



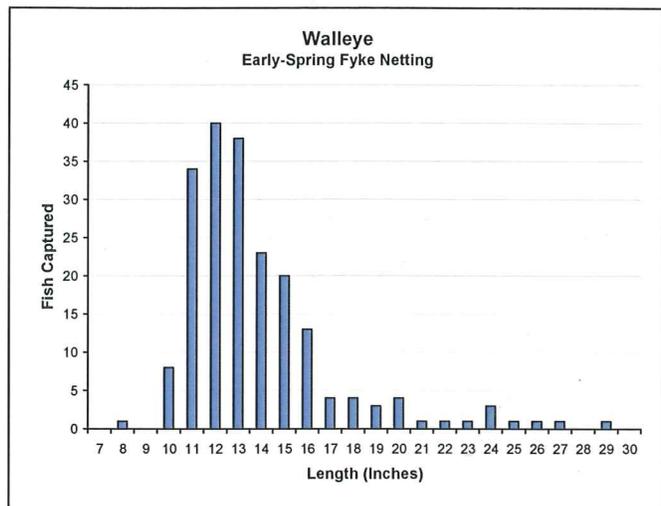
Early-Spring Fyke Netting Survey Summary Chippewa Flowage (East Basin), Sawyer County, 2010

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the Chippewa Flowage (East Basin) during April 8-10, 2010 as part of our baseline monitoring program. Ten nets were set overnight for two nights, resulting in 20 net-nights of effort. Primary target species were walleye, muskellunge, northern pike and yellow perch, but we also obtained useful data on the status of black crappie. An electrofishing survey conducted by our team in mid May documented the status of smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, bluegill and other species. Those results are summarized in a separate survey report. 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.

Walleye



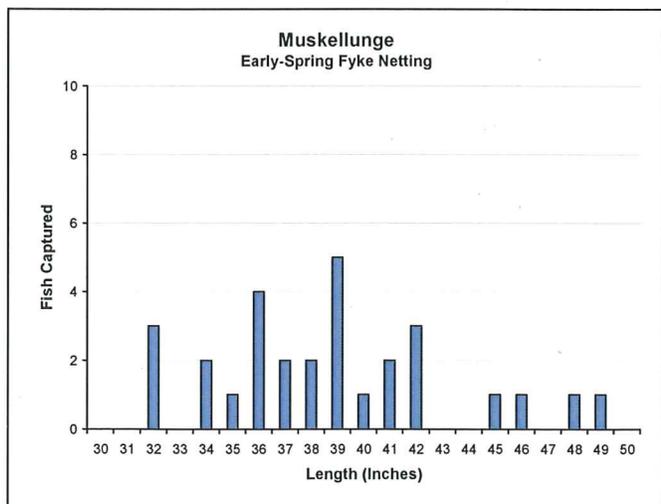
Captured 10 per net-night $\geq 10''$	
Quality Size $\geq 15''$	29%
Preferred Size $\geq 20''$	7%



Muskellunge



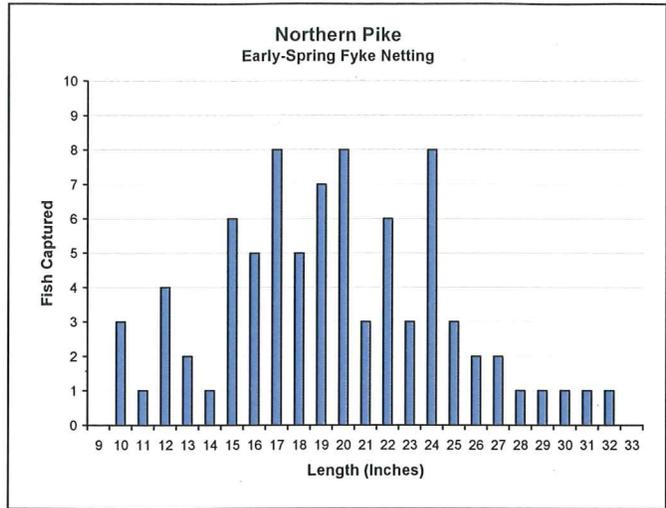
Captured 1.5 per net-night $\geq 20''$	
Quality Size $\geq 30''$	100%
Memorable Size $\geq 42''$	24%



Northern Pike



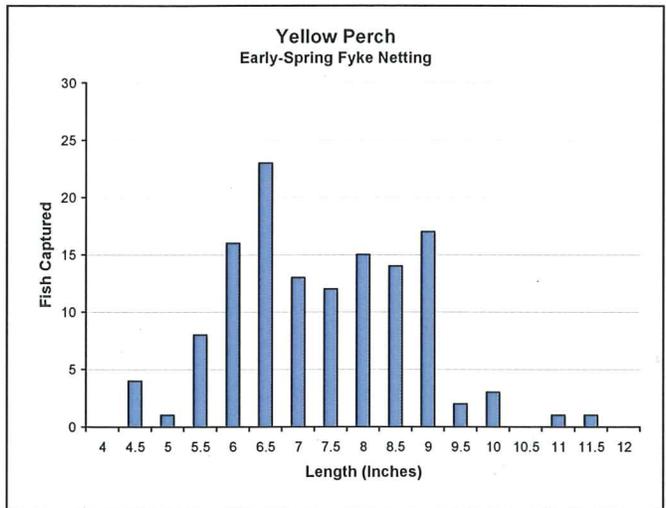
Captured 3.6 per net-night $\geq 14''$	
Quality Size $\geq 21''$	44%
Preferred Size $\geq 28''$	7%



