

MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT PROGRAM 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



FISHERIES BUREAU
By
Stan Crider



MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

1505 Eastover Drive
Jackson, MS 39211
www.mdwfp.com



Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) began a program in 1998 for bass tournament anglers to help biologists monitor bass populations. These results continue to be a valuable addition to the data that MDWFP biologists use to manage bass populations. In some waters, it may be the only measure we have of what anglers are catching.

Bass clubs and tournament organizers are encouraged to provide tournament results to MDWFP on the form shown below. The form may be mailed, faxed or emailed to the address below. Forms, reports and data input can be accessed via internet at: <http://www.mdwfp.com/fishing-boating/tournaments>

MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT REPORT CARD

Lake: _____	Date: _____	Start: _____	Stop: _____
Tournament Type:	Individual ()	Team ()	Director: _____
Club or Organization: _____	Phone: _____		
Address: _____	City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____
Total No. of Anglers or Teams: _____		Limits Caught: _____	
Number of bass weighed-in: _____			
Total Weight (all bass):		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
First Place Weight:		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
Tournament Lunker:		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
No. of Bass over 5 Pounds: _____		Bass Greater than 7 lbs. Individual Fish Wt. _____ _____	

By mail: Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks
 C/O Ryan Jones
 1505 Eastover Drive
 Jackson, MS 39211

ph: 601-432-2208
 fax: 601-432-2203 Attn: Ryan Jones
 email: Stan.Crider@wfp.ms.gov

2023 Bass Tournament Summary

Mississippi's bass tournament anglers had a good year in 2023 based on 243 tournament reports. Average statistics for all lakes in 2023 were slightly lower than 2022, but higher than in 2020 and 2021. In 2023, the average lunker weight was higher than in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. The average weight of individual bass weighed in was also higher in 2023 than in 2020 and 2021. The number of bass weighed in per day was the highest since 2017. In 2023, the number of hours to catch a 5 lb. bass or greater was lower than in 2022. **At least five reports** are needed from a lake to be included in the final "Lake Rankings." In addition, the five reports must include all of the information for each ranking metric. Thirteen lakes were included in the lake rankings. In 2023, Enid Reservoir, Bogue Homa, Okatibbee Reservoir, and Ross Barnett Reservoir ranked as some of Mississippi's best bass fishing lakes. Based on rankings, average weight of bass was highest at Bogue Homa in 2023. For 2023, Back Bay provided the best numbers of bass per day. The following summarizes the most important points from this year's tournament report:

- Reports were submitted from 243 tournaments fishing 31 different waterbodies.
- In 2023, **Enid Reservoir** finished as the top lake in overall quality indicator rankings followed by **Bogue Homa**, **Okatibbee Reservoir**, and **Ross Barnett Reservoir**.
- The largest bass weighed in was 10.88 pounds from Pickwick.

Statewide Tournament Statistics

2.14 - Number of bass caught per angler - day

4.14 - Pounds of bass caught per angler - day

2.00 - Average weight of bass caught

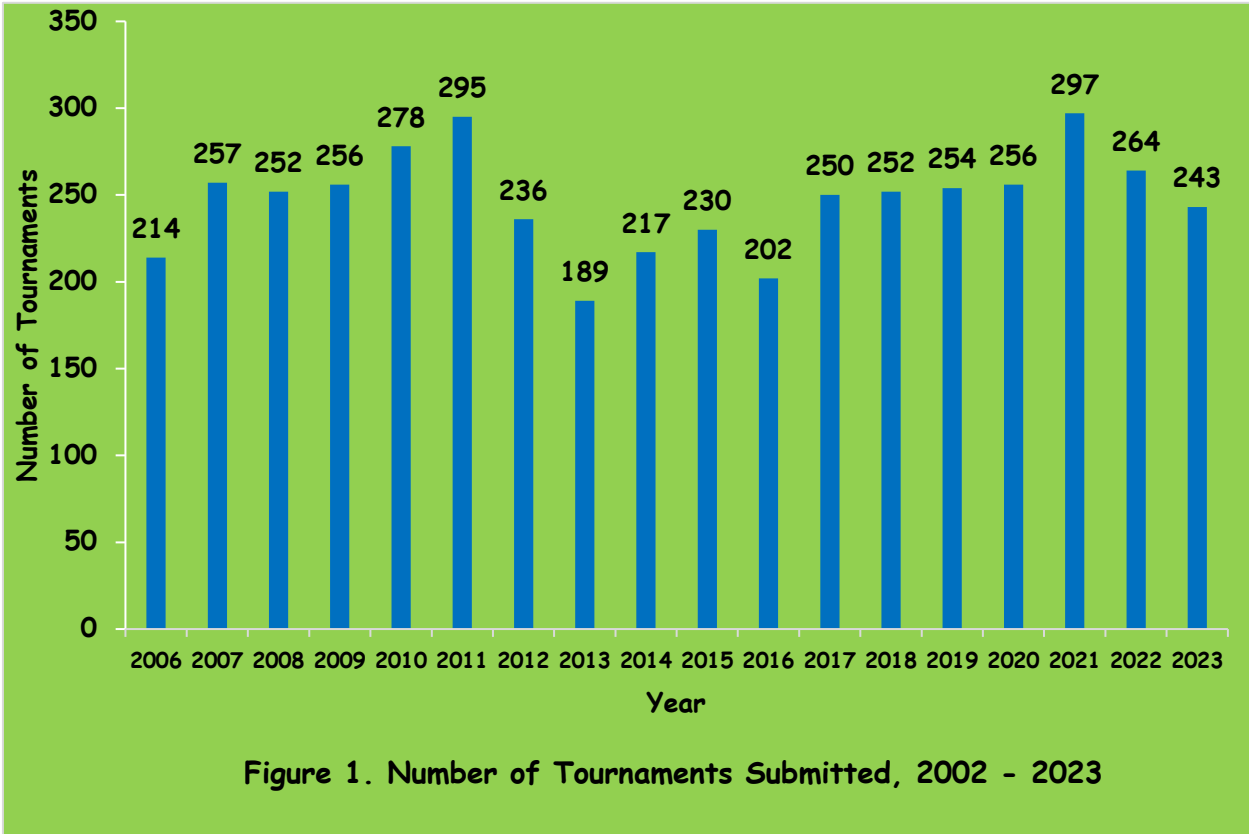
282 - Hours to catch a 5-pound bass

4.88 - Average lunker, or big bass weight

13.42 - Average 1st place weight

267 - Number of bass 5 pounds and larger

- The total number of tournament reports was 243 in 2023 (Figure 1), and the highest number of reports came from Ross Barnett Reservoir (36). Over 8,843 anglers fished in tournaments and weighed-in 15,840 bass (Table 1).



