

**ICE FISHING REPORT
NUMBER 1
1/5/2011**



SAFETY REMINDER: DEP 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 and the type and amounts of recent precipitation. Currently, some northwest locations have up to 10 inches of ice, while several lakes in the southern part of the state are still showing open water. Please check the ice carefully before venturing out and check repeatedly to make sure that ice thickness is sufficient. Always let someone know where you are going and when you'll return.

ICE FISHING REPORT

A colder than usual December has really jump-started ice fishing in Connecticut, providing an extensive list of active species and productive locations. Winter camaraderie on the ice is in full swing, with fishing and cooking dominating the day as friends get together and socialize. It's also a great time to introduce children to the sport.

TROUT - For trout fishing try East Twin Lake, Highland Lake, Mohawk Pond, Black Rock Pond, Black Pond (Meriden), Black Pond (Woodstock), Colebrook Reservoir and Crystal Lake (still has some open water).

ATLANTIC SALMON – Excellent action for these torpedoes has been reported from Crystal Lake (Ellington) where over 15 fish weighing up to 9 pounds each have been caught so far this season.

NORTHERN PIKE – Fishing early ice for these monsters has been excellent with many fish being caught. Best reports are from Quaddick Reservoir (a number of 10 lb fish reported), Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, Park Pond, Pachaug Pond (including a 19.5 lb pike) and Bantam Lake (many catches in the upper 30 inch range). Coves along the Connecticut River are also producing well.

WALLEYE – Anglers have reported some catches coming from Coventry Lake (fish mostly in the 10-14 inch range) and Gardner Lake.

LARGEMOUTH/SMALLMOUTH BASS- Bass are being found at Wethersfield Cove along the Connecticut River, Park Pond, Tyler Lake, Wyassup Lake, Ball Pond, Kenosia Lake, Hatch Pond, Burr Pond, Dog Pond, Winchester Lake, Scoville Reservoir, Woodcreek Pond, Beseck Lake and Black Pond (Woodstock).

LICENSE FEE CREDITS NOW AVAILABLE

During the 2010 session of the General Assembly, legislation was approved and signed into law in April reducing many of the fees for sportsmen's licenses and permits. This was followed in June by legislation authorizing a credit to be applied against the fee for any 2011 sportsmen's license, permit or tag when purchase of a license, permit or tag had been made at the higher prices in place between October 1, 2009 and April 14, 2010. The credit amount will be the difference between the higher amount paid during that time period and the amount set by the new fee structure established April 14, 2010.

For information about these credits, please visit the DEP website license fees and credits page:
www.ct.gov/dep/sportsmensfeereduction

PANFISH - Early mornings are the best for these winter favorites, jigging with corn or grubs on your favorite lure while moving from place to place is the way to go for these delicious fish. Good panfish locations include Wethersfield Cove, Squantz Pond, Kenosia Lake, Hatch Pond, Breakneck Pond, Gardner Lake, Savin Lake, Crystal Lake (Ellington), Beseck Lake, Bolton Lakes, West Side Pond, West Twin Lake, Wyassup Lake, Coventry Lake, Cedar Lake and Tyler Lake.

NOTES & NOTICES:

2011 ANGLER'S AND HUNTING & TRAPPING GUIDES - Online versions of the 2011 editions of the Connecticut Angler's Guide and the Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide are now available online on the DEP web site. Print versions of the 2011 guides will be distributed in late March 2011. This departure from the traditional late December distribution schedule is intended to coordinate publication of the print versions with the marine fisheries regulatory cycle.

TIPS & TRICKS – NORTHERN PIKE IN THE WINTER

- ❖ Pike are aggressive predators and will take almost anything you offer them, including ice transducers.
- ❖ Most people use "tip-ups" when ice fishing for northern pike, although jigging will work also.
- ❖ Northern pike tend to be loners, and are found anywhere in the water column. Fishing 1-4 feet just below the ice is a good place to start.
- ❖ Use large, sharp hooks and big bait. Many anglers use dead bait on the bottom.
- ❖ Northern pike are toothy-creatures so if you want to actually land (ice) one, you will need a steel leader on the end of your ice fishing line.
- ❖ Watch those teeth if you actually land one. Those teeth can rip your hand up pretty bad and there are germs and bacteria in the saliva that can cause quite an infection.
- ❖ Sometimes the northern pike will just tug at your line...just a little. Play it out. Be careful that you have the right line and make sure that you have your drag set correct.
- ❖ Pike like weedy and sheltered habitats. You will find them around fallen trees, beaver dams and anywhere they can find cover. The pike likes to ambush its prey and uses underwater structures for camouflage. The pike will hammer its prey by blindsiding it from behind or the side.

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CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106
www.ct.gov/dep