



## Powhatan Lakes 2013



Nestled in the northeastern corner of the Powhatan Wildlife Management Area, the Powhatan Lakes are long-time angler attractions of Powhatan County. The lakes, between 34 and 40 acres, are contiguous impoundments of Stegers Creek. In June of 2004, a severe storm event caused breaching of both dams. After nearly four years of construction, the Powhatan Lakes were reopened in April of 2008 with some major improvements to the facility including the construction of two new fishing piers, upgrades to the boat launches, and new wildlife viewing trails. Before 2004, the lakes were well known for their quality largemouth bass, sunfish, and crappie fisheries. When the lakes refilled these species reestablished population from fish residing in Stegers Creek. Additionally, F1 hybrid largemouth bass (Florida Strain Female x Northern Strain Male), bluegill, redear, and channel catfish were stocked. The lakes are annually sampled by boat electrofishing to monitor the sportfish community.

The fish communities of both lakes are diverse (Table 1), with largemouth bass being the most popular fish among anglers. In both lakes, largemouth bass are managed under a 14-22 protective slot limit, with the additional harvest restriction of only one bass greater than 22 inches per day per angler. The bass populations in both lakes are exceptional with nearly forty percent of bass collected in the protective slot range of 14-22 inches (Figures 1 and 2). The slot fish are very plump and healthy and biologists have already collected a bass that was over 22 inches and weighed in excess of 9 pounds. The bass reproduction is starting to pick up and some of the smaller fish are experiencing slower growth than the first few generations. Anglers should concentrate bass harvest on the small bass (<14 inches) to prevent future stunting of bass. The abundance of quality bass should provide a rewarding trip for any angler.

The panfish fisheries in both lakes are primarily composed of bluegill and black crappie with growing populations of redear sunfish. Panfish are becoming abundant in both lakes and fish in excess of 10 inches have already been collected. The majority (>95%) of panfish are small measuring less than 8 inches (Figures 3 and 4). There have been some collections of trophy crappie (excess of 15 inches) in both the upper and lower lakes. The abundance of fish should give excitement to even novice anglers. The fishing piers have sunken Christmas trees around the bases that make excellent holding and fishing locations for panfish.

The Powhatan Lakes are in close proximity to the Richmond area (< 1 hrs drive) and offer great angling opportunities to citizens of Central Virginia. The lakes offer many amenities listed above and both lakes are well on their way to establishing the historical fisheries that anglers enjoyed before the dams failed. Both lakes also offer limited fisheries for chain pickerel and bullhead catfish. Channel catfish are to add additional fishing opportunities for anglers. Each lake offers well maintained concrete launches for trolling motor only boat access. Come out and enjoy the Powhatan Lakes and also take time to enjoy the rest of the Wildlife Management Area.

For more information on the Powhatan Lakes, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout the Powhatan Lakes in 2012.

Species	Upper Lake		Lower lake	
	Number Collected	Catch rate (fish/hour)	Number Collected	Catch rate (fish/hour)
Black Crappie	47	47	71	77
Bluegill	183	182	140	152
Brown Bullhead	11	11	12	13
Channel Catfish	5	5	12	13
Creek Chubsucker	1	1	4	4
Chain Pickerel	7	7	2	2
Golden Shiner	3	3	21	23
Green Sunfish	1	1	3	3
Largemouth Bass	68	68	87	94
Pumkinseed	1	1	1	1
Redear	7	7	11	12
Warmouth	5	5	7	8
Yellow Bullhead	1	1	5	5

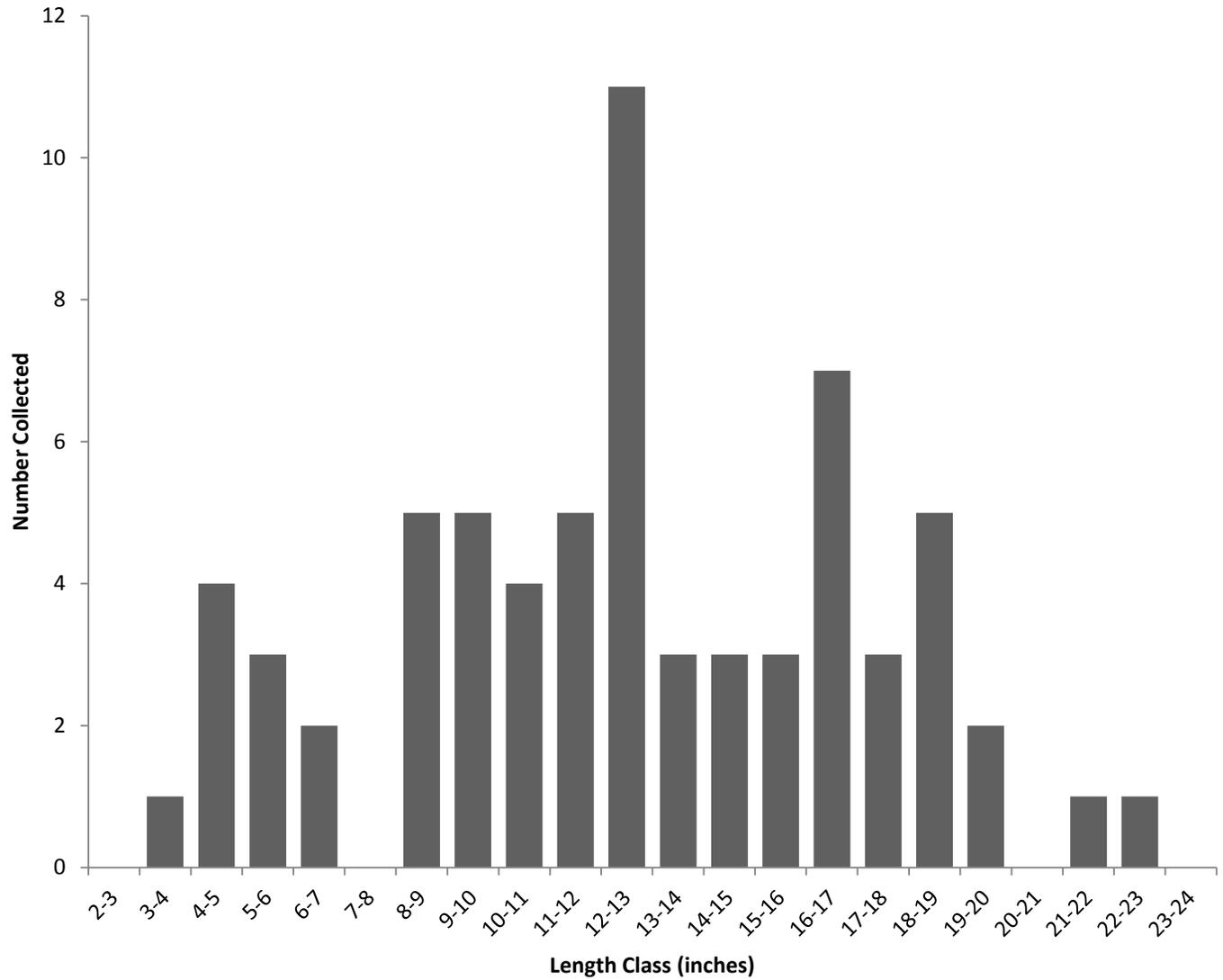


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Upper Powhatan in 2012.

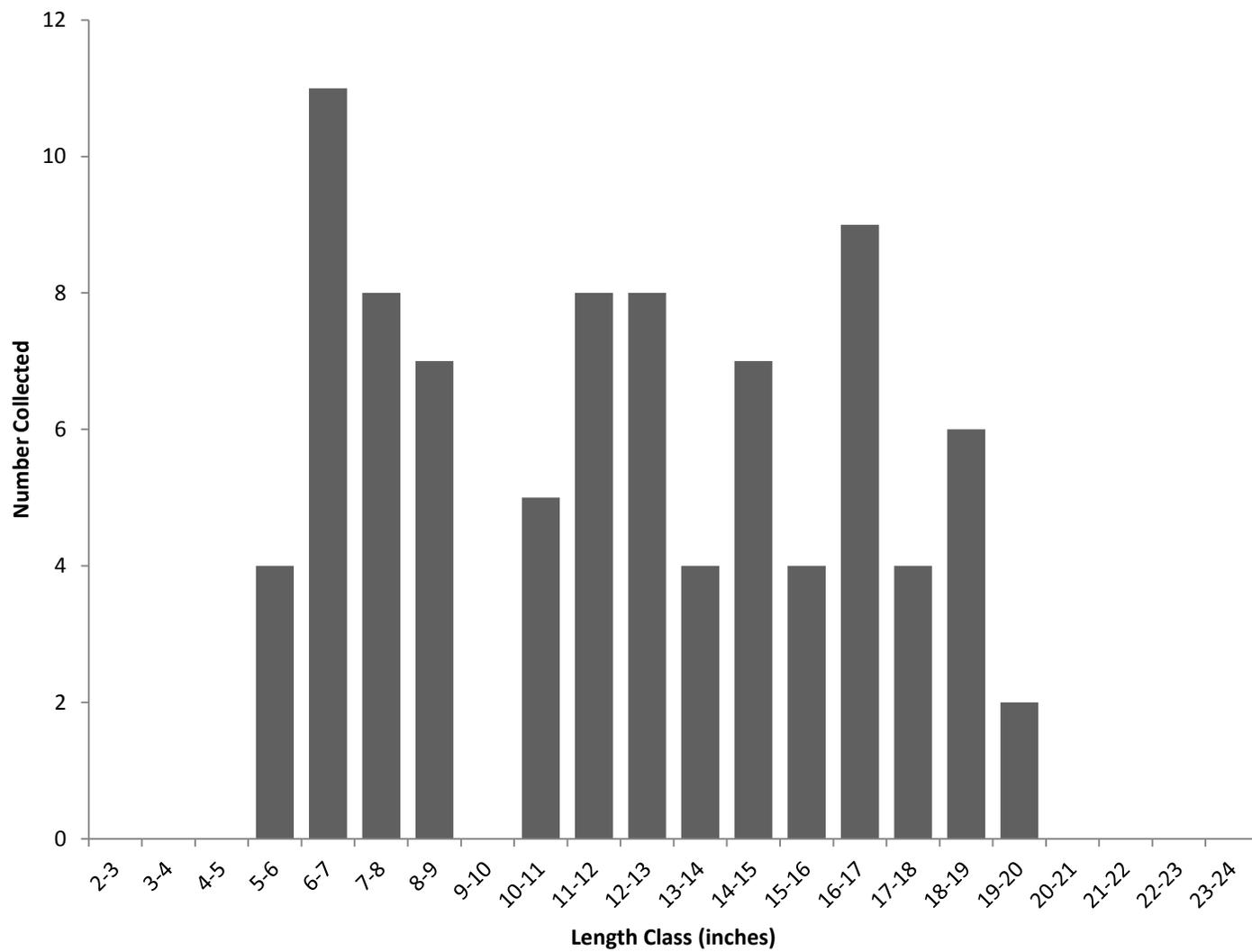


Figure 2. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Lower Powhatan in 2012.

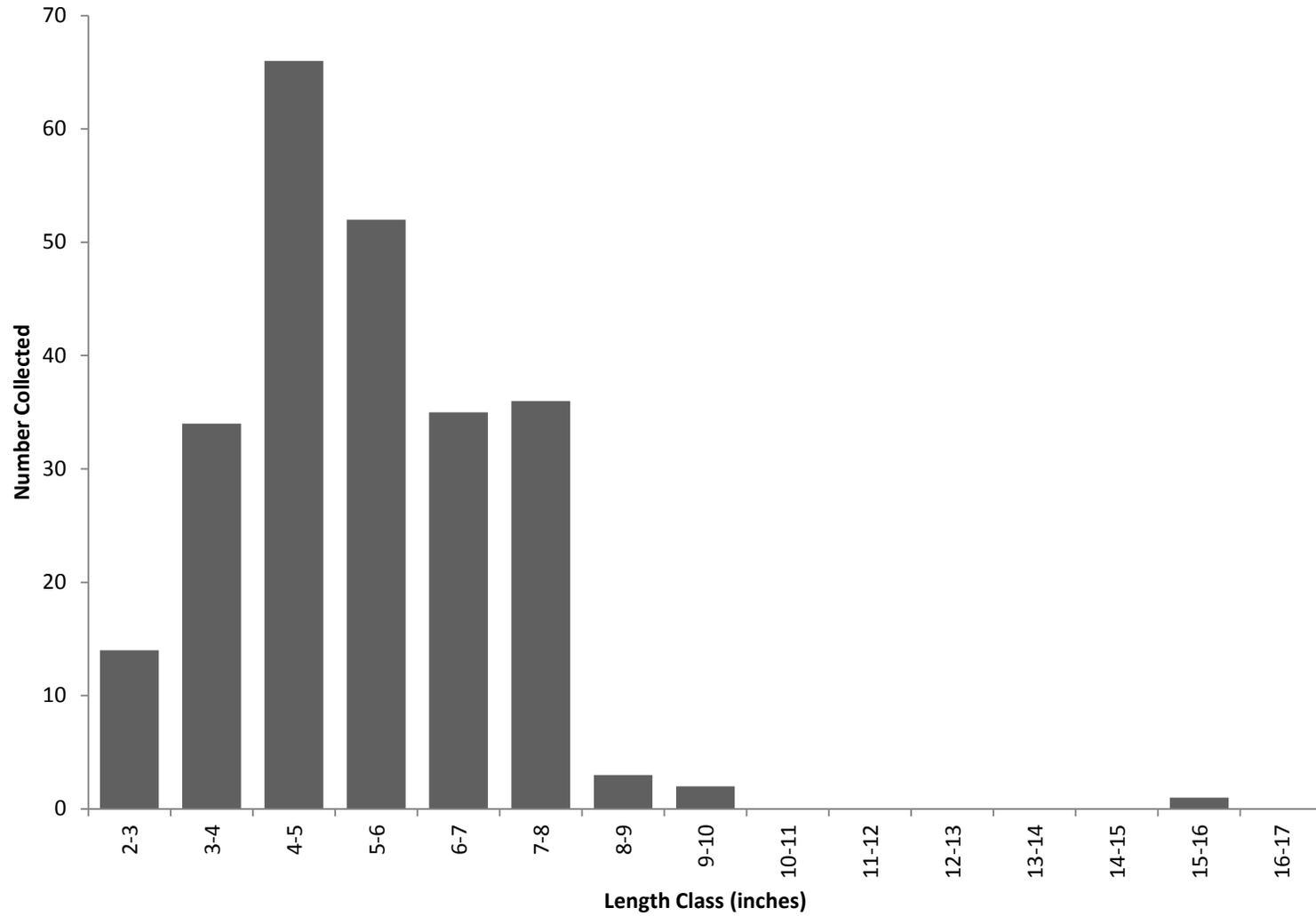


Figure 3. Length distribution of Panfish (black crappie, bluegill, and redear) collected with electrofishing gear throughout Upper Powhatan in 2012.

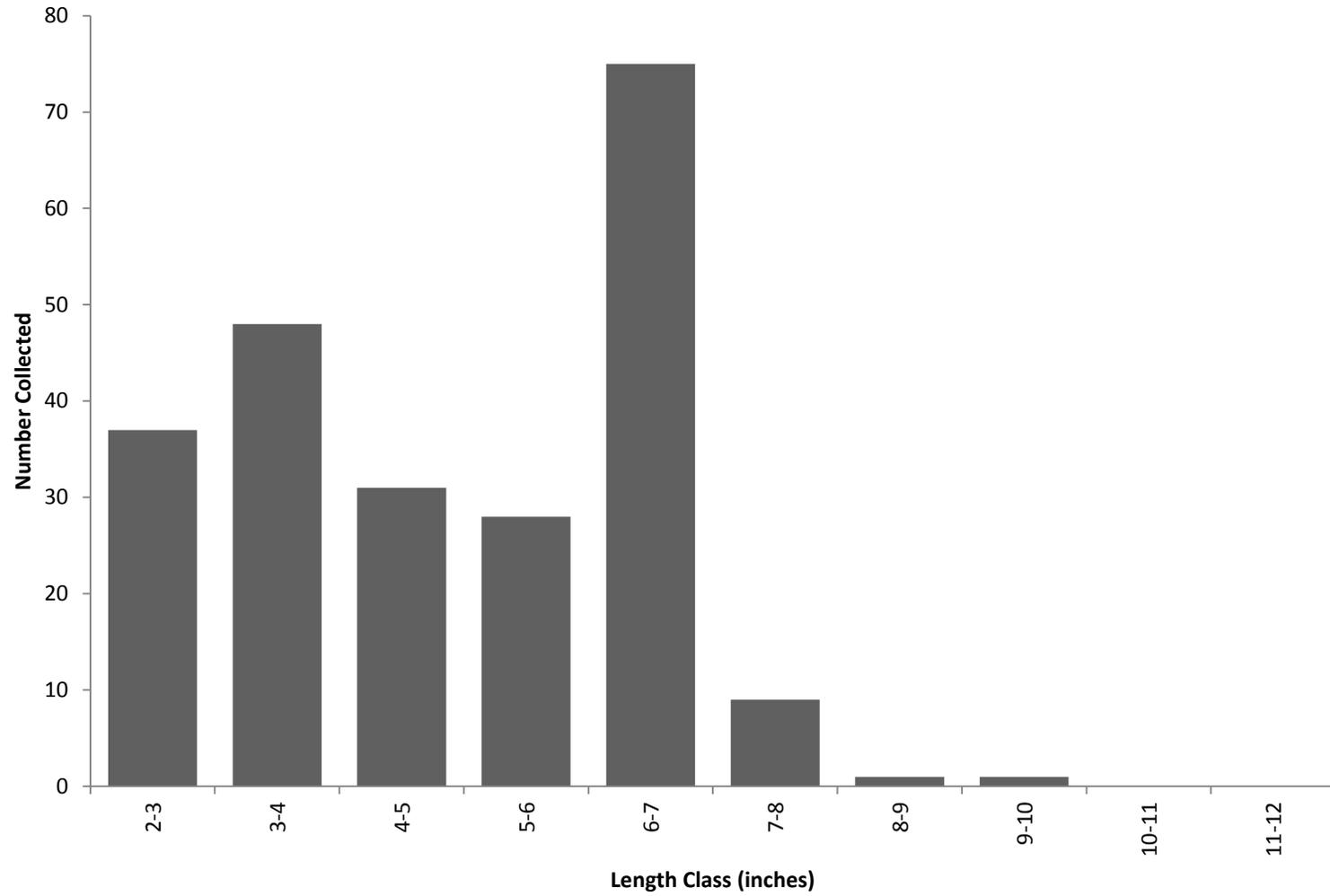


Figure 4. Length distribution of Panfish (black crappie, bluegill, and redear) collected with electrofishing gear throughout Lower Powhatan in 2012.