

FISHING LAWS AND DEFINITIONS

ADVANCE BAITING: It is unlawful to deposit any meat, bones, dead fish or other food material in inland waters for the purpose of luring fish. However, it is lawful to place food particles in a baitfish trap for the purpose of luring baitfish. (12657)

ALEWIVES: A licensed fisherman may take one bushel of alewives daily from inland waters by use of a dip net or single hook and line for consumption by himself or members of his family, except that alewives may not be taken from waters where a municipality or individual has been granted exclusive rights under laws regulating marine resources. (12506)

ARTIFICIAL LURE: Any fishing lure constructed by humans as an imitation or substitute for natural bait or fish forage and includes, but is not limited to artificial flies, spinners, spoons, poppers, plugs, jigs and plastic, rubber or other artificial imitations of natural bait. An artificial lures only rule prohibits the use of any live, dead or chemically preserved natural or organic bait or food.

BAG LIMIT (ALL FISH): Any fish, except baitfish and smelts, legally taken from inland waters shall be immediately released alive into the water from which it was taken, or killed at once. Any fish killed becomes part of the daily bag limit. (12611)

BAIT CONTAINERS: A person selling bait may not provide or sell the bait in containers composed in whole or in part of polystyrene foam plastic. This does not apply to bait fish. (12553-2)

BASS: The term “bass” includes largemouth and smallmouth.

BROOK TROUT: The term “brook trout” includes brook trout, splake, and Arctic charr (Sunapee trout and blueback trout).

CLOSED WATERS: All inland waters, including those in Indian Territory (See pages 89-93), are closed to ice fishing except those opened by rule.

COUNTY LINES: Whenever county lines divide a body of water, the more liberal county rule applies to the entire body of water.

CUSK LINES: All lines set through the ice at night (sunset to sunrise) for cusk must be checked at least once every hour by the person who set them.

DIP NET: A device consisting of a rigid frame filled with netting, firmly attached to a rigid handle and manually operated by a single person.

FAILURE TO LABEL FISH: It is unlawful to keep bass, landlocked salmon, togue (lake trout) or trout at any sporting camp, hotel, public lodging place or any place other than a person’s residence without attaching the name and address of the person who caught the fish. (12608)

FISHWAYS ASSOCIATED WITH DAMS: The area within 150 feet of any operational fishway is closed to fishing except:

- At the following places, the fishway and the area within 75 feet of any part of the fishway are closed to fishing at all times:
 - (1) Grand Falls Powerhouse Dam on St. Croix River in Baileyville.
 - (2) Woodland Dam on the St. Croix River in Baileyville.
- At the following places, the area within 75 feet of the mouth of the fishway is closed to fishing at all times:
 - (1) East Grand Lake Dam in Forest City Twp. (T9R4 NBPP).
 - (2) Spednic Lake Dam in Vanceboro.
- At the so-called ice control dam on the Narraguagus River in the Town of Cherryfield, the area within 100 feet of the dam is closed to fishing at all times.
- At the East Outlet Dam on the outlet of Moosehead Lake in Sapling Twp. (T1R7 BKP WKR) in Somerset County and in Big Moose Twp. (T2R6 BKP EKR) in Piscataquis County, the fishway and the area within 50 feet of any part of the fishway is closed to fishing at all times.
- There is no fishing in or from the fishway at the Sheepscot Lake Dam in the Town of Palermo in Waldo County.

(Note: These provisions do not restrict the taking of alewives and smelts in accordance with laws regulating marine resources). (12457)

FLY (ARTIFICIAL FLY): A single-pointed hook dressed with feathers, hair, thread, tinsel, or any similar material to which no additional hook, spinner, spoon or similar device is added.

FLY FISHING: Casting upon water and retrieving in a manner in which the weight of the fly line propels the fly. No more than 3 unbaited artificial flies individually attached to a line may be used. (NOTE: It is unlawful to troll a fly in waters restricted to fly fishing only).

HOOK: A single fish hook constructed with 1, 2 or 3 points.

ICE FISHING: Taking freshwater fish during the ice fishing season through man-made openings in the ice by the use of ice fishing implements. It is unlawful to open water fish in inland waters while positioned on ice.

ICE FISHING IMPLEMENT: Any lawful fishing implement used to take fish through the ice including a trap (tip-up), jig stick, rod in hand or handline, except that a person engaged in taking smelts and bait fish may do so in accordance with the laws and rules governing these activities.

ICE FISHING SHACK: A person who owns any shack or temporary structure used for ice fishing:

- May not leave or allow the shack or structure to remain on the ice of any inland waters after April 1st; and
- Shall have painted on the outside of the shack or structure in 2-inch letters, the owner's name and address when the shack or structure is on the ice of any inland waters.

