



A BEAR GOES FISHING



RATIONALE FOR ADVENTURE

Fishing is a skill that can become a lifelong hobby, or possibly a career. It can be done alone, or with family or friends. This adventure is meant to be fun and can be used for teaching several points of the Scout Law such as trustworthy, helpful, courteous, obedient, thrifty, cheerful, clean, and even reverent.

TAKEAWAYS FOR CUB SCOUTS

- Learning about the types of fish near the Scouts' homes
- Learning what the fish eat, how they can be caught, and how we can conserve and preserve our fish by using the concept of catch-and-release fishing
- Understanding different types of equipment and making simple fishing tackle
- Going fishing and having a hands-on experience to apply all the Bears have learned

ADVENTURE REQUIREMENTS

Bear Handbook, page 120

Complete at least three of the following:

1. Discover and learn about three types of fish in your area. Draw a color picture of each fish, record what each one likes to eat, and describe what sort of habitat each one likes.
2. Learn about your local fishing regulations with your den leader or a parent or guardian. List three of the regulations you learn about and one reason each regulation exists.
3. Learn about fishing equipment, and make a simple fishing pole. Practice casting at a target.
4. Go on a fishing adventure, and spend a minimum of one hour trying to catch a fish. Put into practice the things you have learned about fish and fishing equipment.

NOTES TO DEN LEADER

This adventure has several choices based on which activities you choose to do with your den. These den meeting plans, when followed as written, meet the requirements to earn this adventure. If you choose to make adjustments, be sure you complete at least the minimum requirements.

Review the plans for Meetings 1 and 2 before beginning the adventure. You might choose to have a local fishing expert assist with Meeting 1, and you will need to make arrangements for equipment.

Meeting 2 is a den outing to go fishing. Select and make plans with the location in advance. Confirm that transportation to and from the event is in place. Secure signed activity consent forms.

If your fishing plan involves Cub Scouts being in boats, review the *Guide to Safe Scouting and Safety Afloat* at www.scouting.org to assure you have a safe outing in compliance with BSA policies.

Review the licensing regulations in your state, which can be obtained through your state conservation service or most places where fishing licenses are sold.

See the appendix for optional den meeting activities, including openings, gatherings, and closings.

MEETING 1 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Markers or colored pencils for each Scout
- Copies of the Good Neighbor rules, 1 for each Scout
- Instructions and materials for making a simple fishing pole
- Instructions and fishing line for tying the clinch knot and the Palomar knot
- Samples of fishing equipment
- Provide one fishing pole per Scout, one pole per two Scouts, or one per team for the relay game. Be certain the poles are set up for bait casting practice with a weight on the end instead of a hook.
- Assemble information regarding at least three types of fish that live in your local waters. This information can be found through the internet or through your state or local conservation service. Many states have agencies that are dedicated to fish and wildlife and can assist you at little or no cost.
- You may invite a local fishing club member, a representative from a local sporting goods or bait shop, or a den parent or grandparent to assist with this den meeting. Some organizations may allow you access to a live fish exhibit as well.

GATHERING (REQUIREMENT 1)

As Bears enter, have them go to this adventure in their handbooks and give them colored pencils or markers to draw fish in the books that are native to your area. Provide pictures you have gathered ahead of time along with basic information about each fish. Another option is to create a page for each fish with pictures and a description, and pass out copies of all the pages; Bears can then cut out and staple together pages for several fishes into their own “fish dictionaries.”

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Pass out copies of the Good Neighbor Fishing Rules. Have Bears recite the rules together.

