

**CHAPTER 923****FISH: FISHING SEASONS AND RESTRICTIONS****SUBCHAPTER 1****SEASONS, RULEMAKING AND SPECIAL REGULATIONS****§12451. Application of laws**

**1. Waters covered by provisions relating to fish.** This Part so far as it relates to fish of all varieties and fishways applies to fish and fishways in the inland waters of the State.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Great ponds.** A person on foot may engage in any activity on the great ponds not inconsistent with any other law or regulation of the State or its political subdivisions.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Ponds of 10 acres or less.** Fishing in a pond of 10 acres or less, whether natural or artificial, formed on a brook, stream or river, is governed by the same laws and rules that govern fishing in the brook, stream or river on which the pond is situated. This subsection does not apply to private ponds as set forth in section 12508.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12452. Consolidation of rules**

Fishing rules as set forth in the Open Water and Ice Fishing Regulations folder, as maintained by the department in an electronic version and distributed through electronic means, are declared to be official consolidations of fishing rules upon filing with the Secretary of State, except that the 150-day limit of Title 5, section 8052, subsection 7, paragraph B does not apply to this section. [PL 2017, c. 164, §18 (AMD).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 214, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 164, §18 (AMD).

**§12453. Inland waters closed to fishing except as opened by law or rule**

All inland waters of the State are closed to fishing except as opened by law or rule. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12454. Ice fishing; closed areas and times**

**1. Closed waters; commissioner's authority.** All inland waters of the State are closed to ice fishing except those that have been opened by rule of the commissioner.

A. The commissioner may by rule close to ice fishing waters that have been reclaimed by the removal of rough fish. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. [PL 2009, c. 214, §2 (RP).]

[PL 2009, c. 214, §2 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 214, §2 (AMD).

#### **§12455. List of waters where children may fish with single-baited hook and line**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 214, §3 (RP).

#### **§12456. Open seasons; exceptions**

##### **1. Open seasons.**

[PL 2009, c. 214, §4 (RP).]

**1-A. Open seasons.** The commissioner shall establish open seasons for fishing, except as provided in this section and section 6140-A, subsection 4.

A. The open-water fishing season on boundary waters between Maine and New Brunswick is from April 1st to September 30th, inclusive. [PL 2015, c. 301, §33 (AMD).]

[PL 2015, c. 301, §33 (AMD).]

##### **2. Exceptions.** Notwithstanding the open seasons established under subsection 1-A:

A. A person who holds a valid Maine fishing license may take smelts for recreational purposes only from the inland waters or portions of inland waters that are naturally free of ice with a dip net in the usual and ordinary way from noon to 2:00 a.m. in accordance with bag limits established by rule. Bag limits established by rule under this paragraph are for a 24-hour period, beginning at noon on a given day and ending at 11:59 a.m. the following day. The commissioner may prohibit the taking of smelts under this section or shorten the noon to 2:00 a.m. smelt fishing timeframe by rule for enforcement or conservation purposes.

(2) A person may not take smelts with a dip net unless that dip net meets the requirements under section 10001, subsection 12-A.

Each day a person violates subparagraph (2) that person commits a Class E crime; and [PL 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §17 (RPR).]

B. [PL 2009, c. 214, §6 (RP).]

C. [PL 2009, c. 214, §6 (RP).]

D. [PL 2009, c. 214, §6 (RP).]

E. In accordance with section 10104, the commissioner may change the established opening date of an open-water recreational fishing season and may change the established closing date of a recreational ice-fishing season if, in the commissioner's opinion, the change is warranted due to weather conditions. [PL 2019, c. 9, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2019, c. 9, §1 (AMD).]

**3. Rules.** Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A and may be adopted by emergency rulemaking pursuant to Title 5, section 8054.

[PL 2019, c. 9, §2 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B244 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 237, §2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 695, Pt. C, §3 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 214, §§4-6 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 3, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 73, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §17 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §33 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 9, §§1, 2 (AMD).

#### **§12457. Restricted areas**

**1. Closed waters.** Except as the commissioner may by rule provide and as provided in subsection 2, the following waters are closed to fishing:

A. The area within 150 feet of any operational fishway, except:

(1) At the following places, the fishway and the area within 75 feet of any part of the fishway are closed to fishing at all times:

- (a) Grand Falls Powerhouse Dam on the St. Croix River in Baileyville; and
- (b) Woodland Dam on the St. Croix River in Baileyville;

(2) At the following places, the area within the fishway and within 75 feet of the downstream mouth of the fishway is closed to fishing at all times:

- (a) East Grand Lake Dam in Forest City Township, T9 R4 NBPP, except that fishing upstream from the dam at the top of the fishway is lawful;

(2-A) At the following places, the area within 75 feet of the mouth of the fishway is closed to fishing at all times:

- (a) Spednic Lake Dam in Vanceboro;

(3) At the so-called ice control dam on the Narraguagus River in the Town of Cherryfield, the area within 100 feet of the dam must be closed to fishing at all times;

(4) At East Outlet Dam in Sapling Township, T1R7, in Somerset County and in Big Moose Township, T2R6, in Piscataquis County at the outlet of Moosehead Lake, the fishway and the area within 50 feet of any part of the fishway must be closed to fishing at all times; and

(5) There is no fishing in or from the fishway at the Sheepscot Lake Dam in the Town of Palermo in Waldo County, Chain of Ponds Dam in Chain of Ponds Township in Franklin County, Long Pond Dam in Seven Ponds Township in Franklin County, Beaver Pond Dam in Seven Ponds Township in Franklin County, Little Island Pond Dam in Seven Ponds Township in Franklin County, Pushaw Lake Dam in the Town of Hudson in Penobscot County, Davis Pond Dam in the Town of Eddington in Penobscot County, Leonard's Mills Dam on Blackman Stream in the Town of Bradley in Penobscot County, Souadabscook Stream Dam at Grist Mill Road in the Town of Carmel in Penobscot County, Webber Pond Dam in the Town of Vassalboro in Kennebec County and Crooked Brook Dam in the Town of Danforth in Washington County; [PL 2025, c. 41, §1 (AMD).]

B. All waters within 200 feet of any fish hatchery or rearing station; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. The property owned by the Unity Utilities District located on Route 139 and Prairie Road in the municipality of Unity in Waldo County. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

For purposes of this subsection, "operational" means a fishway capable of fish passage whether or not it is allowing the passage of fish at any given time.

[PL 2025, c. 41, §1 (AMD).]

**2. Prohibition.** A person may not fish in inland waters closed to fishing as described in this section except that a person may fish for river herring and smelts in the manner provided under the laws regulating marine resources.

[PL 2017, c. 150, §3 (AMD).]

**3. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20, none of which may be suspended, for each fish unlawfully possessed.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §245 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B245 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 477, §15 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 550, §8 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 253, §27 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 499, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 150, §3 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 41, §1 (AMD).

#### §12458. Special regulations

**1. Aroostook River.** A person 12 years of age or younger may fish from shore with a single-baited hook and line on the following areas of the Aroostook River during the open-water fishing season:

A. In the Town of Caribou, from and including Otter Brook upstream to the Maine Public Service Company dam, including all tributaries in this section upstream to the first highway bridge intersecting each tributary; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. In the Town of Fort Fairfield, from and including Pattee Brook upstream to Hockenhull Brook, including all tributaries in this section upstream to the first highway bridge intersecting the tributary. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Webster Stream.** Between August 16th and September 30th annually, there is a daily bag limit of one brook trout for Webster Stream in Piscataquis County from the Telos Lake dam downstream to Webster Lake.

[PL 2015, c. 234, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2015, c. 234, §1 (AMD).

#### §12459. Fly-fishing by person who has loss of arm

A person who possesses a valid fishing license and has suffered the loss of an arm may use any type of rod and reel to fish with a fly on waters open to fly-fishing. For the purposes of this section, "loss of an arm" means the physical loss of the arm at the wrist or above. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

#### §12460. Smelt fishing in Long Lake

(REPEALED)

#### SECTION HISTORY

RR 2003, c. 2, §20 (COR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B246 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). MRSA T. 12 §12460 (RP).

**§12460-A. Smelt fishing in Mud Brook in Aroostook County****(REPEALED)****SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2005, c. 547, §1 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 651, §12 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 218, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 125, §1 (RP).

**§12461. State heritage fish waters**

**1. Adoption of state heritage fish waters.** The commissioner shall adopt by rule a list of state heritage fish waters composed of lakes and ponds that contain state heritage fish, as defined in Title 1, section 212-A. This list must include waters identified as eastern brook trout waters and arctic charr waters that have never been stocked according to any reliable records authorized for adoption by Resolve 2005, chapter 172, as amended, and waters identified as eastern brook trout waters and arctic charr waters that according to reliable records have not been stocked for at least 25 years. The list of state heritage fish waters may be amended by rule in accordance with the provisions of subsections 2 and 3 based on criteria established by the commissioner and in accordance with the provisions of Title 5, chapter 375. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2013, c. 538, §35 (RPR).]

