



Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

Fisheries Information Sheet

South Harper Lake, Taylor County, WI

Survey Year 2025

Introduction

South Harper Lake is located 4.5 miles north of Rib Lake. The lake is 80 acres, with a maximum and average depth of 32 feet and 11 feet respectively. It is classified as a complex-cool-clear lake, referring the lake to be clear, cool and has a diverse fishery. Access is available from a public boat launch located along the north shore off Rustic Road 1.

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 20, 2025. The purpose of this was to evaluate size structure and abundance of bass and bluegills. The electrofishing sample surveyed one complete circuit, 1.95 miles, around the entire shoreline collecting all species. The water temperature during this survey was 56.8 degrees Fahrenheit. While bass and bluegills were the primary target species for this survey many other species were captured, such as black crappie, golden shiner, northern pike, rock bass, and yellow bullhead. Comparisons were made with a previous survey in 2015 on South Harper Lake and similar Wisconsin lakes in the same lake class.

Bluegill

There were 76 bluegills captured, and lengths ranged from 1.7 to 8.4 inches with an average of 4.9 inches. The catch rate of the 2025 survey falls just above the 25th percentile for a complex-cool-clear lake. The abundance of bluegill has greatly decreased since the 2015 survey while the size structure has slightly increased.

Table 1. Abundance and size structure of bluegills during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2015.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile ≥ 3 " (stock size)	Quality Size ≥ 6 "	Preferred Size ≥ 8 "
2025	39.0	35.4	22%	3%
2015	135.3	84.3	21%	0%

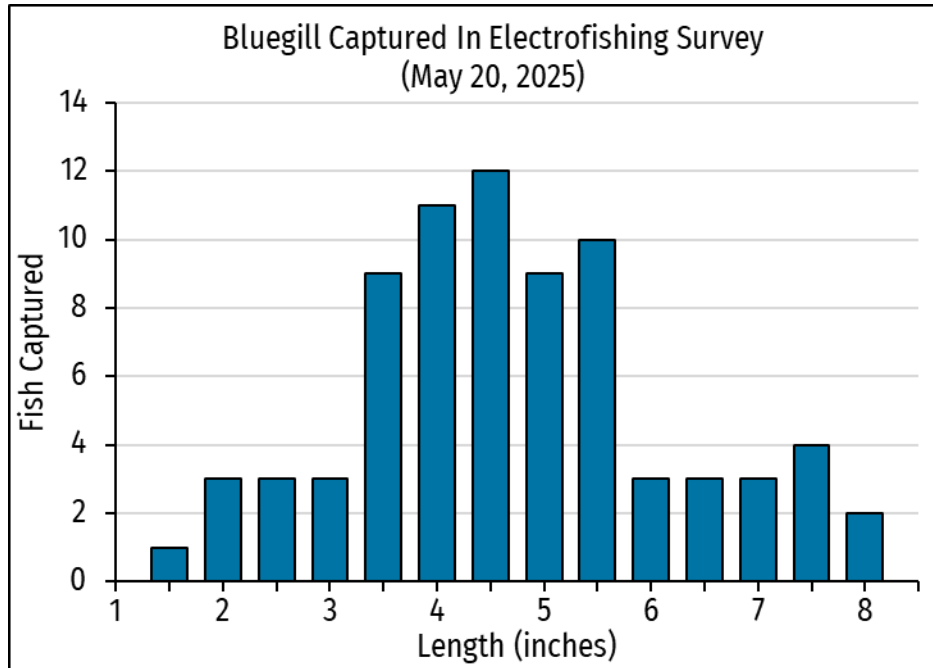


Figure 1. Size histogram of bluegill captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of South Harper Lake in Taylor County, Wisconsin.

Largemouth Bass

There were 25 largemouth bass captured and lengths ranged from 5.2 to 15.0 inches with an average of 11.7 inches. In this sample 45% of the bass were legal size. The catch rate of the 2025 survey falls between the 50th and 75th percentile classification for a complex-cool-clear lake. The abundance of bass has decreased while the size structure has increased.

Table 2. Abundance and size structure of largemouth bass during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2015.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile $\geq 8''$ (stock size)	Quality Size $\geq 12''$	Preferred Size $\geq 15''$
2025	12.8	10.3	75%	5%
2015	39.0	37.4	54%	7%

