

# **DDAS JUNIORS BASIC GUIDE TO PIKE FISHING**



Pike have quite a formidable reputation.  
This guide will take you through how to  
catch them and what with.

# **WARNING**

**Carbon Fibre is extremely good at conducting electricity.**

**Do not fish near High Voltage Electricity lines, particularly in the rain.**

**Cattle fences will probably make you jump and be midly uncomfortable.**

**But the real threat is Lightning.**

**If you are out fishing and a storm brews up,  
Please, pack up and go home.**

**So much fishing equipment is now made from carbon that you may be at risk from serious injury or worse.**

**Pack away and live to fish another day.**

# Pike Fishing

Pike are without doubt the most popular predators to catch. Every year thousands of anglers spend countless hours trying to tempt a Pike to take dead fish, lures, flies and spinners.

So what is it about Pike that draws this kind of attention?

Pike are long and slender fish with a large set of fins at one end and a mouth full of razor sharp teeth at the other. They have evolved into one of nature's most efficient killing machines. The markings on a Pike are stunningly beautiful, but have a sinister job to do. They can hide almost unnoticed against weeds or reeds and those big fins can propel it forward at lightning speed.

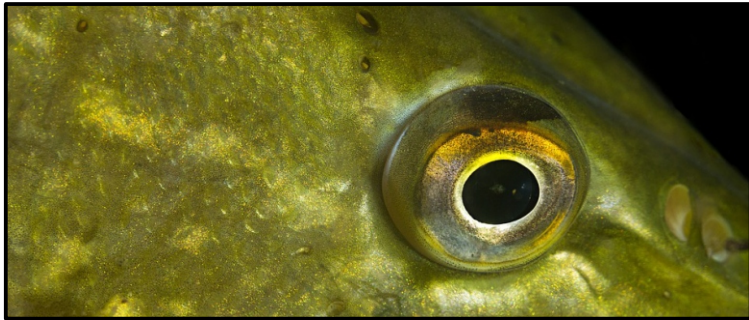
Pike can strike at any moment and it's this unpredictability that ensures itself to anglers across the world. One thing that is predictable though, when the float slides across the surface of the water, the bite alarm sounds with increasing speed or your lure rod goes into a solid bend, your heart will be beating faster than it ever has before

## ANATOMY & BEHAVIOUR

All around its head are sensors that can detect the vibrations of a distressed or dying fish, which is why so many fish caught by anglers, particularly on rivers, are snapped up by unseen Pike.

For match anglers or non Pike anglers, it is pretty much the end of the day. Not only have you lost the fish you had hooked, but now the toothy critter has shown itself, every other fish in your swim will have gone or is now hiding for their lives. You might be lucky to catch the Pike or at least spook it enough to frighten it off for a while. But it will surely return if you do start catching fish again.

The Pike has large eyes positioned towards the top of its head, giving it a wide range of vision.



Naturally a Pike's most striking feature is that toothy mouth. Mono and braided lines rarely stand a chance in there with row upon row of razor sharp teeth. Some larger teeth around the edge are for grabbing and holding its prey, others cover the roof of its mouth and all face backwards so there is no escape.



Once a fish has been snared, a Pike will head first so it can be swallowed.

In days gone by, the thinking was to allow the Pike to run, stop and turn the bait, then strike when it moves off again. By then the baited hooks will be well on their way down the Pike's throat or 'being gorge hooked' and would very often lead to the Pike being killed or dying.

Today, of course, Pike are treated much better, so

we want to strike into a 'run' much earlier than before. Talking of striking, Pike have hard, very boney mouths. So you will have to offer a much firmer strike to set the hooks, may be even twice. You don't have to try to pull its head off however, just one or two firm hits will do.



Don't be surprised if you blank when fishing for Pike. They will gorge themselves with food then just digest it all for anything up to two or three days, depending on their size. This digesting period can land them in trouble from other predators like cormorants or even other Pike.

Pike are a cannibalistic species. That means they will eat each other given half a chance. In fact, Pike have been known to try to eat a fish of more than half their own size!

The Pike in the picture (Right) has actually died because it tried eat a Carp that was too big. It 'choked' because it could no longer use its gills... Pike will also eat frogs and floating birds. They will bite you if you let them. You have be warned...



## RODS FOR DEAD BAIT

As the title suggests, the first rods we're going to have a look at are used for casting a dead bait. More powerful than a standard Carp rod, although to be honest, you will probably get away with using 3.0 to 3.5lb test curve Carp rods if you have them. It really does depend on how often you want to fish for Pike and how seriously you want to get with it. Rods have to be fairly strong to cast the extra weight of a dead bait, and to combat the fighting lunges of an angry Pike at the landing net.



Modern Pike rods come in all sorts of shapes and sizes much like Carp rods. The main difference is the action of the blank, being a faster taper for Pike rods and the size of the guides, which will be much smaller on Pike rods as the extreme distance is not usually required. Try a few out and see how they feel in your hands. Shorter rods will suit smaller hands better.

## REELS FOR DEAD BAIT

Again, reels designed for Carp fishing are ok in the 6000 to 8000 sizes, but make sure they are of a decent quality.

