



WEST VIRGINIA FISHING REGULATIONS SUMMARY 2026

WEST VIRGINIA
DNR
WVdnr.gov

STATE RECORD FISH
pages 25-26

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fish populations continue to thrive across West Virginia, offering anglers abundant opportunities to enjoy our rivers, lakes and streams. This success is the result of dedicated, year-round work by our Wildlife Resources Section's fish management staff to conserve, restore and enhance aquatic habitats statewide.

Over the past year, our biologists, specialists and technicians have made significant progress. Nearly 1,000 habitat structures were added to reservoirs to improve fish habitat and enrich recreational fishing. These structures provide shelter, as well as spawning and feeding areas for many fish species, ensuring that our lakes and impoundments remain productive and enjoyable for generations.

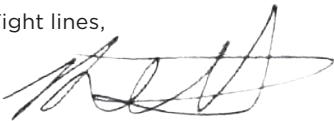
Staff also added thousands of tons of limestone to acidified streams to restore water quality and support native brook trout. As a result, more than 350 miles of streams now maintain pH levels needed to sustain West Virginia's only native trout species.

Our ongoing stream restoration work, which includes culvert removals and installing in-stream structures, reduces erosion, minimizes sedimentation and strengthens aquatic ecosystems, which ultimately benefit fish and wildlife and enhance angling opportunities for residents and visitors.

I am proud of our staff's accomplishments each year and grateful for the anglers, conservation partners and community members who share our passion for West Virginia's natural resources. Together, we're keeping our waters vibrant, healthy and full of life.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tight lines,



Brett McMillion, DNR Director



DISTRICT OFFICES

MAIN OFFICE - CHARLESTON, WV 25305

State Capitol Complex, Building 4, 112 California Avenue

Fish Management – Dave Wellman (304) 558-6200

Law Enforcement – Lt. Col. David Trader (304) 558-6200

License Unit – Floyd Keeney (304) 558-6200

DISTRICT 1 - FARMINGTON, WV 26571

1110 Railroad Street (304) 825-6787

Fish Management – Dustin Smith

Law Enforcement – Vacant

DISTRICT 2 - ROMNEY, WV 26757

1 Depot Street (304) 822-3551

Fish Management – Brandon Keplinger

Law Enforcement – Capt. Michael Lott

DISTRICT 3 - FRENCH CREEK, WV 26218

WV State Wildlife Center (304) 924-6211

163 Wildlife Road

Fish Management – James Walker

Law Enforcement – Capt. David James

DISTRICT 4 - BECKLEY, WV 25801

2006 Robert C. Byrd Drive (304) 256-6947

Fish Management – Cory Hartman

Law Enforcement – Capt. Christopher Lester



DISTRICT 5 - ALUM CREEK, WV 25003

Forks of Coal State Natural Area (304) 756-1023

480 Forks of Coal Way

Fish Management – Jeff Hansbarger

Law Enforcement – Capt. Dwayne A. Duffield

DISTRICT 6 - PARKERSBURG, WV 26104

76 Conservation Way (304) 420-4550

Fish Management – Nate Taylor

Ohio River Biologist – Katie Zipfel


Law Enforcement – Capt. Danny L. Dolin

OPERATIONS CENTER - ELKINS, WV 26241

738 Ward Road, P.O. Box 67 (304) 637-0245

Coldwater Biologist – David Thorne

Hatchery Program Manager – Jim Hedrick






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DNR

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About this publication

This pamphlet is a summary of the applicable laws and regulations governing fishing in West Virginia. It is for informational purposes only and subject to change. It is created for your convenience and designed to provide simplified statements of the controlling law. However, nothing contained herein shall be read to preempt or supersede the laws themselves. Instead, the West Virginia Code and the West Virginia Code of State Rules are, at all times, the controlling laws, and if there is a conflict or a question, it is the West Virginia Code and West Virginia Code of State Rules which prevail. Both the West Virginia Code and the West Virginia Code of State Rules are available for review in the Director's Office and at the Division of Natural Resources District Offices. Copies of the Code may also be found at: <https://code.wvlegislature.gov>. Copies of the Code of State Rules can be obtained from the West Virginia Secretary of State.

Landowner – Sportsmen Relations

West Virginia anglers are indebted to local landowners throughout the state. Without their consent and generosity, fishing would be restricted to state and federal lands. The opportunity for continued use of private property is largely dependent upon anglers' attitudes and conduct. Most stream closures are the result of disrespect for private property.

Statement of Policy Relative to Public Use of Facilities

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, accommodations, services and programs to all persons. Complaints should be mailed to: Director, Division of Natural Resources, State Capitol Complex, Building 4, 112 California Avenue, Charleston, WV 25305, or to the Office of Human Resources, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, MA 01035-9589. The Division of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity employer.

Statement of Policy Relative to Discrimination

This program receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, or if you need more information, please write to: Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



Patrick Morrisey, Governor
State of West Virginia

Brett McMillion, Director
Division of Natural Resources

Paul Johansen, Chief
Wildlife Resources Section

Col. Bobby L. Cales, Chief
Law Enforcement Section

COMMISSIONERS

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The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (DJ), passed in 1950, placed a tax on the manufacturers of fishing equipment. The Wallop-Breaux Amendment of 1984 expanded the program by adding more tackle and sport fishing equipment under the excise tax and included the Federal fuel taxes attributable to motor boats and small engines. These two legislative acts support the overall Sport Fish Restoration Program (SFRP).

Federal tax collection agencies are responsible for collecting the excise taxes from the manufacturers. The collecting agencies deposit SFRP funds into the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. These funds are allocated to states and territories based on the amount of surface area of water and the number of license holders.

In West Virginia, SFRP funds are used to rear and stock fish, enhance habitats in rivers and lakes, and provide opportunities to gain sound biological information on the status and condition of the diverse fish populations inhabiting West Virginia waters.

Projects to develop new access facilities and renovate existing facilities are also funded through the SFRP. States are required to use 15 percent of SFRP funding on recreational boating access projects. In addition, the program funds fish cleaning stations, parking areas and restrooms, among other boating amenities.

Overall, the nation and West Virginia anglers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts have benefited greatly from this unique user pays-users benefit program and the cooperative efforts of industry, government, anglers and boaters contributing to enhancing America's aquatic resources and associated recreational activities.

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REGULATIONS SUMMARY

Species	Daily Creel Limit	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	*Special Regulations
GAME FISH				
BLACK BASS Smallmouth, Largemouth, and Spotted	6* (in any combination)	None*	12* (in any combination)	Jennings Randolph Lake: See Maryland Fishing Regulations. See Black Bass on page 2 for additional regulations.
TROUT Rainbow, Golden Rainbow, Brook, Tiger and Brown	6* (in any combination)	None	12* (in any combination)	Jennings Randolph Lake: See Maryland Fishing Regulations. See Trout on pages 4-5 for additional regulations.
MUSKELLUNGE	1*	30 inches*	2*	See Muskellunge on page 3 for additional regulations.
TIGER MUSKY	1*	30 inches*	2*	
NORTHERN PIKE	1	30 inches*	2*	
CHAIN PICKEREL	1	None	2	Jennings Randolph Lake: See Maryland Fishing Regulations.
TRUE BASS Hybrid Striped Bass, Striped Bass and White Bass	30* (in any combination)	no more than four fish greater than 15 inches	30	Statewide, except in designated special regulations waters.
	4*	15 inches*	4*	Beech Fork, Bluestone, Mt. Storm and R.D. Bailey lakes and the Kanawha River (from confluence of New and Gauley rivers downstream to the Buffalo Bridge).
	0	0	0	Rollins Lake: all hybrid striped bass, striped bass and white bass must be returned to the water immediately.
SAUGER	8*	None*	16*	Ohio River: 6-fish daily creel in aggregate for walleye, sauger, and saugeye. Only 2 of the 6 fish can be walleye and must be a minimum of 18 inches in length.
SAUGEYE				
WALLEYE	8*	None*	16*	Jennings Randolph Lake: See Maryland Fishing Regulations. See Walleye on page 9 for additional regulations.
BLUE CATFISH	2*	25 inches*	No limit*	See Catfish on page 3 for additional regulations.
CHANNEL CATFISH	4*	None	8*	In state-managed impoundments (See Public Fishing Lakes and Ponds Chart, pages 16-17): Daily creel limit 4, possession limit 8. On Mt. Storm, Stonecoal, Cheat, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes and all rivers and streams the daily limit is 30 and possession limit is 60. Potomac River: See Maryland Fishing Regulations.
FLATHEAD CATFISH	30*	*	60*	See Catfish on page 3 for additional regulations.
ALL OTHER GAME FISH (A complete list of gamefish is on the back cover of the regulations.)	30*	None*	60	This limit is for black and white crappie in aggregate, bluegill and all other sunfish in aggregate, and any other game fish not listed separately on this page. See Sunfish on page 8 for additional regulations on sunfish. Jennings Randolph Lake: See Maryland Fishing Regulations.
NON-GAME FISH				
PADDLEFISH	0	0	0	All fish must be returned to the water immediately.
SHOVELNOSE STURGEON				
LAKE STURGEON				
YELLOW PERCH	30*	None	60	Cheat Lake: Daily creel limit 15
BAITFISH				
MINNOWS, CRAYFISH AND SALAMANDERS				See regulations on pages 10-11.
DARTERS	0	0	0	It is illegal to possess darters and use them as bait in West Virginia.

Fishing regulations relating to opening and closing dates, creel and possession limits and size limits on the Potomac and North Branch of the Potomac, including Jennings Randolph Lake, and enforced by West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will correspond with the same regulations published by the State of Maryland.

BLACK BASS

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

CATCH-AND-RELEASE

For waters listed below

1. All black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth) caught must be returned to the water at once.
2. No black bass shall be in the angler's possession (creel limit 0) while fishing in designated catch-and-release lakes and streams.

Lakes

Dunkard Fork, Edwards Run Pond, Kimsey Run, Millers Fork Pond, Rockhouse, Tuckahoe and Upper Mud.

Streams

New River – Fayette, Raleigh and Summers counties

12-mile section from the I-64 bridge at Sandstone downstream to NPS Grandview Sandbar access site near Quinimont. Access by state Route 41 at Quinimont and state Route 20 at Sandstone.

South Branch of Potomac River – Hardy and Hampshire counties

- Area 1** 8-mile section in Hardy County from 3 miles east of Petersburg at the routes 28, 55 and 220 bridge (Petersburg Gap bridge) downstream to the county Route 13 bridge (Fisher bridge).
- Area 2** 9.5-mile section in Hampshire County from the routes 28 and 50 bridge (Romney bridge) downstream to the state Route 28 bridge (Blue Beach bridge).

MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT

Stonewall Jackson Lake

1. Daily creel limit of one black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth) 18 inches or longer.
2. Black bass under 18 inches may be harvested.
3. All black bass harvested must be in accordance with the daily creel limit regulation.
4. Registered bass tournament anglers who are participating in DNR-permitted tournaments only are excluded from this regulation.

Elk Fork, North Bend, O'Brien and Woodrum lakes

Daily creel limit of six black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth). Only one may exceed 16 inches.

For waters listed below:

All black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth) under 12 inches long must be returned to the water at once.

Lakes

Barboursville, Beech Fork, Chief Logan and Conaway Run.

Streams

Wheeling Creek – Marshall and Ohio counties

Entire length.

Ohio River

Entire length of Ohio River from the mouth of Mill Creek, Hancock County, downstream to the mouth of the Big Sandy River, Wayne County. This regulation applies to all waters included in the Ohio River Reciprocal Agreement with the State of Ohio.

SLOT LIMIT

New River

1. All black bass (smallmouth, spotted, and largemouth) from 14 to 22 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of six black bass with only one being over 22 inches.
3. This regulation is in effect from the confluence of the New and Gauley rivers upstream to the West Virginia/Virginia state line, excluding Bluestone Lake (from the dam upstream to the mouth of Indian Creek) and the 12-mile catch and release section (from the Grandview sandbar boat ramp upstream to the I-64 bridge at Sandstone).

South Mill Creek Lake and Parker Hollow Lake

1. All black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth) from 12 to 16 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. All black bass harvested must be in accordance with the daily creel limit regulation.

Greenbrier River – Greenbrier County

6-mile section beginning at the U.S. Route 60 bridge near Caldwell extending downstream to the U.S. Route 219 bridge at Ronceverte.

1. All black bass (smallmouth, spotted and largemouth) from 12 to 20 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of six black bass with only one being over 20 inches. Black bass under 12 inches may be harvested. All black bass harvested must be in accordance with the daily creel limit regulation.

CATFISH

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

For waters listed below

1. Daily creel limit of four **flathead catfish**, of which only one may be 35 inches or longer.
2. Daily creel limit of four **blue catfish** with a 25-inch minimum size on the Kanawha and Ohio rivers, of which only one may exceed 35 inches. The possession limit is eight, only two of which may exceed 35 inches.

Kanawha River

Mouth of Kanawha River extending upstream to the confluence of the New and Gauley rivers.

Monongahela River

Entire length of Monongahela River (flathead catfish only) from the Pennsylvania state line to the confluence of the Tygart Valley and West Fork rivers.

Ohio River

Entire length of Ohio River from the mouth of Mill Creek, Hancock County, downstream to the mouth of the Big Sandy River, Wayne County. This regulation applies to all waters included in the Ohio River Reciprocal Agreement with the state of Ohio.

HAND-FISHING FOR CATFISH ONLY

1. Season for hand-fishing runs from June 15 through Aug. 31 with fishing permitted from sunrise until sunset.
2. Hand-fishing is prohibited in all state-managed impoundments except Stonecoal, Hawks Nest, Mt. Storm, Cheat, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes.
3. Daily creel limit for all catfish species taken by hand-fishing is four total with only one fish allowed to be over 35 inches and only two of which may be blue catfish (minimum length 25 inches). In waters with special regulations, the more restrictive regulations apply. The daily creel limit for hand-fishing counts as part of any daily limit for hook and line fishing.
4. Use or possession of hooks, gaffs, spears or anything other than hands while hand-fishing is prohibited, as is the use of bait or fish attractors. Only naturally-occurring cavities and naturally-occurring habitat may be hand-fished. The placement or use of artificial cavities and nesting boxes for hand-fishing is prohibited. The use of SCUBA gear or any other artificial breathing apparatus to hand fish is prohibited.

MUSKELLUNGE

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

CATCH-AND-RELEASE

For waters listed below

1. All muskellunge caught must be returned to the water at once.
2. No muskellunge shall be in the angler's possession while on stream sections designated as catch-and-release streams.

Buckhannon River – Upshur County

6.5-mile section beginning at the City of Buckhannon's water supply dam and continuing upstream to the first riffle. Included in this area is the section of French Creek from its mouth to the first riffle. The entire stream section is commonly referred to as Buckhannon Pool.

