

The Big GRIN

Grab the kids – we're going fishin'!



BY
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AND
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Remember the first time you went fishing? The sun sparkled on the water, you and your friends played on the shore and teased each other with creepy worms. Then the bobber bobbed — a bite! — and a big grin spread across your face as you hauled in your first-ever fish. That night at home, your proud mom somehow figured out a way to clean and serve an 8-ounce sunfish to the family for dinner.

Those were the days! Maybe your busy schedule and responsibilities weigh heavily on you now, and your distant, carefree worm-dunking adventures seem too good to be true. Maybe — GASP! — no one ever took you fishing!

We say: The first week of June is National Fishing and Boating Week, and it's the perfect time to make some new fishing memories for you and your family! Fishing is fun. It's easy. It's cheap — kids under 16 don't even need a license. It's a fantastic way to reconnect with family and friends. And, best of all, you can do it close to home.

"This time of year in New Hampshire, the days are long and warm," says Mark Beauchesne, coordinator of the *Let's Go Fishing!* program. "Maybe the fish are biting, or maybe they're not. It doesn't matter," he comments, "Because you're on the water, and you're spending time with people you care about. It's hard not to relax out there!"

On these pages, we've collected some simple tips to help you get started — along with a tempting selection of close-to-home fishing opportunities for folks in southern New Hampshire.

Have fun on the water this spring and summer, and don't forget the big grin! Send your pictures and stories to lpoinier@wildlife.state.nh.us — together, we'll create a "gallery of grins" for the Fish and Game website!

Prepare for the Day

Make a fun day even better by taking along the right gear. You'll want to have:

- Fishing rods with spin-casting reels and 8-pound-test line
- Tackle box with hooks, bobbers, non-lead sinkers, artificial baits and a pair of pliers
- N.H. Freshwater Fishing Digest
- Cooler with ice for storing your catch

Keep your family comfortable while they're fishing, and they'll ask to come with you again. Have them dress for the weather and be ready for whatever the day might bring. Keep the bug spray handy, as well as a simple first aid kit, sunscreen, sunglasses and hats. Pack plenty of snacks and drinks, too — but keep in mind that some fishing sites have many users. To help keep these places clean and safe, bring along a small trash bag and carry out everything you bring in.

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Fish Free on June 7

Been thinking about fishing, but not ready to spring for a license? Take advantage of New Hampshire's Free Fishing Day on Saturday, June 7. You can fish all day anywhere in the state without a license. It's a great chance for families to enjoy fishing together for the first time. Once you try it, you'll be hooked!

Season dates, limits and all other fishing regulations must be followed on the free day. These rules are published online at Fish and Game's web site, or pick up a copy of the *2003 New Hampshire Freshwater Fishing Digest* at your local license agent. One exception to the no-license requirement on Free Fishing Day: you do still need a license and a special permit to fish for brood stock Atlantic salmon in the Merrimack and lower Pemigewasset Rivers.

If you do get hooked on fishing, it's easy to purchase your license online anytime at wildlife.state.nh.us. All you need is a credit card, your driver's license and a printer. You'll be set for a fun-filled year of fishing adventures.



Where to go

Where are they biting? Here are some of our close-to-home favorites.

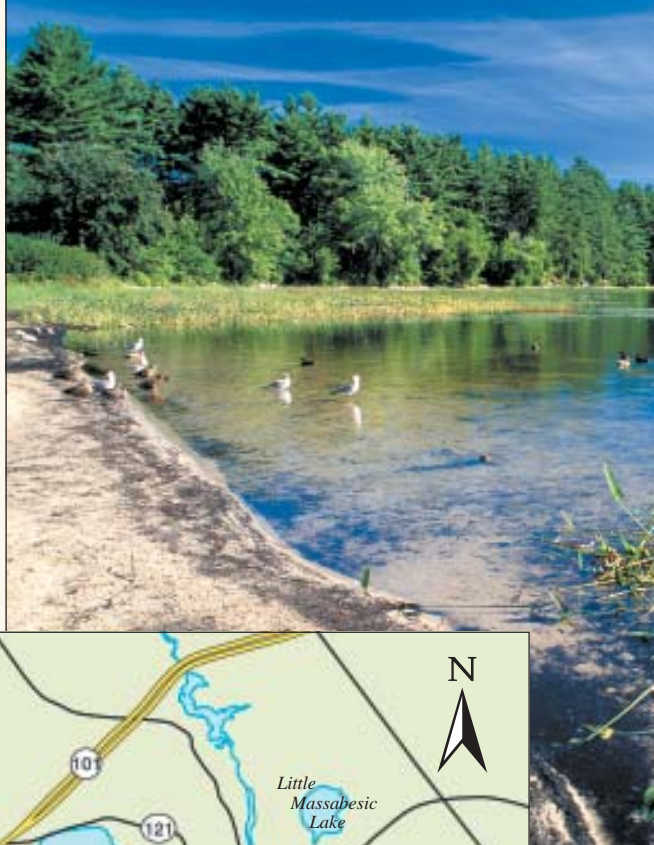
LAKE MASSABESIC

The jewel of Manchester, Lake Massabesic boasts numerous areas for fishing access, offering the land-based angler the best fishing around. Gravel fire roads follow the shoreline. Note that this lake is the main water supply for the area, so special regulations apply; no wading or swimming are allowed. Try one of these areas at Lake Massabesic for fishing and family activities:

Front Park — Take exit 1 off Route 101. Head south on 28 bypass through the traffic circle, and you'll find a large park with plenty of shoreline access. The best fishing is at the south end of the park, near a drainage culvert.

