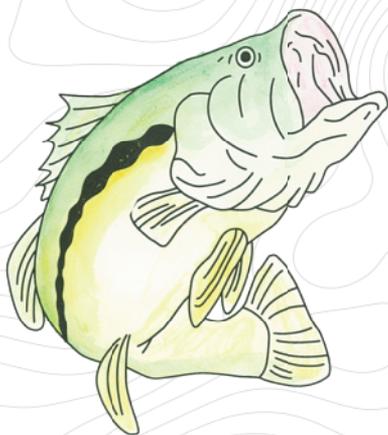


BASS CARE 101



A BRIEF ANGLER'S GUIDE
ON HOW TO BEST TAKE
CARE OF YOUR CATCH
PRIOR TO RELEASE

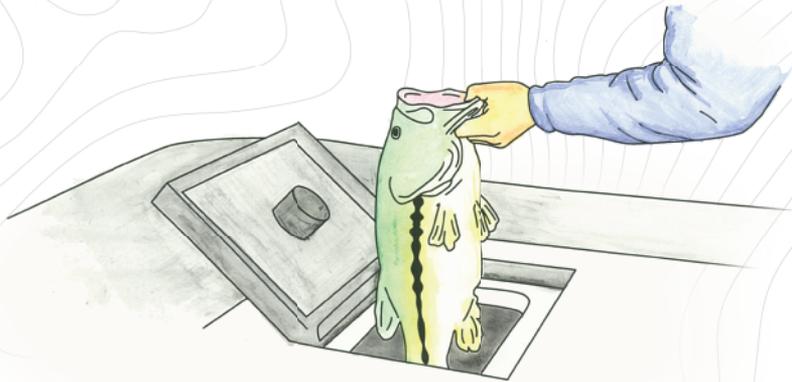
Research conducted and
information received from
Mississippi State University.



We are fortunate here in the U.S. to have a healthy largemouth bass resource. An important key to a future healthy resource, and continually growing bass fishing opportunities is how we the angler care for the bass we catch. The purpose of this pamphlet is to help educate anglers on the basics of how to best care for largemouth bass. The increasing number of largemouth bass anglers and tournaments at all levels makes this information more important now than ever.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Temperatures in the live well and at the weigh-in site should be at or slightly below the temperature where the fish came from. Optimum temperature for largemouth bass is below 84 degrees, depending on time of year and ambient temperature in the lake. Temperature changes of 7+ degrees can be harmful to your bass. The temperature gauge on your boat is reading water temperature near the surface, and your bass were living at a depth with a lower temperature than you show on your boat. Use block ice to allow for longer, slower cooling of the water in your live well. Keep frozen water bottles in your ice chest to cool the live well as needed. At the weigh-in, fill your bag with cooled water from your live well rather than warm lake water.



**PRO
TIP**

Water temperature is the most important factor in bass survival. Maintain temperatures of no more than 84 degrees in your live well and weigh bag. Keep frozen water bottles in your ice chest to use for cooling the water as needed.

OXYGEN

The amount of dissolved oxygen in your live well and weigh bag is also a factor in largemouth survivability. Bass and all fish obtain oxygen by passing water over their gills. Cool water is essential to survival, and cooling the water aids in providing sufficient oxygen. Cool water holds more oxygen and reerates faster than warmer water, and bass in cool water use less oxygen. Oxygen is dissolved faster depending on the number and the size of fish in the live well. Oxygen can be added to the live well by adding fresh water periodically, but you must remember to add ice to maintain temperatures below 84 degrees. To maximize the amount of oxygen in the water, use an air stone that creates small bubbles, or run recirculating aerators continuously.



**PRO
TIP**

Fish need oxygen. Maximize aeration and flush the live well with fresh water periodically to ensure you have adequate oxygen levels.

ANGLING TIME & ANGLER CARE

The amount of angling time does impact survivability, as largemouth bass angled for one minute survived better than did those angled for three minutes. Largemouth bass have a protective slime coat (mucus) that helps to protect them from disease. It is important to be careful to not remove this coating when handling your fish. Wet your hands when handling the fish. It is also important to not “boat flip” your fish directly onto the rough dry carpet or deck of your boat as that will cause slime loss. Grip the fish’s lower jaw to remove the hook. Remove the hook as quickly as possible and use caution to not damage the gills. Keep the fish out of water for as short a time as possible.



**PRO
TIP**

Land your fish as quickly as possible and keep them in the air for as little time as possible. Wet your hands before handling the fish be careful not to remove the protective slime or damage the gills. Don't "boat flip" your bass on to the deck.

BASS HANDLING

Anglers should be careful when handling bass not to break the jaws. If the jaw breaks, it is likely the bass will no longer be able to feed, leading to higher rates of mortality. Anglers should hold the bass in a fully vertical position, or use two hands to support the body. Using a single hand to hold a bass without proper weight distribution will break or dislocate the jaw.

GOOD



GOOD



BAD



PRO TIPS

Water temperature is the most important factor in largemouth survival. Maintain water temperatures of no more than 84 degrees in your live well.

Keep frozen water bottles in your ice chest to use for cooling your live well water as needed.

Fish need oxygen. Maximize aeration and flush the live well with fresh water periodically to insure you have adequate oxygen levels.

Land your fish as quickly as possible and keep them in the air for as little time as possible.

When handling the fish be careful not to remove the protective slime or damage the gills. Wet your hands before handling, and don't "boat flip" your bass on to the deck.

Hold bass horizontally with two hands, or fully vertical with one hand. Do not put the weight of the fish on the jaw, or the jaw will break.

Catch and release has minimal effect on survival if fish are landed quickly, carefully, and held in live wells with sufficient oxygen and temperatures at or below 84 degrees.

10% PLEDGE

Protect & Conserve

EVERY YEAR SINCE 1973 - AFTCO AND THE SHEDD FAMILY HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN 10% OF COMPANY PROFITS TO HELP PROTECT OUR RESOURCES AND ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE FISHERY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



This information is based on scientific studies on largemouth bass, but the general guidelines apply equally to other species of black bass like smallmouth and spotted bass.

BASS CARE



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