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D2 Reservoirs –

Mount Storm Lake is known as a good Black Bass (Smallmouth and Largemouth), Walleye and large Striped Bass lake. It is important to know that Mount Storm Lake receives warm coolant water from a coal-fired power plant, frequently allowing lake water to be much warmer than what adjacent fisheries or air temperatures are! This can cause this lake to be fickle in the summer, as bass can be lethargic over long periods of warm water temperatures. Look for black bass to be congregated in and around the cover of newly downed trees, a result of an ongoing DNR habitat enhancement project. Shad and other minnow patterns work well for these species. Considering the schooling behavior of shad in this lake, umbrella lures (those that mimic several baitfish in a group) would work quite well. Crankbaits and swim baits that mimic wounded baitfish are excellent bait choices. Consider the use of live or natural bait for finicky fish. Largemouth Bass will be found along shorelines that are laden with fallen trees, WV DNR supplemented Christmas trees, beaver dams, and aquatic vegetation. Particularly, these habitats are found more commonly upstream into the creek arms of the lake. Also, cooler water temperatures can often be found nearer to the stream channels that bring cool water into the lake. Smallmouth Bass can be caught more frequently in habitats where large rock outcrops are abundant, although they too will sometimes be associated with vegetation and wood that attracts forage fish. The dam wall and creek channels upstream provide complex rocky habitats for Smallmouth Bass. A medium to heavy action rod would work well. If you target Striped Bass in this lake, it's important to have a boat to get to open water, as well as oversized fishing gear compared to what you would use for bass fishing. Striped Bass do not appear to aggregate seasonally, but seem to stay deep where the coolest, heavier water remains. This is especially true in the summer, as this species often seeks out cool water. Stripers have been caught exceeding 35" in this lake! Walleye can also be caught with trolling techniques - using jerk baits, crank baits, and inline spinners rigged with natural baits like nightcrawlers or minnows. Walleye will congregate along drop-offs of submerged rocky ridges and the submerged creek bed of the Stony River arm of the lake during spring. Channel Catfish are numerous and stunted: the harvest of Channel Catfish is suggested there to improve the population. They can be caught during all seasons using baits such as chicken liver, cut bait, and stink baits. The only public boat ramp for this lake is located right off Route 29. It is certainly ideal to fish Mount Storm Lake with a boat, as very little shoreline access is available for public use. It is critical to understand that if catch and release fishing is participated in during the summer, there WILL be a high degree of fishing mortality if fish are not handled properly. It is suggested that you quickly return Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass back to the water without retaining them in a live well unless you are interested in harvesting them. Also, Striped Bass are particularly prone to dying when caught during warm water temperatures. Consider harvesting them during this time or refraining from fishing for them during warm timeframes in the summer.

Jennings Randolph Lake is known for its excellent Smallmouth Bass population, Rock Bass in abundance, and a dense, reproducing Walleye population. It also gets stocked with trout on occasion by the MD DNR in the spring which, due to a cold mid-depth layer in the lake, can be caught into the summer. Smallmouth Bass key in on crayfish that inhabit rocky habitat along the lake's perimeter. Unlike Mount Storm Lake, Jennings Randolph receives cool source water, and warmer timeframes does not negatively impact fish activity. Weighted soft plastics, crank baits, and jigs that imitate crayfish are great baits to start targeting

Smallmouth Bass and Rock Bass here. If you are targeting Rock Bass, size down your baits to focus on this smaller sport fish. Minnows are abundant in this lake and are prime targets for Walleye. Live or dead minnows trolled on spinner rigs, jerk baits, silver-sided crank baits and swim baits would be excellent for targeting Walleye. Inline spinners work well for catching trout. Walleye will be more dispersed throughout the lake but will likely be feeding or suspending along rocky habitats that follow points or drop-offs along creek channels. Trolling is a particularly good method for hooking up with Walleye and Trout in this deep lake. There are two public boat launches on this lake that operate daily. The Howell Ramp on the WV side will remain open throughout the summer unless summer pool conditions allow the water's surface to drop below the ramp. The Maryland ramp is considerably long and will remain open all summer. The lake's water level is managed by the ACOE. It is certainly ideal to fish Jennings Randolph Lake with a boat, as very little shoreline access is available for public use.

