

# New Jersey Freshwater Fishing Digest

January 2025

**Buddy License  
Updated for 2025  
Page 6**

**Opening Day of  
Trout Season  
April 5, 2025**



A Summary of Regulations and  
Freshwater Fisheries Management Information  
[NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com)





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## 34 Aquatic Invasive Species

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## License Information & Fees 2025

Licenses and fishing-related permits are valid from date of purchase to Dec. 31 of each year.

### LICENSES

Resident Fishing	
Ages 16–64 yrs.....	\$22.50
	(Buddy License* \$11.75)
Senior Resident Fishing	
Ages 65–69 yrs.....	\$12.50
70 & over .....	Free
Resident Trout Stamp	
Ages 16–69 yrs.....	\$10.50
Non-resident Fishing	
Age 16 yrs. and older.....	\$34
	(Buddy License* \$17.50)
Non-resident Trout Stamp .....	\$20
Non-resident 2-Day Vacation Fishing.....	\$9
Non-resident 7-Day Vacation Fishing.....	\$19.50
All-Around Sportsman	
(includes resident fishing, firearm hunting	
and bow/arrow hunting licenses) .....	\$72.25
	(Buddy License* \$62.50)

\* See page 6 for more information on the Buddy License.

### PERMITS

WMA Boat Ramp Permit .....	\$15
Available online or through license agents	
Water Lowering, Fish Stocking,	
Baitfish Collecting, Fish Tagging Permits .....	\$2
Scientific Collecting Permits .....	\$22
Available through the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries	
908-236-2118	
Commercial Snapping Turtles and Frog Permits	
Applications available on NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's	
website. Questions pertaining to these two permits	
can be directed to (856) 629-4950.	



### 2025 Trout Fishing Page

Scan this QR code with your mobile device to view New Jersey's trout fishing information or go to <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/trout-fishing-information>



Scan this QR code with your mobile device for a direct link to NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's website or visit: [NJFishandWildlife.com](https://NJFishandWildlife.com)



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# Assistant Commissioner's Message

DAVE GOLDEN




Have you felt it? That amazing sensation you get while fishing? Anticipation and excitement. These feelings keep us awake the night before the opening day of trout season and have us getting up well before sunrise to race to our favorite spot ahead of the first bite. These same feelings might motivate you to take off from work on a Friday afternoon to get an early jump on picking up the kids from school, hitching up the boat, and driving across the state so you can get out on the water before dark. When these efforts result in a catch, there is little doubt that the next trip will quickly get on the calendar. NJDEP Fish & Wildlife staff know this feeling, share this feeling, and do our very best to continue to provide opportunities for you to experience the thrill of fishing in NJ.

If you're so inclined, you can find freshwater fishing opportunities throughout the year in New Jersey. While April's opening day of trout is often viewed as the "unofficial start" to the fishing season, many anglers know it is only one part of the much bigger story on freshwater fishing, and fish stocking, in New Jersey. Don't limit yourself to fishing only in the spring and summer, consider extending your season this year by getting out on the water (or ice) early and planning trips for the fall and winter. Year-round opportunities exist, but it's up to you to get out there and take advantage of them.

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife manages two fish hatcheries in northern New Jersey, which annually produce and stock more than 3.5 million fish. Our Pequest Trout hatchery grows all of the stocked trout for our spring, fall, and winter trout stocking programs. These fish (more than 600,000 annually) provide great opportunities for anglers across the state. Your trout stamp purchases fund this program and keep it strong.

Our Charles O. Hayford State Fish Hatchery – or "Hackettstown Hatchery" – produces millions of fish each year (some years, exceeding 5.5 million!) used in our warm water stocking program. This hatchery has been in operation since 1912 and now grows 15 species of fish, including largemouth bass, channel catfish, northern pike, and hybrid striped bass. Fish from our Hackettstown Hatchery have put smiles on many faces across New Jersey for the past 113 years! And 2025 will be no different, as our hatchery staff continues to increase the number of large fish stocked in lakes and ponds throughout the state. I hope you'll be smiling this year as a result of their hard work and dedication.

One of our highest priorities at NJDEP Fish & Wildlife is to make it easy for you to get out fishing. With free fishing days (June 7 and October 18), free fishing for youths (under 16 years old) and seniors (over 70 years old), and an updated "Buddy License Program" that offers reduced license costs for new anglers, you might be one of the lucky people that can fish at a lower cost or no cost. Those not qualifying for these programs will need to purchase a license, but can take pride in knowing that 100% of Freshwater Fishing License fees go directly into the management of fish species and habitats across the state. We could not do this work without your ongoing support!

If you're holding this Digest, you're likely eager to bait a hook. Before you head out, please review the regulations and tips included here to ensure a safe, enjoyable, and legal experience, filled with great memories. Now, get out there and start fishing! Tight lines! 

Dave Golden is the Assistant Commissioner of New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife.



## About This Guide

This high-quality guide is brought to you by NJDEP Fish & Wildlife through a partnership with Kalkomey, a trusted leader in outdoor safety education since 1995. In addition to producing this guide, Kalkomey also offers a suite of educational courses to help people enjoy the outdoors safely.

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The fishing regulations in this guide are online at:

 **eRegulations.com**

## Get on The List!

**The Freshwater Fisheries e-mail lists, that is.** This free service provides the latest information about NJDEP Fish & Wildlife events, public hearings and other matters related to our freshwater fishing resources. We also have several other lists so you can maximize your enjoyment of New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources.

Sign up today at: [dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/email-lists](http://dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/email-lists)



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## Attention: Saltwater Anglers

### Register. It's free, easy and required!

**Saltwater Registrations can now be obtained online at [NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm), where all other Fish and Wildlife licenses and permits are available.**

Before heading out to catch your favorite marine fish this year, be sure to join the hundreds of thousands of anglers who have already registered with the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP). Freshwater anglers fishing in tidal freshwater are also required to register with the NJSRRP.

For more information on the NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program and to register, visit [dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/saltwater-registry/](http://dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/saltwater-registry/)

After registering, become part of the fishery management process!

Submit fishing reports after each saltwater trip to the NJ Volunteer Angler Survey. Your fishing reports can help improve saltwater fishing opportunities in New Jersey.

Submit online reports at [dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/volunteer-angler-survey](http://dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/marine/volunteer-angler-survey)

## NJDEP Fish & Wildlife 2025 Calendar of Events

- **Fish Code Changes Meeting — Virtual**  
Thursday, January 16, 2025;  
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- **Public Warm and Coolwater Fisheries Meeting — Virtual**  
Thursday, February 20, 2025;  
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- **Public Trout Meeting — Virtual**  
Tuesday March 11, 2025;  
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- **Opening Day of Trout Season**  
April 5; page 16
- **FREE Fishing Days**  
June 7, Oct. 18; page 37
- **Fall Trout Stocking**  
begins Oct. 14
- **Winter Trout Stocking**  
November 24 and 25

Come and share your views and recommendations for the future of freshwater fisheries in New Jersey and learn about current research, management and fish culture activities! Please look for additional in-person public meetings at a later date. Presented by NJDEP Fish & Wildlife. Go to [dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/freshwater-fisheries-forums](http://dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/freshwater-fisheries-forums) for updates and to register.

## Operation Game Thief

### Report Abuse of our Outdoor Heritage! 1-855-OGT-TIPS

#### 24 Hours a Day, Seven Days a Week

The person who poaches, pollutes habitat and abuses public land tarnishes the image of sportsmen and robs us of our fish and wildlife, as well as tax and license dollars. You can make a difference.

#### Call OGT to report:

- Negligent use of firearms
- Commercial exploitation of fish and wildlife
- Destruction of signs and state property
- Over the limits for game and fish
- Pollution of habitat, dumping on state land
- Illegal killing, taking or possession of any wildlife

#### It's Free. It's Confidential. You May Be Eligible for a Reward.

Funded by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. Designed to encourage sportsmen to report poaching and wildlife crimes.

# New Jersey Freshwater Fishing Digest

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Tahesha Way, Lieutenant Governor

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NJDEP Fish & Wildlife is a professional environmental organization dedicated to the protection, management and wise use of the state's fish and wildlife resources.

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#### Where to Write Us

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Fish & Wildlife

MC 501-03 • P.O. Box 420 • Trenton, NJ 08625-0420 • [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com)

#### New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife

##### Our Mission

To protect and manage the state's fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all New Jerseyans.

##### Our Goals

- To maintain New Jersey's rich variety of fish and wildlife species at stable, healthy levels and to protect and enhance the many habitats on which they depend.
- To educate New Jerseyans on the values and needs of our fish and wildlife and to foster a positive human/wildlife co-existence.
- To maximize the recreational and commercial use of New Jersey's fish and wildlife for both present and future generations.

## Law Enforcement Offices

#### • Northern Region — 908-735-8240

(Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren counties)

#### • Central Region — 609-259-2120

(Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties)

#### • Southern Region — 856-629-0555

(Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties)

#### • Marine Region — 609-748-2050

(coastal and bay areas)





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