



**2023 Louisiana Annual Tournament Report Information  
Project  
(LATRIP)**

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The Louisiana Annual Tournament Report Information Project (LATRIP) is a voluntary project administered by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Developed in 2021, the project supports the goals and objectives of the LDWF Black Bass Management Plan by promoting public awareness for the bass fishery resources of the State and establishing effective lines of communication between LDWF and the public.

Specific goals for LATRIP include: (1) gathering information that is of interest to LDWF and to bass anglers, (2) building relationships and fostering open lines of communication with bass fishing organizations, (3) providing an efficient and low-cost method to generate data that can be used to track trends in bass angling success rates over time, and (4) promoting Louisiana’s quality fisheries.

Data collection and reporting for this project was modeled after similar successful programs from the neighboring states of Arkansas and Mississippi.

## Overview

A total of 44 tournament trails and/or organizations participated during the 2023 calendar year. Participating organizations either emailed their weigh-in data to LDWF or gave LDWF permission to gather the data from publicly available sources such as websites or social media postings. Data were submitted from 271 tournaments representing 42 waterbodies.

Only tournaments that were roughly 8 hours long with 5-fish limits were included. Some data were available for both 3-fish limit tournaments and shorter night tournaments, but the overall datasets for both were too limited for inclusion in this report.

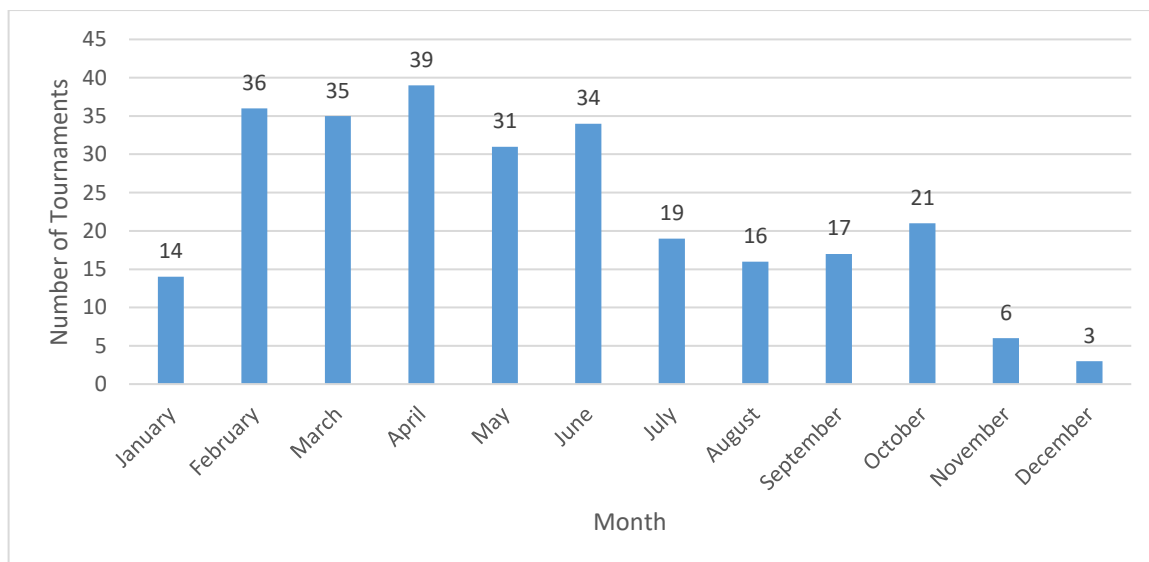


Figure 1. Monthly distribution of LATRIP tournaments during the 2023 tournament season.

Table 1. Number of LATRIP tournaments during the 2023 tournament season by waterbody. If multiple waterbodies are listed, the total applies to each waterbody.

<b>Waterbodies</b>	<b># of Tournaments</b>
Toledo Bend	31
Lake Claiborne	23
Pearl River	22
Lake Verret/Lake Palourde/Atchafalaya Basin Complex	18
Caddo Lake	12
Lake Bistineau & Caney Lake (Caney Creek Reservoir) & Lake D'Arbonne & Black Bayou Lake (Hosston)	11
Maurepas Complex	10
Delacroix Marsh	9
Cross Lake	8
Bienvenue Central Wetlands & Black Lake (Campti) & Lake Des Allemands	6
Bayou Black Marsh (Amelia) & Calcasieu River & Cane River & Henderson Lake & Ouachita River & Lake Providence & Red River	5
Bonne Idee & Lake St. John	4
Bayou Segnette & Lake Concordia & John K. Kelly Reservoir (Grand Bayou) & Venice Marsh	3
Bayou Bartholomew & Lake Bruin & Cypress/Black Bayou Reservoirs & Mill Creek Reservoir & Sabine River & Turkey Creek & Woolen Lake	2
Baker's Cutoff & Black River Lake/Cocodrie Lake & Crocket Point & False River & Lake Poverty Point & Tchefuncte River & Yucatan Lake	1

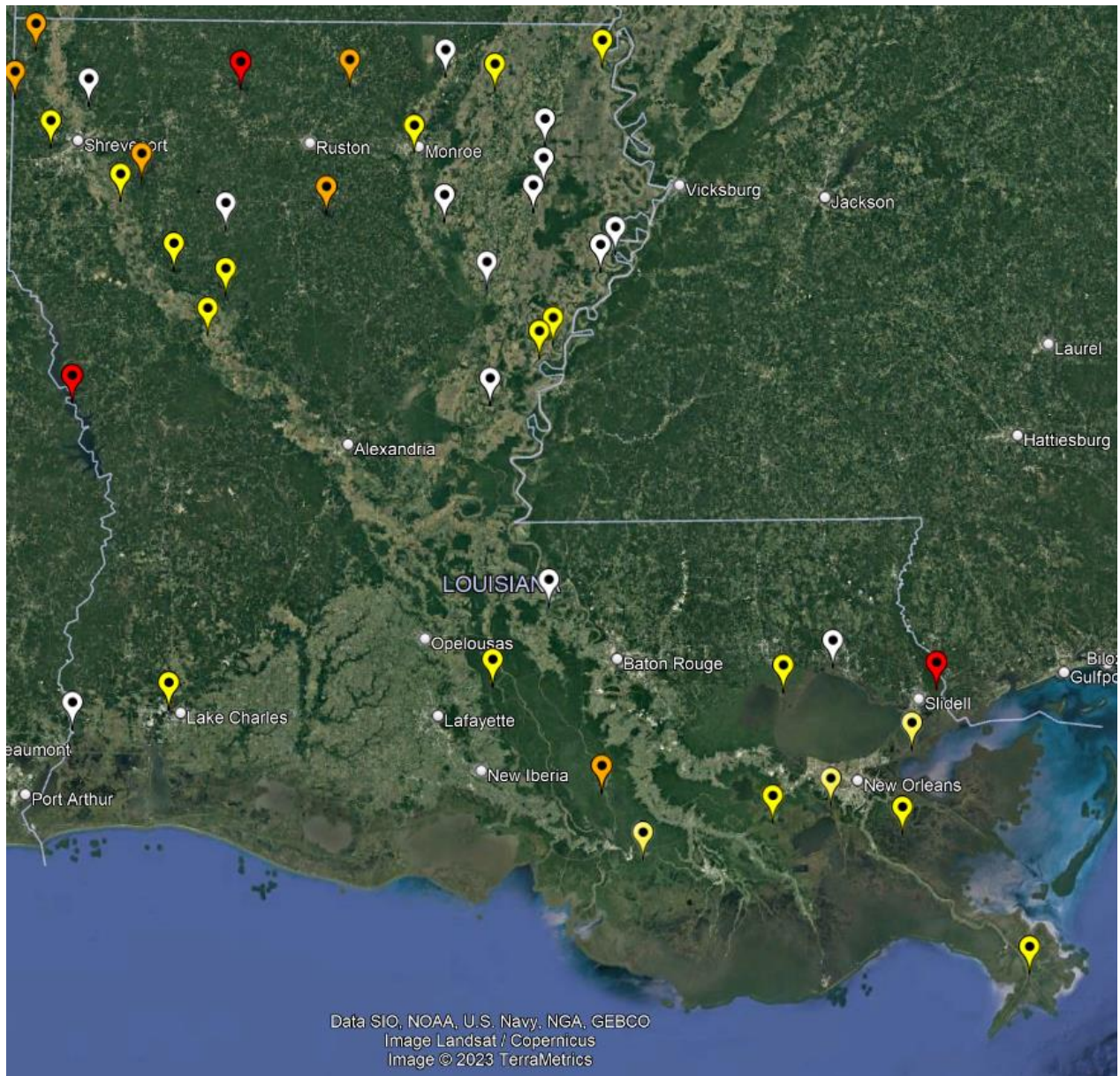


Figure 2. Distribution of 2023 LATRIP tournaments throughout Louisiana. The white markers indicate 1-2 tournaments reported, yellow markers 3-10 tournaments reported, orange markers 11-20 tournaments reported, and the red markers indicate greater than 20 tournaments were reported.

