



The Catskill Mountain streams offer some of the finest trout fishing in the Northeast. We have thousands of miles of beautiful, quiet and well-stocked trout streams. Most permanent streams in the higher elevations boast natural trout populations.

Brook trout, descendents of the original wild populations, are still widely distributed. These brightly colored natives are found in the smaller, higher elevation streams. Brookies are generally the most obliging of all trout to take on a hook.

Rainbows are found irregularly throughout the mountains. They are dominant in some of the larger waters including Catskill and Esopus Creeks. Rainbows tend to be the most acrobatic of the three trout species on the end of a line and they provide colorful diversity to Catskill fishing.

Brown trout are the mainstay of the Catskill trout. Their extensive distribution, potential for large size and a well-founded reputation as a challenging adversary have given the brown top-billing with most of today's anglers.

Stocking is the best-known management tool used in Catskill streams. Each year, the DEC stocks fingerling and yearling trout throughout the mountains, primarily in mid-to-large size streams where trout are capable of living and growing, but where natural reproduction is limited.

Perpetual fishing easements have been acquired on many of our streams including the Beaver Kill, Esopus Creek, Catskill Creek, East and West Branches of the Delaware, Schoharie Creek. These easements, which allow fishing only, are posted with bright yellow and green PUBLIC FISHING SIGNS on the stream bank.

There are many parking areas along the streambeds. Look for wooden signs that are painted with bright yellow lettering

Fishing Seasons

Trout season opens beginning of April and closes the end of September.

Small and Large Mouth Bass Season begins at the end of June ending on November 30th.

Walleye, Northern Pike and Pickerel are in season from the beginning of May through mid-March.

Panfish, Yellow Perch, Bullhead, Crappie are in season all year.

Many of the streams in the Catskills parallel roads, because that's how the Natives and the early settlers traveled. They used the streams as guides and when wagons and stagecoaches and then cars became the means of travel, these old pathways were the sensible way to continue. These streams are beautiful places. Please take care of them when you visit so they stay beautiful. And please remember to ask permission of the landowners if you're stepping onto private land and also remember to say thank you when you leave.

Catskills Streams

Esopus

This Creek was revered by Native Americans for its abundant supply of food and for its beauty. Winding through the high mountains that form the Esopus Valley, its banks are wide apart, its crystal clear waters sparkling as they tumble over rocks and boulders. This is one of those mountain streams everyone should see. The Esopus starts out near County Route 47 in Oliverea near Panther Mountain. It turns east to follow Route 28 into Phoenicia eventually entering the mighty Ashokan Reservoir. The DEC stocks Brown trout in many locations along The Esopus. Fishing is permitted in many spots along the Esopus, parking is available in three main areas: Just east of the Phoenicia Plaza there's a parking area on the south side of Route 28 with fishing access just across the Road; just west of the Shandaken Cemeteries on the south side of Route 28 with fishing access below the parking area and on old Route 28 which is off Route 42. (Region 3)

Woodland Valley Stream

Woodland Valley Stream is in Woodland Valley! Turn onto Woodland Valley Road from Route 28 just west of Phoenicia and you can't miss it. It's a lovely place and the DEC makes it lovelier by stocking it with Brown trout. There are public fishing rights along the length of the stream, and fishing from the Woodland Valley Bridge is a lot of fun. (Region 3)

East Branch of the Delaware

East Branch of the Delaware comes above ground north of Roxbury and runs parallel to Route 30, one of the prettiest roads in the Catskills. It moves south into Margaretville where it feeds into the Pepacton Reservoir. There are plenty of Brown trout here as well as Rainbow trout. (Region 4)

Schoharie Creek

Schoharie Creek is another big and famous streambed in the Catskills. Starting North of Middleburgh, it runs through the beautiful Schoharie Valley as a warmwater creek until it enters the Blenheim Gilboa Reservoir. When it reappears, below the Schoharie Reservoir, it is coldwater and it runs for miles through another beautiful valley, parallel to Route 23A ending just south of Tannersville. The Schoharie Creek is stocked with Brown trout and there are also Brook trout here. There are public fishing rights between Prattsville and Hunter. (Region 4)



East Kill

East Kill breaks off towards the north from Schoharie Creek near the turn off from Route 23A to Jewett and roughly parallels Route 23C. It ends in Colgate Lake. The DEC stocks Brown trout here. (Region 4)

West Kill

West Kill meets up with the Schoharie Creek and then splits off on its own near Lexington. It turns east toward Hunter Mountain and runs parallel to Spruceton Valley Road. It's real pretty back there. The DEC stocks Brown trout here and the state has fishing rights along the full length of the West Kill. (Region 4)

