



# Lake Phelps Creel Survey September 2016 - August 2017

April 2017



Pumpkinseed (Photo by Kevin Dockendorf)

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) is conducting a creel survey at Lake Phelps from September 2016 to August 2017 to better understand angling effort and angler preferences. Lake Phelps is the second largest natural lake in North Carolina (6,480 ha) and is surrounded by Pettigrew State Park, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and a small portion of privately owned land. Lake Phelps is home to popular sport fish, such as Largemouth Bass *Micropterus salmoides* and Pumpkinseed *Lepomis gibbosus*. Since 2002, Largemouth Bass are managed with a minimum size of 14 inches, with a protective slot limit from 16 to 20 inches and a five fish daily creel limit, while sunfish are managed with a 30 fish per day creel limit and no minimum size limits. Since the implementation of the protective slot limit for Largemouth Bass, there has been no official survey of angler effort, harvest or opinions on lake management measures. Angler practices and harvest information are needed from Lake Phelps to evaluate management practices, especially the protective slot limit for Largemouth Bass.

## Project Objectives:

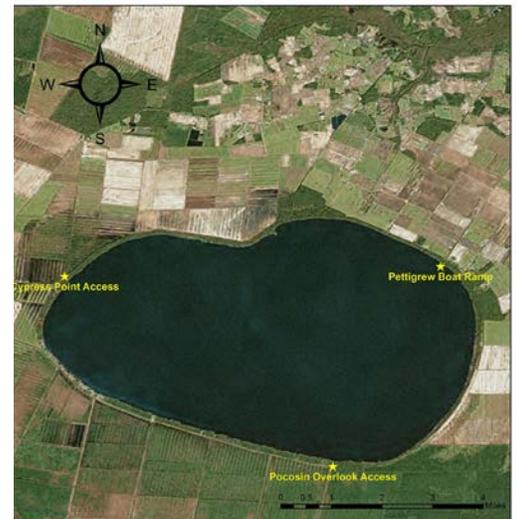
- To quantify recreational angler effort, catch, harvest and target species at Lake Phelps.
- To determine angler preferences, expenditures and thoughts on current management regulations on Lake Phelps.

## Methods:

- A creel clerk will intercept and interview anglers following completed angling trips at five access areas around Lake Phelps.
- Each angling party will be asked formalized questions regarding effort, trip information, targeted species, catch, harvest, trip expenditures and opinions on available access and current Largemouth Bass regulations.
- At each six-hour interview session, the creel clerk will also identify, count, measure and weigh any and all harvested fish.



Lake Phelps is located in Washington and Tyrrell counties, southwest of Creswell, NC and the Scuppernong River. (Map created by Christopher Smith)



Location	Latitude	Longitude	Address
Pettigrew Boat Ramp	35.7897	-76.4114	2252 Lake Shore Road
Cypress Point Access	35.78688	-76.5191	2803 Shore Drive
Pocosin Overlook Access	35.73244	-76.4422	9791 Shore Drive

Lake Phelps has multiple public access locations, all of which are ideal for fishing, boating or kayaking. (Map created by Christopher Smith)



# Lake Phelps Creel Survey September 2016-August 2017

## Results:

- Through January 2017, 26 completed trips were recorded. During these trips, 48 anglers spent 111 hours and 45 minutes fishing. This effort information is preliminary, and will be expanded to provide estimates of the total angling effort during the creel survey period.
- Of the 48 anglers, 69% (33) were specifically targeting Largemouth Bass, while 31% (15) targeted Pumpkinseed or “anything.”
- During the 26 interviews, anglers reported catching 91 Largemouth Bass and 25 Pumpkinseed. There were no Largemouth Bass harvested, while only seven Pumpkinseed were harvested.
- About 38% (18) of the anglers interviewed were from Washington, Tyrrell or Dare counties, while 56% (27) of anglers were from Cabarrus, Davidson, Green, Johnson, Nash and Wilson counties. The remaining 6% (three) were from out of state.

## What's next?:

- A NCWRC creel clerk will continue to interview anglers through the end of August 2017.
- Following the completion of the survey in August 2017, the data will be analyzed and a report summarizing the findings is expected to be completed by the fall of 2018.

## For more information, please contact:

Christopher Smith, District 1 Assistant Fisheries Biologist

Phone: (252)-333-4709

E-mail: [christopher.smith@ncwildlife.org](mailto:christopher.smith@ncwildlife.org)



*The Pocosin Overlook access area features steps for easy wading and kayak fishing. (Photo by Christopher Smith)*



*NCWRC Creel clerk Todd Oliver interviews a fisherman at the Cypress Point access area after a chilly day on the water. (Photo by Christopher Smith)*



## How You Can Help

Your purchase of fishing tackle, fishing licenses and motorboat fuel helps support fisheries work conducted by N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission fisheries biologists through the Sport Fish Restoration Program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

