

THE ABCS OF BROOK TROUT FISHING



Sépaq

Summer vacation is here! It's a time to get away from it all and do something fun and different that breaks the routine. Fishing for brook trout, otherwise known as speckled trout, offers you this opportunity. To be successful, anglers must take the proper steps: choose the right equipment, adapt their fishing technique, and use bathymetric maps and other tools available to them. Get ready and come enjoy a stay at one of Québec's wildlife reserves. The staff of the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq) is waiting for you. This brochure will guide you in organizing your fishing day.

ORGANIZE YOUR FISHING DAY

Essential things to bring with you

CLOTHES

- Warm clothing
- Rainwear
- Hat
- Shoes adapted to the weather conditions
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen

SECURITY

- Life jacket
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- Buoyant line

MATERIALS

- Rod
- Reel
- Tackle box
- Bait
- Landing net
- Cooler
- Plastic bags

MISCELLANEOUS

- Fishing licence
- Right of access to fish
- Map of the territory
- Bathymetric map
- Food
- Beverages

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE FISHING

In order to ensure the protection of fish and fishing, you need to know the rules enacted under the Québec Fishing Regulations (visit the website of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP)).

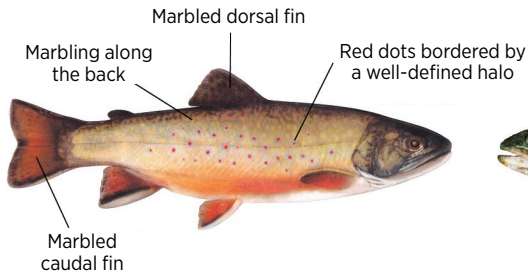
- In Québec, a licence is required for sport fishing, including in wildlife reserves. However, in the case of a family, the children and the parent may fish either with their own licence or the children may do so in the presence of the licenced parent, limited to one catch per fishing licence.

- The number of rods and related gear is limited to **one rod per angler in summer**, and the **number of hooks on a line cannot exceed three**.
- Fishing must be done during authorized seasons and must respect size or weight limits, as well as daily catch and possession limits, if applicable. These limits vary from reserve to reserve, species to species, and sometimes even from lake to lake. It's important to ask the staff about the specifics of the lake you are fishing on or visit www.sepaq.com.

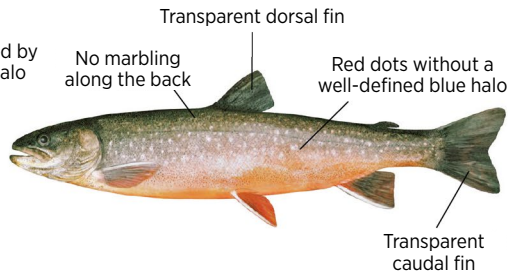
The **daily catch limit** is the maximum number of fish of a species that can be caught and kept in one day in any of the 29 fishing zones in the province. Fish consumed on the same day are included in this daily limit. The **possession limit is** the number of fish of a species that can be in your possession **at any time** and **at any place**, whether at the fishing site, on the road, or at home. This possession limit is usually the same as the daily catch limit.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE BROOK TROUT

The speckled trout, whose official name is the brook trout, is the most fished and sought after native sport fish in Québec. Unlike the brook trout, the Arctic char, also called the sea trout, is recognizable by the absence of marbling on its dorsal and caudal fins.



The brook trout



The Arctic char

Source citation: Louis L'Hérault

WHERE TO FIND BROOK TROUT?

The comfort zone

In a lake in summer, the water temperature decreases from the surface to the bottom. Cold water with a high concentration of dissolved oxygen is essential for brook trout. Its ideal depth is where the temperature remains between 12 and 16 °C (54 and 61 °F), which is the central zone on the lake below, in side view. Since each lake is different, the comfort zone may be between 3 and 10 m (10 to 33 ft) deep, depending on the lake and the time of year.



The food zone

Foraging brook trout linger near water inlets and outlets; islands, rocky points, and narrows between two sections of a lake; shallow grassy beds or bays; beaver lodges or fallen trees; and near escarpments (close to banks where the depth suddenly increases). Brook trout are most lively in the morning or evening but can be active at any time of day depending on the weather. A brook trout is more likely to appear during the emergence of aquatic insects.

