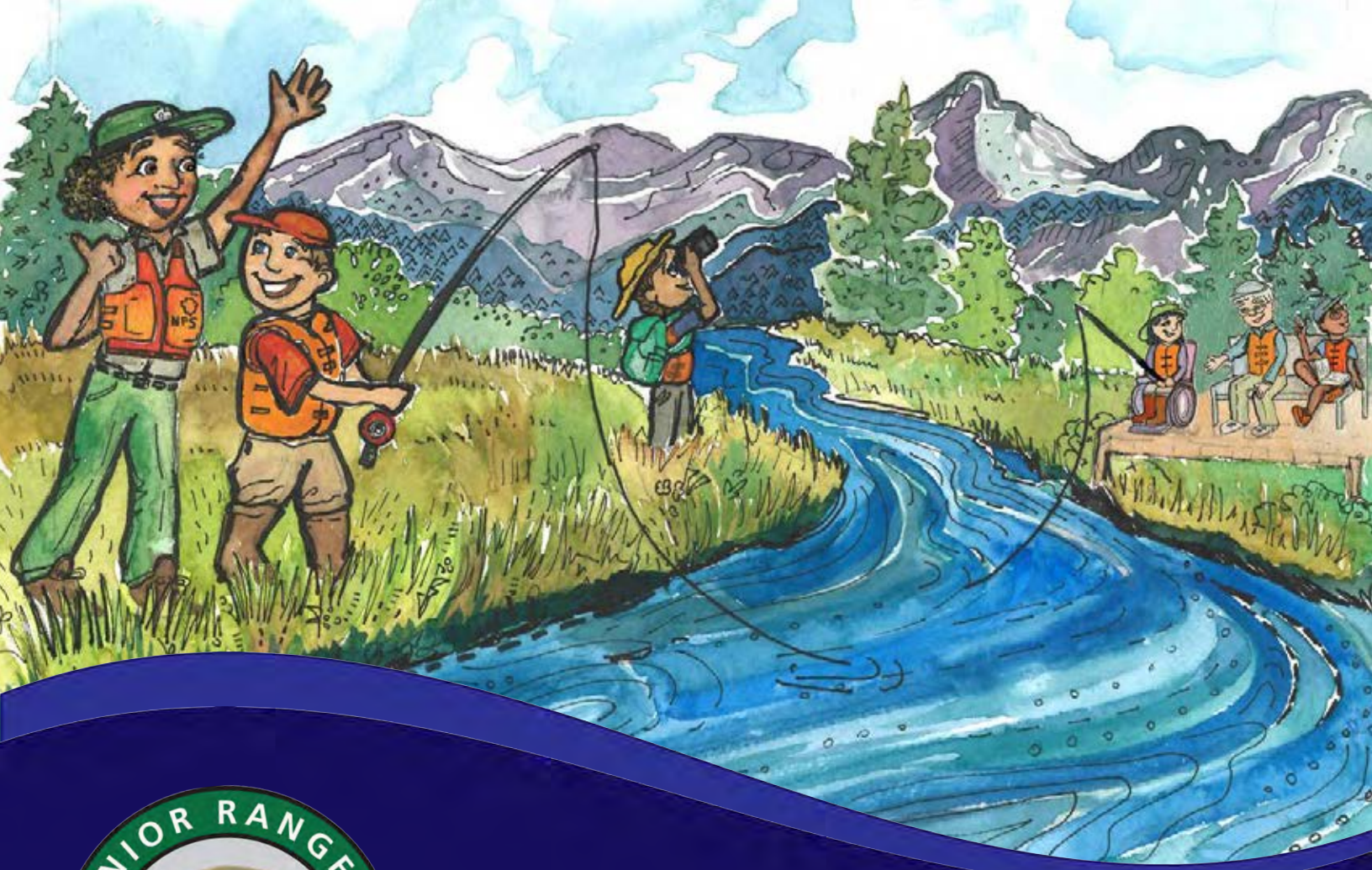
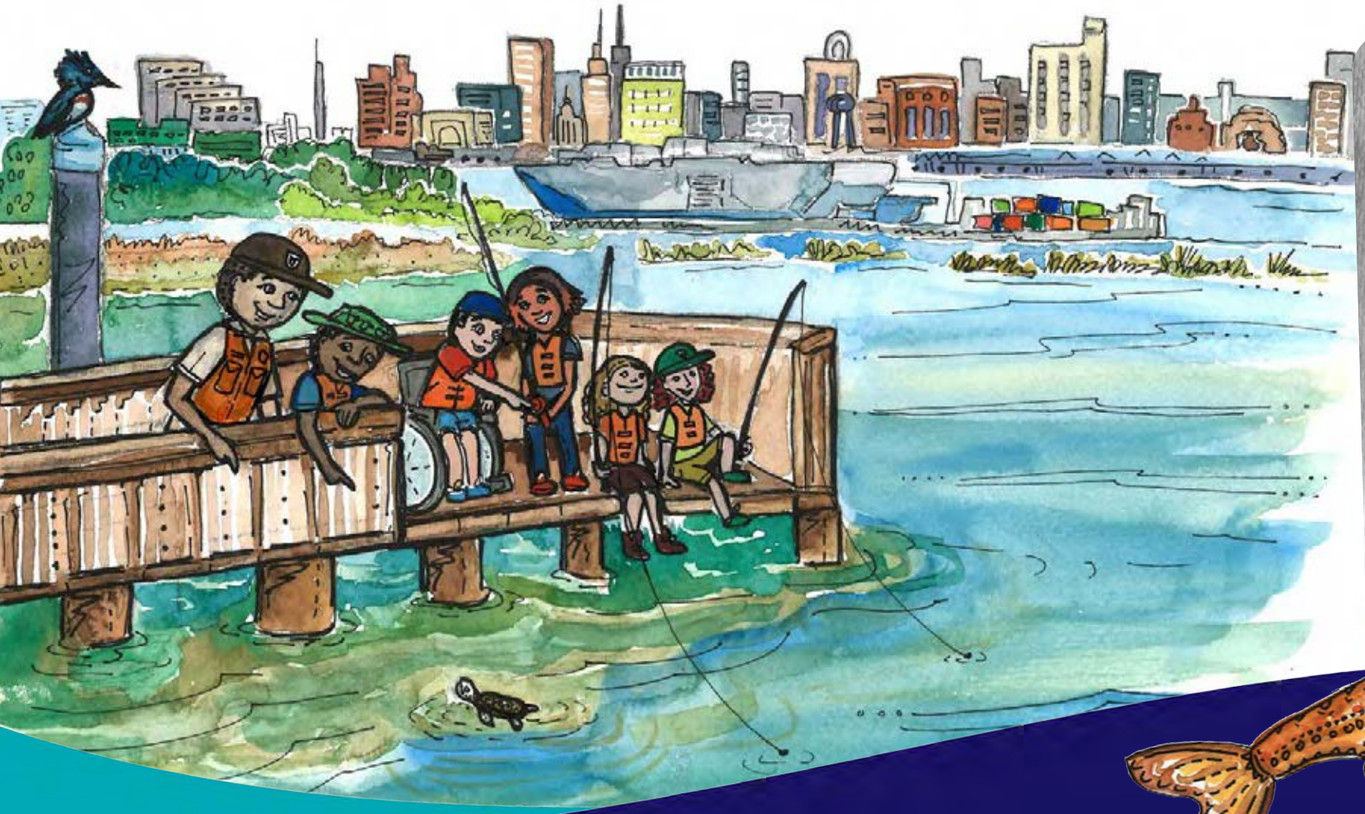


