



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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A RITE OF SPRING, RAIN OR SHINE: OPENING DAY OF TROUT SEASON IS SET FOR APRIL 13; DEM HAS STOCKED 60,000 FISH IN OVER 100 WATERBODIES

PROVIDENCE, RI – As sure a rite of spring as the budding of willows and peeping of peepers, Opening Day of the trout season is set for Saturday, April 13, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) has stocked more than 100 freshwater locations, including children’s-only ponds, with 60,000 fish – brook, brown, rainbow, and golden rainbow trout – to get ready. New this year, Gorton Pond in Warwick will be stocked. A complete list of stocked waters can be found [here](#). Fishing is prohibited in all trout stocked waters until Opening Day. Even when fishing in non-trout stocked water, no trout or salmon caught can be kept during this period. DEM reminds anglers to respect their fellow anglers by adhering to this regulation and not fishing in these areas beforehand. Poachers steal the opportunity from anglers that correctly follow regulations. The closed season enables DEM’s dedicated fisheries staff to stock fishing areas statewide and allows stocked trout time to acclimate and distribute themselves, allowing more anglers to fish for them. The 2024-25 freshwater fishing abstract, which includes all rules and regulations, is available [here](#).

Anglers who catch a golden rainbow trout on Opening Day and through May 6 will be eligible to receive a golden trout pin. Simply take a picture and email it to dem.fishri@dem.ri.gov for verification. Submissions must be received no later than Monday, May 6, 2024, to be eligible. One pin per person limit. For more information on stocking, visit [DFW's Facebook Page](#) or www.dem.ri.gov/fishing. Information about stocked



What a catch! 2024 - 2025 Rhode Island Freshwater Fishing Regulation Guide cover photo contest winner, Broc B. Photo by Len Baker.

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freshwaters, size and creel limits for all freshwater fish species is available in the [2024-25 Freshwater Fishing Abstract](#), or by calling DEM's Great Swamp Field Office at 401-789-0281, or DEM's Aquatic Resource Education office at 401-539-0019.

“Opening Day is a treasured pastime for thousands of Rhode Islanders who head out on the second Saturday of April to a favorite fishing spot to reel in their first trout of the season,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “The work and logistics involved in raising and stocking 60,000 trout are intense, and I am proud to recognize all members of the DEM Freshwater Fisheries Team who somehow pull off this feat every year – and keep freshwaters stocked throughout most of the year.”

After a particularly wet winter and recent above-average rainfall accumulations, many waterbodies throughout Rhode Island will have raised water levels and fast-moving water. DEM is reminding anglers – particularly those fishing from a boat – to exercise personal safety precautions while in pursuit of their first trout of the season. Anyone going out in a boat, canoe, kayak, or vessel of any kind should wear a lifejacket, or personal floatation device (PFD) to help ensure they enjoy a safe Opening Day fishing experience. Wearing a PFD while paddling in Rhode Island is no longer optional; it is required, [according to new boating safety regulations announced last year by DEM](#). The new PFD regulation states that all operators and passengers of canoes, kayaks, sailboards, kiteboards, paddleboards, and any other paddle craft must always wear a United States Coast Guard (USCG)-approved PFD while underway regardless of age. DEM drafted the new rule in response to three fatal kayaking accidents in Rhode Island in 2022 in which none of the three drowning victims was wearing a life jacket. Also, between 2018 and 2021, four out of the 10 boating-related drowning deaths in the state were paddle craft users not wearing life jackets, [according to National Association of State Boating Law Administrators data](#). According to a USCG report, eight out of 10 boaters who drowned were using vessels less than 21 feet in length. Smaller vessels such as canoes and kayaks are less stable than larger vessels and in strong currents paddlers using them can put themselves in danger. Drowning is the reported cause of death in 75% of all boating fatalities. Of those who drowned, 86% were not wearing life jackets.

DEM is reminding anglers, especially inexperienced anglers, to protect themselves from hypothermia. When outdoors, especially in low temperatures, dress in layers and wear a warm hat and gloves. Hypothermia is caused by exposure to cold weather, wind, rain, or submersion in cold water. It can set in when the body core temperature reaches 95 degrees Fahrenheit and is marked by shivering, dizziness, trouble speaking, lack of coordination, confusion, faster heartbeat, and shallow breathing. It is important to look for these symptoms in children and the elderly who may not be focused on this hazard. If hypothermia is suspected, call for help immediately. Move the victim to a warm environment, remove wet clothing, and cover them with warm layers of clothing or blankets.

A [2024 fishing license](#) and trout conservation stamp are required for anglers 15 or older to keep or possess a trout or salmon. A trout conservation stamp also is required for anyone wishing to keep or possess a trout or to fish in a catch-and-release or “fly-fishing only” area. The daily creel and possession limit for trout and/or salmon, individually or in total, is five fish from Opening Day, 2024, to Dec. 1 and two fish from Dec. 1 through Feb. 28, 2025. The creel and possession limits for trout or charr taken in the Wood River between Route 165 and Barberville Dam at Arcadia Road is limited to two fish from the second Saturday in May through the last day of the following February, annually. Anglers are reminded to obey all fishing and boating regulations. Trout stamps are not required for persons possessing trout taken from a lake or pond that shares a border with Rhode Island. Fishing licenses can be purchased online on DEM's [Rhode Island Outdoors \(RIO\)](#) portal.

DEM would like to remind anglers of the following [freshwater regulations](#) and prohibitions:

- The minimum size of all trout or charr species taken from the waters of the state is eight inches, measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. This regulation applies to both wild and stocked trout.
- The minimum size for domestic or landlocked stocked Atlantic salmon is 11 inches in total length. No person shall take any Atlantic salmon from the Pawcatuck River downstream of the Potter Hill Dam in Westerly.
- The taking of any fish in the freshwaters of the state by any means other than angling, using a hook or hooks and fishing line, except for carp, suckers, and fall fish, which may be taken by snares, spears, or bow and arrow, is prohibited.
- The taking of any fish in the freshwaters of the state by net, seine, trawl, or similar device; except for a dip net for the landing of a fish caught by hook and line, and the taking of baitfish, is prohibited. Cast nets and gills nets also are prohibited.
- The Beaver River will not be stocked with hatchery trout. It is catch-and-release only from the confluence of the Beaver River and the Pawcatuck River, located downstream of Shannock Hill Road in Richmond upstream to the New London Turnpike in Richmond. It is designated as a “no kill”, “catch-and-release” area. Fishing shall be permitted with artificial lures equipped with a single barbless hook or single barbed hook that has been crimped, and all fish shall be returned to the water immediately. The possession of any trout, salmon, or charr while fishing this section of the river shall be *prima facie* evidence that said trout, salmon, or charr was taken in violation of these rules and regulations.
- The use of external felt soled waders or boots or those soled with any natural or synthetic porous material capable of absorbing water in any freshwaters in Rhode Island is [strictly prohibited](#). This includes any waters shared with adjacent states in which Rhode Island fishing regulations apply. It is [strictly prohibited](#) to enter or exit a state boat ramp with any vegetation attached to any type of boats, motors, boat trailers, or any other conveyance or equipment in order to curtail the spread of [invasive aquatic plants or invertebrates](#).

DEM is continuing a pilot program for boaters to reserve parking space at the Bowdish Reservoir Boat Ramp in Glocester from the second Friday in April through Oct 31. Due to its location within [the George Washington State Campground](#), boaters who wish to launch a vessel from the boat ramp without a camping reservation may make a parking reservation [by filling out this application form](#). Parking spaces are only reserved for these boating reservations and are not available for use by campground users.

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