## Data Analysis and Methods

Data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for each tournament organization and grouped by waterbody. Fourteen individual metrics were calculated from the available data for each waterbody.

1. Average Number of Bass Weighed In per Boat
2. Average Weight per Bass Weighed In
3. Average Bag Weight per Boat
4. Percentage of Boats Weighing in at Least One Fish
5. Percentage of Boats with a 5 Bass Limit
6. Average Weight of Winning Big Bass
7. Average 1<sup>st</sup> Place Weight (Winning Weight)
8. Number of Angler Hours to catch a 5+ Pound Bass
9. Average 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Weight (i.e. "In the Money")
10. Average 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Big Bass Weight
11. Percentage of Boats with 10+ Pound Bags
12. Percentage of Boats with 15+ Pound Bags
13. Percentage of Boats with 20+ Pound Bags
14. Percentage of Boats with 25+ Pound Bags

In order to be considered for comparisons (Figures 3-15), waterbodies had to have a minimum of 3 tournaments to reduce biases from limited datasets. Twenty-eight waterbodies were eligible for comparisons.

Because many of south Louisiana waterways are interconnected, many tournaments are not held on traditional, closed systems. Therefore, results from tournaments in these locations were lumped together where it was logical to provide sufficient data for waterbody comparisons. Tournament locations were combined from multiple launches within the same basins and in some locations for various reasons such as where competitors are typically limited by organizers from crossing a large body of water.

In addition to comparing the individual metrics listed above, waterbodies were ranked in different categories (see "Category Rankings" section below) by combining applicable individual metrics. For overall rankings by category, each waterbody was assigned points based upon its rank for each individual metric. Therefore, the first place waterbody for each individual metric received 28 points, the second place waterbody received 27 points and so on. Points were added up for all applicable statistics and the waterbodies ranked based upon total points.

Several lakes had special regulations in place that affect the number and size of fish that can be brought to the scales. Such regulations influence all individual metrics used in this report except the estimated number of hours to catch a bass greater than 5 pounds. Waterbodies included in LATRIP with special

regulations are Grand Bayou Reservoir (14"-17" slot), Caddo Lake (14"-18" slot), Toledo Bend (14" minimum length), and Sabine River (12" minimum length).

All tournaments were converted to a standardized 8 hours before calculating angling hours. Although most lasted 7-9 hours, official start and end times were not available for all tournaments.

## **RESULTS**

### **Total Tournament Statistics**

- LATRIP tournaments averaged 27.72 boats per tournament, including championship tournaments with reduced fields.
- Approximately 75% of anglers were successful at weighing in at least one bass.
- Tournament anglers brought an average of 2.76 bass to the scales per boat, per tournament.
- The average individual weight was 2.17 pounds for all bass coming to the scales.
- The average bag weight per boat was 6.23 pounds.
- The average winning Big Bass per tournament was 5.16 pounds.
- On average, it took a bag weight of 14.52 pounds to win a tournament.
- Third Place bag weights were tracked throughout the year in an attempt to estimate what it would take to "be in the money." Average 3<sup>rd</sup> Place bag weight for all tournaments was 11.06 pounds.
- Only 0.1% of boats weighed in more than 20 pounds of bass.
- It took 270.18 angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass.

## Individual Metric Rankings

### Average Number of Bass Weighed In per Boat

The Delacroix marsh ranked the highest for the average number of bass weighed in per boat, with 4.23 fish per boat. Grand Bayou, Toledo Bend, and Caddo Lake ranked lower, and likely were influenced by slot limits and minimum length limits.

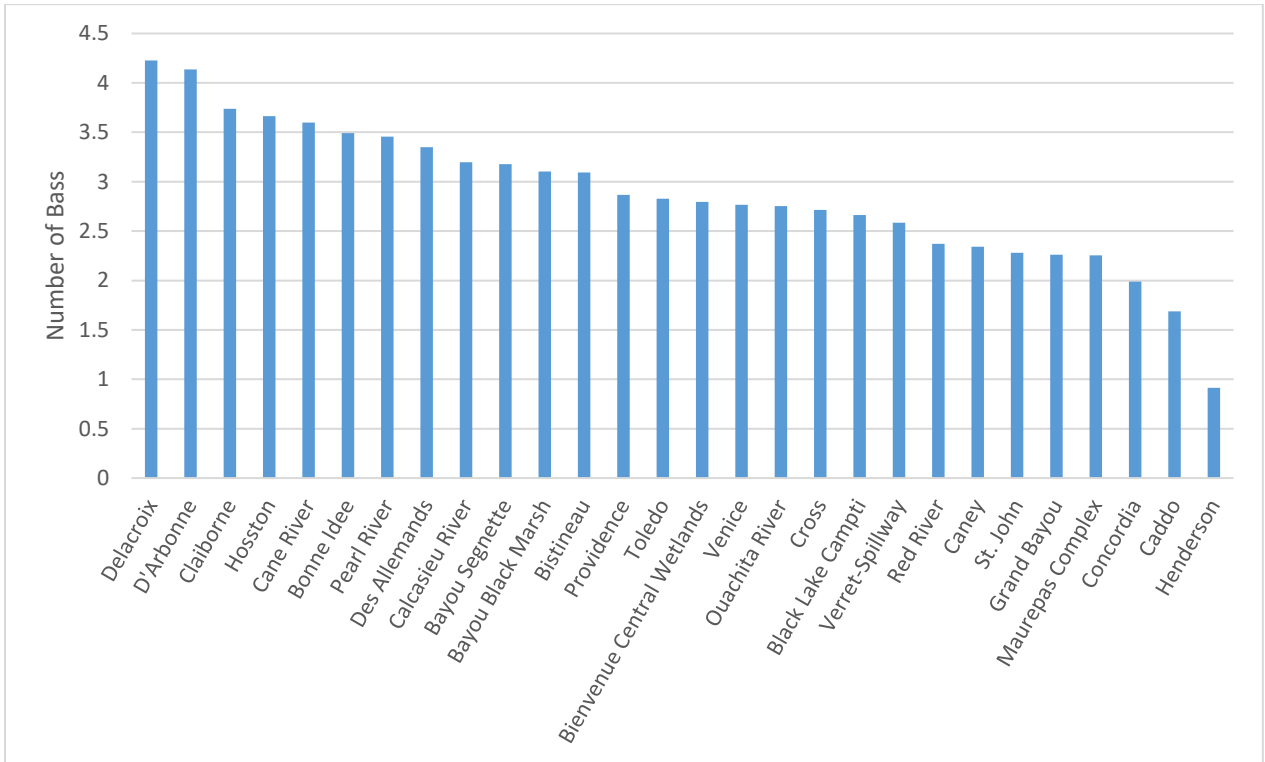


Figure 3. Average number of bass weighed in per boat at LATRIP tournaments on 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Average Weight per Bass Weighed In

Lake Bistineau provided the largest average weight per bass of 3.38 pounds. Venice had the lowest average weight of 0.99 pounds.

