

FISHING IN NONTIDAL WATERS — Trout

What is being considered?

The Department is considering changes to its Put-and-Take trout stocking program. The changes include modifying the areas managed as Put-and-Take areas, modifying the areas managed as Closure 1 areas, eliminating the Closure 2 designation, and making changes to the Youth Trout Fishing Day.

Areas

The Department is considering the following changes to the areas managed for Put-and-Take Trout Fishing:

Additions:

- Extend the Patapsco River Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Area (Baltimore and Howard County) upstream approximately 0.61 miles. The additional area is public property with good access for both stocking and anglers. The new area encompasses the stretch of the Patapsco River from the previous site of Bloede Dam upstream to Ilchester Road.

Deletions:

- Jones Falls below Lake Roland (Baltimore County) - This area has poor/difficult access for stocking, available water is limited in size, and has not been stocked since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Beaver Run (Carroll County) - This area is entirely on private property, primarily within the Beaver Run Fish and Game Club property with little public participation. The stream is very shallow, provides limited holding habitat for trout, and has not been stocked for several years.

Closures

The Department is considering simplifying the way it closes certain bodies of water during the spring trout stocking season. To achieve this, the Department is considering modifying the list of areas affected by this closure and eliminating the Closure 2 management option. There would no longer be the potential for confusion about different closures. Many of the Closure 2 areas would be redesignated as Closure 1; the remainder would be designated as Closure 0. Closure 1 areas are closed from the first Sunday after March 4 to the last Saturday in March. Closure 0 areas are not closed, but are managed under the Put-and-Take rules (daily creel of 5 fish per person per day, possession limit of 10, no brook trout harvest allowed). The Department would also add a number of areas currently on the Closure 0 list to the Closure 1 list in order to enhance the Youth Trout Fishing program.

The following Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas would be removed from the Closure 2 list and added to the Closure 1 list:

- Cotton Cove Pond (Allegany County)
- Farm Museum Pond (Carroll County)
- Hamburg Pond (Frederick County)
- Jennings Run (Allegany County)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Pond (Montgomery County)

- North Jennings Run Watershed (Allegany County)
- Rainbow Lake (Frederick County)
- Savage River (Allegany County)
- Whiskey Springs Pond (Frederick County)

The following Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas would be removed from the Closure 2 list and added to the Closure 0 list:

- Frank Bentz Pond (Frederick County)
- Indian Springs Pond (Washington County)
- Izaak Walton Pond (Montgomery County)
- Northwest Branch (Montgomery County)
- Westminster Pond (Carroll County)

The following Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas would be moved from the Closure 0 list and added to the Closure 1 list:

- Accident Pond (Garrett County)
- Calvert Cliffs Pond (Calvert County)
- Dans Mountain Pond (Allegany County)
- Hughesville Pond (Charles County)
- Hutchins Pond (Calvert County)
- Pine Lake (Montgomery County)
- Warfield Park Pond (Howard County)

Youth Trout Fishing

The Department is considering changing the Youth Trout Fishing Day to include both Saturday and Sunday of the weekend prior to the general opening day of trout fishing. Youth Fishing Day was initially established as only the Saturday of the weekend prior to the general opening day of trout fishing. By extending Youth Fishing Day to Youth Fishing Weekend, the Department hopes more children will be able to take advantage of the opportunity. Youth Fishing Weekend would take place in all waters designated as Closure 1.

Why is this change necessary?

The Department continuously evaluates stocking and management programs to maximize recreational opportunities and experiences for anglers. Proposed stocking locations and closures are adjusted to maximize the recreational experience for anglers. A Youth Trout Fishing Day survey was conducted after the inaugural 2024 event to obtain feedback on the program. A number of modifications to improve the Youth Day experience were identified from the survey. These included extending the event to include the entire weekend, adding additional small ponds, providing a youth educational fishing program during the event, and reducing confusion surrounding the Closure 2 areas. These changes will also reduce complexity in the Department's regulations by creating a single closure period for those waters that are closed during the spring stocking season.

Who will this affect?

This action will affect youth (under 16 years of age) and adult nontidal trout anglers that fish in the designated waters.

When will this be effective?

The Department expects this change could be effective in winter of 2024-2025, however the exact date cannot be determined. The Department will follow our normal scoping and proposal procedures if the concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies?

This idea was scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission at their meetings in July 2024.