**2. Addition of waters to list.** The commissioner may adopt rules to amend the list established under subsection 1 to add a lake or pond if that lake or pond meets criteria established by the commissioner for classifying a lake or pond as a state heritage fish water. Rules adopted to add a lake or pond to the list established under subsection 1 are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. A public hearing on the rules must be held prior to adoption of the rules and conducted in accordance with the provisions of Title 5, chapter 375.

[PL 2013, c. 538, §36 (AMD).]

**3. Removal of waters from list.** The commissioner may by rule remove a lake or pond from the list established under subsection 1. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. A public hearing on the rules must be held prior to adoption of the rules and conducted in accordance with the provisions of Title 5, chapter 375.

[PL 2013, c. 538, §36 (AMD).]

**4. Stocking state heritage fish.** The commissioner may not stock or issue a permit to stock fish in a lake or pond listed as a state heritage fish water under this section.

[PL 2007, c. 21, §2 (AMD).]

**5. Fishing restrictions.** A person may not use live fish as bait or possess live fish to be used as bait on a lake or pond listed as a state heritage fish water under this section. A person who violates this subsection commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2007, c. 21, §2 (AMD).]

**6. Exceptions.** Notwithstanding the stocking restrictions set forth in subsection 4, the commissioner may:

A. Stock Big Reed Pond in T.8, R.10, W.E.L.S. with native fish species. If sufficient brook trout from Big Reed Pond are not available, brook trout from Reed Brook and its tributaries in T.8, R.10, W.E.L.S. may be used for restocking. If arctic charr from Big Reed Pond are not available, arctic charr from an endemic arctic charr water in the State may be used for restocking. If northern redbelly dace need to be restocked in Big Reed Pond, northern redbelly dace from Reed Brook and its tributaries in T.8, R.10, W.E.L.S. may be used for restocking; and [PL 2013, c. 358, §3 (AMD).]

B. Stock Big Wadleigh Pond in T.8, R.15, W.E.L.S. with native fish species. If sufficient brook trout from Big Wadleigh Pond are not available, brook trout from Wadleigh Stream in T.8, R.15, W.E.L.S. and T.7, R.15, W.E.L.S. or Poland Pond in T.7, R.15 W.E.L.S. may be used for restocking. If arctic charr from Big Wadleigh Pond are not available, arctic charr from an endemic arctic charr water in the State may be used for restocking. [PL 2013, c. 538, §37 (AMD).]  
[PL 2013, c. 538, §37 (AMD).]

**7. Use of live fish as bait exceptions.** Notwithstanding the fishing restrictions set forth in subsection 5, a person may fish using live fish for bait in the following waters:

A. Millimagassett Lake, in T.7, R.8 W.E.L.S.; [PL 2013, c. 538, §38 (NEW).]

B. Millinocket Lake and Little Millinocket Lake, in T.7, R.9 W.E.L.S., T.8, R.9 W.E.L.S. and T.7, R.10 W.E.L.S.; and [PL 2013, c. 538, §38 (NEW).]

C. Webster Lake, in T.6, R.10 W.E.L.S. and T.6, R.11 W.E.L.S. [PL 2013, c. 538, §38 (NEW).]  
[PL 2013, c. 538, §38 (NEW).]

**8. Report required.** The commissioner shall report by January 15th annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters regarding any rule-making actions taken to add or to remove waters from the list of state heritage fish waters.  
[PL 2013, c. 538, §38 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 180, §2 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 21, §2 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 214, §7 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 358, §3 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 538, §§35-38 (AMD).

#### **§12462. Waters containing state heritage fish that have not been stocked since 1988**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 358, §4 (NEW). PL 2013, c. 538, §39 (RP).

### SUBCHAPTER 2

#### LICENSE AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORIZATIONS

##### **§12501. General fishing license**

**1. License required.** Except as otherwise permitted pursuant to this Part, a person may not fish for, transport or possess fish without a valid license issued under this section.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Eligibility.** The commissioner may issue the following licenses to the following persons:

A. A resident fishing license to a resident 16 years of age or older; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. A nonresident fishing license to a nonresident 16 years of age or older. [PL 2013, c. 380, §1 (AMD); PL 2013, c. 380, §5 (AFF).]

[PL 2013, c. 380, §1 (AMD); PL 2013, c. 380, §5 (AFF).]

**3. Agent's fee.** Clerks or other agents appointed by the commissioner to issue licenses shall charge a fee of \$2 for each license issued. The commissioner shall charge a fee of \$1 for each fishing license issued by department employees.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**4. Exchange of licenses.** A license issued under this section may not be exchanged for another license except as provided in this subsection. Temporary licenses may be exchanged for annual licenses as follows.

A. A resident who possesses a one-day or 3-day fishing license may exchange it in the municipality in which that person resides for an annual resident fishing license or a resident combination hunting and fishing license upon the payment to the clerk or issuing agent of \$2 and the difference between the fee for the one-day or 3-day license and the fee for the annual license. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. A nonresident who possesses a 15-day nonresident fishing license may exchange it for an annual nonresident license upon the payment of the difference between the fee for the 15-day license and the fee for the annual license and \$2 to the clerk or issuing agent. [PL 2011, c. 253, §28 (AMD).]  
[PL 2011, c. 253, §28 (AMD).]

**5. Nonresident junior fishing license expiration.**  
[PL 2021, c. 184, §8 (RP).]

**6. Schedule of fees.** The fees for fishing licenses are as follows.

A. A resident fishing license is \$30. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

B. A resident combination hunting and fishing license is \$48. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

C. A resident combination archery hunting and fishing license is \$48. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

D. [PL 2013, c. 538, §41 (RPR); MRSA T. 12 §12501, sub-§6, ¶D (RP).]

E. A 3-day fishing license for a resident or nonresident, valid for the 72-hour period specified on the license, is \$30. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

F. A nonresident 7-day fishing license, valid for 7 days from date indicated on license, is \$62. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

G. A nonresident 15-day fishing license, valid for 15 days from date indicated on license, is \$66. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

H. A nonresident season fishing license for persons 16 years of age or older is \$83. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

I. [PL 2017, c. 427, §18 (RP); PL 2017, c. 427, §19 (AFF).]

J. A one-day fishing license for a resident or nonresident, valid for the 24-hour period indicated on license, is \$18. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]  
[PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).]

**7. Reciprocity with New Hampshire.** As long as the State of New Hampshire has similar laws, a fishing license issued to any person by either this State or New Hampshire meets all requirements of the law for a fishing license with respect to fishing in any lake or pond that lies partly in both of the states of Maine and New Hampshire.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §247 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B247 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III24 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 213, Pt. OO, §11 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 253, §28 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 380, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 380, §5 (AFF). PL 2013, c. 408, §§19, 20 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 538, §§40, 41 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 427, §18 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 427, §19 (AFF). PL 2021, c. 184, §8 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 228, §§11, 12 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. NNN, §6 (AMD).

#### **§12502. Youth camp fishing license**

**(REPEALED)**

#### **SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B248 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 211, Pt. B, §7 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §34 (RP).

#### **§12503. Permitted fishing without license**

**1. Resident and nonresident under 16.** A resident and nonresident under 16 years of age may fish without a license.

[PL 2013, c. 380, §4 (AMD); PL 2013, c. 380, §5 (AFF).]

**2. Land legally possessed by resident; domicile; 10 or more contiguous acres in size.** Notwithstanding section 12501, subsection 1 and subject to all other applicable laws and rules, any resident and any member of the resident's immediate family, as long as the angler's license to fish is not under suspension or revocation, may fish without a license in open inland waters from land:

A. To which they are legally entitled to possession; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. On which they are actually domiciled; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. [PL 2025, c. 126, §6 (RP).]

D. That is 10 or more contiguous acres in size. [PL 2025, c. 126, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 126, §6 (AMD).]

**3. Free fishing days; limitations.** The following 2 free fishing periods are established. No more than 2 free fishing periods may be established under this subsection.

A. Except when Memorial Day falls on a Friday, the Saturday and the Sunday immediately following Memorial Day are designated "Family Fishing Days." If Memorial Day falls on a Friday, the Saturday and the Sunday subsequent to Memorial Day weekend are designated "Family Fishing Days." The days designated "Family Fishing Days" are free fishing days. [PL 2003, c. 662, §2 (NEW).]

B. The Saturday and the Sunday immediately preceding Presidents' Day are free fishing days. [PL 2003, c. 662, §2 (NEW).]

Notwithstanding section 12501, it is lawful during a free fishing day established under this subsection for a person to fish without a license in inland waters, except that this subsection does not apply to a person whose license to fish is under suspension or revocation. All other provisions of this Part relating to fishing apply during a free fishing day.

[RR 2003, c. 2, §21 (COR).]

**4. Groups of students.** The commissioner may permit student or youth groups to fish without licenses for periods of not more than 3 days as long as the fishing activity is conducted as part of an educational program and is under the direct supervision of a teacher or instructor.



A. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (RP); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A permit holder:

- (1) May not allow fishing to go on for more than 3 days;
- (2) May not allow any fishing activity that is not conducted as part of an educational program; and
- (3) Shall provide direct supervision. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. The following penalties apply to violations of this subsection.

- (1) A permit holder who violates paragraph B commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.
- (2) A person who violates paragraph B after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

Each day a person violates paragraph B is a separate offense. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2011, c. 533, §5 (AMD).]

**5. Patients at Veterans Administration Hospital.** The commissioner may permit inpatients at the Veterans Administration Hospital at Togus to fish without a license in the inland waters within a 25-mile radius of Togus. Patients not under the direct supervision of hospital staff or volunteer supervisors shall have in their possession while fishing a valid pass issued by the Veterans Administration Hospital.

A. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (RP); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. An inpatient at the Veterans Administration Hospital at Togus permitted under this subsection:

- (1) May not fish beyond a 25-mile radius of Togus; and
- (2) Shall have supervision while fishing or have in that inpatient's possession a valid pass issued by the hospital. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. The following penalties apply to violations of this subsection.

- (1) A person who violates paragraph B commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.
- (2) A person who violates paragraph B after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

Each day a person violates paragraph B is a separate offense. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §249 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**6. Fishing during event sanctioned by department.** A person who does not hold a fishing license may assist a child or a person who is disabled who is a participant in a fishing event sanctioned by the department.

[PL 2021, c. 348, §16 (AMD).]

## SECTION HISTORY

RR 2003, c. 2, §21 (COR). PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B249 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 662, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 533, §5 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 380, §4 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 380, §5 (AFF). PL 2015, c. 301, §35 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 348, §16 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. A, §23 (COR). PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §31 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 126, §6 (AMD).

### §12504. Fishing derby permits

**1. Permit required.** Except as provided in sections 12504-A and 12505, a person may not conduct a fishing derby without a valid permit issued under this section.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

**2. Application.** A person wishing to conduct a fishing derby shall first make application for and obtain a permit from the commissioner. A completed application for a permit must include the proposed rules, targeted fish species, requested dates, places, times and prize structure for the derby.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

**2-A. Conditions; restrictions.** The commissioner may place conditions and restrictions on a derby permit.

A. The commissioner may revoke a derby permit issued to or refuse to issue a permit to a club or group that violates a condition or restriction placed on a derby permit or disallow the participation of an individual who violates a condition or restriction placed on a derby permit. [PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (NEW).]

B. A derby permit does not allow a participant to keep fish alive for entry into the derby. A fish caught as part of the derby, if it is to be retained solely for derby purposes, must be killed at once and becomes part of the participant's daily bag limit. [PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (NEW).]

**3. Rules.** The commissioner shall adopt all necessary rules relative to permits to ensure that derbies are conducted only at such times and places and in such a manner as are consistent with the fisheries management objectives of the department. Such rules must include:

A. Specifying the number of derbies that may be conducted in a given body of water and the dates within which they may be conducted. These rules must be reviewed periodically; and [PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

B. Fixing the maximum total value of prizes that may be awarded at each derby, except that for 2 derbies, one held on Sebago Lake in Cumberland County and the Long Lake Ice Fishing Derby held in northern Aroostook County, the maximum total value of prizes at each derby may not exceed \$100,000. These derbies must be conducted in such a manner as to be consistent with the department's fisheries management objectives. [PL 2025, c. 204, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2025, c. 204, §1 (AMD).]

**3-A. Violation of rules, conditions or restrictions; penalty.** Except as provided in section 12602, the following penalties apply to violations of rules, conditions or restrictions adopted under this section.

A. A person who violates a rule adopted under subsection 3 or a condition or restriction placed on a derby permit under subsection 2-A commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

B. A person who violates a rule adopted under subsection 3 or a condition or restriction placed on a derby permit under subsection 2-A after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more

civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]  
[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

**4. Issuance.** The commissioner, following a determination that an applicant has complied with all rules adopted pursuant to this section, may issue a permit to the applicant authorizing the conduct of the derby. Applicants who have conducted derbies in the requested body of water in the past that have conformed with all rules, conditions and restrictions must be given preference in the issuance of permits.  
[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

**5. Fee.** The fee for a permit to conduct a fishing derby is \$24.  
[PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B250 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 96, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 495, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 358, §5 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 204, §1 (AMD).

#### §12504-A. Fishing derby permits for educational institutions

**1. Permit required.** A person may not conduct a fishing derby held by an educational institution that awards prizes in excess of \$10,000 for a single fishing derby without a permit issued under this section. For purposes of this section, "educational institution" means an accredited postsecondary educational institution incorporated, chartered or established under the laws of the State.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.  
[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

**2. Application.** An educational institution seeking approval to conduct a fishing derby pursuant to this section must submit an application to the commissioner in a manner and form to be designated by the commissioner. The application must include the educational institution's derby rules, any amendments or changes to the rules and a schedule of the dates, places and times of the proposed derby. The department shall accept applications after January 1st annually for derbies to be held during that year and process those applications in the order of receipt.  
[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

**3. Restrictions and requirements.** The following restrictions and requirements apply to permits issued under this section.

A. Rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to section 12504 are applicable to permits issued under this section, except rules limiting the cash value of prizes or concerning an ice fishing derby.  
[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

B. A fishing derby may be conducted only in bodies of water free of ice. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

C. A person may not participate as an angler in a fishing derby unless that person is affiliated with the sponsoring educational institution, either as a student, a parent or sibling of a student, an alumnus or a staff member of the educational institution. A student may invite a single guest to participate in a derby held under this section. For purposes of this paragraph, "student" includes a current or incoming student. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

D. At least 80% of the prizes awarded at a fishing derby must be in the form of scholarships. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

E. An angler participating in a fishing derby may not use a motorboat. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

F. A fishing derby may not target cold-water species. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

G. A fishing derby must be an event that is only catch and release or catch, measure and release. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

H. An angler participating in a fishing derby may not have more than one rod per person or more than 2 rods per boat. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

I. An angler participating in a fishing derby may use artificial lures only. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

**4. Rules.** The commissioner may adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

**5. Penalty.** Except as provided in section 12602, the following penalties apply to violations of subsection 3 or rules adopted under subsection 4.

A. A person who violates subsection 3 or a rule adopted pursuant to subsection 4 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates subsection 3 or a rule adopted under subsection 4 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 96, §2 (NEW).

### §12505. Bass tournament permit

**1. Permit required.** A person may not conduct a bass tournament in waters free of ice without a permit issued under this section.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Application.** A bass club seeking approval to conduct a bass tournament pursuant to this section may make application to the commissioner in a manner and form to be designated by the commissioner. The application must include the club's tournament rules, any amendments or changes to the rules and a schedule of the dates, places and times of the proposed tournament.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2-A. Conditions; restrictions.** The commissioner may place conditions and restrictions on a bass tournament permit.

A. The commissioner may revoke a bass tournament permit issued to or refuse to issue a permit to a bass club that violates a condition or restriction placed on a bass tournament permit or disallow the participation of an individual who violates a condition or restriction placed on a bass tournament permit. [PL 2013, c. 358, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 358, §6 (NEW).]

**3. Issuance; notification to municipality.** The commissioner, following a determination that a bass club has complied with all rules adopted pursuant to this section, may issue a permit to the applicant club authorizing the club to conduct the tournament during open season for black bass in waters free of ice. At least 10 days prior to issuing the permit, the commissioner shall notify any affected municipality of the receipt of an application for a multi-day bass tournament.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**4. Fee.** The fee for a bass tournament permit is:

A. For weigh-in tournaments, \$52 per day; and [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §25 (AMD).]

B. For catch-and-release tournaments, \$12 per day. [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §25 (AMD).]  
[PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §25 (AMD).]

**5. Rules.** The commissioner shall adopt all rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, including, but not limited to:

A. Requiring that precautions be taken so that, if possible, all fish caught may be retained alive and, following the close of the tournament, be released into the body from which they were taken; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. Fixing the maximum total value of prizes that may be awarded at each tournament; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. Limiting the length of a tournament to 3 days. A tournament lasting more than one day must be a regional or multistate tournament sanctioned by the applicant bass club. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §251 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**6. Violation of rules, conditions or restrictions; penalty.** Except as provided in section 12602, the following penalties apply to violations of rules adopted under subsection 5 and violations of conditions or restrictions placed on a bass tournament permit pursuant to subsection 2-A.

A. A person who violates a rule adopted under subsection 5 or a condition or restriction placed on a bass tournament permit pursuant to subsection 2-A commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2013, c. 358, §7 (AMD).]

B. A person who violates a rule adopted under subsection 5 or a condition or restriction placed on a bass tournament permit pursuant to subsection 2-A after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2013, c. 358, §7 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 358, §7 (AMD).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B251,252 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III25 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 358, §§6, 7 (AMD).

