

OHIO

Effective
March 1, 2026 to
February 28, 2027



FISHING REGULATIONS 2026-27



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
wildohio.gov

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



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OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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The Division of Wildlife's mission is to conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.

VISIT US ON THE WEB
WildOhio.gov

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE APP
HuntFish OH

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION
1-800-WILDLIFE
(1-800-945-3543)
(1-614-265-6300)

TO REPORT WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS
1-800-POACHER
(1-800-762-2437)
(1-614-799-9538)

LAKE ERIE FISHING FORECAST
1-888-HOOKFISH
(1-888-466-5347)



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

This program receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

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1849 C Street, NW • Washington, D.C. 20240

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE DISTRICT OFFICES

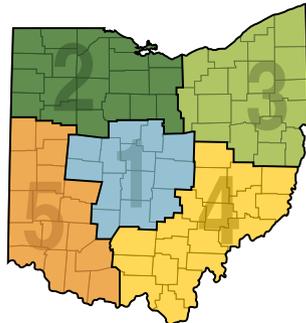
WILDLIFE DISTRICT ONE
1500 Dublin Road
Columbus, OH 43215

WILDLIFE DISTRICT TWO
952 Lima Avenue
Findlay, OH 45840

WILDLIFE DISTRICT THREE
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Akron, OH 44319

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FOUR
360 E. State Street
Athens, OH 45701

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Xenia, OH 45385



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2026-27 OHIO FISHING REGULATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LICENSE INFORMATION	4
STATEWIDE REGULATIONS	6
LAKE ERIE REGULATIONS	6
OHIO RIVER REGULATIONS	8
SITE-SPECIFIC WATERS	10
FROG & TURTLE REGULATIONS	13
OTHER METHODS	14
GENERAL INFORMATION	16
FISH OHIO	18
STATE WILDLIFE OFFICERS	20



OHIO FREE FISHING DAYS

On June 20 and 21, 2026, all Ohio residents are invited to experience Ohio's fantastic public fishing opportunities without purchasing a license. All size and daily limits apply during these two days.

FISHING REGULATION CHANGES

- The landmark used to designate the restricted portion of the Maumee River that is only open for fishing from sunrise to sunset from March 1 through April 30, 2026, has changed to the easternmost point of Missionary Island. See page 12.
- Bait fish traps may now have openings up to 2 inches in diameter or 2 inches in height. See page 16.
- Turtles taken from the wild cannot be sold, bartered, or traded. See page 13.

THIS SUMMARY is intended for the convenience of anglers and IS NOT INTENDED to cover all laws and regulations. THIS SUMMARY is not intended for use as evidence or as a defense in a criminal or civil case. Because of possible changes, this summary may not be an accurate reflection of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code, which contains the details of these regulations. Copies of the actual laws are available for review at each Division of Wildlife district office and online at wildohio.gov.

LICENSE INFORMATION

FISHING LICENSES ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL AUTHORIZED LICENSE SALES AGENTS, ON THE HUNTFISH OH MOBILE APP, AND AT WILDOHIO.GOV.

CATEGORIES

Resident Youth	For Ohio residents under age 16 at the time of purchase.
Resident	For Ohio residents age 16-64 at the time of purchase.
Resident Senior	For Ohio residents age 65 and older born on or after January 1, 1938.
Nonresident	For all nonresidents 16 years old and older at the time of purchase.

LICENSES

COST

Youth LICENSES	Persons under 16 years of age are not required to purchase a fishing license.	
	Resident Youth Lifetime License - purchased before 16th birthday	\$430.56

Resident LICENSES	Resident 1-Day License	\$14.00
	Resident 1-Year Upgraded from a 1-Day License * (see below)	\$12.00
	Resident 1-Year License	\$25.00
	Resident 3-Year License	\$72.11
	Resident 5-Year License	\$120.18
	Resident 10-Year License	\$240.36
	Resident Lifetime License	\$599.04

Resident Senior LICENSES	Resident 1-Year License	\$10.00
	Resident 3-Year License	\$27.04
	Resident 5-Year License	\$45.07
	Resident Lifetime License	\$84.24

Nonresident LICENSES	Nonresident 1-Day License	\$27.04
	Nonresident 1-Year License Upgraded from a 1-Day * (see below)	\$49.92
	Nonresident 3-Day License	\$52.00
	Nonresident 1-Year License	\$76.96

Card and Duplicate	Resident Ohio Conservation Card	\$4.00
	Duplicate License - Free reprints are available at wildohio.gov	\$4.00

* A one-day fishing license may be applied as credit toward the purchase of an annual license.
A transaction fee may apply for online and in-app license sales.

THE OHIO CONSERVATION CARD

The Ohio Conservation Card (a durable plastic card) is included with the purchase of a lifetime license. The card may also be purchased for \$4.00 with a multiyear license.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

- A fishing license is required to engage in fishing in Ohio waters.
- A fishing license is required to take frogs or turtles on public and private property.
- Persons fishing in privately owned ponds, lakes, or reservoirs that are open to public fishing through an agreement or lease with the Ohio Division of Wildlife are required to have a fishing license.
- Persons must have their license in their possession while fishing and must show the license to anyone on request. Licenses may be displayed using a mobile device.
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty stationed in Ohio, but not on leave or furlough, are required to purchase a resident license.



