Bureau of Fisheries Technical Brief #tb719049

Papish Pond Centrarchid Survey (Survey #: 719049)

Ian R. Blackburn, Region 7 Fisheries 6/9/2020

Papish Pond, sometimes also referred to as High Lake or Glover Pond, is a shallow (maximum depth 16 feet), densely vegetated 38-acre impoundment located in the Town of Cincinnatus in Cortland County. It has approximately 1.1 miles of shoreline and is publicly accessible as part of the 195-acre Papish Pond Multiple Use Area (MUA). Shore fishing is available around the pond, and there is a small gravel cartop launch (*electric motors only*) with roadside parking available along the northwest shore. The lake is popular amongst locals for its bullhead, largemouth bass and panfish, and is also a popular local icefishing destination as it is one of the first waterbodies in the area to ice up each winter due to its high elevation and small size.

Papish Pond's dam was rehabilitated in 2014. During the construction, the lake was drawn down significantly. No major fish kills were reported during or shortly after the construction. However, there was concern over the effects of a potential decline in dissolved oxygen and increased thermal and crowding stressors on the fishery. While a pre-construction fisheries survey was not conducted on the pond, this gill net and trap net survey was conducted to assess the current status of the warmwater sportfish and panfish populations in the lake utilizing the NYSDEC Black Bass and Sunfish Sampling Manual (Brooking *et al.* 2018).

Two standard inland experimental mesh gillnets and two Oneida style trap nets were deployed on the pond on the afternoon of 7/15/2019, fished overnight, and retrieved and processed on 7/16/2019. Total sample collection included 752 fish of 9 species. Species captured included black crappie, bluegill sunfish, brown bullhead, chain pickerel, creek chubsucker, golden shiner, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish and yellow perch. Creek chubsuckers were the most prevalent forage species in the pond (60% of the total catch). Brown bullhead comprised 11% of the total catch.

Bluegills and black crappies were the most abundant panfish observed (n = 88 and n = 69, respectively). Pumpkinseeds and yellow perch were of good size but were present in relatively low densities. Bluegills and black crappies exhibited good to excellent condition (average relative weights (W_r) of 92.5 and 100.1, respectively). Most bluegills (65%) were of preferred size (≥8 inches, Figure 1). The vast majority of black crappies observed (97%) were at or above preferred size (≥8 inches), but crappies of legal length (≥9 inches) comprised a much smaller proportion of the sample (30%), likely indicative of intense harvest pressure on this small waterbody for this species.

Gamefish (largemouth bass and chain pickerel) were present (n = 17 and n = 5, respectively) but notably lacking in the catch. Largemouth bass comprised 2.3% of the total survey catch and ranged from 7.2 – 12.7 inches. Chain pickerel comprised 0.6% of the total survey catch and ranged from 15.1 – 23.5 inches. Future sampling efforts should incorporate boat electrofishing as an additional sampling method. Many of these two species were likely inhabiting the more densely vegetated areas of the pond where netting efforts could not be effectively employed and were underrepresented in this sample.

It currently appears that Papish Pond either did not experience any profound detrimental effects on the recreational fishery due to drawdown and dam rehabilitation in 2014, or at a minimum has since recovered from any such ill effects. The panfishing on the pond should, barring any extreme exploitation or other unforeseen problems, be very good over the next few years. Future surveys will focus on further assessment of the gamefish (bass and pickerel) populations in the lake as well as panfish abundance.

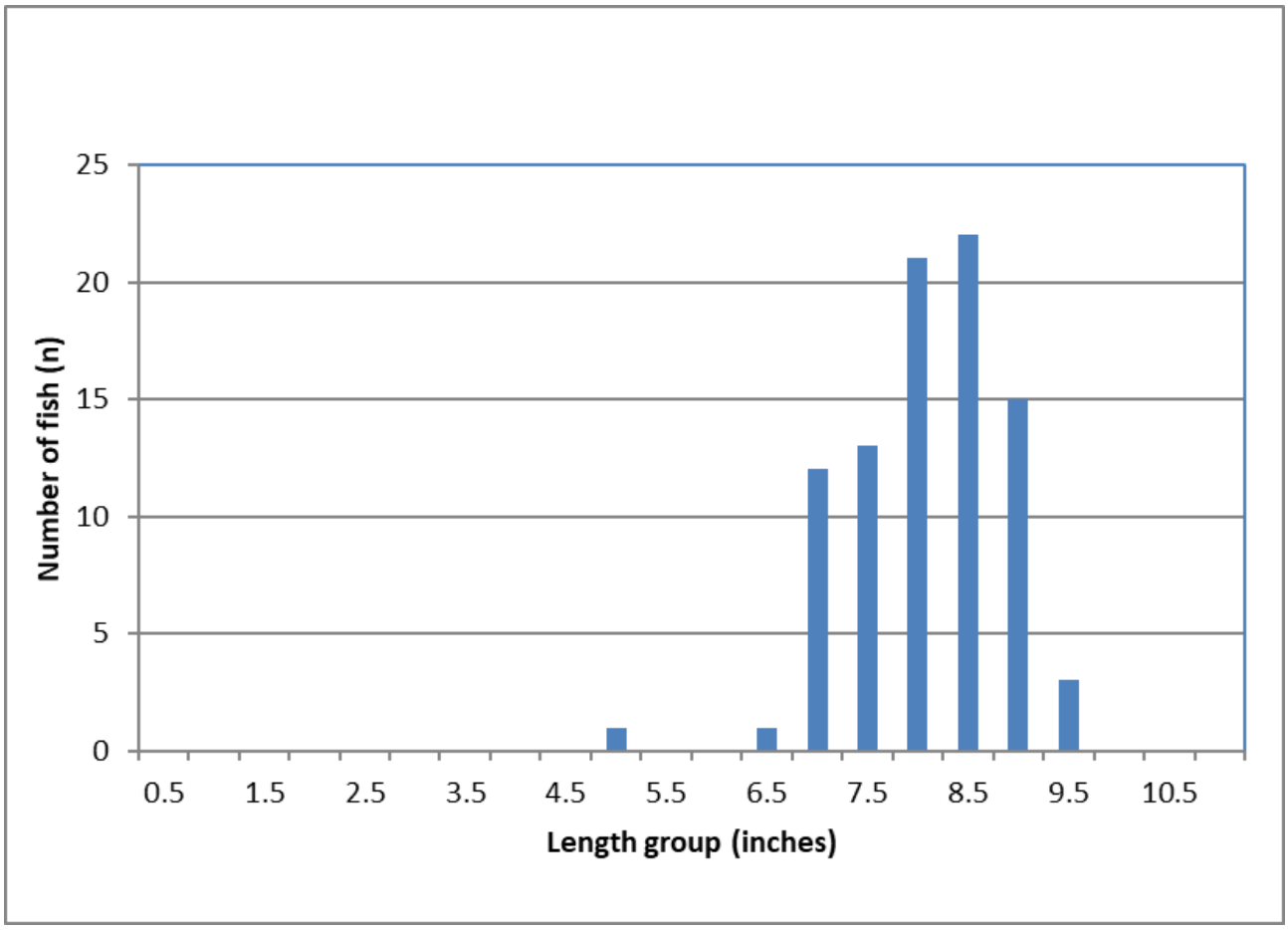

Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of bluegills in Papish Pond, 7/16/2019.

Literature Cited:

Brooking, T., Loukmas, J., Jackson, R. and T. VanDevalk. 2018. Black bass and sunfish sampling manual 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.