



Kyle Lake, Jefferson County

Reclaimed Lake Evaluation



Fisheries Management Area 2 setting up for our night-time boat electrofishing survey on the evening of May 12th.

Introduction

Kyle Lake is a 165-acre reservoir located in Washington Township, Jefferson County. The lake is owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) for public fishing and boating. Boating is restricted to unpowered boats and boats with electric motors only. It can be accessed by one boat launch along Kyle Run Road after taking Exit 97 off Interstate 80 and traveling west on Route 830.

Kyle Lake was drained in 2016 for repairs to the dam which included reconstruction of a second spillway, maintenance for the original spillway, and armoring the embankment ([Blog post by Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau highlighting these 2016 dam repairs to Kyle Lake](#)). Annual stocking efforts began in 2020 (Table 1) and Catch-and-Release regulations were placed on all species at Kyle Lake to allow the fish populations to recover following the refill.

Personnel from Fisheries Management Area 2 completed a comprehensive survey of Kyle Lake in May of 2025. The objective of these surveys was to monitor the recovery status of all stocked gamefish like Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, Bluegill, and others following the refilling of the lake in 2020.

Table 1: Warm water/ cool water species stockings at Kyle Lake since 2020.

Year	Species	Life Stage	Total Stocked
2025	Bluegill	Fingerling	165,000
2025	Black Crappie	Fingerling	4,100
2024	Bluegill	Fingerling	16,500
2024	Black Crappie	Fingerling	4,100
2023	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	687
2023	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	8,200
2022	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	8,200
2022	Fathead Minnow	Adult	16,500
2022	Bluegill	Fingerling	16,500
2021	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	8,200
2021	Bluegill	Fingerling	16,500
2020	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	5,541
2020	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	11,000
2020	Fathead Minnow	Adult	5,500

Methods

Pennsylvania-style trap nets (pictured below) were deployed during the week of May 5, 2025 to assess panfish and forage fish populations. Twelve overnight sets of Pennsylvania-style trap nets totaling 284.42 hours of effort were completed. Night-time boat electrofishing surveys were conducted to evaluate the Largemouth Bass population the week of May 12, 2025. Electrofishing is used to assess black bass as they do not recruit well to trap nets like the other species that were being evaluated. The electrofishing survey consisted of four shoreline runs totaling 1.58 hours of effort; covering a representative portion of the lake. Relative abundance, or catch rate, of fish collected were expressed as catch-per-unit of effort (CPUE); or number of targeted-fish collected per unit of time gear was deployed.

Results

A total of 1,112 fish were captured representing nine species during trap net surveys (Table 2).

Table 2. Species, number caught, and length range for the 2025 trap net and boat electrofishing surveys on Kyle Lake.

Species	Number	Length (in.)
White Sucker	99	Not measured
Golden Shiner	218	Not measured
Brown Bullhead	219	9 - 15
Yellow Bullhead	15	6 - 12
Bluegill	497	2 - 7
Black Crappie	12	7 - 11
Green Sunfish	1	6
Largemouth Bass	324	3 - 18
Pumpkinseed	39	4 - 8
Yellow Perch	12	4 - 11



A Pennsylvania-style trap net after being deployed in Kyle Lake.

Panfish, including Brown and Yellow bullheads, comprised 71% of the total trap net catch at 795 individuals (Table 2). The predominate panfish captured were Bluegills, followed by Brown Bullheads, and Pumpkinseeds. Black Crappies, Yellow Perch, Yellow Bullheads, and Green Sunfish were also present but at lower abundance. The majority of Bluegills (57%) captured in our nets were of quality length (≥ 6 inches). Black Crappie did not recruit well following refill and only accounted for 2% of total panfish captured. Of the Black Crappies captured, 42% achieved quality size (8-11 inches) Yellow Perch comprised only 2% of panfish captured, and 42% of those were eight inches or greater in length. Pumpkinseeds outperformed the prior two species, making up 5% of panfish captured with 18% reaching six inches or greater in length (Table 2). Only one Green Sunfish was captured in the nets. Brown Bullheads and Yellow Bullheads showed good numbers and comprised 21% of our total trap net catch. Brown Bullheads were the most common of the two species with the largest individual exceeding 15 inches in length (Table 2). Yellow Bullheads were far less abundant and the largest measured 12 inches in length. Bullhead populations appear to be healthy and should provide good recreational fishing for the public.



A few Bluegills (~7in) and an 11-inch Black Crappie captured in our trap nets.



Fisheries Biologist Aide Isaak Jones with a Brown Bullhead captured in the trap nets.

A total of 320 Largemouth Bass were netted, ranging in size from 3 to 18 inches in length. This translates to an electrofishing catch rate of 202.1 fish per hour (Figures 1 & 2). Additionally, the catch rate of Largemouth Bass ≥ 12 inches was 75.2 fish per hour; this greatly exceeded the 2022 and 2024 rates of 40.2 and 27.0 fish per hour, respectively. Lastly, the catch rate of Largemouth Bass ≥ 15 inches was the highest on record with a catch rate of 29.0 fish/hr.

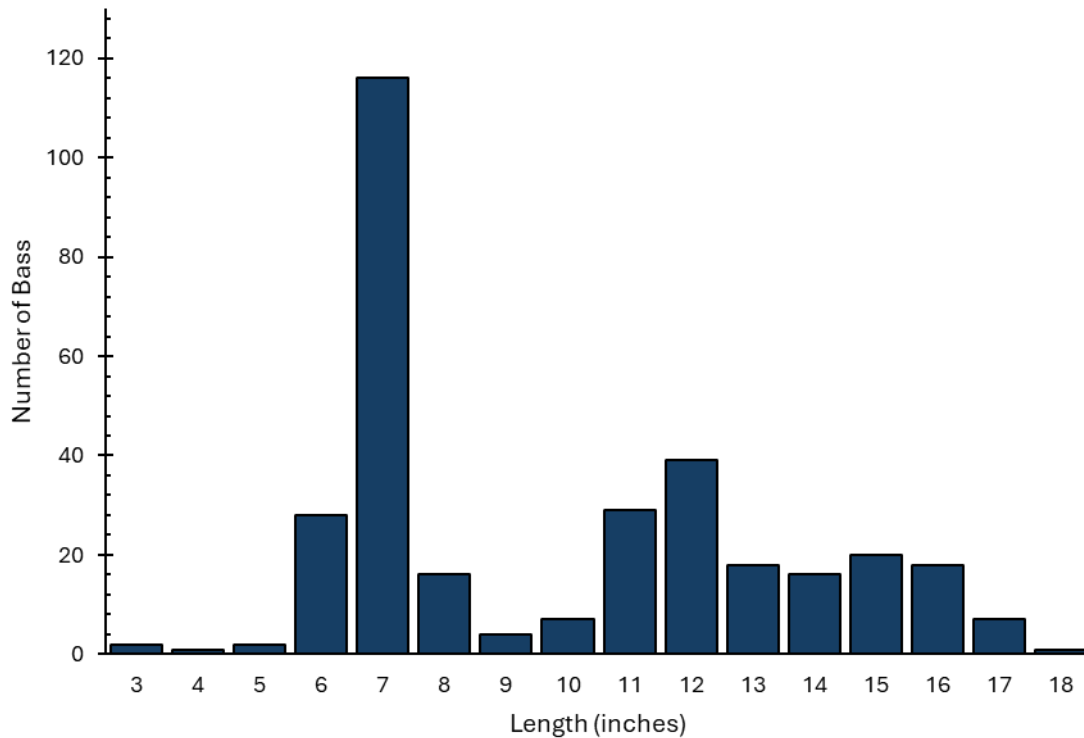


Figure 1. *Largemouth Bass size distribution from Kyle Lake during spring 2025.*

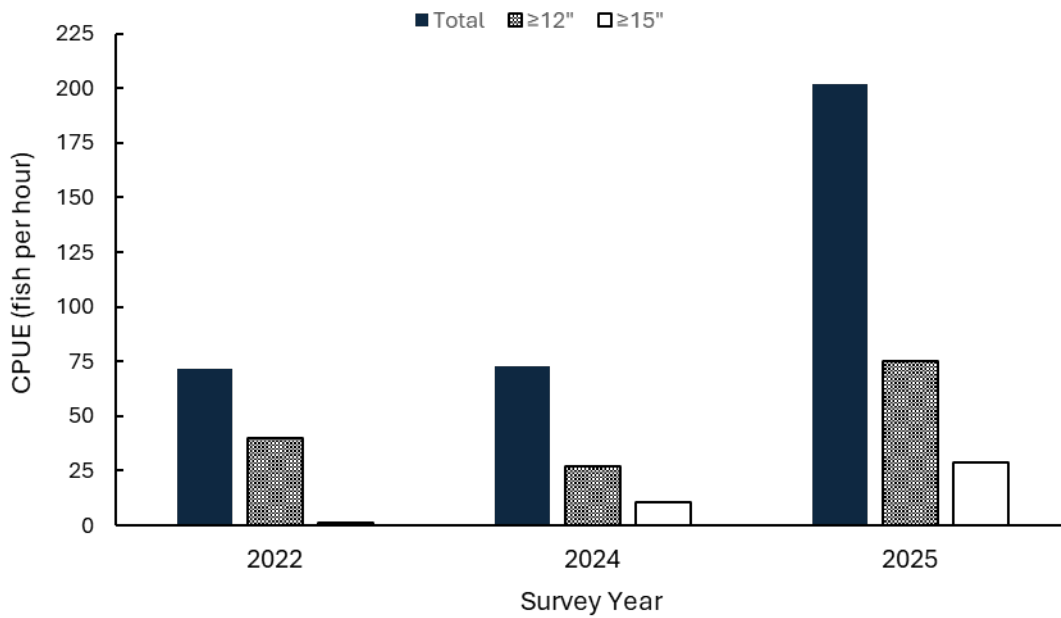


Figure 2. Largemouth Bass night-time boat electrofishing catch per unit effort in Kyle Lake from 2022-2025.



Fisheries Biologists Lucas Hartman (left) and Garrett Herigan (right) with a couple quality Largemouth Bass during night-time boat electrofishing.

Discussion

Kyle Lake is experiencing the “New Lake Effect” that is common in recently refilled reservoirs supported by stocking. Anglers interested in great fishing opportunities with abundant numbers and quality-sized fish should consider a trip to Kyle Lake. Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and bullhead populations are doing exceptionally well and should provide multiple worthy targets for anglers.

Starting January 1, 2026, Kyle Lake will be removed from the Catch & Release Lakes program and will be managed under Big Bass Program regulations for Largemouth Bass and Panfish Enhancement Program regulations for Bluegill and Black Crappie. Anglers are encouraged to consult the Pennsylvania Fishing Summary Book for details regarding these harvest regulation programs. Good Luck!

Fisheries Management Area 2