



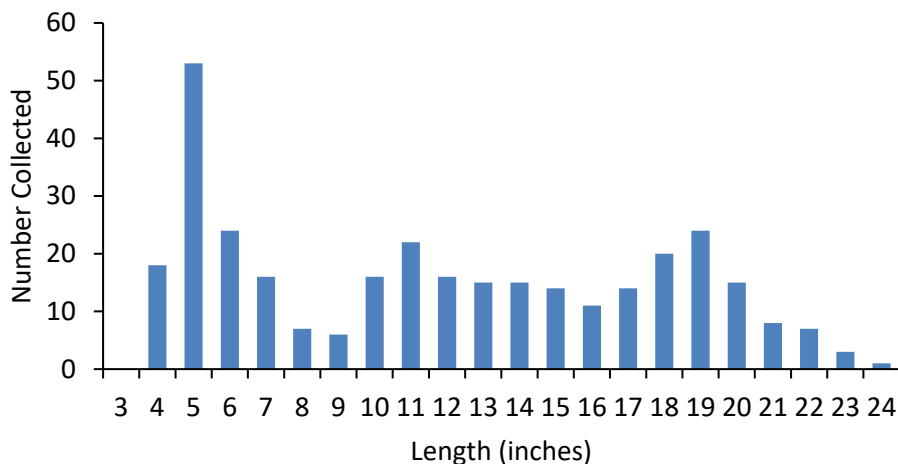
Sandy River Reservoir Report 2020

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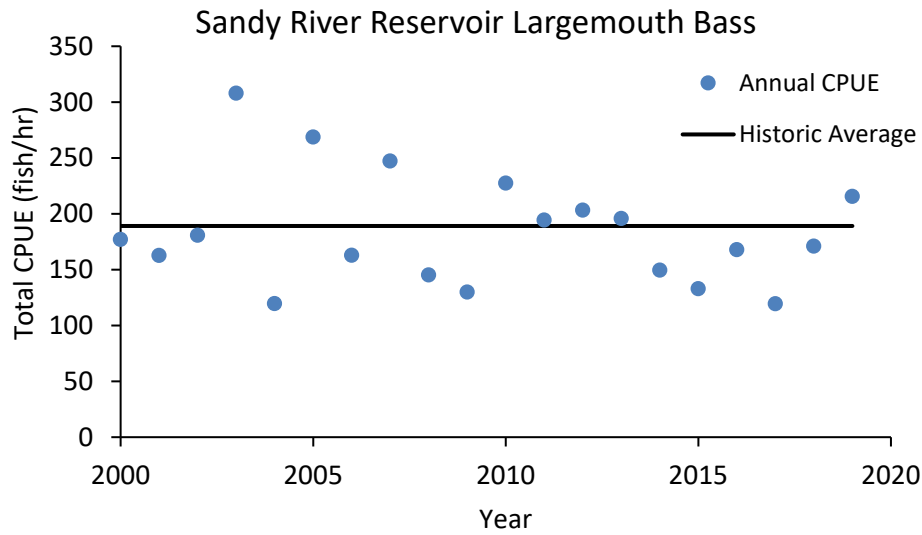
Sandy River Reservoir is a 740-acre impoundment located just east of Farmville in Prince Edward County, Virginia. The impoundment was created in 1994, and opened to public fishing in 1996. The lake is owned by Prince Edward County but the fishery is managed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). Sandy River Reservoir tends to play second fiddle to her bigger sister, Briery Creek Lake, located nearby. However, Sandy River still boasts strong fisheries and has gained notoriety in recent years. The lake provides a warmwater fishery for Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Black Crappie, Chain Pickerel, and Channel Catfish. Fishing regulations can be viewed online (<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/waterbody/sandy-river-reservoir/>) or at the kiosk near the boat ramp. Biologists conducted spring electrofishing surveys annually to monitor sport fish populations characteristics. Below are results from the survey.

Largemouth Bass: Sandy River Reservoir is best known for its bass fishery. Sandy River gained a reputable status among bass anglers shortly after being opened to the public in 1996, boasting some of the highest catch rates of large bass (> 20inches) in the commonwealth. Recent surveys have indicated an overall decline in abundance of bass. However relative abundance of Largemouth Bass during 2019 samples were the highest observed over the previous 6 years. The size structure of the Largemouth Bass populations still boasts high numbers of catchable size bass with some trophy potential still present. Target standing timber, stumps, fallen trees submerged aquatic vegetation, and creek channels for bass on Sandy River.

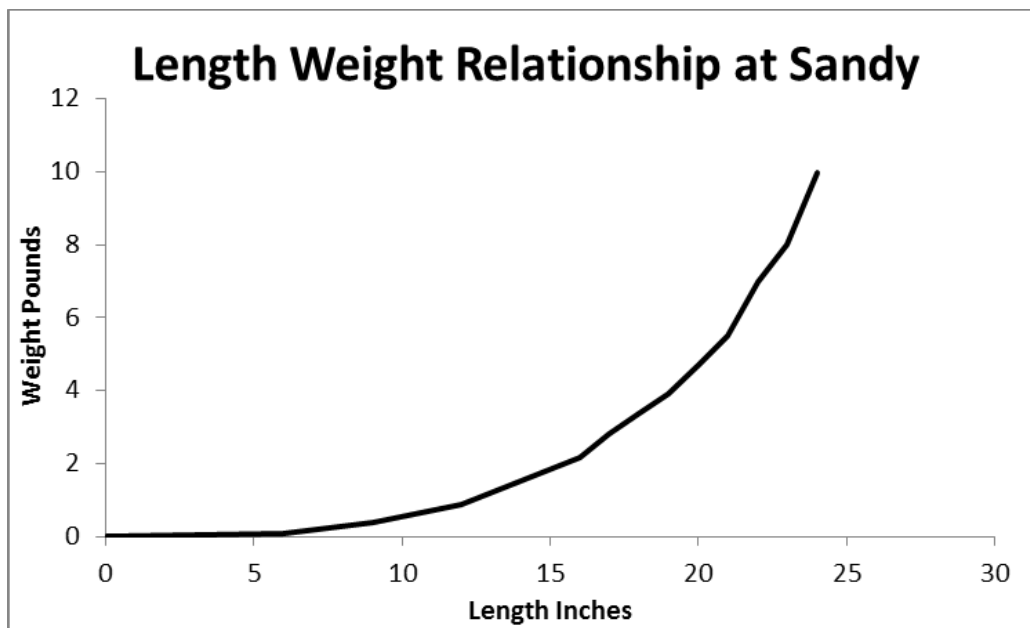
Sandy River Reservoir Largemouth Bass



Largemouth bass size distribution at Sandy River Reservoir from 2019 electrofishing surveys.

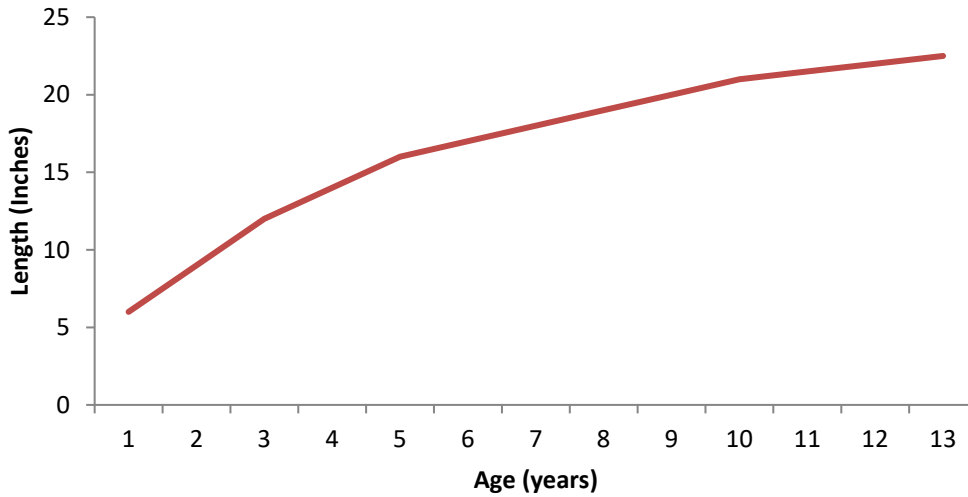


Relative abundance (fish/hour) for Largemouth Bass in Sandy River Reservoir from historic electrofishing samples.



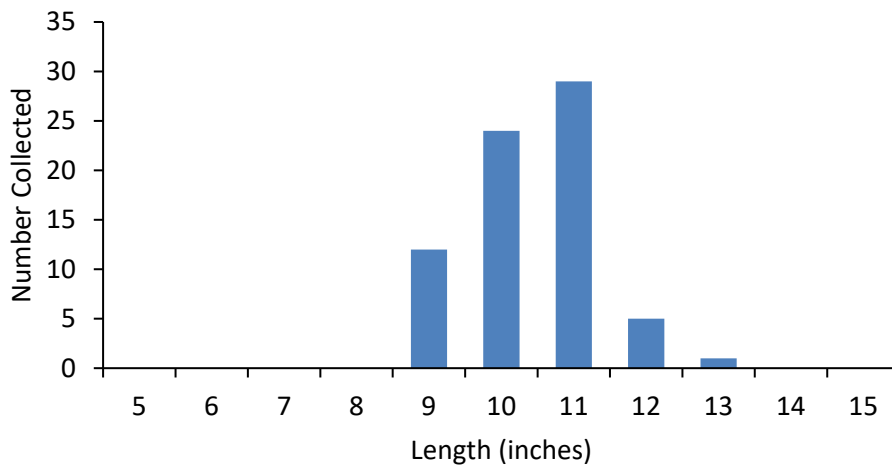
How much does your fish weight?

How Old is your Bass?



Crappie: Black crappie provide a decent fishery at Sandy as well. Crappie are erratic spawners and populations tend to be highly variable as a result. Crappie populations are below the level they were in the mid-2000s but still provide a good fishery. The average length of crappie is around 10 inches, but the potential for 12-13 inch 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. **Crappie anglers should be aware of a 9 inch minimum length requirement for harvest of Crappie in Sandy River Reservoir, this regulation was put in to place in 2018.**

Sandy River Reservoir Black Crappie



Black crappie size distribution at Sandy River Reservoir from 2019 electrofishing survey.

Sunfish: Sunfish at Sandy are very abundant and reach 8-10 inches routinely. Any structure along the shoreline is good for sunfish, but try to target fallen trees and beaver lodges.

Catfish: Electrofishing does not target channel catfish well during surveys, but catfish are still stocked annually at Sandy River Reservoir and are very popular among the anglers. The Catfish at Sandy grow rapidly and tend to be longer and heavier than other reservoirs in Southside Virginia.

Chain Pickerel: Chain pickerel are not very abundant but can be found around the weed edges at Sandy. Pickerel at Sandy tend to average 12-20 inches in length but can occasionally grow larger. Pickerel will usually hit any lure thrown their way and are often incidentally caught by bass anglers.

Area Attractions:

[High Bridge Trail State Park](#)

[Twin Lakes State Park](#)

[Briery Creek Lake](#)

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