Casting and reeling in large dead baits, and playing powerful pike, does take its toll on reels, so make sure they are good ones. Free spool reels are best to allow the Pike to take line during the run. (The run is when a Pike grabs your bait and swims off with it. Usually slow, steady and very exciting).

## LINES FOR DEAD BAIT

DDAS rules state that Mono lines must be at least 15lb breaking strain. You can use braid for Pike but, because it's so tricky to use and expensive, I recommend that Juniors use mono lines.

## WIRE TRACE

We have talked about the fiercely sharp teeth of a Pike and how they will bite through line easily, that is why a wire trace known as 'Snap Tackle' is needed.

DDAS rules say that a minimum of 15kg, or 33lb, wire must be used for any Pike fishing on club waters. The handbook also states that traces should be of a minimum of 12" (30cm) in length. Most traces that can buy are longer than this anyway, so you won't have worry about that.

## HOOKS FOR PIKE

Hooks for pike fishing are completely different to other types of Coarse fishing hook. The most common hook is a 'Treble Hook', a three pointed hook that has been welded together on the shank. One of the hooks is used to push into a dead bait and is barbed to help keep it on the hook for casting, the other two are barbless and are left exposed to catch the Pike.

It is VITAL that you get these hooks the right way round so as not to damage the Pike, or lose your bait. The hooks are fixed to the wire by using 'Crimps'. Small cylinders of stainless steel that are crushed to grip the wire to stop it from coming undone.



Above is a fairly typical Snap Tackle trace with two sets of treble hooks.

One feature of these is the red coloured crimp protectors. More about red things later.



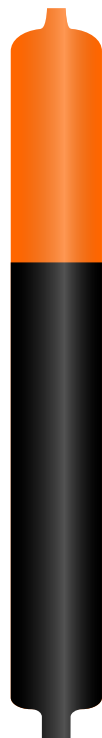
## FLOATS FOR DEAD BAIT



**PENCIL:**  
A long, slender, bottom end only float used for fishing over depth or 'laying on'. Bites are indicated by the float sliding under or lift bites.



**DRIFTER:**  
Fished with the bait off the bottom, the flights catch and follow the wind. Can be used to reach difficult areas with the right wind.



**SLIDER:**  
Essential for deeper swims used with a bead and a sliding stop knot. An extremely common pattern of float. Smaller version are good for close range.



**SLIM SLIDER:**  
An inline slider float particularly well suited to fishing in rivers because of it's slim shape, but is just as useful in a lake or reservoir. Used with float stops or a stop knot.



**BOBBER:**  
A float for smaller baits on still or slow running water. Ideal for Perch, Zander and Pike.



**SUBMERGED:**  
Designed, not to be used as a bite indicator, but to lift baits clear of weed, silt or debris on the bottom.



Pike will eat pretty much anything, but a dead bait can be used to make it seem as though it is alive.

The Club rules state that the use of live fish as bait is 'not encouraged'. I personally would discourage using any live fish as bait, however effective it can be, on the grounds of cruelty. That is my opinion and all I am going to write on the matter.

All kinds of fish can be used as bait from Herrings to Lampreys. Even coarse fish or Trout can be bought as freezer baits. I used to try to 'Match the Hatch' as best I could.

Coarse and game fish are available as frozen baits in vacuum sealed packs.

Roach and Rainbow Trout are all worth a try, the fresher, the better. Smelts, Sprats and Sardines can be quite delicate and fall apart quickly. You won't get too many casts out of one bait before it comes off, so you need to be gentle. Don't 'snatch' at the cast. Be smooth and build the speed through the cast and your bait will get to where you want it.

A trick that many Pike anglers use is to inject fish oil into the bait to add attraction. You don't need much because fish like Mackerel are oily anyway. You will need adult help to do this!

