

CT DEEP **2019**
FISHING REPORT NUMBER 13
7/11/2019



Smallmouth Bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*)



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INLAND REPORT

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Providers of some of the information in this report included Bob's Place, Candlewood Bait & Tackle, Captain Morgan's Bait & Tackle, The Fish Connection, JT's Fly Shop, Yankee Outdoors, CTFisherman.com, and a number of bass fishing clubs & organizations.

LARGEMOUTH BASS fishing is generally fair to good, but the best times will often be early mornings and evenings with some tougher fishing likely found midday. Look for the cooler water. Good reports from Glasgo Pond, Pachaug Pond, Hopeville Pond ("...best where the river comes in."), Morey Pond, Mashapaug Lake, East Twin Lake, Highland Lake, Lake Housatonic, Mudge Pond (pre-dawn hours best, slow otherwise), Congamond Lakes (at night), Candlewood Lake (a winning formula has been to fish smallies early, then go for largemouth in the grass), Wononskopomuc Lake (good for some, slow for others), and Lake Zoar.

Tournament angler reports are from Aspinook Pond (fair to good, 3.5 lb lunker and an average weight of 1.75 lbs per bass for one club, slower for a second club, but with a 5.25 lb lunker and a 1.94 lb average fish weight), Long Pond (tough, 3.63 lb lunker), Pachaug Pond (fishing was on the slow side for one club, but the fish caught averaged 2 lbs apiece with a 5.38 lb lunker, while a second club found much more action with 9 five-fish limits, a 5.16 lb lunker and an average fish weight of 1.95 lbs apiece), Candlewood Lake (fair to good, 4.2 lb lunker), East Twin Lake (good for most, 4.14 lb lunker and a 2.1 lb per fish average weight), Highland Lake (fair for a night tournie, some good size with a 4.38 lb lunker and a 2.3 lb per fish average weight), Rainbow Reservoir (slow to fair, 4.14 lb lunker), Lake Zoar (fair to good, 4.66 lb lunker, nearly a 2.2 lb average fish weight) and the Connecticut River (fair to good for a club out of Salmon River Cove, 4.26 lb lunker).



STRIPED BASS FISHING REGULATIONS ARE GOING TO CHANGE IN 2020,

and DEEP is looking for your opinions and comments on this issue. Please consider clicking the link below to take a brief (2-3 min) survey to share your thoughts on striped bass regulations:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CTStripedBass2019>

The survey will close Monday-July 15, 2019.

Also stay tuned for announcement of a public hearing on striped bass regulations, to be held in August or September.

SMALLMOUTH BASS. Smallies are hard to find in many areas, but fish are being found at Candlewood Lake (look over humps early, swimbaits will work), Lake Zoar and Highland Lake (a bit on the “few and far between” side). Summer is definitely here now and river smallie action is very good in the Housatonic River. Other rivers for smallmouth include the Naugatuck River, Shetucket River, Pachaug River and Quinebaug River.

Tournament angler reports are from Candlewood Lake (fair, 4.09 lb lunker), Pachaug Pond (a couple of smallies) and Lake Zoar (slow to fair, 3.98 lb lunker).

TROUT- RIVERS & STREAMS. Conditions for the weekend should be fair in most places. In many of our stocked areas the water temperatures are hitting stressful levels and may continue to rise with several days in the upper 80’s and nights that won’t cool much. Flows remain comfortable for fishing in many areas but are dropping below typical mid-July levels (*see stream flow graphic on page 4*) and the weather forecast is good (although hot for anglers and fish). While not currently an issue anywhere, you can check stream flows anytime (**real time stream flow data from 68 USGS gauging stations can be found at the [USGS web site](#)**).

To test your fishing skill and for a chance at catching a beautiful trout, try our **Wild Trout Management Areas**. These areas were established because they have adequate water temperatures to support trout year round and have some level of natural reproduction mixed with trout stocked as fry (1.5 inch). Fry stocked trout grow in the stream and are visually indistinguishable from their wild-spawned counterparts. Class 1 areas are catch and release only, fly or artificial lure, and barbless hooks. Class 2 and 3 areas do not have any restriction on gear, however daily limits are 2 fish greater than 12 inches (Class 2) and 5 fish greater than 9 inches (Class 3). All Wild Trout Management Areas are listed in our [Fishing Guide](#).

