

Resolution as Adopted by Convention 06-22-2014

Submitted by: Michigan B.A.S.S. Nation

Passed:

Title: **MICHIGAN BASS SEASON CHANGE**

1 **WHEREAS**, Michigan is one of only four states with a statewide closed black bass (largemouth
2 and smallmouth bass) season; and,
3 **WHEREAS**, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) surveys indicate an average of
4 83 to 92% of all legal-sized black bass caught by anglers are voluntarily released during Michigan's
5 catch-and-keep bass season including 92% of all legal-sized black bass caught during the existing
6 catch-and-keep season on Lake St. Clair; and,
7 **WHEREAS**, it has been legal to catch-and-keep black bass during the entire Upper Peninsula bass
8 spawn and significant parts of Northern Michigan since 1970 with no reported, significant negative
9 effect on bass populations due to this fishing opportunity; and,
10 **WHEREAS**, it has been legal to catch-and-immediately-release black bass on the six 1988 test
11 lakes (Muskegon, Hardy, Pontiac, Holloway, Kent and Cass Lakes) for twenty-five (25) years
12 during the bass spawn that occurs before the catch-and-keep bass season opens without scientific
13 evidence of negative bass population effect due to this fishing opportunity; and,
14 **WHEREAS**, it has been legal to catch-and-immediately-release black bass statewide during the
15 majority of the bass spawn statewide since 2006 with no scientific evidence, or ongoing study
16 demonstrating negative bass population effect due to this fishing opportunity; and,
17 **WHEREAS**, research studies in Michigan and around North America have demonstrated no direct
18 link between black bass fishing any season and the success of new bass recruitment in future
19 seasons, while studies have demonstrated that most restrictive bass fishing regulations are
20 ineffective or limited in effect in creating better bass populations under high voluntary catch-and-
21 release rates, and a majority of Michigan citizens and state government have voted for and
22 supported scientific management of our natural resources; and,

23 **WHEREAS**, fishing is critical to our Michigan natural resources economy, angler recruitment and
24 retention key issues for Michigan, black bass are the second most popular fish in Michigan (behind
25 only panfish) with 589,000 anglers fishing for black bass a total of 8,739,000 fishing days in 2011
26 (*U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated*
27 *Recreation*), and the MDNR has reported 16% of surveyed anglers say they will fish a catch-and-
28 release bass season for a potential of 95,000 to 300,000 or more additional fishing days; NOW,
29 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) urges the
30 MDNR and Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to change Michigan's black bass season to
31 Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass catch-and-immediate-release statewide on all waters including
32 Great Lakes and Great Lakes Connecting Waters - January 1 through the Friday before Memorial
33 Day, Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass catch-and-keep statewide on all waters including Great
34 Lakes and Great Lakes Connecting Waters - Saturday before Memorial Day through the December
35 31 with the following exceptions: a) Bass fishing is closed on inland trout and salmon waters during
36 their closed season dates since fishing is prohibited for all species on those waters, b) Michigan-
37 Wisconsin Boundary Waters - see the Michigan fishing guide (Michigan.gov/fishingguide)
38 Michigan-Wisconsin Boundary Water Regulations for waters covered, and the largemouth and
39 smallmouth bass season for those waters, c) Sylvania Wilderness Area - bass fishing is closed
40 before the last Saturday in April or after October 31. Statewide bass season applies from the last
41 Saturday in April through October 31 though largemouth and smallmouth bass must be released
42 immediately on the special provision lakes - see Sylvania Wilderness Area Regulations in the
43 Michigan fishing guide (Michigan.gov/fishingguide), d) Fishing, bass season or possession
44 exceptions defined in Exceptions to General Regulations by County in the Michigan fishing guide
45 (Michigan.gov/fishingguide); and
46 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that MUCC work with the MDNR and NRC to **consider the**
47 **adoption of** an adaptive management approach to managing Michigan black bass populations.
48 Experts have endorsed adaptive management of natural resources, to learn by doing, in part due to

49 the difficulty in making predictions about long-term impacts of management actions, and the
50 MDNR has stated they do not have the time/resources to study Michigan black bass to the extent
51 needed for new data to support or deny such a change, yet studies already exist in many forms
52 supporting more black bass fishing opportunity, forty-five (45) states allow year-round black bass
53 fishing, and adaptive management allows for adjusting seasons or management on specific waters if
54 scientific evidence demonstrate a need for special regulations.