

MDIFW Fishing Regulation Proposals

For the 2024 fishing season



The Maine 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 24 individual proposals presented in the following “themes”:

Theme	Pages	Proposals
State Heritage Fish Waters	2-3	2
Special Need	4-7	2
North Zone Bass Management	8-15	14
Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion	16-18	4
Endangered and Threatened Species Clarification	19-20	1
Recreational Baitfish and Smelt Clarification	21-24	1

The goal of presenting the proposals in this manner is to better facilitate the public review process and to increase public understanding of the changes currently proposed.

- Note in each proposal: **Gray Highlighted** Text = Eliminated text.
Underlined Text = New text.

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Theme: State Heritage Fish Waters

Description: Proposed additions or removals to the State Heritage Fish Waters List consistent with statutory requirements and MDIFW's Heritage Waters consideration data review process.

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 2

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Theme: State Heritage Fish Waters

Water: BECK POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 5142

Town(s):

T3 R5 BKP WKR

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Amend Chapter 1A by removing Beck Pond from the State Heritage Fish Waters list. Amend Chapter 1 by eliminating unnecessary special regulations and revert to general law.

Purpose of Change:

Beck Pond was first surveyed by MDIFW in 1951 and was resurveyed in 1953. No brook trout were captured in either survey. The pond was stocked by MDIFW for a short period in the 1950's and was privately stocked for an unknown period. Beck Pond has been sampled four times since to the two initial surveys. In 1960, nine hatchery origin brook trout were captured; in 1984, 11 unknown origin brook trout were captured (presumed to have originated from a private stocking); in 2007, no brook trout were captured; and in 2022, no brook trout were captured. It was determined that Beck Pond does not support a self-sustaining brook trout population based on the sampling and stocking history and lack of spawning habitat. Therefore, it is proposed for removal from the State Heritage Fish Waters List. In addition, the lack of a self-sustaining brook trout population results in the current special regulations being unnecessary. North Zone general law regulations will be adequate for this water.

Proposed Modifications:

BECK POND, T3 R5 BKP WKR (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **CI. FFO, S-17.**

Proposed Final Regulations:

Theme: State Heritage Fish Waters

Water: INDIAN POND, BIG

Region: E **WATCODE:** 0324

Town(s):

Moosehead Junction Twp

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Piscataquis

Regulation Change Description:

Amend Chapter 1A by adding Indian Pond, Big to the State Heritage Fish Waters list. No change to current regulations necessary.

Purpose of Change:

The Fisheries Division conducted a thorough review of the statewide lake inventory database and newly surveyed waters to identify candidates for potential inclusion as State Heritage Fish Waters. Big Indian Pond is a well-known wild brook trout water in the Greenville area containing multiple age classes of brook trout. This water was last stocked in 1997. Given it has now been 25+ years since that last stocking event, Big Indian Pond meets all Heritage List eligibility criteria and is proposed to be added to the State Heritage Fish Waters List.

Proposed Modifications:

Proposed Final Regulations:

INDIAN POND, BIG, Moosehead Junction Twp (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **CI. ALO, S-17.**

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Theme: Special Need

Description: Management initiatives, typically in response to dramatic events, an emerging situation requiring adaptive rule changes, or needs not addressed by other regulatory themes (for example, addressing impacts of summer/winter fish kills, changes in management focus, or more complex and comprehensive initiatives).

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 2

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Special Need

Water: BURNT LAND LAKE

Region: C **WATCODE:** 4792

Town(s):

T35 MD

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Hancock

Regulation Change Description:

Add S-33.

Purpose of Change:

This proposal would add the S-33 regulation (Maximum length on landlocked salmon and brown trout: 25 inches) to Burnt Land Lake. Burnt Land Lake is within the Machias River Drainage where there are ongoing efforts to restore Sea-run Atlantic salmon. While Sea-run Atlantic salmon are already prohibited from harvest, this proposal would ensure that anglers will not inadvertently "take" a misidentified adult Sea-run Atlantic salmon that has been mistaken as a landlocked salmon or brown trout.

Proposed Modifications:

BURNT LAND LAKE, T35 MD (South Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **CI. S-16, S-33**. From October 1 - December 31: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

BURNT LAND LAKE, T35 MD (South Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **CI. S-16, S-33**. From October 1 - December 31: ALO, S-7.

