

TWRA BITE

**Bass
Information
From Tournament
Entries**



2004

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Fisheries Management Division
Ellington Agricultural Center
P. O. Box 40747
Nashville, TN 37204



B . I . T . E .

**BASS INFORMATION from
TOURNAMENT ENTRIES**

2004 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 sixteenth 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 33 percent of fishing effort statewide geared toward black bass. These bass anglers produced an estimated 2.2 million angler hours of effort in pursuit of black bass in 2003 (2004 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 \$7.4 million during 2003 (TWRA Creel Survey 2004). These expenditures included items such as fuel, food, bait, and lodging, but excluded boat and vehicle costs.

Through 2004, 5,529 tournament reports have been summarized. More than 151 clubs or tournament organizations participated through the first sixteen years of the program. Bass anglers have spent over 1.6 million hours collecting data for this program and contributed data from 310,589 black bass weighing 584,723 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 B.A.S.S. 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, along with 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. During 2002, the Tennessee B.A.S.S. Federation developed 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/forms and at the TWRA's website www.tn.wildlife.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 number of bass 5 pounds or larger at weigh-in, and this is noted in the appropriate Tables. Also, a couple of reservoirs (Ft. Loudoun/Tellico and Kentucky Lake/Barkley) were combined for analysis when tournament anglers were allowed to fish either reservoir. Therefore, in Table 2 this combined analysis was based on this specific reporting. Since the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) definition of fishing success differs from ours, some of their tournament data from Pickwick reservoir is excluded 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. A minimum of five tournaments per reservoir is considered necessary for minimum confidence. The 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 thirty-four clubs or tournament organizations during 2004 (down fourteen from last year), which submitted 264 tournament reports (Table 1). This is down 24 percent from 2003. Part of this decrease may have resulted from a computer problem affecting the online tournament report form for six months in 2004. Club representatives did a great job filling out the report cards, and only 3 were rejected due to incomplete or erroneous data. Twenty clubs (59%) submitted five or more tournament reports, about the same percent as last year. Twelve clubs submitted 10 or more reports, with almost 8 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 2004, tournament reports were received for 30 bodies of water that were fished 100,188 hours (Table 2). Included in Table 2 are tournament reports received from the MDWFP for reservoirs on the Tennessee River system. Tournaments averaged 45 anglers per event, for an average of 8 hours each. The average tournament had 54 bass weighing 122 pounds. Most tournament data were received from Pickwick and Tims Ford (37), followed by Watts Bar, Cheatham and Kentucky Lake. Barkley, Chickamauga, Old Hickory, and Percy Priest each had 10 or more tournament reports. Of the 15,447 bass anglers competing, 6,586 (58%) were successful. Anglers brought 15,447 bass (12 inches and larger) weighing 34,609 pounds to weigh-ins. Average weight of bass caught on Tennessee reservoirs ranged from 1.65 pounds on Douglas to 2.73 pounds on Nickajack (one tournament). Overall, the average weight was 2.24 pounds, up slightly from last year's 2.07 pounds. Fishing success on in-state reservoirs ranged from a high of 3.35 bass per angler-day at Douglas to 0.46 at Nickajack reservoir. The overall average fishing success was 1.54 bass per angler-day. Pounds per angler-day were highest for Douglas at 5.53, and lowest for Melton Hill reservoir at 0.99 pounds per angler-day. The overall average was 3.45 pounds per angler-day, relatively unchanged from 3.41 pounds in 2003.

Reservoirs with exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2004 are listed in Table 3. Approximately 97% of all bass caught by B.I.T.E. participants were released. Approximately 16% of individual or team anglers brought in limits of bass, up slightly from the number of limits reported in 2003.

A total of 267 bass, weighing five pounds or more, were reported caught during

2004 (down from 406 in 2003), with an overall catch rate of one 5-pound bass or larger for every 375 hours of fishing, an increase from last year's average of 351 hours. The largest bass reported was 8.30 pounds taken from Ft. Loudoun/Tellico in March reported by Bass Invitational Team Events-E. TN. Kentucky Lake led all reservoirs in the catch of bass five pounds and larger with a minimum of 52 fish, followed by Pickwick with 43. A total of 12 bass seven pounds and larger were reported in 2004 (Table 4) with most (42%) of these big fish being caught in March and April. Eleven bass seven pounds or larger were reported in 2003.

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 13% of tournaments with most occurring in June and July. Tournament fishing success for number of bass per angler-day decreased from last year, pounds per angler-day increased slightly, while average weight increased (Figure 3). The hours required to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger during the year (375) increased after declining for the past three years.

Of the 30 waterbodies from which tournaments were reported, 12 had 5 or more tournaments reported (seven less than in 2003). 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 41% at Watts Bar to 80% at Barkley. Average weight of bass caught ranged from 1.65 pounds at Douglas to 2.68 at Guntersville. The average weight for these reservoirs was 2.35 pounds. Catch rates expressed as bass per angler-day ranged from 0.76 at Watts Bar reservoir to 3.35 at Douglas. Catch rate as pounds per angler-day ranged from 1.94 at Watts Bar reservoir to 5.53 at Douglas. The average was 3.65 pounds per angler-day. Anglers at Guntersville expended the least amount of time required to catch a bass 5-pounds or larger at 99 hours.

Overall, using the relative ranking procedure, Guntersville ranked the highest, replacing Kentucky Lake from 2003, followed by Barkley and Douglas reservoirs (Table 5). Kentucky Lake ranked fourth, and Cheatham fifth, a move upward from thirteenth in 2003. Guntersville ranked 5th and Barkley 9th in 2003. 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, Cherokee and Tims Ford ranked high for average weight. However, Tims Ford ranked higher than Cherokee in number and pounds of bass per day, whereas Cherokee has a better success rate and required less than half the amount of time to catch a bass

5 pounds or larger. Since both reservoirs nearly tied overall, anglers deciding which reservoir is “best” would need to choose the characteristics (categories) most important to them. Note to that Cheatham reservoir did tie with Cherokee overall, meaning Cheatham ranked somewhat higher in specific categories than either Cherokee or Tims Ford. 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 2003 TWRA surveys, bass growth rates in Tennessee reservoirs remained relatively stable and forage densities ranged from good to excellent. Bass abundance continues to fluctuate, and electrofishing surveys showed black bass abundance was good to excellent at approximately 59% percent of sampled reservoirs. Recruitment (survival of young bass) continues to be cyclic. Seven reservoirs had good to excellent recruitment, with 14 reservoirs having fair to poor for the 2002 year class (Broadbent et al. 2003). Fish population abundance cycles naturally to some degree, with water level fluctuations and other habitat changes (cover/structure) contributing to this cycling.

Only two minor fish kills nationwide, one in Oklahoma and Missouri, were linked to the largemouth bass virus (LMBV) in 2003 (Group Solutions, 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. Kills and their impact have declined considerably in the past several years, and only 4 kills have been reported nationwide since 2002. 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 every reservoir tested by TWRA, except for Center Hill. 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. The occurrence of the virus in samples from these reservoirs has decreased slightly since 2000, when testing first began.

No evidence exists that LMBV has caused a long-term problem 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. Some recent research indicates that LMBV

infected fish experience slower growth rates. As funding becomes available, some 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 lessening the impact of the virus. 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, never 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.

TWRA fisheries biologists continue to monitor reservoir bass populations and work with researchers studying LMBV. Efforts also continue with government agencies, universities, bass clubs, and private groups to improve fish habitat, including water level management. TWRA will continue to rely on bass clubs and tournament organizations to provide event data so that we can continue to follow population trends. Please report any unusual bass die offs to the nearest TWRA regional office. For further information on LMBV visit www.bassmaster.com.

Because of concern expressed to us regarding the lack of available information on handling tournament bass, we are providing recommendations for tournament procedures that reduce bass mortality during tournaments in the back of this report. In addition, TWRA and the Tennessee B.A.S.S. Federation have 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, ext. 404 or visit their website at: www.bassmaster.com.