Anglers should remember to try a number of tactics and methods. Insect hatches are mixed and variable. Dry flies are on, also look for large stoneflies, all sizes of mayflies, and caddis (black and brown). With the hot mid-day, early mornings and later into the evening are the best times. Nymphs and streamers are still working well. Terrestrials patterns such as beetles, ants (red and black), and grasshoppers are trout favorites. Worms, live minnows, crayfish, powerbait, and a variety of small lures are also productive.

Places reporting the best action are the West Branch (**remember the upper portion stocked 7/3 with 2,250 Brown trout**) and mainstem Farmington River and the Housatonic River (avoid the thermal refuges). The Shetucket River and Fenton River (look for the deep spots) are also providing some action, and the Hammonasset River and Salmon River are really quiet now.

Farmington River – Fishing has been good to very good and conditions for the weekend look good. **The upper section of the West Branch from the Goodwin Dam to the old bridge abutments was stocked with 2,250 Brown Trout (fish averaging at least 12 inches in length) on July 3**, flows are clear and low to

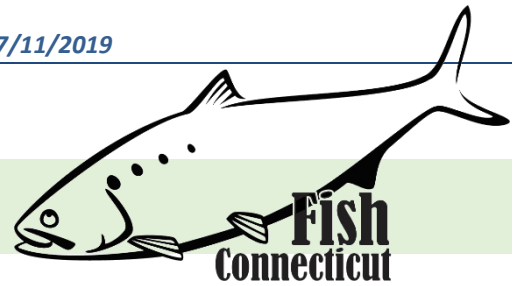
Real time Water Temperature Data is available from the Riverton gauge on the USGS *Current Conditions for Connecticut Streamflow* website (<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ct/nwis/current/?type=flow>).

DEEP’s Bureau of Water Protection & Land Reuse was instrumental in funding this addition to the USGS gauge. This new data will be helpful, including for monitoring conditions and determining the need for additional monitoring farther downstream, especially during droughts and heat waves.

Here’s the link that will take you directly to the USGS 01186000 WEST BRANCH FARMINGTON RIVER AT RIVERTON, CT online gauge data:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ct/nwis/uv?cb_all=on&cb_00010=on&cb_00060=on&cb_00065=on&format=gif_default&site_no=01186000&period=17&begin_date=2019-06-25&end_date=2019-07-09

Note that if you save the direct link above, you’ll need to update the dates every few days as it takes one to a specific time period (in this case 6/22 – 7/9).



MARINE FISHING REPORT

Surface water temperatures in Long Island Sound (LIS) are in the mid 60's to lower 70's °F. Check out the following web sites for more detailed water temperatures and marine boating conditions:

<http://www.mysound.uconn.edu/stationstat.html>
<http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/>

http://marine.rutgers.edu/mrs/sat_data/?nothumbs=1
<http://www.wunderground.com/MAR/AN/330.html>

IMPORTANT REMINDERS for ANGLERS:

- **NORTHERN DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN TURTLE** – Many shore anglers fishing in the lower Connecticut and Housatonic Rivers and other estuaries are encountering these beautiful brackish water turtles while fishing. They will frequently feed on fishermen's live or dead bait when bottom fishing. They are a protected species with very low abundance. Please take great care (use needle nose pliers) when removing the hook and release the turtle without avoidable harm. Terrapins have a long lifespan of about 25 to 40 years. Thank you for supporting conservation!
- **STURGEON** – We've had a few reports of anglers inadvertently catching sturgeon while bottom fishing. Please, do not remove the fish from the water. Release all sturgeon without avoidable harm as their populations are slowly recovering and are at VERY low levels. They are a federally protected species. Thanks!

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CTStripedBass2019> This survey will close on July 15, 2019

Also stay tuned for announcement of a public hearing on striped bass regulations, to be held in August or September.

