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Glenn Dudderar, Wildlife
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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
Newaygo County
Community Building
Fremont, Michigan 49412
Phone 924-0500

Basic Fishing Information for Youth

BY GLENN DUDDERAR
Extension Specialist, Wildlife

Somewhere, not too far from your home, there is a place where you can catch fish. Would you like to learn how?

Find a Fishing Hole

First, locate your fishing place. Some of the smallest ponds and streams have nice fish in them, and even the most polluted river in Michigan has some fish in it. If the water you want to fish is on private land, ask permission first.

Fishing Tackle

There are many different kinds of fishing equipment, called tackle, used to catch different kinds of fish. If you already have some fishing tackle, you can skip this section. If you do not have any fishing tackle, this is what you will need:

- some hand line (at least 30 feet)
- a package of number 6 hooks with leaders already attached
- two or more weights, called sinkers
- two or more floats, called bobbers.

You can purchase all of this tackle for about \$1.00. If you wish, you can also purchase a pole, or make one from an old cane pole, broom handle, curtain rod, or any other long piece of wood or metal that doesn't break easily.

Using Your Fishing Tackle

If you have the tackle just described, you can catch most kinds of fish if you use it skillfully. First, you must learn how to attach hooks and sinkers correctly.

Never tie a hook, lure, or weight on your line with a knot. Knots weaken a line and cause it to break. Use the clinch method listed below. Clinches will not come undone.

On the end of a line:

1.



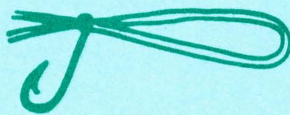
2.



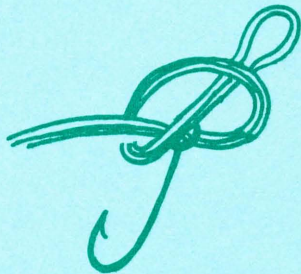
wrap end around line

In the middle of a line:

1.



2.



pull loop around line and through second loop

3.



pull line here

put end of line through first loop

hold this end

4.

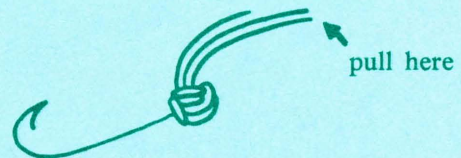


3.



pull first loop around hook

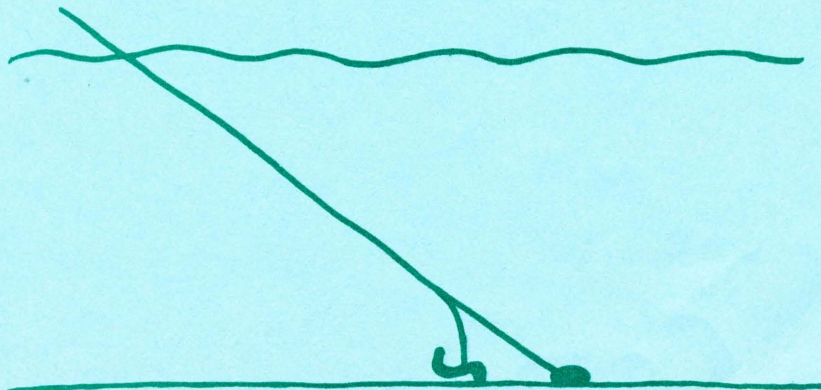
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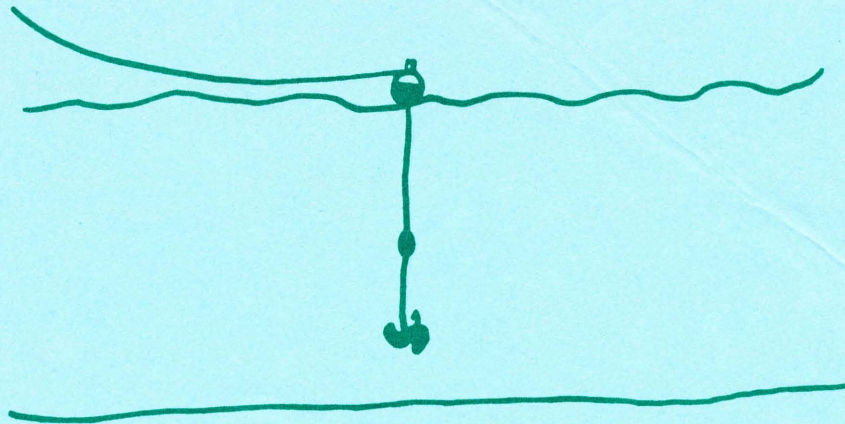
tighten

pull here

There are many ways to arrange hooks, sinkers, and bobbers on a line. The following drawings show two ways. Each time you go fishing, you should try both ways and use the one that catches the most fish.



