



Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

Fisheries Information Sheet

Otter Lake, Vilas County, 2025

Waterbody Information

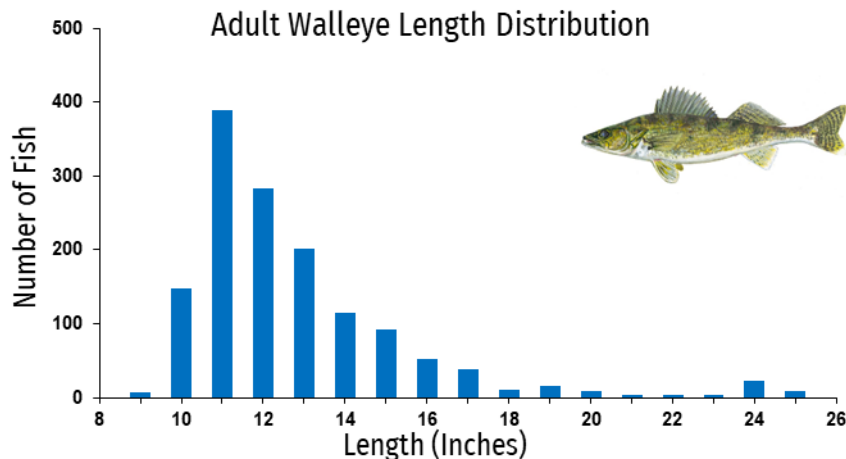
Otter Lake is a 196-acre drainage lake with 3.1 miles of shoreline, a maximum depth of 30 feet. Otter Lake is classified as a complex-riverine system. Bottom substrates are predominately sand and muck with some gravel and rock. Otter Lake is part of the 3,565-acre Eagle River Chain (Eagle Chain) of 10 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 Otter Lake targeting adult walleye (April 22 – 25) and adult muskellunge (April 26 – May 2). Other species reported here weren't specifically targeted during the surveys, but the catch provides some insight into their abundance and length distribution.

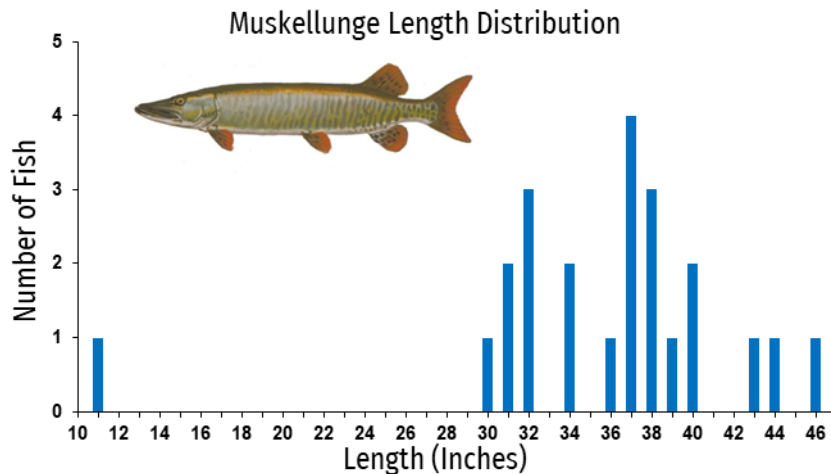
Walleye

Targeted survey efforts captured 424 adult walleye (sexually mature or ≥ 15 inches). Mark-recapture procedures estimated 1,410 (7.2/acre) adult walleye in Otter Lake. An estimated 19% of adult walleye were ≥ 15 inches, and the largest captured was a 25.2-inch female. The accompanying bar chart shows the estimated adult walleye length distribution with fish ranging from 9 to 25 inches and a peak occurring at 11 inches.



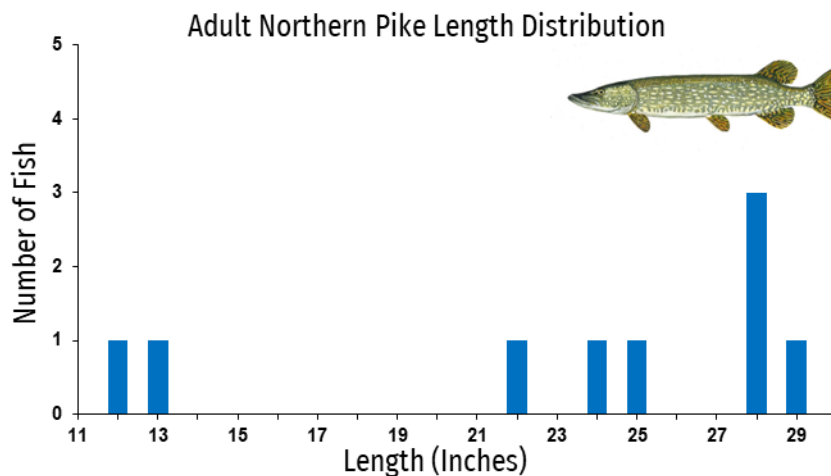
Muskellunge

During the surveys, 23 adult (sexually mature or ≥ 30 inches) and 1 juvenile muskellunge were captured. Adult muskellunge were caught at a rate of 1.5 per net night of targeted effort, placing it above the 95th percentile for its lake class. Of the adults captured, 22% were ≥ 40 inches, and the largest was a 46.4-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 37 inches.



