

Lake Norman F1 Largemouth Bass Stocking and Evaluation, 2021-2030

December 2021



Beginning in October 2020, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (Commission), along with support from local anglers, began stocking F1 hybrid Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides floridanus* X *Micropterus salmoides salmoides*) to augment the Largemouth Bass population and potentially increase the quantity of trophy black bass in the reservoir. Since 2001, invasive Alabama Bass have been increasingly detected in Lake Norman, while the Largemouth Bass population density has simultaneously declined (Figure 1).

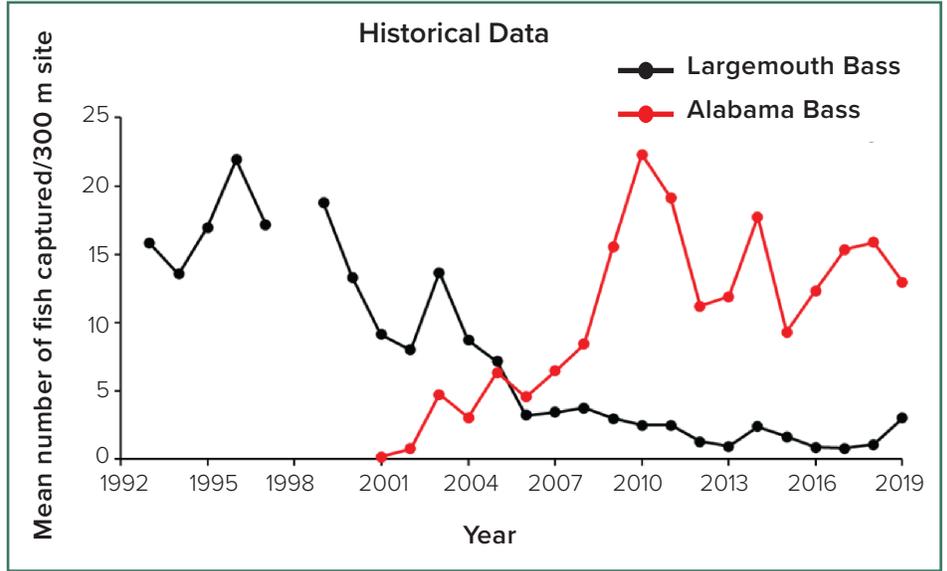


Figure 1. Mean number of Largemouth and Alabama Bass collected from 1993 to 2019 during electrofishing surveys.

F1 Largemouth Bass juveniles (approximately 8 inches in length) were stocked in fall 2020 and 2021. In June 2021, fingerlings (approximately 2 inches in length) were stocked. Fingerling stockings will continue each summer from 2022-2026, with 130,000 stocked annually. These fish will be stocked at up to 16 sites each year (Figure 2). To determine the impact these stockings have on the Largemouth Bass population, spring electrofishing surveys will be conducted from 2022 to 2030 by Commission staff. All Largemouth Bass collected will be weighed, measured, and a genetic sample will be taken that will allow staff to determine if individuals caught are stocked F1 Largemouth Bass or wild Lake Norman Largemouth Bass. Genetic samples will also be opportunistically collected from fishing tournaments.

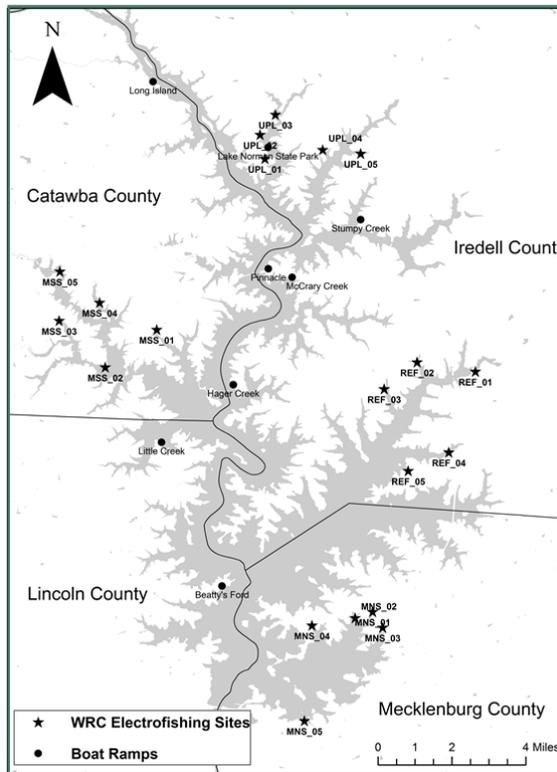


Figure 2. Map of Lake Norman, North Carolina and Commission electrofishing survey sites.



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Project Objectives

- Determine the persistence and growth rates of stocked F1 Largemouth Bass in Lake Norman.
- Evaluate F1 Largemouth Bass impact on the overall Lake Norman Largemouth Bass fishery.

What's Next:

- Continue stocking F1 Largemouth Bass each summer from 2022-2026.
- Complete electrofishing surveys and tournament collections annually to assess the impact of stocking.

Contact

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F1 Largemouth Bass juvenile stocked in October 2021 (Casey Joubert)



Corey Oakley releasing fingerling F1 Largemouth Bass in June 2021 (Lawrence Dorsey)

