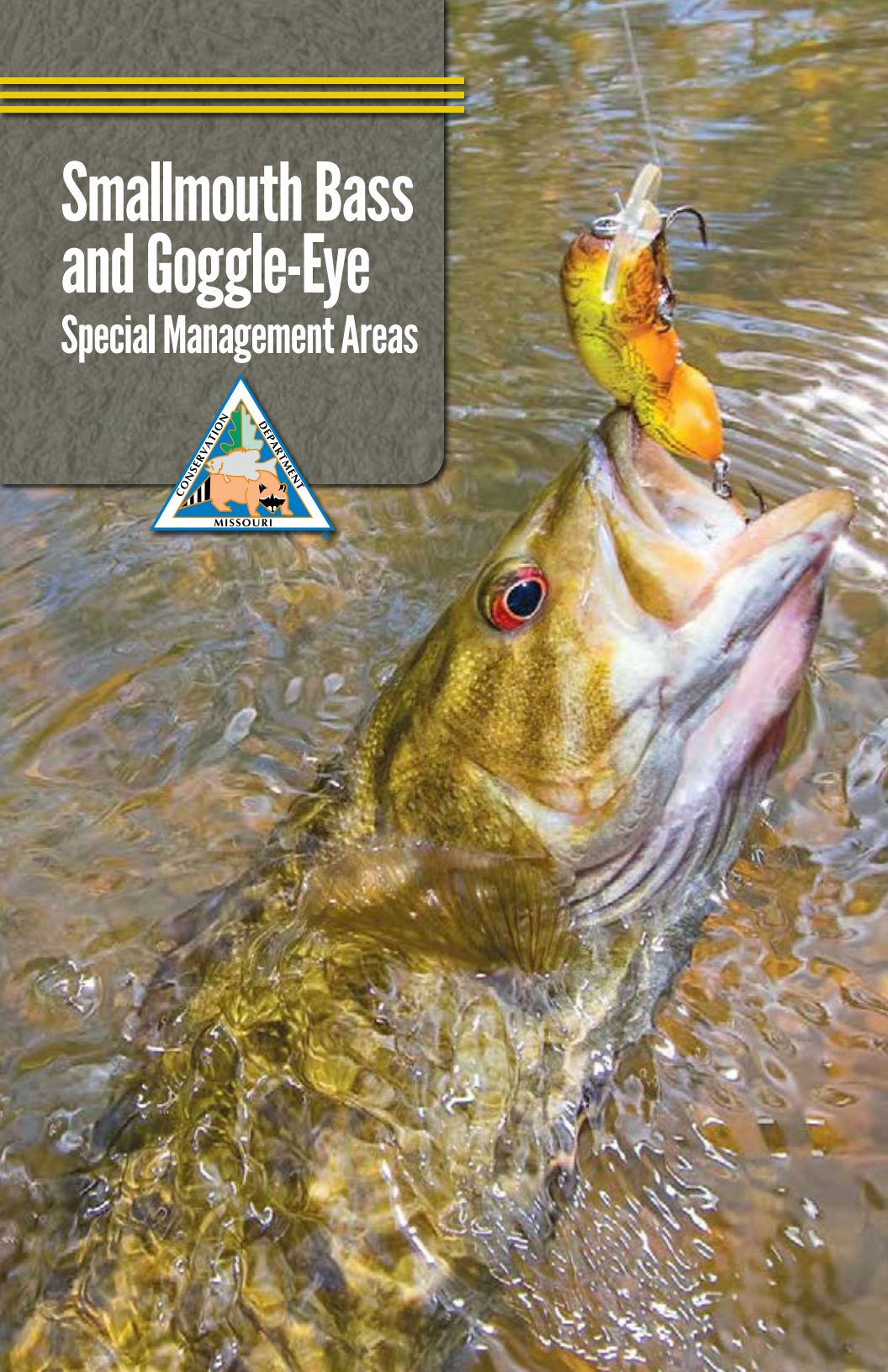


Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-Eye Special Management Areas



Introduction

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye (which is a term commonly used for Ozark bass, rock bass, shadow bass, and warmouth) are popular with anglers on Ozark streams. However, research shows that these species grow slowly, and many fish do not reach a quality size before being caught.

As a result of ongoing research and angler feedback, the Conservation Department created Special Management Areas on more than 300 miles of Ozark streams. The more-restrictive regulations on these streams are designed to help smallmouth and goggle-eye populations increase and allow more fish to grow to a quality size.

When fishing in a Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area, the daily limit is one smallmouth bass and the minimum length limit is 15 inches. On streams that are open to statewide regulations, the daily limit is six black bass (which includes smallmouth, largemouth, and spotted bass) and the minimum length limit is 12 inches.

When fishing in a Goggle-eye Special Management Area, the minimum length limit is 8 inches. On streams open to statewide regulations, the minimum length limit is 7 inches. In both cases, the daily limit is 15 goggle-eye.

This booklet summarizes Special Management Area regulations for smallmouth bass and goggle-eye and offers information helpful to anglers. **Additional regulations apply on many of the streams and rivers in this booklet.**



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











Special Management Area Maps

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Additional Information

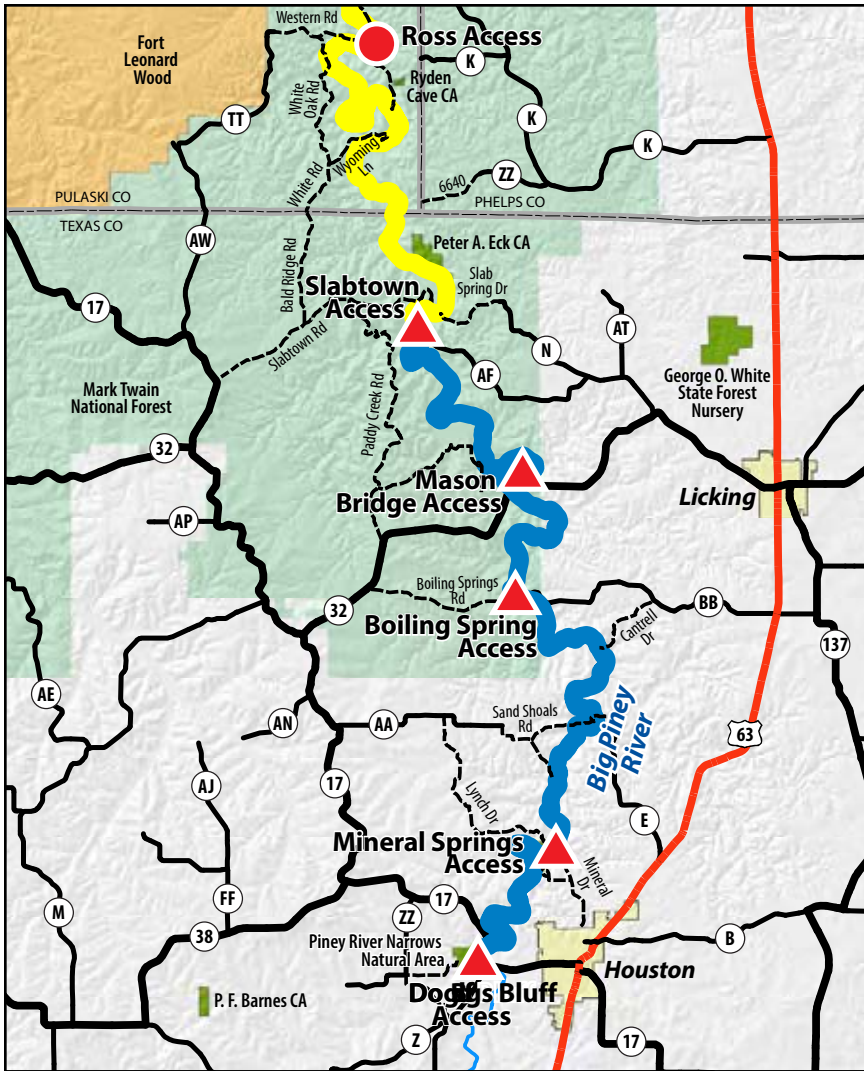
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Map Legend

 River Access	 Water Bodies
 Concrete Boat Ramp	 Ozark National Scenic Riverways
 Smallmouth Bass Management Area	 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Goggle-Eye Management Area	 Missouri Department of Conservation
 Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-Eye Management Area	 Missouri Department of Natural Resources
 Streams	 Mark Twain National Forest
 County Roads	 U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
 Interstate Highway	 Fort Leonard Wood
 Missouri Highway	 Cities
 Missouri Route	 County Boundaries
 U.S. Highway	

Big Piney River

- Goggle-eye Management Area
- Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye Management Area



From Highway 17 bridge to the Gasconade River:

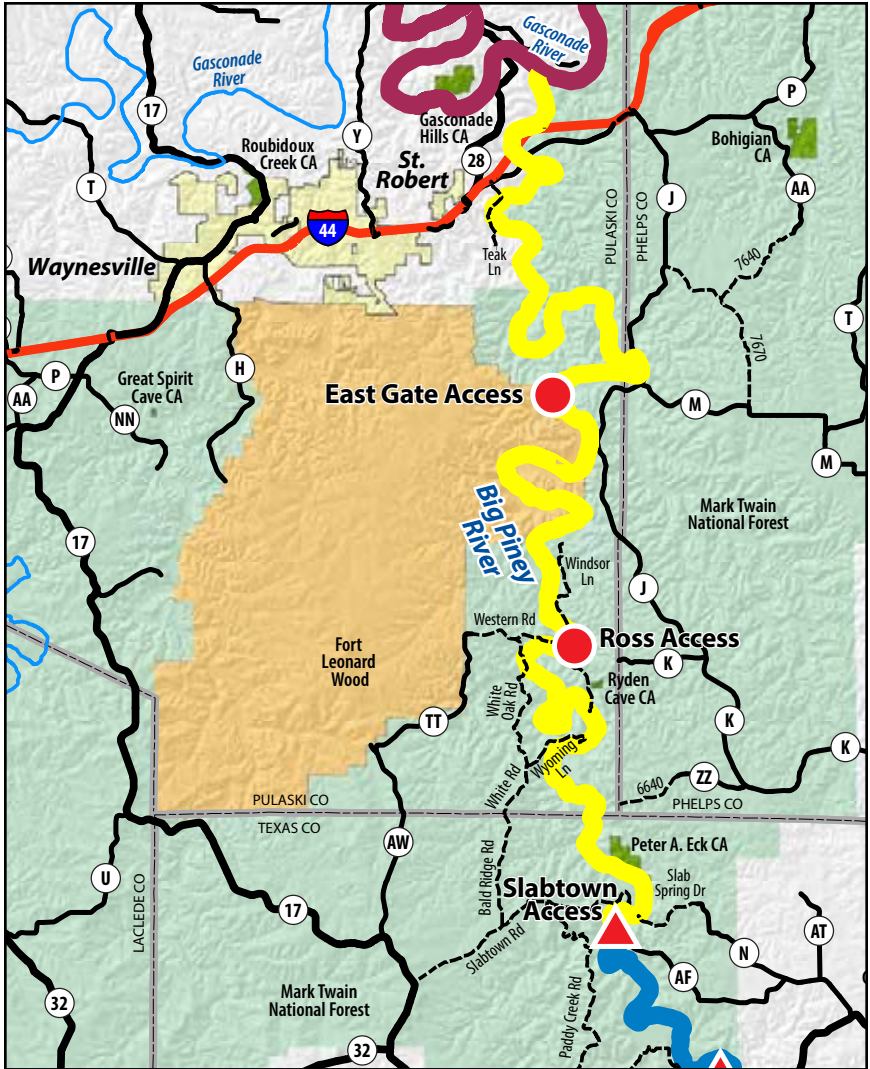
Goggle-eye — 8-inch minimum length limit

From Slabtown Access to the Gasconade River:

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

Big Piney River continued

- Goggle-eye Management Area
- Smallmouth Bass Management Area
- Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye Management Area

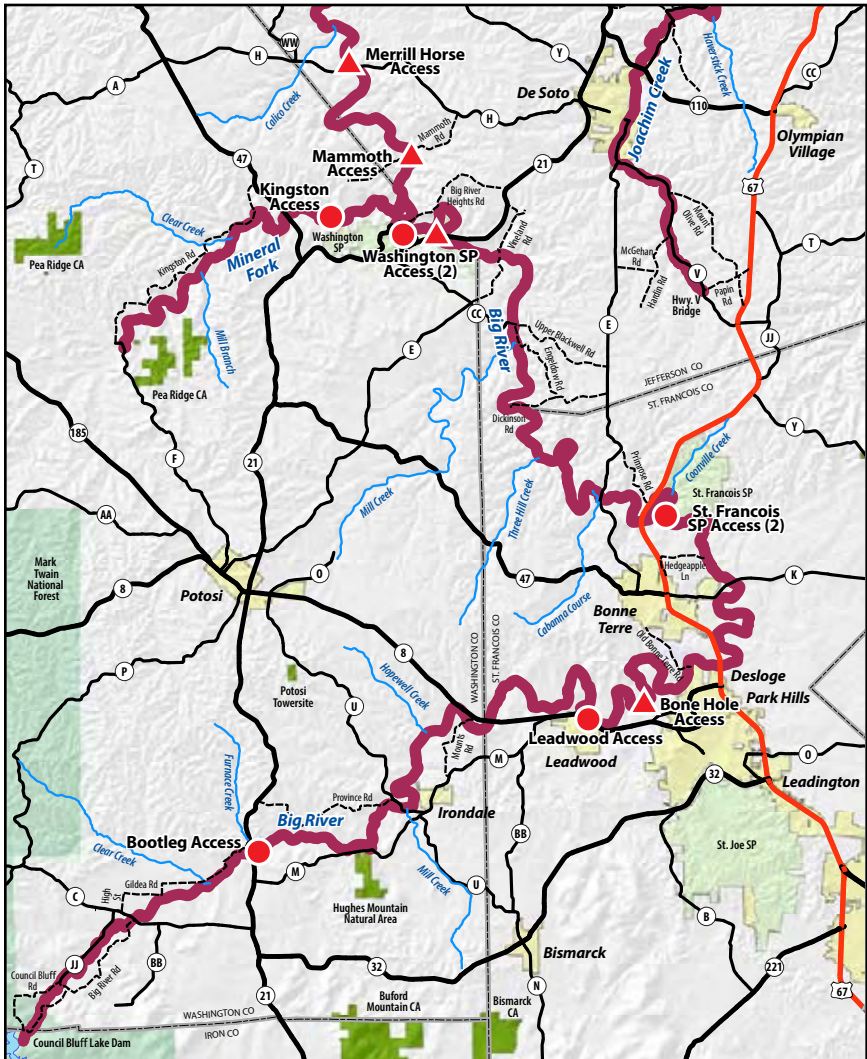


Gasconade River regulations are on pages 12–13.

Big River and Mineral Fork



Smallmouth Bass Management Area



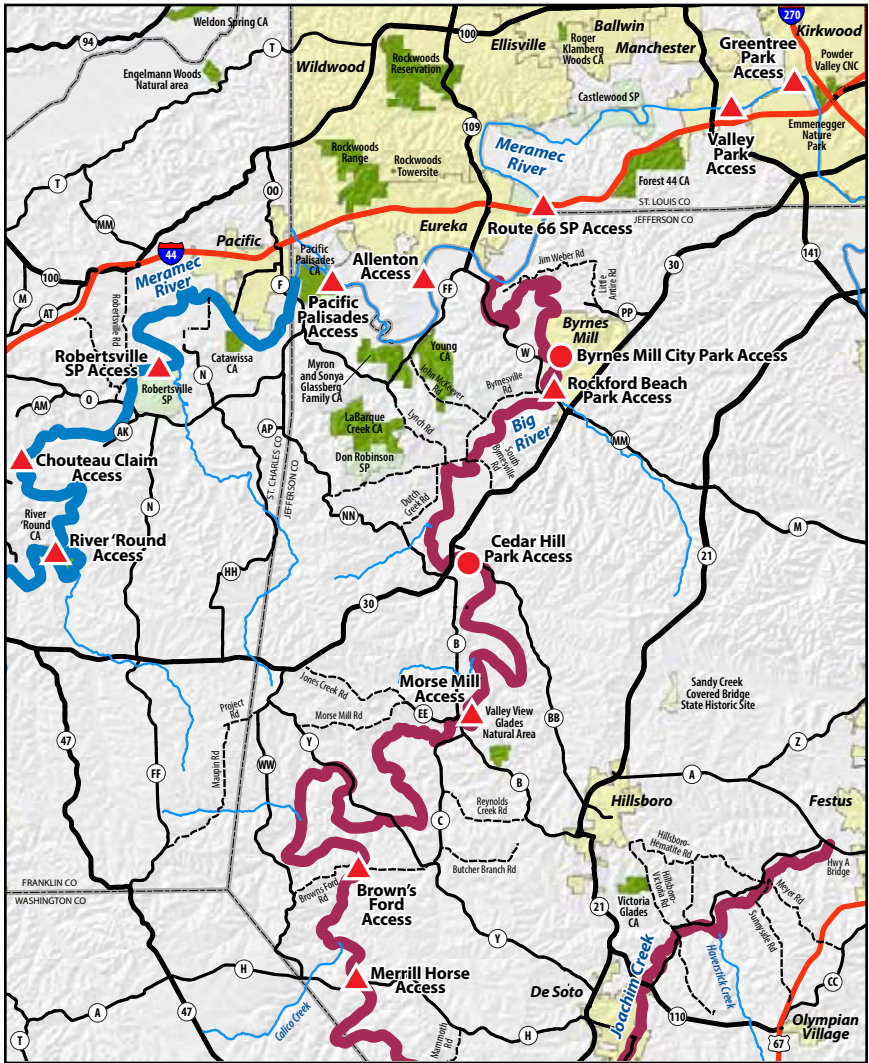
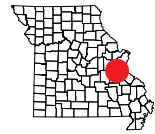
Mineral Fork from Highway F bridge in Washington County to the Big River:

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. Daily and possession limit of 12 black bass, which may include no more than six largemouth bass and smallmouth bass, combined total of both species, may include only one smallmouth bass.

Joachim Creek regulations are on Page 17.

Big River continued

- Smallmouth Bass Management Area
- Goggle-eye Management Area



Big River from the Council Bluff Lake Dam to the Meramec River:

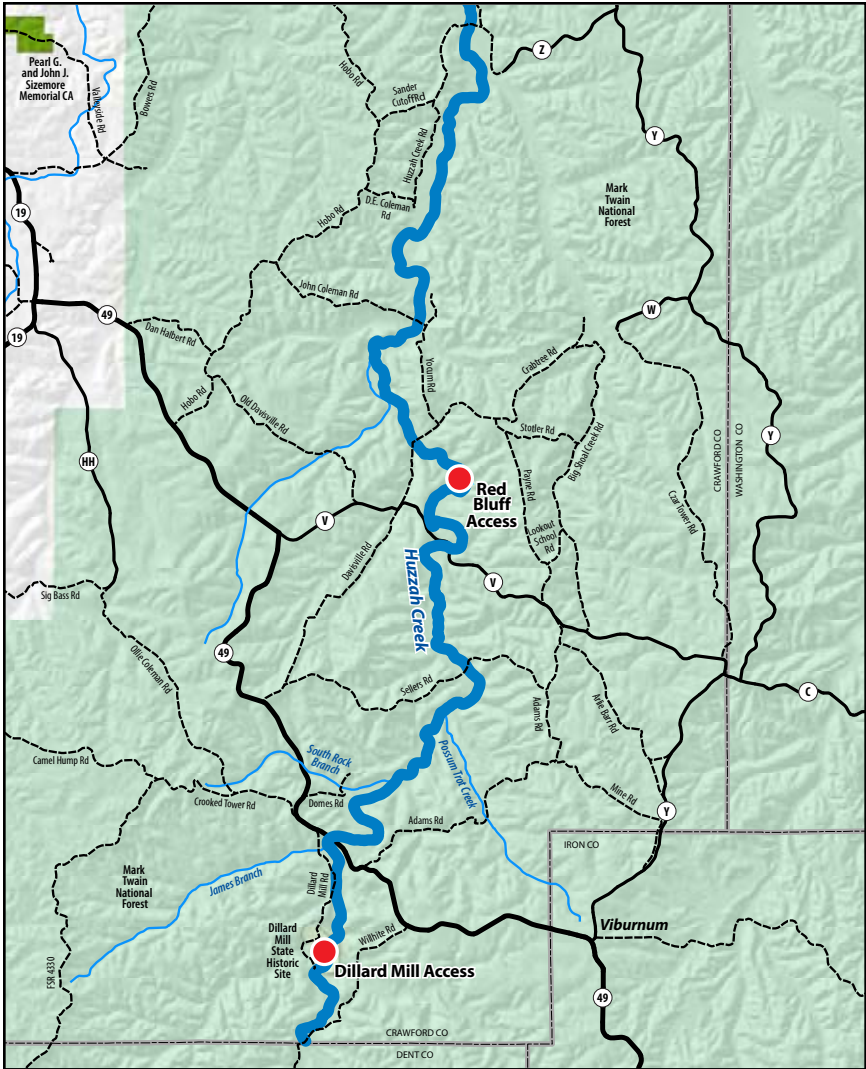
Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily and possession limit of 12 black bass, which may include no more than six largemouth bass and smallmouth bass, combined total of both species, may include only one smallmouth bass.

Meramec River regulations are on pages 19–23.

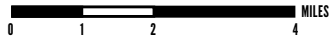
Huzzah Creek



 Goggle-eye Management Area



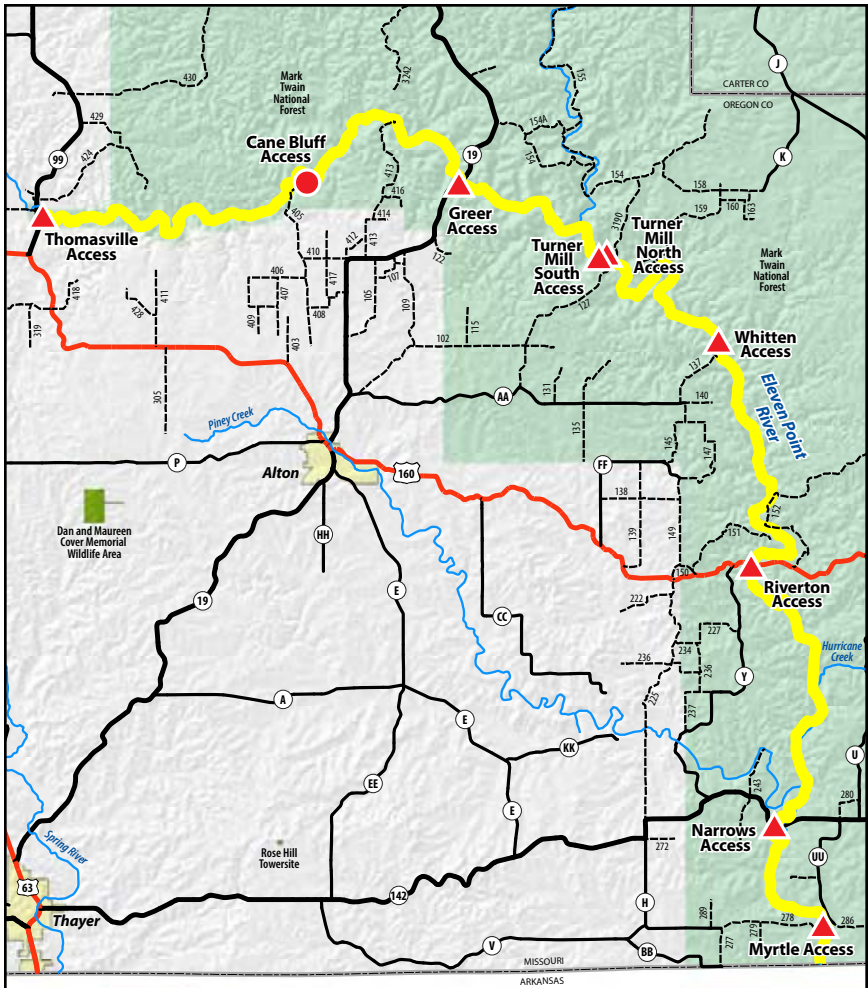
Huzzah Creek from Willhite Road in Crawford County to the Meramec River:
Goggle-eye — 8-inch minimum length limit



Eleven Point River



Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye Management Area



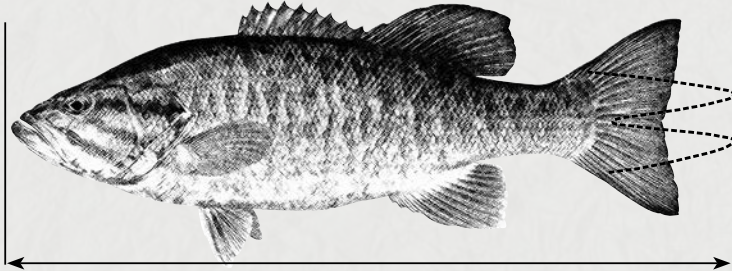
From Thomasville Access to the Arkansas line:

Goggle-eye — 8-inch minimum length limit

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

How to Measure Your Catch

Learn to measure and identify the fish you catch so that you can abide by Missouri's fishing seasons, daily limits, length limits, and other regulations. When in doubt about a fish's legal length, play it safe, and immediately return the fish to the water unharmed.



To measure a fish:

1. Place the fish on a ruler. Make sure the fish is laid flat on its side.
2. Close the fish's jaws.
3. Squeeze the lobes of the fish's tail fin together.
4. Measure a straight line from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail lobes.

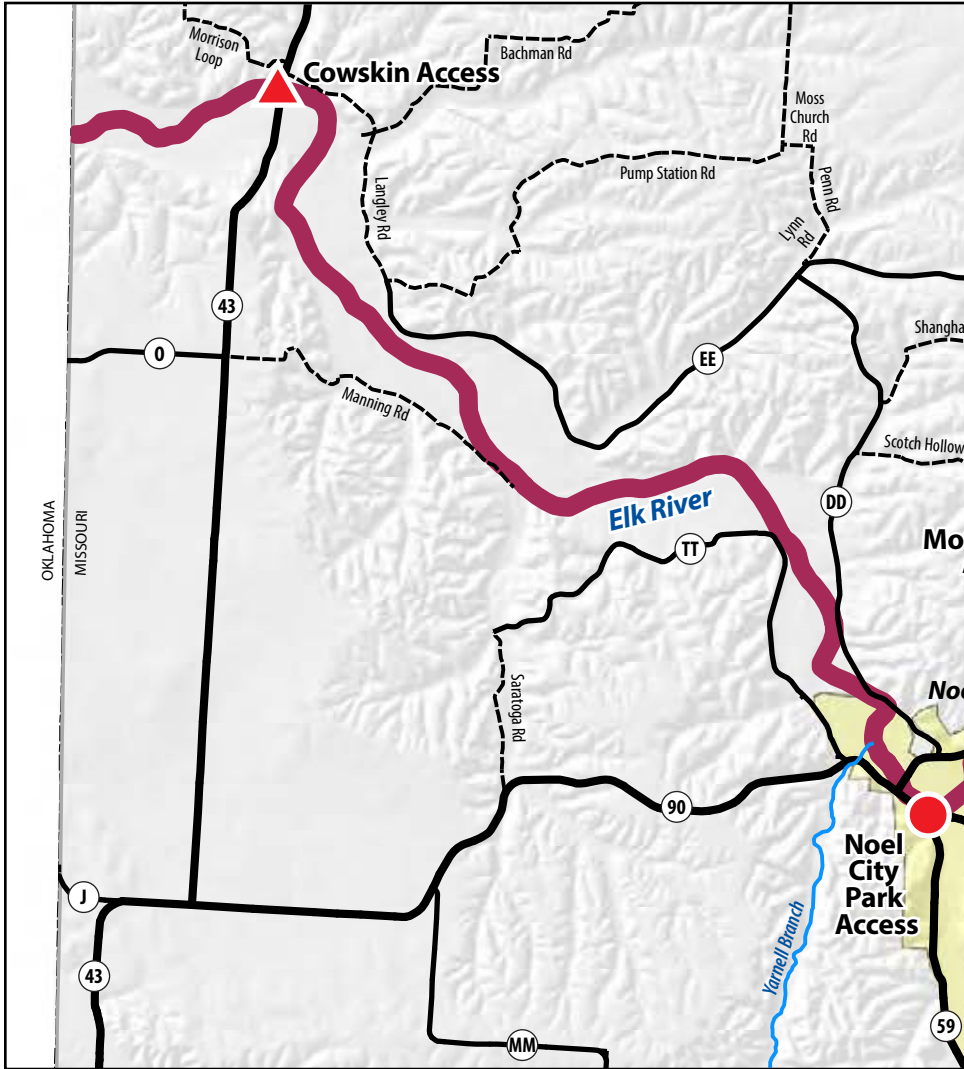
Minimum Length Limit

Any fish below the listed minimum length must be returned to the water unharmed immediately after being caught.

Smallmouth Bass Special Management Areas have a 15-inch minimum length limit. Goggle-eye Special Management Areas have an 8-inch minimum length limit. This means that if you're fishing in a Smallmouth Bass Special Management Area and catch a 14-inch smallmouth bass, you must return it to the water. But if you catch a 15-inch or larger fish, you may keep it.

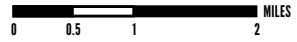
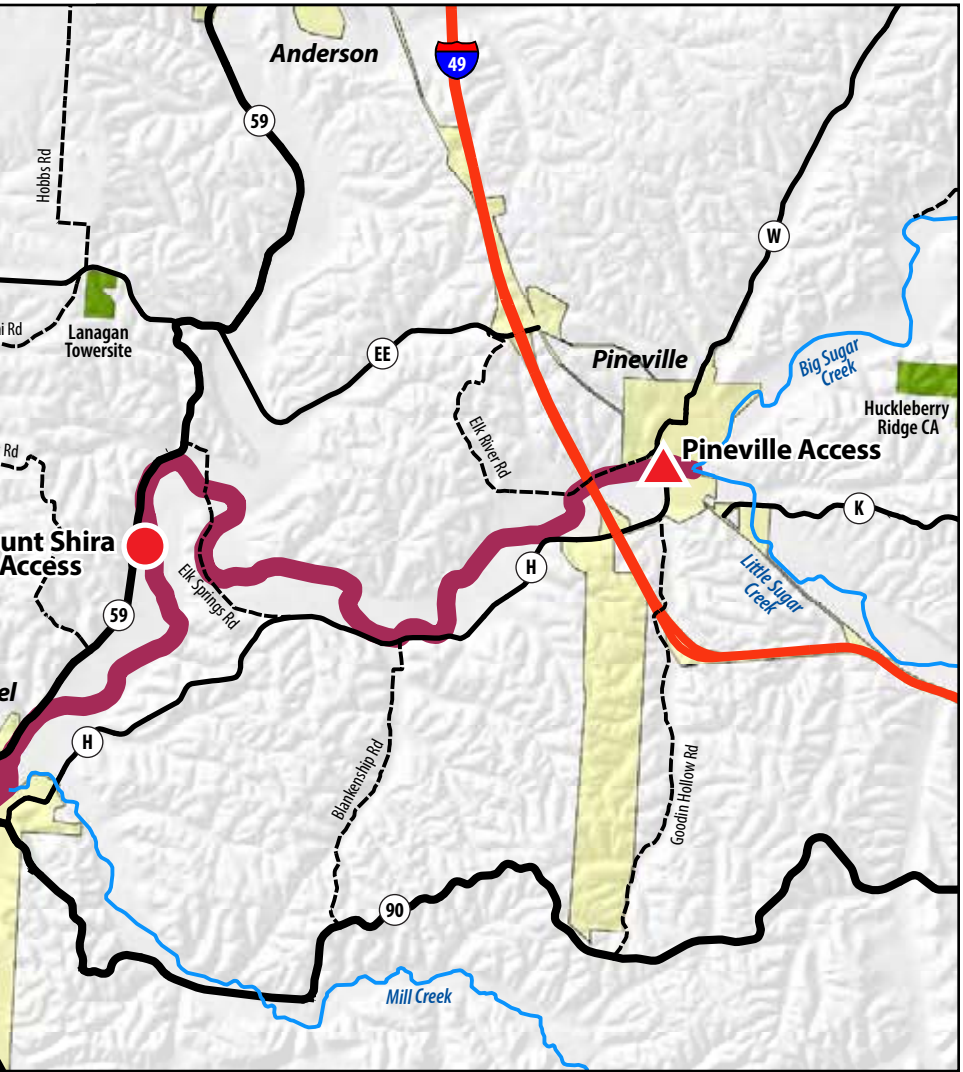
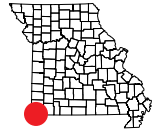
Elk River

— Smallmouth Bass Management Area



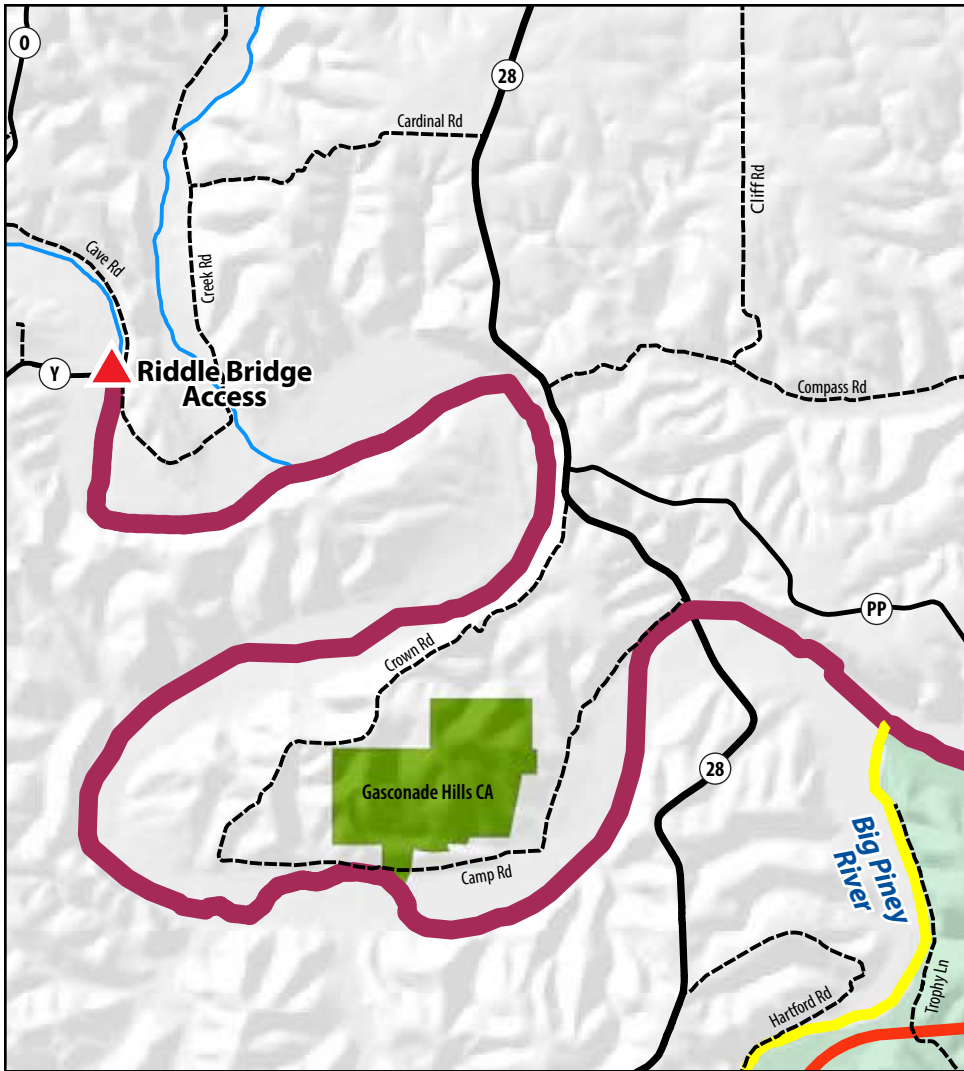
Entire length of Elk River in Missouri:

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.



