

WILDLIFE RESOURCES
WARMWATER FISH MANAGEMENT

2022 STATE TOURNAMENT
FISHING REPORT



WEST VIRGINIA

DNR

Introduction

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) began collecting fishing tournament data in 1975. For many years, bass tournaments were the only tournaments that provided data. More recently, tournament angling in West Virginia has expanded to include catfish, crappie, walleye, musky, panfish, and trout. The goal of this document is to summarize the angler catch data to provide valuable information to West Virginia's fishing community. Within this report, anglers can find which waterbodies have provided the best tournament success, catch-rates by month, average weights of fish in tournament weigh-ins, number of tournaments held per waterbody, etc. Anglers can use this information to plan tournaments or non-tournament fishing trips.

Summary of Results

The number of fishing tournaments and tournament angler effort increased in 2022 from the previous year. In 2022, a total of 774 fishing tournaments were held in West Virginia with a species breakdown of 688 black bass (Largemouth, Spotted and Smallmouth) tournaments, 58 catfish (Blue, Channel, and Flathead) tournaments, 19 Muskellunge tournaments, three crappie tournaments, two trout tournaments, one Common Carp tournament, and one panfish tournament. Fishing tournaments were held on 32 waterbodies that included 13 reservoirs (>500 acres), 10 small impoundments (<500 acres), six small rivers, and three large rivers. In addition to traditional fishing tournaments that conduct events and weigh-ins at a single location, tournaments requiring lengths only and immediate releases for species such as Muskellunge and black bass occurring across multiple waterbodies are held. In 2022, 25 of these "statewide" fishing tournaments were reported.

BASS TOURNAMENTS

Bass tournament participation has dramatically increased since the WVDNR began monitoring them in 1975 (Figure 1). In 2022, anglers reported 688 bass tournaments and 143,057 tournament angler hours, which is the most on record (Figure 1). Bass tournaments are categorized into traditional and non-traditional tournaments. Traditional tournaments typically have official weigh-ins and are held at a specific location and dates. This tournament type has been and continues to be the most popular in West Virginia with 663 being reported in 2022 (Table 1). Non-traditional bass tournaments do not have weigh-ins and are held on multiple waterbodies on

the same days. There were 25 non-traditional tournaments reported in 2022. Angler effort and location was not provided for non-traditional tournaments due to the difficulty for tournament organizers to obtain this information. Angler effort and angler catch-rate (number of 12-inch and larger bass per hour) for specific waterbodies presented within this report includes data from traditional tournaments only as the data provided by non-traditional tournaments is insufficient. For statewide estimates, traditional and non-traditional tournament data is combined.

Angler effort increased approximately 5% from 135,231 hours in 2021 to 143,057 hours in 2022 (Figure 1). Nearly 59% of the bass tournament effort in 2022 were on reservoirs with 388 tournaments and 76,025 hours being reported (Table 1). Ohio River's tournament anglers increased their effort from the previous year and had the most reported tournament angler hours for any waterbody in 2022 at 36,550. Summersville Lake had the highest reported hours for reservoirs at 17,792 (Table 1 - 2). Pressure, defined as tournament hours per acre, was highest at Beech Fork Lake and East Lynn Lake in 2022 with 10.6 and 9.1 tournament hours per acre. In contrast, Bluestone Lake, Jennings Randolph Lake, Kanawha River, and Ohio River had the lowest pressure with about 1.0 tournament hours per acre (Table 2). Typically, most tournament hours are reported in the spring and early summer. This past year, May had the highest report tournament angler hours at 27,556 (Table 4).

