



## 2024 State of Connecticut Bass Tournament Fishing

In Connecticut, bass fishing accounts for 2.1 million fishing days annually, making it the most popular freshwater gamefish in the state. A subset of this angling effort comes from tournaments, a popular activity for fishing clubs. Bass tournament fishing in Connecticut has dramatically increased since tracking began, going from 124 events in 1986 to a record high of 810 events in 2021. This nearly seven-fold increase in tournament angling over the past four decades shows a shift in the popularity of bass fishing in Connecticut, following a nationwide trend. While tournament numbers have dropped in Connecticut over the past few years (699 in 2024), bass fishing is still popular and growing across the state annually.

This document will serve as an annual update on bass tournament fishing in Connecticut. The purpose will be to inform all stakeholders (tournament anglers, recreational anglers, fisheries biologists, etc.) of the distribution of tournaments, tournament-related pressures, and potential impact on bass fisheries across the state. Tournament bass anglers also benefit fisheries management as they are often more effective at sampling the bass in a waterbody than other fisheries methods. Accordingly, post-event reporting is a key contribution that tournament directors make to fisheries management in Connecticut.

In this document, you will find 2024 tournament statistics for Connecticut as a whole, and then for each waterbody that has hosted at least one event. Also included is a list of the location and weight of the 20 biggest bass reported! Finally, you will also see monthly breakdowns of tournament pressure across the state, and at Candlewood Lake, which is widely considered to be the State's best bass fishery. Unfortunately, at this time, the post-tournament reporting percentage is extremely low (35.48%). As post-tournament reporting improves over time, this report will be expanded to include more useful information, such as largest bass by species, total tournament effort at waterbodies, and advanced monitoring of bass populations.

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Some general guidelines for permit application submission, approval, and completion:

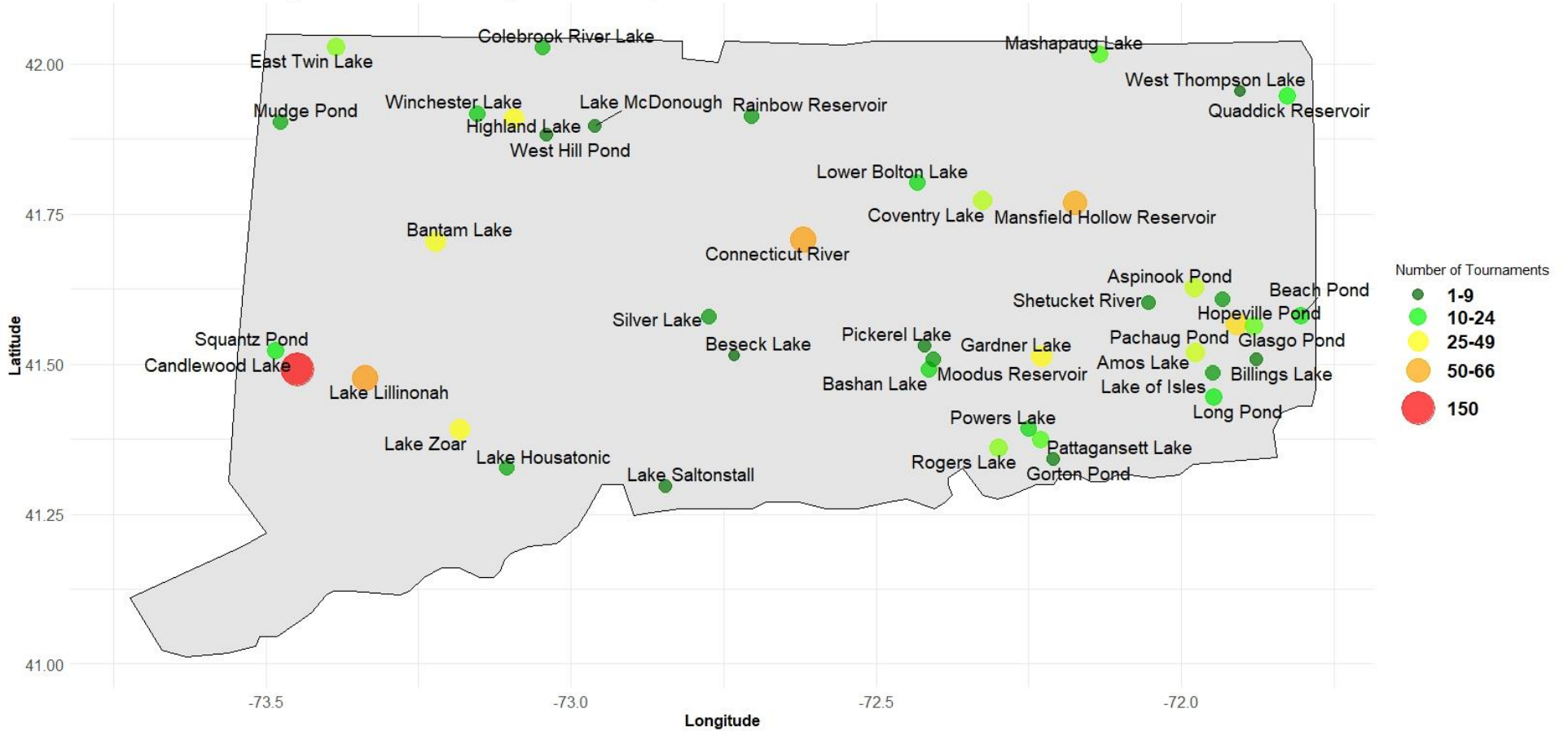
- Permit applications can be submitted for the following year as early as April 1<sup>st</sup>. (i.e., for 2026, you can begin submitting permits on April 1, 2025).
- Tournaments are allotted 50% of the parking capacity at a launch facility. Requesting greater than 50% is possible with approval, but generally only granted for weekdays and off-season periods.
- From July 1 – August 31, tournament fishing is limited to catch-and-immediate release events at Bass Management Lakes, with exemptions given for Mansfield Hollow Reservoir and Gardner Lake.
- Tournament permits are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. If there is a conflict for those clubs that do not fit at the selected launch, the club that submitted their permit last will be asked to move to another waterbody or select another date without further conflict.
- For clubs launching from the same launch on the same day, tournament start/end times will be staggered to reduce congestion and allow other boaters ease-of-access.
- Clubs must always have at least one copy of the approved permit on-hand the day of the tournament.
- After the completion of every event, clubs are required to report their results within 7 days. These results help generate this document and improve knowledge of the fisheries.



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### 2024 Bass Fishing Tournaments by Waterbody



**Figure 1:** Map of Connecticut depicting locations and names of the 42 waterbodies that hosted at least one bass fishing tournament in 2024. Dot size and color denote a range in the number of tournaments held on each waterbody.



Table 1: Summary statistics of bass tournament reporting across Connecticut. Averages derived from all post-tournament results submitted via EZFile and paper.

<u>Annual Statistics</u>	
Permits Requested	789
Permits Approved	705
Tournaments Held	699
Tournaments Cancelled	6
Permits with no Resolution*	84
<hr/>	
Unique Tournament Directors	107
Unique Clubs	101
Average Tournaments/Club	6.5
<hr/>	
Number of Reports Submitted	248
via EZFile	151
via email/mail	97
Number of Reports Missing	451
Reporting Compliance Percentage	35.48%
<u>Tournament Statistics</u>	
Number of Waterbodies w/ Tournaments	42
Average Number of Anglers	12.28
Average Number of Boats	7.65
Average # of Bass Reported/Tournament	29.58
Average # of Bass Reported/Angler	2.41
Total Bass Weighed (estimate for all 699)	20,677

\* In the event of a conflict with a permit, all attempts are made to accommodate permittees with alternative solutions (i.e. change dates, times, or waterbodies). If no acceptable resolution is found, the permit is not issued as agreed upon by both parties.

