

# Regulations Scavenger Hunt

Grade Level(s): 3-6  
Time: 20 – 25 minutes  
Group Size: 10-25  
Setting: Indoors (gym)/Outdoors

## NYS Learning Standards Core Curriculum MST

### Standard 4: Living Environment

Students will: understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

- *Key Idea 1:* Living things are both similar to and different from each other and nonliving things.
- *Key Idea 4:* The continuity of life is sustained through reproduction and development.
- *Key Idea 7:* Human decisions and activities have had a profound impact on the physical and living environment.

## Summary

It is important to be able to identify fish in order to determine if they are a regulated species. Knowing fishing regulations and some simple information about fish will help promote the health and abundance of fish stocks.

## Materials

- Freshwater & Saltwater Color Guide and Poster Combo worksheets
- Colored craft sticks (tongue depressors) for Freshwater/Saltwater

## Objectives

After this presentation, students will be able to:

- Identify 1-3 species of fish specific to fishing area
- Describe characteristics about the fish that inhabit their area ecosystems
- Explain the predator-prey interaction that occurs in the ecosystem



# NYSDEC Region 1 Freshwater Fisheries I FISH NY Program

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## Vocabulary

- **Anal Fin** - Located near the anal opening; used in balance and steering
- **Caudal/Tail Fin** - Fin on end of fish; used to propel the fish
- **Daily Limit** - Number of different species of fish one is allowed to keep per day
- **Dorsal Fin** - Top or backside fin on a fish; used for balance and protection
- **Electrofishing** – Use of electricity to stun fish for quick scientific collection to weigh, measure, and count in order to set regulations and record population estimates.
- **External Anatomy** - The outside body parts
- **Gills** - Organ a fish uses to obtain oxygen from the water
- **Lateral Line** - Organ a fish uses to “feel” low vibrations; tiny microscopic pores
- **Nares** - Organ a fish uses to smell; similar to nostrils
- **Open Season** - The calendar dates during which it is permissible to fish for a particular species of fish
- **Pectoral Fin** - Chest fins on a fish; used for balance
- **Pelvic Fin** - Bottom or belly fins on a fish; used in balance and steering
- **Scales** - Protective cover on a fish; similar to skin
- **Size Limit** - Specific size fish must be to keep; each fish is different
- **Slime Layer** - Covers scales; layer protects from bacteria, parasites, etc.

## Background

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### Introduction

It is important to identify fish to determine if they are a regulated species. Being aware and knowledgeable of fishing regulations, size limit, and open season will promote the health and abundance of many fish species and preserve quality fishing and enjoyment for thousands of anglers in New York State. New York State Environmental Conservation Police Officers enforce these regulations and requirements.

### NYSDEC Role

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources is responsible for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of freshwater and saltwater recreational and commercial fisheries. The freshwater Bureau of Fisheries conducts diverse scientific and educational programs, and annually conducts a wide array of activities to accomplish its mission to “*Conserve and enhance New York State’s abundant and diverse populations of freshwater fishes while providing the public with quality recreational angling opportunities.*”

To determine what is going on in the fisheries, Regional Fisheries Managers use information collected through various sources including

- The Angler Diary Program
- The Creel Census Program via Angler Surveys
- Fishery surveys utilizing electrofishing

Catch nets, angling, local fishing clubs, and reports from anglers

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## Freshwater Fishing Rules

The main components of the freshwater fishing rules and regulations include a license, species identification, size limit, open season, and daily limit.

### *License*

New York State requires freshwater anglers, age 16 years and older, to have a fishing license. Licenses can be purchased at various locations, such as bait and tackle shops, sporting good stores, on-line at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6101.html>, and by phone at 1-866-933-2257. When purchasing a fishing license, you will receive a current NYS Regulations Guide. Become familiar with it. The general regulations are listed in the front of the book. However, there are special regulations for each region. Be sure to familiarize yourself with your local regulations as well.

### *Species Identification*

There are over 165 freshwater fish species in NYS. Check out <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/84775.html> for more information on local freshwater fish species.



### *Size Limit*

Many fish have size limits to protect the species. Size limits are dependent on each individual species. Most often minimum size limit regulations are enacted to insure that the fish can reproduce at least once before they are taken from their environment.

### *Open Season*

Some fish species have seasons when you can and cannot fish for them. These are most often based upon the spawning and reproduction time for that species.

### *Daily Limit*

There are a certain number of fish of a given species that you can keep on a daily basis. The daily limit encompasses the entire day regardless of how many times or places one goes fishing. Daily limits are set to help sustain the fishery.



