INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) initiated the Bass Information from Tournament Entries (B.I.T.E.) program in 1989 as a cooperative effort between the agency and Tennessee's organized bass fishing clubs. Completing its eighteenth year, the objective of the program has been to establish a closer working relationship with bass clubs and tournament organizations through the mutual exchange of bass tournament data. The B.I.T.E. program summarizes catch data already being collected by participating clubs on reservoir bass populations. These data will supplement T.W.R.A.'s reservoir fishery database, while providing bass clubs with a statewide summary of tournament results for their interest and possible use in tournament site selection.

Based on TWRA creel survey results, reservoir bass fishing is one of Tennessee's important recreational resources with approximately 33 percent of fishing effort statewide geared toward black bass. These bass anglers produced an estimated 2.3 million angler hours of effort in pursuit of black bass in 2005 (2006 data not available at time of printing).

Economically, fishing generated over $480 million in total expenditures by anglers in Tennessee during 2001 (USFWS 2003). Total trip expenditures by bass anglers on reservoirs in Tennessee were estimated at over $8.8 million during 2005 (TWRA Creel Survey 2006). These expenditures included items such as fuel, food, bait, and lodging, but excluded boat and vehicle costs.

Through 2006, 5,926 tournament reports have been summarized. More than 154 clubs or tournament organizations participated through the first eighteen years of the program. Bass anglers have spent over 1.7 million hours collecting data for this program and contributed data from 336,292 black bass weighing 640,134 pounds.

METHODS

Participation in the B.I.T.E. program was solicited via fishery biologists, creel clerks, wildlife officers, statewide news releases, TWRA web site, and supported by the Tennessee Bass Federation, including their website. Direct mailings were used in maintaining the support of the previous years' clubs.

Participating clubs and tournament organizations were sent the previous year's annual report, and if applicable, postpaid tournament report cards to be completed and mailed after each tournament. Completion of one card per tournament was all that was required from each club. Electronic mail and fax was also used to collect tournament data. The Tennessee Bass Federation supported an online B.I.T.E. tournament reporting form (Figure 1), which allows the reporting of tournament data to be more convenient. The form can be found at www.tnbass.com (click B.I.T.E. form) and at the TWRA's website www.tnwildlife.org (click the "Fishing" link). Clubs were assigned individual code numbers for confidentiality. Tournament data cards were checked for accuracy and entered into a computer database. Club officers were contacted when data were incomplete or suspected to be erroneous.

Statewide tournament data were summarized by club and by reservoir. Various indices including fishing success (weighing in one or more bass), average weight, bass per day, and pounds per day were calculated to measure bass fishing tournament characteristics on specific reservoirs and for each club. Since the length of a fishing day varied between tournaments, an angler-day was defined as 10 hours of fishing effort. Bass weight listed in the tables is reported in pounds. Occasionally, bass clubs did not always keep up with the total number of bass 5 pounds or larger at weigh-in, and this is noted in the appropriate Tables. Also, Ft. Loudoun and Tellico reservoirs were combined for analysis when tournament anglers were allowed to fish either reservoir. Since the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) calculated tournament fishing success differently, their tournament data from Pickwick reservoir is excluded from some calculations in Table 2. Unless otherwise noted in this report, the term "bass" is used collectively to include largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted (Kentucky) bass.

Reservoirs with five or more tournament reports were ranked according to important tournament characteristics. The ranking categories were as follows: percent successful (percent of anglers with one or more bass at weigh-in), average bass weight, number of bass per angler-day, pounds of bass per angler-day, and hours required to catch a bass five pounds or larger. Values were assigned to each rank and an overall rank was determined for each reservoir by averaging the values of the five categories. The intent of this ranking system was not to rank the "best" or "worst" reservoirs in the state, but to provide club members with a reference guide for possible use in tournament site selection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The B.I.T.E. program was supported by fifteen clubs or tournament organizations during 2006 (down from 27 last year), which submitted 143 tournament reports (Table 1). This is down 25 percent from 2005. Club representatives did a great job filling out the report cards, and only a couple was rejected due to incomplete or erroneous data. Eleven clubs (73%) submitted five or more tournament reports, a higher percent than last year. Seven clubs submitted 10 or more reports, with 9 reports, on average, being received per club. Higher numbers of reports allow better estimates of fishing conditions, and not just a good or bad day's fishing by one or two clubs. All club representatives should remember that each tournament report is important to this program.

During 2006, tournament reports were received for 30 bodies of water that were fished 69,872 hours (Table 2). Included in Table 2 are the only tournament reports received for Pickwick reservoir from the MDWFP. The average tournament had 48 anglers catching 64 bass weighing 136 pounds. This is similar to an average of 65 bass and 143 pounds per tournament in 2005. Most tournament data were received for Watts Bar and Pickwick reservoirs, followed by Cheatham, Chickamauga and Douglas. Excluding Pickwick, sixty-two percent of bass anglers were successful at bringing at least one bass to weigh-in. Anglers brought 11,259 bass (12 inches and larger) weighing 23,760 pounds to weigh-ins. Average weight of bass caught on Tennessee reservoirs ranged from 1.30 pounds on Woods to 2.90 pounds on Watts Bar. Overall, the average weight was 2.11 pounds, down slightly from last year's 2.19 pounds. On in-state reservoirs, fishing success ranged from a high of 3.03 bass per angler-day at Douglas to 0.81 at Watts Bar reservoir, with an average of 1.61 bass per angler-day. Pounds per angler-day were highest for Dale Hollow at 5.38, and lowest for Woods reservoir at 1.79 pounds per angler-day. The overall average was 3.40 pounds per angler-day, down from 3.61 pounds in 2005.

Reservoirs with exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2006 are listed in Table 3. Approximately 98% of all bass caught by B.I.T.E. participants were released. Approximately 16% of individual or team anglers brought in limits of bass, similar to the number of limits reported in the last few years.

A total of 166 bass, weighing five pounds or more, were reported caught during 2006 (down from 267 in 2005), with an overall catch rate of one 5-pound bass or larger for every 421 hours of fishing, an increase from last year's average of 328 hours. The largest bass reported was 7.74 pounds taken from Pickwick in March reported by MDWFP. Pickwick led all reservoirs in the catch of bass five pounds and larger with 52 fish, followed by Watts Bar with 29. A total of 7 bass seven pounds and larger were reported in 2006 (Table 4) with most (57%) of these big fish being caught in March. Twelve bass seven pounds or larger were reported in 2005.

The seasonal distribution of tournament fishing effort, including night tournaments, is presented in Figure 2. Most tournaments were held during March, April and June. Night tournaments accounted for approximately 16% of tournaments with most occurring in June, July and August. Tournament fishing success for both number of bass per angler-day and pounds per angler-day decreased slightly in 2006, with average weight also decreasing slightly (Figure 3). The hours (effort) required to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger during the year increased to 421, the highest amount since 2002.

Of the 30 waterbodies from which tournaments were reported, six had 5 or more tournaments reported (down from 12 in 2005). Pickwick reservoir was excluded because of the difference in the way MDWFP calculated success rates. Relative ranks of these 6 reservoirs within 5 categories were determined and the following comments relate only to these reservoirs (Table 5). Percent successful anglers (those with one or more fish) ranged from approximately 44% at Watts Bar to 83% at Douglas. Average weight of bass caught ranged from 1.62 pounds at Douglas to 2.90 at Watts Bar. The average weight for these reservoirs was 2.19 pounds. Catch rates expressed as bass per angler-day ranged from 0.81 at Watts Bar reservoir to 3.03 at Douglas. Catch rate as pounds per angler-day ranged from 2.36 at Watts Bar reservoir to 4.89 at Douglas. The average was 3.32 pounds per angler-day. Anglers at Cheatham expended the least amount of time required to catch a bass 5-pounds or larger at 319 hours. Had Pickwick been included, it would have most likely ranked number three or four overall.

Overall, using the relative ranking procedure, Douglas ranked the highest, followed by Cherokee and Chickamauga reservoirs (Table 5). This is a move up from third for Cherokee and fourth for Douglas in 2005. Cheatham ranked fourth, and Ft. Loudoun/Tellico fifth, a move up from sixth last year for Cheatham and up from eighth for Loudoun/Tellico. The increase in rank for several of these reservoirs was related to

the exclusion of reservoirs that have been included in this ranking in the past, such as Guntersville, Kentucky Lake and Barkley. Remember, the intent of this ranking procedure is to characterize the bass fishery of each reservoir. Anglers should look at the category that is important to them. The overall rating should be used to narrow the choices. For example, if an angler felt like average weight and less effort to catch bass five pounds or larger was the most important, then Watts Bar would be a top choice. However, Chickamauga which ranked third in average weight, ranked 25% higher in pounds per angler-day, a measure important at weigh-in. If an angler wanted to catch more fish of a smaller size versus fewer fish of a larger size, then Chickamauga should be “better” than Watts Bar. With Douglas and Cherokee ranking first or second in three or more of the categories, these reservoirs should have offered the “best” overall fishing success. Remember, the intent of this ranking system was not to rank the "best" or "worst" reservoirs in the state, but to provide club members with a reference guide for possible use in tournament site selection. It is important to note that these rankings are relative in nature and sensitive to fluctuations in bass abundance and size structure. Varying environmental conditions and angling pressure from year to year also affect the rankings.

Based on 2005 TWRA surveys, bass growth rates in Tennessee reservoirs have remained relatively stable, with forage densities ranging from fair to good. Bass abundance continues to fluctuate, and electrofishing surveys showed black bass abundance was good to excellent at approximately 58% percent of sampled reservoirs. Recruitment (survival of young bass) continues to be cyclic, with 11 reservoirs having good to excellent recruitment, and 26 reservoirs having fair to poor for the 2004 year class (Broadbent et al. 2006). Fish population abundance cycles naturally to some degree, with water level fluctuations and other habitat changes (cover/structure) contributing to this cycling.

