



Columbus Lake 2023

REEL FACTS

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General Information: Covering 8,910 acres, Columbus Lake is the largest reservoir along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. It was opened in 1981 and is owned and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The reservoir extends 22 miles from Aberdeen Lock and Dam (mile 357.5) to Columbus Lock and Dam (Stennis Lock and Dam, mile 334.7). Historically, Columbus Lake has been a popular destination for bass and crappie anglers from around the state and the west central region of Alabama.

Location: Just west of the Columbus, MS along Lock and Dam Rd., east of West Point along Hwy. 50.

Fishery Management: Largemouth Bass, crappie, catfish, and Paddlefish.

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

Amenities

- 8 public boat ramps
- 2 marinas
- 3 campgrounds
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms

Regulations

- Black bass (largemouth and spotted): 14 inch minimum length limit, 10 bass (combined) per day per angler.
- Crappie: 9 inch minimum length limit and 30 crappie limit per day per angler.
- Bream: 100 bream (combined) per day per angler.
- Catfish: no limit.
- All paddlefish caught must be released
- Other creel limits can be found at <http://www.mdwfp.com>

Regulations

Yo-Yo's, Jugs, and Trotlines

- No more than 25 jugs and no more than 25 yo-yos may be fished per person. No more than 2 hooks are allowed on each device. Trotlines may have no more than 100 single hooks.

Spillway

- Anglers can only use on pole or rod per person.
- Artificial lures with no more than 3 treble hooks no larger than #2 may be used anytime.
- The use of baited or bare treble hooks is illegal.
- From Dec 1 until the last day in Feb – Anglers can only fish with 2 single hooks no larger than #2. Hooks must be at least 1 inch apart.
- From March 1 until the last day in Nov – Anglers may fish with 2 single hooks of any size. Hooks must be at least 1 inch apart.
- Baitfish captured at Aberdeen or Columbus spillways must be immediately placed on ice or in a dry container.

Sportfishing Notes

Black Bass

- Target deeper backwater areas with woody debris and aquatic vegetation with Texas-rigged plastics, square-billed crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and jigs.
- In the spring, target backwater flats with spinnerbaits, Texas-rigs, vibrating jigs, and weedless swimbaits.

Crappie

- Target the deep old river bendways with jigs and minnows around any woody cover.
- Fish the edges of vegetation in the lower end of the lake around the gravel pits and Tibbee Creek.

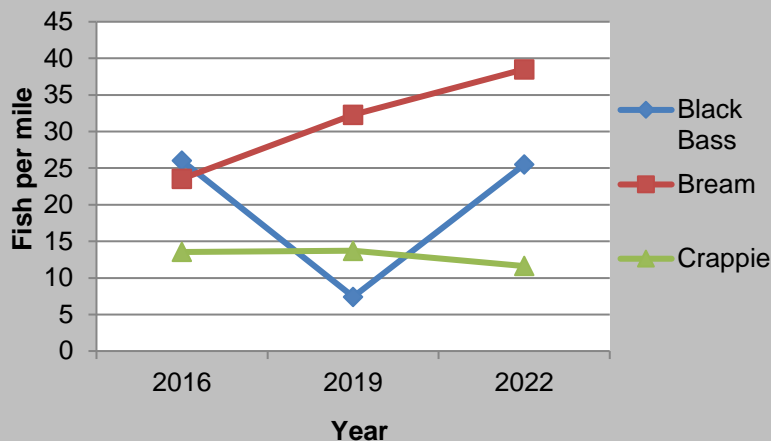
Catfish

- Fish for cats along main channel drop-offs, mouths of bendways, and deep old river channels with cutbait or whole shad.

Below: Results from the 2022 fall electrofishing survey on Columbus Lake. Boat electrofishing was completed along 8.4 miles of shoreline at 14 random samples in late November and early December.

