



Alabama Bass:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



The Problem

Alabama bass (*Micropetrus henshalli*) has been illegally introduced into Virginia waters, including non-tidal waters of James River (Virginia). It can be invasive and has caused harm to both largemouth bass and smallmouth bass fisheries in other states. The species has not yet been found in Maryland. The information below seeks to inform the general public and encourage reporting if someone thinks they have caught an Alabama bass.

Current Status

- Alabama bass, native to Georgia and Alabama, has been introduced, likely by anglers, to Lake Gaston (North Carolina, Virginia) and Claytor Lake (Virginia). It has been also found in James River (Virginia).
- Staff from Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has circulated information about Alabama bass to prevent further introductions of the species: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/fish/alabama-bass/>
- Alabama bass has not been found in Maryland.

Know the Difference

- The jaw of Alabama bass lines up with the middle rear of the eye. The jaw of largemouth bass extends past the eye.
- Alabama bass has a dark, blotchy lateral band from head to tail, and has well-defined rows of spots below this band. Largemouth bass also has a blotchy band, but usually is not as dark and lacks well-defined rows of spots.

Know the Law

- In both Maryland and Virginia, it is illegal to stock fish into a public body of water without a permit from the state.
- It is illegal to purchase or possess Alabama bass in Maryland.
- Wildlife Crime Stoppers: 443-433-4112.

What to Do

If you think you have caught an Alabama bass, please report it to Maryland's Invasive Species Tracker at: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Invasives/Pages/default.aspx> or call Joe Love at 410-260-8257.



Alabama bass has a jaw that extends to the rear middle of the eye and a blotchy, dark band along their side. Largemouth Bass has a jaw that extends past the rear edge of the eye. Images courtesy of iNaturalist and Duane Raver (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).



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