

TWRA BITE

**Bass
Information
From Tournament
Entries**



2009

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

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION
TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Summary of 2009 Bass Tournament Results	2
Table 1. Waterbody summary of reported tournament data	5
Table 2. Top 10 heaviest limits	6
Table 3. Bass seven pounds and larger reported	6
Table 4. Clubs/Organizations contributing tournament data	7
Figure 1. Seasonal distribution of 2009 reported tournaments	8
Figure 2. Fishing success for reported tournaments (1989-2009).....	8
Table 5. Relative rankings for reservoirs with 5 or more reported tournaments...	9
Reducing bass mortality during tournaments.....	10
Preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species.....	12
Literature Cited	13
On-line tournament reporting procedures.....	14
Appendix. Historical record of reservoir tournament statistics	15

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 black bass fishing clubs and organizations. Completing its twenty-first 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 black 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, black bass fishing is one of Tennessee's important recreational resources with approximately 37 percent of fishing effort statewide geared toward black bass. These bass anglers produced an estimated 2.5 million angler hours of effort in pursuit of black bass in 2008 (latest data available).

Economically, fishing generated over \$600 million in total expenditures by anglers in Tennessee during 2006 (U.S. Dept. of Interior 2007). Total trip expenditures by bass anglers on reservoirs in Tennessee were estimated at over \$13 million during 2008 (TWRA Creel Survey 2009). These expenditures included items such as fuel, food, bait, and lodging, but excluded boat and vehicle costs.

Through 2009, 6,331 tournament reports have been summarized. More than 161 clubs or tournament organizations participated through the first twenty-one years of the program. Bass anglers have spent over 1.93 million hours collecting data for this program and contributed data from 363,657 black bass weighing 705,181 pounds.

We especially want to thank the clubs and organizations that voluntarily return report cards or submit tournament data via the on-line system following their events. Approximately 40% of the reports received in 2009 came in via the on-line system. See page 14 for information about submitting tournament data on-line.

SUMMARY OF 2009 BASS TOURNAMENT RESULTS

- A total of 134 tournament reports were received on 16 waterbodies, and includes data from tournaments on Pickwick received from Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MS WFP) (Table 1). Although this is a slight increase from the 120 reports received in 2008, this still represents a forty to fifty percent decline in submitted reports for the past several years. Unless otherwise noted, Pickwick is not included in the following summaries, because of differences in some calculations.
- Most tournament reports were received from Cheatham and Kentucky Lake, followed by Boone and Watts Bar.
- There were 3,608 anglers fishing 30,857 hours that weighed-in 5,570 bass during 2009 (Table 1). Based on a 10-hour angler-day, an average of 1.81 bass per angler was weighed in for each tournament.
- The average tournament had 43 anglers catching 66 bass weighing 170 pounds. This is an increase from an average of 52 bass and 130 pounds per tournament in 2008.
- The overall success rate (anglers or teams weighing in at least one bass) was 74%, up fourteen percent over the last two years.
- Average weight of bass ranged from 1.63 pounds at Melton Hill to 3.49 pounds at Beech Lake (one tourney each). Overall, the average weight was 2.56 pounds, up from last year's 2.46 pounds. Excluding Pickwick, bass per angler-day was highest at Boone, and lowest at South Holston. Pounds per angler-day, an important measure for tournaments, were highest at Kentucky Lake, whereas South Holston was lowest.
- The heaviest 1st Place weight was 29.32 pounds from Kentucky Lake, with nine of the top ten 1st place limits coming from Kentucky Lake (Table 2). The average for all statewide tournaments was 12.05 pounds. For Pickwick, the heaviest limit weighed-in was 31.77 pounds.
- A total of 245 bass, weighing five pounds or more, were reported caught during 2009 (up from 230 in 2008), with an overall catch rate of one 5-pound bass or larger for

every 126 hours (or approximately 12.5 angler-days) of fishing, a decrease from last year's average of 177 hours. Kentucky Lake led all reservoirs in the catch of bass five pounds and larger with 194 fish, followed by Cheatham with 18.

- The largest bass reported was a 10.11 pound largemouth taken from Kentucky Lake in June reported by Tennessee River Trail. Including Pickwick, a total of 14 bass seven pounds and larger were reported in 2009 (Table 3) with Kentucky Lake the only other waterbody reporting any bass larger than seven pounds.
- Eleven clubs or organizations submitted tournament reports during 2009 (Table 4). Eight clubs or organizations (73%) submitted five or more, and five submitted 10 or more reports. The average number of reports received from in-state clubs or organizations was approximately eight. It's important to remember that 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. Club representatives should remember that each tournament report is important to the program.
- Limits of bass were weighed-in by approximately 37% of anglers, up from twenty-five percent reported last year.
- The seasonal distribution of tournament fishing effort, including night tournaments, is presented in Figure 1. Most tournaments were held during March through May. Night tournaments accounted for approximately 9% of tournaments and occurred May through August.
- Tournament fishing success for bass and pounds per angler-day increased to the highest since 1997 and 1996, respectively (Figure 2). Average weight increased to the highest since the program began. The hours (effort) required to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger during the year was 126, which is nearly a thirty percent decrease from 2008, and the lowest since the program began.
- Waterbodies with at least 5 or more tournaments reported were ranked by averaging five "fishing quality indicators" (Table 5). Percent successful anglers (those with one or more fish) ranged from approximately 70% at Watts Bar to 81% at Kentucky Lake. Average weight of bass caught ranged from 1.93 pounds at Cheatham to 3.28 at Kentucky Lake. The average weight for these reservoirs was 2.37 pounds. Catch

rates expressed as bass per angler-day ranged from 1.64 at Ft. Loudoun/Tellico reservoir to 2.17 at Boone. Catch rate as pounds per angler-day ranged from 3.31 at Ft. Loudoun/Tellico to 6.60 at Kentucky Lake. The average was 4.50 pounds per angler-day. Anglers at Kentucky Lake expended the least amount of time required to catch a bass 5-pounds or larger at 59 hours (or nearly 6 angler-days).

- Overall, using the relative ranking system, the top 2 ranked waterbodies in 2009 were Kentucky Lake and Boone, with Watts Bar, Chickamauga and Cheatham rounding out the top 5. Kentucky Lake scored 1st place rank in four out the five “quality indicators”, while Boone received high marks bass and pounds per angler-day. Watts Bar scored high marks for average weight of bass and for the least amount of effort to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger. Kentucky Lake kept the top overall rank for the third year in a row, with Boone (first showing since 2002) replacing Chickamauga for the number 2 spot. Watts Bar moved up from 4th to 3rd place, while Cheatham moved down from 3rd to 5th place. Remember, the intent of this ranking system was not to rank the "best" or "worst" reservoirs, but to characterize the bass fishery, and provide club members with a reference guide for possible use in tournament site selection. 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.
- The graphs in the Appendix provide anglers with a historical record of reservoir tournament 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 for which four years or less of consecutive 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 4). 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 can be successful in yielding important information about Tennessee's reservoir black bass resources. This report will be made available on TWRA's Internet site at <http://www.state.tn.us/twra/fish/bite/bite.html>

Table 1. Waterbody summary of reported tournament data to the 2009 B.I.T.E. program.

