



Beaver Creek Reservoir 2015



Located in Albemarle County, Beaver Creek Reservoir is a 104-acre water supply impoundment for the town of Crozet. The reservoir contains self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and black crappie. Additionally, the lake is stocked annually with channel catfish to maintain a fishery. The lake has traditionally provided excellent largemouth bass and panfish fisheries. In the spring of 2014, the fish community of Beaver Creek was sampled by boat electrofishing and trapnets. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Beaver Creek.

Beaver Creek Reservoir's fish community is diverse with a total of eleven fish species collected in the 2014 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth bass and bluegill were by far the most abundant species collected in the electrofishing survey, while bluegill and black crappie were the most abundant species collected in the trapnet survey (Table 1). Beaver Creek's bass population is poor based on the size of bass collected. Bass catch rates were very high for the area, but the bass population is dominated by small individuals (Figure 1). Bass are very stunted in growth and are stockpiling below 12 inches. The reservoir is in dire need of small bass (< 12 inches) harvest. Anglers should harvest bass under 12 inches within the 5 bass per statewide creel limit. A handful of bass over 20 inches were collected (Figure 1), but stockpiling is limiting the trophy bass potential of the lake. The largest bass collected measured 22 inches and weighed 7.4 lbs. The most productive areas for bass were the points and woody structures throughout the lake.

Sunfish electrofishing catch rates were fairly high with bluegill comprising the majority of sunfish collected. The bulk of sunfish collected were small (< 8 inches); only a few bluegill and redear sunfish over 8 inches were collected (Figure 2). Anglers determined to catch quality sunfish should concentrate their efforts on around woody structure throughout the lake.

Crappie catch rates were good with all the crappie catch composed of black crappie. Beaver Creek supports a quality crappie fishery with the majority of crappie collected in the 7 to 11 inch range (Figure 3). The lake is regulated under a 9-inch minimum size limit for crappie and the individuals in this fishery are exhibiting fast growth; on average crappie are approaching 10 inches by age-3 (Figure 4). Very fast growth combined with a young population (94% of crappie collected were younger than age-5) indicates overexploitation of the crappie fishery; the overharvest is also exhibited in a high mortality rate of the crappie population (around 50%). The minimum size limit should be increased to 10 inches to allow young fast growing fish time to survive and reproduce. This change should help maintain this exceptional crappie fishery.

Anglers looking for an excellent crappie lake that is in the Charlottesville area should visit Beaver Creek Reservoir. The lake offers good numbers of catfish and smaller panfish for anglers to enjoy. There is a well designed concrete boat ramp and numerous areas for bank fishing. Gas powered motors are prohibited in the reservoir.

For more information on Beaver Creek, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Beaver Creek Reservoir in 2014.

Species	Trapnets			Electrofishing		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/net-night)	Percentage of the Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of the Catch
Black Crappie	70	7	30.7	71	36	13.1
Bluegill	77	7.7	33.8	181	91	33.3
Brown Bullhead	7	0.7	3.1	None Collected		
Channel Catfish	51	5.1	22.4	5	3	0.9
Golden Shiner	2	0.2	0.9	14	7	2.6
Largemouth Bass	2	0.2	0.9	256	128	47.1
Pumkinseed	1	0.1	0.4	1	1	0.2
Redear	3	0.3	1.3	7	4	1.3
White Perch	11	1.1	4.8	None Collected		
White Sucker	1	0.1	0.4	7	4	1.3
Yellow Bullhead	3	0.3	1.3	1	1	0.2

