



Pascagoula River 2022

REEL FACTS

Stephen Brown – Fisheries Biologist

Stephen.Brown@wfp.ms.gov

General Information: The Pascagoula River is a roughly 80 mile long saltwater influenced freshwater river. The river has numerous oxbow lakes including Dead River, McCrae Dead River, Big Lake, and Caswell Lake.

Location: The Pascagoula River originates with the confluence of the Leaf River and the Chickasawhay River in Merrill (George County) before emptying into the Pascagoula River Marsh in Jackson County.

Fishery Management: Largemouth Bass, Spotted Bass, bream, crappie and catfish

Purchase a Fishing License: https://www.ms.gov/mdwfp/hunting_fishing/

Amenities

- Many public boat ramps located throughout George and Jackson Counties
- Multiple pay-to-use ramps
- Connected oxbow lakes
- Beach fishing areas

Creel and Size Limits

- Black Bass (Largemouth and Spotted): 12-inch minimum length limit and 10 per day (combined) per angler.
- The length limit is in effect from Merrill to the Highway 90 Bridge and includes all connected oxbow lakes and the East and West Pascagoula Rivers and all waters between said rivers.
- Statewide creel and size limits apply to all other fish species.

Regulations

- Buffalo, carp, gar, catfish, shad and Bowfin may be taken throughout the year with a bow and arrow, crossbow, spear or gig. However, catfish may not be taken with a spear or gig from May 1 to July 15.
- Hand grabbing season for catfish is open May 1 to July 15 each year
- A freshwater fishing license is required when fishing north of I-10, and either a saltwater or a freshwater license is valid between the Hwy 90 and I-10 bridges in the Pascagoula Marsh. A saltwater license is required when fishing south of the Hwy 90 Bridge.

Fishing Tips

Crappie

Target shallow areas with Cypress knees along the shoreline in connected oxbow lakes during the spring.

Largemouth Bass

Fish areas in connected oxbow lakes with heavy cover or structure (such as sunken logs) below the water surface.

Spotted Bass

Target flowing waters with light cover. Use top water lures around dawn or dusk.

Bream

For Redear Sunfish and Bluegill fish areas along the bank with underwater vegetation. Longear Sunfish can be caught in flowing shallow streams along the shoreline.

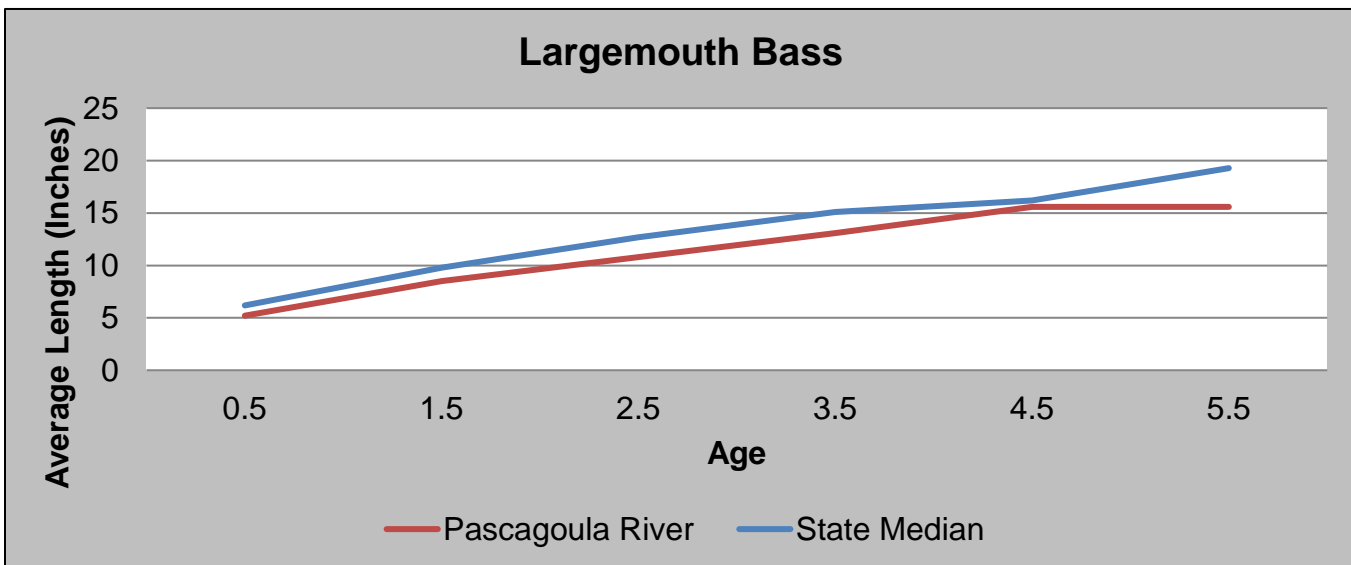


Above: The Pascagoula River is recognized as the largest unimpeded river system in the contiguous United States. The river spans the length of the Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a 37,000-acre tract of predominately bottomland hardwood forest located within George and Jackson counties.