Table 2: Ranking of the 20 “biggest” bass reported from tournaments during 2024. Waterbody and the final weight of the fish were collected from results submitted via EZFile and paper. Species distinction could not be made as some fish were designated as “black bass.”

Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)	Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)
1	Candlewood Lake	6.89	11	Candlewood Lake	6.15
2	Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	6.63	12	Bantam Lake	6.15
3	Candlewood Lake	6.62	13	Candlewood Lake	6.09
4	Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	6.56	14	Bantam Lake	6.08
5	Hopeville Pond	6.52	15	East Twin Lake	6.06
6	Candlewood Lake	6.46	16	Candlewood Lake	6.02
7	Pachaug Pond	6.23	17	Candlewood Lake	5.93
8	Candlewood Lake	6.18	18	Candlewood Lake	5.91
9	Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	6.17	19	Candlewood Lake	5.86
10	Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	6.15	20	Candlewood Lake	5.78

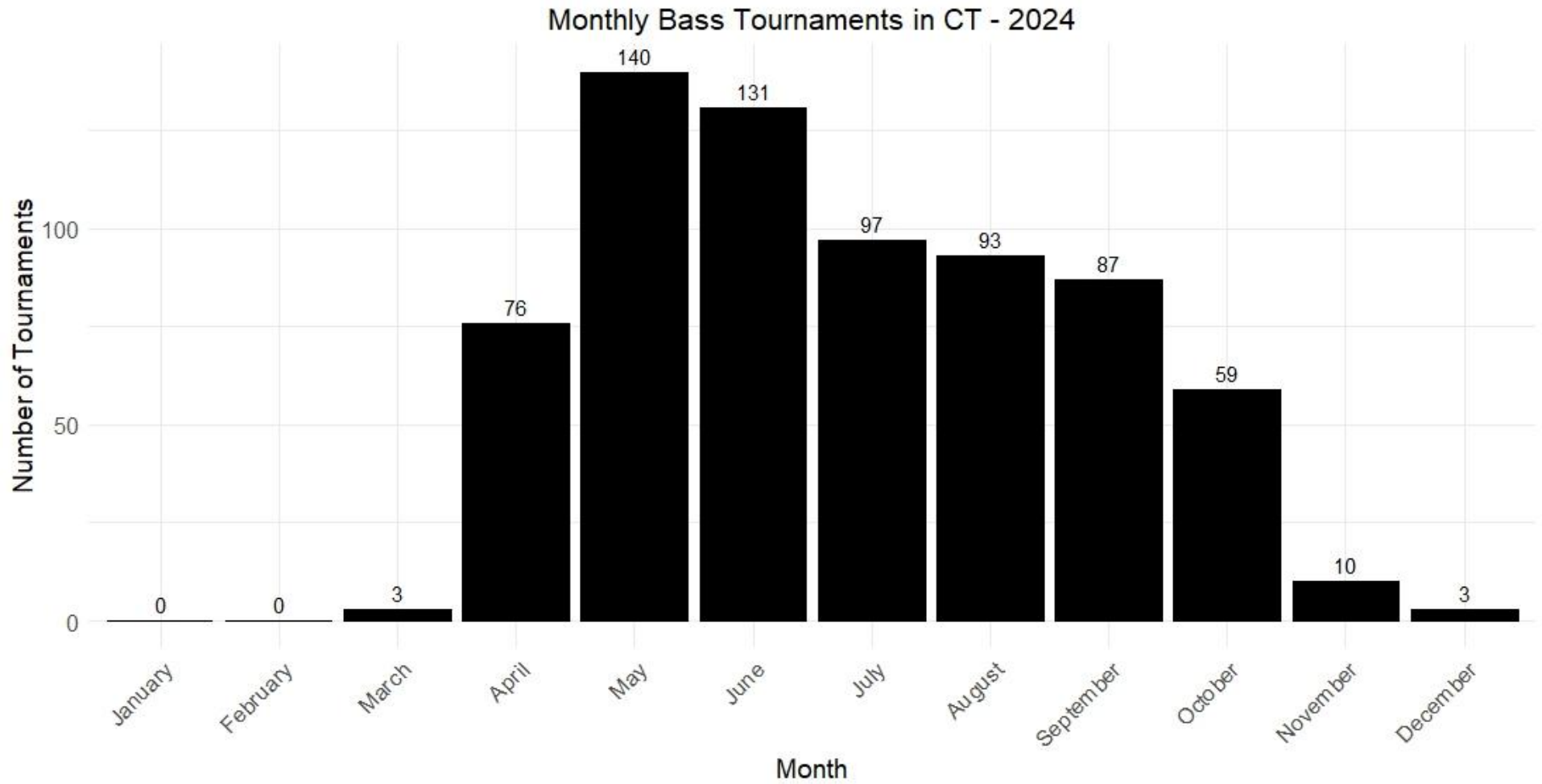


Figure 2: Bar graph representing total bass fishing tournaments hosted at all waterbodies in Connecticut for each month of 2024. Total waterbodies represented is 42. Monthly values are represented above each bar.

