

PLAY



Winter
2022

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Ice Fishing—A Winter Adventure for Everyone!

What are your first thoughts when you think of winter? Do you think of snow days, sledding, ice skating, and hot cocoa?

Ice fishing is another fun activity to try in the winter. Ice fishing is for all ages and experience levels.

Get ready for a new wintertime adventure. In this *PLAY* issue, you will learn about who ice fishes, how to get started, ice fishing gear, where to go ice fishing, and finding fish.



Vocabulary *(Watch for these words!)*

- **Ice auger** - hand-powered, battery-powered, or gasoline-powered tool used to drill holes in ice
- **Ice awls** - handheld picks used to pull yourself onto the ice if you fall into the water
- **Ice crampons** - metal plates or flexible straps with spikes placed on boots to prevent slipping
- **Mentor** - person who provides advice, guidance, or inspiration to another person
- **Spud bar** - steel bar with a chisel on one end used to check ice conditions
- **Tip-ups** - fishing devices that send up a signal flag after fish bite
- **Aquatic macroinvertebrates** - animals that live in water, lack backbones, and are large enough to be seen with your eyes
- **Ectotherms** - also known as cold-blooded animals, body temperature varies with environment
- **Endotherms** - also known as warm-blooded animals, metabolism used to maintain constant body temperature

Getting Started—Join the Community

Find A Mentor

Ice fishing may be intimidating. The equipment is different and safety is important. Find an experienced family member or friend to be your **mentor**. Or, if you already ice fish, consider becoming a mentor.

Get “Social-iced”

Many ice anglers are welcoming and willing to share equipment, tips, tricks, stories, and even food. The priority is not always the fish you catch, although it is a bonus. It is this social aspect that lures many anglers back to the ice.

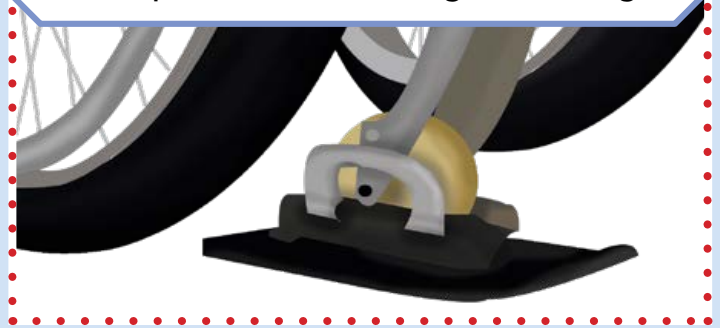
Ice Fishing is for Everyone

Ice fishing is challenging because of slippery conditions or thin ice. The advantages of ice fishing include no wading, water currents, or rocks to walk over. Instead, there is a flat path to key fish habitat. Ice also makes it easy to transport fishing gear with a sled.

Ice fishing equipment and technology is always changing. There are accessories and specialized equipment to make it accessible to everyone.



Ski attachments make it easier for anglers who require wheelchairs to go ice fishing.



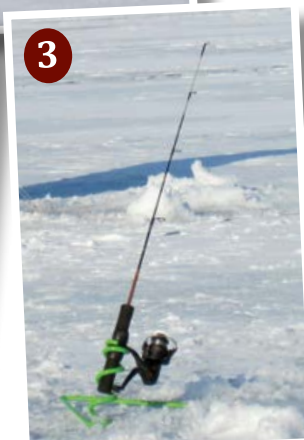
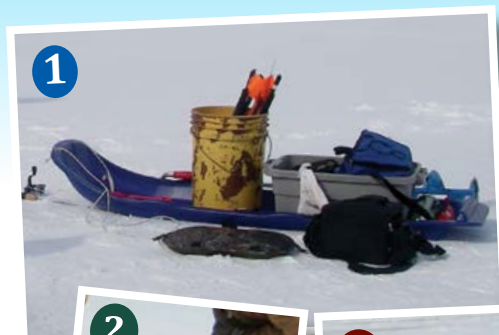
Getting Started—Ice Fishing Equipment

Ice fishing does not have to be complicated or expensive. Keep it simple. Here is what you need to get started.

- 1 **Sled** - A sled easily transports gear.
- 2 **Ice auger** - A hand-powered **ice auger** is inexpensive and keeps you warm when you use it. Keep the blades sharp and cover it when not in use.

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: **SAFETY NOTE:** When not using
: your ice auger, make sure the guard is
: covering the blades to keep you safe
: and your blades sharp.
:

- 3 **Ice fishing rod and reel** - Stick with a short, light, or medium-action rod and reel ice fishing combo to target a variety of fish.
- 4 **Tackle** - Small spoons and jigs are simple and work great. Try different sizes and colors. Check with local bait shops to see what works best.
- 5 **Seat** - A 5-gallon bucket makes a great seat. It also works well for storage of fishing gear, bait, and snacks.
- 6 **Skimmer** - An ice skimmer or kitchen strainer removes slush from the fishing hole.
- 7 **Cell phone** - Bring a cell phone to photograph ice fishing adventures and make calls in an emergency. Protect your phone with a waterproof case and lanyard.



Learn more about basic ice fishing: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WocXAn31SHA&t=1s

Creature Comforts—Ice Fishing

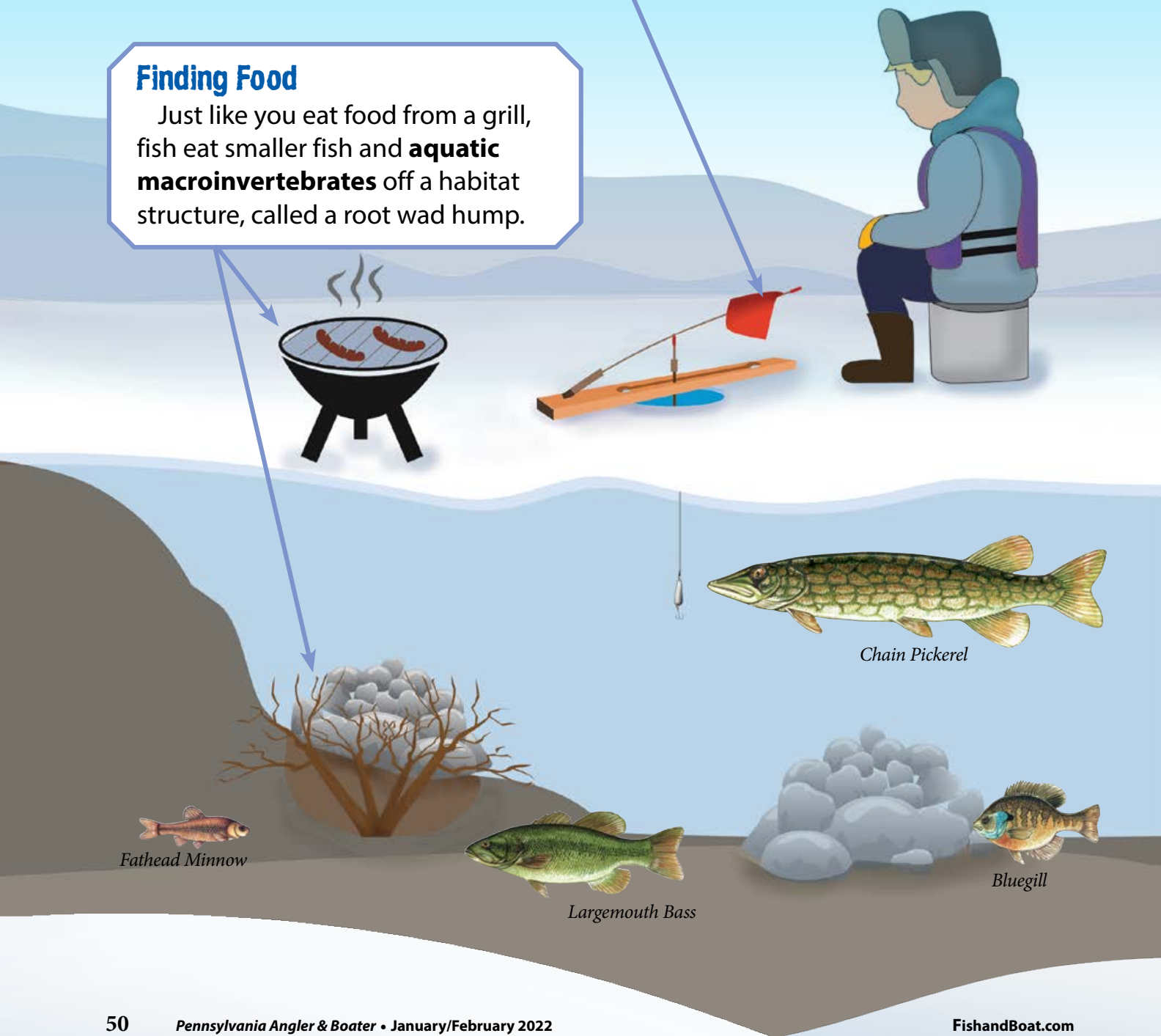
Discover what humans and fish need to survive and thrive in winter.

Catching A Bite

Anglers use tools such as **tip-ups** to catch their dinner. A fish uses adaptations to catch its meals. To read the Angler's Notebook: Fish Senses series, visit the Activities & Education Portal at **FishandBoat.com** and click on "PA Fishes." Then, scroll down to "Additional Resources."

