

# Fisheries Research Summary

Division of Inland Fisheries

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission



## Assessment of the Crappie Population in Lake Rhodhiss

Lake Rhodhiss is an impoundment of the Catawba River located in Burke and Caldwell counties. Anglers on Lake Rhodhiss enjoy fishing for a variety of resident sport fishes; largemouth bass, striped bass, sunfish and crappie are the most sought after species

In 2004, biologists with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission began a three-year effort to determine the catch rate, age, growth rate and body condition of crappies in Lake Rhodhiss. To obtain this information staff collected crappies by using trap nets during the late fall period throughout the entire reservoir.

Biologists collected crappies up to age 6 during the survey, but the majority of the fish collected (64.4 percent) were individuals hatched in 2001 (the 2001 year class). Crappies ranged in size from 4.9 to 14.4 inches, with an average size of 8.5 inches (Figure 1), and growth of crappies in Lake Rhodhiss is best described as average until age 2 and low afterward. In addition, the weights of fish collected indicated that crappies were in moderate condition compared to crappie populations nationwide.

The crappie population in Lake Rhodhiss is primarily composed of fishes from the 2001 year class. In addition, crappies in the reservoir are characterized by slow growth and moderate condition. Crappie anglers should anticipate the persisting members of the 2001 year class to increase in size during the immediate future, but ultimately, these larger fishes will be replaced by smaller members of younger year classes that will mature into the fishery. The Commission will continue to evaluate the crappie population in Lake Rhodhiss to maintain and improve the quality of crappie fishing.

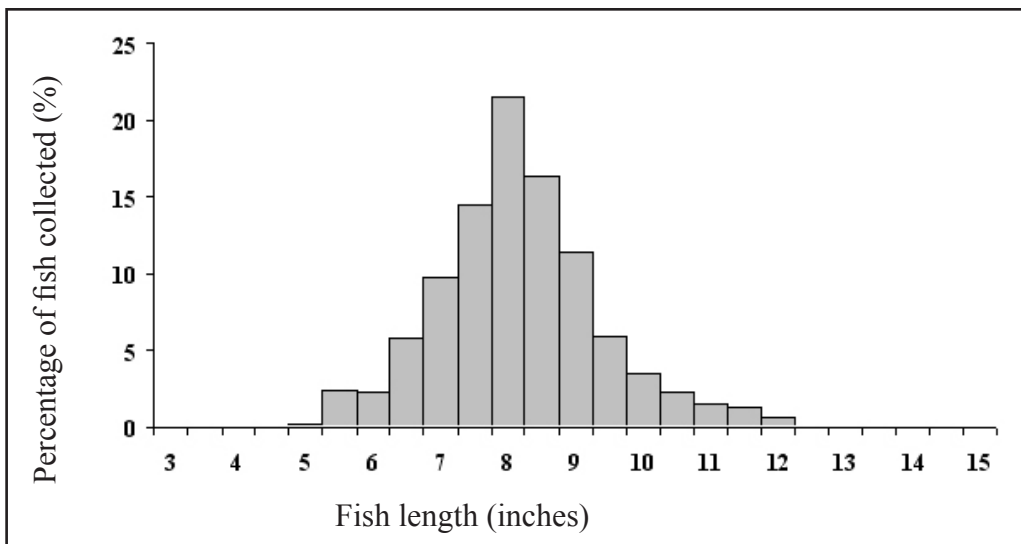
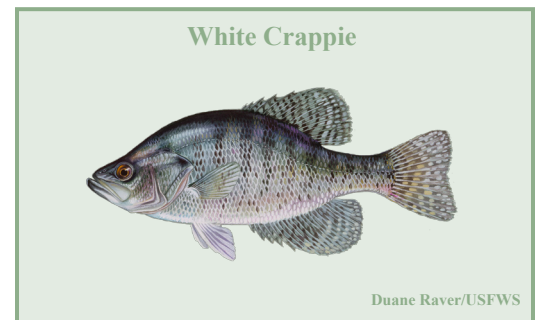


FIGURE 1—Length-frequency distribution of all crappies collected during the 2004–2006 sampling seasons on Lake Rhodhiss, North Carolina. Fish are grouped by 0.5-in size class intervals.