### Monthly Bass Tournaments at Candlewood Lake, CT - 2024

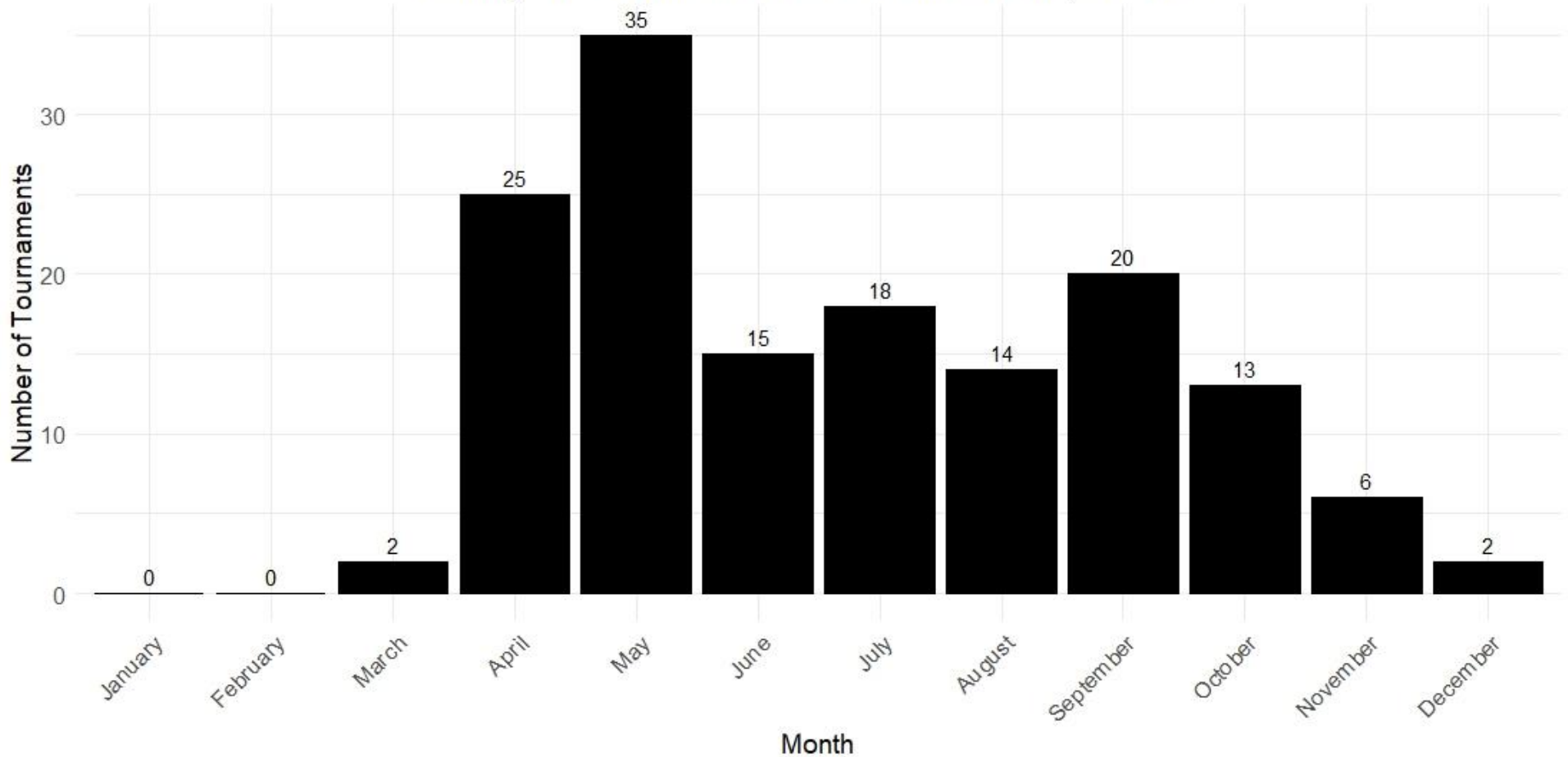


Figure 3: Bar graph representing total bass fishing tournaments hosted at Candlewood Lake, CT, for each month of 2024. Monthly values are represented above each bar.

Table 3: Waterbody specific reporting statistics for bass tournaments in Connecticut during 2024. A total of 42 waterbodies were used for at least one bass tournament. Averages were calculated for each waterbody that had at least one report returned (35.48% reporting rate). Ranges of values are shown in parentheses below the averages for waterbodies with at least two reports. Estimated tournament effort is the average anglers per tournament times the number of tournaments that took place times seven hours, the average tournament length. Estimated effort/acre is used to standardize fishing pressure across waterbodies. Higher values represent more pressure on those fisheries. Increased post-tournament reporting will refine these summary statistics in future years.

Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Estimated Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Total Bass/Bag	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Amos Lake	112.4	20	6	30.0%	10.8 (5 - 26)	1,512	13.45	1.8 (1.3 - 2.9)	2.27 (2.05 - 2.40)
Aspinook Pond	308.8	19	8	42.1%	12.4 (4 - 20)	1,649	5.34	2.2 (1.4 - 2.8)	1.67 (1.36 - 1.92)
Bantam Lake	955.4	24	10	41.7%	9.9 (4 - 30)	1,663	1.74	2.2 (1.3 - 3.4)	2.07 (1.93 - 2.80)
Bashan Lake	265.5	8	1	12.5%	7.0	392	1.48	2.9	1.60
Beach Pond	348.5	9	4	44.4%	5.0 (4 - 7)	315	0.90	3.2 (2.9 - 3.8)	1.29 (1.06 - 1.50)
Beseck Lake	112.8	1	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Billings Lake	94.9	2	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Candlewood Lake	5,085.60	150	62	41.3%	17.7 (2 - 70)	18,585	3.65	2.4 (0.5 - 5.0)	2.14 (1.56 - 4.01)
Colebrook River Lake	852.3	6	1	16.7%	7.0	294	0.34	2.9	1.30
Connecticut River	N/A	59	11	18.6%	12.1 (8 - 24)	4,997	N/A	2.1 (0.9 - 3.4)	1.64 (1.24 - 2.41)



