

## Barbel Society Handling Code

The popularity of the barbel has exploded over the last few years and continues to grow into what is now the most sought after river fish. It is the duty of all barbel anglers to protect this exciting and powerful species and ensure that it is returned, after capture, in the same or even better condition as that when it was hooked. Today's four pound fish may well be tomorrow's "double" or even record.

We recommend to you the following code when handling barbel:

1. Always use well balanced tackle. Accept the objective of landing barbel as quickly as possible, thereby causing minimum distress and exhaustion to the fish. A protracted fight does the fish or your swim no good at all and increases the chances of losing it.
2. No one rod, line strength or hook size will suit the variety of methods and situations that will present themselves to the versatile barbel angler. However, as a general guide to power use the minimum of a through action 1 ¼ lb test curve rod with six pound line.
3. **Recognise that as a rod is up rated in power so should the line and hook strength. Balanced tackle is vital. A rough guide is: rod test curve x five = line strength required.**

### 4. Realize that line does not last forever.

Examine and test it frequently. If in doubt change it! Remember that some modern ultra strong and thin braids may 'cheese wire' into the fish. Use them with great caution.

5. Land and remove fish from the river by using a large knotless landing net and allow a few minutes recovery period before removing the landing net and fish from the water. Never attempt to 'beach' the fish as considerable damage can be caused to fins, eyes and scales. If possible unhook the fish while it is still in the net and in the water, if this is not an option place the fish (still in the net) on a wet unhooking mat - never on bare gravel, stones etc. Use wet hands to handle the fish.

6. Barbless hooks, or those with barbs squeezed flat, are very much easier to remove than barbed ones. All types should be removed with good quality forceps. If necessary cut the line and thread the hook out point first. Carefully examine the mouth for other hooks and remove them too.

7. Mouth sores and wounds can be treated with antiseptic creams and solutions like Kryston Clinic. Damage on areas other than the head can be treated with the same preparations and also adcotyl-in-orabase available from leading chemists. Dry wounds with a clean towel before treatment and use sterilised cotton buds to apply the treatments.

8. If the fish is not required for weighing or photography it should be released when fully recovered. Do not retain barbel without reason.

9. If weighing and photography are required leave the fish in the water contained in the landing net while you prepare your equipment, i.e.:

A. Decide where the weighing/photo. Should take place- preferably a flat area of bank protected from strong sunlight.

B. Wet the weigh sling, which must be large enough to support the entire length of the barbel.

C. Zero the scales with the wet weigh sling.

D. Set up photo' gear

E. Check that all is ready,

10. Transfer the barbel to the required place whilst still in the landing net. Weigh it in the sling. Remove it. Then hold it (carefully but firmly) low to the ground for photography. Return the barbel to the landing net,

11. Return the net and fish to the river and allow it to fully recover its strength. During this period of recovery, hold the head facing upstream in a flow of clean water and making sure the body is kept upright. Watch for steady working of the gills and the ability of the fish to maintain its balance. It is imperative that the barbel is not released until you are absolutely certain that the fish can swim powerfully back into the main river.

12. According to your own preference, record written details of weight, length, girth, distinguishing marks, date, time etc.

13. If an exceptional fish is to be retained it should be of the shortest time possible. Barbel tubes and tunnels must be used with great caution. Never use keepnets to retain barbel. They cause damage and stress. Only one barbel in a tunnel. Carpsacks are not recommended for retention.

14. The Barbel Society recognises that barbel are retained in keep nets during matches. We therefore appeal to all match anglers to use large 'barbel friendly' nets and to position them where the fish receive adequate oxygen and protection from strong sunlight. We ask all to consider a 'weigh and release' policy where fish are returned almost immediately after capture. We also request that slings are used instead of baskets and that all barbel be individually 'nursed' on their return.

15. The use of plastic tubing or other mechanical devices to try and release what may be perceived to be trapped air in barbel is not recommended.

Fish are able to rid themselves of air naturally, and poking around or massaging fish could lead to internal damage.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Always make your first consideration the welfare of the fish.

Always use adequate balanced tackle.

There is no place in barbel angling for keepnets.

Only pursue barbel in rivers. Barbel anglers are against their stocking into stillwaters

All anglers are advised to join the A.C.A.