Deer Neck Bridge — Further south on bypass 28, try fishing the narrow channel that connects the two sides of Lake Massabesic — and be sure to save some time for exploring the nearby walking trails.

Clair's Landing — In the village of Auburn on Route 121, you'll find a spot that's a great pick for a family outing, offering excellent fishing and additional fishing sites further down the river.



Want more fishing tips and New Hampshire hot spots? Sign up for the free Fishing Report at the N.H. Fish and Game web site, www.wildlife.state.nh.us, and we'll deliver the fishing news to your e-mail in-box every Thursday!



PISCATAQUOG RIVER

The Piscataquog has become popular with anglers in the Manchester area. In spring and early summer — while the water is still cool — fishing for trout is at its best.

Kelley Street Bridge — The upper part of the river below the bridge is a good place to start out for trout fishing. As you work your way downstream to the Merrimack, the river changes to a warmwater fishery, where smallmouth and largemouth bass and other fish are plentiful.

Piscataquog River Park — The park's growing trail system on both sides of the river provides dozens of places to cast your line, right in the middle of good fishing for both cold and warmwater fish. The main park entrance is on the east side of the river, off Douglas Street.



©ALAN BRIERE PHOTO

Try Front Park on Lake Massabesic for fishing and family fun, with lots of shoreline access to the water. Tranquil fishing destinations like this can be found in cities and towns throughout New Hampshire.

MINE FALLS PARK

Just minutes from downtown Nashua, Mine Falls Park's network of trails follows the Nashua River, offering rewarding fishing opportunities along the way.

Mill Pond — Enjoy easy shoreline access and great fishing for largemouth bass, bluegills and yellow perch.

Nashua River — From below Mine Falls Dam to downtown, you'll find several miles of trails and excellent fishing access to the river. This area gives anglers the ideal opportunity to cast their lines for abundant smallmouth bass, bluegills, largemouth bass and carp, and explore the possibilities of the beautiful Nashua River.



©JIM BLOCK PHOTO

Other locations in the Nashua area offer fishing access to the Merrimack River. At the **Taylor Falls Bridge** and the **bridges on Route 111** you'll catch carp, smallmouth and largemouth bass. **Greeley Park** also offers access to the Merrimack, with plenty of fine fishing spots and a nearby boat launch.

There's no better way to spend a summer day than fishing with your buddies.

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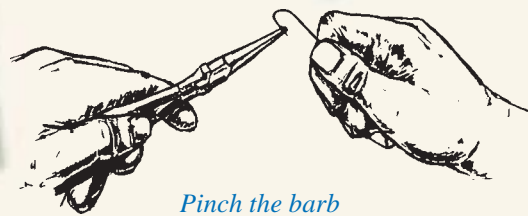
Catch-and-release

Fishing for fun, not food? Make sure you practice “catch-and-release.” A fish that is properly handled will have the best chance for survival.

Here’s how:

- Use barbless hooks or hooks with pinched barbs.
- Play the fish quickly, so it does not become exhausted or stressed.
- To remove the hook, gently back it out of the fish’s mouth. You can use pliers for this.
- Never remove a deeply-swallowed hook from the fish’s throat or stomach — instead, cut the leader and leave the hook in the fish. It will eventually work free or rust away.
- Release the fish while it’s still in the water. 

For more information, look for our catch-and-release brochure at www.wildlife.state.nh.us



Pinch the barb



Gently back the hook out



Release in water

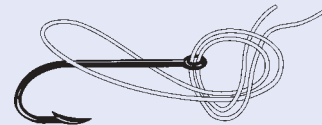
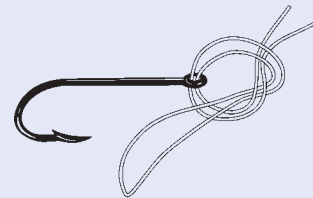
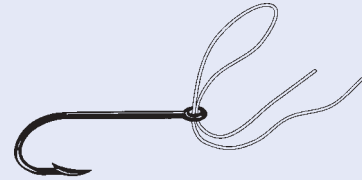
Aquatic education and fisheries restoration in New Hampshire is supported by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program.



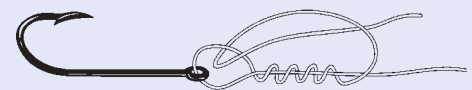
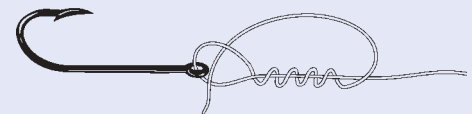
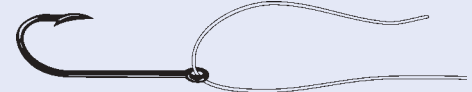
Need-to-Know Knots

Whether you’re an experienced angler or a first-time fisherman, secure your hook on the line with these tried-and-true knots, and you won’t have to tell about “the one that got away.”

Palomar Knot




Clinch Knot



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