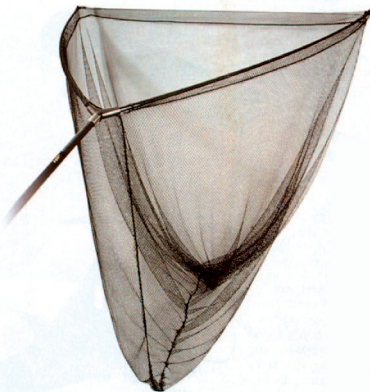




Pike Fishing Fundamentals



For the safety of the pike, a wire trace of at least 18 inches (45cm) in length must be always be used when fishing for pike, whether you are bait or lure fishing. Even small pike have razor sharp teeth that will cut through ordinary line and big pike could easily swallow a shorter trace and bite through your line. There is no need to use traces lighter than 30lb breaking strain, or line lighter than 15lb.

For speedy unhooking it is preferable that barbless or semi-barbed hooks are used when bait fishing. These days most tackle shops stock ready-made reliable traces constructed with top quality components and which cost about the same as a pack of deadbaits.

When it comes to landing pike, a large, knotless landing net with arms of at least 36 inches, or a round frame of at least 30 inches is best.

Once a pike is landed place it on an unhooking mat, or an area of soft grass - never on a rough surface.

Look to see where your hooks are before proceeding to handle the fish. Turn the fish on its back and insert one or two fingers under a gill plate, keeping them well away from any hooks. You might like to wear a suitable glove on the hand you do this with. Lift the pike's head carefully and its mouth will usually open. Maintain this hold while you use a pair of 10-12 inch artery forceps to grip and remove the hooks. It is now that you will appreciate the use of semi-barbed hooks. With lively fish it is often easier to unhook the fish by kneeling astride it.

A pike will not purposely bite you. Don't be frightened, treat the pike with respect and confidence. If the hooks are difficult to get out, put the pike in the landing net and back into the water. Then seek help from another pike angler, do not feel embarrassed, we have all been there.

When returning a pike to the water, always ensure that the pike can support itself before releasing your grip on it. If it has difficulty staying upright it will need careful nursing to recover. Stay with the fish for as long as it takes for it to maintain its balance unaided. A fully recovered pike will swim steadily away.

ESSENTIAL PIKE TACKLE

Wire traces - at least 18in/45cm long and 30lb breaking strain

15lb reel line

Forceps for removing hooks

Large knotless landing net

Unhooking mat

Small bolt cutters

Look after the pike you catch and they will live to be caught again another day.