



Albemarle Lake 2025



Albemarle Lake is a 35-acre impoundment built by the Civilian Conservation Corp. in 1938. The lake was one of the first public lakes in Albemarle County when it was purchased by the Department of Wildlife Resources. The lake was originally stocked with many different fish species but currently the lake contains self-sustaining populations of Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Black Crappie, and bullhead catfish. Additionally, the lake is annually stocked with Channel Catfish. In 2024, the fish community of Albemarle Lake was sampled by boat electrofishing. This report summarizes the results of this survey and what anglers can expect to catch in Albemarle Lake.

A total of seven fish species were collected in the 2024 surveys (Table 1). Bluegill and Largemouth Bass were the most abundant species collected in the survey (Table 1). Lake Albemarle's Largemouth Bass population has fluctuated over the years from a quality fishery to an overcrowded/stunted population. Recent harvest efforts temporarily shifted the population back to a more balanced fishery with more fish showing up in the 11-to-13-inch range (Figure 1), but there are still signs of stunting in smaller individuals with the uneven distribution of fish under 10 inches collected and less than ideal condition of small bass collected during the surveys (i.e. skinny fish). To continue the progress to a more balanced population, anglers should harvest as many of these small bass as legally possible (note: 5 bass per day creel limit for Virginia) to improve bass growth and to alleviate the stunting problem. The lake contains some quality bass, but anglers will have to work to catch them. The largest bass collected in 2024 measured nearly 20 inches and weighed close to 5 pounds. Largemouth Bass can be caught along the shoreline, especially along areas with fallen timber. Additionally, anglers should fish around the numerous fish attractors placed throughout the lake. The most prominent attractor is the old steel framed diving platform located near the boat launch.

Albemarle Lake continues to offer one of the best sunfish fisheries (Bluegill and Redear) for a small impoundment in Central Virginia. The electrofishing catch rates for both species was above average when compared to historical catch rates for the lake. The sunfish sample had large number of fish above harvestable size (> 7 inches, Figure 2). The lake produces excellent numbers of sunfish between 8 to 10 inches (Figure 2). The abundance of larger sunfish offers high potential for a trophy catch. Any serious sunfish anglers should give Albemarle Lake a visit. Sunfish can be found throughout the lake but the fallen trees around the shoreline and spawning flats just above and below the boat launch offer some of the best places to catch the big sunfish.

In 2012, a 10-inch minimum size limit for crappie was established to help a struggling crappie population in Lake Albemarle. The regulation is working to create a more robust fishery. The size distribution of crappie collected shows a good distribution of fish between 7 and 12 inches (Figure 3). Approximately 75% of the fish collected in 2024 were under the protective harvest minimum of 10-inches and will stay in the population to spawn and maintain the population. All crappie collected were Black Crappie.

No Channel Catfish and one bullhead catfish were collected in the 2024 survey. Little is known about the catfish population, because catfish often frequent deeper water making them more difficult to catch with electrofishing gear. Albemarle Lake is open to catfish anglers after dark so there is plenty of opportunity for anglers to catch some bullheads or stocked Channel Catfish.

Anglers looking for a remote location to fish with numerous bass and an excellent sunfish fishery should visit Albemarle Lake. There is ample parking, a gravel ramp that accommodates most boats, and areas to fish from the shoreline. Gas powered motors are prohibited, but a good trolling motor will get you to any area of the lake.

For more information on Albemarle Lake, please contact:

Johnathan Harris
District Fisheries Biologist
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
(804) 305-8940

Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Albemarle Lake in 2024.

Species	Electrofishing		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch
Black Crappie	28	32	11
Bluegill	108	123	43
Golden Shiner	3	3	1
Largemouth Bass	88	100	35
Redear Sunfish	10	11	4
Warmouth	10	16	6
Yellow Bullhead	1	1	<1

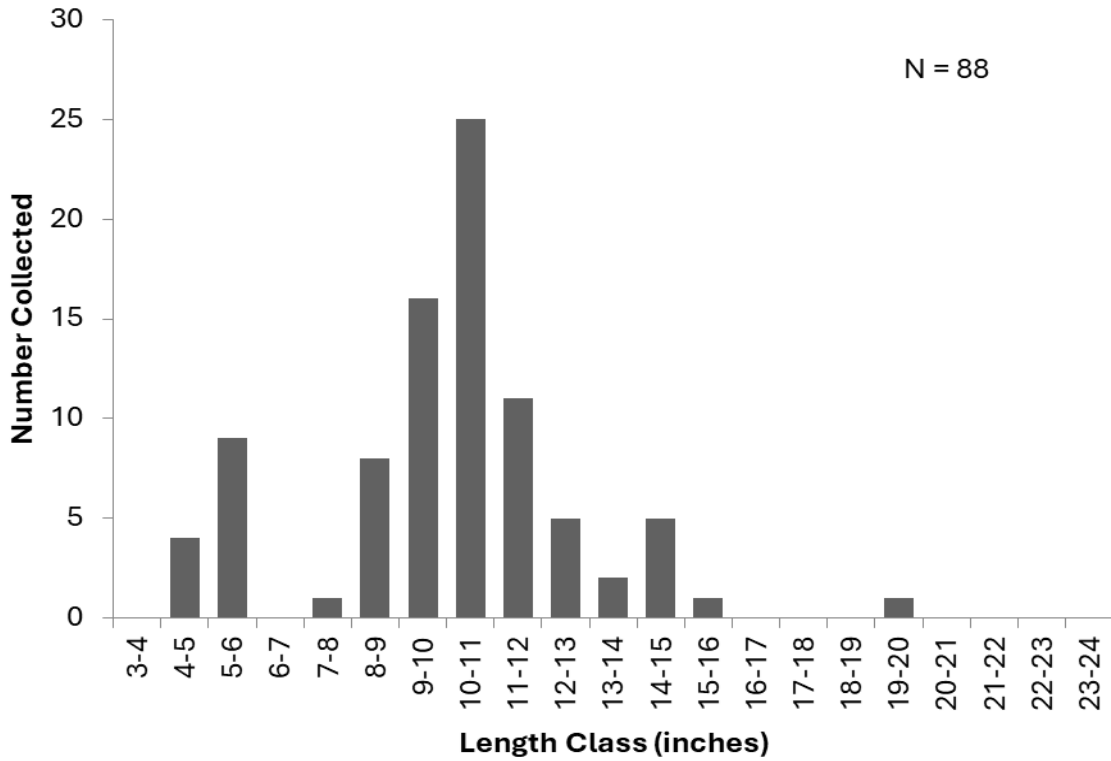


Figure 1. Length distribution of Largemouth Bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Albemarle Lake in 2024.

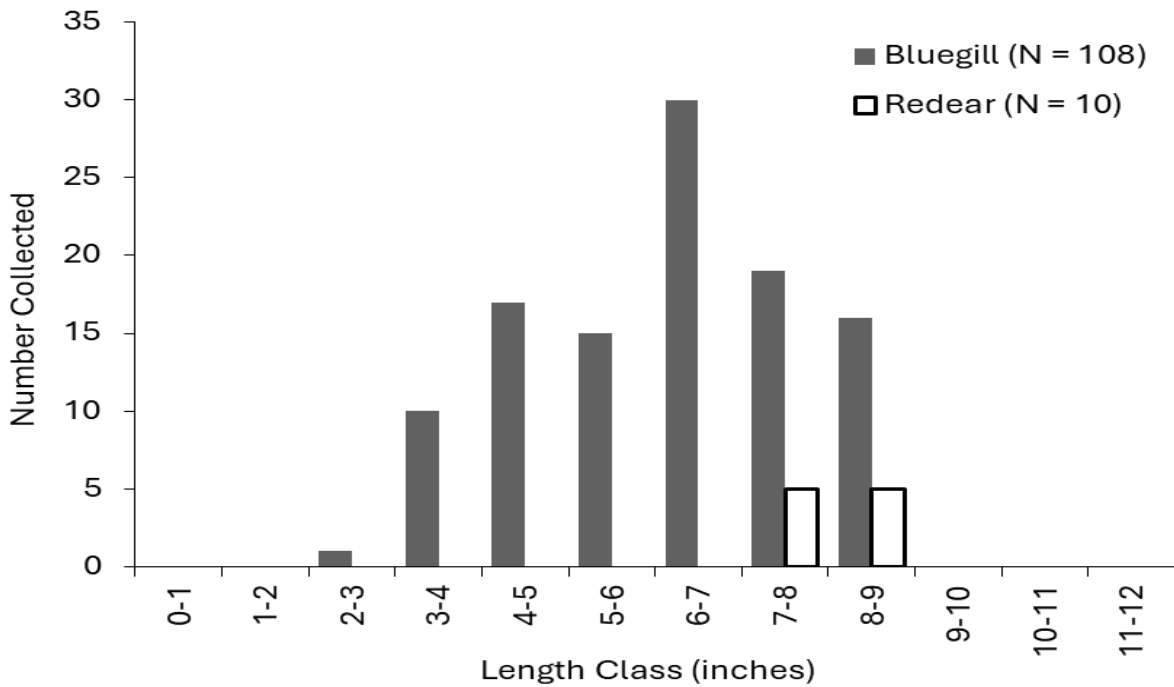


Figure 2. Length distribution of sunfish (Bluegill and Redear) collected throughout Albemarle Lake in 2024.

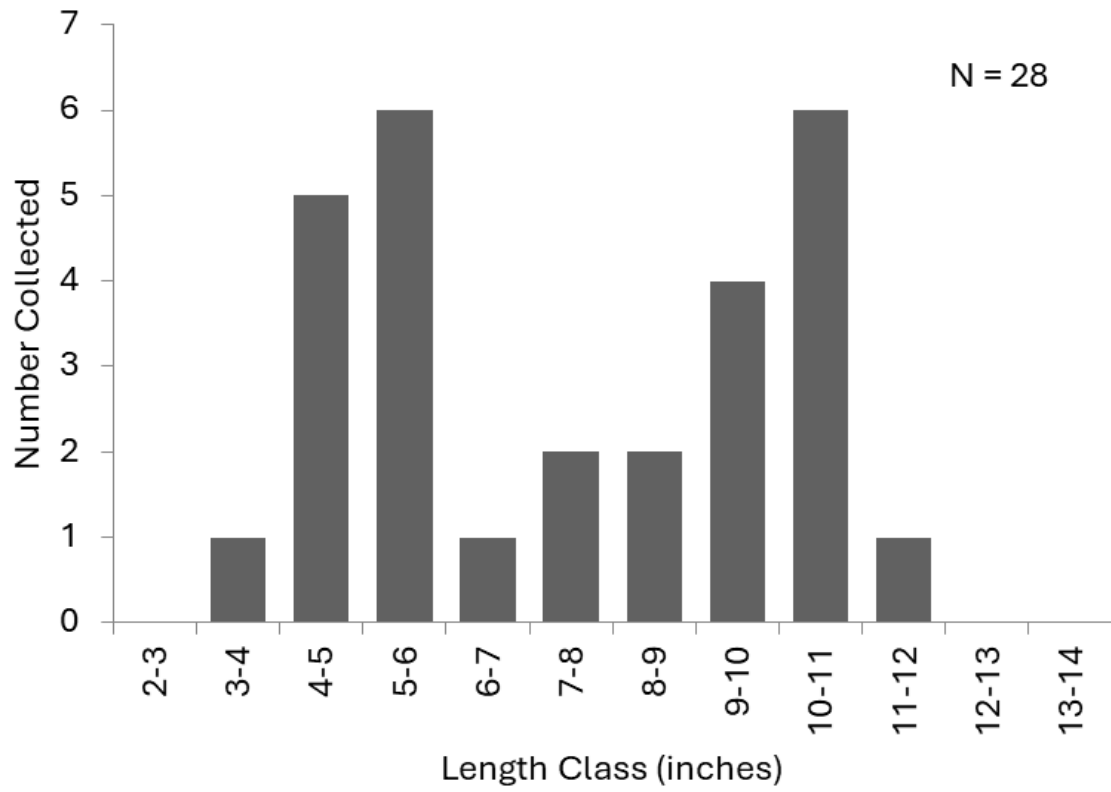


Figure 3. Length distribution of crappie collected throughout Albemarle Lake in 2024.