

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CREEL SURVEY REPORT**

RICE RESERVOIR

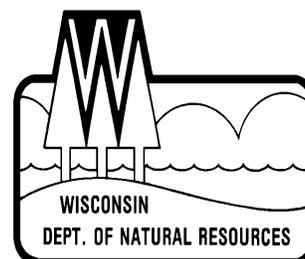
LINCOLN COUNTY

2012-13



Treaty Fisheries Publication

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INTRODUCTION

Fish populations can fluctuate due to natural forces (weather, predation, competition), management actions (stocking, regulations, habitat improvement), inappropriate development (habitat degradation), and harvest impacts. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fisheries crews regularly conduct fishery surveys on area lakes and reservoirs to gather the information needed to monitor changes, identify concerns, evaluate past management actions, and to prescribe good fishery management strategies. Netting and electrofishing surveys are used to gather data on the status of fish populations and communities (species composition, population size, reproductive success, size/age distribution, and growth rates). But the other key component of the fishery that we often need to measure is the harvest.

On many lakes in the Ceded Territory of northern Wisconsin, harvest of fish is divided between sport anglers and the six Chippewa tribes who harvest fish under rights granted by federal treaties. The tribes harvest fish mostly using a highly efficient method, spearing, during a relatively short time period in the spring. Every fish in the spear harvest is counted – a complete “census” of the harvest.

We also measure the sport harvest to assess its impact on the fishery. But because it would be highly impractical and very costly to conduct a complete census of every angler who fishes on a lake, we conduct creel surveys.

A creel survey is an assessment tool used to sample the fishing activities of anglers on a body of water and make projections of harvest and other fishery parameters. Creel survey clerks work on randomly-selected

days and shifts, forty hours per week during the open season for gamefish from the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March, except during the month of November when fishing effort is low and ice conditions are often unsafe. The survey is run during daylight hours, and shift times change from month to month as day length changes.

Creel survey clerks travel their lakes using a boat or snowmobile to count numbers of anglers on a lake at predetermined times, and to interview anglers who have completed their fishing trip to collect data on what species they fished for, catch, harvest, lengths of fish harvested, marks (finclips or tags), and hours of fishing effort. Collecting completed-trip data provides the most accurate assessment of angling activities, and it avoids the need to disturb anglers while they are fishing.

A computer program is used to make projections of total catch and harvest of each species, catch and harvest rates, and total fishing effort, by month and for the year in total. Keep in mind that these are only projections based on the best information available, and not a complete accounting of effort, catch, and harvest. Accurate projections require that we sample a sufficient and representative portion of the angling activity on a lake. The accuracy of creel survey results, therefore, depends on good cooperation and truthful responses by anglers when a creel clerk interviews them.

You may have encountered a DNR creel survey clerk on a recent fishing trip. We appreciate your cooperation during an interview. The survey only takes a moment of your time and it gives the Department valuable information needed for management of the fishery.

This report provides projections of:

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

Also included are a physical description of Rice Reservoir; discussion of results of the survey; and detailed summaries, by species of fishing effort, catch and harvest.

GENERAL LAKE INFORMATION



Location

Rice Reservoir is located in Lincoln County in the Town of Tomahawk.

Physical Characteristics

Rice Reservoir is a 3,764 acre chain with a total of three lakes (Bridge, Nokomis, and Rice Flowage). Rice Reservoir is an impoundment of the Tomahawk and Little Rice River. Littoral substrate consists primarily of sand, with lesser amounts of muck, and gravel.

Seasons Surveyed

The period referred to in this report as the 2012-13 fishing season ran from May 5, 2012 through March 3, 2013. The open water creel survey ran from May 5 through October 31, 2012 and the ice fishing creel survey ran from December 1, 2012 through March 5, 2013.

Weather

Ice-out on Rice Reservoir was around March 22, 2012. Fishable-ice formed on Rice Reservoir in mid-December.

Sportfishing Regulations

The following seasons, daily bag limits, and length limits were in place on Rice Reservoir during the 2012-13 fishing season:

		Catch&Release	
Largemouth Bass&	5/5-6/15		
Smallmouth Bass	6/15-3/3	5	14"
Musky	5/26-11/30	1	40"
Northern Pike	5/5-3/3	5	none
Walleye	5/5-3/3	2*	15"
Panfish	year round	25	none
Rock Bass	year round	none	none

* The statewide bag limit was 5 walleye, but due to tribal declarations it was reduced on Rice Reservoir.

SPECIES CATCH AND HARVEST INFORMATION

Angling effort, catch, and harvest information is summarized for each species in Table 2 and Figures 1-10. Table 2 also includes a comparison of these statistics with the previous creel survey. Information presented about species whose fishing season extends beyond March 3 should be considered minimum estimates. Each species page has up to five graphs depicting the following:

1. **PROJECTED FISHING EFFORT**
Total calculated number of hours during each month that anglers spent fishing for a species.
2. **PROJECTED SPECIFIC CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**
Calculated 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.

- 3. PROJECTED CATCH AND HARVEST**
Calculated number of fish of the indicated species caught or harvested by all anglers, regardless of targeted species.
- 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH**
All fish of a species that were measured by the clerk during the entire creel survey season.
- 5. LARGEST AND AVERAGE LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH**
Monthly largest and average length of harvested fish of a species. Only those fish measured by the creel survey clerk are reported.

CREEL SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey Logistics

The creel survey went well. We encountered no unusual problems conducting the survey or calculating the projections contained in the report. This was the third time the department conducted a creel survey on Rice Reservoir. The last creel survey took place in 2001-02.

General Angler Information

Anglers spent 59,044 hours or 15.7 hours per acre fishing Rice Reservoir during the 2012-13 fishing season (Table 1). That was less than the Lincoln County average of 36.3 hours per acre. May was the most heavily fished month (3.8 hours per acre). Fishing effort was lightest in October (0.2 hours per acre) for those months when the entire month was creeled.

RESULTS BY SPECIES

Walleye (Table 2, Figure 1)

Walleyes received the most fishing effort during the 2012-13 fishing season. Anglers spent 25,285 hours targeting walleyes. The greatest fishing effort for walleyes was in May (6,927 hours). March had the least amount of walleye fishing effort (155hours).

Total catch of walleyes was 7,061 fish with a harvest of 1,259 fish. Highest catch (3,637 fish) and harvest (725 fish) occurred in May. Anglers fished 3.7 hours to catch and 20.1 hours to harvest a walleye during 2012-13.

The mean length of harvested walleyes was 16.5 inches and the largest walleye measured was a 21.1inch fish.

Northern Pike (Table 2, Figure 2)

Fishing effort directed at northern pike was 14,787 hours during the 2012-13 fishing season. Northern pike fishing effort was greatest in December (3,042 hours).

Total catch of northern pike was 8,175 fish with a harvest of 1,375 fish.

The mean length of harvested northern pike was 24.6 inches.

Muskellunge (Table 2, Figure 3)

Anglers spent 4,855 hours targeting muskellunge during the 2012-13 fishing season. Muskellunge fishing effort was greatest in June (1,831 hours).

Total catch of muskellunge was 196 fish. Highest catch (77 fish) occurred in June. Anglers fished 28.5 hours to catch a muskellunge during 2012-13.

Smallmouth Bass (Table 2, Figure 4)

Fishing effort targeted at smallmouth bass was 6,054 hours during the 2012-13 fishing season. Smallmouth bass fishing effort was greatest in June (2,444 hours).

Total catch of smallmouth bass was 2,471 fish with 140 harvested. Highest catch (818 fish) occurred in June. Anglers fished 3.3 hours to catch a smallmouth bass during 2012-13.

Largemouth Bass (Table 2, Figure 5)

Fishing effort directed at largemouth bass was 7,009 hours during the 2012-13 fishing season. Largemouth bass fishing effort was greatest in June (2,870 hours).

Total catch of largemouth bass was 3,531 fish with a harvest of 300 fish. Highest catch (1,800 fish) occurred in June. Anglers fished 2.9 hours to catch a largemouth bass during 2012-13.

Panfish (Table 2, Figures 6-10)

Bluegills were the most sought after panfish species during the survey. Fishing effort directed at bluegills was 22,657 hours.

Total catch of bluegills was 48,027 fish with 18,751 harvested. The mean length of bluegills harvested was 7.7 inches.

