TOLEDO BEND LUNKER BASS REPLICAS AWARDED AT BIG BASS SPLASH

By Ramona Moore

The Toledo Bend Lake Association awarded 72 lunker bass replicas to anglers at the Toledo Bend Sealy Outdoors Big Bass Splash at Cypress Bend Park on Sunday, May 21. This was the third highest number of lunkers caught, and replicas awarded in a single year.

Dinah Medine, coordinator of the TBLA Lunker Bass Program, presented the replicas to the anglers. Among the 72 fish caught, two fish qualified to move into the **Top 100** largest reported largemouth bass caught on Toledo Bend. One of these big fish was caught by Mike Thaxton of Zwolle, weighing 12.37 lbs., the largest lunker caught this year. Joe Cooley of Florien, caught the other fish weighing 12.20 lbs. Ten of the lunkers caught this year were previously caught and tagged fish. Norman Land of Cleveland, TX, received two replicas, having caught both of his fish on the same day, an achievement not previously recorded! Jason Courville of Orange, TX, also received two replicas this year.

Figure 1   TBLA Lunker Program Replicas awarded 5/21/2017

The Lunker Bass Replica Program was initiated by the Sabine River Authority of Louisiana in 1992, and transferred to Toledo Town and Tackle in 1998. It was assumed by the Toledo Bend Lake Association in 2005. Since its inception, over 879 lunkers have been caught and released back to Toledo Bend Lake through this Program.

The goal of the Program is to encourage the return of trophy fish to the lake by rewarding anglers with a replica bass for catching and releasing their Toledo Bend Lunker back to the Lake. TBLA hopes these fish will live, spawn, reproduce, grow bigger and be caught again by another angler.

Photos of the anglers and their lunkers can be seen on the Toledo Bend Lunker Bass Program on Facebook and a complete list is also posted on www.toledobendlakeassociation.com. This year's replicas were produced for the Toledo Bend Lake Association by Scottie's Taxidermy.

Congratulations to all the anglers who have earned lunker replicas.