

CATCH.



BUT COMPLY.

HANDBOOK FOR ANGLERS,
CRAYFISH CATCHERS AND
UNDERWATER HUNTERS IN LATVIA



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DEAR FRIENDS OF NATURE!

Visiting rivers and lakes, we don't try to catch rules.
We want fish.

This publication tries to explain more simple how to fish legally in Latvia. We have devoted separate pages to the most popular game fish so you don't have to go through the entire regulations every time.

Fishing regulations are similar to traffic code: although lawbreakers may reach home, it is much nicer and safer for everyone if we follow the rules.

We use traffic light principles as an example with pike-perch:



16.04-
31.05

Red means something is prohibited;
in this case, it is closed spawning season.



45cm

Yellow means Warning! In this case, the size of the fish that may be kept in the catch. (Fish are measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the caudal fin.)



5 pcs.

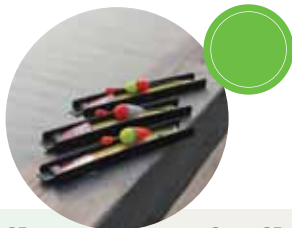
Green indicates what you can do. For example, you can keep 5 pike-perch in your catch.

Attention!

We hope this work will help you understand the regulations better. Nonetheless, the short version does not replace the Regulations and any misunderstanding does not release from the responsibility for any violation of the Regulations.

WHO CAN GO FISHING?

To start fishing, you need at least one fishing line and a hook.



Under 16

anyone, no card purchase necessary. You should carry an ID if you are a teenager (nobody will ask small children to prove their age).

Underwater hunting only under adult supervision.

From 16 to 65

anyone who has a fishing, crayfish catching and underwater hunting card and an ID attesting to a person's identity and age (photo, name, surname and identity number).

Over 65

anyone who has an ID that allows to establish the person identity and age (photo, name, surname and identity number).

Disabled persons – no card purchase necessary, but must carry a valid disability certificate.

The card for 1 year or 3 months **can be purchased** from fishing stores, Maxima supermarkets, Statoil, Latvijas Pastu post-offices, Narvesen stores, etc.

If you purchase your card online at www.makskeresanaskarte.lv, an inspector will only need to know you card number.

Your **Fishing Card should also be presented** at the licensed fishing sites together with the licence. Pensioners might also require licences (see regulations for a particular fishing site).

WHERE CAN I FISH?

In public water bodies:

- * with fishing, crayfish catching and underwater hunting card
- * free using towpath – 10 m, or 20 m from the seashore.



At licensed fishing, crayfish catching and underwater hunting sites – with the card and a licence.

List of the licensed fishing, crayfish catching and underwater hunting sites: www.zm.gov.lv/zivsaimnieciba/statiskas-lapas/makskeresana/licenceta-makskeresana?nid=740#jump

In private water bodies:

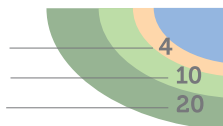
- * towpath is 4 metres
- * if fishing rights in private water bodies belong to the government, the same regulations apply
- * if fishing rights belong to the owner, the same regulations apply, but the owner's permit is necessary. Such water body should be marked as private property.

For water body ownership list, see Civil Law, Appendices I, II and III: www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=90219

The map of nature reserves is here, some regulations impact fishing: <http://www.daba.gov.lv/public/lat/iadt/>

Towpath, metres

- Private water bodies
- Public water bodies
- Seashore



WHERE AM I NOT ALLOWED

- * Under the bridges, from bridge structures
- * Within 50 metres from marked industrial fishing tackle
- * From boats on marked shipping routes
- * Within 100 metres downstream from dams, locks and waterfalls
- * Within 200 metres from river or canal inflow into the sea (point further out in the sea)
- * On constructed piers, no fishing is allowed on the inside part of the pier (only allowed on the seaward side)
- * In the sea near large river estuaries:
- * **Within 2000 metre range from the Venta estuary**
- * **Within 1000 metres in the Daugava, the Gauja, the Lielupe and the Salaca estuaries.**

TO FISH?

Periods when fishing is not allowed in certain rivers and parts of lakes are set out in Appendix 3 of the Fishing Regulations.

GRAYLING

Thymallus thymallus

1.02-
30.04

30 cm

1pc.



Sports rarity

Salmon family, occurs in the Gauja, the Venta and the Daugava basins. Depends on the climate, rapids and rocky river bed.



LV record

1,02 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

8 – 10 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of grayling is

143 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

* It is not allowed to catch grayling using natural bait (submerging or floating earthworms or minnow).

Grayling spawn from February to April and can be easily caught when in many rivers fishing is not allowed due to the autumn spawning of salmon and trout.

