

Have You Heard About The **Invasive** Alabama Bass?

Alabama bass (*Micropterus henshali*), aka Coosa spotted bass, are a recent and illegal introduction to Virginia waters. Alabama bass outcompete largemouth bass and readily hybridize with smallmouth and spotted bass. Alabama bass are nearly identical in appearance to spotted bass and can be differentiated from largemouth bass by the presence of a tooth patch on their tongue and their spot pattern.

Alabama bass are native to Georgia and Alabama, occurring primarily in large river systems and large impoundments, but are an invasive species here in Virginia. Alabama bass are present in Lake Gaston, Buggs Island Lake (Kerr Reservoir), Claytor Lake, the New River below Claytor Lake, Philpott Lake, Martinsville Reservoir, Diascund Reservoir, James River (Fall-Line area in Richmond), and the Chickahominy River. The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is conducting genetic testing to better identify the extent of Alabama bass throughout Virginia.

Regulations in Effect

In 2021, Alabama bass were added to Virginia's Predatory and Undesirable Species List. These regulations have made live possession of this species unlawful outside of the body of water of catch. As an example, this means that it would be unlawful to capture an Alabama bass in the Chickahominy River and to release it into the James River. Violation of this regulation is a Class III misdemeanor. There is no bag or size limit on Alabama bass and anglers are encouraged to harvest any that they capture.

What To Do If You Suspect You Have Caught An Alabama Bass?

Anglers who suspect they have captured an Alabama bass should take a picture of the fish, clip off a thumbnail-sized portion of one of the pelvic fins, and store the fin clip dry in an envelope. The pelvic fins are located on the bottom of the fish, just under the head. They should then either contact the DWR at: fisheries@dwr.virginia.gov or at 804-367-1293.

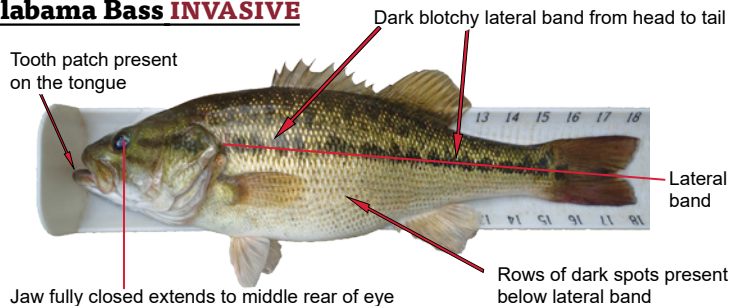
Anyone with knowledge of intentional stockings of Alabama or spotted bass should contact DWR law enforcement at 800-237-5712 or WildCrime@dwr.virginia.gov.

A Collaborative Effort

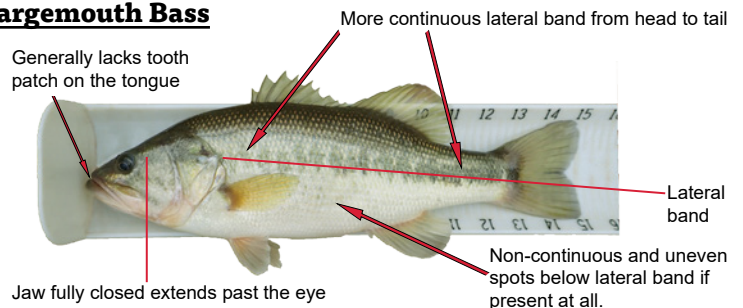
Preventing the spread of Alabama bass is a collaborative effort. DWR has been working hand in hand with The Virginia Chapter of the Bass Federation, the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, and the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame to spread awareness of Alabama bass and to monitor and prevent their further spread.

Do You Know The Difference?

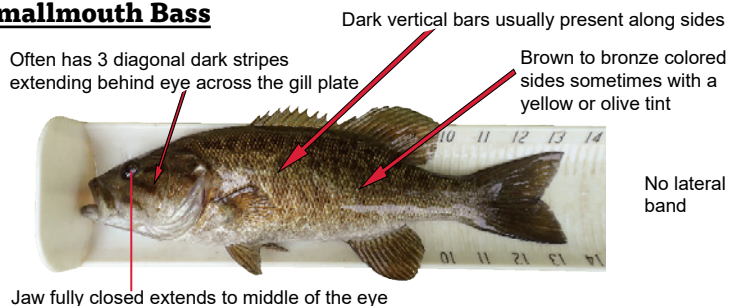
Alabama Bass **INVASIVE**



Largemouth Bass



Smallmouth Bass



For additional information on Alabama bass: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/fish/alabama-bass/>

Photos of bass courtesy of the iNaturalist Angling for Black Bass Conservation Project