



## OUR OWN COUNCIL'S "GONE FISHIN'"

### GIRL SCOUT JUNIOR BADGE

**Fishing** is the most popular wildlife-related activity in **Georgia**. From pristine trout streams winding their way through the state parks, to bass fishing on one of the state's reservoirs, Georgia has plenty to offer both the beginning and experienced angler. **To earn this badge, choose and complete at least 6 activities, including the two that are starred (\*).** A good place to start your search for information on fishing in Georgia is at <http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us/fishing.aspx>.

#### 1. Know Your Fish

"What kind of fish is this?" is often asked by young fishermen and women. Find out about at least five different types of Georgia freshwater fish:

- a. Give a description of each fish;
- b. its habitat;
- c. its food requirements;
- d. the type of bait used to catch it;
- e. and, if you can, its range in Georgia.

#### 2. Find the Right Rod

Visit a bait shop or the sporting goods section of a department store to find out:

- a. the different kinds of fishing rods for sale
- b. the length of each type rod
- c. the cost of the rods
- d. what the different types are used for

### 3. Fish Dish

Is eating fish good for you, or is it dangerous? How does eating fish affect the environment? Eating fish can be part of a healthy diet; it's a good source of protein and is low in fat. It's hard to believe that fish that looks, smells, and tastes fine may not be safe to eat. But the truth is that fish caught in some lakes, ponds, and rivers have mercury or other pollutants in them. Go online to research how much and what kinds of fish are safe to eat. Then find out what *sustainable fishing* means. After you've completed your research, decide which – if any – fish to prepare for a family or camp meal.

### 4. It's Official

With fishing being so popular in Georgia, it seems only fitting that we have a State Fish! Find out what Georgia's State Fish is, what it looks like, and why it was chosen. Where does this fish live (what kind of water?) What does it like to eat? If you wanted to catch this fish, what equipment would you need? Create a poster or skit to share what you learn about Georgia's State Fish with another group.

### \* 5. Follow the Law

Learn about Georgia's fishing laws and regulations by interviewing a game warden with the Department of Natural Resources or another knowledgeable person, or through your local library or the internet.

- a. Who needs a fishing license?
- b. Where do you get one?
- c. How much does it cost?
- d. What is the license fee used for?

### 6. Go Fish

Plan a fishing trip with your troop, group or family. \*Before you go, **you must complete activities #5 (Follow the Law) and #8 (Play It Safe.)** Find out what you need to take with you on your trip (type of gear, sunscreen, food, water, bait) Read the following Angler's Code of Conduct and discuss it with your troop or group. Always abide by the rules. Check the weather and then go fishing! (Did you catch any fish? How many, what kind, what size were the fish?)

*Angler's Code of Conduct*

\* Know the fishing rules and regulations for Georgia. A Georgia Rules and Regulations booklet is published each year.

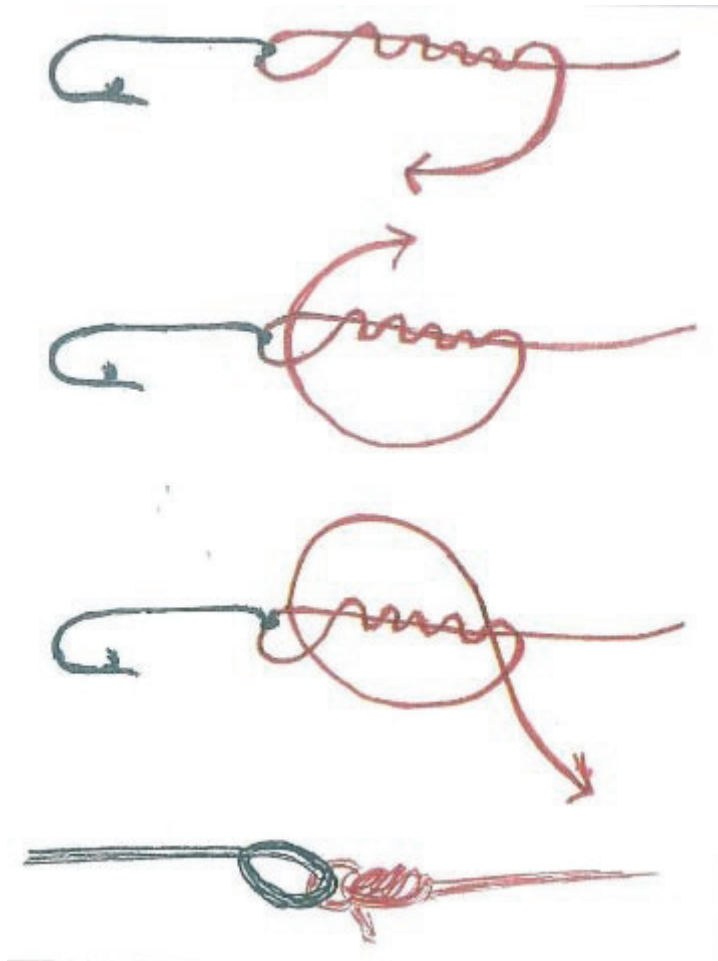
\* Only take what you can use. Learn and practice "catch and release".

\* Never leave fishing line, Styrofoam, bait boxes, or any kind of litter. Take all of your trash with you. Always leave an area cleaner than you found it. Trash can harm and kill fish and other wildlife.

\* Always ask before entering private land.

## 7. Know Your Knot

Learn the proper way to tie a hook onto your fishing line. Use the illustration below to master the Improved Clinch Knot. (Also called the Fisherman's Knot.)



## \*8. Play It Safe

Make a list of at least five safety procedures that fishermen and women should follow when fishing from a boat or from the bank. Know and follow the rules in *Safety-Wise* or the "Safety Activity Checkpoints" for using a boat. Know what to take and what to wear to help you keep safe and healthy

while fishing. Know how to recognize dangerous weather and what to do in case of a storm.

### **9. Fishy Business**

Visit a fish hatchery, catfish farm, or another place whose business is "fish". Talk to people and learn what they do there and the different jobs that are available. Find out what training or education you need to do those jobs.

### **10. Cast Away**

Learn what a casting plug is and what it is used for. Practice casting by playing the following cast game:

- a. Use an old tire, a hula hoop, or a piece of rope laid in a circle as a target
- b. Take turns throwing the casting plug toward the target.

You will score three points every time you hit inside the target.

*This patch was originally developed by Aimee Bozeman and Ansley Carter of Girl Scout Troop 83, Pike County, Georgia. Revised November, 2008*

### **Tips For Fishing With Kids**

1. Keep it easy. Choose simple tackle, bait and techniques. Fish for species that you can catch a lot of in a very short amount of time. The goal should be to keep their rod bent as much as possible. Don't worry about catching a fish that YOU will be proud of, catch anything! The more interesting, colorful and unique the fish, the more excited they will be.
2. Keep it short. Marathon days are not what they need. Try to find fishing spots VERY close that that don't require long car or boat rides.
3. Keep them covered. Use plenty of sunscreen and protective clothing. Try not to make anything about the experience painful or unpleasant.
4. Keep them happy. Take lots of snacks including a treat that usually is not allowed at home. Snacks can help break up any moments of frustration and keeps kids interested.
5. Keep your cool. Expect to re-bait hooks and take out tangles and knots all day. This is their day, not yours. The quickest way to turn a kid off of fishing is to get frustrated with them. Teach them what you know -- tell them about birds, plants or fish. Kids remember these things and find it interesting. Read to them about fish.
6. Keep a few fish for dinner. Keep fish within the limits and never keep more than you plan to eat. These lessons mold responsible and conscientious anglers to ensure the future of our fisheries.

## ***Top Places to Take a Kid Fishing***

- Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center, Jasper/Newton Counties
- Clayton and Henry County Water Supply Reservoirs
- Cochran Shoals (Chattahoochee River NRA)
- Hard Labor Creek State Park, Morgan Co.
- Lake Varner Water Supply Reservoir, Newton Co.
- Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawson CO.
- Buford Fish Hatchery, Forsyth Co,
- Watson Mill Bridge State Park, Oglethorpe Co.
- Burton Fish Hatchery, Rabun Co.
- Carter's Lake, Gilmer Co.
- Panola Mountain State Park, Henry/Rockdale Co.
- Atlanta Area: Bull Sluice Lake, Chapel Hill Park, Stone Mtn. Park, Exchange Park.

To find out about free or low-cost fishing lessons and fishing festivals or rodeos for kids, go to Georgia State Parks & Historic Site's Web site ([www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org)) and click on "Events."



**Large Mouth Bass**

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# Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Inc

[www.gsgatl.org](http://www.gsgatl.org)

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