



Robert W. Duncan WMA Ponds 2020



Located just northeast of Doswell in Caroline County, the Robert W. Duncan Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 1300+ acre parcel of land acquired by DGIF in April of 2019. The property borders nearly 3 miles of the Mattaponi River and has numerous small ponds within its boundaries. Although relatively shallow (average depth < 4 ft.), two ponds on the property contain limited, self-sustaining fish populations. The smaller pond, approximately 1.6 acres in size, is located in the northeastern portion of the WMA and was created by previous quarry operations on the property. The larger pond, approximately 15 acres in size, is centrally located within the WMA and has vast amounts of spatterdock lily pads and duck weed in the warmer months of the year. Due to the previously described characteristics, the two ponds are named the Quarry and Lily Ponds. In the spring of 2019, the fish communities of both ponds were sampled by boat electrofishing. This report summarizes the results of these surveys.

The fish communities of the WMA ponds were quite diverse for such small, shallow impoundments (Table 1). Although diverse, the fisheries in each pond are limited in numbers of fish, which is due to the small waterbody sizes and limited deep-water refuge for the fish. Largemouth Bass and Bluegill were the most abundant species collected in both lakes (Table 1) and these species are the primary species sought after by anglers. Most of the bass collected were between 10 and 15 inches, but there were a few fish greater than 15 inches collected from both lakes (Figure 1). The largest bass collected was from the Lily Pond and measured 19 ½ inches. Due to the limited bass populations, DGIF is proposing a 12-22 protective slot limit, with a harvest restriction of only one bass over 22 allowed per angler per day at the WMA. The harvest restrictions will help protect the adult bass population for all anglers to enjoy. All but two Bluegill collected were small (< 8 inches) and their populations do not provide much of a quality fishery for anglers. The only other fish of note were a small number of crappie between 9 and 11 inches and a handful of Redear above 9 inches collected from the Quarry Pond.

The Robert W. Duncan WMA ponds offer remote fishing locations surrounded by a scenic conservation area. There is only one access to the WMA and the ponds are a considerable walking distance from the parking area (approximately 1.6 miles). The roads to the ponds are well established and anglers can use bicycles to access the lakes from the parking area. The remoteness of the ponds limits boat access and the amount of anglers that visit, and for these reasons, the ponds offer a good opportunity to anglers that like a private, a quiet fishing experience. The WMA entrance is located at 21590 Frog Level Road in Ruther Glen, approximately 6 miles east of U.S. 301 and 12 miles west of U. S. 360 at Aylett.

For more information on the Robert W Duncan WMA ponds, please contact:

Johnathan Harris
District Fisheries Biologist
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
johnathan.harris@dwr.virginia.gov
(804) 305-8940

Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected in the Robert W. Duncan WMA Ponds 2019.

Species	Quarry Pond (1.6 acres)			Lily Pond (15 acres)		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch
Black Crappie	7	27	10	4	4	5
Bluegill	15	57	22	26	29	30
Bluespotted Sunfish	None Collected			3	3	3
Bowfin	1	4	1	11	12	13
Brown Bullhead	1	4	1	None Collected		
Chain Pickerel	2	8	3	1	1	1
Common Carp	1	4	1	None Collected		
Flier	2	8	3	16	18	19
Golden Shiner	1	4	1	4	4	5
Largemouth Bass	28	106	39	20	22	23
Redear	13	49	19	1	1	1

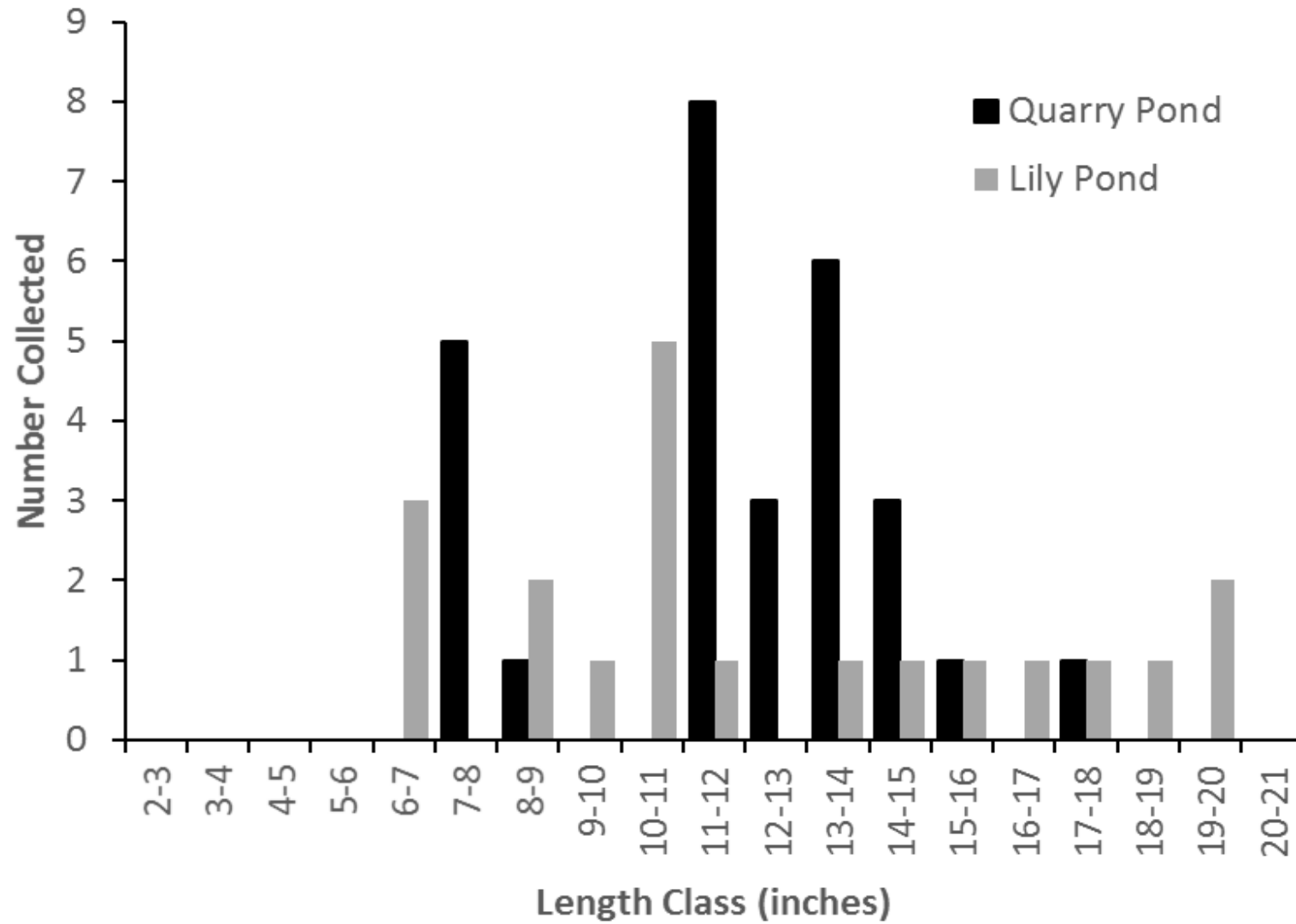


Figure 1. Length distribution of Largemouth Bass collected in the Robert W. Duncan WMA Ponds with electrofishing in 2019.