

2026

DELAWARE

FISHING GUIDE



NEW for 2026

- Three New State Records
- New regulations for multiple tidal species are anticipated. Please refer to electronic version.
- Three New Elite Anglers



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DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE



Esta guía está disponible en español en DE.GOV/FW

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CONTENTS

FISH AND WILDLIFE DIRECTORY.....	2	FISHING AND CLAMMING MAPS.....	17
2026 LICENSE FEES.....	4	GENERAL TIDAL FISHING REGULATIONS ...	18
What's New for 2026.....	4	Striped Bass Spawning Season.....	18
Before You Fish.....	4	Ethical Catch and Release of Sharks.....	18
FISHING LICENSE INFORMATION.....	5	American Shad and Hickory Shad.....	18
Fishing License Requirements and FIN Number.....	5	River Herring.....	18
Fishing License Exemptions and Exceptions.....	6	Summer Flounder.....	18
Fishing License Dollars.....	6	Electric Lights.....	19
GENERAL NON-TIDAL FISHING REGULATIONS.....	7	Courtesy Docks.....	19
Closure of Department Ponds During Draw-Downs.....	7	ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM.....	19
Speed and Wake of Motorboats on Division Ponds.....	7	BLUE CRAB, CLAMS, CONCHS AND OYSTERS... 22	
FRESHWATER TROUT FISHING.....	8	Blue Crabs.....	22
License and Stamp Requirements for Trout Fishing.....	8	Clamming.....	22
Freshwater Trout Fishing.....	8	Conchs.....	22
Special Fly Fishing Only Section (Restricted Trout Stream) ...	8	Jonah Crab.....	22
Possession Limits of Trout.....	8	Oysters.....	22
Designated Trout Streams.....	10	SPORT FISHING TOURNAMENT UPDATES... 24	
Tentative Trout Stocking Schedule.....	10	SPORT FISHING TOURNAMENT.....	24
BOATING SAFETY.....	11	YOUTH FISHING.....	26
2026 QUICK REFERENCE.....	12	40th Annual Youth Fishing Tournament.....	26
Delaware's Recreational Season, Size and Creel Limits.....		2026 "Take a Kid Fishing!" Program.....	26
CIRCLE HOOKS FOR STRIPED BASS.....	14	STATE RECORD HOLDERS.....	28
NON-TIDAL FISHING ACCESS AREAS.....	14	WEIGH STATIONS AND/OR BOAT RAMP CERTIFICATE SALES.....	29
TIDAL FISHING ACCESS AREAS.....	15	FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES.....	30
SURF FISHING.....	15	ACCESS POINT ANGLER INTERCEPT SURVEY.....	30
BE AWARE		DNREC PHOTO CONTEST.....	32
Invasive Species.....	16		
Shellfish Aquaculture — Inland Bays.....	16		

Maps for this publication were created by the Department of Technology & Information. Fish illustrations were drawn by Duane Raver. A special thanks to the Delaware anglers, our friends at NOAA-NMFS, the ASMFC, and DNREC staff who donated pictures throughout this guide.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE



As with hunting, many people have their first experiences fishing with family and friends and the comradery of the event is in many cases as important as the fishing itself. This year as you prepare to go fishing think about taking someone that hasn't had the opportunity to experience fishing or take someone that hasn't fished in a long time

Fishing is considered by many to be a spiritual experience, an opportunity to unwind and enjoy nature at its finest. Many who fish love the solitude, the adventure of pitting their skills against nature and a wary adversary. Others look at it as an opportunity to be with family and friends.

to open that door once again. Delaware has abundant opportunities for both fresh and saltwater fishing.

Check the 2026 Delaware Fishing Guide for locations and boat launch areas as well as fishing tournaments that are available to the public.

The Division of Fish & Wildlife and its dedicated and passionate staff are committed to providing you with fishing adventure opportunities by providing numerous public fishing and boating access areas and scientifically managing fish populations to help ensure diverse and quality fishing. The allure of fishing is calling you, answer the call and enjoy Delaware's natural resources today.

Patrick J. Emory
Patrick J. Emory

Pictured are Director Emory's grandsons, Hunter and Reese Emory fishing in Fenwick Island, DE

FISH & WILDLIFE DIRECTORY

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Governor

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

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Secretary

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

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This summary is for the convenience of the sportsman and is not intended to cover all fishing laws and regulations. For specific provisions, reference should be made to Title 7, Delaware Code and Delaware Administrative Code. When federal and state laws conflict, the law which is more restrictive governs.

FOR THE ACTUAL WORDING OF THE FISHERIES STATUTES AND REGULATIONS, AS WELL AS A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER INFORMATION, VISIT THE DIVISION'S WEBSITE at DE.gov/fw



About This Guide

This high-quality guide is brought to you by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control through a partnership with Kalkomey, a trusted leader in outdoor safety education since 1995. In addition to producing this guide, Kalkomey also offers a suite of educational courses to help people enjoy the outdoors safely.

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The fishing regulations in this guide are online at:



DIRECTORY

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE - DE.GOV/FW

Fisheries Section, Dover(302) 739-9914
Fisheries Field Offices
Little Creek (302) 735-2960
Aquatic Resources
Education Center (302) 735-8689
Recreational Fishing Licenses(302) 739-9918

FISH & WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT SECTION

New Castle County(302) 836-4682
Kent County.....(302) 739-6139
Sussex County(302) 855-1901
24-hour hotline (KENTCOM)
for reporting violations,
problems **(800) 523-3336**
Boating Safety.....(302) 739-9915
Ramp Certificates.....(302) 739-9916
Boat Registration(302) 739-9916



GENERAL INFORMATION

Freshwater Trout Program(302) 739-9914
Non-tidal Fishing(302) 735-2960 / (302) 735-8650
Tidal Fishing.....(302) 739-9914 / (302) 735-2960
Fish Consumption Advisories(302) 739-9914
Division Public Health.....(302) 744-4546
Artificial Reef Program (302) 735-2960
Fishing / Boating Access Areas(302) 739-9914
Clamming..... (302) 735-2960
Shellfish Health & Safety,
Closures (302) 739-9939
Crabbing (302) 735-2960
State Record
Fish Verification...(302) 735-2960 / (800) 523-3336
Fish Kills & Environmental
Emergencies/Complaints (800) 662-8802

On The Cover: A chilly sunrise in March greets a Striped Bass angler at the South Jetty of Indian River Inlet.
Photo by Matthew Trucks.

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2026 LICENSE / STAMP FEES

LICENSE CATEGORY	RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
General Fishing License	\$8.50	\$20.00
7-day Tourist Fishing	NA	\$12.50
*Boat Fishing License 20 ft or less (optional)	\$40.00	\$40.00
*Boat Fishing License more than 20 ft (optional)	\$50.00	\$50.00
Head Boat License	\$300.00	\$600.00
Charter Boat License	\$150.00	\$300.00
Guide/Fishing	\$100.00	\$300.00
TROUT STAMP	RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
Young Angler (12-15)	\$2.10	\$6.20
Adult (16-64)	\$4.20	

*** Boat Fishing License** - The optional boat fishing license for a recreational angler covers the holder of the license, and all occupants in the boat. A resident who buys a boat fishing license also will be given a regular fishing license to use anywhere in the state. Non-resident holders of boat fishing licenses will need to purchase a non-resident fishing license to fish elsewhere in Delaware when not aboard their vessels. A Delaware FIN is required of all anglers age 16 years or older on the vessel.

Charter/Head Boat Licenses - Both the charter and head boat fishing licenses will cover the license holder as well as all persons fishing from the licensed vessel. Individuals fishing only from a charter boat or head boat do not need to have a separate FIN number. Federal law requires all captains to maintain a log aboard the vessel for federal survey purposes.

Non-resident - Any non-resident who is 16 years of age or older except persons covered by one of the exemptions is required to have a license to fish, clam, or crab in the waters of the State of Delaware. Non-residents may purchase a 7-consecutive day tourist fishing license.

BEFORE YOU FISH

BEFORE YOU GO FISHING, CRABBING, OR CLAMMING IN DELAWARE YOU MUST:

- Purchase a 2026 Delaware fishing license and keep it with you while fishing (page 5).
- Get a free 2026 FIN number (automatically generated with the purchase of an individual license) and keep it with you while fishing (page 5).
- If fishing for freshwater trout get a 2026 trout stamp and affix it to your license (page 8).

WHILE FISHING, CRABBING, OR CLAMMING IN DELAWARE, YOU MUST:

- Abide by size and possession limits.
- Be aware of area and seasonal closures.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT:

- Delaware does not have fishing license reciprocity with other states. You must have a Delaware fishing license to fish, crab or clam in Delaware.
- Delaware does not recognize Federal FIN numbers or FIN numbers from other states. You must have a free Delaware FIN (page 5).
- You must have a New Jersey FIN number if you fish in New Jersey waters of Delaware Bay.

2026 FREE FISHING DAYS!

In celebration of National Fishing and Boating Week, June 6-14, 2026, the Division has designated June 7 and 8 as free fishing days when anyone may fish in Delaware's waters without a fishing license. Anglers age 16 and older must still obtain a free FIN number to participate in the free fishing days.

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2026

- New state records for Northern Snakehead, Flathead Catfish, and Golden Tilefish were established in 2025. See page 28 for details.
- In 2025, Three anglers met the qualifications for "Elite" angler and are named on page 24. For more information on how to qualify, see page 24. Give it a shot in 2026.
- Striped Bass, Cobia, and Spot season, size, and daily limit regulation changes went into effect in 2025, see page 12.
- New regulations will likely be necessary for several tidal water species in 2026. The electronic version of Delaware's fishing guide, available at DE.gov/fw, will be updated to reflect such regulatory changes as they occur.
- Anglers and boaters should be aware that shellfish aquaculture leasing is underway in Delaware's Inland Bays. For more information on lease marking, see page 16.

FISH FACTS

Hey, having trouble identifying your catch? Want to know a good bait to use to catch a certain species? Need to find out what the current state record is for a species? Check out our "Fish Facts" page with loads of helpful information on over 180 species of fish and shellfish you can catch in Delaware waters. Just type DE.gov/fishspecies in any browser and click on a category. Many folks keep it bookmarked on their smartphone for quick access. Enjoy!



FISHING LICENSE INFORMATION

FISHING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS AND FIN NUMBER

A general fishing license is required for fishing, crabbing, or clamming in tidal and non-tidal waters throughout the State of Delaware (see Fishing License Exemptions page 6). A fishing license may be obtained at DNREC headquarters (89 Kings Highway, Dover), from over 40 licensing agents located throughout the state, or online by accessing [DE.gov/fw](http://de.gov/fw) and following the licensing link. A fishing license is good through December 31 for the calendar year in which it was issued.

In addition to the general fishing license, all anglers (resident and non-resident) age 16 or older must obtain a free Delaware Fisherman Information Network (FIN) number each year before fishing in tidal or non-tidal waters of Delaware. This includes those anglers exempt from obtaining a general fishing license. See these exemptions on page 6. A FIN number is automatically generated and issued with the purchase of an INDIVIDUAL fishing license. Non-residents who do not have an individual fishing license AND those exempt from the license requirement must obtain a FIN number before fishing.

There are three ways to obtain a FIN number: 1) Visit Digital DNREC at <http://de.gov/erpermitting>, create an account and obtain a free FIN number; 2) Use the "Quick FIN" link at the bottom of the Digital DNREC sign-in page. You do not need to create an account to

obtain a FIN using Quick FIN; or 3) Visit one of more than 40 licensing agents throughout the state to obtain a free FIN number. Toll-free phone numbers are no longer available for obtaining FIN numbers. The FIN number is mandatory and failure to provide a valid FIN number to an enforcement agent will be treated the same as a failure to have a valid fishing license. The number that you are issued will be valid through December 31 for the calendar year in which it was issued. A FIN number is not needed if you only crab or clam.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will use the data obtained from the FIN program to identify anglers for survey purposes. The program allows for better estimates of recreational landings, an important component of fisheries management.

All funds derived from the issuance of fishing licenses are dedicated to a special account for the purpose of matching and securing federal money allotted to Delaware under the provisions of the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act and cannot be diverted to other purposes. Together, these funds support projects having as their purpose the restoration, conservation, management and enhancement of sportfish, and the provision for public use and benefits from these resources (page 6).



Recreational Fishing Licenses Available Online Now.

ONE STOP ONLINE, EASIER AND FASTER
Just go to <https://de.gov/DigitalDNREC>

Are you exempt from purchasing a Fishing License?

Anglers age 16 or older and not required to purchase a Fishing License must still obtain a **Free FIN Number**.

Use **one** of these 3 options:

1. Have a Digital DNREC account?
Log into Digital DNREC and use your existing account to obtain a Free FIN Number.

2. No Account? No problem!

Click on the blue "Quick FIN" box at the bottom of the Digital DNREC sign-in page to obtain a Free FIN Number.



3. Visit a Licensing Agent.

Obtain a Free FIN Number from one of more than 40 Licensing Agents statewide.

Note: FIN Numbers are no longer available using the toll-free numbers.

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FISHING LICENSE INFORMATION

FISHING LICENSE EXEMPTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Exempt anglers are required to get a FIN number (page 5), unless otherwise noted below.

