



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fisheries Information Sheet

LAKE: Middle Eau Claire

COUNTY: Bayfield

YEAR: 2025

Introduction

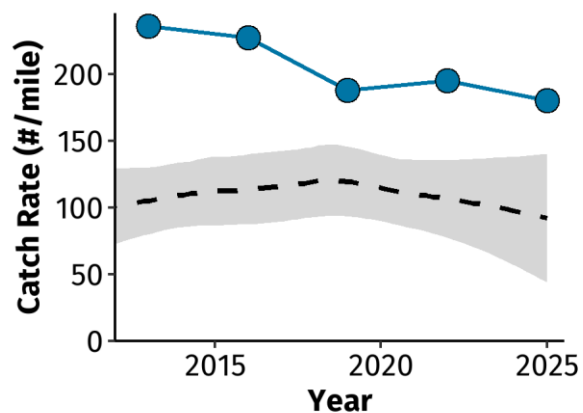
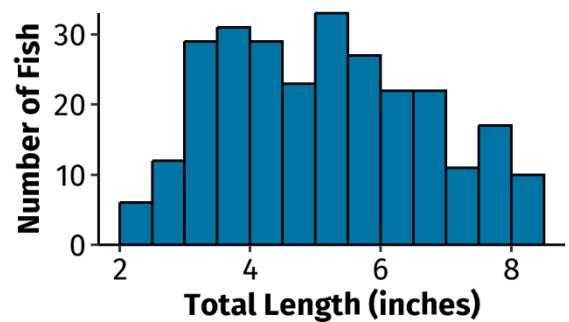
A late spring electrofishing survey was conducted on Middle Eau Claire Lake (WBIC 2742100) in Bayfield County on May 13th, 2025. All species were collected along 1.5 miles of shoreline and gamefish were collected along an additional 4.5 miles of shoreline. Although SE2 surveys primarily target bass and bluegill, other species observed included smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleye, muskellunge, pumpkinseed, hybrid sunfish, black crappie, yellow perch, rock bass, yellow bullhead, white sucker, central mudminnow, golden shiner, blacknose shiner and brook silverside. Comparisons were made to previous surveys and similar Wisconsin lakes in the same lake class.

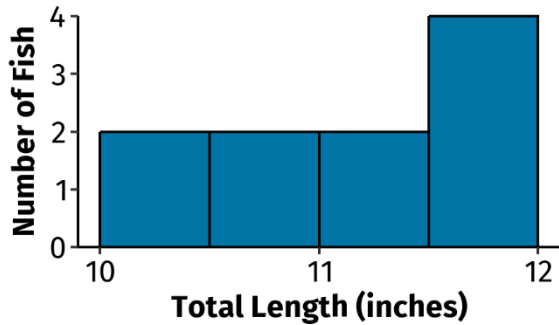
BLUEGILL



There were 270 bluegills captured and length ranged from 2.0 to 8.5 inches. Bluegill catch rate (blue dots) was well above average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the bluegill catch rate and size structure declined. Twenty 6–7-inch bluegills were kept for aging. Age ranged from 5 to 12 years with a mean of 8.9 years, which is the slowest bluegill growth documented in Douglas and Bayfield counties.

Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	195	180
Quality Size ($\geq 6"$)	65%	30%
Preferred Size ($\geq 8"$)	6%	4%



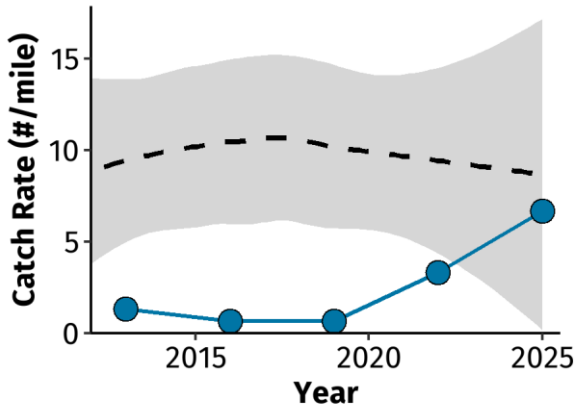


BLACK CRAPPIE



There were 10 black crappies captured and length ranged from 10.2 to 11.9 inches. Black crappie catch rate (blue dots) was near the average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the black crappie catch rate increased and size structure declined slightly but remains good.

Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	3.3	6.7
Preferred Size ($\geq 10"$)	100%	100%
Memorable Size ($\geq 12"$)	20%	0%

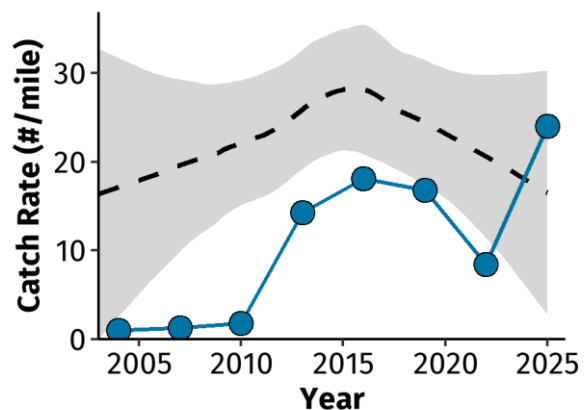
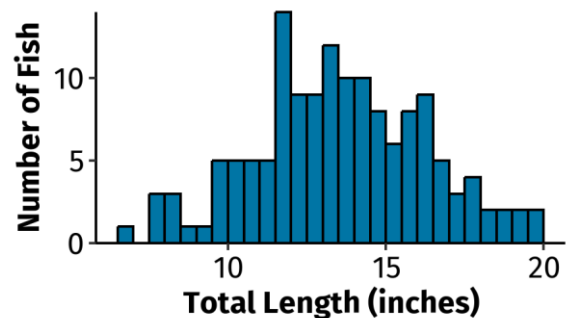


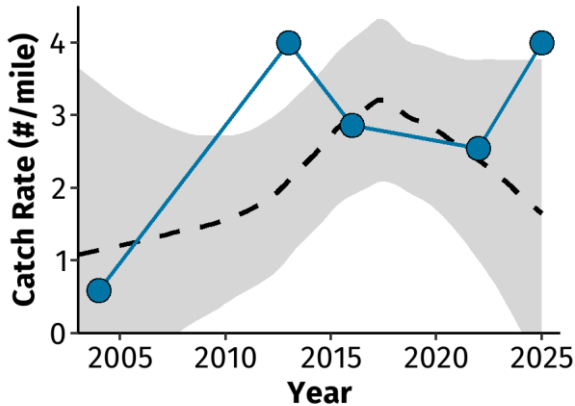
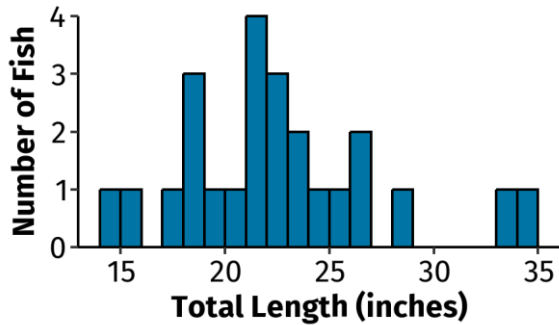
LARGEMOUTH BASS



There were 144 largemouth bass captured and length ranged from 6.7 to 20.0 inches. Largemouth bass catch rate (blue dots) was slightly above average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the largemouth bass catch rate increased and size structure remained similar.

Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	9	24
Quality Size ($\geq 12"$)	71%	70%
Preferred Size ($\geq 15"$)	32%	30%





NORTHERN PIKE



There were 24 northern pike captured and length ranged from 14.8 to 34.3 inches. Northern pike catch rate (blue dots) was above average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the northern pike catch rate and size structure both increased.

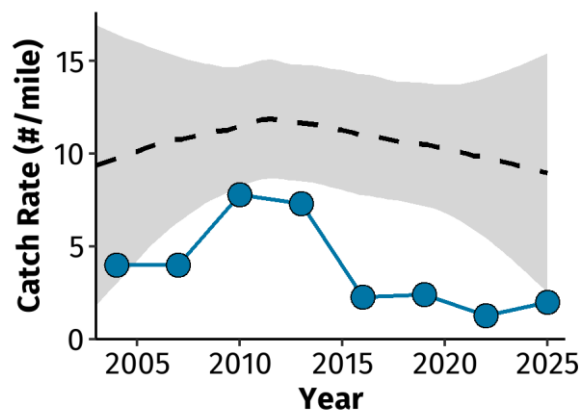
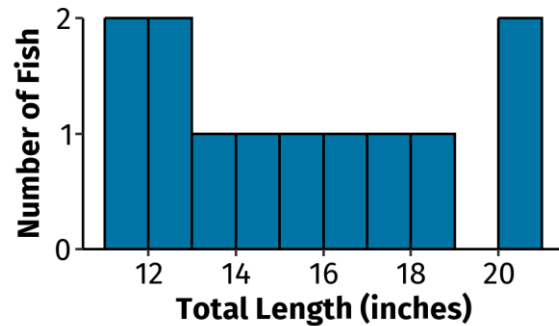
Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	2.6	4.0
Quality Size ($\geq 21"$)	39%	67%
Preferred Size ($\geq 28"$)	4%	13%

