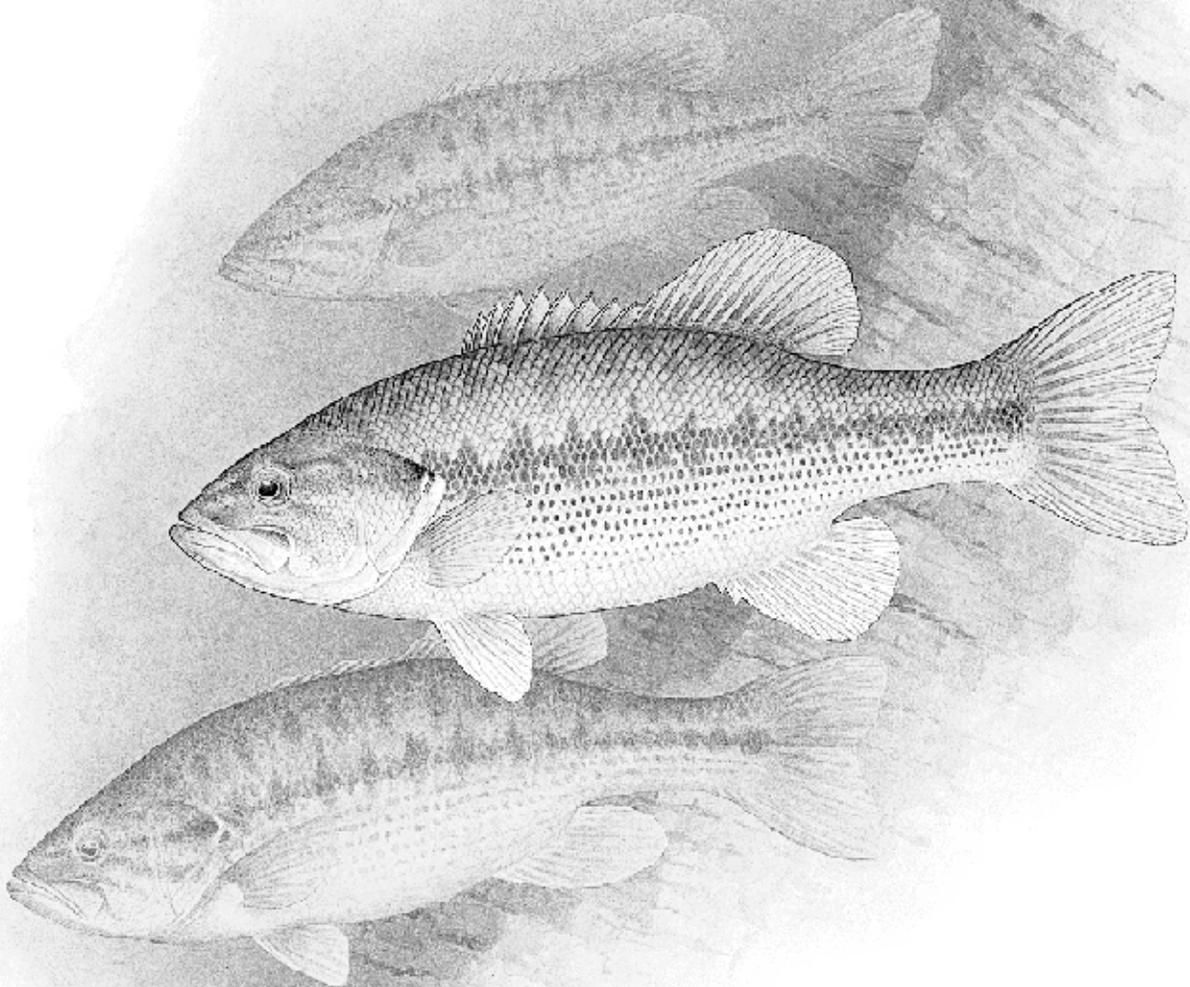




# Bass Tournament Results 2013



**Kentucky Department of Fish  
And Wildlife Resources**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, a total of 295 black bass tournaments participated in the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' (KDFWR) Tournament Reporting Program. Even though this was well below the high participation levels of 2011 (n = 350 events) and 2010 (n = 376 events), it was a substantial increase over the 233 tournaments that had reported their catch data in 2012. Despite fluctuations in the number of events actually submitting their results, the use of KDFWR's online system to schedule tournaments has remained relatively consistent over the past several years. For example, the 643 tournaments obtained in 2013 was similar to that in both 2012 and 2011 when 622 and 671 tournaments were scheduled online, respectively. After the number of scheduled tournaments is taken into account, the 2013 participation rate of 45.9% was also a substantial improvement over 2012 (37.5%), but it still fell short of the higher rates achieved during other years like 2011 (52%) and 2009 (61%). In total, the 2013 tournament data was obtained from 33 different lake and rivers in Kentucky, which included 15 large reservoirs (> 1000 acres), 14 smaller lakes (< 1000 acres) and the Ohio, Kentucky, Cumberland and Tennessee river systems.

There were no changes to how the data was reported in 2013, but the updates implemented in 2010 are still having an effect on the results presented in this report. These updates were developed with the goal of not only increasing accuracy, but also reducing the number of categories that tournament directors had to keep track of. Between 1999 and 2009, the catch data was entered the same way, regardless of whether the tournament was fished by individuals or in a team format. Over the past several years, team tournaments have become increasingly more popular with the most common format involving boats with up to 2 anglers that fish for a single limit of bass. Previously, this would lead to some error during the data analysis because the assumption was often made that each angler was fishing for his/her own limit. In order to produce the most accurate results possible, tournament organizers were asked to input catch data differently in relation to whether an individual or team format was used.

Most black bass tournaments in 2013 reported both the creel and size limits that they used. Although the majority of them followed limits that were already being enforced at the water body, some tournaments opted to be more restrictive. On average, 90.5% of the bass tournaments participating in the program used creel limits of 5-fish, 6-fish or a multiple of either (i.e. Team events with 10-fish by allowing each member to weigh in their own limit). When more stringent bag limits were used, it included creels of either 2 (0.7%) or 3 (8.8%) fish. As would be expected, the 12-in and 15-in minimum length limits were by far the most common for the 2013 tournaments. This combination of different creel and size limits that were in place for each event had an impact on the number of anglers that were able to weigh-in a full limit of fish. Even though it missed the program high of 35.7% from 2012, the 26.4% of individual anglers and teams catching the limit of bass in 2013 became the 2<sup>nd</sup> best mark after surpassing the 24.7% obtained in 2011. This is one statistic that was greatly affected by the changes introduced to the program in 2010, and now that single angler tournaments can be distinguished from those that adopted a team format, it's expected that results like these will be much more accurate than those from 5+ years ago.

In order to compete in a standard tournament in 2013, a bass angler would have to fish for 7.9 hours (hr), which is only a slight decline from the fishing events in 2012 and 2011 that lasted an average of 8.0 and 8.4 hours, respectively. More specifically, the tournament lengths reported in 2013 ranged from the 4 hr evening events hosted by local bass clubs to the 3-day 24 hr events that professional tournament organizations hold at larger reservoirs. Also, much like those from previous years, the majority of the bass tournaments in 2013 were held in either the spring (46.8%) or summer (38.0%) while the fall (13.2%) and winter (2.0%) events were much less common. Of all the events being reported in 2013, 87.8% of them took place during the day and the remaining 12.2% were held at night. The majority of these night tournaments were scheduled during the summer months when lakes in Kentucky can have daytime surface temperatures of 90°F or more.

After making the assumption that each team had 2 members, the analysis of the 2013 catch data revealed that 14,399 anglers participating in tournaments throughout Kentucky were able to weigh in 24,584 bass. The data from 2013 was also able to demonstrate that the standard 8-hour tournament was fished by 48.8

individual anglers, or 24.4 teams, and that it required an average of 14.70 lbs to take 1<sup>st</sup> place, which became a new high for the program after surpassing the previous mark of 14.5 lbs set in 2012. And yet, the 2013 and 2012 averages were both remarkable considering that during the previous 5 years, total weights ranging from 13.1 to 13.8 lbs were often enough to take 1<sup>st</sup> place. After being standardized to a length of 8 hrs and a creel limit of 5 bass, the highest 1<sup>st</sup> place weight for a 2013 fishing tournament was the 32.42 lbs needed to win an event at Lake Beshear on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The biggest bass reported from these same 2013 tournaments was an 8.50 lb fish caught on March 30<sup>th</sup> from Kentucky Lake. The ten biggest bass reported in 2013 had weights ranging from 7.2 to 8.5 lbs, and it's not surprising to find that 8 of them were caught from either Kentucky Lake or Lake Barkley. The only other water bodies on this list were Fagan Branch Reservoir and Lake Cumberland with big bass weighing 7.76 and 7.55 lbs, respectively.

As in previous years, the water bodies that hosted 3 or more events in 2013 were ranked according to 6 different tournament statistics. Of the 14 that qualified, Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Lake Beshear once again appeared to be some of the better locations for bass tournaments. This was primarily based on the fact that for each of the 6 categories being ranked Kentucky Lake was fourth or better while Lake Barkley was found in the top 5 for all but one of them. And even though anglers had average catch and success rates at Lake Beshear, it still held the top spot for all 3 categories related to the size of the bass being caught. The one category that might be best to sum up the 2013 bass tournament season is the average weight that it takes to win an event. Once all 295 tournaments were standardized to a duration of 8 hr and a creel limit of 5 fish, it was not surprising to find that Lake Beshear, Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley held the top 3 spots on the list with average 1<sup>st</sup> place weights of 22.29lbs, 18.43 lbs and 18.04 lbs. Despite the prominence of these 3 lakes, there were other water bodies like Green River and Barren River lakes that consistently landed in the top half of each list. Also, the Ohio River was able to rank first in the "Number of Bass Caught per Hour" with 0.43 bass/hr as well as the "Percent of Successful Anglers/Teams" with 86.6%. Both of these rankings demonstrated that a lot of "keeper" bass were being caught by tournament participants, but the lower average weights of these fish have prevented the Ohio River from being found anywhere near the top of the other categories. Overall, ten out of the 14 water bodies hosting at least 3 bass tournaments had average 1<sup>st</sup> place weights that exceeded 10 lbs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ever since that first year of catch data was collected from tournaments in 1999, there has been enough participation to allow the KDFWR to consider the program a success. Even though there have been some major updates since that first year, the basic principle of the program remains the same. Tournaments submit their results, the KDFWR analyzes the data and then the findings go out to anglers in the form of an annual report, which will hopefully illustrate how their favorite fishing holes stack up against others. This program has done well even though the participation of bass clubs and other tournament organizations has always been *voluntary*, which says a lot about their ongoing commitment to conservation.

The KDFWR has always acknowledged that anglers are a crucial component to this program, but until very recently, we had yet to thank the individual bass clubs and tournament organizations that have participated. They've always been willing to put in the extra effort needed to gather/submit their catch data, and many of them have participated in the program on more than one occasion. In fact, there are some groups that have been submitting their tournament data each year since the program started in 1999. So from this point on, the KDFWR will officially thank each group that participates in the program, including the bass clubs and tournament organizations listed below that submitted their tournament data in 2013. This program simply could not succeed without the ongoing efforts of these groups!