ICE FISHING TRAP (TIP-UP): An ice fishing implement for storing line, designed to be set through the ice and to indicate when something has disturbed the attached bait.

ILLEGAL IMPLEMENTS, USE OF:

- A. Except as otherwise provided, it is unlawful to possess any grapnel, trawl, weir, seine, gill net, trap, set line or drop net on or adjacent to any of the inland waters of this State.
- B. Except as otherwise provided, it is unlawful to fish with a grapnel, spear, spear gun, trawl, weir, gaff, seine, gill net, trap, or set lines. (12656)

ILLEGAL FISHING: Except as otherwise provided, it is unlawful to fish other than with a single baited hook and line, artificial flies or artificial lures and spinners.

Exception: This does not apply to hook and line smelt fishing. All other rules and regulations governing the taking of smelt apply. Use of a gaff is unlawful. (12654)

ILLEGAL USE OF ANTIFREEZE: Adding substances containing ethylene glycol or other antifreeze agents to waters of this State is illegal. (Title 38, §413)

IMPORTATION OF FISH: It is unlawful to import any live freshwater fish or eggs into this State without written permission from the Commissioner. (12556)

LEAD SINKERS: It is unlawful to sell or offer for sale a lead sinker for fishing that weighs 1/2 ounce or less. This does not include artificial lures, weighted line or lines, or jig heads. (12663-A)

LINE RESTRICTIONS: Unless otherwise provided by rule, the number of lines an angler may fish at any one time is limited to two lines while open water fishing and five lines while ice fishing. At no time may an angler fish with more than five lines.

LITTER: It is unlawful to dispose of litter (including abandoned ice fishing shacks) anywhere in this State, except in areas or receptacles designed for that purpose. Convicted violators face fines up to \$200 for the first offense and up to \$500 for subsequent offenses.

MARKING FISH: It is unlawful to tag, fin clip, or otherwise mark any fish to be released alive into the inland waters of the State without the written consent of the Commissioner.

MINIMUM LEGAL LENGTH: The total length of a fish measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail, with the lobes of the tail squeezed together.

NIGHT FISHING: Except as otherwise provided by rule, all waters open to fishing are open to fishing 24 hours a day. All lines must be under the immediate supervision of the person who set them. Exception: All lines set through the ice at night for cusk must be checked at least once every hour by the person who set them.

NOTICE OF SUBMERGED VEHICLE: The owner of any motor vehicle, all terrain vehicle or snowmobile that becomes submerged, or partially submerged, in the waters

of the State shall immediately notify the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife of the event and the location of the vehicle. The owner is legally liable for removal and to pay any damages resulting from the submersion or removal. Motor vehicles shall be removed within 30 days (same day if public water supply). Snowmobiles and ATVs shall be removed within 24 hours.

OPEN WATER FISHING: Taking freshwater fish during the open water fishing season by means of hook and line in hand, or attached to a rod, or by casting or trolling artificial flies, lures, or baited hooks, provided that the person angling does not take fish through a man made hole in the ice, from the ice or from any object supported by the ice.

POSSESSION LIMIT (ALL FISH): A person shall not possess at any time more fish than may lawfully be taken in one day.

RAILROAD TRACK RESTRICTIONS: A person may not, without right, stand or walk on a railroad track or railroad bridge or pass over a railroad bridge except by railroad conveyance. For penalties see Title 23, Chapter 611, § 7007.

REMOVAL OF BAG LIMITS ON BASS: In waters where the bag limit on bass has been removed by special rule, the season on bass and the method of fishing for them is the same as for trout and salmon.

REMOVAL OF HEADS AND TAILS: It is unlawful to alter the length of landlocked salmon, trout, togue, lake whitefish, and bass unless the fish are being prepared for immediate cooking. It is unlawful to possess or transport fish dressed in such a manner that the species of fish cannot be identified; unless the fish are being prepared for immediate cooking (smoking does not constitute cooking).

SALE OF CERTAIN FISH PROHIBITED: It is unlawful to buy or sell, directly or indirectly, trout, togue, landlocked salmon, bass, white perch, or pickerel (except fish which have been lawfully produced by commercial producers and skins of fish which have been preserved by taxidermy). (12609-A)

SALMON: The term “Salmon”, when used alone, means the same as landlocked salmon.

SALMON EGGS AS BAIT: Commercially prepared eggs from species that do not naturally occur in this State may be used for bait. (12553)

SEASON DATES: All dates are inclusive.

SET LINE: A line extending into the water and rigged to catch fish that has one end secured to the shore, or to a fixed or buoyant object, that is not personally attended. Exception: lines set through the ice for cusk at night.