## DEAD BAIT



SMELT



SPRAT



HERRING



JOEY MACKEREL



RAINBOW TROUT



ROACH



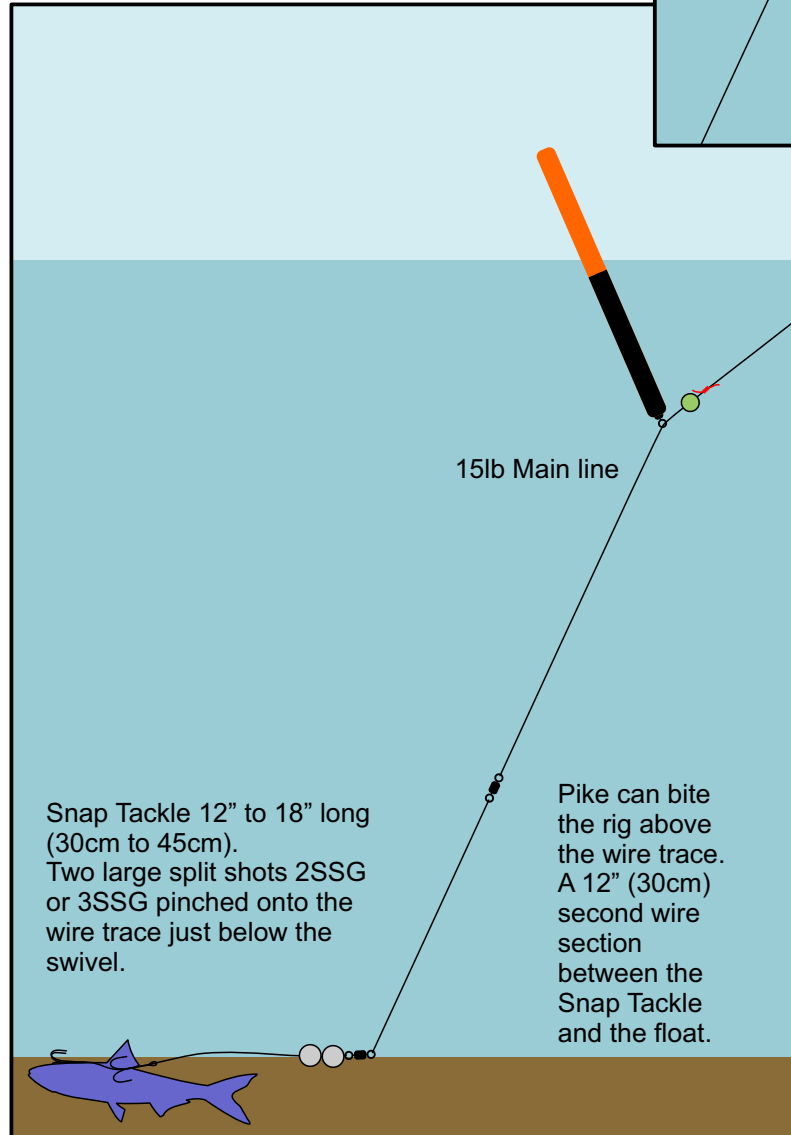
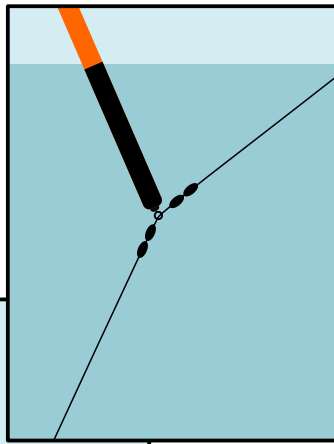
SARDINE

LAMPREY



# PENCIL FLOATS OVER DEPTH

The pencil float is set over depth and fixed using float rubbers (inset right) for shallower venues or by a sliding power gum stop knot and a buffer bead (below).

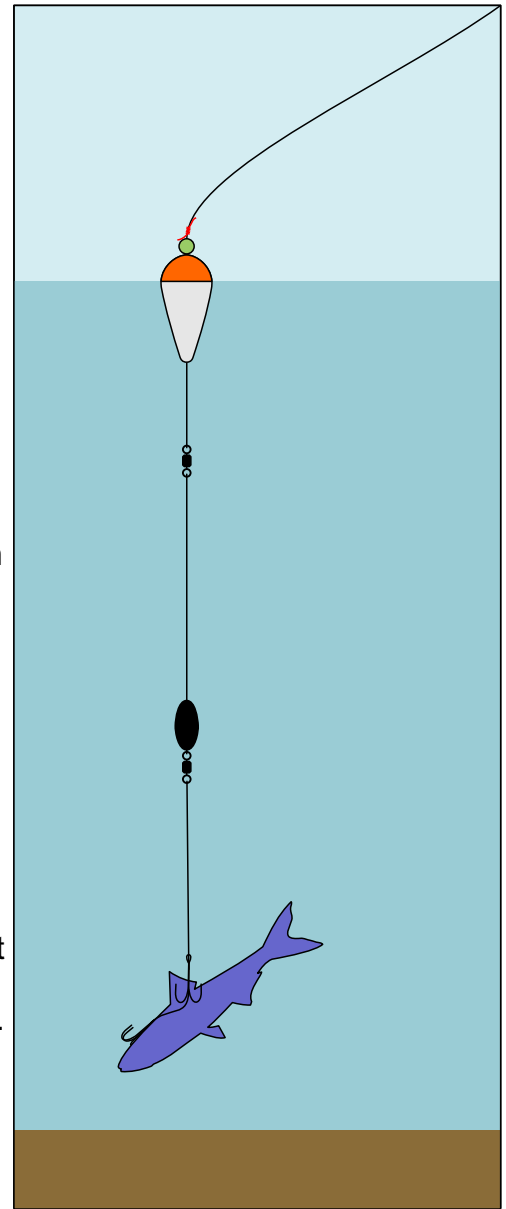


15lb Main line

Snap Tackle 12" to 18" long (30cm to 45cm). Two large split shots 2SSG or 3SSG pinched onto the wire trace just below the swivel.

