

Freshwater Fishing

Quick Guide



TAKEMEFISHING™.org

Tailored Tackle®
Fishing Kits & Combos

License & Registration

One of the most important items any angler needs before they go fishing is their fishing license. Each state has their own regulations and offers daily, short-term, or annual licenses. [TakeMeFishing.org](https://www.TakeMeFishing.org) has a great tool to find out where to buy a fishing license, the types of fishing licenses available, age requirements, fishing regulations and online purchasing.

1 Click the button below

GET YOUR FISHING LICENSE

2 Select your state

3 Review the best licensing options to fit your fishing needs

LICENSE INFORMATION BY STATE

Alabama	Illinois	Montana	Rhode Island
Alaska	Indiana	Nebraska	South Carolina
Arizona	Iowa	Nevada	South Dakota
Arkansas	Kansas	New Hampshire	Tennessee
California	Kentucky	New Jersey	Texas
Colorado	Louisiana	New Mexico	Utah
Connecticut	Maine	New York	Vermont
Delaware	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
District Of Columbia	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Washington
Florida	Michigan	Ohio	West Virginia
Georgia	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Hawaii	Mississippi	Oregon	Wyoming
Idaho	Missouri	Pennsylvania	

North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania

Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming



 TAKEMEFISHING.org

[Learn To Fish & Hunt](#) [Where To Fish & Hunt](#) [About TMs](#) [Get Licensed](#) 

[Home](#) [Washington](#) [Alaska](#) [Fishing License](#)

Get a Washington Fishing License

Purchase a fishing license Washington, then spend a day fishing for crappie with the kids at Potholes Reservoir or testing us prods off of the docks at Lake Stevens. Fishing creates an opportunity to teach kids about how to follow rules and identify different types of fish, buy your license, read the fishing regulations, and take a lot fishing in Washington.

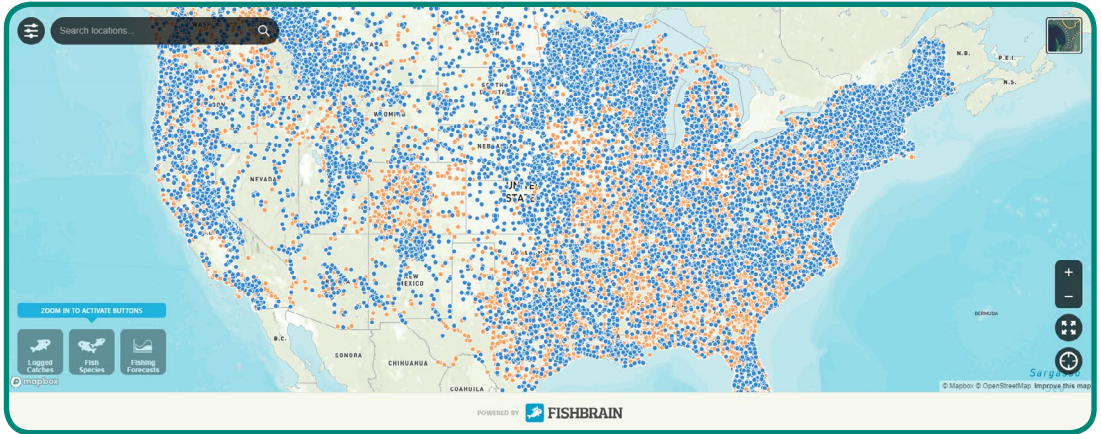
GET A WASHINGTON FISHING LICENSE



Your state's profile has links to resources where you can review the state **fishing regulations** and browse different types of **fishing licenses** available in your area. Many states allow you to purchase your license online and print out a temporary license to go fishing the same day. Remember to review the **age requirements** as children, seniors and veterans often receive discounts and unique opportunities for open fishing.

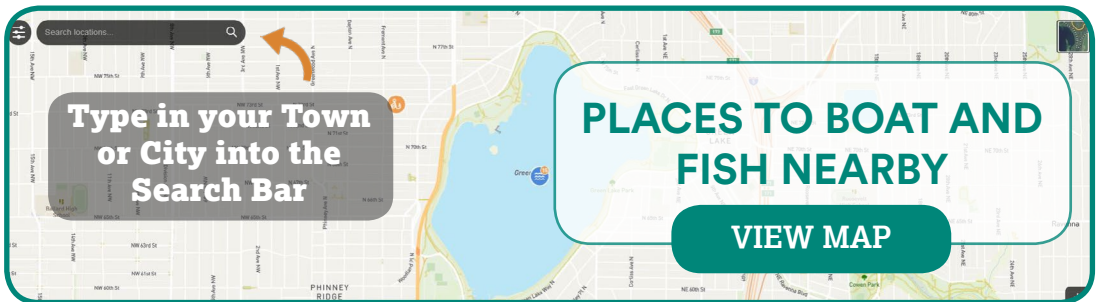
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Places to Boat & Fish



Ready to get out on the water but not sure where to start?

Click the **VIEW MAP** below to find [Places to Fish and Boat](#) across the United States.

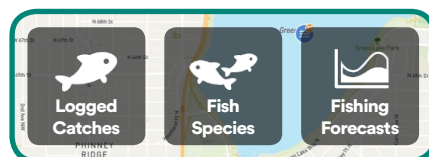


- Body of Water to fish and boat on
- Best Place to Fish and Boat with family-friendly amenities
- Boat Ramp to launch your boat
- Marinas, moorings and supplies
- Bait Shop to buy fishing bait & lures
- Fishing License Vendors
- Charter & Boat rentals
- Fishing Gear & equipment vendors
- Fly Fishing shops.
- Fish Refuge or Hatchery Facility
- Multiple Places of Interest

Use this list of **Key Symbols** on the map to find places to fish, bait shops, and hot fishing bites!