The Appendix in 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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Malvestuto, S. P. and W.P. Black. 2004. Tennessee Reservoir Creel Survey 2003 Results. Fisheries Report No. 04-05. 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: Zip: Phone:

Reservoir: Date Start:
mm/dd/yyyy
Launch Site: Date End:
mm/dd/yyyy
Bass Creel Limit: Size Limit: inches Day/Night: Hrs
Fished
Bass Numbers: Caught: Released: Over 4.99 lbs:
of Anglers: w/1 or more: w/Limit:
Total Weight: lbs ozs Type:
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

Table 1. Tournament Summary for bass clubs participating in the 2004 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	2	64	29	60	141	1	592	45.31	2.35	1.01	2.38	592
4	10	1197	814	1573	3956	38	10773	68.00	2.51	1.46	3.67	284
7	3	768	429	743	1752	23	6144	55.86	2.36	1.21	2.85	267
9	10	140	119	314	784	**	1496	85.00	2.50	2.10	5.24	**
14	12	277	158	328	582	1	2286	57.04	1.77	1.43	2.55	2286
15	2	77	42	76	177	1	770	54.55	2.34	0.99	2.30	770
21	18	316	237	485	1068	11	2889	75.00	2.20	1.68	3.70	263
26	26	1596	617	831	2181	19	11681	38.66	2.63	0.71	1.87	615
27	10	162	140	278	538	2	1620	86.42	1.94	1.72	3.32	810
33	1	27	16	25	48	0	243	59.26	1.91	1.03	1.97	-
38	12	243	155	170	425	5	1938	63.79	2.50	0.88	2.19	388
43	9	94	70	86	181	1	929	74.47	2.10	0.93	1.95	929
45	6	47	41	159	317	2	540	87.23	1.99	2.94	5.86	270
53	33	1427	665	1164	2960	4	6412	46.60	2.54	1.82	4.62	1603
59	5	73	43	85	150	3	628	58.90	1.77	1.35	2.39	209
61	1	50	26	28	74	1	300	52.00	2.64	0.93	2.47	300
62	3	520	368	793	1958	16	4372	70.77	2.47	1.81	4.48	273
65	15	160	142	261	440	7	1280	88.75	1.69	2.04	3.44	183
82	1	12	7	12	21	0	102	58.33	1.79	1.18	2.10	-
87	2	50	17	17	44	1	300	34.00	2.57	0.57	1.46	300
89	7	2073	1363	3558	7176	42**	17281	65.75	2.02	2.06	4.15	**
90	7	89	48	87	217	2	789	53.93	2.50	1.10	2.75	395
92	6	146	72	146	314	3	1077	49.32	2.15	1.36	2.91	359
94	12	213	103	171	347	1	1613	48.36	2.03	1.06	2.15	1613
99	3	503	310	518	1273	21	4224	61.63	2.46	1.23	3.01	201
100	6	126	60	125	276	3	1035	47.62	2.21	1.21	2.67	345
103	10	204	153	273	625	6	1774	75.00	2.29	1.54	3.52	296
104	3	116	61	112	296	1	696	52.59	2.64	1.61	4.25	696
119	2	17	9	19	40	0	136	52.94	2.13	1.40	2.97	-
123	10	144	71	125	307	1	1296	49.31	2.45	0.96	2.37	1296
165	2	42	20	42	115	0	303	47.62	2.73	1.39	3.79	-
255	8	188	153	586	1082	10	2036	81.38	1.85	2.88	5.32	204
4691	4	54	27	34	89	0	432	50.00	2.61	0.79	2.05	-

TOTAL S 264 11276 6611 13332 30054 227** 88491

AVG. PER TOURNAMENT 58.63 2.25 1.51 3.40 390**

*BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY

** TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED

Table 2. Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2004 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**
BARKLEY	15	238	190	386	975	5***	2187	79.83	2.53	1.76	4.46
BAY SPRINGS	2	22	20	36	64	2	176	90.91	1.79	2.05	3.66
BEECH LAKE	1	10	8	10	29	1	90	80.00	2.91	1.11	3.23
CANEY FORK RIVER	2	50	20	46	73	0	400	40.00	1.60	1.15	1.83
CENTER HILL	4	549	443	1139	2512	23	4753	80.69	2.21	2.40	5.29
CHEATHAM	34	624	436	811	1773	21	5517	69.87	2.19	1.47	3.21
CHEROKEE	7	342	236	404	1079	5	2925	69.01	2.67	1.38	3.69
CHICKAMAUGA	17	278	156	316	672	2	2472	56.12	2.13	1.28	2.72
CORDELL HULL	1	26	11	16	39	0	208	42.31	2.45	0.77	1.89
DALE HOLLOW	2	380	212	418	873	9	3018	55.79	2.09	1.39	2.89
DOUGLAS	5	663	516	1800	2971	6***	5373	77.83	1.65	3.35	5.53
FT. LOUDOUN	3	200	67	125	258	8	1683	33.50	2.06	0.74	1.53
FT. LOUDOUN/ TELLICO	4	322	190	291	725	11	2489	59.01	2.49	1.17	2.91
GUNTERSVILLE	5	83	61	184	492	10	991	73.49	2.68	1.86	4.97
KENTUCKY LAKE	31	1738	1202	2322	5695	52***	15667	69.16	2.45	1.48	3.64
KY. LAKE/BARKLEY	1	340	223	532	1234	***	2890	65.59	2.32	1.84	4.27
KEOWEE	1	20	20	143	212	1	340	100.00	1.48	4.21	6.22

Table 2. (CONT.) Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2004 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**
MELTON HILL	2	32	11	14	24	0	240	34.38	1.70	0.58	0.99
NICKAJACK	1	30	9	11	30	1	240	30.00	2.73	0.46	1.25
NORRIS	4	177	129	205	439	8	1487	72.88	2.14	1.38	2.95
OLD HICKORY	13	378	192	349	768	7	3171	50.79	2.20	1.10	2.42
PERCY PRIEST	10	661	372	655	1640	16	5278	56.28	2.50	1.24	3.11
PICKWICK	37	1806	226 ¹	2567	5402	43	15347	56.5 ¹	2.10	1.67	3.52
PIN OAK LAKE	3	35	25	45	105	2	292	71.43	2.33	1.54	3.59
SOUTH HOLSTON	1	32	16	36	79	1	288	50.00	2.19	1.25	2.73
TIMS FORD	37	1548	728	1279	3262	5	7148	47.03	2.55	1.79	4.56
TUNICA CUTOFF	1	8	8	22	43	0	72	100.00	1.95	3.06	5.97
WATTS BAR	36	2004	818	1144	2908	27	14967	40.82	2.54	0.76	1.94
WEISS	1	8	8	59	101	1	120	100.00	1.72	4.92	8.45
WHEELER	1	12	12	29	31	0	96	100.00	1.07	3.02	3.24
WOODS	2	33	21	53	99	0	264	63.64	1.87	2.01	3.75
TOTALS	284	12649	6586 ¹	15447	34609	267***	100188				
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT		45		54	122			58.57 ¹	2.24	1.54	3.45

*INCLUDES TOURNAMENTS (23) FROM RESERVOIRS OF THE TENN. RIVER IN MISSISSIPPI

**BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY

***TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED

1-DOES NOT INCLUDE PICKWICK TOURNAMENTS AS REPORTED BY MISSISSIPPI DEPT. OF WILDLIFE,FISHERIES&PARKS

Table 3. Reservoirs having exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2004.

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Largemouth bass</u>	<u>Smallmouth bass</u>	<u>Spotted bass</u>
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	-
Pickwick(AL portion)	-	14" minimum	-
Pickwick(MS portion)	-	-	-
Tims Ford	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Watauga	12" minimum	12" minimum	15 fish creel
Watts Bar	15" minimum	18" minimum	-

Table 4. Bass seven pounds and larger reported* from 2004 tournament reports.

WEIGHT (LBS)	DATE	LOCATION	REPORTING CLUB/ORGANIZATION
8.30	03/14	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-E.TN
8.04	03/06	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.94	04/10	CHEATHAM	TEKSID BASS ANGLERS
7.63	09/26	CHEATHAM	CUMBERLAND BASS ANGLERS(CBA)
7.56	06/07	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.50	09/18	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.32	04/24	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.25	09/14	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.19	03/13	GUNTERSVILLE	CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS
7.02	08/15	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.00	05/22	PICKWICK	FLW OUTDOORS
7.00	12/04	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

*Reported as big bass for each tournament

FIGURE 2. SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF
TOURNAMENTS
2004 B.I.T.E. PROGRAM

