

# Types of fishing and bait

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## **Types of fishing and bait**

# Salmon fishing

Québec has roughly one hundred salmon rivers containing very large fish, and offers an outstanding fishing experience for enthusiasts from home and abroad. To ensure the conservation of this much sought-after species, populations are monitored rigorously and stringent rules apply to salmon fishing.

## Tagging of salmon

If you want to fish for salmon in Québec, you must hold one of the [Atlantic salmon fishing licences](#). The licences that allow you to fish for and keep salmon are issued with tags for registration purposes.

- **Validity of the tag:** Only during the period shown on the licence, provided the annual limit of four salmon has not been reached.
- **When to attach the tag:** As soon as you catch and keep a salmon, you must attach the tag supplied with your licence to it (the three consecutive day licence only tags a small salmon).
- **Tagging order:** (annual licence only) You cannot keep more than four salmon in any given season. For the first three small salmon, tagging must be done in the order indicated on the tags issued with the licence. If a fourth small salmon is kept, or when one big salmon is kept (where the rules so allow), you must use the tag marked "Grand saumon" (63 cm or longer) or "Petit saumon" (at least 30 cm and less than 63 cm).
- **When to remove the tag:** It is prohibited to have a salmon caught by sport fishing in your possession if it has not been tagged. You must not remove the tag from the fish until you prepare the salmon for consumption.
- **Origin of the tag:** Anywhere in Québec where salmon can be caught and kept, the tag must be taken from the licence of the angler who struck the fish, even if someone else handled the fishing rod when the fish was recovered.
- **Where to place the tag:** Below are some examples of where the tag may be placed.

## Salmon tagged correctly



## Mandatory registration of catches

You must personally register any salmon you catch and keep within 48 hours of leaving the

fishing site. A wildlife protection officer may also ask you to register your catch immediately.

## How to register your catch

The following options are available to you:

### Authorized partner

- Take your licence and your tagged salmon (whole or gutted) to a registration station that is authorized by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs to manage the body of water where the salmon was caught, either an outfitting operation offering salmon fishing, or a wildlife reserve or a salmon fishing controlled harvesting zone (ZEC). In the case of a wildlife reserve, the salmon must be presented whole.
- The tag from your licence is punched.
- Your fish is weighed and measured, and samples or other scientific specimens may be taken.

### Self-registration at a control point

If the registration station is not in service and the self-registration option is available at your fishing site, simply follow the procedure indicated to register your salmon.

### By telephone or Internet

If there is no self-registration procedure, you have the option of registering your salmon remotely (either by telephone or via the Internet) for some salmon rivers or river systems. If there is no provision to register your salmon, you must contact the [regional office](#) (in French only).

## Salmon registration logbook

We recommend that you use the [Angler's Logbook \(PDF 636 Kb\)](#) if you fish for salmon in zones 23 and 24, located in the Nord-du-Québec region.

The logbook can be used to register your catch, and also:

- to register with an outfitter;
- to obtain instructions for taking part in the collection of information used to manage the species in the zones in question.

Please note that other special rules may apply if you fish in the [Nord-du-Québec region](#).

## Fishing for salmon in a salmon river

Because salmon rivers are usually managed by an organization of some kind, different sectors of the same river may have status as a ZEC, a wildlife reserve, a provincial park, an outfitter with exclusive rights or a private property.

Special conditions may therefore apply, depending on the specific location of the watercourse. In addition to the general rules (fishing periods, quotas and limits, authorized gear), you must therefore make sure you comply with the requirements of the fishing territory concerned.

You have free access to salmon rivers or sectors of salmon rivers that are not managed by an organization or located on private property.

See the [map of salmon rivers in Québec \(PDF 7.36 Mb\)](#) (in French only).

## Main prohibitions in salmon rivers

Salmon rivers are regulated to protect the reproduction and migration of Atlantic salmon. Notably, it is prohibited to fish salmon with a harpoon, bow or crossbow. Generally, only fly fishing is allowed.

### In a salmon river, for all fish species, you are also not allowed to fish:

- during the period beginning one hour after sunset and ending one hour before sunrise (see the [Sunrise/Sunset Calculator of the National Research Council Canada](#));
- from a bridge crossing a salmon river or its estuary;
- within 23 metres downstream from the lower entrance of a fish ladder, an operating fishway, an obstacle or a leaping space designed to facilitate the movement of fish;
- other than with a fishing rod less than 500 m downstream of any point of the mouth in zones 18, 19, 20 and 27 and on the north shore of the fleuve Saint-Laurent in zone 21.

