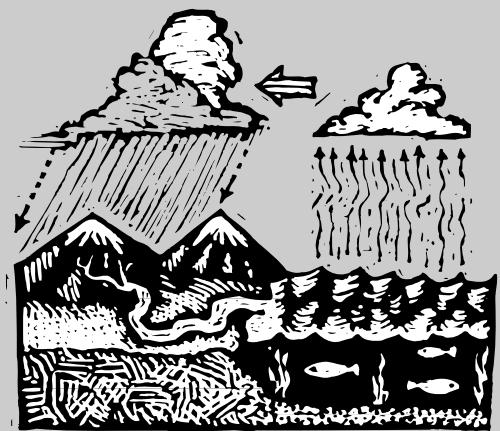



Enjoying the Watershed





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Angling for a Good Time
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Pennsylvania has witnessed a surge of interest in water-oriented recreation in the last several decades that mirrors the same trend throughout the country. This has placed additional demand on the water resources of the Commonwealth. In some areas, problems of overcrowding have detracted from the overall recreation experience. However, the increased use also has allowed more residents and visitors alike to discover the diversity and the importance of the state's water resources and watersheds, as well as the multiple uses they provide.

Fishing Pennsylvania's Miles and Miles of Streams

When thoughts turn to sports and activities that take place in and around our water resources, the first thing to come to mind is often angling of some form or other. With more than 83,000 miles of rivers and streams in Pennsylvania, fishing opportunities readily abound throughout the state, which is home to several different types of streams and rivers. Most of our waterways are freestone water, which means they rely on precipitation for recharging. Another variety are



French Creek

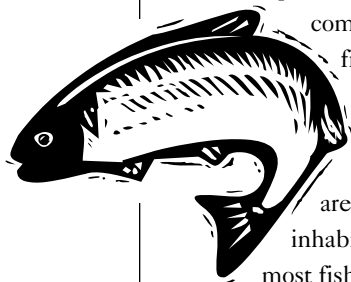
spring creeks that emerge in full flow from underground rivers and maintain their vitality by flowing through limestone-enriched corridors. Pennsylvania also is home to countless headwater streams that act as coldwater resources and that are often born on remote mountain sides or emanate from fertile valleys.

Tracking Trout

The predominant fish found in both freestone and limestone spring creeks are trout; these include brook, brown and rainbow trout. The brook trout, which is actually a char, is the only native trout of Pennsylvania's watersheds. Brown and rainbow trout, although popular angling fare, are imports that have adapted well to the state's cold-flowing rivers and streams. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission maintains a vigorous stocking program that helps maintain the supply of fish for anglers well after the opening day of trout season in mid-April.

Unfortunately, many trout anglers fade from the water after the last stocking trucks run in late May. Knowledgeable anglers know, however, that large num-

bers of trout survive the early season onslaught and remain in many waterways through the summer and into the autumn and winter as well. Holdover fish supplemented by selected fall stockings by the commission provide a year-round trout fishing experience for anyone willing to take advantage of it.



An often-overlooked resource among many Pennsylvania anglers are the wild or stream-bred trout that inhabit many more miles of water than most fishermen think. There are outstanding opportunities to angle for wild trout in all corners of the state. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, in fact, manages many waters primarily for the enhancement of wild trout.

A Variety of Angling Options

Overall, angling opportunities abound in Pennsylvania for bait, lure and fly-fishing enthusiasts. Bait anglers always have found particular success in the early season when water temperature is at its optimum and higher water levels make the presentation of live bait more attractive. Spin or lure fishermen, on the other hand, can locate year-round action with standard bladed spinner offerings. Simply varying the retrieve and color schemes as the seasons change makes this a versatile and effective choice of angling methods. The fly rod, however, is perhaps the most versatile of the lot since it is possible with today's equipment and techniques to put wet flies or nymphs on the bottom when needed and to change to surface presentations when required, depending on water conditions and the mood of the quarry.

Pennsylvania still has outstanding hatches of aquatic insects that fly anglers enjoy pursuing. The Commonwealth's watersheds are home to a large variety of mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies and midges, as well as terrestrial insects that provide a plentiful supply of food for the fish and myriad hatch-matching scenarios for the flytier and fly angler. Some of the most famous fly rod anglers in the country currently reside in the state or call Pennsylvania their original home. In addition, such streams as Letort Spring Run, Penns Creek, Spring Creek and others are steeped in fly fishing lore and are known by anglers around the world.

For the Warmwater Angler

As they continue their trek, many freestone and spring-fed waters in Pennsylvania emerge from forested regions, creating opportunities for the sun to increase water temperature. Most of these streams also lose their steep gradient, which slows the water and facilitates the change from a coldwater to a warmwater environment. Just as the characteristics of the water change, so do the inhabitants. Pennsylvania boasts superb warmwater streams and rivers that harbor outstanding populations of smallmouth bass, crappies, rock bass, sunfish and bluegills. Mighty rivers such as the Susquehanna, the lower Delaware and the lower Youghiogheny present some of the finest warmwater angling in the northeast. Unfortunately, for many years the state suffered from overharvest of bass and other

Tips for Pennsylvania Anglers

- Anglers should always pinch down the barbs on their hooks. This makes for faster and quicker penetration by the hook point and produces less damage to the fish, which is especially important if it is to be released.
- Most anglers concentrate on long, flat pools or deep holes when fishing rivers and streams. In order to avoid crowds and heavily fished water, concentrate instead on the riffles and fastwater stretches. Contrary to popular belief, more and larger fish reside in these areas.
- The jig is still the most deadly and versatile lure ever invented, and it is effective for every species of fish. Fish jigs slow when the water is cold and move faster and more erratically in warmer water—and hold on!
- Some of the largest fish in streams and rivers reside close to the slower currents near the banks rather than in the faster water in the center of the stream. Too many anglers stand in the location they should be fishing in.
- The one tool that most fishermen should carry, but seldom do, is hook hone. Keeping hooks sharp is the simplest most important thing an angler can do to increase his or her catch rate.

warmwater species. Despite many miles of water and an excellent food base, larger smallmouth and largemouth bass were difficult to come by. However, in recent years the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, at the urging of many concerned anglers, has adopted more resource enhancement regulations that are expanding the opportunity for anglers to catch and hopefully return more and larger smallmouth bass and other species.

