

TWRA BITE

**Bass
Information
From Tournament
Entries**



2003



Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Fisheries Management Division
Ellington Agricultural Center
P. O. Box 40747
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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 fifteenth 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 TWRA'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 2.1 million angler hours of effort in pursuit of black bass in 2003.

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 only included items such as fuel, food, bait, and lodging, but excluded boat and vehicle costs.

Through 2003, 5,245 tournament reports have been summarized. More than 149 clubs or tournament organizations participated through the first 15 years of the program. Bass anglers have spent over 1.5 million hours collecting data for this program and contributed data from 295,142 black bass weighing 550,114 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 were 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.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 ten hours of fishing effort. Bass weight listed in the tables is reported in pounds. Ft. Loudoun and Tellico reservoirs were combined for analyses when tournament anglers could "lock through" to fish either reservoir. The individual reservoir is reported when "lock through" was not allowed. Therefore, in Table 2 these reservoirs are separated 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 48 clubs or tournament organizations during 2003 (up one from last year), which submitted 348 tournament reports (Table 1). This is down almost 17 percent from 2002. Reports were also received from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and the MDWFP for reservoirs on the Tennessee River system and are included in Table 2. Club representatives did a great job filling out the report cards, and only three were rejected due to incomplete or erroneous data. Twenty-seven clubs (56%) submitted five or more tournament reports, down 22 percent from last year. Twelve clubs submitted ten or more reports. On average, seven reports were 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. A list of clubs and tournament organizations contributing tournament results for this report are presented in Table 6.

During 2003, tournament reports were received for 36 bodies of water that were fished 142,617 hours (Table 2). Tournaments averaged 41 anglers per event, for an average of 8.1 hours each. The average tournament had 55 bass weighing 114 pounds. Most tournament data were received from Pickwick (57), followed by Cheatham and Watts Bar. Chickamauga, Guntersville, Kentucky Lake, Percy Priest, and Tims Ford each had 20 or more tournament reports. Ten lakes were represented by 20 or more reports in 2002. Of the 15,138 bass anglers competing, 8,705 (57%) were successful. Anglers brought 23,504 bass (12 inches and larger) weighing 48,588 pounds to weigh-ins. Average weight of bass caught in Tennessee ranged from 1.12 pounds on Ft. Patrick Henry reservoir (one tournament) to 2.60 pounds on Percy Priest. Overall, the average weight was 2.07 pounds, down slightly from last year's 2.15 pounds. Fishing success on in-state reservoirs ranged from a high of 3.11 bass per angler-day at Tellico (one tournament) to 0.60 at Norris reservoir. The overall average fishing success was 1.65 bass per angler-day. Pounds per angler-day were highest for Center Hill at 5.71, and lowest for Ft. Patrick Henry reservoir at 0.94 pounds per angler-day. The overall average was 3.41 pounds per angler-day, up from 3.34 pounds in 2002.

Reservoirs with exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2003 are listed in Table 3. Approximately 98 percent of all bass caught by B.I.T.E. participants were released. Approximately 13 percent of individual or team anglers brought in limits of bass, similar to the number of

limits reported in 2002.

A total of 406 bass, weighing five pounds or more, were reported caught during 2003 (up from 396 in 2002), with an overall catch rate of one 5-pound bass or larger for every 351 hours of fishing, a decrease from last year's average of 383 hours. The largest bass reported was 8.25 pounds taken from Pickwick in March reported by MDWFP. Kentucky Lake led all reservoirs in the catch of bass five pounds and larger with 61 fish, followed by Pickwick with 44. A total of 11 bass seven pounds and larger were reported in 2003 (Table 4) with most (63%) of these big fish being caught in March and April. Eighteen bass seven pounds or larger were reported in 2002.

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 19 percent of tournaments with most occurring in July and August.

Of the 36 water bodies from which tournaments were reported, 19 had five or more tournaments reported (three less than in 2002). Relative ranks of these 19 reservoirs within five 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 29 percent at Ft. Loudoun to 84 percent at Pickwick. Average weight of bass caught ranged from 1.58 pounds at Wheeler to 2.60 at Percy Priest. The average weight for these reservoirs was 2.07 pounds. Catch rates expressed as bass per angler-day ranged from 0.87 at Percy Priest reservoir to 2.77 at Wheeler. Catch rate as pounds per angler-day ranged from 2.07 at Melton Hill reservoir to 5.39 at Ft. Loudoun. The average was 3.38 pounds per angler-day. Anglers at Ft. Loudoun expended the least amount of time required to catch a bass five pounds or larger at 99 hours.

Overall, using the relative ranking procedure, Kentucky Lake ranked the highest, replacing Guntersville from 2002, followed by Cherokee reservoir (Table 5). Douglas ranked third, and Ft. Loudoun fourth, a move upward from ninth and fifth, respectively, in 2002. Kentucky Lake ranked third and Cherokee thirteenth in 2002. 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 first 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 average weight was the most important, then Percy Priest would be a

top choice. However, Cherokee, which ranked third in this category, has a much higher overall ranking, and should provide high average weight along with other higher ranked categories. 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.

Tournament fishing success for number of bass per angler-day and pounds per angler-day increased slightly from last year, while average weight decreased slightly (Figure 3). The hours required to catch a bass five pounds or larger during the year (351) declined for the third year from the all-time high of 509 in 2000. Like last year, the decrease in hours corresponded to an increase in the number of bass five pounds or larger. A similar decrease in hours required to catch a bass five pounds or larger was also observed in Alabama for the years 2000 through 2002. The number of bass five pounds or larger reported to B.I.T.E. had been declining since 1997 (876 in 1997; 637 in 1998; 426 in 1999; 376 in 2000; to 336 in 2001) but increased to 396 in 2002 and 406 in 2003.

According to 2002 TWRA surveys, bass growth rates in Tennessee reservoirs remained relatively unchanged 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 68 percent of sampled reservoirs. Recruitment (survival of young bass) continues to be cyclic. Nine reservoirs had good to excellent recruitment, with 14 reservoirs having fair to poor for the 2001 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.

Mortality of larger fish is still being investigated, especially as it relates to the largemouth bass virus (LMBV). 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 two kills were reported nationwide in 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. Thus far, 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. But scientists and biologist in several states are investigating how the virus might affect behavior, reproduction, and growth rates of bass, particularly younger fish. They are also studying if different strains of LMBV will have different affects on fish.

Anglers can play an important role in lessening the impact of the virus. Preliminary recommendations from LMBV investigators include cleaning the live wells and weigh-in tanks with a 5-percent, or stronger, bleach solution **and** allowing them to dry out for several days between tournaments. Recent research suggests that a solution of ¼ cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water followed by a drying out period will kill the virus in live wells. Handling bass as little as possible during hot weather and **never** moving fish or water between water bodies 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 will also continue with government agencies, universities, bass clubs, and private groups to improve fish habitat, including water level management. We 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 at the end 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

Broadbent, T., A. Myhr III, D. Peterson, J. Riddle, T. St. John, and T. Churchill. 2003 Tennessee Reservoir Fisheries Statewide Management Report 2002. Fisheries Report No. 03-08. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Nashville.

Malvestuto, S. P. and W.P. Black. 2004. Tennessee Reservoir Creel Survey 2003 Results. Fisheries Report No. 04-05. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Nashville.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: Tennessee. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington D.C.

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

Club Code:	<input type="text"/>	Club Code as provided by TWRA.
Club Name:	<input type="text"/>	Club Rep: <input type="text"/>
Street:	<input type="text"/>	City: <input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text" value="TN"/> Zip: <input type="text"/>	Phone: <input type="text"/>

Reservoir:	<input type="text"/>	Date Start:	<input type="text"/>	mm/dd/yyyy			
Launch Site:	<input type="text"/>	Date End:	<input type="text"/>	mm/dd/yyyy			
Bass Creel Limit:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size Limit:	<input type="text"/> inches	Day/Night:	<input type="text" value="Day"/> <input type="text"/> Hrs		
Bass Numbers:		Caught:	<input type="text"/>	Released:	<input type="text"/>	Over 4.99 lbs:	<input type="text"/>
No. of Anglers:	<input type="text"/>	w/1 or more:	<input type="text"/>	w/Limit:	<input type="text"/>	Type:	<input type="text" value="Team"/>
Total Weight:	<input type="text"/> lbs	<input type="text"/> ozs				If Team:	<input type="text"/> # of Teams
Big Bass:	<input type="text"/> lbs	<input type="text"/> ozs					

Optional Information:

Number of Largemouth Bass caught:	<input type="text"/>	Total Weight:	<input type="text"/> lbs	<input type="text"/> ozs
Number of Spotted Bass caught:	<input type="text"/>	Total Weight:	<input type="text"/> lbs	<input type="text"/> ozs
Number of Smallmouth Bass caught:	<input type="text"/>	Total Weight:	<input type="text"/> lbs	<input type="text"/> ozs