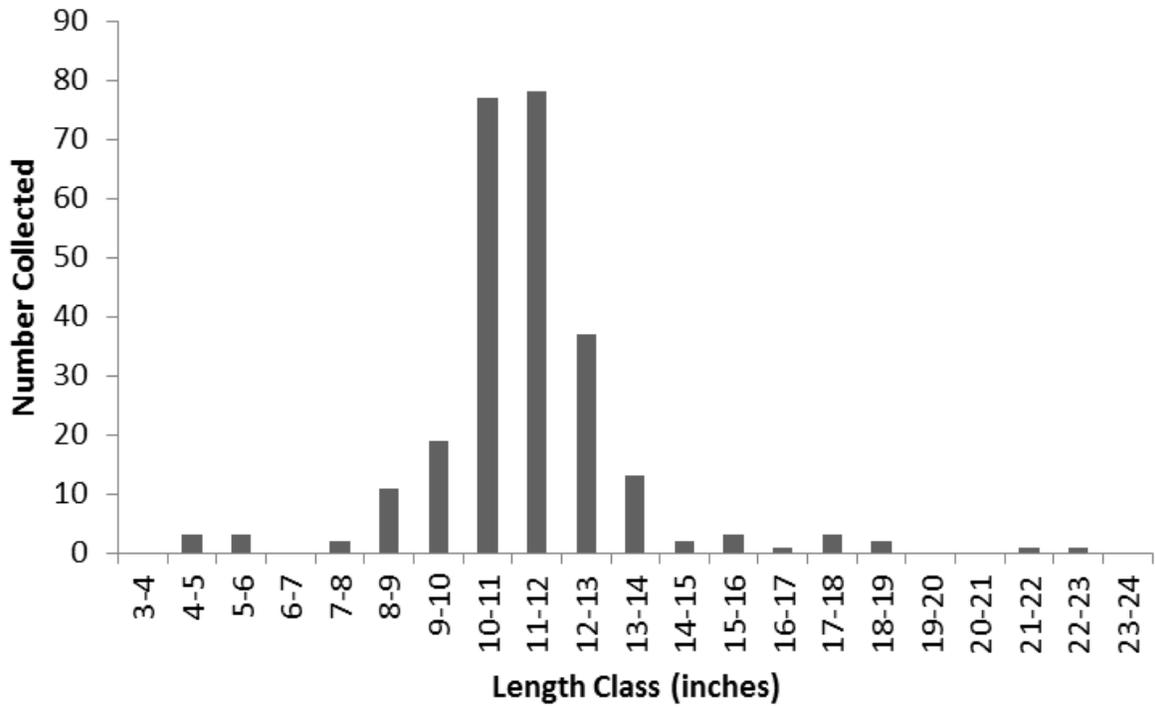


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Beaver Creek Reservoir in 2014.

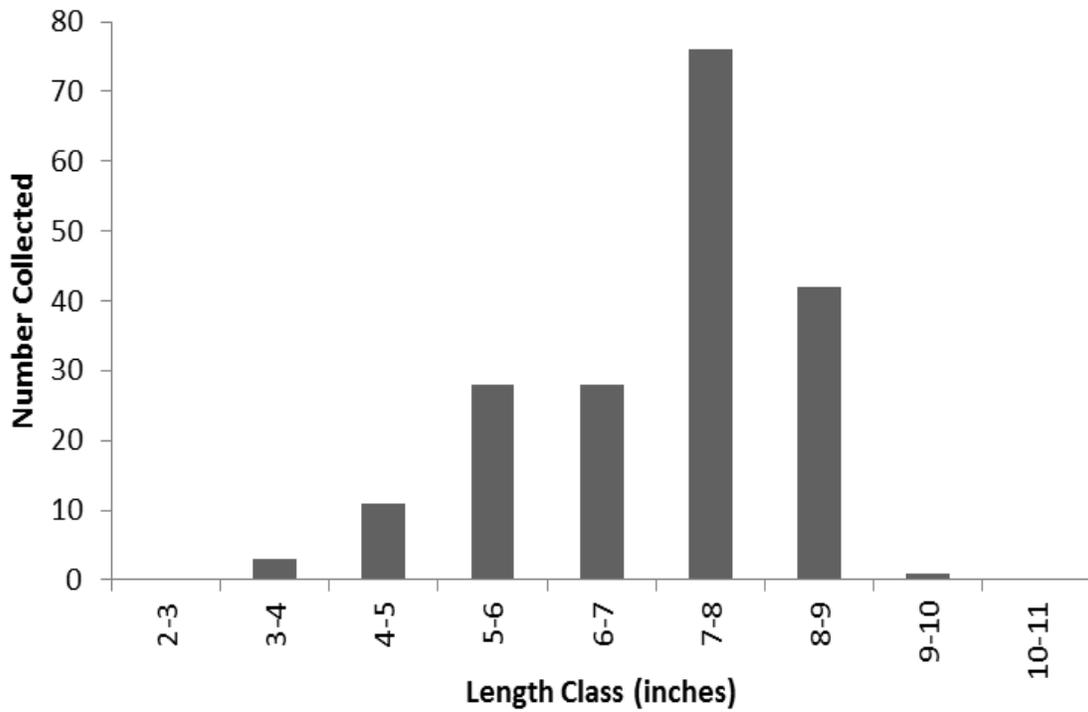


Figure 2. Length distribution of sunfish collected with electrofishing gear throughout Beaver Creek in 2014.

