

Fords Lake, Lackawanna County

A 2006 fisheries assessment of Fords Lake found that an illegal stocking of gizzard shad had taken place (http://fishandboat.com/images/fisheries/afm/2006/4x05_01ford.htm). Gizzard shad had begun to reproduce, causing PFBC biologists to have concern for the lake's crappie, bluegill, and black bass populations. Gizzard shad compete with and prey upon the young of these species. We sampled Fords Lake once again in 2011 to monitor the status of sportfish populations following the gizzard shad introduction.

The 2011 fisheries assessment found that black crappies, bluegills, and largemouth bass were still abundant in Fords Lake. Black crappies reached large sizes but bluegills did not. Night electrofishing catch rates for largemouth bass were as follows: total catch 79/hour; catch \geq 12 inches 45/hour; and catch \geq 15 inches 15/hour. The total catch rate was slightly above average for the region, but the catch rates of bass \geq 12 inches and \geq 15 inches were about 3 times higher than average. The biggest largemouth we captured was 21 inches long and weighed 6 pounds.

The complete list of fish we caught during this work is listed in Table 1. Overall, it appeared that gizzard shad haven't yet negatively impacted bass and panfish at Fords Lake. Gizzard shad numbers were relatively low, possibly due to predation by the lake's abundant bass and bullheads.

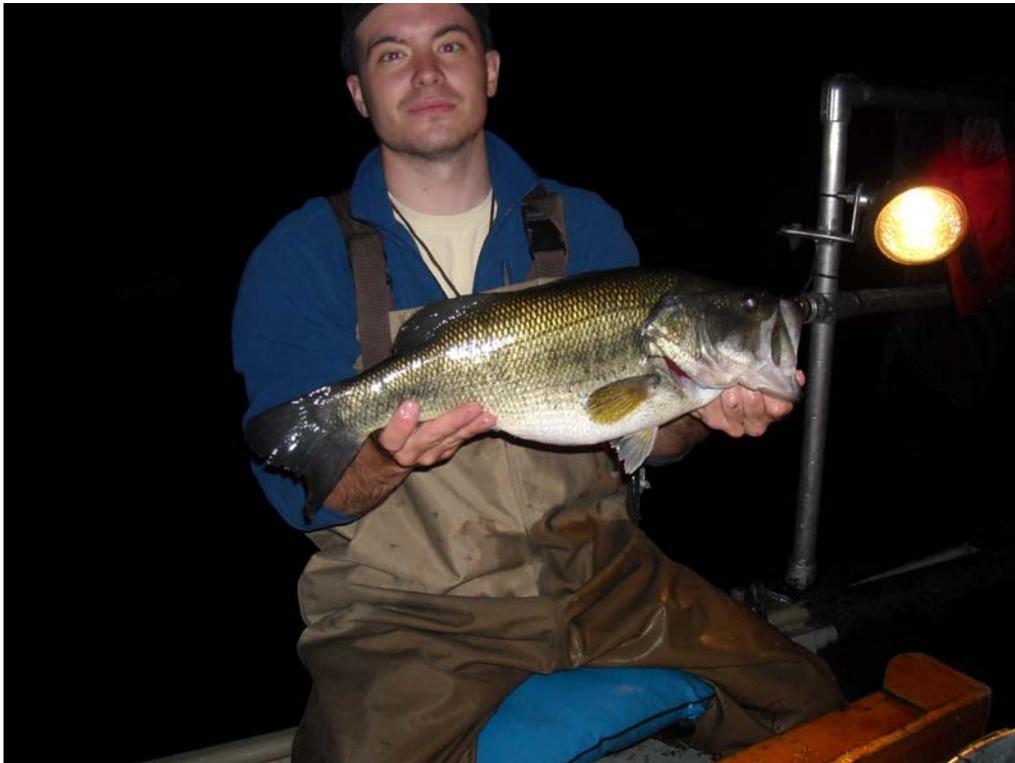
Table 1. Number and sizes of fish caught (all gear combined) during the 2011 Fords Lake survey.

Species	Number Caught	Length Range (inches)
Black crappie	456	4 – 12.9
White crappie	2	6 – 11.9
Bluegill	467	3 – 8.9
Pumpkinseed	40	4 - 7.9
Yellow perch	2	6 - 7.9
Brown bullhead	326	8 – 13.9
Yellow bullhead	63	5 – 12.9
Largemouth bass	70	3 – 21.9
Tiger muskellunge	1	11 – 11.9
Walleye	1	25 – 25.9
Gizzard shad	42	13 – 17.9

Black crappie caught at Fords Lake in 2011.



Largemouth bass caught at Fords Lake in 2011.



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