Click on a blue Body of Water icon on a fishing spot near you to:

- Review Logged Catches
- View Photos of Fish Caught
- Filter Fish Species in the Area
- Read Fishing Forecasts
- Get Directions to that Location



Freshwater Lure

Crankbait



Cast across shoreline transitions in depth and bottom, covering the full water column. Crank and pause on retrieve, letting the lure float up. Drive back down and repeat to mimic a wounded baitfish.



Pike Spoon

Steadily retrieve alongside weed lines or directly above weed beds. Keep the pace consistent, you will feel a big thud when a pike or bass hit. Maintain tension to set the hook. Great for trolling as well.



Feather Spinner



Ideal for trout lurking in streams and creeks. Cast this spinner from bank to bank, covering a lot of distance. Steadily retrieve near the surface and try gliding it against a rocky bottom.



Brass Rattle Spinner

Great for ponds and small lakes, target aggressive trout and panfish with this vibrant spinner. Work shallow shoals and shorelines, bumping against rocks and flickering light to call in fish.



Quick Sheet

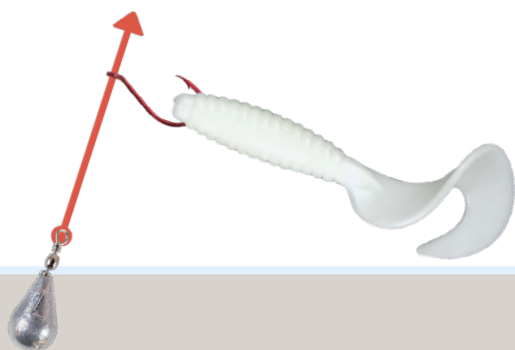
Texas Rig



Thump against the bottom along weed lines and deeper transitions. Primary targets include stumps, fallen timber, boulders, and brush piles. Weedless set up lets you get into the thicket. Great year round!



Drop Shot Rig + Grub

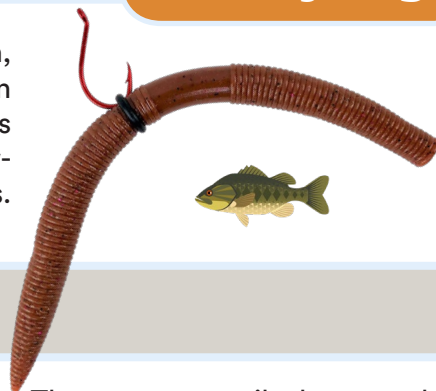


Your deep water go-to, use a drop shot rig and a white grub when bass and perch are +20 ft deep during the colder months. Drift the sinker along the bottom, letting your bait ride high.



Wacky Rig

Ultimate finesse approach to largemouth, use this rig to target hard to reach bass in deep cover. Pitch the wacky rig under docks and small clearings, let the lure fall slowly with tails wiggling to coax finicky bass.



Jig and Curl Tail Grub



The most versatile lure combo in the world, a Jig + Grub will catch anything! Jig it along the bottom of mid-lake structure, or swim it along the shoreline for your best chance at a mixed bag of species.

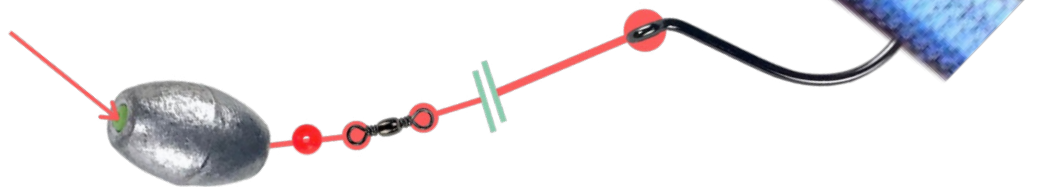


Live Bait Rig

Catfish Bottom Rig

Catfish are a great option to target when fishing a river. One of the most productive ways to hook up with a

big cat is with a simple bottom rig. Cut off a 2-3 ft piece of mono or fluorocarbon fishing line and set aside. With your main line, thread on a 1 oz egg sinker and a red bead, then tie on a barrel swivel. Now tie one end of the leader to your swivel, and the other to a 5/0 circle hook. Cut up a 2-3" chunk of minnow or sunfish and hook it right below the spine.

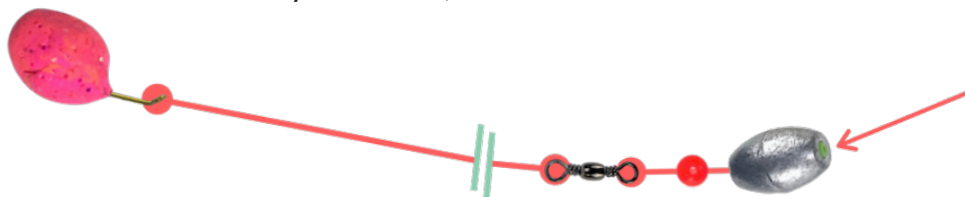


Try to cast your bait into the deepest portion of the river, typically the middle. Reel in until your line is taut. Either hold or prop up your pole so that the line is consistently tight to your sinker. Monitor your rod tip for a bite.

Trout Bottom Rig

Trout typically feed in the middle of the water column within a lake. Use a bottom rig to cast out

deep, with a floating bait to rise up to the feeding area. Cut off a 2-5 ft piece of mono or fluorocarbon fishing line and set aside. With your main line, thread on a 1/4 oz egg sinker and a red bead, then tie on a barrel swivel. Now tie one end of the leader to your swivel, and the other to a #6 baitholder hook.



