



# Spring Lake 2023

## REEL FACTS

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**General Information:** Spring Lake is a clear, shallow 60-acre spring-fed impoundment in Wall Doxey State Park. Nearly half the lake is filled with large cypress trees.

**Location:** Approximately 7 miles south of Holly Springs.

**Fishery Management:** Largemouth Bass, bream, crappie, catfish, and Gulf Coast strain Walleye.

**Park/Lake information:** <http://www.mdwfp.com/parks-destinations/state-parks/wall-doxey/>

**Lake Depth Map:** <http://www.mdwfp.com/media/5447/wall-doxey-park-lake.pdf>

**Purchase a Fishing License:** [https://www.ms.gov/mdwfp/hunting\\_fishing/](https://www.ms.gov/mdwfp/hunting_fishing/)

### Amenities

- 1 public boat ramp.
- 2 wooden fishing piers, 1 courtesy pier by ramp.

### Creel and Size Limits

- Largemouth Bass: 10 bass per day per angler.
- Crappie: 30 crappie per day per angler.
- Bream: 100 bream per day per angler.
- Catfish: no limit.
- Walleye: No harvest allowed.
- No size limits on any species.

### Regulations

- Rod and reel or pole fishing is allowed. No trotlines, FFFD's, jugs, yo-yo's, limblines, throwlines, or set hooks are allowed.
- MS sportfishing licenses and fishing permits are required except by individuals otherwise exempt or on designated days during National Fishing and Boating Week.
- No water skiing allowed.
- Boating is no wake only.

### Stocking

- 2022 - 1,000 triploid (sterile) grass carp
- 2022 - 2,400 channel catfish.

### Fishing Tips

#### Largemouth Bass

- Very clear water means fish with light line and smaller lures. Spinnerbaits and weedless soft plastics are less likely to get lost fishing around cypresses and piers.

#### Bream

- Try crickets and worms for bream around cypresses. Bream bed over sand or gravel bottoms.

#### Catfish

- Channel Catfish can be caught with cut bait, liver, worms, etc.

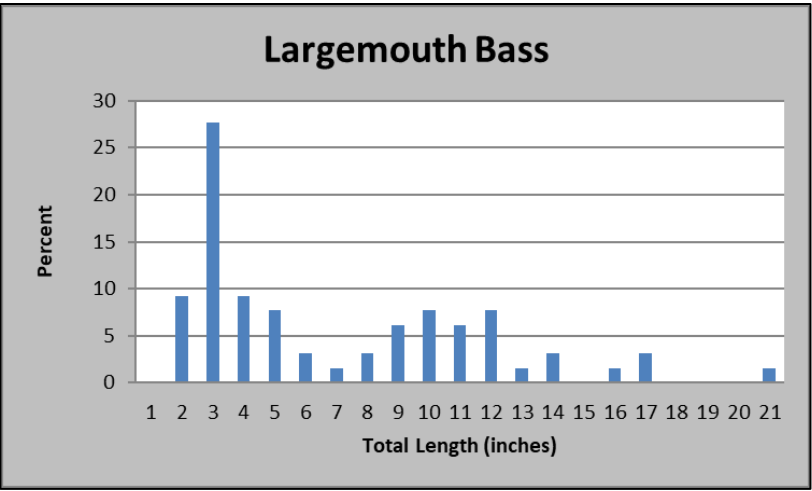
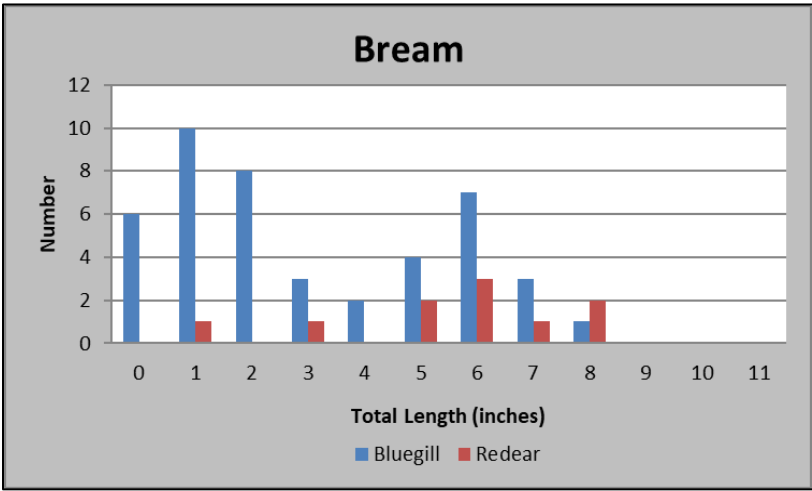
#### Crappie

- Crappie can be caught with jigs and/or minnows around cypresses or fallen trees.

