



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Wildlife Resources

David L. Bulova
*Secretary of Natural
and Historic Resources*

Ryan J. Brown
Executive Director

27-March-2026

Ms. Pam Baughman
General Manager
Louisa County Water Authority
23 Loudin Lane
Louisa, VA 23093

Dear Ms. Baughman:

I would like to update you on our recent fisheries management activities for Northeast Creek Reservoir. The fish community of the lake was surveyed by DWR in 2025; thirteen different species of fish were collected during the surveys. All species of fish collected were common to central Virginia and expected in the reservoir. The most popular fish for anglers at the reservoir is Largemouth Bass and results from this survey indicate that the bass population is in decent shape. There is slight stockpiling of bass in the 7–13-inch range, which is likely a function of slow growth due to low lake productivity. The lake contains a substantial amount of Watershield lily pads that grow throughout the summer and use nutrients that could go into food production (planktonic algae) for fish. A quick visual estimate indicated that up to 70 acres of the lake has some form of vegetation growth during the warmer months. The vegetative cover is around 41% which is well above the 30% threshold that is desired for fisheries production and recreational uses. Even with the vegetation issues, the electrofishing catch rate for bass was good and the population had decent portions of larger fish with bass up to 22 inches collected.

The reservoir contains numerous species of panfish including Bluegill, Redear, Black Crappie, and White Perch. The populations for these species were marginal with lower than desired catch rates and populations dominated by individuals smaller than the preferred size of anglers. The only exception was the catch rates for White Perch during the collections, which were good. The low catches and small sizes of panfish were likely caused by the same vegetation issues stated above.

DWR stocks Channel Catfish annually, but few were observed in our surveys, which is not uncommon. Our sampling gears are not effective for collecting catfish. Statewide fishing surveys and angler reports indicate that the stocked Channel Catfish fisheries are successful in small impoundments and very popular with Virginia anglers. Unfortunately, DWR is suspending the stocked Channel Catfish program for 2026 due to budgetary issues. We are hopeful to resolve the issue and continue the program soon. If facility owners and/or cooperators want to continue the popular program by providing funding during DWR's suspension, we approve and will be happy to help facilitate finding fish vendors and coordinate stockings.

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Based on the surveys, there are no regulatory or management actions that I recommend. In a fishing/recreational impoundment, I would strongly suggest creating a vegetation management plan and actions to reduce the vegetation growth. In the case of Northeast Creek, vegetation reduction might affect the Authority's operations to supply drinking water by introducing additional herbicides and increasing algae production. For this reason, I am not recommending the action unless the Authority wants to undergo the effort to benefit the fisheries and boaters. Let me know if I can be of assistance in any way with this matter

On our 2025 visits, I noticed that the lake regulation sign at the landing is deteriorated and some regulations were out of date or not included. I recommend updating or replacing the sign at the boat landing. If I can be of service to help or if you need a copy of our logo, please let me know. The current regulations pertaining to the lake include:

Largemouth Bass: 5 per day, no minimum length limit,
Bluegill (Bream) and other Sunfish: 50 per day in the aggregate (combined), no minimum length limit,
Crappie (Black and White): 25 per day in the aggregate (combined), no minimum length limit,
Channel Catfish: 5 per day, 18-inch minimum length limit,
Chain Pickerel: 5 per day, no minimum length limit,
Perch (Yellow and White): No daily limit and no length limit.

I am attaching our 2026 fishing report for Northeast Creek for your viewing. The report includes more detailed findings from our surveys and what anglers can expect to catch from the reservoir. Please contact me if you have questions or want to discuss the findings and recommendations. I can be reached by email or phone at (804) 305-8940. Thank you for all your cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Johnathan Harris

Johnathan Harris
Fisheries Biologist

Enclosure

Cc: Steve Reeser – Regional Fisheries Manager, VDWR
Christian Goodwin – County Administrator, Louisa County



Northeast Creek Reservoir 2026



NOTE TO ANGLERS: THE CHANNEL CATFISH STOCKING PROGRAM HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO FUNDING LIMITATIONS. NO CHANNEL CATFISH STOCKINGS AT THE LAKE ARE PLANNED FOR 2026 AND ANGLERS MAY EXPERIENCE DECREASE CATFISH CATCHES IN FUTURE YEARS. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE FUNDING ISSUES WILL BE RESOLVED, THE PROGRAM CAN BE RESTORED, AND THAT THIS WILL BE A TEMPORARY INCONVENIENCE FOR CATFISH ANGLERS.

