

Freshwater Fisheries – September 2023

Freshwater Fisheries - Stock Assessment

Piney Reservoir - Conducted an electrofishing survey on Piney Reservoir to verify survival of saugeye that were stocked in April of 2023. One saugeye was collected during the sample that showed great condition and growth since being stocked earlier this year. Future monitoring will be completed in 2024 to further assess the newly established saugeye population within the reservoir.



Saugeye collected in Piney Reservoir, September 5, 2023.

Creel Data - Continues to collect and enter Deep Creek Lake creel data from angler interviews.

Burba Lake - Conducted an electrofishing survey on Burba Lake, located on Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County. Three sites were sampled to assess the fish population which was composed of black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, and redear sunfish. Thanks to the personnel of the Fort Meade Public Works and Environmental Division who helped us with the survey.

Freshwater Fisheries - Habitat and Water Quality

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

- Reviewed the Potomac Garrett and Green Ridge State Forest FY25 annual work plans. Eastern Regional Freshwater Fisheries staff reviewed and provided comments to the Maryland Forest Service for the 2025 Chesapeake/Pocomoke State Forest Work Plan.
- An application submitted by Columbia Gas of Maryland for a gas line maintenance project on Gorman Road in Garrett County, Maryland. Comments were provided for minimal disturbance to the floodplain and riparian areas along with site restoration at the completion of the project.

- A ditch cleaning project along MD Route 42, Friendsville, Maryland. Comments were given to work during optimal weather conditions, best management practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control, minimal disturbance during excavation and proper site restoration upon the completion of the project.
- On four proposed Project Open Space properties. Properties were located in Allegany County, Washington County, Garrett County, and Frederick County.
- In-stream work that had been completed in an unnamed tributary to Little Deer Creek. Fishing and Boating Services staff were approached by a concerned resident while conducting a fish survey in the stream. The resident informed them of the in-stream work and associated impacts to the resource. The work cleared 200 to 300 meters of riparian buffer and straightened the stream with ditches at several locations. No record of a permit or environmental review for the project could be found. Fishing and Boating Services collected biological data for the stream and information about the impacted stream section and submitted it to Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) compliance division for investigation.
- Projects in Cecil County including the I-95 interchange at Belvedere Road and the Amtrak bridge replacement over the Susquehanna River.

Broadford Lake - Attended a meeting with the Town of Oakland, Garrett County Government, MDE, and the Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council to review recommendations for potential management actions made by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and MDE for the Broadford Lake Watershed Protection Plan.

Temperature Loggers - Retrieved temperature loggers from the North Branch Potomac River in Western Region and several streams in Cecil County. Data will be analyzed for the critical monitoring period of June 1 through August 31 and added to the freshwater temperature database.

Freshwater Fisheries - Stocking and Population Management

Trout - Staff picked up 14,000 rainbow trout fingerlings donated from White Sulphur Springs Fish Hatchery in West Virginia and stocked them in the North Branch Potomac River catch-and-return trout fishing area.

Inspected all put-and-take ponds in the southern region to make sure that there are no obstacles keeping us from stocking trout in October. Parameters such as water quality, water level, excessive amounts of SAV, and shoreline debris were observed/monitored.

Freshwater Fisheries – Fish Health

Largemouth Bass Testing - Completed young-of-year (YOY) largemouth bass collection for University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science as part of an ongoing study looking at atmospheric mercury deposition trends in YOY fish to monitor mercury accumulation levels for a given year. Fish were collected from Deep Creek Lake, Frostburg Reservoir (Piney), and Savage River Reservoir.

Eastern Regional Freshwater staff continued to provide blue catfish samples for an ongoing study in the Nanticoke/Marshyhope watershed by Salisbury University.

Freshwater Fisheries - Outreach

Customer Service - Provided customer service information for inquiries regarding:

- Fishing license information
- Fishing Deep Creek Lake
- Trout fishing the North Branch Potomac River
- Fishing access at Piney Reservoir

New Germany Fishing Event – Delivered the First Catch Fishing Trailer to New Germany State Park for a Fishing Day at the Lake event. Park Rangers hosted approximately 25 kids, with their parents over the Labor Day Weekend. For most of the kids, it was their first time ever catching a fish.



Mobile First Catch Trailer being used at New Germany State Park

Hispanic Heritage Month – Kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with an event at Patapsco State Park. Many units from the department were present including Fishing and Boating Services with the Mobile First Catch Trailer. Although there was no fishing at this location, participants were provided with angling information and practiced some hands-on knot tying and casting.



Casting Practice with “Backyard Bass”

Women on the Water – Provided the Mobile First Catch Trailer for an introductory Fishing and Boating Clinic for women. The event was held at Gunpowder Falls State Park. This Recruitment-Retention-Reactivation (R3) workshop was geared toward teaching women basic boating and fishing skills. A seminar on “How to get Started in Boating” was given and discussion about boating safety, boat types and where to go for boat rentals. Participants also learned basic fishing skills (knot tying, tackle selection, rigging, and casting) before heading to the water to fish. Unfortunately only two fish were caught, maybe due to the extremely hot weather.



Learning and fishing at Dundee Creek, Gunpowder State Park

Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Workshop – Partnered with the Mid-Shore Chapter of Izaak Walton League to host a Beyond BOW Archery/Kayaking/Outdoor Cooking workshop in Trappe. This workshop provided the opportunities for 30 women to learn new outdoors skills.