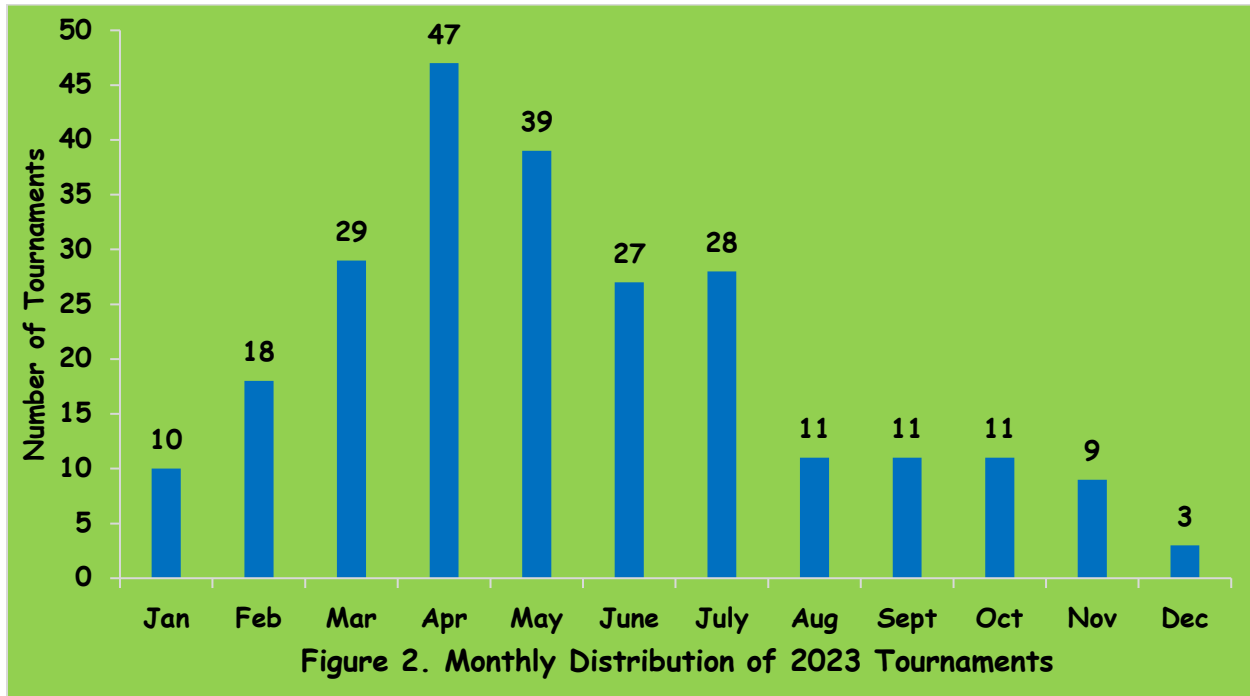
- It took an average of 13.42 pounds to win a tournament in 2023 (Table 1). Of lakes with at least five tournaments reported Bogue Homa had the highest winning weight followed by Enid Reservoir and Pickwick.
- After reviewing water bodies with more than three tournament reports and using average length of tournaments to define an angler day, the numbers of bass caught per angler day ranged from 1.44 at Columbia to 4.07 the Aliceville. The highest average lunker was highest at Pickwick and the highest average weight was at Bogue Homa.
- The seasonal distribution of 2023 tournaments appears in Figure 2. March through July were the most popular months to conduct tournaments with at least 27 per month. April had the highest number of reports submitted at 47.

Table 1. Summary of Bass Tournament results from the 2023 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program

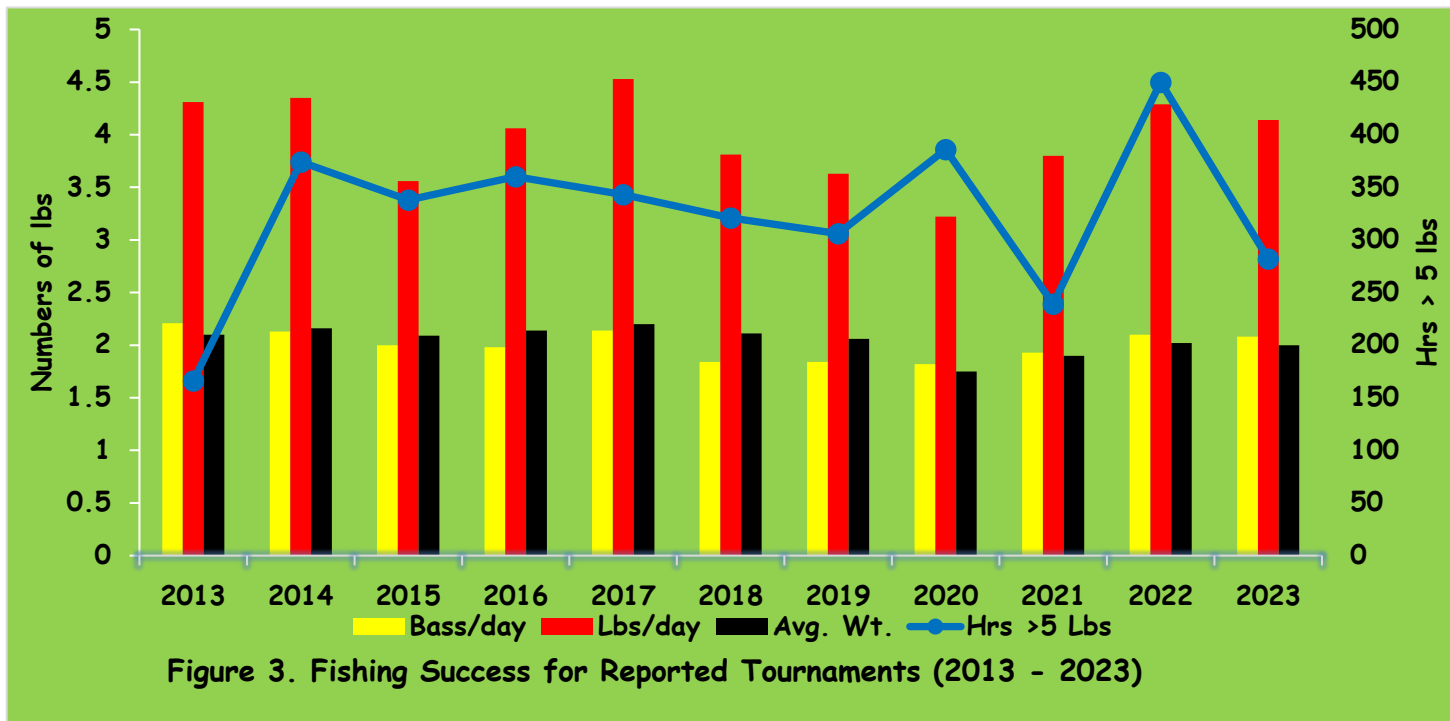
Waterbody	Report Cards	Entries	Bass Caught	Bass Per Day	Pounds Per Day	Percent Success	Average Weight	No. > 5 lbs.	Big Bass	Average 1st Place
Aliceville	4	65	290	4.07	8.92	84	2.17	6	5.48	17.19
Archusa	1	18	68	2.13	3.02	56	1.42	0	4.35	12.30
Back Bay	5	97	365	3.39	5.54	60	1.62	2	5.09	12.87
Bay Springs	5	87	290	2.25	5.04	40	2.31	9	6.29	15.33
Bill Waller	10	88	156	1.75	1.63	48	0.96	6	4.75	7.59
Bogue Homa	5	79	208	2.07	6.80	31	3.31	18	6.21	21.97
Calling Panther	6	59	163	3.09	4.92	36	1.69	3	5.24	9.35
Columbia	10	83	201	1.44	1.96	24	1.38	0	3.00	7.86
Columbus	5	217	503	1.91	4.60	42	2.38	5	5.34	16.1
Eagle Lake	1	15	30	1.03	3.03	7	2.93	2	7.42	17.50
Enid	6	112	456	3.13	7.62	82	2.51	17	6.60	21.27
Ferguson	2	50	179	1.79	4.88	54	2.73	1	4.86	18.74
Flint Creek	2	24	86	1.56	2.49	38	1.51	1	3.92	8.86
Grenada	2	24	101	2.20	5.67	78	2.55	1	5.01	17.84
Jeff Davis	25	236	669	1.65	1.67	35	1.01	3	3.00	7.15
Jourdan River	4	65	240	3.79	5.58	53	1.47	0	3.49	10.48
Lake Lincoln	2	19	83	2.16	5.83	72	2.70	3	6.32	17.01
Maynor Creek	2	32	114	2.03	4.10	62	1.99	1	4.91	13.93
Mike Conner	9	76	232	1.92	1.24	37	0.65	0	2.03	3.99
Moon Lake	1	24	94	2.09	3.86	67	1.85	0	4.94	13.46
Okatibbee	6	141	386	2.57	4.79	66	1.97	13	5.76	14.56
Okhissa	1	14			2.99				2.55	7.15
Pascagoula River	27	287	934	2.78	4.14	43	1.50	2	3.61	9.26
Paul B. Johnson SP	7	47	34	1.19	1.25	17	1.07	1	2.86	6.16
Pearl River	12	167	159	2.61	3.90	42	1.67	1	4.47	11.63
Pickwick	32	2341	4840	1.76	5.31	29	2.95	92	6.72	19.77

Table 1. continued										
Waterbody	Report Cards	Entries	Bass	Bass	Pounds	Percent	Average	No.	Big	Average
			Caught	Per Day	Per Day	Success	Weight	> 5 lbs.	Bass	1st Place
Ross Barnett	36	1610	4152	2.02	5.15	42	2.57	54	6.31	17.92
Sardis Lake	10	219	467	1.78	4.34	55	2.37	20	5.63	18.11
Tunica Lake	2	33	58	0.88	2.21	16	2.64	0	4.61	11.87
Washington	2	56	201	1.80	5.52	60	3.07	3	5.53	19.99
Waterway	1	19	81	2.25	5.05	74	2.24	3	6.16	20.12
Totals	243	6404	15840					267		
Average				2.14	4.14	42	2.00	1.099	4.88	13.42

All calculations for Waterbodies, Totals, and Averages are based upon individual tournaments



- The average weight of bass weighed in decreased from 2.02 in 2022 to 2.00 in 2023. Pounds per day (4.14) in 2023 was higher than 2020 (3.22) and 2021 (3.80). The hours to weigh in a five-pound bass decreased from 450 in 2022 to 282 in 2023 (Figure 3).



- In 2023, of the 10 heaviest 5-bass limits five came from Pickwick and three came from Ross Barnett Reservoir (Table 2). The largest sack (33.06 pounds) was weighed in at Bogue Homa during a Dixie Bassmasters event in February. Three of the 10 big sacks were weighed in during February, and two of the 10 big sacks were weighed in during March.

Table 2. The top 10 heaviest limits weighed-in 2023 MDWFP Bass Tuournament Report

Lake	Date	Tournament	1st Place Weight (lbs)
Bogue Homa	4-Feb	Dixie Bassmasters	33.06
Pickwick	24-Feb	PWBT Classic	28.78
Pickwick	10-Sep	MLF	28.44
Pickwick	18-Nov	PWBT	27.62
Pickwick	2-Dec	PWBT	26.68
Pickwick	22-Oct	BAIT	26.63
Ross Barnett	11-Mar	Media Bass MS	25.71
Sardis Lake	28-May	St. Jude Open Bass Classic	24.41
Ross Barnett	26-Mar	Weekend Warrior	24.28
Ross Barnett	25-Feb	Media Bass MS	23.77

- The number of bass weighing at least five pounds increased from 205 in 2022 to 267 in 2023. Bass ≥ 5 pounds represented 1.099% of fish caught per tournament during 2023. On average, it took 282 angler hours to weigh in a bass equal to or over five pounds.
- In 2023 there were 32 lunkers that weighed at least seven pounds. The largest lunker was caught at Pickwick on November 18 and weighed 10.88 pounds (Table 3). The second largest lunker was at Lake Jeff Davis on May 15 and weighed 10.57 lbs., and the third largest lunker was also caught at Lake Jeff Davis on March 13 weighing 10.13 lbs. Ross Barnett Reservoir accounted for 31% of the bass seven pounds or bigger. Another 25% were caught at Pickwick. Bill Waller and Lake Jeff Davis each accounted for 9%.
- Forty-six clubs or tournament organizations submitted reports (Table 4). Seventeen clubs submitted five or more reports and six clubs submitted ten or more. The average number of reports received per club or organization was five.