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Special Need

Water: MOOSEHEAD LAKE

Region: E **WATCODE:** 0390_BLNK

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Greenville, etc.

Piscataquis, Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Clarify that open water fishing is prohibited in closed areas during the winter season.

Purpose of Change:

The purpose of this proposal is to clarify that the identified closed areas are closed to ice fishing at all times, and to open water fishing from January 1 to March 31. This past winter there was open water in some of these areas and while it was inconsistent with the intent of the regulation, technically anglers would have been legally permitted to open water fish. These are important staging and spawning areas for wild brook trout and the intention is to prohibit angling to protect these fish during and immediately after the spawning period.

Proposed Modifications:

Proposed Final Regulations:

MOOSEHEAD LAKE, Greenville, etc. (North Zone).

Ice fishing: Moosehead Lake. General fishing laws apply, except: **B.** S-1, S-11, S-21. All brook trout between 18 and 22 inches must be released alive at once. No minimum length limit on togue. Daily bag limit on togue: 5 fish (only 1 togue may be greater than 18 inches). Closed to the taking of landlocked salmon until February 15: S-22; minimum length limit on landlocked salmon: 18 inches. From January 1 - February 14 and from April 1 - April 30, all landlocked salmon caught while ice fishing must be released alive without removal from the water. From April 1 - April 30: All brook trout caught while ice fishing must be released alive without removal from the water.

CLOSED AREAS:The following areas are Closed to Ice Fishing (**CI.**) and closed to open water fishing from January 1 - March 31.

- That portion known as Spencer Bay;
- That portion from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream to a straight line between 2 red markers, 1 set on the small point of land on the north shore of Tomhegan Cove approximately 1/2 mile from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream, the other set on the small point of land on the south shore of Tomhegan Cove approximately 3/4 mile from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream;
- That portion from the mouth of Moose Brook to a straight line between 2 red markers, 1 set at the south shore of Moose Brook Cove, the other on the north shore of Moose Brook Cove on a line passing inside the islands in Moose Brook Cove;
- That portion from the mouth of Socatean Stream to a straight line between 2 red markers, one set on the

MOOSEHEAD LAKE, Greenville, etc. (North Zone).

Ice fishing: Moosehead Lake. General fishing laws apply, except: **B.** S-1, S-11, S-21. All brook trout between 18 and 22 inches must be released alive at once. No minimum length limit on togue. Daily bag limit on togue: 5 fish (only 1 togue may be greater than 18 inches). Closed to the taking of landlocked salmon until February 15: S-22; minimum length limit on landlocked salmon: 18 inches. From January 1 - February 14 and from April 1 - April 30, all landlocked salmon caught while ice fishing must be released alive without removal from the water. From April 1 - April 30: All brook trout caught while ice fishing must be released alive without removal from the water.

The following areas are Closed to Ice Fishing (**CI.**) and closed to open water fishing from January 1 - March 31.

- That portion known as Spencer Bay;
- That portion from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream to a straight line between 2 red markers, 1 set on the small point of land on the north shore of Tomhegan Cove approximately 1/2 mile from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream, the other set on the small point of land on the south shore of Tomhegan Cove approximately 3/4 mile from the mouth of Tomhegan Stream;
- That portion from the mouth of Moose Brook to a straight line between 2 red markers, 1 set at the south shore of Moose Brook Cove, the other on the north shore of Moose Brook Cove on a line passing inside the islands in Moose Brook Cove;
- That portion from the mouth of Socatean Stream to a straight line between 2 red markers, one set on the northerly shore of Socatean Bay at the camp site known as

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northerly shore of Socatean Bay at the camp site known as the Ledges, the other set on the westerly shore of Socatean Bay on a line passing just outside Wiggin's Island;

- That portion from the mouth of Williams Brook in Big W Township to a straight line between 2 red markers, one set on the land of Hermon Brautigan on the south shore of Williams Cove and the other in a northeasterly direction on the opposite shore, Piscataquis County;

- That portion inside of the red markers located at the mouth of Moose River;

- That portion of Lily Bay with a west border running in a straight line between 2 red posts, one located on the Lily Bay State Park boundary and the other on Sugar Island to the west of Dollar Island. The east boundary in a straight line between 2 red posts, one located just south of Porcupine Point on Sugar Island and the other on Laker Point near the mouth of Mathews Cove on a line running south of Two-Mile Island.

Open water fishing: Moosehead Lake and Tributaries (Upstream to red markers or the first rail or road crossing).