There still have been no confirmed fish kills related to largemouth bass virus (LMBV) in Tennessee, and only a few minor fish kills have occurred nationwide since 2003. However, the virus has been found in a majority of the reservoirs sampled in Tennessee, and in 21 other states (Grizzle and Brunner 2003). Bass kills have been attributed to this virus in at least a dozen states. LMBV outbreaks appear to be triggered by a combination of stress and heat. Since the virus usually affects the swim bladder, infected fish may appear near the surface and have trouble swimming and remaining upright.

No evidence exits that LMBV has caused long-term problems to any fishery, and many fisheries that have had LMBV related kills are rebounding (Group Solutions 2004). However, recent research indicates that LMBV infected fish experience slower growth rates and possibly higher natural mortality of older fish (Maceina and Grizzle 2006). While most states are in a "monitoring mode" for LMBV, future research needs include finding a quick and non-lethal way of testing bass for LMBV, further examination of any long-term effects on bass populations, determining why LMBV kills some fish and not others, and finding out how long antibodies remain in previously infected fish (Group Solutions, 2004).

TWRA is continuing to cooperate with researchers and other agencies to assess the presence of this virus in Tennessee bass populations, and to monitor any fish kills that may be caused by this pathogen. To aid us in this monitoring effort, please report any unusual bass fish kills to your regional TWRA office.

Anglers can play an important role in decreasing the chance of a LMBV outbreak. Although recent research by LMBV investigators shows the virus to be tough and hardy, surviving both temperature changes and drying, they suggest that cleaning the live wells with a solution of ¼ cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water for at least 5 minutes, then thoroughly rinsing will kill the virus in live wells. Handling bass as little as possible during hot weather, never moving fish or water between waterbodies, and never releasing live bait are strongly recommended. Cleaning boats and trailers between fishing trips is suggested. When not fishing competitively, always release fish immediately to minimize stress and mortality associated with holding fish in a live well for extended periods of time. This is particularly important during hot months when water temperatures exceed 80^{o}F. If fish are to be harvested they should put on ice immediately and not held in live wells.

In an effort to reduce bass mortality during tournaments, information and recommendations on handling and holding bass are provided in the back of this report. In addition, TWRA and the Tennessee Bass Federation produced a publication entitled, "Keeping Your Tournament-Caught Bass Alive". It is intended to help tournament anglers and organizers increase survival of tournament caught bass. For a copy, visit www.tnwildlife.org, or call 615-781-6575. B.A.S.S. has a more detailed publication titled, "Keeping Bass Alive: A Guidebook for Anglers and Tournament Organizers". This publication provides an overview of bass physiology and helps tournament anglers and organizers maximize the survival of bass caught and released at bass tournaments. To

request a copy, call 1-877-227-7872, or email conservation@bassmaster.com.

The Appendix in the back of this report provides anglers with a historical record of reservoir statistics from the B.I.T.E. program since 1989. Please note that graphs were not restricted to reservoirs with five or more tournaments. Data points for some years were represented by only one tournament, and data are completely absent in some years. Reservoirs from which three years or less of data were reported are not included. Readers should be aware that the scales on the vertical graph axes vary in range, which must be considered when comparing reservoir trends.

The B.I.T.E. program exists only because of the time and effort participating clubs or tournament organizations have provided to contribute bass tournament data to TWRA (Table 6). We thank all those who voluntarily submitted tournament data. With your continued support, and the additional support of other bass clubs across the state, the program will continue to be successful and yield important information about Tennessee's reservoir bass resources. This report will also be made available on TWRA's Internet site: www.tnwildlife.org.

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

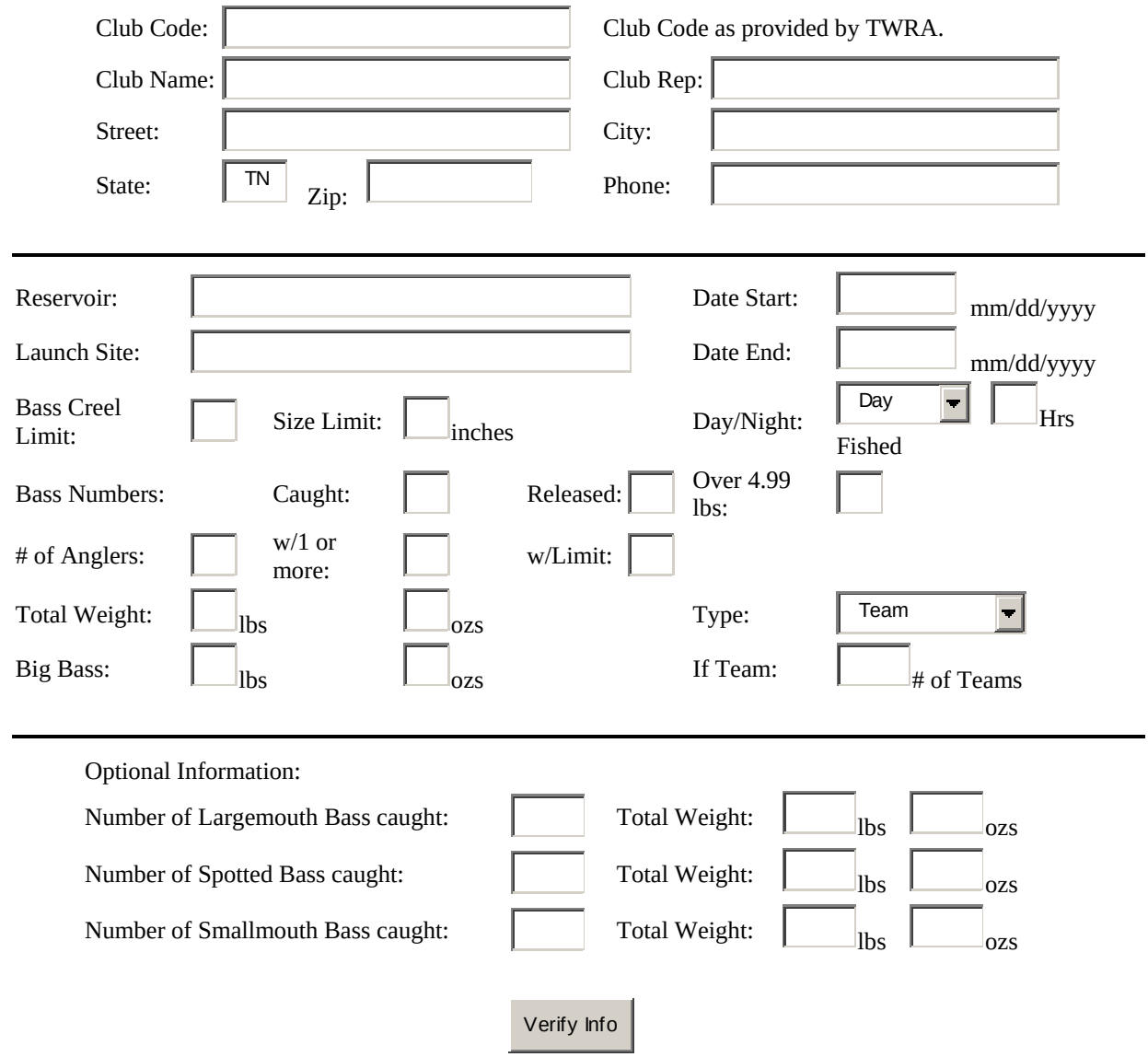


Table 1. Tournament summary for bass clubs participating in the 2006 B.I.T.E. program.

CLUB	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS=>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day*	LBS. PER ANGLER-day*	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
2	10	367	229	604	1205	8	3481	62.40	1.99	1.74	3.46	435
15	9	171	107	284	542	4	1454	62.57	1.91	1.95	3.73	363
21	18	494	331	673	1241	11	4492	67.00	1.84	1.50	2.76	408
26	26	1353	584	782	2301	26	10001	43.16	2.94	0.78	2.30	385
43	3	29	29	38	61	2	250	100.00	1.61	1.52	2.45	125
89	4	1215	829	2446	4730	18**	9720	68.23	1.93	2.52	4.87	540**
91	4	67	33	101	202	1	670	49.25	2.00	1.51	3.02	670
92	5	77	49	95	192	2	585	63.64	2.02	1.63	3.28	292
94	12	156	81	125	257	2	1164	51.92	2.06	1.07	2.21	582
99	7	937	752	1378	2935	23	8147	80.26	2.13	1.69	3.60	354
103	10	231	151	284	581	9	2013	65.37	2.05	1.41	2.89	224
108	1	19	5	21	27	0	152	26.32	1.30	1.38	1.79	-

Table 1 (cont'd). Tournament summary for bass clubs participating in the 2006 B.I.T.E. program

123	14	237	137	329	706	5	2133	57.81	2.15	1.54	3.31	427
164	9	197	136	263	492	2	1598	69.04	1.87	1.65	3.08	799
216	11	154	114	279	507	1	1336	74.03	1.82	2.09	3.79	1336
TOTALS	143	5704	3567	7702	15980	114**	47194					
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT								62.54	2.07	1.63	3.39	414**

*BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY

** TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED

Table 2. Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2006 B.I.T.E. program.