Located in Louisa County, Northeast Creek Reservoir is a 170-acre water supply reservoir that is administered by the Louisa County Water Authority. The reservoir was constructed in 1983, open to fishing in 1987, and currently contains self-sustaining populations of Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Black Crappie, and Chain Pickerel. To provide additional angling opportunities, the reservoir is annually stocked with Channel Catfish. In the spring of 2025, the fish community of Northeast Creek Reservoir was sampled by boat electrofishing and trapnet gear. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in Northeast Creek.

Northeast Creek Reservoir contains a diverse fish community for a small impoundment with a combined total of thirteen fish species collected in the 2025 surveys (Table 1). Largemouth Bass, Redear, and Bluegill were the most abundant species collected in the electrofishing survey, while White Perch, Creek Chubsuckers, and Redear were the most abundant in the trapnets (Table 1). The Largemouth Bass electrofishing catch rate (88 fish/hour) was the highest observed in recent times and more than double the historical average for the lake (42 fish/hour). The higher catch rate was likely due to sampling variability since the bass catch has been fairly stable since 2008. The lake generally produces low bass catch rates for the area due to low lake productivity. The reservoir has a small watershed supplying nutrients to the lake, and the reservoir has a large presence of aquatic vegetation that utilize nutrients that would be available to prey fish.

Largemouth Bass in Northeast Creek exhibit slow growth due to the limited lake productivity and the large amounts of Watershield lily pads in the lake. Excessive vegetation can cause issues like reduction in bass spawning habitat, difficulty for bass to find prey, and nutrient reduction which limit beneficial algae growth for fish. Previous surveys have shown that, on average, bass in Northeast Creek do not reach 12 inches until age-5 and do not reach 16 inches until after age-7. Further evidence of low productivity is stockpiling of bass in the 7-to-13-inch range (Figure 1). Additionally, these 7-to-13-inch bass appear to be in poor condition with the average relative weight for adult fish below 87. Relative weight is a measure of fitness or plumpness, and in Central Virginia, ideal relative weights should range between 90 and 100. Overcrowding in the smaller size classes combined with poor lake productivity leads to slow bass growth and less potential for the lake to produce quality bass. Angler harvest of small bass (< 13 inches) within the statewide 5 bass per day creel limit is encouraged to alleviate overcrowding and increase bass growth rates. Even with overcrowding, the lake still contained acceptable numbers of larger bass (Figure 1), with nearly 20% of the adult bass collected

measuring larger than 15 inches. The largest bass collected in the 2025 survey measured 22 inches and weighed 5.3 pounds. Anglers fishing for bass should concentrate around the edge of the water shield lily pads and in the areas with standing timber.

Crappie catch rates were low for a central Virginia impoundment but similar to values observed in previous surveys on the lake. All crappie collected were Black Crappie. Northeast Creek supports an average crappie fishery with the majority of crappie collected in the 8-to-10-inch range (Figure 2). Crappie growth is slow and seems to level off at age-6 and around 10 inches (Figure 3). The crappie population exhibits moderate annual survival (around 60%) but could still benefit from angler harvest due to the limited productivity in the lake. Anglers should harvest crappie caught < 9 inches within the statewide creel limit. A reduction in the number of smaller crappie will increase growth of the remaining fish and create a better crappie fishery.

Northeast Creek Reservoir offers a marginal panfish fishery (mainly Bluegill and Redear sunfish). Bluegill are not extremely abundant but there are better numbers of Redear available. The majority of sunfish collected were between 6 and 9 inches (Figure 4). Panfish populations in Northeast Creek are limited by the low lake productive and excessive growth of vegetation in the lake. Anglers searching for panfish should concentrate efforts around the sandy flats and brush piles in the spring and the deeper timber structure during the summer. A good area to start is the brush piles in the eastern arm of the reservoir or the sandy banks on the western shore, just above the boat launch.

Channel Catfish and Chain Pickerel offer anglers a different variety of fishing experiences in the reservoir. Channel Catfish are stocked annually, but only twenty were captured in surveys. The low numbers of catfish in the catch are due to our sampling gear rather than a lack of fish. Channel catfish ranged in size from 11 to 19 inches (average size of 15 inches). Very few pickerel were collected in the 2025 survey (Table 1), but the abundance of vegetation offers these fish plenty of suitable habitat and numerous places to hide. Fishing around the vegetation beds with rooster-tailed spinner or beetle-spin baits should give anglers a chance to catch a pickerel.