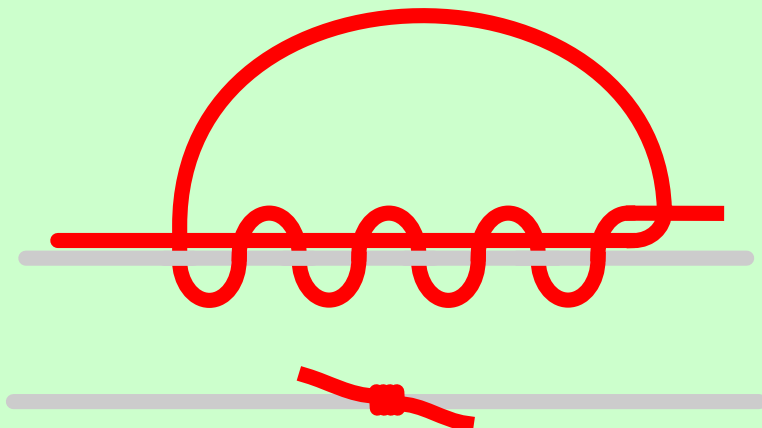
Pike can bite the rig above the wire trace. A 12" (30cm) second wire section between the Snap Tackle and the float.

The roving or drifter float can be used on lakes or rivers and with or without a float with 'vanes'. A standard float like the one pictured left is fine for a more static bait or one that drifts naturally with the water. A vaned float with dart like 'flights' on the top, will catch the wind like a sail and use it to drift faster than the water is moving. This helps you to cover more water with one cast. However be mindful of the bow blown in your line. It may be necessary to mend your line in a similar way to a river float, otherwise you will be striking into fresh air when the float does go under. The float is one that is large enough to carry the bait and any sinker or dropper weights, but small



enough to give little resistance much like any other float. The depth is adjusted by a sliding stop knot made from Power gum, a stretchy stiff mono like line that grips your line nicely. Below that is a 6mm buffer bead. There is a weight above the Snap Tackle trace to keep the at the right depth in the water. Special weights are available but large split shots or even Olivette weights can be used.

The Power Gum sliding stop knot (Right) is an important knot to learn in Pike fishing. Leave the tag ends a little longer to ensure they stop at the bead.



# PATERNOSTER DEADBAIT RIG

The Paternoster rig is slightly technical in that it uses a 'Rotten Bottom'.

If the bomb gets caught or snagged on the bottom, the lighter line will break, releasing the rig allowing you to retrieve your tackle or play a fish.

Use the Paternoster on still or running water but, on a river, you can carefully balance the weight of the bomb to the size of the float to make the rig skip slowly along the bottom in the current.

You notice a red coloured polyball. This bright, buoyant ball is used to make the bait lighter and float or 'waft' much like carp bait.

You may need a few different sizes to get the balance right. The float shape is not that important but I would use a more streamlined float in a river to minimise the drag.

The size of the hooks on your Snap Tackle will depend on the size of the bait you intend to use and the size of the fish you expect to catch, because you will have done your homework on the venue before you fish it of course...

Using legering techniques for catching Pike can be very effective and the set up is pretty straightforward. Just remove the float and you've got a leger set up ready to go. If you know that you are fishing over a clean bottom, one with no weed, leaf litter or silt, then you can just use it as it is.

But if there is weed or other obstacles on the bottom, then you may need a submerged float. A buoyant device that lifts you end tackle above anything that it might get snagged in. You can buy specially designed 'booms', but if there is a risk of you losing your tackle, then use two or three cork balls instead.

They much cheaper to buy!

