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MDC to Temporarily Waive Fishing Permits Starting Friday

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Starting March 27, people may fish in Missouri without a permit through April 15.

Jefferson City, MO - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Missouri Conservation Commission announce they are temporarily waiving permit requirements for sport fishing and daily trout tags for Missouri residents and nonresidents whose fishing privileges are not otherwise suspended.

The waiver of needing a permit or trout tag to fish will run from Friday, March 27, through April 15. MDC will reassess the situation at that point. All season dates and limits will continue to apply and be enforced.

“The current public-health emergency caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) has many Missourians and others looking for safe ways to get outside in nature,” said MDC Director Sara Parker Pauley. “Missouri’s rivers and streams offer high quality fishing as a way for people to connect with nature while still complying with all health and safety recommendations. Fishing is also a great way to get some much needed physical and mental health benefits during this stressful time.”

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to fish and Missouri has more than a million acres of surface water with most of it providing great fishing. More than 200 different fish

species are found in Missouri, with more than 20 of them being game fish for the state's more than 1.1 million anglers. Get more info on Missouri fishing at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing

Pauley added that it is still critical for everyone to continue to heed all recommendations for hand washing, social distancing, and other public-health measures while fishing and during other outdoor activities, including maintaining at least six feet of distance between all individuals who are not family members.

COVID-19 CLOSURES AND CANCELLATIONS

The James Foundation announced it has closed Maramec Spring Park in St. James to the public for trout fishing and all other activities until further notice. Maramec Spring Park is owned and operated by the James Foundation. MDC manages the trout hatchery at Maramec Spring Park. For more information, visit maramecspringpark.com.

Missouri's three other public trout parks remain open for day use and fishing: Bennett Spring State Park in Lebanon, Montauk State Park near Licking, and Roaring River State Park near Cassville. They are operated by Missouri State Parks under the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR). MDC manages the trout hatcheries at these locations.

To reduce possible increased social congregation, MDC will suspend daily trout stocking at all trout parks starting Friday and has suspended other fish stocking in waters around the state until further notice.

According to DNR, Missouri State Parks remain open. However, in reaction to COVID-19 and out of an abundance of caution, Missouri State Parks will temporarily close all campgrounds and lodging effective Friday, March 27, through Thursday, April 30. This includes campgrounds, park-run lodging and concessionaire-run lodging. While they are not able to accommodate overnight guests, Missouri State Parks remain open to the public for day-use, including boat ramps and more than 1,100 miles of trails.

“We are taking these measures now to reduce the impact of COVID-19,” said Missouri State Parks Director Mike Sutherland. “The outdoors provide a great opportunity to relax and destress. Even outdoors, it is important to practice social distancing, avoid large gatherings and wash your hands often.”

MDC and DNR remind people to make outdoor activities as safe and enjoyable as possible by taking the following actions:

If you have been sick in the last two weeks, please stay home for your health and the safety of others.

Travel in a small group with a maximum of 10 people.

Avoid popular areas where people may congregate, such as scenic overlooks, buildings, playgrounds, etc.

Maintain at least a six-foot distance between you and others.

Pack water, soap and/or hand sanitizer.

Get more information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on best practices for keeping you and your family safe at [gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html).

MDC has closed its regional offices, Department headquarters in Jefferson City, and other public contact offices, nature centers, visitor centers, educational centers, and staffed shooting ranges to the public until April 15.

While MDC public offices will be closed to general visitation, offices will still be staffed. Visitors with official business will need to notify the office to gain access. Find MDC office contact information at mdc.mo.gov/regional-contacts?county=All.

MDC has also cancelled its public events and programs around the state until April 15, including hunter education classes, nature center programs and events, shooting range programs and events, and landowner workshops. MDC will reassess the situation at that point.

Conservation areas, nature center trails, unstaffed shooting ranges, and boat accesses remain open to the public. Hunting, fishing, and trapping seasons continue as scheduled. MDC managed hunts and mentored spring turkey hunts continue as planned.

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