Columbus Lake 2026
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 https://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 one 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

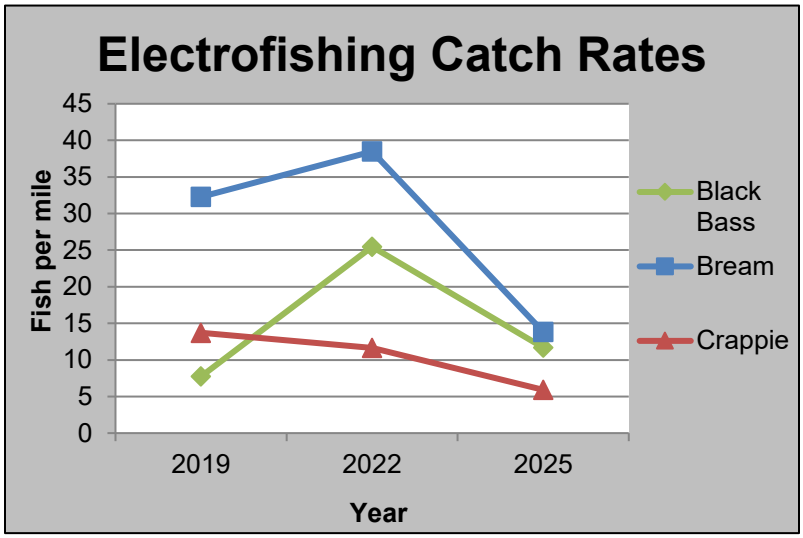
- Target the deep old river bendways with jigs and minnows around any woody cover.
- Fish the edges of vegetation in the lower end of the lake around the gravel pits and Tibbee Creek.

Catfish

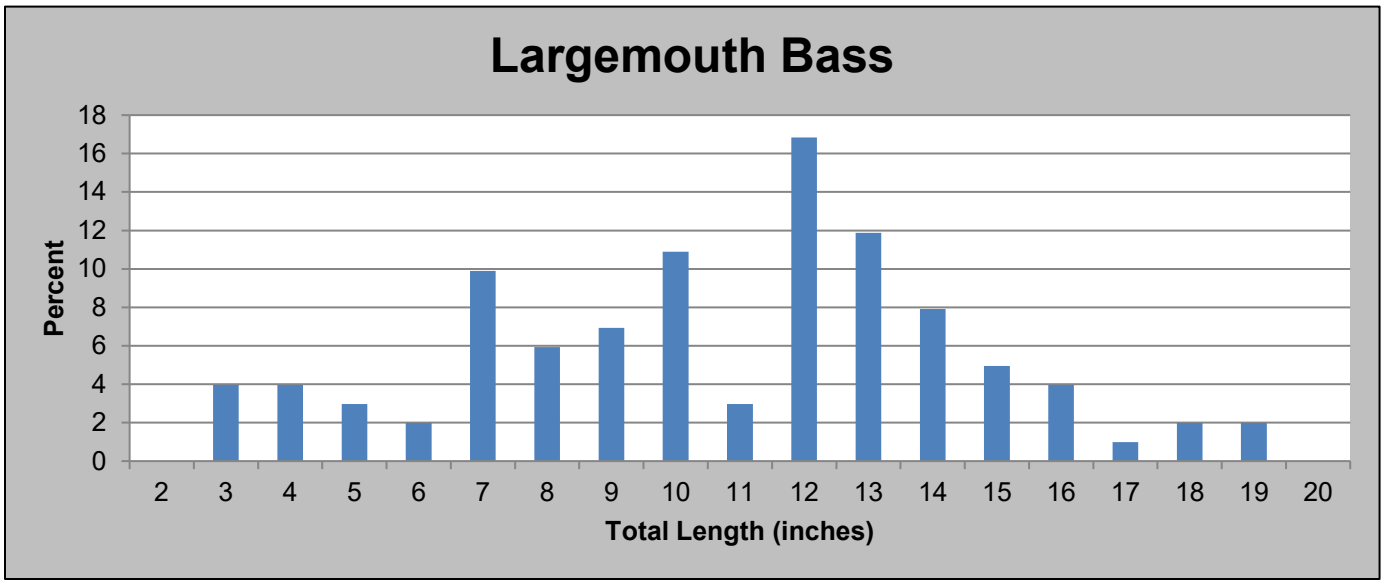
- Fish for cats along main channel drop-offs, mouths of bendways, and deep old river channels with cutbait or whole shad.

