

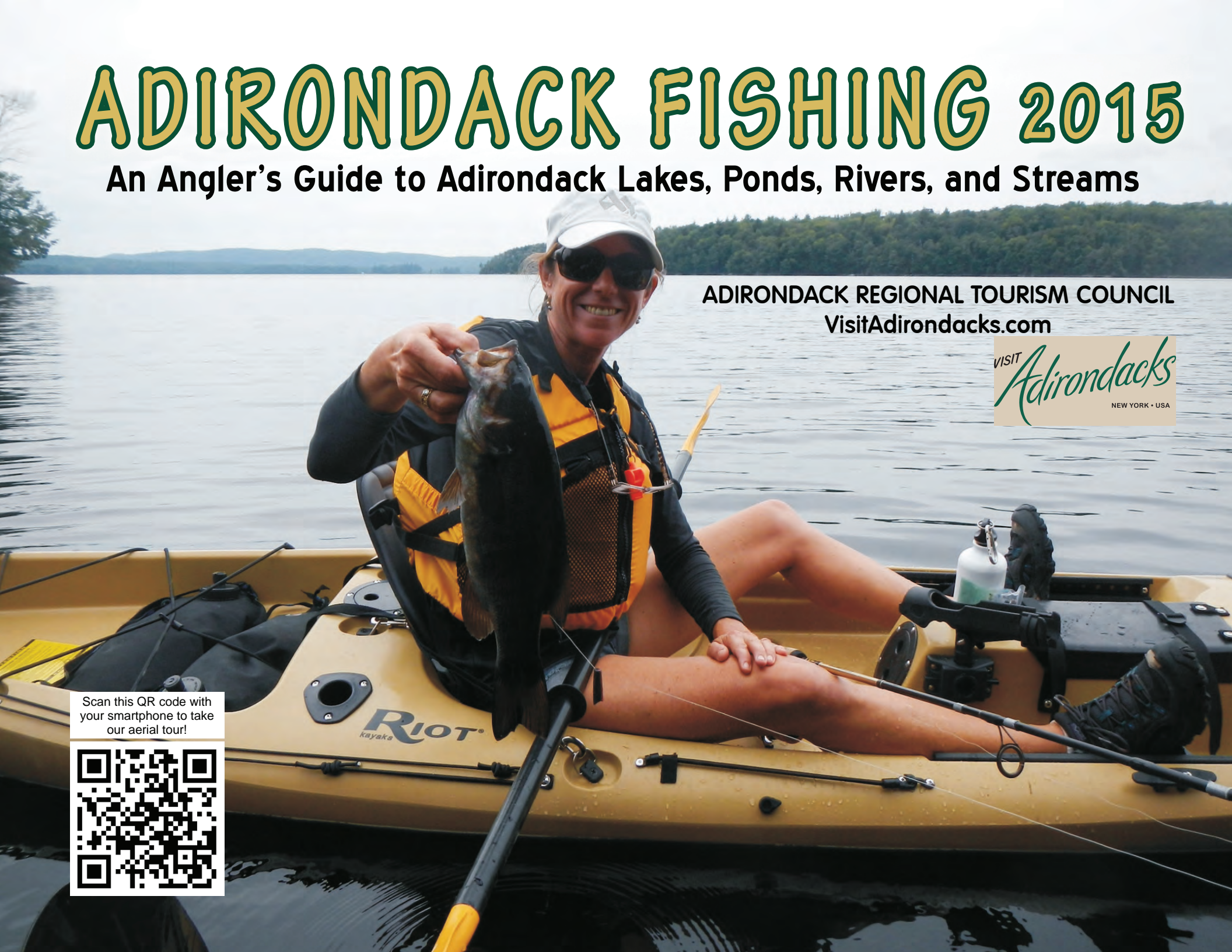
ADIRONDACK FISHING 2015

An Angler's Guide to Adirondack Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, and Streams

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Wilderness Brook Trout

The brook trout, like the common loon, signifies the essence of the Adirondack wilderness. Any venture to a remote pond in search of brookies promises an awesome setting, a respite from the hectic pace of modern lifestyles, an enriching experience, an intimacy with the natural world, a magical solitude, and a personal renewal. Anyone who spends time in the Adirondack wilderness returns home a richer person. Whenever this individual recalls the experience, nature beckons; mind, body, and spirit come alive with an overwhelming urge to return to the wild.

