



Stonehouse Lake 2006



Stonehouse Lake is a 41-acre impoundment located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Amherst County. This is one of three public reservoirs owned by the County and offers good fishing opportunities. The various facilities include picnic tables with shelters, grills, restroom, and play area. This lake has a good boat ramp for boat anglers but has limited bank fishing access. The lake is open year round but nighttime activities are prohibited except for fishing. Anglers are required to obtain a permit from the county to fish at night. Boats propelled by oar or electric motor are welcome but outboard motor use is prohibited.

Largemouth bass are doing well in this small impoundment and recent VDGIF sampling indicates the bass population is stable. The current 12-15 inch slot limit is protecting bass that make it to the slot limit and is allowing a few bass to grow large enough to qualify (minimum of 22" or 8 lbs.) for the Virginia Angler Recognition Program.

Largemouth bass collected during the 2000-2005 electrofishing surveys. The top row is the inch group and the bottom rows are the number of fish collected in each size group.

Size (Inches)	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
# in 2005	3	19	31	21	10	10	8	4	10	1	1	4	0	4	3	2	3	0
# in 2003	13	1	12	19	16	5	4	3	4	4	1	0	2	3	2	1	2	1
# in 2000	5	3	3	8	3	5	4	3	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0

The panfish population is dominated by bluegill and black crappie. The bluegill population has maintained good numbers of quality-size bluegill. Redear sunfish are present but they are not abundant enough to offer many additional fishing opportunities. The crappie population has remained stable for several years but reproduction has been cyclic resulting in a fluctuating population. High harvest rates of crappie combined with recent poor reproduction has resulted in a reduction of the adult crappie population but adequate numbers still exist for a good fishery.

Crappie collected during the 2000-2003 surveys. The top row is the inch group and the bottom row is the number of fish collected in each size group.

Size (Inches)	6	7	8	9	10	11
# in 2005	15	7	17	5	1	1
# in 2003	3	6	12	19	10	0
# in 2000	0	18	23	16	2	0

Channel catfish had been stocked from 1978-1999 with few catfish ever being collected. No catfish were collected in 2000 or 2003 and only one catfish was collected in 1991. The channel catfish stocking program at Stonehouse Lake was discontinued since stocked catfish contributed very little to the fishery. A new channel catfish stocking program was recently initiated at nearby Mill Creek Lake. The new program changed the traditional stocking of small catfish (3"-4") to larger fish averaging around 8 inches and this program has provided better fishing opportunities in most areas where it was initiated. Since the larger catfish are more costly, there were fewer catfish available for stocking. In order to still provide a good fishery in Amherst County, stocking was concentrated at Mill Creek Lake instead spreading the allocation to three reservoirs and producing only a moderate fishery in all three lakes. Consequently, Amherst County catfish anglers should concentrate their efforts at Mill Creek Lake.

The current regulations have been effective in producing a well-balanced fish population and should remain in affect. If harvest trends at Stonehouse Lake change, this regulation may need to be modified to meet changing angler interests.

To access this reservoir, turn northeast on Rt. 610 from Rt. 60 (approximately 9 miles west of Amherst), then turn left on Rt. 625, and the lake access road will be the first road on the left. Permits for night fishing are available through Amherst County at 434-946-9371.