Waterbody	Reports Received	Number of Anglers	Bass Weighed-in	Bass Weight > 5LB	Bass > 5LB	Total Hours	Percent Success	Bass Per A-Day*	Pounds Per A-Day*	Average Weight	Avg. 1st Place	Avg. Big Bass Wt.	Hours Per Bass>5lbs.
Barkley	2	54	69	171.31	6	459	70	1.50	3.73	2.48	15.50	5.13	77
Beech Lake	1	14	21	73.26	5	126	50	1.67	5.81	3.49	19.05	6.70	25
Boone	7	79	89	190.08	1	410	73	2.17	4.64	2.14	9.83	3.58	410
Cheatham	30	919	1580	3051.05	18	7873	79	2.01	3.88	1.93	13.48	5.07	437
Cherokee	4	424	523	1155.70	2	3751	67	1.39	3.08	2.21	15.57	4.67	1876
Chickamauga	5	70	92	206.00	1	511	79	1.80	4.03	2.24	12.96	4.34	511
Douglas	3	130	199	378.67	4	1084	68	1.84	3.49	1.90	12.63	5.43	271
Ft. Loudoun	1	132	124	234.78	2	924	64	1.34	2.54	1.89	18.52	5.50	462
Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	5	197	259	521.32	4	1576	72	1.64	3.31	2.01	14.17	3.69	394
Kentucky Lake	12	1265	2314	7585.01	194	11496	81	2.01	6.60	3.28	23.50	7.92	59
Melton Hill	1	10	10	16.29	1	70	60	1.43	2.33	1.63	7.14	2.00	70
Norris	1	141	114	228.83	-	1234	51	0.92	1.85	2.01	13.63	4.34	-
Pickwick ¹	50	2261	6588	15315.32	72	19219	52	3.43	7.97	2.32	19.38	5.65	267
South Holston	4	63	33	84.42	1	513	37	0.64	1.65	2.56	8.85	3.89	513
Watts Bar	7	101	133	344.57	6	760	70	1.75	4.53	2.59	13.29	4.92	127
Wilson Lake	1	9	10	18.42	-	72	56	1.39	2.56	1.84	6.82	3.71	-
Totals	134	3608	5570	14259.71	245	30857							
Avg. for all tournaments		43	66	170	2.92		74.42	1.81	4.62	2.56	12.05	4.17	126

*Angler-day based on a 10 hour fishing day

1 – Pickwick tournament data are not included in the totals (except reports received) or averages, because of calculation differences

Table 2. Top 10 heaviest limits weighed-in from the 2009 B.I.T.E. Program.

Waterbody	Date	Tournament	1st Place Weight
Kentucky Lake	09/26/09	Tennessee River Trail	29.32
Kentucky Lake	07/11/09	Tennessee River Trail	27.77
Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	08/15/09	Caney Creek Bass Club	26.22
Kentucky Lake	06/20/09	Tennessee River Trail	26.13
Kentucky Lake	03/21/09	Tennessee River Trail	25.55
Kentucky Lake	02/14/09	Tennessee River Trail	25.19
Kentucky Lake	08/29/09	Tennessee River Trail	24.90
Kentucky Lake	05/23/09	Tennessee River Trail	24.51
Kentucky Lake	10/24/09	Tennessee River Trail	23.36
Kentucky Lake	10/25/09	Tennessee River Trail	22.69

Table 3. Bass 7 pounds and larger reported* from 2009 tournaments.

Weight (lbs)	Date	Waterbody	Club/Organization
10.11	6/20/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
9.71	5/23/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
9.52	11/16/09	Pickwick	MS WFP
9.17	8/29/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
8.77	9/26/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
8.39	2/14/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
8.30	11/9/09	Pickwick	MS WFP
7.84	4/25/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
7.81	7/11/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
7.73	10/24/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
7.56	11/2/09	Pickwick	MS WFP
7.38	1/9/09	Pickwick	MS WFP
7.29	3/21/09	Kentucky Lake	Tennessee River Trail
7.00	2/28/09	Pickwick	MS WFP

*Reported as big bass for each tournament

Table 4. Clubs/Organizations contributing to the 2009 B.I.T.E. report.

Club/Organization	Club Representative	Number of Tournaments
Bass Anglers Invitational Trail	Bud DeFoe	7
Boone Lake Thursday Night: USA Bassin	Keith Lunsford	6
Caney Creek Bass Club	Kent Bowman	13
Central Tennessee Bass Club	Miles Tudor	2
Cheatham County Bass Club	Mike Stubbs	19
Cumberland Bass Anglers	Michael Crowell	13
Mayfield Dairy Bass Club	Chris Kelly	4
MS WFP	Larry Pugh	50
Tennessee Christian Bass Anglers	Allen Jackson	6
Tennessee River Trail	Tommy Henley	12
VA06 South Holston: USA Bassin	Keith Lunsford	2

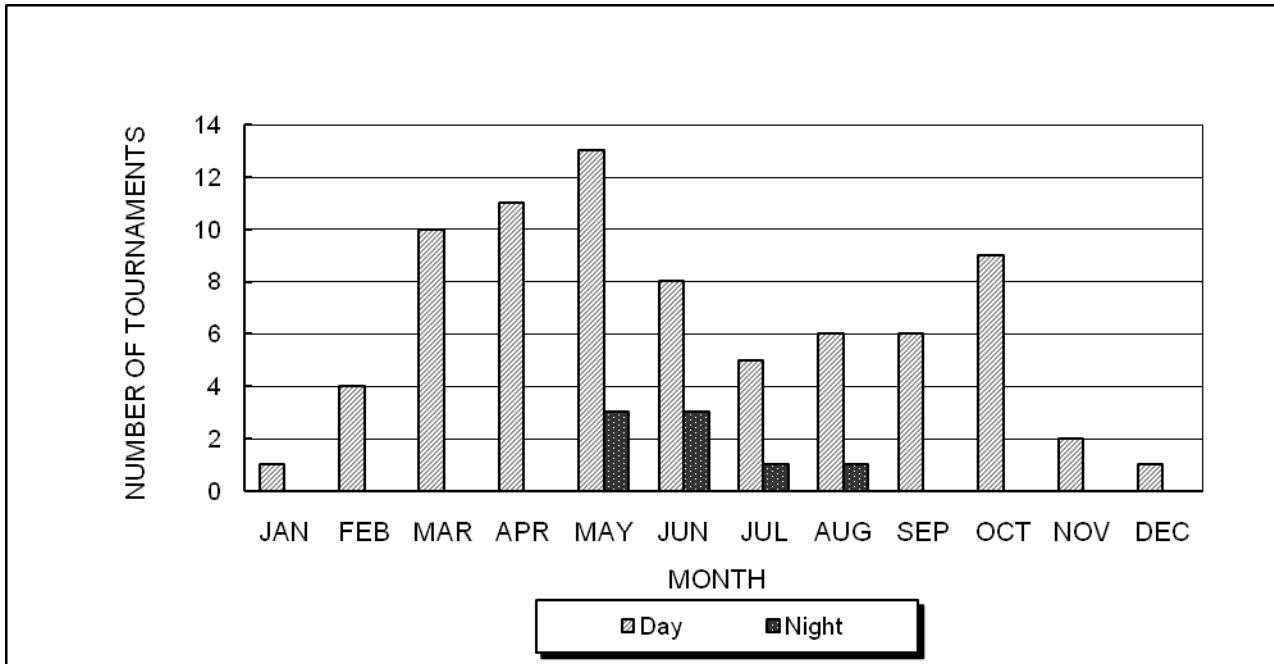


Figure 1. Seasonal Distribution of 2009 Reported Tournaments.