Purpose of the limits:

* For a couple of years in Latvia there has been a 1-fish limit for grayling. This is intended to restore the grayling stock.

* In Estonia, grayling cannot be kept at all; in Latvia at least you can keep a bleeding fish, for example.

PERCH

Perca fluviatilis

19 cm*

5 kg**



A dream of a kilo...

Small ones occur almost everywhere; it is the most popular fish for ice fishing in Latvia.

* Only in the Baltic Sea and the Gulf

** In the Baltic Sea and the Gulf - 10 kg



LV record

2,15 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

7 – 10 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of perch is

8 €/kg

Other provisions of the Regulations:

* Perch can be used as live bait

* Perch may not be gutted during the fishing, i.e. the catch should not contain filleted perch.

In Latvia, perch spawn from April to June.

The closed season and minimum size in the inland waters are not set out.

Purpose of the limits:

* Unlimited fishing in popular places may lead to a decrease in the average perch size.

* Perch gutting would make the bag limit (kg) hard to control.

CARPS

Cyprinidae



The majority of all fish in Latvia. Some limits apply to the most valuable species, but the rest can be caught without any restrictions.

BREAM

Abramis brama



LV record
5,61 kg

There is no closed spawning season, unlike in other Baltic countries. Not bag limit.

TENCH

Tinca tinca



LV record
3,19 kg

Delicious tench is protected by setting the bag limit of

25cm

CARP

Cyprinus carpio



LV record
19,70 kg

No bag limit.

5 pcs.

For carp and tench

The compensation for fish resources is 8 €/piece.

The compensation for other species (silver bream, roach, rudd, crucian carp, Prussian carp, nase, grass carp, black carp, sabrefish, bleak, goby, sunbleak, minnow, Amur bitterling, etc.) – 2 €/kg.

Vendace looks similar to the carps, but it belongs to the salmon family; closed season, size and bag limits apply.



VENDACE

Coregonus albula



ROACH

Rutilus rutilus

SALMON

1.10-
30.12

Salmo salar



60cm

1pcs.*

* In the sea, in the Daugava downstream from the Rīga Power Plant, in Buļļupe and at licensed fishing sites.

SEA TROUT

Salmo trutta



50cm



A 'holy fish'

It is difficult to catch it in the sea and cost-ineffective in rivers.



	Salmon	Sea trout
LV record	16 kg	6 kg



Compensation for illegal harvesting is **143 €/pcs.**

Other provisions of the Regulations:

Natural bait cannot be used for fishing salmon and sea trout.

In Latvia, the following are considered salmon rivers: Venta, Užava, Tebra, Stende, Saka, Roja, Rinda, Raķupe, Ostupe, Irbe, Durbe, Abava, Vitrupe, Vaive, Strīkupe, Raunis, Rauna, Pēterupe, Līgatne, Loja, Lenčupe, Kumada, Jaunupe (Vidzeme), Gauja, Brasla, Amata, Aģe, Mergupe, Mazā Jugla, Lielā Jugla. There, the season for fishing using artificial bait is closed from 1 October to 31 December.

For the differences between salmon and sea trout, see page 29.

Purpose of the limits:

Salmon stocks are in decline due to climate change, whereas the number of salmon anglers is growing.

PIKE

Esox Lucius

1.03-
30.04

50cm

5 pcs.



The most common catch

An important aquatic janitor. An angling season has been extended due to the recent warm winters.



LV record

19,56 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

3 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of pike is

29 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

- * Gaffs are allowed only in winter when fishing on ice.
- * Fish strings for caught pike transportation are not allowed,
- * Freely floating tip-up devices for pike are not allowed.
- * In inland waters, the use of bait fish is not allowed from 1 March to 30 April



Purpose of the limits:

- * The minimum size of 50 cm allows fish to spawn at least once in its lifetime and reproduce.
- * If you decide to release your fish, you should do it quickly without hanging it on a fish string or subjecting to long photo sessions.

ASP

Aspius aspius



1.03-
15.05

45cm

3 pcs.



A trophy for the alert ones

Not so much rare as difficult to catch. A strong, vigilant stream-loving fish, easily recognizable as its tail splashes that stun smaller fish.



LV record

8,12 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

3 years



Compensation for illegal
harvesting of asp is

36 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

Closed spawning season for asp ends at an ideal time, on 15 May, two weeks after season opening for pike, but two weeks before pike-perch (zander) season.

Purpose of the limits:

The 3-piece bag limit is set for the most valuable and rare species and for whitefish, ide, wels catfish and eel.

SMELT

Osmerus eperlanus

10 kg.



