

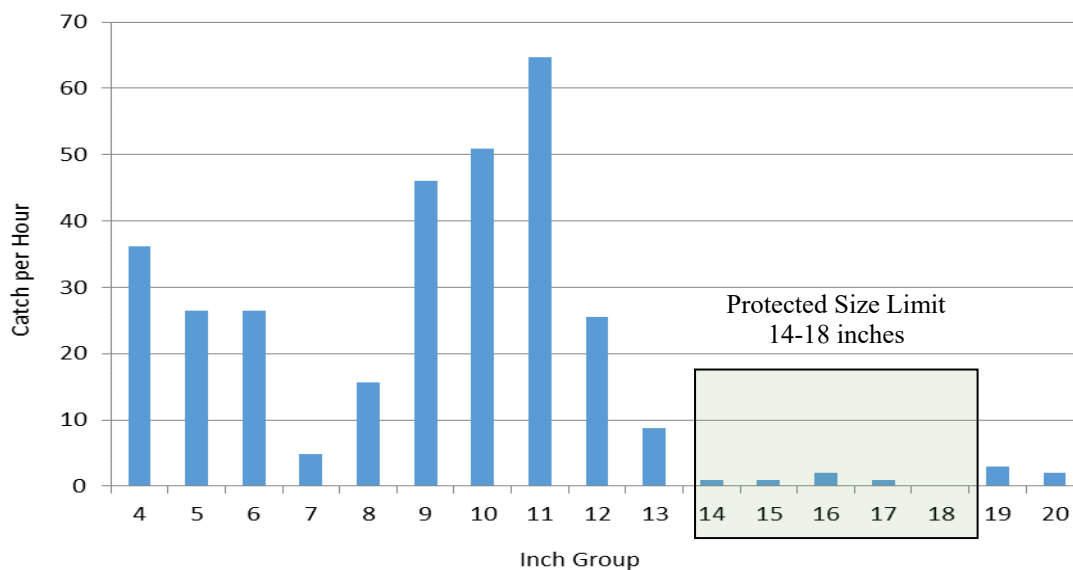


## Lake Nelson 2021

Lake Nelson is a 40-acre impoundment located in Nelson County, Virginia. This reservoir is owned by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and is managed primarily for fisheries related activities. Facilities available at this reservoir are a boat ramp, parking areas near the boat ramp and dam, and portable toilets are available April-October. Bank anglers can utilize a large mowed area adjoining the parking lot, a mowed dam, and a narrow strip of DWR property that extends around the entire shoreline. The boundaries are marked with T posts and DWR property extends from the T posts to the lake. The lake is open 24 hours a day. Outboard motor use is prohibited but electric motors are permitted.

### Largemouth Bass

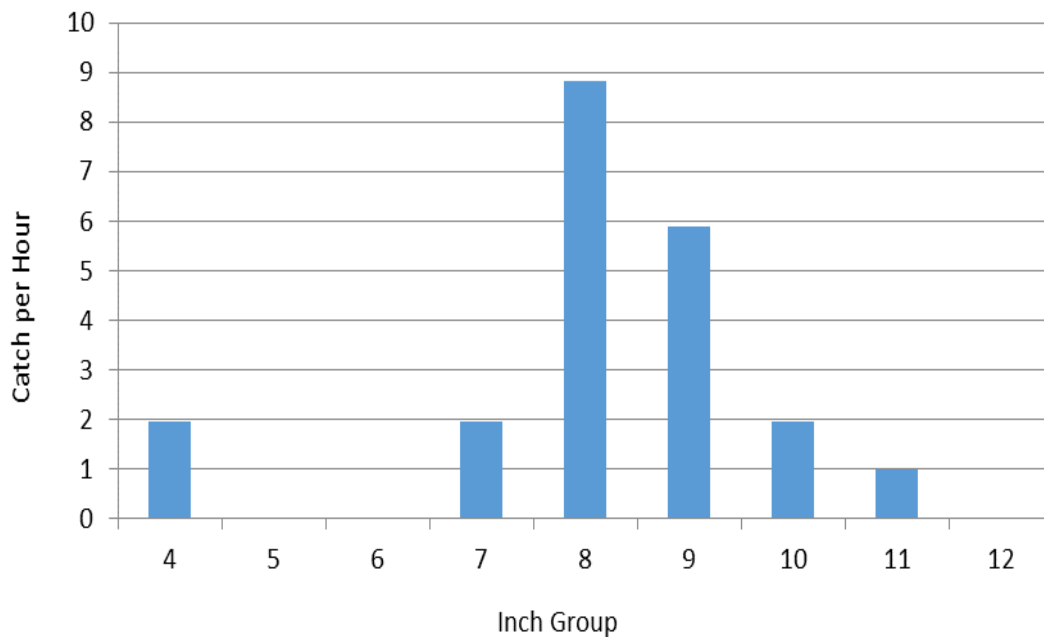
Largemouth bass are abundant but most of these fish are less than 13 inches. Largemouth bass are now regulated with a 14-18 inch protected slot limit. All bass caught between 14 and 18 inches must be immediately released unharmed. This new size limit was initiated in 2021 to assist in reducing the number of bass 9-12 inches because the bass population was overabundant and stunted. Very few bass will grow beyond 13 inches until the population is reduced and growth improves. While management objectives are not designed to produce a trophy bass fishery, DWR is managing the lake to sustain high numbers of smaller bass. However, to maintain a healthy bass population, a small reduction of bass between 9 and 12 inches is needed so growth and the size structure can improve.



*Catch rates (number of fish collected per hour of sampling) and sizes of largemouth bass collected from Lake Nelson in the spring of 2021.*

## Crappie

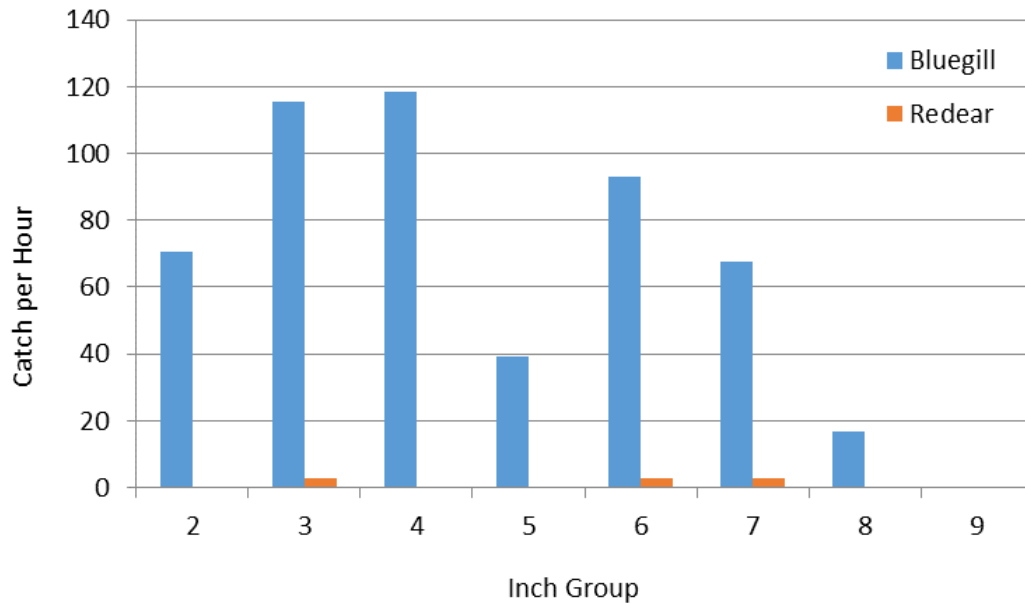
The crappie population continues to fluctuate due to varying reproduction. Crappie routinely have good and bad years when it comes to spawning success especially in small lakes and Lake Nelson is no exception. With this in mind, anglers may not know what to expect from year to year until they try their favorite crappie holes each spring. Current crappie numbers are low and this population experiences high harvest rates, most crappie are removed when they reached the nine-inch minimum length limit. Anglers looking for crappie should check beaver lodges or shoreline structure such as fallen trees and brush piles in the spring and deeper water during other months.



*Catch rates (number of fish collected per hour of sampling) and sizes of crappie collected from Lake Nelson in the spring of 2021.*

## Sunfish

Bluegill are the primary sunfish species available at Lake Nelson but there are a few quality redear sunfish also available. Due to the overabundant bass population, sunfish numbers have declined slightly from historical levels. The reduction in sunfish numbers has improved growth and the size structure, providing a very good bluegill fishery.



*Catch rates (number of fish collected per hour of sampling) and sizes of bluegill and redear sunfish collected from Lake Nelson in the spring of 2021.*

### **Other Fish Species**

Lake Nelson receives stockings of channel catfish (10"-12"), which does support a limited catfish fishery. Restrictive regulations are necessary to allow for the stocked catfish to grow larger and provide a higher quality fish for anglers. The regulations for catfish include a 5 fish daily creel and a 15 inch minimum size limit.

Lake Nelson has an abundant fish population but does not produce high numbers of larger bass. Management is designed to sustain an abundant bass population, provide a good sunfish fishery, and maintain limited crappie and catfish opportunities. Grass carp are occasionally stocked to control aquatic vegetation. Any grass carp caught must be immediately released unharmed.

This lake is fertilized each year to improve the production of algae and plankton which is utilized by small fish and later by larger predators. Ultimately, fertilization increases the overall amount of food and the number of fish in the reservoir.

The lake can be reached from Route 29 near Colleen, then take Route 655 about 2.8 miles to Arrington; go through Arrington, then left on Route 812, go about 2.2 miles and watch for the sign. Turn left and follow the road to the lake. For additional information, call 434-525-7522.