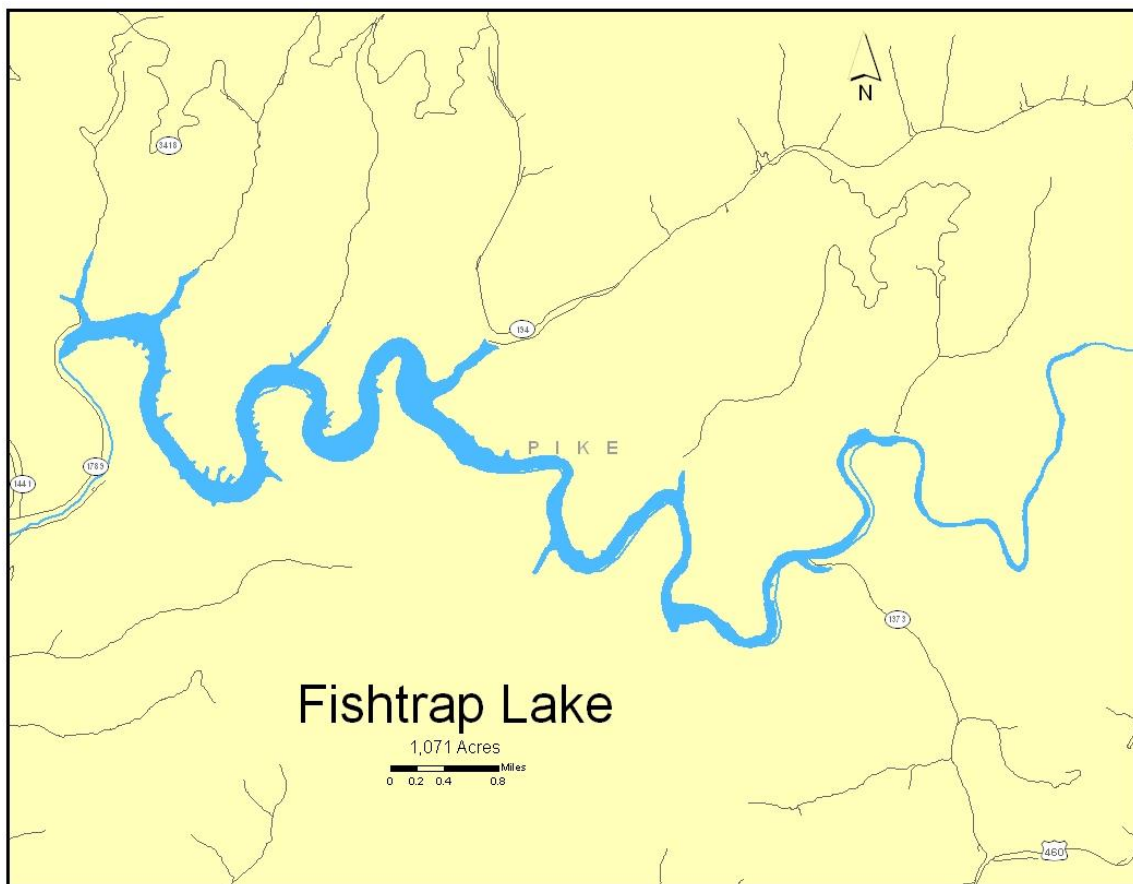# Fishtrap Lake Bass Assessment 2019

Fishtrap Lake is a 1,143-acre multipurpose reservoir on the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River in Pike County. This lake is an excellent choice as a fishing destination for many species including hybrid striped bass, white crappie, bluegill, and flathead, blue and channel catfish. The lake also provides good opportunities for all three black bass species (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass) common to Kentucky. In addition to statewide consumption advisories for mercury, specific advisories are in place for PCB in bottom feeders and white bass. These advisories limit harvest and have subsequently increased the quality of fish present in the lake.
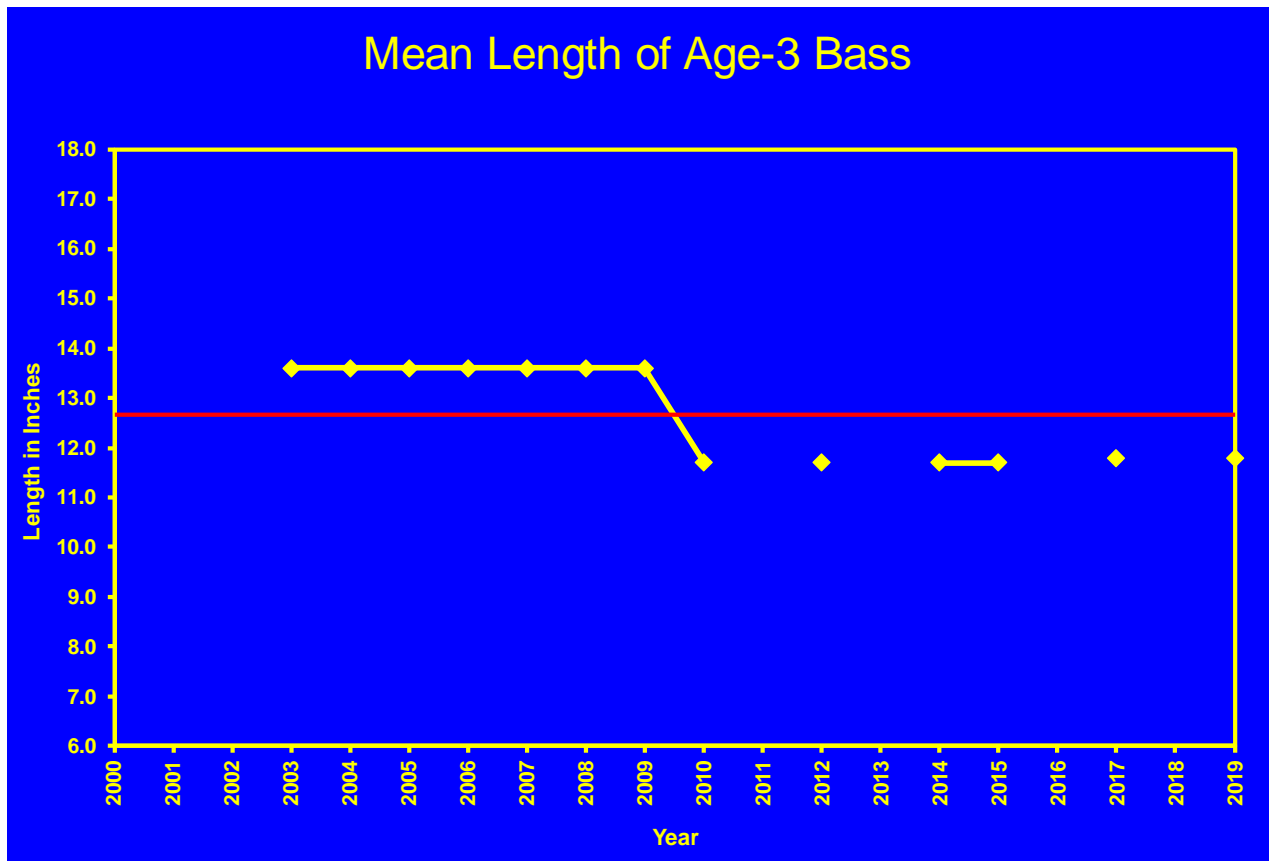
The following graphs show trends and rankings for each of the five population parameters used in the largemouth bass assessment.

Please see the Sportfish Assessments page for an explanation of how the assessment works and for a list of other lakes with largemouth bass assessments.

