Take the Bait

Sportfishing Project Activity Guide

Name: ________________________________

County: ______________________________

National 4-H Curriculum
BU-07598
Note to the Fishing Project Helper

Thank you for volunteering your time and talents to assist one or more young people in this project. This activity guide will introduce them to the exciting world of fishing. Your involvement will make a real difference in the quality of their experiences. You will play a valuable role in helping them learn the subject matter and practice important life skills along the way. Your interest, enthusiasm and most importantly, your time will be key ingredients to positive and successful experiences. With your guidance and support, youth will set goals and challenge themselves to work through the activities in this guide. It will be a fishing journey everyone will enjoy.

Your Role

- Become familiar with the material in the activity guide and the Sportfishing Project Helper’s Guide.
- Support youth in their efforts to set goals and complete the activities.
- Date and initial the activities when the youth completes them.
- Help them know themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses.
- Incorporate the use of the experiential learning cycle in all learning experiences.

The Fishing for Adventure Sportfishing Series

This guide, Take the Bait, is the first in the series of three for youth that also includes Sportfishing 2: Reel in the Fun and Sportfishing 3: Cast into the Future. The three youth guides have been designed for grades 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 respectively, but may be used by youth in any grade based on their fishing project skills, experience and interest.

Each activity is designed so the young person has an opportunity to learn by doing before being told or shown how. Your role as Helper is to “take a back seat” while the youth explores the activities and learns from the experiences, even when something doesn’t work the first time the way you might think it should. You can help with the learning most effectively by listening as the young person considers the questions and draws conclusions. At times the activity may call for you to be a resource person for content or other ideas.

Experiential Learning Model

This five-step model is used in each activity in this series.

The youth first attempts the activity on their own. After the youth do as much as they can and answer the questions, you meet with the youth and discuss the questions with them. What did they do? What was important about what they did? How does their accomplishment relate to their lives? And finally, how might they use the life and project skills practiced in the future? The more you can ask additional thought-provoking questions and help them clarify and expand on their ideas, the richer the youth’s educational experiences will be.

All activities support the experiential learning model endorsed by the 4-H Program. Each activity lists the project skill, the life skill to be practiced and a success indicator. The success indicator indicates what the youth will do to successfully complete the activity. In addition, in the Helper’s Guide you will find an evaluation piece to use to determine what the youth has learned from each activity.

Baiting the Hook

gives direction how to complete the activity.

Sharing Fish Tales

asks youth to share their experience by recording brief answers to questions and sharing these with the project helper. The questions help youth process the experience through the five important steps of the experiential cycle shown on this page and more fully outlined in the Helper’s Guide:

- Casting Out – Youth share what they did in the activity.
- Working the Line – Youth answer questions about important aspects of the experience and the life skill practiced while doing the activity.
- Setting the Hook – Youth relate the experience to everyday or similar experience in their own lives.
- Landing the Fish – Youth tell how they could use the experience or build from this experience to another experience.

Fishing Deeper

This section includes additional activities the youth may choose to do to expand the experience. Doing these activities may be used to complete the Achievement Program for this level.

Find more Sportfishing facts, information and resources online.

Sportfishing Helper’s Guide

The fourth publication in this series, the Sportfishing Helper’s Guide, provides additional learn-by-doing activities that can be adapted to 4-H fishing project groups, clubs or other groups. You’ll also find helpful hints about characteristics of youth, life skill development, teaching experientially, project meeting ideas and resources for organizing a community sportfishing program.

Good luck in your role as Project Helper!

Acknowledgments

Original 4-H Sportfishing Design Team: Doug Steele, Chair, Eric Bergersen, Perry Brewer, Ronnie Castillo, Mark Conquisti, Rachel Dunaway, Kim Fabrizius, Elcon Fisher, Steve Flickinger, Bill Hix, Colleen G. Rodriguez, CO.

National Sportfishing Design Team: Darlene Baker, Al and Michael Gavey, MT, co-chairs; Ron Howard Jr., TX; Joe Courneya, ND; Doug Steele, and Tom Zurcher, MI.

Graphic Designers: Northam Design Group, MN; Terry Lyn Nash, CO; Jeanine Kline, CO.

Word Processing: Sue Teeters, MI.

Editors: Tom Zurcher, MI and Jennifer Geraci, CO.

Photographs: Kelly Nelson, CO and Tom Zurcher, MI.

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### Related Sections

- **Red in the Fish**
  - More on sportfishing look for these other guides in this set.
  - For more on sportfishing look for these other guides in this set.

