

Focus on Fishing

Guidelines for success

Largemouth bass



General facts

One of the most sought after freshwater fish nationwide, largemouth bass can be found in almost every lake, pond, slow moving river or stream throughout the state. Their diverse diet offers the opportunity for anglers to use a variety of fishing techniques. Bass are a shallow water species for most of the year, often found in or near vegetation, brush piles, logs and stumps, rocks and docks. Targeting these types of structure will lead to many successful fishing trips.

Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Day time
Summer	Early morning, evening and night
Fall	Daytime
Winter	Daytime

Seasonality

In early spring, largemouth bass move out of their deep wintering areas and onto shallow flats. Here they remain throughout the spring and into early summer. Higher mid-summer surface water temperatures cause bass to move slightly deeper in the lake in favor of cooler water. In late September and October, bass may school in open areas of the lake, feeding heavily in preparation for the upcoming winter. Winter can be another great time to catch bass, either ice-fishing or in open water.

Gear:

Fishing Rod — 5.5 to 7 ft.

Line — 6 to 14 lb. test monofilament

Key Fishing Areas:

Assunpink Lake, Cooper River Lake, Delaware Lake, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Manasquan Reservoir, Merrill Creek Reservoir, Monksville Reservoir, Newton Lake, Parvin Lake, Rainbow Lake, Round Valley Reservoir, Salem Canal, Splitrock Reservoir, Stone Tavern Lake, Union Lake, Lower Delaware River and Maurice River.

Size:

Adults typically range 1- 6 lbs. (average 2 lbs.)

Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

Adult: 6 lbs.

Junior: 4 lbs.

Catch & Release: 21 in.

State Record:

10 lbs., 14 oz, Menantico Sand Pond (1980)

Bait

Live minnows, worms or crayfish are common baits for bass fishing. A small split shot weight (size #7) can be added 6 to 9 inches above a #4 hook. A bobber is not necessary, but if preferred, should be placed 12 to 24 inches above the weight. Cast towards structure such as weeds, logs, stumps and docks. Slowly reel in excess line as necessary.

Artificial Lures

Spinnerbait – A 3/8 oz., white or chartreuse spinnerbait with either a #4 willow leaf blade for clear waters, or a #4 Colorado blade in cold and muddy water. Cast in and around structure using a steady retrieve.

Crankbait – Use lures approximately 3 to 4 inches in size. Choose colors that mimic the fish on which bass naturally feed such as shiner, sunfish, yellow perch and others. Cast beyond structure and try a steady or varied retrieve.

Plastic Worms – Popular colors for bass are black, brown, green, pumpkin or white. Cast near structure, let sink, twitch, retrieve and cast again. *Examples:* Berkley Power Worm, Senko, Zoom Finesse Worm



In late March, try for big, pre-spawn bass in over-wintering holes near shallow spawning areas by casting a 1/4 to 1/2 oz. Rattletrap in shad color for clear water, chartreuse for stained or muddy water. In late June, cast a Texas-rigged plastic worm in and around vegetation.

For more information visit the following Web sites: www.NJFishandWildlife.com, www.bassmaster.com, www.flwoutdoors.com, www.bassfan.com, www.bassfishin.com, www.njbassfed.org, and www.federationnationofnj.org.