



Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

Fisheries Information Sheet

Cranberry Lake, Vilas County, 2025

Waterbody Information

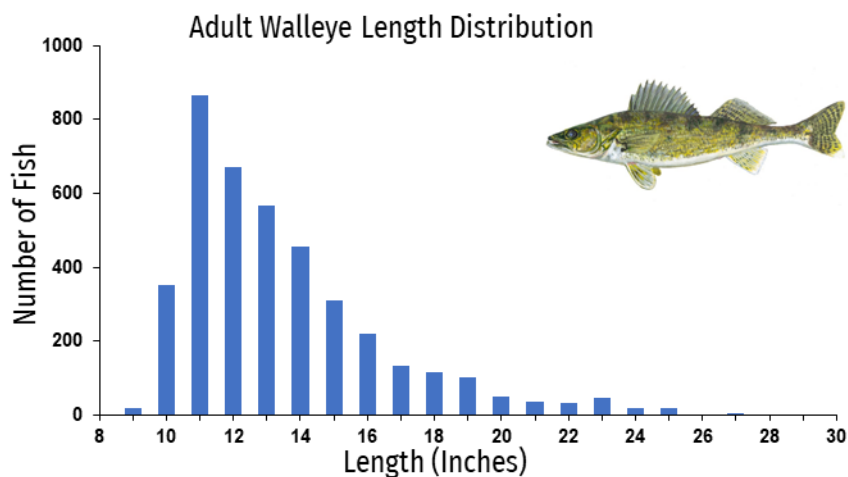
Cranberry Lake is a 956-acre drainage lake with 9.4 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 23 feet. Cranberry Lake is classified as a complex-cool-dark system. Bottom substrates are predominantly sand and gravel with some areas of muck. Cranberry Lake is part of the 3,565-acre Eagle River Chain (Eagle Chain) of 10 lakes. The Eagle Chain's walleye population is sustained through natural reproduction, while the muskellunge population is produced from a combination of stocking and natural reproduction.

Survey Information

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducted netting and electrofishing surveys of Cranberry Lake targeting adult walleye (April 21 – 26), adult muskellunge (April 27 – May 1), adult bass and panfish (May 20). Other species reported here weren't specifically targeted during the surveys, but the catch provides some insight into their abundance and length distribution.

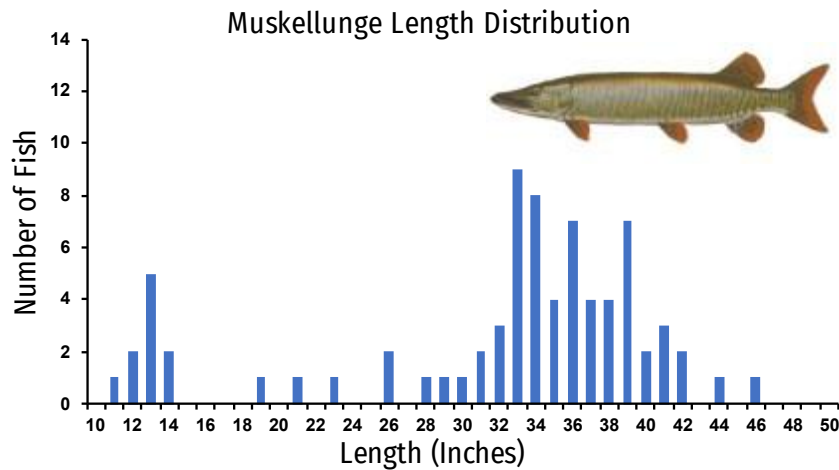
Walleye

Targeted survey efforts captured 1,516 adult walleye (sexually mature or ≥ 15 inches). Mark-recapture procedures estimated 4,013 (4.2/acre) adult walleye in Cranberry Lake. An estimated 27% of adult walleye were ≥ 15 inches, and the largest captured was a 27.3-inch female. The accompanying bar chart shows the estimated adult walleye length distribution with fish ranging from 9 to 27 inches and a peak occurring at 11 inches.



