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Fishing the Water of Leith

What you need to know



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The Water of Leith flows through Scotland's capital city. It begins its 24 mile journey in the Pentland Hills, continuing over moor, heath and agricultural land, flowing through the suburban and urban landscapes to finally join the Firth of Forth at the Port of Leith.



Fishing the Water of Leith

Fishing on the Water of Leith is popular as it appeals to all age groups and abilities. Used by residents and visitors for recreation and home to a wealth of wildlife; it provides a pleasant break from the hustle and bustle of the city and a great chance to view the river's fantastic wildlife up close. The route is well-served by a formal walkway/cycle route and by local Edinburgh buses.

You can enjoy fishing on the Water of Leith by obtaining a free permit from a variety of outlets, for information please contact the Council's Natural Heritage team – please call **0131 529 2401** or email naturalheritageservice@edinburgh.gov.uk. The permit includes information on fishery rules and regulations.

The fishing season begins on 1 April and ends on 30 September.

You are not permitted to fish outside of the season.

What will I catch?

The Water of Leith is a river rich in biodiversity. Species include brown trout, grayling and flounder. Other small species include minnow, stone loach and three-spined stickleback.

Protected and migratory species include salmon, sea trout, eels, lampreys and bullheads. It is illegal to target and disturb these species. You should return all fish safely to the river; the fishery is managed as **catch and release only**.

Fishing responsibly

Where can I fish?

The permit allows you to fish an approximate 12 mile stretch between Bridge Road in Balerno and West Bowling Green Street bridge in Leith. There are a few private stretches where fishing is prohibited unless you get prior consent from the land owner/manager.

These stretches include:

- downstream from Balerno Bridge
- both banks on the Lymphoy Estate to just beyond the Lennox Tower
- the northern bank of the river from Currie Bowling Club, downstream to Kinleith Mill Estate
- both banks of the Kinleith Mill Estate.

There are other private stretches in Roseburn and Dean Village where owners' properties and gardens include the riverbank and fishing rights. Some of these small stretches are marked clearly while others are not. You should respect the owner's privacy and property when fishing. If you are challenged and made aware that you are encroaching on private land, please leave the area politely and respectfully.

Be safe

Carelessly discarded tackle is dangerous to wildlife, pets and people. Please collect and dispose of your tackle responsibly and safely.

If you are wading in any part of the river be aware of conditions underfoot to keep safe from hazards such as rocks and deep pools. Be especially careful fishing in low light.

Help manage the river

The Water of Leith Fishery expects anglers to follow the regulations and best practice when fishing. This ensures the fishery's long-term health and sustainability.

You will find information on the permit about how to register catch returns. Please complete a return for every visit to the river (even if you don't catch anything). This information helps us with on-going monitoring of the river. Please report any pollution to SEPA (24 hour) on **0800 80 70 60**. This will help maintain the beautiful river for all to enjoy.