

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# CONNORS LAKE

2021 – 2022 CREEL SURVEY REPORT

SAWYER COUNTY



Treaty Fisheries Publication



Created by  
Matthew Kufahl  
DNR Treaty Fisheries Technician



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## INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regularly conducts fishery surveys on lakes and reservoirs to gather information on species composition, population size, reproductive success, size/age distribution, and growth rates. The information from the netting and electrofishing surveys helps the DNR determine the best management practices for that body of water. Another important aspect of a fishery is the amount of harvest that is occurring on the lake. This information is collected by creel census or creel survey.

On lakes in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin, harvest of fish is divided between sport anglers and the six Ojibwe tribal bands. The six Ojibwe tribal bands harvest fish under rights governed by federal treaties of 1837 and 1842. Most tribal fish harvest is done by spearing during a short period of time in the spring. All speared fish are individually counted by tribal creel clerks, allowing for a complete “census” of the tribal fish harvest in the spring.

We also measure the sport angler harvest to assess its impact on the fishery. It would be highly impractical and very costly to conduct a complete census of every angler who fishes on a lake, a creel survey is conducted to estimate the amount of fish harvested by sports anglers.

A creel survey is an assessment tool used to sample the fishing activities of anglers on a body of water to make estimates of harvest and other fishery parameters. Creel survey clerks work on randomly-selected days and shifts, forty hours per week. The survey is conducted during daylight hours throughout the open season for gamefish from the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March. Creel surveys are not conducted in November when fishing effort is low and ice conditions are often unsafe.

A creel survey is a sampling tool used to measure the fishing activities of the sport

anglers and to estimate the amount of fish harvested on a body of water. Creel surveys are designed to have a creel clerk on a lake, work random shifts, and forty hours each week throughout the fishing season. Each month these shifts cover a sample of all the daylight hours. Creel clerks travel their lakes using a boat, snowmobile or vehicle to count and to interview anglers.

The information collected from anglers during the interview includes the species of fish being targeted, catch and harvest, lengths of harvested fish, and hours of fishing effort. Typically, only anglers that have completed their fishing trip are interviewed because it provides the most accurate information, and it avoids the need to disturb anglers while they are fishing.

You may have encountered one of the DNR creel clerks on a recent fishing trip. The survey only takes a moment of your time, and we appreciate your cooperation during an interview. The information collected gives the DNR valuable knowledge required for management of the fishery.

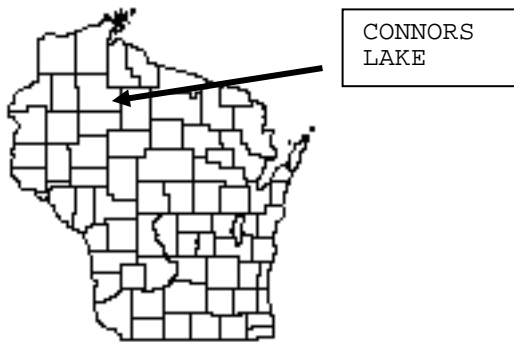
The data collected during the survey is processed by a computer program and summarized by month to calculate estimates of the total fishing pressure, fishing effort directed at each species, catch and harvest rates, and the number of fish caught and harvested.

This creel survey report will provide you with four types of estimated information for this body of water:

1. Overall fishing pressure
2. Fishing effort directed at each species
3. Catch and harvest rates
4. Numbers of fish caught and harvested.

Also included in this report are physical information about the lake, discussion of results of this survey and detailed summaries by species.

## GENERAL LAKE INFORMATION



### LOCATION

Connors Lake is located in southeast Sawyer County.

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Connors Lake is a 429-acre drainage lake with a maximum depth of 82 feet.

### SEASONS SURVEYED

The period referred to in this report as the 2021-22 fishing season ran from May 1, 2021 through March 6, 2022. The open-water creel survey ran from May 1 through Oct. 31, 2021, and the ice fishing creel survey ran from Dec. 1, 2021 through March 6, 2022.

### FISHING REGULATIONS

The following seasons, daily bag limits and length limits were in place on Connors Lake during the 2021-22 fishing season:

SPECIES	SEASON	BAG LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth Bass	5/ 1-3/ 6	5	14"
	C&R all other times of year		
Smallmouth Bass	6/ 19-3/ 6	5	14"
	C&R all other times of year		
Musky	5/ 29-12/ 31	1	40"
	On open water only		
Northern Pike	5/ 1-3/ 6	5	None
Walleye	5/ 1-3/ 6	3	15"
	20"-24" Protected Slot, 1>24"		
Panfish	Open all year	25(10)	None
Rock Bass	Open all year	None	None

## SPECIES CATCH AND HARVEST INFORMATION

Summaries of angling effort, catch and harvest information for each species are in Table 1 and Figures 1-11, along with a comparison of these statistics with the previous creel survey in Table 2. Information about species with fishing seasons extending beyond March 7 should be considered minimum estimates. Each species page has up to five graphs depicting the following:

- DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT**  
The estimated number of hours during each month that anglers spent fishing for a species.
- TOTAL CATCH AND HARVEST**  
The estimated number of fish of the indicated species caught or harvested by all anglers, regardless of targeted species.
- SPECIFIC CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**  
The estimated number of hours it takes an angler to catch or harvest a fish of the indicated species. Only information from anglers who were specifically targeting that species is reported.
- LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH**  
All fish of a species that were measured by the clerk during the entire creel survey season.
- LARGEST AND AVERAGE LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH**  
The largest and average (mean) length of a species of fish harvested. Only fish measured by the creel survey clerk are reported.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this survey was possible because of the efforts of the following treaty assessment staff: Gene Hatzenbeler, Todd Brecka, Misty Rood, Bill Sobaski and Chance Brown. We would especially like to recognize the efforts of our creel clerks Donna Sorensen (summer) and Christian Dahlquist (winter) who collected the angler interviews.

The department would like to thank Ron and Mary Guarascio. They generously allowed the department to keep a boat at their property during this survey.

