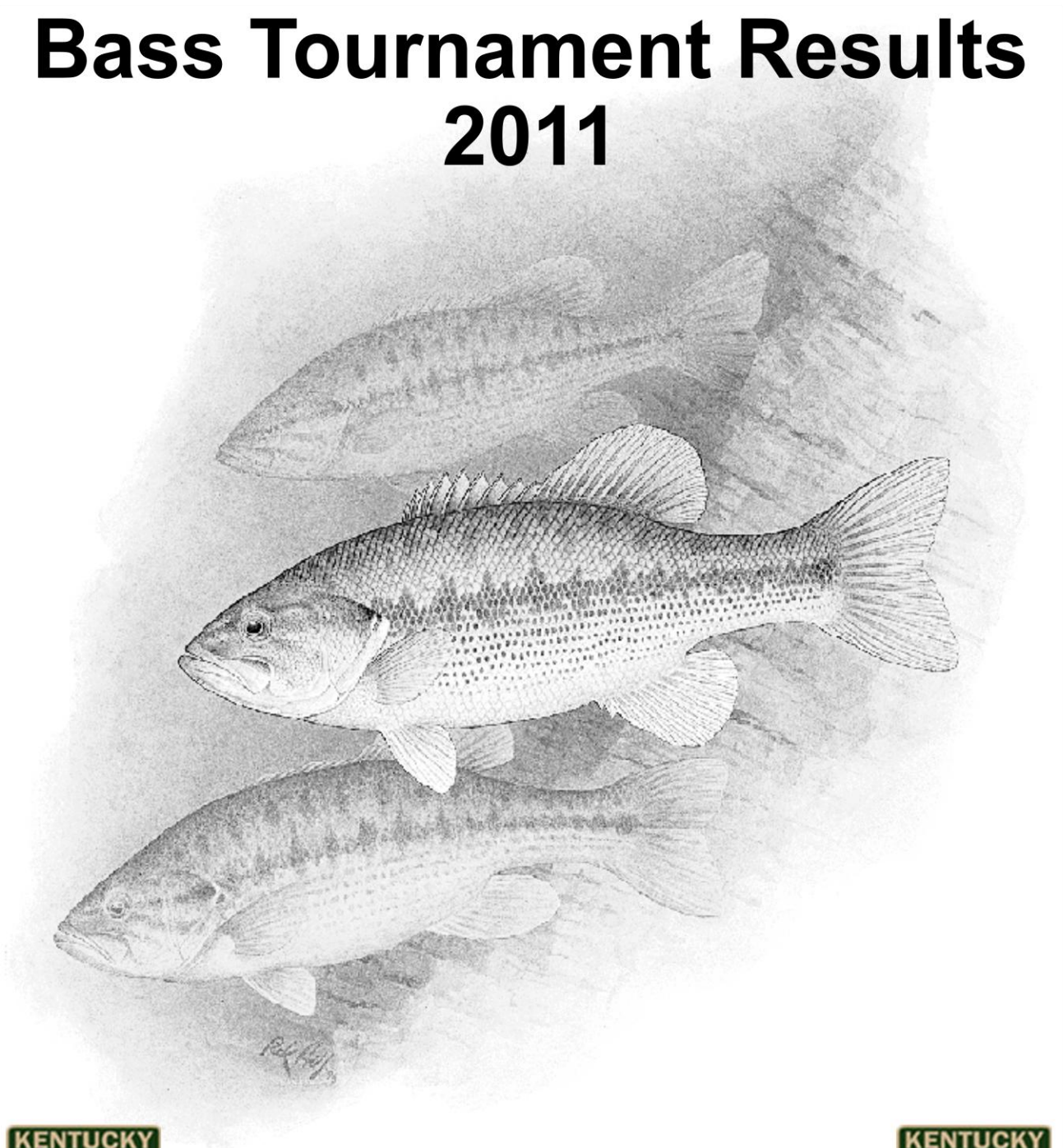
Bass Tournament Results 2011



Kentucky Department of Fish And Wildlife Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There were 350 black bass tournaments that participated in the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' (KDFWR) Tournament Reporting Program in 2011. This was very good, but still a decrease from the 376 tournaments in 2010 and 355 tournaments reporting their catch data in 2009. When comparing the 350 tournaments that participated with the 671 bass tournaments that were scheduled online in 2011, the participation rate for the program was at 52%, which is also down from 2010 (59%) and 2009 (61%). Even though the number and rate of tournaments reporting their catch data dropped, there was an increase in the number of tournaments that were scheduled online, which follows the trend from the past several years. The tournament data was obtained from waterbodies all over Kentucky, including 14 different large reservoirs (> 1000 acres), 11 small lakes (< 1000 acres), and the Ohio, Cumberland, Kentucky and Green river systems.

Since the number of events that were scheduled at Kentucky waterbodies last year did not decrease, there must be other factors leading to a drop in the number of tournaments reporting their catch data. It is believed that a big reason for this was the record amount of precipitation that Kentucky endured in 2011. This often lead to flood conditions at many waterbodies, and during the peak of the 2011 tournament season in late spring/early summer, some of the most popular reservoirs in the state (i.e. Kentucky lake, Lake Barkley, etc) were closed to boat traffic for several weeks. As a result, scores of bass tournaments all over Kentucky had to be cancelled. Since only a small fraction of those cancellations were reported, there is no way to determine how much they affected the numbers in this report. Hopefully, lake and river conditions will be ideal for 2012 bass tournaments and there will once again be increasing numbers of tournaments reporting their catch data.

Although there were no new changes to the program in 2011, it did carry on with the 2010 modifications to the data reported by bass tournaments with the ultimate goal of increasing the accuracy of this report. In earlier years, 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, the team format has become increasingly more popular and the most common of this format being when 2 anglers in the boat work together for a single limit of bass. Previously, this would lead to some error in the annual tournament report as 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.

Nearly all of the black bass tournaments in 2011 reported both the creel and size limits that they used. Most tournaments followed the limits set for the specific water body that was being fished, although some enforced more stringent regulations. Creel limits of 5 or 6-fish were used by 89.9% of all black bass tournaments; however, 3.0%, 1.5% and 5.7% reported using creel limits of 1, 2 and 3 fish, respectively. Twelve inch and 15-inch minimum size limits were the most commonly used length limits. The percentage of bass anglers who reported catching a limit during a tournament increased considerably from 18.7% in 2010 to 24.7% in 2011. In fact, the 24.7% is now the highest since the start of this program. This was one of those measurements that were greatly influenced by the newer way of reporting team vs. single angler tournaments, but it was still a substantial increase over results from 2010 and represents a value that better reflects the true number of limits caught.

The average length of a bass fishing tournament was 8.4 hours in 2011, which was up slightly from the average length of 8.2 hours that was observed in 2010. Tournament lengths ranged from 3.0 to 24.0 hours in 2011. The 24-hour tournaments generally involved 3-day events that were predominantly hosted by larger tournament organizations. The majority of the 2011 tournaments were hosted in the spring (40.3%) and summer (40.0%). Events held during the fall and winter comprised 17.3% and 2.4% of the total number of bass tournaments, respectively. Daytime tournaments were most common and made up 88.4% of all 2011 events, while night tournaments only comprised 11.6%. Approximately 76.9% of all night tournaments were held during the warmer summer months when the day-time temperatures in Kentucky can routinely hit 90°F.

In 2011, a total of 17,093 anglers weighed in 26,440 bass during all the tournaments reported to this program. The average 8-hour tournament had 51 anglers participating and would require around 13.62 pounds to take 1st place. This is actually a considerable increase from 2010, when it took approximately 13.11 pounds to win 1st place. The 2011 weight becomes even more notable when considering that this "average 1st place weight" actually ranged from 13.11 to 13.30 pounds over the past several years. The largest 1st place weight in 2011 (standardized to a 1-day, 8.0 hour tournament) was 27.7 pounds and was reported from a tournament at Kentucky Lake that was held on December 31st. There was a tie for the heaviest bass brought to the scales during 2011 tournaments when an 8.45 pound bass was caught at both Lake Cumberland on April 16th and Lake Barkley on November 11th.

