

# Rutland Water

## *Boat Anglers' Guide*



A guide to the most productive locations and conditions, with maps, access and tactics



# Rutland Water - Boat Anglers' Guide

The hardest thing for the newcomer about Rutland Water is knowing where to fish, its size of 3,100 acres can be daunting enough before taking into account the weather, seasonal variations and changing ecology. This guide attempts to provide the newcomer with assistance in deciding how to approach 'the big puddle' when fishing from a boat. Although its size can make things difficult it is also its greatest strength, stock fish can live as close to a wild life as is possible on a fishery and disappear for months before encountering a trout fisherman as a fully finned wild fish.

Rutland water comprises many different ecosystems which are constantly changing through the year due to weather, wind direction and changing water levels. The best guide to fishing Rutland is time spent on the water. However there are shortcuts to gaining knowledge such as having friends who share information and up to date knowledge from the fishery staff. This guide hopes to assist the newcomer to learn the water.

## Useful information

Tickets and boats should be booked online:

**<https://anglianwaterparks.co.uk/rutland-water>**

Fishery lodge phone	01780 686441
Rangers' phone	07885 484113
Weather reports	<a href="http://www.xcweather.co.uk">www.xcweather.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather">www.bbc.co.uk/weather</a> <a href="http://www.windguru.cz">www.windguru.cz</a> <a href="http://www.windy.com">www.windy.com</a>

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## Target Fish

At Rutland on most days there are a variety of options available to the boat fisherman. These could include targeting the large grown on brown trout using fast sinking lines and fry imitating lures; deep buzzer fishing for overwintered rainbows at the top of the arms; or going for numbers of more recently introduced rainbows fishing midwater in the main basin.

Through the season there will be many more options available but the choice is often one of quantity versus quality, we are all different and some seek numbers whilst others are happier with just one or two good fish to show for their day on the water.

We all seek what fishing offers in our own way, some focus on hunting out specimens, others enjoy competitions and the camaraderie they offer, others fish to enjoy the peace and solitude that the large expanse of Rutland offers.

*Rutland produces a large number of quality brown trout and rainbows every year. It's difficult to think of many other waters that consistently produce fish of this quality.*



## Seasonal Changes

Due to its size Rutland takes a long time to warm up in the Spring and this has an impact on the insect life and weed growth. It also takes a longer time to cool down in the autumn which may mean that the trout are swimming around in warmer water than in other smaller fisheries and this affects the insect/invertebrate and coarse fish populations, and consequently trout diet.

In common with many reservoirs Rutland fishes very well in the spring and early summer when buzzer hatches are most prevalent, water temperatures are cool and the fish are hungry. As the season progresses the fishing can be more challenging but there are always fish feeding somewhere in the reservoir and there to be caught.

**Shrimps** The recent invasion of the *Demon* and *Killer Shrimps* has had a dramatic change on the trout's diet. They love the shallow margins with rocky bottom and fish are happy to feed very close in for much of the season. Good news for the bank fisherman but challenging for the boat angler.



*The natural shrimp comes in a wide variety of colours and sizes, as do the imitations. Floating versions on the top row and standard styles below, including the basic Hare's Ear, can be fished individually or in combination. Often the simpler patterns work as well as anything.*



## Equipment

In addition to the rod, reels, lines and flies etc. there are a number of items that the boat fisher should always carry. These include G clamps (or Velcro straps) to attach the drogue to the boat, polarised sunglasses for eye protection and to cut through the surface glare, and a seat with a backrest to sit on. Many anglers take a plastic fishing box or toolbox to put all their gear in which protects it from the weather and keeps the boat organised.

*There are many designs of boat seat. Some sit across the thwart and others clamp on to the boat's seat - it's a matter of personal preference. The boat's thwarts are too low and not comfortable for a full day's fishing.*



Boats at Rutland are provided with drogues and landing nets which should always be checked before setting off as they are not always well treated by the previous users. You are allowed to take your own landing net pole and drogue ropes if you wish as long as everything is back together before you leave.

### Drogues

*These can be attached to the boat at one, or two, points with G clamps. Some anglers have two point attachment where the rope runs through the clamp carabiners and connects centrally. This enables small adjustments to correct the drift. Alternatively, clamp the drogue ropes to the gunwale as here.*



## Clothing, Waterproofs and Sun Protection

Throughout the year, whatever the weather, when starting from the fishing lodge there is always the scope for temperature change, thunderstorms, squalls and big winds so it always pays to have sufficient warm and waterproof clothing to cope with every eventuality. A warm afternoon can easily turn into a miserable chilly evening when an east wind picks up and you don't want to be at the bottom of an arm dressed only shorts and a T-shirt.

Many boat anglers nowadays wear bib and brace type overtrousers that yachtsmen wear, which seem to be much better than fishing branded ones. You will also need waterproof footwear and a waterproof coat, as even when the rain holds off on a windy day there is a lot of water splash when motoring back up the drift.

The best way of keeping warm is through several layers that can be added to or removed as temperatures dictate. In hot sunny weather there is nowhere more exposed than a fishing boat so long sleeved shirts made from UV protective material and a hat with a good brim will protect you from the sun's rays. This is especially important if you are fair skinned and prone to burn, sun cream is a must (factor 50 for us gingers!). Even on a dull day the glare of the water will burn your unprotected skin.



*Rutland is a big water where the weather can change with little warning and conditions can become suddenly very tricky.*

# Tackle

**Rods** Normal reservoir tackle of 7 or 8 weight outfits work well on Rutland. Boat anglers tend, as a rule, to use 10 foot fly rods slightly longer than those often used for bank fishing as this helps with hanging the fly before recasting. Some anglers still like to use traditional longer 11 foot rods which can be good for dibbling top droppers, hanging fast sinking lines, bung fishing and fishing a team of well spaced nymphs, though the strain on elbows through repetitive casting has rendered these rods a bit obsolete nowadays. A useful addition is a lightweight 5 or 6 weight outfit handy for fishing where quick accurate casts and a delicate approach is required, usually in conjunction with a single dry and a fine leader.

**Lines** One area where boat anglers differ from bank anglers is in the number of fly lines of different sink rates they carry and use. For the bank angler a floater and an intermediate covers most fishing situations but for the boat angler fast sinking lines of various densities and profiles are useful especially for the competition angler.

**Leader** One thing that is critical at Rutland is to use leader material, whether fluorocarbon, copolymer or nylon monofil, that is colourless. As the water is now crystal clear throughout the season due to the vast population of millions of zebra mussels filtering the water.