RESERVOIR/LAKE	TOURNAMENTS	NUMBER ANGLERS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL	BASS CAUGHT	BASS WEIGHT	BASS =>5LB.	TOTAL HOURS	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	BASS PER ANGLER-day**	LBS. PER ANGLER-day**	HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.
BARKLEY	3	56	33	71	183	1	480	58.93	2.58	1.48	3.81	480
BEECH LAKE	1	11	4	4	13	1	88	36.36	3.13	0.45	1.42	88
BOONE	2	75	41	76	181	0	637	54.67	2.38	1.19	2.84	-
CENTER HILL	2	284	167	481	911	5***	2272	58.80	1.89	2.12	4.01	454***
CHEATHAM	26	676	449	891	1654	19	6063	66.42	1.86	1.47	2.73	319
CHEROKEE	7	471	342	619	1653	7	4159	72.61	2.67	1.49	3.97	594
CHICKAMAUGA	20	341	202	445	921	5	2945	59.24	2.07	1.51	3.13	589
DALE HOLLOW	1	345	259	684	1485	6***	2760	75.07	2.17	2.48	5.38	460***
DOUGLAS	9	792	661	2015	3256	18***	6653	83.46	1.62	3.03	4.89	370***
FT. LOUDOUN	1	145	108	157	343	7	1269	74.48	2.19	1.24	2.70	181
FT. LOUDOUN/ TELLICO	7	228	153	282	562	3	1967	67.11	1.99	1.43	2.86	656
GIBSON COUNY LAKE	1	10	10	25	31	1	90	100.00	1.25	2.78	3.48	90
GUNTERSVILLE	4	80	50	110	313	6	918	62.50	2.84	1.20	3.41	153
KENTUCKY LAKE	2	21	17	19	41	0	176	80.95	2.14	1.08	2.31	-
MELTON HILL	2	23	12	19	33	0	174	52.17	1.72	1.09	1.88	-
NEELY HENRY	2	36	30	93	137	0	288	83.33	1.47	3.23	4.75	-

Table 2. (CONT.) Statewide* reservoir summary of tournament data reported to the 2006 B.I.T.E. program.

NICKAJACK	1	17	13	29	53	0	153	76.47	1.81	1.90	3.43	-
NORRIS	1	24	12	18	43	0	192	50.00	2.40	0.94	2.25	-
OLD HICKORY	4	66	52	104	191	1	530	78.79	1.83	1.96	3.60	530
PERCY PRIEST	4	326	165	299	788	4***	2593	50.61	2.63	1.15	3.04	648***
PICKWICK	31	2651	384 [1]	3550	7762	52	22534	22.91 [1]	2.19	1.58	3.44	433
PIN OAK	2	30	29	103	181	0	344	96.67	1.76	2.99	5.27	-
SOUTH HOLSTON	1	42	26	44	64	0	336	61.90	1.46	1.31	1.92	-
TIMS FORD	1	15	7	18	41	0	120	46.67	2.25	1.50	3.38	-
WATAUGA	1	31	18	40	69	1	279	58.06	1.72	1.43	2.46	279
WATTS BAR	34	1489	651	905	2628	29	11155	43.72	2.90	0.81	2.36	385
WEISS	2	35	21	75	112	0	291	60.00	1.50	2.58	3.86	-
WHEELER	1	14	13	39	56	0	112	92.86	1.44	3.48	5.00	-
WILSON	1	18	13	23	30	0	144	72.22	1.31	1.60	2.09	-
WOODS	1	19	5	21	27	0	152	26.32	1.30	1.38	1.79	-
TOTALS	175	8371	3563 [1]	11259	23760	166***	69872					
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT		48		64	136			62.30 [2]	2.11	1.61	3.40	421***

*INCLUDES TOURNAMENTS (31) FROM PICKWICK RESERVOIR IN MISSISSIPPI
**BASED ON A 10 HOUR FISHING DAY
*** TOTAL NUMBER BASS=>5LB. NOT REPORTED
1-NUMBER AND PERCENT SUCCESS IS THE NUMBER OF TEAMS OR ANGLERS THAT CAUGHT A LIMIT
2-DOES NOT INCLUDE PICKWICK RESERVOIR

Table 3. Reservoirs having exceptions to the statewide black bass regulations of five fish daily with no length restriction during 2006.

Reservoir	Largemouth bass	Smallmouth bass	Spotted bass
Barkley	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Boone	15" minimum	15" minimum	15 fish creel
Center Hill	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Cheatham	14" minimum	14" minimum	-
Cherokee	15" minimum	15" minimum	15 fish creel
Chickamauga	15" minimum	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Dale Hollow	15" minimum	16-21" PLR with 1 under 16" & 1 over 21"	-
Douglas	-	20" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	14" minimum	18" minimum	15 fish creel
Guntersville(TN portion)	-	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Kentucky Lake	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Melton Hill	14" minimum	14" minimum	15 fish creel
Nickajack	15" minimum	18" minimum with 1 fish limit	-
Normandy	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Norris	14" minimum	18" minimum	15 fish creel
Old Hickory	14" minimum	14" minimum	-
Percy Priest	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Pickwick(TN portion)	15" minimum	15" minimum	-
Tims Ford	15" minimum	18" minimum	-
Watauga	12" minimum	12" minimum	15 fish creel
Watts Bar	15" minimum	18" minimum	-

Table 4. Bass seven pounds and larger reported* from 2006 tournament reports.

WEIGHT (LBS)	DATE	LOCATION	REPORTING CLUB/ORGANIZATION
7.74	03/18	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.64	06/30	WATTS BAR	MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB
7.50	11/12	FT. LOUDOUN	BASS ANGLERS INVITATIONAL TRAIL
7.43	03/02	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.39	05/26	WATTS BAR	MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB
7.35	03/11	PICKWICK	MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
7.13	03/04	PERCY PRIEST	FLW OUTDOORS

*Reported as big bass for each tournament

FIGURE 2. SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF TOURNAMENTS 2006 B.I.T.E. PROGRAM