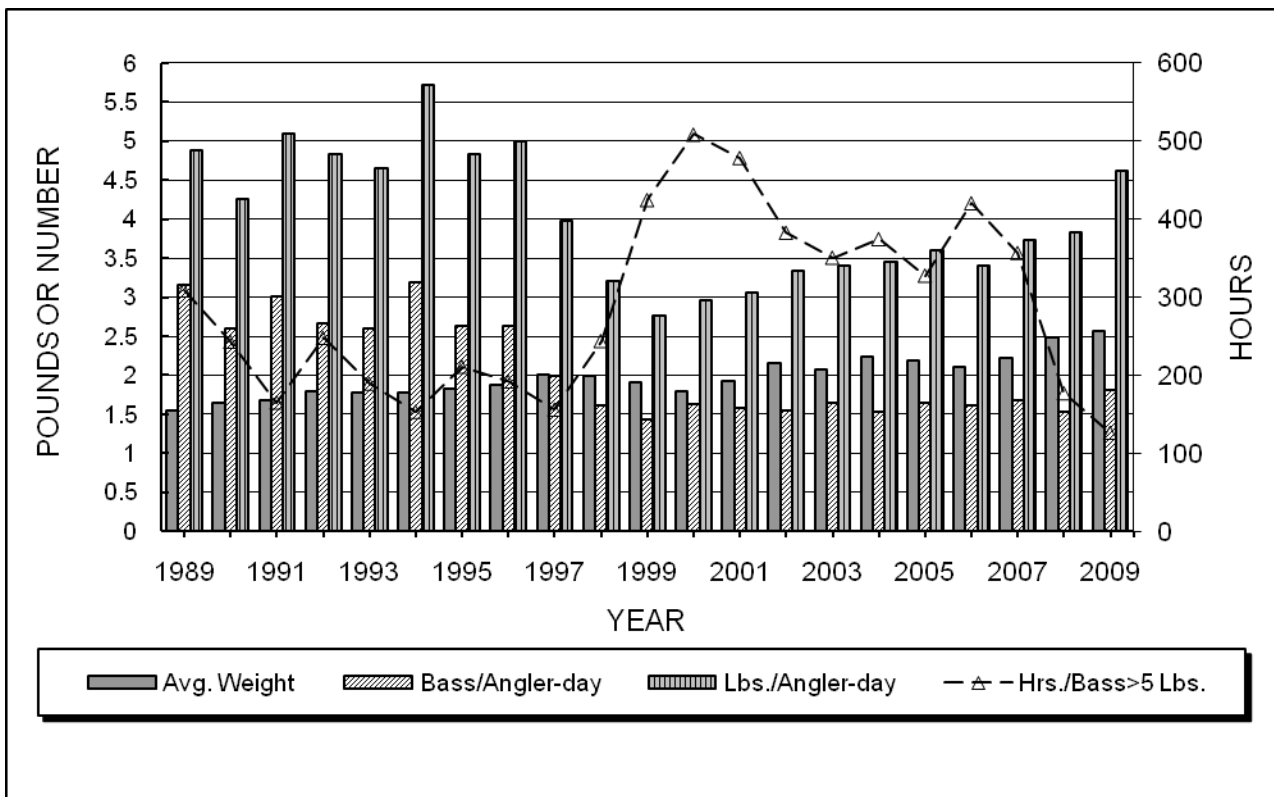


Figure 2. Fishing Success for Reported Tournaments (1989 - 2009).

Table 5. Relative ranking for reservoirs with 5 or more reported tournaments in the 2009 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	KENTUCKY LAKE 81.03	KENTUCKY LAKE 3.28	BOONE 2.17	KENTUCKY LAKE 6.60	KENTUCKY LAKE 59	#1 KENTUCKY LAKE
2	CHEATHAM 79.00	WATTS BAR 2.59	KENTUCKY LAKE 2.01	BOONE 4.64	WATTS BAR 127	#2 BOONE
3	CHICKAMAUGA 78.57	CHICKAMAUGA 2.24	CHEATHAM 2.01	WATTS BAR 4.53	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO 394	#3 WATTS BAR
4	BOONE 73.42	BOONE 2.14	CHICKAMAUGA 1.80	CHICKAMAUGA 4.03	BOONE 410	#4 CHICKAMAUGA
5	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO 71.57	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO 2.01	WATTS BAR 1.75	CHEATHAM 3.88	CHEATHAM 437	#5 CHEATHAM
6	WATTS BAR 70.30	CHEATHAM 1.93	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO 1.64	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO 3.31	CHICKAMAUGA 511	#6 FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO

Reducing Bass Mortality during Tournaments

In an effort to reduce bass mortality during tournaments, delayed mortality after release, and to reduce the risk of a Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) outbreak, information and recommendations on handling and holding bass are provided below. 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, visit www.tnwildlife.org, or call 615-781-6575. Bass Angler Sportsmen Society (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 1-877-227-7872, visit www.bassmaster.com/conservation, or email: conservation@bassmaster.com. An updated version of this guide, which hits the highlights, can also be found on the TWRA website mentioned above.

The following suggestions reflect research by southeastern fisheries management agencies and universities into the practice of handling 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, avoiding stagnant backwaters, sloughs, or boat launching sites. (Open water areas with good water quality). Turn on aerator systems to begin building oxygen levels in the live well. Levels above 5 ppm are recommended. 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 one. (Live well capacities vary, but allow at least one gallon of water per one pound of fish). If your livewell is not vented to the outside, lift the livewell lid regularly to allow fresh air to circulate into the livewell.
2. Try not to play the fish to total exhaustion and land them by hand if possible, or use knotless nylon or rubber nets. Avoid swinging or flipping fish into the boat or onto the floor. 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, hemostats, or a hook removal tool. Every effort should be made to remove hooks as quickly and with as little tissue damage as possible. 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. Consideration should be given to using circle hooks with appropriate baits. 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 help maintain electrolyte balance and reduce the effects of shock and stress. Commercially available live well additives that are FDA approved 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 and livewell 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 livewell water 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 (or 2 half-gallon jugs) 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. There are companies that are attempting to develop a livewell chiller, and if successful, may help with water temperature issues.
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. Installing an oxygen delivery system, which delivers oxygen directly into live wells from a pressurized tank through air-stones or hose can improve oxygen uptake by bass. The system must have a regulator or pressure valve, the tank must be securely mounted, and hoses and fittings should be maintained in good condition. 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 (see #5) is still essential. Livewell additives that contain salt are not recommended when using oxygen delivery systems.

7. To reduce the chance of a Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) outbreak, it's suggested 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 also 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.

Preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species

Anglers and boaters can also play an important role in preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS), such as Asian carp, zebra mussels, blueback herring, Eurasian water milfoil, and hydrilla. These are some of the 55 ANS that have been identified in Tennessee that can be transferred in bilge or livewell water, in bait buckets, on the boat/motor, and on trailer bunks or frames. Please do your part to prevent the spread of these invaders by inspecting, cleaning and draining your boat before you leave the lake, don't dump minnows or bait into the lake, and never transplant fish from one body of water to another. For further information about preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species, visit www.ProtectYourWaters.net.

Literature Cited

Black, W.P. 2009. Tennessee Reservoir Creel Survey 2008 Results. Fisheries Report No. 09-08. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Nashville.

Tennessee Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. 2007. Tennessee Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Nashville.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: Tennessee. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington D.C.

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING BLACK BASS TOURNAMENT RESULTS TO TWRA VIA THE ON-LINE REPORTING SYSTEM

Log on to: http://www.state.tn.us/twra/fish/bite/Online_Reporting_Proc.html

Please complete all requested information as best as possible for any black bass tournaments your club or tournament organization has held. (Note that you can use the “tab” button to move to the next entry). Be sure to include contact information, including an E-mail address so we can contact you if we have any questions regarding the data, and to send you the end-of-the-year report when it’s completed. For those that still prefer to use the post-paid data report cards, they will continue to be sent to you.

If possible, enter your results weekly or monthly while the information is fresh on your mind. If this timing is not possible, you can submit your reports whenever or at the end of your fishing season, preferably by December 1st.

