



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fisheries Information Sheet

LAKE: Dowling Lake

COUNTY: Douglas

YEAR: 2024

Introduction

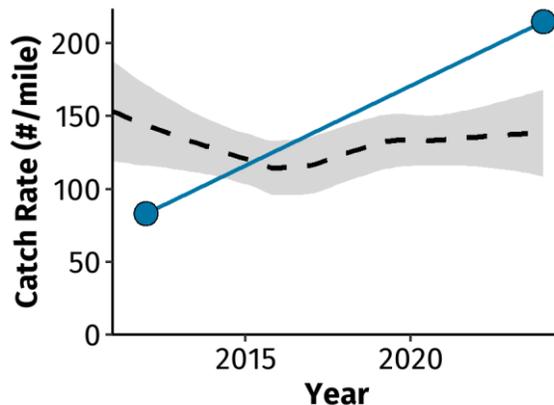
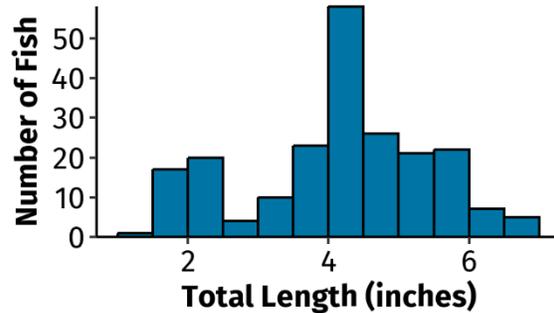
A late spring electrofishing (SE2) survey was conducted on Dowling Lake (WBIC 2858300) in Douglas County on May 13th, 2024. All species were collected along one mile of shoreline and gamefish were collected along an additional 0.8 miles of shoreline. Although SE2 surveys primarily target bass and panfish, species observed in the 2024 survey included walleye, largemouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, bluegill, pumpkinseed, black crappie, yellow perch, white sucker, golden shiner, central mudminnow, fathead minnow, tadpole madtom and yellow bullhead.

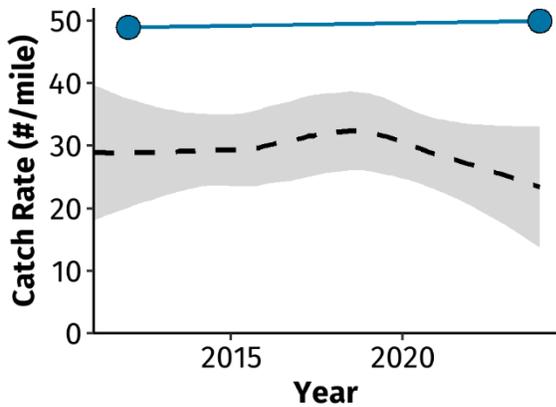
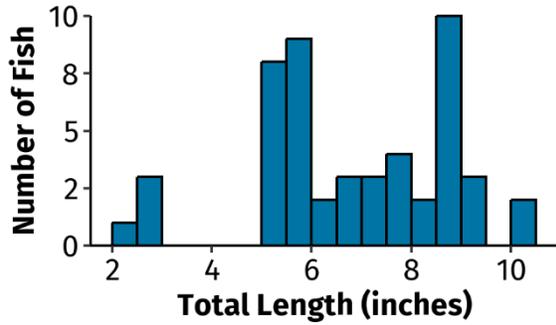
BLUEGILL



There were 215 bluegills captured and length ranged from 1.4-6.8 inches. Bluegill catch rate (blue dots) was above average for complex-cool-dark lakes in Wisconsin (dashed line; 95% confidence interval shaded). Since the 2012 survey, the bluegill catch rate more than doubled, but size structure declined. Twelve 6-7-inch bluegills were kept for aging. Eleven were age-4 and one was age-7. With a mean of 4.2 years at 6-7-inches, growth is relatively fast for Douglas and Bayfield counties.

