



Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife



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Saltwater & Freshwater Regulations

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Fishing License Requirements

A fishing license is required to fish in the non-tidal waters in this State. Non-tidal waters include lakes, ponds, impoundments and streams where the tides do not occur. Most non-tidal waters are fresh except for brackish water impoundments. A license may be obtained from the Dover, Delaware office or from over 100 license agents, mostly sporting goods and hardware stores, throughout the State. Each holder of a fishing license shall display the license on an outer garment while fishing.

Any resident of Delaware who is 16 years of age or older, but less than 65 years of age, is required to have a license to fish in non-tidal waters. The following individuals may fish without a license:

1. Any resident who owns or lives on a farm in this state containing 20 or more acres and the members of his or her immediate family who reside on the farm, may fish on that farm.
2. Any resident who has been honorably discharged from the armed forces and certified by the Veterans Administration as having at least a 60% service-oriented disability.
3. Any member of the armed forces who is a patient in a military hospital and submits a written statement signed by the patient's commanding officer certifying the nature of the disability and place of station.
4. Any patient in a Veterans Administration facility in this state.
5. Any patient in a rehabilitation hospital under the Department of Health and Social Services.
6. Any person who is legally blind.
7. Any person who fishes in a fee fishing facility, registered as such with the Department of Agriculture, is not required to have a fishing license.

Any nonresident who is 16 years of age or older except persons covered in 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 above, is required to have a license to fish in non-tidal waters.

The cost of a fishing license for non-tidal waters for a resident is \$ 8.50 and \$ 15.00 for a nonresident. A fishing license is valid through December 31 for the calendar year in which it is issued. Nonresidents may purchase a 7-consecutive day fishing license for \$ 5.20. For freshwater trout fishing, possession of a trout stamp may be required (see Freshwater Trout Fishing Program).

All funds derived from the issuance of fishing licenses are dedicated to a special account for the purpose of matching and securing federal money allotted to Delaware under the provisions of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act. Together, these funds

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Gamefish and General Fishing Restrictions

Gamefish include the following species in Delaware:

Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass
Black Crappie	White Crappie
Rock Bass	White Bass
Walleye	Northern Pike
Chain Pickerel	Salmon/Trout
Muskellunge & Hybrids	Hybrid Striped Bass
Sunfish of the genus <i>Lepomis</i>	

Gamefish may be found in either tidal or non-tidal freshwater. Gamefish taken from the waters of the State shall not be legally sold, traded or bartered unless authorized by permit.

The following restrictions apply to fishing for gamefish and in general for fishing in all non-tidal waters:

1. The simultaneous use of more than two rods or poles per person is prohibited except five tip ups are permitted while fishing through the ice.
2. The use of more than three hooks or lures per rod or pole is prohibited.
3. The use of any chemical, poison or electrical shocking equipment or device is prohibited unless authorized by permit.
4. In non-tidal waters, the use of nets is prohibited except for a dip net used to assist in the landing of the hooked fish. In tidal streams, within 300 ft. of any constructed dam or spillway, all nets other than minnow traps not exceeding 2' x 1' x 1', dip nets and lift nets no larger than 6 feet by 6 feet used to take river herring are prohibited.
5. Carp may be taken with a bow and arrow or spear. They shall not be netted in non-tidal waters unless authorized by permit.
6. Anyone fishing for shad with a hook and line shall not use more than two lures per line and each lure shall not contain more than a single hook.
7. Stocking any live fish in any public waters is prohibited without written authorization from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
8. The possession, transporting, purchase or selling of walking catfish and/or the white amur or grass carp is prohibited without written authorization from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
9. Snagging gamefish is prohibited.

For information or to report a violation, call 1 (800) 523-3336






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Year 2001 Freshwater Fishing Limits

NAME OF FISH SPECIES	SIZE LIMIT (Inches)	CREEL LIMIT (Number Per
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(Except the Following)			
SMALLMOUTH BASS - Tidal and Non-Tidal Waters (Except the Following)	None between and including 12 - 17 Only 1 greater than 17	6	
Andrews Lake	12 - 15 Protected Less than 12 Greater than 15	5* Only 1 may be greater than 15"	
Derby & Hearn's Ponds	15 - 18 Protected Less than 15 Greater than 18	5* Only 1 may be greater than 18"	
Becks Pond	None less than 15	2	
PANFISH - Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Black or White Crappie, White or Yellow Perch	None	50 - But no More Than 25 per Species	
STRIPED BASS INCLUDING HYBRIDS - Non-tidal Waters Only	None less than 15	2	
TROUT - Freshwater	No minimum	6 (4 in Restricted Streams)**	

*6 if all bass are less than minimum slot size.

