

# FISHING

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW

## Public Fisheries Regulations 2021

### ATTENTION!

Consult the website of the 'Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos' (Nature and Forest Agency) for the full legislation and recent information.

[www.natuureenbos.be/visserij](http://www.natuureenbos.be/visserij)



AGENTSCHAP  
NATUUR & BOS

# When and how can you fish?



To protect fish stocks there are two types of measures:

- Periods in which you may not fish for certain fish species.
- Ecologically valuable waters mentioned on p. 6-7 where fishing is prohibited in certain periods.



	January	February	March	April		May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
				1 > 15	16 > 30								
Trout	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x
Pike and pikeperch	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
All other species	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fishing with bait fish	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Night fishing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bobber fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wading fishing	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Fly fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ Permitted
x Prohibited
x Prohibited in the waters listed on p. 6-7

Any fish that you happen to catch at the time when fishing is prohibited according to the table above must be immediately and carefully put back in the water where it was caught. In the period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive the use of fish or parts thereof as bait is prohibited and you also must put back each fish caught immediately and carefully into the water of origin.

**Attention:** the owner or water manager can impose local access rules so that fishing at certain points in time or fishing at certain places is not possible. In some waters you might also need an explicit permit from the owner to fish there.

# Catch limitation, transport and keeping of fish

The use of a keepnet is prohibited in the interests of efficient enforcement of the rules on taking fish with you, transporting them and keeping them in your possession!

**Fish > 15 cm:** An angler may transport up to 5 dead fish larger than 15 cm and keep them in his possession during angling. Only eel can be kept alive. For eel and pike-perch, the number is in addition limited to a maximum of 3. For example: if you already have 3 pike-perch and 1 roach, you may only keep 1 eel in your possession.

**Bait fish ≤ 15 cm:** An angler may transport up to 20 bait fish smaller than or equal to 15 cm and keep them in his possession during angling. A maximum of 5 live bait fish is permitted; the remaining bait fish must be dead.

## Permitted fish species

Only the fish species shown alongside may be transported, kept in possession during angling or used as bait fish. You must immediately and carefully put back any other fish species you catch into the water of origin.

- Live bait fish and live eel may only be stored and transported in a bucket or container filled with water.
- Keep in mind the sizes for fish species.
- From 16 April to 31 May inclusive, and during night fishing, you may not transport fish, keep them in your possession during angling, or use them as bait.



perch



brown trout  
minimum size 30 cm



roach



common bream



silver or white  
bream



eel  
minimum size 30 cm



rudd



gudgeon



pikeperch or zander  
minimum size 45 cm  
maximum size 70 cm



bide or orfe

## Sizes for fish species

You must immediately and carefully put back any fish smaller than the minimum size or larger than the maximum size into the water of origin. The length is measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin. You should keep a measuring rod with you.

- Brown trout and eel: minimum size 30 cm.
- Pikeperch: minimum size 45 cm and maximum size 70 cm.

## Bobber fishing

Eel fishing with a bobber is permitted at all times and in all waters. When fishing in the period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive or while fishing at night, anglers may only keep or take away eel, on condition that they use one bobber and do not use any other fishing rods.

## Fly Fishing

However, fly fishing from the banks is permitted from 16 April to 31 May inclusive in all waters. You must immediately and carefully put back every fish you catch into the water of origin.

## Protected species

19 fish species and the indigenous crayfish are very rare in our waters. In order to protect these species, fishing for them is no longer permitted. If you happen to catch one of them, make sure you immediately and carefully put it back into the water of origin. These species are:

Atlantic salmon, brook lamprey, stone loach, bitterling, allis shad, twaite shad, schneider or spirlin, gwyniad or powan, wheaterfish or wheater loach, houting, European crayfish, spined loach, burbot, bullhead, river lamprey, common sturgeon, belica or motherless minnow, grayling, sea trout and sea lamprey.

## Special stipulations marine fish species

### Sea bass

- From 1 January to 30 June: all fish have to be put back.
- From 1 July to 31 December: an angler may transport and keep in possession during angling no more than 1 bass (minimum size 42 cm) a day.

### Remaining marine fish species

By way of derogation from the rules on p. 3 you may transport and keep in your possession during angling an unlimited number of dead marine fish species, both by day and by night. The use of marine fish species as bait fish is prohibited in the period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive.



