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Period: 01 April 2025
through
31 March 2026

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

for

Statewide Fisheries Investigation Project

Part III of IV

Subsection III: Rivers and Streams Fisheries Research Branch



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Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Fisheries Division



STATE: Kentucky

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GRANT TYPE: Research and Survey

GRANT TITLE: Statewide Fisheries Investigations

SUBSECTION I TITLE: Rivers and Streams Fisheries Research Branch

PERIOD COVERED: 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

Research and Survey Section

Subsection III

Project I: Ohio River Sport Fishery Survey

Project Objective: Develop and implement a monitoring program for selected sport fish populations and their fisheries.

A. ACTIVITY

General Sport Fish Assessments

Meldahl Pool

Embayments— A total of 9.0 hours of general sport fish electrofishing was conducted during October 2025 in embayment of the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River. Seven embayments were sampled: Big Snag Creek (1.0 hr), Big Locust Creek (1.5 hr), Big Turtle Creek (1.5 hr), Bracken Creek (1.5 hr), Lawrence Creek (1.25 hr), Cabin Creek (1.0 hr), and Kinniconick Creek (1.25 hr). Bluegill, largemouth bass, white crappie, and spotted bass were the most abundant species, but catch rates varied among embayments.

Markland Pool

Embayments— A total of 7.0 hours of general sport fish electrofishing was conducted during October 2025 in embayments of the Markland Pool of the Ohio River. Five embayments were sampled: Craig's Creek (1.5 hr), Paint Lick Creek (1.5 hr), Big Bone Creek (1.5 hr), Gunpowder Creek (1.5 hr), and Woolper Creek (1.0 hr). Bluegill, largemouth bass, and white crappie were the most abundant species, but catch rates varied substantially among embayments.

Sander Surveys

Previous modeling of ORFMT data suggested that overfishing was occurring and that regulations should be implemented on the Ohio River sauger population. A 14.0-in minimum size limit with a 6-fish creel limit was passed by KDFWR and went into effect in January 2019. Illinois DNR, Indiana DNR, and Ohio DNR have all passed this same regulation on the Ohio River since then.

Six separate 10-minutes transects were completed in the Markland, Cannelton, and JT Myers tailwaters in December 2025 for a total of 3.0 hr of effort. A total of 103 sauger were collected with no walleye or saugeye present in the sample. Overall CPUE of sauger was 34.3fish/hr, the lowest by far since sampling resumed in 2014 and down from a record high in 2024. Water levels in Markland and Cannelton tailwaters were extremely low during sampling. That coupled with an abundance of anglers in those tailwaters that did not allow for standard areas to be sampled may have led to lower catch rates.

Otoliths were taken from a subsample of sauger to assess age structure and growth. Length at

age as calculated by the von Bertalanffy growth equation indicated excellent growth as age-1+ sauger averaged 13.4 in and age-2+ sauger average 15.5 in.

B. TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Planned achievement date - 31 March 2026

Work accomplished - 31 March 2026

C. SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS

General Sport Fish Assessments

None

Sander Surveys

Water levels in Markland and Cannelton tailwaters were extremely low during sampling. That coupled with an abundance of anglers in those tailwaters that did not allow for standard areas to be sampled may have led to lower catch rates.

D. REMARKS

General Sport Fish Assessments

None

Sander Surveys

None

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Sport Fish Assessments

General sport fish sampling/monitoring will continue in various pools along the Ohio River. The McAlpine and Cannelton pools will be sampled in 2026.

Sander Surveys

Sampling in conjunction with the ORFMT will continue.

Project II: Evaluation of new recreational and commercial regulations on catfish in the Ohio River

Project Objectives:

1. Determine abundance (CPUE), size structure, and condition of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish in the Ohio River, and evaluate the effects of new regulations on blue, channel, and flathead catfish in the Ohio River, particularly trophy-size catfish.
2. Quantify age, growth, and mortality of the three species in each reach, and compare to previous data to determine if any changes have occurred over time.

A. ACTIVITY

The conflict between commercial fishermen and recreational catfish anglers on the Ohio River has been apparent for nearly a decade, with the main issue being a perceived switch from a harvest market predominantly for flesh to a market for sale of largely trophy fish to pay lakes. In 2013, KDFWR standardized its catfish data collection methods and began expanding the effort river-wide to more accurately estimate population dynamics of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. On December 1, 2014 the following regulation became law:

Recreational anglers on the main-stem Ohio River are allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day. Harvest of fish below their respective length limits is not regulated.

The majority of commercial fishers fishing in the legal waters of the Ohio River and its tributaries are allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day. However, up to 50 commercial fishers (this number was reduced to 15 commercial fishers in 2019) that harvested over 10,000 lbs of catfish in at least 2 of the last 3 years along with an additional six commercial fishers, who are chosen by a lottery drawing, are allowed a daily harvest of four (in aggregate) blue catfish and flathead catfish ≥ 40.0 in and channel catfish ≥ 30.0 inches in Kentucky's portion of the Ohio River and its tributaries open to commercial fishing below Cannelton Lock and Dam. Harvest of fish below their respective length limits is not regulated.

Accusations by recreational anglers that overharvest was still occurring on the Ohio River surfaced again in 2018. Multiple meetings were held with KDFWR staff, recreational anglers, commercial fishers, and paylake owners to work towards another compromise. Several regulations were proposed and submitted for review. At the time of this report the following regulations have been made law:

The number of commercial fishers awarded trophy permits was reduced to 15 (previously 50).

There will be no more than two licensed commercial fishers per boat. If more are present, they may only keep two limits of trophy catfish.

A possession limit (twice the daily limit) was placed on trophy catfish for commercial fishers. This applies when on the water and when trailering fish.

Regulations talk resurfaced once again, and KDFWR suggested the following regulations which were passed unanimously by the Commission and went into effect in summer 2024:

All commercial fishers are allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day on commercially fishable waters statewide. Trophy permit harvest is now only allowed on the Ohio River from Cannelton Dam downriver to the Ohio River's confluence with the Mississippi River. As a result, tributaries such as Green River, Cumberland River, and Tennessee Rivers no longer are

open to trophy permit harvest laws. Additionally, Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake now have protective regulations.

Commercial fishing on several waterbodies across the state was closed permanently due to low use, low harvest, and/or low abundance of fish (identified by KDFWR sampling and commercial harvest records). The following waterbodies were closed: Barren River, Licking River, Rough River, Tradewater River, Salt River, Eagle Creek, Highland Creek, North Fork Kentucky River, South Fork Kentucky River, and Panther Creek.

Trotlines—CPUE of blue catfish in 2025 was 5.7 fish/line. Catch rate of blue catfish had been gradually increasing since 2013 until 2023. Catch rate of trophy-size (≥ 35.0 in) blue catfish has remained consistent since 2018.

Hoop nets—Catch rate of channel catfish was 3.4 fish/net-night which is the highest since 2019. Flathead catfish CPUE was 0.8 fish/net-night, and was below the historical average (CPUE 1.1 fish/net-night). Unseasonably low flow in 2023 and 2024 and below average water temperatures during the 2023, 2024, and 2025 sampling seasons likely had negative impacts on catch rates.

Electrofishing—Blue catfish CPUE (20.4 fish/hr) was near its historical average of 21.5 fish/hr. CPUE of flathead catfish was 34.7 fish/hr, a decrease from 48.4 fish/hr in 2023 and below the historical average (42.0 fish/hr). Sampling occurred within the same time frame as normal; however, water temperatures at the start of the sampling period were below average and above average in the latter portion of sampling. This coupled with higher than average flows during the sampling period may account for the variability and below average catch rates.

B. TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Planned achievement date - 31 March 2026

Work accomplished - 31 March 2026

C. SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS

Hoop nets—High water leading to unsafe sampling conditions and inaccessible boat ramps did not allow for sampling in the Smithland Pools and limited sampling in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools.

Electrofishing—Catch rates of both blue catfish and flathead catfish were variable between and among pools. Many pools displayed catch rates below their respective historical averages. Sampling occurred within the same time frame as normal; however, water temperatures at the start of the sampling period were below average and above average in the latter portion of sampling. This coupled with higher than average flows during the sampling period may account for the variability and below average catch rates.

D. REMARKS

NONE

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue sampling blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish using approved methods.

Project III: Warm Water Stream Sport Fish Surveys

Project Objective: To conduct general sport fish surveys on streams and rivers to determine relative abundance, size structure, growth rates and condition of these fisheries. This information will be used to promote these fisheries while providing anglers with accurate population assessments.

A. ACTIVITY

Spring/Summer sport fish electrofishing surveys were conducted on Eagle Creek, Elkhorn Creek, Rockcastle River, upper Cumberland River and Cumberland Tailwater when water temperatures ranged from 53 - 75°F. A total of seven species of sport fish were collected on Eagle Creek, with bluegill making up 43% of the sample. CPUE for rock bass (4.9 fish/hr) was higher than the historical average (3.6 fish/hr) and received a “poor” population assessment score. CPUE for smallmouth bass (1.3 fish/hr) was below the historical average (7.3 fish/hr), and smallmouth bass received a “poor” assessment score as well. Elkhorn Creek was sampled for black bass and rock bass only. CPUE for smallmouth bass (95.0 fish/hr) was within the historical average (95.9 fish/hr) on Elkhorn Creek and smallmouth bass made up 77% of the entire sample. Smallmouth bass received a population assessment score of “excellent”. CPUE for rock bass (16.6 fish/hr) was above the historical average (13.9 fish/hr) and the highest recorded by the Rivers and Streams Research Branch. Rock bass also received a population assessment score of “fair”. Largemouth bass only comprised 11% of the black bass sample with CPUE being (11.6 fish/hr) which is higher than the historical average (7.2 fish/hr). A total of seven species of sport fish were collected on the Rockcastle River, with rock bass and smallmouth bass making up 87% of the entire sample. CPUE for smallmouth bass (9.1 fish/hr) was lower than historical average of (13.2 fish/hr) and received a “poor” population assessment score. CPUE for rock bass (18.6 fish/hr) was higher than the historical average (15.3 fish/hr) and received a “fair” population assessment score. A total of ten species of sport fish were collected in the upper Cumberland River. Black bass and rock bass were the dominant species comprising 58% of the entire sample and channel catfish was the second most dominant species comprising 30% of the sample. Population assessments in the upper Cumberland River rated smallmouth bass “fair”, spotted bass “good” and rock bass “fair”. A total of ten species of sport fish were collected in the Lake Cumberland Tailwater/River. This was the first initial baseline sportfish data collected by the Rivers and Streams Research Branch on the Cumberland Tailwater/River. With the Cumberland Tailwater/River having significantly cooler water, the abundance of sportfish collected were in low numbers. Percids and black bass comprised 73% of the entire sample. CPUE of striped bass (1.0 fish/hr) were in lower densities but fish were collected from 17.0 – 39.0 inch class.

Fall sport fish surveys were conducted on Old Pool 5 of the Green River and lower Barren River. The removal of Lock and Dam 5 was initiated in the summer of 2021 and the majority of lock and dam 5 was removed in the summer of 2024. Old Pool 5 of Green River has drastically changed with water levels dropping exposing more natural habitat which may enhance habitat complexity and influence fish distribution. A total of ten different species were collected on Old Pool 5 of the Green River with spotted bass being the most abundant species collected (16.0 fish/hr). CPUE was the fourth highest catch rate recorded since sampling began in 2012 and just higher than the historical average of 15.0 fish/hr. Rock bass were collected from the 3.0 – 9.0 inch class with CPUE being 4.3 fish/hr. The 2025 sample was the second highest CPUE recorded for rock bass since sampling began in 2012 and drastically above the historical average of 1.8 fish/hr. The continued improvement in the number of sportfish sampled could be due in part to significant habitat changes with the low water conditions, but further sampling will continue in order to collect more historical data for post-dam removal to better compare the effects of impounded and free-flowing streams on Old Pool 5 of Green River.

A total of thirteen species were collected on lower Barren River with smallmouth bass being the most abundant at (11.3 fish/hr). Lower Barren River previously had the statewide 12-inch size minimum, and a new regulation passed increasing the minimum size limit to 15 inches. Eighty-nine percent of smallmouth bass collected were under the new 15-inch minimum size limit.

CPUE for spotted bass (9.2 fish/hr) was similar to the historical average (10.8 fish/hr). Overall, rock bass CPUE (3.0/fish hr) decreased from the 2023 sample (8.8/fish hr) and was well below the historical average (11.2 fish/hr). Lock and Dam 1 at Greencastle was removed from lower Barren River in August – September 2022. After the dam removal, this formerly impounded sections water level has dropped approximately 7 – 10 ft with a change in a variety of habitat conditions. The four most abundant species observed were spotted bass (16.0 fish/hr), bluegill (12.0 fish/hr), smallmouth bass (7.3 fish/hr) and rock bass (3.0 fish/hr). The catch rates for smallmouth bass, spotted bass and rock bass were all above the historical average. This could be due in part to significant habitat changes with the low water conditions, but further sampling will continue in order to collect more historical data for post-dam removal to better compare the effects of impounded and free-flowing streams on lower Barren River.

Twenty-one streams are currently available on the KDFWR departmental website providing detailed information on public access sites, water levels, stream mileages, interactive maps, fisheries, and photo gallery. This information provides Kentucky anglers with an increased awareness to the fishing and boating opportunities that exist in many of Kentucky's rivers and streams. Additionally, the stream webpages will be getting updated and the newest data for these streams will be available along with two new streams that should be on the webpage soon.

B. TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Planned achievement date- 31 March 2026

Work accomplished- 31 March 2026

C. SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS

NONE

D. REMARKS

New locations will be sampled annually. Sites are scheduled to be sampled on a 3-5 year rotation in an effort to develop trend data that will be beneficial for future management decisions.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue stream sampling due to the current lack of continuous sport fish data on most streams.

Project IV: Supplemental Stocking of Ohio River Embayments Using Fish from Largemouth Bass-Crowded Lakes

Project Objectives:

1. Increase and maintain Largemouth Bass CPUE to ≥ 75.0 fish/hr.
2. Increase and maintain Largemouth Bass ≥ 12.0 in to ≥ 10.0 fish/hr.
3. Increase and maintain Largemouth Bass ≥ 15.0 in to ≥ 3.0 fish/hr.
4. Increase and maintain Largemouth Bass PSD to ≥ 40 .

A. ACTIVITY

Spring catch rate of Largemouth bass in control embayments was 6.9 fish/hr, while CPUE in experimental embayments was 15.5 fish/hr, well below the objective of 75 fish/hr. CPUE of fish ≥ 12.0 in and fish ≥ 15.0 was also well below project objectives of 10.0 fish/hr and 3.0 fish/hr, respectively. PSD of Largemouth Bass in control embayments was 36, and 48 in experimental embayments. PSD in experimental embayments currently meets the project objective. Future stockings should help to maintain the desired size structure.

A total of 2,500 Largemouth Bass were removed over nine removal events (36.13 hrs of electrofishing effort) on three lakes—Grayson Lake, Corinth Lake, and Panbowl Lake. Lengths of Largemouth Bass removed ranged from 2.0 – 11.9 in with a mean length of 5.8 in. All fish received a left pectoral fin clip and were stocked into experimental embayments at a rate of 10.0 fish/acre.

B. TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Planned achievement date - 31 March 2026

Work accomplished - 31 March 2026

C. SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS

NONE

D. REMARKS

NONE

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue spring sampling to evaluate transplant stockings. Continue fall removal and stocking efforts.

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Project I: Ohio River Sport Fishery Survey

FINDINGS

General Sport Fish Assessments

Meldahl Pool

A total of 9.0 hours of general sport fish electrofishing was conducted during October 2025 in embayment of the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River. Seven embayments were sampled: Big Snag Creek (1.0 hr), Big Locust Creek (1.5 hr), Big Turtle Creek (1.5 hr), Bracken Creek (1.5 hr), Lawrence Creek (1.25 hr), Cabin Creek (1.0 hr), and Kinniconick Creek (1.25 hr). Bluegill, largemouth bass, white crappie, and spotted bass were the most abundant species, but catch rates varied among embayments.

Total CPUE of largemouth bass was 16.2 fish/hr and ranged from 0.8 fish/hr in Kinniconick Creek to 26.7 fish/hr in Big Locust Creek (Table 1). Lengths of largemouth bass ranged from 5.1– 18.2 in with a mean length of 10.5 in. Spotted bass CPUE was 8.0 fish/hr and ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in Big Turtle Creek to 15.0 fish/hr in Cabin Creek. Lengths of spotted bass ranged from 4.5 – 14.5 in with a mean length of 8.2 in. Smallmouth bass were only captured in Kinniconick Creek at a rate 4.0 fish/hr. Size structure of largemouth bass and spotted bass varied between embayments, but 76.2% of black bass were <12.0 in. This is lower than previous years and can be attributed to well below average catch rates of fish in smaller length groups (Table 2). Relative weights for both largemouth bass and spotted bass have decreased since the 2022 fall sample with the exception of larger fish. Overall fish were still in great to excellent condition (Table 3).

Bluegill were the most abundant fish sampled in the Meldahl Pool (CPUE=26.4 fish/hr; Table 4). Catch rates ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in Kinniconick Creek to 97.0 fish/hr in Big Snag Creek. Catch rates of bluegill were significantly lower than previous years. Lengths ranged from 1.5 – 6.7 in with a mean length of 4.7 in and 14.3% of those fish were quality size (≥ 6.0 in). Overall catch rate of redear sunfish was 2.3 fish/hr. Catch rates ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in several embayments to 10.0 fish/hr in Big Snag Creek. Lengths ranged from 4.0 – 9.5 in with a mean length of 6.3 in. White crappie were collected at 8.0 fish/hr and ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in Cabin Creek and Kinniconick Creek to 20.7 fish/hr in Big Turtle Creek. Lengths ranged from 3.7 – 14.0 in with a mean length of 9.7 in. Black Crappie were collected at 1.4 fish/hr and ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in several creeks to 6.7 fish/hr in Big Snag Creek. Lengths ranged from 8.3 – 11.4 in with a mean length of 9.8 in. Catch rates for two different length groups of white crappie and black crappie were examined (Table 5). Overall, white crappie and black crappie CPUE was the lowest recorded value in the past four samples. Relative weight of white crappie (95) and black crappie (91) indicated that both species were in good condition; however, record lows were observed for both species (Table 6).

Markland Pool

A total of 7.0 hours of general sport fish electrofishing was conducted during October 2025 in embayments of the Markland Pool of the Ohio River. Five embayments were sampled: Craig's Creek (1.5 hr), Paint Lick Creek (1.5 hr), Big Bone Creek (1.5 hr), Gunpowder Creek (1.5 hr), and Woolper Creek (1.0 hr). Bluegill, largemouth bass, and white crappie were the most abundant species, but catch rates varied substantially among embayments.

Total CPUE of largemouth bass was 28.1 fish/hr and ranged from 9.3 fish/hr in Paint Lick Creek to 88.0 fish/hr in Big Bone Creek (Table 7). Lengths of largemouth bass ranged from 4.0 – 20.3 in with a mean length of 9.4 in. Spotted bass CPUE was 3.4 fish/hr and ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in Paint Lick Creek and to 8.7 fish/hr in Big Bone Creek. Lengths of spotted bass ranged from 4.0 – 13.2 in with a mean length of 8.4 in. Size structure of largemouth bass and spotted bass varied between embayment, but larger fish continue to be more common in the Markland Pool than the Meldahl Pool. Catch rates for four different length groups of largemouth bass and spotted bass were examined. Decreases in CPUE from 2022 for

all length groups of largemouth bass were observed, while length groups for spotted bass were similar to the last three samples (Table 8). Overall relative weights of largemouth bass have seen a gradual decrease since 2014, but were still in good condition ($Wr = 93$; Table 9). Spotted bass also exhibited below average relative weight (94) but were still in good condition.

Bluegill were the most abundant fish sampled in the Meldahl Pool (CPUE= 76.1 fish/hr; Table 10). Catch rates ranged from 23.3 fish/hr in Gunpowder Creek to 85.3 fish/hr in Craig's Creek. Lengths ranged from 1.0– 7.1 in with a mean length of 4.6 in and only 12.8% of those fish were quality size (≥ 6.0 in). Overall catch rate of redear sunfish was 2.7 fish/hr with the highest observed CPUE in Big Bone Creek (6.0 fish/hr). Lengths ranged from 4.3 – 10.6 in with a mean length of 8.1 in, and 52.6% of those fish were quality size (≥ 6.0 in). White crappie were collected at 29.4 fish/hr and ranged from 0.7 fish/hr in Gunpowder Creek to 73.3 fish/hr in Paint Lick Creek. Lengths ranged from 3.7 – 13.9 in with a mean length of 11.3 in. Black Crappie were collected at 1.3 fish/hr and ranged from 0.0 fish/hr in several embayments to 4.0 fish/hr in Woolper Creek. Lengths ranged from 7.1 – 11.6 in with a mean length of 9.1 in. Catch rates for two different length groups of white crappie and black crappie were examined (Table 11). Overall, white crappie CPUE was the lowest in the previous four and saw decreases across length groups. Black crappie CPUE was the second lowest on record, but similar to past samples. Relative weight of white crappie (90) and black crappie (90) were down from previous samples, but indicated that both species were in fair condition (Table 12).

Sander Surveys

The member agencies of the Ohio River Fish Management Team (ORFMT) had traditionally completed annual surveys of sauger and walleye in the Ohio River. Due to time and budget constraints, this cooperative effort stopped in 2007; however, recent concerns of a possibly declining fishery as well as threats from the expanding Asian carp population led biologists to reinstitute these annual surveys in 2014. KDFWR, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources all agreed to sample tailwaters of the Ohio River. KDFWR was tasked with sampling the Markland and Cannelton tailwaters. In 2017, JT Myers tailwater was added. After three years of sampling in late fall, all agencies reported lower catch rates than in the past and noted a lack of age 3+ sauger. Issues with timing of sampling were discussed in a meeting in January 2017. Although a late fall sample was likely underrepresenting larger fish and females (therefore inflating mortality estimates), the decision was made to keep sampling methods the same due to the unpredictability and unstable nature of water levels on the Ohio River during the preferred months of January – March.

Previous modeling of ORFMT data suggested that overfishing was occurring and that regulations should be implemented on the Ohio River sauger population. A 14.0-in minimum size limit with a 6-fish creel limit was passed by KDFWR and went into effect in January 2019. Illinois DNR, Indiana DNR, and Ohio DNR have all passed this same regulation on the Ohio River since then.

Six separate 10-minutes transects were completed in the Markland, Cannelton, and JT Myers tailwaters in December 2025 for a total of 3.0 hr of effort. A total of 103 sauger were collected with no walleye or saugeye present in the sample (Table 13). Overall CPUE of sauger was 34.3fish/hr, the lowest by far since sampling resumed in 2014 and down from a record high in 2024 (Table 14). Water levels in Markland and Cannelton tailwaters were extremely low during sampling. That coupled with an abundance of anglers in those tailwaters that did not allow for standard areas to be sampled may have led to lower catch rates. Lengths ranged from 7.8 – 17.7 in with a mean length of 12.4 in (Table 15).

Catch rates were also calculated for four length groups of sauger (Table 16). Overall catch rates of sauger in the Markland Tailwater (CPUE=21.0 fish/hr) were the lowest since sampling resumed in 2014 and drastically lower than the record high (CPUE=654.0 fish/hr) observed the previous year. CPUE of all length groups examined in the Markland Tailwater were down from 2024 and below their historical averages. Overall CPUE in Cannelton Pool (CPUE=45.0 fish/hr) was also a record low and all length groups examined showed decreases since the previous sample in 2023 with the exception of the ≥ 15.0 in

class. Additionally, CPUE of all length groups in the Cannelton Tailwater were below their historical averages. Overall catch rate in the JT Myers Tailwater (CPUE=37.0 fish/hr) was the second lowest ever recorded and all length groups were at or below their historical averages.

Otoliths were taken from a subsample of sauger to assess age structure and growth. Length at age as calculated by the von Bertalanffy growth equation indicated good growth as age-1+ sauger averaged 13.4 in and age-2+ sauger average 15.5 in (Table 17). Age-0 and age-1 sauger were the majority of the catch as usual, comprising 77.7% of the total catch (Table 18); however, this is 15 – 20% less than normal. Estimates for total annual mortality of sauger were much lower than normal (59.7% riverwide; Table 17). This is a result of the proportional decrease age-0 and age-1 in the sample. Estimates for Markland Tailwater were unable to be calculated due to small sample size.

Table 1. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of black bass collected during 9.0 hrs of electrofishing in six embayments in the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River during October 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Embayment	Species	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total	CPUE
Big Snag Creek	Largemouth bass				1				3	9	5	3	1		2			2	26	26.0 (8.1)
	Spotted bass				1				1	1	1								4	4.0 (1.6)
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Big Locust Creek	Largemouth bass				5		2	3	3	4	8	5	3	4	2		1		40	26.7 (6.8)
	Spotted bass			1			1	1						1					4	2.7 (1.3)
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Big Turtle Creek	Largemouth bass				2	1		1	2	3	3			2					14	9.3 (1.7)
	Spotted bass																		0	0.0
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Bracken Creek	Largemouth bass				2	1		4	4	5	7	4		1			2		30	20.0 (3.4)
	Spotted bass								1										1	0.7 (0.7)
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Lawrence Creek	Largemouth bass					3	3	1	1	1	2		2	1	1				15	12.0 (4.6)
	Spotted bass			1	1		1	2											5	4.0 (1.8)
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Cabin Creek	Largemouth bass				1	4	4	2	1	2	3	2	1						20	20.0 (6.3)
	Spotted bass			1	3			4	5	1			1						15	15.0 (11.1)
	Smallmouth bass																		0	0.0
Kinniconick Creek	Largemouth bass													1					1	0.8 (0.8)
	Spotted bass						2												2	1.6 (1.0)
	Smallmouth bass													1			2	2	5	4.0 (4.0)
Total	Largemouth bass				11	9	9	11	14	24	28	14	7	9	5		3	2	146	16.2 (2.2)
	Spotted bass			3	5		4	7	7	2	1		1	1					31	8.0 (1.9)
	Smallmouth bass													1			2	2	5	0.6 (0.6)

Table 2. Fall electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four size groups of black bass from the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River from 2007-2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group				Total
	<8.0 in	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
Largemouth bass					
2007	23.8 (8.2)	14.2 (4.9)	17.6 (4.2)	2.9 (1.8)	58.4 (13.5)
2008	3.0 (2.3)	24.2 (8.0)	2.5 (3.8)	1.5 (0.8)	31.2 (7.4)
2009	3.7 (1.7)	5.9 (2.5)	4.5 (2.4)	1.3 (0.9)	15.5 (3.8)
2010	9.4 (3.4)	5.3 (2.8)	6.4 (2.2)	2.4 (1.4)	23.5 (4.2)
2011	37.3 (5.6)	20.1 (2.4)	10.3 (2.1)	2.9 (0.7)	70.6 (7.7)
2012	23.9 (3.9)	30.2 (3.9)	10.5 (1.7)	1.8 (0.6)	66.4 (6.3)
2013	7.0 (1.3)	16.0 (2.1)	3.9 (0.9)	1.4 (0.5)	28.9 (3.3)
2014	26.4 (4.6)	19.1 (3.2)	14.2 (2.4)	1.0 (0.6)	60.7 (6.8)
2015	24.4 (5.6)	13.4 (2.5)	4.2 (0.9)	0.9 (0.4)	42.8 (8.0)
2019	23.5 (5.3)	7.9 (1.5)	3.3 (0.8)	0.8 (0.3)	35.5 (5.9)
2022	29.8 (5.3)	11.4 (2.0)	3.1 (0.7)	0.9 (0.3)	45.2 (7.2)
2025	3.2 (0.8)	8.6 (1.6)	3.3 (0.7)	1.1 (0.4)	16.2 (2.2)
Mean	18.0 (3.4)	14.7 (2.2)	7.0 (1.4)	1.6 (0.2)	41.2 (5.6)
	<7.0 in	7.0-10.9 in	11.0-13.9 in	≥14.0 in	Total
Spotted bass					
2007	12.0 (5.2)	3.1 (1.7)	4.0 (2.1)	0.4 (0.4)	19.6 (6.4)
2008	0.5 (0.4)	6.8 (3.0)	0.3 (0.3)	0.0	9.1 (2.2)
2009	0.8 (0.8)	1.3 (1.0)	0.3 (0.3)	0.3 (0.3)	2.7 (1.0)
2010	4.0 (2.3)	1.6 (1.2)	1.9 (1.2)	0.0 (0.0)	7.5 (1.7)
2011	17.5 (5.3)	17.7 (3.1)	6.1 (1.1)	0.4 (0.3)	41.5 (7.7)
2012	11.8 (2.0)	3.1 (1.7)	0.6 (0.4)	0.2 (0.2)	15.6 (3.0)
2013	3.2 (0.9)	1.8 (0.6)	0.9 (0.5)	0.2 (0.2)	6.2 (1.3)
2014	11.6 (3.7)	6.7 (1.8)	2.6 (1.1)	0.4 (0.3)	21.3 (5.5)
2015	11.0 (3.2)	2.8 (0.7)	0.5 (0.3)	0.2 (0.2)	14.4 (3.8)
2019	3.5 (1.6)	0.9 (0.4)	0.4 (0.2)	0.0	4.8 (1.2)
2022	5.9 (1.1)	3.1 (0.9)	0.4 (0.3)	0.0	9.5 (1.6)
2025	0.9 (0.4)	2.2 (0.9)	0.2 (0.2)	0.1 (0.1)	8.0 (1.9)
Mean	6.9 (1.6)	4.3 (1.3)	1.5 (0.5)	0.2 (0.1)	13.4 (3.1)

Table 3. Relative weight (Wr) by length group estimates for each species of black bass collected from the Meldahl Pool in the Ohio River from fall 2007-2025.

Largemouth bass relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
2007	106	105	103	105
2008	107	101	88	105
2009	96	92	93	94
2010	110	105	99	106
2011	106	109	107	107
2012	112	108	103	111
2013	92	95	91	92
2014	119	104	83	112
2015	94	89	91	93
2019	97	90	92	95
2022	109	103	100	107
2025	96	96	102	96
Mean	104	100	97	104

Spotted bass relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	7.0-10.9 in	11.0-13.9 in	≥14.0 in	
2007	106	115	107	111
2008	116	95		115
2009	102	94	75	97
2010	116	99		107
2011	108	109	111	108
2012	108	103	101	107
2013	97	92	97	96
2014	103	100	92	102
2015	106	85	95	102
2019	103	101		102
2022	106	105		106
2025	101	101	97	101
Mean	106	103	97	105

Table 4. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sunfish species collected during 9.0 hrs of electrofishing in embayments in the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River during October 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Embayment	Species	Inch class														Total	CPUE
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Big Snag Creek	Bluegill	3	1	14	35	33	11									97	97.0 (38.7)
	Redear sunfish				1	3	1	3	1	1						10	10.0 (8.7)
	White crappie								2	1	8		1			12	12.0 (4.9)
	Black crappie								1							1	1.0 (1.0)
Big Locust Creek	Bluegill		2	8	14	5	3									32	21.3 (7.9)
	Redear sunfish				2		1		1							4	2.7 (1.3)
	White crappie				2					1	8	3		1		15	10.0 (4.0)
	Black crappie															0	0.0
Big Turtle Creek	Bluegill		5	6	10	14	10									45	30.0 (11.4)
	Redear sunfish				1	2	3	1								7	4.7 (2.4)
	White crappie			2		1	1	2	5	3	8	7	1		1	31	20.7 (5.5)
	Black crappie								1	5	1	3				10	6.7 (2.7)
Bracken Creek	Bluegill			2		5	1									8	5.3 (2.5)
	Redear sunfish															0	0.0 (0.0)
	White crappie										1					1	0.7 (0.7)
	Black crappie															1	0.7 (0.7)
Lawrence Creek	Bluegill		3	19	14	9	9									54	43.2 (26.4)
	Redear sunfish															0	0.0
	White crappie				2		1	1	1		6	1		1		13	10.4 (6.4)
	Black crappie								1							1	0.8 (0.8)
Cabin Creek	Bluegill				2											2	2.0 (1.2)
	Redear sunfish															0	0.0 (0.0)
	White crappie															0	0.0 (0.0)
	Black crappie															0	0.0 (0.0)
Kinniconick Creek	Bluegill															0	0.0
	Redear sunfish															0	0.0
	White crappie															0	0.0
	Black crappie															0	0.0
Total	Bluegill	3	11	49	75	66	34									238	26.4 (7.4)
	Redear sunfish				4	5	5	4	2	1						21	2.3 (1.1)
	White crappie			2	4	1	2	3	8	5	31	11	2	2	1	72	8.0 (1.9)
	Black crappie								3	6	1	3				13	1.4 (0.6)

Table 5. Fall electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four size groups of crappie from the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River from 2015-2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group		Total
	>8.0 in	≥10.0 in	
<u>White crappie</u>			
2015	9.6 (2.1)	4.7 (1.1)	17.4 (4.3)
2019	7.3 (1.8)	3.3 (0.9)	13.2 (3.5)
2022	9.0 (1.9)	5.2 (1.0)	12.6 (2.4)
2025	6.7 (1.6)	5.2 (1.3)	8.0 (1.9)
Mean	8.0 (0.9)	4.6 (0.6)	12.3 (1.5)
	>8.0 in	≥10.0 in	Total
<u>Black crappie</u>			
2015	0.7 (0.3)	0.5 (0.3)	1.7 (0.7)
2019	0.7 (0.4)	0.3 (0.2)	2.9 (1.3)
2022	0.9 (0.4)	0.7 (0.4)	1.5 (0.5)
2025	1.4 (0.6)	0.4 (0.3)	1.4 (0.6)
Mean	0.8 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	1.9 (0.4)

Table 6. Relative weight (Wr) by length group estimates for each species of crappie collected from the Meldahl Pool in the Ohio River from fall 2015-2025.

<u>White crappie relative weight (Wr)</u>				
Year	length group			Overall
	5.0-7.9 in	8.0-9.9 in	≥10.0 in	
2015	97	94	94	96
2019	107	98	90	99
2022	113	108	103	106
2025	95	95	95	95
Mean	102	99	96	99
<u>Black crappie relative weight (Wr)</u>				
Year	length group			Overall
	5.0-7.9 in	8.0-9.9 in	≥10.0 in	
2015	100	88	100	99
2019	108	100	97	106
2022	115	102	103	106
2025		89	96	91
Mean	106	92	100	101

Table 7. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of black bass collected during 7.0 hrs of electrofishing in embayments in the Markland Pool of the Ohio River during October 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Embayment	Species	Inch class																		Total	CPUE
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
Craig's Creek	Largemouth bass			2	1	4	1	1	4	3	1	3	1	1	1					23	15.3 (4.3)
	Spotted bass							1	1											2	1.3 (1.3)
Paint Lick Creek	Largemouth bass								4	1	1	3	2		1		1		1	14	9.3 (2.7)
	Spotted bass																			0	0.0
Big Bone Creek	Largemouth bass		8	19	25	11	10	17	11	9	8	8	5					1		132	88.0 (22.8)
	Spotted bass		2	2	2	2	1		1	1	1	1								13	8.7 (2.8)
Gunpowder Creek	Largemouth bass			3	2			3	1		2	3		1	1	1				17	11.3 (4.3)
	Spotted bass					1	3	4												8	5.3 (2.2)
Woolper Creek	Largemouth bass	2	2				3		1			1	1	1						11	11.0 (4.1)
	Spotted bass					1														1	1.0 (1.0)
Total	Largemouth bass	10	26	28	15	14	21	21	13	12	18	9	3	3	1	1	1	1		197	28.1 (7.7)
	Spotted bass	2	2	2	4	4	5	2	1	1	1									24	3.4 (1.0)

Table 8. Fall electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four size groups of black bass from the Markland Pool of the Ohio River from 2007-2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group				Total
	<8.0 in	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
Largemouth bass					
2007	18.6 (4.4)	25.6 (4.8)	10.7 (3.2)	2.8 (1.3)	57.7 (6.1)
2008	18.9 (6.7)	27.4 (5.3)	8.1 (2.1)	2.0 (1.1)	45.7 (7.7)
2009	8.0 (2.6)	15.2 (4.4)	8.7 (2.6)	5.2 (1.9)	37.0 (5.5)
2010	24.7 (5.7)	18.1 (4.8)	7.0 (2.2)	2.8 (1.4)	52.6 (8.2)
2011	18.1 (3.3)	27.8 (4.9)	10.4 (1.8)	3.2 (1.1)	59.6 (8.8)
2012	38.4 (5.3)	54.3 (7.4)	20.1 (2.9)	3.6 (0.8)	116.4 (12.7)
2013	4.7 (1.6)	16.4 (2.4)	4.8 (1.2)	1.2 (0.4)	27.9 (4.0)
2014	21.4 (3.1)	28.3 (3.9)	22.0 (3.5)	2.6 (0.8)	74.3 (8.0)
2015	21.6 (7.7)	23.9 (3.7)	8.0 (1.3)	1.9 (0.5)	55.4 (10.5)
2019	24.8 (4.5)	10.5 (2.2)	4.7 (0.9)	2.5 (0.6)	42.5 (6.7)
2022	26.4 (4.5)	14.0 (3.0)	7.2 (1.4)	3.3 (0.8)	50.9 (7.7)
2025	11.3 (3.6)	9.9 (3.6)	5.6 (1.7)	1.4 (0.5)	28.1 (7.7)
Mean	19.1 (2.6)	22.6 (3.5)	9.7 (1.6)	2.7 (0.3)	54.0 (6.9)

Year	Length Group				Total
	<7.0 in	7.0-10.9 in	11.0-13.9 in	≥14.0 in	
Spotted bass					
2007	3.8 (1.8)	4.8 (1.9)	4.2 (1.7)	0.5 (0.3)	13.3 (2.7)
2008	2.0 (1.3)	5.8 (2.5)	2.1 (1.1)	0.4 (0.2)	8.3 (2.2)
2009	0.5 (0.4)	0.9 (0.6)	0.7 (0.5)	0.2 (0.2)	2.3 (0.6)
2010	3.3 (1.3)	0.5 (0.5)	0.8 (0.7)	0.2 (0.2)	4.7 (1.3)
2011	2.4 (0.6)	2.2 (1.2)	1.5 (0.7)	0.2 (0.2)	6.2 (2.3)
2012	3.3 (1.0)	3.5 (1.0)	0.9 (0.4)	0.2 (0.2)	7.8 (1.7)
2013	0.9 (0.4)	1.7 (0.6)	0.0 (0.0)	0.2 (0.2)	2.8 (0.9)
2014	2.1 (1.1)	4.0 (1.2)	1.9 (0.8)	0.0	7.9 (2.4)
2015	3.7 (0.7)	0.3 (0.2)	0.6 (0.4)	0.0	4.6 (0.9)
2019	3.4 (0.7)	0.7 (0.3)	0.3 (0.2)	0.0	4.4 (1.0)
2022	1.3 (0.5)	0.5 (0.4)	0.5 (0.3)	0.0	2.4 (0.7)
2025	0.9 (0.5)	2.1 (0.7)	0.4 (0.3)	0.0	3.4 (1.0)
Mean	2.3 (0.3)	2.3 (0.5)	1.2 (0.3)	0.2 (0.1)	5.7 (0.9)

Table 9. Relative weight (Wr) by length group estimates for each species of black bass collected from the Markland Pool in the Ohio River from fall 2007-2025.

Largemouth bass relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
2007	106	106	109	106
2008	101	98	100	101
2009	97	94	101	97
2010	101	103	100	102
2011	100	97	105	100
2012	107	106	103	107
2013	91	95	98	92
2014	107	103	106	105
2015	97	108	98	100
2019	95	96	95	95
2022	95	92	94	94
2025	92	92	101	93
Mean	100	100	101	100

Spotted bass relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	7.0-10.9 in	11.0-13.9 in	≥14.0 in	
2007	101	106	109	104
2008	100	100	90	99
2009	100	99	98	99
2010	103	102	94	102
2011	102	104	113	104
2012	124	84	103	115
2013	99	111	81	97
2014	106	97		103
2015	96	91		93
2019	93	100		95
2022	102	97		100
2025	94	92		94
Mean	103	100	99	101

Table 10. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sunfish species collected during 7.5 hrs of electrofishing in embayments in the Markland Pool of the Ohio River during October 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Embayment	Species	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	CPUE
Craig's Creek	Bluegill	4	15	40	42	25	2								128	85.3 (26.3)
	Redear sunfish									2					2	1.3 (0.8)
	White crappie						2		1	4	6	5	4		22	14.7 (3.8)
	Black crappie									1					1	0.7 (0.7)
Paint Lick Creek	Bluegill	2	24	29	27	9	1								92	61.3 (12.6)
	Redear sunfish			1	1	1	1	1							5	3.3 (1.2)
	White crappie		1	1	1	13	5	8	17	33	20	10	1		110	73.3 (15.0)
	Black crappie										1				1	0.7 (0.7)
Big Bone Creek	Bluegill	7	65	70	50	27	1								220	146.7 (26.5)
	Redear sunfish			3	3	3									9	6.0 (4.1)
	White crappie					2	2	5	7	8	5	6	3		38	25.3 (14.0)
	Black crappie								1						1	0.7 (0.7)
Gunpowder Creek	Bluegill	5	12	10	8										35	23.3 (11.0)
	Redear sunfish			1			1								2	1.3 (0.8)
	White crappie								1						1	0.7 (0.7)
	Black crappie						1	1							2	1.3 (0.8)
Woolper Creek	Bluegill	12	21	17	5	3									58	58.0 (22.9)
	Redear sunfish						1								1	1.0 (1.0)
	White crappie					2	7	4	6	3	8	3	2		35	35.0 (5.0)
	Black crappie						1	2		1					4	4.0 (2.3)
Total	Bluegill	30	137	166	132	64	4								533	76.1 (11.6)
	Redear sunfish			5	4	4	3	1		2					19	2.7 (1.0)
	White crappie		1	1	1	17	16	17	32	48	39	24	10		206	29.4 (6.5)
	Black crappie						2	3	1	2	1				9	1.3 (0.5)

Table 11. Fall electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four size groups of crappie from the Markland Pool of the Ohio River from 2015-2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group		Total
	<u>>8.0 in</u>	<u>≥10.0 in</u>	
<u>White crappie</u>			
2015	28.7 (5.4)	19.3 (4.1)	44.3 (8.9)
2019	28.4 (4.5)	16.8 (3.0)	44.8 (7.3)
2022	39.1 (10.3)	23.7 (6.2)	49.9 (13.5)
2025	24.3 (5.5)	17.3 (3.9)	29.4 (6.5)
Mean	30.3 (3.5)	19.3 (2.2)	42.3 (4.8)

	<u>>8.0 in</u>	<u>≥10.0 in</u>	Total
<u>Black crappie</u>			
2015	0.2 (0.2)	0.0	0.6 (0.3)
2019	0.6 (0.3)	0.0	2.2 (0.9)
2022	1.1 (0.5)	0.4 (0.2)	1.7 (0.6)
2025	1.0 (0.4)	0.4 (0.2)	1.3 (0.5)
Mean	0.7 (0.2)	0.2 (0.1)	1.5 (0.3)

Table 12. Relative weight (Wr) by length group estimates for each species of crappie collected from the Markland Pool in the Ohio River from fall 2015-2025.