**White Clay Creek from a point 25 yards above Thompson Bridge at Chambers Rock Road to the Pennsylvania State Line is designated as a restricted trout stream for fly fishing only.

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Year 2001 Freshwater Trout Fishing Program

The year 2001 freshwater trout season opens at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, April 7.



Delaware's freshwater trout program is a self-supporting put-and-take fishery in selected streams in northern New Castle County. The fees paid for trout stamps are used to purchase trout from commercial hatcheries. Rainbow, brown and/or brook trout are stocked in selected streams within two weeks of the spring opening date and for an additional period of time into the season. There also may be a supplemental fall stocking. Since Delaware stream temperatures are marginal at best for trout survival in the summer and no reproduction has been noted, stocked fish are meant to be taken.

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Fishing Only.

2. **Mill Creek** - Brackenville Road to Route 7.
3. **Pike Creek** - Route 72 to Henderson Road.
4. **Christina Creek** - Maryland line through Rittenhouse Park.
5. **Beaver Run** - Pennsylvania line to Brandywine River.
6. **Wilson Run** - Route 72 through Brandywine Creek State Park.

Most access to these streams is through and on private property. Each fisherman should respect the privilege of using private property.

No fishing is permitted in any designated trout stream within two weeks of the opening day of spring trout season, which is the first Saturday in April.

On opening day in the spring, legal trout fishing on designated trout streams begins at 7:30 a.m. On other days, trout fishing begins one-half hour before sunrise. Fishing in designated trout streams is prohibited after one-hour past sunset.

The daily limit for trout is six in possession. Once an angler takes and possesses six trout in any day, he or she is prohibited from fishing in a designated trout stream during the remainder of that day.

A stream or portion thereof may be designated as a restricted trout stream. Only artificial flies having one single pointed hook and a fly rod may be used. There may not be more than two flies on a line at one time. The use of any metallic, wooden, plastic or rubber spinners, spoons, lures, plugs and/or natural bait is prohibited in a restricted trout stream.

The possession limit of trout on a restricted trout stream is four. Furthermore, the possession of more than four trout within 50 feet of any restricted trout stream is prohibited. A person may continue to fish on a restricted trout stream once the possession limit is reached provided all additional trout are released immediately with the least possible injury.

License and Stamp Requirements

1. Residents 16 years of age and older but not over 65 years old are required to have a fishing license (\$ 8.50).
2. Residents 12 through 15 years old, are required to have a juvenile trout stamp (\$ 2.10). Residents 16 years and older but not over 65 are required to have a trout stamp (\$ 4.20) when fishing in a designated trout stream on or between the first Saturday in April and June 30 and on or between the first Saturday in October and November 30 of the same year.
3. Non-residents 16 years of age and older are required to have a license (\$ 15.00 annually or \$ 5.20 for seven consecutive days).
4. Non-residents 12 years of age and older are required to have a trout stamp (\$ 6.20) when fishing in a designated trout stream on or between the first Saturday in April and June 30 and on or between the first Saturday in October and November 30. Trout stamps are available from license agents or the Division of Fish and Wildlife at the Dover Office. A trout stamp is not valid unless it is signed across its face in ink.

Experimental Pond Stocking

In an effort to provide a diversity of fishing experiences, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has been evaluating the stocking of trout into warm water ponds during a cold time of the year when trout can be expected to survive (trout generally require temperatures below 75 degrees Fahrenheit). Tidbury Pond in Kent County will be stocked in March, as will the easternmost State Department of Transportation Pond at Gravel Hill near Georgetown in Sussex County. Trout stamp provisions that apply in designated trout streams will also apply to any pond so stocked with trout, except that trout stamp requirements will not be enforced in ponds stocked with trout from April 1 through February 28. There will be no closed season for trout fishing in any pond so stocked. The daily limit is six trout per day. Once a person takes and possesses six trout in any day, he or she is prohibited from fishing in that pond during the remainder of that day.

