



2025 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 (633 in 2025, a drop of 66 tournaments from 2024), bass fishing is still a popular hobby.

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 2025 tournament statistics for Connecticut, 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 of each species! Finally, you will see monthly breakdowns of tournaments across the state, and at Candlewood Lake, which is widely considered to be the State's best bass fishery. Compared to 2024 (35.48%), post-tournament reporting in 2025 increased by nearly 20 percentage points year-over-year (55.45%). As post-tournament reporting continues to improve, this report will expand to include more useful information, such as further waterbody specific data, year-over-year comparisons, and advanced monitoring of bass populations.

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

- Permit applications can currently be submitted for the following year as early as April 1st. (i.e., for 2026, permits could be submitted as early as 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 are 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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Table 1: Summary statistics of bass tournament reporting across Connecticut in 2025. Averages derived from all post-tournament results submitted via EZFile and paper.

<u>Annual Statistics</u>	
Permits Approved	666
Tournaments Held	633
Tournaments Cancelled	33
Unique Clubs	101
Average Tournaments/Club	6.3
Number of Reports Submitted	351
via EZFile	213
via email/mail	138
Number of Reports Missing	282
Reporting Compliance Percentage	55.45%
<u>Tournament Statistics</u>	
Number of Waterbodies w/ Tournaments	44
Average Number of Anglers	13.41
Average Number of Boats	9.32
Average # of Bass Reported/Tournament	31.19
Average # of Bass Reported/Angler	2.33
Total Bass Weighed (estimate for all 699)	19,744

