

Fishing Basics

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FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Scouting America Fishing Basics

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NCAP Standard: NA

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to do the following:

Successfully lead a Cub Scout and Scout BSA Fishing program.

Materials Needed for this Session:

1. See Resources Section on Page 2

Session Timeline: 1 hour

Time	Action	Delivery Method
-	Pre-class Preparation	NA
5 minutes	Welcome & Introduction	Presentation / Discussion
50 minutes	Module 1 Instruction	Presentation / Discussion
5 minutes	Summary & Closing	Presentation / Discussion

PRE – Class Preparation

Resources	Instructors & Staff
• Attendance Roster. • Fishing Basics & Fishing Basics Facilitator Guide. • Laptop, projector, screen and extension cord. • Handout of Fishing Basics presentation or send PDF via email to participants. • Hands-on supplies: ○ Cane or crappie poles & spincast rods. ○ Trout floats or 1” bobbers or smaller. ○ 6- or 8-pound monofilament line or paracord to tie the clinch knot. ○ Circle hooks & “J” Hooks (size 6 or 8). ○ Split shot. ○ Pliers, hemostat or hook remover. ○ Nippers. ○ Paper clips. ○ Gummy worms. ○ Treble hooks. • Basic Fishing Outfit (Slide 4) Show how the terminal tackle is attached. • Basic Fishing Tackle (Slide 5) Hand out float, line and split shot. • Hooks (Slide 6) Show circle and “J” hooks. • Learning Knots (Slide 7) Hand out paperclips and monofilament or paracord. • Have Fishing Regulations to hand out. (Slide 9) • Put a worm on a Hook. (Slide 23) Hand out gummy worms and paper clips. • Some Artificial Lures. (Slide 24) Bring a lure with Treble hooks to show why we recommend inline single hooks. • Cane or crappie poles and spincast rods for participants to use. (Slides 25 & 26) • Backyard Bass (Final Slide 32)	

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Slide	Instructor Talking Points
Fishing Basics  Tom Bourret, Connecticut DEEP Justin Wiggins, Connecticut DEEP Fred Monahan, Scouting America  	• Fishing Basics is based on the Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education (CARE) program with their permission. • It was adopted by Scouting America and developed to meet beginning Scout angler needs. • You will receive access to the Fishing Basics presentation as part of this course.
 Intro to Fishing Developed by: Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education (CARE) program BSA National Fishing Team    	• Welcome to the Scouting America Fishing Basics Course for Scouters • I am ____ from __ and I'll be your instructor. Ask other instructors to introduce themselves. • Please tell us who you are, where you're from, what you hope to learn from this course and what is your plan to DO with what you've learned.
Topics 3 ▶ Basic Fishing Tackle ▶ Fishing knots ▶ Fishing Ethics ▶ Fishing Regulations ▶ Finding Fish in a Pond or Lake ▶ Fishing Trip Checklist ▶ Fish Identification ▶ Baits and Lures ▶ Casting ▶ Fishing Techniques © 2026, Scouting America	• This course is taught in this one session. • These are the primary topics we'll cover.
Basic Fishing Outfits 4    2-Piece Spincast Outfit Telescoping Pole 3-Piece Cane Pole © 2026, Scouting America	• We recommend a telescoping, fiberglass, fixed-line pole for beginners. No confusing reels! Affordable! Easy to use! Easy to store! ○ Check out B'n'M Black Widow Poles. • Cane poles can be used, but are more fragile and difficult to store. • Have a cane or crappie pole to show the participants. ○ Length of the cane pole line equals the length of the pole. • Show how to attach the terminal tackle (hook, split shot and bobber).

Basic Fishing Tackle 5 Spincast reel Split shot sinker Foam float Circle hook The split-shot goes below the float to reduce tangling when casting. Hook sizes 6-10 perfect for freshwater fishing. Point Shank Barb Bend Split Shot Weight © 2024, Scouting America	- This basic terminal tackle setup is just right for beginner fishing with bait. Demonstrate how to setup the Basic Fishing Terminal Tackle. - Attach the float/bobber. - Attach the split shot sinker, show how that works. - Talk about the different parts of the hook. Pinch the barbs to create a “barbless” hook. Have extra tackle so the participants can do the same setup after you show them.
Hooks 6 ▶ “J” hook – Used as a bait hook. ▶ “Inline J” hook – Is used to replace treble hooks on lures. ▶ “Circle” hook – Can be used as a bait hook. Best choice for youth; safer and easier for young Scouts to use. © 2024, Scouting America	“J” hooks: The point of the hook is pointed upwards. How many fingers and clothes does this hook catch? - Inline J hooks: Used as a bait hook or to replace treble hooks on lure. - Circle hooks: The point is bent towards the hook shaft. Since the point of the hook is bent in, it catches fish and not many fingers. Show actual hooks so the participants can see the difference.
Learning Knots: the EDGE Method 7 ▶ Hand out 6-lb monofilament line and paperclips. Bend each paperclip into a practice “hook”. ▶ Explain what the clinch knot is used for, why strong knots are important, why knots must be <u>neatly formed</u>, why knots should be <u>lubricated</u> before tightening, and why knots should be <u>tested</u> before use. ▶ Demonstrate how to tie the knot. ▶ Guide each Scout while he or she ties the knot. ▶ Enable Scouts to succeed on their own. Ask them to tie the knot a few times. www.animatedknots.com and www.101knots.com are excellent online resources Tying a Clinch Knot 1. Pass the working end through the hook eye 2. Wrap it 5 times around the standing line 3. Pass it through the first loop 4. Pull it and the standing line to tighten 5. Cut off excess tag end 6. The knot is complete © 2024, Scouting America	- The clinch knot is just right for beginners – simple and strong. - Knot tying is an important skill, and the techniques discussed here are important for strength. - The EDGE Method is good for most skills-based activities. - Knots must be neat, lubricate your knot before tightening it and then test your knot. Demonstrate how to tie the Clinch Knot. - Hand out the monofilament along with the paperclips so the participants can tie this knot on the paperclip. - Participants can hold onto the paperclips for later use with the Gummy Worms (slide 23). - Paracord can also be used.
Outdoor Ethics 8 1. Try to retrieve ALL lost fishing gear, monofilament, hooks, weights, etc. 2. Properly dispose all discarded fishing gear, especially monofilament and fluorocarbon. 3. Pack out all trash - yours and any that you find. Recycle all plastic. 4. Respect wildlife. 5. Be considerate of others. Leave your fishing area cleaner than you found it. Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints. © 2024, Scouting America	- Outdoor Ethics are important to teach Scouts at an early age. - Follow the rules, respect others, pick up your trash and leave your fishing area cleaner than you found it. - Again, Keep It Simple; Make It Fun (KISMIF) so they will enjoy becoming a “conservation helper”.

Fishing Regulations 9 ▶ Your State Fishing Guide contains regulations and advice concerning: ➢ Fish Species Identification. ➢ Bag Limits. ➢ Seasons & Size Limits. ➢ License Requirements. ➢ Where to go Fishing & Waterbody Regulations. ➢ What Gear You Can Use. © 2024, Scouting America	• Your local state fishing guide is usually free, is a great resource for regulations, where to go fishing, and fish identification. • Your state fish and game department is a great resource, and it is usually more than happy to help you with gear and other resources. • Handout a copy of your state Fishing regulations.
Finding Pond and Lake Fish in the Spring 10 From Lake Fly-Fishing Manifesto by Mike Croft	• After a long cold winter, fish start moving from the deep water to shallower areas where the water is warmer to feed and spawn. ○ Tip: Look at the northern and western banks of the pond or lake since these areas get the most direct sunlight throughout the day. This water is warmer and fish are here. • Look for structure like weed beds and submerged logs in the shallow areas because fish use this for protection and to ambush prey. • Shallow structure is a productive fishing area.
Finding Pond and Lake Fish in the Summer 11 From Lake Fly-Fishing Manifesto by Mike Croft	• Fishing in summer can be challenging since fish are looking for cooler water to escape the heat. • Fish go to deeper water, it's cooler, better oxygenated and food is there. • Even in the shallows, fish use cover such as weeds and submerged logs because its cooler and they can feed. • Fishing in the early morning and evening is better since the water cools off and the fish rise to feed. • Remember; heat pushes fish to cover and into deeper water.
Fishing Trip Checklist 12 • Check the weather (rain gear). • Check local fishing regulations (available online). • Check your gear (fresh line, hooks, floats, bait, tackle box, eye protection, etc.). • Tell someone where you are going. • Scout essentials (next slide). Invite a friend - share the fun! © 2024, Scouting America	• Discuss special gear you want the Parents and Scouts to bring. • Mention that water and snacks should be brought along. • Why check your fishing gear? • Tell others where you and your buddy are fishing. • Dress for the weather. Be Prepared!

