



NEW
YORK
STATE

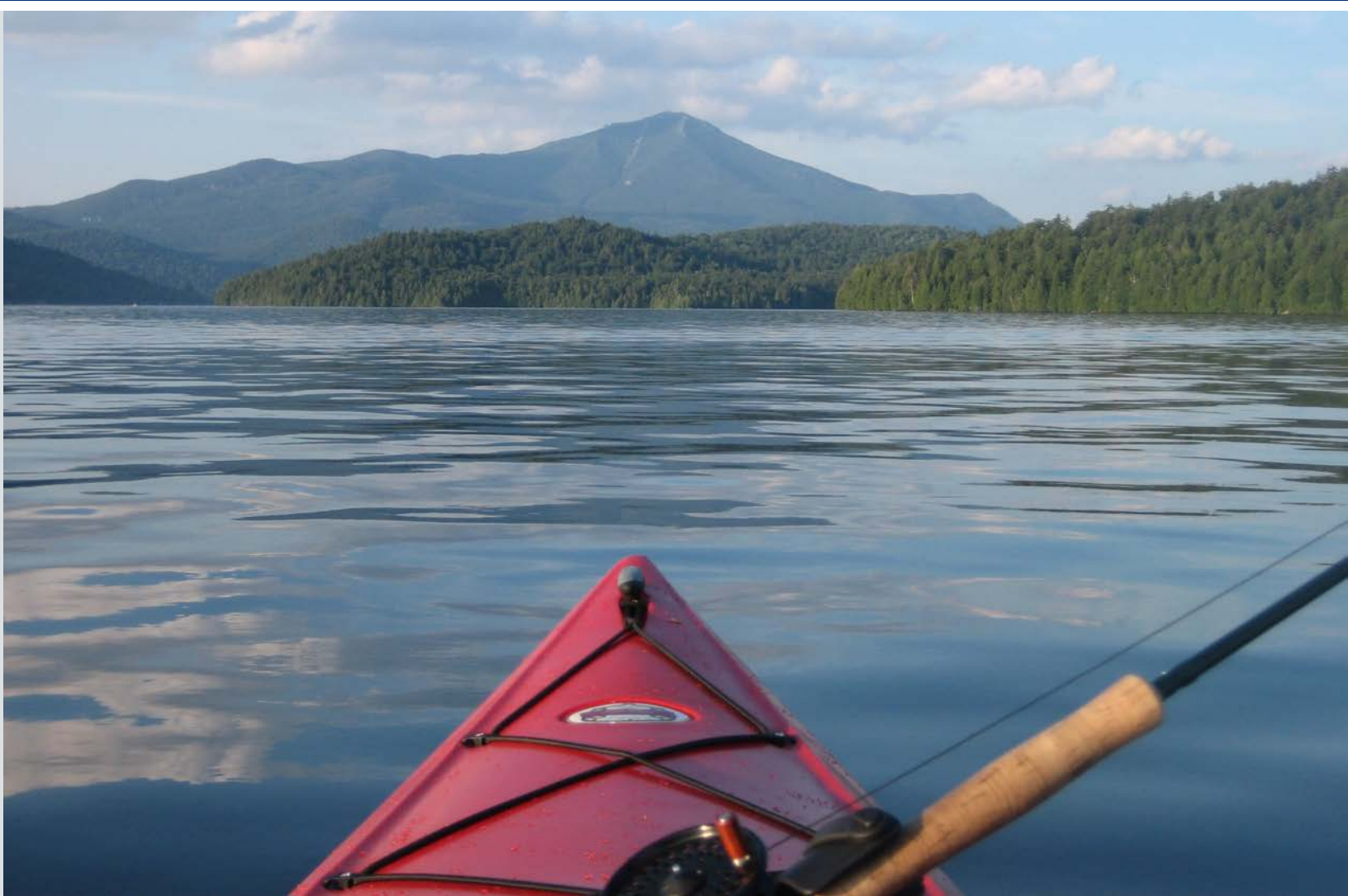
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Full Assessment of Public Comments

FISHING REGULATIONS AND CLEAN-UP PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

Kathy Hochul, Governor | Basil Seggos, Commissioner



This page is intentionally left blank.

Assessment of Public Comment

Notice of Proposed Rule Making to Amend 6 NYCRR Parts 10, 19 and 35 pertaining to the simplification and clean-up of freshwater fishing regulations

- Filed with the Department of State on November 22, 2021
- Posted in issue 49 of the State Register, dated December 8, 2021
- Open for public comment until February 6, 2022 (60 days)

Introduction

Regulations are a tool used to adequately sustain the State's fisheries resources and produce enjoyable benefits for all who fish. Their purpose is to guide the actions of law-abiding anglers. To be effective, they should be reasonable in number, easy to understand and as concise as possible. Numerous and complicated regulations place anglers at risk of unknowingly violating the law and serve as a barrier for participation and enjoyment. Through the years, regulations prescribing special season and harvest limits have been applied broadly across the state striving for improved management outcomes on individual water bodies. However, many of the current special regulations for individual waters are based on limited survey information and do not consider the variability of other factors that influence fluctuations in the fishery. These special regulations, with their limited survey information, work to manage the states waters at a level much more granular than necessary to consistently achieve desired benefits.

Fishing is an outdoor recreational activity that should be fun. For many years anglers have expressed dismay and confusion to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) over the wide array of special regulations and the number of waters managed with special regulations. Given anglers desires and our duty to serve the angling public, DEC's Bureau of Fisheries embarked on a process to determine if New York's regulations could be streamlined and consistently formatted to reduce complexity while also continuing to provide the conservation needed for sustainable management and optimal enjoyment. The outcome of this effort resulted in the issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) pertaining to the Simplification and Clean-up of Freshwater Fishing Regulations on December 8, 2021. This assessment of public comment has been developed as required by the State Administrative Procedures Act.

Advertisement and Engagement

In addition to the legal requirement to post the notice in the Environmental News Bulletin, the summary of text and express terms for the proposed rulemaking were posted to the DEC public website ([link](#)). Other supporting documents that described DEC's rationale for change and details on actual waters affected were also included on the website: These documents include:

- [A Proposal to Change New York's Trout Pond Fishing Regulations \(PDF\)](#)
- [Proposed Lake Trout Regulations \(PDF\)](#)
- [Proposed Atlantic Salmon Regulations \(PDF\)](#)
- [Text Summary with Rationale for Proposed Fishing Regulation \(webpage\)](#)
- [Sportfish Season Opening Dates Angler Survey \(PDF\)](#)
- [Angler Opinion Survey on the Oneida Lake Walleye Daily Limit \(PDF\)](#)

The NPR was advertised via a [DEC press release](#) on December 8, 2021. It was also sent to 167,000 subscribers of DEC's Fishing Line Newsletter on December 10, 2021, and again on January 21, 2022. DEC's Bureau of Fisheries Chief engaged the New York Outdoor Writers Association in a question-and-answer session on January 10, 2022. On January 21, 2022, an email message was sent to over 400,000 licensed anglers with valid email addresses, reminding them to comment on the NPR. The message provided a link to a [Fisheries Regulation Changes Information Packet](#) and included instructions on how to provide comment. The same message was sent out via the DEC Delivers Regulations and Proposed Changes electronic newsletter.

These efforts yielded 427 set of comments on the NPR, more than any Fisheries related rulemaking in recent history.

Adoption Decisions

DEC fisheries managers read, cataloged, and evaluated all of the 427 comments received. Every comment, including those received via regular mail, can be found in Appendix 1. Comments were assessed for substantiveness relative to the proposals and grouped by theme for a consolidated response. Overall, a significant number of comments advocated for simpler regulations, substantiating the need for this proposal. Based on our assessment of public comment, DEC will adopt all aspects of the proposed rulemaking with two exceptions: opening the statewide lake trout season to year-round fishing and adopting statewide regulations for Atlantic Salmon on Lake George. The summary below provides DEC's decisions for adopting or rejecting major aspects of the rulemaking based on this assessment. Responses for all comment themes can be found in the following Comment Assessment section.

Proposal: Establish a rainbow and brown trout in lakes and ponds regulation all year with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 trout longer than 12”.

Decision: DEC will adopt the proposed statewide regulation for rainbow trout and brown trout in lakes and ponds.

Nearly all pond fisheries for brown and rainbow trout in New York State are sustained through stocking. Given the lack of natural reproduction and continued stocking, the proposed regulation provides for a sustainable harvest. This regulation is already in place and has been proven effective in DEC Regions 6, 7, 8 and 9, and many other waters are already open year-round via a special regulation. Applying it statewide will provide overall consistency and simplification. Some commenters expressed concern that the proposed regulations may diminish the number of larger holdover fish available to anglers. DEC will be responsive to the needs of individual waters and will adjust management if harvest results in diminished abundance of holdover trout.

Proposal: Establish a brook trout in lakes and ponds regulation from April 1 to October 15 with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 trout longer than 12”.

Decision: DEC will not adopt the proposed statewide regulation for brook trout in lakes and ponds.

DEC received comments both in favor and opposed to this aspect of the proposal. Some commenters viewed the proposal as too restrictive while others recommended much more conservative regulations. On one side of the spectrum, anglers were unhappy with the 5 trout any size limit with only 2 over 12” regulation as it would restrain them from harvesting more than two large trout. Others felt that it would result in increased mortality due to culling or hooking mortality. More conservative anglers felt that even stricter harvest regulations, including no harvest, should be implemented, while others advocated a prohibition on the use of all bait. Others advocated for a conservative watershed approach based on strain, which would significantly increase the number of special regulations.

Although the proposal would have provided for consistency in harvest regulations between ponds and streams, DEC will not adopt the proposed change to the statewide regulation given the wide range of opinions received and because DEC will soon be updating its plan for management of brook trout ponds statewide. Thus, current regulations will be reevaluated when DEC updates its plan for managing brook trout ponds in the near future.

Proposal: Expand the statewide Atlantic Salmon season to all year.

Decision: Excluding Lake George, DEC will adopt the proposed statewide regulation for Atlantic Salmon.

Comments received on this proposal were associated with concerns that an expanded statewide season would increase the potential for over-harvest and diminish reproductive capacity in wild populations. These concerns are unwarranted, as a majority of these waters are already managed for year-round fishing under a special regulation. These waters do not have self-sustaining populations and are dependent on annual stockings of hatchery fish to support their Atlantic salmon fisheries. Management will largely remain status quo, but 32 special regulations will be eliminated.

Commenters concerned about the Lake George Atlantic Salmon fishery felt that the proposed reduction in the minimum size limit and increased harvest would negatively impact the population due to slow growth and current abundance. Based on available information, DEC generally concurs with this assessment and will therefore retain the current regulation that allows for two fish 18" or greater to be harvested.

Proposal: Expand the statewide lake trout season to all year.

Decision: DEC will not adopt the proposed statewide regulation for lake trout.

Comments received on this proposal identified potential concerns with overharvest in some waters. Although the proposed regulation is a good fit for the state's significant lake trout fisheries, additional review revealed that a number of waters would require special regulations to protect potentially vulnerable populations or co-existing brook trout. As such, the impact of changing the current statewide regulation was diminished, resulting in a net elimination of very few special regulations. DEC will retain the current lake trout regulation, which includes a closed season between October 16 and March 31.

Proposal: *Change the statewide season opening dates for select species from various Saturdays to hard dates.*

Walleye, Pike, Pickerel and Tiger Muskellunge – May 1

Black Bass – June 15

Muskellunge – June 1

Great Lakes Black Bass – June 15

Great Lakes Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge – June 15

Decision: *DEC will adopt the proposed statewide opening dates for all species on both inland and Great Lakes waters*

Comments received on the suite of opening day proposals were largely supportive, but some concerns were expressed by anglers. There was a concern that a weekday opener both walleye and bass would have a negative effect on fishing tournaments and local economies. Both recreational and tournament anglers will still be able to take advantage of the first weekend of the walleye season and the bass harvest season as well as the remainder of the open seasons for both species.

Walleye anglers expressed concern that a May 1 opening day would place spawning fish at risk. In most of the state, walleye have completed spawning in late March and early April. Although some walleye may still be present in some tributaries on May 1, spawning is completed and the fish remaining are primarily males. The proposed change represents a minor adjustment, as opening day could occur under the current regulation.

Like above, commenters were concerned that black bass anglers, and in particular, tournament anglers, would have an adverse effect on populations because fish could be caught and moved off their nests before spawning is complete. The spawning season is highly variable from year to year, and like the proposed walleye season opener, June 15 can fall on the current bass harvest season opener on the third Saturday in June. Harvest of black bass in most of the state is not widely practiced, and a few extra days of opportunity will have minimal harvest impacts. Bass can also be caught on the nest under current regulations for most of the state during the catch and release season. To date, DEC has not observed any population level impacts that directly tie to this season. Lastly, some Lake Erie anglers worry that moving up the start of the Great Lakes regular season for black bass will lead to an influx of Canadian anglers because the Canadian season is not yet open, placing undue pressure on the resource. The Canadian regular bass season already opens after the beginning of the current regular season for black bass in NY. The addition of an average of three weekdays at the beginning of the season is not likely to lead to a significant increase in effort from

Canadian anglers, and harvest should be negligible as Canadian anglers travelling by water are not allowed to transport bass across the border during the closed season.

Comments from muskellunge anglers largely centered on the loss of opportunity associated with the proposed rule change and that a rule change in 2022 will have a negative effect on business owners because fishing trips have already been booked for the last weekend in May. DEC believes that a June 1 opening date for the statewide muskellunge season will be easy for anglers to remember and provides suitable protection for muskellunge spawning in inland waters. DEC will use its authority to invoke law enforcement discretion from the last Saturday in May until May 31st of 2022 so previously planned trips can still take place.

It should be reinforced that the proposed opening date changes are not being implemented to achieve species management goals. The changes are minor adjustments to provide consistency in format as part of an overall effort to make our regulations more understandable. Moving forward DEC may propose a change in season dates when species management plans are developed. This rulemaking sets the stage for providing consistency in the formatting of opening dates into the future.

Proposal: Simplify ice fishing regulations by permitting ice fishing unless specifically prohibited in New York except for nine counties where the existing ice fishing is prohibited unless specifically permitted in waters inhabited by trout regulation will still apply.

Decision: DEC will adopt the proposed ice fishing regulation.

Some commenters felt anglers will be confused if they can ice fish in a pond that has both brook trout and either brown or rainbow trout. Others felt that ice fishing should be prohibited in ponds inhabited by brook trout. Outside of 9 Adirondack counties, there should be no confusion as ice fishing is permitted unless specifically prohibited. This will eliminate the need for many special regulations that were applied to allow ice fishing. Within the 9 Adirondack counties, the existing ice fishing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout unless otherwise specifically permitted will remain. The proposed regulations do not change where anglers can and cannot ice fish within those 9 counties.

Comment Assessment

As stated previously, DEC received 428 comments on the NPR. Response to comments received by the public are grouped and addressed by like theme.

Coldwater

Brown and rainbow trout - *Establish a rainbow and brown trout in lakes and ponds regulation all year with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 longer than 12”.*

Theme: The proposed statewide regulation is not restrictive enough to sustain quality pond fisheries for holdover brown and rainbow trout. A more restrictive harvest limit and closed winter season is needed for these waters.

Comments (11): 73, 106, 117, 137, 166, 169, 201, 207, 244, 315, 334

Response: Nearly all pond fisheries for brown and rainbow trout in New York State depend on stocking because the habitat does not support adequate reproduction. Given the lack of natural reproduction and continued stocking, the proposed regulation provides for a sustainable harvest. Many brown trout and rainbow trout ponded waters in New York have been sustainably managed under special regulations identical to the proposed statewide regulation and which allow ice fishing. Therefore, the statewide application of the 5 trout limit with only 2 over 12” and year-round fishing is a logical step. DEC will adjust its strategy for certain waters given evidence that harvest is decreasing the abundance of holdover trout. The proposed regulation would still reduce overall complexity even if some exceptions become necessary.

Theme: The proposed possession limit for rainbow trout and brown trout in ponds is too strict and is a discouraging imposition on anglers who are fortunate enough to catch more than two trout over 12 inches in a day.

Comments (6): 69, 72, 76, 119, 311, 374

Response: DEC considers a possession limit of five trout that may include two trout over 12” in length to be a balanced approach which provides anglers with the chance to harvest an ample number of fish while, at the same time, expanding opportunity for a greater number of anglers to enjoy catching and, if desired, harvesting larger trout.

Brook trout - Establish a brook trout in lakes and ponds regulation from April 1 to October 15 with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 trout longer than 12”.

Theme: The proposed regulation is not strict enough to adequately protect brook trout in Adirondack ponds. More stringent restrictions on harvest and angling methods are desired for some or all brook trout ponds.

Comments (24): 4, 6, 8, 16, 21, 44, 50, 73, 106, 117, 125, 136, 166, 169, 189, 221, 252, 294, 295, 306, 321, 345, 370, 387

Response: The proposed daily limit of 5 brook trout any size with no more than 2 over 12” is more restrictive than the 5 brook trout any size regulation currently in effect on over 390 brook trout ponds. Increased protection is afforded to highly prized mature fish with the greatest reproductive potential. Although harvest is the most visible constraint, brook trout populations are also subject to habitat limitations and natural predation which cannot be addressed by angling regulations. Therefore, broadly imposing a complex of more restrictive angling regulations would burden anglers without providing a consistent conservation benefit or improvement to the fishery. Special regulations were retained or modified for a set of ponds where compelling justifications existed. However, DEC will not adopt the proposed change given the polarized opinions received and minor impact it would have in reducing the number of special regulations. Current regulations will be reevaluated when DEC updates its plan for managing brook trout ponds in the near future.

Theme: The proposed 5 fish with only 2 longer than 12” for brook trout is unnecessarily restrictive for many remote ponds where fishing pressure is light and discouraging to harvest oriented anglers who are unable to easily or frequently visit these waters.

Comments (15): 11, 26, 69, 76, 119, 242, 297, 322, 323, 366, 375, 382, 383, 395, 396

Response: Comments received on this proposal have run the gamut from too strict to too liberal. We acknowledge that the situation will vary somewhat from pond to pond; however, we believe that, for the vast majority of Adirondack brook trout ponds the proposal strikes a reasonable balance between recognizing the value of large pond-dwelling brook trout while providing for a harvest opportunity. However, DEC will not adopt the proposed change given the wide range of opinions and minor impact it would have in reducing the number of special regulations. Current regulations will be reevaluated when DEC updates its plan for managing brook trout ponds in the near future.

Theme: The proposal to manage brook trout ponds under a single regulation is a step backwards because the fishery characteristics and management needs of these waters

are too diverse to be successfully managed in this way. A more complex approach is preferred to satisfy angler expectations and to conserve specific populations.

Comments (7): 6, 8, 16, 117, 313, 323, 424

Response: Special regulations currently apply to only 28 individual brook trout ponds whereas over 390 brook trout ponds are managed under the current statewide regulation. Thus, the proposal does not reflect a fundamental shift in management approach. However, DEC will not adopt the proposed change given the polarized opinions received and minor impact it would have in reducing the number of special regulations. Current regulations will be reevaluated when DEC updates its plan for managing brook trout ponds in the near future.

Theme: Brook trout would be better served by a watershed-based approach to address the conservation needs of different wild brook trout strains and account for the movements of brook trout between connected waterbodies including streams.

Comments (8): 21, 58, 136, 252, 294, 306, 323, 412

Response: With respect to fishing regulations, it is not evident that different regulations for different watersheds would provide a consistent conservation benefit relative to the proposed statewide regulation. By aligning possession limits during the harvest season for ponds with the possession limit applicable to nearly all brook trout streams, the proposal provides greater regulatory consistency between stream and pond components of a watershed. With respect to the potential ambiguity associated with fishing for brook trout in the mouths of tributary streams during the closed season for ponds, DEC sees no meaningful conservation risk because anglers may not possess brook trout between October 16 and March 31 and fishing pressure is already low on these waters. However, DEC will not adopt the proposed change given the polarized opinions received and minor impact it would have in reducing the number of special regulations. Current regulations will be reevaluated when DEC updates its plan for managing brook trout ponds in the near future.

Brown, rainbow, and brook trout - *General*

Theme: The proposed regulations (for brook trout, brown trout, and rainbow trout) should be modified to include a minimum size limit to promote natural reproduction particularly with respect to wild brook trout.

Comments (13): 9, 59, 70, 88, 104, 106, 156, 177, 191, 270, 302, 334, 424

Response: Minimum size limits can be counterproductive as a general approach to trout pond management. Stunting of wild trout populations can result where reproduction is extensive and growth potential is low. Where stocked trout lack access

to suitable spawning habitat, no reproductive benefit is achieved, but natural predators are not prevented from consuming trout before they reach the minimum size for angler harvest. Some special regulations imposing a minimum size have been retained or modified where justified by considerations of exceptional growth potential, harvest potential, or specific reproductive concerns.

Theme: For both brook trout and the other trout species, the proposed possession limit risks killing more trout than it will protect through hooking mortality and because it will encourage people to “cull” trout over 12”, releasing fish that have been on a stringer or otherwise in possession when they catch a larger fish. This is of particular concern for bait anglers and during warm summer weather.

Comments (11): 26, 49, 54, 320, 321, 324, 366, 382, 383, 395, 396

Response: Except for black bass, the culling of fish is illegal in New York. It is illegal to exchange trout already in possession for freshly caught trout. Anglers in possession of a daily limit may continue to fish provided they immediately release any additional fish caught. Anglers in possession of five trout under the current regulation are already subject to the temptation to continue fishing with the associated potential for hooking mortality. Hooking mortality will occur, as it does now, but DEC feels that it will not have a population level impact because harvest opportunity includes multiple size classes in contrast to minimum size requirement and due to relatively low fishing pressure on most brook trout ponds.

Atlantic Salmon - Expand the statewide Atlantic Salmon season to all year.

Theme: Permitting year-round harvest of Atlantic Salmon will increase harvest pressure and hurt the quality of fishing for this rare sportfish. Abundance will decrease either directly from the numbers harvested or from the reproductive capacity lost when mature salmon are harvested pre-spawn.

Comments (6): 39, 153, 166, 178, 245, 352

Response: The proposed regulation does not increase the potential for harvest on 32 waters already open to year-round harvest under special regulations. More broadly, Atlantic Salmon spawning opportunity is lacking on the affected waters such that the fishery depends on regular stocking. Special regulations may be imposed, if required, should the potential to establish a viable self-sustaining population be identified for a water. Otherwise, the proposed statewide regulation is a good fit for most waters and allows the elimination of 32 special regulations.

Theme: Given the slow growth characteristics and current abundance trends for Atlantic Salmon in Lake George, the possession limit of 2 salmon with a minimum size of 18” is a better fit than the proposed statewide regulation and should be retained.

Comments (3): 39, 44, 406

Response: On further review and consideration of the available information, DEC concurs with the comments received and will retain the existing special regulation.

Lake trout - Expand the statewide lake trout season to all year.

Theme: Opening up the lake trout season to year-round is not conservation minded and could destroy fishing quality over time due to excessive harvest. Some particularly vulnerable waters were suggested.

Comments (7): 1, 39, 73, 153, 166, 190, 245

Response: Although the proposed regulation best serves New York’s most significant inland lake trout fisheries, further review reveal that a number of waters would still require special regulations. Given the prevalence of these waters the proposed regulation does not achieve the objective of substantially reducing special regulations while addressing the important management issues and therefore will not be adopted.

Carmans River - Eliminate the catch-and-release season and extend the existing Rainbow and brown trout regulation upstream to Yaphank Avenue.

Theme: Because some anglers cannot distinguish between brook trout, rainbow trout, and brown trout, the special regulation prohibiting harvest of brook trout will not adequately protect the wild brook trout population on the Carmans River within the existing catch and release only section.

Comments (1): 32

Response: Distinguishing different fish species is a basic responsibility of licensed anglers. Most anglers are well-versed in being able to differentiate between the three species.

Season Opening Dates

Warmwater

Walleye - Change opening day of the season to May 1.

Theme: Adjusting the walleye opening date to May 1 does not adequately protect spawning walleye.

Comments (5): 30, 49, 54, 247, 328

Response: Walleye typically spawn in mid- to late March through early April in New York waters, often soon after ice-out when water temperatures are in the low to mid-40s. The season closure starting on March 15 is in place to protect spawning walleye. Opening day can occur on May 1 under the current regulation. The proposed change is a very minor adjustment from the current opening day format and does not pose added risk to walleye fisheries.

Theme: Adjusting the walleye opening date to May 1 will make it the same as the opening day of turkey season, creating a conflict for people who wish to partake in both.

Comments (3): 49, 54, 323

Response: Having the same opening date for both species should not impact the success or enjoyment of those who wish to pursue both. Walleye in particular have a long open season and anglers can have great success throughout the season. Given the regulations for spring turkey hunting a sportsperson could also choose to hunt in the morning and fish after noon.

Theme: An opening day for walleye other than Saturday will negatively impact the number of participants entering the Oneida Lake Fishing Derby because all anglers prioritize the opener above the rest of the season. If enacted this year, the resulting confusion would hurt us even more. Consider delaying the season opener date change until 2023.

Comment (3): 342, 348, 423

Response: It is incorrect to assume that all anglers prioritize season opening dates. Walleye have a long open season and anglers can and do have great success catching walleye in Oneida Lake and many other waters throughout the season. Fishing effort and quality do not drop after opening day. Continuing to start the Derby on the first Saturday in May is still an option under the proposed rule change.

Theme: Keep walleye opening day on the first Saturday of May as not everyone would be able to fish during the week due to work and school schedules.

Comment (2): 342, 398

Response: Walleye have a long open season and anglers can and do have great success catching walleye throughout the season in many waters throughout the state. Walleye fishing effort and quality do not drop after opening day.

Walleye - *Establish a walleye, all year, Minimum Length-12", Daily Limit-none regulation on Skaneateles Lake.*

Theme: Liberal walleye regulations should not be adopted for Skaneateles Lake. Walleye should be stocked there instead.

Comment (1): 173

Response: Skaneateles Lake has a long history of very successful and popular fisheries for rainbow trout and Atlantic salmon. Walleye were recently illegally introduced to the lake and they pose a risk to these fisheries due to predation on the young trout and salmon and by competing for available forage. Allowing liberal harvest of walleye is meant to limit their impact on these important coldwater fisheries.

Theme: Liberalizing walleye regulations on Skaneateles Lake will result in confrontations because there is a severe lack of boating access. These regulations will increase demand for fishing, but there will be no place to park.

Comment (1): 369

Response: Unfortunately, public boat access to Skaneateles Lake is too limited for the overall demand. The level of angler interest in taking advantage of liberalized walleye regulations is currently unknown, but it is not expected to significantly increase angler use of access sites beyond current levels during what is typically the busiest time of the year, June - August. DEC plans to monitor angler interest and involvement in this opportunity to better understand how it is being used.

Walleye - *Eliminate Oneida Lake walleye special regulation and revert to statewide regulations.*

Theme: Changing the walleye harvest limit from 3 to 5 for Oneida Lake will negatively impact the fishery because of the high fishing pressure and anglers who keep more than the limit. This would be further compounded by lack of enforcement, cormorant predation, and the overall declining health of the lake. More restrictive harvest regulations should be considered such as slot limits or increased minimum size limits. A harvest limit of 3/day is more than enough.

Comments (11): 13, 24, 35, 329, 398, 399, 402, 403, 409, 411, 422

Response: Oneida Lake currently supports a very abundant adult walleye population of well over 1 million fish, the highest on record. Current walleye harvest under the 3 fish/day limit is typically 50,000 – 60,000 fish/year. Increasing the daily limit to 5 fish/day will likely result in a modest increase in harvest. Cornell research scientists determined

that the most realistic percent harvest increase based on existing creel data was 34%. The projected total harvest under a 5 fish/day limit would therefore range from 67,000 – 80,400. This is well below 10% of the overall adult population and should not negatively impact the walleye fishery. Also, recent data indicate that walleye growth and condition are declining and there is a concern that the walleye population may now be negatively impacting the forage base in the lake. A moderate increase in walleye harvest is warranted for the health of both the walleye and the forage base in Oneida Lake.

Bass - Change the statewide opening date for black bass harvest season to June 15.

Theme: A Saturday bass season opener is a boost for local economies. Changing the opening day to a hard date will result in weekday openers (like in 2022), and therefore fishing related industries will lose a significant amount of money and business.

Comment (2): 15, 365

Response: Anglers, both recreational and tournament, will still be able to take advantage of the first weekend of the bass harvest season. A weekday opener should not limit participation in bass fishing or lessen its financial impact. In most of the state, bass fishing is open year-around, with a catch and release season in the winter and spring.

Theme: A Saturday bass season opener is better for anglers to plan fishing trips. Only tournament anglers want mid-week openers because there would be less boat traffic.

Comments (5): 53, 283, 299, 353, 365

Response: Anglers will still be able to plan trips during the first weekend of the bass harvest season if desired. Tournaments are typically held during weekends and are therefore more likely to be held during the first weekend than they are mid-week. In most of the state, bass fishing is open year-around, with a catch and release season in the winter and spring.

Theme: Adjusting the bass season opener to June 15 will allow tournaments to be held earlier in most years. Bass populations will suffer because male bass are typically nest guarding during this time and tournament anglers will take males off and away from their nests.

Comment (1): 247

Response: Most of the larger tournaments are typically held on weekends and even if the harvest season opener is on a weekday, most tournaments scheduled for that week will likely be held on the following weekend (i.e., coinciding with the 3rd Saturday in

June). The proposed change is a very minor adjustment from the current bass harvest season opening day format and should not pose added risk to bass fisheries.

Theme: The 3rd Saturday in June bass season opener is already easy to remember as it is always the day before Father's Day.

Comment (1): 151

Response: This proposed change was made, in part, to establish consistency among the opening dates for all sportfish seasons on hard dates. We believe that having this consistency will make it easier for anglers to remember all opening dates and in effect help them plan for future trips. The proposed season opener will always begin before Father's Day.

Theme: Bass are often still on their beds on the 3rd Saturday in June and too frequently females have not yet laid their eggs. Because of this, the opening date should be July 1 (or later in July).

Comment (2): 361, 400

Response: In most of the state, bass fishing is open year-around, with a catch and release season in the winter and spring, and even during the harvest season bass fishing is primarily a catch and release activity. There is no evidence that this has caused a detrimental impact to bass populations. Opening day can occur on June 15 under the current regulation. The proposed change is a very minor adjustment from the current bass harvest season opening day format and should not pose added risk to bass fisheries.

Muskellunge - Change the statewide opening date for Muskellunge harvest season to June 1.

Theme: The current muskellunge opening day corresponds with Memorial Day weekend, and it is not a good idea to change it because of this. Moving it to June 1 will limit opportunities. Changing the muskellunge opening day to June 1 in 2022 will cause a hardship for anglers and guides who already have trips and rooms booked for Memorial Day weekend. Can the change in regulation be delayed until 2023?

Comments (5): 12, 25, 27, 42, 43

Response: This proposed change was made, in part, to establish consistency among the opening dates for all sportfish seasons on hard dates. We believe that a June 1 opening date for the statewide muskellunge season will be easy for anglers to remember and provides suitable protection for muskellunge spawning in inland waters.

Given the short timeframe between the date of adoption of the new regulations and the season opener, the Department will utilize its enforcement discretion this year to allow for muskellunge fishing from May 28th until June 1st so previously planned trips over the 2022 Memorial Day weekend may still occur.

Theme: Changing the statewide muskellunge season opener to June 1 shortens the season, eliminating opportunity for good quality fishing between the last Saturday in May and June 1st. Mid- summer is not the best time to fish for muskies because high water temperatures can be stressful for these fish. The season should be extended until mid to late December, as fishing is often good in the cooler water.

Comment (1): 389

Response: This proposed change was made, in part, to establish consistency among the opening dates for all sportfish seasons on hard dates. We believe that a June 1 opening date for the statewide muskellunge season will be easy for anglers to remember and provides suitable protection for muskellunge spawning in inland waters. The season closing date of December 1 is in place as a conservation safeguard to provide adult muskies an opportunity to build and maintain their condition in preparation for spawning in the spring. This date is also consistent with the end of the black bass harvest season, which maintains regulatory simplicity.

Theme: If the special muskellunge regulation in the Susquehanna River and Chenango River is eliminated, a catch and release only regulation during the closed season should be implemented so anglers can take advantage of the amazing opportunity. Muskie anglers are a conscientious group who will protect the fishery.

Comment (2): 38, 392

Response: These rivers support one of only a few self-sustaining muskellunge populations in New York State and it is important for the sustainability of the fishery to protect them during the spawning period. The proposed December 1 through May 31 closed season appropriately affords this protection. Implementing a catch and release fishing season during this time conflicts with the need to protect spawning fish.

Great Lakes

Statewide change to fixed date seasons for black bass, muskellunge, and walleye (Great Lakes comments)

The goal of these regulatory proposals was to respond to anglers' preference for a fixed date season format based on the results of an [angler survey](#). Season dates were

chosen that would mirror the previous regulations as closely as possible while not removing angling opportunities. Increasing regulation consistency across New York's Great Lakes waters where possible was also a priority. Changing to a fixed date format is largely separate from ongoing department efforts to update Great Lakes regulations to reflect the latest information on species biology, changing environmental conditions, angler desires and concerns, and the constantly changing nature of our fisheries. To that end, anglers can expect the department to engage them regarding additional proposed regulatory changes in the future. The department will continue to use angler surveys and fishery independent surveys to monitor angling quality, population status, and the impact of regulatory changes, adapting regulations as necessary.

The proposed changes will switch season dates from traditional Saturday openers to fixed dates that will fall on or before the traditional Saturday opener (walleye: May 1; muskellunge and bass: June 15). This change will result in an average increase of three days at the beginning of the season for each species. In some years the season start date will be identical to the previous Saturday opener. The additional days at the beginning of the season would be almost entirely weekdays, greatly limiting any potential impact from an increased angler participation and pressure perspective.

It is true that many of the regulations governing Great Lakes fisheries, including season dates, are not in agreement between New York and the Province of Ontario. Diverse stakeholder groups and fisheries goals make regulation standardization challenging for many Great Lakes species. New York's switch to fixed date seasons in no way precludes continued cooperation with the Province of Ontario to try to standardize regulations where possible and to ensure that both jurisdictions are managing toward common goals.

Additional species-specific concerns are addressed below.

Theme: Moving up the start of the Great Lakes regular season for black bass will lead to an influx of Canadian anglers because the Canadian season is not yet open, placing undue pressure on the resource.

Response: The Canadian regular bass season already opens after the beginning of the current regular season for black bass in NY. The addition of an average of three weekdays at the beginning of the season is not likely to lead to a significant increase in effort from Canadian anglers. From a harvest perspective, Canadian anglers traveling to NY by water will not be able to bring harvested fish back into Canada without being in violation of the Canadian closed season. As stated above, angler surveys and fishery independent monitoring will be used to assess the impact of regulation changes on angling quality and population status.

Theme: Moving up the start of the Great Lakes regular season for black bass will lead to increased effort, harvest, and tournament pressure targeting males guarding nests leading to negative population impacts.

Response: It is well established that the smallmouth bass spawning season in the Great Lakes can extend into July, well beyond the existing regular season start date. The addition of an average of three weekdays at the beginning of the season is not likely to lead to a biologically significant increase in catch or harvest. Comments concerning the desire for a generally more conservative approach to black bass management are part of a regulatory process that encompasses issues beyond a simple switch to fixed dates. As stated above, the department is in the process of evaluating black bass management across the Great Lakes.

Walleye (Great Lakes)

Theme: Moving up the start of the Great Lakes regular season for walleye at a time when male walleye are still associated with spawning areas will have a negative impact on the population.

Response: A popular, but relatively limited, nighttime fishery for male Walleye already exists on and around spawning areas in the spring and extends into June in some areas. Given that opening day can occur on May 1 under the current regulation, the predominately male-only nature of this fishery, and the fact that fishing conditions are typically far from ideal on May 1 on some areas, the proposed change does not pose added risk to the Walleye population and fishery.

