

FISHTAIL

Designed by Benny Al-Ashani

GOAL
















Collect the most **points** by catching fish and collecting bait icons. **Points** are earned from:

- **Fish:** Each fish is worth **0–8 Points**, printed on the card.
- **Bait Sets:** Earn bonus points for catching multiple fish of the same bait type.



Important Notes:

- **Live Bait (Orange)** does not count for sets!
- **Spinners (Yellow)** sets only count for half as many points!

Set of 1	➔	0 Point	
Set of 2	➔	2 Points	 
Set of 3	➔	4 Points	  
Set of 4	➔	8 Points	   
Set of 5	➔	14 Points	    

- **Bonus points:** The player who collects the most total Live bait (Orange) earns +5 Points. If multiple players tie for the most, they both receive +5 Points.

COMPONENTS

- 36 unique Fish Cards
- 5 Dice, each matching the 6 bait colors
- 15 Boats (3 of each color)
- 15 Star Tokens

GENERAL GAMEPLAY

Fishtail is a bidding and set-collection game. Each round:

1. Fish are revealed one at a time.
2. Players take turns allocating boats to “bid” on fish.
3. At the end of the round, dice are revealed as a shared bait pool, and the player with the most boats on each fish tries to catch it.
4. Stars are earned with unused boats and can be spent as bonus bait. You can save stars from round to round.
5. Fish are collected to score **points**, and sets of the same bait type increase your total score.

You must balance bidding boats, using stars, and catching fish efficiently to maximize **points**.

SETUP

1. Designate a Start Player
Everyone rolls the dice. Whoever rolls the most live bait goes first.
2. Shuffle the fish deck and place it face down.
3. Each player receives:

- 3 Boats
 - 1 Die (2 dice in a 2-player game)
4. The start player takes an additional die.

ROUND STRUCTURE

Each round consists of four phases:

1. **Start of Season** (Replacing the Fish)
2. **Setting the Lines** (Bidding)
3. **The Catch** (Resolving the Dice)
4. **End of Season** (Returning Boats)

1. New Season

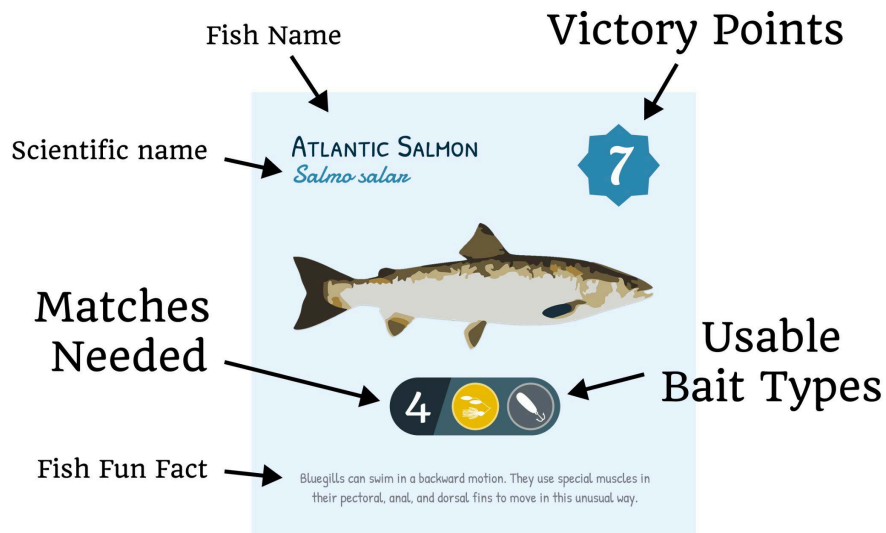
1. Take (Players + 1) fish and place them face down in the center of the play area
2. Each player secretly rolls their die or dice.
 1. Dice represent the bait you can use to catch fish.

