

# Hinckston Run Reservoir

## Cambria County

### April and May 2011 Trap Net, Gill Net and Electrofishing Survey

Hinckston Run Reservoir is a 103 acre impoundment located in central Cambria County just east of Johnstown PA. The impoundment is owned by the Cambria-Somerset Authority (CSA) and was opened to public fishing and other recreational activities in 2000. Boats are restricted to electric motors only and ice fishing is not permitted. The lake is surrounded by a large area of woodlands and wetlands which provides a scenic setting. Hinckston Run Reservoir is a very steep sided lake and has very little shallow areas. The major habitat features are fallen trees, rocky shorelines, and seasonal vegetation. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Division of Habitat Management has also installed numerous artificial fish holding structures. The reservoir has moderate turbidity and moderate productivity (alkalinity 19 parts per million in 2011). Currently Hinckston Run Reservoir is managed with Big Bass and Panfish Enhancement regulations for sunfish and crappie. The Fish and Boat Commission currently stocks Hinckston Run Reservoir with fingerling walleye, brown trout, and rainbow trout yearly.



*Fisheries biologist aide Joseph Cocco with a 28 inch walleye*

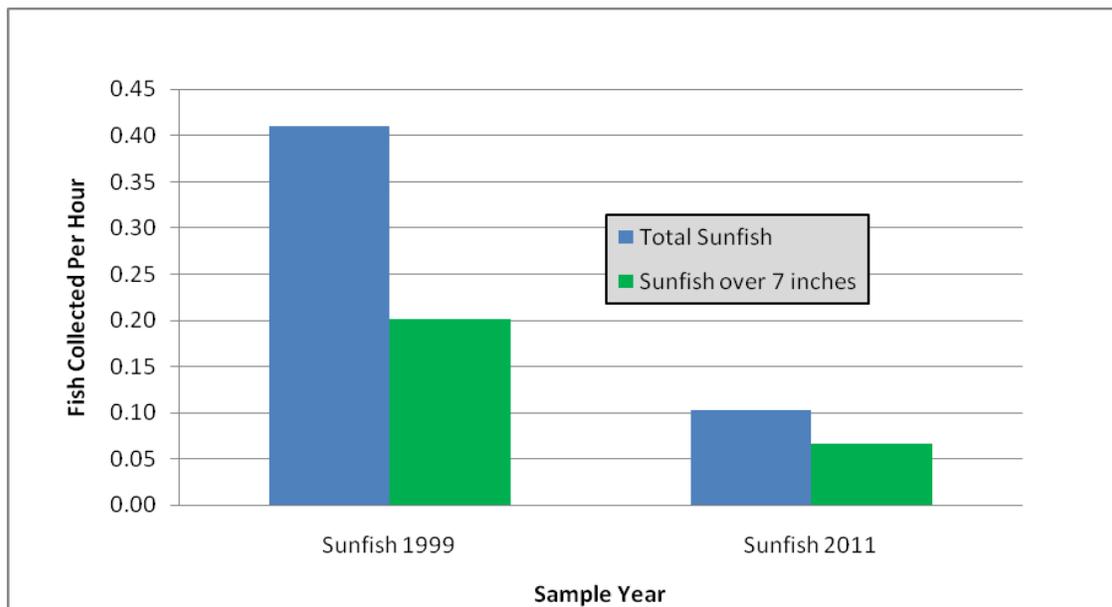
The primary purpose of our 2011 surveys was to measure the size structure and quality of the lake's resident gamefish and panfish populations. These data will be used to update the fishery management plan for the lake. Table 1 below summarizes the catch data from our 2011 trap net and gill net survey.

**Table 1. 2011 Survey Gear: 9 Trap Net Sets & 9 Gill Net Sets.**

Fish Species	Number	Size (Inches)	Comments
Walleye	5	10 - 28	80% Quality Sized Fish
Black Crappie	8	10 - 13	All Quality Fish
Bluegill	30	3 - 9	80% Quality Sized Fish
Pumpkinseed	17	6 - 7	41% Quality Sized Fish
Rock Bass	26	3 - 7	-
Yellow Perch	48	3 - 13	86% Quality Sized Fish
Brown Bullhead	3	9 - 15	80% Quality Sized Fish
Brook and Tiger Trout	20	Not Measured	All Stocked Fish
Northern Pike	1	24	-
Golden Shiner	12	Not Measured	-
White Sucker	25	Not Measured	-
Common Carp	1	Not Measured	-

Catch Rates were lower than in 1999 for sunfish, black crappie, bullheads and yellow perch. Angler harvest, competition with other fish for food and space, and/or environmental factors could have played a role in this change. We will be looking at this closely during our data analysis. Cold weather and cold water during sampling may have been a factor; many fish species may have been inactive and did not recruit to our survey gear. The following five graphs compare catch rates of popular panfish between sample years (Fig 1- Fig 5).

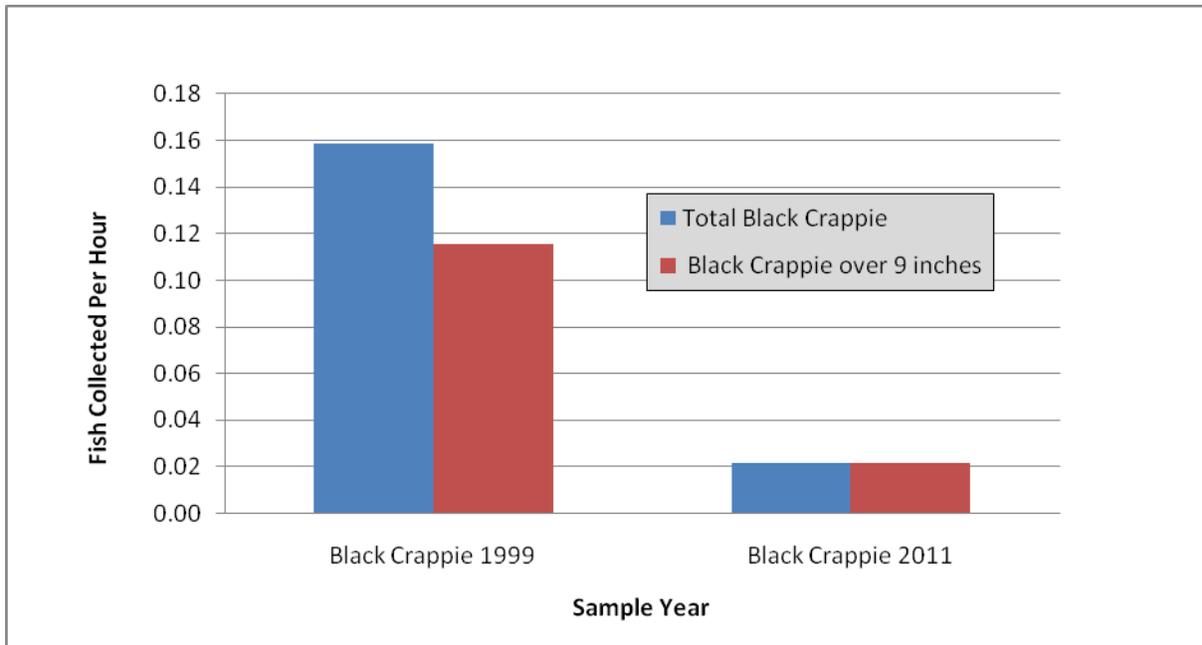
**Figure 1. Sunfish Captured in Trap and Gill nets at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**





*Fisheries Biologist aide Matt Kinsey with two very nice bluegill*

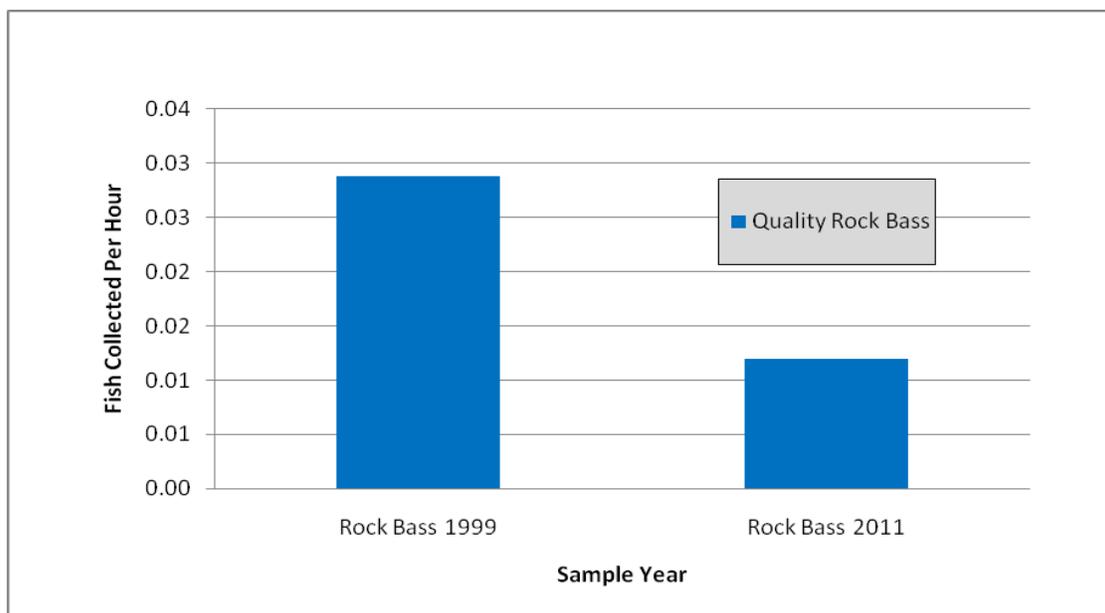
**Figure 2. Black Crappie Captured in Trap and Gill Nets at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**



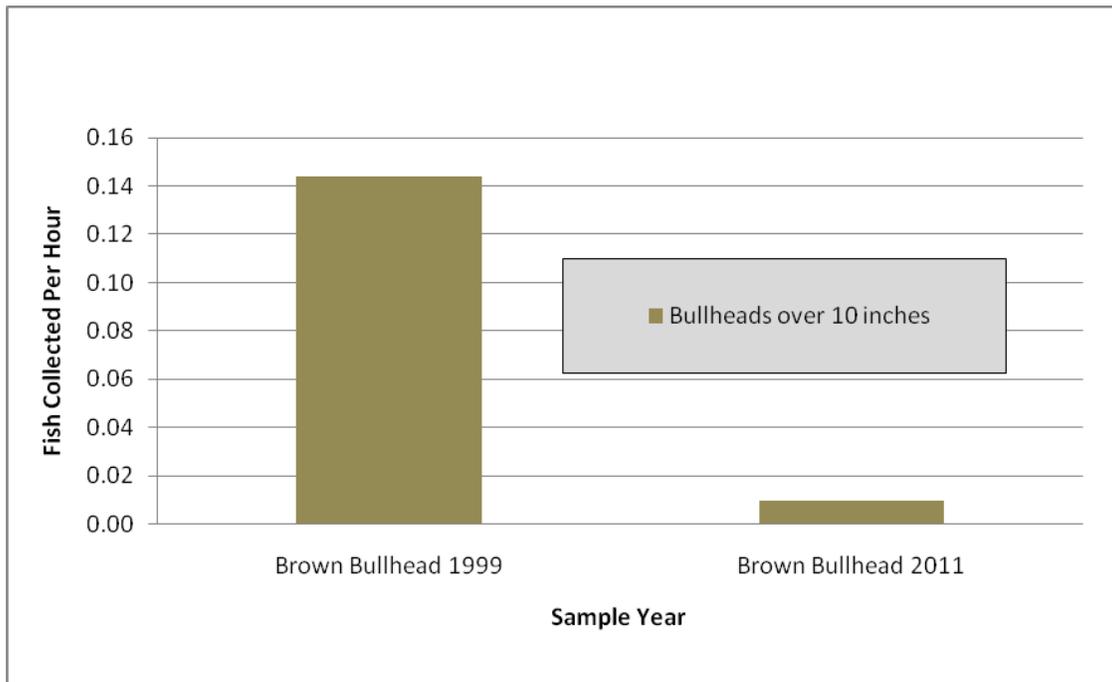


*Fisheries Biologist Mike Depew holding two nice black crappie*

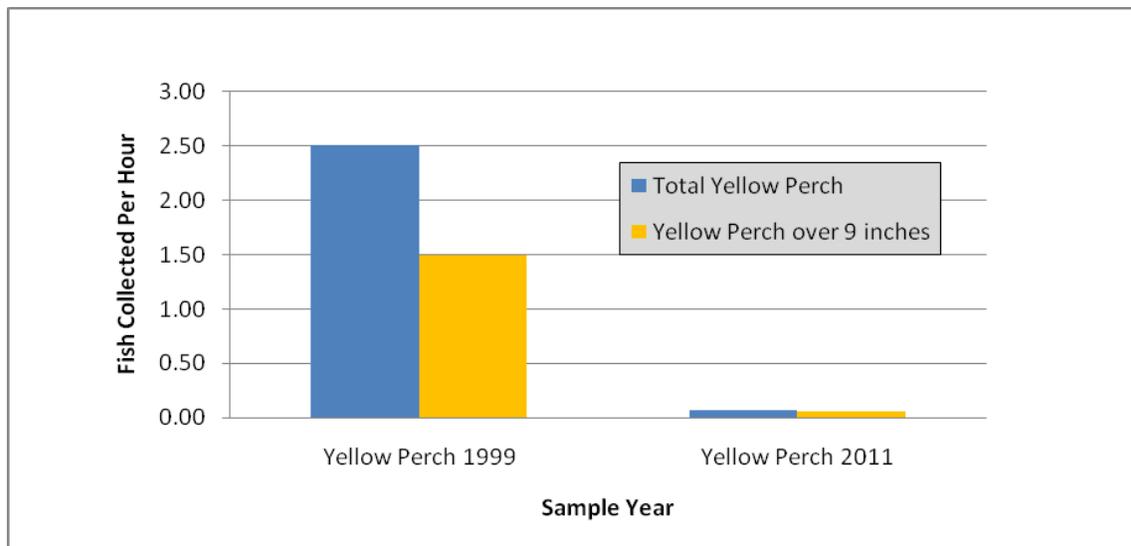
**Figure 3. Rock Bass Captured in Trap and Gill Nets at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**



**Figure 4. Brown Bullheads Captured in Trap and Gill Nets at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**



**Figure 5. Yellow Perch Captured in Trap and Gill Nets at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**



In contrast to the gill and trap net surveys, during the nighttime electrofishing survey we found that the number and size structure of largemouth and smallmouth bass was much better than previous surveys. Table 2 below summarizes the catch data from our 2011 electrofishing survey.

**Table 2. 2011 Survey Gear: 3 Nighttime Boat Electrofishing Runs.**

Fish Species	Number	Size (Inches)	Comments
Largemouth Bass	97	4 -18	70% over 12 inches 7% over 15 inches
Smallmouth Bass	136	3 -14	26% over 12 inches

Figure 6 shows catch rates for largemouth bass. In 2011 our total catch was 91 fish per hour which was triple our catch rate from 1999 (29 fish per hour).

**Figure 6. Largemouth Bass Collected during Nighttime Electrofishing at Hinckston Run Reservoir.**

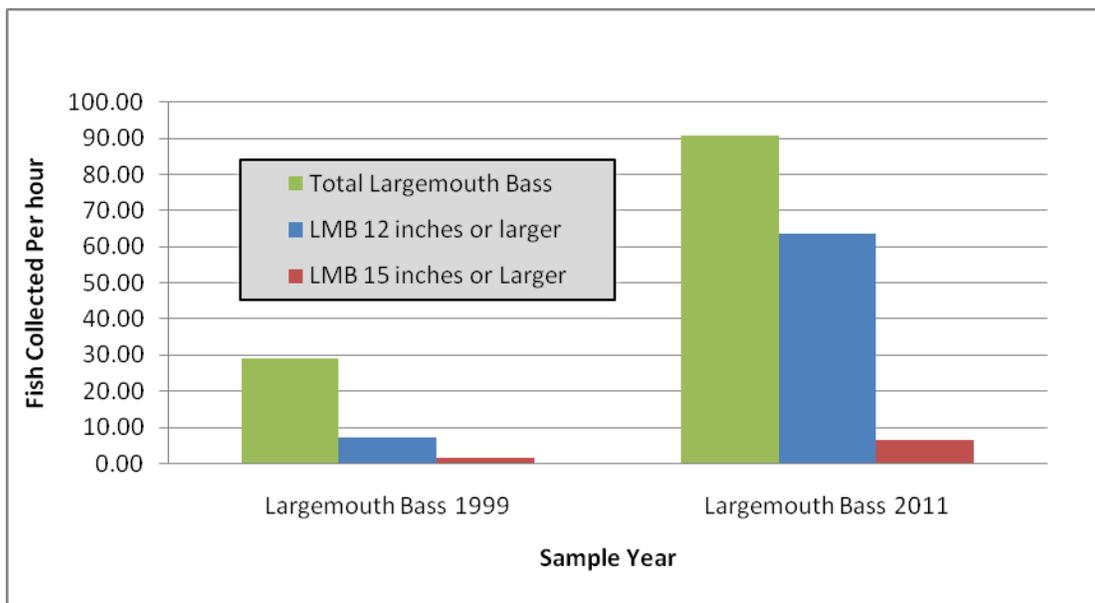
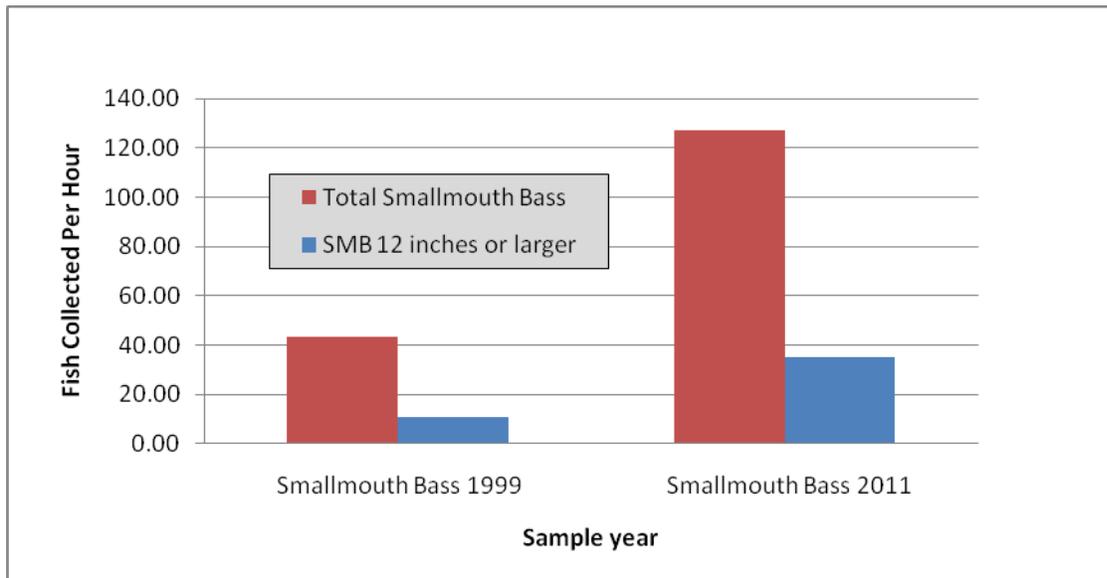


Figure 7 shows catch rates for smallmouth bass. In 2011 our smallmouth bass catch was 127 fish per hour which was more than triple our catch rate from 1999 (43 fish per hour). All Big Bass Program guidelines were exceeded at Hinckston Run Reservoir. Total combined bass were caught at 218 fish per hour (state guideline = 35 per hour), combined bass over 12 inches were caught at a rate of 96 fish per hour (state guideline = 7 per hour) and combined bass over 15 inches at a rate of 7 fish per hour (state guideline = 2 per hour).

**Figure 7. Smallmouth Bass Collected during Nighttime Electrofishing at Hinckston run Reservoir.**



Hinckston Run Reservoir has excellent fishing opportunities for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Many local anglers stopped by and told us stories of good angling for walleye and yellow perch despite our low catches. Hinckston may be a good area to target these species as well. Adult brown and rainbow trout were not collected during our 2011 survey as a result stocking will be discontinued. Walleye were not collected in 1999 and a few were collected in 2011. We will determine how to proceed with walleye management at Hinckston after all data is analyzed.

We at the Fish and Boat Commission would like to extend our thanks on behalf of all fishermen to the CSA for making this lake public and such a great place to enjoy.

**Joseph Cocco and Mike Depew  
Area 8 Fisheries Biologist Aide and Fisheries Biologist**