Lesson 8

Will there be any left for me?

The theme of this lesson is the nutritional value of fish. Fish is an important source of protein and vitamins for humans. Recipes are included to encourage greater consumption of fish.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

This lesson is designed to encourage pupils to become anglers by informing pupils about the variety of fish species in Irish watercourses and the three types of fishing. They will also learn about protection and conservation work carried out to protect the variety of fish species in Ireland and the importance of catch and release for conservation of fish. This lesson is designed to encourage pupils to become anglers.

TEACHERS GUIDELINES

Fishing in Ireland

This lesson could begin with a Q & A session to recap on pupils’ knowledge from other lessons. Suggested questions for the teacher to ask the class include:

- Where do fish live? How many types of fish can you name?
- What lakes or rivers are in your area or county?
- Have you any idea what types of fish are in our rivers/lakes?
- Can you recall where a salmon begins its life?
- Can you name a sea fish in Irish waters?
- Have you ever gone on a fishing trip?

Posters, atlas and other such teaching aids can be used to help recap pupils memory of previous lessons.

DOWNLOADS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Activity: Fishing Game
Activity Card (Lesson 8)
Whiteboard: Quiz and Questions (Lesson 8)

Downloads and Additional Resources can be found in the Resource page of Somethingfishy.ie
Fishing is both a sport and a livelihood in Ireland. Commercial fishing is when fishermen catch fish to sell for profit. Angling is a very popular sport or hobby in Ireland. There are three types of angling done in Ireland – Game Angling, Coarse Angling, Sea Angling.

**Game Angling** means fishing with a rod and line for freshwater species such as salmon, brown trout and sea trout. These fish are often referred to as salmonids and have been native to Irish waters for thousands of years. A licence is needed for salmon or sea trout fishing, which can be obtained from your local tackle shop or Fisheries Board. Permits for fishing on certain waters are also required for salmon and trout fishing. Permits can generally be obtained locally.

**Coarse Angling** is fishing in freshwater (rivers, lakes and canals) for other species. These fish include bream, roach, tench, rudd, perch, carp, dace and eel. Use the chart to help you identify them. Pike is found in many parts of the country and is Ireland’s biggest freshwater fish. Different fishing equipment is used for catching many coarse species along with a large number of different baits. Fishing for pike is generally done with a spinning rod; however some flyfishing for pike is also done.

**Sea Angling** is fishing in the sea from a boat or fishing from the shore. Shore angling is by far the most popular form of sea angling. It is enjoyed all around the Irish coastline. It can be divided into three forms – beach, rock and pier. Each has its own unique attraction. Beach anglers enjoy catches of bass, flounder, ray, plaice, dabs, dogfish and codling, while rock anglers seek pollack, wrasse, conger, mackerel and rockling. Pier anglers will mostly concentrate on mullet, dogfish, ray, conger, flounder and mackerel. Deep sea fishing from specially or purpose built charter boats is a very popular sport during summer months. Deep sea fish include blue shark, conger eel, cod, ling and tope. There is no licence or permit charge associated with sea fishing. If boat fishing, make sure the boat is licensed to ensure your safety.

Many anglers fish for the biggest fish and these are recorded by a special committee called the Irish Specimen Fish Committee which awards prizes every year for fish over a certain size and record.

Tourism is very important to the Irish economy. The Irish Tourist Board organises and promotes angling holidays in Ireland and liaises with the Fisheries Boards to organise competitions and festivals around the country. Many foreign as well as local anglers take part in these events.

**Safety**

Pupils should be reminded that if going fishing, they should be aware of their personal safety. They should never put themselves or others at risk for the sake of catching a fish. They should never fish alone and always inform someone about where they are going and when they are due to return. Always wear a lifejacket if fishing in a boat.

**Getting Started in Game Angling**

There are no magic formulas when it comes to catching a fish. To be a successful angler, you must understand that a huge store of information has been built up over the years and is being constantly added to and updated. It is a matter of searching and being able to find it. Fishing is not an exact science like maths or physics. Angling is as much an art as a science. Learning to become a good angler – or fly fisher – is like learning to become an artist – either of the visual or musical type. First you must learn the traditional angling skills. It is with the practice of the following skills that the fly fisher is mainly concerned:
**Observation** is about keeping one’s eyes and ears open when on the riverbank or lake. It is about looking out for such things as water temperature, fly hatches, weather conditions etc.

**Watercraft** is about being able to read a situation so that one is always fishing a place most likely to produce a fish.

**Fly Selection** is about having a knowledge of the more common insects on rivers or lakes and selecting their artificial imitations. It is also about the size, shape and tone of a fly and the speed and depth at which it is fished.

**Fly Casting** is about good fly presentation. One must be able to place the fly where the fish can see it and ensure that it attracts rather than frightens a fish.

You can also fish for trout and salmon using spinning methods with artificial lures and worms. You can learn a lot about fishing from videos and books. For the Irish situation, *Fly Fishing in Ireland* by Peter O’Reilly has a lot of useful information and advice for the beginner. It is available in most book shops and tackle shops.

“Hands on” experience is very important. Try to get an experienced angler to take you fishing and observe how he or she does things. You might also wish to take professional fly casting and angling instruction. Contact the angling section at Inland Fisheries Ireland for their details.