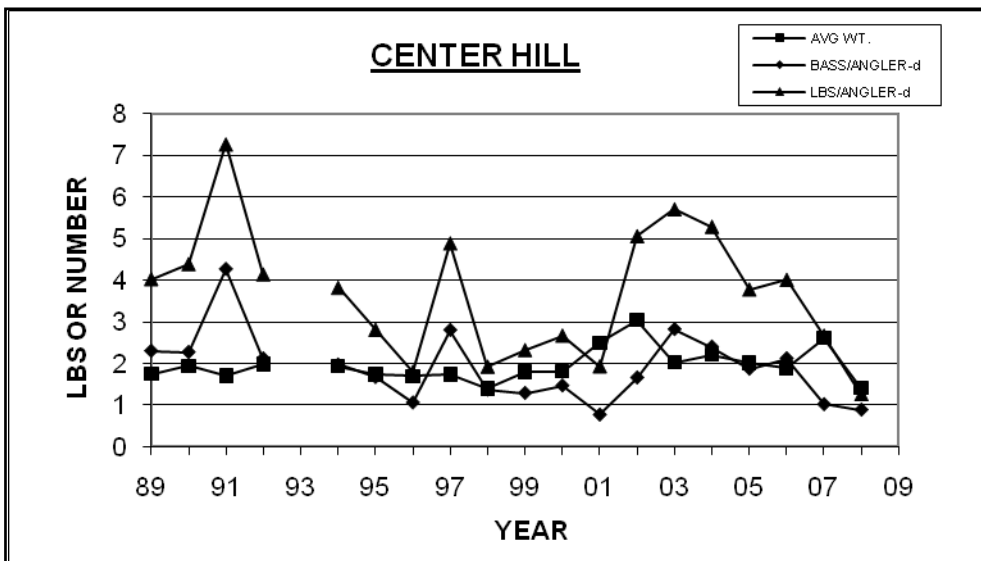
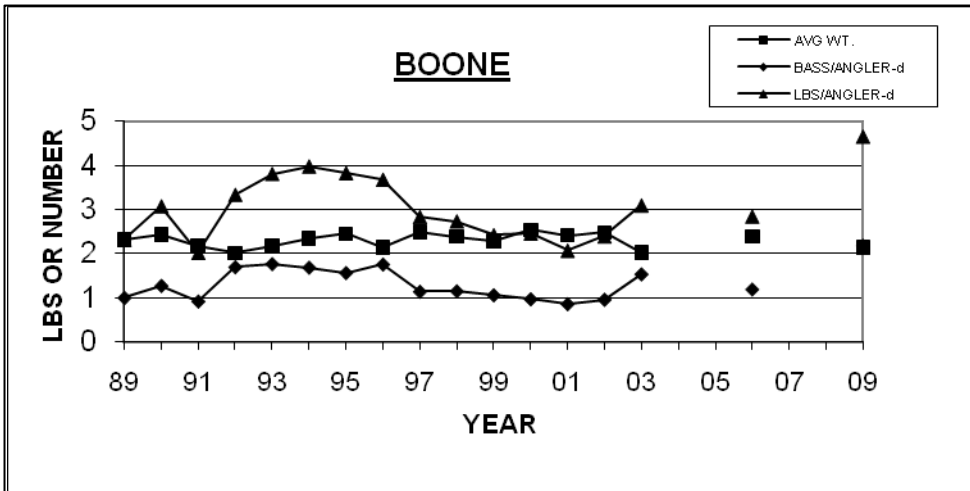
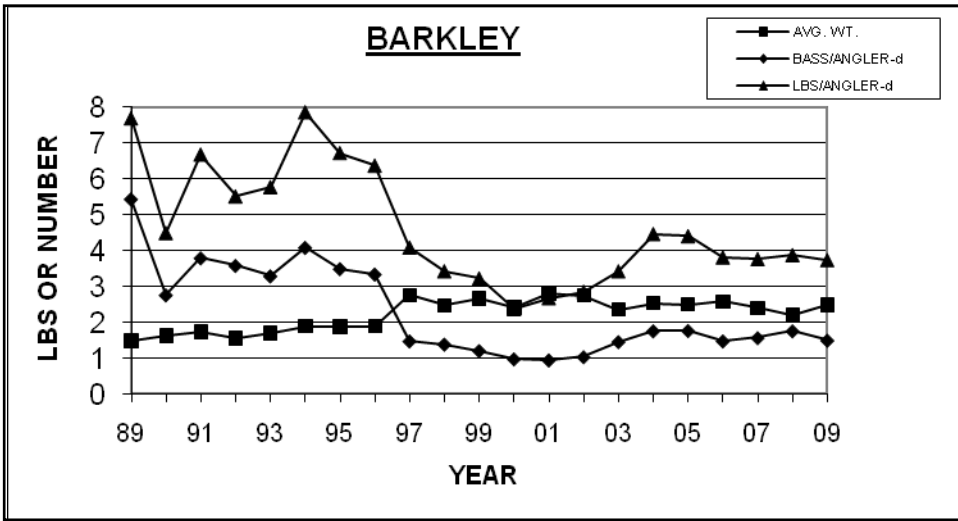
If you have several reports to submit:

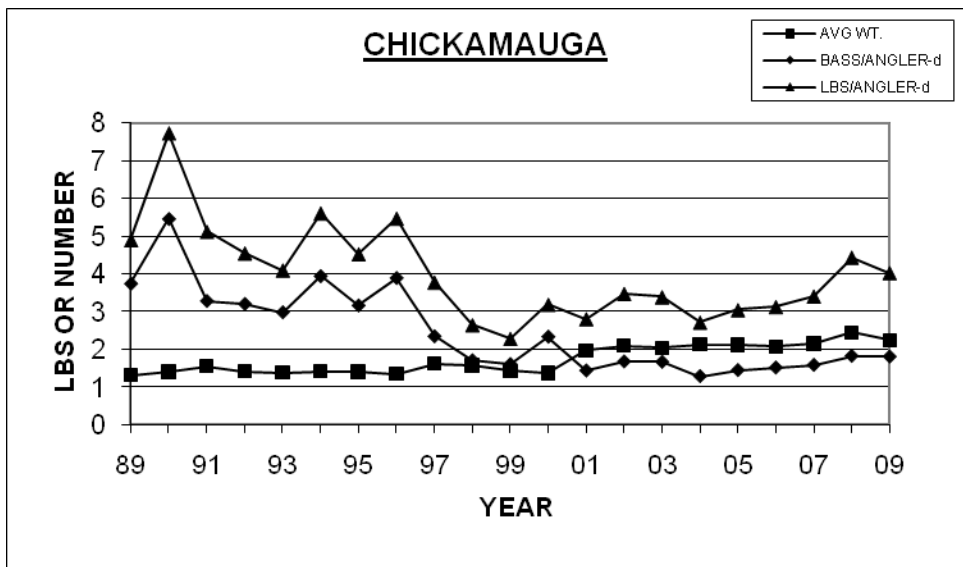
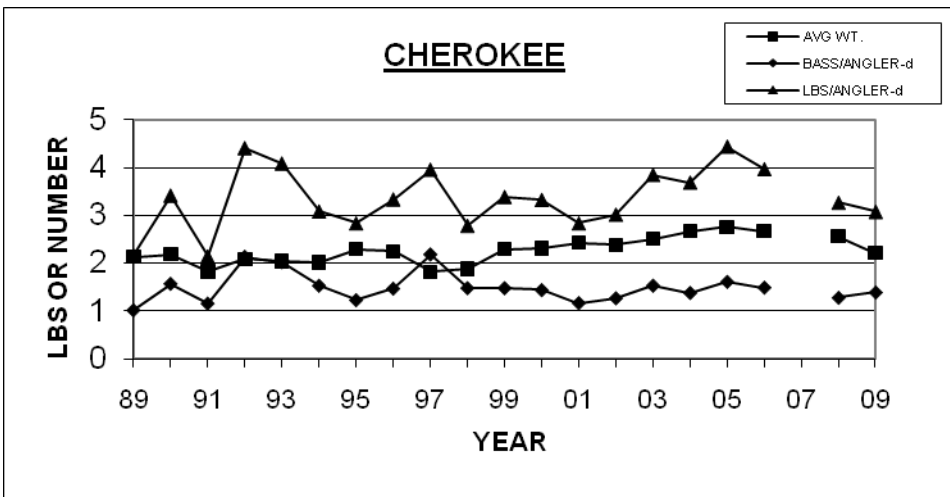
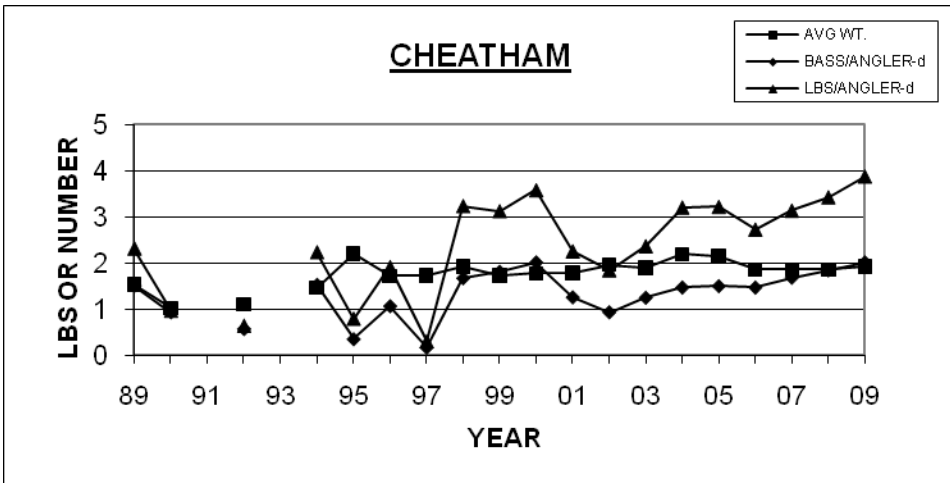
- Fill in the data for your first report and click the “**Submit**” button at the bottom of the page. After you click “Submit” you will see “Thank You”, click “Continue” to finish. Note: Click “Continue” only if you have no more tournament data to submit, otherwise see the next step.
- Click the “**Back**” button of your browser and it will take you back to the data you just entered and submitted.
- Change the information in the appropriate fields such as “Reservoir/Lake” name, “Date” and the catch statistics, leaving other information such as your club/organization name and address the same. (Note that you can either double-click or highlight the data to be changed, and the new data you type will overwrite it).
- Click the “**Submit**” button again to send the new data. Repeat as often as necessary to get all your tournament results submitted.