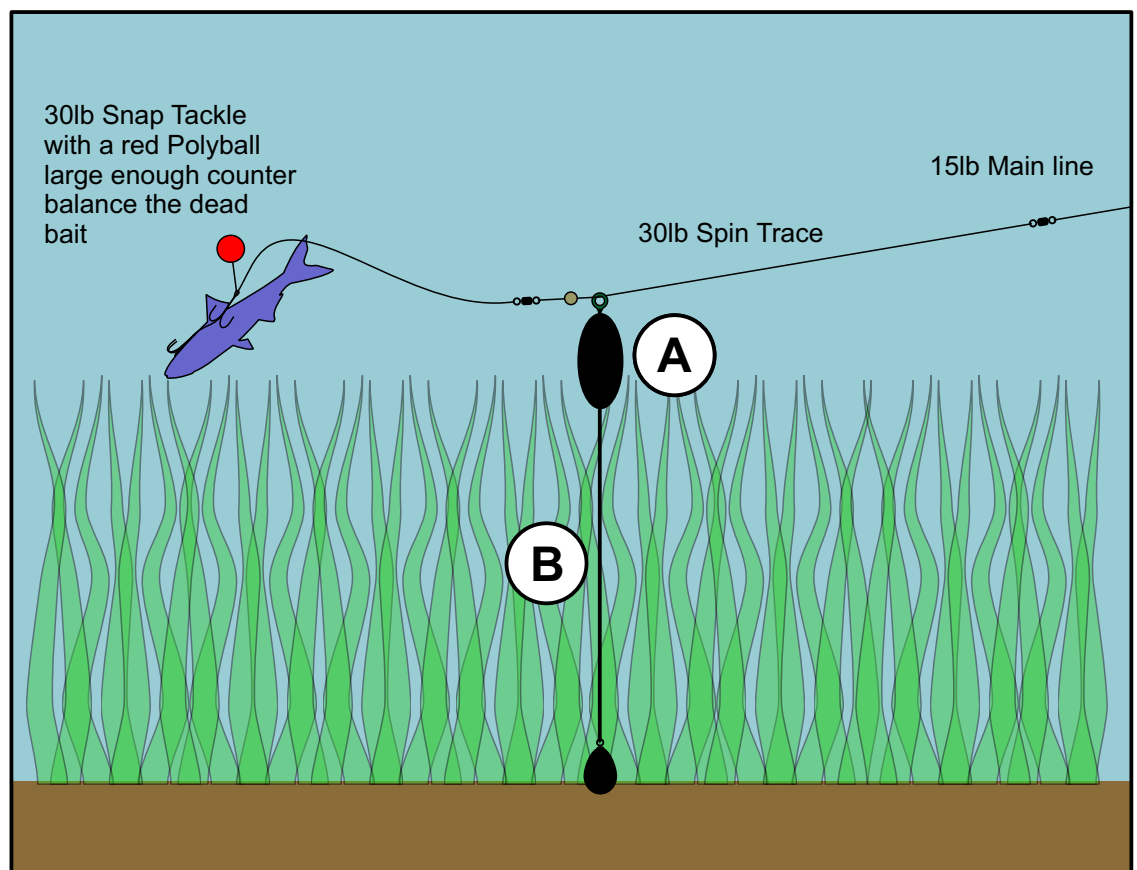
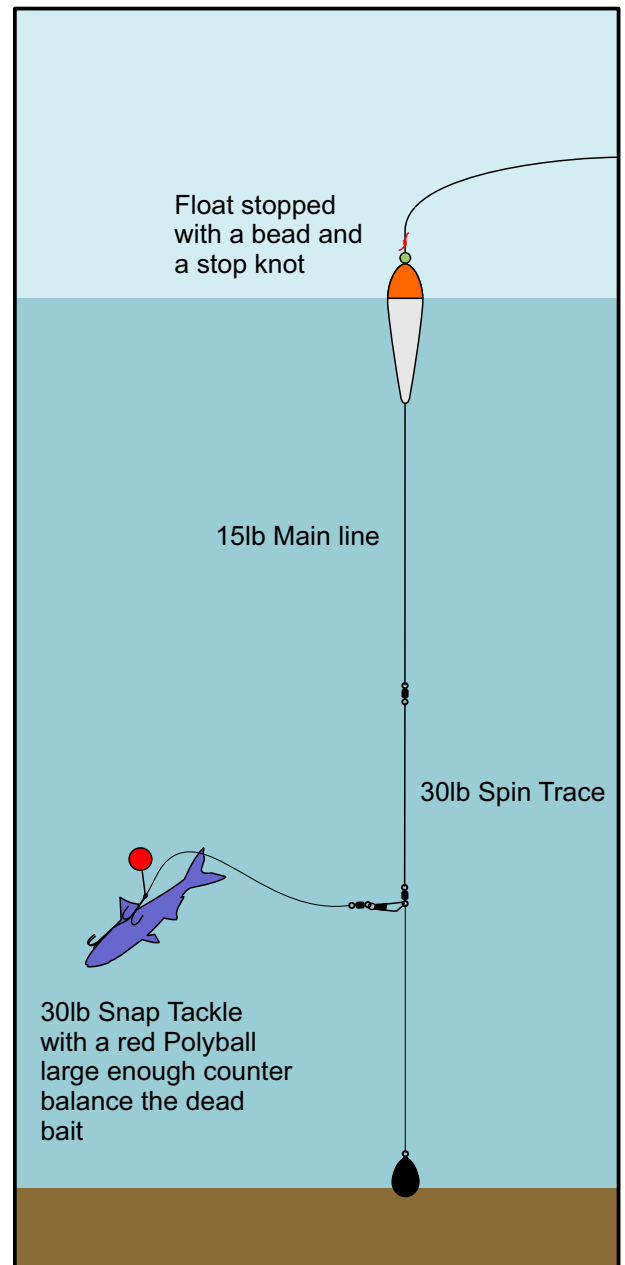
You will notice that the bait also has a brightly coloured polyball as before.

Without a float, you will need another type of bite indication.

We will look at those later.

A. Submerged float keeps the line out of bottom vegetation, leaf litter or silt.

B. 6 or 8lb mono as a 'Rotten Bottom' or shop bought Paternoster boom to a 1oz or 2oz (30g or 60g) bomb



# HANDLING PIKE SAFELY

We have established that Pike are mean looking, lethal predators. So they're going to be tough, Right?

WRONG!

Pike are, in fact, a quite delicate species and proper care needs to be taken when you catch one. Many people are scared of them and get jumpy around a Pike. This can lead the fish getting hurt, permanently damaged or worse. If you are worried about getting hurt or hurting the fish, then always go with someone who has experience of catch pike to help you.



You will need a PROPER unhooking mat, one over 1 metre wide at the very least. Pike are a long species and you might need every centimetre. A big landing net is needed to. 36" (90cm) is ok but, 42" (106cm) is better.



Make sure you wet the mesh fully before casting out. Ideally you want a net that you can pull the arms out of the spreader block and roll them down the mesh to lift the fish out of the water safely. Earlier we spoke about how it is better to strike into a run from a Pike sooner than later and there is good reason why. Obviously, so the Pike does not get deep hooked, putting it's life at risk. But also if the hooks are located as close to the mouth as possible, you don't have to go so far into that mouth full of teeth!