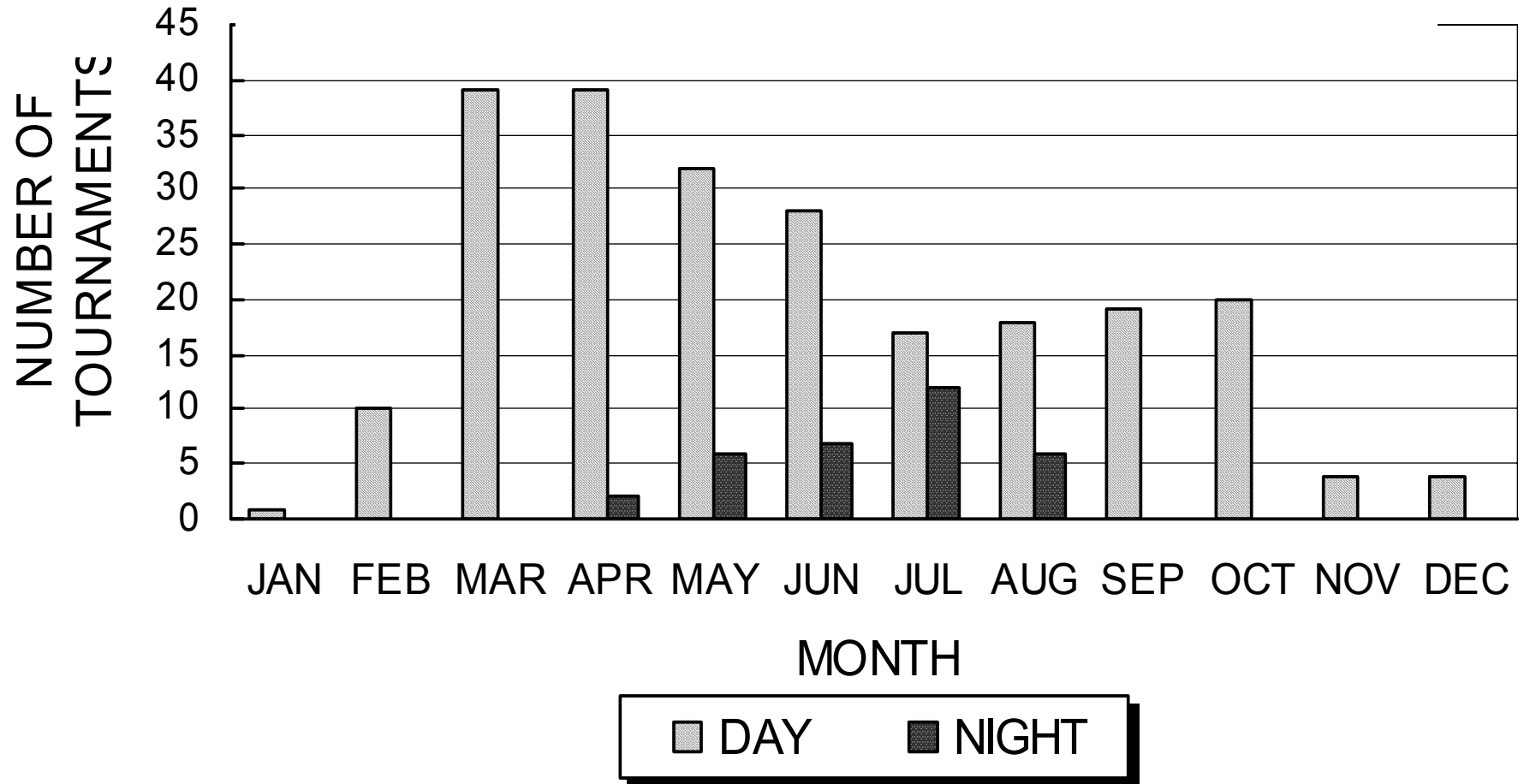
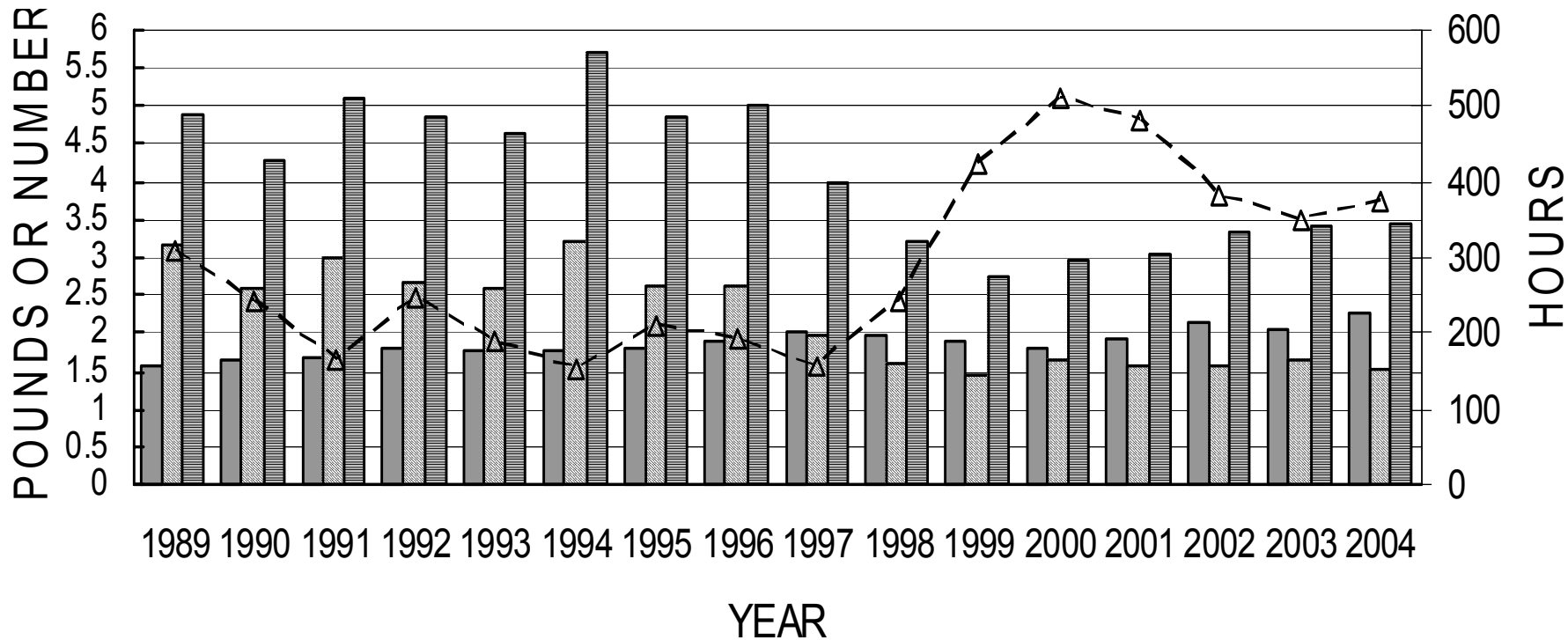


FIGURE 3. FISHING SUCCESS FOR REPORTED TOURNAMENTS



AVG. WEIGHT

 BASS/ANGLER-day

 LBS/ANGELR-day
 - - Δ - - HRS/BASS=>5LB.

Table 5. Relative ranking for reservoirs with 5 or more tournaments reported in the 2004 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	BARKLEY	79.83	GUNTERSVILLE^	2.68	Douglas^^	3.35	Douglas^^	5.53	GUNTERSVILLE	99	#1 GUNTERSVILLE^
2	Douglas^^	77.83	CHEROKEE	2.67	GUNTERSVILLE^	1.86	GUNTERSVILLE^	4.97	CHEATHAM	263	#2 BARKLEY
3	GUNTERSVILLE^	73.49	TIMS FORD	2.55	TIMS FORD	1.79	TIMS FORD	4.56	KENTUCKY LAKE	301**	#3 Douglas^^
4	CHEATHAM	69.87	WATTS BAR	2.54	BARKLEY	1.76	BARKLEY	4.46	PERCY PRIEST	330	#4 KENTUCKY LAKE
5	KENTUCKY LAKE	69.16	BARKLEY	2.53	PICKWICK	1.67	CHEROKEE	3.69	PICKWICK	357	#5 CHEATHAM
6	CHEROKEE	69.01	PERCY PRIEST	2.50	KENTUCKY LAKE	1.48	KENTUCKY LAKE	3.64	BARKLEY	437**	#5 CHEROKEE
7	PICKWICK	56.5	KENTUCKY LAKE	2.45	CHEATHAM	1.47	PICKWICK	3.52	OLD HICKORY	453	#6 TIMS FORD
8	PERCY PRIEST	56.28	OLD HICKORY	2.20	CHEROKEE	1.38	CHEATHAM	3.21	WATTS BAR	554	#7 PICKWICK
9	CHICKAMAUGA	56.12	CHEATHAM	2.19	CHICKAMAUGA	1.28	PERCY PRIEST	3.11	CHEROKEE	585	#8 PERCY PRIEST
10	OLD HICKORY	50.79	CHICKAMAUGA	2.13	PERCY PRIEST	1.24	CHICKAMAUGA	2.72	DOUGLAS	896**	#9 OLD HICKORY
11	TIMS FORD	47.03	PICKWICK	2.10	OLD HICKORY	1.10	OLD HICKORY	2.42	CHICKAMAUGA	1236	#10 WATTS BAR
12	WATTS BAR	40.82	Douglas^^	1.65	WATTS BAR	0.76	WATTS BAR	1.94	TIMS FORD	1430	#11 CHICKAMAUGA

*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.

