

2017 Fishing Derby Tips

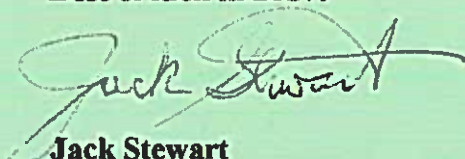
Dear Derby Participant:

Most participants believe they have to catch a large trophy fish to win one of the 173 cash prizes totaling \$7,560.00 in this year's fishing derby. **This is not so, in 2016, 22 of the prizes totaling \$745.00 were not awarded due to no entries.** I have compiled the following list of fishing tips you can use to take advantage of this situation and improve your chances to win a prize in 2017.

1. The 20 reservoirs that comprise the New York City Reservoir System offer year round fishing opportunities within minutes of area residents. In addition, there are hundreds of local streams, lakes and ponds as well as the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, and Long Island Sound, which offer excellent fishing opportunities. The Southern New York Fishing Directory is an angler's Bible for not only the young inexperienced angler but to the older veteran fishermen looking for new places to fish. Order a copy when you register for the 2017 Derby.
2. Historically March, September, October and November offer the best opportunity to win a prize. In March fishing activity is at its lowest due to the poor weather conditions, unsafe ice, and the boating season is just beginning on many of the NYC reservoirs. Take advantage of good weather breaks and fish for trout near the bridges and open water areas using live bait and casting spoons. Fish the warmer water inlets for pre spawn crappies and perch. Most trout and panfish caught in March will win prizes. The fall months of Sept-Oct-Nov. are usually very productive for bass, pickerel, walleye, panfish and an occasional trout. Fishing participation is usually low as many stop fishing after Labor Day and either go hunting or put their tackle and boats away until spring. The knowledgeable fisherman who continue to fish during the fall months enjoy some of the best fishing of the whole year and usually have the lakes and reservoirs to themselves. Last year the biggest bass and walleye were caught in October and November.
3. Historically the biggest trout are normally caught during the April- August five-month period. Ice fishing for trout, pickerel and panfish is permitted on the NYC reservoirs (East of Hudson only) with West Branch, Croton Falls, Gleneida, Cross River, Gilead, Sodom, Diverting and Muscoot the most popular. Titicus, Croton Falls, Amawalk and Diverting reservoirs have good trout populations and produce trout and panfish to knowledgeable ice fisherman each year. Try them and do not forget to fish for Browns and Lakers from boat or from shore at Kensico or big panfish and pickerel at New Croton Reservoir before these reservoirs start to freeze up. Last year there was no safe ice and fishermen were able to use their reservoir boats all winter.
4. Trout fishing during the September-November period is usually very slow because larger trout go through a spawning cycle and seldom feed during this period. A 20" Brown or a 24" Laker will usually win a prize during this time. Try Croton Falls, Kensico, Titicus, Gleneida, Gilead or Cross Rivers for Brown Trout using spoons, Flatfish, or Rapala fished 10'-40' or trolling lures and plugs 40'-120' down for Lake Trout on Kensico, Rondout, Gilead or Gleneida. Enter all trout caught and you have an excellent chance to win a prize during this period.
5. Both West Branch and Neversink Reservoirs have been stocked with Landlock Salmon. An 18" fish can win a \$25 a monthly prize or even the \$50 yearly prize. Small spoons, grey ghost streamer flies and silver flatfish trolled fast produce best results. Historically very few landlock salmon have been entered in the derby. Any salmon 18+ should be entered.
6. Bass Fishing usually improves once the water starts cooling down in late summer. Fish live bait, spinner baits, plugs and jigs. Ashokan, Amawalk, Sodom, Bogs Brook, Croton Falls, New Croton, Cross River, Titicus and Kensico produce excellent Fall bass fishing. Try trolling during this period as you cover a bigger area and this method usually produces nonstop action for all species including panfish and an occasional trout.
7. Walleye and pickerel are caught all year but are not targeted by many anglers. Greenwood Lake, Toronto Reservoir, White Lake, Sodom, Bog Brook, West Branch, Diverting, Boyd's Corners, Swinging Bridge, Lake Oscawana, the Delaware River and White Pond have produced quality walleyes. Early and late fishing produces best results. Use spinner and worm combo, jigs or husky Jerk Rapalas for best results. A 20"-23" three to five-pound walleye will win a prize most months. The best reservoirs for 24" plus pickerel are Kensico, New Croton, Muscoot, Gleneida, Lake Gilead, Orange Lake and Peach Lake. Weigh in all 24" pickerel and 20" walleyes caught and you probably will win a prize. Walleyes have been stocked in Titicus Reservoir for the past three years and fish up to 19" were caught last year. 2017 and subsequent years should produce more and bigger walleyes from Titicus.
8. The biggest perch and crappies are usually caught from January thru May and in October and November. The pre-spawn panfish are heaviest during this period. Any 1-1½ lb. fish caught during the June-November period has an excellent chance to win a \$25 monthly prize. Most fishermen get carried away trying to catch a big trout or bass during this period and forget about weighing in their 1 lb. panfish. Every year prospective winning fish are either thrown back or not weighed in. Panfish usually make better table fare than the more popular game fish. Weigh in all 1lb plus panfish.

