



Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake 2016



Located in Fluvanna County, Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake is a 50-acre impoundment owned and managed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The lake contains self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and black crappie. The lake has provided excellent largemouth bass and panfish fisheries since the Department began an annual fertilization program in 1970. The fertilizer enhances the bloom of phytoplankton in the lake, which provides important food for the production and growth of fish. The phytoplankton also gives the lake its greenish color in the spring and summer months. To provide additional angling opportunities, the reservoir is annually stocked with channel catfish. In 2015, the fish community of Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake was sampled by biologists. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake.

A total of nine fish species were collected in the 2015 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth bass and bluegill were the most abundant species collected in the electrofishing survey while black crappie and bluegill were the most abundant species collected in the trapnet survey (Table 1). Fluvanna-Ruritan continues to produce a quality bass fishery. The catch rate for largemouth bass was average when compared to catch rates from previous surveys, and was ideal for a Central Virginia impoundment. The size distribution of bass collected was exceptional, with good numbers of fish collected up to 20 inches (Figure 1). Catch rates for bass between 12 and 18 inches were astonishingly high, and anglers should experience great success catching these quality-sized fish. Numerous bass above 20 inches were collected (Figure 1), indicating a good potential for trophy bass production in Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake. The largest bass collected in electrofishing surveys measured 24 inches and weighed approximately 8 lbs. The good growth of young and middle-aged bass is imperative to trophy potential of bass. In Fluvanna-Ruritan, largemouth bass growth is decent but could be better; small bass (< 12 inches) were slightly skinny. Anglers should harvest bass from the small size classes (< 12 inches) to avoid stockpiling and stunting of the bass population. Anglers searching for bass should fish the numerous brushpiles, the main-lake points, or the deep shoreline up lake from the dam. In recent years biologists have worked to increase the fishable habitat in Fluvanna-Ruritan through the addition of marked fish attractors and fallen trees cabled to the bank.

Sunfish catch rates were slightly low with bluegill comprising the majority of sunfish collected. The bulk of sunfish collected were in the 4 to 8 inch range, but a few fish above 9 inches were collected (Figure 2). Only a small number of redear sunfish were collected but the majority of redear collected were large sunfish (9+ inches). The fertilization program has shown the largest effect with the increase in the production and growth of sunfish throughout the lake. Anglers should easily catch their limit of harvestable-sized sunfish during a summer's day at Fluvanna-Ruritan. The best places to fish for sunfish are around the numerous brushpiles throughout the lake and the off the dam shoreline.

Catch rates for black crappie were good due to an abundance of three year old fish collected. It appears that the 2012 crappie spawn was outstanding and these fish are experiencing very good growth with the average three year old crappie reaching nearly 9-inches. These 2012 fish, ranging in size from 7 to 11 inches, comprise the majority of crappie collected

(Figure 3). Crappie anglers should expect wonderful success for crappie in the 8-10 range in 2015 but limited success for any larger fish. Crappie are experience good growth and are being removed from the lake when they reach 10 plus inches, likely by anglers. Although angler harvest of larger fish seems high, the population has good numbers of adult (spawning-aged) fish and the harvest is likely the reason growth rates are high. Anglers looking to quickly fill their creel limit with good fillet-sized fish should fish crappie during the spring and fall around any structure (brushpile, attractors, and fallen trees).

A small number of channel catfish were collected in the 2015 surveys, but catfish often frequent deeper water making them more difficult to catch with electrofishing and trapnet gear. Channel catfish are being stocked annually, so anglers always have a good chance of catching one. Anglers looking for a remote location to fish with excellent bass, crappie, and sunfish fisheries should visit Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake. There is ample parking, a concrete ramp that accommodates most boats, and an abundant amount of open areas to fish from the shoreline. Gas powered motors are prohibited, but a good trolling motor will get you to any area of the lake.

For more information on Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2015.