Ice fishing

Theme: Anglers will be confused if they can ice fish in a pond that has both brook trout and either brown or rainbow trout. Ice fishing should be prohibited in ponds inhabited by brook trout.

Comment (7): 8, 44, 294, 306, 323, 383, 413

Response: Outside of 9 Adirondack counties, there should be no confusion: ice fishing is permitted unless specifically prohibited. Within those 9 Adirondack counties, the existing ice fishing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout unless otherwise specifically permitted will remain. The proposed regulations do no change where anglers can and cannot ice fish within those 9 counties. Ice fishing will continue to be prohibited in brook trout ponds. Special regulations prohibiting ice fishing for individual brook trout ponds outside of those 9 counties are included in the proposed regulations.

Theme: Ice fishing should be allowed statewide, including the 9 Adirondack Counties.

Comment (1): 133

Response: Protecting brook trout, which are very vulnerable to ice fishing, during their closed season necessitated leaving the existing ice fishing regulations in place in the 9 Adirondack Counties.

Theme: The ice fishing permitted/prohibited rule [based on inhabitation by trout] adds much perceived complexity to the overall fishing regulations.

Comment (1): 419

Response: The current ice fishing regulation that prohibits ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout requires anglers to know if a water is inhabited by trout to determine if they can ice fish or not. The proposed regulations allow anglers to know that all waters are open to ice fishing, unless specified for the entire state with the exception of 9 Adirondack counties. DEC recognizes the need to clearly define where anglers can ice fish within those 9 counties and will continue to seek a solution to this issue.

Theme: Opening ice fishing to include the [NYC] reservoirs is dangerous.

Comment (1): 122

Response: NYC reservoirs currently closed to ice fishing will remain closed to ice fishing.

Other

Non-topic comments

Comment: 14, 19, 20, 28, 31, 36, 37, 51, 52, 55, 63, 64, 70, 75, 76, 78, 79, 85, 87, 89, 90, 96, 98, 116, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 130, 132, 145, 148, 150, 158, 160, 161, 165, 174, 176, 177, 181, 184, 185, 187, 189, 215, 218, 225, 229, 231, 239, 251, 253, 258, 260, 269, 271, 274, 276, 278, 280, 281, 282, 287, 291, 305, 308, 310, 314, 319, 320, 331, 337, 346, 356, 358, 359, 362, 363, 377, 380, 381, 385, 391, 397

Appendix 1: Numerical listing of public comments

1. I think making the Musky season earlier on June 1st is a very bad idea. They are not even done spawning with the current season 3rd sat in June sometimes plus they are receiving more pressure now. Just a horrible idea.
Same with Lake Trout. No closed season? Why are we getting less conservation minded? Especially with more pressure and technology involved. The fish are spawning in the fall and most charter captains keep them so you are ruining future fisheries. Why is the DEC not acting smart? I dont get it.
2. i support the new proposed regulations. anything to try to make the easier to understand and some what uniform.
3. I do appreciate the opportunity for public comment on the proposed changes. I am in favor of the proposed opening dates being changed from certain Saturdays to a hard date, such as May 1st, June 1st and June 15th for proposed species. This makes more sense and is a specific calendar date each year. In most years it would only be a difference of a few days. It is a smart change. I'm also in favor of raising the 3 walleye limit back to 5 on Oneida Lake now that the population can sustain it. Your changing of the previous regulation has made this possible now.
4. I would like to offer my comments on the proposal to remove special regulations currently in place on a number of ponds across New York State, particularly those in Regions 5 and 6.

This is absolutely the wrong direction. To go. A number of these ponds have been long term producers of large brook trout. Peaked Mountain Pond (near Thirteenth Lake) is an example of this. The pond has produced exceptionally large brook trout since it was reclaimed. Recently, there have been documented cases of individuals illegally fishing with bait in this pond and those instances were reported to the relevant authorities. Over the past several years and correlated with illegal activity the fishing quality has declined markedly. This is an enforcement issue and it bothers me that those charged with enforcement offer the same excuse (well, I can't be everywhere) when events are reported. It also bothers me that acts of sabotage are not countered by enforcement action. I'm talking here about the deliberate introduction of bass into Little Tupper Lake and the destruction of a superb brook trout fishery. This approach has led to major landowners publicly stating they will never allow their lands to fall into state hands.

In sum, it seems to me that the new regulations point to an unwillingness to enforce existing regulations and a capitulation to those who want to fish with bait and keep everything they catch.

There is a distinct desire for high quality, limited kill, restricted methods fishing opportunities. I would go further and suggest that we develop more high quality, catch and release, fly fishing only opportunities on our ponds, especially for brook trout. Other states manage this. Why can't New York? It all seems to boil down to institutional laziness, including funding, and a lackadaisical approach to enforcement. Witness the fact that I've had my license checked only twice in the last fifty years and that was by the same (very dedicated) ECO.

5. I would like to cast my vote against Bass "Catch and Release" season prior to the June official season start!

I have volunteered as a Boat Ramp Steward on Raquette Lake for several years. On Memorial Day weekend I have had a number of Bass fishermen refuse to allow their fish wells be inspected. I am now placed in a position of I call my ECO and the folks are stopped, they certainly know who turned them in!!

I am a summer resident and have quite a bit of shoreline. 10 years ago I would count 10 - 15 Bass beds along my shoreline. The last two years I counted only a single Bass bed. WHY? I truly believe it is because I see at least a dozen "Catch and Release" fishermen a day fish my shoreline. This goes on from mid-May to the season start. A couple of years ago the local Fish and Game club cancelled their annual Bass fishing contest because so few Bass were caught. They had fishermen coming from as far away as Pennsylvania to enter and when they don't catch fish, they don't come back. It was a great economic shot in the arm for the local economy.

A few years ago I noted that the Bass spawned in September! My grandsons got to watch their mating ritual! I have not yet been able to go get a camera and video that process. I have watched their mate selection process a half dozen times, but it doesn't last that long (3-5 minutes) for about a dozen or so Bass. In the Spring there were 2-3" Bass all along the shore of the lake, and not just on the North side. In the US deep South, I'm told that due to over fishing, the Bass have started to spawn in deep water as a reaction to overfishing, but my fish finder doesn't show Bass activity in water over 18-20'.

Please continue with the present NO "Catch and Release" season at least on Raquette Lake!

6. As a lifelong resident of NY, I don't know where to start regarding my discontent on DEC's handling of Brook Trout fisheries in the Adirondack Park. We all know of well documented cases of heritage strains being fished out and now gone forever. To simplify and reduce regulations presumes either laziness within DEC or an assumption that sportsmen are too stupid to read regulations. Considering special regulations only apply to handful of ponds, the thought of eliminating even these minor protections is to go back 100 years in fishery management. How many ponds have been destroyed by baitfish illegally introduced? How many worm caught trout, even if released, survive? It seems that DEC, probably under fiscal pressure, just wants to make life easier at the expense of the sportsmen and conservationists who have worked so hard throughout the years to care for this resource. If anything, the number of ponds restricted to artificial or fly only should be greatly expanded. Bait fisherman have 98 percent of the Park to themselves. Is it too much to ask that C&R advocates, a large group, has some place to enjoy without seeing coolers of dead brook trout, abandoned boats and Styrofoam worm containers? How many ponds has DEC reclaimed only to have them deteriorate due to lack of fish barrier maintenance or simple enforcement? Money gets spent on one side only to go out the back door shortly thereafter. I've had friends visit to fish with me from western states and they are shocked at the lack of resource management and enforcement. I would be happy to provide you with a list of ponds that have been ruined by overfishing. It's a long list so I would use an Excel worksheet.

Please do not follow this retrograde path for the sake of expediency. We have a rare resource with much greater potential to bring anglers and dollars to the region. If DEC continues to manage our resources as if it's 1950, the work that was done previously will be for naught. I hope this will get the consideration it deserves.

7. I am very pleased you have eliminated the no fishing regulations from October 15 to April 1 for streams that allow catch and keep during the April to October period. The new year around catch and release regulation is much appreciated and is similar to the North Carolina Delayed Harvest (DH) regulations. However, it is not clear to me when the yearly fish stocking period is or will be in the future for our trout streams.

I ask this by way of comparison with the NC DH program which has monthly incremental fish stocking starting in their October catch and release only period for each subsequent month up

until the catch and keep regulation begins in June that runs to October when the yearly cycle is repeated.

My concern is basically that a once or twice a year fish stocking at the beginning of the catch and keep period will yield very few fish still in the streams when the catch and release period begins in the Fall. The NC DH program addresses this potential with their monthly stocking DURING the catch and release period. Having fished some of these DH streams over the years, I can attest to the terrific catch and release opportunities my son and I have enjoyed on these streams.

8. After the rollout earlier this year of the NY stream regulation overhaul I was cautiously optimistic that the department would take a similar publicly vetted, science and consensus based approach to the patchwork of stillwater regulations that exists today. Instead, we get this new proposal that is best characterized as lazy, unscientific, and regressive.

You say "while brook trout ponds, which are largely managed for self-sustaining wild populations" in the Proposal Highlights here (Freshwater Fishing Regulation Simplification and Clean-up Proposal) however these new regulations are anything but friendly to wild brook trout. Let me give you some examples of government entities that are serious about protecting their stillwater trout populations. Take the province of British Columbia for example, every stream and most stillwaters in the ENTIRE PROVINCE is managed with a barbless single hook regulation (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/outdoor-recreation/fishing-and-hunting/freshwater-fishing/fishing_synopsis.pdf). That's a land mass of 374,364 square miles with far more remote wilderness than our Adirondack park at 9,375 square miles. Closer to home and certainly closer in geography and fishery similarity is the state of Maine. Maine has around 1200 designated brook trout ponds and lakes, each managed with a custom regulation based on its wild trout status and ability to withstand angling pressure (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/fishing/laws-rules/special-laws.html#scodes>). Maine's s-codes include artificial only, catch and release, and flyfishing only regs and are easily parsed in a dropdown menu on their website. If a small state like Maine can understand the trout population dynamics in 1200 ponds (more than double our 525 by my count ADK brook trout ponds) then why can't NY do the same? Maine even has 200 ponds designated Flyfishing only where even trolling isn't allowed. And yet your new proposal eliminates the few Artificials Only regs we had covering ponds?

We have the opportunity here in NY to protect our wild brook trout for generations to come by protecting them now through proactive regulations and public outreach. There are many people, especially the younger generations, that value the experience of fishing for wild fish in their native habitat. These people value a strong conservation ethics, and will spend considerable time and money to pursue these fish. Despite the current lax regulations, some Adirondack ponds produce trophy size fish that are certainly on par with Maine's stillwaters or even some Canadian waters. With a more proactive approach, our ponds can both sustain wild fish and also produce outstanding specimens that are highly sought after by conservation minded anglers.

Our Adirondack brook trout ponds represent the southern-most range of native lacustrine brook trout in the United States. Meaning that they are first in line to experience the effects of climate change. The Department stocks some 'marginal' ponds (<20 ft deep, unstratified during summer) and believe me, you're already losing year classes in those during some of the hot dry summers we've had over the past 20 years. Acid rain has been reduced by the Clean Air act amendments of 1990 but all it takes is an environmentally hostile president and congress to walk back the progress made over the last 30 years. Personal conversation with Dan Josephson of Cornell University confirms my suspicion that a reverse in Acid rain regulations would cause a rapid

return to inhospitable water conditions because of cation shortage from 100 years of mineral acid deposition. The time is NOW to protect these fish.

I'm not going to insult the intelligence of the Department personnel by listing the many scientific studies linking bait fishing with significantly higher fish release mortality. If the Department is serious about protecting wild trout as I referenced above, then we need more not less artificial only regulations in place and the enforcement presence to ensure conformance. The Department has mandated circle hooks for Striped Bass in the Hudson River, why can't we mandate a barbless hook regulation in Adirondack Ponds-especially the wild self sustaining ones? By the way, I estimate that there are 130 wild, unstocked, self sustaining, fishable brook trout ponds out of the 525.

- Does the Department even realize that there are that many?
- How come there are no current regulations in place to protect these?
- Does the Department know what the genetic lineage of those fish are?
- Why in the new proposed regulations is the Department proposing to roll back size and method restrictions on wild ponds such as those north of Thirteenth lake that are experiencing a surge in angling pressure from illegal bait fisherman?
- The Department stocks brown and rainbow trout along with brook trout in many ponds, some in wilderness areas, are these now going to be open to ice fishing with the new year round brown/rainbow regulations?
- Long standing put and take brook trout icefishing regulations have been in place in the upper Raquette watershed (Eckford chain, Forked, Raquette, Blue Mt etc) but are now proposed for elimination. These seem to be a reasonable place for a non-backcountry put and take fishery, why eliminate the year round season here?

In summary, I think the Department needs to go back to the drawing board on these proposed regulations. These regulations are disrespectful to the brook trout fishery that has been slowly built back through the efforts of the Department and scientists working on environmental problems and genetics. My personal recommendations:

- More not less Artificial Only Regulations
- Barbless single hook regulations for all ponds
- More Catch and Release ponds
- A limited number of Trophy only ponds (limit of one fish 18 inch or over)
- Allow year round harvest in put and take lakes

9. I've scanned through the proposed regulation revisions and would like to provide comments / concerns. Overall, the simplification of fishing regulations is long overdue and could glean a nice savings for taxpayers while enhancing tourism.

General:

- How does DEC intend to manage restrictions for temporarily limiting takes (all types of fish) - due to unforeseen environmental reasons?
- Has the DEC considered an early season for Disabled Veterans?
- Has NYS considered a multi-State reciprocity agreement to partially honor licenses from participating States & issue a out-of-state license - to fish NYS during specific periods - for a nominal fee? That might help with tourism.
- It is reasonable to believe that all other regulatory guidelines will remain the same, however, it would be beneficial if DEC made that clear in the text of these proposed changes.

Fish:

- Trout: ponded & stream/brook;"limit of 5 per day of which only 2 can be greater than 12...."
 - The new regulation(s) should clearly specify the minimum length.

- Should weight be a consideration? In other words, a trout (or salmon as applicable) could be less 12" but weigh, say 10%, more than a 12" trout. Those meatier trout are desirable for reproduction.
 - Salmon & trout: Wouldn't it be prudent to prohibit trout or salmon to be taken until after they spawn?
10. I am most concerned about your clean up of the amount of steelhead you can harvest on the Niagara River. It sounds like you just had a change of heart when you created a two steelhead limit. The limit of 3 Brown trout apparently still is in effect. DEC Fisheries also recently deleted the harvest of 3 Browns on the Lake Ontario tribs. Why can't you truly simplify the regulations to allow the harvest of two trout in all of the tribs, and lower river. The 3,2,1 is anything but simple.
 11. The regulation to limit the size of brook trout is ludicrous. We carry ultra light boats in for miles in hoping to catch beautiful trout. Why bother to put forth all of the effort and not have the ability to be rewarded by catching 5 big trout. It takes away from the adventure.

These ponds are not over run with fisher people. It is a rarity to see anyone, let alone someone else carrying a boat.

Obviously you are more concerned about regulations than people fishing and probably do not carry fishing boats for an adventurous day of being in the great outdoors.

12. It's not a good idea to change the opening day . because of the holiday weekend
13. Please leave the Oneida Lake walleye limit at 3 for now. The lake gets an enormous amount of fishing pressure and raising it to 5 could ruin the great fishery it currently is.
14. I am curious to know a timeframe of when these propositions may be instituted. I organize a fishing trip every year for opening Bass season and have lodging reservations booked in advance. The proposal would change the dates. If the proposal goes through can we expect the change in 2022?
15. The hard date chosen for Opening Bass could be an economic disaster for upstate NY. The Opening Bass weekend has always resulted in a significant economic boost for fishing related industries. Why would you change this after so many successful years, just to make it a set date. In 2022 the date is mid week. I am certain the sports fishing industry will lose millions because it is not on a weekend. So will the government. Why would you do this just so fishermen will know the specific date? We all know now that we can plan our Opening Bass plans for NY in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 and beyond. All we have to do is get a calendar and look for the 3rd Saturday in June for that year! Changing this is a bad idea! Just so you know, this could have been my 47th year of not missing Opening Bass in NY!
16. After the rollout earlier this year of the NY stream regulation overhaul I was cautiously optimistic that the department would take a similar publicly vetted, science and consensus based approach to the patchwork of stillwater regulations that exists today. Instead, we get this new proposal that is best characterized as lazy, unscientific, and regressive.

You say "while brook trout ponds, which are largely managed for self-sustaining wild populations" in the Proposal Highlights here (Freshwater Fishing Regulation Simplification and Clean-up Proposal) however these new regulations are anything but friendly to wild brook trout. Let me give you some examples of government entities that are serious about protecting their stillwater trout populations. Take the province of British Columbia for example, every stream and most

stillwaters in the ENTIRE PROVINCE is managed with a barbless single hook regulation (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/outdoor-recreation/fishing-and-hunting/freshwater-fishing/fishing_synopsis.pdf). That's a land mass of 374,364 square miles with far more remote wilderness than our Adirondack park at 9,375 square miles. Closer to home and certainly closer in geography and fishery similarity is the state of Maine. Maine has around 1200 designated brook trout ponds and lakes, each managed with a custom regulation based on its wild trout status and ability to withstand angling pressure (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/fishing/laws-rules/special-laws.html#scodes>). Maine's s-codes include artificial only, catch and release, and flyfishing only regs and are easily parsed in a dropdown menu on their website. If a small state like Maine can understand the trout population dynamics in 1200 ponds (more than double our 525 by my count ADK brook trout ponds) then why can't NY do the same? Maine even has 200 ponds designated Flyfishing only where even trolling isn't allowed. And yet your new proposal eliminates the few Artificial Only regs we had covering ponds?

We have the opportunity here in NY to protect our wild brook trout for generations to come by protecting them now through proactive regulations and public outreach. There are many people, especially the younger generations, that value the experience of fishing for wild fish in their native habitat. These people value a strong conservation ethics, and will spend considerable time and money to pursue these fish. Despite the current lax regulations, some Adirondack ponds produce trophy size fish that are certainly on par with Maine's stillwaters or even some Canadian waters. With a more proactive approach, our ponds can both sustain wild fish and also produce outstanding specimens that are highly sought after by conservation minded anglers.

Our Adirondack brook trout ponds represent the southern-most range of native lacustrine brook trout in the United States. Meaning that they are first in line to experience the effects of climate change. The Department stocks some 'marginal' ponds (<20 ft deep, unstratified during summer) and believe me, you're already losing year classes in those during some of the hot dry summers we've had over the past 20 years. Acid rain has been reduced by the Clean Air act amendments of 1990 but all it takes is an environmentally hostile president and congress to walk back the progress made over the last 30 years. Personal conversation with Dan Josephson of Cornell University confirms my suspicion that a reverse in Acid rain regulations would cause a rapid return to inhospitable water conditions because of cation shortage from 100 years of mineral acid deposition. The time is NOW to protect these fish.

I'm not going to insult the intelligence of the Department personnel by listing the many scientific studies linking bait fishing with significantly higher fish release mortality. If the Department is serious about protecting wild trout as I referenced above, then we need more not less artificials only regulations in place and the enforcement presence to ensure conformance. The Department has mandated circle hooks for Striped Bass in the Hudson River, why can't we mandate a barbless hook regulation in Adirondack Ponds-especially the wild self sustaining ones? By the way, I estimate that there are 130 wild, unstocked, self sustaining, fishable brook trout ponds out of the 525.

- Does the Department even realize that there are that many?
- How come there are no current regulations in place to protect these?
- Does the Department know what the genetic lineage of those fish are?
- Why in the new proposed regulations is the Department proposing to roll back size and method restrictions on wild ponds such as those north of Thirteenth lake that are experiencing a surge in angling pressure from illegal bait fisherman?

- The Department stocks brown and rainbow trout along with brook trout in many ponds, some in wilderness areas, are these now going to be open to ice fishing with the new year round brown/rainbow regulations?
- Long standing put and take brook trout icefishing regulations have been in place in the upper Raquette watershed (Eckford chain, Forked, Raquette, Blue Mt etc) but are now proposed for elimination. These seem to be a reasonable place for a non-backcountry put and take fishery, why eliminate the year round season here?

In summary, I think the Department needs to go back to the drawing board on these proposed regulations. These regulations are disrespectful to the brook trout fishery that has been slowly built back through the efforts of the Department and scientists working on environmental problems and genetics. My personal recommendations:

- More not less Artificial Only Regulations
- Barbless single hook regulations for all ponds
- More Catch and Release ponds
- A limited number of Trophy only ponds (limit of one fish 18 inch or over)
- Allow year round harvest in put and take lakes
- With climate change happening consider extending the Brook trout pond fisheries season to November 1st. More often than not pond temps are still in the 60's on the 15th. Perhaps consider that for put and take waters only where interference with spawning would be negligible.

17. The Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA), a non-profit citizens-based watershed association dedicated to the restoration, conservation and enjoyment of the Hoosic River and its watershed, envisions a watershed that is ecologically sound and adds to the quality of life for its residents. To that end, HooRWA respectfully submits the following comments concerning the Department's proposal to amend freshwater fishing regulations as announced on December 8, 2021.

While the Department's proposals have minor direct bearing on the fishery associated with the Hoosic River Watershed, we view the proposal as consistent with your statewide efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers by simplifying regulations, thereby making it easier for new or current anglers to understand the legal requirements for enjoying fishing in New York. We particularly support the proposal to establish consistent dates for sportfish opening dates, thereby making it much easier for people to remember when they can get on the water. We appreciate the Department's responsiveness to the angler poll mentioned in the news release, which indicated public preference for consistent opening dates.

We look forward to the adoption of the proposed rule, and we appreciate the opportunity to comment.

18. You people keep making it worse and worse. Another reason to get out of NY. That's why I have not paid for a NY fishing license in two years. Your state sticks for fishing
19. If. Noone stops the dumping of unfiltered sewage into the susquehanna river here in the southern tier west of Binghamton this river is gone. Already way down on smallmouth, walleye. Very few chub, rockbass and others with all the pollution in there. Won't even drop my kayak in with the filth.
20. I would like to talk about a saltwater fish call blowfish about 30 years ago the fish disappeared in the last two or three years it's starting to make a comeback but since there's no size season or

limit there are plenty of people taking 25 to 35 fish every day between four and 6 inches this Has to stop and the only way it can is if we have a law that lists the size the season and and the amount of fish that can be taken daily I hope you will direct this to someone in authority who can be responsible and make a law now so they don't disappear again because if nothing is done the blowfish are going to disappear hopefully someone will take the appropriate action if they want any further info they can email me and I'd be more than happy to accommodate them thank you

21. The New York State Conservation Council (NYSCC) Fisheries Committee generally supports the NYSDEC proposal to make changes to freshwater fishing regulations to help make angling more accessible and enjoyable.

The Fish committee has felt for a long time that the regulations needed to be simplified regarding seasons, daily catch rate, and minimum size allowed which seemed to vary a great deal depending on where you fished. As an example, the regulations booklet years ago was approx. 35 pages! We seemed to be in the mode of trying to micromanage every lake, pond, stream, etc. in New York State. Some anglers may not participate in the sport as the regulations were confusing and hard to find in the regulations book.

The committee however realizes you need to have special regulations where they are critically needed such as in Skaneateles and Oneida Lake, but these should be kept to a minimum. This is especially important now as New York State has had an unprecedented increase in fishing license sales with a lot of new young anglers taking up the sport. Hopefully the simplified regulations will make a more enjoyable experience for these people and fishing will become a lifelong sport for them instead of trying it for a year or two and quitting partly because the regulations were too complicated to understand.

Regarding brook trout, we have some reservations regarding the proposed pond regulations as they relate to the newly implemented stream regulations. It is our opinion that the brook trout, New York's state fish and a biological and angling treasure, should be afforded the most aggressive protection possible. We suggest a number of revisions or clarifications as follow:

1. We suggest that the DEC manage brook trout in New York according to "ranges" or watersheds that include both streams and ponds. In isolated ponds that have limited or no connectivity, the regulation proposed is satisfactory. However, if a pond is a part of a stream system that is known to contain brook trout, that pond should be managed for brook trout. In the event that such a pond has historically been managed as a put and take brown or rainbow trout pond, the management objectives should change accordingly. The best science demonstrated the migratory patterns of brook trout populations and the ephemeral use of ponds and stillwaters in these systems.
2. When genetic or other data emerges that indicate brook trout populations in waters not previously managed for them, the regulation apparatus should be flexible enough to quickly adapt to the new data/presence of brook trout and change regulations in these water bodies accordingly.
3. We are in favor of managing brook trout ponds in brook trout ranges or watersheds consistent with the newly adopted Trout Stream Regulations for Wild Quality:
 - Maintain a long-term average wild trout abundance greater than 40 pounds/acre or 300 yearling and older trout/mile.
 - Where feasible, identify significant habitat deficiencies and implement durable (long-term) improvements.
 - Limit harvest to 3 trout/day with no more than 1 over 12 inches in length.
 - Complete trout population assessment surveys within a 10-year recurrence interval.

Artificial only regulations, baitfish prohibitions, and an aggressive signage campaign parallel to the trout stream effort are also highly recommended.

Again, the NYSCC Fish Committee is very supportive of the NYSDEC proposed initiative to change the freshwater fishing regulations.

22. I am most concerned about your clean up of the amount of steelhead you can harvest on the Niagara River. It sounds like you just had a change of heart when you created a two steelhead limit. The limit of 3 Brown trout apparently still is in effect. DEC Fisheries also recently deleted the harvest of 3 Browns on the Lake Ontario tribs. Why can't you truly simplify the regulations to allow the harvest of two trout in all of the tribs, and lower river. The 3,2,1 is anything but simple.
23. I am questioning the wisdom of changing the opening day of the Musky season to June 1st. My principal concern is with the upper Niagara River, Lake Erie, Lower Niagara River, Lake Ontario & St Lawrence River.

The musky fishery in these waters is struggling to say the least & totally dependent on natural reproduction, with some limited netting & hatchery raised fingerlings on the SLR.

Past DEC studies have indicated very different spawning dates particularly on the SLR because of colder water temperatures.

In earlier years the opening date was July 1st & I believe that should be reconsidered for these 2 troubled fragile fisheries, rather than opening it sooner.

Additionally I strongly believe the season should end sooner than 12-15, & moved to 11-30 as a way of protecting the larger female Muskies that frequently migrate back into the Rivers late in the year as staging areas for the following years spawning season.

With both of these fisheries so dependent on natural reproduction we should do all that we can to avoid over stressing post spawn fish in the spring, and the delayed mortality that often occurs after release, of the larger late season caught fish as possible.

I realize that NYS has made it their policy of maximizing the sportsman's outdoor activities but for now & until these fisheries recover they need & deserve more protection not less.

I believe that other regulation changes should be considered as well to help limit the delayed mortality that occurs after releasing large muskellunge.

Limit fishermen to 1 rod & 2 rods per boat, which will help avoid delays in clearing rods & safely releasing the fish.

Stress & time out of water is a killer of these fish & we must try to streamline the process to help them survive.

Today's Muskie fishermen release virtually 100% of their catch, yet we seem to have fewer fish each year so delayed mortality is a big problem.

More should be done.

Please consider these suggestions

24. As professional angler and captain I disagree with the proposed changes in the regulations for oneida lake. The increase in the limit will damage the current population that already has increased pressure related to social media. The lake would be better served by decreasing the perch limit to 25 a day and prohibiting the sales of the same. I spend over 100 days a year on the water and would love to see the lake continue to thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

25. I am opposed to the muskellunge season date change. While many anglers might prefer a hard start date, I do not think they prefer one that leads to a shorter season. This also impacts the ability to target musky when with family and friends over Memorial Day weekend, which is a great opportunity introduce new young fishermen to musky. Please reconsider this date change or if it must be a hard date, please consider setting it for a date that consistently falls before Memorial Day.
26. These new regulations for brook trout are a terrible idea. There is absolutely no reason to lump every pond in with a few that would be affected by ice fishing. Having the limit be five with just two over twelve inches will just cause fishermen to cull more fish, thus killing more fish than it will save. Leaving the creel limit at five of any size, will allow fishermen to get their limit and get off the pond, where forcing them to cull any over twelve after the first two seems backwards. If someone catches a couple of decent fish, just at or just over twelve inches, then keeps them on the stringer while attempting to fill their limit with smaller ones, are going to be culling the twelve inchers when they catch something bigger and more than likely releasing fish that have been on the stringer for who knows how long, with no chance of that fish surviving. Using the excuse of “simplifying” regulations is quite frankly insulting to any fishermen, to imply that they cannot understand the regulations. Again, and I cannot stress this enough, these new regulations will kill far more fish than they could ever save.
27. The Eastern Lake Erie Charter Boat Association would like to go on record against the proposed changes to the season dates for the muskellunge season.

The change for the Great Lakes from the 3rd Saturday in June (6/18/2022) to June 15th is not beneficial to the fishery. Muskellunge is a species which has limited population and the pressure earlier in the season could affect fish stocks. It is important to protect this very important resource.

The change statewide from the last Saturday in May (5/28/2022) to June 1st will have a negative impact on tourism. Many captains have already scheduled charters for the May dates especially during the holiday weekend.

We do support the extension of the season to December 15th for the Great Lakes.

To this regard, we suggest leaving the statewide dates as is for 2022 and having the Great Lakes season dates coincide with the Canadian season.

28. Greetings DEC Fish Division! I have one thought regarding Simplify Existing Regulations: How about a short commentary (3 to 4 sentences) regarding the principles governing each species' open dates. The commentary should be designed to educate anglers, take them one step more in understanding life cycles and our great natural resources in general. It might be especially helpful in educating young folks. Who knows, it may prompt a lifelong pursuit of conservation.
29. Walleye fishing move to May 1 no matter what day it is.
30. We, the Saratoga County Council of Fish and Game Clubs oppose a reg. change or even the continuation of the reg to open the Walleye season on May 1 of each year.

We tried to convince Steve Hurst to delay the opening in Saratoga County to at least May 15 to protect the spawning females in the Kayaderos Creek where it empties into Saratoga Lake. We

have witnessed spawning females being taken by uninformed fisher men with no regard to the dwindling population.

Even the Local biologist is in favor of this delay as the DEC at the last fish survey in 2018 or 2019 produced no walleyes at all. It may already be too late. The walleye fishery may be gone

Mr. Hurst did not even want to hear this proposal as he is against a county special reg. at all saying he wants a state wide reg. only. We say BS to this. He would not even listen to us.

I think that he feels that the Sportsmen and Women do not know what we are talking about. As every one knows due to the warming climate our lakes in the southern parts of this state are warming up and the ice is going out faster than the northern parts of the state causing what's left of the walleyes to spawn early than normal.

Please change the reg. to at least May 15 to give them a chance.

31. Native Brook Trout in NON-Stocked streams should be a limit of 10 or more, 100's of streams in the Adirondacks are full of these trout. I stopped fishing many streams that are 1-5 miles back for the reason of a limit of 5 Brookies. Would anyone walk that far for 5 little trout 7 & 8" long. Not Me.
32. **My name is Michael Barger and I am the President of Art Flick Trout Unlimited.** I have been fishing the Carmans River for 27 years. The last 2 seasons I fished the Carmans River 83 different times from the tidal section to Lower Lake. I want to make a formal comment in an effort to maintain the "No Kill" section of the Carmans River in Southaven County Park. This section of the river is prime native Brook Trout habitat and should be protected for that very reason. People accessing the river at Yaphank Avenue in Kayaks and Canoes are frequently encountered fishing with conventional tackle in this stretch of the river, and it is my sincere belief that several of these anglers do not know the difference between Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and our native Brook Trout. For that reason and other sporting regulations that support catch and release fishing we at AFTU are against removing the current regulations of the "No Kill" section from the Powerlines at G Gate to Lower Lake.
33. After reviewing all the proposed changes, I fully agree with all the proposals. The more opportunities we as sportsmen have to enjoy our state's natural resources without over taxing them the better.
34. There are a couple that I really hope that you are able to follow through on as I just turned 70 back on 1/5/22 so all hope they go into place very quickly.

#1. Going back to hard dates to open up all fishing season sure would be a very nice thing especially as we continue to experience some of the effects of Global Warming as anglers in N.Y.S. . Bring the open date back to May 1st every year for Northern Pike, Walleye, Chain Pickerel & also Hybrid Muskie sure would be nice for anglers who do a lot of their fishing from shore or in their waders. Gaining those extra days of the Post Spawn Period that were taken away from us back in the early 1970's is important now. For anglers like me who love fishing for trophy size Northern Pike using large Suckers (VHS Certified) having the season open on May 1st is a huge welcome back gift especially on those years when that first Saturday in May was as late as the 7th, 6th, - 4th plus bodies of water experienced early ice - outs followed by warmer April. Most anglers who fish the Post Spawn Period for Trophy Northern Pike fish from shore & in shallow water so water temps. are very important to them. Post Spawn Chain Pickerel too.

Now let's talk about those Walleye anglers who might not own a boat and they count on fishing with their Chest Waders on Oneida Lake those . Hungry Post Spawn Walleye move in shallow to feed on Shiners , Sand Pike ,& Smaller Yellow Perch those couple of hours before & into dark as well as at daybreak .This productive pattern stays in place through most of May & that first week of May is probably the best fishing . This is a great time to introduce young anglers 12-16 years old into catching Walleye using Stick Baits while wear Waders & fishing with these Father, Grandfather ,etc.,... plus they learn all about predictor prey relationships in the process . A great fishing confidence builder for them.

#2. Gaining a few days up to six is another great idea for having a hard Season Opener for Bass of June 15th every year . Once again another great time for targeting hungry Post Spawn Bass especially for younger anglers fishing with their Father or Grandfather were they can use Crawfish or VHS Certified Minnows for Bait .Lots of aRecreational Anglers still enjoy fishing for Bass with Bait . Also most anglers release all or most of themBass they catch in recent years too.

Steve adding a few extra days on the traditional season openers really is a plus for the Recreation anglers creating more positive Family Leisure opportunities , new anglers , and old timers too.

#3. Also keep the traditional April 1st Opener too as it still is a big deal especially for the anglers who want to keep a few Trout to eat especially those young anglers fishing with Dad .

As a young angler back in the 1960's these are the types of fishing with my Father that helped build up my confidence in my fishing success and passion for Sport Fishing.

So Steve I am highly recommending the moves to those hard dates of opening seasons every year and I am hoping you can put them into place on May 1, 2022 & June 15, 2022 .

Keep up the good job Steve as you are doing a fantastic job in your Title.

35. I think keeping the Oneida Lake walleye limit should remain at 3 fish. I have witnessed anglers catching 3 then going back out for 3 more! If the limit is raised to 5 then it will deplete Oneida's healthy walleye populations. I also recommend highly that a lower limit on yellow perch should be looked into also. The current limit of 50 perch is seriously too many. Lake Simcoe in Ontario had a 50 fish limit years ago and now it's 25 but will take you all day to reach this limit.50 perch for 1 angler is way too many. Thank you. By the way I am 76 years old and remember the days when you could catch a limit of any fish in a short time, not anymore with the electronics on boats it's getting too easy to deplete a school of fish in a short time.

36. I would like to propose Fern Lake should go back to (3) Walleye limit 18" min length. (I would actually like a 1 fish limit, but I know that would likely not pass)

Fern Lake is stocked by the state on alternating years with fry and by the lake association (under a permit that was held by an individual, but will be held by the association going forward) with larger 5-10" walleye. It is the belief by resident anglers that since the size limit has decreased to 15" and limit of 5 fish from previous special regs of 18" and 3 that walleye spawning adults have significantly decreased during spring spawning observations and catch rate has significantly decreased.

The Fern Lake association stocking has missed a large block of years due to irregularities with the hatchery, but was able to stock during the fall of 2020. Hopefully this will boost the walleye

population in the next few years with larger, more viable fish. That said, this stocking is made possible through private donations. As such, it is special circumstance that should be considered for special regulations. If the state were able to stock larger fish that had a better chance of survival, private stocking may not be necessary, however we have not seen a notable improvement to walleye fishing since the state has begun stocking. However, walleye fishing did initially improve after private stocking was once again reinstated 10? years ago.

Thank you for this consideration. I know it does not simplify the regulations, however it may help protect some of the smaller numbers of privately funded stocked fish and allow for more opportunities for all.

37. I believe that first responders, firefighters, police officers, etc. and disabled New Yorkers should be given free or reduced lifetime licenses. Some states already do this. This I believe would provide these men and women with a time value hobby and also provide some therapy.
38. I am writing concerning the potential change in the musky season regulations for the Chenango River and Susquehanna . Myself and my friends have been fishing these areas for 15 plus years . We are from Pennsylvania and have experienced some amazing fishing throughout the year/years. If the regulation is changed I am hoping that a catch and release season could be implemented during the closed season. In the case of Musky fishermen, I believe we are a conscientious group that is very much aware of the need to protect the fishery.
39. I have never been a fan of a "one size fits all "approach to fisheries management. While this is certainly a "convenient" approach to managing a multitude of different fisheries around New York State, it is not necessarily in the best interest of these individual fisheries. Been running fishing charters in New York State for over 30 years. Many of these regulations were put in a place by previous administrations after hours of research on the part of local DEC biologists.

With regard to Lake George , it makes absolutely no sense to make any changes to our Atlantic salmon program. Many anglers have worked alongside DEC fisheries managers over the years regarding our declining salmon numbers. In recent years, we have a scene some improvement in the salmon fishery.

I, along with many others, adamantly oppose any changes to our current regulations for Atlantic salmon or lake trout on Lake George.

As you are aware, many of New York states fisheries are truly unique and, consequently, assessor Tate unique management regulations. Hopefully our current lake trout and salmon plan remains in tact.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration relative to this important matter.

40. I have been fishing NYS for over 40 years and I applaud NYSDEC for proposing changes to the sportfish seasons to begin and end on hard dates. Specific changes include changing the statewide opening date to:
 - May 1 for Walleye, Northern Pike, Pickerel and Tiger Muskellunge;
 - June 1 for Muskellunge; and
 - June 15 for Largemouth and Smallmouth BassI would appreciate it if these proposed changes could be instituted for the upcoming 2022 sportfish seasons.

41. I am in favor of the new regs as follows from your web site:

Season Dates

Provide consistency in how the State represents opening and closing fishing season dates for sport fish. DEC currently uses a mixed approach for season dates. Some species seasons begin on a hard calendar year date while others start on a designated Saturday. Based on results of an angler poll (PDF) conducted in 2021, all sportfish seasons will begin and end on hard dates.

Specific changes include changing the statewide opening date to:

- May 1 for Walleye, Northern Pike, Pickerel and Tiger Muskellunge;
- June 1 for Muskellunge; and
- June 15 for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass

Special regulations for these species will be aligned with new season dates.

42. I would like to applaud the DEC's efforts to further simplify the freshwater fishing regulations through the proposed changes for regulation simplification and clean up. It is certainly well worth this effort and I certainly appreciate the hard work and dedication to this project.

One component, however, brings great concerns in my mind – pertaining to the season opening dates for specific species.

The proposed opening day change to walleye, northern pike, pickerel and tiger muskellunge moving from the 1st Saturday in May to a hard date of May 1 brings much concern for walleye. Many inland waters across NYS still show spawning activity this late in the Spring, and moving the season opener up as much as 6 or 7 days could expose these late spawning fish still populating tributaries to angling pressure that may produce a negative outcome over time. This portion may need to be revisited, as I see little issue with opening northern pike, tiger musky and pickerel on May 1, but walleye may need to remain as is to protect spawning stocks as long as possible. I believe this should be left as is currently constituted.

The season change on inland musky from last Saturday in May to June 1, although sound in reasoning, this year the last Saturday falls on Memorial Day weekend, and many do plan their travel and fishing trips to coincide with opening days, and as these proposed changes aim to take effect in April 2022, those who have reserved lodging and hired charter captains for their musky opener could be in for a rude and unnecessary surprise. I would recommend delaying this change until 2023. A simple language change in the proposal to reflect this would suffice.

Concerning black bass season being moved from 3rd Saturday in June to June 15, although statewide this doesn't present too many issues, it does bring questions on Lake Erie with the incongruent seasons on this boundary water between US and Canada – as bass season in Canada opens the last Saturday in June, and this earlier opening could bring an increase in pressure on local bass stocks that are still guarding eggs and fry on their beds, and considering the abundance of such egg-eating fish species like the round goby, pulling more bass of their beds via increased Canadian angling pressure, may have ill affects down the road. I would recommend leaving black bass season opening as is on the Great Lakes.

The move of Musky season on Great Lakes to June 15 vs. 3rd Saturday in June, with season closure on Dec 15, although sound, again leaves inconsistent the regulations between NY and Canada for Great Lakes. A delay in this move to 2023 effective date would buy some time for the working groups on standardizing seasons between US and Canada on Great Lakes boundary water to come up with a workable consistent season opener structure.

43. I believe your proposed June 1 musky opener is limiting fishing opportunities. A firm date should be earlier in May. Please consider keeping the existing start date or moving the opener to earlier in May.
44. After reviewing the proposed changes there are questions as to the rationale and scientific explanation of the proposed changes. I believe the “warm water” changes are beneficial in obtaining clarity and simplification. Some of the “cold water” fishing regulations seem to lack clarity and simplification, as well as an explanation of scientific backing. My review was primarily focused on the Region 5 Area, as this is where I reside, work and primarily fish.

First, I would like to start with the change in regulations on Lake George for the Atlantic Salmon fishery. While I understand the reduction of size will conform to general statewide regulations, this action may have a dramatic effect on the fishery. The salmon fishery in the lake has struggled in past years. The introduction of the Sebago Strain has helped, with more and larger salmon being caught consistently. By decreasing the size limit to 15” of these fish that exhibit slow growth rates, a year class of younger fish will ultimately be able to be harvested. The longevity of the fishery may not be capable of maintaining the catch rates with the new harvest of the younger year class.

After reviewing the ice fishing regulations clarification will be needed. Some bodies of water state that ice fishing is prohibited, yet in the next line it states that ice fishing is permitted with a maximum of three lines permitted, for example Bigsby Pond. This is confusing. With the “trout” take season now open year-round some fishermen may believe that ice fishing is ultimately permitted. The way the regulation is written, ‘with the exception of waters within these nine counties’, will have to be clearly and boldly stated. It may be a common oversight if regulations are read quickly and there are many pages to bounce back and forth between.

The “Brook Trout” management is of my largest concern. Many certain ponds are proposed to be managed for brook trout, alleviating the stocking of other salmonid species. The elimination of stocking certain other species will extinguish a physical and economic benefit that is rare and unique to the area. There are currently very few places where anglers have the opportunity to fish in one pond and have the chance of catching “trout” and “brook trout” together. Many of these places are easily accessible making it easier for most anglers’, especially ones with handicaps or physical impairments. If these places are managed for “brook trout” their usage may diminish, as they are not such a catchable species. Another factor with these ponds is that there may be little to no natural reproduction by salmonid species, so ultimately the water body would conform to a “put-and-take” fishery regardless.

It states that “Brook Trout” ponds are to be managed for “self-sustaining wild populations”. However, the same daily limits exist as the “Trout” managed waters. If a population is to be managed as such, should it not have the same regulations as a “put-and-take” fishery. There is also the question of genetics that comes into play. If “Brook Trout” waters are going to be continually be stocked with brook trout, how will the specific strain to be stocked be distinguished? There will be an increased demand on our hatchery systems to produce more brook trout. The NYSDEC is now stocking more Temiscamie brook trout, as they are more resilient to acid deposition and easier hatchery rearing, and less “heritage” fish. Yet this strain is not even native to NY. Will there be a shift back to “heritage” fish, which ultimately grow slower, more difficult to rear and cost more due to egg extraction practices. The Rome Strain, which grows quicker have been found to not be as viable long term, yet are easier to quickly grow to stocking length status. With the growth rates of brook trout, especially “heritage” strains, one can not equate their size to reproduction status, especially in many Adirondack ponds. While a pond has a catch limit of 5 per day, an 8” to 10” brook trout is a mature reproducing fish. I am aware

that the current limit is 5 fish per day, but maybe a direction should be made to lower the limit, which may lower needed stocking rates in the long run while producing larger, more mature fish. As you are aware too, many of the ponds that currently are "Brook Trout" waters and will continually managed as such do not support natural reproduction either due to water chemistry or introduction of undesirable species and rely on stocking practices. Due to this, wouldn't they inherently be a "put and take" fishery even though they are a brook trout water?

With the new regulations, certain bodies of water have fishing prohibited regulations in place due to Brood Stock protection. What about protecting ponds that are currently used as "heritage brook trout" brood stock protection, i.e. Mountain Pond, Fishbrook Pond, Long Pond, Big and Little Ponds, etc. Should there be "special regulations" reducing the take and size limits. It is rare to catch brook trout 12" in length in some of these ponds. An idea may be to institute a daily limit of 3 with no more than 1 over 12" in length to help better protect the future egg stock.

From the Warren County Fish Hatcheries perspective, we will ultimately need to adjust quantities of species raised to meet the new proposed changes. We ultimately try to balance out fish supplied to each town the best way possible and as permitted by NYSDEC. There will definitely be a shift, so we will need to come up with new management layouts. Once again, the question of strain arises. If we are to shift to a higher quantity of brook trout, what strain is to be stocked where? We do not have the capability of holding numerous strains of brook trout and at current stocking rates, do not have the capacity of rearing "heritage" brook trout into the spring unless there is a significant switch from the Rome Strain to another more suitable strain for the proposed objectives. There are not many waters in Warren County that would be changing in regulation, but it will have an impact on our management. These new regulations will have a significant impact on the state hatchery systems, and with the loss of Rome Hatchery as a viable Brook Trout Rearing facility, will the system be able to meet the demands of the proposed changes?

45. The proposed Regulations make a lot of sense. I am in favor of the proposed regulations.

46. I fully support this Proposal. It makes sense from several perspectives:

1. It's simply easier to remember a hard numerical date. This proposed change eliminates any confusion about what (species) opens and when. Frankly, for as many years as I've fished NY, I always felt that I had to "check the regulations" each calendar year just to confirm the beginning of a Season.

2. There is a potentially positive financial impact of this proposal. For many years, participation in hunting and fishing by the younger generation has been on the decline. With so much emphasis on sports like soccer, baseball, basketball and others, Saturday openers (see: Bass Season) often conflicted with ever more popular participation sports. Establishing a hard numerical date enables a family to plan more effectively, and should whatever numerical date is established were to fall on a weekday, it is possible that participation of our younger generation may slightly increase.

Frankly, there does not appear to be any downside to this Proposal. In fact, with respect to my comments, any numerical date established should focus on ensuring they fall during a weekday. Some may grouse about such a thing, especially those who work full time. But the reality is that segment of the population while they may miss Opening Day, will have the (same) opportunity to participate on a weekend as if no change had been made at all.

47. • Removing the statewide closed season restriction on lake trout (PDF) and Atlantic salmon (PDF). - YES PLEASE
• Changing opening dates for selected warmwater and coolwater species fishing seasons from Saturdays to hard numerical dates. - YES PLEASE
48. I totally disagree on making opening season for Musky June 1. Its too early, they are not done spawning yet by then and there already is too much pressure on them now. You are going to ruin it.

I also disagree on having no closed season for Lakers. They are spawning in the fall and charter captains keep them all. Going to ruin that also.

49. As a lifetime angler and former NYS licensed guide with over 25 years of experience fishing in the Adirondacks, particularly for brook trout, I must vehemently oppose the proposed regulation changes. I can appreciate the department trying to simplify the rules by removing special regulations, however, those special regulations are in place for legitimate reason. Brook trout are too valuable and too sensitive a species to collectively regulate that many ponds with blanket regulations. I agree that they must be protected from ice fishing. I must oppose the 2 fish over 12" proposal. I advocate for catch and release when and where possible and practical, however, fish caught during the summer season are often susceptible to mortality even upon or after release. Imposing a 2 fish over 12" limit is certainly going to result in "culling" fish that will certainly die after being released. While certainly possible on select waters, there is no documentation to support overfishing or overharvesting of trout on the website or in the materials submitted for review.

I must also oppose moving the walleye opener to the first of the month. The first Saturday of the month has worked well for almost 50 years. Some years it protects spawning fish. Most years it allows sportsmen the opportunity to hunt and kill their turkey(s) and then move on to fishing. Don't force sportsmen to choose between the 2 on opening day as well as spread our ECO's any thinner than they already are.

50. I have worked on Brook Trout Research and Management for more than 50 years. I have probably published more research papers on Brook Trout than anyone else who is responding to these proposed changes. Alaska Fish and Game and Florida Fish and Game have better fishers management. Alaska continues to exert regulations on a water by water basis. NYS DEC seems to be only interested in license fees, and easier workloads for their fisheries research and management personnel. I manage some private waters and am quite familiar with catch rates, etc. Catch and Release as practiced by the NPS has been quite good. And there is more adherence to native fish species protection.

I have worked on barrier dams, stream and lake improvement, creel census, and biological surveys in NYS, State of West Virginia, State of PA, and many other salmonid fishery populations.

Dwight Webster, head of dept. of Natural resources at Cornell University was openly critical of DEC fishery management. These changes surely prove NYS DEC is mostly after minimum work for their personnel and little interest in specific populations. Brook Trout habitat in NYS continues to decline in this state. Some states especially those with National Parks have done better to keep native populations.

My brother, Kermit Johnson and I GAVE 850 acres to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. So we have continued to try to do the best by wild trout populations. Alaska has no Brook Trout at all.

They are not native there. But at the rate NYS seems to be managing Brook Trout waters it appears the most sought after species at least for the about 30 years I dealt more with Adirondack Waters (private and state) their populations are not benefitting as much as they should from special regulations. There also probably should be farther more emphasis on catch and release. I have let almost every Brook Trout I have landed above 12 inches up to about 6.5 pounds go. Some of them I know lived to spawn several years more as a result.

51. I'm 52, lived out on the twin forks for 25 years. We are finally seeing whales and seals return to our waters. Cornell Cooperate and other environmental groups have made effort full strides in seabed restoration. Eel grass is being planted by volunteers and oysters are understood for their vital role in filtration. Still the threat of red tide algae blooms from fertilizer choking off life from these shores is real.

I support less fishing, reduction in fleet size, by catch limits, and the creation of a UN type agency to police the crimes of overfishing in the open seas. Citizen awareness is growing and continued education will help ensure follow through of regulations.

52. Current black bass regulations on the Hudson River continue to list a 15 inch minimum. Said regulation does not make sense nor does it help with the financial prosperity of the depressed Hudson River basin area. As our regional Tournament anglers engage in club and small open tournaments on the Hudson, the major BASS, BLF, MLF and other National organizations have departed the Hudson venue in favor of Champlain, Oneida and 1,000 Islands. A major bass fishing tournament can have a \$4–5 million economic impact on the local community. A championship event can have a \$27 million economic impact (Go Fish Education Center). It has been over 36 years since Roland Martin won a National BASS event out of Catskill NY, and that was one of the last major event held on the Hudson River. And the reason for the departure was moving the NY State minimum length from 12 inches to 15 inches. For many years our club has been managing the annual "Bassin; Lane Open" and we draw around 20 boats. Approximately 25% of the teams (two anglers) weigh in limits of five 15 inch bass. However, a great many more bass at 12 to 15 inches are caught and released. And in our bass tournaments, all bass are eventually released. The 12 inch regulation results in more limits and improves competition. As is the rule in most of NY State, please return to the black bass 12 inch minimum.

53. I for one disagree with the change for opening bass season. I would schedule my vacations every year for the last forty yrs for the third Saturday of June weekend to weekend not the middle of a week. There is ten of that have been doing this for years. The only people that would want it change are your tournament people so they would be on the waters first no heavy boat traffic. If this crazy rule changed is made than stop all catch and release before the season opens. People get greedy just like all other sports in new York one group or should I say clubs want it all for themselves the hell with the small people. Thank you for listening

54. I personally oppose the 2 trout over 12" limit on the grounds that will promote the culling and mortality of trout during the summer season.

I also oppose moving the walleye opener to May first, most years the traditional opener protects spawning fish as well as gives us sportsmen the opportunity to hunt turkeys and then move on to fishing without both openers falling on the same day.

55. Comments:

- 1) Boundary waters need to be listed
- 2) Lake Champlain should be included in Great Lakes Tribs. Regs

3) Spawning seasons fluctuate with climate and there should be a notice about ethical practices related to harvest dates

4) Hatchery acquired trout eggs via permit and subsequent sale should be certified and treated to avoid transmission of invasives or diseases to other water bodies.

Mostly I agree with proposals for clarification of rules/guidance/regulation.

56. In agreement with most of the changes. Love NYS fishing opportunities. However, new inland stream classifications/regulations are very confusing. Just my 2 cents.

57. I think your changes are fine!

58. I am a passionate fisherman and the president of a nonprofit organization called Trout Power. Trout Power is a group that focuses on genetic analysis and conservation of brook trout within the Adirondack park in New York State. After reading through the proposed changes to the NYS fishing regulations, I have numerous thoughts regarding these changes and hopes/suggestions for future changes.

When reading through the proposal I was encouraged to read that “trout” will not be managed as a whole, as brook trout should be managed differently. As one of our two native char, I agree with the notion that these fish should be managed in a separate and more delicate manner than rainbow and brown trout. Although these foreign invaders in browns and rainbows have their place in stocked fisheries, I am excited to see a focus put on our native fish. I applaud the DEC for aiming to have self-sustaining populations of brook trout in our ponds. A focus on restoring habitat and providing watersheds where these fish can survive and flourish was one of the highlights of the recent inland trout stream management plan. Working to protect these fish, I also appreciated the notion of closing off brook trout ponds to ice fishing to protect the fishes well being. To me, as a fisherman, there is no greater prize than catching a wild brook trout within its native range. I believe this special management of brook trout is an important step in preserving the future of our state’s fish. management plan. Managing stillwater and moving water bodies, especially when they are directly connected, seems like a form of mismanagement to me. The approach of managing watersheds and connected water bodies would allow for the protection of wild fish and their genetics. Stocked fish, while necessary in many places, dilute the genetics and success of wild trout populations. The proposed plan and recently passed inland plan says that the state hopes to see more wild and sustaining populations of brook trout. In that case, if there is a watershed with brook trout anywhere in it, no fish should be stocked within the watershed boundary. I fish streams in New York that have wild brook trout residing in its waters. Many of those streams are tributaries to larger lakes which have brook trout stocked within them. I have seen spring and fall runs of brook trout in the streams that were clearly stocked in the lake. These runs can potentially dilute wild/native genetics, provide unnecessary competition for wild fish, and push wild fish out of their natural habitat. If we have wild trout streams connecting to lakes or ponds with stocked fish, we are not truly doing all that can be done to protect our wild fish. Until the state thinks about management at a watershed level, we have two plans that are only partially effective at sustaining and protecting our wild fish.

I applaud the DEC and fisheries department for the changes and adaptations they have made to the inland trout stream management plan. I applaud the focus on brook trout. I understand that my desire for a watershed level management plan is a massive jump, and one that cannot be immediately made by an organization as huge as the DEC. I do hope, however, that the state will consider pursuing this form of management in the future. As the regulations become much more simplified for our ponds with this proposed rule, maybe that can open a door to combining our trout stream and trout stillwater plans within New York.

Thank you for your efforts in providing and protecting our fisheries within New York State and allowing me to share my thoughts.

59. Input:

- 1). Okay to make common dates for seasons to open rather than some on 3rd Tuesday of June - make all of them first of a month
- 2). Do not think you should allow "baby" trout...should be a minimum length for all trout - shortage of fish now, if you lessen, more younger trout will be taken.

60. The fewer the regulations the better.

61. As an avid fisherman in NYS I agree with all of the proposed changes.

62. The changes are good and will go a long way to make things understandable. I often tell people you have to be a lawyer to fish in NY there are so many different and confusing regulations. It has kept me from fishing.

So yes I approve of what you are proposing.

63. I believe we should get out ahead of the current stripe bass population problem. Issue a hard moratorium to avoid a collapse as has happened in the past.

64. I don't really freshwater fish here in Staten Island NY, but I'd love to see changes in saltwater fishing. Lease let me know when these will be reviewed.

65. As a lifetime sportsman license holder in NYS, I have reviewed, and for the most part support, the proposed changes and amendments. The only one I disagree with is the 5 trout limit. I think that is excessive, and that 3 a day is plenty, and will leave more opportunity for more anglers.

66. REGULATION CHANGES LOOK GOOD TO THIS NY RESIDENT. THANK YOU

67. I think those are good changes

68. I say yes to the proposal for changing the fishing rules

69. I am for the five fish limit but I oppose that only 2 can be over 12 inches. It's not very often that you will catch 2 over 12 inches but when you do you should be able to keep 5.

70. was wondering if the new regulations proposed are based on increased fish count or on monetary needs of the state. I think there still needs to be a size limit of fish taken from streams and the lakes. thank you.

71. I am in favor of the proposed changes.

72. I think you should all visit N. J. Fish hatchery to see how to do it. Five trout but only two can be over 12". I fish the Otselic and have never caught anything under 12". So all I can keep is two fish. I would pay for a trout stamp to pay for doing things right.

73. year round Fishing should be allowed for catch and release only, always. Kills should be limited to maximum 2 fish per day none greater than 12".. we have great streams which are losing numbers year-on-year due to the current allowance - it's damaging.

74. The new regulation is asking for a common opening day for the entire state. This request does not address the varying weather conditions throughout our state. Example ice out, if any, in Regions 3&4 may happen as much as days or even weeks before Regions 5&6 or even 7 8 and 9. As you know this condition has a direct impact on the spawning cycle. I don't think anyone wants these spawning fish taken at this time. The department should conduct Regional info meetings around the state to receive input from local fishermen.

I don't know how many Lifetime members there are in the state, but I am sure there are more than 21,000. As one of those members I DID NOT receive a survey in July.

Please reconsider this proposal at a later date. When more state wide data can be reconsidered. Thank You for your time.

75. Doesn't this put a potential strain on limited resources?

76. I have been fishing the Salmon River in around Malone for over 70 years! The river is not what it was 40 years ago but still a wonderful beautiful trout stream. Over the years my Dad and I harvested many great trout.

My thoughts on the changes:

A. I would like to see more catch and release zones set up with no live bait, only artificial lures. At one time many years ago there was a trophy stretch set up near Chasm Falls. Fred White, the officer at the time helped accomplish this. It was a true fun strip for avid fisherman like myself.

B. The no size limit is good as many small fish are hooked and will die anyway. And most fisherman will release small trout, anyway.

C. Putting a limit on two fish over 12 inches does not make any sense to me. If you were fortunate enough to catch a 16 and an 18 inch trout in the same day, why take that joy away from a fisherman?

Hope this helps and thank you all for stocking and keeping our rivers alive and well.

77. I agree about hard dates for season openers.

I also agree on having trout open all year.

78. In response to a further reduction in regulations regarding fishing in New York I strongly oppose both these regulations and the ones previously instated. As a business owner that depends directly on your decisions to either improve or degrade our fisheries these decisions do not help the long-term sustainability of any fishery. In the case of New York we don't have robust enough fish populations to handle additional pressure.

I have tried to find a good reason to continue to open up any fishery beyond traditional regulations (pre-2021) and I cannot. All of the previous and proposed actions will do little to enhance the fishing experience as the few who will take advantage of these circumstances and it will diminish the opportunities for those that choose to engage the same fishery during previous established periods. As one with a lot of experience I can say for certain they will have little to no economic benefits in what we use to call the off season.

Finally, the opportunities for poaching and other illegal activity will directly benefit from all of your recent actions. Given you cannot adequately enforce existing and past regulations our fishery will be harmed. This is not a result of poor efforts by existing officers but more a consequence of asking too much from too few.

Do not make any new changes that further open any fishery and repeal the ones instituted last year. Conservation should be the primary goal not excessive fishing pressure that will ultimately not benefit anyone.

79. Thanks for sharing this information! I did not find the proposal. But I would like to comment on the change in previous limits. I noticed that the number of blue fish changed from 15 to 3 two years ago. Which was quite a big cut. None of the fishing folks I know was happy with the cut. I was curious whether the limit of blue fish is restored to 15 for the coming season.

80. I wholeheartedly support the proposed amendments to the state's fishing regulations, and I applaud your efforts to make the rules simpler and more efficient. I do believe that the rules should not create unnecessary barriers to those who wish to try fishing. It is one of the greatest ways to enjoy the State's natural resources. The proposals appear to strike a healthy balance between access and preservation of our fish population.

81. I support all the proposed changes.

82. I concur with the new fishing regulations.

83. I received an email about the new year round trout regulations.

My comment is the move was wonderful!

It make my winter so much more pleasant and I assure you that we all treat the fish we release carefully and with respect.

This was a great solution to a complicated issue; when you can fish for trout in NY State.

Thank you again for implementing it. I love it!

84. I strongly support the simplification of the Regulations, and making size limits and open seasons the same state wide.

85. I get there are regulation on sizes due to spawning and stuff but last time I went caught three fish had to throw back because size limit was already had for that size. Do not only was I able to catch three more fish to fill my bag limit but the first three floated on lake dead. Not sure size thing is working the way it's supposed to if the law allowed me to keep the ones I had to put back there would have been more live fish in lake. Not sure on the exact numbers but used three as example. But I do remember throwing two into lake that came up from over a hundred feet of water bleeding very bad. Can someone please explain how the law works like it was told to me by charter captain which was a retired Dec officer. I asked him what sense it made and only answer I got was I try and fight that law every year

86. I support the changes as proposed.

87. We need more young anglers so making the sport more accessible is a good idea. I think most of what is proposed may be beneficial however increasing daily harvest limits and decreasing size

limits will ultimately put additional strains on our fisheries. Many of which would not thrive today without intervention.

I'm a strong advocate for catch and release but take no issue with daily harvest if it's done responsibly. Slot limits protect the breeders while allowing anglers to still harvest a few fish. I would also point out that most modern day anglers support sustainable resources and therefore endorse catch and release. The state invest a lot of money in stocking. Increasing harvest limits while decreasing size limits will likely lead to greater expense. More importantly it will ultimately diminish the fisheries which would be counter productive for both new comers and those of us that truly love the sport.

88. I believe there should be size limits for all trout caught. It used to be 7", and even that is too small. I propose the following:

Rainbows/Browns--- 10"
Brook Trout--- 7"
Lake Trout--- 25"
Salmon---18"

89. I fish Walleyes on Lake Champlain and the season starts the first Saturday in May of each year which is fine.

However many fisherman are fishing prior to the opening day of the season, targeting walleyes and I believe are doing "catch and release"??

I do not feel this is right, to me opening day is opening day & I realize there may not be much you can do about it.

I can also say that the Walleye population on Lake Champlain has improved the last few years which I think is in part to the great program Vermont is doing.

90. Your new regulations "WILL DESTROY" in a few years the fragile need of closures and spawning sanctuary on wild trout streams New York was once a proud pioneer in - shame on you guys!. It worked!- why wild trout had a future in NY...with new regulations- THEY ARE DOOMED!!!...simple as that! I have written books about New York's trout and salmon and I can't believe you covered to social ridiculousness and money...fact is!- you will lose money and destroy the wild brown trout fisheries anglers come to New York to catch

91. These rules look great to me but I have a suggestion. As a passionate bass angler, what will it take to speak with someone from the DEC to stop the spraying of aquatic vegetation? I have spoken with multiple people who are out to spray "Hydrilla" and they are horribly wrong and are spraying MILFOIL. Which is an incredible habitat for Largemouth Bass and various other freshwater species. This spraying has ruined Conesus Lake and wrecked half of Cayuga Lake. Anglers are not happy that we aren't getting a voice in this being that the ANGLERS contribute the most money in simply fishing licenses. Would love to have a conversation with someone about this.

92. Having reviewed the proposed rule changes I would like to state that the change I most support is the changing of opening days for all species to a hard date. Proper opening date is based on end of spawn for most species. Fish do not change their spawning habits based on what day of the week a particular date falls on. This will allow Fisheries BIOLOGISTS to choose the date which is on average most optimum for any given species which is a better management practice.

93. Our current hunting and fishing regulations are Byzantine, discourage new sportsmen, and are a punchline to hunters in other states. I strongly support the suggested changes along with any others which meet our regulatory needs while unburdening sportsmen.
94. As with the damage you have done with the changes made to the statewide trout regulations for 2022, especially as it pertains to our wild trout fisheries, I disagree with these proposed changes. I would prefer you manage the resource based upon science, not upon someone's ability to comprehend a syllabus. I also do not believe it matters what changes you make. There is almost a complete lack of enforcement of the NYS fish and game laws, with the exception of the most easily accessed trailheads or boat launches on opening day of the season.
95. As an angler, I'm fully in favor of all the proposed changes.
96. We should be making limits smaller on all trout in streams especially brook trout. People take their limit day after day and decimate the trout population in 3 weeks after the opener
97. I agree with proposed changes.
98. It's my opinion that this has not been researched fully enough and more time is needed to know if this good or bad!
99. I believe all proposed regulation changes should be incorporated as written.
100. (Thumbs up emoji)
101. I support the new simplified regulations proposed by the Dec. I think it will have a positive impact on the sport and keeping it simple will encourage more people to follow the rules.
102. I am ALL in favor of the review and simplification of regulations that have diminished the number of fishermen and made it difficult to enjoy the sport. The suggestions so far outlined will be a great start. This program should also include an evaluation of how much these actions will help to encourage the future of fishing in NY. A serious look should be made to include volunteers to comment in the evaluations. Experienced individuals who may live on our waterways and who can gather comments from other sportsmen and women.
103. The regulations have grown way past the point where the average angler can easily understand. The proposed changes, in my opinion, will help remedy some of the confusion. Thank you for your efforts.
104. I welcome the proposed changes to the fishing regulations. I think there should be a 4 inch minimum size limit to let the fish get bigger but the rest of the proposals I think will have a positive impact on the fishing season. I hope they go through and are allowed.
105.
 - Changing the statewide regulation for rainbow trout and brown trout in ponds to allow for year-round fishing. YES
 - Aligning harvest limits for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout across streams and ponds at five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12". YES
 - Changing the statewide regulations for Atlantic Salmon and lake trout to allow for year-round fishing. YES
 - Normalizing season dates so all openers for sportfish begin on a hard date. YES
 - Allow ice fishing statewide unless specifically prohibited in all but 9 Adirondack counties, where the existing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout will remain. YES

106. As a frequent fly & summer bass fishing enthusiast I would make the following modifications:

- 1) max two brown , rainbow, Brook trout . Nothing under 12 inches . Don't understand the logic of taking fish under 12 inches that u just stocked? I would think u would want to limit the people sitting at the streams with buckets after the dec just stocked the stream.
- 2) pond fishing should be consistent with stream regs
- 3) for the finger lakes , dec should change the bass fishing regs back to no targeting of early season spawning bass . The pressure that is placed on the spawning fish is impacting fry yields and fish populations adversely.

107. I have just relocated from Colorado to New York. I support the proposed new regulations because I have always enjoyed winter and late fall fishing.

108. I believe the simpler the better. People love enjoying the outdoors however if they have to read ten paragraphs of rules/regs, they are less likely to take advantage of our beautiful waters. One other thing is that with the opening of inland trout waters during the winter months, snow removal of DEC parking lots would be extremely helpful. Might be asking too much but often times I see cars parked in places they don't belong & usually mine is one of them lol.

109. As a newer resident of NY state I would agree that the laws and regulations are in need of simplification. I am an avid fisherman and always want to abide by all regulations but find that they are more often do more confusing than bring clarification. I employ the KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) method for much of my life's issues. I am sure that many of us can benefit from that motto even if they are much smarter than I.

The highlighted changes are succinct and seem more than reasonable. I also believe that they will continue to produce a sustainable format for harvesting while allowing the population of fish to remain healthy. As a primarily catch and release fishermen, I believe strongly in that area as well.

Thank you for all your diligence and efforts on conservation here in NY. They are greatly appreciated.

110. I've read the proposed regulation changes and I strongly believe they are an excellent idea. As a person who has tried to explain season dates and harvest limits to young and new hunters and anglers in the past and have had difficulty doing so, I think any simplifying of the regulations is an improvement. Particularly when dealing with children including my 12 year old son...I have seen much confusion while explaining season dates,harvest limits and hunting tags.

So in conclusion...simplifying anything is a great idea and in fact I hope things like hard dates and simplified harvest limits will be used even more so than in the proposed regulations for both fishing and hunting in the future.

111. I agree with the proposals.

112. I agree with all the rule changes being considered.

113. As an angler and all year fishermen , I agree with these new and upcoming proposed statements.

- Changing the statewide regulation for rainbow trout and brown trout in ponds to allow for year-round fishing.
- Aligning harvest limits for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout across streams and ponds at five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12”.
- Changing the statewide regulations for Atlantic Salmon and lake trout to allow for year-round fishing.
- Normalizing season dates so all openers for sportfish begin on a hard date.
- Allow ice fishing statewide unless specifically prohibited in all but 9 Adirondack counties, where the existing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout will remain.

114. I'm in support.

115. I support the changes outlined in the NY fishing regulations proposal.

116. As the Striped Bass populations continue to suffer, and as an avid saltwater fisherman I would like to urge you to close the recreational and any commercial Striped Bass season on the Hudson river during the spawning period from April till June.

Even with the slot limit too many breeding females are dying. Perhaps if the populations rebound the seasons could be reopened but it is a terrible mistake to allow fishermen to take spawning fish in the Hudson.

Thank you for your efforts.

117. I am writing in regard to one of the proposed regulation changes. The levelling of limits across the state for Brook, Brown and rainbow trout is a huge step back in fisheries management. With many differences in water quality and ponds that are self-sustaining how could one possibly set one set of limits that would work for all? I advocate for more catch and release waters in those that have self-sustaining brook trout populations. I'm not sure if these new regulations are born out of laziness or an assumption that anglers are too stupid to read the regulations. The biggest problem is the lack of enforcement in the field. Many western states are decades ahead of New York in terms of fisheries management. I'm wondering how long it will take for New York to wake up to the potential, particularly when it comes to managing the Brook trout fishery.

118. As an avid Trout fisherman the simplification of being able to take five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12” across all streams would be so very welcomed. I could see on many days fisherman struggling with the past adaptation of what areas of the stream could take up to 3 vs 5 trout , people just did not grasp the rules. I hope we can see this change, thanks for the kind review on this topic !

119. I am against the proposal of limiting my catch of trout to only 2 of more than 12”. I don't get out to fish often and spend a considerable amount of money time and travel when I do go. Limiting my catch would certainly deter me from vacationing in ny

120. Hamilton County rivers, ponds and lakes were historically trout & salmon waters. There has been significant progress in restoring these waters back to their original state. You can do more by removing the seasons and limitations from these waters as they relate to NON-NATIVE and INVASIVE species. Why is the state continuing to STOCK and PROTECT non-native / invasive species?

Start by adding OPEN SEASON on all Non-native and Invasive species in Hamilton County!

121. Regulate the # of pan fish on can catch. There was a picture on face book of two fisher men that caught 300 perch (all sizes) knowing gosh darn well they sure aren't going to clean the little ones.

122. some considerations should be made to make the full west branch delaware, upper and lower east branch delaware rivers and some sections of the main stem of delaware open to only catch and release trout fishing.; maybe till long eddy? no treble hooks, no live bait.

that is one of the most special trout fishing ecosystems we may have in the united states. the diversity and how prolific the insects are, suggest the waters are clean. i have not observed any other water which approaches these standards. the bottom line is most people who kill fish are careless about the future and preserving, conserving resources. let these mouth-breathers continue to ruin the rest of the waters. effort should be made to preserve one last, close to pristine resource. as great as these rivers are, they are trending downward based on most fly fisherman/women with 30+ years of observations

opening ice fishing to all waters to include the reservoirs is also dangerous. most ice fisherman kill their catch and these fisheries will take a hit.

shame on anyone who targets bass or any fish as they spawn during this already stressful and vulnerable time. heavy fines and tickets should be written for these simpletons harassing these weakened fish. i think i read, that keeping bass on the st. lawrence river before a certain date is prohibited. if that is correct, thank you but also make the act of even fishing for them illegal.

does anyone within the state of new york fisheries understand just how special the delware river trout fishing is? please do more managing and limiting the damage these selfish, smooth brain, cigarette smoking, antiscience people do to our already compromised lands.

