Autumn

This can be an excellent time to fish at Pier Head. Many of the Summer species are present until quite late in the season and the Winter species start to arrive from late September. Large bass can be caught on small live baits fished at the Pier Head and mullet feed on sandrag. Whiting, dabs and pouting can be caught from the Prince George Extension.

Winter

Dabs, whiting, pouting and codling can be caught fishing from the Prince George Extension.

BAIT

Ragworm, lugworm, sandrag, mackerel, squid and peeler crab are the most commonly used bait. The bait used will influence what you catch. If you buy your bait from one of the local tackle shops, it is wise to order it in advance.

For flat fish, use any worm bait and crab when in season. The exception to this is dab, which can be caught on fish, squid, worm or a cocktail. The larger plaice often prefer worm bait and flounder will take worm all year and crab in the summer.

Mackerel, garfish, horse mackerel and shad are usually taken on thin strips of mackerel skin fished up in the water or on a float gear.

Bass are taken on worm and crab. Small live baits can work well for the bigger fish during late summer. Whole ragworm fished at the Pier Head will produce bass in early summer.

Mullet will take small fish baits (use the flesh of a fresh mackerel, not the skin) and later in the season, sandrag. At the bottom of the slope at the shore end of the Stem, golden grey mullet can be taken on sandrag during September.

Whiting can be taken on lugworm, lug & mackerel and lug & squid cocktails.

Codling are taken on lugworm or lug & squid cocktails.

TACKLE TO USE

The varied fishing found on the Pier requires the use of a variety of rigs, dependent on what species you want to catch. Local knowledge is invaluable in most situations so chat to other anglers about the rigs which are proving successful or why not join a local angling club where the members are only too willing to share their knowledge. However, the following suggestions will set you off in the right direction.

★ Most rigs which present a bait on or close to the bottom work reasonably well for flounders, plaice, eels, bass (from the Stem), whiting, pouting, dabs and codling.

★ For Mackerel and garfish from the southern end of the Stem use a rig that present the bait high in the water or, sliding float gear. Size 6 short shank hooks are recommended.

★ Bass from the Pier Head are usually caught on a single hook or a pennel rig on a 24 inch trace fixed above the lead. Strong tackle is required to avoid losing fish under the Pier Head.

★ Mullet are taken on a small paternoster rig using a size 8 short shank hook.

BAIT

Ragworm, lugworm, sandrag, mackerel, squid and peeler crab are the most commonly used bait. The bait used will influence what you catch. If you buy your bait from one of the local tackle shops, it is wise to order it in advance.

For flat fish, use any worm bait and crab when in season. The exception to this is dab, which can be caught on fish, squid, worm or a cocktail. The larger plaice often prefer worm bait and flounder will take worm all year and crab in the summer.

Mackerel, garfish, horse mackerel and shad are usually taken on thin strips of mackerel skin fished up in the water or on a float gear.

Bass are taken on worm and crab. Small live baits can work well for the bigger fish during late summer. Whole ragworm fished at the Pier Head will produce bass in early summer.

Mullet will take small fish baits (use the flesh of a fresh mackerel, not the skin) and later in the season, sandrag. At the bottom of the slope at the shore end of the Stem, golden grey mullet can be taken on sandrag during September.
THE ANGLERS CODE OF CONDUCT

- No overhead casting.
- Show respect to other anglers, all other Pier customers and Council staff.
- Comply with any instruction given by Council staff. This is for your safety.
- Do not fish in restricted areas. Areas where fishing is prohibited at all times are marked by yellow railings. Other areas where fishing is restricted to certain times of the year have signs displayed.
- No fishing shall take place on the lower decks or the slipways.
- Treat the Pier with respect. Do not place or cut bait on seats. Clear all bait and any other rubbish up before leaving. Old fishing lines should be cut into short lengths as it is a threat to wildlife. Old hooks must be taken home and disposed of properly. Leave the Pier as you would wish to find it.
- Do not block the walkway. Leave plenty of room for people to pass unhindered.
- Each fisherman may use up to two rods but do check the rules first if you are entering a competition.
- Treat all fish and crabs carefully. Return all undersized fish and crabs to the sea. Fish you wish to keep should be dispatched quickly and humanely.
- Do not use stainless steel hooks. Fish cannot rid themselves of this type of hook if a trace is accidentally lost.
- Pier staff will recognize responsible Anglers as valued customers and seek to foster mutual respect.