## Fishing for salmon elsewhere than in salmon rivers

Except for some waters, salmon fishing elsewhere than in a salmon river is not allowed.

For more information, see the [Fishing periods and quotas](#).

## Catch size limit

The catch limit for salmon is expressed in size ("large" or "small" salmon).

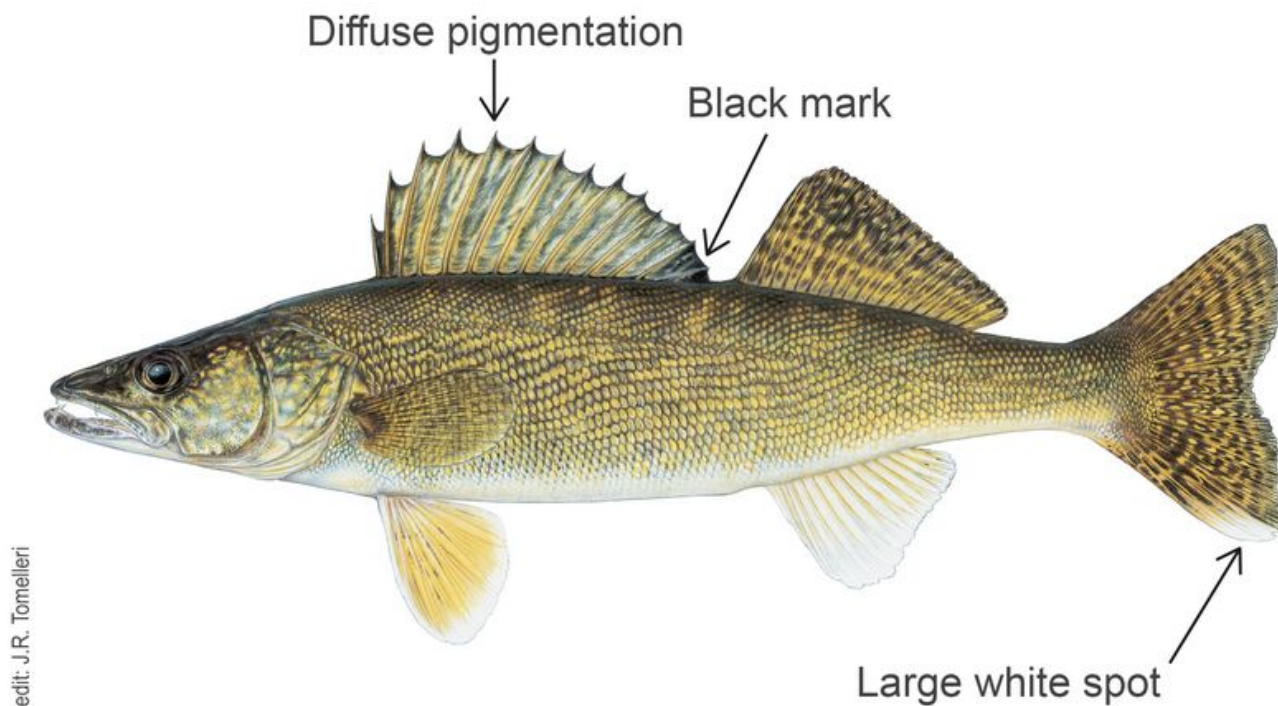
**Large salmon:** salmon measuring 63 cm or longer

**Small salmon:** salmon measuring at least 30 cm and less than 63 cm

To learn about other limits applicable to Atlantic salmon, [select your fishing zone](#).