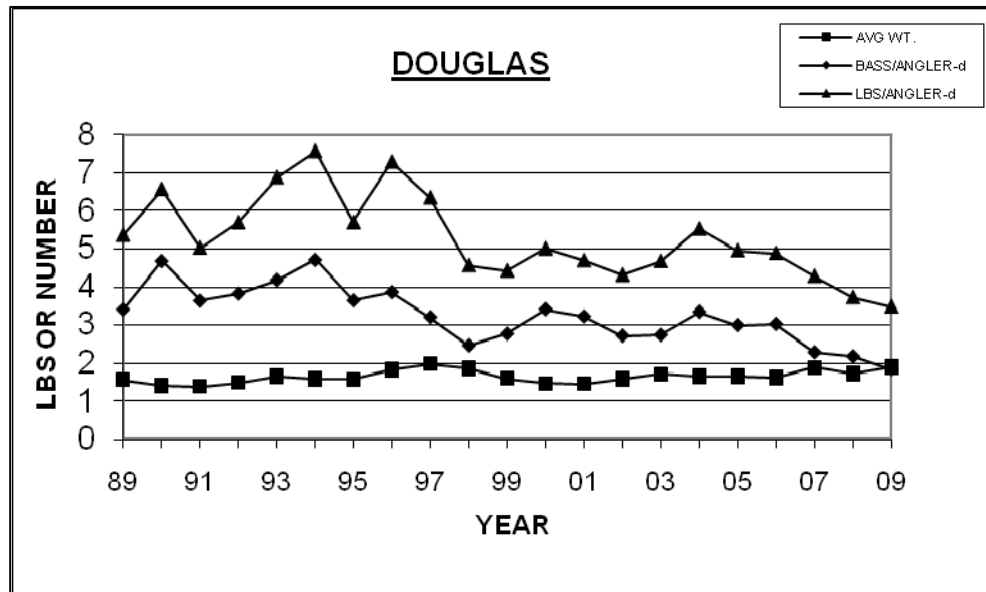
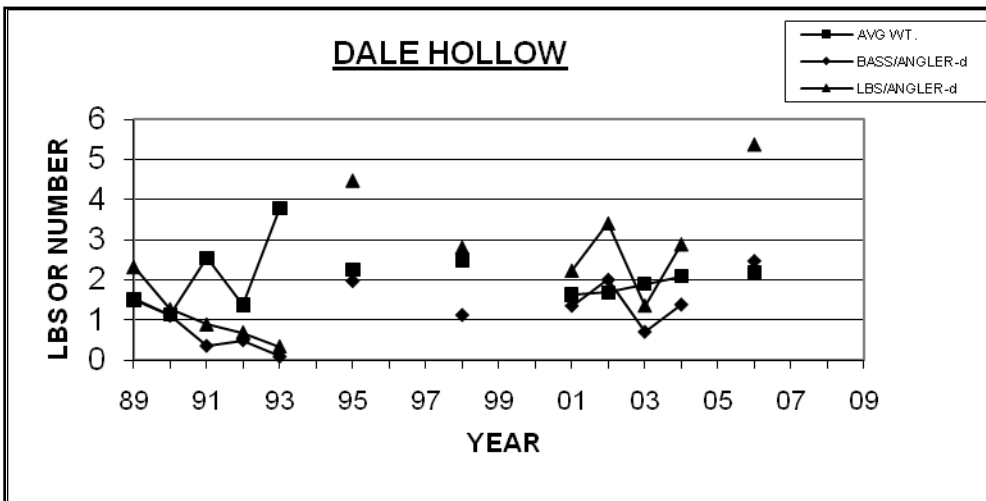
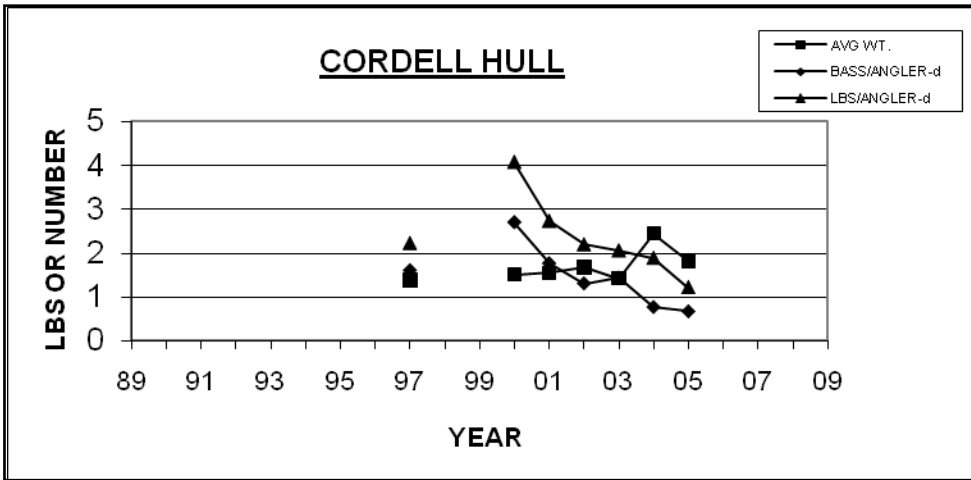
If you are a tournament angler, urge your Tournament Director to submit your clubs tournament results.