*A good selection of lines will include fast sink, medium and slow sinking lines, floating, midge tip and various other tip lines.*



## Boat Handling and Etiquette

Before setting off from the boat dock at Rutland familiarise yourself with the workings of the outboard motor. They are simple to operate - squeeze the fuel bulb, open the choke, set the throttle to start then you have forward, neutral and reverse gears. They come with sufficient fuel for the whole day.

The secret to a happy day afloat with no damaged tackle is a well organised boat. Keep landing nets to hand, spare rods out of way, and other tackle organised in bags and boxes.

In addition you must always wear a life jacket whether built in to a fishing waistcoat or a dedicated lifesaver available from the fishing lodge.



*All Rutland boats have an outboard motor. The rangers will happily show you how to operate them.*

### Some basic rules with regard to boat handling

1. Observe the out of bounds areas: the Sailing Club frontage, Whitwell Creek, buoys 100m from the dam, and Manton Bay beyond the bunds. Keep 50m away from bank anglers, anchored boats and the nature reserve shoreline at the top of the arms.
2. Never motor up or across another boats drift, if unavoidable slow the revs to avoid disturbing the water.
3. Don't anchor in the main basin or where anglers are already drifting.
4. Give other fishing boats a wide berth when motoring and keep revs down when in a crowded area.

## Drifting or Anchoring?

When it comes to boat angling there are two basic methods.

**Drifting** The boat drifts along at the speed of the wind continuously covering fresh water. It can be slowed and held over the fishing zone through the use of a drogue - an underwater parachute which slows the drift down (see page 4).



*With the use of clamps, attached at two points, anglers can ensure the boat drifts straight, preventing sideways drag.*

This method - loch style - works best when the trout are well spread out and up in the water in the summer, but can be successful throughout the season. As a rule the boat drifts with the motor on the left hand side which is most effective for right handed anglers. The bow position sits slightly higher which can be advantageous when it comes to spotting moving fish, the angler on the motor has the advantage when it comes to covering fish moving upwind outside the drift of the boat.

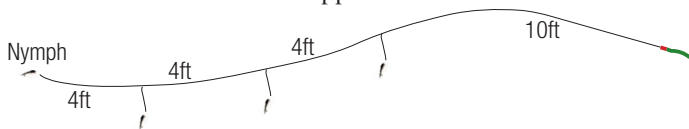
**Anchoring** During the early part of the season when the trout are tightly shoaled, holding deep and close to shore, anchoring can be deadly, enabling flies to be presented at the right depth without the boat overrunning the line. It is also useful method later in the year when targeting fry feeding fish close to weedbeds.

The usual method is to attach the anchor rope to the rowlock ensuring that sufficient rope is paid out (three times the depth) so that the chain is on the bottom of the lake. Some anglers take a second anchor to hold the boat more securely and stop the boat swinging around in the wind (Check that this is allowed under biosecurity measures). In very windy conditions the anchor may not hold leaving the angler with two options, seeking shelter from the wind or attaching the anchor to the point of the boat.

## Methods

There are a number of fly fishing techniques which are useful when boat fishing:

**Straight Line Nymphing** This method is good for presenting flies at a variety of depths. A leader of 18–22 feet incorporating 2 or 3 droppers can be used to fish a variety of flies and is a good method for searching the water. When fished at anchor it can be used to fish flies as naturally as possible; virtually static via a very slow retrieve. In the spring a team of **buzzers** can be fished over the silty areas. A typical team would include a heavy **varnished buzzer** in a size 8 or 10 grub hook on the point with smaller versions in 10 or 12 on the droppers.



Some anglers now fish a large heavy fly on the top dropper to get the flies down more quickly. In early spring **black buzzers** are best, giving way to olive and brown as the season progresses. In rocky areas **hare's ear** and **shrimp** imitation flies would be used, later in the summer **pheasant tails**, **crunchers** and **damsels** work better.

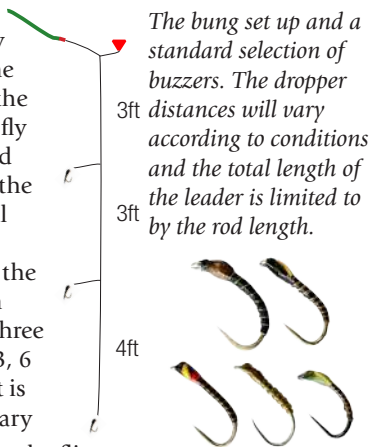
**Washing Line** This method incorporates the use of a buoyant fly on the point usually a **booby** or **FAB** to hold the droppers at the right depth, used in conjunction with floating lines down to medium sinking lines including the various tip lines available. The benefit of this method is that one is able to keep ones flies at



the correct depth for much of the retrieve thereby increasing the chances of a trout encountering them. There are times when the fish are very high in the water and the use of another buoyant fly on the top dropper will hold the two flies in between up near the surface. Retrieve is usually slow, figure of eight or slow draw keeping up with the drift of the boat, there are times however when a stripped retrieve can be used to pop the buoyant flies attracting trout to investigate, chase, follow and attack.

**The Bung** This method is most successful in April and May when the buzzers are hatching. It involves suspending two or three

flies, usually **buzzers**, below a bright visible buoyant bung fly or bite indicator attached to the top dropper or the tag end of the leader where it attaches to the fly line. The beauty of this method is that it is possible to present the flies static imitating the natural behaviour of the buzzer pupa which means that it will catch the more wily overwintered fish in addition to recent stock fish. Three flies are usually suspended at 3, 6 and 9-12 foot deep although it is possible to go deeper if necessary



**The Hang** This is simply hanging the flies still in the water for a period at the end of the retrieve, rather than lifting off straight away to cast again. The purpose is to entice any wary trout that have been following the fly to gain the confidence to take it before it is recast. It is a method commonly used early in the season for catching stock fish on fast sinking lines however it also works for **buzzers** on a floater and fry imitating flies at the back end. Watch the top dropper or end of the fly line for any indication and set the hook before the trout spits out the fly.

**Dry Fly** Dry fly fishing, on its day, is one of the most enjoyable methods, however there are many days when it can be a complete waste of time. Not usually for the first weeks of the season it's probably best from May onwards ideally on a cloudy day or at dusk and is a method that is good for catching the larger, wiser fish feeding on naturals.



