

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

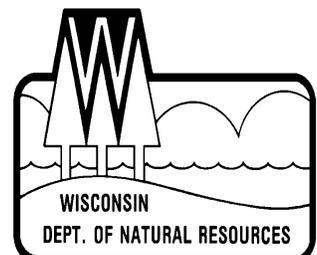
**WHITEFISH LAKE  
DOUGLAS COUNTY**

**2014-2015**



**Treaty Fisheries Publication**

**March, 2015**



## INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regularly conducts fishery surveys of area 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 WDNR 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 Chippewa tribal bands. The six Chippewa 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.

Information is also collected on the effects of sport angler harvest on fish populations. Because it would be impractical and costly to conduct a complete “census” of the fish harvested by sport anglers on area lakes, a creel survey is conducted to estimate the amount of fish harvested by sports anglers.

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

Whitefish Lake (also known as Bardon Lake) is located in Douglas County west of Gordon.

### Physical Characteristics

Whitefish Lake is 832 acres with a maximum depth of 102 feet. Water clarity is very clear in this seepage lake. There is a public boat landing on the southwest side of the lake on South Whitefish Lake Road.

### Seasons Surveyed

An open water creel survey was conducted from opening day of gamefish season on May 3, 2014 and ran through the end of October. Winter creel was conducted from December 1<sup>st</sup> through the close of the gamefish season on March 1, 2015.

### Harvest Regulations

The following seasons, daily bag limits, and length limits were in place on this lake in 2014-2015:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Bag Limit</u>	<u>Min. Size</u>
Walleye*	05/03-3/01	3	15"
Largemouth Bass	06/21-3/01	5	14"
Smallmouth Bass	06/21-3/01	5	14"
Northern Pike	05/03-3/01	5	none
Panfish	all year	25	none

\*The walleye bag limit may have been reduced due to tribal declarations.

## SPECIES CATCH AND HARVEST INFORMATION

Angling information is summarized on a single page for each species. If a page for a particular species is not present in this section it is because no one reported fishing for that species and/or none were caught. Each species page has up to five graphs covering the following:

### FIGURE 1 ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

Total calculated number of hours during each month that anglers spent fishing for this species.

### FIGURE 2 ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

Calculated number of hours it takes an angler to catch or harvest a fish of this species. Only information from anglers who were **specifically** targeting this species is reported here.

### FIGURE 3 ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

Calculated number of fish of this species caught or harvested by all anglers. This estimate also includes **incidental** catch and harvest of fish by anglers that were not specifically targeting this species.

### FIGURE 4 LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

All fish of this species measured by the clerk during the entire creel survey season.

## **FIGURE 5**

### **AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**

Average length and the largest fish of this species harvested each month. Only those fish measured by the creel clerk are reported here.

Questions about the report can be directed to  
Gene Hatzenbeler  
WDNR Spooner Office  
810 W. Maple Street  
Spooner, WI 54801  
Phone: (715)635-4164  
Email: [Gene.Hatzenbeler@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Gene.Hatzenbeler@Wisconsin.gov)

## **Seasonal Angler Effort Summary**

The table provides a summary by month of the total angler hours and total angler hours per acre. Also, the table compares county average and ceded territory average to current survey results.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

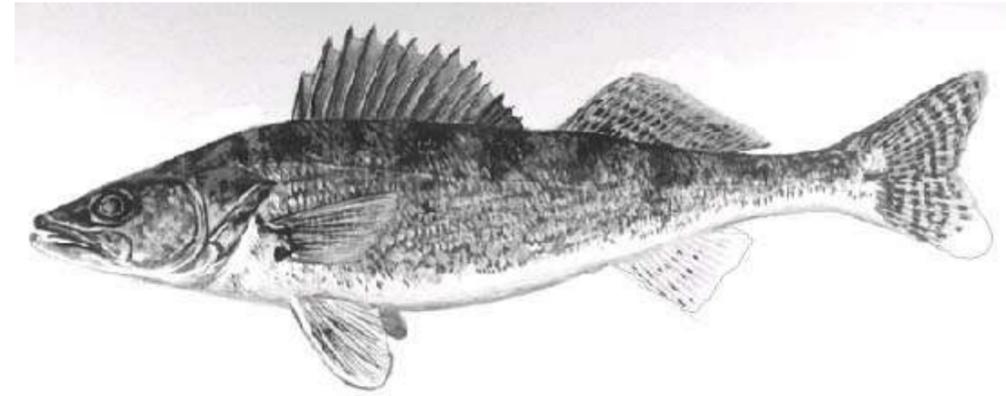
The completion of this survey was possible because of the efforts of the following Treaty Assessment Staff: Gene Hatzenbeler, Todd Brecka, Misty Rood, Jill Sunderland, Jake Jacobson, and Mac McInroy. We would especially like to recognize the efforts of our creel clerk Marty Kangas who collected the angler interviews.

The Department would like to thank Roger Kolquist. He generously allowed the department to keep a boat and snowmobile at his property during this survey.

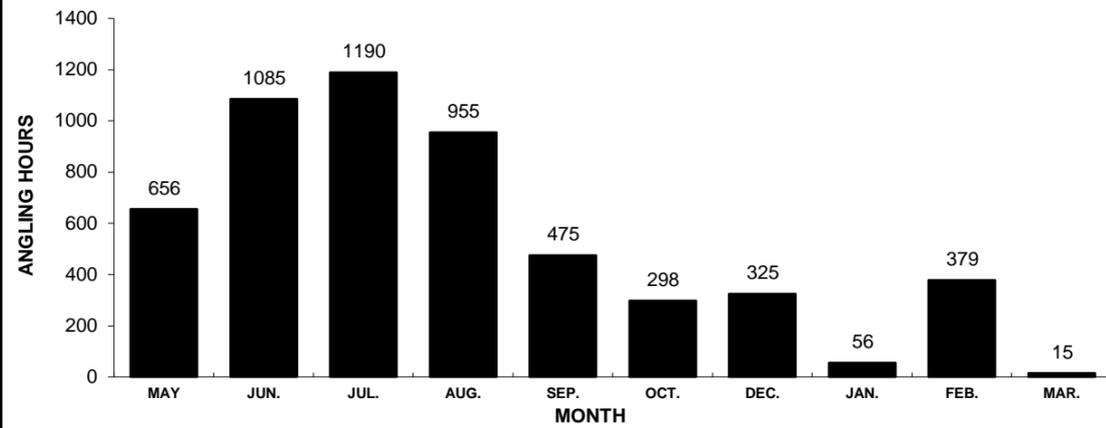
We would also like to thank all the anglers who took the time to offer information about their fishing trip to the survey clerk. Without your cooperation this survey would not have been possible.

Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes can be obtained from the Treaty Fisheries Biologist in Spooner or WDNR Webpage.

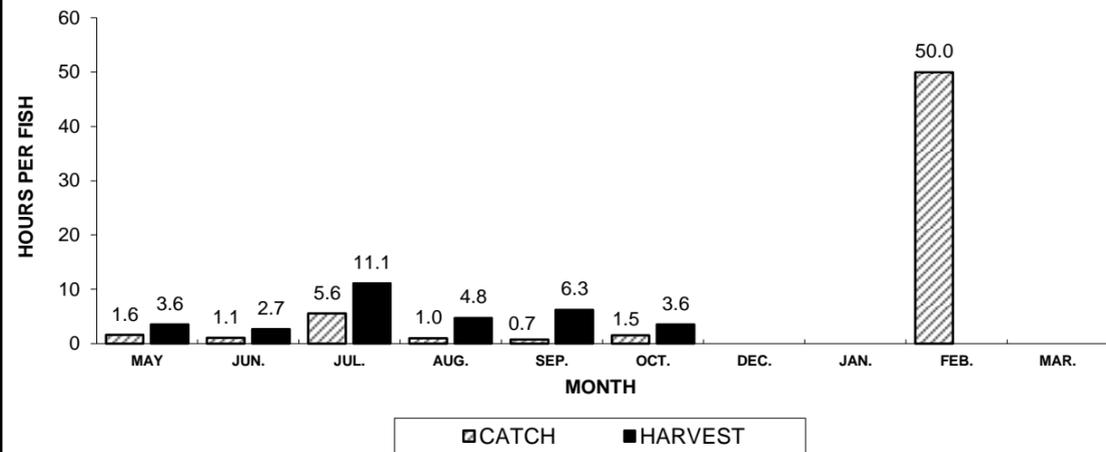
# WALLEYE



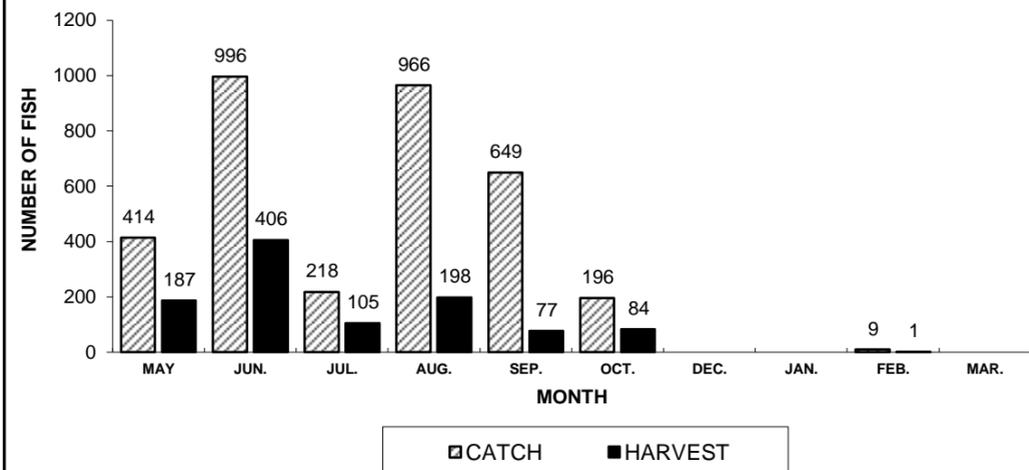
**FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT**



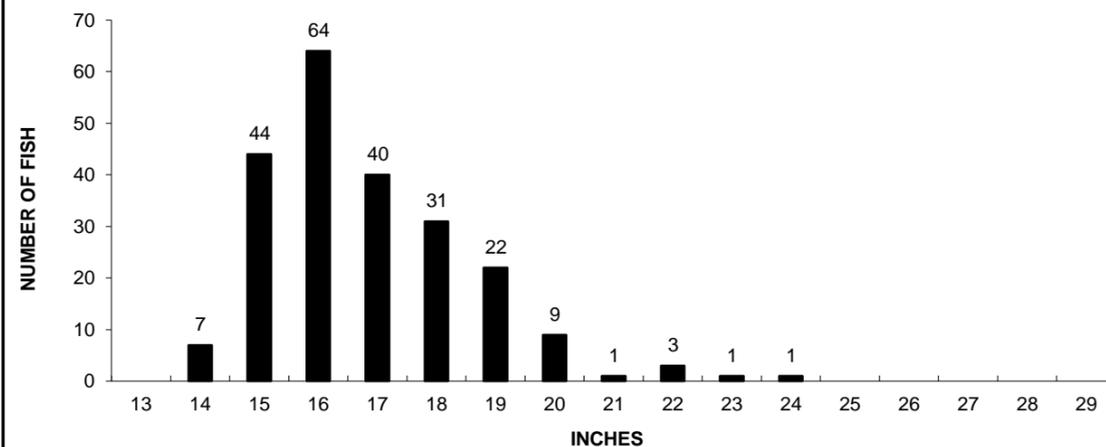
**FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**



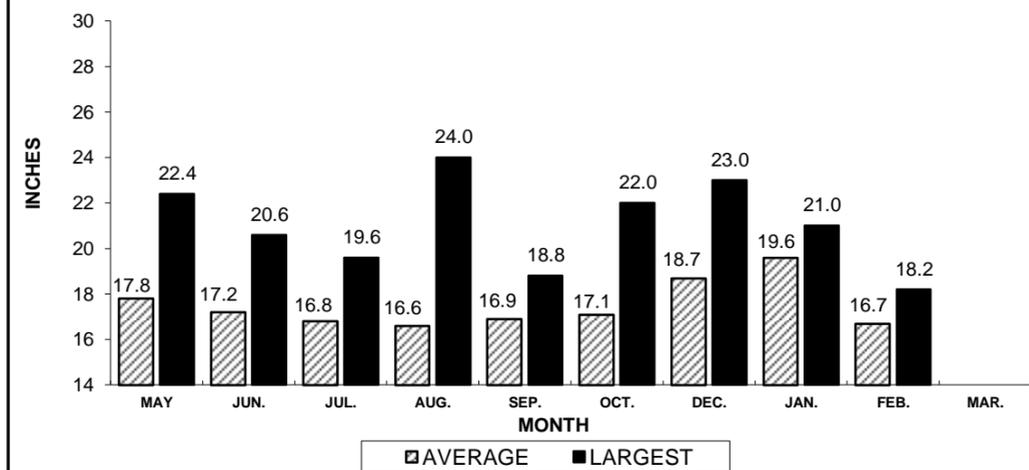
**FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST**



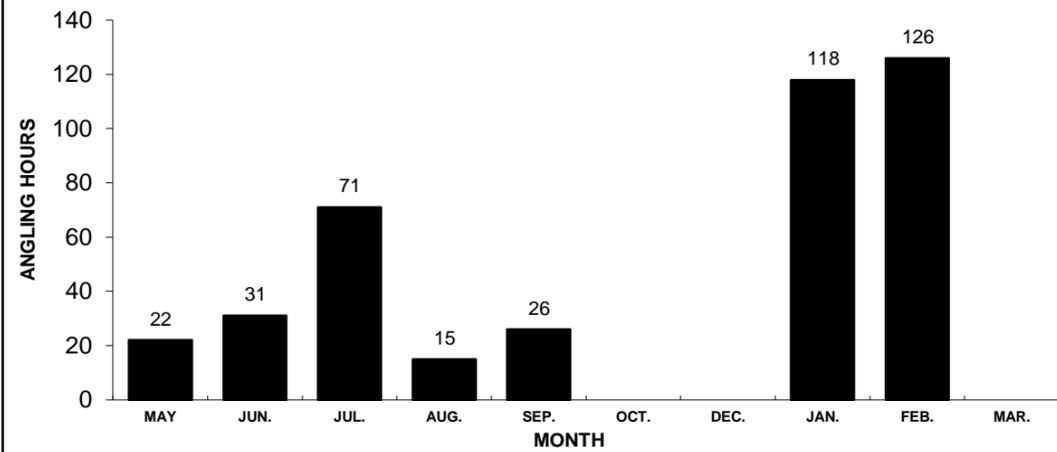
**FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF FISH MEASURED BY CLERK**



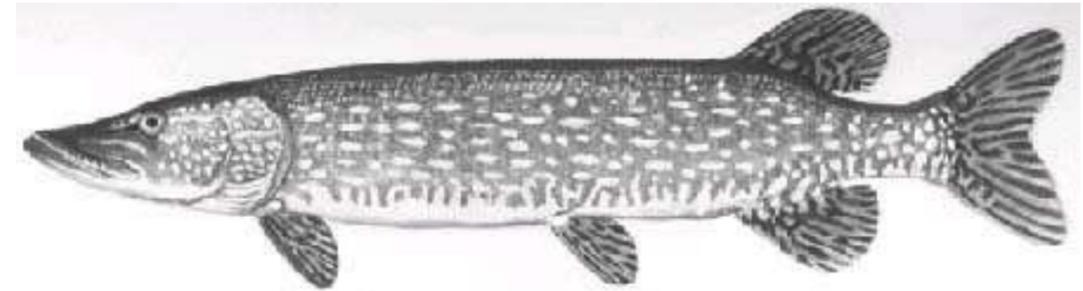
**FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**



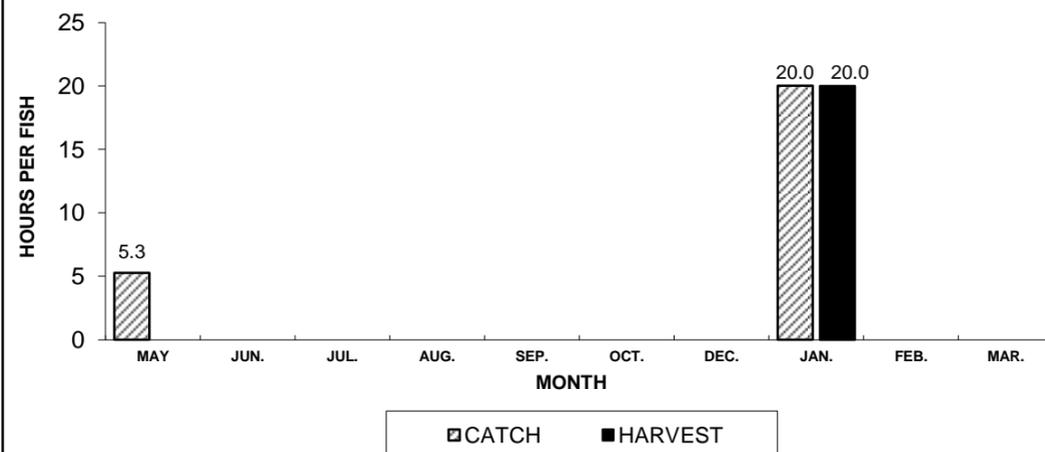
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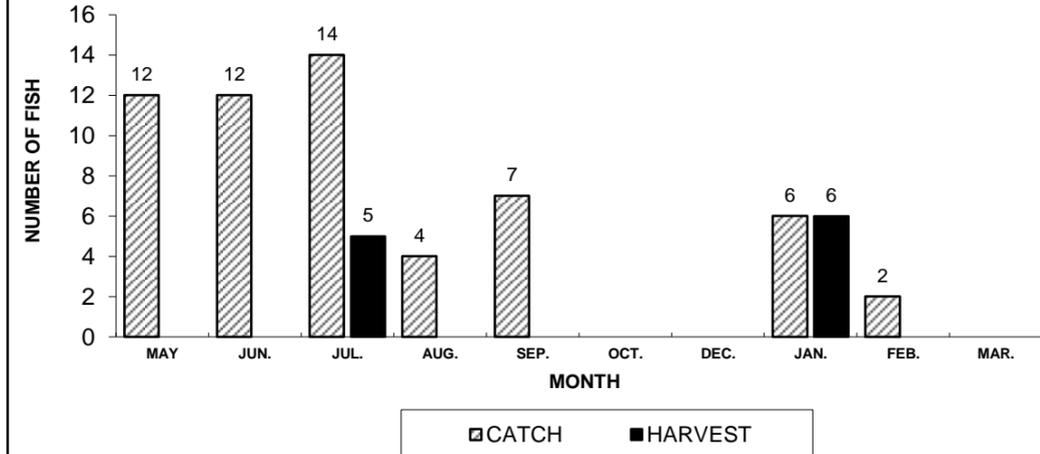
# NORTHERN PIKE



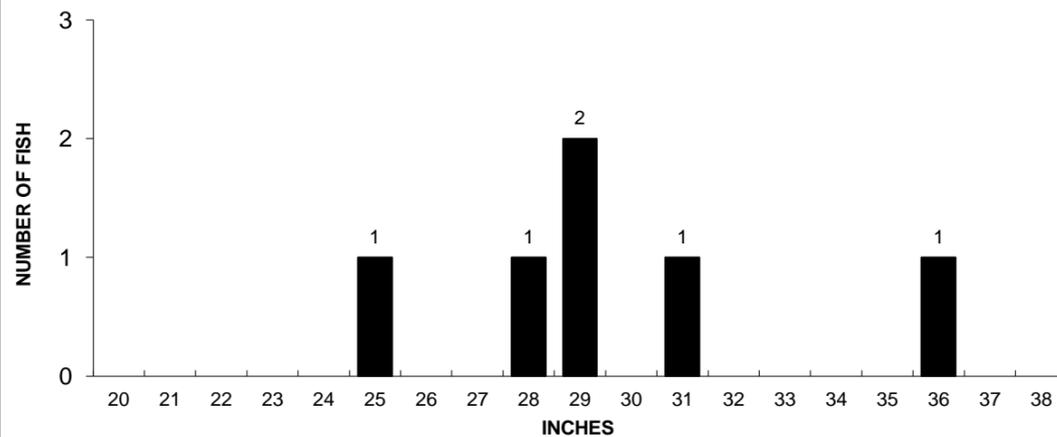
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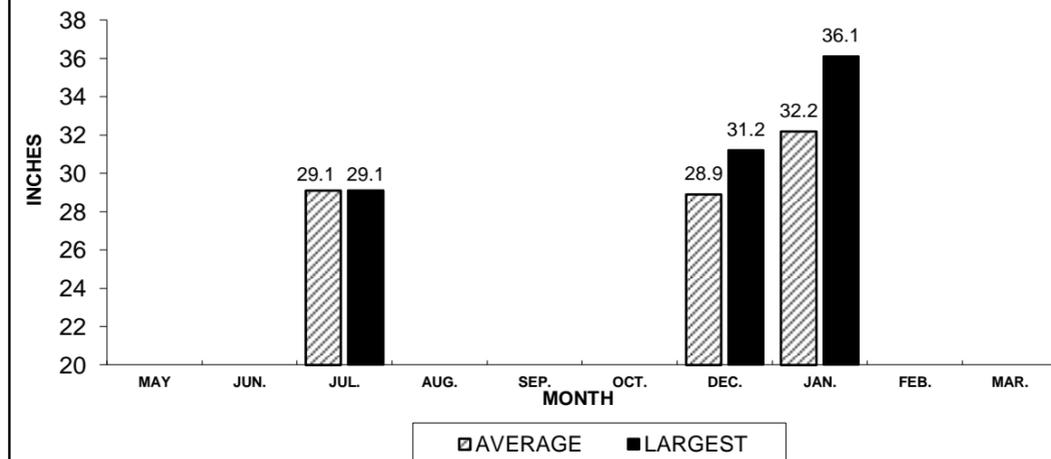
**FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST**



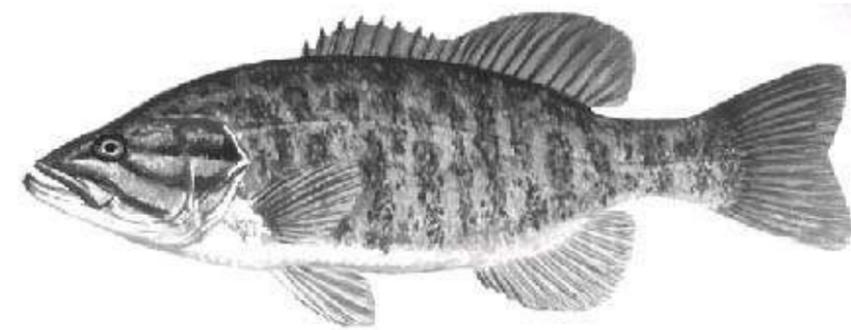
**FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK**



