



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN  
DIRECTOR

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Department of Natural Resources welcomes your interest in improving fishing opportunities in public waters of Michigan. As a private party, you can stock fish into public waters of the state, which requires a permit from DNR Fisheries Division. This permit is required to ensure that fish to be stocked are:

1. Healthy and will not pose a disease risk to populations in the wild;
2. A species that currently exists in the watershed and does not pose long-term management problems; and
3. A species that is compatible with the overall fisheries management goals in a watershed.

The permit process protects the state's fisheries resources by preventing potential long-term and expensive problems before they occur, thus improving fishing opportunities for all.

The permit process follows the following five steps and is detailed in the attached materials:

1. *Determining if the water to be stocked is public or private.* Water bodies that have permanent inlets or outlets will require a permit, as fish will escape from these waters into public waters. If there are no permanent inlets or outlets, the water body does not require a permit. Waters with public access sites are also public waters. If you are unsure about the status of the water body you wish to stock, please contact any of our Fisheries Management Unit offices for assistance (see [Table 1](#)).
2. *Applying for a permit if the water body to be stocked is public.* If the water you wish to stock is public, you will need to fill out the attached application specifying the species and how many fish you intend to stock. This allows DNR Fisheries Division to determine if the species is permitted for stocking, and if it is compatible with management goals established for the watershed. It is also important to determine if the source from which you intend to obtain the fish is free of certain fish pathogens ([click here for information on fish health testing requirements](#)), so be sure to inquire about the fish health certification status of the source you intend to use. DNR Fisheries strongly recommends that any applicant obtain a copy of the fish pathogen inspection report and certification from the source of the fish, as fish must be certified disease-free for stocking in the waters of the state. Although providing a copy of the disease certification with your application may speed the processing of the permit, it is not required.
3. *Submitting the Application.* After you fill out the application form, submit it to the Fisheries Management Unit (see [Table 1](#)) responsible for the watershed in which you wish to stock fish. If you need help determining the right office, feel free to

contact any Fisheries Management Unit Office. Our fisheries staff will review the permit and provide you with either an approved permit or a letter detailing why the permit was denied.

4. *Stocking Fish.* Once you have an approved permit, you can stock your fish. Be sure to pay attention to the expiration date of the permit. Please be sure to contact our Fisheries Management Unit Office about the stocking at least three, but not more than ten business days before stocking occurs. Also be sure that either an original or a copy of the Public Waters Fish Stocking Permit is on site during the stocking.
5. *Report Stocking of Fish.* After stocking, be sure to submit the Public Waters Fish Stocking Report to DNR Fisheries. The form for reporting of the stocking of fish is located at the bottom of the stocking permit. These data will be entered into our fish stocking database and will become a permanent part of the fisheries management record for the watershed. If the fish stocking report is not submitted, future stocking permits may be denied.

We appreciate your interest in our fisheries resources. If you have questions about this process, please contact a Fisheries Management Unit Office or Mr. Ed Eisch at 231-499-4118 or [eische@michigan.gov](mailto:eische@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,



Randy Claramunt, Chief  
Fisheries Division  
231-622-3820

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources**  
**Fisheries Division**

**PUBLIC WATERS STOCKING PERMIT PROCESS**

Revised January 21,2025

1. It is the responsibility of the purchaser or their agent to determine if a permit is required to stock fish into a water body. If a Public Waters Stocking Permit is necessary, the purchaser or their agent must obtain the permit prior to any stocking event. A copy of the Public Waters Stocking Permit Application is in Attachment 1.
  - a. If the water body to be stocked is not permanently connected to any other water body and does not have public access, it does not require a Public Waters Stocking Permit.
  - b. If the water body to be stocked is permanently connected to public water bodies via an inlet or outlet, the purchaser or their agent must obtain a Public Waters Stocking Permit.
  - c. If the water body has a public access site, the purchaser or their agent must obtain a Public Waters Stocking Permit.
  - d. If unsure of the need for a permit to stock a water body, the purchaser or their agent may request assistance from any Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries Management Unit Office. The offices and fisheries biologists are listed in Table 1.
2. The purchaser or their agent can obtain an application for a Public Waters Stocking Permit from any DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office, from the DNR website, or from many private aquaculture facilities.
3. The purchaser or their agent must return the completed Public Waters Stocking Permit Application to the DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office responsible for the watershed that is to be stocked. It speeds up the application process if the most recent fish health inspection and certification documents are included with the application. See attached Table 1 to determine which office is the appropriate location or contact any DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office.
4. DNR Fisheries Management Unit will use the following guidelines in its review of the permit application:
  - a. Disease status of the private aquaculture facility – If the facility has a valid pathogen-free certification for key fish diseases, then the fish can be stocked in public waters. The fish lot number that the private aquaculture facility provided to the DNR to confirm that health testing has been completed must be included in application. That lot number should be obtained from the facility providing the fish for stocking. If the facility does not have a current or valid pathogen-free certification for key fish diseases, then the permit shall be denied until such information can be provided. If the fish have clinical signs of disease, they cannot be stocked in our waters. [Click here](#) for a list of key fish diseases (see bottom of Table 2).
  - b. Species analysis – If the species is included in the list of species approved for stocking in waters of the state, the fish may be approved for stocking in public

waters. If the species has not been approved for stocking in waters of the state, then the permit shall be denied. The list of approved species for fish stocked is in Table 2 [here](#).