Middle Island Creek – Tyler County

6-mile section beginning at the state Route 18 bridge near Centerville and continuing downstream to the low water bridge near the Jug WMA. Included in this area are sections of Indian Creek and McElroy Creek from their mouths to their first riffles.

MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT

North Bend Lake

1. All muskellunge under 40 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of one muskellunge.

Stonewall Jackson Lake

(Including entire drainage upstream of the lake)

1. All muskellunge under 52 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of one muskellunge.

North Fork Hughes River – Ritchie County

1.3-mile section extending from North Bend Lake Dam downstream to the CR 809 bridge near the North Bend State Park campground.

1. All muskellunge under 40 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of one muskellunge.

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

CATCH-AND-RELEASE

For catch-and-release waters listed on page 4

1. Fishing permitted during daylight hours only, except that on the three North Branch of the Potomac River Catch-and-Release Trout Fishing Areas fishing is permitted between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 10 p.m. only.
2. Only artificial flies and lures made of metal, wood, feathers, hair, or synthetic material may be used or possessed on catch-and-release trout streams. No lure or fly with any scent, oil, or edible enticement added onto, or impregnated into (regardless if the scent is added in the manufacturing process or applied afterward), may be used or possessed on any catch-and-release trout stream.
3. Multiple hook lures must have barbless hooks (except on the North Branch of the Potomac River Catch & Release areas).
4. Single hook lures may have barbed hooks.
5. All trout caught must be returned to the water at once.
6. No trout shall be in the angler's possession while on stream sections designated as catch-and-release streams.
7. Powerbait, Gulp and other manufactured scented baits are considered illegal under this section and may not be used or possessed on catch-and-release streams.

Back Fork of Elk River – Webster County

4-mile section beginning 2 miles upstream from Webster Springs and extending upstream. Access by county Routes 24 and 24/3.

Barkers Creek of Guyandotte River – Wyoming County

From the mouth of Barkers Creek upstream to include the entire drainage area for a total of 88 stream miles.

Blackwater River – Tucker County

3.5-mile section from the county Route 29/1 bridge in Blackwater Falls State Park downstream to the mouth of the North Fork.

Bluestone River – Summers County

1-mile section from the mouth of Mountain Creek downstream to a stream gauge station within Pipestem State Park.

Cranberry River – Webster, Pocahontas and Nicholas counties

4.3-mile section from the junction of the North and South forks downstream to the low water bridge at Dogway Fork. Access by foot on National Forest Route 76 from the Cranberry Glades parking area.

Elkhorn Creek – McDowell County

From the mouth of Elkhorn Creek upstream, including all tributaries.

Elk River – Randolph County

2-mile section from the Elk Springs Campground downstream to Rose Run bridge. Access by county Route 49 off state Route 15 about 4 miles west of Valley Head.

Glade Creek of New River – Raleigh County

3-mile section from the mouth upstream to the National Park Service foot bridge. Access by Glade Creek Road off state Route 41.

Guyandotte River – Wyoming and Raleigh counties

Entire drainage upstream of railroad bridge in Mullens, including all tributaries.

Middle Fork of Williams River and tributaries – Webster/Pocahontas counties

Mill Creek – Randolph County

Entire length of Mill Creek and its tributaries within Kumbrabow State Forest.

North Branch of Potomac River – Grant and Mineral counties

See the current Maryland Fishing Regulations for special regulations on the North Branch of the Potomac and Potomac rivers.

North Fork of Cherry River – Nicholas County

1.8-mile section extending upstream from Richwood's water supply dam to first state Route 39 bridge. Access by state Route 39.

North Fork of Cranberry River – Pocahontas County

0.25-mile section from the mouth upstream to the limestone treatment dam. Access by foot on National Forest Route 76.

North Fork of the South Branch – Pendleton County

0.75-mile section at the mouth of Seneca Creek near Seneca Rocks Visitors Center. Access by county Route 28/3 at junction of state Route 28 and U.S. Route 33 at Seneca Rocks.

Otter Creek and tributaries – Randolph/Tucker counties

Red Creek and tributaries – Tucker County

Upstream of county Route 45 bridge.

Seneca Creek – Pendleton County

0.20-mile section from the mouth extending upstream to the Route 28 bridge.

Slatyfork section of Elk River – Pocahontas County

4.6-mile section from the junction of Big Spring and Old Field forks downstream to the mouth of Dry Branch, including Props Run and Big Run. Access by foot from county Routes 219/2 on the north and 219/12 on the south.

South Branch of the Potomac River – Pendleton County

1-mile section beginning 2 miles below U.S. Route 220 at Eagle Rock and extending downstream. Access by county Route 2.

Tea Creek and tributaries – Pocahontas County

Upstream of Tea Creek Campground

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS CONTINUED

DELAYED HARVEST STREAMS

For waters listed below

1. Catch-and-release regulations apply: November 1 – May 15.
2. General regulations apply: May 16 – October 31.

Clear Fork of the Guyandotte River – Wyoming County

1-mile section from the R.D. Bailey WMA manager's residence downstream to the state Route 6 bridge.

Middle Wheeling Creek – Ohio County

1.2-mile section from just above the upper limits of Middle Wheeling Creek Lake upstream to mouth of Gillespie Run. Access by county Route 39/6.

Paint Creek – Fayette and Kanawha counties

From Ash Branch upstream 12.5 miles to the mouth of Milburn Creek.

Shavers Fork River – Randolph County

The 5.5-mile section extending from the mouth of Whitmeadow Run downstream to the mouth of McGee Run.

Williams River – Pocahontas County

From a signed location approximately 2 miles downstream of Tea Creek extending 2 miles downstream. Access by National Forest Route 86.

FLY FISHING ONLY

For waters listed below

1. Fishing permitted during daylight hours only.
2. Only artificial flies and streamers may be used or in possession on any of the fly fishing-only streams.
3. Only conventional fly fishing tackle may be used.
4. Open-face and closed-face spinning or spincast reels are prohibited.
5. All fish caught must be returned to water at once.
6. No trout shall be in the angler's possession while on stream sections designated as fly-fishing-only streams.
7. No lure or fly with any scent, oil, or edible enticement added onto, or impregnated into (regardless if the scent is added in the manufacturing process or applied afterward), may be used or possessed on any fly-fishing-only trout stream.
8. Powerbait, Gulp and other manufactured scented baits are considered illegal under this section and may not be used or possessed on catch-and-release streams.

Dogway Fork of the Cranberry –

Webster, Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties

Main stream and all tributaries of Dogway Fork. Access by foot on National Forest Route 78.

Edwards Run – Hampshire County

Upstream of the Edwards Run Pond 1.25 miles to the upstream boundary of Edwards Run WMA.

Milligan Creek – Greenbrier County

Marked area about 1 mile north of U.S. Route 60 from the county Route 60/15 bridge extending downstream about .33-mile to a fence crossing.

Red Run of Dry Fork – Tucker County

Main stream and all tributaries of Red Run. Access by foot from state Route 72 and National Forest Route 13.

Second Creek – Greenbrier and Monroe counties

Marked 2.4-mile section on the Monroe/Greenbrier county line at Rodgers Mill.

Spring Run – Grant County

Marked one mile section along Spring Run Road near Dorcas.

Thorn Creek – Pendleton County

Marked .5-mile section beginning approximately 3 miles above the mouth. Access is by county Route 20.

REDUCED CREEL LIMIT

Stephens Lake – Raleigh County

Daily creel limit of two trout.

REGULATIONS PUBLIC MEETINGS

WVDNR staff will be available at the locations below to discuss and take public comments for proposed 2027 regulations.

March 10, 2026

D1 - Farmington District Office
D3 - Elkins Operations Center
D5 - Forks of Coal District Office

March 12, 2026

D2 - Romney (South Branch Inn)
D4 - Beckley (Beckley Convention Center)
D6 - Parkersburg District Office

TROUT CONTINUED

TROUT STOCKING – LAKES AND PONDS

Code	No. StockingsPeriod	Code	No. StockingsPeriod	Code	No. StockingsPeriod
Q	One.....1st week of March	BW	Two each month.....February – April	V	Varies.....Varies
W	One.....January		One.....May	M	One each month.....February – May
	Two.....February	X	After April 1 or area is open to public	MJ	One each month.....January – April
	One each week.....March – May			F	One ... each week for two weeks, beginning on the third Monday of October

Lake or Pond	County	Code
Anawalt	McDowell	M
Baker	Ohio	Q
Barboursville	Cabell	MJ
Bear Rocks	Ohio	BW*
Berwind	McDowell	M
Big Run	Marion	MJ
Boley	Fayette	BW
Brandywine	Pendleton	BW-F
Brushy Fork	Pendleton	BW
Buffalo Fork	Pocahontas	BW-F
Cacapon	Morgan	W-F
Castleman Run	Brooke, Ohio	BW
Cedar Creek	Gilmer	MJ
Chief Logan	Logan	MJ
Conaway Run	Tyler	MJ
Coonskin Park	Kanawha	Q
Coopers Rock	Monongalia	BW-F
Curtisville	Marion	MJ
Deegan Lake	Harrison	MJ
Dog Run	Harrison	M
Edwards Run	Hampshire	BW
Fitzpatrick	Raleigh	MJ
Ft. Ashby	Mineral	BW
French Creek	Upshur	BW
Handley	Pocahontas	Q
Hinkle Lake	Harrison	MJ
Horse Creek	Wyoming	M
Huey Run	Marion	MJ
Hurricane Water Supply	Putnam	MJ
Indian Rocks Lake	Nicholas	M
James P. Bailey	Mercer	MJ
Jimmy Lewis	Mercer	M
Kimsey Run	Hardy	BW
Krodel	Mason	MJ
Larenim	Mineral	MJ
Laurel	Mingo	MJ

Lake or Pond	County	Code
Lick Creek	Wayne	MJ
Little Beaver	Raleigh	MJ
Logan County Airport	Logan	Q
Mannington Lake	Marion	MJ
Mason Lake	Monongalia	M
Middle Wheeling Creek	Ohio	BW
Miletree	Roane	MJ
Mill Creek	Barbour	M
Millers Fork	Wayne	Q
Mountwood	Wood	MJ
Newburg	Preston	M
New Creek Dam 14	Grant	BW-F
Pendleton	Tucker	MJ-F
Pennsboro W. S. Reservoir	Ritchie	MJ
Pipestem	Summers	M- F
Poorhouse	Berkeley	BW
Raleigh County Airport	Raleigh	Q
Ridenour	Kanawha	MJ
Rock Cliff	Hardy	X-BW-F
Rockhouse	Logan	M
Rollins	Jackson	MJ
Seneca	Pocahontas	M-F
South Mill Creek	Grant	BW
Spruce Knob	Randolph	W-F
Summit	Greenbrier	W-F
Teter Creek	Barbour	BW-F
Thomas Park	Tucker	MJ
Tomlinson Run	Hancock	MJ
Tracy	Ritchie	MJ
Tuckahoe	Greenbrier	M
Turkey Run	Jackson	MJ*
Underwood	Cabell	Q
Wallback	Clay, Roane	M
Warden	Hardy	BW
Watoga	Pocahontas	BW-F
Westover Park	Monongalia	Q

* Stocking may be suspended in 2026 due to dam maintenance.

Updated daily during Trout Stocking Season: **Hunting and Fishing Hotline (304) 558-3399** and online at **WVdnr.gov**

TROUT CONTINUED

TROUT STOCKING – STREAMS

Stream	County	Code
Anthony Creek	Greenbrier	W-F
Back Fork of Elk River	Webster	M
Back Fork of Elk River (C & R)	Webster	V
Beech Fork Lake (Tailwaters)	Wayne	M
Bullskin Run	Jefferson	BW
Big Clear Creek	Greenbrier	BW-F
Big Sandy Creek	Preston	BW
Blackwater River	Tucker	W-F
Blackwater River (C & R)	Tucker	V
Buckhannon River	Upshur	BW-F
Buffalo Creek	Brooke	BW
Buffalo Creek	Clay	M
Buffalo Creek	Logan	M
Burnsville Lake (Tailwaters)	Braxton	BW
Camp Creek	Mercer	BW
Cherry River	Nicholas	BW
Clear Fork	McDowell	M
Clear Fork	Wyoming	BW
Clear Fork (Delayed Harvest)	Wyoming	V
Clover Run	Tucker	M
Cranberry River	Nicholas, Pocahontas, Webster	W-F
Cranberry River (C & R)	Pocahontas, Webster	V
Davis Creek	Kanawha	Q
Dillions Run	Hampshire	BW
Dry Fork	McDowell	M
Dry Fork	Randolph, Tucker	BW
Dunloup Creek	Fayette	M
East Lynn Lake (Tailwaters)	Wayne	M
East River of New River	Mercer	BW
Elk River	Randolph, Webster	W-F
Elk River (C & R)	Randolph	V
Evitts Run	Jefferson	BW
Gandy Creek	Randolph	W
Glade Creek (Babcock)	Fayette	BW
Glade Creek of New River	Raleigh	BW-F
Gladly Fork	Randolph	W
Greenbrier River (Cass)	Pocahontas	M
Greenbrier River	Pocahontas	BW
Greenbrier River (Rail)	Pocahontas	V
Greenbrier River (Marlinton Section)	Pocahontas	MJ
Guyandotte River	Wyoming	BW-F
Hills Creek	Pocahontas	M
Hopkins Fork	Boone	M
Horseshoe Run	Tucker	BW
Howard Creek	Greenbrier	MJ
Indian Creek of New River	Summers	M
Kings Creek	Hancock	MJ
Knapps Creek	Pocahontas	W-F
Laurel Creek of New River	Fayette	M
Laurel Creek of Cherry River	Greenbrier, Nicholas	M
Laurel Fork	Randolph	W
Laurel Fork	Webster	BW
Laurel Fork	Wyoming	Q
Left Fork of Buckhannon River (Rail)	Upshur	V
Left Fork of Holly River	Webster	BW
Left Fork of Right Fork Buckhannon	Randolph, Upshur	BW
Little Clear Creek	Greenbrier	BW
Little Kanawha River (Headwaters)	Upshur	M
Little River (West Fork)	Pocahontas	W
Lost River	Hardy	BW-F
Marsh Fork	Raleigh	M
Mash Fork	Mercer	BW-Q
Meadow Creek	Greenbrier	M
Meadow Creek	Summers	M
Middle Creek	Berkeley	BW