Black crappies were the second most sought after panfish species during the survey. Fishing effort directed at black crappies was 16,906 hours.

Anglers caught 10,044 black crappies and harvested 6,384 fish. The mean length of black crappies harvested was 9.9 inches.

Yellow perch were the third most sought after panfish species during the survey. Fishing effort directed at yellow perch was 12,586 hours.

Total catch of yellow perch was 7,061 fish with 3,045 harvested. The mean length of yellow perch harvested was 9.1 inches.

Pumpkinseeds and rock bass were also caught during the 2012-13 fishing season.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completion of this survey was possible because of the efforts of the technical staff of the fisheries management and Treaty Fisheries Unit. Treaty staff responsible for ensuring completion of this survey included Jonathan Pyatskowitz, Jeff Blonski, Joelle Underwood, Marty Kiepkke, Jason Halverson, and Tim Tobias. Jason Halverson, Dave Stahmer, and Bob Consolo were the creel clerks on Rice Reservoir during the survey period.

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

The department thanks the cooperators, Leroy and Marlene Rupnow, Fish Bones, Greg and Rosie Niemec, who generously allowed the department to keep a boat and snowmobile on their property during this survey.

This creel report was reviewed by, Dave Seibel and Dennis Scholl of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Woodruff, Wisconsin.

Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes can be obtained from the Woodruff DNR or online at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/ceded/reports.html>

Table 1. Sportfishing effort summary, the Rice Reservoir, 2012-13 season

Month	Total Angler Hours	Total Angler Hours/Acre	Lincoln County Average Hours/Acre	Statewide Average Hours/Acre
May	14155	3.8	5.8	5.8
June	13056	3.5	6.1	6.1
July	7396	2.0	7.8	6.4
August	5354	1.4	5.1	5.4
September	2696	0.7	2.2	3.8
October	934	0.2	0.5	1.6
December	5812	1.5	1.6	1.7
January	5852	1.6	3.6	1.5
February	3290	0.9	2.1	1.3
March	500	0.1	1.5	**
*Summer Total	43590	11.6	27.5	29.1
*Winter Total	15455	4.1	8.8	4.5
Grand Total	59044	15.7	36.3	33.6

*"Summer" is May-October; "Winter" is December-March

**Too few lakes have been surveyed in March to give a meaningful statewide average.

Total Angler Hours is the estimated total number of hours that anglers spent fishing on the Rice Reservoir 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 if you wish to compare effort on the Rice Reservoir to other lakes.

County Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for county lakes that have been surveyed since 1990. This value can be useful in comparisons as well.

Statewide Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for inland lakes in the state surveyed between 1990 and 1995. This value can be used to compare the Rice Reservoir to other lakes statewide.

Table 2. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Rice Reservoir, 2012-13 and 2001-02 fishing seasons.

CREEL YEAR: 2012-13

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	25285	22.58%	7061	3.7	1259	20.1	16.5
Northern Pike	14787	13.20%	8175	4.7	1375	17.3	24.6
Muskellunge	4855	4.33%	196	28.5	4	1197.2	43.7
Smallmouth Bass	6054	5.41%	2471	3.3	140	48.4	17.9
Largemouth Bass	7009	6.26%	3531	2.9	300	30.3	17.6
Yellow Perch	12586	11.24%	7061	2.2	3045	4.7	9.1
Bluegill	22657	20.23%	48027	0.5	18751	1.2	7.7
Pumpkinseed	1861	1.66%	3592	2.0	609	7.3	7.1
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	547		88		8.6
Black Crappie	16906	15.09%	10044	1.8	6384	2.9	9.9

* A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were caught by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

** A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were harvested by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

CREEL YEAR: 2001-02

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)
Walleye	51896	39.96%	14619	3.5	3665	14.2
Northern Pike	8428	6.49%	9529	0.9	1210	7.0
Muskellunge	7105	5.47%	310	22.9	0	
Smallmouth Bass	7565	5.82%	3429	2.2	176	
Largemouth Bass	3610	2.78%	2030	1.8	39	92.6
Yellow Perch	17877	13.76%	25325	0.7	9337	1.9
Bluegill	18299	14.09%	15066	1.2	6709	2.7
Pumpkinseed	1278	0.98%	763	1.7	439	2.9
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	1709	0.0	10	0.0
Black Crappie	13818	10.64%	3685	3.7	2499	5.5

Table 3. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Bridge Lake, 2012-13 and 2001-02 fishing seasons.

CREEL YEAR: 2012-13

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	1311	6.49%	98	13.4	80	16.4	16.7
Northern Pike	2355	11.67%	2487	2.2	371	10.1	22.9
Muskellunge	1423	7.05%	5	285.7	0		
Smallmouth Bass	1488	7.37%	935	1.8	24	83.3	16.7
Largemouth Bass	1757	8.70%	863	2.6	56	38.3	15.4
Yellow Perch	1377	6.82%	2031	0.9	149	20.4	9.3
Bluegill	6160	30.51%	18849	0.3	5293	1.2	7.3
Pumpkinseed	782	3.87%	2047	1.7	231	8.0	6.6
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	125		0		
Black Crappie	3535	17.51%	3352	1.2	2012	1.9	9.6

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** A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were harvested by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

CREEL YEAR: 2001-02

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	3686	11.63%	1283	5.8	91	58.1	18.5
Northern Pike	1735	5.48%	1931	1.7	160	13.2	22.9
Muskellunge	1990	6.28%	65	96.2	0		
Smallmouth Bass	2532	7.99%	818	4.7	15	172.4	17.5
Largemouth Bass	1258	3.97%	1546	12.7	0		
Yellow Perch	8331	26.29%	15595	0.5	6132	1.4	8.8
Bluegill	6877	21.71%	6887	1.6	2985	2.6	7.7
Pumpkinseed	822	2.59%	409	2.4	152	6.4	8.1
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	43		0		
Black Crappie	4452	14.05%	1115	4.2	835	5.7	11.5

Table 4. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Nokmis Lake, 2012-13 and 2001-02 fishing seasons.

CREEL YEAR: 2012-13

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	22035	25.79%	5916	3.9	1094	20.2	16.4
Northern Pike	11688	13.68%	5233	6.4	858	24.3	25.8
Muskellunge	3059	3.58%	163	22.2	4	769.2	43.7
Smallmouth Bass	4266	4.99%	1404	4.6	116	39.8	18.2
Largemouth Bass	4787	5.60%	2457	3.0	219	29.8	18.2
Yellow Perch	10843	12.69%	4932	2.7	2805	4.2	9.1
Bluegill	15218	17.81%	27895	0.6	12865	1.2	7.8
Pumpkinseed	930	1.09%	1446	2.5	316	9.9	7.1
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	422		88		8.6
Black Crappie	12606	14.76%	6423	2.1	4181	3.3	10.0

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** A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were harvested by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

CREEL YEAR: 2001-02

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	42099	48.23%	11444	3.7	2772	15.2	16.9
Northern Pike	5835	6.68%	6078	3.7	965	10.6	20.3
Muskellunge	4735	5.42%	194	46.7	0		
Smallmouth Bass	4950	5.67%	2561	3.1	148	33.6	16.8
Largemouth Bass	2352	2.69%	469	6.0	39	79.4	18.4
Yellow Perch	8301	9.51%	8725	1.8	2602	5.0	9.5
Bluegill	10279	11.78%	7856	1.4	3401	3.1	7.9
Pumpkinseed	456	0.52%	354	1.5	287	1.9	7.1
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	1666		10		8.1
Black Crappie	8283	9.49%	2398	4.2	1542	5.4	10.8

Table 5. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Rice Flowage, 2012-13 and 2001-02 fishing seasons.

CREEL YEAR: 2012-13

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	1939	30.39%	1047	1.8	85	22.6	17.1
Northern Pike	744	11.66%	455	2.7	146	5.3	22.2
Muskellunge	373	5.85%	28	13.4	0		
Smallmouth Bass	300	4.70%	132	2.5	0		
Largemouth Bass	465	7.29%	211	3.3	25	18.8	17.8
Yellow Perch	366	5.74%	98	6.0	91	6.0	9.9
Bluegill	1279	20.05%	1283	1.0	593	2.2	8.5
Pumpkinseed	149	2.34%	99	1.5	62	2.4	8.5
Rock Bass	0	0.00%	0		0		
Black Crappie	765	11.99%	269	3.3	191	4.9	11.1

* A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were caught by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

** A blank cell in this column indicates that no fish of a given species were harvested by anglers who specifically targeted that species.