So, the Pike is in the net, the unhooking area is ready and the mat is nice and wet. Gently place the netted Pike on the mat and carefully unwrap it. The best way to keep a Pike under control is to position it on its back, between your knees.



Very carefully, open the gill cover. You will be able to see the bright red gills. It is vital that these are not damaged.



Gently slide your fingers inside and move them up towards the Pikes chin. Be careful though, the Gill covers can be sharp enough to cut you. You can wear gloves if you want to. You will lose some sensitivity, but if feel safer then do it.



A pike can only move its bottom jaw, the top can't move. So now you have control of the moving bit, it should not be able to get you! I did say SHOULD....



You can now open the fishes mouth and take a peek inside to see where your hooks are. With long forceps, carefully remove the top hooks first and then the bottom. Barbless hooks should come out fairly easily.



If you are concerned about removing the hooks or the hooks are near the gills, then get help from someone more experienced. You should not be trying this for the first time without supervision.

We all like a photo or two with our fish, but with Pike being such a long fish, you need to think about things a bit differently.

The 'Chin Hold' that you used to get the hooks out, is fine for holding the fish for trophy picture. Your other hand needs to be supporting the Pikes belly and all it's internal organs. Don't hold it at the tail, you will further stress an already stressed animal. The arrows indicate the correct areas to position your hands.



Like the mat, your weighing sling should be big enough to fit the Pike inside without it 'bending' unnecessarily.

Weigh your fish, picture your fish and admire it. But don't keep it out of the water for too long. Pike fight HARD and so will be exhausted and need to recover properly. It will swim away in its own time. It just gives you a few more seconds to admire these beautiful fish.

## PIKE ACCESSORIES

If you're going to use a legdered paternoster, then you will need to identify bites with an indicator of some sort.

You need to keep an eye on what's going on around you more when fishing for Pike. You simply can not allow the fish to swallow the hooks. You can use alarms similar to that which are used by Carp anglers.

Alarms are used by Pike anglers, but the visual indicators are slightly different.



A common visual indicator is called a 'Drop Off' indicator (Above). If the fish move away from you, the line be pulled from the clip and the indicator will drop. If the fish come toward you, the indicator will slowly drop down and the line will be pulled from the clip as you pick up the rod.



Long forceps (12" or 30cm minimum) are vital from removing hooks from toothy mouths. You are required to carry forceps on DDAS waters when fishing for Pike.



Just important as forceps, long nosed wire or side cutters are a vital piece of equipment to have with you. To be honest, you really should not go Pike fishing without them. If you do hook a Pike that is deep hooked or you or your helper can not get the hooks out, the best chance of survival that Pike has now is for the hooks to be cut close to the fish and to release it as quickly as possible.



To prevent your hands getting cut by one of the many sharp bits on a Pike, you can purchase a filleting glove. Made from stainless steel, they will protect you from damage either from the fish or your own hooks as you remove them.

# THE COLOUR RED

As you go deeper in to the world of Pike fishing, you will find one theme that keeps on popping up regularly. The colour red.

Before we get wrapped up in whether this is all a load of rubbish or not, let's look at some facts...

- Everything gives off a colour.
- Colour is light at different wave lengths.
- Red has the longest wave length and Violet has the shortest.
- Red is the first colour that disappears (it turns grey) in water or low light conditions and Violet is the last to disappear and is visible for longer in deeper water.

Ok they are the facts...but, if Red is so quick to lose its colour, why are so many popular baits red?



Minnows, Sticklebacks and Trout.

All of the above have different reasons for using red.

Minnows and Sticklebacks are shallow water species. So the red colour is probably used for mating. Red meaning look at me and how healthy and strong I am!

Bloodworm or 'Chironomids' come in a few colours. Red, green and transparent. They live unseen, beneath the mud and silt. Colour is of no real significance.

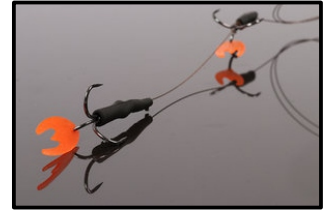
Crayfish (Signal Crayfish) have a bright red colour under their claws, probably for mating and communication. I imagine that they have to pick their moments quite carefully, particularly when there are Trout close by.

Conversations will be very short if the eye of Mr Trout is caught by flashy claws.



The fins of some fish, Roach and Rudd are red. A Pike will always try to swallow its prey head first. So the significance of 'red' will help it to target a fish in the right way.

Pike anglers realised that there could be something in this red thing and 'Bait Flags' were invented. Small plastic bright red flags that slip on to the barbed hook point before the bait fish is attached.



Lures and Spinners very often have anything from small flecks to being completely covered. Something as simple as red wool wrapped around the treble hook on a spinner or lure can make a difference. The effectiveness of two toned lures has been proven in both light and dark light conditions.

Another bait jumping on the red band wagon is the good old dead bait. Red is not the only colour baits can be dyed of course. If you can get the colour dye you want, then you can have that colour bait.



I wonder if those fishing deeper waters have tried violet coloured bait?

A famously effective dyed bait is the humble maggot.

I'll put money on the fact that Red is the most popular colour. Worms are naturally a reddish colour too. Even if the colour does drop out, the wriggling movement will be enough to attract the attention of hungry fish. Any of these could trigger a strike from a fish, probably in shallower, clearer water during the colder winter months.