Little Tupper Lake produces a genetically unique “heritage” strain of brook trout that is descended directly from trout that first reached the lake 12,000 years ago when the glaciers receded. (see page 26)

The wild Windfall Brook Trout (pictured above) is a unique centuries-old strain found solely in Franklin County waters. It is coveted by serious anglers for its tenacious fighting ability, brilliant color and large sizes—some reach over 3 pounds and 20 inches in length.

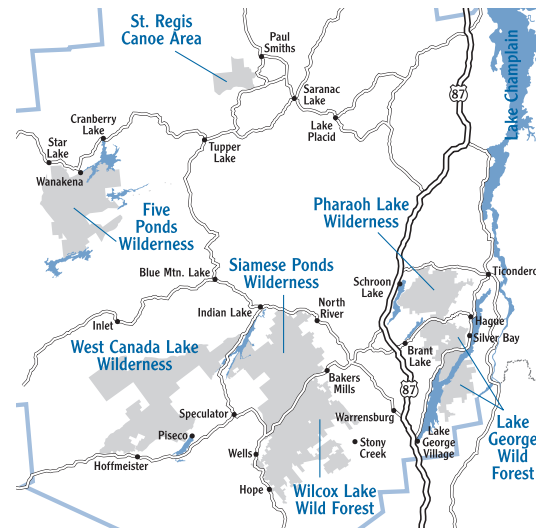
The Big Three

Five hundred Adirondack lakes and ponds have significant populations of brook trout, sometimes called speckled trout. More than 300 of these waters are found on public lands. When searching for a remote experience for brookies, individuals should consider the Big Three:

- St. Regis Canoe Area
- Pharaoh Lake Wilderness
- West Canada Lake Wilderness

Each area boasts of wild and stocked brook trout, numerous ponds and lakes, miles of marked hiking trails, and wild, remote settings. Visitors here, especially those who work their way into the heart of an area, may go days without encountering other humans. Because thick vegetation typically dominates the shorelines of wilderness waters, anglers who carry in inflatable rafts or lightweight canoes will have the best fishing opportunities.

Other ‘hike-in’ areas covered by this guide include the *Five Ponds Wilderness* (p. 26), *Siamese Ponds Wilderness* (p. 29), *Wilcox Lake Wild Forest* (p. 31), and the *Lake George Wild Forest* (p. 32).



St. Regis Canoe Area

Of the Big Three, the St. Regis Canoe Area is most accessible. The St. Regis is the only designated Canoe Area in New York State, and the area is managed as wilderness with a special focus on non-motorized water recreation and the protection of fishery resources. Located in southern Franklin County, the Canoe Area covers 18,000 acres and includes 58 bodies of water. This vast tract of wilderness offers a variety of trip possibilities ranging from a half-day to two weeks. Popular trips include the Seven Carries and the Nine Carries, but canoeists can opt for a trip with any number of carries. In addition to brook trout, waters in the Canoe Area also hold **lake trout**, **splake**, **landlocked salmon**, and **rainbow trout**. (Also see map and description on page 21.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Regional guidebooks with maps include *Discover the Northern Adirondacks* by Barbara McMartin, and the *Adirondack Mountain Club Guide to Adirondack Trails: Northern Region*.

USGS MAPS: 7.5 x 15 Upper Saranac Lake and St. Regis Mtn. Quadrangles.

Pharaoh Lake Wilderness

Accessible by foot only, Pharaoh Lake Wilderness offers a more remote experience than St. Regis Canoe Area. The Pharaoh Lake region has a gentle topography by Adirondack standards. Anglers will encounter outstanding scenery as well as twenty ponds of various size and fishing quality. A number of these ponds offer excellent brook trout fishing while some waters promise high populations of wild lake trout.