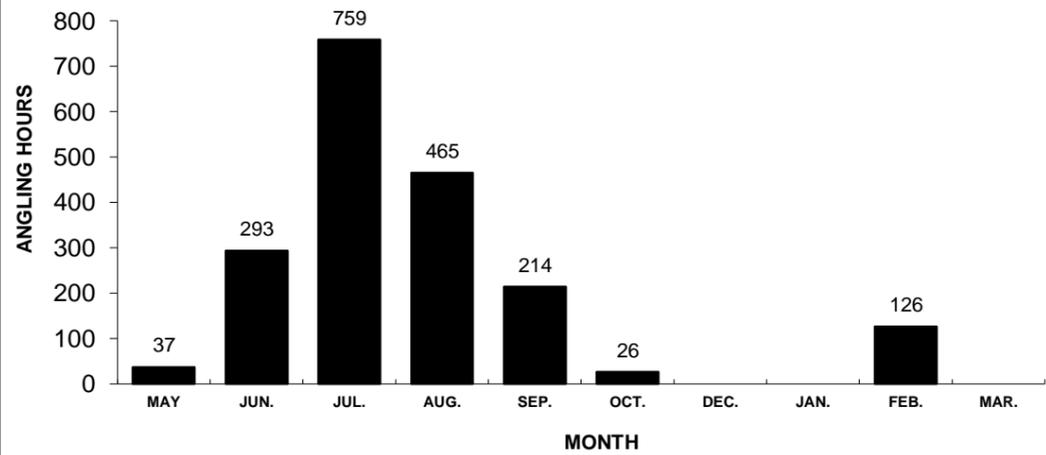
**FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**



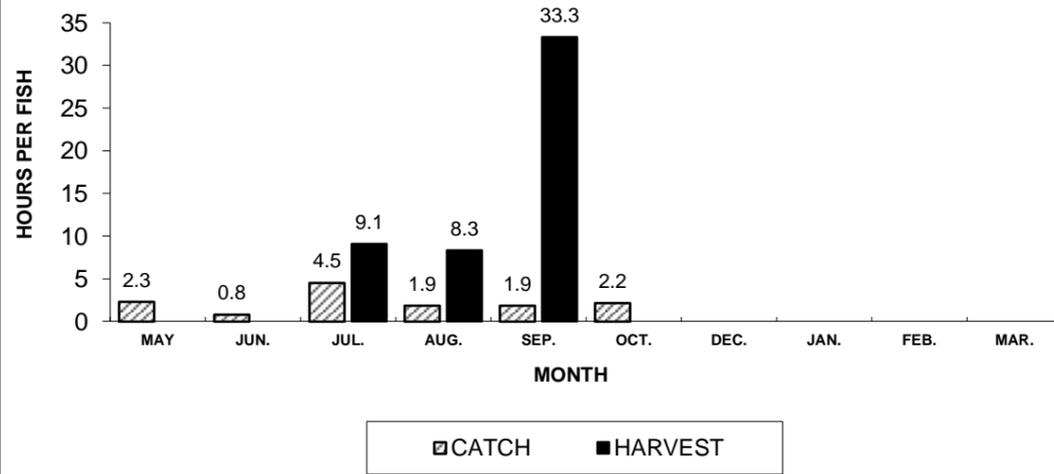
# SMALLMOUTH BASS



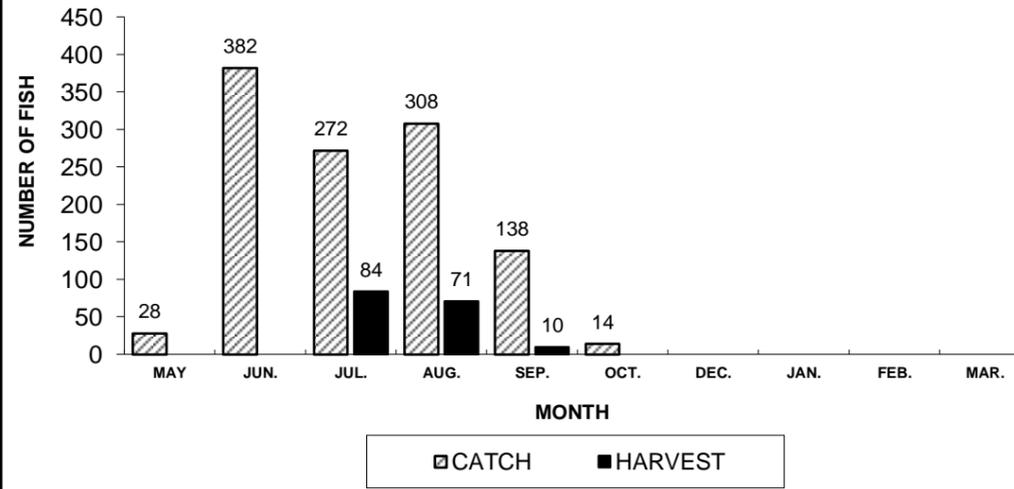
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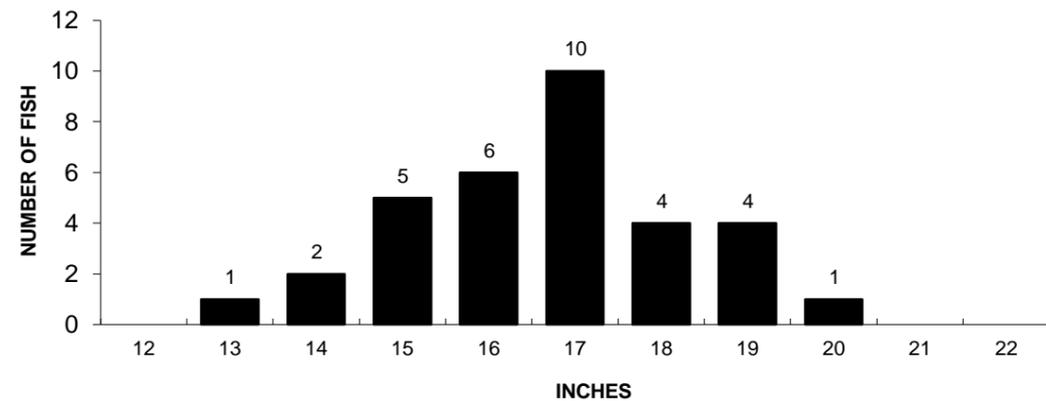
**FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**



