

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



photos-Chris Garavaglia, PFBC archives, and Terry Malloy

The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources, and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

www.fishandboat.com



STATEWIDE INITIATIVES



Thank You from Executive Director Tim Schaeffer

To the nearly one-million licensed anglers and countless individuals and families who found solace, excitement, and fun in, on, and along Pennsylvania waters during 2020, thank you for fishing and boating. Throughout the year, Pennsylvanians rediscovered—or experienced for the first time—the joys of fishing and boating here in the Commonwealth. As we say in our new strategic plan, we have something for everyone!

Thank you to everyone for your understanding and flexibility as we collectively adapted to changing circumstances and kept people fishing and boating safely—at a rod's length or kayak paddle apart. And, special thanks to those anglers whose record number of voluntary permit purchases allowed the agency to do more for the resource than otherwise would have been possible.

In 2021, anglers and boaters will enjoy an improved customer experience with the launch of a new automated license system that streamlines and modernizes the ways they interact with us. Please visit www.fishandboat.com or our mobile app FishBoatPA to check it out. We are confident you will like what you see!

Thank you to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) staff, Commissioners, Boating Advisory Board members, volunteers, and other partners who worked under unprecedented circumstances to deliver on-the-ground results in the field, from their homes, and safely at agency hatcheries, offices, and other locations on behalf of our customers and the resources we serve. Each day brought a

new challenge, and each task took a new level of diligence, discipline, and collaboration in 2020. The successful projects and accomplishments are too numerous to name, and multiple statewide and regional examples are highlighted in this annual report.

Thank you to the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Governor Wolf for the most significant year of legislative accomplishments that the agency has enjoyed since the recodification of the Fish and Boat Code in 1980. Collectively, the acts will improve public safety and customer service and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the agency and the work we do each day in all corners of the Commonwealth.

Finally, thank you for wearing your life jacket. I often end public remarks—and I mean it—by telling people that if they remember one thing from what is said, it is to wear your life jacket. Despite historic numbers of people on the water in 2020, we had a below average number of fatalities. But even one preventable accident is too many. In 2020, none of the 11 people who lost their lives in a boating accident were wearing a life jacket.

Thank you in advance for being safe on the water and for fishing, boating, and doing your part to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources again in 2021.



WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania



Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Tim Schaeffer stocking trout at Letterkenny Reservoir, Franklin County.

SPECIAL SECTION ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affected nearly every aspect of our lives in 2020, including the daily operations of the PFBC. Through strategic adaptations and flexibility of staff, the agency was able to meet these challenges and keep its commitment to the anglers and boaters of Pennsylvania.

Stocking

The PFBC was in the early stages of preseason trout stocking operations when the initial quarantine period began in mid-March. To protect the safety of the PFBC employees and the public, preseason and inseason stocking continued under an accelerated schedule using only the PFBC staff and no volunteers. Staff from all areas of the agency that were unable to telework during this period were reallocated to assist with stocking operations in the field. Staff were always required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks and gloves and maintain safe social distance from each other. For health and safety reasons, volunteers were unfortunately not permitted to help stock, and preseason and inseason stocking dates were removed from the PFBC website to further prevent crowds from gathering at stocking locations. For fall and winter stockings, the PFBC posted a schedule on the agency website to advise anglers of the week that a water would be stocked with trout but did not provide the exact date.



Commissioner Donald Anderson stocks trout in Laurel Hill Creek, Somerset County.

Change to Opening Day

In consultation with the Governor’s Office and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the PFBC made several adjustments to traditional opening day of trout season in 2020. To prevent high volumes of angler travel to-and-from several high-risk parts of the Commonwealth early in the pandemic, the PFBC canceled the Regional Opening Day of trout season for 18 southeastern counties, as well as two scheduled Mentored Youth Trout Fishing Days. Later, in further efforts to reduce large gatherings around a traditional opening day, the PFBC announced the early opening of trout season on the morning of April 7, 2020. This unexpected announcement on a weekday effectively spread out crowds over several days while the PFBC continued to encourage anglers to fish on local waterways.

Fishing License, Launch Permit, and Boat Registration Display Requirements

To reduce unnecessary travel and social contact amid health concerns, anglers and boaters were able to display their fishing licenses, launch permits, or boat registration renewals digitally on a phone or other mobile device as proof of possession. This change allowed customers who were unable to or felt uncomfortable visiting a store to purchase fishing licenses and launch permits and renew boating registrations by using the FishBoatPA app or computer through The Outdoor Shop and not have to possess a printed copy of the document. If approached by a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) in the field, the angler or boater only had to produce the digital image of the license, permit, or registration on their phone or mobile device.

Marketing

Amid public health concerns throughout the early stages of the pandemic, the PFBC adjusted its overall marketing strategies. In place of traditional marketing campaigns promoting fishing license sales ahead of the spring trout season, the PFBC exclusively promoted social distancing for anglers, asking them to remain 6 feet, or “a fishing rod’s length apart,” from others outside of their same household.

The length of a fishing rod is a good measure of social distance when fishing with others.

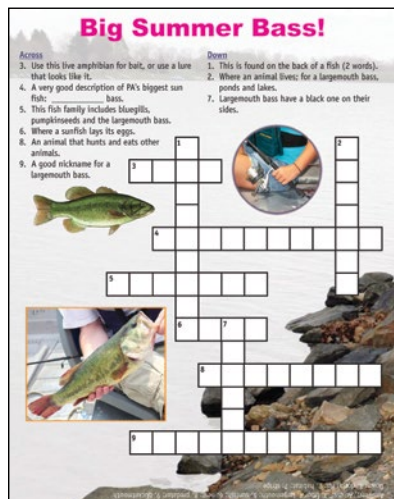


Field Work

The pandemic impacted the schedule of field work for the PFBC biologists, engineers, and others. While some non-essential operations were placed on hold temporarily, most field work continued under strict COVID-19 restrictions, including mandatory PPE use, one-person-to-a-vehicle travel, and social distancing.

Educational Programming

In accordance with safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health to limit gatherings of people, the PFBC canceled most in-person educational programs for the 2020 season. As an alternative, staff quickly developed an Activities & Education Portal (www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/ActivitiesAndEducationPortal/Pages/default.aspx) that included hundreds of resource materials. The portal expanded during the year with the addition of more than 130 new educational videos and over 50 printable activity sheets, 60 coloring pages, and numerous publications by topic. In addition, “hybrid” educational programs were developed to give a virtual component to some previous in-person events. Staff can now reach a larger statewide audience in the virtual format, and then schedule smaller, regional programs for fishing opportunities. Through these efforts, the PFBC education staff reached 1,178 participants through 70 programs and countless others online in 2020.



Trout In the Classroom (TIC)

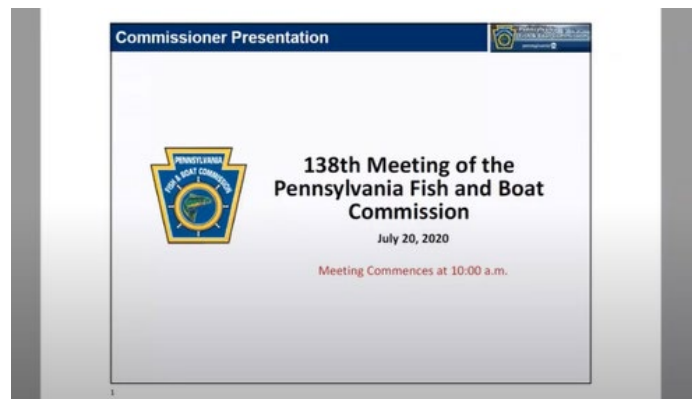
In response to challenges COVID-19 presented to TIC teachers, the PFBC staff developed TIC Weekly, a remote learning resource e-mail sent to registered TIC teachers and program partners. It included themed, printable publications, virtual field trip/ educational videos, and Trout In the Office (TIO) update videos. Printable TIC resources were retained on the PFBC's Activities and Education Portal at www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/ActivitiesAndEducationPortal/Pages/default.aspx. Videos were retained on the PFBC's social media accounts. Despite the pandemic, 393 (95%) of 412 registered TIC teachers completed end of year reports for school year 2019-2020. In June, the PFBC and the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) staff provided a virtual TIC workshop for 36 new teachers and program partners. In July, the PFBC staff began working with program partners to plan the second biennial TIC Summit for July 13-15, 2021.

Staff Telework

Under the direction of the Governor's Office, the PBFC staff were directed to telework, where possible, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace. Where telework was not possible, employees were reassigned, on a voluntary basis, to assist with trout stocking operations.

