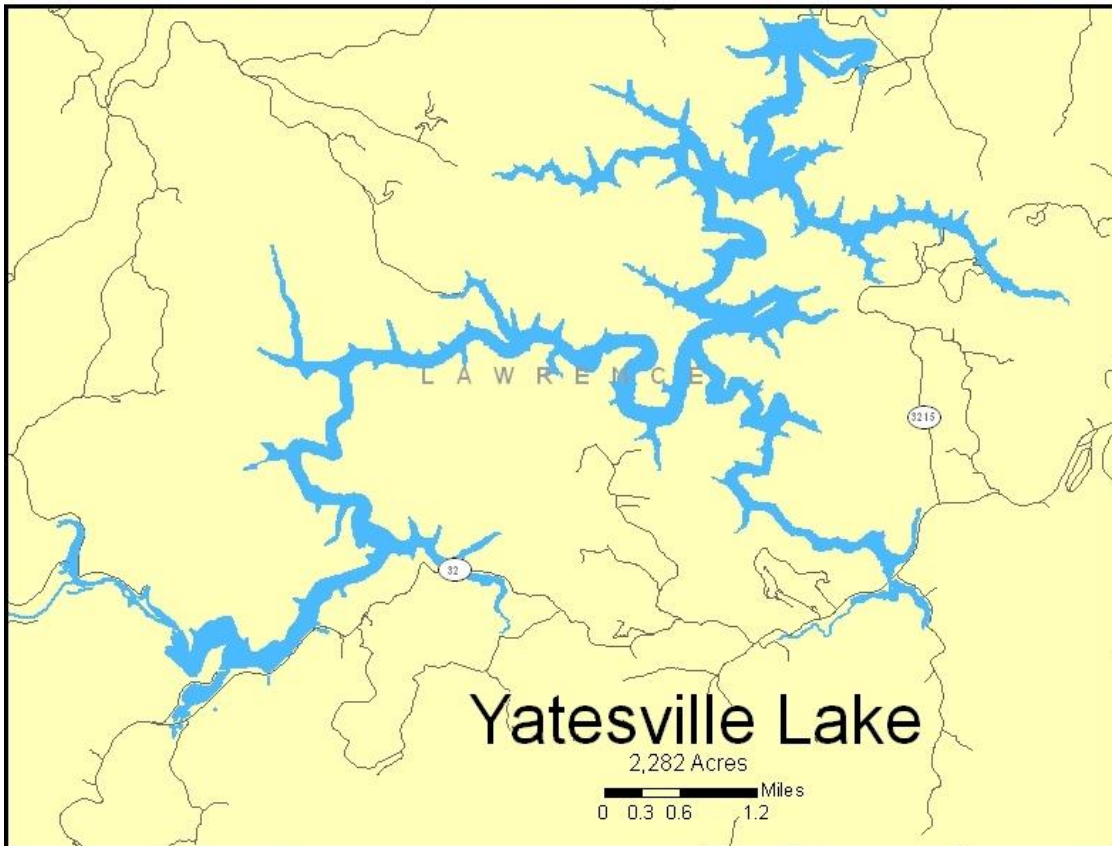


Yatesville Lake Bass Assessment 2011

Yatesville Lake is a 2,350 acre multipurpose US Army Corps of Engineers reservoir on Blaine Creek in Lawrence County. This lake has continually produced quality largemouth bass since final impoundment in 1994, but also produces abundant quality channel catfish and white crappie. Gizzard shad have allowed white crappie quality to improve, but competition with shad has lead to reduced bluegill size. Largemouth bass tournaments are very popular at Yatesville Lake.

