

## = Class A Wild Trout Waters =

Class A Wild Trout Waters are the highest biomass class given to streams in Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission . They are considered to contain the highest @-@ quality naturally reproducing trout populations in Pennsylvania . The first streams received their Class A Wild Trout Waters designations in 1983 . There are now hundreds of such waters , comprising nearly 1 @, @ 500 miles ( 2 @, @ 400 km ) of streams . Class A Wild Trout Waters receive certain legal protections . For instance , they are typically classified by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as High @-@ Quality Coldwater Fisheries . Most Class A Wild Trout Waters are subject to standard statewide angling regulations by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission .

The official definition of Class A Wild Trout Waters is " streams that support a population of naturally produced trout of sufficient size and abundance to support a long @-@ term and rewarding sport fishery " . These streams are considered to be the best angling streams in Pennsylvania and most of the state 's 67 counties contain at least one . Class A Wild Trout Waters are virtually never stocked , although many were prior to receiving their designation . There are different total biomass criteria for different species and combinations of species , but for brook trout alone , the minimum is 30 kilograms per hectare ( 27 lb / acre ) , and for brown trout alone , the minimum is 40 kilograms per hectare ( 36 lb / acre ) .

## = = History = =

The modern stream classification system of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission , including Class A Wild Trout Waters , was developed with Operation Future , which marked a transition from recreation @-@ based management to resource @-@ based management , in 1983 . Following statewide stream surveys in the late 1970s and early 1980s , the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission created a set of biomass standards for trout streams in the state .

The first streams were designated as Class A Wild Trout Waters in 1983 . At that time , 138 stream sections , totaling nearly 400 miles ( 640 km ) of streams , were found to meet the criteria . As more streams were assessed , the number of Class A Wild Trout Waters grew rapidly . By 2005 , there were 436 Class A Wild Trout Waters , totaling 1 @, @ 265 miles ( 2 @, @ 036 km ) . By the end of 2008 , there were 487 such stream sections , which together included 1 @, @ 436 miles ( 2 @, @ 311 km ) of streams . By 2014 , there were 510 Class A Wild Trout Waters , comprising 1 @, @ 490 @. @ 6 miles ( 2 @, @ 398 @. @ 9 km ) of streams .

In the 2010s , the fact that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission was considering adding seven urban streams to its list of Class A Wild Trout Waters ? thus ending stocking there ? caused some criticism by anglers who believed that this would impact the quality of fishing in heavily fished streams such as Monocacy Creek and Little Lehigh Creek . However , the criticism was not universal , with proponents pointing out that a redesignation would provide extra protection for the streams . The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission eventually decided to classify them as Class A Wild Trout Waters , but continue stocking them in the spring to satisfy angler demand .

According to Pennsylvania Outdoor News Person of the Year Bill Anderson , the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has become hesitant to classify streams as Class A Wild Trout Waters due to " ' social ' concerns " .

## = = Description and distribution = =

The official definition of Class A Wild Trout Waters is " streams that support a population of naturally produced trout of sufficient size and abundance to support a long @-@ term and rewarding sport fishery " .

Class A Wild Trout Waters are the " best of the best " streams for trout fishing in Pennsylvania . They are distributed widely across the state . However , most are found in north @-@ central and northeastern Pennsylvania , while very few are in the western third of the state . Some Class A Wild

Trout Waters are located in The Poconos or the Lehigh Valley . As of 2009 , 49 of the state 's 67 counties contain at least one Class A Wild Trout stream . However , in that year , only nine counties contained at least 30 miles ( 48 km ) of Class A Wild Trout Waters .

Class A Wild Trout Waters are virtually never stocked with trout since they are managed solely for the propagation of wild trout . However , most current Class A Wild Trout streams were historically stocked with trout prior to the introduction of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 's classification system . They may also be tributaries of streams that are stocked with trout .

In 2014 , there were 274 Class A Wild Trout Waters for brook trout , comprising 743 @. @ 6 miles ( 1 @, @ 196 @. @ 7 km ) of streams . There were 163 such stream segments for brown trout , making up a total of 507 @. @ 3 miles ( 816 @. @ 4 km ) of streams , and 62 Class A Wild Trout Waters for both brook trout and brown trout , totaling 211 @. @ 0 miles ( 339 @. @ 6 km ) . There were only 11 Class A Wild Trout Waters for rainbow trout , making up 28 @. @ 7 miles ( 46 @. @ 2 km ) of streams .

= = Criteria = =

In order to be listed as Class A Wild Trout Waters , a stream must be surveyed by Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission biologists with " approved protocols " to determine that it meets the relevant standards . The official designation is carried out by the Board of Commissioners .

The criteria for Class A Wild Trout Waters vary by species . For brook trout , a biomass of 30 kilograms per hectare ( 27 lb / acre ) , including at least 0 @. @ 1 kilograms per hectare ( 0 @. @ 089 lb / acre ) of brook trout less than 15 centimeters ( 5 @. @ 9 in ) long . Additionally , brook trout may not make up less than 75 percent of the total wild trout biomass . The requirements are the same for brown trout except that the minimum brown trout biomass is 40 kilograms per hectare ( 36 lb / acre ) .

For a stream to be Class A Wild Trout Waters for both brook trout and brown trout , the combined biomass of both species must be at least 40 kilograms per hectare ( 36 lb / acre ) and the biomass of each species must include at least 0 @. @ 1 kilograms per hectare ( 0 @. @ 089 lb / acre ) of trout less than 15 centimeters ( 5 @. @ 9 in ) long . Neither species may make up more than 75 percent of the total wild trout biomass .

The criteria for rainbow trout are considerably simpler : the only requirement is that the biomass of wild rainbow trout less than 15 centimeters ( 5 @. @ 9 in ) long must be at least 2 kilograms per hectare ( 1 @. @ 8 lb / acre ) . There is only one stream in Pennsylvania that is Class A Wild Trout Waters for brook trout and rainbow trout : Roaring Run .

There are several rankings with lower biomass requirements in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 's classification system : Class B Wild Trout Waters , Class C Wild Trout Waters , Class D Wild Trout Waters , and Class E Wild Trout Waters .

= = Legal significance = =

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection designates Class A Wild Trout Waters as High @-@ Quality Coldwater Fisheries , provided that there has been an adequate period of public comment and participation . This provides such streams with extra legal protections under the federal Clean Water Act . Thus , any activity involving discharges into a Class A Wild Trout Stream is required to comply with more restrictive standards than for other streams . Some streams receive Exceptional Value status due to their classification as Class A Wild Trout Waters .

Under Section 57.8a of the Pennsylvania Code , the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is to manage trout populations in Class A Wild Trout Waters as renewable natural resources , and to conserve the populations for anglers .

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission bases its water withdrawal policy in part on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 's biomass classifications system . The habitat loss criteria for Class A Wild Trout Waters is 5 percent , except in cases of social or economic justification , in which case it is 7 @. @ 5 percent .

Class A Wild Trout Waters are subject to several angling regulations . The vast majority ( 92 percent ) of such streams are managed with the statewide minimum length of 7 inches ( 18 cm ) and the maximum creel limit of five fish . Of the 40 + Class A Wild Trout Waters under special regulations , about half are managed with a Catch and Release regulation . Trophy Trout and Wild Brook Trout Enhancement regulations apply to the remainder . A total of 31 Class A Wild Trout Waters have been designated as Wilderness Trout Streams .

Fishing in Class A Wild Trout Waters is permitted year @-@ round , although the killing of fish is forbidden from Labor Day to the beginning of the following year 's trout season .

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