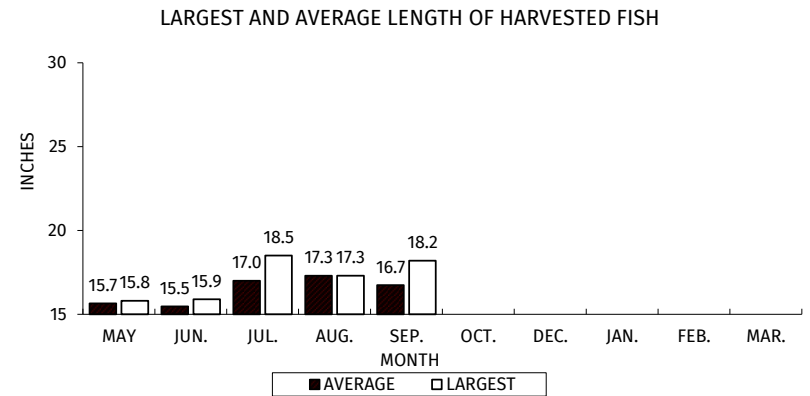
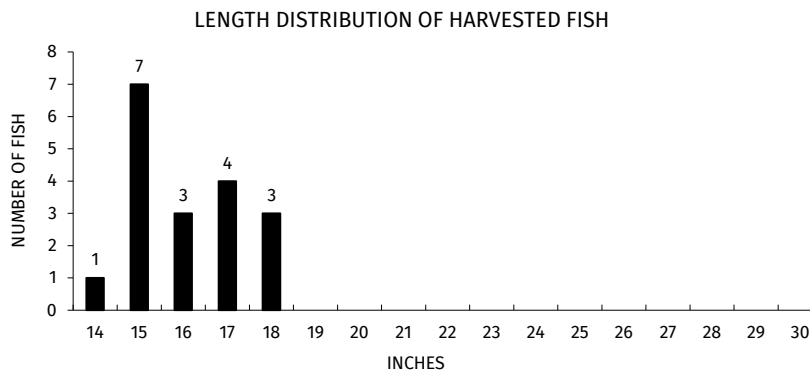
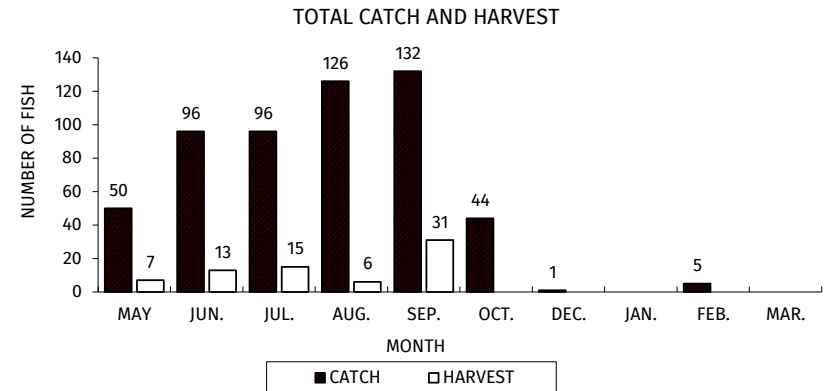
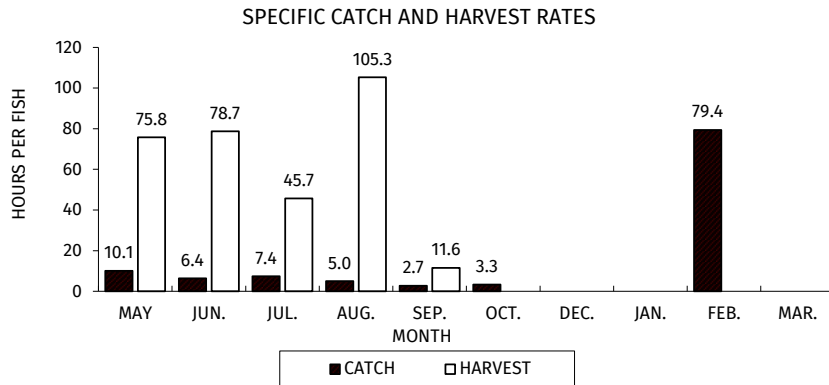
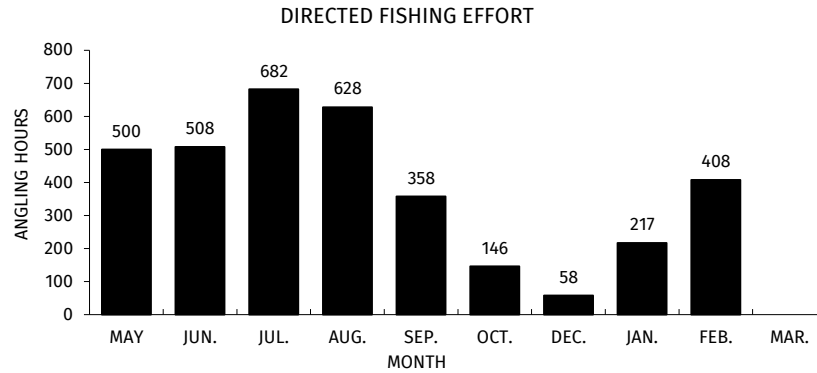
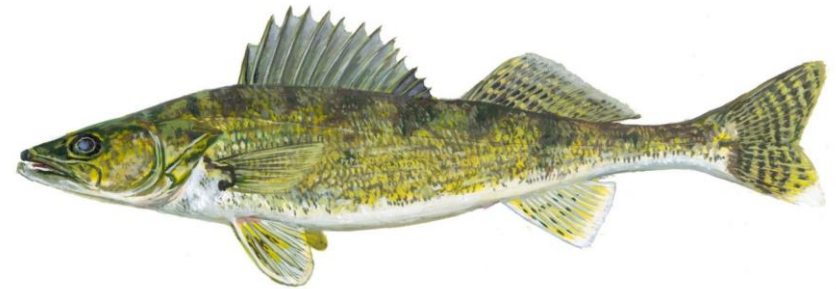
We would also like to thank all the anglers who took the time to offer information about their fishing trip to the survey clerk. Without your cooperation this survey would not have been possible.

~~Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes can be obtained from the treaty fisheries biologist in Spooner or WDNR webpage.~~

Questions about the report can be directed to  
Gene Hatzenbeler  
WDNR Spooner Office  
810 W. Maple Street  
Spooner, WI 54801  
Phone: (715)416-5012  
Email: [Gene.Hatzenbeler@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Gene.Hatzenbeler@Wisconsin.gov)

Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes, can be obtained from the DNR Spooner Service Center or online at:  
<http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/north/trtycrlsrvys.html>

# WALLEYE



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Figure 1. Walleye sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



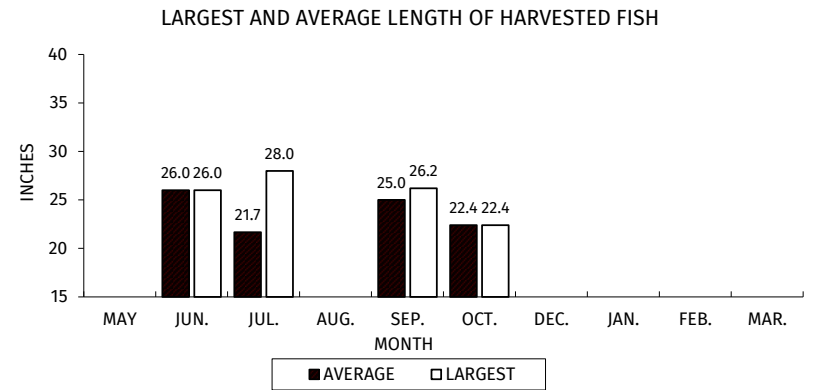
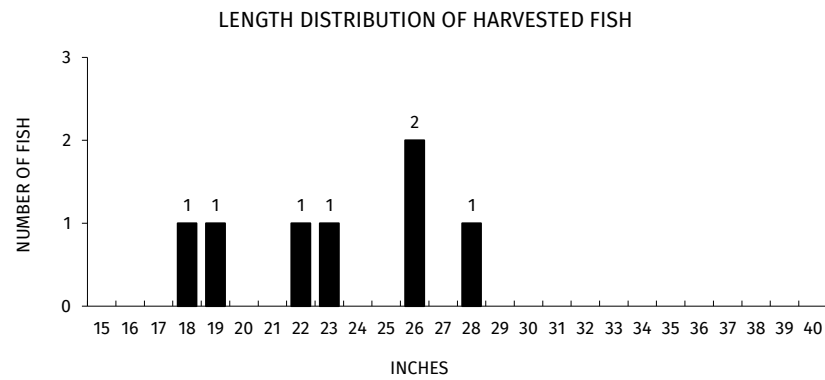
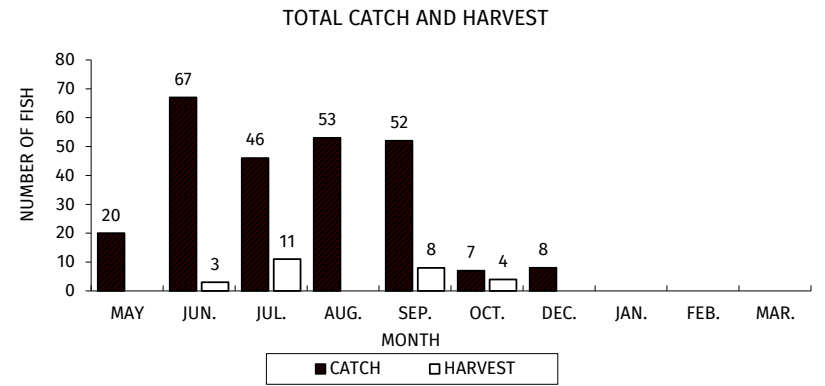
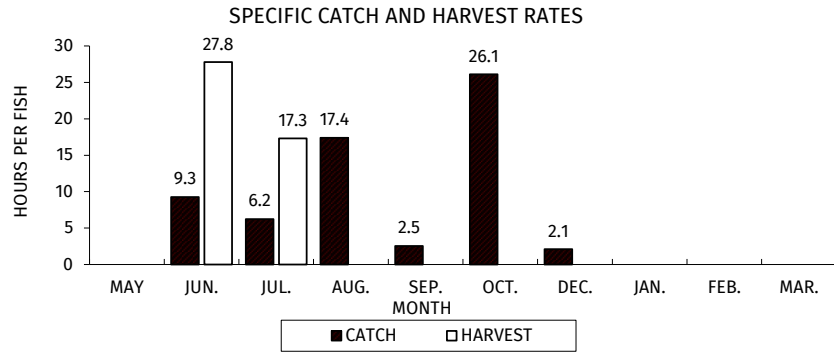
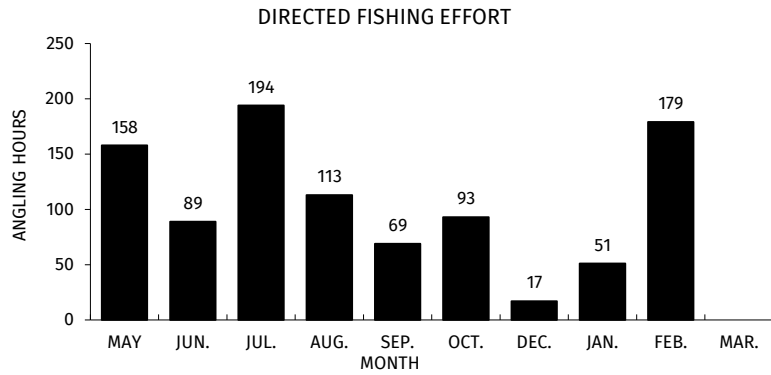
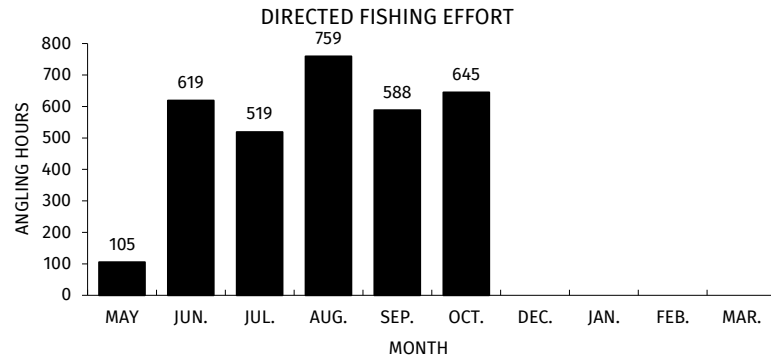


Figure 2. Northern Pike sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.





## MUSKELLUNGE

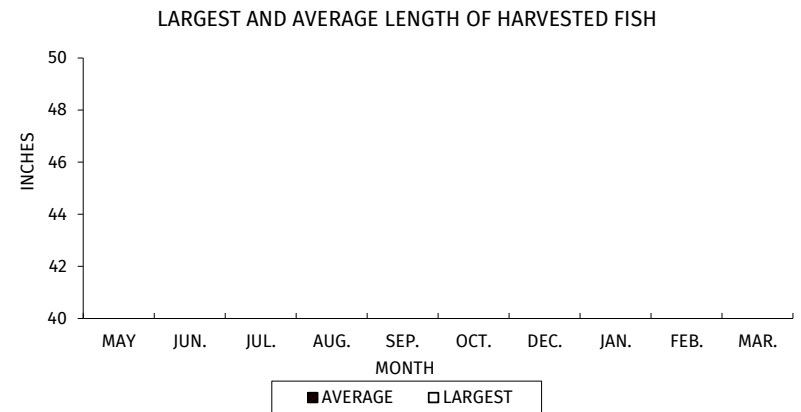
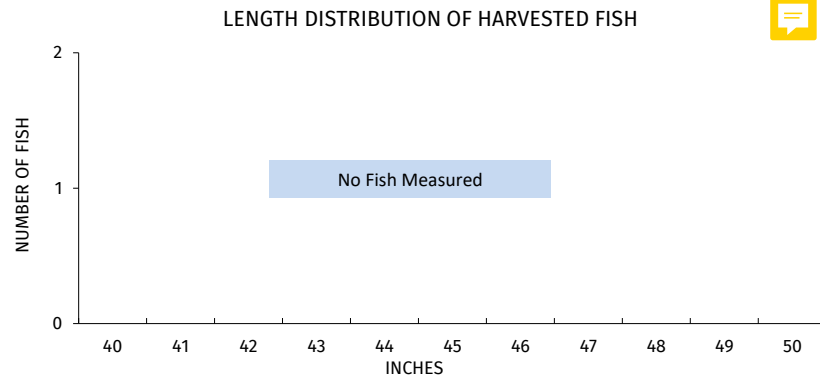
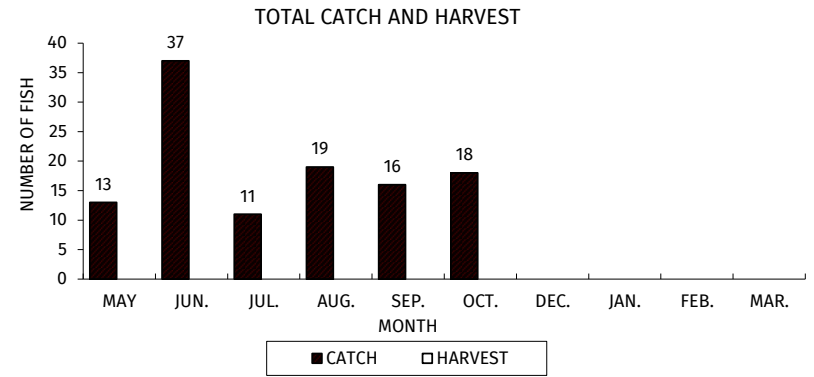
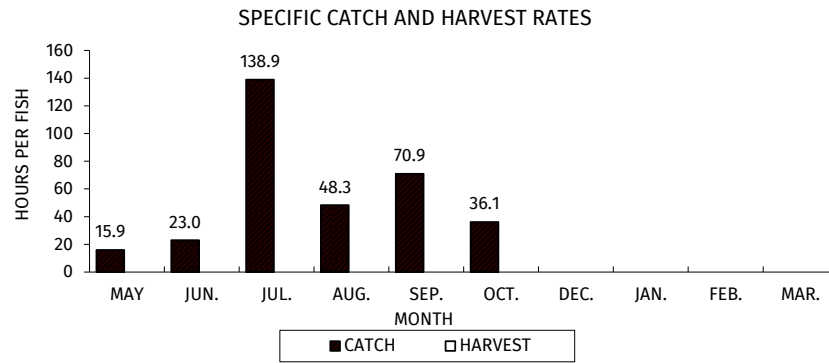
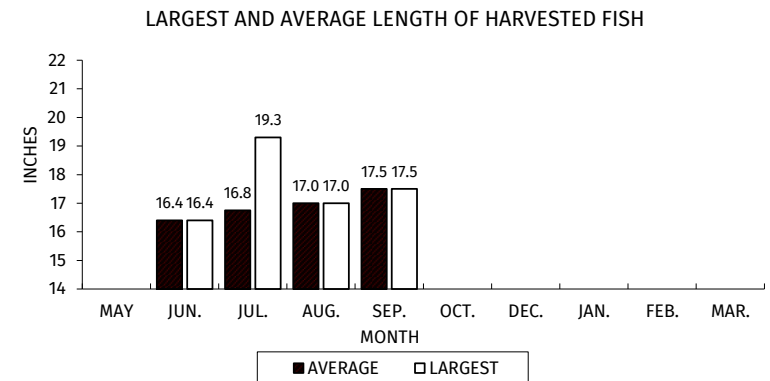
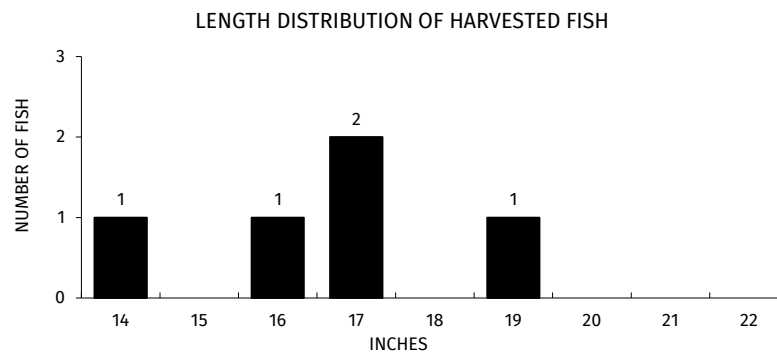
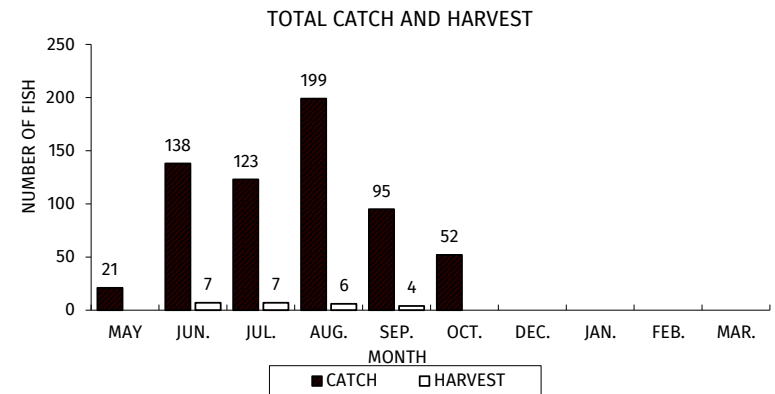
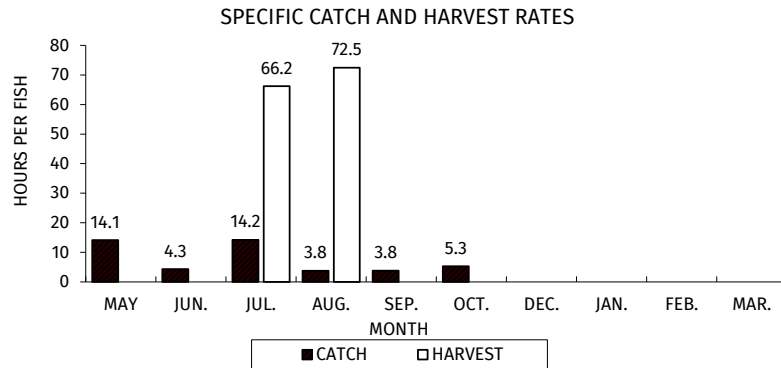
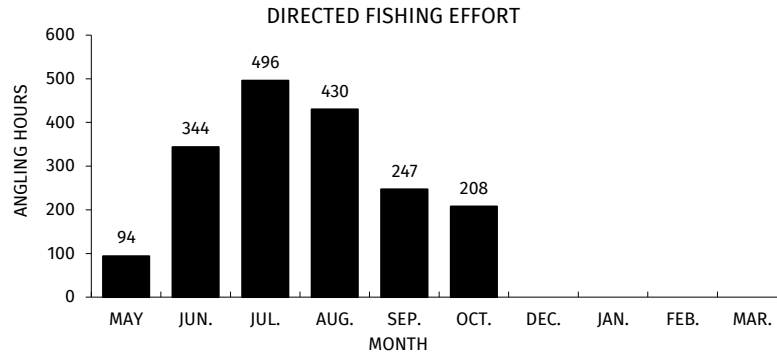


Figure 3. Muskellunge sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.

# SMALLMOUTH BASS

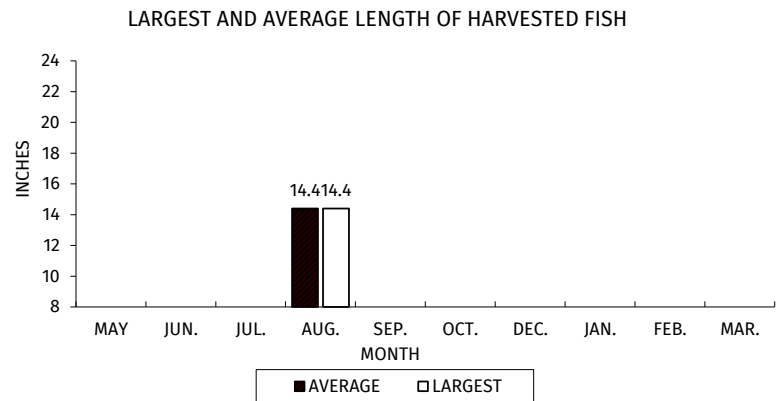
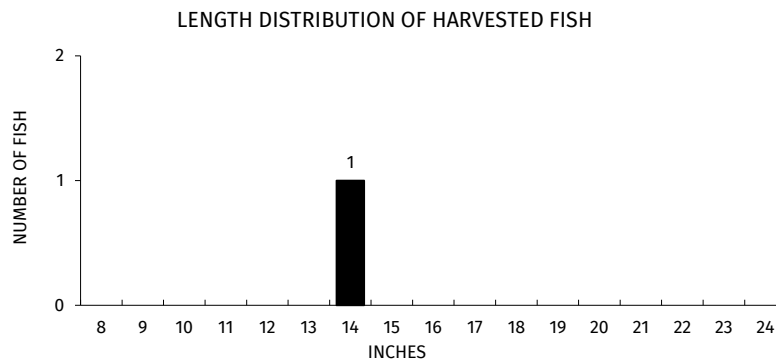
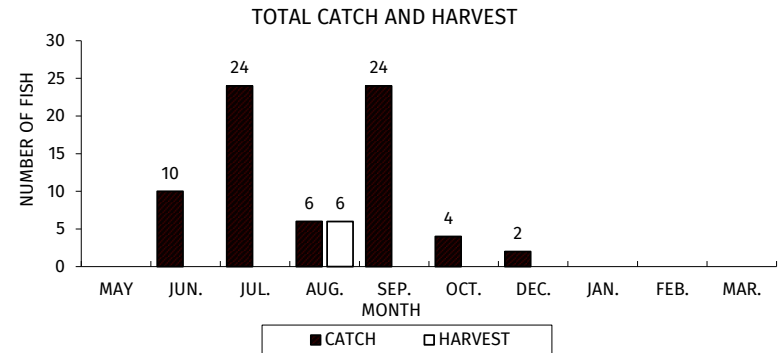
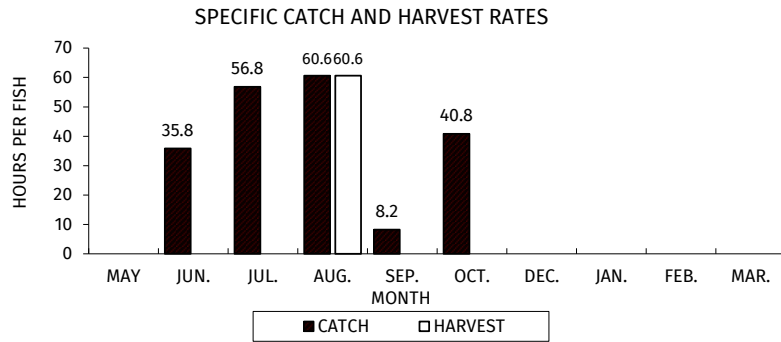
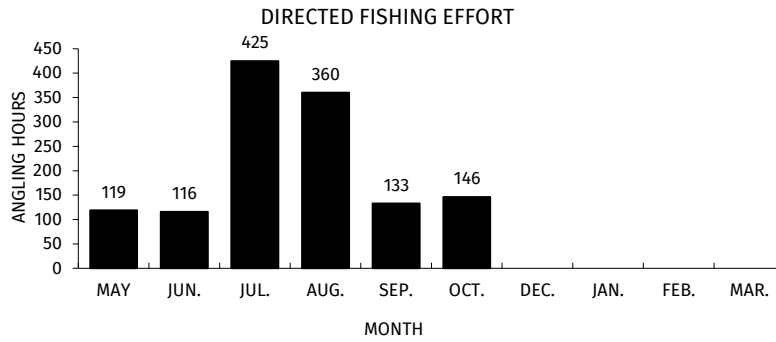
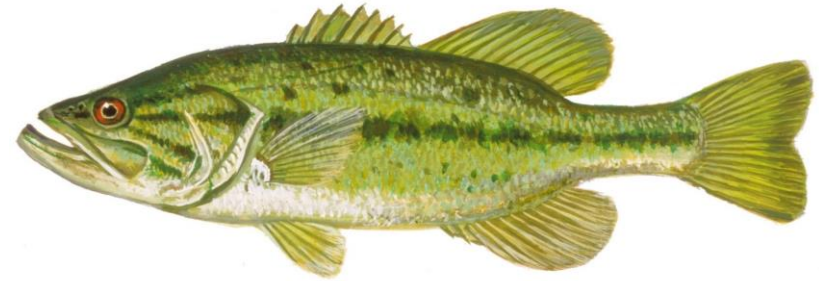