Stream	County	Code
Middle Fork	Barbour, Randolph, Upshur	M
Middle Wheeling Creek (Delayed Harvest)	Ohio	V
Mill Creek	Berkeley	BW
Mill Creek	Fayette	M
Mill Creek	Hampshire	BW
Moore's Run	Hardy	M
New Creek	Mineral	BW
North Branch of Potomac River	Mineral	M-F
North Bend Lake (Tailwaters)	Ritchie	MJ
North Fork of Fishing Creek	Wetzel	MJ
North River	Hardy	BW
North Fork of Cherry River	Greenbrier, Nicholas	BW
North Fork of Cherry River (C & R)	Nicholas	V
North Fork of Lunice Creek	Grant	BW
North Fork of Patterson Creek	Grant	BW
North Fork of South Branch	Grant, Pendleton	W-F
North Fork of South Branch (C & R)	Pendleton	V
Opequon Creek	Berkeley, Jefferson	W-F
Paint Creek (Delayed Harvest)	Fayette, Kanawha	V
Paint Creek	Fayette	BW
Panther Creek	McDowell	M
Paw Paw Creek	Marion	BW
Pinnacle Creek	Wyoming	BW-F
Pond Fork	Boone	BW-F
Potts Creek	Monroe	M
R.D. Bailey Lake (Tailwaters)	Mingo, Wyoming	BW-F
Rhine Creek	Preston	M
Rich Creek	Monroe	M
Right Fork of Buckhannon River	Upshur	M
Right Fork of Middle Fork	Upshur	M
Rocky Marsh Run	Jefferson	BW
Second Creek (C & R)	Greenbrier, Monroe	V
Shavers Fork (Delayed Harvest)	Randolph	V
Shavers Fork (Rail)	Randolph	V
Shavers Fork (Lower Section)	Randolph	W-F
Shavers Fork (Upper Section)	Randolph	W-F
South Branch (Petersburg)	Grant, Hardy	MJ
South Branch (Franklin Section)	Pendleton	W-F
South Branch (Smoke Hole Section)	Pendleton	W-F
South Branch (C & R)	Pendleton	V
South Fork of Cherry River	Greenbrier, Nicholas	BW
South Fork of Cranberry River	Pocahontas	MJ
South Fork of Fishing Creek	Wetzel	MJ
Spruce Laurel Fork	Boone	M
Stonewall Jackson Lake (Tailwaters)	Lewis	BW
Sugar Creek	Webster	M
Summersville Lake (Tailwaters)	Nicholas	BW-F
Sutton Lake (Tailwaters)	Braxton	BW-F
Tilhance Creek	Berkeley	BW
Tomlinson Run	Hancock	MJ
Trout Run	Hardy	BW
Tuscarora Creek	Berkeley	BW
Twelvepole Creek /Wayne Dam	Wayne	MJ
Tygart Lake (Tailwaters)	Taylor	M-F
Tygart Valley River (Headwaters)	Randolph	BW-F
Waite's Run	Hardy	BW
West Fork of Greenbrier River	Pocahontas	W-F
West Fork of Twelvepole Creek	Wayne	M
Wheeling Creek	Marshall, Ohio	BW-F
Whiteday Creek	Marion, Monongalia	BW
Williams River	Pocahontas, Webster	W-F
Williams River (Delayed Harvest)	Pocahontas	V

TROUT CONTINUED

CHILDREN AND CLASS Q FISHING AREAS

For waters listed below

1. Areas are managed under special regulations March-May.
2. During this period fishing is restricted to children 14 years of age or under and to people with disabilities holding a Class Q permit.
3. Fishing permitted during daylight hours only.
4. Creel limit is four trout.
5. Another person may assist with baiting hooks and removing fish.

Lakes

Baker Lake – Ohio County

3-acre lake in Bear Rocks Lake WMA. Access by county Route 41/6.

Bishop Knob Pond – Webster County

2-acre lake between Cranberry and Williams rivers. Access by Forest Road 101.

Coonskin Park Pond – Kanawha County

2.7-acre pond in Coonskin Park. Access is off I-77, Exit 1, U.S. Route 119 north to Henry Shores Drive.

Handley Pond – Pocahontas County

5-acre pond on the Handley WMA. Access by county Routes 17 and 17/1 that intersect U.S. Route 219 at Edray north of Marlinton.

Logan County Airport Pond

1-acre pond. Access by county Route 119/8 off state Route 17.

Millers Fork Pond – Wayne County

5-acre pond on the Beech Fork Lake WMA. Access by county Route 22 off county Route 17.

Raleigh County Airport Pond

1-acre pond at the entrance to the Raleigh County Airport. Access by county Route 9/9 off I-64 at Airport Exit 125-B.

Underwood Lake – Cabell County

1-acre pond on Huntington YMCA property. Access by state Route 2.

Westover Park Pond – Monongalia County

1-acre pond located at the Westover Park just off U.S. Route 19 approximately .5 mile east of I-79 Westover exit.

Streams

Davis Creek – Kanawha County

From Route 23 bridge near the entrance of Kanawha State Forest upstream including all tributaries (17.2 miles).

Laurel Fork – Wyoming County

300-yard section of Laurel Fork in Gilliland Park in Oceana. Access is by Route 10.

Mash Fork of Camp Creek – Mercer County

100-yard section of Mash Fork in Camp Creek State Park/ State Forest at Mash Fork Waterfalls. Access by county Route 19/5 from I-77, exit 20.

SUNFISH

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

SIZE LIMIT AND CREEL LIMIT

Mason Lake (Monongalia County) and Teter Creek Lake (Barbour County)

10-fish daily creel limit, of which only five fish may be 8 inches or longer for bluegill and all other sunfish species (e.g., pumpkinseed, green sunfish, hybrid sunfish, etc.) in aggregate.

FISH HANDLING AND RELEASE

When practicing catch-and-release fishing, survival of the released fish can be greatly enhanced by following these simple guidelines.

1. Time is important — play and release the fish as quickly as possible to reduce unnecessary stress.
2. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible and use a pair of forceps or needle-nosed pliers to remove the hook.
3. Handle the fish with bare, wet hands. Do not squeeze the fish, put your fingers in the eyes or gills, or cause scale loss.
4. When releasing the fish, hold it gently in the water until the fish is ready to swim off on its own.
5. You may take time to snap a quick photo of your catch before releasing it.
6. To release a deeply hooked or gill-hooked fish, cut the line 5 to 6 inches above the lure.

SPECIAL REGULATION AREAS

CATCH-AND-RELEASE

New River (5-mile section from Meadow Creek public access site upstream to base of Sandstone Falls in Raleigh and Summers counties), as well as **Charles Fork and Dog Run lakes**

1. All walleye caught must be returned to the water at once.
2. No walleye shall be in the angler's possession while on the waters designated as catch-and-release.

MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT


Monongahela River, Tygart River (from the mouth upstream to Valley Falls) and **West Fork River** (downstream of Stonewall Jackson Lake Dam), as well as **Burnsville, Stephens and Stonecoal lakes**


1. All walleye under 15 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of eight walleye.


Ohio River (including Ohio River tributary reciprocal boundaries) and the **Kanawha River** upstream to the Winfield Lock and Dam

1. All walleye under 18 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of two walleye.

LAKES

 8/day limit;
20- to 30-inch no harvest;
1 fish over 30"

 2/day limit;
20- to 30-inch no harvest;
1 fish over 30"


 8/day limit; 15-inch minimum


 Dams

 **NO HARVEST LOCATIONS**

STREAMS

 2/day limit; 18-inch minimum

 2/day limit; 20- to 30-inch no harvest; 1 fish over 30"

 8/day limit; 20- to 30-inch no harvest; 1 fish over 30"

 8/day limit; 15-inch minimum

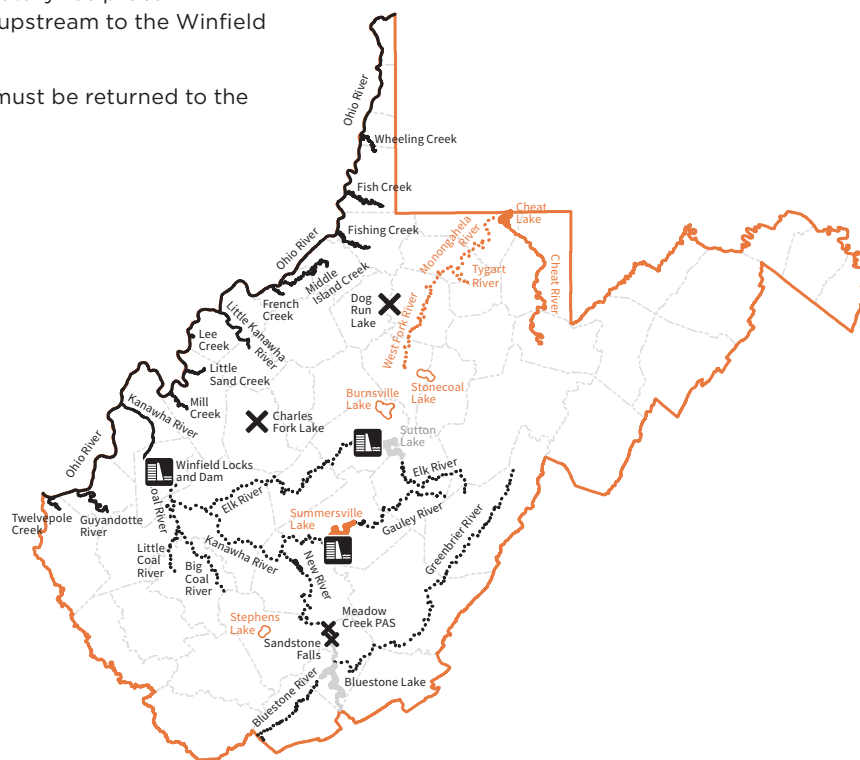
SLOT LIMIT

Bluestone, Coal, Elk (including Sutton Lake), Greenbrier, Gauley (excluding Summersville Lake-Summersville Dam upstream to mouth of Persinger Creek), **Kanawha** (upstream of Winfield Locks and Dam) and **New** (excluding no-harvest area near Sandstone) **rivers, including all tributaries**

1. All walleye from 20 to 30 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of two walleye, only one of which may be over 30 inches long.

Summersville Lake (Summersville Dam upstream to mouth of Persinger Creek) and **Cheat Lake** and the entire length of the **Cheat River**

1. All walleye from 20 to 30 inches long must be returned to the water at once.
2. Daily creel limit of eight walleye, only one of which may be over 30 inches long.



FREE FISHING DAYS

June 13-14, 2026

Take your son, daughter or grandchild to your favorite fishing spot. No license required on these days.

OTHER SPECIAL REGULATIONS

DIXON LAKE (PEDLAR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA)

CATCH-AND-RELEASE ALL SPECIES

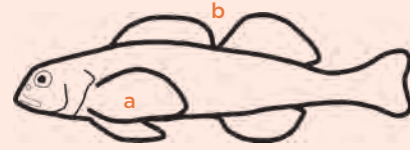
1. All species of fish must be returned to the water at once.
2. No fish shall be in the angler's possession (creel limit 0) while fishing in designated catch-and-release lakes and streams.
3. Use of live minnows is prohibited.
4. Use of barbed hooks is prohibited.

BAITFISH REGULATIONS

1. It is illegal to possess any darter in West Virginia

Darters are small fishes (1-5" in length) that belong to the perch family with yellow perch and walleye. Although much smaller, darters share similar characteristics to their gamefish cousins, such as having two separate dorsal (top) fins that are approximately equal in length. Anyone collecting live baitfish is advised to inspect their catch for darters. Generally, darters will stay on the bottom of the bait bucket and do not swim freely in the water column. Any fishes displaying this bucket behavior and possessing two dorsal fins should be either returned at once into the waters where they were collected or destroyed immediately. Darter colorations can range from brightly colored to drab brown. See examples of regional darter species here: (efish.fishwild.vt.edu/families/percidae.html). When in doubt, throw it out!

HOW TO IDENTIFY DARTERS



- a. Have relatively large pectoral fins compared to body size
- b. Have two dorsal fins that are approximately equal in length

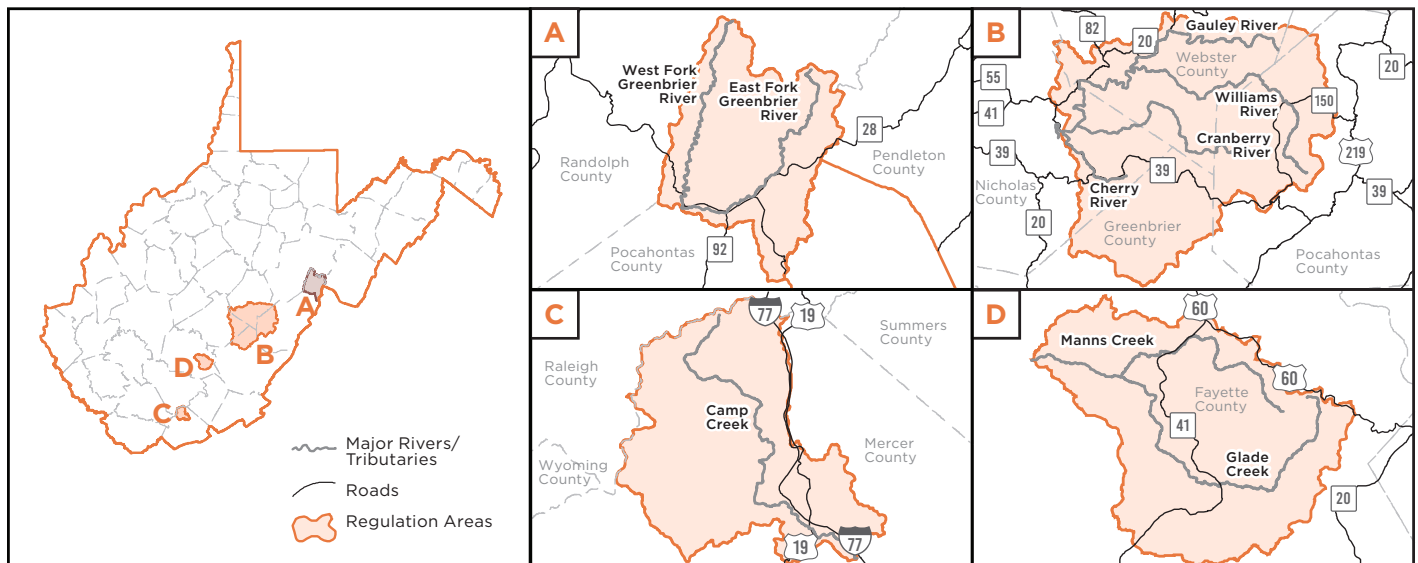
2. Zero possession limit for all non-game fishes (including their collection for any use); and no fish, including dead/packaged minnows, may be used as bait in the following waters:

- A. East and West Forks of the Greenbrier River including all tributaries.
- B. Gauley River upstream of the Route 55/20 bridge (i.e., Curtin, W.Va.) including the Cherry, Williams, Cranberry, and upper Gauley rivers and all respective tributaries.
- C. Camp Creek (Mercer County) and all tributaries.
- D. Manns Creek including Glade Creek in Babcock State Park and all tributaries.

