



Landlocked Salmon...

Landlocked salmon are swimming in Lake Waywayanda, Lake Aeroflex and Tilcon Lake, thanks to a stocking program initiated by NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife in 2006. Anglers now have an opportunity to fish for this unique coldwater sport fish close to home.

This hard-fighting salmonid species is the lake-dwelling form of the Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*. Unlike the anadromous Atlantic salmon, which migrates from saltwater to spawn in freshwater streams, the landlocked form completes its entire life cycle in freshwater. Landlocked salmon are native to eastern Canada and Maine, and have been successfully introduced to suitable waters outside their native range, in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York.

Only a handful of deep lakes in New Jersey have suitable year round habitat for coldwater fish like trout and salmon. Salmon prefer water temperatures less than 70°F and dissolved oxygen levels greater than 5 mg/L, but can withstand warmer, less oxygenated water for short periods.

Salmon were stocked in several New Jersey waters over a half-century ago, and the historical state record for landlocked salmon is an 8 pound fish caught from Lake Aeroflex in 1951.

...In New Jersey

From 2006-2013 spring yearling salmon at about 8 inches were stocked each May in lakes Waywayanda and Aeroflex immediately upon their arrival from Massachusetts. Salmon at this size usually feed on insects and macroinvertebrates; by the end of their first summer their food preference will shift to fish (alewives).

In 2013 some of the spring yearlings received in May were retained in the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery and grown to a larger size. A portion of these fish were later stocked in lakes Waywayanda and Aeroflex in late fall, at an average size of 14 inches. Some fish remained in the hatchery over the winter and were stocked in Tilcon Lake in Morris County in April of 2014. These fish averaged 18 inches.

The landlocked salmon populations are maintained at these three lakes through annual stockings. While mature salmon may migrate to inlets and outlets and attempt to spawn, it is unlikely that natural reproduction would produce enough fish to maintain the fishery. The stocking rate and harvest regulations are intended to provide anglers with an opportunity to catch salmon that range from 12-17 inches and an occasional salmon in excess of 17 inches, weighing 3 pounds or more.

Landlocked salmon are closely related to brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), and anglers may have difficulty telling them apart. Because size and creel limits are different for salmon and trout, anglers need to know the difference in order to comply with the regulations and quickly release salmon smaller than 12 inches. When in doubt about identifying salmon and brown trout, play it safe and release the fish unharmed!

All three lakes are located in state parks that are open from sunrise to sunset and boating is permitted (electric motors only). Lake Waywayanda located in Waywayanda State Park in Sussex County has a boat ramp and entrance fees are charged from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Boat rentals are available seasonally. The boat ramp at Lake Aeroflex in Kittatinny Valley State Park in Sussex County is open 24 hours for fishing with no fees. Tilcon Lake is located in Allamuchy Mountain State Park in Morris County. To reach the lake a short walk of about 300 yards from Kinney Road in Mt. Olive Township is required and boats must be hand-carried. There are no entrance fees GPS coordinates for the entrance/parking area to Tilcon Lake are DMS 40^o 54' 28.8" N; 74^o 46' 16.3" W.

Park information is available at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/>

The park office numbers are

Waywayanda State Park: (973) 853-4462
Kittatinny Valley State Park: (973) 786-6445
Allamuchy Mountain State Park: (908) 852-3790

Anglers must have a valid fishing license and when fishing for trout/salmon, a valid trout stamp. For a list of current regulations, see the current Freshwater Fishing Digest. More information about the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's fishing regulations and landlocked salmon program can be found at www.NJFishandWildlife.com.

Anglers are urged to report their catch of landlocked salmon by emailing the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries at: njfwfish@dep.nj.gov (Send digital photos of your catch!)