JUNIOR RANGER

Let's Go Fishing!

ACTIVITY BOOK



What public lands are near your home?
Pictured above: Masonville Cove, Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Rivers to Harbor Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

Hey there!

With this book in your hands, you're already on your way to becoming a Junior Ranger Angler! All across the United States you can find public lands, places we protect and share for all. If you're ready to dive into the world of fishing, these parks, wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and reserves are great places to start. Follow the directions below to begin your adventure.

- **Complete this book.** Do as much as you can as best as you can. If you're really about to go fishing, great! If you're not fishing today, use this book to plan a fishing trip—real or imaginary— that you would like to go on.
- **Check your work.** Show a ranger, fish and wildlife manager, teacher, or other adult what you completed.
- **Get a Junior Ranger Angler badge.** Return your completed book to a participating park, wildlife refuge, or hatchery. See the back cover for more instructions.

Angler: one who fishes with a rod and line.

Junior Ranger Angler: one who respects fish and fish habitats, protects nature, and is a role model for safe and smart angling practices.

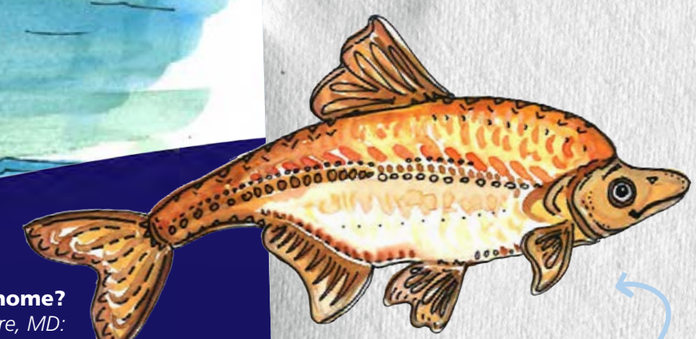
1 Let's Go Fishing!

No matter who you are or where you live, whether you've been fishing or not, if you're ready to learn, explore, and be a safe angler, fishing is for you!

Your name _____

time out in nature *adventure* *learning about animals + plants* *time with my friends + family* *playing* *quiet time* *relaxing*

☐ **What would you like most about a day out fishing?** Draw or write below.



HUMPBACK CHUB Anglers help this native fish by fishing for non-native fish competitors at Canyonlands National Park.

