

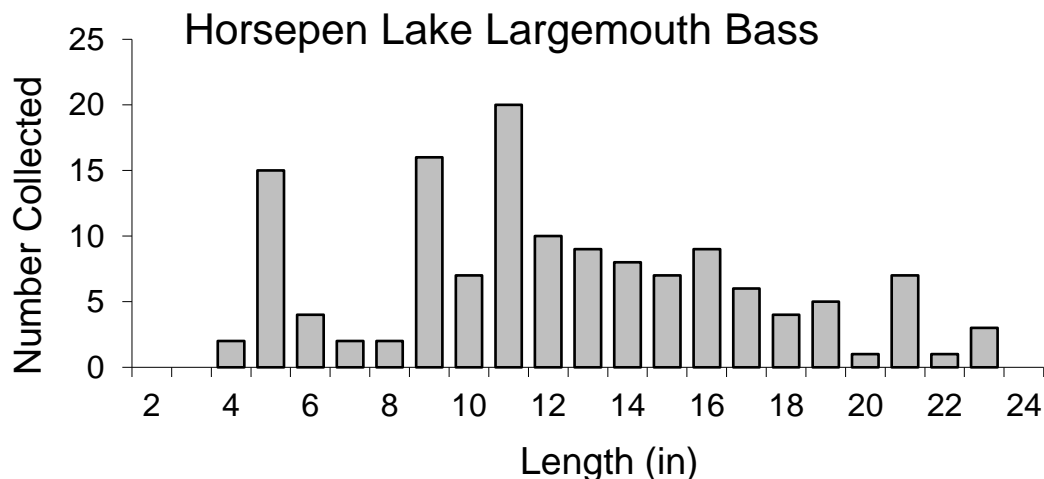


## Horsepen Lake Report 2021

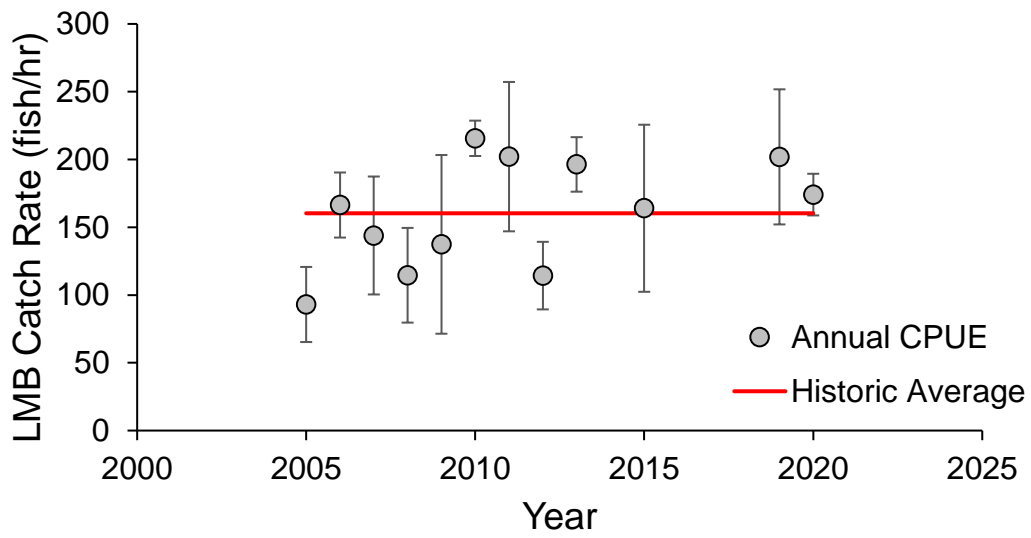
*Hunter Hatcher  
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Horsepen Lake is a 19 acre lake located in Buckingham County and owned by the Department of Wildlife Resources. The lake is an impoundment of Horsepen Creek, a tributary of the Slate River, and is located within Horsepen Wildlife Management Area. Horsepen Lake was drained in the early 2000's and was restocked in 2002. 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.dwr.virginia.gov/waterbody/horsepen-lake/>) or at the kiosk near the boat ramp. Biologists routinely sample the lake using boat electrofishing. Below are results from the 2020 survey.

**Largemouth Bass:** Horsepen Lake electrofishing efforts in Spring of 2020 yielded high catch rates for Largemouth Bass, well in line with historic averages for the lake. Size structure indicated a range of sizes present with strong numbers for Largemouth greater than 20 inches. Horsepen Lake is managed with a 22 inch minimum length with a one fish per day limit, with the goal of creating a trophy fishery. Target submerged cover including fallen trees and brush piles near depth changes for Largemouth Bass. Success can also be found skipping lures under overhanging button bush around the lake.



*Largemouth bass size distribution at Horsepen Lake from 2020 electrofishing surveys.*

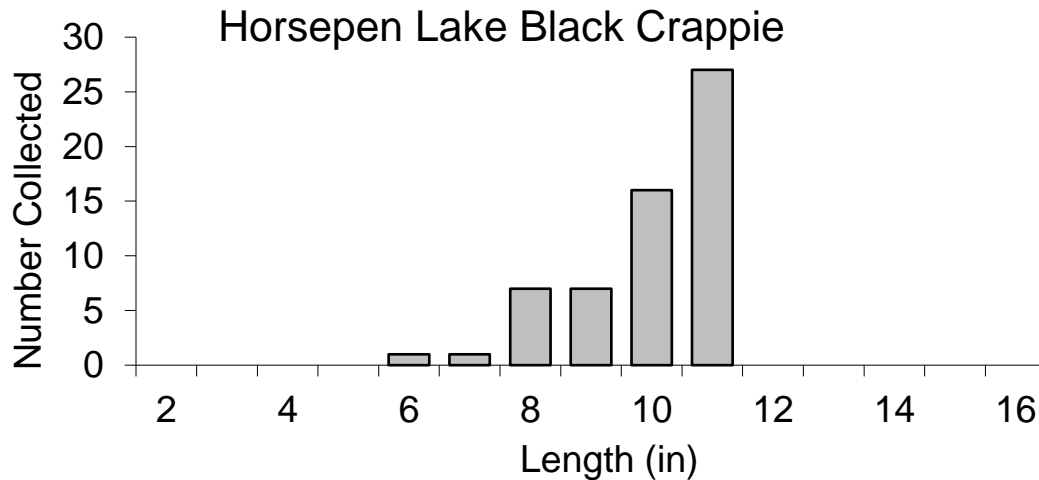


*Catch rate (fish/hour) for Largemouth Bass in Horsepen Lake from historic electrofishing samples.*



*A pair of Largemouth Bass >22" collected during 2020 Electrofishing samples at Horsepen Lake.*

**Crappie:** Horsepen Lake has an abundance of Black Crappie of catchable size. The average length of crappie is around 9-10 inches, but the potential for larger 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. Generally speaking Crappie are an undesirable species in small impoundments like Horsepen Lake. These fish have a tendency to become over populated and exhibit decreased growth. Anglers are encouraged to harvest any Black Crappie they catch, not to exceed the statewide 25 fish per day limit.

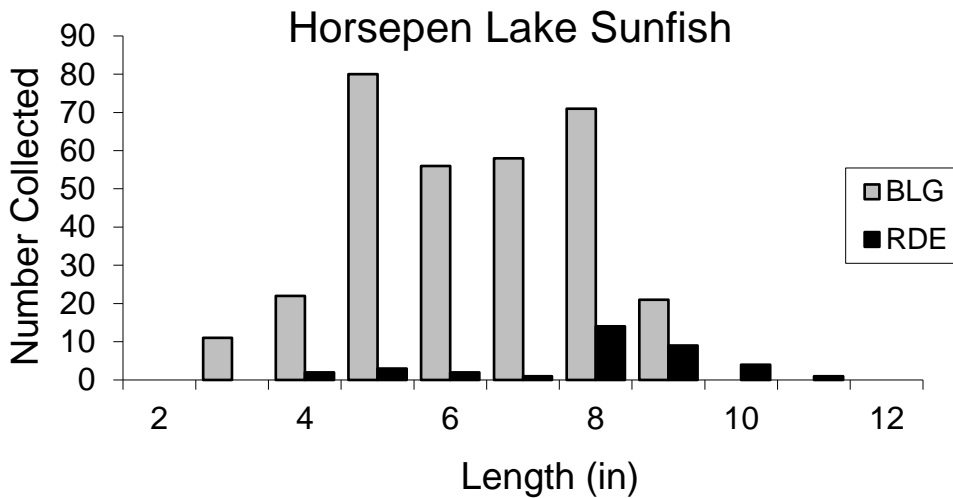


*Black crappie size distribution at Horsepen Lake from 2020 electrofishing survey.*



*A quality Black Crappie collected during 2020 electrofishing samples at Horsepen Lake.*

**Sunfish:** Horsepen Lake offers modest populations of catchable size sunfish. Bluegill in particular are present in good numbers. Average size is approximately 6-7 inches for Bluegill and 7-8 inches for Redear Sunfish. Any structure along the shoreline should hold sunfish, but try to target fallen trees and beaver lodges.



*Sunfish (Bluegill and Redbreast Sunfish) size distribution at Horsepen Lake from 2020 electrofishing surveys.*

**Catfish:** Electrofishing surveys are poor indicators of Channel Catfish populations. However, catfish are still numerous and very popular among the anglers at Horsepen. Channel catfish numbers at Horsepen are supplemented annually by stocking, with almost 300 fish added to the lake each year. Catfish spawning boxes have also been added to the lake in an effort to increase spawning success. Please do not remove or move any catfish spawning boxes. When targeting catfish try cut bait or other natural baits fished on the bottom near creek channels for best success.

**Area Attractions:**

[Holliday Lake](#)

[Slate River Reservoir](#)

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