

In Front of the Eight Ball:

Top Southeast Opening Day Trout Waters

by Vic Attardo photos by the author



Manatawny Creek

Casting right to target, here are eight top Opening Day trout waters in the southeast corner—a corner with fish and the anglers to catch them.

1 Bushkill Creek

Long-suffering Bushkill Creek outside Easton, Northampton County, is a survivor. Wrecked by pollutions and repeated flooding, Bushkill Creek is still an admirable stream that provides plenty of sport for early-season anglers and those who toil later into the year.

The long, middle section of Bushkill Creek is highly wadeable and contains a massive pool above a dam—a place for sit-down anglers. Most of the stocked section has a mild gradient, and it's not until you get below the dam that a special regulation section turns tumbled and wide. Bait and hardware anglers do well in the middle section. Fly anglers occupy the special regulation zone.

Bushkill Creek never meanders far from Bushkill Drive, so access is very good.

2 Unami Creek

Except in very limited sections, Unami Creek in Bucks and Montgomery counties is impossible to wade. The humongous Triassic boulders, which dominate its channels and sidelines, are better fished from shore. There are few places where you can wade up to your knees, but wading these areas is difficult. Also, its dammed pools are immense compared to other medium-sized streams.

Nevertheless, Unami Creek is a great put-and-take trout stream in the southeast, as challenging as it is productive and

staunchly beautiful. The stream is perfect for short-rod hardware and bait anglers. Split shot, swivels and tough leaders will catch the stream's stocked trout.

Access is along Swamp Creek Road, east of Sumneytown. Some ongoing bridge reconstruction may hinder access for a time.

3 Perkiomen Creek

The Perkiomen Creek in Berks and Montgomery counties is a low gradient, mud-banked stream captured in a picture postcard. The water quality of Perkiomen Creek has improved with cooler temperatures and cleaner flows, extending the range of wild brown trout from the West Branch down through the village of Palm.

The stream is suitable for spin and fly anglers, and there are long wadeable sections. Access is found off Route 29 above East Greenville and in the rural roads twisting through lower Hereford Township.

4 Scotts Run Lake

Peaceful and pasteurized, Scotts Run Lake in Berks County is the perfect family trout place. Strands of flat shoreline and a slanted dam face provide sites for seated anglers; boaters can float the core of the 22-acre lake.

Though the average depth of the impoundment is about 7 feet, Scotts Run does have a dark zone at 22 feet. Even in the southeast, trout will be down low the first few weeks of the season. Also, casting from the shoreline catches a lot of nice fish through the several stockings the lake receives.

Scotts Run Lake is located in French Creek State Park along Rt. 345.

5 Ridley Creek

A hot spot for suburban Philadelphia anglers, Ridley Creek, Delaware County, is shored by nice parkland and antique housing. The stream boasts both ancient sycamore trees, whose roots create structure, and prominent cobble rocks.

Stocked trout can show up every few feet in this mostly mid-width water. Fish-friendly eddies are around riffles, roots and rocks, and trout rent every home they can. Bait and hardware anglers rule most of Ridley Creek. However, through Ridley Creek State Park, fly anglers take over on special regulation water.

Ridley Creek is found northwest of Media.

6 East Branch Perkiomen Creek

The biggest, single pool in southern Pennsylvania may be the pool on the East Branch Perkiomen Creek in Sellersville, Bucks County. Wide, slow and moderately deep, sit-down anglers line both sides of this channeled stretch to catch nice trout.

Up and down from the pool and surrounding park, the East Branch is a narrow stream with ambivalent structure. But before it crosses under the Pennsylvania Turnpike, it has the mammoth boulders of the Triassic times, making it difficult to wade. However, by the time it reaches Salford Township in Montgomery County, the East Branch is a wide, rural stream bedded with red shale. Access is gained by way of a township park off Skippack-Salfordville Road. The Bergey's Mill is another park section with steep cliffs and dam pools.

7 Pickering Creek

Surprisingly rural, Pickering Creek is a lowland stream that challenges an angler with its many deep holes and stretches of pocket water. Well canopied and with more twists



Bushkill Creek

and turns than a John Grisham novel, the trout on Pickering Creek have lots of places to hide.

If you enjoy fishing the twisted roots of sycamore trees and the dark green of eddy holes, this Chester County stream is for you.

8 Manatawny Creek

You have to fish around the two covered bridges on Manatawny Creek, Berks and Montgomery counties, in the Oley area to call yourself a bona fide southeast rural angler. And for Pottstown families, the lower section has become popular. ☐



East Branch Perkiomen Creek