

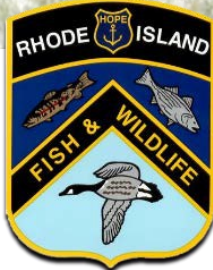
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT  
OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Division of Fish and Wildlife  
*Wild Rhode Island*

Autumn 2024 ☿ Volume 17 ☿ Issue 4



Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) Photo: P. Topham



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**WANTED: NORTHERN PIKE DATA**

The RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife is looking for your photos and details of Northern Pike caught by rod and reel in the state (scan the QR code to enter your catch information). Historically, the Division has stocked 5 waterbodies with Northern Pike. These locations include Worden Pond, Chapman Pond, Johnsons Pond, Stump Pond and Waterman Reservoir. In recent years, stocking has been limited to within Worden Pond and a lesser amount to Stump Pond. Your information on pike catch will be extremely useful to us to better understand in what waterbodies these fish are being caught, the amount of time spent targeting pike, and the size of pike. This information will help inform future decisions regarding our Northern Pike stocking program. Thank you for your efforts and tight lines! Questions can be directed to [Corey.Pelletier@dem.ri.gov](mailto:Corey.Pelletier@dem.ri.gov).



Photo left: Fingerling northern pike ready to be stocked. Photo: C. Pelletier





THE DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to ensure that the freshwater, wildlife, and marine resources of the state of Rhode Island will be conserved and managed for equitable and sustainable use.



Great Swamp Management Area, West Kingston, R.I. Photo: M. Curry



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This Issue Features:


WANTED: NORTHERN PIKE DATA.....1

 DFW IS COLLECTING DATA ON NORTHERN PIKE CAUGHT THROUGHOUT THE STATE TO INFORM FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DECISIONS IN THE FUTURE.


2024 - 2025 FRESHWATER FISHING REGULATIONS.....5

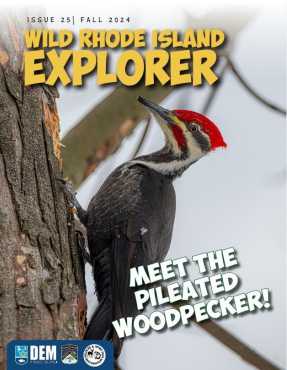
 THE NEWEST RHODE ISLAND FRESHWATER FISHING REGULATION GUIDE IS AVAILABLE NOW ONLINE AND IN PRINT.

DEER CHECK STATION CHANGES.....6

 THERE ARE NEW CHANGES TO THE DEER CHECK STATION LOCATIONS THIS YEAR. READ UP ON THE REQUIREMENTS AND CHANGES THIS SEASON.

NORTH AMERICAN CATFISHES.....8

 LEARN MORE ABOUT CATFISHES FOUND IN RHODE ISLAND IN THIS EXCERPT FROM THE DFW PUBLICATION INLAND FISHES OF RHODE ISLAND.



CHECK OUT THE LATEST ISSUE OF  
WILD RHODE ISLAND EXPLORER!

For a free subscription to Wild Rhode Island and/or Wild Rhode Island Explorer, please email [Sarah.Riley@dem.ri.gov](mailto:Sarah.Riley@dem.ri.gov)

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# Fluorescent Orange Requirements in State Wildlife Management Areas and Cooperative Areas

- ALL users of State Management Areas, designated undeveloped State Parks and Cooperative properties are required to wear 200 square inches of solid daylight fluorescent orange from the second Saturday in September through the last day of February: 09/14/2024 - 02/28/2025.
- ALL users of these properties must wear 500 square inches of solid daylight fluorescent orange from 12/07/2024 - 01/02/2025.
- Orange must be worn above the waist and be visible in all directions
- Fluorescent camouflage, or any other color does not meet the requirement.



## *RIDEM DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE WELCOMES NEW STAFF!*

### CHRIS THAWLEY, PhD - HERPETOLOGIST/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATIONS NEED (SGCN) COORDINATOR

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Christopher Thawley as he takes over Rhode Island's Herpetology and Species of Greatest Conservation Need Programs. Chris will be responsible for monitoring and managing populations of reptiles and amphibians and coordinating the Division's work with species that are most in need of conservation and management in Rhode Island, including plants and insects.

Chris has almost two decades of experience working with reptiles, amphibians, and conservation across the Eastern seaboard, from Cape Cod to the Gulf Coast. As part of his MS research at the University of Alabama and PhD at Penn State University, Chris investigated how invasive species impact reptiles and amphibians. More recently, Chris' research in the Department of Biological Sciences at URI has focused on how urbanization and artificial light at night affect reptiles. Chris notes, "In previous positions, I've seen the benefits of collaborating with partners across the board, from NGOs and federal agencies to local groups and citizen scientists. I also personally enjoy working with volunteers and doing outreach with folks who are passionate about conserving our state's natural heritage. As an ecologist, I look forward to increasing our knowledge of organisms like herpetofauna, which are often less appreciated, and implementing science-based strategies to help these species thrive. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking on public lands in RI with my wife and baby, taking photos of interesting critters, and baking cookies and pizzas." *WELCOME CHRIS!*



### SEAN MARTIN - OUTDOOR EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANT



We are pleased to announce that Sean Martin will join us as a full-time Technician for the Aquatic Resource Education and Hunter Education Programs at DFW's Outdoor Education Office in Exeter, Rhode Island. Sean is a recent graduate of the University of Rhode Island with a Bachelor of Science (BSc.) in Marine Biology and a BSc. in Wildlife and Conservation Biology. He has spent three summers as a seasonal researcher with the Aquatic Resource Education program and is currently wrapping up his seasonal term with our Fisheries section. In addition to his familiarity with our programs, Sean is also known for his dedication and his ability to engage effectively with both our team and program participants. Plus, he is an avid outdoorsman!

*WELCOME SEAN!*





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We are moving to the RIO system. Please take a few minutes to create an account to save time when your renewal becomes due.



**RHODE ISLAND**

**Freshwater Fishing**

2024-2025 REGULATION GUIDE

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Visit our website:  
[www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov)  
State of Rhode Island  
Department of Environmental Management • Division of Fish & Wildlife

## THE 2024 FRESHWATER FISHING REGULATION GUIDE IS AVAILABLE NOW

Pick up a copy at bait & tackle or sporting shops around the state, at the RIDFW Great Swamp office, or online using your computer or mobile device. Stay informed of fishing season dates, changes to laws, improvements to fishing areas, and much more.

GET THE REGULATIONS GUIDE ONLINE:

[WWW.EREGULATIONS.COM/RHODEISLAND](http://WWW.EREGULATIONS.COM/RHODEISLAND)



# Deer Check Stations

## 2024 - 2025 Season

Deer check stations are the main way the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) monitors the deer herd. The DFW collects biological data such as age, weight, and antler beam measurements and Chronic Wasting Disease tissue samples that cannot be collected from online/phone reports.

This collection of information is being used to evaluate and estimate the deer population and is critical to ensure the DFW is managing deer responsibly. It is critical and required by regulation that if you harvest a deer during the first weekend of muzzleloader and shotgun season that you bring it to a check station. Deer brought to a deer check station do not need to be reported online by the hunter.

In order to increase hunter satisfaction by reducing wait times and travel time to and from check stations, there will be a new deer check station open for this year's muzzleloader and shotgun deer check station

period. The new Smithfield Sportsman Club Check Station will be located at 14 Walter Carey Rd, Smithfield, RI 02917 (41.8786, -71.5346). In addition, Durfee Hill Check Station will be closed for renovations. George Washington Management Area will be open as a Check Station in replacement of Durfee Hill Check Station while the renovation is underway.

All deer taken during the first two days (Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 2 & 3) of the Muzzleloader Deer Season, and the first two days (Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 7 & 8) of Shotgun Deer Season, including deer taken with archery equipment, must be physically checked at a state operated bio-logical check station, except those deer taken on Patience, Prudence, and Block Island, which must be reported using the online licensing system. Hunters bringing their deer to a check station DO NOT need to report their harvest online prior to going to the check station.

### Deer Check Station Operating Hours

**November 2nd & 3rd: 8:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M.**

**December 7th & 8th: 8:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.**

### Check Stations

- **Durfee Hill Management Area: CLOSED** for renovations
- **NEW Smithfield Sportsman Club:** 14 Walter Carey Rd, Smithfield, (41.8786, -71.5346)
- **NEW George Washington Management Area:** 2185 Putnam Pike, Chepachet, (41.919437, -71.759970)
- Arcadia Management Area: Rt. 165, Ten Rod Road, at Wood River, Exeter, (41.57305, -71.72163)
- Carolina Management Area: Pine Hill Road, Richmond, (41.46618, -71.68860)
- Great Swamp Management Area: 277 Great Neck Road, West Kingston, (41.47374, -71.57533)
- Tiverton Rod and Gun Club: 1529 Fish Rd, Tiverton, (41.62681, -71.18825)



# RHODE ISLAND HUNTING & TRAPPING 2024-2025 REGULATION GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE!



You can view the regulation guide online at

<https://www.eregulations.com/rhodeisland/hunting>

and hard copies can be obtained from local vendors. Find a full list of in-person sales agents at [dem.ri.gov/license-agents](https://dem.ri.gov/license-agents).

