

Summary Report of Fishing Contests Held in 2023



Inland Fisheries Assessment and Monitoring Program

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Introduction

Fishing contests represent an important component of recreational fishing in California and include tournaments and derbies. Black bass tournaments typically represent 90% of all fishing contests held in California; therefore, this report focuses on the black bass subset.

History of Fishing Contest Management

Beginning in 1975, organizers offering prizes for the taking of sport fish in any California water were required to obtain a fishing contest permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Since 1985, organizers have been required to submit a "Fishing Contest Report" to the CDFW detailing the results of each permitted contest. In 1990 regulations were established that provided two types of contests, "Event" and "Annual." An "Event" type contest permit is designed to regulate large fishing contests often run by commercial organizations. The "Annual" type contest permit is designed to gather data from smaller organized contests, such as those offered by bass clubs or individuals. In 2023, updated language to Title 14 § 230, Issuance of Permits for Contests Offering Prizes for the Taking of Game Fish, was completed and effective on July 1, 2023. These regulations redefined the previous contest permits types (Type A – Event, and Type B – Annual) and added two new permit types (Type C – Catch and Release, and Type D – Other). An electronic contest reporting system to streamline data collection was also deployed.

Permitting Process

Prior to July 1, 2023, an "Event" type permit was required for contests of more than 50 anglers, or if prizes and inducements totaled more than \$1,000 in value. Only one "Event" type permit was allowed per water per day and could not exceed 3 days in duration. An "Annual" type permit was required for contests with 50 or fewer participants and total value of prizes or inducements was less than \$1,000. There was no limit to the number of "Annual" type permits that could be issued for each water on the same day.

Beginning July 1, 2023, the update to Title 14, Section 230 went into effect, which redefined permit types for contests offering prizes for the taking of game fish.

- **Type A - Event:** contests targeting black bass with more than 60 anglers. Type A contests may not exceed three days in duration and no more than one contest is allowed for any water on the same day.
- **Type B - Annual:** contests targeting black bass with 60 or fewer anglers. Type B contests may not exceed three days in duration and no more than three contests are allowed for any water on the same day.
- **Type C - Catch and Release:** contests targeting black bass in which anglers do not retain fish for a centralized weigh-in. These contests require the angler to immediately release all live fish caught after recording weight or measurement.

Contests may exceed three days in duration and may be conducted on multiple water bodies concurrently. Type C permits do not limit the number of anglers.

- **Type D - Other:** contests **not** targeting black bass. Contests may exceed three days in duration and be conducted on multiple waters simultaneously.

Reporting Requirement

For each permit issued, the organizer is required to submit a Fishing Contest Report to the CDFW within 30 days of the conclusion of each contest. Report compliance has varied from year to year. Beginning in 2007, to improve compliance, the CDFW began sending a "Letter of Notice" to organizers that specific contest reports were delinquent. In late 2008, CDFW improved reporting procedures by developing a writeable PDF form and e-mail submission procedures. In early 2016, CDFW instituted an online report form which allowed tournament directors to submit their results electronically, in addition to the mail-in option. With the update to Title 14, Section 230, all permits issued after July 1, 2023, are now required to be submitted electronically through CDFW's Data Portal, which has streamlined the reporting process and improve frequency, consistency, and accuracy of reports.

Future of Fishing Contest Management

Fishing contests can put intense fishing pressure on recreational fisheries. Adaptive management is essential to ensure fishery health while maintaining and improving these recreational fisheries. Management measures could include activities implemented by CDFW, water management agencies, fishing contest sponsors, and anglers.

CDFW does its part by:

- Approving or denying permits to hold fishing contests according to regulations.
- Rescinding permits of non-compliant sponsors.
- Monitoring fishing contests with an observer as needed.
- Responding to angler inquiries and concerns regarding tournaments.
- Assessing the effects of fishing contests on the fishery, including poor fish care, barotrauma incidence, and mortality rates.

Tournament organizations can do their part by:

- Enforcing proper fish care by participants during each contest.
- Enforcing any aquatic invasive guidelines for all boats, such as quagga mussel inspections, and ensuring participants are aware of any required inspections.
- Supplying anglers with properly aerated tanks at weigh in to keep fish healthy while waiting to weigh in.
- Informing participants of unique conditions at any water, such as the presence of protected aquatic species, areas off limits to fishing, or non-standard length or bag limits.
- Submitting all tournament contest reports in a timely manner.
- Communicating with the local marina, water control agency, or property owner to ensure that appropriate permits and permissions have been obtained.

Anglers can do their part by:

- Taking the best possible care of their fish at all points during the tournament. High mortality rates not only hurt an angler's performance in the tournament; they also negatively affect the fishery. The loss of large fish from the population reduces not only their density (and angler catch rates), but also reduces the spawning potential of the population. Larger females produce far more eggs than small females.
- Following directions from sponsors during weigh-ins.
- Abiding by the special conditions identified for bass tournaments (See "Additional Resources").
- Following all guidelines and regulations relating to aquatic invasive and protected species.

Additional Resources and FAQ

Where are upcoming tournaments?

Upcoming fishing contests and contest sponsors are listed online on the CDFW [Data Portal](#).

More detailed information for scheduled contests can typically be found at the contest sponsor's website.

How do I apply for a fishing contest permit?

To apply for a fishing contest permit with CDFW, complete form DFW-775, accessible online on the [CDFW Fishing Contests, Tournaments, and Derbies](#) webpage.

Mail or turn in your application, along with appropriate processing fee, at your regional CDFW headquarters, with an address line "ATTN: Fishing Contest Application." The appropriate addresses are listed on page 5 within the Fishing Contest Application (DFW-775).

I am a sponsor looking to apply for Type A contests. When is the earliest I can apply?

Every year, CDFW sponsors an Initial Offering to facilitate Type A game fish contests permits occurring the following year. For more information about the Initial Offering, see details on the [CDFW Fishing Contests, Tournaments, and Derbies](#) webpage. If you are planning fishing contests that will require a Type A - Event permit, we strongly recommend your attendance.

To apply for the initial Offering, you must submit the form, [Initial Offering Application for "Type A "Game Fish Contests \(DFW 774\)](#).

What are the special conditions for fishing contests?

A list of special conditions can be found in [section 3](#) of the DFW 775 form.

Permit Exemptions

Forms requesting exemption from fishing regulations are available online in the [exemptions](#) section of the Fishing Contest, Tournaments, and Derbies webpage.

How do I report the results of a fishing contest?

All sponsors are required to submit results for all contests through CDFW's Data Portal within 30 days of the completion of each contest. Instructions can be found in the Data Portal [Fishing Contest Reporting Instructions](#).

Questions or comments?

For more information, contact Tournaments@wildlife.ca.gov, or contact Shawn Simkins, Inland Fisheries Assessment and Monitoring Program, at Shawn.Simkins@wildlife.ca.gov.

Preliminary Results: These tables represent data available at the time of publication, not necessarily all fishing contests held.

Table 1
Summary of All 2023 Fishing Contest Reports by Individual Water
(Permit Types A, B, C, and D)

Water Name	Number of Contests	Total Participants	Total Hours Reported	Total Fish Caught	Total Fish Dead	Average Weight (lbs)
Antelope Lake	2	30	15	103	1	2.08
Bass Lake (Madera County)	7	2989	70	280	3	2.08
Big Bear Lake	1	266	16	1200	1200	2.46
Black Butte Lake	1	66	8	3	0	2.96
Butt Valley Reservoir	1	17	9	30	0	3.13
Camanche Reservoir	21	660	202	1485	22	2.42
Camp Far West (Placer County)	2	40	16	65	0	1.91
Casitas Lake	11	294	80	306	2	2.20
Castaic Lagoon	2	36	12	70	0	2.14
Castaic Lake	5	145	38	83	0	1.75
Clear Lake (Lake County)	65	8347	729* Derived from 64 reported contests	13213	147	3.85
Colorado River	11	302	104	706	4	2.63
Crowley Lake	2	331	20	150	150	2.91
Delta (Contra Costa County)	55	5707	462	8565	33	2.34
Delta (Sacramento County)	27	812	233* Derived from 26 reported contests	1546	46	2.16
Delta (San Joaquin County)	45	2183	348* Derived from 44 reported contests	2514	26	2.33
Delta (Solano County)	1	35	9.5	6	6	6.50
Diamond Valley Lake	27	805	187	1210	4	3.30
Don Pedro Reservoir	28	1426	226* Derived from 27 reported contests	3998	227	1.96
El Capitan Lake (San Diego County)	32	968	222	2455	56	2.02
Folsom Lake	11	429	63	749	4	2.30

H. V. Eastman Lake	3	89	15* Derived from 2 reported contests	245	1	1.24
Hume Lake	2	350	22	735	0	---
Isabella Lake	11	205	69	430	143	2.74
Lake Almanor	12	290	123	586	6	2.63
Lake Amador	6	149	58	274	19	2.11
Lake Arrowhead	1	78	7	220	110	---
Lake Berryessa	27	1142	268	2306	23	2.17
Lake Britton	1	18	---	90	0	---
Lake Cachuma	6	1354	57	378	47	1.61
Lake Cahuilla in Lake Cahuilla Park	4	1558	0* Derived from 3 reported contests	97	26	2.56
Lake Cuyamaca	1	408	16	16	16	---
Lake Davis	3	114	33.5	155	19	2.48
Lake Havasu	2	64	28	83	2	1.08
Lake Hemet	1	758	12	432	375	0.74
Lake Hodges	1	7	10	13	0	1.28
Lake Kaweah	4	160	38	166	1	2.16
Lake McClure	29	988	233* Derived from 28 reported contests	2717	173	1.68
Lake Mittry	1	14	8	36	0	2.02
Lake Mohave Landing	1	28	18	27	0	2.81
Lake Nacimiento	13	378	86* Derived from 12 reported contests	907	5	1.55
Lake Oroville	27	945	205	2076	8	1.79
Lake Piru	1	15	6	22	0	1.37
Lake Sonoma	6	156	37	211	0	2.08
Lake Success	4	197	44	174	35	1.21
Lake Sutherland	1	7	9	21	0	1.45
Lopez Lake	6	264	38* Derived from 5 reported contests	322	2	2.79
Lower Otay Lake	25	618	176	1556	14	1.73
Merle Collins Reservoir	1	40	8	71	0	2.83
Millerton Lake (Fresno County)	16	582	128	1828	8	1.84
Murray Reservoir	1	11	1	19	0	1.68
Murry Park Pond	1	200	2	71	0	0.43
New Bullards Bar Reservoir	4	219	32.5	340	270	1.00
New Hogan Lake	7	199	64	390	7	1.74
New Melones Lake	33	1417	290.5	3767	176	1.66

Pardee Reservoir	13	417	102.5	839	158	1.91
Perris Reservoir	8	230	58	573	0	2.45
Pine Flat Lake	19	734	150* Derived from 18 reported contests	1648	14	1.77
Pyramid Lake	15	564	114	734	1	2.77
Rancho Jurupa Park Lake	1	100	---	0	0	0
Rollins Reservoir	1	36	16	74	0	1.27
Ruth Lake (Trinity County)	3	140	21	294	3	3.26
Sacramento River	1	---	---	36	36	3.39
Salt Springs Valley Reservoir	3	68	23	101	1	2.42
San Antonio Lake	1	15	8	18	0	1.88
San Vicente Reservoir	22	534	158.5	1915	11	2.12
Santa Margarita Lake	15	505	118	1144	70	2.33
Shasta Lake	29	1280	277	4245	304	1.64
Shaver Lake	1	103	8.5	104	104	1.07
Silverwood Lake	3	56	21	69	0	3.03
Skinner Reservoir	9	268	57	213	5	2.81
Stampede Reservoir	1	217	8.5	236	236	0.82
Susan River	1	129	9	85	0	5.56
Thermalito Afterbay	7	165	54	274	2	2.61
Trinity Lake	14	409	148	1309	25	3.04
Tulloch Reservoir (Calaveras County)	3	170	17	160	0	2.83
Tulloch Reservoir (Tuolumne County)	23	478	117* Derived from 21 reported contests	1190	13	2.30
Twin Lakes	1	96	---	59	42	0.76
Union Valley Reservoir	1	74	9	46	46	---
Various Waters (Inyo County)	2	192	20	1127	890	0.79
Various Waters (Mono County)	2	107	7	45	45	1.86
West Walker River	1	---	---	55	0	3.36
Whiskeytown Lake	2	19	15.5	206	128	1.92

