

Freshwater

Recreational Fishing in NSW

Rules and Regulations Summary

September 2025



When fishing in NSW waters you are required to pay the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee (unless exempt) and to have the receipt for current payment in your immediate possession.

This also applies to crayfishing, yabbybing and bait collecting or when in possession of fishing gear in, on or adjacent to waters.

Permitted lines

Attended lines must be within 50 metres and in your line of sight

Non tidal waters (fishing location, technique)	Maximum attended lines permitted for use	Maximum hooks per line permitted	Maximum lines permitted in possession
Inland waters excluding trout waters (bait, artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use) handlines or rods and lines	2 (bait, artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use), 2 additional (unused) rods and lines or hand lines in possession rigged with artificial flies, lures only (no bait) = total 4
General trout streams (bait, artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use) rods and lines, no handlines	2 (bait, artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use), 2 additional (unused) rods and lines (no handlines) in possession rigged with artificial flies, lures only (no bait) = total 4
General trout dams (bait, artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use) rods and lines, no handlines	2 (bait), 3 (artificial flies, lures)	2 (in use), 2 additional (unused) rods and lines (no handlines) in possession rigged with artificial flies, lures only (no bait) = total 4
Artificial fly and lure dams (no bait fishing)	1 (in use) rod and line, no handline	3 (artificial flies, lures)	1 (in use), 2 additional (unused) rods and lines (no handlines) in possession rigged with artificial flies, lures only (no bait) = total 3
Artificial fly and lure streams and trout spawning streams (no bait fishing)	1 (in use) rod and line, no handline	2 (artificial flies, lures)	1 (in use), 2 additional (unused) rods and lines (no handlines) in possession rigged with artificial flies, lures only (no bait) = total 3

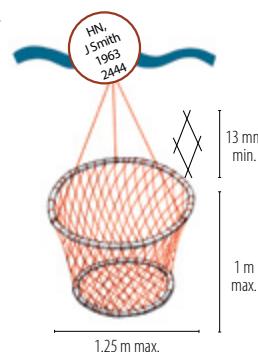
Note: Up to three (3) treble hooks attached to any artificial fly or lure is permitted. The following baits are permitted to take trout or salmon: natural flies or insects or their larvae, worms, shrimps, yabbies, mussels, artificial baits (except products containing trout and salmon roe), plant matter.

Nets and traps

Specific closures may prohibit the use of, or limit the number of nets and traps.

Hoop or lift net

- Maximum dimensions: Net attached with not more than 2 hoops, rings or frames attached to the net, but not attached to each other by any rigid frame. Drop of net (inclusive of hoops, rings or frames) not more than 1 metre. Greatest diameter or diagonal of the hoops, rings or frames not exceeding 1.25 metres.
- Mesh size: Mesh not less than 13 mm.
- Maximum number: Up to a total of 5 comprised of either hoop / lift nets or open pyramid lift nets or a combination of both.
- Maximum set time: Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours.
- Identification: The buoy must be positioned above the net and measure not less than 100 mm in all dimensions and must be 50 mm above the water with the letters HN and the user's initial, surname, year of birth and postcode, 15 mm in height, clearly visible and in a contrasting colour to the buoy. Any rope attached to the buoy must not be floating on the surface of the water.
- Waters: Inland waters to take Crayfish and Yabbies except closed waters and trout waters (other than using up to a total of 5 comprised of either hoop / lift nets or open pyramid lift nets or a combination of both, to take Yabbies in Googong Dam and in Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne).

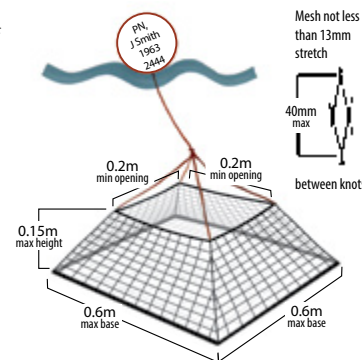


Open pyramid lift net

- Maximum dimensions: Netting with a horizontal opening at the top of not less than 200 mm in all dimensions; parallel to the base of the net with a

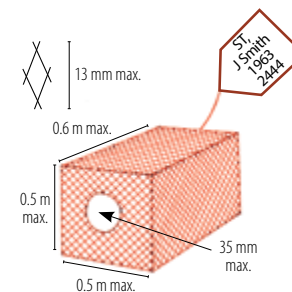
mesh net height of not more than 150 mm, a maximum base size of 600 mm in length and width

- Mesh size: 13mm - 40mm.
- Maximum number: Up to a total of 5 comprised of either hoop / lift nets or open pyramid lift nets or a combination of both.
- Identification: The buoy must have the letters PN, initial and surname, year of birth and postcode, 15mm in height, clearly visible and in a contrasting colour to the buoy. Any rope attached to the buoy must not be floating on the surface of the water.
- Maximum set time: Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours.
- Waters: Inland waters to take Crayfish and Yabbies except closed waters and trout waters (other than using up to a total of 5 comprised of either hoop / lift nets or open pyramid lift nets or a combination of both, to take Yabbies in Googong Dam and in Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne).



Shrimp trap

- Max. dimensions: 0.6 m x 0.5 m x 0.5 m.
- Mesh size: 13 mm maximum measured across the diagonal.
- Entrance funnels: Inner hole maximum width of 35 mm.
- Maximum number: One (1) trap may be set, used and in your possession.
- Maximum set time: Cannot be left set for more than 24 hours.
- Identification: Must have a tag with dimensions of at least 80 mm by 45 mm

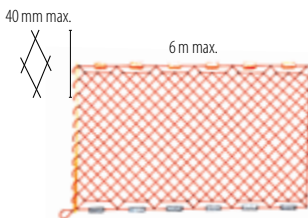


attached to the trap at or above the water level which clearly displays the letters ST and the fisher's initial, surname, year of birth and postcode, in clearly visible letters not less than 15 mm in height, in a contrasting colour.

- Waters: May be used in inland waters to take freshwater shrimp and yabbies, except closed areas and trout waters.

Hand-hauled yabby net

- Maximum dimension: Up to 6 m in length measured along the headline.
- Mesh size: 40 mm maximum measured across the diagonal.
- Maximum number: Propelled by one (1) person. One (1) other person may assist in the operation of the net. May be used with or without hauling lines or poles.
- Maximum set time: Zero. Must be continuously and manually propelled. Not to be set, staked or joined with any other net.
- Waters: May only be used to take yabbies in inland waters, being ground tanks, bore drains or lagoons. Not permitted in any river or public dam, or in closed areas or trout waters.
- Must be used as a hand implement only.



Prohibited fishing methods and activities

Line fishing – you are not permitted to:

- set line, drop line, or jag (foul hooking)
- use hand lines in trout waters (rods and lines only permitted)
- use more than the maximum number of hooks permitted per attended line
- use, carry or possess additional rigged lines (you must not use, carry or possess rigged lines in excess of the maximum number of attended lines permitted for use, or maximum number of rods and lines rigged with flies/lures permitted in possession. Spare lines should not be rigged e.g. should not have hooks or lures attached, should not be capable of taking fish)

Gear and methods – you are not permitted to use:

- gaffs in inland waters
- spears, spear guns or other similar device except if using bowfishing equipment to take carp
- explosives, firearms or electrical devices
- fish traps, gill nets, drum nets, crab nets, cast nets or any other illegal gear
- a light or your hand (e.g. 'tickle') to take trout and salmon
- a hand-hauled yabby net in rivers or dams to take yabbies
- traps and nets in trout waters except hoop or lift nets in Googong Dam and in Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne to take yabbies.
- yabby traps (you may use up to 5 hoop / lift nets or open pyramid lift nets, or a combination of both, to take yabbies. Yabbies caught in a shrimp trap lawfully used to take freshwater shrimp may also be taken)

Fish filleting

You must not alter the length of a fish which is subject to a minimum or maximum size limit whilst you are in, on or adjacent to any waters in any manner other than by gutting, gilling and scaling. You cannot remove the head or tail. This rule does not apply if the fish are being prepared for immediate consumption, are being prepared for immediate use as bait, in the course of authorised charter fishing operations or at a permanent facility, specifically provided for the cleaning of fish, being a place that is not in or on any waters (e.g. a fish cleaning table at a boat ramp), or for fish that do not have a legal length.

