Catch-and-Immediate-Release Tournament Fishing Protocols

Requirements and recommendations for all black bass events occurring during the catch-and-release-bass fishing season and regular bass fishing season on the lower Susquehanna River (Adam T. Bower Memorial Dam, otherwise known as the Fabridam, at Sunbury, PA to Holtwood Dam at Holtwood, PA); lower Juniata River (Port Royal, PA [Route 75 bridge] to the mouth at Duncannon, PA); and tributaries to a location one half mile upstream of the confluence of these river reaches.

NOTE: DURING THE CATCH-AND-RELEASE ONLY BASS SEASON FROM APRIL 13, 2024, TO JUNE 7, 2024, BLACK BASS TOURNAMENT FISHING IS PROHIBITED WITHIN THESE REACHES. At other times, during the regular bass fishing season, catch and release only fishing rules apply to tournaments as detailed in the 2024 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary (available from www.fishandboat.com).

The overriding goal for tournament anglers is to return black bass, Smallmouth Bass and Largemouth Bass, to the water unharmed as quickly as possible, while securing necessary event statistics (length/weight/photo) during the regular bass season while fishing within these reaches. Weights can be secured using alternative means based upon lengths; this method is encouraged, but not required (see below).

To minimize handling stress, we encourage anglers to make use of a long-handled net such that caught fish can be held in the water until necessary length, weight, and/or photo can be secured. We expect that "out of the water exposure" while weighing, measuring, or picture taking will be limited to ONE MINUTE or less. All bass must be returned to the water unharmed following capture/processing. Holding bass out of the water for extended periods will be a violation of the conditions of the Special Activity Permit. Retention of bass in live wells is prohibited.

Length to Weight Conversion Tables

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has prepared a length-weight conversion table and a length to weight conversion formula for use by anglers who wish to convert lengths to weight for event scoring (Table 1). For Smallmouth Bass, this relationship was derived specifically from Smallmouth Bass collected on the lower Susquehanna River and lower Juniata River reaches. For Largemouth Bass, the relationship was based upon fish collected from all Pennsylvania rivers (Table 2).

At the outset, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission recognizes that minimizing weigh-in event loss among tournament anglers and eliminating harvest and hook and release loss among the general angling population will not alone lead to restoration of Smallmouth Bass populations to historic levels on these river reaches. Such restrictions will serve to maintain and enhance existing fishing catch rates and thereby prevent further decreases in catch rates. Rebound will occur when production and survival of young bass are sustained at levels like those in nearby reaches of the Susquehanna River and other Pennsylvania rivers. **Your willingness to sustain good fishing and good bass survival by adhering to practices that minimize or eliminate stress following capture are applauded.** The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stands in solidarity with all bass anglers who look forward to return of Smallmouth Bass abundance to historic levels and eventual restoration of previous harvest rules.

Table 1. Smallmouth Bass length and predicted weight by 1/8-inch increments. Data used to develop this relationship was derived from Smallmouth Bass samples collected from the Susquehanna River below Sunbury, PA and from the Juniata River below Port Royal, PA.

Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds
8-	0.23	11-	0.65	14-	1.43	17-	2.70
8-1/8	0.24	11-1/8	0.67	14-1/8	1.47	17-1/8	2.77
8-1/4	0.25	11-1/4	0.70	14-1/4	1.51	17-1/4	2.83
8-3/8	0.26	11-3/8	0.72	14-3/8	1.56	17-3/8	2.90
8-1/2	0.28	11-1/2	0.75	14-1/2	1.60	17-1/2	2.97
8-5/8	0.29	11-5/8	0.78	14-5/8	1.65	17-5/8	3.04
8-3/4	0.30	11-3/4	0.80	14-3/4	1.69	17-3/4	3.11
8-7/8	0.32	11-7/8	0.83	14-7/8	1.74	17-7/8	3.19
9-	0.33	12-	0.86	15-	1.79	18-	3.26
9-1/8	0.35	12-1/8	0.89	15-1/8	1.84	18-1/8	3.33
9-1/4	0.37	12-1/4	0.92	15-1/4	1.89	18-1/4	3.41
9-3/8	0.38	12-3/8	0.95	15-3/8	1.94	18-3/8	3.49
9-1/2	0.40	12-1/2	0.98	15-1/2	1.99	18-1/2	3.57
9-5/8	0.42	12-5/8	1.02	15-5/8	2.05	18-5/8	3.65
9-3/4	0.43	12-3/4	1.05	15-3/4	2.10	18-3/4	3.73
9-7/8	0.45	12-7/8	1.08	15-7/8	2.16	18-7/8	3.81
10-	0.47	13-	1.12	16-	2.21	19-	3.89
10-1/8	0.49	13-1/8	1.15	16-1/8	2.27	19-1/8	3.98
10-1/4	0.51	13-1/4	1.19	16-1/4	2.33	19-1/4	4.06
10-3/8	0.53	13-3/8	1.23	16-3/8	2.39	19-3/8	4.15
10-1/2	0.55	13-1/2	1.27	16-1/2	2.45	19-1/2	4.24
10-5/8	0.58	13-5/8	1.31	16-5/8	2.51	19-5/8	4.33
10-3/4	0.60	13-3/4	1.35	16-3/4	2.57	19-3/4	4.42
10-7/8	0.62	13-7/8	1.39	16-7/8	2.64	19-7/8	4.51
						20-	4.61
						20-1/8	4.70
						20-1/4	4.80