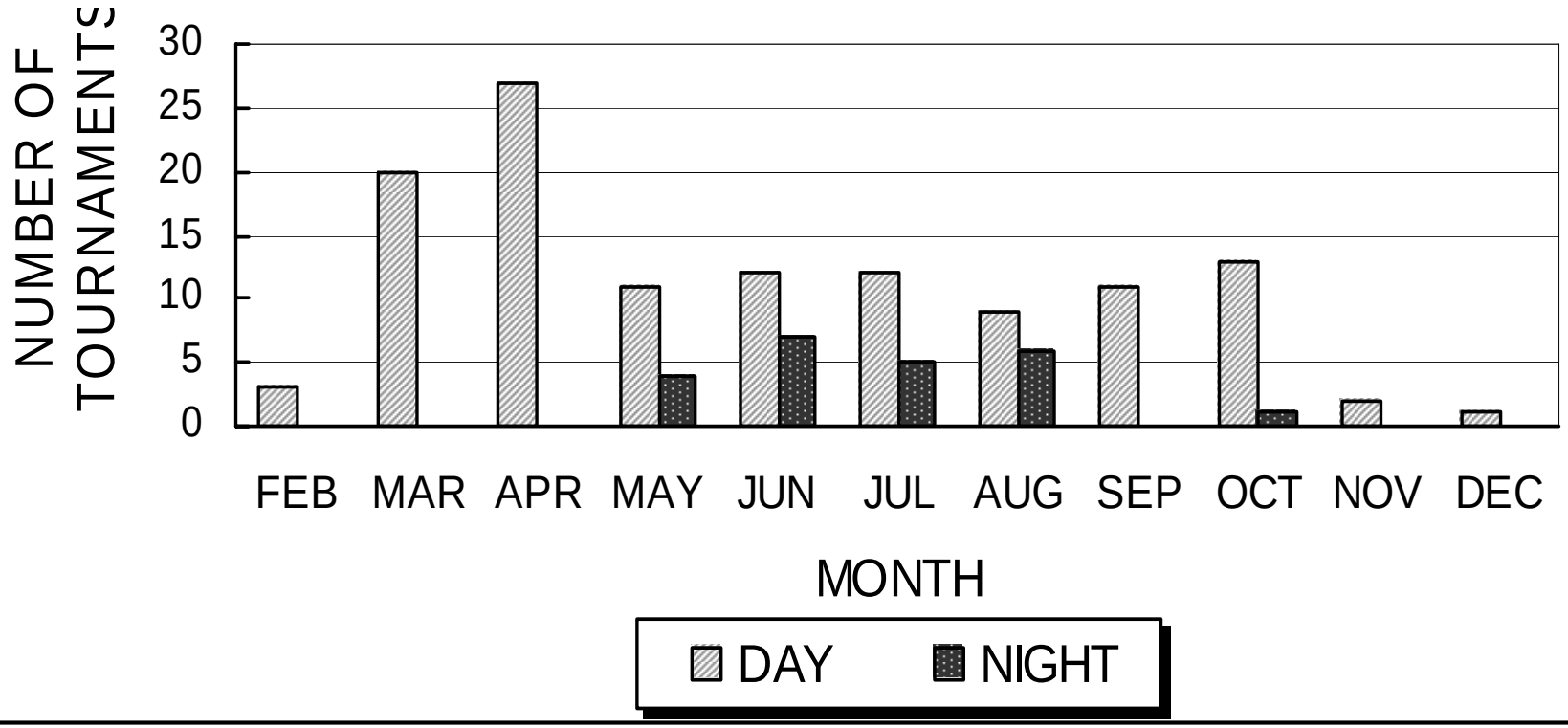


FIGURE 3. FISHING SUCCESS FOR REPORTED TOURNAMENTS

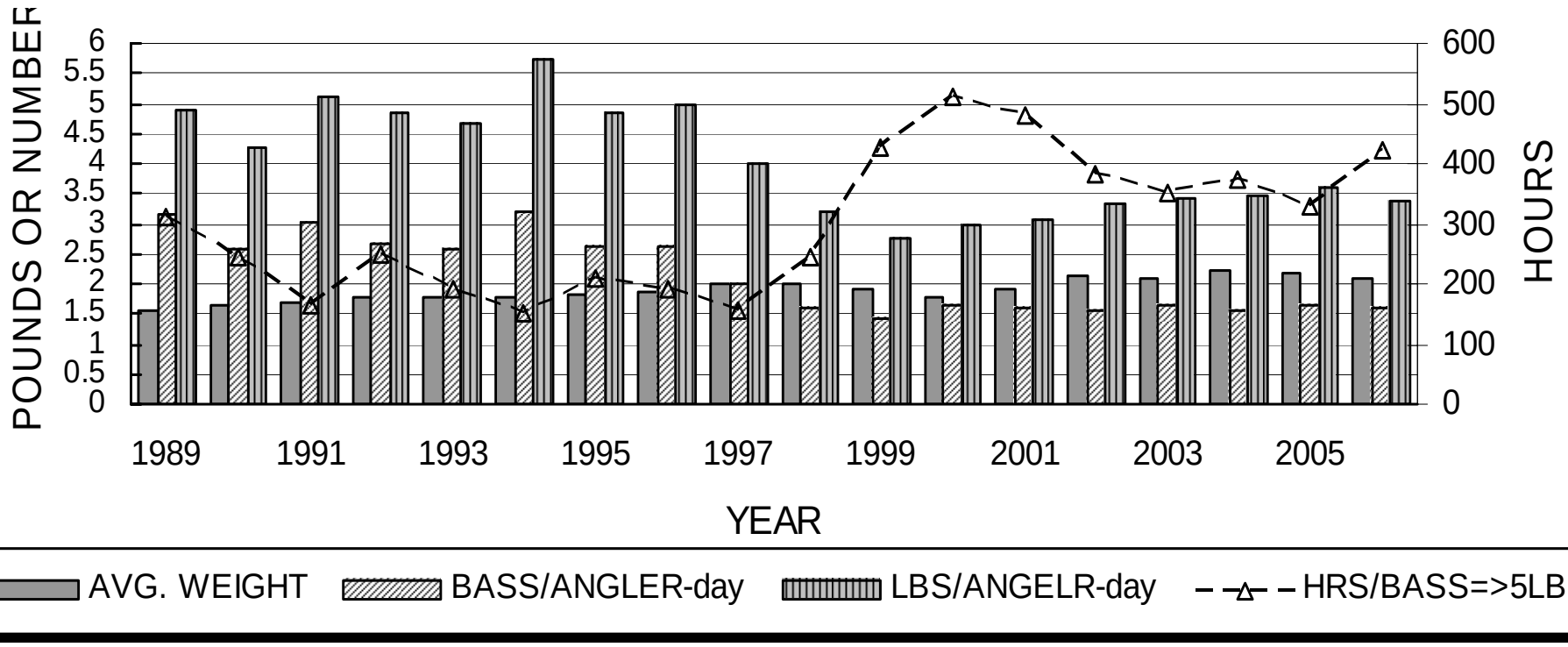


Table 5. Relative ranking for reservoirs with 5 or more tournaments reported in the 2006 B.I.T.E. program.*

RANK	PERCENT SUCCESS		AVERAGE WEIGHT (LBS.)		BASS PER 10-HOUR DAY		POUNDS PER 10-HOUR DAY		HOURS PER BASS=>5LB.		OVERALL RANK
1	Douglas^^	83.46	Watts Bar	2.90	Douglas^^	3.03	Douglas^^	4.89	Cheatham	319	#1 Douglas^^
2	Cherokee	72.61	Cherokee	2.67	Chickamauga	1.51	Cherokee	3.97	Douglas^^	370**	#2 Cherokee
3	Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	67.11	Chickamauga	2.07	Cherokee	1.49	Chickamauga	3.13	Watts Bar	385	#3 Chickamauga
4	Cheatham	66.42	Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	1.99	Cheatham	1.47	Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	2.86	Chickamauga	589	#4 Cheatham
5	Chickamauga	59.24	Cheatham	1.86	Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	1.43	Cheatham	2.73	Cherokee	594	#5 Ft. Loudoun/Tellico
6	Watts Bar	43.72	Douglas^^	1.62	Watts Bar	0.81	Watts Bar	2.36	Ft. Loudoun/Tellico	656	#6 Watts Bar

*Size limit restrictions in effect on CAPITALIZED reservoirs.
**Total number Bass=>5LB. not reported.
^^Size limit restrictions on smallmouth bass only.

Table 6. Clubs or Organizations contributing to the 2006 B.I.T.E. report.

CLUB NAME	CLUB REPRESENTATIVE	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIPCODE
BASS ANGLERS INVITATIONAL TRAIL - B.A.I.T.	Bud DeFoe	1412 McCarty Rd.	Knoxville	TN	37914
BLUE RIDGE BASSMASTERS	Gary Hickman	116 Lake View Dr.	Maynardville	TN	37807
CANEY CREEK BASS CLUB	Kent Bowman	146 Windswept Ln.	Harriman	TN	37748
CENTRAL TENN. BASS CLUB	Miles Tudor	183 Heathersett Dr.	Franklin	TN	37064
CHEATHAM COUNTY BASS CLUB	Mike Stubbs	115 Mockingbird Rd.	Nashville	TN	37205
CLEVELAND BASSMASTERS	George Corbit	1065 Red Hill Valley Rd. S.E.	Cleveland	TN	37323
CUMBERLAND BASS ANGLERS(CBA)	Michael Crowell	1907 Bluebird Dr.	Pleasant View	TN	37146
FAYETTE COUNTY BASS CLUB	Eddie Kerr	35 County Brook Dr.	Oakland	TN	38060
FLW OUTDOORS	Mike Hale	#30 Gamble Ln.	Benton	KY	42025
MIDDLE CREEK FISHING CLUB	David Slack	177 County Road 568	Englewood	TN	37329
RISING STARS BASSMASTERS	Sonny Miller	4937 Shady Rd.	Straw Plains	TN	37871
SALE CREEK BASS CLUB	Ron Bryant	428 Troy Dr.	Dayton	TN	37321
STONES RIVER BASS ANGLERS	Mike Taylor	6740 Holt Rd.	Nashville	TN	37211
TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN BASS ANGLERS	Richard Francisco	5133 Foxfire Trail	Kingsport	TN	37664
TULLAOMA BASS HUSTLERS	Van Davidson	495 Sturbridge Dr.	Tullahoma	TN	37388
MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS	Larry Pugh	P.O. Box 451	Jackson	MS	39205

BASS HANDLING/TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has several tips for tournament anglers to help keep fish alive. The following suggestions reflect current research by southeastern fisheries management agencies into practice of culling fish during tournament events and the stress caused by holding fish in live wells.

1. Fill your live well immediately upon arrival at your first fishing location (Open water areas with good water quality). Turn on aerator systems to begin building oxygen levels in the live well. Run aerators/recirculating pump continuously when you have fish in the live well. If the aerator must run on a timer, run as often as possible as oxygen depletion occurs quickly when the pump is off. Make sure aeration system provides proper aeration while boat is moving or on a trailer. If you don't have a recirculating system, add on.(Live well capacities vary, but allow at least one gallon of water per one pound of fish)

2. Try not to play the fish to total exhaustion and land them by hand, if possible or use knotless nylon or rubber nets. Grasp bass by the lower jaw and hold them vertically, supporting large fish with a wet hand under the belly. Do not allow fish to touch boat or carpet and rub off protective slime. Remove hooks quickly with as little tissue damage as possible with needlenose pliers or hemostats. When attempts fail, or the hook has penetrated through the throat or gill arch, use cutting pliers to cut the point and barb off of the hook. The hook can then be backed out causing less tissue damage. Try not to hold the fish out of the water longer than you can hold your breath. This includes fish in bags headed for weigh-in. If the fish has become exhausted, hold it gently in the water until it becomes acclimated, moving it slowly back and forth to help it regain and maintain its equilibrium. Keep fish in rear live wells, evenly distributed between compartments. Fish in forward live wells are more likely to be injured from bouncing on rough water. Remove dead fish from live well immediately to prevent further mortality.

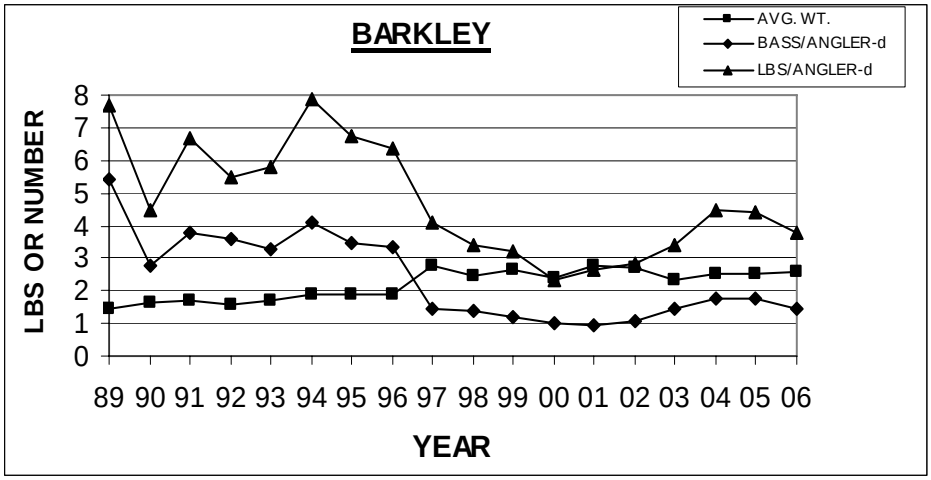
3. Add 1 cup of non-iodized salt (rock salt, sea salt, etc.) to 15 gallons of live well water (1/3 cup per five gallons) to maintain electrolyte balance and reduce the effects of shock and stress. Commercially available live well additives that are FDA approved can also be used as directed. Don't over salt if using both. Pre-measure salt and additive into zip-lock bags for use when you exchange water in the live wells (see #5).

4. Monitor lake surface and livewell water temperatures and add small amounts of non-chlorinated ice to keep live well temperatures 5 to 10 degrees cooler than surface temperature. (**Do not reduce livewell water temperature more than 10 degrees below the lake surface temperature to avoid thermal shock when the fish are leased back to the lake**) If lake water temperatures are above 75 degrees, recirculate cooler, aerated live well water rather than pumping in warmer lake water. Block ice is preferred, because it melts slower and it can be made economically by freezing water-filled half-gallon plastic jugs. Use hot water or a chlorine remover in making the ice jugs to reduce the possible release of toxic chlorine when the ice is used. A one gallon block of ice will lower the temperature of 30 gallons of water approximately 10 degrees for about three hours. At water temperatures above 80 degrees, and during the months of July and August, consideration should be given to reducing tournament times or postponing tournaments until cooler water temperatures. Holding tournaments at night during the summer does not make much difference in reducing bass mortality, since water temperatures do not change that much over a 24-hour period.

5. Constantly monitor the fish for signs of stress and drain half the live well water every three hours to remove toxic waste products (carbon dioxide and ammonia). Refill with fresh water and add half the amounts of ice, salt and/or a commercial live well additive (as directed) each time.

6. Install an oxygen delivery system, which delivers oxygen directly into live wells from a pressurized tank through air-stones or hose. The system must have a regulator or pressure valve and the tank must be securely mounted. The system is better than simple aeration (air is only 21% oxygen) and solves oxygen demand problems. Although less need for water temperature adjustments is usually required, flushing with freshwater every 3 hours is still essential.

APPENDIX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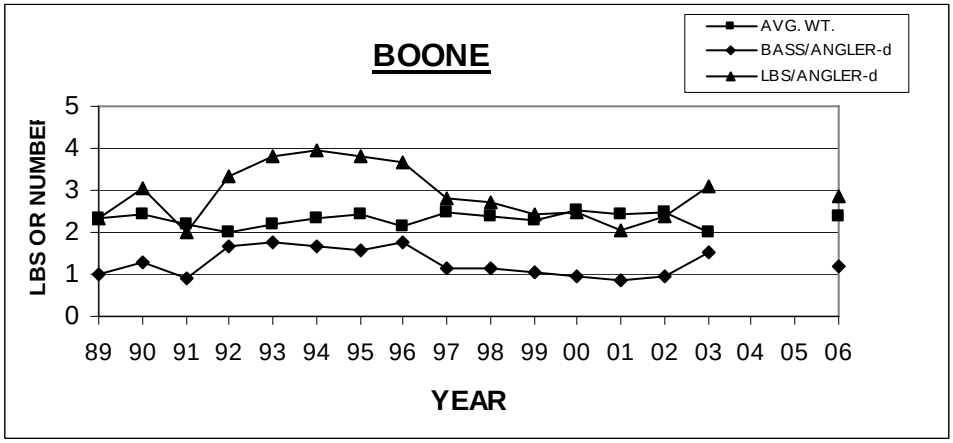
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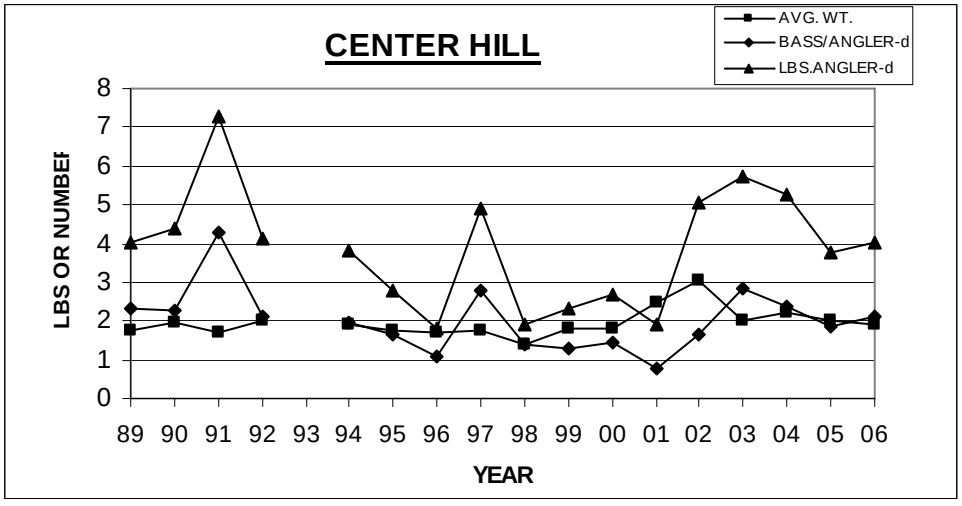
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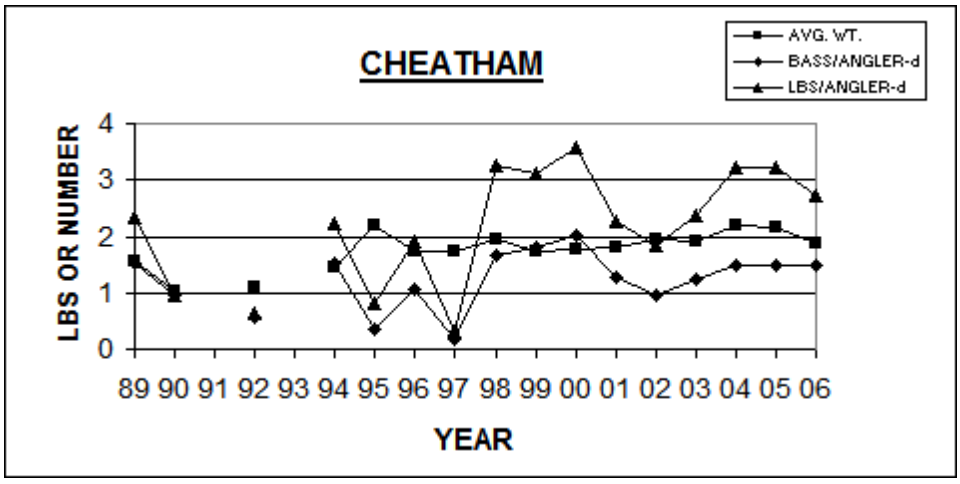
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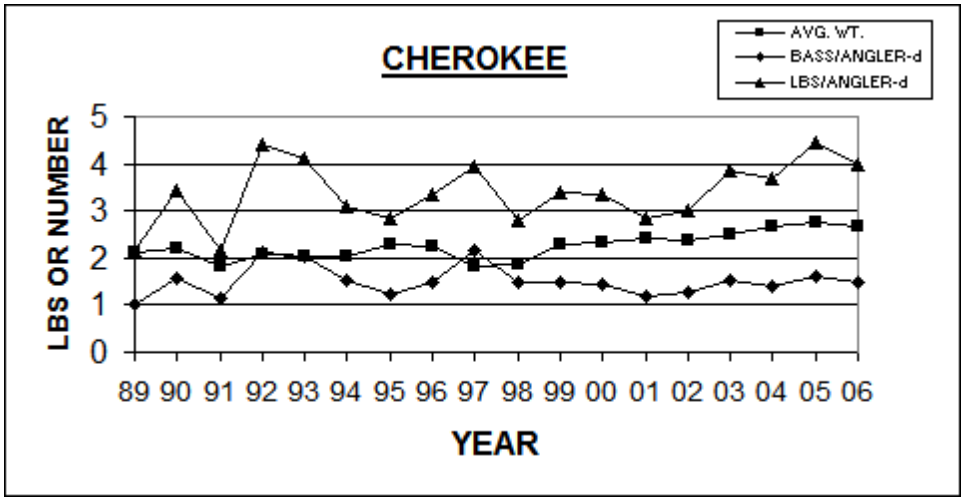
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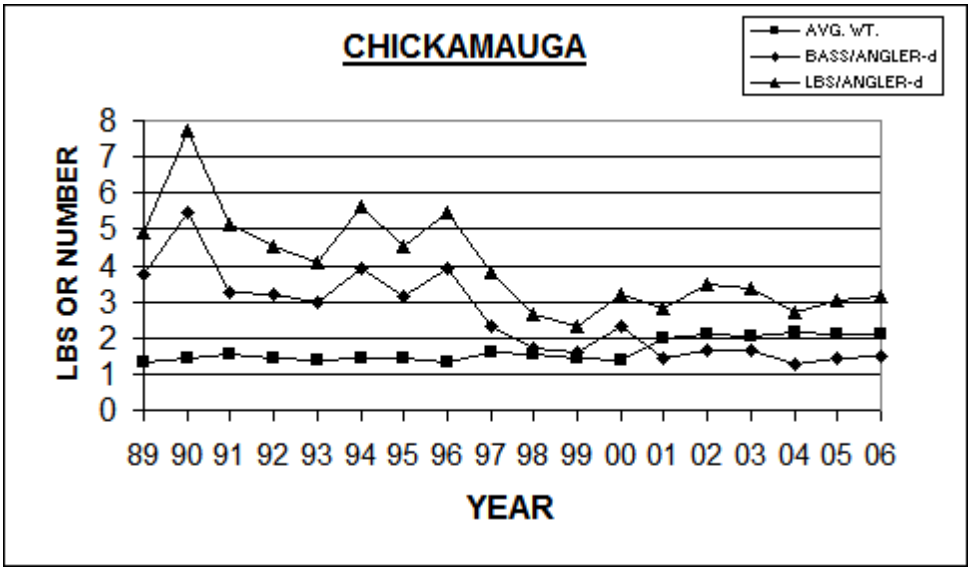
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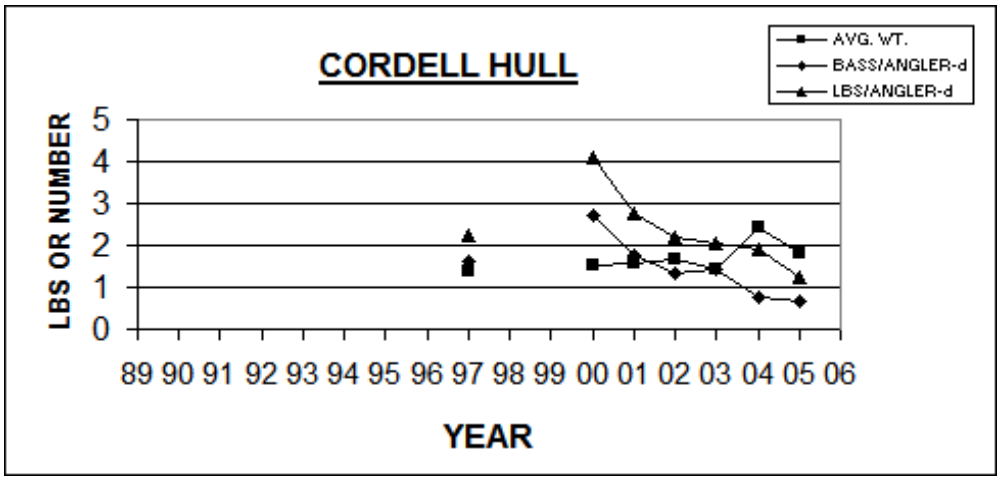
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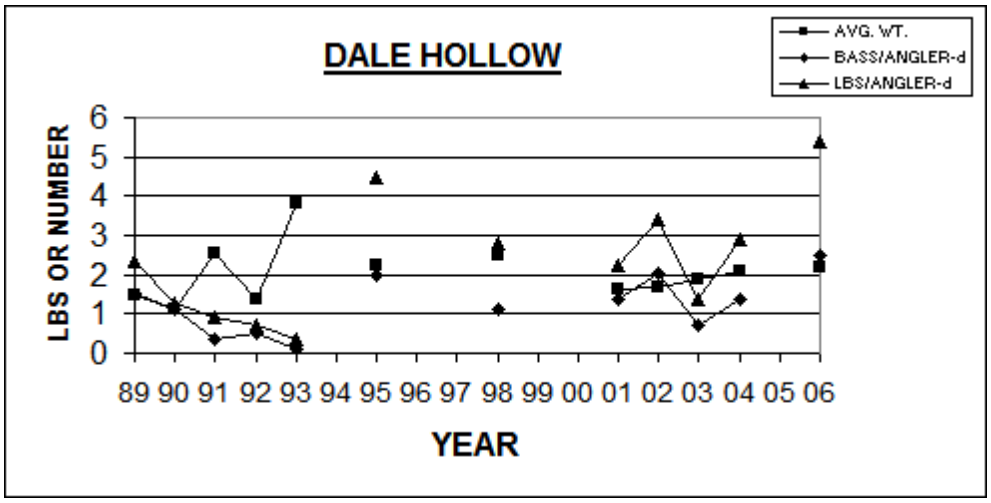
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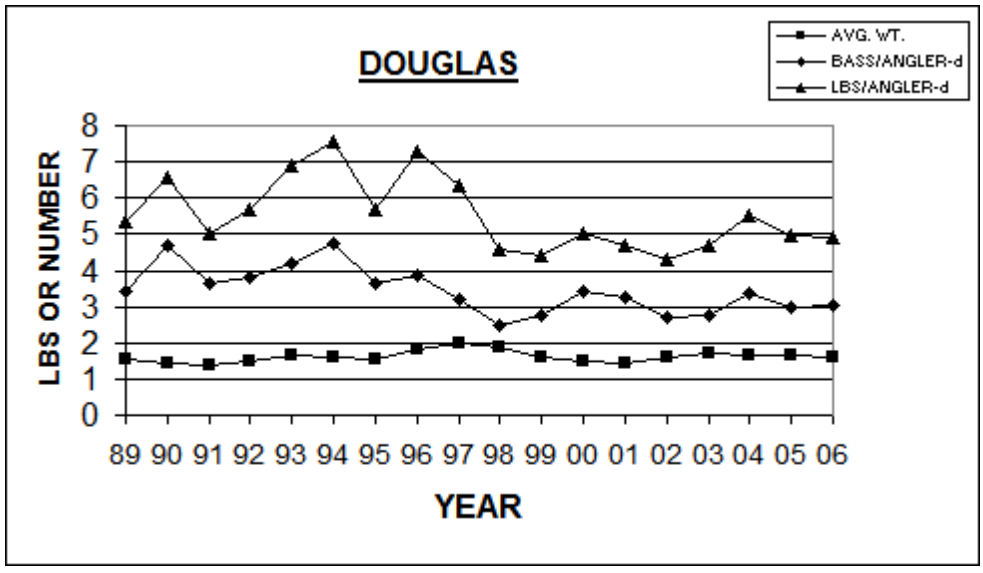