## **§12506. Eel, sucker, lamprey and yellow perch harvesting method permit; elver prohibition; limitations on river herring harvesting**

**1. Permit required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part and except as provided in subsection 5-A, a person may not fish for or possess the following fish using the harvesting methods listed in subsection 2 without a valid permit issued under this section:

- A. [PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (RP); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]
- B. Eels; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- C. Suckers; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- D. Lampreys; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- E. Yellow perch. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (AMD); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may adopt rules providing for the issuance of permits to fish for or possess the following fish using the following harvesting methods in the inland waters of the State, provided the permits do not interfere with any rights granted under section 6131:

- A. Eels using eel pots or weirs; [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- B. Suckers and yellow perch using trap nets, dip nets or spears; [PL 2013, c. 148, §1 (AMD).]
- C. Lampreys by hand or using hand-held dip nets; and [PL 2013, c. 148, §1 (AMD).]
- D. [PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (RP); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]
- E. Yellow perch using seines. [PL 2013, c. 148, §2 (NEW).]

The commissioner may place conditions on the use of gear allowed under this subsection and may prohibit or restrict the use of any gear used to concentrate species for harvest under this subsection.

Each day a person violates a condition or restriction placed on the use of gear allowed under this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2013, c. 148, §§1, 2 (AMD).]

**3. Fees; transfer of permit.** The minimum fee for an individual permit for suckers, lampreys and yellow perch is \$44. The holder of an individual permit for suckers, lampreys or yellow perch may purchase a crew permit for suckers, lampreys and yellow perch for \$102, authorizing up to 3 persons to engage in the permitted activity. The annual fee for an eel pot or weir permit is \$102. An eel pot or eel weir permit is not transferable.

[PL 2015, c. 298, §8 (AMD).]

**4. Five-year limited entry; eel weirs.** A person is ineligible to receive an eel weir permit unless that person possessed a valid eel weir permit for calendar year 1995. The department shall adopt routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A regarding the issuance of eel weir permits. The number of weirs and the number of square miles of watersheds in this State fished by eel weirs may be no more than those permitted in calendar year 1995.

[PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (AMD); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]

**5. Exception to permit requirement.**

[PL 2005, c. 683, Pt. A, §17 (RP).]

**5-A. Limitations on river herring harvesting.** Except as provided in this subsection a person may not harvest river herring.

- A. A person may fish for river herring by use of a dip net or single hook and line for consumption by that person or members of that person's family, as long as the person takes or possesses no more than 25 fish in any day and as long as the river herring are taken downstream from any location where a municipality or other person has been granted exclusive rights under section 6131; and [PL 2017, c. 150, §4 (AMD).]

B. A person may fish for or possess river herring from inland waters if that person has been granted fishing rights under section 6131. [PL 2017, c. 150, §4 (AMD).]

C. [PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (RP); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]

A person that violates this subsection commits a Class E crime.  
[PL 2017, c. 150, §4 (AMD).]

**5-B. Harvesting suckers for bait without a permit.** Notwithstanding subsection 1, a person may take suckers for use as bait for fishing in inland waters as provided in section 12551-A without a permit under subsection 2.

[PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (NEW); PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF).]

**6. Eels and elvers prohibitions.** The following prohibitions apply to the harvesting of eels and elvers in inland waters.

A. A person may not fish for or take elvers from inland waters. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person other than the owner of a weir used to fish for or take eels in inland waters may not tend that weir while the weir is immersed unless that person has in the person's possession written permission from the owner to tend the weir or is in the presence of the owner and has the owner's permission to tend the weir. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

A person who violates this subsection commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**7. Other harvesting methods for suckers.** Notwithstanding subsection 1, a person licensed or otherwise entitled to fish in Maine waters may take suckers for that person's use in all rivers, brooks and streams that are open to fishing between April 1st and June 30th of each calendar year by the use of a hand spear, by archery equipment or by snagging.

A. A person may not use archery equipment to harvest suckers unless the arrow or bolt used has a barbed or pronged point and the arrow or bolt is attached to the archery equipment with a line. [PL 2023, c. 239, §34 (AMD).]

B. The following penalties apply to violations of paragraph A.

(1) A person who violates paragraph A commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.

(2) A person who violates paragraph A after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §253 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2023, c. 239, §34 (AMD).]

**8. Reports required.** A person issued a permit under this section shall submit a completed report on forms provided by the department with the following information: water name and location, including the town and county of waters fished; date fished; total catch; gear type and quantity; number of crew; amount of time the gear is set; total gear in the water; water depth; total time the boat is on the water; species and pounds harvested; license number of the dealer the catch was sold to or the disposition of the catch; town where the catch was brought to shore; boat registration number; vessel name; and the harvester's name, telephone number and permit number. A holder of an eel permit must submit the report by the date specified on the permit. A holder of a sucker, lamprey or yellow perch permit must submit the report by December 31st of each year. All data submitted as part of the report are for scientific purposes only and are confidential and not part of a public record within the meaning

of Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1, except that the commissioner may disclose data collected under this subsection if released in a form that is statistical or general in nature.

If a person issued a permit under this section fails to provide information required under this section, the commissioner may refuse to renew or may revoke that person's permit. If a person becomes ineligible for a permit as a result of a violation of this section, that person may request a hearing in accordance with section 10905.

[PL 2015, c. 494, Pt. A, §9 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B253 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III26 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 397, §E8 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 683, §§A16-18 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 463, §6 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 463, §9 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 253, §29 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 148, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 298, §8 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 494, Pt. A, §9 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 150, §4 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 239, §34 (AMD).

#### §12507. License to cultivate or sell commercially grown and imported fish

**1. License required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part, a person may not cultivate or sell fish that have been commercially grown within the State or imported from outside the State without a valid license issued under this section.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may issue a license to cultivate and sell fish that have been either commercially grown within the State or imported from without the State.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Application.** This section does not apply to and the commissioner may not issue permits governing any aspect of either the commercial aquaculture of Atlantic salmon when intended for use in commercial aquaculture in coastal waters or the Atlantic salmon restoration program.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**4. Fee.** The fee for a license to sell commercially grown or imported fish is \$27 annually.

[PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §27 (AMD).]

**5. Requirements.** A licensee shall:

A. Keep a license issued under subsection 2 constantly and publicly posted in the office or place of business of the licensee; [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Be licensed for each wholesale and retail outlet from which a person sells fish; [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. Identify in a manner approved by the commissioner the name and address of the source of all fish offered for sale or sold under this section; and [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

D. Keep invoices of fish sold and purchased under this section so that the invoices are available at all times for inspection by the commissioner or the commissioner's duly authorized agent. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]



**6. Penalties.** The following penalties apply to violations of subsection 5.

A. A person who violates subsection 5 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates subsection 5 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

Each day a person violates subsection 5 is a separate violation.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §254 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B254 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III27 (AMD).

**§12508. License to operate private fee pond**

**1. License required.** A person who owns a private pond may not charge others for the opportunity to fish in that private pond unless the owner of that pond possesses a valid private fee pond license issued by the commissioner under this section.

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a civil violation.

[PL 2023, c. 431, §15 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).]

**2. Licensed activities.** A private fee pond license authorizes the owner of a private pond to charge others for the opportunity to fish in that private pond and authorizes persons who fish in that pond to fish for, take, possess and transport fish harvested from that pond, notwithstanding other provisions of the law or rules of the department pertaining to manner, time, season, bag limit, length limit or fishing license requirements.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Fee.** The fee for a private fee pond license is \$27.

[PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §28 (AMD).]

**4. Requirements.** Except as otherwise authorized under this Part, a person shall:

A. Kill all fish taken from a private fee pond operated pursuant to this section prior to their transportation from the site; and [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §255 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Tag all fish transported from the site as provided by rules adopted by the commissioner. Rules providing for tagging adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §255 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

Each day a person violates this subsection that person commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §255 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B255 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III28 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 431, §15 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).

**§12509. Permit to import live freshwater fish or eggs**

**1. Permit required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part, a person may not introduce, import or transport any live fish or fish eggs into the State or receive or have in that person's possession fish or fish eggs so introduced, imported or transported without a valid permit issued under this section.

A person who violates this subsection commits a Class E crime, except that, notwithstanding Title 17-A, section 1704, the fine may not be less than \$1,000 nor more than \$10,000.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §5 (AMD).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may grant permits to introduce, import or transport any live fish or fish eggs into the State or to receive or have in possession fish or fish eggs so introduced, imported or transported if the commissioner determines that the species does not pose an unreasonable risk to any species of fish or other organism after evaluating fish health, habitat and population management issues. The commissioner may not adopt rules or issue permits governing any aspect of either the commercial aquaculture of Atlantic salmon when intended for use in commercial aquaculture in coastal waters, or in land-based aquaculture facilities, or the Atlantic salmon restoration program.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §6 (AMD).]

