



EarthWatch Rhode Island



Topic: Free Fishing Days This Weekend
Date: Friday, May 7, 2010
Location: Lafayette Trout Hatchery, 424 Hatchery Road, North Kingstown

Background

The Department of Environmental Management announces that Saturday, May 8 and Sunday, May 9 are free fishing days in Rhode Island. During those two days, all Rhode Islanders and visitors can fish in freshwaters without a fishing license or trout conservation stamp. The free fishing days provide local residents and visitors a special incentive to get outdoors and try something new while enjoying their natural surroundings.

Anglers will have an opportunity to catch a prized Golden Rainbow trout on Saturday, May 8 during a fishing tournament sponsored by DEM's Division of Fish & Wildlife at Silver Spring Lake and Shady Lea Picnic Area in North Kingstown. DEM's hatchery staff will stock the Rhode Island hatchery-raised Golden Rainbow trout at these two fishing access areas for the event, and prizes will be awarded to the lucky anglers who catch a Golden Rainbow. There will also be loaner fishing rods and bait available for those who need them. DEM hatchery staff and volunteers from fishing clubs including Trout Unlimited, United Fly Tyers of RI, and the BASS Federation will be on hand to assist families during the fishing event.

The Coventry and Lincoln libraries also have a fishing rod loan program, available through the CLAN network to people throughout the state with library cards. DEM's aquatic resource education program and the RI Saltwater Anglers Association sponsor the fishing rod loan program.

The free fishing program was established nationally about 19 years ago as an opportunity to encourage people to experience new recreational opportunities outdoors, and therefore become more active stewards of the environment.

All usual regulations on size and limits apply during the two free fishing days. Information about size and limits can be obtained at bait and tackle shops, or by calling DEM's Great Swamp Field Office at 789-0281. The regulations can also be found on **DEM's website at www.dem.ri.gov** by clicking on "**Fish and Wildlife**" under "**Offices and Divisions.**"

A list of **stocked ponds** and other information of interest to anglers can also be found on **DEM's website, www.dem.ri.gov**, by clicking on "**Fish and Wildlife**" under "**Offices and Divisions,**" and then choosing "**Freshwater Fisheries.**"

The Lafayette Fish Hatchery is one of four hatcheries where DEM raises fish until they are stocked in the state's waters. Once known as Goose Nest Spring, the Lafayette property was purchased by the state in 1921 and developed for the sole purpose of raising trout. While

remnants of the original hatchery can be observed, the property and hatch house have been rebuilt to increase fish production and bring the Rhode Island hatchery system into the 21st century. With the recent modernizations, Lafayette Trout Hatchery raises over 120,000 pounds of rainbow, brook, and brown trout. The trout raised at Lafayette, as well as the other hatcheries around the state, are stocked into over 110 ponds, streams, and rivers throughout Rhode Island for anglers throughout the fishing season.

Interviews:

Peter Angelone, manager of the Lafayette Trout Hatchery, explained how trout and other fish are raised for stocking state waters, describe what is involved in raising the golden trout and display some of the trout for the viewers to see.

Christine Dudley, supervising freshwater fisheries biologist in DEM's Division of Fish and Wildlife discussed the activities available during Free Fishing Days and the first Free Fishing Weekend tournament scheduled for Saturday.