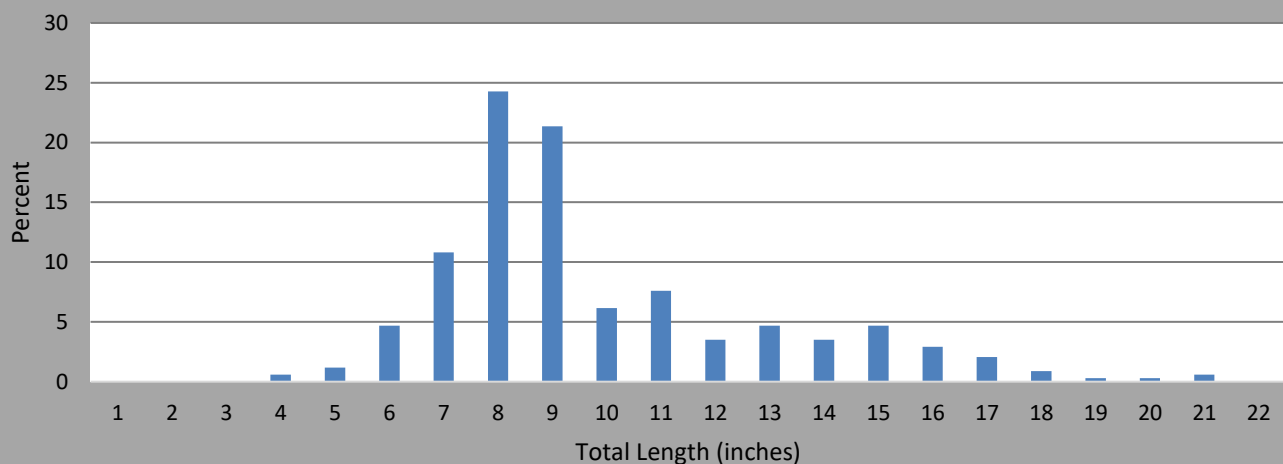
Species	# of Fish Sampled	% of Sample	Average Length (inches)	Minimum Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Catch Rate Adult fish (fish/mile)
Spotted gar	1	<1	13.6	13.6	13.6	<1
Gizzard shad	312	16	4.1	2.4	11.8	3
Threadfin shad	589	29	2.4	1.6	4.3	-
Common carp	6	<1	24.5	23.8	26.6	<1
Emerald shiner	11	1	2.6	1.6	3.1	-
Weed shiner	1	<1	2.0	2.0	2.0	-
Blacktail shiner	2	<1	3.5	3.1	3.9	-
Highfin carpsucker	8	<1	14.2	13.5	15.0	-
Smallmouth buffalo	142	7	15.8	10.9	20.6	20
Spotted sucker	8	<1	8.2	5.4	15.0	-
Blacktail redhorse	14	1	12.5	5.6	14.8	-
Blue catfish	15	1	19.2	12.7	25.8	2
Channel catfish	8	0	14.6	9.0	24.1	<1
Brook silverside	28	1	2.8	2.0	4.3	-
White bass	6	<1	10.2	9.3	10.9	<1
Green sunfish	2	<1	2.3	2.2	2.4	-
Warmouth	9	<1	5.3	1.6	8.4	<1
Orangespotted sunfish	7	<1	2.1	2.0	2.4	-
Bluegill	347	17	4.1	2.0	7.3	37
Longear sunfish	1	<1	2.8	2.8	2.8	-
Redear sunfish	13	1	5.4	4.3	7.2	2
Red spotted sunfish	4	<1	2.7	2.4	3.5	<1
Largemouth bass	342	17	9.4	3.4	20.4	26
White crappie	105	5	9.1	3.0	14.6	10
Black crappie	10	<1	9.1	5.9	11.9	1
Logperch	1	<1	3.9	3.9	3.9	-
Freshwater drum	12	1	8.1	5.6	10.9	1

