

Fishing – advice from top local anglers on how to start

There has been a surge in interest in fishing in recently and Geoffrey Lowe, chairman of Edinburgh and Lothians Coarse Angling Club, and Craig Ogilvie, chairman of the Bass Rock Shore Angling League, provide tips for those tempted to wet a line.

Geoffrey suggested that the Union Canal (pictured at Hermiston) is not a preferred location for keen coarse anglers who normally travel to Magiscroft near Cumbernauld or Orchil near Dunblane.

You can, of course, walk the banks of the canal with a spinning rod to catch perch and jack pike.

Fishing for roach, he suggests, is only worthwhile near Ratho on the Edinburgh side of the Bridge Inn.

Early morning from first light until mid-morning is the best time with maggot and bread punch are the preferred baits, but not sweetcorn.

Lowe said that a keen newcomer could start with a budget of around £50 and there are a number of on sites which offer coarse angling equipment. Best to shop around.

Keep it simple. A rod, reel, line, float and split shot with hooks and some bait will get you started but if you cast a line always check the depth of the water as most coarse fish congregate at the bottom of the water looking for food.

Lowe said: “The five-mile suggestion means we can’t travel to Magiscroft or Orchil but the Union Canal is not really worth trying unless you walk the banks spinning.

“People do fish near the Bridge Inn at Ratho for roach and at

locations in the city centre (like Harrison Park) but it can be tough going."

If you do wish to fish the Union and Forth and Clyde Canals there is a permit (£8 adult, £5 concession) from the Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling. Details are on their website.

The rules include returning all fish to the water, a maximum of three rods and anglers must not block the towpath with fishing equipment.

Meanwhile, Craig Ogilvie, a well-known competition angler, said that people interested in starting sea fishing could do so with a standard 5oz beachcaster rod or spinning rod.

They will, he said, be sufficient to fish beaches in the Forth Estuary.

Three-hook flapper rigs with size 4 hooks baited with a small worm tipped with a little fish would be the preferred bait. Worm would be lugworm or ragworm and the fish bait is mostly mackerel or bluey.

Ogilvie said: "Try beaches such as Kirkcaldy or Leven on the northern Forth for flounders but I would advise staying away from the sun-seekers.

"On the Edinburgh shoreline, try Silvernowes, Portobello or Belhaven beaches."

If anglers are looking for cod or wrasse try places like Pittenweem, Anstruther and Crail on the north coast and Dunbar, Barns Ness and Skateraw on the south coast.

He added: "A heavy 8oz beachcaster rod with 60lb plus braid mainline, 5oz lead to a 20lb rotten bottom link with a 4/0 hook baited with peeler crab or mussel is good. Peeler crab is best and ragworm is good for wrasse."

The final tip from the Bass Rock Shore Angling League co-founder is to look for calm, settled seas and remember that

fish will be in the rough ground in the rocks and weed.