

Laurel Hill Lake

Somerset County

April 2015 Trap Net, May 2016 Night Electrofishing Survey

Laurel Hill Lake is a 63-acre impoundment that is operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) as part of [Laurel Hill State Park](#) in Somerset County. The lake has two boat launches, and motorized boats are restricted to electric motors only. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) stocks catchable trout annually and the lake also contains populations of naturally reproducing warmwater/coolwater species. The lake was surveyed in April 2015 with trap nets and May 2016 with night flatbottom boat electrofishing to assess the resident warmwater and coolwater gamefish and panfish populations.

Table 1 below shows the catch from the April 2015 trap net survey. Overall catch rates were low, which were likely due to cold water temperatures during the time of survey. Bluegill was the most abundant species captured with 40 individuals ranging from 2 – 8 inches. Other panfish captured included small numbers of Black Crappie, Pumpkinseed, Yellow Perch, and Rock Bass. Northern Pike were the most abundant gamefish captured with 10 individuals ranging from 20 – 30 inches.

Table 1. Length and frequency distribution of sampled fish.

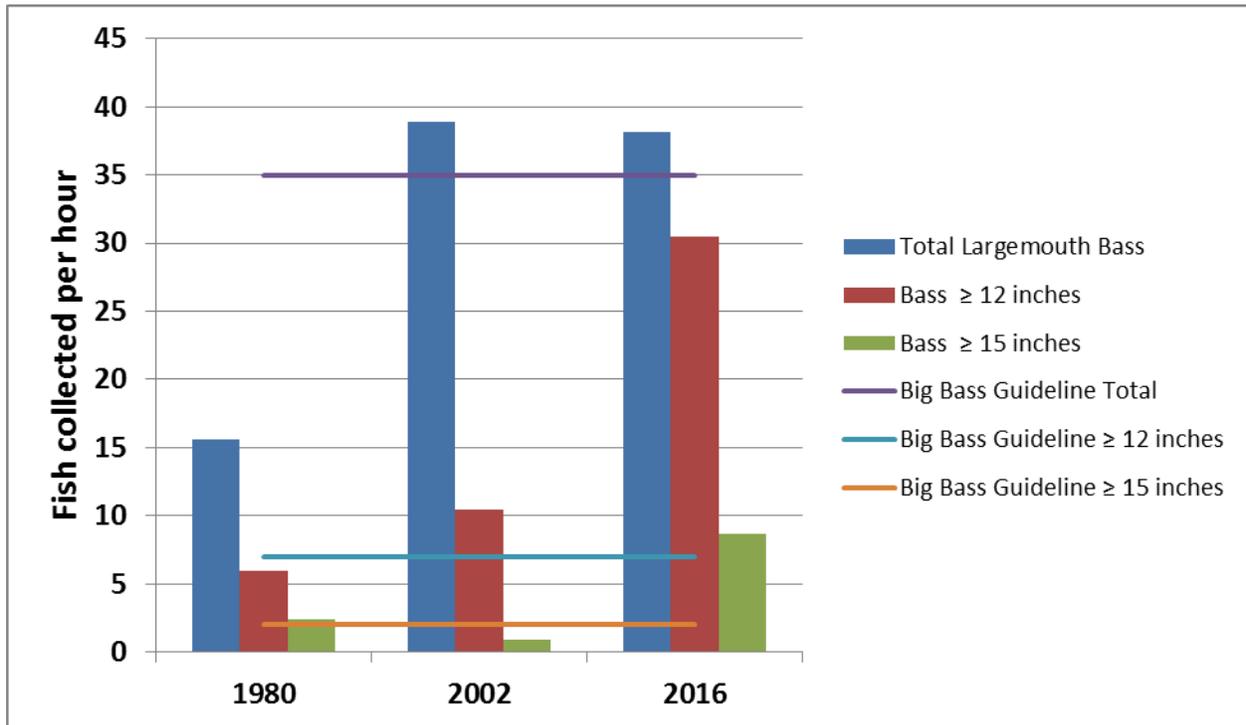
Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)
Bluegill	40	2 - 8
Brown Bullhead	5	8 - 11
Yellow Bullhead	5	8 - 11
Black Crappie	4	10 - 11
Northern Pike	10	20 – 30
Pumpkinseed	2	3 - 6
Yellow Perch	7	4 – 9
Rock Bass	20	5 - 8
Largemouth Bass	3	12 - 18
Bluntnose Minnow	2	Not Measured
Hatchery Brook Trout	2	Not Measured
Hatchery Rainbow Trout	10	Not Measured
White Sucker	17	Not Measured
Common Carp	2	Not Measured