The following are exemptions or exceptions to the license provisions:

- **Surf Fishing Permit** - Residents and non-residents are exempt from fishing license requirements if they are the operator of a vehicle with a valid Delaware surf fishing vehicle permit when that vehicle is located on a designated Delaware State Park beach. Other occupants of that vehicle are required to have a fishing license if they are fishing.
- **Seniors** - Residents of the State of Delaware age 65 years and older are exempt from fishing license requirements, but must have proof of age and residency.
- **Children** - Children under the age of 16 are exempt from the license and FIN requirement.
- **Other Exemptions** - Anyone qualifying for the following exemptions should contact the Division at (302) 739-9918.
 - » Any resident who owns or lives on a farm in this state containing 20 or more acres and the members of his or her immediate family who reside on the farm may fish on that farm without a license.

- » A member of the armed forces who is a patient in a military hospital and submits a written statement signed by the patient's commanding officer certifying the nature of the disability and place of station.
- » Persons who are patients in any Veterans Administration facility in this State, or in any public hospital or sanitarium for the treatment of tuberculosis, or a patient in a rehabilitation hospital under the State Department of Health, provided such person carries identification which verifies his or her status as such a patient, shall not be required to purchase a fishing license. Forms shall be supplied to such persons when they apply for their licenses to be used for the identification purposes.
- » Persons who have been honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States and certified by the Veterans Administration as having at least a 60% service-connected disability.
- » Any Delaware resident that is a patient in a rehabilitation hospital under the Department of Health and Social Services. Any Delaware resident who is legally blind.
- » Any person who fishes in a fee-fishing facility, registered as such with the Department of Agriculture.
- » Any resident who has served honorably for 90 or more consecutive days on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, including service as a member of the Delaware National Guard, in military actions in Southwest Asia associated with Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom may, for the first 12 months following the date the resident was honorably discharged or removed from active status, be issued a license to fish in this State without charge.
- » Any member of the US armed forces, including any reserve component, serving on full time active duty in Delaware while not deployed or on temporary duty, and any member of Delaware's National Guard, shall be eligible for a resident fishing license. Qualifying persons should contact the Division at (302) 739-9918.



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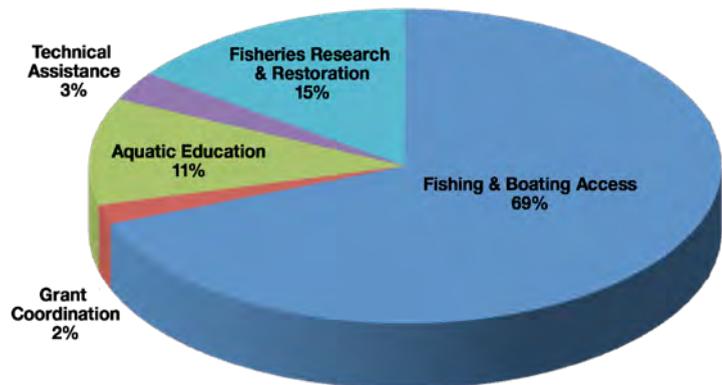
DUPLICATE LICENSES

Duplicate licenses may be printed free of charge by logging into your Digital DNREC Account at: <https://de.gov/DigitalDNREC>. If you do not have a Digital DNREC Account or need more information, please call the Recreational Licensing Office at (302) 739-9918 or email dfwrecl@delaware.gov.

FISHING LICENSE DOLLARS

WHERE DO YOUR FISHING LICENSE DOLLARS GO?

Your license and trout stamp purchases allow the Division to secure additional federal Sport Fish Restoration funds used for fisheries research, maintenance and construction of fishing areas, and aquatic education. Please note that anglers exempted from purchasing a fishing license may voluntarily purchase a license and/or trout stamp to support these activities. The Division is grateful to anglers that contribute to our mission in this way. For more information, please visit us at DE.gov/FW.



GENERAL NON-TIDAL FISHING REGULATIONS

These are some of the regulations and state statutes that all anglers should be familiar with. Most have been edited to make them easier to read and understand. **This is not a complete list and it is up to the angler to be familiar with all of the laws and regulations currently existing or newly adopted.** For a complete listing, refer to the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Division of Fish and Wildlife website or request a copy from the Director's office.

Unless otherwise authorized, it shall be illegal for any person to fish for any freshwater fish in the non-tidal waters of this State with any fishing equipment or by any method, unless it is provided for in the following subdivisions:

A hook and line may be used, with each line to have no more than 3 hooks or 3 separate lures with hooks.

Unless a person is fishing through the ice, the number of hooks and lines that any one person is permitted to use to fish for any freshwater fish in the non-tidal waters of the State shall be no more than 2.

A person may use a dip net to aid in landing any freshwater finfish taken or caught by hook and line in the non-tidal or fresh waters of the State.

Carp and snakehead fish may be taken and/or fished for by using a bow and arrow and/or spear, unless said equipment or method is otherwise restricted by any Department regulation or local ordinance. At this time, no carp or snakehead fish may be taken from State Park ponds or Becks Pond using bow and arrow.

It is illegal to sell, trade, or barter any finfish taken from the non-tidal waters of this State, unless authorized to do so in a permit issued by the Director.

It is illegal to take shad, except by hook and line, and no more than two (2) lures attached. Each lure may have no more than one (1) single pointed hook.

It is illegal to knowingly snag fish in non-tidal waters with any hook (single, double or treble) or otherwise catch or attempt to snag or catch any game fish by hooking the fish in any part of the body other than in the mouth.

It shall be unlawful for any person to fish within ten (10) feet of an entrance or exit of a fish ladder or to remove fish from any fish ladder between March 15 and May 30.

CLOSURE OF DEPARTMENT PONDS DURING DRAW-DOWNS

It shall be unlawful for any person to fish in any pond or lake administered by the Department when the water level is lowered for any purpose provided it is duly posted with signs by the Department that state it is closed to fishing.

SPEED AND WAKE OF MOTORBOATS ON DIVISION PONDS

It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a motorized vessel, except at a **slow-no-wake speed**, on any pond or lake administered by the Division.

CLEAN WATER

How's My Waterway

How's My Waterway (www.epa.gov/mywaterway) helps users quickly find information on the condition of their local waters using a smart phone, tablet, or desktop computer. This tool provides results within seconds using EPA's water quality assessment data. Check out the condition of your local waterbody today!



Photo shows an algae bloom.

CATCH AND RELEASE

Many anglers practice catch and release fishing. This behavior, popularized by bass anglers, promotes the release of fish by anglers so the fish can be caught again. A long-term bass tagging study in Delaware has demonstrated many tagged fish are caught, released, and caught again — a few as many as four times. The Division strongly encourages catch and release fishing to maximize angling success — unless a fish population is known to be overcrowded.



PUBLIC PONDS

A guide to public ponds, available online, is updated annually with the latest fisheries data. Each pond's information includes: fish populations, vegetation conditions, special regulations and facilities, and a contour map of the pond.

This information is available at: <http://de.gov/pondbook>.

FISHING LICENSE PLATES

Purchase a Delaware recreational fishing specialty motor vehicle license plate to show your passion and support for sport fishing in Delaware. There is a one-time purchase price of \$95, \$80 of which will be used to promote recreational fishing in Delaware and to support fisheries research, habitat restoration, and fish stocking. The new fishing plates can be ordered by mail. An application and ordering instructions are available online at <https://tinyurl.com/DEFishplate>.



FRESHWATER TROUT FISHING

LICENSE AND STAMP REQUIREMENTS FOR TROUT FISHING

RESIDENT / AGE	FISHING LICENSE	YOUNG ANGLER TROUT STAMP	TROUT STAMP	FIN
Under 12	No	No	No	No
12 thru 15	No	Yes	No	No
16 thru 64	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
65 and over	No	No	No	Yes
FEE	\$8.50	\$2.10	\$4.20	NONE

NON-RESIDENT / AGE	FISHING LICENSE	YOUNG ANGLER TROUT STAMP	TROUT STAMP	FIN
Under 12	No	No	No	No
12 thru 15	No	No	Yes	No
16 and over	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
FEE	\$20.00		\$6.20	NONE

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT

It is unlawful for any person to transport, purchase, possess, or sell live: walking catfish (*Clarius batrachus*), the white amur or grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), live northern snakehead fish (*Channa argus*), blotched snakehead fish (*Channa maculata*), blue catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*) or flathead catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*) without the written permission of the Director.



FRESHWATER TROUT FISHING

Delaware's freshwater trout program is a self-supporting put-and-take fishery in selected New Castle County streams and Kent and Sussex County ponds. Revenue generated from the sales of trout stamps is used to purchase rainbow, brook and/or brown trout for stocking. Summer water temperatures limit trout survival and reproduction in Delaware waters, so stocked fish are meant to be taken, but may be released at the angler's discretion.

Season / Hours - The 2026 freshwater trout season at Tidbury (Kent County) and Newton (Sussex County) Ponds opens at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday March 7, 2026 for youth under the age of 16, and one-half hour before sunrise on Sunday March 8, 2026 for all anglers. The 2026 freshwater trout season in New Castle County opens at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday April 4, 2026 for youth under the age of 16, and one-half hour before sunrise for all anglers on Sunday April 5, 2026. **No fishing is allowed in designated trout**

streams or designated trout ponds (Tidbury & Newton Ponds) two weeks (14 days) prior to the scheduled opening of the trout season. It is unlawful to fish for trout in designated trout streams or designated trout ponds between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise.

Trout Stamps - A trout stamp is required to fish in a designated **trout stream** from the first Saturday in April through June 30 and from the first Saturday in October through November 30 unless exempted by law. A trout stamp is also required to fish **Tidbury Pond** in Kent County and **Newton Pond** in Sussex County from the first Saturday in March through April 1. Electronically issued digital and paper facsimile stamps are available online. Electronically issued stamps do not require a signature. Anglers must possess either a digital or paper facsimile trout stamp when fishing in designated trout streams and ponds.

SPECIAL FLY FISHING ONLY SECTION (RESTRICTED TROUT STREAM)

1. White Clay Creek from a point 25 yards above Thompson Bridge at Chambers Rock Road to the Pennsylvania state line is designated as a fly-fishing only trout stream.
2. Red Clay Creek from the downstream side of Yorklyn Road (39°48'29.00"N and 75°40'33.00"W) approximately 0.4 miles downstream to the Auburn Valley State Park boundary adjacent Creek Road (39°48'31.00"N and 75°40'13.00"W).

It is unlawful to use any metallic, plastic or rubber spinners, spoons, lures, plugs or natural bait or to use more than two (2) flies on a line at any one time.

It is unlawful to possess more than four (4) trout within 50 feet of a fly fishing only section (restricted trout water). Anglers may catch and release trout on these waters as long as the four (4) trout possession limit is not exceeded. All trout released must be returned to the water as quickly as possible with the least possible injury. These restrictions are in effect year round.

POSSESSION LIMITS OF TROUT

It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than six (6) trout in any one day; except, it shall be unlawful to possess more than four (4) trout in or within 50 feet of any fly-fishing only waters (restricted trout streams).

COLLECTING STAMPS

If you are interested in collecting trout or waterfowl stamps, please contact the Division at (302) 739-9918 or visit our website at: <http://de.gov/troutstamp>.



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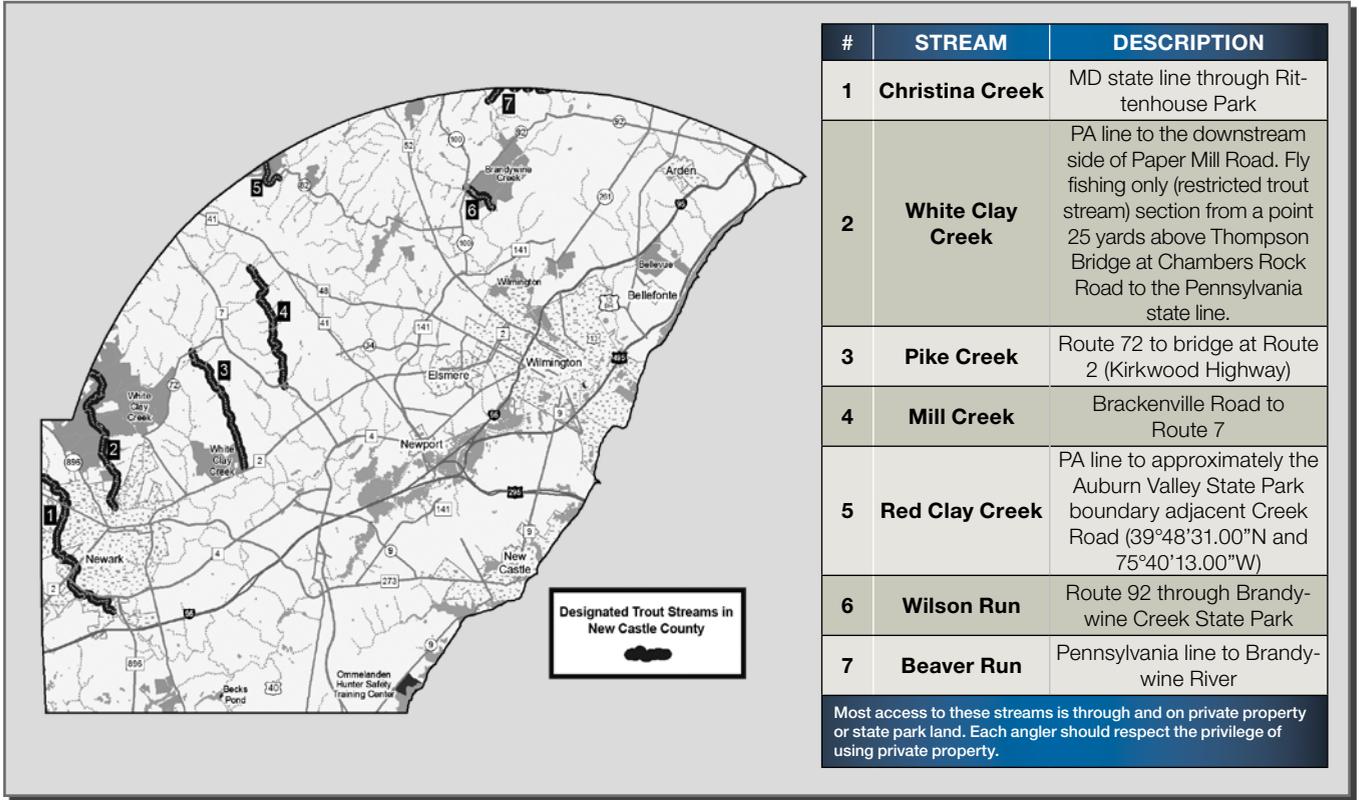