### *2013 Program Participants*

- 3 Keeper Club
- Anglers Outpost & Marine
- Barn Owl Classic
- Barren Bassmasters
- Barren River Fishing League
- Brandeis Machinery & Supply
- Daniel Boone Chapter of NWTF
- Derbytownt Lunkers II Bass Club
- Dominator Series Tournaments
- Early Bird Bass Club
- East Hartford Baptist Church
- Faith Outdoors
- Fishing Coalminers (Warrior)
- Fishing for a Cure
- FLW Outdoors
- FOCAS
- Green River Bass Club
- Greenbo Bass Club
- Hardinsburg City Fire Dept.
- Heartland Anglers
- Highlands Foundation
- Hooks & Sinkers Bass Club
- Indy Bass Club
- Jet-A-Marina
- KABCOT
- Kentucky Lake Bass League
- Lake Malone Bass Club
- Limestone Bassmasters
- Lyon County Bass Club
- Masonic Lodge
- Mid-Kentucky Bass Club
- Murray Rotary Club
- Nana B's Boat Dock & Bait
- Northern Kentucky Bass Hasslers
- Ohio River Senior Bass Club
- Outkast Bass Club
- Owen County Bassmasters
- Partners in Cancer Survival
- Paul's Discount
- R&W Nitro Tracker Team Trail
- River Cities Bass Club
- Russell Co Little League Baseball
- Senior Bass Anglers
- Shimano Team Tournaments
- Sportsmen For Christ
- Sportsmens Digest
- The Steel City Bassmasters
- Tuckasee Bass Anglers
- Twin Lakes Guys & Gals Bass Club
- UAW Local 862
- USA Bassin
- USA Bassin - Barkley Division
- USA Bassin - Cedar Creek Lake
- USA Bassin - Green River Co-Ed
- Wabash Valley Bass Club
- Walk To End Alzheimer's
- Wayne Co Football Boosters
- WC Anglers
- Western Kentucky Bass Club
- Zoneton Fire Dept.

## INTRODUCTION

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) started the tournament reporting program in 1999, and it was meant to provide a simple way for the state's black bass fishing events to submit their catch data to resource managers. After 15 years, the primary objective of this program remains the same as it continues to focus on obtaining data related to the catch rates of bass tournament anglers throughout Kentucky. The long-term database that is being strengthened each year with these results has developed into a new tool for resource managers. After combining the results of this program with the KDFWR's annual sampling efforts, fisheries biologists will hopefully have an increased ability to understand and forecast changes to these black bass populations. However, the more obvious benefit to the program is the publication of an annual report that bass anglers can reference when planning their future tournaments, but most all, it effectively illustrates how even the most popular bass fisheries in Kentucky can fluctuate on a regular basis.

This program began with biologists simply obtaining the contact information for the more popular bass clubs located throughout Kentucky. Prior to 1999, these bass clubs received packets containing both a detailed explanation of the program, and some very specific items related to the collection of tournament data, such as blank report cards and postage-paid envelopes. They were asked to fill in a report card for each tournament held during the year, and then mail them back to the KDFWR. Fisheries biologists analyzed the data from the various events and then composed a report summarizing all the results from that year. Any club and/or tournament that participated in the program would get a copy of the report mailed to them by the next spring. In order to continue promoting the program during the first several years after 1999, project biologists gave presentations at various bass club meetings throughout the state. This would not only give the biologists a chance to provide a detailed explanation on the methods/results of the program, but it also allowed the anglers to provide feedback on how to make the entire process as efficient as possible.

When efforts to promote the program were eventually cut back, the overall tournament participation had leveled out and remained fairly stable for several years. This was until 2005 when the KDFWR launched a new online scheduling system for fishing tournaments that was made available via the department's website. Despite the fact that the system has remained completely voluntary to this day, it became popular because tournament organizers could check for any conflicts with events that were already scheduled for a given date and location. This tool (found at <http://app.fw.ky.gov/TournamentManager/tournamentschedule.aspx>) greatly assisted the reporting program by not only providing an effective way to promote it, but to also reduce the steps that tournament organizers had to follow in order to submit their results. Ultimately, this put an end to the days when tournaments only had the one option of mailing in their report cards.

To complete the 2013 Kentucky Black Bass Tournament Report, the KDFWR asked that all tournament cards be mailed in or submitted via the online system by 1 February 2014. After obtaining the tournament results, program biologists would be able finish analyzing the large amount of data and have the report available during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 2014 fishing season. The 2013 report would initially be sent out to all directors/organizations that participated in the program during the previous year, so that they could share the results with anglers that fish in their tournaments. Although this report could definitely help anyone in the planning of their upcoming events, the main purpose of this 1<sup>st</sup> mailing is to emphasize just how important their catch data is to the continued success of the program. After each participant has received their copy, a digital version of the 2013 Bass Tournament Report will be uploaded to the department's website (<http://fw.ky.gov/Fish/Pages/Tournament-Fishing.aspx>) where it will be available to anyone that is interested in reviewing the latest results.

After all bass tournament results from 2013 were analyzed as a whole, they were then sorted by water body so that the catch data could be summarized for each lake/river according to the season. Seasons have been defined by the same 3 month periods since the program started and they include spring (March – May), summer (June – August), fall (September – November) and winter (December – February). It is important to note that each annual report summarizes data from the same calendar year (Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – Dec 31<sup>st</sup>), which means the winter season actually contains data from the 1<sup>st</sup> two months (January and February) and then the last month (December) of 2013. During a normal year, this split does not have a big impact on the overall results, but it may need to be considered when back-to-back winters exhibit completely different conditions. For

instance, when a short, mild winter happens to be followed by an unusually cold one, the success rates of tournament anglers can decline substantially when moving from February to December of the same year.

Before the analysis of the catch data could proceed, there were a number of issues that needed to be corrected for. For instance, it was recognized that bass tournaments in Kentucky were not only hosted at different waterbodies and during different seasons, but they often had different durations. In some cases, the lengths at which a group of fishing events lasted would vary by only a couple hours, while there were others that would differ by a number of days. In order to allow for comparisons, the 1<sup>st</sup> place weight of each fishing event needed to be standardized to what was considered as the “average” 8-hour tournament. For instance, the “standard 1<sup>st</sup> place weight” for a 10-hour bass fishing event would be derived by first dividing the reported winning weight (i.e. 20 pounds) by the actual length of the tournament (i.e. 20 pounds/10 hours = 2) to establish the pounds per hour. This number could then be multiplied by 8 (i.e. 2 pounds/hour \* 8.0 hours = 16 pounds) to determine the “standard 1<sup>st</sup> place weight”, which can then be compared to any other “standardized tournament”. Luckily, most of the bass tournaments in Kentucky already adhere to an 8-hour time limit, so this type of correction was not always necessary.

The angler catch rates in this report are presented as the number of legal, or “keeper”, size bass that were caught per hour of tournament fishing. For instance, if the average catch rate for tournaments at *Lake A* was calculated to be 0.20 bass/hour for the entire year, then the amount of time normally required to catch a single keeper-sized bass would be estimated at 5 hours ( $5 * 0.20 = 1$  bass). It is very important to keep in mind that when the results are related to the size of the fish (i.e. legal or “keeper” size bass), they will most likely be influenced by the specific regulations being used by each tournament, which is the case even if the events are being held at the same water body. As expected, most bass tournaments in 2013 chose to follow the minimum length limits already being enforced at each water body. However, tournament organizers do have the option to adopt other regulations, but they *must*, at the very least, follow the minimum size and creel limits that are already posted for each waterbody. For example, the most common length limit used by fishing events at Kentucky Lake is 15 inches, which happens to be the same size limit that the KDFWR imposes on all anglers, regardless if they are participating in a tournament. These same bass tournaments also have the option to enforce a stricter, 18 in size limit, but they are not allowed to adopt a more-liberal 12-inch limit. Ultimately, stricter regulations could influence some of the statistics being calculated for that tournament (i.e. a lower catch rate, but a higher average weight for the bass).

Since the program began in 1999, tournament results were submitted and analyzed for 10 years with very few changes to way it was done. However, just prior to 2010, the program underwent several updates in an attempt to increase the accuracy of the results. The first was an adjustment to the size of the bass that would be classified in the program as big fish. During earlier years, tournaments were submitting data that included both the number of bass that weighed  $\geq 4$  pounds and the number of those weighing  $\geq 6$  pounds, but after this change, tournament directors would only have to keep track of those that came in at 5 pounds or more. This would still allow the program to provide an estimate of the number of hours needed to catch a big bass ( $\geq 5.0$  lbs), but it would also ease up on tournament directors by no longer requiring them to keep track of fish from two different size classes. This update also helped by minimizing the need for tournaments to provide estimates rather than real numbers, and while at the same time, reducing any additional stress placed on large bass that often had to be weighed more than once.

Despite all the benefits that came with having a single classification for large bass, there was second change adopted in 2010 that had an even bigger impact on the program. This update specifically addressed how the tournaments were being set up. The objective was to account for the growing number of bass fishing events in Kentucky that were using a team format. This was especially important because the program was initially set up for tournaments that were more inclined to be fished by individual anglers, or at least by teams where each member tries to catch his/her own limit. This update would allow those types of fishing events to be separated from what now appears to be the more common style of team tournament where both members work towards a single limit of fish. If the program had failed to adapt to these changes, it's likely that certain statistics provided in the report (i.e. angler catch rates) would only continue to error naturally on the low side. However, the modifications that are now in place will allow those tournaments with teams weighing in a single limit to be correctly analyzed as two members working as one “angling-unit”.

When it comes to calculating the amount of time it took for anglers to catch a large bass (i.e.  $\geq 5.0$  lbs), the original approach was to report it the same way as the overall angler catch rates, which would be to determine the number of large bass that were caught per hour of fishing. However, it was eventually realized that the resulting number would usually come out to be extremely low and difficult to use in any “real-world” situation (i.e. the catch rate of  $\geq 5.0$  lbs bass = 0.004 bass/hour). When calculated this way, it would mean that for every hour fished, there were 0.004 bass  $\geq 5.0$  lbs caught by tournament anglers. This has since been changed to a more user-friendly measurement that estimates how many hours would be needed to catch a  $\geq 5.0$  lbs bass. For example, in a past report, it took approximately 20 hours of fishing at Lake Beshear to catch a bass weighing 5 lbs or more, while it took over 800 hours at Taylorsville Lake. At first glance, most of the numbers may actually seem too high, but when considering an 8-hr tournament with 50 anglers has a total fishing time of 400 hours (50 anglers x 8 hours = 400), those anglers could expect to see around 20  $\geq 5.0$  lbs bass (400 hours  $\div$  20 hours per  $\geq 5.0$  lb bass = 20) caught from Lake Beshear. Unfortunately, that would also mean that there would only be a 50% chance (400 hours  $\div$  800 hours per  $\geq 5.0$  lb bass = 0.50) that only 1  $\geq 5.0$  lbs bass would be brought to the weigh-in during the same tournament at Taylorsville Lake. However, since this statistic is simply a prediction based on the results from what might be only a handful of tournaments, it should never be looked at as a guarantee. There will be plenty of tournaments that weigh in more  $\geq 5.0$  lbs bass than was predicted by this report, but there will likely be just as many events that finish with far less.

Although this report should serve well as a record for bass tournament results over the years, it is actually intended to be a reference for just about anyone who plans on using the resource. For this very reason, everyone who uses the information provided in this report has the ability to suggest improvements that they would like to see incorporated into the program. If you happen to have any suggestions, need information on how to get involved, or simply have some comments to provide on the program, feel free to contact Chris Hickey, the KDFWR black bass research biologist, via any of the following information:

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**Your contribution to the Black Bass Tournament Program is greatly appreciated. But as always, we extend a warm welcome to any clubs that are not already participating.** Your continued efforts are the only way that this program can succeed like it does, which allows everyone to gain a better understanding of the bass populations that inhabit the many lakes and rivers within Kentucky. We truly hope that the information provided in this report will be of benefit to you and your organization.

**The Department would also like to remind all tournament directors to continue using the KDFWR website to schedule their fishing events in the future.** This system was created to help reduce user conflict that may develop as a result of multiple tournaments being scheduled at the same time and location. During the registration process for each tournament, the directors will be able to verify if any event has already registered on the same date, water body, and even boat ramp that they are also interested in. **If there is a situation where an event is already scheduled, we ask that you consider changing the date and/or location of your tournament, or at least attempt to contact the other director to come up with a compromise.** Prior to the establishment of the online scheduling system, the Department received regular calls/emails concerning conflicts that would result from multiple events occurring at the same boat landing. This system is the KDFWR’s attempt at alleviating these conflicts without having to implement mandatory regulations on fishing tournaments in Kentucky. As interest in sport fishing and recreational boating increase, we ask for everybody’s participation in order to help reduce potential conflict. On behalf of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, I would like to wish everybody a great fishing season in 2014, and we hope to see everyone out on the water!

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In 2013, there were a total of 295 bass tournaments that took part in this program by submitting their catch data either through the online system or by mailing in a completed report card. When comparing these results to the 233 events that contributed in 2012, participation had increased by 62 tournaments in 2013. This is even more impressive considering that the 117 tournament decline from 2011 (n = 350) to 2012 was the largest 1-year drop that the program has ever experienced. Unfortunately, the total number of tournaments participating in 2013 was still well below the program high of 376 events that was obtained in 2010. When considering there were 643 tournaments scheduled via the KDFWR website, the participation rate for 2013 was 45.9%, which was once again a substantial improvement over the reporting rate of 37.5% that was achieved in 2012. Despite the increase and a rate that was getting much closer to 50%, the results from 2013 still came up short of the higher rates that had been obtained several years ago, which included the 52% encountered in 2011 and the program's highest rate of 61% that had been achieved in 2009. Hopefully, tournament participation will continue to improve over the next couple of years, especially with new plans to promote the program to everyone that has scheduled a tournament via the online system over the past couple of years.

Of the 295 events participating in the program in 2013, there was at least 1 tournament hosted at 33 different water bodies, which included 15 large ( $\geq 1,000$  acres) reservoirs, 14 smaller ( $< 1000$  acre) lakes and 4 river systems. The fact that the number of larger reservoirs in 2013 was identical to 2012 was not surprising since this statistic has been very consistent over the last several years, which included totals of 14 and 15 that were reported in 2011 and 2010, respectively. This is in contrast to the instability in the total number of tournaments being held at smaller lakes ( $< 1,000$  acre). For example, the 14 small lakes in 2013 was a substantial increase from the 8 reported in 2012, but it was identical to what was discovered a few years earlier in 2010 (n = 14). In the past, local bass clubs have been responsible for the majority of the events hosted at smaller water bodies, so it's likely that their participation rates are correlated to the number of  $< 1000$  acre lakes reported to the program over the years. The last group of water bodies to host a tournament in 2013 was the 4 different river systems, which was identical to the results from 2012 through 2010. Another similarity to recent years is that this statistic is a bit misleading since more than 80% of the events in 2013 were held on the Ohio River, and 85% of those were hosted on either the Markland or Meldahl pools located along the border of north central Kentucky.

Several program updates instituted in 2010 made it possible to analyze the data while considering different formats utilized by tournament organizers. The individual angler format calls for each tournament participant to use a separate boat while fishing for their own limit of bass, and it's often the most recognized setup, especially for those who aren't regular anglers. However, only 14.9% of bass tournaments in 2013 (n = 44) actually followed the individual angler format, which dropped slightly from 2012 (15.9%) and is still far from being the most common setup. The team format that involved 2 anglers using the same boat and both fishing for a single limit of bass was employed by 84.4% of the tournaments (n = 249) in 2013, which easily made it the most popular. However, this format was followed by only 79.4% of the bass fishing events in 2012, which meant that the remaining 4.7% from that year utilized a team format that ended up being the least common of them all. In this case, the 2 members of a team would use the same boat, but they would each have to catch their own limit of bass, which would eventually be combined at the tournament's weigh-in. This setup was used by only 2, or 0.7%, of the tournaments in 2013, which dropped from the 11 events that followed it in 2012 (4.7%).

As in previous years, the largest proportion of black bass tournaments in 2013 used a daily creel, or "bag", limit that included either 5 or 6 fish. The submitted data was used to determine that 86.8% of the events in 2013 utilized a 5-fish limit while 3.1% of the tournaments allowed anglers to weigh in the statewide creel limit of 6 bass. These results increased from 2012 when 78.1% and 6.0% of the bass tournaments had a 5-fish and 6-fish "bag", respectively, which would indicate that more of the 2012 events (16.0%) utilized creel limits of  $\leq 4$  bass. This type of bag limit has been less common as of late, but there were still some tournaments in 2013 that used creels of 2 (0.7%) or 3 (8.8%) bass. The smaller bag limits are usually enforced either to comply with a water body's special regulations or to adapt to shorter tournament durations

(i.e.  $\leq 5$  hrs). Although they also appeared to be less common in 2013, “Big Fish” tournaments have been utilized at Kentucky reservoirs where the bass populations are being managed by highly restrictive regulations. For instance, Cedar Creek Lake is known for having a high-quality largemouth bass fishery, but a trophy regulation allowing anglers to keep a single  $\geq 20$ -in largemouth bass does not lend itself to the standard tournament format. However, several bass clubs have been known to adopt a “Big Fish” format simply to fit Cedar Creek Lake into its tournament schedule.

After considering the creel limits used by the tournaments, it was determined that 26.4% of all angling-units (individual anglers or teams) participating in the program in 2013 were able to successfully weigh in a full limit of black bass. Although this surpassed both 2010 (18.7%) and 2011 (24.7%), it was not able to improve on 2012 when 35.7% of all angling-units were reported to have weighed in a full limit, which also turned out to be a new high for the program. In total, the percentages obtained for 2011, 2012 and 2013 have all been considerably higher than those from previous years. However, the percentages from 2009 and earlier were obtained when tournament format was not being reported, so the proportion of “angling-units” weighing in a full limit was actually expected to improve after the program updates were implemented. For example, even if each team from a tournament in 2009 had successfully weighed in a limit and should have resulted in 100% for this statistic, it’s more likely to have been credited with 50.0% because the original methods would often incorrectly define the 2 members of a team as a pair of individual anglers fishing for his/her own limit. If the 2013 catch data had been analyzed using these same methods, the overall number of teams ( $n = 5,373$ ) would first have to be doubled and then added to the number of participants ( $n = 3,653$ ) from all individual angler tournaments. And finally, the number of limits reported in 2013 ( $n = 2,381$ ) would be divided by this sum ( $n = 14,399$ ) and finish with a result showing that 16.5% of all anglers weighed in a limit. As expected, the program’s original methods not only produced results that were lower, but also proved to be less accurate than those used to analyze the data after the program updates were implemented.

Size limits associated with bass tournaments in 2013 most often followed along with the regulations already being enforced at each water body, which has been case since the program began over 14 years ago. The standard 12 and 15 in size limits commonly used to manage bass populations in Kentucky were also utilized by 98.4% of the fishing events reported in 2013. When coming up with the rules for future events, tournament organizers must keep in mind that there is still no scenario that allows their participants to possess a fish that does not comply with the regulations that all other anglers must follow. Even though each tournament is still allowed to implement more restrictive size limits (i.e. an 18-inch size limit instead the lake’s 15 inch minimum), they should not encourage anglers to weigh in sub-legal fish (i.e. a 12-in size limit on a 15-in lake).

Details from all 295 bass fishing events were used to determine that they typically lasted between 4.0 and 24.0 hours (h), but the average length of a tournament in 2013 was discovered to be only 7.9 h, which was identical to 2012 (7.9 h), but still less than the 8+ hour averages of 2011 (8.4 h) and 2010 (8.2 h). The declines in 2013 and 2012 were most likely the result of multi-day events becoming less common and a boost in the amount of shorter week-day tournaments being reported. From information reported in 2013, it was determined that the vast majority of tournaments lasted only 1 day (96.3%) while the 2-day (3.1%) and 3-day (0.6%) events were much less common. It had been previously assumed that only the largest organizations were hosting multi-day events, but it appears that some smaller bass clubs are now jumping in with 2+ day tournaments serving as their championship event, which are usually held at the end of each year.

After the 2013 bass fish events were separated by season, it was found that they were similar to previous years with 84.8% of them taking place in either the spring (46.8%) or summer (38.0%), and the remaining 15.2% that occurred during the fall (13.2%) and winter (2.0%). The similarities also included the time of day that the 2013 tournaments took place, which included 87.8% and 12.2% of the events occurring during the daylight and nighttime hours, respectively. Because Kentucky summers are often accompanied by  $\geq 90^{\circ}\text{F}$  air temperatures during the daylight hours, this was the season that contained the majority (83.3%) of the nighttime tournaments, which are often used to avoid excessive heat that is detrimental to both the fish and the anglers. In fact, the KDFWR strongly recommends that the hottest months (i.e. July & August) be avoided altogether when scheduling a fishing event because this heat has been shown to increase the

mortality rates of the fish caught and released during tournaments. However, if it's not feasible to select a month with cooler temperatures, it's the responsibility of each participant to learn about the different procedures available to lower the stress levels of the fish they catch. The actual details of these procedures are updated regularly because ongoing research is constantly trying to discover the most effective methods of increasing the survival rates of fish caught and released during tournaments. For this reason, there have always been some examples of current procedures attached to end of each annual tournament report, including this one.

Without considering each event's format and assuming that every team had 2 members, a total of 14,399 anglers had participated in the tournaments that submitted catch data in 2013. This was an increase over the 13,636 anglers from 2012, which was expected since that year also had 62 fewer tournaments. Once the formats for all events were finally considered, there were actually 9,026 "angling-units" that participated in 2013, which was indeed higher than 2012 (8,050 angling-units), but well short of the 10,630 angling-units that reported in 2011. As mentioned previously, the number of angling-units from 2013 was determined by adding the total participants of individual angler tournaments ( $n = 3,653$ ) to the number of teams pulled from each team tournament ( $n = 5,373$ ). It was surprising to find that 2013 had fewer teams than 2012 ( $n = 5,586$ ), which also meant that events in 2012 that followed the single angler format had substantially fewer participants ( $n = 2,464$ ). The results from 2013 actually opposed the conclusions from previous years that had stated that angler participation in tournaments could increase, but it was only expected for those that utilized a team format.

According to the 2013 tournament results, the 14,399 anglers, or 9,026 angling-units, caught a total of 24,584 bass weighing 61,716.14 pounds (lbs), which results in an average weight of 2.32 lbs per fish. The total number of bass brought into the weigh-ins in 2013 was higher than 2012 ( $n = 22,815$ ), but like the number of angling-units, it was once again unable to top the 26,440 fish reported in 2011, which also happens to be the highest number of bass caught during all 15-years of this project. A comparison of the 2013 and 2012 catch data revealed that the 10.8% jump in tournament anglers in 2013 was accompanied by only a 7.2% increase in the number of bass that they caught. So despite the increases in numbers of both angling-units and fish, there are indications that tournament anglers in 2013 were just not able to match the success of those in 2012.

The "average catch" statistic for this program is defined as the average number of bass caught per angling-unit, but it only accounts for those fish that were submitted to the weigh-ins, which obviously excludes any undersized or culled bass. This was another statistic that was directly affected by the 2010 updates to how tournament data should be reported. Since tournament format was not considered under the pre-2010 methods, teams would be counted as 2 separate anglers and the "average catch" would have been calculated as 1.71 bass/angler in 2013. However, teams have since been properly accounted for as a single unit, and now, the more accurate measure of "average catch" for 2013 was 2.72 bass/angling-unit. There was a slight drop from the average catch of 2.83 bass/angling-unit in 2012, but like other statistics, it remained higher than both 2011 (2.49 bass/angling-unit) and 2010 (2.11 bass/angling-unit). The small decline from 2012 helps reinforce previous speculations that tournament anglers were not quite as successful in 2013.

An average of 49 anglers competed in the typical bass tournament in 2013, which was substantially less than the program high set in 2012 when bass fishing events had an average of 59 participants. The fact is that 2013 was the first time since 2010 (44 anglers/event) that participation dropped below 50 anglers per tournament. After being broken down by format, the single angler tournaments in 2013 had an average of 83 participants while the team events typically consisted of 21 teams. When compared to the average individual ( $n = 67$  anglers) and team ( $n = 29$  teams) tournaments in 2012, it wasn't a surprise to find that a single-angler event in 2013 was 19.3% larger while the team events were actually 27.6% smaller. When this is considered along with previous comparisons, it becomes evident that if 2012 and 2013 had the same number of tournaments, it's likely that 2013 would have ended with substantially less anglers and fewer bass being caught.

Anglers competing in bass tournaments in 2013 needed an average weight of 14.70 pounds to take 1<sup>st</sup> place in the standard 8 hour event. It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight year that the average winning weight was able to surpass

the 14 lb. mark, and because it was greater than 2012 (14.52 lb.), it was easily the highest weight obtained during the bass tournament program has been ongoing. This included years with what was once considered as “high” average winning weights, like 13.80 and 13.62 lbs in 2007 and 2011, respectively. After each of the 295 events were standardized to a length of 8 hours and a creel limit of 5 fish, the highest winning weight of 2013 belonged to a May 2<sup>nd</sup> event at Lake Beshear where it took 32.42 lb. to claim 1<sup>st</sup> place. And finally, the biggest fish reported to the program in 2013 was a large bass caught during a March 30<sup>th</sup> tournament at Kentucky Lake that tipped the scales at 8.50 pounds.

Similar to all other years of the program, largemouth bass was the most common black bass species caught during the 2013 tournaments when it comprised 87.6% of the total catch while spotted and smallmouth bass made identical contributions of 6.2%. The percentage of largemouth bass caught during tournaments actually declined from the 93.4% obtained in 2012, and in fact, it was the first time it had dropped in several years. The previous trend of increasing largemouth bass contributions included the tournaments in 2008 (85.0%), 2009 (86.4%), 2010 (87.4%), and 2011 (90.7%), and it has apparently ended with 2012 (93.4%). In 2013, the highest proportions of spotted bass came from tournaments held at Herrington Lake (42.9%) and Lake Cumberland (30.1%) (Table 4). As for smallmouth bass, they made contributions of 23.3% and 26.2% to all the fish weighed in at Dale Hollow Lake and Lake Cumberland, respectively. They were also the only bass weighed in (n = 3) during the single tournament reported from Carr Creek Lake in 2013.

In an attempt to compare the statistics from the more popular tournament water bodies in Kentucky, a system was developed early on in the program that originally ranked the lakes and rivers in 6 specific categories related to angler success and size of the bass being caught. In order to prevent any one tournament from having too much of an influence, the program required a water body to have hosted 3 or more bass fishing events during the year in order for it to be included in the rankings. The original ranking system was in place for several years without change, but updates in 2010 that altered the way that catch data was reported ultimately lead to the elimination of one of the six original categories. In 2013, and for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row, this category was replaced by one that ranked the lakes and rivers according to the number of tournaments that were reported. Although the category isn't related to angler success or size of the bass, it helps to illustrate how the number of tournaments can influence the different results in this report. It's also very important to keep in mind that there can be specific aspects of a fishery (i.e. different creel and minimum length limits) that could have either a negative or a positive impact on where it ranks in the other categories.

The ranking of water bodies according to the total number of events reported in 2013 has indicated that once again larger reservoirs in western and central Kentucky were the preferred locations for bass tournaments (Table 5). The top 3 water bodies were the only locations to host 25 or more bass fishing events in 2013, which included Kentucky Lake (55 tournaments), Green River Lake (33 tournaments) and Lake Barkley (28 tournaments). These 3 lakes often occupy a perennial spot near the top of this list along with the Ohio River and other larger water bodies, like Barren River, Nolin River, Rough River and Taylorsville lakes, consistently coming in close behind them. Although Lake Cumberland is indeed one of the largest reservoirs in Kentucky, it regularly finishes near the middle, or even the lower half, of this ranking. This could be the case because Lake Cumberland has several features that are more conducive to cool water fisheries like striped bass and walleye, and according to the results submitted to this program each year, it's simply not a popular location for black bass tournaments.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> category in the rankings involved the catch rates of black bass at each water body that hosted 3 or more tournaments in 2013. For this category, the catch rate is described as the number of bass that were caught per hour of fishing by the anglers/teams participating in the tournaments at each qualifying water body. The best way to illustrate this is to consider a fishing event with 100 anglers/teams planned for a reservoir that had an average catch rate of 0.40 bass per hour. According to this rate, one could expect each hour of the tournament to result in nearly 40 legal-size bass being caught (100 anglers/teams X 0.4 bass/h = 40 fish), or as many as 320 bass over the course of an 8-hour event. In 2013, the tournament catch rates for black bass were highest at the Ohio River (0.43 bass/hour), which is often near the top of those rankings related to number of bass being caught (Table 5). Other water bodies that filled in the top 5 for black bass catch rates in 2013 were Kentucky Lake (0.41 bass/hour), Lake Beshear (0.41 bass/hour), Green River Lake

(0.40 bass/hour) and Lake Barkley/Barren River Lake (0.36 bass/hour). Through the years that tournament results have been submitted, lakes and rivers managed under a 12-inch minimum length limit are commonly found near the top of this ranking because the lower size limit generally allows the anglers/teams to weigh in higher numbers of smaller bass. Also, black bass catch rate was another statistic influenced by the 2010 updates, and before these changes took effect (2009 and earlier), the tournament water bodies rarely achieved catch rates of 0.40 bass/hour or higher.

The “percent of successful anglers/teams” is the 3<sup>rd</sup> category in the rankings, and it’s best described as the proportion of tournament participants that were able to catch a legal-size bass. This is a rather simple statistic that is calculated by dividing the number of anglers/teams that weighed in at least 1 bass by the total number of those that participated in the tournament. For instance, if a fishing event with 60 teams reported that 45 of them had weighed in at least one bass, the percent success for this tournament would be 75% ( $45 \div 60 = 0.75$ ). Since this statistic relies on what defines a legal size-bass, the minimum length limit being enforced by each tournament had a substantial influence on the outcome, and those water bodies managed by lower size limits (i.e. 12 in or a 1 under 15 in slot) were generally expected to rank well in this category. This was the case in 2013 with the top 3 water bodies in this category being the Ohio River (86.6%), Nolin River Lake (86.0%) and Green River Lake (83.8%). The Ohio River also ranked the highest in this category in 2012 with 92.4% of the anglers bringing in at least 1 bass to the weigh-in, while Herrington (90.5%) and Nolin River (90.0%) lakes finished up the top 3. Unlike 2012, none of the lakes or rivers in the 2013 rankings were able to achieve average success rates of 90% or higher, which further supports the idea that tournament anglers were simply not as successful at catching bass in 2013 as they were in 2012.

“Average weight per bass” is the next category in the rankings, and like some previous statistics, it has the potential to be influenced substantially by the size regulations used by the tournaments at each water body. However, in contrast to the others, this is one statistic that can actually improve from the enforcement of a highly restrictive size limit. During the last several years, this scenario was described perfectly by those tournaments held at Cedar Creek Lake, which has a largemouth bass population that has always been managed by trophy regulations that only allow anglers to possess one fish that has to be at least 20 inches in length. When the lake qualified with 3+ events, these regulations almost guaranteed that it would be at or near the top of the ranking for average weight per bass. Unlike the previous years, Cedar Creek Lake did not have enough tournaments reported in 2013 to be included in the rankings. This allowed the top spot in 2013 to be filled by the average weight per bass obtained by tournament anglers at Lake Beshear (3.05 lbs), which often ranks 1<sup>st</sup> when Cedar Creek Lake is unable to qualify. The other water bodies making up the top 5 in 2013 were Kentucky Lake (2.83 lbs), Lake Barkley (2.71 lbs), Lake Cumberland (2.43 lbs) and Yatesville Lake (2.35 lbs). With the exception of Lake Beshear (12-in min), all lakes in the top 5 have bass populations that are managed by the higher 15-inch minimum length limit. In 2012, three of the same water bodies, Lake Beshear (2.96 lbs), Kentucky Lake (2.60 lbs) and Lake Barkely (2.45 lbs), were in the top 5. Other than Cedar Creek Lake (4.87 lbs in 2012), the only location that didn’t repeat in the top 5 was Barren River Lake, where the decline in average weight from 2.48 lbs in 2012 to 2.31 lbs in 2013 was enough to drop it from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> on the list. The reservoirs often found near the top of the rankings for average weight per bass (i.e. Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley) have enjoyed long histories where their black bass fisheries have been at a higher level than those at other lakes, which is why they tend to be ideal locations for tournaments each and every year.

From 1999 through 2009, tournament directors were asked to keep track of multiple categories of big fish, which included any bass weighing more than 4 and 6 lbs. During the updates in 2010, the requirements for reporting big bass were simplified when tournaments would now only be asked to count those fish weighing 5 lbs or more. Obviously, this also resulted in a notable change to the rankings when 2 of the original categories were ultimately combined into one, which was used to illustrate the amount of time (angler or team hours) it took to catch a  $\geq 5$  lb bass. In 2013, the least amount of time to catch a “big bass” was the 33 hours it took at Lake Beshear (Table 5), which was an improvement over the 46 and 34 hour averages the lake needed to rank 1<sup>st</sup> in 2012 and 2011, respectively. It has actually become commonplace for Lake Beshear to top this category as long as it has the 3+ events to be included in the rankings. The water bodies capping off the top 5 for the least amount of time to catch a  $\geq 5.0$  pounds bass in 2013 were Green River

Lake (42 hours), Kentucky Lake (99 hours), Lake Barkley (100 hours) and Rough River Lake (110 hours). When considering the actual numbers of “big bass” reported to the program in 2013, Kentucky Lake easily surpassed all other water bodies with 379 fish weighing 5 lbs or more, while Green River Lake and Lake Barkley finished well behind that with 81 and 70  $\geq 5.0$  lb bass, respectively. Of the 33 water bodies that had results submitted in 2013, there were 17 locations (51.5%) reporting at least 1 bass caught that weighed in at 5 lbs or more.

The average weight required to take 1<sup>st</sup> place was the 6<sup>th</sup> and final category ranked in 2013, but this statistic was calculated only after all black bass tournaments were standardized to a 1-day, 8 hour event. With the 22.29 lb average needed to win a standard tournament at Lake Beshear in 2013, it was not surprising to find it at the top of this list, which means the lake has ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in each of the 3 categories related to size of the bass being caught by tournament anglers. Because Kentucky Lake (18.43 lbs), Lake Barkley (18.04 lbs), Rough River Lake (16.11 lbs) and Barren River Lake (16.07 lbs) had average winning weights that exceeded 16 lbs in 2013, it was enough to place each of them in the top 5 below Lake Beshear. Although the 10 water bodies with standardized 1<sup>st</sup> place weights of 10 lbs or more in 2013 is respectable, it did manage to prolong one of the more unfavorable trends observed since the bass tournament program began. This downward trend was originally suspected when the 15 lakes/ivers with average winning weights of  $\geq 10$  lbs in 2009 fell to a total of 13 locations in 2010, and then declined once more to only 12 water bodies in 2011 that had the standard 1<sup>st</sup> place weights of 10 lbs or more. Unfortunately, the decline continued after 2012 finished with a total of 11 lakes/ivers achieving the  $\geq 10$  lb average winning weights, and then it finally moved on to the latest drop in 2013 when only 10 water bodies were able to meet the criteria. With increases in both the total number of participating tournaments and the amount of different water bodies hosting an event in 2013, it was initially expected to be enough to finally break the trend. Since this has yet to occur, additional variables will be observed very closely in the future in order to identify the reason(s) why an increasing number of water bodies appear to be falling short of achieving average winning weights of 10 lbs or more. And finally, on an opposite note, several water bodies, including Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Lake Beshear, have been able to achieve standardized 1<sup>st</sup> place weights that average well over 10 lbs in every year that catch data has been submitted.

The KDFWR has long intended to use the tournament data to help identify, or even predict, major changes to the black bass populations at the more popular lakes/ivers in Kentucky. Tables that were originally designed to complete this objective started off with 5 specific variables that were updated annually and then examined very closely for any potential trends. In 2010, there were several program updates that effectively reduced the number of variables in each table to 4 (Table 6). These changes allowed tournament format to be considered properly for the first time, but they initially had an artificial impact on most of the data required to update the tables. In fact, the average weight per bass was the only variable not affected by these changes. Hence, for several years after 2010, the new methods for reporting catch data had not been used long enough to allow any real trends to be recognized for those 3 variables that were most likely to be altered by the sudden recognition of tournament format. However, because the updated methods had been used for 4 consecutive years in 2013, it was starting to get easier to attribute any potential trends to actual changes in the bass populations.

Another variable was added to the tables in 2012 that simply listed the number of events that submitted catch data each year, and with the program’s long-term database, there was enough reliable information available immediately so there was no need to wait for further data to be collected (Table 6). The number of tournaments reported in a given year could be very important because it provided a simple way to gauge the accuracy of the other variables in the table. In the case when only a few events from a specific water body are reported, a single tournament with below/above average results would have a great deal of influence over the different variables being examined. If this were to occur, those using the data could immediately recognize that there was an increased possibility that the results were not an accurate representation of the lake/river. In contrast, when a water body has 15 events participating in the program during the same year, it’s unlikely that the results from a single tournament would have too much influence over the other variables being monitored. Ultimately, it’s much easier to put confidence in trends that are associated with a lake/river that consistently has 10 or more tournaments report their catch data each year.

As already mentioned, “average weight per bass” has been calculated in the same manner since the program began, and it’s a variable that was not affected when some of the methods were recently updated. Hence, any results obtained prior to 2010 could be examined along with the most recent tournament data without any issues, and for the latest tables, this means that the “average weight per bass” from 2004 through 2013 could be used to identify any trends. Ironically, it’s been found that when there are enough tournaments reported to produce accurate trends, the “average weigh per bass” is actually less likely to fluctuate than any of the other variables in the table (Table 6). When subtle changes are observed, they can often be attributed to different influences ranging from an increase/decrease in the number of fishing events being reported to the movement of strong/weak year classes through the size class of bass most often targeted by tournament participants. Changes are sometimes strong enough that local anglers can actually notice a fluctuation in the average weight of the fish they catch, but this will almost always last at most a couple a years before reverting back to a level that the water body has been accustomed to. In order for the average weight of an entire bass population to experience a long-term increase or decrease, it would have to begin with some major event that would then trigger a noticeable shift in the growth and/or condition of the fish. Events that could potentially lead to this include a swing in the most abundant forage species, an introduction of a new predator that would compete directly with black bass and/or a substantial change in the water conditions (i.e. an increase in productivity levels via the introduction of artificial fertilizer). However, these types of events are not commonplace, and they would rarely occur without already being identified by those that manage the resource. In fact, it’s likely that the resource manager is intentionally using it to manipulate the fishery, which means that he/she would already be closely monitoring the status of the black bass population.

After the 2013 tournament results were used to update the tables, there were only a handful of water bodies found to be exhibiting a shift in the average weight per bass that could not simply be explained by increases/decreases in the number of events reporting catch data. One such water body, Green River Lake, appeared to continue following a trend being monitored for a couple years now that was based on a sustained increase in the average size of the bass being caught during tournaments. Along with the results from 2013 (2.29 lbs) and 2012 (2.32 lbs), the average size of the fish have exceeded 2.0 lbs for 5 straight years, which is in contrast to 2004 through 2008 when the bass caught during tournaments only averaged 1.48 to 1.74 lbs. It doesn’t appear that the average weights of bass from Green River Lake are expected to drop below the 2-lb mark in the near future, which should demonstrate that the higher average size is not linked to any specific year-class. Because the historical sampling data cannot provide a full explanation for this sustained improvement in tournament results at Green River Lake, additional efforts may be needed to take a closer look at the bass population. Resource managers will seek out an explanation not only to help make sure that this trend continues for a long time, but also to potentially discover something that could be used to improve the black bass fisheries at other locations as well.

The methods used to follow the numbers of “big bass” being caught during tournaments in Kentucky originally required the participants to keep track of 2 separate size groups ( $\geq 4.0$  and  $\geq 6.0$  lbs). However, ever since the program updates in 2010, the process was altered to the point that tournaments are now only required to submit one number, which is the total quantity of bass weighing 5 lbs or more. Similar to other variables related to the size of the fish, those factors having the biggest influence on the average amount of time it takes to catch a “big bass” don’t generally fluctuate much over time, so it’s difficult to identify any trends that can actually be attributed to real changes to the fishery. Additionally, if there happened to be events that could alter the average size of the bass, it does not mean that anglers will begin to immediately experience increases/decreases in the amount of time needed to catch a “big fish”. In fact, there is no guarantee that a noticeable change in the average size of the bass will ever be followed by the same for the time it takes to catch the larger fish. In order for this to happen, there would need to be fluctuations in the actual number of “big fish” in the population, which can occur only after a long-term, or even permanent, change that directly influences the black bass growth rates.

Regardless of the minimum size used to define a “big bass”, there always seems to be a specific group of water bodies that consistently reports more large fish than any of the others that hosted tournaments that year. At the lakes/rivers that are most likely to produce big fish, there is usually some combination of characteristics in place that create ideal conditions for the growth of black bass. However, if a water body

was to somehow acquire just one of these characteristics, like a growing abundance of vulnerable forage fish or consistently higher levels of productivity, the anglers could very well experience an increase in the number of high-quality bass that they catch, but the amount of those reaching “big fish” status is still likely to remain unchanged. On those rare occasions that “big bass” densities do improve, there’s still the possibility that whatever conditions led to the increase could start to dissipate simply because of the increases in demand that were created by the higher numbers of larger fish in the system. Over the course of this program, most water bodies have experienced some fluctuation when it comes to the average amount of time needed to catch a “big fish”. For instance, there were times when Lake Cumberland was near the top of the list for this category (i.e. 39 hr for  $\geq 4$  lb bass in 2007 and 2009), but that would only last for a couple years before it would start to get harder for anglers to catch similar size fish (i.e.  $>1000$  hr for  $\geq 4$  lb bass in 2012). Ultimately, after recognizing that most of the “big bass” come from the same list of water bodies year after year, it would require some unlikely long-term changes before a lake/river would experience enough of an increase in the abundance of large fish to eventually become the next location added to this list.

If the 2014 season is anything like those from the past several years, anglers should not be surprised to discover that popular tournament locations like Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley, Barren River Lake and Green River Lake will once again produce winning weights that average 15 pounds or more. The combined total number of events at Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley could continue to be 3 times that of any other water body in the state. But the results from a group of highly successful spring events held at Lake Beshear is likely to prolong the small impoundment’s dominance over most of the big reservoirs. Tournament anglers fishing in the pools of the Ohio River near Cincinnati should continue to experience above-average catch rates resulting from a largemouth bass stocking program that the KDFWR developed several years ago. Finally, after 667 bass weighing 5 lbs or more were reported from the 295 tournaments in 2013, anglers still have the potential to catch some really big bass at many lakes and reservoirs throughout Kentucky.

As always, the KDFWR greatly appreciates all of those who continue to participate in Kentucky’s Black Bass Tournament Reporting Program, which has become a model for similar programs in other states. Their continued involvement has been absolutely critical in making this program a success year after year. Hopefully, now that it has finished its 15<sup>th</sup> year, tournament anglers can now realize just how valuable their catch data can be to the continued management of Kentucky’s invaluable black bass fisheries. Good luck to you and your continued fishing success in 2014!

Table 1. Summary of 2013 bass tournament data from Kentucky lakes (&gt; 1000 acres) by season and overall.

Water Body	Total # of Events	# of Ind. Events	# of Team Events	Total # of Angling-units	# Bass Caught	# Bass per Hour	Percent Success	Average Weight per Bass (lbs)	# of Bass >5.0 lbs	Big Bass (lbs)	Average 1st Place Weight (Standard 8h Day)
Barren River Lake											
Spring	7	0	7	159	476	0.38	87.1	2.20	8	6.44	16.16
Summer	9	1	8	417	1331	0.38	78.4	2.42	21	5.81	16.06
Fall	4	1	3	291	719	0.28	69.5	2.33	7	5.94	16.20
Winter	1	0	1	18	47	0.44	94.4	2.03	2	6.01	14.95
Total	21	2	19	885	2573	0.36	80.4	2.31	38	6.44	16.07
Cave Run Lake											
Spring	1	1	0	20	18	0.11	55.0	1.37	0	4.90	6.12
Summer	2	2	0	24	19	0.10	49.7	1.78	1	5.69	5.24
Total	3	3	0	44	37	0.11	51.4	1.64	1	5.69	5.53
Dale Hollow Lake											
Spring & Total	2	0	2	22	73	0.23	85.0	2.42	0	4.94	11.32
Dewey Lake											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	60	18	0.04	21.7	2.44	0	4.50	7.50
Grayson Lake											
Spring	2	2	0	46	9	0.02	14.8	1.98	0	4.80	5.12
Summer	1	1	0	14	7	0.06	35.7	2.34	0	3.42	5.24
Fall	1	1	0	16	3	0.02	12.5	2.57	0	3.82	6.09
Total	4	4	0	76	19	0.03	19.5	2.22	0	4.80	5.39
Green River Lake											
Spring	15	0	15	191	554	0.37	79.7	2.46	41	7.10	14.58
Summer	12	0	12	141	529	0.47	88.6	2.06	29	7.00	15.10
Fall	5	0	5	74	197	0.36	86.9	2.20	6	6.00	14.85
Winter	1	0	1	14	36	0.32	71.4	2.69	5	6.65	18.80
Total	33	0	33	420	1316	0.40	83.8	2.29	81	7.10	14.94
Herrington Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	10	35	0.50	100.0	1.59	1	5.42	13.29
Kentucky Lake											
Spring	22	5	17	1504	5127	0.41	87.6	2.94	246	8.50	18.37
Summer	22	4	18	907	4456	0.45	82.5	2.77	85	7.15	19.40
Fall	9	2	7	486	1646	0.32	77.2	2.57	30	6.94	15.37
Winter	2	0	2	36	96	0.35	72.7	3.50	18	7.19	22.31
Total	55	11	44	2933	11325	0.41	83.3	2.83	379	8.50	18.43

Table 1 cont. Summary of 2013 bass tournament data from Kentucky lakes (> 1000 acres) by season and overall.

Water Body	Total # of Events	# of Ind. Events	# of Team Events	Total # of Angling-units	# Bass Caught	# Bass per Hour	Percent Success	Average Weight per Bass (lbs)	# of Bass >5.0 lbs	Big Bass (lbs)	Average 1st Place Weight (Standard 8h Day)	
Lake Barkley												
Spring	15	5	10	572	1607	0.33	77.0	2.78	39	8.34	17.97	
Summer	11	2	9	269	865	0.38	78.0	2.66	29	6.60	17.88	
Fall	2	0	2	32	106	0.44	85.8	2.42	2	5.21	19.48	
Total	28	7	21	873	2578	0.36	78.0	2.71	70	8.34	18.04	
Lake Cumberland												
Spring	11	2	9	726	1210	0.26	65.9	2.52	6	6.30	16.12	
Summer	1	0	1	16	47	0.37	56.3	2.71	1	7.55	19.05	
Fall	3	0	3	72	199	0.26	59.7	1.86	1	5.90	10.91	
Winter	2	0	2	18	48	0.33	61.3	2.66	0	4.57	13.95	
Total	17	2	15	832	1504	0.27	63.7	2.43	8	7.55	15.12	
Nolin River Lake												
Spring	11	0	11	191	447	0.29	87.1	1.95	11	6.49	12.14	
Summer	6	0	6	108	245	0.29	84.6	1.88	3	5.70	13.03	
Fall	4	0	4	40	76	0.26	85.1	1.66	1	5.01	8.62	
Total	21	0	21	339	768	0.29	86.0	1.87	15	6.49	11.72	
Paintsville Lake												
Spring	1	1	0	208	22	0.01	10.6	2.80	1	5.50	13.50	
Fall	1	1	0	13	0	0.00	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total	2	2	0	221	22	0.01	5.3	2.80	0	5.50	13.50	
Rough River Lake												
Spring	9	0	9	172	478	0.35	83.1	2.26	22	6.26	16.26	
Summer	8	0	8	103	272	0.35	91.8	2.03	10	6.57	15.68	
Fall	4	0	4	252	557	0.26	55.6	2.07	6	7.02	16.60	
Total	21	0	21	527	1307	0.33	81.1	2.14	38	7.02	16.11	
Taylorsville Lake												
Spring	10	0	10	228	220	0.24	58.6	2.40	0	4.98	13.81	
Summer	11	0	11	602	518	0.21	48.6	2.08	0	4.53	15.06	
Total	21	0	21	830	738	0.22	53.4	2.23	0	4.98	14.47	
Yatesville Lake												
Spring	2	2	0	58	64	0.14	60.0	2.34	1	5.09	8.07	
Summer	3	1	2	48	88	0.24	60.2	2.28	1	5.45	9.63	
Fall	1	1	0	17	23	0.17	76.5	2.60	0	4.54	11.91	
Total	6	4	2	123	175	0.19	62.9	2.35	2	5.45	9.49	

Table 2. Summary of 2013 bass tournament data from Kentucky lakes (< 1000 acres) by season and overall.

Water Body	Total # of Events	# of Ind. Events	# of Team Events	Total # of Angling-units	# Bass Caught	# Bass per Hour	Percent Success	Average Weight per Bass (lbs)	# of Bass >5.0 lbs	Big Bass (lbs)	Average 1st Place Weight (Standard 8h Day)
Boltz Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	14	35	0.36	78.6	1.28	0	2.82	N/A
Bullock Pen Lake											
Spring	5	0	5	44	64	0.19	56.0	2.24	1	5.12	9.10
Summer	4	0	4	56	132	0.33	66.3	1.66	0	4.90	12.18
Total	9	0	9	100	196	0.25	60.6	1.98	1	5.12	10.47
Carr Creek Lake											
Fall & Total	1	0	1	10	3	0.04	20.0	1.67	0	2.00	3.66
Cedar Creek Lake											
Spring	1	0	1	10	1	0.01	10.0	5.62	1	5.62	5.62
Summer	1	0	1	7	2	0.04	28.6	4.64	0	4.99	5.70
Total	2	0	2	17	3	0.03	19.3	5.13	1	5.62	5.66
Elmer Davis Lake											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	9	41	0.57	100.0	0.93	0	4.00	10.00
Fagan Branch Lake											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	10	18	0.30	60.0	1.34	1	7.76	13.36

Table 2 cont. Summary of 2013 bass tournament data from Kentucky lakes (< 1000 acres) by season and overall.

Water Body	Total # of Events	# of Ind. Events	# of Team Events	Total # of Angling-units	# Bass Caught	# Bass per Hour	Percent Success	Average Weight per Bass (lbs)	# of Bass >5.0 lbs	Big Bass (lbs)	Average 1st Place Weight (Standard 8h Day)
Kincaid Lake											
Spring	1	0	1	7	10	0.18	85.7	1.36	0	2.10	4.03
Summer	1	0	1	7	25	0.45	100.0	1.35	0	3.83	10.36
Total	2	0	2	14	35	0.32	92.9	1.36	0	3.83	7.20
Lake Beshear											
Spring & Total	11	2	9	131	294	0.41	80.0	3.05	29	6.79	22.29
Lake Jericho											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	11	14	0.18	54.6	2.85	1	5.36	11.36
Peabody WMA											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	6	6	0.14	50.0	1.53	0	1.08	3.55
Springfield Res.											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	10	45	0.75	100.0	1.29	0	3.06	12.17
Wilgreen Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	13	41	0.45	92.3	1.57	1	5.11	7.33
Williamstown Lake											
Spring & Total	2	0	2	23	7	0.04	26.5	1.54	0	2.71	2.30
Willisburg Lake											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	12	24	0.29	91.7	1.36	0	2.71	N/A

Table 3. Summary of 2013 bass tournament data from Kentucky rivers (by pool, if available) by season and overall.

Water Body	Total # of Events	# of Ind. Events	# of Team Events	Total # of Angling-units	# Bass Caught	# Bass per Hour	Percent Success	Average Weight per Bass (lbs)	# of Bass >5.0 lbs	Big Bass (lbs)	Average 1st Place Weight (Standard 8h Day)
Kentucky River											
Summer	1	0	1	6	18	0.38	100.0	1.28	0	2.31	6.72
Fall	1	0	1	12	24	0.29	66.7	1.18	0	2.09	8.59
Total	2	0	2	18	42	0.34	83.4	1.23	0	2.31	7.66
Kentucky Lake Tailwater											
Summer & Total	1	1	0	20	57	0.36	85.0	1.94	0	3.85	12.47
Lake Barkley Tailwater											
Summer & Total	1	1	0	15	59	0.49	100.0	1.99	0	4.39	11.01
Ohio River											
Greenup Pool											
Spring	1	1	0	16	32	0.22	87.5	1.65	0	2.84	8.60
Summer	1	1	0	18	18	0.13	55.6	1.27	0	3.27	5.40
Fall	1	1	0	12	7	0.07	33.3	1.55	0	3.32	6.42
Total	3	3	0	46	57	0.14	58.8	1.49	0	3.32	6.81
Markland Pool											
Summer & Total	5	0	5	63	261	0.51	90.8	1.38	0	4.46	9.73
Meldahl Pool											
Spring	3	0	3	39	173	0.54	94.3	1.68	0	3.95	10.58
Summer	7	2	5	233	615	0.43	90.1	1.28	0	4.35	8.36
Fall	2	0	2	17	70	0.52	93.8	1.32	0	2.71	8.87
Total	12	2	10	289	858	0.47	91.7	1.38	0	4.35	9.00
All Pools Combined											
Spring	4	1	3	55	205	0.46	92.6	1.67	0	3.95	10.08
Summer	13	3	10	314	894	0.44	87.7	1.32	0	4.46	8.66
Fall	3	1	2	29	77	0.37	73.6	1.39	0	3.32	8.05
Total	20	5	15	398	1176	0.43	86.6	1.40	0	4.46	8.85

Table 4. Species composition (%) for each water body that was reported by tournaments in 2013. The size limits used by each event often varied, which can influence how much each black bass species had contributed to the anglers' catch

Water body	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Spotted Bass
Barren River Lake	89.9	1.0	9.1
Boltz Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Bullock Pen Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Carr Creek Lake	0.0	100.0	0.0
Cave Run Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Cedar Creek Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Dale Hollow Lake	69.9	23.3	6.8
Dewey Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Elmer Davis Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Fagan Branch Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Grayson Lake	94.7	0.0	5.3
Green River Lake	80.7	3.5	15.8
Herrington Lake	57.1	0.0	42.9
Kentucky Lake	89.0	9.1	1.9
Kentucky Lake Tailwater	94.7	5.3	0.0
Kentucky River	71.5	9.5	19.0
Kincaid Lake	100.0	0.0	2.9
Lake Barkley	97.2	2.7	0.1
Lake Barkley Tailwater	93.2	6.8	0.2
Lake Beshear	100.0	0.0	0.0
Lake Cumberland	43.7	26.2	30.1
Lake Jericho	100.0	0.0	0.0
Nolin River Lake	94.8	0.0	5.2
Ohio River - All Pools	85.5	2.5	12.0
Ohio River - Greenup	93.0	0.0	7.0
Ohio River - Markland	83.9	2.7	13.4
Ohio River - Meldahl	85.5	2.6	11.9
Paintsville Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Peabody WMA	100.0	0.0	0.0
Rough River Lake	97.5	0.0	2.5
Springfield Reservoir	100.0	0.0	0.0
Taylorsville Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Wilgreen Lake	85.4	0.0	14.6
Williamstown Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Willisburg Lake	100.0	0.0	0.0
Yatesville Lake	99.4	0.0	0.6

Table 5. Kentucky lakes and rivers ranked under 6 different statistics that were calculated from catch data reported by bass tournaments in 2013. In order to be included in these rankings, each water body was required to have at least 3 events participate in the program over the past year.

Total Number of Tournaments Reported		Number of Bass Caught per Hour		Percent of Successful Anglers/Teams		Average Weight (lbs) per Bass		Hours to Catch a $\geq 5.0$ lbs Bass <sup>A</sup>		Average 1st Place Weight (lbs) per 8 hour Day	
Kentucky Lake	55	Ohio River	0.43	Ohio River	86.6	Lake Beshear	3.05	Lake Beshear	33	Lake Beshear	22.29
Green River Lake	33	Kentucky Lake	0.41	Nolin River Lake	86.0	Kentucky Lake	2.83	Green River Lake	42	Kentucky Lake	18.43
Lake Barkley	28	Lake Beshear	0.41	Green River Lake	83.8	Lake Barkley	2.71	Kentucky Lake	99	Lake Barkley	18.04
Barren River Lake	21	Green River Lake	0.40	Kentucky Lake	83.3	Lake Cumberland	2.43	Lake Barkley	100	Rough River Lake	16.11
Nolin River Lake	21	Lake Barkley	0.36	Rough River Lake	81.1	Yatesville Lake	2.35	Rough River Lake	110	Barren River Lake	16.07
Rough River Lake	21	Barren River Lake	0.36	Barren River Lake	80.4	Barren River Lake	2.31	Nolin River Lake	180	Lake Cumberland	15.12
Taylorville Lake	21	Rough River Lake	0.33	Lake Beshear	80.0	Green River Lake	2.29	Barren River Lake	229	Green River Lake	14.94
Ohio River	20	Nolin River Lake	0.28	Lake Barkley	78.0	Taylorville Lake	2.23	Cave Run Lake	352	Taylorville Lake	14.47
Lake Cumberland	17	Lake Cumberland	0.27	Lake Cumberland	63.7	Grayson Lake	2.22	Yatesville Lake	468	Nolin River Lake	11.72
Lake Beshear	11	Bullock Pen Lake	0.25	Yatesville Lake	62.9	Rough River Lake	2.14	Bullock Pen Lake	709	Bullock Pen Lake	10.47
Bullock Pen Lake	9	Taylorville Lake	0.22	Bullock Pen Lake	60.6	Bullock Pen Lake	1.98	Lake Cumberland	860	Yatesville Lake	9.49
Yatesville Lake	6	Yatesville Lake	0.19	Taylorville Lake	53.4	Nolin River Lake	1.77	Taylorville Lake	n/a	Ohio River	8.85
Grayson Lake	4	Cave Run Lake	0.11	Cave Run Lake	51.4	Cave Run Lake	1.64	Grayson Lake	n/a	Cave Run Lake	5.53
Cave Run Lake	3	Grayson Lake	0.03	Grayson Lake	19.5	Ohio River	1.40	Ohio River	n/a	Grayson Lake	5.39

n/a = Since a  $\geq 5.0$  lb bass was not reported from this water body in 2013, the average amount of time to catch a bass in this size class could not be determined.

<sup>A</sup> This metric relates to the amount of fishing effort needed to catch a bass  $\geq 5.0$  lbs. Total fishing effort is calculated by multiplying the number of anglers/teams by the length (in hours) of the tournament. (Example: With an estimated 100 hrs to catch a  $\geq 5.0$  lb bass, the 50 anglers participating in an 8-h tournament at Lake Barkley could expect to finish with ~4 bass weighing  $\geq 5.0$  lbs (400 divided by 100 = 4 bass).

Table 6. Various measures of angler success derived from the past 10 years (2004 – 2013) of black bass tournament results for the more popular waterbodies in Kentucky. These results can be used to identify trends. However, updates to the program in 2010 led to changes in the way that the data was collected/analyzed and had an artificial influence on most of these variables. Subsequently, only "No. of reported tournaments" and "Average weight per bass" could use data from both before and after 2010 without being directly impacted by the updates.

Variable	Barren River Lake										Cave Run Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	22	21	26	40	32	27	27	24	28	21	14	9	6	3	2	3	2	1	0	3
No. bass caught per hour	0.15	0.14	0.14	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.30	0.39	0.35	0.36	0.13	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.12	0.22	0.29	--	0.11
Percent successful	70.4	63.1	55.6	63.1	60.2	67.0	83.4	86.1	75.7	80.4	55.8	59.4	71.6	65.5	59.4	40.2	76.7	83.3	--	51.4
Average weight per bass	1.89	2.09	2.56	2.32	2.29	2.27	2.31	2.36	2.48	2.31	1.28	1.18	0.71	0.68	0.80	2.36	0.86	1.18	--	1.64
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	200	143	184	53	137	89	--	--	--	--	333	333	440	>1000	>1000	298	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	226	460	257	229	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	352
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	--	--	--	--	>1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--
Variable	Cedar Creek Lake										Dale Hollow Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	--	--	--	--	6	5	4	14	15	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	2
No. bass caught per hour	--	--	--	--	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.03	0.05	0.18	0.10	0.07	0.17	0.14	0.36	0.16	0.49	0.23
Percent successful	--	--	--	--	5.50	15.5	18.4	30.7	20.6	19.3	26.1	54.7	57.1	30.0	60.7	42.9	80.7	1000	95.0	85.0
Average weight per bass	--	--	--	--	4.93	4.91	4.79	4.64	4.87	5.13	2.11	1.57	2.34	2.30	2.05	2.03	1.69	2.73	2.28	2.42
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	--	--	--	--	124	46	--	--	--	--	125	143	401	290	161	274	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	65	84	68	129	--	--	--	--	--	--	289	240	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	--	--	--	--	n/a	300	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	>1000	n/a	--	--	--	--
Variable	Dewey Lake										Grayson Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	3	5	2	13	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	4
No. bass caught per hour	0.05	0.07	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.04	--	--	0.04	0.04	--	0.11	0.02	--	--	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.03
Percent successful	25.0	39.9	59.5	n/a	26.5	34.4	--	--	29.2	21.7	--	42.3	12.5	--	--	24.0	39.4	34.3	38.2	19.5
Average weight per bass	2.90	1.86	2.86	2.59	1.49	2.43	--	--	2.25	2.44	--	0.75	2.71	--	--	2.61	3.33	2.22	2.31	2.22
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	77	167	38	n/a	>1000	500	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	128	--	--	400	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	53	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	n/a	500	382	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	--	n/a	--	--	--	--

'--' = There was either no fish of this size caught during the year or no tournaments were reported so these variables could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Various measures of angler success derived from the past 10 years (2004 – 2013) of black bass tournament results for the more popular waterbodies in Kentucky. These results can be used to identify trends. However, updates to the program in 2010 led to changes in the way that the data was collected/analyzed and had an artificial influence on most of these variables. Subsequently, only "No. of reported tournaments" and "Average weight per bass" could use data from both before and after 2010 without being directly impacted by the updates.

Variable	Green River Lake										Guist Creek Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	6	15	16	26	20	17	23	17	7	33	4	7	10	8	10	13	7	1	1	0
No. bass caught per hour	0.10	0.11	0.14	0.19	0.22	0.22	0.34	0.29	0.39	0.40	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.11	0.20	0.26	0.18	--
Percent successful	49.7	49.0	44.8	56.5	63.3	57.7	72.3	62.9	86.5	83.8	45.1	51.5	50.1	46.6	49.6	44.3	71.1	100.0	52.9	--
Average weight per bass	2.10	1.51	1.74	1.65	1.48	2.20	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.29	1.69	1.82	2.33	1.90	1.88	1.98	2.01	1.43	2.03	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	111	500	184	179	108	76	--	--	--	--	1000	250	229	119	154	212	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	101	181	56	42	--	--	--	--	--	--	355	n/a	119	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	500	>1000	>1000	>1000	344	459	--	--	--	--	1000	n/a	688	894	n/a	>1000	--	--	--	--
Variable	Herrington Lake										Kentucky Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	3	13	7	3	7	1	3	6	5	1	23	18	33	38	46	66	59	62	25	55
No. bass caught per hour	0.12	0.15	0.21	0.11	0.22	0.22	0.37	0.38	0.44	0.50	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.20	0.26	0.29	0.42	0.41
Percent successful	76.5	58.5	75.8	50.2	63.3	77.8	95.4	76.0	90.5	100.0	56.0	56.5	63.5	57.1	71.4	63.4	72.8	75.0	84.1	83.3
Average weight per bass	1.57	1.63	1.30	1.80	1.48	1.11	1.56	1.63	1.66	1.59	2.72	2.52	2.48	2.60	2.58	2.75	2.78	2.59	2.60	2.83
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	n/a	500	n/a	339	380	n/a	--	--	--	--	100	143	127	81	86	48	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	373	479	n/a	70	--	--	--	--	--	--	148	154	99	99
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	--	--	--	--	1000	1000	795	818	>1000	533	--	--	--	--
Variable	Kentucky River										Kincaid Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	0	3	2	2	5	3	3	3	3	2	7	5	8	5	14	17	11	9	3	2
No. bass caught per hour	--	0.07	0.14	0.12	0.21	0.25	0.12	0.45	0.22	0.34	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.17	0.12	0.26	0.26	0.15	0.32
Percent successful	--	35.3	73.1	43.2	60.2	76.6	43.8	78.5	63.2	83.4	41.7	44.7	39.2	42.6	32.7	28.5	59.6	60.0	58.8	92.9
Average weight per bass	--	1.82	1.38	1.17	1.36	1.41	1.43	1.05	1.43	1.23	1.66	1.89	1.53	1.96	1.55	1.72	1.90	1.75	1.81	1.36
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	--	333	259	n/a	n/a	438	--	--	--	--	333	167	231	124	226	157	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	198	154	248	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	n/a	333	n/a	248	>1000	n/a	--	--	--	--

'--' = There was either no fish of this size caught during the year or no tournaments were reported so these variables could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Various measures of angler success derived from the past 10 years (2004 – 2013) of black bass tournament results for the more popular waterbodies in Kentucky. These results can be used to identify trends. However, updates to the program in 2010 led to changes in the way that the data was collected/analyzed and had an artificial influence on most of these variables. Subsequently, only "No. of reported tournaments" and "Average weight per bass" could use data from both before and after 2010 without being directly impacted by the updates.

Variable	Lake Barkley										Lake Beshear									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	44	41	43	40	35	48	70	74	36	28	4	3	6	0	1	9	8	6	9	11
No. bass caught per hour	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.23	0.29	0.43	0.36	0.14	0.16	0.10	--	0.08	0.24	0.40	0.36	0.35	0.41
Percent successful	55.0	53.2	55.6	65.2	70.5	67.3	70.5	73.0	78.8	78.0	75.6	60.9	56.2	--	45.5	79.7	85.3	81.0	76.9	80.0
Average weight per bass	2.27	2.55	2.56	2.62	2.67	2.64	2.69	2.45	2.47	2.71	2.69	2.92	2.59	--	2.42	3.40	2.97	3.12	2.96	3.05
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	125	100	84	53	61	64	--	--	--	--	35	50	43	--	--	16				--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	127	130	133	100							41	34	46	33
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	610	518	573	483	--	--	--	--	500	n/a	>1000	--	--	73				--
Variable	Lake Cumberland										Lake Malone									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	11	10	10	9	15	14	10	11	7	17	8	3	0	0	0	5	4	1	1	0
No. bass caught per hour	0.11	0.10	0.13	0.20	0.12	0.17	0.26	0.16	0.39	0.27	0.12	0.07	--	--	--	0.08	0.18	0.08	0.14	--
Percent successful	45.9	45.0	46.4	79.8	51.7	62.4	71.7	56.8	76.5	63.7	41.9	38.4	--	--	--	35.8	51.3	23.8	65.2	--
Average weight per bass	2.02	2.21	2.09	2.62	2.33	2.38	2.09	2.36	2.03	2.43	2.02	3.31	--	--	--	2.84	2.92	3.12	2.40	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	167	125	440	39	91	39	--	--	--	--	83	43	--	--	--	137	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	870	545	>1000	860	--	--	--	--	--	--	102	84	184	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	>1000	709	972	>1000	--	--	--	--	333	333	--	--	--	275	--	--	--	--
Variable	Laurel River Lake										Nolin River Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	2.0	0.0	1	0.0	4	4	1	1	4	0	8	7	16	29	25	21	22	15	21	21
No. bass caught per hour	--	--	n/a	--	0.18	0.09	0.06	0.20	0.27	--	0.10	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.15	0.30	0.36	0.36	0.28
Percent successful	--	--	61.1	--	62.2	38.3	25.8	65.6	89.8	--	66.2	63.9	64.7	61.3	64.8	76.6	81.5	88.9	90.0	86.0
Average weight per bass	--	--	n/a	--	3.14	3.02	2.80	2.55	2.15	--	2.03	1.96	1.89	1.73	1.79	1.71	2.05	1.87	1.82	1.77
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	--	--	72	--	106	79	--	--	--	--	500	167	176	127	140	150	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	256	865	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	109	230	223	180
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	--	--	n/a	--	n/a	367	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	>1000	>1000	>1000	320	--	--	--	--

'--' = There was either no fish of this size caught during the year or no tournaments were reported so these variables could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Various measures of angler success derived from the past 10 years (2004 – 2013) of black bass tournament results for the more popular waterbodies in Kentucky. These results can be used to identify trends. However, updates to the program in 2010 led to changes in the way that the data was collected/analyzed and had an artificial influence on most of these variables. Subsequently, only "No. of reported tournaments" and "Average weight per bass" could use data from both before and after 2010 without being directly impacted by the updates.

Variable	Rough River Lake										Taylorsville Lake									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	14	14	14	25	17	23	24	19	13	21	7	22	15	6	5	23	23	20	22	21
No. bass caught per hour	0.13	0.15	0.12	0.15	0.11	0.13	0.27	0.32	0.35	0.33	0.04	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.15	0.20	0.17	0.22
Percent successful	62.4	56.6	57.5	57.2	50.3	67.3	81.6	85.1	83.9	81.1	30.6	46.4	40.3	34.3	29.9	32.7	37.3	49.2	46.4	53.4
Average weight per bass	1.96	1.79	2.03	2.02	1.91	1.82	1.64	1.94	2.07	2.14	2.23	2.32	2.16	2.36	2.38	2.32	2.17	2.21	2.27	2.23
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	167	143	176	126	159	204	--	--	--	--	500	333	932	195	299	844	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	571	325	252	110	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	>1000	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	1000	1000	>1000	969	>1000	>1000	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	>1000	--	--	--	--
Variable	Yatesville Lake										Ohio River – Markland Pool									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	11	14	6	4	3	4	2	2	2	6	9	11	4	4	33	17	31	21	9	5
No. bass caught per hour	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.11	0.10	0.19	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.27	0.26	0.39	0.45	0.42	0.51
Percent successful	30.3	40.6	35.7	39.1	49.9	45.9	61.2	60.9	44.8	62.9	40.0	51.2	70.9	42.7	62.0	61.7	70.7	73.5	89.8	90.8
Average weight per bass	2.43	2.22	2.24	2.07	2.38	2.09	2.36	2.87	2.60	2.35	1.36	1.50	1.25	1.29	1.55	1.45	1.35	1.36	1.40	1.38
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	143	143	352	>1000	516	336	--	--	--	--	1000	1000	n/a	249	510	242	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	275	984	468	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	554	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	>1000	1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	672	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	--	--	--	--
Variable	Ohio River - Meldahl Pool										Ohio River - All Pools									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of tournaments	6	12	4	5	6	13	14	13	9	12	19	24	10	15	45	35	49	34	18	20
No. bass caught per hour	0.09	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.24	0.23	0.28	0.32	0.44	0.47	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.13	0.25	0.24	0.34	0.40	0.43	0.43
Percent successful	40.8	42.5	43.6	42.1	63.3	67.3	73.9	74.1	95.1	91.7	40.7	45.8	55.6	41.2	62.6	64.1	70.3	74.1	92.4	86.6
Average weight per bass	1.36	1.37	1.41	1.40	1.42	1.38	1.36	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.39	1.44	1.36	1.42	1.48	1.44	1.36	1.37	1.42	1.40
Hours to catch bass ≥ 4 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	289	n/a	>1000	--	--	--	--	1000	1000	>1000	317	968	583	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass ≥ 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	>1000	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass ≥ 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	>1000	--	--	--	--

'--' = There was either no fish of this size caught during the year or no tournaments were reported so these variables could not be calculated.

## SUMMER TOURNAMENT BASS HANDLING GUIDELINES

Tournaments often illustrate the conservation mentality of today's bass anglers by requiring their participants to follow practices (i.e. catch & release) that will allow the fish to "survive to be caught another day". To help ensure that the bass remain healthy, specific procedures have been developed to reduce stress that fish might experience during a typical tournament. These procedures are even more important during the summer months when high water temperatures and low oxygen levels can already be very demanding on fish. The KDFWR fisheries division recommends that all summer tournaments adopt these guidelines taken from "Keeping Bass Alive", which is a book published by the B.A.S.S. conservation program. For more information and full text of the guidebook, visit the B.A.S.S. website located at:

<http://www.bassmaster.com/tips/keeping-bass-alive>

- Stress caused by handling and long-term confinement in a livewell is a major factor that can increase the mortality of bass that are caught during tournaments. High water temperature and low oxygen levels increase this stress.
- Stress can be reduced by maintaining adequate oxygen levels via the continual operation of the aerator in a *closed* livewell. **Do not constantly pump in hot lake water.**
- Keeping the livewell temperature *5-10 °F cooler than the lake water* can greatly reduce stress; Always remember that cooler water holds more oxygen.
  - Two frozen ½ gallon water jugs (or 8 lb ice block) can cool a 30-gal livewell by 10 °F for ~ 3 hours.
  - Livewell temperatures should be checked every hour while ice can be added/removed as needed.
  - To avoid temperature shock, the livewell should not be cooled by more than 10 degrees.
  - Livewell temperature should never be allowed to rise above 85 °F.
  - Extra jugs or blocks can always be carried in a cooler or insulated boat compartment.
- Non-iodized salt (available at farm supply stores) can also help reduce stress when it is added to the livewell at a rate of *1/3 cup to every 5 gallons of water*. The salt can be pre-measured for any size of livewell and stored in small plastic bags.
- Once there is more than 10 pounds of bass in the livewell, ½ of the water should be exchanged midway through the tournament day. Always re-adjust the temperature and add a ½ dose of salt when the fresh water is added.

These simple procedures can considerably decrease the amount of stress that bass experience after being caught during tournaments. Reducing this stress can increase their chances of survival once they are released, which is a good way of making sure the next year's winning sack will stay alive.

## **OTHER HELPFUL TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES**

- All tournaments should be scheduled through KDFWR's Tournament Scheduling web site at least 30-60 days in advance.
- Avoid dates and locations where other tournaments are already scheduled; remember that larger reservoirs usually have more than one ramp available each day.
- Contact the marina or agency in charge of the ramp where your tournament is scheduled. Confusion and conflict can be avoided when adequate planning and communication is used.
- Always check if the ramp used by your tournament has a launch fee.
- Due to the increased use of lakes and rivers, you should avoid scheduling tournaments around major holidays.
- Respect the rights of other anglers who are using the same ramp as your tournament.
- Minimize the disturbance to campsites and docked boats that could be used for overnight stays.
- Make a plan for the most effective use of available parking spaces to allow non-tournament anglers access to the ramp. Check with Marina operators as they may have alternate parking arrangements for tournament participants.
- Make sure all tournament participants have clear instructions on when and where to launch, as well as where to park their vehicles after the boats are in the water. This is another step that will help avoid any issues at the ramps and/or marinas.
- Shotgun starts have proven to be very unsafe and should be avoided.
- Large tournaments should stagger launch and weigh-in times to prevent "gridlock" at the ramp. Organizers should use support personnel to direct traffic during launching, parking, weigh-in and boat retrieval.
- Each tournament angler should be knowledgeable of all local fishing and boating regulations. They must also possess a valid fishing license, proper boat registration, personal floatation devices and other required equipment.
- If possible, avoid scheduling daytime tournaments during the hotter summer months, which will help reduce extra stress on the fish and minimize mortality.
- Tournament anglers and organizers should set the example and handle their fish responsibly, which includes the procedures that were outlined above in the "Summer Tournament Bass Handling Guidelines".