Lake Beshear was once again a premier tournament lake in 2011, and was ranked near the top for each of the 5 main tournament statistics. It held the highest rank in the "average 1st place weight" (per 8 hour tournament) with 21.07 lbs and the amount of time needed to catch a $\geq$ 5.0 pounds bass with only 34 hours. Cedar Creek Lake, with its highly restrictive limits that only allow for "big fish" tournaments, ran away with the average weight per bass category at 4.64 lbs. Lake Beshear's average weight of 3.12 lbs came in a distant 2nd, with Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Barren River Lake rounding off the top 5 lakes in this group. The other two categories, which were highly influenced by the 2010 changes to how tournament data was reported, saw some atypical waterbodies at the top of the rankings. Catch rate is described as the number of bass caught per hour and was found to be the highest at the Kentucky River, which experienced a catch rate of 0.45 bass/hour during 2011 tournaments. The Ohio River came in second with a catch rate of 0.40 bass/hour. And finally, the percentage of anglers/teams that were successful at bringing a bass to the scales was highest at Nolin River Lake (88.9%). Two other reservoirs in the region, Barren River Lake and Rough River Lake, came in close behind with 86.1% and 85.1% of angler/teams weighing in at least one bass, respectively. As usual some perennial favorites, like Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake, were also ranked near the top for all of these categories.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources developed a program that was focused on collecting data from black bass tournaments taking place on many lakes and rivers in Kentucky. The objective of this program is to obtain data on the fishing pressure, catch, and success rates of the bass tournament anglers. The reported numbers will be added to a long-term database and used to monitor trends in the black bass fisheries, both on a lake-by-lake basis and for Kentucky as a whole. By combining this tournament data with the annual surveys conducted by fisheries biologists, resource managers have an increased ability to understand and forecast changes in black bass populations throughout the state. When this data is summarized into a yearly report, it can also be used by bass anglers to both plan future fishing trips and understand why fluctuations can occur in some of Kentucky's premier black bass fisheries.

The bass tournament program officially started with biologists obtaining the contact information for well-known bass clubs across Kentucky. These clubs were mailed packets that not only contained a detailed explanation of the program, but very specific items, such as tournament report cards and instructions on how to collect the data. These bass clubs were asked to fill in a report card for each tournament held during the year, and then mail them back to biologists at the KDFWR headquarters in Frankfort, Kentucky. These biologists then analyzed the data from the various tournaments and composed a report that summarized all the data from that year. Every club and/or tournament that participated in the program would get a copy of the report mailed to them by the next spring.

Participation in the program was ultimately bolstered by the introduction of a new tournament scheduling system that was made available on the KDFWR website. Despite the fact that the system is completely voluntary, it became popular among tournament organizations as a central location to check for and avoid conflicts with other events that were scheduled at the same time. This website, which is located at http://fw.ky.gov/app1/tournamentschedule.aspx, is also a way for tournament organizers to report their results exactly as had been done in the past, but without having to worry about physically mailing something into the KDFWR headquarters.

For the 2011 Kentucky Bass Tournament Report, fisheries biologists asked that the tournament report cards be mailed in or reported online before 1 February 2012. This would allow enough time for data analyses and to finish the report before the 2012 fishing got into full swing. This report that compiles all of the catch data from 2011 bass tournaments will be sent to any director/organization that participated in the program. The goal is not only to aid in the planning of the 2012 tournament season, but to emphasize just how important their participation is to the continued success of this report. Finally, as in the past, the Bass Tournament Report will be placed online at http://fw.ky.gov/navigation.aspx?cid=143&navpath=C742 .

This report summarizes the 2011 bass tournament data by waterbody and season. Months included in each season are: spring = March – May; summer = June – August; fall = September – November; winter = December – February. Since the length of bass tournaments can vary by both the number of days and hours, winning weights need to be standardized before any comparisons can be made. This is the reason why all of the "average 1st place weights" in this report were adjusted to represent a simple 8.0-hour tournament. For instance, the "average 1st place weight" for a 10-hour tournament is derived by first dividing the winning weight (i.e. 20 pounds) by the total length of the tournament (i.e. 20 pounds/10 hours = 2) to establish the pounds per hour. This number would then be multiplied by the standard 8.0-hour length (i.e. 2 pounds/hour * 8.0 hours = 16 pounds) to determine the "average 1st place weight", which can then be compared to any other tournament in the program.

Also for this report, angler catch rates are given as the number of legal-sized bass caught per hour of fishing. For example, if the average catch rate for a lake was determined to be 0.20 bass/hour for the entire year, the amount of time needed to catch a legal bass would be estimated at 5 hours (1 bass divided by 0.20). It is important to remember that the data presented in this report will be affected by the different regulations that can vary from one tournament to the next, even if they take place on the same reservoir. The vast majority of

the tournaments in this report chose to follow the minimum limits that were already in place at each waterbody. However, these tournaments do reserve the right to impose other regulations on their competitors, but these regulations ***must***, at the least, adhere to the minimum size and creel limits that are posted for each lake. For example, at Kentucky Lake, the minimum size limit for both largemouth and smallmouth bass is 15-inches. Hence, the most common length limit in place for a tournament at Kentucky Lake is 15-inches; however, they do have the option to enforce a stricter minimum size limit (i.e. 16-inches). A more-restrictive regulation would directly impact a number of different statistics that are used within this report (i.e. lower catch rates and percent success, but higher average weight per bass).

Since the program began in 1999, and for the next 10 years, the catch data was submitted and analyzed every year with few updates. It was just prior to the 2010 tournament season that a couple key changes were made to the program. First, there was an adjustment to the way that big fish were tracked and reported for each tournament. In previous years, biologists requested data which included both the number of fish that weighed ≥ 4 pounds and the number of fish that weighed ≥ 6 pounds. This original request was changed in 2010 to only asking for the number of bass that weighed ≥ 5 pounds. This would still allow biologists to estimate the number of angling hours it would take to catch a large bass (≥ 5.0 lbs), along with reducing the demand on tournament directors by asking them to only keep track of the number of fish in one specific size class. In addition, this change hopefully minimized the amount of estimating that was taking place at the tournament level, while reducing the handling time and stress placed on large bass that would have to be weighed multiple times.

The most notable of the recent changes to how the catch data was reported and analyzed arose from a need to adapt to the increasing number of tournaments that were using a team format. These changes were not required for those tournaments where both anglers on the team were allowed to keep their own limit of bass. Essentially, the anglers in these tournaments were very similar to those in individual angler tournaments, with the exception that they were fishing from the same boat. These changes were needed to account for tournaments where the anglers on a team were fishing for a single limit of bass. In previous years of this program, certain statistics in the report (i.e. angler catch rates) would naturally error on the low side as it was difficult to correctly identify which tournaments followed this type of format. With the recently modified way of reporting catch data, those tournaments where the team only weighs in a single limit can now be correctly analyzed as if the 2 anglers were one unit.

When calculating the amount of time it takes for anglers to catch a large bass (i.e. ≥ 5.0 lbs), the initial approach was to report it the same way as the angler catch rates, which was the number of large bass caught per hour of fishing. However, it was quickly determined that the resulting number would usually come out to be extremely low and difficult to understand (i.e. a catch rate of ≥ 5.0 pounds bass at 0.004 bass/hour). When it was calculated this way, it would come out to mean that for every hour fished, 0.004 bass ≥ 5.0 pounds are caught. This has been changed to a measurement that is more angler-friendly and it estimates the number of hours that is needed to catch a ≥ 5.0 pounds bass. For example, in a past report, it took approximately 20 hours of fishing at Lake Beshear to catch a ≥ 5.0 pounds bass, while it took over 800 hours to catch the same size bass at Taylorsville Lake. Initially, these numbers may seem high, but consider that in a 50 angler tournament that runs for 8.0 hours, the total amount of time fished is 400 hours (50 x 8 = 400). If it takes 20 hours of fishing to catch a ≥ 5.0 pound black bass, anglers could expect to see nearly 20 bass of this size brought to the weigh-in (400 h fished ÷ 20 h to catch a ≥ 5.0 lb bass = 20 ≥ 5.0 lb bass). This statistic is simply a prediction of how many ≥ 5.0 lb bass could be caught in a given tournament. It should never be considered a guarantee; some tournaments could weigh in more ≥ 5.0 pounds bass and others might weigh in far less.

