

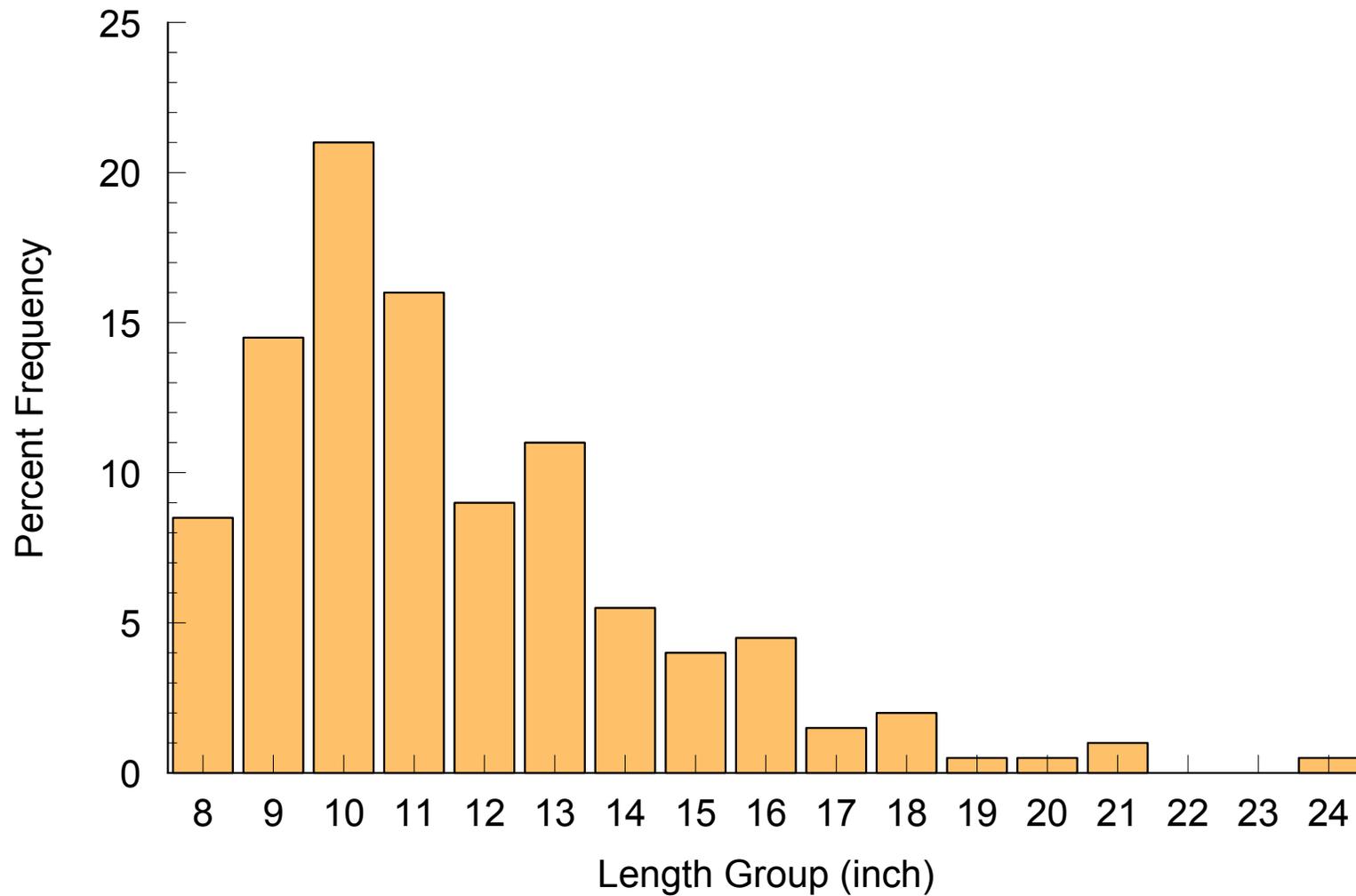
Large Mouth Bass Data

2004

A total of 200 largemouth bass were collected in 466 minutes with electrofishing gear from four areas around Lake Okeechobee resulting in a catch rate of 0.43 fish per minute. Length frequency analysis indicated that largemouth bass lengths ranged from 8- to 24-inches. Of the 200 fish collected, 69% fell between the 8 inch and 12 inch size groups, 28.5% were between 13- to 18-inch groups and only 2.5% were greater than 18 inches (Attachment 1). Analysis of age structure indicated that 90% of the bass population is composed of fish 1 and 2 of age (Attachment 2). The age one fish comprised 80% of the total fish aged. No age three fish showed up in the sample and ages 4 through 10 comprised less than 10% of the total sample.

