

2022 Harris Lake Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Survey

NC Division of Water Resources

Introduction

Shearon Harris Reservoir (Harris Lake) is a 4,100-acre reservoir located in Wake and Chatham counties. The primary purpose of the reservoir is to serve as the cooling water for the Shearon Harris Nuclear Electrical Generation Station cooling tower and general operational water supply for the nuclear station. Secondary uses of the reservoir include recreational activities including fishing, boating and hunting. Hydrilla, *Hydrilla verticillata*, was first reported in the reservoir in 1988 and was thought to be introduced at one of the public ramps. A survey conducted in 2014 by NCSU identified approximately 668 acres of Hydrilla and a survey in 2015 found approximately 942 acres. No lake-wide survey was completed in 2016 or 2017. Starting in 2018 the Aquatic Weed Control Program (AWCP) partnered with Duke Energy to eradicate Hydrilla from the reservoir. A survey conducted by the AWCP in 2018 found approximately 232 acres of Hydrilla. More information concerning past management activities can be found on the AWCP online database ([NCDEQ-DWR :: Aquatic Weed Control \(ncwater.org\)](https://ncdeq-dwr.org/AquaticWeedControl)).

Methods

The AWCP completed a full-lake survey October 25th – October 28th and October 31st. Using a point-intercept method, a total of 151 points were sampled in 2022 (Figure 1). Three rake tosses were conducted at pre-determined points along the shoreline to determine presence/absence of SAV as well as quantify rake coverage. Rake coverage was quantified using a scale from 0 to 4 (0 = no vegetation; 1 (Trace) = <25%; 2 (Sparse) = 25% - 50%; 3 (Moderate) = 50% - 75%; 4 (Dense) = 75% - 100%). Additionally, a recording fathometer (SONAR) was used to map and record the bottom. Roughly 58.5 miles of SONAR was logged. The SONAR data was uploaded to a third-party company, Biobase, to quantify the depth and biovolume, a percentage of the water column taken up by vegetation when vegetation exists, data. All of this was then combined with the rake-toss data using GIS software to estimate coverage.

Results

There was no SAV found during the survey. The cyanobacteria Lyngbya, *Microseria wollei*, was found at 2, or 1%, of the points (Figure 2). Other emergent and floating vegetation observed was Giant Cutgrass (*Zizaniopsis miliacea*), Cattail (*Typha domingensis*), Water Willow (*Justicia americana*), Alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), Creeping Water Primrose (*Ludwigia grandiflora*), American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) and Fragrant Water Lily (*Nymphaea odorata*).

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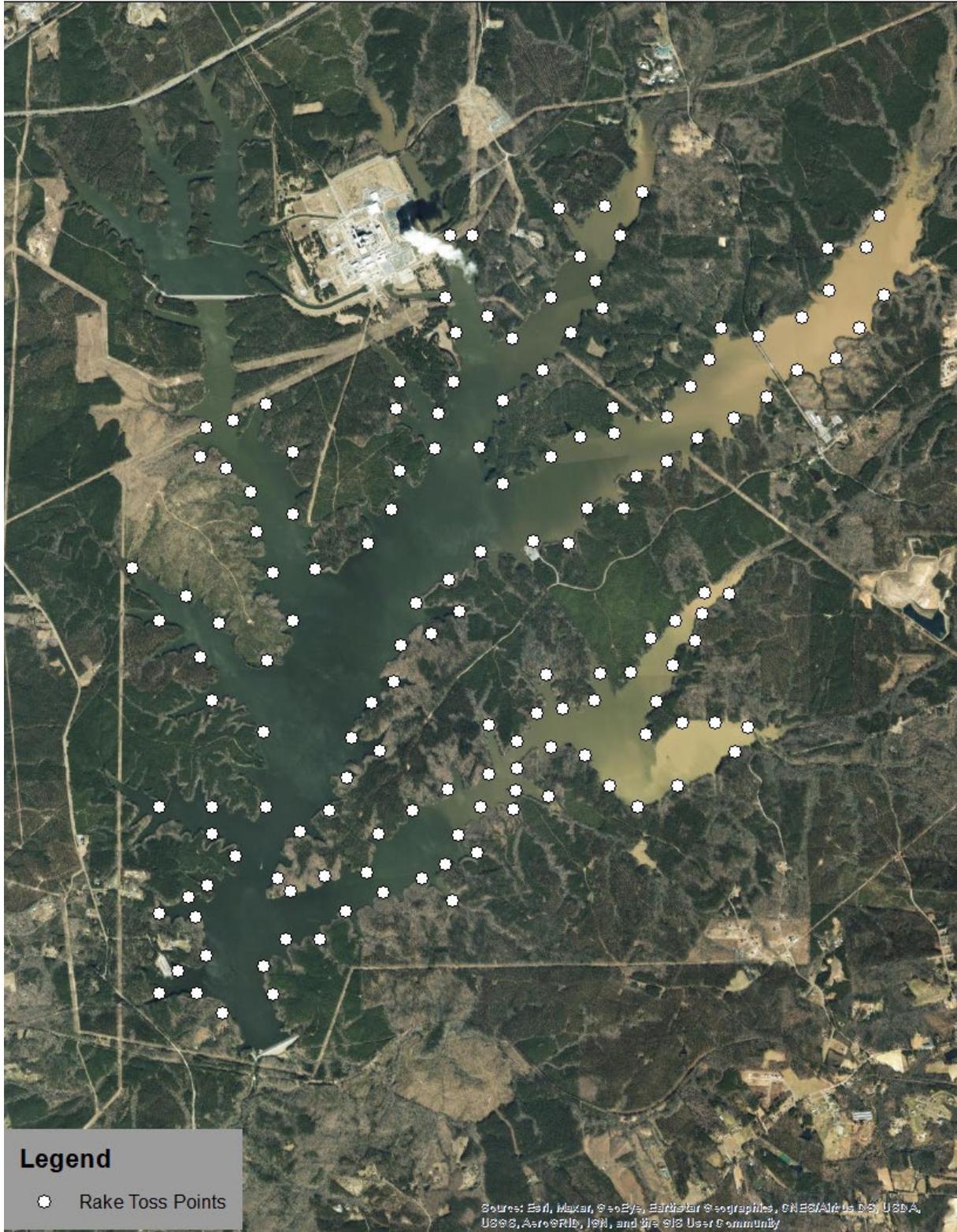