21' - 28' SPORT CABINS



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FRESHWATER TROUT FISHING



2026 TENTATIVE TROUT STOCKING SCHEDULE

WATER	PRIOR TO SEASON*	MARCH 12	APRIL 6	APRIL 9	APRIL 13	APRIL 16	APRIL 23	APRIL 30	MID OCTOBER
STREAMS (SEASON OPENS 7:00 A.M., APRIL 4 - YOUTH ONLY. APRIL 5 - 1/2 HR BEFORE SUNRISE FOR ALL ANGLERS)									
Beaver Run	🐟			🐟	🐟				
Christina Creek	🐟		🐟		🐟	🐟**	🐟		
Mill Creek	🐟			🐟					
Pike Creek	🐟			🐟					
Red Clay Creek	🐟		🐟			🐟		🐟	
White Clay Creek	🐟		🐟	🐟	🐟	🐟**	🐟	🐟**	🐟
Wilson Run	🐟			🐟	🐟	🐟**	🐟***		
PONDS (SEASON OPENS 7:00 A.M. MARCH 7 - YOUTH ONLY. MARCH 8 - 1/2 HR BEFORE SUNRISE FOR ALL ANGLERS)									
Tidbury	🐟	🐟							
Newton	🐟	🐟							

* Prior to season: stocking includes trophy-sized rainbow trout (14 inches or greater) at all locations
 ** April 16 and May 1: Brown trout 11 inches or greater will be stocked at locations listed
 *** April 23: Stocking of 12-13 inch and trophy-sized rainbows to prepare for the annual anglers fishing derby for anglers with special needs on April 25, 2026 in Wilson Run at Brandywine State Park. For details on the fishing derby, please call the park office at 302-577-3534.

It shall be unlawful for any person to stock any species of fish into the non-tidal public waters of this State without the written permission of the Director. This regulation does not prohibit the stocking of private impoundments.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

A PFD must be worn by a child 12 years old or under while aboard a vessel which is underway. All PWC riders and anyone being towed must wear a PFD. Current regulations require all vessels to carry a wearable PFD for each person onboard. A throwable PFD is also required on vessels, excluding those less than 16'. The Office of Boating Safety & Education suggests all vessels carry a throwable with a line attached for casting, and that you wear your life jacket as it is meant to be worn, and at all times.

ALCOHOL

Just as drinking and driving don't mix, drinking and boating are a dangerous combination. Sun, glare from the water, constant boat motion and boat vibration all contribute to boater fatigue. Add alcohol consumption and those problems are compounded. Additionally, alcohol affects balance and muscle coordination, causes tunnel vision and slows reaction time. It also affects reasoning and increases the tendency to take risks. Operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs is against the law and could result in fines up to \$1,000 for first offense and/or up to 60 days in jail. A blood alcohol content of 0.08 or greater constitutes being under the influence.

REGISTRATION, NUMBERING AND MARKING OF UNDOCUMENTED VESSELS

Vessels equipped with any type of motor must be registered in Delaware if principally used (a period of more than 60 days) in this State. The registration card or valid temporary registration card must be on board when the boat is in use. For further information on boating registration call The Office of Boat Registration at: (302) 739-9916 OR visit <https://de.gov/boatreg>

SAFE BOATING SPEED

The speed of all vessels on Delaware waters must be slow enough to prevent any wake of appreciable height when the vessels are within 100 feet of: "Slow-No-Wake" speed areas, docks, launching ramps, marked swimming areas, swimmers, anchored, moored, or drifting vessels.

DELAWARE SMALL BOAT EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

EQUIPMENT	CLASS A (LESS THAN 16 FEET)	CLASS 1 (16 FEET TO LESS THAN 26 FEET)
1. Annual registration fee	\$20.00	\$40.00
2. Decals & boat number	Display properly on bow	Display properly on bow
3. Personal flotation Device (PFD)*Must be serviceable (see below)	One approved wearable PFD for each person on board	One approved wearable PFD for each person on board plus one throwable PFD.
4. Whistle	One hand, mouth or power operated, and audible at least one half (1/2) mile	One hand, mouth or power operated, and audible at least one half (1/2) mile
5. Fire Extinguisher Portable	One type B-1, if carrying passengers for hire, or if boat construction will permit entrapment of flammable vapors.	One type B-1, if carrying passengers for hire, or if boat construction will permit entrapment of flammable vapors.
6. Ventilation At least two ventilator ducts fitted with cowls or equivalent, if boat construction will permit entrapment of flammable vapors.		
7. Atlantic Ocean, Delaware Bay and Delaware River South of Artificial Island—U.S. Coast Guard regulations require all vessels to carry day and night distress signaling devices. Outboard motorboats less than 16' in length are exempt from daytime requirements.		
* Test for serviceability of PFD—All PFD's must be readily accessible, in serviceable condition, legibly marked with approval number of the U.S. Coast Guard and be of appropriate size. PFD's must have flotation material without rot or being waterlogged, unorn or damaged coverings and straps in good condition.		

TAKE A BOATING EDUCATION COURSE

Those persons born on or after **January 1, 1978** must take an approved boating education course before operating a motorized vessel, to include personal watercraft (PWC). Contact the Office of Boating Safety & Education for more information on taking a classroom course at: (302) 739-9915 OR find their online course options by visiting <http://de.gov/boatsafety>

Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police are responsible for enforcing all of the safe boating laws in Delaware. To report violations and accidents call their 24 hour dispatch line at: (800) 523-3336.



SAFE BOATING CLASSES

AND VESSEL INSPECTIONS

• USCG CERTIFIED SAFE BOATING CLASSES

VISIT: www.uscg.safe.boating.course.safety
or: www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Pages/FWPortal.aspx

• USCG AUX CERTIFIED VESSEL INSPECTIONS

VISIT: www.uscg.safe.boating.course.safety

USCG DISTRICT 5NR
SECTOR DELAWARE BAY



DELAWARE'S VOLUNTEER GUARDIANS





CAPTAIN BONES

**Crabbing Supplies
Bait, Tackle & Hunting**

302-378-3377 or 302-378-4200
Rt. 13 South, Odessa DE 19730

Make Hunting & Fishing Dreams Come True!

Hunt of a Lifetime is a nonprofit organization that grants hunting and fishing dreams to children, age 21 and under, who have been diagnosed with life threatening illnesses.

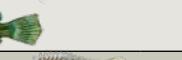
If you are interested in helping a child live their dream, please contact us for more information.

Toll Free 814.572.4387 HuntofaLifetime.org

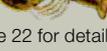


2026 SEASONS, SIZE AND CREEL LIMITS

NON-TIDAL WATERS				
SPECIES		OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	DAILY LIMIT
	Largemouth bass	All year	12 inches; except 15 inches in Becks Pond	6; except 2 from Becks Pond
	Smallmouth bass	All year	None between & including 12 - 17 inches	6 (no more than 1 > 17 inches)
	Striped bass hybrid	All year	15 inches	2
	Panfish (white perch, yellow perch, crappie, bluegill & pumpkinseed)	All year	No Size Limit	50 (no more than 25 of one species)
	Trout (special rules apply, pages 8 - 10)	Streams open 1st Sat. in April Ponds open 1st Sat. in March	No Size Limit	6 (4 in fly-fishing only waters)

TIDAL WATERS (CHANGES EXPECTED FOR SPECIES LISTED IN RED)				
SPECIES		OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	DAILY LIMIT
	American eel	All year	9 inches	25
	American & hickory shad	Closed Nanticoke R. & its tribs.; Open all year elsewhere	No Size Limit	2 American shad 10 Hickory shad
	Atlantic croaker	All year	8 inches	50
	Atlantic sturgeon	Endangered – no harvest permitted (see also page 15)		
	Black drum	All year	16 inches	3
	Black sea bass	May 15 - Sep. 30 Oct. 10 - Dec. 31	13 inches	15
	Bluefish	All year	No Size Limit	3 – fishing from a private vessel or shore 5 – fishing from a charter boat or headboat
	Catfish (any species)	All year	No Size Limit	No Daily Limit
	Cobia	All year	43 inches	2 per angler or 2 per vessel
	Red drum	All year	20 - 27 inches may be retained	5
	River herring (alewife & blueback)	Closed - no harvest permitted		
	Scup	All year	9 inches	30
	Spanish mackerel	All year	14 inches	15
	Spot	All year	No Size Limit	50
	Spotted seatrout	All year	12 inches	No Daily Limit
	Striped bass	All year, except catch & release only on spawning grounds Apr 1- May 31	28 – 31 inches; except 20 – 24 inches only - Jul 1 - Aug 31 in the DE Bay, River and their tributaries.	1, except catch & release only on spawning grounds April 1 - May 31
	Summer flounder	All year	January 1 - May 31: 16 inches June 1 - December 31: 17.5 inches	4
	Tautog	Jan. 1 - May 15 July 1 - Dec. 31	16 inches	4 4
	Tilefish (Blueline)	May 1 - Oct. 31	No Size Limit	3 - person from private vessel 5 - person from US Coast Guard uninspected for-hire vessel 7 - person from US Coast Guard inspected for-hire vessel
	Tilefish (Golden)	All year	No Size Limit	8
	Weakfish	All year	13 inches	1
	White perch	All year	8 inches	No Daily Limit
	Winter flounder	Feb. 11 - Apr. 10	12 inches	2

2026 SEASONS, SIZE AND CREEL LIMITS

SPECIES		OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	DAILY LIMIT
 Blue crab	See page 23 for more details	Pots: Mar. 1 - Nov. 30; other gears year around	Peeler - 3 inches	1 bushel
			Soft-shell - 3.5 inches	
			Hard-shell - 5 inches	
 Jonah crab		All year	4 3/4 inches	50
Hard clams		All year	1.5 inches	100/resident 50/non-resident
 Lobster		All year	3 3/8 - 5 1/4 inches (slot)	2; V-notched prohibited
 Conch See page 22 for details	Knobbed whelk	All year	5 inches / 3 inch whorl	5 bushels
	Channeled whelk	All year	6 inches / 3.125 inch whorl	5 bushels

SHARKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS) - SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED FOR FEDERAL WATERS

SPECIES		OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	DAILY LIMIT
	Smoothhound and spiny dogfish	All year	No Size Limit	No Daily Limit
	Blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, nurse shark, silky shark, spinner shark, tiger shark	Jan. 1 - May 14 July 16 - Dec. 31	54 inches FORK LENGTH	Boat anglers - only 1 shark of any species per vessel, except 1 additional bonnethead and 1 additional Atlantic sharpnose per angler onboard vessel. Shore anglers - only 1 shark of any species per angler, except 1 additional bonnethead and one additional Atlantic sharpnose per shore angler. Possession of oceanic white-tip sharks is prohibited.
	Great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead	Jan. 1 - May 14 July 16 - Dec. 31	78 inches FORK LENGTH	
	Blue shark, oceanic white-tip shark, porbeagle, thresher shark	All year	54 inches FORK LENGTH	
	Atlantic sharpnose shark, blacknose shark, bonnethead, finetooth shark	All year	No Size Limit	

PROHIBITED SPECIES

	Sandbar shark, sand tiger, Atlantic angel shark, basking shark, bigeye sand tiger, bigeye sixgill shark, bigeye thresher, bignose shark, Caribbean reef shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, dusky shark, Galapagos shark, longfin mako, narrowtooth shark, night shark, sevengill shark, shortfin mako, sixgill shark, smalltail shark, whale shark, white shark	The sandbar & sand tiger are toothed sharks commonly taken in the nearshore waters of the state and are prohibited species. Like all prohibited species, they must be immediately released to ensure the maximum probability of survival.
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SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS FOR SHARK

It is unlawful to fillet a shark prior to landing. A shark may be eviscerated prior to landing, but head, tail and fins must remain attached to the carcass.