# Night fishing



Night fishing: fishing from two hours after sunset until two hours before sunrise. A **large fishing permit** is mandatory!

Night fishing is prohibited in the ecologically valuable waters listed on p.6-7!

Night fishing is in principle permitted in all other waters not listed on p.6-7.

**Map of Flanders with the public angling waters and indication where night fishing and fishing in the period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive are permitted:**

[www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart](http://www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart)

**Please note:** The owner or water manager can restrict access to a stretch of water by imposing local access rules so that night fishing is not possible. In some waters you might also need an explicit permit from the owner to fish there.

## Special conditions for night fishing

Always put each fish you have caught immediately and carefully back into the water of origin.

You may not keep any fish in your possession, not even if you caught that fish outside the night fishing period.



The use of artificial bait with a total length of more than 2 cm is prohibited.



The use of fish or parts thereof as bait is prohibited.

## Release obligation in Zwalm and IJse

For the protection of the populations of rare fish species a release obligation is applicable in the watercourses Zwalm and IJse and their tributaries. Also the possession and use of bait fish is not allowed in these waters.

# Ecologically valuable fishing waters with restrictions on fishing



- Fishing is prohibited in the spawning period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive.
- Night fishing: fishing from two hours after sunset until two hours before sunrise is prohibited.
- The use of artificial bait with a total length of more than 2 cm and the use of fish or parts thereof as bait is prohibited from 1 March to 15 April inclusive.
- **Please note:** in some waters, local access rules apply. Always observe the access hours for a stretch of water and make sure you know the local rules.
- Map of Flanders with the public angling waters and indication where night fishing and fishing in the period from 16 April to 31 May inclusive are permitted: [www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart](http://www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart)

## 1. All unnavigable watercourses

## 2. Waterways or navigable watercourses (or parts thereof)

### Leie river meanders

Oude Leie Bourgoyen / Oude Leie Astene / Oude Leie Grammene / Oude Leie Gottem / Oude Leie Oeselgem / Oude Leie Sint-Baafs-Vijve / Oude Leie Schoendalebocht / Oude Leie Ooigem / Oude Leie Bavikhove / Oude Leie Wevelgem (Groot Volander en Leiebos) / Oude Leie Menen ('Sluizenkaai' north of the old locks)

### Scheldt river meanders

Oude Schelde Zonneput / Oude Schelde Doornhammeke / Oude Schelde Teirlinckput / Oude Schelde Kriephoek / Oude Schelde Meilegem / Oude Schelde Mesureput / Oude Schelde Blarewater / Oude Schelde Spettekraai / Oude Schelde Heurne-Heuvel / Oude Schelde De Sterre / Oude Schelde Nederename / Oude Schelde Melden het Veer / Oude Schelde het Anker / Oude Schelde Elsegem / Oude Schelde Berchem Meerse / Oude Schelde Scheiteput / Oude Schelde Kerkhove / Oude Schelde Coupure Outrijve

### **The Scheldt Estuary**

This concerns the following waters or parts of waters which are classified as navigable: Oude Durme Hamme, Zenne and Zenne-diversion in Epegem, Nete River upstream of the confluence with the Nete Canal in Duffel, Kleine Nete, Grote Nete, Demer

### **Other (parts of) waterways**

Ypres-Komen canal / Zuidervaartje / Antitankgracht / Binnenvest Brugge: Brugse Reien / Binnenvest Brugge: Brugse Coupure / Gevaertsarm and Miseriebocht (old canal branches of Canal Ghent-Ostend) / Canal Brugge to Sluis (Damse Vaart): from the Hoeke bridge to the border with the Netherlands (Sluis)

## **3. Fish ponds**

### **Province of Antwerp**

De Melle at Turnhout / Domein Volharding at Rijkevorsel / Domein Walenhoek at Niel / Het Broek at Blaasveld / Balderij at Tielen / Fort van Oelegem

### **Province of Flemish Brabant**

Groot en Klein Wachtbekken Zuunbeek / Lindevijver en Putselvijver at Groenendaal / Meer van Rotselaar / Grote vijver van Zevenbronnen / Webbekoms Broek / Vossevijver / Kleine vijver van Horst / Demermeander Schoonhoven