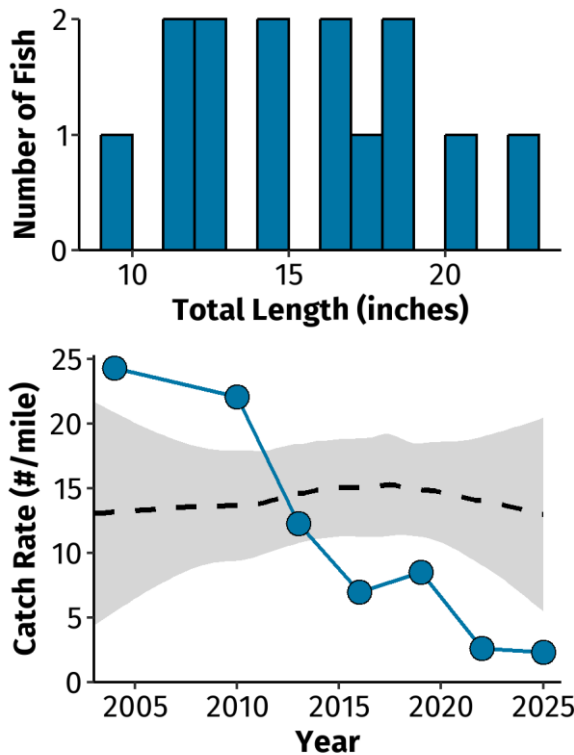
SMALLMOUTH BASS



There were 12 smallmouth bass captured and length ranged from 11.2 to 20.8 inches. Smallmouth bass catch rate (blue dots) was below average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the smallmouth bass catch rate remained similar and size structure increased.

Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	1.3	2.0
Quality Size ($\geq 11"$)	64%	100%
Preferred Size ($\geq 14"$)	50%	58%





WALLEYE



There were 14 walleyes captured and length ranged from 9.1 to 22.4 inches. Walleye catch rate (blue dots) was below average for similar Wisconsin lakes (dashed line). Since the 2022 survey, the walleye catch rate remained similar and size structure increased.

Year	2022	2025
# Captured Per Mile	2.6	2.3
Quality Size ($\geq 15"$)	27%	50%
Preferred Size ($\geq 20"$)	3%	14%

OTHER SPECIES

Nine rock bass were captured, and length ranged from 5.5 to 9.5 inches. Seven pumpkinseeds or sunfish hybrids were captured, and length ranged from 4.3 to 8.3 inches. Four yellow perch were captured, and all were less than 5 inches. One 13.6-inch muskellunge was captured. Other species captured in low numbers (less than five fish) included central mudminnow, golden shiner, white sucker, blacknose shiner, brook silverside and yellow bullhead.

Summary

Middle Eau Claire Lake features productive fisheries for a variety of gamefish and panfish species. Largemouth bass and northern pike have increased in abundance and harvest of smaller individuals is encouraged to maintain size structure. Smallmouth bass remain at low abundance with excellent size structure. The catch rate for black crappies increased and size structure remains good, but fyke net surveys are typically better indicators of black crappie populations. Bluegills had high abundance with poor size structure and slow growth. Slow growth is likely due to their high abundance so reducing abundance may increase growth rates and improve size structure. A creel survey will be completed during the 2025-2026 angling season and will provide necessary data on current panfish harvest and inform future management regarding the panfish regulation. Although some walleyes were captured in this survey, a walleye population estimate was completed in April of 2025 and is a better indicator of population status. Results from the walleye population estimate and creel survey will be compiled along with the results of this survey in a comprehensive fisheries survey report published in 2026.

General fishing regulations for Middle Eau Claire Lake in Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
Largemouth Bass (LMB)	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	5 in total with SMB	None
Smallmouth Bass (SMB)	3 rd Saturday in June to 1 st Sunday in March	1	18 inches
Northern Pike	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	5	None
Panfish	Open all year	10	None
Walleye	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	3	Less than 14 inches except 1 over 18"
Muskellunge	Saturday nearest Memorial Day to Dec 31	1	40 inches

For fisheries management questions about Middle Eau Claire Lake, contact:

Logan Cutler

Fisheries Biologist

(715) 815-7265

Logan.Cutler@wisconsin.gov

Nate Thomas

Fisheries Biologist - Senior

(715) 815-7108

Nathan.Thomas@wisconsin.gov