Species	Electrofishing			Trapnets		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/net night)	Percentage of Catch
Black Crappie	60	36	16	183	9.1	66
Bluegill	111	67	29	31	1.6	11
Brown Bullhead	NONE COLLECTED			23	1.2	8
Channel Catfish	16	10	4	26	1.3	9
Chain Pickerel	185	111	49	1	0.1	0.5
Largemouth Bass	NONE COLLECTED			3	0.2	1
Redear	9	5	2	10	0.5	3.5
Yellow Bullhead	NONE COLLECTED			1	0.1	0.5
Warmouth	NONE COLLECTED			1	0.1	0.5

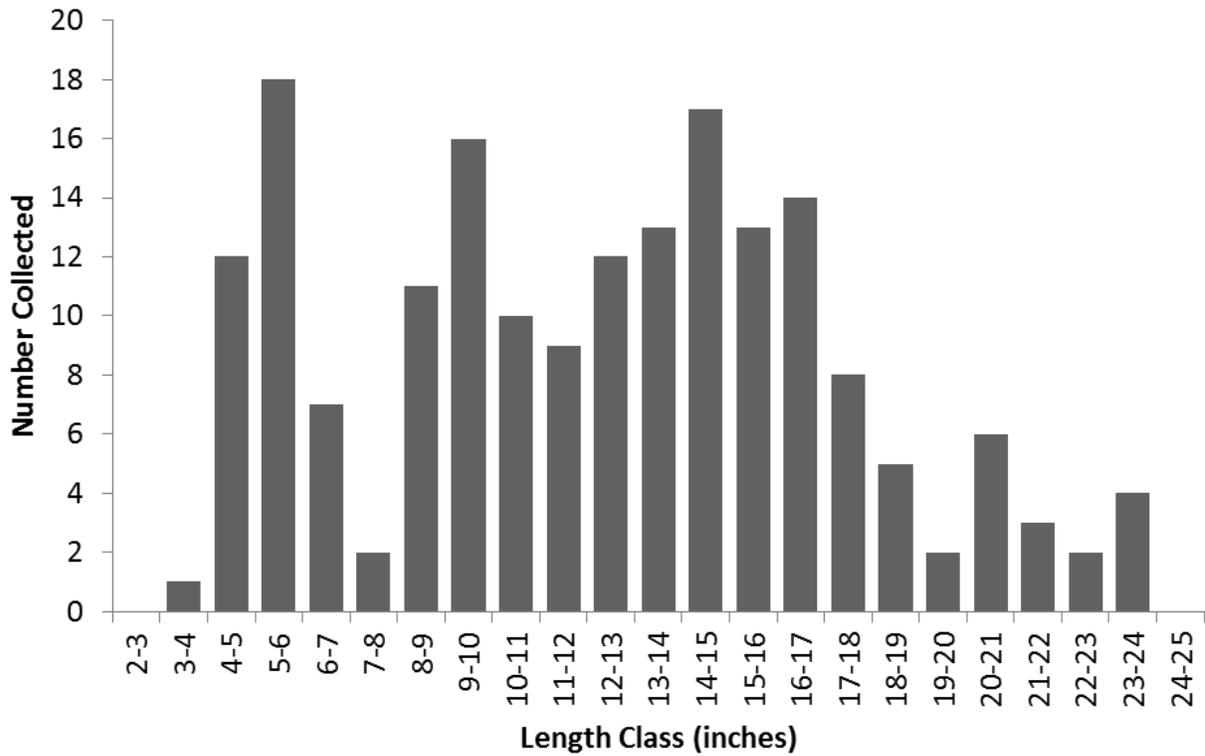


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2015.

