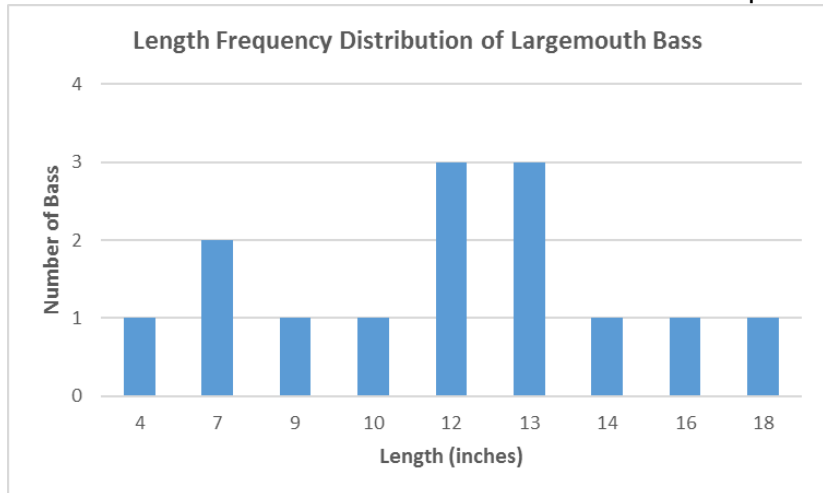


Van Cortlandt Lake (Survey #:217004)

Nikki Goodman, Region 2 Fisheries

Covering 18 acres, with 0.81 miles of shoreline, Van Cortlandt is the largest lake in the Bronx. It is a shallow lake (up to 8 ft deep) located in Van Cortlandt Park and is part of the Lower Hudson watershed. Much like all NYC waters, the shoreline is the only way to access the lake. The shoreline varies from flat grassy areas to steeper wooded spots, but all areas are accessible to anglers. The fishery is managed under catch and release only regulations, and barbless hooks must be used. Largemouth bass are the primary sportfish in the lake, and there are a variety of panfish such as yellow perch and sunfish. The lake was known for its quality yellow perch fishing in the past. In addition, the DEC I FISH NY program provides free clinics there to teach young students the joy of fishing and the importance of protecting our natural resources. A boat electrofishing survey following the DEC Centrarchid Sampling Manual was conducted in June 2017 to assess the status of sportfish and panfish populations.

A total of 145 fish consisting of nine different species were caught. Fifteen were largemouth bass ranging in size from five to a little over 18 inches. An assessment of condition indicated that largemouth bass were somewhat lean, which suggests that the population is over abundant or the forage base is not sufficient. The other species of fish caught included yellow perch, brown bullhead, golden shiner, goldfish, bluegill, pumpkinseed, black crappie and white sucker.



Bluegill were the most common species, comprising 52% of the total catch; an increase from 21% from a previous survey conducted in 2013. Largemouth bass were 10% of the total 2017 catch, a decrease from 18% in 2013. There was a good number of quality sized brown bullhead, ranging up to 15 inches. There were also yellow perch and black crappie up to 12 inches. Eleven largemouth bass and 60 sunfish were collected and sent to the USFWS Lamar Fish Health Center for disease testing. Van Cortlandt Lake supports a diverse warmwater fish community that should provide quality fishing opportunities for largemouth bass and a variety of panfish. This survey confirms Van Cortlandt as a quintessential site for fisheries education and angler recreation.

Table 1. Number of fish collected and length category catch rates from Van Cortlandt Lake, 2017.

Species	Number collected	Length category catch rate (number caught/hour)						
		0-4 in	4-6 in	6-8 in	8-10 in	10-12 in	12-15 in	15-18 in
Largemouth bass	14	0	4	0	1	1	11	1
Bluegill	76	4	57	47	0	0	0	0
Pumpkinseed	11	0	10	6	0	0	0	0
Brown bullhead	15	0	0	0	0	19	3	0
Yellow perch	8	0	1	3	6	1	0	0
Black Crappie	7	0	0	3	6	1	0	0
White sucker	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	7
Golden shiner	6	0	0	3	6	0	0	0
Goldfish	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