Ball up your power dough bait around the hook to the diameter of a dime. Target depths of 10-20 ft so your bait floats reasonably close to the middle. Keep your line taut, holding or propping up the pole. After a tap, let the Trout take it for 5-10 seconds, then set the hook.

Quick Sheet

Live Bait Slip Bobber

Slip Bobbers are the most versatile method for

fishing with live bait as they allow you to target any depth while keeping your minnow lively and your presence subtle. Set your depth by pushing the slip-tie up on your line until the sinker has hit the bottom. Push your slip-tie back down 2-3 ft so your bait sits just above the bottom. Let the wind take your bobber about 20-30 yds away to cover more water, but no farther as you are likely past your set depth. When you have a hit, let the fish take the bobber all the way down before setting the hook. Check your bait every 10-15 minutes, changing at least every 30 minutes. See step by step rigging instructions in the following section.

Live Bait Jigs



Target fish holding deeper, with live bait jigs. Hook on a minnow to the 1/4 oz live bait jig as pictured. Fish in 10-30 ft of water, bouncing the bait along the bottom. Let it hit bottom, lift back up, drop and pause. This motion is a classic jigging pattern. Ideal for rocky, muddy, or sandy bottoms without snaggy weeds, you can pitch your jig by casting and retrieving. The most popular method is to drift your jig along the bottom, keeping it a few inches off the ground and jigging every 10 seconds.



Freshwater lures and rigs in the Quick Guide are from the Tailored Tackle [Freshwater Fishing Kit](#).

Set Up a Fishing Pole

Spooling Line



1

Remember to open the bail



2

Run line through each guide starting from the rod tip down to the reel



3

Tie an arbor knot around the spool



4

Place spool in water to reduce memory in line



5

Reel your line slowly, add pressure by pinching line with thumb + index finger



6

Don't fill it all up! Leave about 1/8" gap

Spool your reel with monofilament or braided line up to 3/4 the capacity. To spool your reel, run the line through your rod guides and tie an arbor knot to your spool while the bail is open. Place the spool holding your new line in a pot of water. Apply tension with your thumb and index finger while you reel the line on, leaving a 1/8" space between the line and the base of the spool.

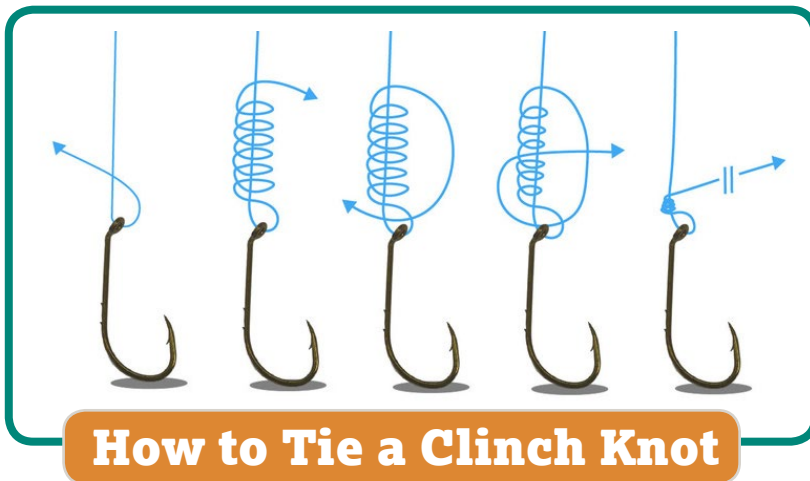
How to Tie the Arbor Knot



7

Rig Up a Slip Bobber

1. Thread 2-3 ft of line through the slip tie tube and slide the tie off the tube, removing the tube off of your line.
2. Pull on both tag ends until the slip tie is lightly snug on your line.
3. Thread on a neon bead. This keeps your line from chaffing against the slip bobber. Then thread on your slip float, neon side first.
4. Push your bobber against the bead + slip tie. Tighten the tie snug enough to stop the bobber but still loose enough to move up and down your line with finger pinched pressure. Clip the tag ends down to 1/2".
5. Tie on your hook with a clinch knot.



6. Pinch on a 3/0 split shot sinker about 1-2 ft above the hook so your slip float stands straight in the water.
7. Push the slip tie up or down to set depth.
8. We recommend worms, minnows or leeches as bait.



Bait Your Hook

Get started catching some easy panfish from the shore. Grab a 12 count cup of nightcrawlers from a local bait shop or dig some up in your backyard. Pinch a nightcrawler into a 1/4 length piece. Thread the piece's tail through the barb and up the hook shaft. Then, pierce the worms opposite end into the barb, covering the hook tip. 4-5 kernels of corn or small slices of hot dog can work as replacements.

Beginner Bait



Nightcrawler



Corn



Hot Dog Slices

Minnows and leeches are typically used to target larger and more advanced species like walleye and bass. You can rig these up with your slip float, bounce them with a jig, or present them on a live bait rig. You can even step up your panfish game with micro-sized wax worms. Review the Live Bait Rig Quick Sheet to rig up and effectively use these baits when you're ready to advance.

Advanced Bait



Leech



**Shiner
Minnow**



**Crappie
Minnow**



Wax Worms

Cast Your Fishing Pole

Starting Position: Your fishing combo should be in front of you with the reel and rod guides facing down.

