

4/7/2020



## PENNSYLVANIA TROUT FISHING SEASON NOW OPEN

*Anglers must abide by social distancing guidelines while fishing and boating*

HARRISBURG, PA (April 7) – Effective 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), in consultation with the Office of the Governor, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) opened the statewide 2020 trout season.

This measure allows properly licensed anglers and youth to begin fishing for and harvesting trout. All regulations, sizes, and creel limits apply.

**Anglers and boaters must abide by social distancing guidelines** provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Governor Tom Wolf's [Stay-at-Home Order](#) regarding COVID-19.

“We realize that this announcement is another disruption to tradition, but it is in the best interest of public health and safety,” said Tim Schaeffer, PFBC Executive Director. “We have already seen that anglers and boaters across the Commonwealth are willing to adapt their behavior to include social distancing, and we ask everyone to follow their lead while enjoying outdoor activities during this challenging time. The trout we have been stocking have had time to spread out, and so should you.”

Anglers and boaters should limit travel by fishing close to home, cover their faces with a mask or other cloth covering, keep a distance of at least six feet from others (the length of arm with an outstretched fishing rod is a good guide), only go fishing with members of their families living in the same household, and never share fishing gear with others. If another angler is in an area you intended to fish, move on to another spot.

Non-resident Pennsylvania fishing license holders should comply with the [CDC Travel Advisory](#) urging residents in several states, including New York and New Jersey, to refrain from non-essential domestic travel.

The decision to open trout season immediately is intended to discourage concentrated gatherings of people that may have occurred on the traditional opening day, to minimize intrastate and interstate travel, and to reduce the threat of illegal poaching in waters that have already been stocked.

PFBC staff will continue to stock trout throughout the spring, but not all waters have been stocked at this time. To further discourage group gatherings, a stocking schedule and list of waters that have been stocked will not be provided to the public this season. Anglers should also be aware that public access to some waters may be restricted by the landowner or local municipal government.

Fishing and boating is permitted in Pennsylvania state parks and state forests, when social distancing guidelines are followed. DCNR is encouraging people to fish and conduct other outdoor recreation within 15 minutes of their homes. Anglers should note that state park facilities, including restrooms [may be closed](#).

“Outdoor recreational activities, including fishing, lift our spirits and help relieve stress, but they need to be done with attention to social distancing guidelines to help protect ourselves and others, and slow the spread of COVID-19,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “That means practicing physical distancing of six feet, avoiding crowds and staying close to home, and being prepared with a mask and hand sanitizer.”

Regardless of fishing location, anglers should bring a bag with them and carry out their trash.

As a result of this action, a Mentored Youth Trout Day will not take place this season. The PFBC will honor all Voluntary Youth Fishing Licenses purchased in 2020 for all mentored youth fishing opportunities during the 2021 season.

To participate in trout fishing, anglers must have a Pennsylvania fishing license and Trout/Salmon Permit, both of which may be purchased online using the [FishBoatPA](#) mobile app for smartphones, or at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com). Those who do not have the ability to purchase online and are unable to visit a retail location may call (814) 359-5222 for purchasing assistance. Anglers may produce a digital copy of their license on their mobile device as proof of purchase. A signed, printed copy is not currently required to prove you own a valid license. If approached by a Waterways Conservation Officer in the field, an angler or boater may provide a digital image or receipt of their fishing license, and a digital receipt from their launch permit or boat registration. Anglers may still display their fishing license.

### **Practice Social Distancing While Fishing**

In accordance with direction provided by the Governor, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the CDC, the PFBC recommends that anglers practice social distancing while fishing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- **Stay home if you do not feel well.**
- Cover your face with a mask or cloth covering.
- Practice social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet (the length of an outstretched standard fishing rod) between you and the nearest angler.
- Avoid crowds. If you arrive at a fishing spot that is already occupied, find another location.
- Keep children from wandering into the personal space of others.

- Do not share fishing gear.
- Do not carpool.
- [Buy your fishing license online.](#)
- Continue to follow [CDC guidelines](#), which include washing your hands or using hand sanitizer frequently, and not touching your face.
- If you are fishing at a state or local park, the restrooms may be closed. Use the bathroom before you visit or dispose of waste properly. Carry out your trash.

A video message containing social distancing recommendations while fishing can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/NUtaY260DDA>

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