

Spotlight on... Sunglasses

Even if it isn't sunny, sunglasses and professional eyewear have become an integral part of the sport of fishing. **ttw** examines the rise and rise of this product category and how you can capitalise on it.

Fishing with specialist eyewear is now almost as commonplace as fishing with a rod and reel. No longer will serious anglers settle for standard sunglasses or no eyewear at all. In today's market, if you are not catering for the needs of anglers who demand good-quality eyewear, you are seriously missing out.

It probably all started with fly fishermen, who realised that

polarised sunglasses seriously aided their ability to spot fish in rivers and streams. As time has gone on, these benefits have expanded out to lure anglers and even carp fishermen, as more and more anglers seek to spot and stalk their quarry.

As such, the fishing eyewear market has expanded at a fairly rapid rate, to a point where there is now a huge array of choice available. The wave was initially started by several fishing brands that had their own glasses, but it has

gradually spawned companies who actually specialise in eyewear for fishing – the likes of Costa, Wiley X and Smith all offer substantial ranges.

It all comes down to the changing habits of the customers.

"Anglers all across the globe are paying much more attention to optimise their gear outside of just fishing tackle," explains Thomas Wæver, the

vice-president and outdoor director of one of those eyewear brands that has been pushing things forward in fishing tackle – Wiley X.

"There is an old saying in fishing that an hour in the right spot is better than 10 in the wrong one.

Having polarised fishing eyewear that will allow you to use the polarised filter 100 per cent, be able to find a frame that fits your head

ANGLERS ARE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO THEIR GEAR.



TOP FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SUNGLASSES

POLARISATION

It goes without saying that polarisation is what makes sunglasses perform on the fishing front. Without it they are high on useless.

FIT

Having a wraparound fit is often key because it prevents peripheral light getting into the back of the lens and killing any benefits it offers.

PROTECTION

Brands like Wiley X offer virtually shatterproof lenses and frames – an essential aspect for anglers who are likely to give them a tough time.

STYLE

Style is almost as important as function with sunglasses. All anglers want to look good, so make sure you only stock the 'sexy' models.

ACCESSIBILITY

Make sure you can cater for wearers of normal spectacles, whether that be with 'flover' style glasses or prescription options.

perfectly, use the right colour lens for the right conditions – either enhancing the colour contrast in and on the water or simply work as sunglasses – is simply essential in modern fishing."

Another of the fishing sunglasses arena's big players, Costa, shares this thirst for technology and better eyewear.

Export manager for the company Jenny Gordillo explained: "Today, anglers from across the globe recognise the importance of quality, high-performance, polarised

sunglasses to enhance their fishing experience, and the need to protect their eyes from the damage that sustained exposure to the sun can cause. As in any sport, specialised gear is a must for all professionals.

"Fishing gear is becoming more specialised. Fishing sunglasses are evolving into specialised gear that is highly valued by many avid anglers. Now, with specific lens colours and lens properties that are targeted for different kinds of fishing, we can offer lens colours and materials that are developed for inshore fishing, offshore fishing, low light conditions,

shallow water, and high overhead sun.

"The fisherman can now purchase the perfect sunglasses for his fishing techniques, wherever and whenever he fishes."

One thing that sunglasses offer, besides this improved experience for fishermen, is a very healthy mark-up for retailers.

Some of the top brands in the category can demand very strong prices thanks to their marketing and product quality, but there is plenty of margin to be made for those willing to stock sunglasses.

SELECTED KEY BRANDS

COCOONS
Fortis
SHIMANO

SPRO
Polaroid

LENZ OPTICS
COSTA
SMITH

Rapala
WILEY X
ADVANCED VISION PROTECTION