



2024 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

BARKER LAKE, SAWYER COUNTY

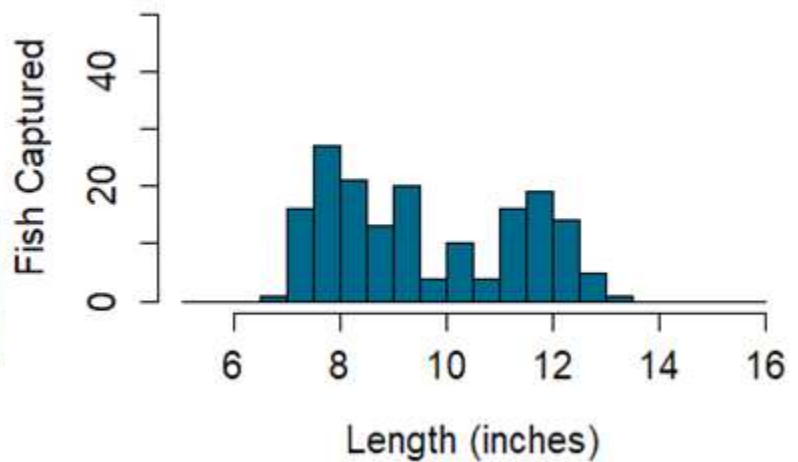
Report by Max Wolter

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Barker Lake from May 7-8, 2024. The primary target was black crappie, but useful data was also gathered on walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass and yellow perch. Six nets were set overnight for two total nights which resulted in 12 total net-nights of effort. 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.

BLACK CRAPPIE



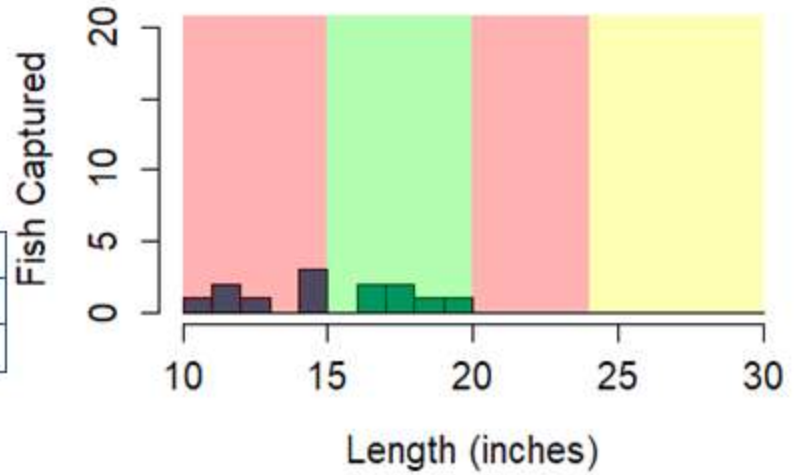
Captured 14 per net-night \geq 5 inches	
Quality Size \geq 8"	74%
Preferred Size \geq 10"	40%



WALLEYE



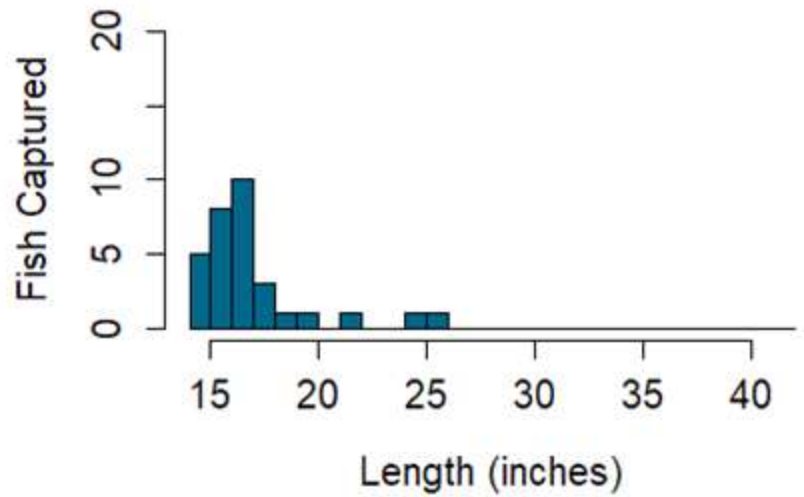
Captured 1 per net-night ≥ 10 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 15''$	46%
Preferred Size $\geq 20''$	0%



