



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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Springtime is fishing time: Get your Illinois 2026 fishing license now

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois fishing licenses – among the most affordable in the nation – are now on sale for the 2026 season. Illinois fishing licenses and stamps for 2026 are available for purchase online and at department-authorized vendors.

A standard, non-discounted resident fishing license costs \$15. Licenses for the 2025 season remain valid through March 31. Anglers 16 and older must have a valid fishing license in Illinois. Exemptions apply to active-duty military personnel and people with disabilities.

When anglers purchase a fishing license, they support conservation, education and economic activity across the state. Purchases help enhance outdoor recreation opportunities statewide and ensure future generations can enjoy Illinois' aquatic resources.

"Quality fishing opportunities depend on the support of anglers, and that starts with buying a fishing license," said **Mike McClelland, chief of fisheries for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources**. "When anglers buy a license, they help support sport fishing, hatcheries and habitat improvements for people across Illinois, now and in the future."

IDNR's Division of Fisheries is funded primarily through the sale of fishing licenses and associated stamps. Key fisheries programs supported by license and stamp sales include research, fisheries management, hatchery operations, invasive species prevention, outdoor education and other initiatives.

Additional support comes from the Sport Fish Restoration Program of 1950, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program distributes funding to states through federal excise taxes on fishing equipment, motorboat fuel and related outdoor accessories. Funding allocations are based on land area and each state's fishing license sales.

For more information about fishing in Illinois visit ifishillinois.org. To review [license and stamp fees](#), visit the IDNR website. The current [Illinois fishing regulations guide](#) is also available online.

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About IDNR

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources was established in 1925 as the Illinois Department of Conservation, bringing under one umbrella oversight of fish and game, forestry, public works, and lakes. Today, IDNR's work encompasses management of about 400 sites across Illinois, including state parks and historic sites; wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and natural heritage; Lake Michigan water allocation and coastal management; conservation police; mines and minerals; oil and gas; issuance of licenses, permits, and numerous grants; the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta; and the Illinois State Museum. Visit <https://dnr.illinois.gov> and follow us on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).