☐ **Act out what you are most looking forward to for your day outside.** Don't use words. See if your friends or family can guess what you mean!

☐ **Know before you go!** Read and discuss the SAFETY and STAY SMART checklists with your friends and family.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ LIFE JACKET
- ☐ WATER
- ☐ SNACKS AND FOOD
- ☐ LAYERS OF CLOTHES
- ☐ HAT AND SUNGLASSES
- ☐ SUNSCREEN
- ☐ FIRST AID KIT
- ☐ FLASHLIGHT

STAY SMART CHECKLIST

- ☐ I'M FISHING WITH A BUDDY.
- ☐ WE GAVE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER OUR FISHING PLAN.
- ☐ WE KNOW THE RULES FOR FISHING.
- ☐ WE'RE NOT RELYING ON CELL PHONES. (Phone service may be limited. Only use phone flashlight and map apps as backup.)

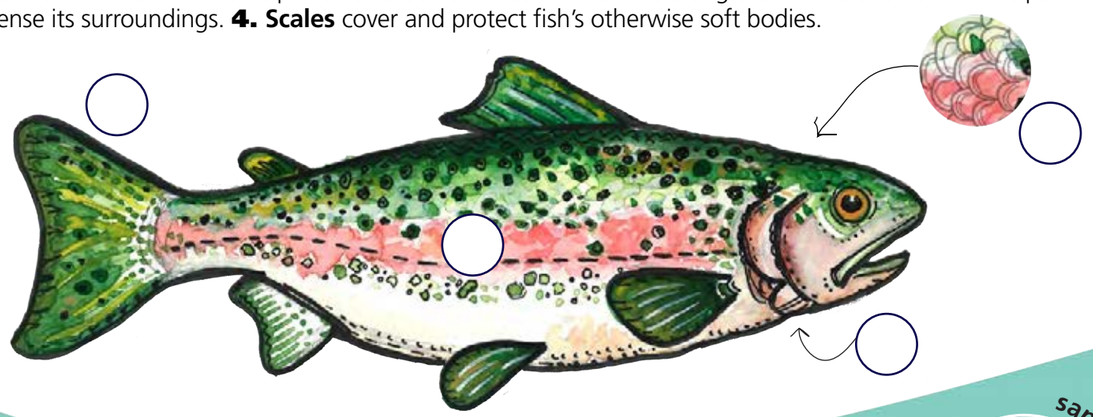
CATCHING DINNER? For types of fish and amounts of fish safe to eat, check fish eating guidelines (fish consumption advisories).

2 Meet a Fish

From tiny seahorses smaller than your pinky finger to whale sharks that weigh more than a car, the huge group of animals we call 'fish' share a similar *anatomy,* or body structure.

Label the fish by reading the terms below and writing in the matching number.

1. Gills help fish breathe by taking oxygen from the water. **2. Tail** moves side to side and pushes the fish forward. Other fins help the fish steer. **3. Lateral line** runs along the middle of a fish and helps it sense its surroundings. **4. Scales** cover and protect fish's otherwise soft bodies.



Draw a line to match each fish with its habitat (home in nature).

Northern pike

The pike's long body is designed for quick bursts to grab prey. Pike live in lakes and like to hide in aquatic plants, waiting for dinner to swim by.

Summer flounder

With a sideways mouth and two eyes on one side, this flat fish wiggles into the sand and waits for food to swim above. Look for them in bays and beaches.

Bluegill sunfish

A skinny shape and special fins help this fish swim fast and change directions quickly. Sunfish search for bugs in the underwater grasses of lakes and ponds.

Channel catfish

Like whiskers, barbels help catfish move and find food as they hide in muddy creeks, channels, or under logs.

