

Angling - Fish Identification

Barbel

The Barbel is a bottom dwelling fish, preferring clean rivers with stretches of gravel, pools and deeper areas.

The fish is named because it has two pairs of barbules (feelers) located around its mouth. Barbel are torpedo shaped and of a golden bronze colour, with large reddish brown fins. Barbel are a hard fighting fish that will test both the angler and their tackle to the limit. Good baits include luncheon meat, sweetcorn and maggots.



Bream



The bream is a deep bodied fish that has a thick covering of slime to protect it. Young bream are more silvery than the adults which are usually darker with a greenish tinge. Bream are usually found in large shoals, preferring deep, slow rivers or still waters. They usually feed on or near the bottom, feeding on worm, maggot, caster or sweetcorn.

A large shoal of bream requires large quantities of ground bait to keep them in your swim, otherwise they soon move on looking for other feeding areas.

Bream is not generally a hard fighting fish, they usually come to the net with little resistance.

Carp (Common, Leather, Mirror)

The carp family were originally introduced to the UK by the Romans. They have been selectively bred over the years, resulting in the species we have today. The Common Carp is fully scaled, the Mirror Carp is partially scaled and the Leather Carp has very few scales running along its back.

Carp are found in lakes, slow flowing rivers and, increasingly, some canals.

Whilst they are generally bottom feeders, they can also be caught on the surface using floating bait, such as bread crust and dog biscuit. When fishing on the surface always be aware of the presence of ducks as they may take your bait. Other good baits include maggots, luncheon meat and sweetcorn.

Carp are a hard fighting fish so a strong tackle is required.



Common



Mirror

Leather

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Chub



Chub can be found in most UK rivers, however they are being increasingly stocked in commercial still waters. They like to live under overhanging trees, undercut riverbanks and feed over gravel beds, hovering in the river's currents.

Chub are a relative of the dace but they are larger and slightly more golden in colour, have large rubber lipped mouths and orange brown fins.

Fishing with a stick float, behind some loose feed such as maggot, worm or luncheon meat can bring good results. Bread flake can be good for the larger specimen.

Tackle should be relatively strong not only to cope with the fish but the river current as well.

Crucian Carp

The Crucian is of the same family as the Common Carp, the difference is that it doesn't have barbules and is a lot smaller, rarely reaching over 3lb in weight.

The Crucian is roundish in appearance, is of a dark brownish colour and is fully scaled.

Crucian Carp are mainly bottom feeders and prefer small ponds and lakes.

Crucians are not easy to catch so light tackle and small baits such as maggot, worm, sweetcorn are suggested.

Despite their small size they will give your light tackle a good workout!



Dace



Dace are streamlined fast silver fish found in shoals in rivers. Often mistaken for small Chub, they can be identified by their concave anal fin.

The best method of capture without doubt is the stick float, with the shot evenly spread out down the line. Light tackle and small bait such as a single maggot or caster, falling through the swim should tempt the Dace to bite.

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Eel

The Eel has a snake like body, almost round in cross section and is an olive green colour. They can turn up in almost any water environment.

There is much mystery surrounding the spawning habits. The mature eel migrates downstream heading for the Sargasso sea in the Atlantic, off the east coast of America. Their journey can take up to eighteen months. Once they reach their spawning ground they spawn and die. The resulting larvae drift with the Gulf Stream towards the coast of Europe developing into young fish called Elvers. They eventually migrate upstream into the river systems until they find a place to settle. They live up to 15 years before returning to their spawning ground. Strong tackle is required, fishing on the bottom using Leger tactics with a juicy lob worm, especially at night, should bring good results.

Eels can be difficult to unhook. It is recommended to lay the fish on a wet unhooking mat and calm the fish. If the hook is showing, use forceps to remove it. If it is not, it is recommended to cut the line as close as possible to the hook and then release the fish. Serious damage to the fish can be caused by attempting to use a disgorging, especially by an inexperienced angler.



Gudgeon



Gudgeon can be found in still waters, canals and rivers. The Gudgeon is a small fish, brown, grey or green in colour with a row of dark spots along its sides. The Gudgeon is a bottom feeding fish, therefore you should fish on or near the bottom, with light tackle such as a whip or pole, using maggot, pinkie or worm as bait. They can shoal up in large numbers, so a lot of fish can be caught in a short time.

Perch

Perch can be found in most waters in the UK. They are easily recognisable by their spiny dorsal fin and the vertical stripes along its sides. The perch is a predator and often hunts in packs chasing small fish. Perch are easily tempted by maggots or worms, float fished or legered tactics are best. Seek out locations such as sunken trees, stumps and obstacles.



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Pike

Pike is the ultimate fresh water hunter. A fish with a fast powerful streamlined body and well camouflaged flanks, complete with a jaw full of teeth make the pike a respected predator. It can be found in still waters, canals and slow flowing rivers. They can grow up to 30lb in weight. They will eat all other species of fishing including its own. They have also been known to attack moorhens and ducklings. The best methods for capture are the spinner, lure and dead bait. Strong tackle is recommended.



Roach

The Roach is one of the most common fish in the UK. It will be found in stillwaters, canals and rivers. The Roach is silvery in appearance with orange brown fins and red eyes.

They can be caught at all levels in the water using maggots, castors, small worms and bread. Other baits to consider could be hemp and tares.

Waggler, pole or whip are suggested methods using light tackle. Loose feed, little and often should keep the bites coming.



Rudd



The Rudd is often mistaken for a Roach. The main differences are the Rudd is slightly more golden in colour, its mouth curves upwards and its eyes are yellowish.

It feeds in the upper layers of the water. Bait such as maggots, castors and bread should work well, using float fishing tactics, spreading the split shot along the line, allowing the fish to be taken on the drop.

Tench

Tench are found in stillwaters and canals. The tench is a well built fish with small scales, olive green in colour and powerful fins. It is a bottom feeder, releasing a stream of tiny bubbles that can be seen on the surface. Good baits would include, maggots, worms, bread and sweetcorn. Waggler and pole tactics are best making sure your bait is firmly presented on the bottom. Fairly strong tackle is required as once hooked the tench will put up a good fight.

