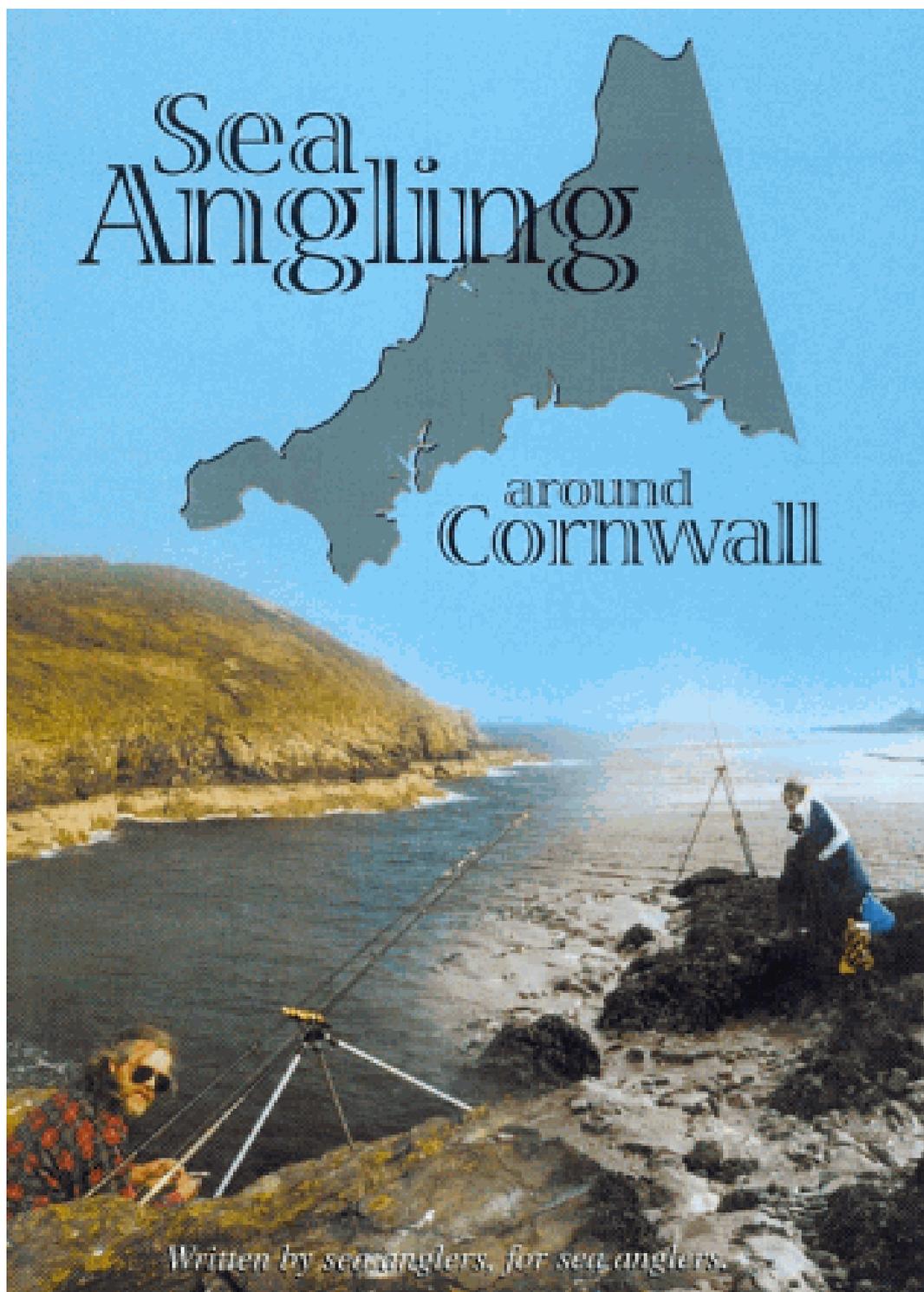


# Sea Angling

around  
Cornwall



*Written by sea anglers, for sea anglers.*

# Sea Angling Around Cornwall



## **AUTHORS :**

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David is an experienced course angler who first converted to sea angling in the early 1980's. The fact that David suffers some mobility problems has influenced the choice of some of his fishing marks, placing an emphasis on safety and ease of access.

### **NIGEL PARISH**

Nigel is the owner of one of Cornwall's premier tackle shops. He is a keen shore angler, but an even more enthusiastic boat angler, with a long experience of both inshore and offshore boat fishing. Along with David, Nigel has considerable experience of bait collection and preparation.

