

# Adventurer's MK FISHING

Being able to fish in a survival situation could be the difference between staying alive and perishing. Not only would you need to know where the best place is to look for your fish but also how to catch them.

Gathering together a fishing kit using a few household items is a simple task. Safety pins can be substituted for fishing hooks. Individual strands from your paracord can be used for the line, and bobbers can easily be made from small pieces of paracord.

Learning to fish can be as simple as tying your shoe lace. You may find yourself sitting on the bank of a river or pond using a cane pole and a can of worms, or using a fully-rigged boat with state-of-the-art equipment. Either way, with some basic knowledge and a minimum of skill, a beginning angler can embark on a lifetime of fun, relaxation, and camaraderie with other anglers.

And don't forget – fishing isn't just about catching fish! As experienced anglers will tell you, fishing is one of the best ways families and friends relax together as they enjoy being outdoors and learning new skills. You'll also learn how you can help protect our precious aquatic resources.

## **BASIC FISHING TACKLE**

### **Hooks**

Hooks come in an assortment of sizes and styles and must be kept sharp to be effective. If you plan to release your catch, bend down the barb to make it easier to remove the hook. Choose the size of hook for the species of fish you are trying to catch and the type of bait you are using.

### **Line**

Fishing line comes in pound-test, (the line size or strength). The larger the line size the stronger it is. Six-pound test line is more flexible but is not as strong as 12-pound test line. Match your fishing line to your rod and reel capability and the species of fish you want to catch. Using heavier line or higher pound test than needed may reduce the number of hits or strikes you get because heavier line is more visible to fish.

### **Sinkers**

Sinkers are weights used to cast your bait, take bait to the bottom, hold bait in place, or keep your bobber upright. Sinkers are designed in several different shapes and sizes and are used for various types of fishing techniques. They range in size from BB split shot to five pounds, something short of a cannon ball. In many cases, you will place your sinker 4 to 8 inches above your hook to allow live bait to look natural to the fish.

### **Bobbers**

Bobbers, floats and corks are used for three reasons. They keep your bait where the fish are biting, keep bait off the bottom, and they tell you when you're getting a bite or strike by bobbing up and down. Bobbers come in various shapes from round, to pencil or quill, to popping, and oblong. Most bobbers are spring-loaded and attach to your fishing line with a clip. Some are tied directly to your line or allow the line to slip entirely through for slip-cork fishing.

## **FISHING RODS**

Rods come in several varieties, each with its own advantages. Choosing a rod is a personal choice. You can fish with a can and string or a fancy rod and reel. One of the simplest and easiest fishing rods is the cane pole.

### **Cane Poles**

Cane poles are simply a pole or straight rod with a fishing line tied on to it. Use cane poles mainly for shoreline fishing since you're restricted to depth and distance you can reach. Cane poles can be made of bamboo, fiberglass, graphite or even a straight tree branch. Cane poles work, are easy to use and are inexpensive.

### **Spincasting and Baitcasting Rods**

Casting rods have "spincast" or "baitcast" reels and line guides mounted on top. Spincasting rods are easy to handle and perfect for beginners. These rods have straight handles and small line guides. Spincast tackle is the most popular. Baitcasting rods have either a pistol-grip or straight handle. The baitcast rod with its more complex reel is more difficult to control and is better suited for an experienced angler.

### **Spinning Rods**

Spinning rods have straight handles with large line guides and reels mounted on the bottom. Spinning reels cast quickly and long distances, making this rod suitable for all types of freshwater and saltwater fishing.

### **Fly Rods**

Fly rods are very long, flexible rods. In flyfishing, you cast the line, not the lure. You'll see anglers develop almost artistic casting techniques, adding to the appeal of the sport. Line guides and reel are mounted on bottom of the rod. Fly rods come in various weight classes and lengths, suited for different locations and fish.

### **Saltwater Tackle**

Going after saltwater fish involves a little change in the strength of the equipment. The rods, reels, hooks, line and lures or baits vary just as in freshwater fishing, but they can be stronger and heavier, built to withstand larger fish and natural or artificial structures.

## **FISHING REELS**

### **Spincast**

This popular reel is ideal for beginners. Known as a "closed-faced reel," it's the easiest reel to use.

