



REEL FUN!

Fishing in Vermont State Parks

Fishing in Vermont State Parks Reel Fun for All Ages and Anglers!

Vermont has some of the highest-quality and most-diverse freshwater fishing opportunities in New England with great fishing to offer at most Vermont State Parks.

Forty-six of Vermont's state parks have fishing opportunities directly on site or within a short walk. And, the remaining six parks have fishing opportunities within a 5-mile drive.

We hope you will consider taking advantage of the phenomenal fishing that Vermont State Parks have to offer.

New to fishing? No fishing gear? No worries – we've got you covered!

Several Vermont State Parks offer "Let's Go Fishing" clinics where trained instructors teach and encourage beginners how to fish. The instructors teach fishing skills, how to use different types of tackle, the importance of good aquatic habitat, fishing ethics and fishing regulations.

Some Vermont State Parks are also participating in the "Reel Fun" initiative, a cooperative effort between Vermont Fish & Wildlife and Vermont State Parks to provide loaner fishing equipment—including rods, reels, line and tackle as well as guides to the local fishing—to help provide park visitors instant access to the sport of fishing.

Additionally, Vermont State Parks offer a range of rental boats for anglers to use including rowboats, canoes, kayaks and pedal boats.

Visit the contact station at your state park to find out more about how you can get started on a Vermont fishing adventure!



Tips on handling and releasing fish

While harvesting and eating freshly caught fish is an enjoyable part of the angling experience, catch and release angling can also be a rewarding pastime. In certain instances, regulations may actually require you to release your catch (see Vermont Fish & Wildlife Regulations Guide). Using the proper techniques when releasing fish will help ensure the fish will survive to be caught again. Here are some tips:

- Don't play the fish to complete exhaustion.
- Minimize the fish's time out of the water. If at all possible, keep the fish in the water while you remove the hook.
- Consider pinching down the barbs on your hooks to make hook removal much easier.
- If the fish is hooked deep in the throat, gills, or stomach, simply cut the line close to the fish's mouth. The fish may have a good chance of surviving, and the hook will eventually rust out.

Show off your catch and win a prize!

Be eligible to win free passes to the state parks and fishing gear! Send your fishing in state parks photos to fwinformation@state.vt.us or parks@state.vt.us, or tag #ReelFunVT on Twitter by Labor Day.



Wilgus State Park



www.vtfishandwildlife.com www.vtstateparks.com

802-828-1000



Fishing at Wilgus State Park on the Connecticut River

River Area: 11,260 square miles (from the Quebec border to the coast of Connecticut)

River Max. Depth: Shallow at the park (130 feet at Gill, MA)

Fish Species: Primarily bullhead, chain pickerel, largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleye, yellow perch and various species of panfish.

Habitat: The Connecticut River around Wilgus State Parks primarily consists of shallow water and a bottom composition of sand, gravel and rock. Fish habitat includes: gravel bars, submerged timber, on- and off-shore boulders, bridge pilings, overhanging trees, undercut banks, pools, eddies and riffles. These cover types provide great spots for predatory fish to wait to ambush minnows and other forage that comes down river.

Park Fishing Tips: Fishing in any river – including the Connecticut– often hinges around water levels, flow rates and how current is hitting different types of fish-holding cover. Identify potential fish cover in the river such as boulders, rock piles, submerged limbs, overhanging branches, gravel bars and deeper holes. Try casting your lure or bait above the fish cover and bringing it down past with the natural flow of the river, or casting from above the cover and bringing your lure or bait back up against or across the natural flow of the river. Fish will lay in the eddies behind structure, along current breaks, in slack water holes or out in fast-moving riffles at different times and may react differently to varied presentation angles. Also try a mixture of lures or live bait at different depths in the water column – from bottom to top. Some good choices for the Connecticut River include a nightcrawler and bobber rig, inline spinners, small soft plastic tube baits or spider jigs that imitate crayfish, lipped crankbaits, paddle tail swimbaits and stickbaits, among others.

Nearby Fishing License Dealers: You can purchase a license at the park office or online at vtfishandwildlife.com.

What kind of facilities do the parks have?

Vermont State Parks provide the perfect setting for many fun outdoor activities – hiking, wildlife watching, and of course tossing a line out and reeling in your next big catch. Most parks offer car-top launches for canoes and kayaks, and motorboat launching access areas are available across the state.

Wilgus State Park has an access area for car top, small vessel boating on site. You can also find a Vermont Fish & Wildlife boat access area nearby at Hoyt's Landing in Springfield, VT.

Whether you want to bring your boat and head out on local waters or fish from shore at a nearby fishing hole, Vermont State Parks have the facilities to make for a truly enjoyable stay.

What a deal!

The second Saturday in June is Free Fishing Day where anyone can fish anywhere in Vermont for free.

The rest of the summer, **you'll need a fishing license**, even at a State Park. Vermont offers inexpensive, short-term licenses for just a few bucks and kids under 15 can fish for free!

Or you can get a year-round fishing license that costs only as much as a tank of gas or a couple of movie tickets. But unlike gas or movie tickets, your fishing license lets you fish for a whole year, anywhere in the state, with just a single purchase. Buy and download it to your phone and you'll be all set.

See www.vtfishandwildlife.com to find out more.

Fishing licenses are available right at the contact office at many state parks and at authorized license agents. You can find a list of these online at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

For more information

- For a full list of state parks, or trailered boat launches in Vermont State Parks, visit www.vtstateparks.com.
- For a complete fish stocking schedule, information on fishing regulations, or to buy a license online, visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

Or simply scan this QR code to buy a fishing license now.