- c. Management implications of the stocking – If the stocking action is consistent with DNR Fisheries management objectives for the water body and watershed to be stocked, then the fish can be stocked in public waters. If the stocking action is not consistent with DNR Fisheries management objectives for the water body and watershed to be stocked, then the permit shall be denied.
5. After review of the application, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit will determine if the permit is to be approved or denied based on Sections 4a, b, and c above.
  6. Within seven working days of receipt of the permit application, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit shall provide either an approved permit to the purchaser or their agent, or a letter of permit denial designating the rationale for denial based on Sections 4a, b, and c above (see Attachment 2).
  7. Purchaser or their agent must notify the appropriate DNR Fisheries Management Unit of the actual date of stocking at least three, but not more than ten business days, prior to the stocking event. This notification can be done via letter, telephone, or e-mail. Upon receipt of notification, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit shall provide a response to the purchaser or their agent that notification of the actual stocking date has been received.
  8. The stocking permit must be available on site when fish are stocked into public waters.
    - a. If a private aquaculture operation stocks the fish, they must have the original or a copy of the valid Public Waters Stocking Permit on site during stocking.
    - b. If the purchaser or their agent stocks the fish, they must have the original valid Public Waters Stocking Permit on site during stocking.
  9. **Note that the lower portion of the stocking permit is a Public Waters Stocking Report. Within 14 calendar days of the public waters stocking event, a signed Public Waters Stocking Report (see Attachment 2) shall be sent either by surface mail or email to the Fisheries Management Unit that issued the permit. Failure to submit the stocking report may result in denial of future stocking permits.**
  10. Upon receipt of the report, the Fisheries Management Unit shall:
    - a. Record receipt of the report.
    - b. Enter the data into the DNR Fisheries Fish Stocking Information System database.
    - c. Provide a response to the party that the report was received and processed.

**Table 1. DNR Fisheries Management Unit Offices**

Basin/Watersheds	Staff	Office location	Telephone	E-mail
<b>Lake Superior</b> All	Cory Kovacs Kris Nault	Newberry Baraga	906-293-5131 906-353-6651	<a href="mailto:kovacsc@michigan.gov">kovacsc@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:naultk3@michigan.gov">naultk3@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Northern Lake Michigan</b> All Upper Peninsula watersheds	Jennifer Johnson John Bauman Darren Kramer	Norway Escanaba Escanaba	906-563-9247 906-786-2351 906-789-8213	<a href="mailto:JohnsonJ17@michigan.gov">JohnsonJ17@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:baumanj@michigan.gov">baumanj@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:kramerd@michigan.gov">kramerd@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Central Lake Michigan</b> Mackinac Bridge to Muskegon River	Scott Heintzleman Mark Tonello Heather Hettinger	Cadillac Cadillac Traverse City	231-775-9727 231-775-9727 231-922-6056	<a href="mailto:heintzelmans@michigan.gov">heintzelmans@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:tonellom@michigan.gov">tonellom@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:hettingerh@michigan.gov">hettingerh@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Southern Lake Michigan</b> South of Muskegon River to Indiana border	Matt Diana Addie Myers Brian Gunderman	Plainwell Plainwell Plainwell	269-204-7008 989-778-0389 269-204-7009	<a href="mailto:dianam@michigan.gov">dianam@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:myersa13@michigan.gov">myersa13@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:gundermanb@michigan.gov">gundermanb@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Northern Lake Huron</b> St. Marys River to Au Sable River	Tim Cwalinski Neal Godby Matt Klungle	Gaylord Gaylord Gaylord	989-732-3541 989-732-3541 989-732-3541	<a href="mailto:cwalinski@michigan.gov">cwalinski@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:godbyn@michigan.gov">godbyn@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:klunglek@michigan.gov">klunglek@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Southern Lake Huron</b> South of Au Sable River to Port Huron	Jeff Jolley April Simmons Jason Gostiaux	Bay City Bay City Bay City	989-686-2678 989-686-2295 989-686-3645	<a href="mailto:jolleyj1@michigan.gov">jolleyj1@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:simmons14@michigan.gov">simmons14@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:gostiauxJ@michigan.gov">gostiauxJ@michigan.gov</a>
<b>Lake Erie</b> South of Port Huron to Ohio border	Sara Thomas John Buszkiewicz Cleyo Harris	Waterford Waterford Waterford	734-718-0474 248-296-2498 248-221-0328	<a href="mailto:thomass35@michigan.gov">thomass35@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:buszkiewiczj@michigan.gov">buszkiewiczj@michigan.gov</a> <a href="mailto:harrisc9@michigan.gov">harrisc9@michigan.gov</a>

Baraga DNR Office 427 US 41 North Baraga, MI 49908	Escanaba DNR Office 6833 Hwy. 2, 41 & M-35 Gladstone, MI 49837	Plainwell DNR Office 621 N. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street Plainwell, MI 49080
Bay City DNR Office 3580 State Park Drive Bay City, MI 48706	Gaylord DNR Office 1732 M-32 West Gaylord, MI 49735	Traverse City DNR Office 2122 South M-37 Traverse City, MI 49685
Cadillac DNR Office 8015 Mackinaw Trail Cadillac, MI 49601	Newberry DNR Office 5100 State Highway M-123 Newberry, MI 49868	Waterford DNR Office 7806 Gale Road Waterford, MI 48327

Click [here](#) to access the application to stock fish.