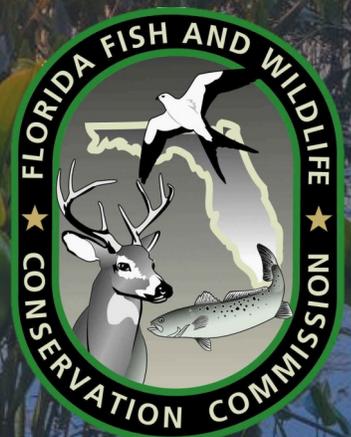


2019

Annual Summary

Harris Chain of Lakes





Ways we Collect Information:

Electrofishing:

Electrofishing is a safe and effective way to collect fish, where biologists use electricity to temporarily stun the fish. This allows biologists to handle the fish for data collection (e.g., length and weights) and return them safely to the water.



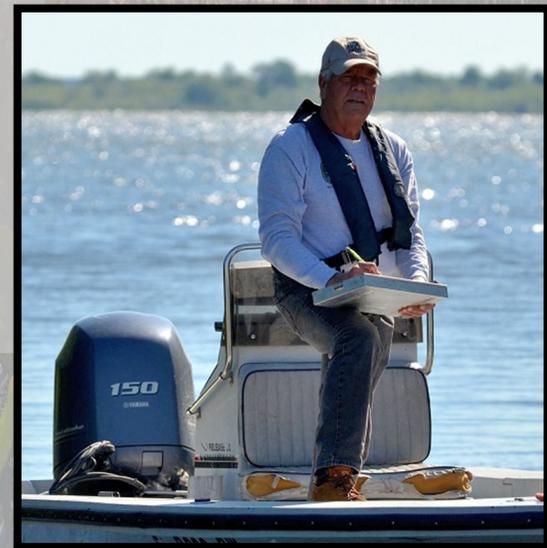
Trawling:

FWC uses trawling to monitor the crappie population. Biologists use this information to look at long-term trends in the population along with monitoring the number of young crappie being produced.



Anglers:

Anglers provide valuable information about fishing in the Harris Chain. Angler surveys allow biologists to monitor how much anglers fish, what they're fishing for, # of fish caught/harvested, and how successful they are (fish caught per hour). Also to monitor crappie populations in Lake Harris and Griffin, biologists set coolers at various locations (e.g., fish camps, fish cleaning stations) where anglers can deposit filleted carcasses. Biologists use these carcasses to monitor age and growth of the crappie.





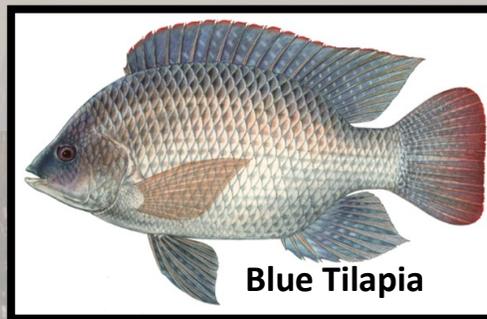
Fall Community Sampling

In October and November 2018, FWC sampled four Harris Chain lakes (Apopka, Harris, Griffin, and Beauclair) to assess the fish community (all species) diversity. Random sites around each lake were selected and fish were collected using electrofishing.

We sampled 92 sites and collected 19,768 fish and 41 different species. The most common species in all four lakes was Bluegill. Species richness and diversity of the Harris Chain remains within historical norms. Numbers of exotic fish species (e.g., Blue Tilapia) dramatically decreased during the cold winter of 2009–2010, and number remain low.



