



## Mint Springs Lakes 2012



Located just west of Crozet in Albemarle County, the two Mint Springs lakes are small (< 5 acres) recreation lakes administered by Albemarle Parks and Recreation. The ponds are part of the Department's put-and-take trout stocking program, but also contain several warmwater species including largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie. Channel catfish were stocked in both lakes in 2010 to create an additional fishery. In the spring of 2011, the fish communities of both lakes were sampled by boat electrofishing. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in the Mint Springs lakes.

The fish communities of both lakes are limited by small waterbody size. The main fishing attraction is the popular put-and-take trout stocking program. During sampling numerous trout were observed but were not collected. Excluding trout, a total of five fish species were collected in both lakes during the 2011 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth bass and bluegill were by far the most abundant species collected in both lakes (Table 1).

The bass fisheries in both lakes are severely stunted with bass stockpiling at sizes below 12 inches (Figure 1). A few larger bass were collected and were of exceptional size for the small lakes. The largest bass was collected in the upper lake, measured 22 inches and weighed nearly 8 lbs. To correct stockpiling and produce more quality bass, anglers should harvest every bass caught under 12 inches within the 5 bass per statewide creel limit. Once harvest is increased, bass growth will improve and more bass will grow to larger sizes. A 12-22 protective slot limit is recommended to protect the limited number of large bass produced. Additionally, harvest of only one bass over 22 will be allowed per angler per day.

The sunfish population, primarily bluegill and black crappie, were limited in numbers. Although low in number, quality sized bluegill and crappie were collected (Figures 2 and 3). These fish were between 9 and 12 inches and would be a potential trophy catch for any angler. The largest sunfish was actually a bluegill that was close to 12 inches in length and weighed nearly 1 pound.

The trout fisheries within the Mint Springs lakes are major fishing attractions but there are ample opportunities to catch other species including stocked catfish. The park has wonderful amenities including a fishing pier in the lower lake, numerous bank fishing access, and picnic areas. Swimming is the big attraction in the upper pond during the summer, but there is ample room for anglers to enjoy shore fishing. Mint Springs is open during daylight hours, and a small fee is required to enter the park. Boats are prohibited on both lakes.

For more information on the Mint Springs lakes please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout the Mint Springs lakes in 2011.

Species	Upper Lake			Lower Lake		
	Number	CPUE (fish/hour)	Percentage of Catch	Number	CPUE (fish/hour)	Percentage of Catch
<b>Black Crappie</b>	8	20	7.2	10	38	10.4
<b>Bluegill</b>	33	81	29.7	48	184	50.0
<b>Brown Bullhead</b>	2	5	1.8	None Collected		
<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	68	167	61.3	34	131	35.4
<b>Warmouth</b>	None Collected			4	15	4.2

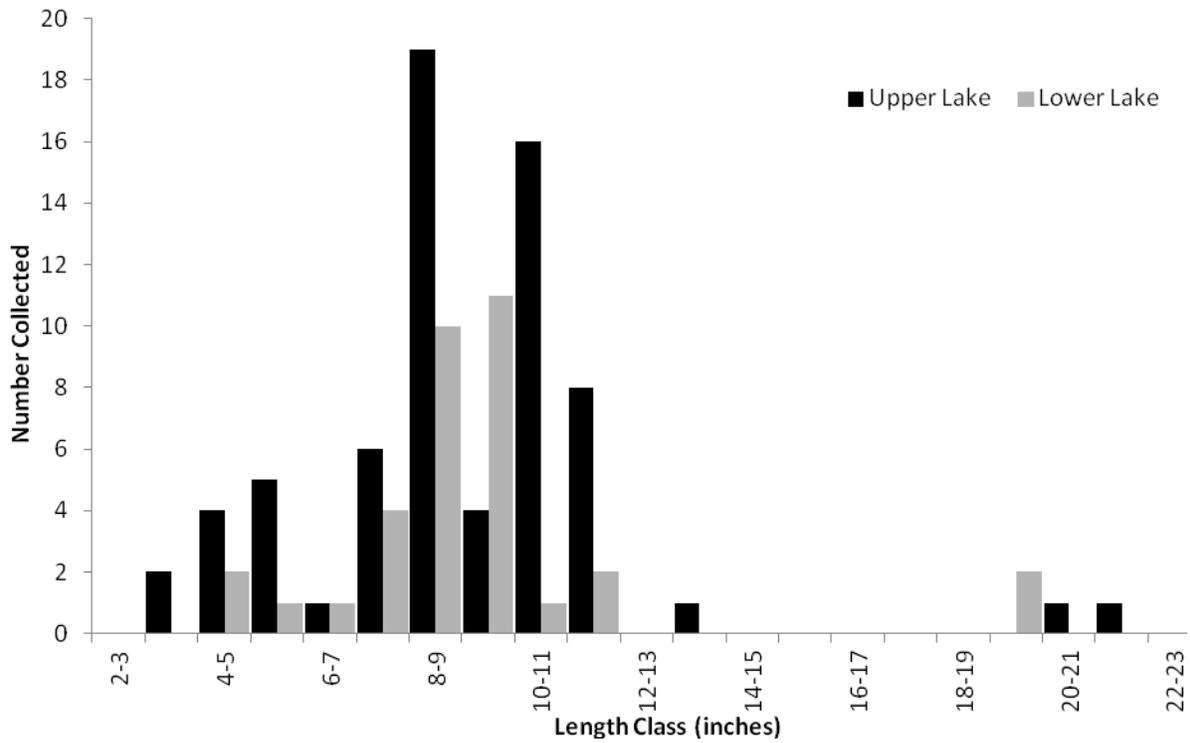


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected throughout the Mint Springs lakes in 2011.

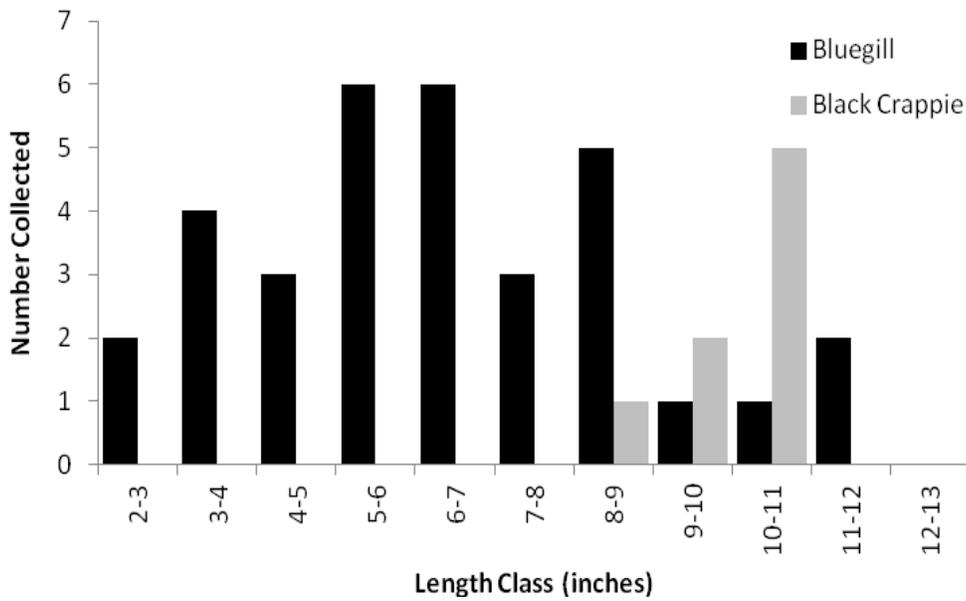


Figure 2. Length distribution of bluegill and black crappie collected throughout upper Mint Springs lake in 2011.

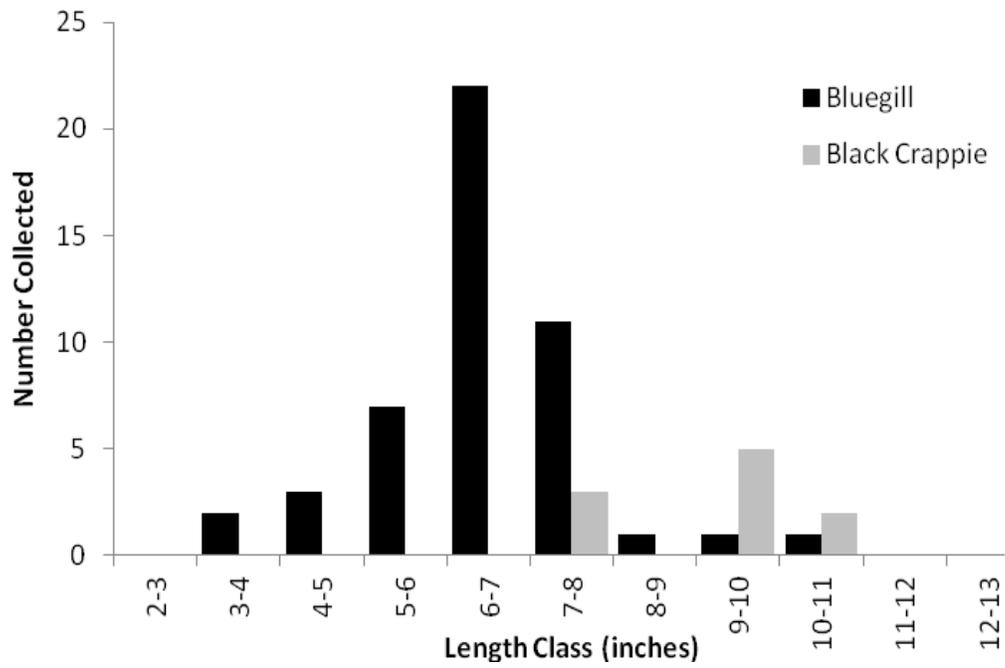


Figure 3. Length distribution of bluegill and black crappie collected throughout lower Mint Springs lake in 2011.