

OKLAHOMA BASS TOURNAMENTS

2001 ANNUAL REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) used postage-paid *Tournament Report* cards for the eighth year to gather data on competitive bass fishing in Oklahoma. These cards were supplied to organizations that applied for tournament permits on lakes controlled by various agencies and cities throughout the state; or they were provided directly to clubs that fish on lakes that do not require permits.

We thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District Project Offices; Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, State Park Offices; the Grand River Dam Authority, Lake Patrol Office; and the many city offices that helped distribute *Tournament Report* cards in 2001.

We especially want to thank the many tournament organizations that voluntarily returned these cards following their events. Look for an on-line reporting system to be set up in 2002 that will allow Tournament Directors to submit reports via the Internet.

We want this report to be as useful to bass anglers and tournament directors as possible. If you have suggestions on how to make this report better, what to include or what to leave out, let us know and we will incorporate those ideas in future reports.

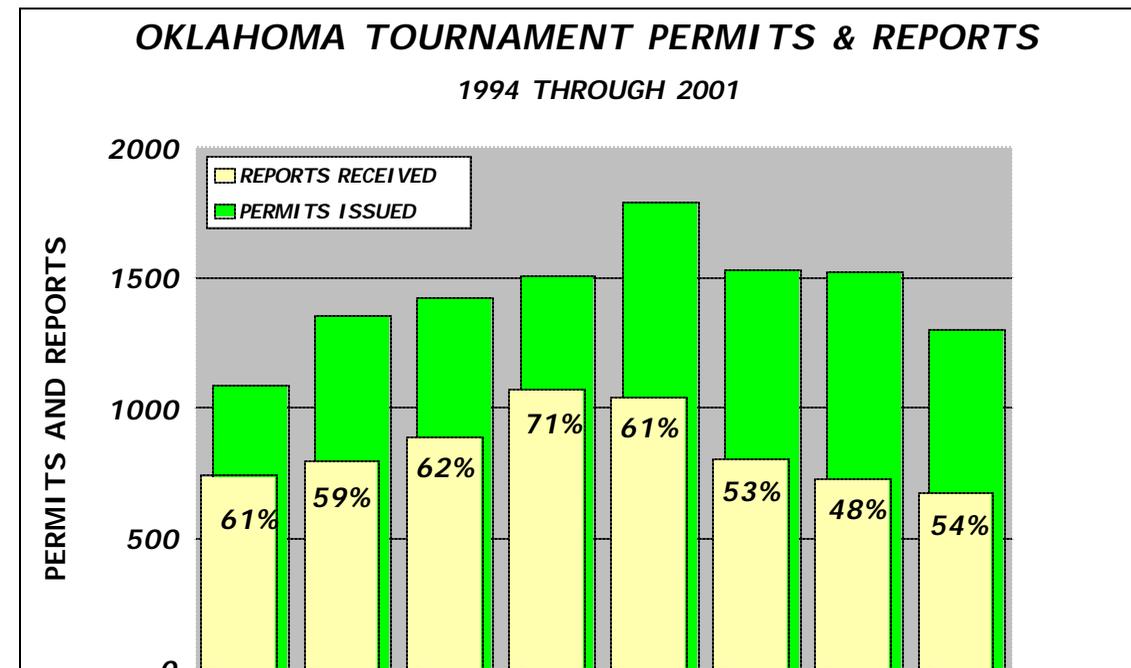
SUMMARY OF 2001 RESULTS

Controlling authorities permitted 1,297 bass tournaments on Oklahoma lakes in 2001. This does not include tournaments that did not know to get, or avoided getting permits, groups that got season-long permits, or events on lakes where permits were not required. We added 10% for non-permitted events and estimated there were 1,425 tournaments.

- The number of permits issued in 2001 was slightly lower (6%) than in 2000 (1,520) and 19% fewer than the record high set in 1998 (1,752).
- A slow economy, another hot summer and low lake levels in many parts of the state may have contributed to lower than normal tournament activity.
- Reports of poor fishing and continued media attention to the suspected impacts of LMBV may have also reduced tournament participation.

We received good information on some lakes, but others were very poorly represented.