sandy bottoms

muddy creeks

lake edges

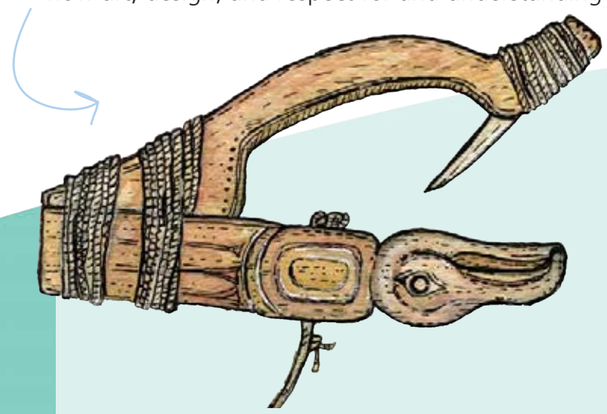
underwater grasses

3 Fish and People

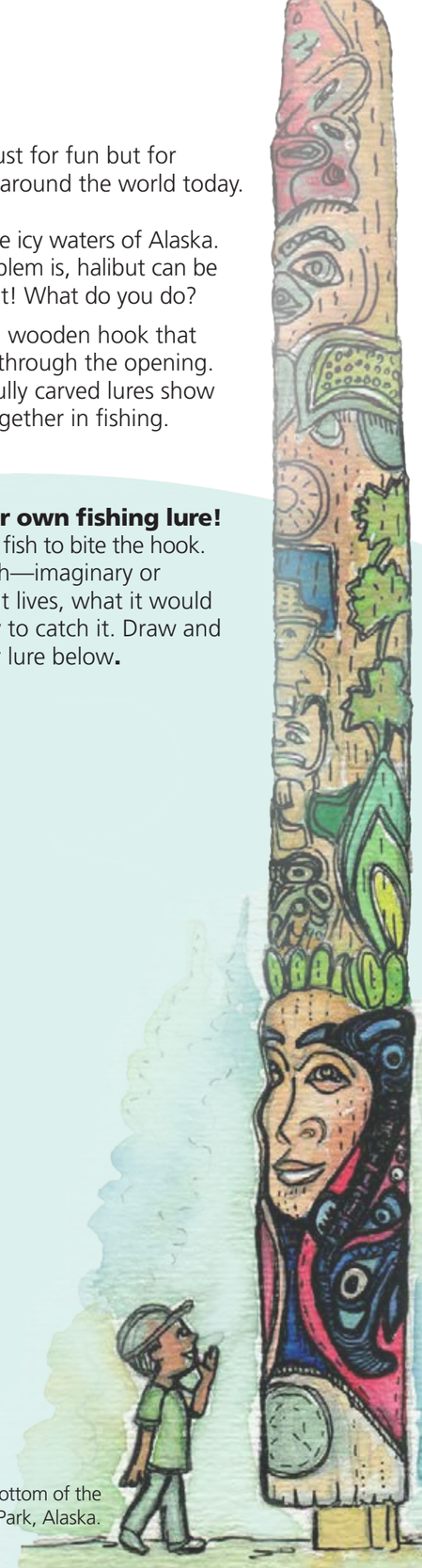
For thousands of years, fishing has been important not just for fun but for food and survival. Fish are still an important food source around the world today.

The amazing halibut hook. Imagine you are in a canoe, fishing in the icy waters of Alaska. You hope to catch a halibut, a flat fish that lives on the sea floor. The problem is, halibut can be huge—over 300 pounds! If you hook a big one, it could swamp your boat! What do you do?

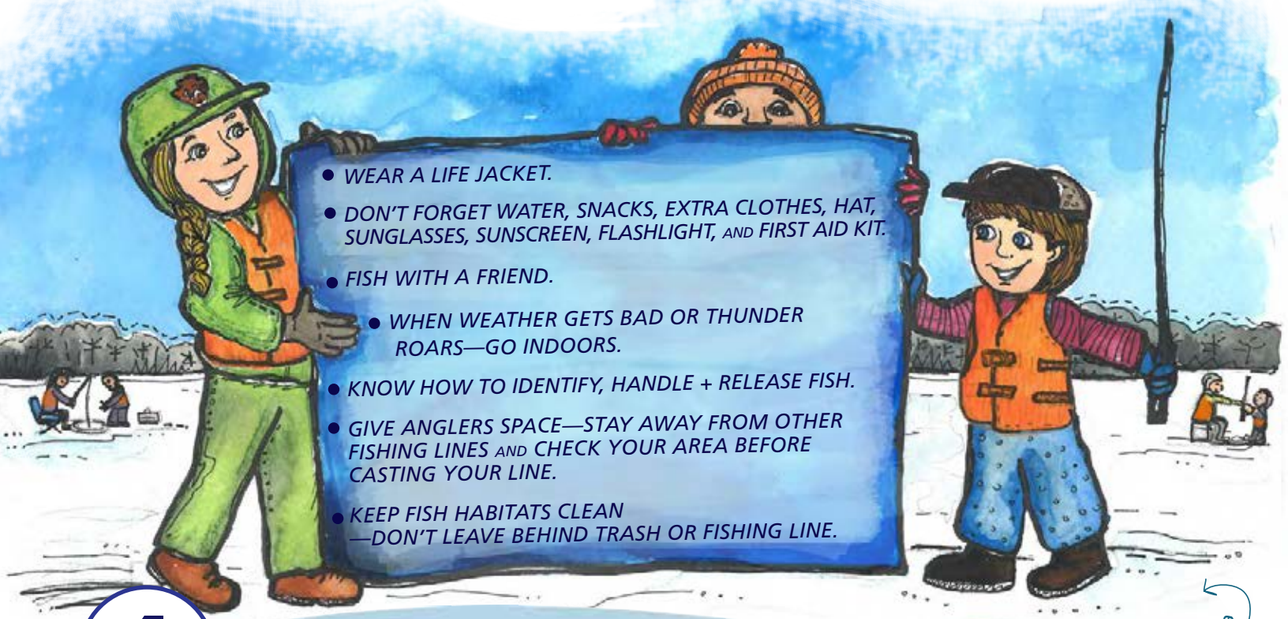
Long ago, the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people of Alaska designed a wooden hook that catches only perfect sized halibut. The biggest halibut, can't fit their lip through the opening. The smaller halibut can't fit their mouths around the top. These beautifully carved lures show how art, design, and respect for and understanding of fish can come together in fishing.