Golden Shiner



Blue Tilapia



Bluegill



Bluespotted Sunfish



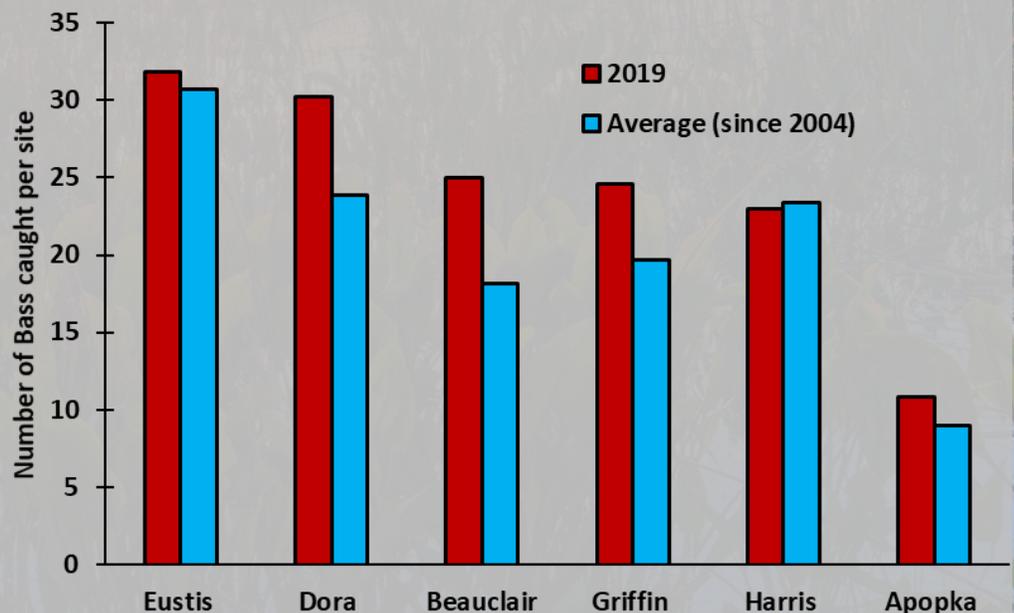
Chain Pickerel

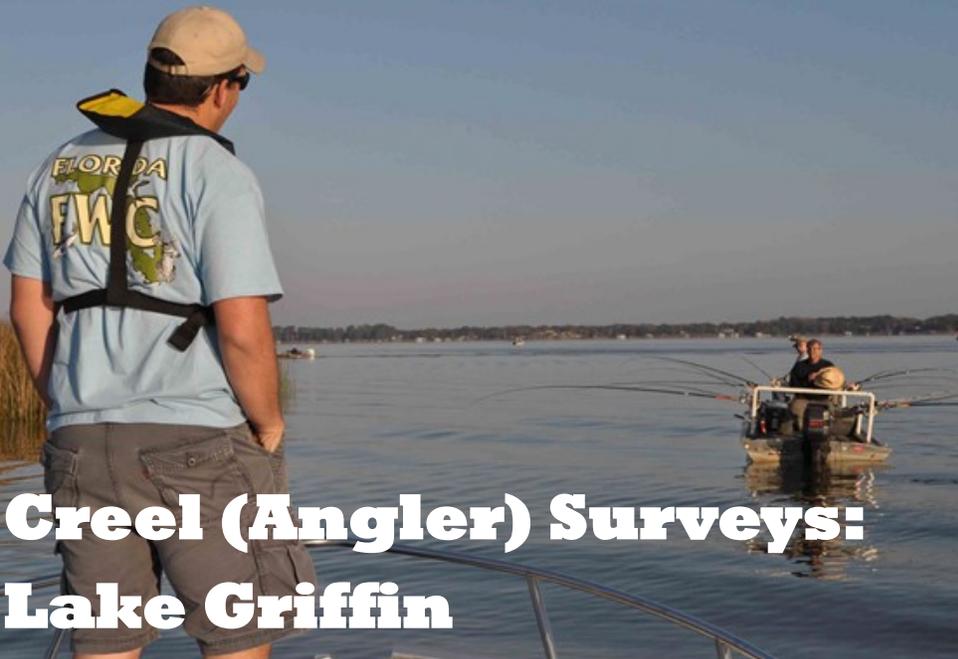


Spring Bass Sampling

In February and March 2019, FWC sampled six Harris Chain lakes (Apopka, Harris, Griffin, Eustis, Dora and Beauclair) to assess the Largemouth Bass populations and compare to long-term trends. Random sites around each lake were selected and fish were collected using electrofishing.

