



Holliday Lake 2009

Holliday Lake is a 145-acre impoundment owned and operated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The lake is the focal point of the 250-acre Holliday Lake State Park located in the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. The lake is steep-sided and clear. There is a boat ramp providing anglers access to the lake as well as a hiking trail that provides bank fishing access. Warmwater fish species at Holliday Lake include largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, channel catfish, black crappie, and yellow perch. The largemouth bass fishery is managed with a 12-inch minimum length limit and five fish per day creel limit. All other species are under general statewide fishing regulations.

A spring electrofishing sample was completed by Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists to assess the health of the Holliday Lake fishery. The largemouth bass fishery has declined somewhat since the lake was last sampled in 2005 with fewer fish in the larger size classes. The fishery was dominated by bass less than 12 inches but there was one bass over 23 inches in the survey. Overall the density of bass in Holliday Lake remained stable but the size structure did not. More small fish, especially in the 8-11 inch range, were sampled in 2008 than in other recent survey years.

Besides largemouth bass, Holliday Lake also provides a fishery for several "panfish" species. Bluegill are present in Holliday Lake but their numbers continue to decline since the illegal introduction of yellow perch in the late 1990's. Since 1998, bluegill numbers have declined from over 700 fish/hour sampled by electrofishing to only 27 fish/hour in 2008. There are limited numbers of bluegill over eight inches present in the reservoir but most bluegill are in the 5-7 inch range. Similarly, redear sunfish numbers in our samples were nearly non-existent in 2008 with only two redear observed in our electrofishing survey. Redear have never been plentiful at Holliday Lake but there had been fish up to 10 inches in previous surveys. Black crappie are also present in limited numbers at Holliday Lake. All crappie sampled were between eight and eleven inches.

Yellow perch have become well established at Holliday Lake. The density of the species seems to have stabilized since the explosion in numbers in the early 2000's. There is now the opportunity to catch perch over 12 inches and many fish are present in the 8-10 inch range. This is a great opportunity for anglers to fish for and catch a species that is not common in Southside Virginia but the introduction has taken a toll on the other warmwater species in the lake. Bream numbers have declined the most drastically and this seems to be affecting the size distribution of largemouth bass in a domino affect. Bluegill have always been the dominant prey for largemouth bass in the system and as their numbers have declined in the past ten years, the largemouth fishery has begun to suffer. We will continue to monitor the Holliday Lake fishery and hope that the bream species can rally. Enjoy fishing for and keeping yellow perch from Holliday Lake. Perch is one of the best tasting freshwater fillets in this angler's opinion.

Holliday Lake is restricted to electric motor or paddle only to enhance the experience of this beautiful park. The lake can be reached by following state route 626 east from route 24 (north of Appomattox). Follow route 626 until the turn-off on state route 723 that will take you to the lake. Signs are posted to assist visitors in finding the state park and boat launch facility.