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Squirrel Season and Black Bass Seasons Open in Missouri

MAY 21ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by
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Missouri - Memorial Day is an even bigger deal for hunters and anglers than it is for other Missourians. That is the weekend when squirrel season opens and anglers can keep legal-sized black bass in most southern Missouri streams.

Missouri's squirrel and black bass seasons open on the same day, the fourth Saturday in May, each year. To take full advantage of these seasons, it helps to be familiar with the regulations for each.

Squirrels

Squirrel hunting regulations remain unchanged from last year, with a daily limit of 10 and a possession limit of 20 fox or gray squirrels in the aggregate. "In the aggregate" means you can take any combination of fox and gray squirrels, so long as you do not exceed 10 squirrels in one day. If you bag a daily limit two days in a row, you have a possession limit of 20 squirrels. After that, you must eat or give away some squirrels before going hunting again in order to stay within the possession limit.

Hunters can pursue squirrels from May 24 through Feb. 15, 2015, with rifles, shotguns, archery equipment, or atlatls. Summer foliage makes rifle shots more difficult than in late fall and winter, when leaves no longer obscure a shooter's view. As a result, shotguns are the preferred method for many hunters during the early part of the season.

Hunters also can take squirrels with cage-type traps, as long as they label traps with their full name and address. Squirrel traps also must have openings measuring 144 square inches or less, for instance, 12 inches by 12 inches. Hunters must attend their traps daily. The same regulations apply to rabbits and groundhogs during their respective seasons.

Black Bass

The bass catch-and-keep season in southern Missouri streams applies to largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass. Anglers may catch these species legally all year, anywhere in the state. They may keep legal-sized bass caught from impoundments all year long, statewide. However, from March 1 through the Friday before the fourth Saturday in May, you may only keep black bass caught in streams if you are:

On the Mississippi River

North of the south bank of the Missouri River

In that portion of southeast Missouri south and east of Cape Girardeau following Highways 74 and 25, U.S. Highways 60, 67, and 160 and the west bank of the Little Black River to the Arkansas state line, or

On the St. Francis River downstream from Wappapello Dam

In the rest of the state, black-bass fishing is strictly catch-and-release from March 1 until the fourth Saturday in May.

In most of the state's waters, the daily limit on black bass is six, with a possession limit of 12. Black bass taken from streams must be at least 12 inches long in most areas. There is no statewide length limit on bass taken from impoundments. However, special length and daily limits apply on many lakes and streams. To ensure that you keep only legal bass, you must check for special regulations on the waters you intend to fish. You can find these posted at areas with special regulations and in the 2014 Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations, which is

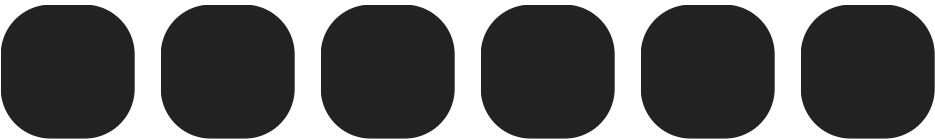
available from fishing permit vendors.

An abundance of stream accesses maintained by the Missouri Department of Conservation statewide makes it easy to combine float-fishing and squirrel hunting. It is important to remember, however, that a hunting permit does not give you the right to trespass on private property bordering streams. The best places for this dual sport are where streams run through conservation areas or national forest land.

LAST UPDATED ON MAY 21ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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