

General Notes And Information

Local Tackle Shops

Murphy's Tackle
92 North Main St
Wexford 053 24717

Hayes Cycles and
Fishing
108 South Main St
Wexford 053 22462

Dave's Tackle
Ardcavan Wexford
053 24307

South East Angling
North Parade Gorey
055 80448

Charles Cullen
14 Temple Shannon
Enniscorthy
054 33478

Miles Kehoe
Enniscorthy
054 33588



Information

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is accurate at the time of print, no responsibility will be accepted by SEAI for errors or inaccuracies contained within this document

Angling Guides Available in This Series

Part 1 North and East Co.Wexford

Part 2 Wexford Hbr

Part 3 South East Co.Wexford



Part
1
Of three

Shore Angling on the Wexford Coast



North and East Co.Wexford

Courtown to The Raven point

Part 1—Courtown to The Raven Point

Introduction

The north and eastern shoreline of Wexford is surely the most prolific in the entire county, both in relation to the species available and in that the region can be fished virtually all year long. There are in fact so many areas on the northern and eastern shores that I found it difficult to pick just nine. It is very worthwhile, when angling in the area, to visit other beaches not mentioned like Ballyvaldon, Knocknasilloge, and Ballinaclash to mention a few. Although basically similar in the type of species on offer and the methods used, it is often the case that one venue is fishing better than the other. Tackle required is relatively simple and although distance casting can be helpful, it is not essential.

S.E.A.i~

South East Angling Ireland



Wexford is situated in the south eastern corner of Ireland

- Courtown
- Rooney Point
- Cahore
- Ballinoulart
- Tinnebearna
- Ballinamona
- Blackwater
- Culletons Gap
- Raven Point

Area 1 is bounded to the north at Courtown and to the south at the Raven Point. There are many venues to explore along the R742 as mentioned above, the villages of Courtown, Kilmuckridge and Curracloe provide facilities. Extreme care should be taken at The Raven Point.

To contact SEAi
www.bassfishing.ie
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NOTES

Tips and General Advice For Beginners

Weather

Day by day and hour by hour the weather is prone to change. This is important to the angler not only from a fish catching point of view but also the ability to remain fishing while feeling comfortable in any weather condition is often a necessary part of sea angling. If you are considering going fishing watch the weather forecast the day before, listen to the shipping forecast on radio or even read the forecast in daily newspapers. Go fishing well prepared because undoubtedly, the weather will change and often for the worse, when you are fishing keep a constant eye on wind direction, cloud cover, the height of the sun, all these factors help to add up to a successful days angling.

Tides

Combined with weather, tides play an extremely important, if not the most important part in successful sea angling. To help you find the right tide, tables are available from local shops and they are willing to help you read them. In general a rising tide over dawn, dusk or even during daytime is better than a falling tide during the day. Spring tides often bring fish closer to shore in some venues, while in others it may force them to move off until the tidal stream reduces. Over time and with experience it is often possible to select venues for success by combining the existing weather and tidal state.

Night Fishing

Night fishing on a lot of venues can be very successful, particularly on the north county beaches. A lot of species tend to move closer to shore under the cover of darkness, thus making them more accessible to the shore angler. Fishing at night is a whole new experience for many people and calls for some special equipment and increased care. If you are considering a night time trip it is probably best to venture out with an experienced angler for the first few sessions. Make sure you stay warm, have a bright headlamp or beach lamp, something warm to drink, know where you are going and can get back, and always tell someone what your intentions are.

Bait

If you cannot acquire your own bait it is available both fresh and frozen in the local angling shops, especially during the summer months. It is advisable to ring ahead of your trip to book your supplies. When you are out fishing it is often worthwhile taking the opportunity to search for bait holding areas in your vicinity, you cant beat fresh bait!

Courtown



Directions: Travel the N11, or the R741 to Gorey take the R742 to Courtown.

Species: Tope, smoothound, bass, lesser spotted dogfish, ray.

Bait: Fresh mackerel, sand eel, peeler crab, lugworm

Terrain: Sand + gravel patches.