This data and report are open for use by tournament directors, tournament and non-tournament anglers, and resource managers. It is intended to be just as much as a tool, as it is a record of bass tournament results over the years. All users have the ability to suggest improvements that they would like to see incorporated into future reports. If you have any suggestions, would like information on how to get a tournament involved, or

simply have some comments on the program, you can contact Chris Hickey, the KDFWR black bass research biologist, via any of the following information:

Chris Hickey
KY Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources
Fisheries Lab
#1 Sportsman's Lane
Frankfort, KY. 40601
Phone: 800-858-1549 ext. 4467
Email: chris.hickey@ky.gov

Your participation is greatly appreciated. We would like extend a very warm welcome to all clubs who are not already participating in this bass tournament program. Increased participation will result in a more reliable understanding of bass populations and fishing opportunities at Kentucky's lakes and rivers. We truly hope that the information provided in this report will be of benefit to you and your organization.

The Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources also strongly recommends that all tournament directors utilize the tournament website for scheduling their tournaments. This website was created to help reduce user conflict that may develop as a result of multiple events being scheduled for the same place and time. During the registration process for each tournament, directors will be able to verify if an event has already registered on the day, ramp, and waterbody that they are also interested in. **If there is a situation where an event is already scheduled, we ask that you consider rescheduling your tournament and/or attempt to contact the other director to come up with a compromise.** Prior to the establishment of this online scheduling system, the Department received regular calls/emails concerning conflicts that would result from multiple events occurring at the same ramp. 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 the sport of fishing and recreational boating increases, we ask for everybody's participation to help reduce potential user conflict. On behalf of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, I would like to wish everybody a great fishing season in 2012, and hope to see you out on the water!

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Participation in the program during 2011 was very good with 350 black bass fishing tournaments reporting catch data, but it was a decrease from the 376 tournaments in 2010. It was the first time that participation has dropped since 2006. However, the number of tournaments reporting catch data in 2011 is still the 3rd highest total in the 13 years of the program and it falls in line behind the 376 tournaments in 2010 and the 355 in 2009. Catch statistics were obtained from 52.2% of the tournaments that were registered online in 2011. This is also down from the 59.2% in 2010 and the 61.0% in 2009, which is still this program's highest reporting rate. In all, the rate in 2011 is very respectable and comparable to others in 2008 (57.9%) and 2007 (51.7%). It is believed that a big factor for this latest drop, both in the total number of tournaments participating and the reporting rate, was the high amount of precipitation that most of Kentucky endured in the spring and early summer of 2011. The result was water levels that were so high that many of Kentucky's reservoirs had to be closed to boat traffic. A total of 15 tournaments reported cancelations because of these conditions, but many more scheduled during this time period could have also been cancelled. The return of normal water levels could lead to a rebound in the number of participating tournaments in 2012.

In 2011, the 350 black bass fishing tournaments were reported from 30 different waterbodies in Kentucky. This included tournament results from 14 large reservoirs ≥ 1000 acres (Table 1) and 11 smaller lakes with a surface area of < 1000 acres (Table 2). This is a decrease from the 15 large reservoirs and 14 smaller lakes reported in 2010. The number of lakes and reservoirs holding these events do fluctuate from year to year, so it is still too early to determine if this is an indication that bass tournaments are moving away from the smaller lakes. In addition, catch data was also obtained from five different river systems in 2011, which is actually a slight increase from the 4 systems that were reported in both 2010 and 2009. The 2011 data came from bass tournaments on the Kentucky Lake tailwater, as well as, the Ohio (Markland and Meldahl pools), Kentucky, Green and Cumberland river systems (Table 3).

Ever since changes were made to the program in 2010, it has been possible to report on the different tournament formats that are most commonly used. The more recognizable, individual angler format made up only 19.1% of all the tournaments. In this format, all anglers are usually in separate boats and fishing for their own daily limit of bass. The team format, when up 2 anglers use the same boat and work together for a single limit of bass, was the most common (80.9%) in 2011 tournaments. This is only a small shift from what was seen with individual (22.8%) and team (77.2%) formats during the 2010 tournaments. There is also a less common type of team format where two anglers fish together and are allowed to weigh in what would constitute two limits, one for each team member. In 2011, this format was used by only 11, or 3.3%, of the bass tournaments.

The majority of black bass fishing tournaments used a daily creel limit of either 5 or 6 fish in 2011. Approximately, 81.2% of all bass tournaments utilized a 5-fish daily creel limit, while 8.7% used a 6-fish limit. This was a small shift from what was observed in 2010, where 78.8% and 13.0% of the tournaments used the 5-fish and 6-fish daily creel limits, respectively. Also in 2011, 5.7% of all reported bass tournaments utilized a 3-fish daily creel, 1.5% used a 2-fish limit, and 3.0% used a 1-fish limit. Tournaments that used a lower limit, like 2 or 3 fish, were usually much shorter in length and often scheduled on a week-day evening. The 1-fish limits could also be used in "Big Fish" tournaments held at lakes with highly restrictive regulations. For instance, the 1-fish and 20 in minimum length limit for largemouth bass at Cedar Creek Lake is not conducive to the "standard" bass tournament format, but the fishing can be good enough that angler groups will use a "Big Fish" format in order to fit the lake into its annual schedule.

The percentage of anglers/teams weighing in a full daily limit of black bass during the course of a 2011 tournament was 24.7%, which is a substantial increase over 2010 (18.7%) and 2009 (14.2%). In fact, 2011 set a new high mark for the percentage of anglers/teams that caught a limit. However, it must be taken into account that this statistic was affected by the recent changes to how catch data is reported. Prior to 2010, tournament format was not properly accounted for, which would mean that a team who was fishing for one daily limit of 5 bass would have been incorrectly included in the calculation as 2 separate anglers going after

2 separate daily limits. When this happened in 2009, the 14.2% that had weighed in a full daily limit of bass was calculated by simply dividing the total number of limits by the total number of anglers, regardless of whether they were competing in a team or an individual tournament. In order to make the same calculation from 2011 data, the total number of anglers had to be determined by first multiplying the number of teams by 2 and then adding that to the number of competitors in tournaments that followed the individual angler format. This method would have yielded a different result for 2011 with 15.4% of anglers weighing in a daily limit, which is still a notable increase over 2009. Since 2010, when the tournament format started to be properly reported, the 2 anglers on a team were correctly regarded as a single unit, which resulted in not only a higher, but also more accurate, measure of anglers/teams who caught a daily limit.

Similar to previous years, the size limits used in 2011 bass tournaments most often followed the regulations that were already enforced at each lake. The majority of these tournaments (95.7%) used either a 12-inch or 15-inch minimum length limit. Directors and anglers should be aware that size limits utilized by each tournament must at least adhere to that waterbody's minimum regulations. Tournament size limits may be more restrictive (i.e. an 18-inch size limit on a lake where the minimum is only 15 inches), but tournaments are not allowed to use lesser size limits (i.e. a 12-inch size limit on a 15-inch lake).

Tournaments length ranged from 3.0 to 24.0 hours (h) with an average duration of 8.4 h in 2011, which is a small jump from the 8.2 h average in 2010. An increase in the average length of the tournaments in 2011 could be accredited to more multiple day events and a drop in the number of smaller weekday tournaments. Of the 350 bass tournaments that were reported in 2011, 90.7% were 1-day fishing events, 8.4% were 2-day fishing events, and 0.9% were held over 3 days. Multiple day tournaments are usually larger, individual angler events that are hosted by major tournament organizations. By season, the majority of the 2011 bass fishing tournaments were held during the spring (40.3%) and summer (40.0%). Bass fishing tournaments taking place in the fall comprised 17.3% of the total number of tournaments with only 2.4% occurring in the winter months. Approximately 88.4% of all bass fishing tournaments were held during the day, while 11.6% were at night. Of all the night tournaments reported, 76.9% took place during the summer months when day-time temperatures are usually around 90° F.

Regardless of what tournament format was used and making the assumption that there were 2 anglers for every team, a total of 17,093 anglers fished in 2011 bass tournaments. Surprisingly, the drop in the number of tournaments reporting catch data in 2011 did not translate into fewer anglers. There were only 16,410 anglers from the 376 tournaments reporting their results in 2010, which means that there was substantially less anglers per tournament. In fact, the 17,093 anglers that participated in bass tournaments in 2011 was the highest number ever reported. Nonetheless, when this total is broken down by tournament format, there were actually 10,630 "angling-units" reported in 2011, which is a more modest increase from the 10,379 "angling-units" in 2010. This overall number of "angling-units" is arrived at by adding the total number of anglers in individual tournaments (4,167) and the total number of teams in the team tournaments (6,463). When 2011 data is compared to the number of individual anglers (5,068) and teams (5,671) reported in 2010, it appears that the team format is growing in popularity among Kentucky bass tournaments. Since tournament formats have only been reported from 2010 and 2011, several more years of this data is needed before any trends can be truly identified.

In all of the 2011 bass tournaments, the 17,093 anglers, or 10,630 angling-units, weighed in 26,440 bass. The total weight of these bass was 61,853.27 pounds (lbs), which means that the average fish came in at 2.34 lbs. The number of bass caught in 2011 was not only a 16.8% increase from the 22,009 bass weighed in during 2010, but it also represents the largest number of bass reported in the 13 years of this program. The previous high was the 25,973 bass weighed in during 2008 tournaments.

The "average catch" is simply the average number of bass caught per angler/team, and excludes undersized fish that were immediately released and/or any culled bass that would not be accounted for at the weigh-ins. Similar to the calculation used to determine the percentage of anglers that caught a daily limit, "average catch" is another one of those statistics that can be influenced by the recent changes to how the tournament

data is reported. Under the earlier method when the tournament format was ignored, and teams were included in the calculations as 2 separate anglers, the "average catch" for 2011 would have been 1.55 bass/angler. This is a respectable improvement over the "average catch" of 1.46 bass/angler in 2009, which is the last year that the original method was officially used. However, when the 2 anglers on a team were correctly regarded as a single angling-unit, the result is a more accurate measure of "average catch". This newer method resulted in a 2011 "average catch" of 2.49 bass/angling-unit and represents an increase over the 2.11 bass/angling-unit from 2010. This is the 2nd consecutive year that the "average catch" was able to surpass the 2-bass mark, which may turn out to be more common now that the method for calculating "average catch" takes the different tournament formats into account.

The average size of a 2011 tournament was 51 anglers, which surpasses other years like 2010 (44 anglers) and 2008 (48 anglers), making it the highest mark since the program began in 1999. When the 2011 tournaments were separated according to their format, it was determined that the individual tournaments averaged 65 anglers and the team tournaments averaged 24 teams. With increases over 2010 in both the size of individual (60 anglers) and team (20 teams) tournaments, these results demonstrate why 2011 had more anglers participating in the program even though there was a decrease in the overall number of events reporting their catch data.

In 2011, the average weight it took to win a "standard" 8.0 hour tournament was 13.62 pounds. This "average 1st place weight" was up from 13.11 pounds in 2010 and was actually second only to 2007 when it took 13.80 pounds to win a tournament. The increase in 2011 becomes even more notable when it is considered that the "average 1st place weight" from the past several years (2008 – 2010) only ranged between 13.11 and 13.30 pounds. After all winning weights were standardized to an 8-h tournament, the highest 1st place weight reported in 2011 was the 27.7 pounds it took to win a tournament at Kentucky Lake held on December 31st. It is rare to have a 1st place weight this high coming from a December tournament, but mild weather and warmer water temperatures might have been enough to keep the bass active, even after the start of winter.

The black bass species predominantly caught during 2011 tournaments was largemouth bass, which comprised 90.7% of the total catch. Spotted and smallmouth bass accounted for 5.8% and 3.5% of the remaining catch, respectively. The percentage of largemouth bass caught during tournaments continues to increase, following a trend that started in 2008 (85.0%) and leading into 2009 (86.4%) and 2010 (87.4%). In 2011, the highest percentages of spotted bass came from tournaments held at the Green River (45.0%) and Lake Cumberland (34.0%) (Table 4). As for smallmouth bass, Dale Hollow Lake (21.0%), Lake Cumberland (16.0%) and the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River (11.0%) were the only waterbodies where they made up more than 10% of the tournament catch.

A ranking system was developed earlier on in the program and includes only those waterbodies that had 3 or more tournaments report their catch data during that year. This system originally ranked these lakes and rivers in 6 specific categories that related to the success of the anglers and the size of the fish that were caught (Table 5). However, there were changes in 2010 that affected the way that bass tournament data was reported and lead to the elimination of one of the original categories. For the second year in a row, this category was replaced by one that ranked the lakes and rivers according to the number of bass tournaments that were held there. This category does not directly relate to the anglers' success or the size of the bass caught, but it can help illustrate how the number of tournaments can lead to different results in this report. It's also very important to keep in mind that there are other aspects of a waterbody (i.e. different creel and minimum length limits) that can have negative or positive impacts on where it ranks.

The analysis of the number of tournaments held at each waterbody showed that the larger reservoirs and the Ohio River were once again the preferred locations for 2011 bass tournaments (Table 5). The top 3 waterbodies were the only ones to have held 25 or more bass tournaments in 2011, and these included Lake Barkley (74 tournaments), Kentucky Lake (62 tournaments) and the Ohio River along North-Central Kentucky (34 tournaments). These waterbodies often occupy a perennial spot on the top of this list with

other larger reservoirs, like Barren River, Taylorsville, Rough River, and Green River lakes, coming in close behind. However, the last of the large reservoirs in Kentucky, Lake Cumberland, often falls in the middle, or even lower half, of the rankings for its number of bass tournaments. Despite its large size, several features of Lake Cumberland are more conducive to cooler water fisheries (i.e. striped bass and walleye) and, according to the data reported to this program, it is not usually a top choice for black bass tournaments.

The next category in the 2011 rankings looked at bass catch rates for each waterbody that held 3 or more tournaments. Catch rates are calculated in terms of the number of bass caught per hour of fishing by tournament anglers/teams. These catch rates can be best illustrated by considering a bass tournament that has 100 anglers/teams in the competition. If the lake where the tournament is being held has an average catch rate of 0.40 bass/hour, then for every hour of the tournament it can be expected that approximately 40 "keeper" bass are caught by the anglers/teams (100 anglers/teams X 0.4 bass/h = 40 fish). This 8-hour tournament would then have an average of 320 bass brought in to the weigh-in. In 2011, bass catch rates were highest on the Kentucky River (0.45 bass/hour) (Table 5). Other waterbodies that were in the top 5 included the Ohio River (0.40 bass/hour), Barren River Lake (0.39 bass/hour), Herrington Lake (0.38 bass/hour), and Lake Beshear (0.36 bass/hour). Last year, Fagan Branch Lake ran away in this category with 0.70 bass/hour and, in 2009, the Kentucky River once again held the top spot with 0.25 bass/hour. The catch rate is one of those statistics that was influenced by the 2010 changes to the way tournament data was reported, which is illustrated by the higher average catch rates in the last couple years when compared to 2009. Also, many of the lakes and rivers that are routinely found at the top of this ranking often abide by the lower 12-inch minimum length limit, which usually allows anglers/teams to weigh in higher numbers of smaller bass.

The average success rate is the percentage of anglers/teams that were able to catch at least one legal-size bass at a tournament, and it is calculated by dividing the number of angler/teams that weighed in by the total number of anglers/teams in that tournament. For instance, if a 100 team bass tournament reported that 83 teams weighed in at least one bass, the percent success for this particular tournament was 83% (83 ÷ 100 = 0.83). Results showed that tournament anglers were most successful at Nolin River Lake in 2011, where 88.9% of all anglers/teams weighed in a legal size bass (Table 5). This was a small drop from the highest success rate in 2010, which was 95.4% at Herrington Lake. Other waterbodies that ranked high in percent success during 2011 bass tournaments included Barren River Lake (86.1%), Rough River Lake (85.1%), Lake Beshear (81.0%) and the Kentucky River (78.5%). This is another category that can be influenced by the number of tournaments and minimum length limits at each waterbody.

A statistic that is probably most influenced by the minimum length limits is the average weight per bass. This is best illustrated by the scenario at Cedar Creek Lake and its average weight of 4.64 pounds (lbs) per bass that ranked highest among water bodies in 2011 (Table 5). Cedar Creek Lake is being managed as a trophy bass fishery with highly restrictive regulations that include a 20-inch minimum length limit and 1 fish/angler creel limit. For this reason, an angler can only submit a single 20+ inch fish to a tournament weigh-in, which would greatly increase the average weight. Other lakes in the top 5 include Lake Beshear (3.12 lbs), Kentucky Lake (2.59 lbs), Lake Barkley (2.45 lbs), and Barren River Lake (2.36 lbs). All these lakes abide by the statewide creel limits and, with the exception of Lake Beshear (12-inch minimum), have the higher 15-inch minimum length limit. In 2010, Cedar Creek Lake ranked highest in average weight per bass with 4.79 lbs with Lake Beshear (2.97 lbs) and Lake Malone (2.92 lbs) coming in second and third, respectively. Aside from Cedar Creek Lake, waterbodies that are well-known for their bass fisheries (i.e. Beshear, Kentucky, and Barkley) are often found near the top of this list.

In 2010, the way that big bass were reported was simplified to having tournaments keep a count of fish that only weighed in at ≥ 5.0 pounds. In 2011, it was Lake Beshear that averaged the least amount of time (34 angler/team hours) to catch a ≥ 5.0 pounds bass (Table 5). When it has enough tournaments to be included in the rankings, Lake Beshear often tops this category, and in 2010, it only took an average of 41 hours to catch a ≥ 5.0 pounds bass. Those waterbodies that finished off the top 5 in 2011 for the least amount of time to catch a ≥ 5.0 pounds bass were Cedar Creek Lake (84 hours), Lake Barkley (130 hours) and Kentucky and

Kincaid lakes, which both averaged 154 hours. When talking about actual numbers, Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley had 291 and 129 ≥ 5.0 pounds bass, respectively, brought to the tournament scales while the next highest, Barren River Lake, only boasted 33 ≥ 5.0 pounds bass. Of the 30 waterbodies turning in catch data in 2011, 21 reported at least 1 bass weighing ≥ 5.0 pounds.

The last category used to rank the waterbodies that reported data from 3 or more bass tournaments was the average weight required to take 1st place in a standard 1-day, 8-hour tournament. In 2011, the average of 21.07 lbs that it took to win the "standard" 8.0 hour tournament at Lake Beshear stood at the top of this list (Table 5). It was Barren River Lake (17.06 lbs), Kentucky Lake (16.06 lbs), Lake Barkley (14.61 lbs), and Taylorsville Lake (13.66 lbs) that finished off the top 5. Overall, 12 waterbodies produced an average 1st place weight in excess of 10 lbs during bass tournaments in 2011. This was down slightly from the 13 waterbodies in 2010 that produced average 1st place weights ≥ 10.0 lbs, but was well below 2009 (15 lakes), which is the highest number ever seen during the Bass Tournament Program. A few waterbodies, like Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Lake Beshear, have produced average 1st place weights in excess of 10 lbs for every year that catch data has been reported.

When it was initially designed, KDFWR had always intended on using the tournament program to help identify any trends in the bass population characteristics at the different waterbodies around the state. For the first 10 years of the program, 5 different variables were examined annually, but the changes made to how tournament data is reported in 2010 effectively reduced this number of variables to 4 (Table 6). Also, these changes could substantially impact all but one of these variables, the average weight per bass. For instance, teams are now examined in the same way as anglers who are participating in a tournament using the individual format, so the average catch rate (# bass/hour) and the percentage of anglers weighing in at least one bass could turn out to be much higher. Since recent increases can be attributed to the modifications of the program, and not necessarily changes to the actual bass populations, it is difficult to accurately compare it to any data gathered prior to 2010. It may take a couple more years of tournament data under the new format before any reliable trends can be identified. It must also be recognized that tournament data cannot always pick up on the natural yearly fluctuations within bass populations.

As was already mentioned, the average weight per bass is the one variable that can still be looked at with the historical tournament data. However, this is one of those variables that do not always differ much from year to year (Table 6). Subtle changes may be observed, but can often be attributed to a number of factors, including an increase/decrease in the amount of tournaments reported from that waterbody or the movement of a strong/weak year class through the size range of bass most often targeted by tournament anglers. These changes may be noticeable, but only seem to last for a few years before reverting back to a level that the lake or river is accustomed to. If there was a situation where the average weight per bass did indeed make a long-term change, the entire lake would need to be studied in order to determine the cause for such a drastic shift in the growth/condition of the fish. Possible reasons for such a shift could include an adjustment in the most abundant forage species, the introduction of a new competitor, and/or a notable change in water quality.

There are still some waterbodies in Kentucky that experience changes in the average weight per bass that cannot be explained by such factors as increases/decreases in the number of tournaments. The best example of this is from catch data submitted by tournaments at Green River Lake where, prior to 2009, bass rarely reached an average weight of 2.00 lbs or higher (Table 6). However, during the last 3 years, the lake has seen sustained increases in these weights, which included 2.20 lbs (2009), 2.22 lbs (2010) and 2.16 lbs (2011). This increase could soon come to an end and average weights might even start to decline, but if this trend persists over the next couple of years, a comparison between the current and historical sampling data could help identify a biological reason for the increase.

The amount of time it takes to catch a "big bass" is difficult to trend because so many factors can influence the calculation. For instance, in 2009, it appeared that some waterbodies, like Green River Lake and Lake Cumberland, were becoming regular producers of big bass. However, it was noticed by 2011 that Green River Lake continued to do fairly well while Lake Cumberland was already in decline (Table 6). This

description purposely refers to the catch of "big bass", because the actual weight of these fish has changed from $\geq$ 4.0 and $\geq$ 6.0 lbs during earlier years of the program to only bass that weighed $\geq$ 5.0 pounds in 2010 and 2011. Regardless of the actual weight, higher numbers of big bass are usually found in the same waterbodies year after year, and drastic changes to a lake would be required for any substantial and/or permanent shift in the number of big bass that are caught by tournament anglers.

If the results from 2011 continue into the 2012 fishing season, anglers should once again see the more popular tournament locales like Lake Barkley, Kentucky Lake, Barren River Lake and Lake Beshear produce 1st place weights that could average 14.0 lbs or better. Also, even though winning weights from the Ohio and Kentucky rivers aren't expected to break any records, anglers there will keep benefiting from KDFWR's ongoing stocking efforts with catch rates that could rank as some of the highest in Kentucky. Finally, there is the potential to catch big bass in lakes and reservoirs throughout Kentucky, which was illustrated in 2011 tournaments when there were more than 560 bass caught that weighed $\geq$ 5.0 lbs. This includes the 15 different waterbodies in 2011 with tournaments where bass that weighed at least 6.0 lbs were brought to the scales.

As always, KDFWR greatly appreciates all of those who participate in Kentucky's Bass Tournament Reporting Program, which has become the model for similar programs in other states. It's your continued involvement that has been absolutely crucial to making this a success year after year. Hopefully, now that this program has finished its 13th year, tournament anglers have come to realize just how valuable their catch data can be to the continued management of Kentucky's priceless bass fisheries. Good luck to you and your continued fishing success in 2012 and we hope to see you out on the water!

Table 1. Summary of 2011 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)
Barren River Lake											
Spring	6	1	5	135	341	0.32	77.3	2.48	4	6.77	15.33
Summer	5	1	4	276	953	0.45	91.4	2.66	10	6.70	17.97
Fall	12	2	10	714	2567	0.40	88.1	2.20	19	7.61	17.93
Winter	1	0	1	24	53	0.28	87.5	2.01	0	4.67	12.50
Total	24	4	20	1149	3914	0.39	86.1	2.36	33	7.61	17.06
Cave Run Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	6	14	0.29	83.3	1.18	0	3.13	5.50
Dale Hollow											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	15	38	0.16	100.0	2.73	1	5.39	14.95
Grayson Lake											
Spring	1	1	0	25	13	0.07	40.0	2.53	0	4.10	6.44
Summer	1	0	1	7	3	0.07	28.6	1.91	0	2.40	4.44
Total	2	1	1	32	16	0.07	34.3	2.22	0	4.10	5.44
Green River Lake											
Spring	6	0	6	63	157	0.32	66.5	2.41	4	6.09	15.46
Summer	10	2	8	157	469	0.25	59.6	2.10	9	6.02	12.51
Fall	1	1	0	20	129	0.40	75.0	1.18	0	4.38	7.13
Total	17	3	14	240	755	0.29	62.9	2.16	13	6.09	13.23
Herrington Lake											
Spring	2	0	2	48	173	0.46	90.6	1.60	1	6.24	13.14
Summer	3	0	3	97	306	0.42	81.0	1.60	3	5.67	11.56
Fall	1	0	1	108	92	0.12	31.5	1.79	0	4.52	11.47
Total	6	0	6	253	571	0.38	76.0	1.63	4	6.24	12.07
Kentucky Lake											
Spring	27	8	19	2165	6097	0.29	77.8	2.63	184	8.08	16.60
Summer	24	5	19	820	2007	0.32	71.5	2.50	40	7.02	15.29
Fall	7	2	5	580	1968	0.22	74.2	2.50	50	8.31	15.39
Winter	4	0	4	95	280	0.30	79.3	3.02	17	7.52	18.13
Total	62	15	47	3660	10352	0.29	75.0	2.59	291	8.31	16.06

Table 1 (cont). Summary of 2011 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	28	10	18	676	1427	0.25	67.6	2.47	52	7.97	13.69
Summer	32	8	24	753	2313	0.36	80.6	2.44	50	6.94	16.36
Fall	14	3	11	357	1032	0.22	66.1	2.46	27	8.45	12.45
Total	74	21	53	1786	4772	0.29	73.0	2.45	129	8.45	14.61
Lake Cumberland											
Spring & Total	11	2	9	480	665	0.16	56.8	2.36	7	8.45	12.66
Laurel River Lake											
Spring & Total	1	1	0	224	350	0.20	65.6	2.55	7	6.55	16.65
Nolin River Lake											
Spring	5	0	5	75	185	0.30	85.2	1.85	3	7.61	11.45
Summer	5	0	5	119	402	0.42	87.5	2.08	6	5.95	14.10
Fall	3	1	2	57	249	0.42	91.9	1.67	1	5.30	10.30
Winter	2	0	2	24	58	0.26	97.4	1.68	0	4.84	7.59
Total	15	1	14	275	894	0.36	88.9	1.87	10	7.61	11.59
Rough River Lake											
Spring	7	2	5	141	427	0.29	83.8	1.97	8	6.02	11.05
Summer	3	0	3	48	132	0.34	93.6	2.20	0	4.53	13.70
Fall	8	0	8	350	816	0.35	86.2	1.85	6	6.38	13.65
Winter	1	0	1	5	8	0.23	60.0	1.72	0	2.18	6.63
Total	19	2	17	544	1383	0.32	85.1	1.94	14	6.38	12.33
Taylorsville Lake											
Spring	2	0	2	15	10	0.13	60.0	2.91	0	4.72	7.95
Summer	14	0	14	560	466	0.22	50.3	2.11	2	6.15	14.87
Fall	4	0	4	147	116	0.15	40.0	2.19	0	4.31	12.25
Total	20	0	20	722	592	0.20	49.2	2.21	2	6.15	13.66
Yatesville Lake											
Spring & Total	2	1	1	103	86	0.11	60.9	2.87	3	5.75	12.19

Table 2. Summary of 2011 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											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	9	12	0.19	88.9	1.95	1	6.19	12.55
Cedar Creek lake											
Spring	7	1	6	104	32	0.08	24.5	4.83	9	7.83	9.83
Summer	6	0	6	79	43	0.12	33.6	4.49	6	5.90	8.35
Fall	1	0	1	7	4	0.07	57.1	4.39	0	4.75	4.75
Total	14	1	13	190	79	0.10	30.7	4.64	15	7.83	8.83
Elmer Davis Lake											
Spring & Total	2	1	1	22	50	0.33	84.4	1.33	1	5.56	9.75
Guist Creek Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	6	11	0.26	100.0	1.43	0	2.50	8.25
Kincaid Lake											
Spring	7	1	6	69	77	0.27	55.5	1.74	5	6.50	14.19
Summer	2	1	1	22	48	0.23	76.0	1.77	0	4.03	9.64
Total	9	2	7	91	125	0.26	60.0	1.75	5	6.50	13.17
Lake Beshear											
Spring & Total	6	1	5	106	287	0.36	81.0	3.12	24	8.15	21.07
Lake Jericho											
Spring & Total	1	1	0	14	12	0.11	57.1	2.87	0	4.21	8.23
Lake Malone											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	21	14	0.08	23.8	3.12	2	5.49	7.96
Wilgreen Lake											
Spring & Total	1	0	1	13	9	0.09	38.5	1.53	0	2.31	5.88
Williamstown Lake											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	21	82	0.39	81.0	1.44	1	5.08	10.98
Willisburg Lake											
Spring	1	0	1	6	4	0.08	25.0	1.30	0	2.69	3.44
Summer	1	0	1	9	22	0.35	44.4	1.31	0	3.29	10.64
Total	2	0	2	15	26	0.22	34.7	1.30	0	3.29	7.04

Table 3. Summary of 2011 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)
Cumberland River											
Summer & Total	1	1	0	6	27	0.64	100.0	1.96	0	3.57	14.56
Green River											
Summer & Total	1	0	1	10	11	0.14	80.0	2.01	0	3.35	7.69
Kentucky Lake Tailwater											
Summer & Total	2	2	0	27	55	0.3	67.3	1.70	1	5.29	7.85
Kentucky River											
Summer	2	0	2	21	64	0.38	77.8	1.23	0	4.24	8.02
Fall	1	0	1	10	41	0.59	80.0	0.58	0	1.67	5.05
Total	3	0	3	31	105	0.45	78.5	1.05	0	4.24	7.03
Ohio River											
Markland Pool											
Spring	6	1	5	72	129	0.45	66.2	1.51	1	5.54	16.21
Summer	14	0	14	185	423	0.47	77.9	1.31	2	6.10	11.37
Fall	1	1	0	18	20	0.14	55.6	1.18	0	2.00	4.56
Total	21	2	19	275	572	0.45	73.5	1.36	3	6.10	12.43
Meldahl Pool											
Spring	2	0	2	17	42	0.31	81.7	1.48	0	3.31	8.19
Summer	6	1	5	98	254	0.30	74.2	1.33	0	4.93	8.60
Fall	5	1	4	169	265	0.34	73.8	1.41	0	3.90	8.55
Total	13	2	11	284	561	0.32	75.2	1.38	0	4.93	8.52
All Pools Combined											
Spring	8	1	7	89	171	0.41	70.1	1.50	1	5.54	14.20
Summer	20	1	19	283	677	0.42	76.8	1.31	2	6.10	10.54
Fall	6	2	4	187	285	0.31	70.7	1.38	0	3.90	7.89
Total	34	4	30	559	1133	0.40	74.1	1.37	3	6.10	10.93

Table 4. Species composition (%) at each tournament site reported in 2011. Size limits used by tournaments varied and can affect the composition of the reported catch.