# Walleye and sauger fishing

## Walleye



The [walleye](#) (in French) has :

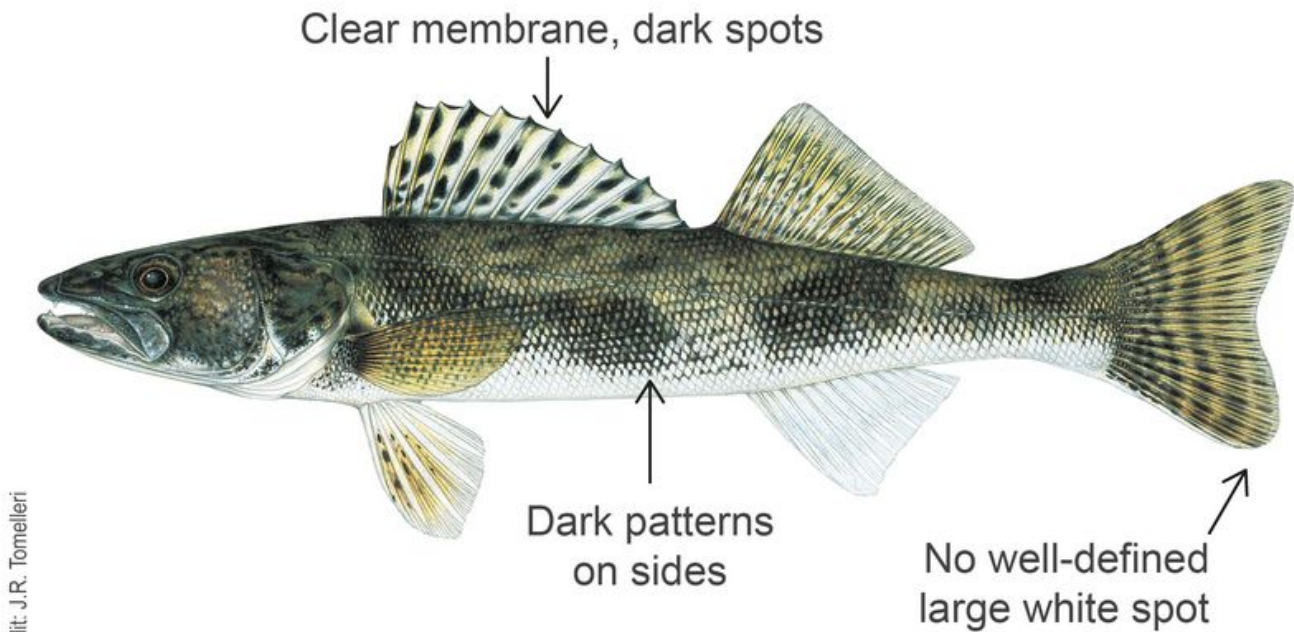
- **Body:** An elongated body, lightly compressed to the sides.
- **Size:** A size that ranges from 30 to 50 cm.
- **First dorsal fin:** Diffuse pigmentation, without defined spots. Black mark at the base of this same fin.
- **Tail (caudal fin):** Well-defined large white spot.

To respect the length limits of walleye, you must learn to distinguish it from sauger. Walleye should also be transported in whole or in wallet fillets.

## On this page:

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- [Methods](#)
- [Line fly](#)
- [Others](#)
- [Baits](#)

## Sauger



Credit: J.R. Tomelleri

The [sauger](#) (in French) has:

- **Body:** Longer, in the shape of a cylinder;
- **Size:** Small, with an average length of 20 to 30 cm.
- **Cheeks:** With rough scales.
- **First dorsal fin:** Clear membrane with distinct dark spots.
- **Flanks:** Dark patterns generally present on sides.
- **Tail (caudal fin):** No well-defined large white spot, but a thin white line may sometimes be present.