Gasconade River

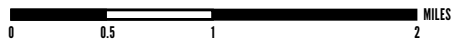
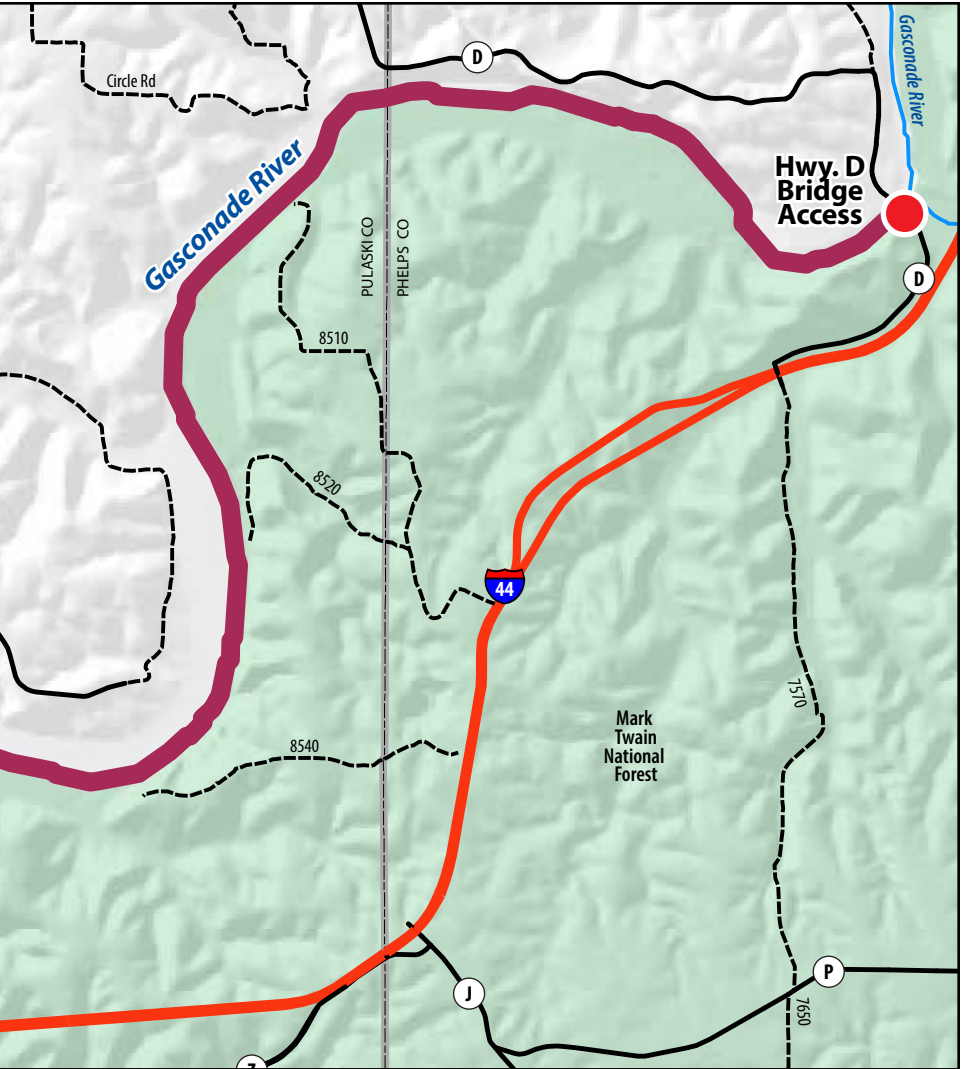
- Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye Management Area
- Smallmouth Bass Management Area



From Highway Y bridge in Pulaski County to Highway D bridge in Phelps County:

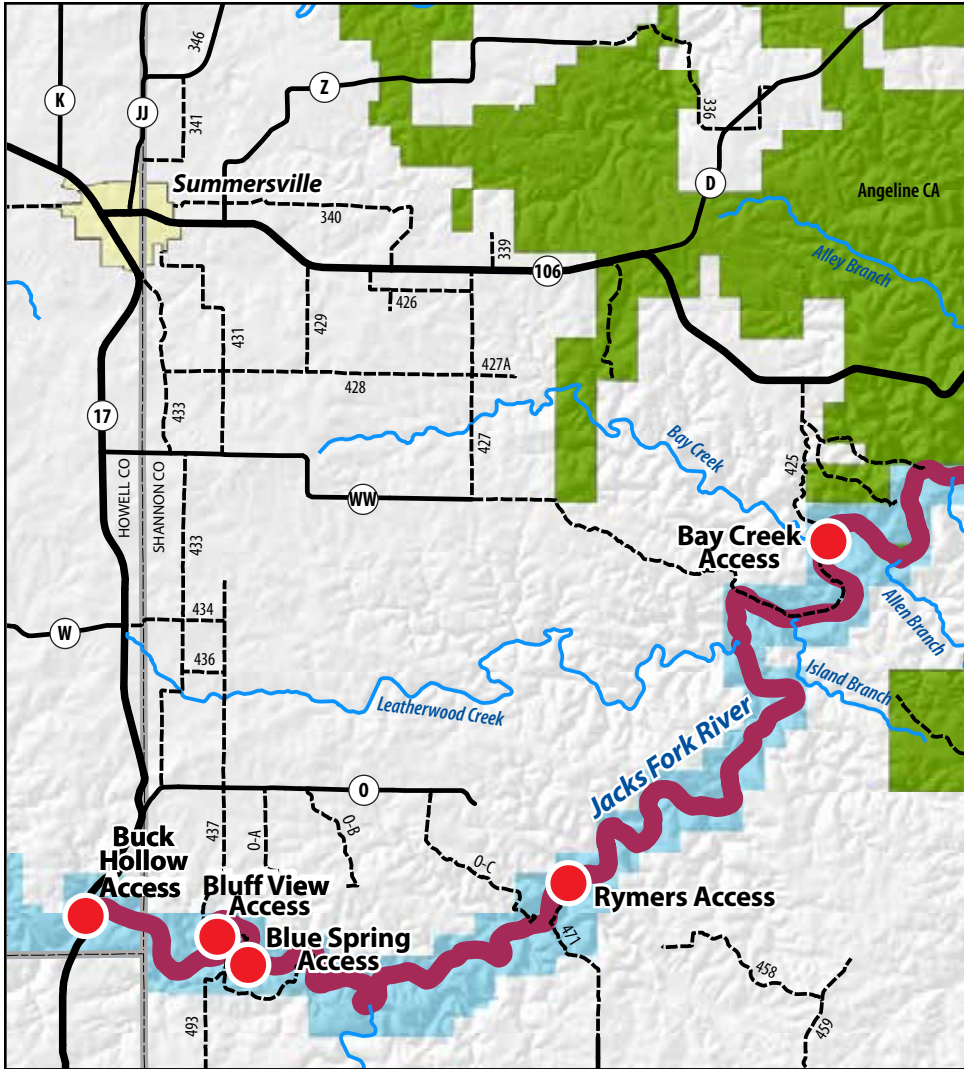
Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

Big Piney River regulations are on pages 2–3.



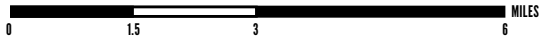
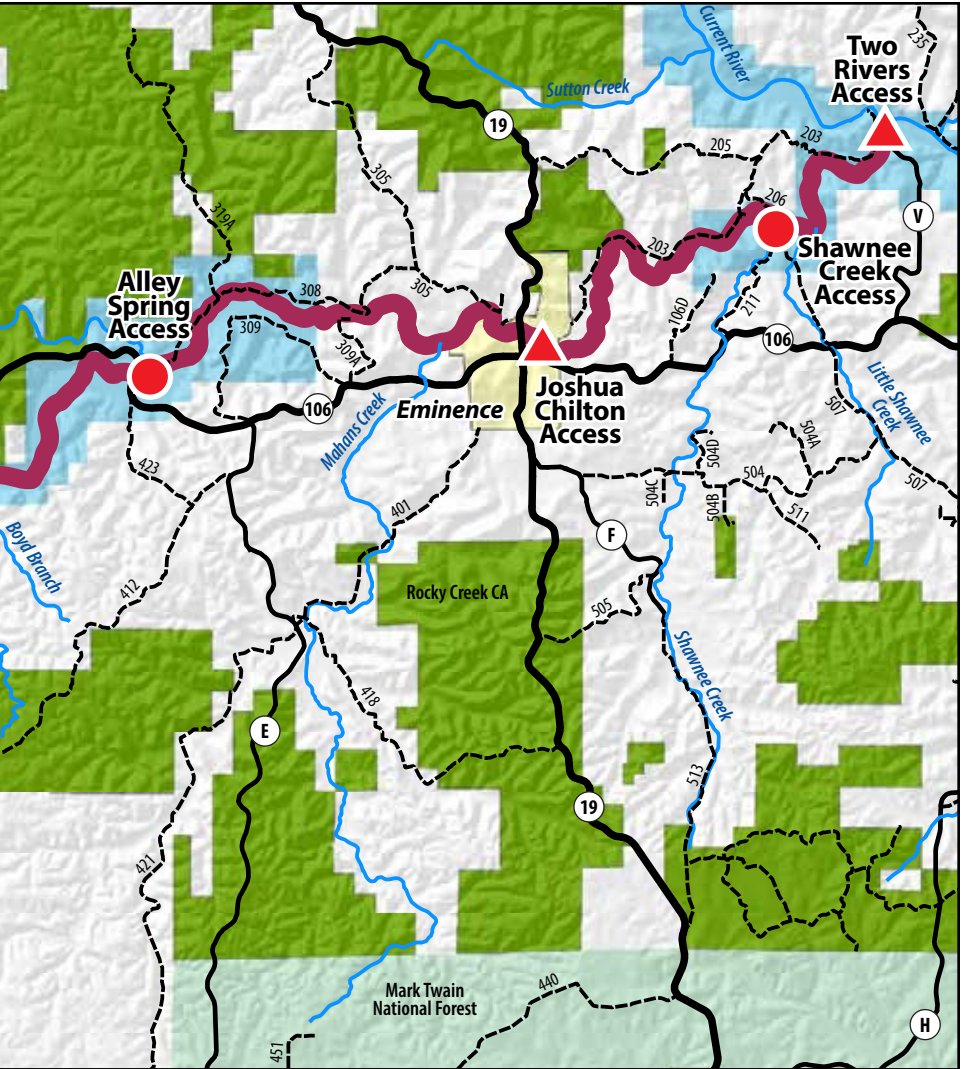
Jacks Fork River

— Smallmouth Bass Management Area



From Highway 17 bridge to the Current River:

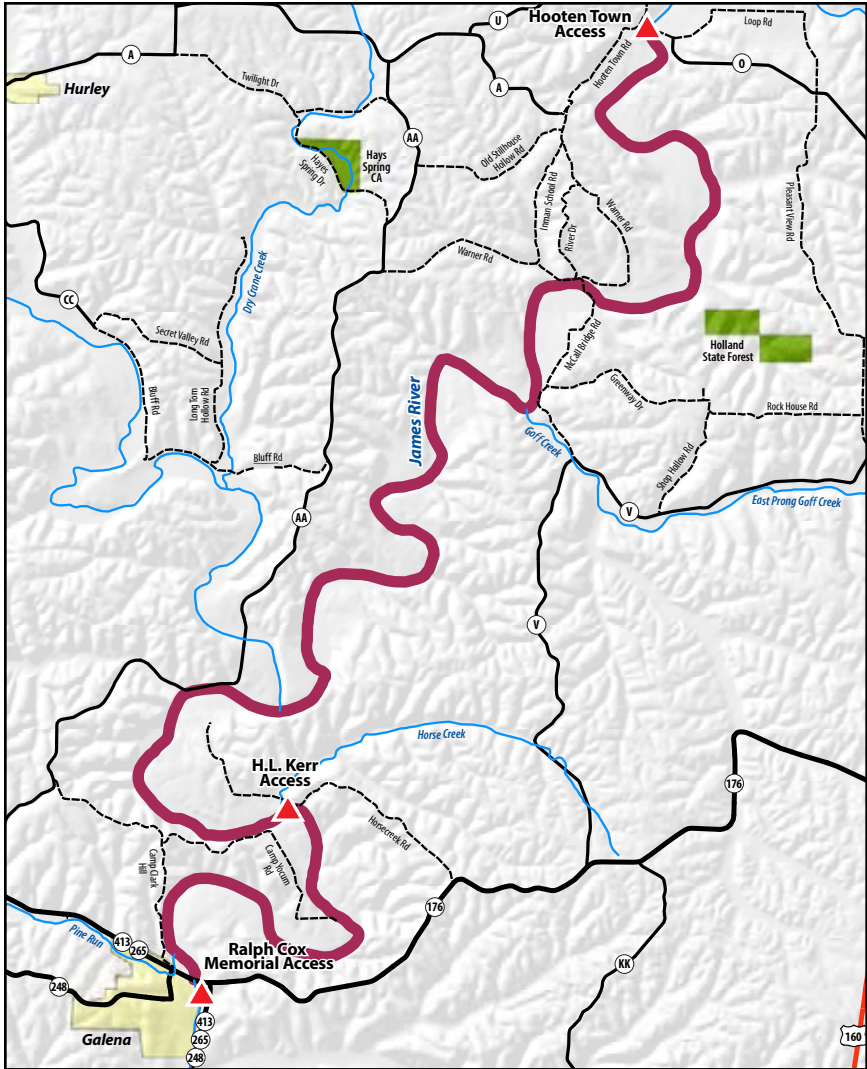
Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.



James River



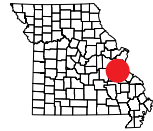
— Smallmouth Bass Management Area



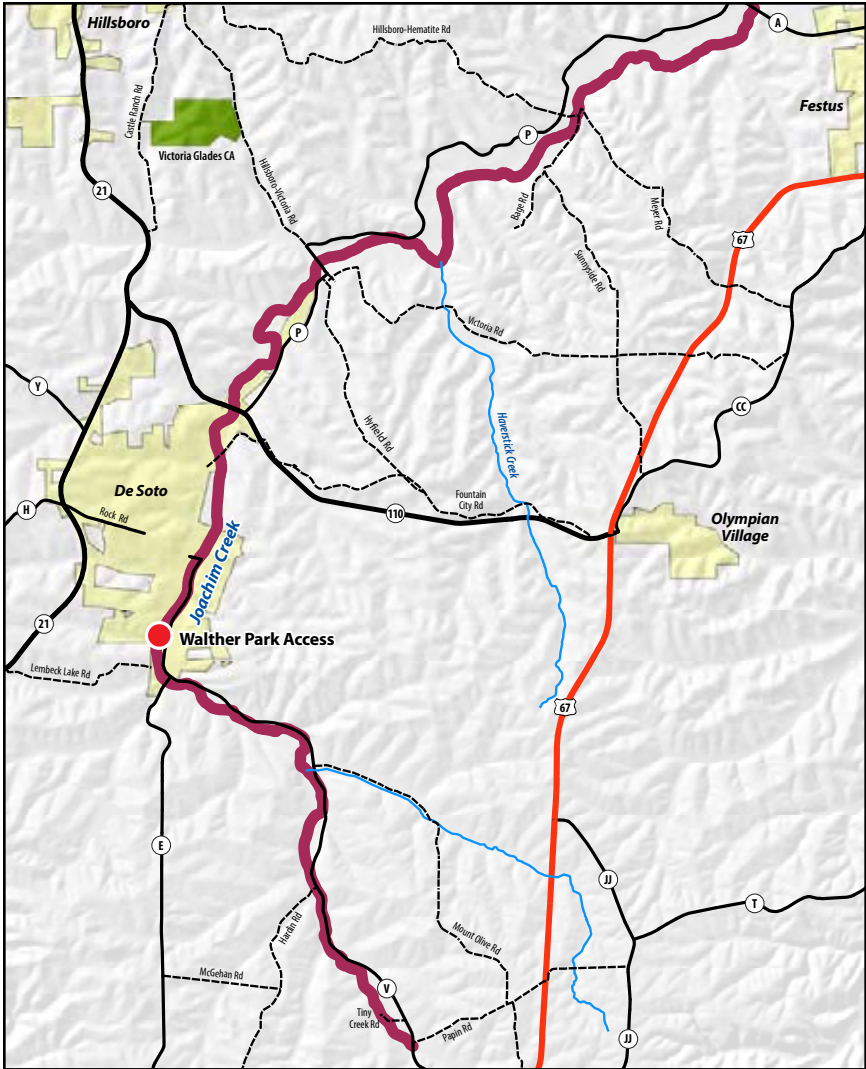
From Hooten Town bridge (the Loop Road at Route O) to the Highway 413/ Highway 265 bridge at Galena:

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

Joachim Creek



— Smallmouth Bass Management Area



From Highway V bridge to Highway A bridge in Jefferson County:

Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

Spotted (Kentucky) Bass

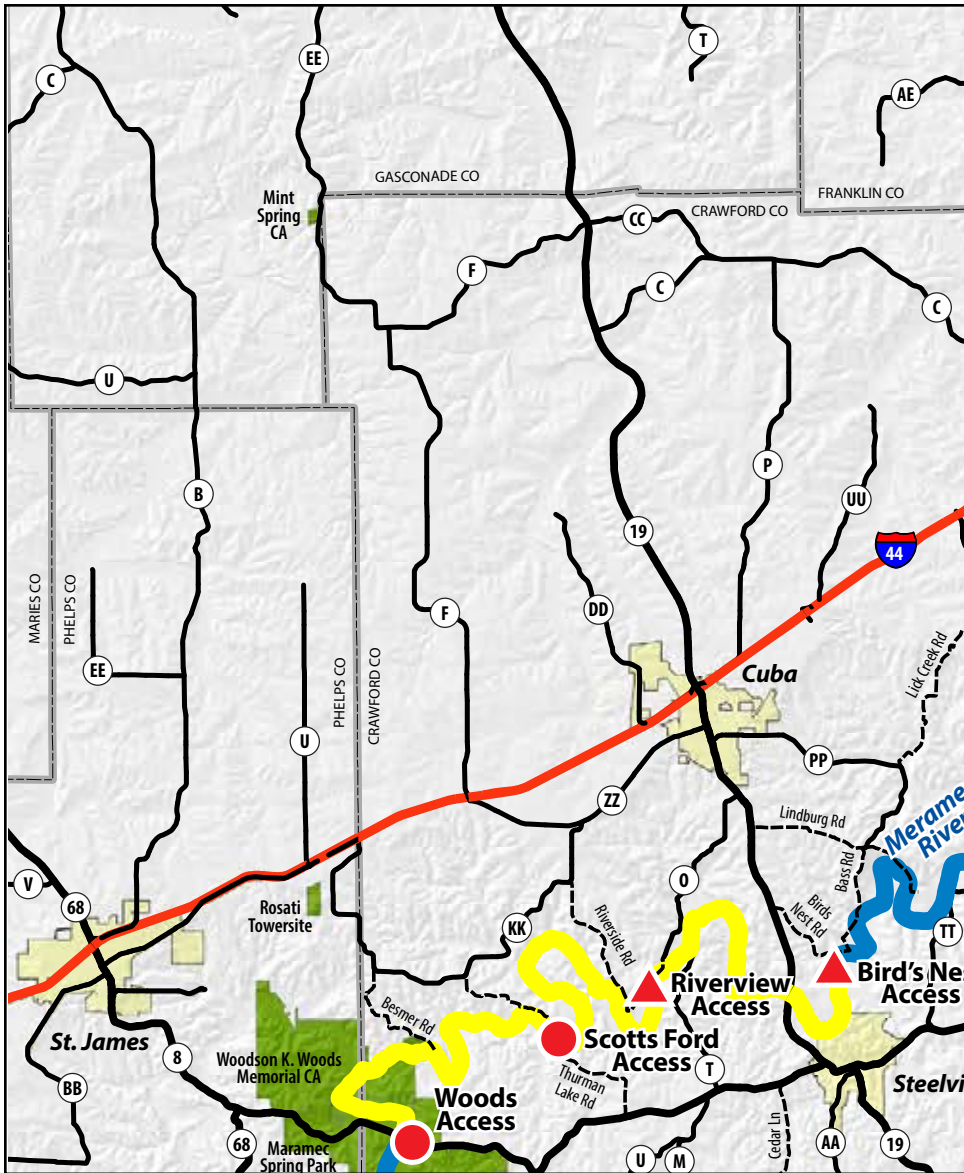
Since the 1980s, biologists have noticed that spotted (Kentucky) bass populations have increased dramatically in portions of the Meramec River and its tributaries where the fish were historically absent. In those rivers, spotted bass rarely reach the statewide 12-inch minimum length limit. In addition, smallmouth bass numbers appear to have declined in many of these rivers, and biologists believe spotted bass may be partly to blame. In response, the Conservation Department has removed the minimum length limit on spotted bass and increased the daily limit to 12.

If you're fishing the Meramec River or any of its tributaries, including Big River, Bourbuese River, Mineral Fork, Huzzah Creek, and Courtois Creek, do your part to slow the increase of spotted bass by taking a few home on your stringer.

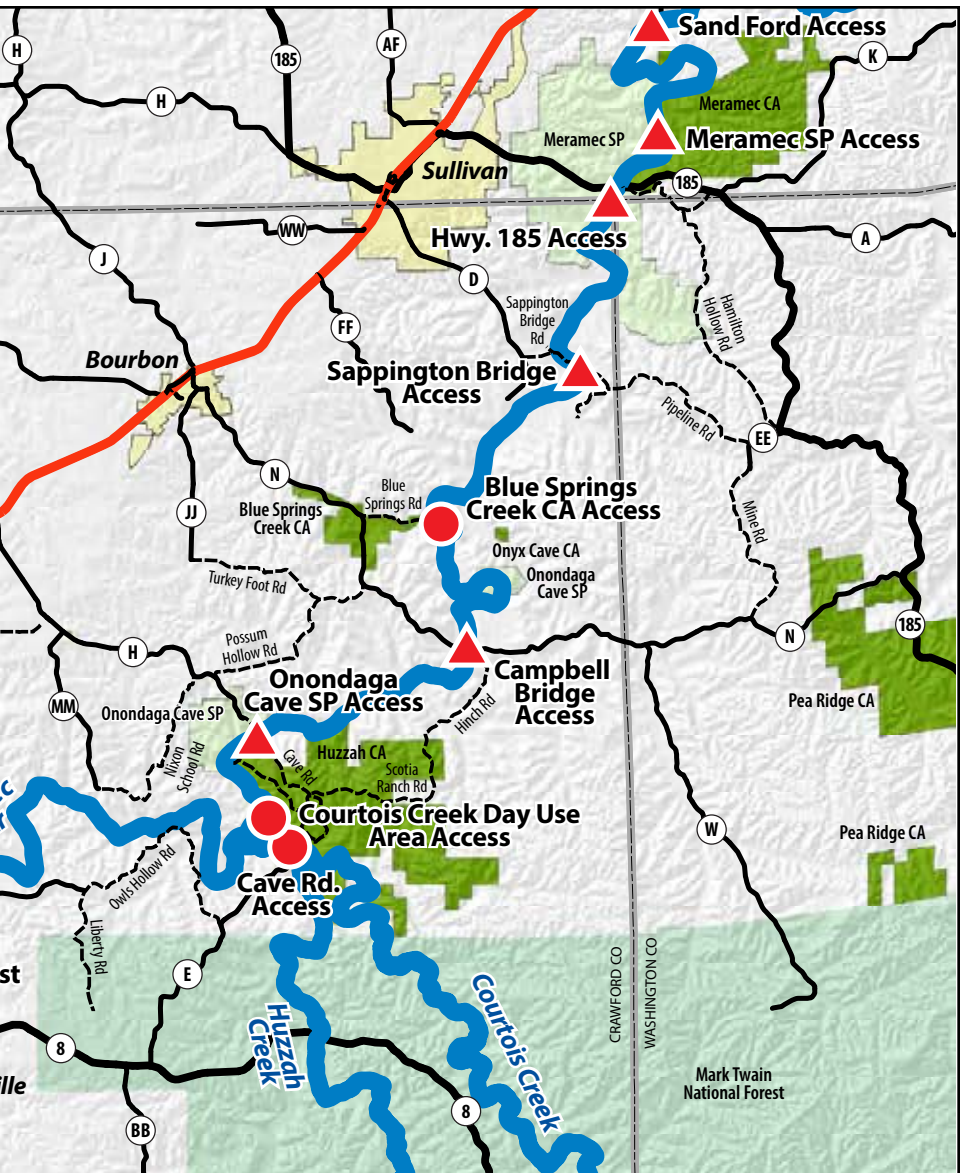


Meramec River continued

-  Goggle-eye Management Area
-  Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye Management Area



From Highway 8 bridge to the railroad crossing at Bird's Nest Access: Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. Daily and possession limit of 12 black bass, which may include no more than six largemouth bass and smallmouth bass, combined total of both species, and may include only one smallmouth bass.

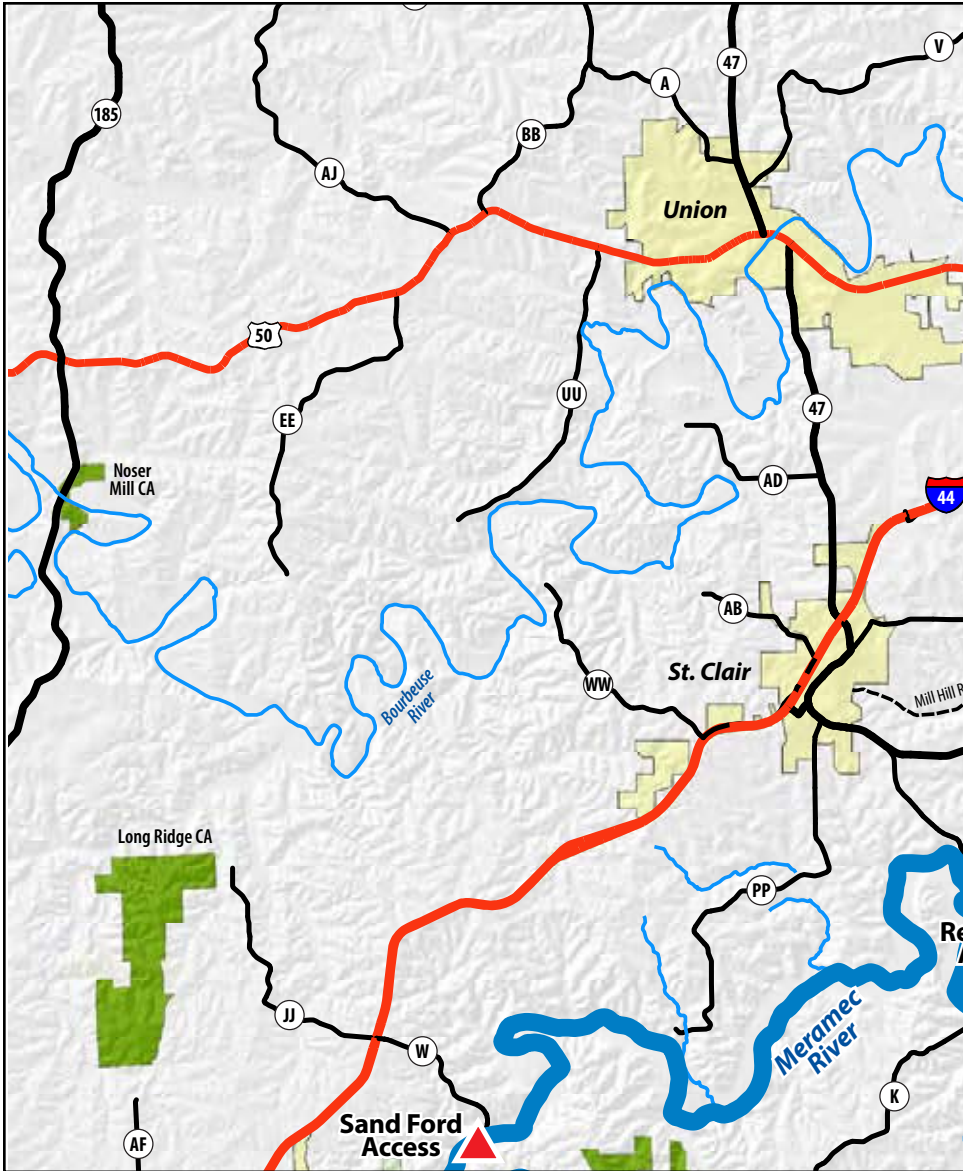


From Highway 19 bridge in Dent County to Pacific Palisades Conservation Area:
Goggle-eye — 8-inch minimum length limit

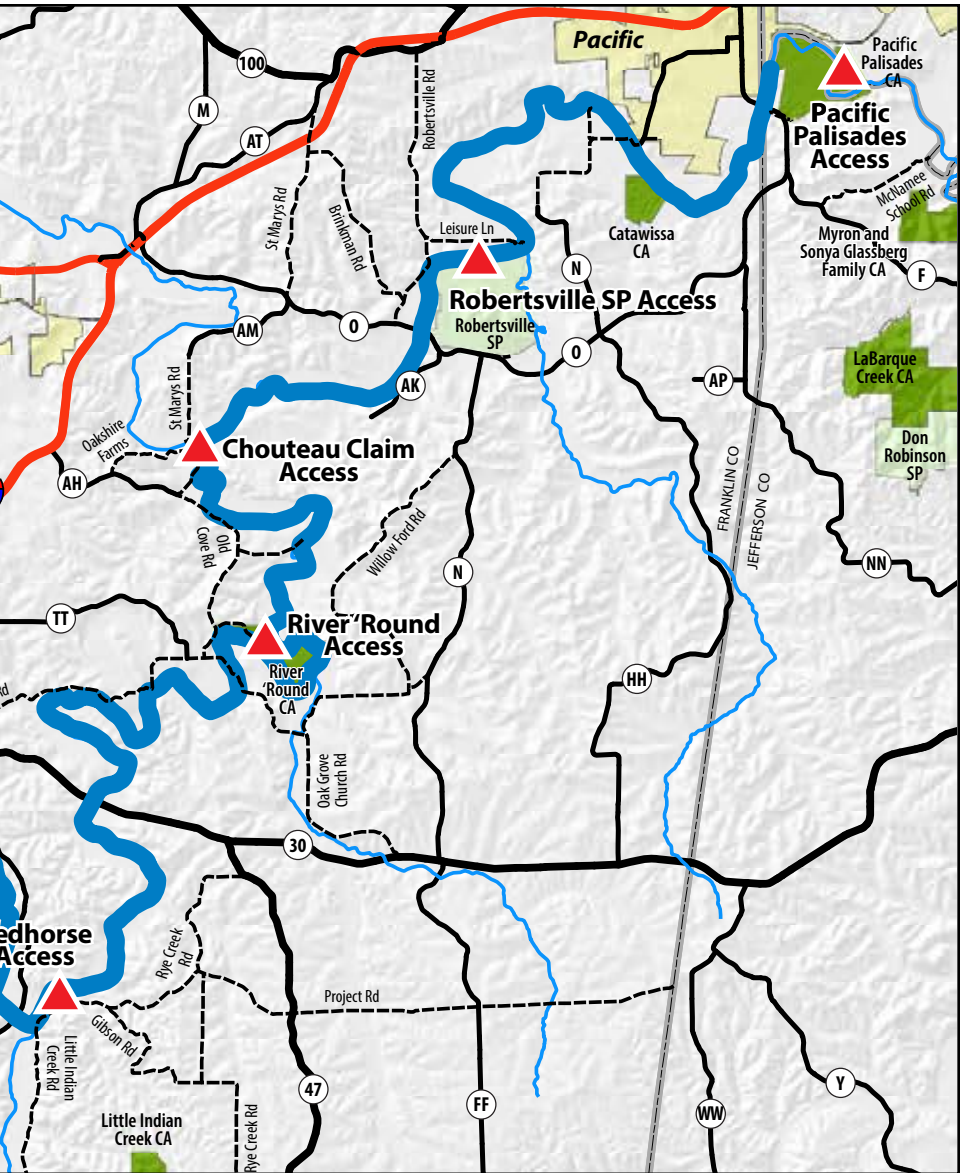
Huzzah Creek and Courtois Creek regulations are on Page 7.