NOTE: These areas are delineated on the maps above.

3. It is illegal to release any fish into public waters other than the location where it was captured.

DO NOT release unused baitfish.



NOTE: Baitfish regulation 2 (see above) applies to the shaded areas illustrated on the maps above.

OTHER SPECIAL REGULATIONS CONTINUED

BAITFISH REGULATIONS CONTINUED

CRAYFISH

1. A fishing license is required to catch or use crayfish from public lands as fishing bait.
2. Licensed anglers may take or have in his or her possession no more than 50 crayfish for use as fishing bait.
3. A seine, throw net or minnow trap may be used to obtain crayfish for use as fishing bait provided the seine, throw net or minnow trap meet certain specifications. (See Seining for Aquatic Life/Minnow Traps on page 13.)
4. A crayfish may be taken by hand for use as fishing bait from the stream it was captured.
5. It is illegal to release any aquatic organism including crayfish, alive or dead, used or unused, into public waters other than the location where it was captured, pursuant to W.Va. Code 20-2-64.

SALAMANDERS

A person may take the following salamanders year-round for use as fishing bait.

Possession Limit: 10 in aggregate Season: Open	
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Northern dusky salamander	<i>Desmognathus fuscus</i>
Seal salamander	<i>Desmognathus monticola</i>
Allegheny dusky salamander	<i>Desmognathus ochrophaeus</i>
Black Mountain salamander	<i>Desmognathus welteri</i>
Northern spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus</i>
Kentucky spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus p. duryi</i>
Northern two-lined salamander	<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>
Southern two-lined salamander	<i>Eurycea cirrigera</i>
Eastern long-tailed salamander	<i>Eurycea l. longicauda</i>

Licensed bait dealers may possess 250 salamanders in total aggregate from species listed in table.

A person may have in his or her possession no more than 50 salamanders which are purchased from a licensed dealer and accompanied by a bill of sale pursuant to W. Va. Code of State Rules, Title 58 Series 62, Bait Fish Rule.

TURTLES AND FROGS

The take or possession of any native West Virginia reptile or amphibian species not listed hereafter is prohibited pursuant to W.Va. Code 20-2-4.

Turtles

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Snapping turtle	<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>
Spiny softshell	<i>Apalone s. spinifera</i>

Turtles may be taken by gigging, snagging or snaring from Jan. 1 through May 15 and from July 15 through Dec. 31.

The daily creel limit for snapping turtles and spiny softshells is 10, with a possession limit of 20.

Frogs and Toads

Residents and nonresidents may take or possess green and American bullfrogs.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
American bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>
Green frog	<i>Lithobates clamitans</i>

Frog season opens at 9 p.m. on the Saturday nearest to June 15 and closes at midnight on July 31.

The daily creel limit for American bullfrog and green frog is 10, with a possession limit of 20.

For more information about West Virginia Reptile and Amphibian Regulations, go to **WVdnr.gov**.

OUTDOOR FUN FOR YOUTH IN WEST VIRGINIA

Get involved.

State Conservation Camp – June annually
wvconservationcamp.com

Junior Conservation Camp – June annually
dep.wv.gov/environmental-advocate/YEP/Pages/YouthConservationCamp.aspx

Free Fishing Days – June 13-14, 2026

Trout Unlimited Trout in the Classroom Program
tu.org/conservation/outreach-education

NRA Youth Shooting Events
explore.nra.org/interests/youth-interests/

Bass Federation Youth Events
bassfederation.com/tbf-youth/

National Wild Turkey Federation
nwtf.org/programs/jakes-program

OTHER SPECIAL REGULATIONS CONTINUED

OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES

DIAMOND DARTER AND CANDY DARTER

1. The diamond darter and candy darter are small fish found in the perch family and are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
2. For more information, go to USFWS site at [fws.gov/species/search](https://www.fws.gov/species/search)

PADDLEFISH AND STURGEON

All fish must be returned to the water immediately.

ALL MUSSEL SPECIES

It is illegal to possess mussels or any parts thereof.

WANTON WASTE

It is illegal for any person to cause through carelessness, neglect or otherwise to let any edible portion of any game fish to go to waste needlessly. The edible portion is the fillet meat from the gill plate to the tail fin. Edible meat does not include bones, sinew, viscera, meat from the head or neck, meat that has been damaged or rendered inedible by method of taking, or meat that is reasonably lost as a result of boning or close trimming of bones.

Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500, or confinement in jail not less than 10 days nor more than 100 days, or both fined and confined; suspension of hunting and fishing license for a period of two years; and a applicable forfeiture and replacement provisions in Chapter 20, Article 2, Section 5a of the code.

FISHING TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS

A permit is required from the Division of Natural Resources to hold any fishing tournament or big fish contest. Tournament policy and application are available online under FISHING FORMS at WVDnr.gov/fishing-regulations.

Make tournament permit requests to:

WVDNR Wildlife Resources Section

State Capitol Complex, Building 4
112 California Avenue, Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Call (304) 558-6200 or send email to dnrfishtournament@wv.gov for information.



HUNTING & FISHING DAY


September 19, 2026
Stonewall Resort State Park
Roanoke, West Virginia

Join us this fall for West Virginia's biggest hunting and fishing show at Stonewall Resort State Park — an action-packed day of hands-on outdoor recreation demonstrations and the Outdoor Youth Challenge, which gives kids a chance to win a lifetime hunting and fishing license. Perfect for hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts of any age.

Don't miss out!

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OTHER METHODS OF FISHING

Except as authorized on pages 13-14, it is illegal to take fish by any means other than by rod, line and hooks.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO:

- use a firearm, crossbow, dynamite or any like explosive, or a poisonous mixture placed in the water for the purpose of killing or taking fish, frogs, aquatic turtles or other forms of aquatic life.
- use any free-floating device (jug fishing) used to deploy a hook and line.
- fish with more than two (2) lines or poles in an impoundment stocked with trout by the WVDNR from January 1 – May 31.
- stock fish in the waters of West Virginia. Please do not release unused bait into West Virginia waters.
- sell any fish for profit.
- sell or give any fish caught in public waters to a pay pond.
- improperly dispose of, leave on a bank or in the water fish taken while bow fishing.
- fish within 200 feet of Division of Natural Resources personnel who are stocking fish in public waters.
- use game fish as bait unless that game fish was legally caught with a rod, line and hooks or purchased from a licensed bait dealer. See Special Regulations for possession rules.

BOW FISHING

Bow fishing for game fish is not permitted. A complete list of gamefish is on the back cover of the regulations. Only common carp, bighead carp, silver carp and grass carp may be taken by bow year-round; smallmouth buffalo are not carp and cannot be shot year-round. Other nongame fish may be taken by bow during all months of the year except May and June. All anglers must have a valid fishing license in order to fish using a bow. All persons using a bow to fish must observe all applicable fishing regulations. Fish taken by bow fishing may not be returned to the water or left on the bank.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO:

- use an arrow having an explosive head or shaft or an arrow dipped in or smeared with poison or other chemicals.

DIPPING

Dipping for nongame fish is legal year-round with a valid West Virginia fishing license. A dip net may not exceed 36 square feet in overall area, and its mesh may not be smaller than one-fourth (1/4) inch.

GIGGING, SNAGGING AND SNARING

Suckers, carp, fallfish and creek chubs may be taken by snaring year-round. Nongame fish, certain turtles (see **Turtles and Frogs** regulations on page 11) and eels may be taken by gigging, snagging, or snaring from January 1 – May 15 and from July 15 – December 31, except that snagging and gigging shall be prohibited within 100 feet of all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Locks and Dams and their appurtenances. Snagging of game fish is prohibited.

HAND-FISHING FOR CATFISH

It is legal to hand-fish or “noodle” only for catfish in West Virginia public waters from June 15 to Aug. 31 with fishing permitted from sunrise to sunset. See page 3 for more details.

ICE FISHING

Holes cut for ice fishing must be no larger than 10 inches in diameter. This applies to public waters where ice fishing is allowed.

SEINING FOR AQUATIC LIFE/MINNOW TRAPS

Game fish may not be seined or trapped. A seine may be used to obtain minnows for use as bait provided the seine is not longer than eight feet nor deeper than four feet. A thrownet may be used provided the radius is no larger than 12 feet and mesh size no larger than one (1) inch. Minnow traps may be used provided the openings are not larger than one inch in diameter. A person may have in his possession no more than 50 minnows nor more than a total of 100 aquatic animal life (see **Salamanders and Turtles and Frogs** on page 11) unless obtained from a licensed dealer and a bill of sale is provided. A valid West Virginia fishing license is needed to collect minnows and other aquatic life. Minnow traps must be tagged with a waterproof, legible tag bearing either the owner’s name and address or his or her WVDNR identification number. Minnow traps must also be checked once every 24 hours.

HATCHERY FISH REMOVAL

IT IS ILLEGAL TO:

- take fish, frogs, aquatic turtles or other aquatic life from a state fish hatchery.

OTHER METHODS OF FISHING CONTINUED

TROT LINES AND DROPLINES

Trotlines and droplines must be attached to the bank or a tree thereon, must bear an identification tag that is legible and waterproof, and must be attended every 24 hours. The tag must either bear the owner's name and address or his or her WVDNR identification number. Wire or cable lines and hooks with more than one point are prohibited.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO:

- fish with trotlines and droplines in state-managed impoundments except Stonecoal, Hawks Nest, Mt. Storm, Cheat and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes (See chart on pages 16-17 for state-managed lakes.)
- attach a trotline to public piers and docks or within 50 feet of dam appurtenances
- use droplines on the Elk River, Hughes River, Little Kanawha River, Middle Island Creek, and South Fork of Hughes River

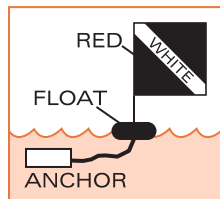
SPEARFISHING AND DIVING

1. Nongame fish may be taken by spearfishing from July 1 - September 30 during daylight hours only. Gamefish are not permitted to be taken while spear fishing. A complete list of gamefish is on the back cover of the regulations.

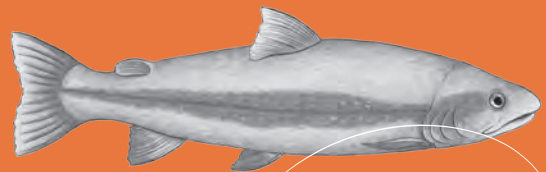
2. Spearfishing is prohibited on the following:

→ Elk River, from Sutton Dam downstream to the U.S. Route 19 bridge at Sutton;

→ New River, from Bluestone Dam downstream to the lower bridge at Hinton.



3. Spearguns may be discharged only beneath the surface of the water.
4. It is illegal to use a bolt having an explosive head or shaft or a bolt dipped in or smeared with poison or other chemicals.
5. A diver may not spearfish in such a manner as to interfere with other anglers.
6. A diver may not spearfish in heavily traveled boat lanes, marked swimming areas or marked waterskiing areas.
7. "Diver down flag" shall be a red field of not less than 10 inches x 10 inches dimension with a white diagonal stripe not less than 1.5 inches wide running upper left to lower right. The flag shall be displayed at all times and be affixed to a separate flotation device. No such flag shall be attached to any navigational device or placed so as to obstruct boat traffic. Divers must come up within 100 feet of flag. All powerboats will remain a minimum distance of 100 feet away from the marker flag. The top of the flag shall be at least 3 feet above the surface of the water.
8. Fish taken by spearfishing may not be returned to the water or left on the bank.



GOLD RUSH

WEST VIRGINIA

50,000 GOLDEN TROUT

100 TAGGED TROUT

11 LUCKY WINNERS

West Virginia's Gold Rush returns April 2026 with two weeks of epic stockings and plenty of chances to reel in the catch of a lifetime and win prizes.

JOIN THE GOLD RUSH GIVEAWAY

1. Buy your fishing license and trout stamp.
2. Catch a tagged golden trout.
3. Submit your tag number and share a photo with your catch.

Learn more at WVDnr.gov/gold-rush.

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WHERE TO FISH

FAVORITE FISHING WATERS

ALL BASS

Hybrid Striped Bass/Striped Bass

Kanawha River, Monongahela River and Ohio River dam tailwaters; Beech Fork, Bluestone, Mt. Storm and R.D. Bailey lakes.

Favorite baits

White jigs, silver spoons, chicken livers, shad imitation lures, live minnows and umbrella rigs.

Largemouth Bass

Beech Fork, Bluestone, Burnsville, Cheat, East Lynn, Elk Fork, Monongahela, O'Brien, R.D. Bailey, Stonewall Jackson and Sutton lakes; Ohio River backwaters; most farm ponds and state-managed lakes, including South Mill Creek and Kimsey Run lakes; Upper Mud Reservoir.

Favorite baits

Minnows, night crawlers, crayfish, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, jigs, soft plastic and most top-water lures.

Smallmouth Bass

Summersville and Tygart lakes. Buckhannon, Cacapon, Cheat, Elk, Greenbrier, Guyandotte, New, upper Ohio, South Branch of Potomac, Shenandoah, Tug Fork and Tygart rivers.

Favorite tackle and baits

Spinning tackle of medium-light and ultra-light weight using spinners and other artificial lures resembling minnows, night crawlers, hellgrammites, crayfish, crankbaits, jigs, and numerous soft plastic and top-water baits.

White Bass

Cheat and Tygart lakes; Ohio, Kanawha and Monongahela rivers and tributaries.

Favorite baits

Jigs, crankbaits, spinners, spoons, streamers and live minnows.

CHANNEL CATFISH

Beech Fork, Bluestone, Cheat, East Lynn, Burnsville, Stonecoal and Stonewall Jackson lakes; Kanawha, Monongahela, Shenandoah, South Branch of the Potomac, Ohio and West Fork rivers. Most warmwater streams and state-managed impoundments.

Favorite baits

Minnows, night crawlers, chicken livers, cut shad, cut bluegill and other natural baits.

CRAPPIE

Bluestone, Burnsville, Cheat, East Lynn, North Bend, R.D. Bailey, Stonewall Jackson, Sutton, Summersville, Tygart and state-managed lakes, including Sleepy Creek and Plum Orchard lakes; Ohio and Kanawha river backwaters.

Favorite baits

Minnows, jigs and minnow-imitating lures.

MUSKELLUNGE

Burnsville, East Lynn, Kimsey Run, North Bend, Stonecoal, Stonewall Jackson and Woodrum lakes; Buckhannon, Elk (downstream of Sutton), Gauley, Hughes, Little Kanawha, Monongahela, Mud, New, Potomac main stem, Tygart and West Fork rivers; Dunkard, Middle Island, Mill, Sandy and 18-Mile creeks.

