



2024 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

CLEAR LAKE (WBIC:1841300), SAWYER COUNTY

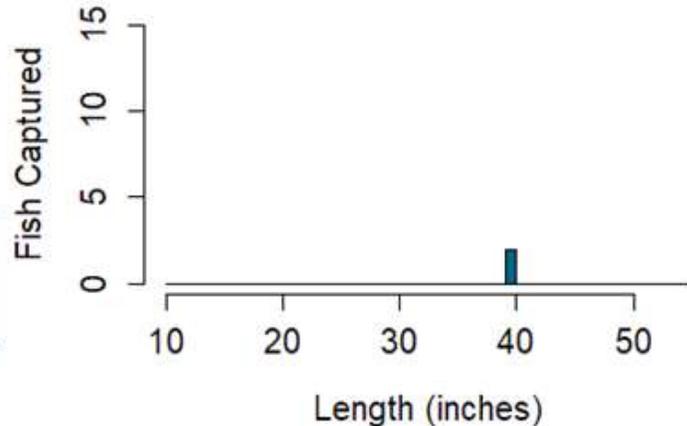
Report by Max Wolter

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Clear Lake from April 17-18, 2024. The primary target was muskellunge, yellow perch and black crappie. Up to six nets were set overnight for two total nights which resulted in 12 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey was conducted on May 15, 2024 to target largemouth bass and bluegill and included 1.6 miles of shoreline (total shoreline for the lake). 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.

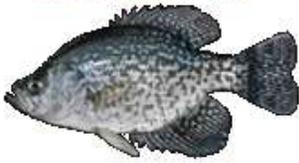
MUSKELLUNGE



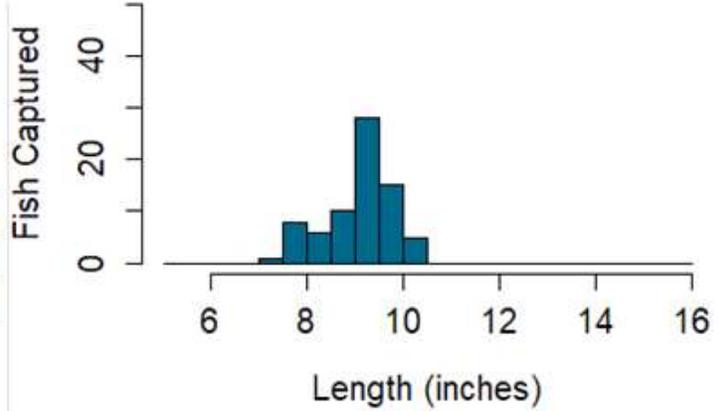
Captured 0.2 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 30 "	100%
Memorable Size ≥ 42 "	0%



BLACK CRAPPIE



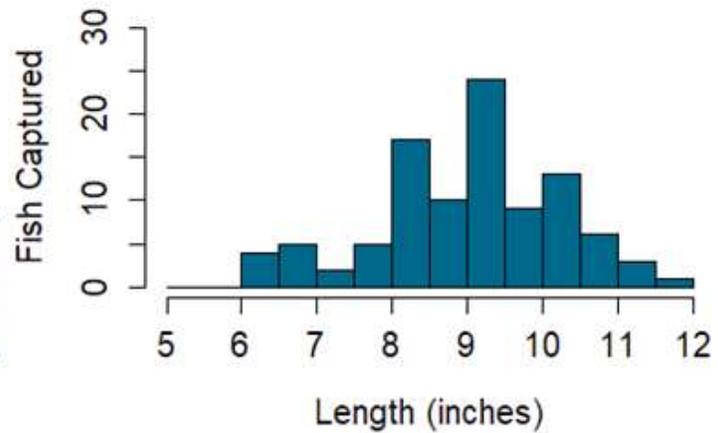
Captured 6 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	88%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	7%



