

Longevity record for Spotted Bass

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Research Note

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A review of available literature found the maximum age reported for Spotted Bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*) was 11 years. Carlander's (1977) summary reported a maximum age of 7 years (Cooper 1950; Roseberry 1951; Charles 1957) as did Vogeley (1975). Eggleton et al. (2013) sampled fish up to eight years old on the Arkansas River. In a study of Alabama reservoirs, DiCenzo et al. (1995) observed fish at least 7 years old in 6 of the 10 reservoirs sampled with a maximum age of 11 years. Other authors reporting a maximum age of 11 years include Risley (2006) on Table Rock Lake (this study also sampled fish up to 10 years old on Bull Shoals Lake), Alford and Heimann (2016) in the Lake Pontchartrain basin, and Webb and Reeves (1975) on Lake Taneycomo in Missouri, based on a personal communication with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

On 19 June 2009, a recreational angler caught a Spotted Bass from Whiskeytown Reservoir, Shasta County, California that weighed approximately 2.95 kg, was 514 mm total length, and had a girth of 378 mm. Sagittal otoliths taken from this fish were sectioned along the transverse plane, mounted on microscope slides, ground, and polished consistent with methods described by Pagliughi (2002). Images of the otolith sections were taken using an AmScope high speed color camera (model No. MU1803-HS)

mounted to a compound microscope and modified using version 10 of AmScope imaging software. Examination of the images confirmed 17 clearly defined annuli and an 18th annulus ([Fig. 1](#)) forming on the structure edge making this fish 18 years-old per the age designation convention described by DeVries and Frie (1996). Although the 18th annulus was not fully formed, the age of this fish can confidently be assigned 18 because it was harvested in June, is a large fish, annual water temperatures in Whiskeytown Reservoir are comparatively cold, and the translucent section of the otolith between the 17th annulus and the structure edge is fairly wide.

