LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES

OFFICE OF FISHERIES
INLAND FISHERIES SECTION

PART VI -A

WATERBODY MANAGEMENT PLAN SERIES

CHATHAM LAKE

LAKE HISTORY & MANAGEMENT ISSUES
CHRONOLOGY

DOCUMENT SCHEDULED TO BE UPDATED EVERY FIVE YEARS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LAKE HISTORY .......................................................................................................................... 4

GENERAL INFORMATION .............................................................................................................. 4
  Shoreline length ......................................................................................................................... 4
  Average depth .......................................................................................................................... 4
  Maximum depth ....................................................................................................................... 4
  Natural seasonal water fluctuation .......................................................................................... 4
  Parish ....................................................................................................................................... 4
  Date Lake formed ..................................................................................................................... 4
  Impoundment ........................................................................................................................... 4
  Size (surface area) .................................................................................................................... 4
  Watershed ................................................................................................................................ 4
  Pool Stage ................................................................................................................................ 4
  Spillway width ............................................................................................................................ 4
  Drawdown description .............................................................................................................. 5

LAKE AUTHORITY .......................................................................................................................... 5
  Association ............................................................................................................................... 5
  Authorization ............................................................................................................................ 6

ACCESS ...................................................................................................................................... 6
  Boat Docks ............................................................................................................................... 6
  Piers ......................................................................................................................................... 6
  State/Federal facilities ............................................................................................................. 7

SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................................... 7
  Chatham Dam Leakage ............................................................................................................. 7

EVENTS / PROBLEMS .................................................................................................................. 7

MANAGEMENT ISSUES ................................................................................................................. 9

AQUATIC VEGETATION ............................................................................................................... 9
  Aquatic Vegetation Surveys .................................................................................................... 10
  Aquatic Vegetation Treatment History .................................................................................. 10

HISTORY OF REGULATIONS ...................................................................................................... 12
  Recreational ............................................................................................................................ 12
  Commercial .............................................................................................................................. 12
  Drawdown Dates ...................................................................................................................... 12

FISH KILLS / DISEASE HISTORY, LMBV ................................................................................. 12

CONTAMINANTS / POLLUTION .................................................................................................. 12
  Water quality ............................................................................................................................ 12

BIOLOGICAL ............................................................................................................................... 13
  Fish and aquatic vegetation sampling ..................................................................................... 13
  Stocking History ...................................................................................................................... 14
  Species profile ........................................................................................................................... 15
  Largemouth Bass Genetics ....................................................................................................... 16
  Threatened/endangered/exotic species .................................................................................... 16

CREASE ..................................................................................................................................... 16
  Historic Information/Type ...................................................................................................... 16

WATER USE ................................................................................................................................. 16

APPENDIX I ................................................................................................................................. 17

APPENDIX II ............................................................................................................................... 18
LAKE HISTORY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Shoreline length
3.4 miles

Average depth
5 feet

Maximum depth
10 feet

Natural seasonal water fluctuation
1 to 2 feet

Parish
Jackson

Date Lake formed
1952

Impoundment
Edwards Branch (tributary of Castor Creek)

Size (surface area)
158 acres
The heavily forested west end is too shallow for vessels and is not suitable for traditional forms of recreation. Therefore, the lake has approximately 103 acres of recreationally usable habitat.

Watershed
10,229 acres drain into Chatham Lake.
The ratio of watershed to lake surface is large at 64.7 to 1.
Watershed characteristics: Commercial pineland forest, upland hardwood, pasture, rural residential. Soil is acidic, sandy, and infertile. Soil alkalinity and pH are low.

Pool Stage
Surface elevation of Chatham Lake is set at the spillway weir elevation of 165 MSL.

Spillway width
Spillway dam structure – total weir length – 150 feet.
**Drawdown description**
Gate Size – 18” slide gate with 18” diameter pipe
Number of gates - 1
Condition – good – new gate installed August, 2007

**Who controls**
The Jackson Parish Watershed District (JPWD) is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Chatham Lake dam and spillway. Drawdown plans from the commission are coordinated through Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) prior to opening the control structure. The land where the dam and control structure are located is privately owned, but the JPWD has long-term servitudes to operate the lake according to the Jackson Parish Tax Assessor’s Office. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development is responsible for inspecting the dam and control structure as part of its dam safety program.