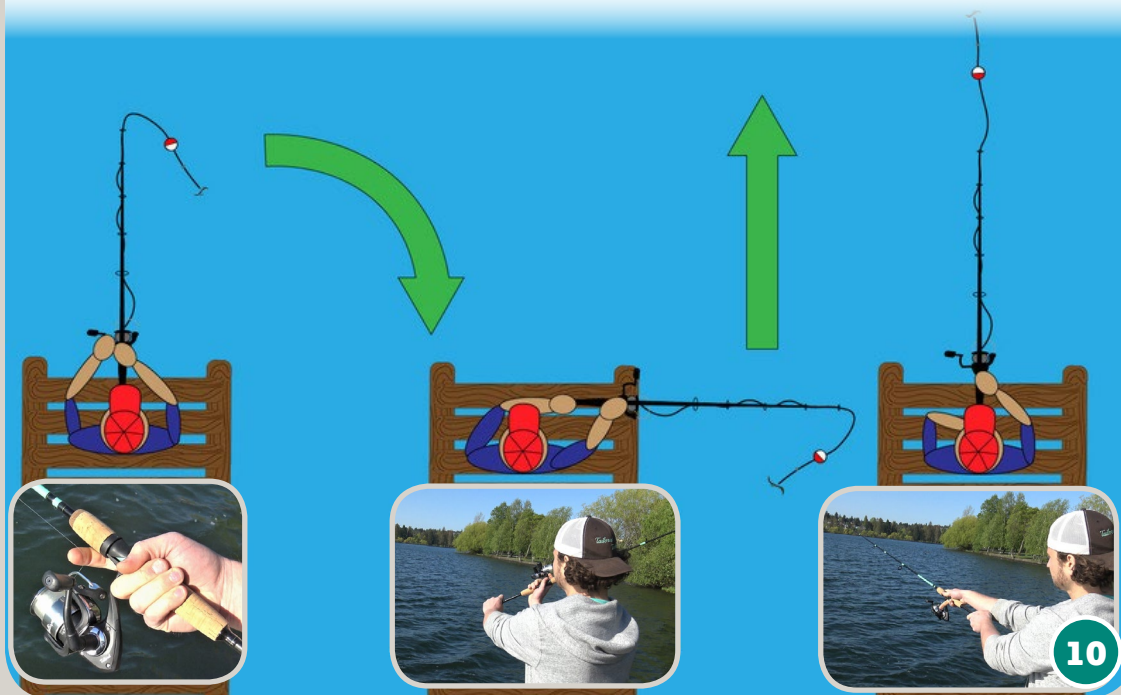
1. Hold the reel's shaft in-between your middle and index finger. Pull the line against the rod handle with your index finger and open the bail (metal half circle) with your opposite hand.



2. Look behind you to make sure you are clear of other anglers as well as objects your hook could catch. Slowly bring the rod 90° to your side. Keep pressing your finger against your line and against your rod.

3. Sway your rod back to its original position in front of you, releasing the line from your index finger at the apex of your rod fully extending forward. Close your bail to re-engage your fishing reel and begin your retrieving presentation.

4. For greater casting distance, repeat these steps over your shoulder vs. at your side. An over the shoulder cast will give you more velocity, however accidents are more likely to occur so graduate to this style after you master the side cast.



Catching Fish

Let your bait sit for 5-10 minutes. When the bobber begins to move abruptly you have a bite! If the bobber goes under, bobs rapidly, or is consistently moving to the side for over 5 seconds, the fish has taken the bait. Reel in some line by rotating the reel handle counter clock-wise. Once the line is taut, set the hook by swiftly lifting your rod tip a few inches. Once the fish is locked in, gradually reel the fish in by balancing the tension of the fight with the pace of your retrieve to avoid losing the fish.

The Bite!

The Tailored Tackle [Multispecies Combo](#) (Left) is a great option to fish multiple fresh-water species with one rod & reel.

The Fight!

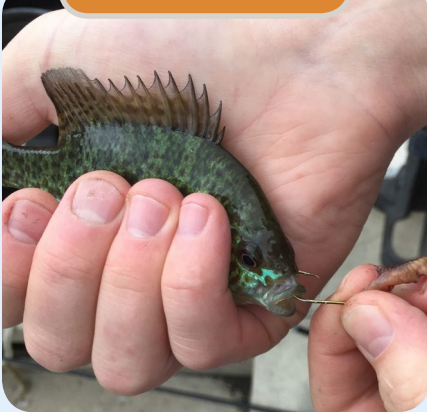
Maintain pressure and never let your line go slack. Keep your rod tip up so you maintain leverage over the fish. Adjust your drag so that line pulls out gently when tough tension is applied. Drag will give the fish room to wear itself down without allowing slack to form. Retrieve at a steady pace, slowing down if the fish runs, and speeding up when the fish gives. When preparing to land, never let your lure or rig get close to your rod tip.

Releasing Fish

Remove Hook

Lift your freshly caught fish fully out of the water, be careful not to let it fall to the ground. Cup the belly of the fish with the palm of your hand so the spine remains exposed. Remove the hook by gripping your pliers right below the eyelet of the hook. Push the hook down into the fish's mouth, rotate the hook away from the point, and remove. Sometimes you will need to twist, dig, and rotate the hook for removal. You can also remove the hook by applying pressure on the eyelet with your opposite thumb and index finger. Push the hook towards the fish extracting the barb, then remove.

Remove by Hand

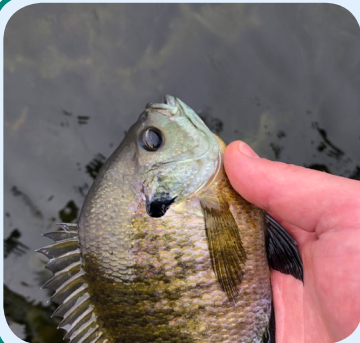


Remove by Pliers



Releasing Fish

Release your catch by submerging the fish with your hand cupping the belly. Let the fish paddle off on its own as you open your hand. If the fish is not kicking off on its own, hold it upright in the water cupped by the belly with one hand. With your opposite hand, wag the tail back and forth. Repeat this process 3-4 times over 5 minutes to resuscitate the fish. If the fish does not revive, please harvest it according to state regulations. Otherwise, contact the local DNR.