### **Province of Limburg**

De Broeken at Elen / Dijkbeemdijver at Zonhoven / Oud Kanaal Bocholt / Oud Kanaal Bree-Beek / Old Lanklaar Canal (southern part of canal branch of Zuid-Willemsvaart; south of the Boslaan-N75) / Schulensmeer / Oude Maas Stokkem / Grindplas Koole Greent / Grindplas Bichterweert / Grindplassen Negenoord East and West / Grindplas Maasbeempder Greend / Old Dilsen Canal (northern part of canal branch of Zuid-Willemsvaart; north of the Boslaan-N75)

### **Province of East Flanders**

Berlarebroek / Bosdamvijver Wachtebeke / Het Leen at Eeklo / Geul Zalegemdijk at Meerdonk

### **Provincie West-Vlaanderen**

Hoge Dijken at Oudenburg / Grote Bassin at Roeselare / Kasteelvijver Buls-kampveld at Beernem / 't Veld-Zeetje at Ardoorie / Bergelen Put / Koolhofput at Nieuwpoort

# All other fishing waters



In all other waters which are not listed on p.6-7, fishing is permitted throughout the year, even during the night.

- In the period from **16 April to 31 May** the use of fish or parts thereof as bait is prohibited and you also must put back each fish caught immediately and carefully into the water of origin.
- **During night fishing**, from two hours after sunset until two hours before sunrise, you must put back each fish caught immediately and carefully into the water of origin. During night fishing, the use of artificial bait with a total length of more than 2 cm and the use of fish or parts thereof as bait is prohibited.
- **Please note:** The owner or water manager can restrict access to a stretch of water by imposing local access rules. In some waters you might also need an explicit permit from the owner to fish there.

The following table shows the main fishing waters per province where restrictions apply as regards accessibility. **Please note:** even in waters which are not listed in this table there may be restrictions or a permit might be required from the owner. Always observe the access hours for a stretch of fishing water and make sure you know the local rules.

FISHING WATERS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS AS REGARDS ACCESSIBILITY			
Water	Fishing from 16 April to 31 May inclusive	Night-fishing	Accessibility restrictions
<b>ANTWERPEN</b>			
Breeven (Bornem)	x	✓	Fishing from landing stages in the indicated angling zone. Fishing ban from 16 April to 31 May inclusive.
Galgenweel (Antwerp)	✓	✓	Fishing in the indicated angling zones.



Burchtse Weel (Antwerp)	✓	✓	Fishing allowed in the buffer basin. Fishing not allowed in the tidal areas of the Scheldt river.
Hazewinkel (Heindonk)	✓	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zones indicated. Not accessible from sunset to sunrise.
De Bocht (Heindonk)	✓	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zone. Not accessible from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise.
Muisbroek: small pond (Ekeren)	✓	✓	Fishing in the large pond is not permitted.
Fort van Walem	✓	✓	Fishing from the outside banks of the fortress canal.
Schranshoeve (Vorselaar)	✓	✗	Not accessible from sunset till 08:00.
Rivierenhof (Deurne)	✓	✗	Not accessible from 22:00 till 06:30.
<b>LIMBURG</b>			
Grindplas Heerenlaak (Aldeneik)	✓	✗	Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.
Grindplas Meynekomplas (Aldeneik)	✓	✗	Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.
Grindplassen Kessenich: Daler Oe (Spaanjerd), Vissen Akker and Boterakker	✓	✗	Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.
Paalse Plas	✗	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zones. Fishing from boats not allowed. Fishing ban from 16 April to 31 May inclusive. From 1 April to 31 October inclusive not accessible from 22:00 till 06:00. From 1 November to 31 March inclusive not accessible from 20:00 till 07:00.
<b>EAST FLANDERS</b>			
Blaarmeersen (Ghent)	✓	✗	Not accessible from 23:00 till 08:00.
De Gavers (Geraardsbergen)	✓	✗	Additional special fishing permit from domain itself is obligatory (free). Fishing is allowed on the Poelaert Plas and the pond of the camp site. Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.