For predicted weights not listed: Weight(lbs)= $0.0002452 * \text{length(in)}^{3.285}$
Length measurements must be expressed as a decimal, example: 14-1/8 = 14.125

Table 2. Largemouth Bass length and predicted weight by 1/8-inch increments. Data used to develop this relationship was derived from Largemouth Bass samples collected from rivers across Pennsylvania. Largemouth Bass are typically not as abundant relative to Smallmouth Bass in Pennsylvania rivers. Largemouth Bass tend to be more plump when derived from Pennsylvania lakes.

Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds	Inches	Pounds
8-	0.24	11-	0.65	14-	1.36	17-	2.47
8-1/8	0.26	11-1/8	0.67	14-1/8	1.40	17-1/8	2.53
8-1/4	0.27	11-1/4	0.70	14-1/4	1.44	17-1/4	2.59
8-3/8	0.28	11-3/8	0.72	14-3/8	1.48	17-3/8	2.64
8-1/2	0.29	11-1/2	0.74	14-1/2	1.52	17-1/2	2.70
8-5/8	0.31	11-5/8	0.77	14-5/8	1.56	17-5/8	2.76
8-3/4	0.32	11-3/4	0.80	14-3/4	1.60	17-3/4	2.82
8-7/8	0.34	11-7/8	0.82	14-7/8	1.64	17-7/8	2.89
9-	0.35	12-	0.85	15-	1.68	18-	2.95
9-1/8	0.37	12-1/8	0.88	15-1/8	1.73	18-1/8	3.01
9-1/4	0.38	12-1/4	0.90	15-1/4	1.77	18-1/4	3.08
9-3/8	0.40	12-3/8	0.93	15-3/8	1.82	18-3/8	3.14
9-1/2	0.41	12-1/2	0.96	15-1/2	1.86	18-1/2	3.21
9-5/8	0.43	12-5/8	0.99	15-5/8	1.91	18-5/8	3.27
9-3/4	0.45	12-3/4	1.02	15-3/4	1.96	18-3/4	3.34
9-7/8	0.47	12-7/8	1.05	15-7/8	2.00	18-7/8	3.41
10-	0.48	13-	1.08	16-	2.05	19-	3.48
10-1/8	0.50	13-1/8	1.12	16-1/8	2.10	19-1/8	3.55
10-1/4	0.52	13-1/4	1.15	16-1/4	2.15	19-1/4	3.62
10-3/8	0.54	13-3/8	1.18	16-3/8	2.20	19-3/8	3.70
10-1/2	0.56	13-1/2	1.22	16-1/2	2.26	19-1/2	3.77
10-5/8	0.58	13-5/8	1.25	16-5/8	2.31	19-5/8	3.84
10-3/4	0.61	13-3/4	1.29	16-3/4	2.36	19-3/4	3.92
10-7/8	0.63	13-7/8	1.33	16-7/8	2.42	19-7/8	4.00
						20-	4.07
						20-1/8	4.15
						20-1/4	4.23

For predicted weights not listed: Weight(lbs)= $0.0004102 * \text{length(in)}^{3.0722653}$

Length measurements must be expressed as a decimal, example: 14-1/8 = 14.125