



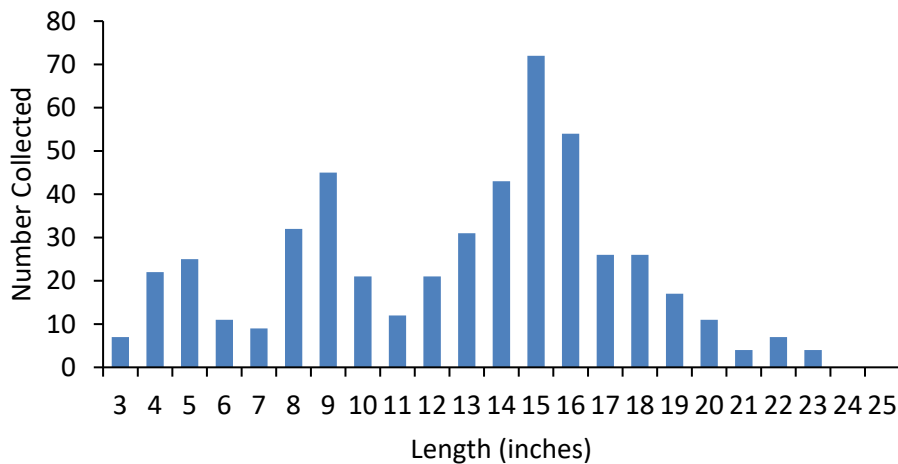
Briery Creek Lake Report 2020

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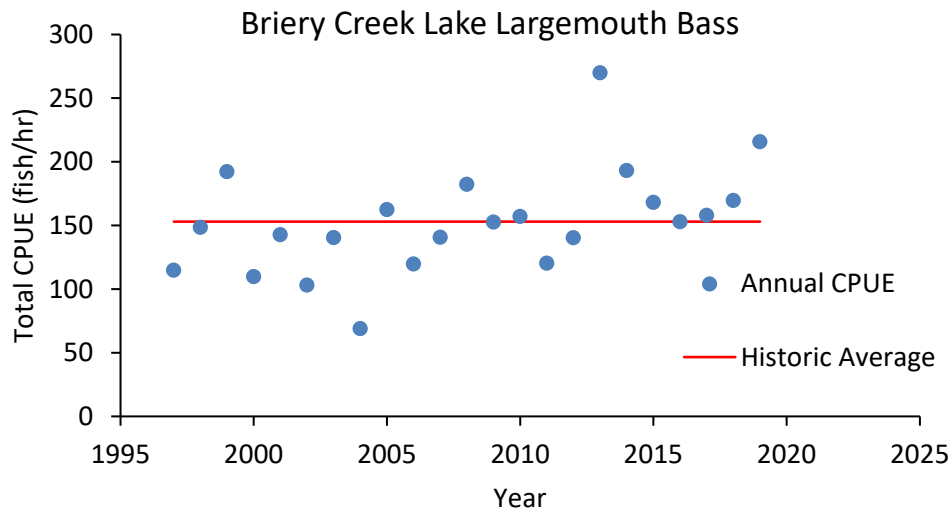
Briery Creek Lake is an 845 acre lake located in Prince Edward County, just south of the town of Farmville. Briery Creek Lake is the largest Department of Game and Inland Fisheries owned lake in the Commonwealth. The lake was impounded in 1986 and opened to fishing in 1989. Fish populations have been sampled annually since the lake was opened for fishing in 1989. The lake provides a warmwater fishery for Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Black Crappie, Chain Pickerel, and Channel Catfish. Fishing regulations can be viewed online (<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/waterbody/briery-creek-lake/>) or at the kiosk near both boat ramps. Biologists conduct spring electrofishing surveys annually to monitor sport fish populations characteristics. Below are results from the survey.

Largemouth Bass: Briery Creek Lake is best known for its bass fishery. Briery Creek gained a strong reputation among bass anglers shortly after being opened to the public in 1989, boasting some of the highest catch rates of trophy size bass (> 24 inches) in the Commonwealth. Recent surveys have indicated declines in abundance of trophy size bass. However overall abundance of Largemouth Bass during 2019 samples were the highest observed over the previous 7 years. The size structure of the Largemouth Bass populations still boasts high numbers of catchable size bass with some memorable fish (>20 inches) potential still present. Target submerged structure including standing timber, fallen trees, and aquatic vegetation near creek channels or other depth changes for bass on Briery Creek Lake.

Briery Creek Lake Largemouth Bass



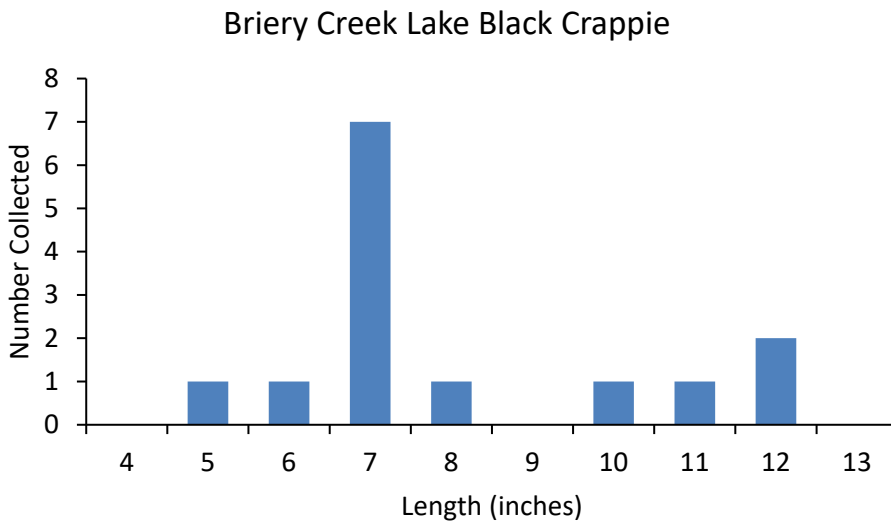
Largemouth bass size distribution at Briery Creek Lake from 2019 electrofishing surveys.



Relative abundance (fish/hour) for Largemouth Bass in Briery Creek Lake from historic electrofishing samples.

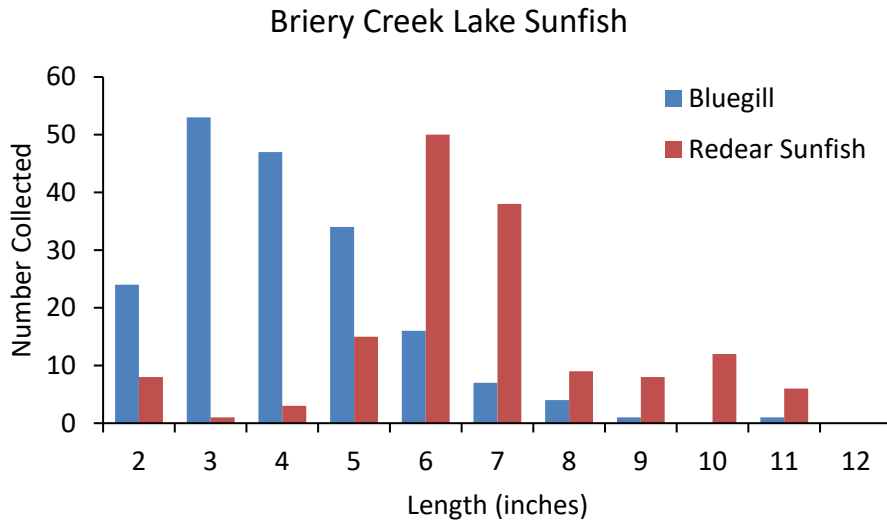
Crappie: Black crappie provide a decent fishery at Briery Creek as well. Crappie are erratic spawners and populations tend to be highly variable as a result. Crappie populations are below the level they were in the mid-2000s but still provide a good fishery. The average length of crappie is around 8 inches, but the potential for 12 inch individuals does exist. 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.

Crappie anglers should be aware of a 9 inch minimum length requirement for harvest of Crappie in Briery Creek Lake, this regulation was put in to place in 2018.



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

Sunfish: Sunfish at Briery Creek are very abundant. Both Bluegill and Redear Sunfish are present in good numbers. Average size among Redear Sunfish is higher than that for Bluegill and likely offers greater opportunity for catchable size individuals. In an effort to improve abundance and supplement bass forage Bluegill are stocked annually. 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 Briery 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 Briery Creek. Try cut bait or other natural baits fished on the bottom near creek channels on Briery for catfish.

Chain Pickerel: Chain pickerel are not very abundant but can be found around the weed edges at Briery. Pickerel will usually hit any lure thrown their way and are often incidentally caught by bass anglers.

Area Attractions:

[High Bridge Trail State Park](#)

[Twin Lakes State Park](#)

[Sandy River Reservoir](#)

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