

Exciting Changes to the Buddy Fishing License Program!

Increased Eligibility for Reduced Fee Licenses Beginning in 2025

The Buddy Fishing License Program was introduced in 2016 to reward anglers for introducing a "Buddy" to fishing by offering fishing licenses at a reduced cost, and to promote the outstanding freshwater fishing opportunities New Jersey has to offer. This license offers both an existing angler and new angler, or two new anglers, an opportunity to receive reduced-priced fishing licenses provided they purchase their licenses together. Unfortunately, the definition of a "new angler" was inadvertently changed as the original bill went through the process of becoming a law. A "New Angler" was accidentally defined as someone who had not had a fishing license since a fixed year (2010) instead of a floating time span that would change with each successive year. This meant that with each passing year, fewer and fewer people could take advantage of this incentive.



This definition has been corrected by the state Legislature and NJDEP Fish & Wildlife is excited to now offer customers the opportunity to take advantage of the law as originally intended! This change begins with the 2025 Licenses, which became available Monday, December 2, 2024.

When a returning angler and a new angler, or two new anglers, purchase Buddy Fishing licenses together in the same transaction, both customers will receive a substantial discount. For a Buddy Fishing License, the following definitions apply:

Returning Angler – A returning angler is someone who has purchased at least one NJ resident or non-resident fishing license in the previous five years. NJ residents must be 16–64 and be eligible for a regular resident fishing license and not qualify for any of the already discounted licenses. Non-residents must be age 16 or older.

New Angler – A new angler is someone who either has never purchased a NJ Fishing License before or someone who has had at least a five-year lapse in purchasing and therefore, does not have a NJ fishing license on file for any of the previous five years. For example, if purchasing for 2025, the previous five years include 2020–2024 inclusive. In 2026, the previous five years would include 2021–2025.

Who Qualifies for the Buddy Fishing License Discount?

A “Buddy Team” must be two individuals and the licenses for these individuals must be purchased together in the same transaction.

A Buddy Team may consist of either:

- One Returning Angler and One New Angler purchasing together.
- Two New Anglers purchasing together.

Who is Not Eligible for the Buddy Fishing License Discount?

The following individuals already qualify for a discounted license and therefore are not eligible to be considered part of a Buddy Team: Disabled Veterans or National Guard personnel who are certified in the system and already receive no-charge items, senior residents aged 65 and older who qualify for senior priced licenses, and NJ residents over the age of 70 who are exempt from license requirements for freshwater fishing.

Do Buddies Always Have to Fish Together?

No, Buddy Fishing Licenses don’t tie you at the hip boots. While NJDEP Fish & Wildlife hopes the seasoned or returning angler will impart some lessons and skills to new anglers, both Buddy Fishing license holders can fish alone or with other partners at any point in time.



How Do We Purchase the Reduced-priced Licenses?

Licenses must be purchased in the same transaction. At a license agent both customers do not need to be present, however the absent customer MUST have already completed their profile using our internet sales site and completed their Child Support Certification form for the year.

Online purchases must also be done in the same transaction and BOTH customers must have already completed their profiles and Child Support Certification forms prior to initiating the sales transaction.

- You need a Buddy Team of two people who are both eligible for full-priced NJ Fishing Licenses. (NJ residents 16-64, non-residents aged 16 or over)
- Make sure at least one person in your Buddy Team has not had a NJ Fishing License in the prior five years.
- Decide how you want to purchase your licenses.

What’s It Going to Cost Me?

Full price

Resident Fishing License: \$22.50
Non-resident Fishing License: \$34.00
All-Around License: \$72.25

Buddy Up and Save!

Resident Buddy Fishing: \$11.75
Non-resident Buddy Fishing: \$17.50
All-Around Buddy License: \$62.25

There is no limit on the number of Buddy Fishing Licenses a customer may purchase in their lifetime, provided they continue to meet eligibility requirements each license year.



What's the Catch?

The only catch is the fish you hook! This reduced-price license is an incentive for new anglers who may be apprehensive to try the sport alone and for seasoned or returning anglers to introduce new fishing buddies into the sport.

Whether your goals are to catch big fish, spend quality time outdoors with friends or family, or just enjoy some quiet relaxing time in nature, Buddy Fishing Licenses are a great way to introduce others to the sport you love!

Purchase online using the Internet Sales Site:
NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm



Purchase in person from a participating License Agent:
dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/license-agents/



For more information about the Fishing Buddy License visit:
njfishandwildlife.com/fish-buddy.htm



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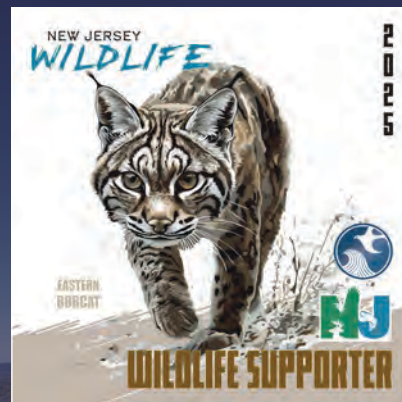


Become a Wildlife Habitat Supporter!

