

Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



Taking better pike photographs

Today's 'idiot proof' cameras, film and digital, that do everything for you make it really easy for anglers to take good quality pictures of their prize captures. Using an auto-focus, auto exposure camera with a built in flash (even a relatively inexpensive one) there are no excuses for out of focus or poorly exposed pictures anymore - so long as you follow a few simple rules.

First of all, set the camera to auto or program mode, so the exposure is taken care of, and make sure it is in auto-focus mode (if there is an option). Also check that any close-up or macro facility is switched off! If it is a dull day, or it is near dusk or dawn, then switch the flash on if it doesn't come on automatically. Switch the flash on on bright days too if you are unable to get the sun behind you as you take the picture. You will need to come out of auto mode to do this on most cameras, and entering programme mode usually works for this to provide 'fill in' flash. Consult the manual for your camera on this subject.



Photo taken with the sun behind the angler using no flash.



The same fish photographed with the flash turned on.

Given that the camera takes care of the technical problems, all that remains for the anglers to worry about are making the fish and angler being photographed look good, and getting the shots well framed. It is up to the angler with the camera to make sure of the following:

- * Pick a location for the photographs that doesn't have a cluttered background.
- * Make sure fish is clean - no grass or leaves stuck to it.
- * Tell the angler holding the fish how to hold it so the tail isn't folded back, his hands don't show too much, and the fins are well displayed.

The photographer also has to make sure the picture is well framed:

- * Get in close to remove as much of the background as possible and to make the pike appear larger in the frame.
- * Don't be afraid to turn the camera on its side to get a vertical shot.
- * There is no need to get all of the angler in the picture, so long as all the fish is framed and the angler's face can be seen a good shot should result. Even cutting off the top of the angler's head - but not all of it - is acceptable!

Take a look at the best pictures you see in angling magazines to see how they are composed and how the angler is holding the pike to get some ideas for making good pike photographs. The main thing to remember is to make the pike fill as much as possible of the viewfinder.

Unless you are attempting to hide the background, the photographer should always be at the same level, or lower, than the angler with the fish.

If the sunlight is bright, or if using flash, it is a good idea to tilt the top of the fish's back slightly towards the camera so the flank of the fish is not vertical. This bounces the light downwards so it won't reflect directly into the camera lens and 'White out' the detail on the fish's flanks.

Finally, remember to keep the pike out of the water for as short a time as possible. Half a dozen photographs should be plenty to get at least one really good one, and taking more rarely seems to make them any better. Put the pike's welfare before good photographs every time.



This picture is actually better composed than many



But closer framing improves it even more.