**LAKE AUTHORITY**

**Association**
The Jackson Parish Watershed District shall consist of seven commissioners, each of whom shall be a qualified elector of the State of Louisiana who resides within the limits of Jackson Parish. The commissioners shall be appointed by the Jackson Parish Police Jury and serve terms of 4 years and until their successors have been appointed and have been qualified. The members are listed in Table 1. Any vacancy in the office of commissioner, due to death, resignation or any other cause shall be filled by an appointment of the Jackson Parish Police Jury.

**Table 1. Members of Jackson Parish Watershed District Board of Commissioners as of October, 2018.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Term Expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benson Bagwell</td>
<td>400 Spillway Rd. Chatham, LA 71226</td>
<td>8/8/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswald Brown</td>
<td>3722 Hwy. 146 Chatham, LA 71226</td>
<td>9/4/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Barlow</td>
<td>385 Hughes Rd. Jonesboro, LA 71251</td>
<td>5/14/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Ponder</td>
<td>PO Box 395 Hodge, LA 71247</td>
<td>3/3/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian Pace</td>
<td>106 Alex Rd. Jonesboro, LA 71251</td>
<td>3/6/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavelle Smith</td>
<td>154 Easy St. Chatham, LA 71226</td>
<td>8-8-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chairman)
Authorization
JPWD created in 1972 by LA R.S. 38:2900 as political subdivision and budgetary unit. LA R.S. 38:2900 creates the Jackson Parish Watershed District, out of the watershed of all streams located in Jackson Parish, and more particularly defined as all of Jackson Parish, Louisiana. The Jackson Parish Watershed District shall be an agency of the State of Louisiana and a budgetary unit thereof, which shall have as its purpose the conservation of soil and water, developing the natural resources and wealth of the district for sanitary, agricultural and recreational purposes, as the same may be conducive to the public health, safety, convenience or welfare or of public utility or benefit of the citizens of the State of Louisiana.

The Jackson Parish Game and Fish Preserve purchased some property and acquired servitudes for the creation of Chatham Lake for a recreational fishery. The land was transferred to the Louisiana Conservation Commission (presently known as Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries). The majority of lake bottom is privately owned. Approximately 30 acres of land within the lakebed belong to the State of Louisiana.

ACCESS

Boat Docks
The Chatham Public Boat Ramp is open to the public and is free of charge. The concrete ramp was renovated in late 2007. The location of the ramp is indicated on map in APPENDIX I.

Piers
There are a few (<5) privately owned piers associated with shoreline properties. One public fishing pier was constructed on the south side of the lake in 2006 (Figure 1).
State/Federal facilities
Two picnic areas were constructed in 2006.

SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT

The Chatham Lake shoreline is primarily residential, but lightly developed. No commercial marinas are in operation.

EVENTS / PROBLEMS

Chatham Dam Leakage
July, 1998 - Letter from Mr. Mike Aghayan, Chief of DOTD Dam Safety, indicated that Chatham Lake Dam required immediate attention. DOTD personnel that inspected the dam were not able to determine the extent of damages. They suspected that the metal sliding gate (approx. 3’ X 3’) had deteriorated and was leaking (Figure 2). Funding was secured for the repairs by Rep. Jim Fannin through Rural Development Funds in 2006. The spillway gate was replaced in 2007. Because a drawdown was required for spillway repairs, renovation of the existing fish population and improvements to the boat ramp were planned to coincide with the project.
Figure 2. Control structure on Chatham Lake, LA prior to repairs being performed in 2007.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES

AQUATIC VEGETATION

Complex Cover in Chatham Lake consists of aquatic vegetation and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) trees. The upper half of the lake is shallow with scattered cypress trees in the center of the lake and patches of aquatic vegetation that transition to a cypress forest near the headwaters (Figure 3). Much of the timber on the lower half of the lake was cut prior to impoundment. Therefore, complex cover in this part of the lake can only be found in the littoral zone and consists of a fringe of emergent vegetation and cypress trees.

