

## WHAT TO CATCH AND WHERE

In NYC, many parks have a pond, and almost all park ponds have fish in them. Please visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7951.html> for more information and links about NYC fishing spots and the species present.

The most commonly caught freshwater fish are sunfish. Some lakes with especially dense populations of sunfish are the Harlem Meer in Manhattan, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and Willowbrook Pond in Staten Island. The two most common sunfish are bluegill and pumpkinseed (distinguished by a typically yellower color, no stripes, and a small red spot behind the black spot).

The most common larger fish is the largemouth bass (also in the sunfish family but larger and thinner in profile), growing up to 18 inches long. However, carp, yellow perch, black crappies, and brown bullhead catfish are also common. For pictures and more information, please check out “Freshwater Sportfish of New York” [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/commonfish.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/commonfish.pdf). All of the NYC fish will be found in the “warm water” portion of the brochure.

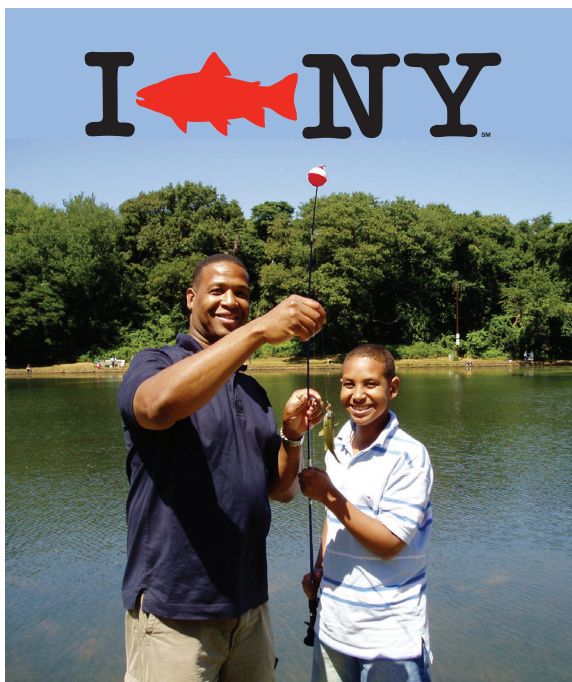
### SUGGESTED GEAR CHECKLIST

Rod	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bait	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bobbers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pliers/Forceps	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clippers (for cutting Line)	<input type="checkbox"/>
FW Fishing License	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regulations (outside NYC)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tape measure (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camera (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>



Department of  
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Conservation

## GETTING STARTED FISHING IN NEW YORK CITY



## FRESHWATER

### Tips for the First-Time Angler

Here we provide tips and suggestions on everything from purchasing your equipment, to getting your line in the water and enjoying the exciting hobby of fishing.

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/>

## EQUIPMENT

For anyone with no fishing experience, walking into a tackle shop can be daunting. With so many different types of rods, lures, hooks and bait, it is hard to know where to start. Here are a few tips on what equipment to purchase and how to use it. The most expensive equipment will not guarantee the best results, but try to avoid the very cheapest equipment.

### RODS AND REELS

For freshwater fishing, we recommend a medium- to light- weight 6' rod and a reel that can hold about 50 yards of 8 lb test. Beginners should use a spincasting reel (see diagram). No matter what reel you choose, use the correct size for the rod. Make sure the line weight, rod line rating, and reel size match.

Alternatively, many retailers sell relatively inexpensive rod-reel combinations. A setup should cost somewhere between \$30 and \$60 from a sporting goods retailer. Make sure your reel is firmly attached to the rod.

### SETTING THE DRAG

Before you start to fish, set the drag on the reel. Drag is the resistance you feel when line is pulled from the reel. The location of the drag control varies depending on the reel type and manufacturer.

Set the drag by adjusting the drag control towards the (+) or (-). (+) will increase resistance, while (-) will lower the resistance, making the line easier to pull out. The goal is to set the drag tight enough to hook and hold a fish. Be careful; if you set the drag too tight, the line might break. Practice with different settings as you fish. Proper use of the drag can require some experience.

