

Hinckston Run Reservoir

Cambria County

April/May 2021 Trap Net and Night Electrofishing Surveys

Hinckston Run Reservoir is a 103-acre impoundment located in central Cambria County just northeast of Johnstown, PA. The reservoir was formed in 1905 by impounding Hinckston Run for use as a private water supply reservoir. The impoundment is now owned by the Cambria-Somerset Authority (CSA). In 2000, it was opened to public fishing and other recreational activities. Boats are restricted to electric motors only and ice fishing is not permitted. The reservoir is surrounded by a large area of woodlands and is a very steep-sided lake with rocky shorelines. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC) Division of Habitat Management has installed numerous artificial fish holding structures as well as turtle basking platforms in the impoundment. Hinckston Run Reservoir is managed with [Big Bass](#) and [Panfish Enhancement Regulations](#) for sunfish and crappie. [Statewide regulations](#) are used to manage all other fish populations in the lake.

Hinckston Run Reservoir was previously surveyed in 1999 and 2011. PFBC Fisheries Management Area 8 staff conducted fish population surveys in Spring of 2021. The purpose of the survey was to assess the lake's current fish population. Staff used Pennsylvania style trap nets to target panfish and night boat electrofishing to sample for bass. A total of eleven species were captured in our trap nets with Yellow Perch, Bluegill and Black Crappie being the most abundant (Table 1).

Table 1. Length and frequency distribution of sampled fish from trap nets.

Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)	Notes
Black Crappie	85	3 – 12 inches	42% over 9 inches
Bluegill	124	2 – 10 inches	52% over 7 inches
Pumpkinseed	12	2 – 8 inches	33% of 7 inches
Yellow Perch	199	7 - 14 inches	95% over 9 inches
Smallmouth Bass	2	15 inches	
Brown Bullhead	1	13 inches	
Yellow Bullhead	3	9 - 11 inches	
Rock Bass	33	4 - 8 inches	
Hatchery Rainbow Trout	2	10 and 12 inches	
Golden Shiner	3	Not Measured	
White Sucker	20	Not Measured	

Yellow Perch catch rates have greatly improved from the 2011 survey (Figure 1). Not only was the overall catch higher, the number of quality-sized perch (fish ≥ 9 inches) also increased. Quality-sized Yellow Perch were collected at a rate of 0.91 fish per hour compared to 0.17 fish per hour in 2011. The statewide guideline for a good quality Yellow Perch population is 0.19 fish ≥ 9 inches per hour.

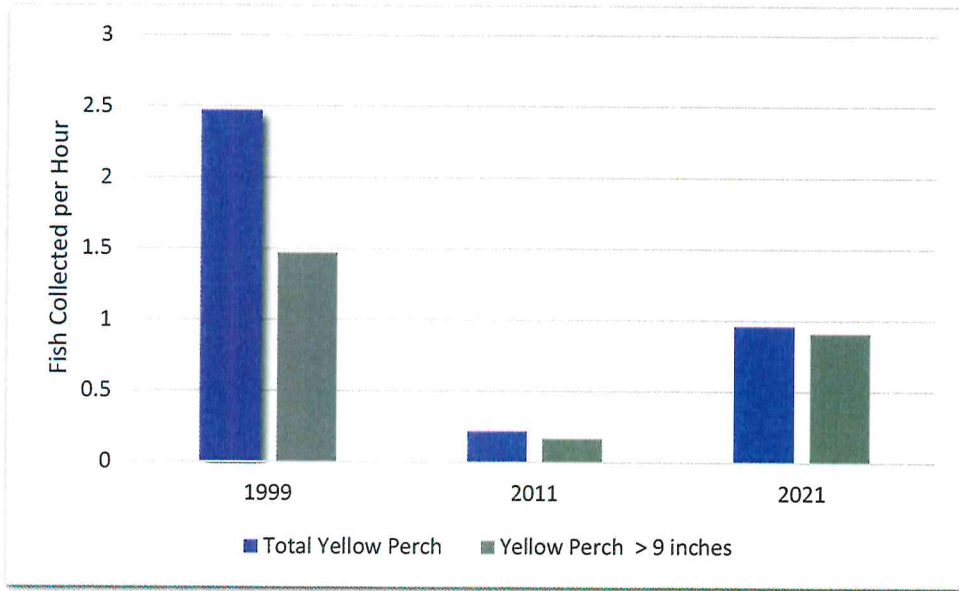


Figure 1. Trap net catch rates of Yellow Perch at Hinckston Run Reservoir.

In 2021 the number of sunfish collected per hour tripled when compared to the 2011 survey (Figure 2). Quality-sized sunfish (fish ≥ 7 inches) doubled from 0.15 fish per hour in 2011 to 0.33 fish per hour in 2021. The statewide guideline for a good quality sunfish population is 0.51 sunfish ≥ 7 inches per hour. Hinckston Run Reservoir is part of the Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations Program. These regulations are intended to improve the quality of sunfish available for harvest by restricting the daily creel limit and setting a minimum size limit.

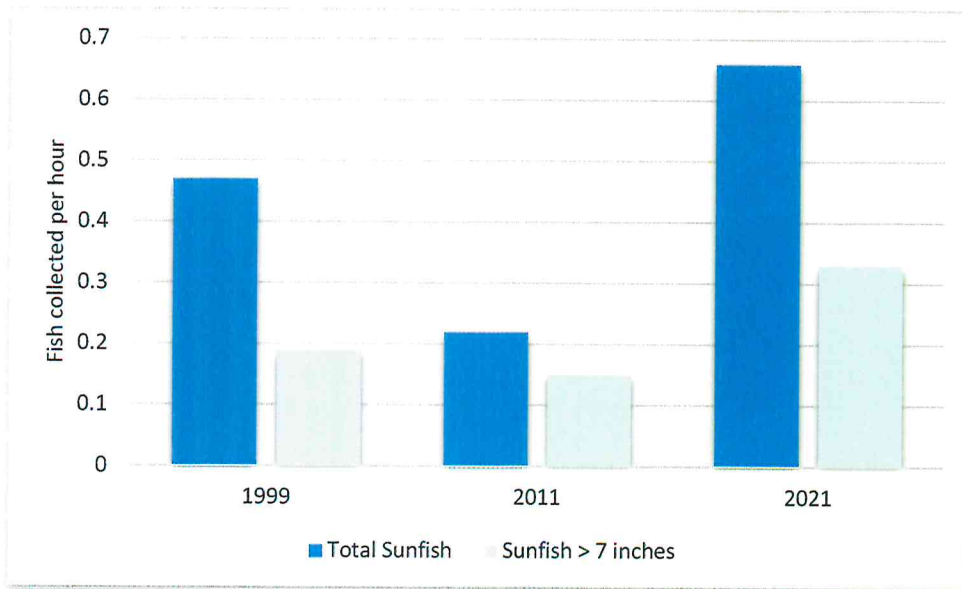


Figure 2. Trap net catch rates of sunfish at Hinckston Run Reservoir

Catch rates of Black Crappie in 2021 were higher than in 1999 and 2011 (Figure 3). The catch rate of quality -sized (fish ≥ 9 inches) crappie was 0.18 fish per hour, which was slightly below the statewide guideline (0.25 fish ≥ 9 inches per hour) used to define a quality crappie population. Crappie are also part of the Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations at Hinckston Run Reservoir.

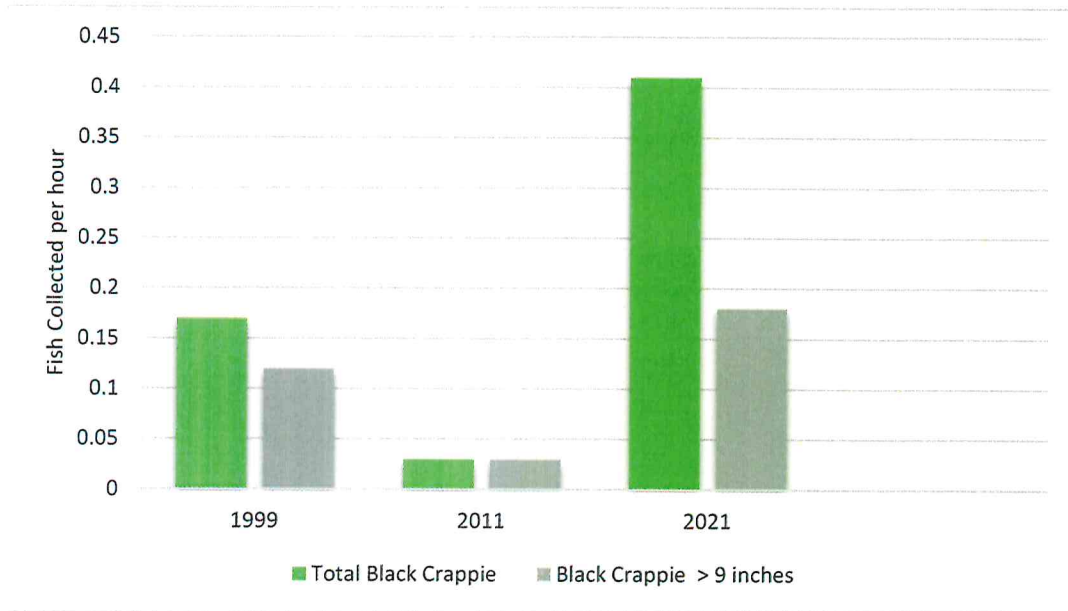
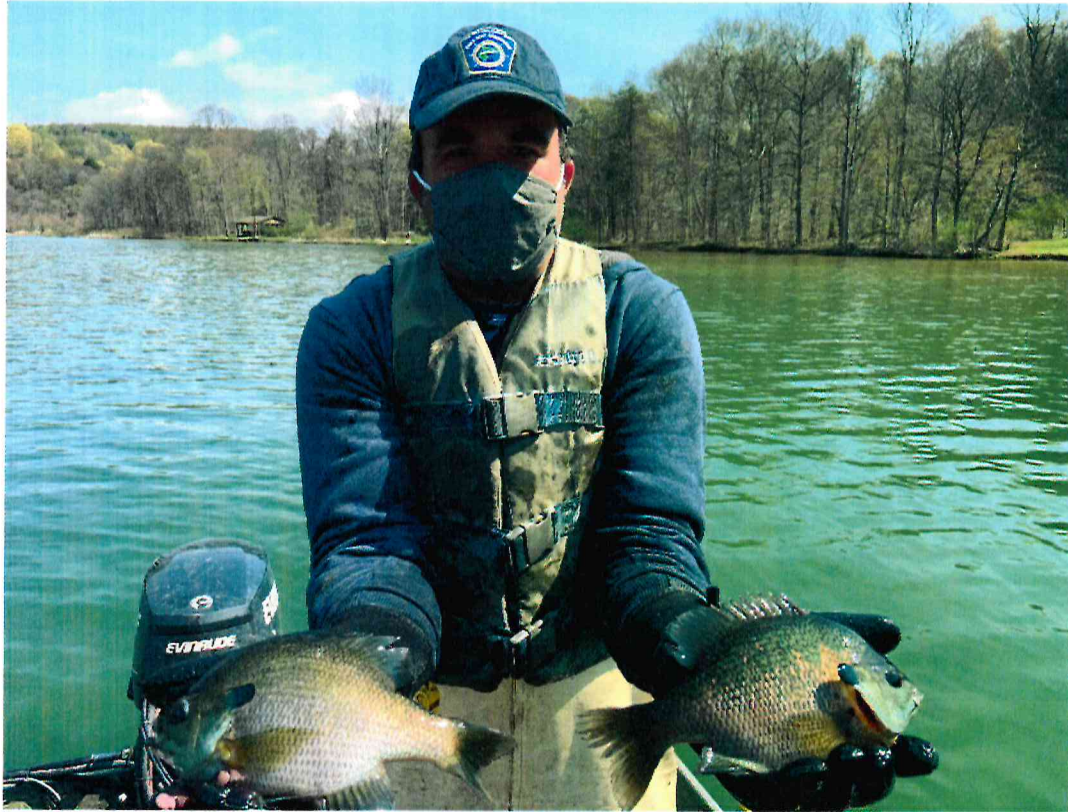


Figure 3. Trap net catch rates of Black Crappie at Hinckston Run Reservoir



Nice sized Black Crappie and Yellow Perch captured trap netting.



Two large Bluegill from trap netting at Hinckston Run Reservoir.

Night electrofishing for 1 hour and 25 minutes yielded 97 Largemouth Bass and 102 Smallmouth Bass (Table 2). The catch rate of legal Largemouth Bass (fish \geq 15 inches) in 2021 increased from previous surveys (Figure 3). The total catch rate of Smallmouth Bass in 2021 was lower than in 2011 but higher than in 1999 (Figure 4). Total combined bass species were caught at a rate of 138 fish per hour in 2021. State guidelines for black bass total catch per hour is 35 fish per hour. State guidelines for bass over 12 inches is 7 per hour and for bass over 15 inches is 2 fish per hour. Hinckston Run Reservoir well exceeds all the Big Bass Program guidelines.

Table 2. Length and frequency distribution of Largemouth Bass from night electrofishing.

Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)	Notes
Largemouth Bass	97	3 -19 inches	48% over 12 inches 15% over 15 inches
Smallmouth Bass	102	2 - 21 inches	26% over 12 inches 2% over 15 inches

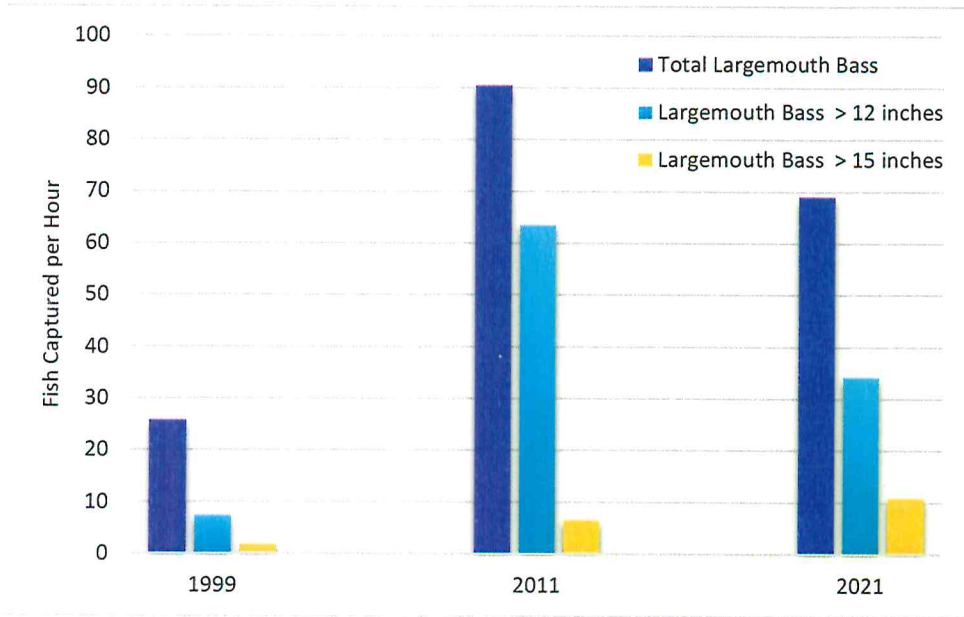


Figure 3. Night electrofishing catch rates of Largemouth Bass at Hinckston Run Reservoir.

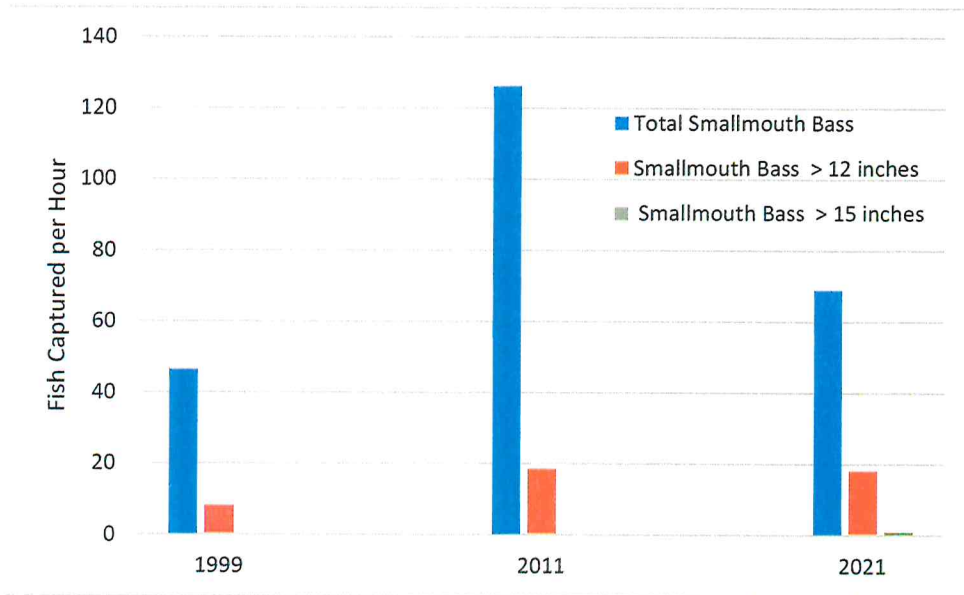
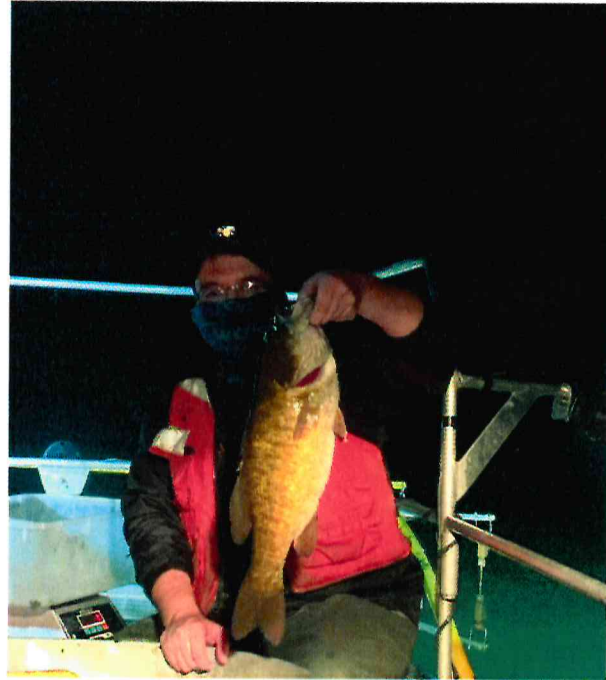


Figure 4. Night electrofishing catch rates of Smallmouth Bass at Hinckston Run Reservoir.



A pair of big Largemouth Bass and a 21-inch Smallmouth Bass from night electrofishing.

Overall, Hinckston Run Reservoir has great fishing opportunities for a variety of fish species. There are plenty of nice sized bass as well as Yellow Perch. The sunfish and crappie populations improved from previous surveys and are present in good numbers and sizes.

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