

**January 8, 2026**  
**Highlight/Summary Report**

**Statewide news:**

- *The fall trout stocking program has completed for the year and the latest stockings are posted each day by the crews at the [DNR trout stocking website](#).*
- Link to DNR new licensing online system/process.  
<https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2025/06/24/new-md-outdoors-licensing-system-now-online/>
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has developed a **striped bass habitat conditions** mapping tool that uses our newly developed water temperature and dissolved oxygen-based thresholds for Maryland's resident striped bass.
  - <https://eyesonthebay.dnr.maryland.gov/eyesonthebay/StripedBassHabitatConditions.cfm>
  -
- DNR has introduced a two online links to show lakes and ponds locations/hot spots.
  - [Freshwater Fisheries Fishing Lakes and Ponds webpage](#).
    - *The online map highlights fishing opportunities for gamefish species in reservoirs, lakes, and ponds with public access.*
    - <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/hotspots/index.aspx>
  - [Hotspots:](#)  
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- **NEW:** The Secretary of the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) announces the following seasons, catch limits, size limits and commercial quotas for 2026. These notices will become effective 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2026.
  - *Click each NOTICE below to view the full details, which will open the NOTICE off the DNR website.*
  - [Summary of notice notes below](#)

- **2026 Summer Flounder Fishery**
  - **2026 Summer Flounder Fishery — Effective 1/1/2026**
  - 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2026:
  - The season is open January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
  - **RECREATIONAL MINIMUM SIZE**
    - • January 1, 2026 – May 31, 2026: 16 inches
    - • June 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026: 17-1/2 inches
  - **RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMIT**
  - 4 fish/person/day
- **2026 Recreational Bluefish Fishery**
  - **2026 Recreational Bluefish Fishery — Effective 1/1/2026**
  - Effective 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2026:
  - Recreational anglers fishing from shore or private boats can keep up to 5 bluefish per person per day.
  - Recreational anglers fishing from for-hire boats can keep up to 7 bluefish per person per day.
  - The minimum size is 8 inches.
  - There is no closed season.
- **2026 Yellow Perch Recreational Catch Limit**
  - **2026 Yellow Perch Recreational Catch Limit – Effective 1/8/2026**
  - **Effective 12:01 a.m. January 8,**
  - **2026, except for reservoirs, lakes, ponds, impoundments, and waters upstream of them, the recreational daily catch and possession limit for yellow perch is five fish per person per day. This notice supersedes any public notice affecting the yellow perch recreational catch limit issued prior to January 8, 2026.**
  - **WHY THIS IS NECESSARY ....continue on next page.**
    - **This action is necessary because yellow perch are experiencing a period of low recruitment that has occurred over the last six years. Reducing the harvest of larger females**

may improve the chance of spawning success. This action for the recreational fishery equitably manages the burden of reduced harvests experienced by the commercial fisheries reduction in quota

- 2026 Recreational Black Sea Bass Fishery
  - 2026 Recreational Black Sea Bass Fishery — Effective 1/1/2026
  - ***The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources announces the recreational season for black sea bass is closed from January 1, 2026 through May 14, 2026.***
  - A subsequent notice will establish the rules for the remainder of the season at a later date.
- 2026 Recreational Cobia Fishery
  - **026 Recreational Cobia Fishery — Effective 1/1/2026**
  - **Effective 12:01 a.m.**
  - **January 1, 2026: The season is open June 15, 2026, through September 20, 2026. It is closed all other dates.**
  - - Recreational anglers may keep:
      - 1 cobia per person per day; or
      - Up to 2 cobia per vessel per day if there are 2 or more individuals on the vessel.
    - The recreational minimum size for cobia is 43 inches total length.