



FISHING



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Introduction

The Fishing activity is very popular with campers of all ages and as instructors it's your job to make sure everyone stays safe and has fun during this activity; including the fish! To lead fishing you will have completed training with either a member of the support team or the Irish Angeling association before running a session with a group of campers. This manual will help you to familiarise yourself with the equipment we use here at Barretstown and also some considerations to be taken seriously when working at the lake with children and adults. We will also look at how we use therapeutic recreation in the fishing activity in order to comply with the philosophy and mission of Barretstown. Before we go into detail on therapeutic recreation we must first understand about comfort zones.

Barretstown uses a 'challenge by choice' principle in all the activities we run at camp. This means that campers will never be pushed into something or forced into doing an activity/exercise which they feel strongly about not doing. They will choose their own level of participation and challenge.

Comfort Zones

Each individual has three levels of comfort which we call 'zones' at camp; a comfort zone, a stretch zone and a panic zone. You are in your comfort zone when you are doing the things you love i.e. reading, listening to music, watching TV etc. This is a zone you enjoy being in. You enjoy both the activity you are doing and the environment you are doing it in.

The next zone is known as your 'stretch zone'. This is a zone where you feel you are being challenged in some way. You are not as comfortable as you were in your comfort zone but you still feel like you can cope with where you are and carry on doing what you are doing. Each person's stretch zone is different because we all have different levels of comfort. What seems like a challenge to one person may be no problem to the other. Some people have a fear of flying whereas others are quite comfortable in an aeroplane. This is the zone we want our campers to be in. We want



them to challenge themselves and put themselves in their stretch zone. This is the zone where you learn that you can overcome challenges, be successful and feel good about yourself. This is the zone where self-esteem grows and campers realise their potential. The same applies to adults.

The final zone is the 'panic zone'. This zone is the last place we want anyone to be in at camp. Camp is a safe, fun and positive environment. When you find yourself in your panic zone you feel scared, unsure about what is going on. You question yourself and the people around you. You become stressed out and you find yourself making quick decisions to get yourself back to your comfort zone. **At no point throughout the duration of camp should campers or staff find themselves in their panic zone.**

By ensuring campers choose their own level of challenge we avoid placing them in their panic zone. They decide their level of participation and their level of challenge depending on their own level of comfort. As staff, we then try to help them overcome the challenges they have set for themselves. We do this by creating a safe and fun activity and, recognising the individual success which each camper obtains through taking part in an activity at some level.

As well as the physical challenge using fishing equipment, and being in a boat in a lake there is a huge emotional challenge for campers to overcome also. The feeling of being nervous, anxious, unsafe and unsure of what is going on is a huge challenge to overcome. The campers are placing total trust in both the instructors and the equipment therefore it is important to be empathetic towards them. We can do this by remembering a time when we were in our stretch zone and what it felt like. What would have made us more comfortable at the time? Between doing this and keeping communication open between the instructor and the camper we can ensure that emotional challenges are overcome.



Supervision

- There must be at least 1 qualified instructor with the appropriate training to supervise the Fishing activity. The instructor is responsible for the safety of the children and staff who are visiting the Lake.
- A Barretstown nurse must be on-call by walkie talkie at all times during activities.

Safety Rules

- Closed toed shoes must be worn.
- Participants who are Fishing on the boat must not sit at the edge of the boat.
- Participants who are fishing from the deck must all fish from the same side.
- A ratio of 1:15 Activity leader to campers must be maintained, Along with cara supervision.
- All summer staff are trained in the use of PPE during staff orientation and shown the correct techniques on how to put corn on a hook as well as how to hold a fishing rod and cast off.
- In the case of a fire alarm please leave the hall and move to the fire assembly point.

Controlled Access

- No one is permitted to go fishing when activities are not in session.
- All equipment is stored in a locked and dry boat house when activities are not in session.
- The Boat House is protected by locked doors to ensure campers do not enter unsupervised.



Emergency procedures

Fire Alarm

When you hear the fire alarm at the lake the steps you take are very straight forward.

1. Safely close down the activity area and ensure all campers make their way with the Cara's to the assemble point.
2. At the assembly point notify the support team member you have all of your group including staff.
3. Line up accordingly and await further instructions from the support team.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency you should;

1. Contact the medical centre immediately
2. Remove the rest of the group if possible to the front of the castle or dining hall if necessary.
3. Remain calm and wait for medical help to arrive.

Missing Camper

When you hear a call over the walkie talkie that 'the red folder has gone missing' you must;

1. Safely close down the activity area.
2. Volunteer Cara's escort the group to the dining hall while the full time staff meet at the cottage coordinators office.
3. Check in with the support team and await further instructions



Missing Person at the Waterfront

1. If it is suspected that the person has gone missing at the waterfront, Camp Director/Assistant Camp Director will specify that on the walkie talkie
2. 2 support team members will be at the lake to start foot sweeps on the FARMYARD side of the lake
3. The next pair to the lake will be begin sweeping at the bridge
4. Both lines work their way into the centre of the lake
5. Additional pairs will join onto either line
6. All staff will follow the direction of the line leader (person closest to the shore) who will instruct when to sweep, pivot etc.
7. Once the lines meet each other they will pivot and go back over the length of the lake
8. Any extra staff will start a line at the bridge and sweep the lake around the boat.



At the Lake

At Barretstown the lake is used for 2 activities; canoeing and fishing. Even if you have never caught a fish, or even fished in your lifetime, this manual will teach and show you everything you need to know for running fishing at camp. Fishing is a safe, dry sport here at camp and is always good fun. It can get a little crowded at the lake when two activities are running at the one time but with proper planning you can avoid any confusion which might arise. In the unlikely event of rain here (!!) the boathouse will be used as the rainy day location for canoeing and fishing will run in an indoor area in the courtyard i.e. the stage or the discovery room (See the FLY-TYING Manual for an excellent rainy-day activity for fishing).

As with every activity here at camp, safety is the top priority. Being at the waterfront requires that little bit more awareness of the hazards around you and the group. Take the time at the start of each block to explain **waterfront safety** to the group, covering the following points:

- At no point should a camper enter the water
- The point where the grass meets the water can become quite slippery overnight and throughout the day so advise the campers to always stand 3 to 4 feet away from the water at all times.
- Get the group to space themselves out but be sure to keep them all on the one side of the lake for the first half hour of the activity block. This is just so they can get used to the technique required and become familiar with the lake. Also, if fish are being caught, you will not have to run around the lake to unhook fish.
- When there are two groups at the lake, i.e. canoeing and fishing then it is important that the two activity leaders come up with a plan so that the groups do not interfere with each other. Make sure and stress to the group that at no point should you cast your rod into the water if there is a canoe in front of you. You must give them time to pass and then carry on fishing. The hooks being



used are quite sharp and we don't want them catching in someone's clothes or in the skin.

- When using the wooden dock's to fish, there should only be one camper at a time on them. Make sure campers rotate if they are all interested in fishing off the docks.

This will cover all the basic safety instructions with regard to being at the lake. Each person will have a different approach when it comes to fishing but as long as these basic rules get covered then the campers will be extremely safe while at the waterfront. Next up is the equipment we use here at Barretstown.

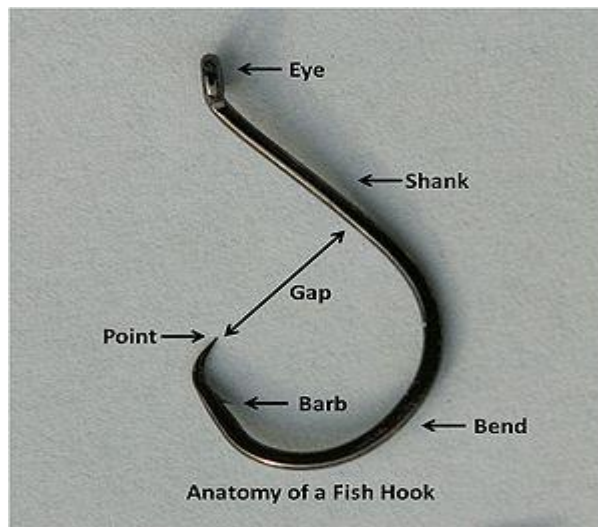
Equipment

Telescopic fishing rods are designed to collapse down to a short distance and open to a long rod. 20 or even 30 foot rods can close to as little as a foot and a half. This makes the rods very easy to transport to store. Telescopic fishing rods are made from the same materials as conventional one or two piece rods. Graphite and fibreglass or composites of these materials are designed to slip into each other so that they open and close. The eyes (reinforced plastic rings which hold the line on a fishing rod. There are usually between 5 and 10 on our telescopic rods) are generally but not always a special design to aid in making the end of each section stronger.

Care for telescopic fishing rods is much the same as other rods. The only difference being that one should not open the telescopic rod in a manner that whips a closed rod into the open position rapidly. Whipping or flinging a telescopic fishing rod open may and likely will cause it to be difficult to close. When closing the rods make a slight twisting motion while pushing the sections together.

A fish hook is a device for catching fish either by impaling them in the mouth or, more rarely, by snagging the body of the fish. Fish hooks have been employed for centuries by fisherman to catch fresh and saltwater fish. Fish hooks are normally attached to some form of line or lure device which connects the caught fish to the fisherman. There is an enormous variety of fish hooks in the world of fishing. Sizes, designs, shapes, and materials are all variable depending on the intended purpose of

the fish hook. Because Barretstown runs a 'catch and release' policy, we cut the barb off the fishing hooks we use. The way to do this is to use fishing pliers and squeeze the barb until it breaks off. Alternatively, if it doesn't break off, simply closing it in towards the hook itself will prevent it from damaging the fish and will make unhooking fish a lot easier.



A **float** also called a **bobber** is a device used in fishing here at camp, which serves two purposes. It suspends the bait at a predetermined depth, and it serves as a bite indicator. There are many different types of float and all are used in different circumstances.



A **fishing reel** is a device used for the deployment and retrieval of a fishing line using a spool mounted on an axle. Fishing reels are traditionally used in the recreational sport of angling. They are most often used in conjunction with a fishing rod, though some specialized reels are mounted directly to a boat.



The **bait** we use here at camp is either sweet corn or bread. We do not use any live bait here at camp so worms or smaller fish are out of the question. In the past we have used ham but found that is quiet hard for the fish to digest it. Ultimately bread and corn are good for the fish and in a large supply so it's best to stick with these. Bait is used to attract the fish so the brighter the colour the better, yet another reason why corn works so well. (Also, who doesn't love corn?)

How to fish!

Ok so up to now we know about the equipment we use here at camp and also some of the waterfront safety point's which are important for the group. Now it's down to actually getting a fish on the end of the line. The first step is:

1. **Baiting the Hook** – At camp we have found that it is best if the staff bait the hooks for the campers. This is a very simple process and involves basically putting the bait on the hook. One piece of sweet corn at a time is best or if you

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are using bread, tear off a small piece and roll it into a little ball between your fingers. This should sit onto the hook perfectly.

- 2. Casting** – Now that the bait is in place we have to get it into the water. In order to cast out properly hold the fishing rod and the line in the same hand between the first eye and the reel. Place your other hand on the handle at the bottom of the rod above the reel. Open the bail to allow the line to cast out when your hand is released (The bail is the silver piece of hard plastic shaped in a semi circle which is on top of the reel. To open it, simply push it down). Check to make sure that there is nobody standing behind you or too close to you for the next part. Gently bring the rod back over your shoulder and when you are ready bring it forward and let go of the line and pole with the hand which was holding them. **Never cast from behind your head. You should be watching your hook the whole time!** Close the bail and sit tight with your bait in the water. Patience is the key here.



Holding line and rod



Opening the bail



Cast over your shoulder

Release the line as you cast out

- 3. Reeling in without a fish** – The reels we use here at camp can only be reeled in one direction. There is a lock on the reel which prevents it from reeling backwards. This is extremely helpful and will prevent the line from knotting and tangling. If you are not having any luck and would like to place your bait in a different position, slowly reel forward until your hook comes out of the water and repeat step 2. (When removing a hook from the water the bait may fall off. Simple get on of the staff to replace it and it's ready for action again).
- 4. Reeling in with a fish** – Ok so you have felt a fish biting on your bait and you want to make a catch. Watch your bobble float and as soon as it goes under the water pull the rod upwards in order to imbed the hook in the fish's mouth. This is the key. If we simply reel in without doing this the fish will take the bait off the hook and swim away. Now we know the fish is definitely on the line start to gently reel in. The fish will fight it for a couple of seconds but will then give up and come in on the line. It is important here to tell the campers never to take the fish out of the water. They can reel it in close to them so they can have a look but for the safety of the fish it must be left in the water until the activity leader arrives.
- 5. Unhooking a fish** – This is done primarily by an activity leader however if a Cara feels comfortable unhooking a fish or has done it before then they can unhook fish for campers also. The first thing is to wet your hands. Fish have a protective layer around them which fights off infection and protects them in the water. If you grab a fish while your hand is dry then this protective layer will come off on your hand. When the fish is then placed back in the water it is



