

# MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT PROGRAM 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



FISHERIES BUREAU



MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

1505 Eastover Drive  
Jackson, MS 39211  
[www.mdwfp.com](http://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: _____			

By mail: Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks  
 C/O Larry Pugh  
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## 2017 Bass Tournament Summary

Mississippi's bass tournament anglers had another good year in 2017 based on 250 tournament reports. Average statistics for all lakes in 2017 were similar to those in 2015 and 2016. The winning weight, and the pounds of bass weighed in per day were higher in 2017 compared to the previous 3 years. In 2017, average lunker weight was higher than the 2016 value, but lower than the 2015 value. **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. Eleven lakes were included in the lake rankings. Even though Ross Barnett Reservoir and Pickwick Lake did not rank as high as last year, both lakes still produced excellent bass fishing opportunities. Delta anglers have excellent bass fisheries at Lakes Washington and Ferguson. Lake Bogue Homa offers excellent bass fishing opportunities in MDWFP's state fishing lake program. The coastal rivers continued to provide the best numbers of bass per day in 2017. The following summarizes the most important points from this year's tournament report:

- 250 reports were submitted from 35 different lakes.
- In 2017, **Lake Washington** finished as the top lake in overall quality indicator rankings followed by **Lake Ferguson, Pickwick Lake,** and **Okatibbee Reservoir.**
- The largest bass weighed-in was 10.92 pounds from Pickwick Lake.

