

Can I use bait in Minnesota waters?

- You can fish with a variety of live or dead bait including worms, night crawlers, insects and larvae. If you are fishing with minnows or leeches, a number of restrictions apply.
- If you choose to keep your bait when done fishing, you must exchange water in bait buckets with tap or bottled water prior to leaving any water body, except when you are fishing through the ice. The exception for ice fishing does not apply when fishing on Lake Superior.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash. It is illegal to release bait into Minnesota lakes and rivers. All earthworms are non-native and can damage forests if released.
- You can't use whole or parts of game fish, goldfish, carp, or salamanders (including mudpuppies) for bait. See page 27 for Lake Superior exceptions.

What are the rules for taking and transporting live minnows and leeches?

- You can't import live minnows or leeches into Minnesota.
- Dead bait may only be imported if it comes from a waterbody tested negative for Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) with a negative fish health certification or has been preserved under a DNR bait preservation permit issued to a commercial license. All imported dead bait must be labeled and the labeling kept on your person while angling (see website for examples).
- You can take an unlimited number of minnows and leeches with an angling license for personal use, however you may not transport more than 12 dozen at one time without a commercial minnow license. All minnows and leeches must be transported in tap/well or bottled water.

Where can I harvest minnows and leeches?

You can take them from all waters of the state where you can legally access the water except:

- Within the boundaries of state parks.
- Within designated trout waters, except under permit.
- Most aquatic invasive species infested waters. See mndnr.gov/AIS for a current list.
- All streams and connected waters in Lincoln, Pipestone, Murray, Rock and Nobles counties south of U.S. Highway 14 and west of U.S. Highway 59 to the South Dakota border.
- A harvest permit is required to take madtoms and stonecats in Dodge, Freeborn and Mower counties.

Can I harvest bait from infested waters?

- Minnows and leeches may be taken for personal use from waters infested solely with Eurasian watermilfoil using a cylindrical trap not exceeding 16 inches in diameter and 32 inches long. At these waters, harvested bait may only be used on the water where taken. The harvest and use of bait from other infested waters is prohibited.
- Within infested streams and rivers (except for the St. Louis River Estuary), bullhead, sucker, mooneye, goldeye and sheepshead may be taken by hook and line for personal use as bait on the same water. Harvested bait may not be transported live from the river or stream. Where a river or stream is divided by barriers such as dams, fish for bait must be caught and used on the same section.
- You can obtain a DNR permit at mndnr.gov/fishing to take gizzard shad by cast net for personal use as bait for fishing from Minnesota portions of the Mississippi River

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