*Popular dry flies*

There are several ways of fishing dry flies on Rutland usually involving short accurate casts to moving fish. One is a single fly on a light leader in conjunction with a 5 or 6 weight outfit to improve presentation. Another is a team of two or three dry flies which has the benefit in that one has a better chance of covering the fish, however there is more risk of tangles and snagging a dropper in weedbeds. Rutland was where the **Shipman's buzzer** was invented by local expert angler Dave Shipman and it still catches many fish to this day in a variety of sizes and colours, claret, olive, ginger and fiery brown all work well on their day. Other effective dry flies are **big reds** (in a various colours!), **Bob's bits**, **cdc**, **hoppers** and **daddy long legs**. The most effective dry flies sit in the surface film rather than on it and can be fished using fluorocarbon or degreased copolymer, static or retrieved.

**Loch Style / Short Lining** The oldest method originating from fishing for wild brown trout in natural lochs of Scotland and Ireland usually in conjunction with floating / intermediate lines and traditional flies with palmered hackles to give them movement in the water. Short casts are repeated and flies stripped in through the surface layers and droppers dabbled through the ways to entice feeding fish. Many of flies are effective at representing the insect life on reservoir, for example **silver invicta** is a good pin fry imitation. Although not often used now, there are times when visiting anglers from Scotland and Ireland beat the locals, especially in a good wave.

## Areas of the Reservoir

Rutland Water can be easily sliced into three distinct areas, **North Arm**, **South Arm** and **Main Basin**, which is often how competition anglers would divide the lake when practising for competitions.

A general rule is North Arm early and late season, and South Arm during the late spring and early summer before the water temperature gets too warm. Then the cooler, deeper water of the Main Basin, aerated by the 'boils', provides the best chance of success.

For the first few months of the season most of the stock fish will not be too far away from the shoreline, preferring the warmer, shallower water where the food is to be found. At this time of year the most productive way of fishing is normally within a couple of hundred yards from the shore either drifting on to the windward shore or anchoring, where permitted.

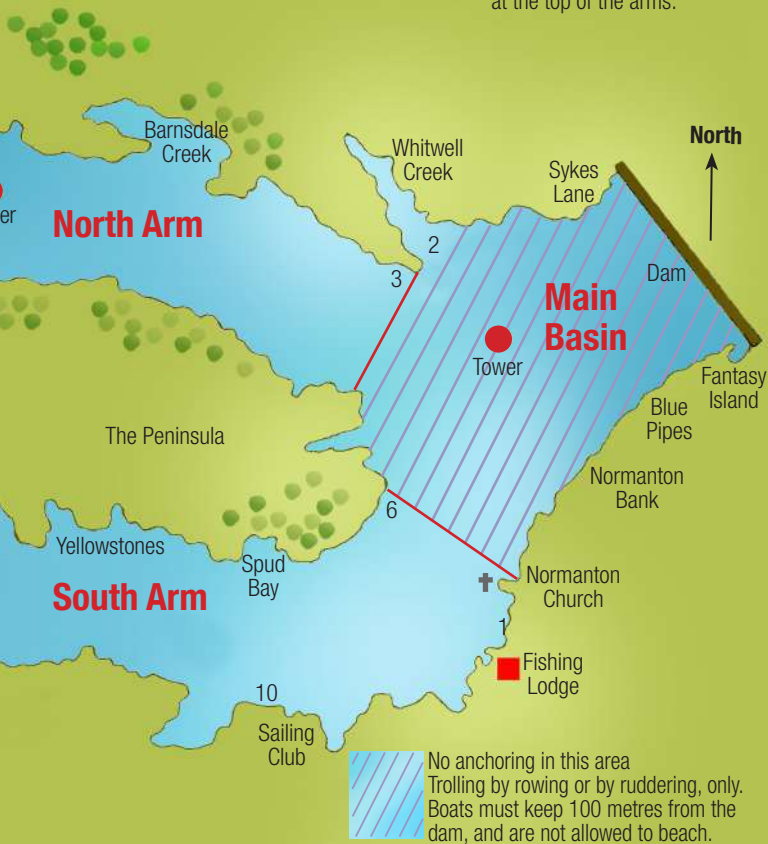


## Stocking Points

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Church Bay             | 6 End of Peninsula      |
| 2 Whitwell Rutland Belle | 7 Old Hall Bay          |
| 3 Whitwell Frontage      | 8 Daltons Point         |
| 4 Barnsdale Road End     | 9 The Stones            |
| 5 Transformer            | 10 Sailing Club Slipway |

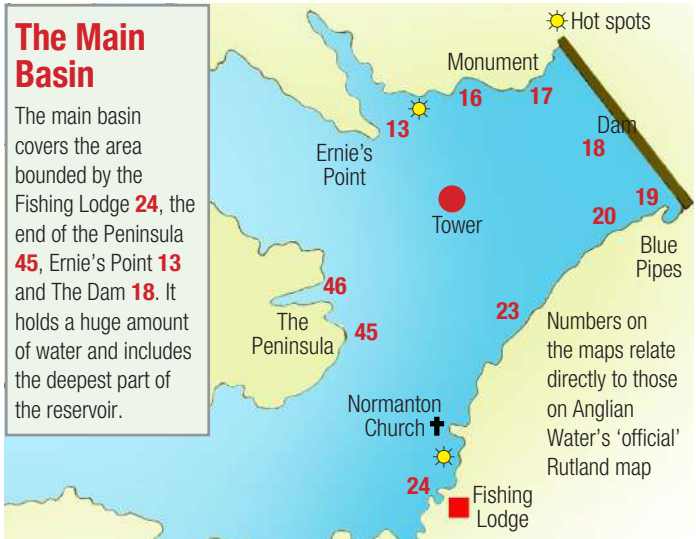
## Out of bounds areas

Sailing club frontage, Whitwell Creek, 100m from the dam, Manton Bay beyond the Bunds, and 50 metres from the Nature Reserve shoreline at the top of the arms.



## The Main Basin

The main basin covers the area bounded by the Fishing Lodge **24**, the end of the Peninsula **45**, Ernie's Point **13** and The Dam **18**. It holds a huge amount of water and includes the deepest part of the reservoir.



This area always holds fish and is probably the most consistent part of the lake for fishing as its great depth and the operation of aerators in the summer means that the water temperature doesn't fluctuate as much as the shallower ends of the reservoir.