CREEL YEAR: 2001-02

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	6111	56.05%	1892	3.3	802	7.9	17.2
Northern Pike	858	7.87%	1520	2.2	85	32.2	19.3
Muskellunge	380	3.49%	51	9.9	0		
Smallmouth Bass	83	0.76%	50		13		14.6
Largemouth Bass	0	0.00%	15		0		
Yellow Perch	1245	11.42%	1005	3.1	603	3.9	9.9
Bluegill	1143	10.48%	323	3.5	323	3.5	8.0
Pumpkinseed		0.00%					
Rock Bass		0.00%					
Black Crappie	1083	9.93%	172	6.8	122	9.9	10.2

WALLEYE

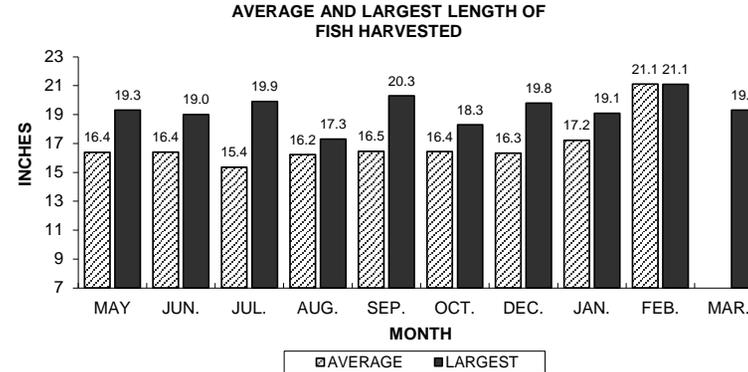
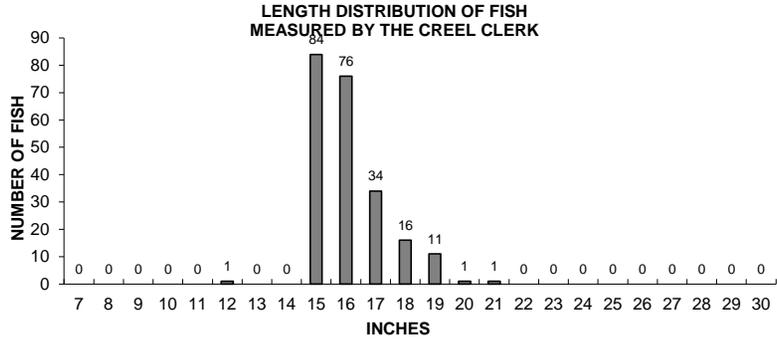
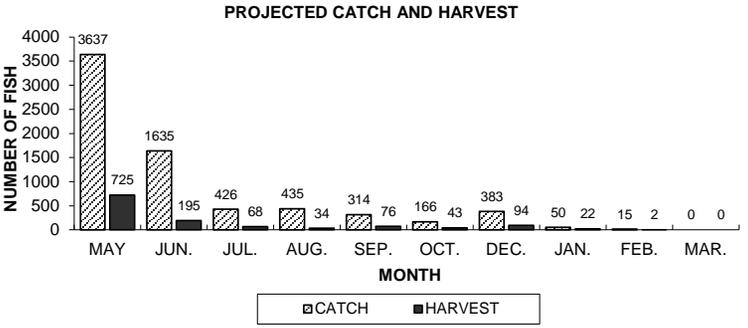
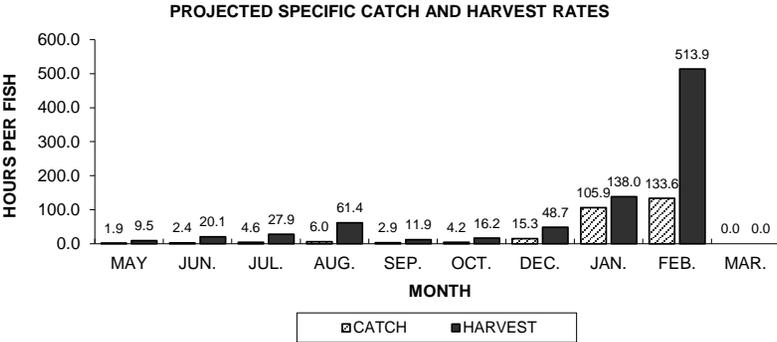
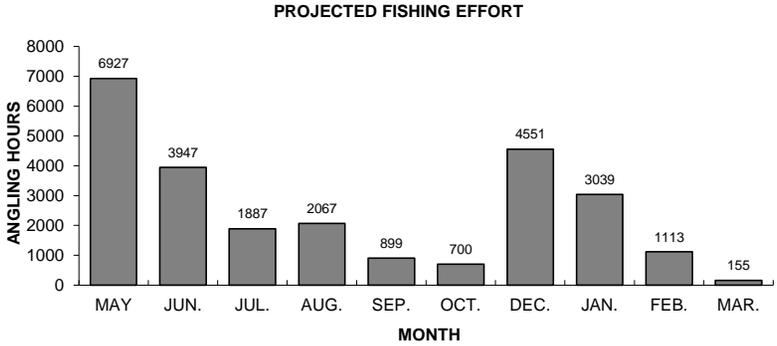
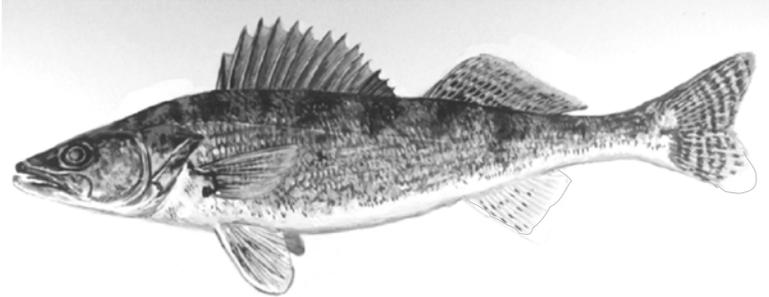