General fishing laws apply, except: S-1, S-11, S-21, S-22. All brook trout between 18 and 22 inches must be released alive at once. No minimum length limit on togue. Daily bag limit on togue: 5 fish (only 1 togue may be greater than 18 inches). For additional regulations and exceptions to the above, see entries for the following: Kennebec River, East and West Outlets; Moose River; Roach River, Lily Bay Brook and Moose Brook; and Socatean Stream.

the Ledges, the other set on the westerly shore of Socatean Bay on a line passing just outside Wiggin's Island;

- That portion from the mouth of Williams Brook in Big W Township to a straight line between 2 red markers, one set on the land of Hermon Brautigan on the south shore of Williams Cove and the other in a northeasterly direction on the opposite shore, Piscataquis County;

- That portion inside of the red markers located at the mouth of Moose River;

- That portion of Lily Bay with a west border running in a straight line between 2 red posts, one located on the Lily Bay State Park boundary and the other on Sugar Island to the west of Dollar Island. The east boundary in a straight line between 2 red posts, one located just south of Porcupine Point on Sugar Island and the other on Laker Point near the mouth of Mathews Cove on a line running south of Two-Mile Island.

Open water fishing: Moosehead Lake and Tributaries (Upstream to red markers or the first rail or road crossing).

General fishing laws apply, except: S-1, S-11, S-21, S-22. All brook trout between 18 and 22 inches must be released alive at once. No minimum length limit on togue. Daily bag limit on togue: 5 fish (only 1 togue may be greater than 18 inches). For additional regulations and exceptions to the above, see entries for the following: Kennebec River, East and West Outlets; Moose River; Roach River, Lily Bay Brook and Moose Brook; and Socatean Stream.

MDIFW Fishing Regulation Proposals

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Description: This theme is the result of a review of all North Zone waters that contain special regulations on bass. Based on MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan, bass populations in the North Zone will be managed as invasive. Therefore, special regulations intended to enhance or protect bass populations will not be applied in the North Zone. A handful of waters near the southern border of the North Zone contain special bag and/or length limits on bass. Proposals captured under this theme will create consistency in managing bass as invasive across the entire North Zone.

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 14

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: CLEARWATER POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 5190

Town(s):

Farmington, Industry

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Franklin

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

CLEARWATER POND, Farmington, Industry (North Zone).
General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.**
Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches.

Proposed Final Regulations:

CLEARWATER POND, Farmington, Industry (North Zone).
General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.**

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: EMBDEN POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 0078

Town(s):

Embden

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

EMBDEN POND, Embden (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-22.** Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. The holding of any live baitfish not taken in Embden Pond is prohibited.

Proposed Final Regulations:

EMBDEN POND, Embden (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-22.** The holding of any live baitfish not taken in Embden Pond is prohibited.

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: HANCOCK POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 0082

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Embden, Lexington Twp

Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

HANCOCK POND, Embden, Lexington Twp (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.**
Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches.

– CLOSED TO ICE FISHING is that portion within 200 yards of the intake of the water supply of the towns of Anson, North Anson, and Madison.

Proposed Final Regulations:

HANCOCK POND, Embden, Lexington Twp (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.**

– CLOSED TO ICE FISHING is that portion within 200 yards of the intake of the water supply of the towns of Anson, North Anson, and Madison.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: HARLOW POND

Region: E **WATCODE:** 0756

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Parkman

Piscataquis

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

HARLOW POND, Parkman (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11, S-19.** All bass must be released alive at once. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

HARLOW POND, Parkman (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11, S-19.** From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: INDIAN POND

Region: E **WATCODE:** 4090

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Big Moose Twp, Indian Stream Twp, Chase Stream Twp,
Sapling Twp

Piscataquis, Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

INDIAN POND, Big Moose Twp, Chase Stream Twp, Indian Stream Twp, Sapling Twp (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-22.** Minimum length on bass: 12 inches. Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

INDIAN POND, Big Moose Twp, Chase Stream Twp, Indian Stream Twp, Sapling Twp (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-22.** Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: IRONBOUND (WENTWORTH) POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 2580

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Solon, Athens

Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

IRONBOUND (WENTWORTH) POND, Solon, Athens (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-11, S-19.** Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

IRONBOUND (WENTWORTH) POND, Solon, Athens (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-11, S-19.** Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: MANHANOCK POND (NORTHWEST POND)