Scout Essentials

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Cub Scouts

- First Aid Kit
- Water Bottle
- Flashlight
- Trail Food
- Sun Protection, Hat & Sun Screen
- Whistle

Scouts BSA (additional)

- Pocket knife
- Rain Gear
- Extra Clothing
- Map & Compass
- Matches & Fire Starters



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- What Scout Essentials should you ask Scouts and parents to bring?
- This is the Basic list of Scout Essentials; add any additional items that your unit would like to include.

Fish Identification

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- A great way to help Scouts and Scouters learn to identify the fish.
- Go to the local Fish & Wildlife center or the Department of Natural Resources, many times they have fish identification posters to give away.
- Use the following slides to identify common fish.
- In the following slides:
 - Look at the different color patterns.
 - Various patterns help camouflage the fish in its habitat.
 - Notice the different locations of the fins this allows the fish to maneuver in different ways.



Pumpkinseed Sunfish

- Pumpkinseed Sunfish



Bluegill Sunfish

- Bluegill Sunfish

17  Largemouth Bass	Largemouth Bass
18  Yellow Perch	Yellow Perch
19  Rainbow Trout	Rainbow Trout
20  Chain Pickerel	Chain Pickerel
21  Channel Catfish	Channel Catfish

Natural Baits

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Live baits commonly used for fishing.



Worm: use for small fish.
Put the worm on the hook as you would put a sock on a foot to cover the hook.



Meal Worm
Put the meal worm on the shaft of the hook leaving the hook bare.



Minnow or Shiner
Place hook through lips or back in front of dorsal fin.



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- Shown are some of the more common natural fishing baits. These baits work by mimicking the natural food sources of fish.
- Various ways in which a bait can be hooked.
 - Threading a worm on a hook; it's just like putting a sock on your foot. It's important to have the point of the hook sticking out of the worm.
 - Thread the hook through the side of the meal worm.
 - Place the hook through the minnow's lips or just behind the dorsal fin so the minnow swims more naturally.

Putting a Worm on a Hook

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- ▶ Hand out a paperclip and Gummy Worm to each Scout. Have each one form a "hook" from the paperclip and break the worm in half. No fair eating yet!
- ▶ **Explain** how the worm should be threaded on the paperclip hook so it just covers the hook.
- ▶ **Demonstrate** how to put a worm on a hook (like putting a sock on your foot).
- ▶ **Guide** the Scouts as they attempt to thread the worm on the hook.
- ▶ **Enable** the Scouts to try threading pieces of worm on the hook a couple of times.



Encourage the Scouts to eat their worms, *after* taking them off the hook!

Note: There are many ways to thread a worm on a hook. Short pieces that cover just the hook are good for small-mouthed fish, like Bluegills. Longer pieces that wiggle are good for large-mouthed fish, like Bass. © 2016, Scouting America

- **Hand out the Gummy worms and paper clips** demonstrate how to put a worm on a paperclip using these items and then have the participant's practice.
 - *Reuse the paperclip* from tying the clinch knot (slide 7).
 - The part Scouts find fun is "eating" the gummy worm once practice is done and it's *off the paperclip*.
- It's important to note that short pieces of bait are usually more effective at hooking fish, especially smaller fish; like bluegills.
- Great demonstration to take back to the unit for a fun hands-on activity.