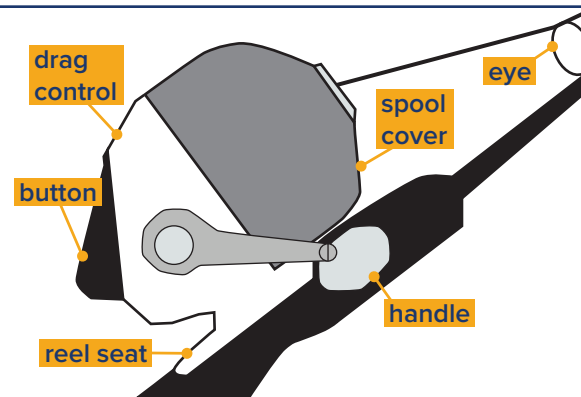


### LINE

Use monofilament line to start as it is easiest to work with. For freshwater, 8 lb test is a good general weight.

Your local tackle store can sometimes spool line onto your reel for you, or you can do it yourself. Follow the instructions found in the line packaging.

### SPINCASTING REEL



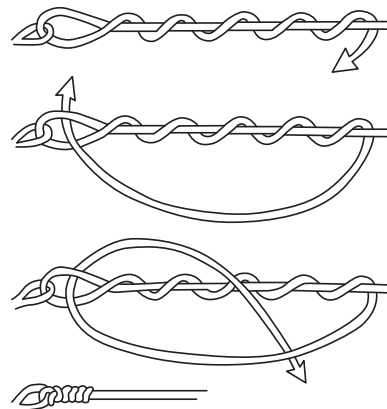
### HOOKS

For freshwater fishing, start with a size 6-8 circle hook. Remember, a smaller hook can catch a larger fish, but not the other way around!

NYC Parks regulations require the use of barbless hooks in freshwater, so either purchase barbless hooks or crimp the barb (see diagram, panel B).

### ATTACHING THE HOOK

To connect your hook and line, use an improved clinch knot.



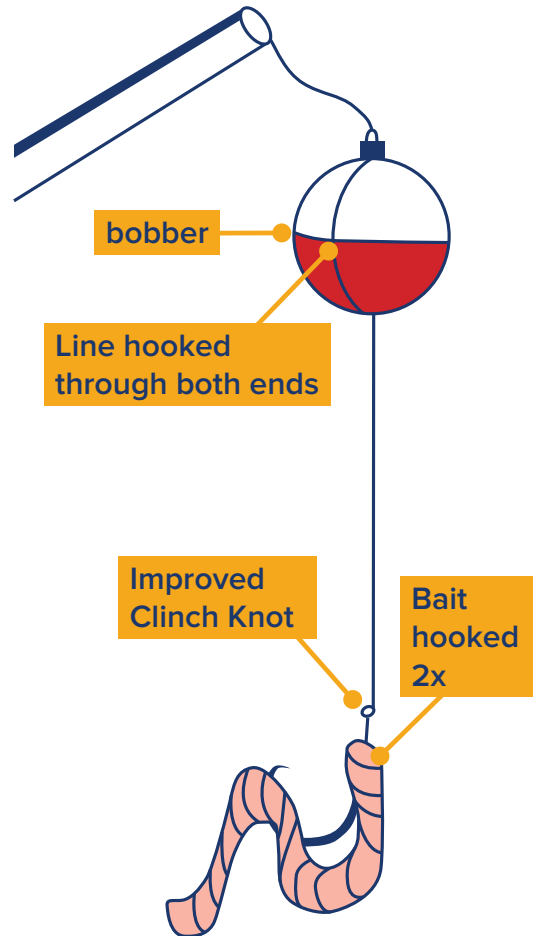
# CATCHING FISH

## BAIT

For the beginning angler, we recommend fishing with bait instead of lures. For freshwater fishing, we suggest worms (hook the worm more than once), but corn, dough, and hotdogs can also work.