9. Bow Hunting for Carp (5/15-9/30) is becoming very popular. We have added another category to the Fishing Derby for the Bow Hunters. \$25 monthly prizes will be given for the heaviest Carp shot with a bow. (10 lb. min.) In 2012 Mark Sobota shot a record 65 lb. 2 oz., 48" grass carp in Titicus reservoir and won top honors. In 2015 Marco DelVerchio shot two monster grass carp, a 54lb 2 oz, 37" from Muscoot and a huge 65lb, 46" grass carp from New Croton Reservoir. In 2016 four additional 50lb+ grass carp from Muscoot, New Croton and Croton Falls were harvested by bow fisherman. One bow hunter, not in the Derby, shot two monster carp at night using a head spotlight up to 63lb, 53" at 1:30 am from Muscoot Reservoir. We urge all bow hunters to give this sport a serious try. Not only is it a challenge but especially in the May 15th – June 30th Carp spawning period action is continuous. The most productive reservoirs are Muscoot, New Croton, Titicus, Croton Falls, Sodom, Diverting and West Branch. You can wade the shore line or bow fish from a boat along the shallows.
10. April, May and June are the best three months for big striped bass both in the Hudson River and Long Island Sound with a 20 lb. plus fish usually needed to win a prize. A 10lb plus striper or bluefish can easily win a \$50.00 monthly prize during the June-November period. Enjoy excellent fishing in October and November on the Hudson and Long Island Sound and you will probably have the entire river or sound to yourself. There are also large striped bass in New Croton Reservoir. In 2012 Fred Franczkiewitz won the \$50 October prize with a 30 lb., 42" striper out of New Croton Reservoir on October 17th.
11. If you are, a catch and release advocate, bass and walleyes are a much hardier fish and easier to keep alive than trout and panfish. They can be caught, kept on a stringer, and be brought in a five gallon pail to a weigh station and still be released to be caught again. Several Derby fishermen have been successfully doing this for many years and regularly win prizes.
12. Monthly Prizes are awarded for many additional fish. Muskellunge from the Delaware River and Greenwood Lake as well as tiger muskies from Middle Branch Reservoir can now win \$25 monthly prizes. Catfish, carp and sunfish are also now eligible for \$25 monthly prizes. Take advantage and cash in by targeting these fish.
13. Enter your wife, older children and your fishing partners in this years Derby. The chance to win one of the five fishing boats being raffled off alone is worth the \$10 annual fee. You can generate a lot of interest and competition, which will make your fishing trips more fun and entertaining.
14. **Take a Kid fishing!** The **YOUTH FISHING CONTEST** is open to all kids 4-15 years of age. Kids have an opportunity to win good quality fishing rod/reel/line combos that are given out every month. No pre-registration, no entry fee....Just catch a fish and weight it in. The majority of kid's fish during the summer months but during the Sept. – May nine month period less fish are entered and most every entry wins a \$40 fishing outfit. Your kids and grandchildren will have fun fishing and they will be talking about winning a prize for years!
15. **This year** a special two-day opening trout fishing (April 1st-April 2nd) and opening day weekend bass fishing (June 17th - 18th) are planned. Three prizes (\$75-\$50-\$25) will be awarded for the heaviest trout and bass weighed in during the two day periods. Regular NYS DEC size limits will apply for these two-day periods only and all fish entered will be eligible for monthly and yearly derby prize as well.
16. The N.Y.C DEP now allows the use of boats all year long on all NYC reservoirs east of the Hudson River. This includes the December 1st March 31st four-month period providing the reservoir is free of ice. This opens up new opportunities to catch trout, pickerel, walleyes, crappies, perch and other panfish. Special attention and care is needed to both dress warmly and only fish from a boat during the calm warmer days. Life jackets are now required to be worn by everyone fishing from a boat from November 1st thru April 30th. Only safe wide width boats are recommended. Be especially careful getting into and out of your boat and never stand up to cast or fight a fish. Falling out of a boat during the winter months into 32 to 40 degree water can be fatal.
DO NOT FORGET TO WEIGH IN ALL YOUR ELIGIBLE FISH LARGE AND SMALL SO YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO WIN A PRIZE. Check website WWW.STEWARTMARINE.COM or your local weight station on or about the tenth of each month for a list of the previous months Derby Winners List and Honorable Mention.

Best of luck in 2017!



**Jack Stewart
Derby Director**