Located in southeastern Essex County, east of Schroon Lake, and extending into northern Warren County, Pharaoh Lake Wilderness has a network of marked trails leading to its brook trout ponds. The eastern portion of the wilderness has a more intricate trail system while the western half, with its limited trails, offers a more remote experience. Popular hiking loops include Bear Pond (5 miles), Crane Pond via Blue Hill (6.2 miles), and Pharaoh Lake (10 miles). (Also see map and description on page 33.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Regional guidebooks with maps include *Discover the Eastern Adirondacks* by Barbara McMartin and the *Adirondack Mountain Club Guide to Adirondack Trails: Eastern Region*.

USGS MAPS: 7.5 x 15 Pharaoh Mountain, Paradox Lake, Eagle Lake, Graphite, Brant Lake and Silver Bay Quadrangles.

The Pharaoh Lake region has a gentle topography by Adirondack standards. Anglers will encounter outstanding scenery as well as twenty ponds of various size and fishing quality. (see page 33)

Ten Tips for Wilderness Ventures

- Study maps and guides of an area before venturing forth
- Develop your wilderness skills by taking shorter trips first
- Engage in a fitness program such as walking several miles a day
- Check short and long-range weather forecasts before heading out
- Inform someone of your planned route and time of return
- Sign in at all trail registers
- Carry a map, compass, and basic survival gear
- Beware of giardia; carry your water or use a quality filtering system
- Travel as lightly as possible
- Travel with a companion
- If you get completely lost, stay put and someone will find you

Roadside Lakes & Ponds



The Adirondack's best kept fishing secret—hundreds of fish-filled lakes and ponds—was revealed to the world when ESPN aired the Bass Fishing segments of the Great Outdoor Games. Viewers witnessed the world's top bass anglers singing the praises of the Adirondacks' big bass and scenic waters. Even though these waters are nestled among the mountains, anglers can access them via roadside launches.

In truth, roadside lakes and ponds have something to offer every angler. Species range from native lake trout to trophy largemouth bass. Effective techniques vary from fishing with a bobber and worm to trolling minnow plugs with electric downriggers. Anglers can fish from shore or launch a 22-foot boat. Some shorelines are dotted with summer homes while other shorelines remain in a completely natural state. Many lakes have state campgrounds with full facilities while others offer primitive campsites.

Adirondack lakes and ponds present a pleasant problem that is not found in other regions of the country: too many waters from which to choose. A visit to any lake will likely result in the angler having a new "favorite fishing hole."

Brook Trout

Even though the Adirondacks' premier brook trout fishing occurs in remote ponds and the uppermost reaches of rivers, a number of roadside waters offer brook trout opportunities. Generally, the best fishing in these waters takes place in spring and again in early autumn prior to the season's close. Prime locations for brookies include shoreline cover, gravel bars, and tributary mouths.

Roadside waters with brook trout populations include Cranberry Lake, Forked Lake, Little Tupper Lake, Massawepie Area, Raquette Lake, and Rock Pond. Little Tupper, the Massawepie Area, and Rock Pond are good bets for canoeists while the other waters offer quality launches for those using motor boats.

Brown Trout

Brown trout are catchable in summer, but the best action occurs in spring and fall. Tributaries that attract spawning smelt are ideal spring locations, as are windblown shorelines. In the fall, tributary mouths as well as shoals near in-coming flows are prime spots. Morning or evening fishing produces the best catches. If a lake has smelt, anglers should use lures or streamers that are long, slender, and flashy.

Among the top brown trout waters are: Brant Lake, Indian Lake, Lake Bonaparte, Lake Colby, Lake Eaton, Lake Pleasant, Lewey Lake, Sacandaga Lake, Thirteenth Lake, Upper Saranac Lake.