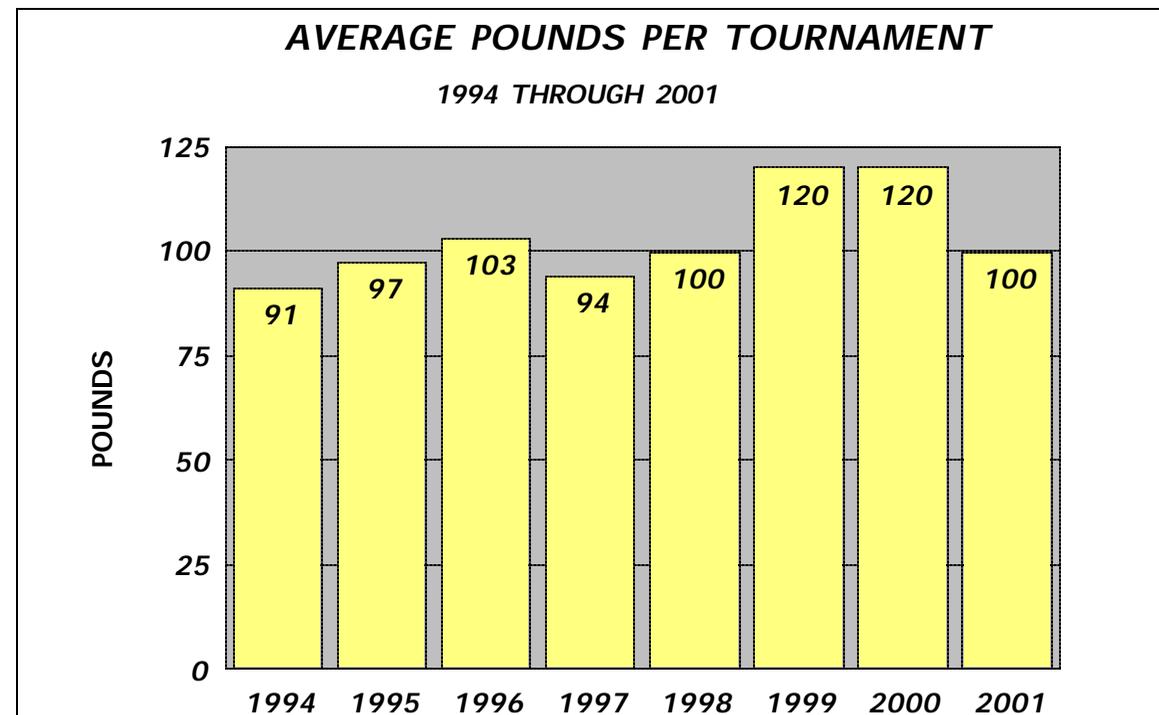
- We received 703 *Tournament Reports* from 47 lakes (see Table 1 on Page 5). This represents only 54% of the permitted tournaments. Reports were received from 113 clubs. This is down from as many as 1,000 reports sent in by 180+ organizations in years past.