NORTHERN PIKE



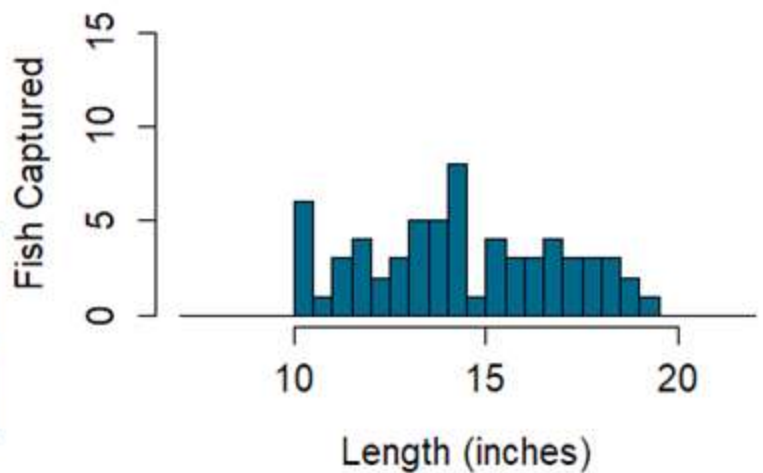
Captured 3 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 21''$	10%
Preferred Size $\geq 28''$	0%



SMALLMOUTH BASS



Captured 5 per net night* ≥ 7 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 11''$	89%
Preferred Size $\geq 14''$	55%
Memorable Size $\geq 17''$	19%

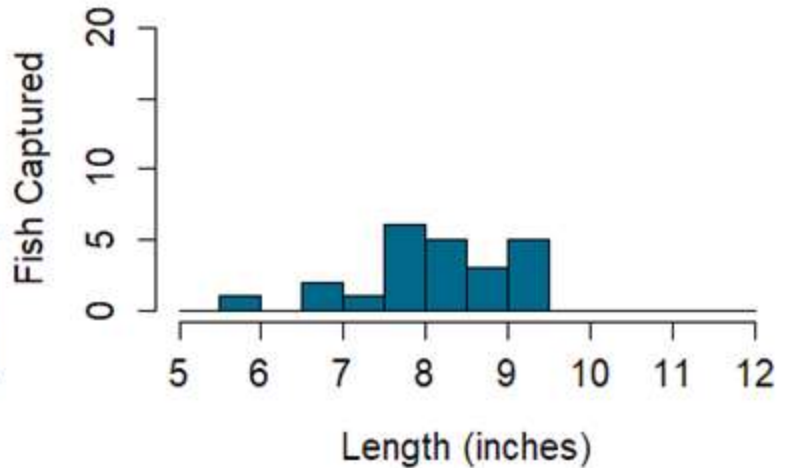


*netting is not the typical gear for surveying smallmouth bass

YELLOW PERCH



Captured 2 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	56%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	0%



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Anglers should think of Barker Lake more as a wide pool of the East Fork of the Chippewa River, rather than an independent lake. The waterbody is heavily influenced by the inflowing and outflowing water. Species that are tolerant of flow, such as smallmouth bass and black crappie, tend to thrive in Barker Lake, while species that do not prefer flow, such as bluegill and largemouth bass, are less common than in other local waters. Additionally, Barker Lake holds some interesting species that exist within the larger river system, including lake sturgeon, channel catfish and several species of redhorse. Common carp are also present in the system, but none were captured in this survey.



This lake sturgeon (held by volunteer Curt Arcand) was a surprise catch in our crappie survey of Barker Lake. Sturgeon, catfish and redhorse that inhabit the connected rivers also use the habitat available in Barker Lake. Photo courtesy of Max Wolter

BLACK CRAPPIE

Black crappie offer one of the better fishing opportunities in Barker Lake, with a population that has both a fishable abundance and good size. Forty percent of the crappie captured in this survey were over 10 inches, with the largest being just over 13 inches. The daily bag limit for panfish in Barker Lake is 25 per day (all species combined).

WALLEYE

Survey timing was not ideal for walleye, but the low capture rate is still likely representative of this population. Walleye in Barker are believed to be “transient”, or able to move among the many connected rivers and lakes in the immediate area. We do not have detailed data on those movements. Walleye in Barker are likely a mix of natural born fish and those stocked in lakes throughout the system. There is a 15-inch minimum length limit for walleye in Barker Lake and walleye between 20-24 inches are protected. The daily bag limit is 3, only one of which may be over 24 inches (regulations line up with color shading in figure above).

NORTHERN PIKE

Northern pike were one of the more abundant predators captured in our survey, yet opportunities for anglers are limited with this species. Only 10% of pike captured were over 21 inches. Northern pike are not native to this system, and harvest of small pike is encouraged. There is no minimum length limit for pike in Barker Lake and the daily bag limit is 5.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

Fyke netting is not our preferred method for surveying smallmouth bass. However, capture rate for smallmouth in our nets was notable and we did not conduct any surveys with other methods that might have more directly targeted bass. With that caveat, we found a nice population of smallmouth bass with over half being greater than 14 inches in length. Smallmouth bass are well-suited to flowing waters and may also move between the lake and the connected rivers. The minimum length limit for both smallmouth and largemouth bass in Barker Lake is 14 inches and the daily bag limit is 5.

YELLOW PERCH

Yellow perch were captured at a low rate and with only modest size. Many perch between 8-10 inches were captured, but none over 10 inches were found in this survey.

Other species captured included muskellunge (1), channel catfish (2), lake sturgeon (1), bluegill, pumpkinseed, rock bass, several species of redhorse and white sucker.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden, Evan Sirianni and volunteer Curt Arcand

Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole