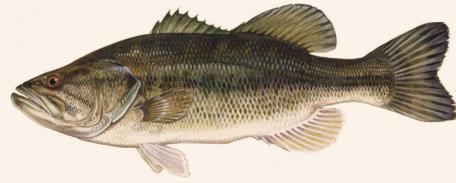


Northern New Jersey Warmwater and Coolwater Game Fish



Largemouth Bass

One of the most sought after freshwater fish nationwide, largemouth bass can be found in almost every New Jersey lake, pond, slow moving river or stream.

Where

New Jersey has a wide variety of excellent habitat for largemouth bass including deep clear lakes, shallow stained lakes, lakes with aquatic vegetation, tidal freshwater rivers, and small park ponds. Monksville Reservoir, Round Valley Reservoir, Delaware Lake and Lake Aeroflex offer excellent largemouth bass fishing opportunities.

When

Bass move into shallows in spring and remain through early summer and in late September and October feed heavily in shallow water prior to winter.

How

Largemouth bass bite a variety of baits and lures throughout the year. Crankbaits, jerkbaits, jigs, plastic worms and fish imitations, spinnerbaits, and topwater lures are extremely effective. Live shiners fished with a float during the spring and summer can produce some giants.



Smallmouth Bass

Best known for their airborne leaps and sudden deep dives, smallmouth bass are one of the most exciting species to catch.

Where

Smallies prefer cool, clear, swift rivers and cool, deep, rocky lakes. Round Valley Reservoir, Merrill Creek Reservoir, Clinton Reservoir and Echo Lake have excellent smallmouth bass fisheries. The Delaware River has an extensive population and is almost a sure bet for anglers looking to catch their first smallmouth.

When

The best time is spring through fall, with fall probably the best when smallmouth begin to school up and feed heavily before winter.

How

Minnows, worms, crayfish, and hellgrammites are common live baits. Crawfish imitators including tubes and jigs work well in addition to the same lures used for largemouth bass.



Chain Pickerel

Chain pickerel can be found in many largemouth bass waters where like bass, they prefer vegetative and woody cover.

Where

Chain pickerel live in a wide range of habitats and are one of the few game fish that are able to tolerate the low pH (acidic) waters. The majority of the year pickerel can be located in shallow bays and near shorelines.

When

Chain pickerel bite year round and are commonly sought by ice anglers. Spring and fall are excellent times to target chain pickerel since they prefer cooler water.

How

Chain pickerel will eat almost anything that moves at times. Live bait such as killifish, minnows and shiners are great baits. Lures such as in line spinners, spinnerbaits, jerkbaits, plastic worms and topwater lures are tops. In shallow weedbeds use plastic jerkbaits such as the Slug-go, Fin-S, Flappin' Shad, and Zoom Fluke.



Muskellunge

This largest member of the pike family is a highly prized sportfish for many anglers. Reaching over 4 feet in length, Jersey muskies grow to trophy proportions that rival fish from many of the best waters in the country.

Where

Muskies are generally a shallow-water fish, preferring areas of weeds, logs and other cover in both lake and river environments. North Jersey lakes with superb musky fishing include Mountain Lake, Echo Lake, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong as well as the Delaware River.

When

Fishing is relatively consistent from late spring to mid-fall, with September and October considered two of the best months.

How

Cast large, 5- to 9-inch, sucker or perch colored crankbaits and stick baits or 1/2 to 1 oz. bucktail spinners or spinnerbaits around available structure and edges of weed beds. Live baits such as large shiners and suckers are also popular.



Carp

A member of the minnow family, carp are long-lived, hard fighters and grow to over 30 pounds.

Where

Can be found in almost every reservoir, lake, pond, river or stream in New Jersey. The Delaware River is popular among carp anglers.

When

Spring and summer are the most productive times for catching carp by rod and reel.

How

Use kernels of nibblet corn or dough balls (find recipes on Internet) rigged on a single bronzed #8-#14 bait holder hook on fish-finder style rig with the least amount of weight possible.



Channel Catfish

The largest member of the catfish family found in New Jersey, this nonnative grows to trophy proportions and is a popular food fish. It is found in the Delaware River and in over 70 waters stocked by the Division.

Where

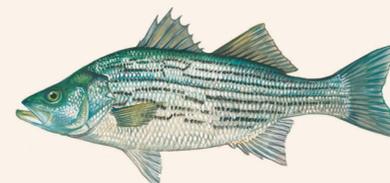
Usually found in clear, warm lakes and moderately large to large rivers over clean sand, gravel or rock-rubble bottoms. The Division stocks approximately 70 waters and many provide excellent fisheries. The Delaware River is a popular angler choice for channel cats.

When

Early spring to early fall, with summer the most consistent period. Although channel catfish can be caught at any time of day, nighttime is the most productive.

How

They feed mostly at night but can be caught anytime. The most productive method and baits are those described for brown bullheads.



Striped Bass Hybrid

The striped bass hybrid is a cross between a white bass and a striped bass. The combined traits of these two species make it a hard hitting and strong fighting fish.

Where

Lake Hopatcong and Spruce Run Reservoir are two outstanding hybrid striped bass lakes. In Spruce Run, they are found in the top 10 feet of the water column during the summer. In both waterbodies, in the fall and spring they will be located at more varied depth ranges.

When

Summer is most productive for striped bass hybrids. Early morning and a couple of hours before sunset are prime times.

How

Most popular techniques are drifting or anchored in a boat using herring or shiners with a weight or live-lined. Shoreline anglers fish night crawlers or chicken liver on bottom.



Brown Bullhead

This native catfish is found in numerous waterbodies, large and small, throughout the state. The brown bullhead is a bottom dweller and tolerates very warm water, and low oxygen levels.

Where

Widely distributed in a variety of waters from small urban ponds to larger lakes and rivers. Good brown bullhead fishing opportunities can be found nearly everywhere.

When

Can be caught at any time of day but most active at night. Summer evenings are the most popular time to fish for them.

How

Fishing technique for bullheads is very simply a bottom rig consisting of a hook and sinker. Popular baits are night crawlers, chicken liver, cut fish and commercial stink and cheese baits.



Lake Trout and Salmon

New Jersey's trout fishing opportunities include trophy-sized lake trout in Round Valley and Merrill Creek Reservoirs and most recently, landlocked Atlantic salmon, which have been reintroduced in Lake Aeroflex and Wawayanda Lake. Both landlocked salmon and lake trout prefer deep, cold lakes rich with oxygen.

When

During early spring, landlocks and lakers can be found throughout the entire water column including shallower depths close to shore. As surface temperatures increase, they begin to seek cooler, deeper waters and in Round Valley, 70 feet is a good starting point. In the summer, salmon can be located between 15 and 40 feet in Lake Aeroflex and Wawayanda Lake. In the fall, salmon can be caught on the surface, at the mouths of streams flowing into the lake or along the shoreline and lakers can be found congregating along rock dikes and dams.

How

During spring and fall, shoreline anglers should fish alewife herring and golden shiners suspended 3 to 5 feet from bobbers near drop offs. During summer, live bait, crankbaits and spoons can be trolled at depths where fish are holding. A one to two ounce white bucktail jig or a silver or gold metal jiggling spoon can take fish by repeatedly dropping and lifting jig or spoon near the bottom.



Crappie

Though two species of crappie are present in New Jersey (black and white), the black crappie is more widespread and sought after. Black crappies are excellent table fare. The crappie is a schooling fish and action can be fast paced when they are located.

Where

Crappies love structure! They have a tendency to school in open water, relating to stumps, standing timber and artificial structure such as brush piles. Delaware Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Allamuchy Pond and Spruce Run Reservoir are popular locations among anglers.