Favorite tackle and baits

Bait casting reels using minnow imitating lures; glide baits and jerkbaits. Large spinners are also excellent choices.

TROUT - YEAR-ROUND

Blackwater, Cranberry, Elk above Webster Springs, Glade Creek of New River, South Branch of the Potomac near Franklin, North Fork of the South Branch, Shavers Fork of Cheat and Williams rivers.

WALLEYE

Cheat, Jennings Randolph, Mount Storm, Summersville, Stonecoal, and Tygart lakes; Elk, lower Gauley and New rivers; Kanawha, Monongahela and Ohio river dam tailwaters; and Stephens Lake.

Favorite baits

Live minnows, night crawlers, jigs, minnow-imitating crankbaits and spinners.

ADA-ACCESSIBLE FISHING AREAS

For more information on developed sites contact:

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Section
State Capitol Complex, Building 4
112 California Avenue, Charleston, WV 25305

(304) 558-6200 or WVdnr.gov

WHERE TO FISH CONTINUED

KEY

- = the listed feature or activity is available or permitted.

A blank space indicates the feature or activity IS NOT available or permitted.

LAKE OR POND

* = National Forest Stamp required

COE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lake

ACCESSIBILITY

USE OF LIVE MINNOWS

NIGHT FISHING

C = registered campers only

P = permit required

CAMPING

L = limited primitive

P = permit required

BOATING

NV = no vessels

NM = no motor boats

E = electric motors only

U = unlimited h.p.

5 = 5 h.p. maximum

10 = 10 h.p. maximum (Larger motors must have props removed or motor tilted to the maximum limit.)

* = contains no-wake zones, speed zones and/or other restricted areas (At Upper Mud Lake, all motors greater than 10 h.p. must operate at no wake speed at all times.)






f = fee charged for private boats,
May 30 - Labor Day

Rental Boats - check with individual facilities






A USCG approved life preserver is required for each occupant of ALL BOATS. See West Virginia Boating Regulations. All boats propelled by machinery must be licensed.

BOATING REMINDERS

All motorized boats (including electric) must be titled and registered with the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles, not the Division of Natural Resources. In addition, motorized boats must meet lighting, sound emitting device and other requirements. For more information about boating rules and laws, go to WVdnr.gov/lands-waters/boating.

Lake or Pond	County		Acres				
Anawalt	McDowell	•	6		•		NV
Baker	Ohio	•	2		•		NV
Barboursville	Cabell	•	14			P	NV
Bear Rocks Lake	Ohio	•	10		•		E
Beech Fork	COE Wayne	•	720	•	•	P	10*
Berwind	McDowell	•	17		•	P	E
Big Ditch	Webster	•	65		•		E
Big Run	Marion		7	•	•		E
Bluestone	COE Summers	•	2,040	•	•	P	U*
Boley	Fayette	•	17		•	P	E
Brandywine*	Pendleton	•	9		•	P	E
Brushy Fork	Pendleton		23		•		E
Buffalo Fork*	Pocahontas	•	22		•		E
Burnsville	COE Braxton	•	968	•	•	P	U*
Cacapon	Morgan	•	12		•		NMf
Cameron	Marshall		7	•	•		NV
Camp Run*	Pendleton		9		•		E
Castleman Run	Brooke, Ohio	•	14	•	•		E
Cedar Creek	Gilmer		10	•	•	P	NV
Charles Fork	Roane	•	65		•		E
Cheat Lake	Monongalia	•	1,730	•	•		U*
Chief Cornstalk	Mason	•	4		•	P	E
Chief Logan	Logan	•	6		•		NV
Conaway Run	Tyler	•	31		•	P	E
Coonskin Park	Kanawha	•	2				NV
Coopers Rock	Monongalia	•	5		•	P	NV
Curtisville	Marion	•	29	•	•	P	E
Deegan	Harrison	•	15	•			E
Dents Run	Marion		29		•		E
Dixon	Monongalia	•	6		•		NV
Doe Run	Taylor		18	•	•	P	E
Dog Run	Harrison		23	•			E
Dunkard Fork	Marshall		30	•	•		E
East Lynn	COE Wayne	•	1,005	•	•	P	U*
Edwards Run	Hampshire		1		•	L	NV
Elk Fork	Jackson	•	209	•	•		10
Elk Two Mile (Site12)	Kanawha		2				NV
Elk Two Mile (Site13)	Kanawha		3				NV
Elk Two Mile (Site14)	Kanawha		3				NV
Elkwater Fork	Randolph		50	•	•		U
Fairfax	Preston		47	•	•		E
Fitzpatrick	Raleigh		5		P	P	NV
Flat Run	Marion		5	•	•		E
Flegal	Monongalia		43				NM
Ft. Ashby	Mineral		15	•	•		E
French Creek	Upshur		2				NV
Frozenscamp Left Fork	Jackson		16		•		E
Frozenscamp Right Fork	Jackson		19		•		E
Handley Pond	Pocahontas	•	6		•	P	E
Hawks Nest	Fayette		234	•	•		U*
Hinkle	Harrison	•	6	•			E
Horse Creek	Wyoming		8		•		E
Huey Run	Marion		18	•	•		E
Hurricane W.S. Reservoir	Putnam	•	13		•		NV
Indian Rock	Nicholas	•	3				NV
James P. Bailey	Mercer	•	28				NV
Jennings Randolph	COE Mineral		952	•	•	P	U*
Jimmy Lewis	Mercer	•	13		•		E
Kee Reservoir	Mercer		62		•		E
Kimsey Run	Hardy	•	47		•		E
Krodel	Mason	•	21	•		P	E
Larenim	Mineral	•	9	•			NM
Laurel	Mingo	•	22		•		E
Lick Creek	Wayne		4	•	•		NV

WHERE TO FISH CONTINUED

Lake or Pond	County		Acres				
Little Beaver	Raleigh	●	18		●	P	E
Logan County Airport	Logan	●	1				NV
Mannington	Marion		10	●			E
Mason Lake	Monongalia	●	9	●	●		E
McClintic Ponds	Mason	●	211		●		E
Middle Wheeling Creek	Ohio		12	●	●		E
Miletree	Roane		10		●		E
Mill Creek	Barbour	●	9				E
Millers Fork	Wayne	●	5				NV
Moncove	Monroe	●	93		●	P	5
Mount Storm	Grant		1,170	●	●		U*
Mountain Valley	Summers		38				E
Mountwood	Wood	●	41		●	P	E
Newburg Lake	Preston		6				NV
New Creek Dam 14	Grant		39		●		E
North Bend Lake	Ritchie	●	235	●	●	P	10
North Bend SP Pond	Ritchie		1.5		C	P	NV
O'Brien	Jackson		197	●	●		10
Parker Hollow	Hardy		34		●		E
Pendleton	Tucker		10			P	NM
Pennsboro W.S. Reservoir	Ritchie		9		●		E
Pettigrew	Kanawha	●	5				NM
Pipestem	Summers	●	18		●	P	E
Plum Orchard	Fayette	●	175		●	P	U*
Poorhouse Pond	Berkeley		3				NV
R.D. Bailey	COE Mingo, Wyoming		630	●	●	P	U*
Raleigh County Airport	Raleigh	●	2				NV
Ridenour	Kanawha	●	23		●		NM
Rock Cliff*	Hardy	●	12		C	P	E
Rockhouse	Logan	●	11		●		E
Rollins	Jackson	●	41		●		E
Salt Lick Pond 9	Braxton		15	●	●		E
Seneca	Pocahontas	●	6		●	P	E
Sherwood*	Greenbrier		161		P	P	E
Silcott Fork	Roane		17				NV
Sleepy Creek	Berkeley	●	209	●	●	P	E
South Mill Creek	Grant	●	40		●		E
Spruce Knob*	Randolph	●	26		●	P	E
Stephens	Raleigh	●	276	●	P		U*
Stonecoal	Lewis, Upshur	●	539	●	●	P	10*
Stonewall Jackson	COE Lewis	●	2,650	●	●	P	U*
Summersville	COE Nicholas	●	2,790	●	●	P	U*
Summit*	Greenbrier	●	37		●	P	E
Sutton	COE Braxton	●	1,440	●	●	P	U*
Teter Creek	Barbour	●	36		●	P	E
Thomas Park	Tucker		22	●	●	L	E
Tomlinson Run	Hancock		23	●	●	P	E
Tracy	Ritchie		12		●	L	E
Trout Pond	Hardy		1		●	P	NV
Tuckahoe	Greenbrier	●	43		●		E
Turkey Run	Marshall		15	●	●		E
Tygart	COE Taylor	●	1,750	●	●	P	U*
Tygart River Backwaters	Randolph	●	58	●	●		E
Underwood Lake	Cabell	●	1				NV
Upper Cover Run	Hardy		6		●		E
Upper Deckers	Preston		10				E
Upper Mud	Lincoln	●	237	●	●		U*
Wallback	Clay	●	14				E
Warden	Hardy	●	46		●		E
Watoga	Pocahontas	●	12		●	P	E
Westover Park	Monongalia	●	1				NV
Whetstone	Marion		8	●	●		E
Woodrum	Jackson	●	237	●	●		10

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING PUBLIC USE OF WEST VIRGINIA FISHING AND BOATING ACCESS SITES

Article 1, Section 7, Chapter 20 of the Code of West Virginia, 1961 as amended, the following rules and regulations govern public use of all fishing and boating access sites administered by the Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS:

- Public boating and fishing access facilities shall be used solely for the purpose of launching and retrieving watercraft or fishing from the shore. Fishing from courtesy docks or ramps is not permitted. No other use of access sites is allowed.
- After launching, vehicles shall be parked in available parking spaces.
- Any law enforcement officer acting under proper authority may prohibit an individual from launching a watercraft from any public boating and fishing access sites.
- The following are prohibited at fishing and boating access sites:**
 - Consumption of alcoholic beverages or possession of an open container of alcoholic beverages.
 - Swimming or bathing.**
 - Camping.
 - Open fires.
 - Trash disposal except where trash receptacles are provided.
 - Discharge of firearms, fireworks and explosives.
 - Leaving unattended watercraft.
 - Commercial use except as authorized by the Director.
 - Parking of any vehicle or the mooring of any watercraft in such a manner as to obstruct any avenue of ingress or egress, except for the purpose of launching.

Any person violating any of these rules and regulations shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the Code of West Virginia and such other laws as may be applicable.

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, accommodations, services and programs to all persons without regard to sex, race, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, disability or other protected group status. The Division of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity employer.

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WHERE TO FISH CONTINUED

FLOAT TRIPS



Many of West Virginia's streams offer excellent float trip fishing when water conditions are suitable. Some popular trips are listed below.

CACAPON RIVER

From	To	Miles
Wardensville.....	Capon Lake.....	8.5
Capon Lake.....	Yellow Springs.....	2.5
Yellow Springs.....	Yellow Springs North.....	5.0
Yellow Springs North.....	Rt. 127 Bridge.....	19.0
Rt. 127 Bridge.....	Cacapon Crossings.....	9.0
Cacapon Crossings.....	Fishers Ford Bridge.....	18.0
Fishers Ford Bridge*.....	Cacapon Power Plant.....	8.5
Cacapon Power Plant.....	Great Cacapon.....	2.8

* Contains dam to be portaged.

CHEAT RIVER

From	To	Miles
Hendricks.....	Parsons.....	3.2
Parsons.....	Holly Meadows.....	3.1
Holly Meadows.....	St. George.....	8.1
St. George.....	Hannahsville Ford.....	8.4
Hannahsville Ford.....	Riverview Lounge.....	12.4
Riverview Lounge.....	Rowlesburg.....	3.3

GREENBRIER RIVER

From	To	Miles
Renick.....	Anthony Bridge.....	10.0
Anthony Bridge.....	Caldwell.....	12.7
Caldwell.....	Ronceverte.....	6.0
Ronceverte.....	Fort Spring.....	8.5
Fort Spring*.....	Alderson.....	6.0
Alderson.....	Talcott Bridge.....	13.0
Talcott Bridge**.....	Barger Springs.....	4.5
Barger Springs.....	Willow Wood Bridge.....	6.0

* Contains rapids for experienced canoeists only.

** Contains two falls to be portaged.

NEW RIVER*

From	To	Miles
Shanklins Ferry.....	Mouth of Indian Creek.....	6
Sandstone.....	Meadow Creek**.....	3.25
Meadow Creek.....	Glade Creek.....	5.5
Glade Creek.....	Grandview Sandbar.....	4.4
Grandview Sandbar.....	McCreery River Access***.....	2.1

* Only experienced boaters should attempt to float the New River. Portaging some areas will be necessary.

** Just up stream of the mouth of Meadow Creek.

*** Mouth of Piney Creek.

SOUTH BRANCH RIVER

From	To	Miles
Petersburg Bridge.....	Welton Park.....	3.0
Welton Park.....	Fisher Bridge South.....	5.5
Fisher Bridge South.....	Fisher Bridge.....	2.5
Fisher Bridge.....	Old Fields Bridge.....	4.5
Old Fields Bridge.....	South Branch WMA (McNeill).....	5.0
South Branch WMA (McNeill).....	Harmisons.....	7.0
Harmisons.....	Stony Run.....	1.5
Stony Run.....	Romney Bridge.....	8.75
Romney Bridge.....	Hanging Rock.....	5.0
Hanging Rock.....	Blues Beach Bridge.....	4.5
Blues Beach Bridge.....	Maple Landing.....	7.5
Maple Landing.....	Millesons Mill Bridge.....	2.0
Millesons Mill Bridge.....	Blue Ford South/North.....	4.75
Blue Ford South/North.....	Indian Rock.....	4.0
Indian Rock.....	Mouth of South Branch.....	4.5

WALHONDE WATER TRAIL (COAL RIVER SYSTEM)

Big Coal River

From	To	Miles
Whitesville.....	Orgas.....	9.0
Orgas.....	John Slack Park.....	11.0
John Slack Park.....	Dartmont.....	9.0
Dartmont.....	Lions Park.....	12.0

Little Coal River

From	To	Miles
Madison City Park.....	Donald Kuhn Juv. Ctr.....	9.0
Donald P. Kuhn Juv. Ctr.....	Waterway Park.....	6.0
Waterway Park.....	Ivy Branch.....	3.0
Ivy Branch.....	Forks of Coal PAS.....	9.0
Forks of Coal PAS.....	Lions Park.....	2.0

Coal River

From	To	Miles
Meadowood Park*.....	Lower Falls.....	6.0
Lower Falls.....	Gateway Shopping Ctr.....	5.5

* Unimproved access below Upper Falls Dam

** Danger: No portage around Upper Falls Dam

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic invasive species are an ever-increasing threat to aquatic ecosystems across the country and in West Virginia waters. Species such as Asian carp, northern snakehead, rusty crayfish, zebra mussels, didymo and hydrilla have had impacts on and are threatening native fishes of not only West Virginia waters but the Great Lakes, and Ohio and Mississippi River basins. Recreational impacts and economic costs associated with invasive species can be substantial if invasive species do become a problem. Informing anglers of these threats and how they can help are our best and first line of defense to guard against invasive species.