The clay dam topped with rock is three quarters of a mile long and half a mile wide and runs in a NW/SE axis. This part of the lake has a variety of substrates. The Demon shrimp has thrived on the predominantly rocky shoreline found along the **Normanton 23** shoreline and also from the mouth of **Whitwell 13**, then **Stockie Bay 16** to the **Monument** at the end of **Sykes Lane 17**. There are also areas of silty

### Stocking points (see page 13)

For the first two or three months of the season the bulk of fish are generally to be found in water no deeper than fifteen feet usually within a hundred metres of the shoreline which is where the bulk of the food is to be found.



and clay bottom which are more suited to insect and invertebrate life particularly at **Sykes Lane 17** and **Fantasy Island 19** where prevailing winds have deposited silt and mud since the reservoir's creation.

Trout are to be found in all areas depending on the time year and weather conditions. There is **no anchoring** here so it's drifting only and bear in mind that in a big westerly wind it can be pretty rough in the basin so pay attention to the weather forecast.

### **Top Drifts Around the Shoreline**

**North Shore** An ideal drift in a West or South Westerly wind is across the **Mouth of Whitwell 13**, into **Stockie Bay 16**, on to the **Monument** and **Sykes Lane 17**.

In a North easterly wind, drifting out from the North corner of **The Dam 18** can be good during buzzer time.

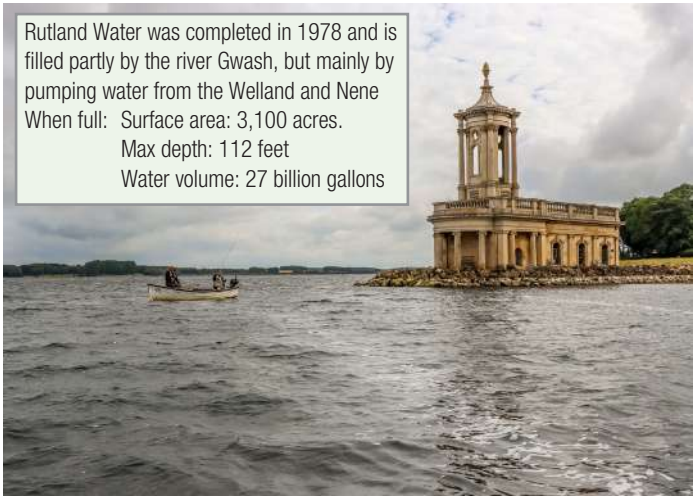
**South Shore** There are fish to be found drifting into the shoreline all the way from **Fantasy island 19** to the **Fishing Lodge 24**, depths vary and the fish location will depend on light conditions, wind speed, etc. There is deeper water on both north and south shores in the borrow pits used to extract material for building the dam, these are known as **Stockie Bay 16** and **Mowmires reach (Blue Pipes) 20** and these areas seem to attract the grown on brown trout for which Rutland is renowned.

**The Peninsula Barnhill Creek 46** can be good at times and provides shelter from a strong westerly. It is best fished at anchor (allowed in the creek) or maybe just one or two quick drifts as continued drifting is likely to spook any fish present.

In early summer this can be a good area for jelly or pin fry feeders best fished for with flies incorporating pearl or silver strips along the side or back

There will always be fish to be caught in the main basin it does however have to be shared with other water users including windsurfers, yachts and the Rutland Belle so you will need to keep an eye out to avoid any collisions.

Rutland Water was completed in 1978 and is filled partly by the river Gwash, but mainly by pumping water from the Welland and Nene  
When full: Surface area: 3,100 acres.  
Max depth: 112 feet  
Water volume: 27 billion gallons



such as **crunchers** or **diawl bachs** or dries such are **cul de canard** or **sugar cube**. Late in the season good weedbeds develop around the margins which provide a good shelter for coarse fish fry and provide a food supply to marauding fry feeders who can find shelter in the nearby deep water of the basin. It is a popular area with bank anglers and cannot be fished effectively from the boat when they are present.

### **In Open Water**

Later in the season the fish move out into the cooler water and can be found all over the basin, drifts into the row of buoys in the **Middle of the Dam 18** can be good. Wind lanes are always worth trying as the trout are attracted to food items, sometimes when the slicks widen as the wind drops its better to fish the edge of the slicks.

In the worst of the Summer heat, during July and August, the fish head for the cooler more oxygenated water around

the **Boils** (centre of the **Main Basin**) where good sport can be had on a variety of techniques from **snakes** on fast sinking lines to **small nymphs** on floating lines. It is always worth trying several boils as some can be devoid of fish and others full, also the fish sometimes prefer one side of a boil.

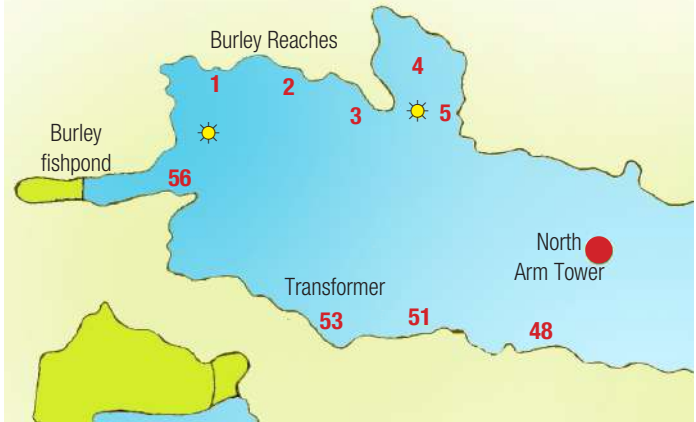
In the evenings the fish can sometimes be right on the top with tails and fins protruding the water surface, **boobies** can be very effective here. At other times the fish are to be found in the wind lanes that tend to form downstream of the boils, particularly in the evenings, it will depend on a combination of light conditions, water temperature and wind speed. Sometimes in the hot weather an extended period of easterly winds can cause the thermocline to tilt pulling the cooler water and trout up towards the dam as the warmer water is blown down the arms. This can be the only area worth fishing during extended period of blue skies and a variety of methods can be successful including **crunchers** and **small black boobies** fished washing line style, **hare's ears suspenders** on a floating line or two **boobies** on a short leader in conjunction with a fast sinking line.

*The 'Monument' by Sykes Lane 17 on the north shore of the Main Basin. A noted hot spot right next to the deeper water of Stockie Bay*



## Top of the North Arm

If you want to catch a lot of fish then (with the exception of **Dickenson's Bay** in April) the top of the North arm is not the place for you. If however you enjoy a challenge and are prepared to commit time and energy this is where many of the better specimens reside, particularly brown trout.



