

# Maine B.A.S.S. Nation

*by Casey Dall*

**M**aine B.A.S.S. Nation is a network of locally organized bass fishing clubs whose members participate in and support a range of activities, such as tournaments, youth programs, conservation initiatives, volunteer work, and more. Is this your year to become a member?



*Will and Dale with a couple of prize winning bass.*

By the time April rolls around, many bass anglers are eager to hit the water after a long, cold winter. This is the start of Maine's bass tournament season. All types of people show up at the boat ramp come the morning of a tournament: life-long friends, fathers and sons (and daughters, too!), husbands and wives, coworkers, and even arch rivals. Some are here for the fun, and some for the competition.

There is no right or wrong way to becoming a tournament angler; you don't have to own a boat and you don't have to have the most expensive tackle. Our organization consists of both boaters and co-anglers. With tournaments being held throughout different parts of the state, chances are there is a tournament on a body of water that you enjoy, or would enjoy, to fish. There's just something about catching a limit of bass in a tournament that keeps you signing up for more. Even better is winning, and taking home some cash for your efforts.

Our members are getting younger, as more opportunity for children and teenagers expands throughout the state. High school and college bass fishing are the fastest growing programs in our sport. The Junior Bassmaster program focuses more on younger anglers, with less pressure of competition and more fun with family and friends. Kids start off learning the basics

before and after use. All inspection forms are submitted to Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife to be filed.

In addition, fish care is on every angler's mind. In a tournament, fish are kept alive in an aerated live well until they are weighed in, and then quickly released to be caught another day. We strive for a 100% survival rate. We host only catch, measure, and release tournaments during the spawning months, to ensure no disruption to a bass's natural habitat. All of these efforts have made a positive impact on our fisheries for generations.

Our anglers are involved in their communities. Their enthusiasm to raise money for charitable causes is boundless. Our annual Father's Day Classic tournament on Androscoggin Lake benefits the Travis Mills Foundation by donation of all proceeds. The New England Paralyzed Veterans of America hosts a trail that makes a stop in Maine, where anglers team up with a veteran for a fun but competitive tournament. Club members volunteer their busy weekdays to connect with kids at Camp Sunshine. One of the biggest tournaments of the year, on Cobosseecontee Lake, brings anglers from out-of-state to raise money for the Special Olympics. We memorialize some of our fellow anglers with annual tournaments celebrating their life. The list goes on.



of fishing and develop into strong, skilled anglers. Designated youth fishing days are also a fun way to get the whole family involved. Our youth members are the future of this sport, and we recognize the importance of taking a kid fishing.

It's important to protect our natural resources and try to sustain the sport for generations to come. Part of that is accomplished with a little extra effort from our club members. We teamed up with the Keep America Fishing Foundation for the "Pitch It" campaign, to ensure baits are disposed of properly. Maine B.A.S.S. Nation clubs built containers at various boat launches, to collect any used tackle or trash. Lake cleanups are another common project, removing trash from shorelines and watersheds. Boat inspection for invasive aquatic plants is a top priority of ours, and we continue to lead by example by making sure no boat is left unchecked

If you are interested in learning the sport of tournament bass fishing, there are many ways for you to get involved. Joining a club is easy—or you can start your own! Check out our website at [www.mebass.com](http://www.mebass.com) to find a club in your area as well as a list of tournaments for 2019.

There is something for everyone being a part of Maine B.A.S.S. Nation.

## Did You Know?

Federal gun laws prohibit you from buying a gun for someone who is prohibited from owning a gun. 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6) and 922(d)

 **The Maine Sportsman SAM MEMBER SPECIAL: 1 YEAR FOR \$20!** 

*The Maine Sportsman magazine says thanks to SAM members by offering a one-year subscription for just \$20. THAT'S \$10 OFF THE REGULAR ONE-YEAR RATE!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Visa/MC \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_



Mail form with payment information (check or money order also accepted) to:  
The Maine Sportsman | 183 State Street, Suite 101 | Augusta, ME 04330  
**(207) 622-4242 • [www.MaineSportsman.com](http://www.MaineSportsman.com)**

\*This offer limited to new subscribers or two-year-lapsed subscribers of The Maine Sportsman. Expires December 31, 2020.