Rainbow Trout

In spring and fall, anglers catch rainbow trout throughout the day, but summer fishers have their best luck in early morning and evening. Trolling flashy artificials in the evening is particularly popular. Summer anglers also chum with corn for action after sunset. Fly fishers have success using black leeches and dark woolly buggers. Prime rainbow trout-holding locations include river mouths, necked down areas between islands, and shoreline dropoffs.

Many north waters are heavily stocked with rainbow trout. The top-ranked waters for rainbows (and their annual stockings) are: Brant Lake (11,520), Chazy Lake (24,500), Eighth Lake (5,700), Glen Lake (4,600), Lake Colby (3,400), Lake Eaton (2,000), Lake Placid (8,450), Lake Pleasant (12,000), Paradox Lake (7,600), Sacandaga Lake (12,000), Seventh Lake (12,300), Upper Chateaugay Lake (4,500), and Upper Saranac Lake (5,600).

Lake Trout

Lake trout thrive in many Adirondack waters because of cool water temperatures and an abundance of baitfish. Two keys to catching lakers are finding water temperatures in the 48- to 52-degree range and then presenting slow-moving offerings close to bottom. In the spring, look for lake trout along dropoffs, near points, and on rocky shoals. In summer, lake trout inhabit deep water near schools of baitfish, and in autumn they head to rocky shoals for spawning. The best shoals have adjacent deep water. Trolling is the preferred technique, and summer requires the use of downriggers, diving devices, or weights to get offerings to the fish. A number of anglers take lakers by hand jigging spoons on wire line or fishing baitfish on bottom.

Some lakes have a reputation for producing high numbers of small to medium size trout, but biologists believe several lakes are capable of producing a New York State record lake trout.

The sixteen top ranked lakes are: Blue Mountain Lake, Chazy Lake, Eighth Lake, Indian Lake, Lake Eaton, Lake Lila (300-yard carry required), Lake Placid, Paradox Lake, Piseco Lake, Raquette Lake, Schroon Lake, Seventh Lake, Taylor Pond, Tupper Lake, Upper Saranac Lake, Upper Chateaugay Lake.

Splake

Anglers looking for a unique experience might want to try splake, a cross between a brook (speckled) trout and a lake trout. Splake have excellent growth rates and are very catchable. Every year, though, a number of anglers become disappointed when they learn that their 5- or 6-pound "brook" trout is actually a splake. Trolling or casting spinners, minnow plugs, and streamers will take fish especially near rocks, points, shoreline dropoffs, shoreline cover, and tributary mouths.

A dozen or so waters are stocked annually with splake. Three good bets for this hybrid are Limekiln Lake, Meacham Lake, and St. Regis Pond.

Landlocked Salmon

Salmo salar, the scientific name for landlocked salmon, also known as Atlantic Salmon, means "leaping." This jumping ability is one reason the species has leapt into the hearts of anglers. Spring fishing is good because landlocks congregate in near-shore areas such as points, wind-blown shorelines, and tributaries where smelt spawn. If there is an offshore wind, fish can be located by finding schools of smelt, feeding gulls, or some structure. In the summer, landlocked salmon move deeper, and keys to locating fish are the thermocline—water temperatures between 58 and 62 degrees—and schools of young smelt. The best fall action occurs at tributary mouths. Trolling or casting minnow plugs, spoons, and streamers will take fish. Two keys are to use a fast presentation and to use smelt imitations.

The top ten waters for landlocked salmon are: Blue Mountain Lake, Chazy Lake, Eighth Lake, Lake Colby, Lake Eaton, Piseco Lake, Schroon Lake, Seventh Lake, Taylor Pond, Upper Chateaugay Lake. Three of these lakes (Colby, Eaton, and Seventh) receive stockings of broodstock fish weighing between five and fourteen pounds.

Angling and camping opportunities abound on the massive Saranac Chain of Lakes. Testimony to the quality fishing found here is the fact that ESPN, for three consecutive years, chose the Saranac Chain for the bass fishing segment of the Great Outdoor Games. (see page 21)

Smallmouth Bass

The outstanding catches of smallmouth bass in the ESPN Great Outdoor Games speak volumes about the quality bronze-back fishing in Adirondack lakes and ponds. Dozens of waters offer first-rate fishing in terms of both quantity and quality of fish.