As one travels up the North arm past the **Transformer 53**, the water become shallower and in the summer the weed growth makes bank fishing almost impossible, but for the boat angler who is prepared to fish imitatively there are some good fish to be caught.

If conditions are not right you could be thinking that the area is devoid of fish especially in a cold easterly wind when the area is best avoided. A couple of interesting features make the topography of the area more interesting than much of the rest of the reservoir; there is an old road at **Tim Appleton's 56** which provides a shallow bar which trout like to patrol and can also catch the propeller of the unwary boat angler. At the very top of

the north arm is the **Burley fishpond** which is now under water, there is a dam which can be visible when the water level is low. **Out from the dam** is a fertile area which is a known fish holding area best fished at anchor.

#### TOP TIP

*Owing to the 40 minutes travelling time back to the fishing lodge it's not possible to fish into the dusk in this area so the last hour belongs to the bank fishermen.*

In the open water at the top of the north arm you will generally not encounter large numbers but what there are there, are good fish - usually survivors from previous stockings and an imitative approach is usually preferred. It is home to a good head of brown trout and these are often caught fishing deep with fry patterns such as black or white humongous.

The north and south shores are both shallow and warm up quickly as the season progresses. This in turn leads to significant weed growth which can cause problems for bank anglers but which provides good a good nursery area for coarse fish fry as well as snails, corixa and damsels. Occasionally early season stock fish introduced at **Barnsdale Road End 5** or the **Transformer 53** can be can be found close in on both shorelines either at anchor or drifting, and usually respond to **buzzers** fished slowly.

As the season progresses, good methods to try include fishing a single dry such as a **Shipman's buzzer** or a **cul de canard (cdc)** pattern in orange ginger or claret when conditions are right i.e. warm overcast and light winds. **The Burley Reaches 1-3** do not get a lot of fishing pressure however on the right day it can be worthwhile, halfway along the shoreline is the remains of an old wall which has proved to be a holding spot for trout over the years, the bay at the western extreme of Burley is on the patrol route of some of Rutland's williest fish but they are too tricky for most anglers.

**Dickenson's Bay 4** is a very prolific area for the first couple of months of the season and has good buzzer hatches. It is shallow on the western side but has a good depth along most of the eastern side where the fish seem to hold in most winds although a strong westerly or southerly wind can cause the water to colour up which will push the fish out into the main body of the reservoir. Beware when motoring into the bay as there is a shallow spit which extends into the lake from the eastern shore and you may run aground if not paying attention. Whilst providing a home for early season stock fish there are usually a few overwintered specimens to be found around the mouth of **Dickenson's Bay** as they take advantage of the prolific buzzer hatches to be found in this area.

Best methods in this area in the spring are **buzzers** fished slowly on a long leader and floating line or under a **bung** either at anchor on or a drifting boat but remember this is an area that gets very busy in April and May with both competition and pleasure anglers and the fish can be localised. A similar approach will

#### **TOP TIP**

*The North arm does not get as much fishing pressure as other areas and while not densely populated with trout for most of the year it pays to adopt a roving approach especially at fry time when the extensive weed beds enable one to keep covering fresh water with a chance of a fish.*

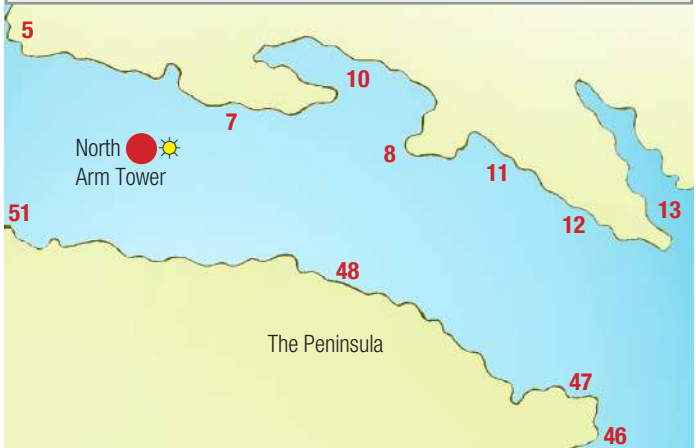
*The muddy bottom is not preferred by the shrimps and although zebra mussels are slowly colonizing the area there are fewer than at the dam end of the reservoir.*

work along the northern side of the north arm with trout usually found within a hundred yards of the shoreline from the **Transformer 53** to **Finches 51** and towards **Armley Wood 48**, this area is sheltered to a degree from strong westerly and southerly winds and you should be able to find fishable water on the days when the northern shore is being churned up by three foot waves.

## Middle of the North Arm

This area is from **Whitwell 13** to **Barnsdale Road End 5** on the North shore, and **Carrot Creek 47** to the **Transformer 53** on the South side.

It includes **Whitwell Frontage 12**, **The Mound 8**, **Barnsdale Creek 10** and **Cardiac Hill 7** together with the **North Arm Tower**, **Finches 51**, **Armley Wood 48** and **Carrot Creek 47**



For the most part North arm is narrower and deeper than the South arm however there are plenty of area of fertile shallow where buzzers are the dominant food source, later in the season there are plenty of weedbeds providing shelter for fry and other invertebrate food items. The bottom substrate is mostly clay and this area has not yet been fully colonised by the shrimp but inroads have been made particularly along **Whitwell Frontage 12** which is quite gravelly in places and between **Armley Wood 48** and **Barnhill Creek 46**.

The North arm is relatively lightly fished compared to other parts of the reservoir but at times of the year it can be the best place to fish. **Whitwell Front 12** to the **Mound 8** usually holds fish close in

early in the season and fishing can be good here especially near the Old Rutland Belle boat dock (**Belgrano 11**) but this area can be busy with surfboarders on windy days. Moving down the arm the **Mound 8** can sometimes hold fish usually holding off either corner in a westerly. It doesn't get fished much by bank anglers these days due to the proliferation of willows so fish can sometimes be found close in. It is also one of the few areas where a good hatch of hawthorn flies can sometimes be encountered in late April.

## Fishing for Big Fish

There are some very big fish in Rutland, and many anglers target these specifically and ignore recently stocked fish. The approach of winter encourages fish to feed on the vast numbers of fry in the water which means fry patterns such as the ever popular **humungous, floating fry, tubes** and **snakes**. You'll need a standard selection of sinking lines, as the fish often lie deep, and shorter than usual leaders which must be strong and stiff, particularly in weedy areas.

Retrieves vary but crucial is the 'hang'. Many fish will attack the fly just as it's being slowly raised out of the water. But don't expect a 'fish a chuck'. Patience is essential.

Popular areas in the autumn are the North Arm Tower and around the Harbour, then later, into the winter, the Normanton Bank down to the Dam and Fantasy. Fishing alongside weed beds can be very productive - especially with **popper** and **floating fry** patterns, usually fished singly.

As always, talk to the wardens - they're there to help you catch.

### TOP TIP



*The record Rainbow of 17lb 6oz came from the depths by the North Arm Tower.*



**Barnsdale Creek 10** is a noted area particularly in times of strong westerly wind when it provides sanctuary and a chance to fish calmer water. Fish seem to find their way into this bay in an easterly wind, sometimes stock fish settle in the end of the creek and it can be some weeks before they disperse. The best area is usually drifting along the deeper wooded northern bank particularly in front of the bird hide, fish can also be found at the Mound end of the creek where prevailing winds concentrate food.

Later in the season there is a chance of fry feeding trout all around any weedbeds, particularly at the end of **Barnsdale Point 10** best fished for using **suspender minky** or **floating fry** patterns imitating either perch or roach fry. This area fishes well in a North easterly wind. Moving down the arm along **Cardiac Hill 7** there are usually fish to be found but as the water gets deep quite quickly it is best fished in a wind blowing up or down the reservoir.

A particular hot spot is the bay at the end of **Cardiac** where the trees start which holds stock fish in the spring and is good for fry feeders in the autumn. Look out for tree stumps on the bottom which have claimed many flies. It is worth fishing all the way up to **Barnsdale Road End 5** where fish are stocked and take up residence in this area before dispersing into the open water as the season progresses. The open water doesn't get fished that often although later in the season it is always worth a drift if you see fish moving.

The north arm tower is a magnet for those targeting large brown trout often in conjunction with fast sinking lines and fry imitating flies. On the southern side of the North arm the water is generally more sheltered and good fishing can be had drifting in the fertile waters up to fifteen foot in depth all the way from **Transformer 53** to **Armley Wood 48**. It doesn't get that much fishing pressure from boats. **Armley Wood** to **Carrot Creek 46** and on to **Barnhill Creek 46** can hold good fish, including good numbers of brown trout, although they probably spend most of their time out in deeper water coming in to shallow water to feed on shrimps and coarse fry.

## Competition Fishing

Rutland Water is considered to be one of the country's premier competition venues. It's size means it can cope with prolonged angling pressure better than most other fisheries, and the fact that visiting anglers, prepared to practice, often do better than the locals, makes it a very fair water.

Most competitions are fished to International Rules - that is, out the front of a broadside drifting boat, using flies no longer than 15/16th of an inch dressed on a hook no bigger than 5/8th of an inch. Competitions provide anglers with the challenge of competing against some of the best anglers, as well as the normal challenges of the fish and conditions. - what other sport gives you the opportunity to fish with international champions, for example? They provide camaraderie and the opportunity to make friends, learn new methods, share flies and a lot more. Whether at club, National, International or World level there is opportunity to progress as one's skills and motivation increase. Many new fly patterns are developed to give anglers an edge in competitions and these eventually find their way into the regular anglers boxes. There is no substitute for practice and time on the water, but there is always an element of luck, which does give the less experienced a chance.

Most competitions now incorporate catch and release with barbless hooks to help preserve fish stocks. Large fish kills are a thing of the past.

### TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

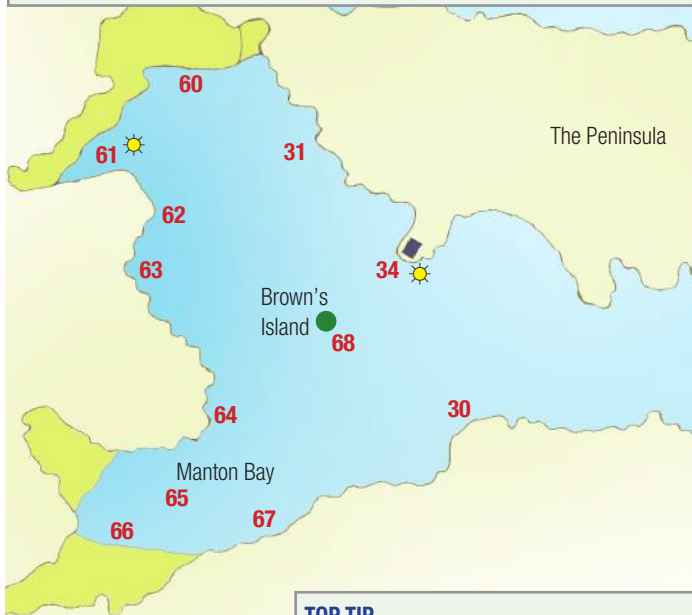
England International  
Paul Wild



*Competitions are fun. Don't enter for any other reason other than enjoyment and the kudos of winning. Prizes are modest, but the opportunities to learn and develop are invaluable.*

## Top of the South Arm

If you were to ask top Rutland anglers their favourite area, many would answer the top of the South arm. Its large expanse of relatively shallow fertile water with few bank anglers, yachts or windsurfers and good insect life is a draw for both anglers and the wised up resident fish. Unfortunately the fish density is not high but at some times of the year they are concentrated in certain areas driven by food and wind direction.



### TOP TIP

*It is important to remember that much of the top of the South Arm is a nature reserve and there anglers must stay fifty metres from the water's edge.*

Once past **Old Hall Point 34** the expanse of water offers some of the best but most challenging fishing Rutland has to offer, and although lures will work here an imitative approach is usually best. Early in the season there are stock fish to be found holding off the shoreline from **Old Hall Point** to the **Bunds 60** wall known as the **Green Bank 31**, there is reasonably deep water close in and the prevailing winds blow food into the shore, this area is also good at pin-fry time in June when the trout can become preoccupied.

Moving westward to the mouth of **Hideaway Bay 61** is an area that in the Spring provides the best chance of an overwintered specimen, this area provides some of the best buzzer hatches on the reservoir and in April and May large black buzzers with brown wing buds are usually prolific pulling fish from the deeper water to feed on the chironimids, even the large brown trout will go after the buzzers. That is not to say the fishing is easy and a cold east wind can leave one thinking there are no fish here. The problem is that everyone knows how good the fishing can be here which can lead to overcrowding with fishing boats and spooked fish, the patient angler will usually be rewarded but if you are after quantity there are more prolific areas to fish. After late June the **Hideaway** area becomes very weedy and very popular with waterfowl but the trout seem to move out to the deeper open water of the South Arm

Moving around from **Hideaway** fishing out from the **Poplars 62** can be good for buzzer and nymph fishing as can the next bay **Cattle Trough Bay 63** named after the submerged large stone troughs. This area fishes well in a north east wind as well as the more prevalent westerly. Floating snails often figure in the trout's diet. Dry flies are good in this shallow water, small ginger and orange **cdc** work well on snail feeders, and claret **Shipman's buzzers** for the midge feeders. As the season progresses all of these areas are worth trying for fry feeders using **floating fry** and **suspender minkies** in the shallow margins and **black and gold**

**humongous** and **tube flies** in the deeper water. Moving around **Lax Hill 64** from **Cattle Trough Bay 63** the water is shallow and always worth a drift. In a strong south westerly wind trout will sometimes be found in the lee of the point of **Lax Hill 64**.

**Manton Bay 65** is a significant body of water in its own right and holds fish throughout the season. It has two bunded areas to maintain the water level for wildfowl into which fishing boats are not allowed. It does provide shelter from strong winds in all directions but easterly. Although fish can be found here early in the season it doesn't attract much fishing pressure until May when buzzer feeding fish migrate to the fertile shallow waters. Successful methods include anchoring fifty yards from the bank and fishing nymphs, best areas being half way along the northern shore close to where a fence runs to the water.

Good bags have also been taken from near to the inlet at the westernmost end, this area used to be referred to as **The Sticks 66** and was a noted mark for large rainbows. For many years lots of flooded trees used to protrude from the water though these have now rotted away. Drifts across the bay can be productive with floating lines and washing line tactics effective during the summer.

Over the years many competitions have been won here justifying the half hour travel time from the fishing lodge. In the autumn drifts along the weedbeds with **popper minkies** can be productive, this fly actually originated from fishing for fry feeders in **Manton Bay** by Nigel Savage and Stan Webster. On brighter days the fish often head for deeper water and drifts from the middle of **Manton Bay** out into the body of the reservoir can locate them.

There is deeper water outside the **Lyndon Nature Reserve 67** and this area can often be relied upon for a few fish. Following the shoreline down to **Gibbets Gorse 30** is more shallow fertile water which can provide shelter in a strong southerly wind and is often worth trying.

*The Old Hall 34 at the top of the South Arm. A real hot spot.*

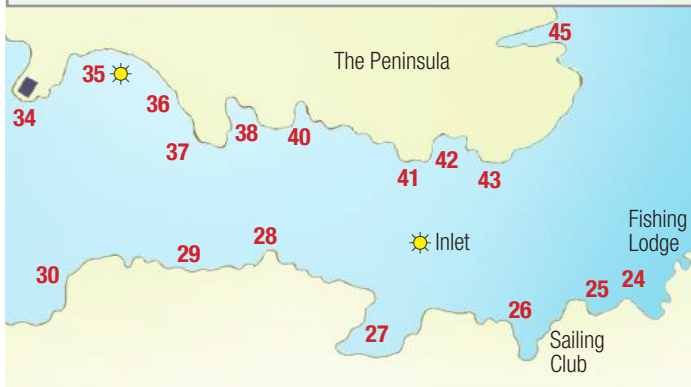


The main body of the South arm is a huge area of water and long drifts across it can be undertaken. Scanning the water for signs of fish can enable the angler to focus his search. When the water level drops a small island appears in the middle of the South Arm, known as **Brown's Island 68** (NB the real Brown's Island is part of the boundary of the Nature Reserve) this area of shallow water is always worth a look, the weedbeds around it harbour snails, corixa and fry and the trout know they are there. Often the trout will hold on one side of the island depending on the wind direction but will not respond well to a lot of boat pressure in the shallow water.

During the heat of July the relatively shallow water of the South Arm warms up and the fish can be hard to catch, but once the days start to shorten and the weather cools in August and September fishing becomes more productive a variety of methods can be successful. On cloudy days, dries static or pulled can work well, as can a booby or two pulled through the wind lanes on a floating line. Or the popular washing line technique, when **crunchers, diawl bachs, pheasant tail nymphs** on droppers in conjunction with a **FAB** or **booby** on the point work well. The best way to find trout in the late summer is long drifts across open water paying attention to wind lanes and scanning the water for signs of fish, when located the fish holding area can be drifted repeatedly by quiet motoring.

## Middle of the South Arm

Turning left from the **Fishing Lodge 24** are several bays that can usually be relied on to hold fish due, in part, to their proximity to regular stocking points at the Fishing Lodge harbour and the Sailing Club. These bays, known as **Disabled Bay 25**, **East Creek 26** and **Sailing Club Bay 27**, are popular with boat anglers as motoring time is minimised.



This area of the lake has a clay bottom and has good buzzer hatches in the spring. Out from the Sailing Club is the water inlet where water is pumped into the reservoir which can be a hotspot during hot weather when the cooler water from the local river Welland can be attractive to the trout. In more general terms the reservoir tends to fish less well when water levels are rising as this has some impact on the trout and their diet items. Moving down the arm from **Sailing Club Bay 27** to **New Zealand Point 28** and on to **Berrybutt Spinney 29** and **Gibbets Gorse 30** can be productive areas in the spring and provide shelter in a strong southerly wind. As the season progresses the fish will spread out and move out into the open water and then come in to the shoreline to feed along the weedbeds in the autumn.

On the northern shore, opposite the Lodge the bank between **Spud Bay 42** and **Barnhill Creek 45** known as **May Tree Bank 43** is often worth a drift with dries or fry imitators, more so in the summer and autumn when pin fry and larger fry are around. **Spud Bay 42** fishes best when the wind is blowing out although like many of Rutland's small bays it will not take a lot of boat traffic before the fish melt away to the safety of deeper water.

From **Spud Bay 42** past **Inman's Spinney 41** to **Yellowstone Creek 40** is fairly deep water and there are usually trout to be found along this stretch although there are no obvious holding features until you reach **Yellowstone Bay 38** which is bounded on one side by **Hambleton Wood 37**. This area always holds fish, it has deep water and shelter from the prevailing winds which deliver food from the fertile **Old Hall Flats 36** to waiting trout and will often save a blank when strong westerly winds render much of the reservoir unfishable.