2. Setting the Lines

1. Flip over the first fish card; it becomes the Active Fish
2. Each player secretly rolls their die or dice.
 1. Dice represent the bait you can use to catch fish.
3. Players take turns placing 1–3 boats on **ONLY** the active fish:
 1. You must place more boats than the current highest on that fish, or you can pass.
 2. You only can use your 3 boats across all of the fish for this round.
 3. You will get 1 star for each boat you do not use this round.
 4. All boats will be returned at the end of the round
4. Repeat for each fish in the middle.

3. The Catch

1. Earn stars: Each player receives 1 star for each unused boat (you can only have a maximum of 4 stars at any time)
2. Reveal dice and place them in the center as a shared bait pool (5 dice total)
In 3-player games, roll the last die and add it to the center.
 1. Dice are not spent and can be used for multiple fish.
3. For each fish:
 1. The player with the most boats attempts to catch it.
 2. Match the bait requirements printed on the card



1. Number next to bait = how many matches are needed.
2. Color icons = which bait types count.
3. Example: If a fish can be caught with Live Bait (Orange), Crank Bait (Green), or a Spoon (Black) and it needs 4 matches, you catch it if at least 4 dice in the pool show those colors.
4. Spending stars: If you lack enough bait, you may spend stars as bonus bait (1 star = 1 additional match).

4. End of Season

1. Any uncaught fish are discarded.
2. Return all boats and dice to players.
3. The current start player passes the start player marker and a die to the player to their left. (Except for the last round)

END OF GAME

After the final round (once each player has been the start player, or twice in 2–3 player games), the game ends. Starting with the current Start Player and proceeding clockwise, any player with more than 5 fish must discard down to 5 cards before scoring.

SCORING

At the end of the game:

1. Each player discards down to 5 fish.
2. Count:
 - Fish **points**
 - Set **points** (See table at the start)
 - i. You can count each bait on every fish you have caught
 - Star **points** (1 star = 1 point)
3. Add bonuses for most Orange bait (+5 **points**).









The player with the highest total **points** wins.

EXAMPLE SCORING

Add up the points in all 8 categories.

The image shows five fish cards arranged in a row. Each card features a fish illustration, its name and scientific name, a point value in a blue star, and a set of gear icons in a black bar. Below the icons is a small text block.

- CHINOOK SALMON** (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): 5 points. Gear icons: 4 Live Bait, 2 Spinners, 1 Crank Bait. Text: "Also called the King Salmon, these fish are incredibly fast and capable of reaching speeds of up to 10 miles per hour when migrating upstream to spawn."
- SMALMOUTH BASS** (*Micropterus dolomieu*): 2 points. Gear icons: 4 Crank Bait, 2 Spinners, 1 Plastic. Text: "The eggs of smallies are larger than those of largemouth bass and hatch in as little as two days."
- RAINBOW TROUT** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*): 5 points. Gear icons: 4 Live Bait, 2 Spinners, 1 Spoon. Text: "Trout are known for their remarkable ability to leap out of the water. This behavior, 'porpoising,' is believed to be a way for them to catch flying insects or evade predators."
- SAUGER** (*Sander canadensis*): 2 points. Gear icons: 3 Live Bait, 2 Spinners, 1 Crank Bait, 1 Jig. Text: "In Michigan, Sauger's are threatened, so populations are much smaller than in other Midwest states. Recognizing and releasing them properly helps their numbers recover."
- ROUND WHITEFISH** (*Proscopium cylindraceum*): 2 points. Gear icons: 2 Live Bait, 2 Spinners. Text: "Whitefish possess specialized sensory organs allowing them to respond to changes in water pressure and movement, as well as detect chemical cues in the water."

	Live Bait	5 Points (Assuming this player had the most live bait)
	Spinners	4 Points (Set of 4, but points are cut in half, because they are Spinners)
	Crank Bait	4 Points (Set of 3)
	Jigs	2 Points (Set of 2)
	Plastics	0 Points (Set of 1)
	Spoons	2 Points (Set of 2)
	Stars	0 Points (No stars left)
	Fish	16 Points
Total		33 Points