



# Black Bass Technical Work Group

Black Bass Species Author:

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# Introduction



- **Bass are not native to Maine – they are introduced.**
  - Smallmouth introduced in 1860's.
  - Largemouth intentionally introduced 1890's.
    - Likely unintentionally introduced prior to 1890's.
- **Neither species raised in the IFW hatchery system.**
  - Most initial introductions involve fry from Federal hatcheries.
- **Bass brought to Maine as sportfish and food fish.**
- **Early fisheries managers encouraged the public to introduce bass to new waters.**



# Management History

- **Bass are some of the most popular sport fishes in Maine.**
  - Residents.
  - Non-residents.
- **Sought by various user groups.**
  - Average angler (Open water and Ice).
  - Bass tournaments.
- **Bass regulations have evolved over time.**
  - Decrease or increase harvest.
  - Increase or decrease size limits.
  - Unlimited harvest (illegal introductions).





## Current Management

- **Variety of sampling methods used to monitor bass populations.**
  - Electrofishing: Population dynamics, biological data, recruitment.
  - Angling: Population dynamics, biological data, catch rates, potential angler success.
  - Creel survey: Biological data, catch rates, harvest information.
- **Habitat evaluations.**
  - Potential spawning habitat.
  - Juvenile habitat.
  - Preferred adult habitat.
  - Water quality
  - Species assemblage
    - Prey/food items
    - Competition/predation





## Current Management (General Law)

### Southern Region.

*-Daily Limit: 2 fish. No minimum length, only one may exceed 14".*

*Goal – Encourage harvest of smaller bass to promote growth while conserving larger bass.*

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### Northern Region.

*-No size or bag limit on bass.*

*Goal – Reduce special S-Codes in what is largely wild salmonid country, discourage illegal bass introductions by not actively managing illegally introduced populations.*

# Special Regulations



## Slot Limits:

*Example - (Daily bag limit:1 fish; all bass between 16-20 inches must be released alive at once.)*

- Used to target harvest or protection to a certain size class of fish.
- Typically used as an attempt to improve size quality.

## Catch and Release:

*Example – (All bass must be released alive at once.)*

- Used where recruitment is severely limited.
- Typically related to a lack of suitable habitat for a particular species.

# Special Regulations



## S-13:

### No size or bag limit on bass.



- Used on any water with newly, illegally introduced bass.
- Illegal introduction = no management.
- Messaging tool – not effective for bass eradication.
- Has been applied as species-specific (complicates law book).