Figure 1. Walleye sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

NORTHERN PIKE

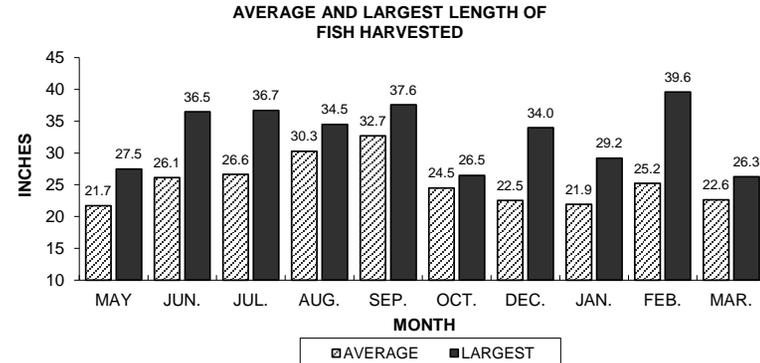
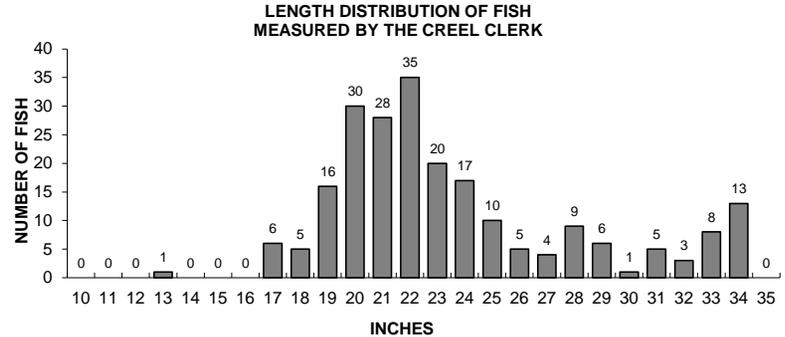
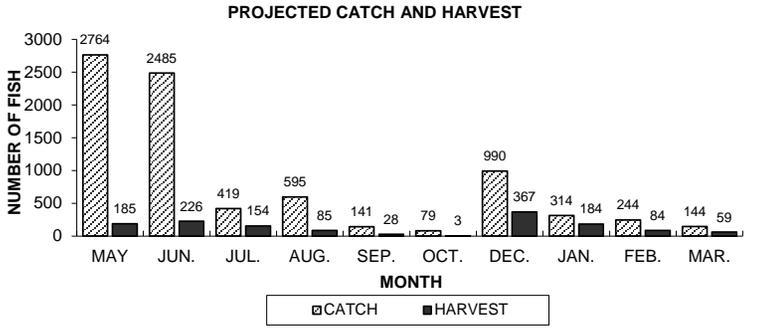
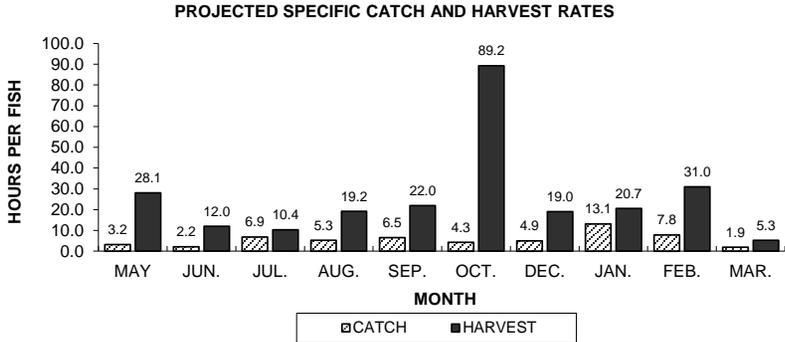
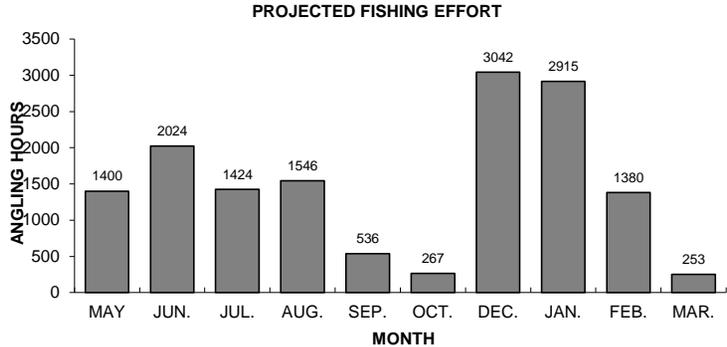
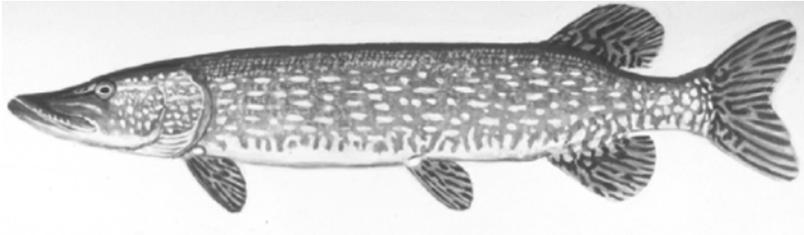
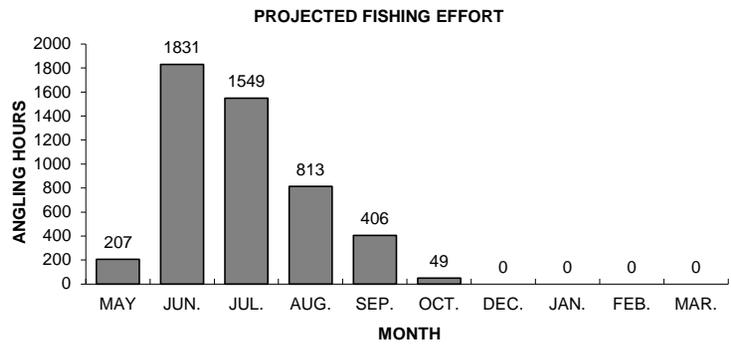


Figure 2. Northern pike sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.



MUSKELLUNGE

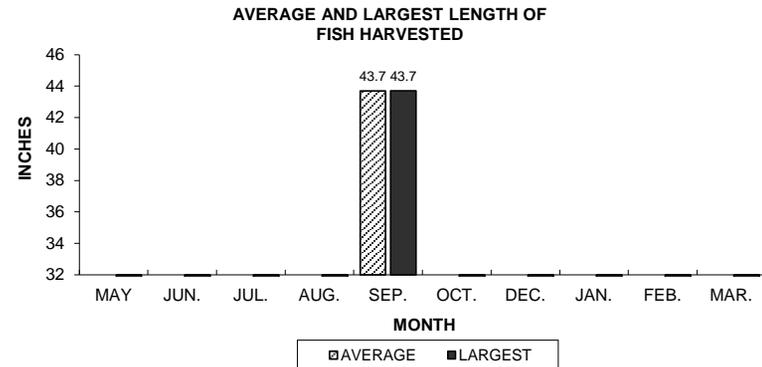
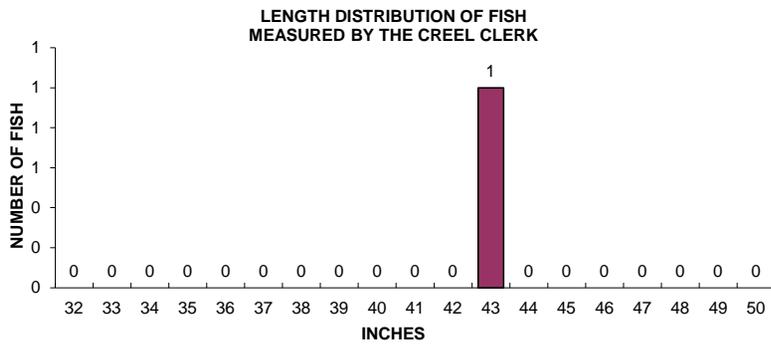
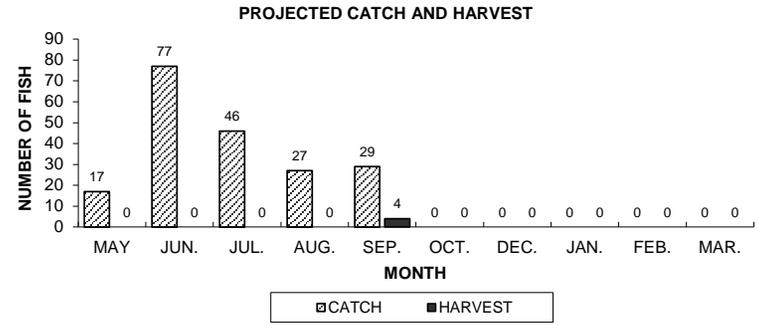
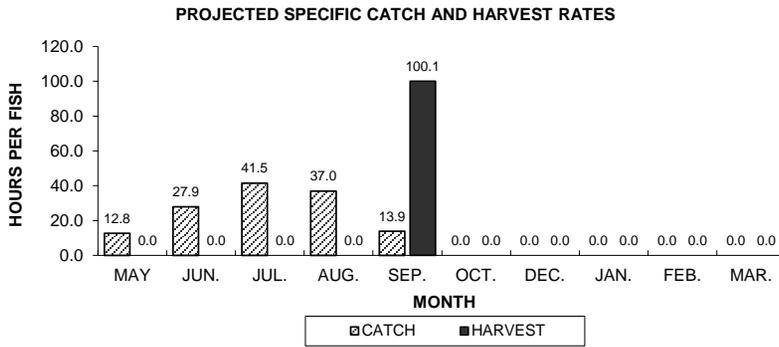


Figure 3. Muskellunge sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

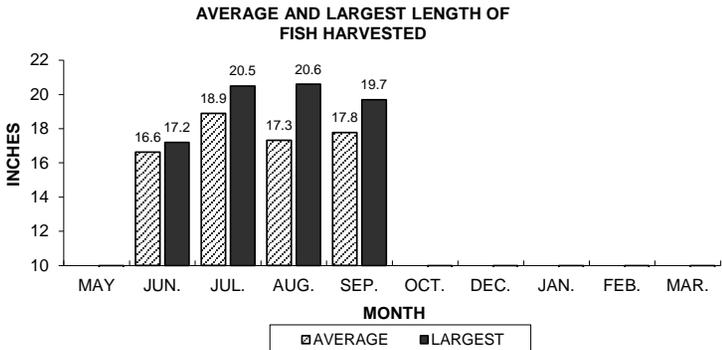
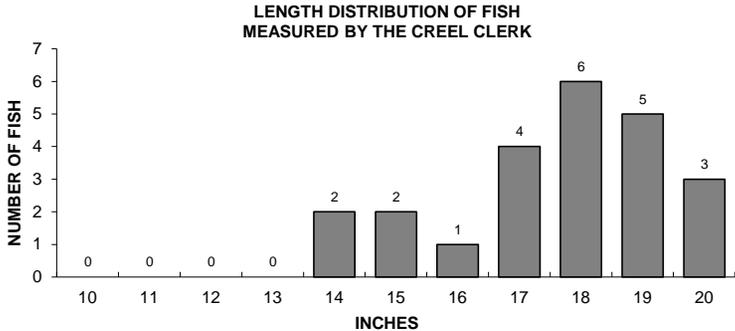
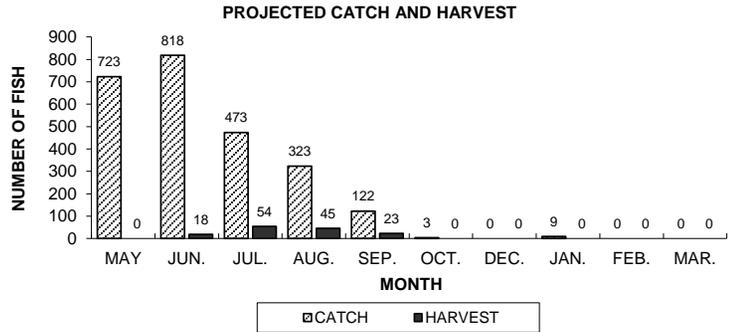
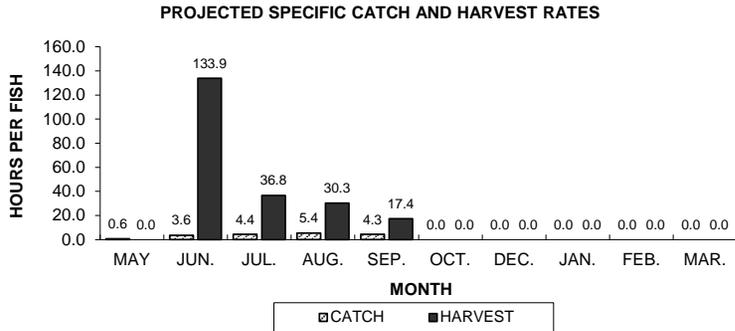
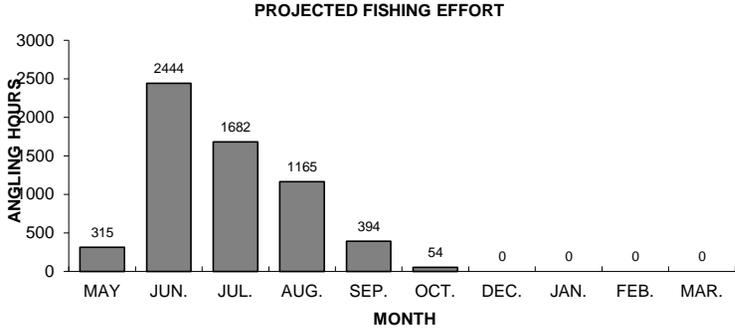
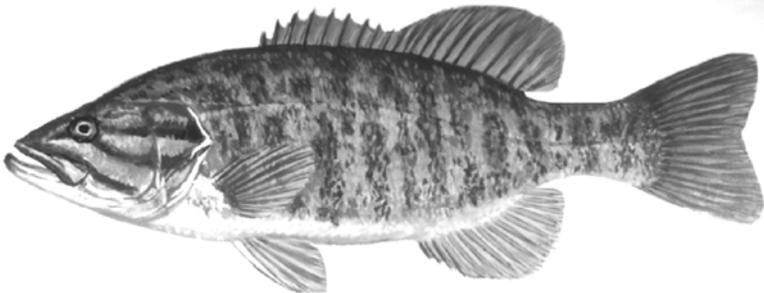


Figure 4. Smallmouth bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

LARGEMOUTH BASS

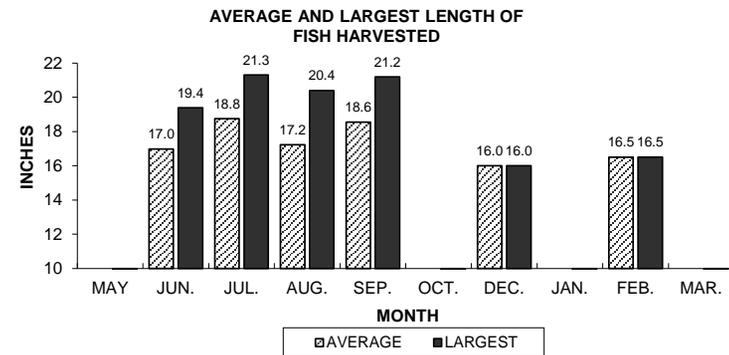
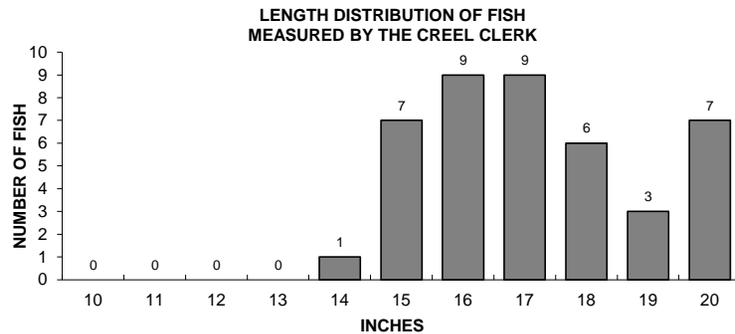
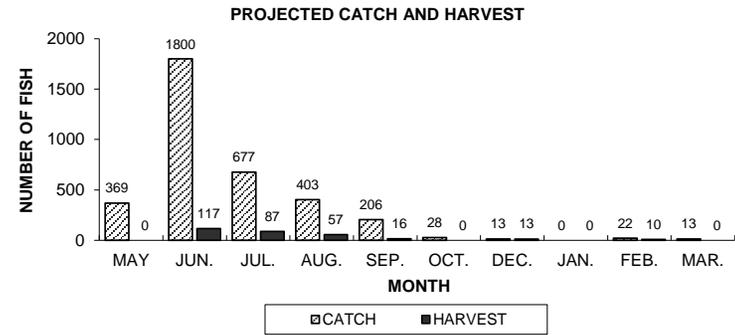
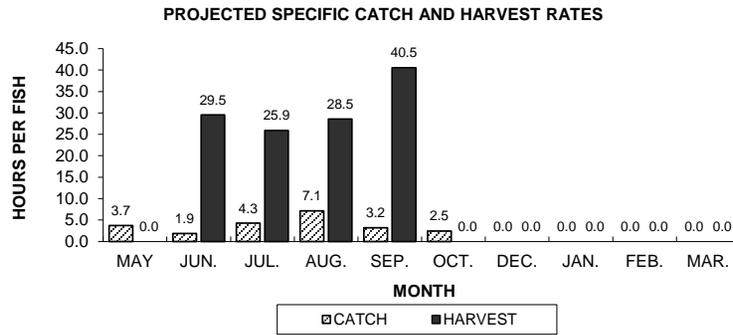
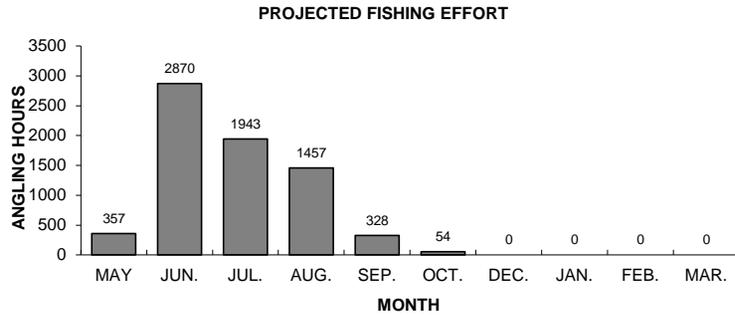
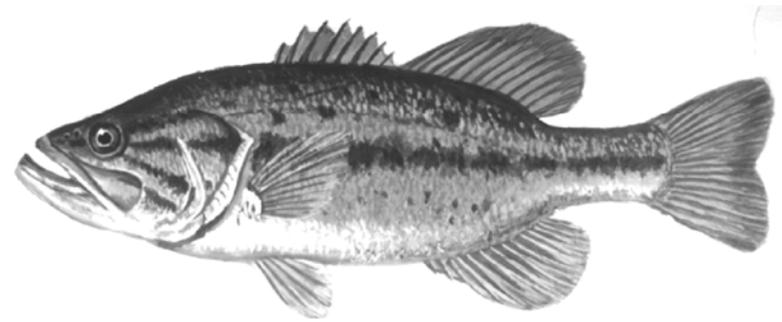