Some Artificial Lures

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**Not recommended for Cub Scouts or young Scouts BSA.
Replace any treble hooks with single inline hooks!**

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- Artificial lures are tricky and not recommended to use with Cub Scouts and Scout BSA youth due to the treble hooks.
- Best to replace treble hooks with single inline hooks.
- Catch rate is not changed through the hook rather by keeping your line tight.
- **Display lures that have treble hooks.**

Casting a Cane or Crappie Pole

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1. Hold the rod in one hand and the bobber in your other hand.
2. Point the rod tip where you want your bobber and bait to go.
3. Lift the rod tip and let go of the bobber so it swings outward like a pendulum.
4. Lower the rod as the bobber and bait swing out.
5. After the bobber lands, lower the rod to give a little slack line from the rod tip to the bobber.



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- We recommend a telescoping, fiberglass, fixed-line cane pole for beginners. No confusing reels! Affordable! Easy to use! Easy to store!
- Swing cast, also known as, the "Pendulum" cast is when you gently lower your rod while holding the float, lift the rod tip up while letting go of your bobber.
 - No side arm casting.
- There's no casting in the traditional sense. Your reach is dictated by the length of the pole and your line attached to the pole.
- **Hand out the cane or crappie poles**, demonstrate the swing cast and then have the participants practice this cast.

Casting a Spincast Rod

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You can use the simple cane pole swing cast or the overhead cast below.



Hold the rod with reel facing UP. Push and hold the button on the reel.



Look around for hazards. If it's safe, slowly bring the rod back over your shoulder.



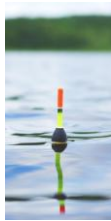
To cast, swing the rod forward, releasing the button when the rod is just past the vertical position.

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- After mastering the swing cast, you can move onto casting a spincast outfit.
- Have a target to aim at (hula hoop, paper plate, etc.) and have a casting plug attached to the line.
- Using your dominant hand, press the button, lift the rod up over your shoulder, bring the rod forward & release the button.
- The line will go forward, once it hits the target, turn the handle forward to engage the line.
 - No side arm casting.
- What better way to practice casting while using Backyard Bass (BYB). Helps teach casting to Scouts of all ages; it's simple and fun.
- **Hand out the spincast rods:** demonstrate the over hand cast and then have the participants practice this cast.

Detect the Bite

- ▶ Visual (best)
 - Bobber, Float or Strike Indicator.
 - Line Motion or Stopping.
 - Water Motion or Swirls.
 - Fish Take or Flash.
- ▶ Touch
 - Line Tightening.
 - Rod Tip Motion.



Set the Hook

- ▶ "J" Hook
 - A short, quick set by raising the rod tip is usually successful.
- ▶ Circle Hook
 - Just hold the rod steady - the fish will set the hook for you.

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- Floats/Bobbers are indicators that help you visually see that a fish is on because you see it moving.
- A gentle tug is another indicator since it is something you feel through the handle of the fishing rod.
- Once you know you have a fish on when using a
 - "J" hook, a quick set is done by raising the pole or rod tip up is usually successful.
 - "Circle" hook, you just need to hold the pole or rod because the fish will set the hook for you.
- When raising the pole upward fast and hard, many times will bring the hook flying back at you without a fish on it.

Play the Fish

- ▶ Maintain line tension. Keep the rod tip up - no slack!
- ▶ Tire the fish with side pressure.
- ▶ Bring the fish in quickly - don't tire it too much.
- ▶ If fishing with a reel:
 - Set the reel's drag to keep tension but still let the fish pull out line without breaking it.
 - As the fish tires, begin to reel it in until it makes another run or you can capture it.
- ▶ If fishing without a reel:
 - Keep steady pressure on the fish.
 - Lift the rod or swing it to the side so the fish can be landed.

