

State of California  
The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

Inland Fisheries - Informational Leaflet No. 41

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBTAINING PERMITS TO OFFER PRIZES  
FOR TAKING GAME FISH IN FISHING CONTESTS

This leaflet explains how to obtain permits to offer prizes or other inducements in fishing contests and describes conditions for issuing permits. Questions should be directed to one of the Department's regional offices. Their addresses, phone numbers, and the counties in each region are located at the end of this leaflet.

Section 230, Title 14, of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) contains the regulations governing game fish contests. Section 2003 of the Fish and Game Code authorizes the Department to issue a permit to any person authorizing that person to offer prizes or other inducements in fishing contests, tournaments or derbies for the taking of game fish. There are two exceptions: Permits are not required for (1) frog-jumping contests or (2) fishing contests conducted in waters of the Pacific Ocean. Game fish include the following species or species groups: white sturgeon; American shad; salmon and trout--all species; goldfish; common carp; hardhead; Sacramento pike minnow; western sucker; catfish and bullheads--all species; striped bass; white bass; black bass and sunfish--all species; tilapia--all species; sargo; bairdiella; and orangemouth corvina.

The Department may issue a permit only if it determines that there would be no detriment to the resource. Therefore, permits may be denied, or special conditions may be applied to the permit to insure that the resource is not harmed. Some denials or special conditions are applied seasonally on some waters.

It is the responsibility of all contest participants to follow all applicable laws and regulations and any special conditions established by the Department to protect the welfare of fish populations or individual fish.

Prepared by Fisheries Branch, December 1987; revised July 1990, January 1991, October 1992, April 1996, December 1996, January 1999, February 2001, April 2002, April 2003, May 2004, April 2008, July 2012, October 2016. This leaflet replaces Information Leaflets Nos. 38 and 39.

## Permit Types

**EVENT Type:** An Event type permit is required if either the number of participants exceeds 50 or the total value of prizes and inducements exceeds \$1,000. Only one contest for which an Event permit has been issued may be held for the same species on the same day on an individual water, the Delta being the only exception. A total of three Event type contests may be scheduled on the same day in the Delta, provided that no more than one contest weigh-in is held in Contra Costa, San Joaquin, or Sacramento counties for that day. Contests permitted under an Event permit shall be three consecutive days duration or less. Please note: the three-day limitation does not apply to permitted contests in which fish from two or more individual waters may be entered, such as a derby-type event.

**ANNUAL Type:** An Annual type permit may be issued if the number of participants for each contest does not exceed 50 and the total value of all prizes or inducements for each contest does not exceed \$1,000. Annual permits are good for one calendar year. Applicants must list on the application all proposed contests by date, name of water, planned weigh-in site, and target species or species group. While there is no limit on the number of contests that may be conducted under an Annual permit, a maximum of 12 contests may appear on each application. The standard administrative fee will be charged for each complete or incomplete set of 12 contests. Contests conducted under Annual permits are not precluded from taking place by another contest approved under an Event or other Annual permits for the same dates and individual waters. If an applicant makes a change to the contest water or contest date from what appears on an approved permit, the applicant must notify the Department's Regional office that issued the permit of such change. **Applications for Annual permit(s) should be submitted to the regional office nearest to the applicant.**

## Permit Issuance Procedures

### General

A non-refundable administrative fee is required to be submitted with each application. All appropriately submitted applications for permits will be date-stamped to insure orderly processing. Regional Managers and the Chief of the Fisheries Branch, or their designees, have the authority to approve Annual Permits. Event Permits must be approved by the Regional Manager, or their designee, of the region in which the contests is proposed. **Permits are nontransferable.**

### Application for Current Year Contests

Permits for contests proposed for the current year will be considered and issued in the order that the applications are received. If an Event Permit has already been issued for a particular water and date(s), the application will be returned to the applicant within 14 calendar days. A list of dates and waters of currently permitted contests is available on the Department's website ([www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)). All applicants are encouraged to review this list to check for water and date availability prior to submitting a contest application. Should an approved permit be canceled, that date for the specific water will become available when the cancellation is processed for that date on the list of dates on the website.