**Table 3: Continued**

Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Estimated Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Total Bass/Bag	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Coventry Lake	374.4	18	9	50.0%	11.2 (6 - 18)	1,411	3.77	2.2 (1.3 - 4.0)	2.03 (1.59 - 2.33)
East Twin Lake	565.3	14	3	21.4%	11.0 (10 - 13)	1,078	1.91	3.3 (2.8 - 4.0)	2.81 (2.52 - 3.00)
Gardner Lake	527.3	26	13	50.0%	13.5 (4 - 25)	2,457	4.66	2.5 (1.5 - 5.0)	1.73 (1.40 - 2.04)
Glasgo Pond	81.3	12	6	50.0%	12.8 (5 - 19)	1,075	13.23	2.0 (1.2 - 3.6)	1.70 (1.43 - 1.81)
Gorton Pond	52.4	2	1	50.0%	3.0	42	0.80	2.7	1.35
Highland Lake	448.2	25	11	44.0%	7.8 (3 - 12)	1,362	3.04	3.1 (0.8 - 5.0)	2.00 (1.56 - 2.31)
Hopeville Pond	106.6	4	3	75.0%	13.0 (13 - 13)	364	3.41	1.4 (0.3 - 2.5)	2.08 (2.00 - 2.08)
Lake Housatonic	346.3	5	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Lake Lillinonah	1,594.80	66	22	33.3%	11.2 (4 - 25)	5,174	3.24	2.8 (1.6 - 4.8)	1.64 (1.44 - 2.87)
Lake McDonough	385.7	2	1	50.0%	28.0	392	1.02	2.3	2.13
Lake Of Isles	91.2	4	2	50.0%	4.0 (4 - 4)	112	1.23	3.8 (2.8 - 4.8)	2.05 (1.88 - 2.15)
Lake Saltonstall	413.4	2	2	100.0%	33.5 (33 - 34)	469	1.13	0.2 (0.1 - 0.2)	3.60 (3.50 - 3.75)
Lake Zoar	919.8	25	8	32.0%	10.8 (3 - 26)	1,890	2.05	2.9 (2.1 - 5.0)	1.71 (1.51 - 2.27)

**Table 3: Continued**





Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/ Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Estimated Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Total Bass/Bag	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Long Pond	86.6	9	1	11.1%	5.0	315	3.64	3.0	1.48
Lower Bolton Lake	176.5	8	3	37.5%	14.0 (9 - 20)	784	4.44	2.3 (1.8 - 3.1)	2.09 (1.63 - 2.43)
Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	429.5	49	16	32.7%	17.3 (4 - 61)	5,934	13.82	1.7 (0.9 - 4.8)	1.99 (1.67 - 2.38)
Mashapaug Lake	297.9	11	1	9.1%	9.0	693	2.33	0.3	2.87
Moodus Reservoir	440.7	4	1	25.0%	6.0	168	0.38	3.7	1.27
Mudge Pond	211.2	5	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Pachaug Pond	817.0	35	14	40.0%	11.3 (4 - 23)	2,769	3.39	2.8 (1.2 - 5.0)	1.74 (0.88 - 2.50)
Pattagansett Lake	125.7	11	6	54.5%	10.0 (4 - 16)	770	6.13	2.2 (0.9 - 5.0)	2.09 (1.69 - 2.49)
Pickerel Lake	82.1	2	1	50.0%	5.0	70	0.85	5.0	1.41
Powers Lake	146.5	8	3	37.5%	6.7 (5 - 9)	375	2.56	1.7 (0.8 - 3.0)	1.00 (0.67 - 1.23)
Quaddick Reservoir	202.8	10	6	60.0%	11.2 (6 - 24)	784	3.87	3.0 (1.1 - 5.0)	1.88 (1.57 - 2.20)
Rainbow Reservoir	204.3	4	1	25.0%	10.0	280	1.37	0.4	1.75
Rogers Lake	275.4	14	4	28.6%	10.0 (9 - 11)	980	3.56	2.7 (1.6 - 3.3)	2.40 (2.38 - 2.42)

**Table 3: Continued**



Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/ Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Estimated Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Total Bass/Bag	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Shetucket River	N/A	3	2	66.7%	28.5 (27 - 30)	599	N/A	1.3 (1.0 - 1.5)	1.85 (1.81 - 1.87)
Silver Lake	140.6	4	3	75.0%	8.3 (4 - 11)	232	1.65	3.0 (2.3 - 5.0)	1.87 (1.47 - 2.07)
Squantz Pond	266.8	9	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
West Hill Pond	245.5	2	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
West Thompson Lake	189.3	1	1	100.0%	11.0	77	0.41	4.0	1.83
Winchester Lake	248.1	7	1	14.3%	9.0	441	1.78	1.6	1.43