

BOLTON ABBEY FISHERY

FAQs

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What can I expect to catch?

Bolton Abbey contains a good stock of both wild and stocked brown trout averaging 10"-12". There are specimens that run upwards of 1kg which turn up each season. The stocked brown trout are diploid fish from our captive bred stock which maintain the vigour and hard fighting characteristic of wild brown trout

Good specimens of grayling can also be found up to 1kg although not as numerous as the brown trout.

I've heard the river is busy with dog walkers and visitors?

The Estate is undeniably popular with tourists and numbers will be especially high during Bank Holidays, weekends and the summer months during hot spells!

That said, the tourists favour the heat of the day whereas the fish and subsequently the fishing prefers the cooler mornings and evenings before the day tripping tourists have arrived.

If you do just fancy a pop down during the day, however, the Estate's plan to expand its riparian fencing should create greater sanctuary for the fish and fishermen and there is always a mile of double bank fishing at the Beamsley Beat which is not accessible to the public.

When is the best time?

Given decent spring hatches, early season can be superb with good daytime sport expected through to June. Summer tends to see fish revise their feeding periods and be reluctant to rise in low water and sunny conditions. The specimen fish in particular prefer to wait until evening time to coincide with sedge and blue winged olive activity and lowering light conditions.

With that said, due to its dense tree cover, Strid Wood is well worth a visit even on stifling hot summer days as is targeting pocket water and riffles with nymphs and North Country Flies.

August through to October belongs to pale wateries and needle flies, which sees both trout and grayling taking advantage as the days grow shorter.

As long as floods don't hamper access, October offers first class dry fly fishing for grayling.

Recommended Equipment

Rods of 8.6 ft - 9.6 ft rod length will suffice, however a 10 ft rod can be useful for fishing nymphs and North Country Flies. Line rating # 4 - 5 weight lines. For nymphing tippets of 5lb (4x) will protect you from snags. For dry flies or North country flies a 9ft, 5lb tapered leader is recommended with a tippet of 3lb (6x). Minimum leader length is the length of your rod as a starting point.

Is wading allowed?

Although it's possible to catch fish without wading it can limit your ability to reach fish without avoiding drag. Thigh waders will suffice however chest waders are recommended as is a wading staff and life preserver.

What flies work the best?

There is a long associated history of North Country Flies often referred to as Spiders. Common patterns include: Partridge and Orange, Snipe and Purple, Waterhen Bloa, Black Magic or a Stewart's Black Spider sizes #14-16.

Bolton Abbey trout are happy to rise freely most of the time. Successful patterns include olive or pale yellow F flies, Grey Duster parachute style, Klinkhammer dark tan, Elk hair and balloon caddis patterns sizes #18-14.

A selection of weighted and unweighted Pheasant tail and Hares ear nymphs will do on most occasions size #16-14.

For deep fast flowing areas then heavy weighted cased caddis, Czech nymph or Ryac patterns will prove useful.

What fly life is present?

The river contains a varied population of aquatic invertebrates. An examination of the underside of submerged rocks will reveal an insight into an important part of the Trout and Graylings diet.

These include Olive Uprights, Large Dark Olives, Yellow May Duns, Stoneflies, several caddis species (notably Grannom) and March Browns.

There are also good numbers of Large Brooks and Blue Winged Olives.

Terrestrials include all manner although aphids can be very abundant as can be black gnats, hawthorn flies and daddy long legs (crane flies).

Do you have any advice?

River fishing is very different from stillwater and novices are often daunted by where to start or go. Be reassured, the river is managed by a full time river keeper who is on hand to offer advice and assistance if asked and will help with suggestions.

The key to success is confidence. Time spent on the water gaining experience and stealth, especially in the quiet parts of the river, will pay dividends. Observation cannot be over stressed and taking time to study the river before you enter. Step back often and rest whilst observing or move on and return later once you have rested the pool. A spooked or wary fish is difficult to catch and most have fled the scene before you even cast your fly!

Search the water with your flies before you enter. Trout are easily spooked particularly in low water and shallows and an alarmed fish fleeing across a pool unseen by you as you hastily enter the river will see all the other occupants of the pool alerted to danger and reluctant to feed confidently. This applies especially to trout, grayling can be more forgiving.

I understand you have a river bailiff. Are they available for lessons and tutorials?

Mark has been employed as the river bailiff at Bolton Abbey since 2000 and has an intimate knowledge of the river, its pools and aquatic life. He is a former member of the Association of Advanced Professional Game Angling Instructors and is therefore highly qualified to teach beginners and experienced anglers the skills to get the most out of a day's fishing at Bolton Abbey. Mark is a constant presence on the banks and is always available for help and guidance. If required, more formal lessons can be booked on enquiry.

What are the benefits of membership?

- Capped membership at 75 fishermen over its 5 miles of double bank fishing
- Continue to release 1,500 10"-14" diploid fish from our captive bred stock to maintain the vigour and hard fighting characteristic of wild brown trout
- Provide padlock keys allowing out of hours riverside access/parking enabling our fishermen to fish the Estate during the hours that suit them
- Expand on the existing livestock exclusion fencing to create:
 - a more stable bank
 - more diverse bank vegetation
 - increase terrestrial and aquatic insect life
 - more sanctuary areas for fish and fishermen alike
 - reduction in particulate runoff and sediment in spawning grounds

Membership will also include:

- 2 guest fishing tickets per annum
- Under 18s can fish free of charge when accompanied by a member
- Introduce a member for 10% reduction in both year one fees*
- An annual season ticket pass for one vehicle to Bolton Abbey car parks with associated member benefits, which in brief are:
 - 10% discount off giftware, food & drink items in the Village & Cavendish shop
 - 10% discount at the Cavendish Pavilion
 - 10% discount on food at the Devonshire Arms Country House Hotel and Spa (excluding the Burlington Restaurant)
 - 10% discount on food at the Devonshire Fell not applicable on Bank Holidays .
- Discounted members' dinner (on a date to be agreed)

Where and when can I fish on a day ticket?

Up to a maximum of 5 day tickets per day are available from 1st June to 15th March. Day ticket fishermen are welcome to fish the entirety of the Estate's waters from Barden Bridge to Kex Beck and from first light to last light, but parking, out of hours to the Estate's main car parks, is limited to the spaces at Bolton Bridge and Barden Bridge. Once open, the ticket also includes free access to all the Estate's car parks. Day ticket fishermen should ensure they have vacated the car parks by the allocated closing time.

What are the Estate's car park opening hours?

<https://boltonabbey.com/>

Is there a plan of the river with named pools?

<https://boltonabbey.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bolton-abbey-River-pools-2021.jpg>

Is there a plan of the facilities and parking?

<https://boltonabbey.com/your-visit/bolton-abbey-map/>