Since 2006, annual catch-rates for bass tournament anglers have been greater than the average catch rate since 1975 (Figure 2). The overall annual state-wide bass tournament catch-rate for 2022 was 0.19 bass per hour (all black bass), which was slightly less than reported in 2021 (Figure 2). Anglers reported better overall success in reservoirs versus rivers during 2022 bass tournaments (Figure 3). Stephens Lake and Sutton Lake ranked first in 2022 for reported bass per hour of any waterbody with more than 1,000 tournament hours, whereas Beech Fork Lake ranked last (Table 2). Over the last three years, Jennings Randolph Lake, Sutton Lake, Cheat Lake, Summersville Lake, Mount Storm Lake, and Tygart Lake have had the highest reported bass tournament catch-rates (Table 3). The number of bass reported per hour varies from year to year and has shown to be highly variable in West Virginia's commercially navigable rivers (Kanawha, Monongahela, and Ohio; Figure 3). In 2022, tournament anglers reported higher than average catch-rates on both the Kanawha and Monongahela rivers and a catch-rate less than the three-year average for Ohio River (Table 3). The highest tournament catch-rates were reported for

the months of May, July, and November at 0.22, 0.20, and 0.24 bass per hour respectively (Table 4).

The average weight per bass tournament reported in 2022 was higher than weights reported in the previous five years (Figure 4). Anglers commonly report weights from large rivers and reservoirs, but typically do not from the smaller rivers and impoundments. Generally, anglers reported heavier average weights per fish from reservoirs than in large rivers (Table 1). Tournament anglers reported the heaviest bass from Bluestone Lake, East Lynn Lake, and Stonewall Jackson. The average weight of reported bass at these lakes were about two pounds (Table 4). The heaviest average weights per tournament were reported in October (Table 4). For the first time, lunker bass were reported (Table 1). The heaviest bass weighed in at a tournament in 2022 was 7.1 pounds from Burnsville Lake. Stonewall Jackson Lake also had a lunker bass that weighed in at 7.0 pounds. The longest bass reported was 24-inches long and was caught in East Lynn Lake.

Figure 1. Reported number of West Virginia bass tournaments and angler hours from 1975 through 2022. Angler effort includes only traditional tournaments.

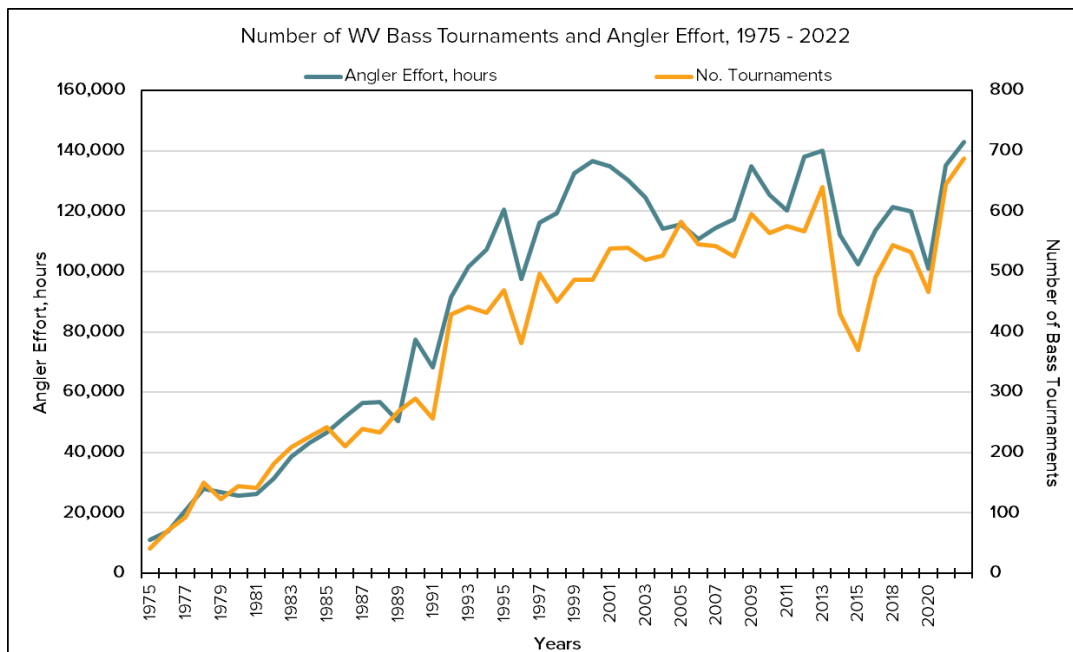


Figure 2. West Virginia bass tournament catch-rates defined as the number of 12-inch and larger black bass per hour reported from 1975 through 2022 for all waterbody types. The overall catch-rate from 1975 through 2022 equals 0.14 bass per hour and is represented by the brown dashed line.