**Getting started in course and pike angling**

The lakes and rivers of the Shannon and the Erne along with the canals hold the best stocks of coarse fish in Ireland. There are other fisheries dispersed throughout Ireland which also hold some good stocks of coarse fish.

Coarse fishing is probably the easiest way to start your fishing adventures and most anglers will catch a perch as their first freshwater fish with a garden worm mounted on a hook. To take up the sport, it is recommended that you join a coarse or pike club in your area. Most clubs hold classes and will often give good advice on what fishing tackle is needed. These recommendations also apply to pike fishing. Both coarse and pike angling clubs will offer advice on the laws governing coarse and pike angling and the most suitable waters in the area to fish.

Coarse fishing often involves using a rod, a reel equipped with a float or a leger weight, with fine line and a small baited hook to try to catch the fish. Baits include worms, bread, maggots and sweetcorn. Pike fishing involves the use of a much heavier rod, reel and heavier line. Bigger floats and heavier leads can be used.

If you have any difficulty in finding a club to join, you can contact the Fisheries Boards or a local fishing tackle shop. They will also advise on tackle and baits to help you get started. Alternatively, the following organisations have lists of possible clubs you could join: Coarse Fish Federation of Ireland and the Irish Federation of Pike Angling Clubs. Their contact details can be obtained from the angling section of Inland Fisheries Ireland.

**Getting started in sea angling**

Sea angling as a sport began in this country in the early 1900s, but it was not until the mid 50s that the sport became firmly established. Ireland is lucky to have a wide variety of sea fish, ranging from the small
flat fishes and wrasse to the massive skates and tuna.

There are three distinct types of sea angling in Ireland:

*Shore Angling:* from beaches, rocks or piers.

*Small Boat Angling:* In boats of 4 to 6m in length for fishing close to shore

*Deep Sea Angling:* From licenced charter boats, carrying up to twelve people.

It is a fairly simple matter to take up sea fishing, and shore angling in particular can be practised virtually anywhere around the Irish coast. Most sea anglers take up the sport by honing their skills on the shore before graduating to boat fishing.

Small boat and deep-sea fishing are a little more difficult to organise and can be expensive to attempt on your own. By joining a sea angling club, these too will be easily accessed with the added bonus of being able to tap into the experience of the older members.

Advice on tackle and baits can be obtained from your local tackle shop and there you will find an Aladdin’s Cave of rods, reels, lines and lures best suited to the type of fishing you wish to try.

The following organisations should direct you to a suitable club when contacted.

Irish Federation of Sea Anglers.

European Federation of Sea Anglers (Ireland).

Their contact details can be obtained from the angling section of Inland Fisheries Ireland. Further information on all aspects of angling can be obtained from the Angling Section, Inland Fisheries Ireland, 01-884 2600, www.fisheriesireland.ie

**Fisheries Protection and Conservation**

Conservation or the protection of our streams, rivers and lakes is vital if our watercourses are to remain unpolluted and well stocked with fish.

Anglers are among the most sensitive environmentalists. They are usually the first people to notice changes in our water quality. The presence of fish in a river or lake is usually a sign of clean water.

The Central and Regional Fisheries Boards work closely with all those who depend on rivers or lakes. They monitor, develop and manage these watercourses. Protection staff of the Regional Fisheries Boards patrol the rivers, lakes and coastline to make sure that overexploitation of the resource does not occur. For example, there is a limit on the number of salmon and trout that anglers may take. There are similar regulations for pike in Ireland.

A number of other government agencies are involved in the protection of our fisheries and their habitats: The Environmental Protection Agency, the Marine Institute, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Local Authorities, the Naval Service, the Air Corps and the Garda Siochána.

The Central and Regional Fisheries Boards are responsible for the management of the inshore commercial salmon fishery and commercial eel fishery. In addition, the Boards are charged with the
protection of inshore mollusc fisheries. The Fisheries Boards also monitor the water quality in Ireland’s rivers and lakes to ensure that the fish can live in them. They stop pollution if it occurs and sometimes it is necessary to bring the people causing the problem to court. Research on fish and fisheries plays an important part of the Fisheries Boards’ function so that any changes in fish habitat are detected and the best strategies for fish conservation and protection can be considered.

All anglers agree that the most important requirement for good fishing is the availability of plenty of fish. The most important requirement to maintain fish stocks is good water quality and a balanced eco-system. In Ireland, as elsewhere on the planet, conservation is necessary to protect the stock and variety of fish in our rivers and lakes.

Anglers play a very important role in the conservation or protection of fish stocks. For most anglers, the pleasure of fishing is in the “challenge of a catch” rather than taking home a bag full of fish. Many anglers are increasingly adopting a policy of “catch and release” approach where fish are released unharmed immediately after they are caught so they can continue their life cycle.

**Revision**

Two different types of revision material accompany this lesson; activity cards and whiteboard material. The activity card is a 4 page document that is filled out by the pupils to test their knowledge of the lesson taught. The teacher can decide if the activity card is filled out individually or in teams.

The whiteboard resource tests the pupils knowledge of the lesson taught. Pupils are encouraged to actively engage in answering questions relating to the different types of fishing, the role of the fisheries board, and how to become a good angler.

**At the end of the lesson, pupils should know**

1. That there are three different types of fishing: Game, Coarse, Sea.
2. That all fish caught are not retained. Some are released back into the water.
3. Fisheries Boards continually monitor fish stocks.
4. Whom to contact if they want to go fishing.