Action holds up from opening day in June through the season's close in November. The key to locating smallies is finding rocky habitat. Such areas exist along shorelines and mid-lake shoals. Trolling or using live bait will catch smallmouth bass, but most fishers opt for casting artificial lures such as minnow plugs, in-line spinners, surface baits, lipless crankbaits, or jigs. Tube jigs can be especially effective.

Twenty-five of the top water for smallmouths are Black Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, Chazy Lake, Cranberry Lake, Eagle Lake, Forked Lake, Indian Lake, Lake Bonaparte, Lake Champlain, Lake Eaton, Lake Lila (300-yard carry required), Lake Pleasant, Long Lake, Lower Chateaugay Lake, Meacham Lake, Paradox Lake, Piseco Lake, Raquette Lake, Raquette Reservoirs, Sacandaga Lake, Saranac Chain of Lakes, Schroon Lake, Seventh Lake, St. Regis Chain of Lakes, Tupper Lake, Union Falls Flow.



“Big Waters”

The St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain, and Lake George rank as the Adirondack Region’s “Big Waters.” All three waters have a national reputation for fantastic fishing and spectacular scenery. In truth, any one of these waters offers a lifetime of angling opportunities, and the fishing is world-class.

St. Lawrence River

See pages 14-15 for maps and more information about the St. Lawrence River.

Forming the boundary between New York State and Canada, the St. Lawrence River has been called this country’s “most majestic river.” This majesty stems from the river’s vast size, impressive currents, beautiful islands, sensational sunsets, and awesome scenery.

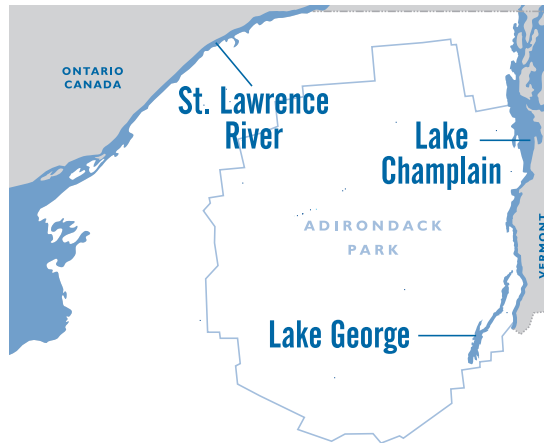
While on the water, anglers routinely get close-up views of vessels from the Great Lakes as well as ocean-going ships from around the world. Anglers may also see loons, cormorants, seagulls, terns, Canada geese, mallards, bald eagles, and blue herons. Many islands have populations of beaver, mink, muskrat, fox, and white-tailed deer. The wildlife and large ship sightings serve to further enhance the St. Lawrence River experience.

Available species include muskellunge, northern pike, chain pickerel, walleye, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, lake trout, brown trout, steelhead, landlocked salmon, carp, catfish, bullhead, yellow perch, black crappie, smelt, and dozens of lesser known fish. This variety of species guarantees first-rate fishing in spring, summer, fall, and winter.



CARP: Even though carp have inhabited the St. Lawrence River for half a century, this species is the “new kid on the block” because of the recent interest it has drawn from European anglers. These fishers recognize that the St. Lawrence River offers some of the world’s best carp fishing. In fact, the river is a likely site for future World Carp Fishing tournaments. Whereas European waters might yield only one or two carp a day per angler, visitors to the St. Lawrence River frequently catch 15 or more carp a day. Furthermore, the river produces numerous fish weighing 30 to 40 pounds. Carp anglers practice a 100 percent catch-and-release ethic. Carp fishing is outstanding in May and June, good in July and August, and excellent in September. Guides and carp fishing services are available along the river from Ogdensburg to Massena.