Verify Info

Table 1. Tournament summary for bass clubs participating in the 2003 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.
	6	800	607	1213	2863	18	7200	75.88	2.36	1.68	3.98	400
7	2	680	380	522	1402	19	5440	55.88	2.69	0.96	2.58	286
14	10	220	129	269	463	3	1738	58.64	1.72	1.55	2.67	579
15	8	261	164	354	744	5	2610	62.84	2.10	1.36	2.85	522
17	9	184	107	258	438	0	1266	58.15	1.70	2.04	3.46	-
21	18	338	266	510	963	10	3062	78.70	1.89	1.67	3.14	306
23	2	38	30	62	109	2	304	78.95	1.75	2.04	3.57	152
26	27	1856	742	1040	2653	27	13515	39.98	2.55	0.77	1.96	501
33	3	83	59	104	197	2	717	71.08	1.89	1.45	2.74	359
38	7	165	94	131	329	8	1320	56.97	2.51	0.99	2.49	165
39	2	44	28	62	117	1	352	63.64	1.88	1.76	3.32	352
43	7	67	57	86	158	2	595	85.07	1.83	1.45	2.65	298
44	1	37	10	17	52	0	333	27.03	3.06	0.51	1.56	-
45	5	37	35	154	347	6	445	94.59	2.25	3.46	7.80	74
53	27	1064	515	861	2126	1	4560	48.40	2.47	1.89	4.66	4560
58	7	341	199	327	687	4	3069	58.36	2.10	1.07	2.24	767
59	9	149	70	136	240	6	1341	46.98	1.76	1.01	1.79	224
62	1	180	100	199	433	3	1440	55.56	2.18	1.38	3.01	480
65	16	168	151	279	487	13	1471	89.88	1.75	1.90	3.31	113
68	8	201	124	275	606	5	2168	61.69	2.20	1.27	2.80	434

(CONT.)

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73	3	480	367	897	1656	6	3840	76.46	1.85	2.34	4.31	640
78	1	14	14	30	38	0	126	100.00	1.28	2.38	3.04	-
80	3	17	11	20	43	0	136	64.71	2.15	1.47	3.16	-
82	4	60	46	172	215	1	553	76.67	1.25	3.11	3.89	553
87	21	608	184	184	570	9	3040	30.26	3.10	0.61	1.87	338
88	4	93	73	216	481	1	816	78.49	2.23	2.65	5.89	816
89	8	1787	1315	3230	6730	83	20422	73.59	2.08	1.58	3.30	246
90	4	87	46	100	257	7	900	52.87	2.57	1.11	2.85	129
92	5	125	54	103	209	1	952	43.20	2.03	1.08	2.20	952
93	3	30	17	29	82	3	240	56.67	2.83	1.21	3.41	80
94	11	193	111	187	391	6	1456	57.51	2.09	1.28	2.69	243
95	3	22	15	28	42	0	168	68.18	1.50	1.67	2.50	-
96	5	448	276	544	1244	9	3584	61.61	2.29	1.52	3.47	398
97	13	995	317	402	739	1	3483	31.86	1.84	1.15	2.12	3483
98	1	416	274	592	1177	15	3328	65.87	1.99	1.78	3.54	222
99	6	784	552	1569	3386	34	6472	70.41	2.16	2.42	5.23	190
100	3	39	26	50	127	5	351	66.67	2.55	1.42	3.63	70
101	1	13	11	37	100	0	104	84.62	2.70	3.56	9.62	-
103	10	228	139	216	440	5	1943	60.96	2.04	1.11	2.26	389
119	6	65	37	83	170	3	568	56.92	2.05	1.46	2.99	189

(CONT.)

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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.
123	12	158	108	199	472	3	1575	68.35	2.37	1.26	3.00	525
148	1	12	4	4	10	0	84	33.33	2.46	0.48	1.17	-
165	18	332	247	609	1181	15	2984	74.40	1.94	2.04	3.96	199
255	8	151	132	471	891	2	1538	87.42	1.89	3.06	5.79	769
493	4	65	52	170	333	0	583	80.00	1.96	2.92	5.72	-
548	3	48	39	120	201	1	397	81.25	1.67	3.02	5.06	397
844	2	31	22	45	111	3	248	70.97	2.46	1.81	4.46	83
4691	10	206	120	199	403	4	1633	58.25	2.03	1.22	2.47	408
TOTALS	348	14420	8476	17365	37111	352	114468	58.78	2.14	1.52	3.24	325

*BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY

Table 2. Statewide reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2003 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	8	212	105	257	603	6	1765	49.53	2.35	1.46	3.42	294
BAY SPRINGS	3	25	17	29	52	4	204	68.00	1.81	1.42	2.57	51
BOONE	2	46	24	46	93	0	300	52.17	2.02	1.53	3.09	-
CANEY FORK RIVER	2	52	40	90	143	1	416	76.92	1.59	2.16	3.44	416
CENTER HILL	4	276	237	695	1409	16	2466	85.87	2.03	2.82	5.71	154
CHEATHAM	40	815	519	895	1703	23	7185	63.68	1.90	1.25	2.37	312
CHEROKEE	13	679	506	1202	3019	23	7845	74.52	2.51	1.53	3.85	341
CHICKAMAUGA	20	449	309	668	1363	7	4020	68.82	2.04	1.66	3.39	574
CORDELL HULL	1	20	12	23	33	1	160	60.00	1.43	1.44	2.06	160
DALE HOLLOW	1	22	8	11	21	0	154	36.36	1.90	0.71	1.36	-
DOUGLAS	18	1026	805	2356	4019	21	8583	78.46	1.71	2.74	4.68	409
FT. LOUDOUN	6	173	50	367	746	14	1384	28.90	2.03	2.65	5.39	99
FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	12	997	633	1152	2523	39	8182	63.49	2.19	1.41	3.08	210
FT. PATRICK HENRY	1	17	5	10	11	0	119	29.41	1.12	0.84	0.94	-
GUNTERSVILLE	28	490	326	798	2047	15	5381	66.53	2.56	1.48	3.80	359
KENTUCKY LAKE	22	1507	1061	2266	5338	61	13244	70.40	2.36	1.71	4.03	217
KEOWEE	1	20	20	153	229	0	340	100.00	1.50	4.50	6.75	-
MCKELLAR LAKE	1	12	8	6	9	0	117	66.67	1.49	0.51	0.76	-
MELTON HILL	18	1087	367	486	875	2	4235	33.76	1.80	1.15	2.07	2117
NICKAJACK	10	193	104	193	421	4	1740	53.89	2.18	1.11	2.42	435
NORMANDY	3	77	39	70	146	2	681	50.65	2.08	1.03	2.14	341

(CONT.)

Table 2. Statewide** reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2003 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.
NORRIS	3	179	109	86	201	1	1439	60.89	2.34	0.60	1.40	1439
OLD HICKORY	16	1274	937	1959	3977	41	13737	73.55	2.03	1.43	2.90	335
PERCY PRIEST	29	1004	399	551	1433	21	6367	39.74	2.60	0.87	2.25	303
PICKWICK	57	2807	254 1	5362	9710	44	23855	83.83 1	1.81	2.25	4.07	542
PIN OAK LAKE	3	30	30	57	152	7	253	100.00	2.66	2.26	6.00	36
PINE LAKE	1	10	5	6	8	0	70	50.00	1.33	0.86	1.14	-
SOUTH HOLSTON	1	22	14	35	59	0	154	63.64	1.69	2.27	3.85	-
TELLICO	1	17	15	45	75	0	145	88.24	1.66	3.11	5.18	-
TIMS FORD	31	1189	580	962	2385	1	5565	48.78	2.48	1.73	4.29	5565
WATAUGA	5	99	64	167	275	0	693	64.65	1.65	2.41	3.97	-
WATTS BAR	39	2396	1049	1565	3874	39	17928	43.78	2.48	0.87	2.16	460
WEISS	2	40	31	124	258	5	435	77.50	2.08	2.85	5.92	87
WHEELER	15	243	200	638	1008	3	2302	82.30	1.58	2.77	4.38	767
WHITEVILLE LAKE	1	8	8	16	35	1	68	100.00	2.20	2.35	5.17	68
WILSON	6	104	56	133	296	3	864	53.85	2.22	1.54	3.42	288
WOODS	1	25	13	25	39	1	225	52.00	1.57	1.11	1.74	225
TOTALS	425	17642	8705 1	23504	48588	406	142617	57.50 1	2.07	1.65	3.41	351

*BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY

**INCLUDES TOURNAMENTS (77) FROM RESERVOIRS OF THE TENN. RIVER IN ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI

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 2003.

<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	12" 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)	-	14" 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	-
Wilson	15" minimum	15" minimum	15" minimum

Table 4. Bass seven pounds and larger reported* from 2003 tournament reports.