***Example: Largemouth bass introduced into a smallmouth bass water.***

***(No size or bag limit on largemouth bass.)***





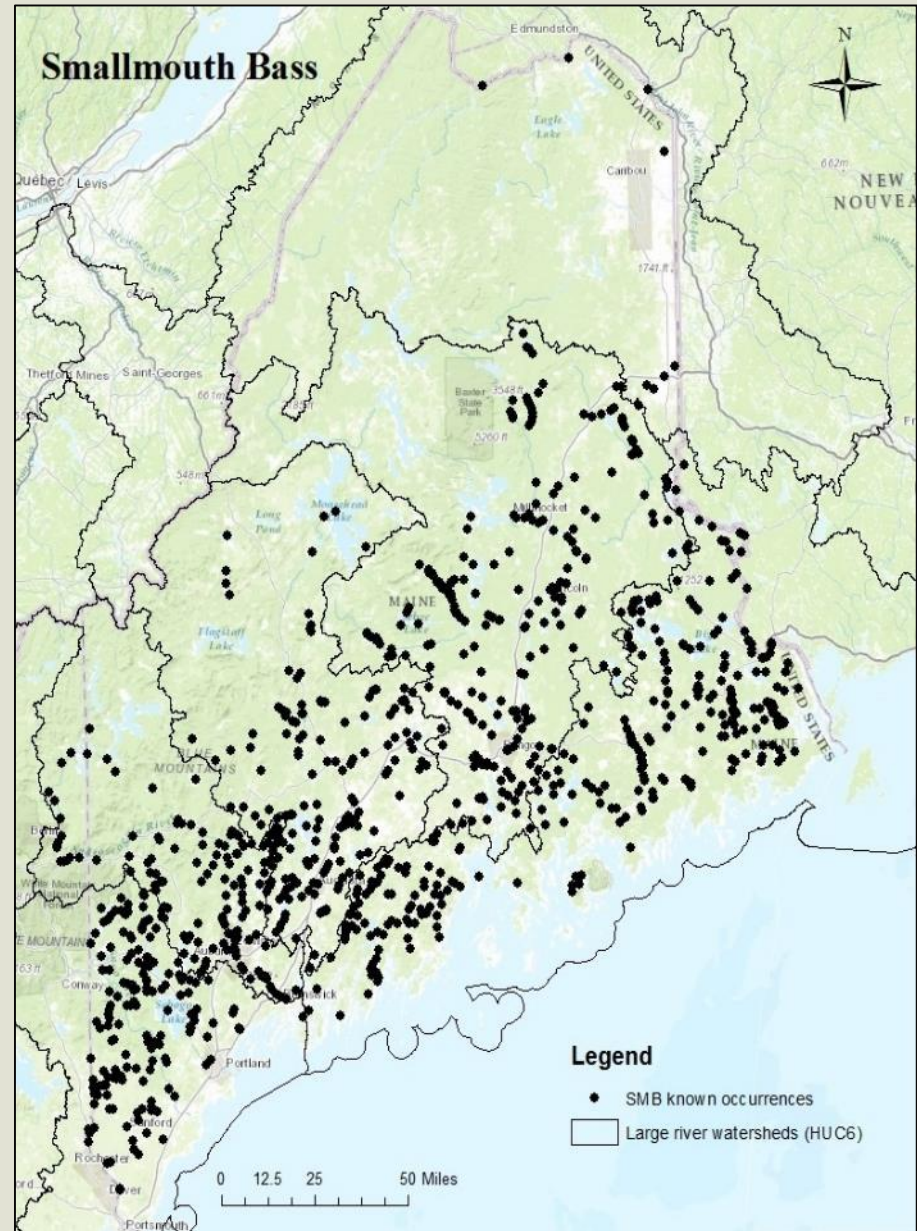
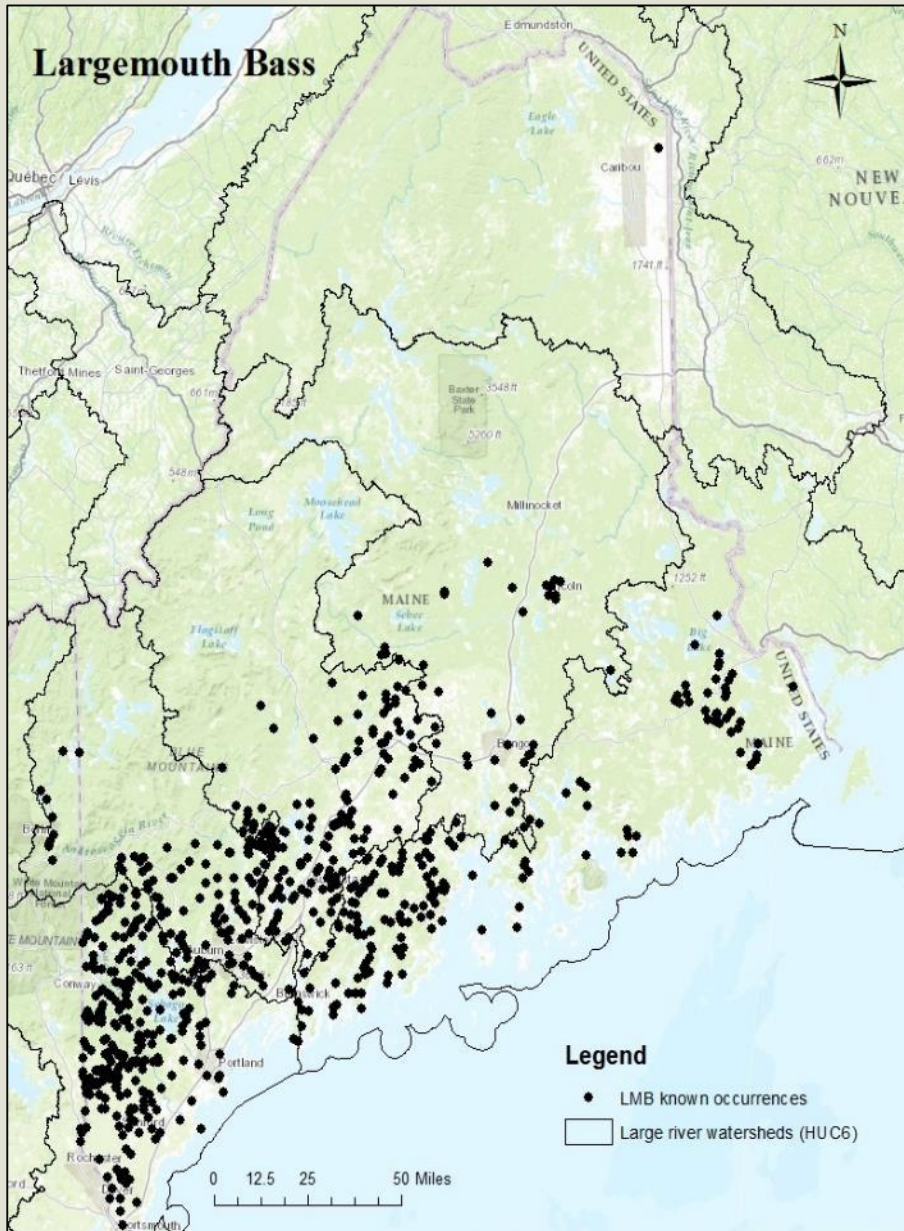
# Bass Tournaments