For fishing on the bottom — carp, bullheads, suckers and many other fish.



For fishing off the bottom — sunfish, crappie, perch.

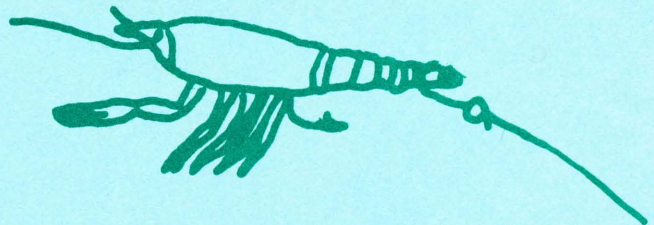
There are many kinds of bait, some live and some artificial, that can be used to catch different kinds of fish. Use whichever kind of bait you are familiar with. If you are a beginner fisherman, worms are the best bait for you to use. Worms are easy to find and can be used to catch most kinds of fish. The following drawings show the best way for you to put bait on a hook.

EARTHWORM

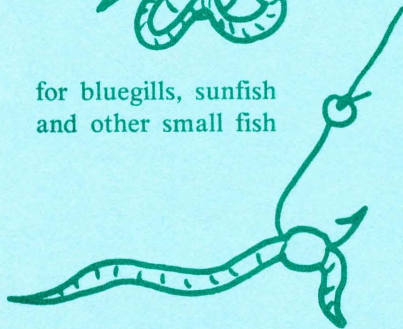


for bluegills, sunfish
and other small fish

CRAYFISH

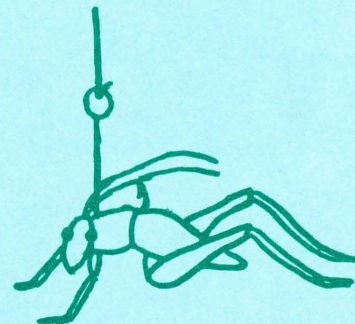
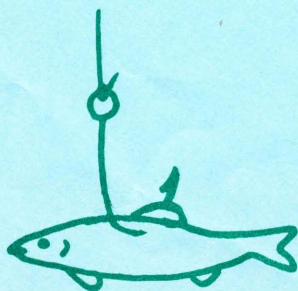


CRICKET OR GRASSHOPPER



for trout and other
large fish

MINNOW



Go Fishing

Now you are ready to go fishing. However, try to get your parent or guardian, or an older relative or friend to go with you. Otherwise, go with a buddy and be sure to tell your parent or guardian where you are going. Be sure to take a burlap sack, a bucket, or something to put your fish in.

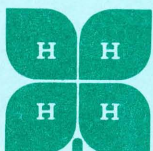
After you catch some fish, you will want to clean them before asking your parent or guardian to cook them. First you should scale the fish, or skin them if they are catfish. Then you will want to remove the insides, cut off the head and tail, and wash them in clean water. Now they are ready to cook. Good eating!

Want to Learn More About Fish and Fishing?

You can learn more about fish and fishing and have more fun fishing by going with friends who also like to fish. 4-H and other youth groups are enjoying "Fish, Fun, and Fellowship." How about joining them and learn to be a more successful fisherman and have fun fishing with new friends. There is an adult in your county who is waiting to hear from you. Phone or visit the cooperative extension service office in your county and tell whoever you contact you are interested in "Fish, Fun, and Fellowship."

A Safety Guide for Beginning Fishermen

1. Always tell your parent or guardian where you are going when you go near water.
2. Always take a friend with you, preferably an adult.
3. If you are going to fish from a boat, pier, breakwater, or any place in or over deep water, be sure you have some kind of life preserver with you. In Michigan, boat laws require you have an approved life preserver. Wear it!
4. Be careful with hooks. Remember that they can hook you, too! Do not cast your hook and line when someone is near you. If you do get a hook in your skin, DO NOT PULL IT OUT. Break or cut the line off near the hook and ask an adult to take you to a doctor immediately.
5. Be careful with knives. Always ask an adult to help you with a knife.
6. Beware of the dorsal fins on some fish and the pectoral fins on catfish. These fins have sharp points and can stick you.
7. Beware of the mouths of pike, walleye, and muskellunge. These fish have sharp teeth and can bite.



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