It is unlawful to release a shark in a manner that will not ensure the sharks maximum probability of survival (i.e. no gaffs, no clubbing, careful hook removal, etc.). A non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hook must be used when fishing for shark, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures.

It is unlawful to possess the fins from any shark prior to landing unless they are naturally attached to the body of the shark.

TUNAS AND HMS - SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED

	Atlantic tunas, swordfish and billfish	*Special permit required - All private vessel owners/operators recreationally fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish and billfish) for personal use in the Atlantic Ocean must obtain an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling Permit. Further limits and restrictions apply. Consult hmspermits.noaa.gov or call toll free (888) 872-8862 for specific information and permits.
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DELAWARE'S PUBLIC FRESHWATER FISHING PONDS

More than 30 Delaware freshwater lakes and ponds are open for fishing and other recreations. These impoundments range in size from 5 to 189 acres and support a variety of gamefish. Full information about each of these ponds, which includes detailed maps, lists of fish species and their abundance, and types of aquatic vegetation, can be accessed using the **Delaware Ponds Map** at de.gov/pondbook.

LOGAN LANE POND

Logan Lane Pond is intended for physically handicapped anglers only. It can be accessed via the Logan Lane Tract within the Ted Harvey conservation area. A Conservation Access Pass (CAP) is not required to park in the adjacent parking lot. Licensed fishing in any Division-managed wildlife area pond is prohibited from September 1 through January 31 and during the spring turkey season.

CIRCLE HOOKS FOR STRIPED BASS

Delaware's regulation requires using non-offset circle hooks when fishing for striped bass using cut or whole natural baits like clams, squid, mackerel, menhaden, sea-worms, or eels. Using non-offset circle hooks significantly increases survival of released striped bass by reducing occurrences of gut hooking.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO TILEFISHING



- All recreational vessels fishing for bluegill or golden tilefish must have a permit and report their trips within 24 hours of returning to port.
- Start by registering and account on **GARFO Fishonline website:** greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login



NON-TIDAL FISHING ACCESS AREAS

AREA	LOCATION	WATER BODY	BOAT RAMP* (# OF LAUNCH LANES)	FISHING PIER**
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE FISHING ACCESS AREAS				
1	7th Street Wilmington (Located Within Babiarz Park)	Christiana, Brandywine, DE Rivers	Yes *(1)	Yes
2	Newport	Christiana River	Yes* (2)	No
3	Churchmans Road	Christiana River	Yes* (1)	No
4	Fort DuPont State Park	DE River	Yes* (3)	No
5	Canal Wildlife Area/ C&D Canal	C&D Canal	No	Yes
6	Augustine Beach	DE River	Yes* (2)	No
7	Odessa	Appoquinimink River	Unimproved	No
8	Collins Beach	DE Bay	Yes* (3)	Yes
9	Woodland Beach (Bayside)	DE Bay	No	Yes
10	Woodland Beach (Creekside)	Duck Creek	Yes* (2)	No
11	Port Mahon	DE Bay	Yes* (2)	Yes (before boat ramp)
12	Water Street (Dover)	St. Jones River	Unimproved/ Car top only	No
13	Lebanon Landing	St. Jones River	Yes* (1)	Yes
14	Scotton Landing	St. Jones River	Yes* (1)	Yes
15	Bowers Beach	DE Bay	Yes* (4)	No
16	Cedar Creek	DE Bay	Yes* (8)	No
17	Front St. Milford	Mispillion River	Yes* (1)	Yes
18	Milton	Broadkill River	Yes* (1)	No
19	Lewes	DE Bay	Yes* (6)	No
20	Masseys Landing	Indian River & Rehoboth Bay	Yes* (4)	Yes
21	Rosedale Beach	Indian River	Yes* (1)	Yes
22	Seaford	Nanticoke River	Yes* (4)	Yes
23	Philips Landing	Broad Creek/ Nanticoke River	Yes* (3) Additional Kayak Launch	No pier but has access along bulkhead
24	Edward R. Koch (Shoreline Only)	Broad Creek	No	No pier but has shoreline access
25	Laurel/Records Pond (Tidal)	Broad Creek	No	Yes
26	Mulberry Landing (Assawoman WA)	Little Assawoman Bay	Yes* (1)	No pier but lots access along bulkhead
27	Little Creek	Little River	Yes* (1)	Yes
28	Woodland Wharf	Nanticoke	Unimproved/Car top only	No pier but has access along bulkhead
29	Piney Point	Pepper & Vines Creeks	No	Yes (walk in access)
DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION FISHING ACCESS AREAS***				
33	Cape Henlopen Fishing Pier	DE Bay	No	Yes
34	Indian River Marina	Atlantic Ocean	Yes* (2)	No
	Indian River Inlet	Atlantic Ocean	No	Fishing Along Inlet
35	Holts Landing	Indian River Bay	Yes* (1)	Yes

* Indicates that an ADA accessible courtesy dock is located at the boat ramp. Courtesy docks are to aid in launching and retrieving boats/kayaks/canoes. No fishing or crabbing is permitted on courtesy docks.

** Some sites do not have fishing piers but have fishing access along the shoreline or bulkhead. Access is dependent on an individual's mobility. It's recommended an individual visit the site to gauge access but please feel free to call the Division with questions regarding access.

*** A seasonal or daily fee may be required at access areas administered by the Division of Parks and Recreation.

TIDAL FISHING ACCESS AREAS

AREA	LOCATION	BOAT RAMP*	FISHING PIER	SHORELINE ACCESS**
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE FISHING ACCESS AREAS				
1	Becks Pond (No Gas Motors)	Yes	No	Yes
2	Garrisons Lake North and South	South Lot Only*	Yes (North Lot)	Yes
3	Masseys Mill Pond	Unimproved	No	Yes
4	Moores Lake	Yes	No	Yes
5	Derby Pond	Yes	No	Yes
6	Logan Lane Pond (ADA Anglers Only)	No	Yes	Yes
7	Mud Mill Pond	Yes	No	Yes
8	McGinnis Pond	Yes	No	Yes
9	Andrews Lake	Yes	No	Limited
10	Coursey Pond	Yes	No	Yes
11	McColly Pond	No	No	Limited
12	Tubmill	Yes	No	Limited
13	Silver Lake (Milford)	No	No	Yes
14	Haven Lake	Yes*	No	Yes
15	Griffith Lake	Yes*	No	Yes
16	Blairs Pond	Yes	No	Yes
17	Abbots Pond	Yes	No	Yes
18	Newton Pond (No gas motors)	Car top only	Yes	Yes
19	Waples Pond	Unimproved	No	Limited
20	Wagamons Pond	Yes*	No	Yes
21	Hearns Pond	Yes*	No	Yes
22	Concord Pond	Yes	No	Limited
23	Craigs Pond	Yes	No	Yes
24	Millsboro Pond	Yes*	No	Yes
25	Ingrams Pond	Yes*	No	Yes
26	Portsville Pond	Yes	No	Limited
27	Records Pond East and West	Yes (East Ramp*)	Yes (Pond and Tidal)	Yes
28	Chipman Pond	Yes	No	Yes
29	Horsey Pond	Yes	No	Yes
30	Tussock Pond	Yes	No	Limited
31	Fleetwood Pond	No	No	Limited
DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION FISHING ACCESS AREAS***				
32	Lums Pond	Yes	Yes	Yes
33	Killens Pond	Unimproved	No	Yes
34	Trap Pond	Yes	No	Yes
35	Trussum Pond	Car top only	No	No
36	Raccoon Pond	Car top only	No	Limited
37	Smithmill Pond	No	No	Yes

* Indicates that an ADA accessible courtesy dock is located at the boat ramp. Courtesy docks are to aid in launching and retrieving boats/kayaks/canoes. No fishing is permitted on courtesy docks.

** Shoreline access is dependent on an individual's mobility. It's recommended an individual visit the site to gauge access but please feel free to call the Division with questions regarding access.

*** A seasonal or daily fee may be required at access areas administered by the Division of Parks and Recreation.

SURF FISHING

The Division of Parks and Recreation surf fishing beaches are located in Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware Seashore State Park and Fenwick Island State Park, and on Beach Plum Island. Special restrictions and regulations apply to these areas. For more information contact the Division of Parks and Recreation, (302) 739-9220 or <https://www.destateparks.com/surf-fishing-permits/>.

In order to drive a vehicle on a designated State Park beach, a SURF FISHING VEHICLE PERMIT is required. Only four-wheel drive vehicles with a minimum ground clearance of seven inches that are licensed to operate on public roadways are eligible for Surf Fishing Vehicle Permits. Permit holders must be actively engaged in surf fishing while on the beach. Permits are available at State Park offices, various license agents, and at the DNREC main office in Dover.

Purchasers of Surf Fishing Vehicle Permits will receive additional rules and safety requirements. The revenue collected from these permits supports the management of seashore State Parks and beaches. None of the proceeds from these permits go towards fisheries management programs or fishing access projects conducted by the Division of Fish and Wildlife.



Eric Gaberlein



Kristen Walker

RECREATIONAL GILL NETS

Gear and seasonal restrictions apply to recreational gill nets and anyone obtaining a permit will be informed of these restrictions. In addition, during 2026, all recreational gill nets must be removed from the Delaware Bay and Ocean on the following dates: May 1-10, May 15-17, 22-24, 29-31, June 5-7, 12-14, 19-21 and June 25-30 in order to reduce weakfish mortality rates as required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Weakfish Management Plan. Each closure period begins at 12:01 a.m. on the first day and ends at midnight on the last day. No striped bass caught in recreational gill nets may be retained at any time.

BE AWARE



Did you know it is illegal to transport an invasive species alive? Please help us track invasive fish by killing and reporting your catch at <http://bit.ly/reportinvasivfish> or use your phone to scan the QR code!

Flathead Catfish

Flathead catfish are most easily recognized by their broad, flat head, brown mottled coloration and lower jaw which sticks out further than the upper.



Northern Snakehead (Mature)

Northern snakehead are identified by a long dorsal (back) fin and anal fin, a rounded tail, and a large mouth reaching beyond the eye with many, sharp teeth. They are often confused with native bowfin. Visit DE.gov/fishspecies for more identification information.



Blue Catfish

The invasive blue catfish (on top), and a channel catfish (lower) can be differentiated by spreading out the anal fin and looking for a straight or lobed appearance.



Northern Snakehead (Juvenile)



SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE — INLAND BAYS

Anglers and boaters should be aware that shellfish aquaculture leases are established in Delaware's Inland Bays. Leased areas may contain submerged or floating aquaculture gear. Although anglers may fish in these areas, it is unlawful to anchor on a leased area or tie a vessel to any lease markers or gear. It is also unlawful to harvest any cultured or wild bivalve shellfish from the lease sites or associated navigation corridors. Shellfish aquaculture leases are presently located in the areas indicated on page 17; however, other areas may be leased in the future. For an interactive map of the leased areas, or more information on the program, please refer to <https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/fishing/shellfish-aquaculture/>



Shellfish aquaculture leases in the Indian River and Rehoboth Bays must be marked with 6-inch PVC pipe and shellfish aquaculture leases in Little Assawoman Bay must be marked with 9 x 16 inch orange bullet floats.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Be A Good Steward. Clean. Drain. Dry.
StopAquaticHitchhikers.org

CLEAN all visible aquatic plants from watercraft and trailers as well as waders and boots.