This code does not replace existing terms and conditions set by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

HISTORY

Southend Pier first opened in 1889 and since completion of the Prince George Extension in 1929 it has retained the accolade of being the World’s Longest Pleasure Pier. Stretching 1.34 miles out to sea there is plenty of scope for those wishing to fish at sea without leaving dry land.

In January 2001, the Southend Pier Angling Forum was established. Representatives from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s Pier and Foreshore Division and local angling clubs meet bimonthly to discuss current issues and this guide has been produced as a result.

PIER FISHING PASSES

Day passes and combined day and night passes can be purchased. Application forms are available from the ticket office at North Station or telephone 01702 215620 to arrange for a form to be sent to you. (Please read the Conditions printed on the back of the application form before signing.)

WHERE TO FISH

Anglers have a choice of location from where to fish on Southend Pier, the Stem or the Pier Head. Both offer varied fishing throughout the year.

THE PIER STEM

The Stem offers anglers a wide variety of species and can be fished on average four hours either side of high tide. It is snag free and a popular place to fish but weed can be a problem in summer. The main factor in determining what fish can be caught is the time of year.

January and February

Usually very quiet with only a few flounders to be caught using worm bait.

March and April

More flounders and the occasional plaice can be caught but the catch rate increases dramatically when the first crab start to peel in late April.

May and June

Two of the best months to fish the Pier. The northern half of the Stem will produce flounders, plaice, eels, garfish, shad and small bass. The southern half of the Stem produces more garfish, shad and the first of the mackerel. There is also the chance of larger bass. Plaice and flounders can be caught here, particularly during the first and last hour of the tide.

July and August

Similar fishing to May and June but some days can be less productive and weed is a real problem, especially on the larger tides.

September and October

Again, similar fishing to May and June but by October many of the summer species will be thinning out. September can be very good for mackerel near South Station, and on night tides in October good bags of whiting can be taken.

November and December

Flounders during the day. Flounders, lots of whiting and a few codling at night.

THE PIER HEAD

Fishing at the Pier Head can be divided into four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Be warned that some areas, especially the south face, suffer fast tides and there are many places where tackle will snag, so expect some losses.

Spring

Spring can be very quiet with only a few small whiting, pouting and dabs. In late April and May early summer species can arrive.

Summer

Bass, mullet, mackerel and horse mackerel are the main species but many other species arrive occasionally. Large bass can be caught fishing at the Pier Head but be prepared to lose tackle!
PIER OPENING TIMES

SPRING
08:15 - 18:00 weekdays
08:15 - 20:00 weekends

SUMMER
08:15 - 20:00 weekdays
08:15 - 20:00 weekends

AUTUMN
08:15 - 18:00 weekdays
08:15 - 20:00 weekends

WINTER
08:15 - 16:00 weekdays
08:15 - 18:00 weekends

MINIMUM FISH SIZES

- BASS 41cm 16"
- MULLET 33cm 13"
- PLACE 32cm 12.5"
- FLOUNDER 25cm 10"
- MACKEREL 30cm 12"
- GARFISH 38cm 15"
- COD 35cm 14"
- WHITING 27cm 10.6"
- EELS 38cm 15"
- DAB 25cm 10"
- POUTING 15cm 7.25"
- HORSE MACKEREL 25cm 10"

Southend Pier Fishing Restrictions

1st May to 30th September

PIER STEM SHELTERS
NO FISHING

TACKLE SHOPS

Bait, tackle and local angling advice is available from the following shops but, whenever possible, bait should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

Alexandra Angling Centre
21 Alexandra Street
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 437066

Bait and Tackle Centre
258a Southchurch Road
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 617764

Pete’s Tackle
103 Rochford Road
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 348600

Jetty Anglers
47 Eastern Esplanade
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 611826

Southend Angling Centre
5 Pier Approach
Western Esplanade
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 603303