

# High Point Lake

## Somerset County

**April and May 2015, March 2016**

High Point Lake is a 338 acre impoundment located in southern Somerset County near Mount Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania. Additional and specific information about this lake can be found on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) website at [http://www.fishandboat.com/water/lakes/high\\_point/00highpoint.htm](http://www.fishandboat.com/water/lakes/high_point/00highpoint.htm). The PFBC owned lake is a popular impoundment for recreational fishing and boating and contains naturally reproducing populations of a variety of gamefish and panfish including Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Yellow Perch, Black Crappie, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, and Brown Bullhead. Chain Pickerel, a non-native species in the Ohio River Basin, have also been introduced into the lake and are now naturally reproducing. Anglers are encouraged to harvest all legal sized Chain Pickerel. In addition to the naturally reproducing gamefish and panfish noted, supplemental stocking of Walleye fingerlings also occurs at High Point Lake. All fish species at High Point Lake are managed under statewide regulations.

Biologists from the PFBC Area 8 Fisheries Management Office in Somerset surveyed High Point Lake in April and May 2015 and March 2016 using Pennsylvania style trap nets and night flatbottom boat electrofishing. Trap netting occurred in April 2015 and night electrofishing occurred in May 2015 and March 2016. The primary objective of the April and March surveys was to assess the success of the fingerling Walleye stocking program at the lake. Additional data on panfish and other gamefish was also collected during the April trap net survey. The primary objective of the May night electrofishing survey was to assess the black bass population.

Table 1 below summarizes the catch data from the 2015 trap net survey. Bluegill, Black Crappie, and Yellow Perch comprised the majority of the catch. Bluegill and Yellow Perch size distribution was poor, with the majority of the fish under 7 and 9 inches in length, respectively. Numerous quality size Black Crappie were present, with almost half of the fish captured greater than 9 inches in length. Black Crappie up to 14 inches in length were captured and anglers were observed catching numerous Black Crappie during our survey. Although not typically captured in trap nets, some nice sized Largemouth Bass were also captured during the trap net survey.

**Table 1. Length and frequency distribution of sampled fish from trap nets in April 2015.**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number caught</b>	<b>Size range (inches)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Walleye	4	21-25	All legal fish
Yellow Perch	102	4-12	13% greater than 9 inches
Black Crappie	133	7-14	47% greater than 9 inches
Rock Bass	3	5-8	
Bluegill	194	2-7	4% greater than 7 inches
Pumpkinseed	19	3-7	5% greater than 7 inches
Hybrid Sunfish	1	3	
Largemouth Bass	9	15-19	All legal fish
Northern Pike	3	23-33	
Chain Pickerel	2	9-19	
Brown Bullhead	35	10-15	
Yellow Bullhead	9	10-12	
Golden Shiner	4	NA	

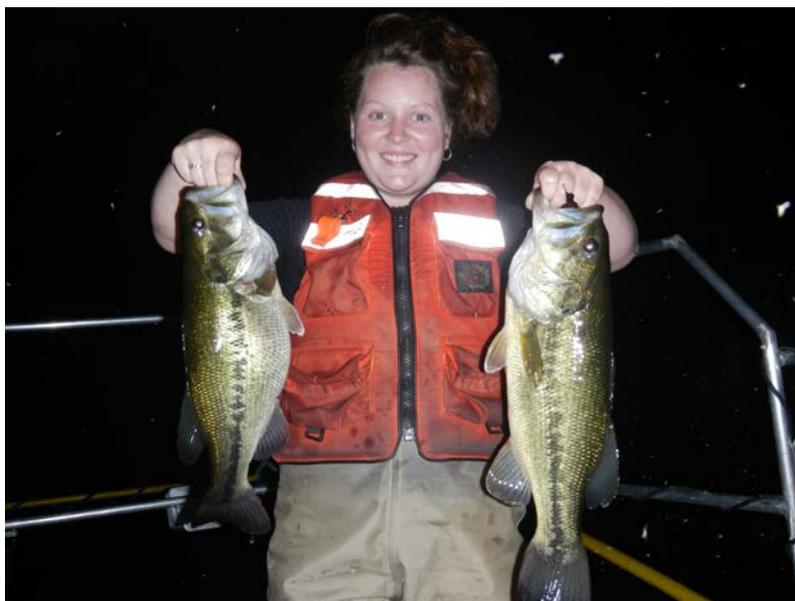


*-Three Rivers Biologist Bob Ventorini with a pair of nice Black Crappie*

Night electrofishing in May 2015 continued to reveal changes in the black bass population at High Point Lake. A total of 291 Largemouth Bass were captured night electrofishing in 2015 (Table 2), which was almost five times as many as in the previous survey in 2007. Only 18 Smallmouth Bass were captured in 2015. Largemouth Bass comprised 94% of the bass population in 2015, compared to 70% in 2007, 28% in 1996, and 40% in 1989. Increased abundance of aquatic vegetation has favored a shift in the black bass community to one dominated by Largemouth Bass. Bass catch rates for Largemouth Bass exceeded Big Bass Guidelines for High Point Lake in 2015 (Figure 1) but not for Smallmouth Bass (Figure 2).

**Table 2. Length and frequency distribution of sampled fish from night electrofishing in May 2015.**

Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)	Comments
Largemouth Bass	291	5-19	13% greater than 15 inches
Smallmouth Bass	18	4-10	
Northern Pike	8	22-28	
Chain Pickerel	6	17-20	



*-Intern Chrissy Edwards with a pair of nice largemouth bass from High Point Lake*

Figure 1. Largemouth Bass collected per hour during night electrofishing runs at High Point Lake.

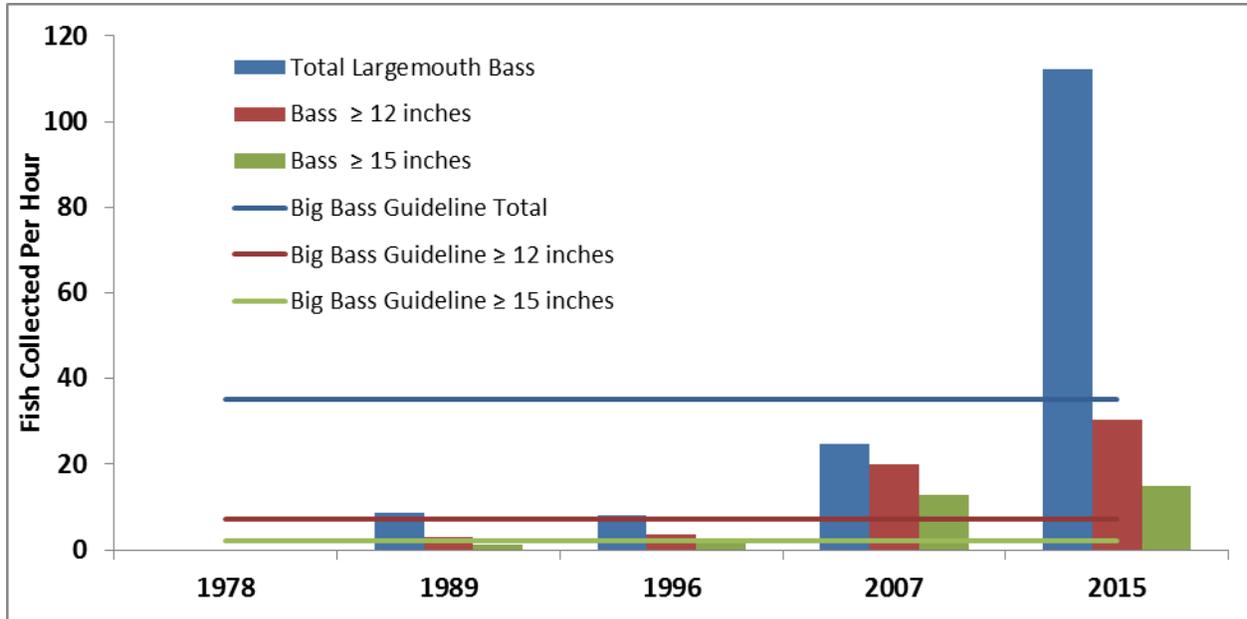
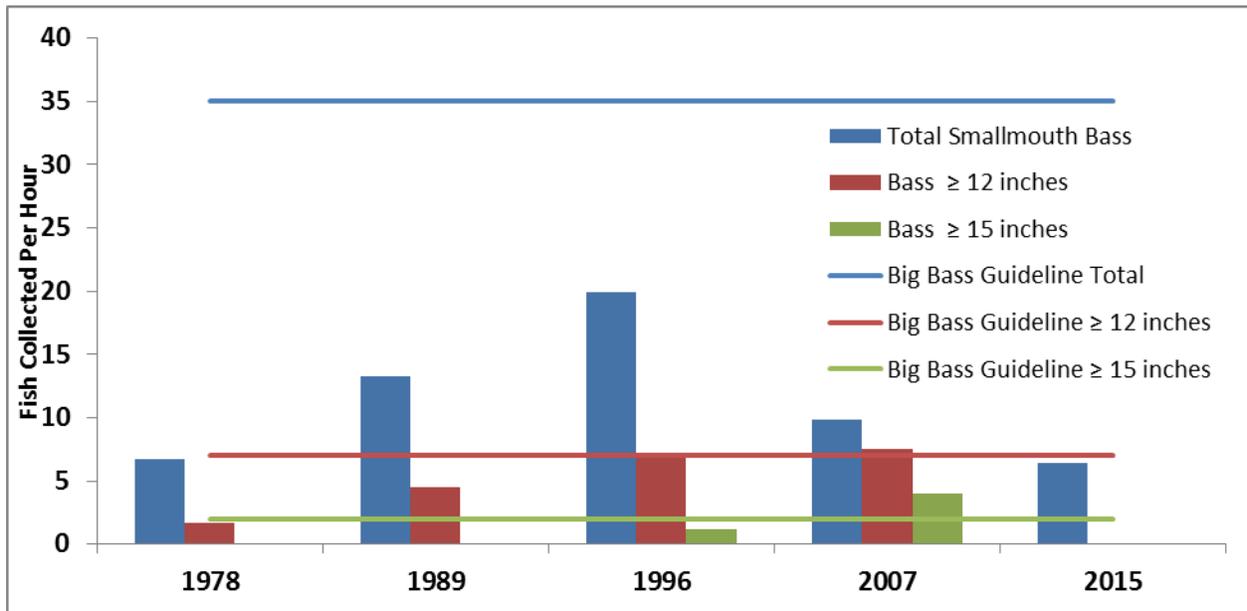
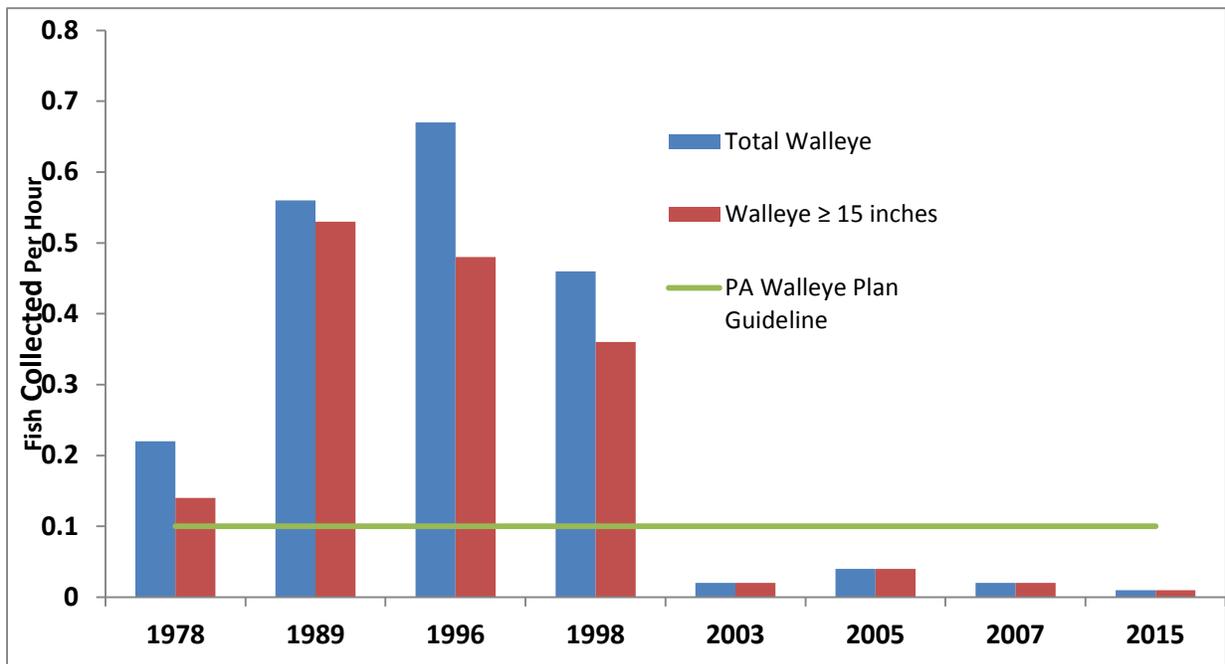