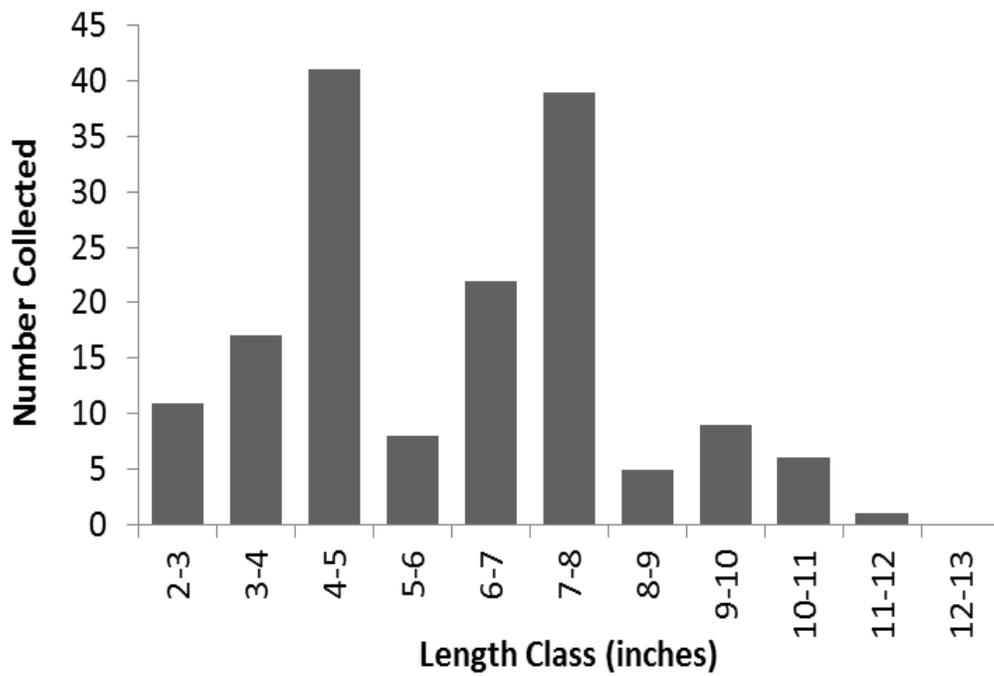


Figure 2. Length distribution of bluegill and redear collected with electrofishing and trapnet gears throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2015.

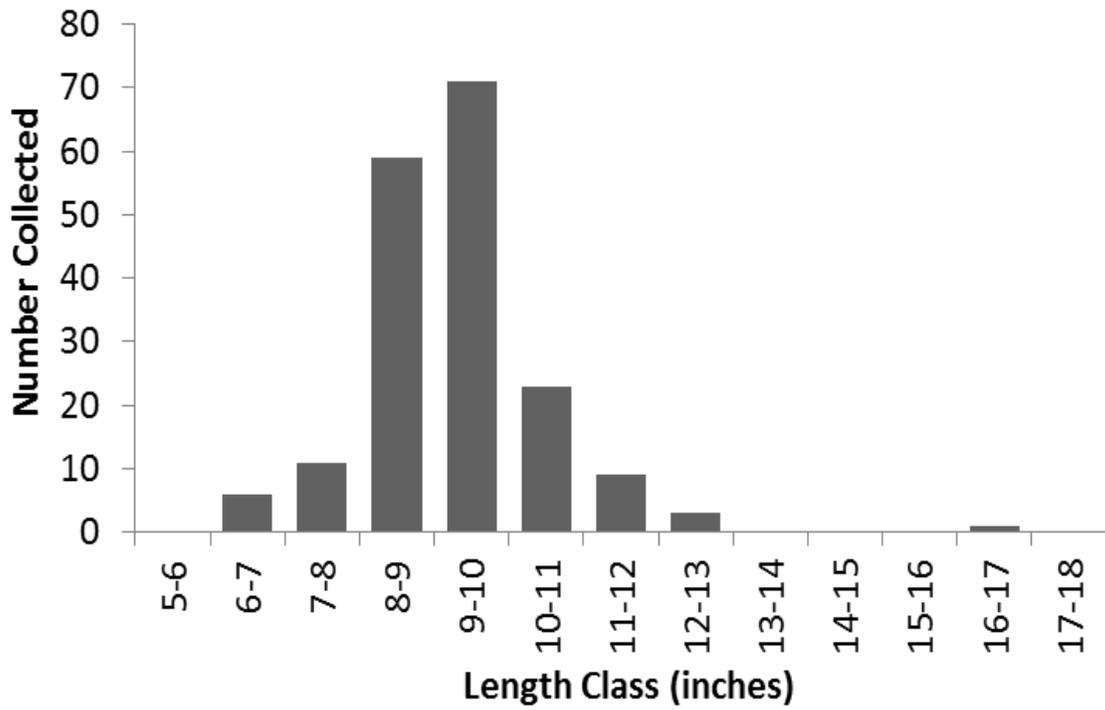


Figure 3. Length distribution of black crappie collected with trapnets throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2015.