



**WESTERN SUSSEX
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Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce

The economics of fish on the Nanticoke River

By Terry Carson- Executive Director
Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce

Anyone who has spent time along the Nanticoke River this summer knows a lot of fishing is happening from boats and the shoreline. This time of COVID has pushed the pause button for most of us and what better recreational social distance activity than a fishing pole and the Nanticoke. The Nanticoke is considered one of the best fishing destinations in Delaware. It is home to sea trout, blue catfish, yellow perch, pickerel, rock fish (striped bass), white perch, largemouth bass and blue crab.

"I love going on my Pop Pop's boat. We always catch fish. I have caught rock-fish, catfish and bass. When we get hot we jump in and swim. I love it out there on the river" said Will Parker, 12, of Laurel.

Carter Whaley, 9, of Seaford shared, "I like to catch catfish on the river. My favorite spot is on my Mom Mom and Pop Pop's dock. I use a two-ounce sinker and a circle hook. I bait my hook with bunker. My favorite fish is the blue catfish and they are good to eat. My cousin Colton likes to help me fish. He cheers me on."

The migratory fish spawning runs make the Nanticoke River even more ecologically significant because of the freshwater/saltwater interface. Rock fish, American shad and river herring typically spawn above this mix of fresh and saltwater.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance commissioned a study through the University of Delaware Water Resources Center which put a value of the Nanticoke River Watershed at \$3.7 billion to the region's economy. "Specifically, \$2.6 billion annually through direct economic value of recreation, water quality and supply, hunting, fishing, forests, agriculture and parks. According to this study the economic annual contribution derived from fish and wildlife alone is \$126.8 million." The entire can be found at <https://nanticoke.watershedalliance.org/economy/>.

Lisa Wool, Executive Director of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance shared, "The Nanticoke is home to several record breaking fish species, as well as a place to relax and socially distance. Our partnerships have helped maintain the river as one of the cleanest rivers that flows into the Chesapeake Bay-that is good for people, plants, wildlife, and fish."

Matt Parker, Laurel resident, fisherman and the president of Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce, shared, "When you look at this important study and the dollar amount worth to our western Sussex area- it is staggering. The Nanticoke River is beautiful and those of us who spend time on it understand its value and beauty. On a practical scale, I think of people fishing and the economic value that is brought to our area by choosing the Nanticoke as their fishing destination. They may buy gasoline, fishing equipment, bait, food and hopefully stick around and explore. Fishing might be the draw, but hopefully they will visit and enjoy all the things that make our area special."

The Western Sussex Chamber will continue to highlight areas and places to visit in our little corner of the world as part of our partnership with Southern Delaware Tourism. We are hoping to highlight and celebrate our wonderful fishing and other recreational opportunities to include boating, kayaking, tubing, bird watching and celebrating history as part of our Western Sussex Chamber mission in 2021.

Upcoming Event

Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce Third Annual Photo Contest

The categories are Pets at Play, Every Picture Tells a Story, Country Roads and We are Western Sussex plus prizes for Fan Favorite, Grand Champion, and Youth Category (14 and under). There will be cash prizes for each category. To submit photos: email the Chamber at admin@westernsussexcoc.com



Carter Whaley, left, and his cousin, Colton Searcy

westernsussexcoc.com or upload them to the Chamber's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WesternSussexCOC. Candidates are allowed one contest entry per category. Entries will be accepted through

Nov. 1. Email admin@westernsussexcoc.com with questions.

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