



# Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

## Fisheries Information Sheet

Fireside Lakes, Rusk County, WI

Survey Year 2025

### Introduction

Fireside Lakes also known as Mud and Rice lakes are located about 20 miles southwest of Ladysmith. The lakes combined are 302 acres, with a maximum of 30 feet deep. The lakes are classified as complex-warm-dark, meaning they have diverse species richness, highly productive and low water clarity from tannins. Access is available from a public boat launch located off Indian Point Road.

The Park Falls Fisheries Management Team of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducted a late spring electrofishing survey (SE2) on the night of May 27, 2025. The purpose of this was to evaluate abundance and size structure of bass and bluegills. The electrofishing sample surveyed one complete circuit around the entire shoreline of both lakes. Panfish were sampled for 1.99 miles while gamefish were captured for 3.71 miles. The water temperature ranged between 60 and 64.54 degrees Fahrenheit. While bass and bluegills were the primary target species for this survey many other species were captured, such as black crappie, walleye, northern pike and yellow perch. Comparisons were made with a previous survey in 2017 on Fireside Lake and similar Wisconsin lakes in the same lake class.

### Bluegill

There were 185 bluegills captured, and lengths ranged from 1.9 to 11.4 inches with an average of 6.1 inches. The catch rate of the 2025 survey fell between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of a complex-warm-dark lake. The abundance of bluegill has decreased since the previous survey, but the size structure has slightly increased.

Table 1. Abundance and size structure of bluegills during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2017.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile $\geq 3$ " (stock size)	Quality Size $\geq 6$ "	Preferred Size $\geq 8$ "
2025	93.0	90.5	66%	2%
2017	187.0	183.0	52%	2%

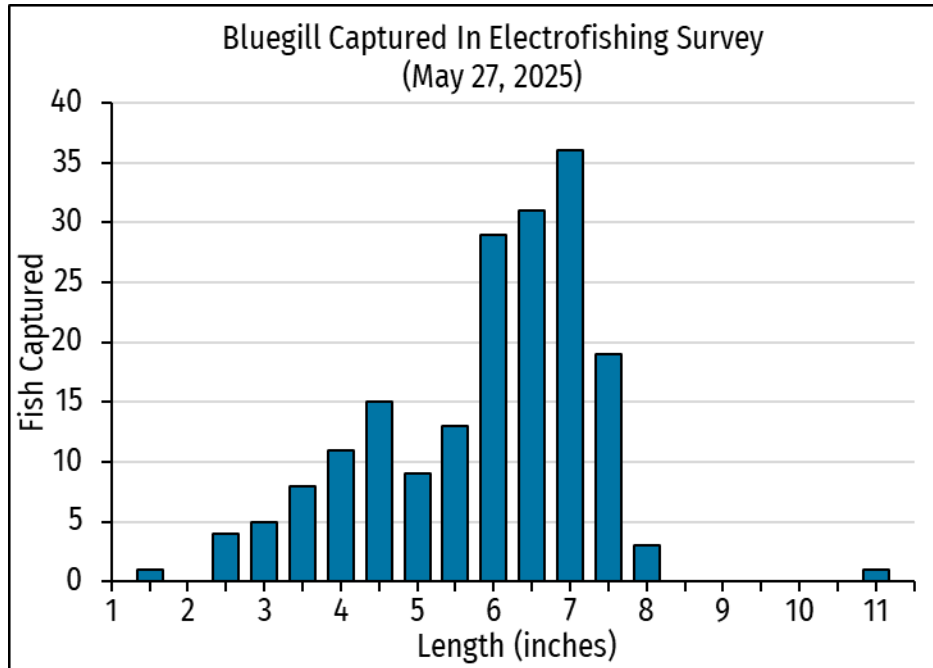


Figure 1. Size histogram of bluegill captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of Fireside Lakes in Rusk County, Wisconsin.

### Largemouth Bass

There were 68 largemouth bass captured, and lengths ranged from 7.8 to 19.0 inches with an average of 14.6 inches. In this sample 67% of the bass were legal size. The catch rate of the 2025 survey falls just above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile classification for a complex-warm-dark lake. The abundance of bass is comparable to the 2017 survey with a slight increase in size structure.

Table 2. Abundance and size structure of largemouth bass during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2017.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile $\geq 8''$ (stock size)	Quality Size $\geq 12''$	Preferred Size $\geq 15''$
2025	18.3	18.1	94%	44%
2017	19.0	19.0	88%	25%