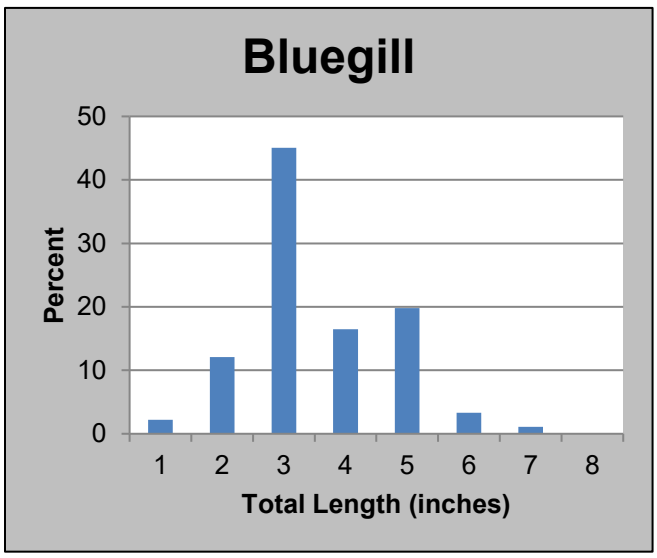
Below: Results from the 2025 fall electrofishing survey on Columbus Lake. Boat electrofishing was completed along 6.2 miles of shoreline at 12 random sites in November.

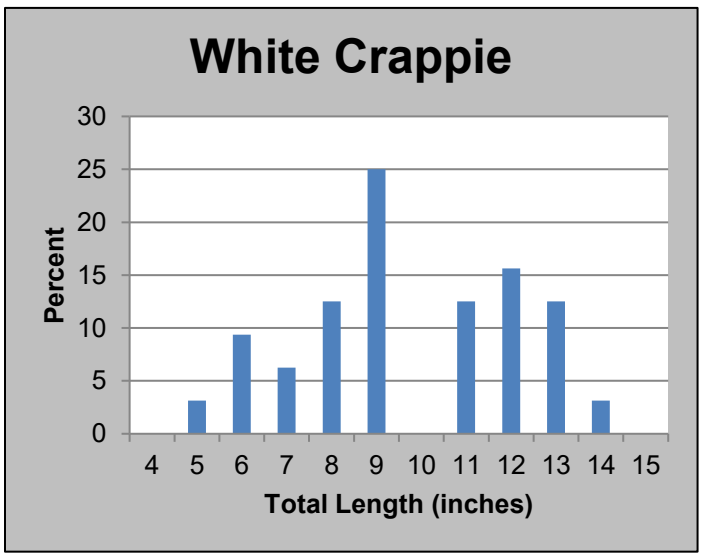
Species	# of Fish Sampled	% of Sample	Average Length (inches)	Minimum Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)	Catch Rate Adult fish (fish/mile)
Spotted Gar	8	2	19.7	10.6	27.5	2
Bowfin	1	<1	26.6	26.6	26.6	-
Gizzard Shad	85	21	6.5	3.5	11.4	4
Common Carp	2	1	-	-	-	-
Emerald Shiner	2	1	2.2	1.2	3.1	-
Pugnose Shiner	2	1	1.8	1.6	2.0	-
Blacktail Shiner	2	1	2.2	1.6	2.8	-
Quillback Carpsucker	2	1	12.1	10.6	13.5	-
Lake Chubsucker	2	1	9.0	8.3	9.8	-
Smallmouth Buffalo	40	10	15.3	12.6	19.6	7
Blacktail Redhorse	11	3	10.5	6.6	12.8	-
Blue Catfish	2	1	19.8	18.1	21.5	<1
Channel Catfish	2	1	16.0	14.6	17.4	<1
Silversides	1	<1	2.0	2.0	2.0	-
White Bass	4	1	12.8	11.7	15.0	1
Warmouth	1	<1	3.5	3.5	3.5	<1
Bluegill	91	22	4.0	1.2	7.1	13
Redear Sunfish	7	2	5.3	3.5	6.6	1
Red Spotted Sunfish	1	<1	3.5	3.5	3.5	<1
Spotted Bass	7	2	9.2	6.3	10.4	1
Largemouth Bass	101	25	11.2	3.2	20.0	11
White Crappie	32	8	10.2	5.7	14.8	5
Black Crappie	4	1	10.5	7.5	11.5	1
Darters	1	<1	1.6	1.6	1.6	-



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 gradually declined, while the bream and black bass catch rate showed an increase in 2022 but dropped off in 2025. Variations in fish populations and/or sampling conditions may both contribute to the fluctuations in catch rates.







Above: Length distributions for Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and White Crappie collected during fall 2025 electrofishing.

Species targeted	Percentage (%)
Bass	66
Crappie	18
Catfish	9
Bream	2
Anything	3
Other	2
Have you been interviewed on Columbus in 2023?	
Yes	9
No	91
How satisfied are you with the fishing at Columbus Lake?	
Very Satisfied	85
Satisfied	7
Neutral	5
Dissatisfied	3
Very Dissatisfied	0
Are you using LiveScope or other forward-facing sonar?	
Yes	21
No	79



Above: Eighty-four percent of the anglers interviewed were targeting either bass or crappie during 2023 creel surveys. The majority of anglers interviewed were satisfied with the fishing at Columbus Lake, though many expressed a desire for improved fish habitat. Twenty-one percent of anglers surveyed were using LiveScope or another brand of forward-facing sonar.

Right: Length of crappie harvested by anglers at Columbus Lake during the spring in 2016, 2019, and 2023. The average length of Crappie harvested in 2016 was 10.8 inches, 11.2 inches in 2019, and 10.6 inches in 2023.

