



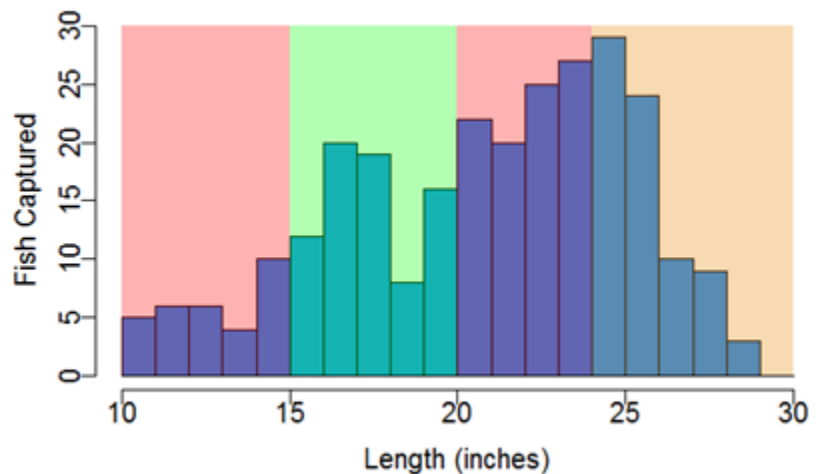
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Lake Chippewa (West Side), Sawyer County, 2017

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the west half of Lake Chippewa (also known as the Chippewa Flowage) from April 14-19 and May 9-11, 2017 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, and black crappie populations in the lake. Ten nets were set overnight for nine total nights which resulted in 87 total net-nights of effort (on three occasions a net was compromised). An electrofishing survey conducted on May 30-31, 2017 documented the status of bluegill, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and non-game species but also provided information on juvenile walleye. Twelve miles of shoreline were shocked. 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)



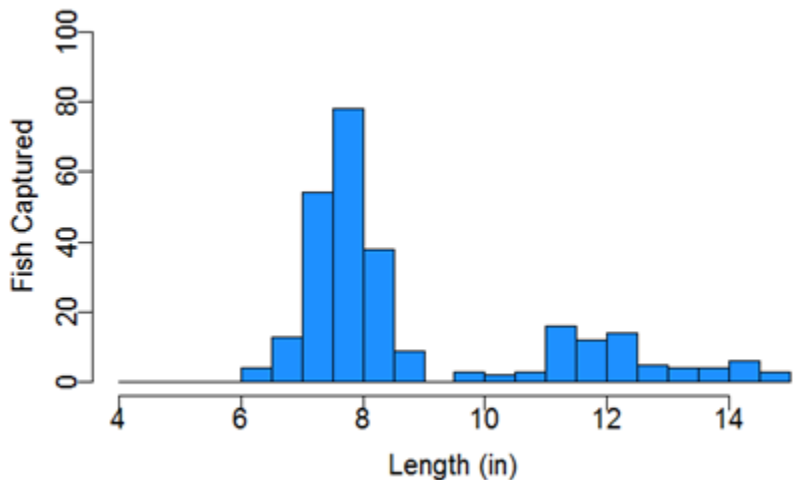
Captured 3 per net-night \geq 10 inches	
Quality Size \geq 15"	89%
Preferred Size \geq 20"	61%



Walleye (Juvenile)



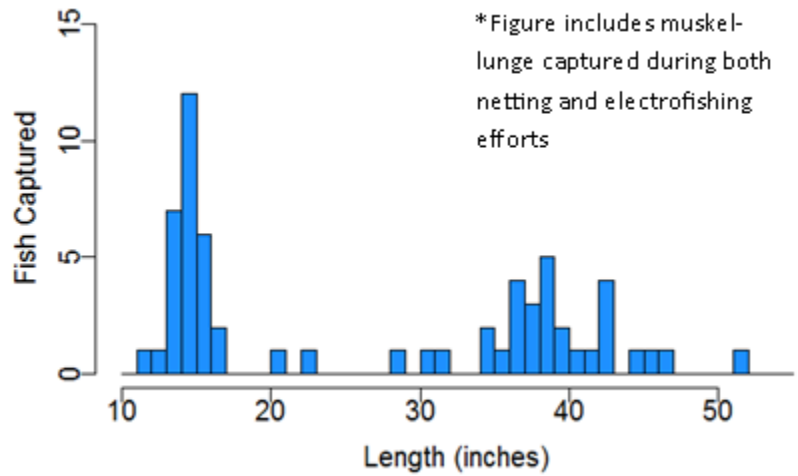
Captured 22 per mile \leq 15 inches



Muskellunge



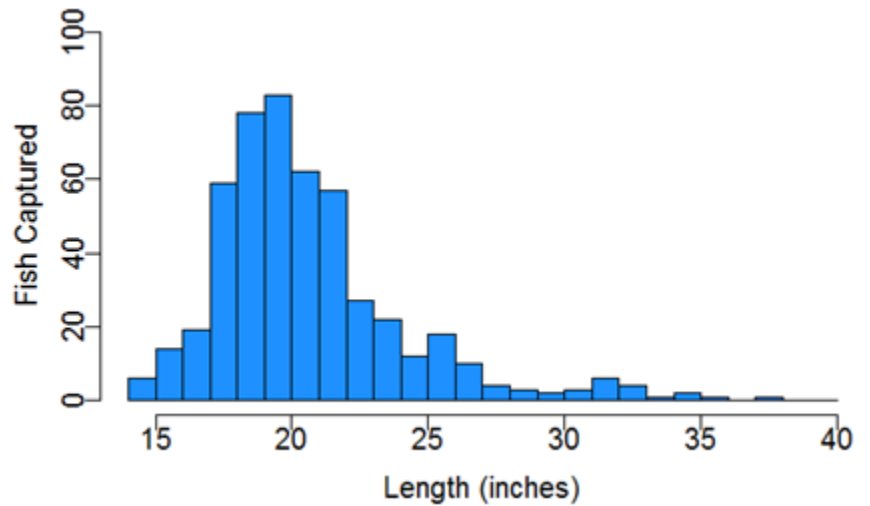
Captured 0.4 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 30"	91%
Memorable Size ≥ 42"	25%



Northern Pike



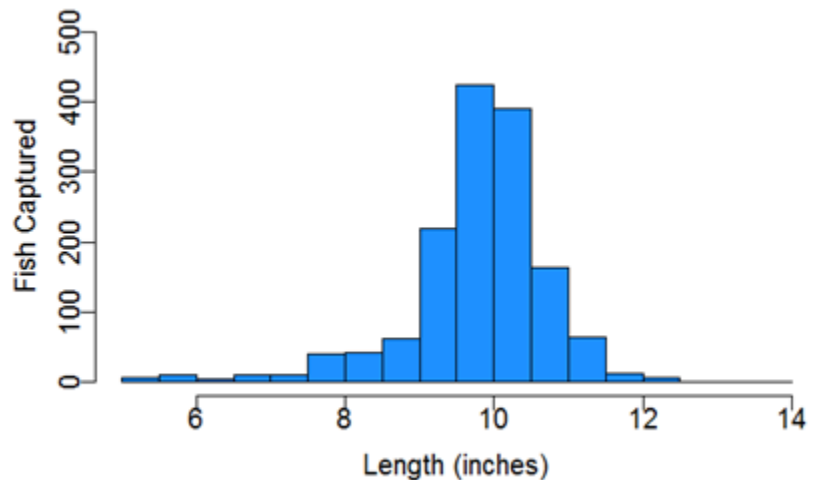
Captured 6 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 21"	35%
Preferred Size ≥ 28"	5%



Black Crappie



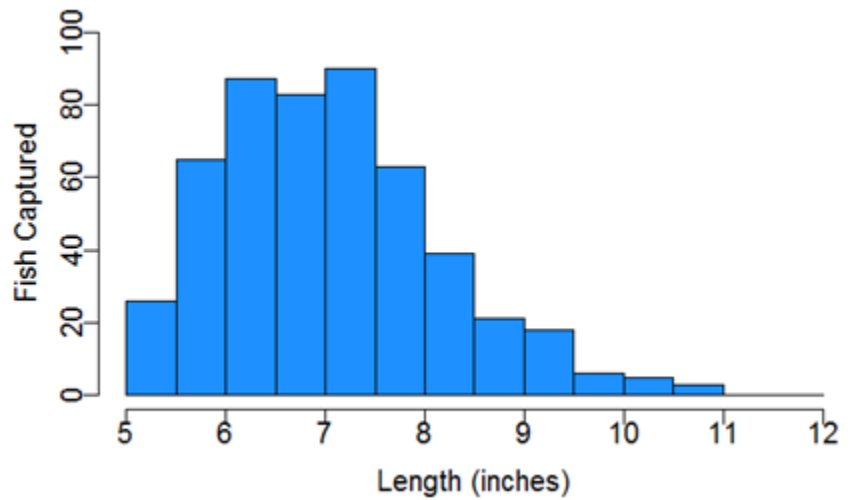
Captured 24 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8"	94%
Preferred Size ≥ 10"	43%



Yellow Perch



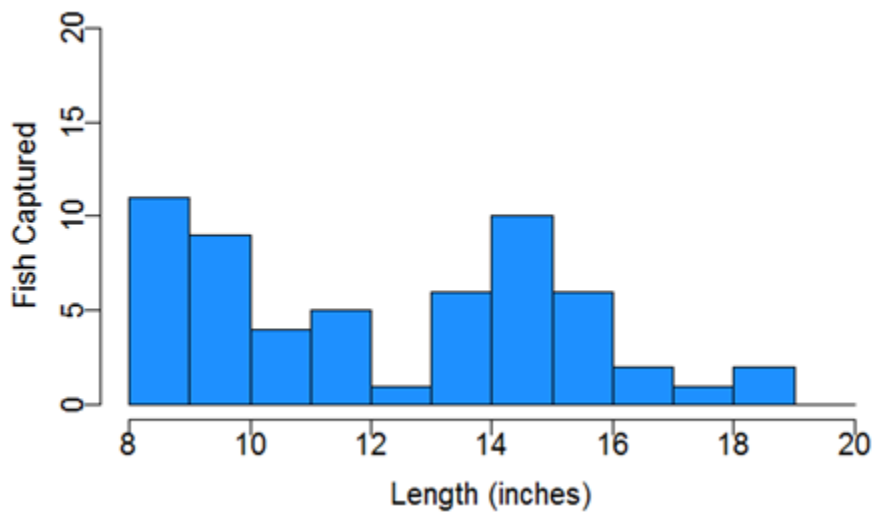
Captured 6 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8"	18%
Preferred Size ≥ 10"	2%



Largemouth bass



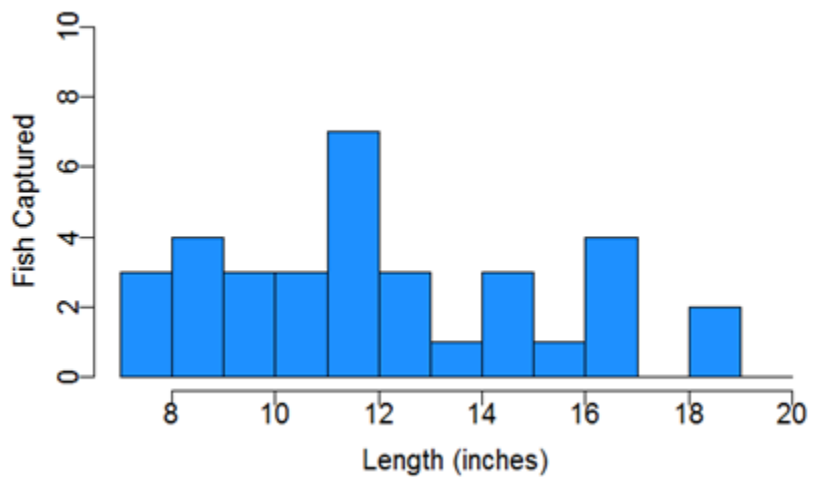
Captured 5 per mile ≥ 8 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 12"	49%
Preferred Size ≥ 15"	19%



Smallmouth bass



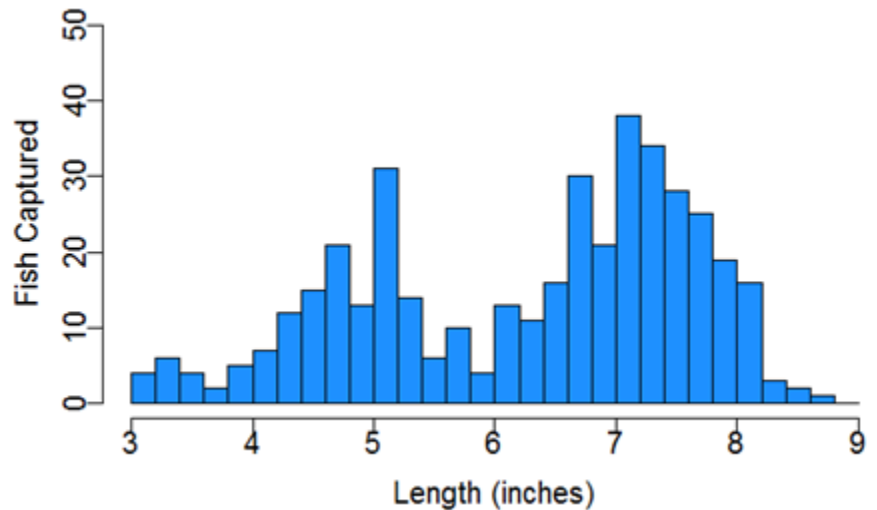
Captured 3 per mile ≥ 7 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 11"	62%
Preferred Size ≥ 14"	29%
Memorable Size ≥ 17"	6%



Bluegill



Captured 137 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	63%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	5%



Summary of Results

The spring of 2017 posed several challenges for DNR crews surveying fish in the Chippewa Flowage (a.k.a. Lake Chippewa). First, work on other area lakes prevented crews from surveying the Chippewa Flowage during the peak of the walleye spawn. All walleye data presented in this survey summary should be interpreted with caution, particularly with regards to relative abundance of walleye. Second, several cold fronts caused major disruptions in the spawning activities of other target species including muskellunge and black crappie. These cold fronts forced DNR crews to halt the survey and return later when water temperature began to rise again.

The walleye population on the west side of the Chippewa Flowage is comprised of a large proportion of bigger fish (61% of walleye surveyed were over 20 inches). Many of those large walleye are protected by a 20-24 inch release-only slot limit on the Chippewa Flowage. However, there are a fair number of fish in the 15-20 inch harvest slot. The number of juvenile walleye captured during the electrofishing portion of this survey was very encouraging. The year class of walleye born in 2016, now 6-9 inches long, are relatively abundant and should make a nice contribution to the adult fishery in coming years.

Muskellunge (“Musky”) are a featured species in the Chippewa Flowage and were the primary target of the netting proportion of the 2017 survey. Most adult muskellunge captured were between 35-45 inches, although a 51-inch muskellunge was captured as a part of our efforts. Overall catch rate of adult muskellunge in DNR surveys is lower on the west side compared to the east side, where a larger population of spawning muskellunge is believed to exist. Many juvenile muskellunge (<20 inches) were captured during our electrofishing efforts. Most of these muskellunge were identified as stocked fish from the fall of 2016. The 2016 stocked year class appears to have had good survival overwinter, an important first step toward those fish reaching adulthood.

Northern pike exhibit poor size on the Chippewa Flowage in comparison to many other lakes in the Hayward area. Only 35% of pike captured during the 2017 survey were over 21 inches long. The predominance of smaller pike is not desired, and it may be difficult to reverse. Anglers willing to keep smaller pike are encouraged to do so.

Crappie have been a popular species in the Chippewa Flowage in recent years. The 2017 survey demonstrated that the crappie population is still made up of mostly 9-11 inch fish, a size anglers on the Chippewa Flowage have come to expect. Crappie over 12 inches are rare.

Most yellow perch in the Chippewa Flowage are less than 9 inches in length, though some larger perch are present. Yellow perch represent an important food item for many other species of fish in the Chippewa Flowage.

Largemouth bass and smallmouth bass are now similarly abundant on the west side, where largemouth bass had previously been considerably more abundant. Size structure of both bass species was largely similar to previous surveys.

Bluegill abundance has not changed considerably over the last two years. A greater percentage of bluegill in this survey were over 8 inches than in any other survey in recent years.



A muskellunge captured during the spring 2017 fish survey of the Chippewa Flowage. A tag implanted in this fish helped determine that it was stocked in the fall of 2016 and had already traveled four miles from its stocking location. Photo by Max Wolter.

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County

Survey conducted by Max Wolter, and Scott Braden, and Evan Sniadajewski, with help from Rick Peters and John Baker

Special thanks to volunteers John Harris, Jim Jabrosky, Randy Neumann, Tom Boley, and Tim Wolter

Reviewed and Approved by Jeff Kampa – Area Fisheries Supervisor