WHAT ANGLERS CAN DO:

- **NEVER** move fish from one body of water to another.
- Drain live wells thoroughly before leaving an access area.
- Allow all equipment to dry completely before moving between waterbodies.
- Dispose of **ALL** unwanted bait into a trash receptacle; do not release bait into lakes or streams.
- Do not release aquarium fish into West Virginia's waters.
- **Report sightings.** Take a picture, note the location and report new sightings to ais@wv.gov or contact local district office (See page ii for contact information).

By following these simple steps, anglers can help ensure West Virginia's good fishing for future generations. For more information on aquatic invasive species, please visit: WVDnr.gov/exotic-and-invasive-species.

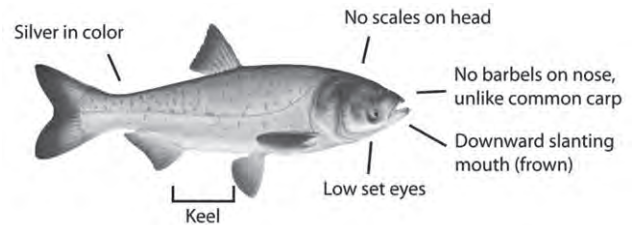
Anglers are reminded that it is unlawful to release any fish or aquatic organism, alive or dead, or any part, nest or egg thereof into public waters of this State except as permitted by a stocking permit authorized by the Director of the Division of Natural Resources.

ASIAN CARP

Some species of Asian carp (bighead and silver carp) pose a particularly serious threat to West Virginia waters. Native to Asia, they were introduced to the United States in the 1970s for use in the aquaculture industry and have since escaped into the Mississippi River basin. Due to their large size, voracious appetite, and reproductive capabilities, they are regarded as highly invasive and have been expanding their range up the Mississippi and Ohio river basins at an alarming rate. Asian carp eat plankton, which puts them in direct competition with native mussels, other filter feeders such as Paddlefish and Smallmouth Buffalo and other forage fishes such as Gizzard shad and Emerald shiner. Nearly all of our native fish species feed on plankton at some point in their lifecycle, thus there is potential for adverse effects of Asian carp on all fishes. In states where they have become established, Asian carp can comprise up to 90 percent of the fish community.

LEARN TO IDENTIFY BIGHEAD AND SILVER CARP:

- Low set eyes, below midline of body
- Large, upturned mouth lacking barbels
- Silver in color with small scales
- Keel along the abdomen



WHERE NATURE COMES ALIVE

See native animals at the West Virginia State Wildlife Center and explore hands-on exhibits showcasing the state's unique flora and fauna at the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center. These educational facilities are the perfect place to inspire a lifelong love of nature. Plan your visit today!

WEST VIRGINIA
DNR

almost heaven

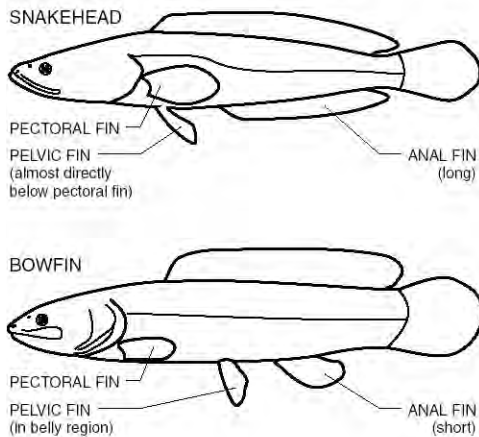
WVDNR.GOV | 304-558-6200 | [f](#) [X](#) [@](#)

NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD

The Northern snakehead is a species of predatory fish native to southeast Asia. Snakeheads were introduced to the United States for the aquarium trade and sold to live food markets and have since been introduced to public waterways. Northern snakeheads are voracious predators preying on and competing with native fishes for forage. They are known to reduce forage availability in some waters. Snakeheads are also facultative air breathers meaning they can breathe air when oxygen levels in the water are low allowing them to survive in stressful conditions, where a native species may not. Currently, there have been no live reports of northern snakeheads in West Virginia waters, but they are present in the Potomac drainage, so it is important to continue to be vigilant and monitor their expansion.

LEARN TO IDENTIFY A NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD:

- Body somewhat elongated with flattened head
- Dark, irregular blotches along their sides
- Long dorsal and anal fins
- Pelvic fins located beneath the pectorals
- No spot at base of tail



REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES SIGHTINGS

Think you've seen an Asian carp or snakehead?

Please report all sightings to: ais@wv.gov or WVdnr.gov.

PROTECT WEST VIRGINIA WATERS

DO NOT DUMP BAIT into the waters of West Virginia.

This will further protect our streams, rivers and lakes from invasive species.

HOW TO PROPERLY DISINFECT RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT

DISINFECTION PROCEDURES

Disinfect boats and personal watercraft prior to moving to another waterbody, watershed, or upstream site.

There are a number of disinfection techniques that will kill most aquatic invasive species and fish and wildlife pathogens, including whirling disease and Didymo. Solutions of bleach or dishwashing detergent product are suggested as they provide the best combination of availability, cost and effectiveness against these species. It is recommended that all disinfected equipment be rinsed on dry land, away from state waters. It is preferable to drain used solutions into treated wastewater (e.g. sinks, tubs, etc.)

SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES

Non-absorbent items (boats, canoes, rubber waders, etc.)

- **Dishwashing Detergent:** soak and scrub for at least one minute with a 5 percent solution.
- **Bleach:** soak or spray all surfaces for a least one minute in a 2 percent solution of household bleach.
- **Hot Water:** soak for at least one minute in very hot water (above 140°F - hotter than most tap water) or for 20 minutes in water kept at 120°F (hot tap water, uncomfortable to touch).
- **Drying:** Drying will kill most aquatic pathogens, but slightly moist environments will support some organisms for months. This approach should only be used for gear that can be left in the sun for extended periods of time.
- **Freeze:** Place item in freezer until solid.

Absorbent items (felt-soled waders, clothing, wetsuits, sandals, etc.)

- These items require longer soaking times to allow thorough penetration into the materials. The thicker and denser the material, the longer it will require for adequate disinfection.
- Bleach solutions are not recommended for absorbent materials.
- **Hot Water:** Soak items for at least 40 minutes in very hot water kept above 140°F (hotter than most tap water).
- **Dishwashing Detergent and Hot Water:** soak for 30 minutes in a hot 5 percent detergent/water solution kept above 120°F.

BOATING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Anglers using boats must obey boating laws. In West Virginia, anyone born on or after December 31, 1986, must successfully complete a NASBLA-approved Boating Education Course before operating a motorboat.

Contact a Natural Resources Police Officer for an available course near you. You can also take the online Boating Education Course available at WVdnr.gov. Click on boating under the Law Enforcement heading.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD)

Most boating fatalities are the result of a boat capsizing or passenger falling overboard. Nearly 80 percent of those who died in boating accidents were NOT wearing a PFD.

If you are fishing from a vessel, West Virginia law requires that you have a PFD (life jacket) that is in good condition, properly sized and readily available for each person on board. Any child under the age of 13, including infants, must wear a PFD while the vessel is underway. Vessels 16 feet and over must have a throwable Type IV PFD ring or cushion on board that can be thrown to a person in the water in addition to the previously stated PFDs. Tygart and Stonewall Jackson lakes have a federal regulation requiring mandatory wearing of PFDs regardless of age on all vessels under 16 feet, including kayaks and paddleboards.

COURTESY ON THE BOAT RAMP

Boat ramp traffic jams can be prevented if everyone practices common courtesy at the ramp. Be sure you observe these simple courtesies.

- Prepare your vessel for launching or for the drive home well away from the ramp.
- Use at least two experienced people to launch and retrieve the vessel (one to drive the towing vehicle and one to operate the vessel).
- Never block a ramp with an unattended vessel or vehicle.
- Move the vessel away from the launch lane immediately after removing it from the trailer. Return briefly to pick up the vehicle driver once he or she has parked the vehicle and is back at the ramp.
- When retrieving, do not pull your vessel into a launch lane until the towing vehicle is at the ramp. The line is formed by vehicles with trailers, not by vessels in the water. Drop off the vehicle driver, and wait offshore and clear of the ramp until he or she arrives with the trailer.

Learn more about boating safety at register-ed.com or take an online course at WVdnr.gov.

SAFE BOATING RULES

Boating accidents usually result from a collision with another boat or an object in the water such as rocks or pilings. A little boating knowledge, common sense and courtesy could prevent most accidents.

- Don't operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Don't overload the boat.
- Don't sit on the edge of the boat.
- If you must stand up, do so carefully away from the sides.
- Drive at a safe speed.
- Use navigation lights at night.
- Keep a lookout for other boats and follow the rules of navigation.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Don't fish during a thunderstorm.

Every vessel or watercraft must carry the proper safety equipment. A vessel means every description of watercraft, other than seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water. Examples of watercraft include kayaks, canoes, inflatable pontoon boats and other vessels.

Check the weather conditions before you leave. Lightning, strong wind and high waves create hazardous conditions. If caught on a lake in a strong storm, put all fishing gear in the bottom of the boat, stay low in the boat and get off the water as soon as possible. In high waves, the best way to keep from capsizing is to steer the boat at a slight angle into the waves.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs creates the same risks and carries the same penalties as DUI. Intoxication affects your balance, which is already challenged by being in a boat. It also affects your coordination, vision and thinking ability. Alcohol also causes you to lose body heat faster should you fall into the water, increasing the risk of hypothermia. A blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or above qualifies as legally intoxicated.

COMMERCIAL RIVER TRAFFIC

While boating on the major rivers of West Virginia, always be alert for large commercial vessels. Large vessels always have the right-of-way because of long stopping distances and blind spots around them. Also, turbulent water around the large vessel could capsize a small boat easily.

Stay out of danger zones and restricted areas around locks and dams.

BOATING AND WATER SAFETY CONTINUED

PERSON IN THE WATER

Reach-Throw-Row-Go is a method of rescuing a person who is in trouble in water. If the person is close to you, REACH out with a long object such as an oar or tree limb to pull the person into shore or the boat.

If you can't reach the person, then THROW them a life-saving device. If possible, it should be tied to the end of a line so you can pull the person to you. An inflatable ball or foam cooler can be used if the proper device is not available.

If there is nothing to throw, ROW a boat to the person in trouble. The person should be pulled in over the stern, or back, of the boat if possible to prevent the boat from tipping over. If the boat has a motor, it must be shut off before you get to the person in the water.

GO (swim) to the person ONLY as a last resort and only if you have had life-saving training. People who are drowning often panic and injure or drown someone trying to rescue them.

SAFETY WITH FISHING EQUIPMENT

Fishing hooks can be dangerous if not handled properly. Look behind you before you cast to make sure your hook will not be caught on a power line, a tree or a person. Do not leave fishing tackle lying loose on the ground. Someone can trip on it and fall or step on a hook.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a condition in which your body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Without treatment, your life is in danger. Exposure to the cold along with wind, wetness and exhaustion causes hypothermia. A common misconception is that the air or water temperature must be below freezing before you can become hypothermic. Actually, many cases of hypothermia develop in air temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees. And because water takes away body heat 25 times faster than air of the same temperature, any water colder than 70 degrees can cause hypothermia.

Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, fumbling hands, slow speech, confusion and exhaustion. To treat hypothermia, get the victim out of the cold, give warm drinks, keep the person awake, remove all wet clothing and get the victim into dry clothes.

FISHING IN COLD WEATHER

To stay warm, wear several layers of clothing. Air trapped between the layers serves as insulation. A wool hat prevents heat loss from your head. Fishing is difficult with most gloves, but lightweight rubber gloves, gloves without fingertips, and gloves that have a flap to expose your fingers allow greater manual dexterity.

ICE FISHING

West Virginia doesn't possess numerous ice fishing opportunities and in some ways, that makes the sport a little riskier. Anglers may be tempted to venture out on a frozen lake or river before checking the thickness of the ice. Ice should be at least four inches thick before it is considered safe. Due to variations in ice thickness on a waterbody, extreme caution should be exercised.

WADING

There are several rules you should follow for safe wading.

- Wade with a fishing buddy.
- Wear your PFD.
- Find out whether the bottom is rocky or muddy.
- Shuffle your feet or probe with a stick along the bottom to avoid holes.
- Study how swiftly the water is moving.
- Wear appropriate footwear (considering water temperature and bottom substrate).



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FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

The West Virginia Fish Consumption Advisories are available by scanning the QR code at right or online at wvdnr.gov/fishing/fish-consumption-advisories. The recommendations are intended to allow you to receive the nutritional benefits from eating fish while keeping the level of contaminants from fish at levels in your body where health problems are not likely. Fish advisories are not intended to discourage you from eating fish, but should be used as a guide to eating fish in the proper amounts so as not to adversely impact your health. You can reduce your risks by eating fish less likely to contain contaminants, cleaning and cooking them properly, and eating portions that correspond to your body weight.



CONTAMINANTS IN FISH

Some fish take in contaminants (PCBs, for example) from the water they live in and the food they eat. These contaminants build up in the fish over time. Eating contaminated fish can result in a buildup of these chemicals in your body, so it is important to keep your exposure as low as possible. The meal advisory is intended to protect people, especially pregnant and nursing women, women who may become pregnant in the next few years, and small children from potential health problems from eating contaminants in fish.

The Statewide Consumption Advisories are based on analysis of fish collected from waters across the state. Mercury levels drive the majority of the consumption advisories, with PCBs being much less widespread. Selenium has been measured from certain waters at low levels that do not require consumption restrictions beyond those in place for other contaminants.

Which fish are less likely to contain contaminants?

Some fish such as sunfish, crappie and trout eat insects and other aquatic life and are less likely to contain contaminants at levels that might affect your health. If you eat walleye, bass, and other predatory fish, eat the smaller, younger fish that are less likely to contain contaminants. Eat fewer fish that feed on the bottom of lakes and rivers (for example, carp) and are more likely to contain contaminants.

How should I prepare and cook fish to reduce the amount of contaminants in the fish?

PCBs and Dioxin are contaminants that usually build up in a fish's fat deposits and just underneath the skin. By removing the skin and fat before cooking, you can reduce the levels of these chemicals. Mercury and Selenium collect in the fish's muscle and cannot be reduced by cleaning and cooking methods.

TO REDUCE PCBs AND DIOXIN CONTAMINANTS:

Fillet fish and throw away the fat, skin and internal organs (where contaminants are most likely to accumulate) before you cook them. Fat is concentrated on the belly, the middle of the back, the line along the sides, and under the skin.