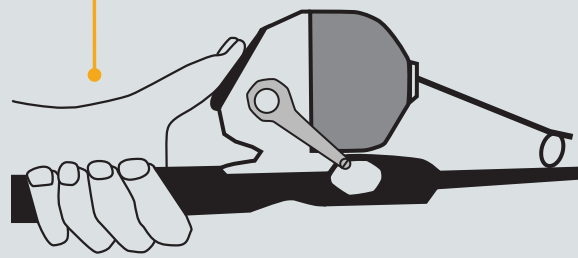
## TYPICAL BOBBER RIG

As your skill level increases, you may want to give lures a try, but we recommend that you master the basic bobber rig first. A lure is something that imitates a fish's food source. There is a dizzying variety of lures to choose from. To get started, consult [takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org) for a discussion of the different lure types.

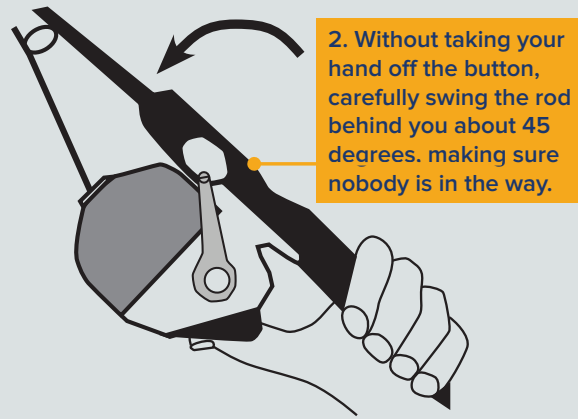


## CASTING YOUR LINE

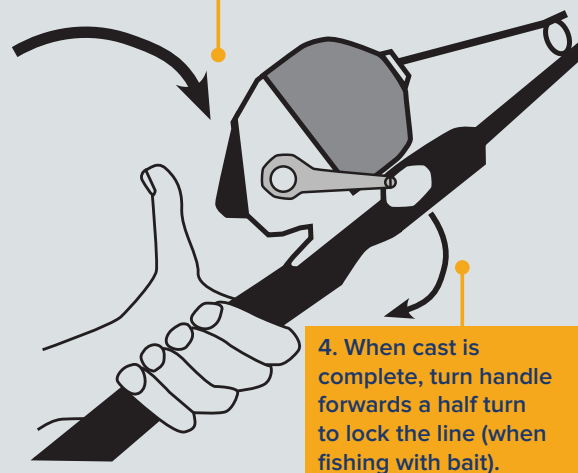
1. Hold rod in front of you with the reel on top of the rod. Press the rear button down with your thumb until it clicks, and keep the button depressed. Do not let the button go.



2. Without taking your hand off the button, carefully swing the rod behind you about 45 degrees, making sure nobody is in the way.



3. Swing the rod forward with a snap of your wrist (not your whole arm). Swing quickly, but excessive power is not necessary. When the rod tip is at approximately a 45 degree angle in front of you, let go of your thumb.



4. When cast is complete, turn handle forwards a half turn to lock the line (when fishing with bait).

## HANDLING FISH

Fish should be handled with care and as briefly as possible. Some fish have sharp spines or teeth, so be careful. Hold a fish by grasping it firmly around the body, outside the gill covers, pinning the dorsal spines to the body, avoiding eyes and gills. Try to unhook the fish in the water, or at least use wet hands to hold the fish.



To remove the hook, hold the fish as described and, in one motion, back the hook out the way it came in. Needle nose pliers or forceps are recommended and are a must for toothy species. If the hook is too deep to reach, cut the line as close to the hook as possible and release the fish.

# SPECIAL NYC REGULATIONS

- Freshwater fishing in NYC parks is catch-and-release only. All fish must be returned to the water unharmed.
- Barbless hooks are required in NYC park ponds.

The complete fishing regulations can be found online at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7917.html>. Copies of the fishing regulations guide are available wherever you purchase your license.

## FISHING LICENSE

Anyone 16 years or older must have a fishing license to fish in the freshwaters of New York State, including NYC lakes and ponds.