The St. Lawrence offers the best muskie fishing in the world. Because of a high, catch-and-release rate by anglers, muskie fishing has improved in both numbers and size of fish in recent years. The St. Lawrence also offers some of the world’s best carp fishing. In fact, the river is a likely site for future World Carp Fishing tournaments.



MUSKELLUNGE: The St. Lawrence offers the best muskie fishing in the world. In 1957 the river produced Art Lawton’s world-record muskie, a fish that weighed 69 pounds and 15 ounces. The St. Lawrence has a unique, fast growing strain of muskie. In essence, the river is a trophy water as a legal fish must measure a minimum of 48 inches. Because of a high, catch-and-release rate by anglers, muskie fishing has improved in both numbers and size of fish in recent years. The best spots are well-known, and they produce fish year after year. Muskies can be taken during the summer, but the majority of fish are caught between Labor Day and the close of the season on November 30. Over 90 percent of muskies are caught by anglers who troll deep-diving plugs.



NORTHERN PIKE: Toothy pike are the river’s “fish for all seasons” as they can be readily taken throughout the year with the prime months being May and September. Pike populations have declined over the last decade because of changes in river ecology, but the action still ranks among the best in the state. To locate northerns, head to any of the mainland or island bays where fish congregate at dropoffs, along weedlines, on points, or in deep holes. Effective techniques include live minnows suspended below a bobber or casting spinners and spoons. Local anglers, however, prefer to cast bucktail jigs tipped with a minnow or plastic worm.



SMALLMOUTH BASS: Smallmouth numbers are incredibly high on the river, and once a school is located, the action can be non-stop. While three and four-pound fish are possible, the river is better known for numbers of smallies in the one- to two-pound range. Fish abound throughout the river, and the fastest action occurs from late July through early September. Prime locations include mid-river shoals, island dropoffs, and shoreline points at 18- to 25-foot depths. Live bait, jigs, and crankbaits will take bronzebacks.



WALLEYE: At a time when angling pressure is increasing, the walleye population is actually expanding. Fish numbers are on the rise because of stocking efforts and habitat improvement projects at primary spawning sites. Walleyes can be caught from opening day in May until freeze up in December. In the early season, look for fish near spawning areas. Throughout summer and fall, walleyes hold near mid-river shoals, along island dropoffs, at mainland points, and over soft-bottomed flats with mild current. Drifting crawler-tipped jigs or worm harnesses is the most effective technique followed by trolling crankbaits, particularly long, slender ones.

Lake Champlain

See pages 34-35 for maps and more information about Lake Champlain.

Lake Champlain has been called the “Sixth Great Lake,” and rightfully so as the waterway extends for 120 miles from Whitehall, New York to the Province of Quebec. Lake Champlain boasts nearly 600 miles of shoreline and 70 islands. This water is home to “Champ,” the legendary sea monster, and hundreds of “Champ” sightings have been reported over the years. With the Green Mountains on the Vermont side and Adirondack Mountains on the New York side, it’s a toss-up whether the beautiful scenery or the fantastic fishing is more awesome. Fortunately, anglers get to experience both the views and the fishing.

Champlain has a “two-storey” fishery of warmwater and coldwater species. Available species include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, chain pickerel, walleye, yellow perch, white perch, catfish, smelt, lake trout, brown trout, steelhead, landlocked salmon and others. Natural fish populations in the lake are enhanced by an annual stocking of 700,000 trout and salmon.



LAKE TROUT: After ice-out in April, lakers move into shoreline waters to seek warmer temperatures and to feed. Frequently the warmest water can be found near tributary mouths. Flat lining or planer boarding smelt-imitating spoons or minnow plugs will take lakers. A slow speed of less than two miles per hour will bring the best action. Throughout the summer, lake trout can be found near structure out to the 100-foot depths. Look for water temperatures in the upper forties and low fifties near structure. Trollers utilize downriggers to get their spoons to summer trout.



LANDLOCKED SALMON: Like lake trout, landlocked salmon move into the shallows after ice-out, and they, too, are taken by trollers using spoons or