Cooking does not destroy the contaminants, but heat from cooking melts some of the fat and allows some of the contaminated fat to drain away. Broil, grill or bake the trimmed, skinned fish on a rack so the fat drips away. Throw away the fat that comes from cooking fish.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The advisory listing was current at the time this summary went to press. Other fish consumption advisories may have been issued or lifted since that time. Notice of such actions is released to the public through press releases. For further information or the most current advice contact:

WVDHHR: (304) 558-2981 • oehs.wvdhhr.org/fish

WVDNR: (304) 558-6200 • WVdnr.gov

WVDEP: (304) 926-0495 • dep.wv.gov

USEPA: epa.gov/fish-tech

KEEPING AND CLEANING FRESH FISH

KEEPING YOUR CATCH FRESH

The two best ways of keeping fish fresh on a fishing trip are to keep them alive or chill them. Since keeping fish alive is not always possible, a practical solution to the problem is an ice chest. Keep the drain open on the chest, because dead fish left in water will soon lose their flavor.

Although not as effective as an ice cooler, fish stringers are often used out of necessity, especially when wade fishing.

CLEANING

The fresher the fish, the easier it is to clean. Do not freeze the fish whole or put the job off until the skin is dry and brittle. Scaling the fish can be done in a variety of ways. Fish scalers, which can be purchased from most tackle shops, do an adequate job.

When skinning catfish, drive a nail through the head into a board, with the fish's belly down. Cut completely through the skin around the back of the head and pull the skin off with pliers. Then, remove the head and entrails. Larger catfish are best filleted after they have been skinned and huge ones may be staked – leaving the backbone in and cutting crosswise in one-inch steaks.

For frying small panfish such as bluegill or crappie whole in a skillet, make a cut down each side of the dorsal and anal fins, then pull the fins out by the "roots." After scaling, make a diagonal cut through the fish, thus removing the head, entrails and rib cage in one operation. Leave the tails on. When fried crisp, they make delicious "crunchies."

STATE RECORD FISH

REPORTING PROCEDURES

A record of the largest fish of each species legally taken with rod and reel by a licensed angler in West Virginia waters is maintained by the Division of Natural Resources. Certificates of accomplishment are awarded for each record holder.

Anglers landing a potential state record fish should report the catch as soon as possible to the district fisheries biologist in the closest WVDNR district office (see inside front cover for contact information). Please follow these guidelines to ensure accuracy of reporting.

- Name, address, license number and telephone number of angler.
- Species of fish, where, when and how caught.
- Total length of fish measured from tip of snout to end of tail. Lay fish on top of ruler on a flat surface. Close the mouth of the fish and squeeze the tail fin lobes together. Do not measure along the curvature of the fish's body. See Measuring a Fish on page 26.
- Fish must be weighed on a scale certified by the West Virginia Division of Labor.
- Signatures and telephone numbers of two persons who witnessed the length and weight measurements.
- A DNR fisheries biologist must verify the species, length and weight of the fish.
- Fish caught from commercial pay lakes/ponds are not eligible.
- A photograph of the fish is desirable.

If a WVDNR biologist is not immediately available, wrap the fish in plastic wrap and freeze it. Contact the local WVDNR biologist as soon as possible.

Species	Yr.	Length (inches)	Weight (pounds)	Location	Angler
BASS					
Largemouth	2025	26.26	9.85	Pond - Harrison Co.	Seth Spry
	1994	24.8	12.28	Pond - Grant Co.	David W. Heeter
Smallmouth	1976	25.5	7.5	New River	Franklin J. Elliott
	1971	24.25	9.75	South Branch	David Lindsay
Rock	1964	13.8	1.75	Big Sandy Creek	Warren Ryan
Spotted	2000	19.0	4.77	R. D. Bailey Lake	Kevin Dameron
	1988	19.0	3.82	R. D. Bailey Lake	Leonard Blankenship
Striped	2010	47.16	45.70	Bluestone Lake	James Brooks
Hybrid Striped	2000	32.1	14.0	Kanawha River	Frankie Harris
	1985	31.5	16.75	Kanawha River	Robert Honaker
White	1985	20.0	4.56	New River	Louis Puskas
SUNFISH					
Bluegill / Hybrid Bluegill	1986	11.7	2.75	Pond - Randolph Co.	Mark Allen Lewis
	1964	13.75	2.25	Pond - Fayette Co.	Dennis Criss
Redbreast	2024	9.29	0.57	New Creek Lake	Zach Adkins
Redear	2024	12	1.75	Plum Orchard Lake	John Plott
	2025	12.44	1.6	Plum Orchard Lake	John Plott
Pumpkinseed	BE THE FIRST! (minimum of 9 inches)				
BOWFIN	1994	32.25	7.54	Pond - Berkeley Co.	Donald E. Newcomb, III
	2024	30.2	10.6	Ohio River	Lauren Noble
BUFFALO	1976	41.0	38.0	Little Kanawha River	Hobert Null
CARP					
Common	1998	39.3	47.0	Farm Pond - Preston Co.	Gary Johnson
	2022	41.2	45.2	Summersville Lake	Ayden Minick
Grass	2005	50.75	71.69	Warden Lake	William R. Taucher
	2020	54.75	67.4	Warden Lake - Hardy Co.	John Miller
CATFISH					
Blue	2025	51.49	66.3	Kanawha River	Justin Connor
	2023	50.51	69.45	Ohio River	Michael John Drake
Bullhead	1977	22.75	6.1	Tygart Lake Headwaters	Gary R. Freeman
Channel	2024	43.51	46.7	Pond - Wayne Co.	John Tyler Rutherford
Flathead	1956	52.0	70.0	Little Kanawha River	L. L. McClung
CHAIN PICKEREL	2001	27.75	6.19	Tuckahoe Lake	Steven Demma
	2019	27.87	4.0	Upper Deckers Lake	Matt Born
CRAPPIE					
White	1971	19.75	4.05	Meathouse Fork	Leonard Edgell
Black	2024	17.76	3.15	Woodrum Lake	Dwight Priestly
	2025	17.7	3.6	East Lynn Lake	Jerry Porter
EEL	1983	44.25	6.27	Elk River	Steve Woods
	1977	44.0	7.25	Bunker Hill Quarry	Arlie R. Ruble
FALLFISH	1970	21.25	3.5	North Fork of So. Branch	James Blackwell
FRESHWATER DRUM	2021	35.59	27.88	Kanawha River	John A. Gibson
	1954	37.0	25.0	Little Kanawha River	Bill Dawkins
LONGNOSE GAR	2023	53.62	15.0	Ohio River	Rich Chapman
	1993	50.5	19.08	Kanawha River	Michael Shan Casey
GOLDEYE/MOONEYE	1983	18.5	3.0	Ohio River	Delbert McWilliams
MUSKELLUNGE	2022	55.0625	51.00	Little Kanawha River	Lucas King
NORTHERN PIKE	1989	42.6	22.06	Dog Run Lake	Boyd O. Pratt, Sr.
REDHORSE	2025	24.57	5.75	Ohio River	Jason Floyd
SAUGER	1985	23.0	4.75	Ohio River	Steve Powell
	2012	22.50	5.06	Ohio River	David L. Vance
SAUGEYE	2006	27.68	8.73	East Lynn Lake	Everett Chapman
SKIPJACK	2021	20.15	3.1	Ohio River	Ethan Moss
TIGER MUSKY	1994	49.25	36.5	Mountwood Lake	Clyde E. Beckett
TROUT					
Brook	2004	22.25	7.64	Shavers Fork	Gary M. Chapman
	1981	23.5	4.78	Lost River	Jack E. Foltz
Brown	1968	32.0	16.0	South Branch	Paul Barker
Golden Rainbow	2023	26.25	9.72	Little Beaver Lake	Charles Lilly, Jr.
	1987	27.5	8.63	Stonecoal Lake	Gerald Estep
Rainbow	2014	33.11	19.40	Pond - Berkeley Co.	Eric Files, Sr.
Tiger	2025	27.6	12.55	Mannington Lake	Robert Riggs
	2011	28.7	10.65	Krodel Lake	Mike Connelly
WALLEYE	2004	30.87	18.97	Elk River	Jerry Rose
	1976	35.0	15.0	Kanawha Falls	Fred Cline
YELLOW PERCH	2018	14.5	2.04	Summersville Lake	Clinton Mills
	2010	15.44	1.20	Summersville Lake	Craig Hollandsworth

STATE RECORD FISH CONTINUED

RECENT STATE RECORD CATCHES



Blue catfish – Justin Connor from Milton, W.Va., landed a 51.49-inch, 66.3-pound blue catfish on May 9 on the Kanawha River in Putnam County. He used a mooneye on an 80-pound test line to break the previous record for length set in 2024 by Kimberly Feltner of Madison, Ind., who caught a 50.82-inch, 64.15-pound catfish. The current weight record for blue catfish—a 50.51-inch, 69.45-pound fish—was set by Michael John Drake on the Ohio River in 2023.



Black crappie – Jerry Porter of Harts, W.Va., caught a 17.7-inch, 3.6-pound black crappie using a minnow-tipped jig on a 6-pound test line on May 7 at East Lynn Lake in Wayne County. Porter's record catch broke the weight record held by Dwight Priestly of Alum Creek, who caught a 17.76-inch, 3.15-pound crappie at Woodrum Lake in Jackson County in 2024. Priestly's record for length still stands.



Largemouth bass – Seth Spry of Lumberport, W.Va., landed a 26.26-inch, 9.85-pound largemouth bass on May 8 at a private pond in Harrison County. He used a 30-pound braided line to break the previous length record of 25.75 inches held by Eli Gain since 2001. The weight record remains a 24.8-inch, 12.28-pound largemouth caught by David Heeter at a private pond in Grant County in 1994.

STATE RECORD FISH CONTINUED

RECENT STATE RECORD CATCHES CONTINUED



Redhorse sucker – Jason Floyd of Washington, W.Va., caught a 24.57-inch, 5.75-pound state record redhorse sucker with a Flobell Bottom Tackle swimbait and jighead on 10-pound braided line on April 22 at the Belleville Lock and Dam on the Ohio River. Floyd became the first to catch a state record redhorse sucker after WVDNR established record categories for the redhorse sucker and four other species in 2024.



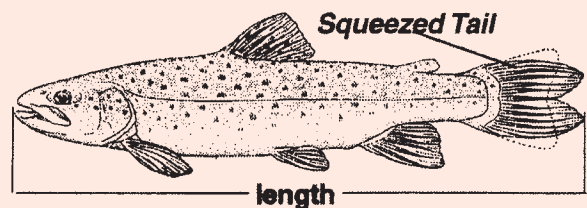
Redear – John Plott from Oak Hill, W.Va., caught a 12.44-inch, 1.60-pound redear sunfish with a night crawler on April 22 at Plum Orchard Lake in Fayette County, breaking his own record for length from 2024. Plott's 1.75-pound weight record still stands.



Tiger trout – Robert Riggs of Grant Town, W.Va., caught a 27.6-inch, 12.55-pound tiger trout with a casting spoon and 6-pound test line from on March 28 at Mannington Lake in Marion County. Riggs' record broke the weight record previously held by Nathaniel Smith of New Creek Lake, whose fish was 26.73 inches long and weighed 11.98 pounds. The length record of 28.7 inches recorded by Mike Connolly in 2011 from Krodel Lake still stands.

MEASURING A FISH

1. Lay the fish on top of a ruler on a flat surface.
2. Close the mouth of the fish and squeeze the tail fin lobes together.
3. Measure all fish from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. Do not measure along the curvature of the fish's body.



ANGLER ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMS

TROPHY FISH CITATION PROGRAM

The trophy fish citation program was initiated to recognize outstanding fishing achievement. The color fish illustrations on the citations are reproductions of original paintings by artist Joseph Tomelleri. Applications to register a trophy fish can be obtained from any WVDNR Wildlife Resources office or WVdnr.gov.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Fish must be legally caught with rod and reel by a licensed angler in West Virginia.
- Fish caught from commercial pay lakes/ponds are not eligible.
- Carp legally taken by bow and meeting minimum size requirements qualify for a trophy fish citation.
- Fish must meet or exceed the minimum length.
- Fish must be measured in the presence of a witness who must sign the application form. If no witness is available, the fish must be measured and a photograph must accompany the application. Measure total length of fish to nearest 1/8 inch from tip of snout to end of tail. See Measuring a Fish on page 26.
- Provide a clear side view photograph of the fish if possible.
- Nonresidents and residents are eligible for trophy fish citations.
- Applications must be submitted or postmarked within 60 days of the date of catch and no later than Jan. 15 of the next year.
- Mail to:** DNR Wildlife Resources
State Capitol Complex
Building 4
112 California Avenue
Charleston, WV 25305

Minimum Sizes			
TROUT		CATFISH	
Brook	15 in.	Blue	35 in.
Brown	21 in.	Bullhead	16 in.
Rainbow	21 in.	Channel	25 in.
Golden Rainbow	21 in.	Flathead	35 in.
Tiger	21 in.	CRAPPIE	15 in.
BLACK BASS		ROCK BASS	10 in.
Largemouth	21 in.	SUNFISH	10 in.
Smallmouth	20 in.	CHAIN PICKEREL	20 in.
Spotted	14 in.	WALLEYE	28 in.
STRIPED BASS	30 in.	SAUGER	17 in.
HYBRID STRIPED BASS	24 in.	YELLOW PERCH	13 in.
WHITE BASS	15 in.	FRESHWATER DRUM	22 in.
MUSKELLUNGE	45 in.	FALLFISH	18 in.
TIGER MUSKY	40 in.	COMMON CARP	31 in.
NORTHERN PIKE	32 in.		

WEST VIRGINIA MASTER ANGLER PROGRAM

WVDNR offers a Master Angler Program to promote fishing and recognize anglers for their accomplishments over a wide range of species and ecosystems. To qualify for a "slam," an angler must catch the species listed for that slam in West Virginia waters, each catch must meet or exceed the minimum lengths for each species and time-stamped photos of the angler holding each species must be submitted with the application. Fish caught from commercial pay lakes/ponds are not eligible. Each slam must be completed within a calendar year to qualify. If an angler completes all six slams, he/she will be awarded a West Virginia Master Angler Award, which will be a lifetime achievement for an angler. The Master Angler and slams are one-time awards. The Master Angler application is online at WVdnr.gov.



