

Fee-fishing Ponds and Streams in Virginia

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What Is Fee-fishing?

Fee-fishing, or pay-fishing as the name implies, is buying the right to fish in a private pond, lake, or stream. These are excellent places to practice your fishing skills and teach children the fine art of fishing.

Fee-fishing ponds and streams can be operated in a variety of ways. In some fee-fishing waters, often called “catch-out” ponds or streams, the angler pays a fee for the fish caught. These waters are usually heavily stocked. In other waters, the angler pays a daily fee (access fee) for the privilege of fishing, but is not charged for the fish caught. Daily-fee waters are usually stocked only a few times each year and consequently, offer somewhat slower fishing than the small catch-out ponds and streams. Still other fee-fishing operations are run as fishing clubs where anglers buy an annual membership rather than pay a daily fee.

Why Pay to Fish?

Fee-fishing offers much the same exciting outdoor experience as does fishing public waters, but greatly increases an angler’s chances of catching a number of large fish for sport and food. It is an excellent way to provide children with a positive fishing experience. Since fee-fishing waters normally are heavily stocked on a regular basis with large fish, the fishing is easy,

the action is fast, and the fish are fat, healthy, and fresh. Many anglers use fee-fishing to sharpen their skills, introduce their children to the sport, enjoy a day with the family, and at the same time fill up the freezer with tasty fillets.

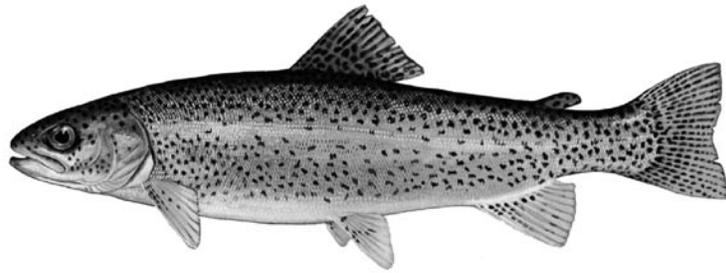
Fee-fishing is a convenient, relaxed form of fishing with success virtually guaranteed. For anglers who cannot afford time-consuming travel to remote fishing spots, this is an option that offers “quick” and exceptional fishing. Good fee-fishing ponds typically are located in quiet, scenic areas with adequate roads, sufficient parking, and easy access. Most provide rest rooms, bait sales, tackle rental, ice, fishing lessons, picnic tables, and fishing docks or piers. Overnight camping, swimming, and food may also be available.

Is a Virginia Fishing License Required?

In most fee waters, no license is required to fish. Most fee-fishing pond owners purchase a state permit (Game Fish Breeders Permit) from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. This license entitles the operators to offer fishing to the public without requiring clients to have a valid Virginia fishing license. Under the terms of this permit, no license is required to fish in the designated fee-fishing pond, and no state regula-



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tions (season, harvest limits) apply. The pond owner is required to provide clients with a receipt listing the number or pounds and species of fish harvested, date of purchase, and a notice that the receipt must be retained by the angler while transporting the fish.

In some fee-fishing waters, however, anglers do need a current Virginia fishing license. These include the three state-owned fee waters operated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area is located in Southwest Virginia, about 7 miles west of Saltville. Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Area is located in Carroll County 5 miles east of Galax. The Douthat Lake Fee Fishing Area includes about 4 miles of Wilson Creek along with the stocked 60-acre Douthat Lake. There is a “children only” area on Wilson Creek just below the dam, and children 12 years of age and under can fish throughout the Douthat Lake Area without a permit as long as they are accompanied by a permitted adult and their combined creel does not exceed that of the adult.

How Much Does it Cost?

Prices vary, but normally the cost of catching a fish at a fee-fishing pond or stream is similar to the price of the same fish at the supermarket. The bonus for anglers is that the family has had the extra enjoyment of catching large, hard-fighting sportfish. The cost of a trout or catfish caught in the fee-fishing waters may average \$3 to \$4 per pound. Because most stocked fish weigh slightly more than a pound, fee anglers pay approximately \$4 to \$5 per fish.

Charges can be calculated in a number of ways. Some fee owners charge by the weight (pounds or ounces) or

length (inches) of the fish caught. Others may simply charge a flat fee for each fish harvested or a daily use fee (usually with a limit on the number of fish that can be caught). Some fee waters are managed on a “fish-for-fun” basis, where all fish are measured and then released. Prizes are sometimes awarded for catching the largest fish.

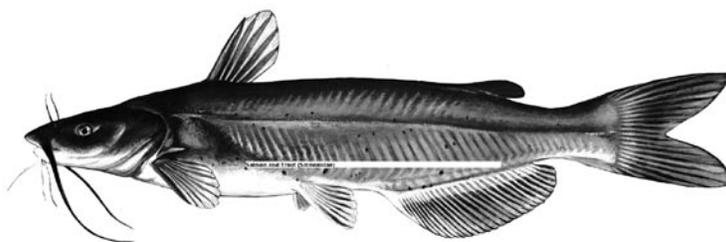
What Types of Fish Are Stocked?

Fee-fishing waters offer a variety of fish species including trout (rainbow, brook, and brown), catfish (channel and blue), largemouth bass, bluegill (bream), crappie, perch, pike, and carp. Of these, rainbow trout is the most commonly stocked species of fish in Virginia’s fee-fishing ponds and streams. Most trout ponds and streams are located in the Ridge and Valley and Mountain regions where an abundant supply of cold, spring water provides good growing conditions for trout.

