A FREE REFERENCE FROM NOR'EAST ANGLER

New England Fishing Regulations at a Glance

Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Freshwater first, then saltwater.

Prices and rules as of November 2026 · noreastangler.com

This is a short statewide summary for anglers, drawn only from each state's official agency pages and lawbooks. It is not a substitute for the official regulations. Many waters have special rules, and agencies can change limits during the year. Check the official page for the state you will fish before you go. Those addresses are on page 3.

LICENSES

State	Who needs one	Resident / Nonresident (adult annual)	Where to buy
Maine	Inland: age 16 and older. Saltwater: annual DMR registry unless you qualify for an exemption.	Inland season license $30 / $83 (agent fee extra). Saltwater registry $1 online or at DMR, $2 at an IFW agent.	IFW agents, online, or the IFW office in Augusta. Registry also by mail or at the DMR licensing office in Augusta.
New Hampshire	Age 16 and older, freshwater and saltwater (separate licenses).	Freshwater $45 / $63. Saltwater $11 for both. Prices include a $1 agent fee, and freshwater prices include a $1 fisheries habitat fee. A transaction fee of $2 ($2.75 online) is added.	nhfishandgame.com, license agents, Fish and Game offices, and some town or city clerks. Valid Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.
Vermont	Age 15 and older. No license needed under age 15. Vermont has no saltwater fishery.	Fishing $28 / $54. Youth (ages 15 to 17) $8 / $15. Residents age 66 or older may buy a permanent license for $60.	Online or from authorized license agents. vtfishandwildlife.com
Massachusetts	Freshwater: age 15 and older. Saltwater permit: age 16 and older.	Freshwater $40 / $50, plus a $5 Wildlands Conservation Stamp on the first resident license each year and on every nonresident license. Saltwater $10, free at age 60 and over (you still need the permit). No resident or nonresident price difference for saltwater.	MassFishHunt, license vendors, or MassWildlife and Division of Marine Fisheries offices. Licenses are valid through Dec. 31.
Rhode Island	Freshwater: age 15 and older. Saltwater: age 16 and older, unless an exemption applies.	Freshwater (online) $24 / $41. Trout Conservation Stamp $6 if you keep trout, salmon, or charr, or fish a catch and release or fly fishing only area. Saltwater $7 / $10; a 7 day license is $5 for either.	rio.ri.gov, bait and tackle shops, retail vendors, and some city or town clerks. Freshwater licenses expire on the last day of February. Yearly saltwater licenses expire Dec. 31.
Connecticut	Age 16 and older, inland and marine (separate or combined licenses).	All Waters $32 / $63 (ages 16 to 17 resident $16). Inland only $28 / $55 (ages 16 to 17 resident $14). Marine only $10 / $15 (ages 16 to 17 resident $5). Residents age 65 and older: inland and marine licenses are free, with annual renewal. Trout and Salmon Stamp $5 ($3 for resident ages 16 to 17) to keep trout or salmon, or to fish designated trout waters.	portal.ct.gov/CTOutdoorLicenses, bait and tackle shops, town clerk offices, or DEEP field offices. Calendar year, expires Dec. 31.

Maine saltwater exemptions include anglers under 16 and anyone holding a valid Maine freshwater fishing license that is not a lifetime license, plus other exemptions listed by DMR. **Rhode Island** residents age 65 or older may obtain a free permanent freshwater license (the printed guide says "over 65," so confirm if you are exactly 65), and no trout stamp is required of residents or nonresidents over 65. Residents over 65 also get a free saltwater license. **Massachusetts** freshwater licenses are free for residents ages 15 to 17 and age 70 or over; residents 65 to 69 pay $20, plus the stamp when it applies. **New Hampshire** senior freshwater licenses are $7 for residents age 68 and older (born in 1948 or later). Several states honor one another's saltwater licenses under reciprocity rules; confirm the details with the agency if you will cross a state line.

Seasons and ice fishing

Statewide frameworks only. Listed waters often have special rules. Prices and rules as of November 2026.

MAIN STATEWIDE SEASON FRAMEWORK

Maine

South Zone lakes and ponds are open Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 to ice and open water fishing under general law. North Zone lakes and ponds are open to open water fishing April 1 to Sept. 30, and closed to all fishing Oct. 1 to March 31. Rivers, streams, and brooks in both zones are open April 1 to Aug. 15, then open with artificial lures or flies only from Aug. 16 to Sept. 30, and closed Oct. 1 to March 31. Only listed waters have special fall seasons (often artificial lures only, with trout, landlocked salmon, and togue released at once).

New Hampshire

On general lakes and ponds, trout may be taken in open water from ice-out to ice-in (5 fish or 5 pounds, whichever is reached first) and 2 fish through the ice. Trout ponds are closed to ice fishing and are open the fourth Saturday in April to Oct. 15. Lake trout: Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 2 fish, 15 inch minimum. Landlocked salmon: April 1 to Sept. 30, 2 fish, 15 inch minimum; salmon may not be taken through the ice. Rivers and streams: trout Jan. 1 to Oct. 15. Bass have a catch and release, artificial lures and flies only window from May 15 to June 15.