Courtown Beaches and Harbour.

Courtown Harbour is situated in the very North east of Co.Wexford. It has remained one of the most unspoilt and attractive seaside resorts on the south east coast and yet offers the visitor a wide range and variety of attractions. It somehow manages to retain an old world charm and yet has become strikingly modern. There are several locations on offer to the visiting angler and we shall start with Courtown North Beach, Dodd's rocks, Courtown south beach and finally Courtown harbour. Courtown **North beach** is an ideal springtime or early autumn venue. Smoothound, ray and dogfish (both lesser and greater spotted) are the target species while traditional favourites like flounder and bass are also resident. Best times are at night and baits are peeler crab, lugworm and mackerel. One species which appears here from time to time particularly during winter is spurdog. They are a distinct possibility during November to January and best bait is mackerel strip. AS summer approaches the beach fills with holidaying families so night time fishing is your best option, often producing the best fish. **Dodd's rocks** named after Captain Dodd, is the next beach down. Although a generally featureless flat sandy bottom is the norm here, the rocks provide some features and often throw up a nice bass during a south westerly. Next on to Courtown **South beach**, it is much smaller than the North beach and is also much closer to the town and amenities. Species remain very similar to those at North beach and methods are double or single hook clip downs for smoothound and ray. Bass and flounder can be caught at the mouth of the Owenavarragh river. Finally we come to **Courtown harbour**, built as famine relief work in 1847 it is a well known mullet venue. Fish in excess of 5 lbs have been recorded here and they are definitely worth a try. It is recommended to ground bait for some days before fishing. Try using light gear and a float or even free lining bread flake. This species is one which I feel needs to be targeted more frequently by Irish anglers as their sporting abilities are incredible especially when caught on light tackle—'the bonefish of Wexford'.

Rooney Point



Directions: Just south of Courtown is Pollshone then due south again is Rooney point

Species: Tope, smoothound, bass, spurdog, ray.

Bait: Fresh mackerel, sand eel, peeler crab, spinning.

Terrain: Sand with rocky patches

Rooney beach and point.

There is a small seal colony on the little island just off Rooney point but don't let this put you off fishing here. These guys may be professionals but they don't catch all the fish! It is here, at the only location that I know of in Co.Wexford that it is very possible to catch **spurdog** from the shore. Recent years have seen some intermittent catches of this species particular during winter and it is a recommended target species for this area. Fish can run quite large often exceeding 10lbs or more and they are not called spurdog for nothing, please be aware of the spur at the dorsal fin it is very sharp and handle the fish carefully before returning him. Baits and tactics tend to be similar for those used for smoothound except the predominant bait is mackerel strip. Single hook clip downs are the norm with some wire incorporated into the trace to prevent been bitten off. During August, September and October **Bass** will make a strong appearance at Rooney point. The rough ground and fast moving tides provide an attractive feeding ground for some very big fish. If ground fishing for Bass at this venue use of 'rotten bottoms' and minimum trace kit is essential as tackle losses can be quite high. Spinning for Bass over the top of high tide can be very good especially if this coincides with dawn or dusk as this will bring the species closer to shore. Best spinners are the surface poppers that splash on the surface when retrieved. Try retrieving a short distance at speed then stopping then repeating the process. This is often a very exciting method as takes by big Bass can often be seen. Use some 30 metres of braid in your line to maintain more direct contact with the lure when surface fishing.

Quick notes and information

Getting there: Access to any of the venues covered in this guide is very easy with the exception of the Raven Point. There are small car parking areas at all of the locations and the beaches are within walking distance. From Wexford town take the coast road to Dublin the R741 and head for Blackwater, which is sign posted very well. Using Blackwater as your base it is a simple drive north to Kilmuckridge to find Ballinoulart, Tinnebearna, Ballinamona and Courtown. South of Blackwater is Curracloe village from where you have access to Culletons gap and The Raven Point. See map for details.