- **Cast into the Future**
  - Cast into the Future Completion Certificate
  - Cast into the Future Achievement Program

- **Cast Into the Future**
  - Cast into the Future Completion Certificate
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- **Sportfishing Helper's Guide**
  - Chapter: Planning for Success
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    - Tackling and Learning Together

- **Sportfishing Helper's Guide**
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    - Fishing for Fun

- **Sportfishing Helper's Guide**
  - Chapter: Playing Sportfishing Games
    - Playing POKER
    - Playing Printemps
    - Playing Printemps

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**Note:**
- This page contains a table of contents and introductory sections for each chapter. The page also includes visual aids such as images of fish and tackle, as well as references to other guides for sportfishing.
Let the Adventure Begin

Are you ready to begin the Sportfishing project? You’ll soon discover that this project is more than just fishing. You will also learn how to make your own fishing tackle, experience the world of aquatic ecology and explore the relationship between fish, people and the environment.

Through the activities in this guide, you will have many interesting and exciting challenges. You’ll learn some different casting methods, how to decide on the proper tackle, the basics of aquatic ecology and how important you and your actions are to a clean environment. It really will be a new adventure for you, even if you have fished before.

Don’t be afraid to jump right into an activity and give it a try. Don’t give up if the activity doesn’t work the first time. Learning takes place even when things don’t turn out as planned. The most important thing is to try. Once you try, talk with your helper about what you did or tried to do.

You’ll also be learning about yourself. In addition to what you learn in this project, many of the things you’ll do are skills you’ll use in other areas of your life, such as decision making, communicating with others and being an effective leader.

Take the Bait
Project Guidelines

Set your goals and record your Sportfishing project highlights.

• Do a minimum of six activities in the Take the Bait Achievement Program each year and complete the Program within three years.
• Participate in a minimum of three of the learning experiences listed on the Planning Guide each year.
• Practice and develop the life skills of relating to others, making decisions, learning to learn and communicating with others.
• Increase your fishing knowledge and skills.

Take the Bait
Achievement Program

While you are having fun doing the activities, you’ll also be completing the Take the Bait Achievement Program. The overall program consists of three levels. This program will help you set goals, record your successes and be recognized for your good work.

Your Project Helper

Your project helper will support you in this project and make learning more fun. This person may be a parent, project leader or advisor, a neighbor or an older friend who knows about fishing and is willing to support you. The choice of a helper is yours.

As you do the activities, you’ll discuss with your helper what you did and the questions in the “Sharing Fish Tales” part of each activity. Sometimes your helper will work with you to identify resources, including people, Internet sites, organizations, events, magazines and books necessary to complete an activity.

Once you have successfully completed an activity, your helper will date and initial your achievement program record. Write the name, phone number and E-mail address of your project helper here.

My Project Helper _______________________
Phone # _______________________________
E-mail address _________________________
### Sportfishing Project Goals

Name ________________________________

What I want to do and learn.

1. ____________________________________

2. ____________________________________

3. ____________________________________

### Learning Experiences

Complete at least three of these activities each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Exhibit at a fair</td>
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<td>Go fishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do a community service project</td>
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<td>Visit a tackle shop</td>
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<td>Attend a fishing project meeting</td>
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<td>Tour a boat or fishing store</td>
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<td>Conduct a water quality experiment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview a fisherman</td>
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<td>Collect local fishing folklore</td>
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### Sportfishing Project Highlights

Date and list the most fun and interesting things you did in this project.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
# Take The Bait

**Guidelines**

1. Try to do at least six activities each year.
2. Complete at least 20 of the Take the Bait and Fishing Deeper activities within three years to complete this achievement program and receive the completion certificate.
3. Ask your project helper to initial the activities as you complete them.

## Take The Bait

Complete at least 12 of the activities.

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<td>Sharp Teeth, Sharp Spines</td>
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</table>

Write your own activity here.

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**Fishing Deeper**

Select any of the Fishing Deeper activities. Record the page number of each activity you complete and discuss with your helper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Helper’s Initials</th>
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Write your own activity here.

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Write your own activity here.

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Write your own activity here.

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Write your own activity here.
Take the Bait
Completion Certificate

I certify that

______________________________
has completed all requirements of the
Take the Bait Achievement Program
in the Sportfishing Adventure Series.

Helper's Signature______________________________

Date ________________________________

Place a picture of you, the angler, here.
Let's Go Fishing!

What do you know about fishing? When you go fishing, do you usually catch fish? Are you ready to learn to be even a better angler? See how much you already know.