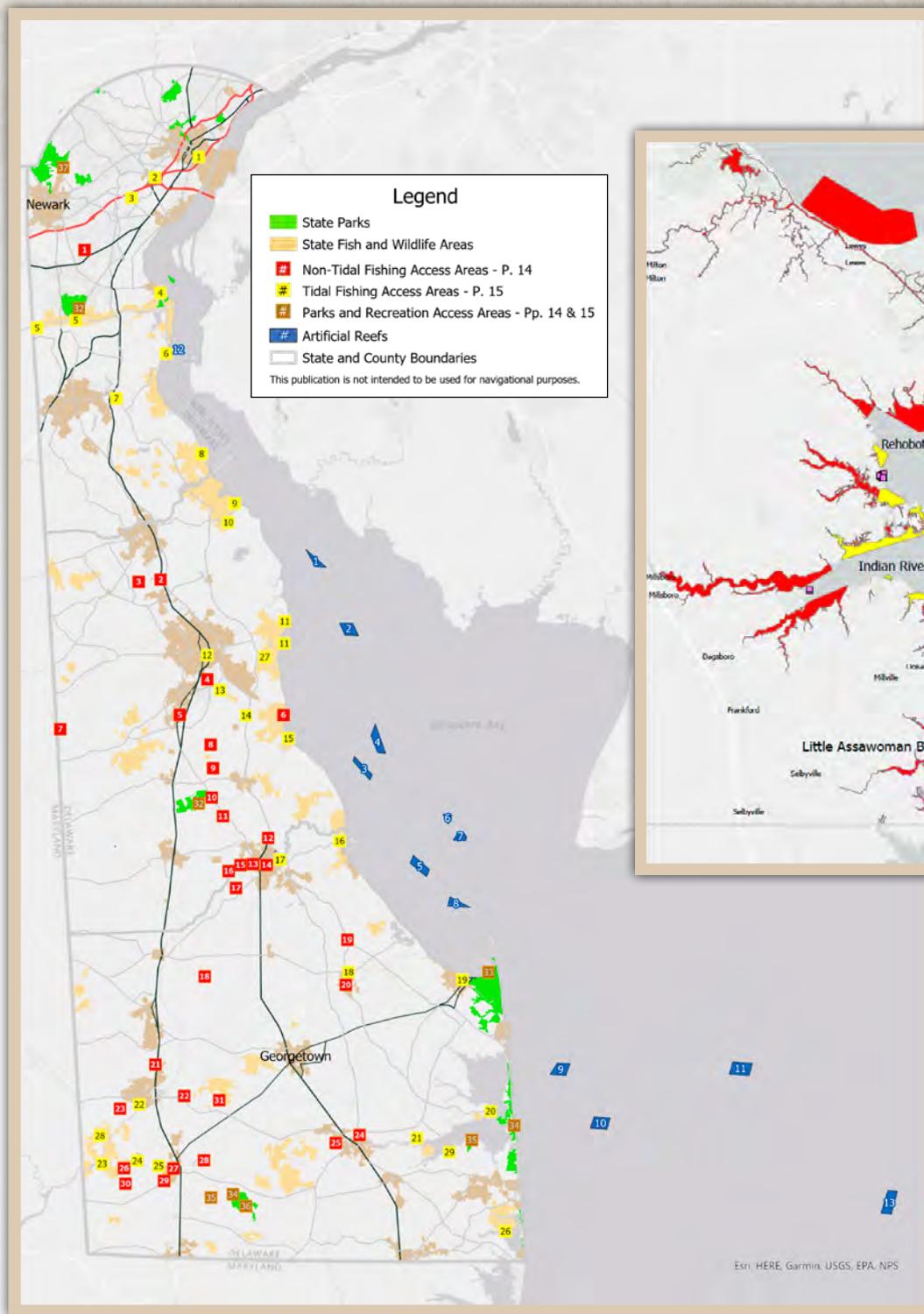
DRAIN equipment (boat bilge, ballast tanks, bait containers, motor) before leaving any water access area.

DISPOSE of unwanted live bait (minnows, worms) in the trash.

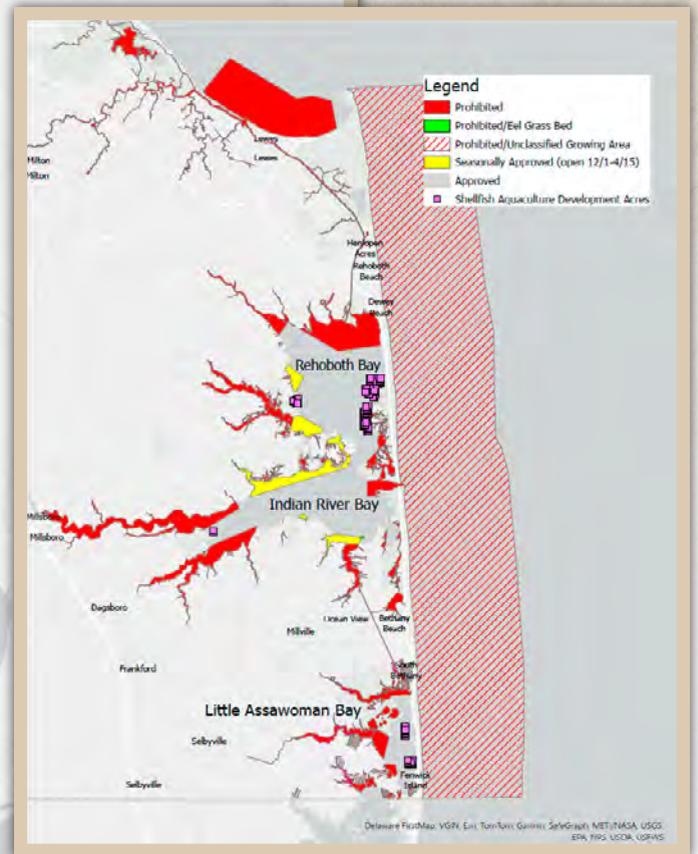
REPORT: In most cases, new fish species that are introduced into our waters don't survive or present a problem. But some may flourish and potentially cause ecological or economic harm. When there is harm, these species are called invasive. Currently, we have several species in our waters that we are tracking as potentially invasive and the department could use your help to document new sites. If you catch something you feel is unusual, **please send an e-mail to DNRECFisheries@delaware.gov or call 302-739-9914 or go to <http://bit.ly/reportinvasivfish> from your phone.** If you catch a Northern snakehead, blue catfish or flathead catfish please do not return it to the water, but kill it and contact us. Document the catch by freezing it or taking a good photo.

FISHING AND CLAMMING MAPS

FISHING MAP



CLAM, MUSSEL, & SCALLOP MAP



To get an expandable high resolution map and to check for emergency shellfish harvest closures, scan this QR code or go to DE.gov/shellfish.

GENERAL TIDAL FISHING REGULATIONS

These are some of the regulations that all anglers should be familiar with. For a complete listing refer to the Division's website or request a copy from the Director's Office. See page 5 for license requirements.

STRIPED BASS SPAWNING SEASON

The spawning season for striped bass in Delaware is considered to begin at 12:01 a.m. on April 1 and continue through midnight on May 31 of each calendar year. It is unlawful

for any person to take and retain any striped bass during the spawning season from the Nanticoke River or its tributaries, the Delaware River and its tributaries to the north of a line extending due east beginning at and including the south jetty at the mouth of the C & D Canal, or the C & D Canal or its tributaries. Catch and release only during this season; no harvest is allowed.

SHARK FISHING

Anglers are prohibited from landing and keeping prohibited sharks, including Sand Tiger and Sandbar sharks due to their slow reproductive rate and overfishing. To ensure the maximum likelihood of survival, prohibited sharks, as well as highly migratory shark species that are not retained, **must be immediately released without removing the fish from the water** by cutting the line near the hook or by using a de-hooking device.

When targeting sharks, non-offset carbon or mild steel circle hooks (not stainless steel) are required. This way, if the shark is lost before it is landed, the hook will rust out within a few weeks. For more information on ethical shark fishing practices, go to <http://www.eregulations.com/delaware/fishing/ethical-catch-release-sharks/>.

AMERICAN SHAD AND HICKORY SHAD

It shall be unlawful for any person to have in possession more than two (2) American Shad and more than ten (10) hickory shad. Additionally, it shall be unlawful for any person to take and reduce to possession any American shad or hickory shad from the Nanticoke River or its tributaries.

RIVER HERRING

Both commercial and recreational river herring (blueback herring and alewife) fisheries are closed to harvest.

No person shall fish with any type of net, within 300 feet of any constructed dam or spillway on a tidal water river, stream, canal, ditch, or tributary located in this state.

SUMMER FLOUNDER

It is unlawful for any person to have in possession any part of a summer flounder that measures less than the current minimum size limit between said part's two most distant points unless said person also has in possession the head, backbone, and tail intact from which said part was removed.



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GENERAL TIDAL FISHING REGULATIONS

ELECTRIC LIGHTS

Electric lights may be used in tidal waters for recreational fishing with certain restrictions. Call Fisheries at 739-9914 for more information.

COURTESY DOCKS

Crabbing, fishing or swimming from floating courtesy docks at any Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife boat ramp is prohibited, unless otherwise posted.

FISHING STATE WILDLIFE AREAS

Licensed fishing in any Division-managed wildlife area pond is prohibited from September 1 through January 31 and during the spring turkey season except as permitted according to area-specific rules established on current area maps. Crabbing or fishing on or from any dike or water control structure or within any impoundment is prohibited at all times.

ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM

Delaware has fourteen permitted artificial reef sites in Delaware Bay and along the Atlantic Coast. Development of these sites began in 1995 and will continue. The Delaware Reef Program is one part of a comprehensive fisheries management effort and is designed to enhance fisheries habitat, benefit structure-oriented fish, and provide fishing opportunities for anglers.

The site charts in the free reef guide show where reef materials have been deployed since 1995. The reef program uses DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) to accurately place materials on site. Locations (latitude - longitude) noted for each site indicate the position of deployments of reef material from an anchored barge. In the case of large, concentrated reef deployments, a latitude or longitude range, may be given such as: N 39 15.377'-402'. This indicates material occurs between 39 degrees, 15.377 to 15.402 minutes north latitude. Due to variability between DGPS receivers, slight variations in readings may occur. It is suggested you use your GPS and a good fathometer to locate reef structure, then note the coordinates on your own GPS. You can view the reef guide online at <https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/fishing/artificial-reefs/> or contact the Fisheries Little Creek field office for a copy (302) 735-2960.



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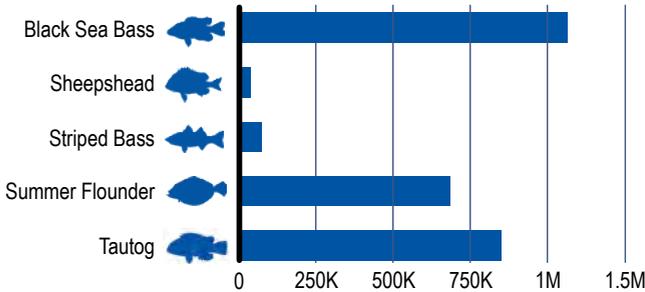


Your Fishing Counts!



Recreational saltwater anglers are on the **front line** of conservation—our **eyes and ears on the water**. When you **share information** about your saltwater fishing trip with **Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife** field interviewers, you play a **key role** in balancing **optimal fishing opportunities** with the **protection of marine resources**.

What's biting in Delaware?



Estimates of fish caught by recreational anglers in 2024. Source: NOAA Fisheries



NOAA
FISHERIES

countmyfish.noaa.gov



We Answer Your Questions About Recreational Data Collection

Why do interviewers survey anglers who didn't catch any fish?

We need a sample that represents all saltwater fishing trips—even those where no fish were caught. If we only included trips where anglers caught fish, our estimates of total catch would be artificially high, because we'd be ignoring all the trips with zero catch.

Why should I participate more than once?

No two fishing trips are alike. Even if you've been surveyed before, the unique characteristics of your current fishing trip—such as the date, time, and place where you fished, or the species you caught—haven't been incorporated into our data.



How does this survey benefit me?

Our understanding of saltwater recreational catch depends on complete and accurate information provided by recreational anglers. The less survey information we have, the less certain we are of the quality of our catch estimates, which could result in more conservative fishing regulations.

dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife
(302) 542-9015 • ashley.hurley@delaware.gov



BE ON THE LOOKOUT

Have You Seen a Sturgeon Lately?

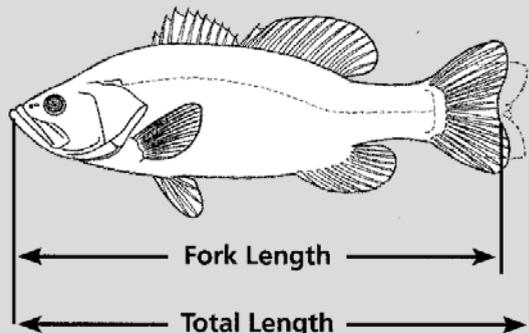
Have You Seen a Sturgeon Lately? If you find a dead sturgeon please report it immediately by email at sturgeon@delaware.gov, by calling: 302-735-8663, or scanning the QR code to the right. Don't forget to include an exact location and contact information in your message.



NOAA/NMFS Permit 20314

MEASURING YOUR CATCH

Total Length (TL) means the greatest straight-line length in inches as measured on a fish from the anterior most tip of the jaw or snout to the farthest extremity of the tail with the upper and lower form of the tail squeezed together. Place the fish on a measuring board or stick with the tip of the jaw or snout (the mouth closed) at the end of the instrument. Hold the head down with one hand to keep the fish in place, pinch the upper and lower lobes of the tail together while swiping the tail back and forth across the board. Note the measurement of the longest part of the tail"; that is the "total length." Keep in mind that fish which barely make the minimum length may shrink after being on ice for an hour or more.

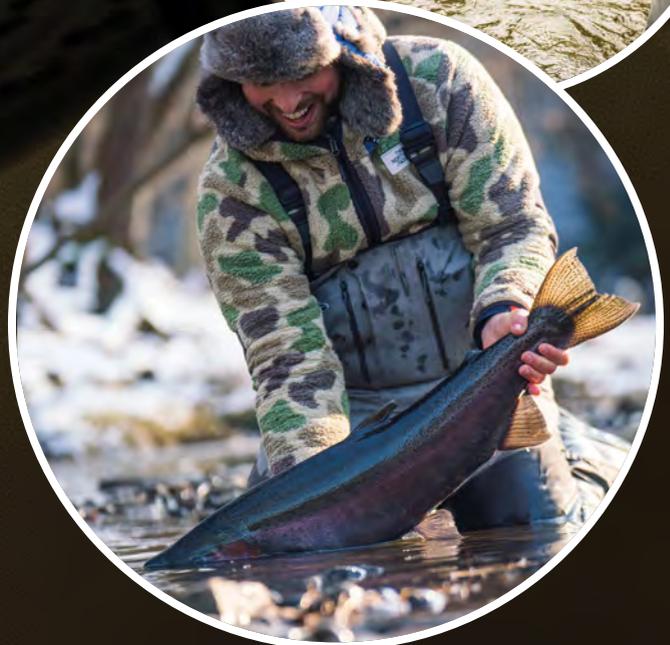


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CRABS, CLAMS, CONCHS AND OYSTERS

BLUE CRABS

A fishing license is required to crab in all waters of the State of Delaware.