### **MIKE WEAVER (B.A.)**

Mike has a degree in Earth Sciences, including Oceanography, and is concerned about conservation and safety aspects of sea angling. As a keen walker, he undertook much of the detailed survey work for the fishing marks. Mike's Cornish experience dates back to a first fishing trip to Hayle in 1958 which he enthusiastically followed up.

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Note , The cover picture is of local angler Tony Hale, fishing for garfish from a flat rock to the west of Black Head.

## FOREWORD

### **SEA ANGLING AROUND CORNWALL.**

The beautiful and rugged Cornish coastline is home to a wide variety of saltwater species but they don't give themselves up easily. What you need to make the most of a sea angling session in our most westerly county is a little bit of inside information. This of course can take time to accumulate, especially if you're only on a short summer holiday.

Inside the covers of "Sea Angling Around Cornwall" there is all the information needed to start off in the correct fashion ensuring you can successfully tackle the productive sea angling in the south west. The marks, the tackle, the bait and which species you can expect to catch are all included in an easy to follow format.

A great deal of time can be wasted trying to fish an unfamiliar mark, using the wrong methods, tackle and bait. This little gem of a book eliminates all that, giving you the knowledge that will ensure you enjoy some pleasant trips in such a beautiful part of the country.

**International Boat Angler, Editor of Total Sea Fishing,  
Jim Whippy.**

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## Introduction

This book has been written, in answer to many of the queries raised by visiting anglers to Cornwall, to give an answer to “where can I fish?”, “what baits are best?” And “which method produces fish best?” These questions are commonly asked in most Sea Angling Centres and Tackle Shops.

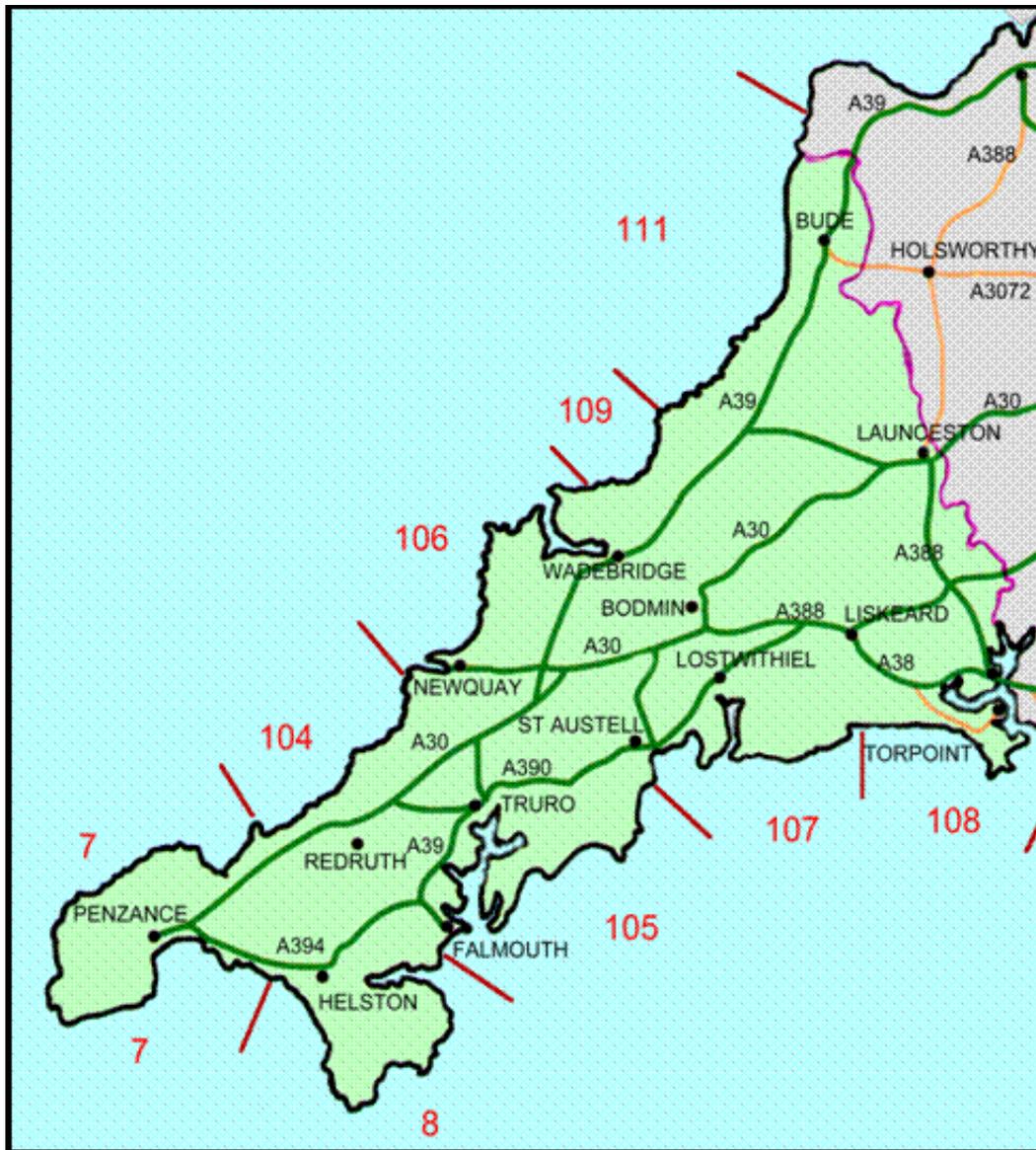
One of the authors of this book, has a tackle shop in Cornwall, however all three of the authors are enthusiastic anglers who have fished in the area for many years, from the shore and boat.