STRIPED BASS fishing hasn't changed much from last week. Hot sunny days means only one thing, it's time to put the headlamps on and become a night owl. Try shore fishing (cast an eel or eel imitating lure) at your local [coastal state park](#) (see page 58 in the CT Fishing Guide) during the morning or evening. If you're lucky enough to find a decent school of bunker its likely you will some nice cows under them. These cow bass are gulping fresh bunker and bunker spoons with some 50 pound bass and larger being caught. Speaking of bunker, head to the western sound where they have finally shown in big numbers! Don't forget about 3-waying eels over your favorite reef. The Morningside area of Milford, Walnut Beach, Gulf Beach Pier and the Milford Audubon Society have been excellent locations for catching that trophy-sized striped bass. Night time is prime time for large stripers on the reefs, rip areas and lower coastal tidal rivers. Other good striped bass areas include the Watch Hill reefs, lower Thames River, the **Race, Montauk Point**, Plum Gut, Pigeon Rip, outer Bartlett Reef, Black Point, Hatchett Reef, lower Connecticut River (Great Island), Long Sand Shoal, Cornfield Point, Southwest Reef (outer), Westbrook, Six Mile Reef, Falkner Island area, the reefs off Branford, New Haven Harbor (including Sandy Point), Charles Island area, Housatonic River, buoys 18 and 20 off Stratford Point, Stratford Shoal/Middle Ground, Bridgeport Harbor, Penfield Reef, around the Norwalk Islands, and Cable and Anchor Reef. Shore locations include...Connecticut River by Dock and Dine and the DEEP Marine Headquarters fishing pier at night. **Please use circle hooks when fishing with bait to prevent gut hooking and practice catch & release.**

SUMMER FLOUNDER (fluke) fishing is fair in Long Island Sound. Mid to western LIS anglers are still reporting good numbers of sub-legal sized fish and a few keepers mixed in, up to 7 pounds. (Norwalk/Stratford/New Haven/Woodmont area). **Fish deeper this time of the year (60-120')**. Fishing deep doesn't have to mean tons of weight, pick the beginning and ends of the tide. Also, look for steep slopes to fish, tend bottom well and you might get lucky. Fluke spots include south shore of Fishers Island (Isabella Beach, Wilderness Point), Watch Hill to Napatree Point, off the Stonington breakwater, mouth of the Mystic River to Groton Long Point, lower Thames River channel, Gardiners Bay over to Greenport, NY, Twotree Channel, Black Point/Niantic Bay/River, Long Sand Shoal, Westbrook-Clinton area, Falkner Island area, New Haven Harbor to West Haven, off the mouth of the Housatonic River, Norwalk Islands, and across over to Port Jefferson, NY. **Minimum size is 19 inches and the daily creel limit is 4 fish per person.** Check out the following link to get all your bait and tackle needs. [CT Bait & Tackleshop List](#)

BLACK SEA BASS fishing is good to excellent. The Middleground and Six Mile Reef are still producing some trophy-sized fish. The green can "C" off of Stratford Shoal Lighthouse in 35'-45' of water can land you several 20" fish when using a high-low rig with heavy clam chum on the bottom. Squid and spearing also attracting these delicious eating beautiful sea bass. Fishing has also been very good this past week off of Buds Reef and buoy 28-C, buoy 32-A and buoy 38 off of Rye, NY's Playland Amusement Park. Black Sea Bass prefer FRESH clams. Remember, **CT black sea bass regulations are as follows...15 inch min. length, 5 fish daily limit.** Berkely Gulp (swimming mullet) on a jig along with squid and a spinner works great for these "Bucketmouths". They are still in deep water, spawning over the sand dunes and slowly migrating east to Block Island Sound. Sea Bass will locate and set up over any structure or wreck.

SCUP (porgy) fishing is very good in Long Island Sound. Nice sized scup have been caught at **Penfield Reef, Jennings Beach, Sunken Island, Buds Reef, buoy 32-A, Buoy 38 (off Playland), Saint Marys by the Sea, Pleasure Beach Family Pier, Sherwood Island State Park and South Benson in Fairfield.** There is no better introduction for novice anglers! Take a friend or child and bend the rod all day with these delicious fighters. **Scup have been the prime target of shore anglers in the Milford area this week, and with great success.** Just about any bait is working right now, sandworms to clam chunks. Porgy fishing has also been reported at these shore fishing locations: Mystic River Park, UCONN Avery Point, Rocky Neck State Park, **Harkness Memorial State Park**, Meigs Point Hammonasset State Park and **Fort Trumbull State Park.** Locate your favorite [Enhanced Shore Fishing Opportunities](#) for these hard fighting and excellent eating "Reef Slammers". Contact your [local bait and tackleshop](#) for updated fishing information. Time to plan a trip on a party/charter boat in CT. [CT Party Boat Association.](#)

STRIPED SEAROBIN fishing is awesome in LIS. These beautiful and strange looking fish are now very common, especially when bottom fishing at many of Connecticut's shore fishing sites. **Searobins are in abundance almost everywhere, and more and more anglers are realizing that filleting them is well worth it - they are quite tasty.** They love sandworms, squid and any live or dead bait. Please be careful when handling them...be mindful of their spines located on top of their head and gill cover.

