

**INLAND FISHERIES WELCOMES REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON  
REGULATION CHANGES BEING CONSIDERED FOR CALENDAR YEAR  
2010**

**Public Meeting Dates and Locations:**

Inland Fisheries regulation meetings are fast approaching. The public is encouraged to attend and provide comments. The following meetings have been scheduled:

- April 8 at the Visitor's Center of Cedarville Natural Resource Area, Cedarville, Prince George's County at 7 p.m.
- April 9 at Greenbrier State Park Visitor's Center, Route 40, Washington County at 7 p.m.
- April 13 at the Natural Resources Police Eastern Region Office, Area 2, Route 309 and 404, Hillsboro, Queen Anne's County at 7 p.m.
- April 14 at Patapsco Valley State Park, Hollofield Headquarters, Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, Howard County at 7 p.m.
- May 9 at Allegany Community College, Cumberland, Allegany County in combination with a Brook Trout Informational Open House from 12:00pm to 8:00pm

**Regulation Changes:**

The following regulation changes may be proposed for 2010.

- 1) Establish a daily creel and possession limit for yellow perch harvest in Deep Creek Lake, Garrett County

**Pre-Proposal:**

Current regulation - daily creel and possession limit 10, minimum size 9 inches, with a year round open season in all waters except in and upstream of any reservoir, lake, pond or impoundment where there is no minimum size or creel limit.

A proposal may be made for Deep Creek Lake only for a yellow perch daily limit of 10; possession limit of 20 ; with no minimum size and a year round open season

**Discussion**

Surveys showed that 62% of Deep Creek Lake anglers believe the yellow perch fishery has declined in the last ten-year period, and current regulations (no creel limit, no size limit, and a year round season) are not providing for an acceptable fishing experience. In this survey a 10 fish (or

fewer) daily creel limit was acceptable to 51% of the fishermen as a means to improve their fishing experience. DNR would like to hear opinions from all potentially affected anglers on this idea.

Angler surveys on the Deep Creek Lake fishery were conducted in 2008 and 2009. Results are as follows:

- 82 anglers responded and they fished an average of 28 trips per year
- When asked about their perception of the status of the Deep Creek Lake yellow perch fishery in last 10 year period: responses were: Declining = 62%; Steady = 29%; Improving = 9%
- Asked if current regulations are providing for a satisfying angling experience, 73% disagreed and 27% agreed.
- Regarding catch rates of yellow perch per trip: 85% of fishermen said they catch 10 or less yellow perch per trip/ 15% replied more than 10.
- 74% of fishermen said they harvest less than half of their catch, while 26% said they harvest more than half. (staff found that during a winter 2008/09 creel survey – 73% of the perch caught on Deep Creek Lake were harvested (17 anglers caught 56 perch and harvested 41 of them).
- 77% said a fish consumption advisory did not affect their harvest rates; 23% said that it did.
- When asked what would they like to see for a regulation, responses were:
  - o 5 fish daily/10 possession = 18%
  - o 10 fish daily/20 possession = 33%
  - o 15 fish daily/30 possession = 12%
  - o > 15 fish daily/30 possession = 9%
  - o 15 fish in aggregate with sunfish/30 possession = 4%
  - o No comment = 24%

2) Allow harvest of northern snakehead in Maryland waters using any legal fishing gear.

**Pre-Proposal:** Allow harvest of northern snakeheads in all Maryland waters using any legal fishing gear, provided the head is removed immediately after capture.

**Discussion:** The northern snakehead has been found in the tidal Potomac River, Maryland and Virginia tributaries in the vicinity of the District of Columbia. This species is considered a nuisance and in Maryland the possession of live specimens is strictly prohibited. Harvest would be beneficial to help keep populations in check. This regulation would clarify that harvest is allowed, if the head is cut off immediately after capture.

On the mainstem of the tidal Potomac River, spear guns may not be used, according to restrictions set forth by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC). Anglers have requested the opportunity to use bow

and arrow to fish for the species, however, when crossing the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Park property conventional bows (recurves, etc) may not be strung and compound bows may not have arrows “knocked in” in ready fire status.

- 3) Require an import permit for all fish species to be imported and stocked to Maryland’s nontidal waters.

**Pre-Proposal:** An import permit will be required for all fish species to be imported for release into nontidal waters.

**Discussion:** Problems have increased nationwide with invasive species and fish diseases. Channel catfish is one of a handful of species which do not require a permit yet difficulty in their identification may have helped to increase the spread of invasive blue and flathead catfish. In addition, some of the exempted species are known to carry diseases which we are trying to prevent or control in Maryland. A permit for the import of all fish species into Maryland would allow better control over invasive species and prevent potential fish health problems by allowing managers to better track fish being stocked into Maryland waters.

- 4) Clarify terminology used to describe terminal tackle restrictions on Special Trout Management Areas.

**Pre-Proposal:** Remove vague and contradictory language describing live bait and other terminal tackle and clarify these regulations.

**Discussion:** Multiple definitions of permitted or prohibited tackle in existing regulations are sometimes confusing and may be contradictory. In the past additional text was added to clarify or to cover loopholes in the language, but the wording has become excessive. For example, the following describes terminal tackle use in one area: “Except for artificial flies and streamers, a person may not use or possess any natural bait, baitfish, fishbait, scents, or natural or synthetic devices capable of catching fish.” Anglers have pointed out that the last part of this sentence, which is prohibited, describes the first part which is allowed. This type of wording needs to be changed in order to make the intent of the regulation clearer.

Inland Fisheries would also like to receive input on the following discussion items which may be proposed as regulations at a future date.

- 1) Allow the angling and harvest of blue catfish in the tidal Potomac River, with no movement of the species to other waters.
- 2) Allow the angling and harvest of flathead catfish in the Susquehanna River at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, with no movement of the species to other waters

**Pre-Proposal:** Blue catfish and flathead catfish are invasive species that have become established in some tidal waters of Maryland. Fishing for these species will be allowed within those areas, but regulations are being considered to prevent anglers from moving these species to new areas.

**Discussion:** These are invasive species that either migrated into Maryland waters or were mistakenly stocked. They are large, highly efficient predators which may have significant impacts on other species through predation, and competition for food and habitat. Measures are being taken through a variety of avenues to reduce the chances of new species knowingly or unknowingly being introduced into Maryland waters. Blue catfish in the Potomac and flathead catfish in the Susquehanna River have established populations and their removal is not considered possible with current available methods. Both species are listed in Maryland regulations as “Nuisance and Prohibited Species” and are on the “No transport” list which prohibits anglers from moving them to other waters of the state. However we recognize that significant fisheries have developed on these species. Language is being crafted which would allow these fisheries to continue while assuring that these species are not spread to new waters or new areas of a drainage..

- 3) Expand the current crayfish prohibition to the Upper Potomac River drainage.

**Pre-Proposal:** Prohibit the use, harvest, disposal, and possession of any crayfish species in the specified waters.

**Discussion:** In early 2008, the Department of Natural Resources passed an emergency regulation banning the capture, use and possession of all crayfish species in the Middle Potomac River, Lower Susquehanna River and the tributaries within these reaches. This ban became permanent in October of 2008. The ban was enacted in response to the discovery of the invasive rusty crayfish in those watersheds and was intended to prevent anglers and others from moving this species to other waters. The rusty crayfish is a great threat to other crayfish species and some aquatic organisms. The subsequent discovery of the rusty crayfish the Upper Potomac River Basin prompted the Department to propose expansion of the ban to that watershed as well. A more detailed map and description of the region affected will be posted to this site at a later date.