	DATE	LOCATION	REPORTING CLUB/ORGANIZATION
8.25	03/12	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI DEPT. OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & PARKS
8.18	03/15	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI DEPT. OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & PARKS
7.88	04/25	GUNTERSVILLE	ALABAMA DEPT. OF CONSERV. & NATURAL RESOURCES
7.61	05/10	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI DEPT. OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & PARKS
7.58	03/08	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	BASS INVITATIONAL TEAM EVENTS-EAST TN.
7.38	03/30	CHEATHAM	PRO FISH ENDEAVORS
7.24	04/26	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI DEPT. OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & PARKS
7.19	04/26	GUNTERSVILLE	CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS
7.00	08/31	GUNTERSVILLE	VOLUNTEER BASSMASTERS
7.00	10/16	OLD HICKORY	FLW OUTDOORS
7.00	11/08	WHEELER	ALABAMA DEPT. OF CONSERV. & NATURAL RESOURCES

*Reported as big bass for each tournament

FIGURE 2. SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF TOURNAMENTS
2003 B.I.T.E. PROGRAM

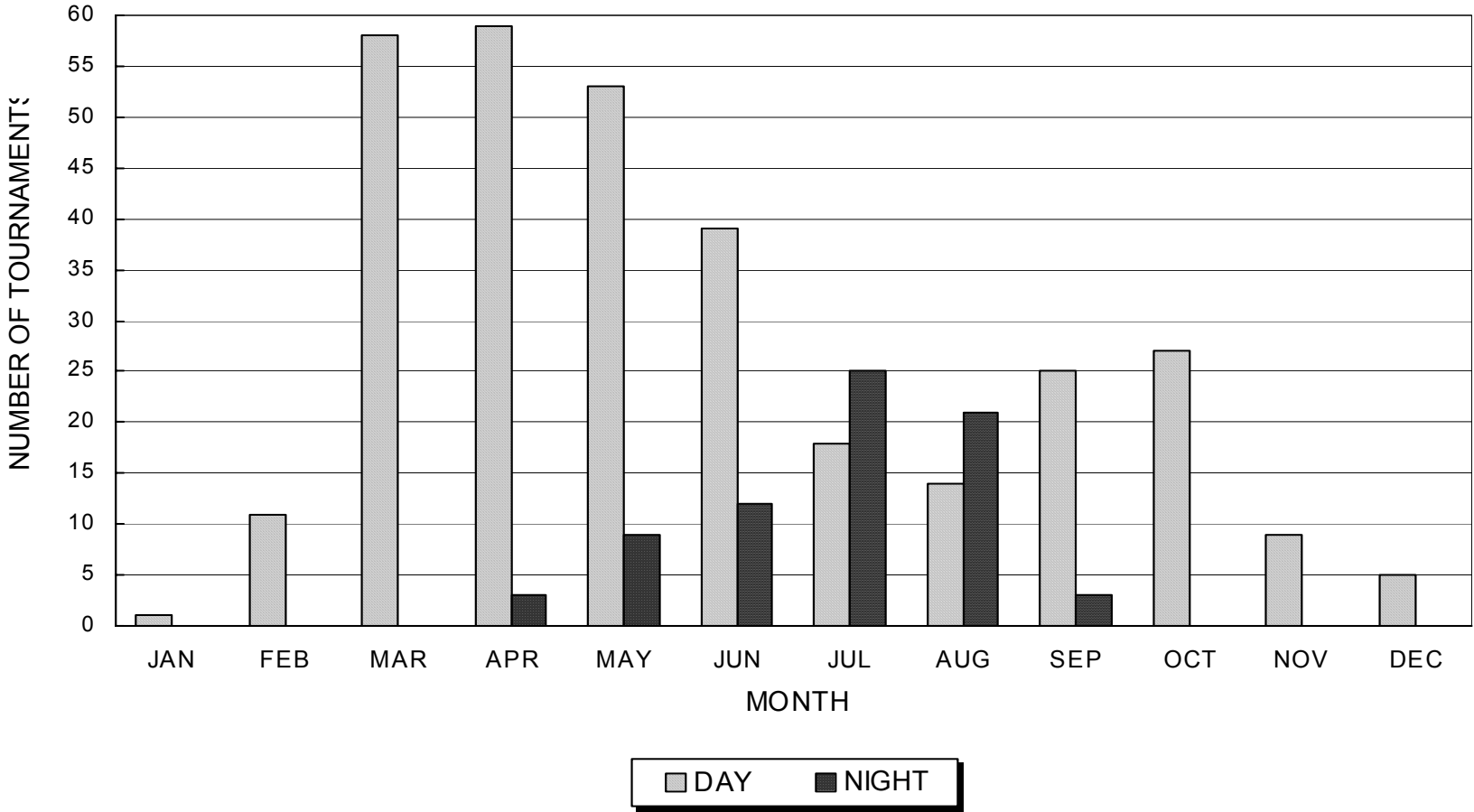


Table 5. Relative ranking for reservoirs with 5 or more tournaments reported in the 2003 B.I.T.E. program.*

RANK	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day	POUNDS PER ANGLER-day	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.	OVERALL RANK
1	Pickwick^^	PERCY PRIEST	Wheeler	FT. LOUDOUN	FT. LOUDOUN	#1 KENTUCKY LAKE
2	Wheeler	GUNTERSVILLE^	Douglas^^	Douglas^^	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	#2 CHEROKEE
3	Douglas^^	CHEROKEE	FT. LOUDOUN	Wheeler	KENTUCKY LAKE	#3 Douglas^^
4	CHEROKEE	TIMS FORD	WATAUGA	TIMS FORD	WILSON	#4 FT. LOUDOUN
5	OLD HICKORY	WATTS BAR	Pickwick^^	Pickwick^^	BARKLEY	#5 GUNTERSVILLE^
6	KENTUCKY LAKE	KENTUCKY LAKE	TIMS FORD	KENTUCKY LAKE	PERCY PRIEST	#5 Pickwick^^
7	CHICKAMAUGA	BARKLEY	KENTUCKY LAKE	WATAUGA	CHEATHAM	#6 Wheeler
8	GUNTERSVILLE^	WILSON	CHICKAMAUGA	CHEROKEE	OLD HICKORY	#7 WILSON
9	WATAUGA	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	WILSON	GUNTERSVILLE^	CHEROKEE	#8 TIMS FORD
10	CHEATHAM	NICKAJACK	CHEROKEE	WILSON	GUNTERSVILLE^	#9 BARKLEY
11	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	CHICKAMAUGA	GUNTERSVILLE^	BARKLEY	Douglas^^	#9 FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO
12	NICKAJACK	FT. LOUDOUN	BARKLEY	CHICKAMAUGA	NICKAJACK	#10 CHICKAMAUGA
13	WILSON	OLD HICKORY	OLD HICKORY	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	WATTS BAR	#10 OLD HICKORY
14	BARKLEY	CHEATHAM	FT. LOUDOUN/TELLICO	OLD HICKORY	Pickwick^^	#11 WATAUGA
15	TIMS FORD	Pickwick^^	CHEATHAM	NICKAJACK	CHICKAMAUGA	#12 PERCY PRIEST
16	WATTS BAR	MELTON HILL	MELTON HILL	CHEATHAM	Wheeler	#13 CHEATHAM
17	PERCY PRIEST	Douglas^^	NICKAJACK	PERCY PRIEST	MELTON HILL	#14 NICKAJACK
18	MELTON HILL	WATAUGA	WATTS BAR	WATTS BAR	TIMS FORD	#15 WATTS BAR
19	FT. LOUDOUN	Wheeler	PERCY PRIEST	MELTON HILL	WATAUGA	#16 MELTON HILL

*Size limit restrictions in effect on CAPITALIZED reservoirs.

^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.