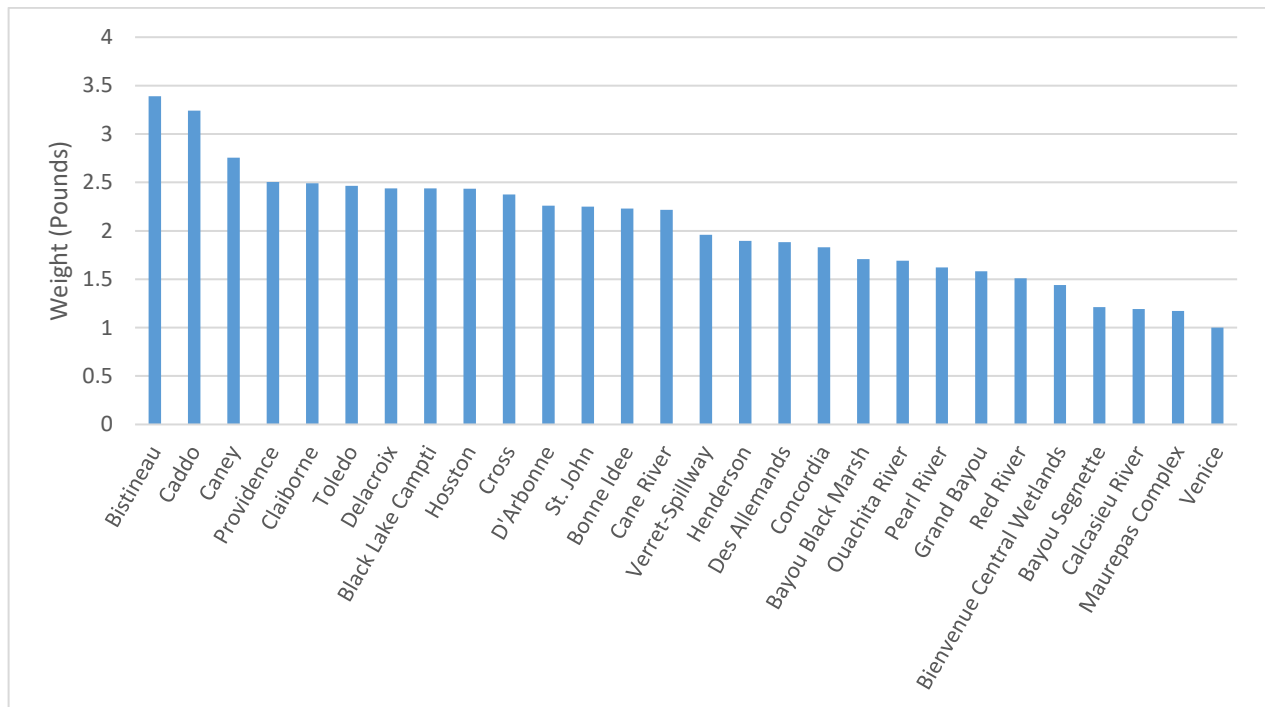


Figure 4. Average weight per bass weighed in at LATRIP tournaments from 28 different waterbodies in 2023.



## Average Bag Weight per Boat

Delacroix ranks highest in the average bag weight per boat, partially due to high angler success rate. Delacroix ranks near the top for the percentage of boats bringing in a limit with only a few anglers not having fish to weigh. Henderson Lake had the lowest average of 1.73 pounds.

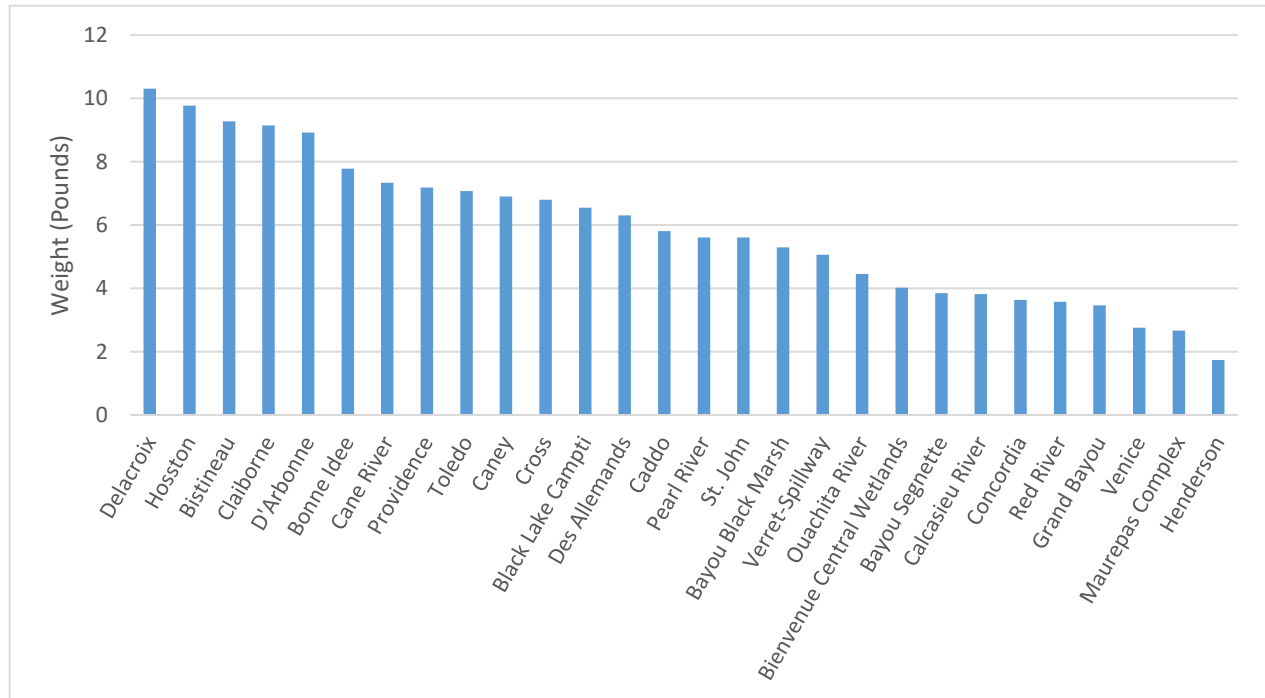


Figure 5. Average bag weight per boat at LATRIP tournaments from 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Percentage of Boats with Zero Bass to Weigh In

John K. Kelly Reservoir (Grand Bayou) in Red River Parish ranked highest in this category with the fewest boats with zero bass to weigh in (9.26%). Success was much harder to come by for anglers on Caddo Lake, the Lake Maurepas complex and Henderson Lake in 2023 LATRIP tournaments.

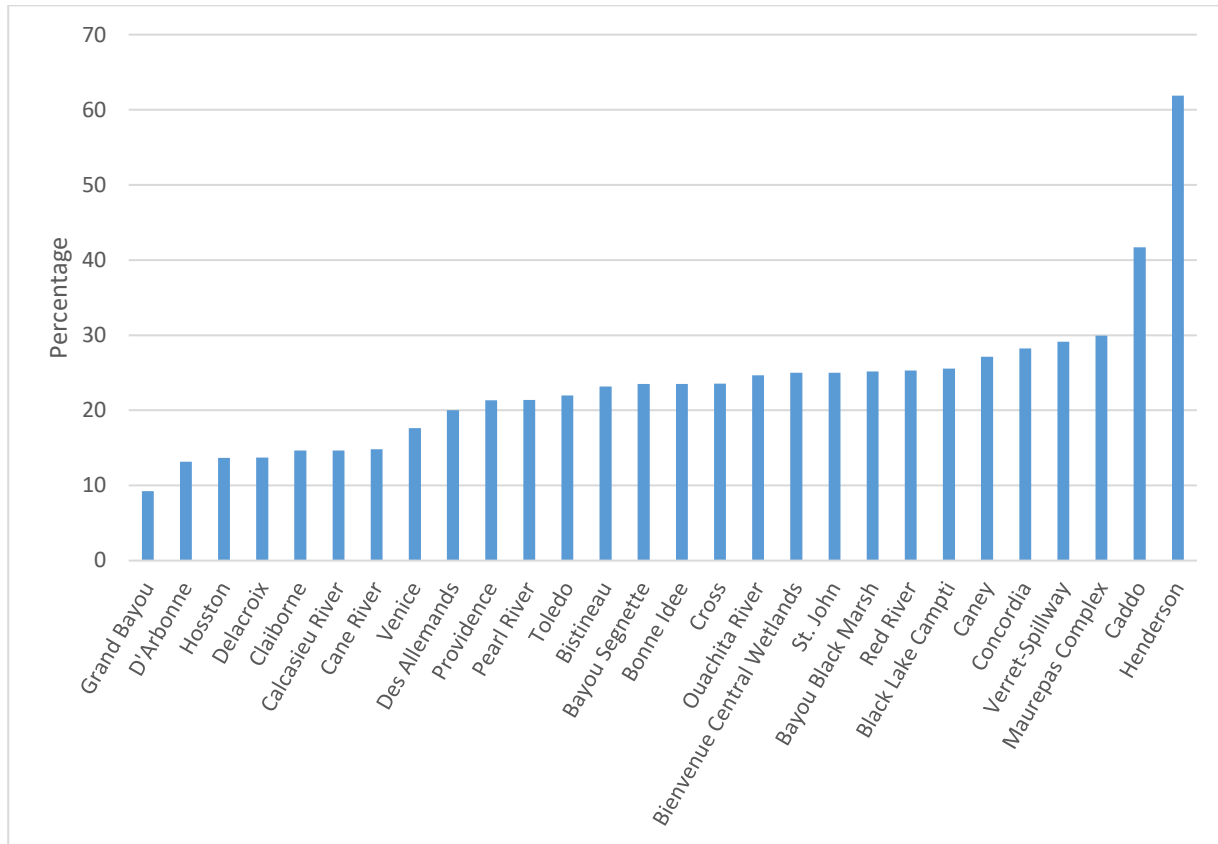


Figure 6. Percentage of boats with zero bass to weigh at LATRIP tournaments from 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Percentage of Boats with a 5 Bass Limit

The Delacroix marsh ranked highest in the percentage of boats with a 5 bass limit (82.26%), while Caddo Lake, Lake Concordia, and Henderson Lake ranked near the bottom.

