

Lower Burrell Park Pond

Westmoreland County

May 2018 Trap Net, Hoop Net, and Night Electrofishing Survey/May 2019 Trap Net and Hoop Net Survey

Lower Burrell Park Pond (also known as Holtzhauer Lake) is a 4-acre impoundment located in northwestern Westmoreland County that is owned by the city of Lower Burrell. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) manages the lake for recreational fishing under Catch and Release Regulations. Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, crappie, and Channel Catfish are the primary species anglers target at this impoundment.

Biologists from the Area 8 Fisheries Management Office in Somerset conducted a survey on Lower Burrell Park Pond in May 2018 and May 2019. The primary purpose of the survey was to evaluate the success of yearling vs fingerling stocking of Channel Catfish through night electrofishing, trap netting, and hoop netting. The PFBC has been stocking fingerling Channel Catfish in Lower Burrell Park Pond for many years and previous electrofishing surveys have only captured a few fish. Beginning in 2014 the PFBC began stocking equal numbers of yearling (8-10") and fingerling catfish (2-3") in the lake. To identify the size at which each lot of fish was stocked as well as the year, all lots of catfish stocked received a unique fin clip. For example, all yearling fish stocked in 2014 received an adipose fin clip. Follow-up assessments would allow biologists to measure the relative density and thus relative survival of each size or lot of stocked catfish.

Night electrofishing was performed to assess the density of the Largemouth Bass population as well as to sample Channel Catfish. A total of 23 Largemouth Bass were captured in 2018 ranging from 8 – 18 inches (Table 1). Total catch of Largemouth Bass was lower than in the previous surveys and may have been due to mediocre water clarity at the time of survey. Size distribution in 2018 was similar to previous years, ranging from 8 – 14 inches with a few larger individuals over 15 inches.

Length (inches)	2002	2011	2018
2	1	0	0
3	2	1	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	1	0	0
7	2	5	0
8	9	8	4
9	7	3	3
10	5	1	6
11	4	5	3
12	3	1	2
13	4	0	2
14	3	1	1
15	0	1	0
16	1	0	1
17	0	3	0
18	1	0	1
Total	43	29	23

Night electrofishing, trap netting, and hoop netting combined yielded a total of 94 Channel Catfish at Lower Burrell Park Pond in 2018. Channel Catfish sampled ranged from 6 – 26 inches with sizes evenly distributed throughout that range. Of the 94 fish captured, 26 were determined to have been fin clipped and 23 of those were stocked as yearlings. The remaining fish either were stocked as fingerlings or yearlings prior to 2014 or alternatively, were introduced by local anglers. Anglers have an excellent chance to catch some nice catfish at Lower Burrell Park Pond and we witnessed numerous anglers fishing for and catching catfish during our survey.

Other fish captured during the trap net portion of the survey at Lower Burrell Park Pond in 2018 included panfish such as Black Crappie, White Crappie, and Bluegill (Table 2). All three species were abundant but contained poor size structure (i.e. stunted due to overabundance).

Table 2. Fish species captured from trap netting at Lower Burrell Park Pond during May 2018.

Fish Species	Number Collected	Size Range (inches)	Additional Comments
Black Crappie	290	5 – 8 inches	None over 9 inches
White Crappie	283	6 – 16 inches	1% over 9 inches
Bluegill	183	3 – 6 inches	None over 7 inches
Channel Catfish*	94	6 - 26 inches	
Flathead Catfish	2	21 – 39 inches	
Freshwater Drum	5	18 – 25 inches	
Common Carp	1	Not Measured	

*Channel Catfish numbers are from trap nets, hoop nets, and night electrofishing

Trap netting and hoop netting in 2019 yielded a total of 79 Channel Catfish with sizes ranging from 9 – 27 inches. As in 2018, fish were evenly distributed throughout the range. Of the 79 Channel Catfish captured, 29 fish were marked with 28 of those fish stocked as yearlings. Results from the two years combined yielded a total catch of 55 marked fish, with 51 of those fish stocked as yearlings. Future stockings of Channel Catfish at Lower Burrell Park Pond will likely consist of only yearling fish, as their survival far exceeds that of fingerlings.

Other fish captured in abundance in trap nets in 2019 included Black Crappie, White Crappie, and Bluegill (Table 3). As in 2018, all three species were abundant but exhibited poor size structure. We retained scales from the panfish species to interpret age and measure growth rate to determine if changes are necessary in management of panfish in this small impoundment.

Table 3. Fish species captured from trap netting at Lower Burrell Park Pond during May 2019.

Fish Species	Number Collected	Size Range (inches)	Additional Comments
Black Crappie	276	3 – 8 inches	None over 9 inches
White Crappie	337	6 – 8 inches	None over 9 inches
Bluegill	88	2 – 6 inches	None over 7 inches
Channel Catfish*	79	9 - 27 inches	
Freshwater Drum	3	17 inches	
Golden Shiner	2	Not Measured	

*Channel Catfish numbers are from trap nets and hoop nets