



Walnut Creek Reservoir 2015



Located in Albemarle County, Walnut Creek Reservoir is the youngest public impoundment in the county. The 45-acre reservoir was filled in 1990 and its primary use is recreation. The reservoir contains self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and black crappie. Additionally, the lake is stocked annually with channel catfish to maintain a fishery. In the spring of 2014, the fish community of Walnut Creek was sampled by boat electrofishing and trapnets. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Walnut Creek.

Walnut Creek Reservoir contained a typical fish community for a central Virginia impoundment with a total of six fish species collected in the 2014 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth bass and black crappie were the most abundant species collected in the electrofishing survey, while black crappie and bluegill were the most abundant species collected in the trapnet survey (Table 1). Walnut Creek provides a quality largemouth bass fishery with a good size distribution of bass inhabiting the lake (Figure 1). Bass catch rates were good for the area, and there was adequate numbers of young and adult bass present in the population. The 12-18 inch slot limit appears to protect a good portion of the adult population (Figure 1). Anglers looking to harvest bass should keep smaller bass (< 12 inches) so they do not become over abundant. The largest bass collected measured 21 inches and weighed 5 lbs. The most productive areas for bass were the points and woody structures located throughout the lake.

Sunfish catch rates were fairly low with redear and bluegill comprising all the sunfish collected. The bulk of sunfish collected were small (< 8 inches); only a redear sunfish over 8 inches were collected (Figure 2). Redear were more abundant than most waters in the Charlottesville area and can offer a unique fishing experience for the area. Anglers determined to catch quality sunfish should concentrated their efforts around woody structure or the flats in the upper end of the lake during the spring spawning period.

Crappie catch rates were good and double the extreme low experienced in 2011. All the crappie collected were black crappie. Walnut Creek supports a decent crappie fishery with the majority of crappie collected in the 8 to 10 inch range (Figure 3). The 10-inch minimum size limit for crappie appears to be working with annual mortality dropping 30% since 2011. Crappie are exhibiting fast growth; on average crappie are approaching 9 inches by age-3 and 10 inches by age-4 (Figure 4). The largest crappie collected measured 16 inches and weighed 2 pounds

Anglers looking for an excellent bass and crappie lake that is in the Charlottesville area should visit Walnut Creek Reservoir. The lake offers good numbers of catfish and smaller panfish for anglers to enjoy. The park has great amenities including an improved boat launch, plenty of bank fishing areas, and a swimming beach. Gas powered motors are prohibited in the reservoir.

For more information on Walnut Creek, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Walnut Creek Reservoir in 2014.

Species	Trapnets				Electrofishing		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/net-night)	Percentage of the Catch		Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of the Catch
Black Crappie	106	5.3	50.0		91	69	31.6
Bluegill	51	2.55	24.1		26	20	9.0
Brown Bullhead	4	0.2	1.9		1	1	0.3
Channel Catfish	5	0.25	2.4		9	7	3.1
Largemouth Bass	5	0.25	2.4		116	88	40.3
Redear	41	2.05	19.3		45	34	15.6

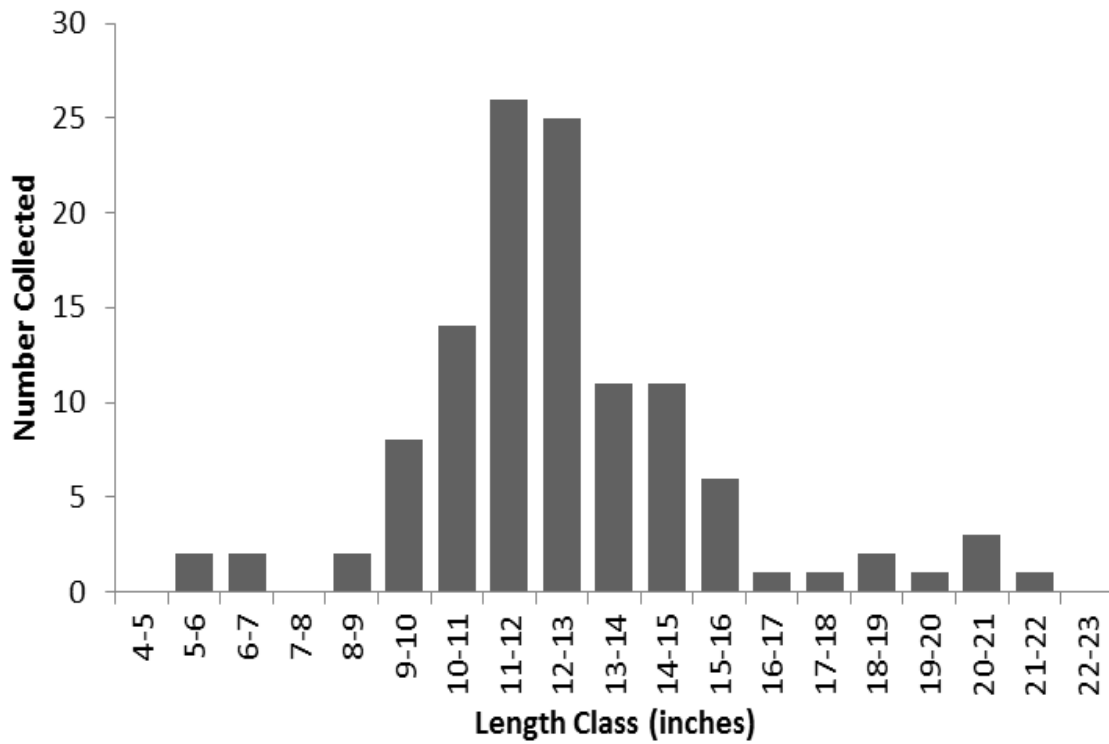


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Walnut Creek Reservoir in 2014.

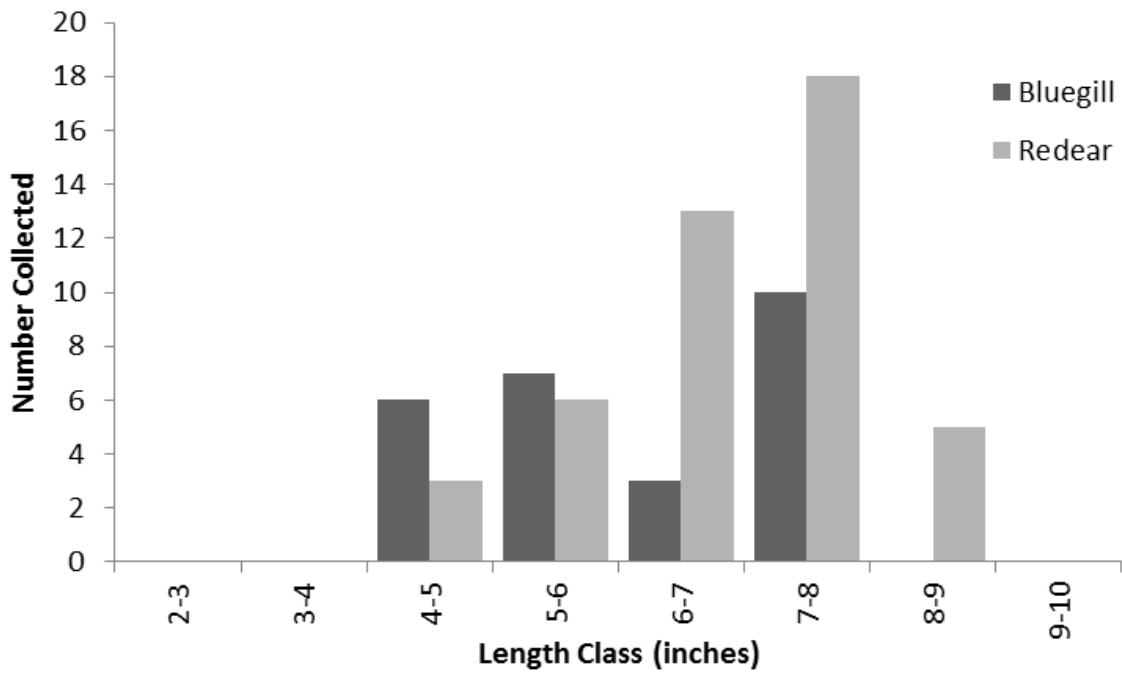


Figure 2. Length distribution of sunfish collected with electrofishing gear throughout Walnut Creek in 2014.

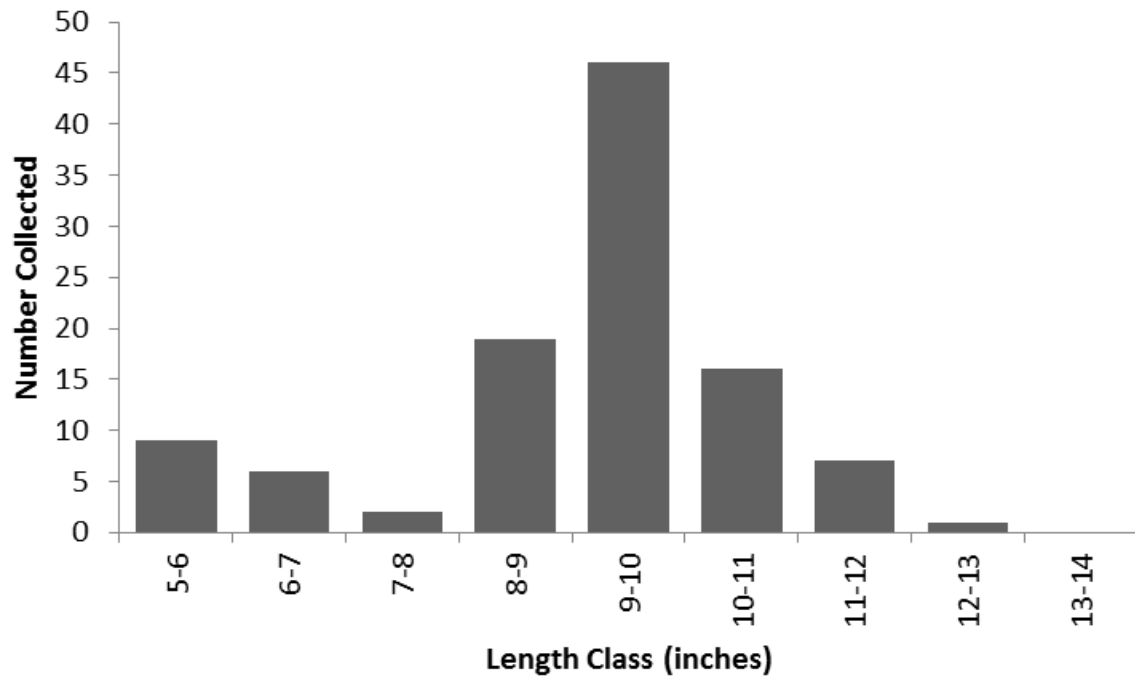


Figure 3. Length distribution of black crappie collected with trapnets throughout Walnut Creek Reservoir in 2014.

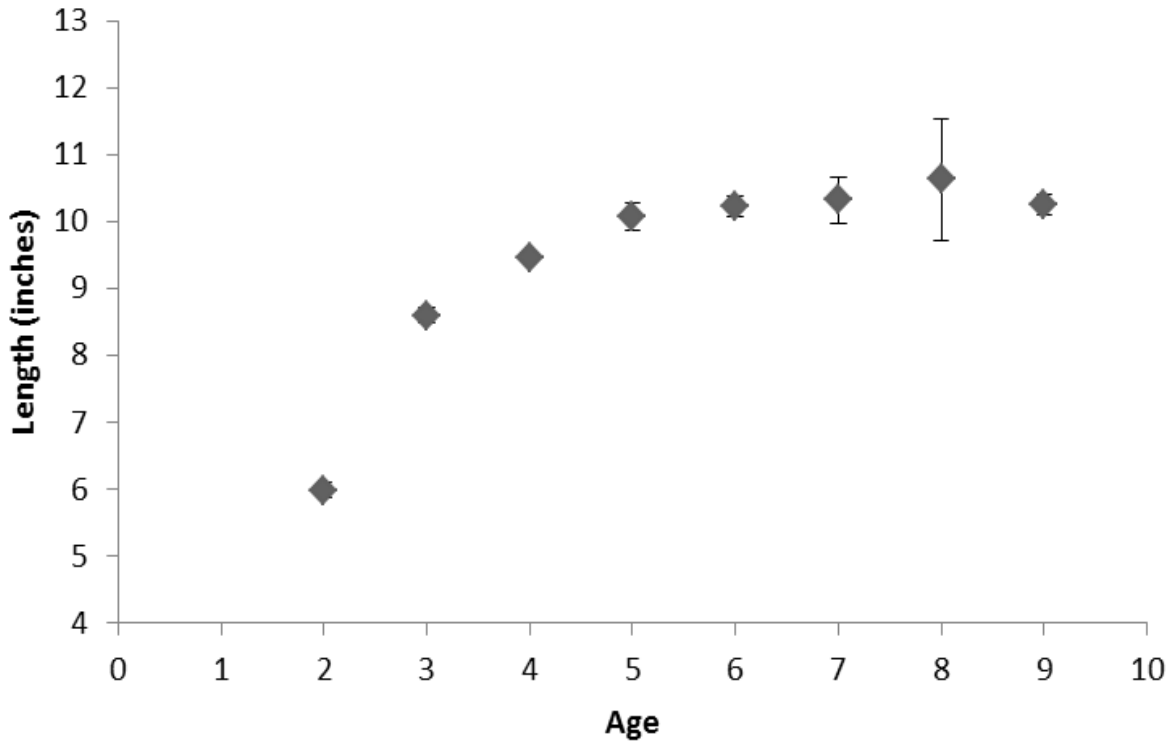


Figure 4. Average length-at-age of crappie collected throughout Walnut Creek Reservoir in 2014. Error bars indicate standard error.