

General Safety information

For your comfort and safety and to help get the most out of your fishing experience, it is important that you read and follow these safety rules and guidance notes when fishing at Hanningfield reservoir.

Hanningfield Reservoir is a large expanse of water which is very cold and deep with underwater obstructions. Weather conditions can change rapidly. Health and safety is paramount; care and attention must be taken at all times.

We would also encourage adults and parents to point out these safety considerations to children:

- Always call at the lodge before fishing so the duty ranger can point out any hazards for your day.
- Look out for and abide by any safety notices or warning signs – they are there to protect you.
- Children under the age of 14 years must be accompanied by an adult.
- Please make yourself familiar with life-saving equipment before fishing.
- When fishing from the dam embankment only fish from the top of the wall and access the waters' edge to land fish via the platforms provided. If fly fishing or bait fishing at the waters' edge only do so from the platforms.
- Wading to thigh depth is permitted when possible, from the natural bank only. Wading is not permitted from the dam walls and where "No wading" signs are displayed.
- To avoid slipping, please wear ankle supporting footwear with good grip and take extra care on dam walls and grassy banks.
- When the water level is low, avoid areas of soft ground and other hazards, which may become exposed.
- Wear head, eye and neck protection.
- Always check behind you before casting in case anyone is passing by.
- In an electrical storm, cease fishing, put the rod down and move well away from it.
- Beware of adders (Britain's only venomous snake); if you spot one please leave it alone, they are harmless if left undisturbed.
- When fishing from a boat the wearing of a life jacket is compulsory. Life jackets are also advised when fishing from the bank.
- Rangers reserve the right to cancel or suspend fishing due to adverse weather or any other safety consideration. E.g. fly fishing from dam walls may be suspended during periods of low water levels. Fishing may be suspended due to muddy areas becoming exposed.
- Unauthorised swimming in all Essex and Suffolk reservoirs is prohibited.
- Be prepared to help others in difficulty but do not put your own life at risk.
- The lighting of fires is not allowed.
- Whilst fishing from the boats or banks alcohol is not allowed.

This list is not exhaustive if in doubt please consult our ranger team.

Safety Information for boat anglers

- All persons in the boat must wear an approved life jacket. Life jackets must be worn over the top of all outdoor clothing at all times. Essex & Suffolk Water provide life jackets free of charge.
- Single occupancy boats are available for those aged 18 and above.
- Boats hold a maximum of two people, at least and one person in the boat must be aged 18 years or over, the minimum age for children in a boat is 8.
- If you have any difficulties please use your mobile phone to alert the duty ranger on their emergency phone. The number is on the plaque in the boat.
- There are flares provided for use in emergency situations, use these to summon the attention of the duty ranger.
- If the outboard does not work and you are drifting towards a hazard, row with the oars to move away from the hazard.
- Use the anchor provided to keep the boat in situ or at least slow the boat from drifting towards a bank or other hazard.
- Only embark or disembark from the boat jetty at the lodge unless in an absolute emergency.
- Keep at least 100m away from any shore, dame wall or valve tower.
- Remain seated whenever possible.
- Ensure you are comfortable with the operation of the outboard motor. The duty ranger would be more than happy to assist in the safe operation of the motor.
- If the motor will not start, ensure the kill cord is in place. Please ask the duty ranger if unsure of what this is.
- If conditions deteriorate whilst fishing and it is safe to do so, navigate back to the boat jetty. A 'follow me' procedure will take place if the duty ranger determines that the conditions are no longer suitable for boat fishing. If this happens please follow the safety boat to a safe location.
- Rangers reserve the right to suspend or cancel boat fishing due to adverse weather conditions or any other safety consideration.
- Whilst fishing from the boats or banks alcohol is not allowed.

This list is not exhaustive please refer to rules and important information or if in doubt consult your fishery ranger.

Any method rules

Our any method trout fisheries allow you to use a variety of fishing techniques.

The use of a landing net is compulsory as is a priest to humanely dispatch the trout once safely landed.

Only Rainbow trout are to be retained. All other fish species must be safely returned to the water unharmed.

Keep nets and other fish retention equipment is not allowed.

The most popular methods are bait fishing with either float or ledger rigs; you can also spin with a variety of artificial spinners, spoons and lures.

The most popular baits are worm, maggot, PowerBait and sweet corn.

Our tackle shops stock a wide range of the most popular trout catching baits and artificial lures.

