



## **Basingstoke Canal: Angling rules**

### **Code of Conduct:**

#### **1. Respect Others:**

- a. All anglers use the Canal in common with other towpath and waterway users – pedestrians have priority on all paths.
- b. Behave in a manner that will not give offence or cause annoyance to anyone on or neighbouring the Canal.
- c. Respect our staff and volunteers - we will not tolerate aggression towards our staff or volunteers.
- d. Drink and drugs – do not come on to the Canal if you are under the influence of drink or drugs. It is unsafe to be intoxicated next to water.
- e. Abandoned gear can harm people and wildlife – make sure you take all you gear home with you.

#### **2. Respect the Countryside:**

- a. You must adhere to [EA Fishery Bylaws](#) and the [Canal Bylaws](#).
- b. “Close Season” is 15 March to 15 June inclusive where no fishing is permitted under [EA Thames Region Bylaws](#), for the entirety of the Canal (SSSI and non-SSSI stretches alike).
- c. Please follow the [Countryside Code](#) – use the Canal with courtesy to other members of the public using the waterway, towpath or associated land and facilities.
- d. The Basingstoke Canal is strictly a catch and release fishery.
- e. Do not spread invasive species – The Basingstoke Canal is home to some invasive non-natives. It is just as important to prevent their spread onto other waters as it is to prevent invasive non-native species from entering the Basingstoke Canal. Check/Clean/Dry your equipment before and after use.
- f. Swimming or entering the channel (even if levels are low) is prohibited at all times.
- g. No firearms, air weapons, bows or catapults of any kind are allowed on any part of the Canal estate. Anyone found carrying these weapons will be reported to the police.

#### **3. Respect your Fellow Anglers:**

- a. The Basingstoke Canal is a single bank fishery – you are only permitted to fish from the towpath.
- b. Swims designated for disabled use are given priority for disabled anglers. Permit holders using one of these swims must vacate if requested to by a disabled angler who wishes to fish the swim if no other designated swims are available in that immediate location.

## **Angling Rules:**

### **4. Permitting:**

- a. Annual permits and day tickets are only available from the [Basingstoke Canal webshop](#). Your annual permit or day ticket will be sent to you by email – make sure you carry a digital device to display the original email, or a printed copy of this at all times. Your ticket or permit will include your name and you may be asked for proof of identity. Copies of email permits or tickets that have been forwarded or otherwise tampered with will be considered void.
- b. By buying a permit or ticket you agree to abide by these rules and code of conduct.
- c. You will need a valid EA Rod Licence before purchasing a Day Ticket or Annual Permit and fishing our waters, which you should bring with you when fishing.
- d. Anglers will, at all times when fishing the Basingstoke Canal be in possession of a current annual angling permit or day ticket. They must show the permit or day ticket to any Council or Canal Officer, Ranger or Lengthsman or another permit holder upon request.
- e. Failure to produce a permit or valid day ticket upon request will be deemed as unauthorised angling. A day ticket will be required to be purchased immediately online, alternatively you will be required to leave the waterway.
- f. Any person in possession of angling equipment on the Canal estate will be deemed to be, intending or having been fishing and will be required to possess a valid permit / ticket.
- g. Permit holders may fish with a maximum of two rods at any one time providing that by doing so they do not occupy more than one swim and in no way inconvenience any other permit holder, towpath or navigation user.
- h. Discounted permits and day tickets are available for disabled anglers and Junior anglers under the age of 16.
- i. Matches must be booked in advance as an event via the [Basingstoke Canal event booking page](#). Details for notice periods can be found on the link.

### **5. Disabled Anglers:**

- a. Anglers with disabilities may be accompanied by a carer. The angler will be responsible for the behaviour of their carer, who has to abide by all bye-laws and rules of the angling licence and Basingstoke Canal. The carer has no right to fish without first obtaining their own permit or day ticket.

### **6. Junior Anglers:**

- a. Junior anglers who have purchased a discounted junior permit should usually be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- b. If the parent / guardian intends to fish as well as the junior, they must have their own permit or day ticket.
- c. A Junior fishing with a guardian or parent must fish the same or adjacent swims.

- d. Junior anglers are not permitted to fish at night. Night fishing is between 1 hour after sunset and 1 hour before sunrise.

## **7. General Fishery Rules:**

- a. Fishing is by rod and line only – no nets (e.g. fyke, seine) or traps are allowed. Any nets or traps found will be confiscated and destroyed.
- b. Use of live bait is prohibited.
- c. The use of bloodworm and joker is forbidden except under the following conditions:
  - i. Time period: 1st October to 14th March
  - ii. Bait limit: 1/2 Kilo limit per angler (standard match pack)
- d. Use of dead bait that is not indigenous to the Canal is prohibited except for those baits which are properly regarded and recognised as frozen predatory fish baits and are sold as such, solely for the purpose of angling.
- e. Dispatching (killing) of Canal caught fish for dead bait is prohibited and is an offence.
- f. The fishery runs strictly on a catch and release basis – it is an offence under the bylaws to kill fish on Canal property.
- g. All baits should be in reusable containers, no tin cans are permitted.
- h. The use of ground baits is restricted to 1kg per angler per 24 hour period.
- i. Hooks used must be barbless and single only. Pike anglers may use trebles with one bait holding barb. All other barbs must be crushed.
- j. Plugs and spinners must have all barbs on all hooks crushed.
- k. No two hook systems allowed on any Canal waters. Pike anglers may use two trebles on a wire trace, one trace per rod.
- l. All Members must be in possession of an unhooking mat of sufficient size and thickness to prevent fish from being damaged. Fish are not to be placed directly on the bank, under any circumstances.
- m. No wet equipment to be brought to the Basingstoke Canal. Unhooking mats, weigh slings landing nets and keepnets must be dry on arrival. Follow the Check/Clean/Dry protocol for your equipment before and after use to stop the spread of invasive species.
- n. No bent hooks and no long shanked curved hooks.
- o. No permanently fixed lead is permitted.
- p. The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) may from time to time issue a bait ban by posting on its website – all permit or day ticket holder must obey any current bait ban.
- q. No bait boats or radio-controlled vessels are allowed on the Canal.
- r. Each permit holder must have their own landing net whilst fishing. Landing nets may not be shared under any circumstances.
- s. Landing nets must be used – fish shall not be dangled out of the water.
- t. Anglers may use a retention sling to retain fish for up to 20-minutes after capture to enable safe recuperation and handling of fish before returning.
- u. A maximum of 50lb of fish to be retained at any one time in a keepnet.

- v. Keepnets must be knotless and of a minimum length of 8 feet and minimum diameter of 18 inches. No fish may be retained by any other method, including sacks, tubes stringers etc. If using a keepnet to retain carp, it must have a carp bottom
- w. Anglers should seek to minimise the time that the fish are so retained and in no circumstances will this exceed 6 hours.
- x. Officers of the Council, Rangers, other appointed representatives of the BCA have the authority to inspect keepnets and order the immediate release of fish from keepnets when, in period of hot weather or other adverse circumstances they consider retention would be harmful. In exceptional circumstances they may ban the use of keepnets, but this will normally be done with advanced notice.
- y. No Carp to be held in any type of keepnet or sack, except during matches in which two keepnets are required, one of which must have a carp bottom for retaining carp.
- z. No fish over 5lb may be retained in a keepnet - These fish must be weighed and returned immediately. The only exception is for an invasive species, in accordance with Rule 9.
- aa. Anglers will not use a gaff or jig of any sort to assist in the taking of any fish on The Basingstoke Canal.

#### **8. Pike and Predatory Fish Rules:**

To protect Pike and other predatory fish in the Canal, a number of special rules have been drawn up to cover fishing for these species.

- a. Suitable equipment shall include:
  - i. Monofilament main line for Pike fishing must have a minimum breaking strain of 15lbs.
  - ii. Braided main line must have minimum breaking strain of 30lbs.
  - iii. Wire traces must be a minimum length of 24 inches (60cm) and a minimum breaking strain of 20lb.
  - iv. No more than two semi-barbless (as described in rule 7.8.) or barbless treble hooks or two single barbless hooks may be used on any one trace.
  - v. Large knotless landing net.
  - vi. Large unhooking mat.
  - vii. 12in (30cm) long artery forceps.
  - viii. Side cutters having a minimum length of 25cm (10") and able to cut problem hooks when caught in the soft throat tissue or gill rakers.
  - ix. An adequate Carp/Pike weigh sling.
  - x. A sensitive and effective bite detector system which shows 'drop back' as well as runs.
- b. Wire traces for lures, plugs and spinners must be no less than 25lb breaking strain and a minimum of 24 inches (60cm) long.
- c. All lures, plugs and spinners must be barbless.

- d. Fishing for Pike with dead baits is permitted from the 1st of October to the 14th of March. Lures, plugs and spinners may be used from for the remainder of the season.
- e. When Perch, Eel and Chub fishing with dead baits or artificial baits, a single barbless hook must be used, no wire trace is required, but is recommended due to the presence of Pike.