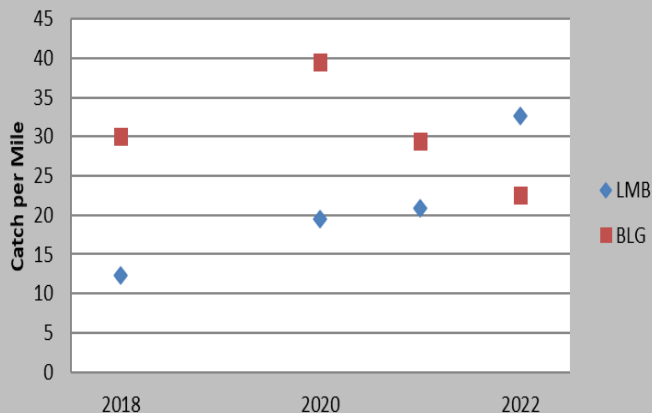
**Below:** Results from 2022 fall electrofishing surveys conducted at Spring Lake. The sport fishery is dominated by Largemouth Bass and bream (Bluegill and Redear Sunfish). Spring Lake has other species (Warmouth Sunfish, Spotted Gar, Bowfin, Pirate Perch, Spotted Suckers, Brook Silversides, etc.) in small numbers. Lake Chubsuckers are collected as an indicator of vegetation abundance; they become more numerous as submerged vegetation increases. Only four were captured in 2018 before vegetation became abundant in 2020.

Species	# of fish collected	% of sample	Average Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Average Weight (pounds)	Catch Rate – Adult fish (fish/mile)
Largemouth Bass	65	48	7.5	21.9	0.5	33
Bluegill	44	32	3.6	8.2	0.1	23
Lake Chubsucker	13	10	7.9	12.1	0.4	0
Redear Sunfish	10	7	6.2	8.3	0.2	9
Grass Carp	2	1	18.8	26.4	4.5	0
Channel Catfish	1	<1	9.2	9.2	0.2	0
White Crappie	1	<1	14.1	14.1	1.3	1

**Right:** Length distributions of Largemouth Bass and Bluegill collected during 2022 fall electrofishing. The size ranges of bass (mostly less than 12 inches) and bream (mostly larger adults and young-of-year) suggested a bass-crowded state of predator to prey balance. Less weedy conditions allowed bass to forage more efficiently on bream. Redear Sunfish were less numerous, but larger, than Bluegill. Redear Sunfish normally average larger than Bluegill in Spring Lake with some “shellcrackers” weighing over a pound.



## Electrofishing Catch Rates



**Above:** Electrofishing catch rate trends (left) for Largemouth Bass (LMB) and Bluegill (BLG) vary year-to-year based on vegetative cover, spawning success, angler harvest, etc. Bluegill numbers have fallen since 2020 as weed control measures have allowed bass to feed on them more efficiently. Bass numbers have increased lately with less angler harvest due to abundant weeds. Fishing (and electrofishing) in this very clear lake is difficult; fish can easily see both boat and bank anglers (right).



**Above:** Gulf Coast strain Walleye (left) are native to the Tombigbee River system. Walleye are the largest species in the perch family. MDWFP North Mississippi Fish Hatchery (NMFH) personnel have stocked Gulf Coast strain Walleye in Spring Lake. Walleye are cool water fish, and the lake rarely exceeds 80° F. Some of these fish are recaptured for brood stock for the NMFH at Enid. Walleye harvest is prohibited in Spring Lake.

As their name suggests, Grass Pickerel (right) **have** flourished with the weedy conditions, although they (and other uncommon species) are not recorded while electrofishing. One of the smallest members of the pike family, they rarely exceed 15 inches. Their natural camouflage lets them hide in vegetation from which they ambush prey with a unique S-shaped strike motion. There are no size or creel limits on pickerel.

Walleye and Grass Pickerel will strike lures intended for bass or other species. Anglers are warned not to “lip land” either of these fish due to their toothy mouths.





**Above:** Parrotfeather, a South American invasive aquatic rooted plant, expanded explosively over the 2019/2020 winter due to several causes. Although aquatic vegetation provides habitat for small fish and their insect prey, too much vegetation prevents bass and other predators from controlling the numbers of bream and other small fish. Thick weeds not only make fishing challenging (left), but they could be spread to other waters on boats and trailers. Triploid (sterile) Grass Carp (right) eat aquatic vegetation; they were stocked in 2019 and 2020. An additional 1,000 Triploid Grass Carp were stocked in 2022.



**Left:** A winter drawdown has been done annually since 2020 to reduce weeds as dewatered areas dried out and froze. Over the winter, Triploid Grass Carp ate parrotfeather while bass fed on abundant small fish in the remaining pool. During the 2020/2021 drawdown, MDWFP extended the boat ramp and replaced the courtesy pier (top). A winter 2022/2023 drawdown is planned. Spring Lake is expected to refill in March 2023.



Since 2020, MDWFP fisheries biologists have treated high use areas around the boat ramp and fishing piers (bottom) with a granular aquatic herbicide. Liquid herbicides were used in open areas of the lake in 2021 to suppress weeds while minimizing damage to scenic cypress trees that provide habitat and shade for fish (and people).