Throughout this book are a number of sketch maps covering the Cornish coastline from Plymouth on the south coast, around Cornwall and up the north coast to just past Bude, these are an aid to locating the fishing marks, however, we recommend the use of the relevant Ordnance Survey Maps in the Explorer series, for more detailed information, and to encourage the exploration of new areas to fish.

One of Cornwall’s main industries is tourism, so it is no accident that many of the named fishing marks can provide safe enjoyment for the non-fishing members of the family.

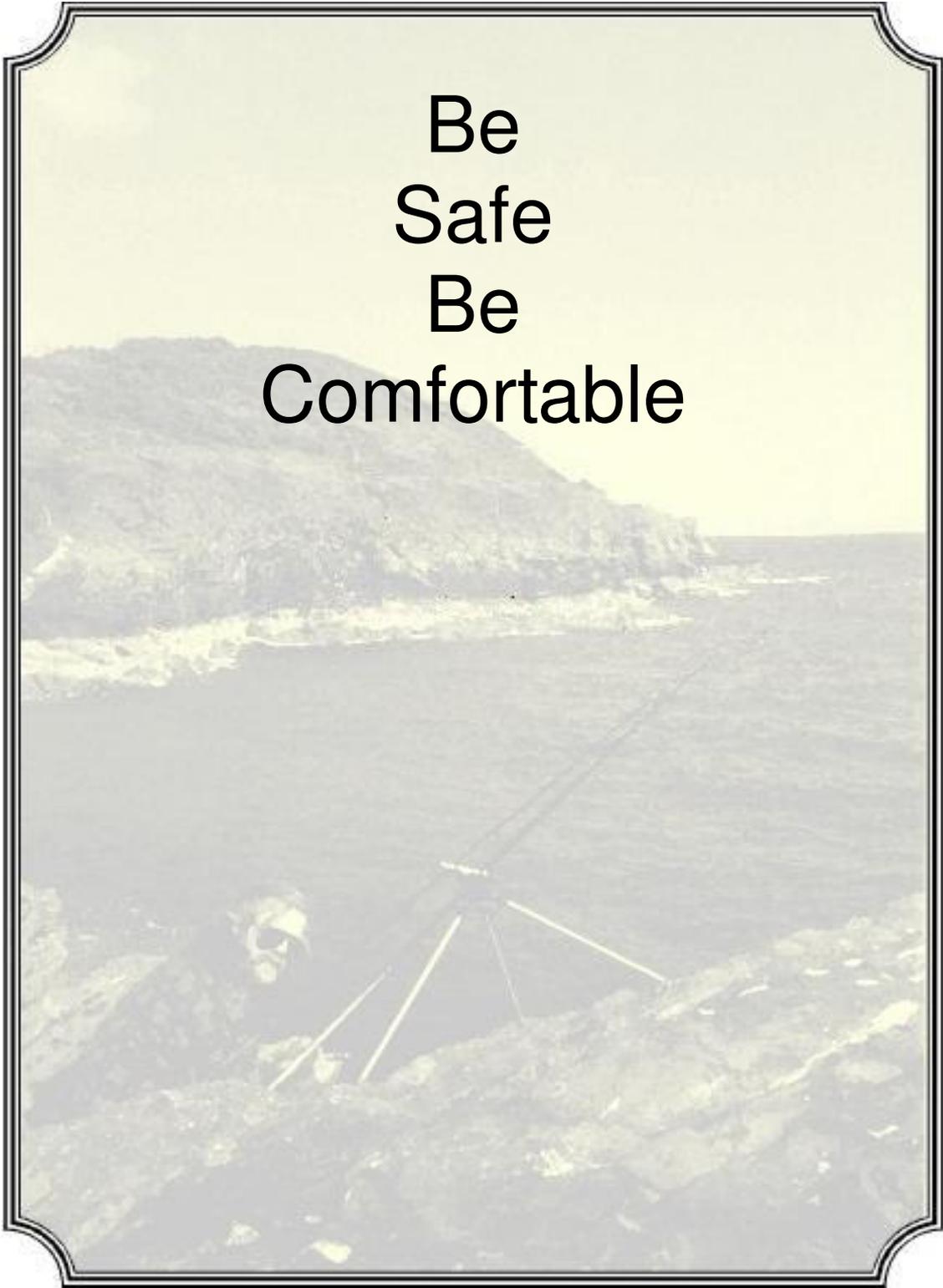
This is not a complete definitive guide to sea angling manual, but does set out to describe areas, baits and methods of catching fish, all of which have stood the test of time and are tried and tested.