Vermont

Waters not listed with special rules follow Table 1 in the official 2026 guide. Trout harvest on rivers and streams runs from the second Saturday in April to Oct. 31 (8 fish, no minimum). On lakes and ponds, trout harvest is the second Saturday in April to Oct. 31 and Jan. 1 to March 15 (6 fish). Bass harvest is the second Saturday in June to March 15 (5 fish, 10 inch minimum). Outside a harvest season, targeted catch and release with artificial lures and flies is allowed except on waters closed to fishing. Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River have their own tables.

Massachusetts

Most inland species are open Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Statewide trout (brook, brown, rainbow, and tiger): 6 per day, and only 3 of those may be brook, brown, or tiger trout in any combination. Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs follow separate Department of Conservation and Recreation seasons. Landlocked salmon harvest is limited to Quabbin, Wachusett, and the Swift River below Quabbin. Sea-run Atlantic salmon may not be harvested in inland waters.

Rhode Island

The open season on trout, salmon, and charr closes at the end of February and reopens at 6:00 AM on the second Saturday of April. All designated trout waters are closed to fishing during that closure. The daily trout limit is 5 from the second Saturday in April through Nov. 30, and 2 from Dec. 1 through the last day of February, with an 8 inch minimum. Black bass and many other freshwater species have no closed season. A Trout Conservation Stamp is required to keep trout, salmon, or charr, or to fish a catch and release or fly fishing only area.

Connecticut

Default inland rules, for waters without a special regulation, keep most species open year round. Trout (brook, brown, rainbow, tiger, and lake): 9 inch minimum, daily limit 5. Catch and release only from March 1 until 6:00 AM on the second Saturday of April. A Trout and Salmon Stamp is required to keep trout or salmon, and to fish designated trout waters. Many rivers, trout parks, and management areas have their own rules.

ICE FISHING (STATEWIDE)

State	Lines or devices	Shelters
Maine	Five lines through the ice (two lines in open water). S-8 waters are restricted to two lines per person.	Remove a shack used for ice fishing by ice out or 3 days after the close of the ice fishing season, whichever is earlier, where there is a closed ice season; by ice out or March 31, whichever is earlier, where there is no closed ice season.
New Hampshire	Six ice fishing devices on most waters; two on designated lake trout and salmon lakes; five on New Hampshire and Maine border waters, except two on Great East Lake. Lake trout and salmon waters: ice fishing Jan. 1 to March 31; salmon may not be taken through the ice. Trout ponds are closed to ice fishing. Baited ice devices may use only one single hook point.	Bob houses must show the owner's name and address and come off the ice no later than April 1. On New Hampshire and Maine border waters, do not place a shack on the ice more than 3 days before the water opens to ice fishing, and remove it within 3 days after ice fishing closes.
Vermont	Eight lines, except 15 on Lake Champlain and 6 on the Connecticut River. You must have immediate control, be able to see your lines, and tend a line that indicates a fish within 30 minutes. Each line may have not more than two baited hooks, or three artificial flies, or two lures.	A fishing house (including a tent used for ice fishing) must show the owner's name and address, may not be placed before Nov. 20, and must come off by the last Sunday in March or when the ice can no longer support the house, whichever comes first.
Massachusetts	Up to five hooks through the ice at one time, on any mix of tip-ups and jig sticks. A lure with more than one hook still counts as one hook. You must be able to tend your own gear.	No statewide shelter rule was listed on the official MassWildlife ice fishing or freshwater regulations pages checked for this sheet.
Rhode Island	Up to five personally attended tip-up lines, with a single hook on each, for fishing through the ice.	No statewide shelter rule was listed in the official 2026 to 2027 freshwater regulation guide checked for this sheet.
Connecticut	Not more than six tip-ups, floats, similar devices, or hand-held jigs in any combination, except on some waters. Not more than three baited hooks, ice flies, or artificial lures on each device.	No statewide shelter rule was listed in the official April 2026 freshwater fishing guide checked for this sheet.

Saltwater limits and official sources

Headline recreational limits. Vermont has no saltwater fishery. Prices and rules as of November 2026.

STRIPED BASS

These are the coastwide recreational harvest rules as published by each marine agency. Local closures and special river rules still apply. Measure total length as the agency describes it, usually a straight line from the snout or lower jaw to the tip of the tail.