LICENSE PURCHASING

- An Ohio resident is a person who has resided in the state of Ohio for the past six consecutive months. All others are considered nonresidents and must purchase a nonresident license. Nonresident students who are actively enrolled full time in an Ohio college or university qualify for a resident license if they live in Ohio at the time of purchase.
- Licenses purchased on wildohio.gov will be emailed to the customer upon completion of the transaction. Licenses are not required to be printed as long as the image of the license may be displayed on a mobile device and presented upon request.

- Operator assistance for license sales is available by calling 1-866-703-1928 between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. A \$5.50 fee will be added to the cost of the license.
- One-year fishing licenses are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase. One-year and multiyear fishing licenses are valid from the date of purchase until the expiration date printed on the license.
- Lifetime licenses and multiyear licenses may be purchased at wildohio.gov, provided an Ohio driver license or state identification is associated with the customer's account. Lifetime license buyers may also visit an Ohio Division of Wildlife office or mail in a paper application. Proof of age and residency are required at the time of purchase. A multiyear license may also be purchased at an agent location (restrictions apply). Visit wildohio.gov for more information about lifetime or multiyear licenses.

LICENSE EXEMPTIONS

A FISHING LICENSE IS NOT REQUIRED OF PERSONS WHO ARE:

- Less than 16 years of age. This includes frogs and turtles;
- Fishing in privately owned ponds, lakes, or reservoirs to and from which fish do not migrate;
- Giving assistance to an angler who has been issued the free mobility impaired or blind fishing license, provided the two persons together are using only one line;
- On June 20 and 21, 2026, all Ohio residents may fish without a license as part of Free Fishing Days;
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty while on leave or furlough;
- Fishing, or taking frogs or turtles, on land and water which they or their parents own, except where the land is in or borders on state parks or state-owned lakes;
- Fishing, or taking frogs or turtles, on land and water where they or their parents are tenants on which they reside, and from which they derive the majority of their income from agricultural production on that land (except state-owned lakes);
- See page 16 for information on free licenses.

STATEWIDE REGULATIONS

These regulations apply to all public waters in Ohio where site-specific regulations are not implemented. Exceptions to these regulations include locations listed for Lake Erie and its tributaries (below), the Ohio River (pages 8-9), and Site-Specific Waters (page 10-12).

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Blue & Flathead Catfish (under 35 inches)	No limit	None
Blue & Flathead Catfish (35 inches or larger)	1 of each (statewide)	35 inches
Channel Catfish (under 28 inches)	No limit	None
Channel Catfish (28 inches or larger)	1 (statewide)	28 inches
Largemouth, Smallmouth, & Spotted Bass	5 (singly or in combination)	12 inches
Muskellunge	1	None
Striped, Hybrid-Striped, & White Bass	30 (singly or in combination)	No more than 4 over 15 inches
Trout	5 (singly or in combination)	None
Walleye, Sauger, & Saugeye	6 (singly or in combination)	None
Yellow Perch	30	None



Download the free
HuntFish OH app



The free app makes buying licenses easy and convenient. You can also find boat ramps, wildlife areas, and more; utilize the weather widget for sunrise and sunset times and area forecasts; reference fishing and hunting regulations; and set notifications to provide alerts on upcoming seasons, license renewal, events, and more.

LAKE ERIE REGULATIONS

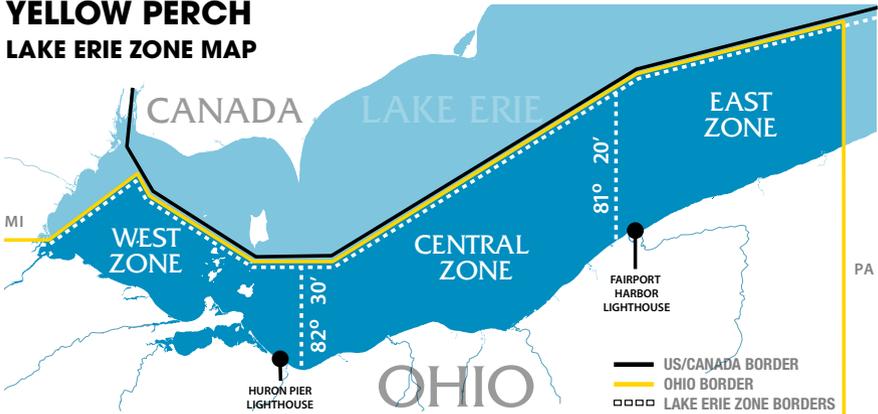
These regulations apply to the Lake Erie Sport Fishing District as described here: Lake Erie and areas immediately upstream in creeks, rivers, and tributaries. The following regulations for walleye, sauger, saugeye, yellow perch, black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted), and white bass apply to the waters of Lake Erie, its embayments including Maumee Bay, Sandusky Bay, East Harbor, Middle Harbor, and West Harbor, and from where Lake Erie tributaries enter the lake upstream to the following end points:

- **Arcola, Wheeler, Cowles, and Indian creeks:** U.S. Route 20 bridges;
- **Ashtabula River:** E. 24th Street bridge;
- **Black River:** State Route 611 bridge;
- **Conneaut Creek:** Main Street bridge (downtown to Conneaut);
- **Euclid Creek and Chagrin River:** State Route 283 bridges;
- **Rocky River:** Detroit Road bridge;
- **Sandusky River:** Waterworks dam in Tiffin;
- **Maumee River:** First dam upstream (Grand Rapids, Ohio);
- **Vermilion River:** State Route 2 bridge;
- **Grand River:** State Route 535 bridge;
- **Cuyahoga River:** Harvard Road bridge.