Yellow Perch



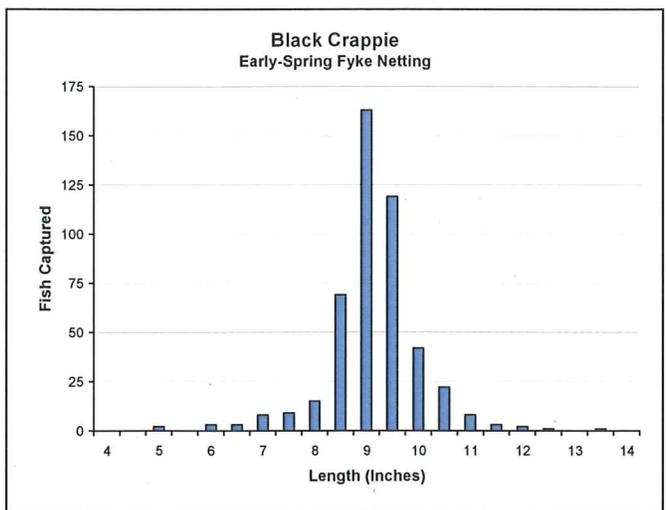
Captured 6.3 per net-night $\geq 5''$	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	42%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	4%



Black Crappie



Captured 24 per net-night $\geq 5''$	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	95%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	17%



A Note on Basin Habitat Characteristics

When interpreting these results, it is important to recognize the differences between the eastern and western basins of the Chippewa Flowage, which are connected by a narrow, navigable channel spanned by the County Highway CC bridge at The Landing.

In general, the East Basin has darker, tannin-stained water, fewer aquatic plants except during times of drought, firmer substrates (more gravel and cobble), and is more heavily influenced by the many rivers and creeks that flow into it. Because of these habitat characteristics, the East Basin provides the best habitat on the Flowage for walleye, smallmouth bass, and muskellunge. In contrast, the West Basin has clearer water, more aquatic plants, and softer substrates (more silt-bottomed bays); and it functions like a group of interconnected lakes. These habitat characteristics provide some advantages to largemouth bass and northern pike. Important panfish species (yellow perch, black crappie, and bluegill) thrive throughout the Flowage.

Summary of Results

In early spring of 2010 the Chippewa Flowage was not quite at full pool after a 4-foot overwinter drawdown, but most of the high-quality walleye spawning habitat (clean gravel and cobble) was underwater. With water temperature in the high 40s, our survey was well-timed for purposes of obtaining a representative sample of target species adults in likely near-shore spawning areas.

We captured a moderate number of walleye ≥ 10 inches (10 per net-night), but this was quite low in comparison with past decades. A major survey operation scheduled for spring of 2011 should allow us to obtain an estimate of actual adult walleye population density (number per acre). In April of 2010, the proportion of quality-size fish ≥ 15 inches was 29% -- higher than in 1999 (22%) but still within our 2007 Management Plan objective range of 20-40%. Observed changes (lower capture rate and increased average size) are consistent with the results of recent fall electrofishing surveys indicating that reproductive survival of young walleyes has been much lower than usual since the last good year-class was produced in 2005.

Muskellunge capture rate was higher than average for northern Wisconsin (1.5 per net-night) but lower than in 2006 (2.4 per net-night in the East Basin). An impressive 24% were of memorable size ≥ 42 inches, up slightly from 20% in 2006. But the absence of fish < 30 inches in our 2010 sample raises concerns that natural reproduction and recruitment of muskellunge may be declining. Capture rate of northern pike ≥ 14 inches was moderately high (3.6 per net-night) and had more than doubled since 2006 (1.5 per net-night in the East Basin), despite promotion of liberal pike harvest at various fishing events. Pike size structure had not changed since 2006 (7% at preferred size ≥ 28 inches).

We captured relatively few yellow perch ≥ 5 inches (6.3 per net-night), but this may still reflect higher perch density than in the past. Though few perch exceeded 10 inches, the number 9 inches and longer has begun to attract more attention among Flowage anglers.

We captured black crappie ≥ 5 inches at a high rate of 24 per net-night -- most 8.5 to 10.5 inches long and comprised of a couple very large year classes that emerged after the walleye population began to decline several years ago. High size-selective harvest of larger crappies by anglers may pose a challenge to achieving our 2007 Management Plan objective of 20-40% ≥ 10 inches.