



Mint Springs Lakes 2021



Located just west of Crozet in Albemarle County, the two Mint Springs lakes are small (< 5 acres) recreation impoundments administered by Albemarle Parks and Recreation. The lakes are part of the Department's put-and-take trout stocking program, but also contain several warm water species including Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and Black Crappie. Channel Catfish are stocked in both lakes to create an additional fishery. In the spring of 2020, the fish communities of both lakes were sampled by boat electrofishing. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in the Mint Springs lakes.

The fish communities of both lakes are limited by small waterbody size. The main fishing attraction is the popular put-and-take trout stocking program. During sampling numerous trout were observed but were not collected. Excluding trout, a total of five fish species were collected in both lakes during the 2020 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth Bass and Bluegill were by far the most abundant species collected in both lakes (Table 1).

The Largemouth Bass fisheries in both lakes are severely stunted with bass stockpiling at sizes below 12 inches (Figure 1). Only two bass over 15 inches were collected in 2020 but larger bass can be hard to catch in such deep and clear lakes. The largest bass collected in the 2020 surveys measured 20 inches and weighed nearly 6 pounds. To correct stockpiling and produce more quality Largemouth Bass, anglers should harvest every bass caught under 12 inches within the 5 bass per day statewide creel limit. Once harvest is increased, Largemouth Bass growth will improve and more bass will grow to larger sizes. There is a 12-22 protective slot limit enforced at both lakes to protect the limited number of large bass produced. Additionally, harvest of only one Largemouth Bass over 22 is allowed per angler per day.

The sunfish population, primarily Bluegill and Black Crappie, were limited in numbers. Although low in number, quality sized Bluegill and Black Crappie were collected (Figures 2 and 3). These fish were between 8 and 12 inches and would be a potential trophy catch for any angler. The largest sunfish collected was a Black Crappie that measured 11 inches and weighed nearly 1 pound.

The trout fisheries within the Mint Springs lakes are major fishing attractions but there are ample opportunities to catch other species including stocked Channel Catfish. Only four Channel Catfish were collected during the surveys, but low collections are expected with electrofishing gear. The Mint Springs Park has wonderful amenities including a fishing pier in the lower lake, numerous bank fishing access, and picnic areas. Swimming is the big attraction in the upper lake during the summer, but there is ample room for anglers to enjoy shore fishing. Mint Springs is open during daylight hours, and a small fee is required to enter the park. Boats are prohibited on both lakes.

For more information on the Mint Springs lakes please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout the Mint Springs lakes in 2020.

| Species | Lower Lake | | | Upper Lake | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Number Collected | Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing) | Percentage of the Catch | Number Collected | Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing) | Percentage of the Catch |
| Black Crappie | 4 | 10 | 2 | 7 | 18 | 8 |
| Bluegill | 89 | 234 | 52 | 28 | 73 | 32 |
| Channel Catfish | None Collected | | | 4 | 10 | 5 |
| Largemouth Bass | 78 | 205 | 45 | 39 | 102 | 45 |
| Warmouth | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 23 | 10 |