In writing this book, the areas and fishing marks visited, have produced many memorable fishing expeditions and moments. We hope that this book will enliven your angling in or around Cornwall and wish you all, Tight Lines and Be Safe.



The areas in green on the above map, show the ground covered in this book, the numbers in red show the corresponding map numbers from the Ordnance Survey, Explorer Series. It is recommended that the angler purchase the map that corresponds with the area to be fished, as these show the ground in greater detail.

Be  
Safe  
Be  
Comfortable





Lamorna Cove

## **BE SAFE, BE COMFORTABLE :**

The Cornish coast is one of the most rugged in Britain. The County's weather can vary from idyllic sun baked days to gale lashed storms. The R.N.A.S Culdrose and R.A.F St Mawgan rescue helicopters are an ever-present part of the skies, along with the Cornish Air Ambulance, particularly during the summer months.

During the year they are on constant call, rendering aid to seamen and anglers but also to people cut off by the tide or washed from the rocks. The R.N.L.I in Cornwall is one of the Britain's busiest, so a few words on elementary safety precautions must be included for the prospective angler to consider and hopefully act upon.

You should remember that in risking your own safety, you may also be risking the safety, or life of the members of the rescue services. Never fish alone, even a sprained ankle on the rocks, will probably need assistance, even a minor problem can become an emergency if you are alone. Should you witness a serious problem, or be involved in an accident and can reach a telephone, you should dial 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.

It is best when planning a fishing trip to let someone know where you are going and an approximate time that you expect to return. In an emergency a Mobile phone can be of assistance, but remember that at sea level, and below cliffs, a signal may be weak or even non existent.

Know where you are, this sounds obvious, but you must be able to direct assistance to where it is needed, if a swift response is required to an emergency.

Obtain a current Tide Table for the area, this will not only allow you to plan the times for your trip, but will also give you the approximate range of the tide so that you will not be cut off by rising water.

Keep an eye on the state of the sea at all times. A storm far out to sea can generate a swell which builds in height as it approaches land, this can quite easily flood over an apparently safe fishing platform.

Some anglers use ropes to reach, and, or, secure themselves to a fishing platform, it is recommended that if a rope is needed for any of these, don't go!

Approach the fishing mark by land, if you can walk or scramble down to the mark, then you can also expect to get off this mark safely. When you approach a fishing mark from sea level at low tide you must either be certain of a dry route away, in the event of being cut off by the incoming tide, or you will have to be prepared to remain until the water level drops sufficiently, for you to return home safely, this can and often takes approximately 6 hours.

There is a considerable link between being safe and the type of clothing we wear when fishing. Good strong footwear with soles that will resist slipping on wet rock, and with good ankle support, is the best type of footwear to use whilst fishing from the rocks. Ironically most of the best fishing marks require quite a lot of walking, often over rough terrain.

