



Albemarle Lake 2009

Albemarle Lake is a 35-acre impoundment built by the Civilian Conservation Corp. in 1938. The lake was one of the first public lakes in Albemarle County when it was purchased by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The lake was originally stocked with many different fish species but currently the lake contains self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, and bullhead catfish. Additionally, the lake is annually stocked with channel catfish. In 2008, the fish community of Albemarle Lake was sampled by boat electrofishing (April) and trapnets (November). This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Albemarle Lake.

A total of ten fish species were collected in the 2008 surveys (Table 1). Bluegill and largemouth bass were 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). Albemarle Lake supports a quality largemouth bass fishery with a high abundance of bass in the lake. The bass population is fairly balanced as determined by a good size distribution of fish collected in the electrofishing survey (Figure 1). Anglers fishing Albemarle Lake should experience high catch rates for bass in the 6 to 15 inch range due to the high numbers of fish in this size range. The smaller size classes of bass could even sustain some harvest to reduce their numbers and improve the overall condition of these smaller fish. The lake also offers a fair number of larger bass (> 15 inches) for anglers. The larger bass collected were all in great condition and should provide any angler a great fishing experience if hooked. The largest bass collected measured 22.2 inches and weighed 6.6 lbs. Anglers targeting largemouth bass should fish around the numerous fish attractors placed throughout the lake. The most prominent attractor is the old steel framed diving platform located near the boat launch.

Albemarle Lake continues to offer one of the best sunfish fisheries for a small impoundment in Central Virginia. The electrofishing catch rate for bluegill was very high with a large number of these fish being harvestable size (> 7 inches, Figure 2). Although no bluegill over 9 inches were observed, a large number of fish in the 8 to 9 inch size class were collected (Figure 2). The abundance of these larger bluegill offers a high potential for trophy catches in years to come. Only a small number of redear sunfish were collected in electrofishing and trapnet surveys but when they were collected the majority were large sunfish (9 + inches). Any serious sunfish anglers should give Albemarle Lake a visit. Sunfish can be found throughout the lake but the fallen trees around the shoreline offer some of the best places to catch the big sunfish.

The trapnet catch rate for black crappie was low indicating a low population density. Crappie anglers will have to work to catch their limit in Albemarle Lake, but the fish they catch should be worth the effort. The 2008 survey indicates that the crappie population has a high portion of fish in the 8 to 12 inch range, with a few crappie above 12 inches available to anglers (Figure 3). The upper section of the lake near the boat launch was the most productive area for catching crappie. Crappie anglers should concentrate efforts in this upper end of the lake or any

area with significant structure. Spring and fall months generally offer the best opportunities to catch large numbers of crappie.

A small number of channel catfish and bullhead catfish were collected in the 2008 surveys. Little is known about the catfish population, because catfish often frequent deeper water making them more difficult to catch with electrofishing and trapnet gear. Albemarle Lake is open to catfish anglers after dark so there is plenty of opportunity for anglers to catch some bullheads or stocked channel catfish.

Anglers looking for a remote location to fish with excellent bass and sunfish fisheries should visit Albemarle Lake. There is ample parking, a gravel ramp that accommodates most boats, and 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.

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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	9	8	2.1	71	4.7	34.0
Bluegill	233	217	55.3	86	5.7	41.1
Brown Bullhead	1	1	0.2	10	0.7	4.8
Channel Catfish	2	2	0.5	2	0.1	1.0
Largemouth Bass	157	146	37.3	4	0.3	1.9
Redbreast Sunfish	2	2	0.5	None	None	None
Redear Sunfish	11	10	2.6	24	1.6	11.5
Warmouth	5	5	1.2	3	0.2	1.4
White Sucker	1	1	0.2	2	0.1	1.0
Yellow Bullhead	None	None	None	7	0.5	3.3

Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Albemarle Lake in 2008.