**3. Application.** Importers shall, when requesting a permit issued pursuant to subsection 2, provide the commissioner with the following information:

A. The number and species to be imported; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. The name and address of the source; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. A statement from a fish health inspector certified by the American Fisheries Society, a fish pathologist certified by the American Fisheries Society or a licensed accredited veterinarian, certifying that the fish or fish eggs are from sources that show no evidence of viral hemorrhagic septicemia, infectious pancreatic necrosis, infectious hematopoietic necrosis, Myxosoma cerebralis or other diseases that may threaten fish stocks within the State; and [PL 2025, c. 343, §7 (AMD).]

D. Other professionally recognized tests or analyses, including evaluation of fish health, habitat or population management issues that the commissioner may require by rule to ensure that the species will not pose an unreasonable risk to any species of fish or other organism. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2025, c. 343, §7 (AMD).]

**4. Rules.** The commissioner may adopt rules allowing the possession and importation of certain species of tropical fish and goldfish without a permit, for aquarium purposes only, if the commissioner determines that the species does not pose an unreasonable risk to any species of fish or other organism after evaluating fish health, habitat and population management issues. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B256 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §20 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 343, §§5-7 (AMD).

### §12510. Permit to stock inland waters

**1. Permit required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part, a person may not introduce fish or fish eggs of any kind into any inland waters without a valid permit issued under this section.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).]

**1-A. Penalty.** A person who violates subsection 1 commits a Class E crime, except that, notwithstanding Title 17-A, section 1704, the fine may not be less than \$1,000 or more than \$10,000. [PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (NEW).]

**1-B. Restitution.** In the case of a person who violates subsection 1, the court shall:

A. Order that person to pay the department an amount equal to the cost of labor, equipment, chemicals and all other related expenses directly associated with mitigating or reclaiming waters affected as a result of the violation; and [PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (NEW).]

B. Direct that person to provide the commissioner, upon making full payment as ordered by the court under paragraph A, proof of that payment. [PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (NEW).]  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (NEW).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may issue a written permit allowing a person to introduce fish or fish eggs of any kind into any inland waters by means of live fish or otherwise.  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).]

**3. Limited permit.** The commissioner may issue a written limited permit to a local government under this subsection. A limited permit:

A. Allows the local government to introduce fish or fish eggs only into a great pond that:

- (1) Is within the jurisdiction of the local government; and
- (2) Was previously stocked by the department and in which stocking was suspended prior to January 1, 2019 and has not been resumed by the department due to inadequate public access; [PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).]

B. Allows the introduction of only:

- (1) The same species of fish that was stocked at the time the department suspended stocking; and
- (2) Fish or fish eggs obtained by the local government at its own expense from an in-state commercial facility that meets testing and health guidelines approved by the department; and [PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).]

C. May be issued only if the local government identifies public access to the great pond that:

- (1) Is at least suitable for the hand carrying of boats to the water;
- (2) Includes a parking area; and
- (3) Has been marked with signage adequate to ensure public awareness of the public access. [PL 2019, c. 263, §1 (NEW).]

For purposes of this subsection, "local government" means a municipality or, in the unorganized territory, a county.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §21 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 263, §1 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 343, §8 (AMD).

### §12511. Permit to introduce fish or fish eggs into private pond

**1. Permit required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part, a person may not introduce fish or fish eggs into a private pond without a valid permit issued under this section.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (AMD).]

**1-A. Penalty.** A person who violates subsection 1 commits a Class E crime, except that, notwithstanding Title 17-A, section 1704, the fine may not be less than \$1,000 or more than \$10,000. [PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (NEW).]

**1-B. Restitution.** In the case of a person who violates subsection 1, the court shall:

A. Order that person to pay the department an amount equal to the cost of labor, equipment, chemicals and all other related expenses directly associated with mitigating or reclaiming waters affected as a result of the violation; and [PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (NEW).]

B. Direct that person to provide the commissioner, upon making full payment as ordered by the court under paragraph A, proof of that payment. [PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (NEW).]  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (NEW).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may issue a written permit to introduce fish or fish eggs into a private pond.  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B257 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §22 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 343, §9 (AMD).

#### §12512. Permit to transport live fish

**1. Permit required.** Except as otherwise authorized pursuant to this Part, a person may not transport within the limits of the State live fish taken in the State, other than baitfish, Atlantic salmon used in commercial aquaculture and smelts, without a valid permit issued under this section. A person who violates this subsection commits a Class E crime, except that, notwithstanding Title 17-A, section 1704, the fine may not be less than \$1,000 nor more than \$10,000.  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §10 (AMD).]

**2. Issuance.** The commissioner may issue a permit to a person permitting that person to transport within the limits of the State fish taken in the State.  
[PL 2025, c. 343, §10 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B257 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §23 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 343, §10 (AMD).

#### §12513. Permit to take baitfish

Whenever inland waters are closed to fishing, the commissioner may issue permits to take baitfish for bait purposes from those waters. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

### SUBCHAPTER 3

#### LIVE BAIT; DEALING, TRAPPING AND POSSESSION

**§12551. Dealing in live smelts and baitfish**  
**(REPEALED)**

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B258 (RP). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12551-A. Dealing in live smelts and baitfish**

**1. Definition.** For purposes of this section, "business facility" means a fixed place of business and does not include a motor vehicle or trailer. Live smelts or baitfish that are held in or on a motor vehicle or trailer by a person licensed under this section are considered in transport even if the motor vehicle or trailer may be temporarily placed at a specific location by the licensee, or the licensee's designee, for the purpose of selling live smelts or baitfish to anglers.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. License required.** A person may not:

A. Possess for resale, sell or offer to sell live smelts, *Osmerus mordax*, or live baitfish, as defined in section 10001, subsection 6, without an appropriate and valid license issued under subsection 3; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Engage in taking or assist in taking live baitfish for resale from inland waters without a valid baitfish wholesaler's license; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. Engage in taking or assist in taking live smelts for resale from inland waters without a smelt wholesaler's license; [PL 2017, c. 164, §19 (AMD).]

D. Sell live smelts or baitfish from more than one facility without an appropriate and valid license for each facility; or [PL 2017, c. 164, §19 (AMD).]

E. When licensed under this section, receive, possess for resale, sell or offer to sell gift baitfish or gift smelts. [PL 2021, c. 184, §9 (AMD).]

Each day a person violates this subsection, that person commits a Class E crime for which a minimum fine of \$50 and an amount equal to twice the applicable license fee must be imposed.

[PL 2021, c. 184, §9 (AMD).]

**2-A. License required.**

[PL 2017, c. 164, §21 (RP).]

**3. Issuance; eligibility.** The commissioner may issue to a resident or nonresident upon payment of the appropriate fee:

A. A live bait retailer's license that permits a person to possess for resale, sell or offer to sell live smelts and baitfish; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A baitfish wholesaler's license that permits a person to take and possess for resale, sell or offer to sell live baitfish; and [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. A smelt wholesaler's license that permits a person to take and possess for resale, sell or offer to sell live smelts. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]  
[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**4. Schedule of fees.** The fees for licenses under this section are:

A. For a live bait retailer's license, \$16; [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §29 (AMD).]

B. For a baitfish wholesaler's license, \$26; and [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §29 (AMD).]

C. For a smelt wholesaler's license, \$71. [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §29 (AMD).]

[PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §29 (AMD).]

**5. Live bait retailer's license authorizations and restrictions.** The provisions of this subsection apply to the selling of live smelts and baitfish under a live bait retailer's license.

A. The holder of a live bait retailer's license may:

- (1) Sell live baitfish or smelts acquired from a person licensed under this section to deal in live baitfish or smelts;
- (2) Designate others to assist in selling live smelts and baitfish at the license holder's business facility;
- (3) Transport live smelts and baitfish or designate another to transport live smelts and baitfish on the license holder's behalf; and
- (4) Possess more than the daily bag limit of smelts, provided that the smelts were acquired from a person licensed under this section to deal in live smelts. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. The holder of a live bait retailer's license:

- (1) May not take or possess for the purposes of retail sale live baitfish or smelts from the inland waters of the State or private ponds;
- (2) Shall present a receipted invoice, bill of lading, bill of sale or other satisfactory evidence of the lawful possession of live baitfish or smelts for retail sale to any agent of the commissioner upon request. A person who violates this subparagraph commits a civil violation; or
- (3) May not possess at that person's place of business any species of fish that may not legally be sold as bait.

Except for a violation of subparagraph (2), each day a person violates this paragraph that person commits a Class E crime for which the sentencing alternative may include only the penalties provided in Title 17-A, section 1704, subsection 5 and Title 17-A, section 1705, subsection 5. [PL 2023, c. 431, §§16, 17 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).]

[PL 2023, c. 431, §§16, 17 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).]

**6. Baitfish wholesaler's license authorizations and restrictions.** The provisions of this subsection apply to the taking and selling of baitfish under the baitfish wholesaler's license.