Baits: Because a lot of the venues are intrinsically similar the baits used will follow a similar pattern. During summer – fresh peeler crab, fresh mackerel and sand eel are all very successful. During Autumn and Winter – frozen mackerel, lugworm and squid are ideal and fresh peeler crab ,if you can get it, is very good for codling.

Tackle: The seabed along the east and north coast is generally very clean so tackle can be matched to this. With the exception of Balliconigar, it is very seldom that the angler should experience tackle loss. Be aware that when distance casting it is often possible to cast onto and over a bank at Tinnebearna and Ballinamona, it is advisable to set up mainline from 15lbs to 18lbs or even 20lbs in order for you to pull through the weed and obstructions. When fishing at the Raven Point be aware that some big fish are a possibility. The Abu Mag elite multiplier or a Daiwa 5500 Emblem fixed spool fitted to a good quality beach caster will cover all occasions.

Terminal Rigs: Three hook flappers, two hook and single hook clip downs all work well on these venues. At night try some luminous beads on your snoods to attract sand dab and flounder. Hook size should be in general around the size 1 even down as far as 4 with the exception of The Raven, here I would advise an increase in hook size and strength even as far as a 3/0 or 4/0.

Facilities: At Courtown, Blackwater, Kilmuckridge and Curracloe there are shops, pubs, restaurants, bed and breakfasts. There are Hotels at Blackwater and Curracloe. There are no facilities at The Raven Point and last port of call for food and drink supplies would be at the shops in Curracloe Village.

Catch Calendar for this region

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|-----|-----|
| Bass | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | | |
| Coalfish | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Codling | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Conger | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dogfish | | | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | |
| Flounder | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Garfish | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mackerel | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mullet | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pollack | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rockling | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Sand dab | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Tope | | | | | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | | |
| Smoothound | | | | | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | | |
| Whiting | 3 | 2 | | | | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Wrasse | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chances | Low | Poor | | Fair | | | Best | | | Fair | | |
| Catch Rate | 17 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 16 | 26 | 28 | 31 | 29 | 27 | 26 |

How to Use the Catch Calendar

This calendar is not based on scientific evidence but on a number of observations made over several years while angling in the area. It is provided here, and in each of the five guides as an indicator to the angler as to what general species it is possible to catch in the area and when to catch them. I have graded a possible success rate of between 1 and 5. No number means you are very unlikely to catch this species at the time indicated. For example the chances of catching a bass in this area during April is indicated at 1 - which means you are unlikely to catch a bass in April here. However as you move across the page and the months move by, your chances improve steadily and the best time for catching bass here is during August indicated at 5. In fact if you look at the total catch rate at the bottom of the chart, August is indeed the best month to fish in this area for most species. It may be that in some years September may fish better or even July might be a success but this chart is merely a general guide over time.

Cahore



Directions: Access of the R742 Gorey to Wexford Road at Ballygarret.

Species: Tope, smoothound, bass, dogfish, ray, flounder, codling,

Bait: Fresh mackerel, sand eel, peeler crab

Terrain: Sandy bottom, rocky patches and promontories.

Cahore beach and Point Cahore beach is bounded to the North by a band of rocks and to the south by Cahore pier. Easily accessible from the R742 at Ballygarret it is a very popular small boat fishing centre. The slipway can be quite busy in summer but with patience you will be rewarded with some excellent fishing. Top species begin to arrive in late April or early May for the shore angler. Smoothound, flounder, bass, all begin to show quite early and will remain throughout the summer into early autumn when they will eventually be replaced with codling, whiting, sand dabs and coalfish. The rocky promontories to the south of Cahore pier at Cahore Point allow the angler access to deeper water and as the tide flows around these points it creates currents that induce feeding in many predatory species. A range of tackle is required here if the angler intends to spend some time fishing in the area. Fishing from the pier can be tough as can fishing from the promontories. I would recommend a stiff beachcaster with strong mainline perhaps as heavy as 22 to 24 pounds breaking strain and 60lbs shockleader. Some anglers prefer to fish a heavier line 'straight through' say 45lbs with no shock leader. A large fixed spool reel or a multiplier with a fast retrieve like the Daiwa SL30SH is required to lift your trace up from the seabed and way from tackle grabbing rocks. It is very possible to catch large fish at these venues like smoothound, ray and tope so a good check of all hooks traces and gear is recommended. Best baits tend to be crab, sandeel and ragworm in summer, while frozen mackerel, lugworm and squid all work well during winter. This is one of Wexford's top shore venues and continues to produce consistent fishing.

Ballinoulart



Directions: R741 from Wex across bridge, R742 right for Curraclloe, to Blackwater, then to Kilmuckridge, left in village then next right after Hydro.
Species: Tope, smoothound, bass, lesser spotted dogfish, ray.
Bait: Fresh mackerel, sand eel, peeler crab
Terrain: Sandy bottom.

Ballinoulart

Ballinoulart, situated just outside Kilmuckridge village is a deep water venue that can produce no end of surprises for the angler. Recorded species vary from turbot to gurnard, and like many of the venues featured in this section it can be fished virtually all year long. There is such a variety on offer that several visits over a period of time using different methods can produce over 15 species. Because most of these species also feature in the other venues covered, our target species here is **turbot**.

A recent local club competition recorded twenty seven caught and returned at this venue and several were suitable for the table. The venue can produce lots of small turbot so fishing with a big bait is often a good idea, although even the small fish have huge 'hoover' like mouths. It is better to target the turbot during the dark cold days of winter around December and January and it is probably best to fish from late afternoon into darkness over a rising tide. It is often useful to fish two rods just to keep things interesting while fishing for other species on the spare. A pennell rig with size 1/0 hooks is suitable for the turbot as they can be strong swimmers especially when approaching the shore. Best bait at this time of year is a large fillet of mackerel taken from the side of the fish and about 6 inches in length—use your bait thread to whip on to the hook. This large bait prevents smaller specimens been caught and injured. Distance casting is not necessary but what can be helpful is to attach just a lead to your end line and cast some distance out, then retrieve the lead while 'feeling' for gullies and holes. This sounds easier than it is but with practice you can locate bottom features that often hold fish. Bring an indelible pen along and mark the line as you retrieve out of holes, this then enables you to cast back to that special spot! Visiting the area or indeed any area at low tide especially over springs is a good way to locate natural fish holding areas – rocks, gullies, holes and other underwater obstructions provide feeding areas for fish.

Skill Level—**All levels**

Facilities **No**

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The Raven Point— Extreme Care Needed



Directions: As for Culletons gap, then choice of walk through forest or along beach to Point
Species: Ray, bullhuss, bass, tope, garfish, flounder, codling.
Bait: Mackerel, lugworm, sandeel Peeler crab, ragworm.
Terrain: Sandy

The Raven Point

The Raven point, so called because it was once populated by a number of Ravens, is an area that is much unexplored from an angling point of view. There is one main reason for this and that is access. A long walk or cycle of approximately 4 kms is the only access available to the angler. Before setting off on such a trek please be aware of the following – the area is very isolated and lonely and is only frequented by the occasional walker, the tides can be extremely dangerous as in several locations they can flow and fill behind the angler at an alarming rate, there are some areas of quicksand and extremely boggy/soft ground in places, the edge of deep sea is deceptively close in lots of areas and can drop into very deep water with fast currents very close to shore – so please be very careful. The Raven is a designated Heritage site and during summer access is prohibited to certain areas due to nesting terns. Having said all that this is the main entrance to Wexford Hbr and hence the possibilities of excellent angling. Tope, bass, codling, flounder, ray, and smoothound are all possible here. I feel that the potential for several species of **ray** is currently untapped at the Raven point and I would consider that these should be your main target species at this venue.

The methods used are relatively simple and tackle should be strong and checked for defects - rather than too heavy. Single hook clipped down rigs with strong snoods and maybe even wire trace should be the order of the day. An extra long shock leader is advisable to prevent fraying in the event of the capture of tope which can pick up baits intended for ray. Fresh mackerel and squid have previously produced results at distance for both tope and ray, while smoothound love fresh peeler crab. Fishing with baits and hooks a little bigger than normal even as far as a 3/0 is advisable because fish tend to run bigger and tidal streams are very powerful. Travel light with only the necessary tackle and provisions and you won't be disappointed at this truly unique venue.