Northern Pike

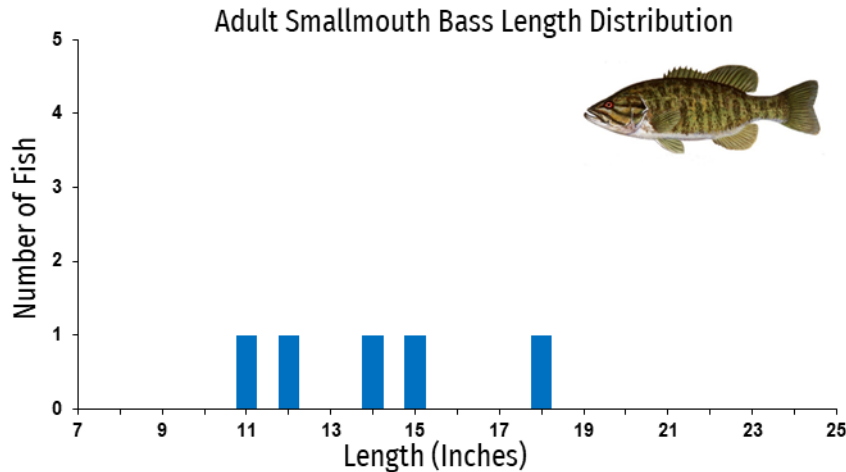
Survey efforts captured 9 adult (sexually mature or ≥ 12 inches) northern pike at a rate of 0.5 per net night, placing it above the 10th percentile for its lake class. Of the adults captured, 78% were ≥ 21 inches and the largest was a 29.2-inch female. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed northern pike length distribution with fish ranging from 12 to 29 inches and a peak at 28 inches.



Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass

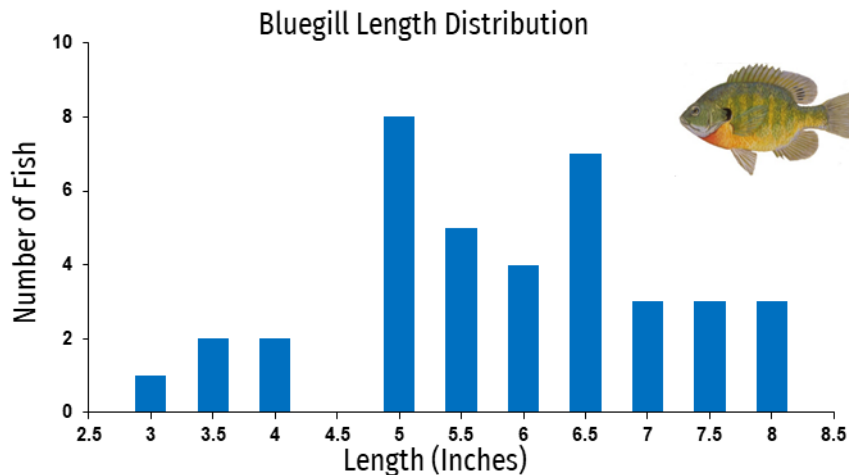
A total of 5 adult (≥ 8 inches) smallmouth bass were captured, 60% were ≥ 14 inches, and the largest was 18.1 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed adult smallmouth bass length distribution with fish ranging from 11 to 18 inches.

Additionally, one 14.5-inch largemouth bass was captured.