Kayaking on Bolingbroke Creek, learning new archery skills

Festival del Rio – Provided the Mobile First Catch Fish Trailer and worked the Festival del Rio at Bladensburg, a celebration during National Hispanic Heritage Month for encouraging fishing and broader appreciation of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



First time anglers enjoying a beautiful day fishing the Anacostia river at the Festival del Rio.

Freshwater Fisheries - Angler Access

Fishery Management Areas (FMAs):

- Performed routine checks and maintenance at the Black Oak and McCooles FMAs. Conducted road maintenance at the Evitts Creek FMA and re-secured a picnic table to its original location and secured the intake pipe by cabling it down to prevent it from being moved during future storm events.
- Preparation continues for the upcoming work at Smithville Lake. The drainpipe and valve are near the end of their usable life and are being replaced. The lake will remain open; however, the lower parking lot and dam area will be closed to the public on or about October 15, 2023 when the project begins. It should be completed February 2024. Notices have been placed on social media and the website. Additionally, an informational sign was installed at the lake.

Lake Waterford - Southern Region manager attended a public meeting organized by Anne Arundel Parks and BayLand Associates, the firm that the county has hired to restore Lake Waterford as a fishing destination. Poor dissolved oxygen and excessive

silting of the fishing basin in Lake Waterford has caused several fish kills over the years. Two of those involved rainbow trout stocked by the department as part of the put-and-take trout stocking program. Freshwater Fisheries discontinued stocking trout in Waterford in 2012 because of these fish kills. One of BayLands objectives is to improve the habitat and water quality in the lake so that trout stockings can, once again, occur at the Lake.

Freshwater Fisheries - Invasive Species

Conducted interviews for an Invasive Fishes Program coordinator and selected a candidate for the position. It is hoped that the position will be filled by mid-October.

Completed a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Geological Survey and the department in support of work funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to plan an invasive fish deterrence strategy at Conowingo Dam.

Flathead Catfish - Conducted trials for two sampling methods for flathead catfish on the upper Potomac River. Flathead catfish are an invasive species currently found in Maryland. Monitoring work is underway to examine their distribution, abundance, size structure, and movement in the river. Six hoop nets were set in the Big Slackwater section upstream from Dam 4 to test their ability to collect fish. Hoop nets are used to survey catfish in the Pennsylvania and Maryland portions of the Susquehanna River. The upper Potomac nets were successful in trapping flathead catfish with the largest one collected measuring 38 inches. Low-frequency boat electrofishing was also tested and proved successful in collecting adult flathead catfish. Additional flathead catfish monitoring efforts in the Washington County portion of the upper Potomac are planned for 2024.

Conducted annual flathead catfish investigations in the Conowingo Reservoir and the Susquehanna River. This project is a continuation of Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's flathead study, into Maryland's reaches on the Susquehanna River. The goal is to gather life history information and determine relative abundance of this invasive species to help determine their current and future impacts to the ecosystem. Four sets of baited hoop nets tied in series were deployed in both the reservoir and the river for three days. The flatheads varied in size, but 20-40 pound flatheads were common in Conowingo Reservoir. All flatheads were removed from the system. Other species collected in the nets included blue catfish, blue crabs, bluegill, black crappie, channel catfish, common carp, quillback and white crappie. No blue catfish were collected above Conowingo Dam. Thanks to the staff from Unicorn Hatchery, Western II and Central regions for assisting.

Freshwater Fisheries - Coldwater Program

Qualitative trout surveys were conducted at the remaining 2023 survey stations. This completed trout surveys for 2023. Temperature data loggers were retrieved throughout the state and the data download process was initiated. Concerns for stream temperatures outside of the critical summer index period were discussed and a plan to collect year-round temperature data was developed. Stations within the brook trout monitoring

network will be targeted for this effort. The data will be used to observe temperature trends associated with climate change.



Young-of-year brown trout captured in a Broad Creek stream reach that was previously thought to be unoccupied.

Met with staff from Wildlife and Heritage Service and the Maryland Department of the Environment, Abandoned Mine Land Division to discuss a habitat reclamation and restoration project on Dans Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Fishing and Boating Services is pursuing a project that would remove an in-line impoundment and restore an unnamed tributary to Moores Run in the reclamation area. Moores Run supports a small brook trout population that would benefit from the removal of the impoundment. Meeting participants agreed that the proposed impoundment removal would be supported by the mine land reclamation and restoration effort.

Attended the quarterly Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) steering committee meeting and participated on EBTJV's website redesign team. Meeting topics included planning for the upcoming EBTJV Annual Meeting in November and funding opportunities for habitat projects through EBTJV and the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The web redesign team met to discuss and improve EBTJVs brook trout information webpage.

Freshwater Fisheries - Tidal Bass Program

Presented an inter-jurisdictional report from tagging and creel work conducted for the largemouth bass fishery on Potomac River to the Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

Revised guidelines for the Black Bass Advisory Committee and selected new members who will participate during their next scheduled, October 2 meeting.

Completed a process by which people who donate to the Black Bass Conservation Fund will receive a signed certificate of appreciation and email from the department.

Attended and worked aboard a release boat during Major League Fishing's FLW bass tournament on Potomac River that brought in over 300 anglers for a 3-day tournament.