**9. Movement of fish or other species:**

- a. The movement of all fish, whether dead or alive, is strictly prohibited for any reason whatsoever other than with the written authorisation of the Basingstoke Canal Authority.
- b. The movement of fish includes to and from the Canal or movement of fish from one part of the Canal to any other part of the Canal.
- c. The removal or deliberate damage to any native flora or fauna is strictly prohibited.
- d. The introduction of on non- native species of plant, wildlife or fish species is strictly prohibited.
- e. All invasive non-native species caught must not be returned to the Canal or any other water (e.g. Signal Crayfish, Terrapins, Bitterling, Top Mouth Gudgeon, Wels Catfish, Pumpkinseed, Sturgeon/Sterlet, Sunbleak, Bluegill, Zander, Fathead Minnow, Black Bullhead, etc.). Anyone caught doing so will be in breach of EA and NE regulations whereby permits will be revoked and prosecutions may be sought.
- f. If you catch any of these species, please report them to the BCA or the EA immediately for guidance.

**10. General conduct:**

- a. Any angler undertaking any activity that is deemed dangerous to themselves or others by the BCA or representative of the Canal's owners (Hampshire and Surrey County Councils) will be ordered to leave the Canal estate, will forfeit their permit and be banned for the remainder of the fishing season.
- b. Damaging the Canal is dangerous and illegal. Any angler undertaking an activity that is deemed damaging or harmful to the Canal structure, conservation status or SSSI designation by the BCA, or a representative of the Canal owners will be ordered to leave the Canal estate immediately, will forfeit their permit and be banned from the waterway. Consideration may also be given to prosecution.
- c. Drink and drugs
  - i. If a Ranger or other representative of the BCA considers that you are intoxicated by alcohol, you will be asked to leave the Canal for your own safety.
  - ii. Any permit holder found in possession of, or under the influence of illegal drugs will forfeit their annual permit and/or be banned from purchasing day tickets for the duration of the fishing season.

- d. Fishing tackle and all accessories must not obstruct the bank area or towpath and must not present a hazard to other anglers or members of the public.
- e. Permit holders must not leave litter or discard hooks, nylon or other line, or shot.
- f. Abandoned gear can harm people and wildlife. Permit holders must make every effort not to snag lines, hooks or other tackle in vegetation. If tackle becomes snagged the permit holder must make reasonable efforts to retrieve the tackle – if they cannot, they must report the abandoned gear to the BCA for recovery within 24 hours of the incident. Anyone found abandoning snagged tackle will be immediately banned from the waterway for the remainder of the season.
- g. Permit holders are responsible for the tidiness/cleanliness of any peg/swim/area of bank they may be fishing at and area within 2 metres of said peg / swim.
- h. All dogs will, at all times, be kept on a secured lead or tether and are not allowed to interfere with other permit holder, Canal user or general public. Members who are accompanied by their dogs must be in possession of pet waste bag in case their dog fouls, failure to clear up after your pet will result in you being asked to leave.
- i. Umbrellas and bivouacs are permitted subject to rule 10.j., below. Tents are not permitted under any circumstance. An umbrella is regarded as a round or oval shape with a collapsible internal frame.
- j. Umbrellas and bivouacs although permitted must be sited so as not to impede use of the towpath, other users, or maintenance of the Canal or towpath. This means that as a minimum at least 2/3 of the towpath width must be available for other users at all times.
- k. Lighting fires on any part of the Canal estate is prohibited.
- l. Primus or cooking stoves may be used. Open/camp fires and BBQs of any kind are prohibited.

#### **11. Swims and where to fish:**

- a. The majority of swims on the Basingstoke Canal are not pegged or marked. Subject to the rules around bridges, wharfs, locks and other navigation structures below you may fish from anywhere on the towpath side of the Canal.
- b. No fishing on or within 20 metres of any formal mooring, wharf or landing stage.
- c. No fishing within 20 metres of a lock, bridge, weir or sluice or other engineered narrowing of the Canal.
- d. No fishing within 10m either side of overhead power cables, unless signage on site states a greater distance, when the distance on the sign must be obeyed (e.g. due to the voltage in the cable route).
- e. No night fishing within 50 metres of any private residence; house or boat.

- f. No fishing from the non-towpath side of the Canal or from a boat/any other floating vessel.
- g. A number of swims are delineated near car parks and are designated as priority for disabled permit holders. If using a designated “disabled swim” you must give up the area to any other permit holder who is disabled.
- h. In establishing a swim permit holders must not cause damage to any bankside or marginal vegetation or tree.
- i. No permit holder may leave their swim unattended for longer than 45 minutes.
- j. You may leave 1 bucket or 1 item of tackle in 1 swim to reserve it for your use, whilst you return to your vehicle to get your fishing tackle, this must take no longer than 45 minutes. When already occupying 1 swim, no permit holder may place a bucket or any other item in any other swim.
- k. Tackle must not be left unattended in the water.
- l. Any equipment left unattended for a period greater than 1 hour maybe considered abandoned and removed from the Canal and placed in storage for a period not exceeding 14 days prior to disposal.
- m. A swim maybe occupied for up to 3 consecutive days. A day is defined as a full or any part of a day. Users may not return to the same swim within 3 days of your departure.