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Figure 4. Smallmouth Bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



# LARGEMOUTH BASS

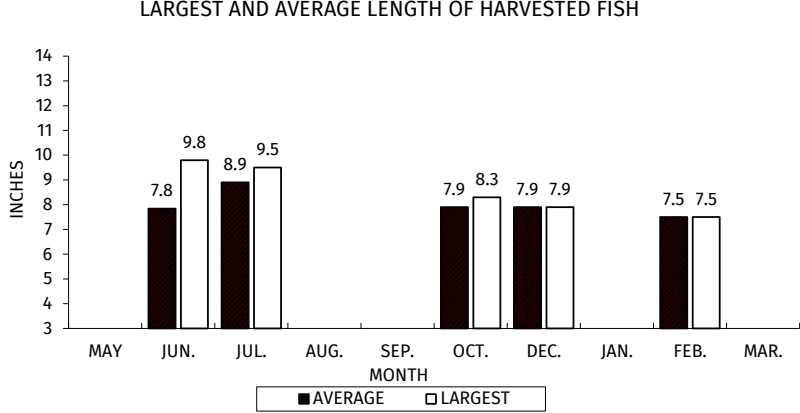
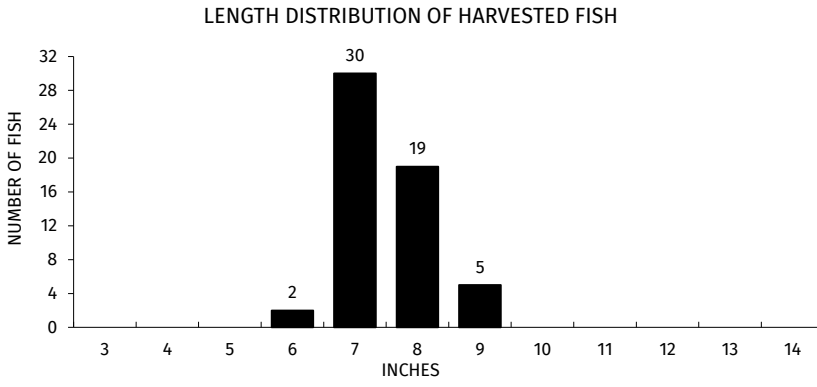
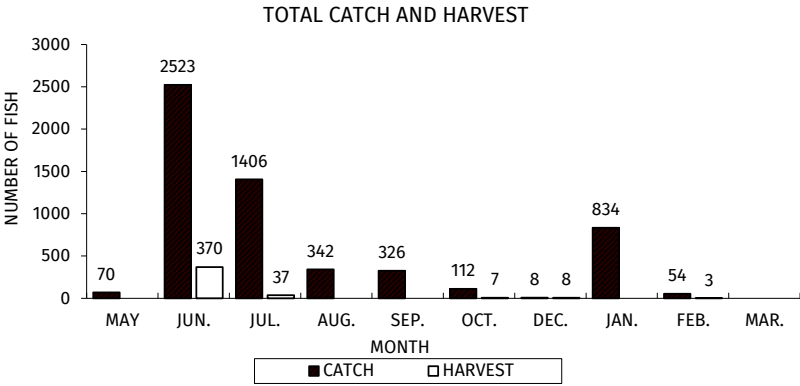
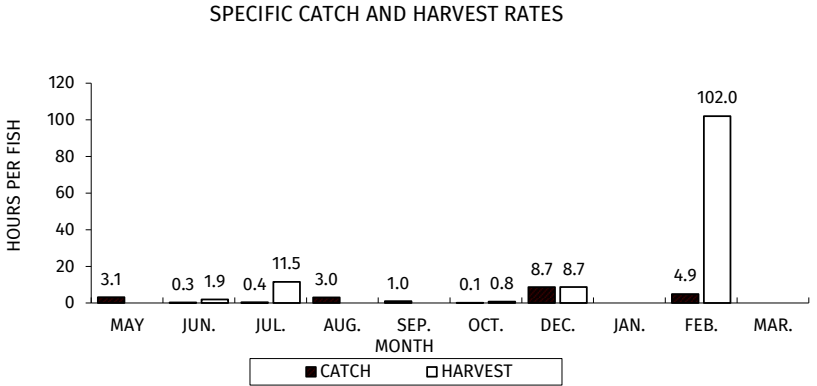
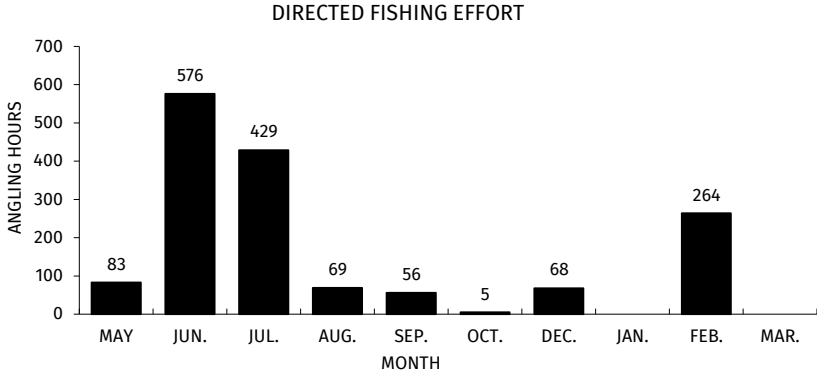


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Figure 5. Largemouth Bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



# YELLOW PERCH



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Figure 6. Yellow Perch sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



# BLUEGILL

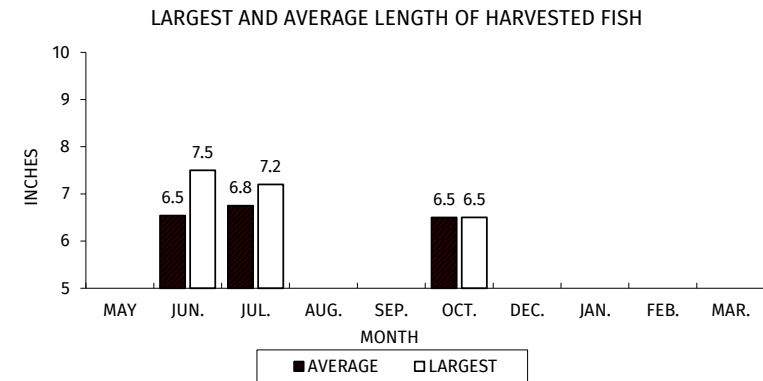
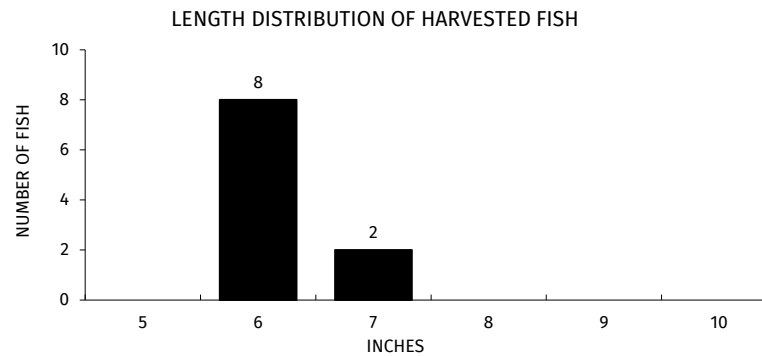
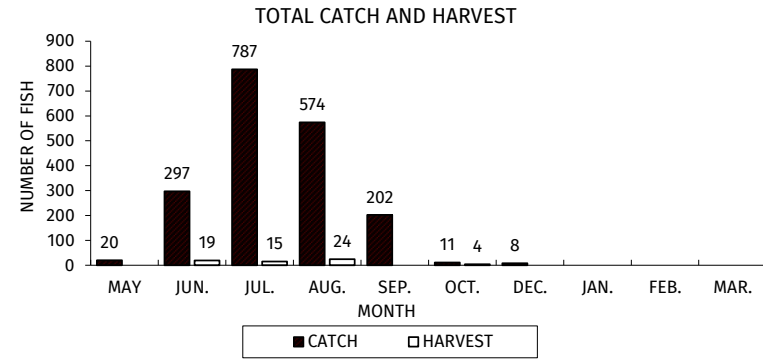
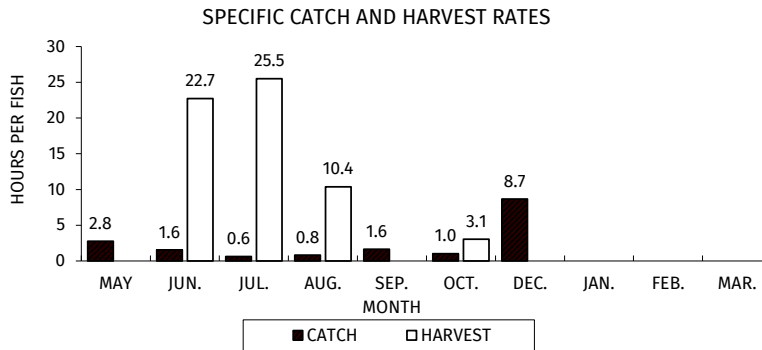
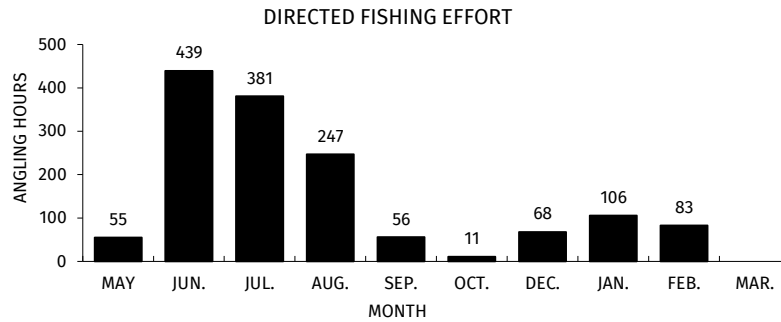


