

# Quick Fishing Facts

The following is for information only. Refer to the current edition of the Iowa Fishing Regulations for a summary of fishing laws.

## Who needs a license?

- People age 16 and older
- Licenses typically are good for 3 years, 1 year, 7 days, or 1 day (24 hours)
- You must ...
  - carry your license when fishing.
  - show your license and catch to any DNR officer who asks to see it.
  - have a license to try to catch fish, frogs, or turtles.
  - also pay a trout fee to fish for trout.

## Where can I get a license?

- Sporting goods stores, convenience stores, county recorders, some bait shops
- Go Outdoors Iowa online licensing system: <https://gooutdoorsiowa.com/>

## Where can I go fishing?

- Public (city, county, state, federal) lakes and reservoirs
- Public access areas to rivers and streams (usually have signs)
- You must get permission from pond owner or person who rents the land to fish private ponds, lakes, or land next to rivers and streams.

## Catching Fish

- You can use only hook and line attached to a “pole.”
  - Poles = purchased poles, sticks, handles, cans, etc.
  - Only 2 “poles” per person (3 “poles” if you purchase the annual permit for a third line)
  - Only 2 hooks per pole and line (4 total per person)
- You cannot use chemicals, explosives, electricity, or any method other than hook and line. (Exception: some fish can be taken by snagging, bow and arrow and/or spear. Check regulations.)

## Hooking fish

- Fish (except carp and suckers) hooked anywhere other than the mouth (snagged) must be released immediately.
- Some areas do not allow snagging even for carp or suckers; check rules and regulations for the area where you fish.

## Keeping Fish (Size)

- Check the current Iowa Fishing Regulations for specific limits.
- Some fish must be a certain length (length limit): e.g., largemouth and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, walleye (may vary by location).
- Fish without length limits: bluegill, crappie, carp, catfish, bullheads

## Keeping Fish (Number)

- Check the current Iowa Fishing Regulations for specific limits.
- You can keep only so many of some kinds of fish each day (daily bag limit). Limits may be different, depending on the body of water.
- You can have only so many total (possession limit) of fish with daily bag limits.
  - This includes the daily limit and any fish at home that have not been eaten.
  - Fish must be eaten before any more of the same kind of fish can be caught.

Turtles – you can have no more than 100 pounds of live turtles or 50 pounds of turtle meat.

## Transporting Fish

- An officer must be able to tell what kind of fish you have while you are fishing.
- An officer must be able to determine the length of your fish on waters where there are length limits.
- If you clean your fish at a public fish cleaning station, you must leave at least one (1) square inch of skin on all fish or fillets.