Figure 3. Typical habitat in the upper end of Chatham Lake, LA.
The upper half of Chatham Lake is very shallow (less than three feet) and aquatic vegetation has been problematic for many years. Historically, the shallow water areas of the lake were covered annually with submerged aquatic vegetation including fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), bladderwort (*Utricularia* spp.), coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), parrot feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), and naiad (*Najas* spp.). Common emergent vegetation present includes water primrose (*Ludwigia octovalvis*), alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), and water lily (*Nymphaea* spp.). Emergent vegetation is typically found in a fringe around the lake and intermingled with submerged vegetation throughout the shallow areas of the lake. Historically, water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and duckweed (*Lemna* spp.) have been the predominant floating plant species.

Common salvinia (*Salvinia minima*) was first observed in Chatham Lake in 2003 during observations made in conjunction with daytime electrofishing sampling. In August of 2004, it was observed to cover approximately 10 acres. Control efforts included foliar herbicide applications by LDWF spray crews and a three-foot drawdown for habitat improvement in 2004. Common salvinia was not observed again until 2006. It is currently found in the lake but has not become problematic.

Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) was first introduced into the lake sometime in 2015. Foliar treatments for the invasive plant first occurred in January of 2016. During 2016 and 2017, giant salvinia became well established on the shallow upper portions of the lake, covering as much as 70 acres at times. Foliar treatments have been somewhat successful at reducing coverage and helping keep the lake recreationally viable. Large mats of salvinia have been flushed out of the lake during times of high water. Freezing weather in January 2018 significantly reduced the salvinia in the lake for the remainder of the year.

**Aquatic Vegetation Surveys**

Surveys to estimate aquatic vegetation coverage were performed in 2005, 2012, 2013, and 2015-2018. The results of the most recent survey can be found in **APPENDIX II – Aquatic Vegetation Survey**.

**Aquatic Vegetation Treatment History**

Foliar herbicide applications for control of nuisance aquatic vegetation are made periodically by LDWF spray crews. Herbicide applications made from 2006 through 2018 are listed in Table 2. Salvinia weevils (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) have been stocked into the lake to aid in salvinia control (see Table 3).
### Table 2. Herbicide applications in Chatham Lake, LA 2006 – 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Year</th>
<th>Primary Plant Species</th>
<th>Herbicides Used</th>
<th>Acres Treated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Alligator weed, primrose</td>
<td>Aqua Neat – 13 gals. (0.75 gal/acre)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Alligator weed, primrose</td>
<td>2,4-D - 3 gals. (1 gal/acre) Reward – 24 gals. (1 gal/acre)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Alligator weed, primrose, common salvinia</td>
<td>Aqua Master – 26 gals. (0.75 gal/acre) Diquat E Pro 2 L – 16 gals. (1 gal/acre) Knockout – 13 gals. (1 gal/acre) Reward – 20 gals (1 gal/acre)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Alligator weed, duckweed, parrot feather, pennywort</td>
<td>Aqua Master – 8 gals. (0.75 gal/acre) Knockout – 32 gals. (1 gal/acre) Platoon – 12 gals. (0.5 gal/acre)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Alligator weed, primrose, common salvinia,</td>
<td>Aqua Master – 2 gals (0.75 gal/acre) Clearcast – 1 gal (0.33 gal/acre) Knockout – 13 gals. (1 gal/acre) Tribune – 5 gals. (1 gal/acre)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>common salvinia</td>
<td>Tribune – 10 gals. (1 gal/acre)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Primrose and duckweed</td>
<td>Clearcast – 3 gals. (0.5 gal/acre)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Giant salvinia and alligator weed</td>
<td>Aquaneat – 8.25 gals (0.75 gal/acre) Round Up Custom – 1.5 gals. (0.75 gal/acre) Tribune - 21.75 gals. (0.25 gal/acre &amp; 0.75 gal/acre)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Giant salvinia</td>
<td>Aquaneat – 60 gals (0.75 gal/acre) Tribune - 28.5 gals (0.25 gal/acre &amp; 0.75 gal/acre)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Giant salvinia and duckweed</td>
<td>Aquaneat – 2.25 gals (0.75 gal/acre) Tribune – 0.75 gals (0.25 gal/acre &amp; 0.75 gal/acre)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Salvinia weevil stockings in Chatham Lake, LA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Weevils</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5,999</td>
<td>LDWF (Iatt Lake)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HISTORY OF REGULATIONS

