



Ross Barnett Reservoir 2017

Reel Facts

Ryan Jones – Fisheries Biologist

Ryanj@mdwfp.state.ms.us (601) 859-3421

General Information: Ross Barnett Reservoir is a 33,000 acre impoundment of the Pearl River. It consists of approximately 24,000 acres of open-water lake habitat and 9,000 acres of riverine habitat north of Hwy 43. The reservoir is managed by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD).

Location: Ross Barnett Reservoir is located six miles northeast of Jackson, MS and extends through Hinds, Rankin, Madison, Scott, and, Leake counties

Fishery Management: crappie, black bass, hybrid striped bass, bream, and catfish.

Purchase a Fishing License: <http://www.mdwfp.com/license/fishing-license.aspx>

Amenities

- 5 large campgrounds
- 5 marinas
- 16 parks
- 22 public boat launches
- 18 miles of walking trails
- Fishing piers
- Fish cleaning stations

Creel Limits

- 30 crappie per day
- 7 black bass per day, must be over 14 inches long
- 6 Striped/Hybrid Striped Bass per day, must be over 15 inches long
- 100 bream per day.
- No limit on catfish.

Regulations

The following areas are closed to trotlines, throw lines, set hooks, limblines, free floating fishing devices, jugs, and Yo-yos:

- Pelahatchie Bay
- Pelahatchie Creek
- Area of the reservoir north of the main dam and south of a line between the point where Twin Harbors channel enters the main lake in Madison County and the Fannin Landing boat launch in Rankin County
- Within 100 yards of any sandbar or public boat launching facility within the main lake or river
- Marked navigational channel between State Highway 43 and Ratliff Ferry in Madison County.

Sportfishing Tips

Crappie

- In the spring, fish shoreline vegetation with jigs or minnows. In the summer and winter, troll river channel ledges or jig deep stump fields on main lake.

Largemouth Bass

- Target vegetation with frogs and other weedless plastics from the spring through the summer. Creek and channel ledges with submerged structure should be targeted in summer and fall.

Bream

- Use crickets or red worms in water 2 – 4 feet in depth. Also, target holes in the vegetation for beds.

Catfish

- Easily caught throughout the reservoir by tightlining cutbait, worms, liver, or stinkbait.

2016 Electrofishing Summary

Species	# of fish collected	% of sample	Average Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Average Weight (pounds)	Catch Rate (fish/mile)
Threadfin shad	1144	29.9	1.8	4.3	-	27
Bluegill	998	26.1	5.6	8.9	0.1	66
Largemouth bass	921	24.0	11.4	22.7	1.1	61
Gizzard shad	403	10.5	6.2	13.4	-	76
Redear sunfish	184	4.8	6.5	9.0	0.2	12
White crappie	76	2.0	10.6	16.2	0.8	5
Black crappie	51	1.3	9.1	13.5	0.5	3
Spotted bass	48	1.3	11.2	15.9	0.9	1
Striped bass	6	0.2	12.4	18.7	1.1	<1

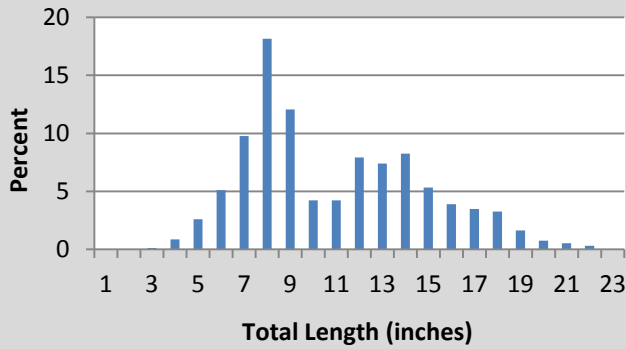
Above: Results from the 2016 electrofishing survey on Ross Barnett Reservoir. The reservoir is sampled by electrofishing every year during the fall. Catch rates of Threadfin Shad, Gizzard Shad, and Bluegill remain high providing a large forage base for black bass and crappie.

Below: Stump fields provide habitat for crappie in the Main Lake. These stumps were in the old Pearl River floodplain and oxbow lakes. Anglers often target crappie in the stump fields along channel ledges of the old river. Boaters should operate cautiously when under power outside the channel markers.

