



Lake Burton 2023 Management Report

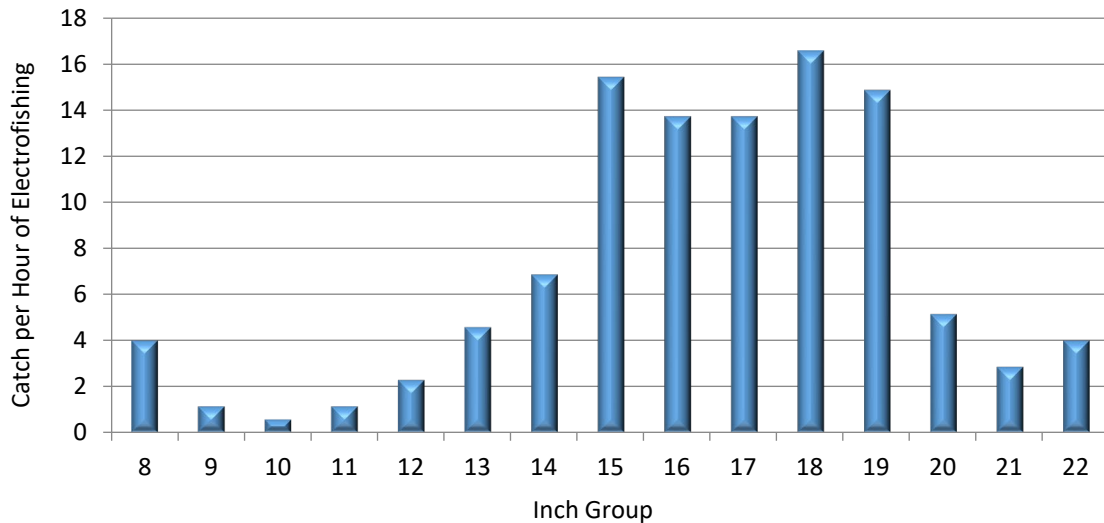
Lake Burton is a 76-acre impoundment located in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) owns and manages the lake primarily for fisheries related activities. The only facilities available at this reservoir are a boat ramp and associated parking. There is limited bank fishing area next to the boat ramp but bank fishing is permissible along the narrow strip of DWR property that extends around the entire shoreline. The lake is open to fishing 24 hours a day. Outboard motor use is prohibited but boats with outboard motors are allowed as long as outboard motors are not started. Electric motor use is legal.

This reservoir is located west of Chatham and can be accessed by taking one of two routes. From Rt. 40; turn left onto Rt. 799, turn right onto 649 in Climax, turn left onto Rt. 750, turn right onto Rt. 800, and the lake entrance will be on your left. Coming in on Rt. 57 from Climax; turn right onto Rt. 750, turn left onto Rt. 800 and the lake entrance will be on your left.

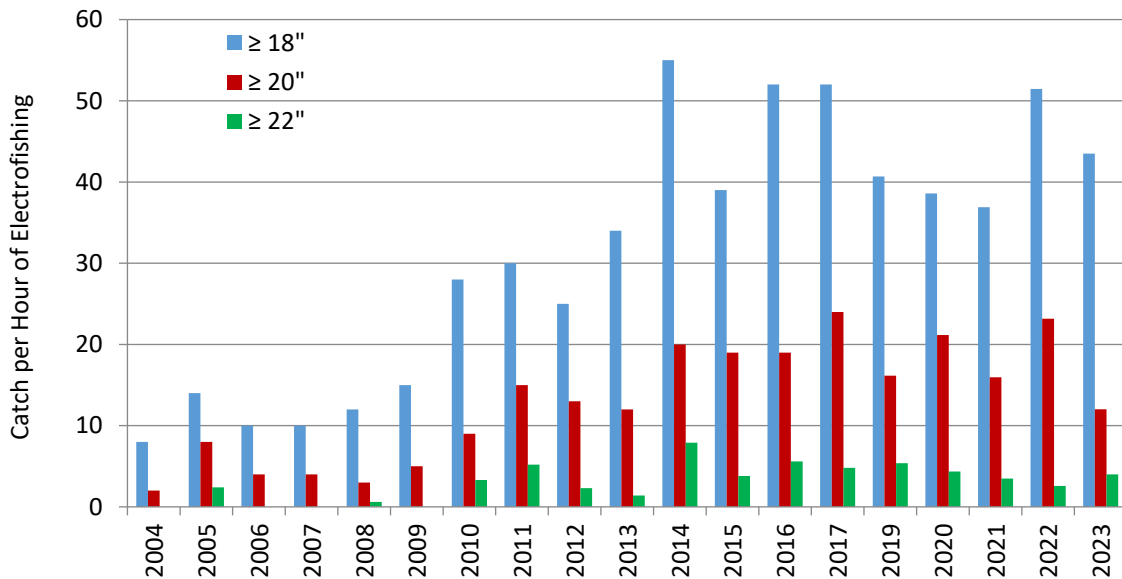
This reservoir does experience turbid water conditions and contains undesirable species (white perch and gizzard shad) which have resulted in an unbalanced fishery. Small impoundments such as Lake Burton typically do not benefit from these species. White perch compete for the same resources as sunfish, crappie, and small bass. While most species at this lake are small and stunted, Lake Burton does provide a unique trophy bass fishery.

Largemouth Bass

The overall largemouth bass population is lower in Lake Burton than many other small lakes due to the abundance of sunfish, crappie, and white perch that limit spawning success and survival of young bass. However, the surviving largemouth bass experience good growth rates from reduced competition and abundant forage, which has produced one of Virginia's best trophy bass fisheries. In fact, Lake Burton annually produces some of highest electrofishing catch rates of bass 15 inches and larger, than any lake in Virginia with the highest catch rates of any lake for bass over 20 inches. The most abundant sizes are 15 to 19 inches with the largest bass reaching 9 pounds. Largemouth bass are most abundant in the lower two thirds of the lake where water depths are generally more favorable. Since the largemouth bass at Lake Burton are well fed, these fish are a challenge to catch due to the large quantity of available forage.



Catch rates and sizes of largemouth bass collected from Lake Burton in spring 2023.



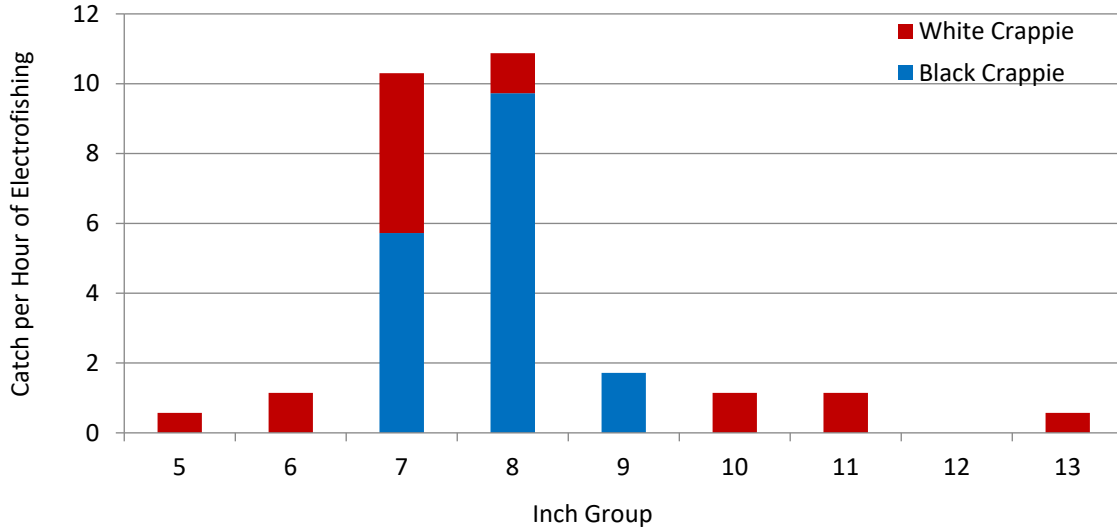
Catch rate trends for three size groups of largemouth bass collected from Lake Burton.

Lake Burton is regulated with a ‘trophy’ largemouth bass regulation which prohibits the harvesting or even retaining any size largemouth bass. The regulation is to protect the limited number of small bass and the trophy bass. Eliminating the harvest of largemouth bass, especially larger adults, is necessary to maintain this trophy fishery. Because of the lake’s small size, if anglers only harvest a small number of trophy fish, it could easily prohibit this lake from maintaining the trophy population.

Crappie

White and black crappie are both present at Lake Burton, both species generally experience poor growth. For good growth, crappie must convert primarily to a fish diet by the time they reach 6-7 inches. Since these fish were historically too abundant, most grew very slow after reaching seven inches. When this happens they do not die from lack of food, they just stop growing. Occasionally anglers catch a large crappie but this is an

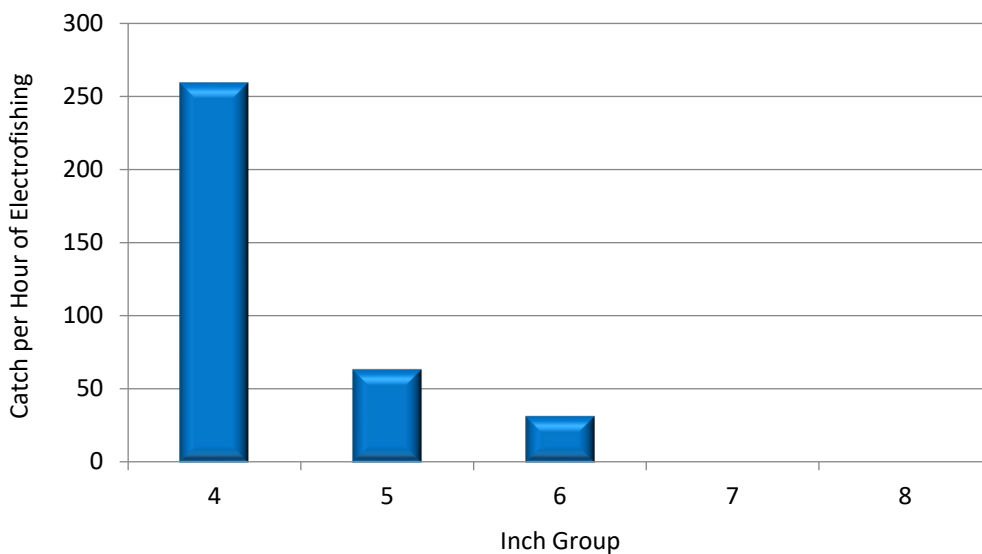
exception since the crappie numbers decline dramatically after 8 inches. The crappie population has experienced a major reduction but only a very modest improvement in the sizes. However, the reduction has coincided with a large increase in white perch which are likely directly competing with the crappie and preventing substantial improvements in size structure.



Catch rates of black and white crappie collected from Lake Burton in spring 2023.

Sunfish

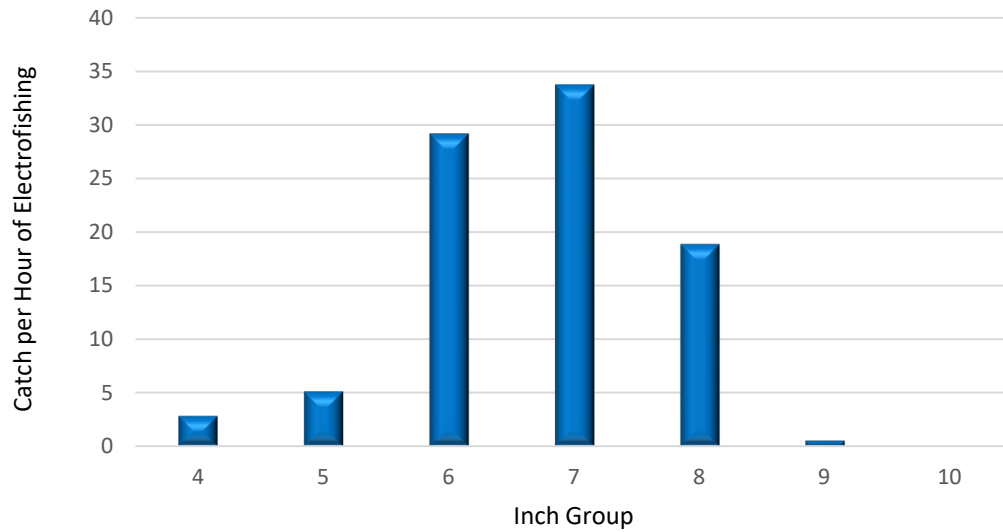
Bluegill are abundant but are slow growing. The overabundant bluegill population is a result of insufficient predation by largemouth bass, which also feed on gizzard shad found in the lake. Sufficient predation from largemouth bass is required to maintain a good growing sunfish population. In addition, gizzard shad compete directly for some of the same forage as bluegill. There are no redear sunfish in Lake Burton.



Catch rates and sizes of bluegill collected from Lake Burton in spring 2023.

White Perch

White perch are also abundant and slow growing. The overabundant population can provide for good fishing opportunities for 7-8 inch fish.



Catch rates and sizes of white perch collected from Lake Burton in spring 2023.