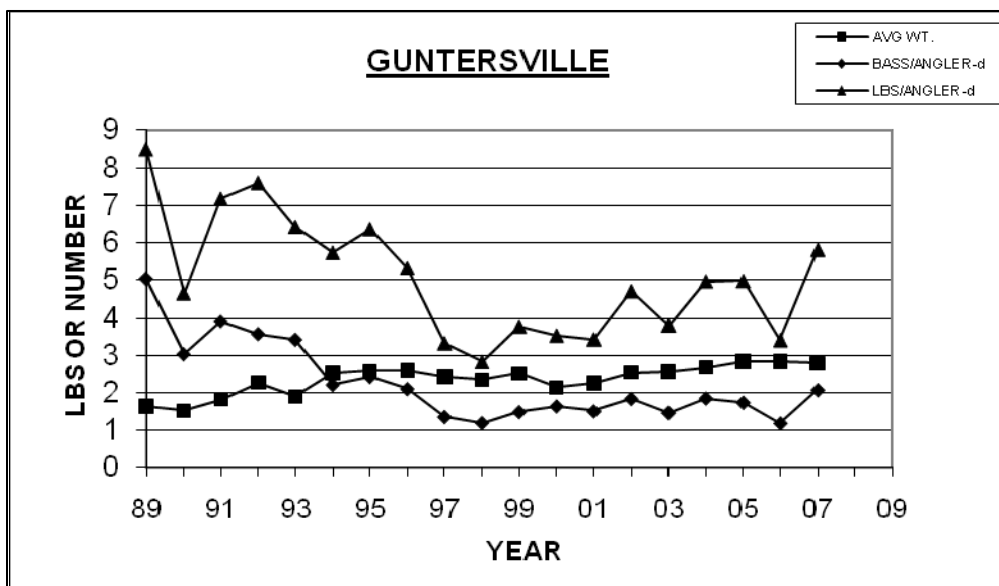
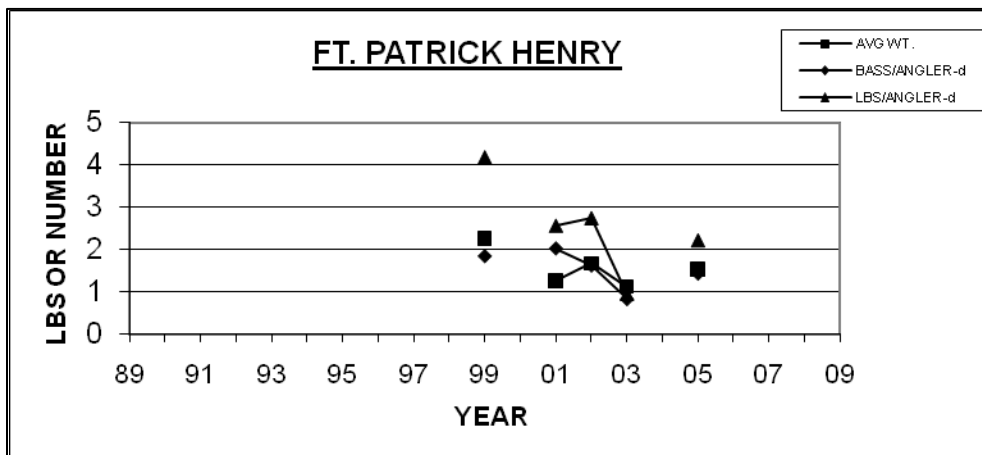
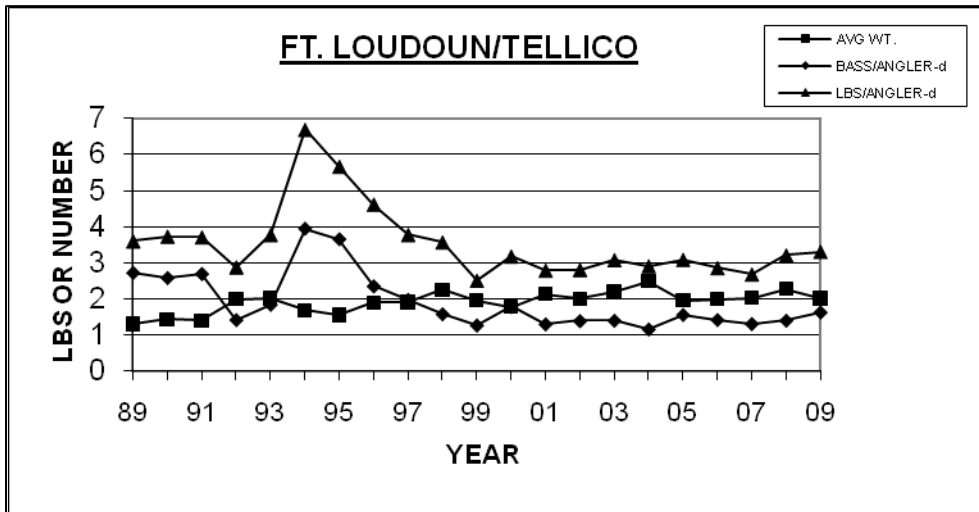
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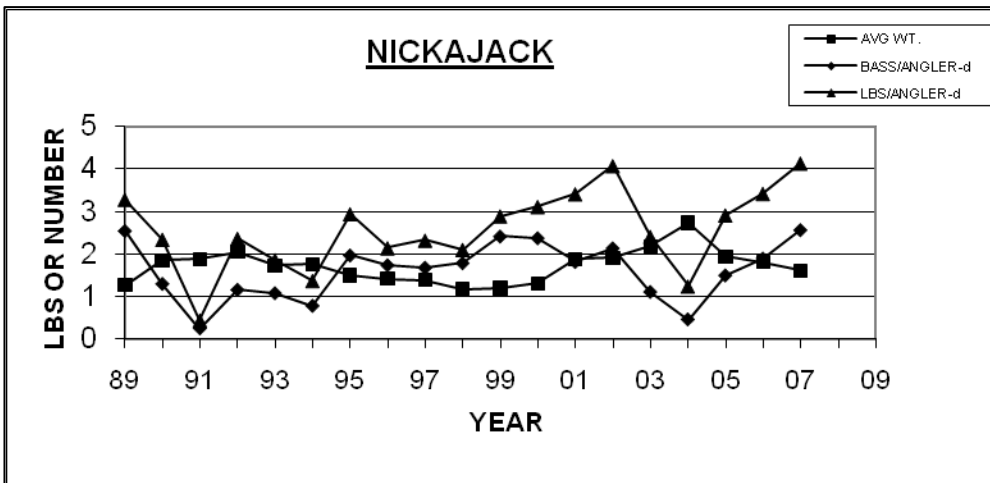
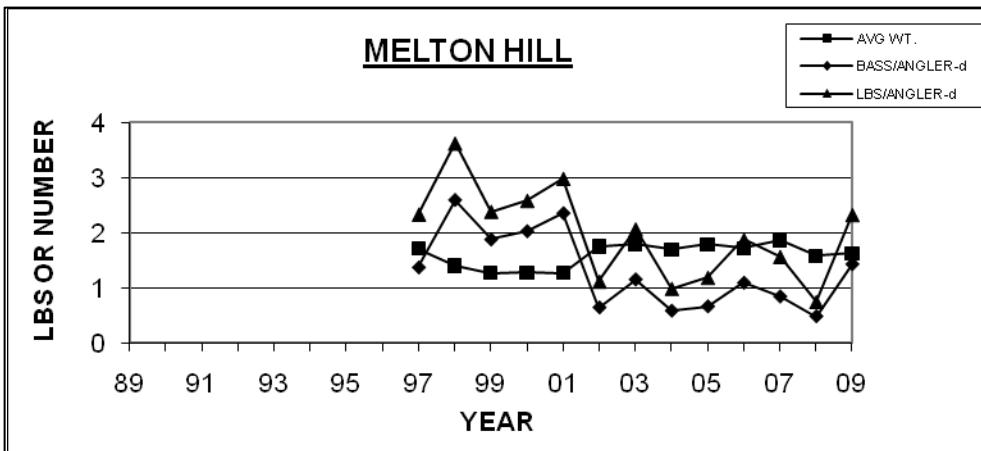
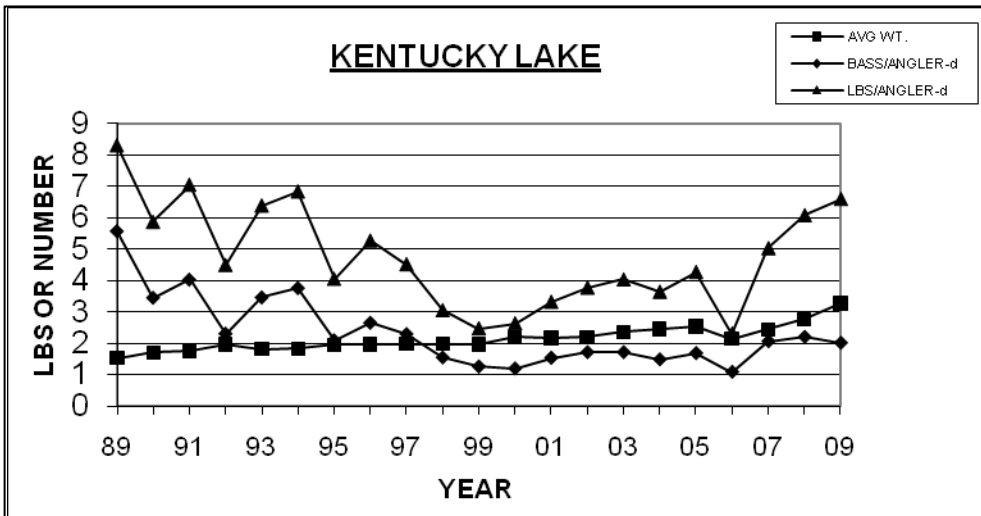
APPENDIX

