



2024 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

MUD/CALLAHAN LAKE, SAWYER COUNTY

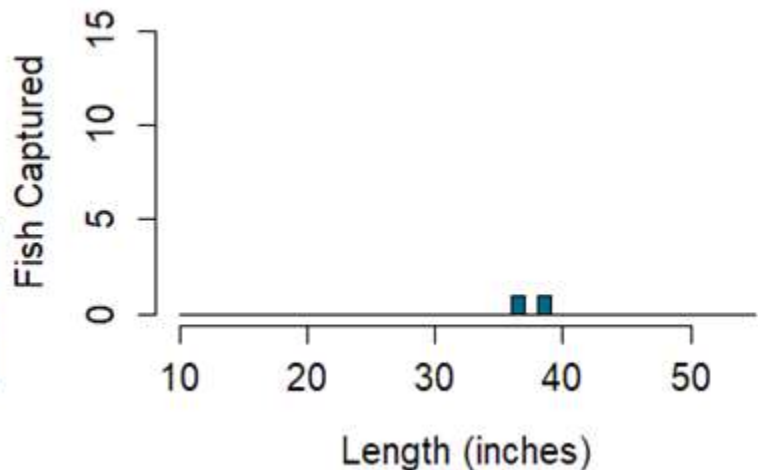
Report by Max Wolter

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Mud and Callahan lakes (locally referred to as one waterbody “Mud/Callahan Lake”) from April 30 to May 2, 2024. The primary target was muskellunge and black crappie, but useful data was also gathered on yellow perch and northern pike. Up to six nets were set overnight for three total nights which resulted in 18 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey was conducted on May 14, 2024 to target largemouth bass and bluegill and included four miles of shoreline. 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



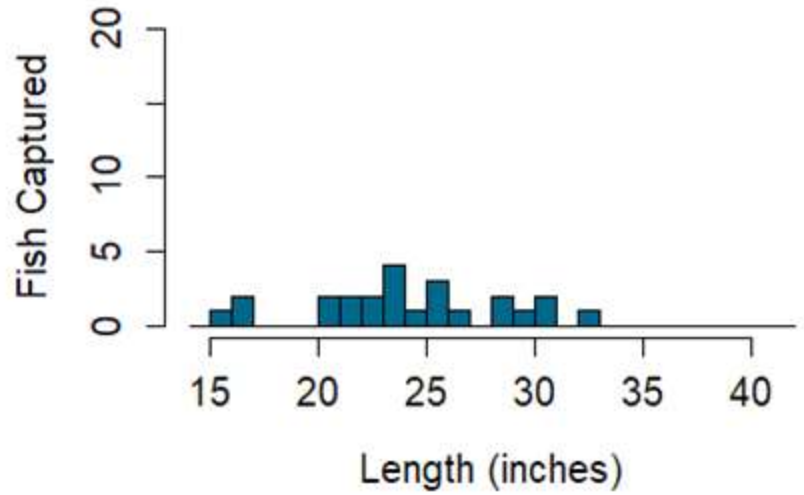
Captured 0.1 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 30''$	100%
Memorable Size $\geq 42''$	0%



NORTHERN PIKE



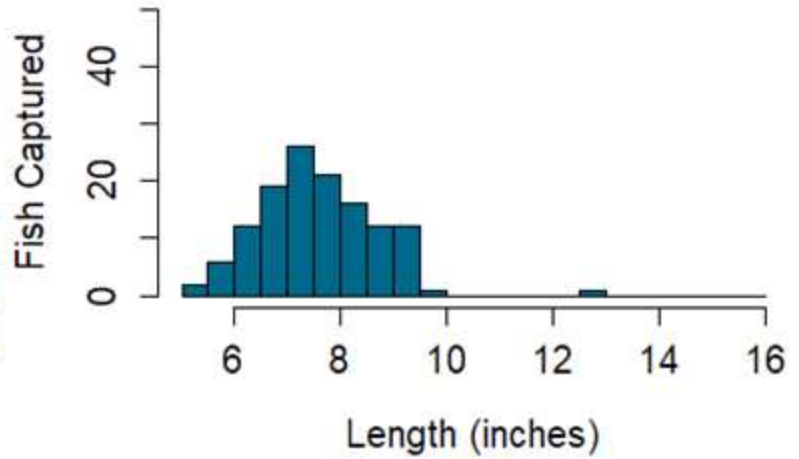
Captured 2.2 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 21''$	79%
Preferred Size $\geq 28''$	25%



BLACK CRAPPIE



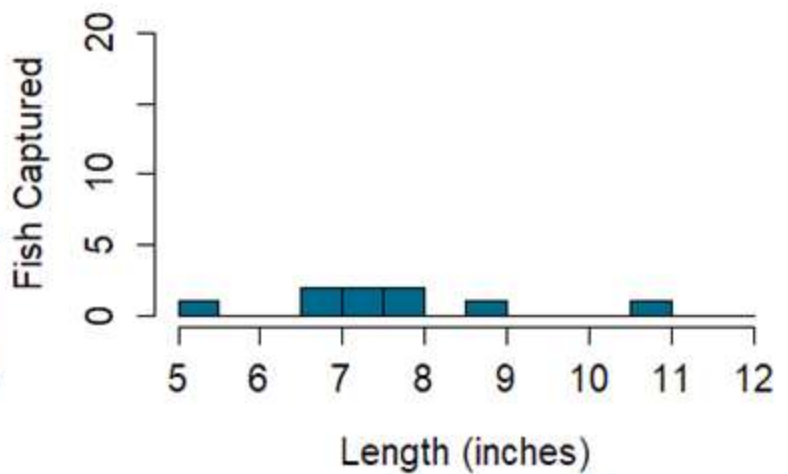
Captured 7 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	33%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	1%



