



**Angling**  
Ireland



**CHARTER BOAT  
FISHING  
IN IRELAND**



## INTRODUCTION

The island of Ireland has long been recognised as one of Europe's premier sea angling destinations and the quality of its deep-sea fishing continues to attract anglers to our shores from all over the globe. With its roaring surf beaches, miles of awe-inspiring sea cliffs and hundreds of tranquil bays and backwaters, the coastline at over 3000 km long is among the most varied and spectacular in Europe. The diverse nature of the coastline coupled with Ireland's unique geographical position, on the edge of the European continental shelf, where the inshore waters are warmed by the North Atlantic Drift means that the native marine life is extremely rich and varied. All this makes for perfect fish habitat, and visiting sport fishermen can expect something in the region of 80 species to aim at, so anything from a blenny of a few grams to a bluefin tuna of over 400 kg can be encountered!

## IRELAND'S CHARTER FLEET

Ireland's reputation as a prime deep-sea fishing destination is founded on the quality of its charter boat fleet. Usually these are purpose built vessels of 9 metres (30 feet) and over, capable of carrying 12 passengers up to 48 km (30 miles) offshore. There are currently over 100, top quality, state certified, charter boats dotted

around the coast offering the whole gamut of offshore fishing experiences. A list of all registered and insured deep sea fishing boats is available here: [www.fishinginireland.info/charterboats/index.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/charterboats/index.htm) while a Google map of their locations is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yynzh9zj>

Charter boat fishing can cater for all levels of angling experience and it is one of the easiest ways to get started into fishing if you are new to the sport. For the complete novice, the skipper can normally rent you a rod, help you get set up and show you the ropes so you will be catching fish on your own before long. For the more experienced anglers, you can chat to the skipper and make a plan on what species you want to target and how best to fish for them. For the specialists who chase those large trophy fish, most skippers will have a range of marks and a knowledge of the best methods to fish them that will help you get that specimen fish.

Charter boat fishing is also a very social experience and is lively and interesting even before a line is cast; the skipper will assemble a group of anglers who may or may not know each other at the beginning of the day, but who will certainly be well acquainted by the end of it, especially if they have had sport with a specimen fish or two. The skippers have well equipped craft and many will have come from several generations of fishermen, their knowledge of the sea is as instinctive as breathing. A lot of local lore is passed on during the day and even more in the evening when the boat is tied up and the scene shifts to a waterfront pub...



There is much more detailed information on the [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info) website and on the accompanying Google map: <https://tinyurl.com/yynzh9zj>

## CERTIFICATION & SAFETY

It is important to check with your skipper at time of booking as to what class of licence they hold and confirm that they have full insurance. There should be no problem to get a copy of insurance by email. All licences have restrictions on the distance the boat can travel from port which could either limit your fishing or, more seriously, pose a danger to your safety if the boat strays outside the designated distance. On boarding the boat you should check that the licence is displayed on either side of the wheelhouse in an official disk form. The full licence must also be available for inspection on board. The main angling boat licences are P3 (you may fish up to 5km (3 miles) off the land) or P5 (which are normally limited at 48km (30 miles)). Full details are available at:

<http://www.dttas.ie/maritime/english/passenger-boat-regulations-0>

It should be noted that all anglers going to sea in small boats (less than 7m) must, by law, wear life jackets at all times. All passengers on board a licensed charter vessel must have access to an emergency life jacket and all charter boats will carry these onboard. However, due to risk of damage, skippers may not make emergency lifejackets available in normal (non emergency) situations. It is therefore strongly encouraged that anglers bring a suitable life jacket when charter fishing and wear it at all times when onboard. Anglers should also check the weather in advance of fishing and wear appropriate clothing for the conditions while those that suffer from sea sickness should consider taking medication to limit its effects. For further information on safety when angling please visit: [www.fishinginireland.info/safety.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/safety.htm)

### THE TIDES

The Irish coast experiences two high tides and two low tides in every 24 hour 50 minute period. Tide tables can be purchased from most tackle shops in coastal towns, ships chandlers or by contacting Dublin Port Company, Port Centre, Alexandra Road, Dublin 1. Email: [info@dublinport.ie](mailto:info@dublinport.ie). Website: [www.dublinport.ie](http://www.dublinport.ie) Tel. +353 1 887 6000

### WEATHER FORECASTS

Weather forecasts are contained in all Irish daily newspapers, and marine forecasts can be heard on RTE Radio1 at: 06.02, 12.53, 16.55 & 23.55. You'll find RTÉ Radio 1 between 88 and 90 on FM. Comprehensive weather reports are also shown on RTE 1 television at 18.50, 21.25 and 24.00.