## Some Significant Regulation Changes & Highlights 2024-2025:

1. Durfee Hill Management Area Deer Check Station is closed for renovations. Two new check station will be open at George Washington Management Area and Smithfield Sportsman Club. See page 11 for details.
2. All hunters under 18 years old possessing or using a firearm must be in the presence of a parent, guardian or qualified adult. (RIGL 11-47-33). This does not apply to hunters under 18 years old using archery equipment. In some cases the adult shall possess a valid RI hunting license regardless of weapon type.
3. All tree stands set on public land or cooperative hunting units must be legibly marked with the hunter's Customer ID number or Sportman's Equipment ID number (both can be found on [rio.ri.gov](https://rio.ri.gov)).
4. Turkey harvest shall be reported within 24 hours of harvest.
5. Dove (Mourning and Eurasian collared) season is now split into two segments. The first segment will be open September 1 - 30. The second segment and third segment has now been combined to be open October 19 - December 17.
6. Shooting hours for all segments of the dove season are one half (1/2) hour before sunrise until sunset.
7. Gray and red squirrel season will be open September 14 - February 28, 2025.
8. Cottontail rabbit season will be open October 1 - February 28, 2025.
9. The fisher trapping season bag limit has been reduced to one (1).
10. The beaver trapping season bag limit has been increased to 40 for Residents. The beaver trapping season bag limit remains at 20 for Non-Residents.
11. The trapping season for coyotes on state land is November 1 - February 28, 2025.
12. Shooting hours for pheasant and small game hunting on opening day and all other hunting days starts at sunrise.
13. The final segment of the duck, coot, and merganser season and regular Canada goose season will be open December 7 - January 26, 2025.



# Species Spotlight: North American Catfishes

Excerpt from Inland Fishes of Rhode Island By Alan D. Libby, RIDEM DFW Freshwater Fisheries Supervisor

## North American Catfishes Family Ictaluridae

This family, consisting of 46 species, is indigenous to North America. North American catfishes are characterized by large flattened heads with several pairs of barbels around the mouth. These fish are scaleless, have an adipose fin, and are armed with sharp spines located in the dorsal and pectoral fins. Glands located at the base of the spines release a toxin that can flow along the spines and into a wound, causing a painful sting. The shape of the caudal fins and color of the chin barbels are useful characteristics that distinguish the three species found in Rhode Island: Brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), white catfish (*Ameiurus catus*), yellow bullhead (*Ameiurus natalis*).

### Brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*)

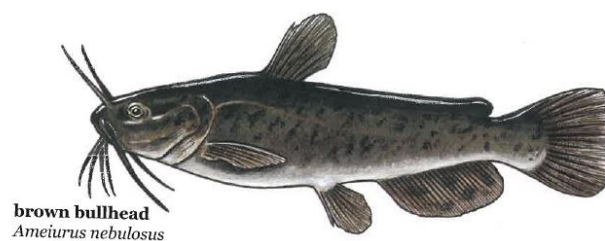
**Distribution:** This native, freshwater species was one of the six most widely distributed species collected, occurring in more than 35 percent of the locations sampled and in a greater portion of ponds than streams. Brown bullheads ranged from approximately 1.25 to 14.75 inches (32

- 375mm) in length and were generally collected in the vegetated areas of ponds and sluggish streams in all but one watershed. Tolerant of a wide variety of environmental conditions, the brown bullhead is found in Atlantic and Gulf Coast drainages from Nova Scotia to Florida, west to Saskatchewan and Oklahoma.

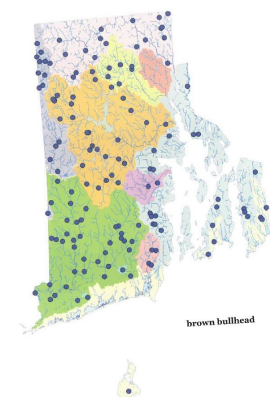
**Identification:** Brown bullheads, which may exceed 18 inches (460mm) in length, are dark olive brown or black dorsally and lighter ventrally. Light and dark mottling may occur along the sides of some individuals. This species is characterized by dark chin barbels and a squared

caudal fin that may be slightly indented.

**Remarks:** The brown bullhead is a benthic omnivore that feeds on a variety of aquatic plants, invertebrates, and fish.



