

How to catch burbot using set lines

Information for setline licence holders.

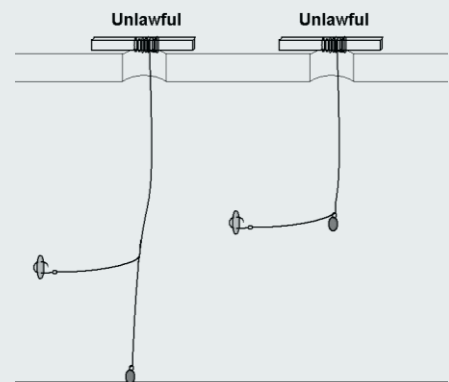
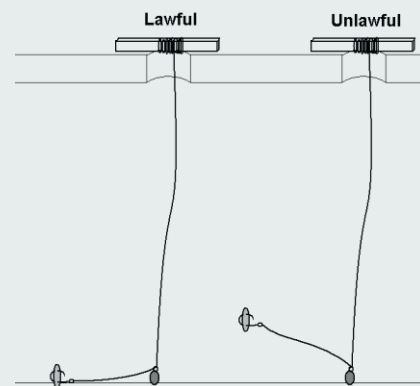
Building a setline

The basic setline requires a length of stick or board, 20 to 30 m of strong line or cord, a heavy weight and a hook. Tie one end of the line to the stick, wind the line around the stick, and tie the weight to the other end of the line. Tie a short leader (60 cm or so) to the weight, using cord or heavy monofilament, and tie your hook to the other end of the leader, so it hangs below the weight.

Fishing with setlines

- To set and retrieve your setlines, you'll need your setline licence, an ice auger, a snow shovel, and a pair of pliers for unhooking fish.
- Bait your hook and lower it down into the water through your hole. Be sure to check the buoyancy of your baited hook – your hook must not float off the bottom. Feed out line until the hook and weight are resting on the lake or river bottom.
- Setting your baited hook on the bottom means you're likely to catch only burbot. Hooks that float up or are set off the bottom are likely to catch other species like lake trout or northern pike, which must be released.
- Prevent your hole from freezing over by making a pile of snow on top of it, but don't forget to mark your holes so you can find them again! You must also clearly mark each set line with your name and licence number. All setlines must be checked at least every 30 hours.
- If you catch a burbot and wish to keep it, quickly kill it with a sharp blow behind the eyes. If you catch any other species, like lake trout or northern pike, you must release them. Consider using barbless and/or circle hooks, to make releasing these fish easier.
- Every day you fish, remember to record your effort and catch on your Setline Catch Report!

Right way and wrong ways



Your hook must rest on the bottom of the lake/river.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Government of Yukon, Fisheries Unit
fisheries@gov.yk.ca, 867-667-5721

Tips for catching burbot

- Burbot are most active at night and feed along the bottoms of lakes and rivers.
- The best spots to find burbot are shallow bays, shoals and near creek mouths with mud or sand bottoms.
- Burbot hunt mostly by smell, not sight, and are not spooked by heavy line – using heavy line reduces bycatch of other species, and is easier to handle while wearing gloves.
- Burbot are attracted to a wide variety of bait – try frozen smelt, chicken livers, or even bacon!
- Consider using circle hooks for setlines – they are designed to avoid deeply hooking fish.

Circle hooks?

Circle hooks differ from conventional J-style hooks in that the hook point is bent back toward the hook shank. This design means that as a fish swims away with the bait in its mouth, the hook doesn't set until it reaches the corner of their mouth, hooking them there rather than in the throat or stomach. The curved-in point also makes it harder for fish to spit the hook, even with barbless circle hooks.



Barbless
J hook



Barbed
J hook



Barbless
circle hook



Barbed
circle hook

In our experience, circle hooks are ideal for setlines. The best rig we have tested is a 2/0 barbless circle hook on a 40 lb test monofilament leader, tied using a knot such as a perfection loop or rapala knot, which allows the hook to rotate freely when hooking a fish. This rig has high catch rates, consistently catches burbot in the corner of the mouth, and is easy to unhook once you've landed the fish.



Try using a circle hook rig. You'll likely find you catch more burbot, and they're easier to unhook, too! Using circle hooks also makes it much easier to release unharmed any other species you might catch.

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