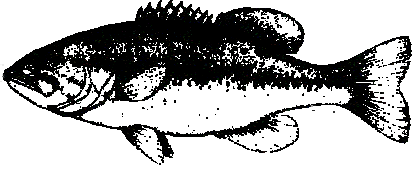




## PRESS RELEASE



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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**June 15, 2009**

#### **The Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey tops 10,000 entries**

In May, the Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey continued its run as the most successful program of its kind. Since the survey began in March 2003, anglers have reported catching more than 10,000 trophy largemouth bass from the 27,000 acre reservoir. During its nearly 30 year history, anglers have braved the stumpy waters of Lake Fork in search of the fish of a lifetime- and many have been rewarded! The latest milestone for the Trophy Bass Survey confirms Lake Fork's legacy as one of the finest trophy largemouth bass fisheries in the world.

The Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey, a voluntary program in which anglers report their catches of trophy largemouth bass on Lake Fork, has been collecting valuable information for TPWD fisheries managers for more than six years. This survey, which is a cooperative project of the Lake Fork Chamber of Commerce, the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association and TPWD, provides invaluable details on Lake Fork's world-renowned trophy bass fishery; information which cannot be obtained through standard fisheries surveys.

The Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey gives anglers an opportunity to record their catches of fish 7 pounds and greater. Anglers are asked to provide information at participating marinas on weights and lengths of these trophy fish. Each month, TPWD personnel collect the survey ledgers and produce a summary of the results. Not only does the survey generate good publicity for the lake, but it also allows fisheries managers and stakeholders a chance to cooperate in a successful project.

During its history, the Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey has recorded 10,127 fish over 7 pounds. Fisheries managers have estimated through their angler creel surveys that through May 2009, 8.1% of trophy fish reportedly caught by interviewed anglers were reported to the Trophy Bass Survey. If the numbers are expanded, that would indicate a catch of in excess of 125,025 fish total over 7 pounds since March 2003! That's a monthly average of 1,667 trophies.

Since March 2003, 8,423 of the Trophy Bass Survey entries (83%) were weighed, and 1,316 of them (15.6%) were 10 pounds or heavier. Fifty six of the weighed fish were 13 pounds or better, with

many of these fish being eligible for entry in TPWD's Sharelunker program. Anglers measured lengths on 5,985 of their entries (59%) and of these fish, 33.3% were 24 inches or longer. This summary information provides compelling evidence that the slot length-limit is working on Lake Fork since considerable numbers of fish are growing past the upper limit of the slot and not dying of old age or the effects of catch-and-release before they get to 24 inches.

The survey also confirms that the fishery at Lake Fork remains the most popular destination for anglers seeking trophy bass in Texas. Entrants from 47 states, the District of Columbia, and many foreign nations were represented in the Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey. As expected, residents of the home state participated in the survey at the highest rate. An estimated 62.6% of trophies were reported by Texans. Neighboring anglers from Oklahoma (6.7%), Missouri (6.0%), Louisiana (5.0%), and Arkansas (3.8%) accounted for a combined 84.1% of entries. Anglers from Illinois, Tennessee, Indiana, Mississippi, Kansas and Kentucky combined, accounted for an additional 8.4%. Despite higher gasoline prices and an economic recession, anglers are still willing to make the trip to Lake Fork.

For questions, comments and additional information concerning the Lake Fork Trophy Bass Survey, please contact TPWD Inland fisheries management personnel in Tyler at (903) 593-5077.



**CAPTION**

Monte Brown hoists a trophy bass caught in the chilly waters of Lake Fork in February 2009.

**PHOTO CREDIT**

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