

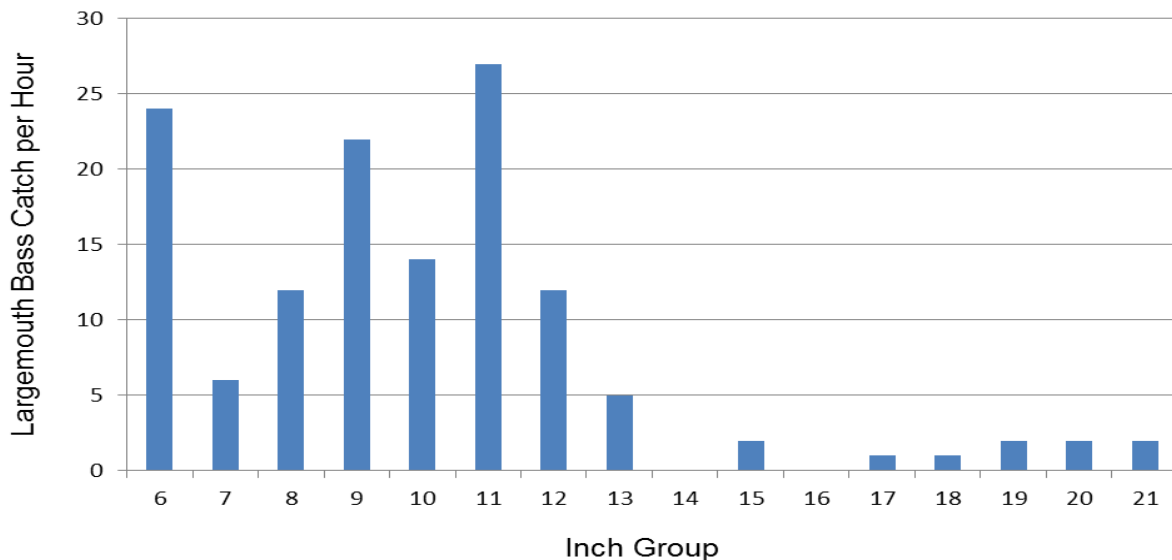


## Thrasher Lake 2016 Management Report



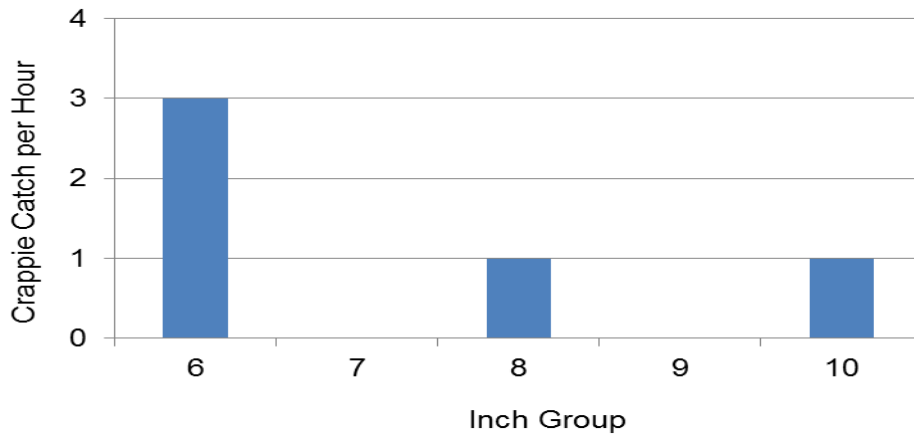
Thrasher Lake is a 36-acre impoundment located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Amherst County. This is one of three public reservoirs owned by the County and offers a scenic view of the mountains while providing opportunities for fishing and family outings. Various facilities include picnic tables, restroom, play area, boat ramp, and associated parking. The lake is open year round but nighttime activities are prohibited except for fishing. Anglers are required to obtain a permit from the county to fish at night. Boats propelled by oar or electric motor are welcome but outboard motor use is prohibited.

The largemouth bass population has fluctuated both in number and quality. There are good numbers of bass but most are less than 13 inches with an occasional fish up to 21 inches in length. The bass population is regulated with a 12-15 inch protective slot limit.



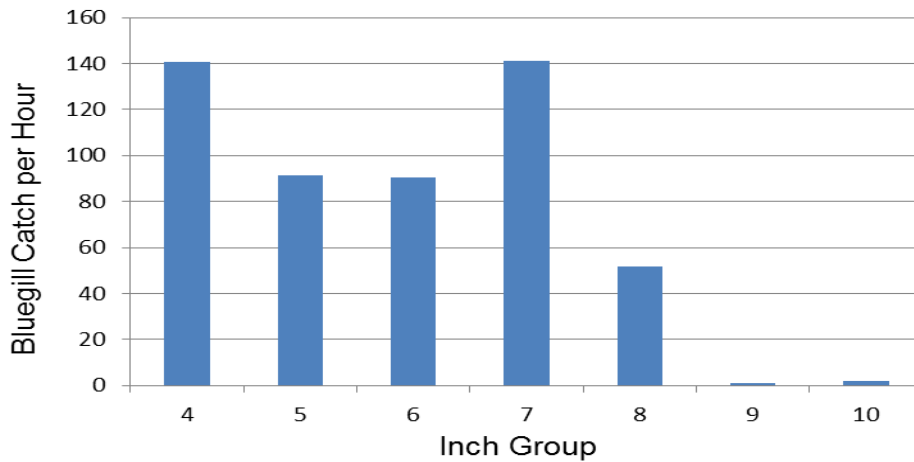
**Figure 1. Largemouth bass collected during the 2015 Thrasher Lake electrofishing surveys.**

Crappie reproduction is generally poor most years with an occasional good reproduction year that improves fishing for only 1-2 seasons several years later. Reproduction is not expected to get much better due to limited crappie habitat in the lake and heavy bass predation. Thrasher Lake crappie have maintained good growth rates so a 9-inch minimum size limit was initiated in the spring of 2013 to protect additional fish from harvest, improve harvest size, and extend good year classes. The outlook for 2016 is poor since reproduction in recent years has been very low.



**Figure 2. Crappie collected during the 2015 Thrasher Lake electrofishing surveys.**

The panfish population is primarily bluegill with only a few redear sunfish available. The bluegill population has recently improved due to reduced bass numbers and is in good condition with high numbers of larger adult bluegill that are 6-8 inches.



**Figure 3. Bluegill collected during the 2015 Thrasher Lake electrofishing surveys.**

To access this reservoir, turn northeast on Rt. 610 from Rt. 60 (approximately 9 miles west of Amherst), then turn left on Rt. 617, and the lake access road will be the first road on the left. Permits for night fishing are available through Amherst County at 434-946-9371.

## Methods

- Three runs totaling 1.10 hours of daytime, boat electrofishing (entire shoreline) were completed on 4/23/15 for community assessment and largemouth bass population dynamics. Water temperature was 14° C.

## Thrasher Lake Key Findings

- Historical sampling indicated the largemouth bass population continued to cycle from a near balanced to bass crowded. Bass removals were conducted in 2004 and again in 2010 to improve the bass crowded conditions. Sampling in 2015 indicates the bass population was balanced and is providing consistent recruitment.
- Catch rates for largemouth bass declined in 2015 (171 fish/hr) from previous samples in 2008-2011 (average 249 fish/hr). However, the entire lake was sampled each of these years and the total number bass collected was only 7% lower in 2015 from the 2008-2011 average. Stock indices were also similar to previous years.
- Thrasher Lake continues to sustain high harvest rates for largemouth bass above the protected slot limit and currently maintains adequate harvest below the slot limit. This lake is managed for higher numbers of smaller bass than nearby Stonehouse Lake, which is managed for larger and trophy bass, to provide area anglers a diversity of fishing options. Due to the size and popularity of this lake, continued harvest of the larger fish is expected. Management is directed at maintaining adequate growth rates to prevent heavily stunted populations and provide a harvest oriented fishery.
- The black crappie population continues to be variable and the population remains low. Variable recruitment and high harvest rates continue to limit angling opportunities for crappie. A 9 inch minimum size limit was initiated in the winter 2013 to reduce harvest of younger fish, extend good year classes, and provide additional quality size crappie for anglers. Sampling in 2015 did not show improvements in the crappie size structure but that was not unexpected given recent poor year classes.
- Catch rates for bluegill declined in 2011 due to the stockpiling of bass. However, 134 bass were removed from Thrasher Lake during the 2010 spring sampling and bluegill numbers responded favorably with the highest catch rates ever collected in 2015. Stock indices for bluegill have remained fairly stable and the current population should sustain adequate forage for largemouth bass.

## Management Recommendations

- Monitor the crappie population to determine if the new 9 inch minimum size limit is resulting in improvements in size structure.
- Continue sampling with electrofishing gear to track the largemouth bass, crappie and sunfish populations every two years.

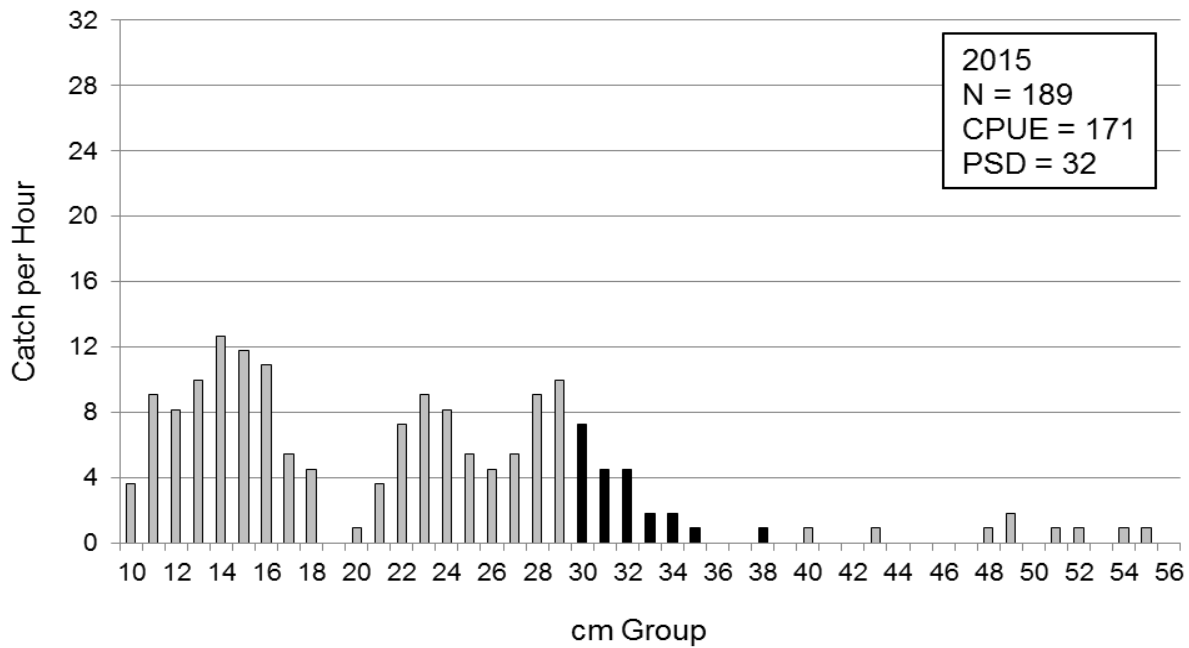


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution for largemouth bass collected per hour of electrofishing from Thrasher Lake on 4/30/15. Dark bars represent bass collected within the slot limit.

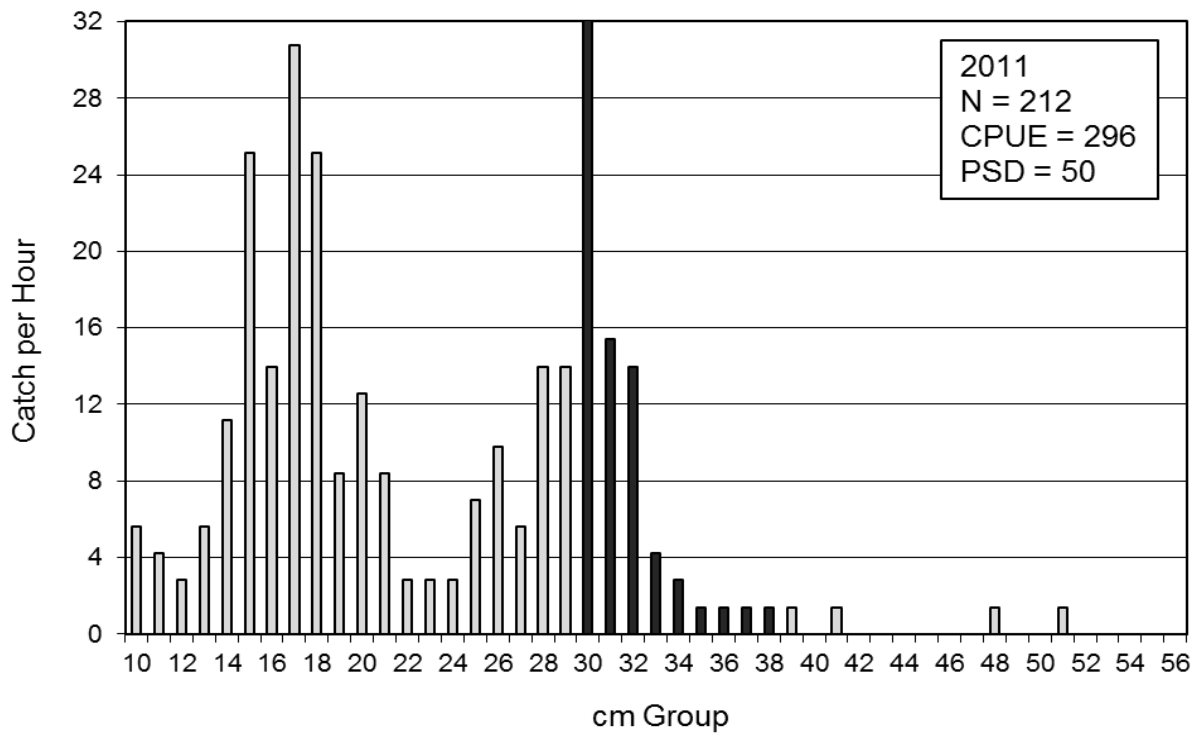


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution for largemouth bass collected per hour of electrofishing from Thrasher Lake on 5/13/11. Dark bars represent bass collected within the slot limit.

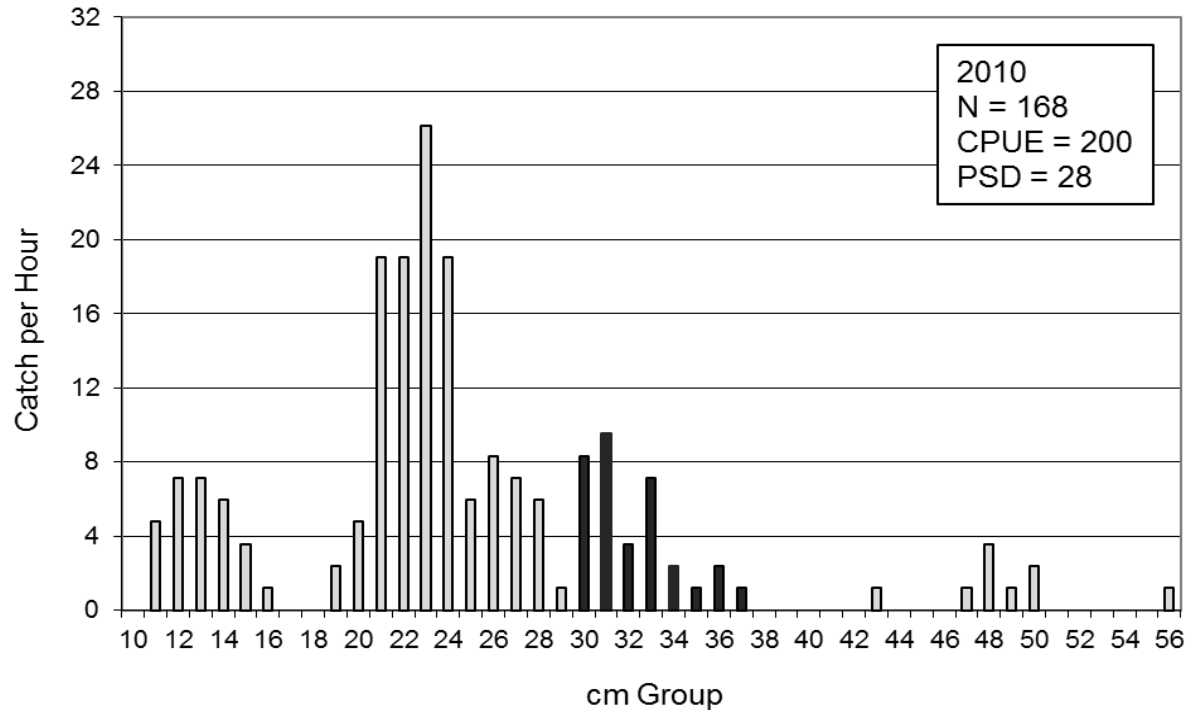


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution for largemouth bass collected per hour of electrofishing from Thrasher Lake on 4/07/10. Dark bars represent bass collected within the slot limit.

Table 1. Largemouth bass catch per hour (CPUE) data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

Year	N	CPUE Total	CPUE Young	CPUE Stock	CPUE Quality	CPUE Preferred	CPUE Memorable	Sample Time
2015	189	171	78	63	21	5	3.6	1.1033
2011	212	296	137	80	73	6	1.4	0.7153
2010	168	200	37	117	36	10	1.2	0.8408
2009	255	299	177	43	67	12	0.0	0.8544
2008	177	204	110	73	13	7	1.2	0.8689

Table 2. Largemouth bass stock indices data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

Year	PSD	RSDp	RSDm
2015	32	10	3.9
2011	50	4	0.9
2010	28	7	0.7
2009	64	10	0.0
2008	22	9	1.2

Table 3. Black Crappie catch per hour (CPUE) data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

Year	N	CPUE Total	CPUE Young	CPUE Stock	CPUE Quality	CPUE Preferred	Sample Time
2015	15	14	7	5	1	1	1.1033
2011	20	28	3	1	13	11	0.7153
2009	22	26	1	2	1	21	0.8544
2008	44	51	0	2	23	25	0.8689

Table 4. Black crappie stock indices and catch per hour (CPUE) data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

	CPUE Total	PSD	RSDp
2015	14	29	14
2011	28	94	44
2009	26	90	86
2008	51	95	50

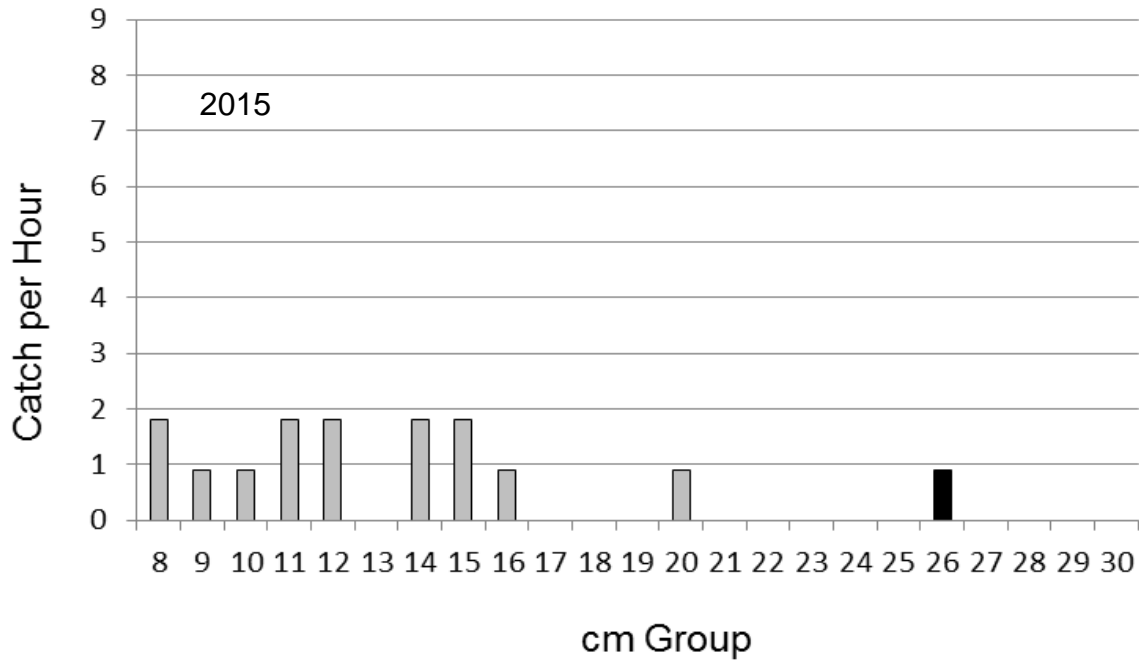


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution for black crappie collected per hour of electrofishing from Thrasher Lake on 4/30/15. Dark bar represent crappie collected larger than the 9 inch minimum size limit.

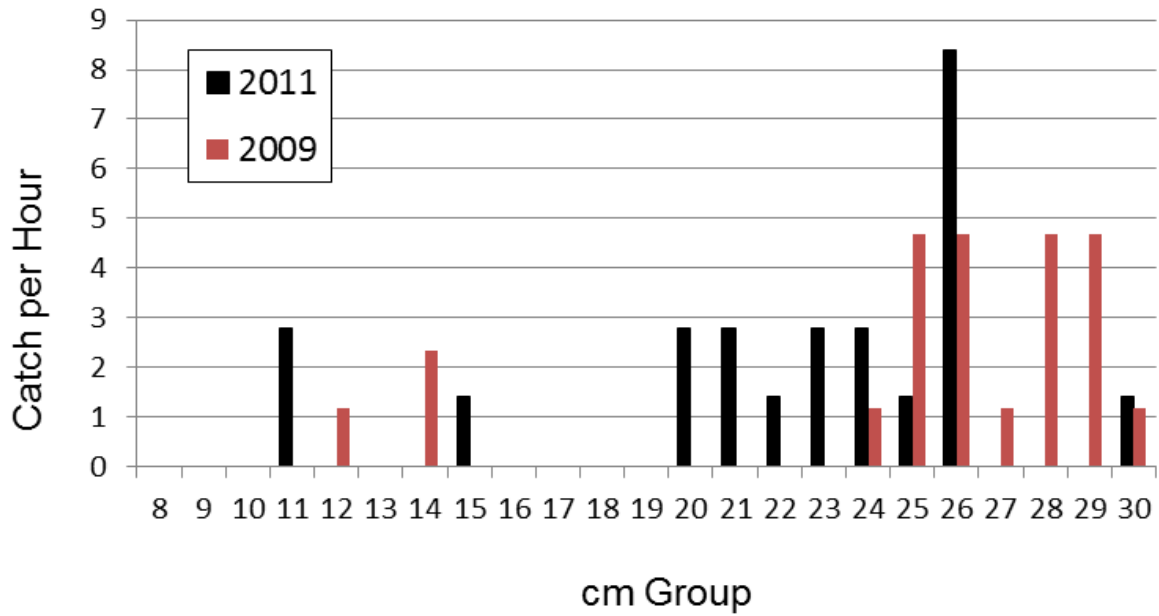


Figure 5. Length frequency distribution for black crappie collected per hour of electrofishing from Thrasher Lake on 5/06/09 and 5/13/11.

Table 5. Bluegill catch per hour (CPUE) data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

Year	N	CPUE Total	CPUE Young	CPUE Stock	CPUE Quality	CPUE Preferred	Sample Time
2015	759	688	70	322	226	71	1.1033
2011	55	222	4	97	109	12	0.2472
2008	170	357	71	162	120	4	0.4764

Table 6. Bluegill stock indices and catch per hour (CPUE) data collected from electrofishing samples at Thrasher Lake, 2008-2015.

	CPUE Total	PSD	RSDp
2015	688	48	11
2011	222	56	6
2008	357	43	2