

Speedwell Forge Lake

Lancaster County

2024 Trap Net Survey



Aerial Image of Speedwell Forge Lake.

Located in northern Lancaster County, Speedwell Forge Lake is a 106-acre reservoir owned and managed by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). Speedwell Forge Lake was refilled in Spring of 2016 following an extended drawdown that began in 2012. Following several surveys and subsequent data analyses, Speedwell Forge Lake was reopened for harvest in 2023 for all species under [Commonwealth Inland Regulations](#), except for Largemouth Bass, which are managed with [Big Bass Program](#) regulations.

During April 15-17, 2024, the PFBC Area 6 fisheries management staff conducted a trap net survey at Speedwell Forge Lake to monitor the status of the panfish populations. During the survey, five Pennsylvania trap nets were set and allowed to fish for approximately 24 hours

each. Nets were set at locations throughout the lake to ensure that all available habitats were sampled. A total of 1,344 fish comprised of Black Crappie, Bluegill, Brown Bullhead, Channel Catfish, Common Carp, Golden Shiner, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseed, Rainbow Trout, tiger muskellunge, White Crappie, White Sucker, and Yellow Bullhead (Tables 1 and 2) were captured during the survey. All sport fish were measured, counted, and released and Common Carp, Golden Shiner, and hatchery Rainbow Trout were counted and released.

Of the total catch, White Crappies made up 78% of the sample. The large contribution of White Crappies to the 2024 sample is an increase over numbers observed during the 2021 and 2022 surveys, where White Crappies comprised 64% and 61% of the total catch, respectively.

However, only 17 White Crappies in the 2024 sample were ≥ 9 in ($< 2\%$), highlighting that while recruitment has been good, the high abundance of fish in the population may be negatively affecting growth rates. Other species including Black Crappie, Bluegill, and Brown Bullhead were encountered at moderate abundance, which is consistent with results from the 2021 and 2022 surveys. Most of the Brown Bullheads collected ranged from 11 – 13 inches, with the largest being 15 inches. Two tiger muskellunge measuring 32 and 35 inches were collected during the survey. Although this equates to a catch rate that is lower than most Area 6 waters managed for Muskellunge or tiger muskellunge, the catch rate meets the PA Muskellunge Management Plan catch benchmark for continued stocking. This suggests that anglers have the potential to catch this stocked hybrid at Speedwell Forge Lake.

Currently, Speedwell Forge Lake provides anglers with the opportunity for a high catch rate of intermediate-length White Crappies, which was the species collected at the highest abundance during this survey. Additionally, larger Brown Bullheads and tiger muskellunge are available to anglers frequenting Speedwell Forge Lake. Anglers and boaters can access the lake at either of two boat ramps located off Lakeview Drive on either side of West Brubaker Valley Road. Boats are limited to unpowered boats and those powered by electric motors only and mooring is available for unpowered watercraft from March 1st through November 30th at the designated areas.

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Table 1. Length-frequency distribution of fish captured during the 2024 Speedwell Forge Lake trap net survey.

Length (in)	Species								
	Brown Bullhead	Yellow Bullhead	Channel Catfish	tiger muskellunge	Pumpkinseed	Bluegill	Largemouth Bass	White Crappie	Black Crappie
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	2	29	0	6	0
5	0	1	0	0	2	83	0	17	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	800	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	187	0
8	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	16	2
9	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	1
10	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
11	26	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
12	19	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
13	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
//	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	68	8	1	2	5	141	3	1,043	8

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Table 2. Summary of species, number (n), and length range (inches) of fish captured during the 2024 Speedwell Forge Lake trap net survey.

Species	n	Length Range (in)
Common Carp	26	-
Golden Shiner	6	-
White Sucker	74	-
Brown Bullhead	68	9-15
Yellow Bullhead	8	5-12
Channel Catfish	1	23
Rainbow Trout*	1	-
tiger muskellunge	2	32-35
Pumpkinseed	5	3-5
Bluegill	141	3-7
Largemouth Bass	3	10-18
White Crappie	1,043	4-13
Black Crappie	73	5-8

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