



SECTION

4



SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE ANGLING

The goal of any fishing trip is to have fun. But, nothing spoils a good time more than an easily avoided accident or the thoughtlessness of others in the form of litter or bad fishing manners. Just like any other form of outdoor recreation, fishing has both written and unwritten rules for staying safe and respecting others and nature.

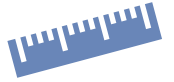
BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE...

A safe and enjoyable fishing trip starts before you leave the house. Besides your fishing gear, you should bring along several other things:

- **Sunblock** – Since water reflects sunlight, you're more exposed to ultraviolet (UV) rays while fishing. Use sunblock to prevent painful sunburn.
- **Polarized sunglasses** – Polarized sunglasses cut the sun's glare on the water and allow you to see fish and places they might hide.
- **Hat** – A hat protects your eyes from the sun, helping you see your line and bobber better when a fish bites.
- **Rain gear** – Sure it's sunny when you leave the house, but you can't always count on that to last. Be prepared for all weather conditions.



- **Flashlight** – Important for fishing at night.
- **Fishing Regulations Guide** – Special regulations apply to some fishing waters, so always check your regulations guide before you go.
- **Ruler** – To figure out if your fish is large enough to legally keep.



See page 26 in the Basic Tackle and Techniques chapter for other recommended things to bring when you go fishing.

LET SOMEONE KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.

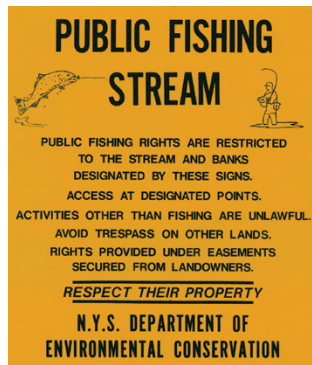
Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return...just in case!

ONCE YOU GET TO THE WATER...

Once you get to the water, your first big decision is where to fish. In your eagerness to start fishing, don't forget your manners. Keep the following tips in mind:

Respect property owners and other anglers.

- Respect private property! Only fish in areas where you have obtained permission from the property owner, or where the property owner has granted legal access to the public for fishing (see Public Fishing Rights at www.dec.ny.gov).
- Give other anglers the same amount of space you would like to have:
 - Before fishing in a crowded area, like a pier, make sure you can cast straight, without hitting others with your hook, or getting entangled with their lines.
 - Don't make a lot of noise and disturb fish or other anglers.
 - Don't "squeeze out" other anglers if they got to your favorite spot first.
- Give other waterway users, such as boaters and swimmers, the space they need to enjoy their activity. They have as much right to be there as you do.
- If you bring your dog fishing, keep an eye on it, so it doesn't bother other anglers or wildlife.



Respect nature.

When you go fishing, you are out in nature and may come in contact with wildlife. Please:

- Don't harass wildlife.
- Don't feed ducks, geese, swans or other wildlife.
- Avoid nesting birds; disturbing them can cause them to leave their nests.
- Don't try to rescue young wild animals that look like they've been abandoned. Leave them alone, or if injured, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
- Avoid wading through fish nests. Destroying nests means fewer fish in the future. Nests look like circles cleared of vegetation or debris, usually with a shallow depression.



Be mindful of natural hazards.

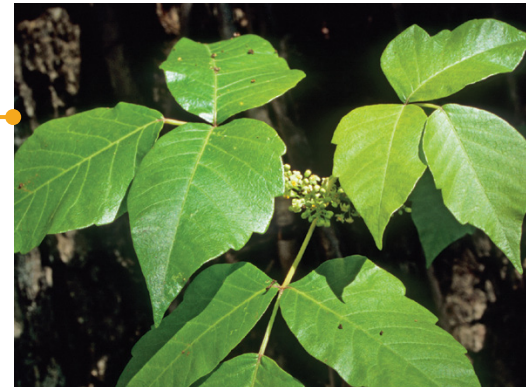
Nature also has some hazards to be aware of while you're fishing:

- Avoid poison ivy.
- Watch for roots, rocks, stumps and other tripping hazards, and sudden drop-offs into deeper water if wading.
- Be careful when walking on wet surfaces. Rocks, roots, logs and stumps can be slippery when wet.
- Leave the water when you hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, you can be struck by lightning.

Stay safe and be considerate while afloat.

