

Last Rites

If a fish is to be kept then please despatch it quickly using a priest. Stones, pieces of wood or the butt of your rod are crude and disrespectful alternatives that should not be used.

Respect

Grayling were not put in this world for our pleasure. However, we do gain pleasure from catching Grayling and many people enjoy eating them. They are wild creatures and when angling for them we are engaged in a legitimate pursuit. Let us all treat the pursuit of Grayling and the fish itself with the respect this age-old tradition deserves.

Environmental Considerations

Anglers are the watchdogs of the river and its environment. Please report any pollution, or other threat to fish, to a responsible person or agency e.g. fishery manager, club official, Environment Agency.

Safety

Like all sports, fishing can be dangerous so, look behind before casting. Wear eye and head protection, particularly in windy condition and remember also that graphite (carbon) rods conduct electricity, so take extra care when fishing near overhead power lines, electric fences and in thunderstorms – when it is advisable to stop fishing altogether.

Final Word

The Society was born out of enthusiasm for the Grayling. Like the Grayling it is special, and has the respect of many in the world of angling and conservation. Let's all keep it that way by observing this Code and encouraging people concerned with angling everywhere to be committed to our cause and to our lovely fish.

Whenever and wherever you are fishing for Grayling enjoy yourself!

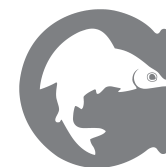
Tight lines!



A Grayling Society Publication

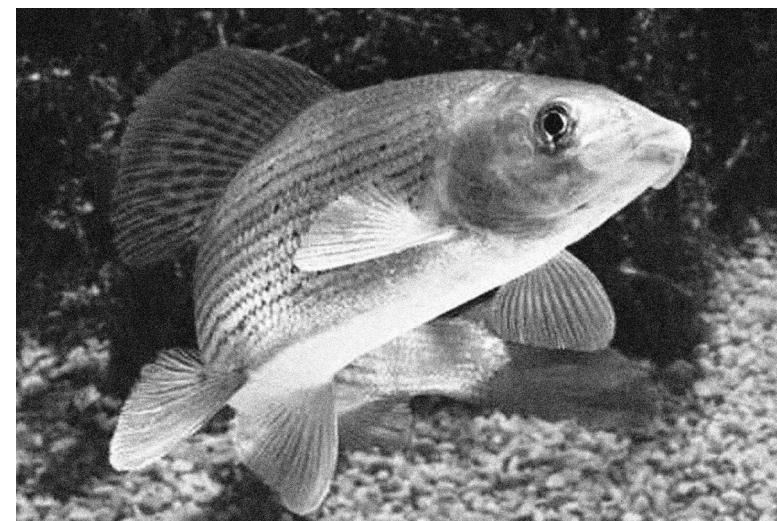
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THE
GRAYLING
SOCIETY

The Grayling Angling Code



*Promoting Awareness, Conservation
and Angling for Grayling*

The Grayling Angling Code

The aims of the Grayling Society are “to promote awareness, conservation and angling for Grayling”

This Grayling Angling Code has been prepared to help us all fish for Grayling in a manner that shows respect for the fish and contributes to its conservation and welfare.

Good Conduct

Grayling Society members are expected to engage in good practice wherever they fish. Educating by example, they should be courteous and considerate to fellow anglers and others using the water amenity; park wisely; close all gates; treat hedges and walls as barriers not sporting obstacles and observe the Country Code. Never leave nylon or other litter on the riverbank. Discarded hooks and nylon endanger wildlife.

Rules of the River

Valid permission to fish should be obtained before fishing, supported, where applicable, with a rod licence. Local rules can vary widely, even on adjacent beats; they should always be consulted and complied with. Should you disagree with one or other of them, don't turn a blind eye and do it your way. If you feel strongly about it, a reasoned and courteous letter to the club or proprietor may prove a catalyst for future change. Constructive feedback is usually appreciated.

