



Chris Greene Reservoir 2007



This 62-acre, Albemarle County Park lake has a good boat ramp, ample parking, a swimming beach and a handicapped-accessible fishing pier. The lake is open from 7:00 a.m. to dark. Chris Greene Lake has historically had fair fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie. Channel catfish are now stocked annually and provide a good fishery. The 12-15-inch slot limit (all bass from 12 to 15 inches must be released) that was implemented in 1989 appeared to help improve the bass population for awhile. Albemarle County draws the water level of the lake down several feet each winter to protect the beach from erosion during winter storms. This may also have benefited the sport fish populations by forcing small fish into a smaller area where they are more susceptible to predation by bass and crappie. This kept both crappie and bluegill from becoming overcrowded and bass well supplied with food prior to 2000. Samples collected in 2000, however, indicated that the bass and bluegill populations had dropped from the previous highs.

Chris Greene Reservoir was sampled using electrofishing during April, 2006 to evaluate the current status of its fish populations. A total of seven species of fish were collected. All were game species except channel catfish. Bluegill and bass were the most abundant species.

Bass abundance was outstanding, but of the 63 collected, only two exceeded 11 inches. Due to the complete absence of bass in the 12-15-inch slot and the poor body condition of the sub-slot bass, it appears that the lack of larger fish is due to a poor food supply and not over-fishing. Bass were much more abundant than in the sample taken in 2000, however, there was a question about whether or not the electrofisher used in 2000 was functioning properly. The fact that bluegill abundance was also about six times higher than in 2000 suggests that there was an equipment problem at that time.

Despite the increase in bluegill abundance in the 2006 sample, they weren't that much more abundant than bass...not a good sign for a forage species. A good portion of the bluegill collected were in the 7-7.5-inch range, but only two were 8 inches in length. Recruitment of young bluegill looked weak. Predation by the abundant bass and crappie was probably responsible for this. Bluegill were a little thin on average.

Redear sunfish were more common here than in most area lakes, but their size structure was similar. Only two fish were 8 inches long. The extremely poor body condition of redear in this lake is an indication that food supplies were limited.

Considering that electrofishing isn't the preferred method for sampling black crappie, the catch of 29 would suggest that there is a good population present. Four of these were 10 inches in length. Body condition was fair (i.e. crappie were a little skinny).

Overall, it appears that this reservoir suffers from a lack of fertility, which is affecting forage fish abundance and body condition, and ultimately, bass growth. The slot limit on bass is accomplishing nothing and should be removed. Anglers can expect an occasional large fish of any species, but for the most part, catches will be dominated by small fish. Because of the abundance of small bass, this would be a great place to teach a youngster the art of bass fishing.