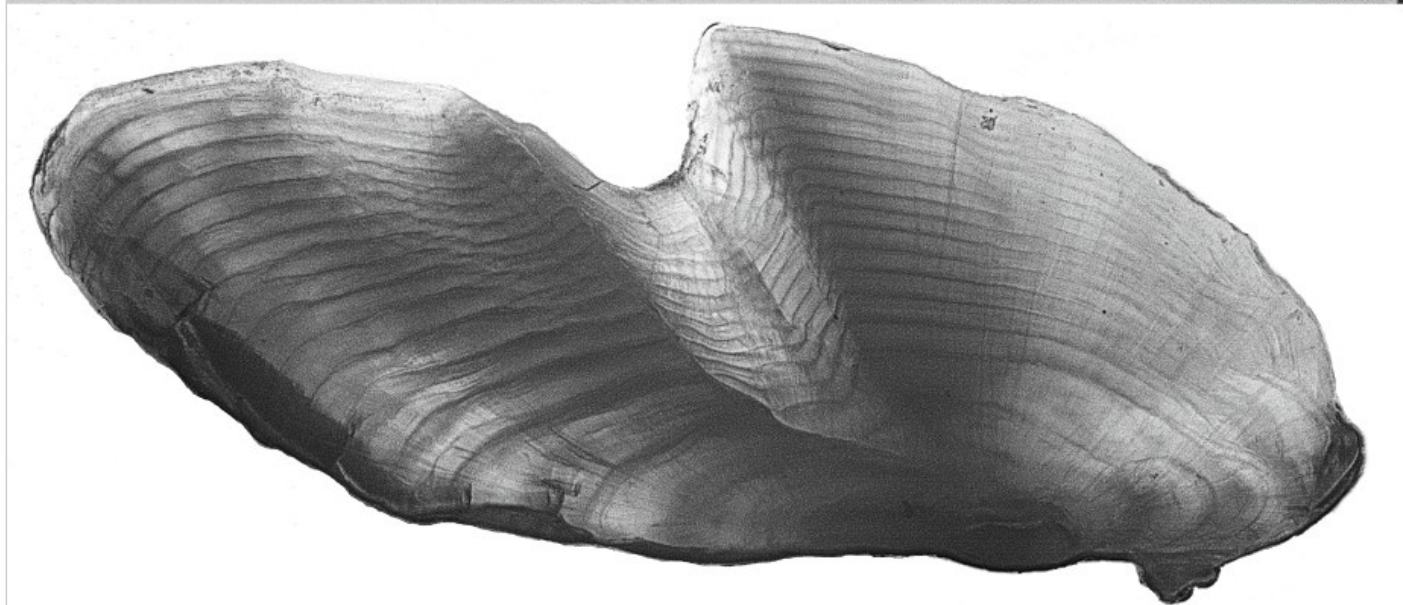
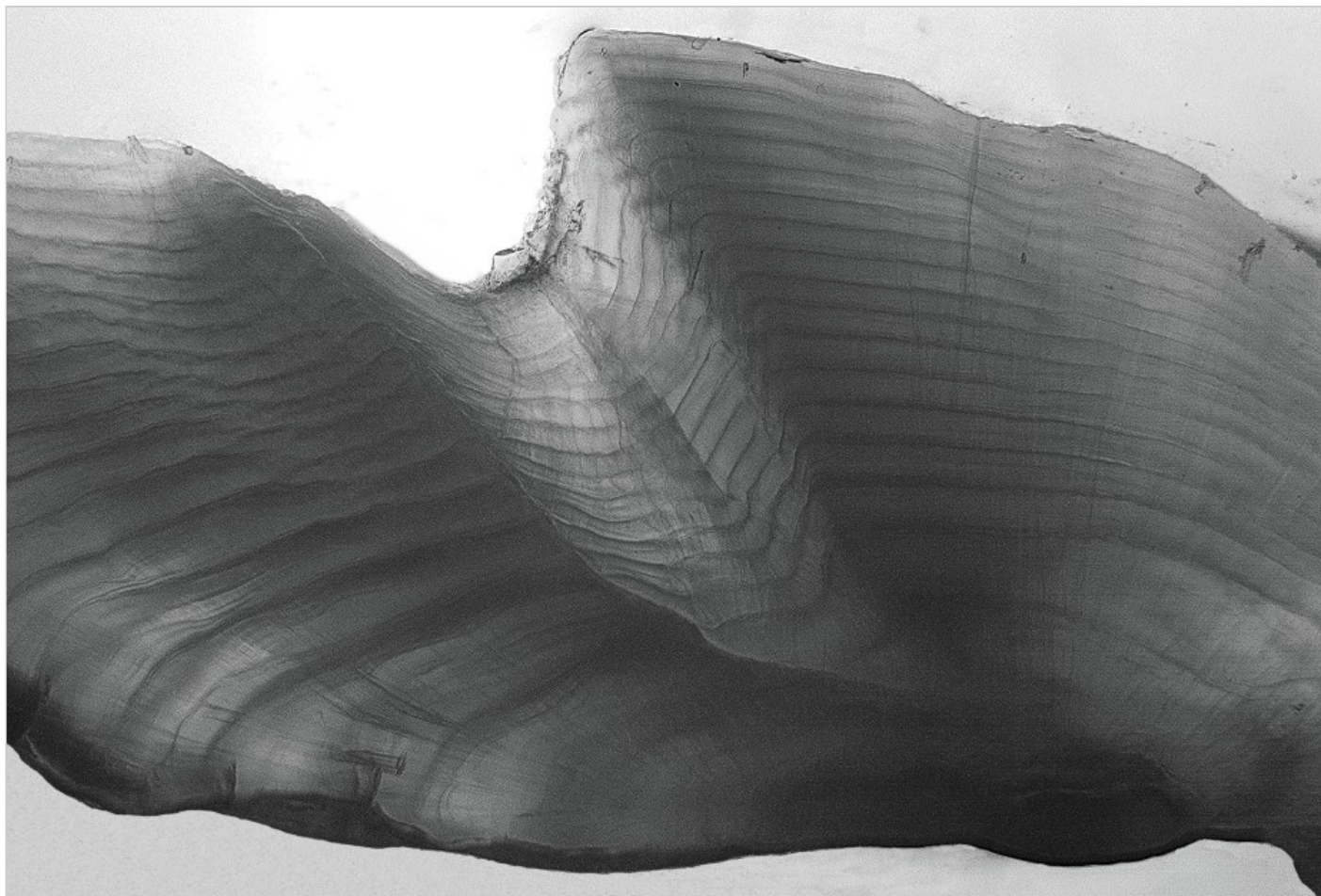


Figure 1. Cross section of a sagittal otolith from an 18-year-old Spotted Bass caught in Whiskeytown Reservoir, Shasta County, CA, USA. There are 17 clearly defined annuli and an 18th annulus partially formed on the structure edge.

Many large Spotted Bass have been caught in California since their introduction in 1933 (Dill and Cordone 1997) including several International Game Fish Association certified world records. Whiskeytown

Reservoir annually produces trophy-sized Spotted Bass. Many of the California reservoirs that have produced large Spotted Bass are oligotrophic, located in mountainous regions, and have relatively cold year-round water temperatures. To my knowledge, data characterizing the age of Spotted Bass from California waters are not available. For these reasons, the 18-year-old Spotted Bass reported in this paper may not be a particularly unusual age for this species in California reservoirs.

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