Table 3. Summary of bass weighed-in that were seven pounds or larger from the 2023 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program Report

<u>Lunker</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>Tourney</u>
10.88	11/18/2023	Pickwick	PWBT
10.57	5/15/2023	Jeff Davis	Jeff Davis Tournament
10.13	3/13/2023	Jeff Davis	Jeff Davis Tournament
9.36	7/22/2023	Bill Waller	Bill Waller Fruit Jar
9.31	10/22/2023	Pickwick	BAIT
8.95	3/26/2023	Ross Barnett	Weekend Warrior
8.70	3/11/2023	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
8.65	5/13/2023	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
8.50	4/22/2023	Pickwick	MLF
8.46	2/4/2023	Bogue Homa	Dixie Bassmasters
8.40	4/15/2023	Bill Waller	Bill Waller Fruit Jar
8.10	12/16/2023	Pickwick	PWBT
8.06	11/11/2023	Pickwick	MLF
7.96	5/6/2023	Calling Panther	Sumrall Bass Club
7.95	8/5/2023	Bill Waller	Bill Waller Fruit Jar
7.94	12/2/2023	Pickwick	PWBT
7.82	3/20/2023	Jeff Davis	Jeff Davis Tournament
7.78	2/24/2023	Pickwick	PWBT Classic
7.68	5/6/2023	Ross Barnett	Weekend Warrior
7.66	6/15/2023	Paul B. Johnson SP	Paul B. Johnson SP Fruit Jar
7.59	7/15/2023	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
7.56	3/11/2023	Back Bay	American Bass Anglers
7.56	3/4/2023	Ross Barnett	MLF
7.56	4/21/2023	Pickwick	MLF
7.55	3/11/2023	Ross Barnett	Weekend Warrior
7.49	4/22/2023	Ross Barnett	American Bass Anglers
7.42	Jan. 2023	Eagle Lake	Southwest Bass Club
7.25	2/25/2023	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
7.23	5/13/2023	Sardis Lake	Lee Co. Bass Club
7.04	5/6/2023	Enid	Miss Bass Nation Boater
7.03	2/19/2023	Ross Barnett	American Bass Anglers
7.01	5/5/2023	Enid	Miss Bass Nation Boater

**Table 4. Organizations that submitted reports in the 2023 MDWFP
Bass Tournament Program**

<u>Club</u>	<u>Number of Tournaments</u>	<u>Number of Anglers</u>
2023 Ricky Blakney Memorial Tourn.	1	10
American Bass Anglers	14	343
BAIT	7	512
Believers Bassmen	2	14
Bill Waller Fruit Jar	9	114
Boondocks Fishing	1	32
Calling Panther Fruit Jar	1	6
Catch A Dream Foundation Bass Classic	1	236
Collinsville Bass Club	3	132
Columbia Fruit Jar	10	162
Dixie Bassmasters	1	19
Elite Series Bigbee North	1	41
Fayette Co. Bass Club - TN	2	25
Fishers of Men	18	739
Franklin County Jawjerkers	1	13
Hub City Bass Club	1	14
Jackson Co. Bassmasters	3	28
Jeff Davis Tournament	25	416
Jones Co. Bassmasters	1	28
Lakeview Bassmasters	1	16
Leake County Bass Club	1	23
Lee Co. Bass Club	4	135
Magnolia Bassmasters	9	79
Media Bass MS	22	1218
Mike Conner Fruit Jar	9	124
Miss Bass Nation Boater	2	54
Miss. Power Benefit Tournament	1	67
MLF	22	2062
Murkey Water Bassmasters	3	52
North MS Bassmasters	6	127
Okatibbee Classic	1	48
Okatibbee Fruit Jar	1	30
Pascagoula River Shoot Out	2	114
Paul B. Johnson SP Fruit Jar	7	83
Peanutcraft Lures Tourn. Tr.	9	364
Philadelphia Bass Club	1	29
Picayune Bass Club	9	176
Pickwick Couples Trail	1	24
Table 4 continued		

Number of

Number of

<u>Club</u>	<u>Tournaments</u>	<u>Anglers</u>
Pine Belt Bass Club	1	16
PWBT	6	395
Singing River Bassmasters	8	41.0
Slay Em and Weigh Eam	1	36
Southwest Bass Club	1	29
St. Jude Open Bass Classic	1	154
Sumrall Bass Club	3	58
Weekend Warrior	9	405

- Team tournaments were more popular than individual tournaments with 63% of the reports submitted from team events. These tournaments averaged 18 individuals per tournament. Individual tournaments accounted for 37% of the reports and averaged 41 participants per event.
- Lakes with at least five tournament reports were ranked by averaging seven quality indicators" (Table 5). In 2023, the top five lakes in order were Enid Reservoir, Bogue Homa, Okatibbee Reservoir, Ross Barnett Reservoir, and Pickwick. Bogue Homa received high marks for average weight of individual bass weighed in. In 2023, Back Bay received high ranks for the number weighed in per day. Pounds of bass weighed in per day was highest in Enid Reservoir. For the second consecutive year, Bogue Homa received high marks for hours to catch a bass equal to or over five pounds. Pickwick received high marks for big bass weight. The highest average for winning weight was at Bogue Homa. The highest percentage of anglers weighing in a limit bag was at Enid Reservoir.
- Tournament bag limits used in the report were five bass which were more restrictive than state regulations. Most tournaments had a 12-inch minimum length limit.
- Success of this program depends on participation from clubs and tournament organizers. We thank all those who voluntarily submitted report cards. Higher numbers of reports allow better estimates of fishing conditions; not just a good or bad day's fishing by one or two clubs. Results can be used by tournament directors, anglers, and biologists to better manage and enjoy our fisheries resources. Angler involvement has been and remains the key to protecting and managing Mississippi's fisheries resources.

**Table 5. Final rankings of tournament lakes in Mississippi based upon 2023 reports.
Ranked by "Fishing Quality Indicators" from lakes with five or more tournament reports**

Average weight/bass (lbs.)		Average Number Caught per 8-hour day		Average Pounds Caught per 8-hour day		Index Hours to Catch a Bass \geq 5 lbs.		Average big bass weight (lbs.)		Average 1 st place weight (lbs.)		Percentage of anglers with a 5-fish bag		Overall Rank	
BH	3.31	BB	3.39	EN	7.62	BH	0.48	PK	6.72	BH	21.97	EN	82	1	EN
PK	2.95	EN	3.13	BH	6.80	EN	0.85	EN	6.60	EN	21.27	OK	66	2	BH
RB	2.57	PS	2.78	BB	5.54	OK	1.44	RB	6.31	PK	19.77	BB	60	3	OK
EN	2.51	OK	2.57	PK	5.31	SL	1.82	BH	6.21	SL	18.11	SL	55	4	RB
COL	2.38	BH	2.07	RB	5.15	BW	2.13	OK	5.76	RB	17.92	BW	48	5	PK
SL	2.37	RB	2.02	OK	4.79	PK	2.44	SL	5.63	COL	16.10	PS	43	6	BB
OK	1.97	MC	1.92	COL	4.60	RB	3.76	COL	5.34	OK	14.56	RB	42	7	SL
BB	1.62	COL	1.91	SL	4.34	COL	4.66	BB	5.09	BB	12.87	COL	42	8	COL
PS	1.50	SL	1.78	PS	4.14	BB	4.68	BW	4.75	PS	9.26	MC	37	9	PS
LC	1.38	PK	1.76	LC	1.96	JD	11.79	PS	3.61	LC	7.86	JD	35	10	BW
JD	1.01	BW	1.75	JD	1.67	PS	15.56	JD	3.00	BW	7.59	BH	31	11	JD
BW	0.96	JD	1.65	BW	1.63	LC	None	LC	3.00	JD	7.15	PK	29	12	LC
MC	0.65	LC	1.44	MC	1.24	MC	None	MC	2.03	MC	3.99	LC	24	13	MC

BB=Back Bay; **BH**=Bogue Homa; **BW**=Bill Waller; **LC**=Lake Columbia; **COL**=Columbus; **EN**=Enid Reservoir;
JD=Jeff Davis; **MC**=Mike Conner; **OK**=Okatibbee Reservoir; **PS**=Pascagoula River; **PK**=Pickwick;
RB=Ross Barnett Reservoir; **SL**=Sardis Lake