

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report

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## Variety is the Spice of Fishing!

Most of us are familiar with the popular saying “Variety is the spice of life!” It means that doing routine things differently, or adding something new to your life, can generate excitement and “bite” in your life.

Like you, fishing is an important part of my outdoor lifestyle and I fish as often as I can. But I easily fall into a routine and fish favorite spots, in my case, Sayers Lake in Bald Eagle State Park and Fishing Creek in my front yard in Clinton County. To borrow from the popular saying, every now and then, I could use a little spice in my fishing!

I think all anglers feel this way at

some point during the season.

With that in mind, we are launching a new program which will add some variety and spice to next year’s trout season. Right now, we’re simply calling it the Big Trout Program, and it will offer trout anglers an exciting opportunity to fish for big stocked trout in eight streams next year. I’ll talk more about the name later.

Under the program, approximately 10 percent of the larger 2- to 3-year-old trout in the PFBC hatchery system that are stocked each year will be allocated to eight streams currently managed under Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures

Only regulations. These fish will measure from 14” to more than 20” in length and will be stocked at a rate of up to 250 trout per mile, which is comparable to the numbers of fish of this size in Pennsylvania’s best wild trout waters. By contrast, the current stocking rate for 2- to 3-year-old fish statewide in the adult stocked trout program is about 5 to 10 per mile.

Similar programs initiated by several groups have proven very popular on other waters, such as Pine Creek in Lycoming County. These programs have successfully demonstrated that destination fisheries can be created, drawing anglers from across the state and even the country and providing an economic boost to lo-

cal communities.

This is the type of experience we want to create with the program. We expect you to fish your popular spots with friends and family. At the same time, we want you to plan that trip to one of these eight unique locations, adding excitement to your season.

The eight streams will be distributed broadly across the state so that at least one water is located within a reasonable distance of all of Pennsylvania’s anglers. Traditionally, we spread out the stocking of these larger trout with a moderate number allocated to each water statewide. While this will still occur, the new program will considerably increase the number of larger trout in the select locations, significantly increasing the opportunity for anglers to catch a large trout.

And by placing the large trout in Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only areas, we’re providing anglers the opportunity to catch the big fish multiple times. I’m confident anglers will enjoy the experience and share it with friends and family.

Here’s where anglers are helping us. We’ve asked them to help us name the program by casting votes online through the PFBC website. The public voting process closes on Sept. 3. PFBC staff will review all of the suggestions and a name will be selected prior to the next quarterly business meeting on September 28 - 29. Both the program name and the names of the selected waters will be released at the September meeting.

I want to thank all the anglers who submitted a vote for the name, and I think you’ll be just as excited as I am about this new program.



*John with a perch caught on the West Branch of the Susquehanna*

## "State of the Trout" 2015

Trout Unlimited released their first ever State of the Trout report. This report describes the many and varied threats facing native and wild trout in this country. Threats have evolved over time, from agriculture and mining practices of the past to a new suite of problems related to four primary issues: energy development, introduction of non-native species, increasing water use and demand, and climate change. Legacy problems remain in many areas and their impacts are compounded by these emerging challenges.

As described in the report, there are major success stories in each region including Nash Stream in New Hampshire. Nash Stream was a National Fish Habitat Partnership "Water to Watch" in 2014 through the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. State and federal agencies dedicate sustained effort towards monitoring and improving the status of native and wild trout.

These agencies have developed

and signed conservation agreements for the rarer native trout species and organized active workgroups to implement these efforts. In 2014, for example, the Interior Redband Trout Conservation Agreement – an agreement describing commitments for restoration of interior redband populations — was signed by three federal agencies, six state fish and wildlife agencies (all states within the historical range of the subspecies), five tribal governments and Trout Unlimited. These same agencies will track implementation progress and modify the agreements as conditions change.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fishing for trout is a passion shared by countless anglers across the country. The challenge of catching a monster Lahontan cutthroat trout from Nevada's Pyramid Lake or a salter brook trout from a coastal stream in Massachusetts can be rewarding and frustrating all at the same time. As fly-fishing

author John Gierach described it, "If people don't occasionally walk away from you shaking their heads, you're doing something wrong."

The beauty and diversity of trout attracts the artist and photographer as well as the angler. Not only are the fish themselves works of art, but they occur in some of the most beautiful settings the country has to offer, from small gurgling country streams to high-mountain lakes to sweeping western rivers.

Unfortunately, neither the status of native trout nor their habitat is secure. During the past century, trout have declined as a result of land development, overfishing, water pollution, poor timber and livestock grazing practices and the introduction of non-native fishes and other aquatic invasive species. Stocking of hatchery trout has swamped the genes of the native trout through hybridization and competition. Read the "State of the Trout" Report here: <http://www.tu.org/stateofthetrout>

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## Hunters and Anglers Favor EPA Clean Water Plan

CARLISLE, Pa. – A poll of national and Pennsylvania hunters and anglers has found overwhelming support, even among self-described conservatives, for a controversial EPA clean water policy.

Commissioned by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the survey found support for an EPA plan to apply Clean Water Act protections to small headwaters and wetlands – something that had been under a legal cloud.

Ed Perry, a lifelong hunter and angler, works for the federation in Pennsylvania.

"Over 85 percent of Pennsylvania hunters and anglers support the rule," he says. "Overwhelming support, not only across the nation, but particularly in Pennsylvania."

Across the spectrum – age, sex, geography, political orientation – people surveyed said clean water is a top priority for them. Perry says three out of four Republican hunters and anglers across the country support the policy, and he adds that

in follow-up conversations, one Republican fisherman said trying to protect major waterways without protecting their small tributaries is "stupid."

"Some of the comments were interesting," he says. "One Republican angler from Pennsylvania said protecting our fisheries and our drinking water should always be a priority."

According to the EPA, the clean water policy would help protect drinking water for nearly a third of Pennsylvanians. The agency says the policy would ensure protection of more than 40,000 miles of state headwaters, and half of its wetlands. Republican pollster Lori Weigel says part of the support among hunters and anglers seems to come from their personal connection to the waterways in question – making it a backyard issue for many of them.

"When we sat and talked to people in focus groups and open-ended discussions, they point to specific places that they know of that have benefited," she says.

While some industries have criticized the plan as over-regulation and congressional Republicans may attempt to overturn it, the NWF survey is the result of a partnership between a Republican and a Democratic polling firm. Both found strong support for the rule even among politically conservative outdoorsmen.

*Dan Heyman, Public News Service (PA)*

### Fishing License Sales Increased in 2013

According to data released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the number of people who bought sport-fishing licenses in 2013 increased 1.94 percent over 2012 levels. The estimates are based on license sales data reported by state fisheries agencies as part of the process used to allocate Sport Fish Restoration excise tax revenues.