Batavia Kill

Batavia Kill breaks away from the Schoharie Creek where Routes 23 and 23A split apart, outside of Prattsville. It then runs pretty much parallel along Route 23A through Ashland and Windham, turning southeast toward Maplecrest. This is the land of the Mohican's, indeed, Route 23 A was the Mohican Trail. Brown trout are stock all along its pathway. There are public fishing rights on the East End of the Batavia Kill, in East Windham near Windham High Peak. (Region 4)

Catskill Creek

Catskill Creek parallels Route 145 in the North Country and then picks up Route 23 as it comes closer to the Hudson River. Up north its waters run cold and nurture Brown trout, Rainbow trout and Brook trout. There are public fishing rights to the north and south of East Durham. (Region 4)

Catskills Ponds

Catskill ponds offer excellent fishing in breathtakingly pristine settings. There are trout, bass, pickerel and panfish (including yellow perch, sunfish, bullhead, and, occasionally crappie) to be had. Catskill ponds fall into three general types: coldwater ponds with trout, two-story ponds with trout and warmwater species; and warmwater ponds.

Coldwater Ponds

The real gems of the Catskills are the clean, cold ponds, which provide the opportunity to catch trout. These ponds are generally located on State Forest Preserve or State Reforestation areas in undeveloped surroundings and provide a "near wilderness" experience. Early in the season, trout forage just beneath the surface and may be caught on worms, small spinning lures or streamer flies. As summer progresses and the water warms, trout seek out cooler springs, tributary inlets and deeper water where a well placed spinning lure or wet fly will often bring results. But remember trout prefer cold (55-68F) water so concentrate your efforts accordingly.

Two-Story Ponds

Many larger ponds, lakes and reservoirs in the Catskills provide a two-story fishery with bass, pickerel and panfish inhabiting the warmer upper story while brown or rainbow trout inhabit the cooler lower story, 15-40 feet below the surface. The exact depth of the lower story will vary, depending upon the specific lake and the time of year, so it pays to have a remote-reading thermometer to find the exact depth of the cooler layer. Trout in lakes tend not to associate with structure (such as weedbeds and rock piles) as do bass and pickerel. Rather, they tend to range throughout the warm water column seeking prey. Trout in these two-story lakes rarely reproduce naturally, so stocking is necessary.

Warmwater Ponds

Other ponds and lakes in the Catskills do not have the cold, well-oxygenated layer necessary for trout survival in summer. Largemouth or small-mouth bass, chain pickerel and panfish (various species of sunfish, yellow perch, bullheads and crappie) typically inhabit these warmwater lakes. Largemouth bass and chain pickerel in warmwater lakes tend to inhabit weedy areas near shore or where there is some sort of cover. These are also popular spots for panfish. Small-mouth bass prefer rockier areas. In the heat of summer, small-mouth bass seek the deeper areas by day, coming inshore in the evening to feed on smaller fish in the shallows. Fishing a surface plug can often bring fast action as night begins to fall.

Ice fishing

(in the winter that is) is generally prohibited in waters inhabited by trout; so many famous Catskill waters can not be fished during the winter. However, many warmwater and two-story lakes offer enjoyable ice fishing for walleye, pickerel or panfish.

Echo Lake

Echo Lake is near Phoenicia. Take Rt 23A East to Rt 214 South, To Route 28 East to Route 212, Echo Lake is near the end of Route 212. Ask some of the really nice people in Phoenicia exactly how to get there. Echo is a Coldwater Lake with Brook trout. Ice fishing is permitted. (Region 4)

Pine Hill Lake

Pine Hill Lake is right off Route 28 outside of the tiny village of Pine Hill. Pine Hill Lake is a cold place so the trout are there! Brook, Brown and Rainbow, all three! Because this is a special place for trout, ice fishing is not permitted. (Region 3)

Colgate Lake

From Hunter, Take Route 23A, heading toward Tannersville. Look for Route 23C, and follow that to County Route 78. Colgate Lake should be at the end of Route 78. This is a coldwater lake and there are Brook trout and Brown trout here. There is no ice fishing. (Region 4)

North-South Lake

Go through Tannersville and somewhere around Haines Falls you'll see signs for Route 18. Make the right and North South Lake is right there. North/South Lake is a famous place, artists used to paint it a lot, and it's also in a State Campground. North-South Lake is a warmwater lake with Large and small-mouthed bass and Panfish. Ice fishing is permitted. Region 4)



Blenheim-Gilboa Reservoir

Blenheim-Gilboa Reservoir is in Schoharie County. From Margaretville, take Route 30 north through Grand Gorge then drive on for about 5 miles. There's a big sign, so you can't miss it. There's a boat launch there, so if you have a boat, this is a good place to go. The reservoir is a warmwater lake with Small-mouthed bass and Panfish. Ice Fishing is not permitted. (Region 4)