

# **Michigan's Fishing Tournament Information System 2018 Summary Report**

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## How did the Fishing Tournament Information System come to be?

During public discussions on Michigan's warm water fishing regulations in 2015, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) asked the Department of Natural Resource's Fisheries Division the following questions related to bass fishing tournament activity:

- 1) How many bass tournaments are conducted in Michigan each year?
- 2) How many anglers participate in bass tournaments in Michigan each year?
- 3) How many bass are handled and released in Michigan tournaments each year?
- 4) What is the economic impact of bass tournament fishing in Michigan?

In response, the NRC passed Fisheries Order 215.15A (replaced in 2019 with Fisheries Order 250.19) which in part requires all bass fishing tournaments to be registered with the DNR and that those tournaments provide basic participation and catch data after the completion of each tournament.

This summary report includes results from fishing tournaments and their catch reports submitted in 2018 via the Fishing Tournament Information System. This data, as well as information that will be collected in subsequent seasons, will be used to guide future management decisions and promote the state's recreational fisheries and natural resource based economy.

## Fishing Tournament Information System Website

In April 2016, the DNR launched the Fishing Tournament Information System online. In addition to providing background information on Michigan's new fishing tournament program, the website allows tournament directors to schedule tournaments and report their results. The site also provides tournament anglers, as well as the general public, the ability to search for registered bass fishing tournaments throughout Michigan. The site has been a huge success and has garnered high interest and visitor traffic with nearly 10,900 site visits in 2018. The system can be found online at [Michigan.gov/FishingTournaments](http://Michigan.gov/FishingTournaments).







# Other Fun Facts about 2018 Michigan Fishing Tournaments

The second most popular waterbody, with 56 events, was Gull Lake (Barry Co.).

The most popular month for tournament activity was June with 642 events. The months of June, July and August combined, held 78.4% of the year's total tournament activity or 1,743 individual tournaments (Figure 2).

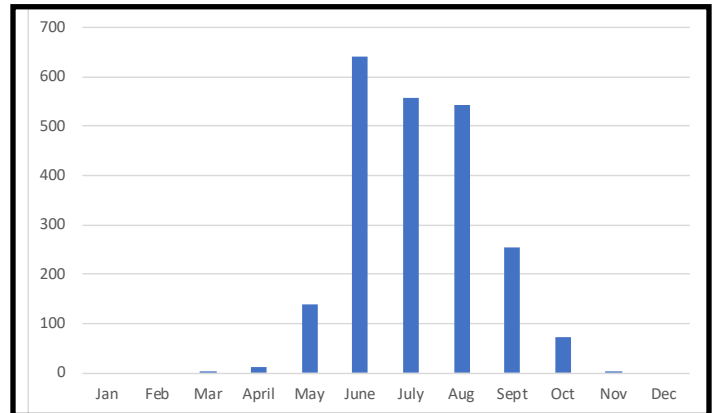
The average size tournament in Michigan was 27 anglers fishing from 14 boats.

Tournaments reported weighing/entering-and-releasing on average 49 bass per event with largemouth bass making up 75% of the bass entered.

Total bass entered/weighed-and-released in bass tournaments in 2018 is estimated in excess of 108,000 fish (81,000 largemouth bass and 27,000 smallmouth bass).

There were 113 waterbodies that hosted 2 or fewer tournaments in 2018.

Bass Tournaments by Month



The average statewide weigh-in rate for tournament anglers was 1.8 bass per angler per event.

The average weight of the bass weighed at Michigan tournaments was 2.2 pounds.

The heaviest bass reported by any tournament in 2018 was a 8.96-pound fish caught-and-released in August from Corey Lake (Cass Co.). Overall, tournaments reported catching-and-releasing 36 bass in excess of 6 pounds in 2018.

Rank	Waterbody	County(s)	No. of Tournaments
1	Lake St. Clair	Macomb (54), St. Clair (7)	61
2	Gull Lake	Barry	56
3	Austin Lake	Kalamazoo	45
4	Pontiac Lake	Oakland	41
5	Coldwater Lake	Branch	38
6	Gun Lake	Barry (35), Allegan (2)	37
7	Portage Lake	St. Joseph	36
8	Grand River	Ottawa (16), Ionia (9), Ingham (8)	33
8	Klinger Lake	St. Joseph	33
8	Muskegon Lake	Muskegon	33
11	Paw Paw Lake	Berrien	32
12	Lake Ponemah	Genesee	31
13	George Lake	Branch	30
13	Lobdell Lake	Genesee	30
15	Jordan Lake	Barry	29
16	Kent Lake	Oakland	26
16	Morrison Lake	Ionia	26
16	Pine lake	Barry	26
19	Wamplers Lake	Lenawee	25
20	White Lake	Muskegon	24

Rank	Waterbody	County	Heaviest Fish (lb.)
1	Corey Lake	Cass	8.96
2	Gun Lake	Barry	8.78
3	Lake Fenton	Genesee	8.58
4	Jordan Lake	Barry	7.71
4	Lake Skegemog	Grand Traverse	7.21
6	Lake Michigan	Leelanau	6.77
7	Mullett Lake	Cheboygan	6.76
7	White Lake	Muskegon	6.76
9	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.73
10	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.55
10	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.55

## Wrapping Up

The DNR will continue to collect and analyze fishing tournament data in the coming years in order to guide future management discussions. Initially, the tournament program was limited to bass fishing. However, in 2019, the NRC replaced Fisheries Order 215 with Order 250,19, effectively expanding this program's requirements to encompass and collect information from walleye and muskellunge tournaments, in addition to those targeting bass.

For more information on Michigan's tournament program registration and reporting, please visit [Michigan.gov/FishingTournaments](https://Michigan.gov/FishingTournaments).