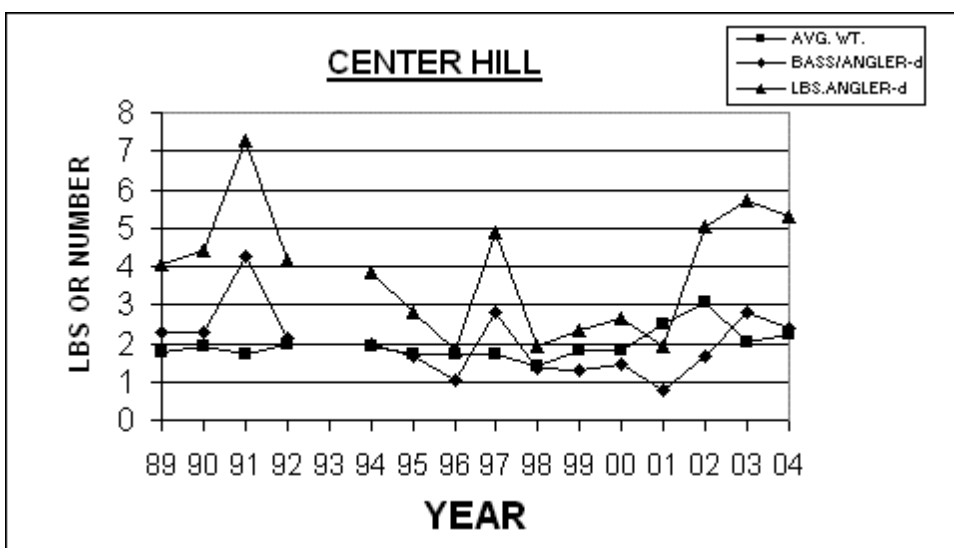
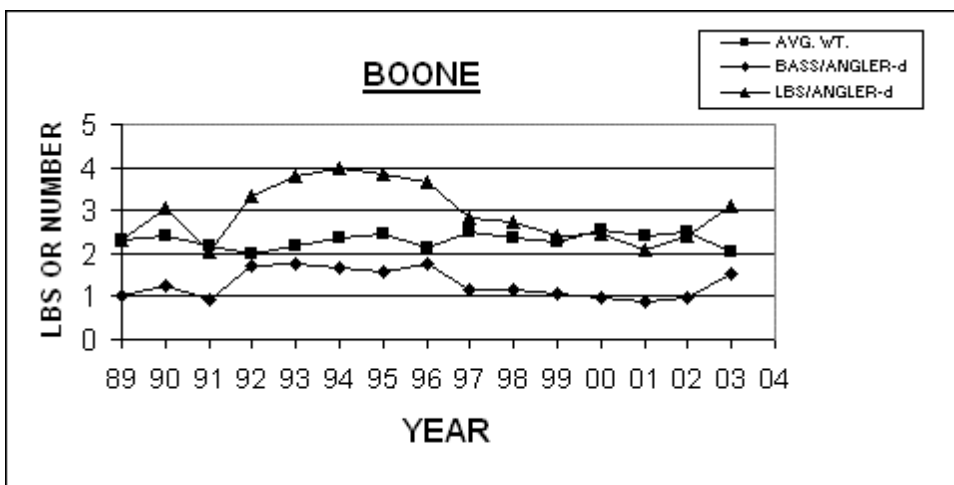
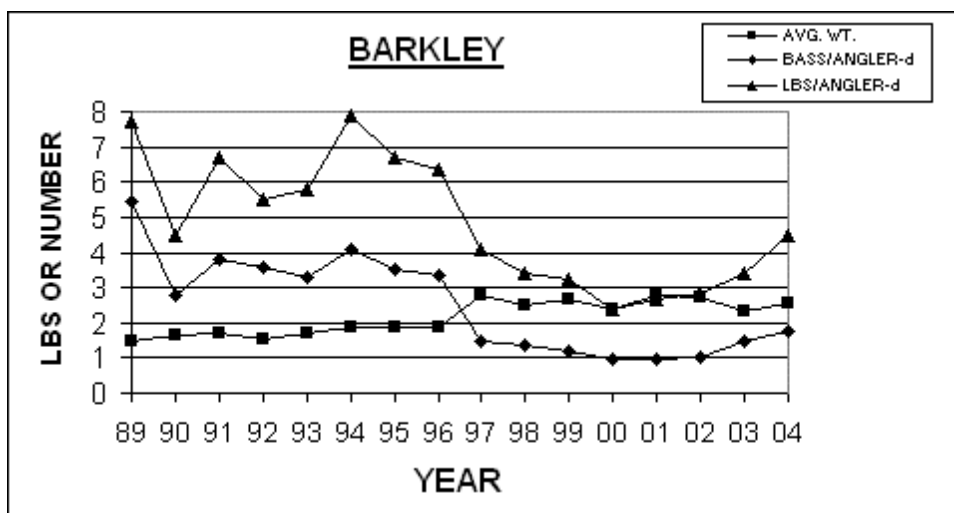
Table 6. Clubs or Organizations contributing to the 2004 B.I.T.E. report.

