

Largemouth Bass Management Action

The Department has received a considerable amount of valuable input ([verbally and in writing](#)) from our constituents over the last week regarding the [black bass tournament memorandum](#) dated March 15, 2016. The Department is responsible for the health of the black bass resource, and the Department has determined that immediate conservation action is necessary. After careful consideration, the Department is modifying the fishable slot tournament permit condition for tournaments scheduled on the Potomac River and Upper Chesapeake Bay from June 16 through October 31. Below is a summary of the modified approach that provides tournament directors two options when applying for a permit, both of which help reduce fishing mortality. This is a needed step that should hasten the recovery of these stressed fisheries.

Tournament directors can choose between one of two options for a tournament permit where the tournament will be held in Maryland on tidal Potomac River or Upper Chesapeake Bay from June 16 through October 31. Option 1 requires the tournament director/participants to adhere to the slot limit permit condition (i.e., possession limited to a 12 inch minimum size, 5 fish creel, with only one fish which may measure 15 inches or bigger). Option 2 requires adherence to special conditions that minimize fish stress, thereby reducing fishing mortality. Option 2 allows possession limits specific to statewide regulations during this time period. Details are provided below:

Option 1: the following language is added to the director's permit: *For tournaments held from June 16 to October 31 at Maryland weigh-in locations on the Potomac River or Upper Chesapeake Bay (Susquehanna, Northeast, Elk, Susquehanna flats), participating anglers are limited to a 12 inch minimum size and a possession limit of 5 bass (largemouth and smallmouth combined), only one of which may be 15 inches or greater (per angler, per day). Therefore, an angler can weigh-in 5 fish over 12" but only one of these fish may be 15"and bigger.*

OR

Option 2: the following language is added to the director's permit *All rules and conditions within the  **Special Conditions for Black Bass Tournaments** must be followed.* Among these are: a) Allows anglers to participate within existing possession regulations (5 fish creel, 12 inch minimum size, no maximum) for tournaments held from June 16 to October 31; b) Requires directors to recover exhausted bass following a tournament and redistribute them to approved locations; c) Requires all anglers to possess a free participant permit; d) Requires other actions to improve survival of large bass.