So what does it all mean?

Well, it is difficult to say to be honest. There is no real proof to say that Red makes any difference or not. But if Red catches you a Pike, how can anyone say it doesn't.

We haven't mentioned the last creature that can be lured in by shiny new brightly coloured baits....

The Common Angler..

## LURE FISHING FOR PIKE

Fishing for Pike with artificial lures has exploded in the UK. Crankbaits, Soft plastic lures, Spinners, Jerkbait, Swimbait and Surface lures are all used to catch a variety of fish and not just Pike. We will look at what need to get started.



## LURE FISHING RODS

There are a thousand different types of lure rod available to you, as usual, I will try to keep it as straightforward as possible.

A rod that enable you to fish with a variety of lures is preferable. So something like 8ft (2.4 metres) is ideal.

Lure rods are different from other coarse fishing rods in that they are measured by the weight they can cast, instead of how much weight it takes them to bend 90 degrees (test curve) 15 - 40 gram cast rating should be plenty strong enough to cast most lures and enough power to stop a decent Pike in its tracks.

## LURE FISHING REELS

To balance you reel to your rod, you need some fairly small. You probably will not be having to cast great distances to reach your target, so large capacity spools are not necessary.

Fixed spool reels are by far the easiest to use and shouldn't cost a fortune either.



A reel of between 2500 and 3000 is usual for spinning for Pike, although, if you are fishing heavy lures for much bigger Pike, you may need to consider a 4000 sized reel.

## LURE FISHING LINE

Nylon Monofilament line (Mono) is the go to line for most fishing, particularly for beginners. But lure fishing is a method that you may want consider using braid.

Braid is made from using multiple strands of man made fibres like Dacron, Spectra and Dyneema. It has little or no stretch and is therefore much more sensitive, allowing the angler to 'feel' every movement of the lure and every lunge of a fighting fish.

Braid is much thinner than Mono (1/3 to 1/4 of the diameter of the same breaking strain in Mono) making it more soft and supple.

The disadvantage of braid is that it is easily cut by sharp objects such as stones and mussels.

Braid is quite slippery too, particularly when it is new. You have to be careful which knots you use, the Palomar knot is by far the best.

Braid is less prone to twisting than Mono, but keep an eye out for loops forming on the spool. Catch them early and might be able to unpick them.



Because of the very low diameter you can fit more on a spool, but put some Mono backing line (if it's a deep spooled reel), so you don't use braid that you will never fish with.

The biggest draw back of braid is the price. It is WAY more expensive than Mono.

As your coach, I would recommend that you start lure fishing with 10lb Mono and work up to considering 20lb braid.

It works too well for me to tell you not to.

## WIRE TRACE

DDAS rules that a spin trace of a minimum of 6lb breaking strain is to be used and it must be shop bought one and not home made.

When lure fishing, you will want everything to act as naturally as possible. Having a heavy wire trace will be too stiff and ruin the effect. Having said that, if you're using a 20lb braid main line, a 6lb trace and you catch a 15lb Pike, that will place an enormous strain on the trace and your nerves. If you learn there bigger fish about, think about balancing your tackle accordingly and use a slightly stronger trace.

## LURES

You will not want me to go through every single lure available and, to be honest, I don't want to either. But I will give you examples of the types of lures available to you. Starting with a

### SPINNER:

Brightly coloured, shiny or both, spinners will flash and vibrate causing predators to attack. Simply reeled in a varying speeds.



### PLUGS:

A group of hard bodied lures that are known by many names. Minnows, Crankbaits and Wobblers are just some. Minnows are long and thin a bit like, well..... Minnows....



Crankbaits are hard, deeper bodied lures with two or three hooks, sometimes called 'Wobblers' that have a swimming vane, lip or bill at varying angles. The vane will make the lure act like a swimming fish when it is reeled in. Some contain metal balls inside to make rattle and give extra attraction.



### SPOONS:

Even I didn't realise just how many different types of spoon lures there are!

Usually highly polished or brightly coloured metal spoons in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes.



### JOINTED

LURES: Similar to wobblers only

with a joint or hinged in the middle.

The joint gives a swimming action to the lure.



### SWIMBAITS:

Hard or soft bodied lure with two, three, four or more hinges making them 'swim' very realistically indeed.



### JERKBAITS:

Usually wooden bodied with brightly coloured paint. Floating for shallow or weedy water, sinking for deeper water and

Suspended or neutral colder conditions when you want to keep the lure in the 'strike zone' for longer. By flicking or 'jerk'ing the rod up and down, and left and right, a Jerkbait will mimic a dying fish.



### SURFACE POPPERS:

Floating, neutral or sinking, these lures have a flatter nose. This 'concave' shape will use the water to drive the lure to the surface and make a lot of splash or 'noise' to attract predators. Mimicking fish or even birds that Pike are so partial to, from time to time.



### JIG HEADS:

Specially designed hooks have 'lead' weight cast towards the eye to make the lures sink quickly. A soft rubbery body is threaded onto the hook shank up to the weight which has either a fish like tail or a flattened tail to give swimming action as they rise and fall. They are then reeled in using a sharp upwards motion of the rod as you wind. This 'Sink and Draw' technique is to mimic an injured or dying fish.



