

# Exporting, Transporting or Storing Fish

## Packaging Sport Fish for Transport

This year thousands of anglers will travel provincial highways to fish Ontario's many lakes and streams. Throughout the fishing season, resident and non-resident anglers will steal away to secret fishing holes in search of their favorite catch of walleye, perch, bass or northern pike.

Anglers who may be considering a fishing trip in the near future need to ensure they are transporting fish home in compliance with the Ontario Fishery Regulations, which help protect fisheries resources.

Fish that you catch and keep may be gilled and gutted. However, please remember that fish taken from waterbodies where size limits are in effect must be readily measurable at all times, unless the fish:

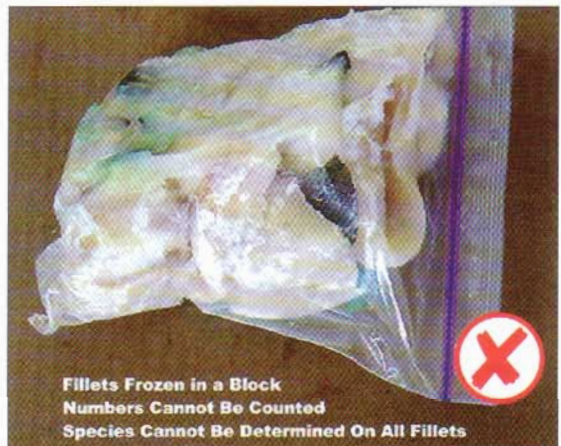
- are being prepared for immediate consumption;
- are prepared at an overnight accommodation for storage;
- are being transported on the water from a temporary overnight accommodation to your primary residence and you are not engaged in sport fishing; or,
- are being transported overland.

In addition, when packaging fish you **must** ensure that a Conservation Officer can determine:

- the number of fish you have
- the species of fish that you have in your possession.

Improperly packaged fish fillets are difficult for Conservation Officers to inspect. These packages sometimes contain many fillets that are either frozen or have been cut up into small pieces, or both. Sometimes skin is left on the fillets, other times it isn't.

Here are a few helpful hints to ensure your catch is being properly packaged for transport:



## Tips For Transporting Packaged Fish

1. Package each fish individually or arrange your fish in a clear freezer bag. Place the fillets flat in the bag. A layer of water can be added to further protect the fillets before freezing. DON'T freeze your fillets in a container such as a milk carton or margarine tub. A large lump of fillets frozen in bags is also not acceptable. Remember, fish must be packaged in such a way that they can be easily counted.

2. Ensure you leave at least a large patch of skin on all fish fillets for identification purposes. Since anglers often transport various species of fish, it's their responsibility to ensure each and every fillet of their catch can be identified.

3. Conservation Officers may inspect your catch at any time. Always have your fish and your licences easily accessible. Pack your coolers of fish last and where they can be quickly inspected. It's inconvenient for anglers to have to unload a vehicle to find licences and coolers.

4. Last but not least, before planning your trip, ensure you pick up a copy of the current year's *Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary*. (Please see page 6 of the *Summary* for more information on transporting fish in Ontario). The *Summary* can be picked up at any outlet selling fishing and hunting licences or at any Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) office. If you have questions about any regulation, contact the MNR office in the area that you intend to fish.

The fishing season also means Conservation Officers will step up enforcement efforts to ensure anglers are complying with regulations. Each year, these officers routinely conduct boat patrols, camp checks, fly-ins over remote lakes and scheduled road check stations.

During these patrols they will inspect thousands of sport fish being transported across the province. Most inspections show that the majority of anglers are complying with Ontario's sport fishing laws.

If a Conservation Officer inspects the sport fish you're transporting and finds they are improperly packaged:

- Your catch may be seized for evidence.
- You could get a ticket and be fined.
- You may have to attend court, usually close to where the inspection took place which may be far away from where you live.

It's definitely not how people want to remember their fishing trip.