White crappie relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	5.0-7.9 in	8.0-9.9 in	≥10.0 in	
2015	94	94	93	94
2019	93	90	85	89
2022	96	96	95	96
2025	100	90	87	90
Mean	95	92	90	92

Black crappie relative weight (Wr)				
Year	length group			Overall
	5.0-7.9 in	8.0-9.9 in	≥10.0 in	
2015	101	92	83	96
2019	99	98		99
2022	106	84	83	92
2025	97	89	87	90
Mean	101	91	84	94

Table 13. Electrofishing effort and CPUE (fish/hr) of *Sander spp.* collected during 3.0 hr of electrofishing in the Ohio River in December 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Tailwater	No. of transects	Effort (hr)	No. of sauger	CPUE
Markland	6	1.0	21	21.0 (6.2)
Cannelton	6	1.0	45	45.0 (25.5)
JT Myers	6	1.0	37	37.0 (16.4)
Total	18	3.0	103	
Mean				34.3 (10.0)

Table 14. CPUE (fish/hr) of sauger, walleye, and saugeye collected during electrofishing surveys on the Ohio River from 2014 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Species		
	Sauger	Walleye	Saugeye
2014	273.5 (48.0)	1.5 (1.1)	1.5 (0.8)
2015	213.0 (22.9)	1.0 (1.0)	0.0
2016	289.5 (61.8)	1.0 (1.0)	1.5 (1.1)
2017	75.3 (12.3)	3.3 (1.6)	1.0 (1.0)
2018	140.5 (28.9)	0.5 (0.5)	0.0
2019	199.5 (43.0)	2.5 (1.1)	0.0
2020	230.7 (37.0)	0.0	0.0
2021	104.0 (30.3)	0.0	0.0
2022	308.0 (56.1)	1.3 (0.8)	0.0
2023	133.3 (16.7)	5.2 (2.1)	0.0
2024	654.0 (154.3)	6.0 (4.0)	0.0
2025	34.3 (10.0)	0.0	0.0
Mean	197.6 (15.2)	1.8 (0.4)	0.3 (0.2)

Table 15. Length frequency, mean length, relative weight (Wr), and CPUE (fish/hr) of *Sander spp.* collected during 3.0 hr of electrofishing in the Ohio River in December 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Tailwater	Mean											Total	length (in)	Wr	CPUE
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17				
Markland		1	2	3	1	2	2	6	3		1	21	13.0	84	21.0 (6.2)
Cannelton	1		8	9	4	4	8	3	2	5	1	45	12.4	93	45.0 (25.5)
JT Myers		4	5	7	3	2	8	3	3	2		37	12.0	96	37.0 (16.4)
Total	1	5	15	19	8	8	18	12	8	7	2	103	12.4	92	34.3 (10.0)

Table 16. Electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four length groups of sauger from the Ohio River from 2014 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Markland tailwater length group				Total
	<8.0 in	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
2014	25.0 (5.6)	235.0 (61.5)	44.0 (15.1)	4.0 (1.2)	308.0 (78.1)
2015	47.0 (10.0)	101.0 (36.0)	39.0 (7.6)	5.0 (2.8)	192.0 (40.9)
2016	2.0 (1.2)	121.0 (25.6)	32.0 (10.2)	1.0 (1.0)	156.0 (33.1)
2017	2.0 (1.2)	63.0 (16.1)	52.0 (8.0)	7.0 (4.7)	124.0 (19.7)
2018	50.0 (23.8)	106.0 (23.0)	39.0 (13.4)	10.0 (4.5)	205.0 (39.1)
2019	4.0 (2.5)	129.0 (34.6)	41.0 (17.4)	8.0 (4.5)	182.0 (53.1)
2020	1.0 (1.0)	137.0 (23.2)	25.0 (4.1)	18.0 (7.9)	181.0 (29.7)
2021	38.0 (9.8)	48.0 (15.6)	15.0 (7.6)	3.0 (1.3)	104.0 (30.3)
2022	153.0 (43.0)	158.0 (27.0)	7.0 (4.7)	1.0 (1.0)	319.0 (60.5)
2023	70.0 (30.4)	39.0 (20.5)	15.0 (9.6)	2.0 (1.0)	126.0 (37.7)
2024	3.0 (1.3)	305.0 (71.9)	330.0 (94.9)	16.0 (6.7)	654.0 (154.3)
2025	0.0	7.0 (4.7)	10.0 (3.3)	4.0 (1.2)	21.0 (6.2)
Mean	32.9 (6.8)	120.8 (13.21)	54.1 (12.5)	6.6 (1.2)	214.3 (24.1)

	Cannelton tailwater length group				Total
	<8.0 in	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
2014	3.0 (2.0)	150.0 (32.3)	60.0 (21.4)	26.0 (11.5)	239.0 (59.9)
2015	17.0 (7.0)	178.0 (24.8)	34.0 (7.4)	5.0 (2.4)	234.0 (21.5)
2016	1.0 (1.0)	279.0 (60.6)	141.0 (37.8)	2.0 (2.0)	423.0 (93.1)
2017	4.0 (2.5)	36.0 (11.0)	22.0 (7.2)	6.0 (4.8)	68.0 (15.3)
2018	29.0 (12.7)	24.0 (5.0)	12.0 (7.3)	11.0 (3.9)	76.0 (23.3)
2019	1.0 (1.0)	166.0 (48.6)	38.0 (25.0)	12.0 (6.4)	217.0 (72.7)
2020	0.0 (0.0)	277.0 (35.8)	49.0 (7.4)	16.0 (5.6)	342.0 (31.2)
2022	200.0 (71.3)	218.0 (48.6)	69.0 (15.7)	1.0 (1.0)	488.0 (106.6)
2023	31.0 (9.0)	47.0 (10.5)	40.0 (13.0)	1.0 (1.0)	119.0 (8.2)
2025	1.0 (1.0)	21.0 (11.8)	15.0 (9.6)	8.0 (4.5)	45.0 (25.4)
Mean	28.7 (10.0)	139.6 (15.9)	48.0 (6.9)	8.8 (1.8)	225.1 (24.8)

	JT Myers tailwater length group				Total
	<8.0 in	8.0-11.9 in	12.0-14.9 in	≥15.0 in	
2017	0.0	9.0 (6.0)	13.0 (4.4)	12.0 (3.4)	34.0 (11.1)
2020	24.0 (19.0)	104.0 (70.9)	37.0 (8.0)	4.0 (3.0)	169.0 (92.4)
2022	34.0 (25.4)	64.0 (32.5)	16.0 (5.2)	3.0 (2.0)	117.0 (61.3)
2023	46.0 (14.3)	99.0 (19.1)	9.0 (3.4)	1.0 (1.0)	155.0 (34.3)
2025	0.0	19.0 (9.4)	13.0 (7.0)	5.0 (2.4)	37.0 (16.4)
Mean	20.8 (7.3)	59.0 (16.7)	17.6 (3.0)	5.0 (1.2)	102.4 (24.3)

Table 17. Mean length (in) at age calculated with the von Bertalanffy growth equation and total annual mortality (A) of sauger collected from the Markland, Cannelton, and JT Myers tailwaters of the Ohio River in December 2025.

Tailwater	Age				A
	1	2	3	4	
Markland	-	-	-	-	-
Cannelton	13.5	15.8	17.0	17.7	57.9
JT Myers	13.8	15.4	16.0		60.5
Total	13.4	15.5	16.8	17.7	59.7

Table 18. Age frequency and CPUE results for sauger collected in the Markland, Cannelton, and JT Myers tailwaters of the Ohio River in December 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Tailwater	Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total	%	CPUE
Markland	0		1	2	3								6	28.6%	6.0 (4.8)
	1					1	2	2	1				6	28.6%	6.0 (1.7)
	2								5	3			8	38.1%	8.0 (3.9)
	3											1	1	4.8%	1.0 (1.0)
	Total		1	2	3	1	2	2	6	3		1	21	100%	21.0 (6.2)
Cannelton	0	1		8	9	3	1						22	48.9%	22.0 (10.9)
	1					1	3	7	3				14	31.1%	14.0 (7.4)
	2							1		2	4		7	15.6%	6.0 (3.3)
	3										1		1	2.2%	1.0 (1.0)
	4											1	1	2.2%	1.0 (1.0)
	Total	1		8	9	4	4	8	3	2	5	1	45	100%	45.0 (25.5)
JT Myers	0		4	5	7	3	1						20	54.1%	20.0 (9.2)
	1						1	8	2		1		12	32.4%	12.0 (5.1)
	2								1	3			4	10.8%	4.0 (2.0)
	3										1		1	2.7%	1.0 (1.0)
	Total		4	5	7	3	2	8	3	3	2		37	100%	37.0 (16.4)
Total	0	1	5	15	19	6	2						48	46.6%	16.0 (5.4)
	1					2	6	17	6		1		32	31.1%	10.7 (3.2)
	2							1	6	8	4		19	18.4%	6.3 (1.7)
	3										2	1	3	2.9%	1.0 (0.5)
	4											1	1	1.0%	0.3 (0.3)
	Total	1	5	15	19	8	8	18	12	8	7		103	100%	34.3 (10.0)

Project II: Evaluation of new recreational and commercial regulations on catfish in the Ohio River

FINDINGS

Commercial fishing for catfish has long existed on the Ohio River; however, harvesting trophy-sized fish to sell to pay lake owners has become more prevalent while a market for flesh also remains popular. At the same time, catch and release trophy catfishing has become extremely popular for recreational anglers on the Ohio River. Different viewpoints on how the fishery should be managed has led to conflict between recreational anglers and commercial anglers. Recreational catfish anglers came to KDFWR asking for more stringent regulation for both recreational and commercial anglers, because of a perceived decline in trophy catfish numbers. KDFWR began looking at some basic population parameters of the three major catfish species (blue catfish, channel catfish, flathead catfish) in the Ohio River beginning in 2004. The study was initiated to obtain baseline information on length frequency, weight, and age profiles of these three species and determine methods to more effectively sample each of these species. The conflict was again brought up at a commission meeting in 2012 and it was decided that one additional year of intense sampling would be conducted before a decision on potential regulations was made. Data prior to 2013 was collected from different pools each year and lacked the consistency and standardization to effectively monitor trends of catfish populations in the Ohio River. In 2013 methods for all gear types were standardized and additional effort was put towards sampling to more accurately estimate population dynamics of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish in the Ohio River.

A public meeting was held in October 2013 to present catfish data that had been gathered during this project and discuss potential regulations that may be put in place. Both recreational and commercial anglers were in attendance and given the opportunity to share their thoughts and suggestions. In November 2013, the following regulations designed to give some protection to trophy catfish were proposed to the Fisheries Committee:

Recreational anglers on the main-stem Ohio River will be allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day. Harvest of fish below their respective length limits will not be regulated.

The majority of commercial fishers fishing in the legal waters of the Ohio River and its tributaries will be allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day. However, 44 commercial fishers that harvested over 10,000 lbs of catfish in at least 2 of the last 3 years along with an additional six commercial fishers, who will be chosen by a lottery drawing, will be allowed a daily harvest of four (in aggregate) blue catfish and flathead catfish ≥ 40.0 in and channel catfish ≥ 30.0 inches in Kentucky's portion of the Ohio River and its tributaries open to commercial fishing below Cannelton Lock and Dam. Harvest of fish below their respective length limits will not be regulated.

After hearing comments from stakeholders in attendance and discussion with the Fisheries Division Director, the Fisheries Committee voted unanimously to pass the proposed regulations on to the full Commission. The regulations were passed by the full Commission at their meeting in December 2013. In June 2014, the regulation was made law; however, an injunction on the regulation was filed by commercial fishers shortly after its enactment and regulations on commercial fishers were not enforceable until December 1, 2014.

Accusations by recreational anglers that overharvest was still occurring on the Ohio River surfaced again in 2018. A working group comprised of the KDFWR Fisheries Committee, KDFWR Director of Fisheries and staff biologist, recreational anglers, commercial fishermen, and paylake owners was formed so that all parties were represented in discussions. Multiple workgroup meetings were held to work towards another compromise. Several regulations were proposed and submitted for review. At the time of this report the following regulations have been made law:

The number of commercial fishers awarded trophy permits is 15 (previously 50).

No more than two licensed commercial fisherman per boat. If more are present, they may only keep two limits of trophy catfish.

A possession limit (twice the daily limit) was placed on trophy catfish for commercial fishers. This applies when on the water and when trailering fish.

Regulations talk resurfaced once again, and KDFWR suggested the following regulations which were passed unanimously by the Commission in 2023 and became law in 2024:

All commercial fishers are allowed one blue catfish ≥ 35.0 in, one flathead catfish ≥ 35.0 in, and one channel catfish ≥ 28.0 in per day on commercially fishable waters statewide. Trophy permit harvest is now only allowed on the Ohio River from Cannelton Dam downriver to the Ohio River's confluence with the Mississippi River.

Commercial fishing on several waterbodies across the state was closed permanently due to low use, low harvest, and/or low abundance of fish (identified by KDFWR sampling).

A compilation of all 2025 catfish sampling activities is summarized in Table 1.

Trotline Surveys

During summer 2025 trotlines (50 hooks/line) baited with fresh cut rough fish (primarily smallmouth buffalo and silver carp) were used to sample blue catfish. KDFWR crews completed sampling in the Meldahl, Cannelton, and Smithland pools of the Ohio River, and Indiana Department of Natural Resources sampled the JT Myers Pool. One hundred twelve total trotlines were fished throughout those pools: 36 in Meldahl Pool, 32 in Cannelton Pool, 32 in JT Myers Pool, and 12 in Smithland Pool (Table 2). CPUE of blue catfish (CPUE=5.7 fish/line) was slightly higher than 2024 (5.3 fish/line) and also slightly higher than the historical average (5.6 fish/line; Table 3).

Blue catfish collected with trotlines ranged from 12.8 – 49.4 in with a mean length of 28.4 in (Table 4). Trophy blue catfish were captured in all pools sampled during trotline sampling and accounted for 10.5% of the total sample (identical to 2024 but up from 8.2% in 2022 and from 9.6% in 2023). Trotline catch rates for different size groups of each species of catfish were also examined (Table 5). Due to the change in trotline methods in 2018, comparisons with previously collected data should be made with caution. Most notably, a 0.5 fishline increase was seen in fish 30.0 – 34.9 inches. All other size groups examined were similar to 2024 catch rates.

Trotline CPUE and size structure of blue catfish in the JT Myers and Smithland pool was once again lower than expected based on findings in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools. The Meldahl and Cannelton pools have displayed consistently higher CPUE (total and trophy fish) than the JT Myers and Smithland pools since 2017. The majority of commercial harvest occurs on the trophy permit section, and invasive carp biomass is continually increasing in this part of the river. Both of these factors could play a role in lower catch rates. Electrofishing CPUE and size structure don't follow this same trend. Differences in available habitat and behavioral tendencies (due to invasive carp) are potential causes for this difference in catchability. If results from different gear types start to align, potential changes in harvest regulations should be examined. Of note, CPUE of blue catfish in the Cannelton Pools was considerably lower than years past, and will be closely monitored to see if this trend continues.

Hoop Net Surveys

Channel catfish hoop net surveys—Department hoop netting was conducted in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools to gather data from hoop net catch of channel catfish. Hoop netting was not conducted in the Smithland Pool due to extended flooding. Single nets baited with ZOTE[®] soap were set overnight for three consecutive net nights in the main stem of the Ohio River. Hoop nets were fished for a total of 117 net-nights: 60 in Meldahl Pool and 57 in Cannelton Pool (Table 6). Overall catch rate of channel

catfish was 3.4 fish/net-night, increasing for the second consecutive year and nearing the historical average (3.4 fish/net-night; Table 7).

Lengths of channel catfish ranged from 5.3 – 28.3 in with a mean length of 15.1 in (Table 8). One trophy channel catfish was captured in the Cannelton Pool and accounted for less than 1.0% of the total catch. Hoop net catch rates were also examined for different size groups of channel catfish. Channel catfish catch rates for the <12.0 in and 12.0 – 19.9 in size groups saw increases from 2024 levels (Table 9).

Flathead catfish hoop net surveys—Netting was conducted simultaneously with baited channel catfish hoop nets in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools. Singles nets were set overnight for three consecutive nights in the main stem of the Ohio River. Hoop nets were fished for a total of 111 net-nights: 51 in the Meldahl Pool and 60 in the Cannelton Pool (Table 10). Overall CPUE of flathead catfish was 0.8 fish/net-night which is slightly lower than 2024 (1.0 fish/net-night) and below the historical average (Table 11).

Lengths of flathead catfish ranged from 13.2 – 44.8 in with a mean length of 27.7 in (Table 12). Hoop net catch rates of different size groups were also examined. CPUE for all size classes except the 20.0 – 29.9 in size group were identical to 2023 and 2024 catch rates (Table 13). Trophy flathead catfish (≥35.0 in) were observed in all pools sampled and captured at 0.1 fish/net-night. Trophy flathead catfish accounted for 15.2% of the total catch in 2025.

Catch rates of both channel catfish and flathead catfish in hoop nets have been steadily declining over the past 4 – 7 years. Hoop net CPUE can be highly influenced by flow and temperature. Unseasonably low flow in 2023 and 2024 and below average water temperatures during the 2023, 2024, and 2025 sampling seasons likely had negative impacts on catch rates. Electrofishing catch rates of flathead catfish have been increasing since 2004 and typically provide a more accurate representation in years when hoop net sampling conditions are not ideal.

Electrofishing Surveys

Low-pulse DC electrofishing was conducted in seven pools in June 2025: Meldahl, Markland, McAlpine, Cannelton, Newburgh, JT Myers, and Smithland. Due to high water and inaccessible ramps, only partial samples were conducted in the Meldahl, Markland, JT Myers, and Smithland pools. A total of 30.0 hr of electrofishing effort was conducted resulting in a total catch of 613 blue catfish and 1,041 flathead catfish (Table 14). Overall CPUE of blue catfish was 20.4 fish/hr which is slightly below the historical average of 21.5 fish/hr (Table 15). Overall flathead catfish CPUE was 34.7 fish/hr, the lowest since 2014 and below the historical average (42.0 fish/hr).

Blue catfish collected with electrofishing ranged from 3.5 – 44.7 in with a mean length of 14.6 in (Table 16). Electrofishing catch rates were also examined for different size groups of blue catfish (Table 17). CPUE of blue catfish in the <12.0 in and 12.0 – 19.9 in size groups increase from 2023 levels while all other size groups saw decreases from 2023 catch rates. Trophy blue catfish were observed in the McAlpine, Newburgh, JT Myers and Smithland pools (Table 16).

Flathead catfish lengths ranged from 3.4 – 41.8 in with a mean length of 15.0 in (Table 16). Electrofishing CPUE for all size groups examined were lower than 2023 catch rates and below their historical averages (Table 18). Trophy flathead catfish were observed in all pools sampled except the McAlpine and Cannelton pools (Table 16).

Catch rates of both blue catfish and flathead catfish were variable between and among pools. Many pools displayed catch rates below their respective historical averages. Sampling occurred within the same time frame as normal; however, water temperatures at the start of the sampling period were below average and above average in the latter portion of sampling. This coupled with higher than average flows during the sampling period may account for the variability and below average catch rates.

Relative Weight

Relative weight (Wr) was also calculated for each species of catfish. Fish collected from all sampling methods used in 2025 were combined to provide a more representative estimate for the entire population of each catfish species. Overall Wr of blue catfish (N=996) in 2025 was 105 (Table 19). Flathead catfish (N=1,033) overall relative weight was 106, and channel catfish (N=342) overall relative weight was 86. Blue catfish and flathead catfish were at or near historical averages; however, channel catfish relative weight was the second lowest on record.

Mortality

Total annual mortality estimates were made on all three species of catfish based off length-at-age of capture data from otoliths and paired with unaged catfish collected with multiple sampling techniques in 2023. Length frequency data from 2025 was paired with the 2022/2023 age-length key to provide mortality estimates. Using Fishery Analysis and Modeling Simulator (FAMS), a separate weighted catch-curve regression was run on each species of catfish for each sampling method to calculate a range of total annual mortality estimates. As a precautionary step, the highest mortality estimate calculated for each species is reported to avoid underestimates and potentially masking problems in the populations. In 2025, river-wide total annual mortality for blue catfish was 19.5%. Channel catfish total annual mortality was 23.6%, and flathead catfish total annual mortality was 18.0% (Table 20). Estimates for all species were near their historical averages.