To partner the footwear, use a good pair of thick socks, in summer you will sweat less and in winter be warm. Even when beach fishing during the summer it is best not to go barefoot, a Weever fish sting or Razor shell cut can mar the trip and cause considerable pain.

During the summer months thin airy clothing is required, but you can still be cool and safe by wearing a floatation waistcoat, this modern floatation aid is light, comfortable, and does not impede your movement whilst fishing or casting. A word of caution however, most of these floatation jackets and suits will give you adequate buoyancy should you fall in to the water, but they will not turn you face up in the way that a self righting inflatable jacket will.

In winter a full floatation suit is ideal to give you an added safety advantage, in addition, coupled with several layers of thin clothing or a fleece one piece suit, will keep you warm on a frosty night. Keep your head warm with a thick woollen hat or balaclava, and wear a thick pair, of neoprene gloves to keep the cold from your hands, during the winter you can spend more time trying to keep your hands warm than actual fishing.

If buying new clothing for the purpose of fishing, get colours that are highly visible, military type combat clothing is designed for camouflage, these will keep you warm, however in the event of an accident, the visibility of clothing can play a major part in any rescue attempt.

When night fishing ensure that you have adequate lighting, either the liquid fuel anchor type lamp or a battery operated head lamp, to be sure that you have the correct light for the job at hand, you can always take both of these light sources with you.

Many accidents can, and have occurred during the process of landing a fish. A heavy fish off the rocks, can tempt your companion to climb down to the waters edge for the purpose of hand lining the fish back up the rocks. Use a landing net with a long handle or a long handled gaff (particularly for Conger eels). A drop net is the best solution from harbour walls, and piers. You must however, make sure that you are on firm ground, and never over stretch your self or lean over the edge of where ever you are fishing, many falls are caused by people over stretching themselves.



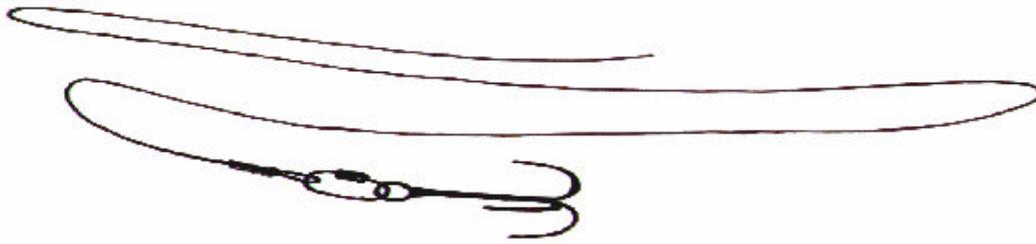
Typical light summer clothing.



Cold and wet weather clothing.



A few useful accessories.



flying gaffe

Another method of landing fish, if you are a long way above the water, and a way down to the fish is either not possible, or very dangerous, is to use a flying gaff, this is made up from a length of rope and a grappling type treble hook, attached by a large snap link, the gaff hook is normally around 6 inches across, these must be handled with care as these are very sharp. The gaff is used by clipping the snap link over the shockleader and main line, now it is lowered down to the fish, where a sharp tug on the rope hooks the fish, it can now be pulled up the cliff, harbour or pier with comparative ease.

A further item of tackle which helps towards comfort more than safety are tip lights and star lights, these help to prevent eye strain, which can cause headaches and migraine. These also help to detect fish bites. Star lights can be used on the end of the rod or attached to a float, enables you to float fish in the evenings, when most fish are taken.

Tip lights can be purchased from local tackle dealers and come in a variety of colours, Red, Green and Yellow. The red ones are easier to see in the dark. A selection of these are shown below.



various tip lights

Finally take a flask of warm drink with you, Coffee, Tea or soup (not alcohol) and you will not only be safe, but also comfortable

As anglers we have a self interest in maintaining the source of our sport and pleasure, in short we need to have a positive attitude towards conservation and other related environmental issues.

