

MELTON HILL LAKE

- 173 miles of shoreline

FISHING: Predominant fish are musky, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, white crappie, largemouth bass, and skipjack herring. The state record saugeye was caught in 1998 at the warmwater discharge at Bull Run Steam Plant, which is probably the most intensely fished section of the lake for all species. Another productive and popular spot is on the tailwaters below the dam, but you'll find both largemouths and smallmouths throughout the lake. Spring and fall crappie fishing is one of Melton Hill Lake's better-kept fishing secrets.

Melton Hill Lake (www.tennesseelakeinfo.com/meltonhilllake) is the only dam in the tributary reservoir system with a navigation lock and is considered a run-of-river reservoir, meaning that water is passed through the reservoir without being stored long term. Unlike many other TVA lakes, Melton Hill does not have extreme water fluctuation in the winter months because it is not used for flood control. Melton Hill Lake has a nationally recognized rowing course and is a spring training site for collegiate teams from throughout the eastern United States. The reservoir has hosted a number of national championships.

WATTS BAR LAKE - 771 miles of shoreline

FISHING: The best fishing is said to be between April and November when the lake is at the summer pool level of 741 feet above sea level. During the winter months, the level usually drops about six feet. Anglers can cast a line in the wide open flats or the narrow winding river channels and expect to catch jumbo crappie, lunker, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, trophy strippers and a wide array of freshwater fish. Crappie and sauger fishing in the spring is exceptionally good. Peak time for fishing largemouths is from April through June, with October through December the best for smallmouths. October and November are also the peak times for striped bass, but you can catch the big strippers year-round. In August and September the lake's white bass fishing is second to none in the state. Note that the state of Tennessee advises against eating fish caught in certain areas of the lake.

One of the South's largest lakes, Watts Bar Lake (www.wattsbarlakeinfo.com/info) has 771 miles of shoreline. Construction of Watts Bar Dam began in 1939. It was completed in January 1942, three weeks after Pearl Harbor, and provided urgently needed electricity for the war effort. Located about midway between Knoxville and Chattanooga, this area had one of the most serious flooding problems in the nation. The principal tributaries of Watts Bar are the Clinch River and the Tennessee River. Now the rivers that often threatened the cities before the construction of the dams and reservoirs, contribute to its economy as a major artery for barge traffic.

The area also provides many opportunities for birdwatching, with an extremely large population of great blue herons, over 120 nesting pairs of osprey, and a few bald eagles living on or near the lake. Several parks and camps are located on the lake, including the John Knox Center and the Boy Scout facility Camp Buck Torns. (http://www.tva.com/sites/wattsbarres.htm)

FORT LOUDOUN LAKE

- 379 miles of shoreline

FISHING: The lake is well known for its great bass and catfishing. The most commonly harvested fish are largemouth, smallmouth, and white bass. Bluegill, crappie, and sauger are also present in good numbers.

Formed by the Holston, French Broad and Little Tennessee Rivers, Fort Loudoun Lake is located at the headwaters of the Tennessee River and extends about 55 miles into Knoxville. It is the uppermost in the chain of nine TVA reservoirs that form a continuous navigable channel from there to Paducah, Kentucky, 652 miles away. Fort Loudoun Dam features a 360-foot lock which raises boats and barges from Watts Bar Lake to Fort Loudoun Lake, providing transit for half a million tons of cargo annually.

The tailwater area immediately below the dam is an excellent site for viewing a variety of waterbirds, including herons, cormorants, gulls, osprey, and bald eagles. Black-crowned night herons and osprey visit during the summer and late fall, and gulls migrate to the area in winter.

Fort Loudoun Lake and Tellico Lake (http://www.fortloudoun-tellicolakeinfo.com/info.shtml) are visited by more than 2 million visitors a year. Both Fort Loudoun Dam and Tellico Dam are located on US 321 at Lenoir City, Tennessee. They are located just one mile apart. HWY I-40 and I-75 provide easy access from all directions to both Fort Loudoun and Tellico Dams.