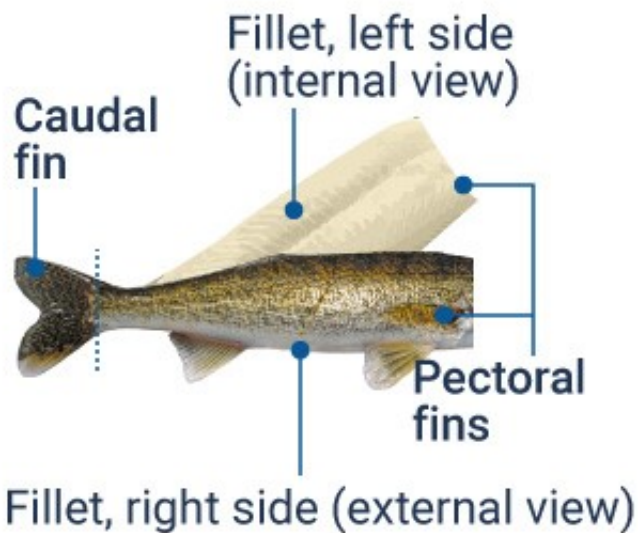
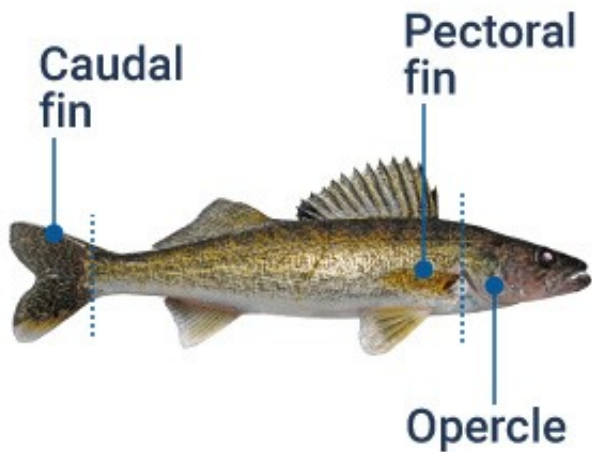
## Filleting walleye

To comply with the length limit applicable to walleye, the fish must be transported whole or in "wallet fillets" if filleted.

### *How to wallet fillet*

You must make sure the skin is left on the flesh, and cut the fish as shown below :

- Make an incision at the front of the pectoral fin (at the opercle).
- Run the knife along the spine towards the tail.
- Stop the cut just before the caudal fin.
- Repeat the operation the other side.
- Cut the spine keeping the two fillets attached to the caudal fin.



To learn more about this technique, have a look at our video [Comment couper le doré en filets portefeuille](#) (French only).

## Length of the fillets

Wallet fillets are compulsory, so that the species can be identified and the length determined where necessary. The accepted length of the fillets depends on the authorized length limit.

**For walleye between 32 cm and 47 cm inclusively.**

The 2 fillets must measure between 24 cm and 35 cm, measured from the tip of the caudal fin to the rear point at which the pectoral fin attaches to the fillet. These fins must remain attached to the fillets.