## Statewide Tournament Statistics

2.14 - Number of bass caught per angler - day

4.53 - Pounds of bass caught per angler - day

2.20 - Average weight of bass caught

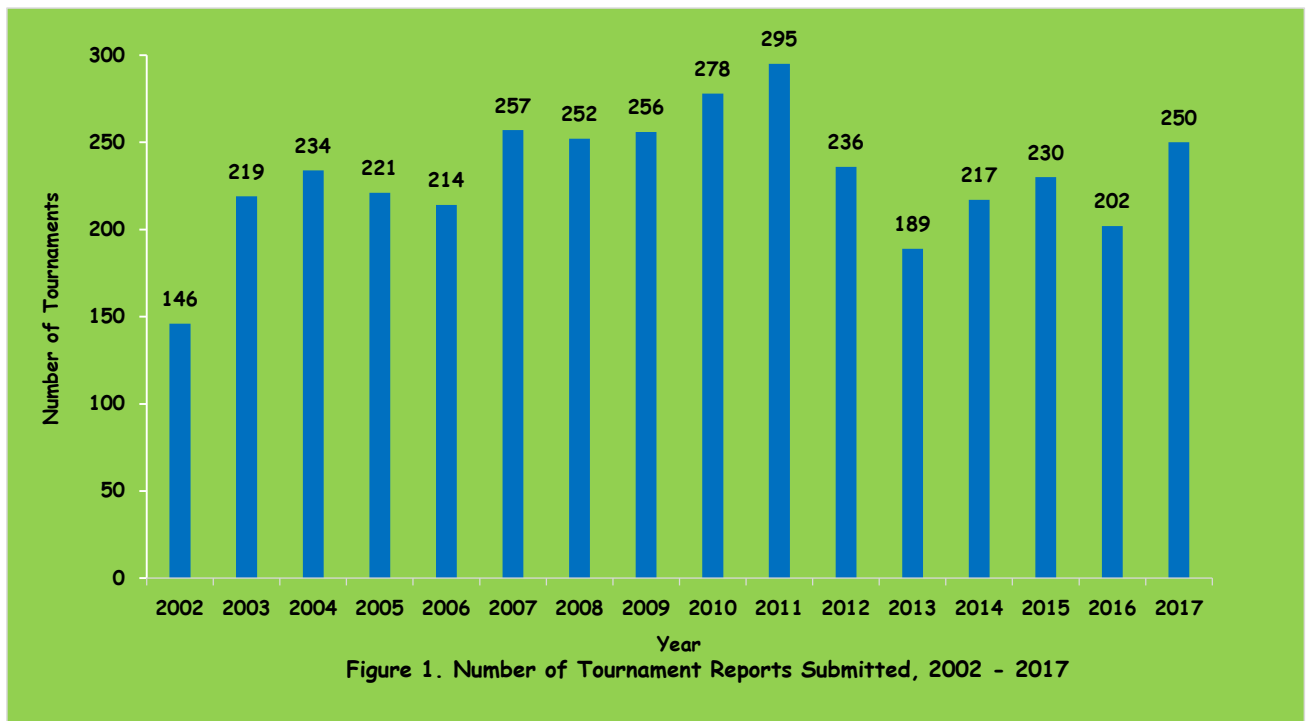
343 - Hours to catch a 5 pound bass

5.30 - Average lunker, or big bass weight

15.16 - Average 1<sup>st</sup> place weight

250 - Number of bass 5 pounds and larger

- Over 10,000 anglers fished in 250 tournaments and weighed-in 18,982 bass (Table 1). The number of tournament reports increased in 2017 from 2016 (Figure 1). The most reports came from Pickwick Lake.



- It took an average of 15.16 pounds to win a tournament in 2017 (Table 1). Of lakes with at least five tournaments reported Lake Ferguson, Lake Washington, and Pickwick Lake had the highest average winning weights.
- Average weight of bass ranged from 0.85 pounds at Lake Mike Connor to 3.29 pounds at Eagle Lake (Table 1). The statewide average weight was 2.20 pounds. Using average length of tournaments to define an angler day, the number of bass caught per angler day was highest on the Jourdan River and the pounds caught per angler day was highest at Lake Ferguson.
- The seasonal distribution of 2017 tournaments appears in Figure 2. March through July were the most popular months to conduct tournaments with at least 25 per month reported. Tournament reports were submitted from all 12 months.

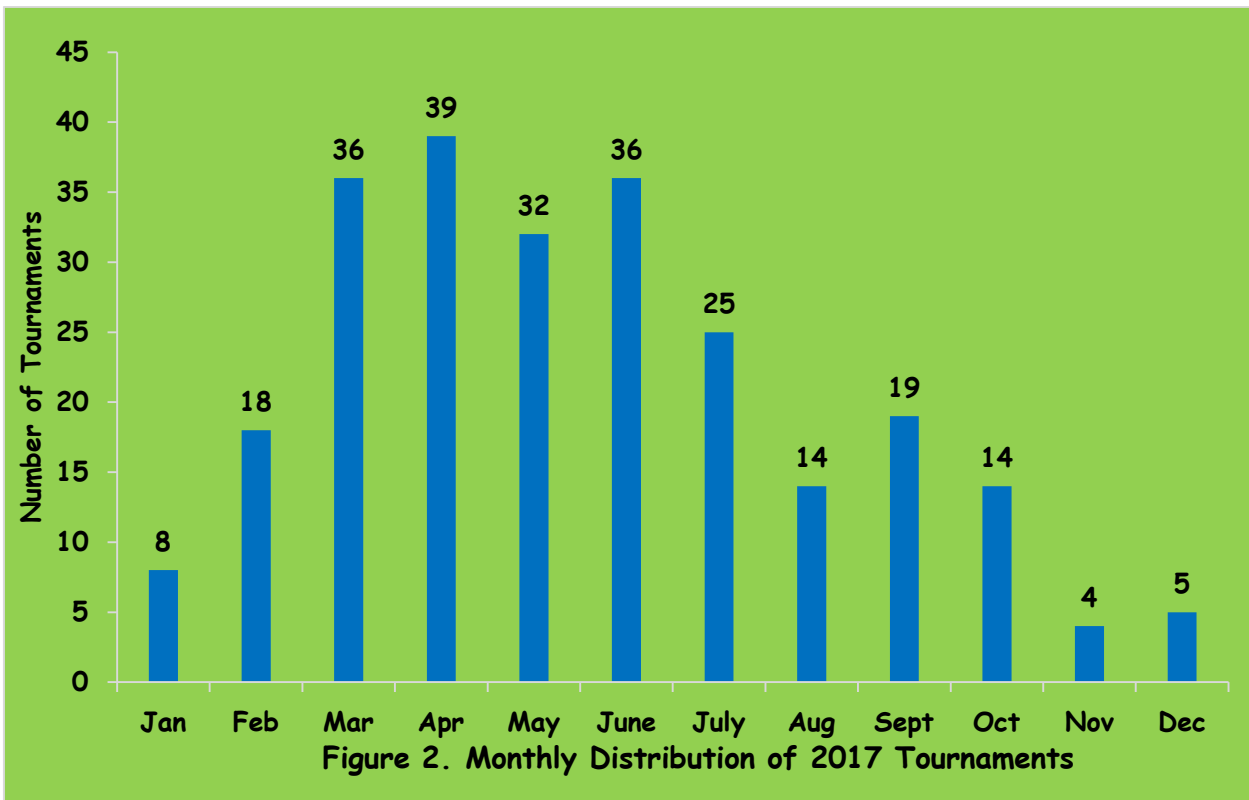
**Table 1. Summary of Bass Tournament results from the 2017 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program**

