



# Bay Springs Lake 2018

## REEL FACTS

Trevor Knight – Fisheries Biologist

[trevork@mdwfp.state.ms.us](mailto:trevork@mdwfp.state.ms.us) (662) 840-5176

**General Information:** Covering approximately 6,700 acres and 8 miles in length, Bay Springs Lake is the northern most impoundment along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Bay Springs is connected to Pickwick Lake on the Tennessee River through the Divide Cut and Yellow Creek. As a result, water levels on Bay Springs are controlled by Tennessee Valley Authority's operations at Pickwick Dam.

**Location:** Within Tishomingo and Prentiss Counties approximately 26 miles East of Booneville on Hwy 4.

**Fishery Management:** Largemouth, Spotted, and Smallmouth Bass, crappie, bream, and catfish.

**Purchase a Fishing License:** <http://www.mdwfp.com/license/fishing-license.aspx>

### Amenities

- 7 public boat ramps
- Marina
- Campground
- Public Beach
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms
- Lock & Dam scenic overlook
- Interpretive center

### Regulations

- Black bass (largemouth, spotted, and smallmouth): 10 bass (combined) per day per angler.
- Crappie: 9 inch minimum length limit and 30 crappie per day per angler.
- Bream: 100 bream (combined) per day per angler.
- Catfish: No limit.
- Other creel limits can be found at <http://www.mdwfp.com>

### Fish Stockings

#### 2013

Florida Largemouth Bass  
(75,000)

#### 2011

Florida Largemouth Bass  
(75,000)

#### 2009

Florida Largemouth Bass  
(114,660)

#### 1999

Threadfin Shad  
(60,000)

#### 1996

Threadfin Shad  
(250,000)

Redear Sunfish  
(285,000)

#### 1995

Florida Largemouth Bass  
(54,300)

### Fishing Tips

#### Black Bass

- Target main lake and secondary points with C/T rigged plastics.
- In the spring, target timber areas in the back of coves with spinner baits.

#### Crappie

- Try standing timber near Jackson Camp.
- Fish Ashcraft Holler and McDougal Branch using road-runners or hair jigs.
- Target main lake points in the winter.

#### Bream

- Fish similar areas as crappie using redworms and crickets.

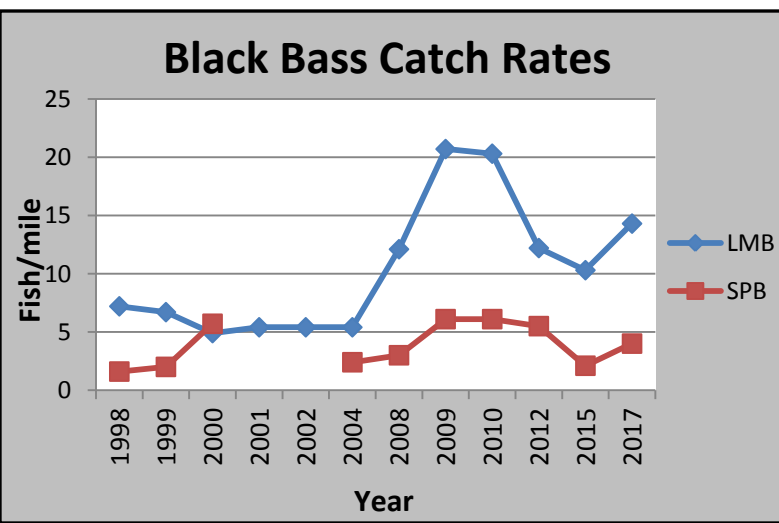
#### Catfish

- Target cats at night on the shallow flats with cutbait or liver.
- During the summer, fish the rip-rap on the north side of the lake near Crow's Neck.