All statewide regulations apply to Ohio waters of Lake Erie EXCEPT for those listed below.

SPECIES	DATES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth, Smallmouth, & Spotted Bass	March 1 - April 30, 2026	5 (singly or in combination)	14 inches
	May 1 - June 26, 2026	1 (singly or in combination)	18 inches
	June 27, 2026 - Feb. 28, 2027	5 (singly or in combination)	14 inches
Walleye, Saugeye, & Sauger	March 1 - April 30, 2026	6 (singly or in combination)	15 inches
	May 1, 2026 - Feb. 28, 2027	to be announced late April	15 inches
Striped, Hybrid, & White Bass	Open year-round	None	None
Yellow Perch	March 1 - April 30, 2026	West Zone: 30	None
		Central Zone: 10	
		East Zone: 20	
	May 1, 2026 - Feb. 28, 2027	to be announced late April	

**YELLOW PERCH
LAKE ERIE ZONE MAP**



LAKE ERIE REGULATIONS FOR TROUT AND SALMON

Lake Erie proper and the entire length of all Lake Erie creeks, rivers, and tributaries.

SPECIES	DATES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Trout* & Salmon	March 1 - May 15, 2026	2 (singly or in combination)	12 inches
	May 16 - Aug. 31, 2026	5 (singly or in combination)	
	Sept. 1, 2026 - Feb. 28, 2027	2 (singly or in combination)	

*Brook trout may not be taken or possessed from the Ashtabula, Chagrin, Conneaut, and Grand rivers and their tributaries.

EXCEPTION TO ABOVE REGULATIONS

For the waters of Cold Creek upstream of State Route 2 (Erie County).

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Trout & Salmon	5 (singly or in combination)	None

OHIO RIVER REGULATIONS

The following Ohio River fishing regulations are the result of agreements between the fish and wildlife agencies of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Regulations differ between the Ohio–Kentucky border (Western Unit) and the Ohio–West Virginia border (Eastern Unit). Anglers must abide by each state’s specified regulations for information not specified below.

- It is illegal to snag fish in the Ohio waters of the Ohio River for any species during any time of the year.
- A maximum of three lines are permitted statewide, including the counties that comprise the Ohio River fishing units.

OHIO RIVER AGREEMENT REGULATIONS WESTERN UNIT • OHIO/KENTUCKY

In the Western Unit, boat anglers on the Ohio River must follow the fishing regulations of the state by which they are licensed. Anglers fishing from the Ohio bank must follow Ohio’s fishing regulations.

OHIO REGULATIONS

These **Ohio regulations** apply to boat anglers when fishing in Ohio waters, shoreline anglers when fishing on the Ohio shoreline, and all anglers in Ohio embayments and tributaries within the **Western Unit**.

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth, Smallmouth, & Spotted Bass	6 (singly or in combination)	12 inches

UNIFIED OHIO AND KENTUCKY REGULATIONS

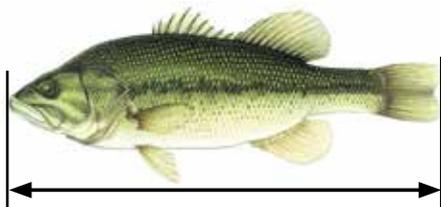
The following are the **ONLY unified regulations** and must be followed when fishing on or within a quarter mile of the Ohio River on its embayments and tributaries to the first riffle or dam in the **Western Unit**.

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Black & White Crappie	30 (singly or in combination)	None
Muskellunge	2	30 inches
Striped, Hybrid-Striped, & White Bass	30 (no more than 4 over 15 inches)	None
Walleye, Sauger, & Saugeye	6 (singly or in combination)	14 inches

KENTUCKY REGULATIONS

Kentucky regulations apply to boat anglers fishing beyond the 1792 low water mark, identified at wildohio.gov.

HOW TO MEASURE A FISH



MEASURE THE FISH WITH ITS MOUTH CLOSED AND THE TAIL FIN COMPRESSED FOR TOTAL LENGTH.

OHIO RIVER AGREEMENT REGULATIONS

EASTERN UNIT • OHIO/WEST VIRGINIA

The eastern unit consists of Lawrence County east of South Point, and Gallia, Meigs, Athens, Washington, Monroe, Belmont, Jefferson, and Columbiana counties. West Virginia and Ohio will honor the other state's fishing licenses along their common borders on the main stem of the Ohio River, including its banks and embayments, and tributaries to the landmark location listed in Publication 404, Waterfowl Hunting and Fishing on the Ohio River (found at wildohio.gov), or call 1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543). Boundaries for areas not listed in this publication extend to the first riffle. This agreement applies to West Virginia and Ohio residents only.

OHIO REGULATIONS

These **Ohio regulations** apply only to shore anglers when fishing on the Ohio shoreline and all anglers in Ohio embayments and tributaries within the Eastern Unit.

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Black & White Crappie	30 (singly or in combination)	None
Walleye, Sauger, & Saugeye	6 (singly or in combination)	None

UNIFIED OHIO AND WEST VIRGINIA REGULATIONS

The following are the **ONLY unified regulations** in this agreement and must be followed when fishing on or within a quarter mile of the Ohio River on its embayments and tributaries to the first riffle or dam in the **Eastern Unit**.