**For walleye between 37 cm and 53 cm inclusively.**

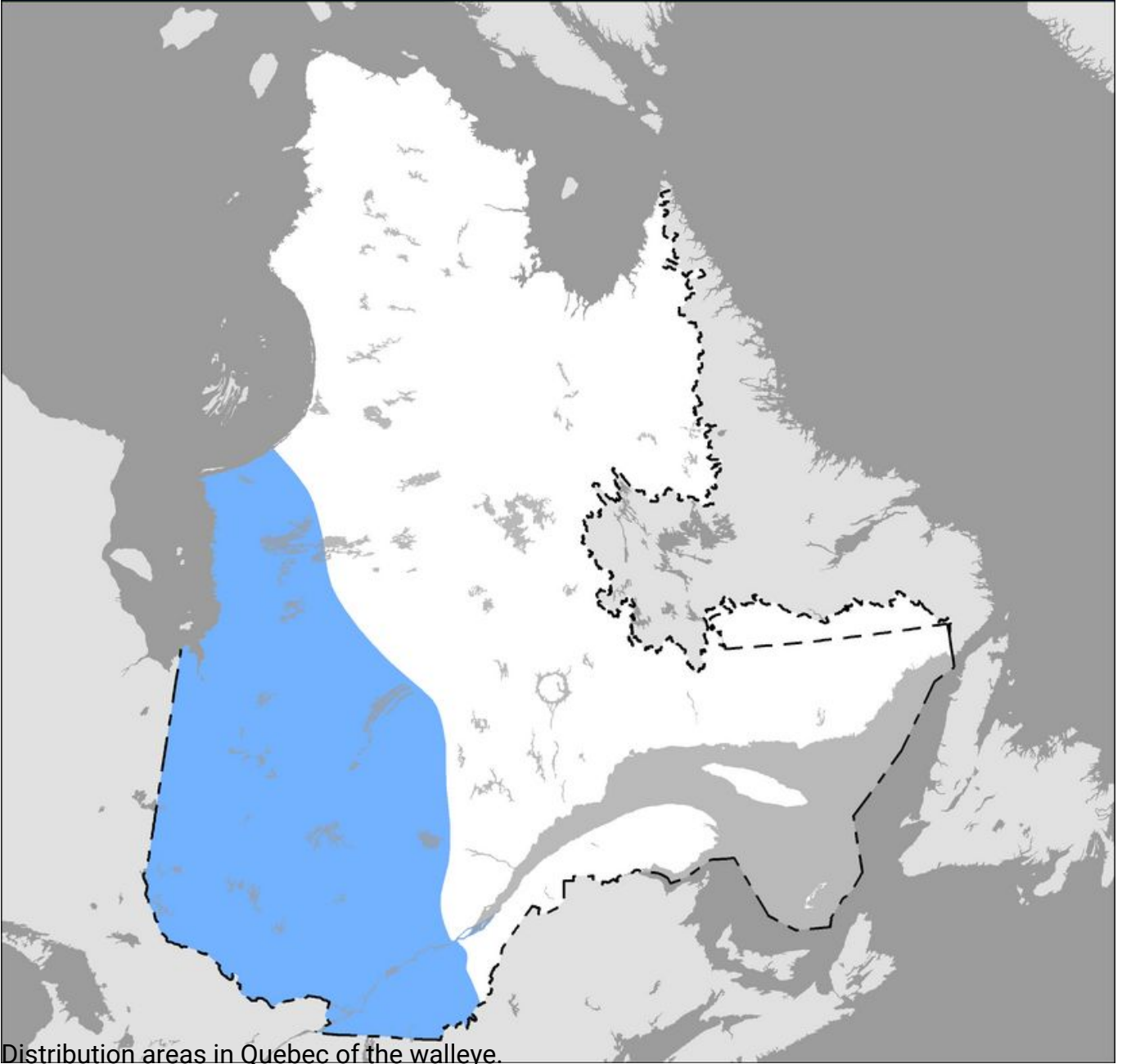
The 2 fillets must measure between 28 cm and 40 cm inclusively, measured from the tip of the caudal fin to the rear point at which the pectoral fin attaches to the fillet. These fins must remain attached to the fillets.

**For walleye of a maximal length of 47 cm inclusively.**

The two fillets must measure 35 cm maximum, measured from the tip of the caudal fin to the rear point at which the pectoral fin attaches to the fillet. These fins must remain attached to the fillets.

Note that it is prohibited to transport or possess elsewhere than the permanent residence filleted walleye from [zone 25](#).

## Walleye range



## Sauger range



Distribution areas in Quebec of the sauger.

### See also

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[Québec Walleye Management Plan \(in French\)](#)

# Specific methods for certain species

## Fishing for rainbow smelt

Special conditions apply to rainbow smelt fishing at certain sites. You may use a [lift net](#) and [landing net](#) in the following situations:

### In zone 21 (St. Lawrence River)

[Residents](#) with no licence and non-residents with a valid sport fishing licence may fish up to **120 rainbow smelt** per day, using a [lift net](#) or [landing net](#), **from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31**.

These methods are prohibited at the following locations:

- In the **waters of the îles de la Madeleine** and in the rivière Ouelle, between the downstream side of the route 132 bridge and a straight line linking the point of rivière Ouelle and the mouth of ruisseau Gagnon;
- In **ruisseau de l'Église**, in the municipality of Beaumont;
- In the **waters of zone 21** where the daily catch limit is 60 rainbow smelt and which are described among the exceptions for [zone 21](#);
- In **rivière Saguenay**, between a line perpendicular to the current running from the upstream side of the split (48°26'23" N., 70°54'08" W.) located near the municipality of Saint-Fulgence, and the downstream side of the Dubuc bridge in Saguenay.

### In some bodies of water in zones 1, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 15

A sport fishing licence holder may use a [lift net](#) or [landing net](#) to catch up to **120 rainbow smelt per day**:

- **from May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31**, in rivière **Bonaventure**, between the downstream side of the former route 132 bridges and Fosse du Malin;
- **from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 14**, in [zones 9](#) and [15](#), except for the waters of lac Archambault, including bays and tributaries, and lac Tire ([zone 9](#));
- **from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 14**, in the waters of **zones 4, 5 and 6**, except certain bodies of water.