Waterbody	Report		Bass	Bass	Pounds	Percent	Average	No.	Big	Average
	Cards	Entries	Caught	Per Day	Per Day	Success	Weight	> 5 lbs.	Bass	1st Place
Aberdeen	3	56	94	1.73	3.17	11	1.82	0	3.78	11.30
Alliceville	2	100	197	2.16	3.63	42	1.72	1	4.81	11.55
Back Bay	4	63	118	3.29	4.68	37	1.51	2	4.23	11.82
Bay Springs	9	156	364	2.24	4.53	55	2.14	8	5.24	14.93
TTW	8	128	346	2.67	4.73	43	1.89	5	5.35	12.47
Bee Lake	3	57	180	3.34	5.62	63	1.74	0	3.70	13.20
Bill Waller	1	14	42	3.00	2.62	29	0.87	0	2.39	6.50
Biloxi River	1	15	45	3.00	4.94	47	1.65	2	7.16	14.62
Bogue Homa	16	585	452	0.90	2.68	14	2.90	16	5.96	16.30
Calling Panther	1	11	37	3.36	5.47	36	1.63	1	5.40	10.08
Chotard Lake	2	37	109	3.13	6.08	73	2.04	1	4.43	13.96
Columbus Pool	5	404	508	1.44	3.21	12	2.15	4	5.63	11.62
Eagle Lake	3	83	128	1.48	4.86	29	3.29	3	5.92	17.36
Enid Lake	2	69	80	1.21	2.78	17	2.33	1	4.85	14.59
Ferguson	8	420	932	2.29	6.09	71	2.74	6	5.09	20.74
Flint Creek	1	50	89	1.78	2.54	56	1.43	0	3.85	10.10
Gulfport Lake	1	8	20	2.50	2.82	13	1.13	0	3.04	6.89
Jourdan River	3	71	69	3.63	4.15	68	1.75	1	6.46	14.02
Lake Archusa	1	34	68	2.00	3.33	71	1.66	0	4.56	11.62
Lake Lincoln	1	30	53	1.77	5.13	33	2.90	1	8.30	20.17
Washington	7	305	628	2.07	5.88	59	2.83	10	6.55	20.66
Lit Blk Cr Cmpgrd Lk	5	105	34	1.55	1.74	50	1.19	0	2.50	7.16
Little Eagle	1	24	54	2.25	4.38	25	1.94	0	4.73	10.76