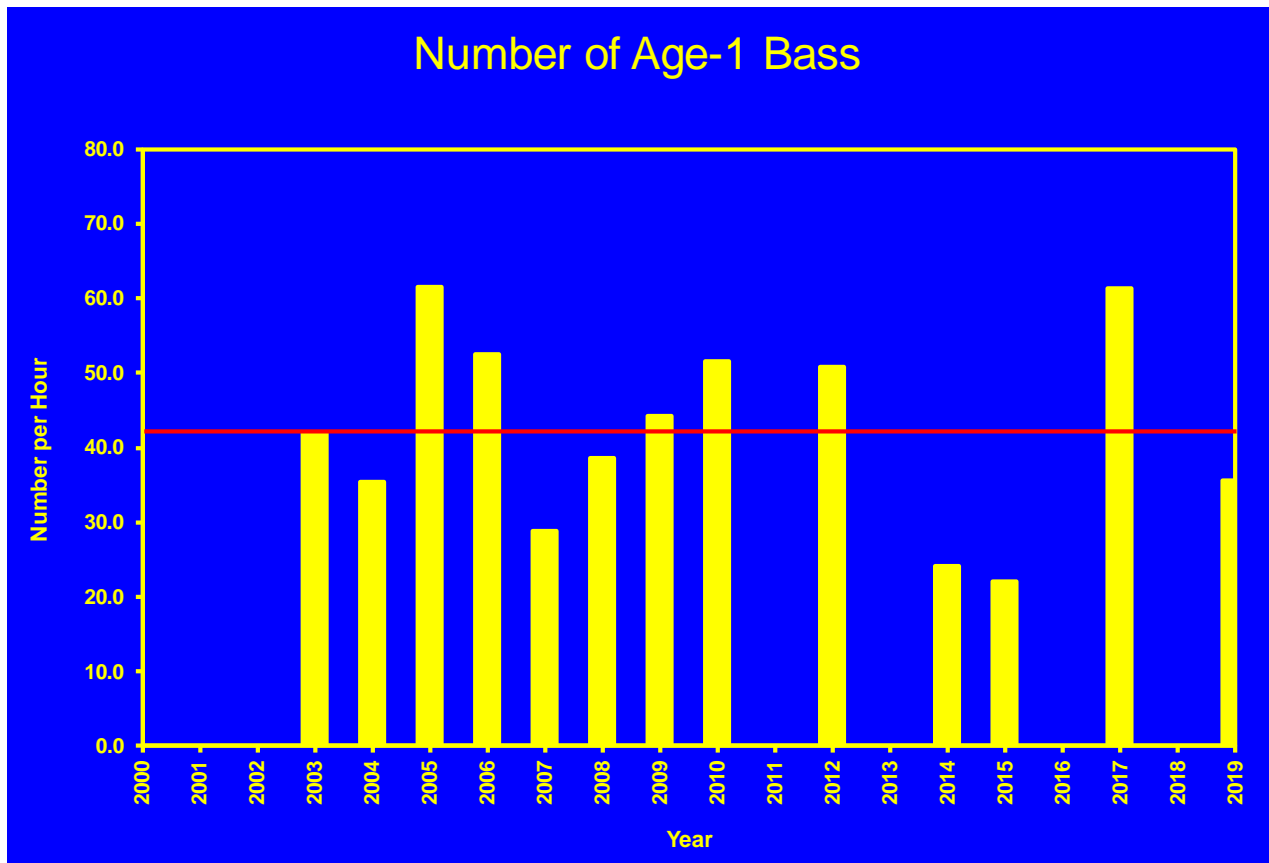Fishtrap Lake

1,071 Acres

Miles
0   0.2   0.4   0.8

Parameter 1 – Length at age-3 (growth rate)

