

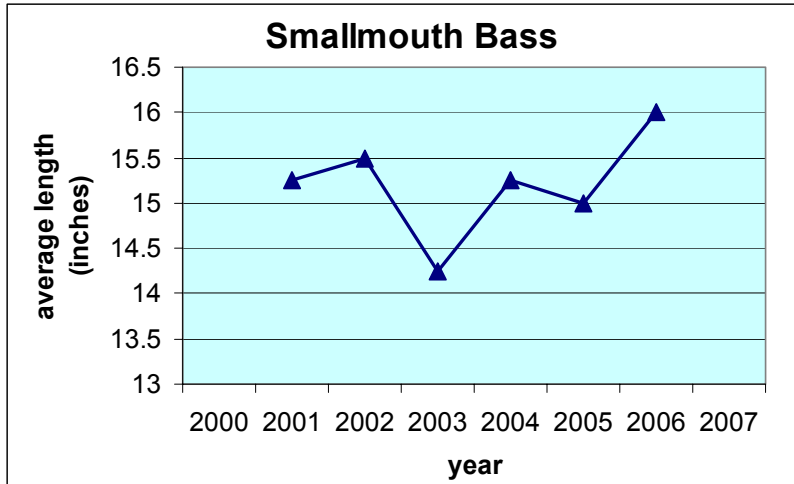


Smallmouth Bass Lake Mead

In 1999, the first 13 inch or longer smallmouth bass were documented in Lake Mead. These were weighed in during a Largemouth bass tournament. It is suspected that the SMB were brought in from another lake and planted in the Echo bay area. About two years ago one SMB was seined in the Virgin River at Halfway Wash. It was suspected that the fish was coming from Lake Mead, as there are no SMB in the Virgin River system. However Lake Powell does have SMB. Reports of SMB were taken prior to 1999, but none were large enough to be weighed in at a tournament.

In 2000, nine SMB were brought to the scales at LMB tournaments. These fish showed a significant increase in size to reach the minimum length of 13 inches. All of these SMB were caught in the Echo Bay area of Lake Mead. Many anglers reported catching a significant amount of smaller SMB in that same area. No other data was taken on these fish. Twenty four tournaments were monitored that year.

By 2001 six SMB were weighed in at LMB tournaments. The average weight of the smallmouth was 2.2 pounds and with a length of 15 inches. As in the past most of these fish were caught in the Echo Bay area. The exceptions were two fish that were caught in the Callville Bay area. These were probably fish that had been caught in an earlier LMB tournament. Because most fish from tournaments are released at the tires of the marina in Callville Bay. This year 27 of the 55 LMB tournaments were monitored for collection of data on SMB.

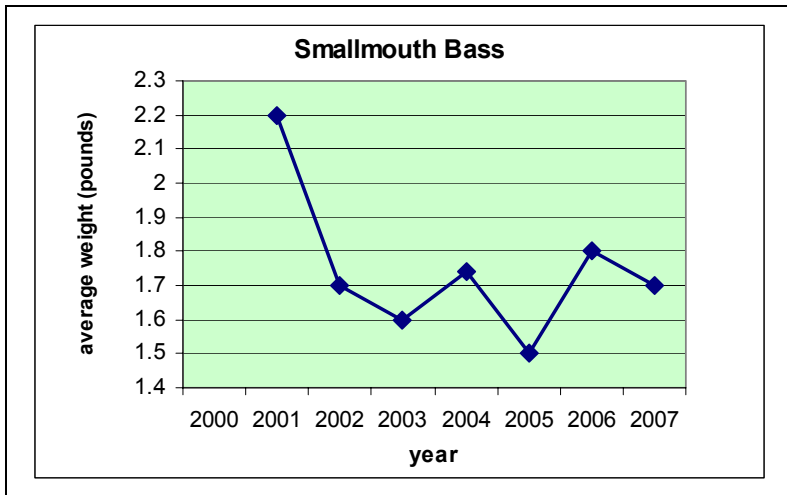


The entire year of 2002 there was a significant increase from the 6 SMB recorded in 2001 to 22 SMB, an increase of 27 percent. At this time it was noted that the SMB were coming from different parts of the lake. While a large portion was still coming from the Overton Arm, - Echo Bay area, some SMB were being caught south of Echo to Middle Point, the Virgin Basin and in the Boulder Basin. The average weight was 1.7 pounds, with an average length of 15.5 inches. There were 59 LMB tournaments held on Lake Mead with 32 monitored.

Another significant increase in population was noted in 2003. There were a total of 80 SMB caught and brought into the weigh in sites during LMB tournaments. That was an increase of 26 percent from 2002. The average weight of 1.5 pounds was slight decrease from 2002. The average length was 14.5 inches. This was the first year that SMB were noted in the Temple Bar area. While the majority of SMB were still caught in the Echo Bay area and south to Middle Point, a fair amount was being caught in the Boulder Basin. Once again all SMB were released in the Callville Bay area from tournaments.

Yet another large increase in SMB bass being brought to the scales of LMB tournaments was noted in 2004. This year NDOW started of tagging SMB with yellow or red floy tags. These tags are placed next to the dorsal fin. The tags have a phone

number and tag number for identification. A total of 208 SMB brought in and 161 were tagged. The average weight was 1.7 pounds with a length of 15.25 inches. Seventeen out of 43 tournaments were attended.



In 2005 a total of 353 SMB bass were caught with 326 being tagged. Again an increase of 58 percent of more fish caught than from 2004. The largest fish caught was 3.76 pounds, with an average weight of 1.5 pounds and length of 15 inches. There was a decrease in the number of tournaments held on Lake Mead from 43 to 39 and the SMB population was still on the increase.

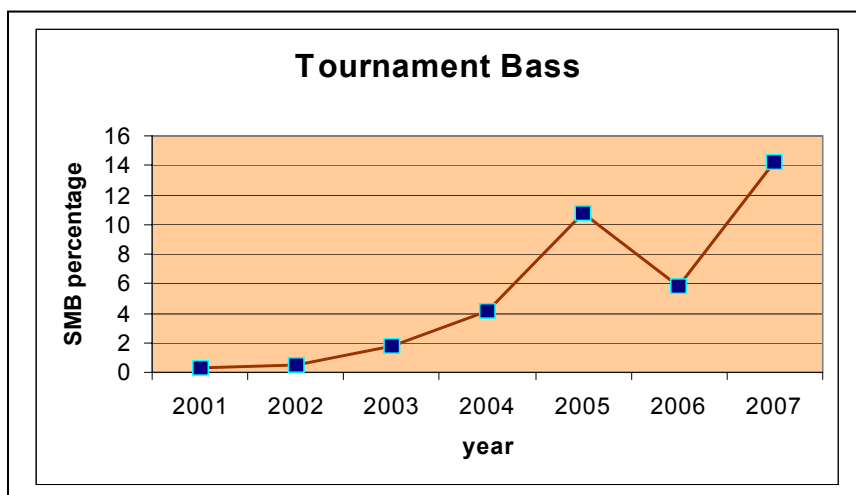
In 2006 only 39 SMB were tagged. This was due to the delay at the scales of the tournaments. This is a time consuming process and with so many SMB being caught, it is difficult to keep up. A total of 289 SMB were caught and weighed, and a location of capture was taken, but these fish were not tagged. The largest SMB to be weighed was 4.4 pounds. The average weight was 1.8 and length of 16 inches. There were 44 tournaments on Lake Mead. This was a decrease in the number of SMB caught by 22 percent.

To date in 2007 from (Jan – Jun) there have been 11 tournaments held on Lake Mead, and 347 SMB have been weighed in at those tournaments. This is a significant increase from previous years. There have been no SMB tagged this year. The average weight is 1.7 pounds. We will continue to monitor by count-the SMB that come into the tournament weigh-ins. Only those that are tagged will be weighed and measured and a location will be taken. Weights will no longer be taken on SMB at the tournaments.

There has been a steady increase in the SMB population over the last seven years.

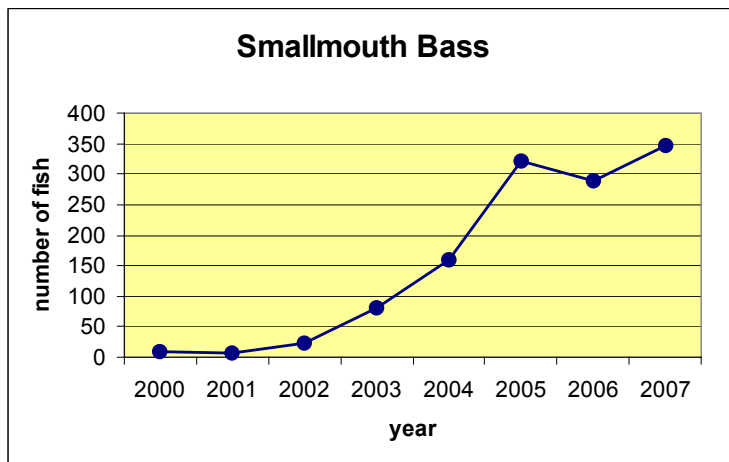
- An average 10 percent of all bass weighted in during 2005 tournaments were SMB.
- In 2006, that average was 5.8 percent.
- To date the average of SMB weighed in at tournaments in 2007 has been 12.6 percent.
- In the past years the average for 2001 was 0.3 percent and 0.4 percent in 2002.
- The average in 2003 was 1.6 percent and 4.1 percent in 2004.

Only LMB tournaments that are in the lower basin of Lake Mead are checked and monitored. Tournaments that are held in Echo Bay, Overton or Temple Bar are smaller and are not attended by any Nevada Department of Wildlife employee.



In 2004 a return of 29 tags out of 161, with an 18 percent of recapture rate. Five of those were recaptured more than once. Again in 2005 326 were tagged with 91 recaptured and total of 27 percent. Out of those 10 were recaptured more than once. In 2006 with only 39 SMB tagged, seven were recaptured with one recaptured more than once a total of 17.9 percent. These are only the returns on SMB from tournaments. A great deal also relies on the public to call in a tag number if caught, with area of capture and if released or harvested.

All data compiled on SMB came from LMB tournaments. The tag data has been both anglers at tournament weigh-ins and phone in angler data.



It is uncertain how SMB got into Lake Mead, they are doing well and offering another bass for the anglers to catch. They also seem to adapting to the lower lake levels.

SMB vs LMB

