

# Careers

## with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Pennsylvania's many different kinds of waterways include headwater mountain streams, rivers and large lakes. The merging of Midwestern and Mid-Atlantic watersheds has led to some of the most diverse fisheries in the nation. Pennsylvania also offers residents and visitors some of the best boating in the Mid-Atlantic area.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) regulates and protects the aquatic resources of the state. This includes fishes, amphibians and reptiles and their habitats. Pennsylvania is unique in having an entire agency dedicated to fisheries. The PFBC's mission is to "provide fishing and boating opportunities through the protection and management of aquatic resources."

Many people enjoy fishing and boating Pennsylvania's waters, and they want to help preserve our state's aquatic resources. If this describes you, you might want to consider a career with the Pennsylvania



*Fish Culturist Jim McCloskey,  
Tylersville Fish Culture Station*



*WCO George Geisler (now Regional  
Manager), Susquehanna River at Goldsboro*

Fish & Boat Commission. The PFBC offers jobs on many skill levels, and hiring occurs year-round. The Commission looks for people with experience and dedication, and for many jobs, a college degree.

### Civil service jobs

Most Fish & Boat Commission employment opportunities are obtained through the state Civil Service Commission. The *Summary of Civil Service Examinations* lists these jobs. A civil service application for employment must be filled out and mailed to the Civil Service Commission. If the job you apply for requires testing, you will be informed of the next test's time and place. Test results are mailed to applicants. If you pass the test and meet the minimum requirements, your name is placed on an eligibility list. When a job vacancy occurs, interviews are conducted from the highest-ranking names on the eligibility list.

For civil service positions, contact the Civil Service Commission—in Harrisburg, 320 Market Street, P.O. Box 569, Harrisburg, PA 17108-0569, or call (717) 783-3058; in Pittsburgh, Room 1503, State Office Building, 300 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210, or call (412)565-7666; in Philadelphia, 10 South 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, or call (215) 560-2253. Find additional information at the Civil Service Commission web site:

[www.scsc.state.pa.us](http://www.scsc.state.pa.us).

### Waterways Conservation Officers

Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) duties include law enforcement work in fisheries conservation and water-



*WCO Craig Garman checks an angler's license, Yellow Breeches Creek, Cumberland County.*

craft safety. Officers may patrol on foot, or with a patrol vehicle or boat. Officers carry firearms, handle venomous reptiles and work in adverse weather.

WCOs issue citations, serve warrants and present evidence at hearings. Conservation officers investigate water pollution incidents and help in fish stocking. There is also community involvement. Officers make public appearances and conduct classes. They teach youth groups and adult organizations. Officers teach fishing skills and boating safety classes. Offic-

ers also supervise volunteer deputy waterways conservation officers.

Extensive daily travel is required. Travel expenses are paid by the Commission. Conservation officers work from home and weekend work is required. Officers are assigned to a district.

The PFBC employs about 75 men and women as WCOs. Applicants must first pass a written civil service test. Persons with high test scores are then interviewed. Applicants must be 21 years old and have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license. Applicants must also be PA residents and be of good moral character. The Commission conducts thorough background and character investigations. Applicants are checked for vision and color perception, hearing, strength and agility. Swimming for 10 minutes or 250 yards is required. All applicants must test negative for illegal substances. Previous military service is a plus.

After acceptance, WCO cadets must complete a one-year training program. Training starts with 18 weeks of municipal police officer training. In this phase, cadets learn the principles and practices of law enforcement. The next phase includes 20 weeks of Commission classroom training. Class subjects include fish and boat laws and regulations. Trainees also learn watercraft safety, weapons use and public relations. Land and water management and fish biology and conservation are also taught. WCO cadets then spend seven weeks in field training assignments under the direction of experienced officers. Finally, cadets receive six weeks of on-the-job training. Graduates become waterways conservation officers. Officers are assigned to seasonal positions. These positions become permanent when vacancies arise. Officers may be assigned to any area of the state, and relocation may be required.

### Fisheries positions

Pennsylvania has more than 4,000 miles of coldwater streams and more than 8,000 miles of warmwater streams and rivers. Many streams, rivers and lakes are stocked with fish raised by the PFBC. The Commission operates 14 major fish culture stations (hatcheries) statewide. These hatcheries annually produce more than 100 million fish. The Commission Bureau of Fisheries maintains these facilities. The Bureau of Fisheries employs more than 190 full-time people. The Bureau of Fisheries also employs seasonal help.

Entry-level employment at a hatchery includes a position such as Fish Culturist I. Culturists I perform duties necessary for the operation of a fish culture station. Technical duties include fish spawning and the care of fish and eggs. They dispense food and medication to fish. Culturists check raceways and ponds for signs of fish disease and stress. Culturists prepare fish for distribution and transportation. This work includes sorting, netting and grading fish. Culturists I are involved in the spawning and breeding of fish. Duties include the use of chemicals in raising fish. They also are responsible for checking water flow, temperature and dissolved oxygen levels in raceways. Other duties include the maintenance and construction of buildings and grounds.



Area 6 Fisheries Manager Mike Kaufmann (left) and Fisheries Technician Bryan Chikotas weigh and measure yellow perch during a trapnetting survey at Marsh Creek Lake, Marsh Creek State Park, Chester County.

The work is limited technical and semi-skilled labor.

Fish Culturist I is a seasonal civil service position. Fish Culturists I do not receive permanent, full-time employee benefits until they receive full-time, permanent status. Applicants for Fish Culturist I need a high school degree. Equivalent certifications or previous experience is also ac-

ceptable. Applicants must have a valid PA driver's license. All Fish Culturists I must complete a 12-month probation period. Probation may last up to two years as a result of the seasonal status. By the end of probation, all employees must have a commercial driver's license. This license must allow for the operation of trucks up to 26,000 pounds, or more. The test for Fish Culturist I is given every two years.

Fish Culturist II may be a full-time civil service position with benefits. Promotion from Fish Culturist I is almost automatic once training requirements have been met. This includes successfully completing the probation period. Additional duties may include operating stocking vehicles. Fish Culturists II maintain stocking and vehicle records. They advise stocking volunteers in the proper ways to handle and release fish into public waters. Culturists II must know the primary and backup life support systems of the hatchery.

Fisheries Technicians are permanent full-time positions. Fisheries Technicians work with and support Fisheries Biologists. Technicians help prepare for fish surveys. They also assist in fish sampling. Most positions are with the Bureau of Fisheries and the Division of Environmental Services. Requirements for this position include nine college-level biology credits and two years of college, or two years experience as a Fish Culturist I.

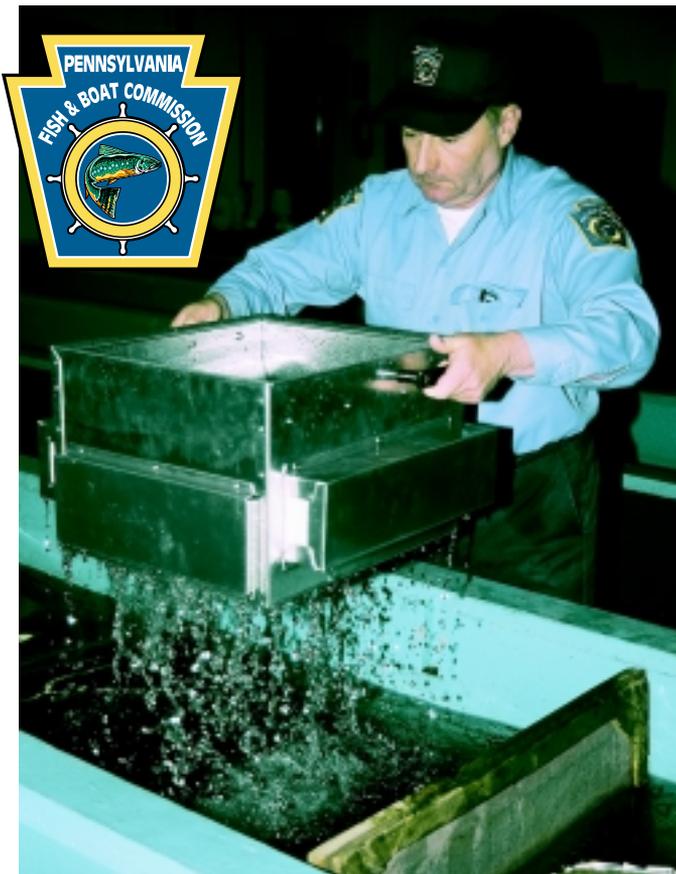
Fisheries Biologist is a technical position in the Bureau of Fisheries or Division of Environmental Services. The job includes research and the interpretation of data. Biologists also design fish and aquatic studies. The biologist then analyzes the data and determines conclusions. The position of Fisheries Biologist requires a bachelor's degree with nine college credits in biology. Most positions are full-time and permanent.