Recreational
Statewide regulations have been in effect for all fish species, since the creation of the lake. Recreational fishing regulations may be viewed at the link below:
http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational-fishing

Commercial
Statewide regulations have been in effect for all fish species, since the creation of the lake. Commercial fishing regulations may be viewed at the link below:
http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing

DRAWDOWN HISTORY

Drawdowns were conducted in 1967 and 1975 for the purpose of aquatic vegetation control. A drawdown conducted in the fall of 2004 was for aquatic vegetation control, and for aeration of shallow substrate. The lake was completely dewatered in 2007 for repairs to the control structure and renovation of the lake. Details of the drawdowns are found in Table 4.

Table 4. Drawdown history of Chatham Lake, LA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUCCESS</th>
<th>FISHING CLOSURE</th>
<th>DEPTH</th>
<th>% EXPOSED</th>
<th>FISH KILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Vegetation Control</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Vegetation Control</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>5 ft</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Habitat Improvement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3 ft</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Renovation of lake, repairs to control structure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawdown Dates
Drawdowns conducted in fall – typically after Labor Day through mid winter.

FISH KILLS / DISEASE HISTORY, LMBV

No kills recorded due to poor water quality or toxins.

CONTAMINANTS / POLLUTION

Water quality
Routine DEQ sampling discontinued in 1999. No fish consumption or swimming advisories issued.

BIOLOGICAL

Fish and aquatic vegetation sampling
The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has conducted standardized sampling on Chatham Lake beginning in 2002. Sampling was increased following the renovation project in 2007. Sampling history and planned sampling through 2023 is listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Schedule of sampling for Chatham Lake, LA from 2002 thru 2023.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Gill Netting – 1 24-hour sample with each of the following:</td>
<td>300' 2.5 in. bar. 300' 3.0 in. bar. 300' 3.5 in. bar. 300’ 4.0 in. bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>4-15 minute samples (daytime – November)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>2-15 minute samples (Summer) Shoreline seining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>2-15 minute samples (Summer) Shoreline seining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>2-15 minute samples (Summer) and 1 -15-minute forage sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>3-15 minute samples (Summer) and 3- 300 second forage samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Electrofishing</td>
<td>2-15 minute samples (Spring); 2-15 minute samples (Fall) and 2-450 second forage samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead nets – 1 stations (2 nets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>No fisheries sampling planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.deq.state.la.us/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>No fisheries sampling planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Electrofishing 2-15 minute samples (Spring); 2-15 minute samples (Fall) and 2-450 second forage samples Lead nets – 1 stations (2 nets) Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Electrofishing 2-15 minute samples (Spring); 2-15 minute samples (Fall) and 2-450 second forage samples Lead nets – 1 station (two nets) Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Electrofishing 2-15 minute samples (Spring); 2-15 minute samples (Fall) and 2-450 second forage samples Lead nets – 1 station (two nets) Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lake records
The Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association (LOWA) is the official curator of fish records for the State of Louisiana. No lists are kept specifically for Chatham Lake. Complete information regarding Louisiana fish records is included in the attached site: [http://laoutdoorwriters.com/louisiana-fish-and-big-game-records/louisiana-fish-records/](http://laoutdoorwriters.com/louisiana-fish-and-big-game-records/louisiana-fish-records/)

Stocking History
Prior to the lake renovation project in 2007, the dominate species stocked into Chatham Lake was channel catfish. The stocking history from 1971 to 2018 is found in Table 6.

Table 6. Stocking history of Chatham Lake, LA from 1971 to 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NUMBER / SPECIES STOCKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>4,000 bluegill fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>904 blue catfish adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5,000 channel catfish fry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>9,982 channel catfish fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15,525 channel catfish fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,760 Florida largemouth bass fingerlings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Species profile
A rotenone application was made in August, 2007 to remove all fish in Chatham Lake in preparation for re-stocking. The species observed are listed in Table 5 along with any species collected during LDWF standardized sampling since the renovation project.