Commercial Fishing Industry

Commercial fishing for catfish has long been present in the Ohio River, but concerns of potential overharvest have warranted further investigations. Harvest of blue catfish has been fairly stable since record keeping began in 1999 (Figure 1). Low points in blue catfish harvest are likely related to extended high water that did not allow gear to be effectively fished. Record harvest of blue catfish (388,274 lbs) was observed in 2021. Channel catfish harvest has been lower than blue catfish. Harvest of channel catfish increased from 2002 – 2011 then gradually declined from 2013 - 2025. Channel catfish harvest in 2025 was 56,251 lbs which is the second lowest harvest ever recorded. Flathead catfish harvest has mirrored channel catfish harvest since records began in 1999 and began decreasing in 2013. Flathead catfish harvest in 2025 was 96,744 lbs which was a 30,000 lbs increase from 2024 but nearly 20,000 lbs below the historical average harvest.

Unfortunately, commercial fish harvest reports do not include detailed information about gear (number of net nights, baited vs. unbaited, length of gillnet, etc.); however, the number of hooks fished for trotlines as well as number of hoop nets fished is required to be reported. Although trotline and hoop net harvest should not be considered indicative of the entire commercial catfish harvest, it is the best available method to analyze trends in commercial catfish harvest rates. Effort (number of hooks for trotlines and number of nets for hoop nets) and pounds harvested by method were examined to determine if harvest rates varied over the years. Trotlines are more effective at capturing blue catfish, while hoop nets are more effective when targeting flathead catfish according to commercial harvest data. Channel catfish appear to be captured efficiently by both trotlines and hoop nets. Each species was examined according to the most effective gear. The harvest rate of blue catfish increased gradually from 1999 – 2022; however, the previous three years have all been records highs. One low point in harvest in 2004 was likely a result of high water/poor fishing conditions (Figure 2). Recent years with decreases in total pounds of catfish harvested are likely not a result of decreased harvest rates, but rather a decrease in effort. The harvest rate remaining high in years where harvest is lower indicates that the amount of fish harvested is not solely a result of increased effort. Channel catfish trotline harvest rates has been extremely consistent since 1999 (Figure 2). Channel catfish and flathead catfish harvest in commercial nets have both typically remained between 5 – 15 pounds/net since 1999; however, a drastic spike in harvest occurred in 2012 and 2013 (Figure 3). Reasons for this extreme peak in harvest are not known, but could be a result of prolonged favorable fishing conditions or demand for fish.

Beginning in 2015, commercial harvesters were required to begin reporting the total number of each species of catfish harvested as well as total trophies of each species of catfish harvested. This allowed for tracking trophy harvested trends as well as average weight per fish. These metrics are important to determine if there is a potential shift in commercial harvest towards larger fish. Harvest rates of trophy catfish, particularly blue catfish and flathead catfish have seen slight increase; however, harvest rate of these fish is likely lower than before the initial regulations were put in place in 2015. Perhaps more revealing is the increase in average weight of fish harvested. Since these additional metrics have been tracked the average weight of blue catfish and flathead catfish harvested have nearly doubled (Figure 4). While this could be an indicator that the average size of fish in the population is increasing, it may also point towards a shift of larger fish due to increased demand for trophy fish in pay lakes. Commercial harvest of blue catfish with trotlines and flathead catfish with hoop nets indicates this same trend of increasing average size of fish harvested. Standardized trotline and hoop net sampling by KDFWR does not follow this same trend, as average size of blue catfish has remained extremely stable since 2018 and average size of flathead catfish has not seen as steep of an increase (Figure 5). Once again, this may point towards increasing demand for larger fish.

In 2025 KDFWR Law Enforcement Division carried out Operation River Raid which amounted to over 700 criminal charges against 25 commercial harvesters. Charges included illegal commercial harvest, unlawful operation of pay lakes, and extreme underreporting of fish harvested. More than 300,000 lbs of harvested catfish were not reported in this case. That equates to 67% of the total reported harvest of all catfish in 2025. It is unknown if this underreporting is an isolated case or if it is normal practice, but it puts doubt in the long-term accuracy of commercial reporting. As such, population level data collection by KDFWR using standardized methods is now even more important.

Table 1. Summary of 2025 catfish sampling sites by waterbody, pool, river mileage, sampling method, species (B=blue catfish, C=channel catfish, and F=flathead catfish), date, and river conditions.

Waterbody	Pool	Location	River mile	Sampling method	Species	Date	Water temp.	Water level (USGS gauge station)	Comments
Ohio River	Meldahl	Dover	411.8 - 420.5	Hoop nets	C,F	4/29/2025	60.5	24.72' @ Greenup Dam	Setting nets
Ohio River	Meldahl	Dover	411.8 - 420.5	Hoop nets	C,F	5/2/2025	62.5	22.34' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling nets
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	392.2 - 400.3	Hoop nets	C,F	5/12/2025	62.0	26.83' @ Greenup Dam	Setting nets
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	392.2 - 400.3	Hoop nets	C,F	5/15/2025	63.1	26.58' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling nets
Ohio River	Cannelton	Cloverport	703.0 - 710.8	Hoop nets	C,F	5/27/2005	63.2	24.29' @ Louisville, KY	Setting nets
Ohio River	Cannelton	Cloverport	703.0 - 710.8	Hoop nets	C,F	5/30/2025	65.1	20.84' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling nets
Ohio River	Meldahl	Maysville	406.8 - 409.5	Electrofishing	B,F	6/2/2025	63.2	33.87' @ Greenup Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Meldahl	Augusta	423.0 - 426.6	Electrofishing	B,F	6/2/2025	63.2	33.87' @ Greenup Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Markland	Frederick's Landing	465.0 - 470.0	Electrofishing	B,F	6/3/2025	64.3	36.18' @ Cincinnati, OH	Annual sample
Ohio River	Markland	Petersburg	495.5 - 497.8	Electrofishing	B,F	6/3/2025	64.3	36.18' @ Cincinnati, OH	Annual sample
Ohio River	Markland	Big Bone Creek	512.1 - 515.5	Electrofishing	B,F	6/3/2025	64.3	36.18' @ Cincinnati, OH	Annual sample
Ohio River	Markland	Big Sugar Creek	519.2 - 523.1	Electrofishing	B,F	6/3/2025	64.3	36.18' @ Cincinnati, OH	Annual sample
Ohio River	Meldahl	Whealersburg	341.0 - 343.5	Electrofishing	B,F	6/4/2025	64.5	22.51' @ Greenup Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	395.3 - 398.3	Electrofishing	B,F	6/4/2025	63.8	22.51' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling nets
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	675.3 - 681.0	Hoop nets	C,F	6/9/2025	66.3	24.98' @ Louisville, KY	Setting nets
Ohio River	McAlpine	Ghent	533.0 - 535.8	Electrofishing	B,F	6/10/2025	68.7	28.49' @ Markland Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	McAlpine	Carrolton	542.8 - 546.2	Electrofishing	B,F	6/10/2025	69.1	28.49' @ Markland Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	McAlpine	Milton	557.2 - 560.3	Electrofishing	B,F	6/11/2025	69.1	28.59' @ Markland Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	McAlpine	Westport	578.3 - 580.0	Electrofishing	B,F	6/11/2025	70.7	28.59' @ Markland Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	675.3 - 681.0	Hoop nets	C,F	6/12/2025	67.6	29.11' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling nets
Ohio River	McAlpine	Cox's Park	595.2 - 598.4	Electrofishing	B,F	6/16/2025	72.9	21.65' @ Markland Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Cannelton	Greenwood	616.2 - 619.5	Electrofishing	B,F	6/16/2025	73.2	21.26' @ Louisville, KY	Annual sample
Ohio River	Cannelton	Brandenburg	636.8 - 644.0	Electrofishing	B,F	6/17/2025	73.4	23.95' @ Louisville, KY	Annual sample
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	671.5 - 683.2	Electrofishing	B,F	6/24/2025	75.5	26.11' @ Louisville, KY	Annual sample
Ohio River	Cannelton	Cloverport	708.2 - 710.0	Electrofishing	B,F	6/24/2025	78.5	26.11' @ Louisville, KY	Annual sample
Ohio River	Newburgh	Hawesville	720.7 - 723.9	Electrofishing	B,F	6/24/2025	77.7	22.56' @ Cannelton Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Newburgh	Owensboro	753.7 - 762.5	Electrofishing	B,F	6/25/2025	78.9	19.05' @ Cannelton Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Newburgh	Lewisport	733.3 - 739.3	Electrofishing	B,F	6/26/2025	80.0	16.67' @ Cannelton Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Newburgh	Little Pigeon Creek	773.0 - 775.4	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	78.9	14.71' @ Cannelton Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	JT Myers	Newburgh Tailwater	777.2 - 780.0	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	78.9	18.67' @ Newburgh Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	JT Myers	Diamond Island	818.5 - 821.9	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	77.1	18.67' @ Newburgh Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Smithland	Old Shawneetown	858.0 - 861.7	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	84.3	19.60' @ JT Myers Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Smithland	Carrsville	890.9 - 894.8	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	82.8	19.60' @ JT Myers Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Smithland	Birdsville	912.7 - 915.7	Electrofishing	B,F	6/30/2025	82.1	19.60' @ JT Myers Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	JT Myers	Uniontown	841.5 - 845.2	Electrofishing	B,F	7/1/2025	82.1	18.35' @ Newburgh Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Smithland	JT Myers Tailwater	846.1 - 848.0	Electrofishing	B,F	7/1/2025	81.2	19.40' @ JT Myers Dam	Annual sample
Ohio River	Meldahl	Dover	415.5 - 423.0	Trotlines	B	7/8/2025	81.0	16.13' @ Greenup Dam	Setting lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Dover	415.5 - 423.0	Trotlines	B	7/9/2025	81.0	14.65' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling/resetting lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Dover	415.5 - 423.0	Trotlines	B	7/10/2025	82.7	15.07' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	671.0 - 681.2	Trotlines	B	7/15/2025	83.1	12.54' @ Louisville, KY	Setting lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	671.0 - 681.2	Trotlines	B	7/16/2025	83.1	14.44' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling/resetting lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Wolf Creek	671.0 - 681.2	Trotlines	B	7/17/2025	83.4	14.88' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling lines
Ohio River	JT Myers	Newburgh	776.1 - 787.0	Trotlines	B	7/28/2025	89.0	14.72' @ Newburgh Dam	Setting lines (INDNR)
Ohio River	JT Myers	Newburgh	776.1 - 787.0	Trotlines	B	7/29/2025	88.0	14.78' @ Newburgh Dam	Pulling/resetting lines (INDNR)
Ohio River	JT Myers	Newburgh	776.1 - 787.0	Trotlines	B	7/30/2025	88.0	16.84' @ Newburgh Dam	Pulling lines (INDNR)
Ohio River	JT Myers	Mount Vernon	829.0 - 835.0	Trotlines	B	8/5/2025	85.0	14.47' @ Newburgh Dam	Setting lines (INDNR)

Table 1. Continued

Waterbody	Pool	Location	River mile		Species	Date	Water temp.	Water level (USGS gauge station)	Comments
Ohio River	JT Myers	Mount Vernon	829.0 - 835.0	Trotlines	B	8/6/2025	85.0	13.61' @ Newburgh Dam	Pulling/resetting lines (INDNR)
Ohio River	JT Myers	Mount Vernon	829.0 - 835.0	Trotlines	B	8/7/2025	87.0	13.97' @ Newburgh Dam	Pulling lines (INDNR)
Ohio River	Cannelton	Brandenburg	638.3 - 649.3	Trotlines	B	7/29/2025	84.3	15.06' @ Louisville, KY	Setting lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Brandenburg	638.3 - 649.3	Trotlines	B	7/30/2025	84.6	17.06' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	390.1 - 401.2	Trotlines	B	8/5/2025	84.1	14.25' @ Greenup Dam	Setting lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	390.1 - 401.2	Trotlines	B	8/6/2025	84.5	12.95' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling/resetting lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Manchester Island	390.1 - 401.2	Trotlines	B	8/7/2025	82.4	13.09' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling lines
Ohio River	Smithland	Birdsville	905.0 - 917.2	Trotlines	B	8/11/2025	84.1	14.27' @ JT Myers Dam	Setting lines
Ohio River	Smithland	Birdsville	905.0 - 917.2	Trotlines	B	8/12/2025	85.0	12.46' @ JT Myers Dam	Pulling lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Cloverport	701.5 - 715.1	Trotlines	B	8/14/2025	86.1	9.52' @ Louisville, KY	Setting lines
Ohio River	Cannelton	Cloverport	701.5 - 715.1	Trotlines	B	8/15/2025	87.2	13.75' @ Louisville, KY	Pulling lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Wheelersburg	342.5 - 352.6	Trotlines	B	8/19/2025	85.7	13.53' @ Greenup Dam	Setting lines
Ohio River	Meldahl	Wheelersburg	342.5 - 352.6	Trotlines	B	8/20/2025	85.7	13.29' @ Greenup Dam	Pulling lines

Table 2. CPUE (fish/line) of blue catfish collected during trotline surveys on the Ohio River in summer 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	No. of trotlines	No. of Blue Catfish	CPUE
Meldahl	36	367	10.2 (0.7)
Cannelton	32	183	5.7 (0.5)
JT Myers	32	55	1.7 (0.4)
Smithland	12	31	2.6 (0.4)
Total	112	636	5.7 (0.4)

Table 3. CPUE (fish/line) of blue catfish collected during trotline surveys on the Ohio River during summer from 2004 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	CPUE
2004	1.5 (0.3)
2005	1.5 (0.4)
2006	6.6 (1.2)
2007	2.4 (0.5)
2008	5.9 (0.7)
2010	4.0 (0.4)
2011	3.9 (0.6)
2012	3.0 (0.8)
2013	1.2 (0.2)
2014	1.3 (0.1)
2015	1.6 (0.2)
2016	2.8 (0.2)
2017	2.0 (0.2)
2018*	5.2 (0.4)
2019*	5.9 (0.4)
2020*	5.4 (0.3)
2022*	7.1 (0.6)
2023*	5.3 (0.4)
2024*	5.3 (0.4)
2025*	5.7 (0.4)
Mean**	5.6 (0.2)

*New methods were adopted for trotlining including changes in bait and style of dropper lines.

**Mean calculated from 2018 - 2023 data after changing methods.

Table 4. Length frequency and CPUE (fish/line) of blue catfish collected during trotline surveys on Ohio River in summer 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	Inch class																																																	Total	CPUE
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49													
Meldahl	1		1		3	1	4	3	4	6	1	9	14	18	27	34	43	43	26	37	38	13	12	8	7	3	5		1	2	2		1											367	10.2 (0.7)						
Cannelton				1	2		6	3	5	2	8	4	10	12	9	17	19	12	9	10	18	11	4	4		3	3	5		2	1	1	1								1	183	5.7 (0.5)								
JT Myers			1			2	2	4	4	5	6	2	2	1	5	1	2	5	1	3	2	1	4				1						1											55	1.7 (0.4)						
Smithland	1	1	1							3	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	2		2	1	2																			31	2.6 (0.4)						
Total	2	2	3	2	5	9	11	12	14	21	8	22	30	33	46	56	63	54	42	59	50	23	17	10	10	10		3	3	5	2	1									1	636	5.7 (0.4)								

Table 5. CPUE (fish/line) by size group of blue catfish collected during trotline surveys on the Ohio River during summer from 2004 - 2023. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Size group (in)					Total
	<12.0	12.0 - 19.9	20.0 - 29.9	30.0 - 34.9	≥35.0	
2004	0.0	0.3 (0.2)	0.9 (0.2)	0.3 (0.2)	0.1 (0.1)	1.5 (0.3)
2005	0.0	<0.1 (<0.1)	1.0 (0.6)	0.2 (0.1)	0.2 (0.1)	1.5 (0.4)
2006	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.8 (0.2)	5.0 (1.0)	0.6 (0.2)	0.2 (0.1)	6.6 (1.2)
2007	0.0	0.3 (0.1)	1.5 (0.4)	0.5 (0.2)	0.1 (<0.1)	2.4 (0.5)
2008	0.0	0.6 (0.2)	4.1 (0.8)	1.0 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	5.9 (0.7)
2010	0.0	0.2 (<0.1)	1.9 (0.3)	1.1 (0.3)	0.7 (0.2)	4.0 (0.4)
2011	0.0	0.2 (0.1)	2.7 (0.5)	0.9 (0.3)	0.3 (0.1)	3.9 (0.6)
2012	0.1 (<0.1)	0.7 (0.3)	1.7 (0.3)	0.3 (0.2)	0.2 (0.1)	3.0 (0.8)
2013	0.1 (<0.1)	0.3 (0.1)	0.6 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	<0.1 (<0.1)	1.2 (0.2)
2014	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	0.2 (<0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	1.3 (0.1)
2015	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.5 (0.2)	0.7 (0.2)	0.3 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	1.6 (0.2)
2016	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.7 (0.2)	1.5 (0.4)	0.5 (0.2)	0.1 (<0.1)	2.8 (0.2)
2017	0.0	0.3 (0.1)	1.4 (0.1)	0.2 (<0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	2.0 (0.2)
2018*	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.3 (0.1)	3.2 (0.3)	0.9 (0.1)	0.8 (0.1)	5.2 (0.4)
2019*	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.2 (<0.1)	4.2 (0.3)	0.9 (0.1)	0.6 (0.1)	5.9 (0.4)
2020*	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	3.9 (0.2)	0.7 (0.1)	0.7 (0.1)	5.4 (0.3)
2022*	.03 (.02)	0.3 (0.1)	5.1 (0.5)	1.1 (0.2)	0.6 (0.1)	7.1 (0.6)
2023*	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.4 (0.1)	3.3 (0.3)	1.1 (0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	5.3 (0.4)
2024*	0.0	0.2 (0.1)	3.3 (0.3)	1.2 (0.1)	0.6 (0.1)	5.3 (0.4)
2025*	0.0	0.4 (0.1)	3.1 (0.3)	1.7 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	5.7 (0.4)
Mean**	<0.1 (<0.1)	0.3 (<0.1)	3.6 (0.1)	1.1 (0.1)	0.6 (<0.1)	5.6 (0.2)

*New methods were adopted for trotlining including changes in bait and style of dropper lines.