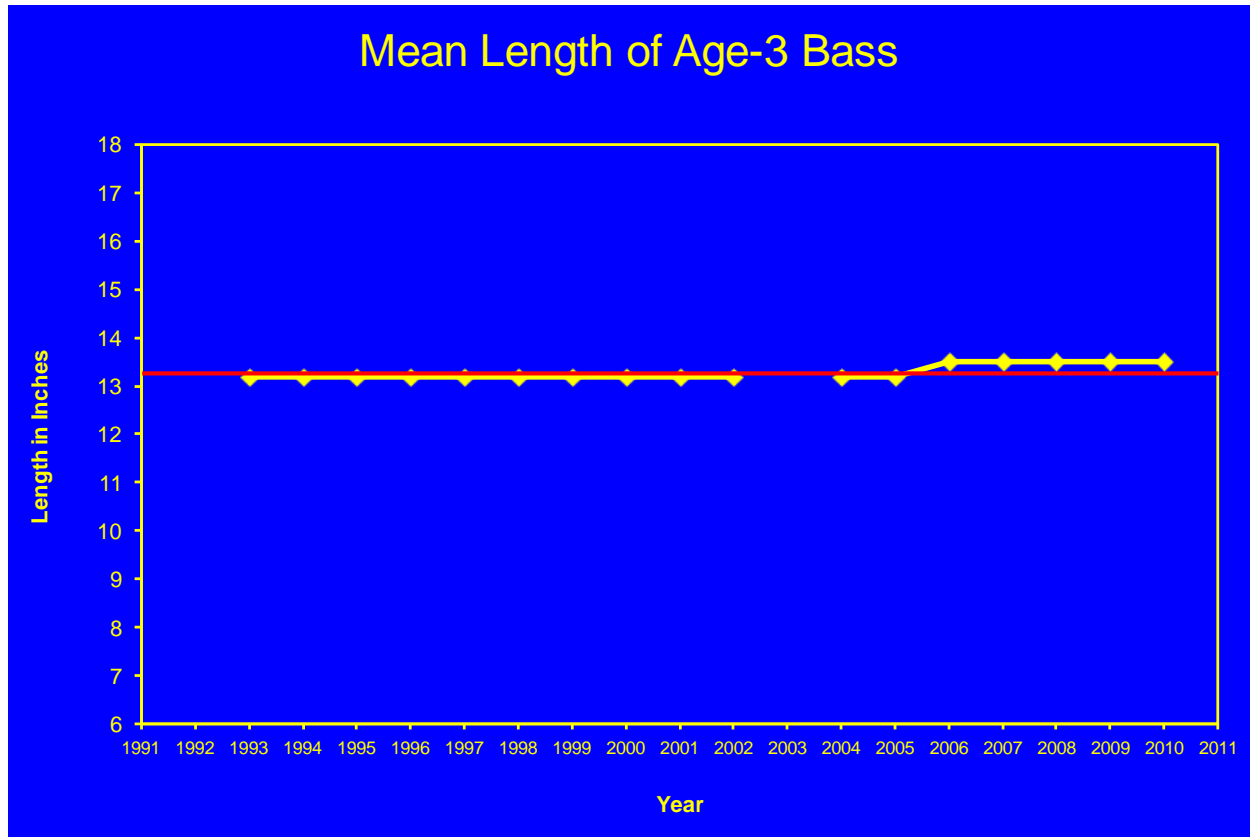
Recently, there has been concern over potential over-harvest of largemouth bass because they are being mistaken for spotted bass. Many largemouth bass in Yatesville Lake exhibit a tongue tooth patch (usually reduced in size) that is typically a distinguishing characteristic of spotted bass. As of 2010, anglers must use other characteristics (noted in the *Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide*) to distinguish spotted bass from largemouth bass. The minimum size limit for largemouth bass is 15.0 inches.

The following graphs show trends and rankings for each of the five population parameters used in the largemouth bass assessment. Sampling at Yatesville Lake was not conducted in 2003. Please see "Understanding the Largemouth Bass Assessment" article for an explanation of how the assessment works.