Land the Fish

- ▶ Capture the fish gently in a WET net or in your WET hand.
- ▶ Protect the fish's gills and delicate protective coating.
- ▶ If possible, keep the fish in the water.



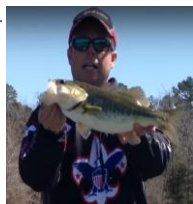
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- Playing a fish begins after it's hooked.
- You want to bring in the fish as quickly as possible.
- Use line control by keeping your tip up so the line is tight.
- You play the fish by letting it run, but not too much to tire it out.
- Fixed line/Cane poles: Use gentle side pressure and even submerge the rod to tire the fish.
- Reels/Spincast Rods: Use the drag to keep some tension on the line since you want the fish to still be able to pull out the line and not break it.

Handle the Fish and Remove the Hook

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- ▶ Wet hands to protect the fish's protective coating.
- ▶ Cradle the fish gently, supporting the head or belly and the tail.
- ▶ Minimize time out of water - about 10 seconds.
- ▶ Be careful of teeth, sharp gill covers, spines, etc.
- ▶ Use forceps or pliers to remove the hook.
- ▶ Be quick and gentle - minimize trauma.
- ▶ If the hook has been swallowed, cut the line before releasing the fish. The hook will dissolve or pass through the fish in time.



And don't forget to smile for the camera!

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- Have someone with a camera ready.
- Have a fish de-hooker or forceps handy.
- When your fish is in, WET your hands before handling it to protect the slime coat. The slime protects the fish.
- Support the fish by the tail and the belly while holding it horizontally.
- Keep the fish in the water and handle it as little as possible.

Release the Fish 30 ▶ Must be done right if you want the fish to survive. ▶ After removing the hook, hold the fish gently in the water until it recovers and swims off strongly. ➢ Facing up-current in moving water. ➢ Facing toward deeper water or shelter in still water. Do NOT move the fish forward and backward to flow water through the gills. This can collapse the gills. ▶ Take the time to make sure the fish is ready to go on its own - usually a minute or less.  © 2020, Scouting America	• Catch and Release was promoted by our founder, Lord Baden-Powell. It is important to maintain healthy fisheries for us and others to enjoy. • Proper handling and release techniques are important for fish survival. • Hands are always WET before you handle the fish. • If you are unable to remove the hook since it is in the belly of the fish, cut the line. The fish will eventually pass the hook or it will dissolve.
Equipment List for Fishing Trip 31 ▶ Spincast outfits and Cane or Crappie poles rigged with 6lb or 8lb monofilament line. ▶ Circle or barbles hooks – size 6 or 8. Always have extra. ▶ Backyard Bass Educator Kit. ▶ First Aid Kit. ▶ Extra snacks and water. ▶ Cooler with ice to keep worms or grubs cool. ▶ Cooler with ice if you are keeping the fish that is caught. ▶ Rags. ▶ Fishing license. ▶ Extra floats or bobbers 1" or smaller. ▶ Pliers, hemostats or fish hook remover. ▶ Fingernail clippers or nippers. ▶ Fishing net. ▶ Sunglasses and sunscreen. ▶ Fishing hat – wide brimmed. ▶ State Fishing regulations. ▶ Scouts to bring their Scouting Essentials backpack.  © 2020, Scouting America	• Plan a fishing trip with your Den, Pack, or Troop to take what you learned today and put it into action. • List of fishing equipment that you should have along at a minimum. • Have a tackle box to place the extra floats, sinkers, hooks, rolls of 6lb or 8lb monofilament line, hook removers and other gear into. • Ensure anyone <i>16 and over who will fish or help the Scouts fish, must have</i> their state fishing license if you are fishing on public waters.
Congratulations on Completing Fishing Basics! Plan and go on that Fishing Trip!  	• Plan and go on your fishing trip! • Cub Scouts and Scout BSA youth want to fish – it's fun! • Fishing is a great family activity. • Your state has diverse fishing opportunities. • Fish On! • Setup Backyard Bass and have fun casting! FISH ON!