BLACKFISH (TAUTOG) fishing season is open in Connecticut waters. **The daily creel limit is 2 fish per person and the minimum size is 16 inches.** Tautog love eating crabs...try green, Asian and hermit crabs for bait. Jigging during the summer season can be very productive. Look for tautog in shallow water as they begin spawning over shellfish beds. Some of your favorite reefs for striped bass and porgy are also holding lots of blackfish. Other prime locations include: pilings with mussel beds and rock (reef) piles (5 to 30 ft).

WEAKFISH fishing continues to impress with good numbers of 18-28 inch size fish being caught in the central and eastern Sound (Milford, West Haven beaches). Central and western Sound catches are improving as the population rebounds. Good fishing in Niantic, New Haven Harbor by the breakwaters over to Woodmont/Milford Point and along Stratford shoals. They've also been reeling them in at West Haven Sandy

Point and the Sandy Point Audubon Society. **Weakfish prefer sand worms and clams at low light and dusk.** One of the best eating saltwater fish you will ever catch.

SAND SHARKS (SMOOTH DOGFISH) fishing is very good in Long Island Sound. They are very abundant and fun to catch when bottom fishing from shore or boat. The name "dogfish" stems from their habit of feeding in packs—sometimes numbering in the hundreds. A really cool looking cartilaginous fish is slender, with elongated cat-like eyes, triangular fins, and an asymmetrical, notched caudal (tail) fin. Unlike most sharks, this **dogfish** has rows of flat grinding teeth rather than sharp blades, which are ideal for crushing and chewing the crustaceans and mollusks that it hunts. They will bite on any bait fished on the bottom. Often found mixed in with scup, summer flounder and sea robins.

BLUE CRAB. With water temps warming up, crabs are molting faster and more frequently. There appears to be a lot of smaller crabs out there...a good sign for a good year of crabbing. By the end of the month...there should be good numbers of legal-sized blue crabs to catch. Please release all sub-legal crabs with care. Also, please remember it's mating season for the crabs and release all egg-bearing females (sooks or lemon bellies). **Remember...all egg bearing females must be released without avoidable harm. Minimum carapace length is 5 inches for a hard shell crab.** Please contact your local bait and tackle shop for most updated information (local hot spots), legal crab traps and bait to use for your fun-filled crabbing. Legal gear types include: scoop (dip) net, hand line, star crab trap, circular (topless) trap not exceeding 26 inches in diameter. Maryland Style Crab traps are prohibited. **Chicken with the skin on it (along with a long handle net) is the preferred method to capture these tasty crabs.** [Blue Crab Fact Sheet](#)

REPORTING YOUR RECREATIONAL FISHING ACTIVITY – CT'S MARINE ANGLER SURVEY

CTDEEP Marine Fisheries Program is responsible for conducting the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) in CT to collect saltwater recreational fishing catch data. This data is part of [NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program \(MRIP\)](#) an extremely important survey used to manage our marine fisheries. You can find CTDEEP marine fisheries staff aboard party boats, visiting marinas, boat launch ramps, canvassing local beaches, piers, and at other fishing access points to gather accurate catch information.

When you're out fishing, please keep an eye out for marine angler survey field staff! The survey takes 5 minutes to complete. Any information you can provide them will remain confidential and is greatly appreciated. For more opportunities to report your recreational catch, please visit Marine [Volunteer Angler Survey](#).

CAUGHT A TROPHY FISH - MARINE TROPHY FISH AWARD PROGRAM AFFIDAVIT

For Current Connecticut Recreational Fishing Regulations: Anglers should consult the 2019 Connecticut Fishing Guide which is now available at most Town Clerks Offices, DEEP offices and at tackle stores selling fishing licenses. Current regulations, electronic versions of the Fishing Guide and additional information can all be accessed on the DEEP website at: www.ct.gov/deep/fishing.

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DEEP WEEKLY Fishing Report



**Connecticut Department of
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

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