Black Bass Regulatory Idea

Replace special regulations for black bass on 24 impoundments with statewide regulations (open season June 16 through February 28, twelve-inch minimum size, 5 fish per day)

BBAC Meeting
April 5, 2021
1) Replace special regulations for black bass (catch-and-release, limited harvest, trophy bass) on 24 impoundments with statewide regulations (open season June 16 through February 28, twelve-inch minimum size, 5 fish per day).

2) Change the designation of “Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Areas” to “Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Slot Limit Fishing Areas”. This will apply to Johnsons Pond, Leonard Mill Pond, Little Seneca Lake, and St. Mary’s Lake.
Fishing and Boating Services enacted several regulation strategies during the 1990s with the goal of improving the catch rate and proportion of quality size largemouth bass (≥ 12 inches) in a number of small impoundments.

- Catch and Return (1 impoundment)
- “Trophy Bass” (aka slot limit, 8 impoundments)
- Limited Harvest (19 impoundments)
Background

➢ Under the Catch and Release regulations, all bass must be immediately returned to the water.

➢ “Trophy Bass” regulations allow anglers to retain up to 5 bass < 11 inches; the creel is 5 bass per day only one of which may be > 15 inches.

➢ Limited Harvest regulations restrict the daily harvest to 10 fish total (all species combined), only one of which may be a largemouth bass, not to exceed 15 inches in length.
Group Impoundments by Regulations
  - Use available data 2000 - present
  - Multiple years of survey data
  - Impoundments of similar size

ANOVA (analysis of variance) test to determine statistical differences between population metrics by regulation
  - Size distribution - Proportional Size Distribution (PSD), stock-quality size increment (8 - 12”),
  - Relative abundance - catch per unit of effort (CPUE)
Regulation Evaluation

24 Impoundments used in the analysis
Special regulation impoundments generally have the highest proportion of small bass. Circle size corresponds to the percentage of bass 8 - 12 inches.
Catch of bass 15 inches and greater generally higher in “Trophy Bass” and “Statewide” regulation areas. Circle size corresponds to CPUE of bass 15” and greater.
No significant difference in relative abundance of size classes by regulations \( (\alpha=0.05; \ p=0.89) \)
## Regulation Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Distribution (largemouth bass)</th>
<th>Catch and Return</th>
<th>Limited Harvest</th>
<th>Statewide Regs</th>
<th>Trophy Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>43.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSD15&quot;</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<td>PSD20&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-way ANOVA p(same) = 0.68
Current special regulations have not met statewide management objectives for black bass in all locations. The proposed action will simplify regulations and remove unnecessary angling restrictions.

The “Limited Harvest” restrictions contribute to regulation complexity without achieving management objectives for largemouth bass.

The designation “Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Area” was generally applied to waters characterized by an abundance of 8 - 12 inch bass, not to areas with very large bass. The designation increases angler confusion and set unrealistic expectations for the fishing experience.
Trophy Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass Fishing Areas

Areas:

- Blairs Valley Lake, Washington County.
- Centennial Lake, Howard County.
- Chesapeake Ranch Estates, Calvert County—all ponds.
- Johnson Pond, Wicomico County.
- Leonard Mill Pond, Wicomico County.
- Little Seneca Lake, Montgomery County.
- Patuxent Naval Air Test Center, St. Mary’s County—all ponds.
- St. Mary’s Lake, St. Mary’s County—located on MD Route 5.
Catch-and-Release Bass Fishing Areas

**Areas:**

- Monocacy River—from the Potomac River upstream to Buckeystown Dam.
- North Branch Potomac River—from the spillway in Cumberland upstream approximately 25 miles to US Route 220 Bridge at Keyser, West Virginia.
- Patapsco River—from Interstate 70 downstream to MD Route 144 (Frederick Road).
- Potomac River—from Dam No. 2 (Seneca Breaks) upstream to the mouth of the Monocacy River.
- Wheatley Lake, Charles County.
Affected Waters

Limited Harvest Fishing Areas

Areas:

- Allens Pond, Prince George’s County.
- Bowie Town Center Pond, Prince George’s County.
- Cosca Lake, Prince George’s County.
- Farm Museum Pond, Carroll County.
- Governor’s Bridge Natural Area Pond, Prince George’s County.
- Greenbelt Lake, Prince George’s County.
- Hughesville Pond, Charles County.
- Hutchins Pond, Calvert County.
- Lake Artemesia, Prince George’s County.
- Merkle Wildlife Management Area, Prince George’s County—all ponds located within the Merkle area boundaries.
- Milltown Landing Pond, Prince George’s County.
- Myrtle Grove Pond, Charles County.
- Pemberton Pond, Wicomico County.
- Rising Sun Pond, Cecil County—age restricted March 1 through May 15.
- Roberts Field Pond, Carroll County.
- Robert’s Mill Pond, Carroll County.
- South Germantown Park Pond, Montgomery County, in South Germantown Park.
- Tucker Pond, Prince George’s County.
- Westminster Community Pond, Carroll County.