

Angling Trust statement on fishing in England from March 29th



Following the Angling Trust's February 11th submission to the Cabinet Office making the case for a relaxation of travel restrictions and a return to all forms of angling - including night fishing, charter boat angling and match fishing - we have been having intense discussions with government officials who are drawing up the new guidance for the return of outdoor sports and recreation for the next relaxation in the Covid restrictions due on March 29th.

The Angling Trust is pleased to announce the Cabinet Office and Defra have now confirmed to us the following from March 29th:

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- Fishing will remain permitted as outdoor recreation or exercise for up to 6 people, or in a larger group if everyone present is from the same two households. A 'household' can include the support bubble linked to that household [if eligible].
- Outdoor recreational activities and exercise may take place at night so you may fish into or through the night. There are no time limits on outdoor recreation. However, you may not go on holiday to go fishing or use fishing as a pretext for a camping trip as overnight stays for these purposes remain prohibited until April 12th (Step 2)
- Match fishing will be enabled as an organised outdoor sport from March 29th. Organised outdoor sports will not be subject to the gatherings limits, but should be compliant with guidance issued by national governing bodies to ensure appropriate steps, including risk assessments, are taken to make it Covid-secure in line with the law. At this stage, these gatherings must only include participants - not spectators.
- Private boat fishing under the Rule of 6 and charter boats operating in accordance with Covid precautions should now both be allowed. However, where fishing takes place on a partially enclosed boat (eg with a cabin or lounge area) with the exception of the skipper, those outside the household support bubble must not go indoors (except for access to/use of the toilet).
- The statutory stay at home restriction will be lifted but the guidance will encourage you to minimise travel outside of your local area. This means avoiding making unnecessary journeys, combining trips and avoiding travel at peak times where possible. People should avoid travelling further than is reasonably necessary to take part in, or during their activity.

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- Tackle shops and other 'non-essential retail' can fully open at Step 2 (April 12th) but can continue to offer click/call and collect until this point. Fisheries offering self-contained accommodation such as campsites and holiday lets, where indoor facilities are not shared with other households, can also reopen at this time.
- Throughout, anglers must also ensure they are in possession of a valid fishing licence, adhere to fisheries bylaws including the close season (March 15 to June 15 for coarse fishing on rivers) and have permission of the fishery owner.

Although the regulations are yet to be published we fully expect them to align line with both our guidelines and the FAQs published by Sport England today (18/3/21) which can be [found here](#).

The Angling Trust will update its formal guidelines once we have seen the regulations and had the benefit of legal advice. In the meantime, and with this caveat, we advise angling clubs and fisheries to plan on this basis.