

Fishing – General



Winneshiek County Conservation Equipment and Recommendations:

Some equipment available. See specific fishing units (Spincasting, Ice Fishing, Fly Fishing) or call WCCB at 563.534.7145 for more information.

Introduction

This section contains general information about fishing. It provides information that is applicable to all three types of fishing included in this guide. For information and skills related to specific types of fishing, please refer to one of the individual units: spincasting, fly fishing, or ice fishing.

General Fishing Terms & Definitions

angler – person who fishes for enjoyment

action – flexibility of the pole or rod

bait – living or dead animals, parts of animals, or prepared materials that fish will eat

bobber – floating object; maintains constant depth of hook and keeps hook off bottom; signals when fish is on the line; smaller bobbers work best for beginning anglers

drag – determines how much force is required to pull line from the rod; should be set so the line stays firm but doesn't break when a fish puts pressure on the line

hook – holds the fish on the line; the bigger the number, the smaller the hook; choose smaller hooks to ensure the fish can fit them in their mouths

- **single** – one point on the hook
- **double** – two points on the hook
- **treble** – three points on the hook
- **barb** – sharp protrusion located just before the point; prevents the hook from being easily backed out of the mouth when set; for catch-and-release fishing, pinch off the barb

line – connects you to the fish; virtually invisible under water

- **monofilament** – single strand of nylon or fluorocarbon
- **braided/polymer** – multiple strands twisted together
- **fly** – heavy, often tapered line used in fly fishing to cast the fly
- **leader** – length of line attached between the main line and the lure; when fishing for fish with sharp teeth, a heavy or metal leader may be used

lure – instrument used to attract fish to the line; made of inedible materials (like plastic or metal)

- **jig** – weighted head molded over a hook
- **plug** – imitates food items in appearance and/or action
- **spoon** – flat metal blade that is shaped to wobble back and forth to resemble a small fish
- **spinner** – flat metal blade that rotates around a stationary wire shaft creating flash and vibration
- **soft plastics** – life-like worms and other small animals made of many colors and shapes
- **flies** – resemble insects, small fish, or other aquatic life

pole/rod – instrument used to cast bait or lures to a certain spot

- **cane pole** – no reel, line attached directly to rod
- **spincasting** – flexible rod with a closed-face reel that uses a thumb stop to release line
- **spinning** – flexible rod with an open reel that has a bail to open in order to release line
- **baitcasting** – flexible rod with an open reel that uses the thumb to slow or stop the line when casting
- **fly fishing** – limber, long rod with thick line and long, tapered leader; reel used primarily for storing line
- **surf** – long, stiff rod and large reel for long casts with heavy lures
- **trolling** – heavy rod with large reel and large line capacity for fishing in open water

reel – stores and retrieves the line

sinker – weight to help cast the line and hold the line under water

swivel – link between leader and main line; prevents line from twisting

tackle – term used to identify fishing equipment

terminal tackle – term used to identify fishing equipment that attaches at the end of the line

test weight/pound test – how much force it takes to break the line

Regulations

Fishing regulations in Iowa are set by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. For a complete list of rules, visit the Iowa DNR website or refer to the current edition of “Iowa Fishing Regulations.”

A few of the basic Iowa rules include:

- A fishing license is required for any person age 16 and older.
- You must carry your license with you when fishing.
- Check length and daily limits for the body of water you are fishing.
- When hook-and-line fishing, the limit is 2 hooks per pole and 2 poles per person.
- Make sure the bait you are using is legal for the body of water you are fishing.
- Ask permission to fish on privately owned ponds and stream banks.

Where to Get a Fishing License

Online: www.iowadnr.com

Phone: 1-800-367-1188

In Winneshiek County:

Festina – The Zipper

Decorah – Oneota Outfitters, Ace Hardware, Quillin’s, Wal-Mart

Where to Go Fishing

You must get permission to fish on private land where it is not clearly public access.

Knot Tying Help

Animations demonstrating how to tie common fishing knots: www.animatedknots.com.

Catch and Release Procedures

- 1) Wet your hands before handling a fish you plan on releasing to prevent damage to the fish's protective slime coating.
- 2) Keep the fish in the water as much as possible, and release as quickly as possible.
- 3) Hold the fish by the lower jaw or around the head from gill cover to gill cover, rather than the eye sockets.
- 4) Try to remove the hook. If the hook has been swallowed, cut the line as close to the fish's mouth as possible. By leaving the hook, it will rust out and the fish is more likely to survive.
- 5) Gently place the fish back in the water.
- 6) Use a barbless hook to ease release and cause less damage to fish.

Cleaning Fish

If you're going to keep your fish to eat, keep them alive on a stringer or in a basket in shaded water, OR put them in a cooler with ice immediately to keep the meat from spoiling. You will need to remove internal organs to make the fish ready for cooking.

Field dress:

Completed in the field with further preparation completed at another location.

- 1) Cut from anal opening to head, keeping knife blade shallow so you don't puncture the intestine.
- 2) Remove internal organs and gills.
- 3) Rinse with clean water, if available.

Pan dress:

Completed on fish that have not been field dressed.

- 1) Remove scales or skin (see below).
- 2) Cut from anal opening to head, keeping knife blade shallow so you don't puncture the intestine.
- 3) Remove all internal organs, including the kidney by the backbone which can be scraped out with a spoon or thumbnail
- 4) Cut off the head, tail, and other fins, if desired
- 5) Rinse with clean water, if available

Scaling:

- 1) Hold fish by the head with one hand
- 2) Rake the scales from the tail toward the head with a fish scaler or large spoon
- 3) Remove scales from both sides of the body

Skinning:

- 1) Gripping the fish's head, slit the skin along the backbone from behind the head to the dorsal fin. Cut on either side of the dorsal fin.
- 2) Firmly holding the head, grasp the skin with pliers and pull toward the tail fin to remove.

Fillet:

For best results, use a fillet knife, which is thin and very sharp; for safety, wear a metal mesh fish cleaning glove on the hand holding the fish

- 1) Place the knife blade just behind the pectoral fin and cut through flesh and skin to the backbone
- 2) Turn the knife so the blade is against, and nearly parallel to, the backbone. Hold the fish firmly at the head with one hand and cut through the ribs toward the tail until you reach the base of the tail. Leaving the flap of meat and skin/scales attached, flip it open to expose the meat.
- 3) Place the knife near the tail end of the fillet with the blade next to the skin. Hold the fish at the base of the tail and work the knife forward between the skin and meat with a sawing motion.
- 4) Cut around and remove the ribs.
- 5) Repeat procedure on the other side of the fish.

Environmental Notes

Use non-lead equipment (sinkers) to avoid lead poisoning in wildlife.

Extensions

Science: water quality, water cycle, insects, life cycles, predator/prey

Shop: constructing rods, tying flies

Resources

- Fish Iowa! Program.
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Education/ForTeachers/ClassroomResources.aspx>
- 4-H Fish Iowa. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/fishiowa/>
- Polk County Outdoor Skills: <http://www.conservationboard.org/default.aspx>



Winneshiek County Conservation has:

- Staff trained in Fish Iowa! to lead group fishing activities
- Rods & reels for free loan to educators trained in the Fish Iowa! Program
- Fly fishing and ice fishing poles to use with group programs

Contact our office to find out more! E-mail education@neitel.net or call 563-534-7145.