123. Hi, Proposals generally seem great. My only concern would be native brook trout populations. Many anglers, myself included, believe it would be best to tighten up if not ban taking brookies out of streams that hold native populations. I'd be interested in hearing or be pointed to information of what the DEC is currently or plans on doing to help protect these fragile fish.

124. While I mainly only fish central New York I do agree with all of the proposed changes. Increasing the limit on walleye in Oneida lake especially. Making hard start dates for seasons is also easier to remember.

125. Any stream or pond that contains a breeding population of wild trout should be catch and release only.

126. I would like to voice my support of the recent changes in fishing regulations, including the year-round catch a release season for all inland trout streams. I am a fly angler focusing on wild quality rivers, where I always practice catch and release. It is nice to be rewarded with an extended fishing season. November and December are great months for catch and release fly angling, as are the occasional warmer days in January and February.

127. I think the modifications to the regulations are a good start. However, the recent change to stream regulations with the stocked, wild, premier wild and so forth are confusing. A person almost has to look up the particular stream and stretch to be fished to understand the limits. I think that area of limits needs work more than the ponds or lakes.

128. I support proposed changes. Long overdue.

129. I like the proposed rule changes.
130. Please not allowed year around fishing, year around fishing is not sport and is not let nature for recuperating from fishing season even after rivers get stocked help nature and nature help ours future
131. I think they are good for the sport and for me, thanks.
132. NYS needs to conserve and help restore the Essex Fishery!.I know that NY"s focus is trout but they have world class muskie and pike fishing and it's not by coincidence. We need to take care and STOCK our waters! And implement more slots on size limits for fish!
133. As a sports fisherman I cannot suport the change to this section of regulations as it does not extend ice fishing throughout the entire state as it should. I laud the changes extending the opportunity to icefish many waters; as these will not only benefit fisherman but also the many small mom and pop operations that the sports fishing economy depends up. However, the decision to exclude nine Adirondack Counties is not in the best interest of the entire State population. All the state waters should be fishable by the general population. However, encon regularly creates rules that cater to the wealthy elite including this proposed addition. This appears to be another restrictive rule which is politically driven to protect select lakes simply because wealthy landowners on these lakes prefer not to see sportsfisherman fishing in front of their camps.
134. the changes look good for fisherwomen
135. Against. Period. This is nothing more than trying to deplete the resources, just like with deer. Who do you think you are fooling?
136. Just wanted to add to general comments and angler vote for zero harvesting of brook trout anywhere and anytime of year.

I have heard all the arguments on all sides from the biologists about how it has "no impact". I call BS...we human beings have an unbalanced impact and it is always best we back off!

We have already dramatically impacted all of the state's waterways from dams to stockings of brown and rainbows among other species. I think the least we can do is simply leave brook trout alone and let nature do its own thing. Odds are high at some point we will be forced to support brook trout to keep them to some degree in our state waters.

I also strongly believe that any water system where brook trout have a strong hold we should stop stocking other species and designate those areas with special restrictions. Those restrictions should be barbless, single hook, artificial and C&R only all year. Very simple!

The adding of limits and changes in that with a time of year is what makes things complicated. Those who want to keep fish these days should be funneled to specific waters that the state stocking program needs to support anyhow in order for fish to be present.

In places where brook trout stand a chance to dominate, I have no problem with anglers keeping the browns or rainbows they might catch in those waters.

137. I don't like the changes that are proposed of being able to fish year round for trout. Why is this being proposed?
138. I like the simplicity alot more of the changes,going forward I hope you also up the limit of walleye on Oneida lake to more than 3 a day,thank you
139. I am disappointed that you did not stock the Otego Creek in Otsego County this year. I have fished this stream for over 30 years. I enjoy fishing here because it is close to my home. I'm afraid if you don't continue to stock it there won't be any trout left.
140. First I would like to thank all of the department of environmental control and protections work in New York and New York State your teams of fishery specialist are doing an amazing job you are rangers and staff are just wonderful we greatly appreciate all the diligent work That they do the new regulations will be wonderful as long as hopefully newcomers adhere to the rules and regulations set forth and make sure that they all possess New York State fishing licenses I greatly appreciate all the diligent work that you guys do to keep our estuaries and streams rivers and Brooks pristine as you guys continue to do your work we thank you in advance all the best
141. Would love to bass fishing start an earlier date. Maybe April 1
142. Nice job. Regarding hard dates for seasons, diehards will always remember the 3rd Saturday in June for bass ... but at the same time we also remember the hard date of April 1st for trout. I'm fine with whatever the DEC suggests here!
143. Most times simple is better. This seems like an improvement to me.
144. Pepacton Reservoir: Don't extend the trout season to October 15th when those fish will be spawning in the tributaries, otherwise the population will be depleted unless of course that's your goal.
145. Concerning possible regulation changes this is the first time the state has ever contacted me in all my years as a resident concerning this subject. Given that I have been purchasing licenses for over 40 years makes one wonder why my opinion matters now. The reason I ask this is when I purchase a license I always make a point of obtaining the hunting and fishing regulations for that specific year obtained when you apply. The last 2 seasons I was not able to obtain the fishing regulations handbook. Granted we are living in a different world currently and there may be other circumstances involved the hunting edition was not a problem. I only have the luxury of getting on the water a few times a year. I was informed by a friend who is a guide that the powers that be severely changed the limits on trout. I tried to look into this online and all I can say is???. Should not be this complicated to obtain information. Minimally there should be a book. As we the people pay for a good portion of this through license purchases and probably our taxes I would ask do we have any input on anything? In my opinion every body of water has to be looked at as an individual. I am sure this is done to some degree. I fish for trout in rivers. The Neversink to be precise. Very rarely do I even hook a fish less than 12 inches. It is nice when I go to keep a few for the freezer, a few being the key as everything is so polluted we do not want to eat to much anyways. Funny it used to be the rule was let them grow. I kind of followed that rule for each place I fished knowing what it held and what it was capable of producing. Point is I am not happy nor are others I have spoken with about this. The happy ones are the purists. So my question is, who is making the rules? Would appreciate an answer.
146. I support the proposed changes to the fishery regulations.

147. I think 12 inches is a smarter choice. I think you should fine the heck out of bait fishermen who fish in flyfish only waters, revoke their licenses, if you win lotto and find a licensed offender-- and shame them publicly on a website wall of shame. They should be cuffed, fingerprinted and processed. They are domestic eco-terrorists, in my humble opinion. You should confiscate their equipment and seize their vehicles. Jmo. I have seen waters cleaned out by these bastards in a week. They take everything. Then, later in the season, they swim and defecate in the river with the whole family--unintelligable music blaring on the river bank. They fill the garbage cans and then leave dirty diapers and garbage all over the place. It's wrong and disgusting. I was born and raised in this country and have always done my part to respect the parks. I am a life long fly tyer and fly fisherman. I have had these people walk right into a rip, riffle, run or pool that I am fishing, drop a worm in the water next to me and act as if I don't exist.
148. As a New York State trout fisherman, I agree with these changes. I generally have to drive an hour to fish on the West Branch and that area is currently designated with a limit of 1 fish .. which makes it less likely for me to drive that hour each way. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposal.
149. The proposed regulations look good to me. Other states have had a regulation of only one fish over 16" can be kept, so DEC saying only one over 12" is pretty close.
150. How about the fluke and stripe bass regulations no one cares about trout
151. Bass season has started the 3rd Saturday in June for as long as Ive been fishing for them which is 40+ years. It is ALWAYS the day before Father's Day which is ALWAYS the 3rd Sunday in June. Pretty hard to forget what day the season starts. Its pathetic that people cant read the regulations. We do not start rifle deer, duck or fall turkey seasons on a specific date, it always coincides with a Saturday. Bass season should be not different.

If you want to create an even better bass fishery state we should be instituting a slot size management to keeping them 12-16" similar to our new QDMA management of shooting 2yr old or older buck deer. It be more of a guideline than a law but the smaller bass taste better than the big ones anyway. This keeps more big bass in our lakes spawning for years to come. We should however ban the keeping of bass through the ice. Way to many schools of big bass get caught through the ice and dont get the opportunity to spawn. Maybe here would be a good place to institute the slot size keeping requirement. When Ice starts to Ice out the size should be limited 12"-16".

Regardless, our initial topic is changing fishing dates to hard dates instead of traditional Saturday starts. In particular bass season which is a very easy date to remember. SAY IT WITH ME, ITS ALWAYS THE DAY BEFORE FATHERS DAY.

152. I am in support of the following new regulations:
- Changing the statewide regulation for rainbow trout and brown trout in ponds to allow for year-round fishing.
 - Aligning harvest limits for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout across streams and ponds at five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12".
 - Changing the statewide regulations for Atlantic Salmon and lake trout to allow for year-round fishing.
 - Normalizing season dates so all openers for sportfish begin on a hard date.
 - Allow ice fishing statewide unless specifically prohibited in all but 9 Adirondack counties, where the existing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout will remain.

Please approve these changes because they make sense and make it easier on us trout fisherman.

153. As a Pa resident who has enjoyed the quality of the fisheries and also protected and maintained state launches on many of your water ways i applaud most of your (common sense) changes proposed for 2022.

However the Salmon Lake trout change to year round fishing is a horrific idea. I have fished Lake Ontario both guided and with friends many times over the last 20 years. 2021 was the worst i have seen as far as Salmon catches go.

With the price of fuel and how this fishery and its fisherman directly support local hotels,restaurants ect ect. it should be your top priority to protect support and effectively manage it. A tough year happens here and there but if the fish are pounded all year long and the quality of the fishing diminishes so does the fisherman and your local economy.

I have witnessed this first hand having fished bass circuits in the early 2000s the publicity of pro bass circuits televised and the constant pounding of bass tournaments pro/am and club turned lake Champlain from a true diamond to an ok fishery.

Most recently it has been the 1000 islands that is starting to get that way. 10 years ago it was on fire its still a great fishery but the fishing pressure has made the typical weekend meat fisherman grow angry of bass guys. Finesse and delicate presentations work the goby population has produces some true trophy smallies but for the novice they now struggle there.

Please take care of the salmon and trout in your state its what truly makes it special compared to anything else in the northeast.

154. Sounds great. Please know you have my support

155. I agree with all of the new proposals.

156. A lifelong angler, I have a few concerns. Please see my comments below in bold.

- Changing the statewide regulation for rainbow trout and brown trout in ponds to allow for year-round fishing.Im just worried for native trout. **YOu know the research better than I, but I feel like there is something to be said for giving the population a break. IF you are stocking who cares but if not you need to let the population rejuvenate.**
- Aligning harvest limits for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout across streams and ponds at five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12". **I really think we need size limits. Maybe not 12 maybe its 11 but we need limits for the health of the population. It's not all stocked fish.**
- Changing the statewide regulations for Atlantic Salmon and lake trout to allow for year-round fishing.
- Normalizing season dates so all openers for sportfish begin on a hard date.
- Allow ice fishing statewide unless specifically prohibited in all but 9 Adirondack counties, where the existing regulation prohibiting ice fishing in waters inhabited by trout will remain.

157. Changing all renewals to a hard date-No!!! Terrible idea. Licenses should be good for 12 months from date of purchase. When a hard date is chosen it can cause people to have to buy 2 licenses in the same 12 month period.
This is a CASH GRAB FOR NYS!!!

It has been done before and had NO benefit to sportsman. Amend this proposal to remove this provision. The other provisions I am in favor of.

158. As the owner of camp on the Oswego River near Phoenix, NY, where I fish with live bait from shore nearly every day from spring through fall, I'm a big fan of the DEC and all that you do to ensure that our ecosystem and habitats are healthy for all animal and plant species. Having said this, I have always found New York State fishing regulations completely confusing and utterly inscrutable. I'm just grateful that I don't fish for salmon or trout.
159. New Fishing Regulation. I believe that this would help out NYS fisherman. Glad to see NY moving in the right direction in some fashion.
160. Please continue to adjust seasons, predicated on SOUND SCIENCE. Several years back, when fluke size limits were predicated on length, a Cornell cooperative examination showed we were killing female breeders (crazy).

Slot size fish, predicated on science are the future(already well established in other states).
Come on scientists!

161. Put the fishing licenses date back to the first of October the same as hunting licenses dates. I renewed my hunting and fishing license in August of this year online. NOW I have to remember that my fishing license is due in mid-August and not October 1st. Big Mistake changing fishing licenses dates.
162. I applaud this change that is proposed and must say it's about time.

However, it has been my observation over the past several years that largemouth and smallmouth bass are generally done spawning in the inland lakes by June 1st. These lakes tend to warm faster than Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the upper and lower Niagara River and the St. Lawrence River.

In the future, I think the NYS DEC should look into this and make the change of the season for largemouth and smallmouth bass to June 1st on inland lakes.

I also believe that Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the upper and lower Niagara and St.Lawrence Rivers would warm faster and benefit with the total removal of the ice boom on Lake Erie, In other words, let things go natural.

Thank you for your concerns and the time and efforts.

163. My only response to new regulations is it is 'too complex' to expect trout anglers to remember 5per day/2 over 12". Simplify.
164. New fishing regulations look good
165. just a recommendation, if someone has an active duty military ID can you waive the license process? It may save in supplies, time and money. This would be in conjunction with a valid NYS drivers license.
166. I think the state should not allow more than 1 trout over 12" per angler no matter the body of water. It brings more illegal angling practices when you increase limits. This fishery is already diminishing in the recent years.

Stocking is a joke, browns and rainbows barely make it past a few months. Allow for more strict regulations in regard to inland fisheries.

Keep the lake trout regulations, and do not allow any angler to keep an Atlantic salmon. They are extremely rare in most waters in Western New York, and should be protected. Catch and release only.

Why are Muskellunge open 3rd Saturday in June on Erie and the Niagara but the last Saturday in May on the inland Lakes? Should be the same for both fisheries.

Thank you for allowing anglers to share their opinions.

167. I am in agreement with the described changes. I would also like to see the out of season, catch and release bass fishing be allowed in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.
168. I agree with the new regulations. My one concern, not related to this, is that last year, when I attempted to renew my license, it said I could only do it on line. I did renew, but I had no way at home to print it. I took a screen-shot on my I-pad, but that's fairly useless to take into the field. I used to just go to the local town hall and get my paper license, pay the fee, and I was good to go. I called the DEC, and the woman I spoke with said I should be able to still get a paper license (the one I would typically carry in my wallet). My question is, next year, when I want to renew, can I get a paper license?
169. One trout per day over 12" should be the limit, not two trout
170. I would like to see these changes made and limits opened up and set fishing season dates for the betterment of New Yorkers.
171. For what it's worth, I am in favor of the proposed changes. So long as the regulations always have conservation in mind, I will support them. Thanks for all the hard work.
172. I agree with and support all of the purposed regulations changes, particularly regarding lake trout.
173.
 1. Change yellow perch limit to 25 per day. No commercial fishing or selling anywhere in NY State.
 2. Don't initiate ratification of walleye in Skaneateles. Have them stocked in there along with Owasco Lake and other Finger Lakes.
 3. Most anglers in NY State prefer warm water fish. Spend more money on those fish in NY Lakes. Too much money spent on trout and salmon. Time for a change from current DEC antiquated fisheries practices!
174. Why do you make it so hard for SC ? SLM. Senior Lives matter !
175. Totally in favor of hard date for Large and Smallmouth Bass on June 15
176. The taking of trophy size fish should be regulated by setting a size standard for these fish. In a maximum size to be determined for each species, these large and healthy breeding size fish

should be returned unharmed from the lake or river in which it was caught Eat the runts but send the breeders back to re-populate the waters

177. As a former guide and conservation minded angler, I prefer the idea of slot limits for trout year round rather than a "no minimum" in size. Just started finding fingerlings in some of the wild streams nearby, and would hate to see these fish disappear to fill someone's bucket. Thank you.
178. Just wanted to give a little bit of my opinion on the proposed regulations. I know you're the real experts here, and most of the changes seem fine to me, but I think the increased limits/fishing time on Atlantic salmon and brook trout are a little much. At least in places where those two species are wild, and not stocked, like most brooks in the Catskills and Adirondacks in the case of brook trout, or most of the Great Lakes for Atlantics, they should be given a little more protection. Their populations are dwindling as is, and I think very few people would feel snubbed if their limits or seasons were harshly reduced. Anyways, hopefully others share my same opinion, and thanks for your time and consideration. Have a good day!
179. i agree with all the proposed regulations and i believe it will introduce more people to the sport
180. Walleye and Northern pike: May 1
Walleye pike limit for Oneida Lake: Change from 3 to 5 daily.
181. why, in the proposed regulation changes on trout, do you have a min length and a 5 fish limit on gleneida and gilead.? you contend that you are trying to make the reg's simpler but that discrepancy from the other reservoirs nearby doesn't make sends to me. i am 85 and i can remember when I could recite the regulations page for page. do you really think it is going to make a difference if the min length is 12" on these two reservoirs and the daily limit is 5 instead of 3 like on all the rest.
that is how we got to this confusing state we are in- micromanaging
182. I think the new changes will be great. There is one suggestion that I would like to make....

Region 3 Alder Lake please don't restrict using worms. I have tried fishing Alder Lake for trout several times over the past 3 years and have had no luck with artificial lures or worms. I do NOT want the restrictions of artificial lures ONLY.
183. I am in favor of the changes as long as it does not harm our fisheries in the finger lakes.
184. Bring back lifetime license purchases
185. In regard to the proposed changes to stream regulations, I understand the desire to simplify the rules but in my opinion, it is moving in the wrong direction. With the ever growing list of threats to New York (and honestly global) fish habitat and populations, this resource needs to be protected at all costs.

I have read and followed NYSDEC research that suggests the biggest threat is not harvest of fish, but why add any possible additional stress on fish populations? The Western New York State trout populations are surviving but not thriving. I speak for many fellow catch and release anglers who believe that making all trout waters catch and release year round would have a positive impact that has the potential to be seen even short term. This battle cannot be left regulators to fight alone. We as anglers need to promote and execute proper safe angling practices. Together, our impact can be even greater. Going forward, the threats to fish habitat

and populations are only going to become more sustained and rolling back regulations now would only expedite this.

Your work is much appreciated and has a significant impact on our environment. Please continue to keep the consideration of future generations ability to enjoy this precious resource at the forefront of regulation modifications.

186. It appears to be a move in the right direction.
187. Hi there and thank you for the email I received? While this seems like good news to be able to fish trout all year round, is there a downside to this? Are we going to deplete the supplies? I had heard from someone this past summer in the Catskills that the Esopus river was not stocked this year and it was widespread amongst fisherman in that area that few were catching any fish this past summer. I stopped going up because I was not catching anything. I would love to get some insight on this in addition to how these proposed fishing regulation changes will affect the fishing and the population of fish. Thanks so much.
188. Anything to simplify and standardize the regulations (understanding some waters have specific concerns) is appreciated.
189. I live in herkimer county and disagree with the 5 trout fish limit. Trout here and especially north in Hamilton county have diminished immensely! Brook trout in our local streams are also depleted. The most trout being caught are stocked fish . Raising trout limit devastate the native population and furthermore something needs to be done about the brook trout population. It's very possible with lower water levels on hinkley res. Due to selling (I know that's what the reservoir is for) but when the res is low the streams fallow. I believe greed is ruining or natural resources that were so plentiful in my childhood . I regularly take my son (9 y/o) brook trout fishing with very low to 0 numbers .
190. I am FOR the 5 walleye limit change on Oneida Lake.
- I am AGAINST year round lake trout fishing. Specially on Millsite lake where the lake trout population is native and ice fishing can have a catastrophic affect on the delicate population.
191. I agree with everything except the size limits. On some of the trout. I think it should stay at 12 inches instead of harvesting any size. Thanks !
192. I agree with the changes as long every angler respect the rules
193. The proposals make sense. Much less confusing.
194. I would be in favor of the proposed changes, I see no reason not to make these changes. Thank You for inviting input,
195. Do not increase limits to 5 fish per person! Too many people taking their limit, going home, returning the same day and taking their limit again. Build the population in the streams. Don't ruin it.
196. I vote for any simplifying of the failure book. As it is now it's now will you make a honest mistake its when. I read these regs for fishing and hunting and think what lawyer wrote these.
197. I support the proposed changes to the Fishing Regulations.

198. I vote yes to the highlighted changes!
199. I agree with each of these changes as I believe they will bring welcomed benefits to New York anglers.
200. All of the proposed regulations are very thought thru I would add regular walleye stocking on certain NYC reservoirs; Titicus, Bog Brook, Boyds Corners Middle branch and East Branch 5 year Rotation on each of those. The reason is there are barely any walleye in Westchester and Putnam County

I would also suggested limit on black crappie to 10 inches long and 15 fish daily limit

201. I would not change the time periods for the limitation on the trout.

The time that the fish are not allowed to be kept, would help to preserve the population and give the trout population time to recover/grow

202. I have received your e-mail regarding the new regulations, specifically:

- Aligning harvest limits for rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout across streams and ponds at five fish per day no minimum size, only two of which can be over 12".

When I look at the info packet and the regulations themselves, I only see this regulation applying to ponds, not streams. The actual regs refer me to "[d]c) See 10.1([e]f) for inland trout streams", which I cannot locate. Please let me know if I am missing something.

Thank you for your patience.

I would note that I do appreciate any level of simplification.

203. I agree and encourage all the changes listed.
204. This is honestly one of the most fuck up things you guys have put out there. instead of helping grow the population of trout so they become wild. You just think about money... great job
205. It's about time some commonsense appeared in the DEC. Thank you for making my upcoming TROUT fishing trip to Catskills more enjoyable. Looks like you are going back to the old regulations of a few years ago. MAY I SUGGEST A CHANGE? WHY NOT MOVE THE LENGTH LIMIT TO 15" WITH TWO OVER 15" AS THE DAILY LIMIT? Most of the stream fish you catch will be under 12" anyway, but if you find a honey hole, it would sure be nice to harvest a few larger fish without being worried about game regulations. Thanks for making my day. I am 76 yrs old and been fishing in NY for many yrs. I look forward to the upcoming season.
206. These types of fishing regulation changes are long overdue. I understand the States's need to protect ecological resources and I support it. But there's definitely an opportunity to adjust the fishing regulations, in particular the season dates, so that more people can enjoy the outdoors while still protecting the populations of diverse species. To add to this, the late bow season this year was a wonderful thing. Just to be able to go out and experience nature with the excitement of hunting, without necessarily a take, significantly adds to the joy of the outdoor experience.

207. As a lifelong NY trout fisherman of 25+ years, I believe these proposed relaxed rules around sizes and quantities of fish that can be kept and times of year that are open season are going to result in unsustainable pressure on the the already threatened trout fishery in NY state.

It's my belief that the rules and regulations should remain as they are. The current season helps the local populations to replenish, stocked trout to holdover, and the opening of trout fishing season has become a tradition for sportsmen across the state.

208. I have read the proposed changes & feel that I really can't comment on most of the changed. I like the idea of setting Hard Dates for the Seasonal Opening Dates.

The reason I don't feel qualified to comment on the other changes is because I only fish for Steelhead, Brown Trout & Salmon in both of the Great Lakes Tributaries.

209. Thank you for asking for our feedback! The proposal was well-presented and understandable. I agree with everything and think the proposed changes are reasonable and well thought out.

The places where I fish regularly have a good DEC presence during the opening days of each season in the areas where it's most needed. I wonder how that would be affected when fishing is year-'round. Too many times I have seen and reported unsportsman-like conduct (salmon lifting, teenagers kicking brown trout, killing them and leaving the carcass) and worry that relaxed regulations might encourage undereducated sportsmen to try their hand without learning the basics first. Will there be any kind of fishing etiquette literature, free classes etc provided to support the new regulations and further encourage new participants?

210. As a licensed recreational fisherman and NYS resident, I strongly support these changes.

211. Please make these changes. Thanks

212. Great start! Next thing to do is PLEASE throw out the MANY confusing rules related to big game hunting. Nobody knows what tags are for what anymore.

213. Although it sounds nice to have the opening day for sportfish align on a common day the opening day should be when best to protect the fish. If that bass have a late spawn we should not have an open season to pull them off nests. this goes for all sport fish seasons. i fish in WA now and our regulations in the columbia river change daily.

214. All proposed regulation changes for trout fishing and atlantic salomon Make absolutely good sense ...all year round outdoor activities in general are positive for people (especially in the covid and non covide periods) , business and nature when performed in a controlled manner!

215. While these purposed changes may be simplified and reduce the number of regulations they are not simple and are still numerous. I support any such rules that reduce the number of government regulations. 41 pages of regulation is still far too many. One simple chart such as the first six pages is all that is needed. Table A is not needed. Special regulations should not outnumber the regulations themselves. I do not believe that one-side of a river should be a boundary and not the other. The river as a whole should be the boundary when determining an area. This is just setting people up so you can tax them for not reading the fine print.

Pertaining to examples like "Fishing from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise is prohibited, except in the Black River (Jefferson County) from Lake Ontario upstream to Route 180 bridge in Dexter." What is acceptable in one area should be acceptable in all

areas. NYS is not that large. I do not support meaningless restrictions on things such as time of day. The DEC should not care about how or when people catch fish. Simply how many they are catching, injuring, and that they are being safe. Regulations should be limited to the strictest of scrutiny that achieve those objectives. Simple "bag limits" suffice.

216. I agree with the proposed changes, I feel they are good proposals.
217. I think that the new proposed regulations for fishing state wide will be very beneficial in many ways. I am all for this proposed State wide fishing regulation change. I am very excited and I can not wait for Trout season!!!
218. Annually, my family makes a trip to NY waters from Virginia specifically to fish for trout. This weeklong sport fishing catch and release recreational trip is worth the several thousand dollars specifically because of the unique regulations that were in place.

Our annual visit supports tourism, restaurant, lodging, supermarket, retail and guide services in the State.

Special regulations are a major reason for our choice to put vacation dollars into the New York economy and are a significant factor in why NY has great fisheries. Specifically the West branch of the Delaware and other self sustaining rivers.

Removal of regulations and opening up the entire watershed to year round 5 limit fishing will decimate the entire fishing economy. If I were a take fish home angler, under the new regulations, I personally could take home 5 fish per day. Over our 7 day trip, my wife and I could pull 70 trout from your waters. 100 anglers would take 7000 fish from each river weekly. Thats 392,000 fish from each river annually! Even if each of us only took 1 fish per day, $(365 \times 2) = 730$.

That would mean 100 anglers could pull 7300 trout from each river per year. This is not sustainable on any river system.

Please do not allow the great NY rivers to become a giant "Put and Take" fishing state by implementing the proposed changes. They would completely change the character of the watersheds and decimate the traditions and history surrounding this wonderful recreational activity.

219. I believe loosening of select regulations is imperative to the sports survival. As I am for regulations where the species is being indiscriminately harvested. Or regulating unfair practices of harvest. I strongly believe that some regulations imposed are too restrictive and therefore push people away from the sport/way of life. I am a life long fisherman and hunter as are most members of my family. For generations, even before regulations existed, my family has harvested from the land and has always respected the balance that is necessary to sustain it. I believe proper regulations are key to longevity of the sport and it's viability depends upon cooperative efforts between the DEC and the public participating in the sport. Disregard for regulations, such as harvests far beyond limitations or non licensed harvest should be more strongly enforced. Where as, limitation easing of select stable species and regulation simplification is critical to ensure the sports survival. Whether it be through the revenue generated or the balance that a sustainable harvest provides. I support the easing of the proposed regulations and look forward to the possibility of future discussions in regulation modification, where sensible. Over regulation leads to disinterest and inevitably the decline of the sport adversely affecting the game and the environment which all fisherman need to

protect. Sustainability is paramount for future generations of fisherman. Preservation of the right to fish and of the land to maintain its bounty is critical!

- 220. I wholeheartedly support all the proposed fishing regulation changes you are considering, especially with respect to Lake Trout.
- 221. I believe the 5 fish per day limit should only apply to larger bodies of water and should exclude native brook trout or limit native brook trout harvest to a smaller number per day depending on the biologists opinions. Some small feeder streams with native brook trout should probably be excluded. Thank you.
- 222. I wish to add my support, (as a prior native of NY, but now a non-resident license holder and annual participant in your ruffed grouse surveys) to the proposed changes listed in your e-mail. Every single one seems to be an improvement in making complex regs simplified. A contrasting case in point is the massively complex Fishing Regs for Maine, it is almost a book, outlining so many watershed or river-specific rules that visitors are overwhelmed.

But what I featured most to weigh in on is the wonderful proposal to start the fishing season on a hard date. As a prior resident it was easy to not forget that hunting AND fishing licenses needed to be renewed on Oct 1st. Yet for the last few years your on line system prevented me from purchasing my non resident license for the fall if my current license hasn't expired yet. The effect was that either I neglected to make that purchase after expiration or stop in at Walmart on my way to the Salmon River and hope they were still open after my 7 hr drive. I think you may have fixed that bug in DECALS now and allow me to renew ahead of expiration, which put revenue in your account even sooner.

While I have you on the line, and I know this is a hunting request not fishing, but I'd like to express how badly I feel DEC needs a 3 day and 7 day non resident hunting license. ALL other states do this, and it allows my kids to hunt with me in the Adirondacks without paying a multiple of that cost for a full year license. The answer I got years ago when suggesting this was... it's a State Legislature issue, not DEC. That sounds very un-accommodating from a non-resident customer's perspective since short term licenses would reduce visitors from not buying a license at all, as we know happens.

Thanks for considering

- 223. Powley residents vote yes to the new proposal.
- 224. I support all of it.
- 225. As an avid fly fisherman I am in favor of the year round open season. That being said, it is silly to release all the stocked trout at the same time in spring. I would suggest both a spring and fall (October) stocking. This would be better for all fisheries. I would also be in favor of adding more catch and release, artificial only areas. Lastly the addition of more encon officers is necessary. They are the most under staffed in the country. These hard working men and woman simply cannot do their jobs with current staff levels.
- 226. I support the proposed fishing regulation changes, primarily because they simplify regulations (e.g. uniform season dates and regulations across state waters) and expand opportunities.

227. I am all for the proposed regulation changes. I am primarily a Walley, Bass Pike guy and not much of a trout fisherman. I like the simplification of dates as compared to "Third Saturday in May" type of regulations.

On another note, I think you do a fantastic job and thanks for keeping the NY outdoors person in mind when considering changes.

228. I strongly am in favor of Normalizing fishing seasons to begin on a hard date - thank you!

229. I am responding to the recent email requesting comments about proposed regulation changes for the tsking of trout, time, bag limit, etc. In my decidedly sophomoric understanding of all this fish population stuff, wonder what you all think about a less restricted season on bass, particularly in bodies of water where they are not native and have had deleterious effect on other species' populations. I.e. if we start taking them during spawning and such, maybe we can even up the fight a bit? Of course the bass fisherman won't necessarily like this idea (which would reduce the population in general), but in the end I wonder if it has some merit, and what the state would have to say about this.

I usually fish Round pond, next to little Tupper, in May. We hook into a fair number of bass, but of course release them. We wouldn't complain about landing more of other species. I think I remember one of the more knowledgeable members of our group suggesting that the bass are indeed not native to a lot of the bodies of water in the Adirondacks. Again, interested in the (fisheries) management perspective on this topic.

230. I'm in agreement with proposed regulation changes. I especially like the hard dates for seasons and overall simplification of the regs. Thanks for your hard work!

231. I agree with the proposed rule changes.

I know this change does not affect the changes proposed for pan fish. In regards to that, the sale of pan fish needs to be banned. We see on social media all the time of certain individuals over harvesting day after day.

232. This great and would extend my fishing

233. Without limits of size and quantity, how will fish populations and state resources be protected. I am not in favor of these proposed changes. Very disheartening to hear that NY is lessening animal protections instead of increasing them.

234. I have reviewed and support the proposed changes.

My family and I have been fishing trout through out New York and Canada for decades, we have often commented on how cumbersome the Regulations are from lake to stream and pond, year to year.

1. Trout are a sensitive fish when handled poorly, I think a more realistic approach to what the average angler does when fishing is the way forward.

2. Lakes that offer ice fishing are under tremendous pressure , Opening up more water for year round fishing would create more opportunities for anglers. Smaller lakes and ponds freeze early giving sportsman earlier access.

Thank you for the good work you do.

235. I would just like to say I am very supportive of the proposals and in general am very appreciative of any effort to simplify the rules. I would say it has been either a disincentive or a worry in the past (particularly feeling like I don't understand the regulations where my 15 year old is fishing).

Thanks very much for the effort to make it easier.

236. I have read over the proposed changes and come to only one glaring conclusion.

None of these proposed changes, except one, will actually improve the New York State fishery. Regulations changes that serve no purpose other than to pander to the demands of fishermen are ill advised. Especially when it comes to the bad practice of increasing creel limits. This approach has resulted in weakened fisheries in every state where it has been tried, including my own.

I spend my money on a nonresident fishing license every year, because New York State fishing regulations are far superior to New Jersey state regulations. Especially in the fact that they do not have a high creel limit. The higher creel limit seems like a good revenue gathering approach, but is only a short term bump harboring a long-term catastrophe. We spend the extra money on nonresident licenses and bring our money into the state because we actually CATCH more fish. Not because we wish to take more fish home. In my opinion, there is never a need for any creel limit that exceeds two fish over 12 inches. That's still allows for a good meal, while preventing hoarding and the filling of freezers.

Regarding brook trout... I would like to see all brook trout in the state be protected by imposing catch and release only regulations from the period of October 15 to January 1 of the following year. With Brook trout being the only species native to the East Coast, they deserve every opportunity to breed naturally.

Thank you for considering these comments.

237. Could you make a fishing calendar with dates that correspond to the new modern calendar? I can help if you want. An example: Say the Bass opener is the third Saturday in June on the Old Gregorian calendar which is 6/18/2022 coming up. That date converts to 3/29 on the New Jerusalem Calendar if you look at the converter chart. So if you made a regulation calendar using the New Jerusalem Calendar we could just put the Bass opener on 3/30 which is always a Saturday and 4/1 is always a Sunday and always Father's Day. So the Bass Opener would always be on the same day on Father's Day weekend. We could set up a standard regulation calendar that is the same every year unlike the Old Gregorian calendar system. All of the opening days would be on the same day every year. I think it would be much more efficient and easy to remember.

238. I am all for a 5 fish limit for walleye. But I am strongly against year round trout fishing.

239. Your last set of changes to the Stream regulations was so overly complicated, that you scared off many potential anglers. You should try to make things less complicated by having one or two standard rules, not 10 per stream or sections of streams. What nut thought that restricting fisherman to 1 fish over 12' per stream would encourage more fishing? Let's have less regulations & you'll get more fishermen.

I've been a licensed guide for 30 years and can tell you that everyone I know hate last years changes.

240. REALLY LIKE NEW REG..HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OLD REGS TOO RESTRICTIVE..WILL ALLOW PEOPLE TO FISH WITHOUT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT BREAKING THE LAW

241. If someone can't read the compendium then maybe they shouldn't be fishing. Do what's best for each species of fish as you've done in the past. However, the price of a fishing license could be a bit more affordable, especially for those on social security.

242. I'm in agreement with the proposed slot limits on trout for river's and streams but not sure that it's a great idea for ponds and lakes. I fish various ponds and lakes in the Adirondacks for brook trout and though you don't catch large numbers of fish, you would in most cases be hard pressed to catch fish under a foot long limiting a day's catch to two fish.

243. I'm a fishing guide on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. I'm also a project leader for stocking chinook salmon in Port Dalhousie (St. Catharines).

I would support the opening of the Lake Trout season to all year angling but would like to suggest a trophy-type size regulation put on these fish during the season that they are currently closed in. For example "Lake Trout Open all year No size limit - Oct 1- Nov 31 Limit 1 greater than 36" " ...This would allow anglers to target and enjoy these great native fish but still protect the bulk of the population during their most vulnerable time in the system.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback. Please let me know if you have any questions.

