



The Black Bass Program was established to direct specific attention to Arkansas' most sought-after game fish: largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted (Kentucky) bass, collectively. The primary purpose of the program is to enhance black bass fishing opportunities for anglers through stockings, population monitoring and research, habitat improvement, and tournament assistance.

Oct-Dec 06

The Commission's Black Bass Program (BBP) has been busy this Fall with several activities. These activities include the following: electrofishing for black bass on Lake Hamilton and Lake Monticello, tissue analysis and evaluation of largemouth bass from Lake Erling, conducting a trash pick-up on the Arkansas River, attending a public meeting concerning the Lake Ouachita Draft Management Plan, rigging out the BBP's new electrofishing boat, attending the dedication of the new Greers Ferry Fish Care Facility, attending a joint meeting with Missouri biologists, and also meeting with the Arkansas B.A.S.S. Federation. In addition to these job related activities, The Hopkins Family received a new addition in October with the birth of their son, Ian Jaret.

Bass Sampling

The BBP assisted District 5 Biologists Diana Andrews and Jeremy Risley with some electrofishing on Lake Monticello in November to gather health

condition data on the bass population. The fish looked to be healthy and robust going into the winter season. Several different sizes of fish were seen with numerous young fish below the slot observed and even a few up to nine pounds.



Monticello largemouths

Electrofishing was also conducted on Lake Hamilton in October in order to evaluate some proposed changes to our standard sampling procedures. The BBP assisted District 8 Biologists Stuart Wooldridge and Brett Hobbs with sampling the upper and lower portions of the lake utilizing the

current electrofishing methods. Different crews went out a few nights later and sampled three areas of the lake utilizing the new proposed method of electrofishing. The proposed “new” method does not require more equipment, but differs from the old method in that it provides more randomization of sample areas and shorter shocking intervals for better statistical analysis.

The BBP assisted Fish Pathologist Kelly Winningham and District 7 Biologists Drew Wilson and Les Claybrook in conducting a fish health assessment and taking LMBV and genetics samples from several bass from Lake Erling.



Kelly dissecting a Lake Erling largemouth

The BBP also conducted age and growth analysis on bass collected from Lake Erling by removing the otoliths or ear bones from the head of the fish and viewing them underneath a dissecting microscope.



Otolith from a three year old largemouth bass

Meetings, presentations, etc.

The BBP assisted the Arkansas Bass Association (ABA), AGFC Stream Team Program, and approximately twenty volunteers with a trash clean-up on the Arkansas River in the Little Rock/North Little Rock area. Trash was picked up near Murray Park, Burns Park, and North River Landing (Alltel). Lots of trash was picked up and lunch was provided by the ABA for all workers and volunteers. This project has been an ongoing ABA fall event, which continues to get bigger every year.

The BBP attended the last public meeting for the proposed Lake Ouachita Draft Management Plan. Attendance was low for the meeting, but several questionnaires were sent out to all of the attendees from the previous meetings to gather additional input. The Draft Plan can be viewed on the AGFC website @ http://www.agfc.com/fishing/fish-management/lakeouachita_mgmtplan.aspx.

Colton attended a meeting with the Arkansas BASS Federation in Conway and gave a presentation to the group on BBP activities and plans for 2007. He also attended the annual meeting with Fisheries Biologists from Missouri (MOARK) and gave a presentation on the progress of the Bull Shoals aquatic vegetation project.

Tournament Assistance

The BBP completed two live release trailers that will be stationed at Russellville and at Greers Ferry. The trailer in Russellville was used at the Arkansas BASS Federation Championship at Lake Dardanelle. It

will be stored at the AGFC Regional Office in Russellville and anyone interested in using it will need to contact District 9 Fisheries Biologists Bob Limbird or Frank Leone @ (877) 967-7577.



New live-release trailer for Dardanelle

The other trailer will be stationed at the new Fish Care Facility at Devils Fork access on Greers Ferry Lake. Colton hauled the trailer up there for the dedication and it was used that day for the fish that were caught in the tournament. The trailer will be stored inside the new weigh-in facility.



Young anglers using the new live-release trailer at Greers Ferry

Other News

The Hopkins Family welcomed a new addition to their family on October 5th with the birth of their son, Ian Jaret Hopkins. He weighed 7lbs. 4oz. And was 20 inches long. He is now three months old and weighs about twelve pounds and is 23 inches long. He's definitely a keeper.



The Hopkins Family



Ian @Christmas

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