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth, Smallmouth, & Spotted Bass	6 (singly or in combination)	12 inches
Muskellunge	2	30 inches
Striped, Hybrid-Striped, & White Bass	30 (no more than 4 over 15 inches)	None

WEST VIRGINIA REGULATIONS

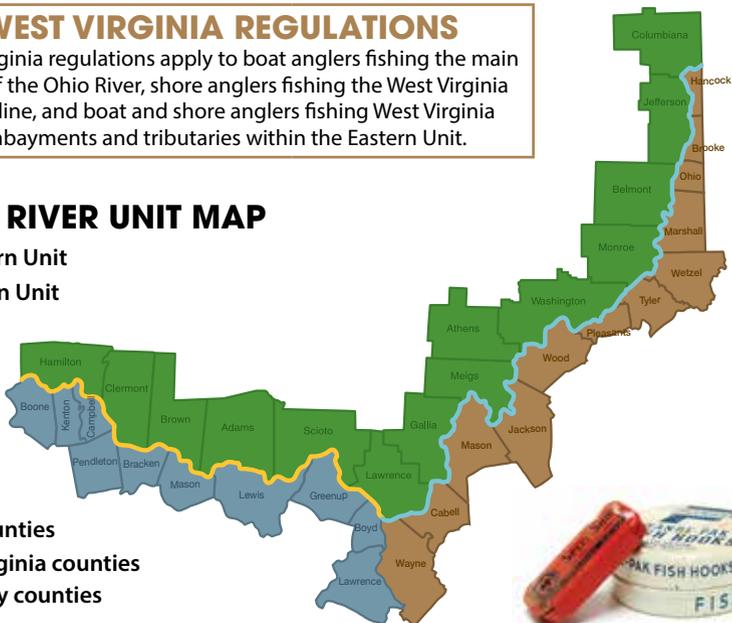
West Virginia regulations apply to boat anglers fishing the main stem of the Ohio River, shore anglers fishing the West Virginia shoreline, and boat and shore anglers fishing West Virginia embayments and tributaries within the Eastern Unit.

OHIO RIVER UNIT MAP

- Western Unit
- Eastern Unit

LEGEND

- Ohio counties
- West Virginia counties
- Kentucky counties



SITE-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

INLAND LAKES, RESERVOIRS, RIVERS, AND STREAMS

These regulations apply to the waters listed under the **LOCATION** column.

SPECIES	LOCATION	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth, Smallmouth, & Spotted Bass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Su An 	Special limits are posted	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knox 	5	18 inches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams • Blue Rock • Caldwell • Cowan • Dale Walborn • Greenfield • Ohio-Erie Canal • Hancock County Wetlands • Pine • Resthaven Pond No. 8 • Ross • Rush Creek Lake • Rush Run Lake • Seneca • Wellington Reservoir South • Zepernick 	5	15 inches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acton • Findley • Hargus • Highlandtown • Lake Snowden • New Lyme • Paint Creek Lake • Salt Fork • Silver Creek Lake • Upper Sandusky No. 2 	4 fish split daily limit	2 fish less than 15 inches, & 2 fish 15 inches or longer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area • Belmont • Guilford • Jesse Owens State Park & Wildlife Area • Killdeer Plains ponds No. 30 and No. 33 • Kiser • Long • Oxbow • Spencer • St. Joseph Wildlife Area • Tycoon • Wingfoot • Wolf Run 	3 fish split daily limit	2 fish less than 14 inches, & 1 fish 20 inches or longer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burr Oak • Dow • Fox • Hammertown (Jackson City Reservoir) • Lake Rupert (Wellston City Reservoir) • Slope Creek (Barnesville No. 3) • Turkey Creek 	5	None may be taken between 12 & 15 inches
Black & White Crappie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alum Creek Lake • Buckeye • Caesar Creek Lake • Deer Creek Lake (Fayette and Pickaway counties) • Delaware (including the Olentangy River upstream to the Waldo dam, and Whetstone Creek upstream to State Route 229) • Dillon • East Fork • Ferguson • Grand Lake St. Marys • Hoover • Indian • Lake Milton • Loramie • Mahoning River between Berlin Lake and Lake Milton • Metzger • Mosquito Creek Lake • O'Shaughnessy • Paint Creek Lake • Piedmont • Pleasant Hill • Portage Lakes: East, North, Turkeyfoot, and West • Rocky Fork • Salt Fork • Seneca • Tappan • Veterans Memorial 	30	9 inches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killdeer Plains • Oxbow • St. Joseph River Wildlife Area 	10	None
Sunfish (all species)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killdeer Plains • Oxbow • St. Joseph River Wildlife Area 	10	None
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area • Jesse Owens State Park and Wildlife Area 	20 (singly or in combination)	None

SPECIES	LOCATION	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Trout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Creek from the first Fairfield County Road 69 bridge (east of the junction of County Roads 26 and 69) to the U.S. Route 33 bridge in Hocking County Clear Fork of the Mohican River in Ashland County 	2	None
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mad River and its tributaries Clear Fork of the Mohican River in Richland County 	2	12 inches
Brook Trout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashtabula, Chagrin, Grand, and Conneaut rivers and their tributaries 	Possession is prohibited	
Walleye, Saugeye, & Sauger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berlin • C.J. Brown • LaDue Lake Milton, including the Mahoning River connecting Berlin Lake and Lake Milton Mosquito Creek Lake • West Branch 	6	15 inches
Paddlefish	Paddlefish may not be taken or possessed in or within 2,000 feet of the following reservoirs and dams: Caesar Creek, Deer Creek, East Fork, and Paint Creek.		