The blue crab is common in all the tidal waters of Delaware. It is a popular recreational resource and tops the list of the State's economically important marine fish and shellfish.

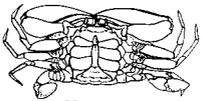
Blue crabs grow very quickly and reach maturity in 12 to 18 months. Most do not live beyond two years under current exploitation levels.

In order to grow, a blue crab must shed its shell and form a new shell. This process is repeated up to 18 times to attain maximum length. It is legal to take crabs at three stages, but to get the most yield in weight out of a crab, they should reach a minimum length before being harvested. This is measured from point to point of the top shell.

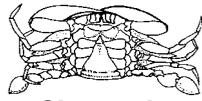
The minimum size for hard-shell blue crab is 5 inches, except mature females. Mature females (sooks) are identified by the rounded apron on their under side. Once this stage of

development is achieved, females stop growing. Therefore, female blue crabs with a U-shaped apron may be retained at any size. Females bearing eggs, commonly known as sponge crabs, may not be taken and should be returned to the water immediately.

Recreational crabbers may not use, place, set or tend more than two pots. The person claiming to own the pots must be the one to set and tend them. These pots must be marked with all white buoys with the owner's full name and permanent mailing address inscribed either on the buoy or on a waterproof tag attached to the buoy. All crab pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours. All crab pots must be removed from the water between December 1 and February 28. Recreational crabbers may use a trot line (no length limit) and any number of hand lines or traps including collapsible crab traps. The recreational daily limit is one bushel per person.



Jimmy
Mature Male



She-crab
Immature Female



Sook
Mature Female



Sponge Crab
Female with Eggs
(Orange eggs under the apron)

JONAH CRAB

Jonah crab are a species of crab that typically occur in offshore waters. The recreational possession limit is 50. The minimum size limit is 4 3/4" measured at the widest part of the carapace. The claws must remain naturally attached to the body of all Jonah crab retained and no egg-bearing females may be taken.

A turtle by-catch reduction device is required to be attached in each funnel entrance of a recreational crab pot to reduce the possibility of diamondback terrapins entering and drowning. A by-catch reduction device is a rigid rectangular frame of plastic or metal that measures 1.75 inches x 4.75 inches and is available at local tackle shops, or can be hand-made from heavy (>11 gauge) wire or other suitable material.

CLAMS, MUSSELS, & SCALLOPS

METHODS OF TAKE AND LIMITS

A fishing license is required to harvest clams in waters of the State of Delaware. See page 5 for details.

It is unlawful for any person to attempt to take, catch, kill or reduce to possession any hard clams with a device other than a hand-held rake with a head no wider than fourteen (14) inches measured perpendicular to the tines and a straight handle not in excess of seven (7) feet in length.

It is unlawful to harvest hard clams from one-half hour after sunset through one-half hour before sunrise.

Minimum Hard Clam Size

The minimum size for a hard clam is 1 1/2 inches from point A to point B.



1 1/2 INCHES

It is unlawful for any resident to harvest more than one hundred (100) clams per day unless otherwise permitted to do so by license or permit.

It is unlawful for any non-resident to harvest more than fifty (50) hard clams per day unless otherwise permitted to do so by license or permit.

No clam, mussel, or scallop harvesting is allowed in the Prohibited Areas marked on the map on page 17, nor any artificial lagoon, wet slip basin, or submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV/seagrass) bed. Harvesting is allowed only from December 1 through April 15 in the Seasonally Approved Areas. This is the law and for your protection against shellfish-borne illnesses. Before harvest, check de.gov/shellfish to verify no emergency closures of shellfish harvest have been issued. After harvest, shellfish should be kept isolated from Prohibited water and then immediately refrigerated to 45°F or below. Questions regarding shellfish harvest area classification and other shellfish illness and sanitation topics should be directed to the Division of Watershed Stewardship, Shellfish and Recreational Water Programs 302-739-9939.

OYSTERS

RECREATIONAL HARVEST PROHIBITED

It is unlawful to recreationally harvest oysters in Delaware. This prohibition protects vulnerable oyster populations.

How to Install a Turtle Excluder Device (TED)

- Obtain a 1 3/4 x 4 3/4 inch TED (metal or plastic) for each funnel opening in the crab pot, along with heavy plastic cable ties. Hog rings or cable ties can be used to attach metal TEDs.
 
- Position the TED in the rear area of the funnel opening.
 
- Loop heavy plastic cable ties around the TED's corners and through the funnel wire. Pull the plastic tie closed and trim the excess cable.
 

Use a minimum of four cable ties to attach the TED in funnel opening. Additional cable ties may be needed to achieve a firm attachment.

National Aquarium in Baltimore

CONCHS

Conch (channeled and knobbed whelk) may only be taken using conch pots with at least one escape vent measuring at least 5 inches x 10 inches in the top or parlor section. The recreational harvest of conch by any other method is prohibited. Recreational conch potters may not use, place, set or tend more than two conch pots. The person claiming to own the pots must be the one to set and tend them. These pots must be marked with all white buoys with the owner's full name and permanent mailing address inscribed either on the buoy or on a waterproof tag attached to the buoy. All conch pots must be tended at least once every 72 hours. Knobbed conch must measure at least 5 inches along the axis or have a minimum diameter at the whorl of 3.0 inches. Channeled whelk must measure at least 6 inches along the axis or have a minimum diameter at the whorl of 3.125 (3 1/8) inches.

MEASURING CONCH

WHORL DIAMETER



LENGTH

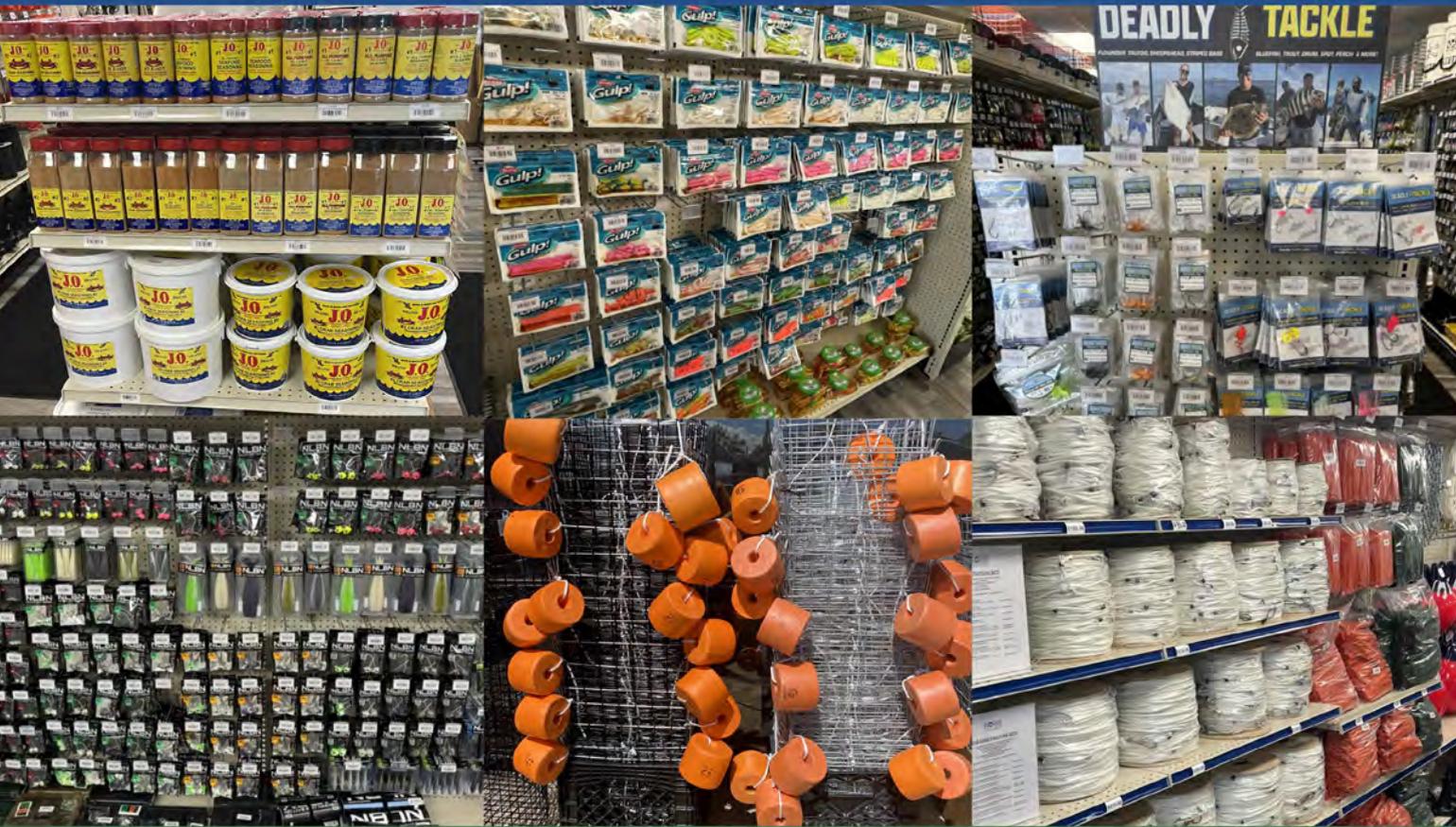


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SPORT FISHING TOURNAMENT UPDATES

Youth Division

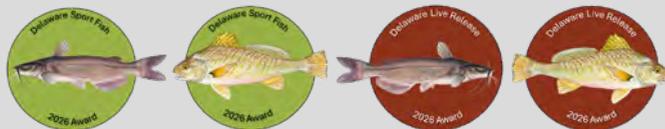
The Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament has implemented a youth division for young anglers age 15 and under. The youth division features lowered minimum qualifying sizes for each species. With the decreased minimum size requirements in the youth division, young anglers have a greater chance to be rewarded for that trophy catch. All 15 freshwater species and all 30 saltwater species recognized in the tournament's adult division will be eligible for youth division recognition and awards.

The youth division applies to the Live Release Award program for conservation minded young anglers that choose to return their trophy catch unharmed, immediately after landing and measuring their catch.

Youth division qualifying lengths and weights are provided on page 25. Other than the reduced qualifying lengths and weights the same tournament rules will apply to the youth division. Youth division entries are not eligible for the elite angler program.

Elite Angler Award

In 2017 the Division of Fish & Wildlife created a new "Elite Angler Award". Anglers that received Tournament citations for five different species within one calendar year, no more than two of which can be Live Release Awards, are recognized as "Delaware Elite Anglers". Three new individuals achieved Elite Angler status in 2025 (at the time of printing), Scott Stevenson, of Milford, DE. Ronald Littleton of Seaford, DE and Billy Mister of Milton, DE. . Congratulations on your outstanding achievement!



2026 award pins.

TOURNAMENT RULES

- The Sport Fishing Tournament is open to the public. There is no entry fee. Charter boat captains are eligible. Weighmasters are eligible to enter, provided their fish are weighed in at a weighing station other than their own.
- All fish except those caught beyond the three-mile limit in the Atlantic Ocean entered in the Tournament must be caught within the boundaries of the State of Delaware. Any fish caught outside the three-mile territorial sea must be landed in a vessel leaving from a Delaware port and returning to a Delaware port.
- All fish entered in the tournament must be weighed at an official Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament Weigh Station.
- All fish entered in the tournament must be caught in a sporting manner with hook and line. No other person may touch the rod or line until the fish is brought within the grasp of the mate.
- All scales used to weigh in fish must be certified yearly by the Delaware Division of Weights and Measures (Department of Agriculture 302-698-4500).
- All fish entered in the tournament must meet the minimum weight requirement as set up for this year's tournament.
- No smallmouth bass will be recognized from Kent or Sussex Counties unless Division of Fish and Wildlife qualified personnel examine and approve the catch.
- A fish will not be recognized as a state record unless qualified personnel from the Division of Fish and Wildlife approve the catch.** In case no Division personnel are available at the time of the weigh-in, the angler must save the entire fish for examination and approval at the earliest convenient time for the Division.
- In the case of a tie for the largest fish of the year or a new state record, both fish will be recognized.
- To replace a record for a fish weighing less than 25 pounds, the replacement must weigh at least 2 ounces more than the existing record. To replace a record for a fish weighing 25 pounds or more, the replacement must weigh at least one-half of 1 percent more than the existing record. Example: at 100 pounds the additional weight required would be 8 ounces. Any catch that exceeds the existing record by less than the amount required to defeat the record will be considered a tie.
- For a potential state record fish to be recognized, the reel must be operated manually by the angler.
- The Tournament Director reserves the right to disqualify any entry.
- All entry forms must be filled out completely and in a legible manner by the weighmaster. The signed forms should be mailed in **by the angler**.
- The tournament runs from January 1 - December 31. **No entry forms for the previous tournament year will be accepted after 4:30 p.m. January 31.**
- Citations will be only issued for **dead** Snakehead, Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish provided anglers have them measured for both length and weight at an official weigh station. Invasive species are not eligible for live release awards.
- Only one saltwater award and one freshwater award will be issued to any one individual during the tournament year; although, anglers may apply for and receive multiple citations within a year.
- Special citations will be issued upon approval of the Tournament Director in the case of unusual catches or extenuating circumstances. If the weigh station feels the catch is rare or unusual, an entry form should be submitted for approval. All decisions by the Director on unusual species will be final.
- Citations will be awarded for released white or blue marlin. Fill out the standard entry form except for length, weight, and girth and include a signature and telephone number of a witness to the catch other than the angler and captain. Any marlin kept for taxidermy also will be eligible for Tournament entry provided a taxidermist receipt is enclosed with the entry form. Marlin retained for any purpose other than mounting will not be eligible for entry in the Tournament.
- Anglers that receive adult division Tournament citations for five different species, no more than two of which can be Live Release Awards, **within one calendar year** will be recognized as "Delaware Elite Anglers". Both saltwater and freshwater Tournament species, or any combination thereof, are eligible. Once an angler achieves "Elite" status, he/she will receive a plaque commemorating their accomplishment. Anglers that achieve "Elite" status may continue to participate in the Sport Fish Tournament, but will not be eligible for additional Elite Angler plaques in subsequent years.
- The Tournament Director reserves the right to disqualify any weigh station if the Tournament rules are not observed.
- Hybrid striped bass will only be recognized for entry when caught in non-tidal water.
- Youth Division applies to anglers age 15 and under that meet the associated minimum size or length eligibility requirements. All Delaware Sport fishing rules apply except for rule 18, as catches awarded under the reduced minimum size requirements of the youth division are not eligible Elite Angler consideration.