Anglers looking for a scenic experience with little interference from other anglers should visit Northeast Creek Reservoir. There is ample parking and a gravel ramp that accommodates most boats. The entrance to the lake is an unmarked gravel road directly off Route 33 (approximately 5 miles east of Louisa). The reservoir is open 0.5 hour before sunrise till 0.5 hour after sunset, and gas-powered motors are prohibited. If you plan to spend a day on the lake, be aware that a fishing permit, issued by Louisa County Water Authority, is required to fish the lake. Permits are \$2.00 daily, \$10.00 annual, \$8.00 for senior citizens (calendar year), and can be obtained by contacting The Water Authority (540.967.1122).

For more information on Northeast Creek Reservoir, please contact:

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Table 1. Species account and catch rates for fish collected throughout Northeast Creek Reservoir in 2025.

Species	Electrofishing			Trapnets		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/net-night)	Percentage of Catch
American Eel	1	1	1	None Collected		
Black Crappie	10	10	4	40	1.0	11
Bluegill	42	43	19	44	1.1	12
Brown Bullhead	None Collected			2	0.1	1
Channel Catfish	2	2	1	18	0.5	5
Creek Chubsucker	1	1	1	69	1.8	19
Chain Pickerel	5	5	2	3	0.1	1
Golden Shiner	5	5	2	4	0.1	1
Largemouth Bass	85	88	38	5	0.1	1
Redear Sunfish	66	68	30	63	1.6	17
Warmouth	6	6	3	10	0.3	3
White Perch	1	1	1	99	2.5	27
Yellow Bullhead	None Collected			8	0.2	2