PYMATUNING LAKE REGULATIONS OHIO - PENNSYLVANIA

Either an Ohio or Pennsylvania fishing license may be used when fishing from a boat; however, a Pennsylvania fishing license is required to take fish, frogs, or turtles from the shore of the Pennsylvania side or from any island. Fish may be taken only by angling, except carp and suckers which may be taken with longbow and arrow, or spears. Special regulations apply to frogs, turtles, tadpoles, minnows, and ice fishing — see the Pennsylvania regulations for specific information.

Pymatuning Lake anglers fishing in either Ohio or Pennsylvania waters may use up to three fishing lines, whether fastened to a pole, a rod and reel, or hand-held. Anglers may use up to three hooks on each line.

SPECIES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Black & White Crappie	20 (singly or in combination)	9 inches
Largemouth & Smallmouth Bass	5 (singly or in combination)	12 inches
Muskellunge	2	30 inches
Walleye	6	15 inches
All other fish	No Limit	None

AVAILABLE 24/7

Turn In a Poacher, Inc.



CALL 1-800-POACHER

TURN IN A POACHER

IF YOU OBSERVE A WILDLIFE VIOLATION

1-800-POACHER

(1-800-762-2437)

OR WILDOHIO.GOV

SITE-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

MAHONING, MAUMEE, PORTAGE, & SANDUSKY RIVERS

The following regulations are in effect from **March 1 through April 30, 2026.**

NO FISHING WITH A LINE WITH MORE THAN A SINGLE HOOK.

The line may not have a hook larger than ½ inch from shank to point, or lure having more than a single hook larger than ½ inch from shank to point. Double and treble hooks are prohibited. These regulations apply to the following areas:

- The Maumee River from the Grand Rapids Providence Dam to a line in the Maumee Bay from Little Cedar Point to Turtle Island;
- The Sandusky River from the Waterworks Dam in Tiffin to a line running ¼ mile east of and parallel to the full length of the Norfolk Southern railroad bridge in Sandusky Bay;
- The Portage River from State Route 19 to the dam at Elmore;
- The Mahoning River from the dam at Berlin Reservoir to Lake Milton.

FISHING IS ALLOWED ONLY FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- The Maumee River from the Ohio Turnpike bridge to the easternmost point of Missionary Island in Wood County, and from the State Route 295 bridge to the Grand Rapids Providence Dam;
- The Sandusky River from the Waterworks Dam in Tiffin to the northern tip of Brady's Island in Fremont;
- The Portage River from State Route 19 to the dam at Elmore;
- The Mahoning River from the dam at Berlin Reservoir to Lake Milton.



STATE ENDANGERED FISH SPECIES

The fish listed below are protected in all Ohio waters and if caught must be immediately released back into its originating waterbody.

Possession of these fish is prohibited: alligator gar, bigeye shiner, blacknose shiner, brook trout*, cisco (or lake herring), gilt darter, goldeye, iowa darter, lake sturgeon, longhead darter, longnose sucker, mountain brook lamprey, northern brook lamprey, northern madtom, Ohio lamprey, pirate perch, popeye shiner, pugnose minnow, shoal chub, short-nose gar, shovelnose sturgeon, spotted darter, spotted gar, tongue-tied minnow, and western banded killifish.

*Taking or possessing brook trout is prohibited in the Ashtabula, Chagrin, Conneaut, and Grand rivers and their tributaries.

OHIO FISH TAG

Anglers may encounter fish from Lake Erie, the Ohio River, or any of Ohio's reservoirs which are tagged to improve the Division of Wildlife's knowledge and management of the state's fisheries. The fish may be kept but please remove the tag, rinse with water, and store the tag at room temperature. Call the number printed on the tag or visit wildohio.gov to report when and where the fish was caught.

Tagged Lake Erie walleye will have up to two external tags and one internal transmitter. Please remove the tags and transmitter. Call (419) 625-8062 to report tagged Lake Erie walleye. A \$100 reward is offered for information on the external tag and transmitter in the event that you catch and keep a tagged walleye.



FROG & TURTLE REGULATIONS

Reptiles and amphibians may not be taken by shooting, except green frogs and bullfrogs which may be taken with archery equipment.

SPECIES	DATES	DAILY LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Bullfrog & Green Frog	June 12, 2026 - April 30, 2027	15 (singly or in combination)	None
Snapping Turtle & Softshell Turtle	July 1 - December 31, 2026	None	11 inches

FROG SEASON

Frog season is open from 6 p.m. on June 12, 2026 (the second Friday in June) through April 30, 2027. Only bullfrogs and green frogs may be taken. No more than 15 (singly or in combination) may be taken or possessed in any one day.

Bullfrogs and green frogs may be taken by any method except:

- By shooting, except with archery equipment;
- A foothold or body-gripping trap;
- Deleterious or stupefying substances;
- Chemicals;
- Smoke;
- Explosives.



TURTLE SEASON

Turtle season is open July 1 through December 31, 2026. Only snapping and softshell turtles may be legally taken. Snapping turtles and softshell turtles must have a straight-line carapace length of 11 inches or greater to be taken, and there is no daily limit. A turtle trap must be marked with the name and address or customer identification number of the owner or user. All traps must be checked once every 24 hours.

It is illegal to take, collect, or possess the eggs of snapping turtles or softshell turtles. See wildohio.gov for additional regulations.

Turtles taken from the wild cannot be sold, bartered, or traded.

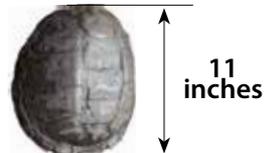
Snapping turtles and softshell turtles may be taken by any method except:

- By shooting;
- Turtle traps having mesh measuring less than 4 inches on a side, unless such traps are provided with an escape ring of at least 6 inches in diameter leading out of the trap and held open at all times;
- Turtle traps placed in water having wings or leads;
- A foothold or body-gripping trap;
- Deleterious or stupefying substances;
- Chemicals; ■ Smoke; ■ Explosives.



PLEASE REPORT YOUR TURTLE HARVEST AT WILDOHIO.GOV OR SCAN THE QR CODE.

HOW TO MEASURE A STRAIGHT-LINE CARAPACE LENGTH



TROTLINES, BANKLINES, SETLINES, CAST NETS, AND FLOATLINES

TROTLINES

A trotline is a fishing line having suspended from it, at frequent intervals, vertical lines with baited hooks attached. Trotlines must be marked with the name and address or customer identification number of the user. Trotlines must be anchored. A trotline may not be made of wire or cable. It is unlawful to set, use, or maintain a trotline that can be removed from the water by pulling from the shore.

No more than three trotlines are permitted in any one body of water in the Inland Fishing District. No more than 50 hooks per trotline are permitted. Trotlines may not be used within 1,000 feet downstream of any dam. All trotlines must be checked once every 24 hours.

A special trotline license is required in the Lake Erie Fishing District. This license may be obtained at the Sandusky Fisheries Research Unit, 305 East Shoreline Drive, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 (phone: 419-625-8062).

Trotlines may be used only in:

- Streams;
- Mosquito Lake north of the causeway and south of a line of buoys designating the wildlife refuge;
- Charles Mill Lake north of State Route 430;
- Clendening Lake east of State Route 799;
- Seneca Lake south of State Route 147;
- Tappan Lake above the gas line causeway and State Route 646;
- Atwood Lake north and east of State Route 542 North at Dellroy;
- Piedmont Lake in sections 11 and 12 of Kirkwood Township;
- Wills Creek Lake, except in the area directly in front of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District boat landing;
- Berlin Lake south and west of State Route 225;
- The inland part of Sandusky Bay commonly called Muddy Creek Bay;

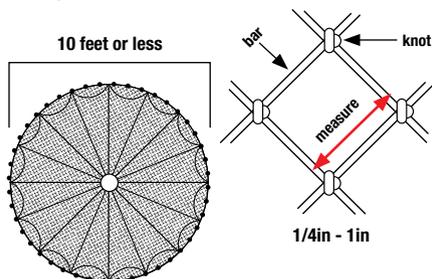
- The area of Grand Lake St. Marys bounded on the west by Prairie Creek, on the east by Big Chickasaw Creek, and on the north by a line of buoys extending east to west between Big Chickasaw and Prairie creeks. Trotlines may not be set in channels or across the mouths of channels or streams in Grand Lake St. Marys.

BANKLINES OR SETLINES

A bankline or setline is a fishing line attached to the bank. Banklines or setlines may be used to catch turtles and fish. The name and address or customer identification number of the user must be attached to each line. The maximum is 50 lines, each having a single hook (not a treble hook). The lines must be attached to the shore above water, but not to a boat, dam, dock, pier, pole, rod, or wall. No more than six banklines or setlines may be used in Ohio's public waters less than 700 surface acres in size. All lines must be checked once every 24 hours. All lines must be removed after completion of use.

CAST NETS

Forage fish and minnows may be taken with cast nets (see FORAGE FISH on page 17). All other fish are required to be released immediately unharmed. It is unlawful to use a cast net with a square mesh less than ¼ inch or larger than 1 inch on a side, or with a diameter greater than 10 feet. It is illegal to use a cast net within a distance of 1,000 feet downstream from any dam posted with Ohio Division of Wildlife signs indicating cast net use is prohibited.



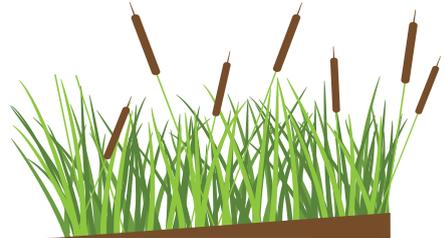
FLOATLINES

These regulations only apply to waters where a fishing license is required. A floatline is a fishing line suspended in the water under a float. Floats may not be made of glass or other shatterable material. Floats must bear the name and address or customer identification number of the user. Floats must be freely adrift and be attended by the user at all times. A floatline may only have one single hook (not a treble hook). It is unlawful to set, use, or maintain more than six floatlines in all public waters of the state of Ohio less than 700 surface acres in size.

Floatline or jug fishing is permitted in:

- All streams;
- Sandusky Bay west of the Conrail Railroad bridge;
- Berlin Lake south & west of State Route 225;
- Mosquito Lake north of the causeway and south of a line of buoys designating the waterfowl refuge;
- Charles Mill Lake north of State Route 430;
- Clendening Lake east of State Route 799;
- Tappan Lake above the gas line causeway and State Route 646;
- Seneca Lake south of State Route 147;
- Atwood Lake north and east of State Route 542 north at Dellroy;
- Piedmont Lake in Sections 11 and 12 of Kirkwood Township;
- Wills Creek Lake, except in the area directly in front of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District boat landing;
- All other public waters, except where prohibited by the owner in authority.

