



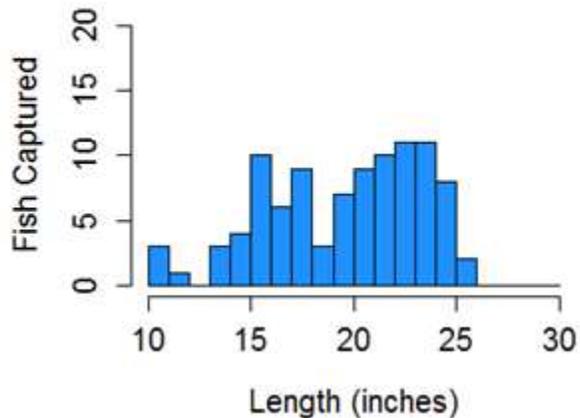
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Lake Chippewa (Flowage), Sawyer County, 2015

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the Chippewa Flowage from April 23-28, 2015 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, and black crappie populations in the lake. Ten nets were set overnight for five nights which resulted in 48 total net-nights of effort (two nets were removed early). An electrofishing survey conducted between May 27 and June 2 documented the status of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and bluegill. Eight miles were shocked on transects spread throughout the lake. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

Walleye (Adult)



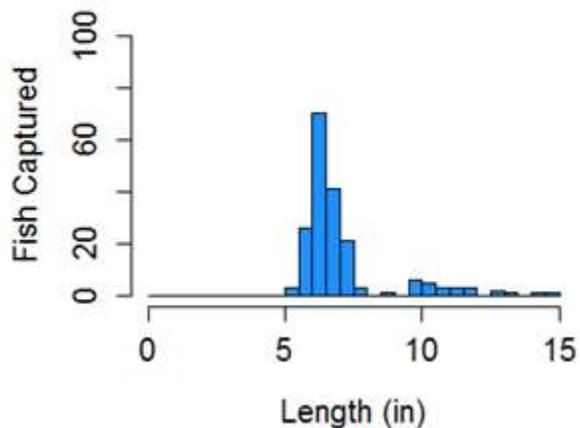
Harvest Slot 15-20"	46%
Protected slot 20-24"	43%
Over Slot ≥ 24 "	10%



Walleye (Juvenile)



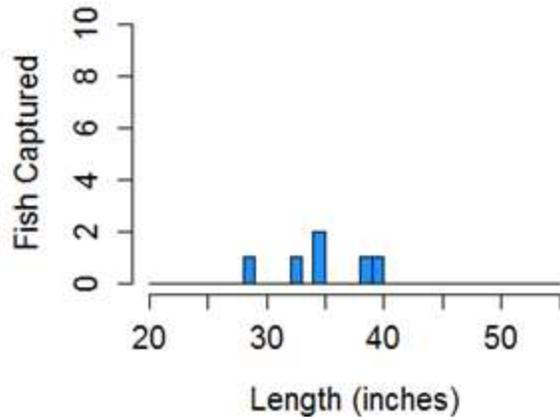
Captured 24 per mile ≤ 15 inches



Muskellunge



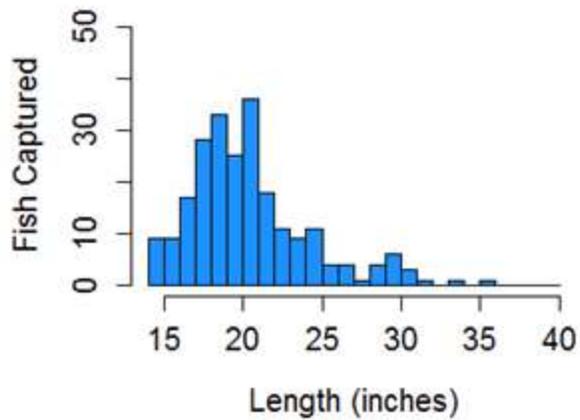
Captured 0.1 per net-night \geq 20 inches	
Quality Size \geq 30"	83%
Memorable Size \geq 42"	0%



Northern Pike



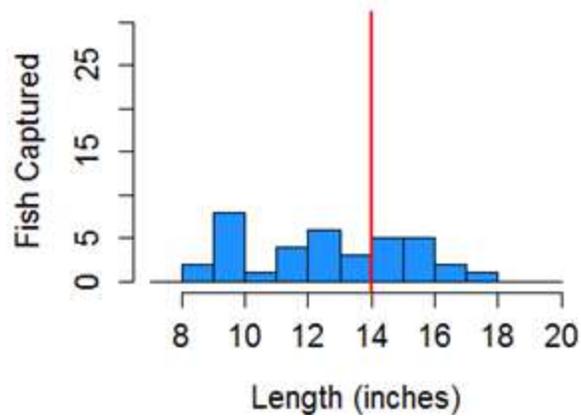
Captured 5 per net-night \geq 14 inches	
Quality Size \geq 21"	32%
Preferred Size \geq 28"	7%



Smallmouth bass



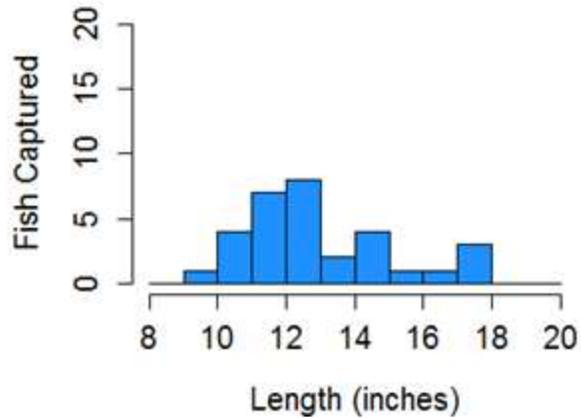
Captured 4.6 per mile \geq 7 inches	
Quality Size \geq 11"	70%
Preferred Size \geq 14"	35%
Memorable Size \geq 17"	3%



Largemouth bass



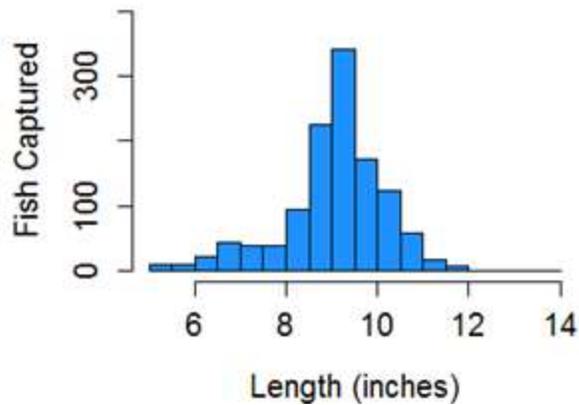
Captured 3.9 per mile \geq 8 inches	
Quality Size \geq 12"	61%
Preferred Size \geq 15"	16%



Black Crappie



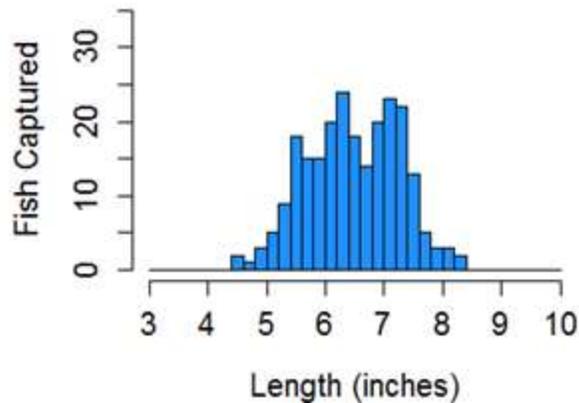
Captured 25 per net-night \geq 5 inches	
Quality Size \geq 8"	87%
Preferred Size \geq 10"	17%



Bluegill



Captured 118 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	71%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	2%



Summary of Results

Starting in 2015 walleye in the Chippewa Flowage are being managed with a minimum length limit of 15 inches and protected slot limit where no harvest of walleye 20-24 inches is allowed, and only one walleye over 24 inches can be harvested per day. This was done so that bag limits could be kept at 3 walleye per day from year to year. Our sampling on the west side captured enough walleye to describe the size structure of the adult population. Based on this survey 46% of the adult population is in the 15-20 inch range that is open to harvest, 43% is within the protected 20-24 inch range, and 10% are greater than 24 inches. During the electrofishing portion

of this survey juvenile walleye were captured at a relatively high rate, particularly 1 year old fish (Class of 2014). The reappearance of strong natural year classes on the Chip bodes very well for the future of this walleye fishery.

While this survey targeted muskellunge it did not provide a very accurate representation of the population, Spawning activity was interrupted by cold weather and adult muskellunge were difficult to catch. The low catch rate and unimpressive size shown in this survey should not be considered representative of the actual population.

Northern pike are more abundant on the west side of the Chippewa Flowage compared to the east side. The west is more clear and weedy, providing more suitable pike habitat. Overall pike size on the west side is poor with most fish being less than 21 inches. Reducing abundance of small pike will be key to meeting northern pike size objectives and having a balanced fish community. Anglers willing to keep smaller pike are encouraged to do so.

For the first time in many years the abundance of smallmouth bass exceeded that of largemouth bass on the west side. Largemouth bass abundance throughout the flowage appears to have declined considerably from when it peaked around 2009, possibly signaling a return to the historical species balance where walleye were the dominant predator.

Black crappie were captured at a high rate and in sizes that should be appealing to many anglers. 8-10 inch crappie are very common on the Chippewa Flowage and have been one of the more popular aspects of the fishery in recent years. Similarly, bluegill were captured at a moderate rate and many 7 inch plus fish are available to anglers. It is not yet clear how the dynamics of these panfish populations will change if walleye become more prevalent again.



Fisheries technician Russ Warwick holds a healthy female walleye from the west side of the Chippewa Flowage. Under the new regulations females of this size are protected for several additional years and allowed to spawn.

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County

Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Russ Warwick (Fisheries Technician), and Scott Braden (Fisheries Technician)

Special thanks to volunteers Dan Seibert, Tom Christianson, Dan Yankowiak (WDNR), Ken Olson, Randy Neumann, Josh Spiegel (WDNR), Stu Neville, and Jim Jabrosky

Reviewed and approved by Mike Vogelsang