Figure 5. Largemouth bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

YELLOW PERCH

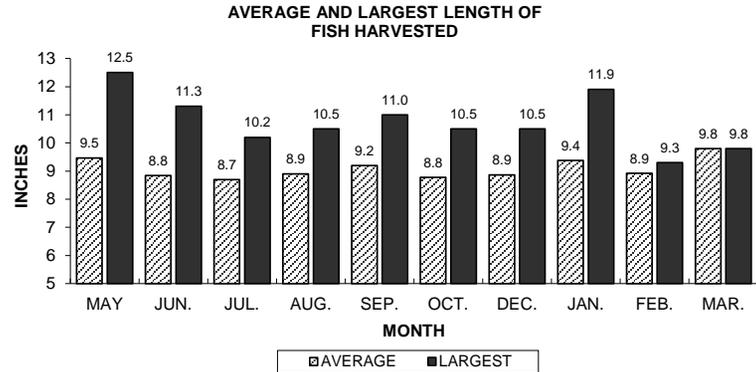
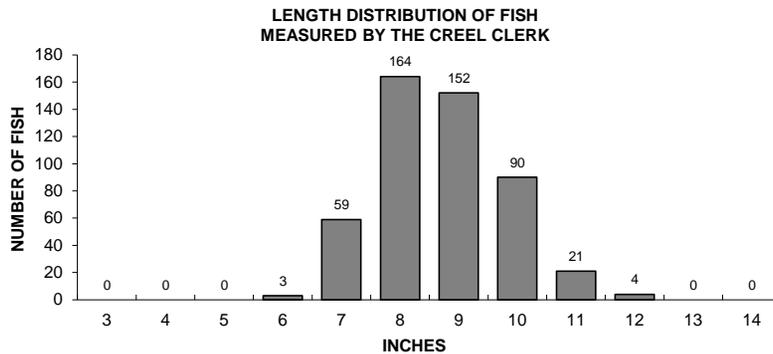
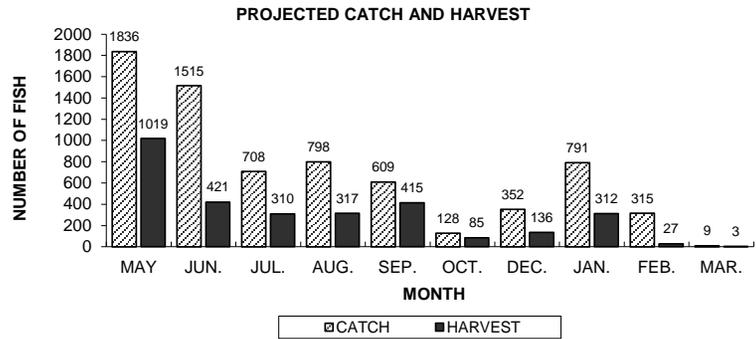
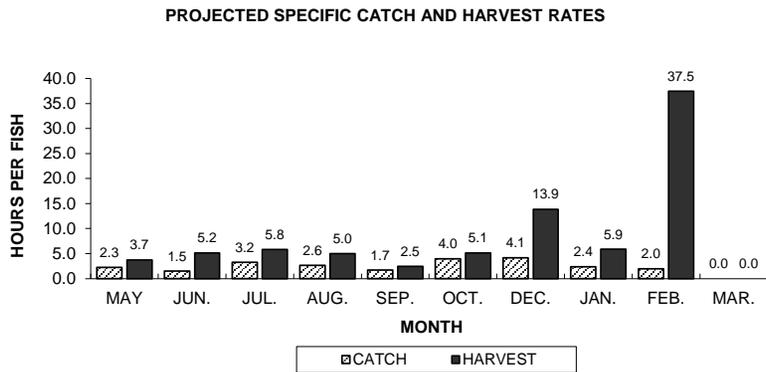
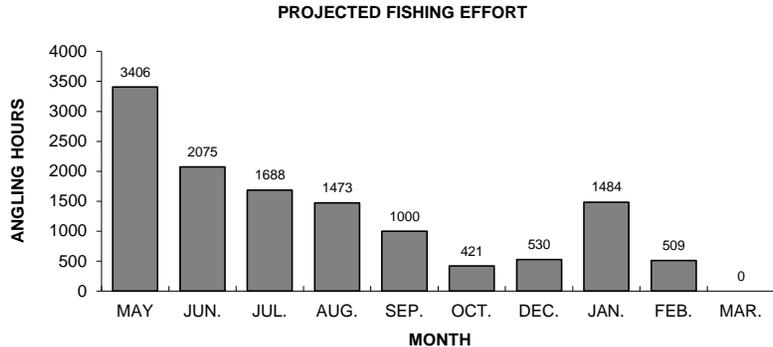


Figure 6. Yellow perch sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

BLUEGILL

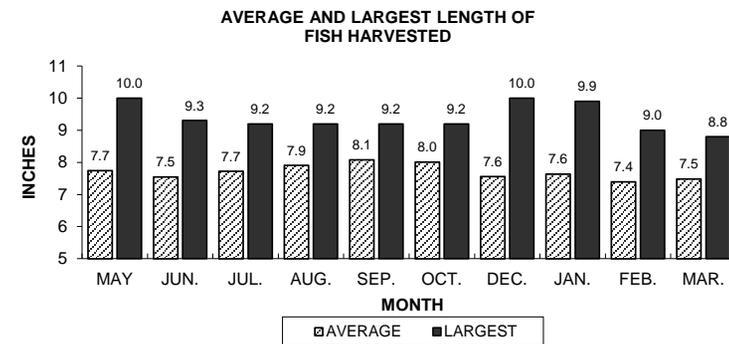
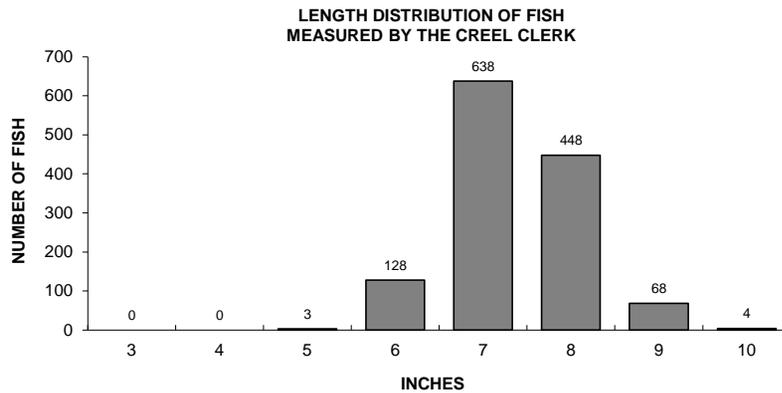
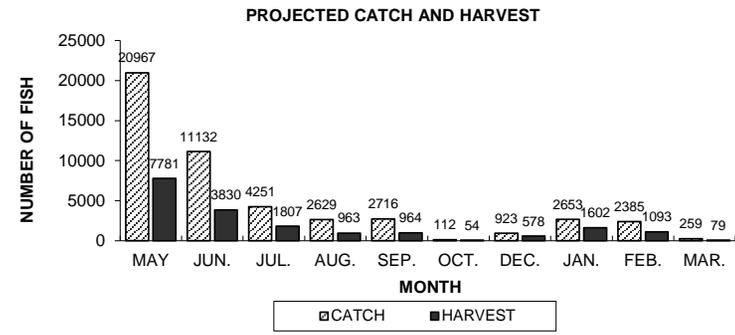
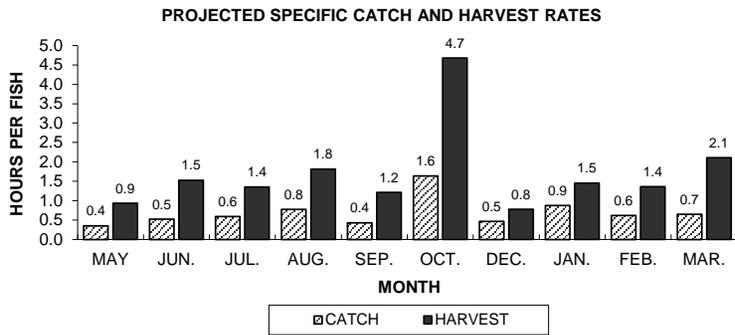
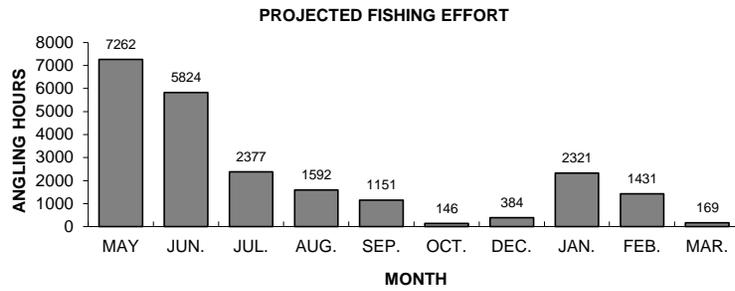
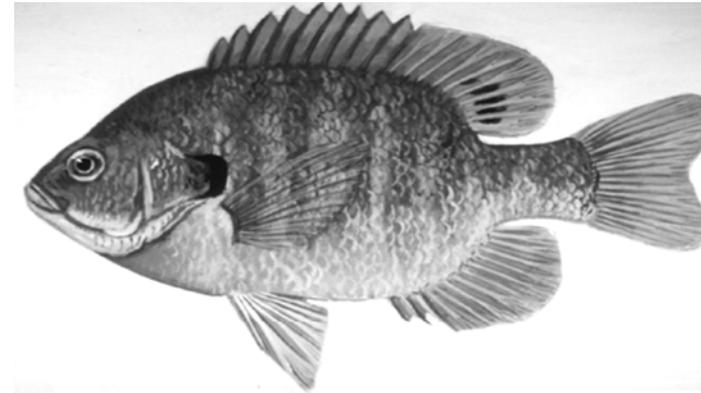


Figure 7. Bluegill sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

PUMPKINSEED

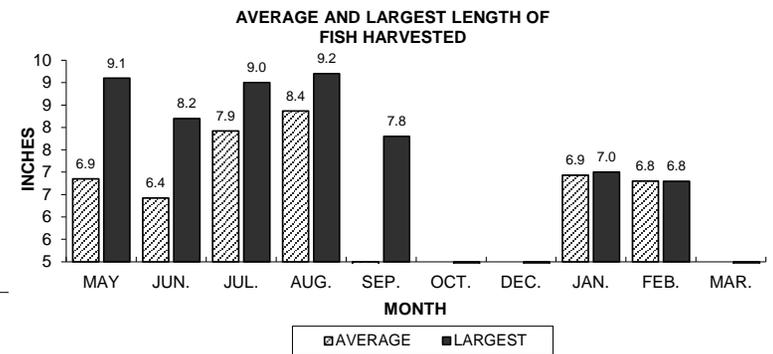
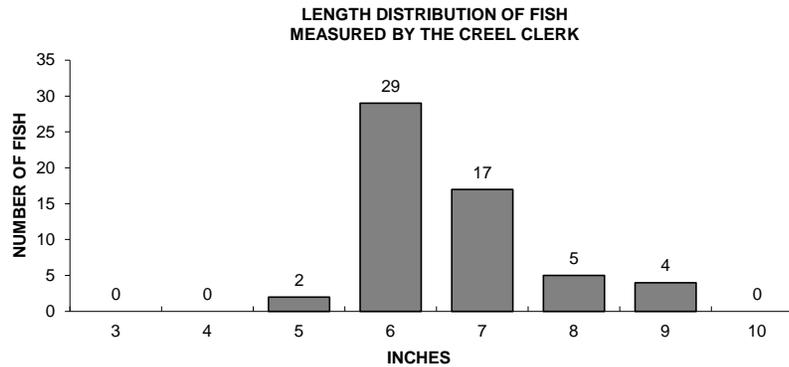
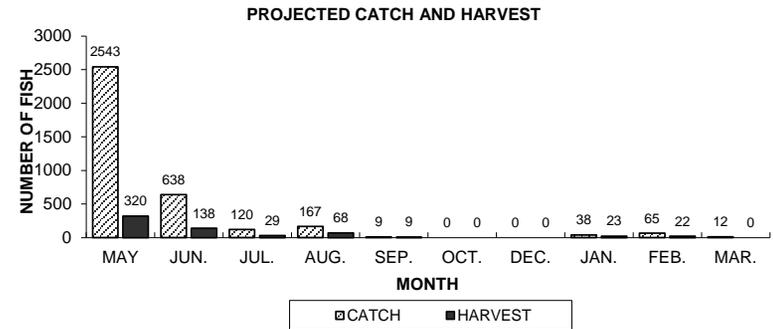
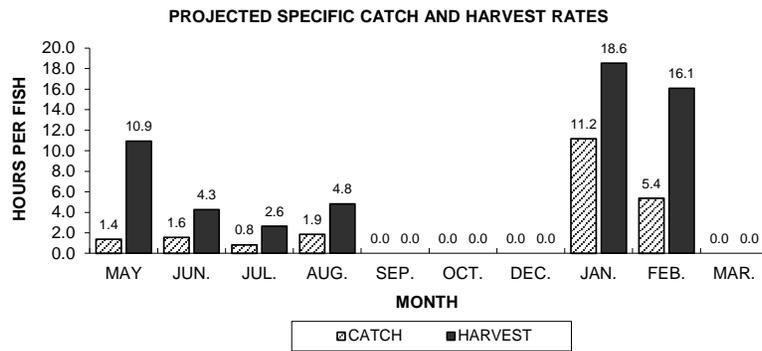
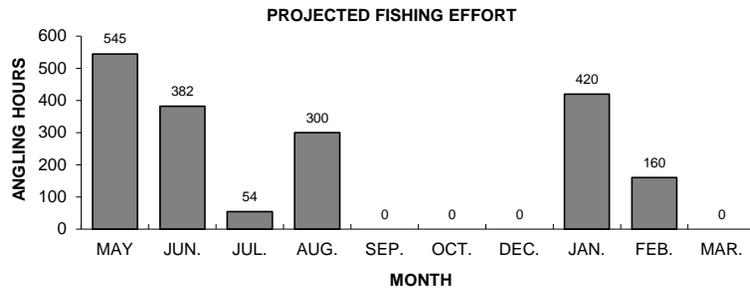
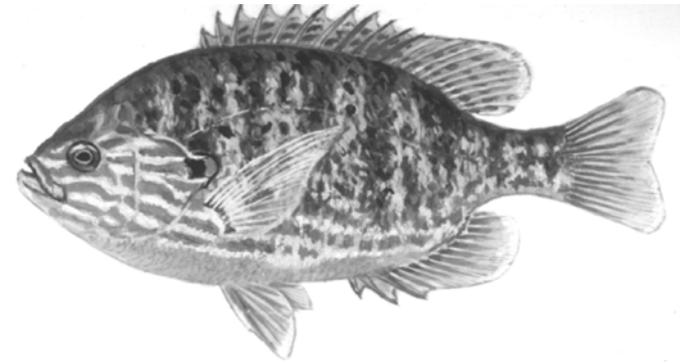