Figure 7. Bluegill sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



# BLACK CRAPPIE

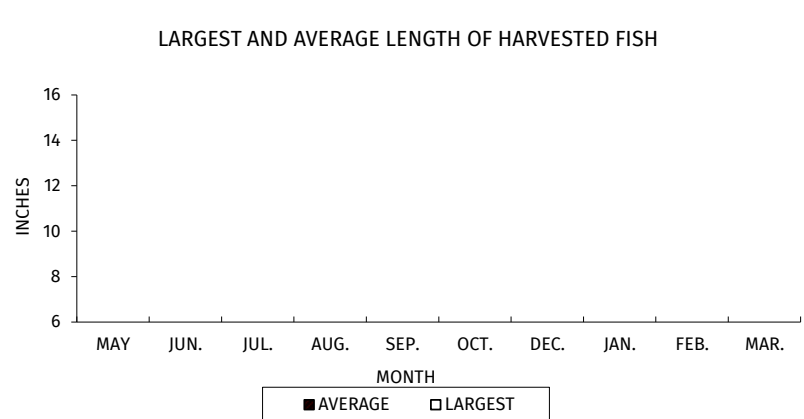
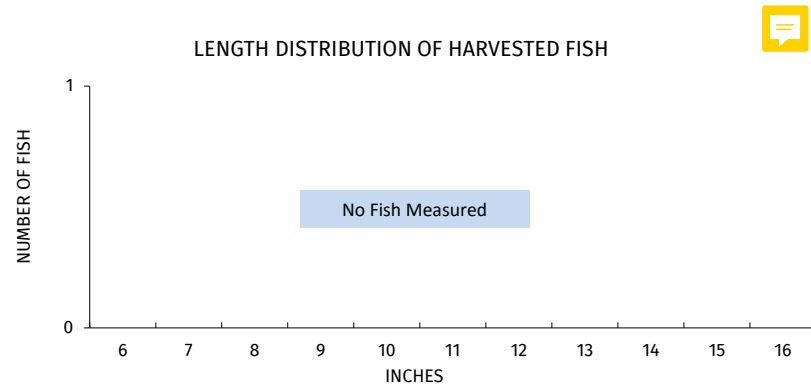
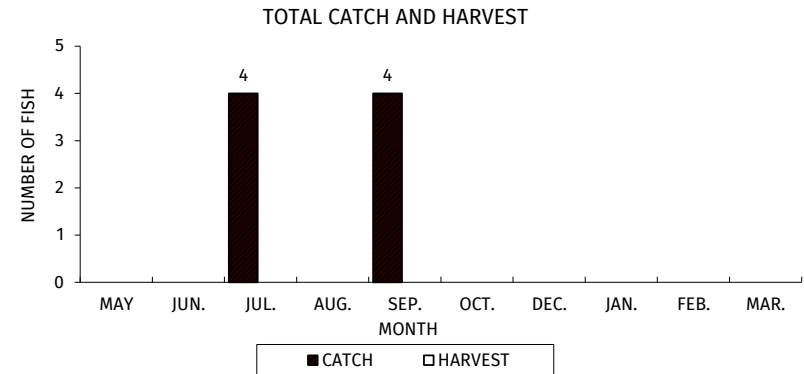
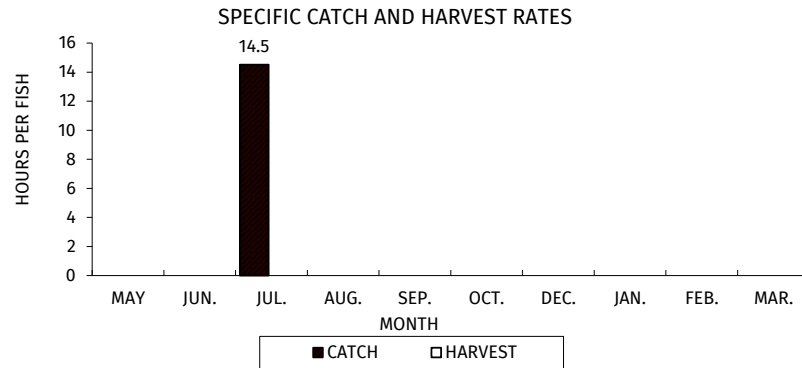
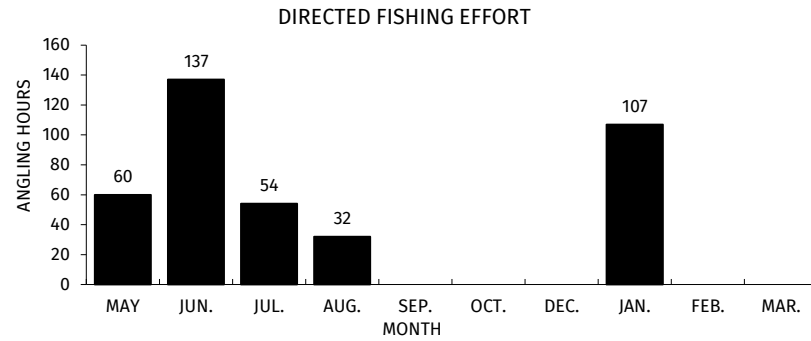
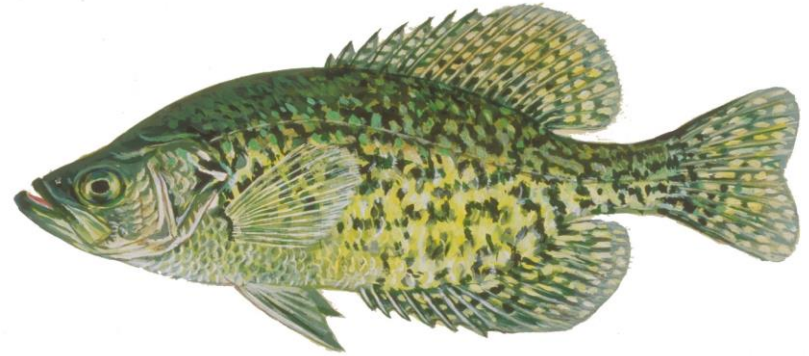


Figure 8. Black Crappie sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2021.