Virtual Commission Meetings

The PFBC conducted its April, July, and October 2020 quarterly business meetings in a virtual format. Commissioners and staff utilized web streaming software to attend, provide presentations, and vote on agenda items. A telephone hotline was created to allow the public to provide comment on agenda items. All meetings were streamed live to the public via Facebook Live.



Increased Participation in Fishing and Boating

As outdoor recreation flourished overall during the pandemic, fishing and boating were among the activities that Pennsylvanians enjoyed. During 2020, the PFBC experienced increases in the sales of fishing licenses (approximately 20%) and launch permits (approximately 40%). This additional participation, which included many first-time anglers and boaters, promoted the PFBC to increase safety messaging throughout the season, which included promoting life jacket wear and Boating Under the Influence (BUI) prevention.



Moraine State Park, Butler County

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

The PFBC Unveils New Strategic Plan

At their July 2020 meeting, the PFBC's Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a new strategic plan to guide the agency's activities from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023. The plan highlights the diverse roles the PFBC plays in its mission to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

The plan includes a revised vision and value set for the agency and introduces new guiding principles and strategic priorities. The plan is ambitious, with 183 goals and subgoals highlighting both new strategic initiatives and core agency functions designed to advance the plan's six strategic priorities: sport fish management; non-game species, aquatic resources and habitat conservation; recreational boating; employee investments and agency operations; communications and marketing; and infrastructure and equipment.

The strategic planning workgroup, composed of staff and Commissioners, spent close to a year and a half developing the new plan, which began with a public survey, as well as input from the Governor's Administration, the General Assembly, and partner organizations engaged in aquatic resource conservation. The plan, along with quarterly reports to track its progress, can be found on the PFBC's website at www.fishandboat.com/AboutUs/AnnualReports/Pages/StrategicPlanQuarterlyReports.aspx.

2019-2020 Legislative Session Recap

During the 2019-2020 legislative session, several important bills supported by the PFBC were signed into law. These new provisions enhance the agency's ability to provide anglers and boaters with safe and enjoyable outdoor experiences.

Act 39 of 2020, introduced as House Bill 1003 by Representative Keith Gillespie, is a public safety measure aimed at holding owners of run-of-the-river or "low-head" dams accountable for properly marking these structures, which can create unsafe recreational conditions for anglers and boaters. Act 39 establishes criminal penalties for failure to properly mark dams and allows WCOs to directly issue citations to owners for noncompliance. It also updates the definition of run-of-the-river dam to the one used by the Association of State Dam Safety Officials.

Act 40 of 2020, introduced as House Bill 1185 by Representative Steven Mentzer, offered several boating safety and customer service enhancements. The new law provides greater consistency between Pennsylvania's Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and BUI penalties. It also deters littering and destruction of the PFBC property, and adds the criminal offense of "aggravated assault by watercraft." Act 40 also modernizes the Fish and Boat Code to facilitate the display of fishing licenses on an electronic device, such as a tablet or smartphone.

Act 56 of 2020, introduced as House Bill 808 by Representative Thomas Mehaffie, provides the agency with greater autonomy in establishing license and registration fees, which account for 75%

of the agency's revenue. Prior to Act 56, adjustments to the PFBC's fee structure required an act of legislation. Under this new process, the PFBC can adjust fees incrementally through regulation, subject to legislative and public oversight. The Act also expanded the use of proceeds from the PFBC's Lake Erie Permit to all projects that benefit public fishing in the watershed, rather than just habitat and access-related initiatives.

Act 90 of 2020, introduced as House Bill 1584 by Representative Garth Everett, removes a restriction in the Fish and Boat Code that historically limited WCOs from coverage under the Policemen and Firemen Collective Bargaining Act of 1968, otherwise referred to as Act 111. When Act 111 was enacted, coverage was limited to state police, municipal police, municipal firefighters, and other select classes of employees. Over time, such coverage was gradually expanded by the legislature to include additional public employees whose scope of employment includes police work, such as Pennsylvania's game wardens. This Act provides uniformity for WCOs and was supported by the Fraternal Order of Police and the PFBC's Board of Commissioners.

On behalf of the PFBC, thank you to Governor Wolf, the General Assembly, and all the organizations that helped us get these important legislative initiatives over the finish line. We look forward to another productive 2021-2022 Legislative Session on behalf of Pennsylvania's anglers, boaters, and aquatic resources.



Representative Keith Gillespie (second from left) is recognized for Act 39, which strengthens the PFBC's ability to enforce the marking of run-of-the-river or "low-head" dams.

Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook

For fishing license year 2021, beginning December 1, 2020, the PFBC created the new 2021 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook. This publication, which is available to the public free of charge, was expanded to include basic boating information. Along with fishing regulations, the book now includes information for both powered and unpowered boat operators including basic navigation rules and safety information related to life jackets and BUI. While hard copies are available at nearly 700 license issuing agents, the summary book remains available in electronic format at www.fishinpa.com.



2021 Fishing License Button

In September, the PFBC conducted an online survey to choose the design of the collectible 2021 fishing license button. A total of 1,453 voters cast their ballots to choose between four options, each representing a different aspect of the fishing lifestyle. The fish skin design featuring the scales of a Chain Pickerel was a runaway winner, earning 676 votes (46.5%). A single-color conservation green option was the second most popular choice, earning 283 votes (19.5%). A classic red and white bobber design placed third, with 279 votes (19.2%). A design featuring a life jacket rounded out the field, collecting 215 votes (14.8%). Fishing license buttons featuring the Chain Pickerel design cost \$10.00 each and can be ordered in addition to a fishing license.



Waterways Conservation Officer Class

On June 26, 2020, 19 members of the 22nd Class of WCOs graduated during a ceremony at the PFBC's Centre Region Office. During their conservation law enforcement careers, the officers' duties will be multifaceted and include patrolling the streams, rivers, and lakes in their regions; assisting with investigations; participating in public outreach events; and stocking waterways with fish.

In addition to welcoming the new officers, the PFBC recruited applicants for a new class of WCOs. To expedite the progression of the class, for the first time, applicants were required to already possess Municipal Police Officers Basic Training (Act 120) certification. The class of seven trainees reported for instruction in January 2021 and will graduate in the summer of 2021.



22nd Class of WCOs

Bureau of Law Enforcement (BLE) Special Investigations

There were 22 incidents investigated during 2020, which will result in 14 individuals being charged with 117 violations including Sale of Native Species to include parts, Sale of Certain Fish, Reptiles, and Amphibians prohibited, Using Unpreserved Fish Eggs, Stocking Fish in Wild Trout Waters, Exceeding the Possession Limit, No Guide License, No Fishing License, False Statements, and No Snapping Turtle Permit. The unit also assisted the United States Fish & Wildlife Service with an investigation that resulted in one individual being found guilty of three Felony Counts for Prohibited Sale of Fish, both endangered and invasive species.

Fish-for-Free Days

The annual Fish-for-Free Days were offered again in 2020 on May 24 and July 4. The Fish and Boat Code permits the PFBC to offer two free fishing days a year. The 2020 dates were picked to coincide with Memorial Day and Independence Day weekends. Fish-for-Free Days allow anyone—residents and non-residents—to legally fish in Pennsylvania without a fishing license. From 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. on both days, no fishing license is needed to fish in Pennsylvania's waterways. All other fishing regulations apply.

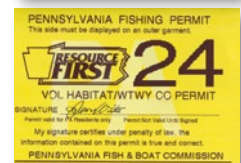
Voluntary Permit Projects

Beginning with the 2019 fishing license sales year, the PFBC initiated a Voluntary Permit Program designed to generate funding to support key, fishing-related programs. Permit categories include Bass (\$10), Musky (\$10), Habitat/Waterways Conservation (\$10), and Wild Trout and Enhanced Waters (\$25). A \$1.00 issuing agent fee and a \$0.90 PALS system transaction fee added \$1.97 to each purchase. Purchasers can buy Voluntary Permits in 1, 3, 5, and 10-year durations. Funds are tracked and maintained in their respective categories and used to wholly fund projects or matched with other funds.

The public response was strong, with approximately \$129,000 being collected during the 2019 fishing license sales year, which ended on November 30, 2019. Over 7,400 units sold means that more than 7,000 persons made an additional financial investment in enhancing fishing and habitat conservation in Pennsylvania.

Revenue from Voluntary Wild Trout and Enhanced Waters Permits represented the highest percentage (45%) followed by Bass (27%), Habitat/Waterways Conservation (16%), and Musky (12%). Although the Voluntary Wild Trout and Enhanced Waters Permit yielded the most revenue, in part due to its higher cost, the Voluntary Bass Permit yielded the greatest proportion of individual permit purchases at 35% of the total revenue. Fourteen projects have been funded, underway, or completed in 2020. Examples include installation of fish habitat devices in four lakes, stream habitat improvement in two, stocked trout streams, tracking of spawning Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout in the Upper Delaware River system, purchase of portable winches to add downed timber as cover in wild trout streams, purchase of live minnows to grow larger musky fingerlings at hatcheries, a water heater to increase hatchery musky growth rates, removal of culverts to allow wild trout movement in small streams, and a bass tournament angler survey to determine angler opinions and preferences.

Sales of Voluntary Permits grew significantly in 2020 with approximately \$290,000 collected by November 30, 2020 to be used in 2021.



Law Enforcement Awards

Each year, the PFBC's BLE honors its WCOs with a variety of awards that recognize outstanding service and excellence in the field. In 2020, awards were presented in the following categories:

The Top Gun Award was presented to WCO Sean Sauserman (Blair/Huntingdon counties) for his BUI enforcement.

The Gerald L. Greiner Environmental Protection Award was presented to WCO Daniel Wilson (Southern Westmoreland/Northern Fayette counties) for his environmental work.

The 2019 Officer of the Year Award was presented to WCO Walter Buckman (Lackawanna/Wayne/Susquehanna counties) for his well-rounded efforts in the Northeast Region.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Boating Officer of the Year Award was presented to WCO Thomas Benevento (Southern Chester counties) for his outstanding commitment to boating safety in his region.

Governor's Youth Council Projects

The PFBC partnered with the Pennsylvania Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation on several outreach projects in 2020. In September, several teen council members gathered in Harrisburg to produce a video about safe boating ahead of the fall boating season, including promoting safe social distancing. In November, additional council members recorded public service announcements from their home regions promoting the PFBC's annual cold weather life jacket requirement from November to April.

New Trout Management Plan

In October, the PFBC staff announced the publication of the new Strategic Plan for Management of Trout Fisheries in Pennsylvania 2020-2024. The plan identifies 43 specific issues facing trout management and offers 137 strategies for addressing those issues. The plan ensures that adequate protection is afforded to Pennsylvania's wild trout resources and that fisheries provided through the management of wild trout and stocking of adult and fingerling trout provide high-quality fishing opportunities in Pennsylvania. The plan can be viewed on the PFBC website.

Water Rescue Training

The Commission certified 2,377 students through the Water Rescue Program in 2020. The Commission also conducted multiple virtual Awareness Level courses through established training agencies due to the COVID-19 guidelines that were enacted. The Commission has a trained in-state volunteer instructor corps of 196 individuals who provided more than 7,300 hours of training.

PA-HART

In 2020, the Pennsylvania Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (PA-HART) conducted several air and ground training exercises throughout the year to enhance skills and planned

training for 2021. On August 12, 2020, the PA-HART was activated and saved two people from a vehicle that had been swept away due to intense localized flooding in the southeast region. While responding to Fort Indiantown Gap for the HART mission, members came upon a recent accident on Interstate-81 and extricated the driver from the tractor trailer. The PA-HART is a joint partnership between the Pennsylvania Army National Guard (PAARNG), the PFBC, and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), along with civilian rescue specialists.

R3 Specialist

In September, the PFBC enhanced its strategies related to the Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) of anglers and boaters. The agency is implementing industry best practices to connect people, including those in underserved urban communities, to PA's fishing and boating opportunities.

Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

In September, the PFBC hired its first-ever full-time Invasive Species Coordinator. This position will work within the Division of Environmental Services to develop programs for the prevention, assessment, control, and management of aquatic invasive species, like Asian Carp, Round Gobies, Northern Snakehead, and Flathead Catfish.

R3 Education Grant Program

In August, the PFBC awarded \$160,000 through its new R3 Education Grant Program to support 14 education projects in 10 counties, including four statewide efforts. Recipients of the grants, including local governments and eligible nonprofit groups, will focus on efforts to recruit new anglers and boaters, retain existing participants in these activities, and reactivate former anglers and boaters who may have lapsed in participation.

Expanded Trophy Trout Stocking

In 2020, anglers had a better opportunity than ever before to catch large, trophy-sized trout. The PFBC stocked approximately 60,000 brood fish, which are 2½ year-old and 3½ year-old hatchery-raised Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, and Brook Trout measuring 14- to 20-inches. The allocation of these large trout was more than double the allocation in 2019. The PFBC also increased the number of golden Rainbow Trout that were stocked in 2020 by roughly 40%.

Farm Show/Great American Outdoor Show

The PFBC took part in various expos and outdoor shows throughout the winter season in 2020. At the largest two events, the Pennsylvania Farm Show in January and Great American Outdoor Show (GAOS) in February, the PFBC offered in-person fishing license sales. The PFBC Commissioners and staff, including WCOs and education specialists, attended both events to interact with the public. At GAOS, the agency conducted informational interviews about fishing, boating safety, and construction projects with media and state lawmakers to share on social media.

Statewide Statistics

| Non-game Permits |
|--|
| Species Impact/PNDI Reviews – 1,828 |
| Scientific Collector Permits/Amendments – 368 |
| Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Permits – 81 |
| Biological Opinions/T&E Take Permits – 6 |
| Non-game Special Permits – 30 |
| Organized Reptile and Amphibian Hunt Permits – 2 |
| Venomous Snake Permits – 2,109 |
| Commercial Snapping Turtle Permits – 22 |

| Bureau of Law Enforcement |
|---|
| Citations – 3,861 |
| Crimes Codes – 46 |
| Warnings for Violations – 21,316 |
| On Board Safety – 13,135 |
| Boating Safety Education Certificates Issued – 24,332 |
| Special Activities – 2,295 |
| Water Rescue Certificates – 2,377 |
| Pollutions Investigated – 138 |
| Boating Under the Influence – 60 |
| Lake Erie Commercial Permits – 19 |

| Boating Accidents |
|--|
| Each year, on average, 700 people die in boating-related accidents nationwide. Nearly 85% of the victims were not wearing life jackets. |
| Last year, there were 58 recreational boating accidents that resulted in 11 fatalities. None of the 11 victims were wearing life jackets at the time of the accidents. Alcohol or drugs were believed to have been a factor in three of the fatal accidents. |

| Education Activity | Count | Participants |
|---|-------|--------------|
| 2019-2020 Trout In the Classroom Teachers | 412 | 55,000 |
| 100% Virtual Programs | 10 | 183 |
| Hybrid (Programs, provided in 2 parts: 1 virtual and 1 in-person) | 7 | 45 |
| Modified programming due to COVID-19 (fishing meet-ups) | 42 | 319 |
| Regular programming when able (pre- and post-COVID-19 restrictions) | 11 | 631 |

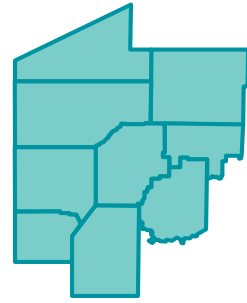
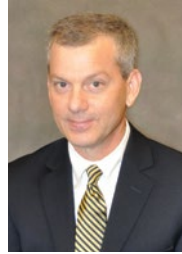


| 2020 Fishing License Types | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| December 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020 | Units Sold |
| 1-Day Labor Day Resident | 611 |
| 1-Day Labor Day Tourist | 220 |
| 1-Day Resident | 4,787 |
| 1-Day Tourist | 5,190 |
| 10-year Non-Resident | 14 |
| 10-Year Resident | 869 |
| 3-Day Tourist | 24,220 |
| 3-Year Non-Resident | 592 |
| 3-Year Resident | 16,353 |
| 3-Year Senior Resident | 484 |
| 5-Year Non-Resident | 81 |
| 5-Year Resident | 4,192 |
| 5-Year Senior Resident | 99 |
| 7-Day Tourist | 7,442 |
| PA Resident National Guard/Reserve | 97 |
| Senior Lifetime | 19,348 |
| Non-Resident | 48,134 |
| POW Resident Annual | 1 |
| POW Resident Lifetime | 0 |
| Reduced Disabled Veteran | 429 |
| Resident | 766,771 |
| Senior Resident | 28,990 |
| Voluntary Youth | 5,335 |
| Total Licenses | 934,259 |

| 2020 Fishing Permit Types | |
|--|----------------|
| December 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020 | Units Sold |
| 3-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Stamp Permit | 2,500 |
| 3-Year Lake Erie Permit | 267 |
| 3-Year Trout Stamp Permit | 9,999 |
| 5-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Stamp Permit | 797 |
| 5-Year Lake Erie Permit | 63 |
| 5-Year Trout Stamp Permit | 2,542 |
| 10-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Stamp Permit | 199 |
| 10-Year Lake Erie Permit | 9 |
| 10-Year Trout Stamp Permit | 483 |
| Combination Lake Erie and Trout Stamp Permit | 84,993 |
| Lake Erie Permit | 27,089 |
| Trout Stamp Permit | 527,807 |
| 3-Year Senior Trout Stamp Permit | 4,300 |
| 5-Year Senior Trout Stamp Permit | 1,863 |
| 10-Year Senior Trout Stamp Permit | 776 |
| Total Permits | 663,687 |

FIRST DISTRICT

Commissioner Daniel J. Pastore



Commissioner Daniel J. Pastore, Fairview, Erie County, represents the First District of the PFBC. He was appointed in June 2019.

The First District includes **Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties.**

FIRST DISTRICT

Erie Access Improvement Program

The steelhead fishery in Lake Erie and its tributaries is a popular destination for anglers and generates tremendous economic benefits for the region. Pennsylvania's Fishing and Boating Access Strategy ranks this watershed as the top priority for access improvements statewide. To date, the Commission has acquired approximately 30 miles of public fishing access in the Lake Erie Watershed through easements and land purchases under the Erie Access Improvement Program.

Steelhead Enforcement

The PFBC's world-class steelhead stocking program in Lake Erie's tributaries attracts thousands of anglers annually from October to April. Incidents of poaching and other illegal fishing practices occur regularly and require enforcement. The steelhead enforcement detail for the 2020 season included officers issuing 141 citations. Violations were witnessed by officers conducting surveillance operations in the field, and hundreds of individuals were given warnings or monetary fines.

State Record Brown Trout

On the morning of August 8, 2020, angler Bob Ferraro, Erie, made history with his 20-pound, 9-ounce catch on Lake Erie. Ferraro was fishing with friends aboard his boat, Heartbeat, when the big fish bit on a small spoon while the angler was trolling in 74 feet of water. PFBC biologists identified the record-breaker as a female, estimated to be 6- or 7-years-old.

Mussel Propagation

In July, the PFBC partnered with staff from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) to stock hundreds of Plain Pocketbook and Black Sandshell mussels into Dunkard Creek, Greene County. These mussels had been raised at the Union City State Fish Hatchery, Erie County, since August 2019 when they were provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Round Hickorynut mussels provided the USFWS will be stocked in 2021. The PFBC also successfully propagated new mussels at Union City that will be stocked beginning in 2022 in waterways where native mussel populations have been depleted due to pollution and other negative impacts.



Commission biologist Jordan Allison on Dunkard Creek, Greene County, holding a mussel raised at the Union City State Fish Hatchery, Erie County.

Lake Erie Sportfishing Update

The Walleye fishery in Lake Erie was exceptional for the fourth consecutive year. The 2020 season provided the sixth highest catch rate in the 25-year survey period, with Walleye averaging 20 inches, and trophy-size fish up to 28 inches. The fishery is expected to remain exceptional for years to come thanks to an abundance of age four adults.

The steelhead tributary fishery was also excellent in fall 2019/spring 2020, with anglers reporting the highest catch rates observed since the Lake Erie Cooperative Angler Logbook survey was reinitiated in 2012. The Commission increased the quality of the stocked juvenile steelhead, which has improved survival while also maintaining the agency stocking objective of 1 million smolt annually. The result is one of the best steelhead trout fisheries on the Great Lakes.

Assessment of Walleye Fry Stocking in the Allegheny River (2015-2020)

Commission staff recently completed a multi-year (2015-2020) Walleye stocking evaluation in three free-flowing sections of the Allegheny River, located in Forest, Venango, and Warren counties. All stocked Walleye fry were chemically tagged to differentiate stocked versus wild Walleye.



Young-of-year Walleye collected on the Allegheny River.

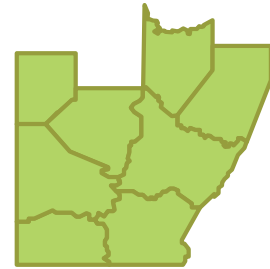
During the study, no tagged young-of-year Walleyes were detected, indicating that the current Walleye population is supported entirely through natural reproduction. As a result of this study, stocking of Walleye fry in the Allegheny River was discontinued after 2019. Moving forward, staff will conduct annual monitoring surveys in these previously stocked sections to assess spawning success and recruitment. A similar stocking evaluation is currently being conducted on French Creek, Crawford County.

Fish Cleaning Stations Able to Sell Byproduct

In November, Commissioners amended a regulation related to fish cleaning stations to allow operators to sell fish byproducts to other entities for further beneficial use such as fertilizer in agriculture. Previously, regulations required fish cleaning station operators to dispose of waste in a sewage treatment plant, which provided no recycling or financial benefit.

SECOND DISTRICT

Commissioner Rocco S. Ali



Commissioner Rocco S. Ali, North Apollo, Armstrong County, represents the Second District of the PFBC. He was appointed in October 2012.

The Second District includes **Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.**

SECOND DISTRICT

Reopening of Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County

Drained in 2016 to replace its aging earthen dam, the PFBC's \$5.6 million rehabilitation project at Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County, was finally completed in the fall of 2019. Over that winter, the lake was gradually refilled, and the 90-acre impoundment was officially reopened for public recreation in the spring of 2020, much to the pleasure of local residents. The PFBC is continuing a multi-year restocking process to reestablish popular gamefish species, such as Largemouth Bass, panfish, and minnows. Additionally, habitat structures were placed in the lake to fully restore this quality warmwater fishery.

Safe Summer Boating Event in Pittsburgh

As part of Operation Dry Water, a national BUI awareness and enforcement campaign, the PFBC held a safe summer boating event on July 2, 2020, at Riverfront Park in Pittsburgh. Using the beautiful Monongahela River as a backdrop, PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer, Senator Jay Costa, and WCO Mike Johnson promoted safe and sober boating during the Independence Day holiday weekend. Alcohol is the leading factor in boating fatalities nationwide and can be particularly dangerous on high-traffic waterways such as the Three Rivers in Pittsburgh.



Commissioner Rocco Ali led a press conference at the South Side Riverfront Park Launch Ramp, Pittsburgh.

Three Rivers Catfish and Walleye Survey

PFBC biologists conducted intensive sampling of the Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish populations in all four sections of the Ohio River and three sections of the Allegheny River from Kittanning (Pool 6) to Templeton (Pool 8) from May-July 2020. Hoop nets and low frequency daytime boat electrofishing were used to sample the catfish populations. Prior to the 2020 survey, limited baseline information was collected among these Allegheny River sections for these two species. Sampling on the three Allegheny River sections documented a total of 411 fish in 2020, of which 334 (81%) were Channel Catfish and 77 (19%) were Flathead Catfish. The Ohio River surveys resulted in 226 Channel Catfish ranging from 3-30 inches and 161 Flathead Catfish ranging from 6-43 inches. Hoop nets were more selective at capturing larger adults, whereas low frequency daytime boat electrofishing caught smaller-sized fish. Staff are currently processing retained specimens for age and growth determination.

Agency staff began targeted Walleye and Sauger night electrofishing surveys in the late fall of 2018 on the Three Rivers to better assess and manage their populations. In November 2020, three sections of the Ohio River and two sections of the Allegheny River were sampled for Walleye and Sauger. A total of 128 Walleyes and 181 Saugers were captured in the Ohio River. Catch rates were higher than average on the Ohio River, particularly for Saugers. High numbers of Walleyes (132 fish) were captured at Allegheny River Pool 6, but only a few legal fish were present. No Saugers were collected in Pool 6. The Walleye catch rate of 48 fish on Allegheny River Pool 2 was lower than other stretches of the Allegheny River. The Sauger catch of six fish in Pool 2 was similarly low. This is not surprising as the Sauger population in the Allegheny River generally decreases as you move upstream. All Walleyes and Saugers were measured, weighed, and sexed. All female fish were examined for the presence of eggs. Scales and otoliths were retained for age and growth determination later.



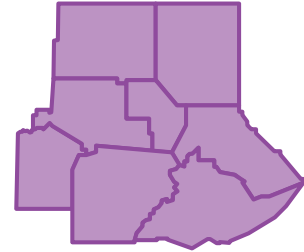
A Flathead Catfish from the Ohio River.

Stream Habitat Project on Mingo Creek, Washington County

The PFBC's Stream Habitat Section continued to partner with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) in 2020 on a variety of habitat improvement projects. Results of this collaboration improved approximately 4,200 linear feet of streams by stabilizing stream banks and reducing erosion and sedimentation through installation of various habitat enhancement structures. This valuable partnership has constructed 1,500 stream habitat enhancement devices over 7.5 miles of stream since 2010. In 2020, approximately 3,300 linear feet of stream was restored on Mingo Creek, Washington County, where over 75 stream habitat structures were constructed to create fish habitat and stabilize eroding stream banks. The project is in the 2,600-acre Mingo Creek County Park that offers excellent fishing opportunities and is popular with local families and youth due to its convenient access. In September, Senator Camera Bartolotta and Representative Mike Puskaric toured the project site in the county park to hear about both the value of the restoration project and the ongoing partnership with WPC.

THIRD DISTRICT

Commissioner William C. Brock



Commissioner William C. Brock, St. Marys, Elk County, represents the Third District of the PFBC. He was appointed in July 2017.

The Third District includes **Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter counties.**

THIRD DISTRICT

Reopening of Kyle Lake, Jefferson County

Kyle Lake, Jefferson County, was reopened for public recreation in the summer of 2020 following a \$4.7 million dam rehabilitation project. A multi-year restocking plan for the lake got underway with the introduction of fingerling Largemouth Bass, as well as forage species like Golden Shiners and Fathead Minnows.



Lake habitat structures were placed into the newly reopened Kyle Lake, Jefferson County, in September.

Hatcheries and Facilities

Prior to the 22nd WCO Class reporting for training and residency, a well rehabilitation project and plumbing system upgrade was completed at the H.R. Stackhouse School, Centre County. This provided potable water for staff at both the facility and the Bellefonte State Fish Hatchery. At the Benner Spring State Fish Hatchery, Centre County, electricians replaced antiquated electrical raceway panel boxes, ruptured domestic water lines, installed new water filters in the water quality lab, and



New Zealand Mudsnaill solar powered, electric barriers were installed in channels at the Benner Spring State Fish Hatchery and Pleasant Gap State Fish Hatchery.

upgraded electrical service to a chemical storage building and bacteriology lab. Energy efficiency upgrades were made at the Pleasant Gap State Fish Hatchery, Centre County, including the replacement of outdated light fixtures with LED fixtures. At the Bellefonte, Benner Spring, Pleasant Gap, and Tylersville state fish hatcheries, solar powered electric barriers were installed to prevent the spread of the invasive New Zealand Mudsnaill, which is present within the Spring Creek Watershed.

Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grant

In November, the PFBC announced that the application period had begun for the sixth round of Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grant Program. For this round of grants, the primary emphasis will be on projects in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed upstream of the confluence with the First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek. Information on project eligibility requirements were made available on www.fishandboat.com. The application deadline was January 23, 2021.



Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron and Clinton counties.

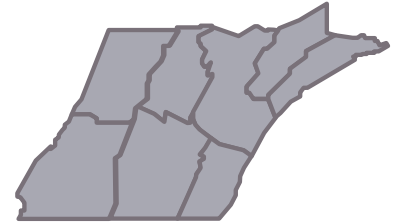
More WCOs on Patrol

Several new graduates of the 22nd Class of WCOs were assigned to the previously vacant counties of Clearfield, Jefferson, and McKean. This additional complement doubled the law enforcement field force within the Third District, providing more dedicated resource protection and public safety efforts. A total of 34 criminal Environmental Investigations of pollution and encroachment incidents were conducted within the Third District. Additionally, a more consistent and dedicated boating patrol presence resulted in three BUI apprehensions from the Kinzua Dam, McKean County.

photo: Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau VisitPA.GO.com Jeff London

FOURTH DISTRICT

Commissioner Donald K. Anderson



Commissioner Donald K. Anderson, Meyersdale, Somerset County, represents the Fourth District of the PFBC. He was appointed in October 2018.

The Fourth District includes **Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, and Somerset counties.**

FOURTH DISTRICT

Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, Habitat Improvement Projects

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has a long-standing partnership with the PFBC Lake Habitat Section at Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, dating back to the 1980s. This year marked the beginning of a three-year project that includes substantial shoreline stabilization and rock rubble reef placement. Heavy boat traffic at Raystown Lake creates heavy wave action that erodes sediment from shorelines. This sedimentation degrades water quality and fish habitat. The PFBC used heavy machinery to reshape the actively eroding lake shore at the Susquehannock Campground, and the Lake Habitat Section guided machine operators while constructing 24 stone deflectors to reduce erosion and reinforce shorelines. The stone deflectors also provide excellent lakeside fishing access adjacent to several camping sites. The USACE and the PFBC are also adding three boat mooring areas to accommodate campers who want to pull their boats up to shore near their campsites. Rock rubble reef placement and additional shoreline stabilization will take place at Raystown Lake in 2021 and 2022.

Meadow Grounds Lake Dam, Fulton County

KC Construction company commenced construction of the \$3.7 million rehabilitation project in the spring of 2020. Construction is currently 90% complete with an anticipated completion in the spring of 2021. Staff members for the office of Senator Judy Ward and the office of Representative Jesse Topper toured the project with Commissioner Don Anderson and Paul Urbanik, director of the PFBC's Bureau of Engineering, during the summer to see the progress first hand.

Somerset Lake Dam, Somerset County

Thomas Construction Company commenced construction of the \$7.5 million rehabilitation project in the spring of 2020. Construction is currently 70% complete with an anticipated completion in the summer of 2021. Senator Pat Stefano and staff members from the office of Representative Carl Metzgar toured the project site in August with Commissioner Anderson and PFBC staff.

Students Build Lake Habitat Structures

The PFBC continued to partner with the Berlin Brothersvalley School District to enhance fish habitat in the Quemahoning Reservoir, Somerset County. Over the winter months, middle school students constructed dozens of habitat structures as part of the woodworking curriculum. PFBC staff later deployed the structures in the reservoir, where they will provide excellent habitat, cover, and spawning grounds for warmwater fish species such as panfish and Largemouth Bass. These locations also create

great fishing opportunities for anglers, who can locate the habitat structures on maps through the PFBC website and FishBoatPA mobile app.



Students at Berlin Brothersvalley Middle School, Somerset County, construct lake habitat structures.

Catfish Cooperative Nurseries at Schools

The PFBC, along with the Salisbury Elk Lick Hunting Club and other service organizations, sponsors indoor cooperative nurseries at Berlin Brothersvalley, Meyersdale Area, and Rockwood Area high schools in southern Somerset County. As part of the agriculture curriculum, the students raise fingerling Channel Catfish provided by the PFBC, which are stocked into local waterways

Clover Creek Habitat Project Benefits Chesapeake Bay

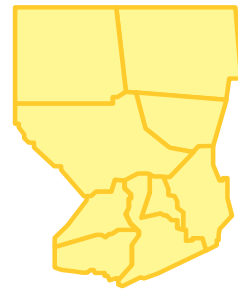
The PFBC staff completed a stream habitat project on Clover Creek, which was a collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Blair County Conservation District, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy on a landowner property near Martinsburg, Blair County. Senator Judy Ward and Representative Jim Gregory received an informational overview of the project and its benefits to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



A student tends to the catfish rearing tank at Meyersdale Area High School, Somerset County.

FIFTH DISTRICT

Commissioner Eric C. Hussar



Commissioner Eric C. Hussar, Lewisburg, Union County, represents the Fifth District of the PFBC. He was appointed in October 2014 and reappointed in June 2019.

The Fifth District includes **Bradford, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union counties.**

FIFTH DISTRICT

Stream Habitat Improvement

PFBC staff improved nearly two miles of stream as part of the Northcentral Stream Restoration Partnership in 2020. The partnership completed their first project in May 2020 on Sechler Run at the Geisinger Woodbine facility, Montour County. The project took place on approximately 1,100 linear feet of stream and included a variety of habitat enhancement structures. The partnership also utilized a grant to plant almost two acres of shrubs, trees, and wildflowers.



Before



After

Sechler Run, Montour County, before and after the Northcentral Stream Restoration Partnership in 2020.

Dam Rehabilitation Projects

Beechwood Lake, Tioga County - A consulting engineer began designing dam safety improvements that will address spillway capacity and dam embankment stability. The dam and property, located in Tioga County, is owned and managed through a partnership between the PFBC and the NRCS.

Engineers were selected to begin design work and provide construction oversight for a \$1.76 million rehabilitation of the dam at **Rose Valley Lake, Lycoming County**, and for a \$2.5 million rehabilitation of the dam at **Hunters Lake, Sullivan County**.

Access Area Improvements

As PennDOT's Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation Project continues, access for anglers and boaters to the West Branch Susquehanna River has improved. Due to unavoidable impacts of recreational fishing and boating, it was agreed to construct a new access to the West Branch Susquehanna River near Winfield, Union County.

The parking lot and access road were repaved at the popular Chillisquaque Access Area, Northumberland County. These improvements will improve boater and angler access to the West Branch Susquehanna River.

New WCOs on Patrol

With the addition of a new WCO in Lycoming County, resource protection and public safety was enhanced within the Fifth District. WCOs conducted 18 criminal Environmental Investigations of pollution and disturbance incidents, as well as made six arrests for BUI within the District.

National Safe Boating Week Statewide Kickoff

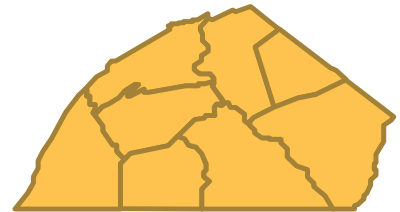
On May 18, 2020, the PFBC partnered with the PA DCNR to offer a Safe Boating Checklist, including reminders to wear a life jacket and never BUI. A statewide media kickoff event was held along the Susquehanna River at Shikellamy State Park, located near Sunbury, Northumberland County.



WCO Jacob Bennett speaking during a press conference at Shikellamy State Park, Northumberland County.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Commissioner Robert B.J. Small



Commissioner Robert B.J. Small, Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County, represents the Sixth District of the PFBC. He was appointed in July 2017.

The Sixth District includes **Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties.**

SIXTH DISTRICT

Safe Summer Boating Event

Summer is a busy time for boaters on the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg, especially at the PFBC's access area near Fort Hunter, Dauphin County. PFBC staff and Commissioner B.J. Small held a press conference prior to the Independence Day weekend to remind boaters to have fun but be safe on the water by wearing a life jacket and avoiding alcohol.



WCO Mark Sweppenhiser talks to the media about safe summer boating.

Codorus State Park Habitat Project

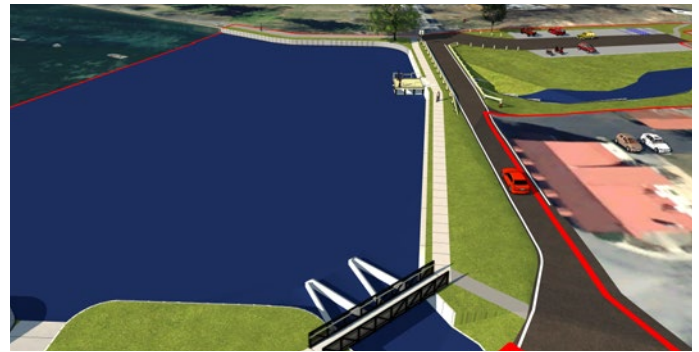
In July, Representative Kate Klunk joined the PFBC's Lake Habitat section staff for a tour of a large-scale habitat project on Lake Marburg, a 1,275-acre lake located in Codorus State Park, York County. The project was funded in part by proceeds from the PFBC's voluntary bass permit. Staff added fish habitat structures, improved angler access, and stabilized an eroding lakeshore. Habitat features included stone deflectors, rock rubble humps, and felled shoreline trees.



The PFBC Habitat crews at Lake Marburg, Codorus State Park, York County.

Childrens Lake, Cumberland County, Update

Consulting engineers have submitted final design drawings for the project for regulatory approval for construction of the dam rehabilitation project at Childrens Lake, Cumberland County. The proposed \$2.2 million rehabilitation project will address dam safety deficiencies related to spillway capacity and embankment stability. Childrens Lake is a popular destination for anglers and is part of the PFBC's stocked trout waters program. Staff from the Bureau of Engineering have been in regular communication with area residents to ensure they are updated on the status of the project.



A rendering of the dam rehabilitation design for Children's Lake, Cumberland County.

Flathead Catfish Diet Study

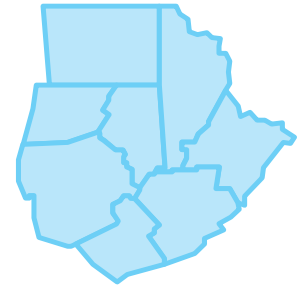
Beginning in 2020, the PFBC partnered with Penn State and the United States Geological Survey on a project funded by Pennsylvania Sea Grant to evaluate the diet of Flathead Catfish in the Susquehanna River Basin to understand their impact as an invasive species. Though native to the Ohio Basin in Pennsylvania, Flathead Catfish are invasive to the Delaware and Susquehanna drainages, where they were first documented in the late 1990s and early 2000s, respectively. Despite being invasive, a recreational fishery has developed as their range expands, demonstrating the complexity surrounding their management. Invasive Flathead Catfish populations have been noted to have negative impacts on resident sportfish populations as well as non-sportfish Species of Greatest Conservation Need because of their largely fish-based diet. Over the next 2 years, stomach contents will be identified using molecular analysis to determine which species are being consumed and at what frequency. The project is expected to be completed in 2022.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Habitat Unit

Through the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant program, PFBC's Division of Habitat Management (DHM) was approved for a project totaling \$3,814,646 over four years (2020-2023). This award was used to create the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Habitat Unit (CBWHU) in the DHM's Stream Habitat Section. This new work unit consists of four full-time Fisheries Biologists and four seasonal Fisheries Biologist Aides. The CBWHU will provide design and construction oversight to assist landowners implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce nutrients and sediment to streams, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, with emphasis on implementation of stream and riparian corridor BMPs. This includes riparian plantings and installation of instream habitat structures that not only reduce bank erosion and sedimentation, but also serve to enhance fish habitat and fishing opportunities. In 2020, the CBWHU completed 16 projects, enhancing 2.86 stream miles in nine counties while training the new staff members. In 2021, the CBWHU will expand efforts in the southern portion of the watershed while continuing focus in the northern tier. It is anticipated to triple habitat enhancement efforts in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by 2022 compared to 2020.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Commissioner William J. Gibney



Commissioner William J. Gibney, Honesdale, Wayne County, represents the Seventh District of the PFBC. He was appointed in June 2019.

The Seventh District includes **Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming** counties.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Dam Rehabilitation Projects

Belmont Lake Dam, Wayne County - Engineers have completed approximately 95% of design work for this \$3.1 million rehabilitation project, which will address safety deficiencies related to spillway capacity and dam embankment stability.

Lower Woods Pond Dam, Wayne County - With design work approximately 95% completed, the Dam Safety Permit remains under review by the PA DEP's Division of Dam Safety. The \$2.6 million rehabilitation project will improve spillway capacity and embankment stability.

White Oak Pond Dam and Miller Pond Dam, Wayne County - Consulting engineers completed topographic surveying, geotechnical drilling, and completed approximately 90% of the design of the new dam structures. The total cost to rehabilitate both dam structures is estimated to be \$6.5 million.

Engineers were selected to design a \$1.99 million construction project at **Harris Pond, Luzerne County**, a \$1.76 million construction project at **Stevens Lake, Wyoming County**, and a \$2.4 million construction project at **Fords Lake, Lackawanna County**, to improve dam spillway capacity, spillway stability, and dam embankment stability.

Access Area Improvements

The parking lot and access road was repaved at the Buckingham Access Area, Wayne County. These improvements will improve boater and angler access to the upper Delaware River.

Northeast Regional Office Construction

Design of a \$3 million, 5,000 square foot renovation to the regional office commenced in the fall of 2020. Construction of the addition, to be located in Sweet Valley, Luzerne County, is expected to be complete in 2025.

Francis E. Walter Dam Re-evaluation Study

The Francis E. Walter Dam, located in the upper Lehigh River Watershed, is operated by the USACE principally for flood control. The USACE, along with the Delaware River Basin Commission and New York City, is conducting a three-year re-evaluation study of the reservoir's operation including water storage, release, infrastructure, and supported recreational activities. This study is part of a broader, basin-wide goal to optimize the water resources of the Delaware River Basin in order to meet a variety of human and ecological needs.

PFBC biologists are playing a central role in evaluating the effect of altered dam operations on habitat for ecologically and recreationally important fish species and any influences on boating and fishing opportunities. The PFBC attends regular virtual meetings to plan and collaborate on data sharing, analysis, and dissemination of model findings.



Commission biologists monitor the effects of the Francis E. Walter Dam on the Upper Lehigh River.

Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Joint Fisheries Investigation Plan: 2018-2020

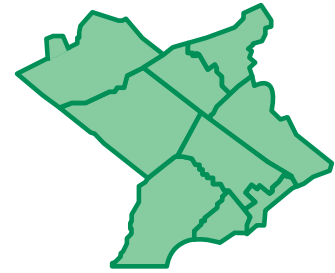
In 2020, the PFBC and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) concluded a three-year Joint Fisheries Investigation Plan. Several thousand trout were tagged with passive integrated transponders (PIT) to be studied. The study revealed robust Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout populations, which support a popular trophy-sized destination fishery. With the conclusion of the Plan, the PFBC and NYSDEC will jointly develop a new fisheries management plan as the next step in the adaptive fisheries management of the Delaware River tailwaters.



Commission staff insert a PIT transponder into a Brown Trout.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Commissioner Richard S. Kauffman



Commissioner Richard S. Kauffman, Leesport, Berks County, represents the Eighth District for the PFBC. He was appointed in July 2017 and reappointed in June 2019.

The Eighth District includes **Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, and Schuylkill counties.**

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Delaware River Estuary Freshwater Mussel Surveys

The Delaware River Estuary is a major part of Pennsylvania’s coastal zone and supports a diverse range of aquatic habitats and species. In August and September 2020, biologists with the Commission’s Division of Environmental Services conducted freshwater mussel surveys along 10 miles of the tidally influenced portion of the river near Bristol, Bucks County. Freshwater mussels are some of the most imperiled aquatic organisms in North America, with nearly a quarter of the species remaining in the Commonwealth protected as threatened or endangered. Additionally, the estuary is the only waterway in Pennsylvania supporting several rare species, including the Tidewater Mucket. The 2020 survey effort was undertaken to inventory the mussel community to help avoid impacts associated with shoreline development and navigational dredging projects. During the surveys, over 3,700 individuals were collected, representing six species of which three are considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Leaser Lake Tiger Muskellunge

In 2020, Commission biologists conducted nighttime electrofishing surveys at Leaser Lake, Lehigh County. These surveys yielded a total of eight Tiger Muskellunge ranging from 36 to 42 inches. Additionally, eight Tiger Muskellunge of similar sizes were observed, but could not be netted and brought onto the boat. This may seem like a low catch rate; however, as a top predator in fish communities, Tiger Muskellunge exist in low numbers compared to other species, and this electrofishing catch rate is indicative of a robust population. As a result of high catch rates during the 2020 survey and previous surveys, the Leaser Lake Tiger Muskellunge population is included on the list of Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters for Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge. Based on our results, Leaser Lake continues to provide fantastic Tiger Muskellunge fishing opportunities.



Commissioner Kauffman holds a tiger muskellunge during a survey of Leaser Lake, Lehigh County.

Delaware Estuary Striped Bass Regulations

Following a benchmark stock assessment conducted in 2018, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) determined that the coastwide Striped Bass stock was overfished, and overfishing is occurring. Therefore, the ASMFC enacted

coastwide regulations to reduce fishing mortality of Striped Bass. For 2021, anglers fishing for Striped Bass in the tidal Delaware River Estuary and tidal portions of tributaries must use inline (non-offset) circle hooks while bait fishing and follow new slot length limits.

Schuylkill Banks Safe Boating Event

Just ahead of the Independence Day holiday weekend, the PFBC joined PennDOT and AAA to spread the word about safe and sober boating and travel. With the scenic Schuylkill Banks as a backdrop, boaters were reminded to wear a life jacket, stay sober, have a float plan, and keep an eye on the weather forecast. PennDOT and AAA officials reminded drivers of motor vehicles to be safe during the extended holiday travel weekend.

State Record Flathead Catfish

On May 24, 2020, angler Jonathan Pierce, Philadelphia, reeled in a 56-pound, 3-ounce Flathead Catfish from the Schuylkill River at East Falls. The PFBC certified the new state record, which outweighed the previous Flathead, caught in 2019 along the Susquehanna River, Lancaster County, by more than 5 pounds. The fish was released back into the Schuylkill River.



Angler Jonathan Pierce with the state record Flathead Catfish.

Commissioner Kauffman Stocks Trout During COVID-19

In mid-March, when it was determined that public volunteers would no longer be permitted to assist with trout stocking due COVID-19, Commission staff took an “all hands on deck” approach to complete this monumental effort on their own in hundreds of waterways statewide. District 6 Commissioner



Richard Kauffman led by example and assisted with dozens of stockings in his home district.

Commissioner Kauffman stocking trout along West Valley Creek, Chester County.

BOATING-AT-LARGE

Boating Facility Grant Program

Reintroduced in 2019, this program is open to townships, boroughs, and municipal and county governments as well as nonprofit groups (501c3) including land trusts, conservancies, and watershed associations that are interested in the planning, acquisition, development, expansion, or rehabilitation of public boating access areas. Grants are funded through boat registration fees and are awarded based on the greatest need for regional boating facilities and the number of boaters served by projects. Successful applicants from the grant round will be announced in early 2021.

National Safe Boating Week Videos

Ahead of National Safe Boating Week, the PFBC produced more than 30 public service announcements featuring legislators who reminded boaters to wear life jackets, have a float plan, and stay sober. Videos were shared in district newsletters and through social media.



Representative Bud Cook records a safe boating message at the State Capitol, Dauphin County.

Boating-At-Large Commissioners

Two members of the Commission serve at-large and are experienced in boating and water safety education.



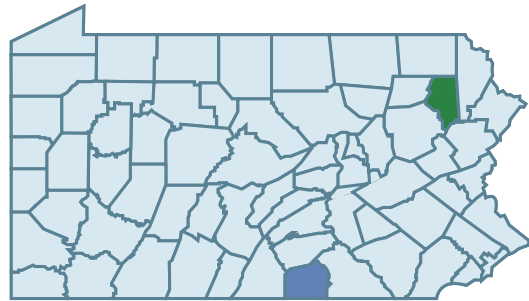
Charles J. Charlesworth

Commissioner Charles J. Charlesworth, Clarks Summit, Lackawanna County, was appointed as an at-large boating commissioner in June 2019.



Richard Lewis

Commissioner Richard Lewis, Gettysburg, Adams County, was appointed as an at-large boating commissioner in July 2017.



Boating Advisory Board

The Boating Advisory Board (BAB) advises the Commission regarding matters relating to boating including recommendations with respect to proposed boating rules and regulations. The BAB's advice assists the Commission with establishing a boating program that ensures the safe and enjoyable operation of boats.

BAB Members:

Loren Lustig, *Chairperson*
Biglerville

Scott Ballantyne
Fleetwood

John Mahn Jr.
Charleroi

Michael Murray
Philadelphia

Elizabeth Winand
Wrightsville

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Report

(unaudited)

EXPENDITURES

Fish Fund

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Personnel | \$26,093,552 |
| Operating | \$10,932,495 |
| Fixed Assets | \$1,706,109 |
| Grants | \$654,714 |
| Fish Fund Total | \$39,386,870 |

Boat Fund

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Personnel | \$12,250,874 |
| Operating | \$3,978,574 |
| Fixed Assets | \$1,329,522 |
| Grants | \$21,255 |
| Boat Fund Total | \$17,580,225 |

Fish Fund & Boat Fund Total

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Personnel | \$38,344,426 |
| Operating | \$14,911,069 |
| Fixed Assets | \$3,035,631 |
| Grants | \$675,969 |
| Fish & Boat Fund Total | \$56,967,095 |

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Report

(unaudited)

REVENUE

Fish Fund

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Licenses & Fees | \$29,397,105 |
| Fines & Penalties | \$211,171 |
| Miscellaneous | \$3,439,407 |
| Federal & State Grants | \$8,960,577 |
| Fish Fund Total | \$42,008,260 |

Boat Fund

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Licenses & Fees | \$8,912,802 |
| Fines & Penalties | \$178,317 |
| Miscellaneous | \$7,971,704 |
| Federal & State Grants | \$3,795,824 |
| Boat Fund Total | \$20,858,647 |