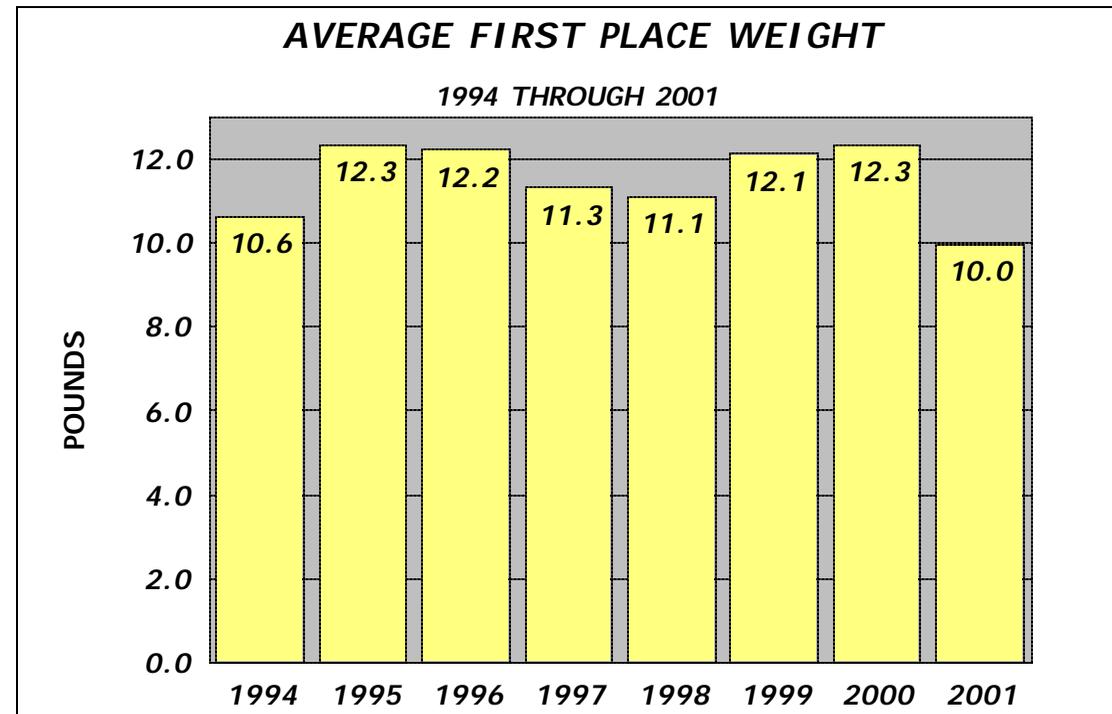


- There has been a consolidation among tournaments. Tournament permits are down 14% since 1998 but the number of contestants is down only 8%.
- Anglers are fishing more tournaments each year - but declining participation indicates that recruitment of new tournament anglers is not keeping pace with those dropping out.
- There were 37,751 entries in 2001, up 2% from last year. The average number of anglers per tournament has risen to the highest level in eight years (54 anglers per event). However, this was in over 200 fewer events.
- The average team tournament averaged 29 boats (2 more than last year). Draw-for-partner or singles events made up 19% of the contests and averaged 37 participants per event (vs. 40 in 2000).

The success rate (anglers/teams with at least one bass at weigh-in) was 57%, equal to last year.

- A total of 34,466 bass were brought to weigh-in totaling 68,976 pounds.
- Each tournament averaged 49 bass weighing 99.50 pounds compared to last year's 51 bass that weighed 119.95 pounds. Although this was a significant decline, the 2001 figure is similar to those seen from 1994 through 1998.

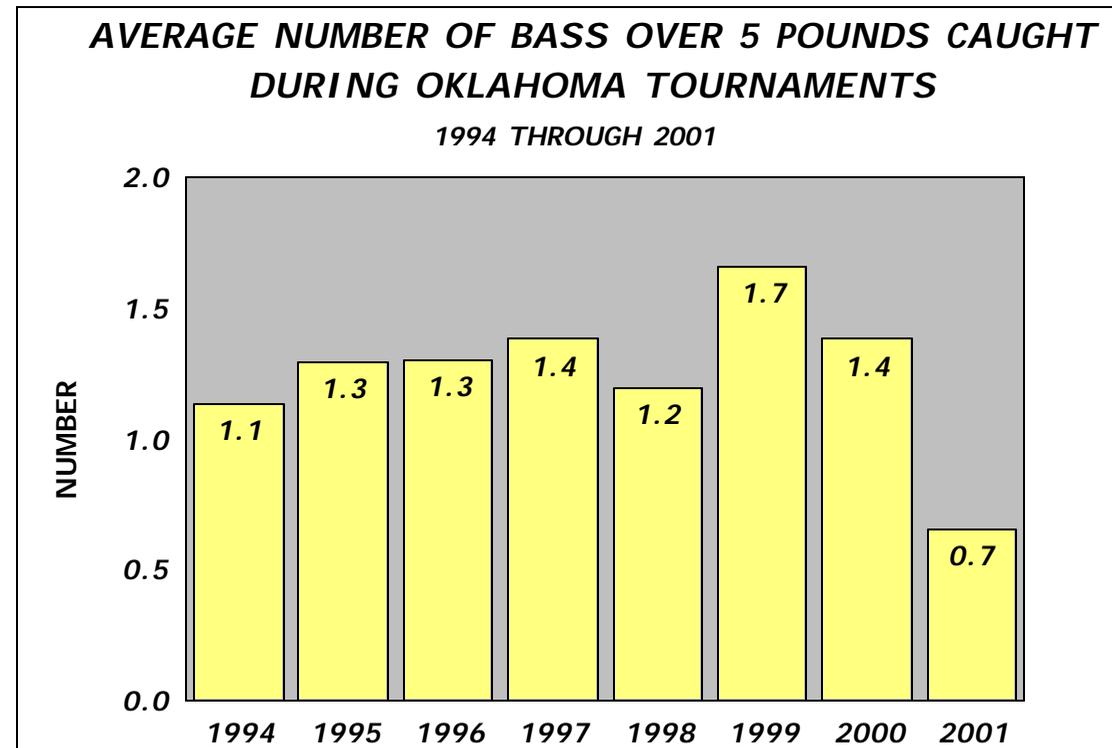




- The heaviest five-bass limit weighed 22.35 pounds from Arbuckle Lake during a Chisholm Trail Bass Club meet. The second heaviest winning weight, 21.21 pounds, was from Eufaula, followed in third by a 21.20 pound stringer from Lone Chimney.
- Limits of bass were weighed by 11% of all anglers or teams versus the long-term average of 14%.

2001 Top Tournament Lake...

- Sardis topped our list this year (Table 2). It jumped from 14th Place last year to the top in 2001, with high marks for Average Weight of bass, Winning Weight and the Hours required to catch a 5-pound or better bass.
- McGee Creek snagged 2nd Place on our list. Ranked 9th last year, McGee Creek topped all lakes in Percent Success and was 2nd in Numbers of Bass per Day.
- Annual contenders Hudson, Grand and Eucha took 3rd, 4th, and 5th Places.
- Keystone, Oologah, Greenleaf, Robert S. Kerr and Texoma round out the Top-10.
- Tenkiller which held a strong 10th Place in 2000 dropped to 19th due in large part to the sharp decline in the numbers of bass over 5 pounds that were caught this year.



CONCLUSIONS

Many anglers said that the bass fishing in 2001 was some of the worst they've ever seen. Weather, water level fluctuations and LMBV may have all played a role in the poor fishing. Tournament results confirmed that fishing was indeed down - but not out. Numbers of bass caught, average size of bass and average winning weights were down less than 20% from peak levels. Some of the 2001 averages were actually equal to or better than previous years.

Again, what was missing in 2001 were the larger bass. That meant fewer 20- pound stringers than we expect to see from our more productive lakes. Without these "headline" stringers, anglers assumed the entire fishery was down. But ODWC sampling shows otherwise. Electrofishing data indicates that while the numbers of larger bass may be lower, the "average" bass are still there. In most lakes, bass less than 16 inches in length are as abundant as they have been in many years.

Time and Mother Nature will bring Oklahoma bass fishing back to the levels anglers have grown accustomed to. Spring 2002 surveys will provide a clearer picture of the status of bass populations and the ODWC will do its best to keep anglers informed of our findings. Look for updates on the ODWC website www.wildlifedepartment.com

TABLE 1. STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF BASS TOURNAMENT RESULTS BY LAKE FOR 2001.

	REPORTS LAKE	ENTRIES RECEIVED	BASS CAUGHT	BASS PER DAY	PERCENT SUCCESS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	NUMBER > 5 lbs.	NUMBER > 8 lbs.	BIG BASS	AVG 1 ST PLACE
ARBUCKLE	39	1,769	1,432	1.81	56	1.57	28	1	9.00	9.27
ARDMORE	1	25	25	0.89	52	2.81	0	0	4.94	10.14
BIRCH	8	230	318	1.57	80	0.93	4	0	7.69	8.69
BLACKWELL	4	117	101	0.81	53	2.76	15	0	6.50	10.27
BROKEN BOW	8	250	651	2.10	58	1.63	5	0	6.14	14.82
CHICKASHA	16	75	618	0.94	54	1.39	4	0	7.07	10.62
CHIMNEY ROCK	3	124	94	0.62	64	3.71	7	0	7.36	11.16
CHOUTEAU	2	54	97	1.35	85	1.86	0	0	3.13	15.51
CLAREMORE	1	19	27	1.52	47	1.41	1	0	6.00	9.06
CLEAR CREEK	3	95	57	0.62	54	2.43	1	1	8.76	10.56
ELLSWORTH	1	36	43	0.94	78	2.10	2	0	7.04	7.04
EUCHA	8	313	572	2.26	79	1.73	9	0	7.13	11.57
EUFAULA	43	4,797	4,358	0.85	63	2.09	29	0	6.04	12.52
FT COBB	4	105	75	0.81	47	3.10	8	0	7.31	12.92
FT GIBSON	56	3,950	2,351	0.69	50	2.21	51	0	6.87	9.67
FOSS	2	33	76	1.41	76	2.63	2	0	7.14	17.98
FUQUA	5	176	159	0.77	58	2.07	0	0	4.80	8.11

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GRAND	51	5,341	7,253	1.03	72	2.30	79	0	7.10	14.53
GREENLEAF	21	612	379	1.25	46	2.40	6	0	6.35	10.27
GUTHRIE	19	221	109	1.29	34	1.95	1	0	7.83	4.23
HUDSON	19	1,405	1,134	0.77	62	2.50	31	1	8.80	14.60
HUGO	3	64	85	1.15	78	2.26	1	0	5.72	13.15
HUMPHREYS	1	18	7	0.37	44	3.18	1	0	6.04	15.13
KAW	3	54	23	0.48	52	2.64	0	0	4.31	9.82
KERR	13	592	703	1.17	67	2.17	4	0	5.43	11.62
KEYSTONE	27	1,450	1,274	1.06	62	2.48	18	0	8.74	11.63
KONAWA	27	999	1,069	2.71	61	0.89	0	0	3.94	4.20
LAWTONKA	4	286	207	0.65	54	2.66	6	1	8.09	11.07
LONE CHIMNEY	3	72	25	0.29	53	3.39	2	1	10.00	10.60
MURRAY	21	856	932	1.09	65	1.55	14	1	8.10	8.36
McGEE CREEK	12	492	1,217	2.25	85	1.33	10	0	7.70	12.12
McMURTRY	3	73	37	0.53	44	2.14	2	0	5.01	7.49
OKEMAH	2	22	11	1.56	43	2.56	0	0	4.10	7.56
OOLOGAH	22	570	352	1.23	56	2.58	9	0	7.81	7.88
PINE CREEK	4	306	397	1.34	79	1.50	7	0	6.65	14.08

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PONCA CITY	1	20	6	0.30	30	2.48	0	0	3.25	6.69
SARDIS	12	393	453	0.95	64	2.32	19	1	8.35	12.83
SKIATOOK	40	4,307	1,406	0.55	38	2.05	27	0	7.84	6.87
SOONER	6	169	111	0.70	56	2.07	4	0	7.00	8.17
SPAVINAW	2	72	56	0.62	71	2.29	1	0	5.76	10.17
SPIRO	1	12	13	1.08	67	2.00	0	0	4.36	13.30
TENKILLER	126	5,019	4,317	1.10	50	1.78	9	0	6.86	8.72
TEXOMA	13	427	547	1.01	76	2.08	2	0	5.72	13.35
THUNDERBIRD	8	474	129	0.79	46	2.82	11	0	7.47	7.54
WAURIKA	3	132	48	0.35	37	2.94	3	0	7.24	10.46
WEBBERS FALLS	13	444	402	0.80	59	2.31	4	0	7.63	10.82
WISTER	5	78	108	1.33	83	2.11	1	0	6.17	10.60
TOTALS	703	37,751	34,466				444	7		
AVG. PER TOURNAMENT		54	49	1.13	57	2.03	0.65	0.01	4.25	9.97