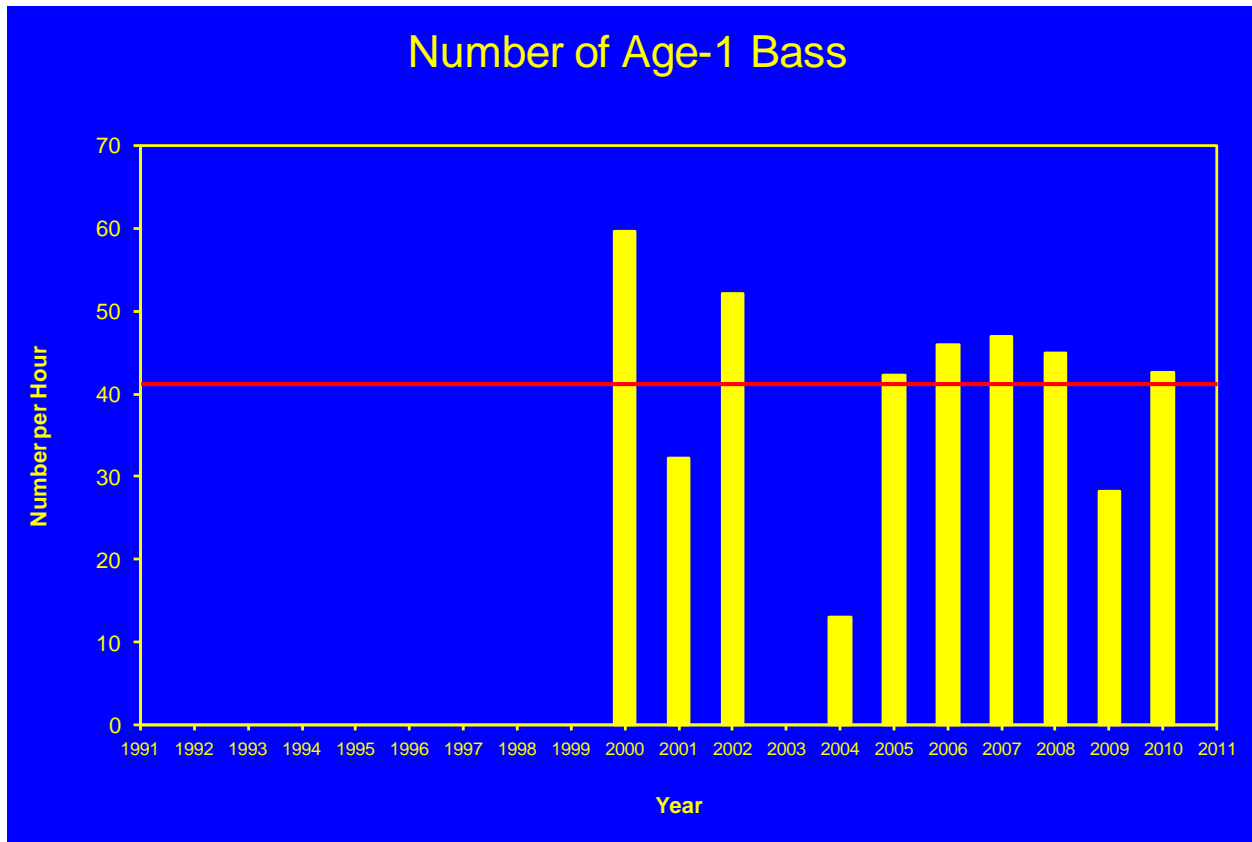
Parameter 1 – Length at age-3 (growth rate)

At Yatesville Lake, the length of an age-3 largemouth bass has averaged 13.3 inches since 1993 (see red line), but increased to 13.5 inches in 2005. Largemouth bass are showing “excellent” growth rates when compared to other lakes of similar size. Since the beginning, growth has been stable. The last year that KDFWR aged largemouth bass at the lake was 2006. Growth rates are generally related to factors such as population density, food resources, and weather patterns.