Wading

Grayling often inhabit salmon rivers, so if your ticket permits you to wade do so with great care as it is a criminal offence to disturb redds and spawning fish. The Society supports salmon interests in denouncing 'shuffling' (attracting grayling by shuffling your feet to release insects from the riverbed), for not only can redds be disturbed, but it can have an adverse impact on fry and other aquatic life. It can also lead to wading being banned or even access being denied, so please don't do it. For your own safety you should wear waders suitable for the conditions prevailing, use common sense over where you wade, and when deep wading employ a wading staff and buoyancy aid, especially in unfamiliar water. Be particularly conscious of the need to prevent the spread of invasive species

into our waters. Aim to disinfect your waders and boots before each trip or, if you can afford to do so, keep specific boots for specific watercourses and use them only in those places. Felt soled boots are very advantageous for grip on rivers with rocky bottoms but are more likely to spread invasive species than the more recently introduced 'sticky' rubber type soles. If you do use felt soled boots be especially meticulous in disinfecting them or keeping them for a particular watercourse. More information on invasive species can be obtained from the Environment Agency website or from Stuart Croft's excellent paper *'Biosecurity for anglers – planning for the future'* which can be found on the Riverfly Partnership website. This paper gives excellent advice on how to disinfect your fishing equipment.

Angling Methods

The Grayling Society is not a fly fishing club. Many anglers do use the fly, but bait fishing is widely practised, particularly in the winter months, and is sometimes essential if fish are to be caught. Whichever method is to be employed, please check and follow the rules! Give proper consideration to other anglers – don't cut across others fishing, or crowd or obstruct, particularly on the opposite bank, and be prepared to give way after fishing a pool or stretch of river.

Hooks

It is strongly recommended that anglers use barbless hooks or hooks which have had the barb pinched down. Experience has shown that, providing a fish is played correctly with a tight line, few fish are lost as a direct result of using barbless hooks. Indeed barbless hooks are commonly used in match angling for coarse fish where landing hooked fish is vital and speed in the unhooking of a landed fish is advantageous.

Taking Fish

Please be aware, when fishing in England or Wales, that there is a National Bye Law regarding the taking of Grayling. Only 2 fish may be taken each day and these must be between 30 and 38 cm.

Playing a Grayling

We all know how hard fighting a Grayling can be, especially downstream of you in a strong water flow. It is important to bring the fish to hand as soon as possible within the limits of your terminal tackle. Please play

the fish quickly whilst avoiding the possibility of breaking off and leaving a hook in the Grayling. Do not overplay a Grayling for your own amusement.

Fish Handling

When handling any fish which is to be returned to the water it is essential to consider its well being. Wet your hands before touching any fish. Dry hands remove the surface 'slime' from the fish, which is there to protect it against waterborne parasites and diseases. Try not to handle the fish at all by leaning down and unhooking the fish in the water using forceps, anglers' pliers, fingers or a product such as the 'Ketchum Release'. Avoid the temptation to hold a fish up for admiration – it may boost your ego but could harm the fish. Unhooking underwater is the preferred method. Even merely lifting the fish's head out of the water will reduce its chances of survival. If a fish has swallowed a hook which cannot be easily and quickly removed, cut off the spare nylon and leave the hook. This will ultimately be less stressful than probing inside the fish with forceps or a disgorging because rusting and digestive fluids will eventually break down the hook.

Returning Fish

Landed fish are tired, especially after a prolonged fight. Contrary to what one may think, a large fish will recover less quickly than a smaller one. When returning any fish hold it carefully in the water facing upstream and keep holding it until it has recovered and is capable of swimming away, perfectly upright, under its own power. Do not hold it with your fingers over the gills – it will drown! Do not move the fish backwards and forward in the water in the belief that this will speed up its recovery – it won't. In fact, this action can reduce its chances of recovery because silt or other foreign bodies may enter the gills.

Nets

The traditional knotted mesh is now illegal so all nets should be fitted with a knotless mesh. Whenever a landing net is used it should be submerged and the fish drawn over it before lifting it gently up and out of the water. Unhooking should then be carried out with wet hands and the fish either released or despatched as quickly as possible. Do not put Grayling into keepnets as they suffer badly from stress in this situation.