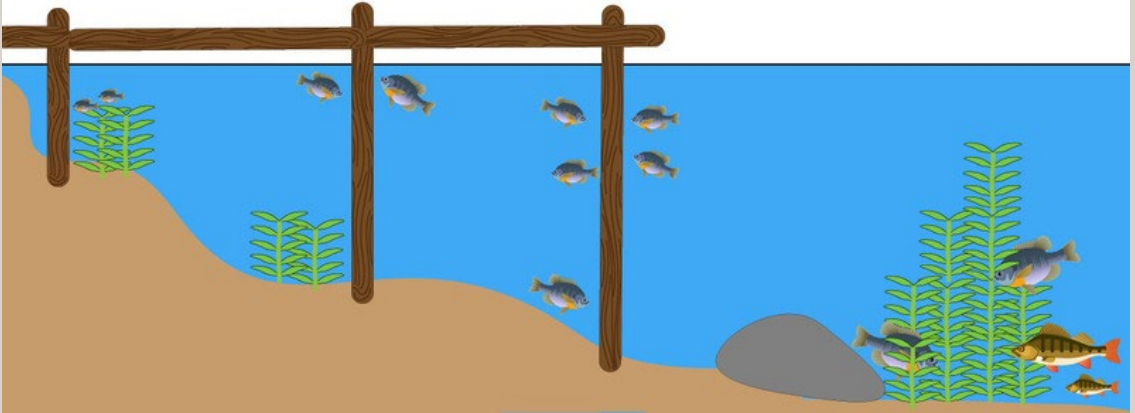
Where to Fish

Target panfish such as bluegill, sunfish, perch and crappie in 3-10 ft depths.

1.) Right Next to the Dock: These species love to be close to cover like a dock because it gives them shelter from predators and hosts abundant food sources. If you have access to a dock, set your line up near the posts of the dock as many panfish tend to congregate there.

2.) Vegetation: Panfish also love hiding in weed lines, if you do not have access to a dock, nearby weeds are a good spot to target. Panfish will be located in and around the weeds, try to get your bait close to the outer edges of the weeds.

3.) Transitions in Structure: If the dock or shoreline you are fishing has a change in depth of a few feet, this transitional location will often hold panfish. If the bottom contents change, like soft silt -> rocks, panfish will hold along that transition.

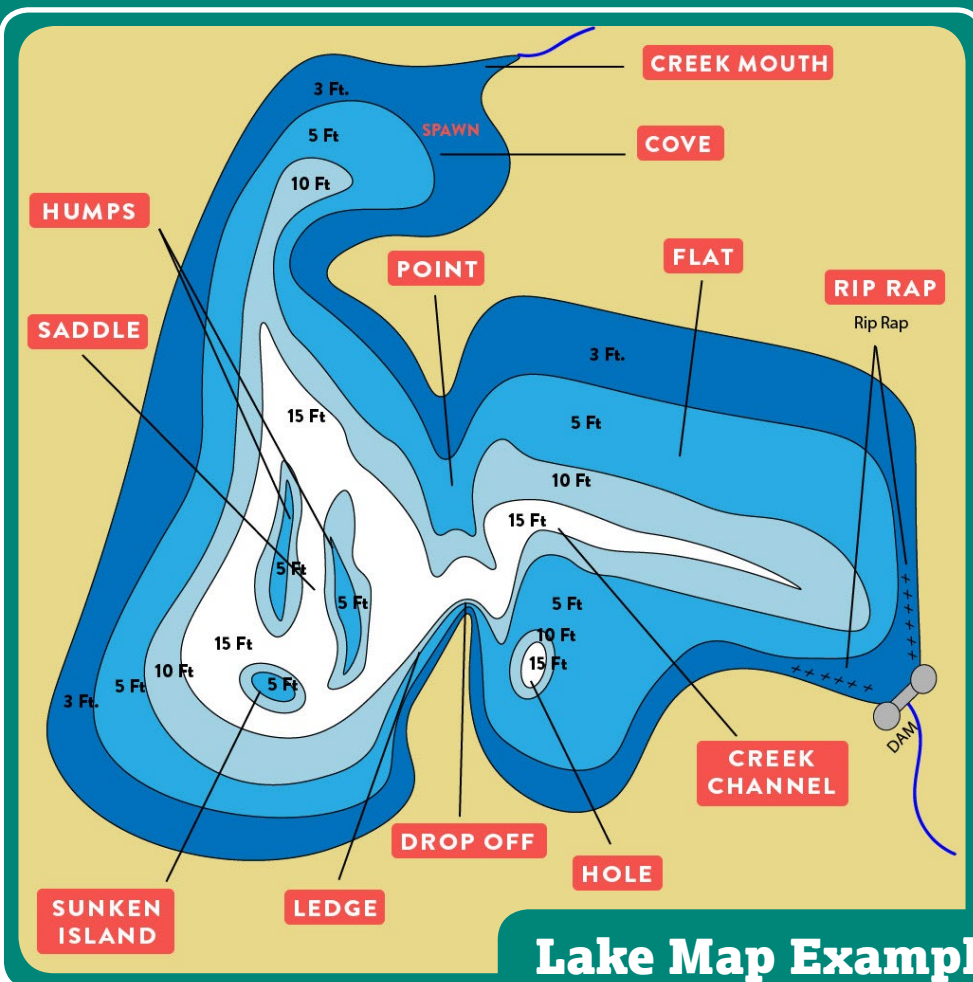


Advanced Fish Finding

Structure: Fish hold to it, particularly where transitions in structure occur. Changes in depth or bottom consistency are the general markers of structural change. Common structural features that support these changes are creek channels, points, humps, holes, and drop offs.