Boaters, please keep the following in mind:

- By law, everyone must wear a life jacket (personal floatation device or PFD) between November 1st and May 1st while riding in a moving boat that is less than 21-feet-long.
- By law, children under 12 must wear a PFD while in a moving boat less than 65-feet-long, unless in an enclosed cabin.
- By law, any person born on or after May 1, 1996, is now required to successfully complete an approved course in boater education in order to operate a motorboat. Approved courses include those offered by NYS Parks, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, or the U.S. Power Squadron. For more information, visit www.parks.ny.gov/recreation/boating/safety-courses.aspx.
- When fishing from a boat, please be considerate of shore anglers. Give them plenty of room to fish, especially if you are using a motor.
- Large wakes can be dangerous to those in small boats and annoying to anglers. Give anglers plenty of space when motoring by, and avoid passing between them and the shore.



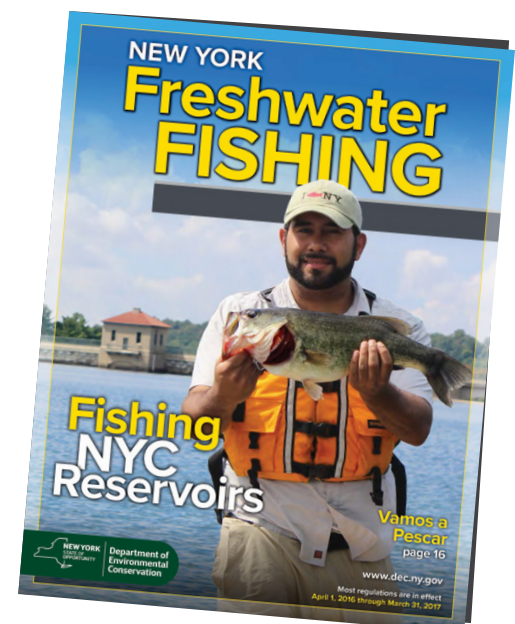
Poison ivy has three leaves that are often glossy.



Courtesy of
Take Me Fishing

Follow fishing regulations and help keep fishing great!

Check your fishing regulations guide for the regulations on the waters you plan to fish. If you use baitfish, be sure to review the baitfish regulations to prevent the spread of fish diseases. Always follow these regulations. They are designed to keep fishing great for years to come.



BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE WATER LEAVE THE WORLD A CLEANER PLACE!

Nobody likes arriving at a fishing spot and finding litter all over the place. Help keep our waterways beautiful. Bring a trash bag and carry out what you carry in. While carrying out your own trash, pick up something someone else left behind. Imagine how clean our waterways would be if everyone picked up just a few extra items when they leave.



DID YOU KNOW

An aluminum beverage can take up to 500 years to break down in the environment. Monofilament fishing line can take up to 600 years!



HEALTH ADVISORIES FOR EATING FISH

Fishing is fun, and fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Fish contain high quality protein and healthy fish oils. However, some fish also contain chemicals that may be harmful. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has some advice that will help you make good choices about the kinds and quantities of fish you should eat. That advice comes in two forms, special health advisories that apply to some waters in the state, and the general health advisory that applies to all other waters in the state.

Special Health Advisories

When looking up advice on eating fish, start by finding out which New York State waters have special health advisories. Waters with special health advisories are located all around the state, even in the Adirondacks and Catskills. You need to know which waters they are because DOH advises kids under 15 and women under 50 not to eat any fish from such waters.

General Health Advisory and Other Tips

Most New York State waters do not have special health advisories. For those waters, DOH says you can eat up to four meals a month of fish you catch. This is called the general health advisory.

Here are some other helpful tips:

- Space out fish meals to about once a week for fish you catch.
- If you are fishing in the Adirondacks or Catskills, avoid or eat less yellow perch over 10 inches, largemouth or smallmouth bass, northern pike, pickerel and walleye. These fish tend to have higher mercury levels. Better choices are smaller yellow perch, brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, bullhead, bluegill/sunfish, rock bass and crappie.
- Some chemicals (like PCBs) are found at higher levels in the fat of fish. You can avoid some of these chemicals by skinning your catch, trimming off the fat, and then grilling, broiling or baking the fish. The fish that have the most of these kinds of chemicals are American eel, carp, lake trout, Chinook and coho salmon, striped bass, white and channel catfish and white perch. It is best to avoid or eat less of those fish.

Get more information for you, your family and friends at www.health.ny.gov/fish.

Checking health advisories is important, but be assured that New York State has thousands of great places to catch fish that are healthy choices for dinner.

WHAT ARE THOSE BLACK SPOTS IN THE FISH I JUST FILLETED?

Those black spots are a common small parasite that penetrates the muscles of fish and produces a black color. Cooking kills the parasite, and the fish are safe to eat once cooked. The spots do not affect the fish's flavor.



