



WHAT CAN I STOCK OR RELEASE INTO MARYLAND WATERS?

Definitions please...

"Maryland Waters" means tidal and nontidal waters located within the boundaries of the State, including that portion of the Atlantic Ocean within three miles of the coast, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and all ponds (including those on private property), lakes, rivers, streams, and public drainage systems.

"Fish" means finfish, crustaceans, mollusks, and amphibians and reptiles which spend the majority of their life cycle in water and any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of these species.

"Shellfish" includes live oysters, seed oysters, live hard-shell clams, and live soft-shell clams.

"Native" means having historically lived, grown, and reproduced in Maryland waters.

"Indigenous" means any fish species that naturally occurs in, or has been artificially introduced into, the waters of the State, and has established self-sustaining populations for at least 10 years.

"Aquaculture" means the commercial rearing of fish or aquatic plants.

Did you know?

A person needs a permit from Maryland DNR Fisheries Service to import fish from other states into Maryland.

A person needs a permit from the Maryland DNR Fisheries Service to stock any fish that is not indigenous to Maryland into tidal waters of the State.

A person needs a permit from the Maryland DNR Fisheries Service to stock any fish other than bluegill sunfish, fathead minnows, golden shiners and channel catfish into nontidal waters of the State.

The use of bait fish on a hook for the purpose of angling is permitted in all waters of the State except the Baltimore City Reservoirs. Bait origin is restricted in Loch Raven Reservoir, Prettyboy Reservoir and Liberty Reservoir.

All fish not indigenous to Maryland must be held in aquaria or other indoor facility from which escape into Maryland waters is impossible.

An individual who leases oyster bottom from the State may plant, cultivate, sow or protect only the native oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) that came from Maryland waters.

It is illegal to...

Import, transport or introduce into Maryland any live fish or viable eggs of snakehead fish of the Family Channidae.

Possess live northern snakeheads (*Channa argus*) and blotched snakeheads (*Channa maculata*), including eggs of those species.

Import into Maryland or possess any living life stage or reproductive products of zebra mussels (*Dreissena sp.*).

It is illegal to...(continued)

Introduce (stock, release) or import or possess for introduction any live fish not indigenous to the waters of Maryland. (This includes dumping the remnants of your bait container when you are done fishing.)

Import or possess shellfish taken from waters outside the waters of Maryland for planting in the waters of Maryland.

What about Aquaculture Facilities?

All aquaculture activities require a permit from the Department. Activities may include the purchase, sale, possession, capture, production, breeding, transportation, and processing of fish or aquatic plants.

A person shall not sell or breed live snakehead fish of the Family Channidae in Maryland.

Live finfish produced in an aquaculture facility may not be stocked in Maryland waters unless specifically permitted by the Department.

Are there exceptions to the rules?

Exceptions to the above prohibitions may be granted and must have prior written authorization from the Department. The request must be made a minimum of 60 days in advance of the date of importation.

With the exception of snakehead fish and zebra mussels, the prohibitions listed with respect to importation and possession do not apply to fish for use in laboratories or exhibitions or for use as pets.

What are the dangers of releasing fish?

Releasing non-native or exotic animals and aquarium plants into the environment causes harmful consequences to native fish, wildlife and flora populations by competing for food and habitat, spreading disease and enabling genetic contamination.

Fish from rivers, streams or other ponds should not be used for stocking due to the possible introduction of disease and nuisance weeds. It could also lead to an unbalanced fish population in your pond.

How do I get a Permit or Special Authorization?

Contact Richard Bohn, Special Permits Coordinator, at Fisheries Service, B-2, 580 Taylor Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401, rbohn@dnr.state.md.us or (410) 260-8217.

Allow a minimum of 60 days to process your request.

Other contacts...

For information on finding a new home for exotic species contact the Maryland Association of Pet Industries at www.mdapi.com

For information concerning the use of live bait in Baltimore City Reservoirs contact the Department of Public Works at www.baltimorecity.gov/government/dpw/water.html or (410) 795-6150.

For information concerning the Aquaculture Industry contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture at www.marylandseafood.org or (410) 841-5820.