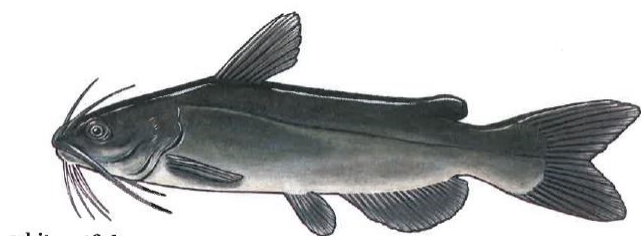
brown bullhead  
*Ameiurus nebulosus*



brown bullhead

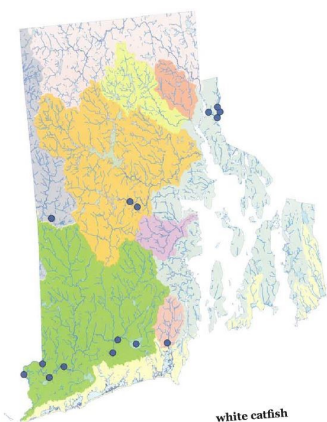
### White catfish (*Ameiurus catus*)

**Distribution:** The white catfish is a freshwater species that was introduced into the state in the 1960s. Reproducing populations were documented in a few widely dispersed streams and ponds. The preferred habitat of this species is the vegetated areas of ponds and quiet streams. White catfish are native to Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico drainages from New York to Florida.



white catfish  
*Ameiurus catus*



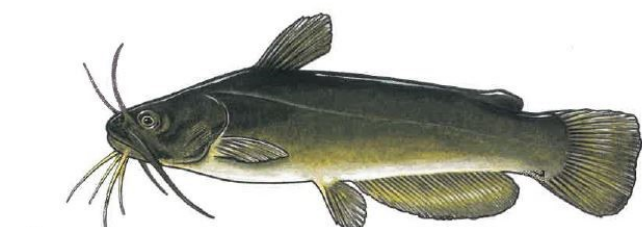


**Identification:** White catfish, which ranged in length from approximately 1.75 to 16 inches (44 - 406 mm), are dark olive brown dorsally, becoming lighter ventrally. This species is characterized by whitish chin barbels and a moderately forked caudal fin with rounded lobes.

**Remarks:** A 33 inch (838 mm) fish weighing more than 16 pounds (7 kg) was caught in Tiogue Lake, Coventry, in 1994. The white catfish is a benthic omnivore that feeds on a variety of aquatic plants, invertebrates, and fish.

## Yellow bullhead (*Ameiurus natalis*)

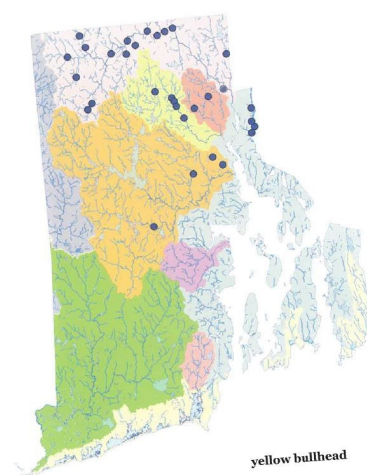
**Distribution:** The yellow bullhead is an introduced freshwater species that was collected in the streams and ponds of several watersheds located in the northern half of the state. It is unknown when this species was first introduced in the state. However, it was first collected in a tributary of the Blackstone River in the 1970s (Demaine and Guthrie 1979). The preferred habitat of this bullhead is the vegetated areas of ponds and



yellow bullhead  
*Ameiurus natalis*

North American catfishes

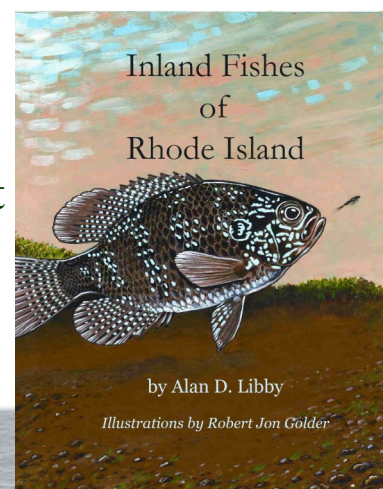
slow-moving streams. Yellow bullheads are native to eastern North America from New York west to Ontario and North Dakota, and south to New Mexico and Florida. Widely introduced elsewhere, yellow bullheads are also found in Massachusetts and Connecticut waters.



**Identification:** The yellow bullhead, which may exceed 18 inches (457 mm) in length, is dark olive brown dorsally becoming lighter and somewhat yellowish ventrally. The species is characterized by whitish yellow chin barbels and rounded caudal fin.

**Remarks:** The diet of this nocturnal benthic feeder includes plants, aquatic invertebrates, and fish.

Want to learn more about Rhode Island's freshwater fish species?  
Pick up a copy of *Inland Fishes of Rhode Island* at the RIDEM Headquarters in Providence, at the DFW Field Headquarters in West Kingston, or by mail (order forms can be emailed to [DEM.DFW@dem.ri.gov](mailto:DEM.DFW@dem.ri.gov))







*Thank you for your continuing support of the  
Rhode Island DEM Division of Fish & Wildlife!*

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

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