

Nockamixon State Park

by Carl Haensel



photo-Carl Haensel

Nockamixon State Park is a jewel of open space in rapidly developing eastern Pennsylvania. Located in northern Bucks County, its 5,283 acres surround the largest lake in the area, 1,450-acre Lake Nockamixon. The lake is roughly 7 miles long with an average width of a quarter-mile to a half-mile. Many accesses, sheltered bays, and a boat rental make this lake a popular choice for anglers and boaters. An engine size limit of 20hp keeps wakes to a minimum. Common fish in the lake include bluegills, crappies, white perch, striped bass, mus-

kellunge, chain pickerel, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleyes and channel catfish. Common forage fish in the lake include gizzard shad and alewives.












Largemouth bass

One of the most popular sport fishes targeted in the lake is the largemouth bass. A good place to start searching for them is the lake's upper end. Put your boat in at the Three Mile Run access and begin by fishing the weed beds along the western area of the lake.

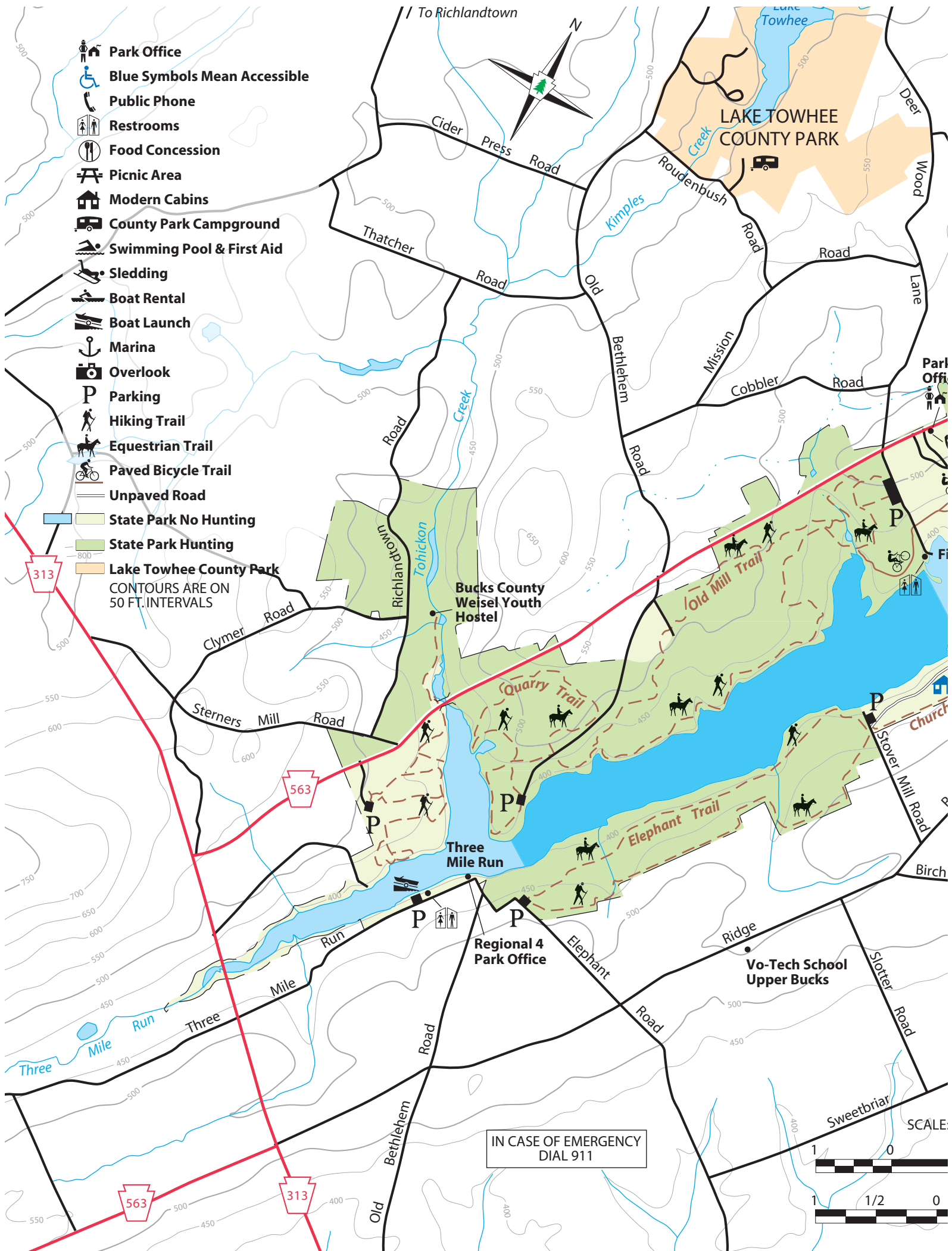
If you're looking for bass while fishing the deeper eastern end of the lake, fish the shoreline structure and the underwater cliffs. Though the lake holds fewer smallmouth bass, this is one area where you can look for the lake's smallies.

