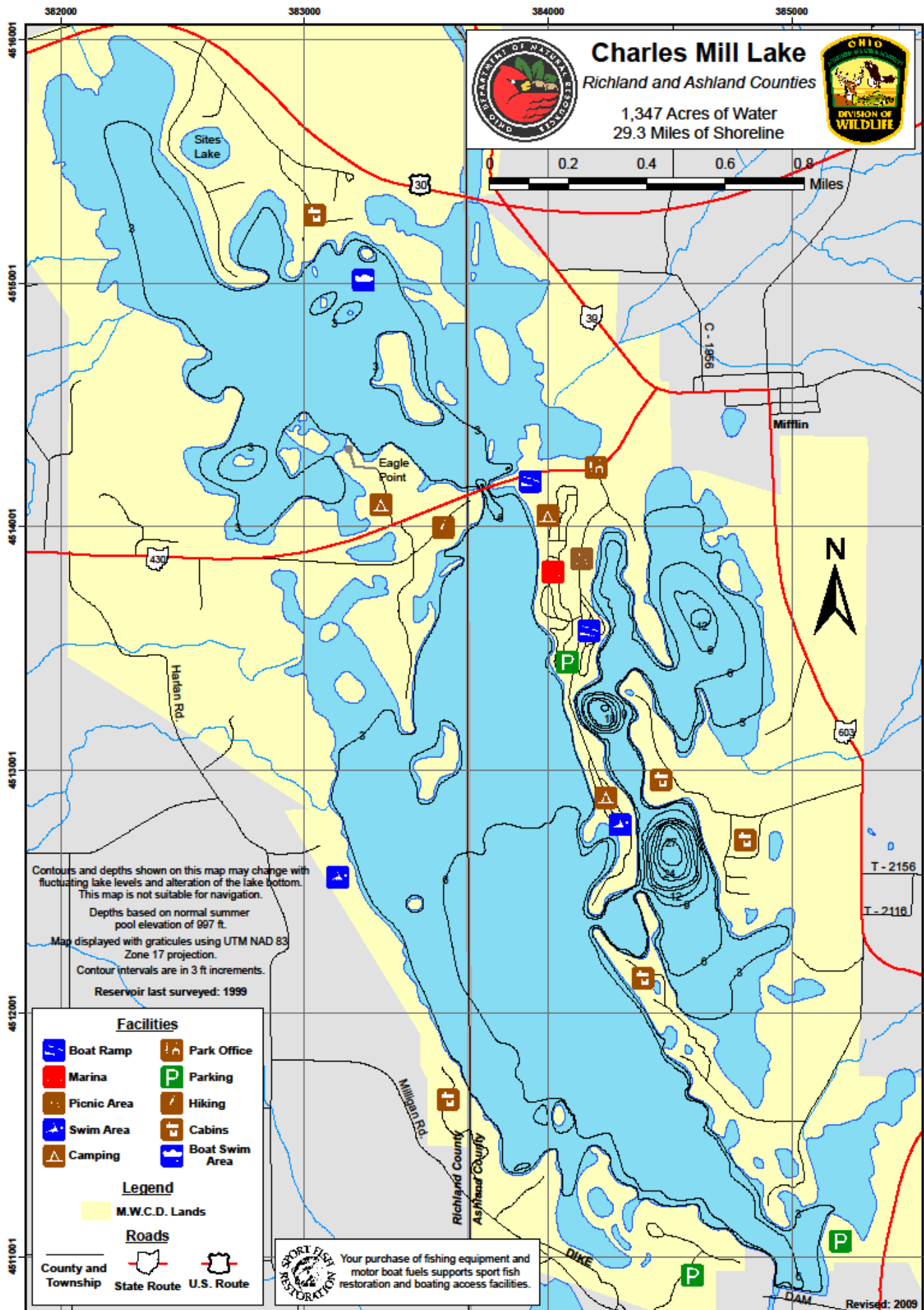




CHARLES MILL LAKE FISHING GUIDE



Charles Mill Lake Fishing Map

BEFORE YOU FISH

License Requirements

- A fishing license is required for any person 16 years and older to take fish from Ohio waters. Persons must have their license in their possession while fishing and must show the license to anyone on request. Licenses may be displayed using a mobile device.
- Licenses are available online at wildohio.gov or at Charles Mill Marina and can be purchased for a single day, a year, or multiple years.

Ohio Fishing Rules and Regulations

- There are daily limits to the number of fish caught by a single person as well as size minimums that vary by fish. These regulations are vital to keeping Ohio's fish populations strong for years to come.
- All limits listed within this guide are current as of March 1, 2022
- For more information on Ohio Fishing Regulations, visit OhioDNR.gov.

CHARLES MILL MARINA BAIT AND TACKLE SHOP

The marina store at Charles Mill Marina is stocked with all of the essential bait and tackle for a full day on Charles Mill Lake. We carry nightcrawlers, wax worms, glo worms, red worms, minnows and frozen shad. We also have an extensive array of tackle that's targeted towards fishing Charles Mill Lake, along with fishing poles, bait buckets, nets, fish finders, and safety equipment. We also carry snacks, pop, beer and ice.



FISHING TECHNIQUES



BAIT FISHING

Most new anglers start with bait fishing. Bait fishing (also called bottom fishing) is a matter of putting your bait in the water and waiting for a fish to find it, making it one of the simplest and most effective fishing methods for beginners.

Drift fishing allows you to fish over a variety of habitats as your boat drifts with the currents or wind movement. Your drift fishing rig can be setup to enjoy fishing on the bottom or at any selected depth if your drift fishing setup includes a bobber or float.

When it comes to selecting drifting bait, natural baits work best, but jigs, lures and artificial flies produce good results, too.



DRIFT FISHING



TROLLING

Trolling is a technique that employs dragging a hooked lure or bait through the water from a moving boat. This tricks the fish into thinking that your bait is moving prey.

Speed is crucial to making the bait look realistic. Try to match the speed of your troll with the speed of the fish you're looking to catch.

Bottom bouncing is a modified version of trolling, where the lure is dragged along the bottom from a moving boat. Use a buck tail jig or natural bait, and drag it so that it bounces, stirring up small clouds of sand. This helps to attract fish.

Make sure to check your bait frequently for weeds and other debris that may be picked up.