### **Spinning**

This "open-face reel" mounts under the rod. Fishing line spools off quickly allowing longer casts. This reel is able to cast lighter baits and lures.

### **Baitcast**

Baitcast tackle is suitable for all types of fish and fishing. The spool turns when you cast, however, and can entangle the line if not properly adjusted. You'll need to practice with this model.

### **Fly reel**

The fly reel is designed to allow fluid movement of the fishing line. This reel is mounted on the bottom of the rod.

## **CASTING TIPS**

### **Spincasting**

A spincasting reel has a button that you push with your thumb to release the line.

1. Grasp the rod's handle or pistol grip with one hand. Push the reel's thumb button down and hold it in.

2. Face the target area with your body turned to a slight angle, about a quarter turn. Aim the rod tip toward the target, about level with your eyes.
3. Swiftly and smoothly bend your arm at the elbow, raising your hand with the rod until it almost reaches eye level. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent back by the weight of the practice plug. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
4. When the rod reaches eye level, release the thumb button. If the plug landed close in front of you, you released the thumb button too late. If the plug went more or less straight up, you released the thumb button too soon.

### **Spinning**

With a spinning reel, you use your finger to release the line.

1. Grasp the rod's handle, placing the reel "stem" that attaches the reel to the rod between your middle fingers. Extend your forefinger to touch the spool cover. Open the reel's bail with your other hand.
2. Face the target area with your body turned at a slight angle, about a quarter turn. The arm holding the rod handle should be closest to the target. Aim the rod tip toward the target at about eye level.
3. Swiftly and smoothly, using just one motion, bend your casting arm at the elbow and raise your forearm so that your hand is almost at eye level.
4. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent by the weight of the practice plug. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
5. When the rod reaches eye level, straighten your forefinger to release the line.

If the plug landed close in front of you, you straightened out your index finger to release the line too late. If the plug went more or less straight up or behind you, you straightened your index finger too soon.

### **Baitcasting**

The baitcasting reel has a button either on the top right-hand side of the reel or a "thumb" button behind and centre of the spool that you push with your thumb to release the line.

1. Grasp the rod's pistol grip or handle with one hand. Push the reel's thumb button down and move your thumb on the spool. Release the line so that the casting plug falls to the ground. Adjust the spool tension knob (located on the side of the reel) so that the spool stops then the plug hits the ground. It may take a couple of times to accomplish this and adjust it correctly. This will reduce the reel from backlashing when cast. Backlashing occurs when momentum from the cast allows the spool to keep rotating causing line to ball up once the plug hits the water or ground.
2. Face the target area with body turned at a slight angle, about a quarter turn. Aim the rod tip toward the target, about level with your eyes.
3. Swiftly and smoothly bend your arm at the elbow, raising your hand with the rod until it almost reaches eye level. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent back by the weight of the practice plug. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
4. When the rod reaches eye level, release your thumb off the spool. As the practice plug hits the ground, place your thumb back on the spool to reduce backlash.

If the plug landed close in front of you, you released your thumb too late. If the plug went more or less straight up, you release your thumb too soon.

## **KNOT TYING**

### **Arbor Knot**

Quick, easy connection for attaching line to the reel spool.

1. Pass the line around the reel arbor (spool).
2. Tie an overhand knot around the main line.
3. Tie a second overhand knot in the tag (loose) end.
4. Pull the knot in the tag end tight and clip off the excess line.

Snug down the first overhand knot on the reel.

### **Palomar Knot**

The easiest to tie and the strongest knot known to hold terminal tackle.

1. Double 4 inches of line to form a loop and pass the loop through the eye of the fishing hook. Let the hook hang loose.
2. Tie an overhand knot in the doubled line. Don't twist or tighten line.
3. Pull the loop far enough to pass it completely over the hook.
4. Wet the line.
5. Hold the hook carefully, and pull the loose end with the standing line slowly to tighten the loose end.

### **Improved Clinch Knot**

An "old standby" known as the fisherman's knot.

1. Pass the line through the hook eye and, with the tag end, make 5 turns around the standing line.
2. Insert the loose end of the line between the eye and the first loop formed.
3. Bring the end through the large second loop formed.
4. Wet the line and tighten the knot slowly while holding the loose end of the line end between thumb and index finger so the knot is partly closed before it's secured against the eye.

Clip the loose end of the line.

## **COMMON FRESHWATER BAITS**

### **Crickets and Grasshoppers**

These are excellent choices for sunfish, bass and catfish. Both of these insects can be caught by hand or with an insect net. Look for them in thick, tall grass or at night under lights. Laying a cloth, towel, cardboard or newspaper on the grass will attract crickets.

You want to use small hooks for sunfish (#6-#10) and medium-sized hooks for bass and catfish (#1 or #2). Make sure the point of the hook is completely covered to increase bites.

### **Worms**

Whether it's an earthworm, red wiggler or nightcrawler, worms are a favoured choice for the majority of freshwater fish. You can raise your own in a compost pile, or dig them up from your garden. Remember to cover the point of the hook when fishing for sunfish to keep them from pulling the worm off the hook. Store live, leftover worms in the refrigerator for the next time you go fishing.

### **Minnows**

Varieties of minnows are used to catch both fresh and saltwater fish. Keep minnows in an aerated minnow bucket and don't crowd them. Remember to change the water often to keep the minnows lively. Hook them through the lips or under the dorsal fin. Avoid hooking through the backbone because this will kill the minnow.

### **Crayfish**

Crayfish, are used for catching largemouth and smallmouth bass, white bass, catfish and freshwater drum. They can be caught in small ponds, roadside ditches or where depressions hold water frequently and usually after a rain. These can be fished either live, dead or using just the tail. Hook through the underside of the tail so the point protrudes through the top. Catfish and freshwater

drum don't mind if it's alive or dead. Grasp the crayfish, and pull the tail away from the head, threading the hook through its tail or both sides of body.

Freshwater drum prefer crayfish to any other type of live or dead bait.

### **PREPARED BAITS**

From homemade concoctions to commercially-made baits, these are primarily used for catching bottom-feeding fish like catfish and carp. Your choices include canned corn, stink bait, cottonseed cake, hot dogs, dough balls – the list goes on with this type of bait. Fishing with treble hooks works best to keep the bait from being flung off during casting.

### **COMMON SALTWATER BAITS**

#### **Shrimp**

Shrimp are widely-used bait for saltwater fishing. Shrimp can be either alive or dead. Hook shrimp under the rostrum "horn" on the head to fish with live shrimp. You can either peel or leave the shell on fresh dead shrimp for fishing on the bottom. Many anglers fishing for freshwater catfish use dead shrimp for bait.

#### **Crab**

Different species are used for saltwater fishing to catch sheepshead, black drum, cobia and snapper. Sheepshead and snapper go after hermit and fiddler crabs hooked through the body. Black drum and cobia have a liking for blue crabs. Break in half or quarters for black drum and hook through the body sections. Use small, whole, live blue crab for cobia by removing the pinchers and hook through the body.

#### **Squid**

You can purchase dead squid for saltwater bottom-fishing. Fish such as gafftopsail catfish, and snapper are good examples. Hook the squid two or three times in and out through body to avoid small fish stealing the bait.

### **LURES**

Many companies make fishing lures in different types, patterns, sizes and colours. "How to" instructions are either on the package or inside with the lure. Both fresh and saltwater anglers use lures interchangeably to catch a variety of fish.

#### **Plugs**

black bass, crappie, striped, white and hybrid bass, seatrout, red drum, flounder and several offshore species Plugs can be made of various materials such as plastic, wood and sometimes cork. Plugs are classified as top water and crankbaits (shallow diving, medium diving and deep diving). Either two or three treble hooks are attached to plugs to cover the fish's striking area.

#### **Spoons**

black bass, striped, white and hybrid bass, seatrout, red drum, flounder and several offshore species Spoons are metal, spoon-shaped lures made to resemble a swimming or injured baitfish. You can jig them (jiggle them up and down), cast and reel them in, or troll them behind a boat (let it drag on a fishing line behind the boat). Many anglers attach a swivel to the spoon to prevent it from twisting their line during retrieval.

#### **Jigs**

black bass, striped, white and hybrid bass, crappie, seatrout, red drum, flounder and several offshore species Jigs have weighted metal or lead heads with a body and tail made of rubber skirts, feathers, soft plastic or animal hair. Numerous sizes, colours and patterns are used to catch a large majority of fresh and saltwater fish.

#### **Spinnerbaits**

black bass, rainbow trout, crappie on small in-line spinners Spinnerbaits have one or more blades that spin or rotate around a straight wire or "safety pin" type shaft. Nearly all spinnerbaits have tails and bodies made of rubber skirts, animal hair, soft plastic, feathers or other materials.

### **Soft Plastics**

black bass, seatrout, red drum and flounder Soft plastics are pliable lures made into worms, grubs, lizards, crayfish, minnows, shrimp, crabs and many others, resembling what fish eat. Plastics are available in different sizes, colours, and some with fish-attracting scent. They can be used with or without bullet weight sinkers, jig heads or spinnerbaits.

### **Flies and Poppers**

almost all common sport fish will strike a fly or popper of some variety Flies and poppers are small, very light, almost weightless lures used primarily for flyfishing. A spincast or spinning rod and reel outfitted with a “bubble” (clear bobber) placed four to five feet above the lure works well if you don’t have a fly rod. These lures are excellent for sunfish and bass, but most any fish can be caught on these baits.

## **THE TACKLE BOX**

What You’ll Need in Your Tackle Box

- Pliers
- Nail clippers (to clip line)
- Small first aid kit
- Hooks (various sizes, depending on the type of fish you are targeting)
- Bobbers
- Weights (sinkers)
- Snap swivels
- Artificial lures (plugs, spinners, spoons or soft plastics)
- Stringer for keeping fish (only if you plan to keep and eat the fish)
- Measuring tape
- Gardening gloves
- Outdoor Annual – Rules and Regulations
- Fish identification card or booklet
- Small spool of monofilament fishing line and oil for lubricating the reel
- Selection of artificial lures will depend on what fish you are targeting.

When selecting artificial lures, it is wise to choose lures that are designed to fish at different water levels, such as top water poppers and diving plugs.

Other items to take along with you on your fishing trip:

- Camera
- Small can of bug repellent
- Cell phone

## **FINDING GOOD FISHING SPOTS**

Fishing is best in water that provides good fish habitat: food, oxygen, water, shelter, and space.

### **Food**

Food sources vary for different species of fish. Food can include plants, plankton, insects and insect larvae, smaller fish, crayfish, worms, and freshwater shrimp.

### **Oxygen**

Oxygen levels in the water vary with water temperature, water movement, and with the amount of algae present. In the summer when water temperatures are high and flow is low, algal blooms can cause oxygen levels to dip at night, causing a fish kill. Oxygen levels are increased when water moves over water falls or riffles.

### **Water**

Water quality is also important and sometimes difficult to determine by just looking. If the water is very muddy, light can’t penetrate, making it hard for many fish to find food. However, some catfish

can thrive in water that is not clear because they can find their food mainly by smell. Also, particles in the water protect a catfish's skin from being sunburned.

"Clean" looking water, however, may have harmful chemicals, too much or too little salt, or may be too acidic or basic. A healthy ecosystem helps maintain a good balance of nutrients and chemical composition in water, making it ideal for fish.

### **Shelter**

All fish need "structure" such as rocks, stumps, aquatic plants, and piers to provide cover from predators or to hide out and wait for prey. If the water is flowing, try fishing downstream below one of these structures. In saltwater, fish deal with currents and tides. Near the shoreline, find a fishing spot down-current from structures such as jetties, piers, and rocks where fish are somewhat protected and can catch food floating by. In bays and other shallow areas, seagrass meadows provide good cover for small fish, crabs, and shrimp. These organisms attract larger predatory fish like spotted seatrout and red drum.

### **Space**

Fish, like people, can't handle being too crowded. Good fish habitat has enough space to provide a good arrangement of structure for protection and rest, not only for them, but for their prey species as well.

Try fishing down-current from "structures" such as rocks, trees and stumps, jetties and piers.

