

Fly Fishing Etiquette - Rivers

Expectation – you should not expect to catch more than a couple of fish on a good day. The brown trout is not as free - rising as the rainbows that tended to be stocked historically. Be aware that some old school owners would frown on you catching loads of their fish.

Social Media – do not post video or other media online without permission from Piffers or the riparian owner.

Fly fishing is deliberately challenging; it's all about being sensitive to ones surroundings.

You are also responsible for the behavior of your guest. Please pass them the joining instructions and especially the etiquette guide.

Always make sure you have printed off the joining instructions, READ THEM and have them with you. Especially note how many fish you may take for the pot. Whatever it says do try to ascertain if a fish is stocked or wild – return all wild fish whatever the rules say.

If the rules are upstream dry (floating) fly, stick to this, no matter how tempting it might be to allow or “encourage” your fly to sink – Keepers are always looking out for this and are very capable of sneaking up on you, whilst you are concentrating on a fish or pool.

Don't spend too long in one spot – keep moving.

Never fish moving downstream (except on the salmon beat) a recipe for fisticuffs if ever there was one. When you reach the end of the beat fishing upstream sometimes there is a return path keeping you away from the river, use it if there is one. If there is not, hug the fence or hedgerow not the riverbank on your way back downstream.

Pushing in - In Montana, they have a term called low holing which is when someone moves into the river just in front of you and blocks your natural progress up or down the river. In Montana, one can get shot for doing this.

If you are new to fly fishing on chalk streams the chalk stream fishing etiquette may seem confusing at first. Always approach the river from the downstream end and only cast upstream or up and across. Your fly should not pass below your position on the river. We fish dry fly in spring and summer and sunken nymph in the autumn for grayling and sometimes after the mayfly (mid June) but check your joining instructions carefully at every fishery for the relevant rules and dates as they vary site to site.

At many of our fisheries we only allow one angler per beat and no guests either fishing or non-fishing. This is a requirement of the club by our landlords and must be respected. At some fisheries non-fishing guests are allowed and here a spouse or family member can enjoy a day on or near the bank.

Before fishing spend a little time observing the water and any other anglers on site, always try to move carefully and remain so far as possible unseen, for all anglers' benefit it is important that you disturb the water as little as possible. In most cases try casting to rising fish, rather than speculatively but if necessary it is acceptable to cast to likely places when no fish are rising.

Wading is permitted where indicated in your joining instructions. Most of our waters do not allow it. The areas that can be waded are normally those that are difficult to fish from the bank. You will usually find obvious access and exit points, do not wade outside these areas. Do not wade around Spawning time or on/around the spawning redds. These rules are in place to protect spawning gravels and the river bed generally. Do not wade during the grayling season as the trout will be spawning then.

Always check your fishery map to find out if we have a single bank fishery or if we have both banks. At a single bank fishery you should only wade to the mid line of the river. On double bank fisheries take care before casting to the far bank as another member may be fishing there.

It is advisable to wade in the margins of the river to protect the bed but it is understood that this is not always possible and some discretion is allowed.

We are guests on most of our fisheries, even where we own fishing rights we are guests on the land. Respect the country code, close gates, leave no litter, pick up litter wherever you find it, do not wander away from the banks or the marked areas for parking. Do not interfere with livestock, wildlife or game, we have no permission other than to be present to fish. Observe the rules regarding dogs at each fishery.

Respect the riverkeeper - he also has a life, so only contact him during working hours unless invited otherwise.