# PUMPKINSEED

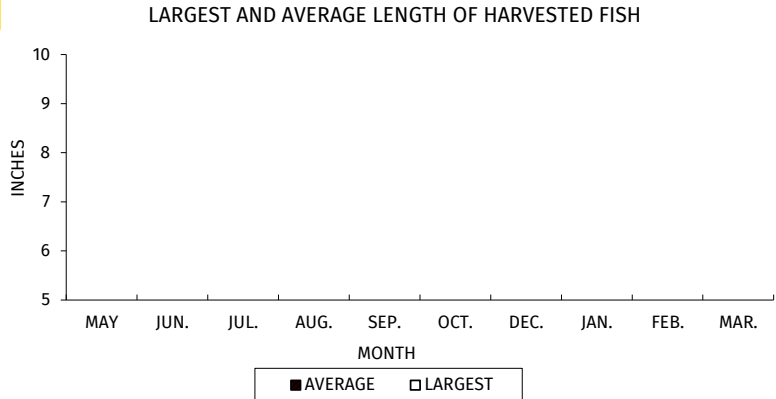
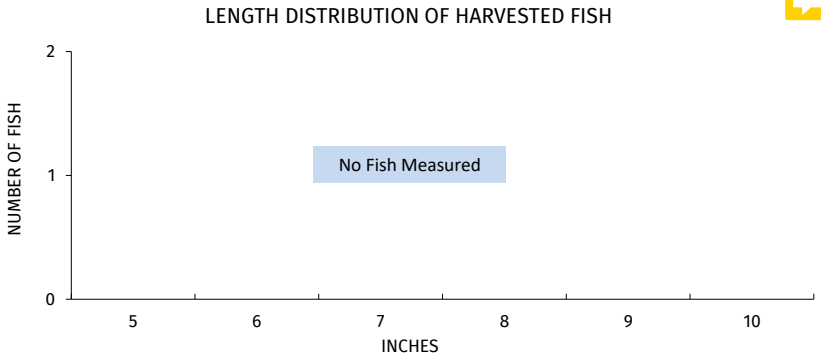
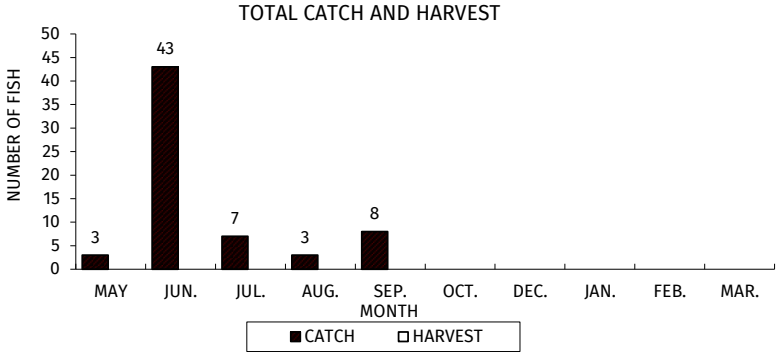
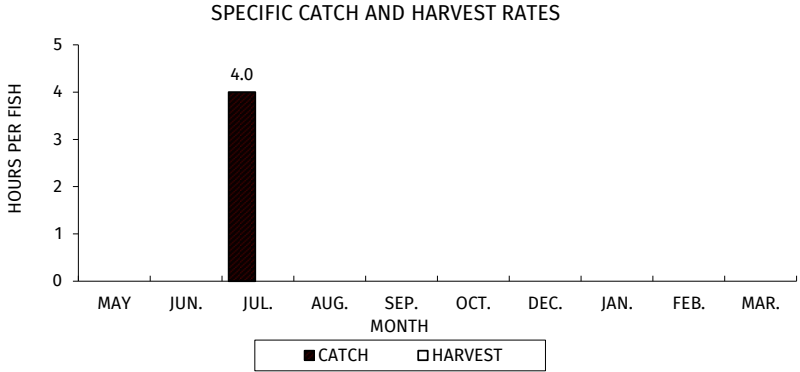
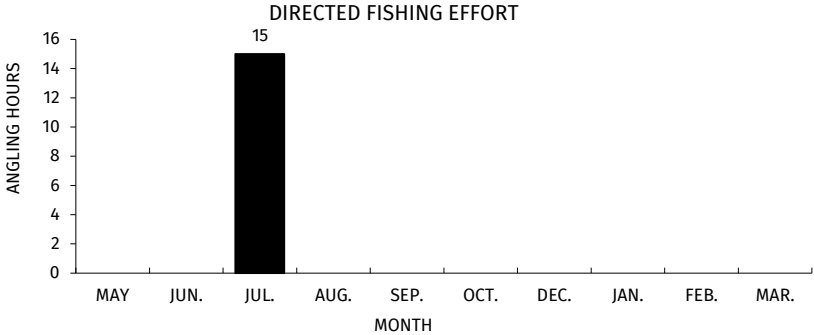


Figure 9. Pumpkinseed sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.

# ROCK BASS

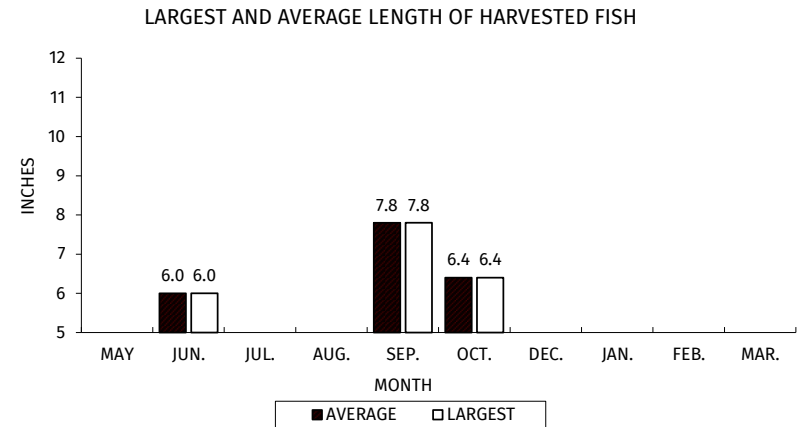
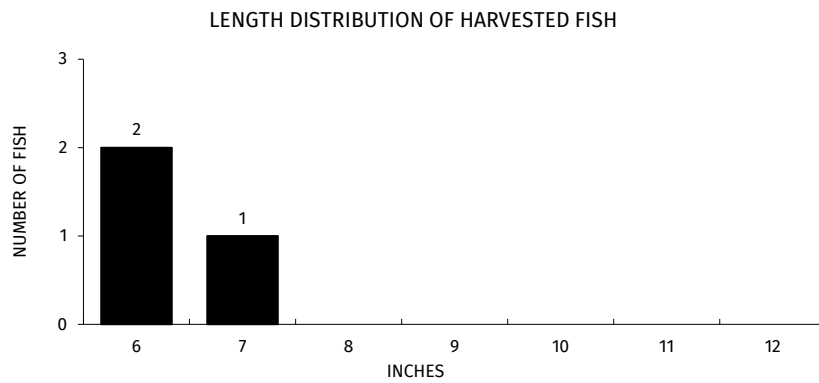
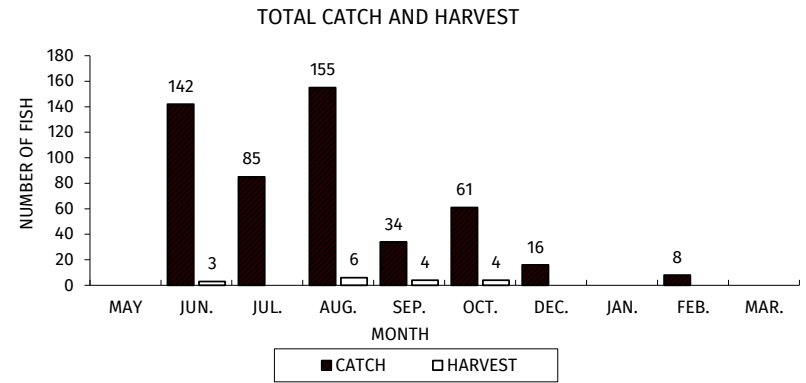
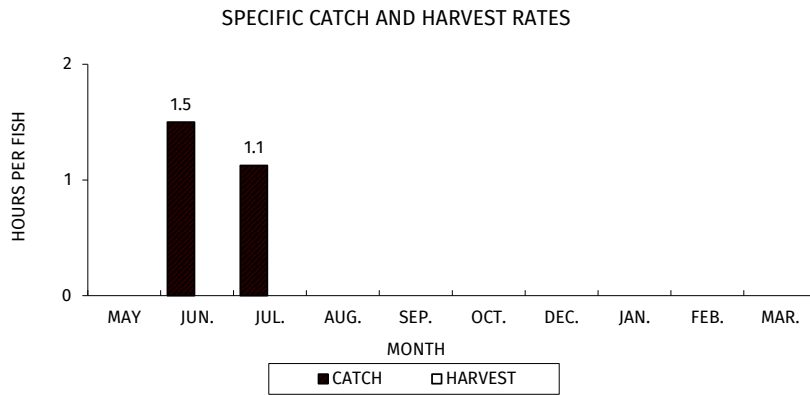
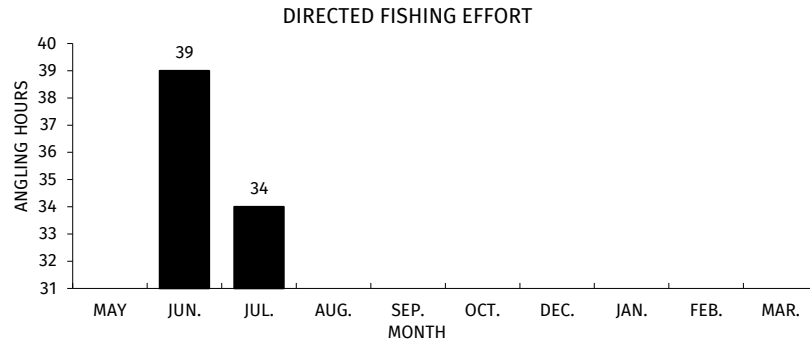
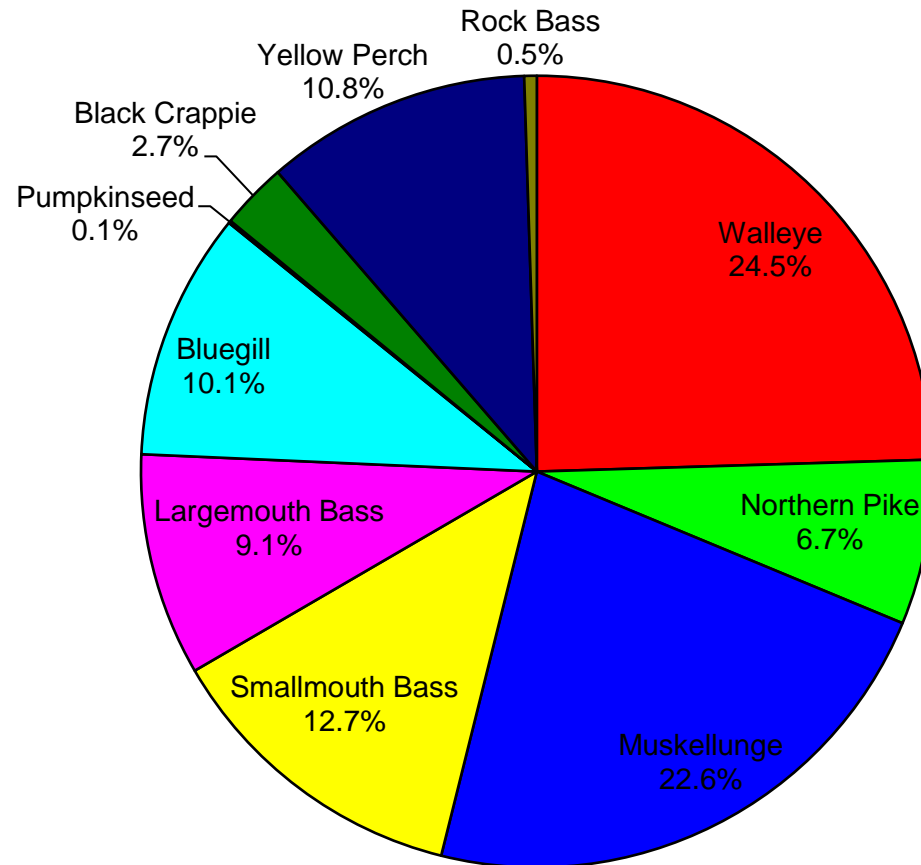