At Fishtrap Lake, the length of an age-3 largemouth bass has averaged 12.7 inches from 2003 to 2019 (see red line). When compared to other lakes of this size this is considered to be good growth for largemouth bass. Age data was last collected in 2017 (periodic sample). This lake has shown stable growth rates in largemouth bass since 2010. Growth rates are generally related to factors such as population density, food resources, and weather patterns.
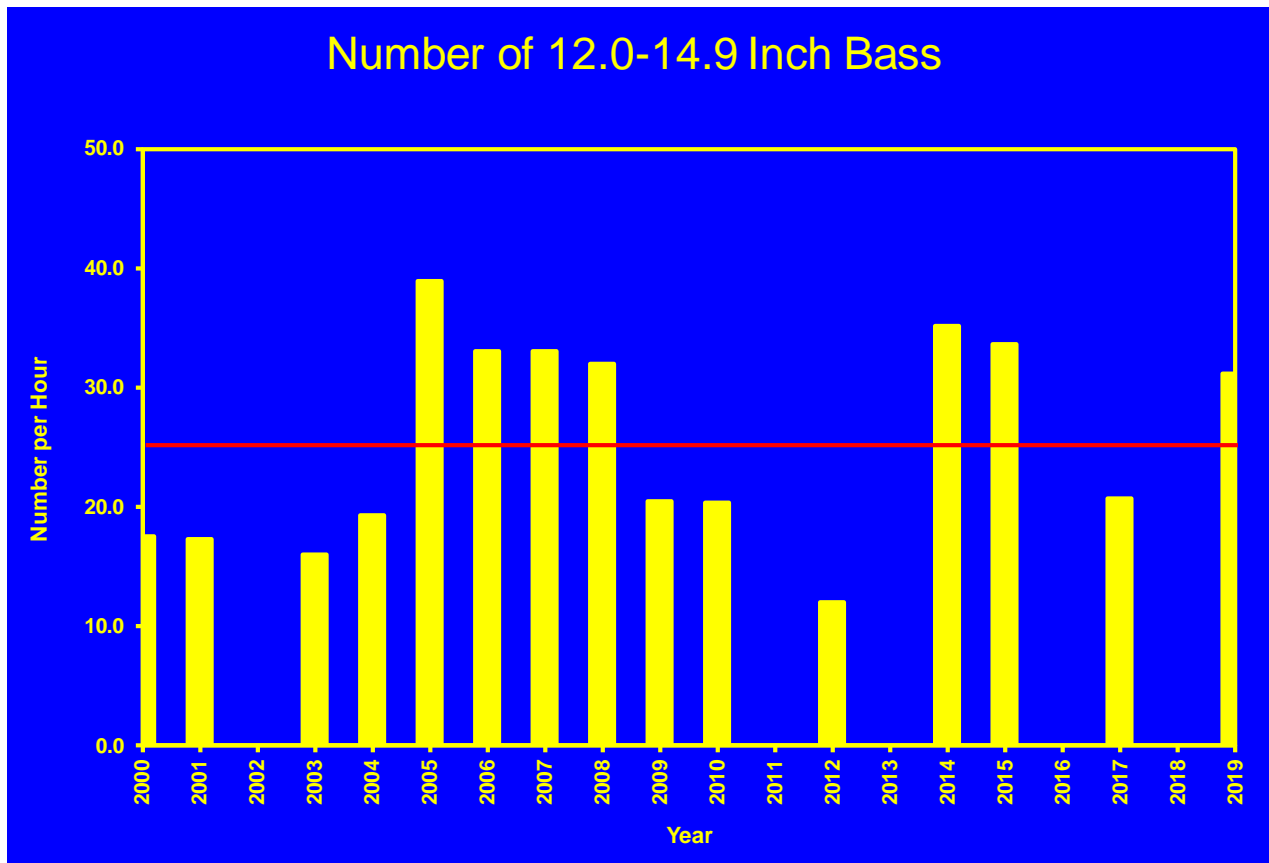
Parameter 2 – Numbers of age-1 bass (how good the spawn was)

KDFWR looks at the electrofishing catch rates of age-1 largemouth bass to assess the success of the spawn that occurred in the prior year. This is an important parameter because the number of age-1 bass produced represents how good the fishing will be once these fish grow large enough for anglers to catch. At Fishtrap Lake, age-1 