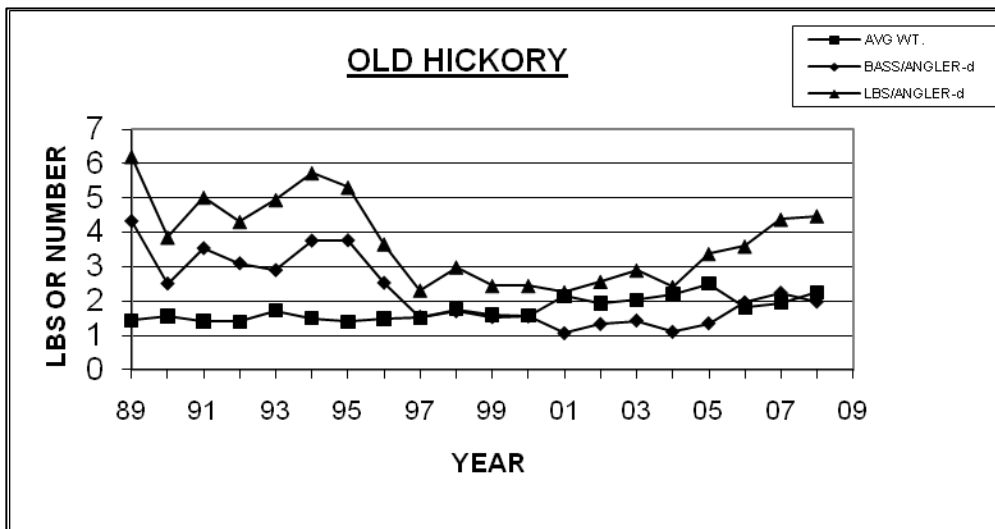
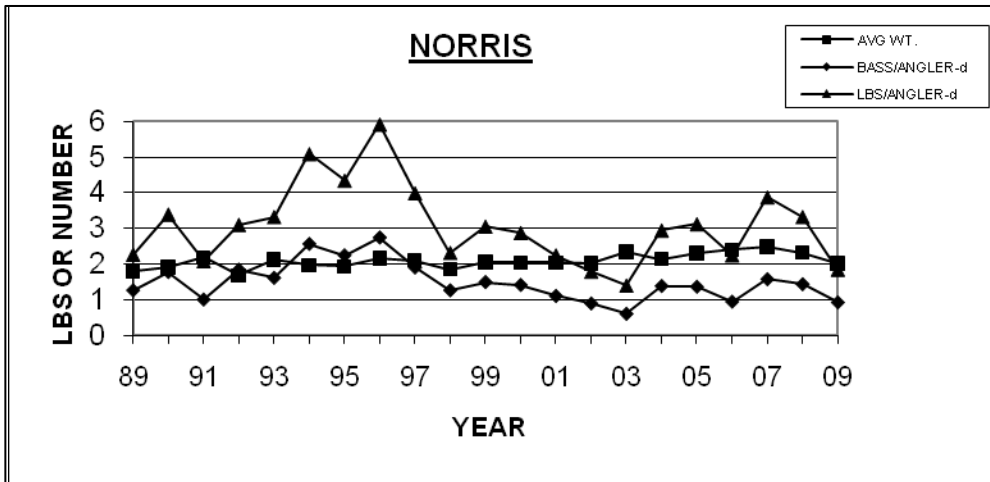
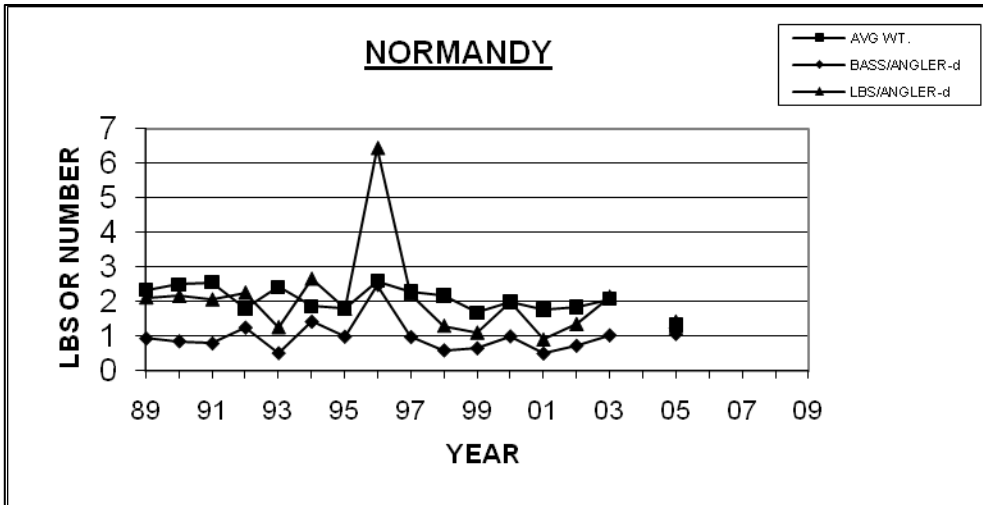


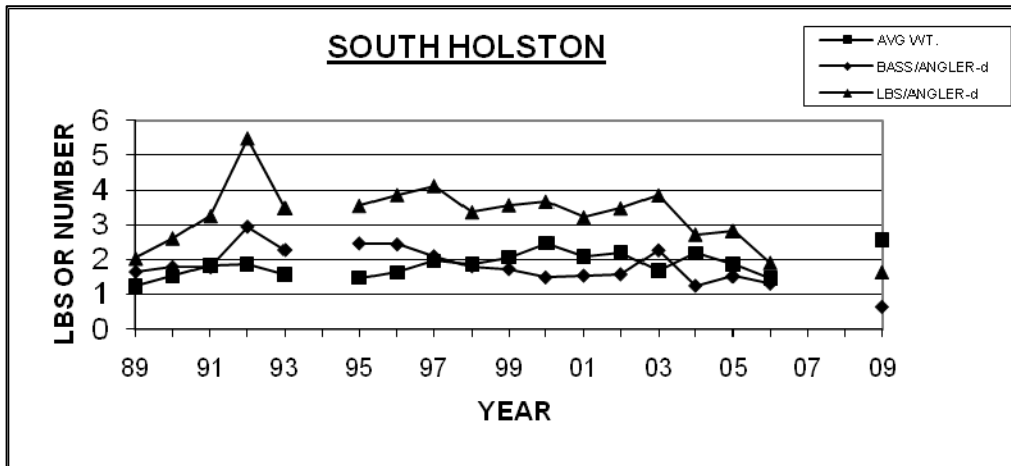
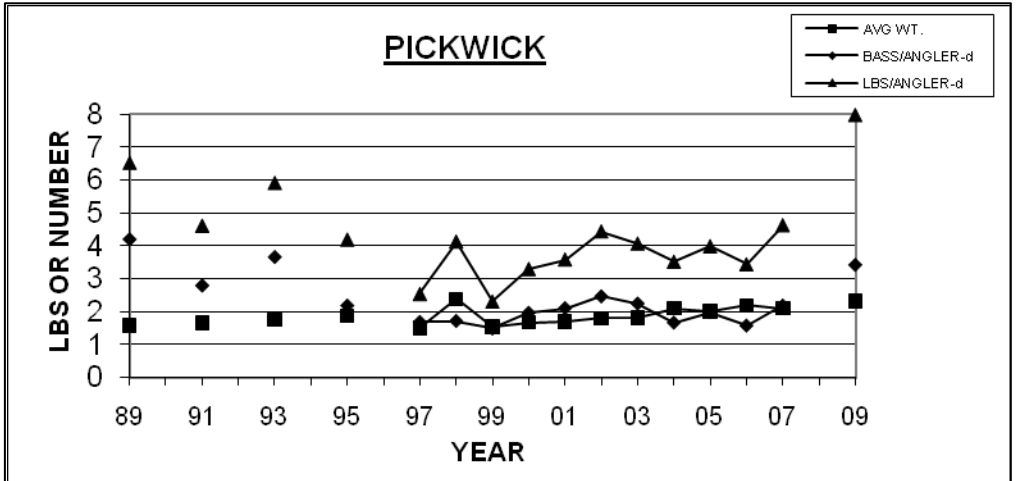
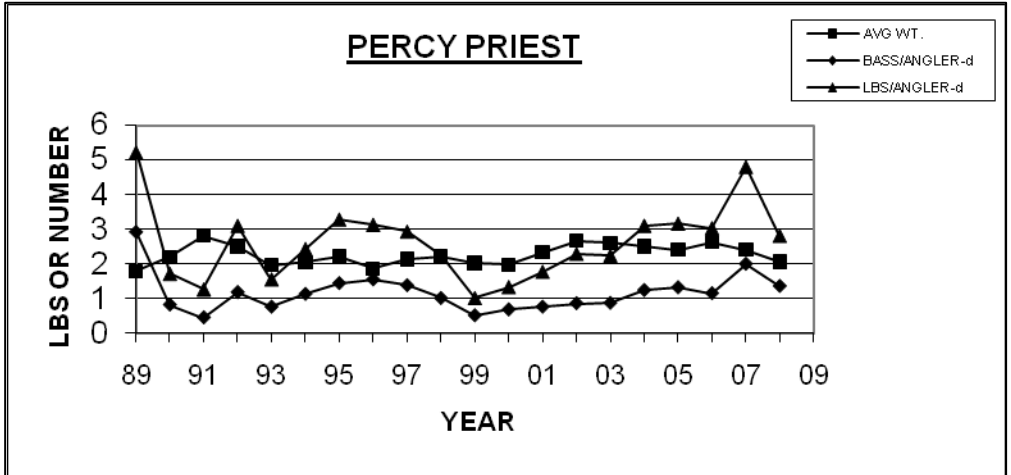