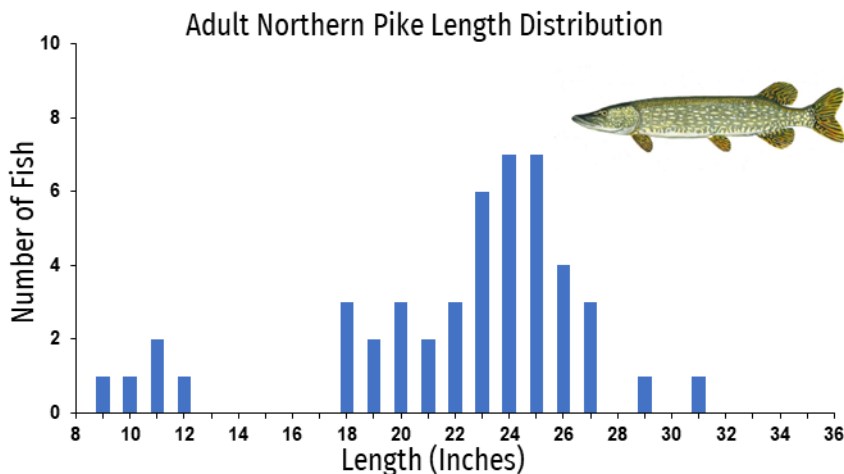
Muskellunge

During the surveys, 62 adult (sexually mature or ≥ 30 inches) and 13 juvenile muskellunge were captured at a rate of 2.5 adults per net night of targeted effort, placing it above the 95th percentile for its lake class. Of the adults captured, 15% were ≥ 40 inches, and the largest was a 46.8-inch female. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed muskellunge length distribution with fish ranging from 11 to 46 inches and a peak occurring at 33 inches.



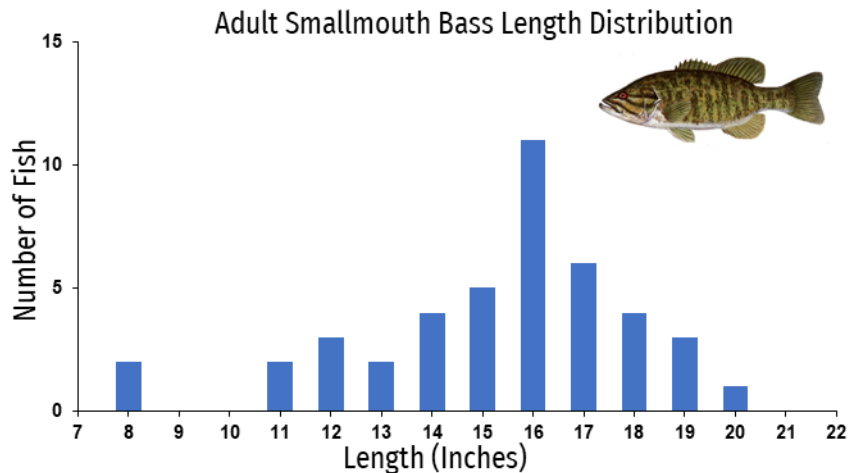
Northern Pike

Survey efforts captured 47 adult (sexually mature or ≥ 12 inches) northern pike and one juvenile at a rate of 0.7 adults per net night, placing it above the 10th percentile for its lake class. An estimated 71% of adult northern pike were ≥ 21 inches, and the largest was a 31.5-inch female. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed northern pike length distribution with fish ranging from 9 to 31 inches and peaks occurring at 24 and 25 inches.



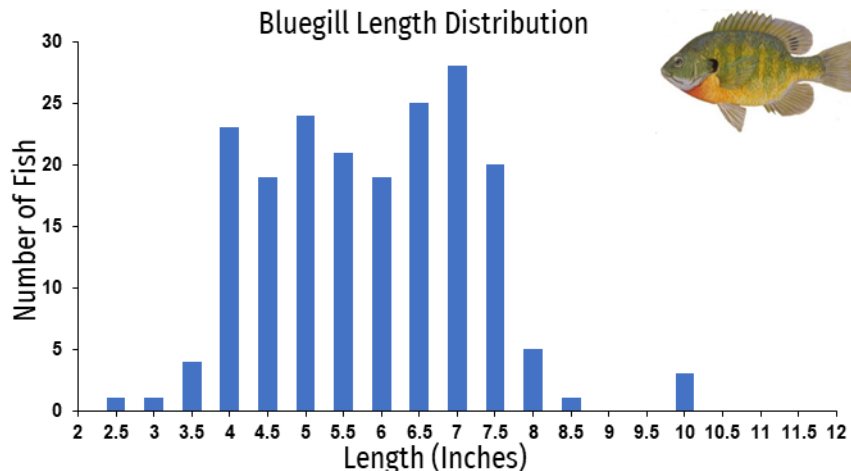
Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass

A total of 43 adult (≥ 8 inches) smallmouth bass were captured, 79% were ≥ 14 inches, and the largest was 20.7 inches. A targeted electrofishing survey caught adult smallmouth bass at a rate of 3.7 per mile of shoreline, placing it slightly above the 75th percentile for its lake class. A total of 4 adult (≥ 8 inches) largemouth bass were also captured, 75% were ≥ 14 inches, and the largest was 15.6 inches. A targeted electrofishing survey caught adult largemouth bass at a rate of 0.2 per mile of shoreline, placing it below the 5th percentile for its lake class. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed adult smallmouth bass length distribution with fish ranging from 8 to 20 inches and a peak occurring at 16 inches.



