

The Tool Box

Trap Nets

This article is first in a new series called “The PA Fish & Boat Commission’s Tool Box.” In “The Tool Box,” we will tell you about the tools we use to do our jobs. Trap nets are the first “tool” we pulled out of our tool box. Commission biologists use trap nets.



In the spring, many kinds of fish are active in shallow water near the shore. They are looking for spawning habitat. During this time, the trap net is a useful tool for our fisheries biologists. A trap net is like a funnel and a maze. Long net walls, called “leaders,” make up the funnel part. The leaders guide the fish toward the trap at the narrow end. The trap at the end is a maze. Swimming in is easy for the fish. Escaping is difficult.

Our biologists count the fish they catch. They also sort the fish by species and age. This information tells them how well the fish are doing. We can then make the best decisions about managing our resources.

Some of our biologists use trap nets to collect adult fish for breeding purposes. They collect walleye eggs and milt from walleye adults caught in trap nets. After the eggs hatch, the young fish, called fry, are stocked.

Our biologists release fish caught in trap nets.

Trap Net—View from above

