



Declaration of Bass Spawning Refuges Temporarily Closed to Fishing in Wyassup Lake

Under the authority of [Section 26-102](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection “may establish fish spawning areas and refuges on any waters; and the commissioner may establish closed areas . . . on public lands and waters . . . and close any such area to fishing”

Therefore, as Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, I find that with respect to Smallmouth Bass in Wyassup Lake in North Stonington:

- Wyassup Lake historically supported a robust, self-sustaining Smallmouth Bass fishery, but long-term DEEP monitoring indicates the species was extirpated from the lake by 2013 for unknown reasons.
- In 2024, DEEP experimentally reintroduced Smallmouth Bass to re-establish the population. Post-introduction monitoring showed spawning activity, but reproductive success was low due to high rates of nest failure.
- DEEP believes nest failure is likely caused by recreational angling removing nest-guarding males during the spawning period, as male Smallmouth Bass aggressively defend nests and fry and are highly vulnerable to capture.
- Temporary, spatially targeted fishing closures in preferred nesting areas during the spring spawning season are expected to improve nesting success and support recovery of Smallmouth Bass in Wyassup Lake.

In recognition of these findings, and in accordance with the aforementioned authority pursuant to Section 26-102 of the Connecticut General Statutes, I hereby designate, by declaration, spawning refuges for Smallmouth Bass in Wyassup Lake that shall be temporarily closed to all fishing from April 15 through May 31, 2026, both dates inclusive. Spawning refuges shall include the areas within 100 feet of the shoreline of all islands in the lake and within 100 feet of the northern shoreline of the lake between the points defined by latitude/longitude of (41.49299, -71.87217) and (41.49311, -71.86882). This declaration shall be effective upon signing and will expire on June 1, 2026.

4/9/2026

Katherine S. Dykes
Commissioner

Date