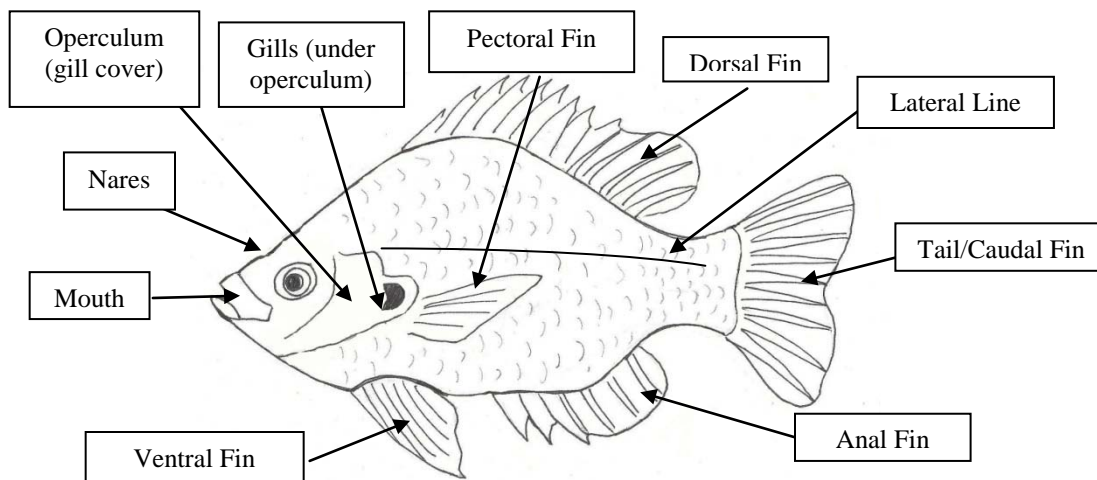
## Enforcement

Environmental Conservation Police Officers enforce the rules and regulations set forth by the NYSDEC. Rule violation can result in a ticket/fine and possible confiscation of fishing equipment. Note that any fish species that is not listed in the regulations guide is currently not regulated.



## External Anatomy

It is important to know how to handle fish for your own safety, and for the safety of the fish. Anglers should be careful when handling fish with teeth and/or spines located on the body (usually on the dorsal fin or near the anal fin).



## Main Activity

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### Set up

1. Determine playing field.
2. Scatter the "fish" sticks.
3. Note where sticks are placed for collecting at end of program.

### Introduction

1. Introduce yourself and the I FISH NY program.
2. Introduce day's activities.
  - a. Fishing rules and regulations
  - b. Game simulation of fishing regulations

## Environmental Conservation Officer Introduction

1. Ask students if they know what an Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) is and what they do. If students need assistance, help them examine the words used to determine the job title: “environmental,” “conservation,” and “police officer.”
2. After students have brainstormed, re-iterate the jobs of an ECO officer.
3. Discuss fishing regulations:
  - a. Species
  - b. Size limit
  - c. Bag limit
  - d. Open season
4. Ask if there are any questions.



## Scavenger Hunt Activity

1. Introduce scavenger hunt activity:
  - a. Identify fishing grounds, within it there are “fish” sticks. Each stick corresponds to a particular fish species, e.g., Green = Largemouth Bass.
  - b. Each stick has a number and that indicates the length or size of the fish.
  - c. Students will go “fishing” (scavenge) for the sticks.
2. After students are done “fishing” they will use the laminated reference card to see if each “fish” is the right (regulation) size.
3. Go around and check fish sizes.
4. Introduce concept of catch and release fishing.

## Summary

The instructor will ask the students to raise their hands to indicate who collected one piece of food, two pieces of food, and so on. The instructor will ask the students what might happen to the fish that did not obtain any food. The instructor might ask:

- a. Was it easier to stay alive when you were swimming in a school? Rather than by yourself?
- b. If more than one predator: Was this round harder or easier than the last round? Why? What about in nature?

*Adapted from: Project Wild; Quick Frozen Critters lesson plan*

## Wrap Up

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### Closing

1. Reminders:
  - a. Fishermen are not required to memorize the regulations but responsible for them.
  - b. Always carry the most current Regulations with you when fishing.
2. Invite questions.

### Questions for Discussion

Q: What is a predator? What is a prey?

A: A predator is an animal that hunts and captures its food (prey).

A prey is an animal that is hunted by another animal (predator) as food.

Q: Can an animal be both predator and prey?

A: Yes. Example – a sunfish is predator to small clams and prey to a largemouth bass.

Q: What are names of two local freshwater species of fish?

A: Bass (largemouth, smallmouth), sunfish (bluegill, pumpkinseed), perch (yellow), trout (rainbow, brown, brook),

Q: What are some characteristics of prey species that help them escape from predators?

A: Schooling, fast swimming, spiny dorsal fin, camouflage, etc

Q: Why do fish have a slime layer?

A: The slime layer helps to protect from bacteria, parasites, and disease.

