

4VAC15-320-25. Creel and length limits.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to modify the regulation table to include size and bag limits for waters shared with Tennessee, specifically those pertaining to smallmouth bass, white bass, crappie, rock bass, trout, and catfish.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

- 1 **4VAC15-320-25. Creel and length limits.**
- 2 The creel limits, including live possession, and the length limits for the various species of fish
- 3 shall be as follows, unless otherwise excepted by posted rules at department-owned or
- 4 department-controlled waters (see [4VAC15-320-100 D](#)).

Type of fish	Subtype or location	Creel and length limits	Geographic exceptions	Creel or length limits for exceptions
largemouth bass, smallmouth bass		5 per day in the aggregate (combined) No statewide length limits	Lakes	
			Briery Creek Lake	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 16 to 24 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass per day in the aggregate longer than 24 inches
			Buggs Island (Kerr)	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate less than 14 inches
			Claytor Lake	No smallmouth bass less than 14 inches

			Flannagan Reservoir	No smallmouth bass less than 15 inches No largemouth bass less than 12 inches
			Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate less than 14 inches
			Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate less than 14 inches
			Lake Moomaw	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 12 inches
			Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate less than 14 inches
			<u>South Holston Reservoir</u>	<u>No smallmouth less than 15 inches</u>
			Rivers	
			Clinch River – within the	No largemouth or smallmouth

		boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell, or Tazewell Counties	bass less than 20 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 20 inches
		Levisa Fork River – within the boundaries Buchanan County	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 20 inches
		Dan River and tributaries downstream from the Union Street Dam, Danville	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 14 inches
		James River – Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt County) downstream to the 14th Street Bridge in Richmond	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 14 to 22 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 22 inches
		New River – Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA - WV state	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 14 to 22 inches; only 1 largemouth or

			<p>line and its tributaries Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County, Big Walker Creek from the Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge downstream to the New River, and Wolf Creek from the Narrows Dam downstream to the New River in Giles County (This does not include Claytor Lake, which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the dam)</p>	<p>smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 22 inches</p>
			<p>North Fork Holston River - Rt. 91 bridge upstream of Saltville, VA downstream to the VA - TN state line</p>	<p>No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 20 inches</p>
			<p>Potomac River - Virginia tidal</p>	<p>No largemouth or smallmouth</p>

			tributaries above Rt. 301 bridge	bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15
			Roanoke (Staunton) River - and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	Only 2 of 5 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate less than 14 inches
			Shenandoah River, South Fork Shenandoah River, North Fork Shenandoah River	No largemouth or smallmouth bass 11 to 14 inches
			Staunton River -	
			Leesville Dam (Campbell County) downstream to the mouth of Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	No largemouth or smallmouth bass less than 20 inches; only 1 largemouth or smallmouth bass in the aggregate per day longer than 20 inches

Alabama bass, spotted bass		No statewide daily limit No statewide length limit		
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striped bass	landlocked striped bass and landlocked striped bass - white bass hybrids	4 per day in the aggregate No fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Leesville Dam and the Dan River and its tributaries to Union Street Dam (Danville)	October 1 - May 31: 2 per day in the aggregate; no striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches or greater than 26 inches June 1 - September 30: 4 per day in the aggregate; no length limit
			Claytor Lake and its tributaries	September 16 - June 30: 2 per day in the aggregate; no striped bass or hybrid bass less than 20 inches July 1 - September 15: 4 per day in the aggregate; no length limit
			Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam	2 per day in the aggregate November 1 - May 31: No striped bass 30 to 40 inches June 1 - October 31: No length limit

			Lake Gaston	<p>4 per day in the aggregate</p> <p>October 1 - May 31: No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches</p> <p>June 1 - September 30: No length limit</p>
	<p>anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay and Crane Lake (City of Suffolk)</p>	<p>Creel and length limits shall be set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters</p>		
	<p>anadromous (coastal) in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest Rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay</p>	<p>No possession</p>		

white bass		5 per day No statewide length limits	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Leesville Dam and the Dan River and its tributaries to Union Street Dam (Danville)	10 per day; no white bass less than 14 inches
			Lake Gaston	10 per day; no white bass less than 14 inches
			<u>South Holston Reservoir</u>	<u>No harvest permitted</u>

walleye, saugeye		5 per day in the aggregate No walleye or saugeye less than 18 inches	Claytor Lake and the New River upstream of Claytor Lake Dam to Fries Dam in Grayson County	2 walleye per day; no walleye 19 to 28 inches
sauger		2 per day No statewide length limits		
yellow perch		No statewide daily limit No statewide length limits	Lake Moomaw	10 per day
			Below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	No yellow perch less than 9 inches; no daily limit
chain pickerel and northern pike		5 per day No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoirs	No daily limit