2025 Bass Fishing Tournaments by Waterbody

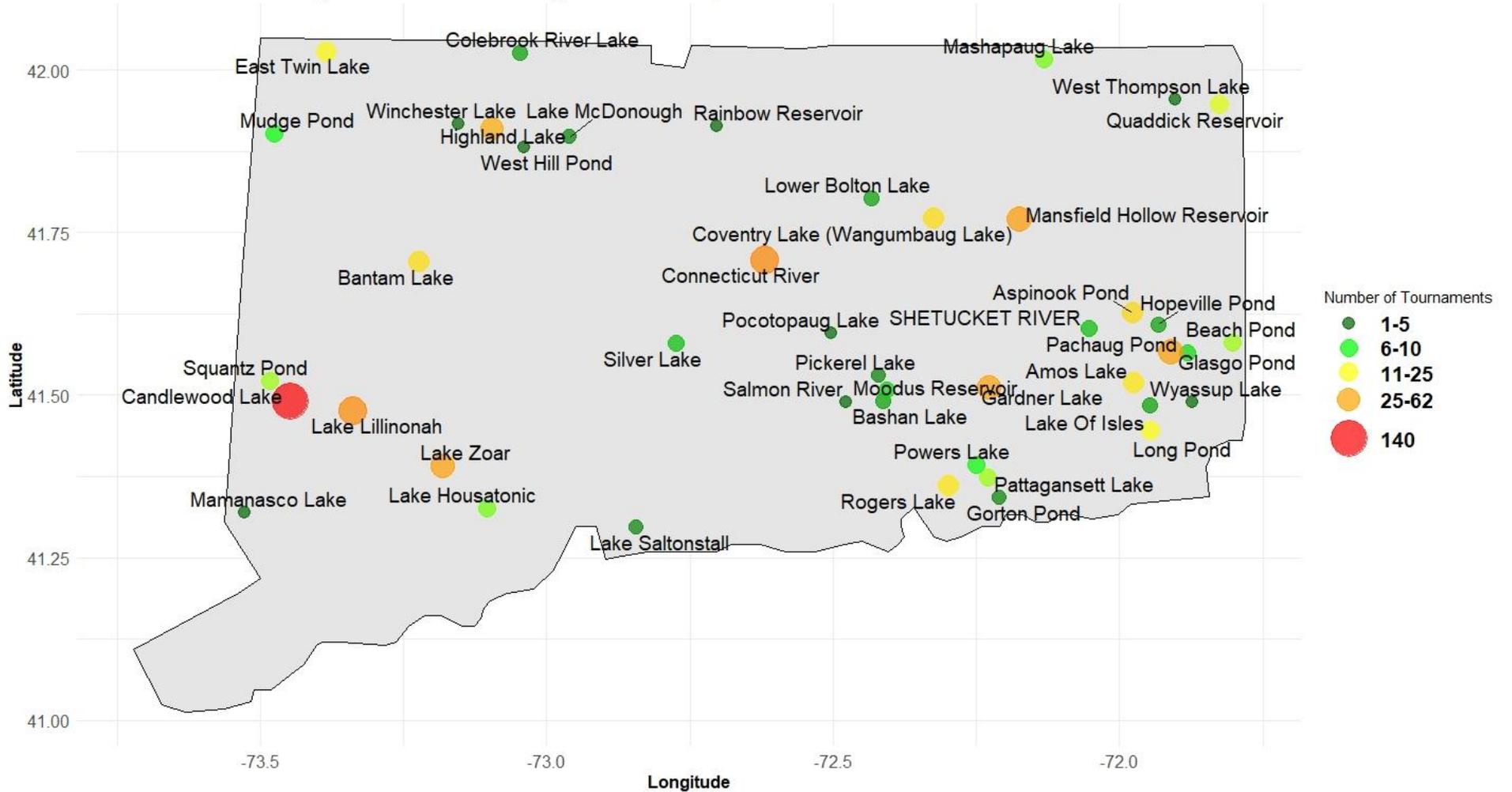


Figure 1: Map of Connecticut depicting locations and names of the 44 waterbodies that hosted at least one bass fishing tournament in 2025. Dot size and color denote the range in the number of tournaments held on each waterbody.



Table 2: Ranking of the 20 “biggest” Largemouth Bass reported from tournaments during 2025. Waterbody and the final weight of the fish were collected from results submitted via EZFile and paper.

Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)	Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)
1	Lake Lillinonah	7.28	11	Long Pond	6.19
2	Mansfield Hollow	6.96	12	Candlewood Lake	6.17
3	Lake Lillinonah	6.95	13	Candlewood Lake	6.15
4	Candlewood Lake	6.83	T14	Bantam Lake	6.14
5	Connecticut River	6.81	T14	Lake Lillinonah	6.14
6	Candlewood Lake	6.80	16	Connecticut River	6.12
7	Coventry Lake	6.69	17	Lake Housatonic	6.11
8	Candlewood Lake	6.41	18	Candlewood Lake	6.09
9	Candlewood Lake	6.40	19	Candlewood Lake	5.97
10	Pachaug Pond	6.22	20	Aspinook Pond	5.95

Table 3: Ranking of the 20 “biggest” Smallmouth Bass reported from tournaments during 2025. Waterbody and the final weight of the fish were collected from results submitted via EZFile and paper.

Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)	Rank	Waterbody	Fish Weight (lbs)
1	Candlewood Lake	6.43	T11	Candlewood Lake	4.84
2	Candlewood Lake	5.78	T11	Lake Lillinonah	4.84
3	Candlewood Lake	5.40	13	Candlewood Lake	4.78
4	Candlewood Lake	5.35	14	Candlewood Lake	4.77
5	Candlewood Lake	5.29	15	Candlewood Lake	4.73
6	Candlewood Lake	5.24	16	Candlewood Lake	4.43
7	Candlewood Lake	5.22	T17	Candlewood Lake	4.42
8	Candlewood Lake	4.92	T17	Lake McDonough	4.42
9	Candlewood Lake	4.90	19	Candlewood Lake	4.41
10	Candlewood Lake	4.87	20	Candlewood Lake	4.40

