

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report

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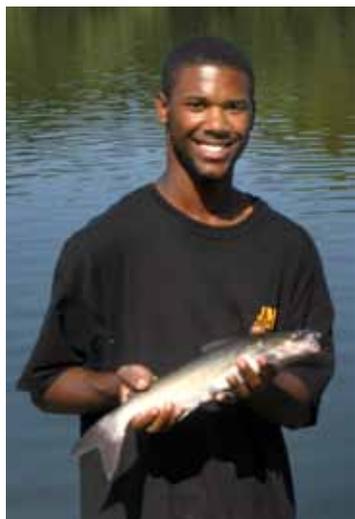


## Mentored Youth Summer Catfish Days

Youth can never have enough opportunities to fish. The PA Fish and Boat Commission is committed to providing youth and their mentors with many different opportunities to learn fishing skills, and to participate in special Mentored Youth Days. I am happy to announce we are creating another unique opportunity for kids in 2017. On July 29 and 30 near Pittsburgh, and on August 5 in Philadelphia City, the PFBC will be providing opportunities for youth and their mentors with an opportunity to learn about fishing for catfish, and providing hands-on opportunities to catch catfish.

This first opportunity will be at North Park, just north of Pittsburgh, and a Family Fishing Festival will be held on-site at the park on July 29 to kick off the opportunity. The festival will run from 4 pm to 6 pm that afternoon, and will prepare youth and mentors for the fishing that will follow. During the festival, presentations on catfish biology and management, basic angling techniques for catfish, and care of your catch (including preparing fish for consumption) will be covered.

Beginning at 6pm, properly licensed or permitted youth and mentors, will have the opportunity to participate in the Mentored Youth Summer Catfish Days. Fishing will continue from 6pm through the evening, and again on July 30. PFBC staff, partners and volunteers will be on hand to provide assistance as needed by participants. Pre-registration will be required. The North



*Youth holds a catfish caught during a PFBC Family Fishing Program (PFBC Photo)*

Park Family Fishing Festival will be open to anyone, but fishing will be only available to holders of mentored youth permits or voluntary youth licenses, and will require a mentor be present while the youth is fishing. Youth and mentors will have access to loaner rods from PFBC during the event.

This opportunity is designed to increase awareness of the catfish opportunities, increase knowledge of catfish, and catfish fishing skills and techniques, and will increase the likelihood of these youth being developed into anglers. Tackling a species such as catfish is important, because of its abundance, catchability, and natural existence in so many locations. Catfish are found in nearly all of our public impoundments statewide.

The catfish population at North Park Lake will be supplemented with a stocking of catfish prior to the program, with additional fish stocked during the Festival. Youth will be able to harvest fish, but for mentors the event will be catch and release.

The second opportunity is August 5 in Philadelphia. A Family Catfish Fishing Festival will be held at the Walnut Street Fishing Pier, on the Schuylkill Banks Trail. The Festival hours are from 9 am until 12 pm. PFBC staff and partners will be providing families with hands-on instruction on basic skills needed to catch catfish, as well catfish biology, and care and preparation of the catch. While this



*Participants in a Family Fishing Program held at the Walnut Street Pier in Philadelphia (PFBC Photo)*

event is open to anyone, pre-registration is required. PFBC is waiving the fishing license requirement for registered participants age 16 and older. Pre-registration will be required, and participants will have an opportunity to fish?

The PFBC is evaluating these initiatives using a number of factors, including both output and outcome measures. Outputs such as the number of participants, hours of fishing effort, and catch rates are important to gauge the relative success of the pilots. However, even more important, a survey at the end of the program, along with a follow-up several months after the conclusion of the program are critical to gauging long-term success.

Depending on the results, Mentored Youth Summer Catfish days could be offered in all regions throughout the Commonwealth in 2018. These two initiatives will assist staff in determining the best and most cost-effective approach to offer this new programming.

Registration, a press release and media announcements, along with opening of pre-registration are slated for May 15. It is anticipated that in excess of 200 participants could participate in the July event and 100 in the August event. For more information these and other opportunities to learn how to fish visit [www.GoneFishingPa.com](http://www.GoneFishingPa.com)

**PFBC**