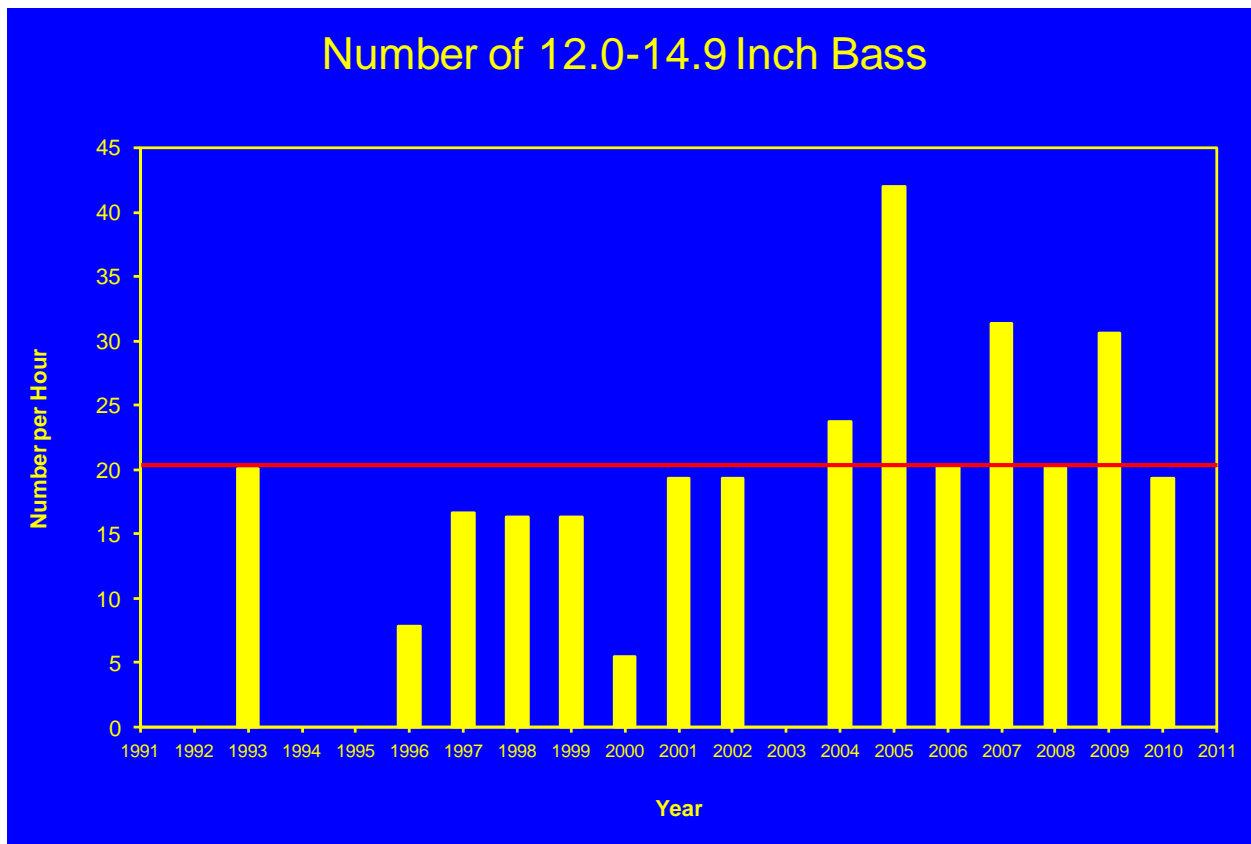
Parameter 2 – Numbers of age-1 bass (how good the spawn was)

KDFWR looks at the electrofishing catch rates of age-1 largemouth bass to assess the success of the spawn which occurred in the prior year. This is an important parameter because the number of bass produced is a good predictor of how good the fishing will be in 2 to 4 years. At Yatesville Lake, age-1 largemouth bass catch rates have averaged 40.80 fish per hour of electrofishing giving it a “good” rating when compared to other lakes in this size range. With the exception of a few low years (2001, 2004, and 2009), Yatesville Lake has consistently produced catch rates of age-1 bass in the “good” – “excellent” range. This has been helped in part by age-0 largemouth bass stockings in 2006 and 2009 to supplement poor year classes. This has resulted in “good” age-1 numbers in 2007 and 2010; years that likely would have produced “fair” or “poor” age-1 catch rates otherwise.



