

Park Ponds Offer Excellent Fishing Adventures Close to Home

When I was a kid, freshwater fishing opportunities in my hometown of Bayonne were nonexistent, so my friend and I would board a public bus, fishing rods and tackle box in hand. After a 15-minute ride, and many strange looks from the elderly passengers, we were standing on the shore of Clove Lake in Staten Island, N.Y. There, the heavily forested park seemed like the wilderness to us city boys.

After a fun-filled day of fishing, I would return home and proudly display my catch to my mother, who like many moms, was joyful about my success. Although I went fishing and crabbing most often in nearby New York Bay, we had many fishing adventures to Clove Lake Park, which gave me an opportunity to experience freshwater fishing close to my neighborhood.

Hundreds of municipal and county park ponds are scattered throughout New Jersey. And while many of these ponds are small, they offer adults and children good fishing opportunities close to home.

Park ponds are excellent places to teach newcomers how to fish. Shorelines are usually unobstructed, allowing good access and plenty of room to cast. Most contain a variety of warm-water fish species, including numerous sunfish, which are relatively easy to catch. Parks also are family

friendly; many feature picnic areas and restrooms.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish & Wildlife recognizes that park ponds and the local fishing opportunities they provide enhance the quality of life in communities statewide, especially those in urban areas.

Seasonal trout fishing in park ponds is quite productive; typical harvest rates are higher than any other type of waterbody. Through various stocking programs, Fish & Wildlife helps to ensure many park ponds continue to offer a quality fishing experience. These programs include trout stockings in the spring, fall and winter, and channel catfish stocking in the fall and in the spring when fish larger than 12 inches are distributed for harvesting. Even small park ponds can produce trophy-size channel catfish, as demonstrated by the 26-pound, nine-ounce monster caught from Holmdel Park Pond in 1988.

Working with local sponsors every year, Fish & Wildlife also supplies fish for more than 90 children's fishing derbies held primarily at park ponds. These popular programs are designed to introduce kids and their parents to the fishing opportunities available practically in their own backyards. In fact, the Essex County Parks

Department, the nation's oldest county park system, has had a successful urban fishing program for more than 30 years.

In recent years, many municipal and county parks in New Jersey have undergone a renaissance that typically has included improving or restoring their ponds, often the parks' focal point. These enhancements generally include dredging, shoreline stabilization and stormwater management, all of which results in a cleaner, healthier pond and better fishing. Recently restored ponds include Woodrow Wilson Park Pond in Union County; Hardcastle Pond in Bergen County; Weequahic Park Lake in Essex County; Ambrose and Doty's Brooks Park in Middlesex County; and Grover Cleveland Park Pond and Verona Park Pond, both in Essex County.

So pick a park, find the pond and wet your line. Park ponds are great places to enjoy fishing with family and friends. Best of all, they're right in your neighborhood.

For more information on ponds in your area, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com and click on "Places to Fish" or contact your local park commission.

—Robert Papson,
Principal Fisheries Biologist

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For a Fresh Perspective on Angling, Try Kayaking

Fishing from a kayak is a unique way to enjoy the fresh air, add pleasant exercise to your routine, and access fishing areas from which other anglers shy away. One- and two-person kayaks are affordable, lightweight and can be transported more easily to nearly any fishing location; no pickup truck or trailer required. Readily available roof racks make it a snap to transport a kayak atop a minivan or a sedan.

Imagine this: You're paddling into the slowly moving, tea-colored water of a lonely creek. Still, you can see three feet down to the gravel bottom dotted with aquatic plants flowing back and forth like long, green ribbons. Your kayak approaches a stand of flooded timber. Suddenly, wood ducks jump up 20 yards beyond and fly off. The flooded timber has a distinctive, wet scent. A small opening just ahead allows sunlight to penetrate the dense tree canopy. To the left, a V-shaped wake moves from left to right, then stops abruptly at a lily pad.

Stealthily, you slip your fishing rod from the holder and make a perfect cast 10 feet past the lily. As you begin to reel in the line, a wake forms again. There's a flash of silver below the waterline and the fish pounces on your lure! The rod doubles over and instinctively you set the hook.



Kayak fishing is catching!

Now your line begins to slice through the water as the fish attempts an escape. Carefully, you guide the rod to direct the fish through the stumps toward your kayak as you reel. It is a largemouth bass.

Reaching into the water and gently grasping the lower lip, you hoist the beauty out of

the water, estimating its weight at four pounds. After removing the hook, you release the fish, admiring the bass's moss-green coloration and black bands running down its length. As the fish swims away, you reflect on this sequence of events and realize the use of a kayak made it possible.

