

GETTING KIDS FISHING



days have gone from strength to strength with over 200 children and parents trying fishing for the first time – many of them coming back year after year and all of them leaving with a smile on their faces.

“We started the family fishing days, with the help of Shoreham Port, 5 years ago and they have been a huge success story for the community and the Angling Trust Sussex Marine Region. Over 200 members of the public come along, to have a go at sea angling, each year. Families really enjoy the marine environment, fresh air, learning new skills and having great fun as a family. Parents tell us they enjoy the day so much they have bought tackle and taken their kids fishing either during the summer months or on holiday. The trips we offer, on the local charter boats, have been a big driver in the success of these events, every novice loves the thrill of mackerel fishing, mum’s and dad’s love cooking fresh mackerel on the BBQ and an hour out on a boat at sea is a new experience to remember for everyone. It has been a privilege to work alongside other sea anglers from various clubs and the local charter boats to encourage others to try sea angling here in Sussex.”

Eight years ago, further east, along the coast in East Sussex another angler was already in the process of setting up a youth section at his local club, Bexhill Sea Angling Club. Brian Pask and some of his angling friends

Hundreds of children have been introduced to sea angling over the course of 2019 thanks to the work of Angling Trust volunteers. No organisation is doing more to overcome the problem of sea angling’s aging population and introduce young people to the wonderful world of fishing. It’s something we

know anglers care passionately about – yet how many of you are actually involved in getting more kids out there fishing yourselves?

Reg Phillips, an Angling Trust volunteer from Shoreham by Sea in West Sussex, is now in his fifth year of organising a series of family fishing days over the summer. The project started in 2015 after an initial approach to the Harbourmaster at Shoreham Port to use a stretch of

unused ground with direct access to the harbour basin.

Local charter skipper, Mark Vale, was also brought on board after he offered to provide his services for the day taking kids and parents out onboard his boat ‘She Likes It’. Volunteer members of the South Coast Angling Club and Trident Sea Anglers have been instrumental in delivering the events which were an immediate success. Five years later the Shoreham Harbour fishing



CHARTER BOAT TRIPS ARE ALWAYS POPULAR

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wanted to get more kids involved in sea fishing and took it upon himself to start the club's youth section .

The youth section soon became so popular on some evenings over 40 kids were fishing and Brian was soon forced into providing sessions two evenings a week instead of one. Eight years after the first sessions and the youth section of the club is now firmly established with an average of 15 kids fishing every week.

Brian has since gone on to work with other clubs and run successful youth fishing sessions in Hastings, Eastbourne and elsewhere – as well as helping Reg Phillips out in Shoreham by Sea. In 2019 the Angling Trust saw what an excellent job Brian was doing and asked him to become a key volunteer for the Trust leading on getting more kids and families into fishing. As Brian says:

"Having been introduced to sea fishing as a youngster I felt that I wanted to put something back into the sport. I have found getting young people involved in fishing and seeing them develop as anglers and young people is incredibly rewarding."

Meanwhile, 250 miles West in Plymouth, the Angling Trust Wyvern Region has been holding its annual Junior

Open competition at Mountbatten Breakwater. The event has been running for the last six years and gives kids the opportunity to try fishing competitively. The event is run in partnership with Plymouth City Council.

This year over 42 juniors competed for trophies and prizes supervised and assisted by volunteer



PERSISTENCE PAID OFF FOR THIS YOUNG MAN



members of the Angling Trust Wyvern Region. The event gives boys and girls, some attached to local clubs and some not, an opportunity to meet other angling-mad children, try fishing for the first time and get their competitive juices flowing, in a friendly and safe environment.

Alex Parker, Chairman of the Wyvern Region, is involved in running the event:

"For the last six years, Wyvern Region of the Angling Trust in conjunction with the Plymouth Federation of Sea Anglers who are also Angling Trust members, have put on an open Junior shore competition at Mt Batten. Permission to put on the event is obtained from the local Plymouth City Council.

This very popular event is always fished in August during the school summer holidays, with entrants not only from the Wyvern region, but some from outside the area, along with some juniors visiting Plymouth on holiday,

with this event attracting around 40 -60 juniors each year.

With excellent sponsorship from around the region, we are able to put on a very good prize table, every junior at the end of the day receives some light refreshments, along with a "goodie bag" containing fishing tackle along with safety information kindly provided by the RNLI."

In 2019 the Angling Trust was able to provide a limited amount of funding to help support clubs and individuals interested in running their own family fishing days. We hope to be able to provide the same level of support again in 2020. If you are interested in supporting one of these events, or running your own event to get kids and families into sea fishing, you can contact our Marine Regions Coordinator, Nevin Hunter, who will be happy to provide support and guidance. All we need from you is to get in touch!

Do you know if other junior of family fishing events taking place around the country? If so, get in touch and tell us about them!