D2 Rivers/Streams –

The South Branch Potomac, Cacapon, and Shenandoah Rivers are the most popular stream fisheries in D2, renowned for their fantastic Smallmouth Bass, Rock Bass, Redbreast Sunfish, and Channel Catfish populations! However, Patterson Creek, Back Creek, Opequon Creek, Sleepy Creek, and the Little Cacapon should not be overlooked, especially when warm weather brings considerable fishing pressure to the more popular streams. The transition from spring to summer brings larger catches of Smallmouth Bass, Redbreast Sunfish and Rock Bass, and the Channel Catfish fishery comes into full swing! Channel Catfish are very abundant in the South Branch and Shenandoah Rivers. Channel Catfish will be particularly abundant in the South Branch in downstream reaches. However, smaller numbers of large fish can certainly be caught above Moorefield! Fish that can be caught the same day and in the same streams to be used as cut bait work excellent for catfishing. This is a safer opportunity that can help prevent the spread of disease and the possibility of bait-bucket-introductions between watersheds! Resident sunfish, large minnows, and suckers all work well as cut bait or live fish. Experiment with the size of the cut bait in order to reduce catches of Yellow Bullhead (if you wish) and to target Channel Catfish sizes of interest. Other baits, like cheese bait, blood bait, chicken livers, live minnows, packaged shad, hellgrammites, and nightcrawlers, can be used to catch these fish as well. Please pay close attention to tagged fish in the South Branch, as many Smallmouth Bass and Channel Catfish have been tagged in order to better understand angler utility, angler pressure, and fish movement in this system. By the time that we are into the summer months, Smallmouth Bass have become very active and have concluded spawning. The conclusion of spawning brings them out of deep pools in which they overwintered and into shallower water where abundant forage exists (see Tip of the Summer Season below). Expect to see large Smallmouth in the backs of pools, along the margins where vegetation is growing, and in habitats where water is swifter and deeper. Crayfish are the forage of choice for Smallmouth Bass in these streams, making up greater than 70% of the forage items they consume! Jigs, crankbaits, tubes, spider grubs, and other soft plastic baits that mimic this forage is suggested and can pay off during any season. However, don't discount minnows as diet items...particularly as Smallmouth begin to become more active with the warmer water, striking more opportunistically higher in the water column at swim baits, surface plugs, flukes, and other baits that mimic shiners! If all else fails, nightcrawlers, crickets, grasshoppers, and other natural baits will certainly catch fish. Remember that many sport fish are much more active during morning and evening hours! This is especially true during the summer months. Considering the different types of baits that you could fish under different conditions; a medium action rod of moderate power would be beneficial. Consider using a light-heavy rod. Six to 8-pound test would work well. Consider

using fluorocarbon, as it is difficult to see underwater, and can be useful for enticing fish to bite when using soft plastics, and during conditions where water depth decreases, and water clarity dramatically increases during summer months.

If you decide to float these streams, make sure that you know the amount of water that you can cover in the time that is allocated to you. Also, know the stream conditions and the zones you intend to float to avoid dragging watercraft during low-flow timeframes or dangerous currents when flows are high! District 2 has an abundance of public access sites available to the angler's advantage: <https://www.mapwv.gov/huntfish/map/?v=fish>

D2 Impoundments –

Small impoundments in D2 are some of the most productive fisheries in the region! Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and quality Channel Catfish (latter maintained by stocking) are available in many of these lakes! Large Bluegill offer excellent table fare and high likelihoods of success for summer anglers, both young and experienced! Bluegill construct bowl shaped depressions in which to lay their eggs. They will often nest colonially during the early summer. If you find shallow flats with soft substrate they can be easily excavated by aggressive Bluegill, chances are good that you can experience double-digit catches. A light power rod with moderate action is good for panfish like Bluegill.

In the summer, Largemouth Bass become very active, feeding up just before the spawn in early May. Focus on using baits that provide action under the surface of the water. Stick baits, crank baits, weighted soft plastics and jigs work well this time of the year. Bass become more aggressive when the water warms, and retrieves should be worked at a faster pace. Pay attention not to fish too deeply during summer months, as fish stay in shallower water where higher levels of oxygen are available and forage gathers near shoreline structure. Largemouth Bass feed near the lake perimeters when active and can be caught anywhere along the shoreline. Pay close attention to shifting shoreline depths, aquatic vegetation, and sunken wood to increase your chances of strikes from Largemouth. As midday heat significantly warms still lake waters, expect fish activities to drop. Morning and evening fishing should be most productive. Fishing brightly colored, darkly colored, sound emitting, and gold/copper bladed baits are more visible to fish when the water is muddy! You can use a variety of fishing equipment styles to fish our small impoundments, considering the species available. A medium power with moderate to fast action is good for bass fishing.

District 2 has an abundance of these small impoundments open to public fishing: <https://www.mapwv.gov/huntfish/map/?v=fish>

District 2 Tip of the Summer Season –

Fish the margins of Water Willow or other vegetation in our District 2 streams! These streamside zones of habitat hold really high densities of forage fish and are also near the types of substrate that high numbers of crayfish inhabit. Shoreline fishermen often spook these fish due to the position of their approach, but floating anglers are in a perfect position to cast to these habitats and make a retrieve without interfering with the fish. Use unweighted soft plastics like flukes, tubes, zingers, and slug-go to stay high, visible, and enticing. Baits like small double-bladed spinnerbaits and buzzbaits, as well as moderate size topwater plugs, also work well. Cast as close to the bank or the vegetation as

possible...Even if you must slowly drag the bait to the water on a cast that is too long. If you get a strike from these hard reaction baits, follow up with a soft plastic substitute if you have another rigged rod to spare. Finally, as with all habitats and fisheries in the summer, Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass will be much more active during the morning and evening hours. Keep these tips in mind when evaluating the effectiveness of the lures that you are using and the planning of your trips!