

## Rainbow Lake Fishing Report: August 2026

A fishing committee was formed to serve the Rainbow Lake community many years ago but it became dormant when the original members stopped reporting. This report is the first in an effort to revive this committee. The prime goal is to inform the community of the rules and regulations regarding fishing in our lake, and reporting, to the best of our ability, on what kinds of fish are being caught. This first report is aimed more at people who are new to Rainbow Lake fishing and less to those who have been fishing here for years or decades. Anyone wishing to participate in this group should contact Bruce Zetter ([bzetter@gmail.com](mailto:bzetter@gmail.com)).

Rules: To fish in Rainbow Lake, you need a current New York State Fishing License. Licenses are available in local shops and online at [dec.ny.gov](http://dec.ny.gov)

One Day - \$5 for residents (with NY State drives license), \$10 for non-residents  
Seven Day - \$12 for residents; \$28 for non-residents  
One Year - \$25 for residents; \$50 for non-residents, \$5 for residents over 70

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If you use live baitfish, do not throw the remaining ones into the lake. Dispose of them on land or in the trash. Do not bring fish from other lakes into our lake as they may carry invasive plant species or various diseases. It is not required to catch and release fish caught in the lake, but many people do this routinely to keep the fish population abundant. From December 1<sup>st</sup> to June 14, bass must be released back into the lake.

The most commonly caught fish in Rainbow Lake are Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Pike, and Perch. While quite common, Smallmouth Bass are not considered a native species in the state of New York. Walleye are stocked in Rainbow Lake every two years but are often consumed by other fish in the lake and remain difficult to catch. Fishermen and women on the lake report that this year has seen an increase in the number and size of Pike being caught in the lake.

Fishing Seasons: *Bass* may not be removed from the lake until after June 14 each year. This is to protect fish that are spawning in late May and early June. The bass season ends on November 30. *Walleye* may be caught from May 1<sup>st</sup> until March 15. *Pike* may also be caught from May 1 to March 15. *Lake Trout* can be caught in Lake Kushaqua all year round.

Inspectors: Environmental Conservation Officers from the Department of Environment and Conservation (ECOs from the DEC) *do patrol our lake*. They are more commonly found down by the bridges to Kushaqua and Buck Pond but they also patrol Rainbow Lake. They will ask to see fishing licenses and make sure that no fish are being caught out of season.

Fishing Tips: Kids under 16 fish for free and will often start fishing with worms (available at Audrey's in Onchiota) or minnows (available from Blue Line Sports, 89 Main Street, Saranac Lake). In general, the best times to fish in the hot summer are a few hours after sunrise, and

for a few hours before sunset. At this time, the fish will be closer to the shore. In the middle of the day, the fish will be found deeper in the lake. Adults can be found fishing for Bass and Pike with artificial worms, and with crankbaits that resemble the baitfish in the lake. Popular lures include the Ned Rig, the Yamamoto Senko and various Rapala Crankbaits. These lures, and many more, along with good advice can be found at Blue Line Sports, and at Woods and Waters, 89 Main Street, Saranac Lake.

Fishing Rods: The Ugly Stick remains a good value in fishing rods. Experienced anglers will often look for rods from Daiwa, Shimano and St Croix, or from G. Loomis if cost is no barrier. If you want just one versatile rod, look for a 7 foot, medium power, fast action spinning rod. That will catch a lot of the fish in our lake.

Enjoy fishing in Rainbow Lake and be sure to leave some for the next people to fish.