FIGURE 3. FISHING SUCCESS FOR REPORTED TOURNAMENTS

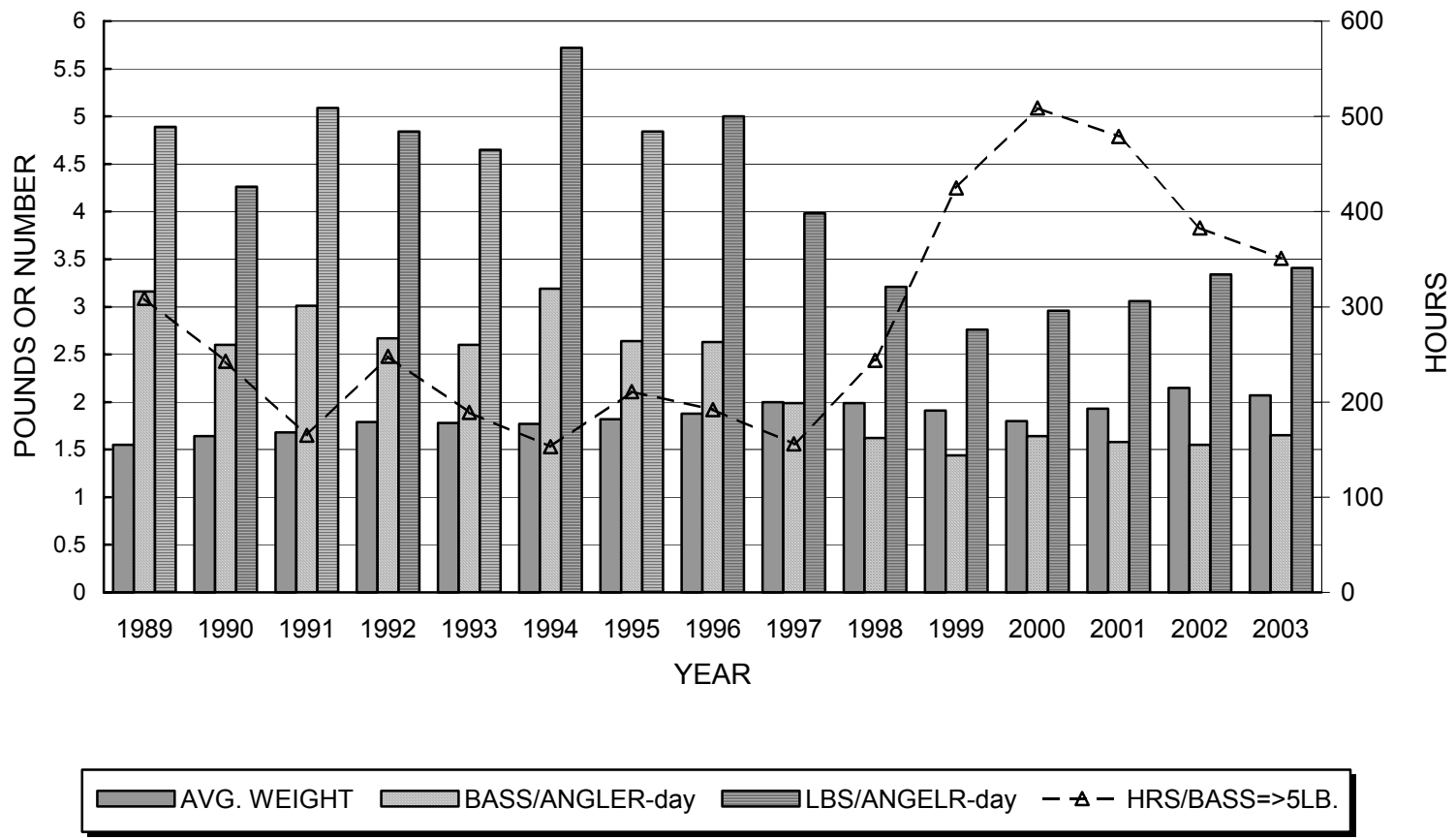


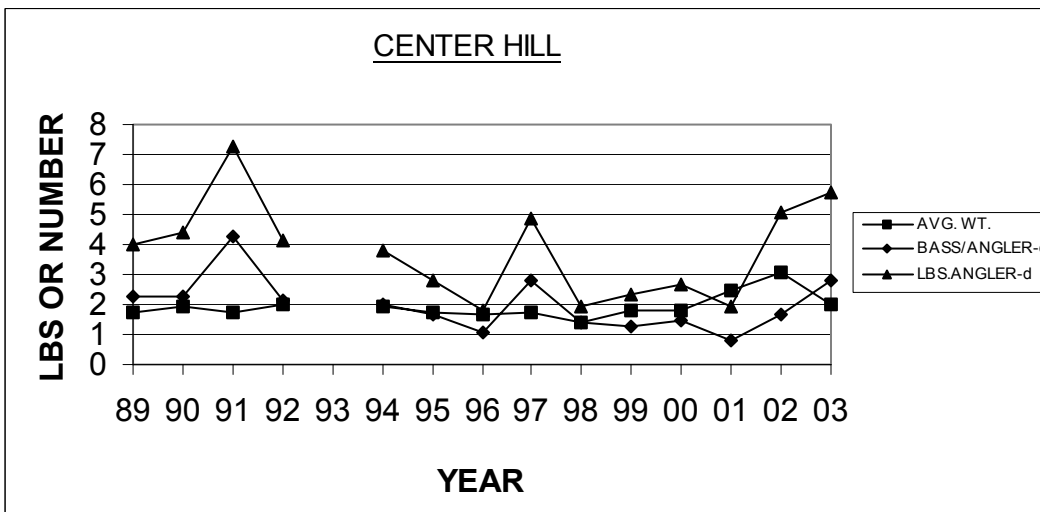
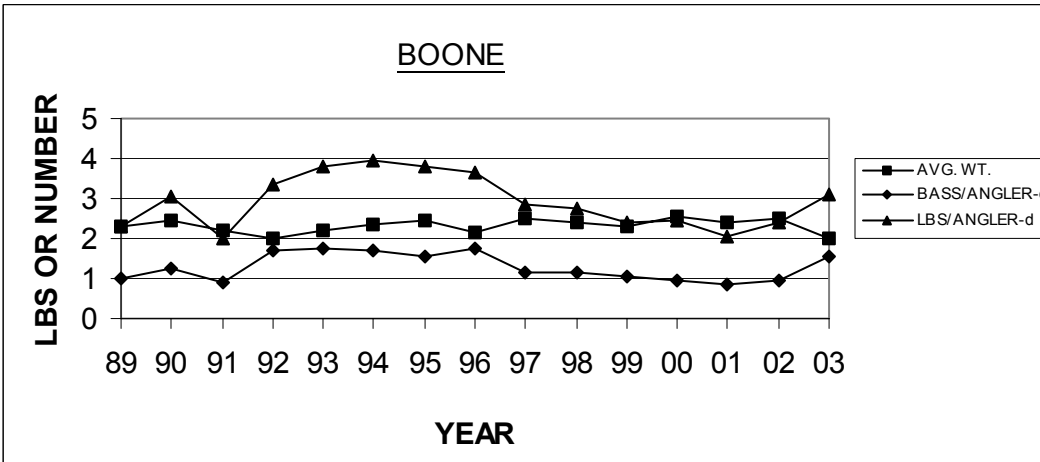
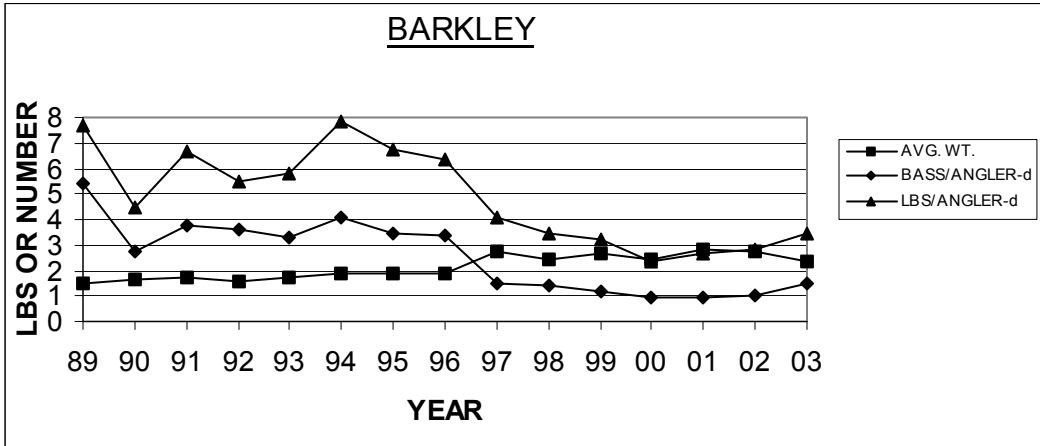
Table 6. Clubs or Organizations contributing to the 2003 B.I.T.E. report.

CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	CITY	STATE
AMERICAN BASS ANGLERS - S.E. TN # 30	Bill Prince	Winchester	TN
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
BASSMASTERS OF EAST TENNESSEE	Bill Hart	Mountain City	TN
BEND OF THE RIVER BASS CLUB	Casey Hitchcock	Dunlap	TN
CANEY CREEK BASS CLUB	Kent Bowman	Harriman	TN
CHEATHAM COUNTY BASS CLUB	Mike Stubbs	Nashville	TN
CHEROKEE BASSMASTERS	Eddie Mullins	Bean Station	TN
CLARKSVILLE BASS CLUB, INC	Ken Head	Clarksville	TN
CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS	George Corbit	Cleveland	TN
CUMBERLAND BASS ANGLERS(CBA)	Michael Crowell	Pleasant View	TN
EAST TENNESSEE BASS ANGLERS	Brad Allison	Knoxville	TN
EAST TENNESSEE BASS ANGLERS(MT)	Stan Strickland	Morristown	TN
FAYETTE COUNTY BASS CLUB	Jason Risley	Cordova	TN
FISHERS OF MEN - CENTRAL TN DIV.	Jake A. Judd	Hendersonville	TN
FLW OUTDOORS	Ron Lappin	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
HARRISON BASSMASTERS	Jim Card	Chattanooga	TN
JACK DANIELS BASSMASTERS	Russ Reynolds	Tullahoma	TN
KENTUCKY LAKE BASS ANGLERS	Charles Mitchell	McEwen	TN
KENTUCKY LAKE OUTDOOR TRAIL	Randy Sullivan	Beech Bluff	TN
LAWRENCEBURG BASS BUSTERS	E. F. Bryant	Lawrenceburg	TN
McNAIRY COUNTY BASS ANGLERS	Gilbert Gough	Savannah	TN

