



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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NEWPORT NEWS, VA. – If you’ve never experienced the thrill of reeling in a big fish, here’s your chance.

For three days next month -- June 6, 7 and 8 – you can fish for free in Virginia.

“This is a great opportunity to discover the joy of fishing and boating, said Steven G. Bowman, Commissioner of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, which regulates saltwater fishing. “Fishing is a wholesome recreational activity that produces memories that can last a lifetime. A day on the water gives a better appreciation for our natural environment, which helps us all become better stewards of our marine resources.”

No fishing license of any kind will be required for recreational rod and reel fishing on those days, except in designated stocked trout waters.

Please keep in mind that all fishing regulations -- such as size, season, catch limits and gear restrictions – will remain in effect.

“We have some of the best river, lake and stream fishing in the country and we would love it if the non-fishing public would give it a try. It’s fun and rewarding,” said Bob Duncan, Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, which regulates freshwater fishing.

Fishing is one of the best bargains around.

A Virginia saltwater fishing license costs only \$12.50 a year for state residents, and much of that money is used for programs that directly benefit recreational anglers, such as boat ramps, artificial reefs and fishing clinics for children.

A freshwater fishing license costs only \$18 a year for state residents and a trout license cost \$18 a year for residents. Those license fees also support valuable fisheries work across the Commonwealth.

Both VMRC and DGIF offer short term licenses ideal for visitors and a variety of combination licenses to benefit anglers.

It's worth it. The fishing in Virginia is simply fabulous.

Three saltwater state records were broken in the past year, testimony to the success of the VMRC's fishery management.

A 8-lbs. and 11-oz. croaker caught in the Chesapeake Bay last August obliterated the state record for the ubiquitous species known for the "croaking" sounds it makes to communicate.

The king mackerel record was set last July when a 63-pound, 1-ounce beast was caught off Sandbridge in the Atlantic Ocean.

And the Atlantic Striped Bass record was blown away in January when a 73-pound "rockfish" was caught off the coast of Virginia Beach. It was a remarkable catch of a species that was at one point so depleted that a ban on catching them was issued in 1989.

"We're proud of the work we do as stewards of our natural resources," said Bowman. "I hope that everyone takes advantage of our free fishing days so that they too may know the joys of fishing in Virginia. This is what our conservation efforts are all about."

For size, season and catch limits of saltwater species, please go to <http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/regulations/swrecfishingrules.shtm>

To purchase a fishing license online – and for freshwater fishing regulations and information on lakes, rivers, boating access and more -- [www.HuntFishVA.com](http://www.HuntFishVA.com)

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