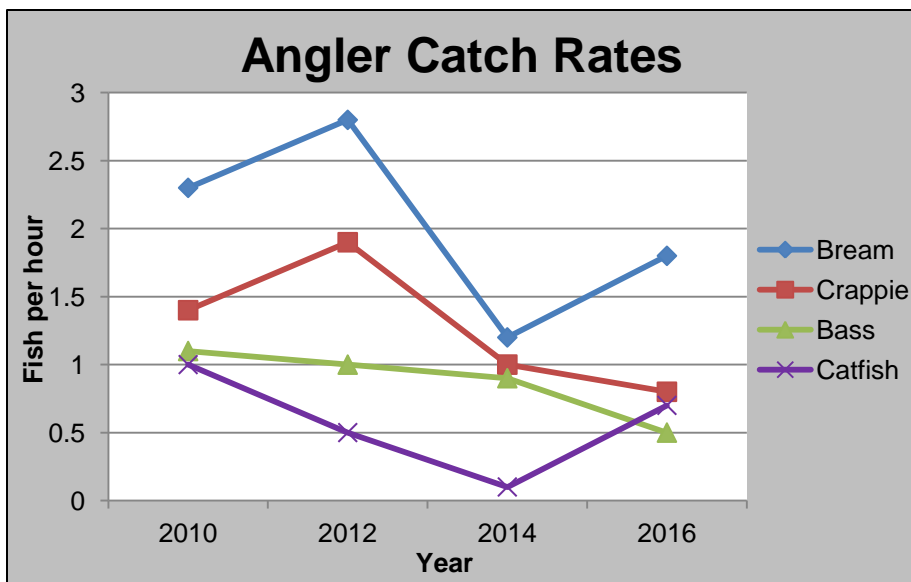
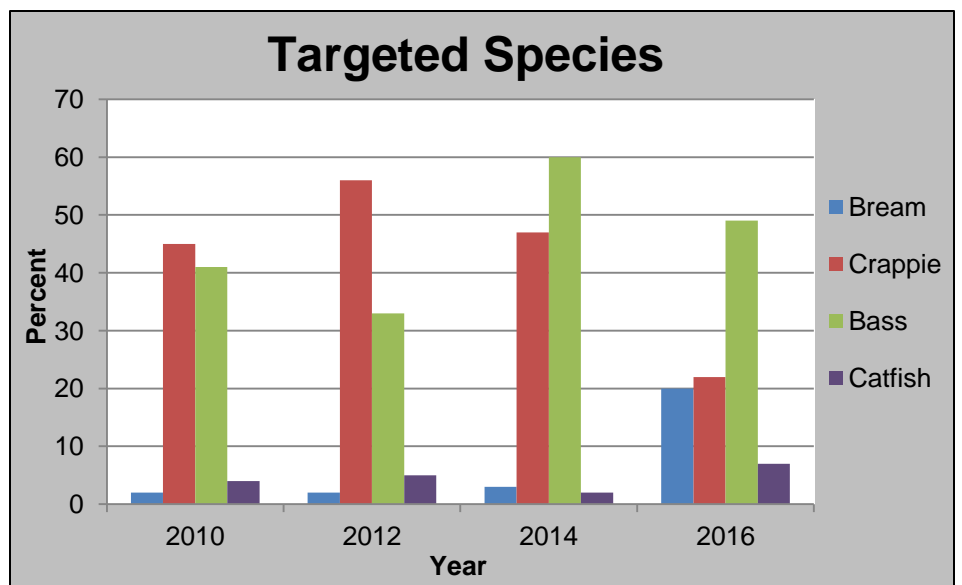
**Below:** Results from the 2017 fall electrofishing survey on Bay Springs. Boat electrofishing was completed along 9.3 miles of shoreline in November. Healthy bass (largemouth and spotted) populations were seen during the survey.

Species	# of Fish Sampled	% of Sample	Average Length (Inches)	Minimum Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Catch Rate Adult fish (fish/mile)
Largemouth Bass	168	29.4	12.0	2.8	23.1	14.3
Bluegill	107	18.7	5.7	1.6	7.9	11.2
Gizzard Shad	70	12.2	11.4	3.9	13.5	7.4
Redear Sunfish	62	10.8	7.6	3.2	9.8	6.7
Spotted Bass	45	7.9	10.7	2.6	19.5	4.0
Threadfin Shad	42	7.4	3.0	2.4	5.9	-
Yellow Perch	23	4.0	7.5	3.4	10.8	1.8
Longear Sunfish	15	2.6	4.3	3.5	5.3	1.6
Chain Pickerel	14	2.4	14.0	9.7	18.7	1.3
Warmouth	11	1.9	6.6	4.3	8.6	1.2
White Bass	3	0.5	14.8	13.7	16.2	0.3
Black Crappie	2	0.4	11.4	11.0	11.7	0.2
Channel Catfish	2	0.4	16.4	15.2	17.7	0.2
Golden Shiner	2	0.4	9.2	8.9	9.5	-
Spotted x Smallmouth Hybrid	2	0.4	9.2	7.3	11.0	-
Smallmouth Bass	1	0.2	9.3	9.3	9.3	0.1
Bowfin	1	0.2	29.0	29.0	29.0	-
Green Sunfish	1	0.2	6.9	6.9	6.9	0.1