Boerekreek (St-Laureins)	✓	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zones. Fishing from boats not allowed. Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.
Bazelse Kreek and Rupelmondse Kreek	✓	✗	Not accessible from sunset to sunrise.
<b>FLEMISH BRABANT</b>			
Visvijver van Weerde	✓	✗	Not accessible from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise.
Groene Beemd (Ruisbroek, Sint-Pieters-Leeuw)	✓	✗	Not accessible from sunset to sunrise.
Domein Gaasbeek	✓	✗	Fishing allowed only on the Krommevijver. From 1 April to 30 September inclusive, not accessible from 20:00 till 08:00. From 1 October to 31 March inclusive, not accessible from 17:00 till 08:00.
Domein Ter Rijst	✓	✗	Fishing allowed only on the small pond. Not accessible from sunset to sunrise. From 1 June to 31 August inclusive the latest opening time is moreover limited to 21:00. From 1 September to 31 May inclusive the latest opening time is moreover limited to 20:00.
Domein Coloma	✓	✗	Fishing allowed only in the Coloma canal pond. Not accessible from sunset to sunrise. The latest opening time is moreover limited to 20:00.
<b>WEST FLANDERS</b>			
De Gavers (Harelbeke)	✓	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zones. Not accessible from sunset to sunrise.
Waggelwater (Bruges)	✓	✗	Fishing in the indicated angling zones. Not accessible from two hours after sunset to two hours before sunrise.

# Public angling waters in Flanders



Flanders has many interesting angling waters. All the major public angling waters are indicated on the provincial angling maps. Regional angling maps give a more detailed overview of the angling waters in a smaller part of a province. The angling maps also mention the types of fish that anglers regularly catch in the various waters. You can obtain angling maps free of charge from your **Provincial Fishery Commission**.

[www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart](http://www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart)



# The fishing right



Rivers, canals and streams, as well as still or flowing waters that are not completely closed off from the public waterway network are all governed by the law of 1 July 1954 on river fishing and the decision of the Government of Flanders of 1 February 2013. With a Flemish fishing permit, everyone has the right to fish in the navigable waterways whose maintenance is paid for by the Flemish Region.

## **An additional permit is required for fishing in:**

- The unnavigable waters where the fishing right belongs to the owner of the shore.
- The creeks and artificial waterways of which the maintenance is at the expense of Polders and Wateringen.
- The fishing pools to which the fisheries legislation applies, but which are on private land.

## **An additional permit is required for fishing in:**

- Boudewijnkanaal: Havenbestuur Zeebrugge, P. Vandammehuis, Isabellalaan 1, 8380 Zeebrugge - tel. 050-54 32 11, [info@portofzeebrugge.be](mailto:info@portofzeebrugge.be)
- Paalse Plas: permit from the municipality of Beringen mandatory. Toerisme Beringen, Koolmijnlaan 203, 3582 Beringen - tel. 011-26 97 20, [www.toerismeberingen.be](http://www.toerismeberingen.be)
- Blaarmeersen in Ghent: here you can fish in the authorized angling zones and an additional urban license is obligatory, as well as the fishing permit. This permit is issued in the beach house of the domain.
- Fort van Oelegem: free license mandatory; information: <https://fortoelegem.be/contact.html>
- Dilsen-Stokkem (Negenoord, Oude Maas, Bichterweerd, Schaapskuil): free license mandatory; info: [www.toerisme-dilsen-stokkem.be](http://www.toerisme-dilsen-stokkem.be)

## **The organized fisheries**

In public waters in Flanders there are numerous fishing clubs, fishing associations and fishing federations. For more information, contact the umbrella organizations:

- Sportvisserij Vlaanderen: [www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be](http://www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be)
- Confederatie Vlaamse Hengelaars: [www.bloggen.be/cvh](http://www.bloggen.be/cvh)
- Stewards in public fisheries: [www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be/stewards](http://www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be/stewards)

# The fishing permit



Anyone who wants to fish in the public waters must be in possession of a valid fishing permit. You must purchase a new fishing permit every year. All fishing permits are valid up to and including 31 December of the year for which they are issued. You can apply for each type of fishing permit online via the website [www.visverlof.be](http://www.visverlof.be) or purchase them in a post office in the Flemish Region.

