



REAR VIEW

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The Author coming home after a good day afloat – Loch Assynt September 2009, with Ardvreck Castle in the background

Trout fishing in Assynt

◆ By Cathel MacLeod
(Produced by the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group)

I have never met Cathel MacLeod – but I would like to. Not only to share angling tales about an area we both share a passion about, but also to thank him for writing such a useful guide to fishing in Assynt.

A lifelong angler and keen hillwalker, I have been visiting Assynt for the last four years to enjoy the superb scenery and wonderful trout fishing. Staying at the Inchnadamph Hotel, an old army friend Sean Elliot and I have fished many of the great lochs of the area with success. We are experienced trout fishers, but even armed with Bruce Sandison's book 'Rivers and Lochs of Scotland' you could be forgiven for being overawed by the sheer scale of the trout fishing in this magnificent part of Scotland.

With the recent efforts being made to better promote the wonderful angling resources of Assynt, there has been a clear need for an easy reference work of this kind, in particular, for visiting anglers who simply want 'somewhere to start'.

Right from the engaging foreword by Mark Bowler, this useful guide gets the angler's juices flowing – indeed Mark even writes "...how handy it is for Cathel MacLeod to share this book with us – a book so full of juicy angling secrets I simply can't wait until I next turn onto the A835 again..."

The format is simple, well written and effective. The book takes you through brief words of wisdom about suitable tackle and map use, before serving up 30 one-page guides to Cathel's selected lochs.

Having fished in the area, I can vouch for the wisdom regarding tackle choice. I would certainly concur that a 3-5wt rod is the right weapon for the usual 'three-to-the-pound' wild trout that you are going to encounter on a regular basis, but would certainly add that you should also make sure you carry something with a bit more backbone for when the wind blows strong as it so often does in these parts. Having also just witnessed the landing of a six-pound brownie on my last visit this September, I can also concur that you should have enough backing on your reel to cope with the fish of a lifetime

– they certainly exist in these waters.

The loch guides are well thought out, clear and enticing. They cover directions, distance and difficulty of walk as well as having short, interesting descriptions to fishing the lochs. In some cases there are maps with recommended fishing areas marked upon them. These will be of particular use to the first time visiting angler – with lochs as big as Assynt, you want to feel you are fishing water that holds fish.

When considering Loch Assynt, Cathel also sensibly dwells on giving safety advice to those afloat. I can personally recall being forced ashore on the loch in dangerous conditions and am often amazed at the lack of understanding of some anglers to the inherent dangers of being afloat on big Scottish lochs. Fly fishing is my passion in life, but no trout is worth dying for.

I would comfortably recommend this booklet to anyone interested in visiting and fishing in Assynt and indeed to those, like myself who have fished there before but who like to get the juices flowing. **LB**

Reviewed by Anthony Glasgow

▶ AUTHOR DETAILS



Above: A nice trout from Loch Fleodach Coire, one of the lochs featured in Cathel MacLeod's book

Anthony Glasgow MBE – lifelong and passionate fisherman, in particular for wild brown trout.

Retired as a major in the Royal Engineers in 2004, aged 38 having served in UK, Germany, Canada, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and the Gulf. Now working as Bursar at Strathallan School, Perthshire (where good fishing is but minutes away – coincidence?). Was once considered a good rugby player, but now fishing takes priority whenever he has the time!

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