Cover: Fish use cover to find shade and ambush prey. Cover is made up of natural and man made features that provide ideal characteristics for fish to feed. Examples of cover are docks, weed beds, boulders, logs, sunken trees, lily pads.

Structure + Cover: Your goal is to position yourself on structure (where fish are holding) and target areas that supply cover (where fish are primed for striking). An example of this would be at the end of a dock that has a steep transition in depth (drop-off). Fish will often position themselves along the changes of a drop-off, and the smaller area where the dock provides shade is an ideal position for a fish to feed along that drop-off while they benefit from shade.



Lake Map Example

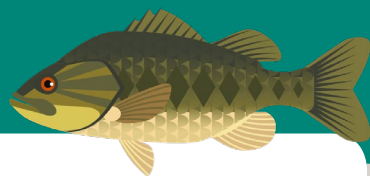
Mapping Structure

Creek channels are an ideal starting place because their s-turns and sloping framework cover long expansions of water that serve as underwater highways for fish and their bait. Seconded by points and drop offs, these structures relate to the surrounding topography and corral fish along the greater outlay of the water body. Humps, holes, and sunken islands serve as an oasis drawing in fish from the greater expanse. Use a lake map or an app to get a general sense of your lake's layout. If fishing from a boat, electronic sonar will best assist you in identifying deeper water structure.

Identifying Cover

Docks and overhanging features are a typical go-to as they do not require electronics and are accessible by boaters and shore anglers. Boulders and brush piles require the use of electronics to target effectively and are generally less accessible from shore. Lily pads and thick vegetation shelter fish in shallower waters that are accessible by boaters and shore anglers. In summary, target areas that provide shade.

Largemouth Bass



Location

Bass are popular inhabitants of lakes, ponds, rivers & streams across the country. Bass are most active from May to August, feeding heavily at dawn and dusk, but can be caught throughout the day. Generally fished in 5-15 ft of water, bass hold to shady areas. Target overhanging cover like docks, branches and lily pads or submerged cover like weed beds, brush piles, and boulders. Ideally, these are near changes in depth or bottom.

Lures



Crankbait



Wacky Worm



Finesse Worm

Tactic

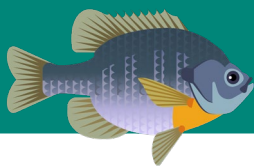
Bass are reactive, so fish aggressively for a reaction. Cast artificial lures that provide an erratic presentation. Fish a lot of water. Target a new spot on every cast, covering a new area every 30 minutes. Start deeper, but fish various depths at different levels of the water column. Try to retrieve your lure through changes in structure or cover. The key takeaway is to stay mobile and experiment with presentations.

Technique

Crankbait: Crank down and pause on the retrieve to mimic a wounded baitfish. Set the hook right when you get a thump.

Soft Plastics: Swoop your worm along the bottom as you retrieve, lifting and dropping it 3-4 ft. Give it a 5 second pause on the bottom (most bites), set the hook on a tap-tap.





Panfish

Bluegill - Sunfish
Bream - Crappie

Location

Panfish can generally be found anywhere and are the best species for learning how to fish or taking kids fishing. They hold to areas that provide protective cover from predators and the hot sun. Almost any dock in freshwater will hold panfish underneath it. Simply drop a worm under a slip bobber rig off a local dock or marina and you will catch fish. When fishing from shore, target the edges of a weed line or a bed of weeds in roughly 3-10 ft of water

Lures



Bobber & Worm



Grub + Jig



Rattle Spinner

Tactic

Panfish are aggressive sight feeders so get your bait right in front of them. For massive quantities of panfish, simply fish a bobber and worm halfway down the water column near shady cover. If you are trying to hone in on trophy panfish, use an artificial grub or lure to sort through the smaller fish. Bigger panfish can be found stratified in deeper water (20-30 ft) like the basin of a lake.

Technique

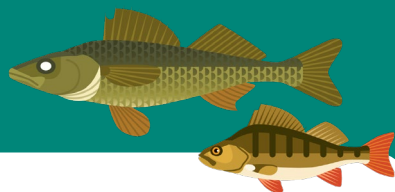
Live Bait: Fish fast, changing your bait often and getting it back down. Panfish have small mouths so let them hit it 2-3 times before setting your hook.

When the bobber completely submerges, set your hook. If the bobber is bobbing or moving rapidly for more than 3 seconds, also set the hook.

Lures: In deeper water, use the grub + jig. Jig the lure by lifting and falling roughly 2-3 ft off the bottom. Remember to pause after the fall to let the fish hit. For bigger panfish in the shallows, cast your rattle spinner alongside weed lines, retrieving at a constant pace so the lure glides through the middle of the water column.



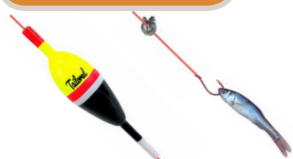
Walleye & Perch



Location

Walleye & perch habit deeper, cool water. 15-30 ft depths in general, 7-15 ft in colder months and 25-40 ft in deep summer. They feed 1-3 ft off the bottom, and hold to structure. Substantial changes in depth and bottom consistency are key. Focus on near shore points and drop offs in Spring, mid-lake structure like humps and holes in Summer, and mud-flats in Fall. Key in on the bottom transitions like weeds to sand or rocks to mud.

Lures



Bobber & Minnow



Jig & Leech



Grub + Jig

Tactic

Present your bait in the strike zone, 6 in - 1 ft off bottom at any depth. Use a slip bobber with lively bait when the bite is slow, jig live bait when the bite is moderate, and jig plastics like a grub when the bite is aggressive to key in on bigger fish. Walleye & perch feed on the same forage, so minnows and leeches work for both. Drift all presentations along the bottom, letting the wind propel you, or use a trolling motor at low speeds.

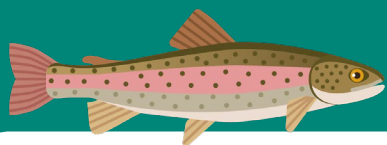
Technique

Slip Bobber: Let the wind carry your rig 20-30 yds each drift. Wait until your bobber submerges 2-3 ft, reel in any slack and set the hook.

Jigging: Keep your jig 1 ft off bottom. Lift up 1-2 ft, drop down, then pause. Repeat every 15 seconds. Most hits come at the pause. After you feel a "tap-tap" wait 3 seconds and set the hook.



**Slip Bobber
Walleye**



Trout

Rainbow - Brown Brook - Cutthroat

Location

Trout are found in rivers, streams, lakes and stocked ponds across the country. While species and regions vary, these general tips work for trout everywhere. In rivers and streams, trout love deeper pockets of water. Look for darker pools, near the middle that sport slower moving water. In lakes & ponds, trout typically navigate adjacent to shoreline. They prefer cooler water, ideally 20-40 ft depths. However, trout often hold to the top half of the water column so fish halfway down.

Lures



Bottom Rig



Feather Spinner



Rattle Spinner

Tactic

Stay quiet and stealthy, in clear water. Trout can see you from about 15 yds away and scatter from sudden noises. Lures are preferred for rivers/streams. Cast upstream so your lure retrieves naturally with the current. Defer to a bottom rig + floating bait when fishing lakes/ponds from shore. If fishing from a boat, troll lures instead. Troll your lure 100 yds back at 1.3-1.7 MPH, add a series of split shots to get deeper.



**Cutthroat Trout -
Bottom Rig**

Technique

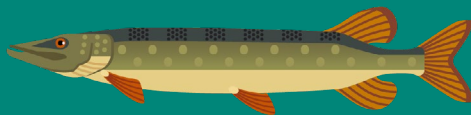
River/Stream:

Cast upstream, from one bank

to the other in a diagonal line to cover all changes in structure. Vary pace so that you fish all levels of the water column, prioritize deep pools. Stay mobile & quiet.

Lake/Pond: Cast the bottom rig as deep as you can (~30 yds) and let it fall to bottom. Reel in until line is taut between your tip and the weight. Hold or prop up your rod, monitoring the tip for a bite. After you see a “tap-tap”, wait 5-10 seconds for a second “tap-tap.” After the second tap, or you see a hard tug, set the hook.

Northern Pike



Location

Northern Pike and Chain Pickerel are found in lakes and rivers across the US, but predominately in the northern states. These are aggressive predators that react to flashy and loud presentations. Most often lurking in the weed lines near shore, pike habit 5-15 ft depths wherever panfish and baitfish are schooling. They aggressively sight feed and are most active during morning and evening hours. However, you can catch pike anywhere at any time.

Lures



Pike Spoon



Crankbait



Bobber and L. Minnow

Tactic

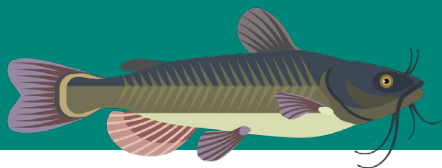
Pike roam individually, or in packs of 2-3. To find them, use lures that reflect light and make a lot of noise. Cast a pike spoon along weed lines or above weed beds to pull them out of cover. When fishing a rocky or deeper body of water, cast a crankbait to get down further. Keep moving & cover a lot of water. If mobility is an issue, let the Pike come to you by fishing a larger shiner minnow under a float.

Technique

Lures: Use a wire leader. Cast and retrieve at a steady pace, halfway up to the top of the water column. Sternly set the hook right when you feel a thump, the trebles and speed will do most of the hook setting for you.

Live Float: Set your depth 2-4 ft off the bottom and bait your hook through the back of the minnow just before the tail. Cast right along the edge of the weeds. Change your bait every 15 min. Wait for your float to submerge for 5-10 seconds, then set the hook.



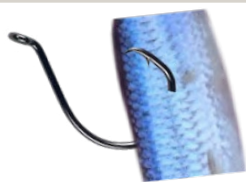
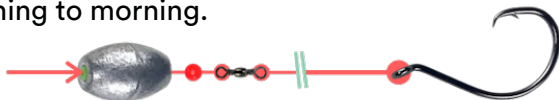


Catfish

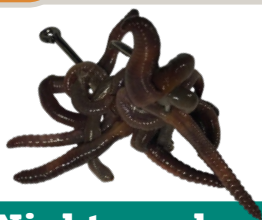
Location

Catfish are the quintessential river monsters, also found in reservoirs and stocked lakes. Cats hug close to the bottom and forage with their whiskers. Target depths range dramatically (10-40 ft), focus on the deepest section of water < 50 ft. The middle of a river where the original channel slopes on the bottom will hold cats. Deeper pockets sheltered from the current like eddies require less energy from cats at the same depth. Cats most actively feed at night from evening to morning.

Bottom Rig



Cut Bait



Nightcrawlers



Dough Bait

Tactic

Get your smelly bait on the bottom, holding against the current and let it sit. All the above baits work, however Cut Bait is best for targeting trophy sizes. Start fishing in the afternoon to find a safe and productive location for the evening/night bite. Find a deeper spot where current is light enough for your sinker to hold. Check your bait every 20 minutes, otherwise the current and small fish will poke away at your offering.