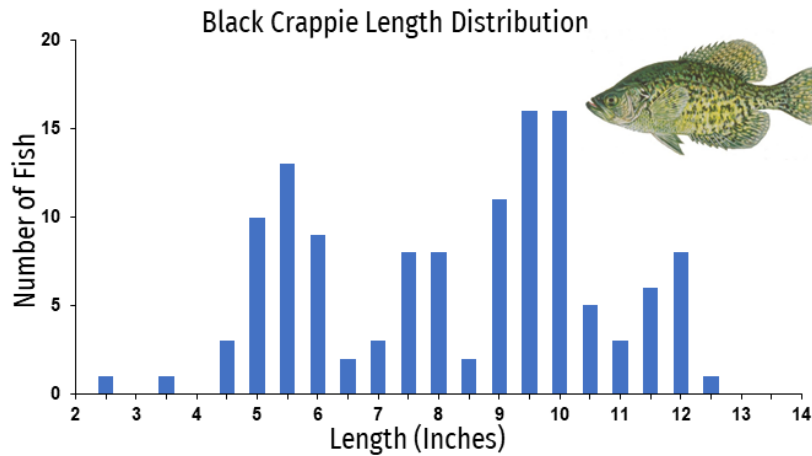
Bluegill

A total of 391 bluegill (including bluegill-pumpkinseed hybrids) were captured during the surveys. Of 194 bluegill measured, the average length was 6.0 inches, 29% were ≥ 7 inches, and the largest was 10.4 inches. A targeted electrofishing survey captured bluegill at a rate of 50.7 fish per mile, placing it slightly above the 25th percentile for its lake class. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed bluegill length distribution with fish ranging from 2.5 to 10 inches and a peak occurring at 7 inches.



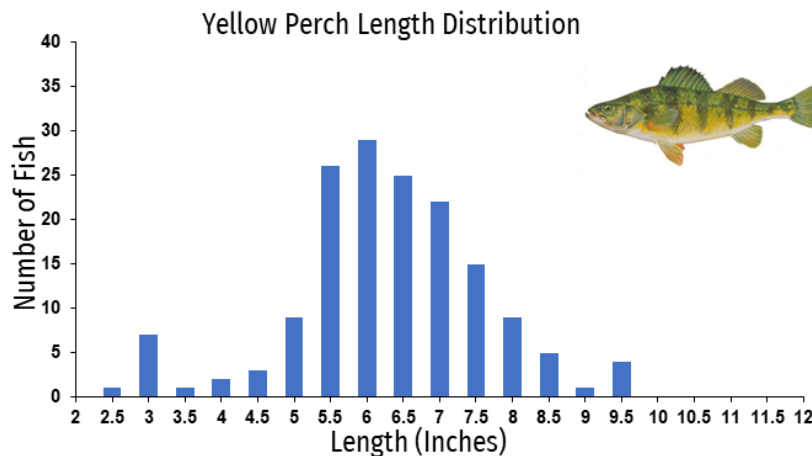
Black Crappie

A total of 418 black crappie were captured at a rate of 9.6 fish per night, placing it above the 50th percentile for its lake class. Of 126 black crappie measured, the average length was 8.5 inches, 31% were ≥ 10 inches, and the largest was 12.7 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed black crappie length distribution with fish ranging from 2.5 to 12.5 inches and peak occurring at 10 inches.



Yellow perch

A total of 5,792 yellow perch were captured at a rate of 137 fish per night, placing it above the 90th percentile for its lake class. Of 159 yellow perch measured, the average length was 6.5 inches, 12% were ≥ 8 inches, and the largest was 9.7 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed yellow perch length distribution with fish ranging from 2.5 to 9.5 inches and a peak occurring at 6 inches.



Other Species

Other species not directly targeted and/or captured in low abundances were black bullhead, bluntnose minnow, burbot, common shiner, golden shiner, mimic shiner, pumpkinseed, rock bass, white crappie, white sucker and yellow bullhead.

Table 1. General fishing regulations for the Eagle Chain of Lakes, Vilas County, WI.

Species	Season Dates	Daily Bag Limit	Size Limit
Largemouth bass (LMB)	1 st Saturday in May – 1 st Sunday in March	5 in total with SMB	14 inches
Smallmouth bass (SMB)	3 rd Saturday in June – 1 st Sunday in March	5 in total with LMB	14 inches
Northern pike	1 st Saturday in May – 1 st Sunday in March	5	None
Muskellunge	Sat of Memorial weekend – Dec 31 (open water only)	1	40 inches
Walleye	1 st Saturday in May – 1 st Sunday in March	3 in total	No minimum; fish from 14 to 18 inches may not be kept; only one over 18 inches.
Bluegill, pumpkin- seed, crappie and yellow perch	Open all year	25 in total	None

Contact Information

For questions regarding fisheries management activities on the Eagle Chain, contact Vilas County Fisheries Biologist Eric Wegleitner. For questions about this report, contact Treaty Fisheries Biologist Lawrence Eslinger.

This report was created by Fisheries Biologist Mark Love.

Fish illustrations by Virgil Beck.

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