Monthly Bass Tournaments in CT - 2025

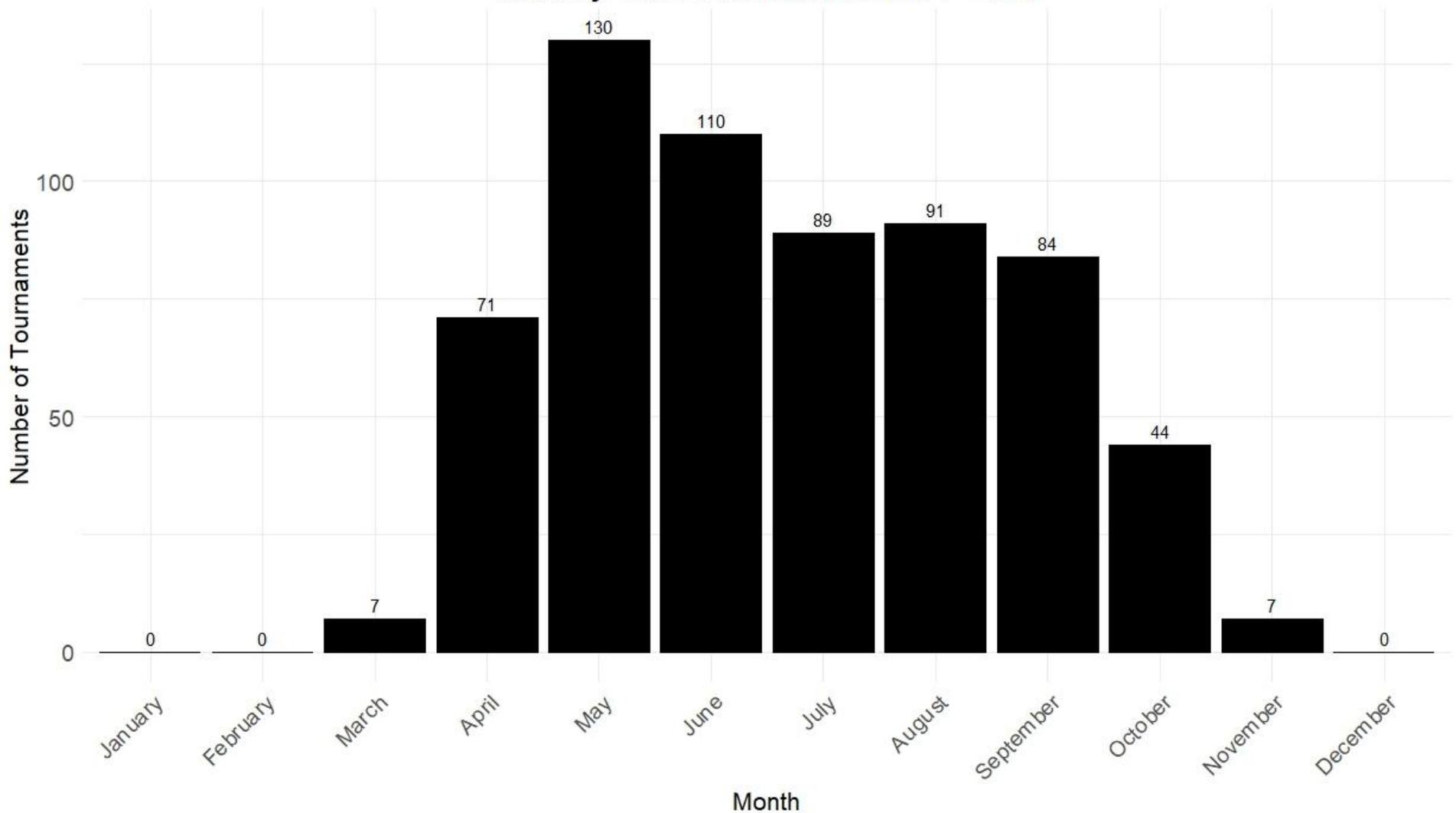


Figure 2: Bar graph representing total bass fishing tournaments hosted at all waterbodies in Connecticut for each month of 2025. Total waterbodies represented is 44. Total tournaments per month are represented above each bar.



Monthly Bass Tournaments at Candlewood Lake, CT - 2025

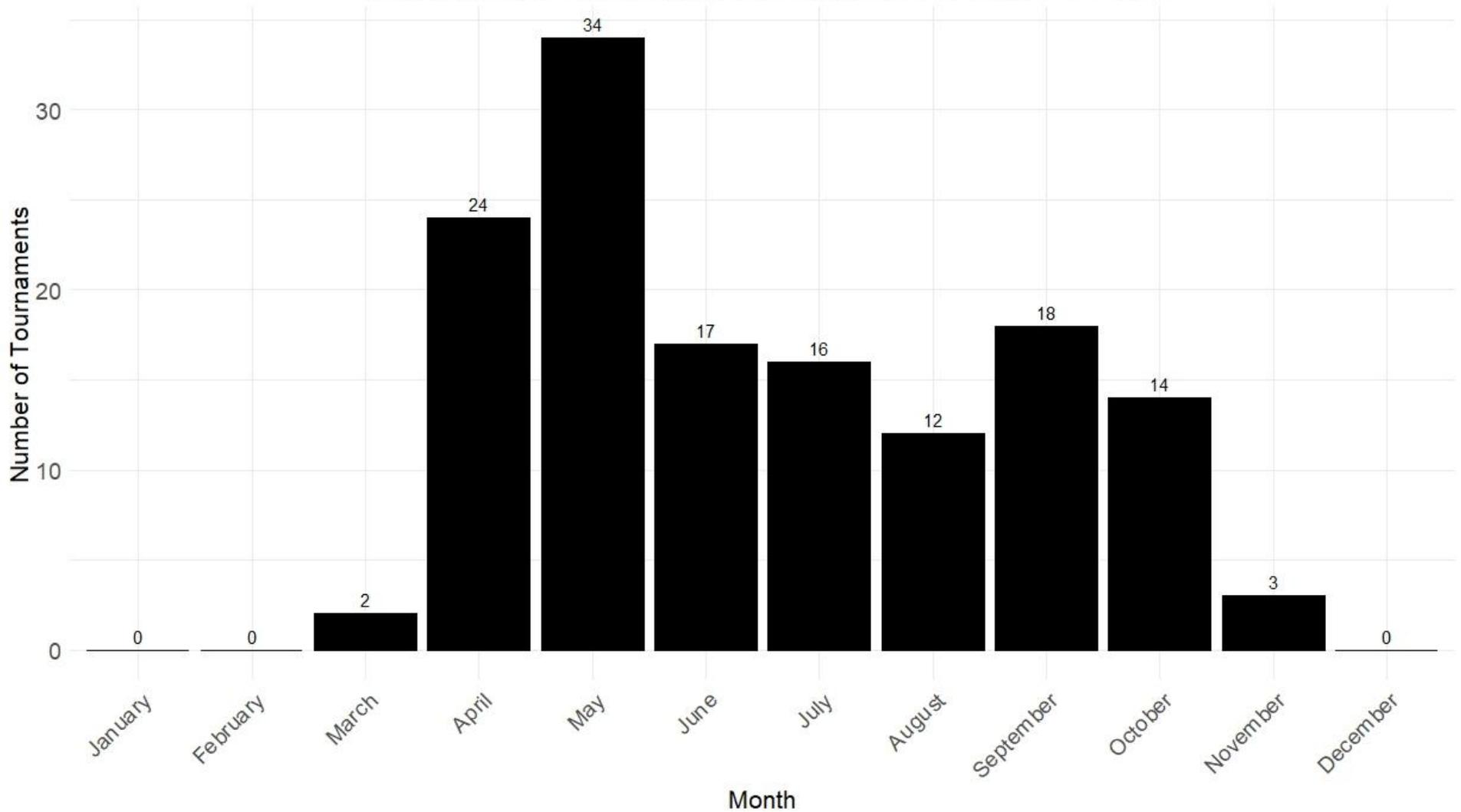


Figure 3: Bar graph representing total bass fishing tournaments hosted at Candlewood Lake, CT, for each month of 2025. Total tournaments per month are represented above each bar.

Table 4: Waterbody specific reporting statistics for bass tournaments in Connecticut during 2025. A total of 44 waterbodies were used for at least one bass tournament. Averages were calculated for each waterbody that had at least one report returned (55.45% 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)	Tournament Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Bass/Angler	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Amos Lake	112.4	15	6	40.0%	13.2 (8 - 24)	1,386	12.33	2.08 (1.53 - 2.50)	2.40 (1.00 - 3.07)
Aspinook Pond	308.8	18	11	61.1%	11.7 (7 - 20)	1,474	4.77	2.47 (1.00 - 3.46)	1.84 (1.34 - 2.50)
Bantam Lake	955.4	17	6	35.3%	11.0 (6 - 24)	1,309	1.37	2.14 (1.20 - 3.38)	2.10 (1.33 - 2.43)
Bashan Lake	265.5	3	3	100.0%	8.3 (7 - 10)	174	0.66	3.80 (3.29 - 4.25)	2.46 (2.44 - 2.47)
Beach Pond	348.5	8	3	37.5%	6.3 (3 - 9)	353	1.01	4.60 (4.33 - 4.71)	1.03 (0.96 - 1.06)
Candlewood Lake	5,085.60	140	79	56.4%	16.8 (4 - 122)	16,464	3.24	2.54 (0.50 - 4.80)	2.69 (1.54 - 4.02)
Colebrook River Lake	852.3	3	2	66.7%	21.5 (18 - 25)	452	0.53	2.23	1.85
Connecticut River	N/A	62	38	61.3%	18.2 (4 - 48)	7,899	N/A	1.96 (0.65 - 3.86)	2.01 (1.49 - 2.58)
Coventry Lake	374.4	17	11	64.7%	11.2 6 - 20	1,333	3.56	1.77 1.25 - 2.50	1.82 1.57 - 1.97
East Twin Lake	565.3	12	4	33.3%	8.0 4 - 13	672	1.19	3.53 2.60 - 3.85	2.25 1.88 - 2.62
Gardner Lake	527.3	30	20	66.7%	14.6 5 - 27	3,066	5.81	2.75 1.40 - 4.70	1.84 0.71 - 2.50