244. I would request the Trout bag limit be reduced to three, with only two over 12." It's not clear to me why anyone would keep any fish at all under 12." The fishing has been slow enough statewide, that the limit should be much lower than it currently is, with more catch and release only quality water. Sport fishing should not be primarily about providing bare sustenance, and for anyone who is doing it for that purpose, ocean fishing makes a lot more sense, which the State has plenty of.

245. My opinion is that the closed winter season on lake trout and salmon should not be changed.

246. I don't see the need for these changes and feel that they may be damaging to fish populations in certain waters. The current fishing seasons have been such to protect spawning seasons and habitat for species that needed those protections. I don't believe that those needs have changed.

247. please keep the fishing season as is. the fishing pressure is only getting worse. we are much better at catching spawning fish. prefer to let the fish complete the spawning. then fish for them. Thanks

248. Being an occasional fisherman I am totally in favor of the proposed regulation changes. When purchasing a yearly fishing license, it is very difficulty to read the fishing guide and fully understand the different rules for different locations. I enjoy taking my grandkids fishing and the changing of the regulations would greatly help in determining where we can go fishing. I urge the DEC to adopt these regulation changes.

249. The NYSDEC proposed modifications to the regulations concerning trout are all well considered and intelligently presented. All will benefit anglers by improving intelligent access

yet preserving and sharing stocks of larger fish. I especially like the limit of two brook trout over 12".

The NYSDEC does a great job of managing the state's northern lakes and ponds and the access to them. I have written to the DEC before just to say thank you.

One request . Can someone please fix the outflow on Stillwater Pond in Fahnstock State Park? It is in Putnam County just off the Taconic Parkway. It was a premier trout pond for decades but the water level has been lowered by 10' and it is turning into a stunted sunny swamp. I offered to help pay for the fix but all I hear is "It's in Albany". NYS Parks is not like the DEC. They don't answer their phone and do not respond to letters. You have continued stocking rainbows but unless they refill the pond it's a lost cause.

250. I am against a five fish limit for rainbow, brook and brown trout in streams statewide. I practice catch and release fishing for all species. Taking so many fish on a daily basis will decimate the population of fish, especially any wild fish. Stocked streams will quickly have zero fish. This regulation will reduce the chance to catch any trout anywhere.

You should encourage conservation, not harvest. At this date, no one needs to rely on catching game fish to eat. Go to the store for fish on your table, not too a stream.

Just my humble opinion.

251. In other states size limits are based on what each lake needs are to improve the fishing. In New York there is a minimum ex. 12" and not based on what will make the lake better for fishing.
252. Thank You very much. For the effort that has gone into simplifying. The regulations for fishing across the state of New York. Overall, I am very pleased with the direction this effort is going. I do however have some concerns specifically about Brooktrout pond management.

I would like the new regulations to be more conservative with our Brook Trout ponds. Brook trout, New York's state fish and a biological and angling treasure, should be afforded the most aggressive protection possible. I suggest a number of revisions or clarifications as follow:

1. I am suggesting that the DEC manage brook trout in New York according to "ranges" or watersheds that include both streams and ponds. In isolated ponds that have limited or no connectivity, the regulation proposed is satisfactory. However, if a pond is a part of a stream system that is known to contain brook trout, that pond should be managed for brook trout. In the event that such a pond has historically been managed as a put and take brown or rainbow trout pond, the management objectives should change accordingly. The best science demonstrates/documents the migratory patterns of brook trout populations and the ephemeral use of ponds and stillwaters in these systems.

2. When genetic or other data emerges that indicate brook trout populations in waters not previously managed for them, the regulation apparatus should be flexible enough to quickly adapt to the new data/presence of brook trout and change regulations in these water bodies accordingly.

3. I am in favor of managing brook trout ponds in brook trout ranges or watersheds consistent with the newly adopted Trout Stream Regulations for Wild Quality:

- Maintain a long-term average wild trout abundance greater than 40 pounds/acre or 300 yearling and older trout/mile.

- Where feasible, identify significant habitat deficiencies and implement durable (long-term) improvements.
- Limit harvest to 3 trout/day with no more than 1 over 12 inches in length.
- Complete trout population assessment surveys within a 10-year recurrence interval.

Artificial only regulations, baitfish prohibitions, and an aggressive signage campaign parallel to the trout stream effort are also highly recommended.

These opinions are my own as an angler and citizen of NY, and do not reflect professional roles and relationships with DEC.

253. I am an avid trout fisherman and would love to be able to fish for rainbow and brown trout in NY streams year round. Thank you.
254. I am in full support of each of the proposed regulatory changes.
255. As a avid fisherman in Buffalo New York is there any way to also put a limit on the amount of emerald shiners a person can take each day? We are having a huge problem with people taking several 5 gallon buckets full with no water in the bucket. Apparently they take them home and grind them into fish patties. I know there is a limit on smelt, I really hope you can do the same for the shiners before the population gets decimated by the over dipping that is happening now
256. I fully support the proposed "Hard Date" change.
257. I have been an avid fisherman for about 40 years now, loving the outdoors and all it has to offer. I am always in favor of making things easier and if this is better for anglers then I am in favor. Thank you for simplifying, unlike most government agencies.
258. Would like to see a30 fish limit for perch state-wide.
259. NYS DEC has taken really good care of our waters and our lands . I think the new regulations will benefit sportsman and our waterways and keep healthy fish for many generations. Keep up the good work
260. Hello, I just have a little bit of input on fishing regulations (specifically trout streams in Wny). I would like to see fly fishing only sections but artificial only would be a compromise with a 3 hook limit. Specifically because of the amount of trout I see get snagged by anglers using spinning reel techniques. Usually around stocking time I see a lot of bridge anglers snagging fishing (unintentionally) and a lot of times in the trouts eyes and Gill areas. I believe if it was to be fly fishing only it would force anglers to be more careful and understanding of the resource. Because fly fishing is a never ending rabbit hole of information it forces anglers to learn more about everything involving the fish (habitat, feeding lanes, aquatic insects, casting techniques, mating habits, ect.) That they inevitably become more respectful of the resource and other anglers. Also since Covid has began I've seen multiple "green" anglers walking directly through trout redds which has a great negative effect on our trouts abilities to reproduce in a stress free environment. If we had some regulations in place it would greatly impact the amount of trout per mile and specifically the ability to harbor more larger natural breeder trout. The amount of trash I see on the bank is also quite upsetting at times. Specifically earth worm bait buckets and salted minnow bags. Every year I catch a few trout that have a hook buried into its stomach with a pre-made eagle claw leader hanging out of its mouth. I believe this to be mostly from bait

fishers that are “dunking” worms and minnows to the bottom of the stream with heavy weights. To the effect that they do not see strikes. So when their lines get pulled in they sometimes have a fish that’s been hooked for sometime, allowing the fish to fully ingest the hook instead of having an ethical hook set into the trout’s jaw. I love these fish, and I believe in the utmost respect for an ethical harvest (if one chooses to do so). I believe that a specific fly fishing only section would only stand to promote the resource and to make all around better more ethical set of anglers. I do not put myself on some high horse because I enjoy the art of fly fishing. But I do see the benefits I gained from learning the craft in which I enjoy so much. Believe me, there is no one that loves dunking worms for big catfish or swimming a multi hook rapala for near shore walleye more than myself. But there is a time and place. If we were to implement these standards onto the trout streams I believe we would have more trout numbers, larger fish, better breeding grounds, and a healthier cleaner creeks/rivers. With these standards we could have creeks that resemble those of the great western trout streams of Montana. But it starts with educating anglers, so that we may learn how to better respect the resource that we so dearly appreciate. Also, that their respect may transfer into other realms such as the long rolling fields of the ring neck pheasant to the dense hardwoods that the White tail deer calls home. I Thank you for your time, and would appreciate your reconciliation on the matter. On a side note I believe the fish bridge on the Cattaraugus creek is a bad idea. We’ve had a great negative effect on this fishery before, a mistake I believe we shouldn’t make again. I only write this because I care, and I want our children and our children’s children to be able to enjoy this past time as much as we do. I look forward to your response.

261. I like the new changes keep up the good work DEC
262. no reason to get a license any more I will fish Pa their stocking program is so much better NY sucks can't wait to move
263. I am indifferent to changes 1,2,3, and 5, but line 4 is absurd. How can you "normalize" season openers for all sportfish? Each species needs to be protected from harvest during certain times of the year, that's basic conservation, is it not? I'm all for making things simpler, but certain bodies of water, and different species, require different regulations. For example Kensico Reservoir, it's beyond infested with lake trout, I can catch 50+ lake trout at Kensico on some days. There needs to be more liberal harvest allowances there on lakers, to allow for other species to thrive. Another example, blackfish, good luck catching a keeper in western LI Sound, but out east, no problem. To me, the blackfish serves as an example that at times there needs to be different regulations for different areas.
264. I support the new regulations for fishing in New York and I think proposals that make rules easier for fishermen to understand are very positive. Anything that simplifies rules and regulations across the state will be helpful.
265. Looks acceptable
266. I am new and beginner for the fishing sports. But still, I am in favor of simplifying the regulations and that really helps, in particular new ones like me encouraged. Thanks for all your efforts and support
267. Changes in regulations are always hard to understand, but to make things easier for a new sportman/ women is great. Any "put and take" lake and pond should be open year round. Opportunities equal new sports man / women. Most of my time fishing is spent in NY. keep it simple thanks

268. I fully support these new changes to the fishing regulations.
269. Mongaup Creek. I believe the brook is receiving too much fishing pressure! I have fished it the last 58 years! Brook trout should have stricter regulations! They rarely grow past 8 inches! I don't like that it is fishable all year! Disturbing spawning activity which I believe is occurring much less frequent because of lower numbers of yearling fish! Became too dependent on hatchery stocked trout! Nj requires that brook trout be returned! That mite improve their chances! Reaching breeding size! Rather than exist as a food source for larger browns!
270. I like all of the proposed changes except the no minimum size of the trout. I believe 8 or 9" should be set.
271. Thank you for taking the time to attempt to make NYS fisheries a better environment. I appreciate the simplifying of the law attempt. I am both an angler in the state as well as a participant in the nys WAVE participant. I also am a resident and angler of region 3 as well as the whole Catskills and Adirondack region. I do believe that while this may simplify things from an angler and enforcement perspective it has the potential to cause harm and damage to ecologically sensitive areas. As economic (inflation) factors continue to drive people more to the outdoors (example is over crowding of ADK parking areas in the high peaks) and the ever more powerful social media influence occurs, it appears outdoor recreation is on the rise. Many small streams, ponds and lakes can not handle this.

I am sure there is some data that shows as enforcement of federal, state and local environmental law as well as clean up occurs certain historically impacted fisheries have and are continuing to make a recovery. Additional pressure to these areas, as well as those considered "stable" or "prime" may push this effort the opposite way.

While some wants to go out and catch the monster or fill their creel, I have scene no data that suggests this is sustainable. During summer months as well as winter months (for lakes and ponds) there appears to always be a presence on the waterways. While I feel "you can not catch them all" you can bring the numbers to a threatened level. This is clearly shown in ocean fishing and the increase in regulations that are being placed on limits and methods allowed in coastal fisheries.

Is there a method or proposal to increase and offset the potential for disruptions to a natural amount (ie. more fish hatcheries or additional capacity at existing). Will the "simplification of regulations" be met with an increased budget for enforcement as well as increased penalties as claiming "I didn't know the rules" will be less tolerable?

One regulation I urge you to consider is to follow Illinois regulations regarding stocking. The model they follow that I have scene personally is once stocked the body of water is heavily signed to ban fishing. The infrastructure, the personnel, the well-being of the product (trout) and the transportation is a significant cost. To allow masses of crowds to begin casting in the "bathtub" of fish immediately after stocking is wasteful. It has been clear that people do not follow regulations filling coolers, making return trips. Between the natural predators (other fish, birds of prey, and mammals) the pressure added by a human influence must highly reduce the effectiveness of creating a self sustaining ecosystem that does not depend on massive amounts of fish being deposited yearly.

While the intent of the new laws and regulations appears to be in good faith, the coordination, the additional studying and enforcement may come at a cost that is both economically and ecologically taxing for all of those involved.

272. All for it!!
273. Refreshing and definitely overdue.
274. How about easing up on your recreational salt water regulations rather than giving everything to commercial fishermen?? We'd like to be allowed to feed our families fresh caught fish too
275. Hope fully the 5 limit on trout with 2 over 12" will apply statewide. Here in the upper Delaware the limit last year was 3 with only 1 over 12" The year before it was 5 without any limit on fish over 12" and this dated back at least 10-15 years. Not much flesh on fish under 12". That means I have to catch more under 12" to make up for the ones I would have kept over 12.
276. I would like to see a multiple choice questioner but I strongly agree and approve the stream lining of fishing regulations and also believe in the stream lining of the walleye limits and sizes, someone needs to look into the salmon river reservoir especially after the studies have been done and it has been shown an 18" fish is double the age of a fish of a similar size in other bodies of water the size limit should be lowered to 15" and maybe a slot limit to protect the breeding aged fish since a fish limit is 18" + you are restricted to basically keeping the breeding stock
277. It's about time to get rational. Please do it.
278. Start allowing bass through the ice or consider an early ice bass season please. The spawn occurs in late spring, that being said there would be no harm in allowing a December-January 31st bass season. We constantly catch and release bass on tip ups during this time frame. I don't understand the need to put all back even before March, but if there is concerned a canned couple of ice fishing months for bass seems reasonable.
279. I am I guide for fishing and hunting in the great nys and would like to give my feed back on the proposed new regulations I fully support the Trout one where only 2 fish can be over 12 inches I think that is a very good plan for managing and protecting breeding and trophy size fish, I would also say I fully disagree is a hard date for opening all fishes within nys there's to many species specific things that are meant to help and protect fish and managing them for specific dates for openers is huge, the other 3 regs I support but don't feel that strongly about other than the ones I've mentioned thank you
Note: Commentor supported the hard dates once it was explained to him that species would have their own specified hard date rather than a single hard date where all species seasons would open.
280. Request new catch and release regulations (Brown trout Rainbow trout (including steelhead) Coho salmon Atlantic salmon) for Lake Ontario and Lake Erie tributaries during annual spawning seasons.
281. How about developing an app that would allow the user to get a quick summary of the applicable fishing regulations for the body of water where they are located.
282. The proposed changes are definitely a step in a better direction; overall I really like most of them.

My main concern is that this could open the door to over harvesting in certain fisheries that rely on stocking and are prone to being fished out. If harvest limits are lessened unused resources could be diverted to establishing trophy fisheries in some cases and possibly expanding lake trout or salmon stocking programs in others.

Some fisheries have great potential to be world class if we stop over managing and move to a catch and release only , wild fish, trophy model used successfully in many watersheds out west. While others could benefit from expanded trout, lake trout and salmon fishing opportunities; where limiting parameters aren't an issue. This could increase the overall value and draw to the NY fishing industry which could have many potential micro and macro positive impacts . Think of what the Beamoc system does for surrounding towns. The Esopus basin comes to mind when I think of a fishery that appears to have all of the potential for great improvement in terms of a fishery; it isn't nearly as good as it should be.

There is always a balance to be had and simplification is a great place to start. Especially when it opens up more fishing opportunities.

283. I like having Bass season open on the third Saturday of June. An opening date in the middle of the week would make it more difficult for the casual fishermen if they have commitments like jobs to break away for opening day, giving an advantage to the professional sport fishermen. It is very easy to look ahead at calendars to figure out which Saturday it opens.

Thanks for listening,

284. Personally I feel that your changes to trout PONDS will not matter at all, most are so remote people don't get concerned with being stopped by an officer. I think 99% of your trout regulations should focus on the river and stream fish as they are targeted much more frequently by those of us without lake fishing gear and boats. As for getting the dates more easy to follow I am all behind that as well as the limit increase for walleye on Oneida, and i think a catch and kill on walleye in Skaneateles Lake would be smart, they are not part of the native species in that lake, nor are rainbow trout but I catch and have seen fewer Atlantic salmon in there since the walleye population was supplemented by "coffee can stocking efforts."

All in all I think the regulation changes for trout are misguided and your focus should be on trout in other water bodies (like the fact that our state fish, the brook trout, is GONE form most of Central, southern and western NY), especially the Salmon river, enforcement of snagging fish is extremely poor as well as people from out of state keeping 3 times the legal limit and when i report them nothing happens. I think the priorities here are somewhat misplaced when the current regulations are not enforced properly.

285. The Finger Lakes Conservation Council (FLCC) supports the Proposal to Simplify Existing Sportfishing Regulations.

The many aquatic environments within New York State's many watersheds often require some individual management and special regulations. These special regs can make fishing challenging for resident anglers and especially challenging for beginning and visiting non-resident anglers. Special regs can create a situation where law abiding, honest anglers unwittingly become violators. Therefore, the FLCC supports the elimination of as many unnecessary and outdated regulations as possible.

Regarding ponded waters, the FLCC finds the proposal somewhat confusing. FLCC agrees that bringing ponded water trout regulations in line with inland trout stream regs will eliminate

possible confusion for trout fishermen. The two fish, over 12" is supported and will spread the resource so more anglers have a chance at larger trout. The release of larger trout could also increase the size and number of large trout.

Consistent season openers are also supported by the FLCC. A May 1st opener for pike, pickerel, walleye and tiger musky are good. Going back 40+ years, May 1st was the traditional opener for these species.

June 1st for statewide muskellunge opener will eliminate legal musky angling over the popular Memorial Day weekend. Inland musky anglers could lose 4 days of legal musky fishing being that 61% of anglers who completed NYSDEC's angler survey answered no preference and a June 1 opener brings it in line with NYSDEC's objectives. FLCC will support June 1s for pure muskellunge statewide.

The Great Lakes regs for muskellunge season of June 15th will bring it in line with bass opener and help NYSDEC's objective of simplifying regs. Again, a large percentage of targeted respondents favored June 15 or stated no preference. June 15th could give Great Lakes musky anglers up to 6 additional days of legal fishing.

FLCC also suggests NYSDEC consider extending the December 15th closing of muskie season on all of New York's Great Lake's waters, including upper and lower Niagara River. Most muskie fishing is catch and release and fish caught in cold water are healthy and less susceptible to injury. This would give robust muskie fishermen more opportunity and the possibility for the fish of a lifetime.

Bass season opening on June 15th is also supported in that it will eliminate some confusion over the current floating 3rd Saturday in June opener. Again, most waters will see bass spawning finished and much of bass fishing is catch and release.

The FLCC feels that specific date season openings will be easier for anglers to remember and will be well received by anglers.

Regarding the 5 walleye per day limit on Oneida Lake, this is supported as the population has rebounded and it brings it in line with the statewide regs.

Establishing the special regs on Skaneateles Lake will, hopefully, control the walleye numbers and protect the trout and salmon population. Too many times, ignorant anglers have damaged and destroyed native fish populations by illegal stocking of non-native fish. Better to leave stocking to the professional fish managers.

Establishing a two steelhead limit on the lower Niagara River corrects and oversight and brings possession limits in line with Lake Ontario regs.

As to banning snatching and spearing on certain waters, these two activities can get out of control, therefore, FLCC supports NYSDEC discretion to limit or ban both on selected waters.

The FLCC thanks the Bureau of Fisheries with the continued work in upgrading New York's fishing opportunities.

286. I submit my concurrence to the proposed changes.

287. I'm an avid Bass fisherman who has Bass fished the Hudson River pretty much my whole life. I saw a fellow angler share some news about possibly the keeper regulation going from 15" to your regular 12" which is recognized state wide on every other body of water. I just wanted to reach out and say that I don't agree with this. I think it should stay 15" to keep a Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass while fun or tournament fishing. I fish a lot of tournaments on the River and there's a lot of 15" plus size fish. I think making it the 12" rule just isn't fair to the guys who put there time in out there and really grind for those bigger bites. A lot of anglers would disagree with me but this is my opinion on the matter. So I vote no for changing the keeper rule of 15" too 12" on the Hudson River.
288. I believe that a stream limit of 5 trout per day – 2 over 12" is still excessive harvest. Many NY streams would have healthy holdover if not naturally producing populations if the limit were lowered even further. I greatly favor catch and release, single hook /artificial only for trout in streams, and would prefer to see monies spent on stream and habitat improvement on already viable trout streams with sustainable year round trout populations rather than put and take harvested stockings which in my view do not constitute a true trout fishery.
289. Note: no comment for #289
290. The normalizing of season dates is an excellent idea. Anything that makes the regulations easier to understand is beneficial to the sport.

I am also glad that in the region I fish there has been a crackdown on targeting bass on their spawning beds before the season. I still see anglers doing this but it has been reduced through enforcement. In my opinion, nothing kills more bass than pulling a bass away from the spawn.

Better publication of this regulation would help including advertising the regulation at state boat launches.

291. Being a lifetime sportsman license member I have opinions I'd like to share with you. I have been an avid fisherman my whole life and a hunter the last 7 years. To me, trout fishing for stocked fish in streams and ponds seemed like a frivolous endeavor. We would stock all these fish and they get fished out in a matter of days. I am sure this does not happen everywhere, but it happens a lot. I always wondered why we didn't drastically limit the numbers that can be kept, until we have established a long lasting population of fish in ponds and streams. Ponds are tough to sustain admittedly, but I feel like the stream fishing could become more sustainable if we limit kept trout to 1 fish.

Also, how about introducing a length limit for perch? This would help lake chautauqua drastically. 9 in or something? Also, many species might benefit from a length interval i.e. walleye can be kept from 15 - 22 in. and greater than 28in or something to that effect. I have heard this helps the spawning fish out.

On another note, I wanted to propose a change to deer harvests tags. I propose an idea that would allow for two buck tags to be used during bow season. So , if a buck is taken during bow, why can't another buck be harvested using the reg season buck tag (still using bow)? Perhaps this would harvest a lot more bucks but I would wonder how many more bucks would get harvested, as many hunters kill a second buck during gun anyway. Thus, a hunter gets an early buck, he/she can harvest another using the reg season tag and be done harvesting bucks for the year.

Another related idea would be to allow a secondary buck only if a doe is harvested by the hunter. I know in my area, there is a high deer population and many doe tags are not used so we could encourage doe harvests by allowing for an additional buck to be harvested, if and only if a doe is harvested before. Thus, a hunter could harvest a buck, harvest a doe, register that doe with the DEC to then be able to use their reg season tag during bow to try for another buck. Any hunter who takes a doe during bow, can be eligible to use two buck tags during bow (and this would only apply to bow season). Just an idea, and maybe this would greatly depreciate the buck population which of course would not be good. I am just looking for a way to not have the bittersweet ending of the bow season if you harvest an early buck. Regardless, I think our seasons are set up nicely. I did not like the early gun season in sept. I understand we are trying to harvest more to better control the population but perhaps my idea would take care of the overpopulation due to the encouraged harvest of does. Thanks for all you do for our wildlife. I do think the DEC does a nice job. I have been thankful for the control of the CWD issue and hope we continue to be diligent on that front too. Thanks -

292. I am totally in favor of these new, simpler regs and appreciate the protections being given Brook Trout. Well done.

293. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on recent proposals.

- 1) Like the idea of normalizing season dates so all openers begin on a hard date
- 2) Like Year round fishing on Atlantic Salmon and trout
- 3) Harvesting: please consider lowering it to 3 fish , only 2 that can be over 12 inches.

The reason I suggest this is that on opening day there is always an onslaught of meat hunters just slaughtering fish stocked off bridge . After 3 weeks , 95% of stocked fish are gone. This eliminates the enjoyment of fishing throughout the rest of the season. I witness this first hand on the local bridges in Pleasant Valley. With a diminished presence of DEC (because of cutbacks), many take more than their limit because often go unchecked.

4) Explore ways to stock trout in more remote areas to spread out the harvest. So "meat hunters" on opening day have to work harder for trout vs stand by a bridge and slaughter them

294. I would like to suggest no ice fishing is allowed at all for brook trout ponds, period. Statewide. Keep it simple. If brook trout co-inhabit a pond, then the regulation errors to no ice fishing.

I would like to suggest that any pond that has a stream running into it, adopts the stream regulations of that stream. If the stream flowing in or out is wild, then the pond is wild. Wild fish don't need anything but for us to leave them alone. Monitor these changes where stocking will no longer be allowed based on this new management plan. I guarantee you will see angler support for this, and it will tie together the trout stream management plan. NOTE: the language used here is POND. So a determination needs to be made that a POND is xxx acres, and a lake is larger. This regulation is based on size and stream attachment.

Harvesting fish in ponds should be for consumption if you are camping only. With today's reproduction mounts, there is no need to take a fish that is a "trophy". Take a photo and release it. I suggest all trout pond harvest is 3 fish all less than 12 inches. Keep it simple.

295. I would like to comment on the proposed brook trout fishing regulations and request the artificial only regulation be kept in place for the Region 5 ponds: Hour, Jabe, Little Jabe, and Peaked Mountain ponds. With artificial only regulations, there is a better chance of catching a trophy brook trout. There is also less of a chance the pond becoming overcome with invasive fish. There are plenty of other ponds where worm fishing is permitted. I believe artificial only regulations on the few ponds noted is not a burden to bait anglers.

296. All these new changes sound good and should make things easier. Thank you.
297. Since most of the small Adirondack brook trout ponds do not support reproduction, why the two max limit on 12 inch or greater brook trout? Since brook trout are territorial and grow large in the inaccessible high elevation ponds, the serious angler would quickly have to stop after all that work getting there.
298. The conditions at the once prized East Branch of the Croton in Brewster has been demolished by the construction of a new pipe line and bridge. The West Branch has not fared much better. Trees are down in both location clogging the normal stream routes that once allowed prime fishing. Designated areas signs were once prevalent, now not even noticeable. It appears much has been ignored in these and many other location in the general area. Sad, that the new regulations of year round fishing make little difference to unfishable streams!
299. The hard opening date is great for in state fisherman, but those of us coming from out of state will have to deal with fish that are already disturbed. In the case of Bass & Walleye it was great being able to plan for the 1st saturday of May and 3rd saturday of June. An honestly, that is a hard date since it is the same start every year. Now you will be having season starts during the middle of the week. But whatever, as a non-resident, I know my concerns mean little to nothing. Much like when I voice concerns to the PA Fish & Game Commission, even as a resident my concerns mean nothing to them. They only hold comment periods because they have to and then do whatever they want anyway. So basically as you were and we will conform to you fixing something that isn't broken.
300. I have reviewed the proposed changes and agree with them.
301. Is there a reason I can't spear carp where I live in Orange County? Yet in areas upstate is fine to do so. My understanding is carp eat large amounts of fish eggs and in the main river I fish there are huge numbers of carp and seems to be less and less small mouth. I would love to be able to spear them and would love to see that rule made state wide instead of just a few places up state.
302. As a long time New York resident and angler, (over 50 years), I have seen many changes occur in our fishery. Some good some not so much. After reviewing your recent proposals and rule changes I have to wonder if our fishery is in competent hands. First I read that brook,brown and rainbow trout need to be managed differently and then see you propose the same regulations for all. Size limits are being removed and year around seasons implemented. This does nothing to protect spawning fish or maintain current populations which have been in decline for the past ten years. I fish at least three times a week and have experienced this decline first hand both personally and among the other anglers I speak with. Current regulations pose no barrier to new anglers unless they cannot read or understand the language. New York regulations are and always have been rather lax compared to many other states. We cannot treat our fishery like it is an inexhaustible resource, it is not. You may also wish to read your regulations guide over again as it is full of misinformation and contradictions. I urge you to reconsider your proposals.
303. To be honest, I only skimmed the proposed changes to Fishing Regulations, but they seem reasonable. Kudos for reaching out for public comment, and for seeking to reduce regulatory complexity!

304. Bravo! The proposed changes in statewide regulations sound sensible. Overly detailed regulation has been a source of sarcastic humor among fishermen. The effort toward elegant simplicity and effective communication should be much appreciated.
305. The regulations pertaining to trout fishing vary too much from one location to another location. I support more consistency surrounding starting/end dates for the fishing season. I also support a five fish limit regardless of fish size. Your consideration of this input is appreciated.
306. I am the president of a nonprofit organization called Trout Power. Trout Power is a group that focuses on genetic analysis and conservation of brook trout within the Adirondack park in New York State. After reading through the proposed changes to the NYS fishing regulations, we have the following thoughts regarding these changes and hopes and suggestions for future changes.

At Trout Power, we are encouraged to see the designation be made between brook trout and the non-native brown and rainbow trout. Brook trout, especially wild and native brook trout, should be managed and protected with added emphasis on sustaining the populations residing within the ponds and lakes of New York.

With this specific management plan for brook trout in mind, Trout Power and its board members have the following suggestions for brook trout management:

- 1) The largest component that all members felt strongly about was larger scale watershed management for any waters where brook trout or any wild trout reside. If a stream connected to a pond has brook trout in it, both the stream and the pond should be managed for wild brook trout. Per the inland trout stream management plan, if a stream has a wild trout designation, any connected water bodies should also be placed under the "wild" designation. If the pond has historically been stocked for a put-and-take fishery with any other species (rainbow, brown, brook trout included), the management plan should be changed to protect the wild (brook or other) trout within the connected watershed. With constant trout movement within a system, stocking trout anywhere within a watershed would jeopardize any wild trout residing there. The wild and potentially native fish could fall victim to increased competition for food, habitat competition, competitive exclusion, genetic hybridization, and predation. If the DEC is committed to protecting wild brook trout, a priority on wild brook trout waters and its connected water bodies needs to be adopted by keeping all of those places wild and free of stocking.
- 2) With the recent passing of the inland trout stream management plan and the potential regulations shift to ponds that is currently being reviewed, Trout Power feels the DEC should aim at investigating a watershed management plan combining the ponds, lakes, and streams into one management plan. Trout Power applauds the inland stream management plan passing and the designation of wild versus stocked trout. Our organization desires to see full watersheds managed in this way. For all of the reasons mentioned above in our first point, we feel any range and connected water that holds wild trout should be managed as a wild trout fishery.
- 3) With the above point in mind, if brook trout are identified in a previously unknown stream or pond, the management plan should immediately be changed to reflect the presence of brook trout.
- 4) Trout Power suggests that the brook trout ponds and ranges be managed with the same guidelines as the wild quality designation within the new inland trout stream management plan:

- Maintain a long-term average wild trout abundance greater than 40 pounds/acre or 300 yearling and older trout/mile.
- Where feasible, identify significant habitat deficiencies and implement durable (long-term) improvements.
- Limit harvest to 3 trout/day with no more than one over 12 inches in length.
- Complete trout population assessment surveys within a 10-year recurrence interval.

5) Trout Power suggests that any pond with brook trout should not allow any ice fishing. Even if a pond has a co-habitation of brook trout, the pond should prohibit ice fishing.

6) An overall reduction of the daily limit of trout to 3 fish with no more than 1 over 12 inches in length. A consideration of a "no take trophy" plan for brook trout would be encouraged, with no fish over 12 inches being kept.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our thoughts as an organization with the DEC. We hope that the above points will be valuable to the DEC as they continue to work to protect and conserve our outstanding fisheries.

Thank you for your time and ongoing efforts,

307. I support the new proposals for fishing. The simplicity of the rules will help newcomers and everyone else in the sport.
308. am a bass fisherman and would like to see the 15 inch min. Limit removed from the Hudson River. Return the 12 inch min. Also, I always looked forward to the "3rd Sat in June" But a hard date makes sense. Thanks to all the dec and eco officers
309. I am specifically happy to hear that season open/close dates will be hard dates and not something like "3rd Saturday in June". Other proposed changes are welcomed additions and I think many anglers will find them beneficial.
310. June 15th is probably a good idea but recognize that many bass are still on their beds this early, meaning many fishermen will be targeting bedded fish at the beginning of the season. This practice is especially harmful for this fishery.

In a related issue, ENCON needs to aggressively enforce the prohibition on catch and release of black bass prior to open day in the waters of the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson County.

Out of state anglers have been descending upon the St. Lawrence in ever increasing numbers. This influx has been beginning earlier and earlier. Mid-May seems to be the "unofficial opening" of our bass season for these visitors. It is clear they are targeting bass on their beds. More and more are using "floggers", which makes this targeting easier and more certain. A great many bass never make it back into the River. Even when a bass is caught and released, damage to its bed has been done by gobies. That is one-spawn that is lost.

During the recent high water years, portable electronic road signage was placed on local roads and highways indicating the 5 mph speed limit rules that were in effect on the River. I would strongly recommend these devices be re-deployed with reminders about the prohibition on the targeting and taking of bass prior to opening day.

I would also like to see a greater physical presence of ENCON officers on the River just before opening day. Although it may be hard to determine "targeting", very limited enforcement of these rules likely results in real long-term harm.

311. I agree with all the changes with the exception of the size/ quantity limit for trout. I would prefer it if I could keep 5 trout, all over 12".
312. I am in favor of the proposed changes. It seems as though these changes are to the benefit of both the anglers and the fisheries.
313. Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in. I would advocate for more catch and release areas where wild trout are present, so that they are protected. There is room for both the put and take approach and the catch and release approach, but not on the same waters. By protecting wild trout, and in turn improving the fishing, you create world class fisheries. This in turn, increases travel to these areas, which pumps millions of dollars into upstate economies that desperately need the revenue. However, you just don't see that economic development on the put and take side. I could ramble on about this all day, but it's pretty easy to see that there is a major appetite for big, wild trout fishing opportunities (which generate millions of dollars), but without better regulations, state like Montana will continue to get bulk the tourism dollars instead.
314. I quit trout fishing last year with the new regulations. You have to be a map-maker with a degree in law to be able to fish (legally) in NY anymore. The regulations are so complicated that they act as a setup to get an innocent person in trouble.

I understand (and read an announcement) that you will try to simplify them, but that email contained so little significance to solving the problems we fishermen face. You need to really simplify the rules. While I understand that you want to manage the fish by the water they are in its just too complex for me. I do not know the names of the creeks that I drive by and want to try. (The names are not on the maps). And then I have to pull over and try to figure out if there are special rules and what they are by referencing a big complex regulations book with tables organized by things that I may recognize - or not. The fun was taken out of it.

I understand why you did what you did but it's too complex and sets traps for the fisherman. I urge you to take the simplification much more seriously. How about, by County?

Seriously - you need to do a lot of work. That email wasn't near enough.

315. I am in receipt of your email regarding "Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes". As a lifelong resident of NYS & a Lifetime Hunting & Fishing License holder I am always appreciative of all the DEC does to try to keep up w/ the times! That being said, after reading through the proposals here's "One Sportsmans" take:
 - 1) If you allow "year-round fishing in ponds" it will only further bring out the NON law abiding people more then they are already out which will ultimately over fish an area & promote more illegal activity while doing so.
 - 2) As for the "Harvest Limits", I'd have to go w/ what do the people that keep track of the particular species of fish say? Will allowing more fish to be physically taken hurt the species?
 - 3) Regarding the Atlantic Salmon & Lake Trout, if you allow year round fishing for them will this also hurt the spawning & hatchings?

4) With regards to the "Normalizing Season Dates" I would be for this for the same reasons you point out regarding "making plans". For example, I know that bass season opens on the 3rd Saturday of June. With that information I can make plans for that if I so choose. Similar to deer season in my area. I know it opens on the 3rd Saturday of November. I can plan my hunting based on that.

5) As for ice fishing, I again go back to the people that are more knowledgeable on what is sustainable for that particular area & species & respect & rely on what their input is on this particular question.

Well, that's my "Two Cents" on these topics. Not that it amounts to much but since ya asked....

Stay Safe & Healthy & Keep Doing what ya'll do!

316. We agree with the proposed changes as described.

317. I think anything that can PRESERVE the fish and have us Anglers happy would be fine. Any changes coming for the Stripe Bass on the Hudson north of the Tappan Zee Bridge?

318. This is a great idea. Especially in waters were fish are stocked with little to no chance of natural reproduction. The list of waters with so many different rules and regulations is currently too complex and confusing.

Fishing in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island is much more "user" friendly!
As a lifetime New Yorker and sportsman, I applaud these proposed changes!!

