

DEC REMINDS ANGLERS OF NEW ICE FISHING REGULATIONS

With the onset of winter, the thoughts of many anglers often turn to ice fishing and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today reminds ice anglers about a recent change to the Environmental Conservation Law.

In waters where ice fishing is permitted, anglers will be allowed to use up to three lines and five tip-ups except as noted in special regulations for specific waters. Previously, ice anglers could only use two lines with five tip-ups.

“Ice fishing provides a great opportunity for people to get outdoors during the long winter months,” said DEC Assistant Commissioner for Natural Resources Kathy Moser. “According to a recent DEC survey, ice fishing participation has doubled over the past 10 years.”

The use of fish for bait is very popular when ice fishing, and bait fish may be used in most but not all waters that are open to ice fishing. See DEC’s website for a list of special regulations by county to find out where bait fish can and cannot be used: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/71546.html).

Anglers are reminded to take these important steps when ice fishing:

- Follow the bait fish regulations to prevent the spread of harmful fish diseases and invasive species.
- Use only certified disease-free bait fish purchased at a local tackle store or use only personally collected bait fish for use in the same waterbody in which they were caught.
- Check for sufficient ice thickness before venturing onto the ice.

A minimum of three to four inches of solid ice is usually safe for anglers on foot. However, ice thickness varies on every body of water and anglers should be particularly wary of areas of moving water and around boat docks/houses where “bubblers” may be installed to reduce ice buildup. DEC cautions that the presence of snowmobile tracks or footprints on the ice should not be taken as evidence of safe ice conditions. Individuals are strongly encouraged to check ice conditions for themselves and avoid situations that appear to present even a remote risk.

For more information on ice fishing, ice safety, and places to ice fish, please visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7733.html>. New York’s freshwater fishing regulations can be found at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7917.html.