

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH FISHERIES RULEMAKING



## Stay Updated

The Department of Natural Resource's website is a source for information on:

- Regulatory scoping and advisory group meetings
- Maryland fishing rules and notices
- Links to federal fishing rules

For current fisheries information visit our website at [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries)

To periodically receive email communications regarding proposed or new rules, simply sign up at [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/email.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/email.aspx)

For current Maryland fishing rules visit [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/index.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/index.aspx)

For current information about legislation relating to fishing and how to be involved with that process visit the Maryland General Assembly website [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov)

Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council  
[www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
[www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)

**The Maryland Department  
of Natural Resources  
Fishing & Boating Services  
580 Taylor Ave., B-2  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: 410-260-8300**

## What Can You Do to Make a Difference and Be Involved?

- Visit the Department of Natural Resource's website to comment on fishing rule ideas or to learn about making a public comment on a proposed fishing rule.
- Attend meetings and hearings discussed in this brochure and speak with Fishing and Boating Services staff.
- Call or email us with your questions, comments or concerns.

## MAKING RULES FOR MARYLAND FISHERIES

Fishing rules in Maryland may be created by either the General Assembly or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. When the department creates a fishing rule, it is called a regulation. When the General Assembly creates a rule, it is called a statute.

This pamphlet provides you with information about:

- Where regulation ideas come from
- How to stay informed
- Ways to get involved in the regulatory process

## Where Regulation Ideas Come From

### General Public Interaction

Public suggestions can generate ideas for fishing rules. The Department of Natural Resources maintains contact with the public through:

- Public meetings and open houses
- Field work and outreach events
- Phone, mail, email, website and social media
- Attending meetings of fishing clubs, environmental groups, watermen's organizations and concerned citizens

### State Management

The research by state biologists may also generate ideas for fishing rules. Our biologists work collaboratively with other scientific peers to better understand our fish resources. This information has led to fishing rule changes that improve fisheries management and sustainability of the resources.

### Interstate Management

Maryland works with other states in our region of the country to manage migratory fish species. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission ([asmfc.org](http://asmfc.org)) and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council ([mafmc.org](http://mafmc.org)) are two interstate groups that Maryland works with when managing some migratory saltwater species. These groups may make decisions that affect Maryland's fishing rules. Their meetings are open to the public.

### Legislature

The Maryland General Assembly holds its legislative session from January through April every year. Legislative hearings on proposed fishing rule changes are open to the public and may also be available to view on the internet. The date, time, and location of these hearings are available on the General Assembly website at [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov).

## How to Stay Informed About Fisheries Rules

### Advisory Groups

Some of the citizen advisory groups that provide advice to the department on fishing rules include:

- Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission
- Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission
- Oyster Advisory Commission
- Commercial Striped Bass Advisory Committee
- Aquaculture Coordinating Council
- Blue Crab Advisory Commission
- Artificial Reef Committee

Advisory groups represent a variety of stakeholders. All advisory meetings are open to the public. There is public comment time at the meetings. Department staff or advisory group members present and discuss possible fishing rules. More information on citizen advisory groups is available at [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/management.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/management.aspx).

### Changes to Regulation Webpage

Any changes to fishing regulations the department is considering, as well as all proposed regulations and recently effective changes are available at [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/changes.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/changes.aspx).

### E-mail Interest List

Fishing and Boating Services has an e-mail interest list that the public can subscribe to and receive fisheries news and rule updates. To periodically receive email communications regarding proposed or new rules, simply sign up at [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/email.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/email.aspx).

### Facebook and Twitter

The public can follow the department's fishing news through Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MarylandDNRFisheries](http://www.facebook.com/MarylandDNRFisheries) and through Twitter @MDDNRFISH.

## Ways to Get Involved in the Regulatory Process

### Public Scoping

The department uses a scoping process to inform the public of potential regulatory changes and provide an opportunity for input before regulations are submitted. You can view and comment on current regulatory ideas and proposals that are being considered by visiting [dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/changes.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/changes.aspx).

Additionally, the department may hold a public meeting or open house on a potential regulatory change in order to receive more feedback. These meetings are posted on the webpage along with the information about the regulatory idea.

### Regulatory Process

All state agencies follow the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act when proposing a regulation. An emergency regulation process also is provided for under this act. The regulatory process includes the following:

- A Maryland legislative committee reviews proposed regulations
- Agencies publish proposed regulations in the Maryland Register
- Agencies accept public comments for 30 days
- Provide the department with your comments:
  - Call:** 410-260-8300
  - Email:** [fisheriespubliccomment.dnr@maryland.gov](mailto:fisheriespubliccomment.dnr@maryland.gov)
  - Mail:** Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fishing and Boating Services Regulatory Staff  
B-2, 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis MD 21401
  - Fax:** 410-260-8310
- The department may also schedule a hearing for a proposed regulation during the 30 day public comment period
- When an agency adopts a proposed regulation it publishes notice in the Maryland Register
- In the notice of adoption that appears in the Maryland Register, the department will specify the effective date