

# Fishing opener: What people need to know

The tradition of fishing opener in Minnesota centers around roughly half a million anglers going fishing the day the season opens for walleye, sauger, northern pike and trout in lakes – this year on Saturday, May 12. Here are some reminders for the 2018 fishing opener.

## Take a mom fishing

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 13, and fishing opener weekend doubles as Take a Mom Fishing Weekend. Mothers who are residents of Minnesota can fish without a license from Saturday, May 12, to Sunday, May 13. Fishing is allowed only for species that have open fishing seasons.

## Wear a life jacket

Cold water kills. Anglers are reminded to not just bring it – wear a life jacket. It's the one action most likely to help in surviving a fall into cold water. Thirty percent of boating fatalities take place in cold water defined as generally below 70 degrees. In spring, this is typically from ice-out until early summer. The cold water shock "gasp reflex" can incapacitate even the strongest swimmer if they aren't wearing a life jacket. A life jacket gives you a fighting chance in cold water.



## To keep pike, measure first

New regulations will be in effect for catching and keeping northern pike on inland waters. The pike regulations have three zones to address the different characteristics of pike populations in Minnesota. Maps, regulations and more information can be found at [mndnr.gov/pike](http://mndnr.gov/pike).

Anglers who plan to keep pike must be able to reliably measure their fish. To do this, lay the fish flat on its side, squeeze the tail from tip to tip, and measure from the nose or jaw (whichever is longer) to the farthest tip of the tail when fully extended.

## Check regulations

Anglers are reminded to check the 2018 Minnesota Fishing Regulations Booklet, especially noting any special regulations that apply to individual lakes, rivers and streams. Regulations as well as lake information through the DNR's LakeFinder site can be found at [mndnr.gov/fishmn](http://mndnr.gov/fishmn).

## Ice out at the buzzer?

The lingering cold weather delayed ice-out on Minnesota lakes and rivers, and even if ice does go out on many lakes in time for opener, the delay was making it difficult for DNR crews to have the 1,500 public water accesses it manages ready in time. There are about 3,000 public water access sites statewide and the DNR's Parks and Trails Division manages about half of them.

Anglers also are advised that some rivers and lakes are at flood levels. Many river access sites are under water and there are some reports of lakes with high water where boaters may be required to proceed at slow or no-wake speeds on the entire lake.

For more information including a map showing where ice-out has occurred, check [mndnr.gov/wateraccess](http://mndnr.gov/wateraccess).

## Possibly break a record

Anglers who catch and release northern pike can earn state records through an expansion of a DNR record

fish program that previously included only lake sturgeon, muskellunge and flathead catfish in the catch-and-release category. There also is a catch-and-keep category; guidelines for both are at [mndnr.gov/recordfish](http://mndnr.gov/recordfish).

## Purchase a fishing license

Anglers from the ages of 16 to 89 are required to have a valid fishing license, aside from mothers taking advantage of Take a Mom Fishing Weekend. Purchase licenses at any DNR license agent, online with a mobile or desktop device at [mndnr.gov/buylicense](http://mndnr.gov/buylicense), or by phone at 888-665-4236. Mobile buyers receive a text or email that serves as proof of a valid fish or game license to state conservation officers. Licenses must be in anglers' possession when fishing or traveling from an area they were fishing. The top two fishing-related regulation violations are for not having a license in possession, and not having a valid license.

## Whole Roast Trout with Potatoes & Asparagus

### Ingredients

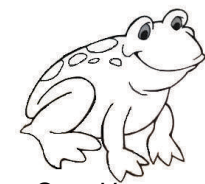
- 1 pound baby new potatoes, halved
- 1 pound asparagus stalks, trimmed and cut in half crosswise
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 whole rainbow trout, scaled, gutted, and gilled
- Half a lemon, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch lemon thyme

### Directions

Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat 425°F. Place potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water by 1-inch. Bring to a boil and cook until barely tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. Arrange the asparagus and potatoes on a large parchment-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Toss to combine.

Rub the trouts inside and out with the remaining tablespoons of olive oil and season inside and out with salt and pepper. Stuff the cavities of the two trout with the lemon slices and fresh thyme. Arrange the two fish on the baking sheet with the vegetables so that everything is in a single layer. Roast for 25 minutes until the potatoes are crisp and tender and the fish is cooked through. Serve immediately.

## Have a GREAT time FISHING!



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# Catch-and-Release program

Responsible catch-and-release fishing can help ensure continued quality fishing opportunities. Anglers can boost the odds of fish surviving catch and release by using methods that avoid internal damage caused by hooks, stress and being pulled from deep water.

Fish hooked in the mouth almost always survive. Set the hook quickly to avoid hooking a fish deeply. Jigs, circle hooks and active baits like crankbaits are more likely to hook a fish in the mouth.

Use some restraint when fish are really biting, and it is a good idea to avoid deep water when planning to catch and release fish.

Have pliers ready that work well for taking hooks out. Cutting the line and leaving the hook in the fish is also a good option.

Quickly land a fish to minimize a fish's time out of water.

Handle the fish firmly but carefully. Wet your hands before touching a fish to prevent



removal of their protective slime coating. Rubberized nets help, too.

Unhook and release the fish while it is still in the water, if possible, and support its weight with both hands or with a net when removed from the water. Never lift

them vertically from the water.

Do not place fish you plan to release on a stringer or in a live well.

Revive a fish by cradling it under the belly and gently moving it forward in the water until it swims away.

Do not release a fish that can be legally kept if it is bleeding heavily or can't right itself.

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