No size limit :)

VIMBA

Vimba vimba



30cm

5 pcs.



Delicious migrants

No closed season for this fish, since the spawning period is the only time they migrate to rivers and become a popular catch. Researchers are monitoring changes in the population and setting some limits.



	Smelt	Vimba
LV record	–	1,45 kg
Compensation for illegal harvesting	1 €/kg	29 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

* In Latvia, there are no special smelt catching privileges, unlike in Lithuania, and only two fishing rods with up to 3 hooks each can be used. Smelt may not be gutted prior to the end of fishing, and the catch should not contain both whole and filleted fish.

* In the Daugava, upstream from the Riga Power Plant there is no minimum size limit for local vimba. The large number of vimba catchers is explained by the chance to catch a lot of spawning fish; the most popular spawning areas in the Venta and Lielupe are licensed.

TURBOT

Scophthalmus maximus

30 cm

5 pcs.



FLOUNDER

Platichthys flesus

10 kg.



Lure of the sea

Every autumn flounders make the anglers travel to the Kurzeme shores, even if it means crossing the entire country. Turbot in the Baltic Sea reaches 50 cm and 4 kg.



	Turbot	Flounder
LV record	2,38 kg	1,69 kg



Compensation for illegal harvesting	15 €/kg	8 €/kg
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The main thing is to know a small turbot from a flounder. If it is impossible to remove it from the hook gently, release by cutting the line.

Similar to flounder, but a rare guest by these shores of the Baltic Sea is plaice, and even rarer – common dab.

Other

SALTWATER FISH



35cm

10pcs.

COD

Although the size of cod by the Latvian shores cannot compare with its Northern counterpart, cod fishing is becoming more and more popular. The minimum size has just been reduced to 35 cm so that small-size cod can be caught. Compensation **for illegal harvesting of cods is 15 €/kg.**



GARFISH

Comes closer to the Latvian shores at the end of May to spawn. Active fishing lasts for 2-3 weeks. No bag limit.



BALTIC HERRING

Comes closer to the shore in May and is caught from piers using special baitless systems. No bag limit – a bucketful on a good day.



VIVIPAROUS EELPOUT

Viviparous eelpout is caught in the Gulf of Riga in winter if there is ice, or in summer from boats. No bag limit.

SEA GOBY

Invasive species. No bag limit. Known also as round goby.



Fishing in the sea is particularly interesting, as in the relatively sweet Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga you can find almost all freshwater fish you would catch in the inland waters, especially perch, pike-perch (zander), pike, bream, etc.

It is worth trying to go after salmon or sea trout as well, however you may only keep one fish you catch in the sea. Unfortunately, because of weather conditions and wind direction, water becomes muddy fast.

VENDACE

Coregonus albula



1.10-
30.11

16cm

20 pcs.

WHITEFISH

Coregonus sp.



1.10-
30.11

30cm

3 pcs.



Secret salmons

A fish of salmon family. Whitefish is artificially reproduced in Latvia because of its culinary value. It's hardly ever in the catch; try the Lielupe downstream, the Buļupe, Lake Usma, Lake Alūksne, etc. Not mentioned in records list in Latvia.

Vendace Whitefish



Compensation for illegal
harvesting of vendace
and whitefish is

36 €/pcs. 143 €/pcs.

A new bag limit regulation for vendace.

Bag limit for vendace was reduced from 5 to 3 fish, however most anglers wouldn't notice this reduction.

WELS CATFISH

60cm

Silurus glanis

3 pcs.



A river giant

The most common in the Daugava. In other areas: it lives in the Venta and the Lielupe, but is hardly ever caught.



LV record

84,7 kg



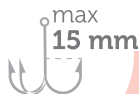
Reaches 1 kg in

3 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of wels catfish is

143 €/pcs.



Other provisions of the Regulations:

* In Latvia, multiple-point hooks cannot exceed 15 cm from the point to the shank. The limit is intended to prevent gaffing.

* Multiple-point hooks can only be used in the Daugava basin (If you don't gaff, it is unlikely that anyone would ask to measure hooks in your angler's bag.)

Purpose of the limits:

* The minimum wels catfish size was increased to allow fish to spawn at least once. In Lithuania only one wels catfish can be kept in the catch; in Estonia, it is not allowed to catch wels catfish at all.

* No closed season during spawning in the inland waters.

CHUB

30cm

Squalius cephalus



5 pcs.



A sparring partner

Loves warmth and currents. Greedy, alert and bony – the perfect catch for a sportsman.



LV record

3,7 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

4 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of chub is

8 €/pcs.

DACE

Leuciscus leuciscus



LV record **0,345 kg**



Chub's more slender brother, dace, is similar in its behaviour; it's smaller and has grey fins rather than pink. There are no size and bag limits. Compensation for illegal harvesting is 2 €/kg.