### Application for Following Year Contests

In order that sponsors may have the opportunity to negotiate between each other for tournament dates for Event type permits for black bass fishing contests on the same body of water, a meeting will be held in the Sacramento area and in the Los Angeles area during July of the preceding year. Dates of these meetings will be determined by the department. Should the sponsors not be able to reconcile a date on a particular water, a random drawing will be conducted by Department personnel at these meetings. Only applications received after July 1 and preceding the random drawing shall be considered.

Applicants may attend the random drawing in person or submit completed application(s) (including appropriate fees) to the appropriate Department office. Applications received as "mail-in" prior to the random drawings must be prioritized by the applicant. If not, the applications will be drawn in chronological order based on the contest date. Prior to the drawing, a random number will be assigned to each applicant in attendance and to each group of applications submitted by an individual not in attendance (mail-in). A series of random drawings of the assigned numbers will be conducted by Department personnel and one application accepted for each number drawn. Only one application shall be accepted from each applicant during each consecutive round of the drawing process. Rounds of drawings will be conducted until all applications have been accepted, or there are no more applications, whichever occurs first. Immediately following the drawings, completed applications (including the signature of the applicant and appropriate fees) must be submitted to Department personnel.

Applications for Event type permits received after the drawings will be issued on a first-come first-serve basis. If two or more applicants have requested an Event type permit for the same species, date, and individual water, the application received first by the appropriate regional office will be given priority.

### Change in Contest Date or Location

Change in date, water, or weigh-in site for contests covered under either permit type will be considered provided the issuing region is notified in a timely manner and the proposed change(s) do not conflict with another contest. A telephone call to the appropriate staff in a regional office may be sufficient, but a written request may be required depending on the extent of the proposed change(s). It is important that Event permit changes be requested not less than 30 days before the earlier of the originally scheduled contest dates or the proposed new contest dates. Change in Event permit plans may require a new application and processing fee, depending on the extent of the proposed change(s), and will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Change in Event permit plans that cross regional boundaries will require a new application and processing fee. Thus, Event Permit sponsors should be very certain about their contest plans before filing an application. Contests held under an Event permit may not be conducted on any date(s), on any waters, or at any weigh-in site not specified on the permit. To do so will result in cancellation of the current permit and could result in denial of future permits.

### Adherence to Special Conditions

Section 230 Title 14 CCR specifies that insofar as possible, all fish shall be returned to the water alive and in good condition, all contestants shall have facilities for keeping bass alive and in good condition (the contest or department officials shall have the authority to disqualify any individual from competing if suitable facilities are not available). Only artificial lures may be used. Contestants may use manufactured and man-made artificial lures with scents or flavored attractants added in during the manufacturing or afterward.

In addition to the conditions specified above, the Department has developed a set of Special Conditions which are intended to provide for the welfare of fish populations and individual fish. These conditions are provided to the applicant in writing to the applicant when issuing the permit. The applicant shall provide copies of the conditions or otherwise inform every participant of the Special Conditions. It is unlawful for any person participating in contest permitted under the authority of Section 230 Title 14 CCR to violate any condition of the permit.

### Application for Exemptions to Angling Regulations

As part of Event permit conditions, the Department *may* authorize an exemption to those black bass angling regulations which impose an increased minimum size limit larger than 12 inches, a slot size limit, or a reduced bag limit. Applicants will be required to submit an 'Angling Regulation Exemption Request Form' for each Event contest in which the applicant seeks an exemption from the normal sport fishing regulations for the proposed contest participants. The exemption allows a participating angler to weigh-in not more than five black bass greater than 12

inches total length. *Each participating angler is required to have in possession during the contest hours written identification issued by the sponsor (i.e. weigh-in slip) that includes the following: 1) Name of contest sponsor; 2) Name of participating angler; 3) Contest permit number; 4) Date of contest; and 5) Contest location and weigh-in site.* Contest sponsors should contact the Department region issuing the permit for specific information on applicable waters and additional requirements.

Nothing in the regulations governing game fish contests prevents sponsors of contests with 50 or less participants and offering prizes and inducements of \$1,000 or less, from applying for and receiving an Event Permit.

### Observer Requirement

The Department may assign a State employee to observe and monitor activities at any contest. If an observer is assigned, the applicant shall reimburse the Department \$100 per day for the cost of the observer's services, and one or more days may be required. The exact dates for observation and monitoring will be determined by the issuing Region and will not be revealed to the public or the contest applicant prior to the scheduled contest dates. The applicant will be notified of any observer assignments(s) on the approved permit. If an applicant fails to reimburse the Department for the observer, the Department may cancel previously permitted contests or deny the issuance of future permit(s). The Department may assign observers to monitor contests at any time (with no observer fee charged to the applicant), and the dates and times for such assignments may or may not be revealed prior to the scheduled contest date(s).

## **Application Considerations**

### Processing (Administrative) Fee

The application processing fee for each Event type permit covers only one (1) contest per application. The application processing fee for each Annual Permit provides for up to 12 contests per application. Each additional set of 12 or fewer contests will require an additional application and processing fee. The processing fee varies each year and is determined using an inflation factor.

**The processing fee is nonrefundable.**

The Department may waive the processing fee if the contest, tournament, or derby is for persons under the age of 16, or who are physically or mentally challenged, the primary purpose of the contest is to introduce young anglers to, or educate them about fishing. All participants in a contest for which the permit fee is waived shall comply with all other requirements set forth in the regulations.

## Falsification of Intent in Obtaining Event Permits

Section 1052 of the Fish and Game Code states that it is unlawful to possess a permit obtained by fraud or deceit. Submitting applications for Event permits for the specific purpose of "tying-up" or preventing other potential applicants from conducting or planning to conduct a contest as proposed is inconsistent with State law.

## **Fishing Contest Reports**

All permittees of fishing contests (both Event and Annual permit holders) are required to complete and return a Fishing Contest Report Form (Form FG 775) or equivalent to the Department for each permitted contest, including all cancelled contests. The Department will attach a copy of the Fishing Contest Report Form with each approved permit. Permittees may also obtain the report form at the Department's website ([www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)), or a copy may be requested from any of the Department regional offices. All questions on the form must be answered and returned to the appropriate office (as indicated at the bottom of the report form) within 30 calendar days after the completion of each contest. The completion and submittal of this report allows Department biologists to monitor the impact of such events on fisheries resources. Failure to return the required report may result in cancellation of existing approved permit(s) and/or denial of future permits.

## **Other Contest Considerations**

### Movement of Live Fish

To prevent the movement of live fish from one body of water to another, the Department may establish permit conditions governing the movement of live fish associated with tournament activities (Section 230 (d)(2) CCR Title 14).

### Culling

Daily bag and possession limits for all permitted black bass contests, insofar that once the daily bag and possession limit has been reached by an individual angler, that same angler may continue to fish under the condition that each additional fish caught must immediately be returned to the water alive and in good condition, or be used to replace a fish being maintained alive and in good condition from the participant's livewell (Section 230 (d)(1)(B) CCR Title 14).

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
Regional and Field Offices

<b>NORTHERN REGION (1)</b>	
<b>601 Locust Street Redding, CA 96001 (530) 225-2300</b>	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, & Trinity
<b>NORTH CENTRAL REGION (2)</b>	
<b>1701 Nimbus Road Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 (916) 358-2900</b>	Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lake, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba and the portions of Sacramento, San Joaquin and Yolo counties that are north of I-80 and east of I-5
<b>BAY-DELTA REGION (3)</b>	
<b>7329 Silverado Road Napa, CA 94558 (707) 944-5500</b>	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Solano, Sonoma and the portions of Sacramento, San Joaquin and Yolo counties that are south of I-80 and west of I-5
<b>CENTRAL REGION (4)</b>	
<b>1234 East Shaw Avenue Fresno, CA 93710 (559) 243-4005</b>	Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Monterey, Merced, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Stanislaus, Tulare and Tuolumne
<b>SOUTH COAST REGION (5)</b>	
<b>4665 Lampson Avenue Los Alamitos, CA 90720 (562) 342-7152</b>	Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura
<b>INLAND DESERTS REGION (6)</b>	
<b>3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220, Ontario, CA 91764 (909) 484-0167</b>	Imperial, Inyo, Mono, Riverside and San Bernardino