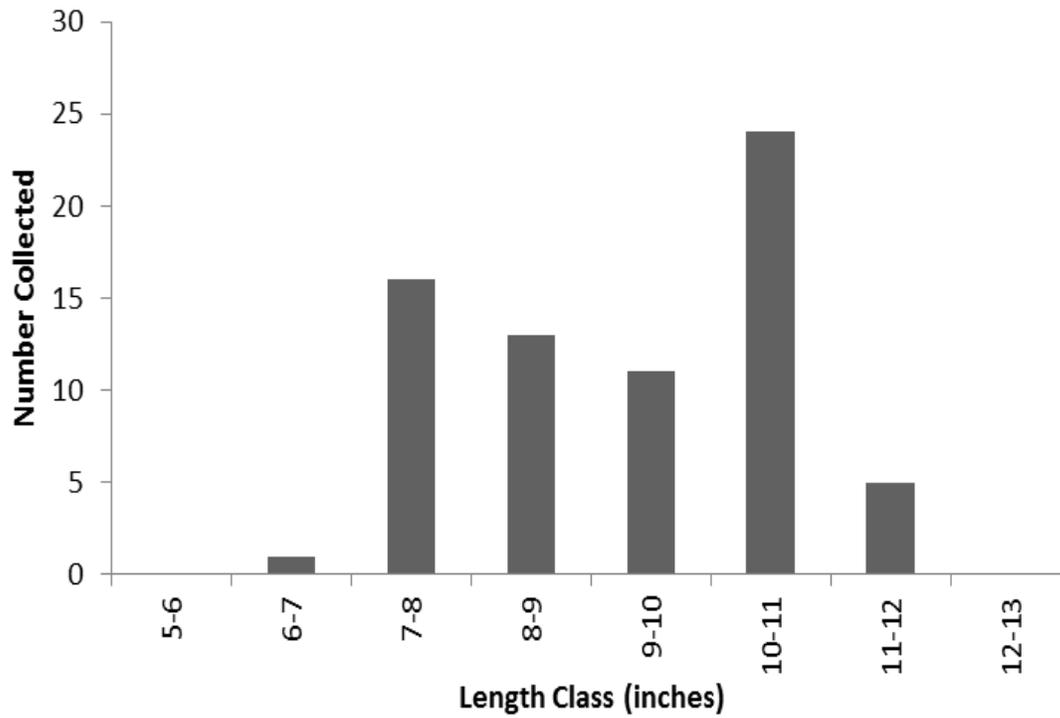


Figure 3. Length distribution of black crappie collected with trapnets throughout Beaver Creek Reservoir in 2014.

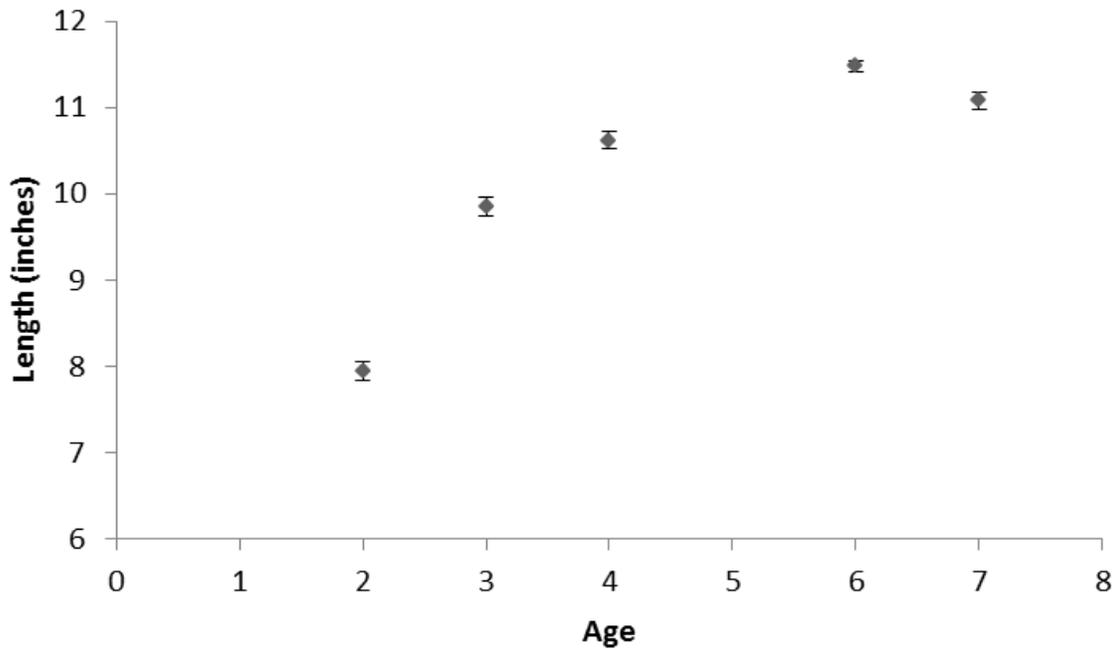


Figure 4. Average length-at-age of crappie collected throughout Beaver Creek Reservoir in 2014. Error bars indicate standard error.