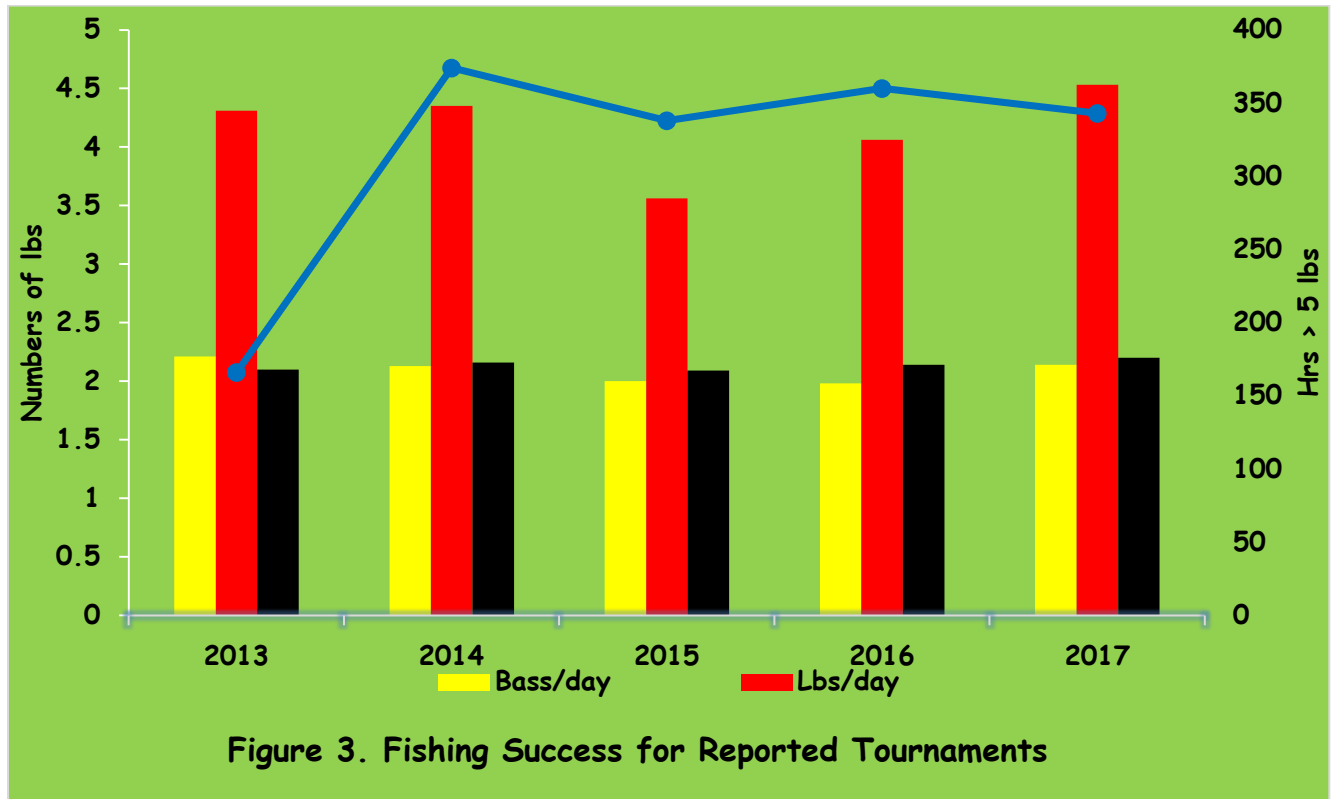
Table 1. continued

Waterbody	Report Cards	Entries	Bass Caught	Bass Per Day	Pounds Per Day	Percent Success	Average Weight	No. > 5 lbs.	Big Bass	Average 1st Place
Mike Conner	11	86	253	1.71	1.33		0.85	3	4.56	
Moon Lake	2	118	237	2.01	3.80	65	1.89	2	5.05	13.47
Okatibbee	5	302	635	2.41	4.37	64	1.85	10	6.86	16.48
Pascagoula River	26	378	879	3.30	4.88	49	1.51	2	3.60	11.17
Paul B. Johnson SP	12	295	337	1.13	1.47	21	1.30	2	3.21	8.04
Pearl River	7	238	446	2.87	4.51	57	1.65	1	4.07	12.40
Pickwick	51	2,616	5,318	2.15	5.99	39	2.80	83	6.80	19.12
Ross Barnett	42	3,030	5,868	2.03	4.92	35	2.40	82	6.10	16.50
Sardis	2	57	97	1.61	4.05	43	2.49	1	5.23	18.62
Tunica Lake	2	123	189	1.55	3.35	41	2.16	2	6.00	16.21
Turkey Fork	1	13	33	2.54	3.65	15	1.44	0	2.70	7.50
Wolf Lake	1	18	43	2.39	3.88	89	1.63	0	4.00	13.10
Totals	250	10,099	18,982					250		
Average				2.14	4.53	40.00	2.20	1	5.30	15.16

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



- Average weight of bass weighed-in (2.20 pounds) during 2017 was lower than in 2016 and higher than in 2015. Pounds per day (4.53) in 2017 was higher than 2015 and 2016 values. The hours to weigh-in a five pound bass decreased from 360 in 2016 to 343 in 2017 (Figure 3).



- In 2017, seven of the 10 heaviest 5-bass limits came from Pickwick Lake (Table 2). The largest sack was weighed-in at Ross Barnett Reservoir during a Media Bass event in March. Lake Bogue Homa and Lake Washington each had a stringer in the top ten. Four of the 10 big sacks were weighed-in during March.