Figure 2. Smallmouth Bass collected per hour during night electrofishing runs at High Point Lake.



The increase in Largemouth Bass has had a negative effect on the Walleye population at High Point Lake. Our total trap net catch of 4 Walleye was the lowest of any survey conducted at the lake (Figure 3). We returned in late March in 2016 and conducted night electrofishing for Walleye during their spawning time when they are typically close to shore and very susceptible to night electrofishing. Unfortunately, we only captured 6 Walleye at that time (Table 3). As none of our recent surveys have met [Walleye Plan](#) catch rate guidelines at High Point Lake, we plan to discontinue stocking Walleye in this waterbody.

**Figure 3. Walleye collected per hour during trap netting at High Point Lake.**



**Table 3. Length and frequency distribution of Walleye from night electrofishing in March 2016.**

Species	Number caught	Size range (inches)	Comments
Walleye	6	20-22	All legal size

Overall, High Point Lake provides anglers with excellent fishing opportunities for Largemouth Bass and Black Crappie, the lake contains an abundant Yellow Perch population, and fair numbers of Bluegill. Although our catches of Northern Pike and Chain Pickerel were low, anglers report catching good numbers of both fish at the lake. Decent numbers of Brown Bullheads and a few Walleye are also available to anglers.

*-prepared by Mike Depew, Area 8 Fisheries Biologist*