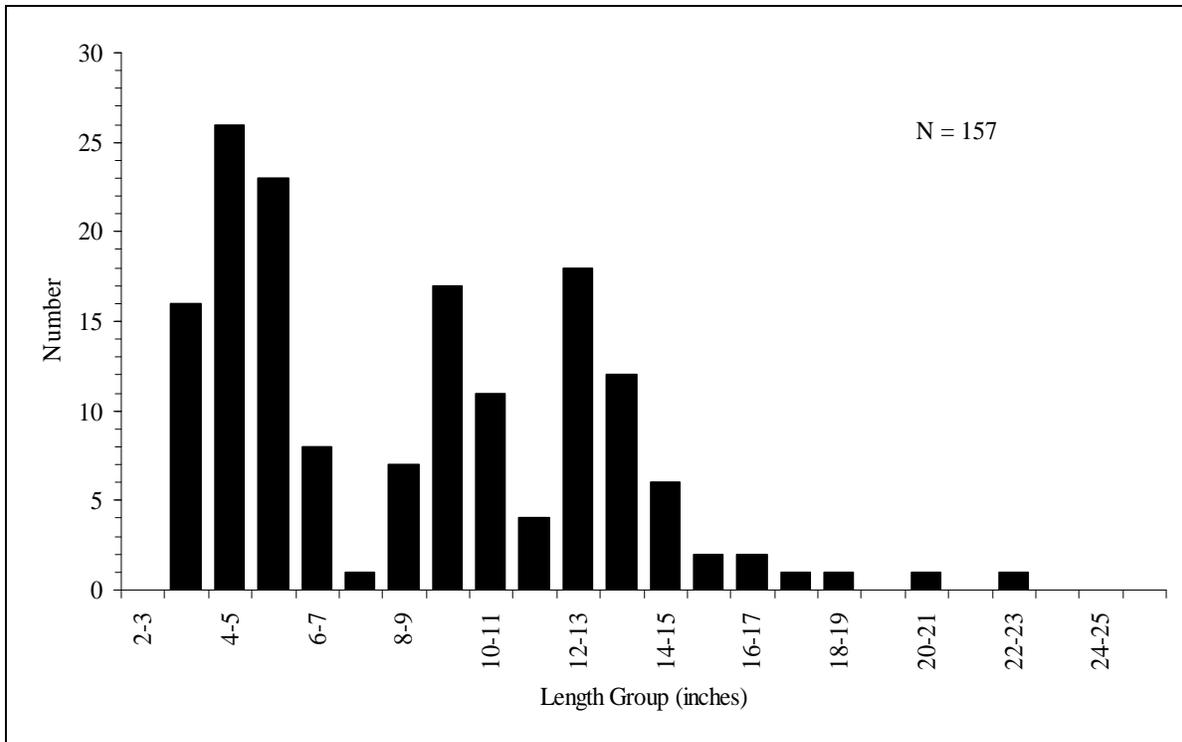


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Albemarle Lake in 2008.

