

photo-Mike Parker

UNDERSTANDING PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW NOTICE OF STOCKING

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Whether you are part of a local conservation club that purchases thousands of trout for an annual fishing rodeo, a landowner who likes to catch bass and Bluegills from a nearby lake and bring them back to your private pond, or just an angler who occasionally uses live bait and releases your unused minnows into the stream, there is a new regulation you should know.

Beginning January 1, 2024, as part of an updated section of the Pennsylvania Code (Title 58, Chapter 71a) that deals with the propagation, introduction and transportation of fish in Commonwealth waters, every angler who moves live fish from one water to another is now required to submit a Notice of Stocking (NOS).

To be clear, the NOS is not a request for permission—it's simply letting the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) know about your legal stocking activity.

There are already long-standing regulations that govern which types of fish are allowed to be stocked

in Pennsylvania, and which are prohibited. This list, "Species by Watershed Approved for Open System (Flow Through) Propagation and Introduction," can be viewed on the PFBC website and specifies, by watershed, which species are suitable for stocking, and which are not, based on invasive qualities and threat of disease.

However, until now, Pennsylvania has been among just a handful of states that had no method of tracking most stocked fish, which left our waters increasingly vulnerable to the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species and pathogens. Additionally, without knowing when and where many private stockings were occurring in both public and private waters, PFBC biologists were missing valuable data that could help them form the most effective fisheries management plans that benefit fish and anglers alike.

With the new NOS requirement now in effect, please consider how this regulation may impact you, and take time to familiarize yourself with the new regulation.

How does it work?

The NOS is required for anyone who introduces live fish into any Pennsylvania water, public or private, with the exception of fish baited on a hook for

fishing purposes. You do not need to submit an NOS if you are placing fish into a closed system backyard ornamental pond, such as a koi pond, which does not contact any other surface waters and is not used for fishing or raising baitfish.

Completing the NOS is a fast, free and user-friendly process that can be done with a few clicks on your smartphone or computer using the **HuntFish.PA.gov** website or by filling out a .pdf form and submitting it by e-mail or traditional mail. You will need to submit the NOS form prior to every stocking event, large or small, or you may submit one form to report multiple stockings occurring within the same calendar year on the same body of water.

Information required for the NOS includes your name, address, any associated organization (such as a conservation club), stocking locations and dates, fish species, sizes, and approximate number or pounds of fish. If you purchased the fish from a commercial producer, the name and address information for the hatchery or dealer should also be included.

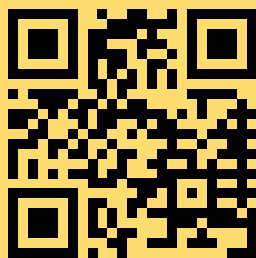
When you submit your NOS electronically, you will receive a confirmation receipt from the PFBC through e-mail. An electronic or hard copy of your completed NOS is required to be present at the time of a stocking event and should be presented to a Waterways Conservation Officer upon request. Failure to submit an NOS before stocking fish may result in a summary citation and fine of \$150.

Protect the resource

For most anglers, this new regulation will have little impact, unless you plan to move live fish from one water to another. Anglers who use live bait such as minnows or Bluegills can avoid submitting an NOS and help protect other fish by properly disposing of their unused bait instead of releasing it into the water at the end of their fishing adventure.

For more information on the NOS requirements and a video guide to completing the form, visit fishandboat.com. 📄

NOS requirements:



fishandboat.com

Pick Up Pennsylvania— A solution to waterway pollution

No angler wants to see trash while trying to land a large bass. We all know pristine waters are healthier for fish, birds, other wildlife and people, too. Participate in Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Pick Up Pennsylvania program and make a difference in your local waterway. You can help by picking up litter that you encounter while fishing or boating along your favorite waterway or by organizing a cleanup of larger items that have been dumped into the water or along the shoreline. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT and Keep America Beautiful to provide free trash bags, gloves and safety vests to registered participants, as supplies last. Additional community improvement events can include community greening and beautification, special collections and anti-littering education events.

Registration begins in January. Register your event at keeppabeautiful.org, choose "Programs", then "Pick Up PA". Questions can be answered by Michelle Dunn, Pick Up Pennsylvania Program Coordinator, at 877-772-3673 ext. 113 or mdunn@keeppabeautiful.org.



Schuylkill River, Chester County

photo-courtesy of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

More information and to register:



keeppabeautiful.org