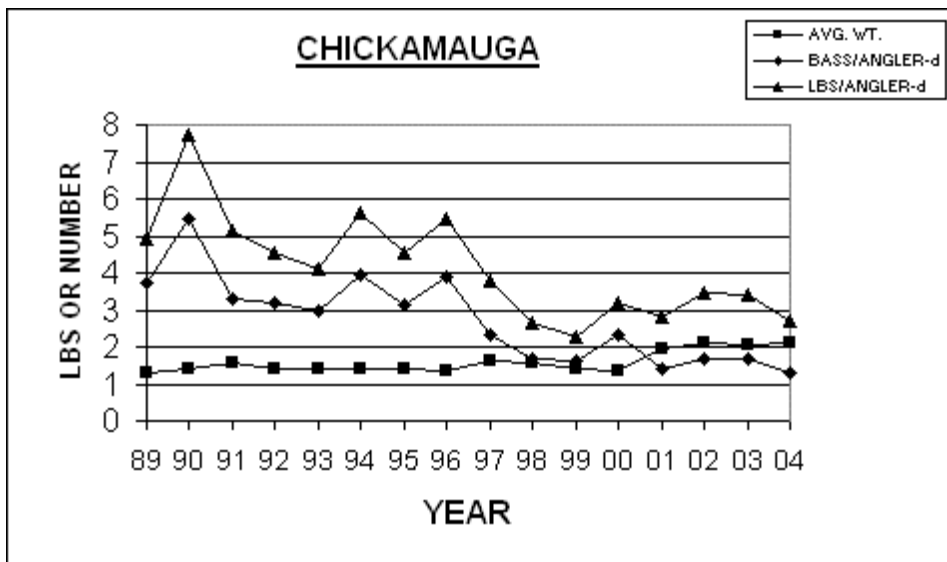
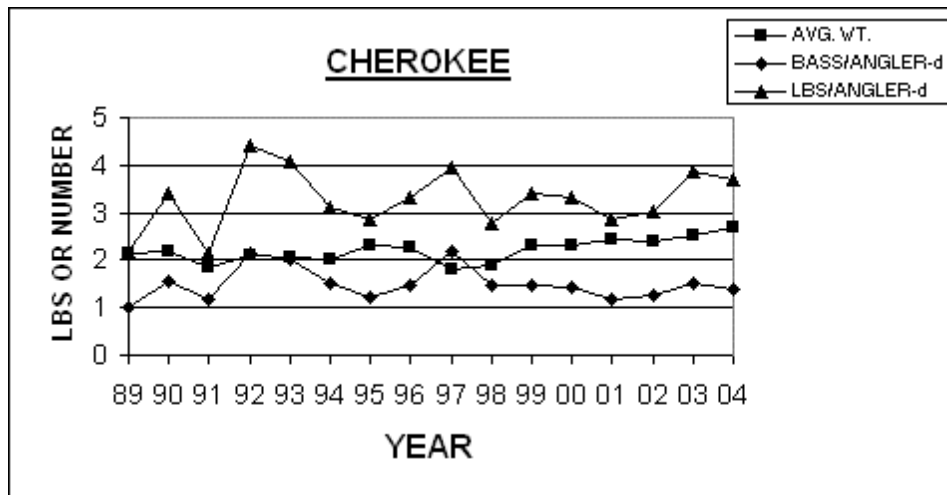
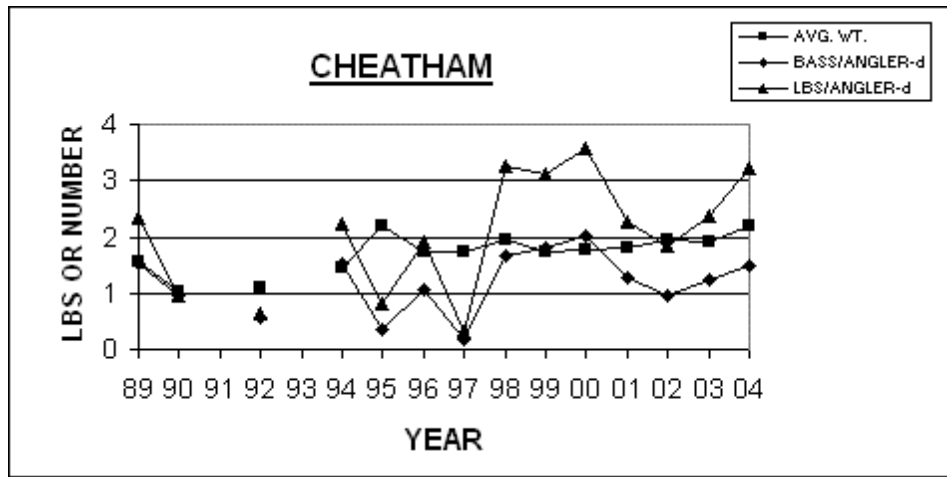
CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	CITY	STATE
AMERICAN BASS ANGLERS - TN CENTRAL # 31	Roger Brugger	Mt. Juliet	TN
BASS ANGLERS INVITATIONAL TRAIL - B.A.I.T.	Bud DeFoe	Knoxville	TN
BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-E.TN	Jane Kawakami	Knoxville	TN
BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-M.TN	Jane Kawakami	Knoxville	TN
BASSIN BUDDY TOURNAMENT SERIES	Scott Abell	Shelbyville	TN
BLUE RIDGE BASSMASTERS	Gary Hickman	Maynardville	TN
CANEY CREEK BASS CLUB	Kent Bowman	Harriman	TN
CHEATHAM COUNTY BASS CLUB	Mike Stubbs	Nashville	TN
CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS	George Corbit	Cleveland	TN
CUMBERLAND BASS ANGLERS(CBA)	Michael Crowell	Pleasant View	TN
EAST TENNESSEE BASS ANGLERS	Brad Allison	Knoxville	TN
FAYETTE COUNTY BASS CLUB	Jason Risley	Cordova	TN
FLW OUTDOORS	Mike Hale	Benton	KY
FRIDAY NIGHT BIG FISH	Jimmy Boss	Joelton	TN
GUYS AND GALS BASS ANGLERS	Jane Kawakami	Knoxville	TN
HAMILTON COUNTY BASS CLUB	Phil Dietsch	Hixson	TN
HOUSTON COUNTY BASS CLUB	Joe Meacham	Erin	TN
JACK DANIELS BASSMASTERS	Russ Reynolds	Tullahoma	TN
JACKSON BASS CLUB	Ed Weaver	Jackson	TN
KENTUCKY LAKE OUTDOOR TRAIL	Randy Sullivan	Beech Bluff	TN
McNAIRY COUNTY BASS ANGLERS	Gilbert Gough	Savannah	TN
MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB	David Slack	Englewood	TN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BASS CLUB	Walt Herrmann	Clarksville	TN
MOUNTAINEER BASSMASTERS	Jeff Russell	Kingston	TN
PERCY PRIEST SPORT FISHING CLUB	Michelle Griggs	Smyrna	TN
PRO FISH ENDEAVORS	Bill & Sherry Garrett	Ashland City	TN
SALE CREEK BASS CLUB	Ron Bryant	Dayton	TN
SPARTA BASS CLUB	Ricky England	Sparta	TN

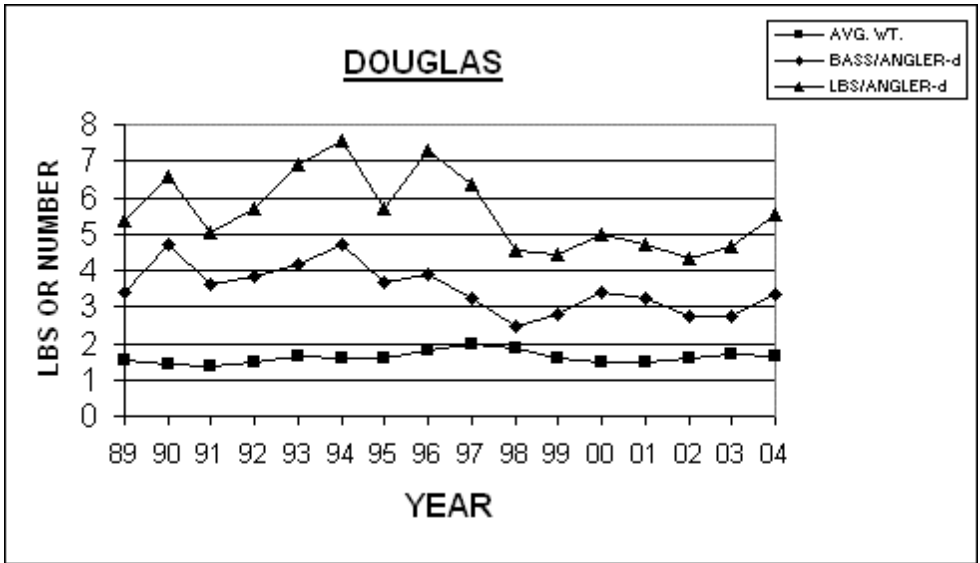
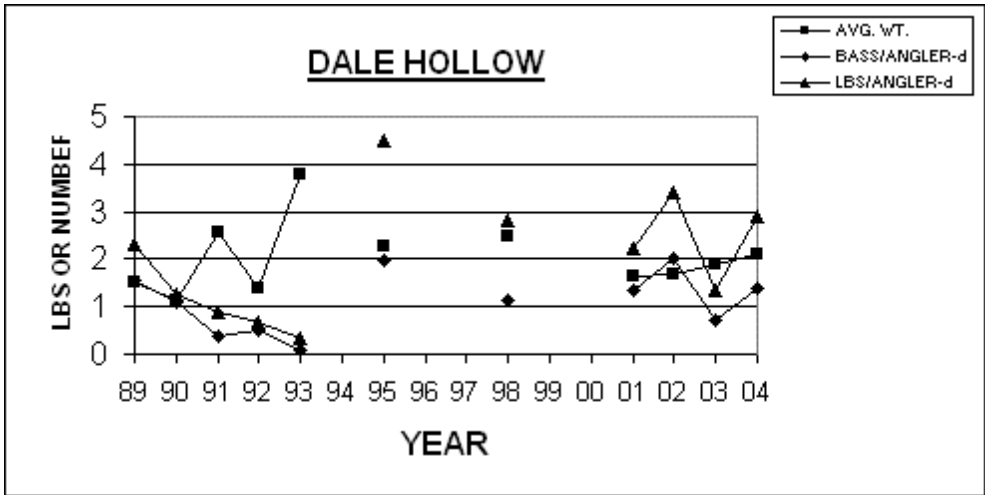
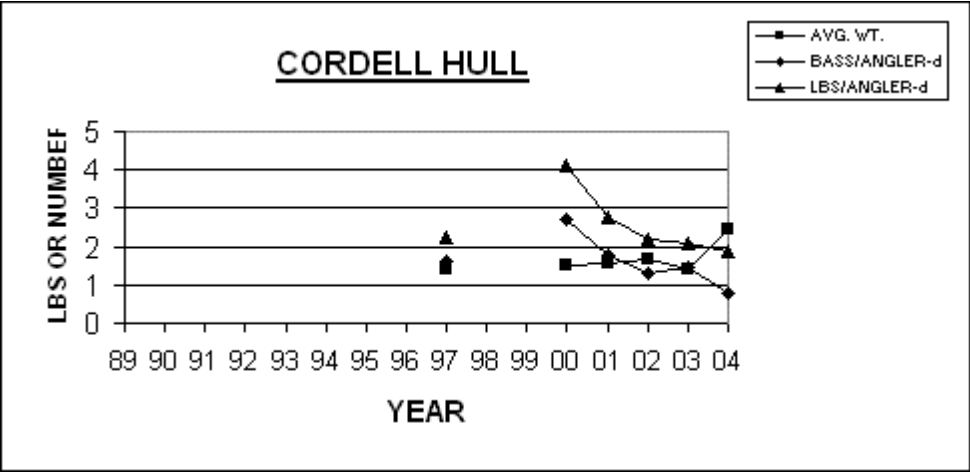
Table 6. (CONT.) Clubs or Organizations contributing to 2004 B.I.T.E.

