

Largemouth Bass Summary

The 2013 electrofishing survey of Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir yielded a total of 150 Largemouth Bass along the five shoreline sites sampled. The CPUE of 90 bass/hour was basically unchanged from the 2012 survey (88 bass/hour). The 2013 survey indicated the presence of a large year class of juvenile bass ready to make their way into the fishery. These bass, in the 4 to 7 inch range, are most likely all from the 2012 year class. In the years immediately following the formation of this water supply reservoir it supported a bass fishery known for producing good numbers of big bass. However, in the years prior to 2012, a change in the dynamics of the bass population occurred, with a stockpiling of bass in the 12 – 15 inch range. This stockpiling resulted in a reduction in the number of large bass in the fishery. The loss of big bass in the population was likely due to reduced growth rates for young and adult bass as the lake underwent an overall reduction in productivity. Mortality also contributed to the shift. This was a combination of natural mortality and angling mortality, which can be significant in fisheries with intense angling pressure. However, as of 2012, the size structure of the bass population had shifted favorably, and results of the 2013 survey indicate good numbers of larger (16 – 17 inch) bass now occur in the bass population. These bass are in excellent condition, having very high relative weight values.

The survey produced a total of 31 preferred-sized bass (LMB > 15 inches in total length). The catch rate – catch per unit effort (CPUE) – of preferred bass was 19 bass/hour, somewhat lower than that obtained during the 2012 survey (24 bass/hour). The sample site along the southern shore of the Route 606 creek arm was the most productive area with the collection of 41 Largemouth Bass.

As of December 9th, Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir anglers had only reported 6 citation-sized fish over the course of the 2013 fishing season. The citations were for one Largemouth Bass, three black crappies and two chain pickerel. Anglers that spend enough time on the reservoir will be able to figure out which areas are better than others and which patterns are worth trying. Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir receives a high level of fishing pressure from anglers in the greater Gloucester region that are interested in freshwater fishing.

Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of the collected bass from the electrofishing survey of Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir on April 25th, 2013. (N =150; CPUE = 90 LMB/hour)

