

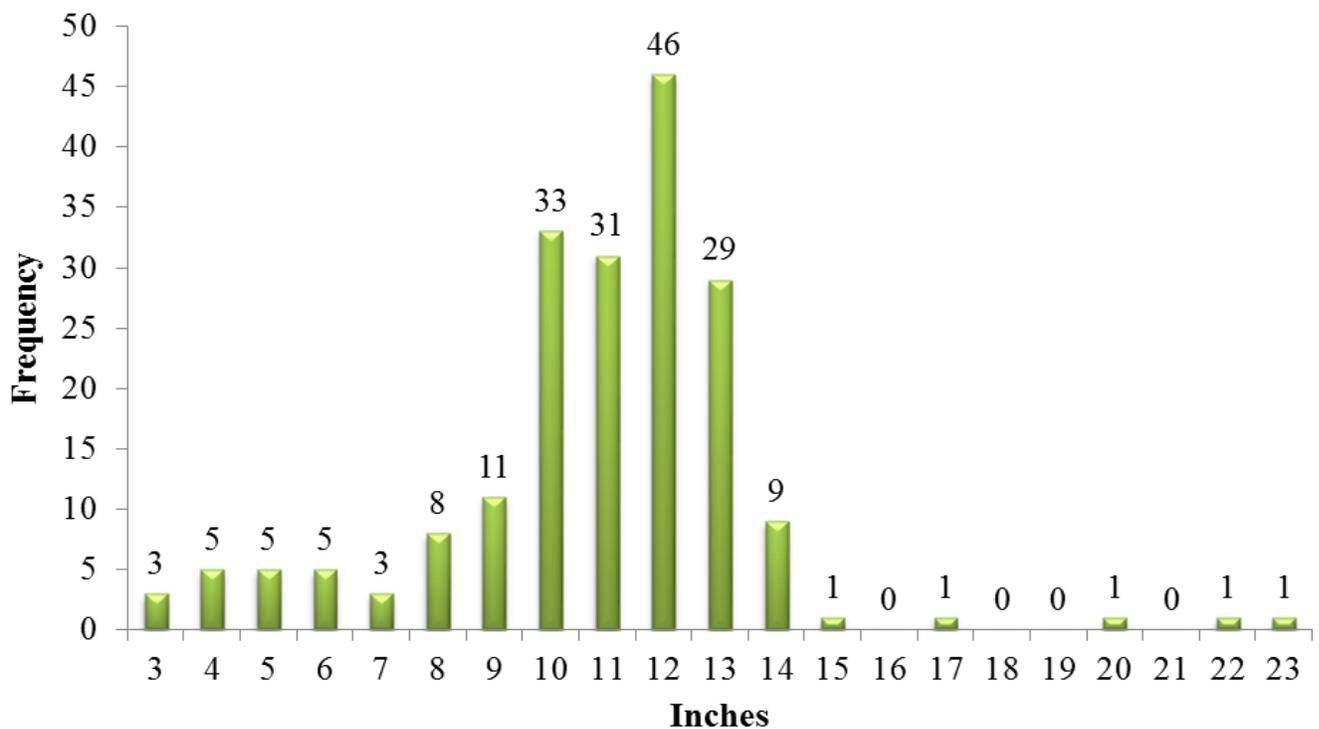


Martinsville Reservoir (Beaver Creek Reservoir) 2015 Management Report

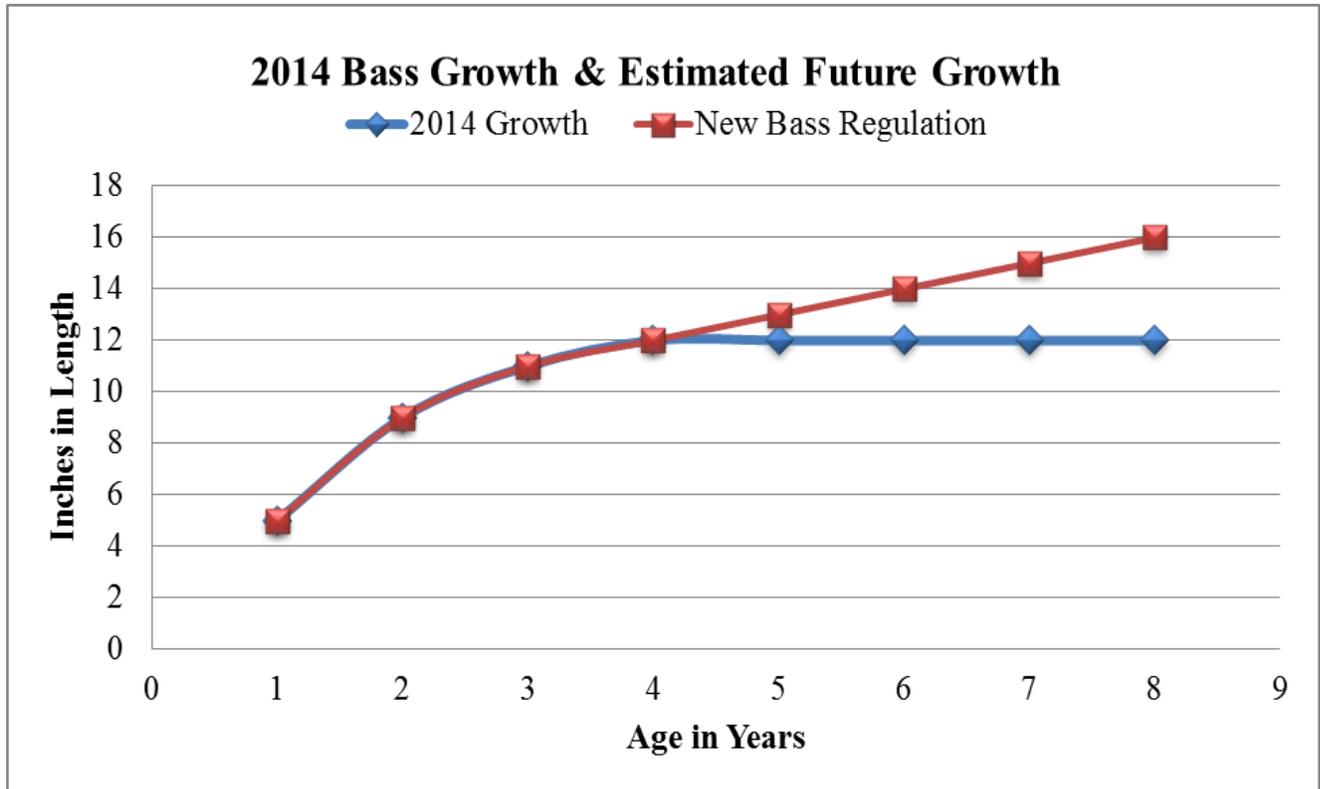
Martinsville Reservoir is a 175-acre impoundment located just north of the city of Martinsville, Virginia. The impoundment is owned and controlled by the city of Martinsville for water supply while the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries manage the fishery. The most popular sportfish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch. Fish surveys conducted during 2014 showed that the fishery in Martinsville Reservoir was in fair condition, but in need of some management adjustments.

The sample of the largemouth bass population at Martinsville Reservoir consisted of a limited number of young fish (< 8 inches), an overabundance of small sized adult fish (8-14 inches), and very few larger sized adult fish (> 14 inches). Adult bass grow very slowly. They reach 9 inches at age 2 and they generally do not grow past 12 inches by age 6. This results in a stockpile of bass in the 8 to 13 inch size range (as seen in the chart below). The young bass entering the population do not compete well with the large numbers of small adults and, are likely to be eaten before they reach adult size.

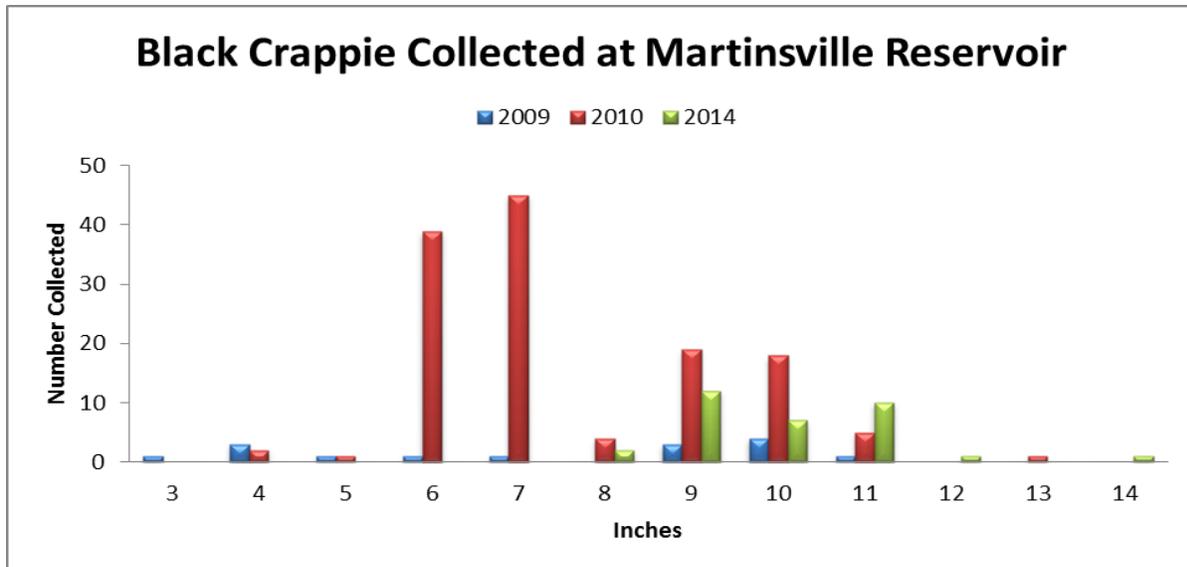
Largemouth Bass Collected in Spring 2014



In an attempt to correct this slow growth condition, the previous 14 inch minimum size limit was discarded and replaced with a new 15 inch maximum length limit. This new limit allows largemouth bass below 15 inches to be taken and protects bass over 15 inches. This should reduce the densities of the 8-13 inch bass and allow some to grow into the larger size classes, where they are protected from harvest. The following chart shows the current bass growth rates and the predicted growth rates under the new 15 inch maximum regulation. Time will tell if the new regulation will cause a shift in the average size of adult largemouth bass.



The Crappie population is comprised primarily of black crappie. Few black crappie (n=33) were collected during the 2014 sampling, with most being adults less than 10 inches in length. Very few young crappie were collected. This fishery can vary due to cyclical reproductive success and heavy harvest rates. Anglers can expect to catch fewer crappie in the next several years due to recent poor survival of younger year classes. Most crappie are found around structures, like beaver lodges and fallen trees and anglers should concentrate their efforts in these areas for best results. However, crappie may concentrate in deeper water, away from shoreline cover during the summer. The chart below shows the catch and size distribution of crappie collected from spring electrofishing from several sampling years.



Bluegill, redbreast, and redear are members of the sunfish family and can be caught in Martinsville Reservoir. Samples collected in 2014 did not include large numbers of these species; mostly likely a result of the overcrowded largemouth bass population. In 2014, 10-12 trees along the shoreline were cut and hinged into the lake to increase habitat for young bass and sunfish. There are plans in place to add more fish habitat in 2015.

Channel catfish were traditionally stocked as fingerling fish (around 3-4 inches) and provided very limited fishing opportunities. Channel catfish are now stocked at around 8-10 inches in length, which has improved their survival and the fishery. Catfish are stocked every other year. The best fishing occurs several months after stocking, but survival is adequate enough to provide good catfish opportunities each year.

Yellow perch were first collected in 1987 and the population has been expanding since that time. The population is sufficient to provide a fishery with sufficient numbers of fish available in the 8-10 inch range. The highest densities of yellow perch are in the lower half of the reservoir.

Since this reservoir has motor restrictions, most fish species are exploited at a higher rate in the lower and more accessible areas near the boat ramp. Anglers that have the time and battery power to travel to the upper end of the reservoir will be rewarded with more opportunities to catch quality fish. Since the water in this reservoir is usually very clear, most fish will be easily spooked. Anglers may want to use a light line and keep as much distance possible between their boat and the structure they are fishing.

The city of Martinsville maintains a park at Martinsville Reservoir; which includes picnic facilities and a boat ramp. Use of the park and reservoir are restricted to the hours of sunrise to sunset and a boat permit is required to launch boats. The permit is \$3 per day or \$15 per calendar year. Permits can be acquired from the reservoir office or by calling 276-251-7766. Boaters are restricted to electric motor use only. The reservoir can be accessed by taking Rt. 108 from Rt. 174 out of Collinsville or Martinsville.

Prepared by: George Palmer, Fisheries Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries: (434) 525-7522; george.palmer@dgif.virginia.gov