

Raccoon Lake Overview 2019 - 2020

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Current Status:

Bass:

- Size structure of the population is good with all population indices meeting or exceeding their targets.
 - Bass body condition remained good ($Wr = 97$) and growth rates remained average.
 - Approximately 22% of the adult bass in the sample exceeded the 15" minimum length.
 - Most legal fish in 2020 will range from 15" – 20" and weigh between 1.8 – 5 lbs.
- Poor bass reproduction and recruitment continue to be a major concern in this lake. To offset this problem, over 35,500 largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked in the lake in June of 2017. This helped the 2017 CPUE improve to 78 bass per hour, well above the target level for the first time in 5 years. However, the catch rate in 2018 was back down to 31 fish per hour. The CPUE in 2019 improved significantly to 82 fish per hour. The 2019 survey showed an increase in the percentage of fish in the 12" – 15" size range, which may be a result of this stocking effort.

Crappie:

- Both black and white crappie are present in Raccoon Lake, but white crappie are the dominant species.
- Approximately, 10% of the adult white crappie in the survey exceeded 10" in length.
- An additional 32% of the white crappie were between 8" – 10".
- The majority (85%) of the white crappie in the survey were 6" – 9" in length. As these fish recruit to 10" and larger, the size structure of the population should improve further.
- White crappie body condition was also good ($Wr = 92$), and growth rates were average.
- Catch rate for white crappie decreased, but remained high (132/hr.).
- Fishing should be good in the coming year with the best fish ranging from 0.5 – 1.5 lbs.

Bluegill:

- The size structure of the bluegill population is fair.
- Approximately 56% of the adult bluegills collected were over 6" and 10% exceeded 7".
- For the first time in eight years, some bluegill exceeding 8" were collected.
- The electrofishing catch rate and body condition remained high (CPUE = 480; $Wr = 101$).
- Bluegill fishing is expected to be good in the coming year. Anglers can expect to catch an abundance of fish 5"- 7" in length weighing 0.1 – 0.3 pounds

Catfish:

- In spite of supplemental stocking, the channel catfish population remains in poor shape.
- Natural reproduction and recruitment remain poor.
- Catch rate increased to 25/hr. and average body condition improved ($Wr = 96$)
- The majority of catfish in 2020 will range from 3 – 5 lbs. with a few larger fish up to 10 lbs.

Wr = Relative weight. It is a mathematical relationship between length and weight used to describe body condition. A score of 90 or above is considered good and a score of 100 and above is excellent. Any score under 90 is considered below optimal.

CPUE = Catch per Unit Effort. This is the catch rate and, unless noted otherwise, is the total number collect per hour of electrofishing.