Technique

Bottom Rigging: Cast out to the deeper section of the river. Once the weight hits bottom, reel in any

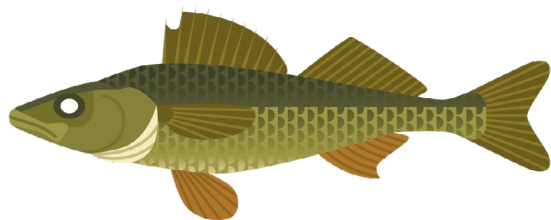
slack. Keep your line taut and prop up your rod, monitoring your tip for a bite.

Cats suck in and spit out their meals a few times before committing. If you see a tap, leave it. Wait until you see repetitive taps or a big pull. The cat's got it and is either shaking its head or about to run. Set the hook.

Keep leverage with your rod tip up to avoid snagging on river debris and rocks.



How To Clean a Walleye



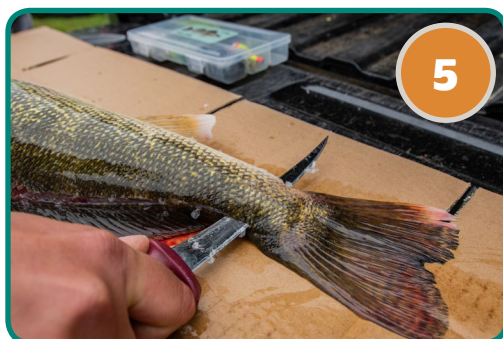
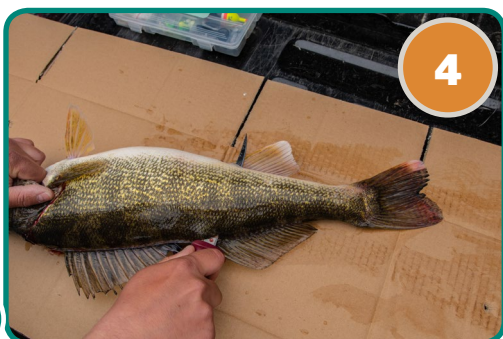
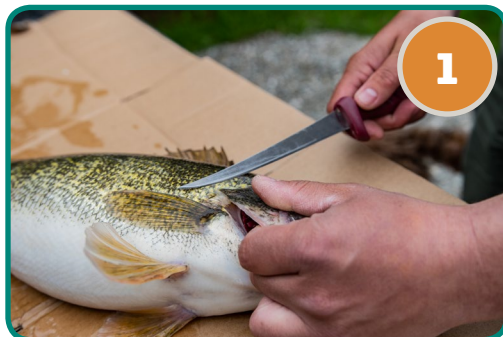
Lay the fish on its side so that the spines are facing you. (1)

Locate the side fin and slice down from the side fin back towards the spine, deep enough to pass the meat. (2)

Turn the knife horizontal and cut front to back, just above the spines. (3)

About halfway back, poke the knife carefully through the fish and continue cutting towards the tail. (4)

Apply pressure, slicing back forth against the spine until you reach the tail. (5)





Open up and carefully cut around the ribcage from the top to the bottom, in an arc towards the belly. (6)

Cut in a straight line along the belly until you reach the tail. (7)

Do not slice off the side of the fish yet. Flip it over, still attached to the tail. (8)

Press the tail down with your fingers, slice down at the edge of the tail until you reach the skin. (9)

Lay your knife flatly angled towards the skin, and carefully shave against the skin back and forth. After the fillet is removed, repeat on the opposite side. (10/11)



How To Clean a Trout

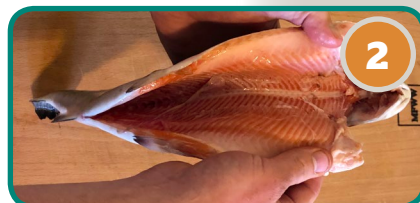


How to Gut a Trout

Cut the gill away from the jaw. (1)



Pierce through the belly near the anus, cut up towards the head of the trout in a straight line. Grab the base of the gills and pull down, removing all the organs. Rub your thumb against the spine to remove blood. (2)



(Optional) To cook Trout with the skin on, remove the scales by grinding the back of the blade against the scales until the skin becomes smooth and semi transparent.

To harvest a fillet, proceed to the next section. Otherwise, you can cook the Trout whole, eating off the bone.

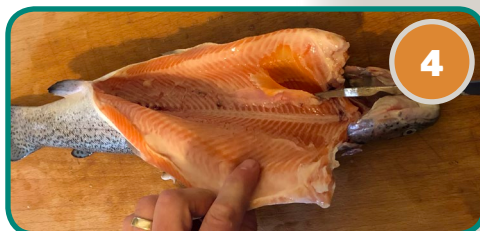


How to Fillet a Trout

Start with the trout's head facing your dominant hand. Break the neck by snapping it backwards. (3)



To remove the bones from the fillet, slip the blade right beneath the rib bones, working the knife up along the rib cage to separate. (4)



Flesh out any left over bones with the edge of your knife, working upwards from the spine to the belly. Flip over and repeat. (5)



Pierce blade through the back, right above the neck. Cut from head to tail, as close to the spine as possible. Flip over & repeat. (6)

Remove the head by cutting across one fin to the other, severing the spine. Remove dorsal fins. (7)

Cut at the base of the tail to remove the spine, leaving the tail on. (8)

For a skinless fillet move onto the next section. Otherwise, sever each fillet from the tail and wash before you cook.

How to Skin a Trout

Press 2 fingers firmly down at the tail. Slant your knife to a 45° angle near the base of the tail. Slowly draw your knife back and forth until you are underneath the meat, pressing against the skin. (9)

Lay your knife flat. Work your knife back and forth against the grain of the skin, separating the fillet from the skin. Repeat on opposite side. (10)

Trim any fins or fat that were missed from steps 1-10. Run under cool water, feeling for any missed bones. Dry off and prep your meal! (11)

