

FREE

angle on the Broads

Helping you get the most out of fishing on the Broads



Broads area maps
How to find your way
about **Pages 8–14**










Where? When? How?
A guide to catching
more fish **Pages 15–18**



Fish species in the Broads
Get the knowledge on the fish
in the area **Pages 19–21**

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Welcome to the Broads

Can there be a more special place to fish than the Broads?

There is something for everyone, whether you are fishing for pike and perch, or seeking bags of quality bream and roach. The area attracts many local and visiting anglers, who in turn help to support local businesses and tourism.

We hope this magazine will help anglers to get the most from the wonderful opportunities in the Broads. Whether you are new to the area, or a regular visitor we hope these articles will give a further insight into this special place.


The Broads are special because of their unique environment, but this is fragile and needs all our support to make sure future generations can enjoy it. Much of the work we do to improve fisheries is from money raised through rod licence sales. We are grateful for the support of local groups which help us achieve more on the ground by working together.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and what the Broads have to offer. I know I'll be trying to get a few days fishing here this summer. If you have any comments about the magazine please contact our National Customer Contact Centre on: 08708 506 506.

Tight Lines!

Dafydd Evans

**Eastern Area Manager,
Environment Agency**



■ Casting a line at Hunsett Mill

Broads Angling Strategy Group

People have been attracted to the unique environment of the Norfolk Broads for holidays and recreation since Victorian times.

The status of the Broads as a National Park recognises the value of the area as a living, working landscape and an important centre for navigation and leisure activities. The natural beauty of the Broads landscape and its importance for wildlife is reflected by a number of National, European and International conservation designations, including Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

By necessity, this delicate balance of interests leads to a complex management system for the area involving local authorities, Natural England, the Broads Authority, the Environment Agency, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and other specialist interests including, of course, anglers.

Formed in May 2000, the Broads Angling Strategy Group is a partnership of local anglers, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority, working together to liaise with those managing the Broadland area and safeguard fishing for the future.

The group consists of anglers with a wide range of experience, but all with a special affinity for Broads angling.

Current members of the group include Bungay Cherry Tree Secretary and angling coach Mark Casto, Oulton Broad enthusiast Peter Waller, local tackle dealer and author Martyn Page, Steve Duckett from Norfolk Angler's Conservation Association, Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain Regional Officer John Currie, well known match anglers Tom Boulton and Keith Ford, Trinity Broads enthusiast Richard Barnes, Norwich and District Angling Association's Tony Gibbons, Malcolm Major and Cyril Wigg and Robin Youngs, Chairman of Wroxham Angling Club. The Environment Agency's Steve Lane and Broads Authority's Adrian Clarke are among the professional members that help make up a very knowledgeable team.

The group has been actively involved in developing the Broads Fishery Action Plan – details of which you will find in this magazine.

Please remember the closed season applies to the broads and rivers 15 March – 15 June inclusive



A Fisheries Action Plan for the

Norfolk Broads



“

The Broads have got something to offer to all fishermen.

”

The Norfolk Broads, at 300 square kilometres, is one of Britain's best known angling locations and one of the region's premier tourist attractions.

Angling accounts for at least 17 percent of visitors to the area and contributes in excess of £20 million to the local economy each year.

Above and below the water's surface the fisheries of the Broads present many complex issues, which can affect the management, improvement and potential development of this unique resource.

The emphasis of the Broads Fisheries Action Plan (FAP) is very much about working together to deliver real improvements and safeguard this fantastic angling environment. Four key areas of activity are summarised below:

» Fisheries Management and Ecology

This includes work such as managing the effects of winter tidal surges and *Prymnesium* algae on fish populations, as well as input to fisheries monitoring and research carried out in the Broads.

» Access

The FAP seeks to improve boat and bank angling access in the Broads, together with the development of a comprehensive network of slipways.

» Information and Education

The FAP is helping to improve the quality and availability of information for anglers as well as highlighting angling good practice, fish welfare and conservation advice. Working in partnership helps to identify and resolve areas of conflict in the Broads.

» Urban Fishery Development

The FAP is helping to ensure that urban fisheries are maintained and developed within the Broads, for example by highlighting the potential for angling facilities to be incorporated into new urban developments.

This magazine highlights some of the work already achieved by the Broads Fisheries Action Plan. Whilst the Broads undoubtedly faces many challenges in the future, including climate change, one thing is certain, the fisheries of the Broads have in place a strong strategy that they so rightly deserve.

If you would like a copy of the FAP or have any questions or views on Broads fisheries issues please contact us on **08708 506 506**.

Working together for new facilities on the Broads

Anglers are benefiting from new and improved access and facilities on the Broads, thanks to work being carried out as part of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP). This is a twenty year project to improve and maintain the flood defences throughout the Broads, undertaken by the Environment Agency in partnership with Broadland Environmental Services Ltd (BESL).

Given the special nature of the Broads and its importance for recreation, BESL works closely with colleagues from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Team, the Broads Authority and the Broads Angling Strategy Group to highlight and achieve angling enhancements as part of the flood defence works. The team is also working closely with local angling clubs to ensure that angling access is maintained wherever possible during the construction works and fully restored once complete.

You can read about some of the exciting angling enhancement projects being delivered in the Broads area on the following pages of this magazine. For more information about the BFAP, see www.bfap.org or call the Project office on 01603 226161.

Improving Access to Angling and Fisheries

The improvement of angling access and facilities in the Broads area is a vital part of the Broads Fisheries Action Plan. Here's a flavour of some of the exciting projects we are currently working on with our partners.

River Ant (Map 1, Page 9)

On the River Ant, where new 'set back' flood defences have been built and the old bank taken down, the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP) has excavated new channels and pools. These new channels are linked to the river in order to provide spawning and refuge areas for fish.

River Bure (Map 2, Page 10)

At **Upton Dyke**, BFAP has refurbished the free slipway and installed two new fishing platforms on the river frontage, linked to the parking area with easy access path. We are working with our partners on a scheme to install additional angling platforms and access upstream.

At **Fleet Dyke**, ten new angling platforms have been built. We are working with the Broads Authority, BFAP and other partners to explore further car parking and access enhancements.

We have worked with BFAP and Norwich & District Angling Association to provide safe angling



■ New Platform Upton Dyke

access along the bank frontage after flood defence works along the popular **St Benets Abbey** stretch.

River Yare (Map 3, Page 12)

On the popular **Beauchamp Arms** stretch of the River Yare at Claxton, we have installed twenty new hard standing fishing pegs on the soft rond upstream of the public house. Further work is planned with BFAP to repair bank erosion and improve access. This stretch of the river is an incredibly important match fishery, with day ticket access to the public available through the controlling club Great Yarmouth and Norfolk County Angling Association.

At **Postwick**, we are currently improving half a kilometre of new



■ Enjoying match practice on the new pegs at Beauchamp Arms

upstream. It is hoped the revitalised venue will also help to provide an excellent coaching facility.

At **Worlingham** near Beccles we are currently working with BFAP and the Broads Authority to install up to ten angling platforms on our banks adjacent to the 24 hour moorings and car parking area.

At **Shipmeadow**, we are working with BFAP, the Broads Authority, and funding from Suffolk County Council, to install fishing platforms alongside new disabled access moorings.

River Thurne (Map 4, Page 14)

At **Potter Heigham** on the Thurne, we are currently working with BAM Nuttalls, BFAP and the Broads Authority to install seven new easy access fishing platforms and paths adjacent to the 24 hour moorings.

At **Martham Ferry**, we have installed six new fishing platforms alongside the flood defence works being undertaken by the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project. We are exploring additional improvements with our partners, including a new slipway, easy access paths and additional parking facilities.

We are currently improving access to the popular **Coldharbour Farm** section near Ludham working with the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP) and the Broads Authority. We have cut swims along our bank up to Womack Dyke, re-surfaced the car park, installed access ramps and are working to create new easy access fishing pegs and path along the adjacent river bank.

For more information on these or any other projects please contact us on **08708 506 506**



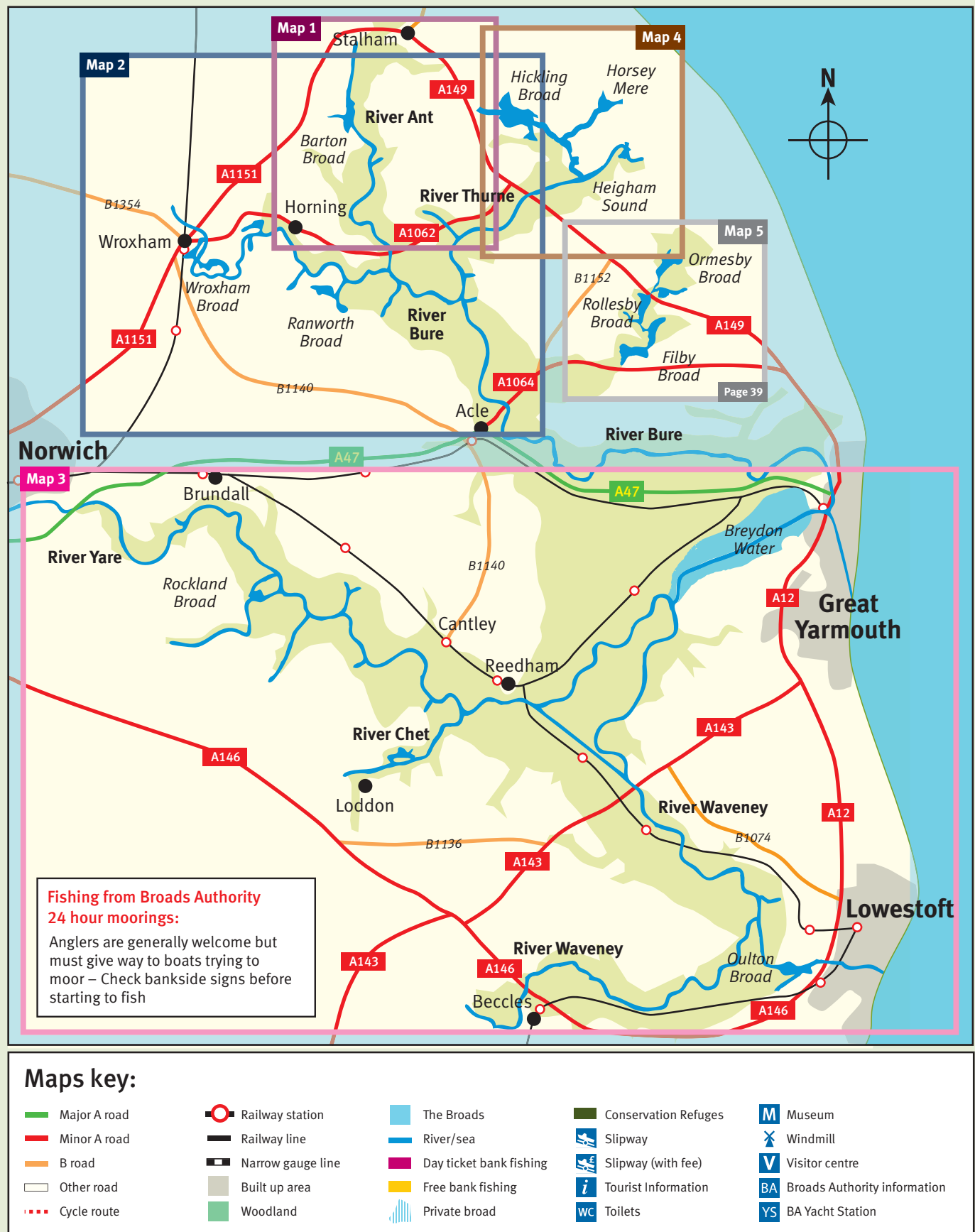
■ Improved access at Martham Ferry

bank for free fishing at Postwick Ferry. We are working with the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project and partners to provide new angling access, slipway, recreation and parking facilities.

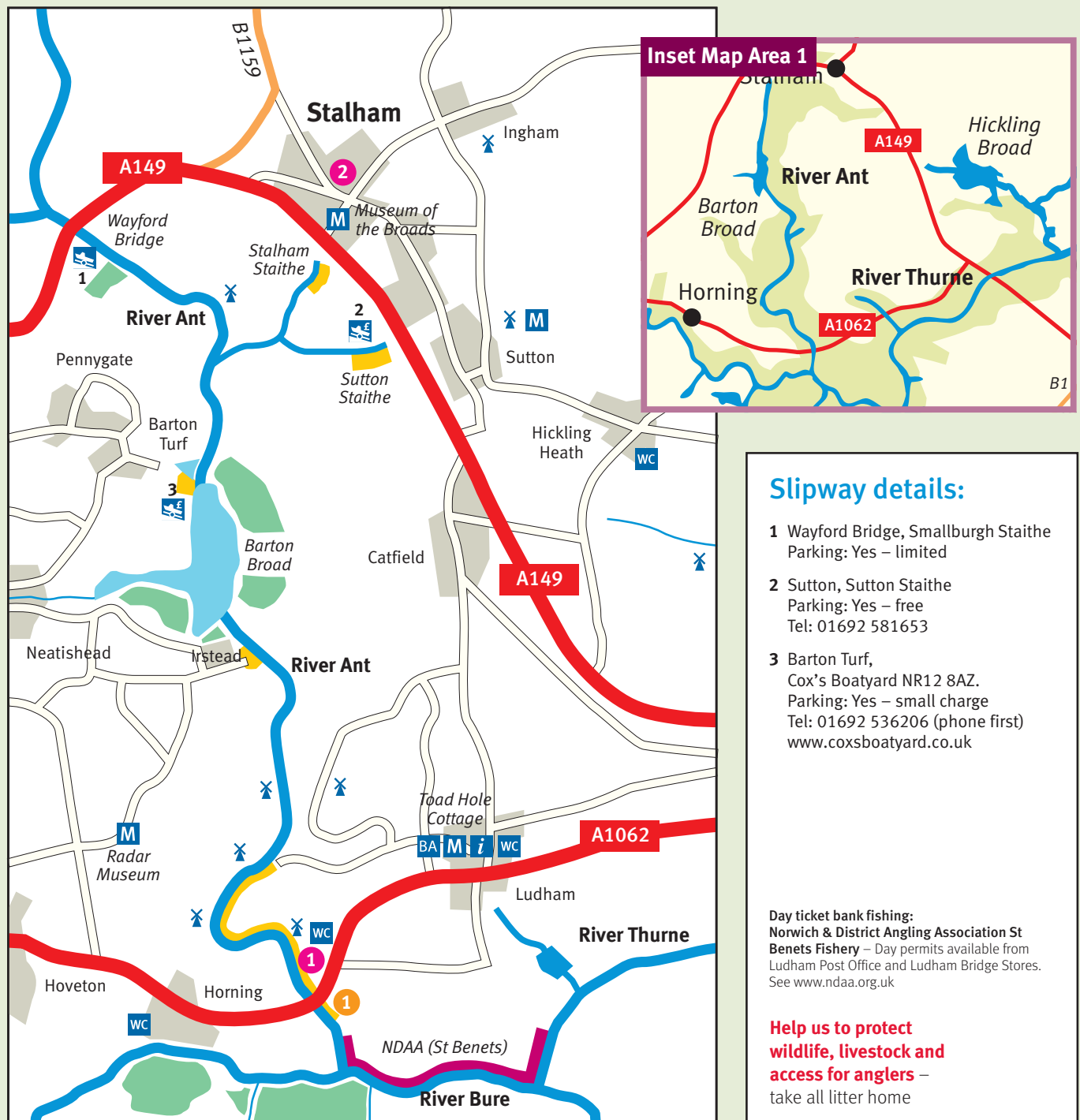
River Waveney (Map 3, Page 12)

We are working with the BFAP and Bungay Cherry Tree Angling Club on an exciting project to install recycled plastic angling platforms along the popular **Falcon Meadow** stretch in Bungay. Up to ten of the new pegs on our bank will be accessible to disabled anglers via easy access paths from the adjacent car park. This will enable a choice of fishing the faster water downstream of the sluice or the slower conditions

The Broads: Overview



Map 1: River Ant



Fishing tackle shops:

- Ludham Bridge Stores**
Ludham Bridge, Ludham,
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 5NZ.
Tel: 01692 630322
- Broadland Angling & Pet Centre**
Stone House, High Street,
Stalham, Norfolk NR12 9AN .
Tel: 01692 580959

Fishing boat hire:

- Ludham Bridge Boatyard**
Ludham Bridge, Ludham, Great
Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 5NX.
Tel: 01692 631011
www.ludhambridgeboats.co.uk

Map 2: River Bure

Slipway details:

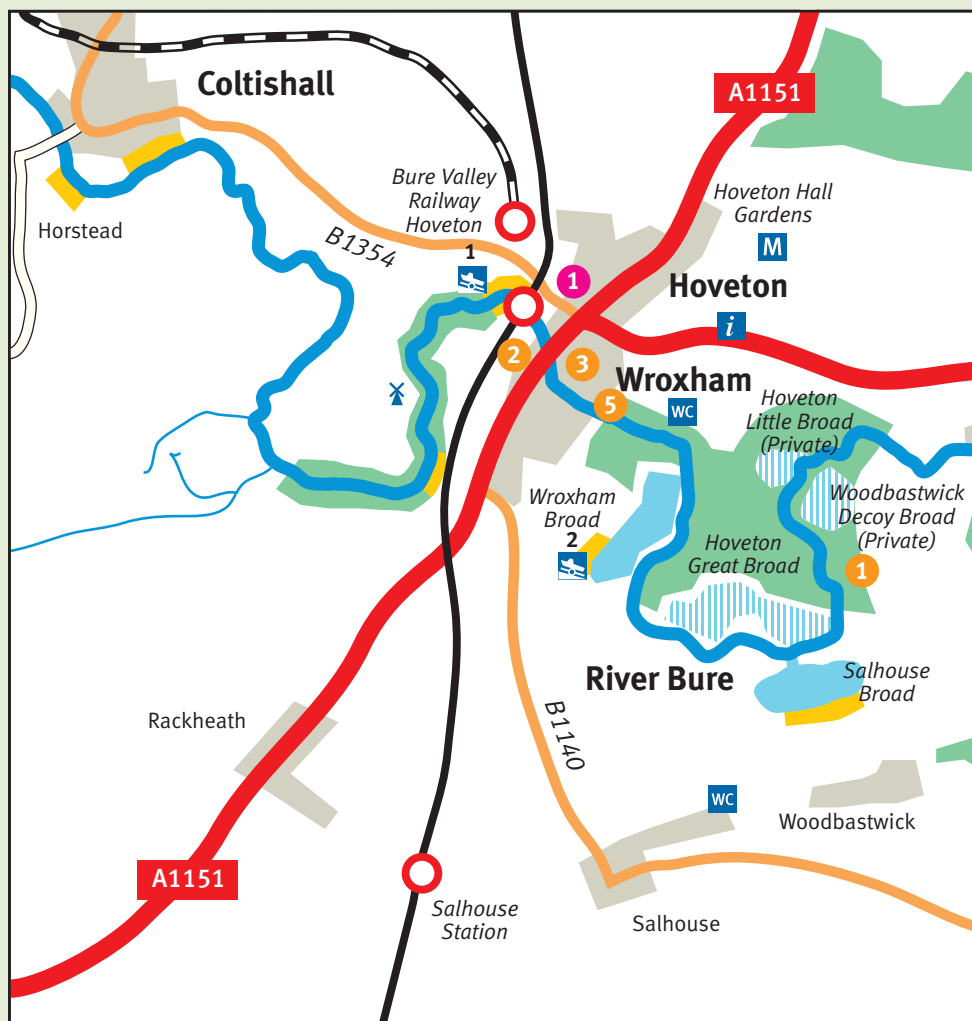
- 1 Hoveton, Riverside Park
Parking: Yes – free (small craft only)
- 2 Wroxham Broad, Wroxham Broad
Parking: Yes – pay and display
- 3 Horning, Near Horning Parish, Staithe
Parking: Yes – pay and display and limited free
Tel: 01692 630434
- 4 Woodbastwick, Woodbastwick
Parking: Yes – limited
- 5 Upton Dyke, Upton Dyke
Parking: Yes – free
Tel: 01493 750430
- 6 Stokesby, Stokesby Staithe
Parking: Yes – free (no overnight)

Day ticket bank fishing:
Norwich & District Angling Association St Benets Fishery – Day permits available from Ludham Post Office and Ludham Bridge Stores. See www.ndaa.org.uk

Hoveton Little Broad
 For seasonal access times contact Broads Radio Control on 01692 678459

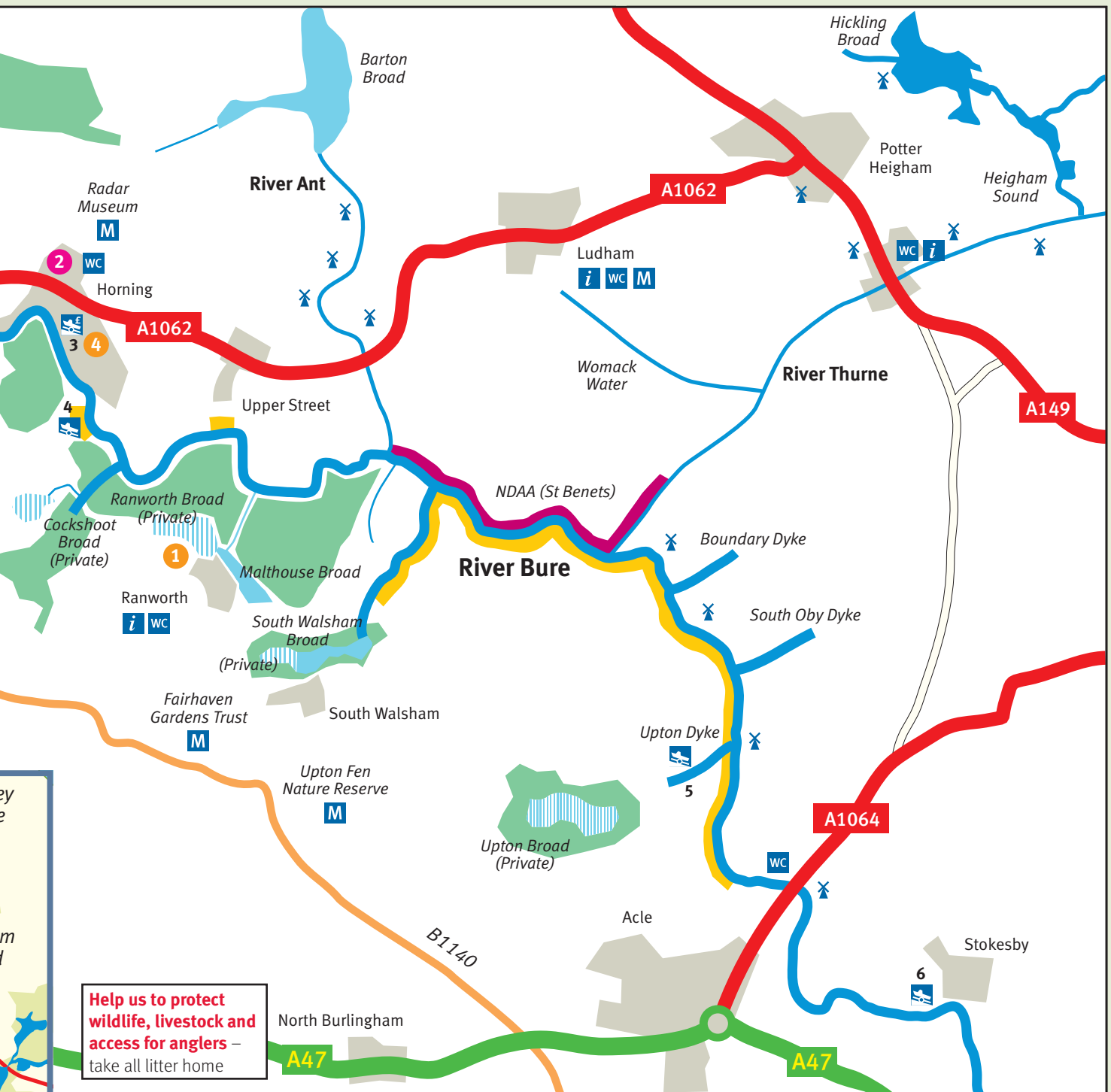
Fishing boat hire:

- 1 **Ranworth Broad and Woodbastwick Decoy Broad**
 Mr M Major (Norwich & District A.A.). Tel: 01953 789541
www.ndaa.org.uk
- 2 **River Bure, Wroxham**
 Mr Bob Westgate (Wroxham A.C.). Tel: 01603 401062
- 3 **Fineway Leisure, Wroxham NR12 8UE.**
 Tel: 01603 782309
www.finewayleisure.co.uk
- 4 **JB Boat Sales, Horning NR12 8PF.**
 Tel: 01692 631411
www.jbboats.co.uk
- 5 **Norfolk Broads Fishing Ltd**
 George Smith & Sons, The Rhond Riverside Road, Hoveton NR12 8UE.
 Tel: 01603 782527
www.fishthebroads.com



Inset Map Area 2





Fishing tackle shops:

- 1 Wroxham Angling Centre**
Station Road, Wroxham, Norfolk NR12 8UR.
Tel: 01603 782453
www.anglingdirect.co.uk
- 2 Horning Fishing Tackle**
106 Lower Street, Horning, Norfolk NR12 8PF.
Tel: 01692 631401
www.jbboats.co.uk

Map 3: Southern Rivers

Slipway details:

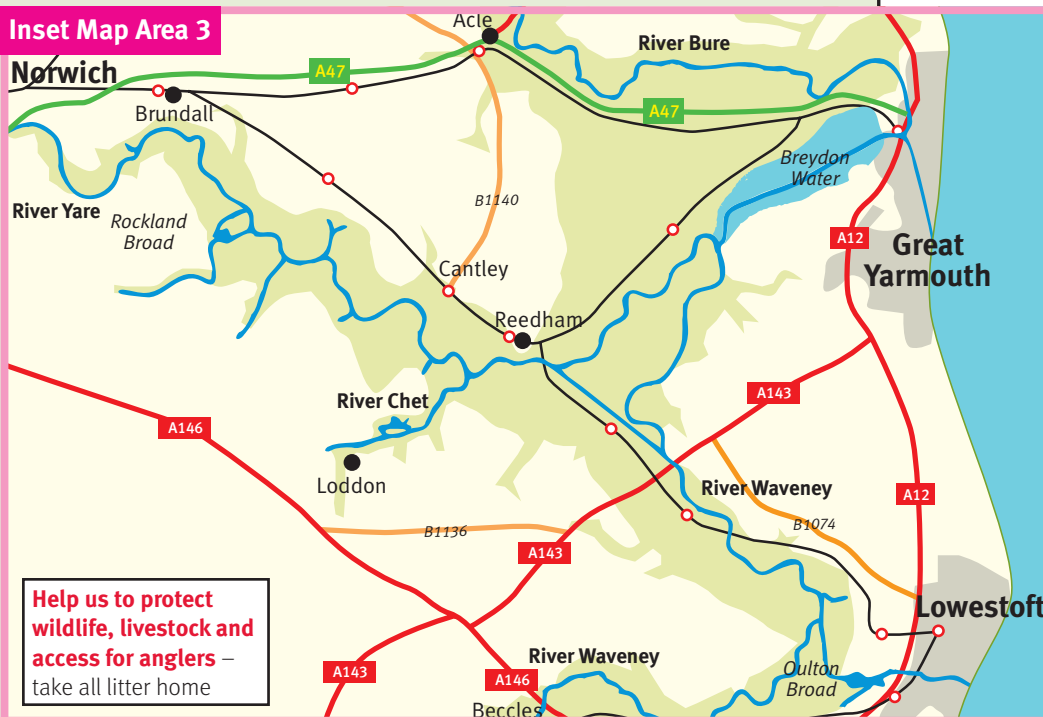
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1 Thorpe St Andrew
Griffin Marine Boatyard
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01603 433253 | 8 Cantley, Next to Reedcutters
Parking: Yes – free | 15 Beccles,
Beccles Quay
Parking: Yes – free
Tel: 01502 712225 |
| 2 Bramerton, Bramerton
Woods End Pub
Parking: Yes | 9 Loddon, Prestige Cruisers
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01508 520353
(phone first) | 16 Beccles, Aston Boats
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01502 713960
(phone first) |
| 3 Postwick, Postwick Wharf
Parking: Yes – limited | 10 Reedham Ferry,
Next to Ferry Inn. Parking: Yes
Tel: 01493 700429 | 17 Geldeston, Rowan Craft
Parking: Yes – charge
Tel: 01508 518208
08:00 – 17:00 (phone first) |
| 4 Brundall, Brundall Bay Marina
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01603 717804
(phone first) | 11 St Olaves, Next to
St Olaves Bridge
Tel: 01493 488230
(phone first) | 18 Chedgrave, Greenway Marine
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01508 520397
(phone first) |
| 5 Brundall Fencraft Boatyard
Parking: Yes – limited
Tel: 01603 715011
08:00 – 17:00
(phone out of hours) | 12 Burgh St Peter, Waveney
River Centre. Parking: Yes
Tel: 01502 677343
(by arrangement) | 19 Chedgrave, Gale Cruisers
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01508 520275
(by arrangement) |
| 6 Rockland, Rockland Staithe
Parking: Yes
Tel: 01508 538622 | 13 Oulton Broad,
Water Sports Centre
Parking: Yes – pay & display
Tel: 01502 574946 | 20 Bungay, Bungay Staithe
Parking: Yes |
| 7 Carleton St Peter Buckenham
Sailing Club
Parking: Yes – limited/free/
pub charge | 14 Oulton Broad, Oulton Broad
Yacht Station
Parking: Yes – pay & display
Tel: 01502 574946
(on request) | |

Day ticket bank fishing:

Gt Yarmouth & Norfolk Country Angling Association – day tickets available from bailiff on the bank.
Waveney River Centre – Tel: 01502 677343

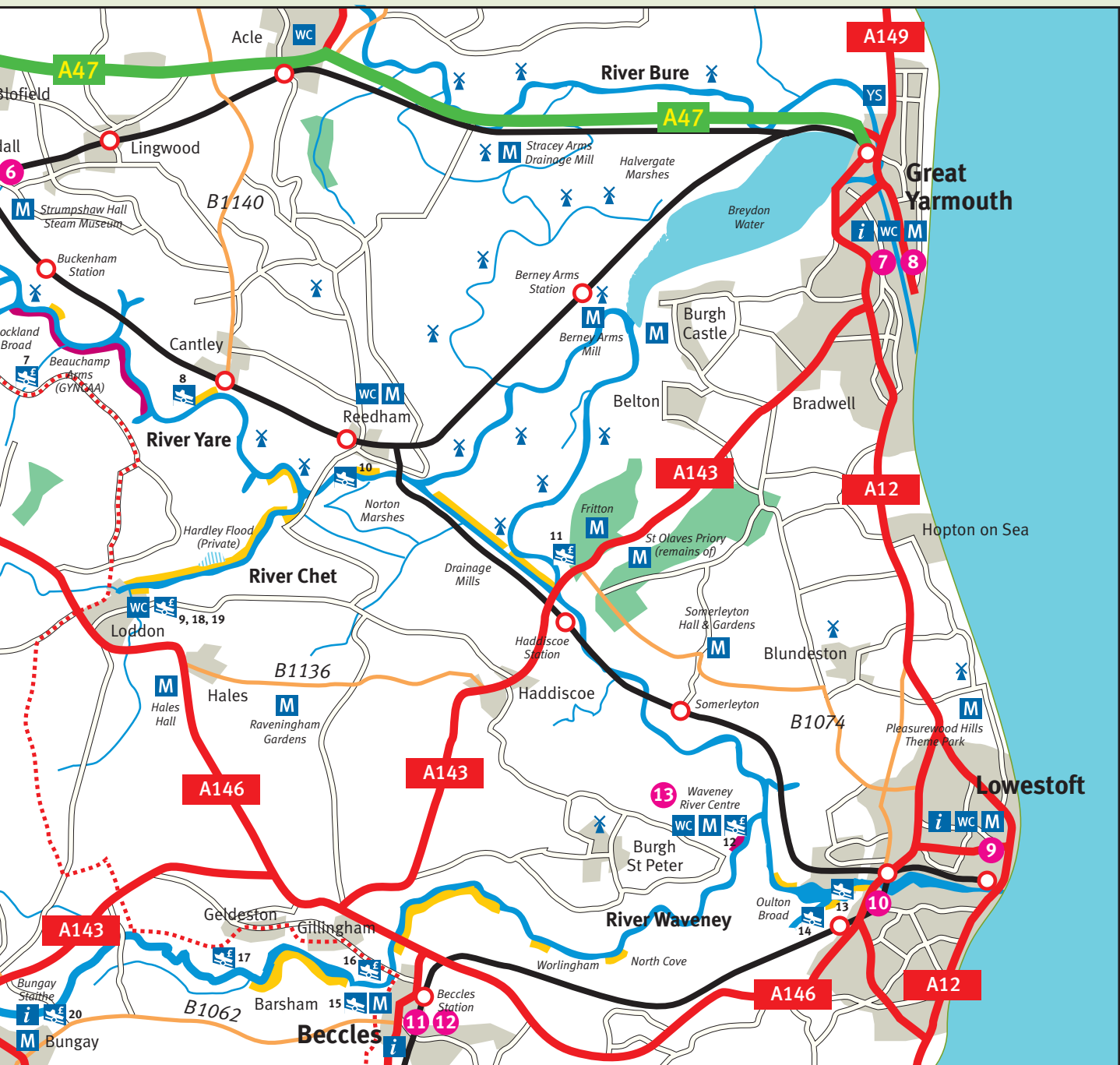


Inset Map Area 3



Fishing tackle shops:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 Angling Direct
277 Aylsham Road,
Norwich, Norfolk NR3 2RE.
Tel: 01603 400757
www.anglingdirect.co.uk | 3 Avenue Angling
16 Denbigh Road,
Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3AA.
Tel: 01603 764004
www.avenueangling.co.uk | 5 Cordy's Tackle Den
390B Bowthorpe Road,
Norwich NR5 8AG.
Tel: 07810 006094 | 7 Pownalls
74 Regent Street,
Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 2AJ.
Tel: 01493 842873
www.pownalls.com |
| 2 AC Browne & Son
194 Norwich Road, Costessey,
Norwich, Norfolk NR5 0EX.
01603 747679 | 4 Wright Tackle
The Dixon Centre,
157-159 Reepham Road,
Norwich NR6 5PH.
Tel: 01603 416680 | 6 Anglers World
59 Long John Hill,
Norwich NR1 2JJ.
Tel: 01603 619381
www.fishingplus.co.uk | 8 Gorleston Tackle Centre
7-8 Pier Walk, Gorleston,
Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 6DA.
Tel: 01493 662448
www.gorlestontackle.co.uk |