Region: E **WATCODE:** 0758

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Parkman, Sangerville

Piscataquis

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

MANHANOCK POND (NORTHWEST POND), Parkman, Sangerville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11, S-19. All bass must be released alive at once. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

MANHANOCK POND (NORTHWEST POND), Parkman, Sangerville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11, S-19. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: NORCROSS POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 5214

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Chesterville

Franklin

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

NORCROSS POND, Chesterville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11, S-19. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

NORCROSS POND, Chesterville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11, S-19. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: NORTH POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 5206

Town(s):

Chesterville

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Franklin

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

NORTH POND, Chesterville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11**. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches.

Proposed Final Regulations:

NORTH POND, Chesterville (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11**.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: ROXBURY (ELLIS) POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 3504

Town(s):

Byron, Roxbury

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Oxford (North)

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

ROXBURY (ELLIS) POND, Byron, Roxbury (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11, S-19**. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

ROXBURY (ELLIS) POND, Byron, Roxbury (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11, S-19**. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

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Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: SEBEC LAKE

Region: E **WATCODE:** 0848

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Bowerbank, Dover-Foxcroft, Sebec, Willimantic

Piscataquis

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

SEBEC LAKE, Bowerbank, Dover-Foxcroft, Sebec, Willimantic (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: S-2, S-3, S-11, S-22. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. Open to ice fishing January 15 - March 15.

Proposed Final Regulations:

SEBEC LAKE, Bowerbank, Dover-Foxcroft, Sebec, Willimantic (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: S-2, S-3, S-11, S-22. Open to ice fishing January 15 - March 15.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: WEBB (WELD) LAKE

Region: D **WATCODE:** 3672

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Weld

Franklin

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

WEBB (WELD) LAKE, Weld (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

WEBB (WELD) LAKE, Weld (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19. Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: WESSERUNSETT LAKE (HAYDEN LAKE)

Region: D **WATCODE:** 0070

Town(s):

Madison

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Somerset

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

WESSERUNSETT LAKE (HAYDEN LAKE), Madison (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-11, S-19.** Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

WESSERUNSETT LAKE (HAYDEN LAKE), Madison (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-11, S-19.** Open to open water fishing from October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Theme: North Zone Bass Management

Water: WILSON POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 3682

Town(s):

Wilton

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Franklin

Regulation Change Description:

Eliminate special regulations on bass. Revert to North Zone General Law on bass.

Purpose of Change:

MDIFW's Fisheries and Hatcheries Strategic Management Plan identifies the broad goal to "Manage bass populations in the North Zone as invasive to protect native fish." Within that goal, is the objective to "Reconcile current inconsistencies with North Zone bass management." There are a handful of waters at the southern extent of the North Zone that currently have special/protective regulations on bass. The Fisheries Division conducted a review of all North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass to determine if those regulations are warranted and to ensure they do not favor bass over the health of native fish populations. It was determined that the special bass regulations on this water are unnecessary and create an inconsistency in the way MDIFW manages bass in the North Zone. This proposal would remove the special bass length and/or bag limit regulations on this water. If approved, this water would revert to the North Zone General Law regulation on bass of "no size or bag limit" and would be managed consistently with all other North Zone waters.

Proposed Modifications:

WILSON POND, Wilton (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.** Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches.

Proposed Final Regulations:

WILSON POND, Wilton (North Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-19, S-26.**

MDIFW Fishing Regulation Proposals

For the 2024 fishing season



Theme: Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion

Description: A significant effort has been made to correct previously identified issues related to conflicting regulations, inconsistencies, inadvertent omissions, errors, and confusing regulations that have also created challenges for mapping special regulations in the Fishing Laws Online Angling Tool (FLOAT). This theme is retained from year to year to correct any newly identified issues.

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 4

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion

Water: CARLTON POND (BOG)

Region: B **WATCODE:** 0041

Town(s):

Detroit, Troy

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Somerset, Waldo

Regulation Change Description:

Convert to South Zone general law and delete unnecessary text.

Purpose of Change:

During the review of North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass, this water was flagged as being currently regulated under North Zone General Law, however the North/South Zone line bisects this water. This proposal would convert Carlton Pond to South Zone General Law to achieve consistency among other waters bisected by the North/South Zone line. Unnecessary special regulation text would also be eliminated. The final regulation results in a change from the North Zone General Law on brook trout and bass going to the South Zone General Law on brook trout and bass (however, brook trout are not present in this water).