TELLICO LAKE - 357 miles of shoreline

FISHING: The Tellico Lake is a cool water impoundment due to the cold water inflows from Chilhowee Lake and the Tellico River. Since the reservoir is relatively infertile, it does not support high densities of fish. Some of the most common game fish include largemouth and smallmouth bass, white crappie, bluegill, rainbow trout, and walleye. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) has issued an advisory against the consumption of catfish.

On Tellico's banks is a reconstruction of the original Fort Loudoun, which was built by the British during the French and Indian War. It was named for John Campbell, the fourth Earl of Loudoun, commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America at the time. Park rangers wear period clothing and lead tours of the reconstructed fort. Another nearby historic attraction is the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, honoring the Cherokee genius who invented the Cherokee alphabet.

Tellico Reservoir was the last major reservoir created by the TVA, in part due to the snail darter controversy. The completion of Tellico Dam was nearly halted by a landmark decision by the Supreme Court regarding the Endangered Species Act. After Congress specifically exempted Tellico Dam from the Endangered Species Act, the work was finished and Tellico Reservoir created. The Tellico Reservoir inundated several Native American sites, including the historically significant sites of Chota and Tanasi. The controversial Bat Creek inscription was also discovered adjacent to this lake.

Tellico Lake Reservoir and Dam create a navigable waterway up the Little Tennessee River, which offers access for barges heading up the river. The canal between Tellico and Fort Loudoun lakes provides barge access to Tellico Lake without the need of a lock.

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NORRIS LAKE - 809 miles of shoreline

FISHING: Norris Lake has over 56 species of fish and is well known for its striped fishing. There are also catches of brown and rainbow trout, small and largemouth bass, walleye, and an abundant source of crappie. The Tennessee state record for brown trout was caught in the Clinch River just below Norris Dam. Striped bass exceeding 50 pounds also lurk in the lake's cool waters. Winter and summer striped bass fishing is excellent in the lower half of the lake. Walleye are stocked annually.

Nestled in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains, about 20 miles north of Knoxville just off I-75, is Norris Lake. It extends 56 miles up the Powell River and 73 miles into the Clinch River. Since the lake is not fed by another major dam, the water has the reputation of being cleaner than any other in the nation. And, once the sun begins to warm the water in late May, it tends to maintain a steady warm temperature until fall. With hundreds of secluded coves, three state parks, two wildlife management areas and 59 public access sites, it's no wonder Norris Lake has become a favorite vacation destination. The shoreline includes over 50 miles of islands, numerous picnic areas, caves, cliffs, beaches and gradual sloping shorelines. An abundance of wildlife can be spotted including elk, deer, turkey, great blue herons and a few eagles along with cows and horses grazing at the shoreline.

Make Norris Lake your family vacation destination. Over 20 marinas (www.norrislakemarinas.com) on the lake offer a variety of accommodations from hotels, condos, homes and campgrounds to mobile houseboats and floating houses. Most of the marinas offer ski boat, fishing boat, pontoon boat, party barge and jet ski rentals, restaurants.

CHEROKEE LAKE - 463 miles of shoreline

FISHING: There is a prolific forage base of threadfin shad, gizzard shad, and alewife. The primary game fish species are the three black bass species, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, crappie, walleye, sauger, sunfish, white bass, and catfish. Fishing around the dam will produce striped bass in the summer months. During fall and spring, strippers run upstream to the John Sevier steam plant discharge. During the winter when the water level drops, largemouth bass can be caught amongst the rock outcroppings. Of all the TVA lakes tested, Cherokee Lake has the highest score for largemouth bass. Along the large creek embayment, there is excellent crappie fishing.