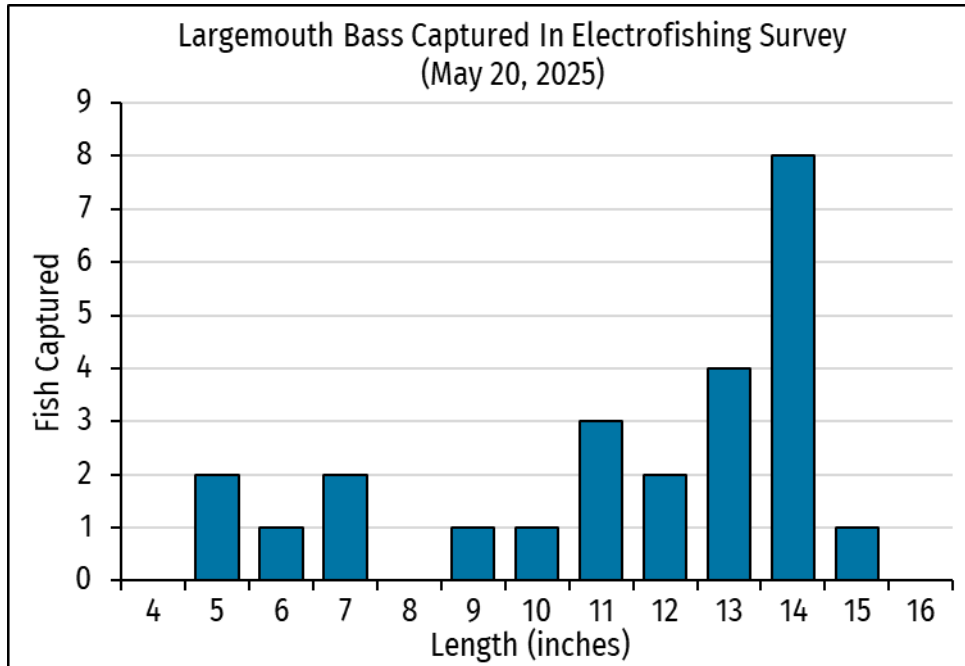


Figure 2. Size histogram of largemouth bass captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of South Harper Lake in Taylor County, Wisconsin.

Pumpkinseed

There were 20 pumpkinseeds captured, and lengths ranged from 4.4 to 8.3 inches with an average of 6.9 inches. The catch rate is between the 50th and 75th percentile classification for a complex-cool-clear lake. The abundance of pumpkinseed has increased since 2015, while the size structure has decreased.

Table 3. Abundance and size structure of pumpkinseed during late spring electrofishing survey in 2025 and 2015.

Survey Year	Number per mile	Number per mile $\geq 3''$ (stock size)	Quality Size $\geq 6''$	Preferred Size $\geq 8''$
2025	10.3	66	45%	0%
2015	5.9	5.9	100%	33%

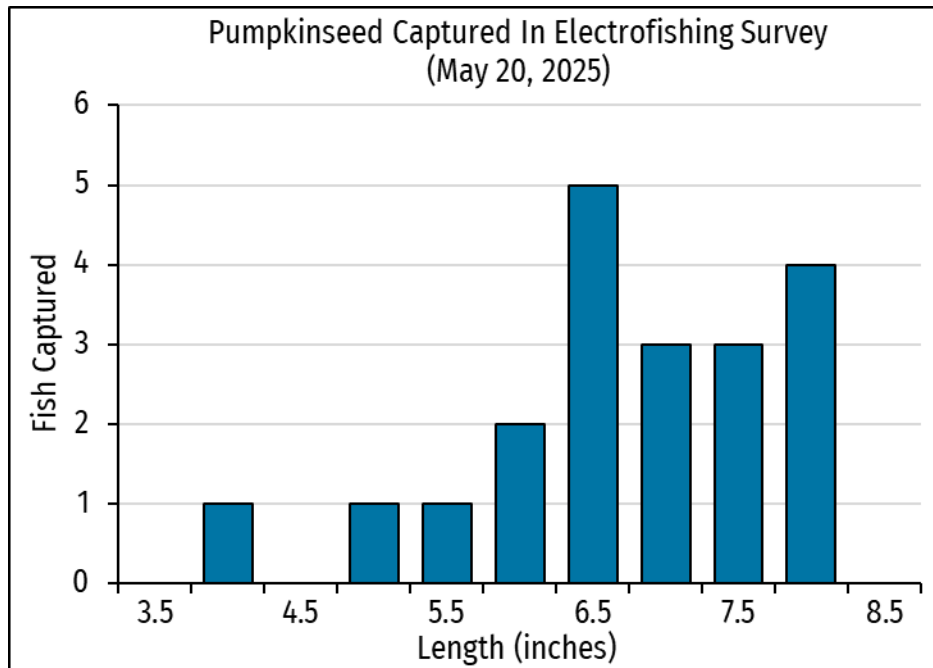


Figure 3. Size histogram of pumpkinseed captured during a spring 2025 electrofishing survey of South Harper Lake in Taylor County, Wisconsin.

OTHER SPECIES

There were nine black crappie captured and lengths ranged from 8.4 to 10.7 inches. There were six northern pike captured and lengths ranged from 8.9 to 25.0 inches. Other species captured included golden shiner, rock bass and yellow bullhead.

Summary

South Harper Lake provides a nice bass and panfish fishery. Bluegill abundance is considered moderate. The abundance of largemouth bass is moderate to high with a large percentage of fish in the quality size. South Harper is scheduled for an early spring electrofishing survey in 2034 according to our lake rotation schedule.

Table 4. General fishing regulations for South Harper Lake, in Taylor 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 st . (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	Third Saturday in June 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 South Harper Lake, Taylor County and all Wisconsin lakes can be found online at [Fishing Regulations | Fishing Wisconsin | Wisconsin DNR](#)

For questions about fisheries management activities on South Harper Lake, contact:

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