



**2021 Louisiana Annual Tournament Report Information
Project
(LATRIP)**

Authors: Jeff Sibley, Kevin Houston and Holden Poole

Louisiana Annual Tournament Report Information Project

The Louisiana Annual Tournament Report Information Project (LATRIP) is a voluntary project administered by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Developed in 2021, the project supports the goals and objectives of LDWF Black Bass Management Plan by promoting public awareness for the bass fishery resources of the State and establishing effective lines of communication between LDWF and the public.

Specific goals for LATRIP include: (1) gathering information that is of interest to LDWF and to bass anglers, (2) building relationships and fostering open lines of communications with bass fishing organizations, (3) provide an efficient and low-cost method to generate data that can be used to track trends in bass angling success rates over time, and (4) promote Louisiana's quality fisheries.

Data collection and reporting for this pilot project was modeled after similar successful programs from our neighboring states of Arkansas and Mississippi. While the results presented in this initial report focus only on tournaments located in northwest Louisiana, the effort may eventually develop into a statewide initiative.

Data Collection

To kick off the project, LDWF held a meeting in February 2021 that included local tournament directors, organizers and bass club presidents. The concept of the project was explained to the representatives, and they were asked to voluntarily submit their tournament results to LDWF. Tournament organizations either submitted their data via email or gave LDWF permission to gather the data from publically available sources such as websites or social media pages. Communication continued throughout the year as LDWF staff periodically contacted tournament organizers as a reminder to submit data and to address any concerns. Many tournament organizers expressed gratitude during the year that LDWF was interested in tournament information and were excited to be a part of helping manage fisheries resources in Louisiana.

A total of 14 tournament trails and/or organizations participated. The data was analyzed from 15 waterbodies, and information from a total of 98 tournaments was submitted.

Words of Caution about the Data

Considering that the 2021 LATRIP report is based on a pilot project with somewhat limited data, some caution is needed when viewing the results.

- 5 tournaments were included in the analysis from November and December, 2020. This allowed a full calendar year of results to be simulated while allowing the report to be released soon into 2022. Future reports will be based off tournaments solely held a single calendar year.
- Several waterbodies had insufficient data to analyze due to low reporting of tournament results, resulting in just one or two tournaments for some waterbodies. Due to this low sample size, some waterbodies had to be excluded from the analysis and lake rankings.
- Tournament results were not reported in a uniform manner, resulting in some missing data values for certain events. As a result, metrics had to be adjusted where possible to only include tournaments that reported the necessary data.

- The number of fish weighed in per boat was most commonly omitted. Without this data, it becomes difficult to compare angler success statistics and accurate average weights of bass.
- Another issue lies with reporting all of the fish 5 pounds or greater that were caught in a tournament. The ability to calculate the number of angler hours needed to catch a 5-pound plus fish should separate waterbodies and indicate which ones provide better opportunities to catch larger size bass. To track such data would add work for the weighmasters and tournament directors, but could be beneficial to help LDWF track where larger fish are being caught. Such data is critical for analyzing the effectiveness of the Florida bass stocking program.
- “Percentage of Boats with zero Bass weighed in” could be overestimated. There are likely competitors throughout the year that caught some fish, but chose not to weigh them due to low numbers or the quality of the fish they had in possession. This issue may never be resolved as it is out of the control of LDWF and the tournament organizers. This reporting error is likely larger on open or trail events, where points are not accumulated for the entire season.
- The time of year in which a tournament is held could bias the overall results for each waterbody. The season of the year could affect things such as the number of fish caught per boat, average weight per bass, or percentage of anglers with no bass to weigh-in. Although not practical, it would be ideal to analyze an equal number of tournaments from throughout the year for each waterbody.
- Several lakes had special regulations on them, biasing the average size per bass that could be weighed in on these lakes. For example, Grand Bayou Reservoir and Caddo Lake have protective slot limits; while Toledo Bend has a 14-inch minimum length limit. Special regulations could affect the number and size of fish that can be brought to the scales for lake comparisons, therefore influencing all metrics used in this report except the estimated number of hours to catch a bass greater than 5 pounds.
- All tournaments were converted to a standardized 8 hours before calculating angling hours. Although most lasted 7-9 hours, official start and end times were not available for all tournaments.
- Statistics comparing tournament organizations are not necessarily equal in terms of which lakes were fished, number of anglers fishing, or what time of year a particular lake was scheduled.

It should also be noted that for this analysis, only day-time tournaments (roughly 8 hours long) with 5-fish limits were analyzed. It would be unfair to use only 3-fish limit tournaments or longer night tournaments to calculate angler success rates. Some data was available for both 3-fish limit tournaments and night tournaments, but the overall dataset for both was small.

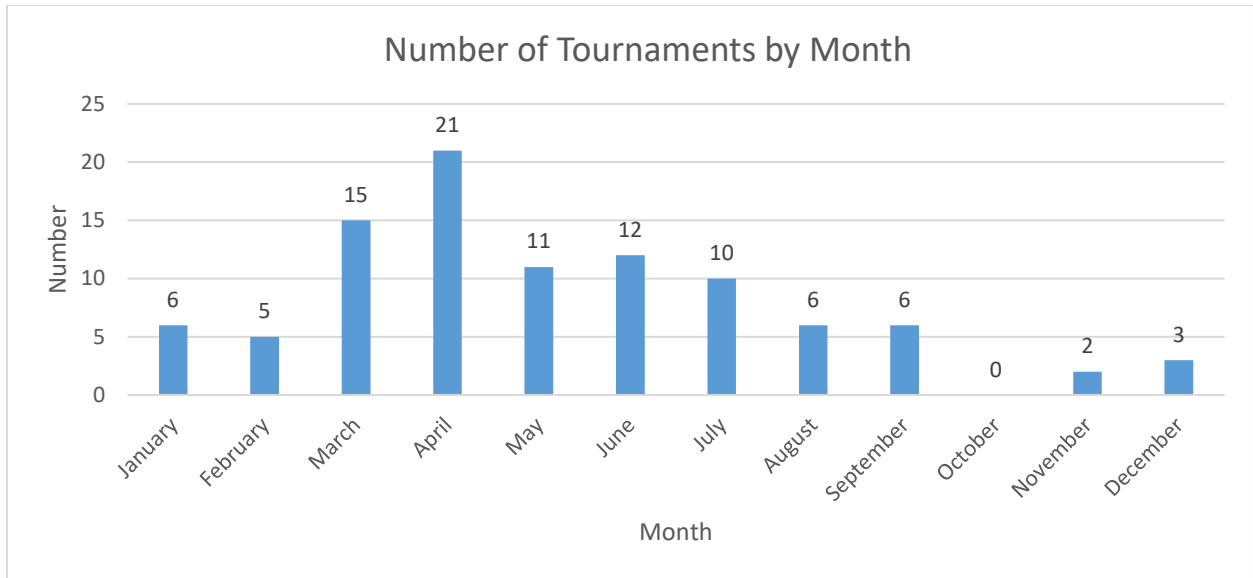


Figure 1. Monthly distribution of tournaments during the 2021 tournament season.

Table 1. Distribution of the number of tournaments during the 2021 tournament season by waterbody.

Waterbodies	# of Tournaments Reported in 2021
Caddo Lake	18
Caney Lake (Jackson Parish)	11
Lake D'Arbonne	11
Cross Lake	10
Lake Bistineau	10
Toledo Bend	9
Lake Claiborne	6
Black Bayou Hosston(Caddo Parish)	5
Grand Bayou Reservoir	4
Ouachita River	4
Red River (Pool 5)	4
Cypress and Black Bayou Reservoirs	2
Bayou Bartholomew	1
Black Lake (Campti)	1
Cane River	1

Data Analysis and Methods

Once submitted, all the data was entered into an excel spreadsheet for each tournament organization and grouped by waterbody. Nineteen metrics were calculated from the available data for each waterbody (see list below).

1. Average Number of Bass Weighed In per Boat
2. Average Weight per Bass Weighed In
3. Average Bag Weight per Boat
4. Percentage of Boats Weighing in at Least One Fish
5. Percentage of Boats with a 5 Bass Limit
6. Average Weight of Winning Big Bass
7. Average 1st Place Weight (Winning Weight)
8. Number of Angler Hours to catch a 5+ Pound Bass
9. Average 3rd Place Weight (i.e. "In the Money")
10. Average 2nd Place Big Bass Weight
11. Percentage of Boats with 10+ Pound Bags
12. Percentage of Boats with 15+ Pound Bags
13. Percentage of Boats with 20+ Pound Bags
14. Percentage of Boats with 25+ Pound Bags

In addition to individual statistics, waterbodies were ranked in different categories (see "Lake Ranks" section below) by combining applicable statistics. For overall rankings by category, each waterbody was assigned points based upon its rank for each statistic. In order to be considered for comparisons, waterbodies had to have a minimum of 4 tournaments to be included. To avoid biases from limited datasets, only 11 waterbodies were able to be used for comparisons. Therefore, the first place waterbody for each statistic received 11 points, the second place waterbody received 10 points and so on. Points were added up for all applicable statistics and the waterbodies ranked based upon total points.

2021 RESULTS

Total Tournament Statistics

- LATRIP tournaments averaged 31 boats per tournament, including championship tournaments with reduced fields.
- Approximately 74.87% of anglers were successful at weighing in at least one bass.
- Tournament anglers brought an average of 2.61 bass to the scales per boat per tournament.
- The average individual weight was 2.45 pounds for all bass coming to the scales.
- Anglers' average bag weight was 6.69 pounds.
- The average winning Big Bass per tournament was 6.25 pounds across all tournaments.

- On average, it took 17.58 pounds to win a tournament across all waterbodies and tournaments included in this analysis.
- Third Place weights were tracked throughout the year in an attempt to estimate what it would take to “be in the money.” Average 3rd Place weight for all tournaments was 13.60 pounds.
- Only 2.18% of boats weighed in more than 20 pounds of bass.
- It was estimated to take 220.72 angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass.

Average Number of Bass Weighed In per Boat

Caney Lake ranked the highest for the average number of bass weighed in per boat, with 3.27 fish per boat. Grand Bayou, Toledo Bend, and Caddo Lake were in the middle of the pack, and likely were influenced by slot limits and minimum length limits.

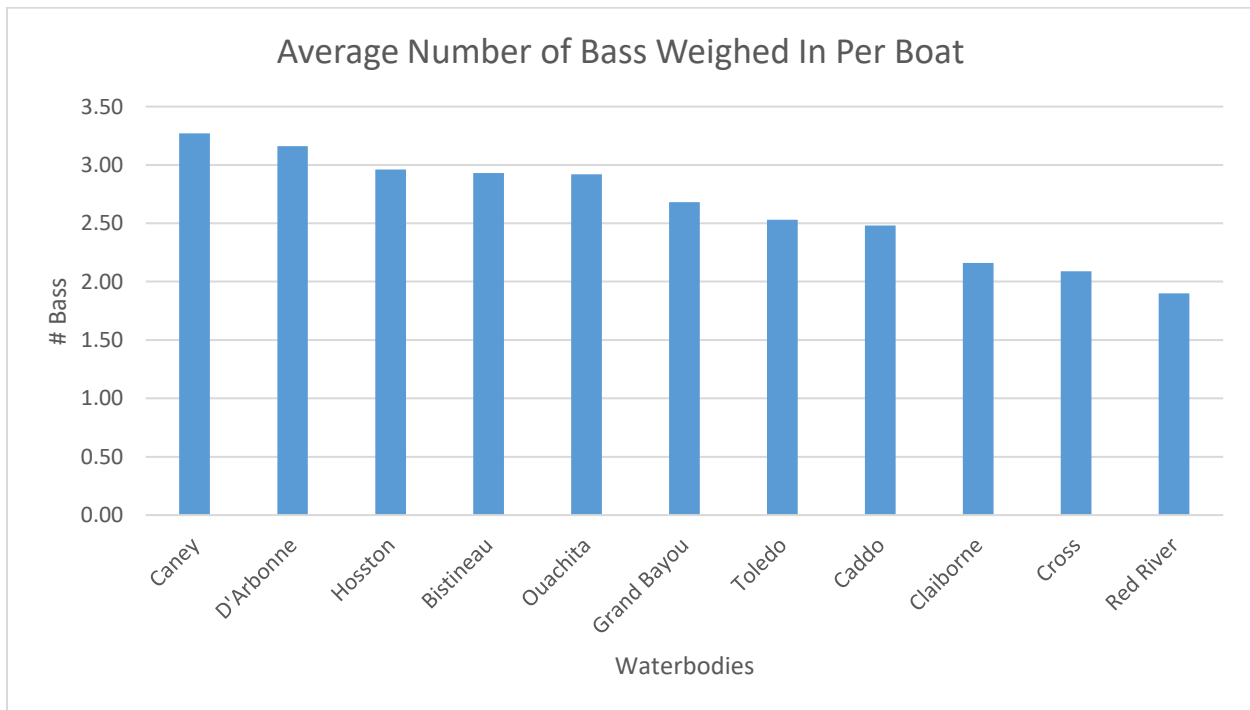


Figure 2. Average number of bass weighed in per boat from 11 waterbodies in 2021.

Average Weight per Bass Weighed In

Caddo Lake provided the largest average weight per bass for 2021, with an average of 3.03 pounds per bass. Grand Bayou Reservoir had the lowest average of 1.49 pounds. Note that slot limits on both lakes likely influence this statistic. For example, if slot fish were weighed-in and included in this information, the Caddo average would likely be lower and the Grand Bayou average would likely be higher.

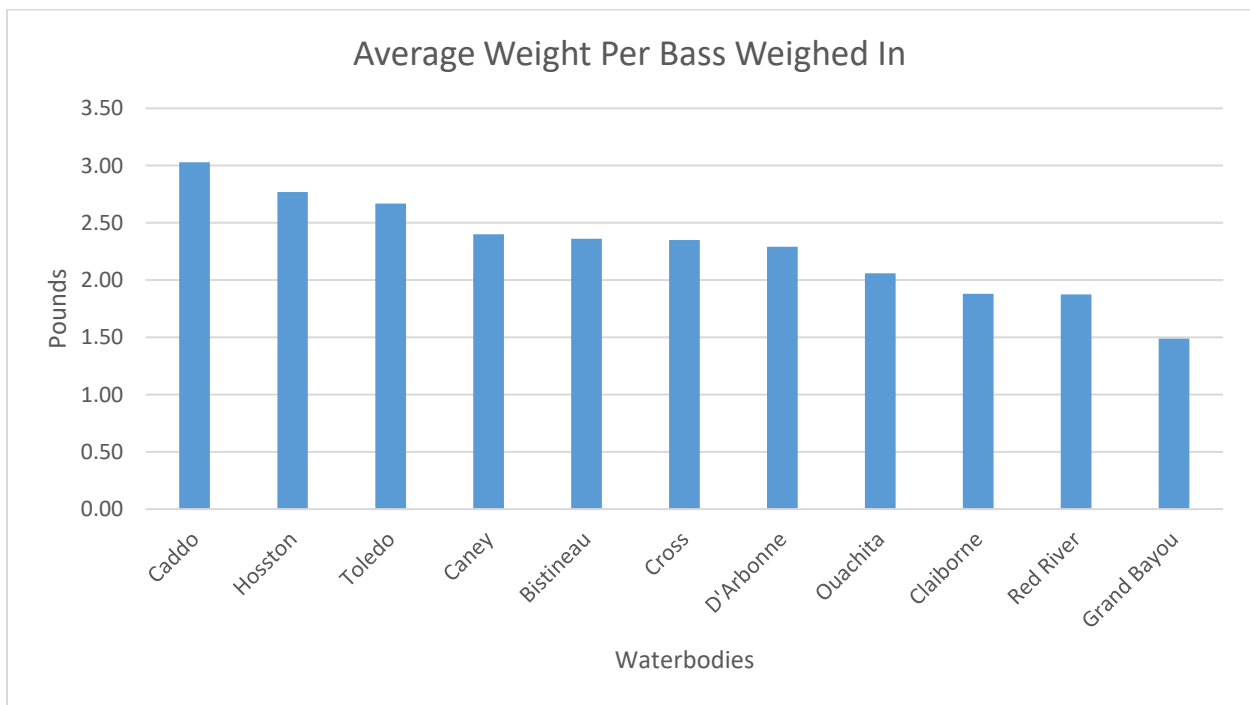


Figure 3. Average weight per bass weighed in from 11 different waterbodies in 2021.

Average Bag Weight per Boat

Black Bayou Hosston ranked first for the largest average bag weight per boat (8.93 lbs.). The lake brought in nearly one pound more per average than its closest competitor, Caney Lake. Red River came in last among ranked lakes with a 3.56 pound average.

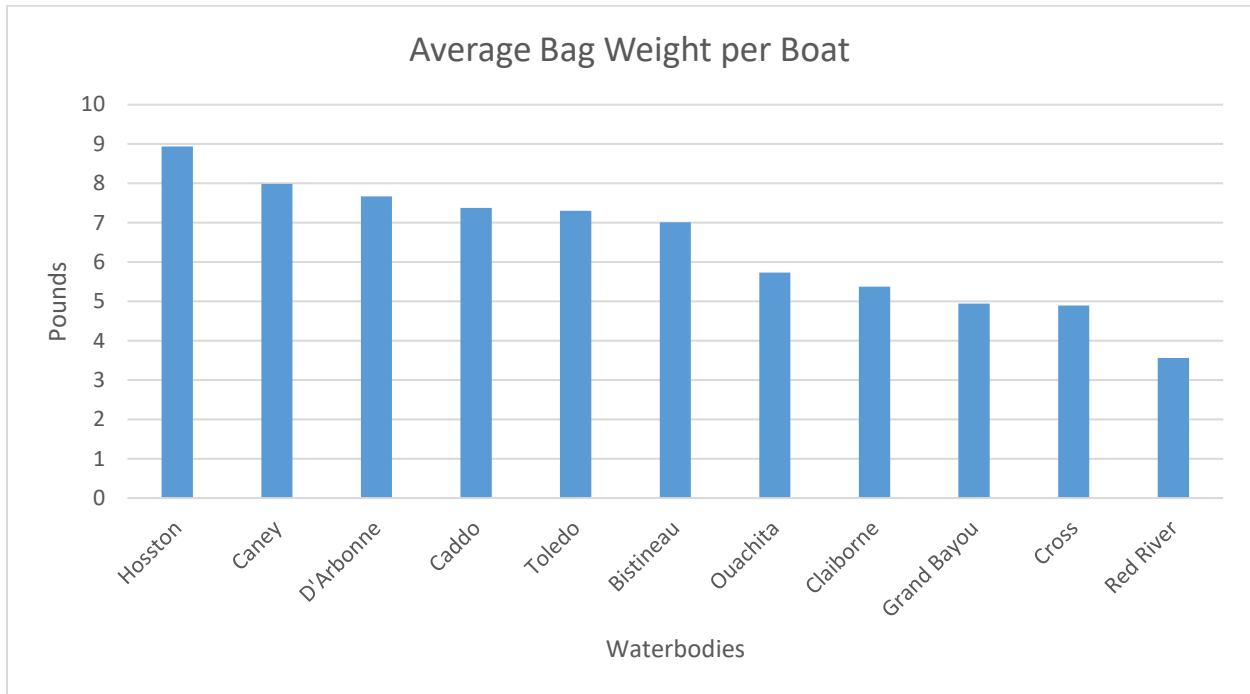


Figure 4. Average bag weight per boat from 11 waterbodies in 2021.

Percentage of Boats with Zero Bass to Weigh In

Caney Lake ranked as the best lake with the lowest percentage (16.12%) of boats with zero bass weighed in during the 2021 LATRIP tournament season. Success was much harder to come by for anglers on Cross Lake and Red River.

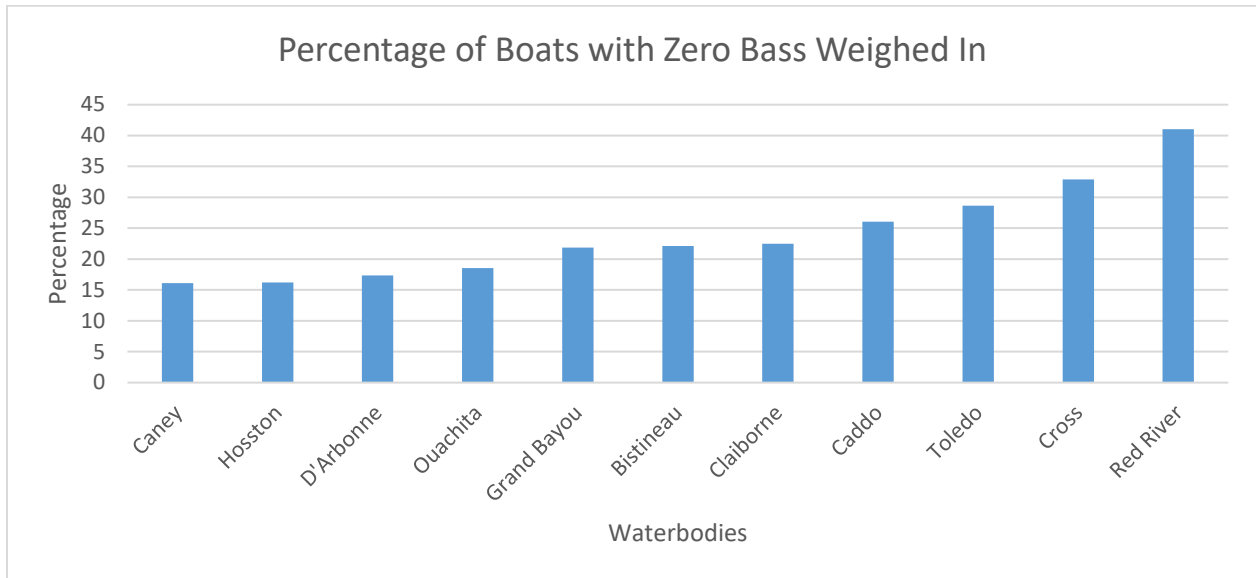


Figure 5. Percentage of boats with zero bass to weigh from 11 waterbodies.

Percentage of Boats with a 5 Bass Limit

D'Arbonne Lake ranked highest in the percentage of boats with a 5 bass limit (47.41%), while Lake Claiborne, Cross Lake, and Red River ranked near the bottom.

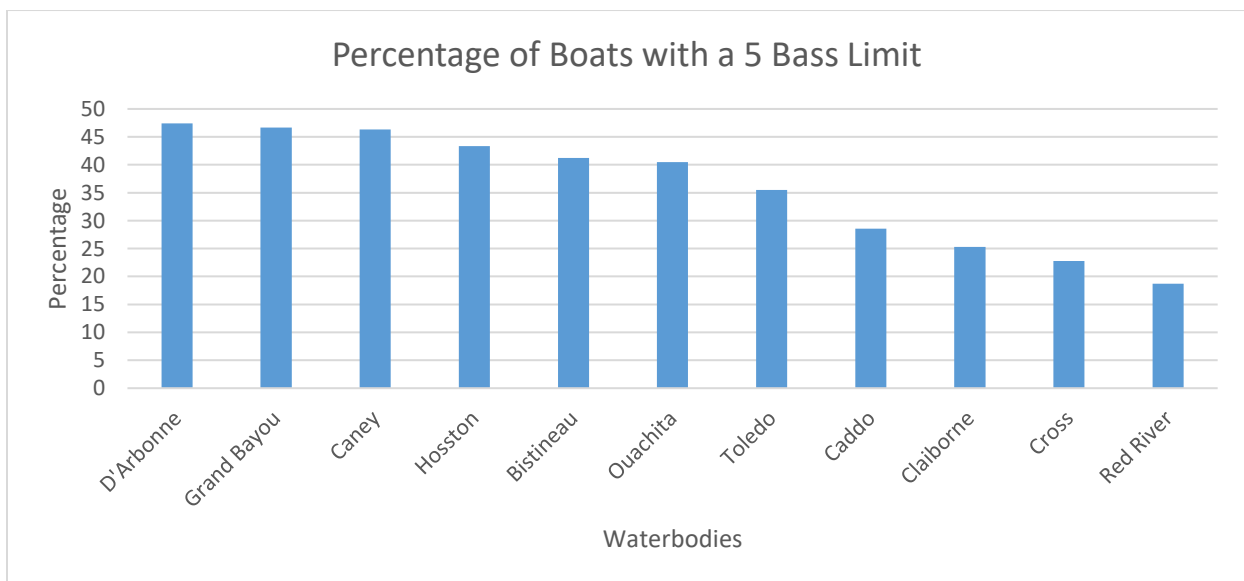


Figure 6. Percentage of boats with a 5 bass limit from 11 waterbodies.

Number of Angler Hours to Catch a Bass \geq 5 Pounds

Black Bayou Hosston provided the best chance for an angler to catch a 5+ pound bass. Notice that the two river systems are on the higher end for the number of tournament fishing hours needed to catch a 5+ pound bass, likely due to less stable water conditions.

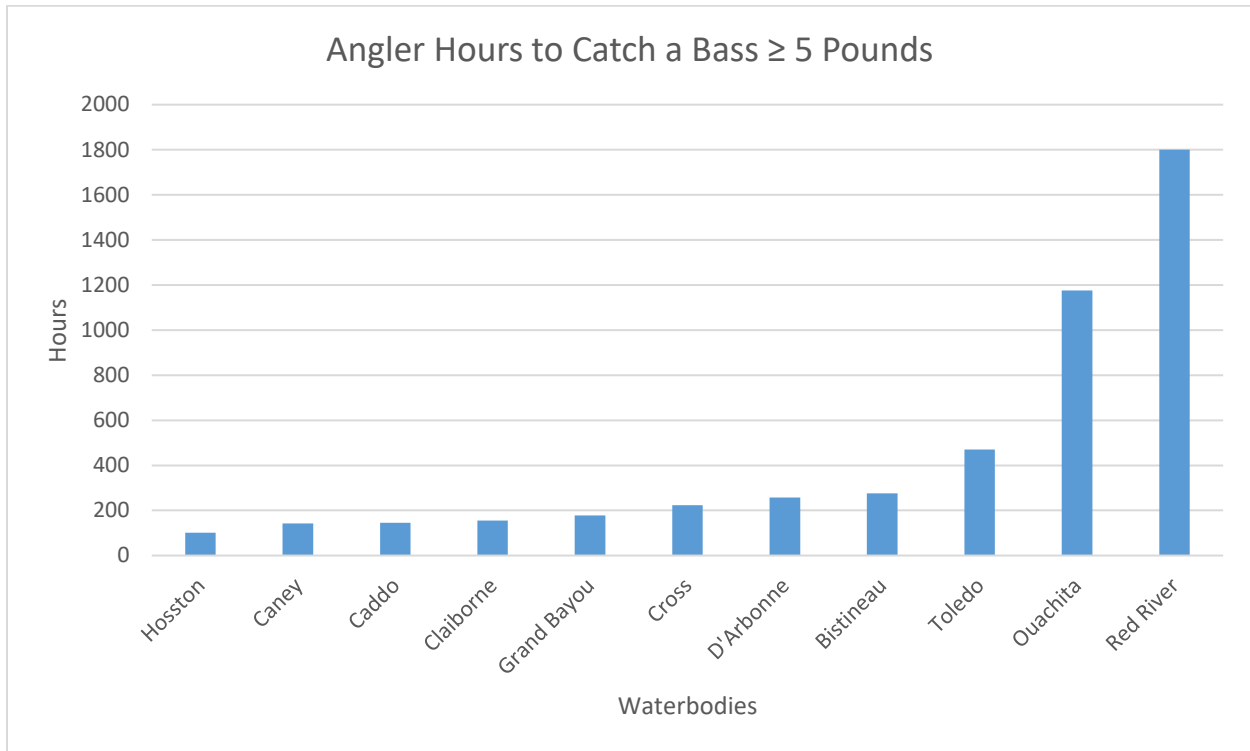


Figure 7. Number of angler hours to catch a bass \geq 5 pounds from 11 waterbodies.

Average 1st Place Weight

Caney Lake (22.09 lbs.) and Black Bayou Hosston (21.91 lbs.) were at the top for the largest average 1st place weight for the 2021 LATRIP Tournament season.

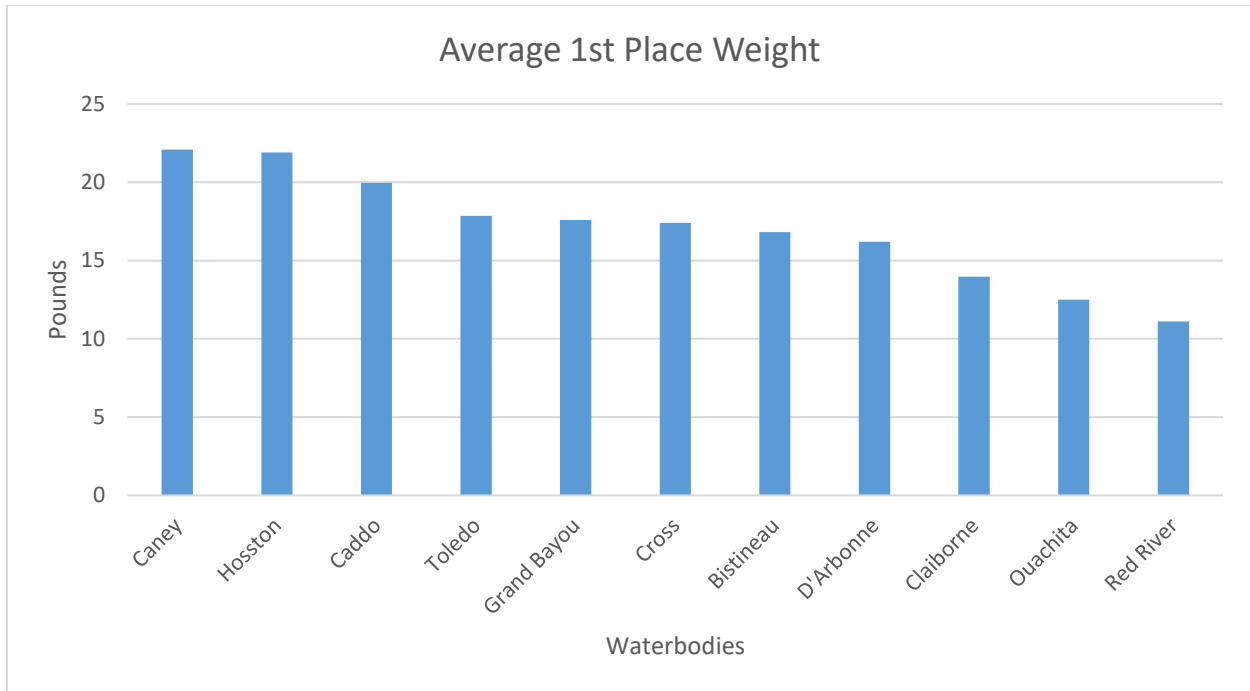


Figure 8. Average 1st place weight (winning weight) from 11 waterbodies.

Average Weight of Winning Big Bass

Black Bayou Hosston, Caney Lake, Grand Bayou Reservoir, and Caddo Lake all boasted averages of over 7 pounds for winning Big Bass Prizes.

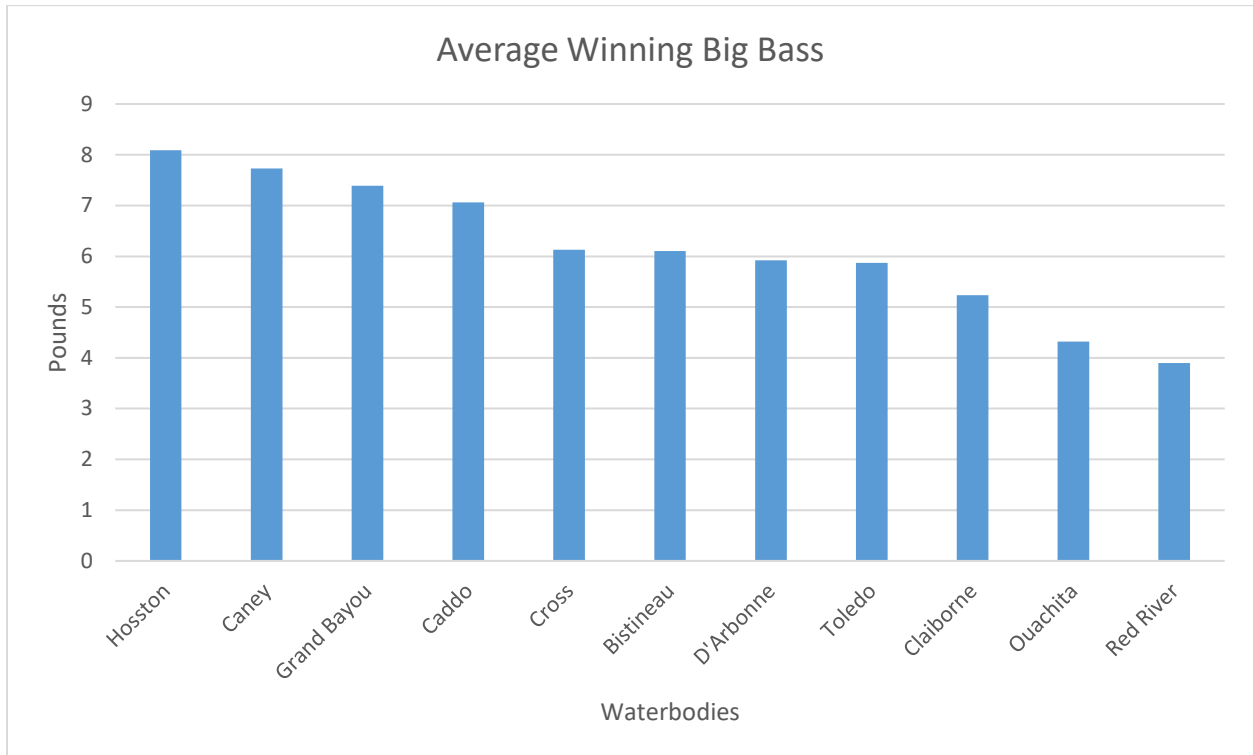


Figure 9. Average weight of winning Big Bass from 11 waterbodies.

Percentage of Boats with Bag Weights of 20+ Pounds

Caney Lake led the field with 5% of boats bringing in bags of 20+ pounds. Lake Claiborne, Ouachita River, and Red River failed to produce any stringers of 20 pounds or more during LATRIP tournaments.

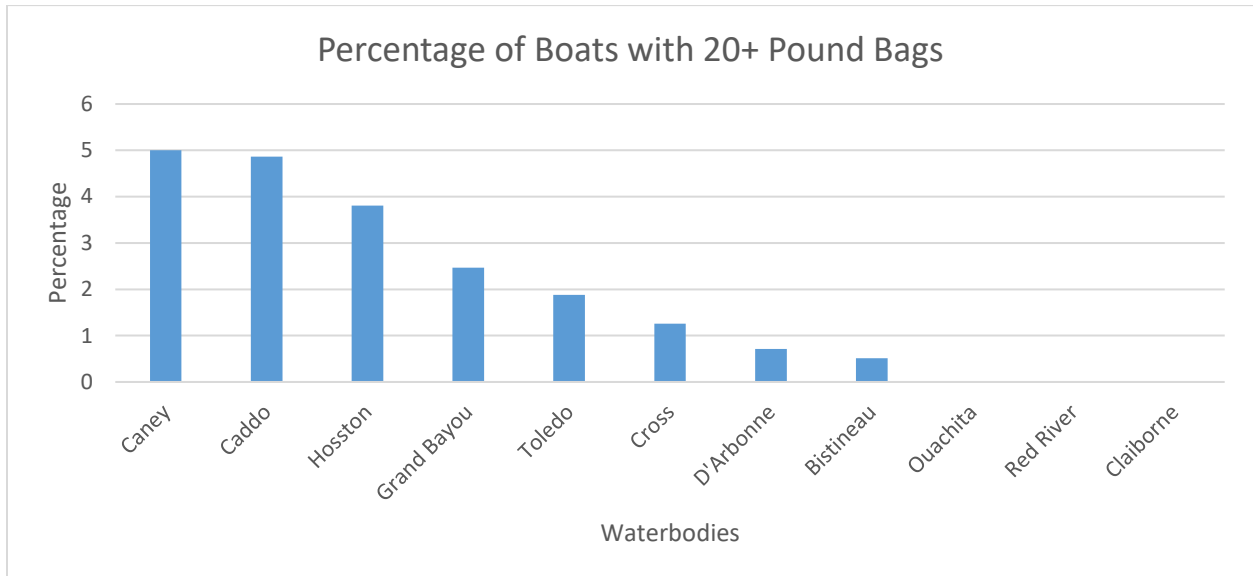


Figure 10. Percentage of boats with Stringers Equal to or Greater than 20 pound bags.

Lake Ranks

Overall Lake Rankings

In order to create a ranking system to evaluate which lake performed the best in 2021 bass tournaments, all 14 variables were included. Theoretically, this ranking gives weight to waterbodies that perform well for winning weights, but also for high angler success. The graph below shows that Black Bayou Hosston and Caney Lake tied at the top, both scoring 139 out of a possible 154 points. The Red River ranked last, collecting only 15 points. It ranked last in all but one category, “average weight per bass,” where it ranked next to last.

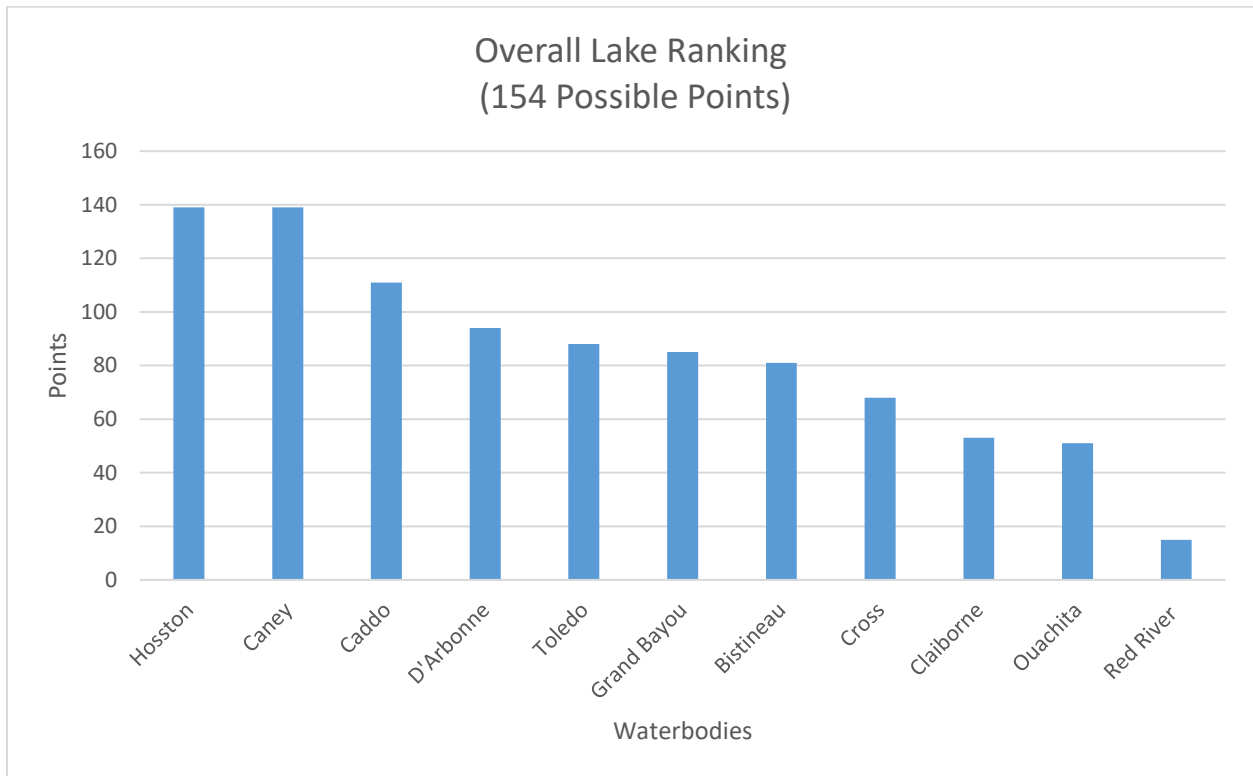


Figure 11. Comparison of 11 waterbodies based on overall bass tournament performance in 2021.

Heavyweight Division

The Heavyweight Division ranking attempts to identify lakes that provide the best opportunity for tournament anglers to catch larger size bass. Seven variables were included: average weight per bass, average big bass, average 1st place weight, number of angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass, average 2nd place big bass, percentage of boats with a 20+ pound bag, and percentage of boats with a 25+ pound bag. Again, Caney Lake, Black Bayou Hosston, and Caddo Lake ranked near the top. Cross Lake improved three places from its position in the overall ranking.

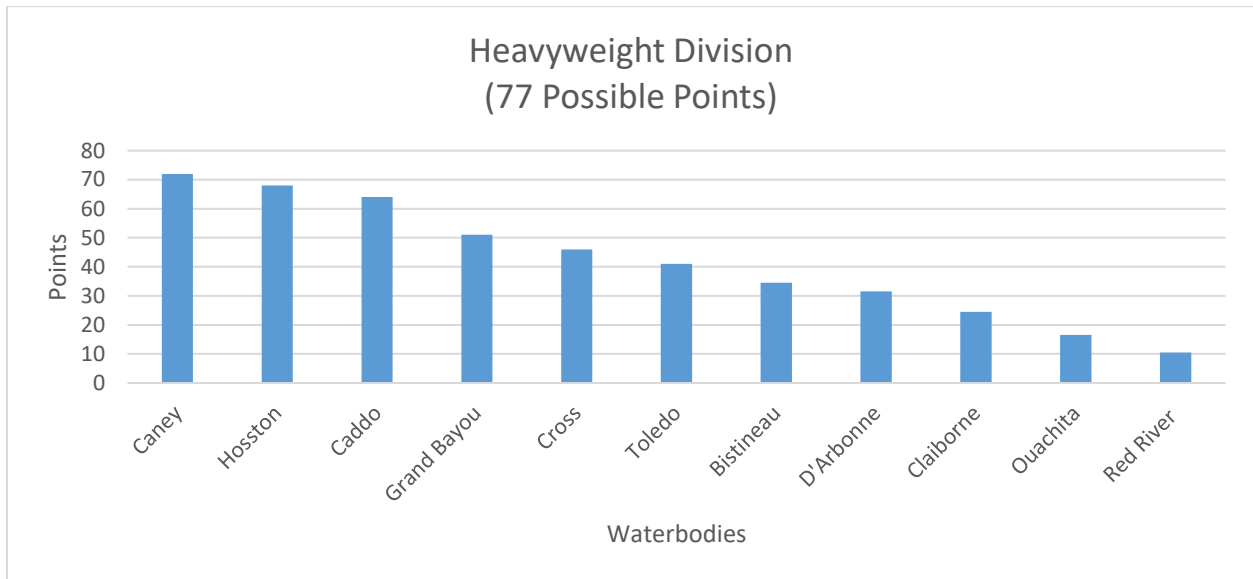


Figure 12. Comparison of 11 waterbodies focused on larger sized bass from tournaments in 2021.

Toughest Lakes to Fish

An analysis was performed to see which waterbody was the hardest to fish during the 2021 LATRIP tournament season. Five variables were used to analyze this: average number of bass per boat, percentage of boats with a limit, number of angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass, percentage of boats with 10+ pound bags, and percentage of boats with 0 fish. Red River, Cross Lake and Lake Claiborne appear to be more difficult for tournament anglers to catch fish than the other waterbodies included in the project.

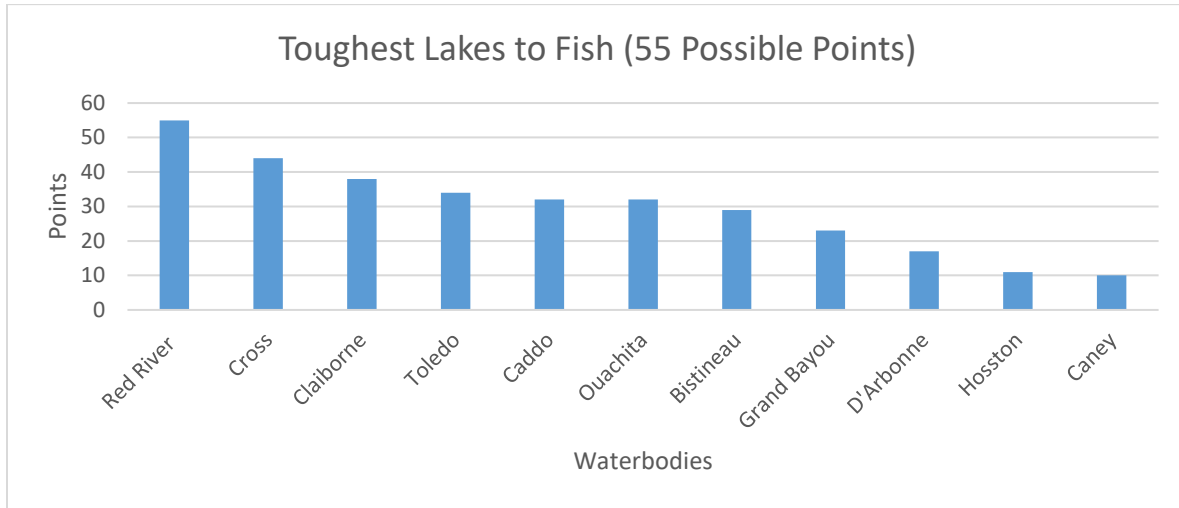


Figure 13. Comparison of 11 waterbodies focused on the toughest waterbodies to catch fish from tournament data in 2021.

Best Fun Fishing (i.e. Easiest to Catch Numbers of Fish)

In an attempt to look at what lakes might be the best to hold a “fun” tournament on, where more anglers have success, the following variables were ranked: Average # Bass/Boat, % Boats with fish to weigh, % of Boats with Limit, and % of Boats with at least 10 Pounds.

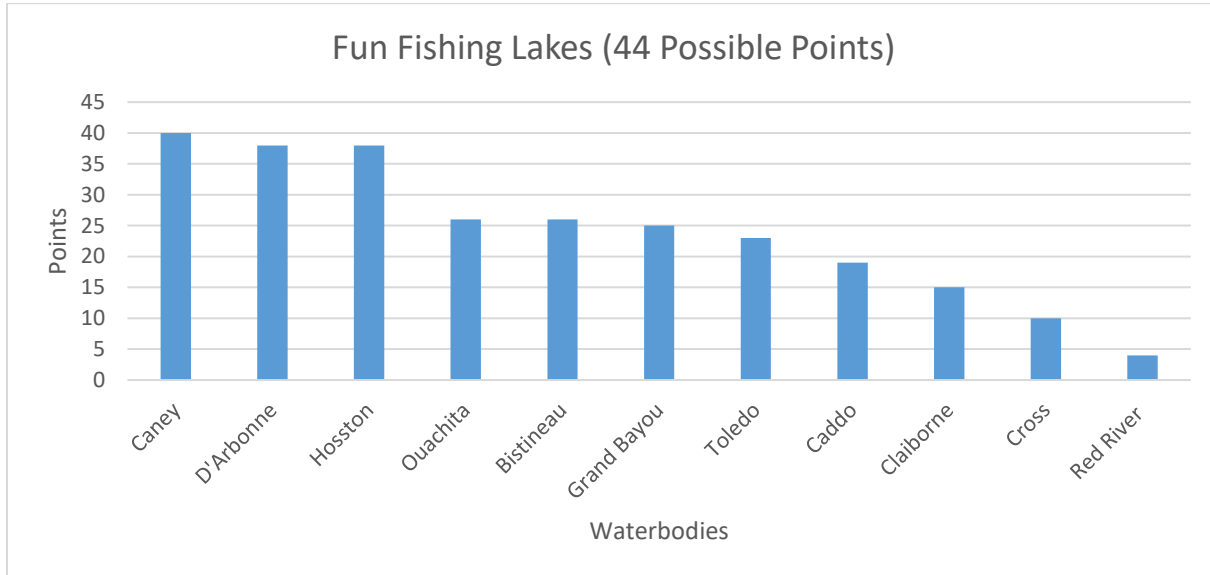


Figure 14. Comparison of 11 waterbodies for high angler success from 2021 tournament data.

Top Ten Big Bass

The table below shows the 10 heaviest bass weighed in during a LATRIP tournament. Three were over 10 pounds.

Table 2. Heaviest Big Bass caught during 2021 tournament season.

Lake	Date	Big Bass	Tournament Club/Trail
Toledo Bend	3/6/2021	10.63	B.O.S.S. Tournament Trail
Black Bayou Lake	4/17/2021	10.35	Hawgherders Bass Club
Black Bayou Lake	3/20/2021	10.09	S'Port City Bass Club
Caddo Lake	6/6/2021	9.72	B.O.S.S. Tournament Trail
Caney Lake	4/24/2021	9.59	Media Bass (Team)
Caney Lake	7/17/2021	9.36	Bayou State Bass Club
Grand Bayou	5/2/2021	8.95	Twin Cities Team Club
Cross Lake	2/6/2021	8.83	B.O.S.S. Tournament Trail
Caddo Lake	3/14/2021	8.53	NBAA
Caney Lake	4/25/2021	8.32	Media Bass (Individual)

Top 10 First Place Weights

Caney Lake and Caddo Lake both have 3 spots in the Top 10 heaviest stringers, followed by Cross Lake (2), Grand Bayou Reservoir (1) and Black Bayou Hosston (1). April boasts four places in the Top 10, followed by June (3), July (1), May (1) and February (1). It was unexpected that several of the largest bag weights recorded in LATRIP tournaments came from the summer months of June and July.

Table 3. Top 10 heaviest, 5-bass limits weighed in during the 2021 LATRIP tournament season.

Lake	1 st place weight (Lbs.)	Date	Club
Caney Lake	29.8	7/17/2021	Bayou State Bass Club
Caddo Lake	29.54	6/5/2021	B.O.S.S Tournament Trail
Cross Lake	27.76	2/6/2021	B.O.S.S Tournament Trail
Caddo Lake	27.06	6/6/2021	B.O.S.S Tournament Trail
Caddo Lake	26.02	4/3/2021	B.O.S.S Tournament Trail
Black Bayou Hosston	25.89	4/17/2021	Hawgherders Bass Club
Grand Bayou	25.78	5/2/2021	Twin Cities Team Club
Cross Lake	25.47	6/17/2021	American Bass Anglers
Caney Lake	25.06	4/24/2021	Media Bass (Team)
Caney Lake	25.04	4/17/2021	Fishers of Men

Number of Bass ≥ 5 Pounds per Tournament

Table 4. Top lakes producing 5+ pound bass per LATRIP tournament in 2021.

Waterbody	Number of Bass ≥ 5 Pounds per Tournament
Caddo Lake	3.18
Black Lake	3
Cross Lake	2.56
Black Bayou Lake	2.2
Lake Bistineau	1.90

2021 Tournament Club Statistics

Table 5. Summary of each club for the 2021 tournament season. Top ranks in each category listed in **BOLD**.