A total of 204 sites were sampled and 3,726 bass were collected including 13 bass larger than eight pounds. The largest bass came from Lake Apopka measuring just under 25" and weighing 10.8 pounds. Bass in the Harris Chain continue to have healthy length-weight ratios, in large part due to high nutrients and plenty of forage. Lake Eustis ranked highest in number of bass caught per site (32 bass per site). Lake Dora rank highest in number of bass larger than 16" per site (6.00 per site). Biologists also found high numbers of young bass in Lake Dora, likely a result of the recent expansion of native submersed vegetation.

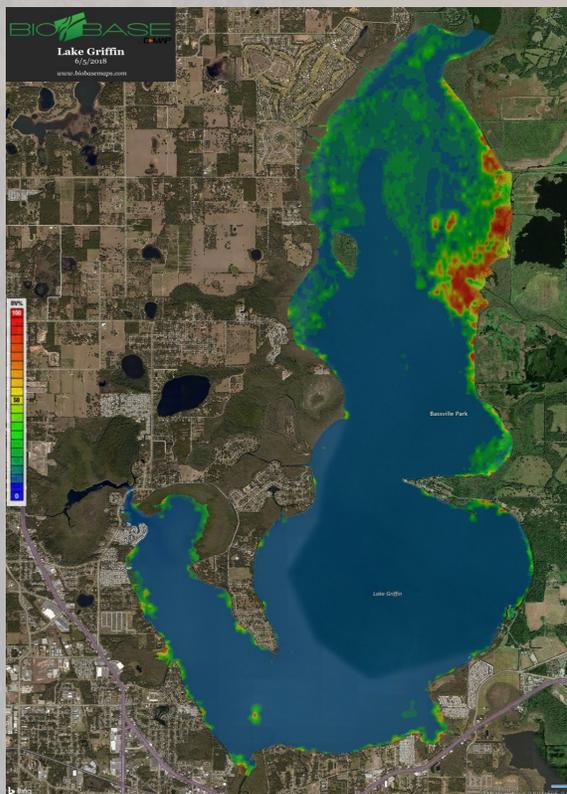
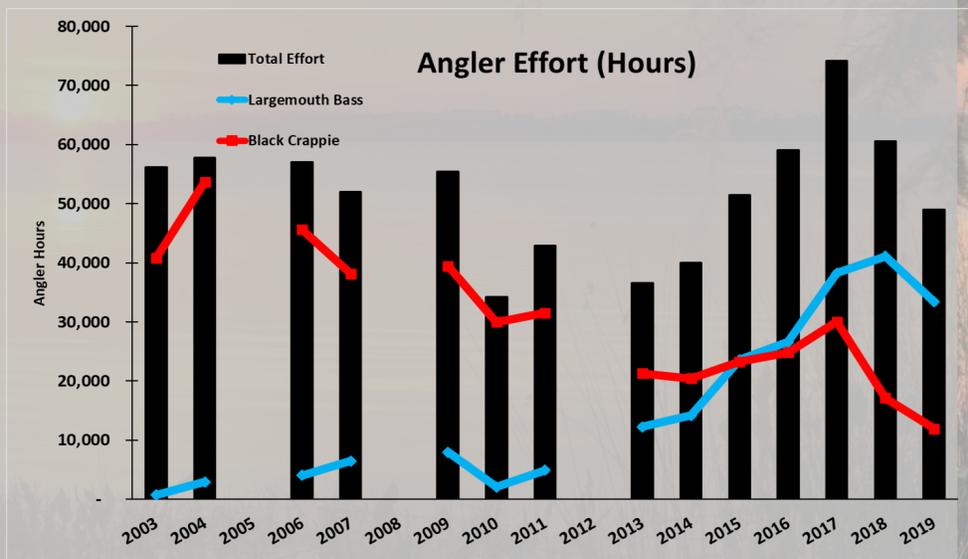




Creel (Angler) Surveys: Lake Griffin

In 2018-2019, FWC conducted a creel (angler) survey on Lake Griffin to assess angler effort (total number of hours), catch, harvest, and success (fish per hour) for all sportfish. Angler surveys are useful for gauging how the fisheries are doing.

In 2018-2019, 1,672 anglers were counted and 1,051 were interviewed, resulting in a estimated total effort of 49,016 hours. Sixty eight percent of anglers were targeting Largemouth Bass.