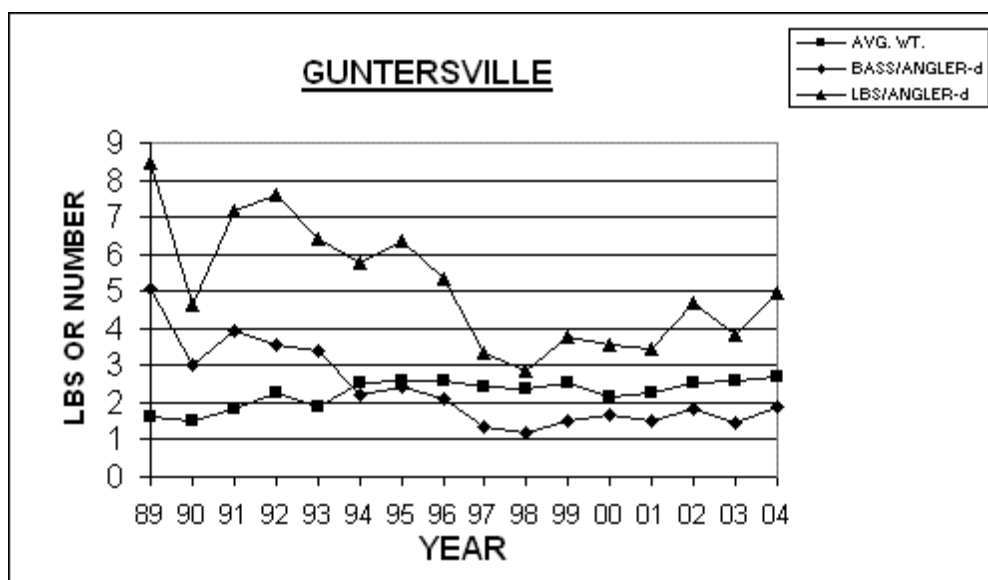
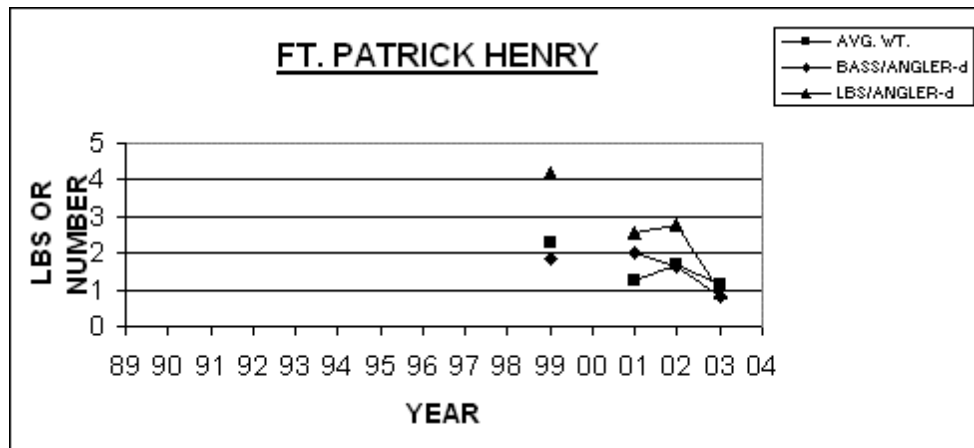
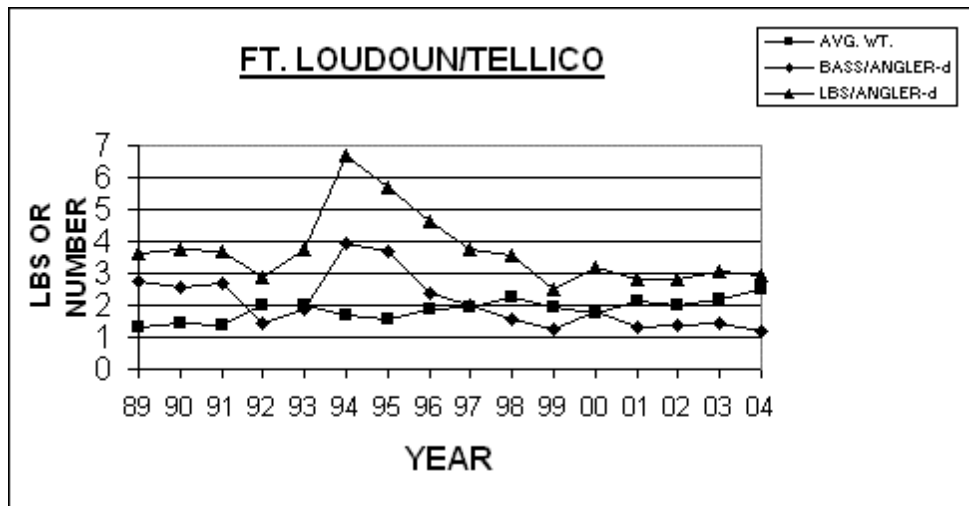
CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	CITY	STATE
STONES RIVER BASS ANGLERS	Mike Taylor	Nashville	TN
TEAM NASHVILLE BASSMASTERS	Brian Anderson	Nashville	TN
TEKSID BASS ANGLERS	Walter Hankins	Vanleer	TN
TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN BASS ANGLERS	Richard Francisco	Kingsport	TN
TIMS FORD BASS CLUB	Bob Krueger	Winchester	TN
VOLUNTEER BASSMASTERS	Bill Hill	Newport	TN
MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS	Larry Pugh	Jackson	MS

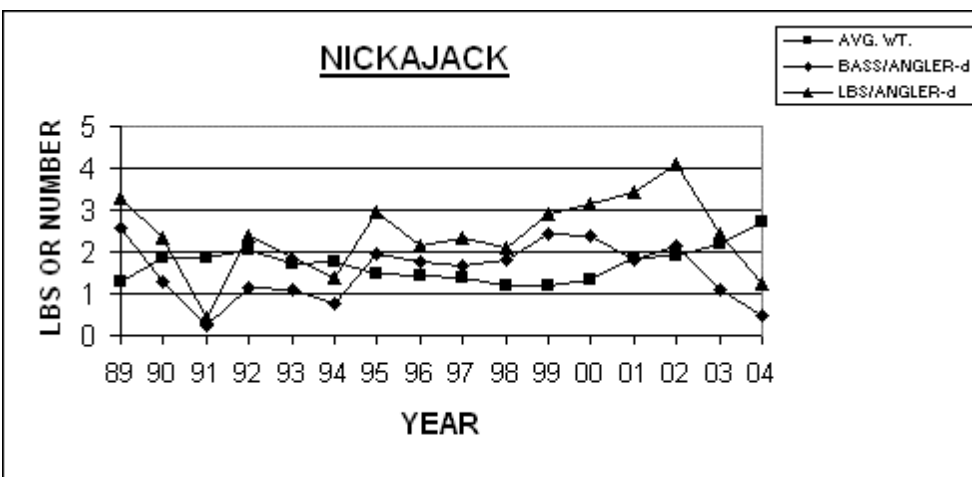
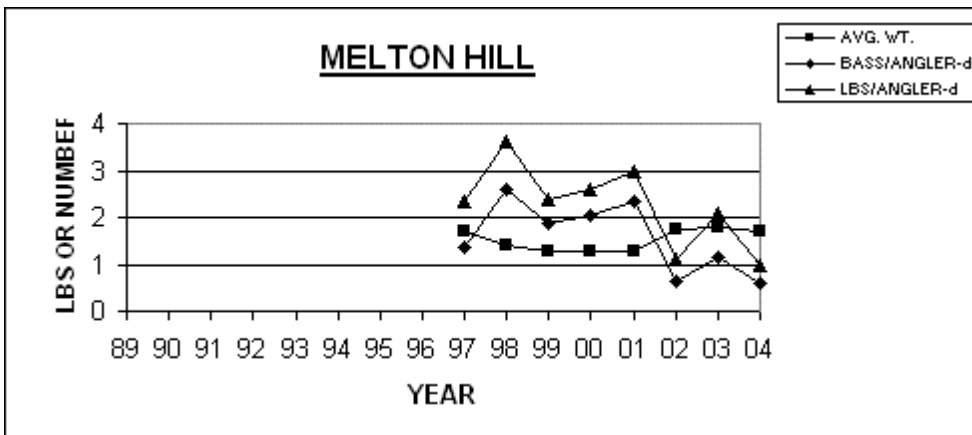
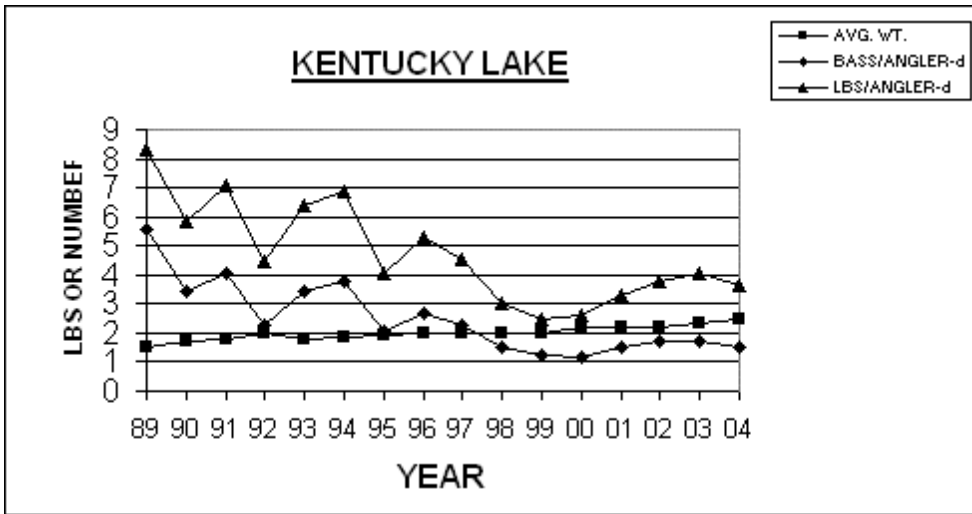
APPENDIX

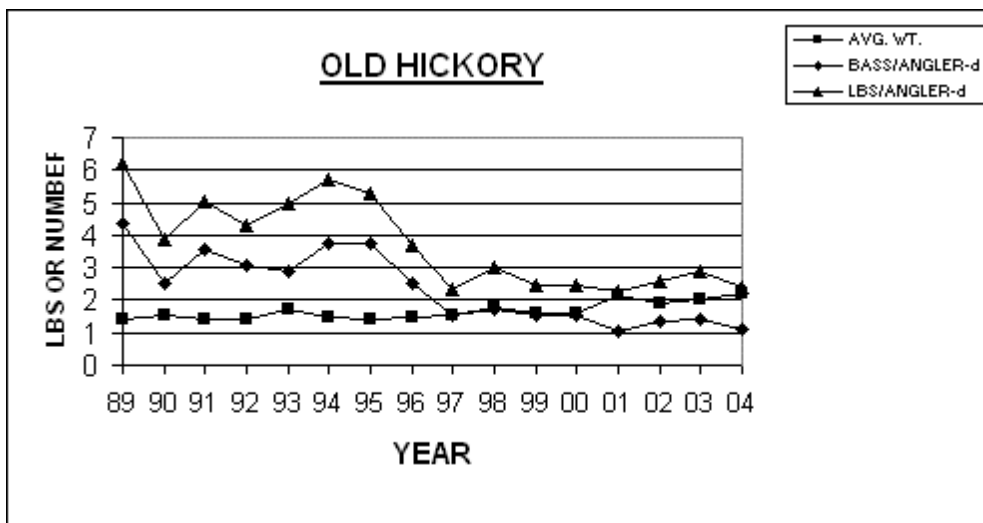
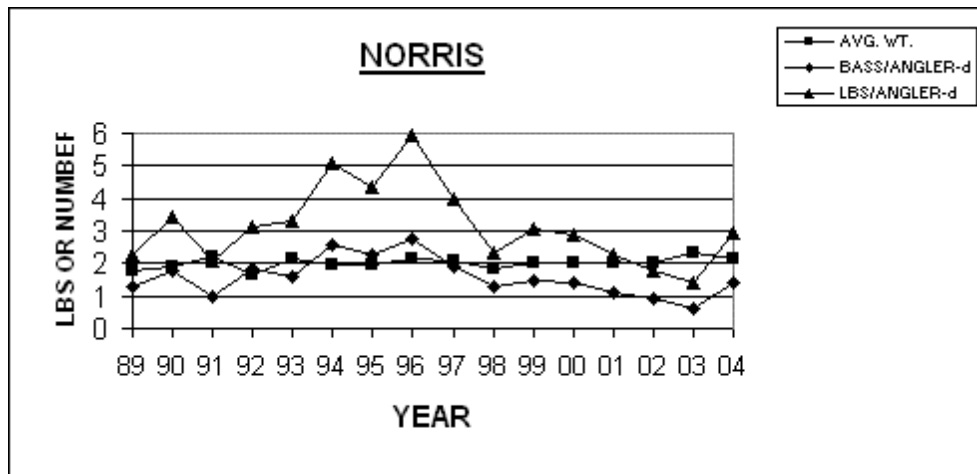
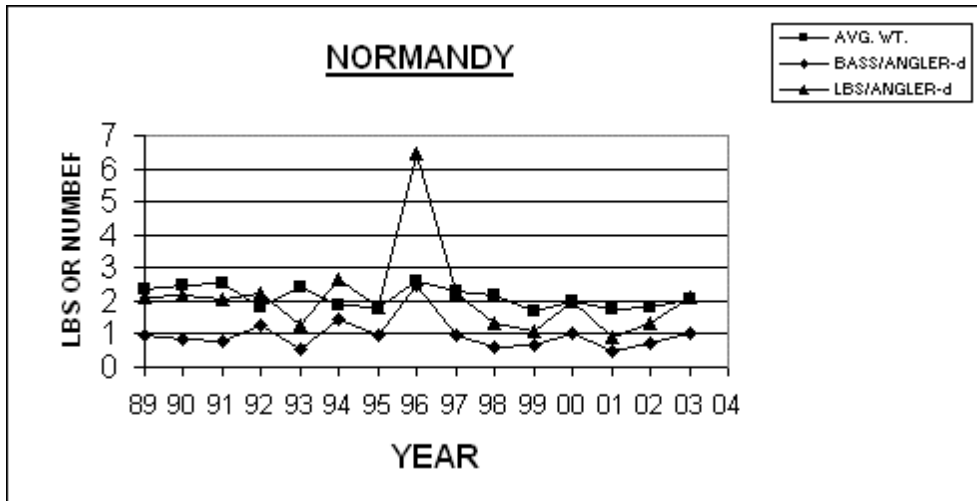


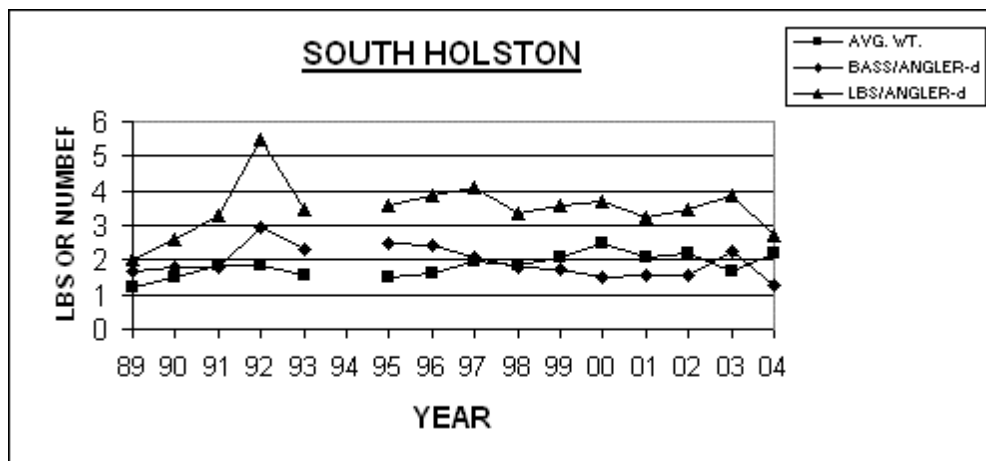
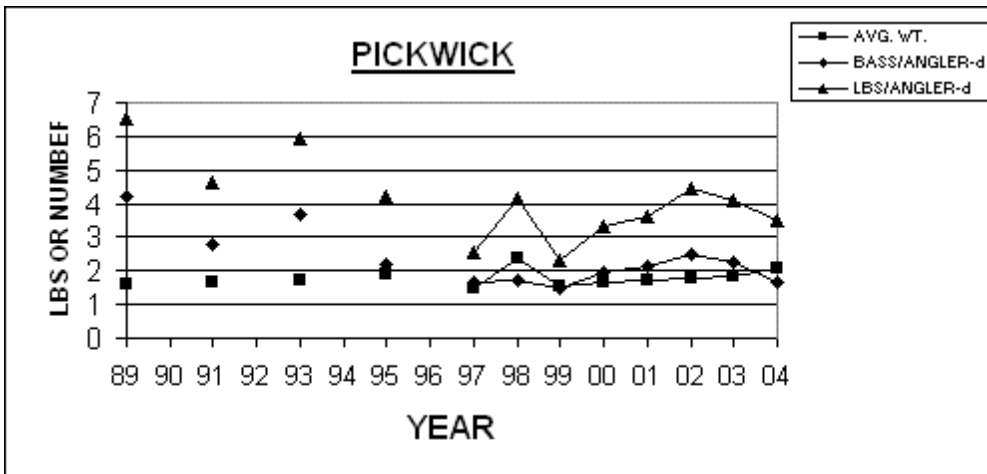
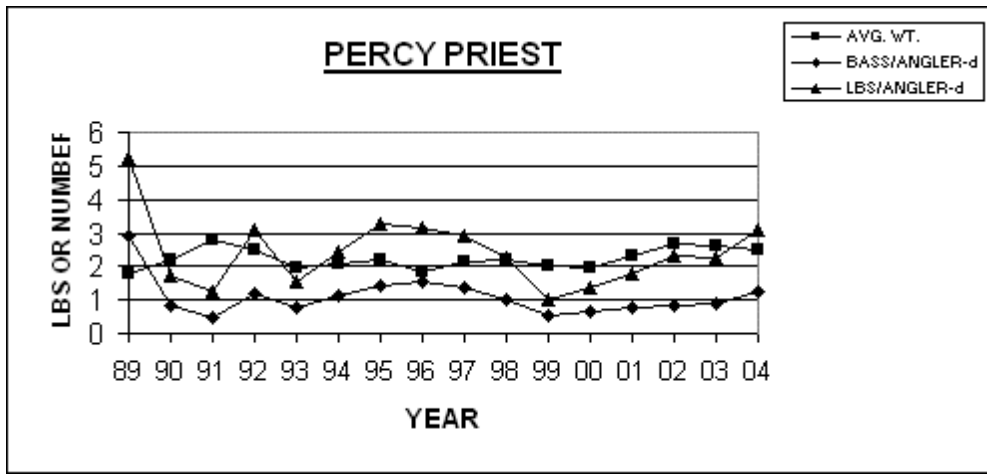


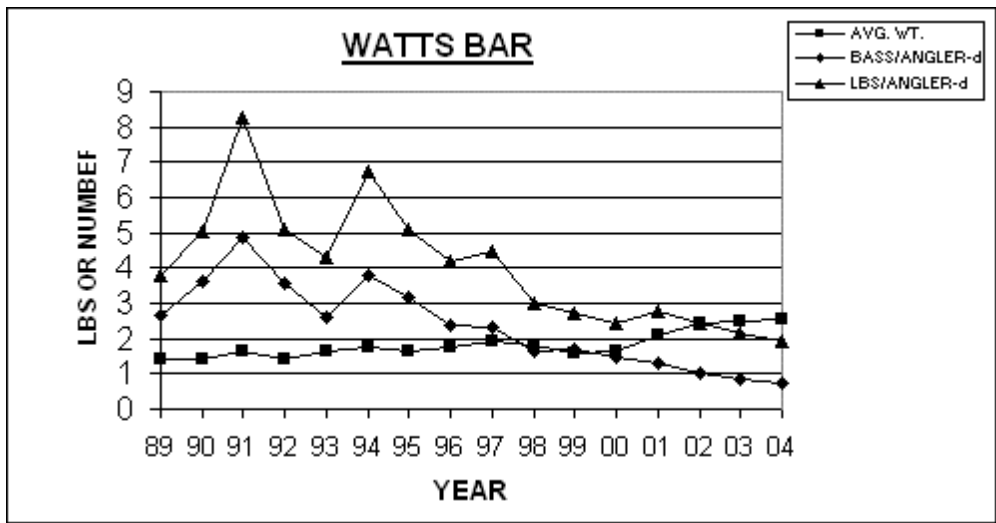
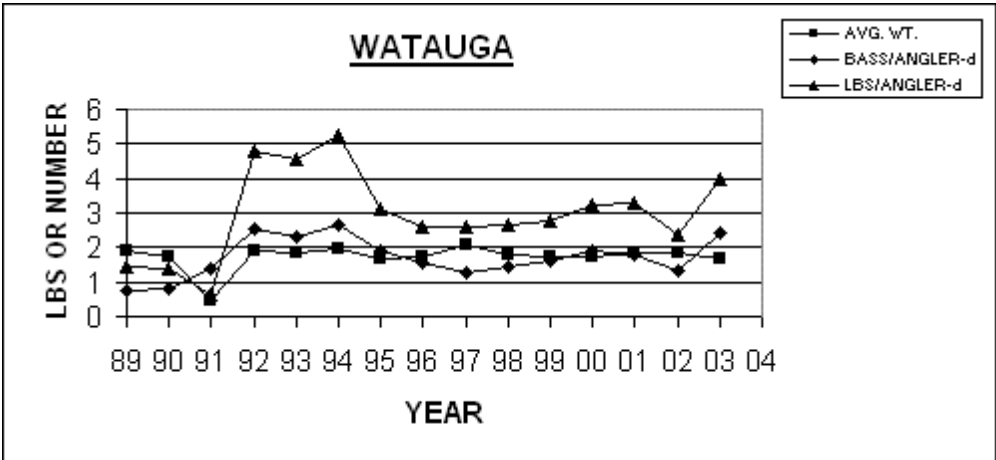
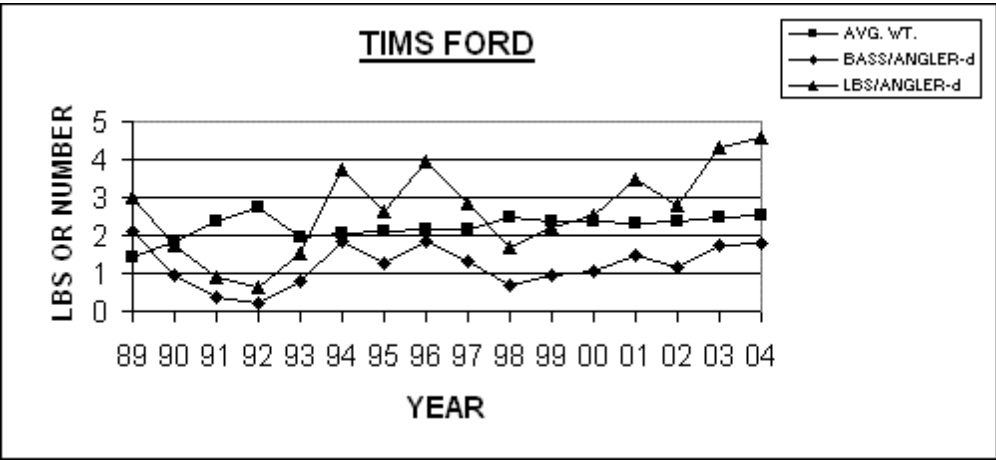


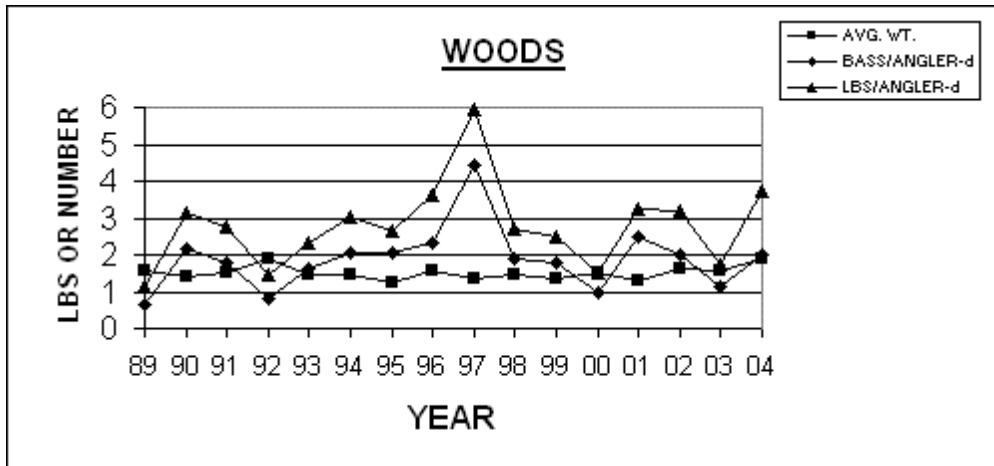












BASS HANDLING/TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

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 leashed 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.