

Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club

April 24, 2026

meeting Fishing Report

Statewide news:

- The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources announces modifications to the season, catch limit, and minimum size for the **2026 summer flounder fishery**. The following rules are effective 12:01 a.m. April 19, 2026:

Recreational Season

- In **State waters**, the season is open January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.
- In **federal waters**, the season is open May 8 – September 30, 2026.
- Closed all other dates.

Recreational Minimum Size

- In **State waters**:
 - The minimum size is 16 inches from January 1 through May 31, 2026.
 - The minimum size is 17-1/2 inches from June 1 through December 31, 2026.
 - In **federal waters**, the minimum size is 18-1/2 inches at all times when the season is open.

Recreational Catch Limit

- In **State waters**, anglers may keep up to 4 fish per person per day.

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:** 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>

Public Access Map: Find Your Perfect Fishing Spot (NEW)

- Anglers searching for a new spot should check out the [Public Angler Access Map](#), an interactive map that shows access locations, waterbodies, fish species available, amenities, as well as regulation and license information. Best viewed on desktop, filtering options can help to zero in on what you want to catch and where you can catch it.

Fishing/Weather Forecast

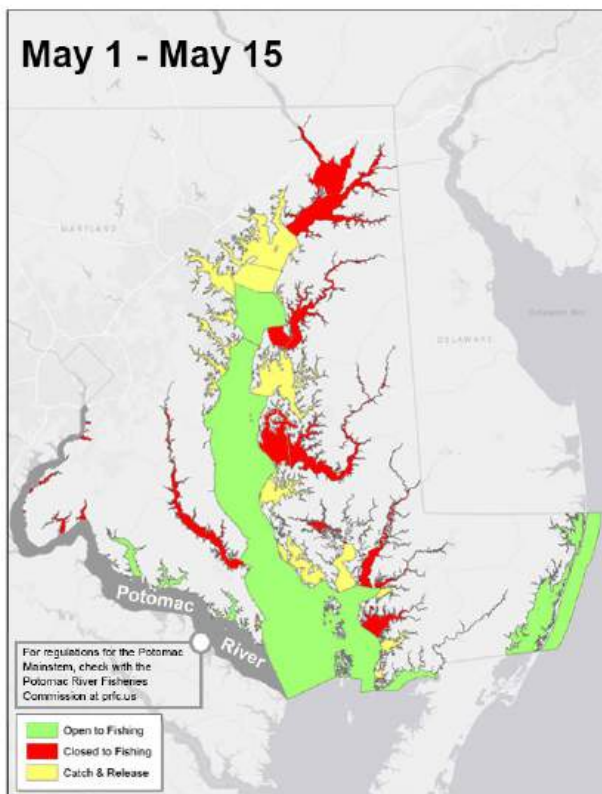
Chesapeake Bay Forecast Summary:

- Main Bay surface and river mouth water temperatures are now in the low to mid 60s. Smaller rivers and streams temperatures are holding in the upper 50s to mid 60s.
- *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 *HARVEST season* opens May 1 thru July 31, 2026. Refer to map.

- May 1 will be here sooner than we think, at which time anglers will be able to keep a striped bass measuring between 19 inches and 24 inches in the area below the Brewerton Channel south to the Virginia line, with exception to the tidal rivers. To be informed on where to fish, check the [striped bass regulation map site](#).
- Large tandem rigged bucktail and sassy shads with good luck in the upper bay region this week.
- *The channel edges* often hold the most promise and locating schools of menhaden can hold the key to success. [Jigging](#) with large soft plastic jigs is also a popular way to fish.
- Trolling along the edges of the main channels is always a popular tactic, but the shallower waters should not be overlooked. Trolling bucktails with sassy shads in chartreuse is very popular, and jigging with 6-inch soft plastic jigs.



Rules regarding the use of HOOKS:

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/recreational/circle_hooks.aspx

White Perch and Yellow Perch:

- **White Perch** are moving down into the lower sections of many of the region's tidal rivers.
 - The Chester, Sassafras, Bush, Gunpower, and Magothy rivers are good places to look for spawning runs of white perch.
 - Small jig heads in the 1/16 to 1/8 size range tipped with a grass shrimp, lip-hooked minnow, or a piece of bloodworm are a very popular way to fish for white perch.

Blue Catfish:

- Blue catfish can be found in all the region's tidal rivers and out in the Bay south to the Bay Bridge (Sandy Point).
- The largest blue cats can be found at the mouth of the Susquehanna River and Conowingo Dam pool, the lower Chester River, and out in the Bay.
- The point that locals call "the rip" at Sandy Point State Park is an excellent spot to fish for blue catfish with medium duty surf fishing gear.
 - Various cut baits, chicken pieces and especially scented baits work very well on [fish finder rigs](#) and [circle hooks](#).

Snake Head/Chesapeake Channa:

- The waters in the upper sections of the tidal rivers and tidal creeks are warming, and anglers are starting to catch Chesapeake Channa (northern snakeheads) in the afternoon hours on the sunny shorelines where waters are warmer.
 - White [paddletails](#) are the most popular lure to cast and large minnows under a [popping cork or bobber](#) are also an excellent choice.

Freshwater news:

Deep Creek Lake water temperatures are about 51 degrees this week.

- Anglers are finding good fishing for a variety of species. Fishermen at Deep Creek Lake are now finding fish such as bluegills, pickerel, and largemouth bass moving into the warmer and shallower waters of the lake, particularly in coves.
 - Largemouth bass are moving towards structure, such as fallen treetops.
- **Walleye season opened on April 15 with a minimum size of 15 inches and creel of five per day, with a protected slot of 18-21 inches.** The upper

Potomac River flows are very low this week, and smallmouth bass are spawning.

- ***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>

- The traditional [Trout Fishing](#) Opening Day is this **Saturday, March 28**.
 - The [creel limit for trout](#) in these areas (except for brook trout) is a combined five daily harvest and 10 possession.
 - **Go to links for more information.**

- ***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>

Maryland DNR News and Good to Know information:

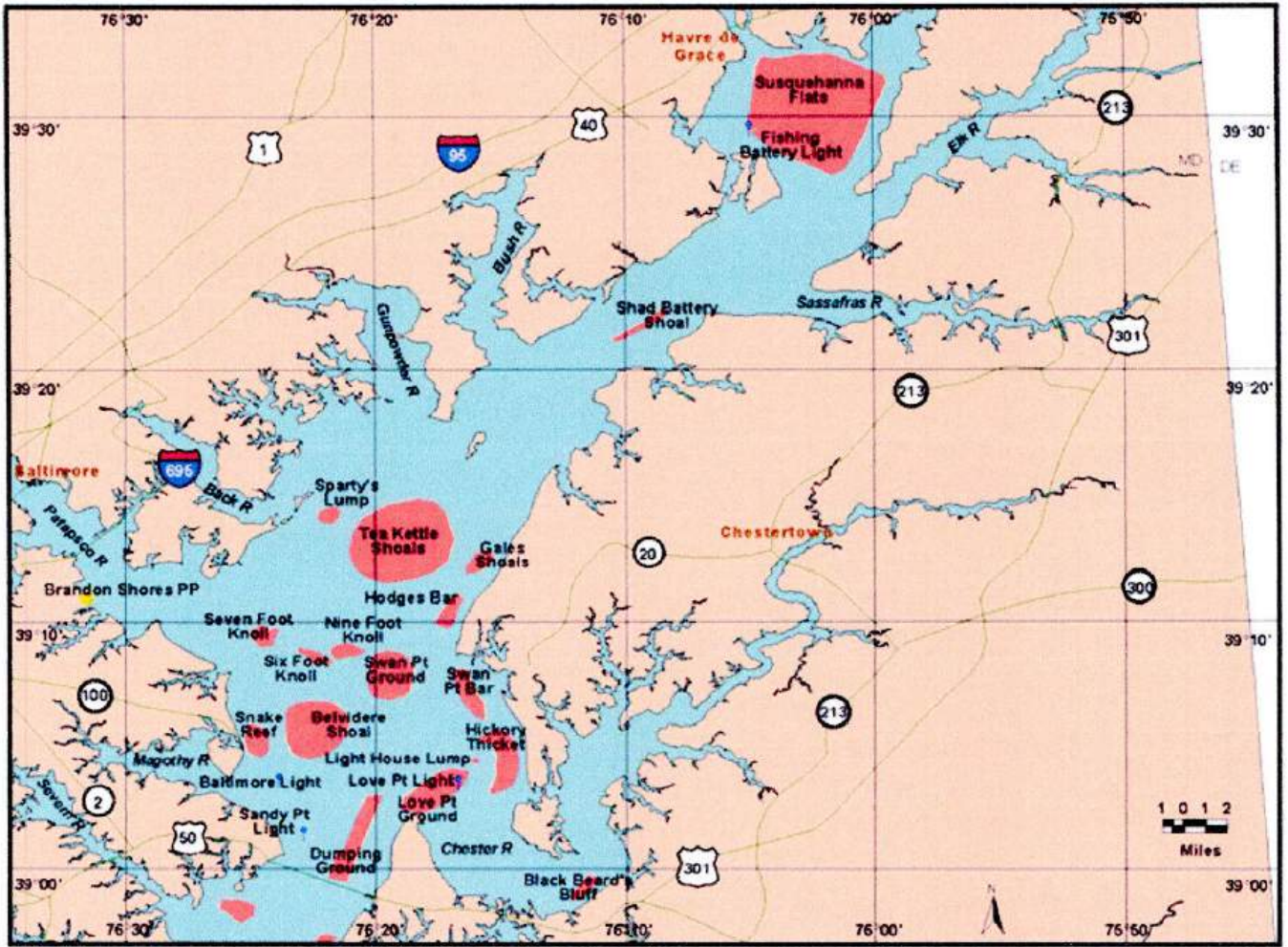
- The Secretary of the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) announces the following seasons, catch limits, size limits and commercial quotas for 2026. These notices will become effective 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2026.
 - *[Click each NOTICE below to view the full details, which will open the NOTICE 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 jerkbait 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](#)