Design your own fishing lure! A lure tempts fish to bite the hook. Think of a fish—imaginary or real—where it lives, what it would eat, and how to catch it. Draw and describe your lure below.



Fish and culture. Can you find the fish carved into the bottom of the Wooch Jin Dul Shat Kooteeya Centennial Pole? Sitka National Historic Park, Alaska.



4 The Junior Angler Way

☐ **Choose one rule and create a 'poster' below** imagining you are helping rangers and fish and wildlife managers teach others about the rule and why it is important.

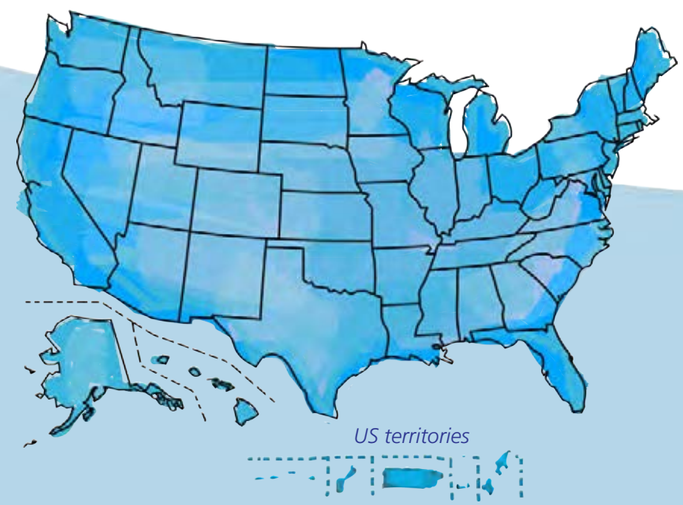
To try ice fishing, bundle up and visit Upper Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Minnesota

5 Types of Fishing

From the rushing rivers of the Rocky Mountains to deep ocean trenches, from warm swamps to the frigid waters beneath thick lake ice, fish can be found across the United States and around the world!

☐ **Where are you visiting today** and/or **Where do you live?** Mark an X on the map. If you live outside the United States, you can write your home country below.

☐ **What kind of fishing would you try at this site or in your state?** Check out the list on the right for ideas!



☐ **Circle a type of fishing you've never tried before.** What do you think would be fun about it? What would be challenging?

LAKE FISHING

In lakes, crappie, bass, and trout might be lurking nearby. Try to learn the different places they hide!

Visit: Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, Idaho.

ICE FISHING

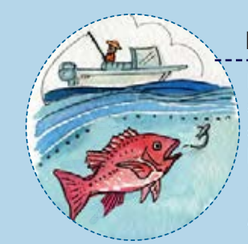
On frozen lakes huddled around a hole cut into the ice, you can try to catch pike, walleye, perch, and bluegill.

Visit: Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota.

SURF FISHING

With an extra long fishing rod, you can stand in the sand and cast out into the surf for striped bass, red drum, or dogfish.

Visit: Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Virginia.



DEEP SEA FISHING

Bring a strong fishing pole and head far out into the ocean to look for fish like halibut, cod, and snapper.

Visit: Biscayne National Park, Florida.

