

Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club

March 13, 2026

meeting Fishing Report

Statewide news:

- **Senate Bill 588, effective July 1, 2026.**

- This bill modifies provisions authorizing or requiring the Department of (DNR) to **issue complimentary angler's licenses**, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sort fishing Natural Resources licenses, recreational oyster licenses, and hunting licenses to specified individuals, including specified veterans, with the changes establishing consistency among the provisions.
- The bill also (1) requires that DNR compile specified statistics on hunting licenses, primarily complimentary licenses, and (2) establishes that commemorative lifetime hunting licenses that were issued until December 31, 2011, are not transferable.

- **Rockfish 2026 Season for recreational in the Chesapeake Bay will be:**

- **January 1–April 30: Catch and Release**
- May 1–July 31: Harvest
- August 1–31: Closed
- September 1–December 5: Harvest
- December 6–31: Catch and Release
- Website link: <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2026/03/12/maryland-set-to-adopt-changes-to-chesapeake-bay-recreational-striped-bass-season/>

- **2026 – Online Fishing Regulations:**

https://www.eregulations.com/assets/docs/resources/MD/26MDFW_LR.pdf

- **NEW online licensing link:** <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2025/06/24/new-md-outdoors-licensing-system-now-online/>

- **NEW 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>

- **NEW:** 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. *Use Eyes on the Bay for the latest updates.*

- **Eyes on the Bay:**

<https://eyesonthebay.dnr.maryland.gov/eyesonthebay/StripedBassHabitatConditions.cfm>

Freshwater news:

- **2026 SPRING trout stocking program schedule is out and located on the DNR trout stocking website** – ATTACHED.
 - <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/trout/stocking.aspx>
 - Over 26K fish have been released over the past two weeks.
 - **Recommend everyone review the latest trout regulations.**
 - **Location opening dates, catch and release and limits.**
- *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:** <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/hotspots/index.aspx>

Chesapeake Bay Forecast Summary:

- Main Bay surface water temperatures are currently in the mid-40's and slowly increasing. River temperatures were slightly cooler in the upper -30's to low 40's.
- **Detailed & up-to-date fishing conditions in your area, refer to checking out Eyes on the Bay's**
 - <https://eyesonthebay.dnr.maryland.gov/eyesonthebay/clickbeforecast.cfm>

Upper/Middle Chesapeake Bay

Rock Fish: The 2026 striped bass season opens January 1–April 30: Catch and Release in the bay only, everywhere else is CLOSED.

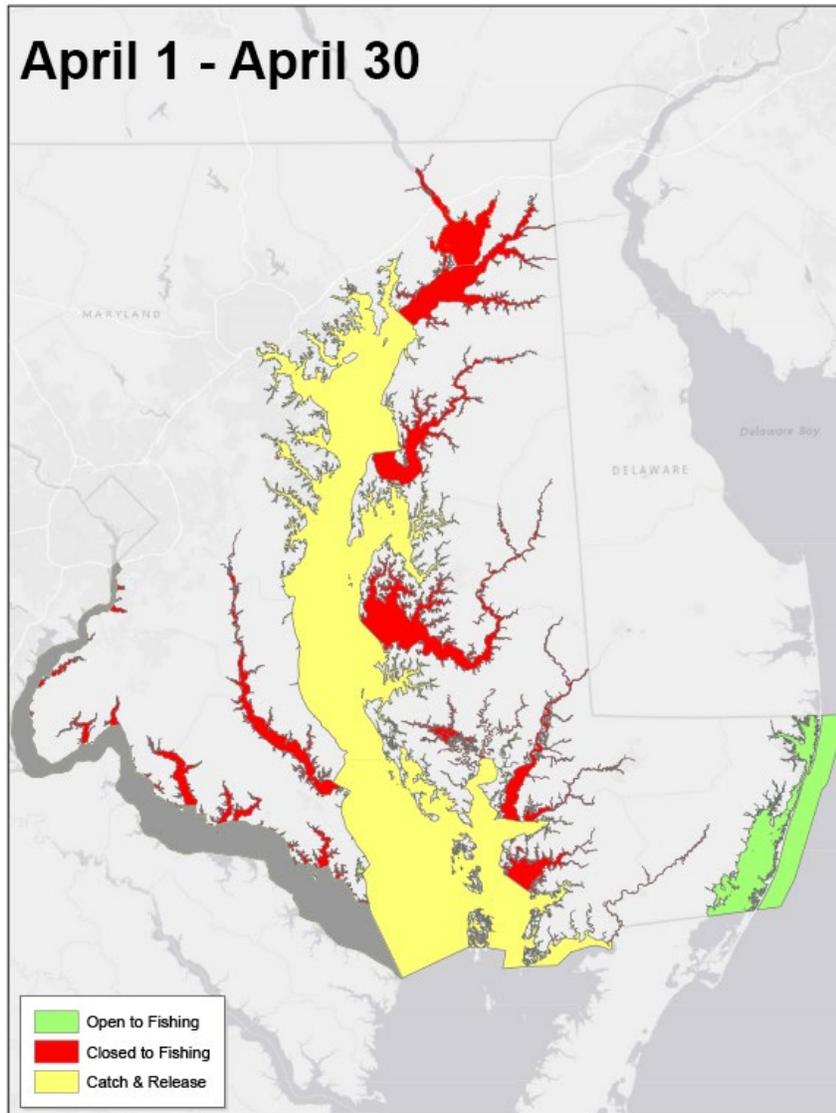
White Perch and Yellow Perch:

- **White Perch** are starting to move as the local waters become warmer and should start to spawn when the water temperature reaches the upper 40's.
- **Yellow perch** are now moving into the upper sections of several of the region's tidal rivers and should start to spawn when the water temperature reaches the upper 40's.
 - The Bush, Northeast, Sassafras, Chester, and Magothy rivers are good locations to fish right now.
 - Fishing in shallower, more confined waters, lip-hooked minnows, Beetle-spins, small jigs, and shad darts tipped with grass shrimp or a small minnow or piece of a minnow will work well when worked slowly close to the bottom. +

- Deeper waters will require bottom rigs baited with lip-hooked minnows or grass shrimp.
- **Blue Catfish:** moving and feeding at the Conowingo Dam pool and the deeper waters of the Susquehanna River and off Sandy Point.
 - Various cut baits, chicken pieces and especially scented baits work very well on [fish finder rigs](#) and [circle hooks](#).

Snake Head/Chesapeake Channa:

- *No reports as the water temperatures are still too cold, below the 40's.*



Fresh water

- **2026 Trout stocking operations are still underway.** For the most up to date information, visit the Maryland DNR [trout stocking website](#)
- **Good fishing locator:** DNR has introduced a monitoring database on your favorite freshwater fish species at your preferred fishing spots.
 - A new impoundment mapping tool is available on the [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>

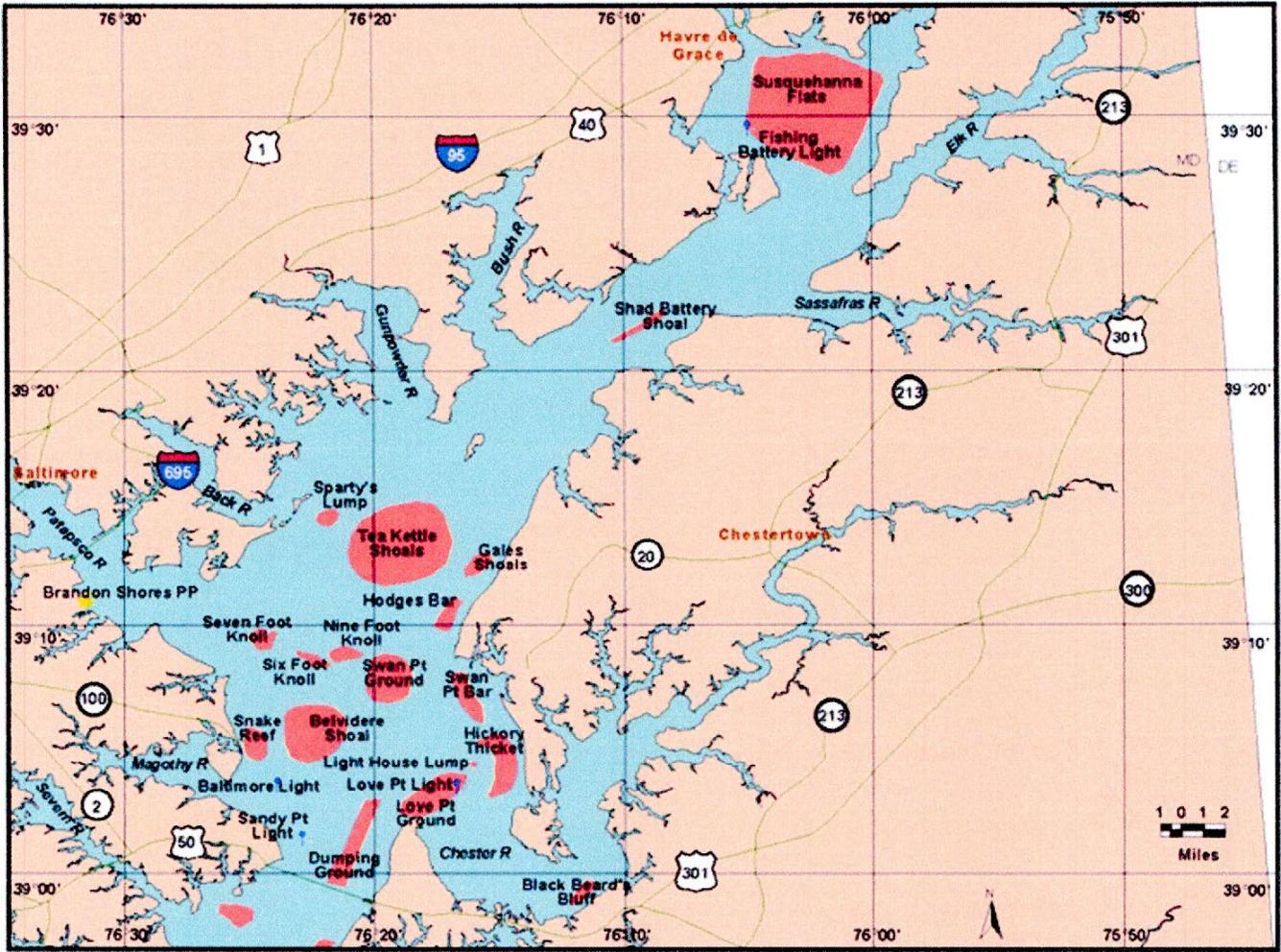
Maryland DNR News and Good to Know information:

- 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 NECESSARYcontinue 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](#)
 - **2026 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.



UPPER Bay

BAITs – Gear - Times

Rock Fish:

- *Jerkbait*s fished along the rocks and Jigging three-to-five-inch soft plastics and straight tails are working well.
- *Jigging three to five inch White and Chartreuse tandems soft plastics are working well.*
- [Live lining spot](#) or [trolling](#) are good.

White Perch:

- Fishing grass shrimp and pieces of bloodworm on a simple bottom rig fished close to a dock, or casting small spinners and soft plastic baits *during the early morning and evening hours along shorelines.*
 - When fishing off docks, a simple bottom rig with a number 2 or 4 hooks, a one-ounce sinker and grass shrimp or pieces of bloodworm for bait.
- Peeler crab has been an excellent bait, but small [spinnerbaits](#) and spin-jigs have also been effective.

Blue Catfish:

- A variety of cut baits work well; white perch, gizzard shad, menhaden, and American eel are excellent baits, but chicken parts and scented baits also work well. *A fish finder rig or sliding sinker rig with a small float in front of a 5/0 to 7/0 circle hook is the most popular rig for fishing blue catfish.*

Snakeheads:

- Casting white paddletails and chatterbaits near emerging grass and shoreline submerged brush is a good tactic. *Often the sunny side of creeks during the afternoon hours is a good place to target fish seeking slightly warmer waters.*

Walleye:

- Casting a mix of swimbaits, flukes and small crankbaits with good results.

Largemouth Bass:

- A mix of spinnerbaits, lipless crankbaits, swimbaits, flukes, and jerkbaits are all good choices to use.

Crappie:

- Rigging small minnows or marabou jigs under a slip bobber and fishing close to structure.



Step 8 - Go fishing and catch fish!

Putting it all together

The whole purpose of this process is to help you find the best places to fish.

1. First learn about where your fish live and preferred conditions.
2. Next, pull out your Chesapeake Bay charts and a marker.
3. Now visit your regional websites with current oxygen, salinity, temperature and water clarity conditions.
4. As you move through each step, continue to cross off unsuitable areas on your chart.
5. Now in the remaining areas on your chart, begin highlighting prime habitat.
6. At this point, find moving water by checking your tide charts, wind conditions and flow at these prime areas.

You have now identified the best places to find fish right now, not last week or last month, but **right now**.

The last step, and most fun, is to go fishing and catch a bunch of fish!

And when you do, don't forget to take photos and submit them to the Angler's Log!



Other great fishing resources from Maryland Department of Natural Resources:

↓ [Fishing Access](#)

↓ [Boat Ramps / Water Access](#)

↓ [Fishing Report](#)

↓ [Angler's Log](#)

↓ [Fishing License Information](#)

↓ [Fish Consumption Advisory Map](#)

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 588 (Senator Simonaire)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Natural Resources - Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses - Alterations

This bill modifies provisions authorizing or requiring the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue complimentary angler's licenses, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses, recreational oyster licenses, and hunting licenses to specified individuals, including specified veterans, with the changes establishing consistency among the provisions. The bill also (1) requires that DNR compile specified statistics on hunting licenses, primarily complimentary licenses, and (2) establishes that commemorative lifetime hunting licenses that were issued until December 31, 2011, are not transferable. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill can be implemented by DNR with existing resources, and the bill's changes to hunting and recreational fishing license provisions are not expected to materially affect license fee revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Complimentary Licenses

The bill makes changes to provisions authorizing DNR to issue complimentary angler's licenses, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses, recreational oyster licenses,

and hunting licenses, that establish certain consistency among the authorizations, as follows:

- The bill makes existing authorizations for DNR to issue a complimentary angler's or Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to any official of the game and fish department of any other state also applicable to any enforcement officer of the game and fish department of any other state; however, the bill limits the authorizations only to officials and enforcement officers of other states that reciprocally offer a complimentary angler's or sport fishing license, respectively. These changes are consistent with a similar existing authorization for DNR to issue complimentary hunting licenses to officials and enforcement officers of the game and fish department of another state which reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses.
- Similar to existing authorizations for DNR to issue lifetime complimentary angler's, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sportfishing, and hunting licenses to specified resident and nonresident veterans, the bill authorizes DNR to issue a complimentary recreational oyster license to any resident of any other state who certifies that the person is (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determines is unemployable; or (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. The nonresident's state must extend reciprocal privileges to former prisoners of war, American veterans who the VA determines are unemployable, or 100% service-connected disabled American veterans. This authorization is in addition to a similar existing complimentary recreational oyster license available to residents, and the bill (1) establishes that DNR is authorized, rather than required, to issue the complimentary license to residents and (2) makes both the resident and nonresident licenses lifetime licenses and nontransferable.
- The bill clarifies under the complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing, recreational oyster, and hunting license provisions that the complimentary licenses are issued without a fee.
- The bill also establishes that DNR may issue an annual complimentary recreational oyster license without a fee to a person that is blind, regardless of whether the person is or is not a resident of the State (under current law, the department must issue a complimentary license to a resident who is blind).
- The bill establishes under the complimentary recreational oyster and hunting license provisions that not more than 20 complimentary licenses (of each type) for each state other than Maryland may be outstanding at any time (there are similar

limitations on complimentary angler's and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses under current law).

Statistics on Hunting Licenses

The bill adds to an existing requirement that DNR compile statistics, after the close of the hunting season each year, concerning hunting license sales. The bill requires that statistics be compiled annually after each hunting season concerning:

- the number of annual complimentary hunting licenses issued for the previous season, including the names, occupations, and states of residence of the persons who were issued the annual complimentary hunting licenses;
- the number of lifetime complimentary hunting licenses issued for the previous season and in total, including the names, eligibility categories, and states of residence of the persons who were issued the lifetime complimentary hunting licenses; and
- the total number of hunting licenses that are no longer issued by the department that remain valid.

Commemorative Lifetime Hunting Licenses

The bill establishes that commemorative lifetime hunting licenses – which DNR was required to issue, pursuant to Chapter 367 of 2010, until December 31, 2011 – are not transferable, except for the initial sale by a nonprofit organization. The bill repeals provisions governing the initial sale of the licenses by nonprofit organizations and the use of the proceeds.

Current Law:

Complimentary Licenses

Angler's, Sport Fishing, and Hunting Licenses

DNR is authorized to issue annually a complimentary angler's license, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license, and/or hunting license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official of the game and fish department of any other state. DNR may also issue an annual complimentary hunting license to an enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of another state, but in the case of both officials and enforcement officers of a game and fish management agency of another state, the other state must reciprocally offer complimentary hunting licenses.

DNR is also authorized to issue lifetime complimentary angler's, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing, and hunting licenses to residents and nonresidents who certify that they are (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the VA determines is unemployable; or (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. However, a nonresident's state of residence must extend similar privileges to Maryland residents.

The complimentary licenses are nontransferable. Statute clarifies that a complimentary angler's license is issued without a fee.

For complimentary angler's and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses, not more than 20 complimentary licenses (of each type) for each state other than Maryland must be outstanding at any time.

Recreational Oyster License

Chapter 518 of 2024 established a recreational oyster license, available to residents of the State, and, as part of the statute, authorized DNR to issue a complimentary recreational oyster license to a resident who certifies that they are (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran determined to be unemployable by the VA; (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran; or (4) blind.

Statistics on Hunting Licenses

Statute requires DNR to compile statistics after the close of the hunting season each year concerning the sale of hunting licenses for the previous season, including the names, addresses, counties of residence, and ages of the persons who purchased the hunting licenses and the types of hunting licenses sold.

Commemorative Lifetime Hunting Licenses

Chapter 367 of 2010 established a commemorative lifetime hunting license and required DNR to issue a limited number of them to certain nonprofit organizations, consistent with eligibility criteria developed by the department, until December 31, 2011. Nonprofit organizations issued hunting licenses were authorized to market and sell the licenses in cooperation with the department, and all proceeds were required to be used by DNR to fund conservation law enforcement by the Natural Resources Police Force.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Veterans and Military Families; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2026
caw/lgc

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510