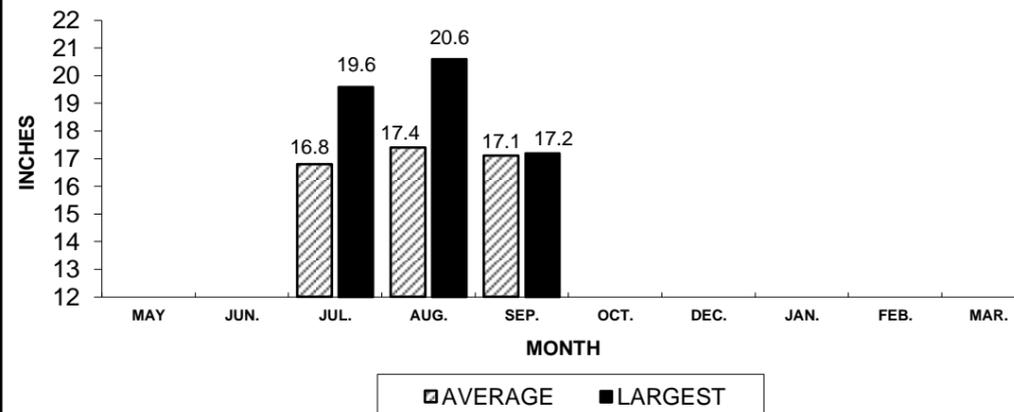
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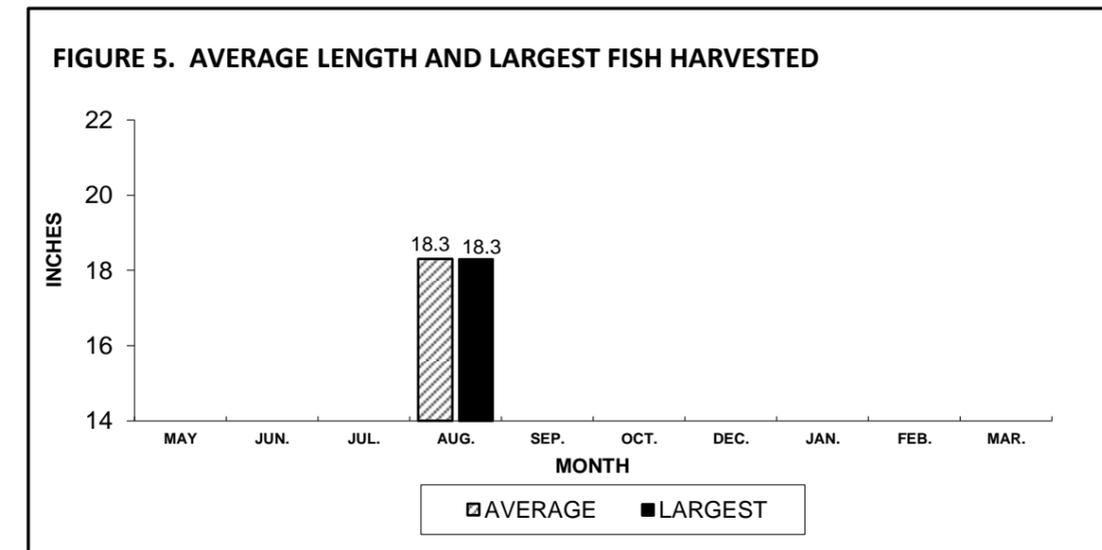
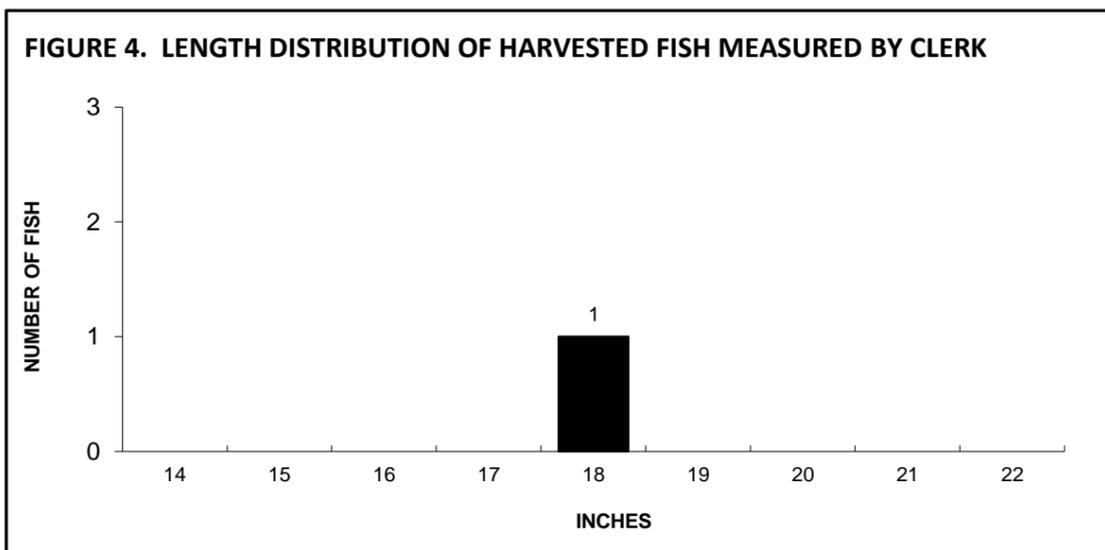
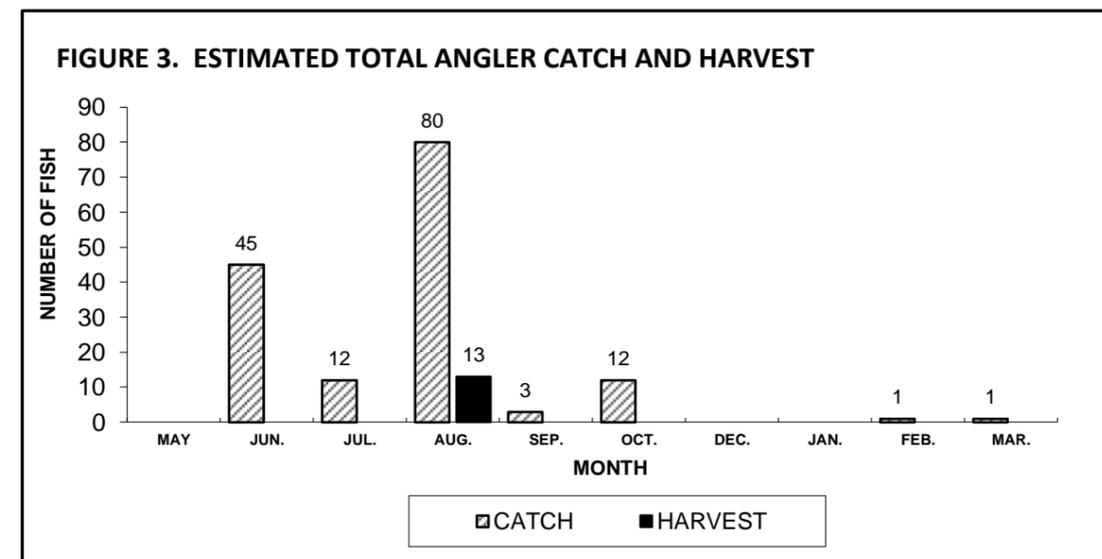
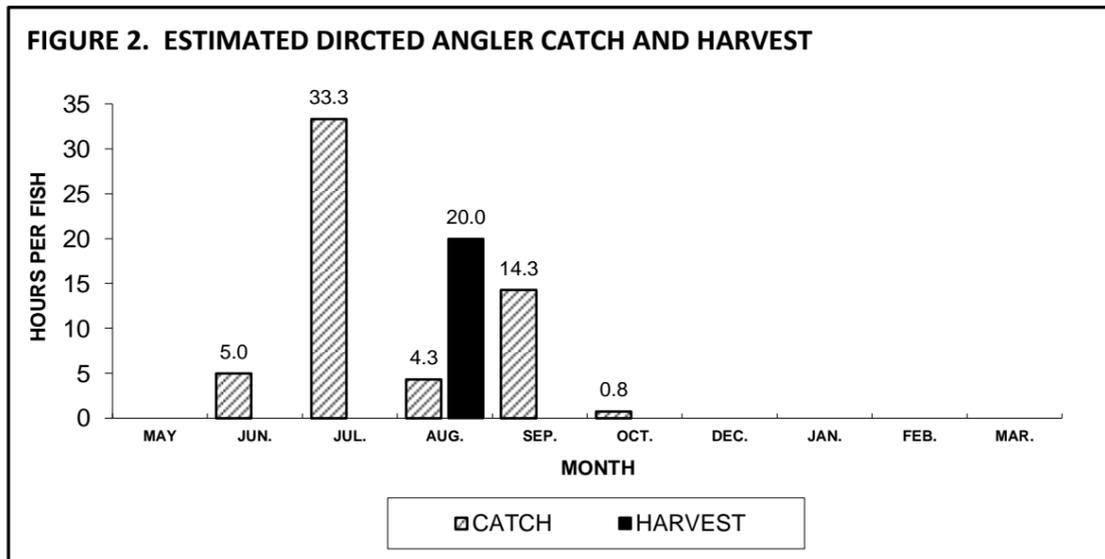
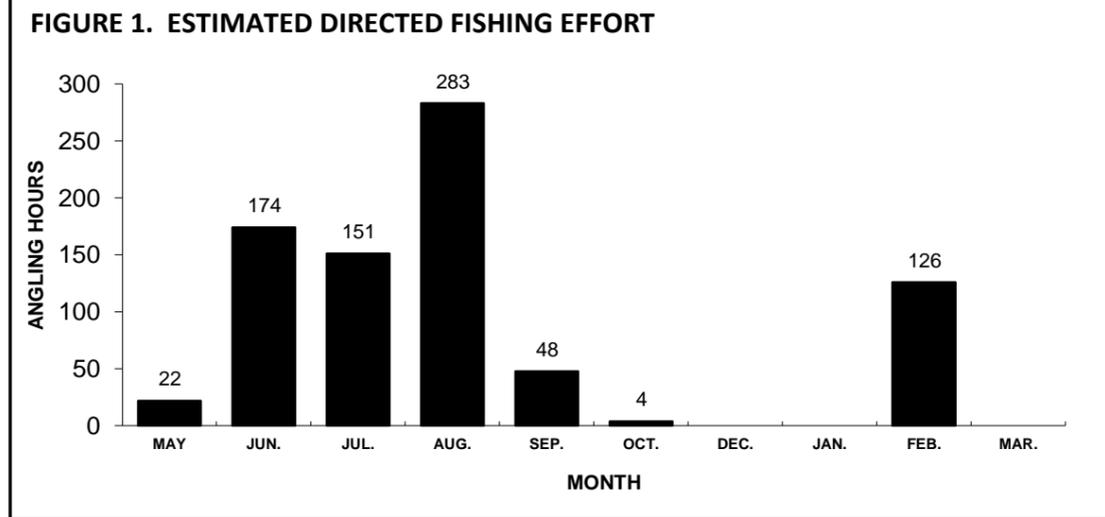
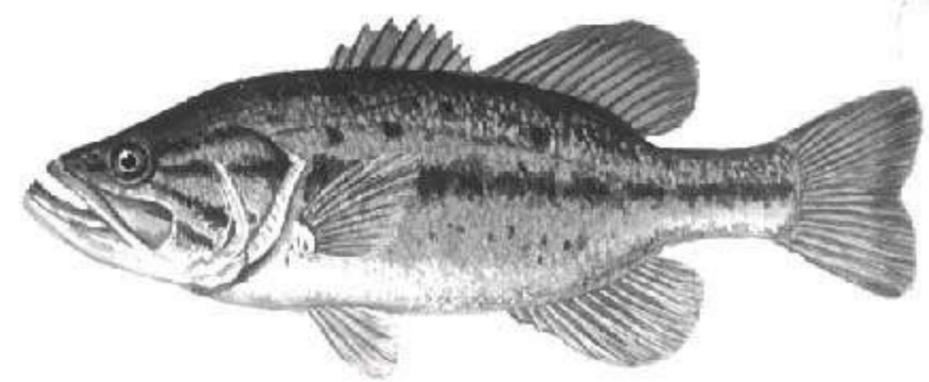