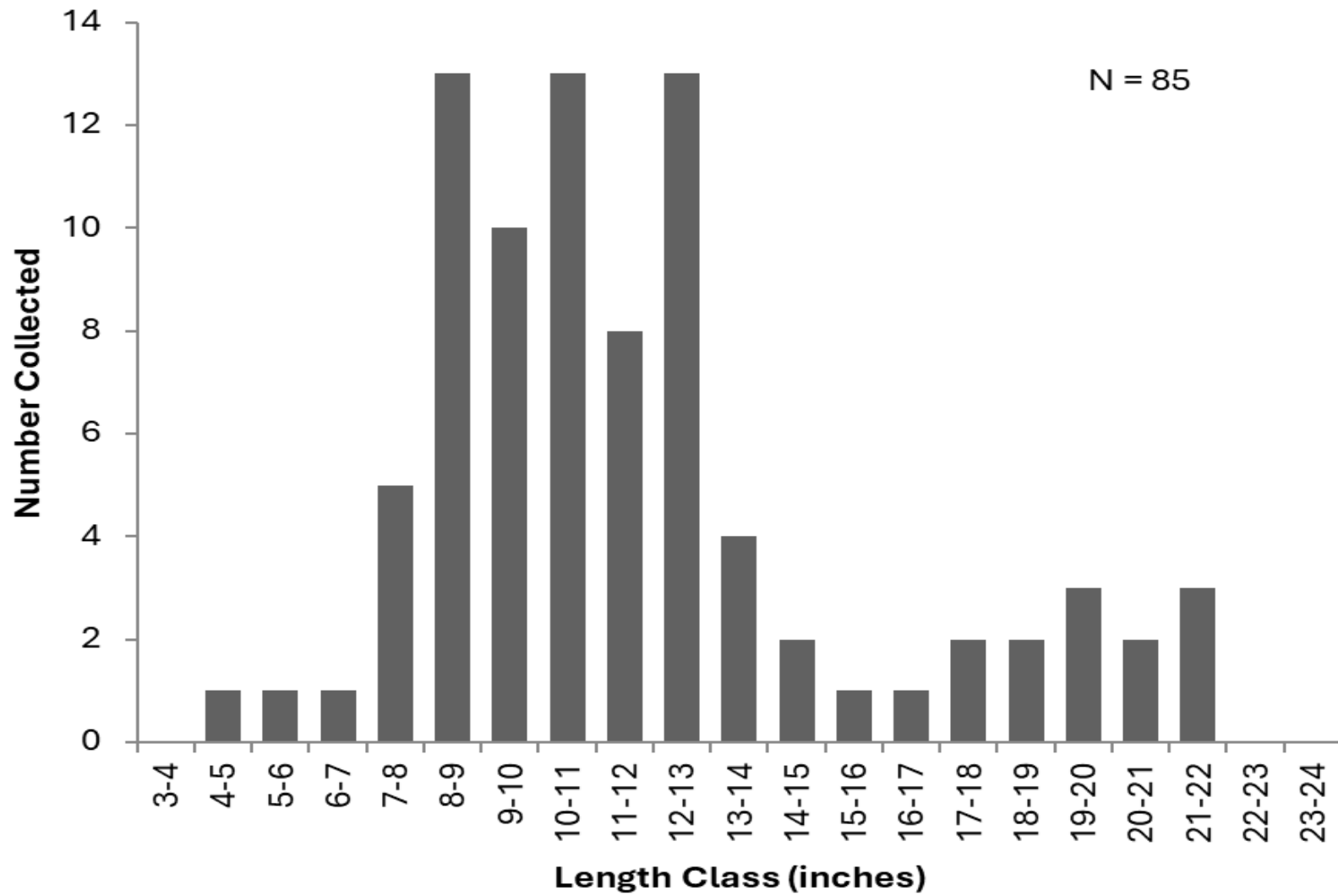


Figure 1. Length distribution of Largemouth Bass collected throughout Northeast Creek Reservoir in 2025.

