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## Safety & the Fishing Trip

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*Even with the best planning, there is no guarantee that you'll catch a fish every time you go fishing—which is why this pastime is called fishing rather than catching! Yet good planning can go a long way in ensuring a safe, successful fishing trip.*

### **What Will the Students Learn?**

Students will learn how to plan a safe fishing trip, develop competency in fishing techniques and skills, and demonstrate responsible fishing practices and sportsmanship. They can experiment with various baits to discover which ones best attract fish. They'll know what to do when a fish takes the bait. They'll learn to practice safe, responsible handling of fish to promote catch-and-release survival. They'll learn how to store, fillet, cook, and safely enjoy the nutritional benefits of the fish they choose to keep.

## Chapter Concepts

When people have a fun and safe fishing experience, they might cultivate a fishing habit that gets them outdoors and “in the habitat” more often. With knowledge of the resource and how it is managed, an understanding of responsible stewardship practices, and practical fishing and safety skills, students will be ready to pursue fishing as a lifelong recreational, educational, reflective, and inspirational outdoor activity—and share their newfound knowledge and skills with friends and family!

### Be Safe, Be Prepared

**Lesson 6:1—Safety and Fishing at the Water’s Edge**

**Lesson 6:2—Ice Fishing and Winter Safety**

**Lesson 6:3—Planning a Fishing Trip**

**Lesson 6:5—Eating Fish**

Lessons from previous chapters provide background information on habitats, food webs, fish identification, water quality, watersheds, stewardship, regulations, and resource management. But there are just a few more important things to learn before diving into fishing, and the first is safety at the water’s edge. Students learn to assess their site for safety, bring a buddy, form a safety plan, be prepared and protect themselves from sun, weather, insects, and poisonous plants in the summer, and from cold temperatures and thin ice in winter. They’ll learn how to safely handle equipment (including sharp hooks) and fish, and to prepare and consume fish safely.

### Planning the Fishing Trip

**Lesson 6:1—Safety and Fishing at the Water’s Edge**

**Lesson 6:2—Ice Fishing and Winter Safety**

**Lesson 6:3—Planning a Fishing Trip**

Where is the best place to go fishing? How do you get there? What kind of fish are anglers likely to catch there? What are the fishing conditions? These

are a few of the questions that you must explore before setting out on a fishing trip. Students will use a variety of resources to plan a fishing trip, including guidebooks, Minnesota DNR Lake Survey information, maps, the local Chamber of Commerce, and the Internet. The best fishing trips start with sound research and well-made plans!

### Go Fish!

**Lesson 6:1—Safety and Fishing at the Water’s Edge**

**Lesson 6:2—Ice Fishing and Winter Safety**

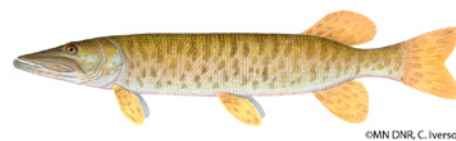
**Lesson 6:4—Piscatorial Palate**

Students are now prepared to “get in the habitat” and apply their knowledge and skills. During the fishing time, learning continues with an experience that includes safe, respectful fishing practices, sportsmanship, careful handling of fish, leaving no trace, and a great deal of fun! Students will bait hooks, cast and retrieve their lines, land fish, remove fish from hooks and gently release—or safely keep—their fish.

A fishing trip can encompass much more than catching fish. Investigate the fishing site with your students. The fishing trip is an opportunity to explore, observe, and identify plants and animals. While the lines are in the water, take some time to reflect on the day or just enjoy being outdoors. This is also a good time to observe people and how they interact with their environment.

Enjoy your fishing experience! You and your students can use what you learn on this trip to help you be even more successful on the next fishing trip.





## Luring Fish to Bite

### Lesson 6:4—Piscatorial Palate

What *do* fish like to eat? They can be picky eaters! On the fishing trip, students experiment with various bait materials. Their discoveries can provide insight into fish food preferences—and this is useful information for the next fishing trip.

## Safe, Nutritious Eating

### Lesson 6:5—Eating Fish

As part of a balanced and healthful diet, fish provide important nutrients, such as Omega-3s and protein, that prevent disease, promote healthy nervous systems, and keep people strong. It's important to understand the benefits of eating fish, and to know where to find—and how to critically assess—information on risks that might be associated with consuming your catch. Pollutants in the water, such as mercury and PCBs, can accumulate in fish. Students learn to use the Minnesota DNR Lake Finder and fish consumption information from the Minnesota Department of Health to evaluate and reduce risks associated with cooking and eating fish. With this information at their disposal, the students will try some fish recipes and enjoy a taste of their catch. By cooking and tasting fish they've caught themselves, students become more aware that all of our food is derived from the living things from the land and water—and that people, too, are part of the food chain.

## Stewardship: Future Fishing

### Service-learning Appendix

You've prepared your students to develop the skills needed to “get in the habitat,” care for aquatic resources, enjoy fishing as a lifelong activity, and share their fishing skills with others, including their family and friends.

Depending on the students' interests and concerns, they could choose a service-learning project that informs neighbors of fishing opportunities in the community; monitor or clean up a local fishing stream, river, lake, or pond; work toward increasing fishing opportunities in the community by initiating a habitat restoration project; raise funds for fishing pier construction; conduct a neighborhood fishing clinic for younger, disabled, or less fortunate children; plan a fishing event for senior citizens; write a public service announcement that encourages responsible and respectful fishing for broadcast on a local radio station; or establish a community fishing sports column in the school newspaper.

Awareness, information, skills, and imagination are the only limiting factors when it comes to engaging in stewardship. Your students have experienced immersion in their local aquatic environment by learning to fish. They've been exposed to environmental concepts, issues, and problems. They've had a chance to practice investigative, analytical, and problem solving skills by completing a variety of lessons in the *MinnAqua Leader's Guide*. You've fueled their imaginations—exciting possibilities for service-learning and stewardship await!

“Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.”

—Henry David Thoreau