Table 5. List of indigenous freshwater fishes found in Chatham Lake, LA during rotenone application for lake renovation efforts in 2007 and LDWF standardized sampling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count and Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>136,250 sunfish fingerlings – 75% bluegill, 25% redbear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>420 channel catfish fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,500 threadfin shad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25,748 Florida largemouth bass fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,975 black crappie (blacknose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,500 channel catfish fingerlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>159,492 redbear fingerlings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gar Family, LEPISOSTEIDAE
Spotted gar, *Lepisosteus oculatus* (Winchell)

Bowfin Family, AMIIDAE
Bowfin, *Amia calva*

Herring Family, CLUPEIDAE
Gizzard shad, *Dorosoma cepedianum* (Lesueur)
Threadfin shad, *Dorosoma petenense* (Günther)

Freshwater Catfish Family, ICTALURIDAE
Yellow bullhead, *Ameiurus natalis* (Lesueur)

Pike Family, ESOCIDAE
Chain pickerel, *Esox niger* (Lesueur)

Minnow Family, CYPRINIDAE
Golden Shiner, *Notemigonus crysoleucas*

Pirate Perch Family, APHREDODERIDAE
Pirate perch, *Aphredoderus sayanus* (Gilliams)

Killifish Family, CYPRINODONTIDAE
Golden topminnow, *Fundulus chrysotus* (Günther)
Blackspotted topminnow, *Fundulus olivaceus* (Storer)

Livebearer Family, POECILIIDAE
Western mosquitoifish, *Gambusia affinis* (Baird and Girard)

Silverside Family, ATERINIDAE
Brook silverside, *Labidesthes sicculus* (Cope)

Sunfish Family, CENTRARCHIDAE
Green sunfish, *Lepomis cyanellus* Rafinesque
Warmouth, *Lepomis gulosus* (Cuvier)
Bluegill, *Lepomis macrochirus* (Rafinesque)
Longear sunfish, *Lepomis megalotis* (Rafinesque)
Redear sunfish, *Lepomis microlophus* (Günther)
Northern largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides salmoides* (Lacépède)
Black crappie, *Pomoxis nigromaculatus* (Lesueur)

**Largemouth Bass Genetics**
No genetics sampling conducted to date.

**Threatened/endangered/exotic species**
None identified.

**CREEL**

**Historic Information/Type**
No angler surveys conducted to date.

**WATER USE**
Fishing and swimming.
APPENDIX I

(return to access)

Chatham Lake Map

Map of Chatham Lake indicating depths of points at pool stage.
APPENDIX II
(Return to surveys)

Aquatic Vegetation Survey

Chatham Lake-Aquatic Vegetation Assessment
2018

An assessment of the aquatic vegetation on Chatham Lake (158 acres) was performed on 6-21-18 by LDWF Inland Fisheries Biologist, James Seales. The lake was at normal pool stage at the time of the survey. The water color was heavily stained with a slight algae bloom.

Although Chatham Lake spans as much as 158 acres, the heavily forested west end is too shallow for vessels and is not suitable for traditional forms of recreation regardless of vegetation present. Therefore, the lake has approximately 103 acres of recreationally usable habitat.

Coverage of floating and emergent aquatic vegetation is approximately eight acres which is greatly reduced from what has been observed the past several years. The harsh winter of 2017/2018 has led to a reduction of such vegetation on all area lakes.

Giant salvinia coverage was greatly reduced from past years. The only area of the lake where salvinia was concentrated (two acres) was directly across the lake from the boat launch in an area that is isolated from the lake except during high water. A sedimentation ridge along a line of cypress trees prevents boat access to this area; however, floating vegetation can be exchanged with the lake if the water is above pool by only a few inches. In the remainder of the lake only occasional patches of primary stage giant salvinia mixed with common salvinia and duckweed were observed. An estimated total of four acres of salvinia were present on Chatham Lake at the time of the survey. Giant salvinia was the dominant species present.

The main lake area contained a light fringe of wild taro, water primrose, alligator weed, water pennywort, duck potato, and southern watergrass along the shoreline. Occasional small patches of water primrose and alligator weed were found on the upper end of the lake. Very sparse coverage of submersed vegetation was found out to the 2’ – 3’ contour. Small concentrations of coontail, milfoil, naiad, bladderwort, fanwort, and slender spikerush were observed.