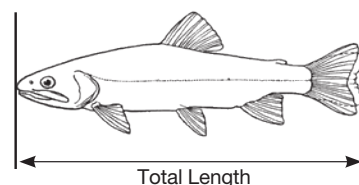


# CREEL (HARVEST) AND LENGTH LIMITS

The tables that follow give statewide creel (harvest) and length limits for major sport fish and exceptions for major rivers and lakes. Regulations for many smaller lakes and boat access areas are posted on site, and posted regulations are in effect (see "OTHER USES" under Department-owned Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites, page 14). For smaller lakes, information can be found online at: [www.virginiawildlife.gov/fishing](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/fishing). Creel limits are per person per day.

## How to Measure a Fish



CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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## Largemouth, Smallmouth Bass

	LAKES	
5 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Briery Creek Lake	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 16 to 24 inches, only 1 per day longer than 24 inches
	Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	Claytor Lake	No smallmouth less than 14 inches
	Flannagan Reservoir	No largemouth bass less than 12 inches; no smallmouth bass less than 15 inches
	Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	Lake Moomaw	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 12 inches
	Smith Mt. Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	South Holston Reservoir	No smallmouth less than 15 inches
	RIVERS	
	Clinch River—within the boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell or Tazewell counties	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
	Dan River and tributaries downstream from the Union Street Dam, Danville	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	James River—Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt Cty) downstream to the 14th St. Bridge in Richmond	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches
	Levisa Fork River—within the boundaries Buchanan County	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
	New River—Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA-WV state line and its tributaries Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County, Big Walker Creek from the Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge downstream to the New River and Wolf Creek from the Narrows Dam downstream to the New River in Giles County. (This does not include Claytor Lake which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the dam.)	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches
	North Fork Holston River—Rt. 91 Bridge upstream of Saltville, Va. downstream to the VA-TN state line	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
	Potomac River – Virginia tidal tributaries above Rt. 301 bridge	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15
	Staunton (Roanoke) River—and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
	North Fork, South Fork and Mainstem Shenandoah River	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 11 to 14 inches
	Staunton River—Leesville Dam (Campbell County) downstream to the mouth of Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	No smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches

## Alabama, Spotted Bass

No statewide daily limit		
No statewide length limit		

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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## Striped Bass

### Landlocked Striped Bass and Landlocked Striped Bass X White Bass Hybrids

4 per day in the aggregate No fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Leesville Dam and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Union Street Dam (Danville)	October 1–May 31: 2 per day in the aggregate (combined) No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches or greater than 26 inches
		June 1–September 30: 4 per day in the aggregate (combined) No length limit
	Claytor Lake and its tributaries	September 16–June 30: 2 per day in the aggregate, no striped bass or hybrid bass less than 20 inches
		July 1–September 15: 4 per day in the aggregate; no length limit
	Lake Gaston	4 per day in the aggregate (combined)
		October 1–May 31: No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches
		June 1–September 30: No length limit
	Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam	2 per day in the aggregate (combined)
		November 1–May 31: No striped bass 30 to 40 inches
		June 1–October 31: No length limit

### Anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay and Crane Lake (City of Suffolk)

Creel and length limits shall be as set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters	None apply	None apply
<b>Striped bass in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay</b>		
No possession	None apply	None apply

## Walleye, Saugeye

5 per day in the aggregate No walleye or saugeye less than 18 inches	Claytor Lake and the New River upstream to Fries Dam in Grayson County	2 walleye per day; no walleye 19 to 28 inches
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## Sauger

2 per day No statewide length limits	None apply	None apply
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## White Bass

5 per day No statewide length limits	South Holston Reservoir	No harvest or possession (catch and release only)
	Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir, including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Leesville Dam and the Dan River and its tributaries to Union Street Dam (Danville)	10 per day; no white bass less than 14 inches

## Chain Pickerel and Northern Pike

5 per day No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir	No daily limit
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## Muskellunge

1 per day No muskellunge less than 40 inches	New River-Claytor Dam downstream to VA-WV state line	1 per day June 1–last day of February: No muskellunge 40 to 48 inches March 1–May 31: No muskellunge less than 48 inches
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# CREEL (HARVEST) AND LENGTH LIMITS

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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## Bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding Crappie, Rock Bass (redeye) and Roanoke Bass

50 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County; and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister River, Halifax County; and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
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## Crappie (black or white)

