

CREEL (HARVEST) AND LENGTH LIMITS

The tables that follow give statewide creel (harvest) and length limits for major sport fish and exceptions for major rivers and lakes. Regulations for many smaller lakes and boat access areas are posted on site, and posted regulations are in effect (see "OTHER USES" under Department Owned Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites, page 15). For smaller lakes, information can be found online at: www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing. Creel limits are per person per day. Changes for 2017 are marked in red.

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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Bass

Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted

		LAKES	
5 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Briery Creek Lake	No bass 16 to 24 inches, only 1 per day longer than 24 inches	
	Buggs Island (Kerr)	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	Claytor Lake	No bass less than 12 inches	
	Flannagan Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches	
	Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	Lake Moomaw	No bass less than 12 inches	
	Philpott Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches	
	Quantico Marine Base waters	No bass 12 to 15 inches	
	Smith Mt. Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	South Holston Reservoir	No smallmouth less than 15 inches, 15 spotted bass per day	
			RIVERS
	Clinch River—within the boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell or Tazewell counties	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 bass per day longer than 20 inches	
	Dan River and tributaries down-stream from the Union Street Dam, Danville	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	James River—Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt Cty) downstream to the 14th St. Bridge in Richmond	No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches	
	New River—Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA-WV state line and its tributaries Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County, Big Walker Creek from the Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge downstream to the New River and Wolf Creek from the Narrows Dam downstream to the New River in Giles County. (This does not include Claytor Lake which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the dam.)	No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches	
	North Fork Holston River—Rt. 91 Bridge upstream of Saltville, Va. downstream to the Va-Tn state line	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches	
	North Fork Shenandoah River— Rt. 42 bridge, Rockingham Co. downstream to the confluence with S. Fork Shenandoah at Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches	
	Potomac River - Virginia tidal tributaries above Rt. 301 bridge	No bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15	
	Roanoke (Staunton) River—and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches	
	Shenandoah River— Confluence of South Fork and North Fork rivers, Front Royal, downstream to the Warren Dam, near Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches	
	Base of Warren Dam, near Front Royal downstream to Rt. 17/50 bridge	No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches	
	Rt. 17/50 bridge downstream to VA–WV state line	No bass 11 to 14 inches	
South Fork Shenandoah River— Confluence of North and South rivers below Port Republic, downstream to Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah	No bass 11 to 14 inches		
Base of Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah, downstream to Luray Dam, near Luray	No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches		
Base of Luray Dam, near Luray, downstream to the confluence with North Fork of Shenandoah, Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches		
Staunton River—Leesville Dam (Campbell County) downstream to the mouth of Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	No smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches		

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Striped Bass

Landlocked Striped Bass and Landlocked Striped Bass X White Bass Hybrids

4 per day in the aggregate No fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir including the Staunton (Roanoke) River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to the Union Street Dam (Danville)	October 1–May 31: 2 per day in the aggregate (combined) No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 24 inches	
		June 1–September 30: 4 per day in the aggregate (combined) No length limit.	
	Lake Gaston		4 per day in the aggregate (combined)
			October 1–May 31: No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches
			June 1–September 30: No length limit
	Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam		2 per day in the aggregate (combined)
		November 1–May 31: No striped bass 30 to 40 inches	
		June 1–October 31: No length limit	

Anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay

Creel and length limits shall be as set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters	None apply	None apply
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Striped bass in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay

2 per day No striped bass less than 18 inches	None apply	None apply
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Walleye, Saugeye

5 per day in the aggregate No walleye or saugeye less than 18 inches	New River upstream of Buck Dam in Carroll County	No walleye less than 20 inches
	New River downstream from Claytor Dam	No walleye less than 18 inches
	Claytor Lake and the New River upstream of Claytor Lake Dam to Buck Dam in Carroll County	February 1–May 31: 2 walleye per day; no walleye 19 to 28 inches
		June 1–January 31: 5 walleye per day; no walleye less than 20 inches