9 Sam Hook (Lowestoft)
132 Bevan Street East,
Lowestoft, Norfolk NR32 2 AQ.
Tel: 01502 565821
www.samhook.co.uk

10 Oulton Broad Fishing Tackle
6 Yacht Station, Bridge Road,
Lowestoft NR33 9JS.
Tel: 01502 539593

11 Angling Direct (Suffolk)
Unit 4C, Taylors Square,
Newgate, Beccles NR34 9QB.
Tel: 01502 713379
www.anglingdirect.co.uk

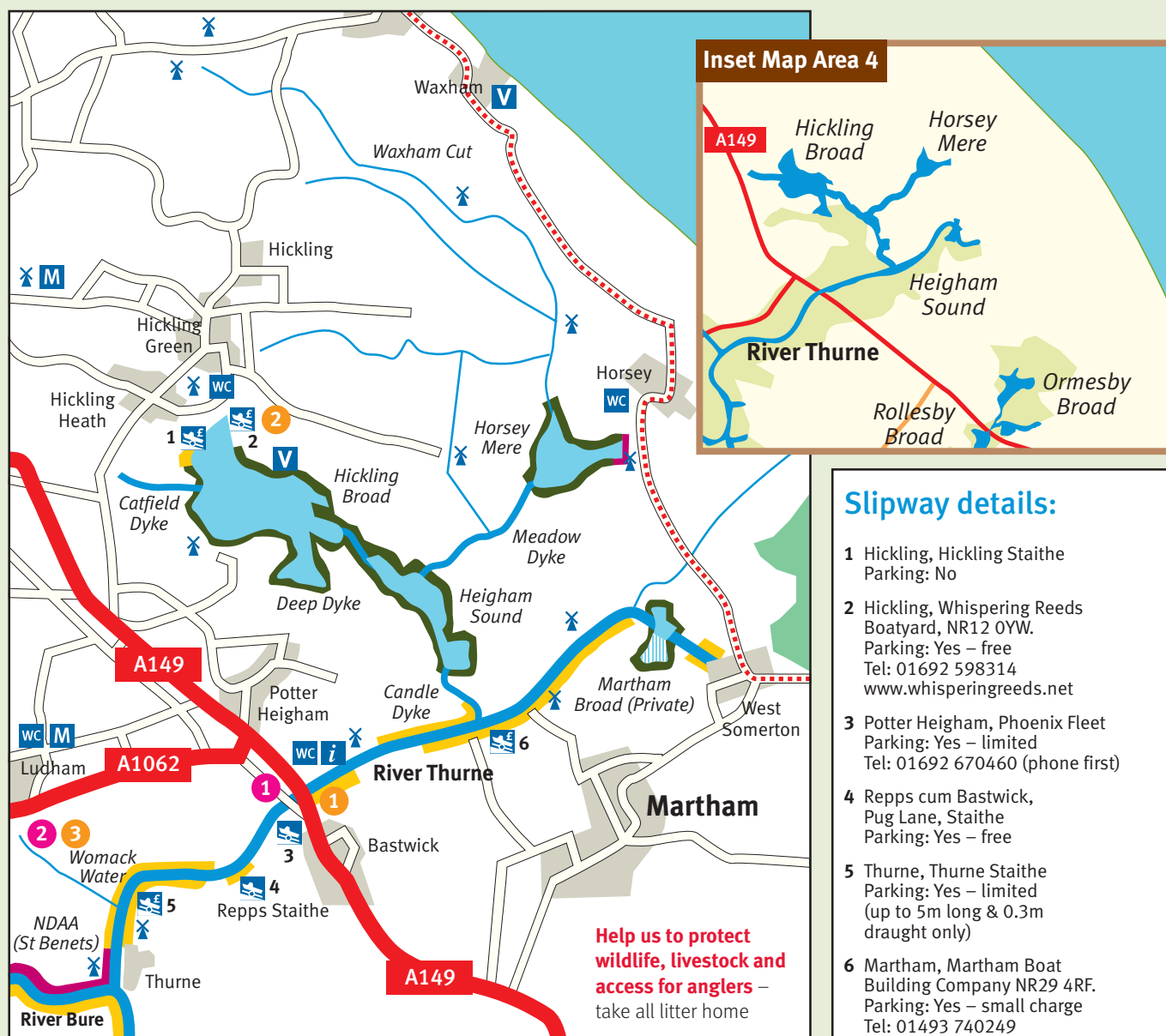
12 Avenue Angling (Suffolk)
The Business Park, Ellough
Industrial Estate, Nr Beccles.
Tel: 01502 710963
www.avenueangling.co.uk

13 Waveney River Centre
Staithe Road,
Burgh St Peter,
Suffolk NR34 0BT.
Tel: 01502 677343
www.waveneyrivercentre.co.uk

Fishing boat hire:

1 Alpha Craft
Riverside Estate,
Brundall NR13 5PS.
01603 713265
www.alphacraft.co.uk

Map 4: River Thurne



Slipway details:

- 1 Hickling, Hickling Staithe
Parking: No
- 2 Hickling, Whispering Reeds Boatyard, NR12 0YW.
Parking: Yes – free
Tel: 01692 598314
www.whisperingreeds.net
- 3 Potter Heigham, Phoenix Fleet
Parking: Yes – limited
Tel: 01692 670460 (phone first)
- 4 Repps cum Bastwick, Pug Lane, Staithe
Parking: Yes – free
- 5 Thurne, Thurne Staithe
Parking: Yes – limited (up to 5m long & 0.3m draught only)
- 6 Martham, Martham Boat Building Company NR29 4RF.
Parking: Yes – small charge
Tel: 01493 740249
www.marthamboats.com

Fishing boat hire:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 Maycraft (Boat Service) Ltd
North West Riverbank, Potter Heigham, Norfolk NR29 5ND.
Tel: 01692 670241
www.maycraft.co.uk</p> | <p>2 Whispering Reeds Boats Ltd
Hickling, Norfolk NR12 0YW.
Tel: 01692 598314
www.whisperingreeds.net</p> | <p>3 D.R.L Marine Services Ltd
Ludham, Norwich, Norfolk NR29 5QG.
Tel: 0844 800 1212
www.drmarine.com</p> |
|--|---|--|

Day ticket bank fishing:
Norwich & District Angling Association
St Benets Fishery – Day permits available from Ludham Post Office and Ludham Bridge Stores.
See www.ndaa.org.uk

Horsey Estate, Horsey Mere – Day tickets from the bailiff on the bank.

Free bank fishing

Please note there is no public access for bank fishing from private bungalow frontages.

Conservation Refuges

To prevent disturbance of over-wintering waterfowl, angling access may be seasonally restricted in certain areas of the Thurne Broads. Anglers should seek further guidance and information prior to fishing – see page 42 and visit: www.thurnefisheries.co.uk for more information.

Fishing tackle shops:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Lathams
Bridge Street, Potter Heigham, Norfolk NR29 5JE.
Tel: 01692 670080
www.lathams-fishing.co.uk</p> | <p>2 D.R.L Marine Services Ltd
Ludham, Norwich, Norfolk NR29 5QG.
Tel: 0844 800 1212
www.drmarine.com</p> |
|---|--|

Where? When? How?

A guide to catching more fish in the Broads

Our rivers and Broads are unique in the British landscape. So it should come as no surprise when fishing them, that the angler must consider very carefully the conditions that confront him. Without such thought, opportunities will be missed and a visit that promised so much could prove a disappointment. An understanding of the tides and the seasonal migratory pattern of fish in the Broads rivers is essential or you could end up fishing where there are no fish.

Tides

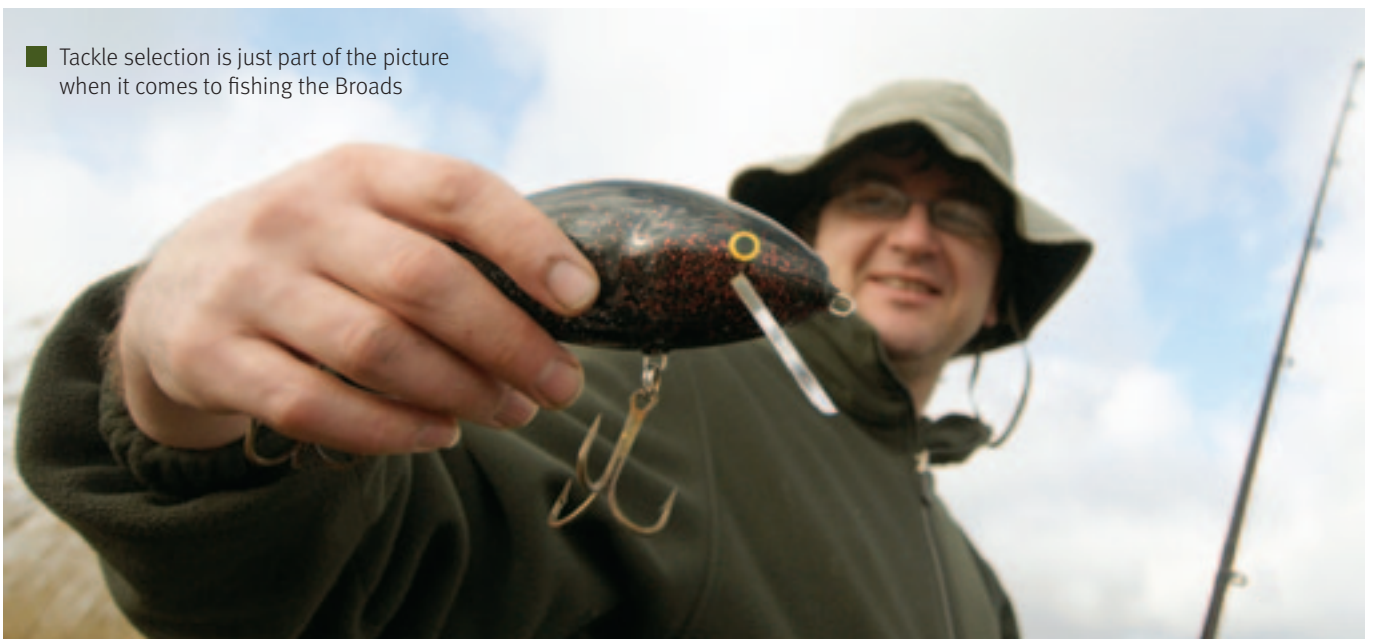
The first consideration is that our rivers and many of the Broads themselves are tidal. This is because the very gentle slope of the rivers in the region allows the tide to penetrate far inland. All the rivers of East Norfolk that form the Broads navigation, flow into the sea at Great Yarmouth. Anyone who stands on one of the Great Yarmouth bridges will notice just how powerful the tidal flow can be. As far inland as Norwich, Beccles, Wroxham, Barton Broads and Heigham Sounds the tidal flow can be clearly seen.

There are two high tides and two low tides each day and the time of the high tides progresses by just under one hour, for each day that passes. The further down river you travel towards Great Yarmouth, the stronger the tidal flow will become. Legering generally takes over as the only viable fishing method in the lower reaches of the rivers.

Times of high tides can be found in local newspapers. For a general guide the high tide at London Bridge is roughly similar to high tide at Horning, Beccles and other parts of the middle reaches of the Broads rivers.

There are variations in the strength of tidal flow from one week to another. A variety of influences cause these variations and anglers need to be aware of them. Many anglers are aware of the changes in the tidal flow brought about by spring tides, those that occur at and immediately after the day of the new moon and the full moon. At these times the tides are stronger, which means that they penetrate further inland and the flow is that bit faster. However, in the Broads there are other influences at work that the angler also needs to know about. Sustained periods of north-westerly winds lead to

■ Tackle selection is just part of the picture when it comes to fishing the Broads





■ Right tide, right place!

“

In the summer roach and bream can be caught as far downstream as Stokesby on the Bure, Reedham on the Yare and Somerleyton on the Waveney.

”

higher tides in the Broads. These are increasingly associated with invasions of salt water up the Broads rivers.

They occur mainly in autumn and winter but are not unknown in the summer. In autumn the effects on fish populations are profound. The fish flee from salt in the lower reaches of the river. This has the result of making large stretches of the river completely devoid of fish by the time November arrives. Any angler visiting the area in late autumn and winter would be advised to avoid these lower reaches.

Examples are: anywhere downstream of St Benets Abbey on the Bure, downstream of Potter Heigham on the Thurne, downstream of Brundall on the Yare and downstream of

Burgh St Peter on the Waveney. For pike anglers visiting in winter these distributions of prey fish should be kept in mind. It should be noted that pike are very vulnerable to salt and will flee at the first hint of it. It is not easy to detect salt in the water – dipping your finger in and sucking it works where the salt levels are high, but saltwater makes its progress upstream along the riverbed (saltwater being denser than freshwater). Therefore the degree of saltiness will be higher at the bottom of the river. What may appear to be a salt-free river can in fact be far too salty for the fish population to bear and they will have fled far from where you are hopefully setting up your gear!

High tides brought on by north westerlies, combined with large amounts of rain, will lead to very high water levels as the tidal surge meets the floodwater coming downstream. The result will often be a slowing of the flow and indeed on some days the flow comes to a complete standstill. This is not usually good for fishing, the fish that inhabit our rivers are used to flowing water and they will often stop feeding when the flow slows to nothing.

There is also a period of still water, referred to as slack water, when each tide changes from flood to ebb. This is generally a period when bites stop for a while. It offers the angler the chance to accurately rebait the swim without the worry of a strong flow making ground baiting somewhat hit or miss.

Seasonal migration

What a difference the seasons make. Fish are distributed much more widely in the summer than in the winter. In the summer roach and bream can be caught as far downstream as Stokesby on the Bure, Reedham on the Yare and Somerleyton on the Waveney. But in winter the fish tend to congregate in huge numbers in very localised

spots, many miles upstream of these summer reaches. The reason for this migration has already been partly explained – fish flee the lower, more brackish reaches of the rivers. However other factors are at work too.