- Tournaments must be permitted through IFW.
- Majority of permits allocated to bass clubs through a lottery system.
- Weigh-in tournaments not permitted on waters less than 500 acres.
- No more than 7 weigh-in tournaments per waterbody.
- No weigh-in tournaments during nesting period (varies by county).
  - Catch/Measure/Release tournaments allowed.
- Club Tournaments.
  - Maximum 15 boats.
- Open Tournaments.
  - 1 boat per 35 acres of water.
  - Maximum 100 boats.





# Bass Distribution





# 2016 Angler Survey Summary

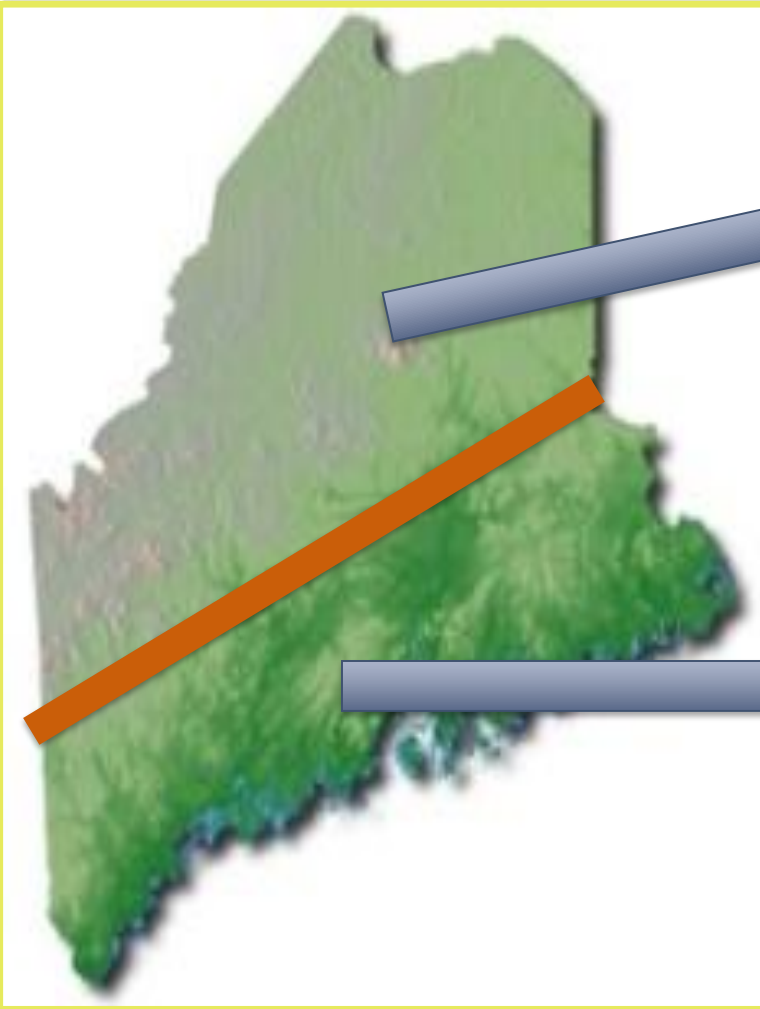
- Taken from the summary section of the RM survey.

