TWRA BITE

Bass Information From Tournament Entries

2005

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Fisheries Management Division
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B.I.T.E.

BASS INFORMATION from TOURNAMENT ENTRIES

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION
TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY
NASHVILLE,TENNESSEE

INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) initiated the Bass Information from Tournament Entries (B.I.T.E.) program in 1989 as a cooperative effort between the agency and Tennessee's organized bass fishing clubs. Completing its seventeenth year, the objective of the program has been to establish a closer working relationship with bass clubs and tournament organizations through the mutual exchange of bass tournament data. The B.I.T.E. program summarizes catch data already being collected by participating clubs on reservoir bass populations. These data will supplement T.W.R.A.'s reservoir fishery database, while providing bass clubs with a statewide summary of tournament results for their interest and possible use in tournament site selection.

Based on TWRA creel survey results, reservoir bass fishing is one of Tennessee's important recreational resources with approximately 34 percent of fishing effort statewide geared toward black bass. These bass anglers produced an estimated 2.3 million angler hours of effort in pursuit of black bass in 2004 (2005 data not available at time of printing).

Economically, fishing generated over $480 million in total expenditures by anglers in Tennessee during 2001 (USFWS 2003). Total trip expenditures by bass anglers on reservoirs in Tennessee were estimated at over $7.2 million during 2004 (TWRA Creel Survey 2005). These expenditures included items such as fuel, food, bait, and lodging, but excluded boat and vehicle costs.

Through 2005, 5,751 tournament reports have been summarized. More than 153 clubs or tournament organizations participated through the first seventeen years of the program. Bass anglers have spent over 1.7 million hours collecting data for this program and contributed data from 325,033 black bass weighing 616,374 pounds.

METHODS

Participation in the B.I.T.E. program was solicited via fishery biologists, creel clerks, wildlife officers, statewide news releases, TWRA web site, and supported by the Tennessee Bass Federation, including their website. Direct mailings were used in maintaining the support of the previous years' clubs.

Participating clubs and tournament organizations were sent the previous year's annual report, and if applicable, postpaid tournament report cards to be completed and mailed after each tournament. Completion of one card per tournament was all that was required from each club.

Electronic mail and fax was also used to collect tournament data. The Tennessee Bass Federation supported an online B.I.T.E. tournament reporting form (Figure 1), which allows the reporting of tournament data to be more convenient. The form can be found at www.tnbass.com (click B.I.T.E. form) and at the TWRA's website www.tnwildlife.org (click the "fishing" link). Clubs were assigned individual code numbers for confidentiality. Tournament data cards were checked for accuracy and entered into a computer database. Club officers were contacted when data were incomplete or suspected to be erroneous.

Statewide tournament data were summarized by club and by reservoir. Various indices including fishing success (weighing in one or more bass), average weight, bass per day, and pounds per day were calculated to measure bass fishing tournament characteristics on specific reservoirs and for each club. Since the length of a fishing day varied between tournaments, an angler-day was defined as 10 hours of fishing effort. Bass weight listed in the tables is reported in pounds. A couple of bass clubs did not always keep up with the total number of bass 5 pounds or larger at weigh-in, and this is noted in the appropriate Tables. Also, Ft. Loudoun and Tellico reservoirs were combined for analysis when tournament anglers were allowed to fish either reservoir. Since the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) definition of fishing success differs from ours, their tournament data from Pickwick reservoir is excluded from some calculations in Table 2. Unless otherwise noted in this report, the term "bass" is used collectively to include largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted (Kentucky) bass.

Reservoirs with five or more tournament reports were ranked according to important tournament characteristics. The ranking categories were as follows: percent successful (percent of anglers with one or more bass at weigh-in), average bass weight, number of bass per angler-day, pounds of bass per angler-day, and hours required to catch a bass five pounds or larger. Values were assigned to each rank and an overall rank was determined for each reservoir by averaging the values of the five categories. The intent of this ranking system was not to rank the "best" or "worst" reservoirs in the state, but to provide club members with a reference guide for possible use in tournament site selection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The B.I.T.E. program was supported by twenty-seven clubs or tournament organizations during 2005 (down seven from last year), which submitted 192 tournament reports (Table 1). This is down 27 percent from 2004. Club representatives did a great job filling out the report cards, and only 2 were rejected due to incomplete or erroneous data. Sixteen clubs (59%) submitted five or more tournament reports, the same percent as last year. Nine clubs submitted

10 or more reports, with 7 reports, on average, being received per club. Higher numbers of reports allow better estimates of fishing conditions, and not just a good or bad day's fishing by one or two clubs. All club representatives should remember that each tournament report is important to this program.

During 2005, tournament reports were received for 31 bodies of water that were fished 87,692 hours (Table 2). Included in Table 2 is the only tournament reports received for Pickwick reservoir from the MDWFP. The average tournament had 47 anglers catching 65 bass weighing 143 pounds. This is up from an average of 54 bass and 122 pounds per tournament in 2004. Most tournament data were received for Watts Bar and Pickwick reservoirs, followed by Cheatham and Chickamauga. Douglas, Ft. Loudoun/Tellico, Old Hickory, and Tims Ford each had 10 or more tournament reports. Excluding Pickwick, sixty-four percent of bass anglers were successful at bringing at least one bass to weigh-in. Anglers brought 14,444 bass (12 inches and larger) weighing 31,651 pounds to weigh-ins. Average weight of bass caught on Tennessee reservoirs ranged from 1.32 pounds on Normandy to 2.76 pounds on Cherokee. Overall, the average weight was 2.19 pounds, down slightly from last year's 2.24 pounds. On in-state reservoirs, fishing success ranged from a high of 3.00 bass per angler-day at Douglas to 0.66 at Melton Hill reservoir, with an average of 1.65 bass per angler-day. (Note Beech Lake had 0.62 bass/angler-day). Pounds per angler-day were highest for Douglas at 4.96, and lowest for Melton Hill reservoir at 1.19 pounds per angler-day. The overall average was 3.61 pounds per angler-day, up from 3.45 pounds in 2004.

Reservoirs with exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2005 are listed in Table 3. Approximately 98% of all bass caught by B.I.T.E. participants were released. Approximately 17% of individual or team anglers brought in limits of bass, similar to the number of limits reported in 2004.

A total of 267 bass, weighing five pounds or more, were reported caught during 2005 (the same as in 2004), with an overall catch rate of one 5-pound bass or larger for every 328 hours of fishing, a decrease from last year's average of 375 hours. The largest bass reported was 7.79 pounds taken from Beech Lake in March reported by Central Tennessee Bass Club. Pickwick led all reservoirs in the catch of bass five pounds and larger with 52 fish, followed by Kentucky Lake 36. A total of 12 bass seven pounds and larger were reported in 2005 (Table 4) with most (58%) of these big fish being caught in March. Twelve bass seven pounds or larger were also reported in 2004.

The seasonal distribution of tournament fishing effort, including night tournaments, is presented in Figure 2. Most tournaments were held during March, April and May. Night tournaments accounted for approximately 17% of tournaments with most occurring in June, July and August. Tournament fishing success for both number of bass per angler-day and pounds per angler-day increased slightly, while average weight decreased slightly (Figure 3). The hours required to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger during the year (328) decreased to the least amount of hours since 1999.

Of the 31 waterbodies from which tournaments were reported, 12 had 5 or more tournaments reported (same as in 2004). Pickwick reservoir was excluded because of the difference in the way MDWFP calculated success rates. Relative ranks of these 12 reservoirs within 5 categories were determined and the following comments relate only to these reservoirs (Table 5). Percent successful anglers (those with one or more fish) ranged from 47% at Watts Bar to 85% at Douglas. Average weight of bass caught ranged from 1.65 pounds at Douglas to 2.84 at Guntersville. The average weight for these reservoirs was 2.36 pounds. Catch rates expressed as bass per angler-day ranged from 0.88 at Watts Bar reservoir to 3.00 at Douglas. Catch rate as pounds per angler-day ranged from 2.32 at Watts Bar reservoir to 4.98 at Guntersville. The average was 3.69 pounds per angler-day. Anglers at Guntersville expended the least amount of time required to catch a bass 5-pounds or larger at 122 hours. Had Pickwick been included, it would have most likely ranked somewhere in the middle.

Overall, using the relative ranking procedure, Guntersville ranked the highest, as it did last year, followed by Kentucky Lake and Cherokee reservoirs (Table 5). This is a move up from fourth for Kentucky Lake and fifth for Cherokee in 2004. Douglas ranked fourth, and Center Hill fifth, a move down from third last year for Douglas and the first showing for Center Hill since 2002, when it ranked second. Remember, the intent of this ranking procedure is not to determine the "best" reservoir, but to characterize the bass fishery of each reservoir. Anglers should look at the category that is important to them. The overall rating should be used to narrow the choices. For example, if an angler felt like catching high numbers of fish was the most important, then Douglas would be a top choice. However, Kentucky Lake which ranked fourth in this category has a much higher average weight. If an angler wanted to catch fewer fish of a larger size versus more fish of a smaller size, then Kentucky Lake may be the better choice. It is important to remember that these rankings are relative in nature and sensitive to fluctuations in bass abundance and size structure. Varying environmental conditions and angling pressure from year to year also affect the rankings.

Based on 2004 TWRA surveys, bass growth rates in Tennessee reservoirs remained relatively stable and forage densities ranged from fair to good. Bass abundance continues to fluctuate, and electrofishing surveys showed black bass abundance was good to excellent at approximately 68% percent of sampled reservoirs. Recruitment (survival of young bass) continues to be cyclic. Nine reservoirs had good to excellent recruitment, with 18 reservoirs having fair to poor for the 2003 year class (Broadbent et al. 2004). Fish population abundance cycles naturally to some degree, with water level fluctuations and other habitat changes (cover/structure) contributing to this cycling.

Bass kills related to largemouth bass virus (LMBV) have declined considerably in the past few years, with only two minor fish kills nationwide in 2003, and none reported in 2004. Since 1995, LMBV has been found in bass populations in at least 19 states, including Tennessee. Bass kills have been attributed to this virus in at least a dozen states. LMBV outbreaks appear to be triggered by a combination of stress and heat. Since the virus usually affects the swim bladder, infected fish may appear near the surface and have trouble swimming and remaining upright. To date there has not been a confirmed fish kill attributed to LMBV in Tennessee, although the virus has been found in reservoirs tested by TWRA. These reservoirs include: Barkley, Boone, Cheatham, Cherokee, Chickamauga, Dale Hollow, Douglas, Ft. Loudoun, Kentucky Lake, Melton Hill, Normandy, Norris, Old Hickory, Percy Priest, South Holston, Tellico, Tims Ford, Watts Bar, and Woods.

No evidence exits that LMBV has caused long-term problems to any fishery, and many fisheries that have had LMBV related kills have rebounded after a few years. But scientists and biologist in several states are investigating how sub-lethal effects of the virus might affect growth rates of bass, particularly younger fish. Recent research indicates that LMBV infected fish experience slower growth rates. As funding becomes available, future research needs include finding a quick and non-lethal way of testing bass for LMBV, further examination of LMBV's long-term effects on bass populations, determining why LMBV kills some fish and not others, and finding out how long antibodies remain in previously infected fish (Group Solutions, 2004).

Anglers can play an important role in decreasing the chance of a LMBV outbreak. Although recent research by LMBV investigators shows the virus to be tough and hardy, surviving both temperature changes and drying, they suggest that cleaning the live wells with a solution of ¼ cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water for at least 5 minutes, then thoroughly rinsing will kill the virus in live wells. Handling bass as little as possible during hot weather, <u>never</u>

moving fish or water between waterbodies, and never releasing live bait are strongly recommended. Cleaning boats and trailers between fishing trips is suggested. When not fishing competitively, always release fish immediately to minimize stress and mortality associated with holding fish in a live well for extended periods of time. This is particularly important during hot months when water temperatures exceed 80°F. If fish are to be harvested they should put on ice immediately and not held in live wells.

In an effort to reduce bass mortality during tournaments, information and recommendations on handling and holding bass are provided in the back of this report. In addition, TWRA and the Tennessee Bass Federation produced a publication entitled, "Keeping Your Tournament-Caught Bass Alive". It is intended to help tournament anglers and organizers increase survival of tournament caught bass. For a copy, call 615-781-6575 or visit www.tnwildlife.org. B.A.S.S. has a more detailed publication titled, "Keeping Bass Alive: A Guidebook for Anglers and Tournament Organizers". This publication provides an overview of bass physiology and helps tournament anglers and organizers maximize the survival of bass caught and released at bass tournaments. To request a copy, call 334/272-9530, or email conservation@bassmaster.com.

The Appendix in the back of this report provides anglers with a historical record of reservoir statistics from the B.I.T.E. program since 1989. Please note that graphs were not restricted to reservoirs with five or more tournaments. Data points for some years were represented by only one tournament, and data are completely absent in some years. Reservoirs from which three years or less of data were reported are not included. Readers should be aware that the scales on the vertical graph axes vary in range, which must be considered when comparing reservoir trends.

The B.I.T.E. program exists only because of the time and effort participating clubs or tournament organizations have provided to contribute bass tournament data to TWRA (Table 6). We thank all those who voluntarily submitted tournament data. With your continued support, and the additional support of other bass clubs across the state, the program will continue to be successful and yield important information about Tennessee's reservoir bass resources. This report will also be made available on TWRA's Internet site: www.tnwildlife.org.

Literature Cited

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Group Solutions. 2004. Largemouth Bass Virus Workshop V. Session Transcripts. March 27, 2004.

Malvestuto, S. P. and W.P. Black. 2005. Tennessee Reservoir Creel Survey 2004 Results. Fisheries Report No. 05-06. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Nashville.

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Figure 1. Online B.I.T.E. tournament reporting form.

Club Code: Club Code as provided by TWRA.

Club Name: Club Rep:

Street: City:

State: TN Zip: Phone:

Reservoir: Date Start: mm/dd/yyyy

Launch Site: Date End: mm/dd/yyyy

Bass Creel Limit: Size Limit: inches Day/Night: Day Hrs Fished

Bass Numbers: Caught: Released: Over 4.99 lbs:

# of Anglers: w/1 or more: w/Limit:

Total Weight: lbs ozs Type: Team

Big Bass: lbs ozs If Team: # of Teams

Optional Information:

Number of Largemouth Bass caught: Total Weight: lbs ozs

Number of Spotted Bass caught: Total Weight: lbs ozs

Number of Smallmouth Bass caught: Total Weight: lbs ozs

Verify Info

Table 1. Tournament summary for bass clubs participating in the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.

CLUB	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS =>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day*	LBS. PER ANGLER-day*	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
2	10	364	262	765	1469	7	3540	71.98	1.92	2.16	4.15	506
4	4	780	583	1178	2955	28	7020	74.74	2.51	1.68	4.21	251
7	2	616	334	525	1495	16	4928	54.22	2.85	1.07	3.03	308
9	2	40	24	66	203	8	360	60.00	3.08	1.83	5.65	45
14	12	293	160	415	734	3	2328	54.61	1.77	1.78	3.15	776
15	11	212	142	279	522	3	1808	66.98	1.87	1.54	2.88	603
21	18	416	309	574	1229	15	3759	74.28	2.14	1.53	3.27	251
26	24	1288	588	826	2188	21	9552	45.65	2.65	0.86	2.29	455
43	1	14	5	10	24	1	130	35.71	2.37	0.77	1.83	130
45	3	24	20	55	155	6	224	83.33	2.82	2.46	6.93	37
62	4	570	414	775	1946	29	4560	72.63	2.51	1.70	4.27	157
89	3	690	487	1439	2534	7**	5904	70.58	1.76	2.44	4.29	**
90	3	31	22	43	111	0	286	70.97	2.59	1.51	3.90	-
92	5	75	39	59	116	1	532	52.00	1.97	1.11	2.18	532
94	11	193	113	193	392	0	1423	58.55	2.03	1.36	2.75	-
99	7	1227	1016	1862	4291	30	10768	82.80	2.30	1.73	3.98	359
100	7	89	52	125	303	5	896	58.43	2.43	1.40	3.39	179

Table 1 (Cont'd). Tournament summary for bass clubs participating in the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.

CLUB	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS =>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day*	LBS. PER ANGLER-day*	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
103	10	232	173	303	673	10	1982	74.57	2.22	1.53	3.39	198
104	6	345	175	394	1119	7	2956	50.72	2.84	1.33	3.79	422
105	1	5	2	4	10	0	30	40.00	2.52	1.33	3.35	-
107	6	39	20	43	122	4	234	51.28	2.84	1.84	5.23	59
119	1	6	5	6	9	0	51	83.33	1.50	1.18	1.76	-
123	11	129	58	153	376	4	1161	44.96	2.46	1.32	3.24	290
164	11	207	124	286	493	4	1656	59.90	1.72	1.73	2.97	414
165	2	41	16	25	69	0	349	39.02	2.75	0.72	1.97	-
216	9	165	86	203	391	1	1410	52.12	1.92	1.44	2.77	1410
4691	8	170	90	166	330	5	1350	52.94	1.99	1.23	2.44	270
TOTALS	192	8261	5319	10772	24258	215**	69195					
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT								64.39	2.25	1.56	3.51	322**

*BASED ON A 10 HOUR
FISHING DAY
** TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED

Table 2. Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.

RESERVOIR	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS=>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day**	LBS. PER ANGLER-day**	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
BARKLEY	4	60	46	92	229	2	520	76.67	2.49	1.77	4.40	260
BEECH LAKE	2	40	15	21	54	2	338	37.50	2.59	0.62	1.61	169
GREAT FALLS	2	50	41	116	173	0	400	82.00	1.49	2.90	4.31	-
CENTER HILL	5	284	185	422	853	8	2256	65.14	2.02	1.87	3.78	282
CHEATHAM	26	606	448	808	1735	23	5383	73.93	2.15	1.50	3.22	234
CHEROKEE	9	795	572	1090	3006	14	6770	71.95	2.76	1.61	4.44	484
CHICKAMAUGA	19	425	233	520	1102	6***	3607	54.82	2.12	1.44	3.05	601***
CORDELL HULL	1	28	9	15	27	1	224	32.14	1.82	0.67	1.22	224
DOUGLAS	10	704	603	1892	3122	7***	6299	85.65	1.65	3.00	4.96	900***
FT. LOUDOUN	1	24	10	24	45	1	192	41.67	1.87	1.25	2.33	192
FT. LOUDOUN/ TELLICO	11	669	507	885	1738	19	5623	75.78	1.96	1.57	3.09	296
FT. PATRICK HENRY	1	39	23	45	69	0	312	58.97	1.54	1.44	2.22	-
GUNTERSVILLE	8	276	223	448	1274	21	2558	80.80	2.84	1.75	4.98	122
KENTUCKY LAKE	7	833	617	1264	3208	36	7504	74.07	2.54	1.68	4.27	208
MELTON HILL	2	32	12	16	29	0	241	37.50	1.79	0.66	1.19	-

Table 2. (CONT.) Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.

RESERVOIR	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS=>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day**	LBS. PER ANGLER-day**	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
NEELY HENRY	2	43	32	82	136	0	375	74.42	1.66	2.19	3.63	-
NICKAJACK	4	66	46	82	159	0	546	69.70	1.94	1.50	2.92	-
NORMANDY	3	65	30	54	71	0	504	46.15	1.32	1.07	1.42	-
NORRIS	3	205	138	233	537	5	1720	67.32	2.31	1.36	3.13	344
OLD HICKORY	13	256	139	293	734	11	2175	54.30	2.51	1.35	3.38	198
PERCY PRIEST	7	411	227	425	1026	15	3231	55.23	2.41	1.32	3.17	215
PICKWICK	29	2148	527 [1]	3628	7280	52	18233	24.53 [1]	2.01	1.99	3.99	351
PIN OAK LAKE	1	12	10	38	67	0	186	83.33	1.76	2.04	3.59	-
REELFOOT LAKE	1	33	24	44	113	0	264	72.73	2.57	1.67	4.28	-
SOUTH HOLSTON	1	43	25	62	116	1	409	58.14	1.87	1.52	2.83	409
TELLICO	1	20	10	21	34	0	150	50.00	1.60	1.40	2.24	-
TIMS FORD	11	422	214	476	1309	8	3556	50.71	2.75	1.34	3.68	445
WATAUGA	1	36	24	42	79	1	288	66.67	1.88	1.46	2.74	288
WATTS BAR	32	1745	824	1169	3071	30	13219	47.22	2.63	0.88	2.32	441
WEISS	3	50	36	75	161	4	434	72.00	2.14	1.73	3.70	109
WHEELER	1	16	15	56	87	0	128	93.75	1.56	4.38	6.82	-

Table 2. (CONT.) Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.

WOODS	1	6	5	6	9	0	51	83.33	1.50	1.18	1.76	-
TOTALS	222	10442	5343 [2]	14444	31651	267***	87692					
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT		47		65	143			64.00 [2]	2.19	1.65	3.61	328***

*INCLUDES TOURNAMENTS (29) FROM PICKWICK RESERVOIR IN MISSISSIPPI
**BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY
*** TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED
1-NUMBER AND PERCENT SUCCESS IS THE NUMBER OF TEAMS OR ANGLERS THAT CAUGHT A LIMIT
2-DOES NOT INCLUDE PICKWICK RESERVOIR

Table 3. Reservoirs having exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2005.

Reservoir	Largemouth bass	Smallmouth bass	Spotted bass
Barkley	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Boone	15" minimum	15" minimum	15 fish creel
Center Hill	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Cheatham	14" minimum	14" minimum	-
Cherokee	15" minimum	15" minimum	15 fish creel
Chickamauga	15" minimum	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Dale Hollow	15" minimum	16-21" PLR with 1 under 16" & 1 over 21"	-
Douglas	-	20" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	14" minimum	18" minimum	15 fish creel
Guntersville(TN portion)	-	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Guntersville(AL portion)	15" minimum	15" minimum	15" minimum
Kentucky Lake	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Melton Hill	14" minimum	14" minimum	15 fish creel
Nickajack	15" minimum	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Normandy	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Norris	14" minimum	18" minimum	15 fish creel
Old Hickory	14" minimum	14" minimum	-
Percy Priest	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Pickwick(TN portion)	15" minimum	15" minimum	-

Table 3 (Cont'd) Reservoirs having exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2005.

Pickwick(AL portion)	-	14" minimum	-
Pickwick(MS portion)	-	-	-
Tims Ford	15" minimum	18" minimum	-
Watauga	12" minimum	12" minimum	15 fish creel
Watts Bar	15" minimum	18" minimum	-

Table 4. Bass seven pounds and larger reported* from 2005 tournament reports.

WEIGHT (LBS)	DATE	LOCATION	REPORTING CLUB/ORGANIZATION
7.79	03/19	BEECH LAKE	CENTRAL TENNESSEE BASS CLUB
7.60	07/23	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.43	02/19	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.38	03/19	KENTUCKY LAKE	KENTUCKY LAKE OUTDOOR TRAIL
7.30	03/19	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.19	03/05	PERCY PRIEST	FLW OUTDOORS
7.15	03/06	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.14	05/20	WATTS BAR	MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB
7.12	03/26	CENTER HILL	BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-M.TN
7.11	05/07	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.06	03/05	CHICKAMAUGA	SALE CREEK BASS CLUB
7.00	07/09	PERCY PRIEST	F-3 (FISHING FOR FUN)

*Reported as big bass for each tournament

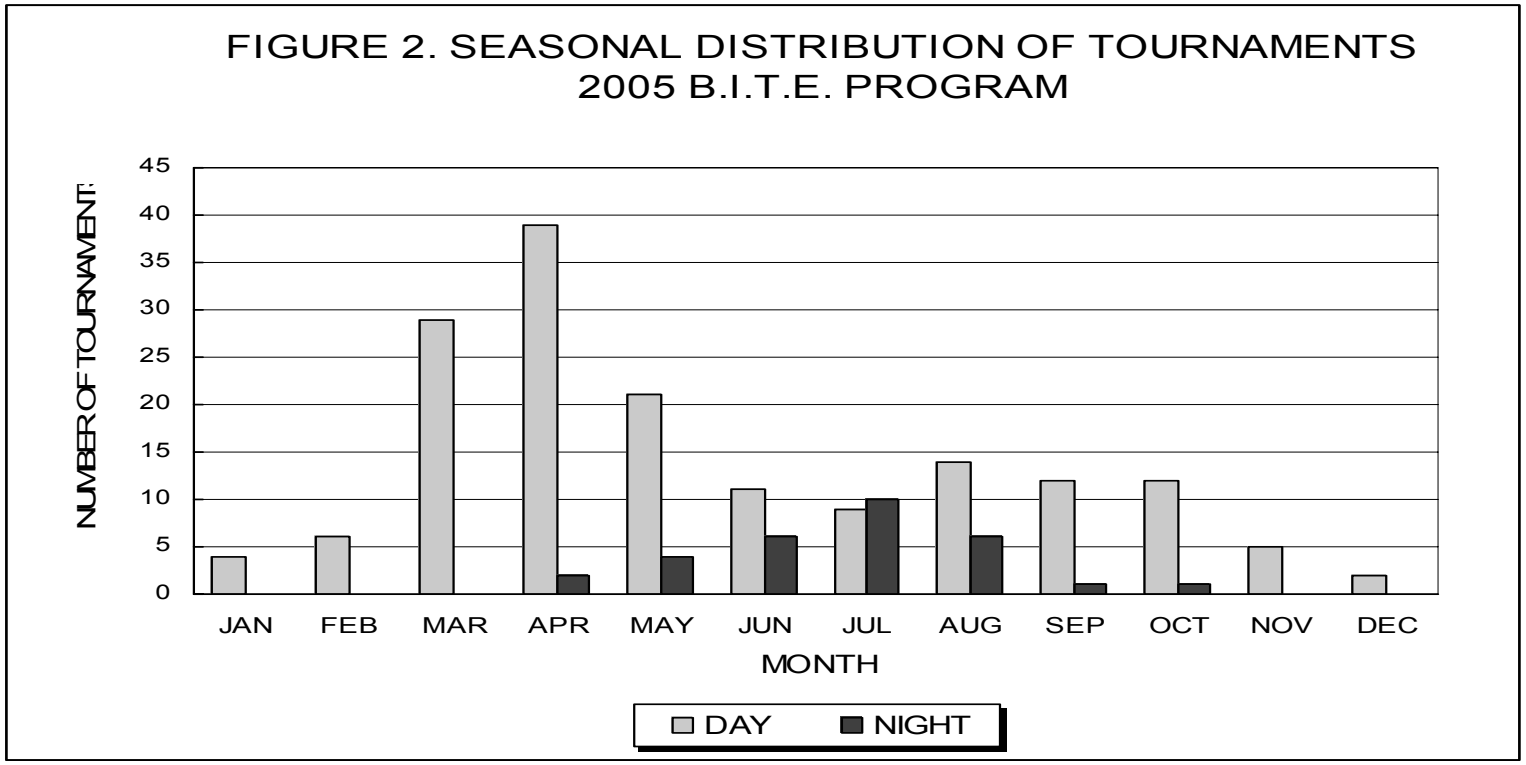
FIGURE 2. SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF TOURNAMENTS
2005 B.I.T.E. PROGRAM
NUMBER OF TOURNAMENTS
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
MONTH
DAY
NIGHT

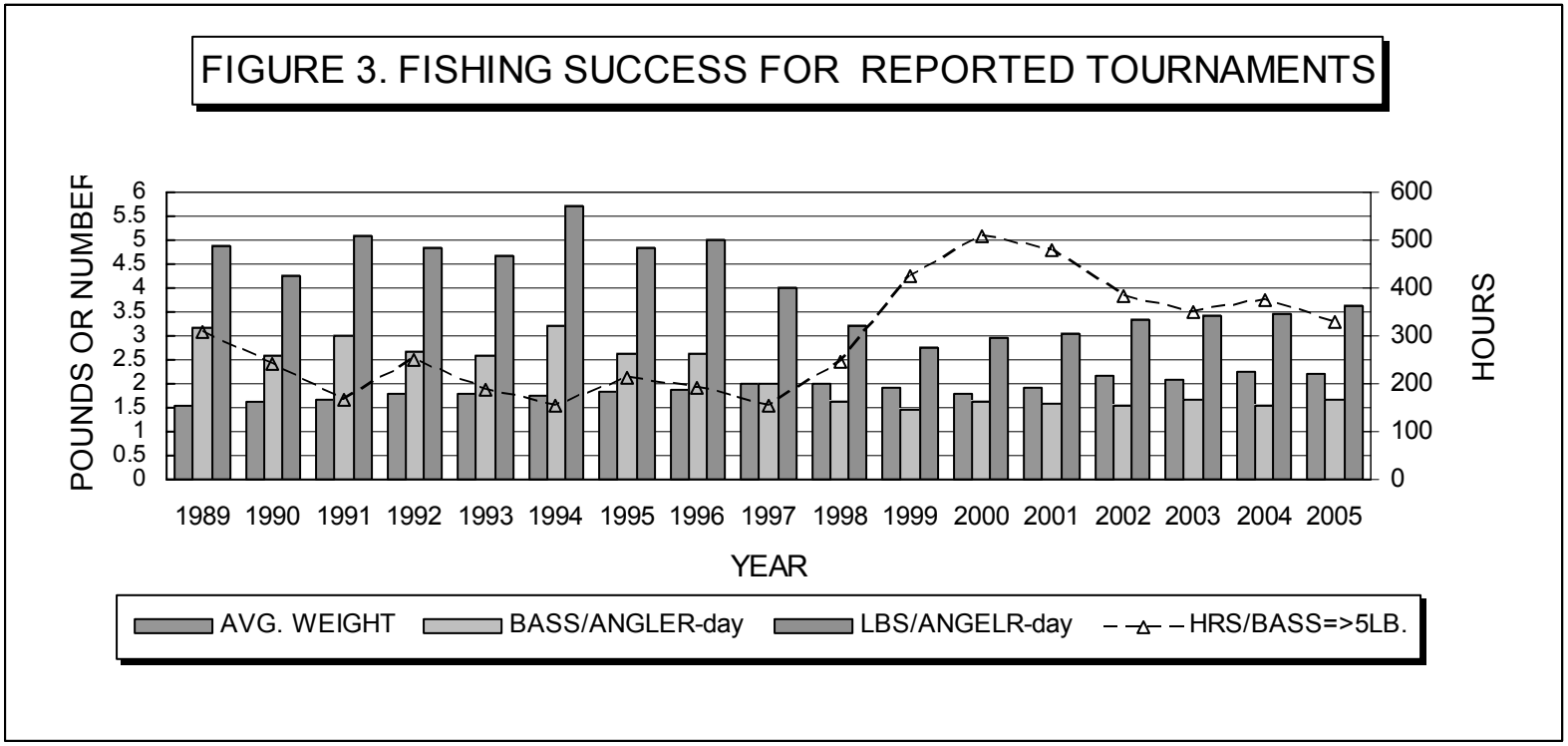
FIGURE 3. FISHING SUCCESS FOR REPORTED TOURNAMENTS
POUNDS OR NUMBER
6
5.5
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
HOURS
1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005
YEAR
AVG. WEIGHT
BASS/ANGLER-day
LBS/ANGELR-day
HRS/BASS=>5LB.

Table 5. Relative ranking for reservoirs with 5 or more tournaments reported in the 2005 B.I.T.E. program.*

RANK	PERCENT SUCCESS		AVERAGE WEIGHT (LBS.)		BASS PER 10-HOUR DAY		POUNDS PER 10-HOUR DAY		HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.		OVERALL RANK
1	Douglas^^	85.65	GUNTERSVILLE^	2.84	Douglas^^	3.00	GUNTERSVILLE^	4.98	GUNTERSVILLE^	122	#1 GUNTERSVILLE^
2	GUNTERSVILLE^	80.80	CHEROKEE	2.76	CENTER HILL	1.87	Douglas^^	4.96	OLD HICKORY	198	#2 KENTUCKY LAKE
3	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	75.78	TIMS FORD	2.75	GUNTERSVILLE^	1.75	CHEROKEE	4.44	KENTUCKY LAKE	208	#3 CHEROKEE
4	KENTUCKY LAKE	74.07	WATTS BAR	2.63	KENTUCKY LAKE	1.68	KENTUCKY LAKE	4.27	PERCY PRIEST	215	#4 Douglas^^
5	CHEATHAM	73.93	KENTUCKY LAKE	2.54	CHEROKEE	1.61	CENTER HILL	3.78	CHEATHAM	234	#5 CENTER HILL
6	CHEROKEE	71.95	OLD HICKORY	2.51	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	1.57	TIMS FORD	3.68	CENTER HILL	282	#6 CHEATHAM
7	CENTER HILL	65.14	PERCY PRIEST	2.41	CHEATHAM	1.50	OLD HICKORY	3.38	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	296	#7 OLD HICKORY
8	PERCY PRIEST	55.23	CHEATHAM	2.15	CHICKAMAUGA	1.44	CHEATHAM	3.22	WATTS BAR	441	#8 FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO
9	CHICKAMAUGA	54.82	CHICKAMAUGA	2.12	OLD HICKORY	1.35	PERCY PRIEST	3.17	TIMS FORD	445	#9 PERCY PRIEST
10	OLD HICKORY	54.30	CENTER HILL	2.02	TIMS FORD	1.34	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	3.09	CHEROKEE	484	#9 TIMS FORD
11	TIMS FORD	50.71	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	1.96	PERCY PRIEST	1.32	CHICKAMAUGA	3.05	CHICKAMAUGA	601***	#10 CHICKAMAUGA
12	WATTS BAR	47.22	Douglas^^	1.65	WATTS BAR	0.88	WATTS BAR	2.32	Douglas^^	900***	#10 WATTS BAR

*Size limit restrictions in effect on CAPITALIZED reservoirs.
**Total number Bass=>5LB. not reported.
^In Tennessee portion, size limit restriction on smallmouth bass only. In Alabama, size limit restriction on all black bass.
^^Size limit restrictions on smallmouth bass only.

Table 6. Clubs or Organizations contributing to the 2005 B.I.T.E. report.

CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIPCODE
AMERICAN BASS ANGLERS - TN CENTRAL # 31	Roger Brugger	631 Gay Winds Dr.	Mt.Juliet	TN	37122
BASS ANGLERS INVITATIONAL TRAIL - B.A.I.T.	Bud DeFoe	1412 McCarty Rd.	Knoxville	TN	38313
BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-E.TN	Jane Kawakami	11728 Georgetown Dr.	Knoxville	TN	37922
BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-M.TN	Jane Kawakami	11728 Georgetown Dr.	Knoxville	TN	37061
BASSIN BUDDY TOURNAMENT SERIES	Scott Abell	396 Uselton Rd.	Shelbyville	TN	38583
BLUE RIDGE BASSMASTERS	Gary Hickman	116 Lake View Dr.	Maynardville	TN	37323
CANEY CREEK BASS CLUB	Kent Bowman	146 Windswept Ln.	Harriman	TN	37205
CENTRAL TENN. BASS CLUB	Miles Tudor	183 Heathersett Dr.	Franklin	TN	37329
CHEATHAM COUNTY BASS CLUB	Mike Stubbs	115 Mockingbird Rd.	Nashville	TN	38016
CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS	George Corbit	1065 Red Hill Valley Rd. S.E.	Cleveland	TN	37343
CUMBERLAND BASS ANGLERS(CBA)	Michael Crowell	1907 Bluebird Dr.	Pleasant View	TN	37922
EAST TENNESSEE BASS ANGLERS	Brad Allison	10641 Dogwood Dr.	Knoxville	KY	42025
F-3 (FISHING FOR FUN)	Billy Harris	2117 Kerrybrook Dr.	Murfreesboro	TN	37040
FAYETTE COUNTY BASS CLUB	Eddie Kerr	35 County Brook Dr.	Oakland	TN	38060
FLW OUTDOORS	Mike Hale	#30 Gamble Ln.	Benton	TN	37748
GUYS AND GALS BASS ANGLERS	Jane Kawakami	11728 Georgetown	Knoxville	TN	37914
HAMILTON COUNTY BASS CLUB	Phil Dietsch	506 Heartheron Ln.	Hixson	TN	37122
HOUSTON COUNTY BASS CLUB	Joe Meacham	1055 State Rt. 231	Erin	TN	37146
JACK DANIELS BASSMASTERS	Howard Blaydes	6148 Firelight Trail	Antioch	TN	37013
KENTUCKY LAKE OUTDOOR TRAIL	Randy Sullivan	587 Diamond Grove Rd.	Beech Bluff	TN	37848
KNOXVILLE MASTER FISHERMAN	Adam Hooper	219 Monroe Hollow Rd.	Powder Springs	TN	37129
MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB	David Slack	177 County Road 568	Englewood	TN	37388
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BASS CLUB	Walt Herrmann	407 Silver Dr.	Clarksville	TN	37321
SALE CREEK BASS CLUB	Ron Bryant	428 Troy Dr.	Dayton	TN	37807
SPARTA BASS CLUB	Ricky England	154 Hawthrone Rd.	Sparta	TN	37931
STONES RIVER BASS ANGLERS	Mike Taylor	6740 Holt Rd.	Nashville	TN	37064
TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN BASS ANGLERS	Richard Francisco	5133 Foxfire Trail	Kingsport	TN	37922
MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS	Larry Pugh	P.O. Box 451	Jackson	MS	39205

BASS HANDLING/TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has several tips for tournament anglers to help keep fish alive. The following suggestions reflect current research by southeastern fisheries management agencies into practice of culling fish during tournament events and the stress caused by holding fish in live wells.

1. Fill your live well immediately upon arrival at your first fishing location (Open water areas with good water quality). Turn on aerator systems to begin building oxygen levels in the live well. Run aerators/recirculating pump continuously when you have fish in the live well. If the aerator must run on a timer, run as often as possible as oxygen depletion occurs quickly when the pump is off. Make sure aeration system provides proper aeration while boat is moving or on a trailer. If you don't have a recirculating system, add on.(Live well capacities vary, but allow at least one gallon of water per one pound of fish)

2. Try not to play the fish to total exhaustion and land them by hand, if possible or use knotless nylon or rubber nets. Grasp bass by the lower jaw and hold them vertically, supporting large fish with a wet hand under the belly. Do not allow fish to touch boat or carpet and rub off protective slime. Remove hooks quickly with as little tissue damage as possible with needlenose pliers or hemostats. When attempts fail, or the hook has penetrated through the throat or gill arch, use cutting pliers to cut the point and barb off of the hook. The hook can then be backed out causing less tissue damage. Try not to hold the fish out of the water longer than you can hold your breath. This includes fish in bags headed for weigh-in. If the fish has become exhausted, hold it gently in the water until it becomes acclimated, moving it slowly back and forth to help it regain and maintain its equilibrium. Keep fish in rear live wells, evenly distributed between compartments. Fish in forward live wells are more likely to be injured from bouncing on rough water. Remove dead fish from live well immediately to prevent further mortality.

3. Add 1 cup of non-iodized salt (rock salt, sea salt, etc.) to 15 gallons of live well water (1/3 cup per five gallons) to maintain electrolyte balance and reduce the effects of shock and stress. Commercially available live well additives can also be used as directed. Don't over salt if using both. Pre-measure salt and additive into zip-lock bags for use when you exchange water in the live wells (see #5).

4. Monitor lake surface water temperatures and add small amounts of non-chlorinated ice to keep live well temperatures 5 to 10 degrees cooler than surface temperature. (**Do not reduce temperature more than 10 degrees below the lake surface temperature to avoid thermal shock when the fish are leased back to the lake**) If lake water temperatures are above 75 degrees, recirculate cooler, aerated live well water rather than pumping in warmer lake water. Block ice is preferred, because it melts slower and it can be made economically by freezing water-filled half-gallon plastic jugs. Use hot water or a chlorine remover in making the ice jugs to reduce the possible release of toxic chlorine when the ice is used. A one gallon block of ice will lower the temperature of 30 gallons of water approximately 10 degrees for about three hours. At water temperatures above 80 degrees, and during the months of July and August, consideration should be given to reducing tournament times or postponing tournaments until cooler water temperatures. Holding tournaments at night during the summer does not make much difference in reducing bass mortality, since water temperatures do not change that much over a 24-hour period.

5. Constantly monitor the fish for signs of stress and drain half the live well water every three hours to remove toxic waste products (carbon dioxide and ammonia). Refill with fresh water and add half the amounts of ice, salt and/or a commercial live well additive (as directed) each time.

6. Install an oxygen delivery system, which delivers oxygen directly into live wells from a pressurized tank through air-stones or hose. The system must have a regulator or pressure valve and the tank must be securely mounted. The system is better than simple aeration (air is only 21% oxygen) and solves oxygen demand problems. Although less need for water temperature adjustments is usually required, flushing with freshwater every 3 hours is still essential.