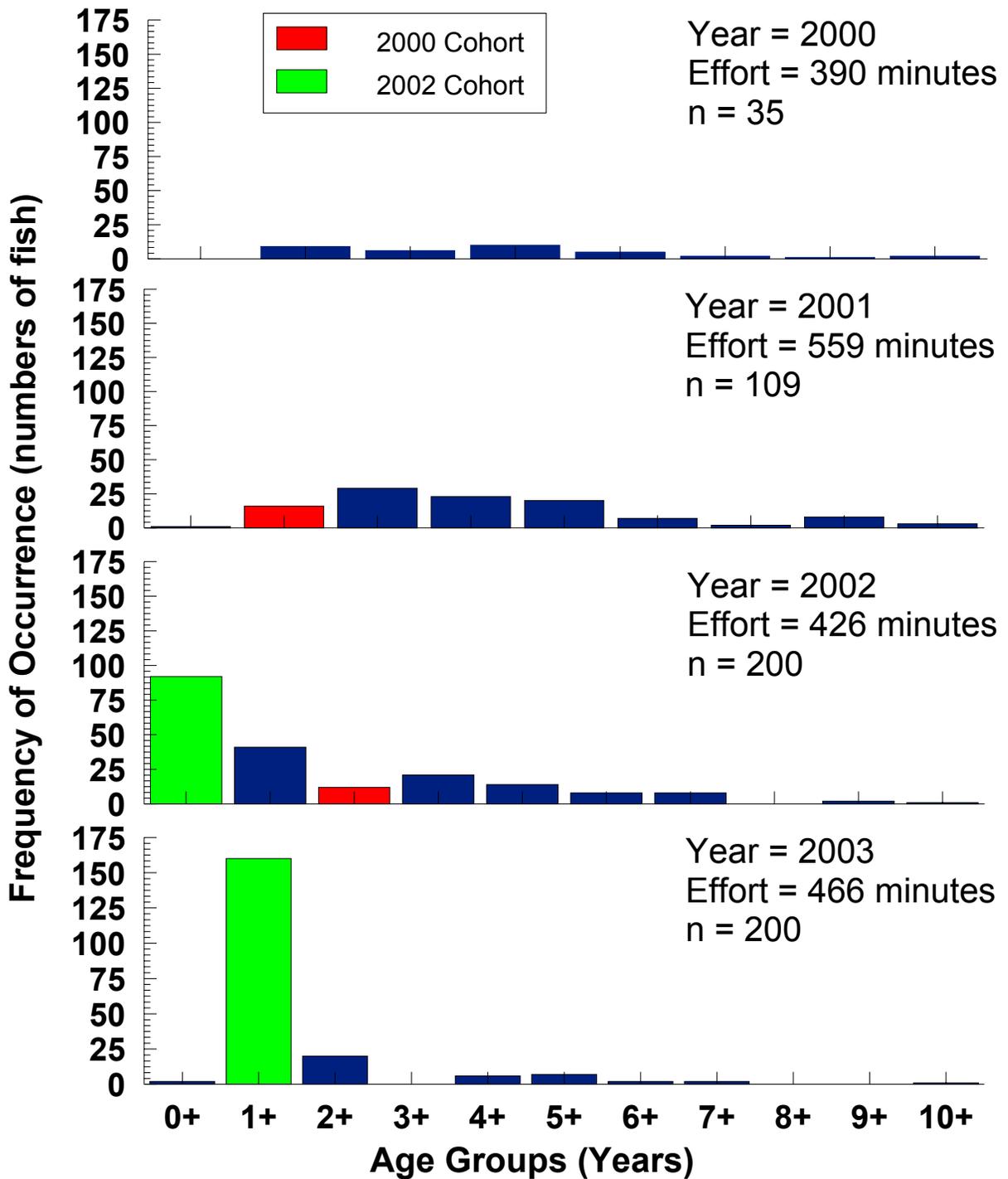
Attachment 2 reveals additional information about the status of the largemouth bass population in Lake Okeechobee. This analysis of cohort (year-class) strength reveals that recruitment is highly variable and possible affected by one or more environmental parameters. In the year 2000 water levels and vegetation were both extremely low and may have been the driving force behind the failed recruitment of young of the year (YOY) largemouth bass spawned during that year. By the year 2003 there was no representation of the 2000 year-class (in red) within the sample. Conversely, the recruitment of YOY bass in 2002 (in green) was very good and this years-class is currently dominating the largemouth population. At this time the largemouth bass population is primarily composed of one year old fish that range in size from 8- to 13-inches. More importantly the population is again lacking good recruitment from the 2003 spawn and the presence of larger/older fish is also deficient.

Attachment 1



Length frequency plot of 200 largemouth bass collected via electrofishing from Lake Okeechobee, November 2003.

Attachment 2



Comparison of cohort contribution to annual catch of largemouth bass collected via electrofishing in Lake Okeechobee, November of each year.