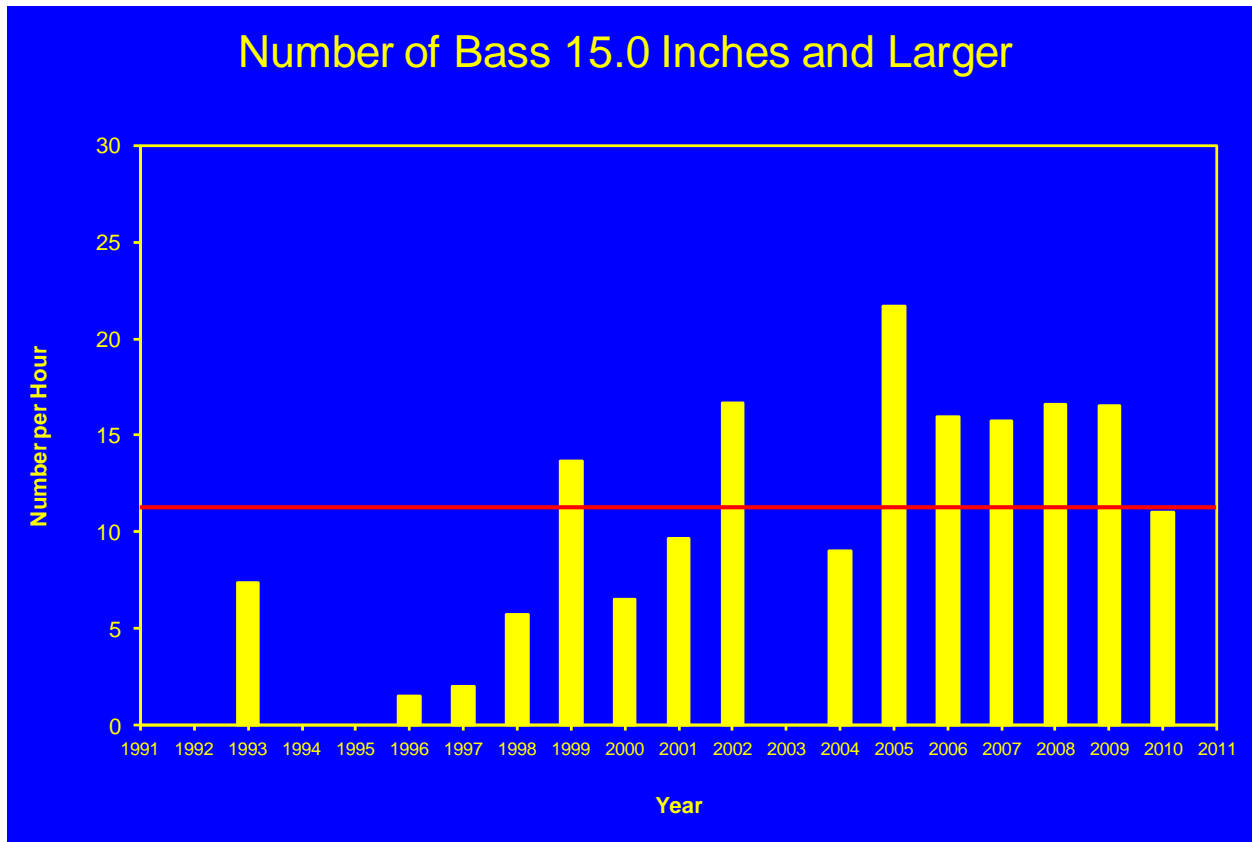
Parameter 3 – Numbers of 12.0-14.9 inch bass

The electrofishing spring catch of 12.0-14.9 inch largemouth bass has averaged 20.59 fish per hour (red line) over the years, which gives Yatesville Lake a “fair” rating when compared to other lakes in its size range. Yatesville Lake is a relatively young lake with a bass population that has recently matured. Since 2004, largemouth bass in this size range have averaged a “good” rating at 26.80 fish per hour. These numbers are important because fish in this size range will soon grow to exceed the 15.0 inch legal size limit at the lake in the next year or two, and result in increased numbers of larger bass available to anglers fishing the lake. While 2010 produced a “fair” catch rate of fish in this size range (19.33 fish per hour), it is expected that future years will continue to produce “good” catch rates similar to the average from recent years.



