



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. 2007

The Commission's Black Bass Program (BBP) has been busy with numerous activities this Fall including: electrofishing for largemouth bass at Pool 4 on the Arkansas River and Lake Chicot, collecting native plants at Lake Millwood to replenish our aquatic plant nursery, documenting aquatic vegetation spread on Bull Shoals, assisting two bass tournaments, attending a joint meeting with Missouri biologists, and also drafting reports and coordinating bass research projects for 2008.

Bass Research

The BBP assisted a University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) graduate student with the tagging of largemouth bass in Pool 4 of the Arkansas River near Pine Bluff as part of a research project that we are partially funding. Approximately 1,000 largemouth bass thirteen inches and greater were collected from the main river and Lake

Langhofer and tagged with a white or yellow streamer tag.



UAPB Graduate Student and Kevin inserting a reward tag

The tags are reward tags and after catching a tagged fish, an angler must remove the tag from the fish and send it to the Monticello AGFC office in order to receive a reward. The tags have a toll free phone number that you must call to provide some angler and catch information, at which time the angler will receive the address to mail the tag to. Each tag is randomly worth \$10, \$20, \$50, or \$100 and a check will be mailed to the participating angler.



Kevin releasing bass with white reward tag

The UAPB graduate student will also be conducting a creel survey on Pool 4 as well in order to assess angler catch rates, harvest rates, and preferences. The creel survey will be conducted at various access sites within Pool 4 and includes angler interviews as well as measuring and weighing any fish that are harvested.

This research project on Pool 4 of the Arkansas River is serving as a pilot study for a similar project that will take place on Pool 2 of the Arkansas River in 2008. Approximately 1,000 largemouth bass will also be tagged in the Pool 2 research study as well. The information collected from this research project on Pool 4 will be very important to the AGFC in helping us better manage the bass fishery in the lower Arkansas River. So, if you catch a tagged bass, please remove the tag and call the number to report it. Also, if you see a graduate student out at one of the access sites conducting a creel survey, please take a few minutes to answer a few questions. Help us make bass fishing better on the River!

The BBP also assisted District 5 Biologists Diana Andrews, Jeremy Risley, and Fish Pathologist Kelly Winningham with some electrofishing

on Lake Chicot in order to assess the genetic composition of the bass population. Fin clips were taken from 150 largemouth bass during this sampling effort. In the last few years, this technique has been refined so that fish do not have to be sacrificed in order to obtain their genetic composition. Only a small portion of their caudal (tail) fin is removed for genetic analysis and the fish is released unharmed.



Kelly, Kevin, and our technician Chris taking a fin clip from a Lake Chicot largemouth bass for genetics

Aquatic Vegetation Projects

Good news, good news, good news! The BBP was able to document for the first time the spread of aquatic vegetation in the West Sugarloaf area of Bull Shoals.



Fisheries Biologist Ken Shirley in the middle of a large mass of Water Stargrass growing wild in Bull Shoals

Four species of vegetation were found including American and Illinois Pondweed, Water Stargrass, and Water Willow at over 30 sites with some being located up to two miles away from our nursery pens. Over the last three years, we have been trying to establish large founder colonies of plants inside some of our pens and apparently the conditions have been right for these plants to produce enough seeds and fragments to become established in unprotected areas of the lake. BBP biologists and District 2 biologist Ken Shirley spent a day taking an extensive look at this area of the lake to GPS all of the areas that vegetation was present. We are looking forward to the 2008 growing season and hopefully documenting further aquatic vegetation spread and establishment in Bull Shoals.

Meetings, Presentations, etc.

Colton and Kevin both attended the annual MOARK meeting with Missouri biologists that was held this year at Big Cedar Lodge near Branson, MO. Colton gave a presentation on the status of the Bull Shoals Aquatic Vegetation Establishment Project and Kevin gave a brief presentation on ATIP bass tournament data from the White River lakes. BBP biologists have also been busy working on several reports and presentations as well as coordinating research projects for the upcoming year.

Tournament Assistance

Colton was able to provide assistance to a couple of bass tournaments this Fall. He provided a fish truck and handled the live-release of bass caught at the Arkie Division BFL Super tournament at Lake Hamilton and also the Under Armour College BASS National Championship tournament on the Arkansas River at North Little Rock for three days. Arkansas was represented in the 36 team field with college bass fishing teams from both the UofA at Fayetteville and AR Tech participating. However, the college bass fishing team from Virginia Tech won the tournament.



Virginia Tech bass fishing team winning the National Championship tournament on the AR River