Proposed Modifications:

CARLTON POND (BOG), Detroit, Troy (NorthSouth Zone).
General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11.

Proposed Final Regulations:

CARLTON POND (BOG), Detroit, Troy (South Zone). General fishing laws apply.

Theme: Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion

Water: CROWELL POND

Region: D **WATCODE:** 5200

Town(s):

Chesterville, New Sharon, Vienna

Proposal Source: MDIFW

County(ies):

Franklin, Kennebec

Regulation Change Description:

Convert to South Zone General Law and eliminate unnecessary text. This proposal will result in no actual changes to seasons or length and bag limits.

Purpose of Change:

During the review of North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass, this water was flagged as being currently regulated under North Zone General Law, however the North/South Zone line bisects this water. This proposal would convert Crowell Pond to South Zone General Law to achieve consistency among other waters bisected by the North/South Zone line. Unnecessary special regulation text would also be eliminated. The final regulation results in no actual changes to seasons, length limits, or bag limits on this water.

Proposed Modifications:

CROWELL POND, Chesterville, New Sharon, Vienna (NorthSouth Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: A. S-11, S-19. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

Proposed Final Regulations:

CROWELL POND, Chesterville, New Sharon, Vienna (South Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: From October 1 - November 30: ALO, S-7.

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion

Water: GRAND LAKE, EAST

Region: F **WATCODE:** 1070

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Danforth, Forest City TWP, Orient, Weston

Aroostook, Washington

Regulation Change Description:

Convert to South Zone general law, eliminate unnecessary text, and add new text. This proposal will result in no actual changes to seasons or length and bag limits.

Purpose of Change:

During the review of North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass, this water was flagged as being currently regulated under North Zone General Law, however the North/South Zone line bisects this water. This proposal would convert East Grand Lake to South Zone General Law to achieve consistency among other waters bisected by the North/South Zone line. Unnecessary special regulation text would also be eliminated and new text would be added to maintain current regulations. The final regulation results in no actual changes to seasons, length limits, or bag limits on this water.

Proposed Modifications:

GRAND LAKE, EAST, Danforth, Forest City Twp, Orient, Weston (**NorthSouth** Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **B. S-2, S-3, S-11, S-25**. Daily bag limit on bass: 2 fish, only 1 may exceed 14 inches. Daily bag limit on brook trout: 5 fish. From October 1 - December 31: Closed to all fishing. International Water (page A-1).

East Grand Lake Dam: Fishing upstream from the dam at the top of fishway is lawful (Title 12, subsection 12457).

Proposed Final Regulations:

GRAND LAKE, EAST, Danforth, Forest City Twp, Orient, Weston (South Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: S-2, S-3, S-25. Daily bag limit on brook trout: 5 fish. From October 1 - December 31: Closed to all fishing. International Water (page A-1).

East Grand Lake Dam: Fishing upstream from the dam at the top of fishway is lawful (Title 12, subsection 12457).

Theme: Errors, Conflicts, and Confusion

Water: SUCKER LAKE

Region: F **WATCODE:** 1074

Proposal Source: MDIFW

Town(s):

County(ies):

Weston, Danforth

Aroostook

Regulation Change Description:

Convert to South Zone general law and delete unnecessary text.

Purpose of Change:

During the review of North Zone waters containing special regulations on bass, this water was flagged as being currently regulated under North Zone General Law, however the North/South Zone line bisects this water. This proposal would convert Carlton Pond to South Zone General Law to achieve consistency among other waters bisected by the North/South Zone line. Unnecessary special regulation text would also be eliminated. The final regulation results in a change from the North Zone General Law on brook trout and bass going to the South Zone General Law on brook trout and bass (however, brook trout are not present in this water).

Proposed Modifications:

SUCKER LAKE, Weston (**NorthSouth** Zone). General fishing laws apply, except: **A. S-11**.

Proposed Final Regulations:

SUCKER LAKE, Weston (South Zone). General fishing laws apply.

MDIFW Fishing Regulation Proposals

For the 2024 fishing season



Theme: Endangered and Threatened Species Clarification

Description: This proposal would clarify that fishes listed by the State as Endangered or Threatened are prohibited from harvest.

