

PIKE HANDLING TIPS FOR BOAT FISHING

It is one thing handling pike when you are on solid ground, but when in a boat it requires a degree more confidence.

If netting a fish from a drifting boat it is a good idea to manoeuvre the boat upwind of the pike. Better still drop the anchor to make boating the pike easier and reduce the length of time it will be played for. Always keep pike away from anchor ropes, strong sound tackle and a firm hand is essential for this.

Some experienced boat-pikers prefer a round framed net, but as these are best used with a scooping motion they are not that easy to use when fishing alone. A triangular framed net is perfectly satisfactory.

Once a pike is netted the net can be held against the side of the boat and the pike unhooked in its meshes. With the hooks removed the pike may as well remain in the net over the side of the boat while the scales and camera are made ready.

Either lift the fish out of the net and directly into the weigh sling, or lift the net aboard and lay it on an unhooking mat or some other padded material prior to transferring the pike to the sling. Take special care when lifting fish aboard in rough weather.



Anglers with a lot of boat fishing experience often prefer to keep their fish held off the deck at all times as pike often start flapping about when laid on a mat. On the bank you have more freedom to kneel astride pike to calm them down, in a cramped boat this course of action is not always practical.

One advantage of photographing pike in a boat is that should the fish start to thrash while being held - and run the risk of falling on the deck - it can be safely dropped into the water. In all other cases pike should be nursed as



carefully when being released from a boat as they would be from the bank. Kneel down and lean over the side of the boat, keeping a hold of the fish by the wrist of its tail until it can maintain its balance and is strong enough to swim off steadily.