

Johnathan Clementi
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Professor Alan G. Labouseur
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Short Essay #1: "Data vs. Information"

This summer I researched the sex ratios of Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*) in North-temperate Lakes varying in environmental factors such as dissolved organic carbon and fishing pressure. To properly conduct the analyses, we created a database to hold fish information such as species, length, weight, and sexual stage. However, these data would not have any meaning without the context of which net, lake, date and time in which the fish were captured. Without these elements of context, the data would just be a collection of fish information and we would not be able to distinguish between fish caught in different lakes or different nets within a lake. Therefore, with that context we could analyze how differences in environmental factors which differed from lake to lake, affected bluegill population dynamics such as sex ratio.