**Table 2. The top 10 heaviest limits weighed-in 2017 MDWFP Bass Tournament Report**

Lake	Date	Tournament	1st Place Weight (lbs)
Ross Barnett	11-Mar	Media Bass MS	30.72
Pickwick	4-Mar	Fishers of Men	30.07
Pickwick	20-May	PWBT	29.35
Pickwick	28-Jan	PWBT	28.11
Pickwick	16-Dec	PWBT	26.52
Pickwick	11-Feb	PWBT	26.03
Pickwick	11-Mar	AL Bait	25.89
Bogue Homa	11-Jul	Bogue Homa Fruit Jar	24.53
Lk Washington	4-Mar	Media Bass MS	24.41
Pickwick	1-Jun	FLW	24.38

- The number of bass weighing at least five pounds increased from 205 in 2016 to 250 in 2017. Bass  $\geq$ 5 pounds represented 1% of the total number weighed-in during 2017. On average, it took 343 angler hours to weigh-in a bass equal to or over five pounds.
- In 2017 there were 45 lunkers that weighed at least seven pounds. Two lunkers weighed over 10 pounds (Table 3). The largest lunker was caught at Pickwick Lake on October 7 and weighed 10.92 pounds. The second largest lunker was caught on Pickwick Lake on March 11 and weighed 10.36 lbs. Pickwick accounted for 51% of the bass seven pounds or bigger. Another 22% were caught at Ross Barnett, and Lake Bogue Homa accounted for 7% of the big bass.
- Thirty-one clubs or tournament organizations submitted reports (Table 4). Twenty four clubs submitted five or more reports and 11 clubs submitted 10 or more. The average number of reports received per club or organization was eight.



Table 3. Summary of bass weighed-in that were seven pounds or larger from the 2017 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program Report

<u>Lunker</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>Tourney</u>
10.92	10/7/2017	Pickwick	Ram Fishing Tournaments MS
10.36	3/11/2017	Pickwick	AL Bait
9.65	1/28/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
9.56	4/1/2017	Pickwick	Ram Fishing Tournaments MS
9.39	4/15/2017	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
9.25	4/8/2017	Pickwick	AL Bait
9.12	3/11/2017	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
8.90	5/9/2017	Bogue Homa	Bogue Homa Fruit Jar
8.75	1/28/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
8.70	2/25/2017	Bogue Homa	Dixie Bass Open
8.30	6/24/2017	Lake Lincoln	Media Bass MS
8.23	2/18/2017	Ross Barnett	Weekend Warrior Bass
8.20	1/28/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
8.11	4/15/2017	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
7.98	4/22/2017	Pickwick	Bass Tactix
7.92	4/8/2017	Okatibbee	Collinsville Bass Club
7.87	1/14/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.02	6/13/2017	Bogue Homa	Bogue Homa Fruit Jar
7.84	2/11/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.82	3/11/2017	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
7.76	2/11/2017	Ross Barnett	Media Bass MS
7.66	11/4/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.61	2/11/2017	Eagle Lake	Media Bass MS
7.61	Feb. 2017	Lk Washington	Clinton Bass Club
7.60	12/2/2017	Okatibbee	Collinsville Bass Club
7.58	5/20/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.58	12/16/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.49	4/15/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.48	6/3/2017	Pickwick	Fishers of Men
7.46	4/15/2017	Bay Springs	Peanut Craft Lures Tournament Tr
7.45	1/14/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.41	2/11/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.28	4/13/2017	Paul B. Johnson SP	Paul B. Johnson Fruit Jar
7.23	5/20/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.20	4/15/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.16	5/18/2017	Biloxi River	Magnolia Bassmasters
7.15	Mar. 2017	Ross Barnett	Clinton Bass Club
7.13	4/27/2017	Ross Barnett	Bassmaster Elite Series
7.12	3/12/2017	Ross Barnett	Weekend Warrior Bass
7.11	3/25/2017	Pickwick	Fishers of Men
7.11	4/1/2017	Pickwick	Ram Fishing Tournaments MS

Table 3 continued

<u>Lunker</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>Tourney</u>
7.10	4/15/2017	Pickwick	PWBT
7.09	2/18/2017	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Weekend Warrior Bass
7.08	4/22/2017	Pickwick	Bass Tactix
7.03	3/4/2017	Lk Washington	Media Bass MS

Table 4. Organizations that submitted reports in the 2017 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program