BROWN TROUT

Salmo trutta f.



Elite catch

It is becoming more expensive to buy equipment for catching fish that are increasingly endangered due to climate change and other reasons. Average life in Latvia is 5 years.



LV record

3,875 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

5 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of brown trout is

143 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

* It is not allowed to catch brown trout using natural bait (earthworms or minnow).

* On trout rivers any fishing is forbidden from 1 October to 30 November. Closed spawning season starts already on the 1st September, which means you can visit the trout rivers in September, but you should gently release the fish.

For gentle catching, you can choose hooks without barbs and keep only males in you catch (distinctive longer jaws).

Purpose of the limits:

To allow keeping 3-5 fish in the catch as before, the rivers must be attended to and replenished with fish.

1.09-30.11

35cm

1 pcs.

BURBOT

Lota lota

35 cm

5 pcs.



A night catch

Have a bit of starry night romance while fishing for burbot. Mostly using legering tackle, sometimes a jig.



LV record

5,5 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

4 – 6 years



Compensation for illegal harvesting of burbot is

8 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

- * In the inland waters, two fishing tackles with up to three hooks each are allowed, but even one hook is enough for burbot (less risk of casting off).
- * Local authorities can set fishing limits for the dark hours of the day. However, any restrictions should be approved by the Nature Conservation Agency and the State Environmental Service first.
- * No closed spawning season in the inland waters.

Purpose of the limits:

The increase of the minimum size to 35 cm (from 30 cm) has mainly a symbolic meaning for the important burbot rivers – let's not eat "tadpoles".

IDE

Leuciscus idus



30 cm

3 pcs.

EEL

Anguilla anguilla



50 cm

3 pcs.



Rare treats

Eel lovers are in luck, as there is a European eel stock renewal programme in place. There is no such programme for ide though and there is no clue as to why ide gets caught less and less.



	Ide	Eel
LV record	5,5 kg	3,5 kg



Compensation for illegal harvesting is	29 €/pcs.	143 €/pcs.
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Ide

Delicious and valuable fish, which these days is not a frequent sight in the catch. It's better preserved in the sea and waters connected with the sea. In Latvia, it reaches 50 cm and 5 kg. No closed spawning season, spawning takes place in April. Similar to chub, but rounder and with a smaller head.

Eel

Normally grows to 80 cm, sometimes exceeds 1 m. Can be caught in Lake Alūksne and Lake Usma, less frequently in the sea. Juvenile fish are released to Lake Zebrus, Lake Puze and others.

PIKE-PERCH

Sander lucioperca

16.04-
31.05

45cm

5 pcs.



A professional

Introduced in Latvia as a result of a long-term effort. Anglers with good skills may catch these both during the day and at night and even in cloudy waters.



LV record

11,8 kg



Reaches 1 kg in

4 years



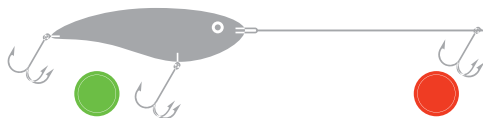
Compensation for illegal harvesting of pike-perch is

36 €/pcs.

Other provisions of the Regulations:

In inland waters, the use of bait fish is not allowed from 1 March to 30 April.

* More than one multiple-point hooks may be used only if those are attached loosely (moving) to the same artificial bait.



* When catching bait fish for pike-perch using a net, remember that the net should not exceed 1.5 x 1.5 m with mesh size not exceeding 10 mm and the caught bait fish can only be used in the same water body it has been caught in.

Purpose of the limits:

By not transferring bait fish to other water bodies we reduce the risk of spreading diseases.

FISHING FROM A BOAT

The fishing regulations set out the following restrictions for fishing from a boat:

- * Fishing from any type of watercraft is not allowed from 1 March to 30 April. (Travelling by boat is allowed.)
- * Catching fish or crayfish from a boat or anchoring is not allowed on any shipping lane.
- * Underwater hunting devices cannot be used from a boat.