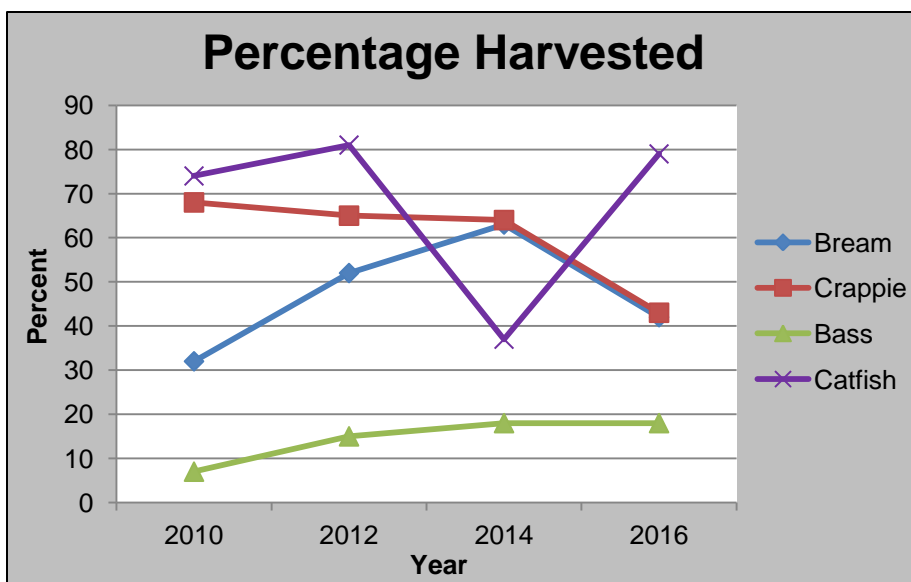
**Below:** Electrofishing catch rates (fish/mile) for Largemouth Bass (LMB) and Spotted Bass (SPB) since 1998. These statistics are for Largemouth Bass 8 inches and longer, and Spotted Bass 7 inches and longer. Electrofishing was conducted in the spring from 2009 through 2015, which would explain some of the sharp increase in catch rate during that time. A greater number of bass are in shallow water during the spring to spawn, making them more susceptible to electrofishing. Over the past 20 years, Spotted Bass numbers have remained relatively constant, while Largemouth Bass numbers have increased.



**Right:** Percentage of anglers targeting bream, crappie, black bass, and catfish at Bay Springs Lake. The percentages of anglers targeting each species have remained fairly consistent over the last few years; however, crappie anglers have decreased in total percentage while bass and bream anglers have increased.



**Left top:** Angler catch rates for bream, crappie, black bass, and catfish at Bay Springs based on spring creel surveys. Fishing was tough in 2014 as catch rates declined for each species. Catch rates for bass and crappie are similar to the historical averages. Catch rates have decreased for bass and crappie since 2012. It is possible that the increase in aquatic vegetation has spread fish out more, making it more difficult for anglers to find concentrations of fish.



**Left bottom:** The percentage of caught fish that are harvested by anglers at Bay Springs Lake during spring creel surveys. The percentage of bass harvested has increased over the past six years. The high percentages of harvested fish indicate that good size sport fish are available to anglers.

Have you been interviewed on Bay Springs in 2014?	%
Yes	21
No	79
How many years have you been fishing on the Tenn-Tom Waterway?	%
0-2	0
2-10	16
11-20	40
> 20	44
Since you started fishing the Tenn-Tom, do you believe the fishing has gotten:	
Better	16
Worse	52
No Difference	32
What action do you think is most needed to improve fishing on the Tenn-Tom?	%
Improve Habitat	23
Stricter Regulations	36
Less Regulations	0
Stocking	41



**Left:** Creel surveys provide a good opportunity to collect information and opinions from anglers. Seventy-nine percent of the anglers were interviewed only one time during spring 2016, which shows that many different anglers fish at Bay Springs. Eighty-four percent of the anglers who fish the Tenn-Tom Waterway have been fishing there for more than 10 years. The majority of anglers believe fishing has gotten worse on the Tenn-Tom since they started fishing it, and they believe stocking fish and stricter regulations would be the most beneficial management actions for the Waterway.

**Right:** Average length of crappie and black bass harvested by anglers at Bay Springs Lake during spring creel surveys. The average length of harvested crappie and bass has increased over the past four years. Although catch rates have decreased, it appears the size of fish caught has increased. Bay Springs Lake should definitely be considered by anglers looking to catch quality size crappie and bass.

