ANNUAL RITE OF SPRING, OPENING DAY OF TROUT SEASON TO REEL IN MORE THAN 100,000 ANGLERS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 7

(18/P23) TRENTON – More than 184,000 freshly stocked rainbow trout will be available as anglers cast their lines on the much-anticipated opening of trout season at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 7, Acting Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced today.

An annual rite of spring, the opening day of trout season reels in more than 100,000 anglers each year, many of them as families.

“New Jersey can take pride in offering some of the finest trout fishing found on the East Coast,” Acting Commissioner McCabe said. “Trout season offers anglers a chance to relax and spend quality time in the outdoors. We strongly encourage newcomers to try their hand at trout fishing and discover a rewarding way to enjoy the splendid scenery of early spring.”

The DEP’s Division of Fish and Wildlife has been stocking waterways with rainbow trout raised at the Pequest State Trout Hatchery in Warren County and will continue to stock waterways in the upcoming weeks. More than 570,000 trout will be released in 173 streams, rivers, lakes and ponds throughout the state by the end of May.

“New Jersey has one of the best trout-stocking programs in the nation,” said Acting Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources Martha Sapp. “With beautiful, high-quality fish being stocked in every county, great fishing opportunities can be found close to home.”

Most of the released trout will average 10½ inches long, but large breeders, known as broodstock, also will be distributed in the early weeks of the stocking season.
The state’s 14 major trout streams are stocked every week following opening day. These streams are closed to fishing from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. the day of stocking to allow the trout a chance to disperse.

All other trout-stocked waters are open to fishing on stocking days. These waters are generally stocked three times during the season.

Select lakes will also receive additional huge trout as part of the Bonus Broodstock Lakes program. This year, 10 trout-stocked ponds and small lakes located throughout the state will each receive 30 to 50 broodstock fish, providing anglers the opportunity to experience the catch of a lifetime. These fish measure from 15 inches to 21 inches and weigh up to 5 pounds.

These big trout will be stocked prior to the opening day of the season and ready for anglers when the season kicks off. A list of broodstock lakes can be found at: www.njfishandwildlife.com/bonus_brdsstk18.htm

Avid trout anglers will also be pleased to hear that plenty of the 21,000 super-sized trout stocked last fall have not been caught and will be available this spring, providing even more exciting fishing opportunities. These fish have grown even more since they were stocked.

For more information on the spring trout stocking program, including the in-season stocking schedule and spring stocking updates and changes visit: www.njfishandwildlife.com/trtinfo_spring18.htm.

Anglers can download the complete in-season stocking schedule to their smartphones just by scanning the QR Code found in the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Freshwater Digest or on trout regulation signs posted along all trout stocked waters. Stocking information is also available through the Trout Stocking Hotline by calling (609) 633-6765.

Anyone age 16 or older must obtain a fishing license and trout stamp to fish for trout. Anglers can buy and print a fishing license and trout stamp online at www.nj.wildlifelicense.com or through license agents. A list is available at www.njfishandwildlife.com/agentlst.htm. Children under 16 and New Jersey residents 70 and older may fish for free.

Introduce a friend or family member to fishing by getting a Fishing Buddy License. This license offers both an existing angler and new angler (or even two new anglers) an opportunity to receive reduced-price fishing licenses. For information about the Fishing Buddy License, visit: www.njfishandwildlife.com/fishbuddy.htm.
The Pequest State Trout Hatchery is supported with proceeds from the sale of trout stamps and federal funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Sport Fish Restoration Program. The dedicated funding received from the purchase of a fishing license and fishing equipment enables the Division of Fish and Wildlife to enhance fishing opportunities in New Jersey and protect the quality of the state’s waters for fish, wildlife and people.

The annual Pequest Trout Hatchery Open House and Flea Market will be held June 2 and June 3. The event was rescheduled from earlier this month due to weather conditions. For information visit: [www.njfishandwildlife.com/peqoh.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/peqoh.htm)

DEP PHOTOS/Top: Rainbow trout; Bottom: Rainbow trout broodstock fish

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