Lake Nockamixon also hosts chain pickerel and muskellunge. Both of these toothy predators will hit shiny and flashy lures such as spoons and spinners. Using over-sized lures can increase your odds of hooking a muskellunge. Larger lures can also keep smaller pickerel off your line. Anglers

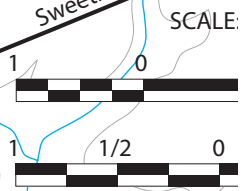
(article continued on page 34)

-  Park Office
-  Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
-  Public Phone
-  Restrooms
-  Food Concession
-  Picnic Area
-  Modern Cabins
-  County Park Campground
-  Swimming Pool & First Aid
-  Sledding
-  Boat Rental
-  Boat Launch
-  Marina
-  Overlook
-  Parking
-  Hiking Trail
-  Equestrian Trail
-  Paved Bicycle Trail
-  Unpaved Road
-  State Park No Hunting
-  State Park Hunting
-  Lake Towhee County Park

CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 911





report good numbers of chain pickerel in the lake's Haycock Arm. Catching pickerel in the 20-inch to 25-inch range is possible.

Catfish

Anglers targeting channel catfish will find that fishing is best at night. Try using chicken livers, shiners or shrimp. Catching a 30-inch channel cat is certainly possible, and fish over 20 inches are commonplace. Keep in mind that even though the park's day-use areas are closed at night, the lake is open to fishing 24 hours a day. Fishing at night is also a great way to get away from the crowds on summer weekends.

Anglers should also note that heavy summer storms bring channel catfish to the mouths of tributary streams. The mouth of Haycock Run is a good location for this action.

Striped bass

Anglers searching for striped bass will find them most often in the area of the lake from the Tohickon cove to the Haycock boat access. Some anglers use downriggers to get their baits deep enough to find the striped bass in the summer. The area between the dam and the Tohickon cove is especially deep and is a good location for this activity. Shad or alewife imitations may be your best bet for these big fish. Try jigs, stickbaits and

soft baits, depending on the location of the fish. Some anglers look for schooling baitfish and then cast into these schools, hoping to catch the stripers in this manner.

Shore fishing

If you're interested in fishing but don't have a boat, this state park offers plenty of options. Try starting at the fishing pier south of the park office off of PA Route 563, which is the primary access road for the park. Take the trail from the pier area along the lake toward the marina. Several coves provide easy access. Anglers should note that fishing is not allowed from the docks at the marina. Shore fishing is also good near the PA Route 563 bridge over the Haycock Arm. Try fishing between the bridge and the Haycock boat access. Stripers, bass, eels, crappies and channel catfish can be caught here, among other species. This is a good location with easy access, and it's a good bet for families with children.

Another good shore location is the south side of the lake near the dam breast at the dead end off of Mink Road. During early spring this area is good for striped bass. Panfish and channel catfish can be found there as well. The lake there is not very deep within casting range of shore, and there's plenty of parking. You can also head west along the lake to a large point that offers casting access to deeper water.

Anglers with children should note that there is also a fishing pond near the marina. The pond doesn't offer a lot of size, but it can be a good option for kids.

Boating

Anglers and recreational boaters should note that the park concession offers canoes, kayaks, motorboats, rowboats, sailboats, paddleboats and pontoon boats. For information on rates, contact the boat rental office directly at 215-538-1340. The park marina has docking facilities for 648

boats up to 24 feet in length. There is also an 85-space dry storage for boats on trailers. Because of the demand for marina space, a waiting list is maintained at the park office for seasonal slips and dry storage spaces. ☐

Carl Haensel is the Fish & Boat Commission's Southeast Region aquatic resources program specialist.

For More Information

For additional information on fishing, current boating regulations, maps, and more park information, visit these web sites: www.fish.state.pa.us and www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/nockamixon.aspx.

Looking to stay in the area? Anglers and boaters should note that there is no tent camping allowed in the state park. A limited number of rustic cabins are available. Open fires are not allowed in the park, though there are some charcoal grills. Contact the park office at 215-529-7300 with questions.

Located just west of the state park is a Bucks County Park, Lake Towhee, where there are several dozen tent camping sites available. It's a good fishery as well, and popular for its panfish. Call Bucks County Parks at 215-348-6114.

Nockamixon Notables

In the Commission's Angler Award Program from 2000 through 2004, the following catches were made at Lake Nockamixon: Eight largemouth bass, seven smallmouth bass, three striped bass, one bluegill, two carp, 16 channel catfish, four crappies, 18 pickerel, and four walleyes.

For more information on the Angler Award Program, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the main page's left side, click on "Fishing," navigate to "Biggest Fish of 2005," and then click on "Angler Award Program Rules and Application."