## **HOW TO HANDLE FISH**

Handling fish properly protects both you and the fish. Some fish have sharp fins or teeth that can cut you if you don't hold them correctly. Thus, different fish species need to be handled in different ways. Hold some fish by the jaw, such as bass or trout, and others along the body, such as a catfish. Learn by watching an experienced angler, but keep the following rules in mind:

1. Always wet your hands first before handling fish. Wet hands are less likely to damage the protective coating of mucous on the outside of the fish. This slimy layer helps protect the fish's skin from disease and makes it glide easily in the water.
2. Don't allow fish to flop around on the bank, the dock, or the floor of the boat. If keeping fish, put them on ice or in a bucket of cool water.
3. If you are not keeping the fish, take the fish off the hook as soon as possible. Gently lower it into the water until it begins to swim away. If it isn't ready to swim, you may need to slowly swish it in the water first. Remember, no fish is a "junk" or "trash" fish. All fish play important roles in the aquatic ecosystem.
4. If you are not keeping the fish, using barbless hooks can make it easier to take the fish off the hook.

## **HOW TO CLEAN FISH**

It's fun to learn to clean and cook your fish. Ask an adult for help and be careful with the knife. Keep cleaned fish ice-cold.

### **Scaling**

For most fish, you'll want to remove the scales if they are not skinned.

#### **To scale fish:**

Hold the fish by its tail and scrape from tail to head with a fish scaler, butter knife or tablespoon. Cut around the head with a sharp knife. Remove the head and insides.

### **Skinning**

Skin a fillet by placing it skin-side down on the cutting board. Start at the tail and keep a tight grip on the skin. With the knife at an angle, saw the flesh off the skin. Catfish have tough skins and you need pliers to pull them off.

- First, cut around the head with a sharp knife,

- Then pull the skin back with the pliers.
- Finally, remove the head and insides.

### **Filleting**

Always cut away from yourself. To make boneless fillets:

- Cut down to the backbone behind the head and along the side of the fish.
- Slice the meat off the bones.
- Turn the fish over and repeat.
- The cheek meat just behind the eye is a delicacy in some households.

### **Proper Cleaning**

Trimming fat reduces your intake of PCBs, which accumulate in fatty tissue. Mercury accumulates in muscle tissue, the part you eat, so limit your consumption.

- Cut away all fat along the back
- Slice off the belly fat
- Remove all skin
- Cut away a V-shaped wedge to remove the dark fatty tissue along the entire length of the fillet

### **FISHING SAFETY**

1. Youth should only go fishing under adult supervision.
2. Keep at least one rod's length between you and the next angler before, during and after you cast.
3. Look behind you and to the side before casting to avoid hooking anyone or anything.
4. Consider fishing with barbless hooks or have an adult bend the barbs down with pliers. If you hook yourself, anyone else, or a fish, a barbless hook will be easier to remove.
5. Wear a properly fitting life jacket and fasten it securely. Eighty-five percent of drowning victims would be alive today if they were wearing a life jacket.
6. To rescue a person who falls into the water: **Reach** the person with something they can hang on to; **Throw** a flotation device to them; **Row** out to them if you are in a boat; and then **Go** – for help! Don't jump in and risk drowning yourself.
7. Use the "buddy system" when fishing. If something happens to you like slipping down a bank, your buddy can help.
8. When fishing in hot or cold weather, protect head, eyes, hands, feet, and skin from exposure to wind and sun. In hot months, wear light-coloured clothing, hat, sunscreen, and take plenty of water with you. In cold months, wear layers of clothing, gloves, a knit hat and waterproof shoes.
9. If your line gets snagged when you have cast it out, gently jiggle your line back and forth and from side to side to loosen it. If you pull too hard, the hook and line could come loose with such force that it could fly back at you and hit you (or someone else).
10. When cleaning a fish, always use safety glasses and gloves to protect eyes and hands. Always cut away from your body when using a knife.

The regulations booklet has good fish-cleaning tips for you.

### **FISHING SAFETY**

#### **Take the Right Path**

Which way will you go when faced with tough choices while fishing? Your ethics are the rules or values you use to help you choose behaviour that is fair to others and to yourself. We practice ethical behaviour when we "do the right thing" even when we think we won't be caught or punished for our behaviour.

