



OUR OWN COUNCIL'S "GO FISH, GEORGIA!"

GIRL SCOUT JUNIOR BADGE

Georgia boasts over 4,000 miles of trout streams, 12,000 miles of warm-water streams and more than one-half million acres of impoundments. More than 1.1 million anglers of all ages fish in Georgia. These anglers spend about \$1 billion annually on fishing, having a total annual impact of over \$2 billion to the state's economy. And what's more – they're having fun in the out-of-doors!

STEPS

1. Know Your Fish
2. Find the Right Rod – and Cast Away!
3. Wet your line!
4. "Respect authority"
5. Fishy Field Trips

Purpose: When I have earned this badge, I will know how to fish with a rod or pole, know Georgia's fishing regulations, and know how to stay safe while fishing.

Girls and adults MUST USE Girl Scouts of the USA's "Fishing: Safety Activity Checkpoints" as they do these activities, including having adults with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification on site, even when fishing from shore.

STEP 1: Know Your Fish

What kind of fish is this? Are there piranhas in Georgia? Where can I catch a trout? Is eating fish good for you? How does eating fish affect the environment? *There's a lot to learn before you even wet a line!*

- o "What kind of fish is this?" is often asked by beginning anglers. Find out about at least five different types of Georgia freshwater fish:
 - Give a description of each fish or be able to identify it;
 - describe its habitat;
 - its food requirements;
 - the type of bait used to catch it;
 - its range in Georgia or where you would typically find it. **OR...**
- o 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. **OR...**
- o 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.

STEP 2: Respect Authority

"I will do my best to respect authority...use resources wisely...make the world a better place." (The Girl Scout Law) Before you begin fishing, it's very important to know about the laws or regulations that help protect Georgia's natural resources.

- o Know the fishing rules and regulations for Georgia. A Georgia Rules and Regulations booklet is published each year and contains information you need to know to fish in freshwater and saltwater in Georgia. To see a digital version of the current Fishing Regulations go to <http://www.georgiawildlife.org/fishing>. Decide as a group how you will help each other learn and follow these regulations. **OR...**
- o Learn about Georgia's fishing laws and regulations by interviewing a Wildlife Ranger (game warden) or other knowledgeable person. Some things you might ask include:
 - Who needs a fishing license? Where do you get one? How much does it cost? What is the license fee used for?
 - How many fish can you catch at one time? What is "catch and release"?
 - Are there rules about when and where you can fish?
 - What's the most important thing to know before you start fishing? **OR...**
- o Read the following Angler's Code of Conduct and discuss it with your troop or group; match the lines of the Code with parts of the Girl Scout Law:

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.

STEP 3: Find the Right Rod and Cast Away!

What's the difference between a fishing pole and a rod? Can I make my own pole? Is this going to cost a lot? Where do you buy hooks and lines and bobbers? You'll need the right tools to be a successful angler!

- o Discover:
 - the different kinds of fishing rods, the length of each type rod, and the cost of the rods;
 - what the different types are used for;
 - how to assemble a rod; and
 - how to use it.

Also find out about cane poles and cane pole fishing. If you can: cut, cure, rig and fish with your own cane pole. **OR...**

- o Learn the proper way to tie a hook onto your fishing line using the Improved Clinch Knot (also called the Fisherman's Knot,) and practice until you can do it easily. Learn how to bait your hook. Know how to attach or replace a float or bobber. **OR...**
- o Learn what a casting plug is and what it is used for. Practice casting by playing the following casting game: Use an old tire, a hula hoop, or a piece of rope laid in a circle as a target. Take turns throwing the casting plug toward the target. You will score three points every time you hit inside the target. *Find out what to do if your line gets caught or tangled.*

Step 4: Wetting Your Line

That's angler talk for "let's get to fishing!" Georgia offers some of the best and most diverse freshwater fishing opportunities in the Southeast with more than 500,000 acres of reservoirs, Public Fishing Areas, small lakes, rivers and trout streams available to anglers. You'll find a list at

<http://www.georgiawildlife.org/fishing/opportunities>. You can also look for commercial fishing places. And don't forget about Girl Scout camps!

- Reservoirs are big water! Once you know the fishing regulations and safety guidelines, plan your trip and go fishing in a Georgia reservoir. **OR...**
- Public Fishing Areas, also known as PFAs, are intensively managed by the Wildlife Resources Division for fishing. Once you know the fishing regulations and safety guidelines, choose one of the nine "Perfect Fishing Areas" in Georgia then plan and go on your fishing trip. **OR...**
- Once you know the fishing regulations and safety guidelines, find a small lake or peaceful river near you or at a Girl Scout camp; plan your trip and go fishing!

SEP 5 – Fishy Field Trips

- 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. **OR...**
- Kid's Fishing Events (or KFEs) are held around the state throughout the year, especially in the spring and summer. Search the calendar at <http://www.georgiawildlife.com/news/events> to see events by date and location. Click on event title for directions, times and contact information for events; choose your event, plan and go! **OR...**
- The **Go Fish Georgia Initiative** promotes fishing as a family-friendly, fun activity that thousands of people across the state already enjoy and encourages others to get outside and give fishing a try. **The Go Fish Center** in Perry offers live fish and wildlife exhibits, fishing simulators, educational displays and a theater. Visit the Go Fish Center and experience wildlife conservation in a whole new way!



It's Your Planet – Love It!

Is your troop or group working on the *Get Moving!* leadership journey? Going fishing is one way to complete the "Stomp In a Rain Puddle" activity for the Energize Award.

Now that I've earned this badge, I'm prepared to give service by:

- Volunteering at a Kid's Fishing Event or teaching younger children to fish (and be safe!)
- Making weather-proof copies of "The Angler's Code" to post at a near-by fishing lake or at a Girl Scout camp where fishing is allowed.
- Make a Casting Game kit that other troops and groups may use.

What are you inspired to do with your new skills?

I'm inspired to:

Sign Here: _____



RESOURCES:

At <http://www.gofisheducationcenter.com/> you will find information about the Go Fish Education Center and what it has to offer both beginning and seasoned anglers. Whether you wish to learn about the variety of water habitats in the state, try your hand at "catching" a bass or seeing how a hatchery operates, this is the place to go.

At the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division Web site, <http://www.georgiawildlife.org/fishing>, you'll find everything you need to know about Georgia fishing! Download the current sport fishing regulations, locate a Public Fishing Area or discover Georgia's abundant reservoir and river fishing opportunities, identify fish, learn more about the Go Fish Georgia Initiative and more.

This badge was originally developed by Aimee Bozeman and Ansley Carter of Girl Scout Troop 83, Pike County, Georgia. Revised November 2008 and May 2011.



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