FISHING IN A LAKE WITHOUT A BATHYMETRIC MAP

Check out the terrain around the lake. Whether steep or shallow, the slope along the shore usually extends underwater. This allows you to identify stretches that are deep enough to harbour brook trout as well as shallower waters that the fish abandon in warm weather. The depth under the watercraft can be estimated by dropping your line to the bottom and measuring the length of line as you retrieve it by hand, one metre at a time.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE COMPONENTS OF A LAKE

The brook trout in search of food lingers near

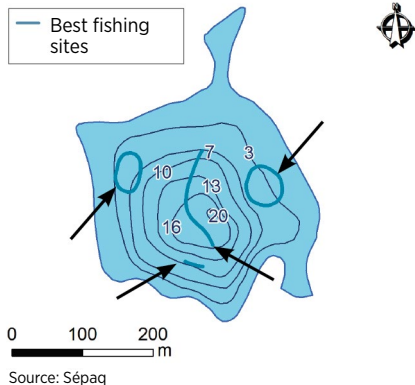
- Water inlets, discharges, and other outlets.
- Islands, rocky points, and narrows between two sections of a lake.
- Shallow seagrass beds or bays.
- Shoals, beaver lodges, or submerged fallen trees.
- Escarpments (close to banks where the depth suddenly increases).

Also, keep an eye on the wind direction. Fish tend to retreat to the side of structures that are consistently buffeted by the wind, in the same direction.



FISHING IN A LAKE WITH A BATHYMETRIC MAP

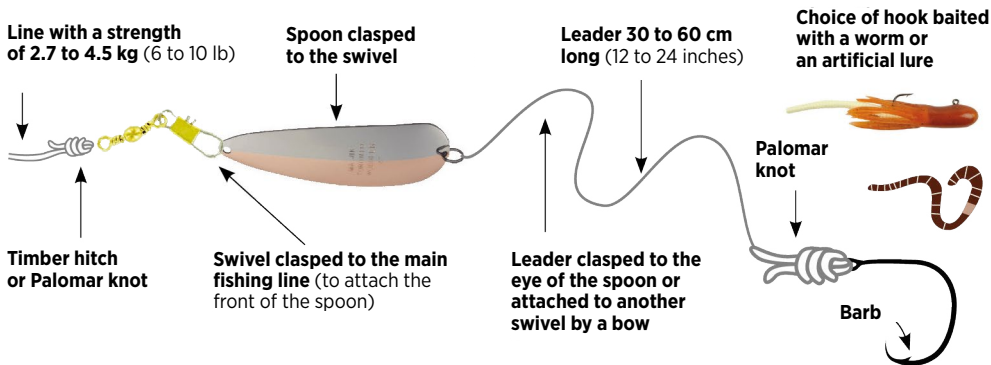
A bathymetric map will help you get a good read on the lake and guide you to the best fishing spots. Bathymetric maps are topographic maps of the bottom of a body of water that show the topography in concentric lines of equal depth. The numbers indicate depths in metres or feet, depending on the map. The closer the lines are to each other, the steeper the slope at the bottom and, conversely, the more the lines are separated, the shallower the slope. Fish frequent the edges of spots where the slope changes rapidly and allows them to make a brief foray into a shallower, but food-rich area before returning to their comfort zone.



The lake maps that are offered free of charge on our website are also essential tools. For some bodies of water, they offer much more than bathymetry: they target favourable fishing sites identified by our experienced guides in order to promote your fishing success.

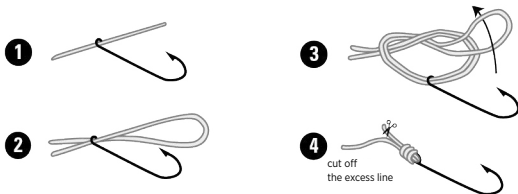
ASSEMBLING THE FISHING LINE LEADER

Ideally, your reel should have a line with a strength of 2.7 to 4.5 kg (6 to 10 lb) that isn't very visible to the fish. Assemble your leader by following the steps in the example below. The leader is a piece of line of varying length that serves to distance the hook (size 4 to 8) from the spoon. Hide the hook as much as possible with the bait (worm, leech, artificial lure). Once assembled, tie the swivel of your leader to the end of the line of your reel. A variation on the illustration below is to tie a single loop 18" in front of the swivel to add an artificial fly assembled on an 8" leader.

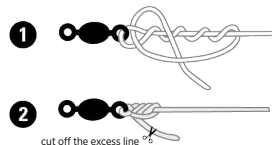


LEARNING SOME KNOTS TO ASSEMBLE A LINE

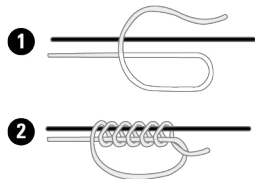
Palomar knot (very popular)



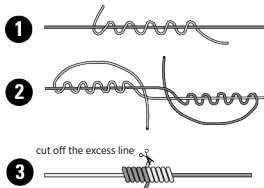
Timber hitch (very popular)



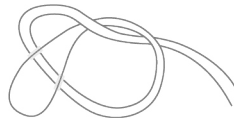
Uni knot (simple grinner)



Connection knot



Bowline knot (simple)



SOME SPOONS TO TRY

Toronto Wobbler style wobbler spoons #2, 2½, 3½ or 4; Williams Wabler W50 or 60 (mirror and hammered surface) and Lake Clear; Mepps Comet style spinner #4 or #5. Spoons come in a variety of sizes and colours. Sizes chosen for early season surface fishing are smaller than for summer depth fishing.