The following fishing prohibitions apply also to fishing from a boat:

- * Estuaries (see page 4 (PDF))
- * Within 50 m to legally marked fishing tackle
- * Within 100 metres from dams, locks and waterfalls
- * Under bridge structures

The parameters for inland waters:

Equipment / vessels

	Row boat up to 4 m	Row boat over 4 m	Motor boat* over 7 m	Powerboat up to 7 m	Powerboat over 7 m
Ring buoy	-	1	1	1	2
Life jacket		6	6	6	6
Fire extinguisher	-	-	1	1	2
Compass	-	-	-	-	1
Bilge pump	-	-	-	-	1
Bucket, shovel or hand water pump	1	1	1	1	1
Anchor with chain or rope					1
First aid kit	1	1	1	1	1
Waterproof torch	1	1	1	1	1
Knife	1	1	1	1	1
Oars	min. 1	min. 1	min. 1	min. 1	min. 1

* or a specialized vessel

Certified swimwear may be used instead of a life jacket. It should be put on. It is now allowed to have forbidden fishing and crayfish tackle on board ensuring they are stored in such a way that prevents immediate use for fishing or catching crayfish. Better contact The State Environmental Service if you have a salmon caught in the sea and you must return to internal waters for mooring.

FISHING TACKLE

Anything starting from a string with one or more hooks can be considered a fishing tackle. **In Latvia, the number of hooks and fishing tackles is limited:**

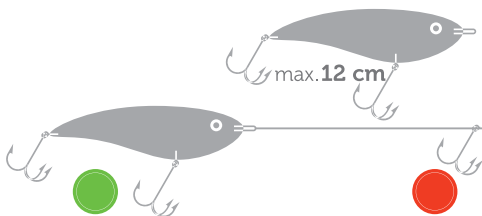
Location	Fishing tackle	Max. hooks for each tackle
Inland waters	2	3
The Baltic Sea and the Gulf	3	3

For multiple-point hooks, the distance between the tip and the shank should be < 15 mm, except for wels catfish fishing in the Daugava.



This provision was included to avoid gaffing. Avoid broad regular jerks and the inspectors will have no reason to measure your hooks.

Attaching extra hooks separate from the lure to the string is not allowed, and the distance between any adjacent treble hooks at the attachment points should not exceed 12 cm.



More than one treble hook may be used only if they are attached to the line loosely

- * Gaffs are allowed only when ice fishing
- * Freely floating tip-up devices and fish string are not allowed
- * Fishing tackle cannot be left unattended (more than 50 m away)

CRAYFISH CATCHING



Allowed at the licensed crayfish catching sites. It is allowed to fish for invasive species in Lake Āraišu, the Daugava up to Rīga Power Plant, the Hapaka Grāvis, the Lielupe, Lake Ķīšezers, Lake Mazais Baltezers, Lake Primmas, the Sausā Daugava, the Vecdaugava and the Venta.

- * Permitted catching methods are:
by hand or using a crayfish trap.
- * Each trap should be marked by a 3 x 7 cm waterproof plate marked with the its owner's name and card number.

Restrictions:

- * Closed season is from 1 October to 30 June.
- * Females with visible spawn – throughout the year.
- * It is not allowed to catch crayfish by forcing it out of its cave or hideout.

Catch limits

- * Broad-fingered crayfish – in licensed places only, up to 50 pcs
- * Turkish crayfish – in licensed places only, up to 50 pcs
- * Spiny-cheek crayfish and signal crayfish – unlimited quantity

Minimum size

(from head spine to the end of the telson)

- * Broad-fingered crayfish and Turkish crayfish – 10 cm
- * Spiny-cheek crayfish and signal crayfish – 8 cm

Up to 5 traps can be used simultaneously!

For differences between the crayfish species, see pages 30-31
For trap design, see page 32

The most comprehensive online forum:

<http://parcopi.lv/forum/3>

UNDERWATER HUNTING



Where can I hunt?

- * In coastal waters of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Rīga
- * With the owner's permit, in private lakes where the fishing rights do not belong to the government
- * At licensed underwater hunting sites
- * In 55 lakes and rivers set out in Appendix No 7 to the Regulations

How can I hunt?

- * Only using rubber powered speargun
- * Spear head width cannot exceed 10 cm
- * Attaching a buoy with at least 8 kg lifting capacity
- * During the dark hours of the day the buoy should be equipped with reflective elements and an all-round light (shines through 360°)
- * Keeping fish attached to the buoy or the belt

What is not allowed?

- * Using scuba or other breathing apparatus or
- * Under 16 years of age – without adult supervision
- * Using a speargun above the surface of the water
- * Hunting in populated areas (swimming sites)
- * Within 20 metres from any marked swimming or water sports sites
- * Caching fish or crayfish by hand
- * From 1 March to 30 April is not allowed anywhere, except the Baltic Sea and the Gulf

In Latvia, underwater hunters tend to unite in clubs. Beginners are recommended to find such club:
in Rīga – Latvian Underwater Hunting Club (LZMK) and Spearfishing.lv, in Krāslava – Poseidon, in Daugavpils – BUGS, in Jēkabpils – JZMK, in Ventspils – Spearlat.

