

# College License Offers Out-of-state Student Anglers a Great Opportunity



*by Jeff Woleslagle*

*photos by the author*

This year a special license will be available for the first time for out-of-state college students attending a school in Pennsylvania. After January 15, 2021, non-resident students enrolled in Pennsylvania schools of higher education during the school year are eligible to purchase the newly created Non-Resident PA Student (Annual) fishing license at all sales locations and online. The cost of a Non-Resident PA Student (Annual) fishing license will be the current cost of a Resident (Annual) fishing license plus issuing agent and transaction fees. See page 32. Licensees are required to possess the required permits to fish for certain species or in certain bodies of water. A Non-Resident PA Student (Annual) fishing license will remain valid for the year for which it is issued. Student identification or other

means of proof of student enrollment must be provided upon request by Waterways Conservation Officers. Pennsylvania joins several states that now offer similar licenses to non-resident students to make fishing more accessible and affordable.

Research shows that there are more than 160 four-year colleges in Pennsylvania, and no matter where students choose to pursue higher education, they are never far away from great fishing in Pennsylvania. From bass to steelhead to catfish and even American Shad, there are many great fishing destinations for students to take advantage of.

In this age of COVID-19, fishing provides college students with abundant opportunities for socially distanced outdoor recreation that promotes good physical and mental health. At a time when sports and many other extracurricular activities have been suspended or curtailed, fishing can provide a great outlet for those looking to balance the rigors of studies and testing with time outdoors.

## By region

**Northwest Region** (Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren)

Fishing opportunities abound in the northwest. For those attending schools such as Penn State-Behrend, Gannon University, Edinboro University, Grove City College, Slippery Rock University, Theil College, and others, this region boasts tremendous and varied places to hit the water. Lake Erie, Erie County, is well known for its phenomenal bass fishing as well as great opportunities for Walleyes and perch. Great fishing can be found at Presque Isle State Park, and it was during my own college days that I discovered the fantastic shore fishing many locations in this park provide anglers. In the fall and over winter break, students can take advantage of some of the best steelhead fishing in the country. Elk Creek and Walnut Creek are popular destinations and have many locations that provide public access.

The nearby Allegheny National Forest boasts plenty of water teeming with native wild Brook Trout and some stocked waters as well. Kinzua Dam, Warren County, is another location worth exploring. Of course, Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County, also makes the list of fantastic fishing destinations in this region. Not only is it one of the state's top Walleye waters, it is also a great lake to pursue crappies and other panfish in the spring. Not as well known, but a great little lake that is worth exploration in the northwest is Justus Lake, Venango County. I have seen it give up some truly stunning Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass.

**Northcentral Region** (Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union)

Fishing in northcentral Pennsylvania can be exceptional and students looking to take advantage of it will find plenty of great destinations waiting for them. Students of Penn State's main campus, Mansfield University, Bucknell University, and other schools in this part of the state will have no trouble finding locations to ease the strain of college pressures. Lakes like Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, Centre



*Mansfield University student Aaron Morder with a gorgeous Brown Trout caught in the Northcentral Region.*

County, provide great bass fishing as well as shore fishing for Channel Catfish and panfish. Although a lesser-known and targeted species, Common Carp fishing can be a blast on this lake, and I enjoyed it immensely during my own college days.

Any mention of fishing in the northcentral region must include the famed trout waters near State College that include Spring Creek and Penns Creek. I cut my own fly fishing teeth on them while attending Penn State. While they can be humbling at times, they also teach an observant angler much about reading water and hatches. Both streams have abundant public access points. Bald Eagle Creek is another great stream in Centre County that should not be overlooked.

**Northeast Region** (Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming)

For students whose academic pursuits land them at Wilkes University, Johnson College, Keystone College, Lackawanna College, King's College, Marywood University, and other schools in this region, fantastic fishing is never far away.

Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, is a large and diverse fishery that is worth a visit. It is truly a multi-species lake that has great fishing for Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass. The biggest Yellow Perch I have ever caught came during a trip to this lake while I was in college. Beltzville Lake, Carbon County, is also a good destination to pursue not only bass and panfish, but it offers fishing opportunities for Striped Bass as well.

This region of the state is also home to some first-class trout fishing. Streams here like the Aquashicola Creek, Buckwha Creek, Mahoning Creek, and Pohopoco Creek all provide opportunities for both stocked and wild trout.



*A college angler with a nice steelhead caught in Elk Creek, Erie County.*

**Southwest Region** (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland)

Those seeking higher education at the University of Pittsburgh, Seton Hill University, Saint Vincent College, and other schools in this part of the state will find amazing opportunities here as well. The Allegheny River, Monongahela River, and Ohio River all offer fishing opportunities for Smallmouth Bass and other species, within sight of the city of Pittsburgh.

The nearby Forbes State Forest has streams that offer excellent fishing for both stocked and wild trout. In fact, the entire Laurel Highlands is known for the great trout fishing. Jones Mills Run Dam in Laurel Hill State Park can be well worth the hike in, not only for the trout fishing but the incredible scenery.

**Southcentral Region** (Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, York)

Students attending York College, Penn State-Harrisburg, Juniata College, and Lebanon Valley College, as well as the other fine schools of this region will find themselves close to some great fishing locations. The fabled waters of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers are there to be sampled. Anglers here will find tremendous Smallmouth Bass fishing opportunities as well as opportunities for Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Muskellunge, and Walleyes. There are many public access points to be found along both rivers and many stretches are well suited to drifting in a kayak or canoe as well as fishing from shore.

Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, is one I was fortunate enough to spend significant time on during my own time in school. It is a dynamic multi-species fishery where anglers can try for both Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass as well as Striped Bass that reach enormous proportions.

**Southeast Region** (Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill)

For those attending the University of Pennsylvania, West Chester University, Delaware Valley University, Elizabethtown College, Franklin & Marshall College, Albright College, Widener University, Lehigh University, Millersville University, and the other great learning institutions in this part of the state, there is no need to venture far to wet a line. The Delaware and Schuylkill rivers have diverse fisheries that will appeal to any out-of-state angler. Trout can be found in the upper reaches, and Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes can be caught in the lower stretches. The Delaware River has a shad run each spring that can be a unique fishing opportunity for students in the southeast. The Little Schuylkill River, Schuylkill County, has seen a resurgence over the years and now boasts excellent fishing for stocked trout in the spring.

The Lehigh River offers Smallmouth Bass fishing in this region and Speedwell Forge Lake, Lancaster County, can be a great place to target Largemouth Bass.

College students coming to Pennsylvania should not leave their fishing gear behind. To discover the tremendous waters

and fishing opportunities available in addition to the ones already mentioned, as well as to find out where the hot bite is located, incoming students should visit the Region Reports on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's web page at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) and also the interactive map for Best Fishing Waters. ☐



*College angler Reese Kyler with a healthy Smallmouth Bass caught in the Southcentral Region's Juniata River.*



*College angler Thomas Cullen with a nice Brook Trout.*