Baiting the Hook

In each of the areas below mark the answers that best show what your fishing skills, knowledge and experiences are right now. There are no right or wrong answers.

Angling Self Assessment

Fish I've Caught
- Bluegill
- Perch
- Catfish
- Trout
- Salmon
- Northern Pike
- Smelt
- Largemouth Bass
- Bullheads
- Walleye
- Muskie
- Carp
- Sunfish
- 

Knots I Know How To Tie
- Krewh knot
- Polomar knot
- Surgeon's knot
- Improved Clinch knot
- Snell knot
- Turtle knot

Fish Parts I Can Identify
- Nape
- Lateral line
- Gill
- Fins
- Caudal fin
- Eye

Fishing Equipment I've Used
- Spinning rod and reel
- Baitcasting rod and reel
- Cane pole
- Lures
- Hooks
- Sinks
- Snaps/swivels

Aquatic Plants I Know
- Cabbage
- Coon tail
- Water milfoil
- Water lily
- Water hyacinth
- Reeds
- Bulrushes
- Cane
- Sand grass
- Eldoed

Baits I Have Used
- Crayfish
- Cutbait
- Grasshopper
- Grub
- Leech
- Night crawler
- Shiner
- Shrimp
- Waxworm
- Worm

Rods and Reels I Have Used
- Fly
- Baitcasting
- Spincasting

Fishing Words I Know
- Leader
- Adipose fin
- Bobber
- Cast
- Creel
- Dry fly
- Fishing rig
- Habitat
- Lure
- Nymph
- Rigging
- Split shot
- Tackle
- Terminal tackle
Sharing Fish Tales
(With your helper)

Casting Out (Share what you did)
What do you know about sportfishing and how to catch fish?

Working the Lure (Process what’s important)
What do you want to learn in the sportfishing project?

Setting the Hook (Generalize to your life)
Why is record keeping important in sportfishing?

Landing the Fish (Apply what you learned)
What is your long-range fishing goal?

Angling Tips

Playing a Fish
To hook a fish and then actually land it on the bank or in a boat takes a lot of patience and skill. Here is a way to practice before you actually hook a big one. Ask your helper or a friend to pretend to be a fish. Practice playing (tiring) a hooked fish and landing it on the bank.

1. Cast out your line in front of you. Remember to take the "slack" out of the line.

2. Ask the person pretending to be the fish to gently pull the casting plug. This will let you get the feel of a fish nibbling and getting ready to take your bait.

3. Have your "fish" take the bait by making a harder series of tugs on the line. Not hard tugs since fish are not as strong as people!

4. Set the "hook" by firmly bringing up the rod tip. Don't do this so hard that you jerk the practice plug from your friend's hand.

5. Now that the fish is "hooked", try to reel it in. Tell your fish to move forward or backward quickly. If the fish moves toward you, reel in the slack in the fishing line. If it moves away let the drag on the reel let line out. The key is to keep slack out of the line between the rod and the fish.

6. Ask the "fish" to move to the left or to the right. If it moves to the left, lean your rod to the right. If the fish moves to the right, lean the rod to the left. This will keep pressure on the fish and will allow you to control it better.

7. Once your "fish" shows it is tired, (this is called "playing" the fish out) reel it in for a landing on the bank. Do not reel the fish all the way up to the tip of the rod because it might break off.

Fishing Deeper

1. At a tackle shop make a list of what a new angler would need in order to fish for pan fish and the total cost of everything.

2. Demonstrate to your helper how you would land a large fish.

3. At an antique show or antique business talk to a dealer who sells antique fishing tackle. Share with your helper what you discover.
It's a Clinch!

Tying good fishing knots is one of the most important fishing skills you can learn. If you have ever had a fish hooked that gets away because a knot was not tied properly, you know the disappointment! In this activity, you'll demonstrate how to tie at least one knot that will attach hooks, flies, snaps, swivels, and lures to your line.

Baiting the Hook

Your challenge is to learn to tie one of the knots shown in Tackle Tips. These knots are often used to attach a hook to a line. You may want to practice the knots using a cord for the "line" and an eye bolt for the "eye" of the hook. When you have learned to tie at least one of the knots, demonstrate to your helper how to tie it. Finally, tie the knot using a hook and line. Carefully tape it in the space shown.

Sharing Fish Tales

Casting Out
Share with your helper how you learned to tie the knot. How did you learn to tie this knot?

Working the Lure
What was the most difficult part of tying a knot?

Setting the Hook
How will being able to tie knots help you be a better angler?