muskellunge		1 per day No muskellunge less than 40 inches	New River - Claytor Dam downstream to the VA - WV state line	1 per day June 1 - last day of February: No muskellunge 40 to 48 inches March 1 - May 31: No muskellunge less than 48 inches
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bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding crappie, rock bass (redeye) and Roanoke bass		50 per day in the aggregate No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoirs, including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister River, Halifax County and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and	No daily limit
			Little Rivers in Grayson County	

crappie (black or white)		25 per day in the aggregate No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister	No crappie less than 9 inches
			River, Halifax County	
			Briery Creek and Sandy River Reservoirs	No crappie less than 9 inches
			<u>Flannagan Reservoir</u>	<u>No crappie less than 10 inches</u>
			<u>South Holston Reservoir</u>	<u>No crappie less than 10 inches, 15 per day</u>

rock bass (redeye)		25 per day; in the aggregate with Roanoke bass No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Nottoway, Meherrin, Blackwater (Franklin County), Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), Falling, and Smith Rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass; no rock bass less than 8 inches
			<u>South Holston Reservoir</u>	<u>20 per day</u>

Roanoke bass		25 per day in the aggregate with rock bass No statewide length limits	Nottoway, Meherrin, Blackwater (Franklin County), Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), Falling, and Smith Rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with rock bass; no Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
Trout	See 4VAC15-330 . Fish: Trout Fishing.		South Holston Reservoir	No minimum length limit, 7 per day only 2 of which may be lake trout
catfish	channel, white, and flathead catfish	20 per day; No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
			South Holston Reservoir	20 per day, only 1 over 34 inches
	blue catfish	20 per day; No statewide length limits	Lake Gaston	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
			Kerr Reservoir, including the	20 per day, except only

			Staunton (Roanoke) River and its tributaries to Difficult Creek, Charlotte County and the Dan River and its tributaries to the Banister River, Halifax County	1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
			James River and its tributaries below the fall line downstream to a line connecting Hog Point on Hog Island (Surry County) and the downstream point of the mouth of College Creek (James City County)	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
			All rivers below the fall line other than the James River and its tributaries, Rappahannock River and its tributaries, and	No daily limit

			the York River and its tributaries	
hickory shad	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission in tidal rivers		
	Meherrin River below Emporia Dam Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest Rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay	10 per day No length limits		
American shad		No possession		
anadromous (coastal) alewife and blueback herring	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for these species in tidal rivers		
	Meherrin River, Nottoway River,	No possession		

	Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest Rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay			
red drum	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North Landing River and its tributaries	1 per day No drum less than 18 inches or greater than 27 inches		
spotted sea trout (speckled trout)	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North Landing River and its tributaries	4 per day No sea trout less than 14 inches		
grey trout (weakfish)	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and North Landing River and its tributaries	1 per day No grey trout less than 12 inches		
southern flounder	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North	6 per day No flounder less than 15 inches		

	Landing River and its tributaries			
northern snakehead		<p>Anglers may possess snakeheads taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify the headquarters or a regional office of the department; notification may be made by telephoning (804) 367-2925</p> <p>No statewide daily limit</p> <p>No statewide length limits</p>		
longnose gar		<p>July 1 to April 14: 5 per day</p> <p>April 15 to June 30: 1 per day</p> <p>No statewide length limits</p>		
bowfin		<p>July 1 to April 14: 5 per day</p> <p>April 15 to June 30: 1 per day</p> <p>No statewide length limits</p>		
American eel		<p>25 per day</p> <p>No eel less than 9 inches</p>	Back Bay and North Landing River	No possession limit for those individuals possessing a

			permit obtained under 4VAC15-340-80
other native or naturalized nongame fish	See 4VAC15-360-10 . Fish: Aquatic Invertebrates, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Nongame Fish. Taking aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and nongame fish for private use.		
endangered or threatened fish	See 4VAC15-20-130 . Definitions and Miscellaneous: In General. Endangered and threatened species; adoption of federal list; additional species enumerated.		
nonnative (exotic) fish	See 4VAC15-30-40 . Definitions and Miscellaneous: Importation, Possession, Sale, Etc., of Animals. Importation requirements, possession and sale of nonnative (exotic) animals.		

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25 **Statutory Authority**

26 §§ [29.1-501](#) and [29.1-502](#) of the Code of Virginia.

RATIONALE: 4VAC15-320-25 is the creel (how many you can keep) and length limit table. This table applies to all fishes defined as gamefish under 29.1-100 as well as selected non game species. Whenever possible, DWR seeks to align size and bag limits on waters shared with adjacent states. Historically, all of the size and bag limits for South Holston and Flannagan Reservoirs were present in the regulation guide but not in the administrative code. This action will add them to the administrative code.