Whilst you can use and enjoy a variety of fishing techniques on our waters there are some that we do not allow. This is to ensure we can offer equal opportunities to all anglers whilst retaining an ethical integrity common to our sport.

Please note the following techniques are not allowed

- When bait fishing with a float and ledger rig a single hook must be used, a multi hook trace is not allowed.
- When bait fishing with a float and ledger rig the use of double and treble hooks is not allowed.

This list is not exhaustive if in doubt please consult our ranger team.

Catch and release guidelines

Please read the following guidelines to help with fishery management and fish welfare.

- Only use barbless hooks, or standard hooks with the barbs removed or crushed.
- Only use knotless micromesh landing nets.
- Buoyant flies which are fished static on a sinking line must not be used.
- All deeply hooked fish or fish showing signs of distress must be humanely dispatched using a priest.
- Play the fish firmly and get them to the net with minimum stress to the fish, this will ensure that they are not exhausted and will aid recovery.
- Keep handling of the fish to a minimum and always make sure your hands are wet before touching the fish, alternatively use a dampened cloth.
- If possible unhook the fish in the water.
- If it is necessary to remove the fish from the water, keep it in the net and remove the barbless hook from the mouth, then quickly return the fish to the water.

This list is not exhaustive if in doubt please consult our ranger team.

Hints and tips

Following these simple hints and tips will help you catch more fish on our waters.

- Use a free running ledger – a common mistake some bait anglers make is to tie the ledger weight or feeder directly to the main line. The result is lots of missed bites as the trout feel the resistance of the weight or feeder. A free running set up will result in more confident bites and a better catch rate. If you are not sure how to set this up please ask the ranger team and we will be pleased to help.
- Washing line. When fly fishing in ideal conditions and trout are feeding in the top few inches even none weighted flies can drop below the trout's field of vision. Placing a booby or muddler on the point will hold the flies at a constant depth.
- Keep on the move especially during very hot or cold weather. It is essential to keep moving in order to catch consistently. Travel light and spend no more than 30mins in one area without success.
- Dry fly fishing. One method often overlooked by anglers is fishing dries 'blind' (when no fish can be seen rising) Often the only reason they can not be seen is because there is simply no fly hatching.
- Try two different colours of PowerBait eggs on the same hook, this technique has been used very successfully over recent seasons. Try fishing a pink and yellow egg with a feeder filled with Powerbait paste, this method has consistently taken limit catches when others have struggled.
- Depth can be crucial when spinning. Using a simple countdown method can pay dividends. Start the retrieve immediately on the 1st cast then after a count of two on the 2nd and so on until the fish are located.
- Set the drag! Many trout are lost due to incorrectly set reel drag systems. With many fantastic double figure fish waiting to be stocked this season we urge all anglers to ensure reels are at the correct setting before fishing. It is also good practice to ensure your reel line and leader material is in good condition by replacing annually. Renewing weak line and leader material will avoid lost fish.

If you would like some further advice and guidance please ask our ranger team, they will be delighted to help and assist you in any way they can.

Fishing rules and important information

- All anglers aged 16 or over must be in possession of their own individual Environment Agency rod license in addition to the fishery permit.
- Each angler must buy a permit before starting to fish and the purchase of a permit is acceptance of the fishery rules.
- Anglers are required to sign in and out and record their catch.
- Up to two children aged under 16 can fish for free on their parent, grandparent or guardian's permit with a shared catch limit.
- Credit cruncher: available daily from 2.00pm the catch limit on this permit is four trout.
- Concessionary permits apply to the following: under 18s, those who are receiving the state pension, Blue Badge holders and those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance - evidence required.
- It is a criminal offence to take trout in excess of the permit catch limit; offenders will be prosecuted under the Theft Act.
- It is illegal to leave your rod unattended while fishing.
- When landing a trout a landing net must be used at all times.
- All coarse fish must be returned unharmed to the reservoir.
- All trout for the table must be humanely dispatched using a priest.
- No gutting of fish is allowed on-site.
- Litter and nylon waste must not be discarded, please use the bins provided or take it home.
- Bank fishing times are from 7am to 8pm or sunset whichever is sooner.
- Fishery Rangers reserve the right to inspect permits, tackle and catches.
- Essex and Suffolk Water reserve the right to change any rules or policy and to close part or the entire fishery without notice or redress.

This list is not exhaustive if in doubt please consult our ranger team.