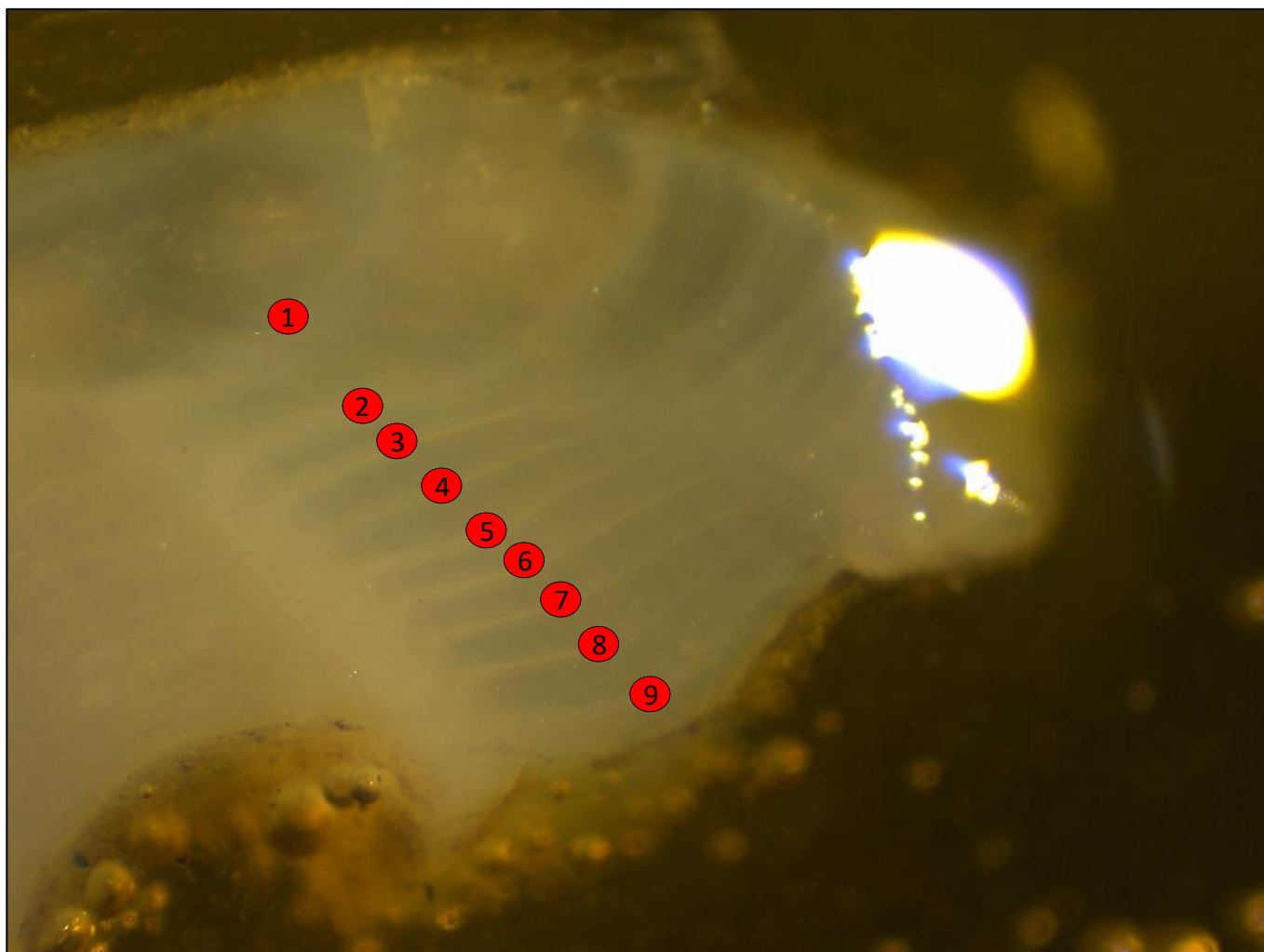
Below: Results from the 2020 fall electrofishing survey conducted in Caswell Lake.