If you love to fish, Cherokee Lake is a must. (www.cherokeelakeinfo.com) Fish densities in Cherokee Lake are greater than most of the other TVA Reservoirs. A variety of fish attractors have been constructed over the years in an attempt to improve fishing for anglers. These include brush piles which are used by many game fish, and stake beds which are used primarily for concentrated crappie. The TVA has also planted Willow, Swamp Oak, Bald Cypress and River Birch in drawdown areas to create additional long lasting habitats.

When visiting Cherokee Lake, you will find it is surrounded by gentle, rolling hills. Beautiful, peaceful country landscape abounds in the many farmlands near the lake. To the Northwest of Cherokee Lake you can see the towering Clinch Mountain Range.

DOUGLAS LAKE - 550 miles of shoreline

FISHING: Nourished by three rivers, Douglas Lake has become the premier crappie lake in East Tennessee and is rated one of the top five crappie fishing lakes in the nation, also in the top 10 in the nation for largemouth bass. Other good fishing includes: white bass, sauger, black crappie, striped bass, spotted bass, walleye, blue cat, flat head catfish, channel catfish, red hound, red breast sunfish and bluegill. Fishing is a year round sport at Douglas although spring and fall are the preferred seasons. From November to May, the wide shallow embayment, fertile creek hollows and stump beds, attract crappie in huge numbers during the spawning season making fishing excellent! Spring is the best time for bass fishing but you'll find there's good stock year-round.

Douglas Lake (www.douglaslakeinfo.com/info) is located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains (near Sevierville, Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg), attracting more than 1.7 million visitors a year.

Douglas Lake (Douglas Reservoir) is fed by the French Broad River and Nolichucky River, both of which originate in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee and offer great fly fishing. The Pigeon River offers Class III and IV white water rapids and is home to a dozen rafting outfitters.

Most of the shoreline on Douglas Lake is privately owned. TVA provides recreational facilities at Douglas Dam. Above the dam is a campground with hookups and showers, a picnic area, all seasons boat ramp, and swimming beach.

CHILHOWEE - 26 miles of shoreline
AND CALDERWOOD LAKES - 17 miles of shoreline

FISHING: These quieter lakes provide a peaceful setting for fishermen and paddlers. The primary game fish are largemouth and smallmouth bass, trout, walleye, crappie, and rock bass. Trout are stocked on an annual basis and thrive in the cool clear water. Access is easy and convenient with several boat ramps on US 129 along the Lake's northern border.

Chilhowee Lake provides part of the boundary between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Cherokee National Forest. This shallow 10-mile long, cool water reservoir is more river-like, coursing a narrow, twisted route that stretches upstream to Calderwood Dam, near the Tennessee/North Carolina state line. Chilhowee Dam and its powerhouse are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Chilhowee Hydroelectric Development. Although now submerged by the Chilhowee Lake impoundment of the Little Tennessee River, the Chilhowee site was home to a substantial 18th-century Overhill Cherokee village and may have been the site of the Creek village "Chalahume" visited by Spanish explorer Juan Pardo in 1567. Although Chilhowee was destroyed by Euro-American frontiersmen in the late 18th century, the village's name is still used for various entities throughout East Tennessee.

Nearby Calderwood Dam is surrounded by mountains on all sides. Built in the Little Tennessee Valley by Alcoa in the 20th century to provide electricity to its aluminum smelting operations. The dam was one of the last to be completed in the Tennessee River watershed before TVA took control of the watershed in 1933. The Calderwood complex graces a horseshoe bend in the river known as "The Narrows." The dam is located along the upstream end of this bend, and the powerhouse, service building, and old Calderwood community (now a recreation area) are located along the downstream end of this bend. The Calderwood Overlook, located along US-129 just south of the road's intersection with Housley Road, provides a sweeping view of the Calderwood Reservoir. A gravel road, also open only to public foot traffic, connects the overlook to Calderwood Dam.

For more information on recreational lake opportunities call 1-800-TVA-LAND. Fishing information taken from www.OutdoorKnoxville.com.

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