TALK TIME (REQUIREMENT 2)

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Talk about the habits, food preferences, sizes, and shapes of the types of local fishes the Scouts drew during the Gathering activity.
- Review the fishing regulations and the Good Neighbor rules. (Requirement 2)
- If you invite a professional or someone who fishes as a hobby to this den meeting, he or she may present the fish information as well as the regulations regarding fishing. You can also find fish that live in your area through your state’s fish and game department website.
- Set up an exhibit for a show-and-tell on fishing equipment. This may be done by a local sporting goods representative or one of the individuals mentioned above. Limit the exhibit to simple and inexpensive equipment.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Make a Simple Fishing Pole (Requirement 3)

Materials:

- Sturdy sticks, 4 to 5 feet long (bamboo is a good choice, as is a hiking staff)
- Fishing line

- Safety scissors
- Fish hooks

Instructions:

1. The best type of stick for a fishing rod is strong, yet slightly flexible. Bamboo—about ½-inch thick—would be a good choice, but if bamboo isn't available Bears can bring something similar from home like a hiking staff.
2. If one end of the stick is larger around, use that part as your handle and tie it to one end of the fishing line. Wrap the line in a spiral around the stick until you reach the tip. Tie the line firmly to the tip, but don't cut the line yet.
3. Unroll the line about a foot longer than your stick, then cut it off the roll. You should now have a continuous length of fishing line extending from the handle of your stick down to the hook. (That way, if the fishing rod breaks in the middle, you still have the line in your hand.)
4. Tie a hook to the end of the line, and you are ready to go fishing.

◆ Activity 2: Practice Bait Casting (Requirement 3)

Materials:

- Bait-casting fishing poles, one for each Cub Scout
- Paper plates, flying discs, or similar objects to be targets
- Weights for the ends of fishing poles

Instructions:

1. The poles should be set up with weights tied on the lines instead of hooks.
2. Begin with the targets positioned less than 30 feet away until the Scouts become accustomed to casting.
3. Continue to move the targets away from the Scouts until they are 30 feet away.
4. Once the Scouts can consistently hit the targets, you can give them the challenge of casting under a bush, or near a tree. Many fish choose underwater plants as their habitats, so learning to cast around them is helpful to the Scout.
5. Another option is to set up a relay game by dividing into teams. Each Scout casts to hit a target 5 feet away and then passes the pole to the next Scout. After all Scouts have hit the target, move the target to 10 feet and let them continue. Have as many rounds as you wish before declaring a winning team.

CLOSING

- Gather everyone in your den together in a circle and conduct the Living Circle closing:

To form a Living Circle, Cub Scouts and leaders face inward in a close circle. With the right hand, each person gives the Cub Scout sign. They turn slightly to the right and extend left hands into the circle. Each thumb in the circle is pointed to the right, and each person grasps the thumb of the person on their left, making a complete Living Circle handclasp. The Scout Oath or Scout Law can then be recited.

The Living Circle also can be brought to a close by moving all of the left hands up and down in a pumping motion while the Cub Scouts say, "A-ke-la! We-e-e-ll do-o-o ou-r-r best," snapping into a circle of individual salutes at the word "best."

- Remind everyone of the need for fishing equipment at next week's meeting. Confirm that families have all the necessary information on transportation and other items to bring.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Record completion of requirements 1, 2, and 3.
- Work together to clean up the meeting place.

MEETING 1 RESOURCES

GOOD NEIGHBOR FISHING RULES

In addition to your state and local fishing laws, there are also some “good neighbor” rules that are important for Scouts to follow.

1. Always ask permission before fishing on another person’s property. (A Scout is courteous.)
2. Always leave the area cleaner than you found it. (A Scout is clean.)
3. Always let others know where you are going and when you will be back. (A Scout is trustworthy.)
4. Do not intrude on a spot where others are already fishing. (A Scout is friendly.)
5. Do not fish in a swimming area. This prevents hooks from being lost in a place where others are walking. (A Scout is courteous.)
6. Decide with your parent if you should wear a life jacket while fishing. (A Scout is obedient.)
7. Know what the weather forecast is before you go fishing, and watch the weather while you fish. Never fish while lightning is striking or if there is a possibility of flooding. (Be Prepared.)

