

Northeast Kingdom Fishing Guide

*Where, When and How to Enjoy
Fishing in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.*



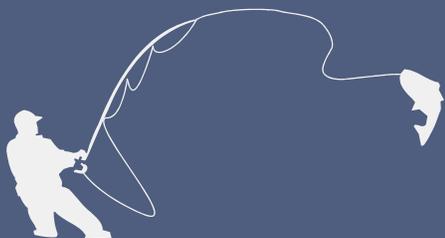
 VERMONT

FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

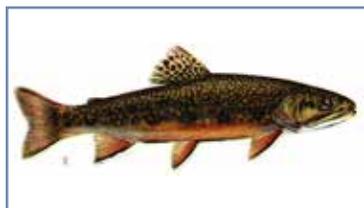
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The great outdoors are truly great here in Vermont, but we can easily become too busy to enjoy them. If you live in, or visit, Vermont why not enjoy the best the state has to offer? Fishing is a great way to escape, relax, and be refreshed while reconnecting with the wonderful natural world in which we live. Fishing is also a great way to spend quality time with family and friends. Chances are your children won't remember their best day of watching television, but take them fishing and you'll make memories you can share for a lifetime.

Fishing is a very affordable hobby. A fishing license costs only half as much as a tank of gas or about the same as a few movie tickets. Children under 15 years of age can fish for free! Perhaps the best part of your fishing license purchase is that it helps support the work of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, which exists to protect and conserve the fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats of Vermont. The department employs several fisheries biologists, who study and manage the state's fisheries resources. They have developed this guide to help you learn what fish to target as well as where, when, and how to enjoy fishing in Vermont. This edition is focused specifically on the Northeast Kingdom. For more information about other regions or fish regulations in general, see the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations or visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com.



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Excise taxes paid by hunters and anglers have led to some of the greatest conservation gains in history. Along with license sales, these funds have been used for fish and wildlife restoration, fishing access areas, and to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife-based recreation throughout Vermont.



Trout

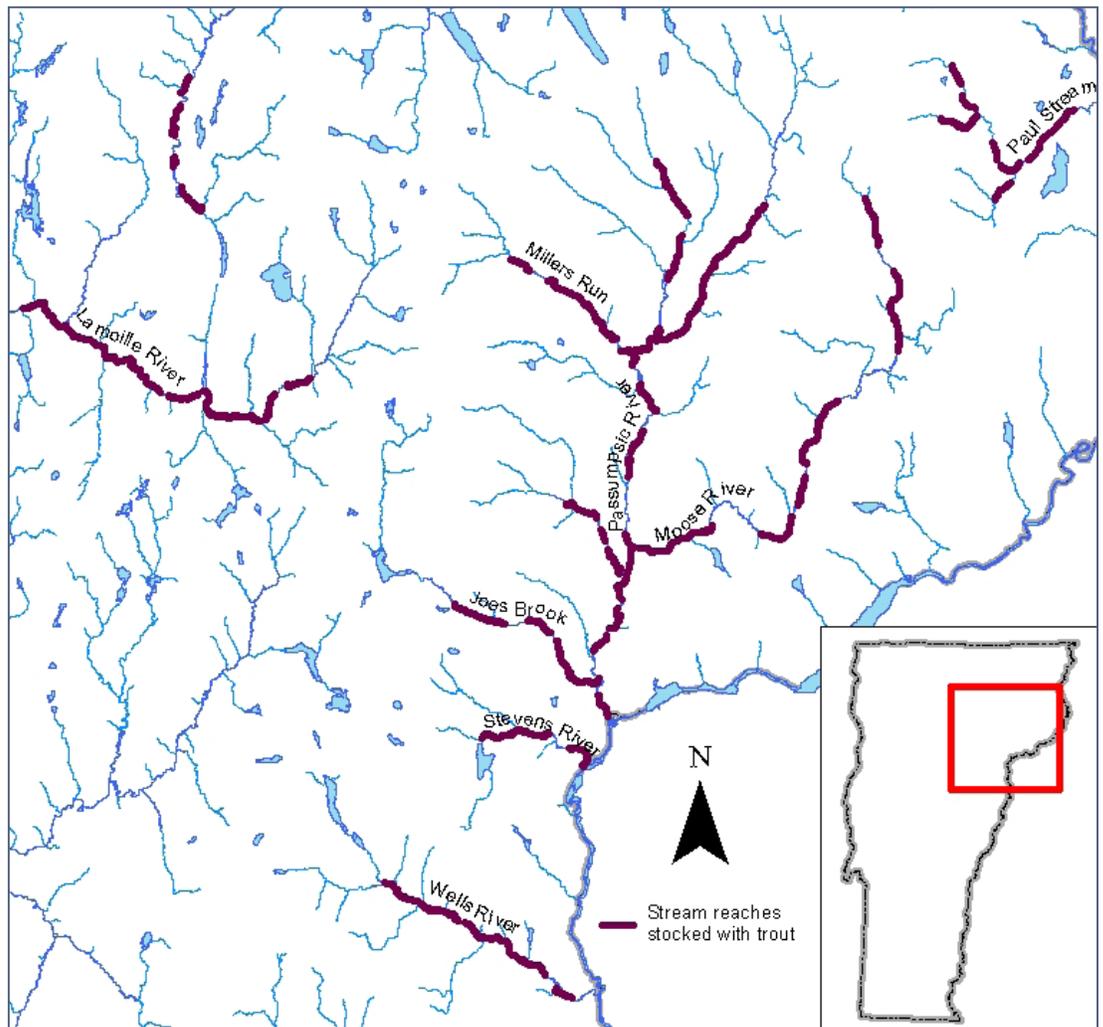


TROUT are the most popular fish for Northeast Kingdom anglers and for good reason. Trout fishing opportunities abound in the Northeast Kingdom, where nearly every small, cold stream supports wild brook trout. Trout are considered “coldwater” fish, which means that they need cold water to survive. Small streams in the Northeast Kingdom are generally cold because forested stream banks provide shade. Cold, clean water and diverse habitat in the streams allow brook trout to survive and reproduce naturally in these streams.

Brook trout have light spots on a dark background. Brown trout and rainbow trout both have dark spots on a light background.

Where to Fish:

Due to habitat destruction, most of the larger streams in the Northeast Kingdom become too warm in the summer to support wild trout, so the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department stocks them with brook, brown, and rainbow trout for the enjoyment of our anglers. Some of the more popular stocked streams include the **Lamoille, Moose, Passumpsic, Stevens, and Wells Rivers**; as well as **Millers Run** and **Paul Stream**. The stretch of the **Passumpsic River** in St. Johnsbury Village is stocked with especially large trout (13”-19”). Anglers are only allowed to keep two trout per day in this “Trophy Trout” section. Refer to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations book for more details.



Trout

When to Fish:

The best fishing for stocked trout is in the spring and early summer, shortly after the fish have been stocked. Trout season opens on the second Saturday of April, but most stocking occurs during the month of May. You can determine whether your favorite stream has been stocked by visiting www.anr.state.vt.us/fwd/stockingschedule.aspx. As noted above, trout need cold water to survive, so as water temperatures increase in the summer, trout in the larger rivers become harder to catch. In contrast, wild brook trout in the small, cold streams can be caught all summer long and even into the fall. Regardless of the season, fishing is usually best around dawn or dusk, when trout are most active.



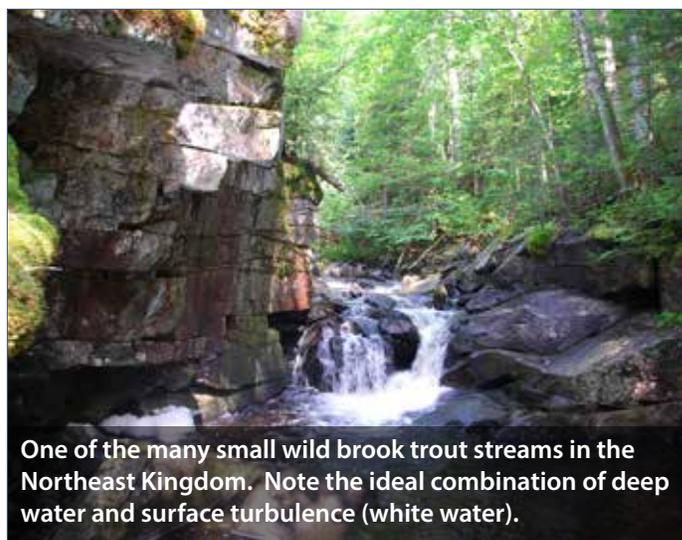
The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department stocks trout in the spring.

How to Fish:

The first challenge in trout fishing is to find the right place to fish. A good way to choose a fishing spot is to think like a trout. A trout needs to eat, but it also wants to avoid being eaten by birds, otters, or anglers. Try to imagine where a bird or otter would have the hardest time seeing and catching a trout, such as areas with deep water or where the water's surface is so turbulent that you can't see what is underneath.

If you find deep water and surface turbulence, you have probably found a good place to fish.

Stocked trout in the larger rivers can be caught with a variety of baits and lures. A live worm with a sinker for weight is a great choice. In areas with current, you can cast across the current or slightly upstream, and let the bait drift downstream. At the end of the drift, reel in and cast again. In areas with slow current, you can simply cast the worm out and let it sink to the bottom. Because trout are typically not "bottom feeders", the worm will be even more effective if you use a "worm



One of the many small wild brook trout streams in the Northeast Kingdom. Note the ideal combination of deep water and surface turbulence (white water).

blower" to inject an air bubble into it so that it will hover just off the stream bottom.

Lures like spoons and spinners can also be very effective at catching stocked trout. Always use small-diameter fishing line, 6 pound test or lighter, to avoid spooking wary trout.



Wild brook trout in the smaller streams are often eager to feed, but fishing smaller streams can be challenging. These fish can be easily spooked. Keep a low profile so they don't see you. Casting can be a real challenge in smaller streams. Use a short rod and/or make short, underhand tosses.

Worms are the bait of choice in small streams because there is usually not enough room to effectively fish an artificial lure.



Panfish



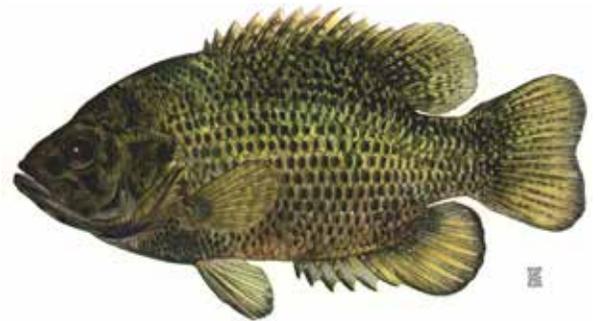
BROWN BULLHEAD



PUMPKINSEED SUNFISH



YELLOW PERCH



ROCK BASS

Bullheads, perch, rock bass, and sunfish are often referred to as “panfish” because they are easy to catch, abundant, and taste delicious, making them a good choice for the frying pan. Many lakes and ponds in the Northeast Kingdom host one or all of these species. Near the end of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations are lists of water bodies in different parts of the state and the fish species that are present in them. Here, we only highlight a few of the better fishing opportunities for the shore-based angler.

Where to Fish:

Gardner Park, located on Lake Memphremagog in Newport City, provides fishing opportunities for all of the panfish species listed above. Much of the Gardner Park waterfront can be fished easily. A good location to try is where the Clyde River enters the lake. A footbridge just to the west of the US-5 bridge also provides good fishing opportunities. Canoes and kayaks can be rented from the local livery. In case the kids get bored, the park also has a very nice playground.

Island Pond, in Brighton, also supports all of the panfish species listed above. A good place to fish from shore is the town park at the very north end of the pond. This park also has a playground and a beach. The



Panfish

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department owns and maintains an access area at the south end of the pond, where you can launch a boat.

Newark Pond, in Newark, has abundant populations of yellow perch and smallmouth bass. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department owns an access area near the north end of the pond. You can either cast from the access area or from the shoulder of the road, which travels right along the north end of the pond. You can also fish from the road shoulder at the dry hydrant, further south. If you have a boat, you can launch at the access area



Fosters Pond in Peacham and **Lower Symes Pond** in Ryegate provide good fishing for bullhead catfish (a.k.a. hornpout). The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department owns access areas at both of these ponds, where you can fish from shore or launch a boat. For maps and directions visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com/Fish_Accessareas.cfm.

When to Fish:

All of these species spawn in the late spring (May to June), and fishing can often be good just before or during the spawning period, when they form large schools in shallow water. The fishing at Gardner Park can be especially good in the spring when these species congregate to spawn in the Clyde River or near its mouth. Unlike trout, panfish prefer warm water, so fishing can be good all summer. Panfish species can be caught at any time of the day, but morning and evening is often best. The best fishing for bullheads is usually at night.

How to Fish:

The best way to catch panfish is usually to fish a worm on or near the bottom of the pond or suspended under a



bobber. Again, remember that these fish want to avoid predators, so look for them near deep water or some type of cover like aquatic vegetation or a fallen tree.

A fun and effective way to fish for bullheads is to fish after dark with a worm on the bottom of the pond. The Fosters and Lower Symes Ponds access areas and Gardner Park are great places to try this technique.



Any lake or pond that has perch can be a good place to try ice fishing (if it is open to ice fishing, refer to Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations). Try small jiggling lures tipped with a live maggot or a perch eye. While using maggots or perch eyes may sound gross, they are some of the best types of live bait you can use for panfish. Fortunately, there are artificial alternatives that work almost as well. Try using small plastic “micro jigs” that you can buy at most tackle shops catering to ice fishing.

These can be found in the shape of maggots, minnow heads, small fish, and even insects like mayflies. Many are even scented with an attractant.



Bass and Chain Pickerel



LARGEMOUTH BASS



SMALLMOUTH BASS



CHAIN PICKEREL

Bass have been growing in popularity with Vermont's anglers, and the Northeast Kingdom boasts many great options for catching largemouth and smallmouth bass. While chain pickerel are much less popular with Vermont's anglers, they are widespread, abundant, easy to catch, and taste delicious (if filleted properly, as they are very bony). Some of the better options for the shore-based angler are listed below. See the "Panfish" section for more detailed descriptions of these locations.

Where to Fish:

Gardner Park is a great place to fish for both species of bass and for chain pickerel. Large numbers of smallmouth bass enter the Clyde River in late-May and June to feed and spawn.

Island Pond has both species of bass and chain pickerel.

As noted earlier, **Newark Pond** supports an abundant population of smallmouth bass.

Chain pickerel are very active under the ice, so any pond that has them and is open to ice fishing can be a good option for ice fishing for this species. Refer to the species lists near the

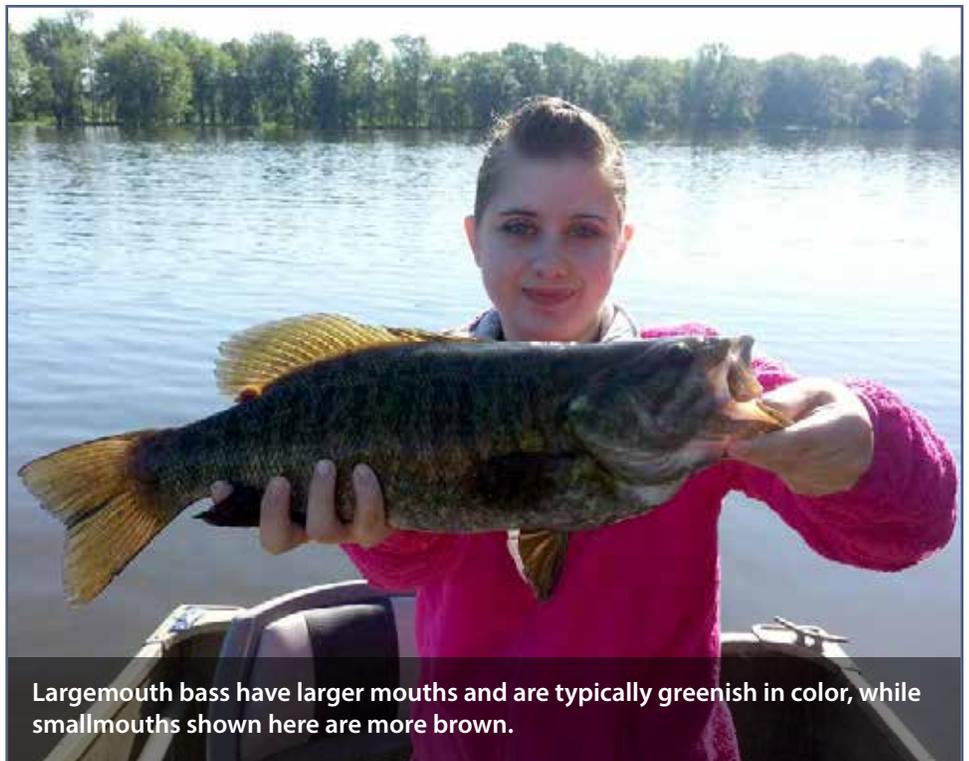
back of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations book to determine where pickerel can be found near you.

When to Fish:

Bass spawn in May and June. In lakes and ponds from the second Saturday in April until the Friday before the second Saturday in June, anglers can only fish for bass with artificial flies and lures, and they must be immediately released. From the Second Saturday in June until

November 30, anglers can use live or artificial baits and they can keep some bass if they choose to do so (refer to Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations book). There are no season, gear, or harvest restrictions on chain pickerel.

Like panfish, bass and pickerel prefer warmwater, so they can be caught all summer long. Best fishing is often at dawn and dusk, when these predatory species are most active.



Largemouth bass have larger mouths and are typically greenish in color, while smallmouths shown here are more brown.

Bass and Chain Pickerel

How to Fish:

These fish are commonly caught while using worms to fish for panfish. Live minnows are even more effective for bass and chain pickerel. These species also respond well to artificial lures such as soft plastic worms, crankbaits, spoons, and spinners. Spoons and spinners are especially effective for chain pickerel because they can be cast a long distance, and pickerel are attracted to the bright flash and vibration of these lures.



Chain pickerel are a fun target during the ice fishing season.

There are two main methods for catching chain pickerel during the ice fishing season. Pickerel can be caught on jigging lures that are tipped with maggots, perch eyes, or small pieces of perch meat. However, the most effective method is often to fish a minnow or small perch under a tip-up. If perch are present in the pond where you want to fish, you can often catch your own bait with little effort.



Now that you know a little about the Northeast Kingdom's fish and where to go find them, we hope you'll take the time to explore all the fishing opportunities that this great region offers. Enjoy!