Woodward Reservoir	1	8	8	4	0	2.38
Grand Total	822	46024	6757.5	76321	5551	2.33

*Total hours reported does not reflect total hours for all contests reported.

** Table includes all fish species reported caught across all permit types.

Table 2

**Summary of 2023 “Event” and “Type A” Black Bass Fishing Contest Reports
by Individual Water**

Water Name	Number of Contests	Total Participants	Total Hours Reported	Total Fish Caught	Total Fish Dead	Average Weight (lbs)
Black Butte Lake	1	66	8	3	0	2.96
Camanche Reservoir	8	369	70	765	4	2.78
Casitas Lake	11	294	80	306	2	2.20
Castaic Lake	4	126	30	61	0	1.70
Clear Lake (Lake County)	35	4530	366	10910	121	3.26
Delta (Contra Costa County)	24	3727	265	6755	26	2.54
Delta (Sacramento County)	9	295	66	709	8	2.07
Delta (San Joaquin County)	23	1638	164	1528	10	2.66
Diamond Valley Lake	18	620	120	1007	1	3.44
Don Pedro Reservoir	14	998	118* Derived from 13 reported contests	2721	216	1.98
El Capitan Lake (San Diego County)	20	733	146	1922	18	2.05
Folsom Lake	4	308	24	495	4	1.96
H. V. Eastman Lake	1	20	8	31	1	1.77
Isabella Lake	10	205	69	291	4	2.35
Lake Almanor	2	63	17	151	3	2.90
Lake Amador	1	26	6	35	2	2.34
Lake Berryessa	10	726	102	1611	20	2.20
Lake Cachuma	5	166	38	310	0	1.47
Lake Hodges	1	7	10	13	0	1.28
Lake Kaweah	2	120	22	151	1	2.00
Lake McClure	12	647	79* Derived from 11 reported contests	1658	162	1.72
Lake Nacimiento	3	174	1* Derived from 2 reported contests	369	0	1.53
Lake Oroville	12	685	89	1382	4	1.93
Lake Sonoma	2	79	8	62	0	2.10
Lake Success	2	147	28	109	4	0.82
Lake Sutherland	1	7	9	21	0	1.45

Lopez Lake	4	191	22* Derived from 3 reported contests	276	2	2.67
Lower Otay Lake	17	470	128	1253	13	1.77
Merle Collins Reservoir	1	40	8	71	0	2.83
Millerton Lake (Fresno County)	11	420	85	1212	2	1.89
Murray Reservoir	1	11	1	19	0	1.68
New Bullards Bar Reservoir	1	15	8	37	0	1.07
New Hogan Lake	2	98	14	183	5	1.75
New Melones Lake	12	762	119	2203	15	1.72
Pardee Reservoir	4	89	32	265	1	1.96
Perris Reservoir	6	192	48	499	0	2.59
Pine Flat Lake	5	485	44* Derived from 4 reported contests	999	13	1.94
Pyramid Lake	12	458	92	626	1	2.78
Ruth Lake (Trinity County)	3	140	21	294	3	3.26
San Vicente Reservoir	14	323	95	1265	9	2.16
Santa Margarita Lake	4	207	30	543	5	2.13
Shasta Lake	14	698	157	2974	19	1.83
Skinner Reservoir	5	125	34	167	5	2.63
Thermalito Afterbay	2	50	15	80	1	2.87
Trinity Lake	5	182	56	520	9	3.18
Tulloch Reservoir (Calaveras County)	2	151	8	120	0	3.18
Tulloch Reservoir (Tuolumne County)	2	84	8* Derived from 1 reported contest	137	0	3.87
Grand Total	362	21967	2968	47119	714	2.39

*Total hours reported does not reflect total hours for all contests reported.

Table 3**Summary of 2023 “Annual”, “Type B”, and “Type C” Black Bass Fishing Contest Reports by Individual Water**

Water Name	Number of Contests	Total Participants	Total Hours Reported	Total Fish Caught	Total Fish Dead	Average Weight (lbs)
Antelope Lake	2	30	15	103	1	2.08
Bass Lake (Madera County)	6	95	46	199	3	2.08
Butt Valley Reservoir	1	17	9	30	0	3.13
Camanche Reservoir	13	291	132	720	18	2.21
Camp Far West (Placer County)	2	40	16	65	0	1.91
Castaic Lagoon	2	36	12	70	0	2.14
Castaic Lake	1	19	8	22	0	1.92
Clear Lake (Lake County)	27	816	299* Derived from 26 reported contests	1860	21	3.36
Colorado River	11	302	104	706	4	2.63
Delta (Contra Costa County)	30	824	167	1790	7	2.18
Delta (Sacramento County)	16	405	159	804	5	1.97
Delta (San Joaquin County)	21	443	176* Derived from 20 reported contests	974	6	1.89
Diamond Valley Lake	9	185	67	203	3	3.01
Don Pedro Reservoir	14	428	108	1277	11	1.94
El Capitan Lake (San Diego County)	12	235	76	533	38	1.99
Folsom Lake	7	121	39	254	0	2.56
H. V. Eastman Lake	2	69	7* Derived from 1 reported contest	214	0	0.71
Lake Almanor	10	227	106	435	3	2.58
Lake Amador	5	123	52	239	17	2.06
Lake Berryessa	17	416	166	695	3	2.16
Lake Britton	1	18	---	90	0	---
Lake Davis	2	67	22	136	0	2.68
Lake Havasu	2	64	28	83	2	1.08
Lake Kaweah	2	40	16	15	0	2.31
Lake McClure	17	341	154	1059	11	1.65

Lake Mitrty	1	14	8	36	0	2.02
Lake Mohave Landing	1	28	18	27	0	2.81
Lake Nacimiento	10	204	85	538	5	1.56
Lake Oroville	15	260	116	694	4	1.69
Lake Piru	1	15	6	22	0	1.37
Lake Sonoma	4	77	29	149	0	2.08
Lake Success	2	50	16	65	31	1.60
Lopez Lake	2	73	16	46	0	3.03
Lower Otoy Lake	8	148	48	303	1	1.64
Millerton Lake (Fresno County)	5	162	43	616	6	1.70
New Bullards Bar Reservoir	2	29	17	33	0	1.24
New Hogan Lake	5	101	50	207	2	1.73
New Melones Lake	20	490	163	1411	8	1.64
Pardee Reservoir	8	268	63	424	7	2.06
Perris Reservoir	2	38	10	74	0	2.02
Pine Flat Lake	14	249	106	649	1	1.71
Pyramid Lake	3	106	22	108	0	2.75
Rollins Reservoir	1	36	16	74	0	1.27
Salt Springs Valley Reservoir	3	68	23	101	1	2.42
San Antonio Lake	1	15	8	18	0	1.88
San Vicente Reservoir	8	211	63.5	650	2	2.06
Santa Margarita Lake	11	298	88	601	65	2.40
Shasta Lake	14	280	99	995	9	1.45
Silverwood Lake	3	56	21	69	0	3.03
Skinner Reservoir	3	43	23	46	0	3.11
Thermalito Afterbay	5	115	39	194	1	2.51
Trinity Lake	9	227	92	789	16	2.96
Tulloch Reservoir (Calaveras County)	1	19	9	40	0	2.48
Tulloch Reservoir (Tuolumne County)	21	394	109* Derived from 20 reported contests	1053	13	0.94
Whiskeytown Lake	1	19	8	80	2	2.48
Woodward Reservoir	1	8	8	4	0	2.38
Grand Total	417	9753	3406.5	22692	327	2.18

*Total hours reported does not reflect total hours for all contests reported.

Table 4

Summary of 2023 “Annual” and “Type D” Non-Black Bass Fishing Contest Reports by Individual Water

Water Name	Number of Contests	Total Participants	Total Duration (hrs.)	Total Fish Caught	Total Fish Dead	Average Weight (lbs.)
Bass Lake (Madera County)	1	2894	24	81	0	---
Big Bear Lake	1	266	16	1200	1200	2.46
Clear Lake (Lake County)	3	3001	64	443	5	14.76
Crowley Lake	2	331	20	150	150	2.91
Delta (Contra Costa County)	1	1156	30	20	0	---
Delta (Sacramento County)	2	112	8* Derived from 1 reported contest	33	33	3.91
Delta (San Joaquin County)	1	102	8	12	10	3.75
Delta (Solano County)	1	35	9.5	6	6	6.50
Hume Lake	2	350	22	735	0	---
Isabella Lake	1	---	---	139	139	6.71
Lake Arrowhead	1	78	7	220	110	---
Lake Cachuma	1	1188	19	68	47	2.30
Lake Cahuilla in Lake Cahuilla Park	4	1558	0* Derived from 3 reported contests	97	26	2.56
Lake Cuyamaca	1	408	16	16	16	---
Lake Davis	1	47	11.5	19	19	2.08
Lake Hemet	1	758	12	432	375	0.74
Murry Park Pond	1	200	2	71	0	0.43
New Bullards Bar Reservoir	1	175	7.5	270	270	0.43
New Melones Lake	1	165	8.5	153	153	1.32
Pardee Reservoir	1	60	7.5	150	150	0.50
Rancho Jurupa Park Lake	1	100	---	0	0	0
Sacramento River	1	---	---	36	36	3.39
Shasta Lake	1	302	21	276	276	1.54
Shaver Lake	1	103	8.5	104	104	1.07
Skinner Reservoir	1	100	---	0	0	0

Stampede Reservoir	1	217	8.5	236	236	0.82
Susan River	1	129	9	85	0	5.56
Twin Lakes	1	96	---	59	42	0.76
Union Valley Reservoir	1	74	9	46	46	---
Various Waters (Inyo County)	2	192	20	1127	890	0.79
Various Waters (Mono County)	2	107	7	45	45	1.86
West Walker River	1	---	---	55	0	3.36
Whiskeytown Lake	1	---	7.5	126	126	1.36
Grand Total	43	14304	383	6510	4510	3.76

*Total hours reported does not reflect total hours for all contests reported.

Table 5**Summary of 1985-2023 “Event”/“Type A” and “Annual”/“Type B”/“Type C/Type D” Black Bass Fishing Contests Held**

Year	Event and Type A Contests Held	Annual, Type B, and Type C Contests Held	Year	Event and Type A Contests Held	Annual, Type B, and Type C Contests Held
1985	57	NA	2005	777	831
1986	151	NA	2006	765	919
1987	156	NA	2007	843	966
1988	234	NA	2008	820	1044
1989	226	NA	2009	808	918
1990	277	485	2010	819	935
1991	265	570	2011	800	922
1992	282	704	2012	790	984
1993	303	704	2013	610	872
1994	298	814	2014	597	851
1995	327	804	2015	515	850
1996	375	808	2016	567	928
1997	422	824	2017	557	894
1998	549	887	2018	566	860
1999	596	820	2019	557	869
2000	630	889	2020	505	820
2001	724	937	2021	499	756
2002	721	934	2022	481	724
2003	843	887	2023	469	732
2004	793	903			