Wavy spoon style
Toronto Wobbler



Spinner
Mepps Comet style



Wavy spoon Williams
Wabler hammered style



Wavy spoon
Lake Clear style

The colours

It's suggested to choose a silver spoon on a light day and a more discreet colour (gold, copper, blue) with a hammered surface on an overcast day. Many spoons have two colours on each surface. As the light travels through the water toward the depths, it breaks down by gradually losing colours in the order of the spectrum, starting with red, then orange, yellow, and green. Blue and purple are the last colours visible to the fish further down.

← **Difficult** for fish to recognize in deep water



Easy for fish to recognize in deep water →

SOME ARTIFICIAL FLIES TO TRY

Black Wooly Bugger



Muddler Minnow



Mickey Finn



Royal Coachmen



Pheasant Tail



Black Nose Dace



Magog Smelt



Gray Ghost



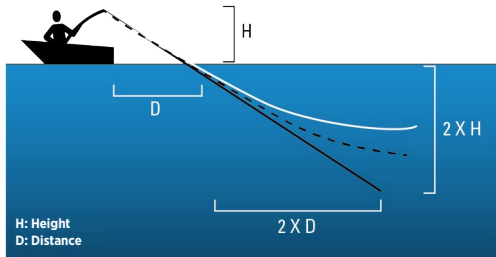
FISHING TECHNIQUES

Among the following techniques, it's suggested that you start exploring the body of water by trolling. When you get nibbles or catches, concentrate your efforts around that stretch of water by spin fishing or still fishing.

Trolling

Trolling is the practice of leaving a line in the water behind the watercraft while moving across a lake.

- It can be practiced with several anglers, each using a different lure or trolling at a different depth.
- Once the type of lure and the depth are determined, you can stop trolling and begin spin fishing or still fishing.



Casting

Spin fishing consists of repeatedly casting and retrieving a lure using movement to entice the fish.

- It can be done from shore, from a dock, or from a watercraft.
- It's best to use a single hook to avoid tangling the line.

FISHING TECHNIQUES (*continued*)

Still fishing

- Still fishing involves presenting a baited hook at a fixed location and waiting for the fish to bite.
- It can be practiced in any season but is well adapted to the warm period when anglers must offer their bait at a deeper level.
- It's possible to attach up to three hooks (spaced about 45 cm apart), then add a weight to carry the line to the bottom.

RECOVERING, STORING, AND TRANSPORTING YOUR CATCH

- When you feel a bite, snag the fish by pulling your line up sharply enough to prick the hook.
- After a catch, keep the line taught and the rod up to absorb the shock, unless the fish is trying to jump out of the water, then lower the rod sideways.
- When the fish is close to the watercraft, scoop it up with a net or carefully swing it high into the watercraft without hitting the edge.
- If you're planning to release your catch, see the "Best Practices for Catch and Release" section.
- It's better to keep your catch cool in a cooler than to keep it alive in the water.

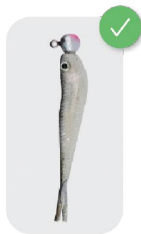
At the end of your fishing day, don't forget to record your catches, even those eaten or released!

BEST PRACTICES FOR CATCH AND RELEASE

Fish may be released for conservation reasons, because the species caught is not the one desired, or because the size of the fish does not meet current regulations. To promote the survival of released fish, a few simple precautions can be taken to minimize injury to the fish.

Some practical advice

- Avoid catch-and-release fishing when the water temperature is above 21 °C.
- Use artificial lures (flexible lures or artificial worms) instead of natural bait (worms and leeches).
- Replace J-hooks or treble hooks with circle hooks.



Artificial lures



Natural bait



Circle
hook



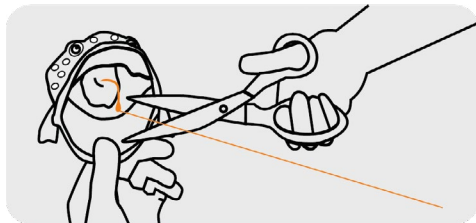
Treble hook



J-hook

BEST PRACTICES FOR CATCH AND RELEASE (*continued*)

- Use a small mesh net without knots.
- Keep the fish in the water for all handling. If you must handle the fish out of the water, it's best to keep your hands bare and wet and to limit the time of exposure to the air to less than 15 seconds. The longer the fish is exposed to the air, the lower its chances of survival.
- Avoid touching the gills or eyes of the fish.



Source: MFFP

IN A NUTSHELL

1. **Become informed:** confirm the dates and learn the regulations pertaining to the water body where you intend to fish.
2. **Gear up:** purchase your fishing licence and equipment.
3. **Review:** practice different fishing techniques depending on the conditions.
4. **Enjoy:** have fun and connect with nature, with rod in hand!



1 800 665-6527 | sepaq.com

Credit: Andre Olivier Lyra, Government of Canada