The open expanses of large Broads such as Hickling or Barton are inhospitable places for fish in winter. Without the cover of weedbeds, fish are vulnerable to predators such as cormorants and pike, so they leave such areas and find sanctuary in narrow waterways, such as the dykes that lead into Broads and in boatyards. Water temperature too is a factor, with the temperature remaining higher in such places that are not constantly at the mercy of cooling winter winds.

Cormorants are far less inclined to hunt their prey in such places; for starters there are too many people around to suit these shy birds. Where they are accessible the boatyards become favoured winter venues for anglers. Stretches of river to which boatyards are directly connected also offer fine prospects in winter. Notable stretches being through Wroxham, Horning and Potter Heigham. Where there are no boatyards but where a river passes through a built-up area such as at Beccles, the prospects for the winter angler are far brighter than on more picturesque but barren stretches of water.

The centre of Norwich in fact provides the best winter sport of all and is a Mecca for match anglers from November through to the season's end. So good is the fishing in the centre of Norwich in winter that it demands a chapter of its own (see pages 24 and 25).

The boat traffic effect

Fish in the Broads are used to boat traffic – they have to be. This means that it is possible to catch fish throughout the day on a busy stretch of river, without the fish being

put off by the constant passing of boats. The exception being in narrow stretches of river such as along the Ant, where daytime fishing is virtually impossible.

However, presenting your tackle in the place and manner you may wish to is another matter. Boat wash and boats travelling through your swim see to that. A better idea during the busy periods of the day, is to find a spot away from the river navigation channels that cross the Broads – for this you will generally need a dinghy or a boat with a shallow draft.

Where fish have the choice, such as on a large Broad, they will stay in the weedbeds in the shallow bays and close to reedbeds during the daytime. At night they leave such areas to feed in the boat channel. So it is obvious where the angler should be, depending on the time of day.

If your visit spans more than a one week period a quiet spell on the rivers can be found in the middle of a Saturday. It is not until mid-afternoon that traffic picks up and you will find very light traffic for about five hours. In the wider reaches, such

as the lower Yare and Waveney, fishing through the day is thoroughly practical and large catches of roach and bream can be made using swimfeeder or quivertip tactics. However, you would be well advised to steer clear of busy areas of the narrower confines of the River Bure between Horning and Wroxham and the River Ant during summer days. Much wiser to seek the peace that the many side Broads have to offer.

Suitable tackle set-ups:



Block End Feeder

Use maggots, casters or chopped worm. Fish heavy or light feeder according to strength of flow.



Open End Feeder

Carries groundbait laced with feed, i.e. maggots, casters, chopped worm, sweetcorn. Fish heavy or light feeder according to strength of flow.



Waggler Rig

Excellent control of moving bait fished just off the bottom, or tripping the riverbed.



Stick Float

Presents a moving bait, often maggot or caster fished just off the bottom. Easily controlled from a boat.



Pole Rig

Useful method in slower reaches of rivers and on Broads.

Fishing from dinghies and small craft

The fish have sought the peace and quiet of shallow weedy bays away from the boat traffic for a good reason – to get away from the turbulent water and feed in an environment that offers them food and cover. The stealthy approach that a dinghy allows the angler is therefore all important. Forget about outboard motors and use a bit of muscle power. Oars allow you to get fit at the same time as maximising your chances of catching fish.

There's much more to it than just ensuring a quiet approach. For many, fishing from a small boat will be a new experience – one that involves a whole new way of thinking. Remember that fish-scaring vibrations travel very effectively through the shallow water to ruin any chance you might have of catching fish.

A few golden rules to remember when small boat fishing:

- » Quiet footwear such as trainers are essential.
- » Gear needs to be organised in such a way that movement within the boat is kept to a minimum.
- » It is important that the boat is not overcrowded – a safety factor as well as for more efficient fishing.

Linked to not being overcrowded is the necessity of keeping fishing gear to a minimum – for instance one landing net (preferably with a short handle) is all that is needed rather than each angler taking their own. Rods should be tackled up before setting out in the boat – it is very awkward for two anglers, each with a 12-foot rod, to try and tackle up in a dinghy that is only 11 feet long! Float fishing is the most effective method when using a small boat, as the unavoidable small movements of the boat make bite indications unreliable using leger tactics.

Mooring the boat should be achieved as quietly as possible, with mudweights being lowered gently down in the water rather than being thrown. A comfortable seat will help cut down fidgeting and will also encourage you to remain seated and out of the sight of the fish. The safety aspect of fishing from a small boat should never be neglected – **always wear a buoyancy aid.**

Tactics for the Broads

It must be recognised that flow rates vary a lot and they dictate how you will be able to fish. The lower reaches of the Yare, Waveney and Bure have powerful currents that make legering with a heavy and open end feeder the most successful tactic. Used in association with a stiffly mixed groundbait and large bait such as worm, sweetcorn or bread this is a good method for bream that inhabit these reaches.

It must be kept in mind that the bream grow large – fish of 7–8lb are fairly common, fish of over 10lb are present – so a size 12–8 hook is appropriate. The experienced pole fisherman will find the roach by controlling the pace of his maggot or caster-baited small hook as it makes progress just off the bottom. Below Thurne Mouth on the Bure, Brundall on the Yare and Beccles on the Waveney are the areas most suited to such tactics. Upstream of

these points float fishing becomes a more viable proposition, although a light feeder fished with a quivertip rod will provide excellent catches, particularly of bream.

Fishing from a boat will allow the angler to have control of a stick float as he trots maggot or caster for the abundant roach stocks. Perch like the areas around quay headings where moorings are situated – try a float-fished worm close to the bank in such places. Often the current is very slight here and a light shotted float is a practical choice.

On the Broads themselves, remember that the water is shallow, keep your tackle as light as possible. A crystal waggler is a good bet, being less visible to your quarry in the shallow and sometimes, clear water. Try to find a balance between delicately presented terminal tackle and the ability to cast at least 15 yards to your fish – get too close and you will scare them. At night, when the bream feed more enthusiastically a betalite illuminated float or light leger gear will suit your purpose. Try to keep light to a minimum, using a torch to bait up or unhook fish when necessary rather than having a powerful light going all the time.

Happy fishing!

John Nunn



■ Don't forget your life jacket

Fish species in the Broads

Containing a diverse variety of non-tidal, tidal and estuarine habitats, the Broads and its rivers, the Thurne, Ant, Yare, Bure, Waveney, Wensum and Chet, all support a large diversity of fish species.

Besides the abundant shoals of roach and slab-sided bream, good numbers of perch and fabulous specimen pike are amongst the species traditionally associated with Broads angling and can be caught throughout the freshwater areas.

Tackle-tangling eels are everywhere and can make the use of maggots and worms impossible in the summer, especially after dark.

Estuarine species such as flounder travel far upstream from Breydon Water, the estuary through which all Broadland rivers eventually drain into the North Sea. Other saltwater species, such as bass, grey mullet and goby are all occasionally found as far inland as Hickling Broad and Heigham Sound. Migratory sea trout

regularly run as far upstream as the cathedral city of Norwich, before their progress is eventually stopped by the last sluices of the upper Wensum.

Away from the busy boat traffic, in the quiet reedy backwaters of the Upper Thurne and Trinity Broads, shoals of beautiful rudd swim alongside good numbers of tench, both of which offer superb summer fishing prospects.

Carp that have escaped during floods from fisheries have become commonplace, especially in the Waveney and Yare, growing to well over 30lbs.

Each species requires various angling techniques and baits employed for their capture; here are the six main

species likely to be encountered along with a few tips which may aid the visiting angler put together some worthwhile catches.

Chris Turnbull

Did you know?

- » The tench is one of the few coarse fish species where the sex of the fish can be easily determined just by looking at them. In contrast to the female, the mature male fish has a long, curved pelvic fin, with a greatly thickened second fin ray.
- » Tench mature at between 3–5 years old and tend to spawn at higher water temperatures than most other native coarse fish. Females can carry 300,000–400,000 eggs per kg of body weight. The eggs stick to submerged vegetation.
- » Roach/bream hybrids are often found in Broads surveys. Hybridisation occurs because roach and bream often spawn at the same time and in the same type of habitat. These are typically shallow beds of water plants and the roots of reeds and sedges around the edges of the Broads. During spawning, some eggs from one species can be accidentally fertilised by the other.



■ Know your fish

Fish species in the Broads



Roach

With silver/blue scales and vermillion fins, roach are a firm favourite species of coarse anglers. Nicknamed the water sheep, this common species is a true shoal fish, which mostly feeds delicately on the bottom but will rise to intercept slow-sinking baits presented on light tackle. Abundant in an average size range of between 2 and 10oz, but specimen roach over 1lb are reasonably commonplace, tending to feed early or late in the day and even after dark throughout the winter.

While huge 2lb roach are reported every season, most of them are roach/bream hybrids, so take care to identify them correctly. In spring and summer months roach are widespread throughout the rivers and Broads; however, once the winter sets in they tend to congregate in large numbers in and around the boatyard areas.

Tackle and methods:

Float fishing using either a waggler for trotting mid river or still water fishing, or a stick float for trotting close in. Feed little and often, baiting to demand. Pole fishing is the favoured approach of match anglers, using a short line and elastic. In faster water try legering using a quivertip, perhaps combined with a maggot swimfeeder.

Baits:

Bread, maggots, casters, sweetcorn, hemp and tares.

Lines:

2lb–4lb reel-line with 1lb–3lb hooklines.

Hook size:

20–12



Rudd

Whilst becoming increasingly rare throughout the country, this dashing species with its beautiful golden flanks and crimson fins is still commonly caught in various areas of the Broads, especially in the Upper Thurne and Trinity Broads.

With an average size of 4 to 10oz, any fish over 1lb could be considered a specimen although undoubtedly fish over 2lb are occasionally caught, especially on Hickling Broad. A bold feeder, with jutting bottom jaw which makes it adept at surface feeding but equally happy to feed on the bottom, rudd are a restless shoal fish and always on the move.

Seek them near the marginal reeds or lily beds in and around the quiet bays, but be careful not to spook them with a clumsy approach.

Tackle and methods:

Float fishing – waggler set shallow or slow sinking. Feed little and often.

Baits:

Breadflake or crust, maggots, casters and sweetcorn.

Lines:

2lb–4lb reel-line, with 1lb–3lb hooklines.

Hook size:

20–12



Bream

Abundant in large shoals throughout the rivers and Broads, this slab-sided, bottom-feeding species is predominantly nocturnal by nature although they can also be caught early and late in the day.

Large 100lb+ catches of bream are occasionally taken by using a specialised approach with plenty of groundbait. Look for them in quiet areas of open water but take care not to overfill the keepnet should you be lucky enough to enjoy a red-letter day.

Broads bream are getting considerably bigger than they used to be, while 2, 3 and 4lb fish are commonplace with any over 7lb generally considered a specimen, huge double figure fish do turn up from time to time.

Tackle and methods:

From a boat try float fishing with a waggler, with the bait tripping or laying on the bottom. From the bank try legering, perhaps using a swingtip where flows allow or otherwise using a quivertip in faster water. Swimfeeder fishing can be highly productive, as can a method feeder. Recast regularly to lay a bed of feed but beware of striking at line bites, which may scare the fish out of your swim.

Baits:

Bread, maggots, casters, sweetcorn, worms and groundbait.

Lines:

3lb–6lb reel-line with 3lb–5lb hooklines.

Hook size:

Forged sized 18–8



Tench

Found mainly on the Thurne and Trinity Broads. With distinctive olive flanks and small red eyes, this hard fighting popular summer species grows to a high average size in the Broads with 3 to 4lb fish commonplace and specimens over 5 and 6lb a distinct possibility.

Usually a bottom feeder, look for them close to lilies or along the reedy margins, particularly where the bottom is hard.

Tackle and methods:

Float fishing laying on the bottom or otherwise using the lift-method. From the bank perhaps try legering with a running leger or paternoster, with swimfeeders being particularly effective.

Baits:

Bread, maggots, casters, sweetcorn, worms, groundbait and hemp.

Lines:

Strong 5lb–6lb reel-lines with 4lb–5lb hooklines respectively.

Hook size:

Forged size 16–8



Pike

At the top of the Broads food-chain, this increasingly popular predatory species is superbly camouflaged to lurk in the reed beds having the perfect body shape to accelerate from a standstill and strike into its prey.

Pike are commonplace throughout the rivers and Broads, where huge fish over 40lb have been caught in the past. Unfortunately, fish this large are unlikely today, however plenty of 20lb specimens exist.

Requiring specialist tackle and skilful handling techniques, inexperienced anglers are advised not to fish for pike, which despite their ferocious looks are one of our most delicate species.

Tackle and methods:

Float fishing baits on or off the bottom from a boat, otherwise either float fishing, freelining or legering from the bank, but always with effective bite indication that will properly register both runs and drop back indications. Never leave the rod unattended and always use a wire trace of 20lb minimum breaking strain. Always strike runs as quickly as possible.

Baits:

Freshwater or sea fish baits and artificial lures.

Lines:

15lb minimum.

Hook size:

Semi-barbed doubles or trebles. 8–6



Perch

Now making a strong comeback from the disease that decimated their numbers in the 1970s, this bold, dashing predatory species is once again regularly caught throughout the rivers and Broads.

With an average size of 4 to 12oz but with 2lb specimens increasingly commonplace and 3lb whoppers a distinct possibility, perch are once again becoming one of the Broads most exciting angling species.

Perch love hiding up under cover, especially in deeper water; look for them beneath overhanging trees, under permanent moorings or in deep reedy margins.

Tackle and methods:

Float and leger fished deep or on the bottom.

Baits:

Worms, maggots, casters, small fish, small spinners and lures. (NB. With fish and lures, pike will make use of a wire trace and stronger lines essential.)

Lines:

2lb–6lb according to the size of fish you are expecting.

Hook size:

18–8

An angling guide to good practice

Fish Care – retaining fish

If you use a keepnet:

- » Only use a keepnet when necessary and retain fish for the shortest time possible.
- » Make sure your keepnet is made of fish-friendly mesh and complies with local bylaws.
- » Don't overcrowd your keepnet, especially during hot weather.
- » Make sure there is enough depth of water for your net.
- » Place fish in the keepnet quickly and gently.
- » Large fish should not be retained in a keepnet.
- » Do not tow fish in keepnets behind boats.
- » Keepnets should not be left unattended for extended periods of time.
- » Ensure that your keepnet is secured properly to the bank or boat to protect it from the wash of motor cruisers.
- » Don't keep pulling the net out of the water to show off your catch, this will harm the fish.
- » Return your catch carefully, do not slide or tumble fish down the keepnet into the water.

Unhooking fish

- » Use barbless or micro-barb hooks where possible. They are kinder to fish and hook removal is much easier.
- » Carry several disgorgers (you will always lose one!) and forceps for the removal of larger hooks.
- » Always wet your hands before handling any fish. Do not use towels, wet or dry, as these can remove the protective slime from fish.
- » Be mindful of unhooking surfaces making sure they are soft and wet. Always use an unhooking mat on soft, flat ground for pike and large fish.
- » Fish should be weighed in appropriate nets or weighing slings and NOT by the gills.
- » When taking a photograph, have your camera ready before you take the fish out of the water.
- » When holding fish, always make sure you keep them low to the ground.
- » Fish should always be returned to the water quickly and gently after weighing (if this is necessary) or at the end of the day, if retained in a keepnet.

Fishing methods and unattended rods

- » Baits and lures should never be left trailing behind moving motor cruisers and day boats. This practice is not only ineffective it is also dangerous.
- » Pike fishing requires specialist knowledge and tackle. It should not be attempted unless you are confident that you can unhook and safely return your catch. If in doubt seek expert advice.
- » It is an offence to leave a baited rod unattended. It can endanger water birds and fish (particularly pike) which might gorge the bait or snag the line. There is also a danger from passing boats.
- » Be aware of crime, don't leave rods or other valuables unattended on the bank or boat.

Wildlife and the environment

- » Don't drop litter – use bins and disposal points.
- » Choose your swim with care to reduce the risk of snagging bank side trees, vegetation and obstacles in the water.
- » Take care where people feed waterfowl; the birds may have learned to associate people with food and their expectations will increase the risk of entanglement.
- » Remove rigs caught up in vegetation, branches or underwater snags immediately, where it is practical and safe to do so.
- » Beware of birds swimming into your fishing line. Swans can reach your bait one metre below the surface and other birds will



■ Carefully returning a fantastic Broads bream (Photo: Jim Tyree)

often dive for food. Wind in your tackle if you think birds are at risk. Hooks and line should never be discarded, especially baited hooks. Line should be cut into one-inch lengths and disposed of with care or better still, taken home.

Safety

- » When fishing from hire craft, moor safely and always wear a life jacket.
- » Wear appropriate footwear on deck and always be mindful of slippery surfaces.
- » Be aware of power cables, especially overhead in boatyards or set back from banks.
- » Take notice of any warning signs. LOOK OUT, LOOK UP and CAST WITH CARE!
- » Observe speed limits. Be considerate to other water users and always watch your speed.

Other water users

- » Angling is very important to many people but it is just one of many legitimate water activities. Please respect the rights of other users.
- » If fishing near a bend in the river or amongst tall reeds be aware of approaching boat traffic, they may not be able to see you.
- » When fishing close to boats, be considerate and use a pole cup to place groundbait, rather than a catapult.
- » Should you accidentally get your hook caught on a boat's mooring ropes, please don't leave it there to injure someone's hand. Remove the hook but make sure that it is safe and practical to do so. Ask the permission of people on the boat if it is occupied.
- » When fishing at 24 hour moorings, anglers should generally give way to vessels trying to moor up – check local signs **before** fishing.
- » Keep paths clear for pedestrians and cyclists.

Useful information

» Environment Agency

24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all pollution and environmental incidents relating to water, land and air call: 0800 80 70 60

» DON'T FORGET YOUR ROD LICENCE

If you are 12 years old or over you must have a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence – available online and from Post Offices. For telephone sales call: 0870 1662 662. A copy of the Anglian Region Fisheries Byelaws can be found on our website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

» Police (non-emergency)

BROADS BEAT call: 08454 564567

» Broads Radio Control

For reporting non-emergency hazards such as boats speeding, obstructions, oil spills or to seek navigation help and advice call: 01692 678459. For boat tolls contact 01603 610734 or visit: www.broads-authority.gov.uk

» National Swan Sanctuary

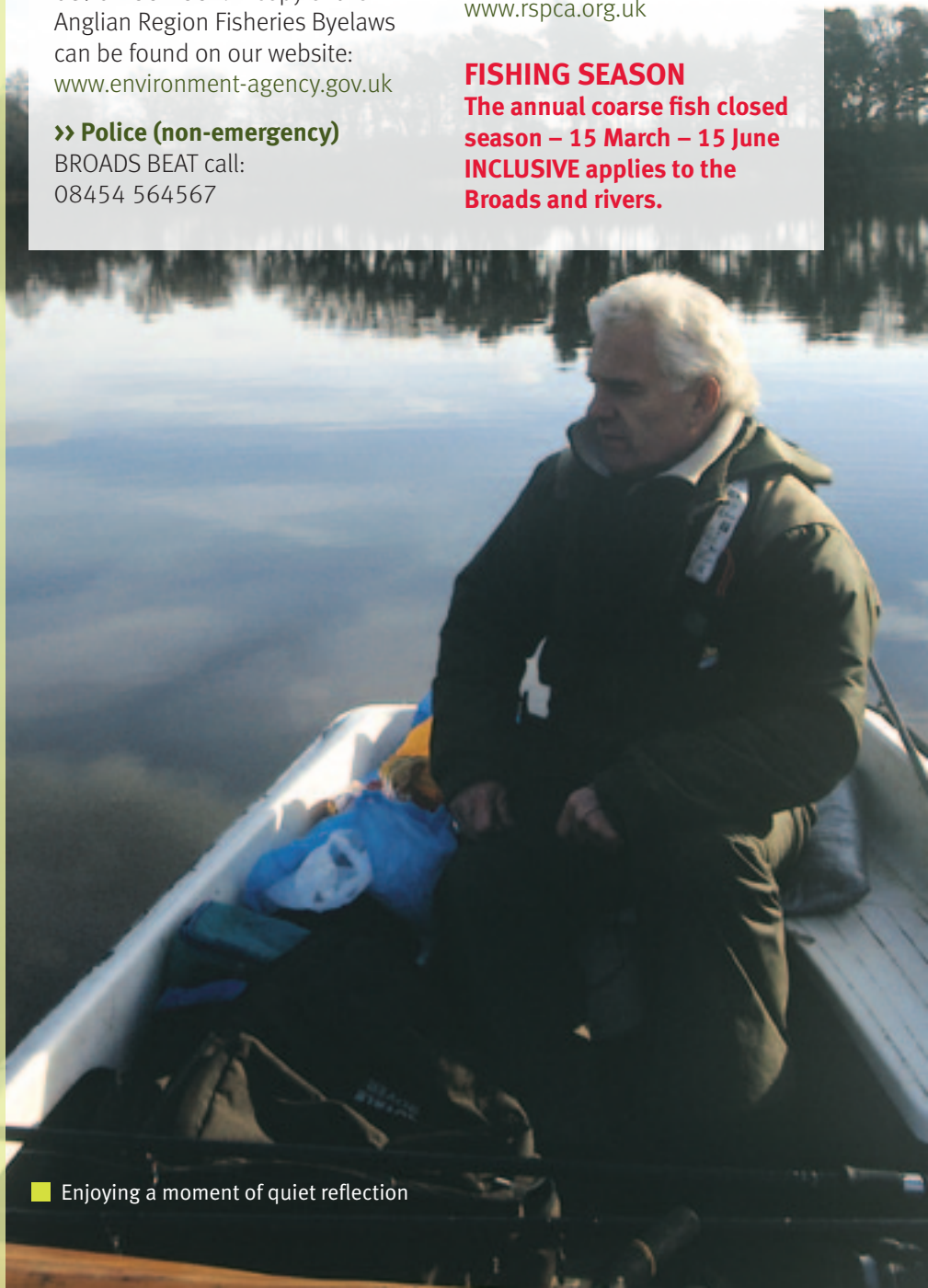
Call: 01932 240790
www.swanuk.org.uk

» RSPCA

Call: 08705 555999
www.rspca.org.uk

FISHING SEASON

The annual coarse fish closed season – 15 March – 15 June INCLUSIVE applies to the Broads and rivers.



■ Enjoying a moment of quiet reflection

Fish City – tackling urban angling in the Broads

If you're fishing on the Broads you're close to one of the country's premier roach venues. Where good summer fishing can be found, but it is the winter fishing that really hits the headlines.



■ Fishing from the riverside

In the autumn and winter double figure bags of prime roach are commonplace. Catches of 20lb plus are needed to get in the first three frames of the many matches held at this fishery. So, where is it?

Well, mention of a holiday angling on the Broads usually evokes images of sweeping expanses of open water, reedy bays and wooded riverbanks. Yet significant stretches of the Broads waterways are in urban areas and around boat moorings and boatyards, running through villages, towns and right up into Norwich City centre. They can offer some fantastic fishing for both local and visiting anglers, particularly for those fishing early in the day or in the holiday off-peak season, when the banks and boat traffic are much quieter. The autumn and winter months bring some spectacular sport when fish, particularly shoal upon shoal of roach, gather in urban areas and around boatyards and boat dykes.

The jewel in the crown of urban Broads fishing is the river Wensum from behind the Norwich City football ground. The stretch runs along the Riverside walk beside the Riverside developments, clubs, multi-storey car parks, restaurants, shops, cinema and houses, to the Yacht Station and up past historic buildings such as Pulls Ferry and Cow Tower into the heart of the city.

While roach are the real draw, there are also plenty of obliging perch and some clonkers too. Some of

us specialising in hunting them out have had plenty over 2lbs, with a number over 3lbs. If you can locate them, bream shoals can give you some bumper weights; match records have gone through the roof to around 70lb when a good angler gets a hot peg. With so many prey fish about, pike anglers can find good numbers of pike as well as specimen fish. The marvellous thing is that there really is something for all tastes and angling abilities, if you fish here you will find a really mixed and very friendly bunch alongside you; pike anglers with rod pods sitting next to match anglers and kids with a few bits of tackle. It is simply stunning that it's all free fishing! Matches in the allocated zones, where casual anglers should give way, have to be booked at a modest cost via Norwich City Council.

When it comes to fishing here, you will find that tidal forces channelled in the banks are probably the biggest factor to come to terms with. These influence depth of water and height from the high banks, flow rate and even direction of flow.

So it makes for very active and stimulating fishing. You have to be constantly changing depth and rig, to present the bait in whatever manner the fish want it on the day.

Virtually all fine line running water techniques are relevant from strung and bulked stick and waggler floats with a steady stream of loose feed, feeder fishing or long pole methods

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It is simply stunning that it's all free fishing.

”

■ Urban Roach fishing



fished static over feed or eased through. Feeding with groundbait, hemp, maggots and casters, bread and corn will catch virtually everything, though the perch love the chopped worm and worm hookbait approach.

It is always worth regular feeding on more than one line and switching between them if bites drop off, in order to keep up a steady flow of fish. The banks are virtually all hard surfaces, so those that have seat-boxes with attachments for rod rests, bait box stands, etc, will be more comfortable.

Those same hard banks make fish care an issue and any specimen hunter must have some kind of padded unhooking mat with them. It is always worth a polite inquiry to local tackle dealers for

up-to-the-minute advice on hot-spots and methods.

This awesome fishing was nearly lost to angling though; in 1997 a concerted anti-angling campaign in the city centre coincided with plans being announced for the redevelopment of the Riverside. Being a free fishery with no controlling club or association it had no effective voice to fight for it.

Determined to protect a fishery so vital for winter match fishing, easy access for kids and other beginners, the Norfolk Anglers Conservation Association (NACA) launched their resources into a lengthy campaign to save the future of angling here. Others rallied to the cause; people like local match ace Steve Borrett, who organised a petition and

presented the case at a meeting of Norwich City Council. Angling as a sport does not do a good enough job of selling itself but, having made so many people aware of the enormous social and economic value of angling on the Riverside, its future was secured.

Please come and enjoy this fantastic fishery but play your part in it by acknowledging that conflicts between angling, conservation, boaters and other user groups is often most acute in urban areas. Read and heed the advice in the Environment Agency's Golden Rules and BASG's Catching Fish on the Broads leaflets.

Colin Smith

A matchman's approach to the Broads

by Nick Larkin

I'm happy to say that despite the general decline of river match fishing around the country, our Broads rivers are still producing the very highest standard of competitions.

Okay, so the big river championships are sadly a thing of the past, but they have been replaced by smaller, more regular matches. There are for example the Saturday Opens on the Beauchamp Arms stretch of the River Yare. These happen every week from June 16th until the big tides push the fish up river, around the middle of October. That's around 20 keenly contested matches that attract good anglers from as far afield as the Midlands and the London area. Testament indeed to the fine roach and bream fishing this river has to offer. There are also team events at this venue, staged mainly on Sundays, which have a more local club feel to them.

Talking of team fishing, this is often the basis of contests run on the fabulous River Bure – the River Yare's smaller cousin. The Bure is shallower and gentler than the Yare and is a delight to fish. The match length is by no means less prolific. Matches here usually start early on Sundays to avoid the boats, often produce the most spectacular roach fishing. Depending on the river conditions, the size of the bream have to be seen to be believed.

Our other rivers, the Ant, Thurne and Waveney were all the scene of big matches years ago but really only host small club events these days. The exception is the River Wensum in the heart of Norwich, which provides the most fantastic winter sport from

October onwards, after our summer venues have finished. So if you're interested in giving these contests a whirl, I'd better tell you how to go about it.

Before you take the plunge, I'd advise anyone to go along to a match on your chosen venue. You can usually find out the dates in the local press or tackle shop. Sit and watch a few regulars in a few different areas of the river, just to feel your way in and learn the methods required. Fishing in match conditions is very different to sitting on your own with the whole river to yourself. You must remember that bait is being fed in every few metres, along the whole stretch of river. Everyone will be 'sharing' the fish. In reality everyone will be trying to pinch everyone else's fish. It's down to you to get your share or preferably more than your share.

In a match situation there are two methods that are head and shoulders above all others – these are the pole and the feeder. Both these methods allow you to fish a very small area of your peg, very efficiently. This makes it easy to condense your feed and therefore your fish into a small area, making them easier to catch and much more difficult for a neighbouring angler to pinch them off you.

Knowing which method to fish in which area comes with experience and getting to know the traits of each



■ Nick Larkin unhooking another fine Broads roach

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The size of the bream have to be seen to be believed!

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venue. You will find if you match fish a venue on a regular basis, a pattern emerges that suggests one method is working better than another. For example, our rivers tend to run very clear these days and this can make feeder fishing, especially for bream, quite difficult. You know the fish are there but you can't tempt them into taking the bait. Perhaps they are spooked by the feeder or maybe with a still bait on the bottom the fish have too much time to inspect it and ultimately reject it. Who knows, but often clear water means pole fishing.

Roach are less wary in clear water than bream and will happily feed over a bed of groundbait, or loose fed casters in the less pacey swims. The usual pole range is 7–11m largely depending on marginal depth. You really need 2m plus of water to be able to hold your fish for the duration of a match. Remember the tidal effect will reduce or increase this depth throughout the day so think ahead. You will usually notice changes in river conditions throughout the year and generally there is a spell when our rivers suddenly colour up. In recent years this has happened just into August and lasts for about six weeks.

When this occurs things change dramatically. Suddenly the river's bream population appears from nowhere and starts a rampant feeding spell. To take advantage of this, you must be feeder fishing. You will need feeders of medium to large sizes ranging from 1oz to 2oz with a few clip-on weights to finely balance them, just to hold bottom. When a bream takes, you're looking for a 'drop-back' as the feeder is momentarily dislodged. Most of the venues mentioned but especially the Yare and Bure carry stocks of bream from 1lb up to 7lb so this can be an exciting period – make the most of it.

Match fishing our wonderful Broads rivers is challenging but a very rewarding form of competition fishing. With tidal variances, not to

mention our changeable weather, I guarantee you'll never fish the same match twice.

As I mentioned, a good local tackle shop is a source of reliable, up-to-date information when it comes to results and tactics, as of course are the guys that run these events. They want you to come along to support their events, so are more than willing to help with any information you need to ensure you enjoy your match to the full. Two such guys are Keith Ford for the River Yare (Tel: 01603 483923) and Tony Gibbons for the River Bure, River Thurne and the River Wensum (Tel 01603 400973).

I myself run tuition days on the River Yare, which are free. You can come along and spend a day fishing with me in a group of up to 10 people and I will demonstrate different methods. These happen once a month from July to October and have to be booked in advance. Also, I now do an individual tuition day for



Local tackle shops can be a good source of advice

those of you who may want a more intensive day, maybe concentrating on certain methods or aspects of fishing of your own choice. There is a fee for these days but all your bait, some tackle and all bank fees are included, in what will be a superb day out. Again, you need to book in advance.

Nick Larkin

For more information contact Nick Larkin on 01502 563965.



Baiting the swim

Pike fishing on the Norfolk Broads

Pike (*Esox lucius*) and the Norfolk Broads are inseparable, particularly as an attraction for holiday anglers hoping to emulate the successes of Hancock, Fickling and Amies in catching pike of UK record proportions. So how do you go about catching pike whilst on holiday on the Broads?

Tackle

To enjoy any degree of success you will need to be equipped with suitable tackle to catch pike. Most anglers today probably have a carp rod or two and these can be put into service for bait and lure fishing with reasonable safety. The correct rods will make the experience that bit more enjoyable but an 11 to 12 foot carp rod which has a medium, compound type of action and a test curve of between 2 and 2.5lbs will cope with leger or float rigs used in bait fishing. A spinning rod of 9 to 10 feet with a medium to heavy rating will allow you to fish with spinners, lures or to 'wobble' and 'sink and draw' dead baits.

These will need to be combined with a medium-sized fixed spool

reel, filled to the spool lip with 15lb breaking strain (BS) mono filament sized line for bait fishing or 30 to 40lb BS braided line for lure fishing, to allow easy casting.

Moving on to the terminal tackle end, you will need a selection of pike floats:

- >> a particularly long thin balsa float (see Rig diagram 2);
- >> some small 5mm diameter beads;
- >> a spool of Powergum or some silicone float stops to set the depth of the float;
- >> a supply of medium-sized swivels (size 10) and a selection of wire traces.

If you do not have the experience to make your own wire traces, we would

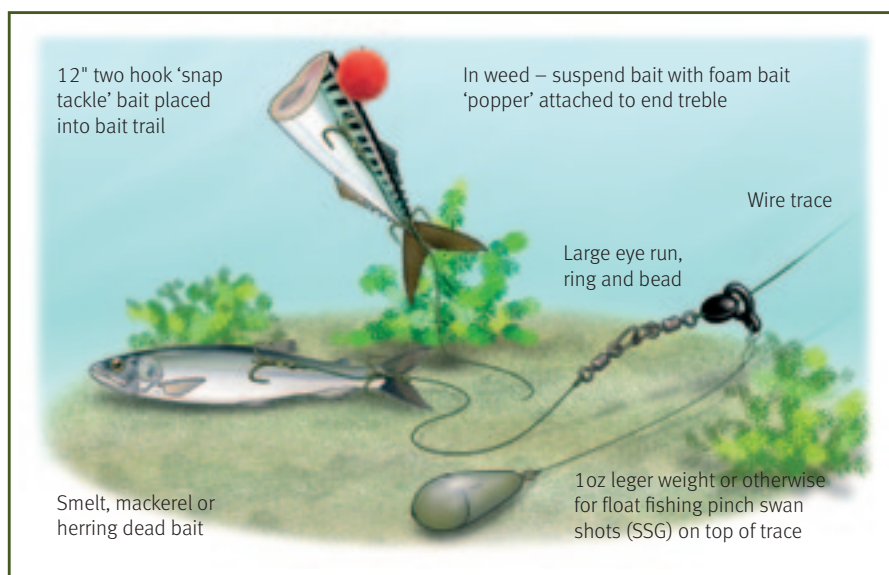
recommend that you purchase them ready made from the tackle shops around the county.

You will need an uptrace for float and lure fishing, one with a link clip for quick hook trace and lure changes and a couple of medium size 'snap tackle' hook traces for your bait fishing. The uptrace/spinning trace is necessary to reduce the risk of a bite off should the pike's teeth come into contact with the line immediately above the bait or lure. The uptrace/spinning trace should be approximately 6 inches longer than the hook trace.

You will need some weights to cock the float and hold the tackle in place, to help with casting and bait presentation. Swan shot (SSGs) will provide greater weight for holding the river bottom in strong flows, whilst also allowing you to make longer casts.

The weights can be attached to the bottom uptrace swivel with 6 inches to 24 inches of mono-filament line (6lb BS) to suit clear bottoms or fishing amongst weed. Alternatively use a large bore run ring and large bead to allow free running of the link on the trace (see Rig diagram 1).

Finally you will need a strong pair of forceps, an unhooking mat and a landing net with at least 32 inch long arms, 42 inch arms being better. To start fishing for pike without these items is unwise, for both you and the pike.



■ Diagram 1: Legered dead bait



■ Diagram 2: Float leger

Methods:

Float/leger fishing

Bait fishing is probably the most reliable way of catching pike using float legered or simple legered dead baits such as mackerel, smelt or sprats. These are readily available in fresh frozen packs from a tackle shop.

The float fishing rig in diagram 2, if correctly loaded with SSGs or with a long enough nylon linked bomb,

will serve well in open running or still water over clean or weedy bottoms. Ensure you plumb the swim to ensure you set the depth correctly for the float to register bites correctly. If you have difficulty with the depth you could straight leger using a drop-off indicator in conjunction with an audible bite alarm, although this is better practised from the bank using bank sticks. This cannot be used effectively from boats. The float rig

will work from the boat or bank. Do not leave your rods unattended if you use a bite alarm, it is illegal.

Lure fishing

This is a very popular method and one suited to the holiday angler, as it doesn't require baits and bait storage. This is particularly true of anglers using cruisers as their means of a holiday afloat. With a spinning rod or carp rod and associated items as described earlier, a selection of spinners, spoons and lures and those spinning traces to prevent bite-offs, the lure angler can cast and fish for pike at any point the cruiser stops on a journey. Please do not use your lures whilst the boat is in motion as this may kill or injure pike or water fowl, if they come into contact with the moving lure. It may also cause tackle to become snagged and lost; annoying, expensive and unnecessary. Furthermore this practice is illegal and against local bylaws. You are only permitted to fish with lures from a moving boat when rowing is the means of propulsion.

Another way of lure fishing with added attraction is to wobble or sink and draw with dead baits (see diagram 3). This has the visual attraction, plus the benefit of the scents being released from the dead bait. This is a worthy method if normal lure fishing or float fishing is unproductive.

Handling and fish care

This section should be at the front of this article really, as the way you put the bait on the hook and set your tackle up can dictate whether you are fishing safely when pike fishing. Accepting you have taken the advice given earlier then perhaps being at the end is not so much of a risk.

To many, the tough, almost menacing, appearance of the pike makes them believe that old Esoc is indestructible and in fact threatening. Nothing could be further from the truth; this magnificent fish

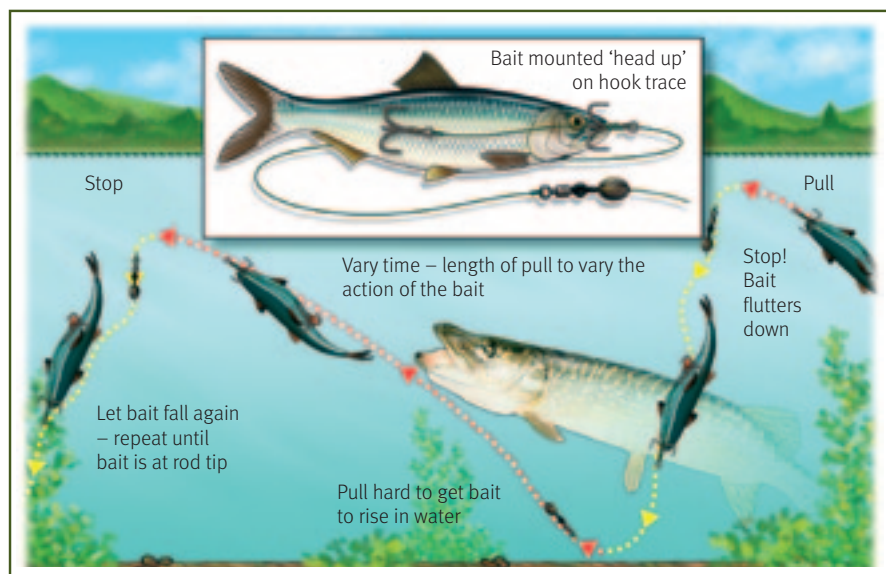
is as vulnerable to damage and disease from poor angling practices as any species. So please consider this and the advice offered in the following paragraphs and continue to work with us to protect the pike stocks which reside in the waters of the Norfolk Broads and surrounding fisheries.

Whilst many of you will fish from the bank, a lot of holiday angling is done from on board a cruiser, day boat or dinghy. This immediately presents its own problems in handling your pike once caught. To accommodate this situation safely, please ensure you carry an unhooking mat or put some suitable padding on the deck or bottom of the boat before starting to fish. Contact between the pike and the hard surfaces of a boat do great damage to the fish and must be avoided. Also have that minimum 32-inch landing net set up and at hand when fishing.

If the tackle is set up correctly and safely, when you hook your pike play it firmly and get it to the net as soon as possible. Once netted lift it onto the handling mat in the net and dependent on its size, prepare it for unhooking with forceps.

If it is a large specimen it will be easier to unhook it laying on the mat, you may find this easier if you kneel astride it. If it is a small pike, under 10lbs or so, it may possibly be easier to chin lift it and unhook it off the mat. Either way with bait or lure, take a firm hold on the pike's lower jaw by inserting your hand under the gill cover, avoiding the gill rakers in the process and run your finger up to the centre of the 'V' of the jaw joint. Now gently pull the lower jaw open and away from the upper jaw or take the weight of the pike and lift it for unhooking.

With the pike's mouth open locate, release and remove the hook(s) from the pike and place them safely away from you and the fish. If you are going to weigh it, do so using a proper weigh sling; do not place



■ Diagram 3: Sink and draw

the hook of your scales through the pike's gill cover, it is barbaric and may severely damage the gill rakers and jaw.

If a photograph is required of your catch ensure that the fish is held low above the ground whilst being photographed – it is far more sensible to kneel or crouch rather than to stand holding the fish high above the ground. Once weighed use the weigh sling to carry the pike back to the water. Don't carry in your hands or arms, if it flaps or struggles and you drop it onto the bank or decking it may not recover. Once in

the water support the pike until it decides to swim off itself and savour the pleasure of having safely caught and returned such a magnificent creature.

Hopefully with our joint effort, other anglers can come and catch those same pike over and over again. Help make each angling holiday a pleasure and also an equal pleasure for those who fish here all year round.

David Batten



■ This pike found a spinner bait irresistible

A brief history of the pike of Broadland

Nowhere in Britain is more identifiable with pike and pike fishing than Broadland. The pike, a truly ancient fish, has existed in Norfolk for considerably longer than the Broads themselves.

Fossils of pike excavated at West Runton in Norfolk date from over half a million years ago. It is now generally accepted that the vast majority of the Broads were man-made, formed from peat diggings cut by hand from as early as the 9th century.

For centuries, man has hunted the pike in Norfolk, initially for food and much later for sport. We can only imagine and wonder at the numbers and sizes these pike would have grown during periods of our history, when circumstances were so much kinder to the environment. In recent times intense farming practices have devastated the wildlife havens of the Broads, in only a few decades.

Accurate records of pike fishing exploits go back little more than one hundred years, but fortunately Broadland has escaped the melodramatic pike lore that has characterised other areas of Britain. Pike have often been shrouded in mysterious and unbelievable tales of huge and monstrous fish.

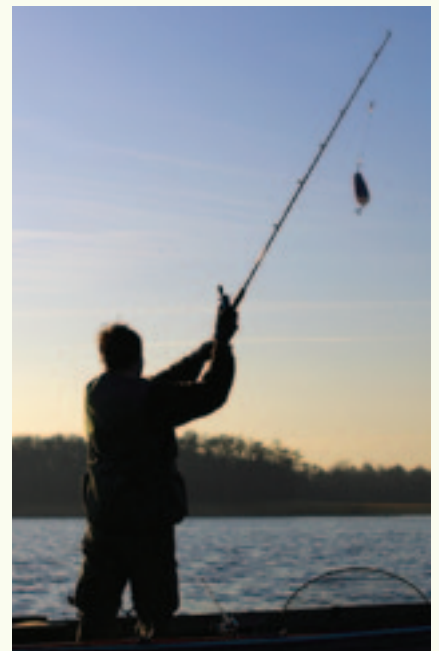
Towards the end of the 19th century, with leisure time and rail transport more widely available to the public, the Norfolk Broads became increasingly popular as a major holiday destination. The reputation of the Broads as an angler's paradise soon spread far and wide, helped

by the flourishing publication of newspapers, sporting and country journals and books dedicated to angling. What a glorious place those Norfolk Broads must have been to fish – crystal clear waters that teemed with life, vast beds of water plants, endless shoals of fish and huge pike that grew fat in such an ideal environment.

No precise records of captures from these early days seem to have survived, although several vague mentions exist of 30 and even 40 pounders. In later years, some of the largest fish were recorded and often set up, including John Nudd's 42 pounder of 1901, J.W. Butler's impressive 35 pounder of 1932, Tom Stevenson's beautiful 31 pounder of 1937 and A. Jackson's 35 pounder of 1948.

Jim Vincent was the first angler to carve his reputation with the pike of Broadland. First and foremost an ornithologist and one of the first conservationists, he was employed on the Whiteslea and Hickling estate throughout his life to improve the habitats of breeding and migrating birds and develop wildfowl for the shooting season.

Jim became captivated by pike fishing around 1920 and went on to create the Jim Vincent Spoon



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The reputation of the Broads as an angler's paradise soon spread far and wide.

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■ Large fish still exist despite modern problems

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We can only imagine and wonder at the numbers and sizes these pike would have attained during periods of our history, when circumstances were so much kinder to the environment.

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and the 'Norfolk' method of dead bait spinning, which have taken their rightful place in angling history. However, Jim Vincent's greatest contribution to Broadland pike angling is without doubt the restocking of pike into the Thurne system, that he organised after the disastrous sea flood of 1938.

When the sea smashed through the Horsey Gap on February 12th 1938, the resulting surge of salt water wiped out all the freshwater fish in the Thurne system with the exception of eels. The task of restoring the area's pike fishing was taken on by Jim Vincent who, during the years 1939–1945, caught many pike from the Bure broads to help restock the Thurne system.

By March 1944, Jim had captured 23 pike in excess of 20 pounds, the largest being a 29 pounder from Hoveton Great Broad in 1930. The 30 pounder that he had so longed for was to elude his efforts, although a fish lost after slipping the gaff was estimated at 35 pounds. So Jim Vincent did not capture a real Broadland 'monster' but perhaps he is the greatest of all the Broadland pikers – not for his captures that were impressive enough – but for his contributions to the pike angling of Broadland.

It was not until the 1950s and the beginning of a new attitude towards angling that pike fishing began to be taken seriously by a new breed of angler, the 'specimen hunter'. One man in particular burst upon the angling world in a blaze of publicity with a string of big pike captures. His name was Dennis Pye and he stamped his own identity on pike fishing in Broadland.

Pye's style of fishing for pike is well documented – large live baits, float-fished on leadless tackle close to the edges of the vast Norfolk reedbeds.

"Dead baits in amongst the thick weed will not work", Dennis Pye often said. But he was to be proved

wrong. Bill Giles and Reg Sandys were contemporaries of Dennis Pye, but their fishing methods differed dramatically. Whilst they both used live baits, they had an open minded approach to other methods, in particular the legered dead bait. This set a new style and direction for pike fishing on the Broads and for pike fishing in general.

The 1960s saw the first 'heyday' of Broadland piking, with some very impressive pike boated, the largest being Peter Hancock's 40 pounder and the 35 pounders caught by Reg Pownall and Frank Wright. Then in 1969 came *Prymnesium* blooms and the demise of fishing on the Thurne system. When the algae *Prymnesium parvum* dies, toxins are released into the water and oxygen is greatly reduced.

When fish cannot escape these toxic areas, disastrous fish kills can occur. After the summer of 1969, it would be ten years before the first pointers to the recovery of the Thurne's giant pike were seen. During those years, very few pike in excess of 30 pounds would be recorded from Broadland.

In 1979 came the first signs of recovery, initially from limited areas of the Thurne system, but soon to be followed by the capture of massive pike from other Broadland waters, in particular the Norfolk Flyfishers' Lake at Lyng. These fish would be so dramatic as to almost overshadow the pike captures that had occurred prior to 1969 and with them would once again come a new breed of angler – the 'specialist angler'. Highly motivated, determined, resourceful



■ A successful boat session for former BASG member David Batten

and well-equipped, but above all, open minded to any method that might catch for him his intended quarry, the rediscovered monster pike of Broadland.

In 1985, this new heyday of pike fishing on Broadland was to result in the capture of a new English record pike. On 2nd February 1985, Neville Fickling staggered the angling community by landing a pike of 41lbs 6ozs from the River Thurne. In August of that year, Derrick Amies recaptured the same fish at 42lbs 2oz.

In the 21st century, the real 'monsters' from Broadland are few and far between. Thirty pounders have once again become a very rare occurrence. The Thurne system, the jewel in Broadland's crown, is once again in decline due to recurring Prymnesium outbreaks.

It is interesting to speculate on what the rest of the 21st century will hold for Broadland piking. With the ever increasing popularity of pike angling and the pressure put upon the sport by outside influences, how will the next generation of pike anglers shape and protect their sport from old and new enemies? No doubt new problems will arise, such as global warming and the rise in sea levels that has been much discussed in recent years. If this does happen, the results for Broadland will be disastrous. We can only hope that the safeguards employed to protect financial considerations such as boating and tourism will also benefit angling. As always, angling will be found well down on the list of priorities should any such catastrophe ever occur.

We gain so much pleasure from our chosen pursuit and long may this continue on the waters of Broadland for the generations of pike anglers to come. I hope they too can fish with freedom for its wild and crocodile headed monsters.

However, with the old problems that continually reappear and with new pressures on our sport in an ever more crowded environment, it is doubtful if we will ever see a similar number of big pike caught from Broadland. I am sure the pike anglers of the future will look back on the second half of the 20th century as the golden age of Broadland pike.

Stephen Harper



■ Always be careful how you catch and release pike

Did you know?

- » The pike is supremely adapted for making lightning quick bursts of high-speed swimming to ambush unsuspecting prey from concealed positions amongst the weed. Whilst they are less suited to chasing down fit and mobile prey, pike will readily follow and attack injured or dying fish.
- » Pike will eat their own kind. Research has shown that a large part of the diet of adult pike is smaller pike. Occasionally dead pike are found that have attempted to eat another pike of a similar or even larger size. Unable to either swallow prey of this size or release it from its mouth, the greedy pike is doomed to a slow death by starvation.
- » Pike teeth are extremely sharp and can easily cut through line or braid. You should always use a suitable wire trace when pike fishing.

What is that boat doing?

■ ©Paul Douglas www.shorebase.co.uk

Anglers and navigators share an interest in enjoying the Broads. From time to time enjoyment of their activities brings them into conflict. Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA) and Broads Angling Strategy Group (BASG) have a common interest in reducing potential conflicts by ensuring that we have a mutual understanding of each other's point of view and by helping both groups to pursue their activities in a spirit of co-operation. This article attempts to explain to anglers some of the reasons why boats do the things they do.



There is a wide range of types of boat in use on the Broads (from canoes and windsurfers to wherries and commercial passenger boats) and a wide range of experience and competence displayed by those at the helm (from absolute beginner to professional skipper). So generalisations are dangerous but it's worth trying to explain some of the behaviours the angler might observe in the species 'navigator'.

Boats handle differently and there are limits to the options available to helms in particular circumstances. Generally, powered craft have more options than sailing craft. Boats

engaged in towing other craft, either strapped alongside or on a line astern, have fewer options for manoeuvring or altering speed.

Powered craft can be expected to travel along the channel, parallel to the bank and on the right-hand side of the centreline. When going against the current (remember Broads rivers are tidal and the current can flow both ways) it is common for them to stay closer to the bank because the current will probably be weaker there and they can make more economical progress. They can also be expected to stay on the deep water side of channel marker posts.

Conflict can arise between anglers and powered craft when the boat's helm fails to see the angler or their gear and fails to pull away from the bank. Anglers can help to avoid this situation by making themselves visible on the bank. Remember, the helm is probably looking around at the wildlife and scenery as well as scanning the water in front of the boat. The light conditions can make fishing gear hard to see and there will be times when the helm cannot pull away from the bank.

Sailing boats are more likely to give anglers problems as they depend on the wind for their motive power. They cannot sail towards the wind – to be more exact, the best they can manage is around 45 degrees from the wind direction on either side. If they want to head to windward they have to follow a zigzag course, gradually getting closer to where they want to go. This is called 'tacking'. Remember also that the wind is not a constant factor, it varies direction frequently. This is made worse by local factors such as trees and houses which form eddies, and dykes and stands of trees which funnel the wind. So the helm is trying all the time to make best use of the wind and the width of the waterway to take the boat in the right direction.

Where do sailing boat problems come from?

Being silent, sailing boats will sneak up on you and will give you little time to lift your gear – they just will not see you. The helm will be looking at the burgee (flag) at the top of the mast to second guess the



Be aware of other boaters when angling afloat

wind direction. They will be looking at the front of the sails to spot fluttering and to see whether the boat is pointed in the best direction relative to the wind. They will also be looking at that boat which is on a collision course on the opposite tack and wondering who has right of way and who should give way. The last thing they will be looking for is an angler tucked into shelter behind a bush with fishing gear below the line of the bank, virtually invisible and streaming towards them with the current. Of course, all these factors come into play in spades when the boat is racing and there is the whiff of competition in the air.

Sailing boats also seem to have an unnatural attraction for the side of the river. It looks as if they will follow a zigzag course, reaching the bank and turning away. But no, for some strange reason they will then flatten out and stick to the

bank way beyond the point that you would have expected them to tack off. This is because they will find it easier to make progress along the bank when the current is against them and will often get a 'lift' in wind direction off the bank and find that they can continue to sail along the bank for a short distance without needing to tack away. Remember, Broads Authority Bylaw 29 (3) says "Any person fishing from a boat or the bank shall show reasonable consideration to any other person using the navigation area and shall ensure that his rod or line does not obstruct the passage of a vessel along a channel."

Mooring is another situation where conflict can occur. Boats want to moor alongside the bank for a whole number of reasons; lunch, a shopping trip, an overnight stop, tea, to drop their mast prior to passing under a bridge or to raise it again on

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Conflict can arise between anglers and powered craft when the boat's helm fails to see the angler or their gear and fails to pull away from the bank.

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Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- » make yourself visible to boat helms approaching along the channel
- » move your gear out of the way when it obstructs a boat's passage
- » acknowledge a helm's attempts to keep out of your way.

Don't:

- » obstruct a boat's passage along the channel
- » throw objects at passing boats
- » shout abuse
- » set yourself up in a spot that is likely to create conflict with other users of the Broads.

the other side. In general they are allowed to do so and in particular they have a right to do so at Broads Authority 24-Hour Moorings. Fishing is allowed at Broads Authority 24-Hour Moorings too, but the signs inform anglers they must make room for boats wishing to moor. Problems will arise when either party has failed to see the other one in time to take action. Anglers may not realise that a sailing craft has only one chance to lose power from the sails and coast into the bank to pick up the mooring. Misjudgment will mean failing to reach the bank or worse, crashing into it with limited control and possible damage.

Racing takes place at many places on the Broads. Inevitably helms' attention will be focused on sailing their boats as fast and efficiently as possible, while avoiding the other craft on the river. They will find it even harder to spot the well

camouflaged angler. Remember also that there will be a lot of activity around the area of the start and finish lines, and the buoys which serve as markers of the course where boats must turn round. In these places boats have very few options on the manoeuvres they can perform, particularly when there are other boats nearby. These are not sensible spots to set yourself up to fish, on days when racing is scheduled.

With a little give and take and good manners on both sides, anglers and boaters can co-exist to their mutual benefit on the Broads. Many people enjoy one or both activities – long may they continue to do so.

Philip Ollier

Executive Secretary, NSBA
www.thegreenbook.org.uk



■ Quality fishing opportunities exist even on busy stretches of the Broads (Photo: Dennis Willis)

The Trinity Broads

Situated north-west of Caister-upon-Sea lie Ormesby, Rollesby, Lily, Ormesby Little and Filby Broads, collectively known as the Trinity Broads. They are a series of interconnected shallow lakes isolated from the main river system and virtually undisturbed.

As the main landowner, Essex & Suffolk Water's primary aim is to maintain the role of the Trinity Broads as a drinking water supply for Great Yarmouth and surrounding villages. They also have a responsibility to protect and improve the nature conservation value of the area. The water resources of the Trinity Broads are important to the wider community for recreation, wildlife conservation and agricultural irrigation.

The Trinity Broads project was set up in 1997 to manage the conservation work and recreation in the area. It is managed through a partnership with Essex & Suffolk Water, the Broads Authority, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

The overall aim of this partnership is to restore the Trinity Broads to benefit nature conservation, public water supply and recreation. Five-year management plans have been drawn up in consultation with the local communities and other Trinity Broads users.

What makes the Trinity Broads so special?

The Trinity Broads are isolated from the River Bure by a sluice, constructed in the mid-19th century and located in the Muckfleet drainage channel. This has protected the Trinity Broads from the effects of saline intrusion and increased nutrients from the River Bure; therefore the water quality remains

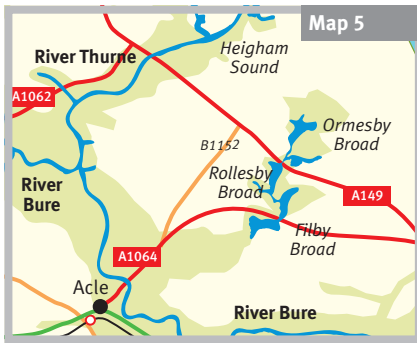
relatively good compared with some other Broads. As there are no motor cruisers and limited petrol outboards, the Trinity Broads have remained a peaceful, preserved and tranquil place.

The Trinity Broads are particularly important for wildlife because of the good water quality and low levels of disturbance. This was recognised by their designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1998 and their status as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the European Habitats Directive.

In common with other Broads, the Trinity Broads have been subject to continuous human use for many hundreds of years, which maintained



■ An aerial view of the delightful Trinity Broads



Fishing boat hire:

- 1 Filby Bridge Restaurant**
Mr R. Barnes
Main Road,
Filby NR29 3AA.
Tel: 01493 368142
www.filbybridgerestaurant.com
- 2 Eels Foot Public House**
Eels Foot Road,
Ormesby NR29 3LP.
(Disabled-accessible, Wheelyboat
also available)
Tel: 01493 730342
- 3 Ormesby Broad**
Mr P Greenwood
Tel: 01493 748724
- 4 The Waterside**
Rollesby NR28 5EF.
Tel: 07595 701590

areas of open water and reed swamp. This management was neglected in the second half of the last century. Fortunately, work has been underway since the project began to manage these habitats to ensure the wildlife living in them is conserved.

The open water supports an array of different aquatic plants including notable species such as flat-stalked pondweed and some stoneworts. Extensive fringes of common reed, reedmace and bullrush surround the margins of the open water. The landscape of alder and oak woodland behind these reedbeds provides a screen from arable land and settlements beyond and creates a sense of isolation that adds to the 'wilderness' feeling of these Broads.

The diversity of woodland and reedswamp creates a variety of habitats for foraging and nesting birds, including bittern, marsh harrier, sedge warbler, kingfisher and Cetti's

warbler. The open water supports nationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl including pochard, tufted duck, shoveller and goldeneye.

What activities are permitted on the Trinity Broads?

Traditionally the Trinity Broads support a low level of activity. Boating, sailing and angling are regulated in order to maintain current and appropriate levels of use.

Access rights exist for a limited number of boat owners whose properties lie adjacent to the Broads. The local parishes of Ormesby St Margaret, Ormesby St Michael, Fleggburgh and Filby also have local parish staithes (from the Norse for landing stage). There are currently three small-scale outlets that hire rowing boats to the public for angling and pleasure rowing. This is the only public access onto open water.

Angling is mainly carried out from rowing boats and broadshore angling is only permitted from fishing platforms at Rollesby Bridge (A149) and Filby Bridge (A1064). Both of these locations have car parks and fishing platforms that are accessible to wheelchair users. Between 15th March and 15th June the Environment Agency's Closed Season is enforced and at all times when angling please remember your rod licence (available online from the Environment Agency).

The biomanipulation project at Ormesby Broad

Ormesby Broad is currently being restored to clearer water conditions through the biomanipulation of fish. This is a technique designed to reduce predation of water fleas by bream and roach fry. Clear water is essential for the establishment of aquatic plants (which help oxygenate the water) and water fleas play a vital role in maintaining clear water as they consume algae. If fry consume too many water fleas, the algae blooms and this results in

cloudy water. Aquatic plants are an important feature of the Broads and provide habitat for fish and insects.

The biomanipulation of fish began in 1994 and at first was very unpopular with the local angling community. In 1998 the Trinity Broads Project set up a Fisheries Conservation Group and through this forum local anglers are informed and consulted on the biomanipulation work.

Why not check out the Trinity Broads for yourself?

Filby Bridge car park (A1064) is a good place to start. From the car park a boardwalk goes through the woodland to a bird hide overlooking Ormesby Little Broad. You can also walk to the new Filby Broadshore Walkway from the car park and across the main road, where the fishing platforms are located. The Rollesby Bridge car park (A149) has toilets and fishing platforms. Alternatively, why not have some food whilst enjoying Broads views at Filby Bridge restaurant (A1064) or the Eels Foot Inn (signed off the A149 at Ormesby St Michael). At both of these eateries you can hire out rowing boats but remember if you row out to conserve energy for the row back!

As Trinity Broads Catchment Officer, my role involves day-to-day management of the area: patrolling, habitat management, wildlife surveying, public events and liaising with landowners in the catchment area. I am the point of contact for the local community on issues relating to the Trinity Broads Project and general Broads Authority issues. There is also a network of volunteer wardens who assist with certain areas of work. If you would like more information on the Trinity Broads please contact:

Hannah Gray

Trinity Broads Project Officer
Broads Authority
Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way,
Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1UB

The Upper Thurne – a delicate jewel

The Upper Thurne stands out as the area where Broads fishing legends were founded.

Since the 1930s, when Jim Vincent made his name, pike fishing anglers such as Dennis Pye, Frank Wright, Len Spencer, Bill Giles, Reg Sandys and Peter Hancock have all helped to ensure that the Thurne system has rarely been out of the big pike spotlight.

The record fish caught by local angler Derrick Amies and by the well-known pike angler and writer Neville Fickling, have helped maintain the Thurne's name in the record books.

Bumper catches of bream from Deep Dyke, between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad, specimen rudd from the reedy margins of the system and large tench from the Thurne in the vicinity of the Martham Broads have all added to this area's reputation as an angler's paradise.

Of all the rich landscapes of Broadland, the Upper Thurne system is probably the one which captures

people's image of the Broads most accurately. It is also the most vulnerable to the whims of natural forces.

Situated within sound of breaking waves, the whole area was twice inundated with seawater during the 20th century. In 1938 and 1953 the low marram grass covered hills were breached by high tides and gale force winds. Then a tidal surge swept along the low lying coasts of the southern North Sea.

The inundated land took a long time to recover and even now high levels of salt remain in the subsoil. Indeed, high salinity in the low lying land, which surrounds the Upper Thurne, has led to regular fish kills from the toxin given off by *Prymnesium parva* algae.

Most affected have been the stocks of pike, which were devastated in 1969 at the height of the Thurne's reputation for exceptional catches.

It was 12 years before reports of large pike from the area heralded its return to the front pages of the angling press. Sporadic fish

kills caused by *Prymnesium* have continued – the last kill in 1999 having another marked effect upon the area's pike population.

More threat from salt comes from the increasingly dangerous tidal surges, which force the deadly saltwater further up these gently graded rivers. This provides the killer algae with a more salty habitat. Within the Broads catchment area, *Prymnesium* only occurs in the Thurne system; it is however, well known in Holland and also Israel. It is hoped that some information from these two countries can lead to a better understanding of what triggers the toxin and perhaps lead us to a point where we can successfully combat the threat.

Such threats led to the formation by the Broads Authority of a working group to help preserve this most precious Broadland jewel. The Upper Thurne Forum is looking to increase our understanding of what is a very complex ecosystem.

This group meets at least every six months and consists of people with diverse backgrounds and leisure interests, but with a common commitment to protect and improve this area. Leadership is provided by the group's chairman, Professor Tim O'Riordan from the University of East Anglia.

Fishing from a small dinghy in this landscape of reedbeds, stark drainage pumps and distant sand dunes is a lasting memory for many that visit the Broads. Marsh harriers soar over the beds of sedge and

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Bumper catches of bream, specimen rudd from the reedy margins of the system and large tench have all added to this area's reputation as an angler's paradise.

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■ Savour the beautiful winter skies of Heigham Sound

reed, which provide thatch for so many local dwellings.

Great crested grebes dive for the small roach and rudd that abound in the shallow bays of Hickling Broad, Heigham Sound and Horsey Mere. Coots dive and feed on the rich reedbeds that give cover for young fish. In winter, the sight of a bittern can add so much to a day's pike fishing.

Away from the boat channels in shallow reed-lined bays, rudd can be caught alongside the reeds as can large tench and bream. The angler can find true solitude in such bays. It would be a pity if we were to stand by and let events take a course which will prevent future generations from enjoying this jewel too.

John Nunn

For a copy of the Upper Thurne Management Plan or to learn more, contact the Broads Authority. www.broads-authority.gov.uk

Saving fish from stormy waters

Storms during the autumn and winter months can cause big problems for over-wintering fish in some parts of the Norfolk Broads. A combination of strong north-westerly winds and intense low pressure can push salt water a considerable distance up the lower reaches of Broadland rivers.

These saltwater incursions can trap fresh water fish in dykes and boatyards when salt levels in the river become too high to allow them to escape. During a storm surge in 1988, an estimated 100,000 over-wintering fish died at the Potter Heigham boatyard on the Thurne system. This led to the creation of a temporary barrier system, which could be installed by divers to stop saltwater entering the yard. However, this took many hours to install and effectively prevented boats from entering or leaving the busy boatyard.

In the mid 1990s, a permanent saltwater barrier was installed. This is hinged on the bottom of the river and can be raised by winches like a castle drawbridge, to seal off the freshwater in the boatyard. A series of automatic water quality sensors downstream alert Environment Agency Officers to increasing saltwater levels, so they can determine if the barrier will be needed.

Alternative methods, such as pumping in freshwater, are also being examined to protect other important sites. At Womack Water on the Thurne, where there is currently no potential for adding freshwater, the Environment Agency is working with Anglian Water to look at the possibility of using fully treated sewage effluent. Providing it is of high quality, the effluent could be pumped into the dyke to help to dilute any saltwater incursion.

Angling and wintering waterfowl in the Upper Thurne

The Broads waterways are recognised for their recreation opportunities whether for angling, sailing, boating or wildlife watching. These activities are integral to the status of the Broads as a national park.

The angling interest is most famously represented by huge pike, including the English record of 40lb landed by a local farmer in 1960. However, bumper catches of bream, specimen rudd and large tench have also added to the area's reputation as an angler's paradise.

However, the importance of the area for conservation is highlighted by the autumn arrival of thousands of waterfowl to the Upper Thurne wetlands, which migrate here to feed and roost for the winter (see Box 1). These waters and wetlands provide ideal winter quarters for the birds, with reed fringed lakes, large open water bodies, quiet bays for roosting and plenty of food. The numbers of migrating waterfowl are recognised in the national and international designations applied to the Upper Thurne (see Box 2). Therefore, there is a considerable challenge in managing these interests to the benefit of all.

Many of these wintering waterfowl are highly wary of humans; it is a natural survival instinct for them to take flight when they feel in danger. Some species, such as teal are highly flighty whilst others, such as tufted duck can tolerate some degree of human disturbance. Disturbance can lead to lack of condition for the birds as they have less time for feeding in their preferred areas, and expend energy flying away. This could eventually jeopardise their breeding

success and further additions of young birds into the population.

There is a need to balance people's recreation enjoyment of the Upper Thurne water with the requirements of the wintering waterfowl. A series of refuges or no-disturbance areas have been in place on the open waters of the Upper Thurne for a number of years. At Horsey Mere, angling by boat is restricted by permit only from 1st November to 28th February inclusive. Applications for permits must be made by post to the Horsey Estate and obtained in advance of fishing. At Martham, where there is no public fishing right, the refuge concept is managed using angling

permits. These operate on the North Broad from October to March inclusive, allowing access three days a week for a maximum of two boats. There is no fishing on the South Broad, which provides a year-round refuge for waterfowl.

Hickling Broad has three voluntary refuges in Pleasure Island Bay, at Heigham Corner and Ling's Mill Bay and one in Duck Broad in Heigham Sound. Anglers and other users are being asked to make a voluntary commitment to stay outside these refuges from November to March inclusive to provide a quiet area for waterfowl. To assist with this approach a Code of Practice has



■ Tufted duck



been produced with local anglers (see Box 3) to provide advice to anglers enjoying winter fishing on Hickling Broad.

The refuges at Hickling, Horsey and Martham have been closely monitored for bird numbers and their response to any waterborne disturbance recorded to give a better idea of how the birds respond to disturbance and how the refuge system can be improved.

Where do we go from here?

The Upper Thurne waters will continue to be critical to the wellbeing of the waterfowl that migrate here to winter and feed before returning to their summer breeding grounds. Equally, these waterways will continue to provide angling opportunities, which people come to the Broads to enjoy. We must continue to work together to find creative ways of accommodating both interests.

The Broads would be a poorer place without the spectacle of thousands of birds arriving here for the winter, or without places where we can enjoy these natural resources, whether angling, sailing or wildlife watching.

Julia Masson

Formerly Conservation Manager,
Broads Authority

1: Arrival of wintering waterfowl

Amongst wintering waterfowl are wigeon, teal, shoveler, gadwall, tufted duck, pochard and goldeneye, which arrive from northerly summer breeding grounds mainly in Iceland, northern Scandinavia and northern central Russia into Siberia. The numbers of ducks overwintering in the Upper Thurne are significant in international terms – 2,000 birds can be regularly present on Hickling Broad, and over 4,000 birds, mainly wigeon and teal, on Horsey Mere.

2: Upper Thurne National and International designations

The whole of the Upper Thurne carries all four designations:

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a National designation protecting nationally important habitats and species. Natural England has responsibility for identifying and protecting SSSIs in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

Special Protection Areas are protected sites classified in accordance with the EU Wild Birds Directive (April 1979). The sites are classified for their rare and vulnerable birds, and for regularly occurring migratory species.

Special Conservation Areas are protected sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive (May 1992) and includes both habitats and species most in need of conservation at a European Level.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Many sites are selected with an emphasis on their importance for waterbirds.

3: Code of Practice for the Hickling Broad refuges

1. Avoid refuge areas if at all possible.
2. If a refuge needs to be entered, navigate refuge areas with care, trying to avoid disturbing any wintering birds.
3. If a refuge area needs to be entered, use only electric outboards or oars within these areas. Do not use petrol outboards within the refuge areas.
4. Go quietly, be seen but not heard.

Visit **www.thurnefisheries.co.uk** for more information and details of the application process for Horsey Mere permits. For a copy of the leaflet 'Reducing disturbance to winter waterfowl' please send an A3 SAE to: **Winter Waterfowl, Broads Authority, Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1UB.**

Environment Agency staff profile

Neil George Environment Agency Water Bailiff

Former Bailiff Mike Holbrook retired in the autumn of 2009, after almost 20 years service for angling and fisheries in Norfolk. In the last few years he has been passing on his knowledge to Neil George, who has now taken over responsibility for patrolling the waters of the Broads.

Neil is a local man who was born and bred in the Broads and has worked locally all his life. Neil has been an Environment Agency bailiff for five years and in that time has built up a rapport with many people, ranging from anglers, eel netsmen, fishery owners and local tackle shops.

Bailiffing work is varied and interesting, with no two days alike. Neil undertakes routine foot patrols along the Broads river banks and local stillwater fisheries to check anglers are correctly licenced. These foot patrols are also complimented by boat patrols looking for illegally set eel nets and other unlawful activities. In 2009 Neil made the gruesome discovery of 6 dead otters in unlicensed eel nets, which had not been fitted with special otter guards as required by the byelaws. Following this and other upsetting discoveries by colleagues, Neil has a clear message: 'The use of eel nets, crayfish traps and other instruments, both on the Broads and elsewhere in our Area is illegal without the appropriate Environment Agency consent. Unlawful netting and



■ Learning the ropes: Neil undertaking eel net patrol with former Bailiff Mick Holbrook

trapping can cause real damage to our precious fisheries and wildlife'.

Neil also works closely with the Broads Authority and Broadsbeat Police Officers. It's not unusual to see staff from all three organisations undertaking a joint patrol onboard a Broads Authority vessel. Since his appointment Neil has seen his reported rod licence evasion rate fall steadily from a peak in 1996. Although Neil has wealth of local knowledge he can not be everywhere at once and encourages anglers and the public to immediately report suspected illegal activities to the

Environment Agencies 24hrs hotline number 0800 80 70 60.



What's down there?

Fishery surveys

For the angler, one of the most exciting aspects of fishing a large river or Broad is never quite knowing what's down there! But when it comes to managing fisheries, this can also be one of the most difficult aspects. This article should help to explain a little about why we need to know and how we go about finding out.

Why we need to know

The presence of a healthy, thriving fish population is vital for angling in the Broads. Fish also play an important role in the ecology of the Broadland waterways. So an understanding of the current state of the fish stocks can not only help us to ensure good fishing, but also to maintain and improve the health of the water and its wildlife. Fisheries surveys may also enable us to detect changes in fish populations, which may affect the quality of angling now

and in the future. Now you can see how important knowing what's down there is, when it comes to managing the Norfolk Broads and its fisheries.

How we find out

More often than not, finding out about fish populations means we have to get out there and catch fish. For example, we can study the age and growth rate of a fish by measuring its length and carefully removing a scale sample. The scales contain rings, or annuli, similar to the

rings on a tree. By carefully counting the number of these annuli we can tell how old the fish is. By measuring the distance between the rings, we can also estimate the length of the fish when it was younger. The gaps between the annuli can tell us how fast the fish has grown throughout its life, highlighting particularly good or bad years for particular species.

Fisheries surveys on the Broads are typically carried out in late summer, from July to September. We also conduct surveys later in the year to assess which habitats fish prefer during the winter. We use a number of different methods to sample fish populations on the Broads.

Seine netting is used to sample fish in open water. This technique involves setting a 100m seine net with a 'cod end' into the water in a horseshoe shape. Once set, the net is slowly drawn in and the fish within it are captured and recorded.

Electric fishing is used to sample the edges or margins of the Broads and enables us to effectively catch fish in amongst reeds, branches and other vegetation. The equipment is set up in a small boat, powered by a generator. Specially trained fisheries officers immerse hand-held electrodes in the water and fish are drawn by the electric field towards



■ Checking the condition of a Trinity Broads pike

the boat, where they can be safely netted and recorded.

Seine netting and electric fishing surveys can help to provide the following information about the fish population:

- » Mean biomass of fish in the river or Broad (mean weight of fish per square metre of water);
- » Mean density of fish in the river or broad (individual fish per square metre of water);
- » Species of fish present in the population;
- » Growth rates;
- » Age structure and year class strengths;
- » Evidence of poor health, disease or non-native species.

Hydroacoustic surveys were introduced in 2003 to sample fish densities in large lengths of Broadland rivers without needing to catch any fish. Mounted on a specially designed boat, the equipment emits sound waves at pre-determined frequencies into the river. These sound waves bounce off the swimbladders of fish and are reflected back to the survey boat where they can be analysed.

The river is surveyed upstream and downstream over two nights to ensure a good representation of river habitats is obtained. This technique enables long stretches of river (up to 40km) to be surveyed in a short period of time. Once the data has been processed it can be displayed as a map, showing fish density and distribution along the river.

Broads fish populations

Broads fish communities tend to be dominated by roach and common bream. The main predator of fish is pike. Perch is also a significant predator of smaller fish.

Recent surveys of Barton, Wroxham and Hickling Broads

Fisheries data suggests that Barton Broad is in the process of change, following mud pumping. The fish community appears to be responding well to the various efforts in cleaning up the Broad, although it may take several more years to confirm this.

Wroxham Broad continues to hold significant numbers of specimen roach and maintains a high biomass classification. The scarcity of smaller bream is of concern but larger specimens are present.

Hickling Broad presents the most challenging environment in which to survey and gain reliable, representative estimations of the fish community. The elevated levels of rudd are encouraging, although the success of other species is yet to be determined.

Broads general summary

Scarcity of eels throughout the Broads is of grave concern. Current fisheries surveys are looking more closely at eels to attempt to gain a better insight into their population dynamics. Several specific monitoring projects are in progress and schemes to enhance eel stocks are being developed.

Bream continue to be present on most broads at very low densities. Routine surveys often fail to pick up many young fish, so special fry surveys are being undertaken to assess breeding success. The Ecological Appraisal team is currently looking into the feasibility of monitoring bream movements and assessing numbers, using tagging experiments to better understand



■ A nice tench sampled from the margins

fish behaviour. The spawning success and growth of young pike is currently being looked at. A series of artificial spawning beds have been constructed and placed into Ormesby Broad in an attempt to increase the numbers of small pike. If successful, the technique may be applied to other Broads. Further studies have taken place in partnership with the University of East Anglia.

Overall fish populations within the Norfolk Broads are variable, but for angling purposes they are

looking promising. Good angling opportunities exist in most Broads with fine examples of roach to be caught at Wroxham Broad. Large numbers of smaller fish are well distributed throughout most other Broads. Large bream can be caught in Barton Broad as well as other areas and pike are to be found on most Broads.

For more detailed information on fisheries surveys on the Norfolk Broads, contact us on 08708 506 506.

Seeing with sound

We are currently assessing new survey equipment, which enables fisheries staff to 'see with sound'. Known as DIDSON (Dual-frequency IDentification SONar). The device uses up to 96 beams of sound to produce high-resolution near-video quality images of the underwater world, even in cloudy water or darkness.

Fisheries Technical Specialist Stephen Lane said, "We are very excited about the potential of DIDSON in telling us more about the fish and their habitat in the Norfolk Broads. A recent trial survey in one of the main boatyards clearly showed how important these areas can be for fish at certain times of the year. This will help us to prioritise schemes and to protect such sites against high salt tides."

DIDSON can display some surprising details. "Whilst surveying a very coloured Broadland dyke, we came across a couple of anglers fishing from the back of a moored cruiser", said Steve. "They told us they were using a secret groundbait recipe and had caught a few fish that morning. I think they would have been amazed to have seen just how many fish were actually in their swim. We asked them how many fish they had in their keepnet – the look on their faces was most amusing when we were able to tell them BEFORE they lifted the net out of the water!"



Useful information

Broads Authority Information Centres:

Beccles, The Quay, Fen Lane
Tel: 01502 713196

Potter Heigham (Bridge Road)
Tel: 01692 677016

Great Yarmouth (North Quay)
Tel: 01493 332095

Hoveton (Station Road)
Tel: 01603 782281

Ranworth (The Staithe)
Tel: 01603 270453

Toad Hole Cottage
(How Hill, Ludham)
Tel: 01692 678763

To email Information Centres, visit: www.broads-authority.gov.uk/visiting/tourist-information-centres.html

Yacht Stations

(Boat tolls info and licences)
Norwich 01603 612980
Great Yarmouth 01493 842794

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Berwick House, 22 Thorpe Road,
Norwich NR1 1RW.
Tel: 01603 625540
www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

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Buy your rod licence online:
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/rodlicence, or call:
0870 166 2662.

Angling Clubs

AYLSHAM & DISTRICT A.C.

Mr K Sutton, 17 Town Lane,
Aylsham, Norfolk NR11 6HH.
Tel: 01263 732433

BECCLES A.C.

Mr M Youngman, 38 Mendham Lane,
Harleston, Norfolk IP20 9DN.
Tel: 01502 712454

BUNGAY CHERRY TREE A.C.

Mr M Casto, 24 St Marys Street,
Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1AX.
www.bctac.co.uk

FLEECE A.C.

Mr Nigel Poll, 7 Green Park,
Harleston, Norfolk IP20 9DT.
Tel: 01379 853571

GEORGE PRIOR, ENGINEERING A.C.

Mr N Jarmy, 42 Rosedale Gardens,
Belton, Great Yarmouth NR31 9PN.
Tel: 01493 780531

GREAT YARMOUTH & NORFOLK COUNTY A.A.

Mr K Ford, 2 Parana Road,
Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8BG.
Tel: 01603 483923

HARLESTON, WORTWELL & DISTRICT A.C.

Mr Nigel Poll, 7 Green Park,
Harleston, Norfolk IP20 9DT.
Tel: 01379 853571

KESSINGLAND & CARLTON COLVILLE A.C.

Mr L Ellis, Orchard House,
Market Place, Kessingland,
Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7TD.
Tel: 01502 740975

MARTHAM & DISTRICT A.C.

Mr K Chaplin,
33 Hemsby Road,
Martham NR29 4QQ.
Tel: 014493 748365

NORFOLK ANGLERS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

PO Box 61, Norfolk NR17 2AL.
www.norfolkanglers.co.uk

NORTH COVE & BARNBY A.C.

Mr R Bird,
17 Rectory Road, Carlton Colville,
Lowestoft NR33 8BB.
Tel: 07796 437381

NORWICH DISABLED A.C.

Mr Goose, 45 Stafford Avenue,
New Costessey, Norwich NR5 0QF.
Tel: 01603 745290
www.david45.worldonline.co.uk

NORWICH & DISTRICT A.A.

Mr M Major, Tumbleweed, Flaxlands,
Carleton Rode, Norwich NR16 1AD.
Tel: 01953 789541
www.ndaa.org.uk

NORWICH & DISTRICT PIKE CLUB

Mr Stephen Roberts, Comfrey Cottage,
Swardeston, Norwich NR14 8LG.
Tel: 01508 578359
www.norwichpike.com

ODDFELLOWS A.C.

Mr M Clare, 8 Calthorpe Road,
Norwich NR5 8RX.
Tel: 01603 503514

STALHAM A.C.

Mr D Pycroft, 113 Lynfield Road,
North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0SW.
Tel: 01692 404362

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Harleston, Norfolk IP20 9DT.
Tel: 01379 853571

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