
Catfish to be Stocked in Connecticut

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DEP Expands Urban Fishing Program into Waterbury

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that channel catfish will be stocked into eleven lakes and ponds located throughout the State. The stocking is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, June 3rd, and marks the second year that the DEP has released catfish into state waters. Included among the 11 lakes are five waters that are part of DEP's new Urban Fishing Program.

"Catfish are a favorite food fish and provide great fishing during the summer. With the recent spike in gasoline costs, providing good family fishing close to home meshes well with the DEP's No Child Left Inside initiative," said DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy.

Creating and enhancing fisheries in urban waters is part of a new program that began two years ago when the DEP stocked rainbow trout into Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport. The program was expanded last year with the addition of Keney Pond (Hartford), Lake Wintergreen (Hamden) and Mohegan Park Pond (Norwich).

"We have further expanded our Urban Fishing program in 2008 to include the City of Waterbury. Trout were stocked in the spring into Fulton Park Pond and, for the first time ever, catfish will be stocked into Lakewood Lake" said Commissioner McCarthy.

The goal of DEP's Urban Fishing Program is to create year-round fishing opportunities in urban waters by combining trout stocking (in the spring and fall) with catfish stocking (in late spring or early summer). "We're bringing the fishing to the people," said Commissioner McCarthy. The Urban Ponds will be stocked with large catfish weighing over two pounds each and measuring 14 to 18 inches in length.

In addition to the urban waters, six other Connecticut lakes will be stocked with smaller 9-12 inch catfish that are expected to survive for many years and grow to much larger size. "The State's only significant population of channel catfish is found in the Connecticut River where they support a very popular fishery. Channel catfish have the potential to grow to true trophy-size proportions," said Edward Parker, Chief of the Bureau of Natural Resources. The current Connecticut state record channel catfish weighed 29 lbs 6 oz and was caught in 2004 from Mashapaug Lake in Union while the world record is a 58 lb catfish taken in South Carolina.

"This new DEP program will establish channel catfish in lakes where we know there is sufficient forage to support a population of large gamefish," explained Parker. The DEP believes that the combination of a popular gamefish stocked into waters that are selected based on scientific data is a winning combination. "We've had great success in using this approach to develop exciting fisheries for northern pike and walleye and now we're looking forward to similar results with catfish," said Parker.

itionally, catfish are the fourth most sought after type of fish according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Catfish are also a favorite food fish and account for approximately half of the value of all aquaculture production in the United States.

Lakes and Ponds scheduled to be stocked with channel catfish

Urban Fishing Waters (14-18" catfish)

Bunnells Pond (Bridgeport)
Keney Park Pond (Hartford)
Mohegan Park Pond (Norwich)
Lake Wintergreen (Hamden)
Lakewood Lake (Waterbury)

Other Lakes & Ponds (9-12" catfish)

Black Pond (Meriden, Middlefield)
Lower Bolton Lake (Bolton)
Maltby Lakes #2 and #3 (Orange, West Haven)
Pattaconk Lake (Chester)
Quonnipaug Lake (Guilford)
Silver Lake (Berlin, Meriden)

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