Fish Fund & Boat Fund Total

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Licenses & Fees | \$38,309,907 |
| Fines & Penalties | \$389,488 |
| Miscellaneous | \$11,411,111 |
| Federal & State Grants | \$12,756,401 |
| Fish & Boat Fund Total | \$62,866,907 |

2020 Cooperative Nursery 50 Year Award Certificates

- Adams County Fish & Game Association
- Dauphin County Anglers & Conservationists
- Dunlo Rod & Gun Club
- Fulton County Sportsmen's League
- Ravers Gap Sportsmen's Association
- Springtown Rod & Gun Club
- Wesleyville Conservation Club

Trout Stocked by PFBC

| Trout Species | Lifestage | Amount |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Brook Trout | Adult | 491,145 |
| | Fingerling | 15,000 |
| Brown Trout | Adult | 901,060 |
| | Fingerling | 587,200 |
| Rainbow Trout | Adult | 1,557,279 |
| | Fingerling | 560,922 |
| Golden Rainbow Trout | Adult | 14,352 |
| Total Trout Stocked by PFBC | | 4,126,958 |

Trout Distributed to Cooperative Nurseries

| Trout Species | Lifestage | Amount |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| Brook Trout | Fingerling to Coops. | 136,450 |
| Brown Trout | Fingerling to Coops. | 243,150 |
| Rainbow Trout | Fingerling to Coops. | 343,662 |
| Golden Rainbow Trout | Fingerling to Coops. | 10,275 |
| Total Trout Distributed to Coops. | | 733,537 |

Total Trout Species (Stocked and Distributed) 4,860,495

Warmwater/Coolwater Fish Production and Stocking

| Species | Lifestage | Amount |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Black Crappie | Fingerling | 20,000 |
| Bluegill | Fingerling | 18,400 |
| Bluntnose Minnow | Adult | 700 |
| Brown Trout - Erie | Yearling | 42,444 |
| Channel Catfish | Fingerling | 75,660 |
| Channel Catfish | Yearling | 14,405 |
| Fathead Minnow | Adult | 39,000 |
| Golden Shiner | Adult | 250 |
| Golden Shiner | Fingerling | 48,500 |
| Lake Trout | Fingerling | 3,000 |
| Lake Trout | Yearling | 46,512 |
| Largemouth Bass | Adult | 8 |
| Largemouth Bass | Fingerling | 49,466 |
| Muskellunge | Fingerling | 19,150 |
| Muskellunge | Yearling | 34,692 |
| Muskellunge - Erie | Fingerling | 29,950 |
| Northern Pike | Fingerling | 3,689 |
| Rainbow Trout - Steelhead | Yearling | 930,500 |
| Striped Bass | Fingerling | 46,562 |
| hybrid Striped Bass | Fingerling | 28,482 |
| Tiger Muskellunge | Fingerling | 10,900 |
| Tiger Muskellunge | Yearling | 9,250 |
| Walleye | Fry | 20,862,000 |
| Walleye | Fingerling | 1,663,152 |
| White Crappie | Adult | 50 |
| Yellow Perch | Fingerling | 8,000 |

Grand Total of all Species 24,004,722

Website Statistics

Top Ten Pages by Page View

1. Home - 1,146,273
2. Buy a License - 935,916
3. Register/Title a Boat - 451,477
4. Trout Season Overview - 287,382
5. Stocking - 273,120
6. Trout - Pa Fishes - 240,507
7. Fishing Licenses FAQ - 215,573
8. Best Fishing Waters - 188,065
9. Boat Registration FAQ - 174,794
10. Fishing Regulations - 151,201

Total Sessions

3,589,419

Total Users

2,316,560

Web Page Visits by State

1. Pennsylvania - 1,636,349
2. New York - 132,039
3. New Jersey - 109,898
4. Virginia - 84,884
5. Ohio - 62,170
6. District of Columbia - 48,543
7. Maryland - 38,488
8. Michigan - 26,444
9. Massachusetts - 18,035
10. Texas - 17,929

Social Media 2020

(1/1/20 to 12/31/20)

Facebook

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Followers (25% increase) | 104,793 |
| Posts | 905 |
| Impressions | 14,768,133 |
| Engagements | 586,708 |

Twitter

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Followers (15% increase) | 12,339 |
| Tweets | 802 |
| Impressions | 1,749,454 |
| Engagements | 74,285 |

Instagram

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Followers (64% increase) | 18,205 |
| Posts | 482 |
| Impressions | 3,379,455 |
| Engagements | 126,646 |

YouTube

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Subscribers | 1,614 |
| Videos | 215 |
| Impressions | 440,932 |
| Engagements | 116,671 |

The PFBC social media and mobile app:
www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

STATE HEADQUARTERS

1601 Elmerton Avenue
 P.O. Box 67000
 Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000
 Phone: (717) 705-7800
 Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 Monday through Friday

CENTRE REGION OFFICE

595 East Rolling Ridge Drive
 Bellefonte, PA 16823
 Lobby Phone: (814) 359-5124
 Fisheries Admin. Phone:
 (814) 359-5110
 Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 Monday through Friday

FISHING LICENSES:

Phone: (877) 707-4085

BOAT REGISTRATION/TITLING:

Phone: (866) 262-8734

PUBLICATIONS:

Phone: (717) 705-7835

BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION COURSES

Phone: (888) 723-4741

THE PFBC WEBSITE:

www.fishandboat.com



www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia

REGION OFFICES: LAW ENFORCEMENT/EDUCATION

Contact **Law Enforcement** for information about regulations and fishing and boating opportunities.
 Contact **Outreach and Education** for information about fishing and boating programs and boating safety education.

NORTHWEST REGION

11528 State Highway 98, Meadville, PA 16335
Law Enforcement: (814) 337-0444
Fax (814) 337-0579
Counties: Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren

Outreach & Education:
 (814) 336-2426
Fax (814) 337-0579

SOUTHCENTRAL REGION

1704 Pine Road, Newville, PA 17241
Law Enforcement: (717) 486-7087
Fax (717) 486-8227
Counties: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, York

Outreach & Education:
 (717) 486-7352
Fax (717) 486-8227

SOUTHWEST REGION

236 Lake Road, Somerset, PA 15501
Law Enforcement: (814) 445-8974
Fax (814) 445-3497
Counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland

Outreach & Education:
 (814) 443-9841
Fax (814) 445-3497

NORTHEAST REGION

5566 Main Road, Sweet Valley, PA 18656
Law Enforcement: (570) 477-5717
Fax (570) 477-3221
Counties: Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming

Outreach & Education:
 (570) 477-2206
Fax (570) 477-2621

NORTHCENTRAL REGION

595 East Rolling Ridge Drive
 Bellefonte, PA 16823
Law Enforcement: (814) 359-5250
Fax (814) 359-5254
Counties: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union

Outreach & Education:
 (814) 359-5127
Fax (814) 359-5153

SOUTHEAST REGION

P.O. Box 9, Elm, PA 17521
Law Enforcement: (717) 626-0228
Fax (717) 626-0486
Counties: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill

Outreach & Education:
 (215) 968-3631
Fax (215) 968-1610

Office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

STATE FISH HATCHERIES

- **BELLEFONTE***
1115 Spring Creek Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823
(814) 355-3371
- **BENNER SPRING**
1735 Shiloh Road
State College, PA 16801
(814) 355-4837
- **OSWAYO***
96 State Route 244 East
Coudersport, PA 16915
(814) 698-2102
- **REYNOLDS DALE***
162 Fish Hatchery Road
New Paris, PA 15554
(814) 839-2211
- **CORRY***
13365 Route 6
Corry, PA 16407
(814) 664-2122
- **HUNTS DALE***
195 Lebo Road
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 486-3419
- **PLEASANT GAP***
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823
(814) 359-5132
- **TIONESTA***
172 Fish Hatchery Lane
Tionesta, PA 16353
(814) 755-3524
- **FAIRVIEW**
2000 Lohrer Road
P.O. Box 531
Fairview, PA 16415
(814) 474-1514
- **LINESVILLE***
13300 Hartstown Road
Linesville, PA 16424
(814) 683-4451
- **PLEASANT MOUNT***
229 Great Bend Turnpike
Pleasant Mount, PA 18453
(570) 448-2101
- **TYLERSVILLE**
43 Hatchery Lane
Loganton, PA 17747
(570) 725-3965
- **UNION CITY**
9450 Route 6
Union City, PA 16438
(814) 438-2222

* Includes visitor center. Visitors are welcome from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.
 Groups should make advance arrangements.

Visitor centers are currently closed due to COVID-19.

www.fishandboat.com