not as well protected as before. Simply dip your hands in the water before you touch the fish. Pin the fish to the ground and remember there is no need to use too much force. When you grab the fish it will normally stop wriggling in your hand. Use your fishing pliers to grab the hook and simply twist the hook out. Sometime's you will encounter a fish that has swallowed a hook. This happens when the camper does not pull the rod up when he/she felt the fish biting. All is not lost here however but it can be trickier. You may have to open the fish's mouth to see if you can see the hook. If you can, place the pliers in the mouth of the fish and twist the hook out. Stay calm and don't feel like you need to rush. Rainbow trout can be out of the water for up to 30 seconds. This is a long time. If you cannot see the hook the best thing to do is to cut the line between the hook and the bobble float and place the fish back in the water. The hook is gone and will pass through the fish eventually or may even fall out by itself.

- 6. Placing a fish back in the lake** – The most important thing here is not to just throw the fish back in. Place them under the water while you are still holding them and make sure they are not upside down. Move your hand back and forth under the water while slowly loosening your grip. The fish will swim away quickly when it's ready.

Maintenance of equipment and upkeep

There is a lot of equipment in the boat house for the fishing activity programme. There are more than enough fishing rods for each camper to have one for themselves. Also there are lots of spare parts from broken rods in the past which are there mainly in case anything needs replacing. In the corner of the boathouse is a fishing rod stand. It's important at the end of each activity block that all the rods are placed in the stands provided and that the hooks are clipped onto one of the eyes on the fishing rod. This will prevent the lines from getting tangled and also prevent the rods from bending too much. It will also make life easier for the canoeing activity leader when trying to bring canoe's in and out of the boathouse if the equipment is stored away, out of the way.

- **Rod Missing a hook** – Simply tie a hook onto the end of the fishing line. There are lots of different ways to do this but in the past we have found that what ever knot the activity leader is more comfortable with is ok.
- **Tangled line** – This is very simple to fix. Simply cut away the line that is tangled and tie a new piece on to the line that is left on the reel. All you have to do is make sure that the new line is going through the eyes of the rod. There is plenty of spare fishing line so don't be afraid to cut it when necessary.
- **Broken reel** – If a reel breaks then there is not much we can do to fix it. The best thing is to swap it out with some of the spare reels in the boathouse. Remove the reel and all the line from the rod. Once a new reel is attached (these can simply be screwed on) you need to put new line on the rod. Tie a basic double knot as tight as possible to the reel and wind it forward so that the line wraps around the reel. Once you feel you have enough line on the rod, cut it at the top so it removes from the spool of fishing line. Don't forget to leave enough line to tie the bobber and the hook on and the again make sure the line goes through the eyes of the rod. It is important to throw away any reels which are damaged so as not to confuse them with working reels. If there are not enough spare reels then contact the Activities Coordinator and they can be ordered in.



Clipping the hook to the rod's eye



Fishing rod stand

Remember

- **Don't be afraid to cut line. You will get frustrated constantly trying to untangle knots in the line so it's much faster to cut the knot away instead of untangling it.**

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- The fish in the lake here will not bite you so although it may seem a bit odd to touch them it is also necessary to make sure you get the hook out without causing too much damage to the fish.
- If you have any questions about knots ask around. Lots of people have fished before and will be more than happy to teach you certain knots when needed.
- We are not teaching kids to become expert fishermen/women. We want them to be safe and enjoy themselves. We also want to show them the basic's of fishing. If a fish is caught it's a bonus.

Cool and Interesting Fishing Facts

- In 2005, the fish hook was chosen by Forbes as one of the top twenty tools in the history of man
- Kentucky native George Snyder is generally given credit for inventing the first fishing reel in America around 1820, a bait casting design that quickly became popular with American anglers.
- Rainbow trout are vegetarian. (this is actually false but it will prevent campers asking if the can fish with live worms)
- Trout have a 5-second memory. This is why they will continue to bit the hook time after time.



Fishing pliers for unhooking fish



Fishing line

