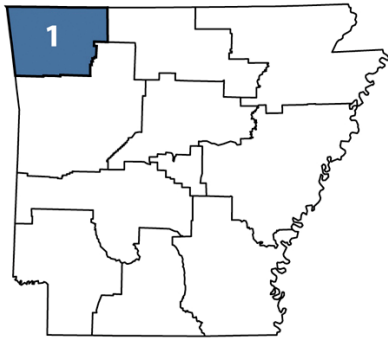




FISHERIES DISTRICT 1 NEWSLETTER

Ron Moore District Biologist E-mail: rmoore@agfc.state.ar.us
Stephen Brown Asst. Biologist E-mail: sjbrown@agfc.state.ar.us
Field Office 2805 West Oak, Rogers, AR 72756 Tel: (877) 631-6005



Swepeco Lake Bass Population Improving

In recent years, the largemouth bass population in Swepeco Lake has gone through significant changes.

In 2006 we received reports of anglers catching lots of fish with very poor condition factors. It wasn't unusual for fishermen to catch 50 -100 bass per day but the fish looked skinny or "all head and no body" to quote one angler.

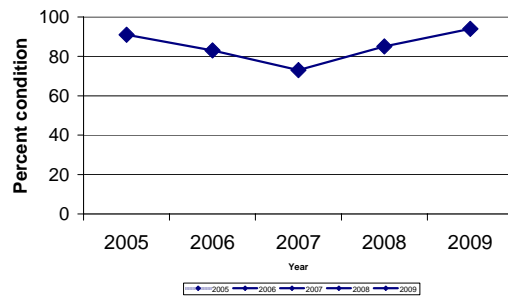
Electrofishing samples quickly confirmed what the anglers were describing. The condition factors (Wr's) of the bass had dropped dramatically from previous years and many fish seemed on the verge of starving. Apparently the catch and release regulation on the lake was causing

severe overcrowding of the bass and reduced forage levels.

To correct this, we recommended changing the catch and release only regulation to allow harvest of ten bass (with only one being over 18 inches). This allowed anglers to reduce the numbers of overcrowded small bass while protecting the larger fish.

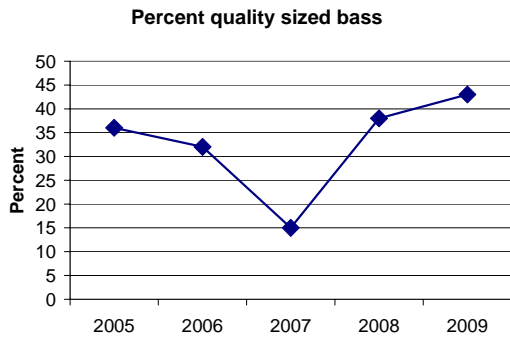
The change in the bass population was demonstrated by this year's electrofishing sample. The condition of the bass had improved considerably during the past two years from a low of 73% in 2007 to 94% in 2009.

Swepeco Bass Condition Factor



The percentage of quality sized bass has also improved from past years from a low of 15% in 2007 to the current 43% in this year's sample. The improvement of both the condition factors and the percentage of quality sized fish is

probably due to the effect of the regulation change and aggressive stocking of forage fish (bluegill) the past two years.



One consequence of the healthier fish population and increased forage is a reduction in angler catches. Gone are the days of catching 50 to 100 starving fish. The catch rates now are much more typical of a fish population that has adequate forage. The bass, however, are in excellent condition and the lake now has the potential to produce some trophy fish in the next few years.



(Photo courtesy of Flip Putthoff, NW Ark Morning News)

With the completion of the new boat launching facility on the lake and the improving fish population, anglers can look forward to a good experience while bass fishing on Swepeco Lake!