Figure 1. Map showing locations of pre-determined rake toss points.

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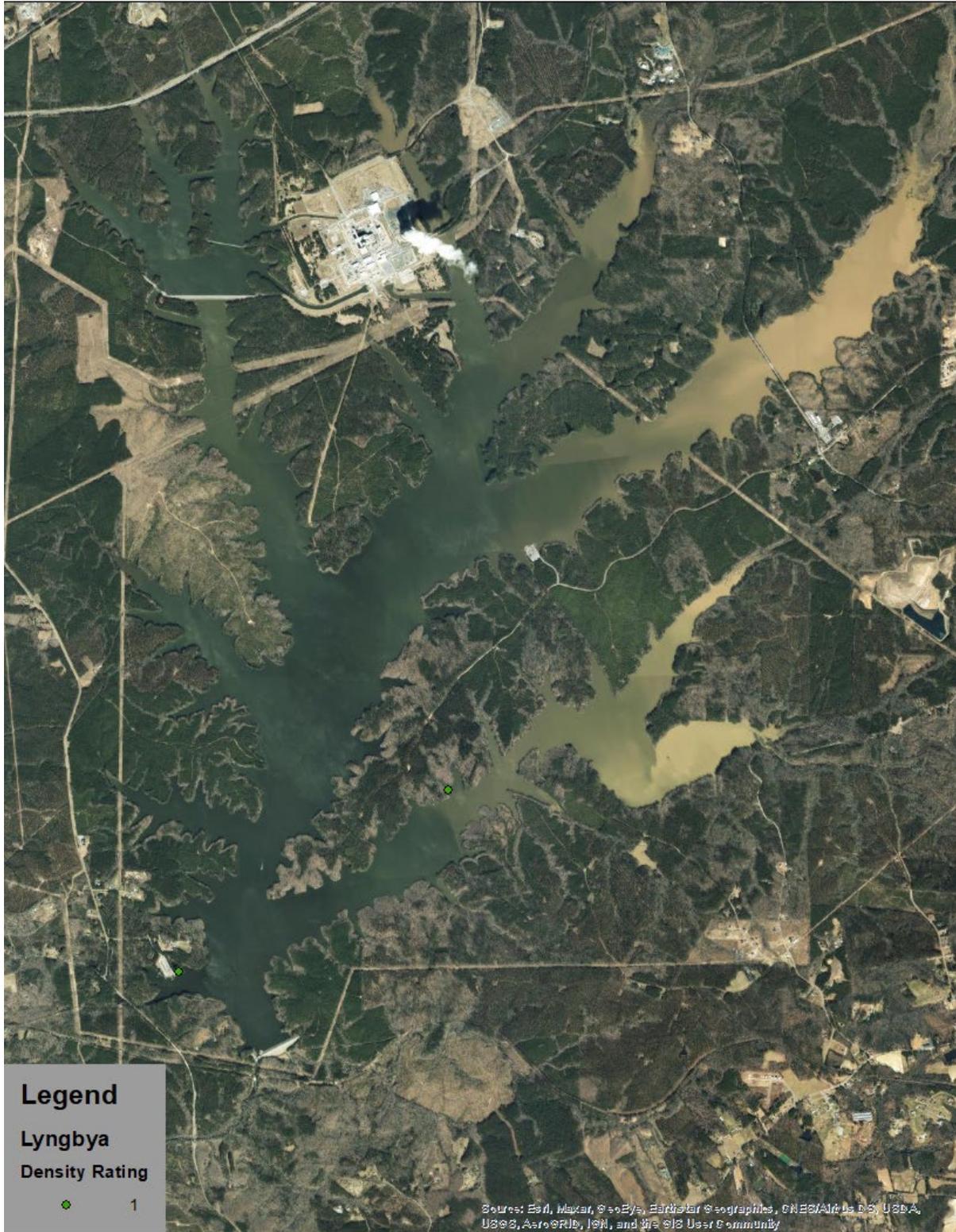


Figure 2. Map showing location and density rating of Lyngbya.