Central New Jersey Warmwater 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 habitats for largemouth bass including deep lakes, shallow lakes, lakes with aquatic vegetation, small freshwater rivers, and small pond perimeters. Aspinwall Lake, Parvin State Park, and Round Valley Reservoir offer excellent largemouth bass fishing opportunities.

When
Bass move into shallows in spring and remain through early summer and late fall. September and October provide ideal bass fishing opportunities.

How
Largemouth bass are very active during the spring, early summer, and fall. Spring and fall are the preferred times to catch largemouth bass since they prefer cooler water.

Smallmouth Bass
Best known for their infinitely large and slender line profiles, smallmouth bass are one of the most popular species to catch.

Where
Smallmouth prefer cool, clear, rocky rivers and streams. Musconetcong Reservoir has an excellent smallmouth bass fishery as well as Round Valley Reservoir. Smallmouth bass have a wider range of habitat tolerance than largemouth bass. They can be found in cooler water as well as shallower and warmer areas.

When
This time of year is spring through fall. Fall probably the best when convict smallmouth bass begin to school up and feed heavily before winter.

How
Minnows, crayfish, and night crawlers are common live baits. Crumshuff lures including tubes and jigs work well in addition to the same baits used for largemouth bass.

Chain pickerel can be found in many largemouth bass waters where they have, pickerel prefer vegetated and weedy cover.

Where
Chain pickerel live in wide range of habitats and are one of the few game fish that are able to tolerate the less productive waters. The majority of the year pickerel can be located in cooler water near structure.

How
Chain pickerel prefer your familiar and common night crawlers or minnows. Spring and fall are excellent times to target chain pickerel since they prefer cooler water.

Crappies are not always on the bottom

Spring being the two best months.

Where
Manasquan Reservoir, Round Valley Reservoir, and Spruce Run Reservoir are popular locations among anglers.

Northern Pike
The northern pike is a very aggressive, surface feeding trophy fish to relatively shallow weed beds and riprap areas along the shoreline. As the weather begins to warm, the pike begin to school up and feed heavily.

Where
Northern pike waters in our state include Spisal Reservoir, Parvin State Park, DeGray Lake, and the Millstone River. The pike prefer to inhabit in smaller areas of the lake and the closer you get to the shore the better.

When
Best during the colder months of spring and fall. Pike feed heavily in daylight with morning considering the best feeding period.

How
Large shiners fished with bobbers or jigs fished off drop-offs in lakes and rivers. Alphine tube jigs are recommended for catching the best. Cast or handline lures use spinners and spoons are very effective.

Striped Bass Hybrid
The striped bass hybrid is a cross between a white bass and a channel catfish. The combined traits of two species result in surface feeding and strong fighting fish.

Where
Mansuquin and Spisal Reservoirs are two outstanding tributaries for striped bass. In Mansuquin one of our primary rivers of fall and winter months. In Spisal Bass, they are found in the top 10 feet of the water column during the summer. They will feed to over 10 feet as well as any other time of year.

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

How
Though two species of crappie are present in New Jersey (black and white), the black crappie is more widespread and abundant. Black crappies are crappies are most commonly found in a lake or pond, Oriented fats can be found in almost every New Jersey lake, pond, slow moving river or stream.

Where
Black and white crappies are found in almost every New Jersey lake, pond, slow moving river or stream. Although bony, their flesh is very tasty and good eating.

When
June – September is their prime spawning time and they will school in schools of up to 1000 fish.

How
Crappie love structure! They have a tendency to school in open water, relating to the structure.

Brown Bullhead
The brown bullhead is found in most urban and suburban waters. It is found in most New Jersey lakes, ponds, and streams.

Where
The brown bullhead is found in most urban and suburban waters. It is found in most New Jersey lakes, ponds, and streams.

When
Fishing for brown bullheads is very simple. They are easy to catch with all types of bait.

How
When fishing for bullheads, look for any signs of active feeding. They are most active at night. Summer evenings are the most popular times for bullheads.

Sunfish
The sunfish is one of the most cold tolerant freshwater species in New Jersey. The most commonly sought species are bluegill, pumpkinseed, and redear sunfish.

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

When
The month of May though October are the most productive times for catching sunfish.

How
The most popular method is hook and line with night crawlers or worms.

Yellow Perch
Young perch show excellent fighting qualities and are often considered good fighting fish. Perch are one of the premier species for angling in the Northeast.

Where
Lake perch are found in most of the lakes and small lakes of the state. They will feed to over 10 feet as well as any other time of year.

When
Spring and fall are the most productive times for catching sunfish. Use 1/16-oz. or 1/8-oz. shiner jigs on night crawlers or worms. Albine tube jigs are recommended for catching the best. Cast or handline lures use spinners and spoons are very effective.

Carp
A member of the minnow family, carp are long-lived, hard fighting fish that grow to 20 pounds.

Where
Carp are found in most ponds, lakes, and rivers. The most productive times for catching carp are during the spring and fall. Use 1/16-oz. or 1/8-oz. shiner jigs on night crawlers or worms. Albine tube jigs are recommended for catching the best. Cast or handline lures use spinners and spoons are very effective.

One of the most widespread and abundant freshwater fish in New Jersey. Largemouth Bass can be found in almost every New Jersey lake, pond, slow moving river or stream.

Where
Some of the most popular locations include Aspinwall Lake, Parvin State Park, and Round Valley Reservoir. Largemouth Bass can be found in almost every New Jersey lake, pond, slow moving river or stream.

When
Early summer. Caught in greater numbers in the colder months with November and December providing some of the best.

How
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