Baits – you are not permitted to use:

- Use frogs, live birds, or live mammals as bait.
- Use live finfish in inland waters including live Carp or other pest species.
- Move, buy, sell, release (other than immediately at point of capture) or be in possession of, live Redfin perch
- Use non-native fish or parts thereof whether alive or dead (for example Redfin Perch), other than dead Carp.
- Use prohibited size fish as bait.
- Use Trout and Salmon roe (eggs) or products containing them as bait.
- Use dough based baits or any other similarly artificially manufactured bait product in artificial fly and lure waters and trout spawning streams.

Crayfish – you are not permitted to:

- take Murray Crayfish in any waters in NSW other than in the Murrumbidgee River and its tributaries excluding Old Man Creek between the Hume Highway road bridge, Gundagai and 100m upstream of the weir face at Berembend Weir near Ganmain and in the Murray River and its tributaries from 130 m below Hume Weir near Albury to the Newell Highway road bridge at Tocumwal, between June and August (inclusive)
- remove the heads, tails and claws or possess tails and or claws when you are in, on or adjacent to waters. This rule does not apply if the crayfish are being prepared for immediate consumption, are being prepared for immediate use as bait, or if the crayfish are being cleaned at a fish cleaning facility or a fish cleaning table at a boat ramp
- keep crayfish, including yabbies, Murray Crayfish or other Spiny Crayfish with eggs, or to remove those eggs. Crayfish with eggs must be returned to the water.

General – you are not permitted to:

- take or attempt to take any species in waters closed to fishing
- possess excess or prohibited fishing gear in, on or adjacent to waters
- take threatened or protected species
- keep prohibited size fish – prohibited size fish should be immediately returned unharmed to the water
- be in excess of your possession limit of fish when transporting or storing such fish. An exception is if the fish have been purchased from a registered fish receiver e.g. a fish shop
- use any methods (e.g. line fishing, traps, nets, bait collection) in closed areas
- sell recreational catch.

Further information

The fishing rules in this brochure are current at the time of printing and cannot be used as a defence in a court of law. For more information on fishing rules, contact your local NSW Fisheries office or check the website:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing

A saltwater rules and regulations summary is available in a similar format. Detailed recreational fishing guides are also available.

Check out the app: FishSmart

This is a summary of laws and regulations at the time of publication. This summary and ruler cannot be used as a defence in a court of law.



Download the **NSW DPIRD FishSmart App** for all the essential information you need to fish in NSW



18842-1-SEP25 Cover image: Brown Trout.

Recreational fishing fee

When do I need to pay?

When you are fishing in NSW waters, both fresh and saltwater, you are required by law to carry a receipt showing the payment of the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee. This applies when line fishing (rod or hand line); spear fishing; using bowfishing equipment (to take carp), bait collecting or when collecting invertebrates using methods such as hand gathering, digging, pumping, trapping and prawn netting.

In freshwater, it applies when fishing in the whole of the inland (non-tidal) waters of NSW including any body of fresh water. This also applies when in possession of fishing gear in, on or adjacent to waters. It does not apply when fishing in a dam on private land if the surface area of the body of water (at full capacity) does not exceed 2 hectares. NSW inland waters boundaries include the whole of the Murray River to the South Australian border, all parts of Lake Mulwala from Yarrawonga Weir wall upstream to the point where the Ovens River enters the Murray River at Bundalong boat ramp and when fishing on the NSW side of the Dumaresq, MacIntyre and Barwon Rivers (a midstream border applies to these rivers).

Note. Lake Hume is managed by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA). Please head to the VFA website for current arrangements.

How much is the fee?

- \$7 for 3 days
- \$14 for 1 month
- \$35 for 1 year
- \$85 for 3 years

If you go fishing aboard a charter vessel or with a fishing guide, you may find that your skipper or guide holds an exemption certificate which covers you. Always check whether you need to have paid the fee before going fishing. A fifty per cent concession applies to people who only fish in the tidal waters of the Tweed River and prescribed adjacent beach areas. Other exemptions apply. Refer to the *NSW Freshwater Recreational Fishing Guide* or website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing for more information.

Where do I pay the fee?

- At most tackle outlets and also at caravan parks, local shops and service stations.
- By phoning 1300 660 436.
- On the internet at www.service.nsw.gov.au
- On the NSW DPIRD FishSmart app.

How do I obtain a plastic receipt?

If you pay for a one year or three year period online, over the phone, at a Touch agent or if you renew your licence using your renewal letter, you will receive a plastic receipt in the post. For all other payment methods you will receive a paper receipt.

Replacement fee receipt

Cost for a replacement fee receipt is \$8.00.
Call 1300 660 436 to obtain a replacement.

Digital receipts

If you own a smartphone you can now link your NSW Fishing Fee Receipt with the Service NSW smartphone app which will enable you to hold a digital fishing fee receipt on your smartphone.

www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/get-started-digital-licences.

Interstate and overseas visitors

Recreational fishing licences issued by other states, territories or countries are not valid for fishing in NSW waters. All visitors must pay the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee.

Bag limits, size limits, closed seasons

Regulations apply to help ensure healthy, sustainable fisheries for future generations. Size limits allow fish to reach maturity and complete their breeding cycle, while bag limits help to make sure everyone gets a fair share of the resource and species are not overfished. Abiding by the regulations will help conserve and maintain our freshwater recreational fisheries. Legal lengths apply to most freshwater fish and are specific for each species. They reflect a size at which fish can spawn at least once before being caught.

Common recreational species

Australian Bass ▼

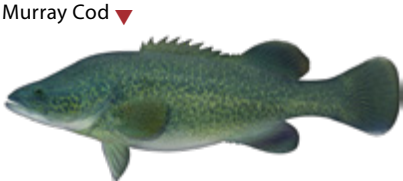

Estuary Perch ▼


Longfin Eel ▼


Southern Shortfin Eel ▼

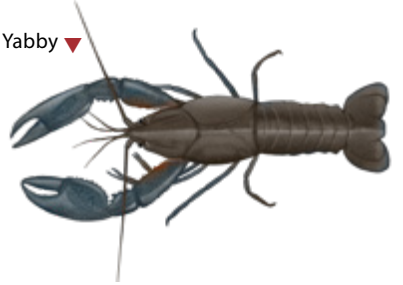

Freshwater Catfish ▼


Golden Perch ▼


Murray Cod ▼


Silver Perch ▼


Other Spiny Crayfish ▼


Yabby ▼


Fish species	Minimum legal length	Daily limit	Possession limit	Open fishing season
Australian Bass and Estuary Perch	-	2 (one or more species, only 1 of which can be longer than 35 cm in rivers).	4 (one or more species, only 1 of which can be longer than 35 cm in rivers).	September to April in rivers below freshwater impoundments (catch and release fishing permitted from May to August). All year in freshwater impoundments and rivers above freshwater impoundments.
Crayfish, Murray	10 cm – 12 cm	2	4	June to August in the following waters: Murrumbidgee River and its tributaries (excluding Old Man Creek) between the Hume Highway road bridge, Gundagai and 100 m upstream of the weir face at Berembed Weir near Ganmain. Murray River and its tributaries from 130 m below Hume Weir near Albury to the Newell Highway road bridge at Tocumwal. All other waters closed to fishing.
Crayfish, other Spiny	9 cm	5 (one or more species, only 1 of which can be longer than 12 cm).	10 (one or more species, only 1 of which can be longer than 12 cm).	All year. Cannot be taken in trout waters.
Eel, Southern Shortfin	30 cm	10	10	All year
Eel, Longfin	58 cm	10	10	All year
Freshwater Catfish, (Eel-tailed)	30 cm in listed dams, eastern dams and eastern rivers.	5 in listed dams and eastern dams, 2 in eastern rivers.	10 in listed dams and eastern dams, 4 in eastern rivers.	All year in eastern rivers, eastern dams and listed dams.
Golden Perch	30 cm	5	10	All year
Murray Cod	55 cm – 75 cm	2	4	December to August each year. All year in Copeton and Blowering Dams.
Silver Perch	25 cm in listed dams.	5 in listed dams.	10 in listed dams.	All year in listed dams. Cannot be taken in rivers or other dams.
Trout and Salmon	25 cm in artificial fly and lure streams and dams. 50 cm in trout spawning streams. 25 cm in all other waters.	2 (one or more species) in artificial fly and lure streams and dams. 1 (one of any species) in trout spawning streams. 5 (one or more species) in all other waters.	4 (one or more species) in artificial fly and lure streams and dams. 2 (one or more species) in trout spawning streams. 10 (one or more species) in all other waters.	From start of October long weekend to end of June long weekend in artificial fly and lure streams. Artificial fly and lure dams are open to fishing all year. From 1 May to end of June long weekend. Rules for artificial fly and lure streams apply from start of October long weekend to 30 April. From start of October long weekend to end of June long weekend in general trout streams. General trout dams and all other waters are open to fishing all year.
Yabbies, Freshwater	-	200	200	All year
Other native fin fish species	-	10 (one or more species other than invertebrates).	10 (one or more species other than invertebrates).	All year
Non-native fin fish species (excluding trout and salmon)	-	-	-	All year