The Largemouth Bass population was sampled by night flatbottom boat electrofishing in May 2016. Table 2 below shows the total catch and size distribution of bass in 2016. Mean total Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) was 38.13 fish/hr, CPUE \geq 12 inches was 30.47 fish/hr, and CPUE \geq 15 inches was 8.7 fish/hr. Catch rates exceeded the Big Bass Guidelines of 35 total fish/hr, 7 fish/hr greater than 12 inches, and 2 fish/hr greater than 15 inches that are used to characterize quality bass populations in Pennsylvania (Figure 1). Quality of the Largemouth Bass population, as measured by number collected over 12 inches and number collected over 15 inches was highest in 2016 of the three survey years. In addition, two Northern Pike were also captured during night electrofishing in May 2016.

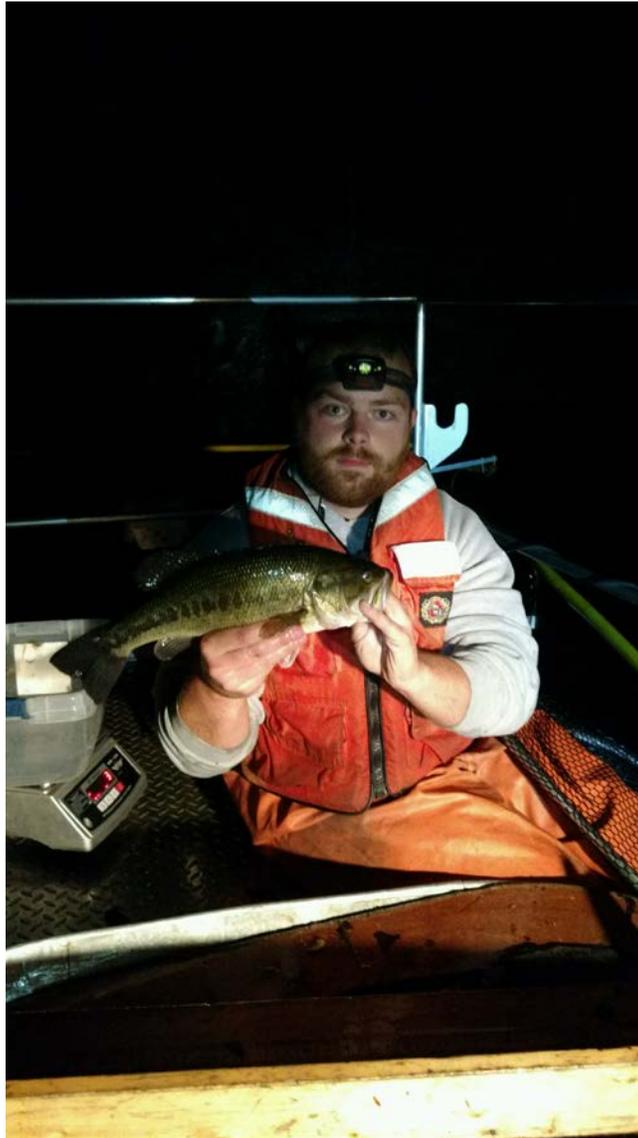
Table 2. Total catch of target species from night electrofishing in May 2016.

Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)
Largemouth Bass	40	4 – 16
Northern Pike	2	21 - 25

Figure 1. Largemouth Bass collected per hour during night electrofishing runs at Laurel Hill Lake.



-Fisheries Biologist Mike Depew with a nice Northern Pike captured trap netting in April 2015



-Fisheries Intern Daren Reinhart with a 16" Largemouth Bass captured night electrofishing in May 2016

Overall, Laurel Hill Lake provides good fishing opportunities for stocked trout and Largemouth Bass, fishable numbers of Northern Pike, and fair opportunities for bullhead catfish and other panfish.

***Mike Depew
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