TABLE 2. THE TOP-20 TOURNAMENT LAKES IN OKLAHOMA BASED ON 2001 REPORTS

RANKED BY "FISHING QUALITY INDICATORS" FROM LAKES WITH TEN OR MORE TOURNAMENT REPORTS										
PERCENT SUCCESSFUL ANGLERS		AVERAGE WEIGHT PER BASS (lbs.)		AVERAGE NUMBER OF BASS CAUGHT PER 8-HOUR DAY		INDEX OF HOURS PER BASS OVER 5 lbs.		AVERAGE 1 ST PLACE WEIGHT (lbs.)		OVERALL RANK
McGEE CK	81	OOLOGAH	2.58	KONAWA	2.71	SARDIS	1.9	HUDSON	14.60	#1 SARDIS
TEXOMA	76	KEYSTONE	2.48	McGEE CK	2.11	OOLOGAH	2.3	GRAND	14.39	#2 McGEE CK
GRAND	72	HUDSON	2.46	ARBUCKLE	1.81	ARBUCKLE	2.8	SARDIS	13.37	#3 HUDSON
EUCHA	70	GREENLEAF	2.40	EUCHA	1.78	EUCHA	3.4	TEXOMA	13.35	#4 GRAND
KERR	67	SARDIS	2.36	GUTHRIE	1.29	GREENLEAF	4.1	EUFAULA	12.44	#5 EUCHA
MURRAY	65	WEBB FALLS	2.31	GREENLEAF	1.25	MURRAY	4.7	McGEE CK	11.87	#6 KEYSTONE
EUFAULA	63	GRAND	2.30	OOLOGAH	1.23	HUDSON	4.8	KEYSTONE	11.63	#7 OOLOGAH
HUDSON	63	FT. GIBSON	2.21	KERR	1.17	McGEE CK	5.1	KERR	11.62	#8 GREENLEAF
KEYSTONE	62	KERR	2.17	TENKILLER	1.10	FT. GIBSON	5.2	WEBB FALLS	10.82	#9 KERR
KONAWA	61	EUFAULA	2.09	MURRAY	1.09	KEYSTONE	5.8	CHICKASHA	10.62	#10 TEXOMA
SARDIS	61	TEXOMA	2.08	KEYSTONE	1.06	CHICKASHA	6.3	GREENLEAF	10.27	#11 ARBUCKLE
WEBB FALLS	59	SKIATOOK	2.05	GRAND	1.03	GUTHRIE	6.6	EUCHA	9.79	#12 EUFAULA
ARBUCKLE	56	EUCHA	1.97	TEXOMA	1.01	GRAND	6.8	FT. GIBSON	9.67	#13 MURRAY
OOLOGAH	56	GUTHRIE	1.95	CHICKASHA	0.94	SKIATOOK	7.9	ARBUCKLE	9.27	#14 WEBB FALLS
CHICKASHA	54	TENKILLER	1.78	SARDIS	0.93	WEBB FALLS	10.8	TENKILLER	8.64	#15 FT. GIBSON
TENKILLER	51	ARBUCKLE	1.57	EUFAULA	0.87	KERR	12.6	MURRAY	8.63	#16 CHICKASHA
FT. GIBSON	50	MURRAY	1.55	WEBB FALLS	0.80	EUFAULA	15.8	OOLOGAH	7.88	#17 GUTHRIE
GREENLEAF	46	McGEE CK	1.41	HUDSON	0.74	TEXOMA	27.0	SKIATOOK	6.87	#18 KONAWA
SKIATOOK	38	CHICKASHA	1.39	FT. GIBSON	0.69	TENKILLER	35.4	GUTHRIE	4.23	#19 TENKILLER
GUTHRIE	34	KONAWA	0.89	SKIATOOK	0.55	KONAWA	40.0	KONAWA	4.20	#20 SKIATOOK

TABLE 3. TROPHY BASS REPORTED IN 2001 TOURNAMENTS.

LAKE	ORGANIZATION	DATE	WEIGHT
Clear Creek	Jus' Bassin'	4/29/01	8.76 lbs.
Hudson	Strike King Bass Club	4/07/01	8.80 lbs.
Keystone	Cleveland Bassmasters	4/13/01	8.74 lbs.
Lawtonka	Jus' Bassin'	3/25/01	8.09 lbs.
Lone Chimney	Good Ole Boys Bassin'	3/25/01	10.00 lbs.
Murray	Bass Assassins	3/10/01	8.10 lbs.
Sardis	Big Muddy	4/08/01	8.35 lbs.

LMBV FACTS AND FIGURES

HISTORY of LARGEMOUTH BASS VIRUS

< **First discovered in Santee-Cooper Reservoir, South Carolina in 1995.**

< **To date it is now been found in the following States:**

Arkansas	Illinois	Missouri	Mississippi	South Carolina
Florida	Indiana	Louisiana	North Carolina	Tennessee
Georgia	Kentucky	Michigan	Oklahoma	Texas

< **Where did it come from?**

Unknown. It may have been brought into the US with tropical aquarium fish (guppies).

< **How is it spread?**

Unknown but possibilities are from angler/boater transfer (contaminated water, boats or transplanting infected fish/bait); shorebirds; fish stockings (ODWC hatcheries have tested negative for LMBV)

< **Other Species of Fish That Can Carry LMBV: (only LMB kills have been documented)**

Smallmouth Bass	Spotted Bass	Bluegill Sunfish	White & Black Crappie
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< **Symptoms of a typical LMBV fish kill:**

1. Fish die during summer, can last for 2-3 months
2. Mostly largemouth bass over 12 inches long are found
3. Dying fish at water surface as a result of affected swim bladder (over-inflated, reddened, or with yellowish mucous)
4. No external lesions, unless a concurrent disease is present

< **No treatment, No cure**

< **Oklahoma lakes with the presence of LMBV documented.**

Arbuckle	Ft. Gibson	Konawa	Skiatook	Thunderbird	Hudson	
Eucha	Grand	McGee Creek	Tenkiller	Eufaula	Sardis	Texoma

Broken Bow & Holdenville were negative. Additional lakes will only be tested if fish kills occur.