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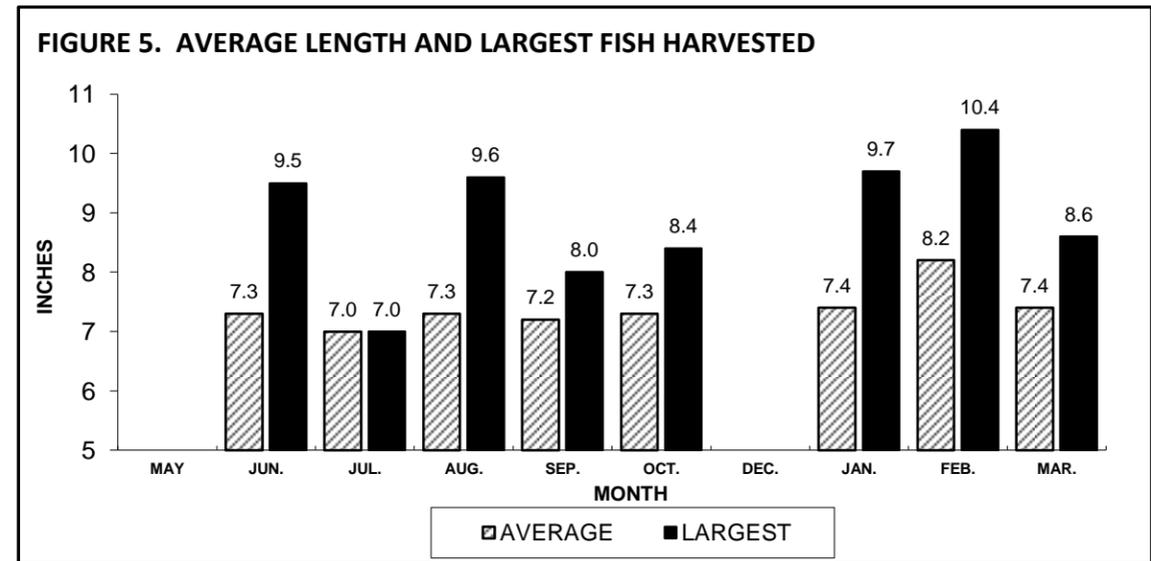
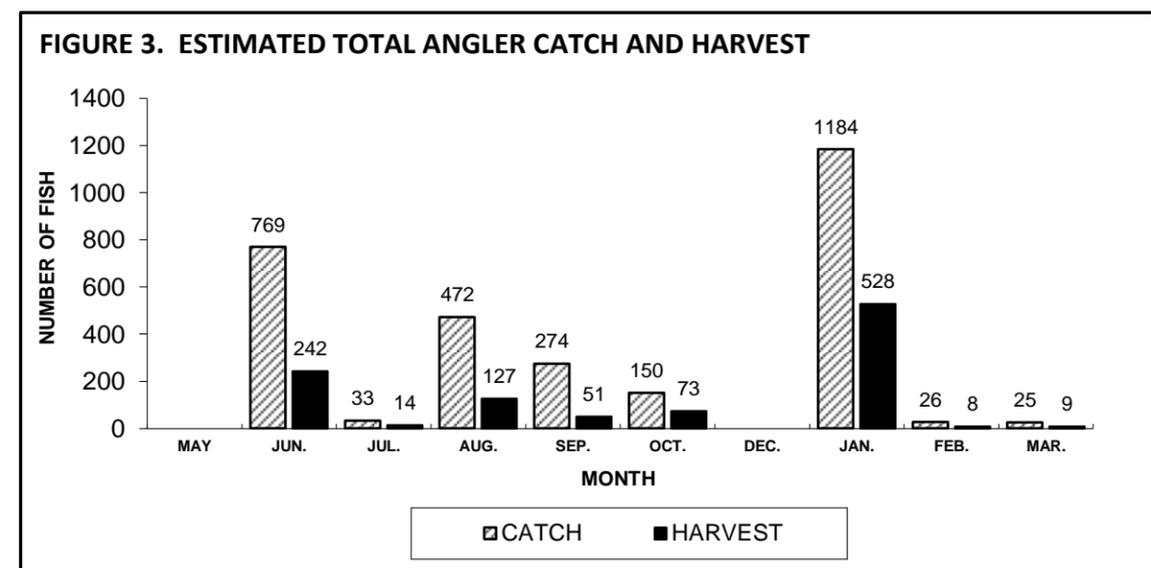
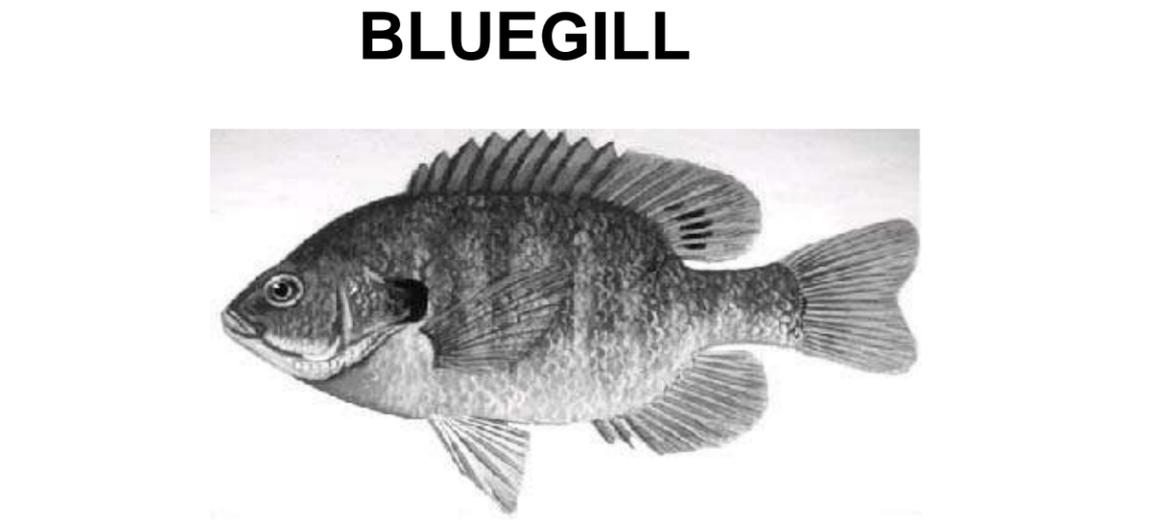
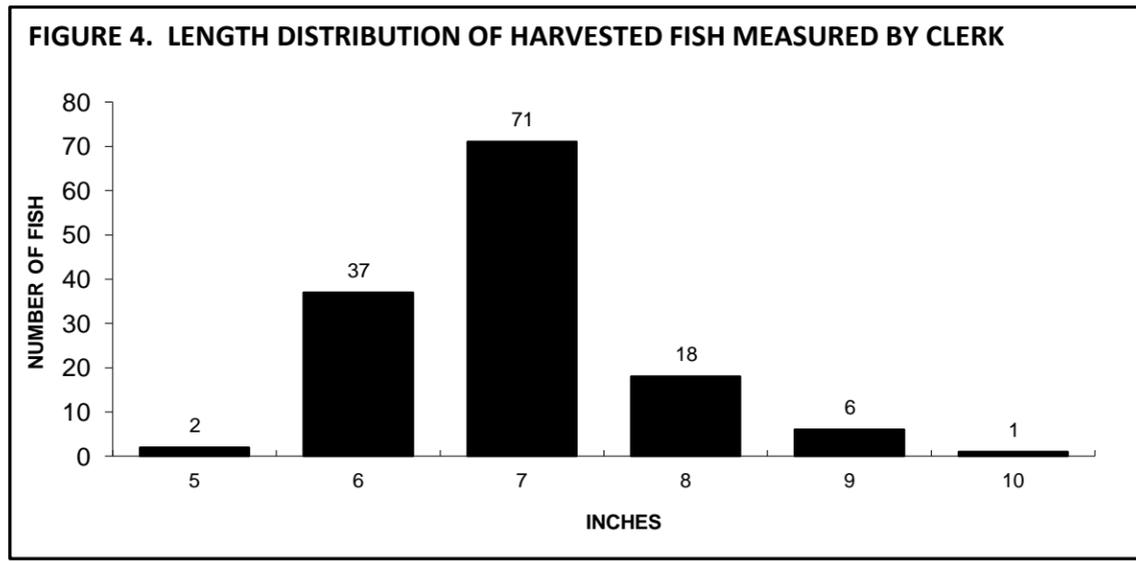
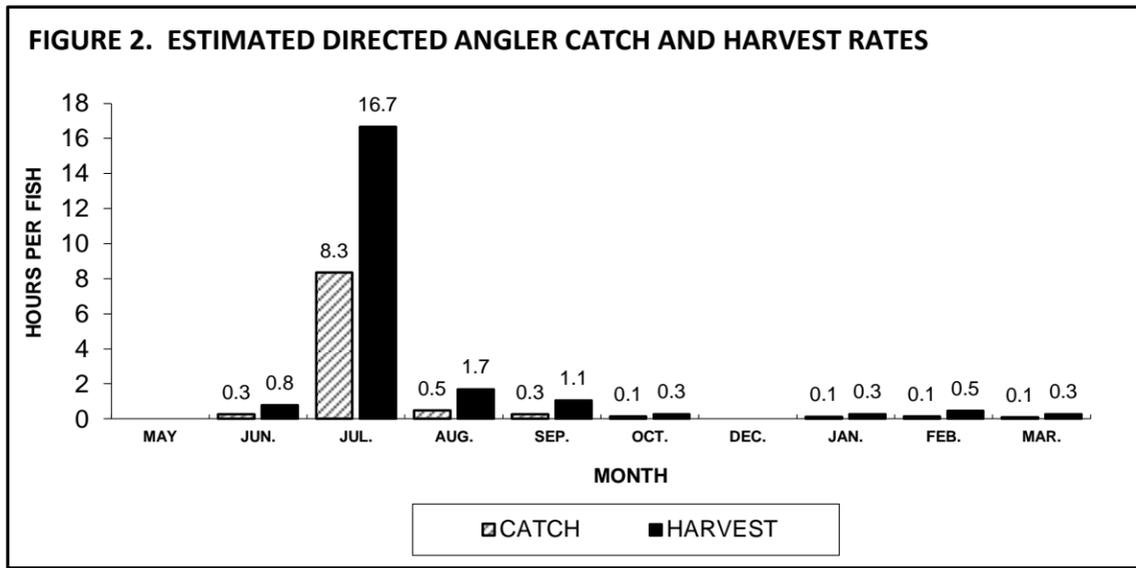
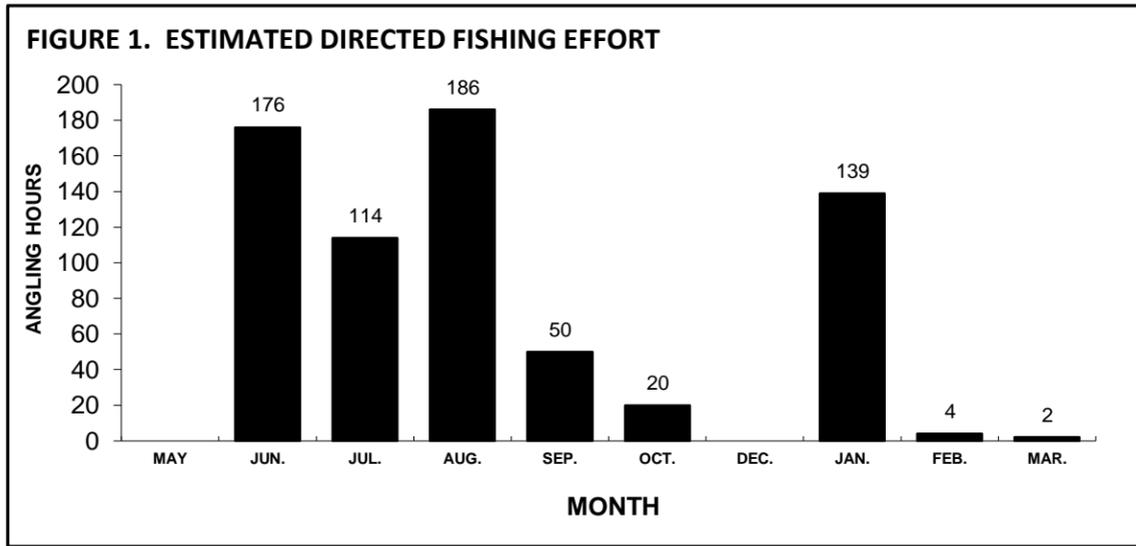


**FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**

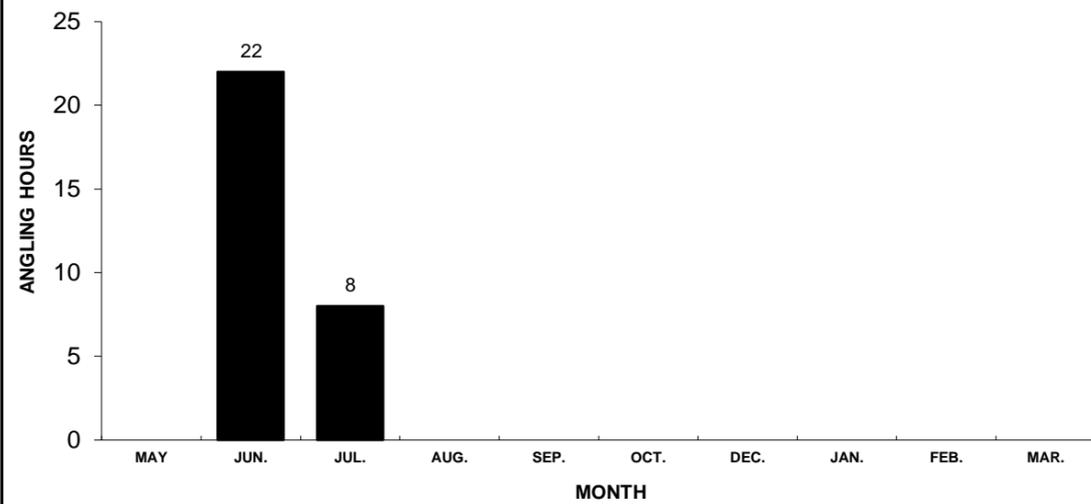


# LARGEMOUTH BASS

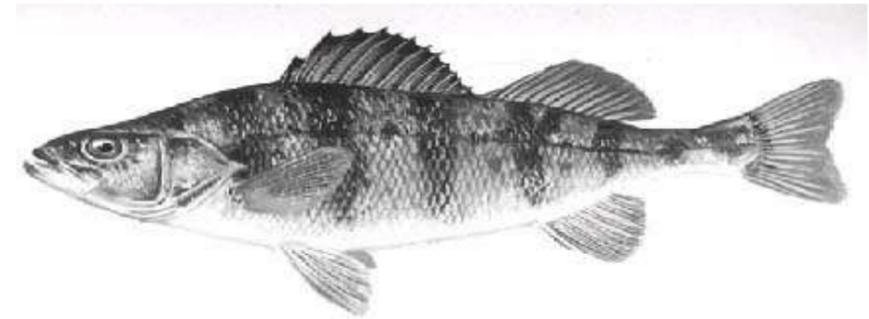




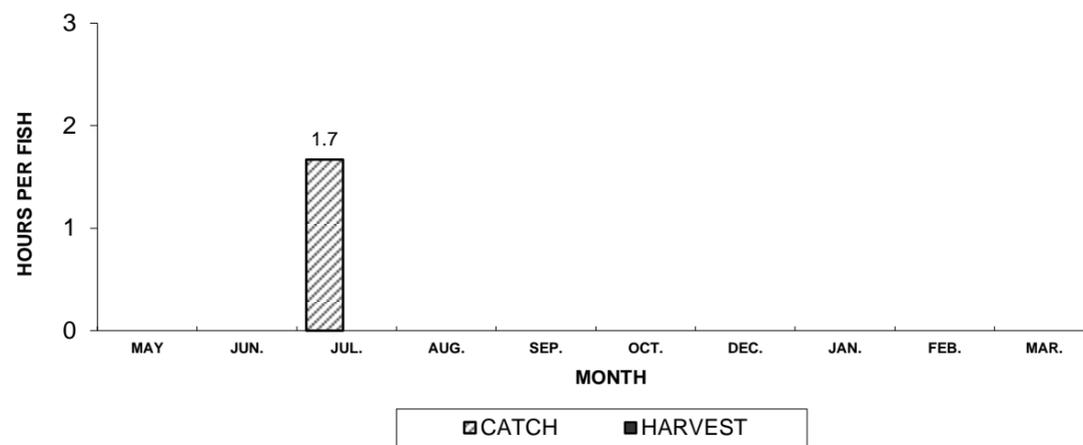
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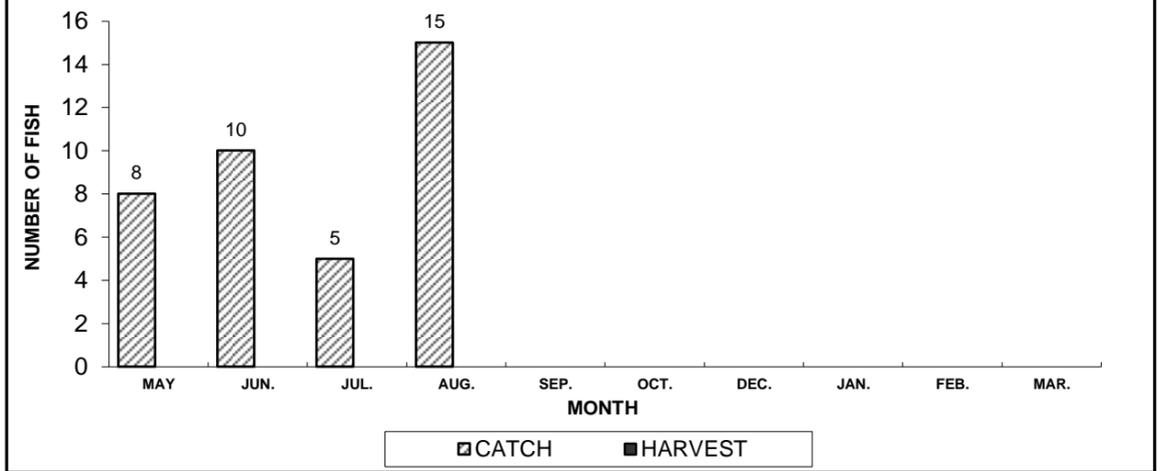
# YELLOW PERCH



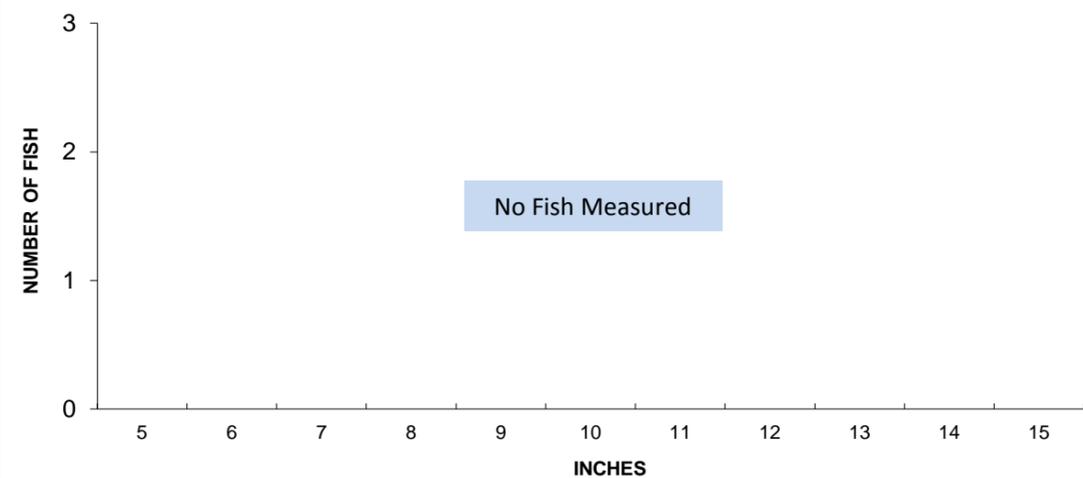
**FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**



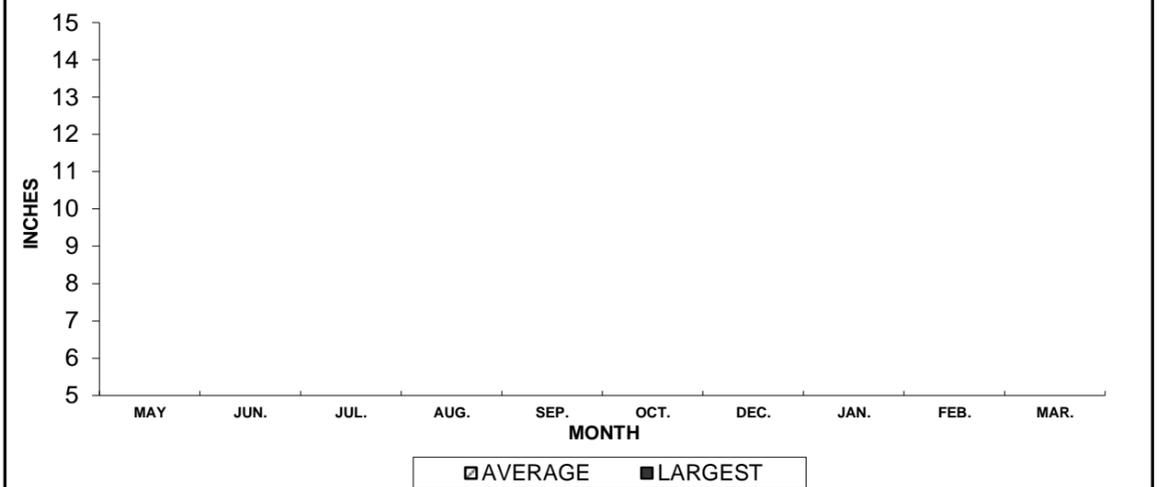
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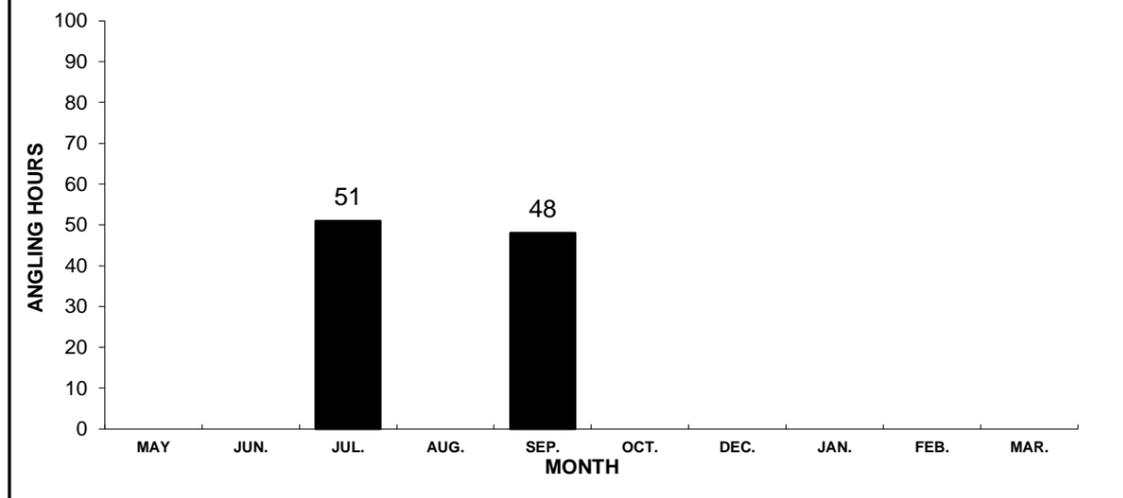
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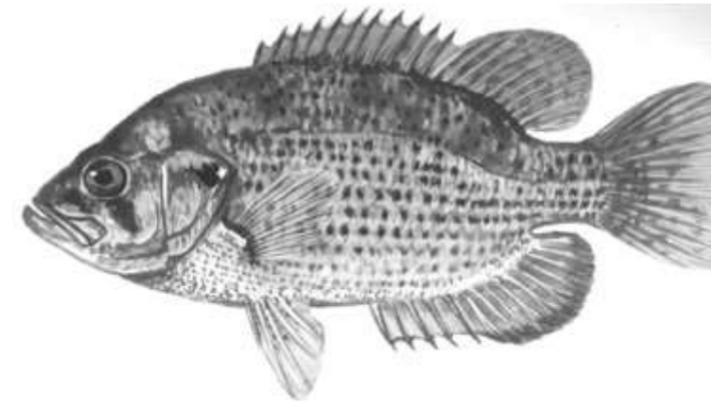
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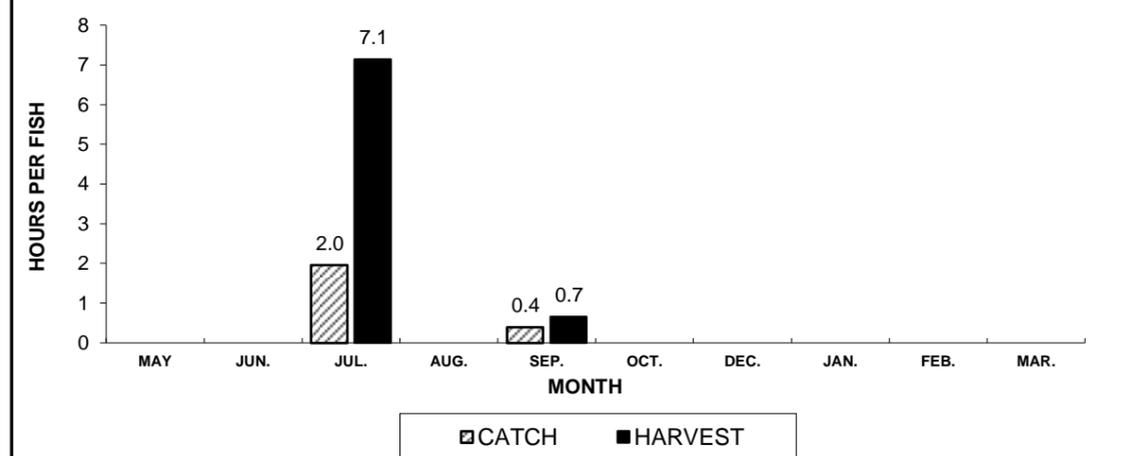
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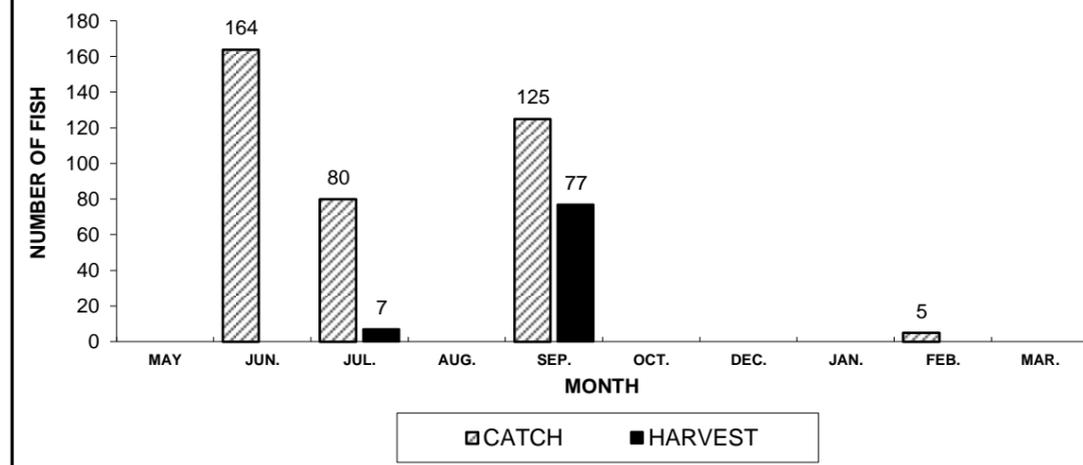
# ROCK BASS