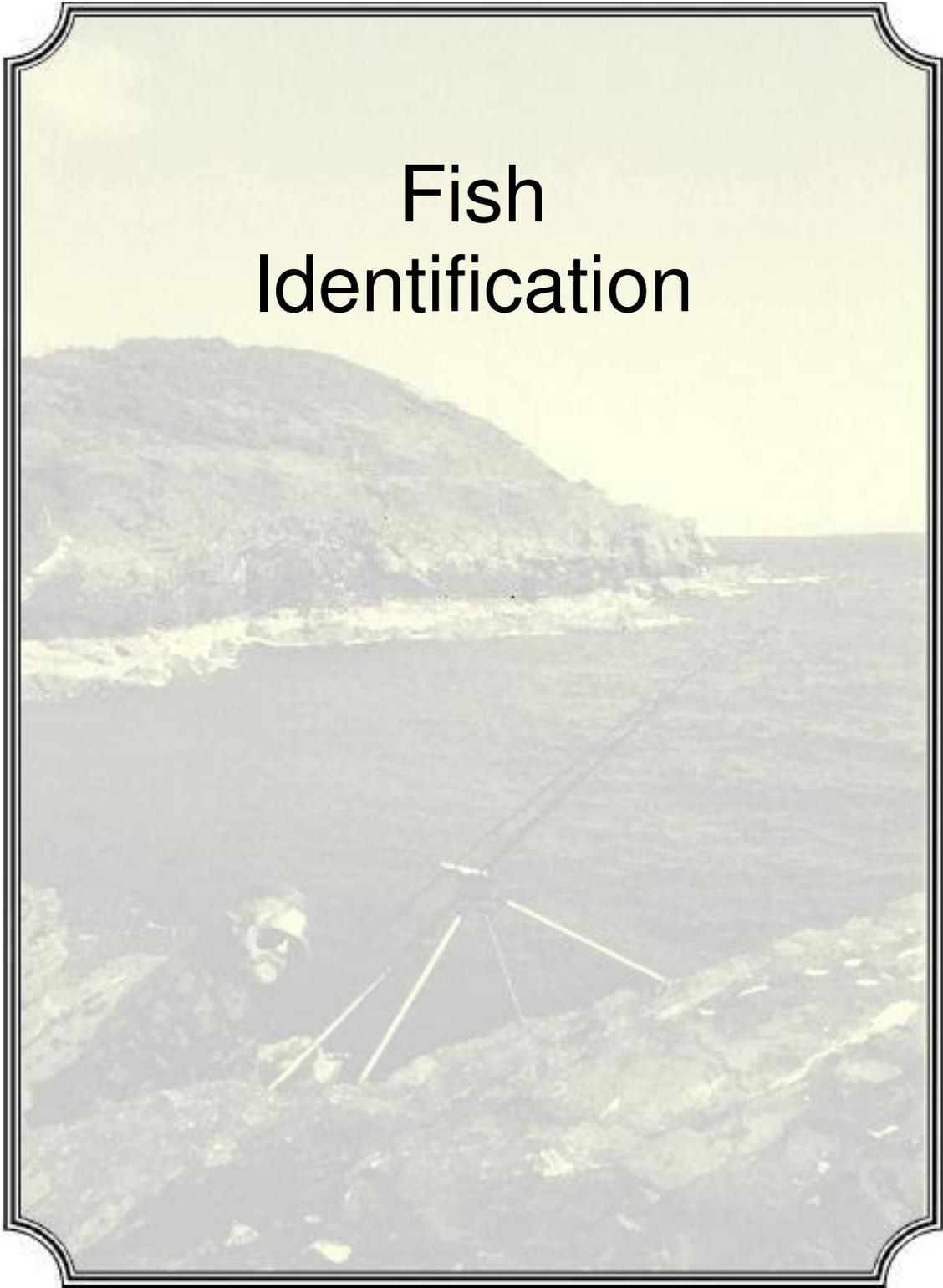
Do not take fish unless it is necessary for either competition or for the table. Dont take it home for an ego trip, with its final resting place the dustbin.If you want to record your catch, weigh it and take a photograph, before gently returning it live to the sea.

Most anglers work to a set of size limits these may be either by weight or overall length . Examples of overall length minimum sizes are those dictated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the National Federation of Sea Anglers. In Cornwall the majority of clubs and anglers work to the minimum weight scale set by the Cornish Federation of Sea Anglers, and in most cases a fish taken from the above overall length systems fall well short of the CFSA weight minimum size. Fishing to a high minimum weight list helps in conservation of stock. Most Cornish fishing shops will be able to give information of these weights. Further as the policing of fish catches both commercial and sport is becoming more vigorous it is better to work to a conservative limit than to pick up a hefty fine.