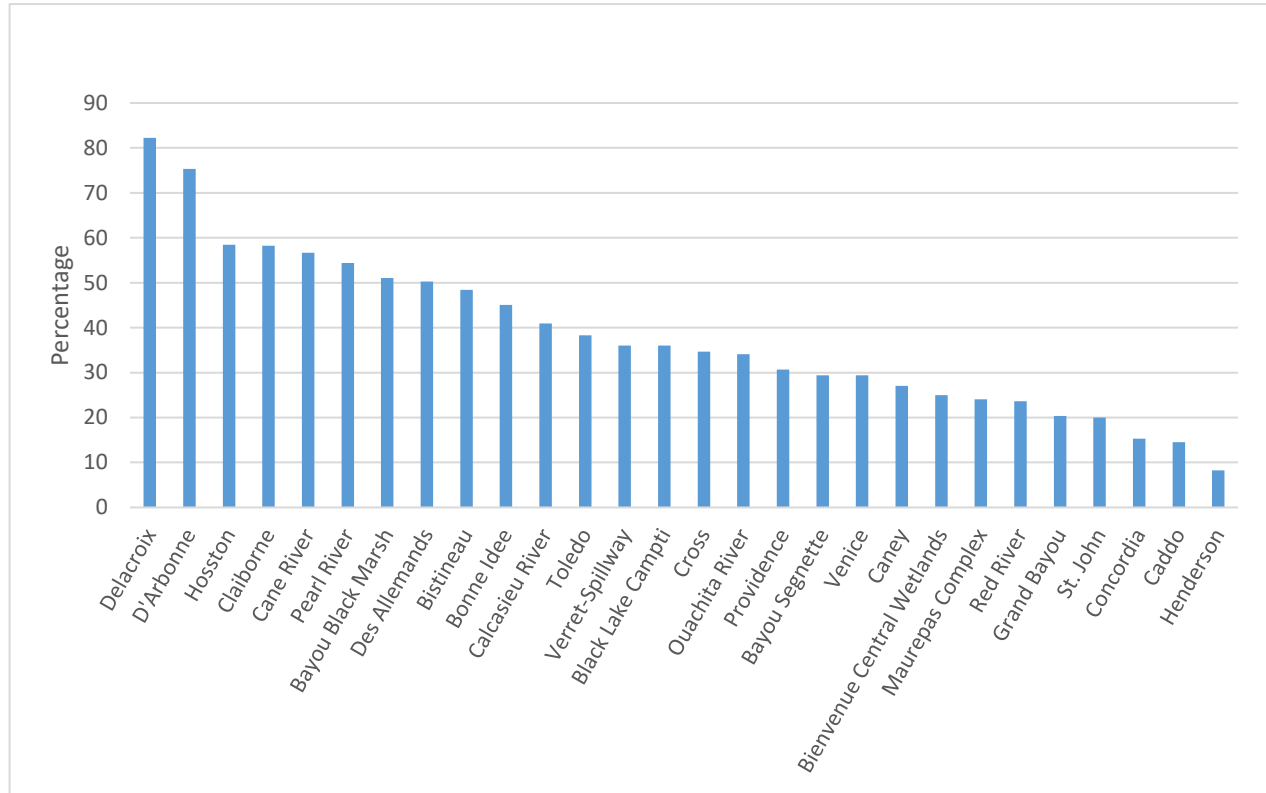


Figure 7. Percentage of boats with a 5 bass limit at LATRIP tournaments from 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Number of Angler Hours to Catch a Bass 5+ Pounds

Black Bayou Hosston ranked highest in this category with the least amount of angler hours required to catch a 5+ pound bass. Note that eight waterbodies included in LATRIP did not report catching a 5+ pound bass during a tournament. The number of angler hours needed to catch a 5+ pound bass is unknown for these waterbodies and therefore they are not represented in Figure 8 below.

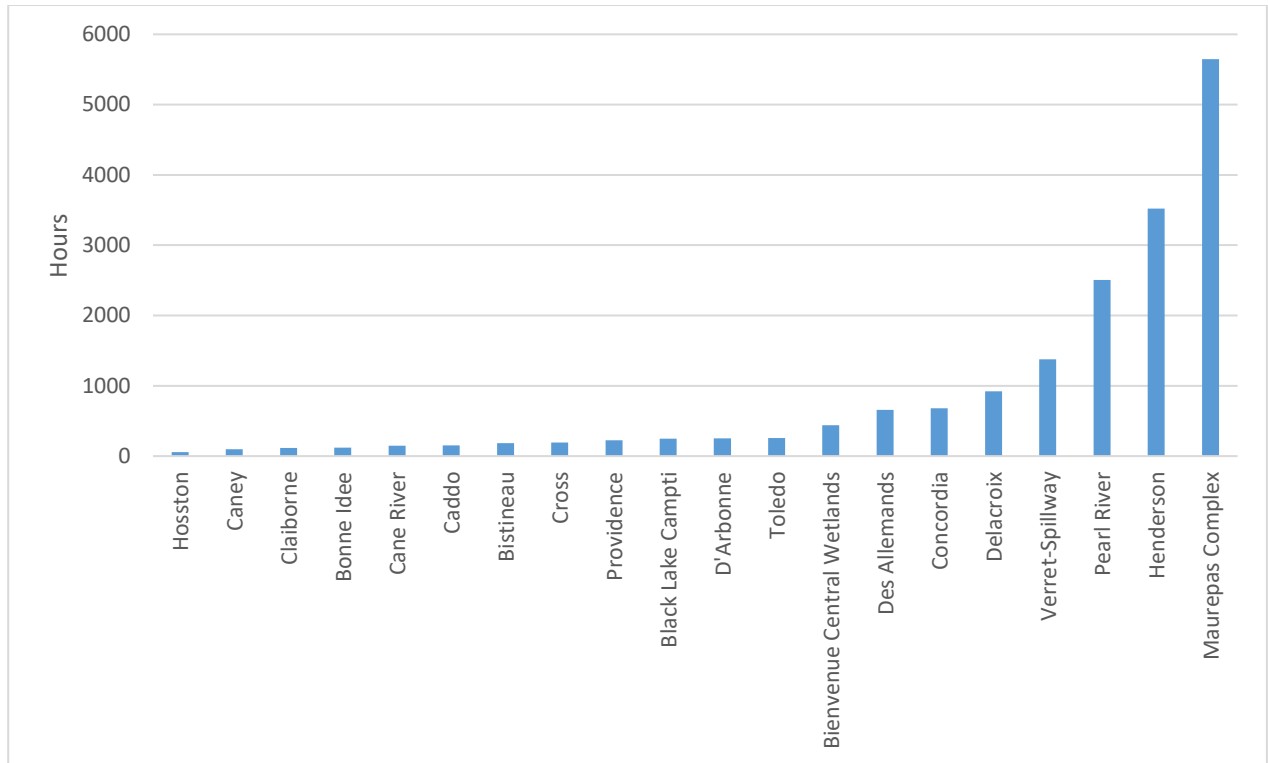


Figure 8. Number of angler hours necessary to catch a bass 5+ pounds at LATRIP tournaments from 20 waterbodies in 2023.

## Average 1<sup>st</sup> Place Weight

Caney Lake (24.29 lbs.) and Lake Bistineau (20.78 lbs.) were ranked highest for the largest average 1<sup>st</sup> place weight for the 2023 LATRIP tournament season.