**Mean calculated from 2018 - 2023 data after changing methods.

Table 6. CPUE (fish/net-night) of channel catfish collected during baited hoop net surveys in Meldahl and Cannelton pools of the Ohio River in spring 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	Effort (net nights)	No. of channel catfish	CPUE
Meldahl	60	155	2.6 (0.8)
Cannelton	57	237	4.2 (1.2)
Total	117	392	3.4 (0.7)

Table 7. CPUE (fish/net-night) of channel catfish collected during baited hoop net surveys on the Ohio River in spring 2017 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	CPUE
2017	7.0 (1.0)
2018	3.8 (0.5)
2019	4.5 (0.8)
2021	2.4 (0.5)
2022	2.1 (0.4)
2023	1.3 (0.3)
2024	2.6 (0.6)
2025	3.4 (0.7)
Mean	3.6 (0.3)

Table 8. Length frequency and CPUE (fish/net-night) of channel catfish collected during baited hoop net sampling in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools during spring 2025 on the Ohio River. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Total	CPUE
Meldahl	1		1	2	5	13	15	7	9	16	21	16	10	7	7	9	7	2	2	2	1	1	1		155	2.6 (0.8)
Cannelton	1	1	1	3	5	14	25	17	17	40	32	23	27	9	10	3	4	3	1					1	237	4.2 (1.2)
Total	2	1	2	5	10	27	40	24	26	56	53	39	37	16	17	12	11	5	3	2	1	1	1	1	392	3.4 (0.7)

Table 9. CPUE (fish/net-night) by size group of channel catfish collected during baited hoop net surveys on the Ohio River in spring 2017 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Size group (in)				Total
	<12.0	12.0 - 19.9	20.0 - 27.9	≥28.0	
2017	1.5 (0.3)	4.5 (0.7)	1.0 (0.2)	<0.1 (<0.1)	7.0 (1.0)
2018	0.7 (0.1)	2.5 (0.4)	0.6 (0.1)	<0.1 (<0.1)	3.8 (0.5)
2019	0.8 (0.2)	2.6 (0.5)	1.0 (0.3)	<0.1 (<0.1)	4.5 (0.8)
2021	0.6 (0.1)	1.3 (0.4)	0.5 (0.1)	0.0	2.4 (0.5)
2022	0.6 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)	0.5 (0.2)	<0.1 (<0.1)	2.1 (0.4)
2023	0.3 (0.1)	0.8 (0.2)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.0	1.3 (0.3)
2024	0.4 (0.1)	1.7 (0.5)	0.4 (0.2)	<0.1 (<0.1)	2.6 (0.6)
2025	0.7 (0.1)	2.3 (0.6)	0.3 (0.1)	<0.1 (<0.1)	3.4 (0.7)
Mean	0.7 (0.1)	2.3 (0.2)	0.6 (0.1)	<0.1 (<0.1)	3.6 (0.3)

Table 10. CPUE (fish/net-night) of flathead catfish collected during unbaited hoop net surveys in Meldahl and Cannelton pools of the Ohio River in spring 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	Effort (net nights)	No. of Flathead Catfish	CPUE
Meldahl	51	44	0.9 (0.2)
Cannelton	60	48	0.8 (0.2)
Total	111	92	0.8 (0.1)

Table 11. CPUE (fish/net-night) of flathead catfish collected during unbaited hoop net surveys on the Ohio River in spring 2017 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	CPUE
2019	1.8 (0.2)
2021	0.8 (0.2)
2022	1.5 (0.2)
2023	0.6 (0.1)
2024	1.0 (0.2)
2025	0.8 (0.1)
Mean	1.1 (0.1)

Table 12. Length frequency and CPUE (fish/net/night) of flathead catfish collected during unbaited hoop net sampling in the Meldahl and Cannelton pools during spring 2025 on the Ohio River. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	Inch class																																Total	CPUE
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44		
Meldahl	1					1	3	1	3	2	3	3	5	5	2	2	1	1	1		2		2		2	1		1	1			1	44	0.9 (0.2)
Cannelton		1					3	1	3	6	1	3	4	3	4	1		2	1	1	5	3		1	2			1		1		1	48	0.8 (0.2)
Total	1	1				1	6	2	6	8	4	6	9	8	6	3	1	3	2	1	7	3	2	1	4	1		2	1	1		2	92	0.8 (0.1)

Table 13. CPUE (fish/net-night) by size group of flathead catfish collected during unbaited hoopnet surveys on the Ohio River in spring 2019 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Size group (in)					Total
	<12.0	12.0 - 19.9	20.0 - 29.9	30.0 - 34.9	≥35.0	
2019	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	1.1 (0.1)	0.3 (0.1)	0.2 (0.1)	1.8 (0.2)
2021	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.5 (0.2)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.8 (0.2)
2022	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.9 (<0.1)	0.3 (0.1)	0.2 (0.1)	1.5 (0.2)
2023	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.4 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.6 (0.1)
2024	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.7 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	1.0 (0.2)
2025	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.8 (0.1)
Mean	0.0	0.1 (<0.1)	0.7 (0.1)	0.2 (<0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	1.1 (0.1)

Table 14. Effort and CPUE (fish/hr) of blue catfish and flathead catfish collected during electrofishing surveys on the Ohio River in June 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Pool	No. of transects	Effort (hr)	No. of Blue Catfish		No. of Flathead	
				CPUE		CPUE
Meldahl	16	4.0	92	23.0 (7.9)	180	45.0 (6.1)
Markland	16	4.0	193	48.3 (16.5)	141	35.3 (4.5)
McAlpine	20	5.0	97	19.4 (7.2)	109	21.8 (3.2)
Cannelton	20	5.0	84	16.8 (4.0)	125	25.0 (3.7)
Newburgh	20	5.0	27	5.4 (1.8)	132	26.4 (4.2)
JT Myers	12	3.0	38	12.7 (5.1)	139	46.3 (10.2)
Smithland	16	4.0	82	20.5 (5.8)	215	53.8 (15.4)
Total	120	30.0	613	20.4 (3.1)	1041	34.7 (2.9)

Table 15. CPUE (fish/hr) of blue catfish and flathead catfish collected during electrofishing surveys on the Ohio River from 2004 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Species	
	Blue catfish	Flathead catfish
2004	0.0	14.5 (4.1)
2009	1.6 (0.8)	15.5 (4.1)
2010	11.9 (4.0)	17.1 (3.3)
2013	11.4 (4.8)	38.9 (5.1)
2014	19.3 (3.2)	32.8 (2.6)
2015	19.0 (3.8)	37.6 (3.6)
2016	17.5 (2.7)	35.5 (2.2)
2017	25.2 (2.7)	40.6 (2.1)
2018	39.8 (5.7)	54.0 (4.7)
2019*	22.2 (2.6)	40.2 (2.4)
2020	20.1 (2.4)	59.6 (3.0)
2021	17.9 (2.0)	41.7 (2.2)
2022	29.7 (3.4)	47.1 (2.3)
2023	14.2 (1.5)	48.4 (2.5)
2025*	20.4 (3.1)	34.7 (2.9)
Mean**	21.5 (3.6)	42.0 (3.1)

*Incomplete sample due to high water

**Mean calculated from 2013 to present when standard sampling methods were adopted.

Table 17. CPUE (fish/hr) by size group of blue catfish collected during electrofishing surveys on the Ohio River from 2004 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Size group (in)					Total
	<12.0	12.0 - 19.9	20.0 - 29.9	30.0 - 34.9	≥35.0	
2004	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2009	0.1 (<0.1)	1.0 (0.1)	0.4 (<0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	0.0	1.6 (0.8)
2010	8.8 (2.3)	1.0 (0.1)	1.4 (0.1)	0.7 (<0.1)	0.0	11.9 (4.0)
2013	9.2 (2.5)	1.8 (0.9)	0.3 (0.1)	0.0	0.0	11.4 (4.8)
2014	6.8 (0.6)	10.1 (1.2)	2.1 (0.2)	0.2 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)	19.3 (3.2)
2015	0.8 (0.4)	14.3 (3.0)	3.5 (0.5)	0.2 (<0.1)	0.2 (0.1)	19.0 (3.8)
2016	0.7 (0.4)	11.1 (2.8)	4.9 (0.9)	0.3 (0.1)	0.5 (0.2)	17.5 (2.7)
2017	3.5 (0.7)	12.8 (1.7)	7.8 (1.0)	0.5 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	25.2 (2.7)
2018	6.2 (1.8)	15.1 (3.4)	17.3 (6.8)	0.6 (0.2)	0.6 (0.2)	39.8 (5.7)
2019*	4.9 (1.0)	7.4 (1.0)	8.6 (1.3)	0.9 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	22.2 (2.6)
2020	2.9 (0.5)	4.6 (0.7)	11.4 (1.7)	0.7 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	20.1 (2.4)
2021	7.0 (1.2)	4.2 (0.5)	5.9 (0.8)	0.3 (0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	17.9 (2.0)
2022	13.3 (2.4)	7.8 (1.0)	7.4 (0.9)	0.7 (0.1)	0.6 (0.1)	26.7 (3.4)
2023	2.1 (0.5)	6.9 (1.0)	4.0 (0.5)	0.7 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1)	14.2 (1.5)
2025*	8.2 (1.9)	9.1 (1.3)	2.7 (0.6)	0.2 (0.1)	0.3 (0.1)	20.4 (3.1)
Mean**	5.0 (1.1)	8.6 (1.4)	7.0 (1.3)	0.5 (0.1)	0.4 (0.1)	21.5 (3.6)

*Incomplete sample due to high water

**Mean calculated from 2013 to present when standard sampling methods were adopted.

Table 18. CPUE (fish/hr) by size group of flathead catfish collected during electrofishing surveys on the Ohio River from 2004 - 2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Size group (in)					Total
	<12.0	12.0 - 19.9	20.0 - 29.9	30.0 - 34.9	≥35.0	
2004	9.3 (4.2)	5.0 (1.1)	0.3 (0.3)	0.0	0.0	14.5 (4.1)
2009	8.4 (1.7)	4.3 (0.2)	2.6 (0.2)	0.0	0.3 (<0.1)	15.5 (4.1)
2010	8.8 (1.9)	6.0 (2.1)	2.1 (0.5)	0.2 (<0.1)	0.0	17.1 (3.3)
2013	14.9 (4.5)	17.2 (1.1)	6.3 (1.8)	0.3 (0.1)	0.2 (0.2)	38.9 (5.1)
2014	12.3 (2.6)	15.9 (3.7)	4.3 (0.2)	0.3 (0.1)	0.1 (<0.1)	32.8 (2.6)
2015	15.8 (2.1)	14.6 (4.2)	5.6 (0.9)	0.9 (0.4)	0.7 (0.3)	37.6 (3.6)
2016	10.9 (1.6)	16.0 (4.2)	7.2 (1.3)	0.8 (0.3)	0.6 (0.3)	35.5 (2.2)
2017	12.5 (1.1)	15.5 (1.0)	10.7 (0.9)	1.1 (0.2)	0.8 (0.2)	40.6 (2.1)
2018	22.0 (2.8)	15.3 (1.0)	13.5 (1.2)	1.9 (0.3)	1.2 (0.2)	54.0 (4.7)
2019*	15.0 (1.8)	12.9 (0.9)	10.1 (0.8)	1.4 (0.3)	0.8 (0.2)	40.2 (2.4)
2020	33.1 (2.4)	13.3 (0.9)	10.8 (0.8)	1.1 (0.2)	1.3 (0.2)	59.6 (3.0)
2021	18.4 (1.5)	15.0 (1.1)	6.8 (0.6)	0.9 (0.2)	0.6 (0.1)	41.7 (2.2)
2022	21.0 (1.9)	14.8 (0.8)	9.7 (0.2)	0.8 (0.2)	0.8 (0.2)	47.1 (2.3)
2023	21.0 (1.9)	16.3 (1.0)	9.6 (0.6)	0.7 (0.2)	0.9 (0.2)	48.4 (2.5)
2025*	13.8 (2.2)	12.5 (1.1)	7.6 (0.7)	0.4 (0.1)	0.4 (0.1)	34.7 (2.9)
Mean**	17.7 (1.8)	13.9 (1.2)	8.7 (1.0)	0.9 (0.1)	0.8 (0.1)	42.0 (3.1)

*Incomplete sample due to high water

**Mean calculated from 2013 to present when standard sampling methods were adopted.

Table 19. Relative weight (Wr) of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish collected from the Ohio River using trotlines, hoop nets, electrofishing and catfish tournaments from 2013 - 2025.

Year	Species		
	Blue catfish	Channel catfish	Flathead catfish
2013	112	100	99
2014	105	97	92
2015	109	100	98
2016	107	97	106
2017	106	89	107
2018	104	90	101
2019	99	86	99
2020	107		107
2021	112	87	114
2022	103	89	95
2023	106	84	101
2024	102	97	95
2025	105	86	106
Mean	105	91	101

Table 20. Maximum total annual mortality rates of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish collected from the Ohio River using trotlines, hoopnets, and electrofishing from 2013 - 2025.

Year	Species		
	Blue catfish	Channel catfish	Flathead catfish
2013	18.7	32.2	18.8
2014	24.7	26.8	18.7
2015	20.0	20.6	15.9
2016	17.4	16.8	16.0
2017	18.9	27.9	18.2
2018	19.8	28.0	18.0
2019	17.3	23.3	17.1
2020	26.6		19.5
2021	23.7	20.7	19.8
2022	26.4	15.8	17.6
2023	16.8	21.7	18.2
2024	27.6	22.2	11.5
2025	19.5	23.6	18.0
Mean	21.3	23.3	17.5

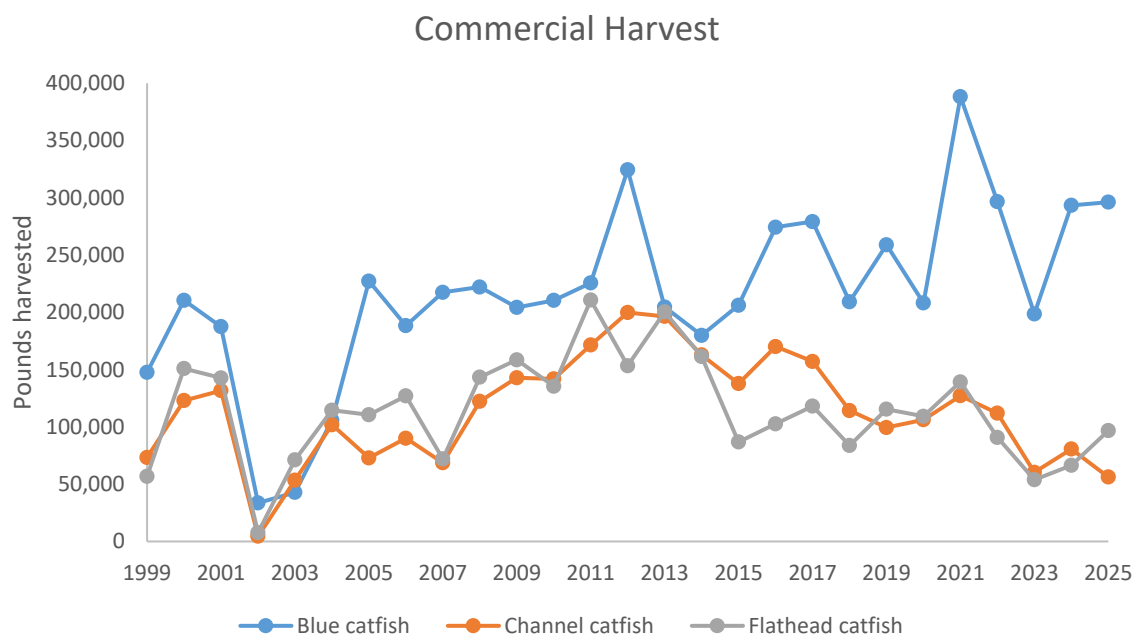


Figure 1. Total pounds of blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish harvested by commercial fishermen from the Ohio River from 2004 – 2025.

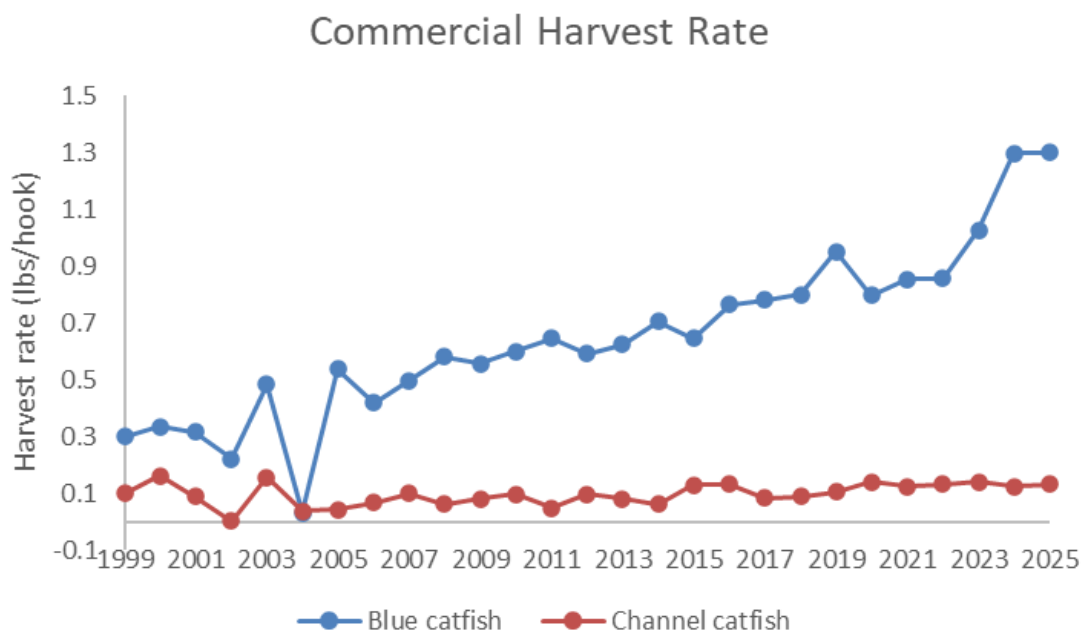


Figure 2. Harvest rate (lbs/hook) of blue catfish and channel catfish harvested with trotlines by commercial fishermen from the Ohio River from 2004 – 2025.

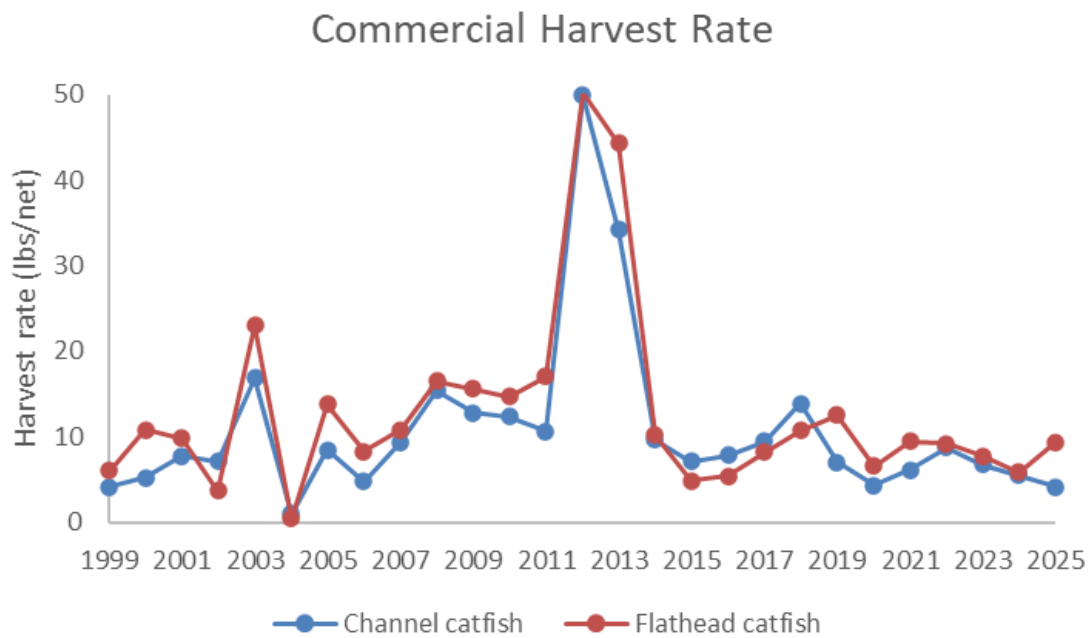


Figure 3. Harvest rate (lbs/net) of channel catfish and flathead catfish harvested with hoop nets by commercial fishermen from the Ohio River from 2004 – 2025.

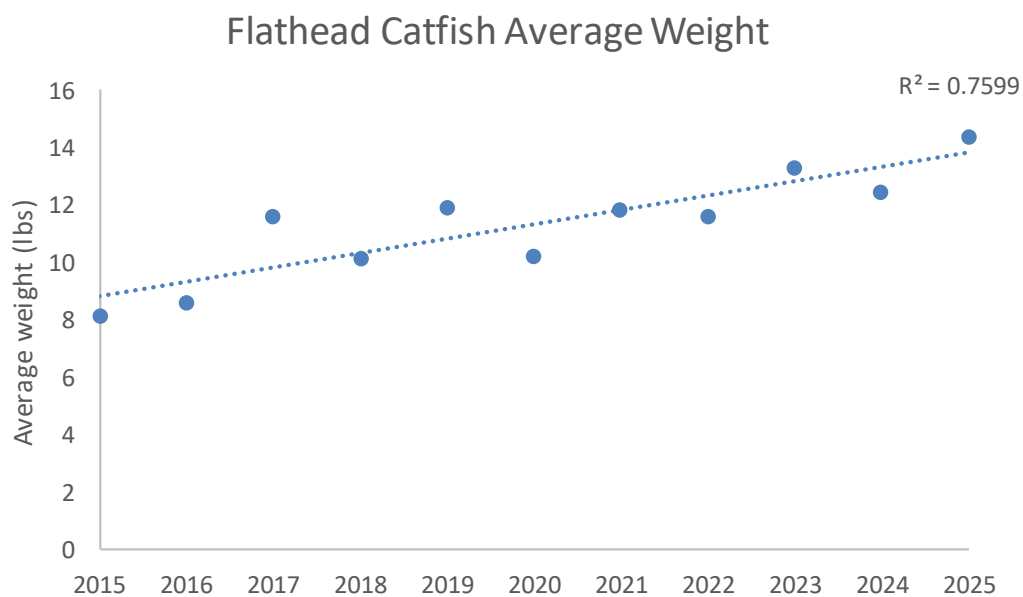
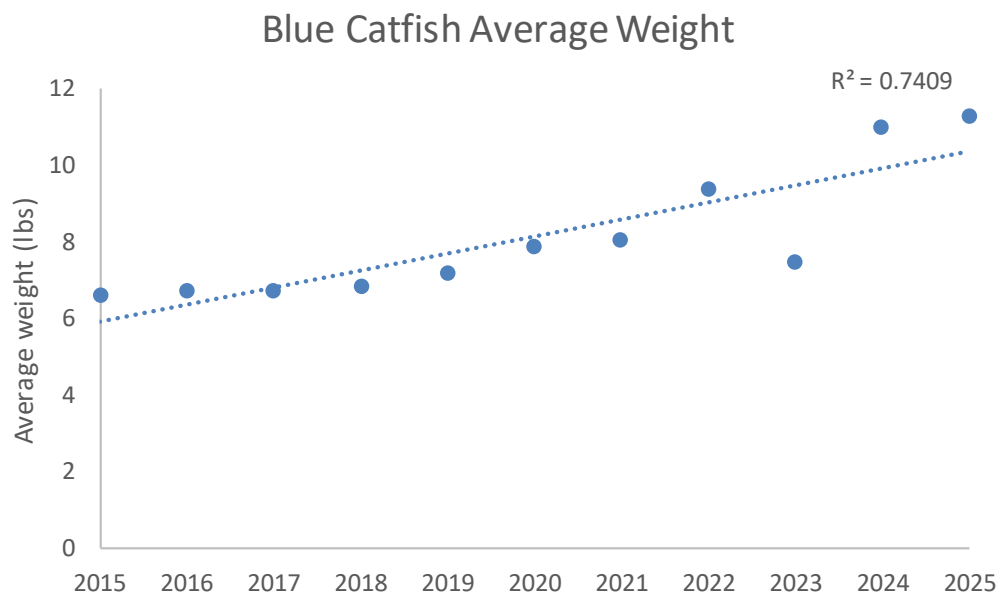


Figure 4. Average weight of blue catfish and flathead catfish harvested P(total harvest) by commercial harvesters as reported from 2015 – 2025.

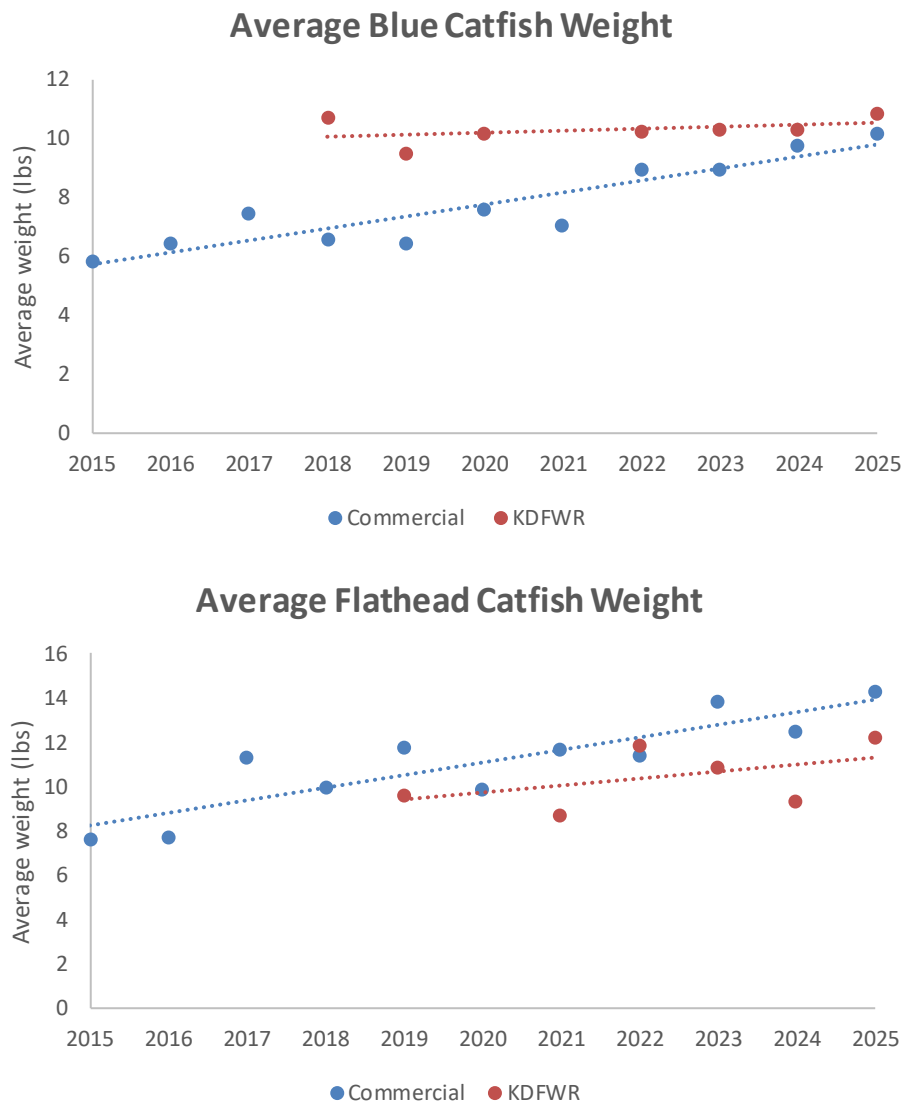


Figure 5. Average weight of blue catfish and flathead catfish harvested by commercial harvesters using trotlines and hoop nets, respectively, versus average weight of blue catfish and flathead catfish collected by KDFWR using standardized sampling methods.

Project III: Warm Water Stream Sport Fish Surveys

FINDINGS

Warm water stream sport fish surveys were completed on various streams during 2025. Species collected during general sport fish surveys include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, rock bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, white and black crappie muskellunge, walleye, sauger, channel catfish, flathead catfish and blue catfish. Sampling seasons and sites for each stream are kept consistent in an effort to standardize the data for comparative purposes. River and stream sampling sites and conditions are summarized in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Eagle Creek

A general sport fish survey was conducted on Eagle Creek during April 2025 at two sites using boat-mounted electrofishing for a total effort of 2.25 hrs. Bluegill (11.1 fish/hr) were the most abundant sport fish collected followed by rock bass (4.9 fish/hr), largemouth bass (4.4 fish/hr; Table 2). Bluegill ranged in size from the 2.0 to 7.0 in classes.

Rock bass were the second most abundant species collected at a rate of 4.9 fish/hr. Rock bass ranged in size from the 3.0 - 7.0 in size classes (Table 2). The rock bass in Eagle Creek received an assessment score of 4, representing a “poor” rating (Table 3). CPUE for rock bass was above the historical average of 3.6 fish/hr (Table 4).

Largemouth bass was the third most abundant species collected in Eagle Creek ranging from the 7.0-12.0 in size classes (Table 2). CPUE for largemouth bass was (4.4 fish/hr.) well below the previous two samples on Eagle Creek and below the historical average of (11.5 fish/hr; Table 5).

Smallmouth bass were collected on Eagle Creek but in lower densities (1.3 fish/hr.). Smallmouth bass ranged from 6.0 – 7.0-inch class (Table 2) and well below the historical average of (7.1 fish/hr; Table 6). The lower CPUE of smallmouth bass could be contributed to lack of access sites that were available in previous samples. The smallmouth bass in Eagle Creek received an assessment score of 1, representing a “poor” rating (Table 7). Additional sport fish species collected in Eagle Creek were spotted bass (1.8 fish/hr), white crappie (1.3 fish/hr) and black crappie (0.9 fish/hr; Table 2).

Elkhorn Creek

A black bass and rock bass survey was conducted on Elkhorn Creek during April 2025 at four sites using boat-mounted electrofishing gear for a total effort of 5.25 hrs (15-minute transects). Smallmouth bass were the most abundant species collected (95.0 fish/hr) and ranged from the 3.0 – 20.0 in classes (Table 8). Overall, 26 % of smallmouth bass sampled were above quality size (≥ 12.0 in) with 11 % being above preferred size (≥ 14.0 in). The smallmouth bass fishery received an assessment score of 20, representing an “excellent” rating (Table 9). CPUE of smallmouth bass was just under the historical average (95.9 fish/hr; Table 10) Additional data on historic catch rates and trends can be found in the 2025 F-50 annual performance report (Central Fisheries District Project).

Rock bass CPUE was 16.6 fish/hr. Rock bass were collected from the 4.0 – 8.0 in size classes (Table 8), with 81.0 % of the sample consisting of quality size (≥ 6.0) fish and 18 % of the sample ≥ 8.0 in (preferred size). The rock bass fishery received an assessment score of 7, representing a “fair” rating (Table 11). CPUE of rock bass was above the historical average of 13.9 fish/hr (Table 12).

Largemouth bass CPUE was 11.6 fish/hr. with sizes ranging from 7.0 – 19.0 in class (Table 8) with 47 % of the largemouth bass sampled above quality size (≥ 12.0 in). The 2025 sample showed improved CPUE of largemouth bass compared to the historical catch rate on Elkhorn Creek which was (7.2 fish/hr; Table 13).

Spotted bass were also collected on Elkhorn Creek at lower densities 0.4 fish/hr. with sizes ranging from 9.0 – 11.0 (Table 8).

Rockcastle River

A general sport fish survey was conducted on Rockcastle River during April 2025 at three sites using boat-mounted electrofishing for a total effort of 2.0 hrs (15-minute transects). Four species were collected, with rock bass (18.6 fish/hr) being the most abundant, followed by smallmouth bass (9.1 fish/hr) walleye (0.3 fish/hr; Table 14).

Rock bass were the most abundant species collected at a rate of 18.6 fish/hr. and ranged in size from the 3.0 - 8.0 in size classes (Table 14). The rock bass in Rockcastle River received an assessment score of 8, representing a “fair” rating (Table 15). CPUE for rock bass were above the historical average of 15.3 fish/hr. (Table 16).

Smallmouth bass were second most abundant species collected at 9.1 fish/hr and ranged from the 5.0-12.0 in size classes (Table 14). Less than 1% percent of smallmouth bass collected were above the statewide 12-in size minimum that is currently on Rockcastle River. CPUE of smallmouth bass collected were under the historical average of 13.2 fish/hr. (Table 17). The smallmouth bass fishery received an assessment score of 5, representing a “poor” rating (Table 18).

Additional sport fish species were present in Rockcastle River but found in lower densities. Walleye were sampled at 1.5 fish/hr with trophy fish being collected in the sample with size ranges of 15.0 – 32.0 in class. Spotted bass (1.1 fish/hr), black crappie (0.7 fish/hr), largemouth bass (0.4 fish/hr), black crappie (0.7 fish/hr) and channel catfish (0.4 fish/hr) were also collected (Table 14).

Upper Cumberland River

A general sport fish survey was conducted on upper Cumberland River during June 2025 at five sites using boat-mounted electrofishing for a total effort of 5.25 hrs (15-minute transects). Channel catfish (16.4 fish/hr) were the most abundant sport fish collected followed by smallmouth bass (14.1 fish/hr) and spotted bass (10.7 fish/hr; Table 19). Although no trophy size (≥ 28.0 in) channel catfish were present in the Upper Cumberland River sample, there were exceptionally good numbers of channel catfish ranging from the 11.0 – 20.0 in size class with 94% being ≥ 14.0 in (Table 19).

Smallmouth bass were the second most abundant species collected at a rate of (14.1 fish/hr; Table 19). Smallmouth bass collected ranged from the 3.0 – 17.0 in class. CPUE was the highest recorded in the three years it has been sampled and well above the historical average (9.0 fish/hr; Table 20). The smallmouth bass in Upper Cumberland River received an assessment score of 10, representing a “fair” rating (Table 21).

Spotted bass was third most abundant species collected at a (10.7 fish/hr). Spotted bass collected ranged from the 2.0-14.0 in class. CPUE was the lowest recorded in the three years it has been sampled and below the historical average (12.8 fish/hr; Table 22). The spotted bass in Upper Cumberland River received an assessment score of 11, representing a “good” rating (Table 23).

Rock bass were collected at a rate of 6.7 fish/hr. and ranged in size from the 4.0 - 9.0 in size classes (Table 19). The rock bass fishery in Upper Cumberland River received an assessment score of 5, representing a “fair” rating (Table 24). CPUE of rock bass (6.7 fish/hr;) was the highest recorded in the three years it has been sampled and above the historical average of (4.7 fish/hr; Table 25).

Additional sport fish species were present in upper Cumberland River but found in lower densities. Flathead catfish (3.6 fish/hr.), bluegill (1.7 fish/hr.), black crappie (0.6 fish/hr.), walleye (0.6 fish/hr.),

largemouth bass (0.4 fish/hr) and redear sunfish (0.4 fish/hr; Table 19).

Cumberland Tailwater/River

In July/August of 2025, a general sport fish survey was conducted on the Cumberland Tailwater/River at nine sites using boat-mounted electrofishing for a total effort of 13.0 hrs (15-minute transects). This was the first initial baseline sportfish data collected by the Rivers and Streams Research Branch on the Cumberland Tailwater/River.

With the Cumberland Tailwater/River having significantly cooler water, the abundance of sportfish collected were in low numbers. A total of ten species were collected in the Cumberland Tailwater/River with walleye (1.6 fish/hr) being the most abundant followed by sauger (1.5 fish/hr) and striped bass (1.0 fish/hr). Walleye were collected up to the 25 in class and striped bass were collected up to the 39 in class (Table 26). CPUE of other species collected were spotted bass (0.9 fish/hr), largemouth bass (0.9 fish/hr), bluegill (0.8 fish/hr), smallmouth bass (0.6 fish/hr), redear sunfish (0.2 fish/hr), black crappie (0.1 fish/hr) and hybrid striped bass (0.1 fish/hr; Table 26).

Cumberland Tailwater/River is a well-known destination trout fishery. Trout samples are conducted annually in November by the Southeast Fisheries District (SEFD). Information on trout can be found in the districts APR under Tailwater Surveys.

Green River

Pool 5

Removal of Lock and Dam 5 was initiated in summer 2021 and the majority of the dam was removed during the summer of 2024. Annual fall sampling to collect general sport fish will continue in Pool 5 for up to five years post dam removal.

A general sport fish survey using boat-mounted electrofishing was conducted on Old Pool 5 of Green River. Ten different species were collected during 3.0 hrs (15-minute transects) of electrofishing. Old Pool 5 of Green River has drastically changed with water levels dropping exposing more gravel shoals, chunk rock banks, woody laydowns and creating harder substrates, which may enhance habitat complexity and influence fish distribution. Spotted bass were the most abundant species collected (16.0 fish/hr) and ranged from the 1.0 - 12.0 in size classes (Table 27). CPUE was the fourth highest catch rate recorded since sampling began in 2012 and higher than historical average of 15.1 fish/hr (Table 28). The continued high catch rates could be contributed to the majority of Lock and Dam 5 being removed and a lot of the habitats reverting back to its natural state which would be more favorable to black bass and rock bass. Relative weight values were good for the 7.0-10.9 in (Wr=95) and 11.0-13.9 in (Wr=95) size groups. Overall condition of these fish was good (Wr= 95; Table 29).

Smallmouth bass were collected at a rate of 2.3 fish/hr ranging from the 4.0 – 18.0 in size classes (Table 27). Sampling for smallmouth bass in Pool 5 of the Green River has never been highly productive and the 2025 sample was below the historical average of 2.6 fish/hr (Table 30). With the majority of Lock and Dam 5 being removed the river is starting to revert back to a free-flowing stream which is preferred by smallmouth bass. Even though there was a small sample size, relative weights for smallmouth bass were good with an overall condition (Wr=79; Table 29).

Largemouth bass were collected at a rate of 1.7 fish/hr ranging from the 8.0-21.0 in size classes (Table 27). CPUE of largemouth bass continues to be low and was below the historical average 4.1 fish/hr (Table 31). Even though there was a small sample size relative weights for largemouth bass were good with an overall condition (Wr=9; Table 29).

Rock bass were collected from the 3.0-9.0 in size classes, with 69% of the sample consisting of quality size (≥ 6.0) fish (Table 27). CPUE was the second highest recorded at 4.3 fish/hr and drastically higher than the historical average (1.8 fish/hr; Table 32).

Additional sport fish species were collected in Pool 5 of the Green River but found in consistently lower densities. Channel catfish (4.7 fish/hr), bluegill (4.7 fish/hr), flathead catfish (3.3 fish/hr), black crappie (1.7 fish/hr), redear sunfish (1.0 fish/hr) and sauger (0.3 fish/hr Table 27).

Lower Barren River

Unimpounded

A general sport fish survey was conducted on the lower Barren River during September 2025 at six sites using boat-mounted electrofishing for a total effort of 7.5 hrs (15-minute transects). Smallmouth bass (11.3 fish/hr) were the most abundant sport fish collected and followed by spotted bass (9.2 fish/hr), and rock bass (3.0 fish/hr; Table 33). It should be noted that the KDFWR collaborated with the Army Corps of Engineers to schedule a moderate release of water flow to allow for the fall sample to happen due to low water conditions. With the scheduled increase in water flow, the sample on lower Barren River was done in early September which had higher than normal water temperatures which could have contributed to the lower-than-normal CPUE for sport fish. Smallmouth bass were collected from the 4.0-18.0 in size classes (Table 33). Lower Barren River previously had the statewide 12-inch size minimum, and a new regulation passed increasing the minimum size limit to 15 inches. Eighty nine percent of smallmouth bass collected were under the new 15-inch minimum size limit. Catch rates by length group for the most part was below the historical average and CPUE (11.3 fish/hr) were below the historical average (15.7 fish/hr; Table 34). Relative weight values observed for smallmouth bass were good but decreased as fish grew larger. Condition was good (Wr=84) for the 7.0-10.9 in size group, good (Wr=78) for the 11.0-13.9 in size group, and good (80) for the ≥ 14.0 in size group (Table 35).

Spotted bass were collected from the 2.0-14.0 in size classes at a rate of 9.2 fish/hr (Table 33). Catch rates by length groups were similar to the historical average (10.8 fish/hr; Table 36). Relative weight values for spotted bass were good (Wr=95) for the 7.0-10.9 in, good (Wr=96) for the 11.0-13.9 in length group and good (Wr=87) for the ≥ 14.0 in length group. The overall condition (Wr=92) for this population was good (Table 35).

Rock Bass sampled in the lower Barren River ranged from the 4.0-8.0 in size classes (Table 33), with quality size (≥ 6.0 in) fish representing 52 % of the sample. Overall CPUE (3.0/fish hr.) decreased from the 2023 sample (8.8/fish hr.) and well below the historical average (10.5/fish hr; Table 37). Relative weight values for rock bass were excellent (Wr=106) for the 4.0 – 5.9, good (Wr=95) for the 6.0 – 9.0 fish, good (Wr=91) for the ≥ 8.0 in and had an overall Wr of 97 (Table 35).

Additional sport fish populations were sampled in lower Barren River but found in lower densities. Bluegill (7.2 fish/hr), channel catfish (5.5 fish/hr), walleye (2.0 fish/hr), flathead catfish (1.5 fish/hr), redear sunfish (0.9 fish/hr), bowfin (0.7 fish/hr), blue catfish (0.6 fish/hr) were present up to 38.0 inch class, largemouth bass (0.6 fish/hr), black crappie (0.5 fish/hr) and muskellunge (0.4 fish/hr) with fish present up to 37.0 inch class (Table 33).

Formerly Impounded

Lock and Dam 1 at Greencastle was removed between August-September of 2022. Sampling in 2025 began the third year of post-dam removal sampling in lower Barren River. There wasn't a 2024 sample on lower Barren River due to high water conditions. The sample consists of two transects normally sampled in the formerly impounded portion of Pool 1 of lower Barren River. A general sport fish survey was conducted at two sites for a total effort of 3.0 hrs (15-minute transects) during September 2025. Lower Barren River has drastically changed with water levels dropping approximately 7-10 ft exposing more gravel shoals, chunk rock banks, woody laydowns and creating more hard bottoms for fish to be able to relate to as well as riffles. With more exposed habitat the numbers of spotted bass and smallmouth bass have drastically increased. The four most abundant species observed were spotted bass (16.0 fish/hr), bluegill (12.0 fish/hr), smallmouth bass (7.3 fish/hr) and rock bass (3.0 fish/hr; Table 38). Water temperatures were slightly higher in the 2025 sample which could have kept fish from being pulled up into shoreline habitat which could have been one reason the CPUE was slightly lower than the

2023 sample. CPUE for spotted bass, smallmouth bass, and rock bass was still among the highest catch rate since sampling started in 2017 (Tables 34, 36, 37). With smallmouth bass and rock bass traditionally needing a more typical riffle-pool environment it is encouraging to see the numbers beginning to improve for the second consecutive year compared to previous sampling years and new environmental conditions.

In general, species composition and overall number of fish sampled between the unimpounded and impounded sections of lower Barren River have traditionally been very different. But with the changing water levels and habitat conditions further sampling will need to take place to determine the impact the dam removal will have for the formerly impounded section of lower Barren River. Typically, the unimpounded section of lower Barren River consists of riffle, run and pool habitats and access to the flood plain, which provides more natural and complex stream ecosystem that allows for a greater diversity of fish species. The formerly impounded section of lower Barren River is beginning to show signs of habitat conditions somewhat comparable to that of the unimpounded sections. Continued sampling will continue for the foreseeable future to compare habitat conditions and species composition post-dam removal.

Table 1. Summary of 2025 boat (B) and tote-barge (TB) electrofishing sampling sites by waterbody, river mile, date, and conditions.