Skill Level—**Expert**

Facilities **No**

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Culletons Gap



Directions: R741 from Wex across bridge, right for Curraclloe, right at Post office in village, next right for nature reserve parking at entrance to forest
Species: Bass, smoothound other species infrequent.
Bait: Fresh mackerel, squid, lugworm, peeler crab, ragworm.
Terrain: Sandy.

Culletons Gap

Culletons gap is situated south of the famous village of Curraclloe. It was in this vicinity that Saving Private Ryan was filmed. Several miles of silver strand stretch from Blackwater to the Raven Point around into Wexford Hbr. The reason I mention Culletons gap in this selection is that it is one of those unpredictable areas that never seem to produce much from a general angling point of view, but when it does it can be out of this world. Plus, for the family holidaying angler who wants to escape for a few hours without going too far it tends to be more productive than Curraclloe. The venue itself is not fished very often either by local or match anglers except when other venues are 'blown out' by bad weather.

That great summer warrior the smoothound can be caught here in abundance during the summer months, especially after periods of high pressure. Fresh crab is the ideal bait. Avoid using fish baits if you don't want to catch the pesky lesser spotted dogfish which are here in very large numbers. Other summer species which can frequent the venue are flounder, sole, gurnard, while during winter sand dab, flounder and whiting can all be found here even if in somewhat smaller numbers than other more Northerly beaches. It is also worth mentioning that when there is a surf running during the summer months some spectacular bass can be caught here in the long tables that run in from the south east. Ideal bait is lugworm and mackerel on a simple one hook paternoster with a rolling lead. Allow the bait to move around with the wash of the sea in a 'natural' way. Ideally this should be done while wading in the surf and holding a light bass/ estuary rod. This method of fishing can be very addictive and is often a way to connect with nature and the elements on a more personal level. Please be careful while wading !

Tinneabearna



Directions: R741 from Wex across bridge, right for Curraclloe, through village to Blackwater, straight for 7kms, right at crossroads with grey wall for 3 kms (track)
Species: Smoothound, tope, lesser spotted dogfish, bass, dab, flounder, whiting, codling.
Bait: Peeler crab, sandeel, frozen mackerel, mussel, lugworm.
Terrain: Sand and shingle.

Tinneabearna

Tinneabearna is located just south of Kilmuckridge village. It is quite difficult to locate and it is probably wise to stop and ask for directions as twisty roads and lanes can lead you astray especially at night. This venue is used extensively for match fishing which is probably an indication of how good an area it is. Again it fishes well in both summer and Winter. Summer species are smoothound, lesser spotted dogfish, tope and bass while winter species vary from coalfish, sand dab, flounder and codling. The venue, as you will see when fishing, is 'split' by a small river. To the left of the river the sea tends to be somewhat deeper, while to the right towards Ballinamona the sea is shallower. During summer, fishing close to the river can sometimes increase your success, while during winter it can often decrease your chances. This is not a 'Golden rule' by any means – but one based purely on the majority of experiences. Our target species here -again trying to narrow down to one which we haven't previously covered- is winter **codling**.

My first time experiences of catching codling at this venue lead me to believe that there are no fixed methods of catching fish. It was a cold, bright, sunny Saturday morning with a falling tide. I had made the decision to cast for flounder with a three hook flapper not more than twenty yards into the surf with mussel and frozen peeler as bait and - you guessed it ! Gone was the clipped down fresh peeler blasted towards the horizon, instead I had plump 3lb codling every cast for about an hour – that's fishing. In fact it has proved so popular with me that several of my friends have caught some very nice codling from this beach and not all of them were anglers. Over a period of some three years the following seems to work best for codling on this venue. Fresh peeler crab or mussel on a two hook clip down with size 1/0 hooks. Lugworm and squid cocktails often produce when the above fails and don't be afraid to mix your baits. Distance casting can be helpful when the fish are feeding far out.