Changes in Percent of bass sampled that carried LMBV between 2000 and 2001...

2000

2001

2. Decreased catch of larger bass (over 4 to 5 pounds) - documented
3. Increased susceptibility to other diseases – unknown

< **Good news?**

1. Never more than one LMBV-related fish kill on a body of water suggesting immunity build-up.
2. This theory supported by decrease in percent occurrence of the virus in the population over time.
3. The disease affects adult bass and surveys show high abundance of smaller bass remain.
4. Trophy fish catch returns after a year or two low. Evidence supports the theory that fish behavior and feeding patterns change significantly during outbreaks but returns to normal over time.

< **Unknowns about the virus:**

1. How does it affect populations? (It is too early to tell for certain but long-term impacts appear to be minimal based on experiences of other states).
2. Are other species affected? (We know other species can carry it but only largemouth bass kills have been proven to be caused by LMBV).
3. Why does the virus kill some fish & not others? (A fish can have the virus without contracting the fatal disease).

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

< **Stocking largemouth bass is not the cure-all for poor fishing.**

1. Electrofishing samples shows an abundance of smaller fish still present.
2. Nature can produce more bass through natural spawning activity.
3. We have no source of large bass in sufficient numbers to make a difference.
4. Transferring fish from one lake to another could spread the virus. Logistically impractical.
5. It costs about \$7.00 per pound for adult LMB. The cost is high because it is difficult to train bass to eat pelleted food or provide enough forage. In addition as they grow they have to be divided into more ponds to help prevent cannibalism. Insufficient pond space and lack of funding are limiting factors. Hatchery fish would be naive to the virus, no built-in immunities like native fish.

< **How Does Tournaments Activity or Angling Affect LMBV?**

1. Only 7% of OK anglers fish in tournaments, accounting for less than 50% of the fishing pressure.
2. Limiting tournaments during summer months could help reduce stress. Night tournaments don't help and could be more stressful on the fish because water temps don't cool down enough at night (more comfortable for the anglers but tournaments often last longer). Longer time in the livewell = more stress on the fish. Night tournaments with multiple weigh-ins would be a better.
3. Reducing creel limits won't help because only 15% of tournament anglers catch limits and on average most only catch two to three fish per event.
4. Reducing creel limits for other anglers (non-tournament anglers) won't help because the majority of anglers don't harvest many bass anyway. Studies show that less than 10% of bass that are caught are harvested. Catch & Release has caught on among all anglers.

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS (COE), GRAND RIVER DAM AUTHORITY (GRDA),
OKLAHOMA STATE PARK and SELECTED MUNICIPAL LAKE AUTHORITIES**

ARBUCKLE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SUSIE STAPLES
PO BOX 201
SULPHUR, OK 73086
580-622-3163, EXT. 205

ARCADIA

EDMOND PARKS & RECREATION
MELISSA WASSON
PO BOX 192
ARCADIA, OK 73007-0192
405-359-4573

**ARKANSAS RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM - NEWT
GRAHAM, CHOUTEAU, WEBBERS FALLS,
ROBERT S. KERR, W. D. MAYO**

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
BOB BURNETT
RT 2 BOX 21
GORE, OK 74435-9404
918-489-5541

THREE-FORKS LANDING - ONLY

MUSKOGEE PORT AUTHORITY
LEWIS MCLEMORE
4901 HAROLD SCOGGINS DR.
MUSKOGEE, OK 74403

BIRCH AND SKIATOOK

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MARCUS WARE
HC 67 BOX 135
SKIATOOK, OK 74070-9107
918-396-3170

BROKEN BOW

HOCHATOWN STATE PARK
DONNA PARKER

CROWDER

SW OK STATE UNIVERSITY
CHAD KINDER
RT 1 BOX 186
COLONY, OK 73021
580-343-2443

**DUNCAN CITY LAKE, CLEAR CREEK, FUQUA,
HUMPHREYS**

DUNCAN PARKS & RECREATION
RUSTY SMITH
RT 2, BOX 294
MARLOW, OK 73055
580-255-9538

EUCHA, SPAVINAW

TULSA PARKS & RECREATION
BILL RAINWATER
RT 2 BOX 128
JAY, OK 74346
918-253-4344

**EUFAULA - COE RAMPS (NO PERMITS ISSUED
FOR HWY. 9 LANDING NORTH & SOUTH, PORUM
LANDING OR BROOKEN COVE)**

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LAURA BRYANT
RT 4 BOX 5500
STIGLER, OK 74462-9440
918-484-5135

**EUFAULA COVE - REQUIRES CITY THEN
COE PERMIT**

CITY OF EUFAULA
STAN KELLY
PO BOX 684
EUFAULA, OK 74432
918-689-2534

EUFAULA - FOUNTAINHEAD & ARROWHEAD

FORT GIBSON

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 SHERYL TOWNSEND
 RT 1 BOX 3900
 FORT GIBSON, OK 74434-9619
 918-682-4314

FOSS

FOSS STATE PARK
 PERRY MATZ
 HC-66 BOX 111
 FOSS, OK 73647-9622
 580-592-4433

GRAND, HUDSON, CHIMNEY ROCK

GRDA LAKE PATROL
 SUE COULSTON
 PO BOX 70
 LANGLEY, OK 74350
 918-782-9594

EAST SPILLWAY RAMP REQUIRES STATE PARK APPROVAL THEN GRDA PERMIT

CHEROKEE STATE PARK
 PO BOX 220
 DISNEY, OK 74340-0220
 918-435-8066

HONEY CREEK & BERNICE STATE PARKS REQUIRE STATE PARK APPROVAL THEN GRDA PERMIT

HONEY CREEK STATE PARK
 901 STATE PARK RD
 GROVE, OK 74344
 918-786-9447

GREENLEAF

GREENLEAF STATE PARK
 STEVE WILLIAMS
 RT 1 BOX 119
 BRAGGS, OK 74423-9743
 918-487-5196

HUGO**KEYSTONE****NEW MANNFORD RAMP**

CITY OF MANNFORD POLICE DEPT.
 PAT DENNIS
 PO BOX 327
 MANNFORD, OK 74044
 918-865-4141

KEYSTONE STATE PARK

KEYSTONE STATE PARK
 CHARLOTTE HEATON
 PO BOX 147
 MANNFORD, OK 74044-0147
 918-865-4477

ALL OTHER COE RAMPS

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 MIKE SHRICK
 2315 W WEKIWA RD
 SAND SPRINGS, OK 74063-9312

MURRAY

LAKE MURRAY STATE PARK
 CAROL JACKSON
 3310 S LAKE MURRAY DRIVE
 ARDMORE, OK 73402-1649
 580-223-4044

THUNDERBIRD

THUNDERBIRD STATE PARK
 DONNA HOLT
 13101 ALAMEDA DR
 NORMAN, OK 73026
 405-360-3572

LAWTONKA, ELLSWORTH

NO PERMITS REQUIRED
 CONTACT ODWC SW RGN OFFICE
 HC32 BOX 580
 LAWTON, OK 73501-9037
 580-529-2795

McGEE CREEK

OKEMAH

CITY OF OKEMAH
 GARY PETTIGREW
 RT 4 BOX 258A
 OKEMAH, OK 74859
 918-623-1539

OOLOGAH

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 PAUL SHOCKLEY
 PO BOX 700
 OOLOGAH, OK 74053-0700
 918-443-2250

PINE CREEK

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 CLIFF CITY
 RT 1 BOX 400
 VALLIANT, OK 74764-9615
 580-933-4239

SARDIS

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 TIM O'DANIEL
 HC 60 BOX 175
 CLAYTON, OK 74536
 918-569-4131

TENKILLER

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 DEAN ROBERTS
 RT 1 BOX 259
 GORE, OK 74435-9547
 918-487-5252

**TENKILLER CHEROKEE LANDING STATE
 PARK REQUIRES STATE PARK THEN COE
 PERMIT**

CHEROKEE LANDING STATE PARK
 LES STEELY
 HC 73 BOX 510
 PARK HILL, OK 74451-0510
 918-457-5716

TEXOMA

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 CHRIS LYNCH
 351 CORPS RD
 DENNISON, TX 75020-6425
 903-465-4990

**TEXOMA CATFISH BAY REQUIRES COE &
 STATE PARK PERMITS**

LAKE TEXOMA STATE PARK
 PAT RALEY
 PO BOX 279
 KINGSTON, OK 73439-0279
 580-564-2566

WAURIKA

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 DEE ANN HIMEBAUGH
 PO BOX 29
 WAURIKA, OK 73573-0029
 580-963-2111

WISTER

CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 TISH LIVESY
 RT 3 BOX 100
 WISTER, OK 74966
 918-655-7206