Water body	Largemouth bass	Smallmouth bass	Spotted bass
Barren River Lake	84	1	15
Boltz Lake	100	0	0
Cave Run Lake	100	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	100	0	0
Cumberland River	93	7	0
Dale Hollow Lake	53	21	26
Elmer Davis Lake	100	0	0
Grayson Lake	100	0	0
Green River	55	0	45
Green River Lake	85	6	9
Guist Creek Lake	100	0	0
Herrington Lake	98	1	1
Kentucky Lake	92	5	3
Kentucky Lake Tailwater	98	2	0
Kentucky River	94	0	6
Kincaid Lake	96	0	4
Lake Barkley	97	2	1
Lake Beshear	100	0	0
Lake Cumberland	50	16	34
Lake Jericho	100	0	0
Lake Malone	100	0	0
Laurel River Lake	72	9	19
Nolin River Lake	95	1	4
Ohio River – Markland	92	1	7
Ohio River – Meldahl	63	11	26
Ohio River - All Pools	78	6	16
Rough River Lake	96	0	4
Taylorsville Lake	100	0	0
Wilgreen Lake	100	0	0
Williamstown Lake	100	0	0
Willisburg Lake	100	0	0
Yatesville Lake	99	0	1

Table 5. Rankings for Kentucky's tournament waters based on the catch data reported from 2011 bass tournaments. Data from a minimum of three tournaments was required for a water body to be included in these rankings.

Total Number of Tournaments		Number of bass caught per hour		Percent of Anglers/Teams who were successful		Average weight (lbs) per bass		Hrs. to catch a bass $\geq$ 5.0 lbs [A]		Average 1st place weight (lb) per 8 hour day	
Lake Barkley	74	Kentucky River	0.45	Nolin River Lake	88.9	Cedar Creek Lake	4.64	Lake Beshear	34	Lake Beshear	21.07
Kentucky Lake	62	Ohio River	0.40	Barren River Lake	86.1	Lake Beshear	3.12	Cedar Creek Lake	84	Barren River Lake	17.06
Ohio River	34	Barren River Lake	0.39	Rough River Lake	85.1	Kentucky Lake	2.59	Lake Barkley	130	Kentucky Lake	16.06
Barren River Lake	24	Herrington Lake	0.38	Lake Beshear	81.0	Lake Barkley	2.45	Kentucky Lake	154	Lake Barkley	14.61
Taylorsville Lake	20	Lake Beshear	0.36	Kentucky River	78.5	Barren River Lake	2.36	Kincaid Lake	154	Taylorsville Lake	13.66
Rough River Lake	19	Nolin River Lake	0.36	Herrington Lake	76.0	Lake Cumberland	2.36	Green River Lake	181	Green River Lake	13.23
Green River Lake	17	Rough River Lake	0.32	Kentucky Lake	75.0	Taylorsville Lake	2.21	Nolin River Lake	230	Kincaid Lake	13.17
Nolin River Lake	15	Green River Lake	0.29	Ohio River	74.1	Green River Lake	2.16	Rough River Lake	325	Lake Cumberland	12.66
Cedar Creek Lake	14	Kentucky Lake	0.29	Lake Barkley	73.0	Rough River Lake	1.94	Barren River Lake	460	Rough River Lake	12.33
Lake Cumberland	11	Lake Barkley	0.29	Green River Lake	62.9	Nolin River Lake	1.87	Herrington Lake	479	Herrington Lake	12.07
Kincaid Lake	9	Kincaid Lake	0.26	Kincaid Lake	60.0	Kincaid Lake	1.75	Lake Cumberland	545	Nolin River Lake	11.59
Lake Beshear	6	Taylorsville Lake	0.20	Lake Cumberland	56.8	Herrington Lake	1.63	Ohio River	1363	Ohio River	10.93
Herrington Lake	6	Lake Cumberland	0.16	Taylorsville Lake	49.2	Ohio River	1.37	Taylorsville Lake	1588	Cedar Creek Lake	8.83
Kentucky River	3	Cedar Creek Lake	0.10	Cedar Creek Lake	30.7	Kentucky River	1.05	Kentucky River	n/a	Kentucky River	7.03

n/a = no fish of this size were caught during the year. Therefore catch rates could not be calculated.

[A] This metric relates to the amount of fishing effort that it takes to catch a bass $\geq$ 5.0 lbs. Total fishing effort is determined by multiplying the number of anglers/teams by the length, in hours, of the tournament. (Example: At Lake A, it takes about 100 hours to catch a bass $\geq$ 5.0 lbs, which means that a 50 angler tournament fishing for 8 hours, could weigh in 4 bass $\geq$ 5.0 lbs during the tournament (400 divided by 100 = 4 bass).

Table 6. Tournament statistics that are used to identify trends at selected water bodies from 2002-2010. A dash indicates no tournaments were reported in that year. In 2010, there were changes made to what tournament data was collected, which had a noticeable impact on all these statistics with only one exception, the "Average weight per bass".

Variable	Barren River Lake										Cave Run Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.30	0.39	0.05	0.04	0.13	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.12	0.22	0.29
Percent successful	52.5	61.3	70.4	63.1	55.6	63.1	60.2	67.0	83.4	86.1	21.1	27.1	55.8	59.4	71.6	65.5	59.4	40.2	76.7	83.3
Average weight per bass	2.25	2.20	1.89	2.09	2.56	2.32	2.29	2.27	2.31	2.36	2.74	2.37	1.28	1.18	0.71	0.68	0.80	2.36	0.86	1.18
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	250	167	200	143	184	53	137	89	--	--	250	500	333	333	440	>1000	>1000	298	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	226	460	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	--	--	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--

	Dale Hollow Lake										Dewey Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.18	0.10	0.07	0.17	0.14	0.36	0.16	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.04	--	--
Percent successful	41.8	37.8	26.1	54.7	57.1	30.0	60.7	42.9	80.7	100	41.8	35.9	25.0	39.9	59.5	n/a	26.5	34.4	--	--
Average weight per bass	1.78	1.80	2.11	1.57	2.34	2.30	2.05	2.03	1.69	2.73	2.14	1.76	2.90	1.86	2.86	2.59	1.49	2.43	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	500	>1000	125	143	401	290	161	274	--	--	500	500	77	167	38	n/a	>1000	500	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	289	240	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	>1000	n/a	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	500	382	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--

	Grayson Lake										Green River Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	--	--	--	0.11	0.02	--	--	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.10	0.11	0.14	0.19	0.22	0.22	0.34	0.29
Percent successful	--	--	--	42.3	12.5	--	--	24.0	39.4	34.3	60.9	36.1	49.7	49.0	44.8	56.5	63.3	57.7	72.3	62.9
Average weight per bass	--	--	--	0.75	2.71	--	--	2.61	3.33	2.22	1.56	1.74	2.10	1.51	1.74	1.65	1.48	2.20	2.22	2.16
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	--	--	--	n/a	128	--	--	400	--	--	333	1000	111	500	184	179	108	76	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	53	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	101	181
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	--	n/a	--	--	>1000	n/a	500	>1000	>1000	>1000	344	459	--	--

n/a = no fish of this size were caught during the year. Therefore catch rates could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Tournament statistics that are used to identify trends at selected water bodies from 2000-2010. A dash indicates no tournaments were reported in that year. In 2010, there were changes made to what tournament data was collected, which had a noticeable impact on all these statistics with only one exception, the "Average weight per bass".