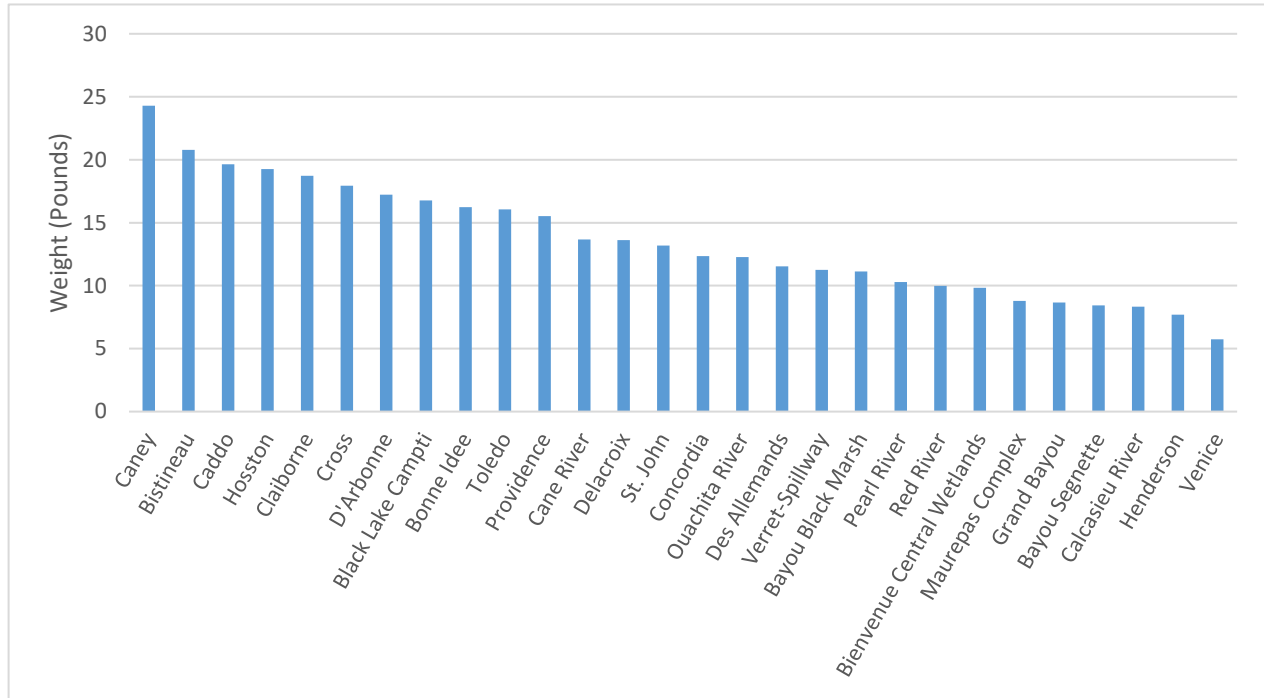


Figure 9. Average 1<sup>st</sup> place weight (winning weight) at LATRIP tournaments from 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Average Weight of Winning Big Bass

Caney Lake had an average winning big bass of 8.61 pounds. Caddo Lake, Lake Bistineau, Black Bayou Lake (Hosston), Lake Claiborne, Lake D'Arbonne, Cross Lake and Toledo Bend all boasted winning averages between 6-7 pounds.

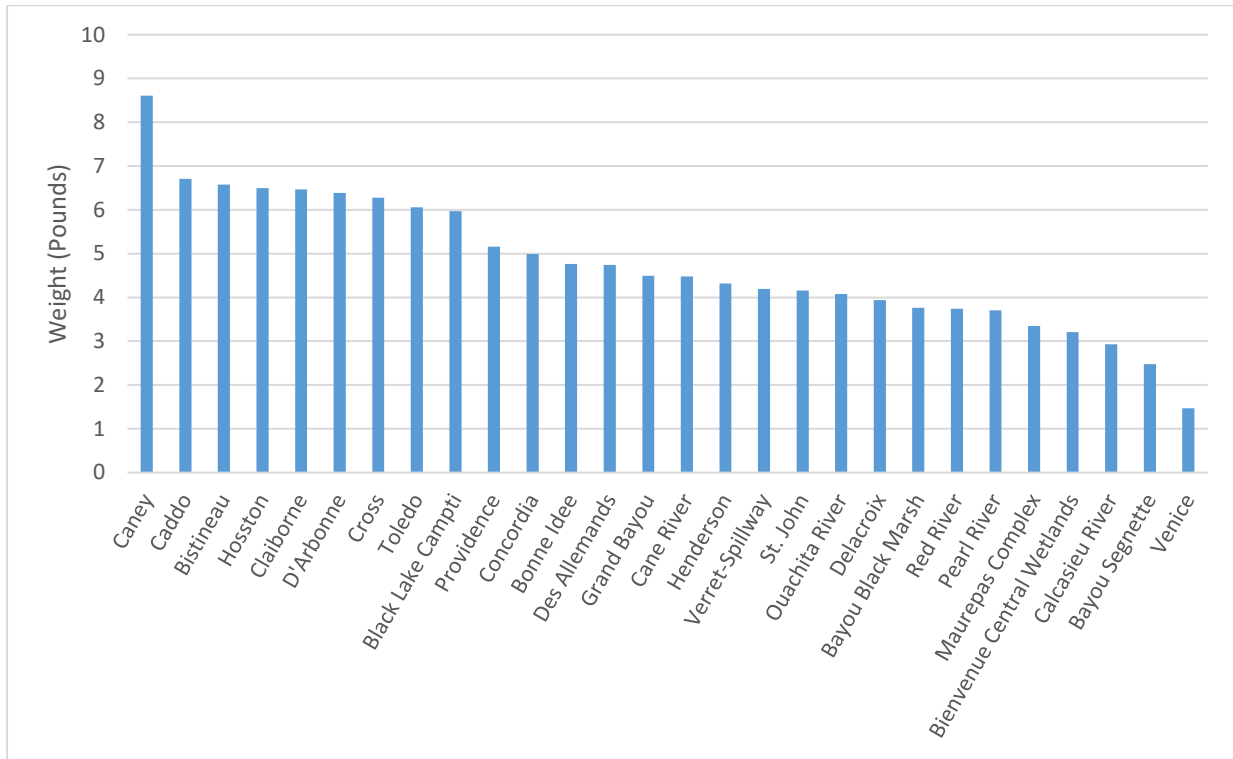


Figure 10. Average weight of winning Big Bass at LATRIP tournaments from 28 waterbodies in 2023.

## Percentage of Boats with Bag Weights of 20+ Pounds

Black Bayou Lake (Hosston) led the field with 6.60% of boats bringing in bags of 20+ pounds. Nineteen waterbodies failed to produce any bags of 20 pounds or more during LATRIP tournaments.

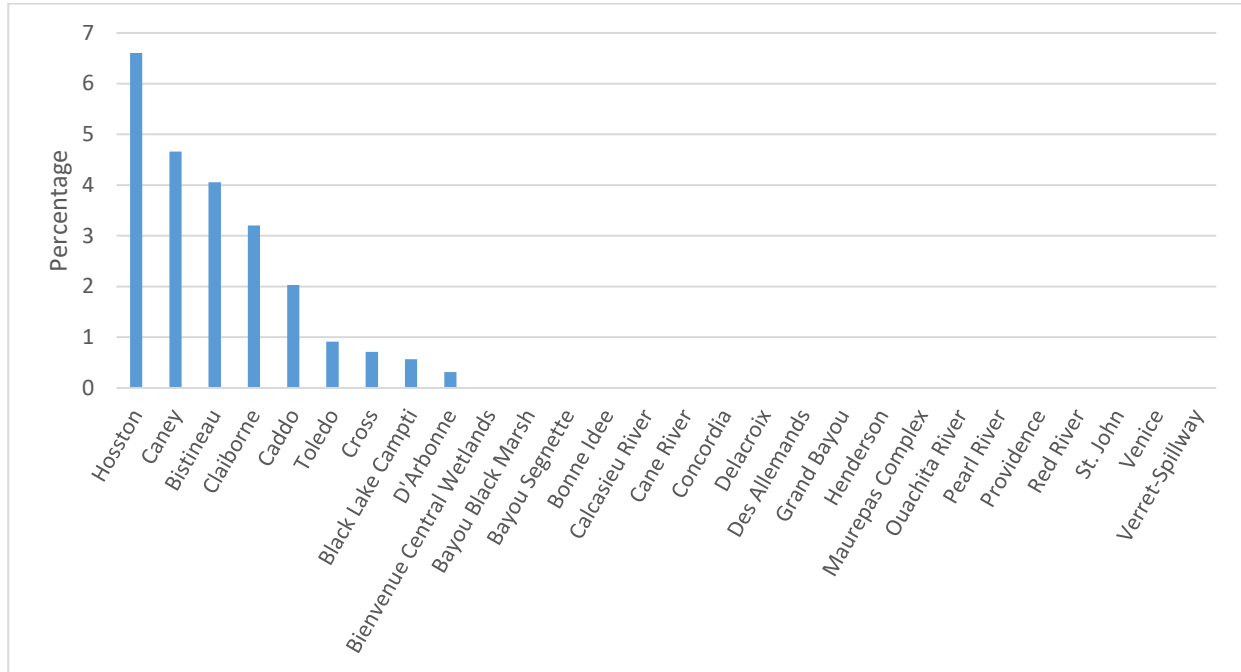


Figure 11. Percentage of boats at LATRIP tournaments with bags that were equal to or greater than 20 pounds in 2023.

