

J The South Molton and District Angling Club

In Praise of the Bray

By Ed Rands, May 2026

THE PICTURESQUE RIVER BRAY is a small spate river in North Devon. It rises in the Exmoor National Park, close to the border with Somerset, from where it flows southwards towards South Molton before joining the River Mole. The Mole is, in turn, a tributary of the River Taw.

The catchment of the River Bray has less intensive farming than much of the surrounding area and typically runs gin clear, benefitting from high invertebrate counts and low phosphate levels. These characteristics, coupled with relatively easy access, make it attractive for fly fishing, particularly the pursuit of wild brown trout.



The South Molton and District Angling Club was established in 1970 and has two sections of fishing on the River Bray, close to Brayford on the southern edge of the moor. The first beat is called the Stucley Water, is approximately 3 miles long and, for the most part, offers fishing from both banks. The remainder of the Club's 5 miles of fishing is called the Hunter Water and again offers fishing from both banks.



Fishing on the club waters is strictly fly-only and members practice voluntary 'catch and release' to preserve the healthy stock of trout. Salmon and sea trout fishing is also permitted with certain restrictions, but the fishing is primarily for the wild brown trout. Club members actively maintain both beats with regular bank clearing sessions, and there are also annual redds counts, Riverfly inspections and Westcountry CSI water quality monitoring is undertaken.



Club members meet monthly in the relaxed atmosphere of a local hostelry, where fishing matters are discussed and fishing tales exchanged! There is also a more formal AGM which typically includes an external speaker and is followed by a meal. An annual dinner is held in the autumn, to which partners are invited, and the club also holds a series of six, stillwater-based, competition events each year. From time to time the chairman organises sea fishing trips off the North Devon coast.

Details of how to join the club can be found at www.southmoltonanglingclub.co.uk and a contact form is provided on the website.

Tight lines!

Ed Rands

Chairman

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