319. I'm an avid bass angler from Northeast New Jersey. I enjoy participating in many of the bass tournaments that are held on the Hudson River. I feel that the 15in minimum regulation for black bass on the Hudson River should be returned back to 12 in. Throughout many tournaments, Angler's do not weigh a limit of five Bass. Often Anglers come in without any bass that reached 15 in. I think lowering the bass limit on the Hudson back down to 12 in would increase participation and bring better bass tournaments to the Hudson Valley area. I also think this will increase revenue in the local communities surrounding the river.

320. I feel this new proposal just further complicates the already complicated rules. So you want us to release any trout over 12" after 2. Some people fly in at a great expense others that are able walk miles to fish backcountry ponds to keep only 4 fish worth packing out. Unless you are a fly fisherman many of the trout released will die anyway.

The new steam regulations are even more confusing. When you went to the five trout of and kind and size per day took all the confusion out of it. Sometimes I think you change regulations just to write more tickets. So I'm NOT for the new proposal.

Thank you for your time if you read this.

321. I'm an avid fisherman of inland ponds, most requiring at least a mile hike. Thank you for improving Brooktrout fishing with heritage strains and air stocking.

I rarely take more than one or two fish so your new guideline will not affect me. However, I'm a fly fisherman and can keep fishing and release many trout with no harm done. If they do float, I'll scoop them up and take them home, delicious!

Worm fisherman, on the other hand have a difficult time with released fish. They usually swallow the worm and it kills the fish when removing the hook. Cutting the line with the hook inside the fish may improve mortality, but I don't know of any long term studies. I sometimes do use lake clears and crawlers, and have watched released fish only live for a few minutes only to float to the surface.

My advice is to have trophy trout ponds. Catch two fish and go home.

Good luck with this topic.

322. I completely disagree with the new proposed trout regulations for pond fishing. If this applies to Adirondack backwoods trout ponds it makes no sense. We hike 6 miles one way to fish some ponds and you can only keep 2 fish over 12 inches. For one you can't release brook trout they won't make it and end up floating, wasting game which most guys will not allow and will keep those fish and be considered violators. Two people aren't going to waste their time to go through all the work to only be able to keep 2 - 12 inch fish. It will ruin the history of backwoods trout fishing.
323. First, I believe that this plan was rushed with very minimal input from the fishing community and stake holders. Unlike the Trout Management plan which evolved over nearly two years with widespread input. I'd remark that we are now doing a pond update but implementation of the Stream plan has not yet been implemented, Signs and locations as well as PFRs are not identified or implemented. I believe the efforts should have been more directed toward completing the new Trout Stream Management plan than this proposal. What is the big hurry if parts get implemented this year or next? The important point is that it gets done right with full input from those most affected.

You cannot manage a roadside pond the same as a remote trout pond based solely on the species involved. Add to that the regulations as proposed are not clear as it relates to what ponds are open for ice fishing.... To mention a couple would be the Mitchell's that have Brook and Brown Trout. Sagamore, that has native and stocked brook trout plus Lake Trout. Are they open for ice fishing?? Both have unique issues There are many more that could be cited throughout the ADK. The point is that the individual regulations currently are science based on local regional input over the years. Is it a watershed-based proposal? Clearly that is not the case either. We have heard for many years with the Department that everything is science based... except this substantial overhaul regulatory proposal.

The foothill ponds in Lewis, St Lawrence, Herkimer, Jefferson and the Eastern Counties are much different than those remote waters in ADK. They need to be managed differently. The plan, at least for the ADK, should be pulled in its entirety and input from all stakeholders be discussed. Do we have the one size fits all regarding the 5/2 limit? We would be opposed to that thought given some people may take their two and next they are killing fish due to size. Where is the science and studies showing that it does or does not work? Most Brook Trout fisherman do catch and release but after packing in miles, catching two fish and then you are done? Enforcement of the provision would be virtually nonexistent.

In regards to the new season openers there are several concerns. Why is there a need to change the opener dates? Those opening days have been in effect for literally generations. The May first proposal would directly conflict with the opening day of the Turkey season. Do I go fishing or Turkey hunting since they are both opening days? Further with warmer temperatures are we going to be pulling fish off their spawning beds?? With the opening of the Bass season

being determined by the calendar date vs the third Saturday would change a lot of traditional tournaments. Again, we ask why? Where is the science?

Streamlining regulations is a good thought but it must be science based. As has been suggested previously, perhaps a regulation that has "Regulation A"; "B"; "C" etc. would make much more sense.

A major point that has had absolutely no discussion whatsoever is regarding the forage base in these ponds which has been a long-standing issue. What is being done to support existing populations and to promote them. Efforts should have been put towards the latter question vs this plan.

Lastly, we would encourage, that the plan be pulled and provide regional meetings or discussions thru Regional F&MB, Federations which have ben unable to meet due to the current Covid restrictions.

324. After reviewing the proposed changes to the current fishing regs, one thing jumps out at me. The new proposed brook trout limit of 5 trout, only two over 12". I have been an avid brook trout fisherman for years, hiking many miles with a boat on my back to remote ponds and this just doesn't make sense. If a guy hikes in 5 miles to fish a pond and gets to 12" keepers he can legally continue to fish. What if the third fish is 14"? Although not ethical many guys would release a 12" fish and put the 14" on the stringer. If stopped and checked he's legal but what about the released fish? Any one who has spent any time brook trout fishing knows that they rarely survive being released, especially if they have already spent time on a stringer. If the biologists really feel that the bigger fish need to be protected from over fishing then a different approach should be considered. Maybe a 3 fish limit on back woods ponds? I am sure that the proposed regs, if enacted as written will result in many dead or almost dead trout being released to stay within the 2 12" fish limit. Please take another look at this proposal. Brook trout are a special fish and deserve better. Thank You for taking my input into consideration.
325. The highlights seem to be in the anglers favor. Please finalize these. The hard date would simplify any challenges.
326. Thank you for sending this out Has proper environmental review been done on these changes or are they strictly appealing to people who want to fish more? I love fishing in NYS but I am happy for regulations as they give populations time to grow on the off season. Already I'm seeing overfishing in certain parts.
327. I am, along with my son and father, are in favor of normalizing season dates so all openers for sportfish begin on a hard date with the dates chosen. Also the increase in the daily walleye limits from 3 fish per day to 5.
328. I am writing in regards to the proposed changes to the freshwater fishing regulations.

I am concerned that some of the changes will have a detrimental effect on certain fish populations in New York State.

As we all know, New York State is a very diverse state with a climate that can be just the same. I am very opposed to the proposed change of the walleye/pike opening day from the first Saturday to May 1st of each year. In the area I am most familiar with, the Adirondacks and as Chairman of the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation, Inc. for 24 years, I often look at the spawning areas of walleye and pike in late April leading up to the opening of the

walleye/pike season. Although once every 7 years the opener can be on May 1st, it is often not and it gives the walleye/pike a little longer to finish spawning and moving out of the spawning areas as opposed to being targeted in the tributaries which I have seen as the case on the odd year the opener is early. In areas downstate, I understand that water temperatures are warmer enough to significantly change spawning patterns. Another proposed change is to move the bass opener from the 3rd Saturday in June to the 15th of the month. If this is the case and you are looking for a set date, then please consider moving the walleye/pike opener to May 15th to aid in spawning. Bottom line of my comment would be it is best to leave the opening dates as they are and have been for decades!

For years I have been an advocate of significantly increasing the size limit for northern pike from the current 18" to at least 25" but unfortunately the pleas I have made to the NYSDEC have gone unheeded although I have been told they are warranted. Please consider this change in the future.

I wish that the NYSDEC held public meetings to hear comments from people on this issue and study some of the proposals that are on the table as opposed to trying to manage the state's diverse and wonderful fisheries from Albany. I have dealt with many fisheries biologists and managers and truly wish that they would be given the resources to conduct studies and assess some of the same regulations that changes are being proposed to so data could be shared and anglers educated with facts of the fisheries in different regions of New York State.

329. I like the 3 walleyes a day limit on Oneida lake . These fish get pounded during the winter both by fishermen but also poachers.

Would also like a limit on perch of 25 per day or make it illegal to sell perch caught anyplace in NY .. we all know perch caught from Oneida Lake make it 5he the fish market....

330. I vote yes on all

331. Please consider adding walleye pike to the last paragraph under the "taking and possession of fish" law. There's no reason that I am aware of that walleye pike cannot be caught and released from a properly working aerated live well. Walleye pike, just like largemouth bass and smallmouth bass are ALL premiere gamefish in New York State and should be treated the same.

If you allow large and smallmouth bass to be caught and released (culled) from an aerated live well, you should allow walleye pike the same. Thank you for any consideration.

332. I believe the proposed changes are reasonable and in line with conservation efforts.

333. Thank you for proposing the fishing regulation changes. I've noticed that hunting and fishing has become much more complicated than it was when I began 25 years ago. I now usually have to have my phone with me to make sure I know what is in season, what are the limits, and that I am following all the regulations. Any simplification would be really welcome!

While I am sure that the complicated regulations are the result of science pushing for the best result for our fisheries and game, we have to make sure that our hunters/fisherman can abide by these laws and that enforcement is not too difficult.

334. I do not support the new proposed trout in pond regulations. I continue to support the put, grow and take 12 inch size limit with a daily limit of 3. The new regulations will allow a greater take and more pressure on pond populations.
335. I would like to put my support behind the proposed new opening dates for esox fishing in NY. As is the case this year we miss an entire week of fishing with the opener being the first Saturday in May. I encourage the dec to implement these new dates. I would also like to see additional locations to fish for pure Muskies in the central part of the state. Thanks for listening.
336. I would like to see the walleye removed from the Skaneateles Lake. Let people who eat them have them to enjoy this fish walleye are eating the other fish in the lake. I would like to say all who eat them let them fish.. I am one who never fish without eating what I caught . I am a fish eater...
337. Is there an error in this memo I received from DEC??? Are Streams included??? If not, they should be!!! Trout stocked into "stock extended streams" like the Catskill Creek all die anyway due to failure to adapt, predators and high summer water temperatures.
338. Greetings— I live and fish in the Ithaca area, and I feel the proposed changes will not only simplify rules for newcomers but also for curmudgeons like me. I certainly hope they are approved.
339. I'm all for it
340. Thank you for all you do for all of us who enjoy the great outdoors & the pursuit of fish & game in our diverse state. Some of us understand this is not an easy task to balance effective conservation efforts and please most outdoor enthusiasts simultaneously!

The proposed regulations are to be applauded as we appreciate simplicity in the regulations, believe it encourages more newcomers to the outdoors and makes for a more positive outdoor experience. I certainly hope the changes are adopted & look forward to the 5 fish Walleye Limit on Oneida Lake this coming season! While that fishery has changed more in the last 10 years than the previous 50 years presenting new management challenges I'm hopeful this change may lead to larger & healthier walleyes in Oneida as we have in other state waters.

341. Simplification of rules is always welcome. These seem to make good sense.
342. I am not in favor of moving season opening dates to a hard date. The DEC recently changed the opening of hunting season from a Monday to a Saturday so School kids and working people would be able to hunt without taking time off and now they want to change the opening of Walleye season to what would be a week day the majority of the time and school kids and working people would have to take time off to fish. Also I really enjoy the Lions Club Walleye tournament which was always the opening weekend of Walleye season. Please keep the opening of Walleye, Northern Pike, pickrel the first Saturday of May. I think all fishermen know this opening day very well.

As far as I am concerned they should change the opening of trout season to the first Saturday of April and Bass season to the first or second Saturday of June.

343. My dad has gone trout fishing in NY every year for decades. I go with him every season and we thoroughly enjoy a week of fishing in the Catskills. I am in full favor of making the fishing regulations simplified as it has always been a challenge to understand the current regulations.

Making them simplified will draw more new anglers to the sport while keeping the fisheries healthy and well managed. I cannot wait for our trip this year and look forward to enjoying beautiful NY state again.

344. Regarding the allowing of ice fishing State-wide, except for some Adirondack waters, be advised that Lake Flavia in Region 9, Cattaraugus County, is a privately owned, Federally (and State) regulated mine site where public fishing from shore is allowed under an MOU between DEC and the mining company. No public ice fishing is allowed on this body under the MOU (liability under Federal mine rules) and that should be made abundantly clear in the updated regulation. Thank you.

345. I am a remote Adirondack pond/ river fisherman...catch and release only.

I have two comments related to the Adirondacks:

Treble hooks sometimes make releasing very difficult. Requiring double hooks or fewer will save fish (Barbless better yet).

Oct through April: catch and release only (proposed?) with double hooks or less.

346. Most kids learn to fish on bluegills and crappie. But with this change they will have to through them back, not get to eat them. Not a life long fisherman. Most lakes and ponds are over poupluated with gills and crappies, (stunted). They will never get larger.

The only people who think they will benefit from this will be the lake owners ass. Who don't want use in our boats on " there lake ".

When the limit was 50 gills most fisherman kept the small badly hooked fish, rather than let them float to shore and smell,not now. You lowered the limit, (wrong again).

I have fished the finger lakes and silver lake Wyoming county for 65 years. The fish are larger now than ever before. Your change will stop this growth in size.

Ice fisherman will be fewer and the sale off equipment much less. I will sell my ice equipment and boats and move to more favorable state, you don't need my tax money.

347. I have read the 18 page summary of proposed changes to the NYS Fishing Regulations and support all of the proposed changes specifically using hard dates to determine the start of a season.

While I am specifically most interested in Region 9, where I live, I see advantages to all the regional changes.

I am hopeful my email is counted amongst the over 19,000 supporters.

348. The Chittenango Lions Club has conducted The Oneida Lake Walleye Derby for many years. This event traditionally runs from midnight on Saturday (opening day) thru Sunday at 3:00 PM. The event is widely known throughout the fishing community well beyond the Central New York region and draws upward of 1500 entries yearly. As a major Lions Club fund raiser, it requires support well beyond the Club's membership to be successful. Several businesses around the lake serve as weigh stations to score the entries which number in the hundreds and start to trickle in during the wee hours on Saturday. That's a lot of fish, and a lot of anglers frequenting bait shops and convenience stores.

Any opening day other than Saturday will surly have some impact on the number of entries we get. All hunters and fisherfolks prioritize the opener above the rest of the season.

If enacted this year, the resulting confusion would hurt us even more.

For this reason, I feel that the Department should as a minimum put off implementing the Walleye season change until May 1st, 2023 (a Monday).

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

349. I am writing to submit positive comments on the proposed fishing regulation changes. Normalizing the season dates helps eliminate any confusion that could impact trip planning. Aligning harvest limits helps avoid uncertainty when moving from one body of water to another, as frequently happens in stream trout fishing. It is also helpful to have clarity about the permissibility of ice fishing unless specifically prohibited. I appreciate that DEC continues to look for opportunities to tweek regulations in order to enhance the angler's experience. Thank you and keep up the good work!

350. I love that we are contemplating opening Lake Trout fishing to year round. They are unbelievably invasive, you should consider extending the daily limit as well for a few years.

Ice Fishing should be an option at the Roundout as well.

351. I support opening the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence musky season on 3rd Saturday in June and closing in all of the same waters on 12/15.

352. I'm commenting specifically on the proposed new fishing regulations for Atlantic Salmon where the statewide closed season restriction is being removed and replaced with an open season 12 months per year, which includes daily kill limits.

Being an Atlantic Salmon fisherman who travels far and wide to catch them; and who pays steep beat fees for the privilege of fishing for them (up to \$1500 per day); and where all adult Atlantic Salmon caught must be released immediately; and where after paying the \$1500 beat fee, if you are lucky enough and/or skillful enough to catch two adult Atlantic Salmon you must quit fishing for the day, I fail to see why Atlantic Salmon fishing in New York State should be anything other than catch and release 12 months per year.

After horrendously greedy Atlantic Salmon harvest and horrible degradation of stream conditions and spawning conditions exterminated the entire Atlantic Salmon population, in the late 1800's, from the largest inland source of Atlantic Salmon in the world (Lake Ontario and for which the Salmon River tributary was named) and after years of DEC trying, with only marginal success, to reestablish the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon population I fail to see why Atlantic Salmon in New York State should be treated as anything other than a species on the Federal Endangered Species List. I believe that the Salmon Rivers in Maine that empty into the Atlantic Ocean have an ESL ban on fishing for Atlantic Salmon.

So that's my comment. Change the current statewide restrictions for Atlantic Salmon to catch and release only.

353. In regards to the regulation,

- Changing opening dates for selected warmwater and coolwater species fishing seasons from Saturdays to hard numerical dates.

When I first moved to NY 4 years ago I thought this was a ridiculous regulation, as my job allows flexibility to recreate when I choose. However, after 4 years and having an out of state friend come up every year to fish after Bass opener, the Saturday date really helps organizing

and planning his trip. I could see it being more difficult say if the opener landed on a Sunday based off of a hard date because I'd be less likely to plan a weekend fishing if I could only keep base on Sunday and not Saturday.

354. I agree with actual dates.
355. I am writing to express my opinion to keep the Saturday season openers as we have it.
356. no commerical fishing within the 3 mile area NONE
357. With fishing being a major tourism draw it would be very helpful to have a hard Walleye opener date so fisher-people can plan accordingly and lodging providers can accommodate guests with a more consistent schedule.
358. When new regulations are being considered maybe and eye towards how electronics are and have affected small and large fisheries especially during ice season.
359. the issue of fishermen leaving lead crap around fishing sites and the fact that those lead instruments hurt animals is something we all need to have corrected. we cannot allow these fishermen to be slobs on sites so that their left equipment that they are too lazy to carry out and dispose of properly should be hurting animals. i find this egregious and the people of this area will not stand for this any longer, we want complete regulations that the conservation officers issue citations for fines that are massive for this kind of waste disposal by these sloppy disgusting murdering fishermen. we will not stand for this anymore. it needs to stop. fishing sites are not waste sites and you have sat on this issue for eons now. this comment is for the public record. please receipt.
360. No, just NO. Having been a fisherwoman for 70 years throughout eastern and central NY rivers, streams and lakes: NO.

Don't make rules simpler. For what? So more ignorant people go out and trash the fish? No, Trout (Browns, Brookies, Lake Trout, Rainbow) are treasures. Walleye too. Bass have their place too. They need all the protection we can provide, forever.

NO. Start classes all over the place to teach those who want to fish who each fish is: genus, specie, history, habitat, reproduction habits, and such. Fish are alive BEINGS.

Teach proper gear, methods to approach waters, respect of property, carry in carry out rules, fishing line retrieval and disposal, hooks allowed, etc. No night fishing WITH LIGHTS.

No. Do NOT give would-be fisherman a free pass. Nothing in this life is free. There are consequences.

Teach people to abide by rules to PROTECT the environment and fish in the water. They are not disposable toys.

Do Not make the mistake of lumping them all together to "make it easier".

That only encourages DISrespect.

If someone does not want to learn (go to class), then, NO LICENSE.

I am serious.

361. This comment is directed specifically at Largemouth and Smallmouth bass opening date. Often on the third Sat. in June, the bass are still on their beds and too frequently females have not yet laid their eggs. Although this proposal will upset many fishermen, I believe that if a hard date is established (which makes sense), the opening date for freshwater bass should be July 1.

Thank you for allowing us to give feedback on these regulations.

362. I believe every fisherman should be required to display fishing licence on hat clothing etc. To often I see people fishing and I know they do not have a NY fishing licence.

Pennsylvania requires you to display your fishing licence similarly to a hunting licence

363. I own the Adirondack Champlain Guide Service, a fishing lodge and fishing, ice fishing guide service on Lake Champlain. We've been in business since 1978. Over the years I've been seeing our bass fishing on Lake Champlain slowly but surely decline. I do know that tournaments do take its toll, but I am "Positively" sure that opening the bass season, "To Keep", one week "EARLIER" than the rest of the state, is devastating to Champlain's Bass fishery, no question?!!! Every year, that second week in June, the bass are right in mid-spawn. There are many tournaments on the lake that weekend, and thousands of bass are taken off their beds to the weigh ins??! Thousands of nests are destroyed. Why would you open the season to keep bass one week earlier than the rest of the state, when it is so far North?? It makes NO sense?!!

I haven't read it anywhere, but all of us here, hope you could at least make Champlain's opening of bass season coincide with the rest of New York State! It is the right thing to do!!

364. It sounds good to make it easier for people to enjoy the sport!

365. I disagree with changing the opening season dates to hard dates as opposed to the current method. The reason for my opposition is as follows:

A certain number of anglers, more specifically bass anglers, arrange to rent cabins or cottages to fish the opening week(s) of the bass season. These cabin rentals are usually from Saturday to Saturday. Changing the opening date from the current third Saturday in June to a hard date such as June 15th will no longer coincide with most rental policies. Those anglers will look to other states for their fishing vacation thereby negatively impacting the cabin owners and the tourist industry in NY State. I urge you to reconsider the opening day proposed changes. The financial loss to the tourist industry is just not worth it.

366. I'm writing in regards to the state wide proposal of the trout harvest of five fish with only two greater than twelve inches in length.

As an Adirondack angler of trout lakes in which most require an extensive hike and portage of canoe I oppose the proposal. The current regulation of five fish of any size is adequate. I enjoy the backcountry fishing experience and sometimes leave the water without any fish. I practice catch and release with smaller fish in which are not hooked badly and will survive. As most trout anglers I know also do.

As most of these fish are stocked with our sportsman's dollar, it would be a shame to only bring home two fish over twelve inches. As I don't have interest in keeping smaller fish from these

ponds and lakes. After catching two fish over twelve inches and keeping those, and now you have just caught another over twelve inches and it is hooked badly and will not survive. Should a person waste that fish that would otherwise be brought home for a meal. One can not control what size fish goes for the bait. They can control how many they take.

I believe the current regulations of five fish any size is adequate and manageable.

367. I own property on eelpot creek in Naples. The fishermen leave lots of trash and trespass where they want. I purchased my property to hunt, fish, and enjoy. Year round legal access will disrupt my hunting season and property enjoyment. Please keep fishing closed after December.
368. Having read your proposed brook trout regulations on Long Island and the need to standardize and simplify fishing regulations statewide, I would like to propose that the brook trout regulations on Long Island be greatly simplified to:

All brook trout on Long Island, whether in ponds or streams, or marine waters are catch and release only..

The rationale is simple. The brook trout in ponds originate from the streams that feed into those ponds. All populations of brook trout on Long Island are very small and exist in small isolated populations in various streams and possibly ponds connected to those streams. Any marine brook trout originate from those ponds and streams. None of these small systems are interconnected, therefore if any of these tiny populations are destroyed there is no natural way for that stream to be repopulated. Any ponds containing brook trout also contain an abundance of predators including the introduced largemouth bass and brown trout and many avian predators. Making all brook trout on Long Island catch and release only would help protect these tiny populations, eliminate a source of mortality and help insure their continued future. The natural continuation of these tiny populations is much more important then providing a harvest of any kind.

Allowing Long Island state parks to set their own regulations should be revisited every 2 or 3 years to see if those regulations are adversely effecting brook trout populations within the parks.

369. The purpose of this email is to comment on the proposal below regarding walleye fishing open no limit on Skaneateles lake
- Establishing a no limit, all year season and 12" minimum length-restriction for walleye on Skaneateles Lake to suppress this introduced species, which has the potential to negatively impact the lake's high-quality trout and salmon fishery.

Opening no limit 12 inch minimum on Skaneateles Lake should be welcome but in fact it will create much more of a potential for confrontation between fishermen trying to launch and grab one of the few places to park at the state launch and frustration with the DEC in general due to very very very very poor access to the lake for the public without having a residence on the lake.

I live in Camillus and have tried to bring my boat down to Skaneateles on many occasions only to find,

The docks at the state ramp on 41 have been taken out earlier then what is necessary, The docks at the state ramp on 41 are not put back yet in the spring

I've had lake homeowners block a ramp for hours while they re-masted and rigged their sailboat,...and were brutally ignorant and confrontational when told this was a public fishing access.

Cars parked just off the side of the access ramp at the launch site making it very difficult to swing around to position to back into the ramp.

MOST FRUSTRATING is very limited access in general. The launch on the west side off of route 41 does not come close to providing enough parking spaces for car and trailer needed for in season fishing activity, but with the walleye open limit change , it will be extremely difficult to get a parking place with the additional walleye craved bunch of fishermen. I don't blame them for trying to take advantage of the fishery. It will certainly increase the demand with no place to park.

and consider the hassle when you pull down with your truck and boat only to find no spaces once you are there, having to try to turn around...driving around the very full lot to turn around to go back up the access road is tricky as it is a bit tight getting around all the parked car trailers in the lot.

And you know about Mandana.....the issue is where do you park, town permit required parking lot, we have to pay to park to have access to a public lake, and its far to carry down gear and there is no good staging space at the launch to unload gear from truck and prepare a trailered boat for launch. It gets crowded with the marina there and they do not own the launch, won't help you, and every time I am there they have their boats right on the line to the road to make it even more difficult for the public to maneuver in there. Really!

The one on the south end is impractical for most. I don't even know where it is or worth trailering all the way down there.

So NO I am against opening up the limit on walleyes until the town or state finds a way to improve access to the lake for the public. If the lake homeowners are upset about their native fishery getting impacted with too many walleyes (which sounds like this is the impetus to this) then communicate they need to find a way to allow the local "licensed" fisherman to have boat access to their lake. I would bet 99% of them that fish off their dock are not licensed.

I love fishing in Finger Lakes region. I am an active fisherman and have been supportive of the DEC's effort in improving our state fishery. But trying to fish Skaneateles by boat is very frustrating to the point I don't try anymore. I very much hope you can find a way to improve access.

370. I am in favor of the change that would segregate brook trout management from brown trout. Only change I would like to see is a further reduction in the daily number of brookies that can be kept. I would change it from 5 to 3. Brook trout are very easy to catch and the proposed limit will make it even easier to wipe out native trout populations
371. I agree with the hard dates for walleye and bass. I also agree with the limit changes for walleye on Oneida and Skaneateles Lakes.
372. Trout season should stay unchanged. All trout harvest and size limit regulations should stay unchanged.
373. I think the limits should be 5 to 7. With no more than 2 being over 12. I like to stock freezer for winter and with the current limits made it difficult to help feed my family through the winter months.. Please consider adjusting the limits.

374. I'm writing to comment on the brown and rainbow trout regulation of still 5 a day but only 2 over 12". I'm sorry but that makes absolutely no sense to me and I feel it actually discriminates against better anglers and people who don't have the luxury of being able to fish every day. It seems completely backwards to me... Much like the "antler restrictions" put in place for certain zones.. So you have passed regulations that prevent a hunter from harvesting a 240 lb 6 year old 4 point which would be the perfect old mature deer to harvest but a hunter can shoot a 110 lb 1 1/2 year scrub buck with 3 little points on his only antler.... ??? You made the only variable the part of the animal no one eats??? turning it into some "trophy hunt" for those unable to actually have the skill it takes to target and harvest a buck.. You've made everyone else suffer in some attempt to accommodate the incapable. A middle class working man pays for his hunting license isn't hunting "trophies", He's hunting to put meat on the table, so he has to watch mature full grown deer with poor antler genetics just walk on by as he waits to see something with "3" points?? A completely arbitrary number.. Why not "5" points? or "2 points"?? "4" points.. None of which have to do with the age or size of the deer. I have friends who harvested very old deer that were well over 220 lbs dressed with basically bull horns for antlers... If you're going to enforce such arbitrary unscientific regulations you should at least make that regular season tag an "either sex" tag so the father who only has 2 or 3 days a season to hunt can harvest one of those does you claim are over populating the state...

So, anyways, somehow when it comes to deer you want people to only harvest "mature" deer and let the younger ones grow (at least that's my guess of what that antler restriction is supposed to do?) ? But with fish you want to do the opposite???? It's been a 5 trout limit for as long as I can remember and I catch more trout now than I caught 20+ years ago.... You're proposing that 3/5ths of the trout people catch be under 12".. Why? One 18" trout has about 2-3 times the meat on it than a small trout.. So once again, a working middle class person doesn't have time to fish everyday and be "picky" about the fish that they catch. So someone can catch 2 trout over 12" then continually catch and release 8 more trout that day stressing and injuring them to only throw them back in search of "3" small trout that provide a fraction of the meat and are full of fragile needle like bones to choke on??? Instead of keeping the first five they have stressed out?? If 3/5th of the trout people keep are under 12" well then, How will there be any bigger ones?? Your logic for "antler restrictions" is assuming the smaller young bucks will continue to grow into larger, mature animals. Why wouldn't that same logic apply to trout? You don't do that for largemouth bass, smallmouth, and many other species, It makes no sense.. If you're thinking of "saving the breeders", well larger trout eat smaller trout so that idea goes out the window.. I don't know why the regulations that have been in effect for decades now need to be altered and changed suddenly??? Unless It's just to confuse people it makes no sense. There's no "science" behind this just like there's no science behind the "antler restrictions". If someone catches a third trout over 12" and it swallows the hook and ends up dying and you want people to just throw the dying or dead fish back in the water??? What good is that? Like i have also heard of multiple stories of people shooting deer thinking they have 3 points on one side in antler restricted zones... They do one of two things. They leave the dead deer there to rot and be eaten by animals in fear of being charged with a crime or they harvest the animal anyways in order to be an ethical hunter and have respect for the kill and never report it... So you never know about all those "less than 3 point" bucks that were either harvested illegally due to your nonsensical regulation or the animal is still dead, but never utilized, left to nature to consume... either way you never get a proper number of deer... You should stop the nonsensical "trophy hunting" approach... A buck is a Buck and a Trout is a Trout. There are far too many variables to justify these wasteful unethical "trophy" "regulations". You're neglecting respect for the animal and sport. The purpose of hunting and fishing is to provide food for the family, not a trophy hunter video game. Please stop the nonsense.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment.

375. I am a retired Forest Ranger of 35 yrs in the Northern Adirondacks. I not only fished many of the ponds, but had opportunity to check and talk to many fishermen. Simply rules are best. Brook trout are easily injured. Returning injured brook trout, that will die is wastfull. Larger trout are probably at the end of their 3 to 4 year life cycle anyway. Most of the brook trout I catch exceed 12 inches. I could injure a number of fish before catching three more under 12 inches.

It is easier to keep and enforce simple laws. Keep it simple catch your 5 fish and go home.

376. Yes I would like to see ponds opened up. For ice fishing for trout.
377. In regards to your recent trout regulation, I am in agreement with having a catch and release season on all streams after October 15, but would like to see some streams open for keeping the trout. Limestone, Butternut and Chittenango Creeks have been in this category, with artificial lures only, and a five-fish limit. I enjoy fishing the streams in the winter in mild temperature, 40 degrees and above, and would like to be able to keep some for dinner. I think the flesh is firmer and the taste is probably better. This was your policy for a long time. Also, I would like to see you add Nine Mile Creek to the list.

378. Current trout regulations can be a nightmare on unfamiliar waters. I get anxiety anytime I explore a new area hoping and praying I'm not misinterpreting a rule or regulation. As long as the rule changes do not negatively impact the incredible fishing opportunities we have in this state, I'm in favor of simplification. I also like the idea of a hard date instead of floating dates.

Thank you for looking after and protecting the natural resources of MY STATE!

379. THE CURRENT LAKE TROUT MANAGEMENT ON LAKE GEORGE IS FAILING. The current limit of 2 fish per day is completely unacceptable, especially with ice fishing pressure and increasingly advanced fish catching technology. THE REGS NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES.
380. Every year, the size and number of these fish goes down, and nothing is being done about it. The trophy sized lakers LG is famous for are barely around anymore. I'm only 23 years old, and myself and other anglers have seen such a drastic change in recent years that I need to reach out before it's too late.

As you guys should know, Lake George is an extremely unique fishery. It needs to start being treated as such. All of the best captains and fisherman on Lake George agree that the current regulations on the lake are not sustainable - they frequently bring up the idea of a slot limit, which would require that larger breeder size fish be released. Slot limit or not, the regs need to change and this situation needs to be addressed.

The best lake trout fisheries have a sustainable harvest of 4 ounces per acre per year. This is very slow growth. This is why lake trout are so vulnerable and need to be managed so closely - it's not a normal fishery. 2 fish over 23 per day CANNOT CONTINUE, and needs to be adjusted to keep pace with increasing pressure and technology. If action is not taken ASAP, we will see this decline continue to a horrible place and will find ourselves with a very sad situation on our hands.

Please address this, Lake George is such a precious resource and we cannot continue to ignore this decline. If my warning is ignored, the consequences on the fishery will be devastating. Instead of waiting for this to happen, lets be proactive and save this fishery NOW.

Whoever receives this email, please ensure it is sent over to the right people and my warning is not ignored.

381. I'm from Connecticut and fish in New York primarily in the NYC reservoirs. My favorite is Pepacton Res. The brown trout fishing is excellent with the limits on size and limit that were imposed years back. Rainbows are growing rapidly. I caught a few five to seven pounds last Sept.

Please do not put Lake Trout in the reservoirs. Things are fine the way they are and I feel lakers will mess things up.

382. I am 50 years old and enjoy spending some free time (when work permits) fishing Brook Trout Ponds in the Adirondacks. When reviewing the proposed regulations I feel I need to mention a story that involves DEC Staff. I was going on a trip to Stillwater Reservoir about 5 years ago to the ponds around it on the recommendation of a DEC coldwater biologist from Region 6. The regulations were confusing at first but once I reached out to my contacts, and reviewed the guide I actually greatly appreciated the approach to these special bodies of water and the varying fishing opportunities provided. The ones I was scheduled to fish had varying special regulations (some statewide reg, some with artificial only, size limit, etc). I have fished Adirondack Brook Trout ponds for approx. 30 years, and the concern is it appears there is no longer this individual approach to some of these ponds. The proposed statewide regulation closely resembles the special regulation that was in place on the ponds I fished and continue to fish. I should also mention the DEC Biologist told me that if you are looking for a trophy brook trout don't focus on the ponds with the special regulations because there has never been a comprehensive review of the of those regulations to see if they really do improve the fishery and at that time (5 years ago now) none of the state record quality fish had come from ponds with special regulations.

I will add I fish artificial means during some times of year and switch to a traditional worm and wobbler setup during other times of year. If I am lucky enough for my son to join me on these trips it is often during the summer months because of school, athletics etc. During the spring trips when care is taken I can usually release a caught fish no matter what method I am using if they aren't hooked deep. However, once the water warms up this isn't the case and during those times we actually keep some of the fish and enjoy them as a meal. My point is this new regulation makes it challenging, some days I get some nice fish (over 12") other days I don't get any over that size. Lets say I harvest 3 fish under 12" first in the day, do I stop fishing knowing that I if I release a fish under 12" it won't likely survive? On the opposite side if I get lucky and get 2 over 12" do I stop for the day knowing that my next fish may be over 12" and if released it will not survive? If it is a harvest issue the department is concerned about then perhaps reduce the limit by one fish and still leave it any size.

In general I am against the proposed regulation because I am afraid it may not achieve the desired goals.

383. After reviewing The proposed changes to the fishing regulations, I have a few concerns.

I Believe you are not taking into consideration that fishing practices and styles differ from pond and stream fishing in this proposal. In pond fishing for Brookies There are fishermen(women)

that use Crawlers or some other live bait and those that use artificial lures. the Lake Clear Wabblor is the lure of choice of most of the fishermen(women) out there in the upstate Adirondacks area. Many of the fish caught with the wabblor have totally swallowed the hook and therefore have a much slimmer chance of survival when thrown back. This is also true for those fishing with crawlers. In streams you have the crawler fisher man but also many artificial lure users. The artificial users have a much better chance of lip hooking the fish and therefore the fish have a better chance of surviving after release. I have been discussing this topic with all of my fishing friends. Almost all of them head out with the intention to catch and release when using lures in streams. Not one of them plans to release when going pond fishing. They will throw some back if lip hooked however, it's not a high percentage.

