



P R E S S R E L E A S E

DEEP COMPLETES 2012 CATFISH STOCKINGS

Catfish stocked early to provide additional fishing opportunities on Memorial Day weekend

Six additional lakes & ponds stocked as catfish stocking program expands to new areas

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) announced that 20,000 channel catfish were stocked into eighteen lakes and ponds located throughout the State on Monday, May 21. These stockings mark the sixth year that the DEEP has released catfish into state waters. Included among the lakes and ponds stocked this year are five waters that are currently part of DEEP's Community Fishing Program and two new areas also located in urban areas.

"Stocking catfish in urban areas will provide excellent family recreational opportunities close to home for many local residents," said DEEP Commissioner Daniel C. Esty. "The Community Fishing Program is one of our many efforts to promote fishing throughout the state and to provide everyone opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. This year, we scheduled the catfish stockings to take place before Memorial Day weekend, providing a great fishing opportunity for the long holiday weekend."

The goal of DEEP's Community Fishing Program is to create and enhance year-round fishing opportunities in urban areas by combining trout stocking (in the spring and fall) with catfish stocking (in late spring or early summer). This program began seven years ago when the DEP stocked rainbow trout into Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport. The program has since expanded to include Fulton Park Pond/Lakewood Lake (Waterbury), Keney Pond (Hartford), Lake Wintergreen (Hamden) and Mohegan Park Pond (Norwich). Two of the new locations stocked with catfish yesterday, Freshwater Pond



One of a number of 'albino' channel catfish stocked this week into the Community Fishing Areas. Approximately a third of the large (14-18 inch fish) catfish stocked were 'albino' fish.

(Enfield) and Pickett's Pond (in Osborndale State Park, Derby) will be evaluated for inclusion in the Community Fishing Program. The Community Ponds are stocked with large catfish weighing over two pounds each and measuring 14–18 inches in length.

Anglers fishing the community fishing ponds stocked this week should not be surprised to find some albino channel catfish among their catches. The catfish that DEEP stocks are obtained from commercial hatcheries in Arkansas. This year, approximately a third of the large (14-18 inch fish) catfish provided by the vendor are albinos and will appear white or peach in color.

In addition to the Community Fishing waters, eleven other Connecticut lakes and ponds were stocked with catfish this year. These lakes and ponds are stocked with smaller 9-12 inch catfish that are expected to survive for many years and grow to a much larger size. Four areas, Hopeville Pond (Griswold), Quinebaug Lake (Wauregan Reservoir, Killingly), Stillwater Pond (Torrington) and Lake Kenosia (Danbury) were stocked for the first time this year. One area stocked with catfish in the previous years of the program, Lake Quonnipaug (Guilford), will no longer be stocked as the fishery was not meeting program expectations. *See below for a complete list of areas stocked.*

“Before this program, the state’s only significant population of channel catfish was found in the Connecticut River. Channel catfish have the potential to grow to true trophy-size proportions,” said Bill Hyatt, Chief of DEEP’s Bureau of Natural Resources. “The current Connecticut state record channel catfish weighed 29 lbs 6 oz and was caught in 2004 from Mashapaug Lake (Union) while the world record is a 58 lb catfish taken in South Carolina.”

“This DEEP program establishes channel catfish in lakes where we know there is sufficient forage to support a population of large gamefish. Interviewed anglers have reported that some of the stocked catfish are getting large with 5-7 lb fish being taken from several of the lakes,” added Hyatt. “The DEEP believes that the combination of a popular gamefish stocked into waters that are selected based on scientific data is a winning combination. We’ve had great success in using this approach to develop exciting fisheries for northern pike and walleye and now we’re looking forward to similar results with catfish,” said Hyatt.

Nationally, catfish are the fourth most sought after type of fish according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Catfish are also a favorite food fish and account for approximately half of the value of all aquaculture production in the United States.

Anglers can find fishing regulations in the *2012 Connecticut Angler’s Guide*, found online at www.ct.gov/deep/anglersguide. Print version of the guides are available at more than 350 locations statewide, including town halls, bait & tackle shops and other vendors selling outdoor equipment, DEEP facilities, and commercial marinas and campgrounds, or by contacting DEEP’s Inland Fisheries Division

(860-424-FISH). Additional fishing and fisheries related information can be found on the DEEP web site at: www.ct.gov/deep/fishing. **You can now also find Fisheries and Wildlife directly on Facebook.** This page features a variety of information on fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching in Connecticut. The address is www.facebook.com/CTFishandWildlife.

Lakes and Ponds Stocked with Channel Catfish - 2012

<i>Community Fishing Ponds (14-18" catfish)</i>	<i>Other Lakes & Ponds (9-12" catfish)</i>
Bunnells Pond (Bridgeport)	Black Pond (Meriden, Middlefield)
Keney Park Pond (Hartford)	Lower Bolton Lake (Bolton)
Mohegan Park Pond (Norwich)	Maltby Lakes #2 and #3 (Orange, West Haven)
Lake Wintergreen (Hamden)	Pattaconk Lake (Chester)
Lakewood Lake (Waterbury)	Silver Lake (Berlin, Meriden)
<i>NEW for 2012</i>	<i>NEW for 2012</i>
Freshwater Pond (Enfield)	Hopeville Pond (Griswold)
Pickett's Pond (Derby – in Osborndale SP)	Quinebaug Lake (Wauregan Reservoir- Killingly)
	Lake Kenosia (Danbury)
	Stillwater Pond (Torrington)

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