

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Notice of Agency Rulemaking Proposal

AGENCY: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Advertise: June 24, 2026

CHAPTER NUMBER AND RULE TITLE: Chapter 1, 1-A. Open Water and Ice Fishing Regulations; State Heritage Fish Waters

TYPE OF RULE: Routine Technical

PROPOSAL FILING NUMBER:

BRIEF SUMMARY: The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is proposing regulation changes for the upcoming ice fishing and open water fishing seasons. These regulations are needed to provide for the effective conservation of Maine's inland fisheries and to enhance fishing opportunities throughout the State. This rule-making packet includes 187 individual proposals and have been organized in the following categories for ease of use for the public: State Heritage Fish Waters; Special Need; Simplify to General Law; Expanded Angler Opportunity; Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion, and Lake Trout Regulation Simplification. The complete list of proposals may be obtained from the Agency Contact Person or online at: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/news-events/rulemaking-proposals.html>. The proposals, if adopted, will become effective January 1, 2027. Members of the public are encouraged to review the proposals and provide comments by submitting written comments by mail or email to the contact person for this filing or by participating in the public hearing. (All comments must be related to this rulemaking packet.) Note: Written comments are given equal consideration to testimony given at the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING: July 21, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 353 Water Street, Room 400, Augusta. An online option for attending via Microsoft Teams will also be available. For those wishing to attend remotely, please contact the Agency Contact Person for this filing.

COMMENT DEADLINE: July 31, 2026

CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS FILING:

Becky Orff

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CONTACT PERSON FOR SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT: Click or tap here to enter text.

FINANCIAL IMPACT ON MUNICIPALITIES OR COUNTIES: None anticipated

STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR THIS RULE: 12 MRS Section 10104, 12452 & 12461

SUBSTANTIVE STATE OR FEDERAL LAW BEING IMPLEMENTED: Click or tap here to enter text.

AGENCY WEBSITE: www.maine.gov/ifw

EMAIL ADDRESS FOR OVERALL AGENCY RULEMAKING LIAISON:

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Rulemaking Fact Sheet

(see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1))

Agency: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Name, Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address of Agency Contact Person:

Becky Orff

353 Water Street, 41 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333

207-287-5202

Becky.orff@maine.gov

Chapter Number and Rule Title: Chapter 1, 1-A. Open Water and Ice Fishing Regulations; State Heritage Fish Waters

Type of Rule: Routine Technical

Statutory Authority: 12 MRS Sections 10104, 12452 & 12461

Public Hearing(s): July 21, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 353 Water Street, Room 400, Augusta. An online option for attending via Microsoft Teams will also be available. For those wishing to attend remotely, please contact the Agency Contact Person for this filing.

Comment Deadline(s): July 31, 2026

Principal Reason(s) or Purpose for Proposing this Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(A)]: These proposals are designed to provide for the effective conservation and management of inland fish throughout the state and provide for a variety of fishing opportunities. The proposals set specific season dates, bag limits, length limits, tackle restrictions, and other special regulations designed to accomplish fisheries management objectives. The list of proposals contains information regarding each proposal.

Is Material Incorporated by Reference into the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8056(2-A)]? No

Analysis and Expected Operation of the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(B) & (D)]: These regulatory proposals are based upon current information regarding the status of game fish populations and their use. Appropriate adjustments to the regulations are proposed to manage harvest and enhance the quality and variety of fishing opportunities throughout the State. The 187 individual proposals have been organized in the following categories for ease of use for the public: State Heritage Fish Waters; Special Need; Simplify to General Law; Expanded Angler Opportunity; Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion, and Lake Trout Regulation Simplification. The proposals, if adopted, will become effective January 1, 2027.

Brief Summary of Relevant Information Considered During Development of the Rule (including up to 3 primary sources relied upon)[see 5 M.R.S. §§ 8057-A(1)(E) & 8063-B]: Proposals are the result of the vetting process of the fisheries division law and rule committee. Biological information, public outreach, angler counts, survey results, and other available data on individual water bodies are reviewed.

Estimated Fiscal Impact of the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(C)]: None anticipated. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.

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Chapter 1 – Open Water and Ice Fishing

Regulations NOTE TO SECRETARY OF STATE:

Amendments to Chapter 1 rules will be in effect for the 2027 fishing season and will be printed in the 2027 Maine Open Water and Ice Fishing regulations booklet and posted on the Department’s website at: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/fishing/laws-rules/index.html> in accordance with 12 MRS, §12452. Consolidation of rules: Fishing rules as set forth in the Open Water and Ice Fishing Regulations folder, as maintained by the department in an electronic version and distributed through electronic means, are declared to be official consolidations of fishing rules upon filing with the Secretary of State, except that the 150-day limit of [Title 5, section 8052, subsection 7, paragraph B](#) does not apply to this section.

AMEND CHAPTER 1-A AS FOLLOWS:

1-A – State Heritage Fish Waters

1. Stocking. The Commissioner may not stock or issue a permit to stock fish in a lake or pond listed as a State Heritage Fish water.
2. Restrictions. A person may not use live fish as bait or possess live fish to be used as bait on a lake or pond listed as a State Heritage Fish water. This may include an “artificial lures only” or “fly fishing only” restriction.

***Note:** NRS = No record of stocking

NOTE TO SECRETARY OF STATE – The following amendments to the State Heritage Fish Waters List will be effective January 1, 2027.

State Heritage Fish Waters

WATCODE	STATE HERITAGE FISH WATER	ALTERNATE NAME	TOWN	COUNTY	REGION	STATE HERITAGE FISH	*LAST YEAR STOCKED
<u>0784</u>	<u>CRANBERRY POND</u>	<u>LITTLE NOTCH POND</u>	<u>BOWDOIN COLLEGE GRANT WEST TWP</u>	<u>PISCATAQUIS</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>BKT</u>	<u>2000</u>
<u>0526</u>	<u>MIRROR POND</u>	<u>MONKEY POND</u>	<u>TA R11 WELS</u>	<u>PISCATAQUIS</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>BKT</u>	<u>2001</u>