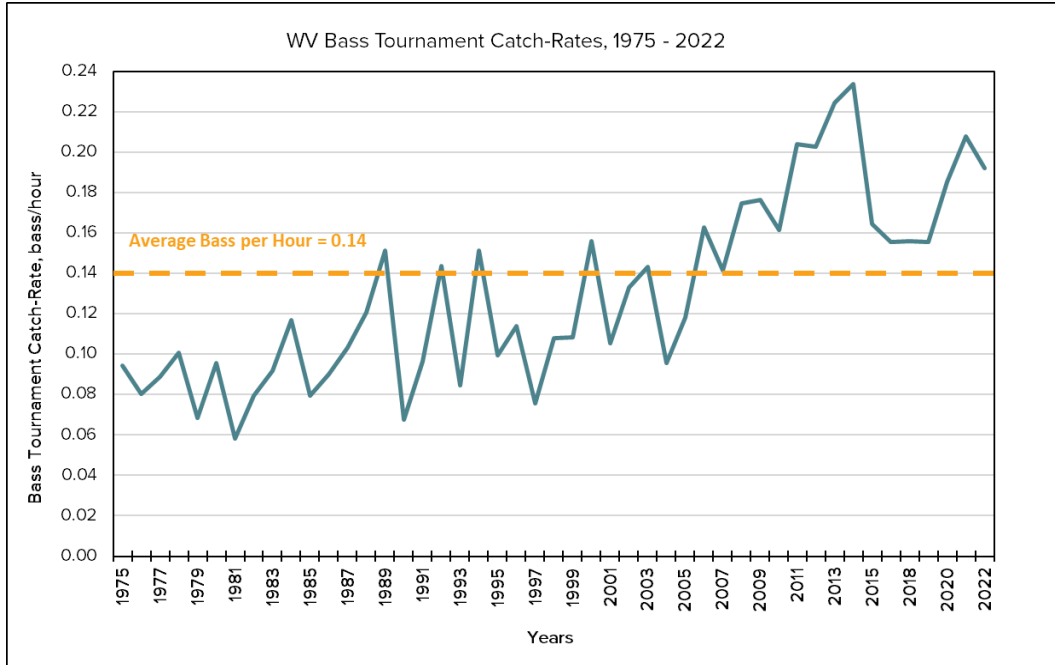


Figure 3. Bass tournament catch-rates for West Virginia’s rivers and reservoirs from 1975 through 2022.

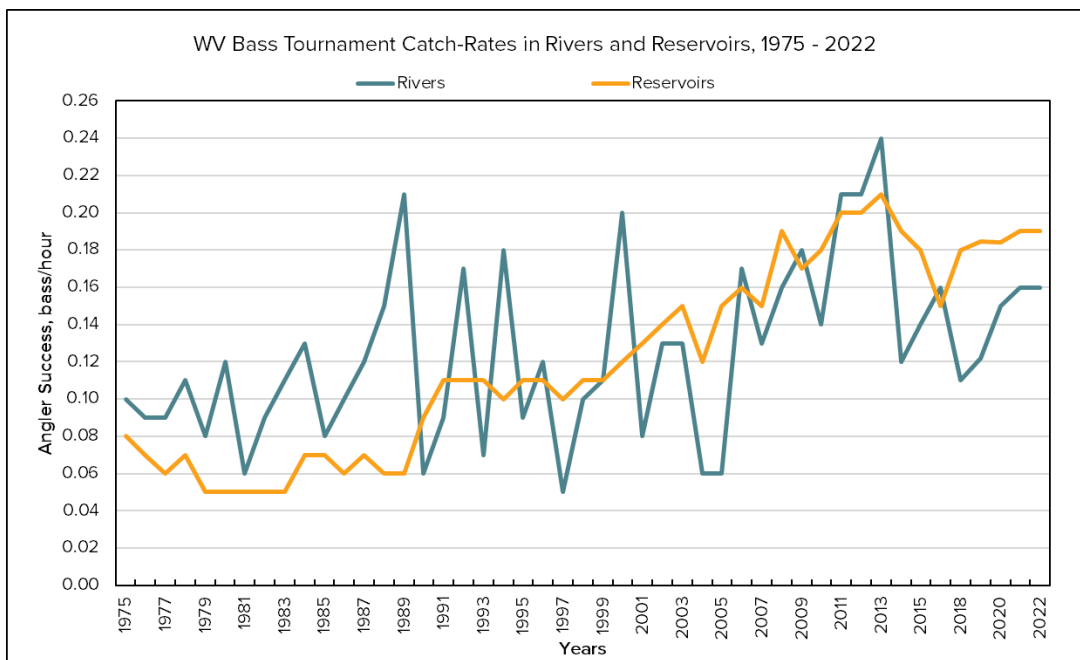


Figure 4. Average bass weight per tournament reported from 2002 through 2022 for all waterbody types.

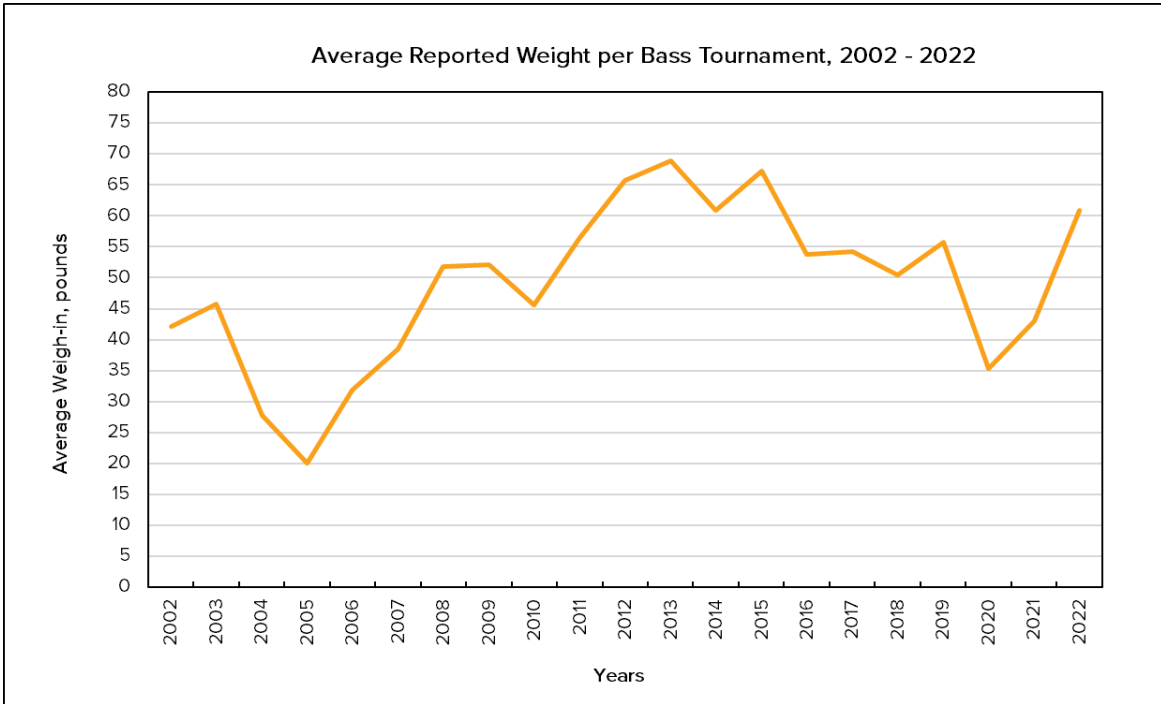


Table 1. Results for West Virginia bass tournaments held in 2022. Data represents 12-inch and larger bass. * Angler effort hours not provided by non-traditional tournaments for specific waterbodies.

Location	No. Tournaments	Effort, hrs	Reported Number of Bass				Reported Bass per hour				Reported Bass Weight, lbs		Reported Lunker Bass	
			All	Largemouth	Smallmouth	Spotted	All	Largemouth	Smallmouth	Spotted	Total Weight	Average	Weight, lbs	Length, inches
Marmet Pool	4	133	15	0	10	5	0.11	0.00	0.08	0.04	10	0.7	1.7	16.0
RC Byrd Pool	2	294	38	3	32	3	0.13	0.01	0.01	0.01	46	1.2	4.3	.
Winfield Pool	42	5,299	852	329	436	87	0.16	0.06	0.08	0.02	1121	1.3	4.0	21.0
Kanawha	48	5,726	905	332	478	95	0.16	0.06	0.08	0.02	1,177	1.3	4.3	21.0
Opekiska Pool	25	6,142	1,392	1,157	202	33	0.23	0.19	0.03	0.01	1,723	1.2	4.7	20.0
Point Marion Pool	6	1,087	296	204	52	0	0.24	0.19	0.05	0.00	362	1.4	3.9	18.0
Monongahela	31	7,229	1,648	1,361	254	33	0.23	0.19	0.04	0.00	2,085	1.3	4.7	20.0
New Cumberland Pool	6	888	205	24	172	9	0.23	0.03	0.19	0.01	101	0.5	3.6	18.8
Pike Island Pool	8	2,360	358	7	336	15	0.15	0.00	0.14	0.01	75	0.2	3.3	18.0
Hannibal Pool	24	9,751	1,667	67	1,480	120	0.17	0.01	0.15	0.01	2,040	1.2	4.8	20.0
Willow Island Pool	14	8,663	1,051	367	558	126	0.12	0.04	0.06	0.01	1,366	1.3	4.9	18.5
Belleville Pool	26	7,100	858	493	266	99	0.12	0.07	0.04	0.01	1,248	1.5	4.0	20.5
Racine Pool	33	5,548	450	257	98	95	0.08	0.05	0.02	0.02	646	1.4	4.9	20.8
R. C. Byrd Pool	8	2,241	338	42	238	58	0.15	0.02	0.11	0.03	423	1.3	4.2	.
Ohio	119	36,550	4,927	1,257	3,148	522	0.13	0.03	0.09	0.01	5,899	1.2	4.9	20.8
All Large Rivers	198	49,505	7,480	2,950	3,880	650	0.15	0.06	0.08	0.01	9,161	1.2	4.9	21.0
Elk River	2	120	12	1	11	0	0.10	0.01	0.09	0.00	.	.	.	17.5
Greenbrier	3	793	81	0	81	0	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	.	.	.	18.3
New River	4	637	204	0	204	0	0.32	0.00	0.32	0.00	.	.	.	21.8
Shenandoah	1	66	8	3	5	0	0.12	0.05	0.08	0.00	14	1.7	2.2	.
South Branch Potomac	2	324	72	1	71	0	0.22	0.00	0.22	0.00	11	0.2	1.9	.
Tygart River	2	441	36	21	15	0	0.08	0.05	0.03	0.00	14	0.4	4.6	18.3
All Small Rivers	14	2,380	413	26	387	0	0.17	0.01	0.16	0.00	39	1.7		
Beech Fork Lake	69	7,615	935	934	0	1	0.12	0.12	0.00	0.00	1,557	1.7	6.0	18.0
Bluestone Lake	14	2,753	437	115	257	65	0.16	0.04	0.09	0.02	891	2.0	5.8	21.0
Burnsville Lake	19	5,855	787	720	1	66	0.13	0.12	0.00	0.01	1,426	1.8	7.1	21.0
Cheat Lake	26	4,532	1,047	748	260	39	0.23	0.17	0.06	0.01	1,459	1.4	5.3	21.5
East Lynn Lake	54	9,149	1,169	1,136	3	30	0.13	0.12	0.00	0.00	2,421	2.1		24.0
Jennings Randolph	5	1,045	220	13	207	0	0.21	0.01	0.20	0.00	242	1.1	4.5	20.5
Mount Storm Lake	5	792	113	51	62	0	0.14	0.06	0.08	0.00	127	1.1	4.2	20.5
R. D. Bailey Lake	3	968	156	103	39	14	0.16	0.11	0.04	0.01	289	1.9	6.1	20.8
Stonecoal Lake	14	1,973	338	284	52	2	0.17	0.14	0.03	0.00	506	1.5	6.5	19.3
Stonewall Jackson	43	11,181	1,797	1,579	43	175	0.16	0.14	0.00	0.02	3,618	2.0	7.0	21.8
Summersville Lake	65	17,792	4,537	434	4,098	5	0.26	0.02	0.23	0.00	6,095	1.3		22.8
Sutton Lake	43	8,060	2,518	1,814	89	615	0.31	0.23	0.01	0.08	3,615	1.4	5.4	18.8
Tygart Lake	28	4,312	834	49	784	1	0.19	0.01	0.18	0.00	1,022	1.2	5.2	20.3
All Reservoirs	388	76,025	14,888	7,980	5,895	1,013	0.20	0.10	0.08	0.01	23,268	1.6	7.1	24.0
Conaway Lake	2	195	48	48	0	0	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.00
Curtisville Lake	1	104	19	19	0	0	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	20.2
Dog Run Lake	2	33	13	13	0	0	0.39	0.39	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	13.5
Elk Fork Lake	17	1,194	324	324	0	0	0.27	0.27	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	23.5
North Bend Lake	6	728	149	148	1	0	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	20.3
O'Brien Lake	5	512	100	100	0	0	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	21.0
Plum Orchard Lake	7	526	196	196	0	0	0.37	0.37	0.00	0.00	238	1.2	4.3	16.3
Stephens Lake	16	1,665	523	510	8	5	0.31	0.31	0.00	0.00	733	1.4	4.1	17.5
Upper Mud Lake	5	418	120	119	0	1	0.29	0.28	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	19.3
Woodrum Lake	2	192	57	57	0	0	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.00	.	.	.	21.8
All Small Impoundments	63	5,567	1,549	1,534	9	6	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.00	971	1.2	4.3	23.5
Statewide non-traditional	25	9,580	3,141	1,613	1,401	127	0.33	0.17	0.15	0.01
Total Bass Results	688	143,057	27,471	14,103	11,572	1,796	0.19	0.10	0.08	0.01	33,439	1.4	7.1	24.0

* Angler effort hours not provided by tournament organizers

** Excludes Statewide - Kayak angler effort and number of bass reported

Table 2. 2022 rankings for West Virginia waterbodies having $\geq 1,000$ bass tournament hours. Does not include non-traditional tournaments.

Ranking	Waterbody	Reported Bass per Hour	Tournament Hours	Surface Acres	Tournament Hours per Acre
1	Stephens Lake	0.31	1,665	272	6.1
1	Sutton Lake	0.31	8,060	1,520	5.3
2	Elk Fork Lake	0.27	1,194	278	4.3
3	Summersville Lake	0.26	17,792	2,700	6.6
4	Cheat Lake	0.23	4,532	1,730	2.6
4	Monongahela River	0.23	7,229	1,254	5.8
5	Jennings Randolph	0.21	1,045	952	11
6	Tygart Lake	0.19	4,321	1,750	2.5
7	Stonecoal Lake	0.17	1,973	550	3.6
8	Bluestone Lake	0.15	2,753	2,040	13
8	Kanawha River	0.15	5,726	5,257	11
8	Stonewall Jackson Lake	0.15	11,181	2,650	4.2
9	Burnsville Lake	0.13	5,855	968	6.0
9	East Lynn Lake	0.13	9,149	1,005	9.1
9	Ohio River	0.13	36,550	36,470	10
10	Beech Fork Lake	0.12	7,615	720	10.6

Table 3. Three (3) year catch-rate for selected waterbodies with annual catch-rates from 2020 - 2022.

Does not include non-traditional tournaments.

Rank	Waterbody	3-year average	2022	2021	2020
1	Jennings Randolph Lake	0.30	0.21	0.34	0.36
2	Sutton Lake	0.27	0.31	0.23	0.27
2	Cheat Lake	0.24	0.23	0.23	0.25
2	Summersville Lake	0.24	0.26	0.23	0.24
3	Mount Storm Lake	0.22	0.14	0.24	0.29
4	Tygart Lake	0.21	0.19	0.24	0.20
6	Monongahela River	0.19	0.23	0.20	0.15
8	Stonewall Jackson Lake	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.15
8	Stonecoal Lake	0.16	0.17	0.15	0.16
8	R.D. Bailey Lake	0.16	0.16	0.09	0.22
9	Ohio River	0.15	0.13	0.13	0.13
10	Kanawha River	0.14	0.16	0.12	0.13
11	Bluestone Lake	0.13	0.16	0.14	0.10
7	Burnsville Lake	0.13	0.13	0.15	0.11
12	Beech Fork Lake	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.12
13	East Lynn Lake	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.09

Table 4. Three (3) year catch-rate for selected waterbodies with annual catch-rates from 2020 - 2022. Does not include non-traditional tournaments.

Month	No. Tournaments	Tournament Hours	Reported No. of Bass	Reported Bass per Hour	Reported Weight, lbs	Average Weight per Tournament
March	5	876	71	0.08	169	2
April	72	20,720	3,371	0.16	4,184	58
May	113	27,556	6,017	0.22	8,014	71
June	111	26,119	4,965	0.19	5,939	54
July	113	17,266	3,483	0.20	3,765	33
August	103	17,820	3,119	0.18	3,358	33
September	84	15,213	2,946	0.19	3,799	59
October	64	14,219	2,716	0.19	3,799	59
November	22	3,197	777	0.24	880	40
December	1	72	5	0.07	6	6
Total	688	143,057	27,470	0.19	33,439	49

CATFISH TOURNAMENTS

The WVDNR began monitoring catfish tournaments in 2008 as catfish popularity was increasing with tournament anglers. Fifty-eight catfish tournaments reported catch data in 2022, which was the second most on record (Table 5). Most catfish tournaments were held on the Ohio River with 46 reported tournaments resulting in 11,268 angler hours (Table 6). The R.C. Byrd Pool and Willow Island Pool of Ohio River reported the most tournaments and had the most angler effort (Table 6).

Flathead Catfish continue to be the dominant species reported by tournament anglers (Table 5). Anglers reported fewer Blue Catfish in 2022 than in the previous three years, but this species continues to represent a significant portion of the total tournament catch, especially in the R.C. Byrd and Greenup pools of Ohio River (Table 5, Table 6). Blue catfish represented about 36% and 21% of the total catch in the Greenup and R.C. Byrd pools of Ohio River respectively (Table 6). Tournaments reported weighing 8,611 pounds of catfish for an average of 276 pounds per tournament and 8.8 pounds per catfish (Table 6). The heaviest weights per tournament reported were from the Greenup and Racine pools of Ohio River with 631 pounds and 418 pounds on

average respectively (Table 6). The heaviest catfish reported was a 53.35-pound Flathead Catfish from the Greenup Pool of Ohio River.

Table 5. Annual summary of West Virginia Catfish tournaments 2008-2022. *Lunker weight was reported from the Greenup Pool of Ohio River.

Year	No. Tournaments	Effort, hours	Catfish per hour	Reported Number of Catfish				% of Reported Catfish			Reported Weight, lbs	Lunker Species	Lunker Weight, lbs
				All	CHC	FLC	BLC	CHC	FLC	BLC			
2008	40	14,526	0.07	1,032	348	684	0	34	66	0	3,988	.	.
2009	18	14,158	0.06	824	351	471	2	43	57	0	3,367	.	.
2010	31	16,448	0.05	818	274	524	20	33	64	2	*	.	.
2011	38	14,846	0.07	968	364	569	35	38	59	4	3,531	.	.
2012	57	16,540	0.06	1,036	357	644	35	34	62	3	7,469	.	.
2013	56	19,271	0.11	2,054	638	1,342	74	31	65	4	16,113	.	.
2014	43	16,071	0.09	1,519	524	949	46	34	62	3	13,334	.	.
2015	42	15,535	0.08	1,213	459	676	78	38	56	6	9,173	.	.
2016	38	13,064	0.08	1,022	335	639	48	33	63	5	8,370	.	.
2017	34	11,714	0.08	913	391	483	39	43	53	4	7,416	.	.
2018	48	11,136	0.09	991	367	555	69	37	56	7	8,446	.	.
2019	50	14,838	0.10	1,512	399	881	232	26	58	15	13,896	.	.
2020	30	10,693	0.08	827	204	427	296	25	52	36	10,879	.	.
2021	68	17,372	0.09	1,609	405	1,117	251	25	69	16	15,279	.	.
2022	58	14,423	0.08	1,127	321	593	213	28	53	19	8,611	Flathead	53.35*
Total	651	220,635	0.08	17,465	5,737	10,554	1,438	33	60	8	129,872	Flathead	53.35*

Table 6. Reported results for all West Virginia waterbodies where catfish tournaments were held in 2022.

Waterbody	No. Tournaments	Effort, hours	No. Catfish	Catfish per hour	No. per Species			Weight, lbs	Average Weight per Catfish, lbs	Average Weight per Tournament, lbs
					BLC	CHC	FLC			
New Cumberland Pool	7	1,536	30	0.02	7	6	17	.	.	.
Hannibal Pool	1	684	33	0.05	0	12	21	337	10.2	337
Willow Island Pool	14	2,893	154	0.05	19	49	86	1,600	10.4	114
Belleville Pool	1	288	43	0.15	2	21	20	315	7.3	315
Racine Pool	2	432	65	0.15	16	12	37	836	12.9	418
R.C. Byrd Pool	19	4,907	344	0.07	73	60	211	2,649	7.7	139
Greenup Pool	2	528	107	0.20	39	13	55	1,261	11.8	631
Ohio River	46	11,268	776	0.07	156	173	447	6,998	10.0	326
River wide	1	344	42	0.12	15	5	42	.	.	.
Winfield Pool	6	1,442	188	0.13	37	68	83	1,504	8.0	215
Kanawha River	7	1,786	230	0.13	52	73	125	1,504	8.0	215
Ridenhour Lake	3	825	48	0.06	2	46	0	108	2.3	36
Statewide	2	544	73	0.13	3	29	41	.	.	.
Total	58	14,423	1,127	0.08	213	321	613	8,611	8.8	276

MUSKELLUNGE, CRAPPIE, TROUT AND CARP TOURNAMENTS

Nineteen Muskellunge tournaments were reported in 2022 accounting for 3,208 angler hours from multiple waterbodies across the state. Anglers reported catching and releasing 42 Muskellunge during these tournaments with the longest being 46-inches. Three crappie tournaments were held in 2022 at Stonewall Jackson Lake with 102 crappie reported. Crappie angler effort was 810 hours, which resulted in a catch-rate of 0.13 fish caught per hour. The longest crappie reported was 14.62 inches and the heaviest reported weight was 1.31 pounds. Two trout tournaments were reported from Shavers Fork (Randolph County) and Laurel Lake (Mingo County) in 2022. These tournaments had a combined angler effort of 768 hours, reported 296 trout being caught, resulting in a catch-rate of 0.39 trout per hour. Five Common Carp with a combined weight of about 68 pounds were reported from for one carp tournament held on West Fork River. The reported lunker Common Carp weighed 18 pounds. Forty anglers participated in this single tournament reporting 640 effort hours. One statewide panfish tournament reported catching in combination 531 Bluegill, Black Crappie, White Crappie, Rock Bass, Yellow Perch and multiple other sunfish species. In this tournament, twenty-one anglers reported 84 effort hours for a catch-rate of 6.3 fish per hour.

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