People following the current regulations trek in to a pond, catch there 5 fish(hopefully) maybe releasing a few lip hooked ones, and then trek out. I believe your proposal would cause more fish to be killed off by trying to follow the proposed regulations. Those same people now would need to cull there catch regardless of survivability. I know of a few ponds that if you hit them at the correct time, you will only catch 14-16" brookies. We are on and off the pond with our limit within 30min. The brookies are in a feeding frenzy swallowing everything. The new proposal would force us to throw some back only to be seagull, Osprey, or Eagle food as they would not survive release. I also believe that if you allow Ice fishing on waters with brook trout there will be some caught and killed unintentionally.

While I do understand the reasoning for the proposed changes, I am certain proposed changes would have the opposite effect of your intentions.

384. I am opposed to opening up ponds and lakes to year round fishing. These proposed changes are just as bad as the last group you proposed. Particularly the following
1. Increasing a daily limit of 3 fish to 5 fish in many bodies of water, particularly our beloved Ashokan Reservoir (Esopus Creek) and various Reservoirs in the Croton Watershed.
 2. Going to a year-round trout fishing season for rainbow and brown trout lakes and ponds, regardless of whether they sustain wild fish.
 3. Expanding the statewide Atlantic Salmon season to all year.
 4. Increasing the daily limit of Brown and Rainbow Trout on Suffolk County Tidal streams such as the Connetquot to 5.

These new regulations do nothing to protect rainbow and brown trout lakes and ponds with wild fish in them.

385. hello i would like to see a closed season on perch. i live on the Cattaraugus creek all summer and fish most weekends. when i get together with other people that fall perch fish, i just cant be leave the number of fish that are caught on a single trip out. then when the lake freezes in the winter there out there again. i know there are alot of perch out there. i just dont want to see it drop like walleye did years ago. what harm will it be to have a closed season.

386. I think the ones that would affect myself the most are the season opening changes. The hard dates sound good to me.

I do know some anglers who plan yearly weekend getaways around the Saturday openers but they shouldn't be affected much. If bass season opened an a Tuesday for example, they could still plan for the following weekend. The fixed April 1st inland trout opener never bothered anyone.

387. From an Adirondack Park perspective:

Brook trout are the Adirondack's native trout (char actually). Focus on their re-introduction and preservation. The Delaware and other fisheries outside of the Park can focus all they want on non-natives, but the Park should focus on the cold waters it has and try to revitalize streams ruined by 19th and 20th century industrialization – dams, deforestation, erosion, and river damage from floating logs.

There is some work underway to re-wild the East Branch Ausable, which is a terrible reminder of what neglect can do to a river. Repairing riparian damage to rivers and ponds will potentially add a great deal of brook trout habitat. We need to step up those efforts to remediate damage to these rivers and ponds.

But you cannot be successful with brook trout reintroduction efforts when you place nonnative species in the same waters that are known to out-compete with them. Until brook trout are reestablished again, why are we encouraging harvesting them at all?? Within the Park, we should be pushing native species in the the few cold-water fisheries that remain, not stocking with their direct competitors just to sell fishing licenses. Outside the Park is another story.

These regulation changes are designed to benefit anglers, not fish. We need to get our priorities straight – at least WITHIN the Park. We don't introduce nonnative mammals to the Park to compete with native whitetail deer, bear, moose, etc. just to sell hunting licenses – why do it with fish? Where are our priorities??

388. Considering the prudent distinction drawn between our need to protect native Brook Trout differently than we do Brown or Rainbow Trout, I fully support the proposed regulation changes. I believe that the related changes also make sense and offer protection of our resources as well as simplification of the regulations.

I believe strongly that simplification and consistency in regulations results in greater compliance, especially with those hunters/anglers who value our resources and want to protect them. I wish we had the ability to go after more of the violators who selfishly disregard regulations designed to prevent decimation of our fisheries.

389. I would like to provide my comments on a portion of the proposed regulations. I am specifically commenting on the season dates impacting esocids.

I support northern pike and tiger muskellunge season opening May 1st; this will give a few more days of angling opportunity most of the time.

I also support the Great Lakes muskellunge season opening June 15th for the same reason, a few more days of angling opportunity most of the time.

I wish the inland muskellunge season was not on June 1st. This cuts the season shorter while I have had a lot of success between the last Saturday in May and June 1st. I do not fish for esox when water temperatures approach 80 degrees to reduce angling mortality (catch and release), so this makes the season relatively short. I would really like for the inland muskellunge be open until December 15th/31st with no ice fishing allowed. I always fish the season closer and have done really well in the cooler water as well.

Overall, I support the proposed regulation changes.

Also, I suggest stocking purebred muskellunge across the state.

390. I support the proposed changes in seasons for pike, muskies, and tiger muskies.
391. Brook Trout: Worry about real things Gill lice and millfoil.. make more trophy ponds as well ..
392. I am writing concerning the change in the musky season regulations for the Chenango River and the Susquehanna River. I have been musky fishing in these two rivers for more than 2 decades. The musky fishing has gotten better with more and larger fish over this time. I understand after speaking with the DEC that the rivers have a self sustaining population, pure strain musky have not been stocked in the rivers. Because the population has always been self sustaining, tiger musky stocking never took hold, closing the season to protect the spawn would only take fishing opportunities (fishing days) away from fishermen. The closing of the season at the end of November would also take away fishing opportunities (fishing days) from fishermen, when the rivers stay ice free, like this year. I was on the river until the first week in January this year, because the rivers did not freeze up until mid-January. There have been years in the past where I was able to fish in the rivers from my boat every month of the year. If the regulation is changed I believe that a catch and release season should be instated during the closed season, like what was just put into effect for the trout season this year. Over the years I have personally caught and released 244 muskies and others in my boat have caught and released another 60 muskies, from these two rivers. A number of these fish have been over 45 inches. The largest was 48 inches and weighed 34 pounds. If the fishery needed to be further protected I would be the first to be on board to change things with stricter regulations. There are northern pike in the rivers, so some of the baits use for them also catch musky, which is why the regulation change would not protect the muskies. I have caught and released 40 inch pike over the years, while fishing for musky. Over all of the years that I have been musky fishing I don't know of many people keeping musky, it seems to be almost completely a catch and release fishery. If you decide to make a regulation change please consider a catch and release season to protect the fishing opportunities in these rivers.

I am sending this again before the close of comments to make sure it gets to you.

393. Thank you for informing me of the proposed regulatory changes impacting seasons and existing rule. I have read the proposed changes and strongly agree with the potential revisions and intent, particularly the changes surrounding opening of ice fishing on inland bodies of water harboring trout and normalization of seasonal start dates. Thank you for considering these changes to what I believe are antiquated, convoluted existing regulations whose intent, though certainly meant for conservation, really only have served to further limit sportsman's opportunities, thus potentially keeping more people from enjoying the gift of the outdoors. As you well know, the fewer the people involved in outdoor recreation, the less concern for active conservation and the less revenue generated to fund said conservation.
394. I agree with the new fishing regulations and the changes proposed. It seems to streamline the current ones. It also makes them very similar to other states that border us like PA, ME, NH and CT. My sons also fish and don't seem to object either. Thank You.
395. I am from the Saranac Lake NY area and this is my concern and others on the new limits that will be allowed for trout. The new policy of only being able to keep 2 trout above 12" in length has some problematic issues. In the areas that I fish it is not uncommon that the trout caught are 12-14" and not so much under 12".

Here is how I see it. Most people are pretty uneducated on trout and their physical properties and how fragile they are. Usually Rainbow and Brown are brought up from deeper depths in a lake and have already experienced trauma. Uneducated fishermen are going to increase that trauma in removing hooks or lures and if they have already caught the allowed 12" trout, in the releasing of future ones they catch they are more than likely going to die due to mishandling. Not everyone is willing to nip the line and leave the hook, they are going to want their tackle back. Even with the most careful handling damage can be done that will cause death.

Talking with other fishermen I have found that this is a concern of theirs also. There is also the point that all bodies of water do not conform to being the same. Some lakes and ponds do not see heavy fishing activity thus allowing the trout to grow to a larger size. Fishing these areas and to keep releasing the bigger trout so smaller ones may be caught to reach the allowed limit is counterproductive. Every trout caught and released has potential for trauma and death.

It would be best to just leave the limit at 5 and not mess with the different sizes. Inexperienced fisherman and that includes youth will in the end I believe will do more damage to the trout populations then can at this time be imagined. To stay within the law you have to realize how many maimed fish will be released so that one stays legal. Have you considered this problem? And it is going to be a problem rest assured. Only thing is you will not be able to have quantitative statistics on it until there appears to be a decline in fish populations.

In simple terms, one can catch 5 trout and go home, or be forced to keep fishing for another 7-8 to stay legal and then have 5 of the released die anyway. I do hope you see my point.

I hope you will make the necessary changes to the law to allow for a healthy continuation of the trout population.

396. I am against this new proposal only allowing 2 brook 12" or better and 3 under 12" to be kept in ponds.

When Brook Trout are biting, the large ones hit or the smaller ones hit. There is generally not a mix.

If I catch 2 Brook Trout over 12" and it takes me another hour to catch another Brook Trout that ends up larger:

- a. the Trout that have been dragging around for an hour probably wouldn't survive if released and I would have to release the larger fish.
- b. in the same scenario if the fish swallow the hook and it is released it has a high probability of dying.

Where is the incentive to carry my ultralight boat several miles into remote ponds to try and catch a beautiful record Brook Trout under these strict guidelines.

It is a rarity to see others in these ponds and the remote ponds are not heavily fished.

There is no reason for uniformity. Anyone who fishes understands the regulations and each fish should be considered separately.

I ask that you leave the section of size out of the new regulations for Brook Trout. I agree to prohibit Brook Trout fishing Oct 16 through March 31 to allow longevity; however please do not include the size regulation.

397. 1) Stock several times a year instead of just the early part of the season.
- 2) Tag some of the stocked fish and, offer cash prizes for catching the tagged fish and turning in the tags, (an incentive to encourage people to fish all year.)
398. Please do not change the Oneida Lake daily limit for Walleyes to 5. 3 a day is more than enough.

And please do not change the opening day to May 1st. Keep it on the first Saturday of May as not everyone would be able to fish during the week due to work schedules.

399. I have been fishing for Walleye and Bass on Oneida Lake for over 50 years. It is truly a wonderful Lake for fishing both species. Although the Walleye fishing has strengthened over the past couple of years, I am concerned with the need to increase the quantity of keepers from 3 to 5. I would like the limit to stay at 3 at 15". Or, go to 5 limit and raise the length of keepers to 18". I honestly believe that, over the next 3 years, we will see a dramatic drop in the Walleye population if we allow a 5 limit, 15" length regulation.

I would also like to see a measured and controlled level of bass tournaments on Oneida Lake. I believe the increased bass tournament activity is definitely taking its toll on the quantity of small mouth bass in the Lake. I am aware that the tournament fisherman must keep their fish alive before weigh-in and they are released back into the Lake in the southwest corner of the lake. I am also aware that the fish supposedly migrate back to their original territory. I can assure you that few make it back to where they were caught. The small mouth bass fishing along the north shore, near Taft Bay has been mediocre over the last couple years due to the tournaments and of course the Cormorant bird. The fall of 2021, in front of my camp on the lake, showed an estimated 200 cormorants eating fish for hours. We have a problem with cormorants that should be addressed.

400. Some of the proposals have little to no effect on my personal passion for the outdoors, but there are a few things I would appreciate my voice being heard on.

1. I love the idea of no limits on Skaneateles for walleyes and also raising the limit to 5 on Oneida. The current limit of 3 can be difficult to even make a meal out of for someone like myself who is the sole fisherman and is trying to provide for feeding 3-4 people at a time. After fishing Oneida a ton this season, there seems to be an absurd amount of bait and walleye in that lake. If the fishery can support it, I'm all for it.

2. The hard start date of 6/15 for black bass, I'm not so sure about. I've found that the bass spawn varies VERY widely throughout the state. Where I grew up in the southern tier, you'd find bass spawning in May some years. After doing some fishing in the central and northern parts of the state, I realized there are some bodies of water where the spawn doesn't happen until July in some instances. As a bass tournament angler myself, I love to catch these fish, but I have almost no use other than sport and catch and release. There are tournaments that have occurred with the current bass season regulation where guys are weighing in 5 pre-spawn/spawning fish. Look for Cayuga lake tournament results from tournament that took place in June and early July and you'll see what I mean. No other time of year are people weighing in

30 pounds of smallmouth, and it's because they're being fished off their beds. If this regulation changes the date for Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence, you're looking at the same problem.

Personally, I'd almost rather see a black bass season start later in the year, say July while we keep catch and release with artificials open for the entire year.

3. I am totally for the proposed change on Skinner Creek.

4. I see the proposed regulation for eggs being sold. Would the bait be sold by the DEC? I'm not so sure about this one. For me, the draw of using eggs is knowing not everyone is going to go through the trouble of doing what I do to acquire them. Also, would these eggs be cured? Would the money made off the eggs come back to the fishermen in any way (better access, launches, etc)? I'm not against the idea, there's just a lot of factors that would make or break this for me. Are you curing the eggs? How much are they sold for? Where can I buy? Where's the money go?

This is my perspective and concerns. Let's keep NY fishing great.

401. I like the changes.

Good job on controlling the walleye in Skaneateles.

Wait until you have to do that in Hemlock.

402. Walleye limit at Oneida: A 5 fish limit in my opinion is a good thing seeing that the numbers are so high in the lake. 75 percent of the people fishing don't limit every time they go so the number of fish taken vs the daily limit won't affect the population as hard as some people seem to think. I think there should also be a slot limit for example 5 fish 15 inches minimum but only 1 of the fish over 28 or something along those lines so the large breeders aren't wiped out but you're still able to keep a mounted if you wanted.

403. I'd like to voice my opinion on the new regulations being proposed for inland water. While I think the hard start dates for season openers is a harmless enough change, I am completely opposed to raising the allowed daily take of walleye from Oneida lake from the current three up to five fish. While I am aware of the estimated number of fish in the lake, believe that a combination of factors argues against raising the daily creel limit.

First, it is well known that the most anglers on Oneida view walleye as a "meat" fish rather than a "sport" fish. Very, very few anglers return a legal walleye to the water. Raising the creel limit to five virtually guarantees that most fishermen will be walking away from the lake with as close to five fish as they can manage. This will rapidly deplete stocks.

Second, there is already far too little in the way of enforcement or monitoring of the lake by DEC personnel and ECOs. Stories abound, and I have witness, many MANY unlicensed anglers taking far in excess of the limit, as well as keeping sublegal fish. This tends to occur at specific shore-based access points — Sylvan Beach, the shore access in Brewerton, and Shore access around Godfrey Point. The South Shore launch has become a favorite target of thieves who rob vehicles (including many reported instances of catalytic converter thefts). If current enforcement on the lake is already lacking, why would we create a situation where we embolden scofflaws to even further pillage our resource?

Third, my own catch logs show a decline over the last four years in the number of 18 inch or better fish I've caught. My own personal practice is to only keep two fish per day, between 16 and 18 inches. Small and larger return to the lake to grow and spawn. This past season, I

caught ZERO walleye over 18inches. Most of the fish i caught were sub legal, just over 14 but less than 15 inches. As most 15 inches end up in the cooler, this leaves me greatly worried about the spawning stock for future years. It suggests to me that overall walleye numbers are going to come down on their own over the next four years or so, as there appear to be fewer adult, spawning-class fish to be had.

Finally, I'm concerned about the overall health of the lake. Water temperatures have been rising, HABs have been increasing, and summer habitat favorable for walleye has been diminishing. Even in the deepest trough of the lake, this past summer I observed temperatures of 75+ degrees — too warm for walleye health. Again, this argues that the population of fish is likely to fall on it's own, due to poorer survivability. Raising the creel limit is likely to cause this to spiral out of control very quickly, and we could soon see historic low stocks of fish - much like what happened in the 90's and 2000's. This would be a disaster for local fisherman, and devastating to the economy that depends on anglers from out of the area who travel to Oneida to fish it.

Instead, I would be inclined to argue that perhaps restrictions should be tightened. I would be in favor of seen the creel limit stay at three fish, and the legal size raised to 18 inches. I believe this would bolster what appear to be shrunken numbers of spawning class fish, which would better help mitigate against the other environmental circumstance which pressure current fish stocks and suggest naturally declining numbers in the future.

404. The need to reduce confusion and consolidate the regulations is apparent and well presented by DEC. But as an advocate of regulations specific to ecological and social conditions I will quote from the information packet: "This does not mean there will be no special regulations, just less." I interpret this to mean that there will be fewer categories of regulations, but still many waters managed by something other than a one-size-fits-all regulation. I suggest looking at Table 3, "Retained Poned Trout Water Regulations." One could distill the long list of special regulations down to the 5 contained in this table (and even 4 if the Artificial Lures Only regulation is added to Massawepie.)

So, reviewing the highlights of the proposal, my comments are:

1. Year round season for rainbows, browns & splake. It seems to me that where these species occur with brook trout (e.g. St. Regis Canoe Area, and nearby ponds) this proposed change will create confusion instead of eliminating it. Also, lake trout occur with brookies in many limited access lakes. I think a year-round season for lakers in those lakes is contradictory to your stated brook trout management objectives. A standardized season for all trout, including LT & LLS seems appropriate in these situations.
2. Standardized harvest limits for ST, RT, BT and SPL. Mostly I support this, but I support more restrictive harvest limits where a trophy fishery is possible, or easy access creates heavy pressure.
3. Year round fishing for LT & LLS. See #1 above
4. Hard dates for some season openers. I have no preference, but maybe this could be delayed 1 year to accommodate tournaments or vacations already planned around the current opening dates.

5. Ice fishing state-wide, with exceptions as noted. I understand this to be a tactic for shortening the list of exceptions, by identifying the waters where ice fishing is prohibited instead of identifying those where it is allowed.

I have no objections to or comments on the remaining proposals.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my thoughts.

405. Simplification of fishing regulations should not jeopardize greater protections needed for wild, native fish species in varying waterbodies.
406. First I'd like to thank the DEC for taking the time to make a concerted effort in streamlining the proposed fishing regulations across New York State. I am sure this was not an easy endeavor and required the collaboration of many professionals across the state. Many of the proposals make a common sense approach to simplification which can generally be perceived as a benefit to the angling license buyers. However, I worry that in an effort to simplify the angling regulations are we, the angling public, losing some important biologically sound regulations across the numerous waters and fish species across the state.

For example one special regulation slated to be eliminated and changed to the new proposed statewide regulation is the lake trout minimum size and daily creel limit for Schroon Lake. The current minimum size and daily creel limit was developed over 25 years ago by some excellent DEC biologists at that time. The regulation was enacted for specific reasons to curtail "stockpiling" of lake trout immediately under a 21" minimum size. Recent lake trout fisheries survey data suggests that these existing lake trout regulations have been very effective at managing the fishery and no other regional lake trout water had higher condition factors than Schroon Lake, suggesting the current special regulations have achieved the fishery management objectives outlined in the 1997 fisheries management plan from DEC.

Second, the removal of the landlocked salmon regulation on Lake George, and reverting to the new statewide regulation with a minimum size of 15" and daily limit of 3. The current regulation has had support of the angling public for many years now. The proposed regulation will reduce the number of salmon that get a second season of growth after being stocked. Thus reducing the quality of atlantic salmon available to be caught in Lake George.

Lastly, the DEC did include angler survey information to support the proposed changes in season dates. However, no other supporting information was provided by the DEC in this regulation proposal suggesting that anglers and the general public were solicited for input prior to this regulation proposal. I hope that the DEC takes every opportunity to solicit public input and include the diverse angling opinions across the state before such sweeping regulation changes are proposed. I know similar public informational meetings were held in the past or some of the trout stream management changes. A summary of similar public input, if solicited, should be included as supporting information for this regulation proposal. This ensures that the DEC is still in close contact with at least a portion of their constituency before such regulations are proposed.

Again I'd like to thank the DEC for their concerted efforts and I appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments on the proposal.

407. I was looking for the 2022 fishing regulations and at one point it looked like they were going to drastically change for this year!

This past year the regulations were very confusing and size and length limits based on where one was fishing on a river did not seem to work as most people that I ran into did not even realize or know or care that the regulations had changed.

This would be in reference primarily to the Schroon and North Rivers.

Also in my opinion and experience size limits do not work.

If there is going to be a change, reducing the number of fish caught per day is easiest, to regulate and to administer.

I am an avid trout fisherman and love being in the woods enjoying nature and seeing wildlife while fishing. I research topographic maps and scout for new fishing spots so as not to fish out a particular spot. I will walk a mile in the woods to scout out a spot, and sometimes find a better spot than expected and sometimes not.

In speaking for myself I will comply with the new laws and regulations and continue to enjoy fishing. There are many however, especially in today's society where they are going to do what they want and not comply with rules or regulations.

The only way I see to enforce the new regulations is to increase the presence of signs at popular fishing spots and increase the presence of the DEC.

408. After reading the summary of proposed changes, I think they mostly make sense and would make little difference in my fishing practices.

However, I have a few questions to clarify things. The changes to Lake Trout regulations mentioned 3 per day, 21" statewide. Would that change the size limit for Lake Trout from Lake Bonaparte? It has been 18" for quite some time. Many of the fish I catch are between 18"-21". I prefer to keep bigger ones, but if they are hooked badly (as they often are) I will keep those in between fish so they are not wasted.

I also wanted to make sure the 50 fish limit for Yellow Perch would still exempt Jefferson County. I fish Chaumont Bay regularly in the winter, and I always walk. Since access is severely limited because of property damage caused by dummies on machines, it is a LONG walk. I want to be able to keep more fish on a good day to make up for the meager days after that long walk.

Another question I have is what is the biological reason for closing bass season at the end of November? They do not spawn until spring and not many people target them during winter. However, many are inadvertently caught through the ice. There are some lakes where I catch Largemouth Bass while tipup fishing for Pike every time I go and sometimes quite a few of them. Lakes where this happens are Lake Bonaparte, Red Lake, and Sixtown Pond. They are often hooked badly (swallowed) and are always larger fish. If a fish is going to die, it should not be wasted. I would never target bass to keep any time of the year; but if it is going to die, why can't I eat it? Being allowed to keep 1 or 2 would not decimate a population any more than throwing it back in to sink and die.

I have checked Bass regulations for all of our surrounding states and none of them are as restrictive as New York in the winter.

409. I have seen multiple articles regarding comments on the proposed laws in New York specifically for Oneida lake walleyes. I am writing this email to express my concern for the limit being changed from 3 fish/day to 5 fish/day. I have fished this lake exclusively for 25 years on average 3-5 times per week for the entire walleyes season, specifically for walleyes. I am very concerned with this change as the fishing now is as it was 20+ years ago with high success during that time years ago. Due to the high number of fisherman on Oneida lake I feel as though this change will ultimately take a very high toll on the population of walleyes which would ultimately lead back to the 3 fish limit. Approximately 6-7 years ago Oneida lake saw its lowest number of walleyes recorded for as long as I can remember and I feel as though this will happen again with what some would call a reckless limit on the amount of walleyes one person can keep. Not only is this decision reckless but as you know walleyes are a sizable fish comparing to any of the panfish species and therefore offer a much larger amount of meat that each walleye provides. The point of this being each person will end up having 10 fillets per day which I feel will become a huge waste of our resources on this excellent lake in New York. A smarter decision I personally feel would be to take a look at Minnesota's regulations regarding slot limits if New York were to increase said limits to 5 fish. This would allow the high number of anglers that do support a higher limit to be able to keep more fish while ultimately allowing the population of walleyes to flourish by not targeting female walleyes. I apologize for the lengthy email but again I am very concerned after seeing Oneida lake go through "cycles" of very good and very bad fishing due to reckless regulation changes such as this.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

410. I'm contacting you to provide our input on the proposed 2022 Freshwater Fishing Regulation changes.

We believe the proposed changes are appropriate and will help resident and non-resident anglers easily identify the starting season for select species and enhance the statewide fishery.

- ▶ May 1 for Walleye, Northern Pike, Pickerel and Tiger Muskellunge
- ▶ June 1 for Muskellunge
- ▶ June 15 for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass
- ▶ Eliminating the current 3 fish per day daily limit for walleye in Oneida Lake and reverting to the statewide 5 fish per day creel limit due to the abundant adult walleye population.
- ▶ Changing the daily limit for steelhead on the Lower Niagara River from 3 fish per day to 2 fish per day.
- ▶ Establishing a no limit, all year season and 12" minimum length-restriction for walleye on Skaneateles Lake to suppress this introduced species, which has the potential to negatively impact the lake's high-quality trout and salmon fishery.
- ▶ Banning snatching and spearing in select waters.

We appreciate the department's continuing efforts to maintain a viable fishery that all anglers can enjoy.

411. One of your proposals would increase the bag limit for Oneida Lake's walleyes from three to five. I oppose this change for the following reasons:

1 - The increase has the potential to damage the fishery. Oneida's walleyes have two top predators - anglers and cormorants. The proposed change could increase anglers' legal harvest by 66%.

At present, no effective checks on cormorant predation of the lake's walleyes exist. Fortunately, round gobies and gizzard shad have buffered these birds' destructive effects on walleye numbers. However, Cornell Field Station research has shown that, in the past - absent the buffers - cormorants have consumed up to 2/3 of a walleye year class.

Cornell's recent annual reports have stated that the number of "fall migrant" cormorants on the lake has been increasing in recent years. Also, our autumns are longer and milder, factors that could keep more birds on Oneida for a lengthier time period.

And, should buffering forage fish populations plummet, walleyes could become cormorants' primary target.

Thus, you can see that a combination of increased angler harvests and heavy cormorant predation could have disastrous consequences for the fishery.

2 - While I have read the results of your online polls that show angler approval for this change, I have to wonder about their accuracy. Given our computer-stuffed society, it's not hard to increase the number of "voters" on any issue. Examples of this abound.

I would like you to consider another, much more reliable poll. Every year, Cornell Field Station staff/grad students perform creel censuses on Oneida Lake. They directly contact anglers on the lake. One question they ask is the interviewees' opinion of the proposed three to five fish change. I attached the results from 2013 to 2019 (two attachments). You'll see that an overwhelming number of anglers opposed the change.

3 - You're certainly familiar with the old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Oneida Lake's current fishery is thriving. Walleye and perch angling are excellent. Bass fishing is steadily improving.

This rich fishery creates hundreds of jobs and pumps millions of dollars into the local economy. It "ain't broke," by a long shot. I well remember the years around 2000 when Oneida Lake's walleye population was in trouble, and I strongly believe that retaining the current walleye limit of three fish will contribute tremendously to making sure those days never return.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

412. Trout Unlimited (TU) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYS DEC) Proposal to Change New York's Trout Pond Fishing Regulations (the Proposal). The Proposal is a necessary effort to simplify the fishing regulations in the ponded trout waters of the State while providing effective fishery management, a diversity of fishing access, improved protection of fragile populations of wild fish and reflects the thoughtfulness and scientific rigor of DEC staff.

Trout Unlimited's conservation approach is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. The long-term goal implicit in our mission statement is to identify a national network of shared Priority Waters for native trout and salmon, and to take strategic action to care for and recover them. A key tenet of the Proposal will complement TU's Priority Waters approach to enhancing wild fish populations by including a fresh focus on wild brook trout populations in ponded waters.

TU is highly supportive of the proposed regulatory approach to managing allopatric brook trout population in ponded waters separately from put and take fisheries of brown and rainbow trout.

TU's strategy in providing feedback on the Proposal is indicative of our organization's national, state, and local structure. National and state responses focus on broad commentary, while local chapter level responses focus on watershed specific concerns. At all scales, TU is unified in its vision to protect and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds so our children can enjoy fishing in their home waters. Our feedback on the Proposal is designed to be constructive, with the desired goal of supporting or recommending additional strategies or considerations that will not overwhelm its implementation. Our recommendations are based on existing TU policy, driven by science and a passion for maximizing both the ecological and recreational potential of New York streams.

Analysis

Regulatory Alignment

Much of the Proposal is dedicated to aligning regulations to match the existing management practices in numerous water bodies for multiple species across the state. TU is wholly supportive of this simplification of the regulations.

In eliminating regulatory complexity, it is our belief that this realignment will make it easier for anglers to understand the fishing regulations, thereby promoting compliance. Simplified regulations will also make enforcement easier and potentially eliminate unpopular and unproductive enforcement actions caused by an erroneous understanding of existing regulations by well-intentioned anglers.

Brook Trout Management

The stated policy goal of creating distinct regulations for Brook Trout versus Brown and Rainbow trout is likely to provide increased protection for vulnerable wild Brook Trout in ponded waters. Since Brook Trout populations are better sustained in the absence of other trout species, proper identification and protection of isolated allopatric populations is important for long term success of wild brook trout strains. Careful management of existing populations and during reintroduction of Brook trout into suitable protected habitats, in streams and ponds, is equally essential. The proposal matches the daily harvest limit for brook trout with the harvest limits in the NYS Stream Management Plan but establishes a defined fishing season for Brook Trout in ponds. This will protect fish during the critical spawning season as well as providing protection from the inherent vulnerability of brook trout to harvest during ice fishing. This will be highly protective of fish populations in isolated ponds. However, for ponds with an inlet and/or an outlet, the Proposal causes some confusion. The flowing waters in the inlet and outlet streams are covered under the NYS trout Stream Management Plan, and therefore fishing for Brook Trout is permitted on a year-round basis with a seasonal catch and release period. This would create some confusion about the seasonal take of fish in the vicinity of the inlet/outlet of ponded water containing Brook Trout. A more protective approach would be to extend the more restrictive defined fishing season to all the interconnected stream reaches known to contain allopatric brook trout through special regulations, or through a regional regulatory approach. These locations may be identifiable with existing knowledge, and protected by amending the proposal.

Brown and Rainbow Trout Management

Trout Unlimited's primary interest is in the protection and enhancement of wild trout populations and the habitats that support them. With this mind, Trout Unlimited would support every effort by NYSDEC to identify the lakes and ponds that are suitable for management as wild trout

waters. TU understands that Put and Take, and also Put, Grow and Take create popular fishing opportunities and provide significant fishing enjoyment for many anglers.

The Proposal, in many waters, allows for the take of smaller newly stocked fish, and generally reduces the number of larger fish (> 12 inches) allowed to be harvested. TU is concerned that in heavily pressured water the taking of smaller fish will reduce the potential number of holdover fish growing to a larger size if significant numbers of smaller fish are harvested. In these heavily fished ponds the lower individual angler harvest limit for larger stocked fish may not necessarily allow for more holdover fish. As such, it is possible that all the stocked fish will be harvested annually with little potential for the extended growth time necessary to produce trophy fish, or allow for the establishment of a desirable population of fish of mixed sizes and ages that would promote the growth of trophy fish.

Fishing Equipment

The Proposal is silent on the issue of terminal tackle used during catch and release seasons and special regulation areas. It could be argued that the use of multiple barbed hooks during the pursuit of fish that are intended to be released unharmed is inconsistent with the concept of fair chase. Consideration should be given to a requirement for using single barbless hooks, or a prohibition of barbed treble hooks in situations where harvesting of fish is prohibited by the regulations.

Recommendations

- TU is supportive of the effort to simplify the regulations to match existing management practices
- TU urges NYSDEC to continue and even expand efforts to identify lacustrine habitats that are capable of supporting the reproduction of wild trout and salmon, particularly native species including Brook Trout, Lake Trout and Atlantic Salmon.
- TU strongly supports a watershed-based approach to the protection of brook trout by ensuring that the regulatory protections for wild brook trout fishing seasons are consistent in interconnected streams and ponds with allopatric brook trout populations
- Measures to evaluate the effects of the regulatory changes should be developed and disseminated, especially regarding the effect of regulatory changes on fishing satisfaction on waterbodies managed as put, grow and take fisheries
- TU recommends the elimination of barbed hooks as terminal tackle in locations and seasons where the harvesting of fish is prohibited by catch and release restrictions.

TU recognizes that any policy or plan based on the best scientific knowledge available will contain some uncertainty. And although imperfect knowledge is no excuse for inaction, lack of data should also be considered when modifying more restrictive measures. We would like to stress the need for adaptive management strategies and for conservative action that does not preclude future options (including reversing previous actions) when new data becomes available. In the face of uncertainty and where the risk to the resource is deemed high, TU advocates for the best science in order to maximize the protection of trout, habitats, and ecosystems.

TU continues to be a strong supporter of DEC's work and dedication to improving New York trout streams. We have many dedicated members that are willing to assist NYS DEC on a variety of tasks from monitoring to habitat restoration. TU is already working closely with NYS DEC staff in many watersheds of New York, and we look forward to expanding opportunities for us to partner together to achieve our mutual goals.

413. In my opinion I think that these changes need more time to review before being put into effect.

The period for comment seemed to be rushed not letting the sportsmen all have a chance to evaluate the situations that are being proposed.

- . Raising the limit on Oneida Lake for walleye from 3 to 5 seems like a very good proposal
- . There is no need to change the opening dates for. pike or bass, they have been that way forever and are working well.
- . Opening other waters for ice fishing will be confusing and the Brook Trout will be caught not being protected if I am looking at this as it is being proposed.

Thank you, I think this needs more time for comment!!

414. After reading all the new proposed regulations, I am in favor of all of them.

I do wonder though if the Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass regulations could be changed to catch and release for the St. Lawrence Seaway Tributaries. I believe this regulation is already in effect for much of NYS. As it is stated now, you may not fish for this species until Father's Day in June.

I practice catch and release for almost all the fish I catch (except trout, perch and walleye). I think it would be reasonable to consider this.

415. Thank you for your time. I primarily fish the waters of the upper Delaware river. This section of river is under managed and under protected. As you know the river here relies on natural reproduction. When you instated year round fishing in areas that had previously been closed in the fall anglers took advantage of the spawning brown trout and trampled through spawning beds. The Upper Delaware's close proximity to New York City and the ever crowded tri state area brings enormous amounts of pressure on the fish and river system. I know as fisheries managers you worry about license sales. But trust me people will not stop buying licenses or coming to this area if you implement more realistic regulations. The fish here deserve your protection. There are not many places left in this country where you can find such beautiful wild trout and diverse insect life. It would be great to see barbless only catch and release for this system and protection to spawning areas. Thanks for your time and consideration. God bless America.

416. Simply put the proposed fishing regulation changes all make a great deal of sense. Hope they are enacted.

417. The Conservation Fund Advisory Board is concerned with the process leading up to the release of the proposed NYSDEC Freshwater Fishing Regulations defined by the Department as a "Simplification and Clean Up Proposal". The Board's concerns outlined below generally focus on the process related to the proposed regulations changes, the condensed time frame for public comment, assessment of public comment, promulgation in the guide, and some general concerns associated with the proposal. We believe that the complexity of materials available for review, the lack of a public review process, and the limited amount of time for allocated for public involvement, will not result in the expected outcome. The Department significantly over exaggerated the public involvement process related to these regulations. The truth is that some components of the warmwater portion of the proposal entailed some limited targeted public involvement, however, the major shift in the management of trout lakes and ponds was never discussed or evaluated in a public manner.

At the CFAB meeting on December 10, 2021, DEC staff fielded questions related to both the warmwater and coldwater proposals: (i.e., existing opening days, how many bodies of water are impacted, has there been any analysis of existing regs, etc.). Despite the logical and fairly simple questions being asked, Staff present at the meeting were unable to provide that information. In addition, information that would have routinely been used or analyzed in the past to develop the proposed regulation was not available or presented for discussion.

According to DEC staff, the Powerpoint presentation shown to CFAB members in the room at the December meeting was finalized the day before the meeting. Members joining the meeting remotely were unable to view the presentation, despite the fact that it was known members would be joining remotely. The additional requested information by CFAB at the December 10th meeting was not made available to the Board until January 7th, the Friday before the scheduled January Board meeting, nearly half of the public comment period had elapsed during this time. In the past basic information requested in a board meeting is provided within days of said meeting.

Department staff argued the proposals were discussed and presented to the Board prior to the release of the regulation; minutes and materials from previous meetings produced no evidence that such discussions ever took place.

DEC staff also argued that the Board should have requested additional information on the subject.

- This is especially concerning because it is hard to request additional information when the Board has not been informed of the work that is being completed.