YELLOW PERCH



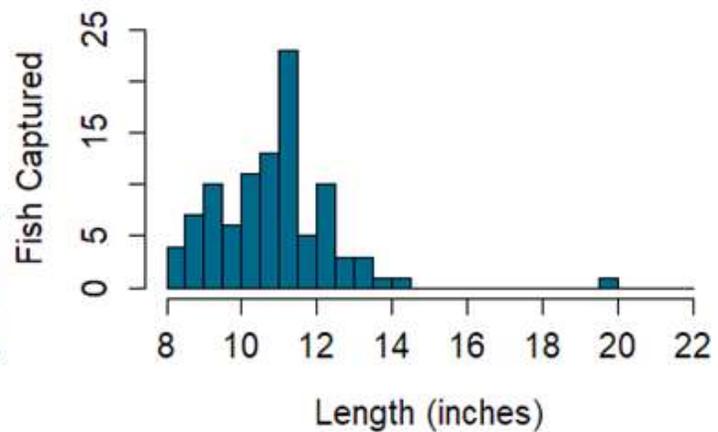
Captured 8 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	84%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	23%



LARGEMOUTH BASS



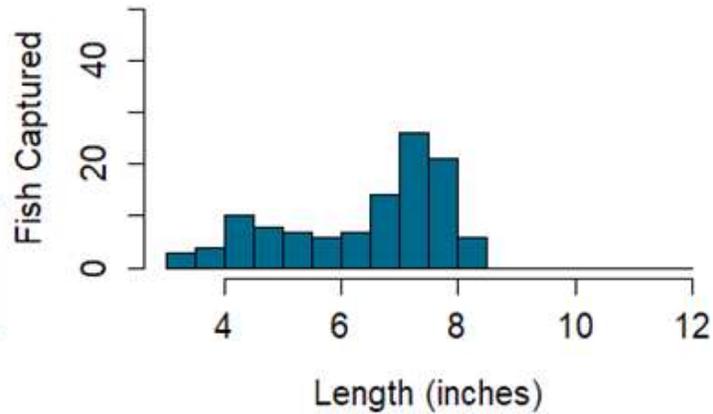
Captured 63 per mile ≥ 8 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 12''$	19%
Preferred Size $\geq 15''$	1%



BLUEGILL



Captured 71 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	66%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	5%



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

MUSKELLUNGE

Two muskellunge were captured during the fyke netting survey (shown above). Two additional muskellunge were captured during the electrofishing survey. All four muskellunge were between 39-43 inches. These muskellunge are the product of natural reproduction, since no stocking has occurred in Clear Lake for many years. Muskellunge offer a unique opportunity for Clear Lake anglers and are unlikely to impact other species because of their low abundance. There is a 40-inch minimum length limit and a 1-fish daily bag limit for muskellunge in Clear Lake.

BLACK CRAPPIE

Black crappie size and abundance were both fairly average and generally similar to the results from a 2015 survey. Still, black crappie offer some opportunities for anglers, with a fair number of 9-inch fish available. The bag limit for panfish is 25 (all species combined).

YELLOW PERCH

Yellow perch were one of the standout species in the fyke netting survey. Perch were considerably less abundant than the 2015 survey but offered much better size. A large



One of the muskies captured during the electrofishing portion of the survey on Clear Lake, 2024. Photo courtesy of Max Wolter

percentage of the perch captured were over 10 inches. Few lakes in the area offer perch of this size, at least consistently.

LARGEMOUTH BASS

Largemouth bass are very abundant in Clear Lake. This was one of the highest bass abundance totals we have seen in recent years and was higher than the 2015 survey of Clear Lake. Typically, when abundance of a species is very high, size will be poor. That is very much the case with the current Clear Lake bass population (though we did capture one bass that was nearly 20 inches). This may be frustrating to some anglers. However, the abundant and small-bodied bass population serves an important function in the ecosystem as a predator on panfish. The above-average size of several panfish species is likely the direct result of the amount of predation the bass population offers on small panfish. If bass were to become less abundant/larger, we would expect increases in panfish abundance and corresponding declines in panfish size. There is a 14-inch minimum length limit for bass in Clear Lake, with a 5-daily bag limit.

BLUEGILL

Bluegill were moderately abundant but still attained a size that would be of interest to many anglers. Quite a few 7-inch, and some 8-inch bluegill were captured. Again, the abundant largemouth bass likely structure the bluegill population and prevent bluegill from becoming too abundant to grow well.

Other species captured include pumpkinseed, rock bass, white sucker and several minnow species. Walleye have a history in this lake, but stocking ceased many years ago and none were captured in this survey.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden and Evan Sirianni

Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole