

Subtitle 02 FISHERIES SERVICE

08.02.11 Fishing in Nontidal Waters

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §4-602, Annotated Code of Maryland

Notice of Proposed Action

[21-158-P]

The Secretary of Natural Resources proposes to amend Regulation .03 under **COMAR 08.02.11 Fishing in Nontidal Waters**.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to amend Regulation .03 under COMAR 08.02.11 Fishing in Nontidal Waters.

This action replaces the special regulations on certain impoundments with Statewide regulations by eliminating the black bass catch and return regulations for Wheatley Lake, removing the designation of “Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Area” from four areas, and eliminating the Limited Harvest regulation entirely. The action also renames the areas currently designated as “Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Areas” to “Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass Slot Length Limit Fishing Areas.”

The Department originally created special regulations for certain impoundments such as catch-and-return-only and slot limits in an effort to meet specific management objectives. These current special regulations have not met the intended management objectives for black bass (largemouth and smallmouth bass) and have created unnecessary complexity. Reverting to Statewide regulations in these areas will simplify regulations, make the rules more easily understood by the angling public, and better assist in meeting our management goals.

The “Limited Harvest” restrictions contributed to regulation complexity without achieving management objectives for largemouth bass. The daily harvest of ten total fish species is unnecessary because Statewide rules will provide protection.

The designation “Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Area” was generally applied to waters characterized by an abundance of 8- to 12-inch bass, not to areas with very large bass. The designation increased angler confusion and set unrealistic expectations for the fishing experience. Changing the designation to “Slot Length Limit Fishing Areas” is a housekeeping action that will better describe an area.

Comparison to Federal Standards

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed action.

Estimate of Economic Impact

The proposed action has no economic impact.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

The proposed action has minimal or no economic impact on small businesses.

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Comments may be sent to Nontidal/Removal of Special Regulations, Regulatory Staff, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fishing and Boating Services, 580 Taylor Avenue, E-4, Annapolis, MD 21401, or call 410-260-8300, or complete comment form at <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/regulations/changes.aspx#removal>. Comments will be accepted through November 22, 2021. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

.03 Special Fisheries Management Areas.

A. [Trophy] Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass *Slot Length Limit* Fishing Areas.

(1) (text unchanged)

(2) The areas subject to this provision are:

(a)—(b) (text unchanged)

[(c) All ponds located within the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center, St. Mary’s County;

(d) Centennial Lake, Howard County;]

[(e)] (c) Johnson Pond, Wicomico County; and

[(f) Blair Valley Lake, Washington County;

(g) All ponds located within the Chesapeake Ranch Club Estates, Calvert County;]

[(h)] (d) (text unchanged)

B. (text unchanged)

C. Catch-and-Return Bass Areas.

(1) (text unchanged)

(2) The areas subject to the provisions of this section are the:

(a)—(b) (text unchanged)

(c) Patapsco River from Interstate 70 downstream to Maryland Route 144 (Frederick Road); and

[(d) Wheatley Lake (Gilbert Run Reservoir); and]

[(e)] (d) (text unchanged)

[D. Limited Harvest Fishing Areas.

(1) The following special requirements are in effect in these areas:

(a) A person may possess not more than 10 fish, only one of which can be a largemouth bass, while fishing in these areas;

(b) If these areas are also on the put-and-take trout fishing list, up to five fish of the ten-fish limit may be trout species other than brook trout; and

(c) A person may possess one largemouth bass per day not to exceed 15 inches (15 inch maximum size) while fishing in these areas. There is no minimum size for bass in these areas.

(2) The areas subject to these provisions are:

(a) Hutchins Pond, Calvert County;

(b) Roberts Field Pond, Carroll County;

(c) Rising Sun Pond, Cecil County;

(d) Hughesville Pond, Charles County;

(e) All ponds located within the Merkle Wildlife Management Area, Prince George’s County;

(f) Allens Pond, Prince George’s County;

(g) Bowie Town Center Pond, Prince George’s County;

(h) Lake Artemesia, Prince George’s County;

(i) Milltown Landing Pond, Prince George’s County;

(j) Greenbelt Lake, Prince George’s County;

(k) Pemberton Pond, Wicomico County;

(l) Robert’s Mill Pond, Carroll County;

(m) Farm Museum Pond, Carroll County;

(n) Westminster Community Pond, Carroll County;

(o) Cosca Lake, Prince George’s County;

(p) Tucker Pond, Prince George’s County;

(q) Myrtle Grove Pond, Charles County;

(r) South Germantown Park Pond in South Germantown Park off Schaeffer Road; and

(s) Governor’s Bridge Natural Areas Pond, Prince George’s County.]

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Secretary of Natural Resources