Year	2012	2024
# Captured Per Mile	83	215
Quality Size ($\geq 6''$)	60%	6%
Preferred Size ($\geq 8''$)	0%	0%





BLACK CRAPPIE



There were 50 black crappies captured and length ranged from 2.3-10.4 inches. Black crappie catch rate (blue dots) was well above average for complex-cool-dark lakes in Wisconsin (dashed line; 95% confidence interval shaded). Since the 2012 survey, the black crappie catch rate remained similar and size structure improved slightly.

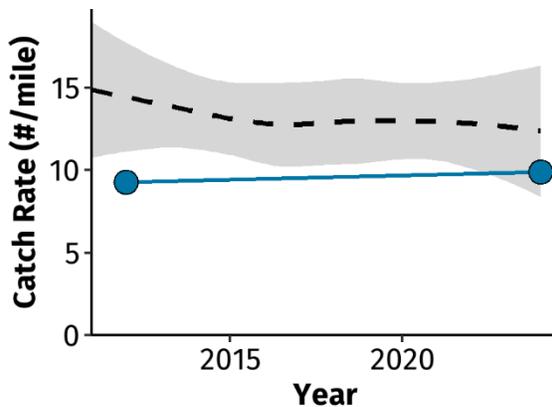
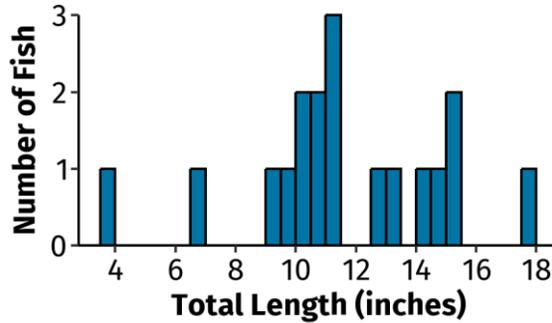
Year	2012	2024
# Captured Per Mile	49	50
Quality Size ($\geq 8''$)	22%	34%
Preferred Size ($\geq 10''$)	0%	4%

LARGEMOUTH BASS



There were 18 largemouth bass captured and length ranged from 3.9-17.9 inches. Largemouth bass catch rate (blue dots) was slightly below the average for complex-cool-dark lakes in Wisconsin (dashed line; 95% confidence interval shaded). Since the 2012 survey, the largemouth bass catch rate remained similar and size structure improved.

Year	2012	2024
# Captured Per Mile	9.3	9.9
Quality Size ($\geq 12''$)	15%	39%
Preferred Size ($\geq 15''$)	15%	17%



OTHER SPECIES

There were 33 walleyes captured and length ranged from 6.3-23.7 inches. One walleye had a recent fin clip, indicating that it likely traveled from Amnicon Lake where a walleye population estimate took place earlier in the spring. A 12.3-inch muskellunge was captured and is likely from natural reproduction, as muskellunge have not been stocked in Dowling Lake since 2021. Additionally, a 25.4-inch muskellunge was captured. Ten northern pike were captured and length ranged from 17.7-23.1 inches. There were 23 pumpkinseeds captured and length ranged from 2.0-7.5 inches. There were 12 yellow perch were captured and all were <6 inches. Additionally, 11 white sucker and nine golden shiner were captured. Other species captured in low numbers (1-2 fish) included central mudminnow, fathead minnow, tadpole madtom and yellow bullhead.

Summary

Overall, Dowling Lake provides diverse and healthy fisheries. Abundant small panfish are an excellent food source for predators in the system. Black crappies also provide an action fishery with some harvest opportunity. Largemouth bass remain present in low numbers. Walleyes were abundant even though they are not a primary target of SE2 surveys, and movement between Dowling and Amnicon lakes via a 0.3-mile-long creek was documented. A spring fyke netting survey would help to better assess the muskellunge and northern pike fisheries.

General fishing regulations for Dowling Lake in Douglas County, Wisconsin.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT
Largemouth Bass	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	5	14 inches
Northern Pike	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	5	None
Panfish	Open all year	25	None
Walleye	1 st Saturday in May to 1 st Sunday in March	3	15 inches but less than 20 inches, with 1 over 24 inches
Muskellunge	Saturday nearest Memorial Day to Dec 31	1	40 inches

For answers to questions about fisheries management activities on Dowling Lake, contact:

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