
11. SPORT FISHERIES ASSESSMENT

WARMWATER/COLDWATER FISHERIES ASSESSMENT

Contact: Tim Simonson

Last updated: 11-2007

Status: Currently in Place

This program has been in place since the 1940s and has been consistently implemented using a variety of funding sources.

Assessments of sport fisheries are intensive site or area-specific surveys used to assess the status of unusual fisheries and determine the cause and extent of problems with gamefish populations. Problems are typically identified during baseline monitoring surveys. Ideally, an integrated ecological assessment with several other monitoring programs should be conducted in order to pinpoint the reason(s) for the impaired status of the sport fishery.

Monitoring Objectives

Clean Water Act Objectives

- Identifying impaired waters
- Supporting the implementation of water management programs
- Supporting the evaluation of program effectiveness

Specific Objectives

- Identify the status of unusual fisheries and the extent of and causes of potential fishery impairments.
- Develop a management plan.
- Evaluate program effectiveness.

Monitoring Design

Intensive site or area-specific monitoring at targeted sites.

Core Indicators

- Population Abundance
- Length Frequency
- Age and Growth
- Recruitment
- Angler effort, catch, and harvest

Supplemental Indicators:

- Habitat conditions
- Water Quality conditions

Quality Assurance

Standardized protocols, training.

Data Management

Data are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Database (http://infotrek.er.usgs.gov/wdnr_bio) system with site descriptions and/or latitude/longitude, and are made available there via access to the World Wide Web.

Data Analysis/Assessment

Data from individual waters are compared to other similar waters in the FH Statewide Database and/or to data collected previously on that waterbody.

Reporting

Data may be reported in the following manners:

- SFR or Fish-SEG Progress Report
- Survey Report
- Management Plans
- Technical Reports

Programmatic Evaluation

The projects funded under this category are of two types. First, high-priority statewide monitoring needs are funded and coordinated by central office staff. Second, other targeted projects or local monitoring needs are funded on a competitive basis, with review and ranking done by a team of central office and region staff. The review team meets biannually to review the projects, develop the workplan, and ensure that it is meeting the needs of resource managers. Program reviews of workplan performance are completed regularly by the central office to evaluate job completion.

General Support and Infrastructure Planning

Staff & Training - Several fisheries staff participate in this monitoring activity. Volunteers may be considered to assist WDNR staff in the field with monitoring for this program.

Laboratory resources - None.

Funding - Funding for this activity comes from the Sport Fish Restoration account and Lake Sturgeon license sales at approximately \$550,000 annually. Total estimated support, including permanent salaries, fringe benefits, and other indirect costs is approximately \$1,600,000 annually.

TREATY ASSESSMENT

Contacts: Dennis Scholl, Joe Hennessy, Tim Simonson

Last updated: 10-2007

Status: Currently in Place

This program has been in place since the mid-1980s and has been consistently implemented using a variety of funding sources.

Assessments of joint sport-tribal fisheries in the Wisconsin Ceded Territory are intensive site-specific surveys used to determine the status of walleye and muskellunge populations and to set safe harvest levels. The fishery is monitored to ensure compliance with court-mandated harvest levels.

Monitoring Objectives

Clean Water Act Objectives

- Identifying impaired waters
- Supporting the implementation of water management programs
- Supporting the evaluation of program effectiveness

Specific Objectives

- Determine trends in the status of walleye and muskellunge populations in the Ceded Territory
- Ensure compliance with court-mandated exploitation levels (monitor program effectiveness)
- Set safe sport and tribal harvest levels (develop management plans)

Monitoring Design

Sampling is done on a stratified, random rotation of lakes within the Ceded Territory. A total of 12 to 27 lakes are sampled each year, depending on lake size. Lakes on the schedule are designated as either “spatial coverage” lakes or trend lakes. Spatial coverage lakes are sampled once each within a 12-year period. Sampling includes spring population estimates on walleye, muskellunge, and other gamefish, fall sampling of juvenile gamefish for recruitment information, and an angling creel survey throughout the open-water and ice-fishing seasons for gamefish species. The 12 trend lakes are sampled annually in the fall for gamefish recruitment, and receive a more comprehensive survey, including creel survey, every three years.

In addition to the sampling above, the standard Tier 1 fisheries sampling elements are added to each lake on the schedule.

Core Indicators

- Population Abundance
- Length Frequency
- Age and Growth
- Recruitment
- Angler effort, catch, and harvest

Quality Assurance

Standardized protocols, training and dedicated field sampling crews.

Data Management

Data are incorporated into the Fisheries and Habitat Statewide Database system with site descriptions and/or latitude/longitude, and are made available there via access to the World Wide Web.

Data Analysis/Assessment

Data on angler and tribal exploitation are evaluated to ensure compliance with court-mandated levels. Population assessment data are used to set safe-harvest levels.

Reporting

Data are reported in the following manners:

- SFR or Fish-SEG Progress Report
- Survey Reports by individual fisheries biologists
- Management Plans
- Annual Report
- Mandatory data exchange with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)

Programmatic Evaluation

Program review is accomplished internally with meetings of the Treaty Fisheries Assessment Team, which meets twice each year, and jointly with GLIFWC, which also meets 2 times each year.

General Support and Infrastructure Planning

Staff & Training - Several fisheries staff participate in this monitoring activity. Volunteers may be considered to assist WDNR staff in the field with monitoring for this program.

Laboratory resources - None.

Funding - Funding for this activity comes from the segregated account (Fish), Sport Fish Restoration, and Gaming revenues at approximately \$407,000 annually. Total estimated support, including permanent salaries, fringe benefits, and other indirect costs is approximately \$1,100,000 annually.

References

Hennessy, J. M. 2002. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2001-2002 Ceded Territory Fishery Assessment Report. Administrative Report 55. Bureau of Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, WDNR.