When

In early spring many fish move from the deep areas of a lake to shallow vegetated areas where spawning will occur. Crappies begin to move to slightly deeper, cooler water in early summer. Caught in greater numbers in the colder months with November and March being the two best months.

How

Small plastic jigs or hair jigs in a variety of colors. Live bait, such as minnow, killifish, small shiners and worms, can improve catches. Crappies are not always on the bottom so the use of a bobber can be important. Small spinners also work well.



Sunfish

The sunfish is one of the most widespread and abundant freshwater fish in New Jersey. The most commonly sought species are bluegill, pumpkinseed and redbreast sunfish.

Where

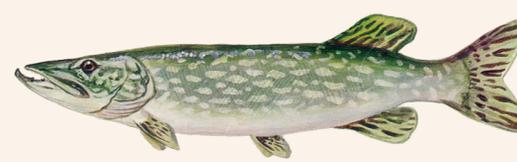
Sunfish are found in most freshwaters throughout the state. Good populations of bluegill and pumpkinseed can be found in municipal, county and state park ponds and lakes.

When

The months of May through October are most productive when water temperatures are between 60-80 degrees.

How

The most popular method is hook and bobber with worms or grubs. Any department store or sports shop has inexpensive rod and reel combos, tackle and bait needed to catch sunfish.



Northern Pike

The northern pike is a very aggressive, hard fighting fish that prefers relatively shallow weedy areas of lakes and slow moving rivers. Although bony, their flesh is very tasty and makes excellent fish cakes.

Where

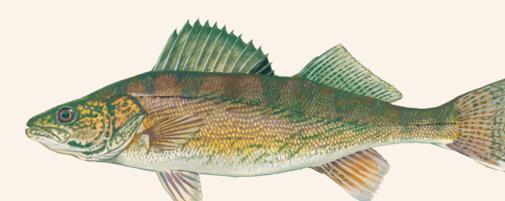
Northern pike waters in North Jersey include Spruce Run Reservoir, Budd Lake, Pompton Lake and Cranberry Lake as well as the Passaic and Pompton Rivers. Fish the pockets in weedy areas and along the weedline in lakes and around fallen trees and deeper holes in rivers.

When

Best during the cooler seasons of spring, fall and winter. Pike feed entirely in daylight with morning considered to be the best fishing period.

How

Large shiners fished on the bottom or with a bobber are effective in both lakes and rivers. A light wire leader is recommended when using live bait. Cast or trolled large spoons and spinners are also very effective.



Walleye

The walleye prefers moderately deep lakes with gravel, rock or sandy bottoms. It is prized for its great tasting white, flaky flesh.

Where

In addition to the Delaware River, healthy populations of walleye have been established in Lake Hopatcong, Greenwood Lake, Monksville Reservoir and Swartswood Lake.

When

Walleye feed most actively in early morning, evening and at night. Fishing for walleye from sundown to midnight is productive, particularly during the heat of summer. In spring, fish small crankbaits, small jigs and plastic worms in shallow to moderate depths as the walleye move into the shallows to spawn. In summer, fish shallow in the mornings and evenings and move deeper as the sun rises.

How

This toothy fish prefers small fish and will eat crustaceans, worms and insects. They tend to be somewhat wary and prefer the safety of deeper darker water. Gravel ledges, points and submerged humps in protected areas are prime holding areas. Fish with live bait, crankbaits, spoons, small spinner baits as well as plastic worms and grubs. Fish shallow to moderate depths in the mornings and evenings. As the sun rises move deeper following points and rocky or gravel structure.



Yellow Perch

Yellow perch are known for their excellent fight on light tackle and flavorful taste. Perch are one of the premier species targeted by ice anglers.

Where

Lake anglers will find yellow perch around edges of aquatic vegetation and near stumps. Waters below spillways can produce good size perch.

When

Yellow perch are active all year long, however the cooler months of September through May are best.

How

Small minnows and worms on hook and sinker or bobber in shallow water. Small hair jigs, plastic tubes, twister tails and small spinners and minnow imitators work well.