### In some bodies of water in zones 10, 11 and 28

A sport fishing licence holder may use a [lift net](#) or [landing net](#) to catch up to **500 rainbow smelt per day**:

- **from May 1 to May 31**, in lac des **Écorces** ([zone 10](#)) and lac **Chaud** ([zone 11](#)) and in their tributaries;
- **from April 15 to May 20**, in rivière aux **Rats**, between lac aux Rats and a straight line

passing through the point 49°30'00" N., 72°11'56" W. ([zone 28](#)).

## In a salmon river

In a part of a salmon river where smelt fishing is permitted, this species can be fished **at night**:

- From December 1, 2025 to April 23, 2026;
- From December 1, 2026 to April 22, 2027;
- From December 1, 2027 to April 27, 2028.

### Limit and quota for rainbow smelt

The possession limit for rainbow smelt may not be the same as the zone's daily quota. Where this is the case, the relevant information will appear on the [interactive map](#).

## Fishing for whitefish

If you have a valid sport fishing licence, you may use a [lift net](#) or [landing net](#) to fish for whitefish in certain places and on certain conditions as indicated below:

### Rivière Touladi (zone 2)

The sector located between the downstream side of ruisseau à Mac and lac Témiscouata.

**Periods:** October 15 to October 28

**Quota:** 50 whitefish per day

### Rivière Saint-François (zone 4)

The sector located between lac Aylmer and the downstream side of route 263 bridge.

**Period:** October 25 to November 7

**Quotas:** 10 whitefish per day

## Fishing for burbot in Lac Saint-Jean

Specific conditions apply to burbot fishing in the waters of lac Saint-Jean encircled by routes 169, 170 and 373, excluding the portions of La Grande Décharge (downstream of the Maligne dam and the lac Saint-Jean water retention structures) and rivière Petite Décharge (the portion situated between its mouth in the Saguenay and the lac Saint-Jean water retention structures).

At this specific location, you may, if you have a [burbot fishing licence](#), fish:

- from December 20 to March 31, with no catch limit;
- using two night lines with no more than 10 fishhooks each, lying continuously on the bottom. In addition, each [night line](#) must be identified with one of the tags issued with your licence, affixed to the identification marker.

**No other species** can be retained with this burbot-specific fishing method.

## **Fishing for striped bass**

In waters where permitted, anglers may fish for striped bass with a single hook only, without natural bait, for a maximum of 3 hooks on the line.

## **Fishing for American eel**

The use of spears or harpoons while not swimming is permitted year-round to fish for American eel in the waters of the îles de la Madeleine.

## **Fishing for crustaceans**

Fishing for freshwater crustaceans is permitted using a [landing net](#), a [baittrap](#), a [lift net](#), with no catch limit, during the fishing periods stipulated for "Other Species" in the targeted fishing zone, except in zones 17 and 22 to 24, where only line fishing (angling) is permitted for all species.

## **Fishing for mollusks**

Fishing for freshwater mollusks is prohibited. Fishing means fishing for, catching or attempting to catch fish by any method. It is also prohibited to handle a freshwater mollusk to move it or release it into the water. In the case of accidental catch with a hook, the mollusk must be released into the water.

## Angling and fly fishing

For these types of fishing, your line may be equipped with [artificial lures](#), hooks or flies, and may be baited or unbaited. A hook may be single or multiple. An artificial lure or a fly counts as a hook.

### Maximum number of hooks and points

Generally, in all bodies of water, where all kinds of line fishing (angling) is permitted (including fly fishing), your line must not have more than three fish hooks. However, the number of points for a hook or combination of hooks is unlimited.

Special conditions may apply as shown in the table below.

### Maximum number of hooks and points (when all types of line fishing are allowed)

Place or fishing period	Hooks	Points
In <a href="#">zone 25</a> and the portion of lac Saint-François located west of a line drawn from Beaudette point on the north shore to Saint-Louis point on the south shore ( <a href="#">zone 8</a> )	4	Unlimited
In <a href="#">zone 21</a> , for rainbow smelt fishing	Unlimited	Unlimited
In zones <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">18</a> , <a href="#">19</a> and <a href="#">21</a> for striped bass fishing	3	1 per shaft and 3 in total per line
In salmon rivers, where salmon fishing is permitted	1	2
In salmon rivers, where salmon fishing is prohibited	3	3 in total

### Number of lines

You must use only one line at a time ([except in winter](#)) and you must monitor it constantly. You must not use a rod and line and a fly fishing rod at the same time.