Did you know that NJDEP Fish & Wildlife manages more than 360,000 acres in 122 wildlife management areas throughout the state?

These spaces protect and conserve fish and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation such as fishing, hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, hiking and more! You can help to ensure the conservation of these natural treasures for the enjoyment of generations to come by becoming a Wildlife Habitat Supporter and making a donation. Donations will be used to:

- Manage and restore fish and wildlife habitat.
- Enforce fish and wildlife regulations.
- Restore and protect endangered and nongame species.
- Fund fish and wildlife educational programs and more.
- Improve public access to recreational facilities on WMAs.



Get Your Collectible Decal Today!

Supporters who donate \$25 or more receive a beautiful, first-edition collectible car decal.

Visit dep.nj.gov/njfw/conservation/wildlife-habitat-supporter-program

FISHING EDUCATION PROGRAMS



NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's R3 Fishing Program is part of the national movement to **Recruit** new anglers, **Retain** existing anglers, and **Reactivate** those who haven't fished in awhile and, we want **YOU** to be a part of it!

Join us at a seminar or workshop to learn a new skill or brush up on an old one; or share your passion for fishing with others by becoming a Fishing Education Instructor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/r3-fishing-program/

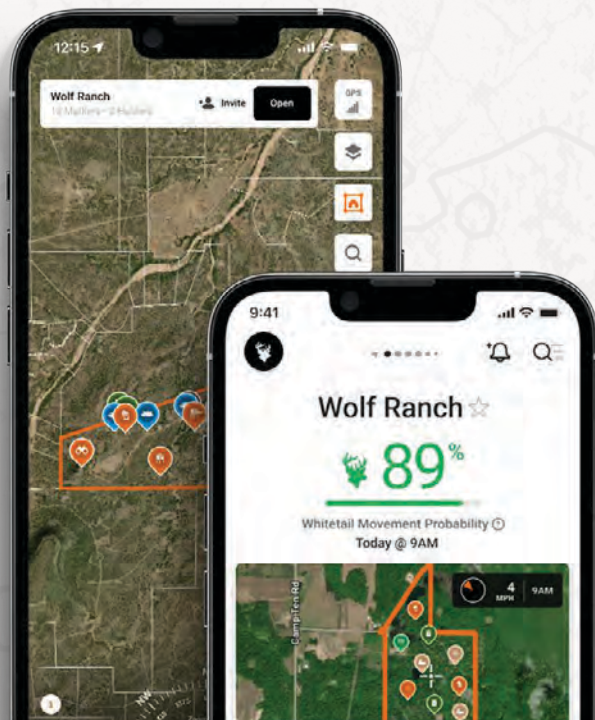
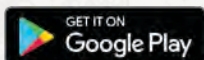
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"If I had an app like this when I started hunting, **the amount of 'the one that got away' stories would be far less.** It's going to take years of mistakes and translate them into years of success."



John Dudley
@nockontv



Regulations in **red** are new this year.

Licenses

- A valid New Jersey fishing license is required for residents at least 16 years and less than 70 years of age (plus all non-residents 16 years and older) to fish the fresh waters of New Jersey, including privately owned waters. **See pages 6–8 for the money-saving Buddy Fishing License.**
- For fishing-related license and permit fees, see page 1. See below for *Purchasing a License*.
- Resident anglers age 70 and over do not require a fishing license. A driver license or other acceptable proof of age containing date of birth and physical description will serve as the actual fishing license. Non-residents 70 and over must purchase a license.
- License must be visibly displayed on outer clothing.
- License and trout stamp are both valid from date of purchase through Dec. 31.
- A person must have an established domicile (principle residence) in New Jersey for at least the previous six months to obtain a resident fishing license.
- Farmers and immediate family members who live on the farm do not need a license to fish on their own farm, but must obey all fishing regulations.
- Anyone convicted of a second fish or wildlife violation in this or another state within a period of five years will have his or her New Jersey sporting licenses revoked for a minimum of two years.
- New Jersey is a member of the **Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact**. Under the Compact, information about suspension of sporting license privileges for people convicted of wildlife violations in New Jersey will be shared with participating member states. It is an individual's responsibility to first contact the licensing authority in the state where they intend to fish, hunt or otherwise take wildlife to determine their eligibility before making a purchase or engaging in those activities. Individuals with wildlife violation convictions or license suspensions received outside of New Jersey may call the Compact Administrator at 609-259-3347 to determine his or her license eligibility in New Jersey.

Trout Stamps

A valid fishing license and trout stamp are both required to fish for or possess trout and salmon for all anglers (residents and non-residents) 16 and over, and residents under the age of 70. No trout stamp is required for **residents** age 70 years and over.

Purchasing a License

Licenses may be purchased online at NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm or at license agents such as sporting goods or bait and tackle stores. Call first to confirm agent's system is active. Visit NJFishandWildlife.com for details, or call 609-292-2965.

Replacement — Lost License or Stamp

Replace a license, permit or stamp at any license agent or online at NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's internet license sales site, NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm also linked through our regular website at NJFishandWildlife.com. For fishing licenses or trout stamps originally purchased online, a reprint can be made free of charge on plain paper. Durable stock duplicates can be ordered online for \$2 per item.

Special Licenses

Servicemen and Servicewomen

A person on active duty in the United States armed services, regardless of their current residency, may buy a New Jersey resident fishing license. Active duty military ID must be shown to the license agent as proof of entitlement.

New Jersey National Guard

Only New Jersey National Guard personnel in good standing are entitled to free sporting licenses, permits and stamps. These privileges are not available using NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's website. However, the NJ Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs can issue fishing licenses through their DMAVA website at www.nj.gov/military/veterans/benefits-resources/hunting-fishing-license.shtml. For all other free sporting licenses, call 609-530-6866, email robert.greco@dmava.nj.gov, or write to: NJ Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs, Attn: MSG (Ret.) Robert Greco (RSB-RALV), PO Box 340, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340.

Veterans Licenses, Stamps and Permits

Free hunting and fishing licenses, stamps and permits are available for resident veterans with a service-connected disability.

For the purposes of this program, legislation defines disabled veterans as "...any resident of New Jersey who has been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service from any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States and who has been declared by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, or its successor, to have a service-connected disability of any degree..."

Newly applying disabled veterans can obtain their hunting and fishing licenses and stamps by mailing the application and all required documentation to: NJDEP Fish & Wildlife, Attn: Disabled Veteran Licensing, MC 501-03, PO Box 420 Trenton, NJ 08625-0420.

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife offices no longer accept Disabled Veteran Certifications in person. For information and updates, go to dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/disabled-veteran-license-information.

All licenses, stamps and permits for which the veteran is eligible will be free of charge. This does not give preferential treatment in any lottery. For questions, call 609-292-2965.

Disabled Veteran Applicants:

1. Documentation of current benefits for a service-connected disability and proof of honorable discharge (copy of your DD-214, VA card or monthly check stub) must be presented to obtain a disabled veteran certification.
2. Applicant must provide a hunter education course certificate applicable to the license for which they are applying or a previously issued resident archery or firearm license or rifle permit. Resident licenses from other states are accepted if the license indicates the sporting arm for which it was valid. Non-resident licenses from other states are not acceptable.
3. To obtain free disabled veteran deer/turkey permits, one must *first* have a free disabled veteran hunting license.

For the Blind

Residents with total blindness may obtain a free license. Call 609-292-2965 for an application.

Where to Buy Your License & Trout Stamp

IMPORTANT!

Licenses and permits can be purchased online at any time at NJFishandWildlife.com/licensesalesite.htm.



Want to make your purchase at a license agent?

Locate one directly through the Fishing & Hunting License Agent Locator application or directly at NJFishandWildlife.com/dfwlicenseagents. You can also find a listing by county at dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/license-agents/



DEP Action Line, 24 Hrs.

The Department has a toll-free telephone hotline number you can use to report environmental incidents, abuses and complaints in New Jersey or impacting it.

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Summary of Fishing Regulations

2025 REGULATIONS

Regulations in **red** are new this year.

Summary of General Fishing Regulations

The season, size and creel limits for freshwater species apply to all waters of the state, including tidal waters.

- Fish may be taken only in the manner known as angling with handline or with rod and line, or as otherwise allowed by law.
- When fishing from the *shoreline*, no more than three fishing rods, handlines or combination thereof may be used (except on the Delaware River. There is no rod limit when fishing from a *boat* except for the Delaware River.) **For the Delaware River, the three rod limit applies both to boat and shoreline anglers** (see page 27).
- Only one daily creel of any fish species may be in possession. Additional fish may be caught once the creel is reached if immediately returned to the water unharmed.
- Separate stringers or buckets must be used for each angler's catch.
- Boats may contain only the combined daily creel limit for each legal angler on board.
- A fishing license does not authorize trespassing on private property. Permission must first be obtained from the landowner.

It Is Unlawful To:

- Fish within 100 feet (or as posted) of any fish ladder entrance or exit from March 1 through June 30.
- Spear fish in fresh waters, except as specified for Delaware River, page 27.
- Possess a fishing device with more than nine hooks in total, or more than three treble hooks, except for the Delaware River; see page 27.
- Use set lines.
- Use cast nets in freshwater lakes or trout stocked waters. See *Baitfish Regulations*, page 29 for other exclusions.
- Foul hook or snag any species of fish. This does not apply to fish taken through the ice.

Bow and Arrow Fishing

Carp (including bighead, common, grass), eels, flathead catfish, American shad (Delaware River only), gizzard shad, snakeheads and suckers or hybrids of these species—may be taken at any time by use of a bow and arrow (with a line attached to the arrow) when in possession of a valid fishing license. Crossbows may be used when bowfishing, except for Greenwood Lake. Crossbows must have a stock length of at least 25 inches, a minimum draw weight of 75 pounds and a working safety. Crossbows must be uncocked during transport or when not actively fishing. They may not be permanently mounted. **NOTE: Some municipalities have banned the discharge of bow and arrow, tethered arrow or not. As such, anglers are strongly urged to check with the waterbody owner and/or municipality prior to engaging in bowfishing.** See regulations for the Delaware River and Greenwood Lake, pages 26–28.

Water Supply Reservoirs Open To Fishing By Permit Only

Permits must be obtained from the specific reservoir owner listed below. A valid fishing license is also required.

Waterbody	County	Type of Fishing	Fee	Permit Source
Newark-Pequanock Watershed Reservoirs	Echo Lake	Boat & Shoreline	Yes	Newark Watershed reservoir permits available in person at: City of Newark 223 Echo Lake Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435 973-697-1724 or online at: www.newarknj.gov/card/recreational-permit
	Clinton Reservoir			
	Oak Ridge Reservoir			
	Canistear Reservoir			
Oradell Reservoir	Bergen	Shoreline only	Yes	Veolia reservoir permits available online only at: Veolia Watershed Recreation Program https://mywater.veolia.us/community-environment/veolia-watershed-recreation-program
Woodcliff Lake				
Lake Tappan Reservoir Lake Deforest				

Emergency Closures

It is illegal to fish or attempt to catch or kill fish by any manner or means in any waters for which the Assistant Commissioner of NJDEP Fish & Wildlife, upon approval by the Fish and Game Council, issues an emergency closure notice. Such notification is effective and/or rescinded immediately upon public notification. Emergency closures shall be based upon imminent threat to the well-being of the fishery resources, and/or its users, and may include any exceptions to the total ban of fishing that the Assistant Commissioner deems practical.

Ice Fishing

No more than five devices per person may be used when fishing through the ice. Legal devices include:

- Ice supported tip-ups or lines with one single pointed hook attached, or one burr of three hooks that measure not more than 1/2-inch from point to shaft.
- An artificial jigging lure with not more than one burr of three hooks that measure not more than 1/2-inch from point to point.
- An artificial jigging lure with not more than three single hooks measuring not more than 1/2-inch from point to shaft.
- An artificial jigging lure with a combination of the hook limitations described in 2 and 3 above.

Natural bait may be used on the hooks of the artificial jigging lures. All devices that are not hand-held must bear the name and address of the user and cannot be left unattended.

See separate regulations for trout-stocked waters and Greenwood Lake.

Potentially Dangerous Fish

The possession or release of live, potentially dangerous fish is prohibited. These species include Asian Swamp Eel, Bighead, Grass (diploid) and Silver Carp, Blue and Flathead Catfish, Round Goby, Brook Stickleback, Green Sunfish, Oriental Weatherfish, Snakehead and Warmouth. All black bass except for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass are considered potentially dangerous.

Anglers MUST destroy these species if encountered while fishing and should submit specimen(s) or photos to a NJDEP Fish & Wildlife Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries biologist for verification. To reach a regional biologist, call 908-236-2118 (north), 609-223-6076 (central) or 856-629-4950 (south). These non-native species are likely to cause environmental harm to the state's fisheries resources by outcompeting preferred game fish species. Common Carp are an invasive species but are NOT classified as a potentially dangerous fish and do not have to be destroyed.

Sale of Fish

It is illegal to sell any freshwater fish species, except under commercial permits as prescribed in the Fish Code. Artificially propagated trout, if properly tagged, may be sold for food purposes.

Stocking Fish

A permit is required to stock fish or fish eggs into any waters of the state, public or private, at any time. Applications are available online at dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/regulations-and-permits or by contacting the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries 908-236-2118. **It is ILLEGAL to stock carp or koi into any waters. No trout may be used as bait or stocked within the PEQUEST RIVER DRAINAGE, except by the Pequest Trout Hatchery.**

Tagging Fish

No person may tag or mark and then release a fish without first obtaining a fish stocking permit or by special permit issued by NJDEP Fish & Wildlife. Contact the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries 908-236-2118 for application information.

Waste of Fish

Fish of any species that are purposely killed become part of the angler's daily limit and must be removed from the waters from which they were taken, then either used or otherwise disposed of properly.