Moving west from **Yellowstone 37** is **Old Hall Bay 35** which is another noted hot spot for both bank and boat anglers with sheltered relatively shallow water. Trout are stocked here which means that there is usually a good head of fish in the area although in early season the bank anglers can prevent boats from covering the trout which can hug the bank in the Bay. However drifts on the **Old Hall Flats 36** and onto **Hambleton Wood 37** enable the boat angler to fish into the shallower water and can be particularly fruitful in the first few weeks of the season. In an easterly or southerly wind drifts onto **Old Hall Point 34** can be productive bank anglers permitting.

There is huge amount of open water between **Old Hall Point 42** and **New Zealand Point 28** which doesn't get a lot of fishing pressure as most boats transit through to the bottom of the South Arm, however trout live here all season long and it always pays to keep an eye out for moving fish. Try fishing deep with large fry imitators for large brown trout but keep moving as these fish are territorial most of the season and don't live in shoals.



## Adverse Weather

Always check the weather forecast before planning a trip on Rutland and avoid big winds and bright, hot, cloudless days. However if you are committed to going there are steps that you can take to get the best out of the day.

### Wind

When the wind is forecast to exceed 25mph boats will not be allowed out. If you find yourself fishing on a windy day, you will need to adopt tactics that maximise your chances of catching.

**Strong westerly winds** on Rutland generate large waves running the length of the reservoir but there are areas where you can find some calmer fishable water where a more delicate nymph based approach will work. These areas include **Sailing Club Bay, Hideaway Bay, Yellowstone Bay, Barnhill Creek, Barnsdale Creek** and sheltered spots on the North side of the **Peninsula**. Avoid any coloured water as the fish do not like the suspended particles in their gills and will not see your flies. But the edge of the turbid water can concentrate fish as they feed on invertebrates carried by underwater currents. If you choose to fish the drift in the wave on a rough day, pulling lures on a sinking line is usually the most effective method, although nymphs and dries can still work if the fish are high in the water on a cloudy day.

### Flat Calms and Sun

These can be challenging both from a comfort and a fishing point of view. With no breeze you need to make sure that you are well hydrated, and are well protected from the sun with appropriate clothing and sun cream. When it comes to fishing there are several approaches that can work. A single dry cast accurately can sometimes work or, alternatively, follow the fish down in the water with deep fished nymphs or a booby or two on a short leader fished on a fast sinking line. Sometimes on a hot day the outboard motors won't start. This problem can be solved by pouring a few balers of water over the outboard to cool it down.

## Tried and Tested Patterns

All the standard reservoir flies will work on Rutland although smaller flies in 12 and 14 have been more successful recently

**FABs, blobs and boobies** of course, **nymphs**, then all the **lures, fry patterns** and the inevitable **snake!** Particular attention should be paid to **shrimp** patterns (see page 3), which include varieties of **hare's ears** and **diawl bachs**.



I hope this guide adds to your knowledge of the reservoir however there is no substitute for time spent on the water, to be successful at fishing at Rutland you must learn to adapt and approach each season with an open mind. A few years ago nobody fished shrimps (or barbless hooks!). Nowadays numerous patterns have been invented by innovative fly tyers, this process will continue as the ecology of the lake changes and new tackle and fly tying materials are developed.

### Acknowledgements

Produced and published by **Friends of Rutland Water**, a non-profit making group dedicated to the promotion of Rutland Water. Thanks to Anglian Water for providing such a wonderful fishery - without doubt one of the finest anywhere. **All those involved gave their time and contributions completely free of charge.**

Text by **Paul Wild** who has fished Rutland as a season ticket holder since Rutland opened in 1977, with particular emphasis on the boats. **Tim Lawson** has taken most of the photographs specifically for this edition, and we are grateful for contributions and the support of all our fellow anglers as well as **Rutland Water Fly Fishing Club**.

The maps and illustrations were drawn by **Stuart Stenning-White**, who has retired from the Grafham Lodge retail shop, was also a fishery warden, and is a working artist.

Thanks to others for suggestions and advice, including **Brian Calvert** and **John Wadham** who have written other guides in this series.

Design and layout by Rutland regular **Chris McLeod**

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# Anglian Water Boat Fishing Regulations

A full description of fishing regulations can be found on each day ticket or by contacting any Lodge. For those anglers unfamiliar with boats, short courses on boat handling are arranged by Anglian Water.

## For your safety and convenience

- Life jackets must be worn on the dock and at all times in the boat.
- Check drogue, nets, bailer and oars and ask Rangers for replacements as necessary.
- Check 'out of bounds' areas and 'boats in' time with the duty Ranger.
- Be considerate near other boats; keep 50 metres from bank anglers – they have priority even if you were there first!
- Do not tie knots in the drogue or anchor ropes. Drogues must be in the boat whilst motoring.
- Remain seated when motoring and consider attaching the 'kill-cord' to your life jacket, particularly important when fishing alone.
- No fishing when under power; no anchoring in the Main Basin, keep more than 15 metres from all towers and do not tie up to any buoy or structure.
- Each boat must carry a mobile phone. In the event of stormy weather or other emergency the lodge staff may need to contact you. If so, follow their instructions.
- When under power you must avoid all craft under sail, oars or paddle.
- Always start the engine, but do not engage gear, before retrieving drogue or anchor, especially when close to the lee (downwind) shore or dam. Failure to do so may result in grounding or worse.
- For secure anchoring the recommended length of anchor rope is three times the depth of water i.e. 30 feet of rope in 10 feet of water. Less than this may not hold.
- Do not be late on return to the harbour, look for and follow Ranger guidance, leave the boat clean and tidy, report any boat issues and return life jackets through the slot in the hut on the pontoon.

Joining a club is an excellent way of finding your way around Rutland Water. These are three local clubs with strong connections to the fishery.



## Rutland Water Fly Fishers

The official club for fly fishing at Rutland Water. Club evenings, social events and a network of keen anglers.

[www.rwff.org.uk](http://www.rwff.org.uk)



## Invicta Fly Fishing Club

A thriving and busy club, founded in 1976, with most members regularly fishing Rutland Water.

[www.invictaffc.org.uk](http://www.invictaffc.org.uk)



## Grafham Water Fly Fishers Association

The club local to Grafham but with members regularly fishing Rutland

[www.gwffa.co.uk](http://www.gwffa.co.uk)

The Fishing Lodge at Rutland has a comprehensively stocked tackle and fly tying materials shop. The staff are well equipped to give advice on the fishing and all aspects of Rutland. Tickets and boats should be booked online <https://anglianwaterparks.co.uk/rutland-water>

## PETER HARTLEY'S School of Fishing



[www.schooloffishing.co.uk](http://www.schooloffishing.co.uk)

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