	Open Water	Ice
<b>Gear types used</b> (multiple responses allowed)	Spin (56%)	Traps/tip-ups (90%)
	Bait (35%)	Jigging (26%)
	Trolling (19%)	
	Fly (15%)	
<b>Size Quality</b>	Quality- $\geq 14$ "	
	Trophy- $\geq 20$ "	

## Bass Harvest is Low in Maine

- Open water: 2.6%
- Ice fishing: 10.3%
- Results of statewide survey corroborate findings of IFW field surveys.

# Attitudes Toward Bass



- Northern Maine

- Anglers prefer fishing for trout rather than bass.
- More likely to harvest bass.

- Southern Maine

- Anglers prefer bass fishing over trout fishing.
- Less likely to harvest bass.





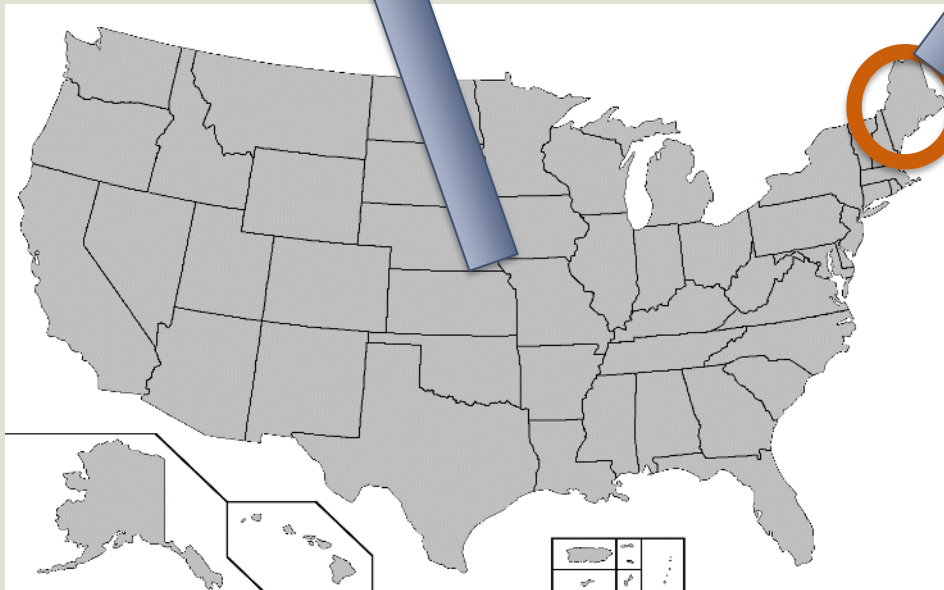
# Angler Preferences

## • Non-Resident Anglers

- Prefer bass fishing over trout fishing.
- Both open water and ice fishing.

## • Maine Resident Anglers

- Open water: rank bass second behind trout.
- Ice fishing: rank bass third behind trout and landlocked salmon.



Bass are very important to anglers and the Maine economy!