# Category Rankings

## Overall Tournament Performance

In order to create a ranking system to evaluate which lake performed the best overall in 2023 LATRIP bass tournaments, all 14 individual metrics were included in this category. This ranking gives weight to waterbodies that not only perform well for winning weights, but also for high angler success. The graph below shows that Black Bayou Lake (Hosston) ranked top in the state, scoring an impressive 363 out of a possible 392 points. The average winning weight for the lake was 19.25 pounds and an average winning big bass of just under 6.5 pounds. Marsh and river systems generally ranked lower, likely due to less stable water conditions. Additionally, many coastal systems were recovering following major fish kills from Hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020 along with Ida and Nicholas in 2021.

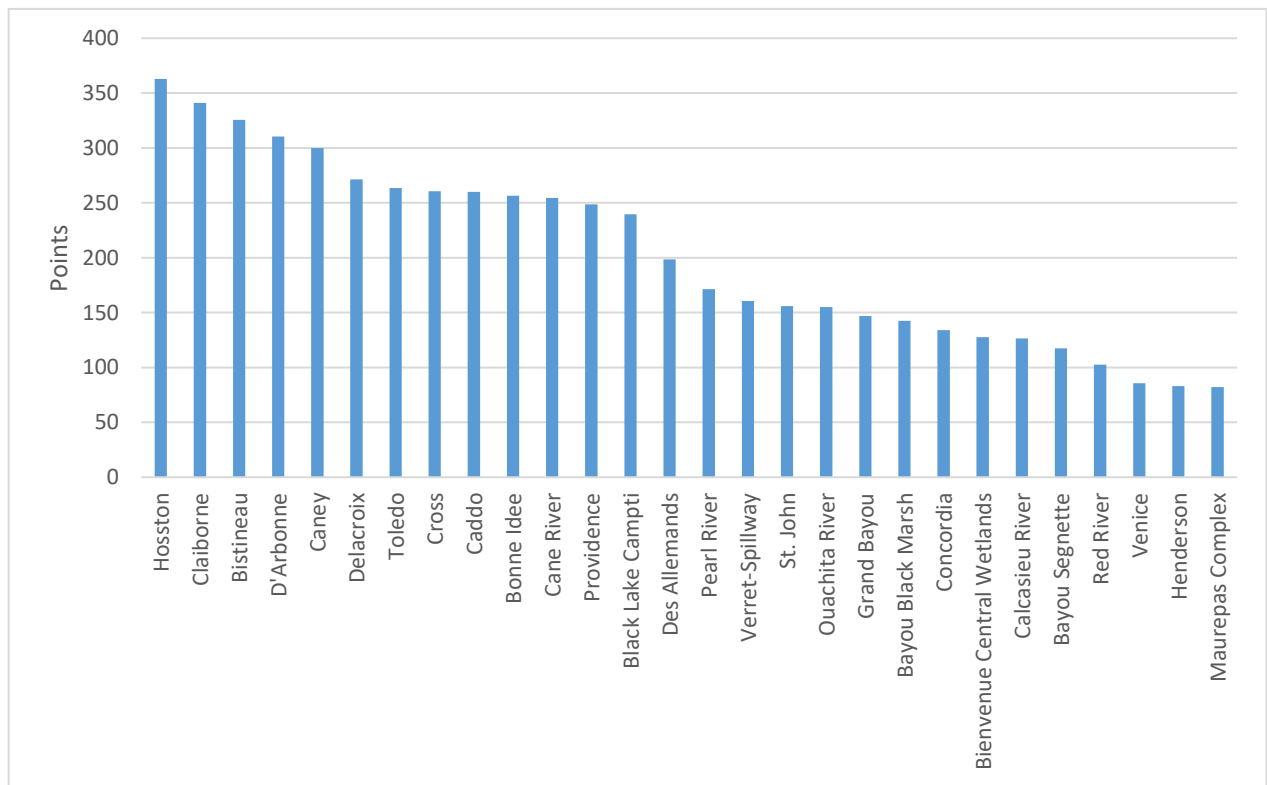


Figure 12. Comparison of 28 waterbodies based on overall LATRIP bass tournament performance in 2023.



## Heavyweight Division

The Heavyweight Division ranking attempts to identify waterbodies that provide the best opportunity for tournament anglers to catch larger-size bass. Seven individual metrics were included: average weight per bass, average big bass, average 1<sup>st</sup> place weight, number of angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass, average 2<sup>nd</sup> place big bass, percentage of boats with a 20+ pound bag, and percentage of boats with a 25+ pound bag. Caney Lake boasted two bass over 11 pounds and three 30+ pound limits during 2023 tournaments, ranking the lake in the top spot with 191 of a possible 196 points.

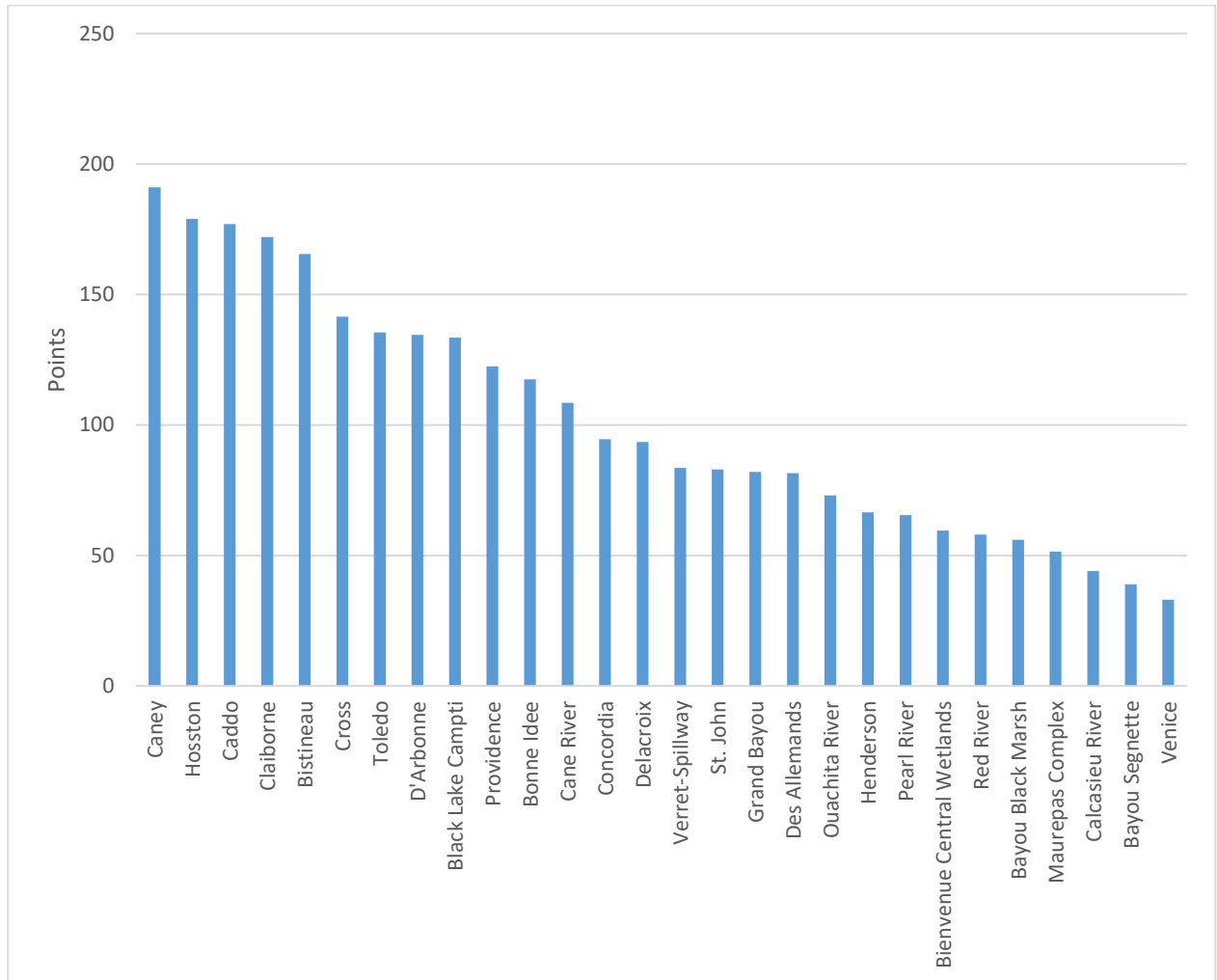


Figure 13. Comparison of 28 waterbodies focused on larger sized bass from LATRIP tournaments in 2023.