A. The holder of a baitfish wholesaler's license may:

- (1) Take for the purpose of sale live baitfish from the inland waters of the State or from private ponds;
- (2) Use particles of food for the purpose of luring baitfish to a baitfish trap, a dip net, a drop net, a lift net or a bag net;
- (3) Designate others to assist the holder in selling live baitfish at the holder's business facility; and
- (4) Transport live baitfish or designate another to transport live baitfish on the license holder's behalf. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. The holder of a baitfish wholesaler's license may not:

- (1) When engaged in taking, or assisting in taking, live baitfish for resale from inland waters, fail to exhibit a baitfish wholesaler's license to any agent of the commissioner upon request. A person who violates this subparagraph commits a Class E crime for which the sentencing alternative may include only the penalties provided in Title 17-A, section 1704, subsection 5 and Title 17-A, section 1705, subsection 5;

- (2) Take baitfish other than by use of a seine as defined in section 10001, subsection 55; a baitfish trap as defined in section 10001, subsection 7; a dip net, a drop net, a lift net or a bag net; or by hook and line;
- (3) Attempt to take from the inland waters live baitfish for resale using drop nets through the ice unless the license holder marks all holes made in the ice by that license holder for that purpose. The holes must be marked either by evergreen boughs placed around the hole or by suspending at least one strand of fluorescent biodegradable tape at least 3 feet above the ice around the entire perimeter of the hole so that the tape is visible from all sides;
- (4) Take eels; or
- (6) Possess at that person's place of business any species of fish that may not legally be sold as bait.

Except for a violation of subparagraph (1), each day a person violates this paragraph that person commits a Class E crime for which the sentencing alternative may include only the penalties provided in Title 17-A, section 1704, subsection 5 and Title 17-A, section 1705, subsection 5. [PL 2025, c. 248, §§1-3 (AMD).]

[PL 2025, c. 248, §§1-3 (AMD).]

**7. Smelt wholesaler's license authorizations and restrictions.** The provisions of this subsection apply to the taking and selling of live smelts under the smelt wholesaler's license.

A. The holder of a smelt wholesale dealer's license may:

- (1) Take live smelts for resale from inland waters or private ponds. The taking of live smelts from inland waters must be in accordance with general rules adopted by the commissioner in regard to the taking of smelts. Except as provided in paragraph B, the holder of a smelt wholesaler's license shall comply with the same daily bag limit and the same tackle restrictions that apply to all other anglers and is subject to the same penalties for violations of those limits and restrictions. This subparagraph does not apply to a holder of a fish cultivator license as provided under section 12507;
- (2) Beginning on the date the body of water on which the smelts are taken is open to ice fishing and ending March 31st annually, use a drop net, lift net or hook and line to take up to 8 quarts of smelts through human-made openings in the ice while fishing on the ice from specific inland waters designated by the commissioner. A dip net may be used in conjunction with the above methods to assist with the handling and transporting of smelts. A licensee may keep the daily bag limit alive. The daily bag limit established under this subparagraph is for a 24-hour period, beginning at noon on a given day and ending at 11:59 a.m. the following day;
- (2-A) In waters naturally free of ice, take smelts from noon to 2:00 a.m. by the use of a dip net in the usual and ordinary way. The commissioner may establish the daily bag limit by rule and a licensee may keep the daily bag limit of smelts alive. The daily bag limit established under this subparagraph is for a 24-hour period, beginning at noon on a given day and ending at 11:59 a.m. the following day. The commissioner may shorten the noon to 2:00 a.m. smelt fishing time frame by rule for enforcement or conservation purposes;
- (3) Use artificial light for the purpose of luring smelts to a drop net or a lift net;
- (4) Transport or possess at the holder's business facility more than the daily bag limit of smelts provided that the smelts were taken by the license holder in accordance with this section or acquired from a person licensed under this section to deal in live smelts;
- (5) Designate others to assist in selling live smelts at the holder's business facility; and
- (6) Transport or designate others to transport on the license holder's behalf live smelts in accordance with this subsection. [RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §77 (COR).]

B. The holder of a smelt wholesale dealer's license may not:

- (1) When engaged in taking, or assisting in taking, live smelts for resale from inland waters, fail to exhibit the license to any agent of the commissioner upon request. A person who violates this subparagraph commits a Class E crime for which the sentencing alternative may include only the penalties provided in Title 17-A, section 1704, subsection 5 and Title 17-A, section 1705, subsection 5;
- (2) Take multiple bag limits from waters governed by general rules regulating the taking of smelts in order to attain the 8-quart limit of smelts described in paragraph A, subparagraph (2);
- (3) Use a seine to take smelts;
- (4) Transport or possess at the holder's business facility more than the daily bag limit of smelts at any time unless the smelts were acquired in accordance with paragraph A, subparagraph (4). If the smelts were purchased from another person, the license holder must present a receipted invoice, bill of lading or bill of sale to any agent of the commissioner upon request;
- (5) Transport from an inland water source to the licensee's place of business more than 8 quarts of live smelts;
- (6) Permit any person to transport live smelts on the license holder's behalf directly from an inland water source;
- (7) Attempt to take from the inland waters of the State live smelts for resale using drop nets through the ice unless the license holder marks all holes made in the ice by that license holder for that purpose. The holes must be marked either by evergreen boughs placed around the hole or by suspending at least one strand of fluorescent biodegradable tape at least 3 feet above the ice around the entire perimeter of the hole so that the tape is visible from all sides;
- (8) Take smelts unless the holder uses an operable commercially manufactured number 14 fish grader to sort smelts by size during the taking of smelts. The holder shall liberate immediately all undersized smelts alive into the waters from which they were taken. For the purpose of this subparagraph, a commercially manufactured number 14 grader is a grader having a minimum grate size of 14/64 inches and that allows smelts to pass through at least 2 sides and the bottom of the grader. The commissioner may adopt rules to amend the grate size restrictions under this subparagraph if the commissioner determines such rules are necessary for conservation or enforcement purposes;
- (9) Possess at that person's place of business any species of fish that may not legally be sold as bait;
- (10) Use particles of food or any other type of bait or lure except light to lure smelts to a drop net or a lift net; or
- (11) Use a dip net to take smelts unless that dip net meets the requirements under section 10001, subsection 12-A.

Except for a violation of subparagraph (1), each day a person violates this paragraph that person commits a Class E crime for which the sentencing alternative may include only the penalties provided in Title 17-A, section 1704, subsection 5 and Title 17-A, section 1705, subsection 5. [PL 2023, c. 431, §§20, 21 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).]

For purposes of this subsection, live smelts are considered in possession of the licensee once the smelts have been removed from the inland waters and placed in a container.

[PL 2023, c. 431, §§20, 21 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF).]



**8. Effect of revoked or suspended license.** A person whose license to deal in live smelts and baitfish has been revoked or suspended pursuant to section 10902 may not assist another dealer in selling or transporting live smelts and baitfish.

A person who violates this subsection commits a class E crime.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**9. Inspection of live smelts and baitfish.** A person licensed under this section who possesses live smelts or baitfish at a fixed place of business shall make those fish available for inspection by a warden or a department fisheries biologist during normal business hours. A person licensed under this section who possesses live smelts or baitfish at a location other than the licensee's fixed place of business shall make those fish available for inspection by a warden or a department fisheries biologist at any time, upon request.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §259 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**9-A. Record inspection.** Records retained as required in this section must be open for inspection by the commissioner or the commissioner's agent.

[PL 2011, c. 253, §30 (NEW).]

**10. Reports required.** A person licensed under this section must submit a report on forms provided by the department with the following information: name and location, including the town and county of waters fished; date fished; total catch; gear type; and number of nets used. The report must be submitted by May 31st of each year. A person who has not submitted this report may be prohibited from obtaining a license under this section. A person who is prohibited from obtaining a license under this section may submit an appeal to the commissioner.

All data submitted as part of the report are for scientific purposes only and are confidential and not a public record within the meaning of Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1, except that the commissioner may disclose data collected under this subsection if that data are released in a form that is statistical or general in nature.

[PL 2005, c. 237, §4 (NEW).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 655, §B259 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 12, §III29 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 237, §§3,4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 340, §16 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 253, §30 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 298, §9 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §36 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 164, §§19-21 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 184, §9 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §77 (COR). PL 2023, c. 431, §§16-21 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 431, §23 (AFF). PL 2025, c. 248, §§1-3 (AMD).

## §12552. Purchase of live smelts from unlicensed dealers

**1. Prohibition.** A person licensed to deal in live baitfish pursuant to section 12551-A may not purchase live smelts from a person who does not hold a current license to sell live smelts issued pursuant to section 12551-A, subsection 3, paragraph A or C.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §260 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates subsection 1 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §261 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates subsection 1 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §261 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

The commissioner, subject to the hearing provisions of section 10902, shall revoke for a period of at least one year from the date of adjudication any licenses issued under section 12551-A to a person adjudicated of a violation of subsection 1.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §261 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B260,261 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

### §12553. Selling, using or possessing baitfish

#### 1. Selling, using or possessing unlawful baitfish.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §262 (RP); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**1-A. Unlawfully selling, using or possessing baitfish.** Except as provided in this subsection and for baitfish as defined in section 10001, subsection 6, a person may not:

A. Sell or offer for sale fish as bait for the purpose of fishing; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §263 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Use or possess fish as bait for the purpose of fishing. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §263 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

Nothing in this Title prohibits the use of commercially prepared eggs from species that do not naturally occur in the State for bait. A person may take baitfish from all inland waters of the State during the period that those waters are open to fishing.