SPORT FISHING TOURNAMENT

MINIMUM WEIGHTS AND LENGTHS*

23. The State of Delaware assumes no responsibility in the certification of a catch for consideration by the International Game Fish Association or any record keeping body other than the Delaware Sportfishing Tournament. If the angler wishes to qualify his/her catch for consideration in some other tournament, it is the responsibility of the angler to insure that his catch and weigh-in meets the appropriate criteria. The Delaware Sportfishing Tournament makes no distinction based on line classes or sex of the angler or fly versus conventional fishing gear.
24. Call (302) 735-2960 for tournament information. Call (800) 523-3336 on weekends or holidays to coordinate state record verification.

LIVE RELEASE RULES

In order to promote conservation ethics among Delaware anglers, the Division of Fish and Wildlife is providing recognition awards to anglers who catch and release live eligible species that exceed minimum qualifying lengths. Applications for Live Release Awards are available on-line or may be picked up at any Sport Fishing Tournament Weigh Station. To qualify, an angler must follow the same general tournament rules of the Sport Fishing Tournament, but:

- Shark:** Fork Length
Billfish: Lower Jaw Fork Length
Bluefin, Yellowfin, and Bigeye Tuna: Curved Fork Length
Black Sea Bass: Total Length (Excluding the Tail Filament)
All Other Fish: Total Length (tip of the jaw to tip of tail)
Girth: The circumference of the fish at its widest point. This measurement must be verified by a witness who signs the entry form.
- The fish **must be released immediately after measuring.**
- Fish retained for any reason other than obtaining a valid length measurement are not eligible.
- Billfish released alive are eligible for either the Live Release Award or the Sport Fishing Tournament Award, whichever one the angler chooses.
- Recipients of live release awards will be eligible for one freshwater live release award and one saltwater live release award per year, but may receive multiple citations in either category.
- Applications for live release awards **must be submitted to the Division of Fish and Wildlife within 30 days of the catch.**
- The entry form for live releases must include both the angler's signature and the signature of a witness to the actual measurement and live release of the fish.
- No fish entered for a Live Release Award will be eligible for consideration as a State record fish.

FRESHWATER FISHES				
SPECIES	ADULT		YOUTH (AGE 15 AND UNDER)	
	WEIGHT* (LBS.)	LENGTH* (INCHES)	WEIGHT* (LBS.)	LENGTH* (INCHES)
Bass (Hyb.), Striped²	5	22	3.5	19
Bass, Largemouth	5	20	3.5	17
Bass, Smallmouth	2 ¹	17	2 ¹	17
Bass, Striped	None	44	None	35
Bluegill	1	10	0.75 (12 oz.)	8
Carp	15	29	11	27
Catfish, Blue^{**} (invasive)	25	None	18	None
Catfish, Channel	6	25	4.5	23
Catfish, Flathead^{**} (invasive)	20	None	15	None
Crappie	1	12	0.75 (12 oz.)	10
Muskie	10	30	7.5	26
Perch, White	1	12	0.75 (12 oz.)	10
Perch, Yellow	1	12	0.75 (12 oz.)	10
Pickereel, Chain	4	24	3	20
Shad, American	5	23	3.5	18
Snakehead^{**} (invasive)	Any	None	Any	None
Sunfish, Redear	1	10	0.75 (12 oz.)	8
Trout	2	16	1.5	15

SALTWATER FISHES				
Albacore, False	12	26	9	24
Albacore, True	30	32	22.5	29
Bass, Striped	None	44	None	35
Bass, Black Sea	3	17	2	15
Bluefish	12	29	10	27
Cobia	45	48	33.5	42
Croaker, Atlantic	3	19	2	16
Dolphinfish	15	41	11	38
Drum, Black	50	45	37.5	39
Drum, Red	None	45	None	35
Flounder	7	25	5	23
Kingfish	1	13	0.75 (12 oz.)	11
Mackerel, Atlantic	2	17	1.5	15
Mackerel, King	10	26	7.5	22
Mackerel, Spanish	5	22	3.5	20
Marlin, Blue	Any	Any ³	Any	Any ³
Marlin, White	Any	Any ³	Any	Any ³
Scup (porgy)	2	14	1.5	12
Shark (excl. Mako)	100 ⁴	66 ^{3,4}	75	56 ³
Sheepshead	8	22	6	20
Swordfish	Any	Any ³	Any	Any ³
Tautog	7	25	5.5	20
Tilefish, Blueline	10	28	7.5	25
Tilefish, Golden	35	40	26.5	35
Triggerfish, Gray	5	20	3.5	18
Tuna, Bluefin	100	60 ³	75	48 ³
Tuna, Yellowfin or Bigeye	70	48 ³	52.5	45 ³
Wahoo	20	50	15	41
Weakfish (Sea trout)	3	20	2	18

* - Lengths apply **only** to live release citations; weights apply **only** to fish officially weighed at a weigh station.

** - It is illegal to transport an invasive species alive.

1 - Must be 17 inches or longer.

2 - Must be taken from non-tidal waters.

3 - Federal regulations require that these species, if not retained, must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, without removing the fish from the water.

4 - Prohibited shark species (see p. 13) are not eligible for entry.

YOUTH FISHING AND TOURNAMENT INFO

40TH ANNUAL YOUTH FISHING TOURNAMENT

As part of its activities for National Fishing and Boating Week, June 6–14, the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife will hold its 40th annual Youth Fishing Tournament from 10 a.m.–1 p.m., Saturday June 6, 2026. The event will take place at designated ponds statewide.

This fishing event is for youths ages 4 to 15. An adult must accompany youths under age 12 and contestants should bring their own fishing equipment. The tournament is free to the public and prizes will be awarded for each age group and largest fish caught in each species.

The tournament was established to introduce youth to the sport of fishing and to teach the catch and release approach to conservation. Registration is free and there is no entrance fee required. The tournament is held rain or shine.

In addition to the youth fishing tournament celebrating National Fishing and Boating Week, the Division has designated June 7 and 8, 2026 as free fishing days when anyone may fish in Delaware's waters without a fishing license. For more information, please visit <https://de.gov/yft>.

AQUATIC RESOURCES EDUCATION CENTER

You can learn about native Delaware sportfish and fishing opportunities in the First State by visiting Delaware's Aquatic Resources Education Center at 2520 Lighthouse Rd., Smyrna, near the Route 9 Bayshore Byway. The center offers two stocked catch and release fishing ponds and a boardwalk featuring a unique vantage point for exploring the tidal salt marsh bordering Delaware Bay. Find us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.



FAMILY FISHING PROGRAMS



Fishing is a great outdoor activity for the entire family. The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife offers free fishing and seining events at the Aquatic Resources Education Center and at other locations around Delaware. These programs are geared toward children and families that want to learn more about fishing and the species that live in Delaware Bay.

TAKE A KID FISHING!

Take A Kid Fishing! events are held at the Aquatic Resources Education Center as well as other ponds throughout our state. Kids aged 6 to 15 and their families learn about basic fishing skills and get a chance to try their hand at catching a fish. For more information visit de.gov/taktf

LIFE IN THE BAY SEINING

Curious about what lives in the waters just off the beach in Delaware Bay? Join us at Woodland Beach to seine for critters along the shoreline. Participants will have a chance to use the seine net themselves to bring in a variety of life including macroinvertebrates and small fish while staff is on hand to identify and teach more about the species caught.

ADULT FISHING CLASSES

The Aquatic Resources Education Center will offer our yearly fly-fishing class in the fall and is expanding our offerings for adults interested in learning more about the sport of angling. Participants must be 16 or older, hold a current Delaware fishing license and Delaware Fisherman Information Network (FIN) number. License-exempt anglers, including Delaware residents 65 and older, may obtain a free FIN number online or from a license agent where recreational fishing licenses are sold. Online services are available at de.gov/fishinglicense. Up-to-date adult class offerings can be found at de.gov/arec.

REGISTRATION

Please check our website de.gov/arec to see the most current and accurate information about all upcoming programs. All equipment needed is provided by the Aquatic Resources Education Center and programs are free of charge, but pre-registration is required. To register or for more information, please contact taylor.border1@delaware.gov.

DELAWARE'S SMALL POND PROGRAM

The Division has nine small ponds scattered throughout the State which offer shore angling targeted at youth. The ponds range from ½ to 8 acres and contain good populations of largemouth bass and bluegill. Catch and release is the order of the day so barbless hooks are required at most. Additional information about the pond locations and available facilities can be found at: <http://bit.ly/SmPond-DE>.



LARGEMOUTH BASS TOURNAMENT PERMITS

A Division of Fish & Wildlife Fishing Event Permit is required to hold a Largemouth Bass tournament in Delaware's public ponds or rivers, regardless of the number of boats or anglers participating in the tournament. Applications may be submitted online at: <http://de.gov/fisheventrpt> or by calling the Division's Enforcement Section at (302) 739-9913. Tournaments held on State Park properties must be approved by the Division of Parks and Recreation prior to submitting a permit application. Contact the appropriate park office for approval: Lums Pond (302) 368-6989, Killens Pond (302) 284-4526, and Trap Pond (302)875-5153.

The Tournament Director/Organizer must submit a Largemouth Bass Tournament Report (<http://de.gov/basstournrpt>) within 30 days of tournament completion. Tournament anglers are encouraged to practice catch and release and to implement other measures that minimize stress to bass caught during tournaments. These conservation measures, links to the permit application and reporting form, and a newsletter for bass anglers, can be found on the Division's Largemouth Bass Tournament page at: <http://de.gov/lmbtourney>. Contact the Fisheries Section at (302)739-9914 for additional information.





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STATE RECORD HOLDERS

Red text denotes a new state record and blue text denotes a new category.

FRESHWATER			
SPECIES	WEIGHT	ANGLER	YEAR
Bass (Hyb.), Striped	13 lbs. 13 oz.	Earl Blevins	1990
Bass, Largemouth	11 lbs. 1.6 oz.	Andrew Klein	2016
Bass, Smallmouth	4 lbs. 15.5 oz.	Jerry Proffitt	1989
Bluegill (Tie)	2 lbs. 10 oz.	Arnold Harmon	1998
		Clifford Snyder	2001
Carp	45 lbs.	Ronald Burnett	1976
Catfish, Blue	53 lbs.	Sydney McBroom	2023
Catfish, Channel	23 lbs. 6 oz.	William Ridgley	1992
Catfish, Flathead	33 lbs. 15.68oz.	Jason Wise	2025
Crappie	4 lbs. 9 oz.	Marvin Billips	1976
Musky	22 lbs. 4.8 oz.	Stephen Rutkowski	2023
Perch, White	2 lbs. 9 oz.	Wayne Hastings	1997
Perch, Yellow	2 lbs. 11 oz.	Marvin Kessinger	1976
Pickereel, Chain	7 lbs. 13 oz.	William Mack	2022
Shad, American	6 lbs. 12 oz.	Bayard Conaway	1972
Snakehead	15 lbs. 8 oz.	Dyllan Rust	2025
Sunfish, Redear	3 lbs. 1 oz.	Marty Messick	1998
Trout	11 lbs. 10 oz.	Edwin Wallace	1997
Walleye	6 lbs. 14 oz.	Nesbit Copenhaver	1995

SALTWATER			
SPECIES	WEIGHT	ANGLER	YEAR
Albacore, False	26 lb. 7 oz.	Mike Spayd	2022
Albacore, True	80 lbs.	David Francella	1987
Bass, Striped	52 lbs.	Benjamin Smith	2012
Black Sea Bass	7 lbs. 6 oz.	Steve Samluk	1988
Bluefish	24 lbs. 13 oz.	Luis Mispireta	2015
Cobia	89 lbs. 3.2 oz.	Scott Brooks	2022
Cod	44 lbs.	John Osborne	1975
Croaker, Atlantic	5 lbs. 3 oz.	Catherine Simpson	1980
Dolphinfish	56 lbs. 9 oz.	William D. Emmert	2014
Drum, Black	115 lbs.	Kenneth Smith	1978
Drum, Red	75 lbs.	James Vandetti	1976
Flounder	17 lbs. 15 oz.	William Kendall	1974
Kingfish	4 lbs.	Billy Hastings	1973
Mackerel, Atlantic	3 lbs. 5 oz.	Ricky Yakimowicz	1985
Mackerel, King	52 lbs. 11.2 oz.	Jeff McCoy	2023
Mackerel, Spanish	6 lbs. 4 oz.	Eric Ludwig	2000
Marlin, Blue	820 lbs.	Bruce King	1986
Marlin, White	120 lbs.	William Garner Jr.	1972
Scup (porgy)	5 lbs. 5 oz.	Herman Schmidt	1979
Shark (excl. Mako)	825 lbs.	Brent Thomas	1981
Shark, Mako	975 lbs.	Thomas Barnes	2000
Sheepshead	17 lbs. 2 oz.	Dave Walker	2014
Swordfish	358 lbs.	Kurt Lorenz	2013
Tautog	22 lbs. 14.4 oz.	James Milano	2023
Tilefish, Blueline	25 lbs. 8 oz.	Dain Hursh	2022
Tilefish, Golden	56 lbs. 3.2 oz.	Logan Smith	2025
Triggerfish, Gray	6 lbs. 5 oz.	Buddy J. Masten	2012
Tuna	873 lbs.	Dan Dillon	2005
Wahoo	106 lbs.	Will Stahlgren	2007
Weakfish (Sea trout)	19 lbs. 2 oz.	William Thomas	1989

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State Record Snakehead
Dyllan Rust, 15lb. 8oz.

