

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

DEEP ANNOUNCES WINTER TROUT STOCKING

13,000 rainbow trout stocked into sixteen Connecticut lakes and ponds.

Does winter seem long this year? Does the shortest month of the year seem like the longest? One way to beat the winter doldrums is to get out and enjoy some sunshine and the out-of-doors by going ice fishing. Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) has just stocked 13,000 rainbow trout into sixteen lakes and ponds located throughout Connecticut to provide some great late-winter ice fishing opportunities. The trout stocked by DEEP during the past week are from the Quinebaug State Fish Hatchery, where some repairs and pond maintenance work are scheduled to begin this spring.

"This winter has been sufficiently long and generally cold enough for anglers to enjoy good ice fishing conditions," said Peter Aarrestad, Director of DEEP's Inland Fisheries Division. "As it appears that winter conditions will last for some time, we felt that it was a good time to stock out the trout from one pond to provide some additional winter trout fishing opportunities and we'll also get a head start on an important maintenance project."

The 13,000 rainbow trout stocked average 11 inches long and range in length from



(Top) DEEP Inland Fisheries Resource Assistant Chris Finch stocking trout through the ice at Gardner Lake last Tuesday (2/4).

(Bottom) One of the 13,000 rainbow trout DEEP just stocked. This one was released through the ice into Gardner Lake.

7 to 14 inches. Half (6,500 fish) were stocked into seven eastern Connecticut lakes; Bashan Lake (East Haddam, 750 fish), Beach Pond (Voluntown, 1,000 fish), Black Pond (Middlefield/Meriden, 750 fish), Coventry Lake (Coventry, 1,000 fish), Crystal Lake (Ellington, 1,000 fish), Gardner Lake (Salem/Montville/Bozrah, 1,000 fish) and Mashapaug Lake (Union, 1,000 fish). The other 6,500 rainbow trout were stocked into nine lakes in western Connecticut; Black Rock Pond (Watertown, 650 fish), Highland Lake (Winchester, 1,250 fish), Mount Tom Pond (Morris/Litchfield/Washington, 600 fish), Squantz Pond (New Fairfield/Sherman, 1,150 fish), Stillwater Pond (Torrington, 600 fish), Tyler Lake (700 fish), West Hill Pond (New Hartford/Barkhamsted, 1,250 fish) and Westside Pond (300 fish).

DEEP reminds winter anglers that **SAFETY COMES FIRST**. Be aware that ice thickness varies on all water bodies due to a number of environmental factors including in-lake water circulatory patterns, snow cover, air temperatures and the type and amounts of recent precipitation. Please check the ice carefully before venturing out and check repeatedly to make sure that ice thickness is sufficient.

Regulations vary on many of the waters stocked this week. Anglers can check fishing regulations in the *Connecticut Angler's Guide*, found online at www.ct.gov/deep/anglersguide. Anglers may continue to use the 2013 Angler's Guide as a reference until the 2014 Guide comes out in late March/early April (fishing regulations have not changed since publication of the 2013 Angler's Guide). The *2014 Connecticut Angler's Guide* will be posted on line and print copies will be available from many Town Clerks and bait & tackle stores, or by contacting DEEP's Inland Fisheries Division (860-424-FISH).

Additional fishing and fisheries related information can be found on the DEEP Fisheries web pages at www.ct.gov/deep/fishing and on the **Fisheries and Wildlife Facebook page** at www.facebook.com/CTFishandWildlife.

Anglers can obtain their 2014 fishing and hunting licenses online (www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing) or at participating town halls, tackle retailers and DEEP offices. For a list of vendors, anglers should contact DEP Licensing and Revenue at 860-424-3105.

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