State	Season	Size and bag	Other rules to know
Maine	Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 in most coastal waters. The Kennebec watershed (including the Sheepscot and Androscoggin) has special open, catch and release, and closed periods. A stretch of the Saco River is closed.	1 fish per day, 28 to 31 inches inclusive, total length (lower jaw to the tip of the tail, tail pinched).	Hook and line only. No gaffing. Non-offset circle hooks required when using bait. No bait on treble hooks. Fish must remain whole and intact, personal use only. Unlawful in federal waters more than 3 miles from shore.
New Hampshire	No closed season.	1 fish per day, 28 inches to less than 31 inches total length.	Non-offset, corrodible circle hooks required when angling with bait. Gaffing, culling, and sale are prohibited. Head and tail must stay intact on the water, with a limited fillet exception in the official digest.
Massachusetts	Year round. Table last updated April 28, 2026.	1 fish, 28 inches to less than 31 inches.	See the official DMF recreational regulations page for measurement and gear rules. Spearfishing may not be used to take striped bass.
Rhode Island	Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.	1 fish per person per day, 28 inches to less than 31 inches.	Circle hooks are required when fishing recreationally for striped bass with bait.
Connecticut	Open year round, but catch and release only from Dec. 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027. Harvest resumes April 1, 2027 (Public Act 26-101).	When harvest is open: 1 fish, 28 inches to less than 31 inches (no fish 31 inches or longer).	During the catch and release period, all striped bass must be returned without avoidable injury, in all Connecticut waters. An in-line circle hook is required when fishing with bait, not including artificial lures tipped with bait.

OTHER HEADLINE SALTWATER LIMITS

Maine

From the official DMR 2026 sheets: bluefish, no minimum, 5 fish per day, circle hooks required when using bait. Atlantic mackerel, no minimum, 25 fish per day. Summer flounder, 20 inches, 2 fish per day. Winter flounder, 12 inches, 8 fish per day. Haddock, 17 inches, 15 fish per day, cannot be possessed March 1 to March 31. American shad, 2 fish per day, hook and line only. American eel, 25 per day, 9 inch minimum. Other species have their own DMR limits that can change during the year, so check the Department of Marine Resources before you go.

New Hampshire

Bluefish: no closed season, no minimum length, 5 fish per day (7 on a licensed for-hire trip), with circle hooks required when using bait. Black sea bass: no closed season, 16.5 inches (length does not include the tail filament), 4 fish per day. Haddock: 17 inches, 15 fish per day, closed March 1 to March 31. Winter flounder: no closed season, 12 inches, 8 fish per day.

Massachusetts

Bluefish (shore and private vessel): year round, 5 fish, no minimum. Summer flounder: May 24 to Sept. 23, 5 fish, 17.5 inches from a vessel and 16.5 inches from shore. Black sea bass: 16 inches; 4 fish May 16 to Aug. 31, and 2 fish Sept. 1 to Oct. 14. Scup (private vessel): 11 inches, 30 fish, May 1 to Dec. 31 (9.5 inches from shore).

Rhode Island

Bluefish (general recreational): no minimum, 5 fish per day, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Summer flounder: 19 inches, 6 fish per day, April 1 to Dec. 31 (special shore sites allow 2 fish 17 inches or larger as part of that limit). Black sea bass (general recreational): 16 inches, 3 fish per day, May 16 to Dec. 31. Tautog: 16 inches, only one fish greater than 21 inches, with seasonal bag limits and a closed period June 1 to July 31.

Connecticut

Bluefish: year round, no minimum, 5 fish per day (new for 2026; 7 for paying passengers on party or charter boats). Summer flounder: 3 fish per day; 19 inches from May 4 to Aug. 1, and 19.5 inches from Aug. 2 to Oct. 15 (17 inches at Enhanced Opportunity Shore Fishing Sites). Black sea bass (general): 15.5 inches, not including the tail filament, 4 fish per day, May 16 to Nov. 25 (new for 2026). Scup: 11 inches from a boat and 9.5 inches from shore, 30 fish, May 1 to Dec. 31.

CHECK THE OFFICIAL RULES

Maine	maine.gov/ifw statewide laws, license fees, and the 2026 lawbook · DMR 2026 striped bass, sea run, and finfish sheets and the saltwater registry at maine.gov/dmr
New Hampshire	wildlife.nh.gov (prices, seasons, ice fishing, saltwater) · Official 2026 Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Digests from NH Fish and Game · Buy a license: nhfishandgame.com
Vermont	vtfishandwildlife.com/fishvt · Official 2026 Vermont Fishing Guide & Regulations PDF · anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/LicenseInformation.aspx
Massachusetts	mass.gov/info-details/license-types-and-fees · freshwater-fishing-regulations · get-started-ice-fishing · recreational-saltwater-fishing-regulations (updated April 28, 2026)
Rhode Island	Freshwater fees and the 2026 to 2027 regulation guide on dem.ri.gov · Saltwater limits: dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-minimum-sizes-possession-limits
Connecticut	portal.ct.gov/deep/fishing/general-information/fisheries-licenses-and-permits · Saltwater species: portal.ct.gov/deep/fishing/saltwater-fishing-guide/species-regulations · portal.ct.gov/CTOutdoorLicenses