The Garden State's uniquely diverse habitats provide kayak anglers with endless fishing opportunities in lakes, ponds and rivers. Unlike other kinds of boats, kayaks can navigate the shallow water and thick vegetation that are distinguishing features of many ideal fishing spots. Species such as bass, chain pickerel and sunfish lurk in these areas, just waiting to be caught!

If the hustle and bustle of the workplace has you dreaming of an escape this weekend, try kayaking. Catch a few fish, exercise a few muscles and experience nature on a more personal level.

—Hugh Carberry, Supervising Fisheries Biologist

Continue the Tradition

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Freshwater Clydesdales: Carp!

Part Two—Carp Fishing UK Style

A carp fishing story published in the 2004 Freshwater Fishing issue of the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife Digest generated an unprecedented level of angler interest. Many anglers called or sent e-mail both to express appreciation and to talk shop about carp fishing. They shared information about carp fishing organizations, tackle supply companies and fishing tactics. It soon became clear there is a growing group of anglers who specialize in carp fishing. The secret's out!

Among many of the conversations there was a common thread: Fishing techniques originating in the United Kingdom have dramatically increased catch rates in New Jersey, and anglers are landing carp as large as 30 pounds. So, Fish & Wildlife is pleased to share this information to help carp-fishing newcomers and seasoned anglers boost their chances of catching a true trophy carp.



Bill Friedman caught a 47-pound carp, a state record, in 1995 on the South Branch of the Raritan River.

barley, cheese, crushed birdseed or bran. These ingredients are best added at the shoreline to ensure maximum dispersal of the scent. Anglers break small pieces from the dough ball and toss them into the water.

A cloud ground bait also starts with stale bread, but it is not soaked. Instead, the bread is tossed into a blender, processed into a fine powder, placed in a container and taken to the fishing location. Once there, scoop up some water, add just enough to the bread powder to achieve a dough-like consistency and then add a flavoring. Form the dough into a ball, break off small pieces and scattered them into the fishing area.

Anglers also can purchase ready-made ground baits from many carp-fishing tackle suppliers (see list below).



Another tip: Avid carp anglers use a throwing stick (above) to distribute ground baits farther from the bank. Fashion your own throwing stick or purchase one from any carp-fishing tackle supplier.

was buried in bait. Their studies demonstrated that carp would regularly spit out the bait if it contained a hidden hook.

To increase hooking success, Maddocks and Middleton developed the hair rig (pictured below with a boilie). Though the premise of the hair rig hasn't changed during the past 30 years, there now is an emphasis on the hook's ability to rotate to get a good hold as the carp runs with the bait. This set up typically uses an eight- to 10-inch piece of braided line with a swivel attached to the terminal end. A large sewing needle can be used to pass the braided line through the boilie. Once it is through, two or three square knots are tied in the line to prevent the boilie from slipping off during a cast. The rig is best used with a fish-finder weight harness that allows the carp to take the bait without feeling the weight of a sinker.



Carp are well distributed in New Jersey and are a virtually untouched recreational fishery. An angler who moved to New Jersey from Great Britain regularly catches 20- to 25-pound carp using fishing tactics he learned abroad. Try these techniques and tips, and you might be amazed. Don't miss out!

—Hugh Carberry, Supervising Biologist

CARP FISHING ORGANIZATIONS

Many of these sites feature "how to" articles on carp fishing.

- **Carp Fishing UK** www.carpfishinguk.net
The most complete collection of carp fishing information on the Internet.
- **Carp Anglers Group (CAG)** www.carpanglersgroup.com
CAG is an organization of avid carp anglers from the United States, Canada, Great Britain and beyond. Founded in 1993 as a specialty section within the American Fishing Association, it has since evolved into an independent educational and social group devoted to carp fishing.

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Boilie Recipe

- Equal parts corn meal, semolina and soy flour; mixed
- Enough eggs to turn dry ingredients into dough (start with 2 eggs for every three cups of meal-flour mixture)
- Flavoring (powdered drink mix, either strawberry or cherry)
- Artificial sweetener
- Food coloring (either red, yellow or green)
- 1/4 tablespoon vegetable oil for each egg used

Mix together eggs, flavoring, sweetener, food coloring and vegetable oil in a bowl. Stir in the meal-flour mixture to make a stiff dough. (If dough is too dry, add more egg.) Let the dough sit for 10-15 minutes. Using your hands, roll large pieces of the dough into the shape of sausages about a half-inch thick. With a knife, cut the roll of dough into half-inch lengths. Use your hands to shape the cut pieces into balls. Add the small balls to boiling water and cooked for approximately two minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove the boilies from the hot water and place them on a several layers of paper towels. Let boilies set for four or five hours, and then go fishing. Extra boilies can be frozen in plastic bags for future fishing trips. If you experiment with this recipe, be sure to write down the ingredient ratios. If the carp find your boilies irresistible, you'll want to recreate your special batch.

