



pennsylvania

FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION

BUREAU OF FISHERIES
DIVISION OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
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Dear Fishing Event Sponsor:

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) welcomes responsibly orchestrated fishing events and tournaments. Special privileges are extended to tournament participants not typically extended to individual anglers. As in the past, Fishing Event Reports (FER) will be required from sponsors of most fishing events during 2026. To fulfill reporting requirements please: (1) print the attached Fishing Event Report, (2) complete it in its entirety, and (3) mail or email the completed report to the above mailing address or email address.

Regulations vary in some waters, and sponsors and participants must be aware of them. This information can be found in the PFBC's *Fishing Summary Book*.

We ask all event sponsors to remind angler participants that it is now legally required in Pennsylvania to clean and drain boats, live wells, trailers, and fishing gear so that undesirable aquatic organisms such as aquatic invasive species and pathogens are not inadvertently introduced into other Commonwealth waterways where they may cause harm. It is also unlawful for anglers to release any unused live bait into Commonwealth waters. Please refer to the PFBC's *Fishing Summary Book* or *Boating Handbook* for guidance about this important topic.

We wish all much success in the 2026 fishing season. Thank you for your cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GES".

Geoffrey Smith
Warmwater Unit Leader

cc: Law Enforcement Bureau, K. Kuhn, D. Nihart, B. Frick

Black Bass Live-Release Tournament Director/Sponsor Checklist

Tournament organization:

All tournaments:

- ☐ Structure departure and weigh-in times to avoid long waits at the weigh-in facility.
- ☐ Identify release location/s and provide release instructions (See [B.A.S.S. "Keeping Bass Alive"](#)).
- ☐ Display surface water temperature in prominent location at all times.

If tournament ≥ 50 participants:

- ☐ Weigh-in and departure times structured in small groups to avoid long waits.

Weigh-in site selection:

- ☐ Contestants can walk from boats to weigh-in area in less than one minute.
- ☐ Short walk to a good release location with adequate water quality, depth, or situated near the live-release vehicle.
- ☐ Situated in a low-traffic area not interfering with other boaters and anglers.
- ☐ Shaded (potentially using portable tarp or tent).
- ☐ Room for spectators without interfering with the movement of contestants.

Weigh-in process:

If the weigh-in facility uses a life support tank:

- ☐ Weigh-in bags are strong, reinforced, perforated, and reusable plastic.
Life support tanks should contain:
 - ☐ 12V bilge pump used to circulate and aerate water. (Encourage contestants to scoop or dip fresh water into perforated bags.)
 - ☐ 1 pound of salt per 25 gallons of water (0.5% salt solution).
 - ☐ At least 100-gallon capacity tank for every 20 contestants.

If the lake water temperature is 75° F (23.9° C) or cooler:

- ☐ Maintain the life support tank at that temperature.

If the lake water temperature is above 75° F (23.9° C):

- ☐ Maintain the life support tank temperature 5-10° F cooler than lake/river temperature, (8 pound of block ice will cool 30 gallons of water about 10° F for 3 hours).

If the weigh-in facility does not use a life support tank:

- ☐ Ensure weigh-in bags are strong, reinforced, and reusable plastic with no holes. Fish must not remain in bags without holes for longer than one minute. Dissolved oxygen declines dramatically in unperforated bags over a very short time.

Handling of fish:

- ☐ Handle fish with wet hands and minimize duration of handling.
- ☐ Use a drainable fish weighing basket outfitted with a measuring board and plastic lid.
- ☐ "Fish slides" set up to quickly return fish to the lake or river must contain a continuous flow of water to prevent injury to fish. See B.A.S.S. "Keeping Bass Alive" for more information†.
- ☐ Ensure dead fish are used or disposed of at home, not the weigh-in site.

Cleaning immediately after the weigh-in process:

Cleaning and drying are now a requirement and are mandatory in Pennsylvania. Information about the requirements and changes can be found in the *2026 Fishing Summary Book* and *2026 Boating Handbook* and on the PFBC website under [Clean Your Gear](#).

