

Focus on Fishing

Guidelines for success

Walleye



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Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Early morning
Summer	Early morning, evening, night
Fall	Morning, early evening
Winter	Early evening

Gear:

Fishing Rod — 5.5 to 7 ft.
Line — 6 to 14 lb. test monofilament

Key Fishing Areas:

Canistear Reservoir, Delaware River, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Monksville Reservoir, and Swartswood Lake.

Size:

Adults typically range 2 - 8 lbs. (average 3 lbs.)

Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

Adult: 6 lbs.
Junior: 4.5 lbs.
Catch & Release: 24 in.

State Record:

13 lbs., 9 oz., Delaware River (1993)

General facts

In terms of popularity, walleye fishing is the fastest growing sport fishery in the country. New Jersey has created top-notch walleye fisheries that may rival many well-known walleye destinations in neighboring states. Due to minimal successful natural-occurring reproduction walleye populations are maintained through annual stocking programs. These trophy specimens are also noted for their excellent eating quality. Walleye prefer moderately deep, large lakes and reservoirs with rocky or gravel bottoms. They are found near the bottom, in and around structure such as rocks, stumps, drop-offs and weeds. Walleye are light sensitive, so they are most active in low light conditions (i.e., overcast days, choppy water, dawn, dusk) and at night.

Seasonality

In the spring, *lake-dwelling* walleye move from deep wintering areas into the shallows to spawn. During the summer months, they can be found at moderate depths (15 – 30 feet), but may move into the shallow areas at night. As cooler fall temperatures prevail, walleye will begin to move into deeper wintering areas. In *river systems*, walleye reside below dams and islands, and at the mouths of tributaries during the late winter to early spring. During the summer, as with lakes, they can be found at moderate depths, which varies with stream size. In the late fall and winter, walleye seek out deep pool areas.

Bait

Try minnows, leeches or night crawlers fished on a 1/8 to 3/8 oz. jig retrieved or drifted bouncing along the bottom. In lakes, drift a worm harness or plain-leadered hook or floating jig head with a slip sinker above the barrel swivel (Lindy rig-style) or bounce a sinker along the bottom. Drifting live alewife herring on a #6 hook suspended off the bottom using a 1/4 to 1/2 oz. egg sinker is a simple and very effective method for walleye.

Artificial Lures

Crankbait – Use a 2.5- to 5-inch size crankbait. Popular colors include orange, firetiger, or black/silver. Troll or cast toward the shoreline. *Examples:* Rapala Husky Jerk or Wally Diver.

Jig – Use a 1/8- to 3/8-ounce jig, white or chartreuse, tipped with a plastic Mr. Twister or Sassy Shad bounced along the bottom. Use the lightest weight jig that will reach the bottom. Through the ice, in deeper areas of the lake, jig a Rapala Swimming Jig one-foot off the bottom using a repeated lift-and-pause motion.



In lakes, from mid-May to mid-June, cast crankbaits near shore at night to walleye feeding on alewives in the shallows. In the fall, try vertical jigging in deep areas in the early morning or evening. In the winter, on the Delaware River, bounce and retrieve a jig with a night crawler or a 6-in. motor oil-colored power worm.