Many anglers dig their own bait but this bait is also the food source for other marine creatures and birds, careless and excessive bait digging in some areas can have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the area. A few simple rules here can help to minimise the problem, take only what you need, refill trenches, replace rocks or other natural materials which have been moved, and lastly, do not dig for worms in boat mooring areas if you wish to retain friendly relations with the boating fraternity and the harbour master.

Rubbish and litter left on beach and rock marks is at the least unsightly but it can also be dangerous to other animals and fishermen. It is unfortunately not uncommon to see sea birds with their legs tangled or amputated by discarded line. A discarded plastic bait bag on wet rocks can be lethal if trodden on, so at the end of your fishing trip please remove any rubbish of your own and if possible other peoples and bin it or take it home. Many of the beautiful fishing marks in Cornwall have been subjected to littering with angling waste to the point where some local authorities have begun to discuss restricted measures. It is clearly in our own interest to be environmentally conscious if we have any regard for the future of our sport.

# Fish Identification





Perranporth Beach  
North End and Penhole Point

## FISH IDENTIFICATION

The Species of fish shown in this book are the main fish caught from the boat and shores around Cornwall. Some species of fish are more plentiful than others, and many of these tend to look similar in size, shape and colour with many having the same fin arrangement.

The habitat in which fish live, swim and feed can greatly affect the colour and markings on different species of fish.

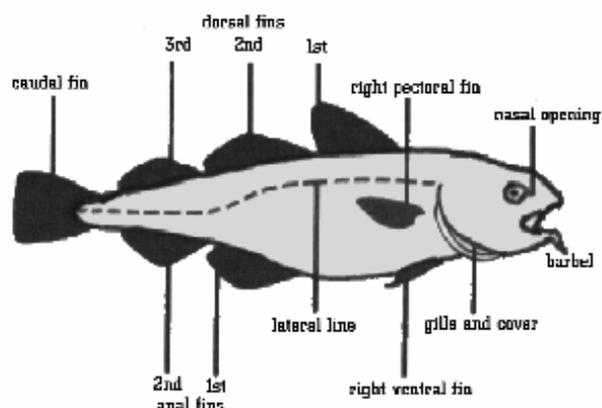
On many fish there may be a size limit in force, depending on which area of the U.K. you happen to be fishing, an example of this is the N.F.S.A, which work on a minimum length of the fish, and the C.F.S.A. work on the minimum weight of the fish, if you are ever in doubt as to the limits on any species of fish, the best thing to do is to ask your tackle dealer as he or she should be very willing to help, and should be up to date on different limits in their area. The M.A.F.F. can impose heavy fines if an angler is caught with under size fish, particularly Bass.

If whilst fishing you happen to get stung, cut or bitten by any fish, it is wise to seek medical advice, some fish in the waters around Cornwall can be venomous or have sharp spines, which can cause infection.

Under sized fish that are to be returned must be handled carefully, it is best to handle them with wet hands or a damp towel, as this will prevent causing any damage to the fish scales, fins, eyes and rest of body. If returning a fish to the sea it is best to carry it down to the waters edge and not drop it from a great height.

### ***FISH IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM***

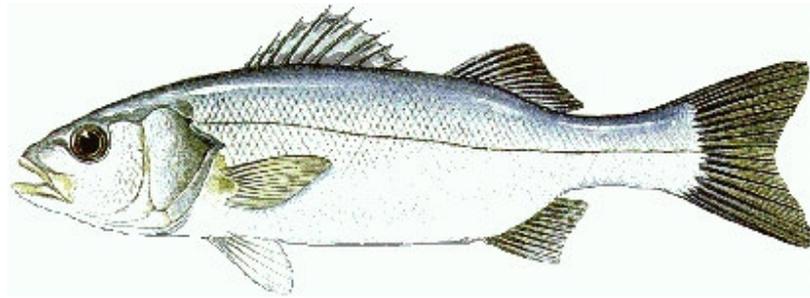
The diagram on this page is for the angler to examine so that he or she should be able to determine the correct name of fins etc, and so help towards the identification of various species of fish, however if in doubt, ask your local tackle dealer as he or she should be able to help with any identification marks that may have been missed by the angler.



## BASS

This is one of the best known sea fish, renowned for feeding in rolling surf on storm beaches, however, having a tolerance for brackish water they are also caught in most estuaries throughout the U.K. The coloration of the Bass is a dark silver grey with a white under belly, it is sometimes possible to find a dark patch on the gill covers. the first dorsal fin is made up of very sharp spines, these can cause nasty injuries as can the gill covers.