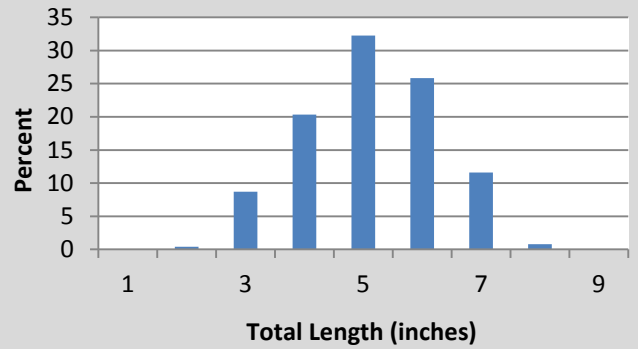


Below: Length distributions for sport fish from the 2016 electrofishing survey at Ross Barnett Reservoir. These figures indicate a wide size distribution of each species, high numbers of catchable sized fish, and successful reproduction, all of which are signs of healthy fish populations.

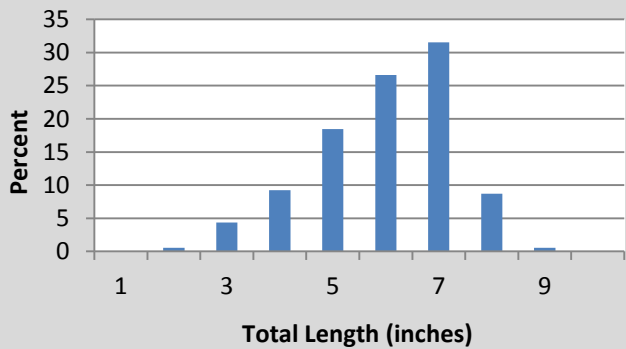
Largemouth Bass



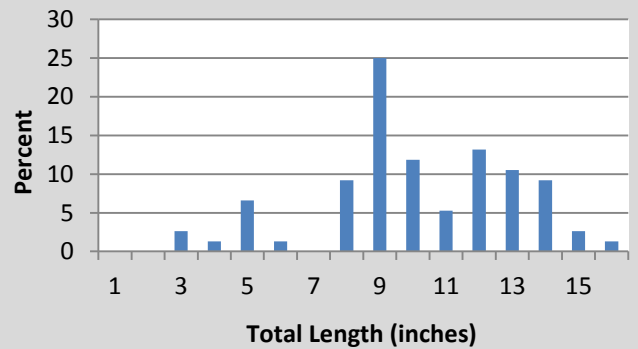
Bluegill



Redear Sunfish

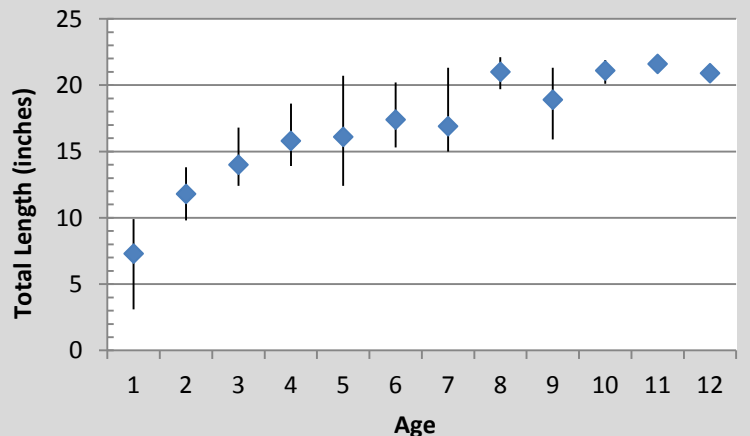


White Crappie

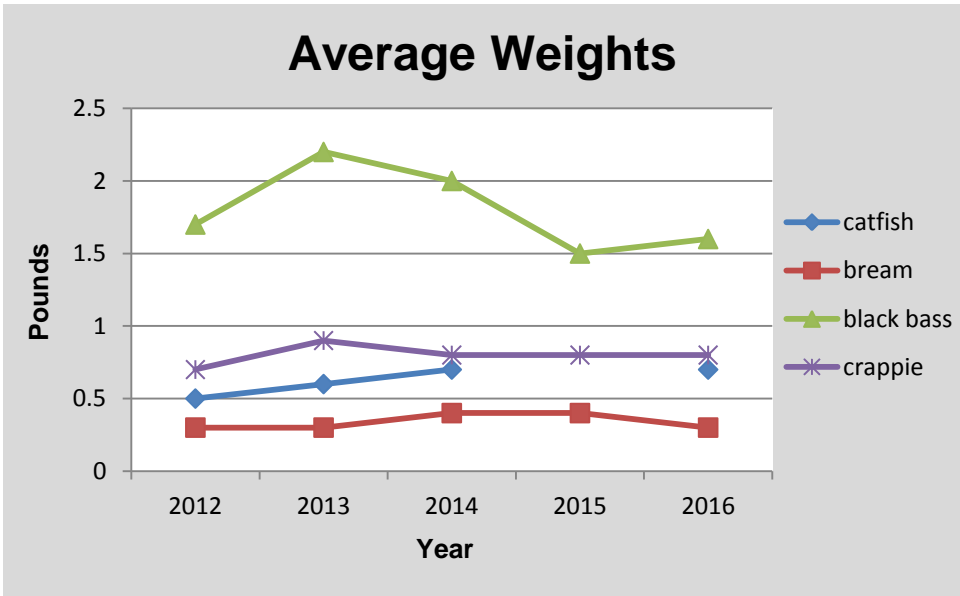
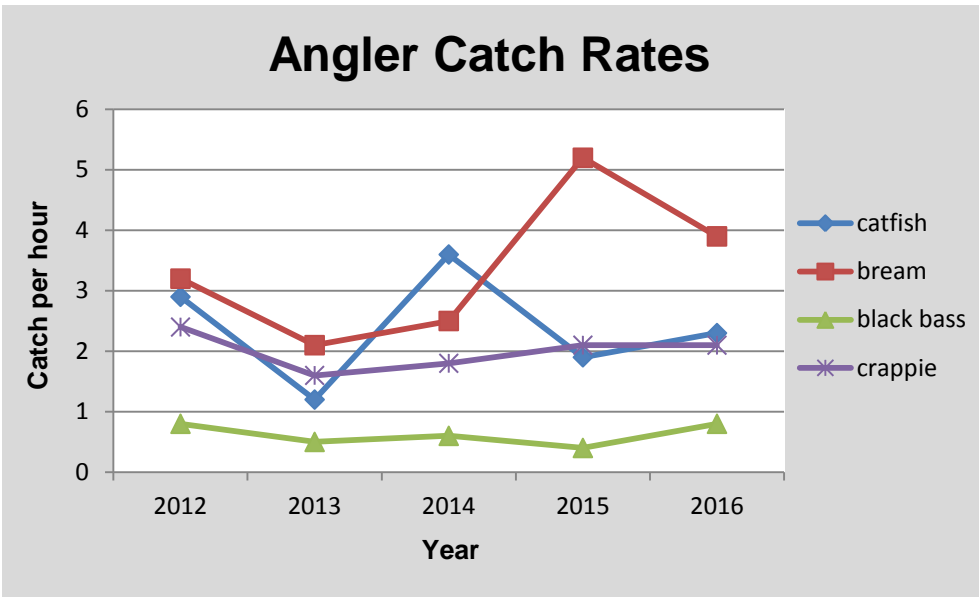


Right: Growth rates for Largemouth Bass in Ross Barnett Reservoir. The mean length at age values are indicated by the blue diamonds. The line through each diamond represents the range of lengths for each age group. For example, the average length of age 3 bass is 14 inches, and they range in size from 12.5 inches to 17 inches. Differences in growth rates for individual fish are due to genetic and environmental factors.

Largemouth Bass Growth Rates



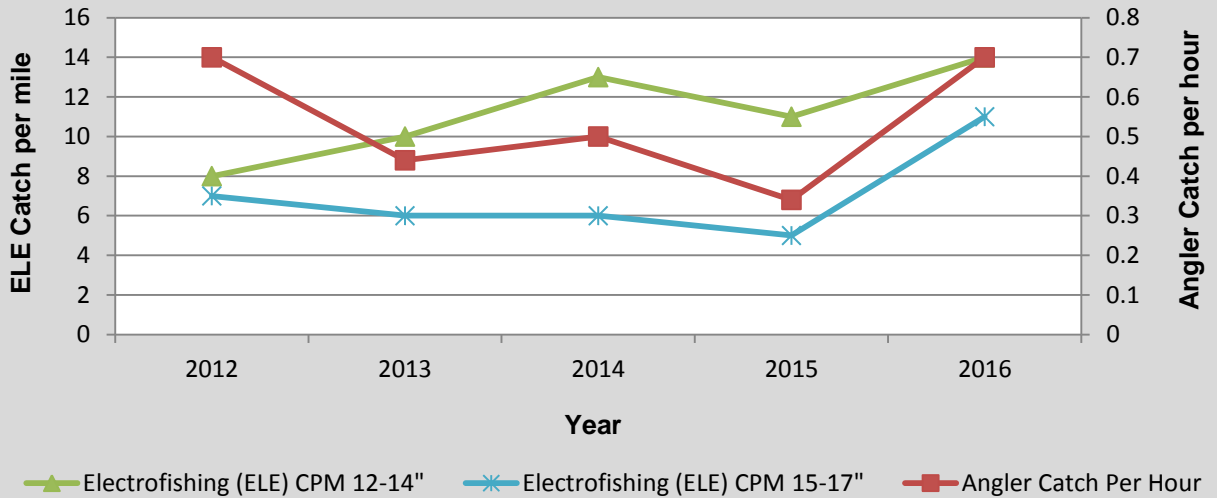
Below and Right: Results from spring angler creel surveys for the last five years. Crappie weights average 3/4 pound and catch rates have been consistent. Bream catch rates have increased recently. Black bass catch rates increased this year while average weight remained around a pound and a half.



Below: Ross Barnett Reservoir contains many native aquatic vegetation species. Large stands of American lotus can be found in Pelahatchie Bay, the northeastern main lake, and upriver. These areas provide abundant fish habitat which are targeted by anglers year round.



Largemouth Bass Catch per Unit Effort

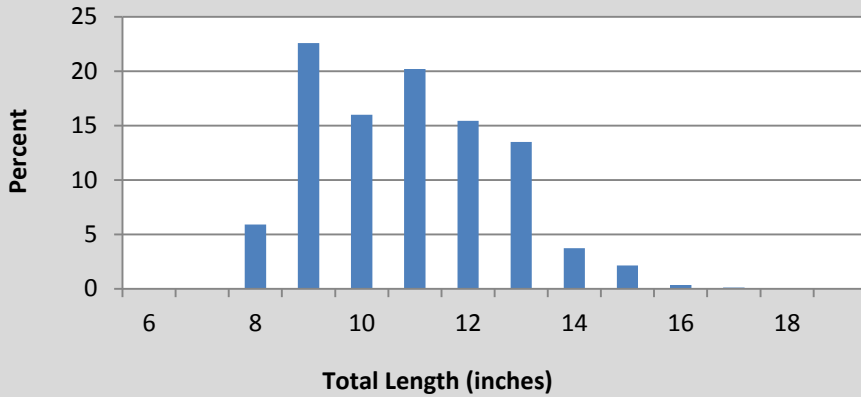


Above: Catch rate trends of Largemouth Bass from electrofishing samples and angler surveys on Ross Barnett Reservoir. All catch rates increased in 2016. Electrofishing catch rates of Largemouth Bass between 12 and 14 inches have increased over the last four years. Angler catch rates and electrofishing catch rates of Largemouth Bass between 15 and 17 inches increased after three years of decline..

Right: This 11.3 lb. Largemouth Bass was weighed-in by Dalton Laster during a tournament in March 2016. Data from 46 bass tournaments held in 2015 included information from 3,263 anglers who weighed-in 7,263 black bass. Winning weights have averaged 16.3 pounds over the last five years.



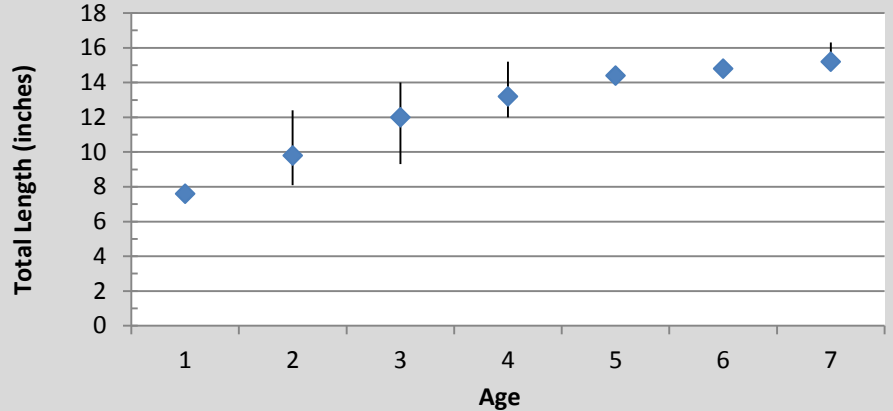
Angler-Caught White Crappie



Left: Length frequency of angler harvested White Crappie. A total of 881 White Crappie were measured during the 2016 spring access creel survey. Nine inch crappie represented the highest percentage harvested (22.6%) in 2016.

Right: Growth rates for White Crappie in Ross Barnett Reservoir. One, two, and three year old fish average 7.6, 9.8, and 12 inches respectively.

White Crappie Growth Rates



Below: Anglers enjoy high catch rates during the spawning season on Ross Barnett Reservoir. Male White Crappie can be identified with dusky coloration during this time of the year.