Detailed forecasts can also be found on the Met Eireann website: [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)

### REGULATION, CONSERVATION AND CATCH & RELEASE

There are relatively few regulations regarding sea angling in Ireland but there are restrictions on some species which anglers need to be aware of. A State licence is required to fish for sea trout (& salmon) and a special licence is also required to fish for bluefin tuna. Bass are subject to some restrictions on season and size. Porbeagle shark, common skate, white skate, undulate ray & angel shark are all considered endangered and should be quickly returned to the water when caught. For more information on angling regulations see: [www.fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm)

We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve our fisheries so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Stocks of most sea angling species have been in decline for many years and can no longer sustain anglers taking home all that they catch. For that reason, we would ask that all anglers consider practicing Catch & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return them to the water. Remember: [#CPRsavesfish](https://www.instagram.com/CPRsavesfish)

### IRISH SPORT FISH TAGGING PROGRAMME

Many Irish charter skippers and a number of private individuals participate voluntarily in a National Marine Sportfish Tagging and Conservation Programme operated by Inland Fisheries Ireland. The programme is designed to collect data on the habits and movements of those species deemed to be most susceptible to over-fishing, particularly the cartilaginous fishes (sharks, skates and rays) which are very important to the Irish angling industry. Fish are measured, sexed and marked with a numbered fin tag before being returned alive to the water. The information gathered is then transferred to a database at the Inland Fisheries Ireland headquarters in Dublin. Tags have been returned from all over the Atlantic Ocean from places as far afield as Barbados, Long Island, the Azores, Canary Islands and the Mediterranean. Anglers are requested to assist skippers, where possible, in returning all cartilaginous species and other unwanted fish alive to the sea. Results from the tagging programme have shown that several species are in danger of over exploitation in traditional angling grounds.



## IRISH SPECIMEN FISH COMMITTEE

Catching a 'specimen fish' is something that many anglers aspire to do, and, because of the range of species available, charter boat fishing is one of the easiest and best ways to achieve this goal. The Irish Specimen Fish Committee (ISFC) is an independent body that sets a threshold size for each fish species and verifies and publicises the capture of fish larger than that threshold size (i.e. specimen fish) caught on rod and line by anglers in Ireland. The ISFC also ratifies Irish record rod caught fish. Those who capture one of these fish need to submit a claim form to the ISFC and, on ratification, will be awarded a certificate at a special awards ceremony held every year. Many skippers are expert at targeting specimen fish and can assist the angler with submitting a claim. The ISFC also produces a yearly report containing a list of all the specimen fish caught during the year and to get your name in this report is a milestone for many anglers. For more information see: <http://irish-trophy-fish.com/>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Angling Information

This guide provides a basic introduction to charter boat fishing in Ireland and provides a map of some of the key charter boat ports. However, there are a number of resources where you can find more detailed and up-to-date angling information. Firstly, there is a dedicated angling website which has more detailed information on individual fisheries and service providers at: [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info)

We have a number of brochures with more in-depth information available from our offices and online at <http://www.fishinginireland.info/sea/>

If you are planning on fishing in Northern Ireland or on the Foyle and Carlingford catchments on either side of the border you should consult:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling) and [www.ufishireland.org/](http://www.ufishireland.org/)

IFI also produces a weekly Angling Update which provides up-to-date reports on what anglers are catching and where. You can sign up to be emailed the weekly Angling Update by emailing [contact@fisheriesireland.ie](mailto:contact@fisheriesireland.ie)

### General Tourism

Ireland also has a general tourism website [www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com) that will help you plan your trip to Ireland. It provides a wealth of information on travel and accommodation as well as information on things to do and see while visiting the island.

### Leave No Trace

Please adhere to the seven principles of Leave No Trace Ireland:

Plan ahead and prepare; Travel and camp on durable surfaces; Dispose of waste properly; Leave what you find; Minimise campfire impacts (be careful with fire); Respect wildlife; Be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles should be parked in designated areas and in such a manner that they do not cause obstruction.