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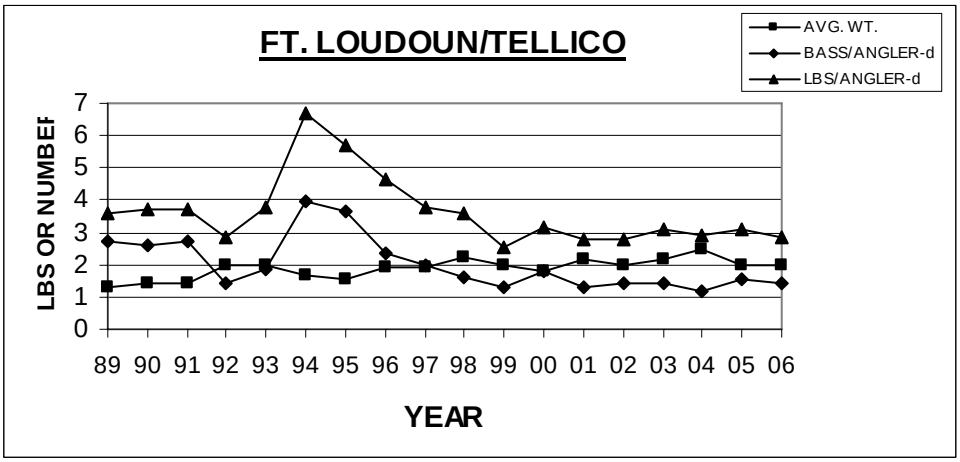
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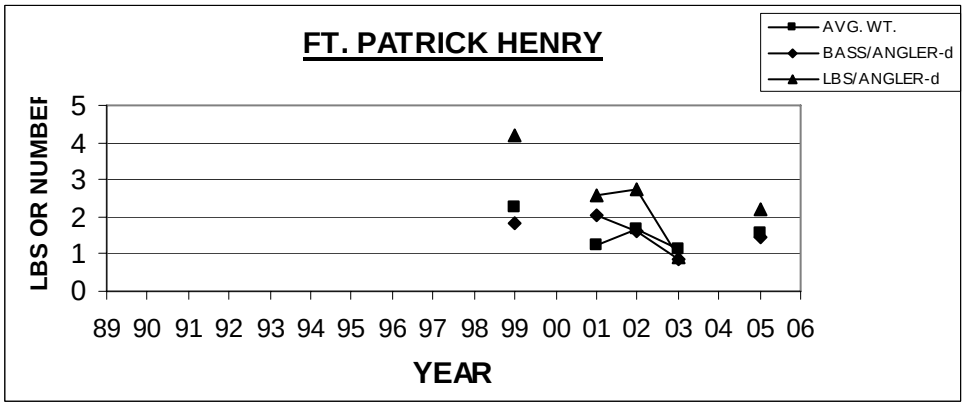
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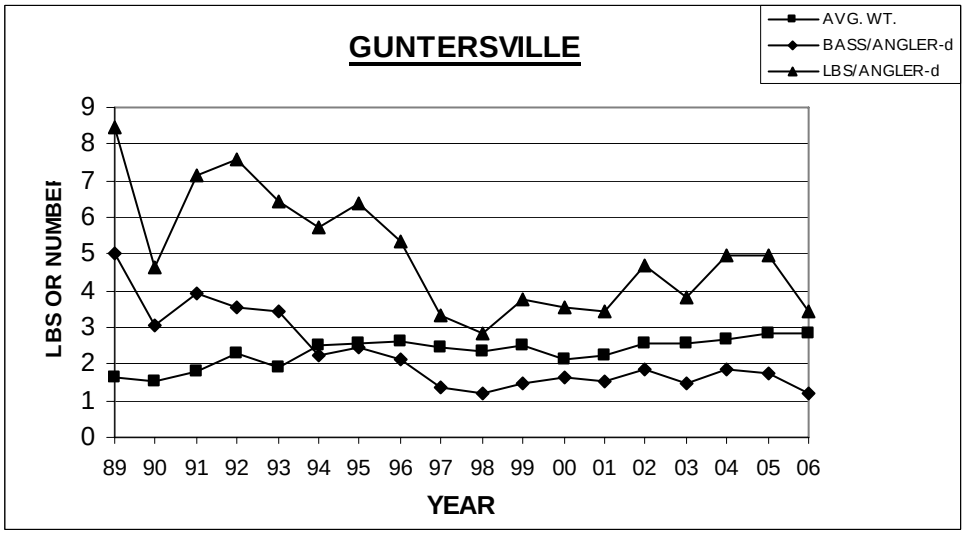
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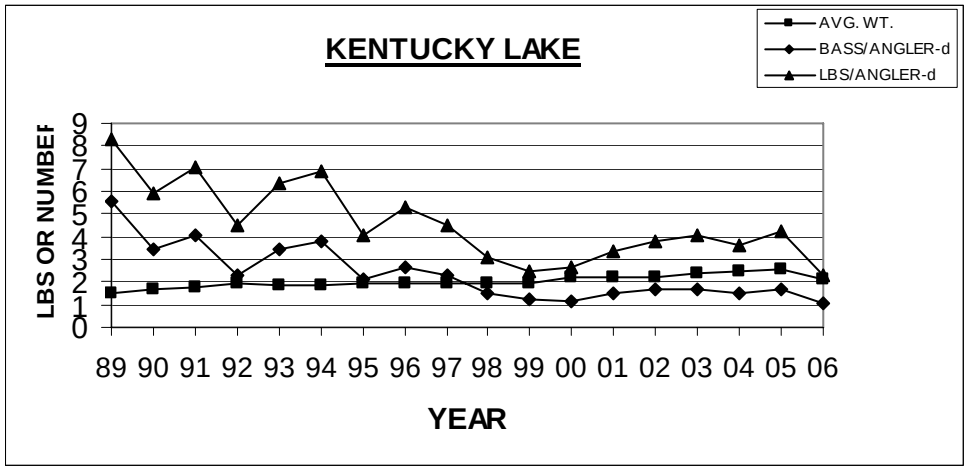
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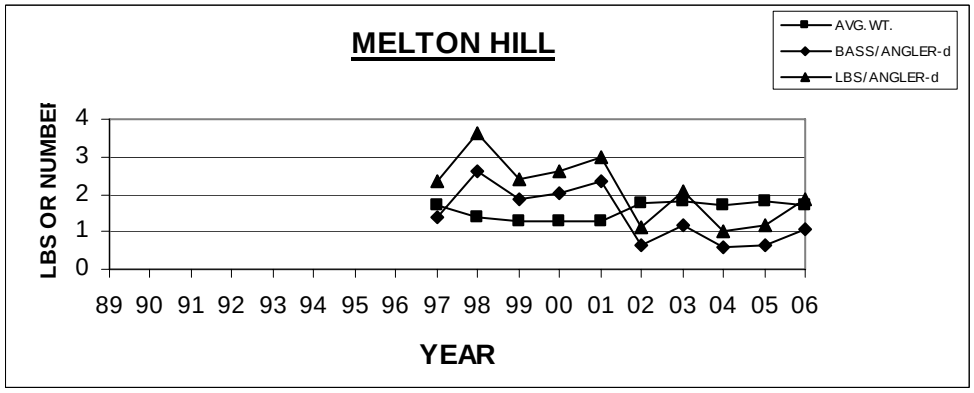
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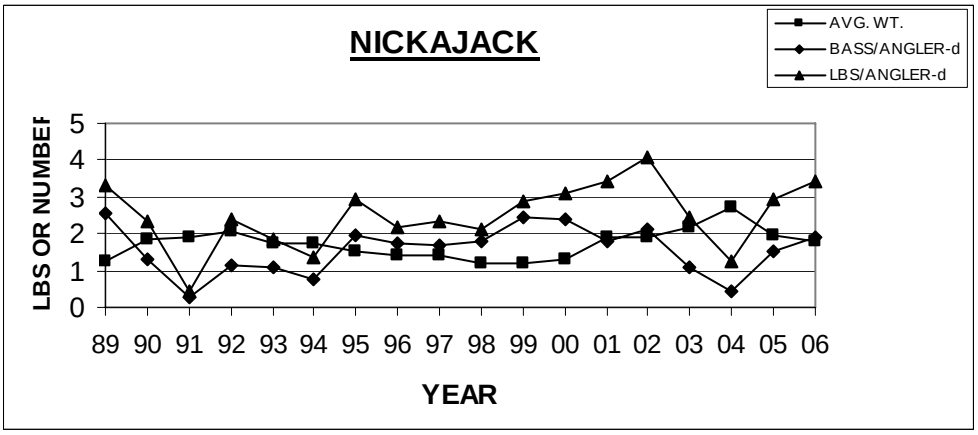
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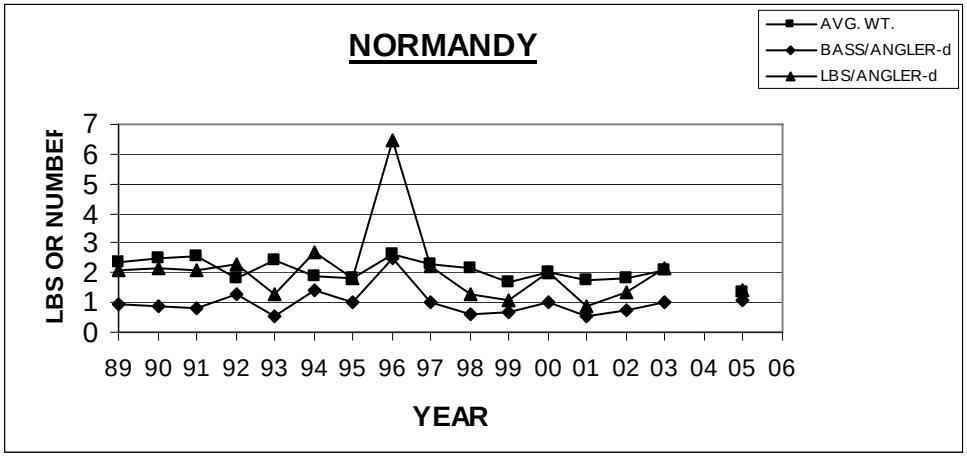
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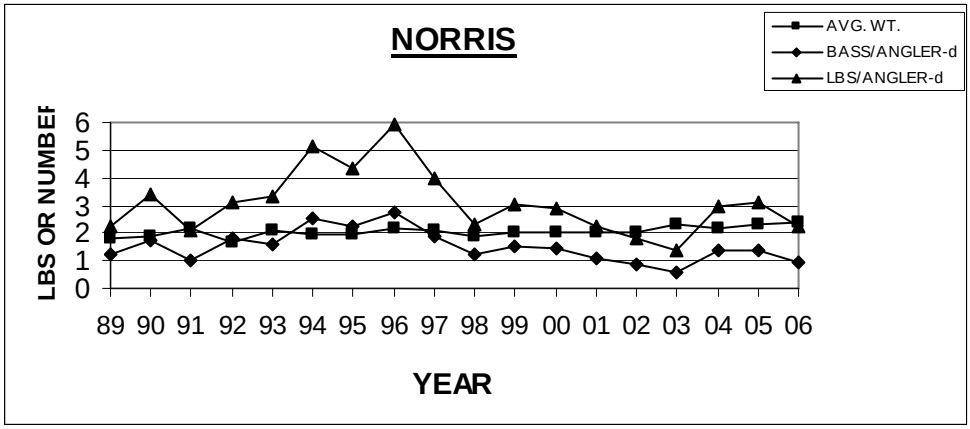