A person who violates this subsection commits a Class E crime. The court shall, in addition, impose a fine of \$20, none of which may be suspended, for each fish illegally possessed.

[PL 2015, c. 301, §37 (AMD).]

**2. Sale of bait in polystyrene foam containers.** A person who sells bait may not provide or sell the bait in containers that are composed in whole or in part of polystyrene foam plastic. This subsection does not apply to baitfish.

A. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 614, §6 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §6 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §6 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Failure to label baitfish traps, drop nets or baitfish holding boxes.** A person may not set or place within the inland waters of the State any baitfish trap, drop net or baitfish holding box without having the baitfish trap, drop net or baitfish holding box plainly labeled with that person's full name and address.

A. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §264 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §264 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §264 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §6 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B262-264 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2015, c. 301, §37 (AMD).

#### **§12554. Disturbing baitfish traps or baitfish holding boxes**

A person may not disturb or take any baitfish trap or baitfish holding box or any fish from any baitfish trap or baitfish holding box other than that person's own without the consent of the owner of the baitfish trap or baitfish holding box. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

#### **§12555. Checking baitfish traps**

**1. Checking baitfish traps.** While trapping for baitfish in the inland waters with the use of a baitfish trap as defined in section 10001, subsection 7 from April 2nd to October 31st, a person shall check the baitfish trap or cause the baitfish trap to be checked at least once in every 7 calendar days. While trapping for baitfish in the inland waters with the use of a baitfish trap from November 1st to April 1st, a person shall check the baitfish trap or cause the baitfish trap to be checked at least once in every 21 calendar days.

[PL 2025, c. 205, §1 (AMD).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates subsection 1 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §265 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates subsection 1 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §265 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §265 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B265 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2025, c. 205, §1 (AMD).

#### **§12556. Importing live bait**

A person may not import into this State any live fish, including smelts, that are commonly used for bait fishing in inland waters. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12557. Disposal of live baitfish or smelts**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not dispose of any live baitfish or smelts into inland waters of the State.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §11 (NEW).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates subsection 1 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2025, c. 343, §11 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates subsection 1 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2025, c. 343, §11 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 343, §11 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2025, c. 343, §11 (NEW).

**SUBCHAPTER 4****GENERAL FISHING PROVISIONS****§12601. Rule violations; open-water fishing or ice fishing**

**1. Civil violations.** Notwithstanding section 10650, a person who violates a rule regulating open-water fishing or ice fishing, except a rule implementing a statute the violation of which is a Class E crime, commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §266 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Crime.** A person who violates a rule regulating open-water fishing or ice fishing, except a rule implementing a statute the violation of which is a Class E crime, after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §266 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B266 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12602. Violation of number, amount, weight or size limits**

A person may not: [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**1. Fish in violation of certain rules.** Fish in violation of the number, amount, weight or size limits established by rules adopted by the commissioner;

[PL 2017, c. 150, §5 (AMD).]

**2. Possess fish in violation of certain rules.** Possess fish in violation of the number, amount, weight or size limits established by rules adopted by the commissioner;

[PL 2019, c. 224, §1 (AMD).]

**3. Alter fish from their natural state prior to measuring for bag limit.** When rules adopted by the commissioner limit the volume of fish that may be taken, alter those fish from or possess fish altered from their natural state prior to their being measured for compliance with the volume limit; or

[PL 2019, c. 224, §2 (AMD).]

**4. Violation of certain Department of Marine Resources rules; striped bass.** Fish for striped bass in inland waters or possess striped bass taken from inland waters in a number, amount or size that exceeds the number, amount or size limits for striped bass established by rules adopted by the Commissioner of Marine Resources under section 6171. Notwithstanding section 6002 or any provision of law to the contrary, for purposes of this subsection only, the number, amount and size limits for striped bass established by rules adopted by the Commissioner of Marine Resources under section 6171 apply to the inland waters of the State.

[PL 2019, c. 224, §3 (NEW).]

A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended, except that, in the case of smelt limits, the court shall impose a fine of \$20 for each quart over the limit, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2019, c. 325, §7 (AMD).]

A person who fishes for striped bass in or possesses striped bass taken from the coastal waters of the State in violation of rules adopted by the Commissioner of Marine Resources under section 6171 is subject to the provisions of section 6174. [PL 2019, c. 224, §4 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2017, c. 150, §5 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 224, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 325, §7 (AMD).

#### §12603. Failure to observe Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission rules and regulations

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not fish in any pond or in that portion of any river or stream subject to the authority of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission created by Title 30, Part 4 in violation of the rules or regulations of the commission.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates subsection 1 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §267 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates subsection 1 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §267 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §267 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B267 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### §12604. Closed season violation

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not fish for any fish during the closed season or possess any fish taken during the closed season on that fish.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12605. Fishing in waters closed to fishing****(REPEALED)****SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B268 (RP). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12606. Ice fishing; waters closed to fishing**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not ice fish in inland waters closed to ice fishing, except that person may fish for river herring and smelts in the manner provided under the laws regulating marine resources. [PL 2017, c. 150, §6 (AMD).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2017, c. 150, §6 (AMD).

**§12607. Unlawfully introducing department-raised fish or fish spawn**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not introduce fish or fish spawn raised by the department into a private pond, unless the department permits the introduction for fishing events held in conjunction with educational or special programs sanctioned by the department. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12608. Failure to label fish**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not keep the following species of fish at any sporting camp, hotel or public lodging place unless the name and address of the person who caught the fish is attached to the fish:

A. Black bass; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Salmon; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. Togue; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

D. Trout. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §269 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B269 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### **§12609. Purchase or sale of certain fish**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B270 (RP). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### **§12609-A. Purchase or sale of certain fish**

**1. Prohibition.** Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person may not directly or indirectly purchase or sell the following species of fish:

- A. Black bass; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- B. Landlocked salmon; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- C. Pickerel; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- D. Togue; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- E. Trout; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

F. White perch. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]  
[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Fish produced by commercial producers or imported.** A person may purchase or sell fish that have been lawfully produced by commercial producers within the State or that have been lawfully imported from without the State.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**3. Skins of fish preserved through taxidermy.** A person may purchase or sell the skins of fish that have been preserved for display through the art of taxidermy.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**4. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §271 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 655, §B271 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### **§12610. Unlawful importation or sale of certain fresh or frozen fish**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not import or offer for sale fresh or frozen any of the following fish:

- A. Salmon; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- B. Brook trout; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- C. Brown trout; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]
- D. Rainbow trout; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

E. Lake trout; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

F. Any member of the family salmonidae whose source is outside of the continental United States, Canada or Alaska or their adjacent waters. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §272 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B272 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### §12611. Illegal possession of live fish

Except as otherwise provided in this Part, a person who takes a fish, other than baitfish or smelt, from inland waters pursuant to this Part shall immediately release that fish alive into the waters from which it was taken or immediately kill that fish. Any fish killed pursuant to this section becomes part of the daily bag limit. A person who possesses a fish in violation of this section commits a Class E crime. [PL 2015, c. 301, §38 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 655, §B273 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2015, c. 301, §38 (AMD).

#### §12612. Parent or guardian; violation by minor

A person violates this section if that person is the adult supervisor, parent or guardian of a minor under 16 years of age and that minor violates any provision of this Part pertaining to fishing. [PL 2009, c. 69, §5 (NEW).]

**1. Civil violation.** A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.

[PL 2009, c. 69, §5 (NEW).]

**2. Class E crime.** A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2009, c. 69, §5 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 69, §5 (NEW).

#### §12613. Possessing gift fish

**1. Prohibition.** A person who does not possess a valid fishing license issued under chapter 913 or this chapter may not possess a fish or any part of a fish given to that person except a person may possess in that person's domicile a gift fish that was lawfully caught and is plainly labeled with the



name of the person who gave the fish and the year, month and day the fish was caught by that person. This section does not apply to baitfish.

[PL 2011, c. 57, §1 (NEW).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2011, c. 57, §1 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2011, c. 57, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 57, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2011, c. 57, §1 (NEW).

### SUBCHAPTER 5

#### UNLAWFUL FISHING METHODS

##### §12651. Snagging

**1. Prohibition.** Except as provided in section 12506, subsection 7, a person may not fish by snagging as defined by section 10001, subsection 58.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §274 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B274 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

##### §12652. Fishing with more than 2 lines

**1. Prohibition.** Unless otherwise provided:

A. A person may not fish with more than 2 lines at any one time during the open-water fishing season; and [PL 2009, c. 214, §8 (NEW).]