For information or to report a violation, call 1 (800) 523-3336

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Year 2001 Tidal Water Recreational Fishing Limits

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hooks and lines, and each hook and line shall have no more than three separate lures with hooks.

NAME OF FISH SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE (Inches)	CREEL LIMIT (Number Per Day)
Atlantic Croaker	All Year	8	None
American Eel	All Year	6	50
Atlantic Sturgeon	CLOSED	N/A	N/A
Bluefish	All Year	None	10
Black Sea Bass	May 10 - Feb. 28	11	25
Red Drum	All Year	18 - 27 Max.	5, 1 greater than 27 Inches
Tautog	July 1 - March 31 April 1 - June 30 Closed Sept. 8 - 18	14 15	10 3
Scup (Porgy)	All Year	8	50
Spotted Seatrout	All Year	12	None
Spanish Mackerel	All Year	14	10
Striped Bass	All Year*	1 Fish 24 - 28 Inches 1 Fish Greater Than 28 Inches	2
Striped Bass Hybrid	All Year	None	None
Summer Flounder	Open May 5, 2001 (No Closed Season)	17 1/2	4
Weakfish	All Year	14	14
White Perch	All Year	8	None
Winter Flounder	All Year	10	None
Blue Crab Peeler Soft Shell Hard Shell	Pots - March 1 - November 30	3 3 1/2" 5	1 Bushel Per Crabber
Hard Clams	All Year	1 1/2"	100 Residents 50 Nonresidents (500 With Permit)
Smooth Conch	All Year	6" length OR 3 1/8" Diameter	N/A
Knobbed Conch	All Year	5" length OR 2 3/4" Diameter	N/A
Lobster	All Year	3 5/16" Carapace length	2 Per Diver
Sharks	All Year	See Below	See Below

*Striped bass recreational season is closed on the spawning grounds (Nanticoke River, C&D; Canal, and Delaware River and their respective tributaries north of the southern most jetty at the C&D; Canal) during April and May.

Finfish are measured from tip of snout to tip of tail.

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Lobster carapace length is measured from rear of eye socket
to rear of bodyshell.



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SHARKS - It is unlawful to:

- o possess the fins from any shark listed in the table below prior to landing unless the fins are attached to the body.
- o fillet any shark listed in the table below prior to landing said shark. A shark may be eviscerated and the head removed prior to landing.
- o release any shark listed in the table below in a manner that will not ensure the maximum probability of survival.
- o have on board more than one shark listed below except that two Atlantic Sharpnose sharks may also be on board.
- o possess any prohibited species at any time, in Delaware waters this would include sand tiger sharks, dusky sharks and white sharks
- o possess any shark listed below that measures less than 54 inches, forked length.

Shark Species

Large Coastal Species

Great Hammerhead	Scalloped Hammerhead	Smooth Hammerhead	Tiger Shark
Nurse Shark	Silky Shark	Blacktip Shark	Bull Shark
Sandbar Shark	Lemon Shark	Spinner Shark	

Small Coastal Species

Finetooth Shark	Bonnethead	Atlantic Sharpnose Shark	Blacknose Shark
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Pelagic (open sea) Species

Porbeagle Shark	Shortfin Mako	Blue Shark	Oceanic Whitetip Shark
Thresher Shark			

Prohibited Species

Basking Shark	Great White Shark	Bigeye Sand Tiger	Sand Tiger
Whale Shark	Bignose Shark	Caribbean Reef Shark	Dusky Shark
Galapogas Shark	Narrowtooth Shark	Night Shark	Atlantic Angel Shark
Caribbean Sharpnose Shark	Smalltail Shark	Bigeye Sixgill Shark	Sevengill Shark
Sixgill Shark	Longfin Mako Shark	Bigeye Thresher Shark	

All recreational gill nets must be out of the water in Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean during the periods in Year
2001 on May 1-9, 11-13, 18-20,
May 25-27 June 1-3, 8-10, 15-17 and June 24-30.

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land, swordfish, bluefish and certain shark species, when caught in waters outside of Delaware's jurisdiction (ocean waters greater than 3 miles offshore), are subject to federal regulations. For further information on federal regulations, call the National Marine Fisheries Service at (301) 713-2347 or (508) 281-9260. In addition, a 24-hour information line is available at (301) 713-1279 or (508) 281-9305.

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Last Update: 09/30/2020 13:09:23