## PIKE ON THE FLY

We don't really touch on fly fishing much at DDAS Juniors and maybe it's something that will change in the future.

Someone that does know about it is my fellow coach, Tim Glass.

Tim has been kind enough to give me some guidance on fishing fly lures for Pike, and now I'm going to pass that knowledge on to you.

Fly fishing is all about casting and because I've never done it, I'm not going to pretend I know how to do it here. Let's go straight to the equipment.

## PIKE ON THE FLY: RODS

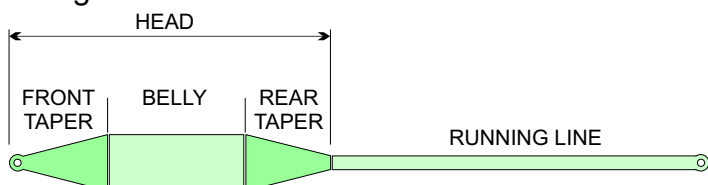
There's two 'weights' of rods we were going to look at. (Fly rods are rated by the lines they are designed to cast). For the lighter set up for smaller Pike and/or Perch and Chub, you're going to need a 6/7 line rated rod with a reel to match.



For the heavier set up, go for a 8/9 weight rod and reel. Which rods you go for is a personal choice depending on how they feel to you and, of course, what you can afford.

## PIKE ON THE FLY: RODS

Fly lines.... This is really where the action is at and where some really weird words live. The light set up needs a weight forward fly line, WF, for short. A WF line means that the first 10 metres or so, is thicker and heavier and then tapers back to a thinner more usable line about 30 metres in total, for easy casting.



Choose a floating fly line and to the of that is tied a 6ft (2 metre) length of 40lb mono called a leader. Tied to the end of the leader is a Tippet. A short piece of either 30lb fluorocarbon or Flexi Trace about 18" (45cm) to which the fly lure is attached



For the heavier set up, it's pretty much the same except that it's 'beefed up' for bigger fish. 8/9 weight forward floating line, but this time with a Polytip between the fly line and the leader.



A Polytip or Polyleader is a 4ft (1.2 metre) length of tapered fly line that can be bought with different sinking rates from Hover to Extra Super Fast.

This enables you to fish a floating fly line at varying depths without having to change the whole set up around for new spool of line, reducing the weight of tackle needed. Leaders and Tippets are the same as those for the light set up.

# PIKE ON THE FLY

As far as Pike flies are concerned they are a world apart from regular fly patterns and designed to mimic injured or dying fish as opposed to insects. The advice is to keep them as fish-like as possible.

There is no need to use treble hooks either. A single, strong patterned hook will be fine. From the bit of research I have done, Pike flies are very graceful in use, dancing and gliding through the water, almost ghostly in fact. When you use these lures, it is important to understand how they work underwater. So watching videos will give you a much better understanding of how they should be retrieved.



Roach



Perch

Articulated flies are like hinged jerkbaits in that they 'swim' invitingly in a way that hungry Pike cannot resist. As you can see from the picture, Pike flies can be quite large.



Like all things in fishing, this booklet only just scratches the surface compared to what can be learned. But you now have enough knowledge to get you started and a foundation from which you can form your own ideas. I hope that you spend some time fishing for Pike. They really are an incredible species to catch. Powerful and intimidating with a sinister beauty that

you have to admire. As long as you are careful and treat them with respect, a day's Pike can turn into a day that you may never forget

## SUMMARY

During my time match fishing, I spent a lot of down time, away from competition, fishing for Pike. Writing this booklet, I have been trying to think why Pike are such an attraction?

I think it might be because everything feels so 'beefed up' and heavy. Heavy baits, stronger line, aggressive looking hooks to catch big fish.

More than anything though, Pike are THE freshwater predator. Yes there are some beautiful Perch, some frightening looking Zander and some huge Catfish and even big Eels. But nothing looks like a Pike, nothing takes like a Pike and no fish has as much myth surrounding them as Pike do.

Stories of massive Pike taking Ducks and wild fowl from the surface. Tales even of Lambs disappearing and attacks on swimmers, all give the Pike some extra Kudos. Fully deserved if the stories are true.

I have experienced for myself the atmosphere change just before the floats slide away, the water seemingly going flat and birds taking to wing, apparently fearful of a nearby Pike.

It is fair to say that no other fish stirs the imagination quite like Pike do.

I have learned, however, that they are a delicate fish, prone to suffering and injury. They deserve to be looked after like any other species. Much maligned in the past, Pike are now being more protected and rightly so.

A lot of my experiences with Pike came during river matches when their presence wasn't that welcome. But I can remember looking at the water, as I tied a new hooklink on after I have been bitten off AGAIN, and thinking about how much I secretly admired the mighty Pike for its cold determination to feed regardless of any intrusions from me as an angler.

When compared to Pike, you have to wonder if we are as much of a developed predator species as we like to think we are?

You will never forget your first Pike. Mine was 3.5lbs from Brogbrough Lake in Bedfordshire on a dead Roach. I was 13. Many, many years ago.

**Graham Howard**  
Junior Secretary