SINGLE-BAITED HOOK: A single-baited apparatus designed to catch only one fish at a time.

SMELTING: A person holding a valid Maine fishing license may take smelts for recreational purposes only from the inland waters or portions of inland waters that are naturally free of ice with a dip net in the usual and ordinary way from noon to 2:00 a.m. in accordance with bag limits established by rule. Bag limits established by rule under this paragraph are for a 24-hour period, beginning at noon on a given day and ending at 11:59 a.m. the following day. A person may not keep more than 5 dozen smelts alive as part of that person's daily bag limit. A person may not take smelts with a dip net unless that dip net meets the requirements listed on page 8. A dip net when used to take smelts in a tributary or within 100 feet of the mouth of a tributary must contain a rigid circular frame that is not more than 24 inches in diameter as measured at any point on the hoop and manually operated by a single person. NOTE: An unlimited number of baited hooks may be used on your line while fishing for smelts.

SNAGGING: To fish by manipulating a hook or hooks in such a manner as to pierce or snag the fish in a part of the body other than the mouth. It is unlawful to fish for any fish, except suckers, by snagging. (12651)

SPECIAL BAG LIMIT: Whenever any waters have a special bag limit, no person shall possess more than one day's bag limit taken from those waters.

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION: It is unlawful to possess or transport fish dressed in such a manner that the species of the fish cannot be identified unless the fish are being prepared for immediate cooking. (Smoking does not constitute cooking).

SUCKERS: Persons licensed, or otherwise entitled to fish, may take suckers for their own use between April 1st and June 30th from all rivers, brooks, and streams open to fishing by use of a hand spear, bow and arrow or by snagging. (Note: If suckers are taken by bow and arrow, the arrow must have a barbed or pronged point and must be attached to the bow with a line). (12506)

SUPERVISION OF LINES: All lines must be under the immediate supervision of the person who set them. Exception: All lines set through the ice at night for cusk must be checked at least once every hour by the person who set them.

TEN-ACRE PONDS: All ponds of 10 acres or less formed on brooks, streams, or rivers are governed by the same fishing rule(s) that apply to the brook, stream, or river where the pond is situated, whether the pond is natural or artificial. (This does not apply to private ponds.)

TERMINAL GEAR: Tackle at the end of a line used to catch fish, including baited and unbaited hooks, artificial lures and baits, and artificial flies. Fishing under general law allows the use of any of these terminal gear types.

THOROUGHFARES: Waterways connecting lakes and/or ponds. The general fishing laws governing lakes and ponds also apply to thoroughfares (includes seasons, bag limits, length limits, etc.)

TO FISH: To catch, handle, take or kill, or attempt to catch, handle, take or kill any fish.

TRIBUTARY: A brook, stream, or river flowing directly or indirectly into a lake, pond, or another brook, stream, or river. A lake or great pond shall not be construed to mean tributary. The tributary to a great pond shall not be considered a tributary to the outlet of that great pond.

TROLL: To fish by trailing a line rigged to catch fish behind or in front of a watercraft being propelled by mechanical, wind or manual power. (Tandem flies are allowed when trolling.)

TROUT: The term “trout” when used alone, includes brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, Arctic charr (Sunapee trout and blueback trout), and splake. The term “brook trout” includes brook trout, splake and Arctic charr (Sunapee trout and blueback trout).

USE OF EXPLOSIVE, POISONOUS OR STUPEFYING SUBSTANCE: It is unlawful to take or destroy any fish by use of an explosive, poisonous or stupefying substance. (12653)

USE OF LIVE FISH AS BAIT: See laws on page 14 concerning the use of live bait fish.

VIOLATION OF LIMITS: It is unlawful to fish for or possess fish in violation of the number, amount, or size limits of any rule adopted by the Commissioner. (12602)

Trouble by the Bucketful

That’s what the illegal introduction of exotic species brings to Maine’s waters.

Some thoughtless individuals are attempting to destroy the future of Maine’s native fisheries. These non-sportsmen illegally stock the type of fish they prefer to catch, without regard for the environmental havoc they inflict on the resource. Illegal stocking selfishly denies the people of Maine the right to decide what is best for our waters.

Please help fight this serious problem.

- It is illegal to transport live fish without a permit.
- It is illegal to dump unused baitfish into any waterway.
- There is a \$10,000 fine for a conviction of illegal stocking.
- Always keep your ears and eyes open for those who are committing these senseless acts.



**There is a \$2,000
reward for information
leading to a conviction**

To report information about an illegal
introduction please call:
1-800-ALERT-US (253-7887) - In-State
(207) 287-6057 - Out-of-State

US Cellular and Maine Wireless dial #GW
Unicel dial *GW