List of licensed underwater hunting sites:

<https://www.zm.gov.lv/zivsaimnieciba/statiskaslapasmakskeresana/licencetas-zemudens-medibas?nid=742#jump>

ICE FISHING

Ice fishing also requires a fishing, crayfish catching and underwater hunting card, but at licensed sites – both the card and a licence. The bag limits still apply, and so does the prohibition to fish from the bridges and in estuaries.



* Fish cannot be left on the ice once you have finished fishing. No waste can be left on the ice.

* Every person should keep their catch separately (it is not allowed to have a heap of fish on the ice and a group of anglers not responsible for the catch).

* In winter, the fish kept on the ice should be killed immediately after you have finished fishing.

* In winter, a gaff can be used to take fish out of the ice hole.



Now balanced jigging lures can be used in the rivers too (was not allowed previously)

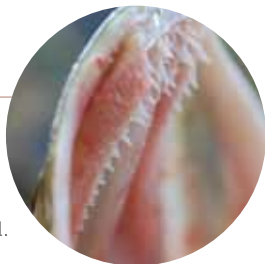
The most popular natural bait in winter is bloodworms and scuds.

You can get your own from the wild, but no more than 100 g.



SUPPORT

THE FISH RESOURCE INSPECTION



An angler must report any violations observed. If you find an illegal net, do not touch it, but inform the control services.

There is a phone number you can call without having to guess in what region the river or lake is situated: a 24/7 State Environmental Service number

26 33 8800 or **670 84 211** at working hours.

If you have a smartphone, you can try Vides SOS app:

www.videssos.lv

In Latvia, fishing can be controlled by both the state and local police, as well as environmental inspectors and public inspectors. Public inspectors cannot impose fines or detain anyone, but based on their inspection reports the State Environmental Service can impose a fine anyway.

To facilitate the work of the inspectors, the following provisions were introduced:

- * It is not allowed to hide fishing tackle and catch – a fine for those who create various hideouts, dump their catch on the shore, etc. can be increased.
- * It is not allowed to be near the water with any restricted tackle and during closed season for the fish in question – the exact distance the lawbreaker should run is not stipulated. This provision does not apply if there is no element of crime, e.g. a net on a cherry tree by the river is not a violation.

Fines bite

Violation of the regulations may lead to criminal responsibility if the damage amounts to five minimum monthly wages in the Republic of Latvia or damage to the environment is significant. **For example:** If the minimum monthly wage is 360 euro, five times minimum wage would amount to 1800 euro. Any damage for three salmon caught during closed season is multiplied by 5. The amount in euro = 715 euro x 3 fish = 2145 euro, which means criminal responsibility. In addition, if the lost roe is taken into account, the amount of damages multiplies.

FISHING STYLE

In Latvian regulations, there are some provisions that are more of good fishing manners than anything else and not all of them can be controlled in real life, but the regulations promote compliance:

- * Gaffing (where fish is hooked by other body parts rather than the mouth) is not allowed
- * Fish, for which a catch limit is set, cannot be used as bait fish (except perch)
- * Gaffs can only be used in winter on ice
- * During open water season fish must be killed immediately after catching (except where it is kept alive without tying or hanging)

Warning!

Taking care of the environment and leaving your fishing area clean after fishing catching crayfish or underwater hunting is a legal obligation, not just good manners.

It is not allowed to:

- * Move fish and crayfish from one water body to another without an approval of the competent authorities (it means that bait fish should be caught in the same water body where fishing will take place)
- * Damage or touch someone else's fishing tackle (you cannot pretend you were just standing by the fishing rod or just found it by accident)
- * Damage informative signs and indicators
- * Create physical obstacles in the rivers, canals and creeks

Help the scientists!

Having caught fish or crayfish with this marking, you should send the marking to BIOR (Scientific Institute for Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment) together with the weight, size, place, time and method of catching.

BIOR address: Lejupes 3, Rīga, LV-1076,
email: bior@bior.lv



ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In Latvia, local authorities can issue additional regulations for the preservation of fish resources.

- * Prohibit fishing and crayfish catching during the dark hours of the day
- * Place additional restrictions on underwater hunting at recreational sites
- * Prohibit fishing and crayfish catching in particular areas to protect spawning
- * Prohibit walking into the water while fishing during certain periods
- * Extend closed spawning season taking into account weather conditions.

Special regulations should be published in accordance with law and the appropriate information should be displayed near the site in question. The Regulations that are in place since 2016 contain very few such special regulations.

LICENSED FISHING

There are various licensed fishing solutions in Latvia (see paragraph 27 of the Regulations), such as:

- * Possibility to catch rare fish (salmon and sea trout) in the Salaca and Venta (from the Ventas Rumba to the Abavas tributary).
- * Possibility to catch spawning fish, i.e. vimba in Bauska – www.bauska.lv
- * Possibility to lessen restrictions by improving care for the area: near the Power Plant, the Varkaļu Canal, etc.
- * Management of individual water sites: large lakes – Alūksne, Burtnieks, Usma; the Mergupe – section of the river, etc.

Carefully study any licensed fishing regulations, as the prices, discounts, the number of fish you can keep may vary. There are places where both Angler's Card and a licence is necessary. For the complete list of licensed fishing and crayfish catching sites, see <https://www.zm.gov.lv/zivsaimnieciba/statiskas-lapas/makskeresana/licenceta-makskeresana?nid=740#jump>

Most of the licenses can be purchased at www.epakalpojumi.lv

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SALMON AND SEA TROUT

Salmon and sea trout juveniles are almost indistinguishable



As they grow, the differences become more apparent:

SALMON



A

There are less small black spots on the salmon's body, especially along the midline, than sea trout's

In salmon, maxilla coincides with the back line of the eyes

SEA TROUT



B

Salmon's tail is more forked than sea trout's

In sea trout, maxilla extends beyond the back line of the eyes

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CRAYFISH SPECIES

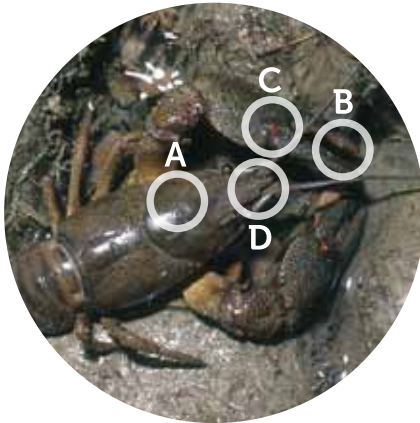


Fig. 1 Broad-fingered crayfish

1. Broad-fingered crayfish (*Astacus astacus*)

- 1.1. smooth body ("a"), only one spine on each side between the cephalothorax and pleon joint (difference from Turkish crayfish, main difference from spine-cheek crayfish)
- 1.2. jagged serrated inside edges of the claws ("b") (difference from Turkish crayfish)
- 1.3. red spot at the claw opening joint ("c") (the main difference from signal crayfish)
- 1.4. smooth head spine folds ("d") (the main difference from Turkish crayfish)

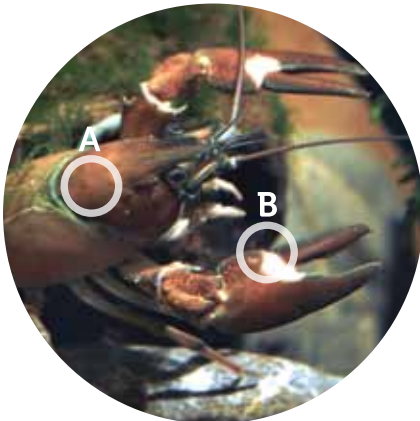


Fig. 2 Signal crayfish

2. Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)

- 2.1. Smooth body without spines ("a") (unlike spiny-cheek crayfish and Turkish crayfish)
- 2.2. Typical light spot at the claw opening joint ("b") (the main difference from broad-fingered crayfish, spine-cheek crayfish and Turkish crayfish)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CRAYFISH SPECIES



Fig. 3 Turkish crayfish

3. Turkish crayfish

(*Astacus leptodactylus*)

- 3.1. rough and spiny body ("a")
(difference from broad-fingered crayfish and signal crayfish)
- 3.2. smooth inside claw edges ("b")
(difference from broad-fingered crayfish)
- 3.3. head spine folds with teeth ("c")
(the main difference from broad-fingered crayfish)

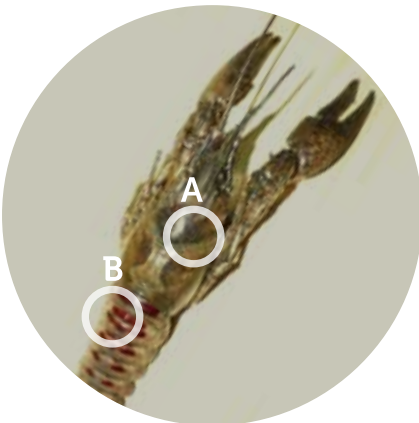


Fig. 4 Spiny-cheek crayfish

4. Spiny-cheek crayfish

(*Orconectes limosus*)

- 4.1. Spiny body ("a") and expressed spines on the sides of the head ('cheeks') (the main difference from broad-fingered crayfish and signal crayfish)
 - 4.2. reddish brown stripes on the top pleon segment ("b") (difference from Turkish crayfish)
- PS. In dark water, tail stripes may not be clearly visible; another indication is yellowish-orange claw tips.

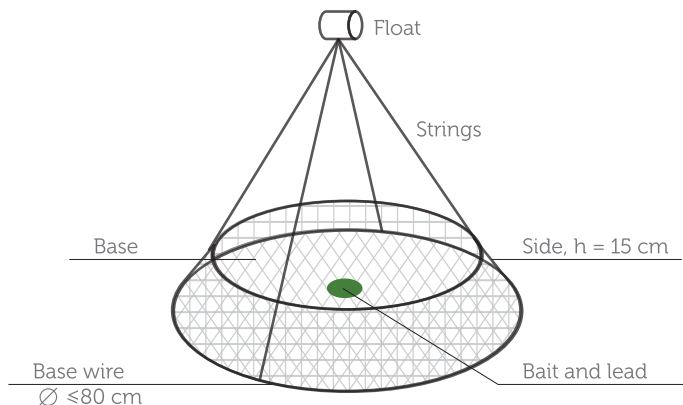
CRAYFISH TRAP DESIGN



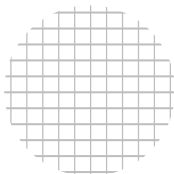
The Regulations set forth the following requirements to the traps:

- * Trap base diameter not exceeding 80 cm
- * Side height not exceeding 15 cm
- * Mesh size not exceeding 20 mm

A usable trap design looks as follows:



Trap mesh size does not exceed 20 mm



PS. In a current, it is advisable to keep the side top on the soil and raise only when pulling out.

BASIC RATE

for calculation of damages caused by individuals through illegal harvesting of fish, crayfish and other aquatic invertebrates



No. unit	Species	Compensation for damage (euro)	Unit
1.	Grayling, salmon, wels catfish, whitefish, brown trout, sea trout, eel	143.-	1 pcs.
2.	Pike-perch, vendace, asp	36.-	1 pcs.
3.	Ide, pike, vimba	29.-	1 pcs.
4.	arp, tench, lamprey, broad-fingered crayfish, chub, burbot	8.-	1 pcs.
5.	Turbot, cod	15.-	1 kg
6.	Perch, flounder	8.-	1 kg
7.	Sprat, Baltic herring, smelt	1.-	1 kg
8.	Fish and crayfish not mentioned in this table	2.-	1 kg
9.	Bloodworms, scuds	29.-	100 g
10.	Fish roe	143.-	100 g

Basic rate may be multiplied by 3 or 5, depending on offense (x3 – no card, bigger catch or smaller fish than allowed; x5 – bigger catch or smaller size of rare fish, fishing in closed season).

Ethics are the rules, which we follow when nobody's watching.

It is not possible to describe all situations, but that's what makes fishing so interesting.

For example, what is the best way to pose with a trophy? There may be several recommendations. The regulations do not require it and you don't have to spoil someone's joy of a catch by pointing it out.

However, it's good to know that it is best to hold larger fish horizontally rather than vertically. Especially if you want to release the fish. If you hold the fish by its head only, it can cause internal organ hernias, which makes the release pointless.



Regardless of whether you decide to release or keep your prize, **you should always respect the fish.**



CODE OF ETHICS



Latvia is our land and water – rivers, lakes and the sea. Human activities significantly affect everything that is around us – including fish resources and the environmental quality. That is why we should go fishing with an idea that we have borrowed the nature's values from our children:

1. The angler shall care about nature and water, never pollute the environment and leave the fishing spot clean. The angler may clean up after others.
2. The angler shall respect other anglers and other users of water bodies.
3. The angler shall carefully read all fishing regulations, comply with them and be able to explain to others.
4. The angler shall use fish resources responsibly, shall not interfere with fish spawning and protect spawning areas.
5. The angler shall know how to apply the 'catch and release' principle releasing small, protected and any other fish with utmost care.
6. The angler shall be careful with fish when taking pictures or videos.
7. The angler shall kill the fish in the catch immediately and take home only as many as necessary for a meal.
8. The angler shall immediately inform the competent authorities of any malicious violations of the regulations.
9. The angler shall provide true information about their catch and understand the importance of that for the future planning of fish resources.

It would be reasonable for the Code of Honour to include rules, which cannot be controlled every day, but with which the anglers would undertake to comply, since they want to be respected as well.

The Code of Ethics is in no way fixed, as the more people participate in its development, the better it gets. This one is developed by the Latvian society of fisherman organisations (MOSP). If you have any suggestions for the Code, please let us know: m.o.s.p@inbox.lv