## Toughest Waters to Fish

Waterbodies were ranked in an effort to determine which was the toughest to fish during the 2023 LATRIP tournament season. Five individual metrics were used to define this category: average number of bass per boat, percentage of boats with a limit, number of angler hours to catch a 5+ pound bass, percentage of boats with 10+ pound bags, and percentage of boats with 0 fish. Henderson Lake, the Lake Maurepas Complex, and the Red River were the waterbodies in which anglers had the most difficulty catching fish in 2023 LATRIP tournaments.

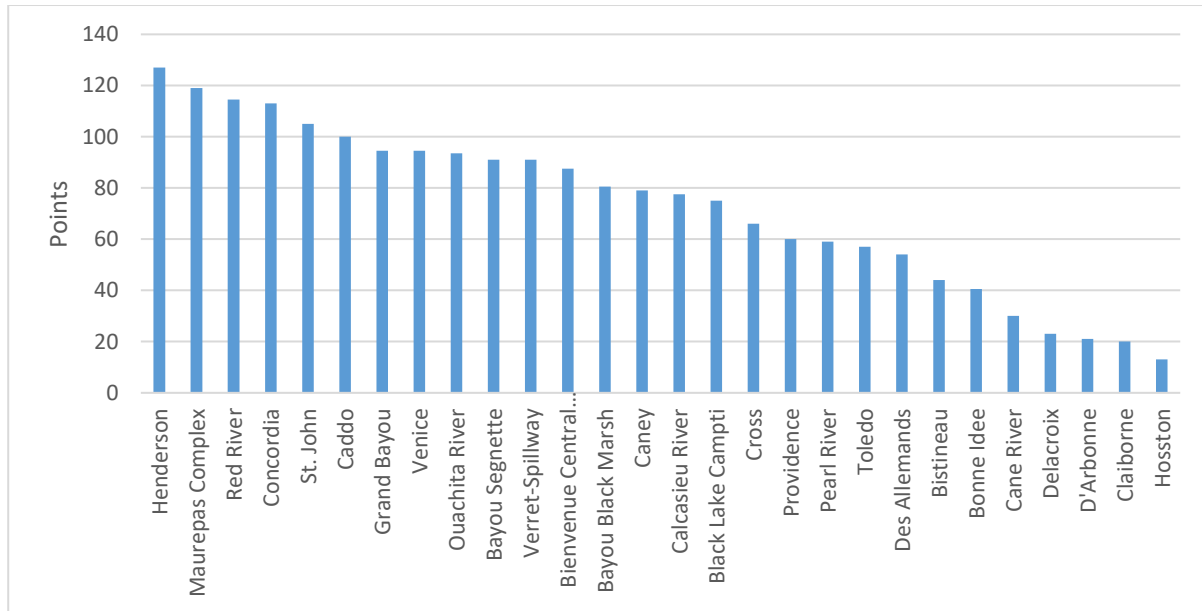


Figure 14. Comparison of 28 waterbodies focused on the toughest waterbodies to catch fish from at LATRIP tournaments in 2023. Waterbodies with a higher point total are more difficult to fish.

## Fun Fishing Lakes (i.e., Easiest to Catch Numbers of Fish)

In an attempt to determine which lakes might be the best to hold a “fun” tournament, where more anglers have success, the following individual metrics were ranked: average number of bass per boat, percentage of boats with fish to weigh, percentage of boats with a limit, and percentage of boats with at least 10 pounds. . The Delacroix Marsh and Lake D’Arbonne rank at the top due to high angler success rates. Over 75% of tournament boats brought a limit to the scales for both waterbodies.

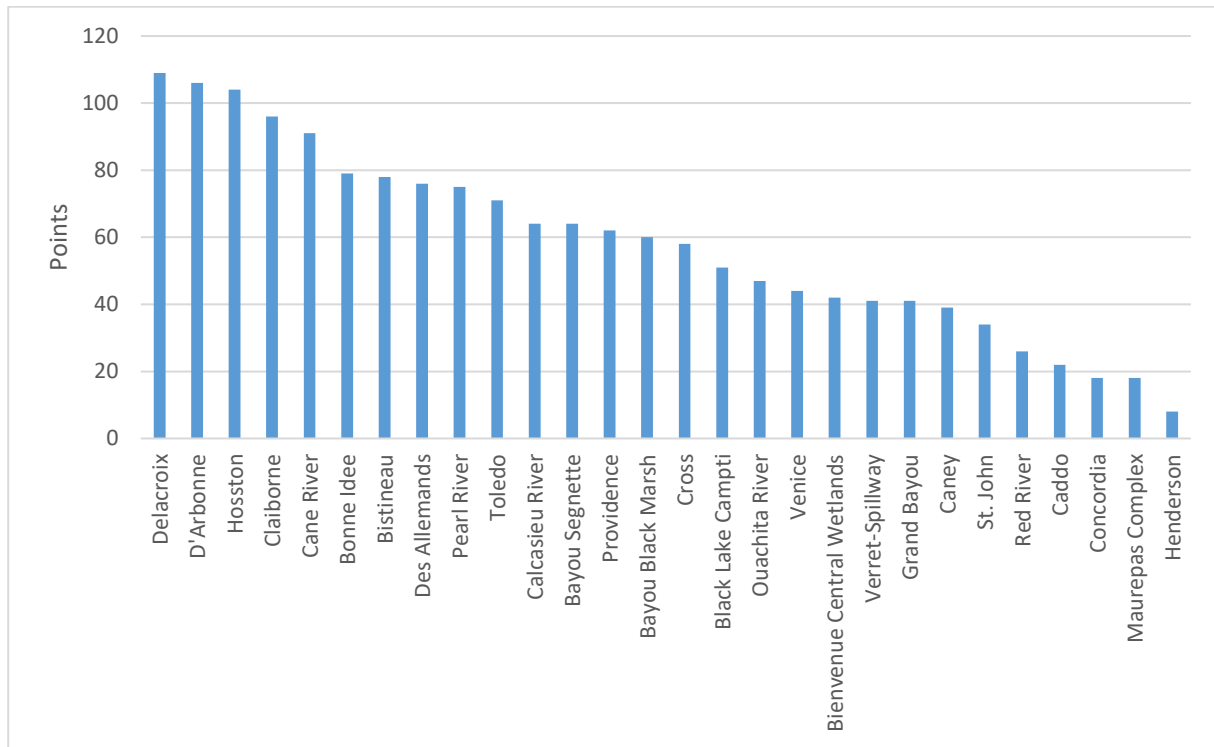


Figure 15. Comparison of angler success from 2023 LATRIP tournaments across 28 waterbodies.

## Top Ten Big Bass

Table 2 below includes the 10 heaviest bass weighed in during a 2023 LATRIP tournament. Five were over 10 pounds.

Table 2. Heaviest Big Bass caught during 2023 tournament season.

<b>Lake</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Big Bass</b>	<b>Tournament Club/Trail</b>
<b>Caney Lake</b>	2/5/23	11.77	Twin City Bass Club
<b>Caney Lake</b>	1/29/23	11.54	Media Bass North (Singles)
<b>Lake Claiborne</b>	5/19/23	10.53	King of the Honey Hole
<b>Toledo Bend</b>	3/4/23	10.36	LA High School Bass Nation North
<b>Lake D'Arbonne</b>	3/11/23	10.11	North Webster Bass Club
<b>Toledo Bend</b>	2/25/23	9.89	North LA High School Fishing League
<b>Lake Bistineau</b>	6/3/23	9.58	H&W Team Tournament Trail
<b>Caney Lake</b>	3/18/23	9.56	LA High School Bass Nation North
<b>Lake Claiborne</b>	2/18/23	8.88	Media Bass North (Team)
<b>Caney Lake</b>	1/28/23	8.57	Media Bass North (Team)

## Top Ten 1st Place Weights

Caney Lake was represented five times in the Top 10 heaviest bag weights, followed by two from Black Bayou Lake (Hosston) and two from Lake Claiborne (Table 3). With the exception of an April, May, and an August tournament, all the heaviest bag weights came from an approximately 60-day period from late January through mid-March.