YELLOW PERCH



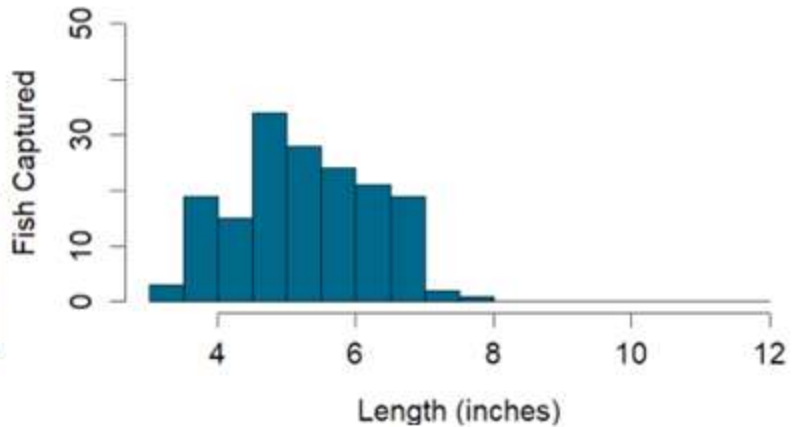
Captured 0.5 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	22%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	11%



BLUEGILL



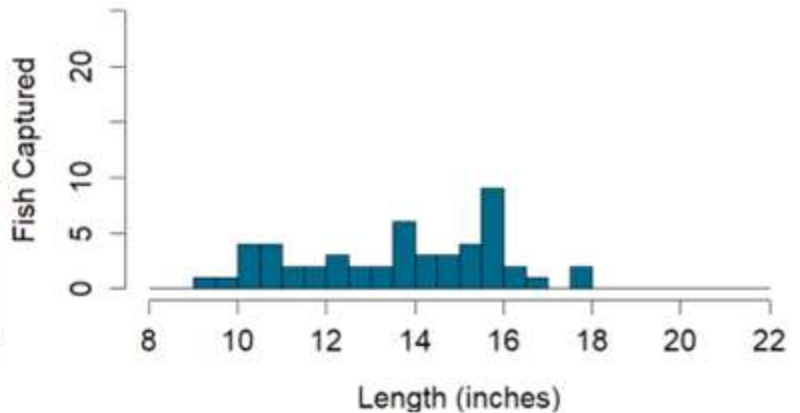
Captured 170 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	26%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	0%



LARGEMOUTH BASS



Captured 13 per mile \geq 8 inches	
Quality Size \geq 12"	73%
Preferred Size \geq 15"	35%



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

MUSKELLUNGE

Muskellunge have long been a favorite species for anglers on Mud/Callahan Lake, in large part because of the lake's historic reputation as an "action" fishery. This survey showed a continuation of a troubling trend of decreasing muskellunge abundance. Just two muskellunge were captured in the three days of netting for this survey, both of which were older, larger fish. The introduction of northern pike, which were believed to come from the waterbodies upstream, appears to be causing a major shift in the fishery. Management action will be needed to maintain this muskellunge fishery but returning to the high-density "action water" status of the past may be very difficult.

NORTHERN PIKE

As mentioned above, northern pike are a relatively new species in Mud/Callahan Lake, where they are not native. Northern pike first started appearing in the waterbody in the late 90s or early 2000s, based on angler accounts. This survey found a higher catch rate for northern pike than any previous survey (most recent was 2019, 0.9 pike per net-night), confirming that pike are increasing in abundance in this waterbody. Anglers and local groups have been making efforts to harvest northern pike in this lake, but it will be challenging to keep up. Northern pike are very successful at reproducing, and much of the habitat in Mud/Callahan is well-suited to this species.

BLACK CRAPPIE

Black crappie were moderately abundant, but with generally poor size. Some crappie over 9 inches were captured, but crappie over 10 inches are rare.

YELLOW PERCH

Yellow perch were captured at a low rate, but with some nice-sized individuals appearing in the catch.

BLUEGILL

The bluegill population shows a lot of similarities to the crappie population. Bluegill are also moderately abundant in Mud/Callahan, but the bulk of the population is smaller than most anglers are looking for. A few “keeper” size bluegill can still be found. Mud/Callahan has never had a reputation as a high-quality panfish destination, and that status continues today.

LARGEMOUTH BASS

Largemouth bass are another popular species in Mud/Callahan. Largemouth bass in this survey were captured at a moderate rate, but with good size structure. Almost a third of the bass captured were over 15 inches.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden, Evan Sirianni and Scott Horton

Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole