

# Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



## Weighing & retaining pike



Once you have safely landed and unhooked your pike you might want to weigh it. There are a great many well designed weigh slings on the market today and one of these should always be used. Some weigh sling have been designed to be used as unhooking mats as well as weigh slings, and you may feel this better suits your requirements. Always make sure that the sling is wetted on the inside before carefully placing the pike in it.

### Weighing a pike

To get an accurate weight for your pike, the scales should be zeroed with the empty, but damp, sling in place. Then when the fish is weighed in the sling the weight you read off the scales will be the weight of the fish - no need for difficult maths deducting the weight of the sling!

### Retaining pike

It is important to ensure that pike are always returned to the water with the minimum amount of fuss and they should not be retained for any longer than necessary. For this reason it pays to be well organised by having unhooking and weighing equipment prepared in advance. Once a pike has been weighed it can usually be released immediately. Of course, if it is a big one you might want to photograph it and your photographic equipment should also be organised before you take the pike from the water.



If you are fishing with a companion this is not a problem as they can take the photographs for you. However, if you are fishing alone you might need a few minutes to set up your camera and the pike should not be kept out of the water while you do so.

Obviously the pike will need to be retained in the water, and 'pike tubes' are recommended in preference to 'carp sacks'. Sacks can cling to the gills of a pike, and get entangled in their teeth which will affect the fish's breathing. Pike tubes keep the soft material away from the pike and the fish seem much happier in them than they do in sacks.

Wet the tube before sliding the pike into it, stake the tube out horizontally in as deep water as you can. Make sure that the head of the pike faces into any flow or wave action as this will improve the flow of oxygen through the fish's gills and speed its recovery. Once a pike rolls on its back and is left unattended it will die, so check that the pike is the right way up at regular intervals if it is kept in the tube for more than just a few minutes.

Never retain pike for prolonged periods - overnight retention is strongly discouraged. Pike should never be retained in order to take 'bag shots' of multiple captures. A tube should never hold more than one pike at a time - this is an EA byelaw in England and Wales.

If boat fishing the tube can be secured to the gunwales, but if you have to move the boat with the tube over the side, you should do this as slowly as possible, and certainly not under motor power. Don't move a pike any distance out of the water, either when boat or bank fishing.

When removing a pike from a tube always hold both ends of the tube while you allow the water to drain away, lie it on a soft surface and slide the pike out head first.

A pike that has recovered its strength while in a tube will be more lively than when you first landed it! Take care not to lose control of it at this stage. Be firm with it until it quietens down sufficiently to be handled easily.



**Returning pike.**

Once a pike has been weighed it can be safely carried back to the water in the sling for a careful release. Slip both sling and fish into the water and ease the pike out into its natural element.

Always ensure that the pike can support itself before releasing your grip on it. If it has difficulty staying upright it will need careful nursing to recover.

Stay with the fish for as long as it takes

for it to maintain its balance unaided and, if necessary, follow the special advice outlined on the next page. A fully recovered pike will swim steadily away.