Electrofishing Catch Rates

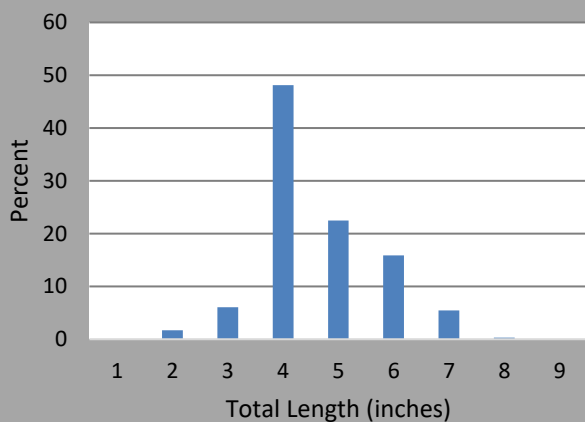


Left: Electrofishing catch rates (fish/mile) for black bass (Largemouth and Spotted Bass), bream, and crappie. These statistics are for Largemouth Bass 8 inches and longer, Spotted Bass 7 inches and longer, and crappie 5 inches and longer. The catch rate for crappie has remained consistent, while the bream catch rate showed an increase each year. Black bass catch rates were much lower in 2019 but rebounded in 2022. It's not uncommon for catch rates to vary over time as populations naturally fluctuate from year to year.

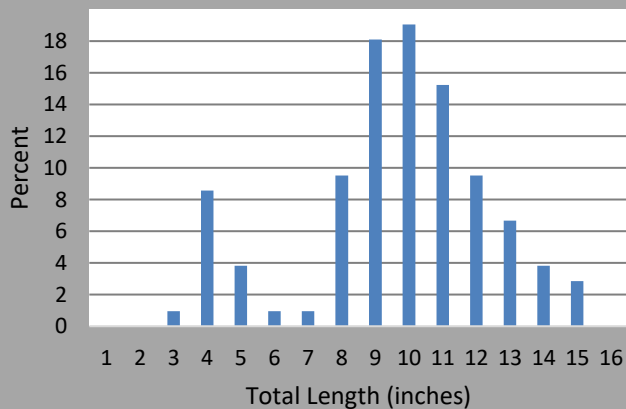
Largemouth Bass



Bluegill



White Crappie



Above: Length distributions for Largemouth Bass, Bluegill Sunfish and White Crappie collected during fall 2022 electrofishing.



Left: Columbus lake boasts a healthy population of trophy Flathead Catfish. Trophy catfish angling has become more and more popular in recent years and catfishing tournaments have grown in popularity. Anglers seeking to add a competitive element to their fishing can find a tournament on Columbus whether they prefer to target catfish, bass, or crappie.

Below and Right: MDWFP aims to increase awareness of invasive species throughout the Tenn-Tom. Invasives of concern include Silver Carp and Bighead Carp (Right) as well as Giant Salvinia (Below). Please report any sightings of these carp and ensure boat trailers are cleaned of all plant material before leaving the lake!



INVASIVE CARPS

Be on the lookout:

- ▶ Low-set eye; large upturned mouth without barbels
- ▶ Silver in color; Bighead Carp have dark blotches on the back and sides
- ▶ Scaleless head; body scales are very small
- ▶ Adults typically weigh 5-50 lbs. and measure 1-3 ft.
- ▶ Silver Carp may jump out of the water when disturbed by boat motors
- ▶ DO NOT RELEASE LIVE BAITFISH

Bighead Carp

Silver Carp

Gizzard Shad (native)
Juvenile

Bighead Carp
Juvenile

Silver Carp
Juvenile

Bighead Carp and Silver Carp have been documented in the Mississippi River and Tennessee River. They pose a risk to native fishes and boaters.

Report any sightings, with exact locations, to:

Mississippi – MDWFP
601-432-2200

Alabama – ADCNR
256-353-2634
asiancarp@dcnr.alabama.gov