



James River State Park Ponds 2007



James River State Park is most notable for its tremendous views and excellent access to the James River. The 1440-acre Park is one of the newest in the state and boasts three miles of James River frontage. What few Virginians probably realize is that James River State Park is also home to three small fishing ponds. These include Green Hill Pond (2 acres), Branch Pond (5 acres), and Taylor Pond (1 acre). Only two of the impoundments are accessible for our electrofishing sample gear so this report will concentrate on Green Hill Pond and Branch Pond. Both ponds are managed under a strict largemouth bass creel and length limit of a one fish creel and a 20" minimum length limit. All other species are managed under statewide regulations. To supplement the fishery of each pond, they are stocked annually with 10 channel catfish per acre.

Recent surveys of both ponds revealed that each has basically the same species assemblage. Both are largemouth bass, sunfish, channel catfish, black crappie fisheries with bluegill and largemouth bass the dominant species in each impoundment. Branch Pond exhibits a more balanced, though somewhat dense, population of bass and bluegill. Most largemouth bass are in the 12-13 inch size range but bigger bass are present. Bluegill are mostly small and numerous with most less than 8 inches. Few black crappie are present in Branch Pond but those sampled are quality size with fish up to ten inches. Green Hill Pond is much less densely populated by largemouth bass but the bluegill population is very dense and stunted. It has a slightly better bass size distribution than Branch Pond with more fish from 12-17 inches present but population numbers are lower than desired for good bass fishing. Like Branch Pond, stunted bluegill and a few redear sunfish dominate the sunfish population. Redear up to nine inches were sampled in 2006 but they were very sparse while bluegill sizes were predominantly less than six inches. Black crappie are present in Green Hill Pond but they too are stunted and sparse.

Branch Pond is an excellent place to take kids or beginning anglers to enjoy catching a lot of bass. Green Hill has excellent access and is also a decent place for anglers to go to simply enjoy catching a few fish and you might just end up catching a quality bass to add to your enjoyment. James River State Park is located in Buckingham County. From U.S. 60 West, turn right onto Route 605 at the James River Bridge. Travel seven miles, then turn left onto Route 606. For more information on the Park, visit the Department of Conservation and Recreation website.