To decide if your behaviours are ethical, ask yourself the following questions.

- Is it legal?



- Would it be good if everybody did it?
- Would it make you proud?

### **Be Considerate of Others**

1. Respect other anglers' rights. Don't crowd another angler or make loud noises when another person is fishing.
2. Always get permission before fishing on private land.
3. Always leave your fishing area cleaner than when you arrived so that other anglers can enjoy it as you did.

### **Conserve Fish and Aquatic Ecosystems**

1. Remember that all native fish (even the ones you may consider nuisance fish) play important roles in aquatic ecosystems and should be released carefully.
2. If you are not going to use the fish you catch, gently place them back in the water as quickly as possible.
3. Place excess fishing line, bait boxes, and litter in trash cans or pack it out with you. A major cause of injury for fish and wildlife along waterways is getting tangled in abandoned fishing line.

### **GET FISHING**

First you need to find a place to fish.

1. Once you have your locations scoped out, it's time to get your gear.
2. Grab a pole and some bait,
3. Tie your monofilament line (cut to the length of your pole) to the top of the pole using an improved clinch knot. Use this knot to attach your line to the top of the pole and to a swivel at the bottom of the line.
4. Once your line is tied to both the pole and the swivel, you can clip on a snelled hook and add a weight.

(If you can find barbless hooks, you'll have an easier time removing them from your fish without doing harm. Or, you can use a pair of pliers to crimp the barbs on your hooks flat).

5. The last thing you'll need to do is rig a bobber, which will hold your bait just off the bottom of the lake or pond—right where the fish like to eat.
6. Round plastic bobbers usually have metal hooks at the top and bottom of the bobber. Depress the plastic sleeve at the top of the bobber to expose the hook and slip your line in. Let go to pull the line tightly against the bobber and hold it in place. Repeat with the hook at the bottom and your bobber will be held in place on your line
7. Adjust the bobber on the line to hold the bait just off the bottom of the pond. If your bait rests on the bottom, your bobber will flop over on its side. Adjust it until the top of bobber stays upright.
8. Bait Your Hook
9. Now that you're rigged up, the best way to get your newly baited line into the pond is to hold the pole upright and "swing" the line out in a pendulum fashion until it reaches the spot you want it to be.
10. Then lower the tip of the pole and your line will fall into the water.

To attract fish and increase your chances of catching some, toss out a little dry cat food to "chum" the water while you're rigging your lines and baiting hooks.

11. Once your line is in the water and the bobber is sitting steadily upright, you'll be able to see when a fish is testing the line. Watch the bobber. When it jerks or wobbles, that means a fish is on the other end! Watch for ripples or movement that indicate a nibble or bite.

The first instinct is to jerk the line the moment you see the bobber move, but it's best to wait a little bit after the initial bobbing, and then pull up on the tip of the pole to set the hook in the fish's mouth. (If you pull too early, the fish will not get hooked).

12. Once the fish is definitely hooked, you'll feel tension on the line, and the flexible tip of the pole will bend down with the weight of the fish. How much the fish resists depends on its size and strength. However, even small fish can put up a good fight.
13. To land your fish you have to raise the pole tip high enough to pull the fish toward you.
14. Once the fish is close to you, hold the line a foot or so away from the wriggling fish until it calms down.
15. The next step is removing the hook and releasing the fish quickly. This is where your garden glove and a pair of needle-nosed pliers come in.

A fish should only be out of the water a moment or two. (Too much handling of a fish can remove the slimy coating on its skin, which is a protective layer it needs in order to stay healthy. Release your fish as soon as possible with minimum handling to help ensure that it survives).

### **Remove the Hook**

1. Once the fish is close to you, grab the line. Hold the pole upright so there's a little tension (but not too much) while you hold the fish and remove the hook.
2. While you hold the line above the fish's mouth with one hand, use the opposite hand to grasp the fish's upper or lower lip between your thumb and forefinger. Wear your garden glove on the "gripping" hand.