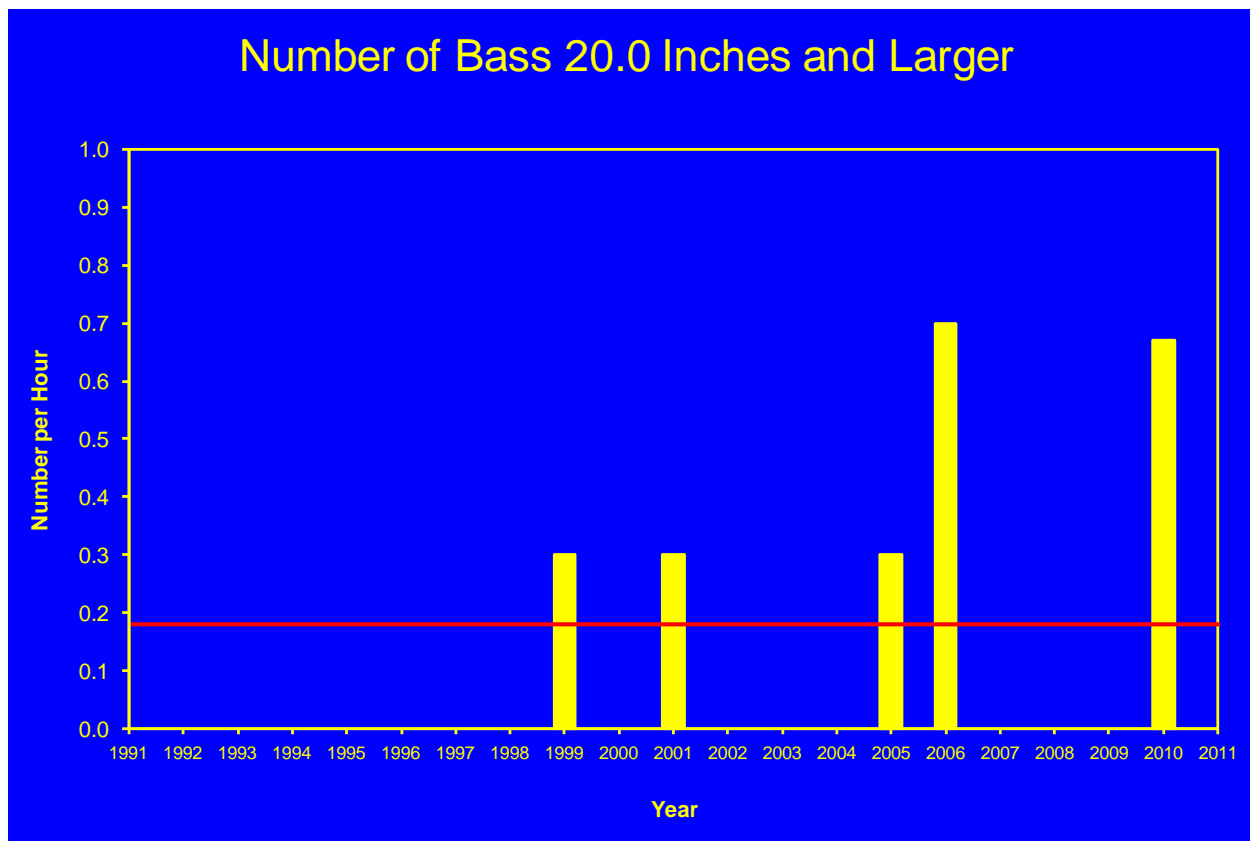
Parameter 4 – Numbers of 15.0 inch and larger bass

This parameter measures the number of fish available for harvest now. The catch rate of 15.0 inch and larger largemouth bass at Yatesville Lake has averaged 11.32 fish per hour of electrofishing (red line). This is a “fair” catch rate for this size group. The average since 2004 is 15.24 fish per hour, giving an assessment of “good.” While the 2010 catch rate (11.00 fish per hour) is slightly below average for Yatesville Lake, it is still considered “fair.”



Parameter 5 – Numbers of 20.0-inch and larger bass

The electrofishing catch of 20.0-inch and larger largemouth bass has averaged 0.19 fish per hour for Yatesville Lake since 1997. This catch rate gives the lake a “poor” rating when it is compared to other lakes in its size range. Most years no fish in excess of 20 inches are observed. However, in 2010 a catch rate of 0.67 fish per hour of 20.0-inch and larger fish was observed with a rating of “fair.” This parameter is subject to chance and is therefore not always a reliable measure of the availability of large fish. It does give good anecdotal evidence that trophy fish are present though.



Overall – Total Assessment Score (All five parameters added together)

Overall, the largemouth bass fishery at Yatesville Lake has averaged a “good” rating (12.6) since 2000. The largemouth bass population at this lake showed consistent improvement which is typical as a new lake matures. This trend is often followed by a leveling off or slight decreasing trend. We may be beginning to see this develop. From 2007 to 2010 the overall assessment score has ranged from 12 to 13 receiving ratings of “good.” Future years will likely be in this range as well.

