

Freshwater Fisheries Monthly Report – December 2023

Freshwater Fisheries - Stock Assessment

Deep Creek Creel Survey - Staff met with Survey Solutions to discuss the formatting of the Deep Creek Lake creel survey data for analysis. Meeting discussions were about survey design and objectives for an upcoming lower Savage River survey to be conducted during 2024.

Met with Regional Operations Manager to discuss ongoing and future stock assessment efforts in Western Region I.

Freshwater Fisheries - Habitat and Water Quality

Environmental Review - Provided aquatic resource information for the following environmental review projects:

- An application submitted by Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) for the paving of an existing culvert invert. Comments were provided for time of year restrictions, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control, safety precautions when working with curing concrete, minimal disturbance with equipment and material storage areas, BMPs for water diversions and pump around, and site restoration upon completion of the project.
- Three Columbia Gas projects to take place in Allegany County, Maryland. Comments were provided for BMPs for sediment and erosion control, minimal disturbance, material storage areas, and site restoration at the completion of the project.
- An application to install a temporary bridge for a logging operation in Swanton, Maryland. Comments were provided for BMPs for sediment and erosion control, proper bridge placement and installation, and site restoration after logging operations have been completed.
- An application was submitted for the installation of a solar farm to be constructed in Friendsville, Maryland. Comments were given for BMPs for sediment and erosion control, minimal disturbance, material storage areas, and site restoration at the completion of the project.
- Three stone revetment projects along the shoreline of Deep Creek Lake. Comments were provided for time of year restrictions, minimal disturbance during construction, and onsite material usage.
- Staff visited Arrowhead Cove on Deep Creek Lake to observe the permitted dredging project that is currently underway. (*photo below*).



Freshwater Fisheries - Stocking and Population Management

Fish Stocking Permits - One permit issued for December 2023.

Out of State Fish Suppliers - Notices were sent to previously approved fish suppliers to remind them to submit their application and fish health inspection reports for the 2024 calendar year. Many fish health inspections expire in November/December; consequently, there are not as many fish species currently listed on the [Approved Fish Suppliers PDF](#). A note was added at the bottom of the PDF to reduce confusion that reads, "Approved Fish Suppliers renew their permits on an annual basis at the beginning of the calendar year. As a result, the full list of Approved Fish Suppliers is typically available in February/March. Fish suppliers and fish species are added as they are approved. Please reference the lower left-hand corner of the PDF to see when this list was last updated."

Freshwater Fisheries - Outreach

Customer Service - Provided customer service information for inquiries regarding:

- Fishing license information
- Directed caller to the proper personnel for information on hunting seasons in regulations
- Becoming an Outdoors-Woman 2024 workshop schedule
- Provided information to the United States Army Corps of Engineers managers regarding the biology and ecology of tailwater trout fisheries
- Provided a video to social media outlets highlighting December activities at the Albert Powell Hatchery. Content included egg delivery, disinfection, and setting up incubators

Additional Services - Developed a boat sticker to summarize length limits for popular fish species in Deep Creek Lake, including the proposed slot limit for walleyes. The purpose of the sticker will be to help anglers understand the new regulation and provide anglers with a useful tool. If the new walleye regulation is formally adopted, the stickers will be handed out to anglers on Deep Creek Lake.

Freshwater Fisheries - Angler Access

Fishery Management Areas (FMA) - The following work supported angler access at public fishing locations:

- Performed routine checks and maintenance at the McCoole, Black Oak, and Evitts Creek FMAs.
- Made a site visit to the Evitts Creek Ponds FMA to inspect the culvert that runs beneath the entrance road due to existing potholes located directly above the culvert. It was determined that the culvert is at no risk of failure, although future meetings are scheduled to discuss improving the entrance road, parking area, and water supply intake for the ponds.

Piney Reservoir Fishing Pier - A new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant fishing pier has been constructed at Piney Reservoir in Garrett County. Staff met with Frostburg City officials and county representatives during the fall of 2021 to discuss the potential project. Since then, funding for the design and construction were identified by the project planners and the fishing pier was completed during the fall of 2023. In addition to the pier, significant improvements to the parking area were also made.



A new ADA fishing pier at Piney Reservoir.

Freshwater Fisheries - Invasive Fishes Program

Worked with the department's Office of Communications on updates to the Invasive Fishes Program, blue catfish, flathead catfish, and northern snakehead webpages.

Staff attended a planning meeting for the January 2024 Chesapeake Bay Program Invasive Catfish Workgroup meeting. Agenda items were discussed and relevant stakeholders were identified for inclusion in the meeting.

Staff met with stakeholders from Coastal Conservation Association Maryland to discuss collaborative opportunities and their upcoming campaign to increase awareness and interest in invasive fishes in Chesapeake Bay.

Freshwater Fisheries - Tidal Bass Program

Staff interviewed three candidates for the Tidal Bass Program Manager position.

Staff completed three draft black bass conservation videos that will be shared for comment with the Black Bass Advisory Committee during the January 8 meeting.

Staff reconciled issued black bass tournament permits with reports to ensure reports were submitted for the 2023 fishing season.

Staff completed quality assurance and quality control checks of 2023 Tidal Bass Survey data, which are now integrated into the Freshwater Fisheries and Hatcheries Divisions' database and spreadsheets for analysis and stock assessments.