



National Coarse Fishing Federation of Ireland

A Month in the Life of NCFFI's Coaches

By Der Casey NCFFI Secretary & ACI National Children's Officer.

Schools Programme

June 2011 saw the continued roll out of the NCFFI Coaching Programme. 10 Primary schools and 3 Second level schools received the benefit from some of the most experienced angling coaches in Ireland today this meant over 260 participants for the south east of Ireland were introduced to Coarse Angling.

This is the twelfth year of this initiative and it's a measure of its success that while all participating schools return to the programme year on year there are always schools applying to join and unfortunately some had to be disappointed, even so these 12/13 year olds will be accommodated in the autumn series of programmes.

We were very lucky that this year we were able to enlist the support of Angling Council of Ireland coaches from outside the NCFFI to help to provide the service. These coaches from game and sea angling took to carp fishing and coaching it with gusto. We might even convert them at least on a part time basis.

One important lesson for all angling coaching is the importance of catching fish. This might sound all too obvious and simple but the ready supply of carp, tench and skimmers in Oaklands meant every child had some story to tell of monsters caught or broken off. "When all fruit fails welcome haws" and so it was for many a disappointed wannabe. Boasting the capture of numerous Leviathan Rudd, at 10 to the pound, was comfort to those who missed out on the monster carp

Kids respond to success and in our case we have the perfect sport to supply it. As experienced game and sea angling coaches we know this only too well. Coarse angling has a real advantage in attracting new comers to the sport. The ever growing band of committed NCFFI coaches are in a great position to grow our sport among the young.

Among the schools participating we had 3 all girls schools and 3 mixed schools. This means that we are at last working toward a "Women in Sport" approach to our coaching. Sorry lads but Men Only days are over on the bank side and as Chairperson of the NCFFI, Pat Dalton is fond of mentioning girls listen and learn a lot better. So up your game boys!

Summer Camp Programme

Summer 2011 is now in full swing with the first couple of summer camps already complete. We run one day camps designed to teach basic skills and leave Youth Workers up skilled sufficiently to carry forward the fishing elements of their club programmes independently.

The calendar this year includes 12 such camps catering for over 200 young people. School completion programmes, Garda diversion projects, Scouting Ireland as well as community youth groups all benefit from our work.

Our Garda Vetting procedures and ACI Licensing mean that Youth Professionals can work with us in confidence. Again we are fortunate to be able to enlist the willing help of local Inland Fisheries Ireland staff whom share a commitment to promote angling among the young. The IDEAL principle of coaching, beloved of Coaching Ireland staff has added greatly to the effectiveness of our programmes.

For many years now we have been developing our approach to angling education with the active assistance of IFI. Respect for our Freshwater Biodiversity has been the focus and the title of the bio-security elements of the day. An introduction to Invasive Species, fish handling and our amazing variety of invertebrate life leads naturally to an understanding of the principles of bio-security. IFI's John Flynn gave masterful and fun filled introduction to this element of the day. Dipping Nets is not just a fishery rule, when he is finished, its just a small part of a deeper commitment to protection of our island's biodiversity

With the preliminaries out of the way, the skills of tackle choice, water reading and plumbing the depth as well as tackle assembly, bait preparation, fish handling and returning are the order of the day.

Well coached days like this are often the beginning of a life times enjoyment. At least that's the mantra when the nerves are frazzled and the 30th rig of the day is in a tangled mess.

Coaching Persons with Disabilities

This project is funded by the European Union's PROGRESS Programme (2007–2013). The Equality Authority in partnership with IFI and Local Sports Partnerships are supporting ACI to deliver coaching to anglers with a variety of disabilities.

Already NCFFI together with ACI coaches have completed one programme and have 3 more near completion in the South East. Further plans include rollout in Wexford and Carlow, followed by rollout in Laois, Offaly, Sligo. Game anglers and Sea anglers will be rolling out the project in Kilkenny, Dún Laoighre and in Kerry.

So what is the fuss about then? Well I guess you'd have to be there to fully appreciate the "buzz" associated with this. Each program lasts six weeks and offers novice anglers and their helpers the opportunity to grow into their sport as the series progresses. Local Sports Partnerships have helped to fund this and the plan is to leave the anglers with access to tackle and to fishing in their local area. NCFFI is a lead partner in this ACI driven project, taking credit for seven of the ten planned programmes. However success thus far has depended on the cooperation, commitment and dedication of all participating coaches. Particular mention should be made of the contribution of SSTRIA (Salmon and Sea Trout Recreational Anglers) coaches, Bob Seward and Brian Mohally. They have travelled long miles and worked long days to ensure participants have the one to one coaching so necessary to help anglers to grow in confidence.