BOTTOM BOUNCING

FISHING TECHNIQUES

HOW TO CAST YOUR LINE

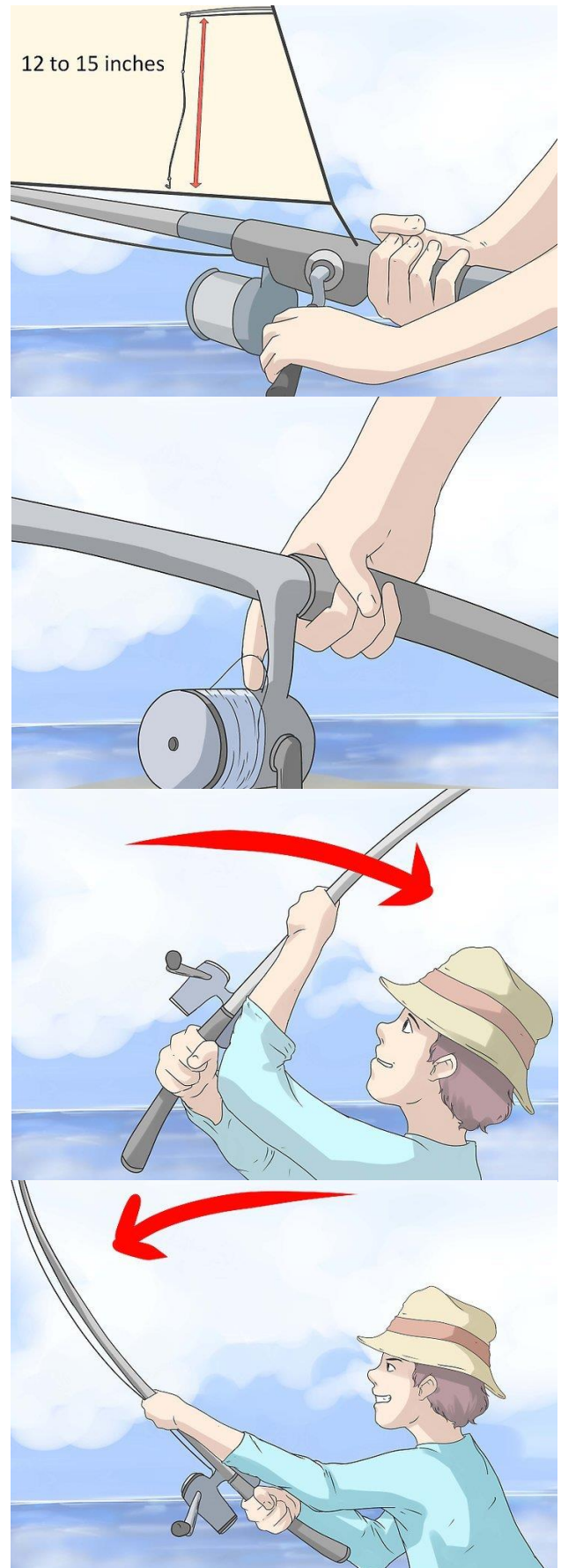
Spincasting reels are ideal tools for fishing for beginners and among the most popular beginner casting reels due to their relatively low cost and easy maintenance.

In fact, when learning how to fish, spincasting is often the easiest reel casting method to master. Unlike open-face spinning reels, spincasting reels come with the line enclosed in a plastic housing designed to minimize tangles.

While less powerful and less accurate than open-face spinning reels, spincasters can still be used to cast both light and heavy lures without breaking your fishing line.

Basic equipment includes a 7-foot rod, a spinning reel and 6- to 10-pound test line for casting 1/16- to 3/4-ounce lures.

1. **Hold the rod at about waist level**, grasping it so that the reel is below the rod, and the stem of the reel feels natural between your fingers. The bait or lure should be hanging **12 to 15 inches** below the end of the rod.
2. **Hook the line** with your forefinger, and **open the bail**, continuing to **hold the line**.
3. **Pull the rod tip back** so the tip sweeps over your dominant shoulder, and then **bring it forward swiftly** pointing the rod tip at your target. As the rod comes forward of your shoulder release the line with your finger so the weight of the lure pulls line off the reel.
4. **Close the bail** with your hand, and you're ready to reel using a retrieve technique.



FISHING TECHNIQUES

HOW TO SET A HOOK

WHAT IS SETTING A HOOK

Simply put, it is the act of planting the hook into the biting fish. You might be thinking, well, how hard can that be? Fish takes bait, reel in. But how can you be sure? A fishing pole or fishing rod setup for beginners may only contain a common bobber. How do you tell the difference between an actual bite versus a nibble or bump of the line? Follow the steps below to learn how to hook a fish every time.

WHEN TO SET A HOOK

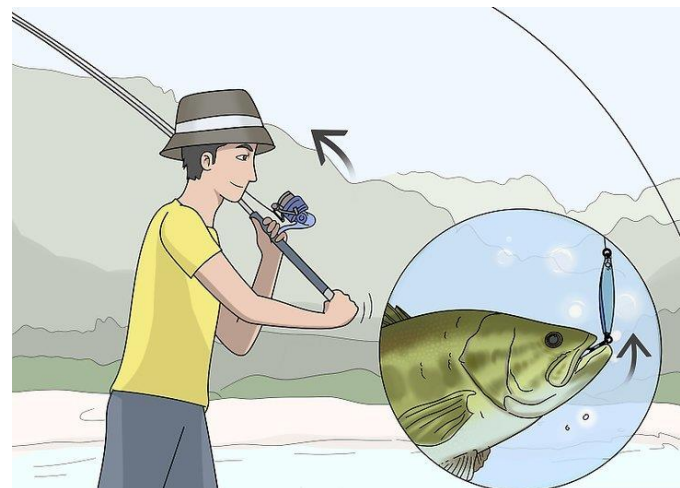
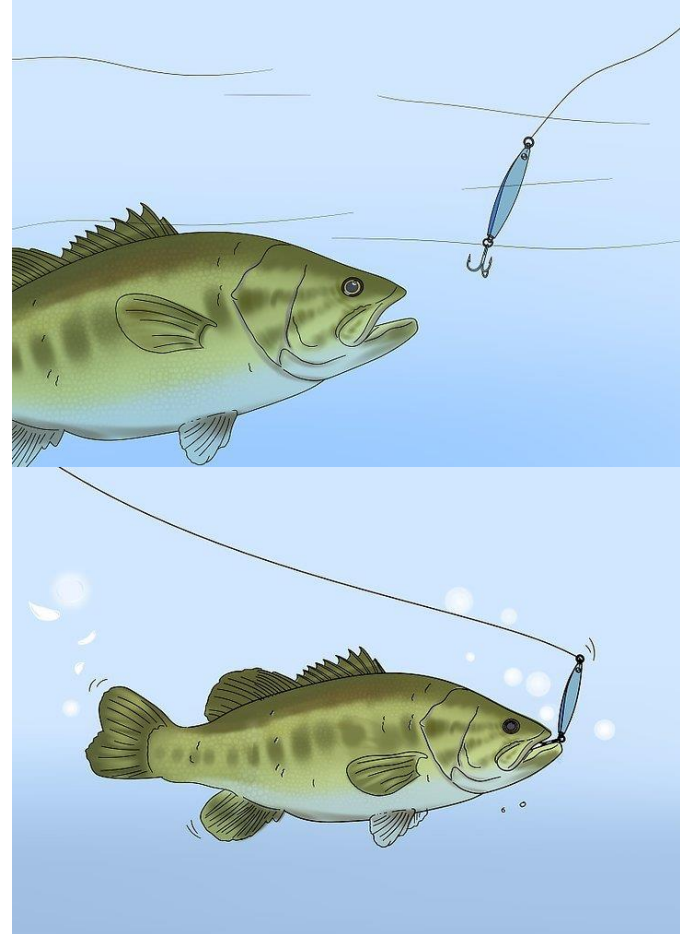
A good rule of thumb when learning how to fish, is to wait and feel the weight of the fish before setting it. If the fish is cautious and just tapping your fishing line and bait lightly, and not biting it, it's best to wait. **Let the fish take the bait**, and then set the hook after you feel its weight.

For best results, be sure to use the proper fishing hook setup. For example, the use of circle baits when fishing catfish often eliminates the need to set the hook, as it generally gets caught in the fish's mouth automatically.

HOW TO SET A HOOK IN THREE SIMPLE STEPS

1. To help you better know how to set the hook, look for common signs a fish is biting such as: your bobber is **pulled completely underwater**, you **feel a true tug** on your fishing line or your **fishing line starts moving**.
2. **Reel in slack** and keep your line tight with the bait or lure. This helps increase the sensitivity allowing you to feel the fish bite and be in a better position to set the hook.
3. The motion of setting the hook is relatively simple. **Snap the rod up into the air** to set the hook in the mouth of the fish. Use one snapping motion to set the hook rather than multiple jerks.

The more you know about the fish species you're after, and the more time you spend on the water practicing, the better you'll get. So grab the proper fishing hook setup and maximize your catches!