DON'T SPREAD INVASIVE SPECIES!

Invasive species can hurt native fish populations. They spread by hitching a ride to new locations in bait buckets and on fishing gear, boats and trailers. Anglers moving from one fishing spot to another can spread invasive species if they are not careful. Protect our fish populations by following these simple guidelines:

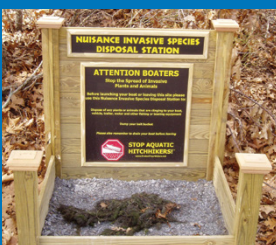


1. INSPECT & CLEAN your boat, trailer, waders and other fishing and boating gear. Remove all mud, plants and other organisms that might be clinging to it. Never release plants, fish or other animals into a water body unless they came out of that water body.

2. DRAIN & DRY everything that came into contact with water. Many aquatic invasive species and fish diseases are microscopic and can be transported in as little as a drop of water. Dry your gear for at least five days before using it in another water body. Difficult to dry gear, such as waders, may take even longer to dry. Be sure to completely drain your boat, including baitwells and livewells.



3. DISINFECT your boat or gear if you do not have the time to dry it before using it in another water body. The simplest way to do this is by soaking or flushing it with hot water that is at least 140°F (hotter than most tap water). Be careful as water of this temperature can cause burns and should only be used under adult supervision. Soak or flush the equipment to be disinfected for a minimum of 30 seconds. If hot water is not available, thoroughly flush all water-holding compartments with tap water. Household steam cleaners can also be effectively used to disinfect equipment. For additional disinfection guidance and information on how you can help stop the spread of invasive species, go to www.dec.ny.gov and search for “Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasives.”



DID YOU KNOW ?

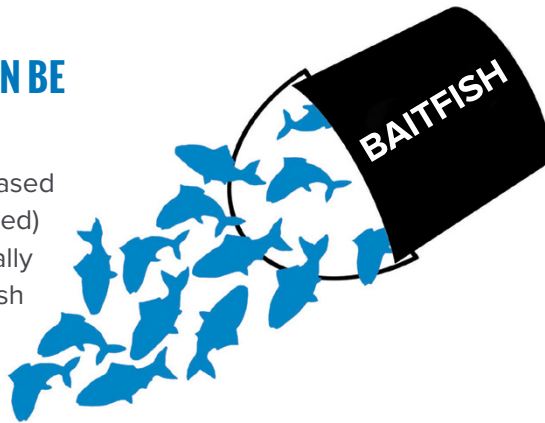
Some DEC boating access sites have special places called “Invasive Species Disposal Stations” to dispose of the weeds you pull off your boat.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Did you know that aquatic invasive species can be transported in as little as a drop of water?

WE MAY BE SMALL BUT WE CAN BE BIG TROUBLE!

Some baitfish can be harmful if released into a lake or pond. Released (stocked) baitfish can start a new and potentially harmful fish population, or spread fish diseases. Never release unused baitfish into the water you are fishing, unless you caught them in that water. If you catch your own baitfish, only use them in the same body of water where you caught them. If you use purchased baitfish, please discard the unused fish, and the water they came in, on dry land. This will ensure that undesirable species (some invisible to the eye) are not introduced into a water body by mistake.



Whether crayfish, baitfish or worms, many species used for bait are not native to New York. It is best to discard them in the trash or at another location where they will not survive to compete with native species.

DID YOU KNOW

The acres of lakes and ponds with brook trout in the Saranac Wild Forest (Adirondack Mountains) have decreased by 97 percent, due mostly to non-native fish introductions.

REFERENCES

Web Resources

- New York State Parks Safe Boating www.parks.ny.gov/recreation/boating/safe-boating.aspx
- Take Me Fishing – Boating <http://takemefishing.org/boating>
- National Safe Boating Council – Sidekicks Series www.safeboatingcampaign.com
- NYSDEC: Fishing Responsibly in New York State www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9223.html
- Take Me Fishing – Fishing Safety <http://takemefishing.org/fishing/fishopedia/fishing-safety>

Books

- *New York State Boater's Guide*. 2013. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Bureau of Marine Services. www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/nysparks/boatersguide2013
- *Fishing for Dummies* by Peter Kaminsky and Greg Schwipps
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fishing Basics* by Mike Toth

ACTIVITIES

Find what is wrong in the picture.
See answers below.



ANSWERS: 1. Not leaving the water as a thunderstorm approaches, into the lake, 6. Not wearing a life preserver, 7. Crowding another angler, 8. Casting without looking behind you, 9. Boating too close to anglers.