largemouth bass catch rates have averaged just over 42.2 fish per hour of electrofishing (red line) since 2003. When compared to other lakes in this size range, this is considered a "good" age-1 catch rate. After reaching a high of 61.5 fish/hr in 2005, the spring catch of age-1 largemouth bass declined through 2007, but then rebounded through 2012. There were then two poor years (2014 and 2015) before catch rates rebounded once again in 2017. Age-1 catch rate in 2019 was below average. Natural recruitment at Fishtrap Lake is variable and can be weak at times. Because of this, the lake received supplemental stockings in the fall of 2012, 2013 and 2014 followed by spring stockings of advanced fingerlings in 2017 and 2018. These additional stockings have kept the population in balance.
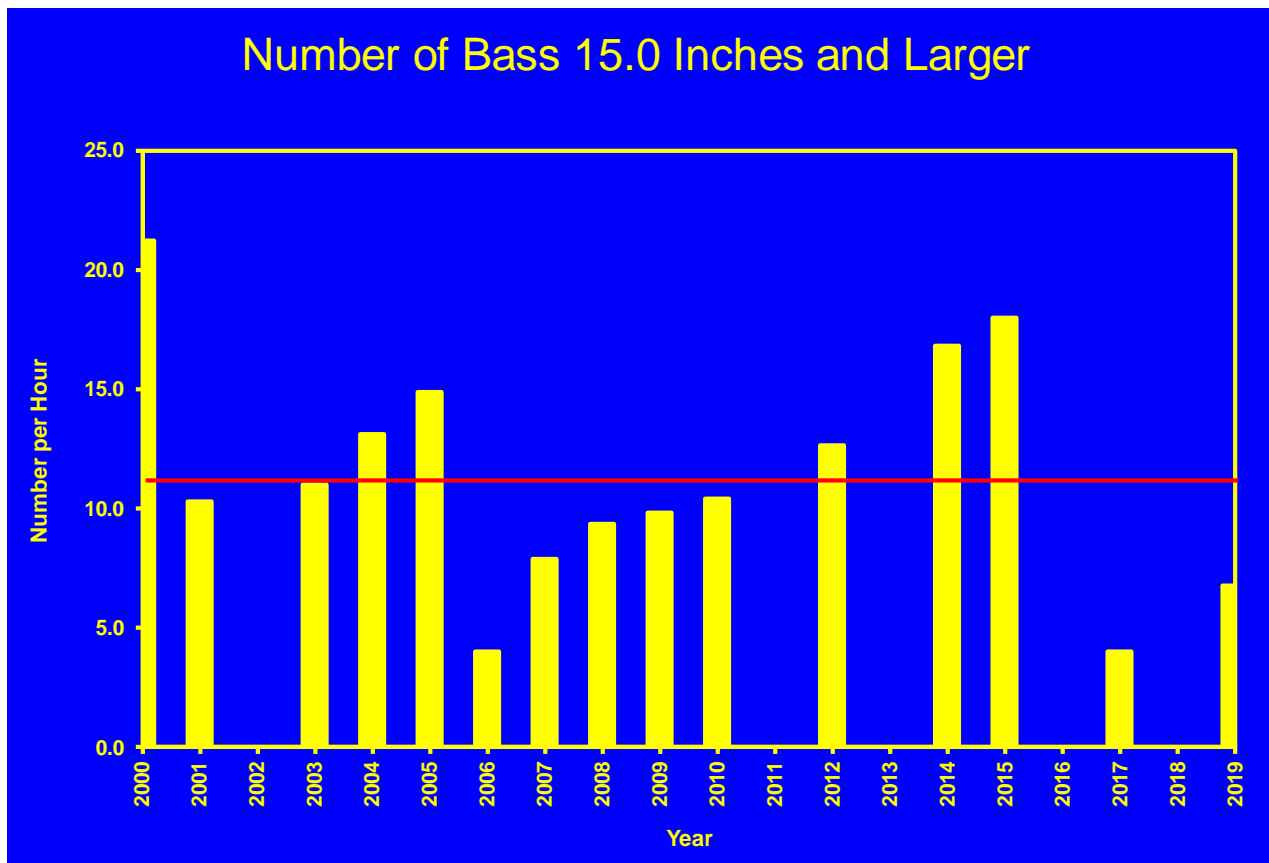
Parameter 3 – Numbers of 12.0- to 14.9-inch bass

The electrofishing catch of 12.0- to 14.9-inch largemouth bass has averaged 25.4 fish/hr (red line), which gives Fishtrap Lake a "good" rating when compared to other lakes in its size range. In 2005, the catch rate for this size range of bass peaked at 38.9 fish per hour. 2014, 2015 and 2019 were also above average years. Supplemental stockings from 2013 to 2018 have succeeded in helping keep these catch rates up and stable in recent years. These numbers are important because these fish will soon grow to exceed the 15.0-inch legal size limit at the lake in the next year or two. There was no data collected in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2018 due to high water levels.
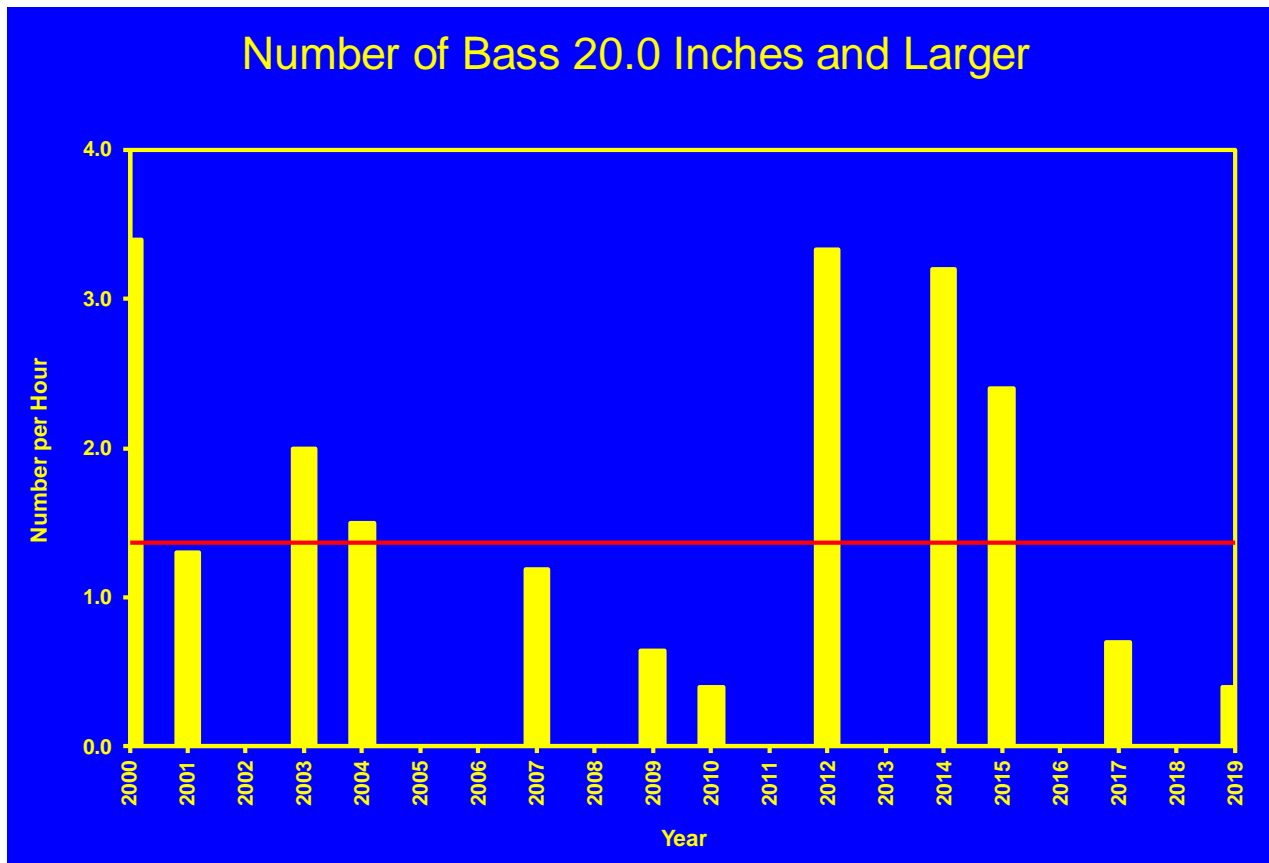