Inspect all gear after the event has concluded and boats have been retrieved onto trailers but still at the fishing location:

- ☐ Remove all debris and plant fragments adhering to boats, trailers, fish holding tanks, fish holding equipment (scales and nets), and all gear exposed to water.
 - ☐ Drain and rinse any water holding tanks and fish life support equipment or containers.
 - ☐ Do not discard any **live** baitfish, non-native fish, crayfish, amphibian, or invertebrate (hellgrammites, etc.) baits into the waterway.
 - ☐ Do not discard, or deposit, any dead fish or dead organisms into the waterway or adjacent trash bins.
 - ☐ Any oil or fuel contaminated bilge water should be retained and disposed of properly.
 - ☐ Any **dead** fish, crayfish, amphibians, or invertebrates should be placed in a cooler, or on ice, for later consumption or proper disposal upon return home or at point of embarkation (camp, hotel, etc.).
- (1) **For all crayfish species, the head must be immediately removed behind the eyes upon capture unless used as bait in the water from which taken. Crayfish head removal/regulations are mandated state law.**
 - (2) **Anglers should be aware of unlawful baitfish, such as the Round Goby, Tubenose Goby, European Rudd, Common Carp, Goldfish, Koi, and Comets, and other species banned under state law.**
 - (3) **Dead fish and amphibians, crayfish heads and carcasses, and/or fish entrails should never be disposed of in waste containers at access areas.**
 - (4) **Entrails of any retained organisms and removed crayfish heads should be disposed of at home in municipal trash.**

Decontamination after the weigh-in process:

All live wells, fish life support equipment, boats, and trailers should be thoroughly decontaminated OFF-SITE, prior to launch in a different river or lake:

- ☐ For boats, tanks, and fish life support equipment, follow the procedures for decontamination described above AND one or more of the following:
 - thorough drying (48+ hours) or freezing (24 hours),
 - hot water cleaning (140° F or hotter upon contact), or
 - chemical washing (bleach solution).

Boats and equipment typically stored by mooring (e.g., at a marina) and destined for use elsewhere require more aggressive cleaning and decontamination procedures (see [Clean Your Gear](#)).

Chemical washing may include use of a number of compounds that typically require follow-up rinsing and/or neutralization. We restrict our guidance to household bleach. We caution that use at certain concentrations makes it corrosive and hazardous; therefore, use and application must be carried out with extreme caution and safety. Thorough rinsing and, where necessary, neutralization should be consistent with manufacturer recommendations where applied.

Table 1: Product, concentration, contact type, contact time, and means to treat or neutralize after prescribed contact time for appropriate decontamination off-site.

Product	Concentration	Contact type	Contact time	Following contact time
House-hold bleach (5.25% liquid sodium hypochlorite)	1:1 (50%) 1 part bleach to 1 part water	Dip, wipe, or spray	5 min.	Rinse thoroughly with water or neutralize*, allow to dry
House-hold bleach (5.25% liquid sodium hypochlorite)	1:9 (10%) 1 part bleach to 9 parts water	Soak	10 min.	Rinse thoroughly with water or neutralize*, allow to dry

* Spray with 800-ppm sodium thiosulfate solution (3 g per 1 gallon of water) on all treated surfaces. Sodium thiosulfate is available at swimming pool supply stores

Black Bass Weigh-in Tournament Participant Check List

► At every tournament:

- ☐ Fill live well to maximum capacity to reduce excessive sloshing (rear live wells experience less sloshing than forward live wells).
- ☐ Distribute fish evenly between front and rear live well compartments, if so equipped.
- ☐ Follow these general suggestions (Table 1) for live well operation.

Table 1: Live well setting, exchange rate, exchange volume, cooling, and additive suggestions for different water temperature conditions for maximum survival of black bass.