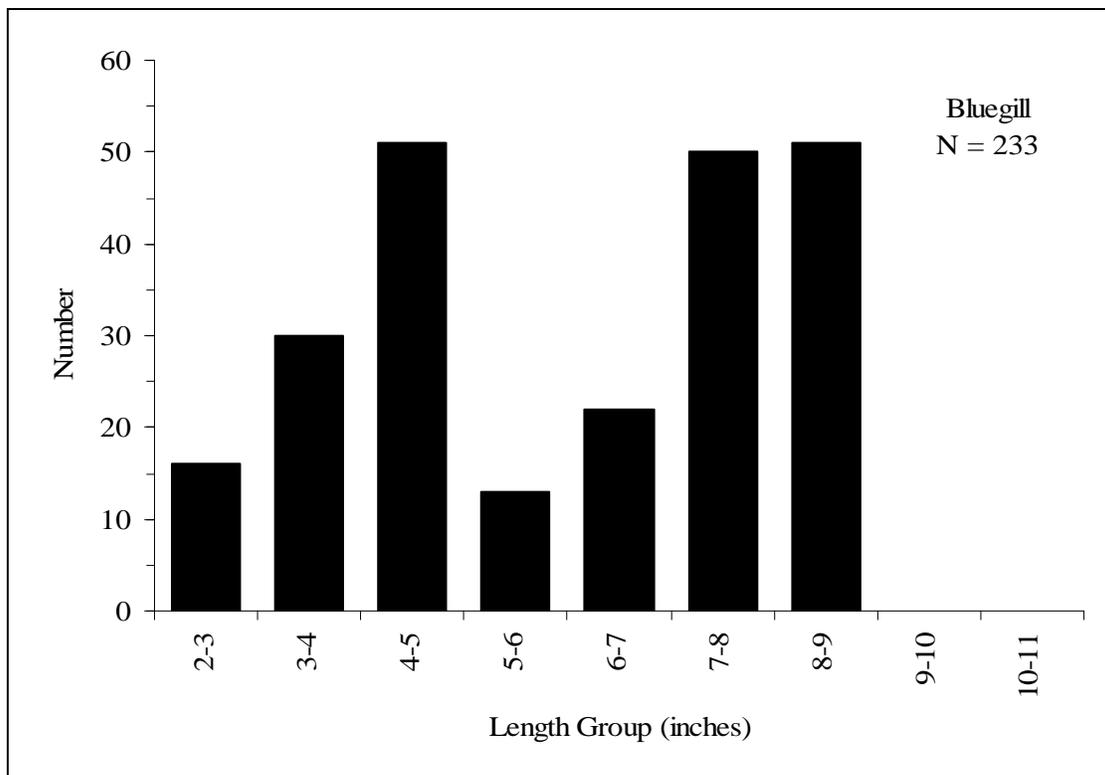


Figure 2. Length distribution of bluegill collected with electrofishing gear throughout Albemarle Lake in 2008.

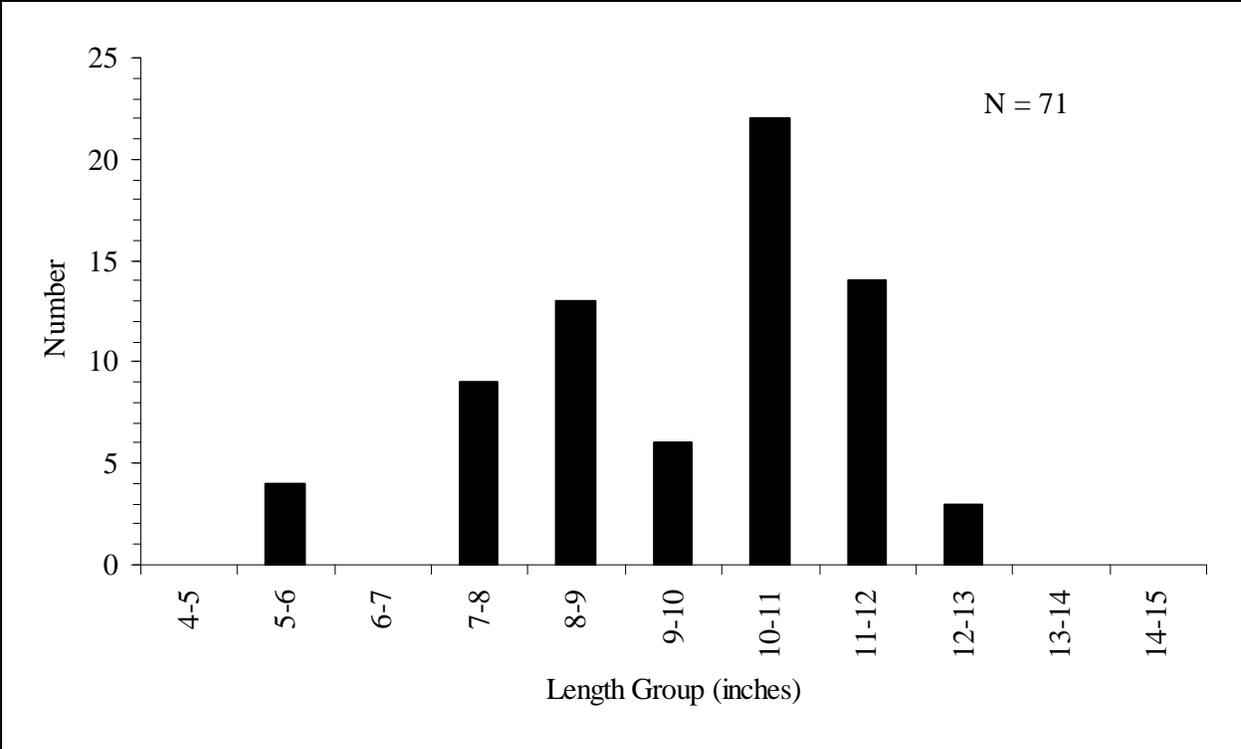


Figure 3. Length distribution of black crappie collected with trapnets throughout Albemarle Lake in 2008.