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Squirrel, Black-Bass Season Open Memorial Day Weekend

MAY 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri - Memorial Day weekend brings an extra-special celebration for squirrel hunters and bass anglers in Missouri. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the Saturday of this fourth weekend in May -- May 23 this year -- is when squirrel season opens and when anglers can keep legal-sized bass in most southern Missouri streams.

SQUIRRELS

Hunters can pursue fox and gray squirrels from May 23 through Feb. 15, 2016, 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.

Valid permits for squirrel hunting are: Archery Hunting, Daily Small Game, Small Game Hunting and Fishing, and Small Game Hunting.

Hunters with valid permits can also take squirrels with cage-type traps. Traps must be labeled with the hunter's full name and address, or Conservation Number. Squirrel traps 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.

The daily limit is 10 with a possession limit of 20. For more information, visit mdc.mo.gov/node/10810.

BASS

The bass catch-and-keep season in most southern Missouri streams applies to largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted/Kentucky bass and runs from May 23 to Feb. 29, 2016. 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 catch-and-release only from March 1 through the Friday before the fourth Saturday in May.

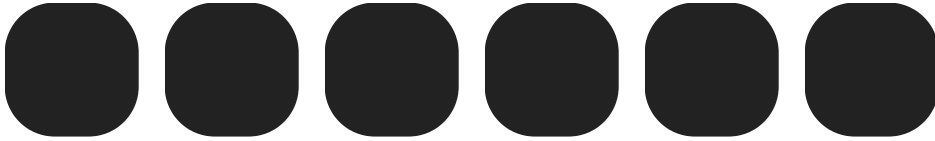
In most of the state's waters, the daily limit on black bass is six, with a possession limit of 12. Black bass taken from streams must be at least 12 inches long in most areas. However, many lakes and streams have special length and daily limits. To ensure that you keep only legal bass, you must check for special regulations on the waters you intend to fish. You can find these posted at areas with special regulations, in the 2015 Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations available where permits are sold, and online at mdc.mo.gov/node/10358.

All anglers must have an appropriate lifetime, annual, or daily fishing permit, or qualify for an exemption. Get more information on fishing permits at mdc.mo.gov/node/5006.

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