FISHING TECHNIQUES

HOW TO REEL IN A FISH

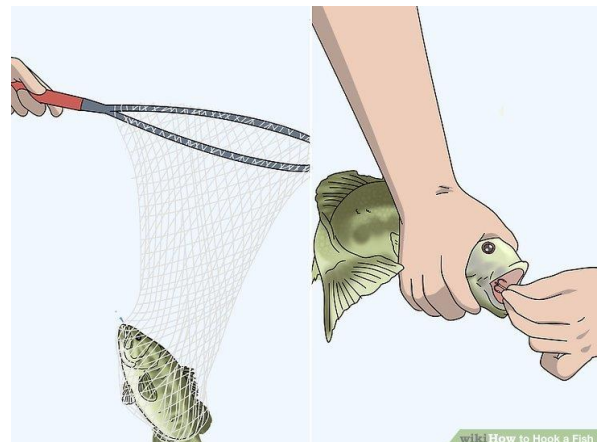
Once you successfully set the hook, the fish instinctively struggles to get free. This might involve jumping, making a long run, swimming back against the line or swimming around obstacles. Each species of fish reacts differently.

Fish hooked in shallow water are more likely to jump and behave more frantically than those hooked in deep water. Deep-water fish often seek the bottom.

Because bigger fish pull harder, reeling in a big fish is often a challenge for most anglers, including experienced pros. The first sign that you've hooked a big one is the sound the reel makes when it speeds into reverse, taking line off your fishing reel while you are holding it tightly.

Here is where you must remember your fishing reel techniques such as how to play a fish by not reeling in the line while the fish is swimming away.

1. Relax and let the drag and rod do the work. Just **keep the fishing rod up** at about a 45-degree angle to the water, **aim it straight towards the fish**, and be ready to reel when the drag stops moving and buzzing.
2. When the fish slows down and stops taking line off your reel, **it's time to go to start reeling**. When learning how to reel in a fish of greater size, a great technique to try is the pump and reel.
3. Without reeling the fish in, lift the tip of the rod up like you're trying to point it skyward to about 90 degrees. A stronger, or heavier fish will often put a major bend in your fishing rod, but don't worry this is normal
4. Then reel as you lower the rod tip back down to about 45 degrees, keeping even pressure on the fish.
5. Repeat this process.





CRAPPIE

HOW TO CATCH A CRAPPIE:

Crappie are one of the most popular fish in America, and it's easy to see why. They are abundant, easy to catch and don't require expensive poles and gear. They are the perfect fish for kids and first-time anglers.

The classic bobber above a small minnow setup is the easiest, yet probably most effective method for catching crappie. It's often best to use a fixed bobber set a foot or two above the minnow attached to a number one to two Aberdeen hook.

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	None
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	Easy
Size	4 to 10 inches
Bait	Minnows, worms, insects
Location	Shallow water near brush, docks or rocks
Best Season	Spring
Best Time of Day	Twilight to Dawn

Anglers can either use the minnow without weight to let it swim freely or add a split shot to keep the minnows they use at a certain depth and prevent it from swimming around too much or hanging up in the cover.

Typically a longer rod ranging from 7 feet for casting to 10 or 12 feet for flipping into cover works best for this bobber and minnow method.



Minnows, worms, insects—just about anything can catch a crappie's attention. Try different colors of lures, crappie's tastes change almost everyday.

The best time of year to catch crappie is during the spawning season which takes place from February-May. During the spawn, both male and female crappie move from deep locations into shallow and concentrated spawning areas. This makes them very easy to target, as they are actively feeding and defending their nests.



SAUGEYE

HOW TO CATCH A SAUGEYE:

Saugeye are a hybrid of the Walleye and Sauger. Unlike it's cousins, Saugeye are more tolerant of warm, muddier water and are plentiful in Charles Mill Lake.

Saugeye tend to stick close to the bottom and can be found in areas with plant and brush cover. The fish will lay-up in deeper water during the day (like near the dam), and come twilight, fan out to forage in shallower water. The same principle applies to seasons – deeper water in the winter, early spring and late fall, and shallower water in the summer months.

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	6
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	Easy-Medium
Size	13 to 16 inches
Bait	Minnows, night crawlers
Location	Near the bottom of the lake, around brush
Best Season	All Year
Best Time of Day	Morning

Charles Mill has a lot of good “bottom structure” i.e. submerged roads and house foundations. A fish finder is a great tool to finding these areas as it's often where Saugeye flock to.

Try out jigs with twister tails, especially with colors like chartreuse, yellow, white and black. A little extra flavor in the form of a nightcrawler will make this lure irresistible to Saugeye. Minnows are also a good bet with Saugeye.

Saugeye are a great winter fish and are still highly active even when there is ice on the water.



Saugeye are brought to Charles Mill Lake as fingerlings where they'll grow into the fish we catch.



HYBRID STRIPED BASS

HOW TO CATCH A HYBRID STRIPED BASS:

Hybrid striped bass, often referred to as “Wipers” by anglers, are genetically engineered, stocked fish that are known for their vicious nature and perennial hunger.

Wipers grow quickly and hit a variety of baits, making them high on any angler’s must-catch list. Wipers are open-water feeders that prey on large concentrations of bait fish.

Use a stout rod with plenty of backbone, a solid reel and a 10-12 pound braided line.

In the colder months wipers appear in schools swimming near the surface of the water. Try casting into the pods with rapalas and crankbaits.

Once the weather warms up, wipers head to cooler, deeper water. Tie on deep diving lures, or fish from the bottom with bait and don’t be afraid to move and cover more water. Because wipers tend to swim in schools, once you find one there’s a good chance you might find others.

Fishing for wipers is typically best in low light conditions just before dark and early in the morning. Even cloud cover can help improve fishing.



Use rapalas and crankbaits during colder months to attract Hybrid Striped Bass.

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	5
Minimum Keep Size	12 inches
Difficulty to Catch	Medium
Size	10 to 20 inches
Bait	Chicken liver, gizzard shad, minnows, any bait fish
Location	Deeper, open water
Best Season	Mid-spring to early fall
Best Time of Day	Low light at dawn and dusk



LARGEMOUTH BASS

HOW TO CATCH A LARGEMOUTH BASS:

Largemouth bass are one of the most exciting species of fish to catch. They strike aggressively, fight hard, and will often leap out of the water in stunning displays of acrobatics.

Live bait and artificial bait alike are equally effective at targeting largemouth bass. Consider using minnows, small shad or crawfish for live bait, and jigs, crankbaits spinnerbaits and jerkbaits for artificial bait.

Bass are attracted to lifelike action, so the more realistic your bait is, the more likely a bass is to go for it. Bass favor areas with some form of cover like vegetation or fallen trees and brush.

Bass are visual predators, relying on their keen sense of eyesight to help them identify and attack prey. They can see better in low-light conditions than most of the prey they hunt, which is one reason why early morning and evening tend to be particularly good times for fishing.

Variations in seasons and temperature affect how active bass are. During the spring and early summer, as the water is warming, they become much more active and can be caught in shallower water.

As the summer heats up, bass are still active but they usually move towards the deepest water on the lake.



Largemouth bass are widely abundant and can be found in 48 states nationwide.

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	5
Minimum Keep Size	12 inches
Difficulty to Catch	Medium
Size	10 to 15 inches
Bait	Minnows, shad and crayfish
Location	Shallow water when it's colder, deep water when it's warmer.
Best Season	Mid-spring to early fall
Best Time of Day	Low light at dawn and dusk



YELLOW PERCH

HOW TO CATCH A YELLOW PERCH:

Yellow perch are one of the most fun, rewarding and tastiest kinds of fish to catch.

Yellow perch are themselves a bait fish, and if you catch one you can be sure other types of larger fish are in the area also. Yellow perch are most productive in the late spring, early summer and early fall.

The best bait for yellow perch are small minnows, nightcrawlers or wax worms. Yellow perch have small mouths that have a hard time eating larger bait or lures.

You can also try small jigs, small spoons, soft plastic minnows, and even small spinner baits. Use a 6-8 pound monofilament line on a fast action rod tip. Having a sensitive rod is ideal so you know when you've hooked one.

Fish for yellow perch from the bottom, letting your bait sink until it hits the bottom. Retrieve your bait slowly or let it bounce across the bottom for more realistic action.

Try casting around for yellow perch, as they move in schools. Don't just keep fishing the same spot.



Yellow perch are one of the best fish to eat because of their mild taste and distinctive flavor

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	30
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	Medium
Size	5 to 12 inches
Bait	Minnows, nightcrawlers, wax worms.
Location	Shallow water at the bottom near structure
Best Season	Late spring to early fall
Best Time of Day	Early morning, evening hours



CHANNEL CATFISH

HOW TO CATCH A CHANNEL CATFISH:

Use a slip bobber with stink bait (the stinkier the better!) attached to a #6 treble hook and keep the bait close to the bottom of the lake. Use a bb split shot sinker to keep the bait at depth.

Watch the bobber carefully, channel catfish have very soft bites – when you think there’s one on the line, quickly set the hook. Catfish mouths are hard and it takes force to set the hook.

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	Under 28": No Limit 28" or Larger: 1
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	Medium
Size	18 to 30 inches
Bait	Stink Bait
Location	Shallow water near stumps, rocks and brush
Best Season	Mid-Summer
Best Time of Day	Twilight / Early Morning

Channel catfish are the most common type of catfish in North America. Channel cats aren’t picky eaters and their diet includes nightcrawlers, crickets, minnows, shad, even hot dogs or dog food!

The channel cat is distinguished from Bullhead and Flathead Catfish by their deeply forked tails and their darker color, usually black to grayish-blue.



A channel catfish body is covered with “taste buds” that provide this amazing ability for them to detect these amino acids and they have approximately 20,000 internal “taste buds” and the exterior of the body has approximately 175,000 external “taste buds”.

Having an entire body that allows the fish to detect smells allows it to “key in” on smells from as far as 15 feet away but some scientists speculate that could be even further.



BULLHEAD CATFISH

HOW TO CATCH A BULLHEAD CATFISH:

Bullheads are gregarious, travel in large schools, and live along the bottoms of warm lakes, slow-moving streams, quiet backwaters, and vegetated shallows.

Being bottom feeders, bobbers are often unnecessary for bullheads – especially on a windy day when moving bobbers can lift bait off the bottom and away from the fish. And you usually won't need a bobber to tell you when a determined bullhead hits your line!

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	No Limit
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	Medium
Size	12 to 18 inches
Bait	Stink Bait
Location	Warm, shallow water near stumps, rocks and brush
Best Season	Mid-Summer
Best Time of Day	Twilight/Dawn

For bullheads, use about a 6 lb. test line, and smaller hooks (sized 2 to 1/0) with long shanks. Bullheads often swallow hooks and longer shanked hooks are easier to remove.

Nightcrawlers are standard baits for Bullhead catfish but these fish will eat just about anything they can swallow. Use up your leeches, live and dead minnows, pieces of chicken, beef, hotdogs, marshmallows left over from last night's dinner, dough balls, stink bait...just avoid artificial lures as these fish forage by smell and taste.



Use caution when handling members of this feisty family of fish! Bullheads are armed with single thick, sharp spines at each of the leading edges of their pectoral (side) and dorsal (top) fins.

When alarmed, the fish firmly extend these spines that easily pierce human flesh.



FLATHEAD CATFISH

HOW TO CATCH A FLATHEAD CATFISH:

Use a sturdy line, at least 30-to-50 pound test line. Use a size 4 treble hook and live fish for bait. Focus on areas with rocky ledges and where streams feed into the lake.

Once the hook sets, prepare for a fight. A sizeable flathead can pull hundreds of feet of line, so try to keep it away from cover and getting your line caught up. Don't fight the fish with the reel. Play the fish with your arms and the rod. Point the rod straight up and allow the bend of the rod to tire the fish. Hold your ground when the catfish is fighting and when it eases up, lower your rod tip toward the water, reeling on the drop.

Be patient and don't apply unneeded pressure. Keep a net handy – flathead can be huge and it's almost impossible to reel them onto a boat.



Fresh and frozen shad make excellent bait for flathead catfish

FAST FACTS

Daily Catch Limit	Under 35": no limit 35" or Larger: 1
Minimum Keep Size	None
Difficulty to Catch	High
Size	15 to 45 inches
Bait	Live bait – shad, bluegill/shiner minnows
Location	Flowing water near rocky areas and debris
Best Season	Late-Summer to Fall
Best Time of Day	Twilight / Early Morning



RECIPE BOOK

SAUGEYE TACOS



- Saugeye filets
- Corn tortillas
- 2 cups Shredded cabbage
- ½ cup Cilantro, shredded
- 1 radish, sliced
- 1 cup Mayo
- 1 Lime, juiced
- 1 tsp Chili Powder
- 1 tsp Cumin
- 1 tsp Paprika
- 1 tsp Cayenne
- 1 tsp Salt/Pepper
- 1 tbsp Oil
- Cojita cheese (optional)
- Avocado (optional)

1. In a mixing bowl whisk the mayo, lime juice, chili powder and a pinch of salt together. Set aside.
2. Mix shredded cabbage and radish with lime juice and salt. Set aside.
3. Season the Saugeye filets with salt, pepper, cumin, paprika, cayenne and chili powder.
4. Preheat a skillet or grill to medium high heat. Brush with oil. Once hot, cook fish for 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer fish to plate.
5. Add corn tortillas to skillet/grill and warm for 15-30 seconds.
6. Serve fish on warm tacos, garnish with cabbage, sauce, cilantro avocado and lime.

CATFISH SANDWICHES



- Catfish filets
- Sandwich buns
- Pickles
- Bread Crumbs
- Cajun Seasoning
- 5 whole eggs – beaten
- 1 oz Whole Milk
- 1 tbsp garlic salt
- 3 cups canola oil
- 1 cup mayo
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp garlic salt
- 1 tsp sugar

1. Combine the mayonnaise, lemon juice, garlic salt, and sugar. Set aside.
2. Add oil to the saute pan and pre-heat on low.
3. Combine the mayonnaise, In a small bowl, mix eggs and milk and place to the side.
4. Combine the flour and bread crumbs on a large flat plate. In a separate bowl add the fish and season with garlic salt. Then place fish into the egg wash, then the breadcrumb/flour mixture.
5. Place the fish into the oil and let cook for 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the fish and place on a plate with paper towels.
6. Spread the mayo mixture on the sandwich buns, add the fish and top with pickles.

PAN-FRIED BASS



- Bass filets
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1 cup flour
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon garlic, sliced thin
- ¼ cup of fresh herbs such as basil, parsley, oregano
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp oil

1. Season the filets with salt and pepper. Dredge the filets in flour and shake off any excess.
2. Heat a saute pan to medium-high heat, then add oil.
3. Add the fish to the pan and fry for about 3 minutes per side until golden brown. Remove the fish from the pan.
4. Add butter to the pan and melt. Once hot, add the sliced garlic and fry until golden brown. Add herbs and remove from heat.
5. Add the lemon juice to the garlic-herb butter mix and season with salt and pepper.
6. Plate the filets and spoon the lemon-garlic herb butter on to the fish.