25 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
	Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County; and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister River, Halifax County;	No crappie less than 9 inches
	Briery Creek and Sandy River reservoirs	No crappie less than 9 inches
	Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs	No crappie less than 10 inches; South Holston Res. — 15 per day in the aggregate (combined)

## Rock Bass (redeye)

25 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir and that portion of the New River from the VA-NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
	Nottoway, Meherrin, Blackwater (Franklin County), Blackwater (Chowan), Falling and Smith rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate (combined) with Roanoke bass No rock bass less than 8 inches
	South Holston Reservoir	20 per day

## Roanoke Bass

25 per day in the aggregate with rock bass No statewide length limits	Nottoway, Meherrin, and Blackwater (Franklin County), Blackwater (Chowan), Falling and Smith rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate (combined) with rock bass No Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
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## Perch (yellow and white)

No statewide daily limit	Lake Moomaw	10 per day
No statewide length limit	Tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay below the fall line	No yellow perch less than 9 inches

## Trout

6 per day 7 inch minimum size	See Trout Waters, pages 31-35	
	South Holston Reservoir	7 fish per day—only 2 lake trout. No minimum size.

## Catfish

### Channel, White, and Flathead

20 per day No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
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### Blue

20 per day No statewide length limits	Buggs Island Lake/Kerr Reservoir including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County; and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister River, Halifax County;	20 per day, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	James River and its tributaries below the fall line, Rappahannock River and its tributaries below the fall line, and York River and its tributaries (including the Pamunkey River and Mattaponi River) below the fall line	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	Lake Gaston	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	All rivers below the fall line other than the James River and its tributaries, the Rappahannock River and its tributaries, and the York River and its tributaries	No daily limit

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
<b>All Catfish</b>		
	South Holston Reservoir	20 per day, only 1 catfish per day longer than 34 inches

## Hickory Shad

Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay and their tributaries

Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm. in tidal rivers	None apply	None apply
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Meherrin River below Emporia Dam, Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay

10 per day No length limits	None apply	None apply
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## American Shad

No possession (catch and release only)

## Anadromous (coastal) Alewife and Blueback Herring

Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay and their tributaries

Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm. for these species in tidal rivers	The Virginia Marine Resources Commission enacted a ban on the possession of river herring, effective January 1, 2012, due to the collapse of the stock, and to comply with an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fishery management plan directive	
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Meherrin River, Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries, plus Back Bay

No possession

## Other native or naturalized nongame fish

20 per day No length limits	Statewide	See pages 27-28 for exceptions
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Threatened and endangered species

No possession	None apply	None apply
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## Grass Carp

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit	Anglers may possess grass carp taken from inland public waters, except for public lakes and reservoirs. Anglers must ensure that harvested grass carp are dead.	
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## Longnose Gar

July 1 to April 14: 5 per day April 15 to June 30: 1 per day No statewide length limits		
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## Bowfin

July 1 to April 14: 5 per day April 15 to June 30: 1 per day No statewide length limits		
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## Northern Snakehead

No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit	Anglers may possess snakeheads taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify the headquarters or a regional office of the department; notification may be made by calling (804) 367-2925.	
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## Non-native (Exotic) Fish

See page 28

# CREEL (HARVEST) AND LENGTH LIMITS

CREEL AND LENGTH LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC EXCEPTIONS	CREEL OR LENGTH LIMITS FOR EXCEPTIONS
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## Spotted Sea Trout

Back Bay and tributaries, including Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), and the North Landing River and its tributaries

4 per day, no fish less than 14 inches

## Red Drum

Back Bay and tributaries, including Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), and the North Landing River and its tributaries

1 per day between 18 and 27 inches

## Grey Trout

Back Bay and tributaries, including Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), and the North Landing River and its tributaries

1 per day, no fish less than 12 inches

## Southern Flounder

Back Bay and tributaries, including Brinson's Inlet Lake (Lake Tecumseh), and the North Landing River and its tributaries

6 per day, no fish less than 15 inches

## American Eel

25 per day; no eel less than 9 inches

Back Bay and North Landing River

No possession limit for those individuals possessing a permit obtained under 4VAC15-340-80

## Saltwater Marine Species

See Virginia Marine Resources website: [www.mrc.virginia.gov](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov)



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### Knowledge Check!

1. Why are drop-offs and other underwater hazards dangerous?
2. Name three items to pack for your fishing trip.
3. Why is a life jacket essential when fishing from shore or a boat?



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