In the table, the terms ‘eastern dams’ and ‘eastern rivers’ refer to waters located within the eastern drainages of NSW.

The possession limit is the maximum number of fish per person if you have been fishing for more than one day. One day is equal to the 24 hour period from midnight to midnight.

Fishing for any fish species in general trout streams, artificial fly and lure streams and trout spawning streams from the end of the June long weekend to the start of the October long weekend is prohibited. Seasonal fishing closures may apply in other waters. Refer to the NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guide or the website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing for an alphabetical listing of streams and dams classified as trout waters. If a stream is not listed check for the major stream that it runs into.

List of dams where Silver Perch and catfish may be taken:

Silver Perch: Ben Chifley, Blowering, Burrendong, Burrinjuck, Chaffey, Copeton, Glenbawn, Glennies Creek, Googong, Jounama, Keepit, Lake Albert, Pindari, Split Rock, Windamere, Wyangala, Wyangan, Yass.

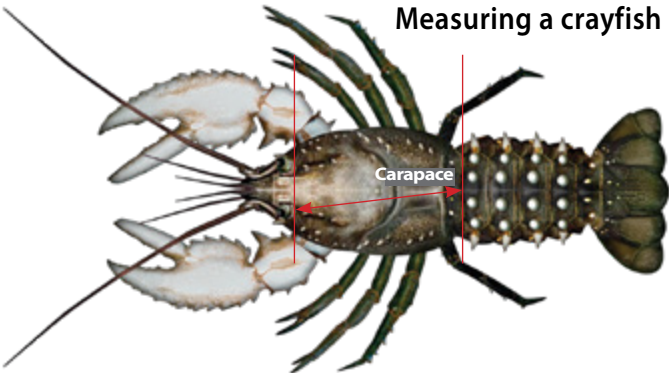
Freshwater Catfish: Ben Chifley, Burrendong, Chaffey, Copeton, Glenbawn, Glennies Creek, Keepit, Pindari, Split Rock, Windamere, Wyangala, Catfish may also be taken from all other eastern dams and eastern rivers.

Measuring a fish



Minimum/maximum length is from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail

Measuring a crayfish



Minimum length is from the rear eye socket to the centre rear of the carapace

Atlantic Salmon ▼


Brook Trout ▼


Brown Trout ▼


Rainbow Trout ▼


Protected from fishing

Fishing prohibited. If caught return immediately to water.

River Blackfish and Two-Spined Blackfish
(River Blackfish population in the Snowy River catchment is endangered.) ▼


Threatened species

Fishing prohibited. If caught return immediately to water.

Eastern (Freshwater) Cod (endangered) ▼


Trout Cod (endangered) ▼


Macquarie Perch (endangered) ▼


Murray Crayfish (endangered) ▼


Major pest species

Common Carp (Live carp cannot be used as bait.) ▼


Redfin (It is illegal to be in possession of live Redfin. Live or dead Redfin cannot be used as bait.) ▼