Warm-water fish species such as catfish usually are stocked in valley ponds or those located in Piedmont and Coastal Plain counties where summer water temperatures are in the 80° to 90°F range. Carp occasionally are stocked in warm-water ponds.

What Are the Characteristics of a Good Fee-fishing Pond?

- Courteous operator
- Quiet, scenic setting
- Easy access



- Sufficient parking area
- Clean restrooms
- Bait sales
- Rod rental
- Fish cleaning facilities
- Life saving equipment
- Healthy, active sport fish
- Fast action fishing
- Drinking water
- Shade
- Picnic tables
- Posted fee-fishing rates

Acknowledgements

The authors greatly appreciate the editorial refinements provided by Neil Clark, Extension agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Southeast District office, and Adam Downing, Extension agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Madison County Extension office.

Web References

West Virginia: <http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/lvefsh.htm#Fee%20Fishing>

North Carolina: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/copubs/ag/aqua/trout/033/>

List of Virginia Cooperative Extension publications on setting up and managing fishing ponds, http://www.cnr.vt.edu/extension/fiw/fisheries/pondslakes/ponds_lakes.htm

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Fee Fishing Areas, http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/trout/specialregulations.asp#Fee_Fishing_Areas

Developing a Fee-Fishing Enterprise: An Opportunity in Recreational Tourism, Maryland Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet 754, <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE/Publications/PDFs%5CFS754.pdf>



Fee-fishing Operations in Virginia

Business Name	Address	City	Phone	Species
Longdale Trout Pond	6400 Longdale Furnace Road	Clifton Forge	(540) 862-4295	Rainbow Trout
Endless Future, LLC	905 Symphony Circle	Vienna	(540) 350-2083	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Tiger Trout (Hybrid Brown & Brook)
Black Bear Trout Pond	646 East Morris Hill Road	Covington	(540) 925-2438	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout
Joe's Fishing Hole	Rt. 1 Box 209	Millboro	(540) 862-2877	Rainbow Trout
Ole Catfish Hole	1476 Epworth Road	Cana	(276) 755-4661	Minnows & Chubs, Flathead Catfish, Channel Catfish
Big Pine Trout Farm	Rt. 1 Box 1090	New Castle	(540) 864-5555	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout, Brown Trout
Shands' Catfish and Trout	22306 Flatfoot Road	Stony Creek	(804) 469-7667	Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout
Lost Arrow Fish Farm	1415 Antrim Street	Salem	(540) 929-5030	Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout
Newport Trout Farm	1301 Spruce Run Road	Newport	(540) 599-3474	Rainbow Trout
Virginia Trout Company	P.O. Box 128	Monterey	(540) 468-2280	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout
Willow Brook Fishing Farm	60 Turners Mill Road	Bumpass	(540) 872-2890	Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Yellow Perch
Graves Mountain Farms	Rt. 670	Syria	(540) 923-4231	Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout
Consolidated Coal Company - Consol Energy	Route 1 1759 Hunting Camp Road	Bastian	(276) 688-4577	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout, Brown Trout
Pence Fish Farm	1308 Stonyman Road	Luray	(540) 743-1608	Rainbow Trout, Blue Catfish
Gauldin Fish Farm	1492 Turkeycock Mtn.	Callands	(434) 724-4264	Channel Catfish
Spring Hollow Farms	789 Henry's Mill Road	Java	(434) 432-1512	Catfish (excluding madtoms)
Sinking Spring Fishing	6340 Morgan's Lane	Dublin	(540) 639-4546	Channel Catfish
Ashland Farm/Pond	2322 Blue Grass Trail	Lexington	(540) 463-4599	Rainbow Trout
Walnut Grove Trout Farm	8794 Senedo Road	Mt. Jackson	(540) 477-3871	Rainbow Trout
Cedar Creek Valley Farm	4898 Zepp Road	Maurertown	(540) 436-9396	Rainbow Trout
Orndorff's Rainbow Trout Farm	5165 Zepp Road	Maurertown	(540) 436-3384	Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout
Flamingo Springs Trout Ponds, Inc.	515 Chestnut Ridge Road	Marion	(276) 646-3014	Brown Trout, Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout, Channel Catfish
Pickle's Trout Farm	422 Dutton Road State Route 679	Rural Retreat	(276) 686-5175	Rainbow Trout (Steelhead), Minnows & Chubs, Hellgrammites
Appalachian Trout/Catfish	17097 Rust Hollow Road	Abingdon	(276) 739-0099	Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout
Greer's Fish Hatchery, Pond & Stream	16335 Mill Creek Road	Chilhowie	(276) 646-3644	Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout
Brackens Trout Hatchery	238 Berea Road	Wytheville	(276) 228-7837	Rainbow Trout

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) Fee-fishing Areas

Crooked Creek Trout Fishing	Crooked Creek, Carroll County	Galax;	(804) 367-1000	Rainbow, Brown, Brook Trout
Clinch Mountain Trout Fishing	Big Tumbling Creek Briar Cove Creek Laurel Bed Creek	Saltville;	(804)367-1000	Rainbow, Brown, Brook Trout
Douthat Lake Fee Fishing	Douthat Lake, Wilson Creek	Bath and Alleghany counties	1-800-933-PARK	Trout, Bass, Bluegill, Catfish

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