

The Delaware River in Pennsylvania



Wayne County

Much of this area provides a combination of scenic float tripping and some really super shad, smallmouth bass, walleyes and trout fishing. There are six Pennsylvania and four New York accesses, and many shore access points. Trout fishing is best upstream from Callicoon beginning in late April. A 20-mile stretch from Hankins, New York, upstream is hot. Dry flies and tandem wet flies work equally well. Try flies in sizes 10 and 12 early, and smaller sizes as water levels drop.

Shad fishing begins about the end of April and continues well into June. A great variety of shad darts and flutterspoons works well. Bucktails are the most effective lure in eighth-to-quarter-ounce sizes. Various brightly colored streamers also take shad.

Smallmouth bass take live bait and lures. The best area begins at Damascus and continues downstream. For walleyes and muskies, try the big hole at Narrowsburg, at the bridge.

Floaters should be especially cautious when going through the area at Skinners Falls, five miles above Narrowsburg. Waters run swift and cold.

Pike County

There are six Pennsylvania accesses and one New York access along this 67-mile stretch. Anglers can find good trout fishing at the mouths of tributary trout streams. Excellent hatches of mayflies, stoneflies and caddises come off in June and into early September.

This spawning ground for shad endures lots of action mid-April through June; early morning and dusk are the best times. Allow your dart to drift into and then hover in deep pools. The area near the Zane Grey Access at Lackawaxen is noted for attracting large numbers of shad. Work the main river flow.

Smallmouth bass are active from July until cold weather sets in. Crayfish and hellgrammites are the preferred live baits. Topwater lures do well in the fall.

Pike County river flow is swift and could pose problems for beginning anglers and boaters. One especially hazardous area is located about two miles above the Zane Grey Access.

Monroe County

Fifteen miles of scenic beauty ending at the Delaware Water Gap enhance your trip in this area. There are one Pennsylvania access and three NJ accesses, and many shore access points. American shad are in the area from early April until early June.

This stretch is a hotspot for smallmouths. Offer the smallies minnow-like plugs, live minnows, or hellgrammites. For walleyes, fish the riffle and still water below the pool at Walpack Bend



in late fall. Use lamprey eels, nightcrawlers and imitation minnows. Lead-head jigs work in winter.

Look for muskies at the mouths of the many tributary streams, the area's deeper pools, and at the tip of Poxono Island, about mid-way through the county.

Avoid Sambo Riff, just below the mouth of Flat Brook. It's a mile of swift rapids that novice boaters should avoid.

Northampton County

Thirty-five miles of river in this section have shad from April into June. There are four PA accesses and two NJ accesses. The top shad spots include the mouth of the Lehigh River at Easton, Eddystone Beach, the pool at the Met-Ed access (about a mile south of Portland), and a huge riffle below the Portland railroad bridge.

Smallmouth bass are found in deep pools with nearby riffles. Try the usual artificials, but crayfish are best during July and August. Poppers and hair bugs work during June and July.

There are muskies here, too. Fish a size 5 spinner in the shallows surrounding

deeper pools. Walleye fishing is best in late fall and early winter. Troll eels in big pools. Striped bass are present from mid-June through early September. They are taken on live eels, jigs, and crankbaits.

Be alert to dangerous rapids at Foul Riff, just above the Met-Ed Access. These rapids are among the most dangerous in the watershed. Only the most experienced boaters should attempt them.

Bucks County

Divide this county into upper non-tidal (43 miles) and lower tidal (17 miles) sections. In the upper section, boaters must watch wing dams at Lambertville and Lumberville. Shad action peaks around the second week of April through mid-May. Fish shad darts and flutterspoons below heavy riffles and in deep pools above the riffles.

Striped bass are present from late May through September. They are taken on live eels, jigs and crankbait.

Smallmouth bass fishing heats up toward the end of June and continues into October. Jigs with white or yellow plastic tails work well. Live hellgrammites take bass in June and July. Walleyes offer an occasional cold-weather fishery, and there is some musky fishing.

The tidal section starts at the Route 1 bridge at Trenton Falls. Tides can vary some seven feet. Fishing pressure is heavy for stripers, white perch, herring and shad, catfish, largemouth and smallmouth bass, and muskies. Bloodworms take stripers from May through early October. Anglers take herring in April and May using plain gold hooks jugged in six to eight feet of water.

Public Launch Sites

Estimated distance to next site

- Balls Eddy (6) miles**
- Buckingham (19)**
- Callicoon (5)**
- Damascus (8)**
- Narrowsburg (13)**
- Zane Grey (22)**
- Matamoras Park (10)**
- Milford Beach (6)**
- Dingmans Ferry (8)**
- Eshback (5)**
- Bushkill (10)**
- Smithfield (12)**
- Met Ed-Portland (12)**
- Martin's Creek, PP&L (5)**
- Sandts Eddy (5)**
- Easton (17.2)**
- Upper Black Eddy (6)**
- Tinicum (26)**
- Yardley (16)**
- Bristol (2.5)**
- Neshaminy (6)**
- Linden (2.5)**
- Tacony (1.5)**
- Frankford Arsenal (16)**
- Commodore Barry Bridge**

* Example: Balls Eddy Access to Buckingham Access = 6 Miles



Trenton Falls is a herring hotspot.

Channel catfish action is excellent in Northampton and Bucks counties, and in Monroe, Northampton and Bucks counties (non-tidal). Panfishing is excellent for rock bass and redbreast sunfish.

Philadelphia County

This 18-mile section is affected by tides and heavy commercial traffic. Be aware of treacherous rips formed when the incoming tide meets the outgoing current. The best angling includes a variety of warmwater species. There is seasonal striper and herring angling. White perch are taken on small spinners, minnows or garden worms. Striper action starts in May and continues through early October. The mouths of Pennypack Creek and Poquessing Creek are hotspots. Anglers enjoy good bass fishing from May through August. The best catches occur between piers and in coves where weed growth is good, usually during the two hours on either side of high tide.

Delaware County

Here are 12 miles of good boating water, but consider the tidal influence and respect the size and power of sea-going vessels passing through this area. A variety of warmwater fish are caught, especially at the mouths of tributaries. Live minnows are effective for gamefish. Doughballs, nightcrawlers and shrimp take carp and catfish. Striper fishing is best in May, June, September and October. Bloodworms are a good bet for stripers along with bucktail jigs dressed with a three-inch minnow. Stripers like areas where tidal currents are heaviest. Herring pass through in late April and May when anglers score while jigging with bare gold hooks. Try fishing for herring along bulkheads and against rocky shorelines.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's *Fishing and Boating Map* provides more details on Delaware River accesses. For a free copy (but add \$1 for postage for each map), contact: Publications Section, PA Fish & Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000.