Number of 12.0-14.9 Inch Bass

Parameter 4 – Numbers of 15.0 inch and larger bass

The catch rate of 15.0 inch and larger largemouth bass at Fishtrap Lake has averaged 11.4 fish per hour of electrofishing (represented by the red line) for a rating of "fair" since 2000. This lake experienced an extreme, rapid drawdown of approximately 42ft during the winter of 2016-2017 for hydraulic gate repairs in the dam. Since that time there has been a noticeable reduction in fish over 15.0 in. This score is now well below the lake average, with only 6.8 fish/hr caught in 2019. This indicates that the harvestable largemouth bass population in Fishtrap Lake has decreased and will likely take a few years to rebuild. Recent spring stockings of age1 fingerlings in 2017 and 2018 should help to rebuild this population over time. These catch rates will continue to be monitored.

Parameter 5 – Numbers of 20.0-inch and larger bass

The electrofishing catch of 20.0 inch and larger largemouth bass has averaged 1.4 fish per hour for Fishtrap Lake since 2003 (represented by the red line). This catch rate gives the lake an "excellent" rating when it is compared to other lakes in its size range. This lake experienced an extreme, rapid drawdown of approximately 42ft during the winter of 2016-2017 for hydraulic gate repairs in the dam. Since that time there has been a noticeable reduction in fish over 20.0 in. Even though the long term average remains high, catch rates since 2017 have been well below the average. Spring stockings of advanced fingerlings in 2017 and 2018 will likely continue to have positive effects on the fishery overall and slowly begin to improve numbers of trophy fish available in the near future.

Number of Bass 20.0 Inches and Larger

Overall – Total Assessment Score (All five parameters added together)

Overall, the largemouth bass fishery at Fishtrap Lake has averaged a "good" rating (14.2) since 2003 (represented by the red line). Inconsistencies in natural recruitment have led to supplemental stockings in recent years. Since 2003, the overall assessment rating for the largemouth bass population at Fishtrap Lake has maintained a "good" rating for every year except 2017. Since the winter drawdown of 2016-2017, there have been fewer numbers of fish over 15.0 and 20.0 inches compared to recent years at Fishtrap Lake. Close monitoring of the spring numbers of age-1 fish and improvements to this component of the fishery will likely be significant to a stable largemouth bass population in the future. Supplemental stockings and the addition of crucial, winter habitat will be utilized as needed to aid recruitment of these small fish to the population.