H2Ohio



THE FILTERING PROCESS
OF WETLANDS IMPROVES
WATER QUALITY.



H2.OHIO.GOV

Governor DeWine's H2Ohio program will help ensure healthy water quality in Ohio by providing the resources necessary to plan, develop, and implement targeted long-term solutions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Anglers may use a maximum of three fishing rods statewide.
- All fish may be taken by hand except bullheads, catfish, trout and salmon species statewide, and walleye and sauger in the Maumee and Sandusky rivers.
- It is unlawful to release any fish or invertebrate (crayfish, snails, insects, etc.) into public waters from which it did not originate.
- Fillets are required to be kept whole until an angler reaches their permanent residence, or until the fish are prepared for immediate consumption. Frozen fish are required to be transported in such a way that the fillets can be easily identified and counted. This does not apply to anglers with a receipt from a fish cleaning house, charter captain, or licensed fishing guide which states the date, number, and type of fish possessed. Fish must be transported whole or as a complete fillet while returning from the Lake Erie islands on a commercial ferry boat.
- It is unlawful for any person to possess a fish in any form or condition other than whole while on or unloading the fish from a boat, while wading, or while fishing on or in any waters in this state where a fishing license is required.
- It is unlawful to buy, sell, trade, or barter any fish taken from any waters in the state where an Ohio fishing license is required, regardless of the method of take. Exceptions apply for a commercial fishing license or bait dealer permit.
- Forage fish, rough fish, and game fish that do not have a possession or length limit on those waters may be cut up and used for bait, provided that the skin or head of the bait is intact so that the species is visually identifiable.
- It is unlawful for the public to tag and release fish into any public water area.
- It is unlawful to introduce or release exotic species of fish or aquatic invertebrates (crayfish, snails, insects, etc.) into the wild.

FREE LICENSE

- Ohio residents born on or before December 31, 1937 may obtain a free license at any license outlet, or online at wildohio.gov.
- The following Ohio residents are also eligible for a free license, but **must submit a formal application**, which is available by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543):
 - Persons who are mobility impaired and require the assistance of another person to cast and retrieve;
 - Holders of veteran license plates displaying the international wheelchair symbol;
 - Certain veterans who are permanently disabled;
 - Residents of state and county institutions;
 - Former prisoners of war.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIREMENT

Any customer who applies for a license is required to provide their Social Security Number (SSN). Federal Statute 42 requires the SSN of any individual to whom the state issues a recreational hunting or fishing license. Applicants who do not have an active SSN must affirm their status at the time of application. Applicants must also declare their residency and provide their full name, date of birth, gender, address, height, weight, hair color, and eye color. Once provided and recorded in the licensing system, applicants will only be required to update their information on file if it changes.

BAIT

It is unlawful for any person except licensed bait dealers to possess more than 100 crayfish, or in combination 500 crayfish, minnows, and other baitfish. A bait dealer's permit is required of persons buying or selling minnows, crayfish, and hellgrammites. This permit may be obtained at wildohio.gov.

It is unlawful for any person to release any fish or aquatic invertebrate, including but not limited to crayfish, snails and insects, into waters of the state from which it did not originate.

FORAGE FISH

Forage fish means freshwater drum (sheepshead), common carp, grass carp (in waters not stocked by the Ohio Division of Wildlife for vegetation control, as indicated by signs), bighead carp, silver carp, black carp, quillback, suckers, bowfin, longnose gar, buffalo, gizzard shad, and goldfish. These species may be taken by any method except by means of explosives, poisons, firearms, electricity, chemicals, nets (other than cast nets), seines, traps, or by snagging within 1,000 feet downstream of a posted dam or dam on the Muskingum River (see SNAGGING for additional information). Gizzard shad and rainbow smelt may be taken with a minnow seine, minnow dip net, or hand landing net.

CLAMS, MUSSELS, & MUSSEL SHELLS

Clams, mussels, or mussel shells may not be taken, possessed, or collected for any purpose.

FISHING LINES

Anglers may use a maximum of three fishing lines statewide, whether fastened to a pole, a rod and reel, or hand-held. Anglers may use up to three hooks on each line, except as provided in the Ohio Administrative Code.

MINNOW OR BAIT FISH TRAPS

It is illegal to set, use, or maintain a minnow or bait fish trap larger than 24 inches in length or 12 inches in width, **or with an opening greater than 2 inches in diameter or 2 inches in height**. A tag must be attached with the owner's name and address or their customer identification number.

MINNOW SEINES AND DIP NETS

Square mesh must not be larger than ½ inch on a side. Seine and net size limits and places where they may be used are as follows:

FISHING DISTRICT	MAXIMUM SIZE	WHERE AND WHEN THEY MAY BE USED
Minnow Seine: Inland	4 feet x 8 feet	Streams only, 4 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Minnow Seine: Lake Erie*	None	No Limit
Minnow Dip Net: Inland	4 feet, each side	All public fishing waters
Minnow Dip Net: Lake Erie*	6 feet, each side	All public fishing waters

* Including East and West harbors in Ottawa County, and waters where fishing with nets is licensed by law.

ARCHERY ANGLERS

Archery anglers may use bows of any draw weight. A fishing license is required. Archery equipment may be used to take bullfrogs, green frogs, and forage fish.

