



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Fisheries Information Sheet

Mississippi River, lower Pool 5a
Buffalo County
2025

Introduction

Pool 5a is an impoundment of the Mississippi River resulting from the construction of Lock and Dam 5a. At about 10 miles in length, the pool is relatively short compared to other Mississippi River pools. It extends from river mile 728.5-738.2. Lower Pool 5a has a mix of aquatic habitat types that include contiguous and isolated backwaters, secondary and tertiary channels, and the main channel and main channel border. For this October fish assemblage assessment, off-main channel areas were surveyed between river miles 728.5-734.5. Twenty-five sites were electroshocked, totaling 302 minutes of shocking time. Specimens were netted, identified, measured and released.

Largemouth Bass

There were 248 largemouth bass captured, and lengths ranged from 2.7 to 17.0 inches. Largemouth bass comprised 35% of the total catch. Forty-nine largemouth bass were captured per hour of electroshocking time (Table 1). When not including the young of year captured, 32% of largemouth bass were 14 inches and greater.

Bluegill

There were 125 bluegills captured, and lengths ranged from 1.8 to 8.1 inches. Bluegill comprised 17.7% of the total catch. Twenty-five bluegills were captured per hour of electroshocking time (Table 1). When not including the young of year captured, 38% of bluegills were 6 inches and greater.

Bowfin, Smallmouth Bass, Sauger and Northern Pike

Bowfin, smallmouth bass, sauger and northern ranged from 4.2-9.7% of the total catch. These species ranged from 6-14 specimens captured per hour of electroshocking time (Table 1).

Table 1. The number of largemouth bass, bluegills, bowfin, smallmouth bass, saugers and northern pike captured per electrofishing hour and the % of total catch for each species.

Species	% of Total Catch	Number Per Electrofishing Hour
Largemouth Bass	35.0	49
Bluegill	17.7	25
Bowfin	9.7	14
Smallmouth Bass	6.6	9
Sauger	4.4	6
Northern Pike	4.2	6

Other Species

In addition to largemouth bass, bluegill, bowfin, smallmouth bass, sauger and northern pike, 21 other species were captured that totaled 158 specimens. Of the 21 additional species, only shorthead redhorse and rock bass comprised more than 3% of the total catch; 26 shorthead redhorse and 23 rock bass were captured comprising 3.7% and 3.2% of the total catch, respectively. Other species captured were black crappie, blue sucker, bullhead minnow, channel catfish, common carp, freshwater drum, gizzard shad, golden redhorse, golden shiner, log perch, longnose gar, pumpkinseed, silver redhorse, spotfin shiner, spotted sucker, walleye, weed shiner, yellow bullhead and yellow perch.

Summary

The Mississippi River supports a diversity of fish including numerous game and non-game species. Our survey found many species sought after by anglers, including largemouth bass, bluegill, smallmouth bass, sauger and northern pike. Many non-gamefish species were also found that are considered important either commercially or may serve as forage for other fish species. Regardless of species designation, all native fish are important components to a healthy Mississippi River fishery. Monitoring surveys, such as this one, will continue to be a high priority.

Acknowledgements

For more information about fisheries management activities in lower Pool 5a, contact:

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