Ballinamona



Directions: R741 from Wex across bridge, right for Curracloe, through village to Blackwater, straight for 3kms, right at signpost for venue
Species: Bass, lesser spotted dogfish, dab, whiting, codling.
Bait: Frozen mackerel, lugworm, Fresh peeler crab, lugworm
Terrain: Sand and shingle

Ballinamona

Ballinamona is located due south of Tinnebearna, and if I was to choose a favourite venue from the North of the County I think this would be it. The reasons for this choice lie in its accessibility, proliferation of specie and again, it is an all year round venue. Sometimes a venue has an air of 'fishiness' about it and this is the one on the North coast that does it for me. This venue, like Tinneabearna, is used extensively for match fishing. Similar species to those listed at the two previous venues can be caught here in equal numbers and like its predecessors night fishing during winter can be absolutely brilliant.

Our target species here is a day and night species which can be caught all along the east coast with relative ease during the late autumn and winter months. It is often the staple diet of match anglers on the east coast during this time and is a very tasty fish to eat as well. This is the **sand dab**. During late October and into early November as the days shorten whiting will begin to appear in numbers soon followed by the sand dab. They are not difficult to catch, often three at a time is very common – that is if you can avoid the ravenous whiting. The three hook flapper with size one hooks and a rolling lead is often all that is necessary. Frozen mackerel strip works best and cast no more than fifty yards into the surf and wait for that very distinctive bite indication. This indication is often visible as a very fast vibrating rod tip for a couple of seconds followed by slack line. Now comes the difficult choice, do I leave the trace to catch another fish or do I retrieve and cast again, if pleasure fishing I would suggest a retrieve of the fish is better to prevent deep hooking. There is some positive debate regarding the success of fluorescent beads attached to the snood line—especially when fishing at night in clear conditions. Experiment for yourself under various conditions to determine your preferences— it will often reveal surprises.

Skill Level—**All levels**

Facilities **No**

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Blackwater— Ideal night fishing for beginners



Directions: R741 from Wex across bridge, right for Curracloe, through village to Blackwater, right in village after river.
Species: Bass, lesser spotted dogfish, flounder, some ray, rockling, codling, coalfish, tope.
Bait: Squid, fresh mackerel. Peeler crab, lugworm, sand eel.
Terrain: Rocky patches and sand

Blackwater

Blackwater also known as Balliconnigar is situated about 15 kms outside Wexford town. Famous as a summer holiday resort it can be a very busy village during the holiday season. The venue is best described as an 'all rounder' and doesn't offer us the ability to focus on one particular species but rather re-emphasise what we have covered in the previous three. Again the venue is split by a small fresh water river and some of the local anglers use this as a source for fresh water eels which can be a deadly weapon when used for tope. Fishing tends to be more productive to the left of the river and 'around the corner' .

When fishing at night there is a handy light over the slip way which provides visibility, and for those wanting to experience their first night time fishing venture, then this is a great venue. Species range from the summer targets of Bass, tope, smoothound, flounder and ray to the by now classics of Winter, codling, rockling, sand dab and coalfish. While fishing to the left of the light, walk towards a semi-submerged rock which is situated about 50 yards from shore. This rock is visible up to about half tide and either side of this rock is very productive, while fishing too close can produce some tackle losses. Blackwater is famous for its disappearing houses as the coastline is subject to severe coastal erosion. Over the years as many house have fallen into the sea they provide holding areas for feeding fish. It is often that these invisible reefs are not evident until you cast into one with the inevitable results. But if you do locate one, then fishing close or into the obstruction with the right tackle can produce some nice codling during winter. The slipway is often fished by local anglers during a summer easterly blow and is famous locally for producing some very big bass in the right conditions. My first experience of a Tope was on this beach. My friend, while fishing for flounder, stood down the beach and into the sea never to be seen again so beware—they are out there!

Skill Level—**All levels**

Facilities **Yes** (2km)

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