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 1

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Endangered and Threatened Species Clarification

Water: General Laws Page *(inside left front flap of printed law book)*

Region: Statewide

Source: MDIFW

Towns:

County(ies):

Statewide

Statewide

Regulation Change Description:

Clarify that no fishing is permitted for state listed endangered or threatened species.

Purpose of Change:

Maine Statute (Title 12, §12808) currently prohibits the “take” of any state listed endangered or threatened species. There are two inland species of fish in Maine that are state listed endangered (Redfin Pickerel), or state listed threatened (Swamp Darter). Although angling is not a significant threat to Maine’s populations and statute already prohibits take, the current Maine Fishing Laws (specifically the General Laws page) lacks the clarity that fishing is not permitted for these two species. This proposal would clarify that angling and/or harvest of Redfin Pickerel and Swamp Darter is not permitted.

Proposed Modifications:

Inside left front flap of printed law book

Species	Daily Bag & Possession Limits	Length Limit
Sea-run Atlantic Salmon, Redfin Pickerel, Swamp Darter	Federally Endangered or Threatened Species - No Fishing Permitted for this Species	

Proposed Final Regulations:

Inside left front flap of printed law book

Species	Daily Bag & Possession Limits	Length Limit
Sea-run Atlantic Salmon, Redfin Pickerel, Swamp Darter	Endangered or Threatened Species - No Fishing Permitted	

MDIFW Fishing Regulation Proposals

For the 2024 fishing season



Theme: Recreational Harvest of Baitfish and Smelt Clarification

Description: Recently, there has been confusion noted regarding the "Baitfish Information" section of the Fishing Laws (page 51-52 of the printed law book). There is a lack of clarity between the term "Baitfish" and the term "Smelt". Baitfish includes 16 species from a list that is defined in law and does not include Smelt. Also, smelt are managed with specific harvest restrictions, bag limits, and water specific goals and objectives. This proposal is intended to clarify several items within this section and offer necessary editorial corrections.

Number of Proposals in this Theme: 1

2024 Rule Making Proposals - Statewide Waters

Theme: Recreational Baitfish and Smelt Clarification

Water: Pages 51-52 of the fishing law book

Region: Statewide

Source: MDIFW

Towns:

County(ies):

Statewide

Statewide

Regulation Change Description:

Clarify the distinction between “baitfish” and smelt as defined in Law; Clarify that it is unlawful to harvest smelt with a baitfish trap.

Purpose of Change:

The purpose of this proposal is to clarify several areas within the “Baitfish Information” section of the fishing law book (pages 51-52). Current text erroneously implies that rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) are considered a “baitfish”. However, they are managed distinctly and are not considered a “baitfish” as defined in Maine Statute (Title 12, §10001-6). Rainbow smelt are managed as forage for salmonids, as a recreational sport fishery, and as a commercial fishery. As such, specific harvest restrictions, bag limits, and water specific goals and objectives are applied to this species. The edits outlined in this proposal are intended to:

- Clearly state the species that are listed in current statute as “baitfish” and clarify that when the term “baitfish” is used alone it applies to the species as defined in statute.
- Clarify that rainbow smelt are legal to be used as bait (in the locations where use of bait is permitted).
- Clarify that rainbow smelt cannot be harvested with a baitfish trap.
- Offer necessary editorial corrections to this section.

Proposed Modifications:

(From the bottom of Page 51 and top of page 52 of the 2023 Maine Inland Fishing Laws)

BAITFISH AND SMELT INFORMATION

The term “baitfish” is defined in Maine Law and means only those species in the following list:

Lake chub, (*Couesius plumbeus*)

Creek chub, (*Semotilus atromaculatus*)

Eastern silvery minnow, (*Hybognathus regius*)

Fallfish, (*Semotilus corporalis*)

Golden shiner, (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*)

Pearl dace, (*Margariscus margarita*)

Common shiner, (*Luxilus cornutus*)

Banded killifish, (*Fundulus diaphanus*)

Northern redbelly dace, (*Phoxinus eos*)

Mummichog, (*Fundulus heteroclitus*)

Finescale dace, (*Phoxinus neogaeus*)

Longnose sucker, (*Catostomus catostomus*)

Fathead minnow, (*Pimephales promelas*)

White sucker, (*Catostomus commersoni*)

Blacknose dace, (*Rhinichthys atratulus*)

American eel, (*Anquilla rostrata*)

The term “baitfish” when used alone, includes only the species defined in law (§10001-6) and listed above.

Rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) are not a “baitfish” (as defined) and specific harvest restrictions, bag limits, and water specific goals and objectives are applied to this species.

LEGAL FISH THAT MAY BE USED AS BAIT (LIVE OR DEAD)

Baitfish (as defined) and rainbow smelt are the only fish species that may be used as bait (live or dead) for fishing in Maine’s inland waters.

HARVESTING BAITFISH FOR PERSONAL USE

All inland waters (including rivers, streams and brooks) are open to the taking of baitfish for personal use unless designated “closed to the taking of live baitfish” (see Special Fishing Laws beginning on page 5), with the following conditions:

- Legal species only – See page 52 for list of fish legal to use and harvest as bait. All other fish must be immediately released alive into the water from which they were taken.
- Fishing license required – You must have a valid Maine fishing license to harvest baitfish for personal use. Baitfish may not be sold or harvested with the intent to sell without a bait dealer’s license.
- Label and tend your traps – Baitfish traps and holding cages must be labeled with the owner’s name and address, and must be tended at least once every 7 days by the person who set them. Baitfish traps may only be used to harvest baitfish species, as defined. All other fish must be immediately released alive into the water from which they were taken. Note - It is unlawful to harvest rainbow smelt with a baitfish trap.
- Trap specifications apply – Baitfish traps may not exceed 50 cubic feet in volume and must be fitted with rigid entrance or exit holes.

HARVESTING SMELTS FOR PERSONAL USE

- Unless closed by rule as indicated within the Special Fishing Laws (beginning on page 5), a person holding a valid Maine fishing license may:
 - Take rainbow smelt for recreational purposes by hook and line from inland waters that are open to fishing in accordance with bag limits established by rule.
 - Take rainbow smelt for recreational purposes only from the inland waters or portions of inland waters that are naturally free of ice with a dip net in the usual and ordinary way from noon to 2:00 a.m. in accordance with bag limits established by rule. Bag limits established by rule under this paragraph are for a 24-hour period, beginning at noon on a given day and ending at 11:59 a.m. the following day.
- A person may not take rainbow smelt with a dip net unless it meets the requirements listed under the dip net definition (Title 12, §12456). A dip net when used to take rainbow smelt in a tributary or within 100 feet of the mouth of a tributary must contain a rigid circular frame that is not more than 24 inches in diameter as measured at any point on the hoop and manually operated by a single person (Title 12, §10001-12-A).
- Fishing license required – You must have a valid Maine fishing license to harvest rainbow smelt for personal use. Rainbow smelt may not be sold or harvested with the intent to sell without a bait dealer’s license.

BAITFISH IMPORTATION OF FISH PROHIBITED

It is unlawful to introduce, import, or transport any live fish or fish gametes (including baitfish or smelts) into the State of Maine without a permit (§12509). This law helps keep Maine’s waters healthy by limiting the introduction of foreign fish diseases and parasites, exotic fish species, invasive plants, and other undesirable aquatic life that can irreversibly damage Maine’s natural resources. Do your part by only using locally caught legal baitfish species when fishing in Maine.

STORING LIVE BAITFISH AND SMELTS

You may not store or hold live baitfish or smelts in waters where the use or possession of live fish as bait is prohibited during the entire fishing season. This includes waters restricted to the use of artificial lures only, waters restricted to fly fishing, and waters where there are other prohibitions on the use of live fish as bait.

COMMERCIAL BAIT DEALER'S LICENSE

In order to harvest live baitfish and smelts for sale, or to buy and resell them, you must possess a valid bait dealer's license (Bait Retail License, Bait Wholesale License, or Smelt Wholesale License). For more information on license requirements or how to obtain a license, contact MDIFW at (207) 287-8000 or visit mefishwildlife.com.

LEGAL BAITFISH

The following are the only fish species that may be used as bait (live or dead) for fishing in Maine's inland waters. Any other fish species must be immediately killed or released alive into the water from which it was taken. Any fish killed becomes part of the daily bag limit.

- Common Shiner
- Golden Shiner
- Rainbow Smelt
- Blacknose Dace
- Finescale Dace
- Northern Redbelly Dace
- Pearl Dace
- Creek Chub
- Lake Chub
- Eastern Silvery Minnow
- Fathead Minnow
- Fallfish
- Longnose Sucker
- White Sucker
- Banded Killifish
- Mummichog
- American Eel