

Lancashire Fly Fishing Association

Members Health & Safety Guide

The purpose of this guide is to raise awareness amongst members of the risks, which may be encountered whilst participating in angling and other activities on or near the association's waters.

As you will be aware at times rivers and watercourses can be hazardous places, your safety is of paramount importance to the association at all times. We advise all members to take time to familiarise themselves with all of the **Associations rules and fisheries**. All members should read and ensure they understand the safety information /advice contained in this document. Please note that members who accompany guests **MUST** take responsibility for informing them of the existence of these rules and the safety information and offer appropriate advice when necessary.

GENERAL ADVICE

Liability: Lancashire Fly Fishing Association accepts no responsibility for injury, loss, theft or damage by or to members or guests whilst on association's fisheries/car parks

Parking: Always Park sensibly and safely in the designated car parks where they are provided leaving access to gateways and properties clear. Emergency vehicles must have unimpeded access at all times.

Discarded tackle: To prevent injury to other humans and wildlife tackle should never be discarded on or around the fisheries but should always be removed and disposed of at home.

Basic first aid: Members are advised to carry with them antiseptic wipes and or cream/gel/sterile plasters preferably waterproof.

Insects: Insect repellent is advisable at all times, where practicable cover areas of exposed skin.

Sun: Be aware of the potential risks associated with prolonged exposure to heat and sunlight. Wear sunscreen, and cover exposed areas of skin, a hat is advisable.

Electrocution: In certain areas electricity lines either cross or run at the side of rivers/streams. Members must take great care when walking under or around these areas, these cables can carry high voltages and can if touched deliver a potentially fatal shock and or serious burns. Always keep rods away from power lines do not fish directly underneath power lines. Avoid fishing during thunder/lightning storms fishing rods make excellent conductors!

Cattle and other livestock: Cattle will often be found in fields bordering the fisheries, young or newly stocked animals can be inquisitive, whilst they usually are of no danger they can make access/egress and fishing difficult and at times impossible. Generally it is advisable not to attempt to move or walk through such herds. If it is necessary to detour please take care not to trespass on private land.

Access: Always stay within the association's boundaries, when crossing land use the obvious pathways and always walk around the edges of fields unless instructed to do otherwise. Always check stiles before traversing them, close and Secure all gates. Never attempt to climb over barbed-wire fences.

Mink: These animals are increasing in numbers on riverbanks and waterways. They are quite small, being dark in colour almost black. They are likely to avoid contact with humans however they are and can be aggressive particularly when protecting young. Contact should be avoided at all times. In the rare case you should be bitten,

medical attention should be sought as soon as possible.

Giant Hogweed: Although not prolific in this area, anglers should be aware that the sap from this plant can cause severe blistering and skin burns which can leave scars. The sap can also cause temporary blindness and in some cases lead to permanent loss of sight. Giant hogweed has serrated leaves and thick hollow stems with purple blotches. If you should come into contact with this plant, you are advised to wash the areas immediately, keep them covered in direct sun light and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Fishing the Rivers and Lakes

Remote areas/locations: Many of the association's fisheries are away from built up or general habitation let your family/friends know where you intend to fish, and when you should be expected home. Where possible carry a mobile phone however do not assume that reception is possible in all areas.

River/lake banks: Banks in many areas are very steep and may be slippery particularly in wet/or icy conditions. In some areas banks can be undermined and prone to collapse especially during and after flooding and frosts. It is in the nature of our riverbanks to move during floods never assume that the bank is safe to support you.

Steps/stiles: Where these are provided for access, check before using them that no damage has occurred due to weathering, land slippage, livestock or flooding etc. Note that these may be slippery when covered with leaves/debris, wet or frosty conditions. Due to the nature of their locations do not assume handrails, steps/stiles are secure/undamaged. If you see any damage,

please inform other members who are on the fishery, and report the location and condition of such items to the secretary as soon as possible.

Wading: It is strongly recommended that anglers/guests wear an appropriate life preserver/floatation device and use a wading staff, avoid spending long periods in cold-water conditions. Plan your entry and exit points from the riverside. Take into account water /weather conditions when wading/crossing rivers, especially during wet weather days as water level/ forces may rise during these periods. It may be raining above your location and it is advisable to check weather forecasts accordingly

Wherever possible avoid wading unnecessarily.

Head/eye protection: Wear suitable head and eye protection whilst on the fisheries.

Night fishing: Whilst night fishing follow the advice noted in all of the previous sections. Carry a suitable light (preferably headlamp type) so that bank edges and footpaths can be seen. It is advisable when fishing with a partner to plan the night's activities to ensure all parties know where they will be at all times. Carry a whistle to alarm your partner/s should you experience difficulty or become lost. Familiarise yourself with the river section you are to fish particularly the riverbed and banks.

Rabies: While fly-fishing anglers may on occasions catch bats. If you do catch a bat, avoid touching it with bare skin. If you should be bitten or scratched, wash the wound immediately (preferably with an antiseptic wipe or soap), Do not scrub the wound and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

General and other risks: All members are reminded that they have a duty of care to other anglers and members of the public on all of the fisheries. Members are reminded to take care when casting particularly during the back cast. Hooks can carry bacteria due to the nature of their use and by design are sharp and can easily penetrate the skin, take extreme care when tying/unhooking. Rusty hooks are particularly hazardous and their use should be avoided. Do not to leave tackle obstructing paths/stiles and gateways. Members are reminded that junior members are always at risk around water and must be accompanied and wear suitable personal safety equipment at all times. During the course of fishing the associations waters you see or encounter any hazards not mentioned, please report them to the secretary as soon as possible so that appropriate action/s may be taken.

Habitat Improvement /working parties.

Members attending HIWP's will take all reasonable steps to safeguard themselves and all those taking part in such activities. Before any such activities participants shall be given relevant safety brief by the organiser or nominated person/s.

Risk assessments are available on request from the secretary and also via the association website.

Fish Handling

Avoid unnecessary and prolonged fights which may cause undue stress and exhaustion to the fish. Ensure that your tackle is well balanced and that lines and leaders are of sufficient strength to enable you to land the target species as soon as practicably possible. Before handling/unhooking a fish always wet your hands, use good quality Artery forceps/disgorger. If weighing a fish before release, use a dampened landing net or

slings. Do not lay the fish on dry earth, gravel or where the fish could damage itself.

When releasing a fish hold it facing upstream allowing clean water to pass freely through the gills. Do not release the fish until it can maintain its balance unaided and is strong enough to swim away.

When fishing catch and release the association actively encourages members to use barbless hooks. Always clean your hands after handling fish.

IMPORTANT- Following changes in which the way insurance companies manage liability claims, our insurers require the association advise them immediately following incidents in which they may have an interest, particularly any incidents which involve personal injury. Members must report to the secretary immediately should they be involved in an incident whilst angling or participating in activities related to the associations fisheries.

The Lancashire Fly Fishing Association cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information contained in this guide and accepts no responsibility for any error or misrepresentation.