As a general rule, if one or more people [fish under the same licence](#), everyone is entitled to his or her own line. However, in the case of [winter fishing](#), [baitfish fishing](#) or [burbot fishing in Lac Saint-Jean](#), the total number of lines used for the group must not exceed the number authorized for a licence.

#### Caution

You cannot have a fishing gear in your possession on or within 100 m of a body of water on which the use of this gear is prohibited. Special conditions may apply if you are fishing on a body of water reserved for fly fishing.

## Sites reserved for fly fishing

Most salmon rivers and some bodies of water, usually located in controlled harvesting zones (ZECs), are reserved for fly fishing and are posted as such at the information centre or near the fishing site.

When fishing in these reserved areas, the number of authorized hooks and points may vary according to the place and the fishing period, as indicated in the table below.

### Maximum number of hooks and points (when only fly fishing is permitted)

Place or fishing period	Artificial flies	Points*
In bodies of water reserved for fly fishing (elsewhere that salmon rivers) In salmon rivers, where salmon fishing is permitted	2	3
In salmon rivers, where salmon fishing is permitted	1	2
In salmon rivers, where salmon fishing is prohibited	2	3

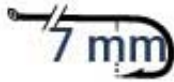
\*Valid for a hook or a combination of hooks

### Maximum authorized hook size

An artificial fly may comprise a combination of fish hooks and must comply with the maximum authorized hook size as shown in the figure below. It must never have more than three points (two points maximum when fishing in a salmon river during the salmon fishing period). There is no restriction on shank length.

The figure above shows the maximum distance (distance between the tip and hook) of the artificial flies based on the number of points.

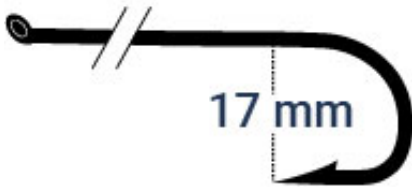
Note: There is no restriction on the length of the hamp.



3 points



2 points



1 point

### **Additional information**

It is prohibited to possess any fishing equipment or gear (for example, weighted flies) other than that required for fly fishing on a body of water reserved for this type of fishing (or within 100 m of that body of water), except:

- When the gear is in a vehicle (other than a boat) or a building.
- You are only crossing or travelling along waters reserved for fly fishing in order to fish in other waters where the use of the gear in question is permitted.

In this case, when you are in the area reserved for fly fishing, you must take the hook (other than an artificial fly) off the line, render your rod unusable by taking it apart into sections, removing the reel or storing it in a closed case.

If you fish at a reserved site, you must also comply with the following rules:

- The fly line (silk) must be unweighted and mounted on a fishing rod designed for that purpose.
- A maximum of 2 flies can be attached to this line, which must not be a metal-core line.
- Unless otherwise indicated, the fly must not be baited.

### **Composition of the fly**

The composition of the fly is very specific as indicated below:

- It may be dressed with silk, tinsel, wool, fabric, fur, feathers or other similar materials.
- Metal (brass, copper or aluminium) and plastic tubing may form part of the fly, along with the straight pin.
- Waddington shafts are authorized but metal heads and eyes are prohibited.
- The fly must not have spinning or undulating parts or be equipped with weights that cause it to sink.

## Other types of fishing

### Winter fishing

Depending on the zone, you may use up to 5 or 10 lines for winter fishing. You must monitor the lines continuously.

For information on the number of lines to which you are entitled, [please select your fishing zone](#).

### Night fishing

Fishing at night is permitted except in a salmon river, where fishing from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise is prohibited. See the special conditions to [fish for rainbow smelt with a lift net or a landing net](#).

### Fishing with bows or crossbows or spearfishing while swimming

This type of fishing is permitted in most fishing zones. You may spearfish while snorkelling or diving (with or without diving apparatus).

However, these methods are prohibited when fishing for:

- atlantic salmon;
- striped bass;
- landlocked salmon;
- muskellunge;
- lake trout;
- sturgeon;
- walleye (except waters where there is no length limit for this species).