	WATER TEMPERATURE (°F)		
	<65	65 - 75	>75
Live well setting	Auto	Manual	Recirculate
Exchange Rate	Regular intervals	Continuously	Every 2 hours
Exchange Volume	100%	N/A	50%
Cooling*			8 lbs of block ice per 30 gallons live well capacity Every 3 hours
Additives^			1/3 cup of <u>non-iodized</u> salt for every 5 gallons live well capacity

* Do not cool more than 10° different than surface temperature

^ Will need to add more salt accordingly with water exchanges

► Hooks, in or out:

If using a corrosion-resistant or coated hooks (example: bronzed, stainless steel, tin-cadmium, nickel)
AND the hook can be easily removed:

- ☐ Try to remove hooks using pliers, hemostats, or hook remover with as little tissue damage as possible with limited air exposure.
- ☐ Cut off the hooks from artificial lures (example: crankbaits, jerkbaits) to facilitate lure and hook removal. Hook points may be left in if the hook shank is cut to facilitate lure removal.
- ☐ Cutting pliers can also be used to cut off the hook barb and point; allowing the hook to be backed out.

If the hook cannot be removed in less than one minute of air exposure or without causing tissue damage:

- ☐ Cut the line above hook leaving less than 2 inches of line attached.
- ☐ Cut hook shanks on single and multi-hook lures to remove the lure body when the entire lure cannot be easily extracted from the fish and remove the lure body/blade. Hook points may be left in if the hook shank is cut to facilitate lure removal.

► **Released bass that float after capture from deep water:**

Capture of bass from deep water (> 30 ft.) only typically occurs in a few lakes in Pennsylvania (examples: Lake Erie, Raystown Lake, and Lake Wallenpaupack). Bass caught from deep water may have difficulty in submerging and swimming normally due to an over-inflated swim bladder (barotrauma). Procedures exist to release this pressure from the swim bladder using a hypodermic needle referred to as “fizzing”. Injury and/ or death of the fish can result if carried out improperly since the procedure requires knowledge of the location of the swim bladder. Anglers interested in mastering this procedure should consult publications that detail proper techniques such as the B.A.S.S.-sponsored video [Fizzing Smallmouth Bass](#) or [B.A.S.S. Keeping Bass Alive](#). Apply the procedure only if comfortable that they will cause no harm to released bass. Studies have shown survival of bass with barotrauma may be enhanced when fizzing is properly applied. This condition will not occur, and the procedure will not be necessary in most Pennsylvania waters.

Black Bass Catch-Measure-Release Tournament Participant Check List

Catch-and-immediate-release fishing tournaments have increased in popularity in recent years. These occur out of necessity (i.e., special regulations, use of kayaks) while others may occur by choice due to convenience or concern for fish welfare. Regardless of reason, the goal is to limit handling stress and get fish back in the water as quickly as possible while still collecting the necessary data for the competition.

► Processing fish for entry:

We ask anglers participating in these events to take some precautions to limit air exposure and handling stress in these situations:

- ☐ Maintain all necessary equipment in close proximity
 - Measuring board/ scale
 - Means of identification for event
 - Camera or phone to verify catch
- ☐ Use a long-handled net to land and secure fish while you prepare for measurement.
**Make sure to wet net and measuring board to protect fish's "slime" coat*

We expect anglers to limit the air exposure period to measure/ weigh and photograph to ONE MINUTE or less. Being more efficient from catch to release will not only be more beneficial to the fish's welfare. It will also get you back to fishing more quickly.

Most catch-measure-release tournaments use length as the means of measurement for competition; however, weight is more commonly used in some competition formats. Provided below is a length-weight conversion table for use by anglers who wish to convert lengths to weight for event scoring. These are estimates based on average fish in our surveys and for use as reference only. For Smallmouth Bass, this relationship was derived specifically from Smallmouth Bass collected at the lower Susquehanna River and lower Juniata River reaches (Table 1). For Largemouth Bass, the relationship was based upon fish collected from all Pennsylvania rivers (Table 2). Largemouth Bass are less abundant in rivers than Smallmouth Bass and tend to be lighter than a Largemouth Bass of the same length in a lake setting.