The Bureau of Fisheries also employs hatchery foremen. These positions are full-time at a hatchery. Foremen are in charge of the daily operations of the hatchery. They assign tasks and supervise their completion. Job requirements include one year as a Fish Culturist II or two years in raising and care of foodfish or gamefish.

A hatchery manager oversees an entire hatchery. Hatchery managers are in charge of long- and short-term planning. Managers schedule fish stockings. They are tasked with purchasing for the hatchery. This includes buying fish food, chemicals and equipment. Job requirements include one year experience as a hatchery foreman or supervisor. Three years of progressive experience in the raising and care of fish is also acceptable.

## Internships

The PFBC also offers internships to provide work experience. Internships are for students to gain practical experience in the profession they are studying. Most internships are as Fisheries Biologist Aides. Both office and field work is involved. Internships are occasionally offered in the Executive Office. The PFBC provides on-the-job training for interns. Interns pay tuition and receive college credits. Students do not receive wages for internships.



Fish Culturist Dave Ellis, Tylersville Fish Culture Station, grades (sorts by size) fingerling trout.

photos: Art Michaels



## Non-civil service jobs

Commission non-civil service positions are available statewide. Applicants for non-civil service jobs must submit a Personal Data Sheet (form STD-300) and a resume. The Commission then sends the data sheet and resume to: The Bureau of State Employment, Room 110, Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Individuals seeking information may also call (717) 787-5703. Listed below are non-civil service jobs offered by the PFBC. More information on non-civil service positions is available at the Bureau of State Employment's web site: [www.bse.state.pa.us](http://www.bse.state.pa.us).

Laborers are hired seasonally. These jobs are not permanent positions. The job requirements vary with location and current Commission projects. There are no minimum requirements for application. Most positions are located in maintenance districts of the Bureau of Engineering and Development.

Equipment Operators are permanent full-time positions. A valid PA driver's license is usually required. Other requirements include six months of experience operating vehicles of more than 10,001 pounds. Equipment Operator jobs include truck drivers, backhoe operators and more. These positions are available statewide.

Maintenance Repairman is another permanent full-time position. The job description includes building repair and equipment maintenance. Job requirements include two years of experience in general maintenance. This experience can be in the building, electrical or mechanical trades. These positions are available throughout the state. Fisheries and the Bureau of Engineering and Development employ most people in maintenance repair.

The PFBC also has positions in skilled trades, including Carpenters and Electricians in the Bureau of Engineering and Development. The job requirements include planning projects and construction. They also maintain PFBC buildings. All positions are permanent and full-time. Carpenters and Electricians are used statewide. Carpenters and Electricians are required to have four years of experience in their fields. Completion of an approved apprenticeship is also acceptable. Some electrician positions may require an applicant to be a journeyman or master electrician.

*WCO Steve Boughter (left) and DWCO Gary Walter conduct a boarding, West Branch Susquehanna River near Northumberland.*

## Clerical staff

The Fish & Boat Commission maintains a small clerical staff. These positions include Clerks and Clerk-Typists. Positions are both part-time and permanent. Most clerical staff members work in Harrisburg. However, positions are statewide in almost every PFBC office. Requirements vary, but typing and computer skills are an asset. Advancement as a Clerk/Clerk Typist requires a high school degree.

The Fish & Boat Commission has one of the lowest employee turnover rates among state agencies. This is a result of high morale and job satisfaction. The benefits for PFBC employees are some of the best offered anywhere. Health benefits include medical, dental and vision. State employees are offered a prescription drug program. Financial benefits include a retirement fund, life insurance and a state-supported investment program. The state has 11 paid holidays, annual leave, sick leave and personal leave. Leave (vacation) time is earned at different rates depending on the amount of time served.

Fish & Boat Commission employees come from diverse backgrounds. Some are hired after graduation from high school or college. Others transfer from private industry. Many of our present employees come to us from other government agencies.

Are you an individual who enjoys the fishing and aquatic recreational opportunities offered here in Pennsylvania? Do you have a dedication to maintaining and enhancing these resources? Then consider employment with the Fish & Boat Commission.

If you have questions, talk to a Commission employee. You may also contact the Fish & Boat Commission's Personnel Office: P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000; 717-705-7820; web site: [www.fish.state.pa.us](http://www.fish.state.pa.us); e-mail: [vwadel@state.pa.us](mailto:vwadel@state.pa.us). ☐