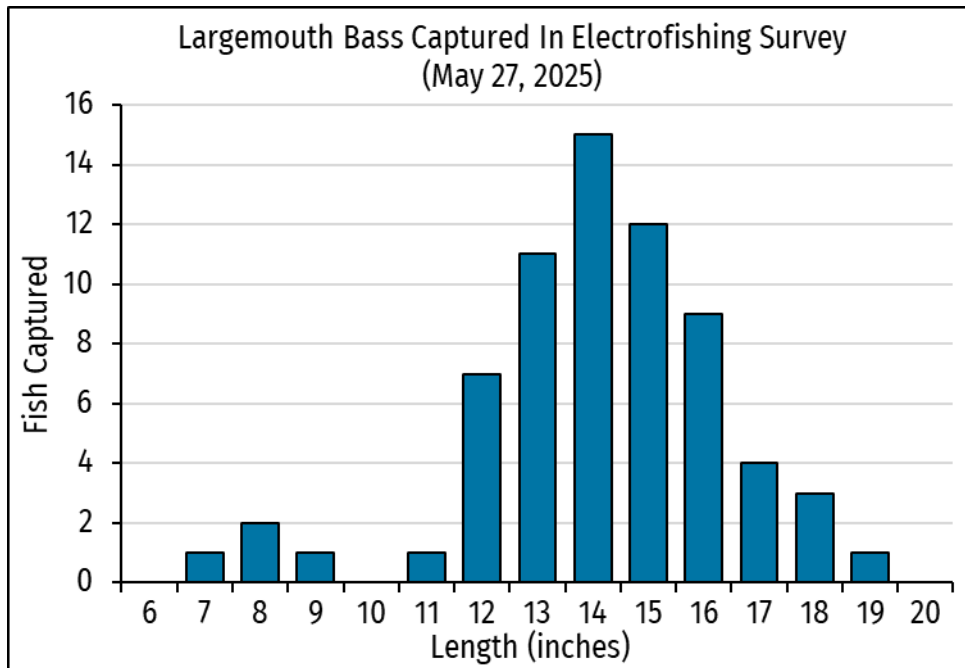


Figure 2. Size histogram of largemouth bass captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of Fireside Lakes in Rusk County, Wisconsin.

### Pumpkinseed

There were 11 pumpkinseeds captured, and lengths ranged from 4.5 to 7.8 inches with an average of 6.3 inches. The catch rate is slightly above the 75<sup>th</sup> percent classification for a complex- dark lake. Since the 2017 survey the abundance of pumpkinseed has decreased while the size structure remains similar.

Table 3. Abundance and size structure of pumpkinseed during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2017.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile $\geq 3''$ (stock size)	Quality Size $\geq 6''$	Preferred Size $\geq 8''$
2025	5.5	5.5	64%	0%
2017	15.0	15.0	67%	0%

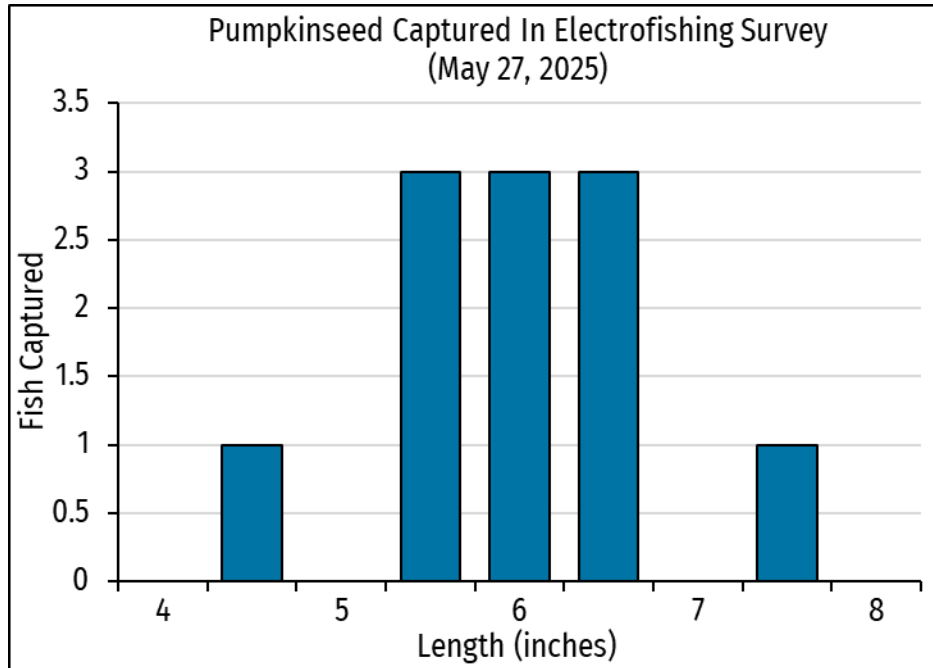


Figure 3. Size histogram of pumpkinseed captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of Fireside Lakes in Rusk County, Wisconsin.

### OTHER SPECIES

There were 19 black crappie captured and lengths ranged from 8.9 to 13.3 inches. There were 20 walleye captured and lengths ranged from 9.3 to 24.3 inches. There were 18 northern pike captured and lengths ranged from 12.5 to 29.1 inches. Other species captured included yellow perch.

## Summary

Fireside lakes provide a great fishing opportunity as it supports a diversity of species. Anglers have the chance to catch quality fish as many of the fish are in that size category. Bluegill abundance is considered moderate with over half of the bluegills in the quality size category. The abundance of largemouth bass is moderate with a large percentage of fish in the quality size. Fireside is scheduled for an early spring electrofishing survey in 2032 according to our lake rotation schedule.

Table 4. General fishing regulations for Fireside Lakes, in Rusk County Wisconsin 2026-2027 fishing season.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
Largemouth Bass	First Saturday in May through first Sunday in March (Catch and release at all other times)	5 in total with smallmouth bass	14"

Muskellunge	First Saturday in May through December 31 <sup>st</sup> . (open water only)	1	40"
Northern Pike	First Saturday in May through first Sunday in March	5	None
Panfish	Open all year	25	None
Smallmouth Bass	First Saturday in May through first Sunday in March. (Catch and release at all other times)	5 in total with largemouth bass	14"
Walleye	First Saturday in May through first Sunday in March	3	15" but less than 20" Except one over 24"

Fishing regulations for Fireside Lakes, Rusk County and all Wisconsin lakes can be found online at [Fishing Regulations | Fishing Wisconsin | Wisconsin DNR](#)

For questions about fisheries management activities on Fireside Lake, contact:

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