Table 1: Length and estimated weight for riverine Smallmouth Bass by 1/8-inch increments. Estimates developed from Smallmouth Bass collected at the Susquehanna River downstream of Sunbury, PA and the Juniata River downstream of Port Royal, PA.

Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)
12	0.86	15	1.79	18	3.26	21	5.41
12 1/8	0.89	15 1/8	1.84	18 1/8	3.33	21 1/8	5.51
12 1/4	0.92	15 1/4	1.89	18 1/4	3.41	21 1/4	5.62
12 3/8	0.95	15 3/8	1.94	18 3/8	3.49	21 3/8	5.73
12 1/2	0.98	15 1/2	1.99	18 1/2	3.57	21 1/2	5.84
12 5/8	1.02	15 5/8	2.05	18 5/8	3.65	21 5/8	5.95
12 3/4	1.05	15 3/4	2.10	18 3/4	3.73	21 3/4	6.07
12 7/8	1.08	15 7/8	2.16	18 7/8	3.81	21 7/8	6.18
13	1.12	16	2.21	19	3.89	22	6.30
13 1/8	1.15	16 1/8	2.27	19 1/8	3.98	22 1/8	6.42
13 1/4	1.19	16 1/4	2.33	19 1/4	4.06	22 1/4	6.54
13 3/8	1.23	16 3/8	2.39	19 3/8	4.15	22 3/8	6.66
13 1/2	1.27	16 1/2	2.45	19 1/2	4.24	22 1/2	6.78
13 5/8	1.31	16 5/8	2.51	19 5/8	4.33	22 5/8	6.91
13 3/4	1.35	16 3/4	2.57	19 3/4	4.42	22 3/4	7.03
13 7/8	1.39	16 7/8	2.64	19 7/8	4.51	22 7/8	7.16
14	1.43	17	2.70	20	4.61	23	7.29
14 1/8	1.47	17 1/8	2.77	20 1/8	4.70	23 1/8	7.42
14 1/4	1.51	17 1/4	2.83	20 1/4	4.80	23 1/4	7.55
14 3/8	1.56	17 3/8	2.90	20 3/8	4.90	23 3/8	7.69
14 1/2	1.60	17 1/2	2.97	20 1/2	5.00	23 1/2	7.82
14 5/8	1.65	17 5/8	3.04	20 5/8	5.10	23 5/8	7.96
14 3/4	1.69	17 3/4	3.11	20 3/4	5.20	23 3/4	8.10
14 7/8	1.74	17 7/8	3.19	20 7/8	5.30	23 7/8	8.24

Table 2: Length and estimated weight for riverine Largemouth Bass by 1/8-inch increments. Estimates developed from Largemouth Bass collected at rivers statewide.

Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)
12	0.85	15	1.68	18	2.95	21	4.73
12 1/8	0.88	15 1/8	1.73	18 1/8	3.01	21 1/8	4.82
12 1/4	0.90	15 1/4	1.77	18 1/4	3.08	21 1/4	4.91
12 3/8	0.93	15 3/8	1.82	18 3/8	3.14	21 3/8	5.00
12 1/2	0.96	15 1/2	1.86	18 1/2	3.21	21 1/2	5.09
12 5/8	0.99	15 5/8	1.91	18 5/8	3.27	21 5/8	5.18
12 3/4	1.02	15 3/4	1.96	18 3/4	3.34	21 3/4	5.27
12 7/8	1.05	15 7/8	2.00	18 7/8	3.41	21 7/8	5.37
13	1.08	16	2.05	19	3.48	22	5.46
13 1/8	1.12	16 1/8	2.10	19 1/8	3.55	22 1/8	5.56
13 1/4	1.15	16 1/4	2.15	19 1/4	3.62	22 1/4	5.65
13 3/8	1.18	16 3/8	2.20	19 3/8	3.70	22 3/8	5.75
13 1/2	1.22	16 1/2	2.26	19 1/2	3.77	22 1/2	5.85
13 5/8	1.25	16 5/8	2.31	19 5/8	3.84	22 5/8	5.95
13 3/4	1.29	16 3/4	2.36	19 3/4	3.92	22 3/4	6.05
13 7/8	1.33	16 7/8	2.42	19 7/8	4.00	22 7/8	6.16
14	1.36	17	2.47	20	4.07	23	6.26
14 1/8	1.40	17 1/8	2.53	20 1/8	4.15	23 1/8	6.37
14 1/4	1.44	17 1/4	2.59	20 1/4	4.23	23 1/4	6.47
14 3/8	1.48	17 3/8	2.64	20 3/8	4.31	23 3/8	6.58
14 1/2	1.52	17 1/2	2.70	20 1/2	4.40	23 1/2	6.69
14 5/8	1.56	17 5/8	2.76	20 5/8	4.48	23 5/8	6.80
14 3/4	1.60	17 3/4	2.82	20 3/4	4.56	23 3/4	6.91
14 7/8	1.64	17 7/8	2.89	20 7/8	4.65	23 7/8	7.02