Figure 8. Pumpkinseed sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

ROCK BASS

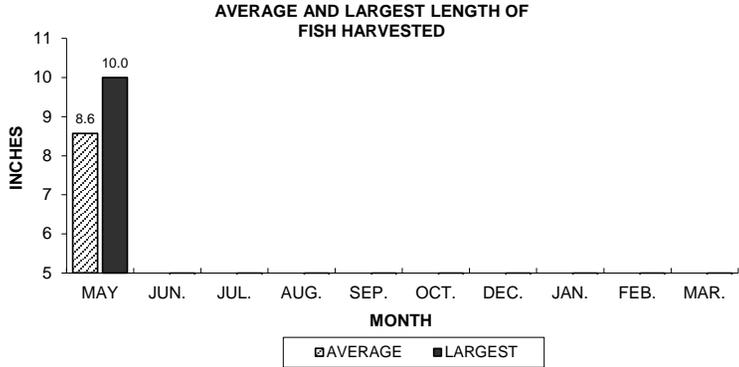
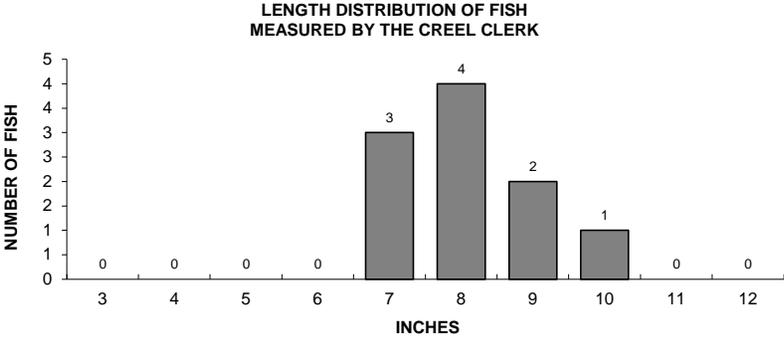
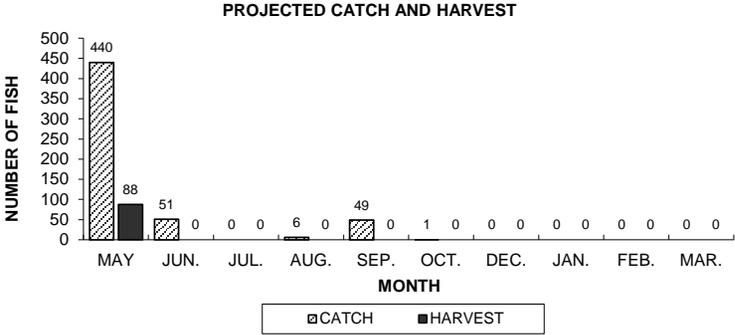
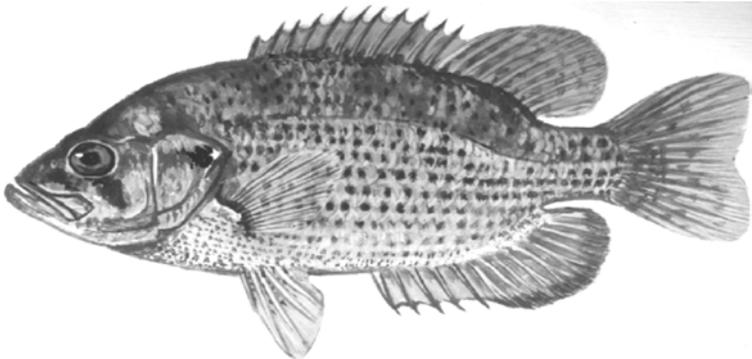


Figure 9. Rock bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.

BLACK CRAPPIE

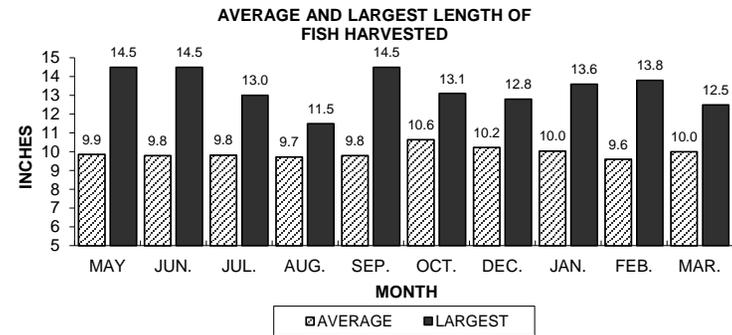
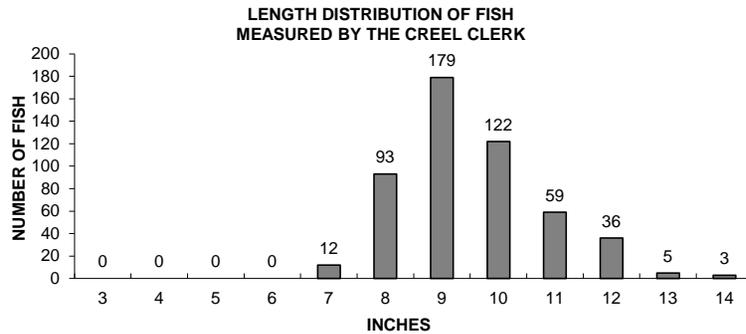
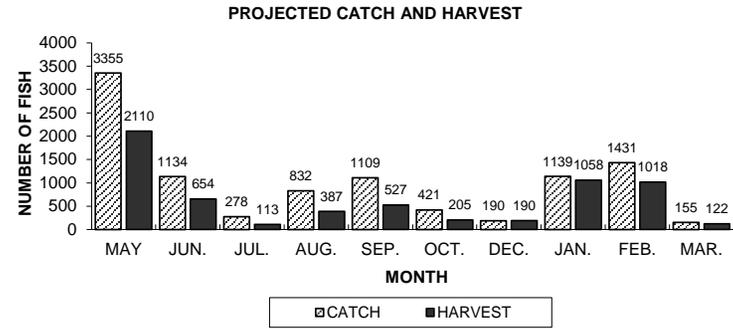
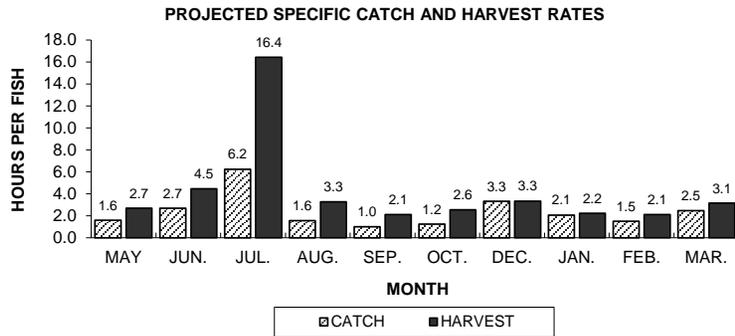
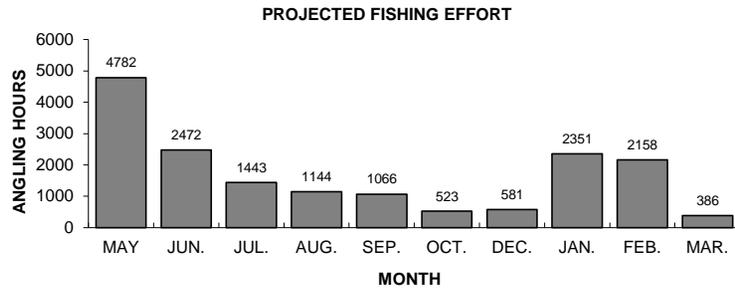
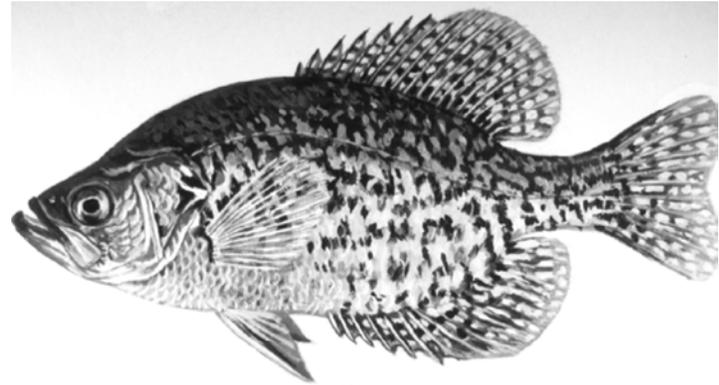


Figure 10. Black crappie sportfishing effort, catch, harvest, and length distribution, Presque Isle Chain, during 2012-13.