

Upper Owl Creek Reservoir

Schuylkill County

2024 Trap Net Survey

Upper Owl Creek Reservoir is a 67-acre impoundment located south of Tamaqua Borough in Schuylkill County. The lake is unproductive; characterized by clear water, sparse vegetation, and a simple fish community. Following a complete drawdown of the lake in 2011, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) implemented fingerling stockings of several species beginning in 2012 to establish a recreational fishery in Upper Owl Creek Lake (Table 1). Largemouth Bass and Bluegill were stocked to create sportfishing opportunities, and Golden Shiners were implemented as a forage species. A [2018 electrofishing survey](#) documented Chain Pickerel, Brown Bullhead, Pumpkinseed, and Black Crappie are also found in the reservoir. In fall 2024, PFBC Area 6 fisheries management staff returned to Upper Owl Creek Reservoir to evaluate the panfish populations.



A large Bluegill and Yellow Perch from Upper Owl Creek Reservoir

Table 1. Historical stockings of Upper Owl Creek Reservoir by the PFBC.

Year	Species	Size	Total Stocked
2005	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	5000
2006	Bluegill	Fingerling	6700
2007	Bluegill	Fingerling	6700
2012	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	500
2014	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	1000
2015	Bluegill	Fingerling	6700
2015	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	8300
2015	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	1000
2016	Golden Shiner	Fingerling	4000
2019	Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	1300

During October 21-22, a survey was conducted at Upper Owl Creek Reservoir where four Pennsylvania-style trap nets were set in various locations around the lake and left to fish overnight for approximately 24 hrs. A total of 97 fish comprised of five species (Black Crappie, Bluegill, Chain Pickerel, Largemouth Bass, and Yellow Perch) were captured during the survey (Table 2). Although the total catch was low, the size structure of the panfish, particularly bluegill, was notable. Nearly half (49%) of the Bluegill captured were ≥ 8 inches in length, and several exceeded 9 inches. Black Crappie and Yellow Perch up to 12 inches were also captured, but total catch of these species was low. In addition to panfish, the nets captured two Chain Pickerel and two Largemouth Bass; however, trap nets do not effectively capture Largemouth Bass.

Anglers planning to fish at Upper Owl Creek Reservoir can access the lake from a single boat ramp located at the northwest corner of the lake or limited shoreline access near the dam and parking area. Be aware that the lake is limited to [catch-and-release fishing](#) of all species and boating is limited to unpowered boats and or those powered by electric motors only.

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Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Biologist Report

Table 2. Length-frequency of gamefish captured in trap nets during the 2024 Upper Owl Creek Reservoir survey.

Length (in.)	Species				
	Chain Pickerel	Bluegill	Largemouth Bass	Black Crappie	Yellow Perch
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	17	0	0	0
3	0	19	1	1	1
4	0	1	0	0	1
5	0	0	0	0	1
6	0	5	0	0	0
7	0	2	0	0	0
8	0	35	0	0	0
9	0	7	0	0	0
10	1	0	0	1	0
11	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	1	1	1
13	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0
16	1	0	0	0	0
	2	86	2	3	4