## **Exemption from fishing permit for young people up to and including the age of 17**

- one rod; exclusively from two hours before sunrise until two hours after sunset.
- only from the bank or from a platform or landing stage which is anchored or connected to the bank
- use of bait fish not permitted
- use of artificial bait allowed
- all fish caught should be released immediately
- transporting and keeping fish during angling is not permitted

## **Youth fishing permit € 5 for young people up to and including the age of 17**

- a maximum of two rods; both during the day and at night
- from the bank and other than from the bank
- use of bait fish not permitted
- use of artificial bait allowed
- all fish caught should be released immediately
- transporting and keeping fish during angling is not permitted

## **Normal fishing permit € 13**

- a maximum of 2 rods; exclusively from two hours before sunrise until two hours after sunset
- only from the bank or from a platform or landing stage which is anchored or connected to the bank
- use of bait fish not allowed
- use of artificial bait allowed
- all fish caught should be released immediately
- transporting and keeping fish during angling is not permitted

## **Large fishing permit € 48**

- a maximum of 2 rods; both during the day and at night
- from the bank and other than from the bank
- use of bait fish and artificial bait allowed
- transporting and keeping fish during angling is permitted (maximum 20 bait fish  $\leq$  15 cm and maximum 5 fish  $>$  15 cm: conditions p.3)

**ATTENTION: a large fishing permit is therefore obliged for taking fish with you!**

# How are you not allowed to fish?



- The use of a keepnet or a retention sack is prohibited.
- It is forbidden to consume the fish you have caught on site.
- You may only use the landing net to take the fish you caught with the fishing rod out of the water.
- The fishing rod and the bobber are the only fishing tools allowed. All tools other than the fishing rod or the bobber are prohibited.
- It is prohibited to fish under ice.
- The use of coloured maggots is prohibited. These contain colouring substances which may be toxic to the fish and the angler.
- It is prohibited to use more than two fishing rods to fish with.
- It is prohibited to attach more than three single or more than three multiple hooks to one and the same fishing rod.
- It is prohibited to leave fishing rods unattended.

## Where should you never fish?

- In locks
- In fish passages
- From bridges over navigable waterways.
- In any other locations, whether from the shore or on the water where the Nature and Forest Agency has imposed a temporary or permanent fishing ban indicated on placards erected on site.



## Seen a large number of dead fish?

Contact the local police or the environment department of your local council as soon as possible.



### Consumption advice

Because of the presence of polluting substances, the Government of Flanders strongly advises against eating eel and predatory fish you have caught yourself in public waters. Eating the fish could be a hazard to your health.

# Recognising other sport fish



Bleak



Barbel



Flounder



European or  
wels catfish



Prussian or  
gibel carp



Mullet



Herring



Cod



Common  
carp



Chub



Crucian  
carp



Pope or  
ruffe



Asp



Dace



Common  
nase



Pike



Sole



Whiting



Sea bass



Tench

## Code for lead use

Lead is a toxic metal and has no place in our environment. Lead is harmful for human and animal health. The government calls on all anglers to make as much use as possible of lead alternatives. Learn more about lead alternatives, practical tips and information for anglers: [www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be/lodalalternatieven](http://www.sportvisserijvlaanderen.be/lodalalternatieven)

## Contact and information

### **Public fisheries info office: provincial fisheries commissions**

Do you have a question about public fishing? Would you like more information about fisheries regulations, fishing waters, fishing rights, fish species and fish stock management? If so, contact the Fisheries Commission in your province:

[www.natuurenbos.be/visserijcommissie](http://www.natuurenbos.be/visserijcommissie)

### **West Flanders**

Burg 3, 8000 Brugge  
Tel. +32 (0)50-40 58 04  
[visserijcommissiewvl@gmail.com](mailto:visserijcommissiewvl@gmail.com)

### **East Flanders**

Woodrow Wilsonplein 2, 9000 Ghent  
Tel +32 (0)9-267 78 02  
[pvc@oost-vlaanderen.be](mailto:pvc@oost-vlaanderen.be)

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Italiëlei 4 bus 16, 2000 Antwerp  
Tel +32 (0)3-204 03 35  
[visserijcommissieantwerpen@gmail.com](mailto:visserijcommissieantwerpen@gmail.com)

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### **Photo baitfish and artificial bait, p.5**

© Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos

### **Photos cover and fish species, p.15**

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Ordering your fishing permit  
online, duplicate of your  
fishing permit, questions?  
**[www.visverlof.be](http://www.visverlof.be)**

**More information about the fishing regulations on  
[www.natuurenbos.be/visserij](http://www.natuurenbos.be/visserij) and [www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart](http://www.natuurenbos.be/hengelkaart)**