WEIGH STATIONS AND/OR BOAT RAMP CERTIFICATE SALES

All motor boats launched from Division of Fish and Wildlife-administered tidal access areas (page 15) must be registered in Delaware or have a valid ramp certificate (\$35) from DNREC or its authorized agents.

AUTHORIZED OUTLET/ WEIGH STATION	CITY	PHONE (302)	WEIGH STATION	BOAT RAMP CERTIFICATE
NEW CASTLE COUNTY				
Master Baiters Bait & Tackle	New Castle	834-2248	Yes	No
Eastern Marine	Newark	737-6603	No	Yes
Capt. Bones Bait, Tackle & Seafood	Odessa	378-4200	Yes	No
KENT COUNTY				
Division of Fish & Wildlife	Dover	739-9916	No	Yes
Smith's Bait Shop	Leipsic	744-9140	Yes	No
Carlisle's Marine	Smyrna	389-0100	Yes	Yes
SUSSEX COUNTY				
Hook'em & Cook'em Outfitters	Bethany	539-6243	Yes	Yes
Vines Creek Marina	Dagsboro	732-6043	Yes	No
Rudy Marine	Dagsboro	945-2254	No	Yes
Fenwick Tackle	Fenwick Island	539-7766	Yes	No
Island Watersports	Fenwick Island	537-2628	No	Yes
Jim's Bait & Tackle	Frankford	436-5050	Yes	No
Pontoon Express	Harbeson	945-0654	No	Yes
Williamsville Country Store	Houston	422-4455	Yes	No
Hook'em & Cook'em	Indian River	226-8220	Yes	Yes
Beach Marine	Lewes	645-7060	No	Yes
Fisherman's Wharf	Lewes	645-8862	Yes	No
Henlopen Bait & Tackle	Lewes	645-8106	Yes	No
Lewes Harbour Marina	Lewes	645-6227	Yes	Yes
Rick's Bait & Tackle	Long Neck	945-9245	Yes	No
Taylor Marine	Milford	422-9177	No	Yes
Lingo Marine	Millsboro	934-9877	No	Yes
Short's Marine	Millsboro	945-1200	No	Yes
WMF Powersports	Millsboro	945-9150	No	Yes
Cedar Creek Marina	Milford	422-2040	No	Yes
Dan's Tackle Box	Milton	684-3093	Yes	No
Bob's Marine Service	Ocean View	539-3711	No	Yes
Old Inlet Bait & Tackle	Rehoboth	227-7974	Yes	No
Taylor'd Tackle Shop	Seaford	629-9017	Yes	No
Walker's Marine	Seaford	629-8666	No	Yes
Cedar Creek Marine Center	Seaford	629-3581	No	Yes
Lankford's Gun Shop	Seaford	536-7077	No	No
Midlantic Marine	Selbyville	436-9763	No	Yes
Northbay Marina	Selbyville	436-4211	No	Yes
Rt 113 Boat Sales	Selbyville	436-1737	No	Yes

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Fishing is an important activity in Delaware's inland and coastal waters. Among the benefits provided by fishing are quality recreational opportunities, direct and indirect input to the local economy, food for recreational anglers, and food for the commercial marketplace. Fish are a good source of readily digestible protein. They are low in fat and sodium, and the unique types of fats found in fish are believed to provide cardiovascular benefits.

Despite the general benefits of fishing and fish consumption, there are also health risks associated with consuming some locally caught fish. Certain toxic chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury persist in the environment and accumulate in fish.

When you eat the fish, you also ingest these chemicals. In cases where the health risk is elevated to recreational anglers and their families, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), in cooperation with the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Public Health (DPH), issue fish consumption advisories to inform the public of the situation. The most recent fish consumption advisories for Delaware waters are shown on the accompanying table. These advisories are intended to protect public health and hence are conservative.

Although the list of waters and fish species under advisory is extensive, monitoring shows that contaminant concentrations in the

fish are slowly improving over time in many cases. This is the result of steady progress in cleaning up the sources of the contamination along with natural processes. DNREC and DPH will continue to monitor contaminant levels in fish over time and issue new or revised fish consumption advisories as appropriate.

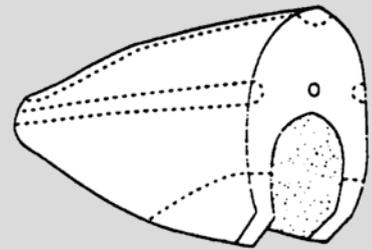
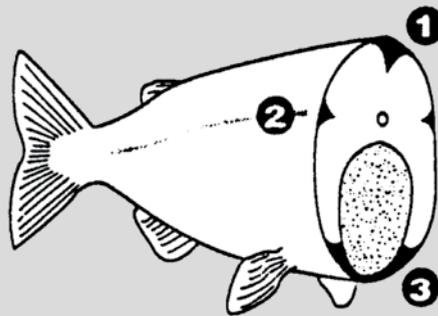
For more information concerning health advisories for Delaware waters, go on-line or contact the Division of Public Health at (302) 744-4546. For more information on balancing health risks and health benefits of consuming seafood, visit <http://seafoodhealthfacts.org>.

CUTTING THE FAT

Toxic chemicals tend to concentrate in the fatty tissue found in the:

- 1) dorsal area.
- 2) lateral line.
- 3) belly flaps.

When cleaning fish, always skin it and trim away fatty areas shown by the dotted line.



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ACCESS POINT ANGLER INTERCEPT SURVEY (APAIS)

The most critical responsibility of Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife's (DDFW) Fisheries Section is sustainably managing our fisheries to keep fishing in Delaware great. Good management depends on good data, so the Fisheries Section is always looking for ways to improve its data collection. To that end, the Fisheries Section, working with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), will conduct the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). This survey is a critical component of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), used to estimate the number of fish caught and harvested by recreational anglers. MRIP counts and reports marine recreational catch and effort, using in-person, telephone, and mail surveys. The Fisheries Section believes that a Delaware APAIS conducted by DDFW will result in improved data quality and greater stakeholder confidence in that data. We anticipate that our involvement in conducting the APAIS will:

- Improve data quality and efficiency of data collection;
- Maximize angler participation; and

- Give Delaware anglers a bigger stake in the recreational data and the data collection program.

What to expect when interviewed

The intercept survey is conducted by DDFW fisheries personnel at fishing access points along the Delaware coast. Saltwater anglers returning from a fishing trip may be asked to participate in the dockside survey. The interview, which only takes a few minutes to complete, consists of two major sections:

1. A background portion that addresses fishing mode (private boat, shore, or charter boat), gear type, number of anglers, hours spent fishing, general area fished, whether anglers were targeting specific fish species, and the anglers' county and state of residence; and
2. The latter portion which focuses on the anglers' catch. We ask questions pertaining to the species and number of fish released as well as those fish kept. For released fish, we collect information on whether they were used for bait,

or released alive or dead. We also ask to measure and weigh fish retained by the anglers

The intercept surveys are conducted by DDFW fisheries personnel at fishing access points along the coast of Delaware.

By participating in this survey, you're helping keep recreational fisheries sustainable.

- You're our **"eyes and ears" on the water** — what we learn from you is critical to understanding the health of our fisheries.
- You're on the **front line of conservation**. You can have a real impact on our waterways and how they're managed.
- **Your input** helps ensure that regulations are working and that our fish populations can support recreational fishing for future generations to enjoy.



FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

WATERBODY	SPECIES	CONTAMINANT OF CONCERN	GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT	MEALS/YR (8-OUNCE SERVING)
All Waters not listed below	All Species not listed below	All	All Areas not listed	52
Delaware River	All Finfish	A, B, E	DE/PA Line to the C&D Canal	3*
Lower Delaware River and Delaware Bay	Striped Bass, Channel Catfish, White Catfish, American Eel	A	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal to the Mouth of the Delaware Bay	3*
	White Perch	A	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal to the Mouth of the Delaware Bay	6
	Bluefish 20 inches or less	A	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal to the Mouth of the Delaware Bay	12
	Bluefish - greater than 20 inches	A, C	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal to the Mouth of the Delaware Bay	3*
Delaware Atlantic Coastal Waters including Delaware Inland Bays	Striped Bass	A	Coastal Delaware from Mouth of the Delaware Bay Southward to DE/MD Line	3*
	Bluefish 20 inches or less	A	Coastal Delaware from Mouth of the Delaware Bay Southward to DE/MD Line	12
	Bluefish - greater than 20 inches	A, C	Coastal Delaware from Mouth of the Delaware Bay Southward to DE/MD Line	3*
Shellpot Creek	All Finfish	A, E, G	Governor Printz Blvd. to Delaware River	1
		A, E, G, H	Upstream of Governor Printz Blvd.	2
Tidal Brandywine River	All Finfish	A, B, E	River Mouth to Baynard Blvd.	2
Non-tidal Brandywine River	All Finfish	A, B, E	Baynard Blvd. to DE/PA Line	6
Tidal Christina River	All Finfish	A	I-95 at Peterson Wildlife Refuge upstream to Smalleys Dam (includes Nonesuch Creek)	12
		A, B, E, F, G	Mouth upstream to I-95 at Peterson Wildlife Refuge	1
Non-tidal Christina River	All Finfish	E	Smalley's Dam to DE/MD Line	12
Tidal White Clay Creek	All Finfish	A, E, F, G	River Mouth to Route 4	1
Non-tidal White Clay Creek	All Finfish	A, E	Route 4 to DE/PA Line	12
Red Clay Creek	All Finfish	A, B, E, F	Creek Mouth to DE/PA Line	3
Little Mill Creek	All Finfish	A, E, G, H	Creek Mouth to Kirkwood Highway	1
Army Creek and Pond	All Finfish	A, B	Creek Mouth to Route 13, including Army Pond	4
Red Lion Creek	All Finfish	A, B	Route 1 to the Delaware River	2
		A, E	Upstream of Route 1	12
Chesapeake & Delaware Canal	All Finfish	A, B, E	Entire Canal in Delaware	1
Appoquinimink River	All Finfish	A, B, E	Tidal Portions	2
Drawyers Creek	All Finfish	A, B, E	Tidal Portions	4
Silver Lake Middletown	All Finfish	E	Entire Lake	12
Saint Jones River and Silver Lake Dover	All Finfish	A, B, E	Tidal River and Entire Pond	4
Fork Branch	All Finfish	C	McKee Road to College Road	24
Moore's Lake	All Finfish	A	Entire Pond	12
Wyoming Mill Pond	All Finfish	F	Entire Pond	24
Slaughter Creek	All Finfish	A, B	Entire Creek	12
Christina Creek	Stocked Trout	A, E	Rittenhouse Park to DE/MD Line	6
Designated Trout Streams & Ponds other than Christina Creek	Stocked Trout	A	See latest Delaware Fishing Guide for Designated Trout Streams	12

* Women of childbearing age and children should not consume any amount of these fish.

For more information on the specific contaminant(s) of concern for each waterbody listed, consult the Division's website (DE.gov/fw) or contact DNREC at (302) 739-9902, or the Division of Public Health at (302) 744-4546.

Contaminants of concern:

A) PCBs, B) Dioxins and furans, C) Mercury, D) Chlorinated pesticides, E) Dieldrin, F) DDT, DDD and DDE, G) Chlordane, H) Heptachlor epoxide



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Contest rules and information: de.gov/outdoorphotography



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