Sauger

2 per day No statewide length limits	None apply	None apply
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White Bass

5 per day No statewide length limits	South Holston Reservoir	No harvest or possession (catch and release only)
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Chain Pickerel

5 per day No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs	No daily limit
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Northern Pike

2 per day No pike less than 20 inches	None apply	None apply
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Muskellunge

2 per day No muskellunge less than 30 inches	New River-Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to Claytor Dam, including Claytor Lake	1 per day No muskellunge less than 42 inches
	New River-Claytor Dam downstream to VA-WV state line	1 per day June 1–last day of February: No muskellunge between 40 to 48 inches March 1–May 31: No muskellunge less than 48 inches

Bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding crappie rock bass (redeye) and Roanoke bass

50 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
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Crappie (black or white)

25 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
	Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs	No crappie less than 10 inches; South Holston Res.–15 per day in the aggregate (combined)

Rock Bass (redeye)

25 per day No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate (combined) with Roanoke bass No rock bass less than 8 inches
	South Holston Reservoir	20 per day

Roanoke Bass

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limits	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate (combined) with rock bass No Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
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Perch (yellow and white)

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit	Lake Moomaw	10 per day
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Trout

6 per day 7 inch minimum size	See Trout Waters, pages 29-33	
No minimum size limit	South Holston Reservoir	7 fish per day—only 2 lake trout. No minimum size.

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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Catfish

Channel, White and Flathead

20 per day No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
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Blue

20 per day No statewide length limits	Kerr Reservoir	20 per day, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	James River and its tributaries below the fall line and York River and its tributaries (including the Pamunkey River and Mataponi River) below the fall line	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	All rivers below the fall line other than the James River and its tributaries and the York River and its tributaries	No daily limit

Yellow, brown, black, flat, and snail bullhead

No daily limit No length limits	None apply	None apply
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All Catfish

	South Holston Reservoir	20 per day, only 1 catfish per day longer than 34 inches
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American Shad and Hickory Shad

VA waters of Lake Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir and tributaries to include the Dan and Staunton rivers

No possession: (catch and release only)	None apply	None apply
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Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay

Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm. for these species in tidal rivers	None apply	None apply
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Meherrin River below Emporia Dam, Nottway River, Blackwater River, (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay

10 per day in the aggregate (combined) No length limits	None apply	None apply
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Anadromous (coastal) Alewife and Blueback Herring

Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay and their tributaries

Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm. for these species in tidal rivers	The Virginia Marine Resources Commission enacted a ban on the possession of river herring, effective January 1, 2012, due to the collapse of the stock, and to comply with an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries fishery management plan directive	
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Meherrin River, Nottway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries, plus Back Bay

No possession		
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Other native or naturalized nongame fish

20 per day No length limits	Statewide	See pages 25–26 for exceptions
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Threatened and endangered species

No possession	None apply	None apply
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Grass Carp

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit	Anglers may possess grass carp taken from inland public waters, except from Department-owned or -controlled lakes. Anglers must ensure that harvested grass carp are dead.	
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Northern Snakehead

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit	Anglers may possess a snakehead taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify the headquarters or a regional office of the department; notification may be made by calling (804) 367-2925.	
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Non-native (Exotic) Fish

See pages 25–26

Spotted Sea Trout

Back Bay, Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), North Landing River and their tributaries

4 per day, no fish less than 14 inches	None apply	None apply
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Red Drum

Back Bay, Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), North Landing River and their tributaries

1 per day between 18 and 27 inches	None apply	None apply
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Grey Trout

Back Bay, Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), North Landing River and their tributaries

1 per day, no fish less than 12 inches	None apply	None apply
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Southern Flounder

Back Bay, Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), North Landing River and their tributaries

6 per day, no fish less than 15 inches	None apply	None apply
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Longnose Gar

5 per day No statewide length limits		
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Bowfin

5 per day No statewide length limits		
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American Eel

25 per day; no eel less than 9 inches	Back Bay and North Landing River	No possession limit for those individuals possessing a permit obtained under-4VAC15-340-80
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