



PLAY

Winter
2015

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Angler's Calendar

There are fishing opportunities in all four seasons. The four seasons of the year are a result of the Earth's position to the sun. While the calendar shows four seasons, the angler's calendar has much more. Often, anglers talk about the season as the time when a particular fish can be kept or harvested. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) establishes and regulates these fishing seasons.

The opening day of trout season is in the spring and is one of the most anticipated days of the year for anglers. The opening day for bass is during the summer, and the opening day for Walleyes, Saugers and saugeyes is between the trout and bass opening days.



Fall provides the opportunity for anglers to try Lake Erie steelhead fishing. Fall is also a great time to fish for crappies and other species of panfish. Some anglers look forward to winter fishing.

This issue is about the angler's calendar and includes information on seasons and regulations.

VOCABULARY *(Watch for the first time these words appear!)*

- **Closed Season** - period of time when fish may not be in possession and must be released unharmed
- **Creel Limit** - the number of fish that an angler may keep in one day during the open season
- **Extended Season** - sections of approved water with a longer fishing period
- **Harvest** - to possess or keep fish, the opposite of catch and release
- **Inland Waters** - bodies of water that are not connected directly to the ocean
- **Juvenile** - young fish that have not yet matured into adults
- **Minimum Size** - specified length of fish required in order to possess and harvest
- **Open Season** - period of time when fish may be in possession and harvested
- **Population** - all fish of a certain species within a water
- **Regional Opening Day** - only waters listed in the Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program
- **Regulation** - fishing rule passed by the Commission
- **Rulemaking** - the process to create a regulation
- **Spawning** - reproduction of mature fish

Why Do We Have Fishing Regulations?

Pennsylvania law states that people age 16 and over must have a current fishing license to fish (unless otherwise exempted). In addition to this law and other laws related to fishing, PFBC establishes fishing **regulations**. These are the basic rules that you must follow when you fish. Some of these regulations specify what, when and the size of the fish you may keep or **harvest**.

Seasons

Regulations that identify when you may harvest fish are called seasons. Some fish species may always be no-harvest; they have no **open season**. Other species have an open season, and that is when you may keep them to eat. The time when you cannot keep these species is called the **closed season**. Species caught during their closed season must be released immediately unharmed. In some cases, closed seasons are in place to protect fish populations. Often the closed season is during the **spawning** period.



Minimum

Minimum sizes are often in place to protect **juvenile** fish. Minimum sizes are set to allow fish to grow and become reproducing adults. Nearly all gamefish have a minimum size regulation. Fish such as bass, Walleyes, Northern Pike and Muskellunge take longer to become adults. The minimum size for these species is based on the length of a 3- or 4-year old fish. Other species, including Bluegills, Yellow Perch and crappies spawn at a younger age and in large numbers. These fish don't have a minimum size on most waters.

Creel Limits

Daily **creel limits** are established to keep people from harvesting too many fish. Limits help to ensure that there are enough fish to catch in the future. Harvesting too many fish can greatly reduce the **population** of that species. Fish like Muskellunge have lower **creel limits**, because they grow slowly and have few offspring. Panfish have higher creel limits, because there are more of them, and they grow fast.



The Off-Season

Professional sports take time off during the year, and this is called the off-season. Some anglers take time off too, especially during the winter months. Some anglers brave the cold and enjoy catching fish through the ice or fishing their favorite river or stream. Others use this time to make repairs, tie flies, build rods, visit sports shows or catch-up on their fishing-related reading.



Special Regulations

The Commission often sets special regulations to enhance fishing opportunities or create a unique experience. Some special regulations are set to provide anglers the opportunity to catch trophy or larger fish. That species has a larger minimum size and a smaller creel limit on those waters. There are also waters where anglers can only use certain types of fishing gear. In these areas, anglers are only permitted to fly fish or use artificial lures.

For current regulations and information, see the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary*. You can view an online version at www.fishinpa.com/ or on the Commission's website at www.fishandboat.com.

No Open Season

Threatened or endangered species have no open season. The same is true of species that the Commission and others are working to restore, such as American Shad in the Susquehanna River. There is no open season on Smallmouth Bass and Largemouth Bass on some sections of the Juniata and Susquehanna rivers. These regulations are in place to protect the remaining population.

'Tis the Season – All Year Long

Here is a look at what fish are “in-season” in Pennsylvania. This means you are allowed to harvest the fish.

Regulations stated below are based on regulations for **Inland Waters**.* For each of these species, special

Angler's Year-Round Calendar

All Species of Trout and Salmon

Regional Opening Day of Trout Season includes only those waters in 18 southeastern counties and two waters crossing from those counties listed in the Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program.

Regular Season is 8 a.m. on the first Saturday after April 11 to midnight Labor Day; minimum size is 7 inches; daily limit is 5 (combined species) except areas with special regulations.

Extended Season is approved trout waters and all waters downstream of approved trout waters 12:01 a.m. the day after Labor Day to midnight the last day of February of the following year; minimum size is 7 inches; daily limit is 3 (combined species), except areas with special regulations.

Extended Season: Class A wild trout stream sections are no harvest - catch and release only. Streams are listed at www.fishandboat.com/classa.pdf.



Brook Trout



Rainbow Trout



Brown Trout

Bass – Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted (Lakes)

January 1 to midnight the day before the first Saturday after April 11 and November 1 to midnight December 31; minimum size is 15 inches; daily limit is 4 (combined species from all habitats).

12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after April 11 to 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after June 11; no harvest – catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted).

12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after June 11 to midnight October 31; minimum size is 12 inches; daily limit is 6 (combined species).



Largemouth Bass



Smallmouth Bass

Bass – Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted (Rivers and Streams)

January 1 to midnight the day before the first Saturday after April 11 and October 1 to midnight December 31; minimum size is 15 inches; daily limit is 4 (combined species).

12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after April 11 to 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after June 11; no harvest – catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted).

12:01 a.m. the first Saturday after June 11 to midnight September 30; minimum size is 12 inches; daily limit is 6 (combined species).



Spotted Bass

Muskellunge and Muskellunge Hybrids

Open year-round; minimum size is 40 inches; daily limit is 1.



Muskellunge

regulations may also apply. The regulations on these waters will be different. Special regulations are set for different seasons,

sizes, creel limits or the type of equipment permitted.

Pickereel

Open year-round; minimum size is 18 inches; daily limit is 4.

Chain Pickerel



Northern Pike

Open year-round; minimum size is 24 inches; daily limit is 2.

Northern Pike



Walleyes and Hybrids (*Saugeye*)

January 1 through March 14; and 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday in May to midnight, December 31; minimum size is 15 inches; daily limit is 6.

Walleye



Sauger

January 1 through March 14; and 12:01 a.m. the first Saturday in May to midnight, December 31; minimum size is 12 inches; daily limit is 6.

Sauger



American Shad

Open year round; no minimum size; daily limit is 3.

Unlawful to take, catch or kill American Shad, in the Susquehanna River and all its tributaries. River Herring (Alewife and Blueback Herring) has a closed year-round season with zero daily limit applied to Susquehanna River and tributaries, Lehigh River and tributaries, Schuylkill River and tributaries, West Branch Delaware River, Delaware River, Delaware estuary, Delaware River tributaries upstream to the limit of the tidal influence and Conowingo Reservoir.

American Shad



Striped Bass and Striped Bass/White Bass Hybrids

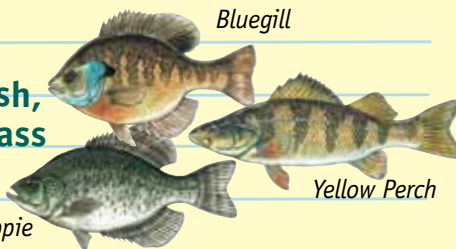
Open year round; minimum size is 20 inches; daily limit is 2 (combined species).

Bluegill

Sunfish, Yellow Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp and White Bass

Open year-round; no minimum size; daily limit is 50 (combined species).

Black Crappie



NOTE: For Bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools in the Ohio drainage are "rivers." It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to kill black bass.

NOTE: Approved trout waters are closed to all fishing from March 1 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program or Approved Trout Waters open to Year-Round Fishing Program.**

*Regulations summarized here are current for the 2015 year but are subject to change.



Laws and Regulations

The *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary* provides a summary of laws and regulations for fishing and boating. These laws and regulations are in place to protect the resource, to provide special fishing and boating opportunities and to help ensure the safety of anglers and boaters.

Laws are the result of the Governor signing a bill passed by the General Assembly. There are fishing laws that set requirements for a license and set its price. There is a Commonwealth law giving

PFBC authority to make fishing and boating regulations. This process is called **rulemaking**.

The PFBC Board of Commissioners makes official Commission rulemaking. During their quarterly meetings, commissioners hear recommendations from PFBC staff and take action on proposed rules and final adoption of rules already proposed. The Commission's website, www.fishandboat.com, shows a calendar of upcoming meetings. The public is welcome to attend Commission meetings. The website also includes the records from previous meetings.

Steps in Rulemaking

- 1** Commissioners vote on an idea to propose it as rulemaking. The proposal may change an existing regulation or establish a new regulation. This vote occurs at a public Commission meeting.
- 2** Notice of proposed rulemaking is published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. The *Pennsylvania Bulletin* is a weekly publication showing rules and regulations being considered by Pennsylvania state agencies.
- 3** Comments from the public are accepted by PFBC for at least 30 days.
- 4** After the public comment period, the Commission considers adopting the proposed change and takes a vote on final rulemaking. This vote occurs at a public Commission meeting.
- 5** If adopted on final rulemaking, the new or changed regulation becomes effective on the date of publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* or on another date specified by the Commission.

PLAY

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Photos: Jeff Decker, Spring Gearhart,
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www.fishandboat.com

Your Fishing Calendar

If you're involved in after-school activities, your calendar at home is marked with important dates. Families use calendars to plan activities.

Since fishing is an important and fun activity, include opening days and other important fishing dates on your calendar.

Mark Your Calendar for these Dates

To fill in the blanks with dates for the current year, refer to the 'Tis the Season—All Year Long pages of this newsletter and these websites: www.fishinpa.com, www.fishandboat.com, www.safeboatingcampaign.com and www.takemefishing.org/nfbw.



- Regional Mentored Youth Fishing Day* _____
- State-Fish Art Contest Deadline* _____
- Regional Opening Day of Trout Season* _____
- Statewide Mentored Youth Fishing Day* _____
- Regular Opening Day for Trout Statewide* _____
- Opening Day for Walleye* _____
- National Safe Boating Week* _____
- Fish-for-Free Days* _____
- National Fishing and Boating Week* _____
- Opening Day for Bass* _____
- Mandatory Cold Weather Life Jacket Wear* _____
Boaters are required by law to wear a life jacket on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak during the cold weather months.
- Fishing Licenses on Sale* _____

Cut this form out or copy it. Then, use it to invite your family to take you fishing on the dates listed above.

PLEASE TAKE ME FISHING!

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Types of fish: _____

Equipment needed: _____