



Lake Maury 2002 Fisheries Management Report **Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries**

Lake Maury is a 165-acre impoundment owned by the Mariner's Museum and is located in Newport News. Built in 1931 it is the centerpiece of a 550-acre park and was named after Matthew Fontain Maury, a noted 19th century oceanographer and native Virginian. The lake is open to the public for a fee; no private boats are allowed, but the Museum rents boats. It is closed during the winter months. There is an extensive hiking trail around the lake and there are picnic areas.

Historically, the lake has been stocked with channel catfish, largemouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, redear sunfish, striped bass, and walleye. Muskellunge, northern pike, striped bass and walleye did not get fully established so stocking of these species was terminated.

To get an overall idea of the status of the fish populations in the lake, sampling was carried out using electrofishing in early summer and gill nets in the fall of 2001. Electrofishing is good for sampling those species that tend to inhabit shoreline areas, e.g. bass and bluegill, while gill netting captures those that frequent deeper water, e.g. white perch and gizzard shad.

The largemouth bass population was in fairly good condition. There was some improvement in population structure as shown by a greater proportion of larger fish in the sample compared to the results of the 1999 survey. All the bass looked very healthy and the largest we caught was a 5 pounder. In contrast, the bream are not doing well. Catch rates for bluegill were very low. The redear sunfish population shows a similar trend.

The population structure of white perch, black crappie and yellow perch has improved considerably since 1999. The former two species were showing signs of getting overabundant, however the populations are now better balanced and should give rise to better quality fishing.

Gizzard shad were extremely abundant and most of them were between 5 and 8 inches in length. As such, they are potentially a good supply of food for large bass. However, this is another species that has the propensity to overpopulate so we will monitor them closely.

Lake Maury is located at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News off Route 60. For more information contact the concessionaire's office at 757 591 7799.