These methods are also prohibited when fishing for all fish species:

- in zones 17 and 22 to 24;
- in [bodies of water reserved for fly fishing](#);
- in [salmon rivers](#);
- within 500 m downstream from any point at the mouth of a salmon river in zones 18 to 20, 27 and 28, or from a salmon river in zone 21 located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River.

### Spear and harpoon fishing

The use of a spear or a harpoon is allowed to fish for American eel (without swimming) in the waters of îles de la Madeleine all year long.

## Use of bait

- Muskellunge
  - Pike
  - Redhorse
  - Round goby
  - Rudd
  - Rusty crayfish
  - Salmon
  - Sturgeon
  - Stone moroko
  - Sunfish
  - Tench
  - Trout
  - Walleye
  - White perch
  - Yabby
  - Yellow perch
- 
- Bass
  - Blueback herring
  - Bowfin
  - Bullhead
  - Burbot
  - Channel catfish
  - Channel darter
  - Char
  - Chinese mitten crab
  - Common carp
  - Freshwater drum
  - Freshwater molluscs
  - Goldeye
  - Goldfish
  - Lake trout
  - Lamprey
  - Longnose gar
  - Mooneye

In Québec, different types of bait can be placed on a hook and used to attempt to catch fish. However, there are some restrictions on the use and possession of certain types of bait.

It should be noted that bait fish are any fish, molluscs, crustaceans (e.g., shrimp, crayfish), marine animals, and **even any part** of these animals and, by assimilation, their eggs, sperm, milt, spawn, larvae, spats or offspring of these animals and which are intended for use as fishing bait.

## Earthworms, leeches, insects and frogs as bait

Earthworms, leeches, insects and frogs are not considered to be bait fish, and their use as bait is therefore permitted unless otherwise indicated.

When capturing frogs, you must comply with the applicable [rules governing frog hunting](#).  
Mainly:

- You must hold a frog hunting licence that allows the holder to hunt Northern leopard frogs, green frogs and bullfrogs from July 15 to November 15, with no bag limit.
- Frog hunting is prohibited in zones 17, 19 north and 22 to 24, as well as in wildlife reserves and territories in which all hunting is prohibited.
- Special rules apply to the keeping of frogs in captivity.

## Prohibited bait fish

Since April 1, 2017, the use and possession of **live bait fish**, regardless of species, is **prohibited** throughout Québec, including during [winter fishing periods](#).

The possession and use of other freshwater fish species from Québec as (**dead**) bait fish is permitted where fishing is authorized. **However, the species listed below cannot be used as dead bait fish.**

- Bass
- Blueback herring
- Bowfin
- Bullhead
- Burbot
- Channel catfish
- Channel darter
- Char
- Chinese mitten crab
- Common carp
- Freshwater drum
- Freshwater molluscs
- Goldeye
- Goldfish
- Lake trout
- Lamprey
- Longnose gar
- Mooneye
  
- Muskellunge

- Pike
- Redhorse
- Round goby
- Rudd
- Rusty crayfish
- Salmon
- Sturgeon
- Stone moroko
- Sunfish
- Tench
- Trout
- Walleye
- White perch
- Yabby
- Yellow perch

Use of the following **as bait fish is also prohibited**:

- all saltwater species EXCEPT capelin, herring, mackerel, freshwater mollusks and crustaceans;
- all fish species designated by the [Species at Risk Act](#).

## Possession and use of dead bait fish

The possession and use of dead bait fish (including dead shrimp) is permitted, but only in certain waters during winter fishing periods. You can have them inside a home at any time.

See the section entitled [Fishing zones](#) to see, in your zone:

- whether or not you may possess or use dead bait fish;
- which species are authorized for use as dead bait fish;
- the periods during which this practice is permitted.

## Fishing for bait fish

If you wish to fish for bait fish, you must:

- have a valid sport fishing licence;
- fish in the zones and during the periods in which the use of bait fish is permitted;
- use a [lift net](#) or no more than three [bait traps](#), except in zones 17 and 22 to 24 as well as in bodies of water reserved for fly fishing;
- write your name, address and licence number on bait traps left without immediate supervision;
- comply with the special possession rules applicable to bait fish.

If one or more other people fish under your licence, the number of lift nets and bait traps used by your group must not exceed the authorized limit for your licence.

## **Importing bait fish**

Importing of live or dead bait fish is prohibited.