Bass can grow up to 80cm and around 15lbs, although the average size in Cornish waters is around 3 - 8lbs with double figure fish being caught, however this is uncommon.

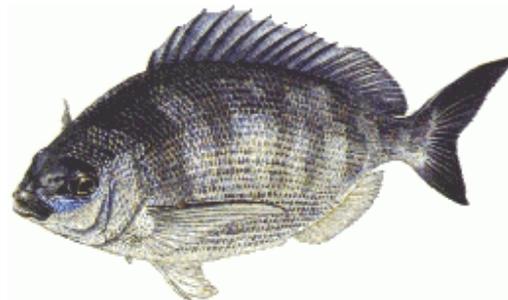


## BREAM FAMILY

The Bream family mainly live in Mediterranean waters, however, during the summer months these fish can be caught in various areas off the Cornish Coastline, if fishing from the boat, and can be caught from the shore over rocky ground. This family of fish are not as common as they once were, and as a consequence many of the Bream caught are taken by the boat angler.

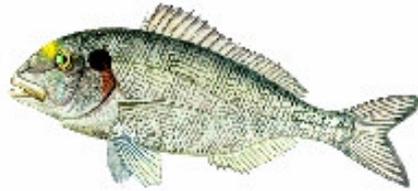
## BREAM, BLACK

The coloration of the Black Bream is a purple - grey with vertical bars of darker grey running up to the top of the fishes back, the fins of the fish are a dark grey in colour, the mouth of the fish is quite small and the top jaw is lined with small needle like sharp teeth. The dorsal fin is long with 11 spined rays and 12 - 14 soft, branched rays. This fish can grow up to 7lbs in weight, however the average size is around 8ozs - 1lb 8ozs.



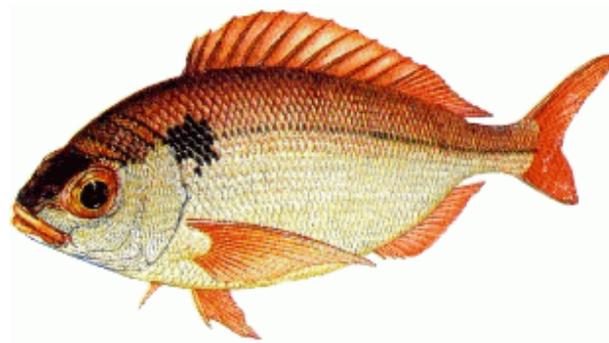
### BREAM, GILT HEAD

Although this species of Bream is mainly caught in Mediterranean waters it is occasionally taken by boat anglers off the Cornish Coast. Coloration of this fish is from blue - grey along the back turning to bright silver on the flanks and under belly, the tail and fin arrangement is similar to the Red and Black Bream. One of the main characteristics of this fish is the golden stripe running across the forehead. This fish has curved teeth at the front of its powerful jaws and flattened teeth to each side.



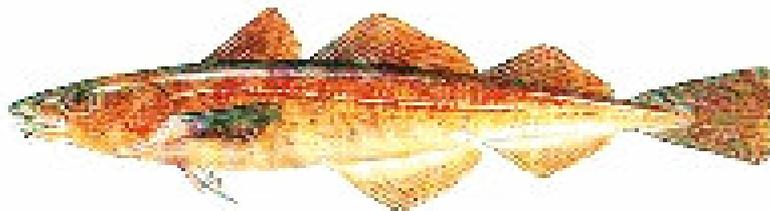
### BREAM, RED.

The coloration of the Red Bream is from silver on the under belly to a deep reddish colour at the top of its back, this is broken by a thin black lateral line. The fins of the fish are a dark red to grey in colour. The Red Bream has a dark shoulder patch, to the rear of its head, this is around the same size as the fishes eye, which unlike the Black Bream, is rather large compared with the size of its head. The jaw of the fish is lined with small needle like sharp teeth.



### COD FAMILY, COD

Like other members of the same family the Cod has three dorsal and two anal fins. The lateral line on the Cod is white bowed over the pectoral fins. The barbell on the chin is normally shorter than the diameter of its eye. The coloration of the Cod can differ from mark to mark as its habitat has an influence on it, from a light orangy yellow to a dark orangy pink however, the lateral line remains white. The Cod can grow in excess of 45lbs, however, the average size in Cornish waters is around 2 - 8lbs, caught from the shore.



**Here ends the brief taster extract.....**

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