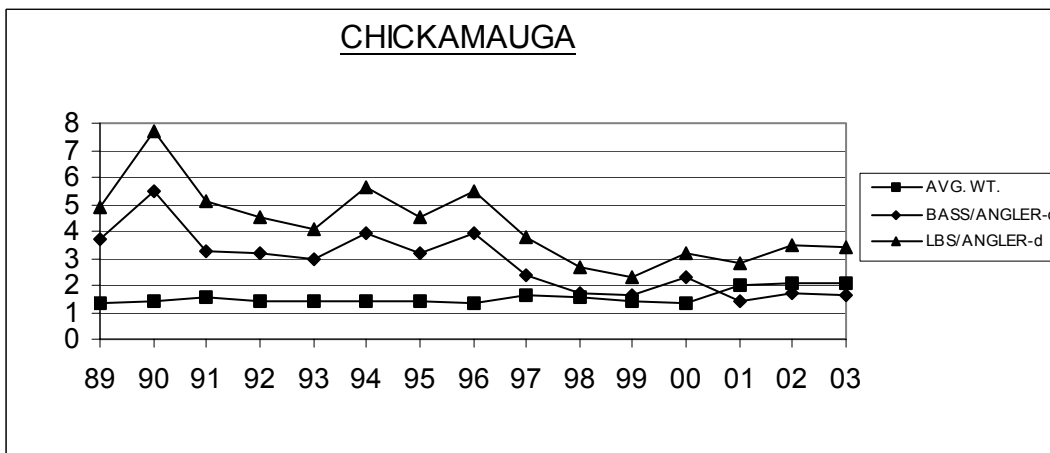
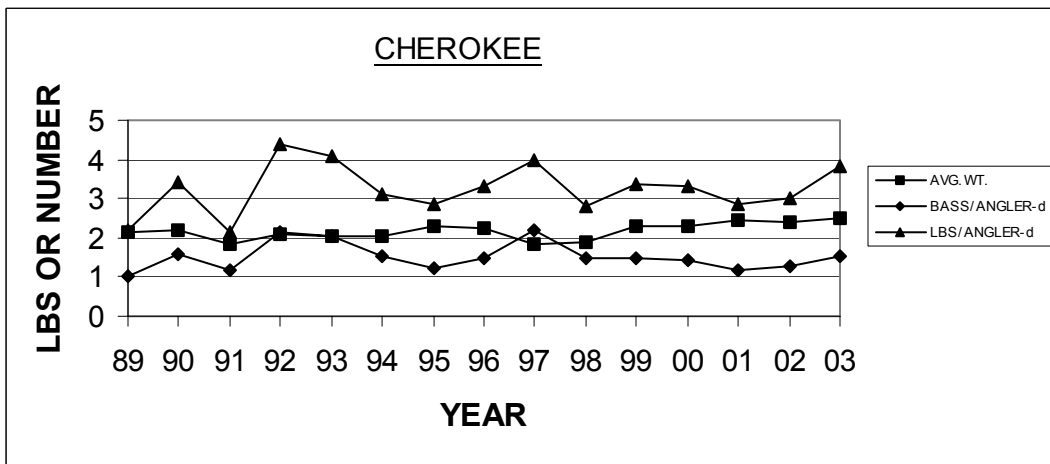
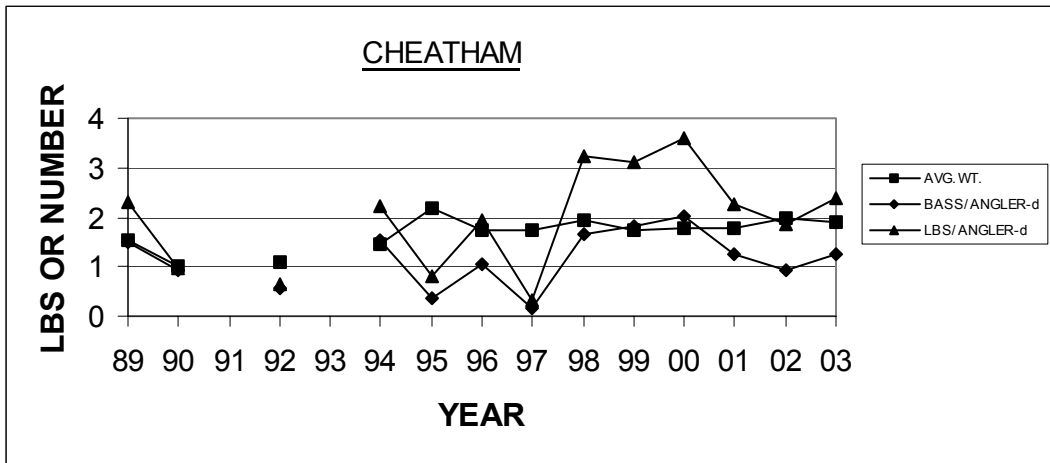
Table 6. Clubs or Organizations contributing to the 2003 B.I.T.E. report.

CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	CITY	STATE
MELTON HILL MON. NIGHT TOURNAMENT	DeWayne Raines	Knoxville	TN
MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB	David Slack	Englewood	TN
MIDDLE TENNESSEE BASS ANGLERS	James D. Hanson	Hendersonville	TN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BASS CLUB	Terry Becknell	Clarksville	TN
MOUNTAINEER BASSMASTERS	Jeff Russell	Kingston	TN
OUTCASTERS BASS CLUB	Joe Roberson	Harrison	TN
PRO FISH ENDEAVORS	Bill & Sherry Garrett	Ashland City	TN
SALE CREEK BASS CLUB	Creed Poole	Sale Creek	TN
SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASS ANGLERS	John Howard	Knoxville	TN
SOUTHLAND BASS ANGLERS	Dan Keeling	Humboldt	TN
SPARTA BASS CLUB	Ricky England	Sparta	TN
STONES RIVER BASS ANGLERS	Mike Taylor	Nashville	TN
TEAM NASHVILLE BASSMASTERS	Brian Anderson	Nashville	TN
TEKSID BASS ANGLERS	Walter Hankins	Vanleer	TN
TENNESSEE BASS FEDERATION	A.D. Sanford	Cedar Grove	TN
TENNESSEE BASSMASTERS	Kirk Eaton	Johnson City	TN
TIM IRWIN/FOOD CITY BASS TOURNAMENT	Tim Irwin	Knoxville	TN
TIMS FORD BASS CLUB	Bob Krueger	Winchester	TN
TRI COUNTY BASS CLUB	John Gregory	Franklin	TN
VOLUNTEER BASS ANGLERS	A.D. Sanford	Cedar Grove	TN
VOLUNTEER BASSMASTERS	Bill Hill	Newport	TN
ALABAMA CONSERV. & NATURAL RESOURCES	James J. McHugh	Montgomery	AL
MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS	Larry Pugh	Jackson	MS

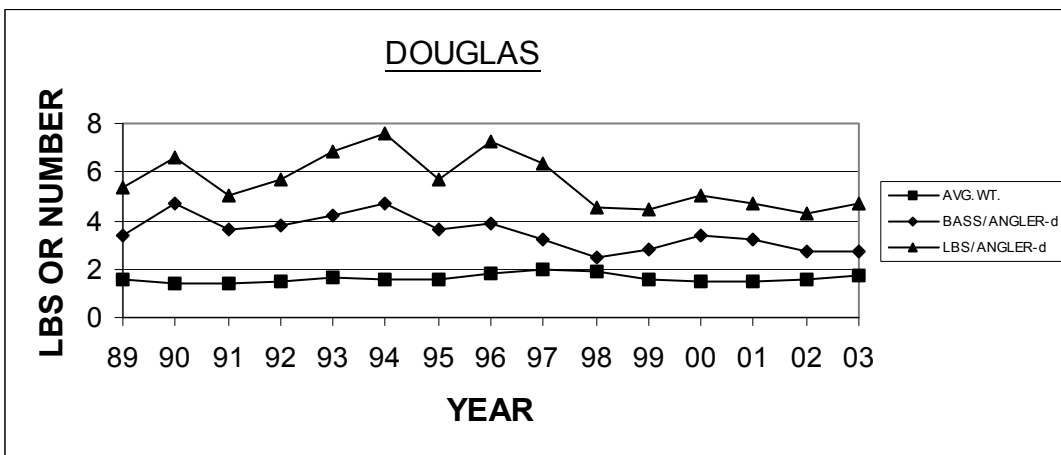
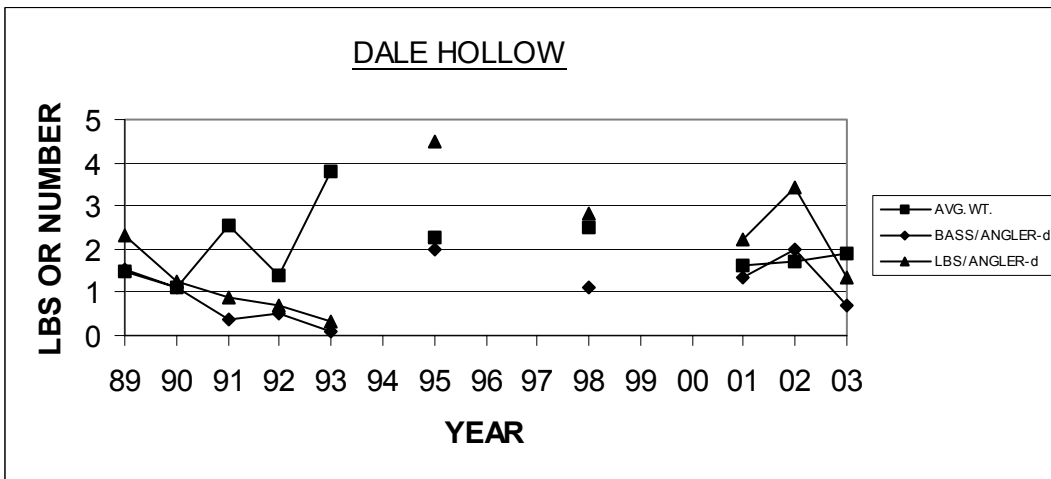
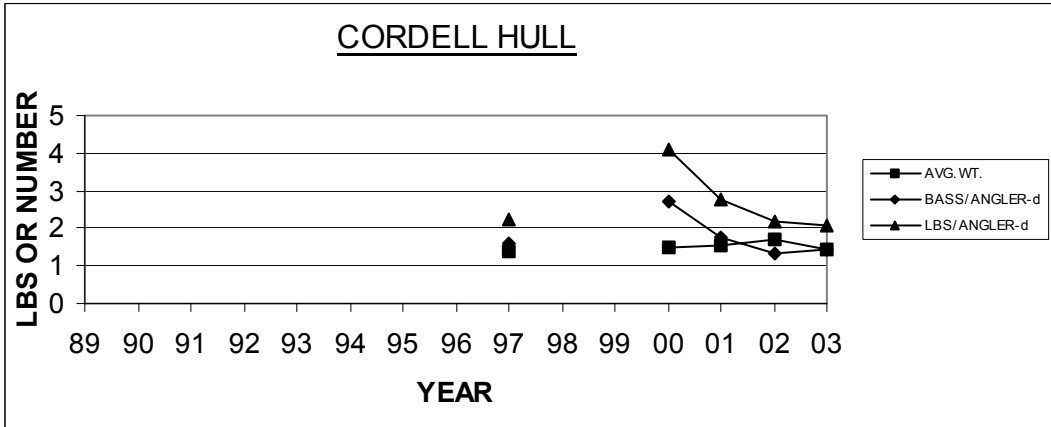
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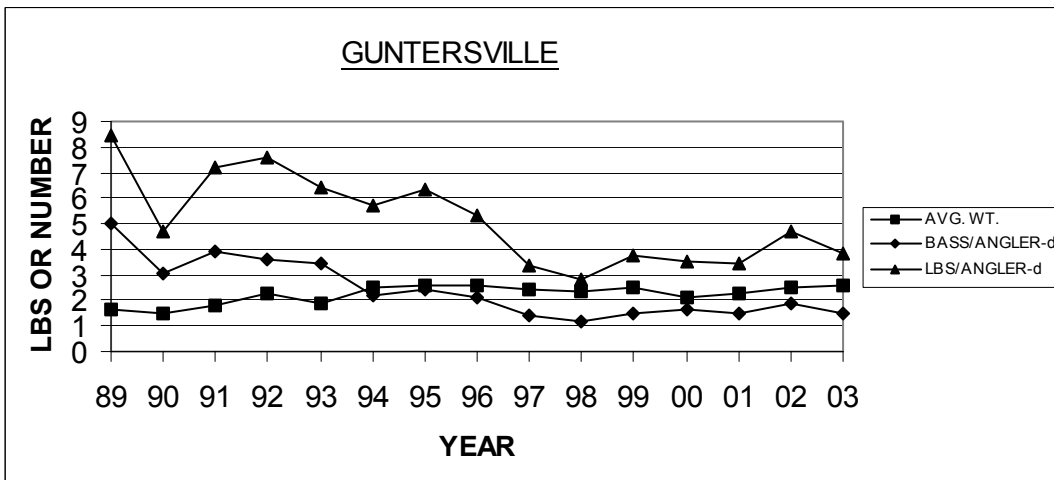
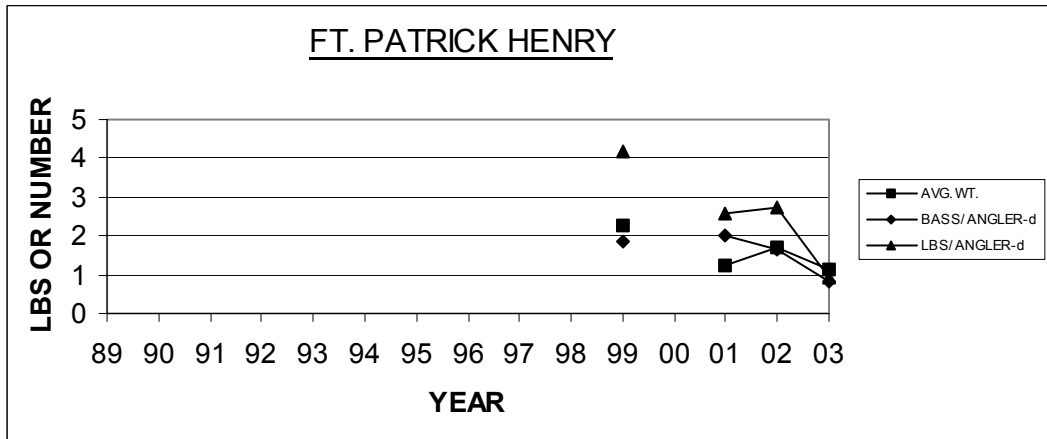
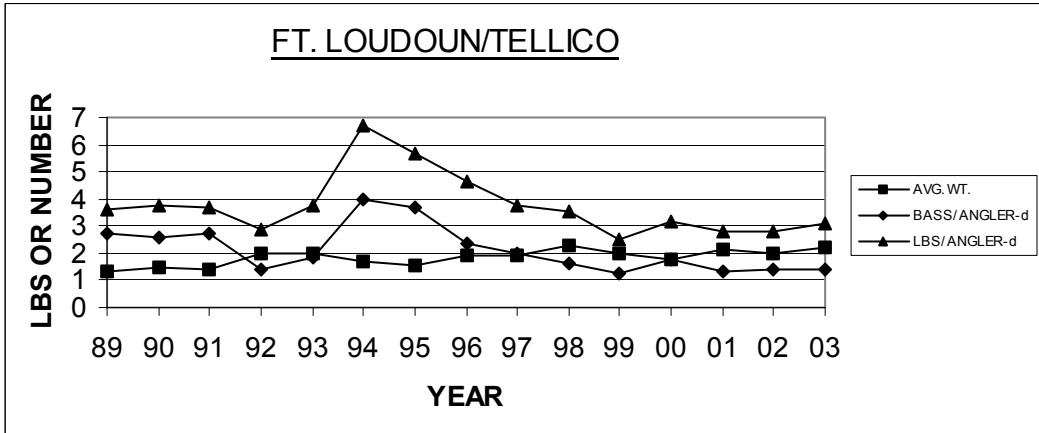
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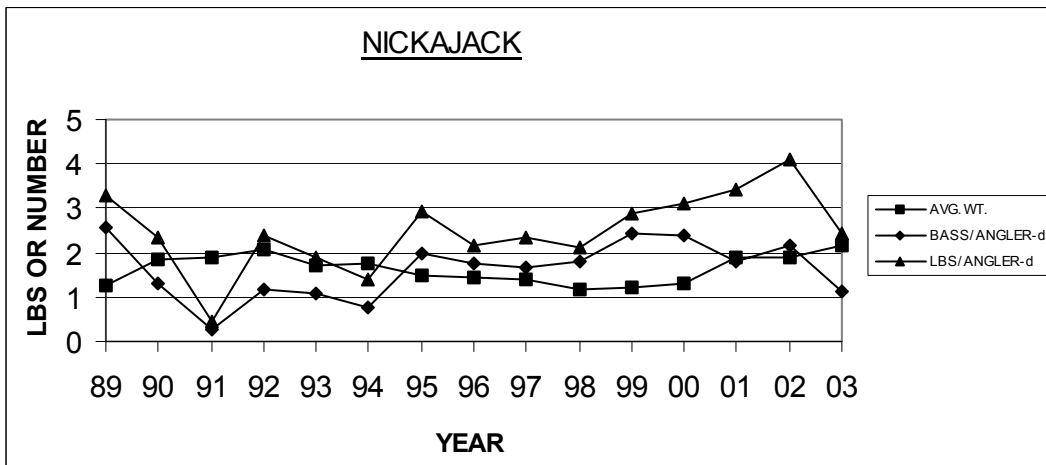
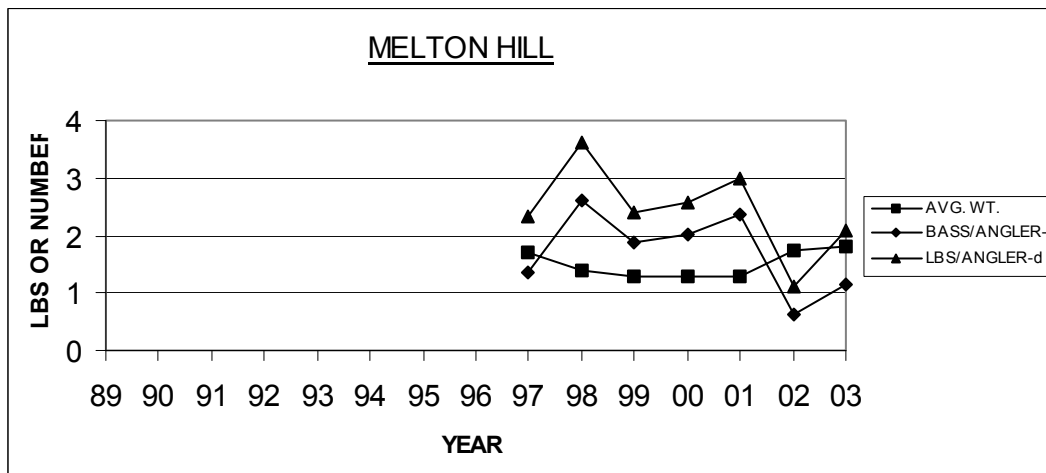
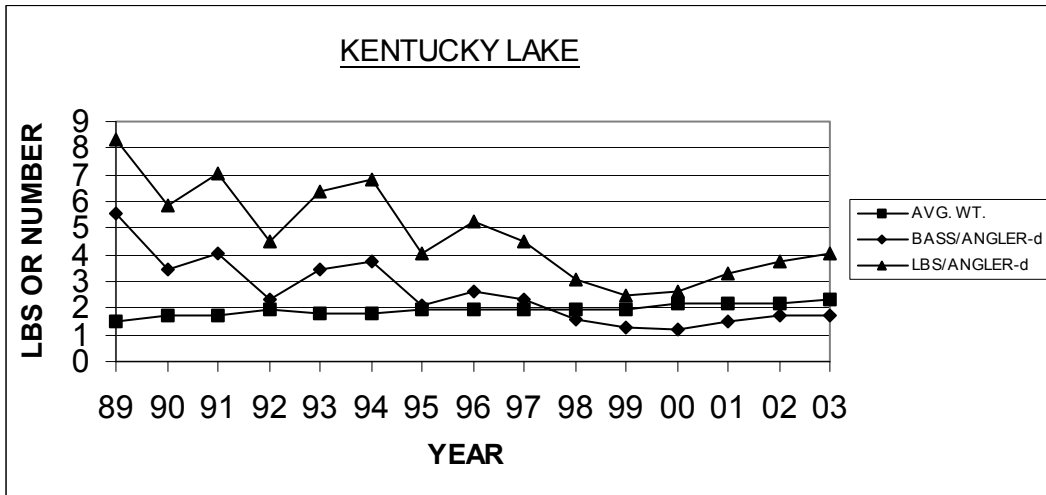
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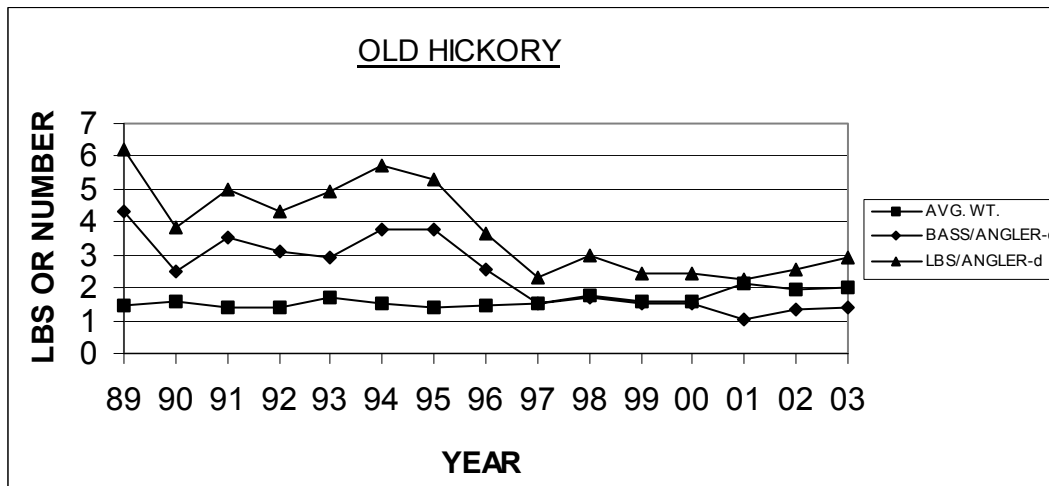
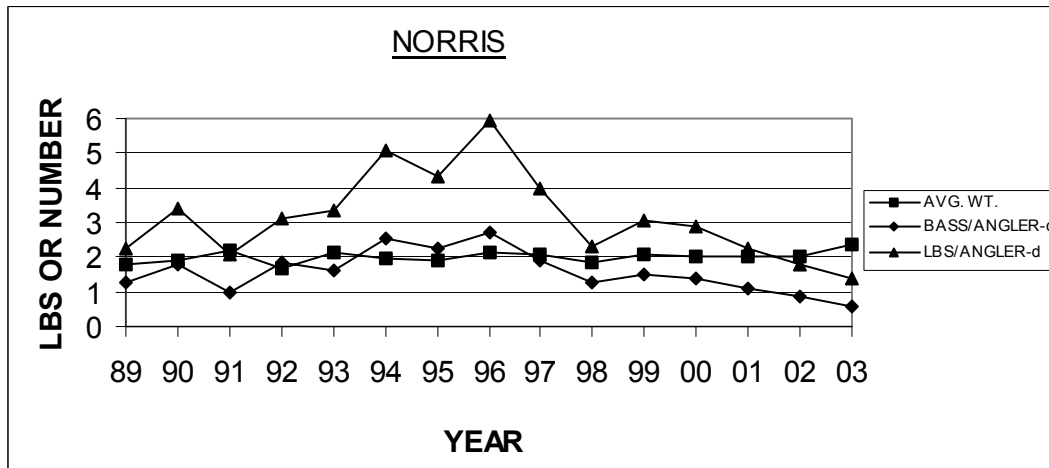
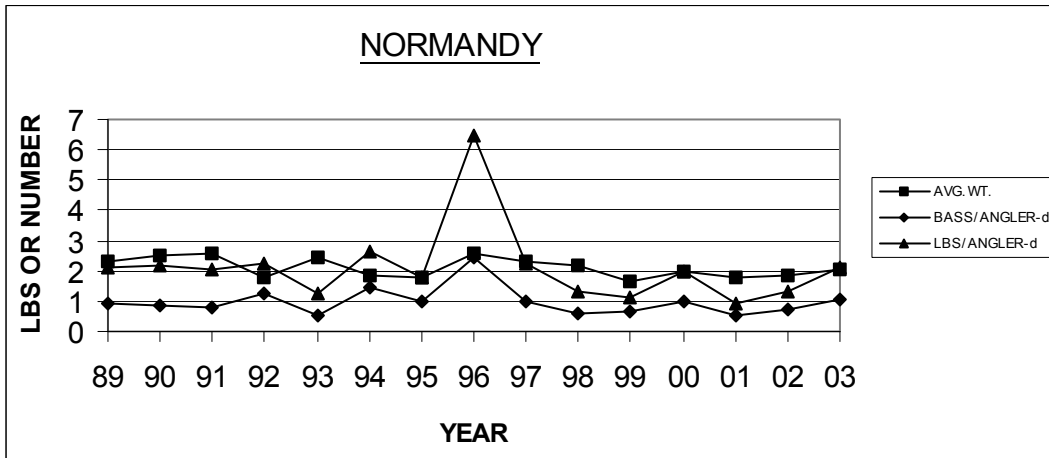
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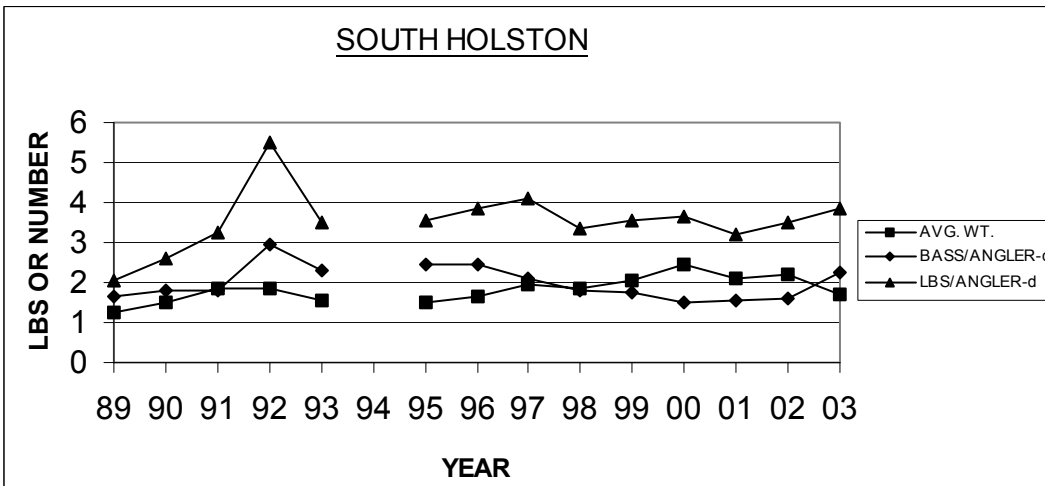
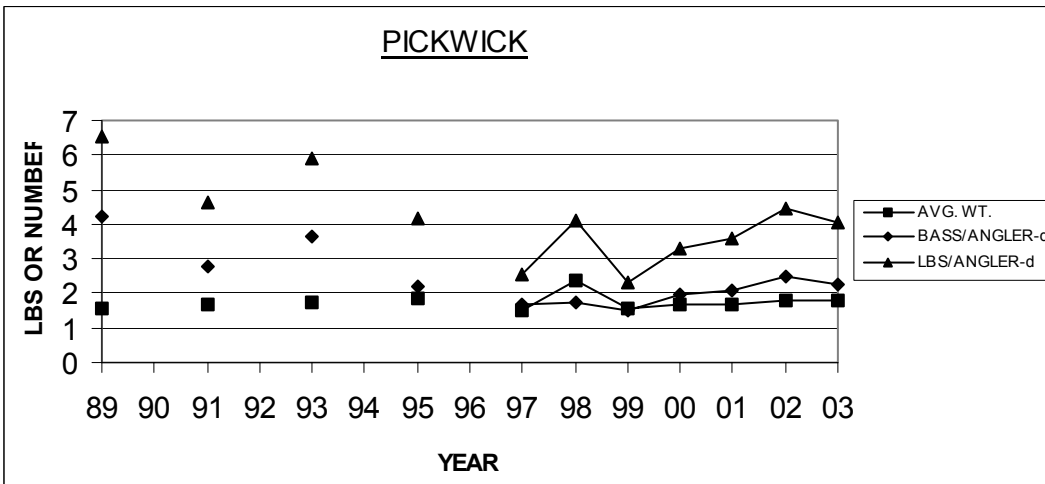
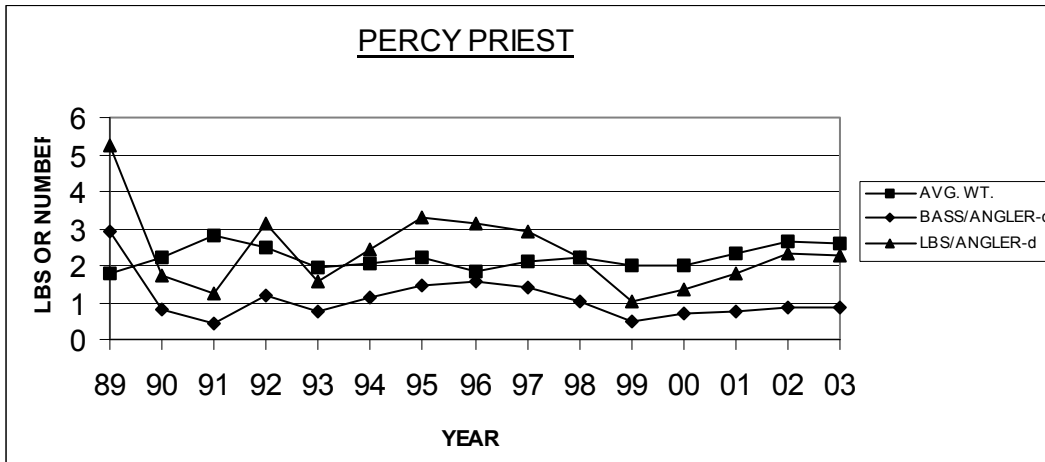
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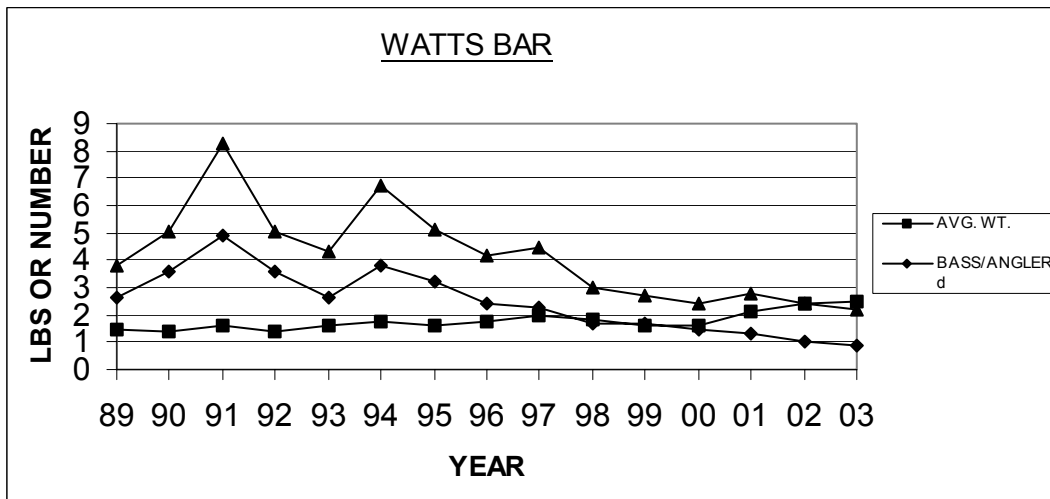
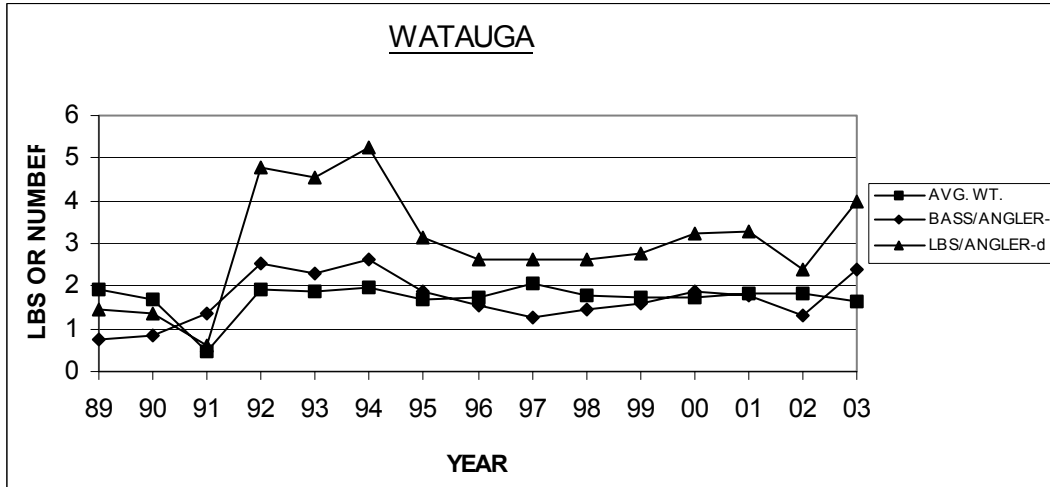
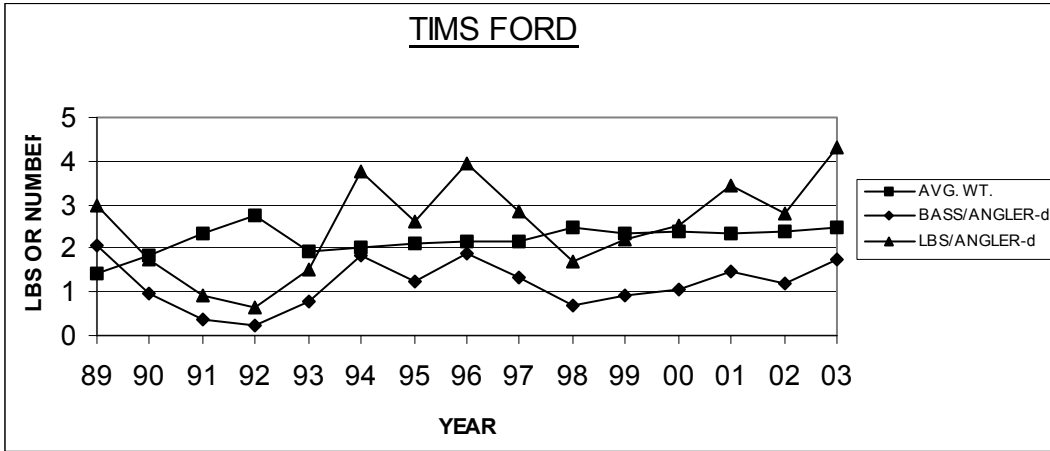
