



## Rivanna Reservoir 2014



Located in Albemarle County, Rivanna Reservoir is a 450-acre water supply impoundment owned and managed by the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority. The reservoir contains self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, and channel catfish. The lake has traditionally provided excellent largemouth bass and panfish fisheries. In the spring of 2013, the fish community of Rivanna Reservoir was sampled by boat electrofishing and trapnets. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Rivanna Reservoir.

Rivanna Reservoir's fish community is very diverse with a total of fifteen fish species collected in the 2013 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth bass and bluegill were by far the most abundant species collected in the electrofishing survey, while black crappie, bluegill, and redear were the most abundant species collected in the trapnet survey (Table 1). Rivanna Reservoir continues to provide a quality largemouth bass fishery for Central Virginia. Bass catch rates were good for a larger reservoir and were similar to rates from previous surveys. The bass population contains good portions of juvenile and adult fish (Figure 1), with exceptional numbers of bass in the 15 to 20 inch range. The reservoir has good trophy potential for largemouth bass due to the diversity and abundance of forage and limited fishing pressure. This potential was clearly evident by our collection of eleven bass measuring over 20 inches (see photo gallery section at our Rivanna Reservoir webpage). The largest bass collected in the 2013 survey measured over 22 inches and weighed approximately 7 pounds. The most productive areas for bass were the upper end of the reservoir around the flats, points, and woody structure and in the lower end of the lake (below the Rt. 743 Bridge) around the emergent water willow.

Sunfish electrofishing catch rates were good with bluegill comprising the majority of sunfish collected. The bulk of sunfish collected were small (< 7 inches); only a few bluegill and redear sunfish over 8 inches were collected (Figure 2). Our trapnet survey along with previous electrofishing surveys and angler reports indicate that there are numerous large redear sunfish (> 8 inches) in the upper end of the reservoir, especially during the spring (April-May). Anglers determined to catch quality sunfish should concentrate their efforts on these big redear during the spring and early summer. The best place to fish for the big redear is in the upper lake around the sandy flats that these fish frequent during spawning.

Crappie catch rates were very high with the majority of the crappie catch (> 91%) composed of black crappie. Although catch rates were high, the majority of crappie collected were less than the preferred angler size of 10 inches (Figure 3). The lack of preferred-sized fish is not due to low survival (annual survival near 70%) with crappie up to age-15 collected in the sample (Figure 4). The lack of larger crappie is due to overpopulation and stunting. On average, crappie growth slows at age-5 when the fish approach 10 inches, and crappie rarely grow in excess of 9 inches (Figure 4). The crappie population is in need of considerable angler harvest of fish in the 7-9 inch range to increase average growth. Crappie up to 15 inches were collected, but these larger fish are very rare and anglers should expect to catch fish in the 7 to 9 inch range.

Anglers looking for an excellent bass lake that is in the Charlottesville area should visit Rivanna Reservoir. The lake offers good numbers of catfish and smaller panfish for anglers to

enjoy. One problem is that the access to the reservoir is limited and only located in the lower half of the lake. One concrete boat ramp exists (on Rt. 659 off of Rt. 631, aka Rio Road), and parking is limited. The other main access point, off of Route 676 on the Ivy Creek arm of the reservoir, is an informal access that has a gravel bank launch and very limited parking. Both access areas have well defined trails nearby for bank anglers with the Ivy Creek access being adjacent to Ivy Creek Park. The Department of Game & Inland Fisheries continues to look for opportunities to improve and develop boat access at this lake. Gas powered motors are prohibited in the reservoir, and anglers should make sure they have a good trolling motor and a well charged batteries to get around the large reservoir.

For more information on Rivanna Reservoir, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Rivanna Reservoir in 2013. NC means none collected.

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	53	28.9	13.7	306	15.3	57.5
Bluegill	113	61.6	29.3	87	4.4	16.4
Brown Bullhead	NC	NC	NC	5	0.3	0.9
Channel Catfish	NC	NC	NC	1	0.1	0.2
Golden Shiner	1	0.5	0.3	NC	NC	NC
Green Sunfish	5	2.7	1.3	NC	NC	NC
Gizzard Shad	3	1.6	0.8	24	1.2	4.5
Largemouth Bass	173	94.4	44.8	NC	NC	NC
Redear	20	10.9	5.2	65	3.3	12.2
Warmouth	11	6.0	2.8	7	0.4	1.3
White Catfish	NC	NC	NC	1	0.1	0.2
White Crappie	NC	NC	NC	29	1.5	5.5
White Sucker	6	3.3	1.6	3	0.2	0.6
Yellow Bullhead	NC	NC	NC	4	0.2	0.8
Yellow Perch	1	0.5	0.3	NC	NC	NC

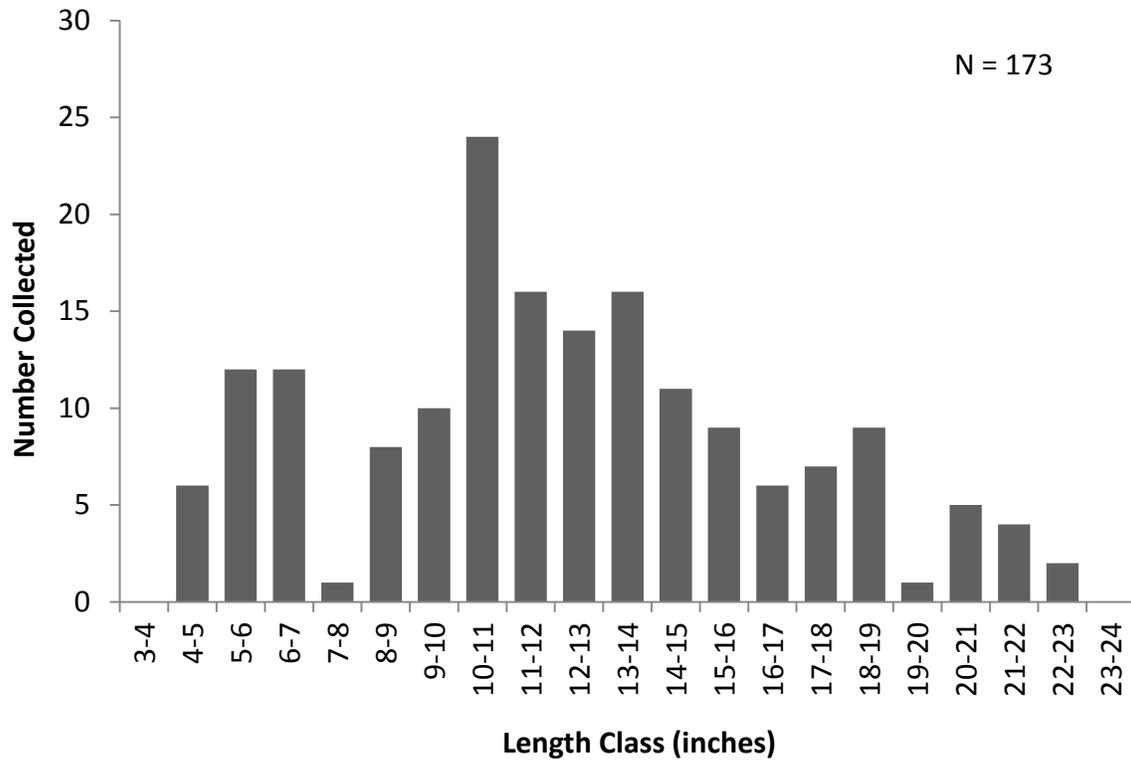


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Rivanna Reservoir in 2013.

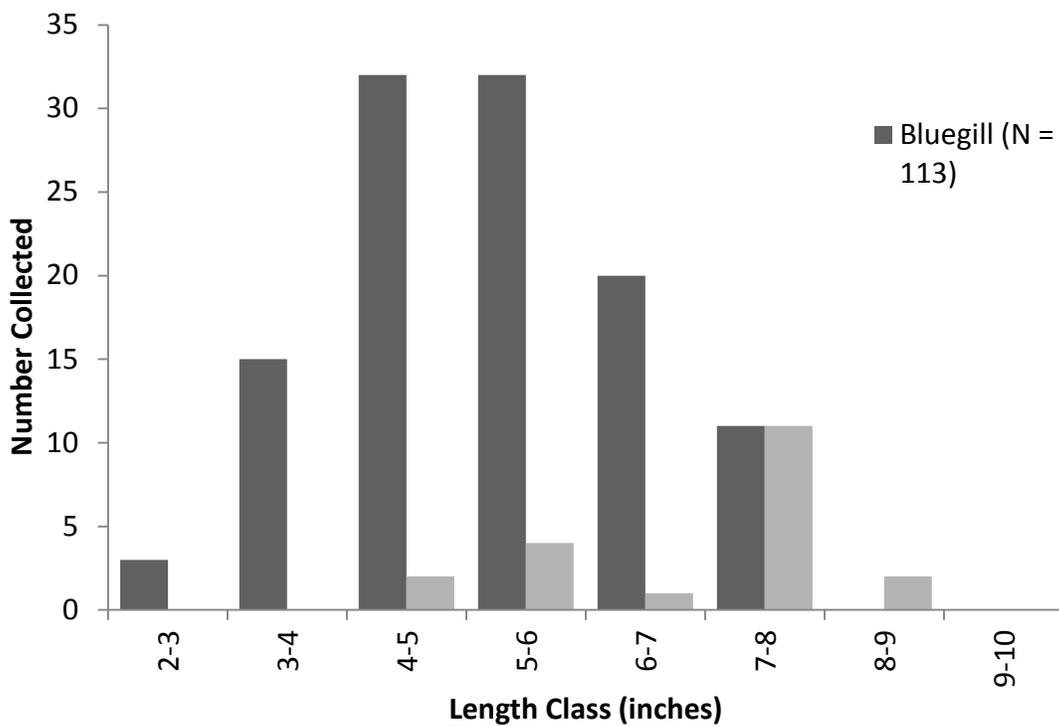


Figure 2. Length distribution of sunfish collected with electrofishing gear throughout Rivanna Reservoir in 2013.

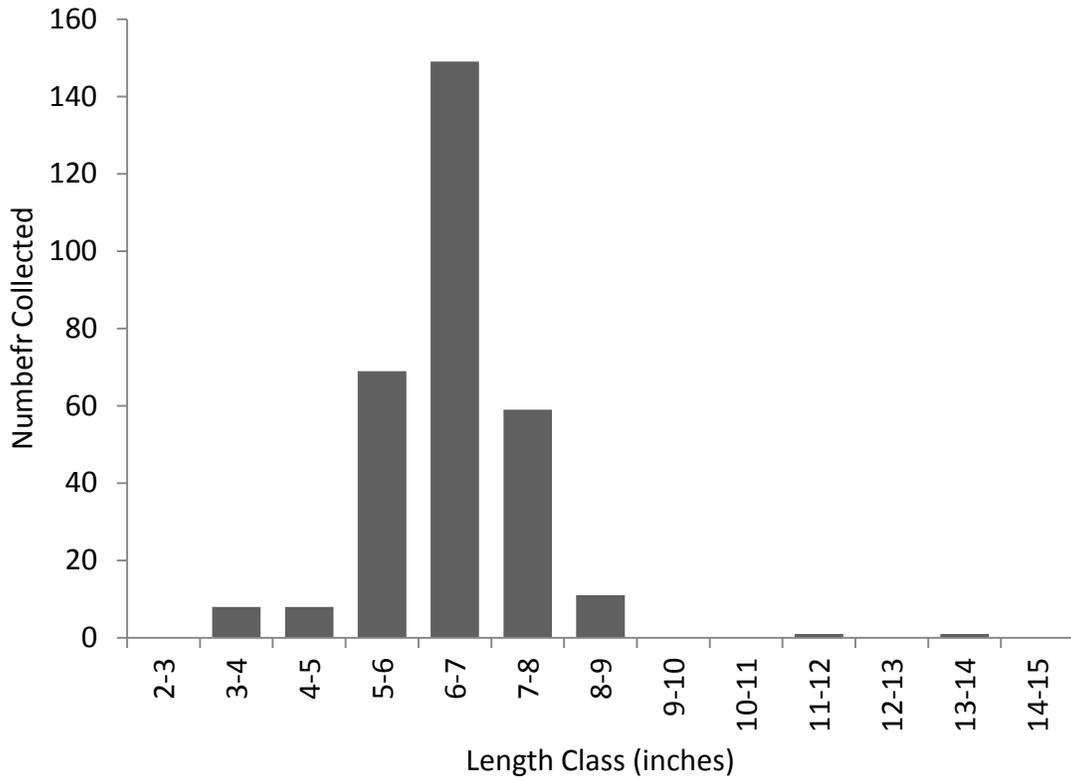


Figure 3. Length distribution of black crappie collected with trapnets throughout Rivanna Reservoir in 2013.

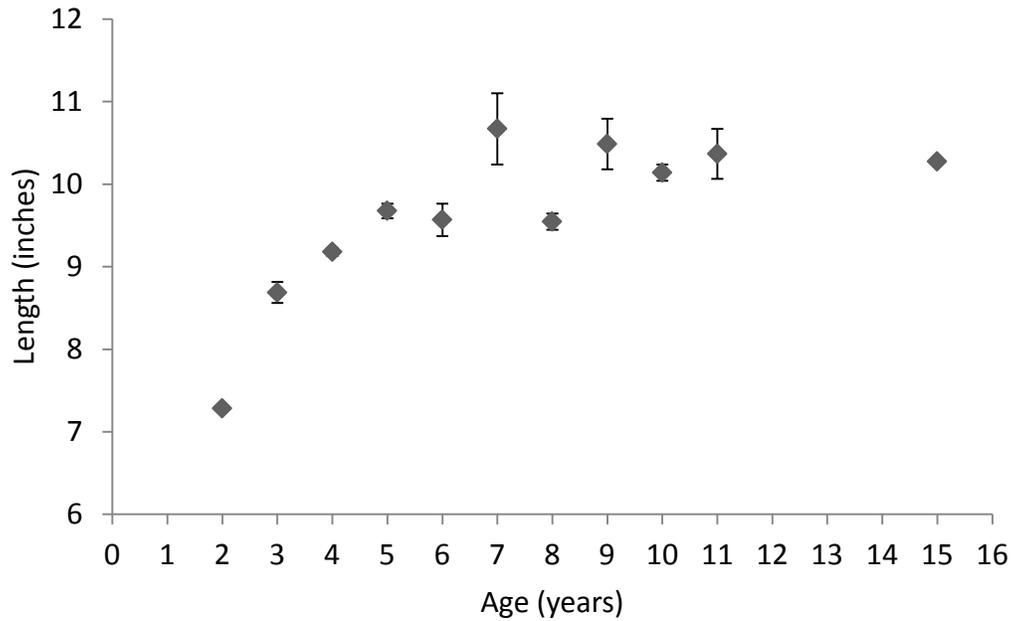


Figure 4. Average length-at-age of crappie collected throughout Rivanna Reservoir in 2013. Error bars indicate standard error.