

How did the Michigan 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 DNR'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?

At the time, the DNR could not provide the NRC with answers. In response, the NRC passed Fisheries Order 215.15A 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 2016 via the Michigan 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.

Michigan Fishing Tournament Information System Website

In April 2016, the DNR launched the Michigan 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 7,700 site visits since its launch in April 2016. The system can be found online at Michigan.gov/fishingtournaments.

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 has been limited to bass fishing only in 2016 and 2017. However, beginning in 2018 this program's requirements will be expanded to encompass and collect information on all tournament activity in Michigan regardless of the fish species that is being targeted.

10 "Heaviest" Bass Reported by Tournaments

Rank	Waterbody	County	Heaviest Fish (lb.)
1	Cheboygan River	Cheboygan	7.60
2	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.95
3	Corey Lake	Cass	6.80
4	Lake Diane	Hillsdale	6.59
5	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.57
6	Long Lake	Hillsdale	6.44
7	Austin Lake	Kalamazoo	6.42
8	Kent Lake	Oakland	6.36
9	Lake St. Clair	Macomb	6.34
10 (tie)	White Lake	Muskegon	6.30
10 (tie)	Indian River	Cheboygan	6.30

20 Most Popular Tournament Locations

Rank	Waterbody	County(s)	No. of Tournaments
1	Lake St. Clair	Macomb, St. Clair	87
2	Austin Lake	Kalamazoo	61
3	Grand River	Ionia, Ingham, Kent, Ottawa	37
3	Pontiac Lake	Oakland	37
5	Muskegon Lake	Muskegon	36
6	Klinger Lake	Saint Joseph	33
7	Gull Lake	Barry	32
7	Gun Lake	Barry, Allegan	32
9	Lobdell Lake	Genesee	31
9	Long Lake	Ionia	31
11	Wabasis Lake	Kent	30
12	Coldwater Lake	Branch	29
12	Lake Ponemah	Genesee	29
12	White Lake	Muskegon	29
15	Paw Paw Lake	Berrien	27
16	Devils Lake	Lenawee	26
16	Wamplers Lake	Lenawee	26
18	Center Lake	Jackson	24
18	Lake Cadillac	Wexford	24
20	Morrison Lake	Ionia	23



Michigan's Fishing Tournament Information System 2016 Summary Report



At-A-Glance: Fishing Tournament Information Reported in 2016

2,096 bass fishing tournaments were registered by 241 directors.

270 unique waterbodies within 66 of Michigan's 83 counties played host to tournaments. Heaviest concentration was in southern 1/2 of Lower Peninsula.

Tournaments, on average, had 25.7 anglers fishing from 13.7 boats.



Reporting tournaments weighed and released on average 39.6 bass per event. Largemouth bass accounted for 82.4% of these catches versus 17.6% smallmouth bass.

20 most popular waterbodies hosted 32.6% of the tournaments, averaging 34.2 events each.

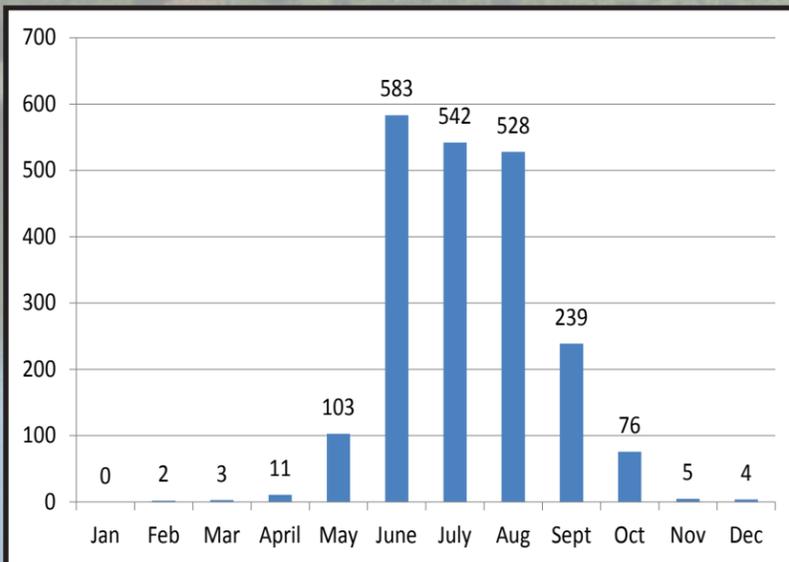
June was the most popular month for tournament activity with 583 events. Combined; June-August accounted for 78.9% of the year's total (1,653 tournaments).

Heaviest bass reported by any tournament was a 7.60 pound fish caught and released from Cheboygan River (July 2016). Overall, tournaments reported catching and releasing 23 bass exceeding 6 pounds.

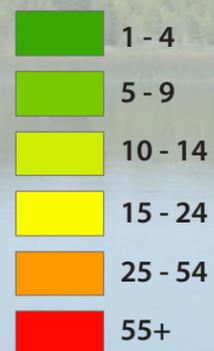
105 waterbodies hosted two or fewer tournaments.

Average statewide catch rate for tournament anglers was 1.54 fish weighed/angler. Catch rates of top 20 waterbodies ranged from 2.72 to 5 fish weighed/angler.

Tournaments Registered by Month



of Tournaments



Second most popular waterbody was Austin Lake (Kalamazoo County) with 61 events.

This heat map shows the range of tournaments held per Michigan county.

Total fish entered in tournaments was estimated in excess of 80,000 fish (66,000 largemouth / 14,000 smallmouth).

Tournament bass, on average, weighed 2.2 pounds.

Most popular waterbody was Lake St. Clair with 87 tournaments.