Finding Food

Just like you eat food from a grill, fish eat smaller fish and **aquatic macroinvertebrates** off a habitat structure, called a root wad hump.



Climate

Humans are **endotherms** and dress in warm clothes or use a heater to stay warm. Fish are **ectotherms**. Fish have physical or behavioral adaptations to survive in cold water. Read *PLAY*—"Where Do They Go In Winter?" to learn more at **FishandBoat.com**.



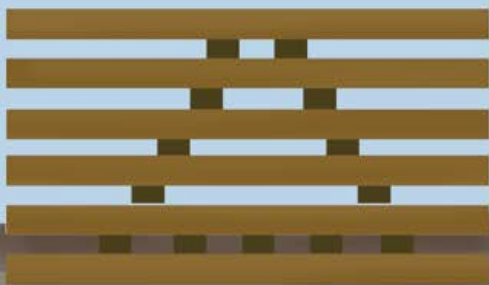
Use the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's mobile app at **<https://.pfbc.pa.gov/mobile.htm>** to download maps of lakes you want to fish. These maps provide GPS locations of habitat structures placed throughout the lake.



Shelter

Ice fishing shelters offer protection for anglers, just like porcupine crib habitat structures provide shelter for fish. These structures also provide great fishing opportunities.

SAFETY NOTE: Shelters should be vented when running a propane heater. A carbon monoxide detector may alarm you of unsafe conditions.



White Crappies

Ice Fishing Safety

Ice fishing has potential hazards. You need to know about ice safety, ice thickness, and safety equipment before going ice fishing. Check out this ice safety video for more information: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RONLQZ8kDxs&t=1s.

Black Ice and White Ice—What's the Difference?

Black/clear ice freezes at a uniform rate and is stronger than "white ice."

White/milky ice is slushy, has less strength, and is formed by melting snow and ice.

Areas to Avoid

Ice is not the same thickness across a lake or pond. Stumps, docks, and rocks absorb the sun's heat and can melt ice. For information on ice thickness, visit:

www.fishandboat.com/Fish/Fishing/Documents/ice_thickness.pdf.



Safety Equipment Checklist

- Spud Bar/Ice Chisel
- Ice Crampons
- Ice Awls

- Float Coat or Life Jacket
- Throw bag or rope



Throw bag

What to Wear—Layer Up

Layering clothes allows for adjustments when weather changes. Avoid cotton. Cotton is a poor insulator and holds moisture, making you colder.

A basic layering system consists of:

- Base Layer - Polyester or merino wool thermal underwear and wool socks
- Mid Layer - Fleece or wool shirt and pants

- Outer Layer - Wind and waterproof pants
 - Ice fishing bibs and coats with built in flotation are great for added warmth and safety
- Feet - Insulated, waterproof, and properly-fitted boots
- Hands - Neoprene or waterproof, nylon gloves or mittens

Ice Fishing Activity!

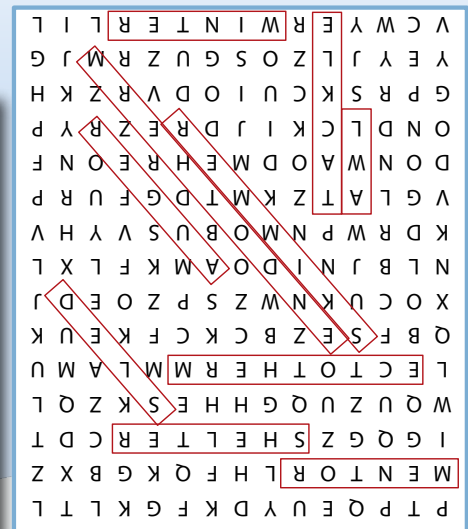
Find these ice fishing words in the word search.

P T P Q E U Y D K F G K L T L
M E N T O R L H F Q K G B X Z
I G Q G Z S H E L T E R C D T
W Q U Z U Q G H H E S K Z Q L
L E C T O T H E R M M L A M U
Q B F S E Z B C K C F K E U K
X O C U K N W Z S P Z O E D J
N L B J N I D O A M K F L X L
K D R W P N M O B U S V Y H V
V G L A T Z K M T D G F U R P
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O N D L C K I J D R E Z R Y P
G P R S K C U I O D V R Z K H
Y E Y J L Z O S G U Z R M J G
V C W Y E R W I N T E R L I L

Word List

MENTOR
AUGER
SHELTER
TACKLE
SLED
SKIMMER
AWL
ECTOTHERM
ENDOTHERM
WINTER

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Answer Key