MEETING 2 PLAN (Den Outing)

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Prior to this meeting you will need to secure a safe location for the den to go fishing. Communicate the location to all Scouts in the den. Some organizations near you may sponsor a fishing derby for kids. Larger cities may have a city park that allows fishing.
- Confirm that transportation to and from the event is in place. Secure signed activity consent forms.
- The unit den leader should bring a copy of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
- Before the trip, make a group decision about what to do with any fish that are caught. Arrangements may need to be made for ice chests and ice if the fish are being kept.
- It is helpful to have extra equipment, if possible, in case equipment breaks. Additional bait is also a good idea.
- Remember to bring the Cub Scout Six Essentials (including sun protection), trash bags for the Good Turn, cameras for memories, and plenty of adult leadership.
- Remind Bears that the BSA’s water safety rules must be followed at all times. Have them pair up and follow the buddy system.

GATHERING

Practice tying the clinch and Palomar knots. See who can tie the fastest knot (properly tied).

OPENING

- Depending on the location of the meeting you may choose not to have a formal opening. If one is desired, have the den chief or denner call the den roll, and have each Cub Scout answer with how many fish that Scout expects to catch at this outing.
- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Law.

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Cub Scouts.
- Review the BSA buddy system and the Good Neighbor Fishing Rules with the Scouts.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Fishing (Requirement 4)

- Spend at least one hour trying to catch a fish. This time can include baiting the hooks, casting, etc.
- Help Scouts, making sure they are adequately spaced from each other so their lines and hooks do not get tangled.

CLOSING

- Do a Good Turn by making certain the area you have visited is cleaner than you found it.
- Congratulate Scouts on a great fishing trip whether or not they caught fish. Point out that this adventure is a success because they learned about the kind of fish in the area and how to make a pole, tie fishing knots, and bait a hook.
- Have the den chief or denner call the roll again and have the Scouts answer with how many fish they actually caught. Did anyone catch more than they expected at the opening?
- Have them recite the Outdoor Code as a reminder of taking good care of our outdoor world. (See the *Bear Handbook*.)

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Record completion of requirement 4.
- Work together to clean up the fishing site.
- Remember to thank anyone who helped make this adventure a success.

Upon completion of the A Bear Goes Fishing adventure, your Bears will have earned the adventure loop shown here. Make sure they are recognized for their completion by presenting the adventure loops, to be worn on their belts, as soon as possible according to your pack's tradition.



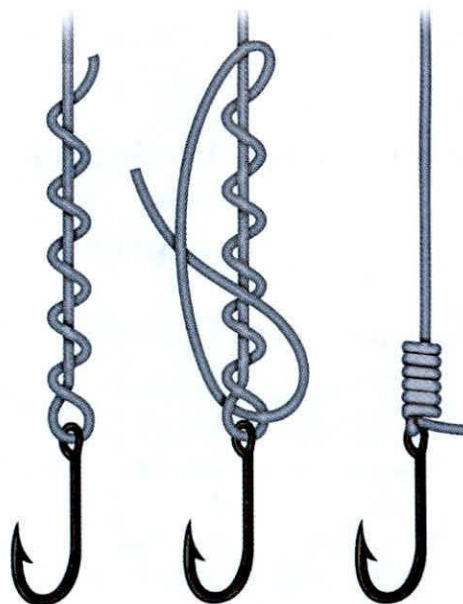
MEETING 2 RESOURCES

KNOT INSTRUCTIONS

◆ Clinch Knot

The clinch knot is a good knot for beginners because it is simple and tightens as tension increases.

1. The first step is to feed the line through the eye of the hook, which is the circle at the opposite end of the hook's sharp edge.
2. After you have a good length (1½ to 2 inches) of line through the eye, wrap the part of the line that has been through the eye back around the part of the line that hasn't been wrapped, but not tightly.
3. Once this step is completed, there will be a loop of line through the eye of the hook. Feed the line through this loop. This will create a large loop that starts at the top of the coil and goes down to the eye of the hook. Feed the line through this loop and pull the line tight.
4. To finish the knot, slide the coils down toward the eye of the hook.



◆ Palomar Knot

This knot is one of the strongest fishing knots.

1. Start by doubling the line and passing the loop through the eye of the hook.
2. Tie this into a simple overhand knot—basically, the first step in tying a shoe.
3. Then, pass the hook through the loop at the end. To finish the knot, pull it tight.