### **Humanely removing hooks**

Use needle-nose pliers to remove the hook. Grasp the hook by the stem and, while holding the fish in the water, twist and pull gently, backing the hook out the way it came in. Don't ever wiggle the hook or pull with too much force if it's snagged. If the fish is gut-hooked or the hook is too deep into the throat, it's best to cut the hook as close to the body as possible and leave it in there. Many times the hook will simply dissolve and get spit out. The fish has a better chance at living than if you struggle to free the hook.

### **Release Your Fish**

Once you remove the hook, keep your grip on the fish's mouth, then lower it into the water and gently release it. It has just been through a fight, so it may need a little time to revive and swim away.

Never toss a fish, or "throw" it back. This could severely injure the fish.

The best time of day to fish is late afternoon. Pond fishing in the summer can be fun any time of day. However, about an hour and half before sunset, when the air cools a bit, fish tend to be more active. You also won't have to worry so much about sunburn at that time of day,

## **FISHING REGULATIONS**

Fishing regulations are important for several reasons. First, many regulations help assure that certain types of fish or certain areas will not be over-fished. Second, some regulations protect certain sizes of fish, allowing for better fish reproduction. Finally, fishing regulations protect the rights of all anglers as well as the rights of landowners. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about fishing regulations?

### **1. Where do I find all fish and wildlife regulations?**

Fishing regulations are found in the <https://www.gov.uk/browse/environment-countryside/fishing-hunting>

### **2. At what age do I need to purchase a fishing license?**

When you turn 12, you must have a fishing license in order to fish legally in public waters.

### **3. How often do I need to renew my fishing license?**

A fishing license is good for one year from the date of purchase.

### **4. Do I need a fishing license to fish from my private property?**

Yes, you will need a license if you are fishing into public waters (such as lakes and rivers) even if you are on private land. But you don't need a license to fish on private property in a private pond unless the landowner requires it.

### **5. What does a "daily bag limit" for fish mean?**

It is the amount of fish that one person can have in their possession in a 24-hour period (midnight to midnight).

### **6. What does "possession limit" for fish mean?**

It is the maximum amount of fish (2-day limit) that one person can have in their possession when they are not in the act of fishing (like in the ice chest or at camp). It is illegal to be in possession of a number of fish that exceeds the daily limit while actually fishing.

### **7. Do I need a fishing license or related stamps to fish with a cane pole or to catch shrimp or crabs or to gather oysters?**

Yes, regardless of the method you are using to fish, you must have a fishing license to fish in public waters. You must also possess a freshwater stamp to fish in inland waters and/or a saltwater stamp to fish in coastal waters.

### **8. Can I give another person my fish if I don't want to bring them home?**

Yes, but you need to give them a Wildlife Resource Document along with the fish you're giving them. A WRD form can be found in your Outdoor Annual or it can be hand written on a piece of paper. It must have the following information:

- a) Name, signature, address, and fishing or hunting license number, as required, of the person who caught or killed the wildlife resource
- b) Name of the person receiving the fish
- c) Description of the fish (number and type of species or parts)
- d) Date fish was caught or killed
- e) Location where fish was caught or killed (name of county, lake, area, bay, stream or ranch)

### **9. What if I catch a fish that is under the size limit, but it dies. Can I keep it then?**

No, if a fish dies while in your possession but it does not meet the size or bag limits, the law requires that you must still release it in the water where it will become food for other animals.

### **10. What should I do with a fish that I catch in a public waterway that I don't want to keep because I consider it an undesirable fish?**

You should put it safely back in the water. It is not legal to catch and purposefully kill non-game fish or fish that don't meet the legal bag and size requirements.

### **11. What does "slot limit" mean?**

There are two different types of slot limits:

1. Freshwater – Slot limits mean you must release any fish between the slot limit numbers. For instance, a largemouth bass at a particular lake has a 14” – 21” slot limit. That means you must release largemouth bass between 14 and 21 inches. Depending on the fish species, some lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams have exceptions to state wide freshwater harvest regulations. See the Outdoor Annual for those exceptions.
2. Saltwater – Slot limit means you may keep any fish between the slot limits. For example, a black drum with a 14” – 30” slot limit means you may retain any black drum between 14 and 30 inches.

All others must be released.