



## **Nottoway Lake Report 2006**

Nottoway Lake, a 188-acre impoundment constructed in 1978, is located in Nottoway County, Virginia. This department-owned lake is managed for a warmwater fishery comprised of largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, channel catfish and redear sunfish. Channel catfish are stocked annually at 15 fish/acre to maintain a fishable population. The lake was initially stocked in 1978 with Florida strain largemouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish and opened to public fishing in 1980. Some standing timber was left at Nottoway after dam construction to provide fish habitat. Much of it has broken off at the water's surface so we urge caution and patience to boaters on the impoundment.

Recent surveys at Nottoway Lake show the fishery to be in very good condition. Previous sampling data indicated an unbalanced largemouth bass and bluegill population. In 1989, samples showed an over-abundance of intermediate (<12 inches) sized bass with an absence of bass in the 12 to 15 inch size range. To correct this imbalance, a 12 – 15 inch protected slot limit was imposed along with a five fish per day creel limit in 1990. The largemouth bass population remains dense but growth rates remain good and fish reach 20 inches and above in the lake. The fishery is dominated by fish inside the 12 to 15 inch slot limit making bass fishing extremely entertaining at Nottoway. With very strong year classes entering the fishery each year, the largemouth bass fishing at Nottoway looks great for the foreseeable future.

Not only does Nottoway Lake provide an excellent largemouth bass fishery, but sunfish fishing is good too. Sampling in 2005 showed that most bluegill were less than six inches but there are good numbers over 8 inches. Numbers of bluegill sampled in 2005 were as high as any seen in the past decade so bream fishing should be very good for the next year or two – if the bass don't beat you to them. Redear sunfish (shellcracker) up to 9 inches were also sampled but numbers are very low. The sunfish fishery has historically been dominated by bluegill so this comes as no surprise. Look for sunfish on beds in April and May especially in the shallows near the corners of the dam. Many fish are normally observed in these areas during the spawn.

Nottoway Lake provides an excellent fishery for the angler who wants to catch good numbers of quality largemouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish. Other fisheries available at Nottoway include a limited black crappie fishery and channel catfish. The crappie population is dominated by fish under 10-inches but does provide an alternative for the angler suffering from spring fever. The current slot limit on largemouth bass appears to be working well and should continue to provide a quality fishery in the lake. Nottoway Lake can be reached by following the signs from Route 460 onto Route 606, north of Blackstone, Virginia.