Waterbody	Sampling method	River mile	Species	Date	Water temp.	Water level (USGS gauge station)	Secchi (inches)	Comments
Eagle Creek - R. Stewart Road Property	B	25.5 - 26.4	Sport fish	4/16/2025	53.7	3.10 ft, 270 cfs @ Glencoe, KY	20	good level
Eagle Creek - Sadieville Ramp	B	90.5 - 92.4	Sport fish	4/17/2025	57.8	1.50 ft, 17.6 cfs @ Sadieville, KY	35	good level
Elkhorn Creek - Great Crossing Dam	B	27.4 - 28.5	Sport fish	4/17/2025	57.4	4.69 ft, 164 cfs @ Georgetown, KY	60	good level
Elkhorn Creek - Jackson Hole	B	7.7 - 8.9	Sport fish	4/17/2025	55.0	3.16 ft, 709 cfs @ Frankfort, KY		high level
Elkhorn Creek - Peaks Mill Bridge	B	5.4 - 6.4	Sport fish	4/21/2025	66.5	3.15 ft, 405 cfs @ Frankfort, KY	64	good level
Elkhorn Creek - Hatchery Ramp	B	3.7 - 4.6	Sport fish	4/17/2025	54.7	3.67 ft, 723 @ Frankfort, KY		high level
Rockcastle River - Livingston	B	42.0 - 44.8	Sport fish	6/4/2025	65.2	3.66 ft, 626 cfs @ Billows, KY	36	good level
Rockcastle River - 75 Bridge	B	35.9 - 37.6	Sport fish	6/4/2025	66.4	3.58 ft, 596 cfs @ Billows, KY	36	good level
Upper Cumberland River - Varilla Ramp	B	653.9 - 654.3	Sport fish	5/29/2025	66.5	2.98 ft, 585 cfs @ Harlan, KY	24	good level
Upper Cumberland River - Barbourville Ramp	B	622.4 - 625	Sport fish	6/5/2025	70.7	3.06 ft @ Barbourville, KY	24	high level
Upper Cumberland River - 296 Bridge	B	577.8 - 579.3	Sport fish	6/11/2025	72.6	2.90 ft @ Barbourville, KY		high level
Upper Cumberland River - Croley Bend	B	572.4 - 576.7	Sport fish	6/12/2025	73.4	4.63 ft @ Williamsburg, KY	20	high level
Upper Cumberland River - Redbird Ramp	B	569.0 - 569.8	Sport fish	6/12/2025	75.6	4.60 ft @ Williamsburg, KY	20	high level
Cumberland tailwater - Kendall Boat Ramp	B	452.1 - 455.1	Sportfish	7/22/2025	52.2	30.27 ft, 7160 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	8' +	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Helms Landing	B	448.5 - 452.1	Sportfish	7/22/2025	52.8	29.09 ft, 5590 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	76	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Rainbow Run	B	440.7 - 443.9	Sportfish	7/23/2025	58.2	29.16 ft, 7020 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	8' +	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Winfrey's Ferry	B	433.7 - 439.2	Sportfish	7/23/2025	58.1	30.76 ft, 7860 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	8' +	high level
Cumberland tailwater - Bakerton Ferry	B	425.9 - 432.3	Sportfish	8/4/2025	58.9	28.89 ft, 5340 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	78	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Burkesville Ramp	B	417.3 - 425.1	Sportfish	8/4/2025	59.5	28.89 ft, 5340 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	51	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Highway 61 Ramp	B	407.5 - 414.2	Sportfish	8/5/2025	59.5	30.27 ft, 7160 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	48	good level
Cumberland tailwater - Cloyds Ferry	B	392.6 - 403.1	Sportfish	8/5/2025	59.3	30.27 ft, 7160 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	48	good level
Cumberland tailwater - J.L. Fox Ramp	B	381.6 - 390.4	Sportfish	8/6/2025	61.7	30.39 ft, 7460 cfs @ Burkesville, KY	42	high level
Green River Pool 5 - Brownsville	B	170.1 - 183.8	Sportfish	9/9/2025	68.4	8.94 ft, 355 cfs @ Mammoth Cave, KY	18	good level
Barren River - Hwy 101 Bridge	B	62.8 - 66.4	Sport fish	9/15/2025	76.0	510 cfs @ Barren River Outflow	42	good level
Barren River - Martinsville Ford	B	57.5 - 62.5	Sport fish	9/15/2025	76.0	510 cfs @ Barren River Outflow	42	good level
Barren River - Wheldon Peete Ramp	B	45.1 - 47.8	Sport fish	9/15/2025	76.4	4.80 ft, 535 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	45	good level
Barren River - State Street Ramp	B	36.9 - 37.9	Sport fish	9/11/2025	71.5	4.09 ft, 267 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	38	good level
Barren River - Above Boat Landing Ramp	B	30.5 - 35.2	Sport fish	9/16/2025	74.7	4.80 ft, 535 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	50	good level
Barren River - Below Boat Landing Ramp	B	26.2 - 30.3	Sport fish	9/16/2025	75.3	4.80 ft, 535 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	50	good level
Barren River - Lonnie White Ramp	B	20.9 - 24.1	Sport fish	9/16/2025	76.0	4.80 ft, 535 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	38	good level
Barren River - Greencastle Ramp	B	12.5 - 15.0	Sport fish	9/12/2025	74.6	4.05 ft, 267 cfs @ Bowling Green, KY	28	good level

Table 2. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 2.25 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at two sites on Eagle Creek during April 2025; standard errors are in parentheses.

Species	Inch class												Total	CPUE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Rock bass			2	2	1	2	4						11	4.9 (3.4)
Bluegill	3	7	4	3	4	2	2						25	11.1 (5.0)
Smallmouth bass						1	2						3	1.3 (0.9)
Spotted bass			1						3				4	1.8 (1.4)
Largemouth bass							1	1		3	4	1	10	4.4 (1.6)
White crappie							3						3	1.3 (0.9)
Black crappie								2					2	0.9 (0.6)

Table 3. Population assessment of rock bass collected from Eagle Creek in April 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.9	2
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-5.9 in)	1.3	1
Quality density (CPUE ≥6.0 in)	2.7	1
Preferred density (CPUE ≥8.0 in)	0.0	0
Total score		4
Assessment rating		Poor

Table 4. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling on Eagle Creek from 2013, 2020 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
2013	0.0	1.7	1.4	0.0	3.1 (1.4)
2020	0.4	0.2	0.8	1.9	3.4 (1.1)
2025	0.9	1.3	2.7	0.0	4.9 (3.4)
Mean	0.4	0.9	1.4	0.9	3.6 (0.9)

Table 5. Largemouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling on Eagle Creek from 2013, 2020 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<8.0	8.0-11.9	12.0-14.9	≥15.0	
2013	9.4	6.0	1.7	0.6	17.7 (7.1)
2020	7.2	2.3	0.6	0.2	10.3 (3.4)
2025	0.4	3.6	0.4	0.0	4.4 (1.6)
Mean	6.5	3.8	0.9	0.3	11.5 (2.9)

Table 6. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling on Eagle Creek from 2013, 2020 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
2013	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 (0.0)
2020	0.2	6.3	3.2	3.0	3.0	15.6 (4.6)
2025	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3 (0.9)
Mean	0.1	3.1	1.4	1.3	1.3	7.3 (2.4)

Table 7. Population assessment of smallmouth bass collected from Eagle Creek in April 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.0	0
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-8.9 in)	1.3	1
Adult density (CPUE ≥9.0 in)	0.0	0
Quality density (CPUE ≥12.0 in)	0.0	0
Preferred density (CPUE ≥14.0 in)	0.0	0
Total score		1
Assessment rating		Poor

Table 8. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 5.25 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at four sites on Elkhorn Creek during April 2025; standard error is in parentheses.

Species	Inch class																		Total	CPUE
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
Rock bass		5	10	23	27	14													79	16.6 (3.2)
Smallmouth bass	31	41	26	39	41	52	40	30	34	43	24	17	6	13	8	2	1	1	449	95.0 (14.0)
Largemouth bass					1	6	7	7	8	8	6	4	1	1	3	1	2		55	11.6 (3.5)
Spotted bass							1		1										2	0.4 (0.3)

Table 9. Population assessment of smallmouth bass collected from Elkhorn Creek in April 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	6.5	4
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-8.9 in)	41.9	4
Adult density (CPUE ≥9.0 in)	46.1	4
Quality density (CPUE ≥12.0 in)	24.2	4
Preferred density (CPUE ≥14.0 in)	10.1	4
Total score		20
Assessment rating		Excellent

Table 10. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling from Elkhorn Creek in 2018, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
2018	1.5	47.8	24.0	7.0	5.3	85.5 (11.0)
2021	4.7	53.4	28.7	14.6	5.9	107.3 (14.0)
2025	6.5	41.9	21.9	14.1	10.1	95.0 (14.0)
Mean	4.4	47.5	24.8	12.1	7.2	95.9 (7.7)

Table 11. Population assessment of rock bass collected from Elkhorn Creek in April 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.0	0
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-5.9 in)	3.2	2
Quality density (CPUE ≥6.0 in)	13.4	3
Preferred density (CPUE ≥8.0 in)	2.9	2
Total score		7
Assessment rating		Fair

Table 12. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling from Elkhorn Creek in 2018, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
2018	0.0	3.3	7.8	0.3	11.3 (2.8)
2021	0.2	2.4	6.6	4.0	13.2 (3.0)
2025	0.0	3.2	10.5	2.9	16.6 (3.2)
Mean	0.1	2.9	8.4	2.5	13.9 (1.7)

Table 13. Largemouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling from Elkhorn Creek in 2018, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites, effort, and sampling period have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<8.0	8.0-11.9	12.0-14.9	≥15.0	
2018	0	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.8 (0.4)
2021	2.1	4.7	1.4	0.0	8.2 (2.5)
2025	0.2	5.9	3.8	1.7	11.6 (3.5)
Mean	0.8	3.9	1.9	0.6	7.2 (1.6)

Table 14. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 2.0 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at two sites on Rockcastle River during June 2025; standard error is in parentheses.

Species	Inch Class																Total	CPUE	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	20		26				32
Channel catfish													1					1	0.4 (0.4)
Rock bass	1	8	22	14	5	1												51	18.6 (7.7)
Smallmouth bass			5	4	2	5	4	3	1	1								25	9.1 (2.5)
Spotted bass				1	1			1										3	1.1 (0.6)
Largemouth bass	1																	1	0.4 (0.4)
Black crappie							2											2	0.7 (0.5)
Walleye											1	1			1		1	4	1.5 (0.8)

Table 15. Population assessment of rock bass collected from Rockcastle River in June 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.4	1
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-5.9 in)	10.9	4
Quality density (CPUE ≥6.0 in)	7.3	2
Preferred density (CPUE ≥8.0 in)	0.4	1
Total score		8
Assessment rating		Fair

Table 16. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling from Rockcastle River in 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
2021	0.7	2.0	8.3	1.3	12.3 (2.4)
2025	0.4	10.9	6.9	0.4	18.6 (7.7)
Mean	0.5	6.3	7.7	0.9	15.3 (3.8)

Table 17. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during spring sampling from Rockcastle River in 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
2021	1.0	3.7	9.0	2.3	1.0	17.0 (3.7)
2025	0.0	5.8	2.9	0.4	0.0	9.1 (2.5)
Mean	0.5	4.7	6.1	1.4	0.5	13.2 (2.4)

Table 18. Population assessment of smallmouth bass collected from Rockcastle River in June 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.0	0
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-8.9 in)	5.8	2
Adult density (CPUE ≥9.0 in)	3.3	2
Quality density (CPUE ≥12.0 in)	0.4	1
Preferred density (CPUE ≥14.0 in)	0.0	0
Total score		5
Assessment rating		Poor

Table 19. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 5.25 hrs of electrofishing (15 minute transects) at five sites on the upper Cumberland River during June 2025; standard error is in parentheses.

Species	Inch class																					Total	CPUE
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
Channel catfish										1	2	2	18	19	12	15	10	5	2		86	16.4 (2.1)	
Flathead catfish		4			1		3	2		1	1	3		2	1	1					19	3.6 (1.0)	
Rock bass				1	8	9	6	8	3												35	6.7 (2.4)	
Bluegill				1	3	4	1														9	1.7 (0.7)	
Redear sunfish				1		1															2	0.4 (0.3)	
Smallmouth bass		3	4		4	6	4	10	10	13	7	5	4	2		2					74	14.1 (2.8)	
Spotted bass	1	4	1	1	7	6	4	11	6	10	2	2	1								56	10.7 (2.3)	
Largemouth bass			1		1																2	0.4 (0.3)	
Black crappie						1		1		1											3	0.6 (0.3)	
Walleye													1			1				1	3	0.6 (0.3)	

Table 20. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling from upper Cumberland River in 2017, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
2017	0.0	1.2	2.8	0.7	0.7	5.4 (2.0)
2021*	0.3	3.3	2.1	0.9	0.4	7.0 (1.8)
2025*	0.6	3.4	6.3	2.3	1.5	14.1 (2.8)
Mean	0.3	2.8	3.7	1.3	0.9	9.0 (1.4)

* CPUE data was collected during the spring

Table 21. Population assessment of smallmouth bass collected from upper Cumberland River in June 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.6	1
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-8.9 in)	3.4	2
Adult density (CPUE ≥9.0 in)	10.0	3
Quality density (CPUE ≥12.0 in)	3.8	2
Preferred density (CPUE ≥14.0 in)	1.5	2
Total score		10
Assessment rating		Fair

Table 22. Spotted bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling from upper Cumberland River in 2017, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-7.9	8.0-10.9	11.0-12.9	≥13.0	
2017	0.0	8.7	5.9	1.9	1.2	17.7 (5.4)
2021*	1.9	3.8	3.5	1.0	0.9	11.1 (2.7)
2025*	1.0	2.9	4.0	2.3	0.6	10.7 (2.3)
Mean	1.1	4.9	4.3	1.7	0.9	12.8 (2.0)

* CPUE data was collected during the spring

Table 23. Population assessment of spotted bass collected from upper Cumberland River in June 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	1.0	2
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-7.9 in)	2.9	2
Adult density (CPUE ≥8.0 in)	6.9	3
Quality density (CPUE ≥11.0 in)	2.9	3
Preferred density (CPUE ≥13.0 in)	0.6	1
Total score		11
Assessment rating		Good

Table 24. Population assessment of rock bass collected from upper Cumberland River in June 2025.

Parameter	Actual value	Assessment score
Recruitment (CPUE <4.0 in)	0.0	0
Intermediate density (CPUE 4.0-5.9 in)	1.7	1
Quality density (CPUE ≥6.0 in)	5.0	2
Preferred density (CPUE ≥8.0 in)	2.1	2
Total score		5
Assessment rating		Fair

Table 25. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling from upper Cumberland River in 2017, 2021 and 2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard error is in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
2017	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.4	2.1 (1.1)
2021*	0.0	0.9	0.7	3.3	4.9 (1.6)
2025*	0.0	1.7	2.9	2.1	6.7 (2.4)
Mean	0.0	0.9	1.6	2.2	4.7 (1.1)

* CPUE data was collected during the spring

Table 26. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of sport fish collected during 13.0 hrs of electrofishing (15 minute transects) at nine sites on the Lake Cumberland Tailwater during July/August 2025; standard error is in parentheses.

Species	Inch class																																	Total	CPUE
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	33		39				
Striped bass														1		1			1	1			2		1	1	1	2	1		1	13	1.0 (0.4)		
Bluegill	3	5	2																													10	0.8 (0.4)		
Redear sunfish		1	1																													2	0.2 (0.2)		
Smallmouth bass			2							1		2			1	2																	8	0.6 (0.3)	
Spotted bass							1	1	2	5	3																						12	0.9 (0.5)	
Largemouth bass			1	2					1		1		2	2	1		2																12	0.9 (0.5)	
Black crappie												1																					1	0.1 (0.8)	
Sauger						1		2	2	4	4	2	3		1																		19	1.5 (0.4)	
Walleye										1				2	2		1	4	4	3	2	2											21	1.6 (0.3)	
Hybrid Striped bass											1																						1	0.1 (0.8)	

Table 27. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 3.0 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at two sites in Pool 5 of the Green River during September 2025; standard errors are in parentheses.

	Inch class																												Total	CPUE
Species	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		32			
Channel catfish															1	2		2	1	1	1		1	2	3			14	4.7 (1.7)	
Flathead catfish									5			1	1	1		1											1	10	3.3 (1.0)	
Rock bass			1		3	7		1	1																			13	4.3 (1.7)	
Bluegill			2	2	5	4	1																					14	4.7 (1.5)	
Redear sunfish						2	1																					3	1.0 (0.5)	
Smallmouth bass				1		1	2				1				1		1											7	2.3 (0.8)	
Spotted bass	1	2	5	6	8	9	5	8	1	1	2																	48	16.0 (2.6)	
Largemouth bass							1						1	1							2							5	1.7 (1.0)	
Black crappie					1			2	1	1																		5	1.7 (1.0)	
Sauger																		1										1	0.3 (0.3)	

Table 28. Spotted bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling on former Pool 5 of the Green River from 2012-2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-7.9	8.0-10.9	11.0-12.9	≥13.0	
2012	2.3	7.3	11.7	2.0	0.0	23.3 (3.3)
2013	0.3	3.3	9.0	0.7	0.3	13.7 (3.1)
2014	2.7	2.7	7.7	1.0	0.3	14.3 (3.6)
2015	0.3	1.0	6.0	3.0	0.0	10.3 (3.1)
2016	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.0	2.3 (0.5)
2017	1.3	4.3	2.7	0.3	0.0	8.7 (2.4)
2018	0.3	1.3	2.0	1.0	0.0	4.7 (1.8)
2019	0.0	7.7	5.0	0.7	0.3	13.7 (3.7)
2020	0.3	1.7	2.7	0.3	0.7	5.7 (1.7)
2021	0.3	5.3	4.0	2.3	0.3	12.3 (3.3)
2022	0.7	4.5	2.7	0.3	0.0	8.3 (2.7)
2023	1.0	13.3	8.0	1.0	0.0	23.3 (4.2)
2024**	3.0	25.7	17.3	1.3	0.0	47.3 (6.9)
2025**	1.0	9.3	4.7	1.0	0.0	16.0 (2.6)
Mean	1.0	6.5	6.2	1.2	0.1	15.1 (1.2)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 29. Number of fish and the relative weight (Wr) for each length group of black bass collected in Pool 5 of the Green River during September 2025.

Crook River, during September 2000.

Species	Length group (in)						Total	
	8.0-11.9		12.0-14.9		≥15.0			
	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr
Largemouth bass	1	92	1	91	3	91	5	91
Smallmouth bass	7.0-10.9		11.0-13.9		≥14.0		Total	
	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr
	2	85	1	74	2	80	5	79
Spotted bass	7.0-10.9		11.0-13.9		≥14.0		Total	
	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr
	23	95	3	95	0	0	26	95

Table 30. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling on former Pool 5 of the Green River from 2012-2024. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)					Total
	<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
2012	1	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	2.7 (0.9)
2013	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	2.0 (0.9)
2014	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.0 (0.7)
2015	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	2.0 (1.4)
2016	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.8 (0.4)
2017	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.0 (0.7)
2018	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.3 (1.0)
2019	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0 (1.2)
2020	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.3 (0.9)
2021	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.0 (0.7)
2022	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	1.7 (1.0)
2023	0.7	1.7	1.0	0.3	1.0	4.7 (2.3)
2024**	0.0	3.7	3.0	0.3	1.0	8.0 (2.3)
2025**	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.3 (0.8)
Mean	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.2	2.6 (0.4)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 31. Largemouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling on former Pool 5 of the Green River from 2012-2025. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<8.0	8.0-11.9	12.0-14.9	≥15.0	
2012	1.7	4.3	2	0.3	8.3 (2.1)
2013	2	4.7	3.3	0.7	10.7 (3.9)
2014	0.3	3.3	0.0	0.7	4.3 (1.3)
2015	0.7	3.7	4.0	1.3	9.7 (4.5)
2016	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.1	1.6 (0.5)
2017	1.7	0.7	1.0	0.7	4.0 (1.2)
2018	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2019	3.7	0.3	0.0	0.7	4.7 (1.1)
2020	1.7	1.0	1.0	0.3	4.0 (2.0)
2021	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.7	1.3 (0.6)
2022	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.0 (0.7)
2023	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.0 (0.5)
2024**	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.3 (0.8)
2025**	0.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.7 (1.0)
Mean	1.0	1.5	1.1	0.5	4.1 (0.6)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 32. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling on former Pool 5 of the Green River from 2012-2024. Number of sites and effort have varied across years; standard errors are in parentheses.

Year	Length group (in)				Total
	<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
2012	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.7	2.0 (1.1)
2013	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.3	1.3 (0.9)
2014	0.7	0.0	1.3	0.3	2.3 (1.3)
2015	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3 (0.3)
2016	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3 (0.2)
2017	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.7 (0.7)
2018	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 (0.0)
2019	0.7	0.3	1.7	0.7	3.3 (3.3)
2020	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7 (0.5)
2021	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.3	1.3 (0.9)
2022	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3 (0.3)
2023	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.0	1.0 (0.7)
2024**	0.7	1.3	3.7	0.3	6.0 (1.5)
2025**	0.3	1.0	2.3	0.7	4.3 (1.7)
Mean	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.3	1.8 (0.4)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 33. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 7.5 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at six unimpounded sites in lower Barren River during September 2025; standard errors are in parentheses.

