

LOCH AWE--THE BOATMAN'S YARNS

Loch Awe, Scotland, offers a unique angling experience distinct from the easily accessible and overfished waters of the region. Despite the challenges of finding good trout fishing in Scotland south of the Pentland Firth, Loch Awe remains a gem for those seeking the blend of solitude, natural beauty, and angling. Unlike the polluted or overfished rivers closer to urban centers, Loch Awe and other remote lochs offer better prospects for anglers, with Sutherland's lochs standing out for their accessibility and abundance of fish, though the journey there discourages brief holiday trips.

Loch Awe, while not as untouched as it once was due to the railway bringing it closer to urban populations, still holds allure. The Victorian-era charm described by Mr. Colquhoun in "The Moor and the Loch" has undoubtedly changed, making way for more anglers, steam launches, and even villas, yet it retains much of its natural beauty and angling potential. The loch is populated with trout, including the famed *salmo ferox*, though these creatures have become warier of the angler's bait over time. Angling in Loch Awe is seasonally dependent, with the best trout fishing occurring from mid-April to mid-June. The experience is enhanced by the magnificent scenery, particularly around the islands and near historical sites like the Green Island with its Celtic burial ground.

On Loch Awe, anglers find themselves in competition not only with the elements but with the increased pressure from fellow fishermen. Despite this, the loch offers rewarding experiences for those who find joy in the act of fishing itself, beyond the mere tally of the catch. The variety of trout, from the golden, thick type to the more common, lean dark green variety, offers both challenge and reward, necessitating diverse tactics and flies.

Andrew Lang, in his account, emphasizes not just the technical aspects of angling but the immersive experience of being in nature, fishing amidst stunning landscapes, and

connecting with the local culture and history. This narrative weaves together practical angling advice with reflections on the evolving nature of fishing in Loch Awe, juxtaposing the sport's traditional solitude with the modern realities of increased accessibility and popularity. Through Lang's eyes, Loch Awe represents a nuanced fishing destination—where the joy of angling intertwines with the appreciation of Scotland's rugged beauty and rich traditions, hinting at the layered experiences awaiting those who visit its waters.

