



Swift Creek Lake 2006



Located in the heart of Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County, this 107-acre impoundment of Swift Creek provides an aesthetic angling resource for central Virginia. Because it gets relatively low fishing pressure, it is typically an enjoyable place to fish. The reservoir is very narrow for its size. It is open for fishing from dawn to dusk, virtually year-round. The park rents canoes, kayaks, rowboats and paddleboats from Memorial Day through Labor Day at the Lake. There is a boat ramp where private boats may be launched, but gasoline motors are prohibited. Only electric motors may be used. There is a 15-inch minimum size limit and 2-per-day creel limit on largemouth bass.

Because it is fed by a relatively large creek and the reservoir itself is “creek-like”, large populations of non-game fish have always overshadowed and competed with the game fish populations. “Undesirable” fish constantly invade the reservoir. Largemouth bass and sunfish populations gained a leg up on non-game species after being stocked immediately following a draining of the reservoir to repair the dam in 1992. However, the quality of these populations for angling had already declined as of the prior evaluation in 1999.

The reservoir was sampled using electrofishing on 1 June, 2005. Game fish abundance was moderate and dominated by bluegill, black crappie, largemouth bass, and redear sunfish. A few chain pickerel and a fair number of yellow perch were observed as well. Unfortunately, thousands of gizzard shad and many common carp were also seen.

The largemouth bass population appeared to be faring very well, and had actually improved since 1999. The catch rates for bass exceeding 12 inches and 15 inches, respectively, were 50% and 33% higher than in 1999. A good number of bass between 16 and 22 inches were collected, and they were quite plump and healthy looking. This is a very good, albeit small, resource for bass anglers.

The abundance of small bluegill had almost tripled since 1999, but the population of larger bluegill had basically not changed. Some seven-inch bluegill were collected, but none larger than that were found. This was not an attractive resource for sunfish anglers in 2005.

Black crappie appeared to have increased in abundance since 1999, and a large number up to 8 inches in length were present. Numbers dropped off drastically above that size, however, a 10-inch, an 11-inch, and a 14-inch crappie were collected. Whether the strong numbers of smaller crappie will advance to larger sizes depends on the future availability of food resources. Regardless, there are already a few large crappie roaming this reservoir for anglers who seek this species.

Some redear sunfish inhabit the reservoir, but their population appears to be fairly static in numbers and size. None over 7 inches were collected.