Meramec River *continued*

 Goggle-eye Management Area



From Highway 19 bridge in
Dent County to Pacific Palisades
Conservation Area:
Goggle-eye — 8-inch minimum length limit

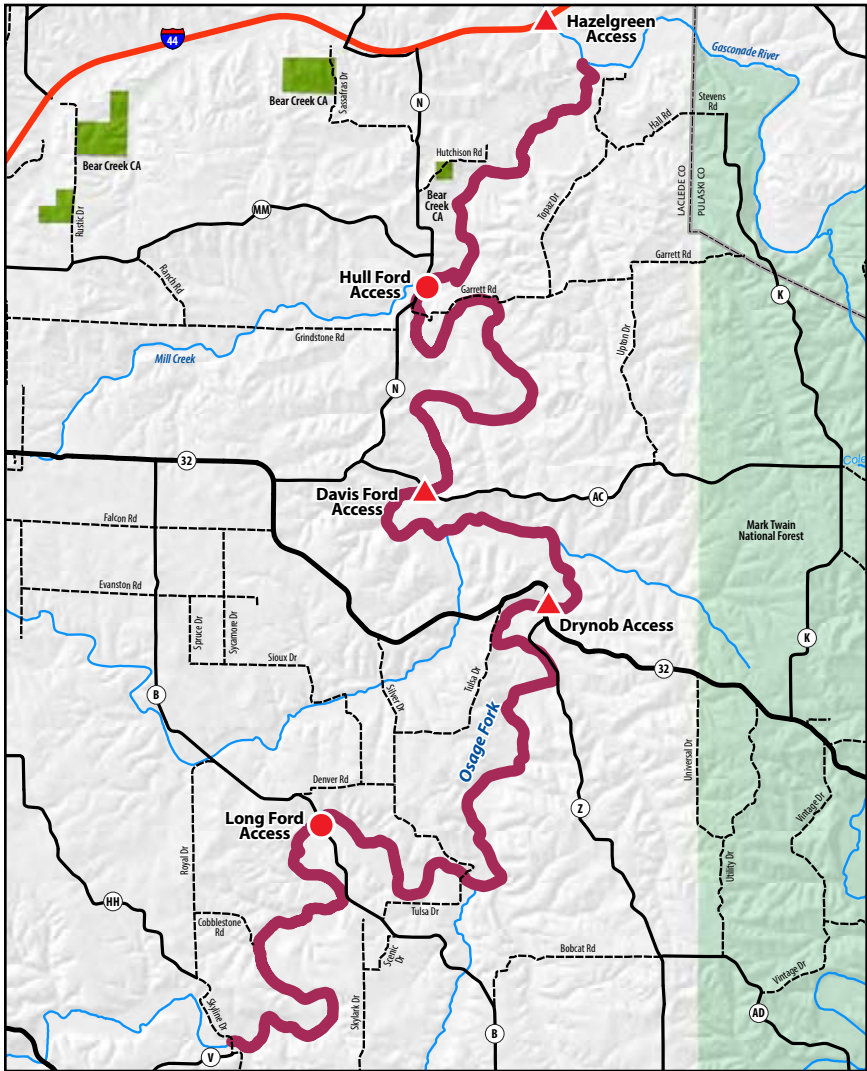


0 1.25 2.5 5 MILES

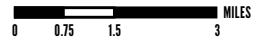
Osage Fork of the Gasconade River



— Smallmouth Bass Management Area



From Skyline Drive bridge near Orla in Laclede County to the Gasconade River:

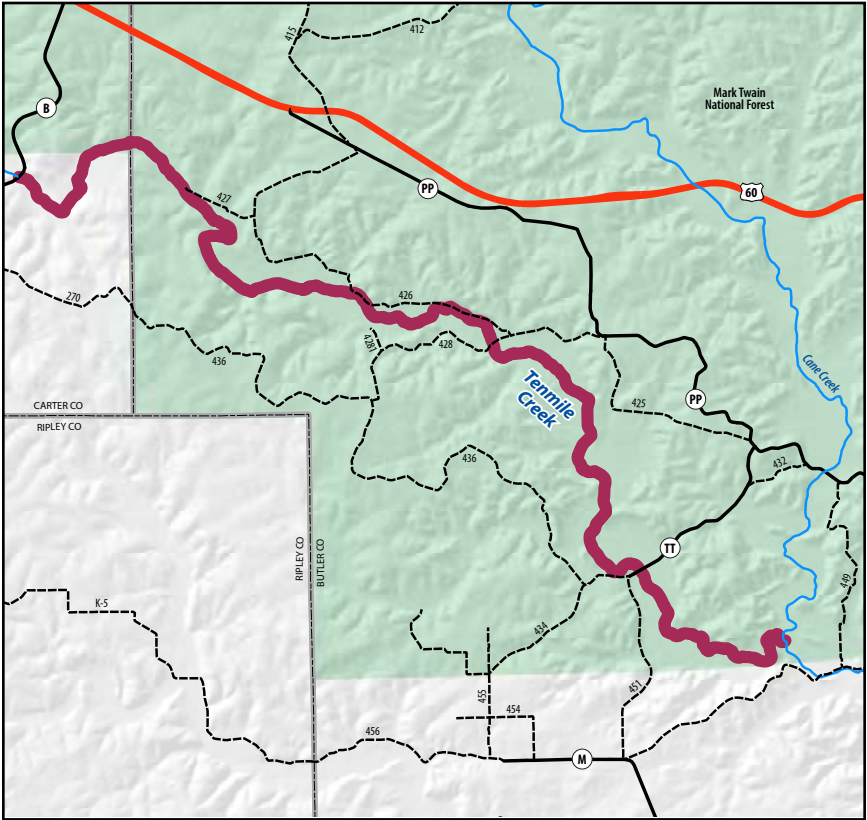


Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

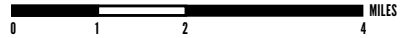
Tenmile Creek



 Smallmouth Bass Management Area



From Highway B bridge in Carter County to Cane Creek:



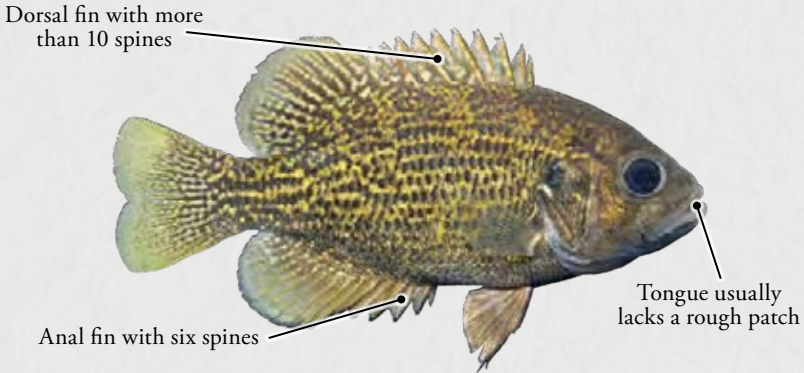
Smallmouth bass — 15-inch minimum length limit. The daily limit of six black bass may include only one smallmouth bass.

Know Your Catch

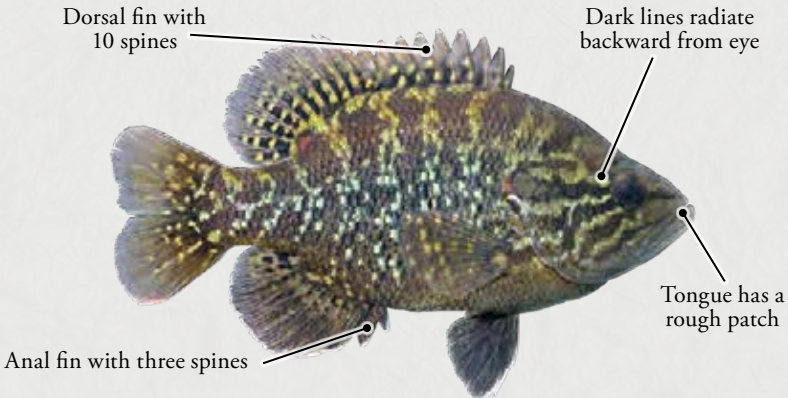
It's important to correctly identify fish that you catch so you can abide by seasons, daily limits, length limits, and other regulations. When in doubt about the identity or length of a fish, play it safe and immediately return the fish to the water unharmed. Identification clues are shown on these pages for goggle-eye and smallmouth bass (along with similar-looking black bass species).

Goggle-Eye

Ozark bass, rock bass, and shadow bass

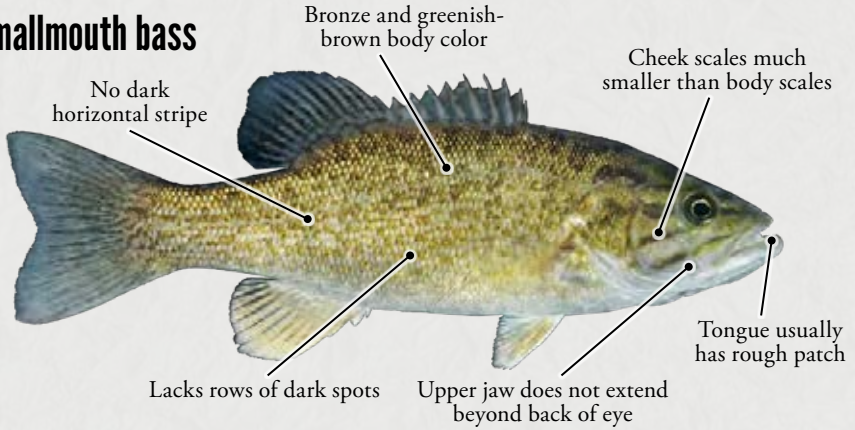


Warmouth

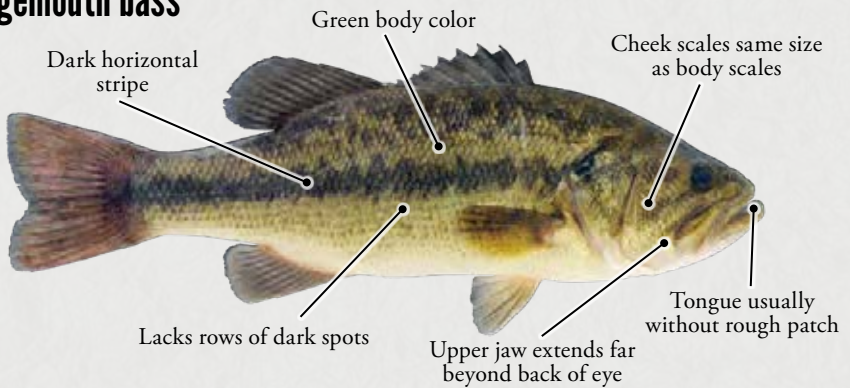


Black Bass

Smallmouth bass



Largemouth bass



Spotted (Kentucky) bass



Catch on to Catch-and-Release Fishing

Fishing is often done for pleasure rather than for food. Catch-and-release, or releasing fish immediately after they are caught, is a conservation measure that helps maintain a fishery for the future. Follow these guidelines to increase the chances of a fish's survival:

- Whenever possible, do not take the fish out of the water.
- Filing the barbs off of hooks makes removing them easier.
- Never pull a hook from a fish's throat or stomach; it is better to cut the line. Many hooks will rust away or be expelled by the fish.
- Avoid excessive handling of fish. Wet your hands before touching a fish.
- If handling is necessary, make certain not to squeeze or drop the fish.
- Never put your fingers in the fish's gills or eye sockets.

Enjoy "MO Fishing" With Free Mobile App

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to fish, and the Conservation Department's free MO Fishing app can help anglers find a place to wet a line. The app allows you to:

- Purchase permits and carry valid, electronic permits afield.
- Find nearby lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Easily see whether a body of water has boat ramps, parking lots, and restrooms.
- See where fish attractors, such as sunken brush piles, are located on various bodies of water. With the app's geo-location feature, you can guide your boat right up to your favorite fish attractor and start fishing.
- Review statewide fishing seasons and regulations.
- Check up on fishing reports for certain bodies of water. The reports are updated weekly from the start of April to the end of September.
- Identify your catch using a searchable electronic field guide.

MO Fishing is available in the Google Play and iTunes stores. You can also get MO Fishing and learn more about the app at **short.mdc.mo.gov/Zoh**. Try it now and get hooked on fishing in Missouri!



Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-Eye Habitat

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye can be found in a variety of flowing waters from small creeks to large float streams. Regardless of size, quality smallmouth bass and goggle-eye streams include:

- Good water quality. Water must be relatively free of excess nutrients, sediment, and contaminants.
- Cool water temperatures. Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye shun water with temperatures that exceed the mid-80s. Temperatures over 90 degrees are lethal.
- Rocky stream bottoms. Gravel and larger rocks provide spawning sites and habitat for the insects and crayfish that smallmouth bass and goggle-eye prey on.
- Abundant cover. Root wads, logs, boulders, and undercut banks provide critical cover, especially during winter months and periods of high flow.
- Deeper pools. These locations provide refuge and feeding areas.



Huzzah Creek

Float or wade?

Which is best, floating or wading? Each angler has a preference.

Floating

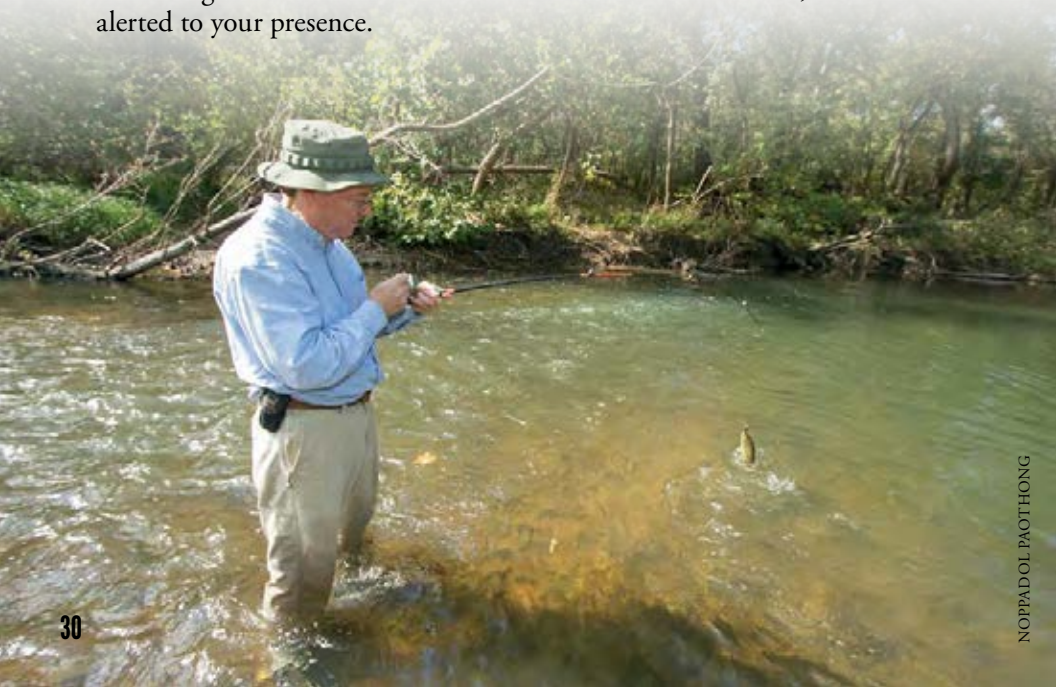
Missouri's larger, deeper streams are made for floating. From a boat, you can fish many miles of stream in a day's time. Floating is also relaxing, allowing you to simply float with the current, cast into likely-looking spots, and stop occasionally to thoroughly work fishy-looking areas.

Using an outboard motor on a small johnboat or canoe gives you the choice of traveling upstream or downstream and of cruising through less desirable stretches of river. If you don't own a boat, canoe rental businesses are available on many of the larger streams in the Ozarks.

Wading

Wading is an enjoyable method for fishing small streams that are inaccessible to boats. As you walk slowly, you will notice wildlife and natural features that are sometimes missed while floating or cruising. Wading anglers often catch large fish because they are able to cast repeatedly into good spots. In addition, wading makes it easier to cast to difficult locations because you can stand still in the stream instead of trying to cast while floating by.

One downside to wading is that you must move slowly to avoid disturbing the stream bottom or stream-side cover. Otherwise, fish will be alerted to your presence.





Trespass Laws

Paddlers and anglers often ask whether they have a legal right to use Missouri's streams. The answer is yes ... in some places and in some ways. Missouri's rivers and streams can be classified as:

- **Public, navigable** — Large rivers on which commercial boats such as barges can navigate.
- **Public, non-navigable** — Middle-sized streams that are capable of floating smaller boats such as canoes.
- **Private, non-navigable** — Small streams that are not capable of floating even small boats such as canoes.

On private, non-navigable streams, adjacent landowners' property extends to the center of the stream. Consequently, anglers and floaters have no right to use these streams. Fishing, wading, and boating are illegal unless you have the landowner's permission.

On public, non-navigable streams, property lines are the same as they are on private, non-navigable streams. The difference is that although you are on private property, you have a right to use public, non-navigable streams for fishing, wading, or boating as long as you stay within the stream bed. The stream bed includes gravel bars that are submerged during part of the year.

The stream bed begins at the high-water mark. In practical terms, this is the point where trees and other permanent vegetation grow. Floaters and anglers need landowner permission to go beyond this point.

On public, navigable streams, property lines end at the high-water mark. The area inside the high-water marks is public property.

Although all of this may seem clear-cut, opinions can vary dramatically about how to classify a particular stretch of stream and where the high-water marks lie. Furthermore, permanent islands in public, navigable and public, non-navigable streams often are private property. **The local prosecuting attorney is your best reference to determine how a particular stretch of a stream is classified and where to find nearby public accesses. The county assessor's office can tell you where the property lines are. When in doubt, always ask for permission from the landowner.**



What do smallmouth bass and goggle-eye eat?

Newly hatched smallmouth bass and goggle-eye eat microscopic organisms. Young fish forage on insects, baitfish, and small crayfish. Adult fish prefer crayfish, followed by other fish, and occasionally large aquatic insects. Where crayfish are abundant, they frequently make up more than two-thirds of a smallmouth bass or goggle-eye's diet.

During the day, adult smallmouth bass and goggle-eye spend their time near submerged cover, preferring to eat whatever happens to flow by. In periods of low light, adult fish venture away from cover and move into shallow water to feed, especially at the heads and tails of deeper pools where the current increases.

How fast do smallmouth bass grow?

Smallmouth bass in streams average about 3.5 inches long at one year of age and attain average lengths of 6.5, 9.5, 11.5, 13.5, and 14.5 inches in each succeeding year. Growth in reservoirs is typically better, with smallmouth bass reaching 15 inches or longer in five years. A 15-inch smallmouth will weigh about 1 pound, 10 ounces. Few fish exceed 22 inches, 6 pounds, or 10 years of age.

Sport Fish Restoration

Your purchase of fishing equipment and boat motors helps fund restoration and management of fish and aquatic resources, development of public fishing accesses, and aquatic resource education.



Fishing Tips

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye can be caught on any type of bait casting, spinning, or fly fishing gear. Anglers typically choose smaller versions of the same baits and lures used to catch largemouth bass. The most common fishing method is to simply cast and retrieve artificial lures or live baits into places where you suspect fish are hanging out.

Artificial Lures

Artificial lures should be your choice if you want to practice catch and release and reduce hooking mortality. A variety of lures that mimic prey animals can be used. Consider the size and color of prey in the body of water that you're fishing, and choose lures to match. In clear water, use lures that match the natural color of prey. In murky water or the low light of early morning or evening, consider using brighter colors.

Soft plastic imitations of worms, crayfish, and lizards, as well as grubs and tubes used with a jig, work well. Cast the lure and allow it to sink, then slowly and repeatedly raise the rod tip from horizontal to vertical to make the lure jerk through the water as you reel in the slack.

Crankbaits and spinner baits come in many varieties. Cast spinner baits over boulders and root wads, then retrieve them at a speed that produces a gurgling noise. As you reel in the lure, crankbaits with an attached plastic lip dive below the surface to depths determined by the length of the lip.

Varying the speed of your retrieval will mimic a minnow in distress, which often provokes a strike. Topwater baits can be retrieved at varying speeds, stopping the lure occasionally.

Fly fishing using large popping bugs or flies to imitate crayfish, large aquatic insects, or minnows is an excellent and sporting way to catch smallmouth bass and goggle-eye.

No matter which lure or fishing method you use, you will need to experiment with the type and speed of retrieval to attract the interest of finicky fish.



Live Baits

Some of the most popular live baits are crayfish, minnows, nightcrawlers, and hellgrammites (dobsonfly larvae). Check the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* for specifics on catching your own live bait. When fishing live bait, use a No. 2 or No. 4 hook with split shot sinkers added a foot or two above the bait to help get it down to the bottom of the stream. Crayfish are commonly hooked underneath the tail, and minnows are usually hooked behind the dorsal fin or through both lips.

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye generally face upstream, so cast upstream beyond your targeted habitat and work the bait back to you and the awaiting fish. Practice casting at home to help make your fishing trips more enjoyable.

Whatever method of fishing you choose, respect fellow anglers, landowners, the river, and the fish.

Don't Dump Bait!

It is illegal to dump bait into Missouri waters.

Throw unused bait in the trash.

Unwanted animals and plants can invade local water, damage habitat and ruin your fishing.

To learn more about protecting Missouri's streams, rivers and lakes from invasive species, visit www.missouriconservation.org.



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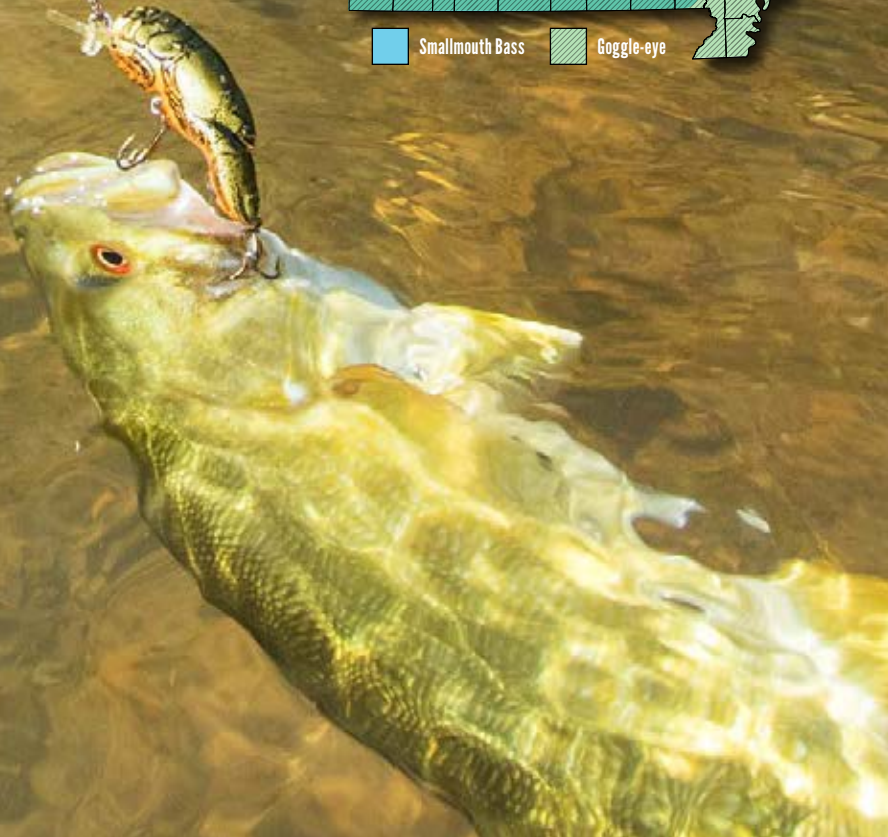
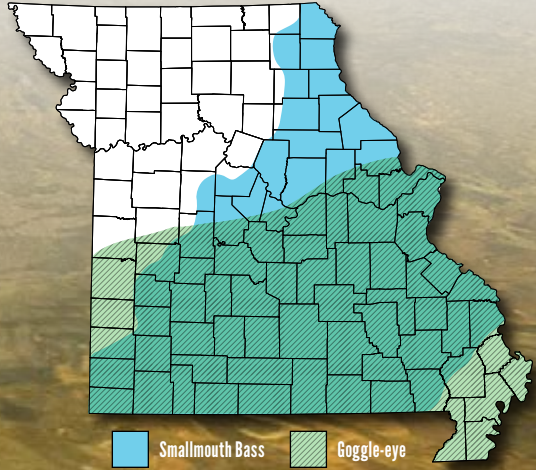


Image courtesy of
Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.

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Where to Find Smallmouth Bass and Goggle-eye

Smallmouth bass and goggle-eye are found throughout much of Missouri (see map). Quality fishing for these species can be found in many streams and rivers not listed in this booklet. Special Management Areas were developed to improve smallmouth bass and goggle-eye populations and to protect high-quality fishing areas.





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Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 573-751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to Chief, Public Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.