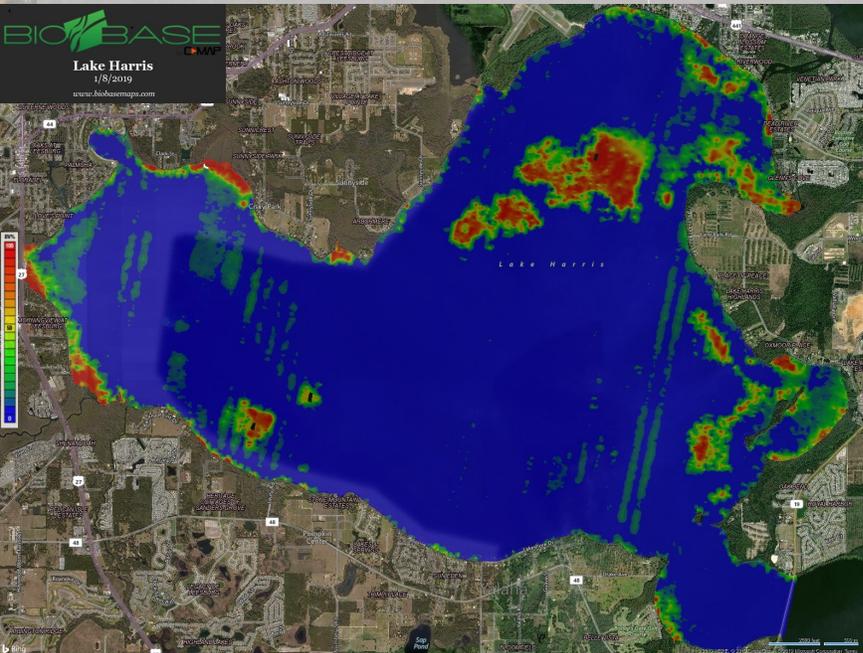
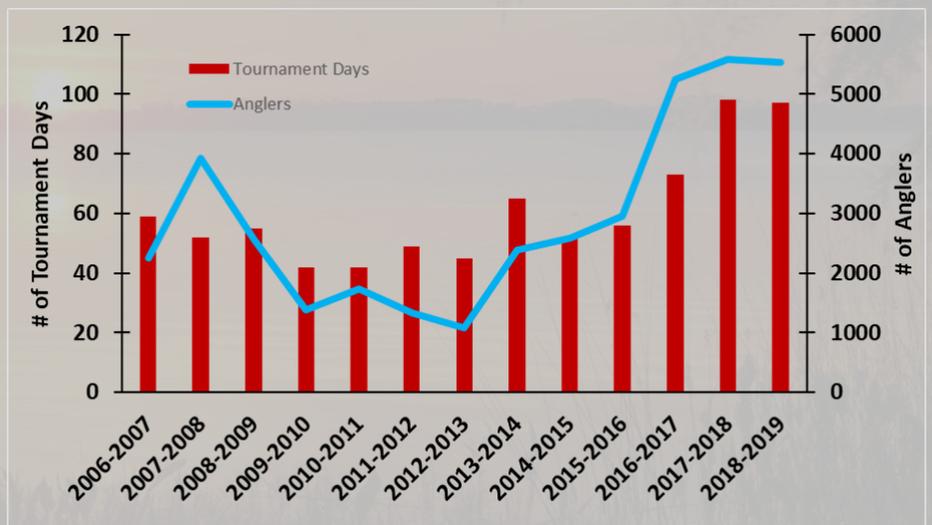
In the early 2000's, angling effort was primary towards crappie. However, with the expansion of submersed vegetation (primarily on the north end) and the increased success of the bass fishery, the effort has now switched, with only 24% of the total effort coming from crappie anglers. In 2018-2019, we saw a slight drop in bass effort (33,399 hours) and angler success (0.70 bass per hour), likely due to an algal bloom in Lake Griffin which dropped the water clarity. However, bass effort and success still remains well above average (since 2003).



Creel (Angler) Surveys: Lake Harris

In 2018-2019, FWC conducted a creel (angler) survey on Lake Harris to assess angler effort (total number of hours), catch, harvest, and success (fish per hour) for all sportfish.