B. A person may not fish during the open-water fishing season unless that person's fishing lines are under that person's immediate supervision. [PL 2009, c. 214, §8 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 214, §8 (RPR).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §276 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §276 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §276 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B275,276 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 214, §8 (AMD).

**§12653. Taking fish by explosive, poisonous or stupefying substance**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not use dynamite or any other explosive, poisonous or stupefying substance at any time for the purpose of taking or destroying any kind of fish.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12654. Unlawful angling or fishing**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not angle or fish other than by the use of the single baited hook and line, artificial flies, artificial lures and spinners, except that a person may take smelts in accordance with rules adopted with regard to the taking of smelts.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

**§12654-A. Limit on artificial flies**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not fish with more than 3 unbaited artificial flies individually attached to a line or hook.

[PL 2005, c. 477, §16 (AMD).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §277 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §277 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §277 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 655, §B277 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 477, §16 (AMD).

**§12655. Unlawful use of bait**

**1. Prohibition.** During times when fishing is limited by rule to the use of artificial lures only, a person may not use:

A. Live bait; [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §278 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. Dead bait; or [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §278 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. Chemically preserved natural or organic bait. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §278 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]  
[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §278 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime.  
[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §278 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B278 (RPR). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### §12656. Possession and use of unlawful implements and devices

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not:

A. Possess any grapnel, trawl, weir, seine, gill net, trap, set line or drop net on or adjacent to any of the inland waters of the State, except in accordance with sections 12157 and 12506, section 12551-A, subsection 7, paragraph A, subparagraph (2) and section 12763, subsections 3 and 4; or [PL 2009, c. 214, §9 (AMD).]

B. Except as otherwise provided, use any grapnel, spear, spear gun, trawl, weir, gaff, seine, gill net, trap or set lines for fishing.

(1) A person may take suckers, eels, river herring and yellow perch in accordance with section 12506.

(2) A person may take baitfish with a baitfish trap, as defined in section 10001, subsection 7. [PL 2017, c. 150, §7 (AMD).]

[PL 2017, c. 150, §7 (AMD).]

**2. Penalty.** A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime. The court shall also impose a fine of \$20 for each fish unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.  
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 214, §9 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 150, §7 (AMD).

#### §12657. Advance baiting

**1. Prohibition.** Except as provided in subsection 2, a person may not deposit any meat, bones, dead fish, parts of meat, bones, or dead fish or other food for fish for the purpose of luring fish, a practice known as "advance baiting."

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Exception.** A person may place food particles in a baitfish trap for the purpose of luring baitfish.  
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates subsection 1 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §279 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates subsection 1 after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.  
[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §279 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §279 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B279 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12658. Unlawfully trolling fly**

**1. Prohibition.** A person may not troll a fly in inland waters restricted to fly-fishing.  
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §280 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §280 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]  
[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §280 (RPR); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B280 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12659. Ice fishing regulations**

**(REPEALED)**

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B281 (RP). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

**§12659-A. Ice fishing regulations**

**1. Five-line limit.** Unless otherwise provided by rule, a person licensed to fish may not fish through the ice with more than 5 lines set or otherwise.

A. [PL 2005, c. 397, Pt. E, §9 (RP).]

B. [PL 2005, c. 397, Pt. E, §9 (RP).]

C. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2005, c. 477, §17 (NEW).]

D. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.  
[PL 2005, c. 477, §17 (NEW).]  
[PL 2005, c. 477, §17 (AMD).]

**2. Penalty.**

[PL 2005, c. 397, Pt. E, §10 (RP).]

**3. Unattended lines.** Except as provided in subsection 4, a person licensed to fish shall have all lines under that person's immediate supervision.

A. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2005, c. 477, §18 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2005, c. 477, §18 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 477, §18 (AMD).]

**4. Checking cusk lines.** A person fishing through the ice for cusk in the nighttime shall visit at least once every hour all lines set by that person for cusk.

A. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2005, c. 477, §19 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2005, c. 477, §19 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 214, §10 (AMD).]

#### **5. Penalty.**

[PL 2005, c. 477, §20 (RP).]

#### **SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 655, §B282 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 397, §§E9-11 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 477, §§17-20 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 214, §10 (AMD).

#### **§12660. Antifreeze agents**

Adding substances containing ethylene glycol or other antifreeze agents to the waters of this State is a violation of Title 38, section 413. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### **SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).

#### **§12661. Ice fishing shacks**

**1. Prohibitions and requirements.** A person who owns any shack or temporary structure used for ice fishing:

A. Must remove or cause to be removed the shack or structure on the ice of any inland waters:

(1) In any area of the State in which there is a closed ice fishing season, by ice out or 3 days after the close of the ice fishing season established by the commissioner by rule pursuant to section 12454, whichever is earlier; and

(2) In any area of the State in which there is no close of the ice fishing season pursuant to section 12454, by ice out or March 31st, whichever is earlier; or [PL 2019, c. 325, §8 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2009, c. 214, §12 (RP).]

C. Shall have painted on the outside of the shack or structure in 2-inch letters the owner's name and address when the shack or structure is on the ice of any inland waters. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §283 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2019, c. 325, §8 (AMD).]

#### **2. Penalty.**

[PL 2011, c. 253, §31 (RP).]

**3. Removal of abandoned ice-fishing shacks.** A person may not leave a structure on another person's land without permission from the landowner. Notwithstanding the provisions of Title 33,

chapter 45 and Title 17, section 2263-A, a landowner on whose property an abandoned ice-fishing shack as defined in Title 17, section 2263 is left in violation of this section may remove or destroy the shack. The landowner may recover any costs of removing or destroying the shack from the owner of the shack in a civil action.

[PL 2019, c. 325, §9 (AMD); PL 2019, c. 498, §8 (AMD).]

**4. Penalty.** The following penalties apply to violations of this section.

A. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2011, c. 253, §33 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this section after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2011, c. 253, §33 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 253, §33 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B283,284 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 397, §A9 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 214, §§11, 12 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 253, §§31-33 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §39 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 164, §22 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 325, §§8, 9 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 498, §8 (AMD).

#### **§12662. Night ice fishing**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B285,286 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 397, §E12 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 214, §13 (RP).

#### **§12663. Unlawful sale of lead sinkers**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B287 (RP). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

#### **§12663-A. Unlawful sale of lead sinkers**

**(REPEALED)**

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 655, §B288 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2013, c. 372, §1 (RP).

#### **§12663-B. Unlawful sale of lead sinkers and lead jigs**

**1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (RP).]

B. "Lead sinker" means a device that contains lead that is designed to be attached to a fishing line and intended to sink the line and does not include artificial lures, ice-fishing sounders, weighted line, weighted flies or jig heads. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (AMD).]

C. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (RP).]

D. "Lead jig" means a hook with a lead weight molded to it, regardless of whether it is painted, coated or covered by some other substance or by attached skirts. "Lead jig" does not include a fishing-related item, including, but not limited to, lead-core line, spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, spoons, poppers, plugs or flies. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (AMD).]

**2. Sale of lead sinker, bare lead jig or painted lead jig.**

[PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (RP).]

**3. Offer lead sinker, bare lead jig or painted lead jig for sale.**

[PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (RP).]

**4. Sell or offer for sale lead sinker or lead jig.** This subsection governs the sale or offering for sale of lead sinkers and lead jigs.

A. A person may not sell or offer for sale a lead sinker or unpainted lead jig that:

(1) Weighs one ounce or less; or

(2) Measures 2 1/2 inches or less in length. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (NEW).]

C. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime.

[PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2013, c. 372, §2 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 231, §1 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 132, §6 (AMD).

**§12664. Unlawful use of lead sinkers and lead jigs**

**1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (RP).]

B. "Lead sinker" means a device that contains lead that is designed to be attached to a fishing line and intended to sink the line and does not include artificial lures, ice-fishing sounders, weighted line, weighted flies or jig heads. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (AMD).]

C. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (RP).]

D. "Lead jig" means a hook with a lead weight molded to it, regardless of whether it is painted, coated or covered by some other substance or by attached skirts. "Lead jig" does not include a fishing-related lead item, including, but not limited to, a lead core line, spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, spoons, poppers, plugs or flies. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (AMD).]

**2. Unlawful use.** This subsection governs the use of lead sinkers and lead jigs.

A. A person may not:

(3) Beginning September 1, 2026, use a painted lead jig. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (AMD).]

A-1. A person may not use a lead sinker or unpainted lead jig that:

(1) Weighs one ounce or less; or

(2) Measures 2 1/2 inches or less in length. [PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (NEW).]

B. A person who violates this subsection commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2013, c. 372, §3 (NEW).]

C. A person who violates this subsection after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2013, c. 372, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 372, §3 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 231, §2 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 132, §7 (AMD).

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