

Ontario Bait Management Strategy

September 14, 2021

Greetings,

The purpose of this mailing is to inform you of changes related to the use and movement of baitfish and leeches in Ontario that will come into effect on January 1, 2022.

As we communicated last summer, Ontario's Sustainable Bait Management Strategy (Bait Strategy) was finalized and posted as a decision notice on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO# 019-0518) in July 2020. As part of our implementation of the strategy, the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNR) recently amended the Fish Licensing Regulation (O. Reg. 664/98) under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997* to implement regulations associated with the movement of bait in Ontario (Section 3 of the Bait Strategy).

The new regulations include:

Establishment of four Bait Management Zones (BMZ)

- Ontario has established four (4) BMZs including the Southern, Central, Northeastern, and Northwestern BMZs. See attached map and description of BMZs.
- Baitfish and leeches (live or dead) cannot be moved into or out of a BMZ. The only exception for anglers is that bait can be transported from a BMZ directly into a Great Lake or Ottawa River for use (but can not be brought back inland for later use).

Receipts

- Anglers that are using bait outside of the BMZ of their primary residence will be required to purchase their bait and retain the receipt.
- The receipt must list the quantity of bait purchased and the date and location (business name, address) of where and when it was purchased.
- Receipts are valid for two weeks and must remain legible and be provided to a conservation officer if requested.
- Commercial bait operators must be prepared to issue receipts to those anglers from outside the BMZ.
- Anglers that are using bait within the BMZ of their primary residence may either purchase or personally-harvest their bait and do not need to retain a receipt.

The ministry will be engaged in communication efforts for commercial bait operators, anglers and stakeholders prior to the new rules coming into effect.

If you have any questions related to the implementation of the Sustainable Bait Management Strategy, please feel free to reach out to Dave Hintz (david.hintz@ontario.ca).

Thanks,

Christie Curley

Director, Fish & Wildlife Policy Branch