

# Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife releases “Go Fish!” map to help target fish on the ice

“Do you like catching perch through the ice? If you find a depth where fish are biting, you can use our Go Fish MA! map to see bathymetry data in real-time as you walk across the ice and follow that depth around the pond.

## Choose a waterbody that’s right for you

If you’re new to fishing or if you’re new to Go Fish MA!, start here. Selecting a pond that shows digital depth information is especially handy when ice fishing. Take a tour of the map and its tools!

## Find waterbody features to target fish

Use digital depth information from the Go Fish MA! map to identify features that are impossible to see through the ice. Look for weed flats, deep water, points, humps, and drop-offs when you’re deciding where to set up on the ice.

### What to look for:

- **Weedy flats:** Look for large expanse of water between 3-10 feet deep. These are likely to hold schools of golden shiner which provide food for other fish like bluegills, northern pike, and largemouth bass. Shallow vegetated water means plenty of places for predators to ambush prey and even more opportunity for prey to hide from their predators.
- **Deep water:** Trout can frequently be found in deep water actively feeding on schools of rainbow smelt and yellow perch,

and this is especially true through the ice. Crappie or smelt are also found in deep water. Don't have tip ups? Deep water is a great place to jig for fish.

- **Points:** A "point" refers to shallow water that extends far out into a pond or lake with much deeper water surrounding it. Points enable fish to rapidly change the depth at which they are feeding and are a focal point for baitfish. These are great all-round areas to target a wide range of fish species.

- **Humps:** Some lakes or ponds have multiple deep basins separated by a shallower area or "hump." This is a great area to intercept every species of fish as they move between the two halves of the waterbody.

- **Drop-offs:** Steep drop-offs offer fish fast travel routes between various depths. If you can find rock piles, trees, or even just a change in the composition of the bottom of the lake near a drop-off, you are likely to encounter species of all kinds.

## **Find your location in real-time**

If you're on one of the many Massachusetts ponds with digital bathymetry (depth) information, you can use your phone to see depth information in real-time as you walk.

- Launch the Go Fish MA! map
- Use the filter tool at the bottom center of the map to narrow your search to show ponds with Digital Depth, then zoom in to see the bathymetry
- When you're at a pond, click the My Location button (see image) to show your movements in real-time.

## **Targeting northern pike through the ice**

Find northern pike in shallow weedy water. Try looking for about 12 feet of water that is close to a steeper drop off. To use the Go Fish MA! map on the ice, click the My Location button to show your movements in real time.

## **Targeting perch through the ice**

Find perch in deeper water. If you find a depth where the fish are biting, follow that depth around the pond. To use the Go Fish MA! map on the ice, click the My Location button to show your movements in real time.

## **More information**

Pike and perch are just some of the many species of fish you can catch through the ice. There are no set rules for finding fish and a lot depends on temperature, dissolved oxygen, structure, and food availability. Experiment with different depths and try setting your bait at different positions in the water column, starting just a few feet from the bottom and then work your way up if nothing's biting. Be patient and have fun!

Visit our [Get started ice fishing](#) page for more information about safety, gear, regulations, and tips. Always consider ice to be potentially dangerous and review ice strength and safety tips before you head out.

Ice fishing requires a freshwater fishing license for those 15 and older; you can get your fishing license online using [MassFishHunt](#).” -Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.