



## Lake Prince 2003

Lake Prince is 777 acres in size and one of five water supply lakes owned by the City of Norfolk and offers anglers the chance to catch a variety of fishes including striped bass, largemouth bass, bluegill, redear, and chain pickerel. The City of Norfolk requires an annual boat permit (\$40.00) which can be purchased at 410 Granby St. in Norfolk or at the Lake Whitehurst Fishing Station on Shore Dr. in Norfolk. Bank fishing is restricted to a small area at the fishing station, and gas motors (up to 9.9 horsepower) are allowed. The lake is open to fishing from sunrise to sunset all year and can be accessed from a single boat landing off U.S. 460 at Providence Church on Route 604 (Lake Prince Road) in Suffolk. The concession there is closed and will probably remain so indefinitely.

Striped bass have been stocked annually in Lake Prince since 1970 and the lake record is just shy of 36 pounds! Approximately 25 fish per acre (19,425 total) are stocked annually. Pelagic stocking is now being used to evaluate the potential for increased survival of stocked fish. Catch rates from gillnet samples indicate that the striper population ranks second to Western Branch in southeast Virginia. Recent surveys show that the striper population has stabilized after a decline during the late 1980's. Stripers collected in 2002 showed excellent growth (22.6 inches at age 3) and were feeding mostly on blueback herring. Banner years for citations were 1988 and 1989 when 19 and 17 citations were awarded, respectively.

Lake Prince has a healthy largemouth bass population and, on average, produces about 50 trophy bass each year. In 1996, 84 citations were issued for largemouth bass, but the number of reported citations has declined in recent years probably due to reduced fishing effort with the closure of the concession. Population surveys conducted in 2002 revealed that the growth of largemouth bass is declining and there are many fish in the 10 to 14 inch-range that could potentially be harvested which would improve the growth of remaining fish. Even so, in 2000, Lake Prince was rated 7<sup>th</sup> out of the top 25 waters for largemouth bass citations in Virginia.

Bluegill and redear sunfish are abundant in Lake Prince and as a result, produce about 150 trophy sunfish each year. In 1994, 314 citations were issued for sunfish alone! Sampling in 2002 confirmed that sunfish populations are not as abundant as in previous years, but are stabilizing and still producing trophy fish.

Besides being rated 16<sup>th</sup> out of the top 25 waters for trophy fish in 2000 and 9<sup>th</sup> in 2001, Lake Prince offers more than just the opportunity to catch trophy fish. Scenic shorelines, waterfowl, bald eagles, deer, and otters can be seen almost regularly while fishing. So if you want to enjoy one of southeast Virginia's premiere fisheries, come test your skills at Lake Prince!