Variable	Guist Creek Lake										Herrington Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.10	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.11	0.20	0.26	0.07	0.13	0.12	0.15	0.21	0.11	0.22	0.22	0.37	0.38
Percent successful	45.6	38.2	45.1	51.5	50.1	46.6	49.6	44.3	71.1	100	40.0	54.4	76.5	58.5	75.8	50.2	63.3	77.8	95.4	76.0
Average weight per bass	2.07	1.58	1.69	1.82	2.33	1.90	1.88	1.98	2.01	1.43	1.76	1.44	1.57	1.63	1.30	1.80	1.48	1.11	1.56	1.63
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	250	>1000	1000	250	229	119	154	212	--	--	500	500	n/a	500	n/a	339	380	n/a	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	355	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	373	479
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	>1000	n/a	1000	n/a	688	894	n/a	>1000	--	--	>1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	--	--

	Kentucky Lake										Kentucky River									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.2	0.26	0.29	0.08	0.09	--	0.07	0.14	0.12	0.21	0.25	0.12	0.45
Percent successful	49.2	65.7	56.0	56.5	63.5	57.1	71.4	63.4	72.8	75.0	38.2	41.2	--	35.3	73.1	43.2	60.2	76.6	43.8	78.5
Average weight per bass	2.72	2.37	2.72	2.52	2.48	2.60	2.58	2.75	2.78	2.59	1.56	1.52	--	1.82	1.38	1.17	1.36	1.41	1.43	1.05
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	167	200	100	143	127	81	86	48	--	--	>1000	1000	--	333	259	n/a	n/a	438	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	148	154	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	1000	1000	795	818	>1000	533	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	--	--

	Kincaid Lake										Lake Barkley									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.08	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.17	0.12	0.26	0.26	0.09	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.23	0.29
Percent successful	24.4	42.7	41.7	44.7	39.2	42.6	32.7	28.5	59.6	60.0	51.8	51.1	55.0	53.2	55.6	65.2	70.5	67.3	70.5	73.0
Average weight per bass	1.99	1.66	1.66	1.89	1.53	1.96	1.55	1.72	1.90	1.75	2.54	2.54	2.27	2.55	2.56	2.62	2.67	2.64	2.69	2.45
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	333	250	333	167	231	124	226	157	--	--	125	143	125	100	84	53	61	64	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	198	154	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	127	130
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	>1000	>1000	n/a	333	n/a	248	>1000	n/a	--	--	>1000	>1000	>1000	>1000	610	518	573	483	--	--

n/a = no fish of this size were caught during the year. Therefore catch rates could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Tournament statistics that are used to identify trends at selected water bodies from 2000-2010. A dash indicates no tournaments were reported in that year. In 2010, there were changes made to what tournament data was collected, which had a noticeable impact on all these statistics with only one exception, the "Average weight per bass".

Variable	Lake Beshear										Lake Cumberland									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	--	0.10	0.14	0.16	0.10	--	0.08	0.24	0.40	0.36	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.13	0.20	0.12	0.17	0.26	0.16
Percent successful	--	34.1	75.6	60.9	56.2	--	45.5	79.7	85.3	81.0	41.1	31.7	45.9	45.0	46.4	79.8	51.7	62.4	71.7	56.8
Average weight per bass	--	2.50	2.69	2.92	2.59	--	2.42	3.40	2.97	3.12	2.10	1.93	2.02	2.21	2.09	2.62	2.33	2.38	2.09	2.36
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	--	67	35	50	43	--	n/a	16	--	--	125	500	167	125	440	39	91	39	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	41	34	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	870	545
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	--	n/a	500	n/a	>1000	--	n/a	73	--	--	>1000	n/a	>1000	>1000	>1000	709	972	>1000	--	--

	Lake Malone										Laurel River Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.07	0.06	0.12	0.07	--	--	--	0.08	0.18	0.08	--	0.05	--	--	n/a	--	0.18	0.09	0.06	0.20
Percent successful	36.9	39.6	41.9	38.4	--	--	--	35.8	51.3	23.8	--	20.7	--	--	61.1	--	62.2	38.3	25.8	65.6
Average weight per bass	2.92	2.58	2.02	3.31	--	--	--	2.84	2.92	3.12	--	1.82	--	--	n/a	--	3.14	3.02	2.80	2.55
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	91	59	83	43	--	--	--	137	--	--	--	>1000	--	--	72	--	106	79	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	102	84	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	256
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	250	333	333	333	--	--	--	275	--	--	--	n/a	--	--	n/a	--	n/a	367	--	--

	Nolin River Lake										Rough River Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.13	0.11	0.10	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.15	0.30	0.36	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.15	0.12	0.15	0.11	0.13	0.27	0.32
Percent successful	67.5	44.2	66.2	63.9	64.7	61.3	64.8	76.6	81.5	88.9	69.0	56.8	62.4	56.6	57.5	57.2	50.3	67.3	81.6	85.1
Average weight per bass	1.84	1.83	2.03	1.96	1.89	1.73	1.79	1.71	2.05	1.87	1.63	1.95	1.96	1.79	2.03	2.02	1.91	1.82	1.64	1.94
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	500	1000	500	167	176	127	140	150	--	--	500	333	167	143	176	126	159	204	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	109	230	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	571	325
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	>1000	>1000	320	--	--	>1000	>1000	1000	1000	>1000	969	>1000	>1000	--	--

n/a = no fish of this size were caught during the year. Therefore catch rates could not be calculated.

Table 6 (cont). Tournament statistics that are used to identify trends at selected water bodies from 2000-2010. A dash indicates no tournaments were reported in that year. In 2010, there were changes made to what tournament data was collected, which had a noticeable impact on all these statistics with only one exception, the "Average weight per bass".

Variable	Taylorsville Lake										Yatesville Lake									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.15	0.20	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.11
Percent successful	35.2	26.1	30.6	46.4	40.3	34.3	29.9	32.7	37.3	49.2	28.1	45.2	30.3	40.6	35.7	39.1	49.9	45.9	61.2	60.9
Average weight per bass	2.26	2.30	2.23	2.32	2.16	2.36	2.38	2.32	2.17	2.21	2.66	2.67	2.43	2.22	2.24	2.07	2.38	2.09	2.36	2.87
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	333	1000	500	333	932	195	299	844	--	--	250	111	143	143	352	>1000	516	336	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	>1000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	275
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	>1000	--	--	>1000	>1000	>1000	1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	672	--	--

	Ohio River - Markland Pool										Ohio River - McAlpine Pool									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.12	0.18	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.27	0.26	0.39	0.45	0.11	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.10	0.11	0.25	0.21	0.13	--
Percent successful	33.4	46.1	40.0	51.2	70.9	42.7	62.0	61.7	70.7	73.5	49.2	55.0	48.6	25.0	47.7	37.8	62.0	61.1	76.5	--
Average weight per bass	1.50	1.42	1.36	1.50	1.25	1.29	1.55	1.45	1.35	1.36	1.43	1.33	1.58	1.58	1.62	1.54	1.16	1.67	1.26	--
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	500	500	1000	1000	n/a	249	510	242	--	--	333	1000	1000	n/a	352	446	n/a	n/a	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	554	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	--
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	--	--

	Ohio River - Meldahl Pool										Ohio River - All Pools									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. bass caught per hour	0.11	0.14	0.09	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.24	0.23	0.28	0.32	0.10	0.17	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.13	0.25	0.24	0.34	0.40
Percent successful	36.0	49.0	40.8	42.5	43.6	42.1	63.3	67.3	73.9	74.1	35.0	48.4	40.7	45.8	55.6	41.2	62.6	64.1	70.3	74.1
Average weight per bass	1.26	1.33	1.36	1.37	1.41	1.40	1.42	1.38	1.36	1.38	1.42	1.37	1.39	1.44	1.36	1.42	1.48	1.44	1.36	1.37
Hours to catch bass > 4 lbs	n/a	1000	n/a	n/a	n/a	289	n/a	>1000	--	--	1000	500	1000	1000	>1000	317	968	583	--	--
Hours to catch bass > 5 lbs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a	n/a	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	>1000	>1000
Hours to catch bass > 6 lbs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	n/a	--	--	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	>1000	n/a	>1000	--	--

n/a = no fish of this size were caught during the year. Therefore catch rates 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 reduces 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 and 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 by ***adding 1/3 cup to every 5 gallons of water*** in the livewell. 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 significantly increase the survival of bass that are caught and released during tournaments and could be used to keep next year's winning sack 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 when 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 confusion and conflicts 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 minimize fish 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".