*Anglers should fish responsibly and sustainably – where possible use single barbless hooks and practice no-weight, "in the water" catch and release.*



[www.leavenotraceireland.org/](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org/)

# #CPRSavesfish



## Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one water-course to another on angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. We would ask that all anglers inspect and clean their gear prior to travelling to Ireland to fish. Full information on prevention of invasive species is available on our website at:

[www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html)

Or via Invasive Species Ireland at

<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/cops/water-users/anglers/>

## Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication and associated maps and web pages. Inland Fisheries Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions therein. Some sporting activities may by their nature be hazardous and involve risk. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. While many operators would have public liability insurance it is always advisable to check with the establishment or operator concerned as to the level of cover carried.

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### FISHING

#### General/Ground Fishing

Most angling locations have a mix of different types of ground that provide opportunities to fish for a range of species. A sandy bottom is the preferred habitat for most flatfish such as plaice and sole. Other species such as pollack, ling and conger prefer to inhabit fouler ground such as rocks and reefs where they hunt smaller fish as prey. Each habitat and species will require different tactics from the angler and one of the great attractions of charter fishing in Ireland is the variety you can get during a day's fishing as the skipper drifts or sets the boat at anchor over various different angling marks.

#### Wreck Fishing

Wreck fishing in deep water marks can be very productive and there are many chartered wrecks off the Irish coast, some lying in water over 50 fathoms deep. Many more wait to be discovered and the angler who is in a boat fishing such a wreck for the first time can experience unforgettable sport. A good number of these are merchant vessels and U-boats from World Wars One and Two bringing a historical aspect to a day on the water. Others are ships that went down in storms or through other calamities at sea. All have their story that the skipper are only too willing share along with local insights and more. It may take an hour or more to reach these marks, but the time is worth it because of the size of the conger, ling, pollack and codfish which are boated from them. Anglers who specialise in this fishing use rods in the 20/30lb class and reel lines of 30lbs test, and such gear may be hired from many charter skippers.

#### Shark Fishing

Shark fishing is very popular during the summer months. There are five species of shark which anglers may catch in Irish coastal waters. They are the mako (*Isurus paucus*), thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*), six gill (*Heteroscyllium griffiths*), porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) and the blue (*Prionace glauca*). Of these, only the latter two are caught with any degree of regularity in Irish waters, the others being mainly accidental catches, although there is reliable fishing for six gill from off the Co. Clare coastline. Drifting and chumming are the methods used to fish blue sharks and porbeagles. The bait is usually a whole mackerel fished on a wire trace under a balloon. On a good day as many as 20 fish can be caught and released. There are many other inshore species like tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*), spurdog and smooth hounds that can offer exciting fishing to the charter boat angler particularly along Ireland's east coast.

#### Bluefin Tuna

At time of going to press (early 2019) an exciting new opportunity has arisen for big game anglers in Ireland with the advent of a legal recreational fishery for bluefin tuna. Specimen fish including a European Record were landed in the 1990s and research fishing has turned up some truly awesome fish in recent years. Specialist charter boats with all the required gear are ready to target that fish of a lifetime... For full details on where you can take part see this link: [www.fishinginireland.info/sea/bluefin-tuna-fishing.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/sea/bluefin-tuna-fishing.htm)

#### Saltwater Fly Fishing

Charter boat skippers don't normally cater to fly anglers but more are recognising the unique sport this form of fishing can offer. Species to be targeted include bass, garfish, pollack, mullet, scud and mackerel. For the more adventurous angler, enquire with your skipper about the possibilities of fly fishing for sharks such as blue shark and spurdogs. Once these predators are chummed to the boat they will willingly take a fly, but be warned tough rods and large capacity reels are needed...

### IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

The island of Ireland consists of two separate countries: the Republic of Ireland (also known as Eire or Southern Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. As a result of this, there are three separate agencies that control fishing on the island of Ireland. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which controls the majority of the fishing in the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which controls most of the fishing in Northern Ireland, and the Loughs Agency, which controls the fishing on the Foyle and Carlingford systems that span the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. These areas are marked on the adjacent map.

This brochure only provides information on fishing in IFI controlled waters in Ireland. Anglers wishing to fish in Loughs Agency or DAERA controlled waters should check the relevant website for information before fishing.

DAERA: [www.wildirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling](http://www.wildirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling)

Loughs Agency: [www.ifiireland.org/](http://www.ifiireland.org/)



**Angling**  
**Ireland**

A green four-leaf clover is positioned to the left of the word "Ireland". A green swoosh underline is positioned below the word "Ireland".