The Stillwater Story

The state is also dotted with lakes and impoundments that provide stillwater piscatorial pursuits for gamefish such as largemouth bass, pike, muskellunge, panfish, lunker trout and, in some instances, striped bass. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission manages and operates numerous impoundments throughout the state, and dozens more are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or other agencies for flood control or hydroelectric power or as water supplies. Manmade lakes such as Raystown Lake, Pymatuning Lake, the Allegheny Reservoir and Lake Wallenpaupack are all outstanding fish producers. In addition, Pennsylvania is home to at least 76 natural lakes—primarily located in the northeastern and northwestern portions of the state—that also provide a diverse angling experience. Last but not least, countless farm ponds provide hours of leisurely fishing for the expert and novice angler alike. This diverse combination produces an exciting array of opportunities for those who prefer stillwater to moving water.

The watersheds of Pennsylvania provide outstanding angling opportunities for both coldwater and warmwater anglers. Each type of water has its own dedicated core of anglers who already know that some of the finest sport fishing on the North American continent can be found within the watersheds of Penn's Woods. ■

Other Outdoor Pursuits in Pennsylvania

Boating: Recreational boating, canoeing and kayaking are extensively pursued throughout the water courses of the state. Large and powerful watercraft are often found traversing the waters of larger impoundments such as Raystown Lake or the Three Rivers area of Pittsburgh. Water skiing and jet skiing are also popular in these larger bodies of water. However, increasing numbers of outdoor-oriented folks are rediscovering crafts that require less horsepower and more people power.

Canoeing: Canoeing on Pennsylvania's more navigable rivers is a sport that can provide a feeling of being one with the surroundings. The canoe is a conveyance that can provide a view of a watershed that no other method can match. It is also a great way to get to fishing spots that otherwise would be inaccessible.

Kayaking: Kayaking, on the other hand, is for the more adventurous outdoorsperson because it often pits man and woman against the elements of the environment. Pennsylvania boasts some of the finest white water rivers in the nation—such as the Youghiogheny in the west and the Lehigh in the east—providing the type of excitement white water enthusiasts crave. Dozens of other water courses throughout the state provide seasonal high-water kayaking and canoeing opportunities as well.

Tip: Before kayaking or canoeing an unfamiliar piece of water, look up information in a book or on the Internet or talk to someone familiar with the stretch. This extra effort can eliminate many unpleasant surprises or even dangerous encounters.

Birdwatching: Pennsylvania watersheds also provide a great opportunity for the growing number of bird-watching enthusiasts to pursue their pastime. Impoundments and rivers are home to or provide stopover for a wide variety of waterfowl and other bird species. Over a 12-month period in Pennsylvania, it's possible to see a dizzying variety of bird life.

Wing Shooting: Of course, some prefer to view waterfowl over the barrel of their favorite shotgun. Large impoundments such as Pymatuning Lake provide some of the finest wing shooting in the northeast. Also, smaller lakes, beaver ponds, wetlands and rivers provide ample chances for duck and geese hunters to bring down their quarry from the sky. Waterfowling opportunities are actually expanding in the state. Better water quality—especially in western Pennsylvania—has heightened the enthusiasm for the sport. Even some longtime dedicated turkey and upland game hunters are now taking a serious look at the increasing waterfowl hunting opportunities that the Commonwealth's watersheds are providing.

Tip: The greatest error made by the waterfowl hunter is not being able to correctly judge distance. Hunt with experienced hunters before venturing out alone in order to learn when and when not to shoot.

Furtrapping: Although often overlooked and even attacked by well intentioned but misguided activists, Pennsylvania's small but active contingent of fur trappers lay the majority of their traplines through river, stream and wetland areas. Beaver, muskrat and mink are still the prominent targets of the dedicated trapper, who provides an important service by controlling certain species that would otherwise go unchecked and at the same time filling a legitimate demand for fur and its byproducts.

Photographing: Many outdoor enthusiasts prefer to shoot or capture their quarry with a camera. The wildlife and waterfowl that inhabit Pennsylvania's watersheds provide countless photographic opportunities. Perhaps no other natural setting is as photographically appealing than a tumbling brook or waterfall tucked away at the headwaters of a watershed.

Tip: Outdoor photographers should always carry a tripod, which is one of the easiest methods of improving the quality of nature photographs. Numerous manufacturers supply small-sized versions that are ideal for field use.

Hiking and Biking: The rails-to-trails program is providing expanded access to some of the state's best watershed resources. Many of these trails follow streams or rivers for much of their length, providing recreational opportunities in the form of hiking or biking that the entire family can enjoy. Discovering and exploring these low-impact highways that lead into the heart of many watersheds is perhaps the fastest-growing recreational endeavor in the state today.