Boilies are the best

Among carp anglers in the United Kingdom, boilies are the baits of choice. Although similar to American-style dough balls, boilies are more refined. An Internet search yields hundreds of recipes for boilies; however, the following one is easy to make and works well in both lakes and rivers. Many of the ingredients are available at your local health food store.

The Hair Rig

After studying carp behavior with hooks during tank tests, English fishermen Kevin Maddocks and Len Middleton developed the hair rig in the late '70s. Maddocks and Middleton learned that carp could sense the presence of a hook and feel the fishing line passing over their lips and were frightened by it, even if the hook

Freshwater Clydesdales: Carp!

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- **Carp Fishing Magazine** www.carp.com
The magazine's Web page
- **Carp Fishing-North America** www.carpfishing.com
Dedicated to disseminating information to carpers throughout North America and the world.

CARP FISHING TACKLE SUPPLIERS

Visit these Web sites for tips, ground baits, boilies, and carp rigs.

- **Leslies-Luton** www.leslies-luton.co.uk
- **CC Moore** www.ccmoore.com
- **Castaway-Tackle** www.castaway-tackle.com
- **Flacktackle** www.flacktackle.com
- **Royal Carp Inc.** www.royalcarp.com

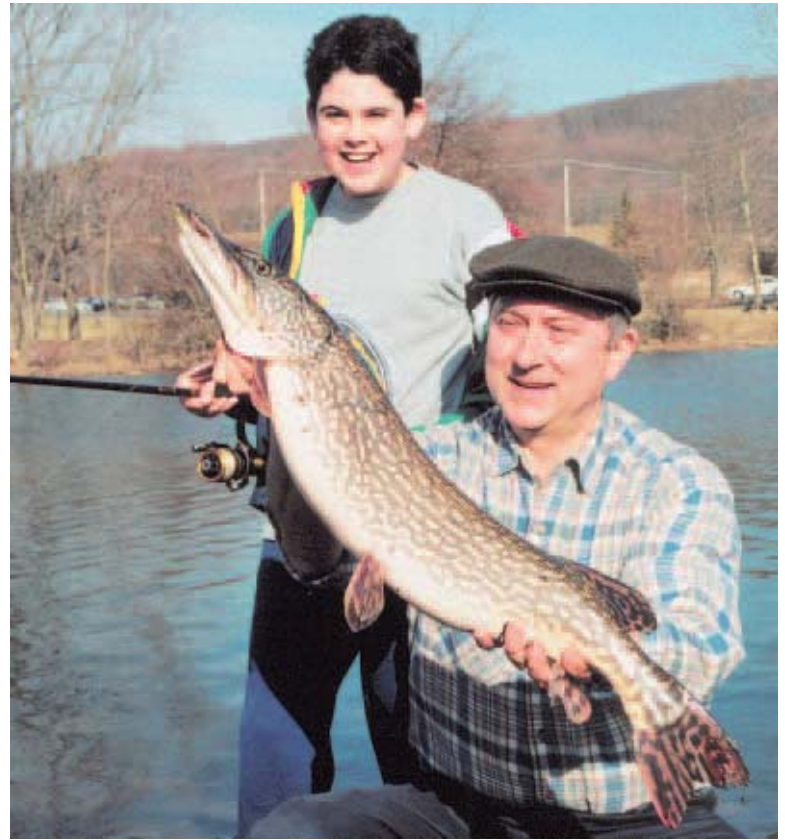
Hey, how's the fishing?

Whether you've been catching fish like crazy or you haven't had a bite, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife wants to hear from you.

A new **Freshwater Fishing Survey** asks about the kinds of fish you're catching (or not catching!) and the places you've been fishing, among other questions.

Information gathered through the survey will help Fish and Wildlife to make the best possible use of your fishing license dollars in its fisheries management programs, which include stocking public waters.

Fish and Wildlife would like to know if you've been successful or you've been skunked; whether you keep your catch or turn them back alive; and other important information. Please complete the fishing survey available at www.njfishandwildlife.com; it only takes minutes to complete.



Hard-fighting northern pike, like this handsome fish caught at Spruce Run Reservoir, make for an exciting fishing experience.

Photo courtesy of Tom Pagliaroli

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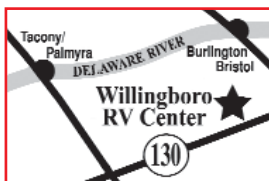
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