



## Abbott Lake 2013 Management Report

Abbott Lake is a 24-acre impoundment located along the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway in Bedford County and is one of the attractions to the Peaks of Otter Park. Fishing is just one of the many recreational opportunities available in the Park. Numerous hiking opportunities range from very demanding hikes up high mountain peaks to the short flat trail around Abbott Lake. The Park also offers the outdoor enthusiast lodging at the popular Peaks of Otter Lodge or campground. Other facilities include picnic sites and shelters, a restaurant, restrooms, and scenic drives.

The Abbot Lake fishery is comprised of smallmouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish with a limited number of bullhead catfish. Abbot Lake was drained in the winter and spring of 2008 for dam repairs. The lake was restocked with fingerling smallmouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish. The smallmouth bass population continues to increase and currently supports fair numbers of 14-17 inch fish. Smallmouth bass are protected with a catch and release only regulation. This regulation will eventually cause slower growth from overcrowding and produce a population dominated by bass 9-13 inches. The sunfish population has responded more quickly producing higher numbers and quality size fish. Sunfish will continue to increase for a couple more years with the size structure expected to remain stable with most fish between 5-8 inches.

Since anglers are prohibited from using live bait (except during special kids fishing events) or boats, fishing from the shoreline with artificial lures is required. This lake is a popular destination for fly fisherman which is the most productive method for sunfish anglers. Small wet flies for bluegill and larger flies such as 'Woolly Buggers' and streamers are more popular for the smallmouth. Other popular artificial lures typically used for smallmouth bass can also be productive.

The Park Service conducts kids fishing event on Saturday mornings form 9:00-11:00 for youngsters ages 3-14. Bait and tackle is provided or you can bring your own. The program begins each spring on Memorial Day weekend and runs through the last weekend of October. For more information, call 540-586-4496.

The lake can be accessed from the Blue Ridge Parkway or by taking Rt. 43 to the Park from the Town of Bedford.

### Abbott Lake Key Findings - 2013

- Most fish were lost when the lake was drained in 2008. Smallmouth bass, bluegill and redear were restocked in 2008.
- Fish stockings were successful with populations expanding and producing good smallmouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish populations.
- Electrofishing sampling in 2012 collected primarily adult smallmouth bass and bluegill. These species are expected to increase for several more years from natural reproduction.
- No management changes are recommended at this time. The Park Service prefers continuing with historical management. This management strategy will eventually produce stunted

smallmouth bass and abundant large sunfish based on previous populations under the same management practices.

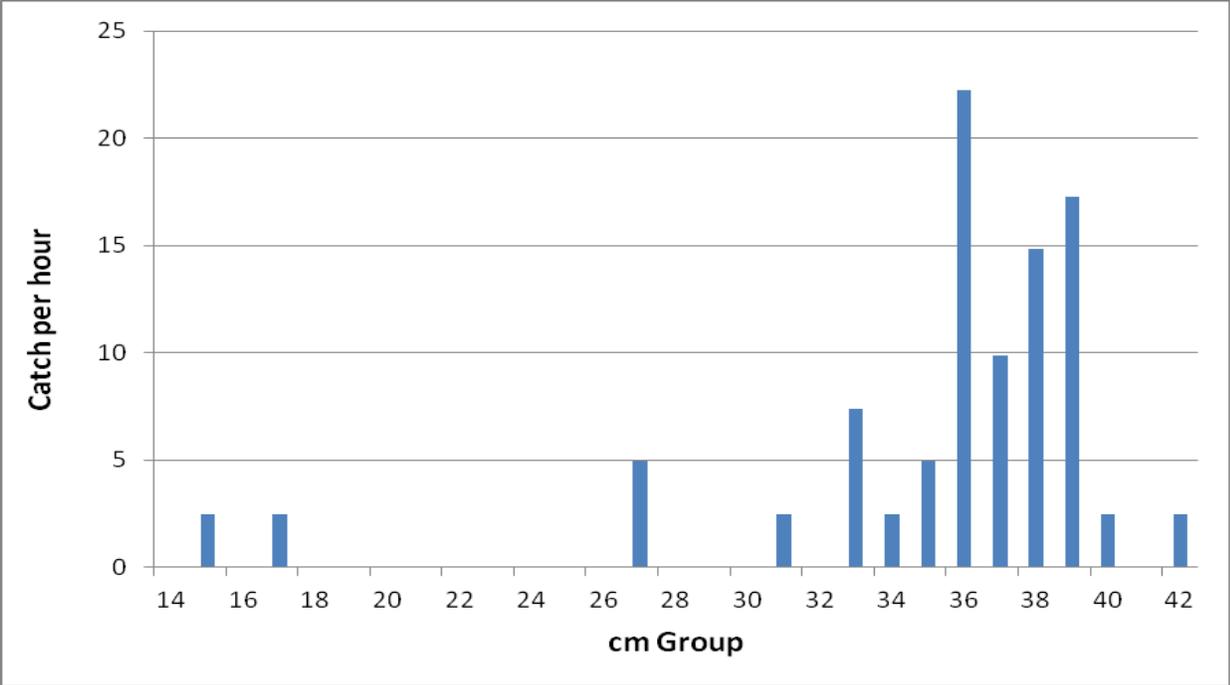


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution for smallmouth bass collected with electrofishing gear at Abbott Lake on 5-05-2012.

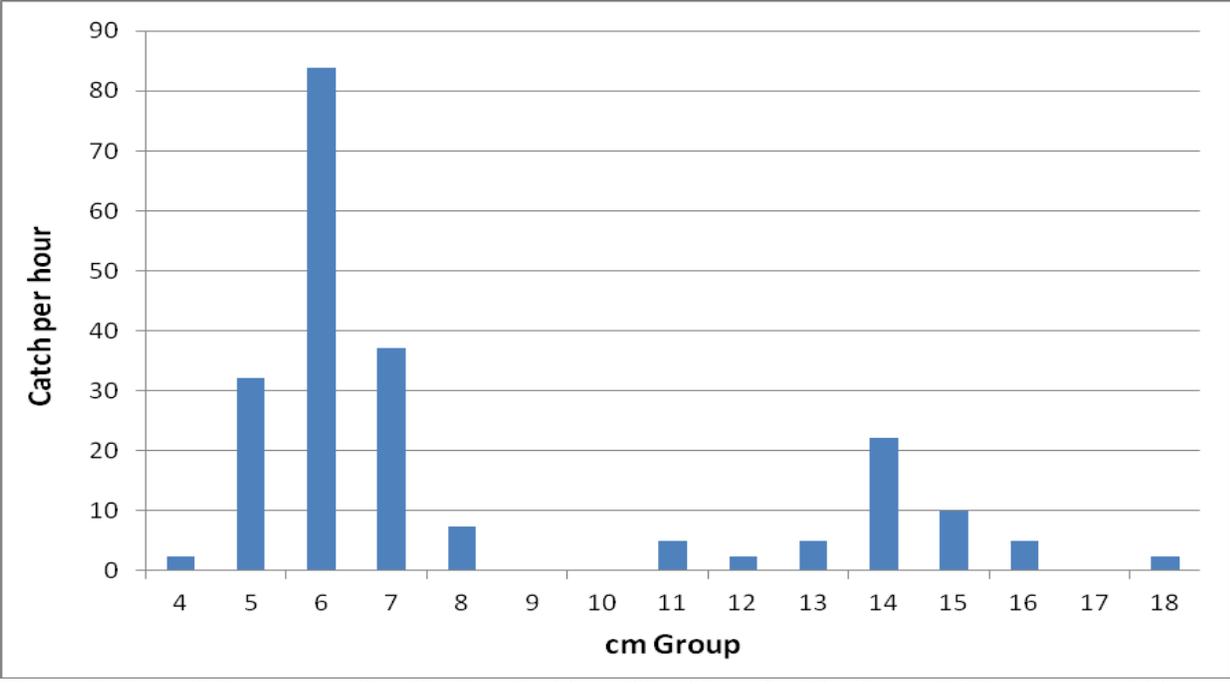


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution for bluegill collected with electrofishing gear at Abbott Lake on 5-05-2012.