



## Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake 2022



Located in Fluvanna County, Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake is a 50-acre impoundment owned and managed by the Department of Wildlife Resources. The lake contains self-sustaining populations of Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, and Black Crappie. The lake has provided excellent Largemouth Bass and panfish fisheries since the Department began an annual fertilization program in 1970. The fertilizer enhances the bloom of phytoplankton in the lake, which provides important food for the production and growth of fish. The phytoplankton also gives the lake its greenish color in the spring and summer months. To provide additional angling opportunities, the reservoir is annually stocked with Channel Catfish. In 2021, the fish community of Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake was sampled by boat electrofishing. This report summarizes the results of the survey and what anglers can expect to catch in Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake.

A total of six fish species were collected in the 2021 electrofishing survey (Table 1). Bluegill and Largemouth Bass were the most abundant species collected in the survey (Table 1). Fluvanna-Ruritan continues to produce a quality Largemouth Bass fishery. The catch rate for Largemouth Bass was close to the historical average rate from previous surveys, and in the optimal range for a Central Virginia impoundment. The size distribution of Largemouth Bass collected was exceptional, with good numbers of fish collected up to 22 inches (Figure 1). Similar to previous surveys, catch rates for bass between 12 and 18 inches were astonishingly high, and anglers should experience great success catching these quality-sized fish. Numerous bass above 20 inches were collected (Figure 1), indicating a good potential for trophy-sized bass in Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake. The exception bass fishery was quantified during a 2016 largemouth bass density study when the lake was estimated to hold 398 bass 15 inches or larger (8/acre) and 80 bass 20 inches or larger (2/acre). The largest bass collected in the 2021 electrofishing survey measured 22 inches and weighed approximately 7 lbs. The good growth of young and middle-aged bass is imperative to trophy potential of bass. In Fluvanna-Ruritan, largemouth bass growth is decent but could be better; small bass (< 12 inches) were slightly skinny. Anglers should harvest bass from the small size classes (< 12 inches) to avoid stockpiling and stunting of the bass population. Anglers searching for bass should fish the numerous brushpiles, the main-lake points, or the deep shoreline up lake from the dam. In recent years, biologists have worked to increase the fishable habitat in Fluvanna-Ruritan through the addition of marked fish attractors and fallen trees cabled to the bank.

Sunfish catch rates were near average with Bluegill comprising the majority of sunfish collected. The bulk of sunfish collected were in the 5 to 9 inch range, but a few fish above 9 inches were collected (Figure 2). Only a small number of Redear Sunfish and Black Crappie were collected with the majority of Redear being large sunfish (9+ inches). Black Crappie collected were relatively small when compared to previous surveys, but the low sample size is likely not indicative of the entire population. The fertilization program has shown the largest effect with the increase in the production and growth of sunfish throughout the lake. Anglers should easily catch their limit of harvestable-sized sunfish during a summer's day at Fluvanna-

Ruritan. The best places to fish for sunfish are around the numerous brushpiles throughout the lake and off the dam shoreline.

A small number of Channel Catfish were collected in the 2021 surveys (Table 1); these fish ranged in size from 15 to 22 inches (average size 18 inches). Catfish often frequent deeper water making them more difficult to catch with electrofishing gear, but Channel Catfish are being stocked annually, so anglers always have a good chance of catching one. During previous surveys, large Blue Catfish were collected and there have been confirmed reports of anglers catches of large Blue Catfish. These catfish were not stocked by the agency and due to their large size, were likely illegally stocked by unauthorized individuals. These large fish can disrupt the balance of the fish community in a small lake like Fluvanna-Ruritan and anglers are encouraged to remove these fish from the lake if they are caught.

Anglers looking for a remote location to fish with excellent bass and sunfish fisheries should visit Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake. The parking area, access road, and boat landing areas were renovated in early 2019 making the access more accommodating to boat anglers. There is ample parking, a concrete boat ramp, and open 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. The lake spillway has some erosion issues and is scheduled for major renovation in the next few years. Due to the erosion, the agency is keeping the lake level 3 to 4 feet low to keep the spillway from charging during minimal rain events. Please visit the Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake page on our website for any updates to the dam and spillway renovation project.

For more information on Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake during the 2021 electrofishing survey.

Species	Electrofishing		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch
Black Crappie	19	14	5
Bluegill	186	137	47
Channel Catfish	12	9	3
Chain Pickerel	1	1	< 1
Largemouth Bass	164	121	42
Redear Sunfish	13	10	3

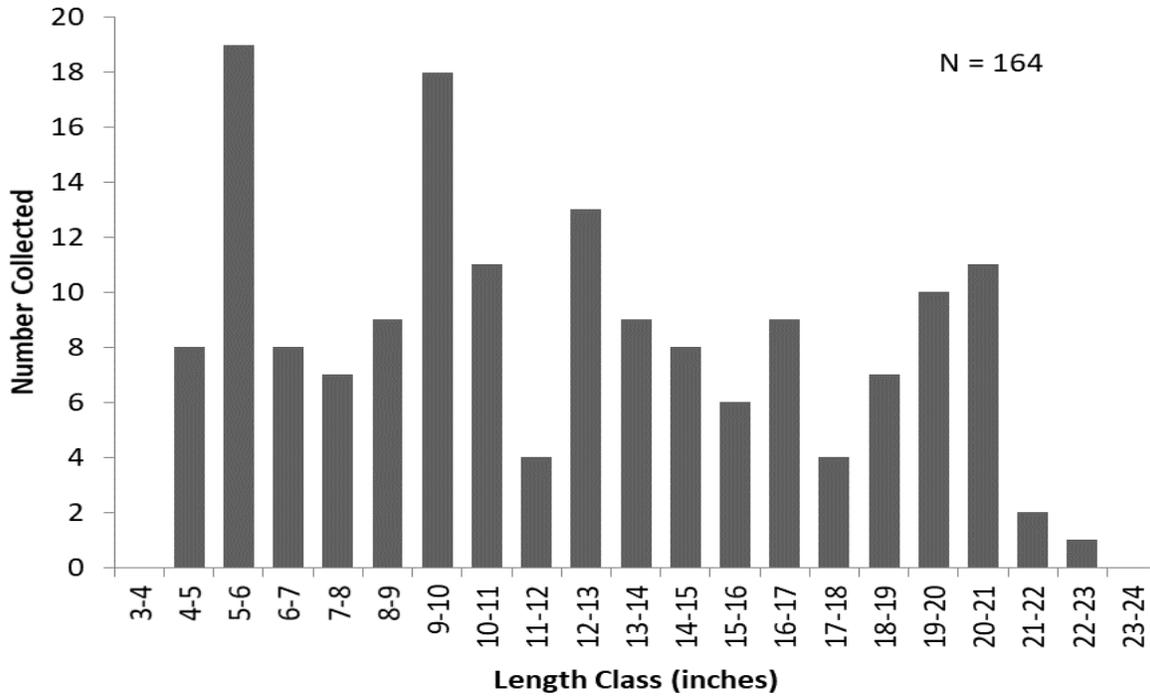


Figure 1. Length distribution of Largemouth Bass collected with electrofishing gear throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2021.

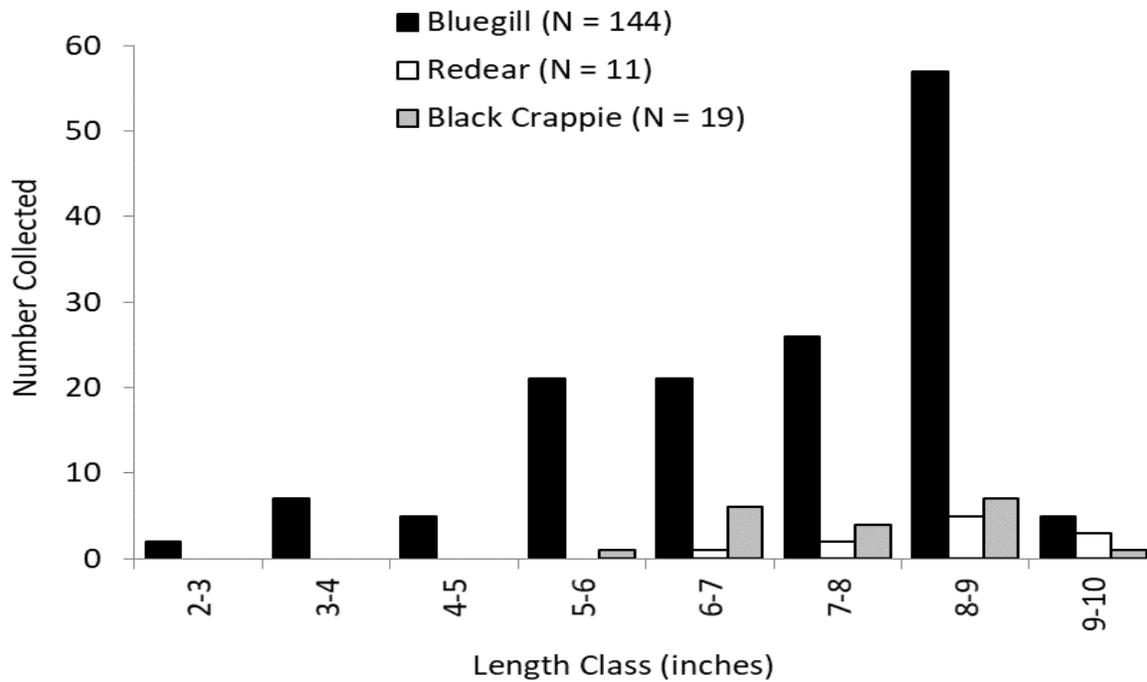


Figure 2. Length distribution of Bluegill, Redear, and Black Crappie collected with electrofishing gear throughout Fluvanna-Ruritan Lake in 2021.