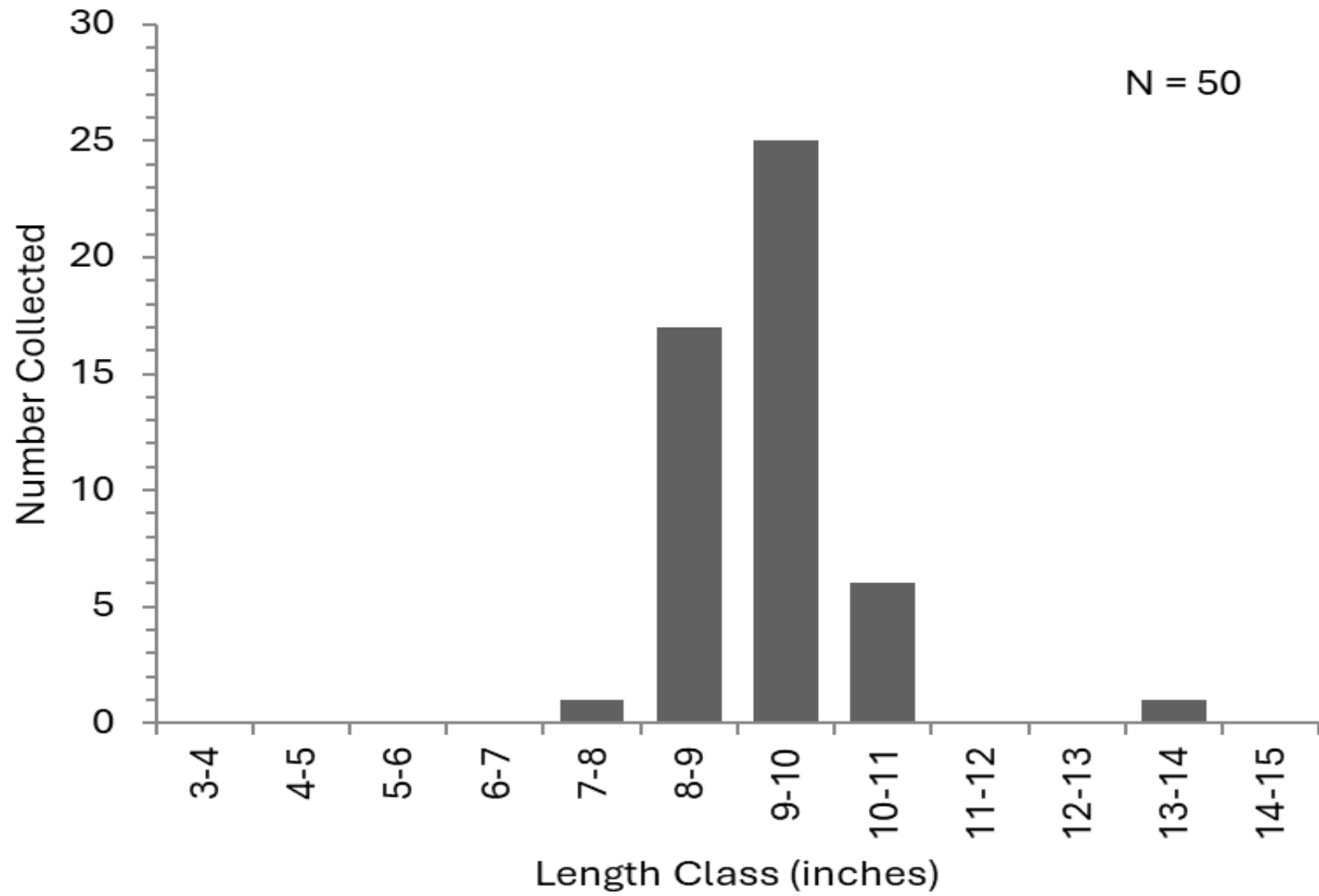


Figure 2. Length distribution of Black Crappie collected throughout Northeast Creek Reservoir in 2025.

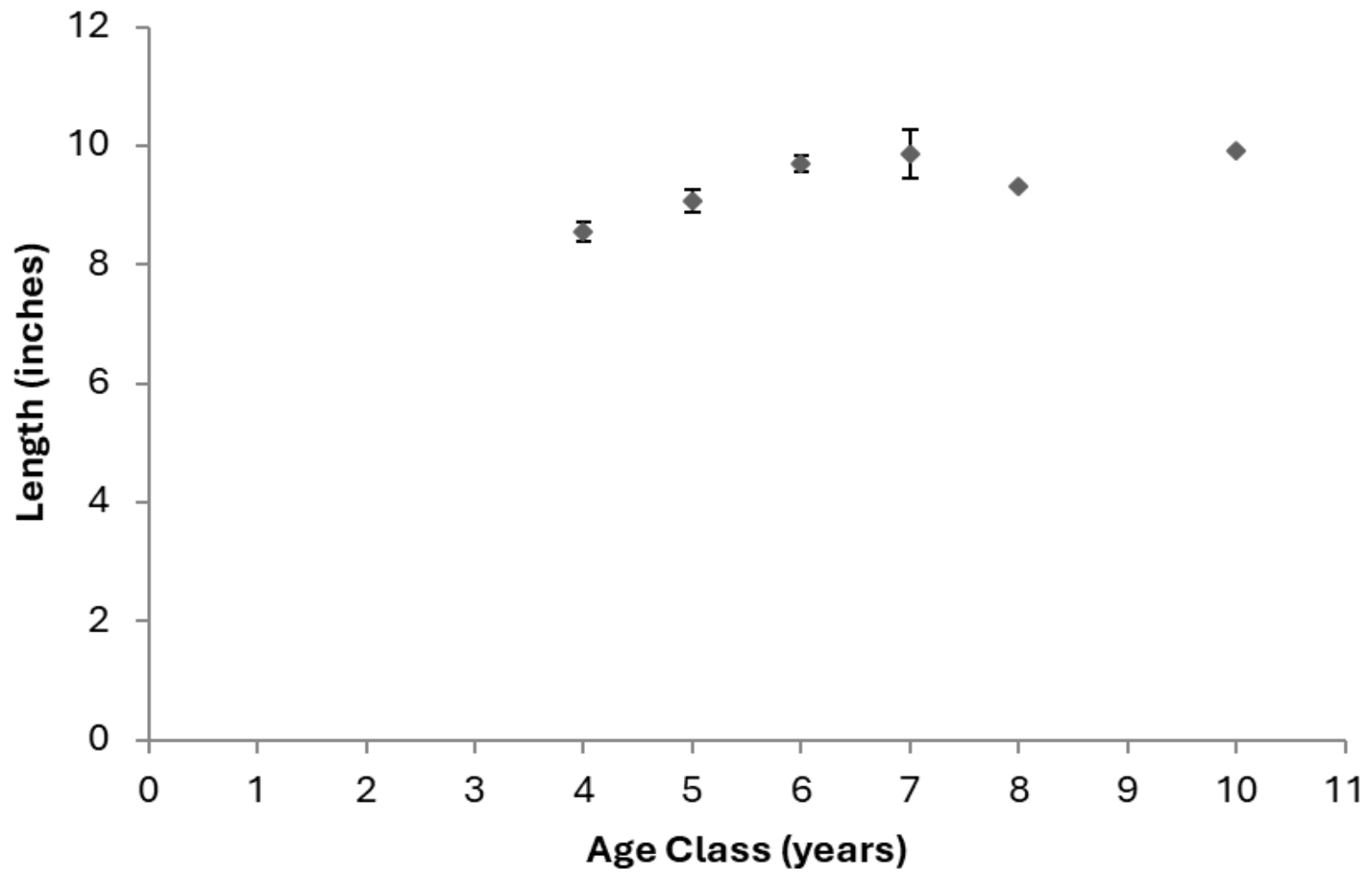


Figure 3. Average length-at-age of Black Crappie collected throughout Northeast Creek Reservoir in 2025. Error bars indicate standard error.