Figure 10. Rock Bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Connors Lake, during 2021-2022.



## FIGURE 11. TOTAL ANNUAL ANGLER DIRECTED EFFORT BY SPECIES Connors Lake 2021-2022

This graph illustrates the percentage of time that anglers spent fishing for each species during the entire creel survey. The percentages are based on the species of fish anglers told the clerk they were fishing for, not what they actually caught. If a particular species is not present in the graph it is because no one reported they were fishing for that species.





**Table 1. Sportfishing effort summary, Connors Lake, 2021-22 season; compared to 2013-14 creel results, Sawyer County averages, and Ceded Territory averages.**

Month	Number of Angler Party Interviews	Total Angler Hours	Total Angler Hours/Acre	2013-14 Total Angler Hours/Acre	Sawyer County Average Hours/Acre	Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre
May	38	796	1.9	2.0	4.3	4.8
June	66	1837	4.3	4.4	5.5	6.2
July	77	1826	4.3	5.9	5.6	6.6
August	62	1626	3.8	4.4	4.8	5.2
September	42	1148	2.7	2.6	3.9	3.2
October	47	899	2.1	3.5	1.8	1.4
December	4	144	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.1
January	7	289	0.7	0.4	0.8	1.7
February	11	434	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.6
March	0	0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
Summer Total	332	8,132	19.0	22.8	25.9	27.4
Winter Total	22	867	2.0	1.7	2.1	4.6
Grand Total	354	8,999	21.0	24.5	28.0	32.0

Note: Summer is May-October; Winter is December-March

**Number of Angler Party Interviews** is the number of groups of anglers interviewed by the creel clerk. A party is considered the members of a group who fish together in the same boat, ice shanty or from shore. The clerk fills out one interview form for each group of anglers. The number of individual anglers actually contacted by the clerk is usually much greater than the number of groups listed in this table since most groups consist of more than one angler.

**Total Angler Hours** is the estimated total number of hours that anglers spent fishing on Connors Lake during each month surveyed.

**Total Angler Hours/Acre** is the total angler hours divided by the area of the lake in acres. This is useful in order to compare effort on Connors Lake to other lakes.

**2013-14 Total Angler Hours/Acre** is the total angler hours divided by the area of the lake in acres. This is from the previous creel survey that took place on Connors Lake.

**County Average Hours/Acre** is the average angler effort in hours per acre for county lakes that have been surveyed since 1990. This value is useful for fishing pressure comparisons with other waters.

**Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre** is the average angler effort in hours per acre for inland lakes in the Ceded Territory that have been surveyed since 1990. This value can be used to compare Connors Lake to other lakes in northern Wisconsin.

**Table 2. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Connors Lake, 2021-22 and 2013-14 fishing seasons.**

**CREEL YEAR: 2021-2022**

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	3,505	24.5%	550	6.6	72	54.1	16.5
Northern Pike	963	6.7%	253	11.2	26	66.7	23.3
Muskellunge	3,235	22.6%	114	40.8	0	*	**
Smallmouth Bass	1,819	12.7%	628	5.4	24	135.1	16.9
Largemouth Bass	1,299	9.1%	70	35.7	6	217.4	14.4
Yellow Perch	1,550	10.8%	5,675	0.5	425	4.4	7.9
Bluegill	1,446	10.1%	1,899	1.1	62	23.5	6.6
Black Crappie	390	2.7%	8	104.2	0	*	**
Pumpkinseed	15	0.1%	64	4.0	0	*	**
Rock Bass	73	0.5%	501	1.3	17	*	6.7

**CREEL YEAR: 2013-14**

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	5717	29.6%	1744	3.3	134	50.0	17.3
Northern Pike	1215	6.3%	59	50.0	18	100.0	26.1
Muskellunge	3046	15.8%	317	12.5	0	*	**
Smallmouth Bass	2919	15.1%	782	6.7	36	100.0	15.7
Largemouth Bass	2174	11.3%	584	5.9	37	100.0	14.7
Yellow Perch	1634	8.5%	2832	0.8	477	5.3	7.2
Bluegill	1752	9.1%	2996	0.8	142	16.7	6.8
Black Crappie	484	2.5%	0	*	0	*	**
Pumpkinseed	135	0.7%	54	4.0	0	*	**
Rock Bass	241	1.2%	509	2.6	36	16.7	7.3

Note: If a species is not shown in a table, no data was collected by the creel clerks for that species.

\* Indicates that no fish of this species were caught or harvested (depending on the column) by anglers who specifically targeted this species.

\*\* Indicates that no fish were measured by the creel clerks for this species