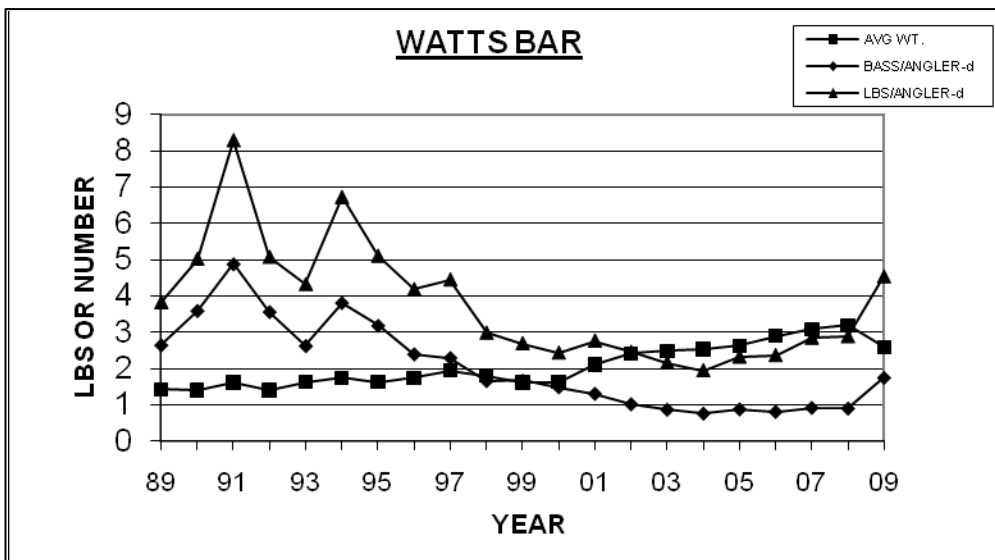
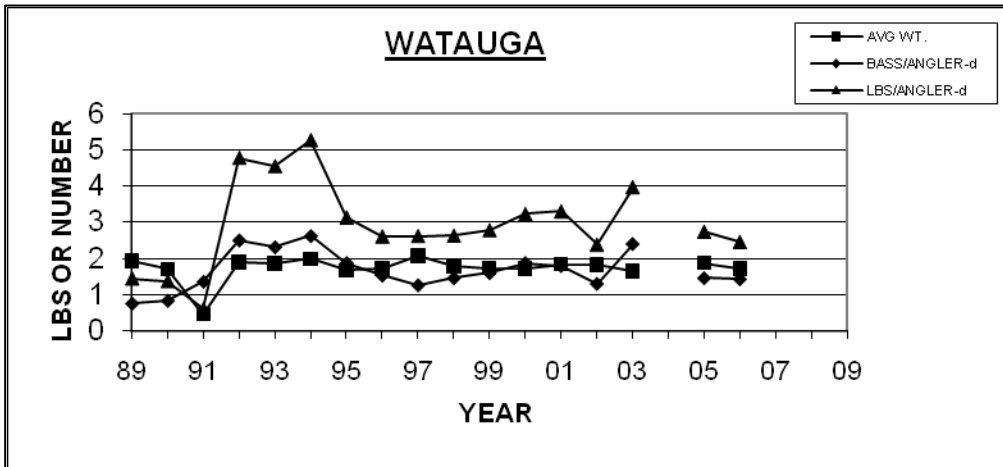
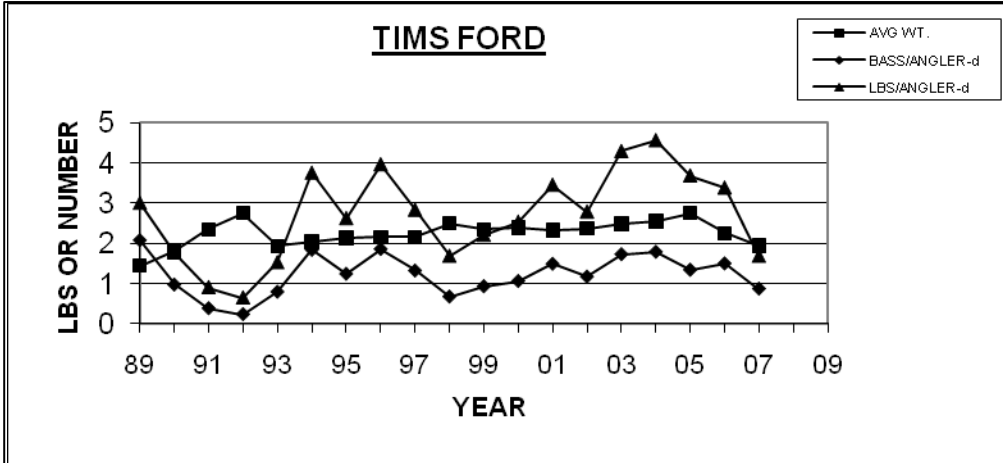


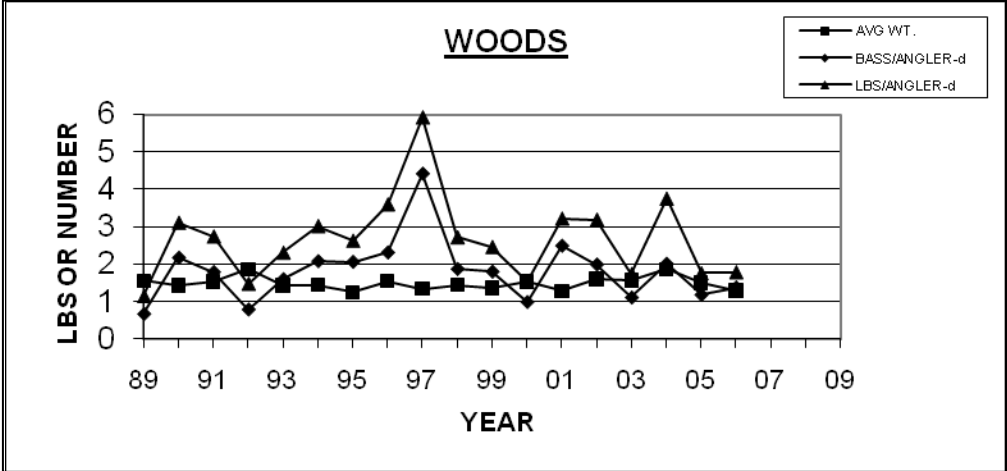














Don't forget to take a kid fishing. They are our future anglers and stewards of Tennessee's resources!