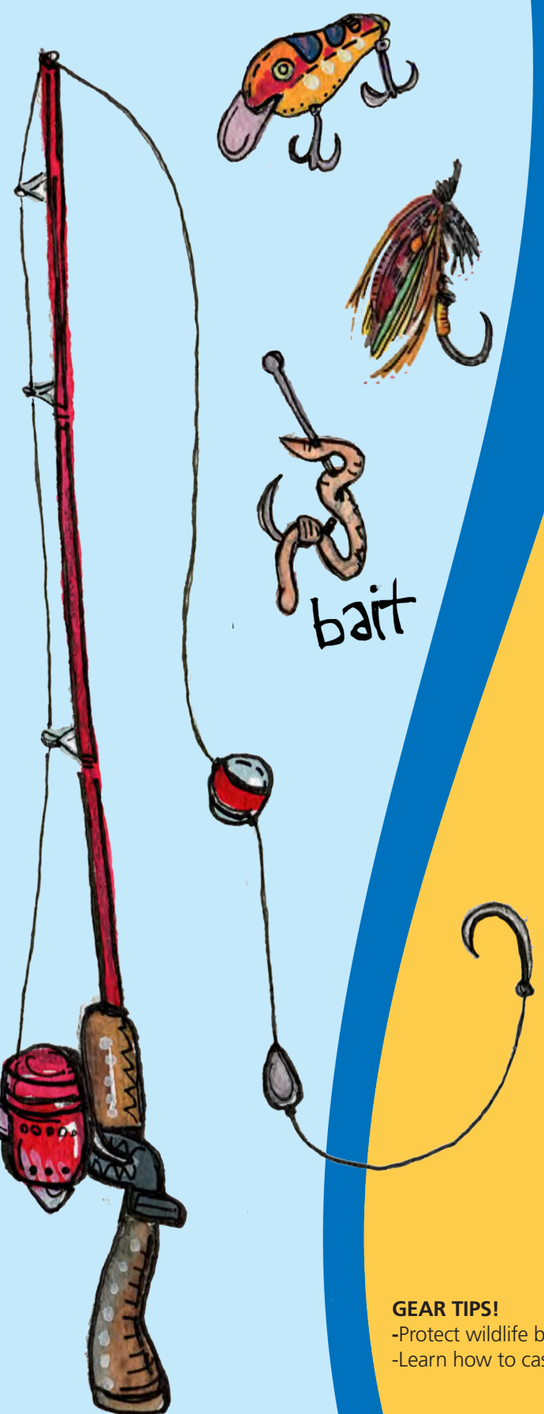
RIVER FISHING

You can wade in the water, stand on the bank, sit in a kayak, or work on tying a fly. Try for trout and bass.

Visit: Ozark National Scenic Riverway, Missouri.

STAY SAFE! Always check to make sure it is safe and allowed to enter the water!

6 Get to Know the Gear



Although there are many different kinds of fishing and types of fishing gear, you can start by learning this basic setup.

☐ **Label the fishing setup on the left by writing in the name of each part.**

1. Fishing rod: the main tool used in fishing, a pole that holds the reel and fishing line.

2. Line: a special 'string' made for fishing.

3. Reel: a device that holds, spools out, and retrieve fishing line.

4. Hook: usually sharp, shaped like a 'J' and attached at the end of the line, it catches or hooks the fish.

5. Bait: a natural attractant like worms or baitfish that tempts the fish into biting the hook.

6. Lure: an item designed to look like the fish's prey or other food it would like to eat.

7. Fly: a special kind of lure made by tying strings and feathers, it is used in river fishing.

8. Bobber: a ball attached to fishing line that floats. It keeps bait from sinking to the bottom and can help you see when a fish bites!

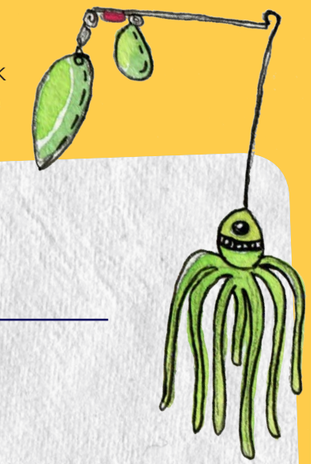
9. Sinker: a weight that helps pull the line down in the water, closer to the bottom.

GEAR TIPS!
-Protect wildlife by using lead-free sinkers.
-Learn how to cast by visiting TakeMeFishing.org

7 Junior Role Model

Like the rules you have at home or school, regulations are things we agree to follow. Regulations help us protect fish and keep fishing open to the public. A good angler always learns and honors these rules.

☐ **Find out the regulations for the site you are visiting or would like to visit.** For help, you can ask a fish and wildlife manager or ranger or visit the state info page at TakeMeFishing.org. Know before you go!



Where will you be fishing?

_____

What kind of fish would you like to catch?

_____

Can you keep this fish? How many?

_____

(If applicable) How long must the fish be for you to keep it?

_____

TIP! You can use the ruler on this page to check the size of your fish!

Who in your group needs a fishing license?

_____

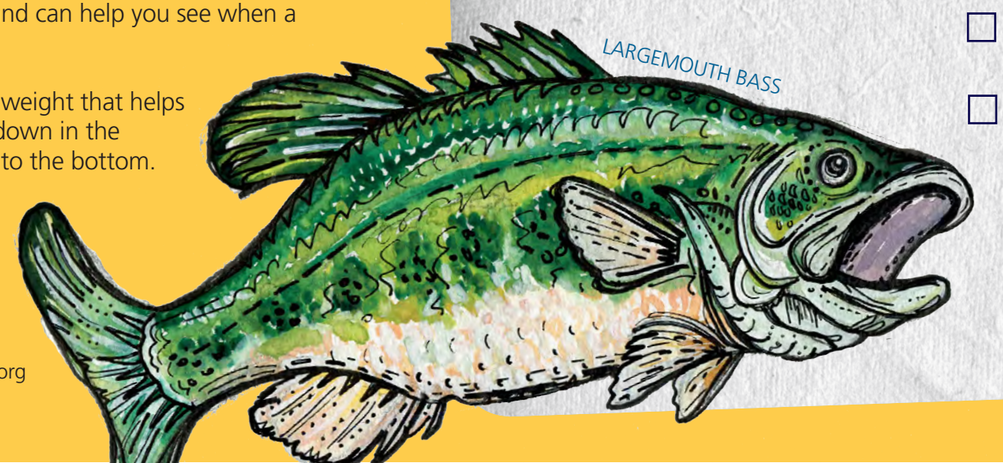
Which species (kinds of fish) are "catch and release" only?

