

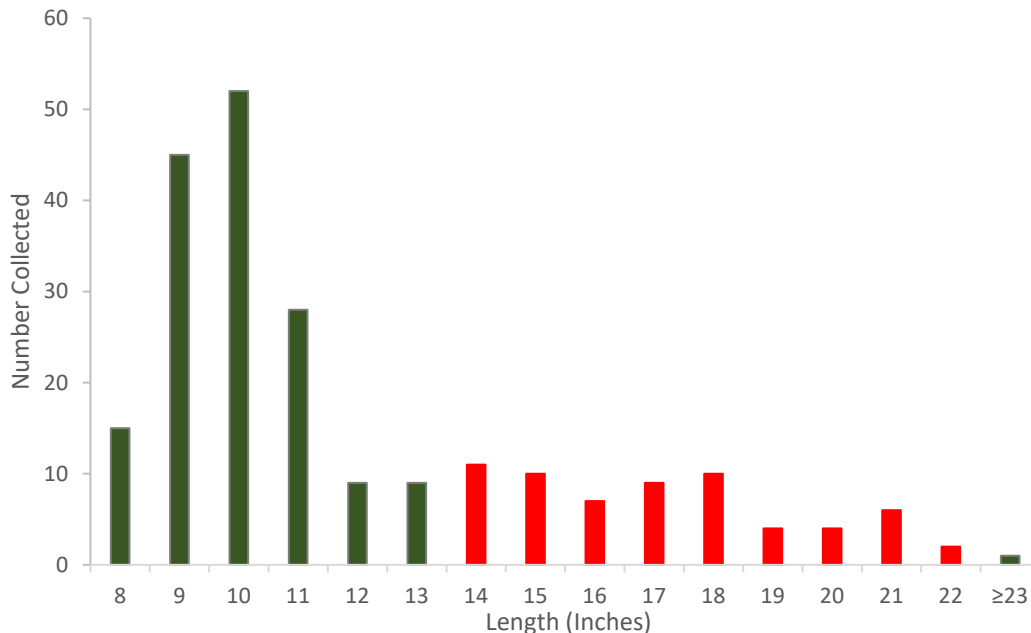


Stonehouse Lake 2023 Management Report



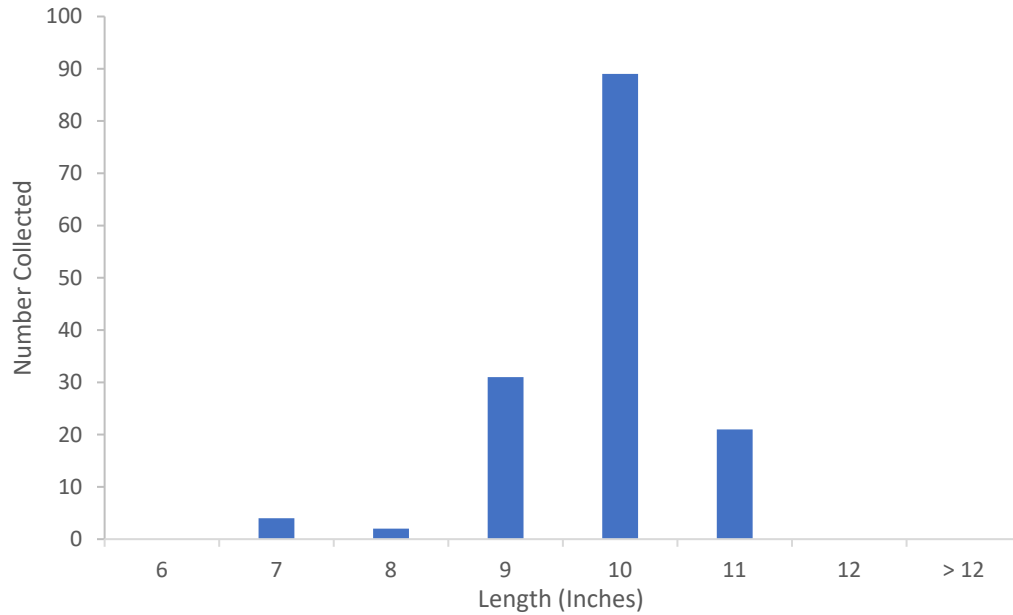
Stonehouse Lake is a 41-acre impoundment located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Amherst County. This is one of three public reservoirs owned by the County and offers very good fishing opportunities for bass, crappie, and sunfish. Instead of managing all three lakes similarly, DWR has chosen to diversify fishing opportunities with Stonehouse lake targeted as a “Trophy” bass fishery based on historical populations and productivity. Stonehouse Lake currently maintains a quality fishery with high fish abundance and balanced populations.

This small reservoir is one of the most productive largemouth bass fisheries in the region and consistently ranks as one of the better producers of quality size largemouth bass each year. Reports from anglers indicate bass fishing can be challenging, probably due to the abundant forage. In 2013, a 14-22 inch protected slot limit on largemouth bass was put in place to protect large bass and maintain the trophy component. In spring 2022, 421 largemouth bass were collected using electrofishing equipment, and ranged from 3 to 24 inches in length. Approximately 15% of largemouth bass collected were between 14 - 22 inches and protected under the current slot limit regulation. Catch rates are calculated in terms of fish collected per hour of electrofishing. The catch rate of largemouth bass 14 inches or greater was 42 fish per hour, which is greater than the long-term average of 35 per hour.



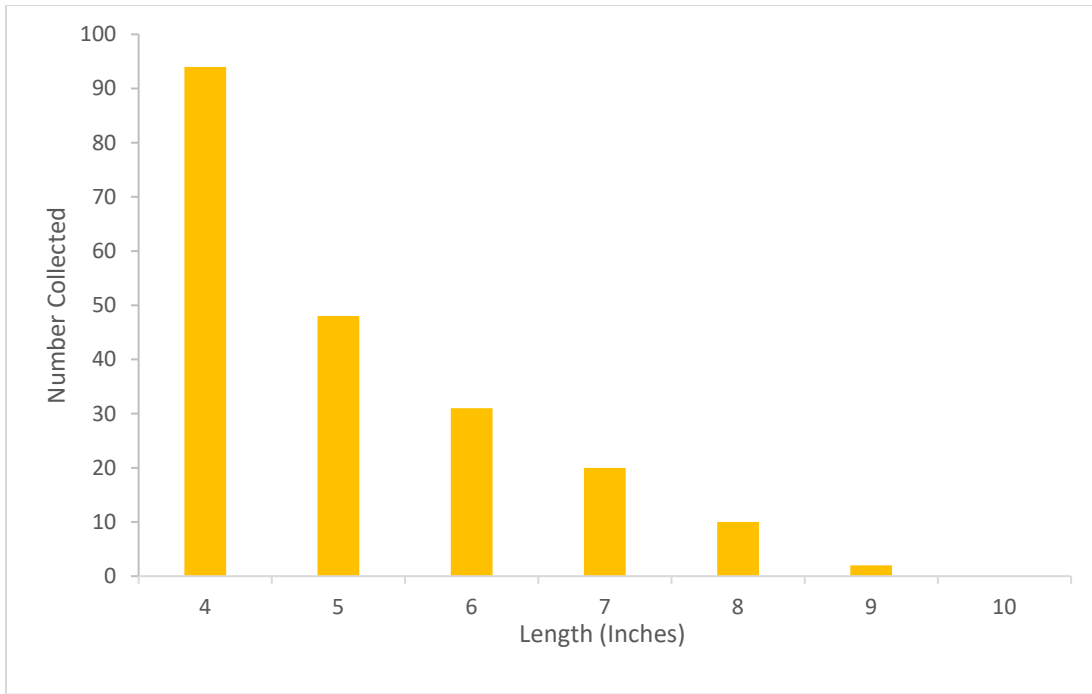
Number and lengths of adult largemouth bass (8 inches and greater) collected in spring 2022. Current regulations protect largemouth bass between 14 and 22 inches (red bars).

The crappie population is more stable than most small reservoirs (<1,000 acres), but reproduction is inconsistent resulting in a fluctuating population. High crappie harvest rates continue to keep the population at a moderate level and similar to Mill Creek Lake. Sampling showed the population continues to provide a good fishery and is the most consistent small lake crappie fishery in the district. In 2022, 147 crappie were collected ranging from 7 to 11 inches in length. The majority of crappie collected were approximately 10 inches in length. Catch rates of crappie in 2022 were 97 per hour, which is greater than the long-term average of 75 fish per hour.



Number and lengths of crappie collected in spring 2022.

Stonehouse Lake is a fertile lake compared to other nearby lakes, and provides the best sunfish fishery of the three Amherst County lakes. The sunfish population is dominated by bluegill, but contains good redear sunfish as well. The bluegill population maintains high densities and fish are abundant in the 4-8 inch groups. Redear sunfish numbers are also good and provide great opportunities with most fish in the 7-9 inch groups.



Number and lengths of sunfish (bluegill and redear sunfish) collected in spring 2022.

This lake has a good boat ramp for boat anglers but has limited bank fishing access. Boats propelled by oar or electric motor are welcome but outboard motor use is prohibited. The reservoir is open year round but nighttime activities are prohibited except for fishing. Anglers are required to obtain a permit from Amherst County to fish at night by calling 434-946-9371. Various facilities include picnic tables with shelters, grills, restrooms, and play area. To access this reservoir, turn northeast on Rt. 610 from Rt. 60 (approximately 9 miles west of Amherst), turn left on Rt. 625, and the lake access road will be the first road on the left.