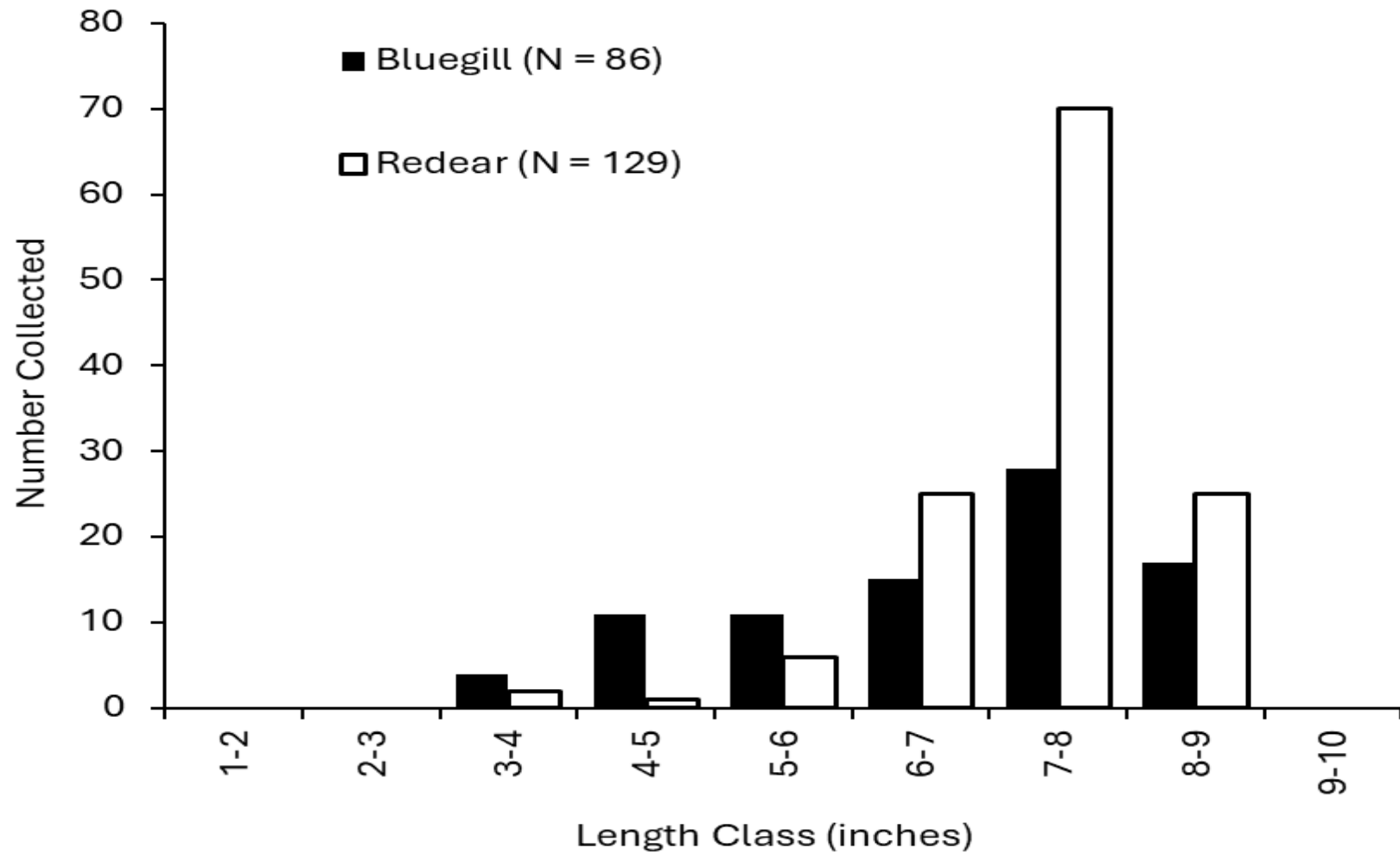


Figure 4. Length distribution of Bluegill and Redear collected throughout Northeast Creek Reservoir in 2025.