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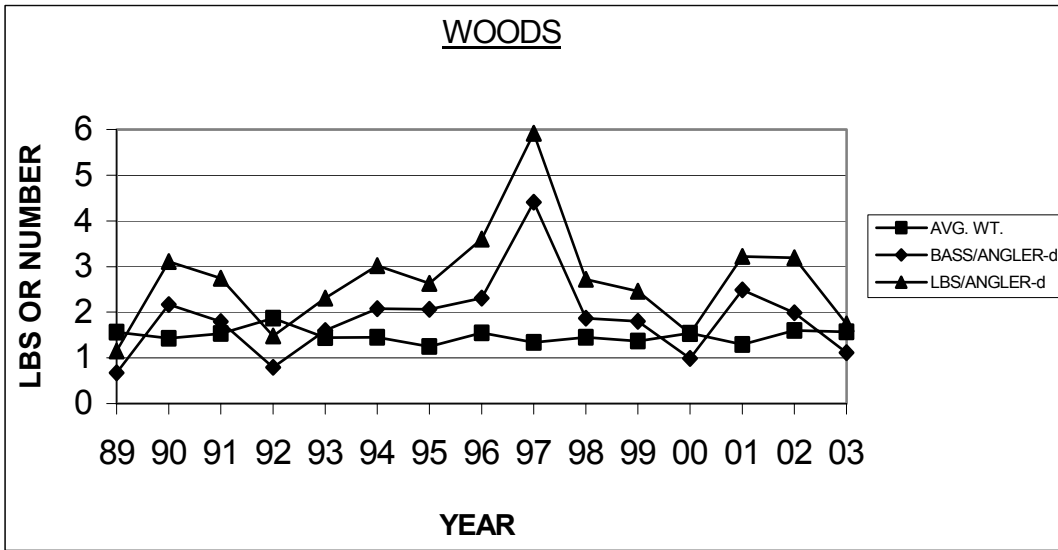
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BASS HANDLING – TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

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 needle nose pliers or hemostats. When attempts fail, or the fish has swallowed the hook cut the line five or six inches above the hook. 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 noniodized 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.