Species	# of fish collected	% of sample	Average Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Average Weight (pounds)	Catch Rate – Adult fish (fish/mile)
Channel Catfish	10	6.0	17.7	20.8	1.7	50
Flathead Catfish	1	0.6	12.1	12.1	0.6	5
Warmouth	10	6.0	6.5	8.5	0.2	23
Bluegill	74	44.3	6.1	8.8	0.2	270
Longear Sunfish	1	0.6	3.2	3.2	0.02	5
Redear Sunfish	14	8.4	8.1	10.2	0.4	47
Red Spotted Sunfish	2	1.2	4.2	4.9	0.04	7
Largemouth Bass	53	31.7	13.8	20.9	1.5	188
White Crappie	1	0.6	8.4	8.4	0.5	2
Gulf Logperch	1	0.6	3.1	3.1	0.01	2

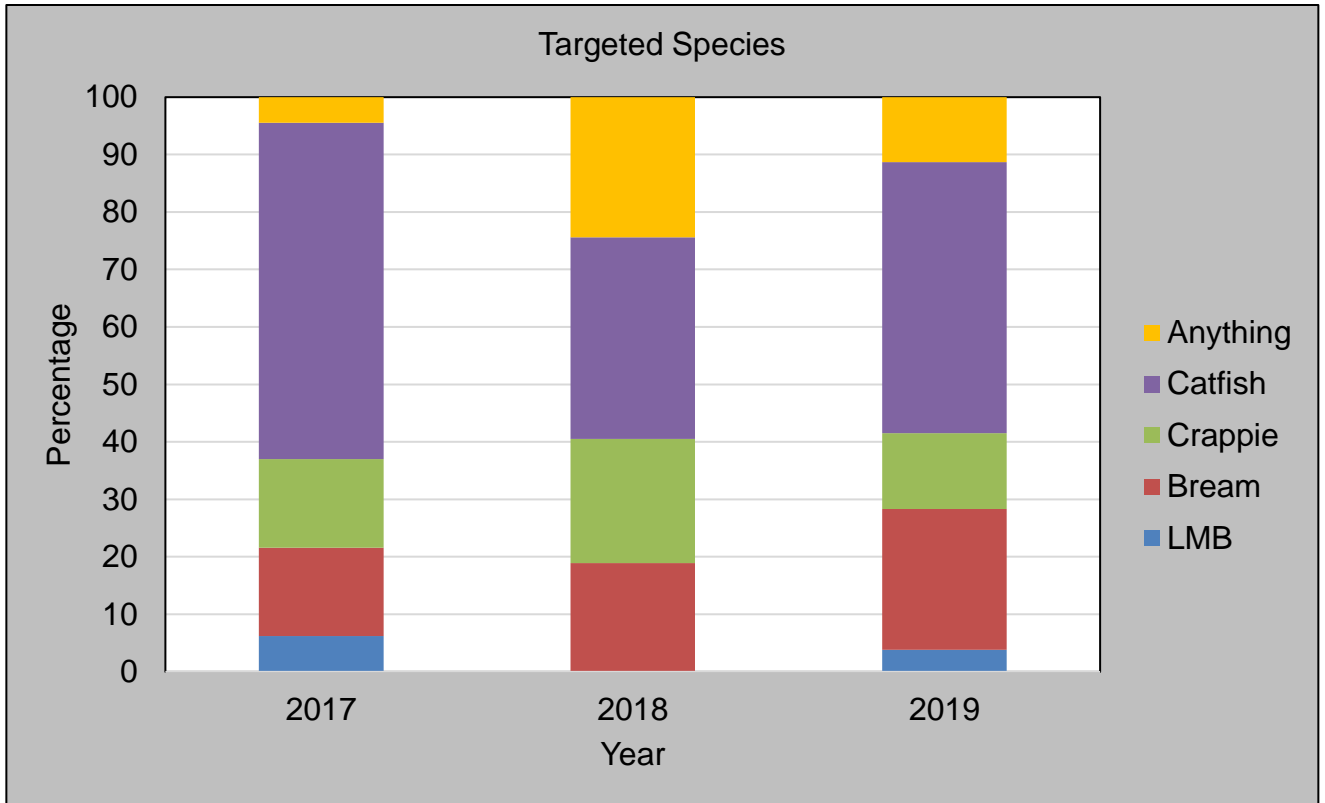
Below: Average length at age for Largemouth Bass in the Pascagoula River compared to the state median length at age.



Below: Largemouth Bass from the Pascagoula River were aged using sagittal otoliths. This is done much like aging a tree, by counting the rings within the otolith. One ring is formed each year. Large otoliths are sectioned and viewed under a microscope for an accurate reading. The otolith below came from a 9 year old bass.



Below: From 2017 – 2019, catfish and bream were the most common species groups anglers fished for on the river.



Below: Percentage of fish species caught by anglers fishing the Pascagoula River from 2017 – 2019.

