



Lake Vesuvius Fishery Gets a Check-up

Anglers who have patiently waited six long years for fishing to once again hit its stride at Lake Vesuvius are being rewarded with a healthy bass fishery.



Mike Greenlee, a Division of Wildlife fisheries biologist, holds two of the largemouth bass collected at Lake Vesuvius during a recent survey.

Anglers lost their favorite Wayne National Forest fishing hole when the Forest Service drained Lake Vesuvius in 2001 to make important repairs to its dam. During the three-year repair project, volunteers, local conservation clubs, and Forest Service biologists took advantage of the dry lake bottom to improve fisheries habitat. They constructed numerous fish cribs and reefs to enhance diversity of underwater habitat, and seeded the lake bed with rye grass. As the lake refilled in 2004, decomposition of the rye grass provided an immediate jumpstart for the lake's food chain and provided cover for the fingerling largemouth bass and bluegill that were stocked by the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife oversees the management of the fish population at Lake Vesuvius. Just as we go to the doctor to get periodic check-ups, the Division of Wildlife performs routine check-ups on lakes that have been drained and restocked. A May 2007 electrofishing survey was conducted at Lake Vesuvius to monitor the bass and bluegill fishery.

Roger Boggs, a Wayne National Forest recreation technician, assisted the Division biologists during the electrofishing survey. "The boat is equipped with special equipment that allows biologists to send a controlled current of electricity into the water", said Boggs. "As fish enter the electrical field, they are stunned so they can be easily netted".

During the survey, all of the sunfish were placed in a cooler so they could be transported back to the lab for further study, but the bass were measured, weighed and then released back into the lake. A few scales were removed from each bass so the biologists could assess bass growth rates.

Division of Wildlife fisheries supervisor Tim Parrett reported that early sampling results suggest that two year classes of largemouth bass are present in Lake Vesuvius. "We'll be looking at the scale samples and conducting a more in depth study of the bass growth rates, but the bass population is looking good. I suspect the catch per unit effort

will increase as more year classes are added to the population".

While largemouth bass and bluegill were the species of interest during the survey, spotted bass comprised 20 percent of the electrofishing sample. Other fishes collected included warmouth, longear sunfish, white crappie, white sucker, gizzard shad, golden redhorse, channel catfish, and yellow bullhead.

Preliminary survey results suggest that the habitat improvement work benefited the new fishery. "The biologists told me that the bass growth rates were real good", reported Boggs. "The lake was restocked in 2004 with 2-4 inch largemouth bass and we were netting bass over 15 inches in length just three years later".

Boggs was born and raised just a few miles down the road from Lake Vesuvius and grew up fishing at the lake. "To be able to take part in helping to care for the lake each day is an opportunity in which I take pride and hold very close to my heart", said Boggs. "Having a place as nice as Vesuvius close to a small community is a really valuable resource".

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