

Delayed Harvest Trout Fishing Information

Delayed Harvest trout waters were created to diversify Virginia's trout stocking program and accommodate variety of trout angler's interests. While the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) continues to stock most trout in traditional put-and-take waters, a small portion are stocked into various Delayed Harvest waters. These waters are stocked less frequently than most put-and-take waters but more trout are available between stockings since harvest is not allowed.

For trout anglers that are not interested in primarily harvesting their catch, Delayed Harvest waters provide fishing opportunities that are less crowded with good numbers of fish available long after stocking. Anglers should not have to worry about the area being "fished out" a few days after the stocking truck leaves. A typical Delayed Harvest water has fewer anglers immediately after stocking but has more consistent long-term usage than most put-and-take waters. This program provides good fishing opportunities with fewer stockings since the stocked trout are not removed. Finding and maintaining areas to stock trout has become increasingly difficult due to many landowners not wanting large crowds, typical of most put-and-take waters, so the Delayed Harvest program is sometimes the only option to find new or to continue current trout stockings since they do not draw big crowds immediately after stocking.

Most Delayed Harvest trout waters are located in areas that cannot support trout year-round due to summer water temperatures, so trout are open to harvest after May 31.

Delayed Harvest Regulations:

- Trout license required October 1 – June 15.
- Only artificial lures may be used, lures with one or more treble hooks are allowed.
- No bait may be in possession while fishing.
- No trout may be in possession (catch and release only) while fishing October 1 – May 31.
- During the period of June 1 – September 30, above lure and harvest restrictions do not apply and Delayed Harvest waters are like any other designated stocked trout water.

Artificial Lure Definition:

Artificial lures shall include manufactured or handmade flies, spinners, plugs, spoons, and facsimiles of live animals, but shall not be construed to include artificially-produced organic baits and fish eggs that are intended to be ingested.