

Fishing Terms: A-Z . . .



Terms familiar to some can be foreign to others. If you're an avid angler, terms like jig, sinker, trolling and crank baits are common. To a novice or casual angler, however, they might make no sense at all. If you're in the latter group you might find the following list of fishing terms helpful.

Angler/angling: Fishing with a hook and line. Angling is another word for fishing and an angler is a person who fishes.

Backlash: Tangled fishing line on a bait casting fishing reel. Tangled fishing line is also referred to as a bird's nest.

Bait: Food, or some substitute, used to lure in fish. Live bait includes worms, minnows, insects, crabs, etc.

Bait casting: Fishing with a revolving spool reel and bait casting rod. The reel is mounted on the topside of the rod.

Bobber: A device that is attached to fishing line designed to float on top of the water. Their purpose is to keep the bait off the lake bottom and signal a fish bite by "bobbing" on the water. Also called a "float," they come in various shapes and sizes.

Buzz bait: A large bait with propeller-type blades that churn when retrieved on top of the water.

Catch and release: After catching a fish, rather than keeping it, the angler unhooks and quickly returns the fish to the water. The practice of catch and release is used as a conservation technique.

Crank bait: Minnow-like lure with a lip that causes the lure to dive under water during the retrieve; usually made from plastic or balsa wood.

Drifting: A method of fishing where the angler allows

the boat to drift in the wind. Usually involves using live bait.

Flies: Lures made from fur, hair, feathers or synthetics tied to hooks. They are intended to resemble insects, larvae or minnows and used in fly-fishing.

Fly-fishing: A fishing technique where anglers use a special light, springy fishing rod (called a fly rod) to cast either live or imitation flies tied to a hook. A preferred trout-fishing method.

Jerk bait: A soft or hard plastic bait resembling a small fish. The usual fishing technique for this bait is to use quick jerks to resemble a bait fish.

Jigs/jigging: Jigs are lures with a weighted head and a fixed hook often dressed with fur, feathers, or a plastic body/tail. Live bait can be added to the hook. Jigging is a technique in which the jig is moved up and down frequently.

Leader: Length of monofilament, wire or other stranded material tied between the end of the line and the lure or hook. Provides extra strength and guards against abrasion from sharp teeth or rough mouths of fish.

Livewell: Compartment in a boat that holds water, used to keep caught fish alive. To prevent transport of harmful invasive species from one lake or river to another, drain water from livewell while on land before leaving any waterbody. In Minnesota it is illegal to transport harmful invasive species.

Lures: Artificial bait made to resemble live bait.

PFD: Personal Flotation Device, such as a life jacket or floating cushion. Minnesota law requires one wearable

life jacket for each person on board a boat. Throwable devices, such as buoyant cushions, are no longer acceptable primary lifesaving devices. For more information, check the Boating Guide

Plugs: Type of lure made of wood, plastic or rubber and designed to imitate small minnows, fish, frogs, bugs, etc. Can be either floating or sinking.

Reel: Mechanical device that holds fishing line and is attached to a fishing rod. There are various types of reels, most notably spin-casting, spinning, bait-casting and fly-casting. Many beginners choose a spin-casting reel because they are easy to use and less prone to tangling

Rod: The pole part of a fishing pole. Usually made of fiberglass, graphite or composite materials, rods come in various lengths and strengths. Different types of rods can be used for fly fishing, spinning, spin casting, and bait casting.

Sinker: Weight used to keep lures from floating up in the water. Sinkers come in different weights, shapes, and types.

Split-sinker: A sinker that slides up and down on the line rather than being locked in place.

Snap/snap swivel/swivel: A snap is a hook-shaped piece of wire with a clasp that is tied to a fishing line. A lure is attached to the snap. Snap swivels are the same concept but also help prevent line twisting.

Split-shot sinker: Small round weight that's split open on one side. It is placed directly on the fishing line and then pinched together to hold the sinker in place. Preferred sinker for the novice angler.

Strike: A pull on the fish-

ing line signaling that a fish attempting to take the lure or bait. Also called a "hit."

Trolling: Fishing from a moving boat. The bait is cast behind the boat and the motor is kept in forward gear at a slow speed. Back-trolling is an alternative technique in which the boat motor is put in reverse. This allows the boat operator to make sharper turns to follow changes in lake bottom structure and helps to keep fishing lines from tangling. Live or crank baits are preferred for this type of fishing.

Zebra Mussels: Zebra mussels are an invasive species that foul beaches, interfere with food webs, smother native mussels, clog water intakes and are linked to fish and wildlife die-offs. Mussels attach to boat hulls, fish-

ing equipment, nets and boat lifts. They can be transported on those materials or aquatic plants that remain on marine equipment and fishing tackle. Microscopic larvae

may be carried in the water of undrained bait buckets or livewells. It is illegal to import, possess, transport and/or introduce zebra mussels into the wild.



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Minnesota's top 10 lakes



With a combined surface area of more than 825,000 acres, Minnesota's 10 largest lakes account for about 40 percent of the annual statewide walleye harvest and make a significant contribution to the \$2.4 billion spent each year on fishing in Minnesota.

The top 10 lakes include: Cass, Kabetogama, Lake of the Woods, Leech, Mille Lacs, Pepin, Rainy, Upper Red, Vermilion and Winnibigoshish. Profiles of the some of these lakes are featured in the regional fishing outlook elsewhere in this supplement.