Q: Why are some fish species “catch and release” only?

A: To help a species grow in number and to maintain a healthy stock

Q: What is the purpose for having a “season” for catching certain fish?

A: To prevent capturing, injuring, or killing a fish that is about to lay eggs, or to interrupting the time when certain species spawn.

Q: What is electrofishing and how does it work?

A: A method of capturing fish for study that does not harm the fish. Low voltage stuns aquatic animals that makes them more easily captured with nets.

### Web Resources

NYS DEC Freshwater Fish Species Information

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/84775.html>. - NYS DEC’s Freshwater Fish site provides information on a variety of species, with over ten series on fish including true bass, common minnows, common prey fish, sunfish, and trout.

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NYS DEC Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7917.html#View> - PDF version of the most recent Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide.

NYS DEC Fishing License

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6091.html> - Provides information on how to obtain a fishing license.

“Fish Anatomy.” Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

<http://myfwc.com/fishing/freshwater/fishing-tips/anatomy/> - Website contains information regarding fish anatomy, regulations, knot tying, and management issues.

“Common Prey Fish of New York.” New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 2013. January 8 2013 <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7031.html> - A New York State DEC website with descriptions of common prey fishes, their habits, and locations.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. (2008) Regulations and Enforcement. 16 July 2008 <http://www.dec.ny.gov/65.html> - A New York State DEC website with descriptions of regulations for fish, wildlife, and environmental protection.

## **Saltwater Fisheries information**

NOAA Fisheries Service. (2008) Fisheries Feature. Regulations. 16 July 2008

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/regulations.htm> - A National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration website for federal regulations, explanations, and resource laws.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. About Us. 16 July 2008

<http://www.asmfc.org/> - The ASMFC website with links to management, enforcement, and publication information.



# Can You Keep Your Fish?



There are rules to follow when fishing. Use the table below and the number on the popsicle stick to find out if your "fish" is a keeper!

## New York State Freshwater Fishing Regulations

	<i>Fish Species</i>	<i>Open Season</i>	<i>Minimum Length</i>	<i>Daily Limit</i>
<b>NASSAU COUNTY</b>	Trout	All Year	Any Size	3
	Largemouth Bass	1st Sat. June - April 30	Catch and Release ONLY	
	Sunfish	All Year	Any Size	15
	All Other Species	All Year	Any Size	Any Number
	Yellow Perch	All Year	8"	15
	Black Crappie	All Year	9"	15
	Pickerel	1st Sat. May - Mar. 15	18"	3
<b>SUFFOLK COUNTY</b>	Trout	All Year	Any Size	3
	Largemouth Bass	1st Sat. June - Nov. 30 Dec. 1 - April 30	12" Catch and Release ONLY	5
	Sunfish	All Year	Any Size	15
	All Other Species	All Year	Any Size	Any Number
	Yellow Perch	All Year	Any Size	15
	Black Crappie	All Year	9"	15
	Pickerel	1st Sat. May - Mar. 15	15"	5



**Food for Thought:** If you do not plan to eat your fish, then release your catch back into the water. Called "Catch and Release" fishing, this practice can help conserve our fishery in New York State.





# What Did You Catch?

use the color key below to identify your freshwater fish



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*Largemouth Bass*



=



*Sunfish*



=



*Chain Pickerel*



=



*Yellow Perch*



=



*Trout*

I  NY





# Can You Keep Your Fish?



*There are rules to follow when fishing. Use the table below and the number on the popsicle stick to find out if your "fish" is a keeper!*

## New York State Saltwater Fishing Regulations 2013

<i><b>Fish Species</b></i>	<i><b>Open Season</b></i>	<i><b>Minimum Length</b></i>	<i><b>Daily Limit</b></i>
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	May 1 - Sept 29	19"	4
Striped Bass	April 15 - Dec 15	28" - 40" > 40"	1 1
Black Sea Bass	July 10 - Dec 31	13"	8
Sea Robin	All Year	Any Size	Any Number
Weakfish	All Year	16"	1
Scup (Porgy)	May 1 - Dec 31	10"	30
Blue Crab	All Year	4.5"	50
Winter Flounder	April 1 - May 30	12"	2
Blackfish (Tautog)	Oct 5 - Dec 14	16"	4
Bluefish	All Year	No minimum size for first 10 fish, 12" for next 5	15 (No more than 10 shall be <12")



***Food for Thought:*** *If you do not plan to eat your fish, then release your catch back into the water. Called "Catch and Release" fishing, this practice can help conserve our fishery in New York State.*



# What Did You Catch?

use the color key below to identify your saltwater fish



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*Striped Bass*



=



*Summer Flounder (Fluke)*



=



*Black Sea Bass*



=



*Sea Robin*



=



*Bluefish*