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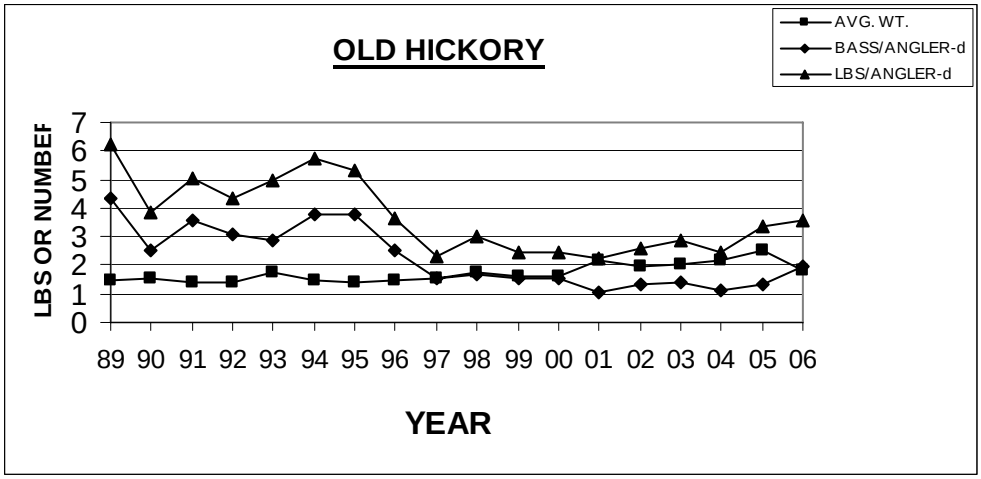
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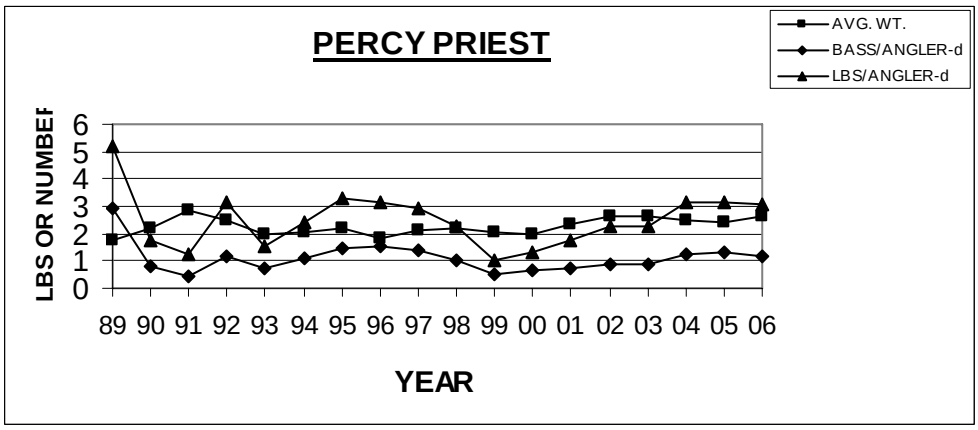
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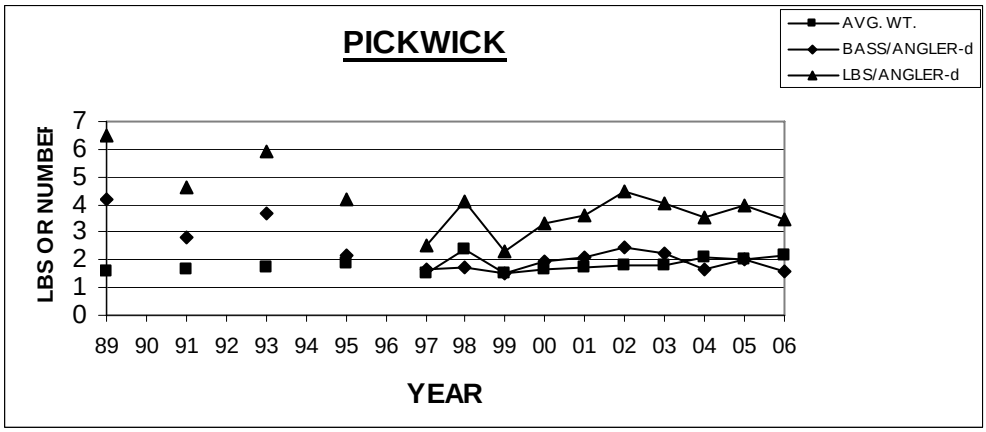
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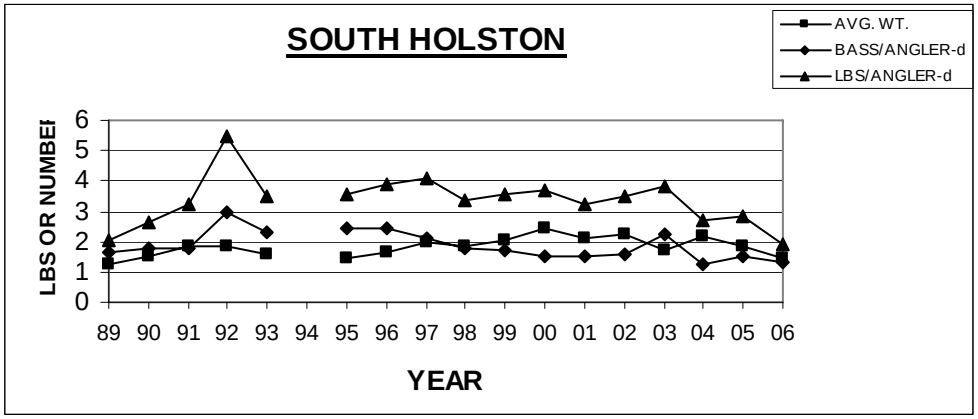
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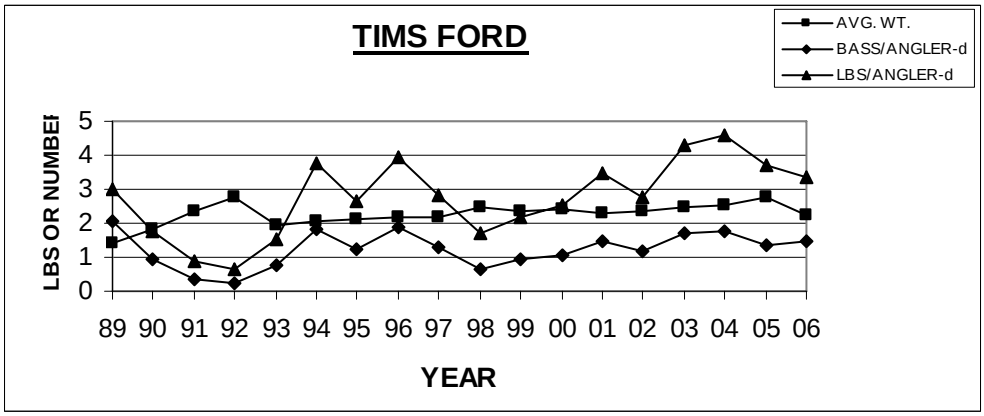
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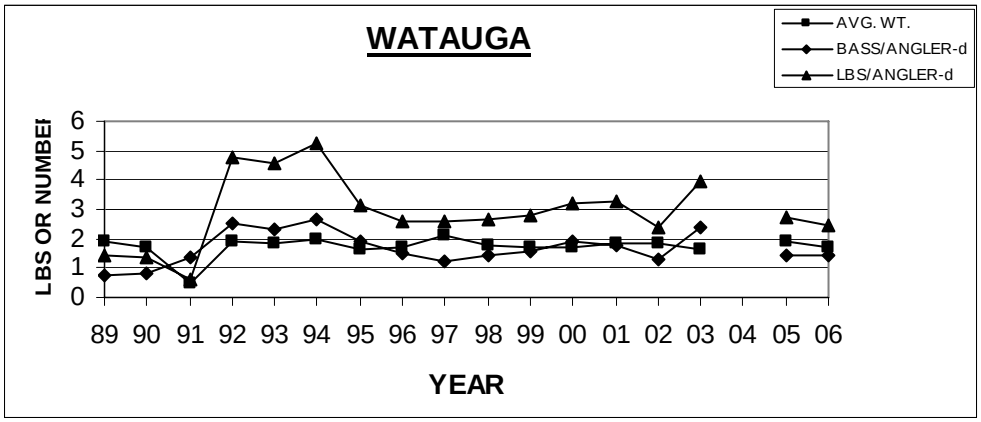
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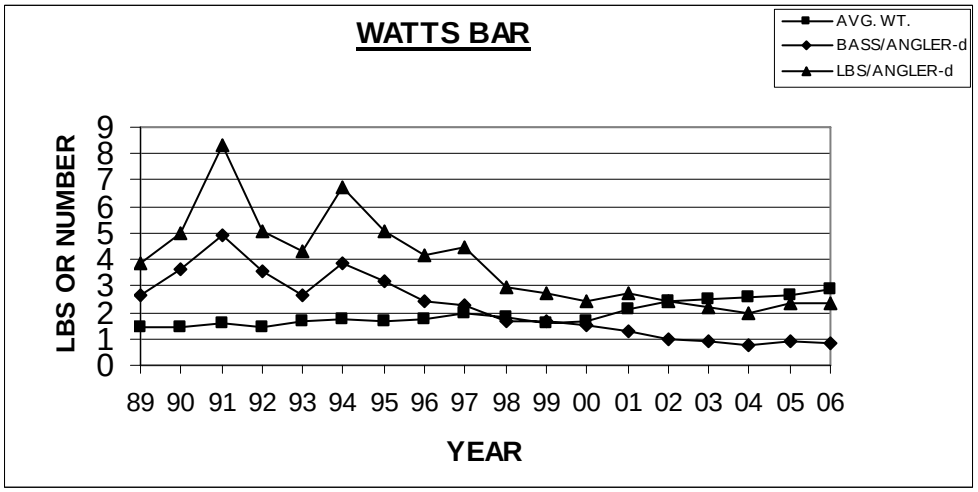
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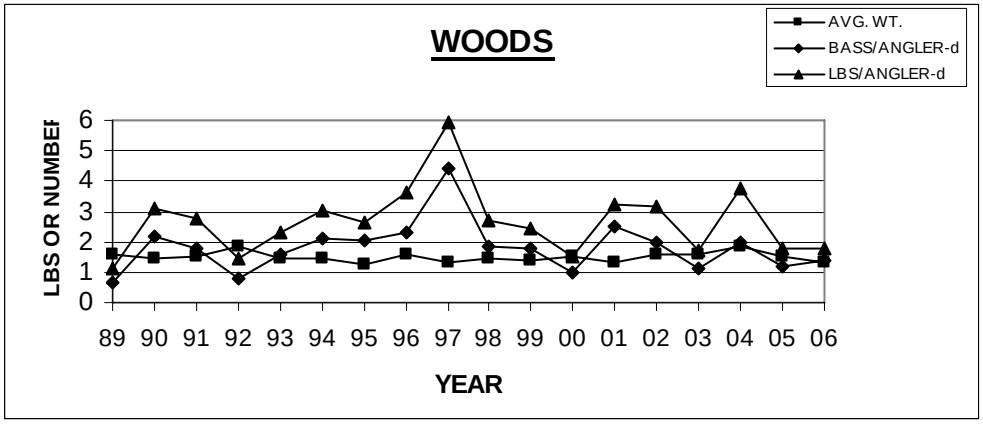
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