In 2018-2019, 3,080 anglers were counted and 1,974 were interviewed resulting in a estimated total effort of 89,557 hours. Seventy seven percent of anglers were targeting Largemouth Bass with an angler success of 0.60 bass per hour. Largemouth bass effort has increased over the last two years, likely due to the improved habitat



within the lake. With the recent rise in the bass fishery on the Harris Chain of Lakes, Lake Harris has hosted various major bass tournaments in recent years, with weigh-ins at Hickory Point park and the new Ski Beach Ramp in Venetian Garden Cove. During the 2018-19 survey, 35% of the bass anglers interviewed were either pre-fishing or fishing a tournament.



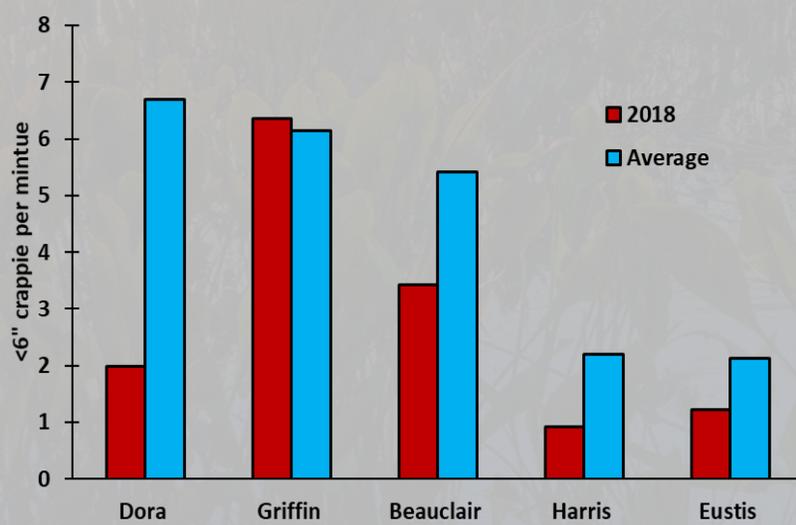
Black Crappie Sampling

In November 2018, FWC sampled Black Crappie in five Harris Chain Lakes (i.e., Griffin, Harris, Eustis, Dora, and Beauclair) to assess population trends and numbers of juvenile crappie (less than 6"). Random sites around each lake were selected and crappie were collected using trawling.

One hundred and thirty two sites were sampled using trawls and 1,399 Black Crappie ranging from 2" to 14" were collected. Black Crappie collected for aging (N=424) ranged from 0 to 7 years old and reach 10" in approximately 3 years.



In 2019, we saw below average catch rates for juvenile crappie (number of crappie less than 6" caught per minute) in lakes Dora, Beauclair, Harris, and Eustis. However, Lake Griffin returned to its 18-year average. Biologist will continue to monitor crappie populations and investigate way in improving crappie fishing throughout the Harris Chain.

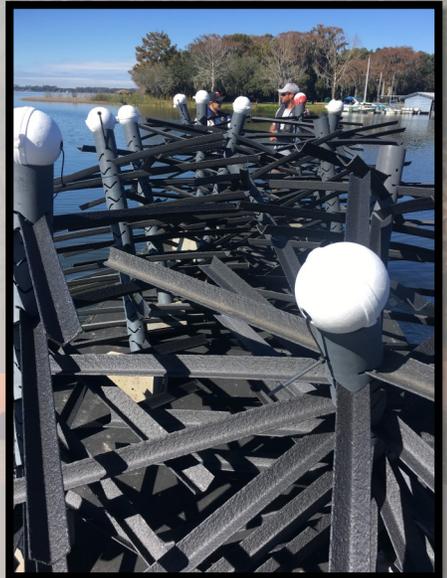




Management Actions

Fish Attractors:

- FWC Installed 100 artificial trees in Lake Dora
- Lake County Water Authority partnered with FWC to install 6 green LED underwater fishing lights at the Hickory Point fishing pier on Lake Harris.



Stocking:

Lake: Eustis
Species: Hybrid Striped Bass
of Fish: 111,144
Size: Fingerlings

Lake: Harris
Species: Hybrid Striped Bass
of Fish: 219,243
Size: Fingerlings