Table 3. Top 10 heaviest, 5-bass bag limits weighed in during the 2023 LATRIP tournament season.

Lake	1 <sup>st</sup> place weight (Lbs.)	Date	Club
Lake Claiborne	37.16	5/19/23	King of the Honey Hole
Caney Lake	37.13	3/18/23	LA High School Bass Nation North
Caney Lake	32.53	1/28/23	Media Bass North (Team)
Black Bayou Lake (Hosston)	29.73	8/19/23	Ultimate Bass Singles
Caney Lake	29.18	1/29/23	Media Bass North (Singles)
Caddo Lake	27.89	4/1/23	H&W Team Tournament Trail
Caney Lake	27.69	2/5/23	Twin City Bass Club
Caney Lake	26.69	2/25/23	Well Hooked Bass Club
Lake Claiborne	26.23	2/19/23	Media Bass North (Singles)
Black Bayou Lake (Hosston)	26.0	2/18/23	Ultimate Bass Singles

## Number of Bass 5+ Pounds per Tournament

Table 4. Top lakes producing 5+ pound bass per LATRIP tournament in 2023.

Waterbody	Number of Bass 5+ Pounds per Tournament
Caney Lake	5.27
Caddo Lake	4.25
False River	4.0
Black Bayou Lake (Hosston)	3.54
Lake Bistineau	2.88

## 2023 Tournament Club Statistics

Table 5. Summary statistics for each club from which LATRIP data were collected during the 2023 tournament season. Top ranks in each category listed in **BOLD**.

Clubs	Average # of boats per tournament	Percent of Boats with a limit	Average Winning weight (lbs.)	Average Big Bass (lbs.)	Average bag weight per boat (lbs.)
ARKLA Team Trail	40.83	73.87	18.38	6.35	9.24
Bass Busterz Bass Club	14.4	40.27	13.57	4.74	6.64
Bastrop Bass Club	14.2	40.84	14.1	4.79	8.28
Bayou State Bass Club	27.22	26.19	14.48	4.96	5.50
Caernarvon Team Trail	17.83	<b>91.59</b>	17.25	4.75	<b>11.47</b>
Delhi Bass Club	12.8	32.03	13.67	5.07	5.47
Eagle Claw Bass Club	5.5	22.72	7.01	1.98	3.42
Fishers of Men North	12	41.67	<b>25.61</b>	7.87	7.31
Fishers of Men South	55.17	66.47	16.95	5.49	8.91
Funkbuster Team Trail	29.67	NA	21.14	7.87	9.61
H&W Team Tournament Trail	62.75	51.39	22.56	7.31	8.95
Hawgherders Bass Club	21.6	20.37	15.18	6.51	5.07
High School Fishing League	95.8	20.88	20.57	<b>8.39</b>	5.32
Jr. Southwest Bassmasters	25	12.92	7.59	3.59	2.09
Junior Fishing League*	48	19.79*	11.88	5.94	2.69
King of the Honey Hole	9.5	NA	18.33	6.26	4.16
LA Bass Nation	56	72.32	16.95	5.90	9.84
LA High School Bass Nation East	141.67	17.41	12.15	6.32	2.42
LA High School Bass Nation East Juniors	26.5	7.55	5.62	2.71	1.44
LA High School Bass Nation North	<b>172.33</b>	19.15	23.23	8.12	4.76
LA High School Bass Nation North Juniors	28.67	9.30	13.05	5.19	2.98
LA High School Bass Nation State	125	5.6	11.26	3.85	1.74
LA High School Bass Nation State Juniors	28	0	5.24	2.49	1.55
LA High School Bass Nation West	162	22.63	13.16	5.49	3.65

<b>Clubs</b>	<b>Average # of boats per tournament</b>	<b>Percent of boats with a limit</b>	<b>Average Winning weight (lbs.)</b>	<b>Average Big Bass (lbs.)</b>	<b>Average bag weight per boat (lbs.)</b>
<b>LA High School Bass Nation West Juniors</b>	23	15.94	8.29	3.52	2.89
<b>Liars and Lunkers</b>	121	52.27	11.73	4.25	5.93
<b>Lock Jaw Bass Club</b>	11.13	40.45	9.65	3.05	4.58
<b>Media Bass North (Individual)</b>	25.33	40.13	19.11	6.67	7.39
<b>Media Bass North (Team)</b>	46.5	55.20	19.93	6.86	8.43
<b>Media Bass South (Individual)</b>	39.83	41.42	12.46	4.80	5.34
<b>Media Bass South (Team)</b>	36	61.11	14.69	5.56	7.32
<b>National Bass Anglers Association</b>	17	30.39	16.23	5.77	6.10
<b>North Webster Bass Club</b>	7.5	58.67	17.88	6.56	9.74
<b>Southeast Bass Association</b>	7.16	68.25	8.07	2.63	4.61
<b>S'Port City Bass Club</b>	21.7	36.61	16.53	5.73	5.99
<b>Sportsmans Club of SW LA</b>	21	NA	15.03	NA	3.36
<b>T.A.B.A.</b>	7	33.77	9.95	3.57	4.62
<b>Tallulah Bass Club</b>	10.8	29.63	12.66	4.47	5.38
<b>Twin City Bass Club</b>	16.57	NA	16.54	5.97	8.22
<b>Twin Cities Team Club</b>	9.86	NA	13.01	4.61	6.12
<b>Ultimate Bass Singles</b>	25.73	28.18	20.67	6.87	9.25
<b>Well Hooked Bass Club</b>	18	51.35	14.90	5.71	7.70

\*Calculated on a 3 fish limit

## **General Trends, Observations and Discussion**

Generally speaking, the man-made reservoirs in central and north Louisiana rank higher for many of the individual metrics calculated in LATRIP. These lakes rank higher for largest bag weights, largest winning big bass, larger average size bass, higher percentage of boats with 20+ pound bags, etc. These waterbodies offer more stable water quality and a less stressful environment to bass than many of the swamps, marshes and coastal rivers in the southern portion of the state. Additionally, these lakes generally have a higher percentage of Florida bass genetics in the population. Bass in swamps, marshes and coastal rivers are often subjected to periods of stress from environmental conditions that can limit growth and survival, such as saltwater intrusion and extended periods of low dissolved oxygen.

Additionally, many coastal systems are recovering from major fish kills following Hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020 and Ida and Nicholas in 2021. Historical fish kills from hurricanes may be a limiting factor in LDWF's attempts to get Florida bass genetics introduced into many of these systems

[https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Freshwater\\_Inland\\_Fish/2011\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_the\\_14-](https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Freshwater_Inland_Fish/2011_Evaluation_of_the_14-Inch_Minimum_Length_Limit_for_Largemouth_Bass_in_the_Atchafalaya_Basin_and_Surrounding_Waters_Louisiana.pdf)

[Inch Minimum Length Limit for Largemouth Bass in the Atchafalaya Basin and Surrounding Waters Louisiana.pdf](https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Freshwater_Inland_Fish/2011_Evaluation_of_the_14-Inch_Minimum_Length_Limit_for_Largemouth_Bass_in_the_Atchafalaya_Basin_and_Surrounding_Waters_Louisiana.pdf)). In those locations frequently impacted by hurricane related fish kills, bass are less likely to reach ages of 5+ years old where the advantages of Florida genetics become apparent. The populations must start over from nearly scratch every few years. Fish populations naturally recover quickly following catastrophic kills by increased reproduction and recruitment rates of the fish that remain alive. During this recovery phase, anglers can experience high catch rates of bass (see Delacroix Marsh in Figure 15). It is more difficult to integrate Florida bass fingerlings into the population when native bass are reproducing at such a high rate. Therefore, native northern bass dominate these populations and may explain the lower performance in some of the LATRIP individual metrics. It will be interesting to track the recoveries of these systems over time in tournament performances if additional storm related kills can be avoided.

Through the process of collecting and compiling tournament data, several improvements were identified as needed and should be implemented in the future. A uniform format for reporting data to LDWF was implemented by way of our online reporting portal which proved to be beneficial but usage amongst participating tournaments is not widespread. In the 2023 season, the following variables were often missing from the dataset: 1) number of fish per boat, 2) number and weights of any fish over 5 pounds, 3) official start and end time of the tournament. Unfortunately, omissions of this information caused some data to be excluded in the analyses, or some assumptions to be made. Having a more complete dataset would be beneficial.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries acknowledges the bass clubs and tournament organizers who voluntarily submitted information for this effort. Without their participation and desire to contribute to improving the natural resources of the Sportsman's Paradise, this effort would not have been possible. These efforts were funded in part by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program.