SLAMS	
Species Name	Minimum Length
BLACK BASS	
Largemouth	12 inches
Smallmouth	12 inches
Spotted	12 inches
CATFISH	
Blue	20 inches
Channel	16 inches
Flathead	20 inches
NON-GAME	
Bullhead	12 inches
Common Carp	20 inches
Fallfish	12 inches
Freshwater Drum	12 inches
PANFISH	
Black or White Crappie	8 inches
Rock Bass	7 inches
Sunfish	6 inches
Yellow Perch	8 inches
PREDATOR	
Hybrid Striped or Striped Bass	15 inches
Musky	30 inches
Walleye	15 inches
TROUT	
Brook	12 inches
Brown	12 inches
Golden Rainbow	12 inches
Rainbow	12 inches
Tiger	12 inches

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Fishing and Hunting Licenses are good for the calendar year. You must purchase new licenses at the beginning of each year. All licensed anglers must carry a valid form of identification while fishing.

RESIDENT LICENSES

Conservation Stamp (Class CS):	\$5.00
Required for anglers and hunters with Class B, L, A and AH licenses	
Hunting and Trapping (Class A):	\$19.00
Fishing (Class B):	\$19.00
Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/Trapping (Class X):	\$35.00
for ages 18 through 64	
Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/Trapping Plus (Class XP):	\$45.00
Annual license that also includes the trout stamp	
Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/Trapping 3-year (Class X3):	\$105.00
A three-year Sportsman license	
Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/Trapping Plus 3-year (Class XP3):	\$135.00
A three-year Sportsman license that also includes the trout stamp	
Five-day Fishing (Class L):	\$8.00
Junior Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/Trapping (Class XJ):	\$16.00
for ages 15 through 17	
Trout Fishing Stamp (Class O):	\$10.00
Required of licensed anglers fishing for trout, except holders of Class XS, XP and XP3 licenses	
Apprentice Junior Hunting/Trapping/ Fishing (Class AHJ):	\$16.00
for ages 15-17, includes privileges of Class XJ	

NONRESIDENT LICENSES

Conservation/Law Enforcement Stamp (Class CS/LE):	\$13.00
Required for anglers and hunters with Class F, LL, XXJ, AAHJ, E, AAH, EE+DS and H licenses	
Fishing (Class F):	\$37.00
One Day Fishing (Class LL):	\$3.00
Junior Sportsman Hunting/Fishing/ Trapping (Class XXJ):	\$16.00
for ages 8 through 17 (not required for fishing under age 15)	
National Forest Hunting/Trapping/Fishing (Class I):	\$2.00
Required if fishing on National Forests in addition to Class F, LL and F-L	
Trout Fishing Stamp (Class OO):	\$16.00
Required of licensed anglers fishing for trout	
Apprentice Junior Hunting/Trapping/ Fishing (Class AAHJ):	\$16.00
For ages 15-17, includes privileges of Class XXJ	

RESIDENT AND NONRESIDENT LICENSES

Special Hunting and Fishing License for Persons with a Life-threatening Condition (Class DT):	FREE
Issued for ages 20 or less. Requires no additional licenses or stamps.	

LIFETIME LICENSES

RESIDENT

Resident lifetime hunting, trapping and fishing licenses serve in lieu of the equivalent annual license; applications are available at DNR offices, license agents and online at WVDnr.gov.

Resident seniors who previously have made a resident purchase through a license agent or at a DNR office may buy a senior lifetime license at a license agent, at a WVDNR office or online at WVDnr.gov. Non-resident, full-time students of any West Virginia college or university are eligible to purchase lifetime licenses.

Combination Hunting, Trapping and Fishing (Class AB-L):	\$805
Combination Hunting, Trapping and Fishing - Child (Class AB-L)*:	
Under age 1:	\$322.00
Age 1 to under 5:	\$442.75
Age 5 to under 10:	\$603.75
Age 10 to under 15:	\$724.50
Senior Hunting/Trapping/Fishing License (Class XS):	\$25
Required for resident hunters and anglers who have reached 65 years of age on or after January 1, 2012 (those born before Jan. 1, 1947), except holders of Class A-L and AB-L licenses, which still require other stamp purchases (for example, bear damage and trout stamps). Class XS license includes bear damage and trout stamps.	
Fishing (Class B-L)*:	\$552.00
Fishing - Child (Class B-L)*:	
Under age 1:	\$220.80
Age 1 to under 5:	\$303.60
Age 5 to under 10:	\$414.00
Age 10 to under 15:	\$496.80
Trout Fishing (Class O-L)**:	\$230.00
Trout Fishing - Child (Class O-L)**:	
Under age 1:	\$92.00
Age 1 to under 5:	\$126.50
Age 5 to under 10:	\$172.50
Age 10 to under 15:	\$207.00

* The above lifetime license fee schedule for a child under 15 also applies to children who have been legally adopted or legally placed in foster care. Conservation Stamp not required.

** The above lifetime license fee schedule for a child under 15 also applies to children who have been legally adopted or legally placed in foster care. Valid only when accompanied by a Class B, AB-L, B-L, X, or XJ license.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

LIFETIME LICENSES CONTINUED

NONRESIDENT

Fishing License (Class F-L):	\$1,150
Fishing License - Child (Class F-L):	
Under age 1:	\$460
Age 1 to under 5:	\$632.50
Age 5 to under 10:	\$862.50
Age 10 to under 15:	\$1,035
Trout Stamp (Class OO-L)*:	\$368
Trout Stamp - Child (Class OO-L)*:	
Under age 1:	\$147.20
Age 1 to under 5:	\$202.40
Age 5 to under 10:	\$276
Age 10 to under 15:	\$331.20
National Forest Stamp (Class I-L)**:	\$46
National Forest Stamp - Child (Class I-L)**:	
Under age 1:	\$18.40
Age 1 to under 5:	\$25.30
Age 5 to under 10:	\$34.50
Age 10 to under 15:	\$41.40

* Requires Class F or Class F-L license

** Requires Class E-L, Class EE-L or Class F-L license

NOTE: WVDNR also offers a variety of lifetime hunting and trapping licenses for nonresidents. For more information, go to WVDnr.gov.

TROUT STAMP REQUIREMENTS

Lifetime license holders who turned 65 after December 31, 2011, must purchase a trout stamp or the Senior Lifetime License which includes that privilege.

INDIVIDUALS IN THE FOLLOWING GROUPS DO NOT NEED A TROUT STAMP:

- residents who turned 65 years of age before January 1, 2012 (those born before Jan. 1, 1947).
- resident and nonresident youth under 15 years of age.
- residents who are disabled veterans receiving 100% permanent service-connected disability, or those who are former POWs.
- residents on active duty in the U. S. armed forces while on military leave. Leave number shall be carried while fishing.
- senior lifetime license (XS) holders.

FISHING LICENSE NOT REQUIRED FOR

- Residents who are totally blind. A physician's statement or certificate must be carried while fishing. A trout stamp is not needed to fish for trout.
- Residents who turned 65 years of age before January 1, 2012 (those born before Jan. 1, 1947). A WV driver's license or WV photo ID card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles shall be carried while fishing.
- Nonresidents or residents under 15 years of age.
- Residents on active duty in the U. S. armed forces while on military leave. Leave number shall be carried while fishing.
- Resident landowners or their resident children, resident parents, or bona fide resident tenants of such land may fish on their own land during open seasons in accordance with the laws and regulations applying to such fishing.
- Residents honorably discharged from the U. S. armed forces receiving total permanent service-connected disability benefits or former prisoners of war as determined by the Veterans Administration or resident disabled veterans who qualify under West Virginia Code 17A-10-8 and are exempted from payment of any motor vehicle registration fee by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. Such persons must carry a card issued by the DNR.
- Residents or in-patients of any state mental hospital, health or benevolent institution. Such persons must be under proper supervision and carry a written statement or certificate signed by the superintendent of the institution or facility.
- Developmentally disabled residents. A DDFL card issued by the DNR must be carried while fishing. A trout stamp is not needed to fish for trout.

DEFINITION OF RESIDENT

A person who has been a domiciled resident continuously in West Virginia for 30 consecutive days or more immediately prior to the date of application for a license or permit. This includes members of the U.S. armed forces stationed outside the state who were West Virginia residents at the time of entry into the service and any full-time student of a college or university of this state. Non-resident, full-time students of any West Virginia college or university are eligible to purchase lifetime licenses.

FEDERAL WELFARE REFORM LEGISLATION

The WVDNR has the authority under Federal Welfare Reform Legislation (Title 42 of the U.S. Code Section 666 (a) (13) to collect the Social Security Number from an applicant for a recreational license such as a fishing and hunting license. This facilitates collection of child support payments. States failing to collect a SSN could face loss of federal welfare funds. The DNR takes every precaution including encryption and masking to protect your SSN.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

VIOLATIONS

POINT SYSTEM FOR FISHING VIOLATIONS

Persons making false application for a license will have their license privileges suspended for one year.

POINTS ASSIGNED FOR OTHER FISHING VIOLATIONS:

10 points for use of explosives or poison material in taking fish

6 points for taking fish by illegal method, exceeding daily creel limit, and using bait in a restricted area

4 points for all other violations

When a violator accumulates 10 or more fishing or hunting points combined, his/her license(s) will be revoked for a period of two years.

Points will be removed on their second anniversary or upon restoration of the license(s). License revocations may be made for cause, pursuant to statutory authority, or through an accumulation of points. Not all instances leading to revocation are listed herein. For more information, please see the W.Va. Code and the State Code of State Rules.

REPORTING BOATING, FISHING AND HUNTING LAW VIOLATIONS:

In progress: dial 911

Not in progress: call your DNR District Law Enforcement Office during normal operating hours or report online at WVDnr.gov/law-enforcement/report-a-natural-resources-crime/. You may also report on [Facebook.com/DNRpolice](https://www.facebook.com/DNRpolice).

- Observe and write down all of the information concerning the violation.
- Don't confront violator.
- Contact a local Natural Resources Police Officer or county communication center as soon as possible.

Become involved in protecting your sport. Be willing to testify in court.

STREAM POLLUTION OR FISH KILLS

Call 1-800-642-3074.



LICENSE CARDS BUILT FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Upgrade your fishing license with a durable collectible card that celebrates West Virginia's legendary fishing heritage. Each card is waterproof, wallet-ready and built to last season after season so you can show your passion on and off the water wherever your next West Virginia adventure takes you.

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PURCHASING A LICENSE

LICENSES MAY BE OBTAINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. At more than 160 retail agent locations throughout the state and designated county clerks offices. (\$3 issuing fee for first purchase and \$1 for subsequent purchases.)
2. **wvfish.com**
(Official DNR Web site - \$2 fee per transaction.)
3. Directly from the Hunting and Fishing License Unit by phoning (304) 558-2758. (\$2 fee per transaction.)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Hunting and Fishing License Unit

State Capitol Complex, Building 4
112 California Avenue, Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-2758 • wvdnrcustomerservice@wv.gov

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

RECIPROCAL FISHING AGREEMENTS

OHIO RIVER

Anglers with a valid Ohio resident or West Virginia resident fishing license may fish on the Ohio River, its embayments or from either bank. The embayment and tributary reciprocal boundaries for each state are available at wvdnr.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021.10.21-Ohio-River-Reciprocal-Agreement-Chart.pdf. Ohio and West Virginia anglers may travel and fish embayments and tributaries to the landmark locations listed in this document. These locations are also defined by distance from the mouth of the tributary and GPS coordinates for convenience.

Current West Virginia fishing laws shall apply while fishing on the Ohio River proper or from West Virginia banks or in West Virginia embayments. The tributaries of the Ohio River above embayments, in both states, are not included as part of this agreement.

Ohio fishing laws and Ohio River fishing regulations for the Eastern Unit, which cover the West Virginia/Ohio border, must be followed while fishing from Ohio banks or on embayments or tributaries that are within the boundaries of Ohio.

POTOMAC RIVER

West Virginia residents who possess valid West Virginia fishing licenses may fish by angling in the waters of the Potomac River, including the North Branch and Jennings Randolph Lake which are opposite both the West Virginia and the Maryland shores, and they may fish from the Maryland shore, without obtaining a Maryland fishing license, subject, however, to all other Maryland laws, rules and regulations applicable to fishing.

Maryland residents who possess valid Maryland fishing licenses may fish by angling in the waters of Jennings Randolph Lake which are opposite both the Maryland and West Virginia shores, and they may fish from the West Virginia shore of the Potomac River, including the North Branch and Jennings Randolph Lake, without obtaining a West Virginia fishing license, subject, however, to all other West Virginia fishing laws, rules and regulations applicable to fishing. This agreement is limited to the Potomac River, including the North Branch and Jennings Randolph Lake and does not extend to any of their tributaries.

The State of West Virginia and the State of Maryland have joint law enforcement jurisdiction on Jennings Randolph Lake.

BIG SANDY AND TUG FORK RIVERS

West Virginia or Kentucky residents with a valid resident fishing license may fish the entire main stem of the Big Sandy and Tug Fork rivers from the confluence of the Ohio and Big Sandy rivers upstream to the Virginia state line, excluding tributaries. As used in this agreement, tributary boundaries shall be defined as a straight line between opposite points where the stream or embayment connects with the main body of the Big Sandy River or Tug Fork River. West Virginia or Kentucky residents with a valid fishing license from their respective state of residence can fish from a boat or from either bank of the sections previously defined.

If fishing from a watercraft, fishing license holders shall abide by the laws, rules and regulations of the state in which he or she is licensed. If fishing from the bank, fishing license holders shall abide by the laws, rules and regulations of the state in which he or she is fishing.

FIND YOUR NEXT FISHING SPOT

Whether you're casting lines in your favorite stream or planning a boating adventure at the lake, our interactive fishing map helps you find the perfect spot. Discover warmwater fishing lakes, stocked trout streams and more at mapwv.gov/huntfish.

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RIPARIAN AND SHORELINE HABITATS

Vegetation is an important component of habitats along West Virginia's streams and lakes. These riparian areas are crucial in the protection of aquatic habitats for fish and other organisms. Help protect West Virginia's waters by protecting riparian areas.

See the following links for more information:

- dep.wv.gov/WWE/Programs/nonptsources
- water.epa.gov

SPORT FISH IDENTIFICATION

GAME FISH Paintings by Duane Raver

Defined: all trout (Brook, Brown, Rainbow, Golden Rainbow), black bass (Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted), Chain Pickerel, Muskellunge, Northern Pike, Tiger Musky, Striped Bass, White Bass, Hybrid Striped Bass, Walleye, Sauger, Rock Bass, White Crappie, Black Crappie, Bluegill, all sunfish species, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Blue Catfish and all game fish hybrids.



Brook Trout



White Crappie



Rock Bass



Brown Trout



Flathead Catfish



Blue Catfish



Rainbow Trout



Channel Catfish



Chain Pickerel



Golden Rainbow Trout



Striped Bass



Muskellunge



Tiger Trout



Hybrid-striped Bass



Northern Pike



Largemouth Bass



White Bass



Tiger Musky



Smallmouth Bass



Walleye



Carp



Spotted Bass



Sauger



Bullhead Catfish



Black Crappie



Bluegill



Fallfish



Yellow Perch

NON-GAME SPECIES