

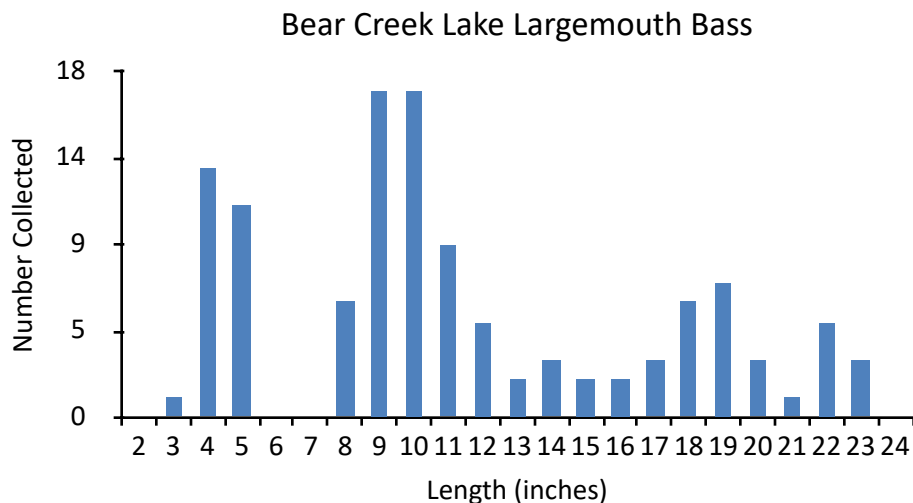


## Bear Creek Lake Report 2019

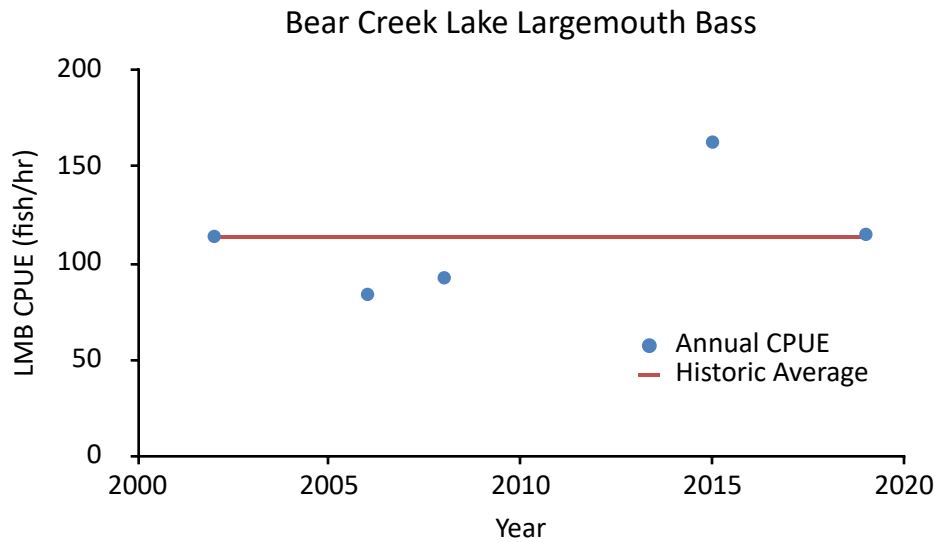
*Hunter Hatcher  
Fisheries Biologist  
Farmville Field Office*

Bear Creek Lake is a 42 acre lake located in Cumberland County within Bear Creek Lake State Park and the Cumberland State Forest. The lake is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation but the fisheries within the lake are managed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The lake provides a warmwater fishery for Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Black Crappie, and Channel Catfish. Fishing regulations can be viewed online (<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/waterbody/Bear-Creek-lake/>) or at the kiosk near the boat ramp. . Biologists routinely sample the lake using boat electrofishing. Prior to sampling efforts in 2019 the lake had not been sampled since 2015. Below are results from the 2019 survey.

**Largemouth Bass:** Bear Creek Lake electrofishing efforts in Spring of 2019 yielded high catch rates for Largemouth Bass. Size structure indicated a range of sizes present with good potential for Largemouth greater than 20 inches. Bear Creek Lake is managed with a 5 fish daily limit and a 16 to 24 inch protected slot with one fish over 24 inches allowed per day. The desire is to create a trophy bass fishery. Target submerged cover including fallen trees and brush piles near depth changes for Largemouth Bass.

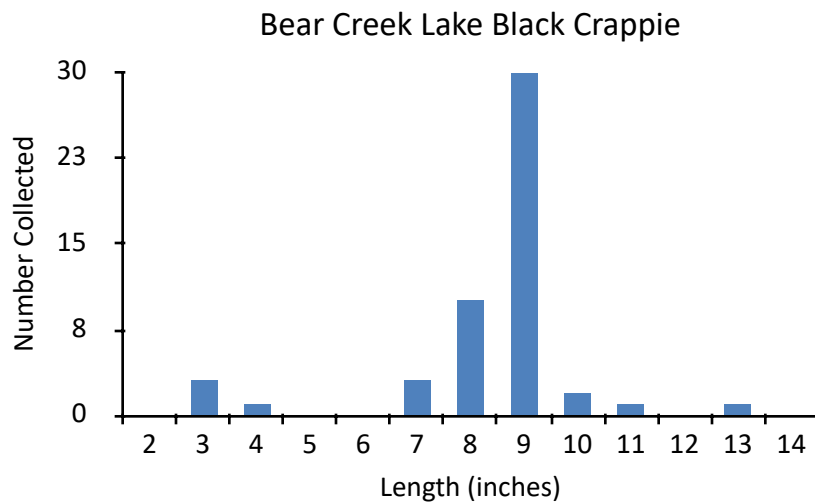


*Largemouth bass size distribution at Bear Creek Lake from 2019 electrofishing surveys.*



*Catch rate (fish/hour) for Largemouth Bass in Bear Creek Lake from historic electrofishing samples.*

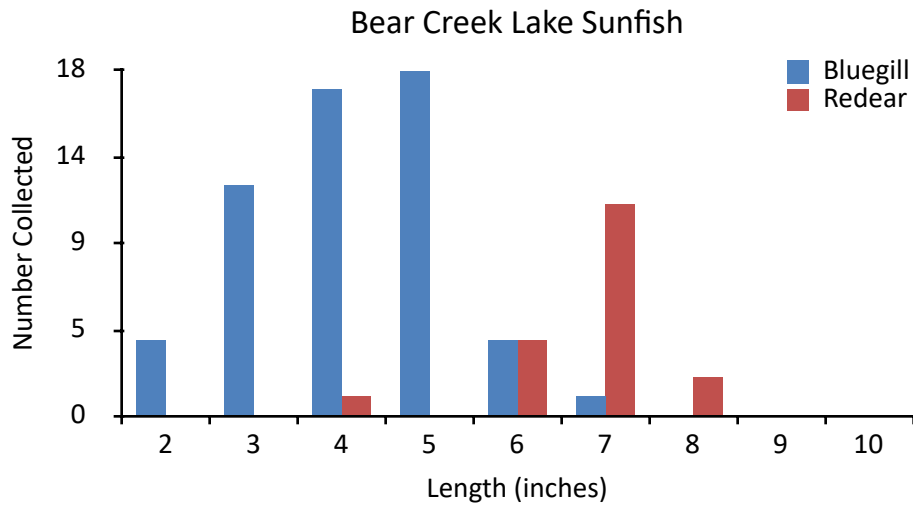
**Crappie:** Generally speaking Crappie are an undesirable species in small impoundments like Bear Creek Lake. These fish have a tendency to become over populated and exhibit decreased growth. Bear Creek Lake has an abundance of Black Crappie of catchable size. The average length of crappie is around 8 inches, but the potential for larger individuals does exist. The largest Crappie collected during 2019 electrofishing was over 13 inches. Crappie tend to occupy brush piles, fallen trees, and beaver lodges during the spring and fall months. In the summer however, they typically move offshore to deeper water and can be tough to find.



*Black crappie size distribution at Bear Creek Lake from 2019 electrofishing survey.*

**Sunfish:** Bear Creek Lake offers modest populations of catchable size Redear Sunfish, with low numbers of catchable size bluegill as well. Bluegill of smaller sizes are present in good number, but likely don't support a strong fishery. Average size is approximately 6 inches for Bluegill and

6.5 inches for Redear Sunfish. Any structure along the shoreline is good for sunfish, but try to target fallen trees and beaver lodges.



*Sunfish (Bluegill and Redbreast Sunfish) size distribution at Bear Creek Lake from 2019 electrofishing surveys.*

**Catfish:** Electrofishing does not target channel catfish well during surveys, but catfish are still very popular among the anglers at Bear Creek. Channel catfish numbers at Bear Creek are supplemented annually by stocking. Try cut bait or other natural baits fished on the bottom near creek channels on Bear Creek for catfish.

**Area Attractions:**

[Bear Creek Lake State Park](#)

[Cumberland State Forest Lakes](#)

[Horsepen Lake](#)

**For more information please contact Hunter Hatcher, Fisheries Biologist, at 434-392-4369**