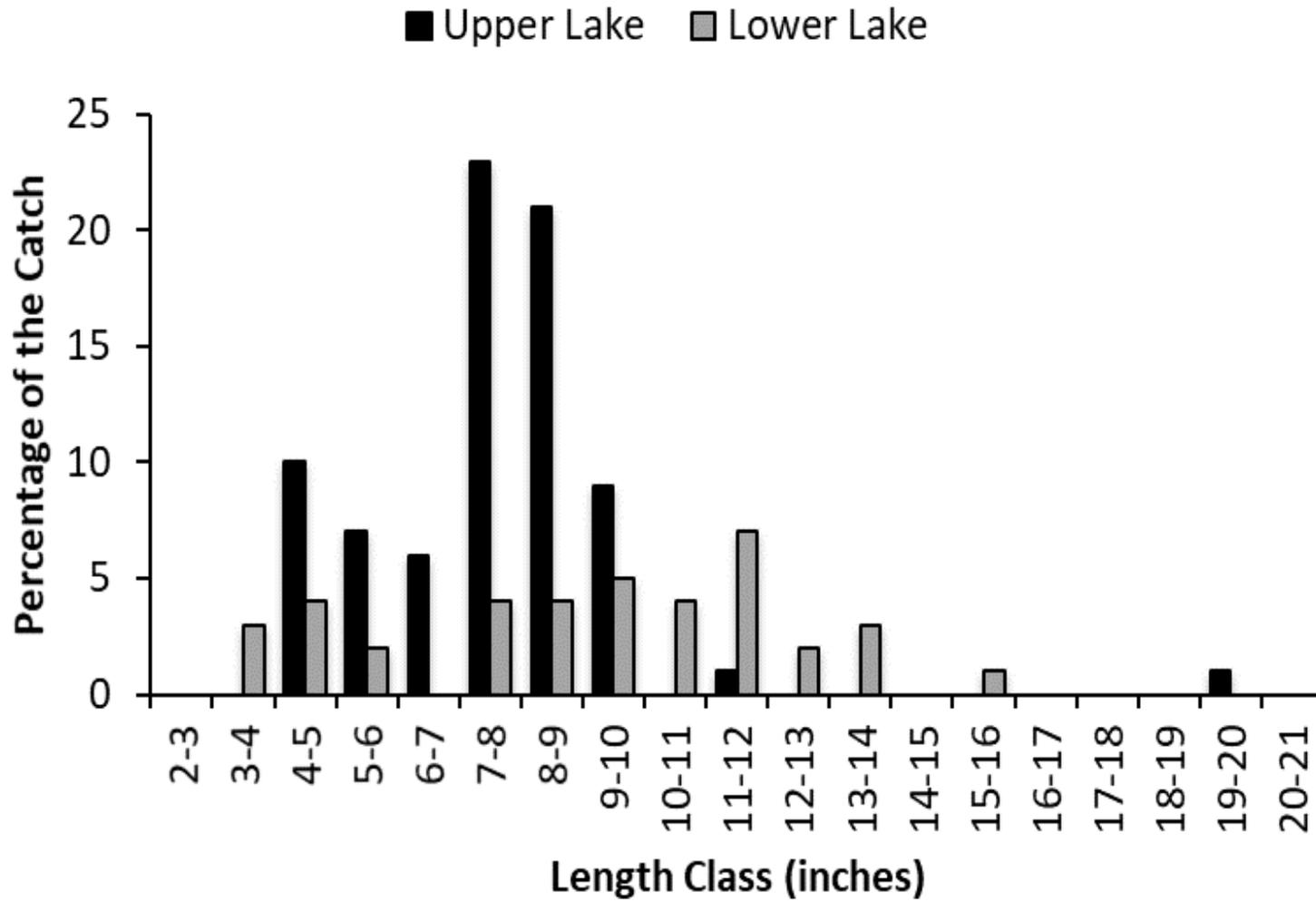


Figure 1. Length distribution of Largemouth Bass collected throughout the Mint Springs Lakes in 2020.

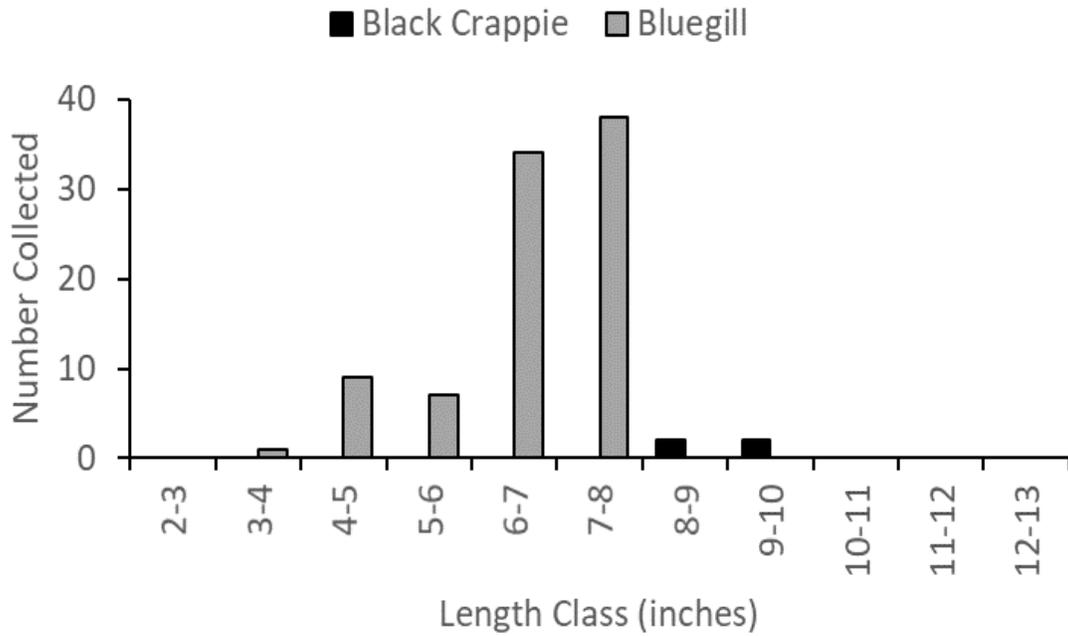


Figure 2. Length distribution of Bluegill and Black Crappie collected throughout upper Mint Springs Lake in 2020.

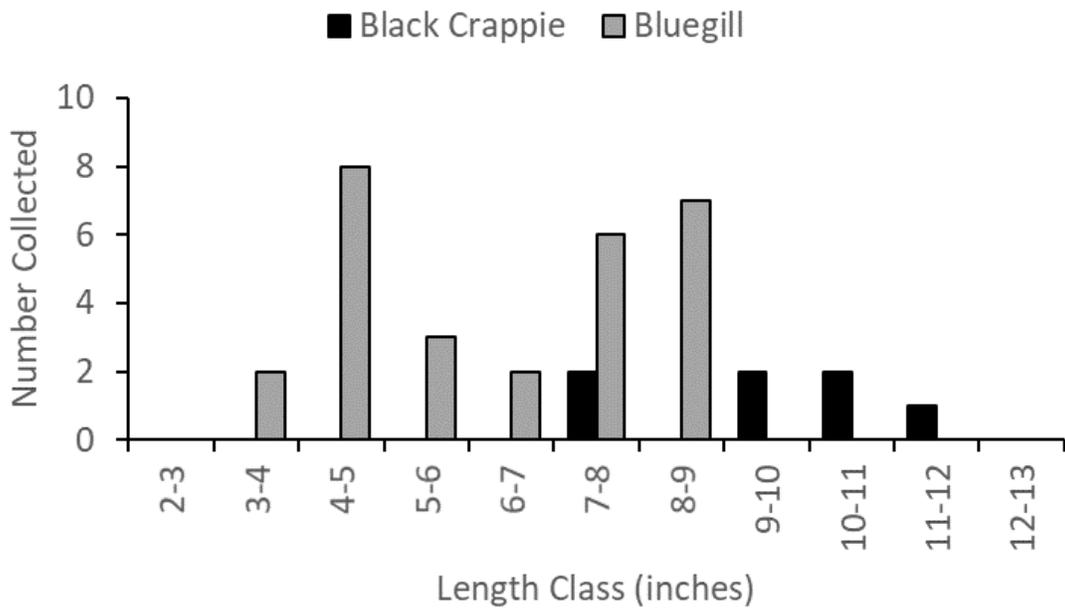


Figure 3. Length distribution of Bluegill and Black Crappie collected throughout lower Mint Springs Lake in 2020.