

Ohrback Lake Bass and Sunfish Survey (#222004)

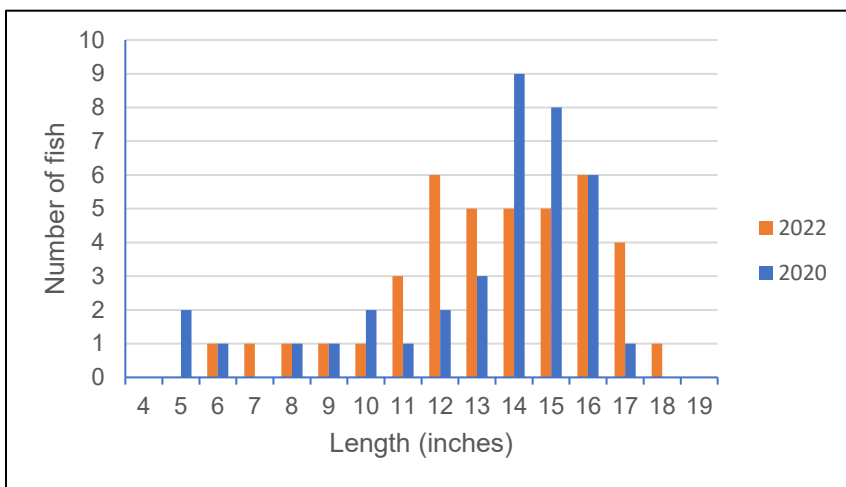
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Ohrback Lake is a 17-acre freshwater pond in Staten Island’s Greenbelt in the Lower Hudson Watershed. Located within Pouch Camp, a property managed by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), the pond is used recreationally for swimming, fishing, and boating. Ohrback’s clear water relative to other NYC freshwater bodies may be attributable to its healthy macrophyte population and lack of common carp. Fishing access is available from various shoreline areas but the location providing easiest access is a pier on the mid-western shoreline. General angling regulations for New York State apply although the BSA require catch-and-release, only. NYC angling regulations do not apply as Ohrback is not under NYC management.

DEC Region 2 Fisheries performs boat electrofishing surveys of Ohrback Lake every two to three years with the last survey in June 2020. These results are from a boat electrofishing survey executed the evening of 17 May 2022, in accordance with the DEC Black Bass and Sunfish Sampling Manual for Lakes and Ponds (Brooking et al., 2018). Survey objectives included determining species abundance and size indices for predators and prey. Approximately 90% of the shoreline was fished in four, ten-minute runs. Approximately 10% of the shoreline was not accessible due to aquatic macrophyte cover. Many stunned fish sank several feet below the surface but were recoverable due to high water clarity. Secchi depth was 6.5 feet, water temperature 69.8°F, pH 7.0 and conductivity 114 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}^3$.



A total of 390 fish of six species were captured with one American eel and zero carp observed. Largemouth bass ranged in length from 5.5 inches to over 17 inches and distribution resembled that of the 2020 survey (Figure 1). Largemouth bass PSD was 70 and RSDp was 30. Bluegill sunfish PSD was 23 and RSDp was 3.5. Relative weights of largemouth bass, black crappie and bluegill were 82, 101 and 98, respectively. Bluegill were the most abundant fish caught and ranged in length from approximately 0.5 to over eight inches (Table 1).

Figure 1. Largemouth bass length frequency distribution from 2022 and 2020 electrofishing surveys of Ohrback Lake.

Capture of bluegill in the quality and preferred size ranges is notable for a NYC pond. It is unknown if we captured larger panfish due to high water clarity or if there are characteristics of Ohrback Lake preferable for these fish. Future surveys using trap nets in Ohrback and other NYC waters may help better characterize fish size distribution. Overall, catch rates and size distributions of fish captured in this survey indicate Ohrback Lake offers good fishing opportunities for anglers targeting largemouth bass, black crappie, sunfish and chain pickerel.



Species	Total catch	Catch rate (fish/hour; standard error)					
		Time (h)	All sizes	Age-1	≥ Stock	≥ Quality	≥ Preferred
Black crappie	17	0.7	25 (14)	3 (3)	19 (8)	12 (2)	4 (3)
Bluegill	313	0.7	460 (67)	259 (43)	166 (37)	38 (12)	6 (2)
Brown bullhead	1	0.7	2 (2)	0	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (2)
Largemouth bass	40	0.7	59 (5)	3 (3)	54 (7)	38 (6)	16 (5)
Pumpkinseed	6	0.7	9 (2)	0	9 (2)	3 (2)	0
Chain pickerel	12	0.7	18 (6)	0	16 (7)	10 (7)	0

Table 1. Catch rates of Ohrback Lake fish species from a 2022 electrofishing survey.

Literature Cited

Brooking, T., Loukmas, J., Jackson, R., VanDeValk, T. 2018. Black bass and sunfish electrofishing protocol for lakes and ponds. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration, F-63-R, Study 2, Job 2-2.3, Albany, New York.