Clubs	Average # of boats/tournament	Percent of boats with a limit (%)	Average Winning weight (Lbs.)	Average Big Bass (Lbs.)	Average bag weight per boat (Lbs.)
Bayou State Bass Club	28.56	25.65	14.53	5.17	4.78
B.O.S.S. Tournament Trail	77.37	52.11	25.23	8.14	9.88
Fishers of Men	12.75	41.92	16.87	5.25	7.44
Funkbuster Team Trail	30	N/A	19.24	7.37	7.84
Hawgherders Bass Club	22.6	N/A	18.65	7.41	5.5
High School Fishing League	83	16.16	15.73	6.45	4.32
Junior Fishing League*	50.6	28.28	9.70	5.11	2.36
Media Bass (Team)	25.5	54.65	18.04	6.33	8.45
Media Bass (Individual)	29	46.79	16.51	6.37	6.48
NBAA	11.5	38.24	15.3	6.04	8.89
North Webster Bass Club	8.5	N/A	16.9	5.14	10.15
S'Port City Bass Club	35.56	26.98	16.67	5.72	4.96
Twin City Bass Club	17.25	N/A	16	5.78	7.99
Twin Cities Team Club	14.29	N/A	17.73	6.83	6.94
American Bass Anglers	21.6	27.42	18.18	6.32	7.02

*Calculated on a 3 fish limit

Monthly Comparisons

Figure 15 below shows the average winning bag weights for each month of the year. No data was available for the month of October. There were only 2 tournaments included for the month of November, so that figure may be biased due to low sample size. However, adequate data existed for both June 2021 and July 2021 tournaments. Surprisingly, these two summer months had some of the heaviest winning bags of the year. Also, notice how winning weights decreased in August and September as the summer continued.

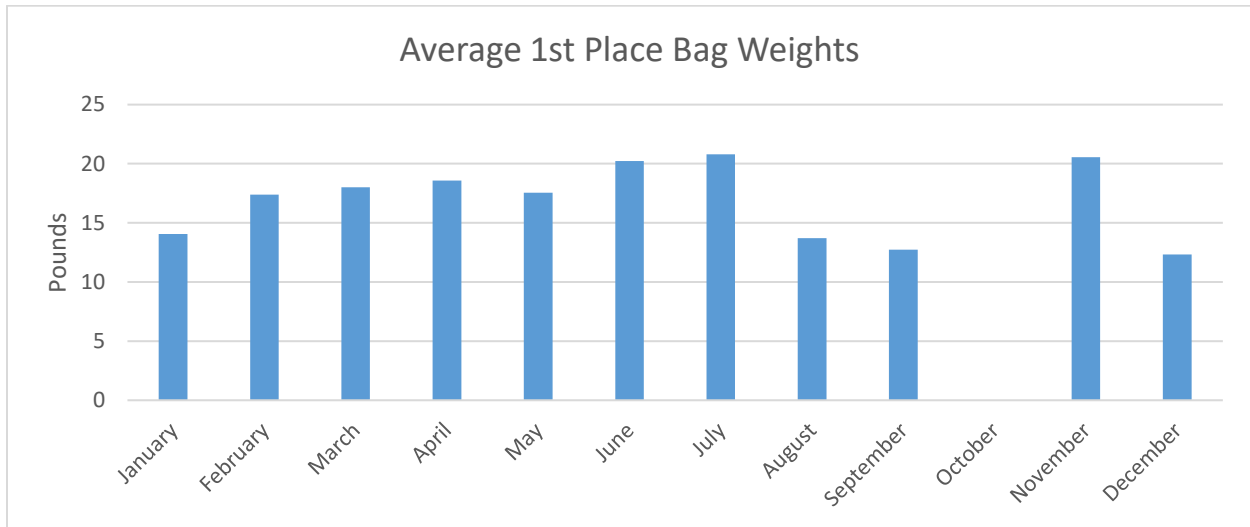


Figure 15. Monthly comparison of first place bag weights for 2021 LATRIP tournaments.

Based upon the percentage of boats weighing in a 5-fish limit, it appears that angling is the toughest in the extreme cold of January and February, as well as the extreme heat of August. Keep in mind that no data was available for October.

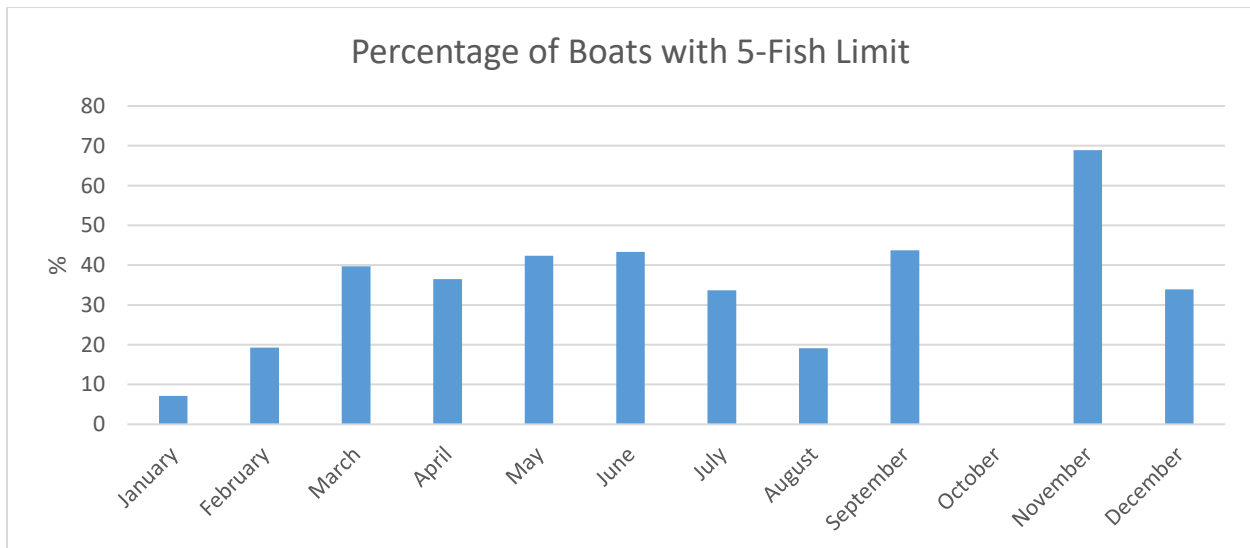


Figure 16. Monthly comparison of percentage of boats with a 5-fish limit for 2021 LATRIP tournaments.

Future Plans

Please keep in mind that this report contains information collected and analyzed for only one year. It should be viewed as a pilot effort that may be altered or expanded upon in future years into a statewide program.

Through this pilot process, several improvements were identified as needed and should be implemented in the future. First, a uniform format for reporting data to LDWF would be beneficial. In the 2021 season, the following variables were often missing from the dataset: 1) number of fish per boat, 2) number and weights of any fish over 5 pounds, 3) official start and end time of the tournament. Unfortunately, omissions of this information caused some data to be excluded in the analyses, or some assumptions to be made. Having a more complete dataset would be beneficial.

To streamline data reporting, a portal or some type of on-line system will likely need to be developed. For the pilot effort, the majority of data was collected from websites or even photographs that had to be converted to spreadsheets. If the dataset becomes much larger, the time necessary to complete the conversions could become a limiting factor and contribute to errors in the dataset.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to collect more information from midweek, evening tournaments. These tournaments are often held during the spring and summer months. Such tournaments would need to be analyzed on their own due to them usually being a 3-fish tournament, but may be able to be combined with other 3-fish tournaments such as the Junior Fishing League with middle school-aged participants.

Acknowledgements

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries acknowledges the bass clubs and tournament organizers who voluntarily submitted information for this effort. Participating clubs include Bayou State Bass Club, B.O.S.S. Tournament Trail, Fishers of Men, Funkbuster Team Trail, Hawgherders Bass Club, High School Fishing League, Junior Fishing League, Media Bass (Team), Media Bass (Individual), NBAA, North Webster Bass Club, S'Port City Bass Club, Twin City Bass Club, Twin Cities Team Club, and American Bass Anglers. Without their participation and desire to contribute to improving the natural resources of the Sportsman's Paradise, this effort would not have been possible.