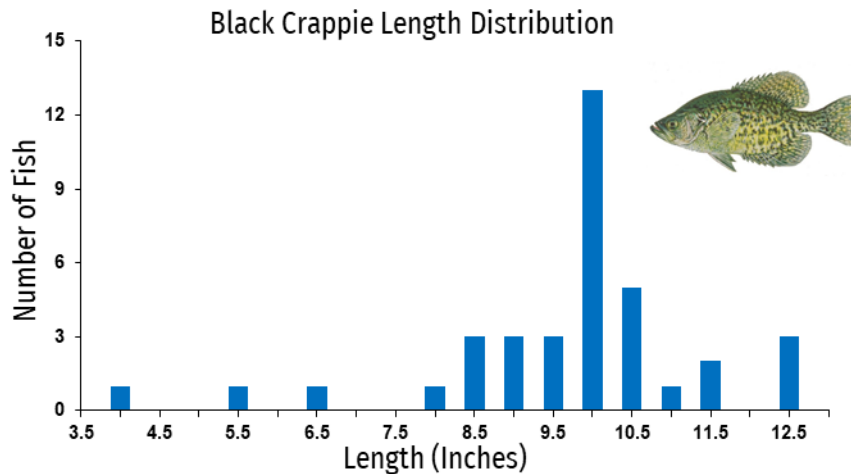
Bluegill

A total of 52 bluegill (including bluegill-pumpkinseed hybrids) were captured. Of 38 bluegill measured, the average length was 6.0 inches, 24% were ≥ 7 inches and the largest was 8.4 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed bluegill length distribution with fish ranging from 3 to 8 inches and a peak occurring at 5 inches.



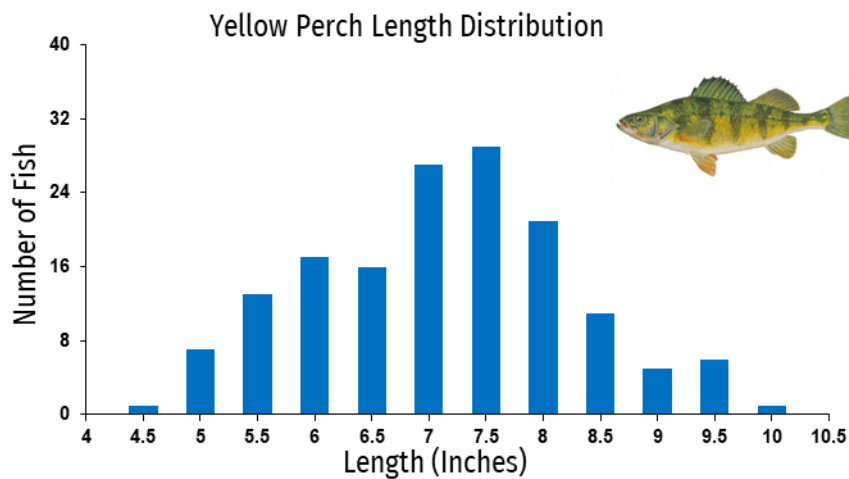
Black Crappie

A total of 63 black crappie were captured at a rate of 3.2 fish per net night, placing it slightly above the 25th percentile for its lake class. Of 37 black crappie measured, the average length was 9.9 inches, 65% were ≥ 10 inches and the largest was 12.6 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed black crappie length distribution with fish ranging from 4 to 12.5 inches and a peak occurring at 10 inches.



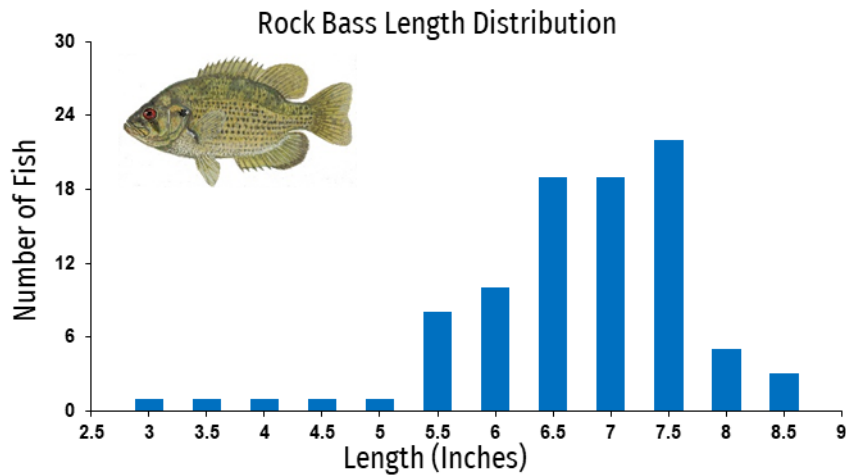
Yellow perch

A total of 2,917 yellow perch were captured at a rate of 145.9 fish per net night, placing it above the 95th percentile for its lake class. Of 154 yellow perch measured, the average length was 7.3 inches, 29% were ≥ 8 inches and the largest was 10.3 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed yellow perch length distribution with fish ranging from 4.5 to 10 inches and a peak occurring at 7.5 inches.



Rock bass

A total of 213 rock bass were captured. Of 91 rock bass measured, the average length was 6.9 inches, 9% were ≥ 8 inches and the largest was 8.8 inches. The accompanying bar chart shows the observed rock bass length distribution with fish ranging from 3 to 8.5 inches and a peak occurring at 7.5 inches.



Other Species

Other species not directly targeted and/or captured in low abundance were burbot, golden shiner and pumpkinseed.

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
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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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