Fishing Event Report

Complete all applicable report fields and submit within 30 days after the scheduled event date or by the date specified on the corresponding permit. Submit via e-mail to RA-FB-BASSSURVEY@pa.gov, or mail or fax to the address or number listed above.

If the event is canceled, mark the checkbox, complete the fields within the bold outline, then submit. ☐ Canceled

Special Activities Permit Number:		Event Date(s) Begin:		End:
Organization:				
First Name:	Middle Int.:	Last Name:		Suffix:
Mailing Address:				
City:		State:	Zip:	
Email:		Phone:		
Waterbody Name(s):				

Provide waterbody GPS coordinates (preferred) or location description by completing 1, 2, or 3.

List GPS coordinates which are within PA only. If you are unable to provide GPS coordinates, provide description details such as road names, bridges, and other easily identifiable landmarks.

1	Flowing water	GPS coordinates of most upstream location	Lat:	Long:
		GPS coordinates of most downstream location	Lat:	Long:
2	Non-flowing water	GPS coordinates of waterbody	Lat:	Long:
3	Location description:			

Event/Tournament Type: ☐ Black bass ☐ Striped Bass ☐ Panfish ☐ Catfish
☐ Other: _____

Additional Fishing Event Categories: ☐ Bow/Arrow ☐ Canoe/Kayak ☐ Shore

Participant Goals (check all that apply):

- ☐ Largest limit of fish caught - length/weight (i.e., "full bag")
- ☐ Largest individual fish caught - length/weight (i.e., "lunker")
- ☐ Largest total length/weight - no creel limit – immediate release mandatory
- ☐ Other:

Event Goals (check one):

- ☐ Catch-measure-release (immediate)
- ☐ Live release at end of day/ event (i.e., weigh-in)
- ☐ Harvest encouraged
- ☐ No release provisions – no check-in restrictions
- ☐ Other:

Event-specific Rules: Describe any minimum lengths and/or creel limits imposed by event organizers that are more restrictive than regulations. Example: *Black bass, 15 inches, 5 fish per angler*

Species	Minimum Fish Length	Event Creel Limit

Type	Date _____	Date _____	Date _____	Date _____
Number of anglers fishing				
Fishing start time				
Fishing stop time				
Number of hours fished				

NOTE: Total Number Checked In = (Number Released Alive) + (Number Released Stressed) + (Number Harvested).

[illegible]

Additional Notes: Detail additional comments/remarks that were not covered above.

☐ **I certify that the information contained in the application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.** This certification is made subject to the penalty of Section 4904 of Crimes Code (18 Pa. C.S.A. § 4904) (relating to Unsworn Falsification to Authorities) and Section 908 of the Fish and Boat Code (30 Pa. C.S. § 908) (relating to False Identification or False or Fraudulent Statements on Reports).

Date: _____