_____

_____

☐ **Check that the site is open for you to visit and fish.**

☐ **Check which types of bait and lures, and sinkers you can use.**



Visit TakeMeFishing.org/FirstCatch to find out how, when and where to fish in your area and to show off your #firstcatch !

8 Angler Tips

A smart angler learns about fish, how to find them, and how to handle them safely and with respect.

☐ **Read and discuss these tips with your friends or family.**

- Try barbless hooks. They cause less harm to the fish.
- Use wet hands—never a towel—when holding fish so you don't wipe off the fish's protective slime.
- Don't keep a fish out of water too long. Put it back gently head-first.

☐ **Read the tips below and mark an X in the places you think you might find fish.**

RIVER FISHING

River bends and **confluences,** places where two bodies of water meet, have good food for fish. **Rocks** make pockets of calmer water downstream. Fish also like **eddies** where water slows and whirlpools.

(STAY SAFE: Check for underwater hazards like holes, trees, and slippery rocks.)

LAKE FISHING

Lily pads, **logs, grass beds, fishing piers**, and other 'structures' give places for fish to hide and find food. **Holes** have cooler, deeper water that some fish like on hot days. **Islands** and the **lake edge** can be good fish habitat too.

AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS.

Check your boots and boat! Don't accidentally bring worms, snails, or other plants and animals to a fish habitat where they don't belong.

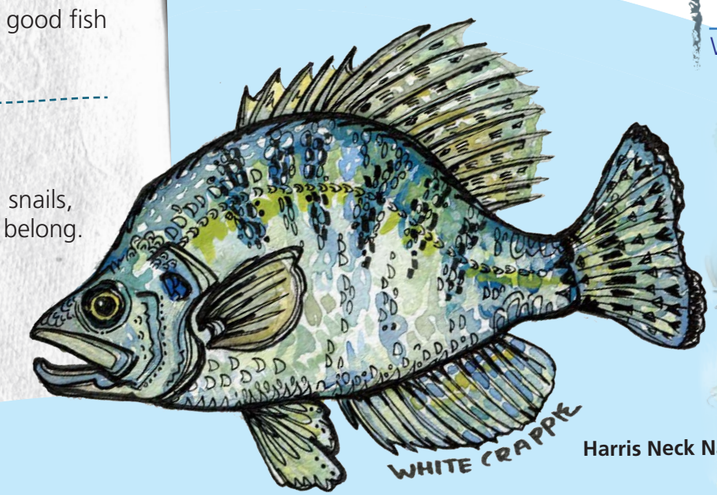
☐ **Clean these boots by marking an X on each 'hitchhiker' or other spots where the boots looks dirty.**

9 Tic-Tac-Go Outside

You don't have to catch a fish to have fun while fishing!

☐ **Go outside and play tic-tac-go with a friend or family member.** One person is X and one is O. Take turns picking squares to complete and mark. First to get three in a row wins. (If you're doing this activity by yourself, try getting three in a row or the four corners.)

Find something a fish would eat. Draw it here.	Tell someone a short story (real or imagined) about fishing.	Draw yourself as a fish.
Invent a new fish species. Tell your friend about it, including where it lives, what it eats, and how to catch it.	Act out an animal that eats fish and see if the other player can guess what it is.	Find a place where you think a fish would hide, and explain why you think a fish would like that spot.
What is your new fish called?	What was it?	What did you find?
Make up a song about fishing and sing it.	Find something slimy in nature.	Listen to the sounds of nature around you for three minutes.
	What was it?	What did you hear?



Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Georgia

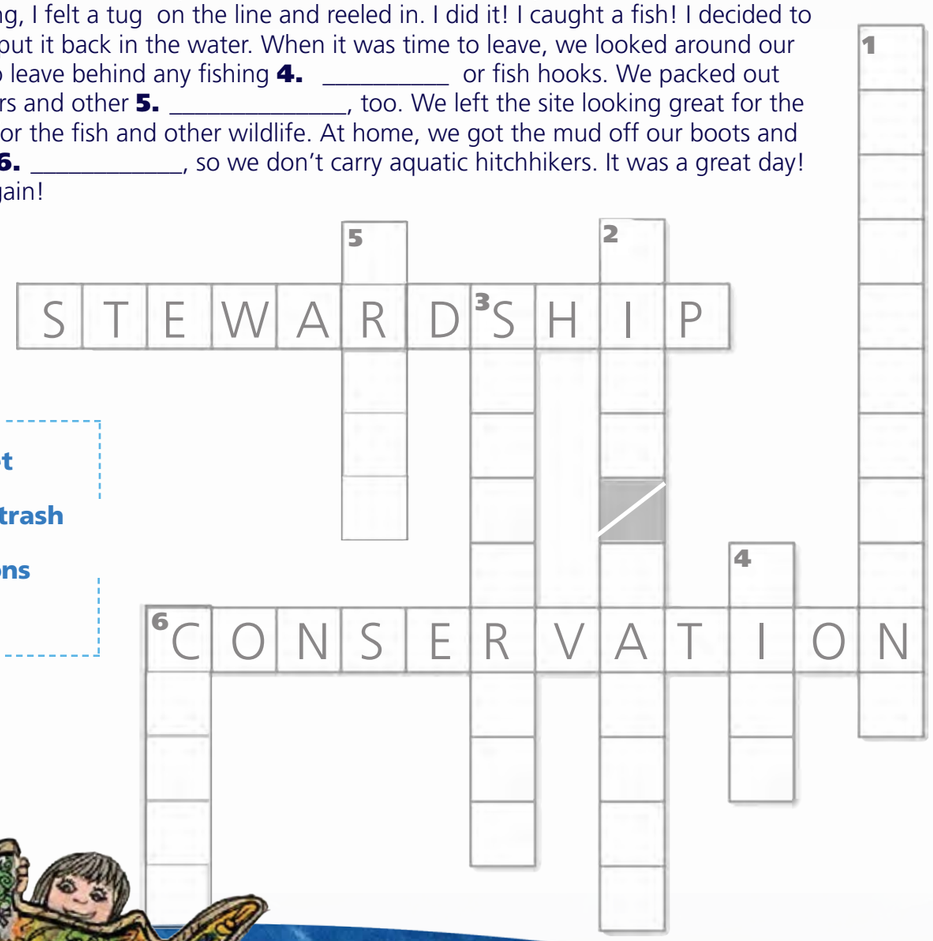
10 Protect and Conserve

On an ordinary day out fishing you'll make choices that affect fish and other anglers. Junior ranger anglers set an example of **stewardship**, taking care of a place, and **conservation,** protecting nature.

☐ **Read the story and complete the crossword puzzle.**

Our Day Fishing

We were so excited for our day fishing! Before we headed out, we checked the rules or **1.** _____ . We wanted to stay safe near the water, so we brought a **2.** _____ _____ for each person. The sun was shining. It reminded us to pack **3.** _____ to protect our skin. After a long time fishing, I felt a tug on the line and reeled in. I did it! I caught a fish! I decided to let it go, and carefully put it back in the water. When it was time to leave, we looked around our site. We didn't want to leave behind any fishing **4.** _____ or fish hooks. We packed out all of our food wrappers and other **5.** _____, too. We left the site looking great for the next anglers and safe for the fish and other wildlife. At home, we got the mud off our boots and made sure they were **6.** _____, so we don't carry aquatic hitchhikers. It was a great day! We can't wait to go again!



WORD BANK

life jacket
line clean trash
regulations
sunscreen

BRAVO! In 2016, to raise awareness about the harmful effects of waste and trash on marine life, students in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Annual Salmon Camp program used beach litter to create a salmon mosaic. It's on display at the refuge visitor center.

11 Pass it On

☐ **Think of a friend or family member you would like to invite fishing, and write or draw them a note.** If you went fishing, tell them about your day. If you haven't gone fishing yet, tell them something you learned in this book and why you would like to go!

This is the inside of the card.
You'll make the front on the next page.

Dear _____ ,

Your friend,

_____

12 Continue the Adventure

You're near the end of this book, and close to getting your Junior Ranger Angler badge! But this is just the beginning. In every state in the U.S. you can find a place to fish, or even just play outside. Plus, you can keep earning junior ranger badges at public lands near you.

SPINY DOGFISH

☐ **Send a fishing invite!** Complete the rest of the card by adding your own design and tips you learned from this book. Give your card to a friend or ask an adult to help you address an envelope and mail it.

Cut out the card along the dotted line. Fold it in half and it's ready to go.

BACK OF CARD

We could go fishing here:

I learned this tip for fishing safely:

I learned this tip for protecting fish and fish habitat:

Visit TakeMeFishing.org to get ready for your next fishing adventure!

FRONT OF CARD

JUNIOR RANGER MAIL

Let's Go Fishing!

JUNIOR RANGER

Let's Go Fishing!

CERTIFICATE *of* ACHIEVEMENT

I _____,
promise to help protect public lands and nature,
to show others how to fish safely and responsibly,
and to keep having fun exploring outdoors!

PARK RANGER OR FISH AND /WILDLIFE MANAGER SIGNATURE

SITE STAMP OR DATE

JUNIOR RANGER CANCELLATION STAMP

Check it out!

Here are some online resources:

Explore fish species, learn new fishing techniques, and find places to fish, by visiting TakeMeFishing.org or VamosAPescar.org.

Find your next Junior Ranger adventure at nps.gov/kids/jrrangers.cfm.

Learn more about fishing in parks and refuges by visiting nps.gov/fishing **and** fws.gov/fishing.

LAKE STURGEON

Thank you.

The Junior Ranger: Let's Go Fishing Activity Book was produced by the National Park Service with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Foundation.

Additional support was provided by the International Game Fish Association and TakeMeFishing.org, a national campaign of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation.