

# **Fords Lake**

## **Lackawanna County**

### **2016 Channel Catfish Survey**

Fords Lake supports excellent fisheries for Largemouth Bass, big Crappies, and Brown Bullheads as described in our recent [spring 2016 trap net survey](#) report (Table 1). However, as previously reported, an illegal introduction of [Gizzard Shad, detected in 2006](#), has harmed the Bluegill fishery, and threatens to negatively influence Largemouth Bass and crappie populations. To control Gizzard Shad numbers, and minimize negative consequences, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission began annual stockings of Tiger Muskellunge and Channel Catfish. In a [spring 2016 trap net survey](#) we found that Tiger Muskellunge were surviving and growing well in Fords Lake and stocking efforts were beginning to yield a desirable Musky fishery.

Here we report a follow-up to that that trap net survey, with targeted sampling at Fords Lake occurring during the week of September 12, 2016 to determine if the Channel Catfish stocking program was working. We set four baited, tandem hoop nets and fished them for a total of 275.88 hours. This effort only produced a single Channel Catfish that measured 20 inches long. Channel Catfish catch per unit effort was well below the minimum level required for continued stocking. Additionally, we failed to capture any Channel Catfish during a general inventory (trap nets, gill nets, and night electrofishing) in [spring 2011](#) and during the recent spring 2016 Tiger Muskellunge work. Thus, we will stop stocking Channel Catfish in Fords Lake and utilize other predators to limit Gizzard Shad abundance.

Table 1. Fish captured at Fords Lake during the March 2016 survey.

Species	Number Caught	Length Range (inches)
Tiger Muskellunge	2	33 – 34
Gizzard Shad	12	15 – 17
Black Crappie	842	5 – 18
White Crappie	96	6 – 16
Bluegill	387	3 – 7
Pumpkinseed	34	5 – 6
Yellow Perch	13	7 – 10
Brown Bullhead	72	8 – 14
Yellow Bullhead	84	6 – 10
Golden Shiner	2	9
Largemouth Bass	3	11 – 12

*34 inch Tiger Muskellunge captured at Fords Lake*



*Fisheries Biologist Aaron Frey holding two large Crappies captured at Fords Lake*



*Rob Wnuk  
Area 4 Fisheries Manager*