Landing the Fish
How and where will you use the knot?
**Tackle Tips**

**Knots to Attach Snaps, Swivels, Lures, Flies, Sinkers and Hooks**

**Improved Clinch Knot**
1. Pass the line through the hook or swivel eye once and pull it back towards the line.
2. Make five turns or “S” twists with the free end of the line around the main line.
3. Pass the end of the line between the eye and the first loop formed.
4. Bring the end through the large loop just formed and slowly pull tight while holding the free end by your thumb and forefinger.
5. After pulling tight, cut off any extra line coming out of the knot.

**Snell Knot**
1. Pass the line through the eye, forming a loop, and pass it through the eye again in the opposite direction.
2. Take the part of the loop closest to the eye and wrap it over the shank seven or eight times.
3. With the long end of the line in your right hand and the wraps held in your left hand, slowly and steadily pull the starting line until the line is almost tight. Then grasp the tag end with your fingers or a pair of pliers and pull it and the standing line at the same time until the knot is tight.

**Polomar Knot**
1. Make a loop and pass it through the eye.
2. Make a loose overhand knot with the double line.
3. Put the loop over the item (hook, lure, swivel).
4. Slowly pull tight both ends of the line.

**Turtle Knot**
1. Pass the line through the eye and tie a single running knot at the end of the line, forming a loop.
2. Pass the fly or hook through the loop.
3. Pull the knot tight behind the eye.
4. Snip away extra line.

**Fish Facts**
Fish have no eyelids so they can’t close their eyes. This is one reason why fish often like to hide in the shade or other dark places.

**Fishing Deeper**
1. Demonstrate to your family how to attach a hook to a line with a snell knot.
2. Teach your family or a friend how to tie a fishing knot.
Pop Can Casting

What do you think when you hear the word rig? Someone might think of an eighteen-wheeler going down the freeway. A fisherman would think of something very different. Fishing “rigs” usually consist of a rod, reel, line and bait such as a worm, lure or fly. There are several types of fishing rigs: bait casting rigs, spin casting rigs, salt-water rigs and fly fishing rigs. In this activity you will have fun building a “pop can rig” and learning to cast it to any spot you select. You can’t catch fish unless you can accurately place the worm, lure or fly where the fish can get to it easily. This activity will not only help you cast accurately but will also help you become a better problem solver.

Baiting the Hook

First you’ll want to make your own pop can rig. Find a pop can, about 50 feet of fishing line and a plastic casting plug. Attach the line to the can with a piece of tape. Then wind the line around the center of the can. Finally, tie a loop in the end of the line and attach the weight.

Now the fun begins. See what happens when you cast the weight to a target such as a bucket. First cast 10 feet to the target. Record below how many feet away from the target the weight lands. Do this 10 times. Check the casting tips in the Fishing Tips section on page 11 for helpful hints. Practice with a friend or your helper to make this activity even more fun. Now cast 10 times from 15 feet and then 20 feet. Finally, write in the space below how you improved your casting scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Casting Record</th>
<th>Cast Number</th>
<th>How I Improved My Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10’ Cast</td>
<td>1 2 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15’ Cast</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20’ Cast</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Casting Out
How did you make a pop can fishing rig?
How was your rig like a real fishing pole, line and lure?
What happened when you made your first casts?
How is this way of casting like casting a real rig?

Working the Lure
What is the most important part of building a pop can rig?
What did you do to make your casts go in the bucket (or close to the bucket)?

Setting the Hook
What's another problem that can be solved in a similar way?

Landing the Fish
How could this activity make you a better angler?

Fish Facts
There are casting tournaments where anglers compete for prizes.

Fish Talk Words
- Casting
- Fishing rig

Acknowledgments: Activity written by Mike Casey.

Fishing Tips
Casting the Pop Can Rig
Place your hand around the can behind the line with your thumb on the line. Swing the can underhand like you would throw a ball. Instead of letting go of the can as you would a ball raise your thumb off the line and hold onto the can.

Increasing Accuracy
As you practice casting you will learn that there are many ways to increase accuracy.
- Releasing the line too soon will cause the weight to fall short.
- Releasing too late causes the weight to go too high and probably short.
- A faster arm speed will cause the weight to go farther.
- How high your hand is when you release the line may affect where the weight goes.

Fishing Deeper
1. Teach someone who has never fished how to cast a lure using the pop can rig.
2. Use a regular fishing rig and practice casting to a target.
3. Describe to your helper how the pole, reel, line and bait affect how accurately you can cast.