



# RAYSTOWN LAKE

*by Richard Tate*

**W**ith 8,300 surface acres, 118 miles of shore line, and a length of 28 miles, Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, is Pennsylvania's largest inland lake. Construction of the present dam began in 1972 and was completed in 1974. The lake and surrounding area, managed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, provides a myriad of activities for outdoor enthusiasts including camping, biking, and walking. During the summer, recreational boating is one of the lake's most enjoyable activities. Anglers flock to the lake for fishing.

My first experience on Raystown Lake was more than 30 years ago. My son, Bob, had developed an interest in fishing for bass, and I guided him to some exciting outings along area streams. The late Walt Rosser, Blair County's Waterways Conservation Officer at the time, discovered this interest and invited Bob and me on a summer outing. I was amazed by Rosser's ability to navigate the lake in his bass boat. He motored us to

various spots, and switched to a small electric motor to explore the coves and ledges for bass. Over 3 hours, both my son and Rosser caught and released several nice bass. Bob landed a fine Walleye, which was unusual for that time of year.

Anglers target various species of gamefish at Raystown Lake including Lake Trout, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass, and Walleyes.

Stan Grove, Blair County, is a longtime Raystown Lake angler. Grove has won numerous bass fishing tournaments and awards, including the prestigious Blair County Bassmaster of the Year Award. Grove noted that anglers can successfully target fish while fishing from the shore at Raystown Lake, but it is advantageous to fish the lake from a boat. Some spots on the lake can be fished from small boats, but having a bass boat is an advantage. Grove fishes from an 18-foot Skeeter. To get from place to place on Raystown Lake, 175 horsepower motors are useful. After arriving at a desired fishing spot, electric motors from 12- to 36-volts help fish along the shoreline. Having a depth finder is helpful in locating fish, as is a temperature



photo-Janelle Howard

gauge. Grove told me that some anglers rely on pH meters to help locate fish.

Striped Bass are in the lake, though fishing for them near the surface is effective mainly in the spring and fall.

Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass follow baitfish. The location of baitfish often depends on the temperature of the water. In hot weather, Smallmouth Bass often move to the channels, while Largemouth Bass continue to feed in shallower portions of the lake. Fall often provides better fishing, because there is less boat traffic on the lake.

Use relatively stiff 6- or 7-foot spinning or baitcasting rods when fishing for Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass. Eight-pound-test line is effective for fishing with most lures and baits. If targeting Striped Bass, a stiffer rod with 20-pound-test line or heavier is necessary.

Rubber worms, speed baits, crankbaits, and spinners are useful. Topwater lures may provide exciting action in shallower spots. Grove normally has multiple outfits rigged for an outing and often uses two or three different options around one piece of structure.

Raystown Lake is a popular spot for outdoor enthusiasts, especially anglers. ☐



photo-Richard Tate

Though fishing from a boat is best, fish can be caught from the shore at Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County.

## Boat Launches

- Aitch
- James Creek
- Seven Points Marina—main location for recreational boats
- Shy Beaver
- Snyder's Run
- Tatman Run
- Weaver Falls

## Fishing Guides

Various fishing guides and charter services are available at Raystown Lake. To find these services, search "Raystown Lake Fishing Guides" online.