<u>Club</u>	<u>Number of Tournaments</u>	<u>Number of Anglers</u>
Attala County Bass Club	6	141
AL Bait	5	296
Bass Tactix	3	367
Bassmaster	4	281
Big Cedar Bassmasters	2	20
Bogue Homa Fruit Jar	14	495
Clinton Bass Club	6	109
Collinsville Bass Club	5	368
Dixie Bass Open	1	53
Dockside Marine Tournament Tr	1	85
Fishers of Men	11	844
FLW	22	1810
Forrest County Bassmasters	7	78
Kings of the River	1	29
Lee County Bass Club	6	62
Lit Blk Cr Cmpgrd Lake Fruit Jar	5	105
Magnolia Bassmasters	10	137
Marsh Masters	7	194
MS Bass Assassins	8	102
Media Bass MS	17	1365
Monroe County Bassmasters	10	163
MRAA 2017	7	435
Paul B. Johnson Fruit Jar	12	295
Peanut Craft Lures Tournament Tr	8	460
PWBT	15	575
Ram Fishing Tournaments MS	22	624
River City Bass Anglers	6	138
Seminary Fishing Team	11	86
Singing River Bassmasters	11	85
Sumrall Bass Club	1	23
Weekend Warrior Bass	6	274

- Team tournaments were more popular than individual tournaments with 59% of the reports submitted from team events. These tournaments averaged 23 teams per tournament. Individual tournaments accounted for 41% of the reports and averaged 34 participants per event. Five-fish limits of bass were weighed-in by 37% of all anglers or teams during 2017.
- Lakes with at least five tournament reports were ranked by averaging seven "quality indicators" (Table 5). In 2017, the top five lakes in order were Lake Washington, Lake Ferguson, Pickwick Lake, Okatibbee Reservoir, and a tie between Bay Springs Lake and Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway Lakes (TTW). Lake Ferguson received high marks for winning weight, pounds of bass weighed-in per day, and highest percentage of anglers weighing in a 5-fish bag. Bay Springs received high marks for hours to catch a bass equal to or over five pounds. As in 2016, Bogue Homa received high marks for average weight of individual bass weighed-in. The highest rank for average lunker belonged to Okatibbee Lake. The Pascagoula River received high ranks for the number weighed-in per day.
- Tournament bag limits varied from three to five bass and 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 2017 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 <sup>st</sup> place weight (lbs.)		Percentage of anglers with a 5-fish bag		Overall Rank	
BH	2.90	PS	3.30	LF	6.09	BS	1.66	OK	6.86	LF	20.74	LF	71	1	LW
LW	2.83	PR	2.87	PK	5.99	TTW	2.18	PK	6.80	LW	20.66	OK	64	2	LF
PK	2.80	TTW	2.67	LW	5.88	OK	2.57	LW	6.55	PK	19.12	LW	59	3	PK
LF	2.74	OK	2.41	RB	4.92	LW	2.59	RB	6.10	RB	16.50	PR	57	4	OK
RB	2.40	LF	2.29	PS	4.88	PK	2.68	BH	5.96	OK	16.48	BS	55	5	BS
BS	2.14	BS	2.24	TTW	4.73	BH	3.11	TTW	5.35	BH	16.30	PR	49	5	TTW
TTW	1.89	PK	2.15	BS	4.53	RB	3.14	BS	5.24	BS	14.93	TTW	43	7	RB
OK	1.85	LW	2.07	PR	4.51	LF	5.95	LF	5.09	TTW	12.47	PK	39	8	BH
PR	1.65	RB	2.03	OK	4.37	PJ	12.54	PR	4.07	PR	12.40	RB	35	9	PS
PS	1.51	PJ	1.13	BH	2.68	PS	16.07	PS	3.60	PS	11.17	PH	21	9	PR
PJ	1.30	BH	0.90	PJ	1.47	PR	20.23	PJ	3.21	PJ	8.04	BH	14	11	PJ

**BS**=Bay Springs; **BH**=Bogue Homa; **LF**=Lake Ferguson; **LW**=Lake Washington; **OK**=Okatibbee  
**PS**=Pascagoula River; **PJ**=Paul B. Johnson SP; **PR**=Pearl River; **PK**=Pickwick; **RB**=Ross Barnett  
**TTW**=Waterway Locks