

PFBC 2008a



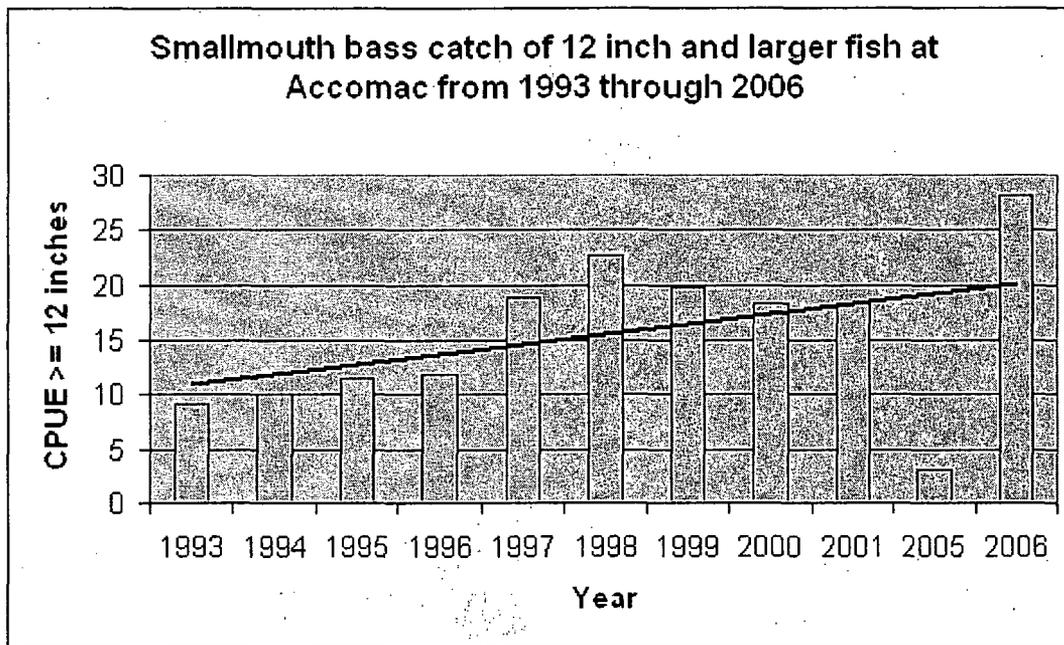
Susquehanna River

Lancaster/York County

Smallmouth Bass

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission biologists night electrofished on September 14, 2006, to assess smallmouth bass abundance in the Susquehanna River at the historic sampling location near Marietta, Lancaster Co. The reach of river electrofished for 2 hours, 10 minutes was along the York County half of the river. This reach of river is easily accessible from the PFBC's Marietta and the East Donegal Township's (Lancaster Co.) River Front Park boat access areas located off State Route 441.

The smallmouth size limit was increased from 12 inches to 15 inches in 1991. The 2006 catch rate of 28 smallmouth bass > 12 inches per hour of electrofishing was the highest recorded at this sampling location (Figure 1) since the 15 inch size limit was implemented. Furthermore, the catch rate of 12 legal length fish (> 15 inches) per hour comprised 43% of the catch over 12 inches and marked a record high for the sampling site.



Presentation of the very favorable site-specific smallmouth bass abundance and size distribution data is not a suggestion that the entire Susquehanna River in Area 6, which extends from York Haven Dam downstream to the Maryland state line, maintained such an attractive smallmouth bass population in 2006; it didn't. Electrofishing catch rates in the Safe Harbor Dam tailrace and on Lake Clark were poor. Conowingo was not sampled. The electrofishing results near Marietta indicated, however, that potentially good smallmouth bass fishing was available in fall 2006, in particular stretches of the river.



Other fish species collected near Marietta that would likely be of interest to area anglers included walleye, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. An abundance of walleye in the 9 to 12 inch range indicated good survival of the river's very strong 2005 year class, equivalent to one of the best year classes that has been seen in the lower Susquehanna in recent times. Twelve flathead catfish were captured ranging from 16-31 inches in length. Seven additional flatheads of similar lengths were seen but not captured. When conditions are favorable, we expect that walleye fishing should be excellent from York Haven to Maryland as the 2005 year class reaches legal size in fall 2007, and that flathead catfish fishing should be good in 2007 throughout much of the lower Susquehanna downstream from York Haven Dam.



-- Area 6

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