ICE ANGLERS

Ice anglers may use holes no larger than 12 inches in diameter. On Lake Erie, ice anglers may use holes no larger than 12 inches in width. Ice anglers may not use more than six tip-ups and three rods per person. All shelters and tip-ups must display the name and address or customer identification number of the owner or user.

A tip-up means a device consisting of a hook and line attached to a spring or other device which is capable of raising a small flag or other signaling device when a fish is biting or is hooked.

SNAGGING

Snagging with a hook to pierce and hook a fish in a part of the body other than the inside of the mouth is illegal for all fish except forage fish. In Lake Erie, it is also illegal to snag freshwater drum. Snagging any species of fish is illegal from September 1 to April 30 in the Ashtabula River, Chagrin River, Grand River, Rocky River, Vermilion River, Arcola Creek, Conneaut Creek, Cowles Creek, Euclid Creek, Indian Creek, Turkey Creek, and Wheeler Creek. It is illegal to snag any species of fish during any time of the year in the Ohio River. Snagging is prohibited within 1,000 feet downstream of any dam on the Muskingum River. Snagging is prohibited within 1,000 feet downstream of a dam where signs are posted. Hooks used for snagging may not be larger than 5/8 inch from shank to point.

FISH OHIO

- Applications for the Fish Ohio award are accepted at fishohio.gov. See below for how to measure your fish.
- Anglers will receive a Fish Ohio pin for their first entry each year, and a Master Angler pin for qualifying entries in **four** different species categories in the same year.
- Fish must be taken by legal angling and not from pay lakes. Deadline for online application is Dec. 31.
- Possible state-record fish must be kept for verification by the Outdoor Writers of Ohio. For more information, go to outdoorwritersofohio.org.

QUALIFYING FISH OHIO SIZES

Qualifying species and sizes listed below

LAKE ERIE	MIN. LENGTH
Freshwater Drum	24 inches
Lake Trout	31 inches
Smallmouth Bass	19 inches
Steelhead Trout	28 inches
Walleye	28 inches
White Bass	15 inches
Yellow Perch	13 inches

- Above qualifying sizes apply to Lake Erie and its tributaries.

RIVERS, LAKES, PONDS	MIN. LENGTH
Freshwater Drum	20 inches
Smallmouth Bass	18 inches
Walleye	25 inches
White Bass	14 inches
Yellow Perch	12 inches

- Above qualifying sizes apply to the Ohio River; inland rivers or streams; inland lakes or reservoirs; and private ponds.

ALL WATERS	MIN. LENGTH
Blue Catfish	35 inches
Bowfin	23 inches
Brown Trout	20 inches
Bullhead	14 inches
Carp	28 inches
Channel Catfish	26 inches
Crappie	13 inches
Flathead Catfish	35 inches
Hybrid-Striped Bass	21 inches
Largemouth Bass	20 inches
Longnose Gar	34 inches
Muskellunge	40 inches
Northern Pike	32 inches
Rock Bass	9 inches
Sauger	16 inches
Saugeye	21 inches
Spotted Bass	15 inches
Sucker	20 inches
Sunfish	9 inches

- Above qualifying sizes apply to all Ohio waters.

STAY CONNECTED

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FISH FOR YOUR HEALTH

The Ohio Department of Health recommends limiting fish consumption to one meal per week, unless a specific advisory is listed for a water body or type of fish.

Ohio anglers typically eat two or fewer meals per month of wild-caught fishes. The greatest amount of fish eaten in Ohio comes from Lake Erie, where both sport and commercial fisheries operate. Current Lake Erie advisories indicate that it is safe to eat one meal per week of walleye, and two meals per week of yellow perch. The Ohio Department of Health lists current guidance on safe consumption of wild-caught fish in Ohio for specific waters and fishes at

odh.ohio.gov/ohfishadvisory

OHIO'S RECORD FISH



Potential state record fish are evaluated and certified by the Record Fish Committee of the Outdoor Writers of Ohio. Among other criteria, potential record fish are weighed on a certified scale and identified by Ohio Division of Wildlife fisheries biologists.

SPECIES	WEIGHT	YEAR
Black Crappie	4.5 lbs	1981
Blue Catfish	101.11 lbs	2024
Bluegill	3.28 lbs	1990
Brown Trout	14.675 lbs	2012
Bullhead	4.25 lbs	1986
Carp	53.65 lbs	2013
Channel Catfish	37.65 lbs	1992
Flathead Catfish	76.5 lbs	1979
Hybrid-Striped Bass	20.83 lbs	2024
Lake Trout	26.63 lbs	2017
Largemouth Bass	13.13 lbs	1976

SPECIES	WEIGHT	YEAR
Muskellunge	55.13 lbs	1972
Northern Pike	22.78 lbs	2016
Rainbow Trout	21.3 lbs	2010
Sauger	7.31 lbs	1981
Saugeye	14.04 lbs	2004
Smallmouth Bass	9.5 lbs	1993
Spotted Bass	5.25 lbs	1967
Walleye	16.19 lbs	1999
White Bass	4 lbs	1983
White Crappie	3.91 lbs	2024
Yellow Perch	2.86 lbs	2016

For the full list of Ohio records and an application, visit outdoorwritersofohio.org/ohio-record-fish

WILD OHIO MAGAZINE

Go to wildohio.gov to sign up online, or visit any store that sells fishing licenses and sign up to have the magazine mailed to you.



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FOR ONLY \$5**

