



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.

July – September 2008

The Black Bass Program (BBP) has been busy this summer with numerous activities. We were able to provide technical assistance and fish care to several tournaments on the Arkansas River and Lake Chicot, assist District 1 Biologists with some habitat improvement work on Beaver Lake, Stream Biologist and the Family and Community Fishing Program with some sampling on the Arkansas River, District 8 Biologists with a SCUBA survey on Lake Ouachita for smallmouth bass, and also a graduate student from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) with a tag-reward largemouth bass study on Pool 2 of the Arkansas River.

Beaver Lake Habitat

The BBP was able to assist District 1 Biologists Ron Moore and Stephen Brown with some habitat work at Beaver Lake. The project involved sinking cedar trees at various depths to provide additional habitat for sportfish.

The trees were provided by the Pea Ridge National Military Park which is only about ten miles from the lake. Park employees were cutting the trees to try and restore one thousand acres of land in the park to the type of habitat that was prevalent during the Civil War. The park employees are cutting the trees, loading them onto trailers and hauling them to the lake. This is a great cooperative project that should benefit anglers on Beaver Lake for years to come.



AGFC Habitat Barge on Beaver Lake



Lake Ouachita Smallmouth



The BBP assisted District 8 Biologists Stuart Wooldridge and Brett Hobbs with the annual SCUBA diving event in order to try and document smallmouth bass inside our stocking zone from Point 1 to Blakely Dam on Lake Ouachita. The trip was cut short due to a storm moving in, but we were able to document some yearling smallmouth 7-9 inches long.

Arkansas River Largemouth Study



Kelly and Kevin tagging a nice Pool 2 largemouth

The BBP assisted a UAPB graduate student collect and tag largemouth bass on Pool 2 of the Arkansas River. The project involves the tagging of approximately 1,500 bass and will enable us to gather valuable information on the bass population in Pool 2. As part of this project, the graduate student will also be conducting creel surveys at various locations in Pool 2 so be sure if you see him around to give him a few minutes of your time.

College Bass Championship



The BBP was able to assist with the Under Armour College Bass Championship that was held on Lake Maumelle the first two days and the top five anglers fished a mystery lake the final day. Fifty-four college teams from around the nation participated in the tournament that was held in Arkansas for the fourth time since its inception in 2004. The BBP was able to pick up one of the mobile aquariums from the Aquatic Resources Education crew in Lonoke and took it to an event for Anglers for Tomorrow which promotes fishing to kids. In addition to providing fish care for all three days, we also provided aerated tanks for the anglers to hold their fish in while waiting to weigh-in.

Bass Tournaments

Colton was able to assist the annual Cystic Fibrosis Benefit tournament on the Arkansas River at Murray Park.



Kevin also assisted the two day ABF Championship that was held on Lake Chicot. The original tournament location was Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge; however, plans had to be changed due to Felsenthal being at flood stage due to the two hurricanes that dumped lots of water in Arkansas.

Big Bass Bonanza

The annual Arkansas Big Bass Bonanza was again postponed due to unsafe flows on the Arkansas River and was held in early August on the entire length of the Arkansas River from Fort Smith to Dumas. The BBP coordinated fish trucks to be stationed at four of the five weigh-in sites to handle fish care and release for the three day event.



Duke Gunnell with the winning \$100,000 bass that weighed 8.14lbs.

Meetings

Colton was able to attend meetings with both the ABF and the ABA. The ABA is working on a project to provide a weigh-in facility at the Pendleton Access on the Arkansas River near Dumas.

Kevin attended the second annual ARKLA meeting in Bossier City, LA. The meeting is attended by Louisiana and Arkansas fisheries biologists who share information on fisheries issues. This year the main topic was nuisance aquatic vegetation and the problems that this may cause. Louisiana has had to deal with a very aggressive form of exotic aquatic vegetation called Giant Salvinia (an exotic aquatic fern) that has spread quickly across the state of Louisiana. Hopefully this stuff won't make it into Arkansas but remember to be sure and watch out for aquatic hitchhikers on boat trailers if traveling into Louisiana to fish. Also, if you notice an unfamiliar form of vegetation growing on a lake then do not hesitate to let us know.