Species	Inch class																																					Total	CPUE
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	30	31	32	37	38							
Bowfin																				1		2	1	1		1							6	0.7 (0.4)					
Blue catfish																	1									1	1			1		1	5	0.6 (0.3)					
Channel catfish										1		1	2		1	5	3	5	9	4	4	1	2	5	3		1						47	5.5 (2.1)					
Flathead catfish						1	2		2	1	1	2	2	2																			13	1.5 (0.4)					
Muskellunge																													1	1	1		3	0.4 (0.2)					
Rock bass				3	9	6	4	3																									25	3.0 (0.9)					
Bluegill			4	13	29	10	5																										61	7.2 (1.4)					
Redear sunfish					3	2		3																									8	0.9 (0.3)					
Smallmouth bass				2	5	1	5	18	7	19	12	9	2	5	3	2	1	5															96	11.3 (2.0)					
Spotted bass	3	1	4	7	12	12	15	10	8	4		1	1																				78	9.2 (1.8)					
Largemouth bass							1		1	1				1				1															5	0.6 (0.3)					
Black crappie						1	1		2																								4	0.5 (0.2)					
Walleye															1	1	6	1			2	3	2					1				17	2.0 (0.5)						

Table 34. Smallmouth bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling at five unimpounded sites of lower Barren River during 2007, 2010, and 2012-2025 and for comparison two sites on the formerly impounded section of lower Barren River in 2017-2025. Standard

Section	Year	Length group (in)					Total
		<4.0	4.0-8.9	9.0-11.9	12.0-13.9	≥14.0	
Unimpounded	2007	3.1	28.7	19.2	4.6	4.3	59.9 (14.6)
	2010	1.6	9.6	10.9	3.8	2.7	28.4 (4.8)
	2012*	4.3	8.0	2.4	0.7	2.0	17.4 (3.2)
	2013	0.3	10.0	2.1	1.5	2.3	16.1 (3.3)
	2014	0.5	5.7	6.3	1.3	2.1	15.9 (2.8)
	2015	0.5	4.7	5.8	1.8	1.5	14.2 (2.2)
	2016	0.1	2.1	2.4	2.9	4.0	11.5 (2.3)
	2017	0.0	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.6	8.7 (2.5)
	2018	0.1	2.9	3.1	1.3	4.1	11.5 (2.1)
	2019	0.0	3.0	2.1	0.9	2.0	8.0 (1.4)
	2020	0.1	3.1	2.4	1.5	2.1	9.3 (1.8)
	2021	0.2	1.1	2.1	1.7	2.6	7.7 (1.5)
	2022	0.4	28.9	5.1	4.7	2.2	41.3 (8.5)
	2023	0.7	10.3	3.7	1.7	2.8	19.2 (3.1)
	2025	0.0	3.7	4.5	1.3	1.9	11.3 (2.0)
	Mean	0.7	6.6	4.1	1.8	2.5	15.7 (1.0)
* 2012 CPUE data was collected during the spring							

Formerly Impounded	2017	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3 (0.3)
	2018	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0 (0.7)
	2019	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.7	2.0 (1.4)
	2020	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7 (0.8)
	2021	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.3	1.3 (0.6)
	2022**	4.7	5.3	2.7	0.7	0.7	14.0 (2.9)
	2023**	0.7	4.0	0.7	0.3	0.3	6.0 (1.2)
	2025**	0.7	3.7	2.0	0.3	0.7	7.3 (1.5)
	Mean	0.5	2.0	0.6	0.1	0.3	3.6 (0.6)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 35. Number of fish and the relative weight (Wr) for each length group of black bass and rock bass collected at five unimpounded sites in the lower Barren River during September 2025.

Two unimpounded sites in the lower Saffron River during September 2020.

Species	Length group (in)						Total	
	7.0-10.9		11.0-13.9		≥14.0			
	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr
Smallmouth bass	48	84	23	78	16	80	87	80
Spotted bass	45	95	5	96	1	87	51	92
Rock bass	4.0-5.9		6.0-7.9		≥8.0		Total	
	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr	No.	Wr
	12	106	10	95	3	91	25	97

Table 36. Spotted bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling at five unimpounded sites of lower Barren River from 2007, 2010, and 2012-2025 and for comparison two sites on the previously impounded section of lower Barren River from 2017-2025. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Section	Year	Length group (in)					Total
		<4.0	4.0-7.9	8.0-10.9	11.0-12.9	≥13.0	
Unimpounded	2007	3.0	11.6	11.1	1.5	0.2	27.4 (5.6)
	2010	2.4	4.0	2.7	1.1	0.0	10.2 (2.5)
	2012*	4.0	7.4	6.0	1.4	0.9	19.8 (2.0)
	2013	0.8	6.7	8.3	2.3	0.0	18.0 (2.8)
	2014	2.1	2.6	3.4	0.9	0.1	9.1 (1.8)
	2015	0.1	11.4	8.6	3.9	1.2	25.2 (5.0)
	2016	0.0	0.7	1.3	1.3	0.4	3.7 (1.0)
	2017	0.0	1.3	2.4	1.0	0.3	5.0 (1.2)
	2018	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.4	2.6 (0.6)
	2019	0.0	1.3	2.8	0.9	0.6	5.5 (1.1)
	2020	0.0	1.6	1.3	1.0	0.3	4.1 (0.9)
	2021	0.6	1.1	1.7	0.2	0.1	3.7 (0.7)
	2022	0.0	11.1	8.7	1.3	0.0	21.1 (4.1)
	2023	0.3	5.7	4.0	1.6	0.4	12.0 (1.5)
	2025	0.5	4.1	3.9	0.5	0.2	9.2 (1.8)
	Mean	0.9	4.3	4.1	1.3	0.4	10.8 (0.7)
*2012 CPUE data was collected during the spring							
Formely Impounded	2017	0.0	1.3	3.7	0.0	0.0	5.0 (1.5)
	2018	0.0	1.0	2.3	0.3	0.0	3.7 (2.0)
	2019	0.0	3.3	5.7	0.0	0.0	9.0 (3.0)
	2020	0.0	8.7	4.0	1.0	0.3	14.0 (3.4)
	2021	0.3	0.0	2.0	0.3	0.0	2.7 (0.9)
	2022**	8.0	56.7	12.0	2.7	1.3	80.7 (15.0)
	2023**	1.0	9.7	3.0	2.0	0.7	16.3 (3.2)
	2025**	0.3	8.3	6.0	1.3	0.0	16.0 (3.0)
	Mean	0.8	8.1	4.4	0.8	0.2	14.3 (2.3)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 37. Rock bass electrofishing CPUE (fish/hr) from each length group collected during sampling at five unimpounded sites of lower Barren River during 2007, 2010, and 2012-2023 and for comparison two sites on the previously impounded section of lower Barren River in 2017-2023. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Section	Year	Length group (in)				Total
		<4.0	4.0-5.9	6.0-7.9	≥8.0	
Unimpounded	2007	1.3	15.2	19.4	7.4	43.3 (18.6)
	2010	0.0	2.9	7.3	0.7	10.9 (1.8)
	2012*	1.0	1.7	8.3	2.9	13.9 (3.1)
	2013	1.7	3.5	5.6	3.3	14.1 (4.1)
	2014	0.2	5.0	4.6	2.9	12.8 (3.5)
	2015	1.7	4.5	13.4	2.2	21.8 (4.9)
	2016	0.0	0.7	3.1	0.1	3.9 (1.3)
	2017	0.0	2.6	7.0	2.6	12.1 (4.0)
	2018	0.5	1.1	5.9	0.8	8.2 (2.1)
	2019	0.0	0.5	3.5	1.8	5.8 (1.7)
	2020	0.0	0.8	3.9	1.8	6.4 (1.7)
	2021	0.0	0.2	1.7	1.2	3.1 (0.9)
	2022	0.4	0.4	6.7	4.0	11.6 (2.2)
	2023	0.5	4.0	2.8	1.5	8.8 (1.9)
	2025	0.0	1.4	1.2	0.4	3.0 (0.9)
	Mean	0.5	2.5	5.6	2.0	10.5 (1.0)
*2012 CPUE data was collected during the spring						
Formerly	2017	0.0	0.3	2.0	0.3	2.7 (1.6)
Impounded	2018	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2019	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0 (1.4)
	2020	0.0	0.7	2.0	1.0	3.7 (1.5)
	2021	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	1.0 (0.5)
	2022**	0.7	2.0	4.7	1.3	8.7 (2.4)
	2023**	0.3	0.3	2.3	0.9	3.7 (1.0)
	2025**	0.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	3.0 (1.3)
	Mean	0.1	0.6	1.7	0.4	2.7 (0.5)

** Indicates the years sampled post dam removal

Table 38. Length-frequency and CPUE (fish/hr) of selected sport fish collected during 3.0 hrs of electrofishing (15-minute transects) at two sites on the previously impounded section of lower Barren River during September 2025; standard errors are in parentheses.

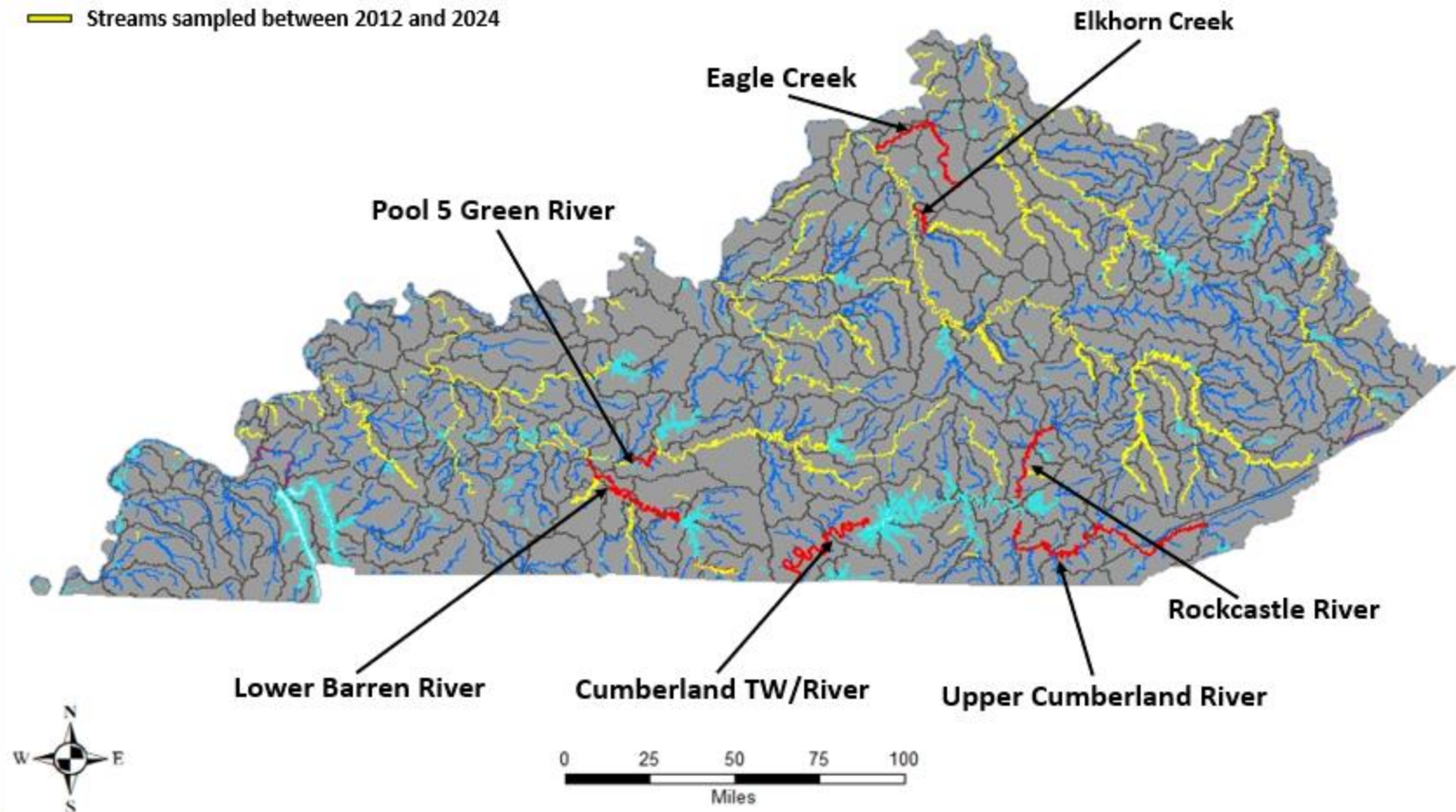
Species	Inch class																				Total	CPUE	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	17	19	21	22	23	24	25			26
Channel catfish								1							1	1	1	1	2	1	1	9	3.0 (1.2)
Rock bass				1	5	3																9	3.0 (1.3)
Bluegill		1	9	13	10	3																36	12.0 (2.3)
Redear sunfish					1	1																2	0.7 (0.5)
Smallmouth bass		2			3	5	3	4	2			1	1	1								22	7.3 (1.5)
Spotted bass	1		2	7	9	7	7	6	5	3	1											48	16.0 (3.0)
Largemouth bass								1														1	0.3 (0.3)
White crappie								1														1	0.3 (0.3)

Warm Water Stream Sport Fish Survey Locations



Legend

- Streams sampled in 2025
- Streams sampled between 2012 and 2024



Project IV: Supplemental Stocking of Ohio River Embayments Using Fish from Largemouth Bass-Crowded Lakes

FINDINGS

Largemouth Bass have long been the most sought-after sport fish in Kentucky and one of the most popular amongst Ohio River anglers. Poor Largemouth Bass populations are nothing new for the Meldahl Pool. Angler concerns over declining numbers and quality became apparent in the late 1990's and were verified by Department data. As a result, a spawning habitat project was initiated in 2004 to increase Largemouth Bass spawning success. Supplemental habitat additions in the Ohio River ultimately had no effect on black bass populations, and it is likely that other factors such as flow and siltation are the main limiting factors in spawning success of Largemouth Bass in the Meldahl Pool. A second project to increase year-class production began in 2007 on the Markland Pool that involved stocking 2.0 in fingerling Largemouth Bass. Early results were promising, so the project was expanded to the Meldahl Pool in 2011. While relative abundance was significantly increased in the Markland Pool, the Meldahl Pool did not experience increases. Stocking proved to have mixed results in the Ohio River, but it may still be the best option. Previous studies on the Ohio River suggested stocking advanced size fingerlings in the fall to increase survival by limiting the negative effects of extended/late high-water events. Unfortunately, hatchery space and resources were not available to accommodate.

While hatchery-reared advanced fingerlings stockings may not be a viable option in the Ohio River, there is another potential solution. Due to the extreme acceptance of catch-and-release fishing for Largemouth Bass, Kentucky has several lakes that have become bass-crowded. These lakes can benefit from increased harvest and targeted removal efforts while providing a source for advanced size fish to be stocked in waterbodies that are limited by poor spawning success and recruitment to larger sizes. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of stocking Largemouth Bass <12.0 inches transplanted from bass-crowded fisheries into Ohio River embayments in the Meldahl Pool to increase relative abundance and size structure in a recruitment-limited population. Two embayments—Kinniconick Creek and Cabin Creek—will serve as control embayments that receive no stockings. Five embayments—Big Snag Creek, Big Locust Creek, Big Turtle Creek, Bracken Creek, and Lawrence Creek—will serve as experimental embayments that are stocked with Largemouth Bass removed from bass-crowded lakes across the state. A summary of work completed for this project can be seen in Table 1.

A pre-stocking spring sample was completed in April 2025. A total of seven embayments were sampled. Catch rate of Largemouth bass in control embayments was 6.9 fish/hr, while CPUE in experimental embayments was 15.5 fish/hr, well below the objective of 75 fish/hr (Table 2). CPUE of fish ≥ 12.0 in and fish ≥ 15.0 was also well below project objectives of 10.0 fish/hr and 3.0 fish/hr, respectively (Table 3). PSD of Largemouth Bass in control embayments was 36, and 48 in experimental embayments. PSD in experimental embayments currently meets the project objective. Future stockings should help to maintain the desired size structure.

Removal and stocking efforts were conducted in Fall 2025 (Table 4). A total of 2,500 Largemouth Bass were removed over nine removal events (36.13 hrs of electrofishing effort) on three lakes—Grayson Lake, Corinth Lake, and Panbowl Lake. These lakes are all Largemouth Bass-crowded lakes that were confirmed to be pure Northern Largemouth Bass populations through KDFWR genetic testing. Lengths of Largemouth Bass removed ranged from 2.0 – 11.9 in with a mean length of 5.8 in. All fish received a left pectoral fin clip and were stocked into experimental embayments at a rate of 10.0 fish/acre.

Table 1. Summary of 2025 Meldahl Pool Largemouth Bass sampling activities by waterbody, date, and water conditions.

Waterbody	Location	Sampling gear	Date	Water temp.	Secchi depth	Water level (USGS gauge station)	Comments
Ohio River	Cabin Creek	Electrofishing	4/22/2025	67.0	21"	18.42' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Lawrence Creek	Electrofishing	4/22/2025	64.3	15"	18.42' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Bracken Creek	Electrofishing	4/22/2025	66.0		18.42' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Big Turtle Creek	Electrofishing	4/22/2025	65.4		18.42' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Big Locust Creek	Electrofishing	4/23/2025	67.5	19"	18.40' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Big Snag Creek	Electrofishing	4/23/2025	67.6	13"	18.40' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Ohio River	Kinniconick Creek	Electrofishing	4/28/2025	64.8	36"	26.27' @ Greenup Dam	Pre-stocking spring sample
Grayson Lake	Clifty Creek	Electrofishing	9/3/2025	77.2		44.20' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		9/3/2025			12.87' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Bruin Ramp	Electrofishing	9/8/2025	75.5		44.08' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		9/8/2025			13.13' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Corinth Lake		Electrofishing	9/10/2025	69.0			Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Big Turtle Creek		9/10/2025			12.99' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Marina	Electrofishing	9/23/2025	76.1		43.46' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		9/23/2024			13.76' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Marina	Electrofishing	9/29/2025	77.5		43.62' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		9/29/2025			13.29' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Panbowl Lake		Electrofishing	9/30/2025	74.2			Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Big Locust Creek		9/30/2025			13.12' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Bruin Ramp	Electrofishing	10/1/2025	75.0		43.52' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Big Locust Creek		10/1/2025			14.06' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		10/1/2025			14.06' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Big Caney Creek	Electrofishing	10/2/2025	73.4		43.47' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Bracken Creek		10/2/2025			13.08' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Grayson Lake	Clifty Creek	Electrofishing	10/14/2025	67.3		45.15' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Grayson Lake	Bruin Ramp	Electrofishing	10/14/2025	69.9		45.15' @ Grayson Lake	Largemouth bass removal
Ohio River	Lawrence Creek		10/14/2025			13.35' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking
Ohio River	Big Snag Creek		10/14/2025			13.35' @ Greenup Dam	Stocking

Table 2. Length-frequency, CPUE(fish/hr), and proportional stock density (PSD) of Largemouth Bass collected during spring electrofishing sampling in control and experimental embayments of the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River.

Control and Experimental Embayments of the Midland PCB of the Ohio River.																			
Embayment	Inch class																Total	CPUE	PSD
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17				
Control																			
Kinniconick Creek				1	2	2	1					1	1				8	5.3 (2.0)	40
Cabin Creek			2		3		2		2	1	1						11	8.8 (2.9)	33
Total			2	1	5	2	3		2	1	1	1	1				19	6.9 (1.7)	36
Expreimental																			
Lawrence Creek	1		2	2	3	1	1	4	7	2	6	2	1	2			34	22.7 (5.4)	50
Bracken Creek		1	1	3	1	1	1	3	6	2	1	5		1			26	17.3 (3.4)	45
Big Turtle Creek				1				1	1	1		1		1			6	8.0 (2.3)	60
Big Locust Creek			1	3	3	5		1	2	3	2		1				21	14.0 (3.5)	42
Big Snag Creek				1		1	1			1			1			1	6	8.0 (4.0)	60
Total	1	1	4	10	7	8	3	9	16	9	9	8	3	4	1		93	15.5 (2.1)	48

Table 3. Spring electrofishing catch-per-unit-effort (fish/hr) estimates for four size groups of black bass from the Meldahl Pool of the Ohio River in 2025. Standard errors are in

Treatment	Length group (in)				Total
	<8.0	8.0 - 11.9	≥12.0	≥15.0	
Control	2.9 (1.0)	2.6 (0.8)	1.5 (0.6)	0.4 (0.4)	6.9 (1.7)
Experimental	3.8 (0.9)	6.0 (1.2)	5.7 (1.2)	1.3 (0.4)	15.5 (2.1)

Table 4. Date, electrofishing effort, waterbody, stocking location, and length frequency of bass removals conducted in fall 2025.

Date	Effort (hrs)	Waterbody	Location	Stocking location	Inch class											Total	Mean length (in)
					≤2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
9/3/2025	4.75	Grayson Lake	Clifty Creek	Bracken Creek	10	14	8	2	2	7	12	13	9	16	93	6.9	
9/8/2025	4.83	Grayson Lake	Bruin	Bracken Creek	36	83	31	2	1	2	14	16	25	27	237	5.4	
9/10/2025	1.25	Corinth Lake		Big Turtle Creek	1	89	91	17	1	1	13	13	20	24	270	5.2	
9/23/2025	2.50	Grayson Lake	Marina	Bracken Creek	2	20	17	3	1	3	1	9	6	21	83	6.7	
9/29/2025	4.00	Grayson Lake	Marina	Bracken Creek	76	47	15	5		1	4	8	7	17	180	4.1	
9/30/2025	6.30	Panbowl Lake		Big Locust Creek		46	142	65	5	3	114	118	72	108	673	7.4	
10/1/2025	2.00	Grayson Lake	Bruin	Big Locust Creek/Bracken Creek	34	125	27	8	2	1	1	4	6	7	215	3.7	
10/2/2025	2.00	Grayson Lake	Big Caney Creek	Bracken Creek		9	36	39	16	1	7	11	21	9	149	6.3	
10/14/2025	8.50	Grayson Lake	Bruin/Clifty Creek	Lawrence Creek/Big Snag Creek	42	177	129	62	18	7	14	46	45	60	600	5.4	
Total	36.13				201	610	496	203	46	26	180	238	211	289	2500	5.8	