Table 4: Continued

Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/ Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Tournament Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Bass/Angler	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Glasgo Pond	81.3	5	3	60.0%	6.0 4 - 8	210	2.58	2.07 1.75 - 2.50	1.90 1.67 - 2.14
Gorton Pond	52.4	2	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Highland Lake	448.2	25	13	52.0%	12.3 6 - 25	2,153	4.80	2.29 1.40 - 4.17	1.88 1.41 - 2.26
Hopeville Pond	106.6	3	3	100.0%	11.0 7 - 18	231	2.17	2.15 1.00 - 3.75	1.88 1.77 - 2.43
Lake Housatonic	346.3	7	5	71.4%	12.2 8 - 21	598	1.73	1.60 0.63 - 2.29	2.01 1.58 - 3.20
Lake Lillinonah	1,594.80	58	29	50.0%	15.8 4 - 47	6,415	4.02	2.61 1.21 - 4.07	2.17 1.43 - 2.58
Lake McDonough	385.7	2	1	50.0%	6.0	84	0.22	4.17	2.63
Lake Of Isles	91.2	3	2	66.7%	5.0	105	1.15	2.00	1.82 1.55 - 1.92
Lake Saltonstall	413.4	2	2	100.0%	31.0	434	1.05	0.19 0.13 - 0.27	3.92 3.75 - 4.25
Lake Zoar	919.8	32	17	53.1%	12.1 5 - 25	2,710	2.95	2.87 1.00 - 4.67	1.91 1.60 - 2.16
Long Pond	86.6	11	7	63.6%	11.7 8 - 20	901	10.40	2.40 1.89 - 2.75	1.81 1.47 - 1.99
Lower Bolton Lake	176.5	3	3	100.0%	12.3 5 - 17	258	1.46	2.67	2.10
Mamansaco Lake	89.2	1	1	100.0%	18.0	126	1.41	0.72	1.40



Table 4: Continued

Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/ Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Tournament Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Bass/Angler	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Mansfield Hollow Reservoir	429.5	37	22	59.5%	16.6 3 - 61	4,299	10.01	1.64 0.88 - 5.00	1.85 1.25 - 2.49
Mashapaug Lake	297.9	7	2	28.6%	8.0 5 - 11	392	1.32	2.88 2.55 - 3.60	2.30 2.11 - 2.43
Moodus Reservoir	440.7	5	5	100.0%	6.8 4 - 17	238	0.54	2.71 1.06 - 5.00	1.55 1.18 - 1.95
Mudge Pond	211.2	6	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Pachaug Pond	817.0	35	21	60.0%	8.5 4 - 28	3,430	4.20	2.36 1.07 - 5.00	1.88 1.30 - 2.96
Pattagansett Lake	125.7	8	4	50.0%	8.5 8 - 9	476	3.79	2.04 0.78 - 3.67	1.87 1.57 - 2.00
Pickerel Lake	82.1	2	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Pocotopaug Lake	511	1	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Powers Lake	146.5	6	2	33.3%	6.0 4 - 8	252	1.72	2.92 1.88 - 4.36	1.44 1.26 - 1.82
Quaddick Reservoir	202.8	10	8	80.0%	10.6 9 - 17	472	3.66	2.92 1.88 - 4.36	1.74 1.50 - 2.24
Rainbow Reservoir	204.3	1	1	100.0%	8.0	56	0.27	2.50	1.25
Rogers Lake	275.4	15	7	46.7%	9.9 6 - 15	1,040	3.77	2.32 0.90 - 4.67	2.25 1.38 - 2.73
Salmon River	N/A	1	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-



Table 4: Continued

Lake	Area (Acres)	Number of Tournaments	Number Reporting Results	Percent Reporting	Anglers/ Tourney	Estimated Tournament Effort (hrs)	Tournament Effort/Acre (hrs/acre)	Average Bass/Angler	Average Bass Weight (lbs)
Shetucket River	N/A	4	3	75.0%	18.6 12 - 26	521	N/A	1.32 1.06 - 1.75	1.69 1.63 - 1.71
Silver Lake	140.6	4	4	100.0%	9.3 6 - 12	259	1.84	3.38 0.83 - 4.8	223.00 1.73 - 2.35
Squantz Pond	266.8	8	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
West Hill Pond	245.5	1	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
West Thompson Lake	189.3	1	1	100.0%	9.0	63	0.33	2.33	2.00
Winchester Lake	248.1	1	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Wyassup Lake	101	1	1	100.0%	12.0	84	0.83	3.42	1.44