DEC staff stated, and it is evident from the amount of material placed on the website, there was considerable use of staff time and associated Conservation Fund expenses associated with this endeavor. It was also stated the internal process to prepare the regulation change took several months if not longer.

- With similar projects that involved significant Conservation Fund expenditures in the past the Dept. readily presented materials and updates during the process leading up to the proposed regulation.

In view of these concerns, it does not seem unreasonable that there should have been some communication with the Board on this issue.

- Just as it should with any other issue that involves a significant expenditure of Conservation Fund dollars.

Historically, the Conservation Fund Advisory Board has been brought into the loop well in advance of the release of a new regulation(s) being promulgated for public comment in the NYS Register. This helps avoid situations similar to what developed here and with previous regulations. Is it required? Absolutely not, but in the past it showed a good faith effort by the Department to interact with representatives of the sporting community on the larger initiatives that entailed large amount of Conservation Fund Resources.

- In this instance the notification to the Board of the proposal was a forwarded press release from the Department after it went out to various outlets and listserves.
- This is a significant change from the Department relative to interacting with a legislatively mandated Board.
- A similar situation occurred within the last 6 months on regulation that led to a large amount of confusion across the state, at that time assurances were provided by DEC Staff that this would be corrected moving forward.

The Department has continued to make updates and post additional information to the website during the open public comment period.

- We believe this was an attempt to supplement a public involvement process that was never conducted as part of this proposal.
- Those individuals that commented early on in the comment period were not given the ability to review the additional material that has since been uploaded to the website.

The basis behind the open day regulation change appears to be an angler survey that was sent out during 4th of July week 2020.

- There are concerns over manner in which the survey was conducted, and the questions that were presented.
- The introductory paragraph in the survey has a statement that reads “ DEC fisheries managers are interested in angler preferences for sportfish opening dates and if switching to a hard date that affords the same protections as Saturday openers would provide for greater simplicity.”

The statement made by the Department that moving up the opening dates on some species would afford the same protections as the current dates and could have easily swayed angler opinion on the issue. Follow up documentation from the department does indicate that spawning could still be occurring in the northern areas of the state when the season opens. Additionally, the CFAB raises the concern that many of these regulations have been in place for decades so the urgency to adopt the regulations in a significantly condensed timeframe is alarming.

Moving the opening of walleye season from the first Saturday in May to May 1st, could add a full week earlier to the season (6 days if enacted for the 2022 season) thus creating an increased risk that spawning fish could be impacted. On the flip side changing climate conditions could cause fish to spawn earlier in the year and cause a situation where fish are beginning to spawn while the season is still open. DEC staff and members of Law Enforcement have verified spawning activity occurs during the current season dates and the potential exists for this to be enhanced with an earlier season opener. This is certainly a complex issue.

The Board is also concerned that despite significant expenditures in the stocking program, NYSDEC will not provide Trout Lakes and Ponds in NYS the same level of staff dedication and resources as were recently dedicated to the Trout Stream Management Plan.

The changes in the Freshwater Fishing Regulations “Simplification and Clean Up Proposal” have been characterized as a regulation “simplification”. However, as noted in the backup material provided, it is clearly a major shift in the management for Trout Species in New York’s Lakes and Ponds. It should have been analyzed and presented as such and the appropriate resources dedicated by the Department to complete the task. One year ago the Department adopted the inland Stream Regulations, these regulations established, and committed significant resources moving forward to update the regulations on a yearly basis if necessary. General Highlights of the Stream Management Plan.

- 5 different categories of streams, 4 of these categories have different size restrictions and creel limits, same stream can have varying categories
- Each stream can be further broken down into a stream reach which is defined as “A stream reach is a segment of stream that shares, at a basic level, a common set of physical and biological characteristics that influence its ability to support trout and trout angling opportunity for the public.”

- Categories determined by 4 criteria (Access, Size, Trout, Carrying Capacity and Angler Use)
- In essence, the stream regulation established a very complex “special regulation” for every significant trout stream in NYS.
- To see a complete listing of all streams a separate lengthy document must be downloaded
- A yearly re-valuation of the stream management classification will occur and appropriate modifications made mid February of every year.
- Stream Management Plan Process, updated to Regulations Etc. initiated in 2017 concluded in Spring of 2021
- Response to Public Comment (June 2020 to October 27, 2020), 186 pages

Instead of developing a plan after evaluating these fisheries using a science-based approach with public involvement as was done with the Trout Streams in NYS, the Dept. chose to shift the inland ponds and lakes trout management to a statewide approach to on our lakes and ponds despite the vast differences in the characteristics of these waterbodies. This was put out for public comment and the Dept. is proposing to adopt the changes and promulgate those changes into the guide within a 60-90 day timeframe. According to the department the current proposal “New rules for trout management in ponded waters, which consolidates 143 waterbody and 33 county-wide special regulations (PDF) into a new statewide regulation that permits anglers to harvest five fish per day, only two of which can be greater than 12 inches in length”. If you take the individual waterbody and county wide approach the department did in this press release then the recently adopted stream regulations are magnitudes greater than the numbers outlined above and far more complex. Below are additional concerns that CFAB expresses on the proposal:

- Statewide general regulation approach
- This is completely the opposite approach that was taken less than one year ago when the stream regulations were proposed and adopted.
- The Dept.’s stated basis for the stream management plan was very similar (differentiate native and stocked trout, angling experience, etc)
- Released for Public Comment on December 8th, comment to close February 6th, 2022
- No evaluation of the existing regulations to see if they achieved the desired goal or improved or degraded the waterbody and fishing experience
- Proposed changes to be incorporated into guide shortly after close of comment period.
- No distinction between Native and Stocked bodies of water as it relates to brook trout or special considerations to the heritage strain of trout that exist in some bodies of water.
- Based on timeline outlined by Dept., response to public comment (2-3 weeks max)

In conclusion, CFAB is not suggesting that fisheries management in NYS is by any means simple or any easy endeavor and we commend those dedicated individuals that work to preserve the resources and balance angler opinion on a daily basis. Additionally, the current pandemic has certainly limited the ability to conduct significant public involvement initiatives. With that being said, with the timeframe allocated by the Dept. to accept comments and to adopt these vastly different proposals (warmwater and coldwater), the CFAB and the general angling community needs to ask the question: How much of an impact will the public comments really have on the process? Or, are the “proposed” regulations already incorporated into a new guide and going to print in the very near future. Whether a state statutory board, or a member of NYS’s diverse angling community this should raise concern. This is an alarming change in traditional input that is sought from the sporting community for these types of proposals.

418. I wish to express dissent for the proposal to change the statewide opening date for Muskellunge from "The last Saturday in May" to June 1. I will first respond to the rationale provided by DEC, before describing the biological implications I believe should be given further review:

The rationale provided by NYSDEC for the change is to:

1. Provide consistency in how opening days are applied
2. Make dates easier to remember and provide anglers a means for easier trip planning.

I can't deny that this would provide more consistency between how opening and closing dates are applied, but it is fixing a problem that did not exist. Muskellunge anglers, who are amongst the most dedicated (read: fanatic), knew when muskellunge season started. It was the first date they marked on the new year's calendar.

To your second consideration point, I would argue that this change will make trip planning no easier and would argue it would actually make trip planning more difficult. While I do not know offhand what the date of the future last Saturdays in May will be, I know that they will be a Saturday - the easiest for trip planning if the majority of anglers work Monday through Friday. Even if I know the opener will be June 1st every year, I must still consult a calendar for the day of the week, which is more vital for trip planning than the date.

It was not clear when the changed regulation would take effect. Should you move forward with the change, please consider the change effective for the 2023 season. By April 2022, anglers (not to mention outfitters) have already made their plans for the 2022 season opener.

Per Commissioner Seggos, these proposed changes are "DEC's continued commitment to making fishing more enjoyable and accessible by eliminating unnecessary and outdated rules". I would argue that in this case, it is not the rule which is outdated, but the environmental data which influenced the original rule.

I offer the following:

As you are aware, the proximate influence on the timing of muskellunge spawning is water temperature (roughly "the 50s"). While I offer no data on the May temperature profile of inland lakes and rivers in New York (which can be gathered easily and inexpensively with data loggers), it cannot be argued that the NY climate is trending toward conditions which would influence an earlier initiation of spawning. The reduced snowpack owing to climate change is also contributing to lower Springtime baseflow, which exacerbates the warming trend. While I am not currently advocating for an earlier muskellunge opener (at least prior to a few years of springtime temperature studies), I would like to point out that the proposal is moving the opening date in the wrong direction. The fact that the current special regulation on the Susquehanna River and tributaries allowed for the harvest of Muskellunge as early as the 1st Saturday in May (ranging from May 1st-May 7th) should reinforce this concept (further comment on that special regulation below). While I acknowledge geographic differences in the seasonal temperatures across the state, I also acknowledge DEC's desire to reduce the number of special regulations.

The preferred spawning range is not the only temperature variable important to muskellunge management. While the exact number is debated amongst muskellunge anglers, most would agree that targeting, or at least excessive play, of muskellunge above 75°F should be discouraged to avoid thermal stress and post-release mortality. For several recent seasons,

water temperatures on the northern muskellunge tributaries have approached or exceeded this threshold by the weekend following the opener. Two weeks following the opener, the water temperature exceeded 80°F presenting unarguably lethal conditions. Anglers had awaited the season opener for 6 months, and the responsible among them made the difficult choice to forgo further pursuit until almost September (excepting the brief periods following a major rain event). While 2021 provided acceptable conditions for almost the entire season, this will likely NOT be the future trend. If anything, a June 1st opener could provide questionably ethical conditions in the very near future. Should this regulatory change be made, I sincerely hope temperature monitoring studies, especially on inland tributaries vulnerable to low flow and temperature swings, be performed.

The last Saturday in May ranges from May 25th to May 31st. For some years this change will be insignificant, but in a given year this could result in the season opening up to a week later than current practice, which as I have described, could result in the significant loss in ethical fishing opportunity. This loss of fishing opportunity runs counter to "DEC's continued commitment to making fishing more enjoyable and accessible".

Secondarily:

I would like to offer support for the proposal to eliminate the Muskellunge/Tiger Muskellunge special regulations on the Chenango, Susquehanna, Tioughnioga, and Tioga rivers and Chemung River and tributaries. Without personal knowledge of the temperature conditions, this special regulation appears to allow anglers to target spawning muskellunge under the guise of "targeting" Tiger muskellunge during what should have been a closed season, which desperate anglers knowingly did. As I have already expressed, I would not oppose an earlier muskellunge statewide season opening date, such as this special regulation provided, if it was supported by temperature data.

In closing:

While it could be said that my comments are ultimately a selfish protection of my own recreational interests, I believe if a regulation is not based on the protection or enhancement of the resource, then it is an arbitrary regulation. This date change will provide no additional protection for spawning fish (the only basis for inland seasonal closures), and may actually detriment the resource by influencing anglers to exploit temperature-stressed fish. I ask that the statewide opening date for Muskellunge not be changed to June 1st.

419. I am a retired professional fisheries manager and active New York angler.

I strongly support this continuing effort of the NYSDEC Bureau of Fisheries to simplify the State's Sportfishing regulations. This most recent set of proposed changes, primarily for ponded waters, is extremely well designed and will make very significant progress toward establishing a more understandable and logical set of fishing rules for New York anglers. This allows for more effective resource management via increased user compliance, and it also encourages more public resource use and enhances enjoyment by increasing user confidence as to what are legal use and harvest activities. My compliments to our State Fisheries Managers for persevering in this extremely detailed, mind-bending, statewide endeavor.

There are, no doubt, a number of nits that might be tweaked in the current proposal, but the overall benefits of this large resetting will far exceed any minor specific deficiencies. Such will shake out in final edits and future adjustments.

Just a few quick thoughts.

The intent to distinguish brook trout from brown/rainbow trout is well founded and clear in the Statewide Regulations. However, the Special regional regs for individual waters continue (in many cases) to use the term "trout" interchangeably for any mix of these species. Not sure if this a functional issue but might be confusing for people trying to understand the rules and not aware of the resource specifics.

Why are Region 1 ponds listed that have statewide trout regs – McDonald, South Pond??

What about the new panfish regs- sunfish 8" in Saratoga, etc ??

One of the big elephants still in the room is the ice fishing permitted/prohibited rule. Wow, takes up an excessive amount of space and adds much perceived complexity to the overall fishing regulations. Would it make better sense to extract these from the individual water listing and add to separate "Ice Fishing Regulations" a list of waters by Region (and County?) where ice fishing is specifically prohibited or permitted? Example. Region 5. Ice Fishing prohibited in all waters inhabited by trout except permitted in: Blue Mountain Lake, Brant Lake, Brant Lake Mill Pond, Canada Lake,..... Takes up a lot less space and goes right to the point re "where can I ice fish." Also, what's with Bigsby Pond? Can one ice fish starting April 1? If so, why not state" ice fishing permitted only April 1 through ice out. Crazy.

The ultimate goal should be a set of "Statewide" use and harvest rules for target species that are conservative enough to allow sustainable, quality recreational fishing (acceptable catch and harvest rates of desirable size fish) for the vast majority of waters over the long term. To optimize public use and enjoyment of the fisheries resources, managers and stakeholders must recognize and accept a level of variability innate to natural ecosystems in order to balance the use of regulations and benefits of simplicity. Ideally, "Statewide" regulations should be the most restrictive use and harvest limits for any water in the State and thus the only set of rules anyone would need to know to participate legally anywhere they fish. That may not be a real possibility and discounts those cases where some special quality or experience outcomes may be very desirable. However, the latter should be added judiciously and maintained only when clearly productive.

Thank you for considering these comments. Good luck with these proposals. I am looking forward to seeing the new "simplified" fishing guide.

420. After reading the proposed regulation changes I question them.

Trout to me I only see one issue as a sportsman. The DEC continues to stock Lake Trout and Splake in the same waters. Average person has a hard time telling the difference between these fish. Have it from one of the DEC biologist that only way he is able to do so is gut the fish looking for reproductive organs.

Have issues with the following walleye. They are fine for all inland waters. My comment is that the St. Lawrence stays quite cold leaving the spawn to a later date.

Bass have seen bass even on present opening dates with eggs in the body. Secondly have read many articles on how removing the males off the beds allow the panfish and goby to raid the nest. One such study done on Lake Erie scientist have gone down setting up cameras a fisherman catching the male pulling landing it then releasing, before fish returned it was estimated 70% of eggs or fry were eaten. Late spawning due to the cold water.

Muskellunge Thanks to what ever the Musky have been hard hit in the St. Lawrence due to the disease that almost whiped them out few years back. Again the cold waters of the ST Lawrence also delay spawning.

As for the comment that a certain group have asked for a hard date. One is able to look January 1 ,and before, to see first Saturday May Fathers Day Weekend to plan ahead for the opening day. First Saturday 5 months ahead, Father's day 6 months and almost three quarters

421. I have read through the packet and agree with all the changes, the hard dates make more sense to me, i like the availability of lake trout fishing year round, as well as the brown and rainbow new proposed regulations. thank you
422. Please DO NOT change the current limit of 3 walleyes per day on Oneida Lake to 5, unless further regulations are put in place to limit the number of larger breeder fish. 1 per day over 21"? Or other appropriate "Slot" regulation. 3 is plenty!
423. Please, leave well enough alone and don't change the dates for the start of Walleye and Bass seasons!

It makes no sense as the tournaments start up on those weekends (i.e. Lions Club Derby on Oneida Lake).

There is nothing confusing about these dates. People just need to do their diligence and reference the fishing (and hunting) manuals they receive each year when they renew their license.

And, it is just like the opener of deer season starting on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

We are all doing fine just with the schedule as it is.

If leadership feels the need to exert energy and effort, please bolster the ranks of the ECO's so more poachers and environmental criminals can be apprehended.

424. I oppose the sweeping change making all trout pond/lake regulations the same statewide in the interest of simplifying the regulations.

Trout Lakes with a 3 fish/12 inch limit are very successful and should not be changed.

Remote trout ponds in ADK have a different ecology, fishing pressure, and stressors than that of a trout pond you can drive up to in the lower Hudson Valley.

The comment period should be extended to give the public an opportunity to absorb the magnitude of the changes for multiple species.

Banning traditional spearing and snatch hooking of suckers as has been done by indigeounous peoples and locals for centuries is a bad idea and not likely based on any biological necessity,

This change is too broad to rush and should be vetted more thoroughly rather than a quick adoption for expediency so they are in-time for the publishing of the 2022-23 Fishing Guide.

425. I oppose to the changes on the trout fishing regulations and the changing of the opening day of walleye and pike season

426. Last year in Western NY you changed the creel limit in 5 streams within a ten mile radius. This included: Clear Creek, Fenton Brook, Cherry Creek, Elm Creek and Conewango. In my opinion this does not simplify regulations it complicates them. For example if I were to keep two trout on any other stream except for Clear Creek and then go to Clear Creek last, I could be arrested for catching over the limit. In my opinion this doesn't make any sense and doesn't simplify the regulations!
427. Just finished reading about walleye population in Skaneateles Lake and Owasco Lake. The article is in the January 2022 NY Outdoor News.

It stated there is a problem with the population of walleye increasing in both lakes. I have a solution:

Let anglers keep and catch any and all walleye regardless of length, time of year, or number

Appendix 2: Text Summary with Rational for Fishing Regulation Simplification and Clean-up

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Trout, Lake Trout and Atlantic Salmon regulation changes	
Separate Trout in lakes and ponds into Brook Trout regulations and Brown and Rainbow Trout regulations.	Brook Trout are managed differently than Rainbow and Brown Trout are. Therefore, they should be regulated differently. See the next two rows for more information.
Establish a Brook Trout in lakes and ponds regulation from April 1 to October 15 with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 trout longer than 12”.	Brook trout are managed to achieve self-sustaining populations where possible and put-grow-and-take fisheries if not possible. They are highly vulnerable to being caught through the ice. To protect wild brook trout during their spawning season and protect brook trout during the vulnerable ice fishing season, a closed season from October 16 through March 31 is appropriate. The proposed ‘5 fish with no more than 2 longer than 12” harvest’ regulation spreads out the catch of larger, more prized brook trout among anglers and aligns the harvest regulation with the trout stream regulation.
Establish a Rainbow and Brown Trout in lakes and ponds regulation all year with a daily limit of 5 with no more than 2 longer than 12”	Rainbow and Brown Trout in lakes and ponds are managed for Put-and-Take or Put-Grow-and-Take fisheries. These are primarily stocked fisheries where there is no biological reason to close the season. The new daily limit is a hybrid approach that allows some harvest of freshly stocked trout while spreading out the catch of larger, more valuable trout and aligns daily limits with the statewide stream trout regulation.
Eliminate 31 county-wide trout regulations in DEC Regions 6, 7, 8 and 9 and revert to new statewide regulations.	The new statewide daily limit matches the existing daily limits in these counties, eliminating the need for these regulations.
Eliminate Nassau and Suffolk county-wide Brown and Rainbow Trout regulations in ponds and lakes.	There is little potential for holdover trout in Nassau and Suffolk County ponds. This proposal allows for additional harvest of stocked yearling trout while spreading out the harvest of larger 12" trout among anglers.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Eliminate 163 special regulations for Trout and revert to statewide regulations.	The proposed statewide regulations for Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout is a hybrid approach that allows multiple regulations types to be consolidated into the proposed statewide regulation. In addition, some special regulations were deleted because they were no longer warranted. Read " A Proposal to Change New York's Trout Pond Fishing Regulations(PDF) " for a list of special regulations proposed to be deleted.
Add Trout, all year, Daily Limit-5 with no more than 2 longer than 12" special regulations to Park Station Pond, McDonald Pond, South Pond (Nassau County) and Belmont Lake.	These ponds receive fall Brook Trout stockings where there is no potential for wild reproduction. This regulation allows for additional fishing and harvest opportunity generated by those stockings.
Change the daily limit of Brown and Rainbow Trout on Suffolk County Tidal streams to 5 with no more than 2 longer than 12".	This regulation extends the harvest of Brown and Rainbow Trout in Suffolk tidal streams for trout that return to these streams in the fall.
Add a Brown and Rainbow Trout, April 1 through October 15, Daily Limit-3 with no more than 1 longer than 12" special regulation on Hards Lake and Carmans River from Hards Lake upstream to Cement Dam	This regulation aligns the lake regulation with the adjoining Carmans River regulation, making the Trout regulations consistent within Southaven County Park.
Align Trout regulation on Trout Pond (Delaware County), Huggins Lake, Crystal Lake, Hodge Pond, Alder Lake and Echo Lake to be Trout, April 1 through September 30, Minimum Length 12", Daily Limit-2, artificial lures only, ice fishing prohibited.	Brook Trout ponds in the Catskills are managed to preserve these locally scarce fisheries. Since they are managed for the same purpose, the regulations should be the same.
Eliminate Brook Trout regulation on Round Lake to the demarcated boundary with Little Tupper Lake.	Largemouth bass have been introduced into Round Lake, decimating the brook trout population. The special harvest regulation is no longer warranted.
Extend the Trout harvest season on Pepacton Reservoir to October 15.	Extending the harvest season to October 15 aligns the Reservoir harvest season with its tributary streams.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Expand the statewide Lake Trout season to all year.	A review of the lake trout special regulations found that 22 waters are managed under an 'Lake Trout, all year, Minimum Length-21"', Daily Limit-3' special regulation. This proposal is to make that special regulation the statewide regulation, thereby eliminating 22 special regulations.
Eliminate 31 special regulations for Lake Trout and revert to statewide regulations.	Most of these regulations were "eliminated" since they align with the proposed statewide Lake Trout regulation. Select other regulations were eliminated because their management purpose no longer exists or the special regulation applied to waters not managed for Lake Trout.
Increase the Lake Trout daily limit to 3 on Schroon Lake, Schroon River from Schroon Lake upstream to Alder Meadow Road, and Schroon River from Schroon Lake downstream to Starbuckville Dam.	This regulation change simplifies the suite of Lake Trout regulations by eliminating the minimum length 18", Daily Limit-2 Lake Trout regulation variation.
Expand the statewide Atlantic Salmon season to all year.	Few Atlantic Salmon fisheries are managed under the existing statewide season. Extending the season to all year reflects current management of these fishery resources.
Eliminate 45 special regulations for Atlantic Salmon and revert to statewide regulations.	Most of these regulations were "eliminated" since they align with the proposed statewide Atlantic Salmon regulation. Select other regulations were eliminated because the management purpose no longer exists or the special regulation applied to waters not managed for Atlantic Salmon.
Inland Trout Stream regulation changes	
Remove Rock Pond Outlet Stream and Thirteenth Lake Outlet from the list of waters where the Inland Trout Stream regulations do not apply.	There was no biological reason to retain the special regulations for these waters. Management under the Statewide Trout Stream Management Plan is appropriate.
Eliminate Carmans River catch-and-release season and extend the existing Rainbow and Brown trout regulation upstream to Yaphank Avenue.	The management purpose of this regulation was to protect wild Brook Trout. Since there is an existing catch and release season on the Carmans River for Brook Trout, this regulation is unnecessary and reduces harvest opportunity of stocked brown and rainbow trout.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Eliminate the Stocked-Extended regulations for Onondaga Creek and Otselic River.	An evaluation of these reaches determined they did not meet the Stocked-Extended criteria documented in the New York Trout Stream Management Plan and are therefore eliminated. They will be managed as Stocked streams.
Move/restore the downstream end point of the Genesee River catch-and-release reach to 1.0 miles upstream of County Route 29 near York’s Corners.	The catch-and-release reach was inadvertently extended in the 2021 Trout Stream regulations package. This proposal restores the original reach boundaries to correct this mistake.
Clarify that the downstream endpoint of the Oriskany Creek Wild Premier reach is the Route 12B Bridge in Oriskany Falls.	Route 12B crosses Oriskany Creek in two places. This change clarifies which of the 2 bridges mark the downstream endpoint of the Wild Premier reach.
Add Fish Creek, tributary to Black River, as a Wild-Quality water.	Fish Creek meets the criteria for Wild-Quality documented in the New York Trout Stream Management Plan.
Limit Nassau and Suffolk County catch and release Brook Trout regulations to waters of concern.	This change protects Brook Trout streams where concerns about angler harvest exists without over-regulating the approximately 1,000 streams where Brook Trout do not exist.
Statewide and related species seasonal date changes	
Change opening dates for selected warmwater and coolwater species fishing seasons from Saturdays to hard numerical dates.	<p>Season dates for New York sportfish seasons are currently a mix of hard dates (Trout Harvest Season – April 1 to October 15) and Saturday openers (Black Bass Harvest Season – Third Saturday in June until December 31). DEC proposed to normalize opening dates to hard dates to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provide consistency in how opening days are applied 2. make dates easier to remember and provide anglers a means for easier trip planning.
Change the statewide opening day for Walleye, Northern Pike, Pickerel and Tiger Muskellunge seasons to May 1.	Simplifies regulations by going to May 1 rather than “The first Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Change the season opening date for Walleye, Northern Pike, Pickerel, Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge to May 1 for any special regulations with a first Saturday in May opening date except border waters.	Simplifies regulations by going to May 1 rather than “The first Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the fishing prohibited closure end date to April 30 on 26 stream reaches.	Simplifies regulations by going to an April 30 date rather than “The Friday preceding the first Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the statewide opening date for Muskellunge to June 1.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 1 date rather than “The last Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the season opening date for Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge to June 1 for any special regulations with a last Saturday in May season opening date.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 1 date rather than “The last Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the statewide opening date for Black Bass harvest season to June 15.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 15 date rather than “The third Saturday in June.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the harvest season opening date for Black Bass to June 15 for any special regulations with a third Saturday in June season opening date.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 15 date rather than “The third Saturday in June.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll. Border waters are exempt from this change to keep regulations aligned with the bordering state.
Change the statewide closing date Black Bass catch and release season to June 14.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 14 date rather than “The Friday preceding the third Saturday in June.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Change the end date of Black Bass catch and release season to June 14 for any special regulations with a Friday preceding the third Saturday in June end date.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 14 date rather than “The Friday preceding the third Saturday in June.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Great Lakes regulation changes	

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Align Northern Pike, Walleye and Black Bass season openers with new statewide opener.	Simplifies regulations by going to May 1 rather than “The first Saturday in May.” This change is based on results of a 2021 angler poll.
Align season dates for Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge to June 15 through December 15 on Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Upper Niagara River, and Lower Niagara River.	Simplifies regulations by going to a June 15 season opener rather than “third Saturday in June” and aligns the season end date in all Great Lakes waters.
Limit harvest of Rainbow Trout to 2 in the Lower Niagara River.	Aligns the Lower Niagara River regulations with other Lake Ontario tributary regulations and corrects a previous rule change omission.
Eliminate redundant statewide regulations for Yellow Perch and Sunfish for Great Lakes waters.	There is no need to repeat statewide regulations in an individual waterbody regulation.
Clarify that jigs do not need a free-swinging hook on Great Lakes tributaries.	Jigs do not have free swinging hooks by their construction. This clarification makes it clear jigs are permitted to be used on Great Lakes tributaries.
Eliminate the seasonal added weight restrictions from Lake Erie tributaries.	These restrictions are not considered necessary in a Steelhead based tributary fishery.
Eliminate special Trout regulation for Skinner Creek.	Skinner Creek is a Lake Ontario tributary that received migratory runs of trout and salmon, and it should be managed as such.
Finger Lakes regulation changes	
Establish a “Walleye, all year, Minimum Length-12”, Daily Limit-none” regulation on Skaneateles Lake.	Walleye were illegally introduced into Skaneateles Lake and threaten the Rainbow Trout fishery. This is an experimental regulation that attempts to control Walleye at a low enough population level to protect Rainbow Trout.
Establish regulatory exclusion language for Finger Lakes tributaries.	This language is necessary to help enforce tributary regulations.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Eliminate unnecessary reference to 10.1(b) for all other species in Fishing Regulations for Finger Lakes table.	This reference is unnecessary because statewide species regulations apply unless there is a Finger Lakes special species regulation.
Clarify that the seasonal fishing prohibited closure on North McMillian Creek and Conesus Inlet Fish and Wildlife Management Area includes the dam on Conesus Inlet.	This regulation eliminates an ongoing law enforcement issue with anglers fishing from the dam during the Northern Pike and Walleye spawning runs.
Other species regulation changes	
Eliminate statewide Kokanee regulation.	Kokanee are not managed in New York and only exist in a few waters. Therefore they do not warrant a statewide regulation.
Eliminate Nassau County county-wide regulations for Crappie, Sunfish, Yellow Perch and Pickerel.	These special regulations did not result in a change the population structure which was their intended management purpose. Therefore, these regulations are unnecessary and are reverted to statewide regulations.
Expand Nassau County Black Bass catch and release season to all year and apply to only lakes and ponds.	Expanding the catch and release season allows additional fishing opportunity. Additionally, there are no black bass fisheries in rivers and streams in Nassau County, so regulating streams was unnecessary.
Eliminate Suffolk County county-wide regulations for Crappie, Sunfish, Yellow Perch, and Black Bass.	These special regulations did not result in a change to the population structure which was their intended management purpose. Therefore, these regulations are unnecessary and are reverted to statewide regulation.
Eliminate Ulster County county-wide Walleye regulation.	Ulster County streams are no longer being stocked with walleye. Therefore, this regulation is unnecessary.
Eliminate Deep Pond Chain Pickerel special regulation.	The Chain Pickerel regulation is no longer necessary due to the introduction of Largemouth Bass and a reduction of Chain Pickerel habitat that has caused the population to drop. The regulation no longer serves its management purpose.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Eliminate Walleye special regulations on East Sidney Reservoir and DeRuyter Reservoir.	The regulation for DeRuyter Reservoir was part of a special project that has ended. The regulation on East Sidney Reservoir is no longer necessary because the Walleye stocking experiment ended.
Eliminate redundant Yellow Perch and Sunfish special regulations on Lake George.	This regulation mirrored the statewide regulation and is therefore unnecessary.
Change the start of the Fishing Prohibited season to March 16 on the Saranac River from Hough Brook at Union Falls Flow upstream to Franklin Falls Dam.	This change aligns the Fishing Prohibited season with other regulations that protect Walleye during their spawning season.
Eliminate Perch Lake special regulation.	The “fishing” regulation was more about access than fishing. Access to fish Perch Lake will be controlled by WMA signage in the future.
Add fishing prohibited March 16 through April 30 special regulation on Genesee River from downstream side of Mount Morris Dam downstream to first railroad bridge downstream of Route 36.	This regulation protects a spawning congregation of Walleye.
Eliminate Pickerel and Black Bass special regulations on Bashakill Marsh.	The extended season for these species on the Bashakill Marsh are unnecessary. Eliminating them also reduces the number of regulation variations for these species.
Add Walleye, May 1 through March 15, Minimum Length-18”, Daily Limit-3 regulation to Eric Canal and Clyde River downstream of Lock 26 on the Canal to confluence with Seneca River.	This regulation aligns these reaches with the regulations for the Seneca River. Walleye can move freely between these waterbodies, so aligning regulations manages the population as a whole.
Eliminate Muskellunge/Tiger Muskellunge and American Shad special regulations on Chenango, Susquehanna, Tioughnioga, and Tioga rivers and Chemung River and tributaries.	These rivers have self-sustaining Muskellunge populations and are no longer managed for Tiger Muskellunge. Therefore they should be regulated under statewide Muskellunge regulations. American Shad no longer make a detectable run up the Susquehanna River into New York, so the special regulation was unnecessary.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Limit the Chautauqua Lake tributaries Muskellunge/Tiger Muskellunge special regulation to upstream to the first road bridge.	This change limits the special regulations on the tributaries to the portion of greatest concern. It also eliminates unnecessary regulations on the portions of the tributaries where Muskellunge do not exist.
Limit Great Sacandaga Lake tributaries Walleye special regulation to upstream to the first road bridge.	This change clarifies the upstream extent of the special regulations.
Eliminate Oneida Lake Walleye special regulation.	The Walleye special regulation is no longer necessary due to an adult Walleye population of over 1,000,000 fish. The population should remain abundant over the several years with additional good year classes recruiting into the fishery.
Border waters regulations	
Clarify downstream endpoint of the fishing prohibited from boats section of the Ausable River.	This regulation moves the endpoint from the railroad bridge upstream to Route 9 where the endpoint was originally intended to be.
Increase the Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge size limit on Greenwood Lake to 44".	This aligns New York regulations with New Jersey regulations.
Baitfish regulation changes	
Prohibit the use of European Rudd as bait.	European Rudd are a regulated invasive species. Prohibiting their use as bait will help prevent their spread.
Update the baitfish prohibited waters list to include new primitive and wilderness areas, deleted specific ponds included in the new primitive and wilderness areas, added additional ponds, and corrected misspellings.	These additions help protect native brook trout ponds where necessary and eliminate restrictions where they no longer make sense.
Prohibit the use of Alewife as bait in Otsego Lake.	The Alewife population in Otsego Lake is suppressed. Eliminating their use as bait will help prevent a re-population and help restore native whitefish.

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
<p>Allow the collection and use of baitfish on the Catch and Release section of the Hudson River from the Troy Dam upstream to Bakers Falls in the Village of Hudson Falls and tributaries in this section upstream to the first impassible barrier by fish and the Mohawk River below Route 32 bridge.</p>	<p>Use of baitfish is permitted on this reach of the Hudson River. There is no biological reason why collecting baitfish in this reach for use as bait in this reach should not be allowed.</p>
<p>Clarify use and possession of Smelt on Neversink Reservoir is prohibited.</p>	<p>Harvest of Smelt is already prohibited. Therefore, use and possession should also be prohibited.</p>
<p>Allow trout eggs produced in a hatchery under permit by the Department to be sold as bait.</p>	<p>This clarification allows for the commercial availability and use of trout eggs as bait, reducing the need for anglers to harvest eggs from trout they catch for personal use.</p>
<p>Ice Fishing regulation changes</p>	
<p>Simplify ice fishing regulations by permitting ice fishing unless specifically prohibited in New York except for Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Warren, and Washington counties where the existing ice fishing is prohibited unless specifically permitted in waters inhabited by trout regulation will still apply.</p>	<p>This proposal simplifies ice fishing regulations by clearly establishing where ice fishing is permitted in most of the state. Due to the prevalence of Brook Trout waters in the listed counties, the existing ice fishing regulations remain in place that require an angler to know if a water is inhabited by trout or not.</p>
<p>Gear restriction changes</p>	
<p>Eliminate regulations allowing snatching and spearing in select waters.</p>	<p>These practices are no longer widely practiced and violate the principle of fair chase.</p>
<p>Clarify that bowfishing is not permitted in waters where the harvest of Carp is not permitted.</p>	<p>Bowfishing is a lethal fishing technique. Therefore it does not make sense to allow bow fishing in waters where the harvest of Carp is not permitted.</p>
<p>Allow the use of gaffs while bowfishing.</p>	<p>Bow fishing is a lethal fishing technique. Since all bow fished Carp are “kept,” use of a gaff will not injure fish intended to be released.</p>
<p>Waterbody definition changes</p>	

Summarized regulation change	Rationale
Combine 2 existing waterbodies into a single waterbody consisting of Onondaga Lake and the Three Rivers complex.	Fish can move freely within the new designated waterbody, so combining these waters into a single designated water is appropriate.
Correct any regulatory references to the defined Hudson River waterbody which was renumbered.	These changes were made due to changes in the numbering of designated waters.
Regulation reorganization	
Modify existing County regulation table (6 NYCRR 10.3(b)) by splitting into a lakes, ponds and associated tributaries table and a rivers and streams table with individual waters listed alphabetically by DEC Region.	This change simplifies regulations by eliminating redundant regulations that crossed county boundaries and made regulation look up easier by listing waters alphabetically by Region, making regulation look up simpler.
Regulations listed in 6 NYCRR 10.3(f) "Waters closed to all fishing" were moved to appropriate locations in Great Lakes tributaries, Finger Lakes tributaries or the newly created rivers and streams table.	These regulations were moved to make regulation look up easier in NYCRR.
Clarifications	
Rename any references to Landlocked Salmon to Atlantic Salmon.	Atlantic Salmon is the appropriate name to use to refer to this species.