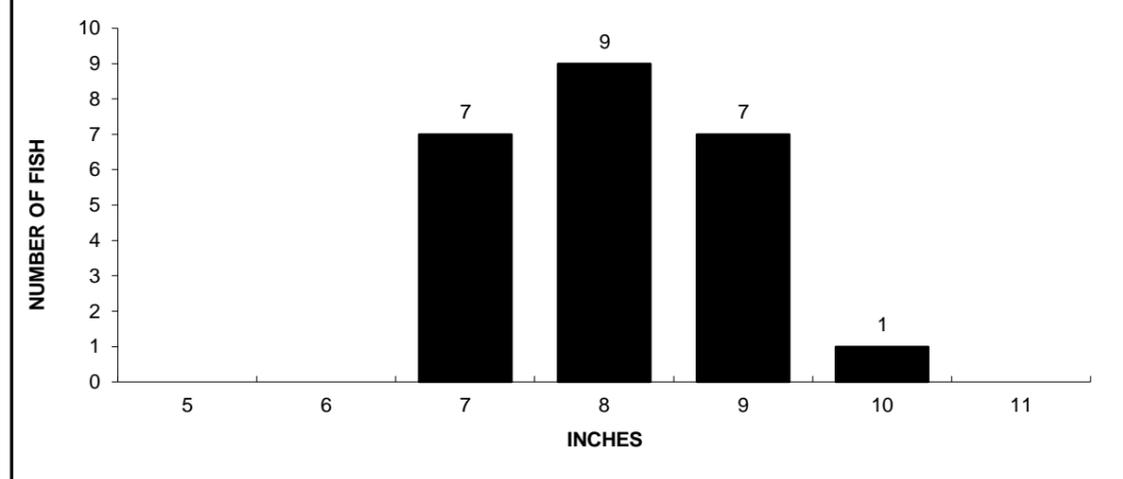
**FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**



**FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST**



**FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK**



**FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**

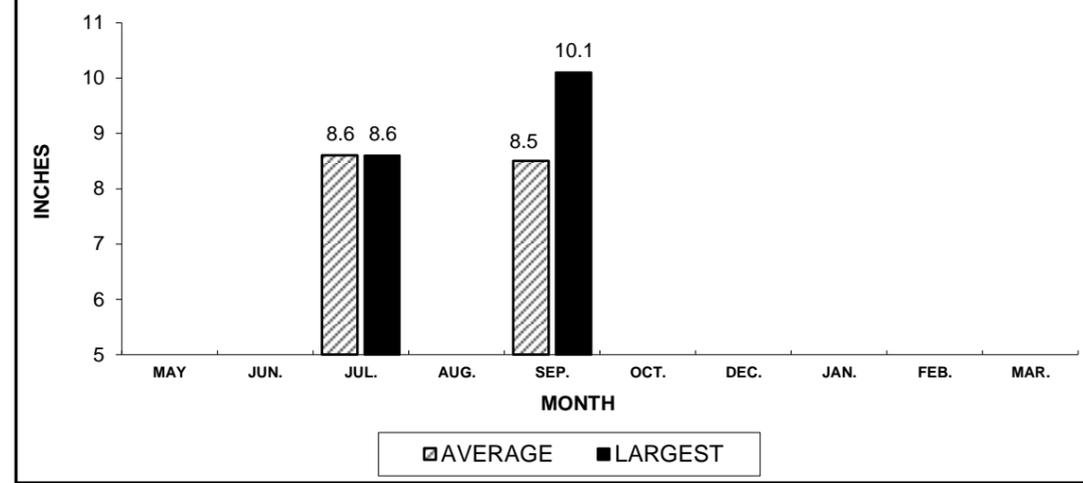
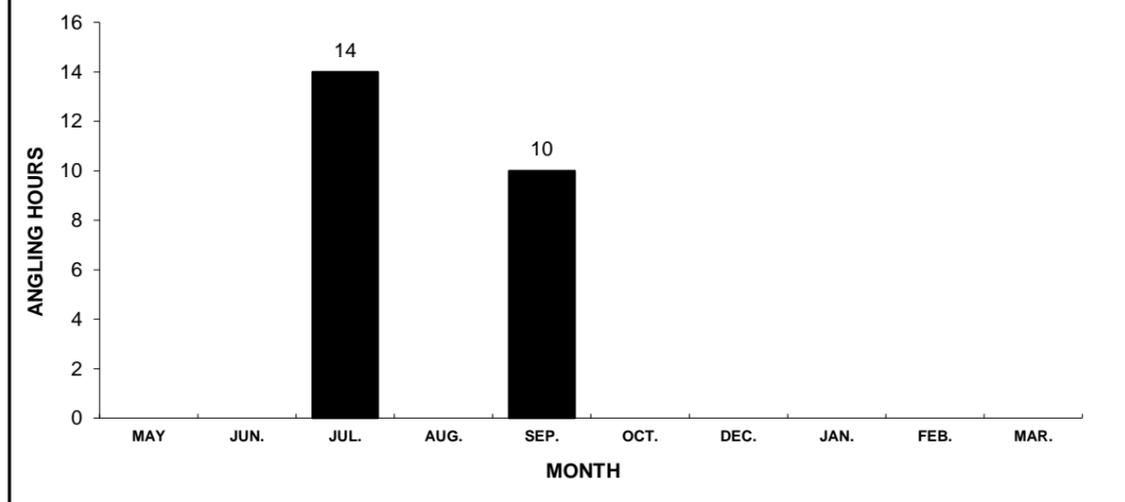


FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT



# BROWN TROUT

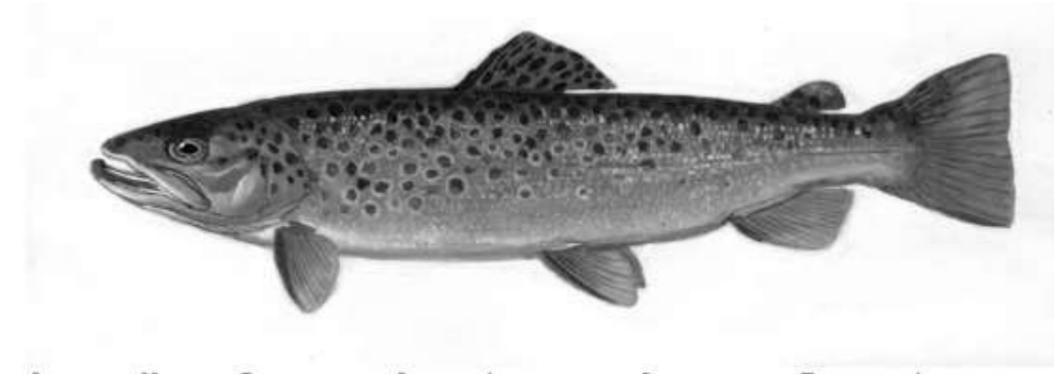


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

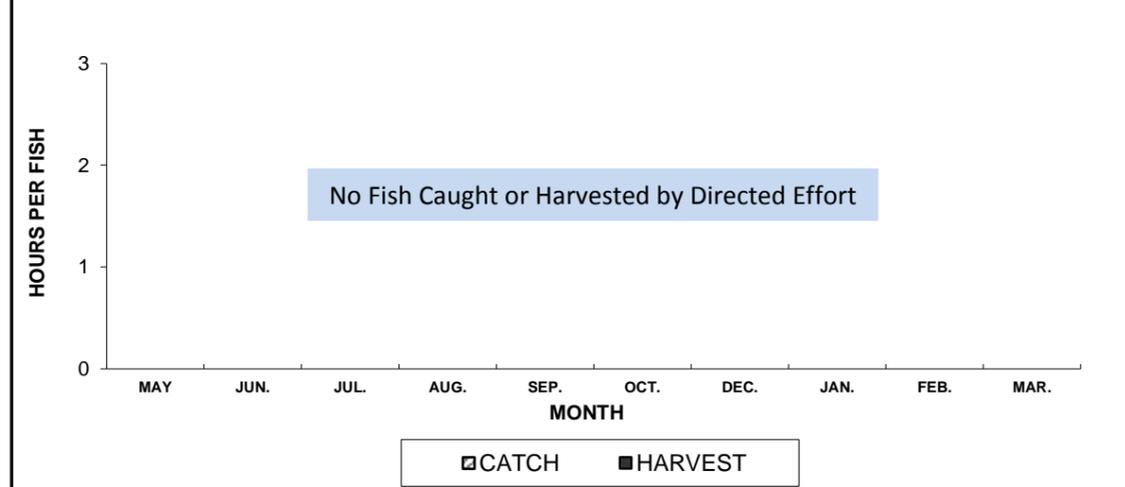


FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

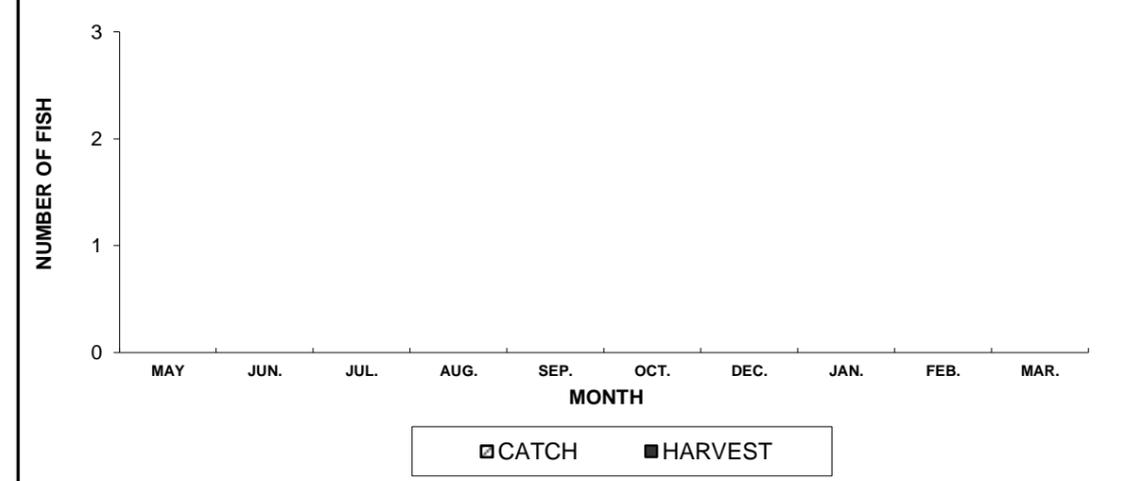


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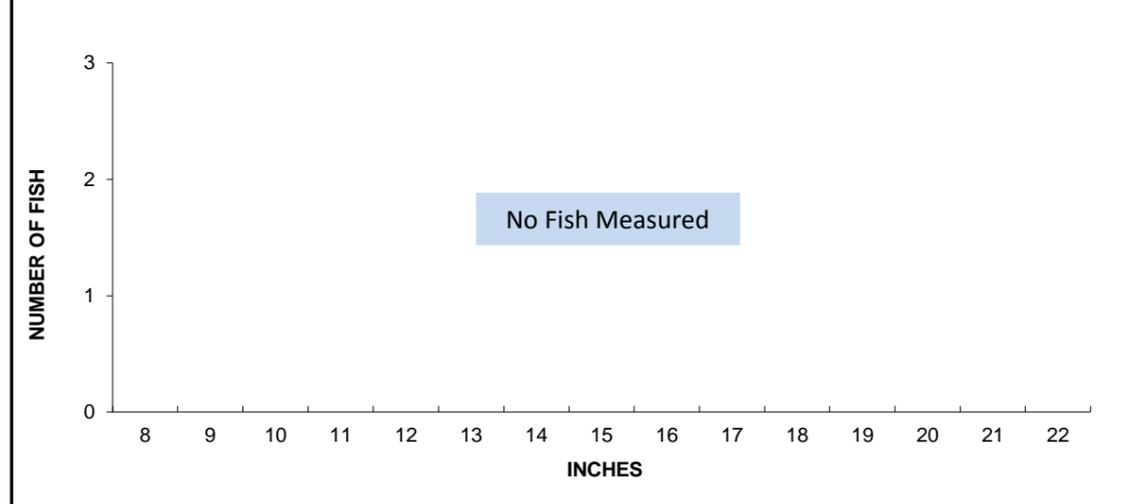
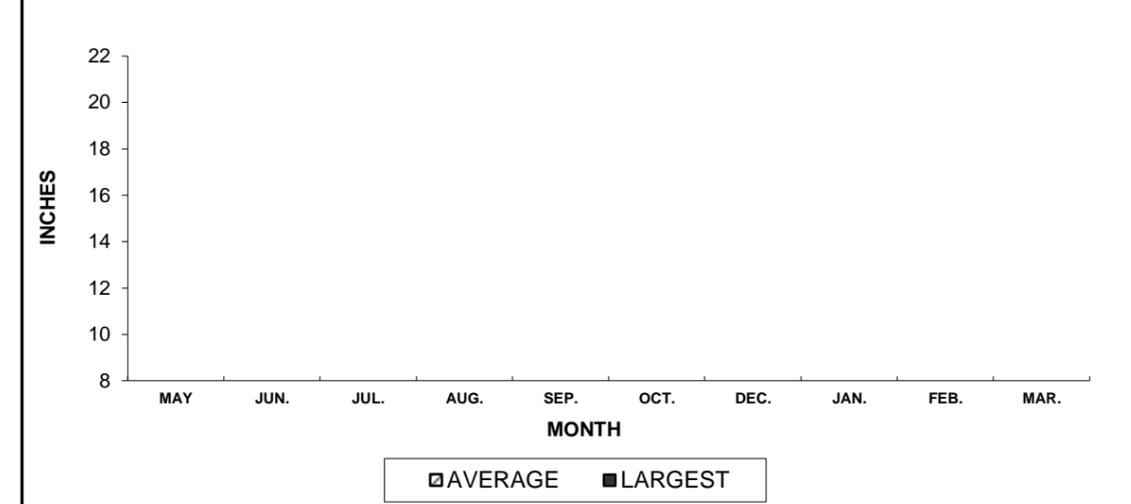


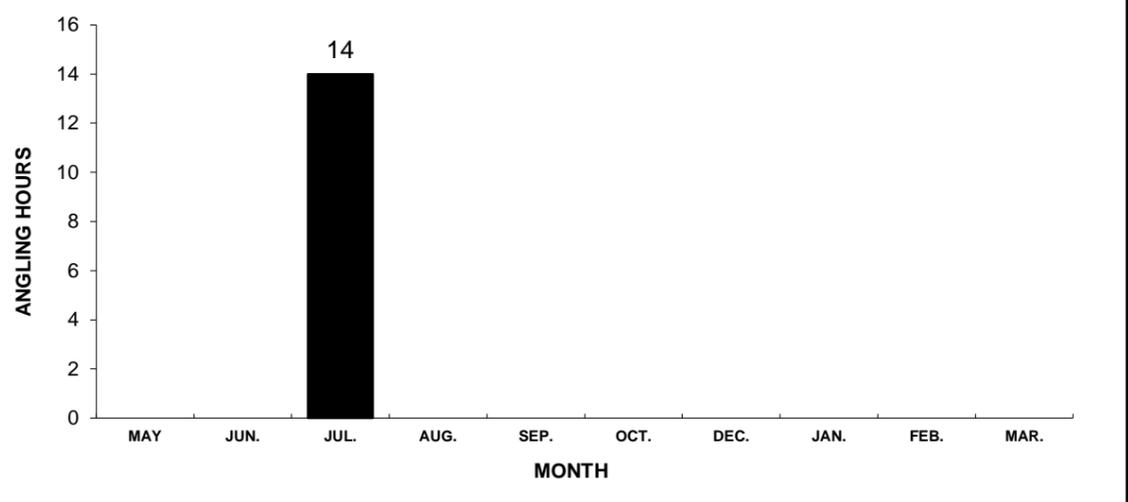
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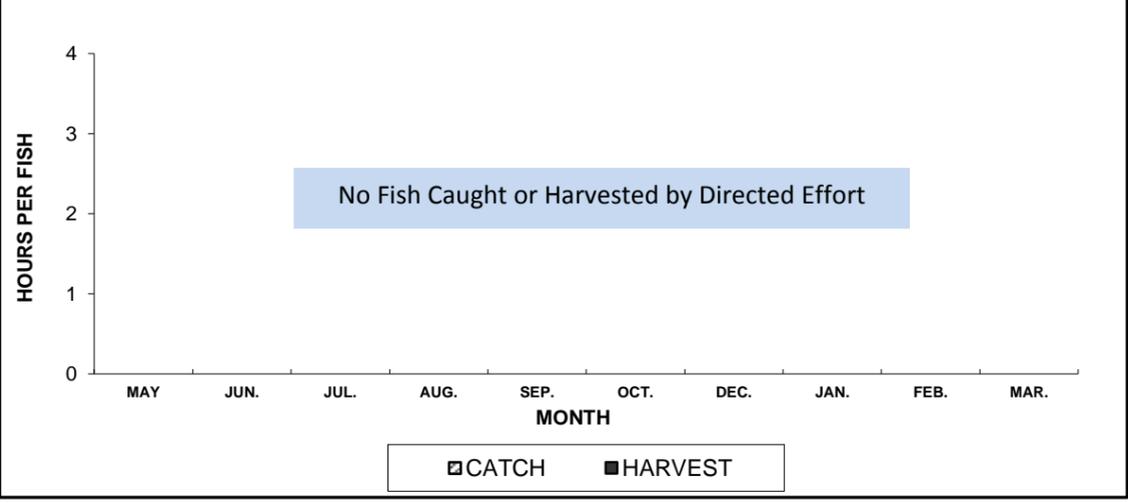
# RAINBOW TROUT



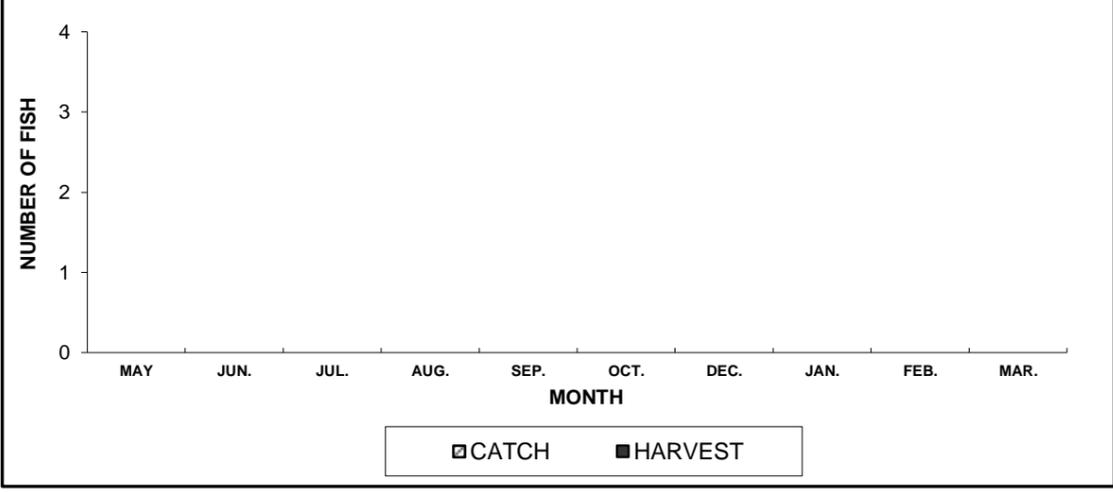
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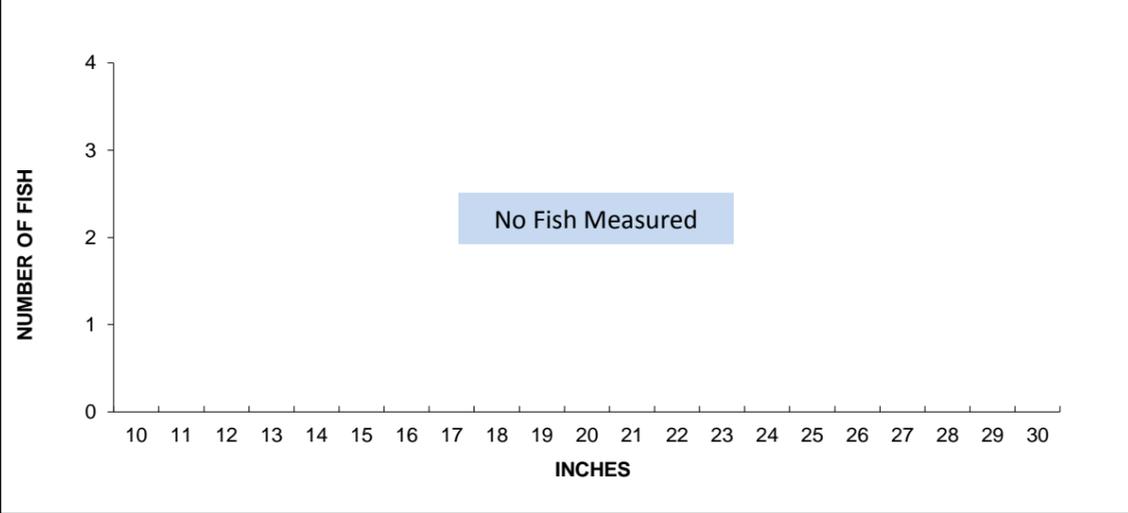
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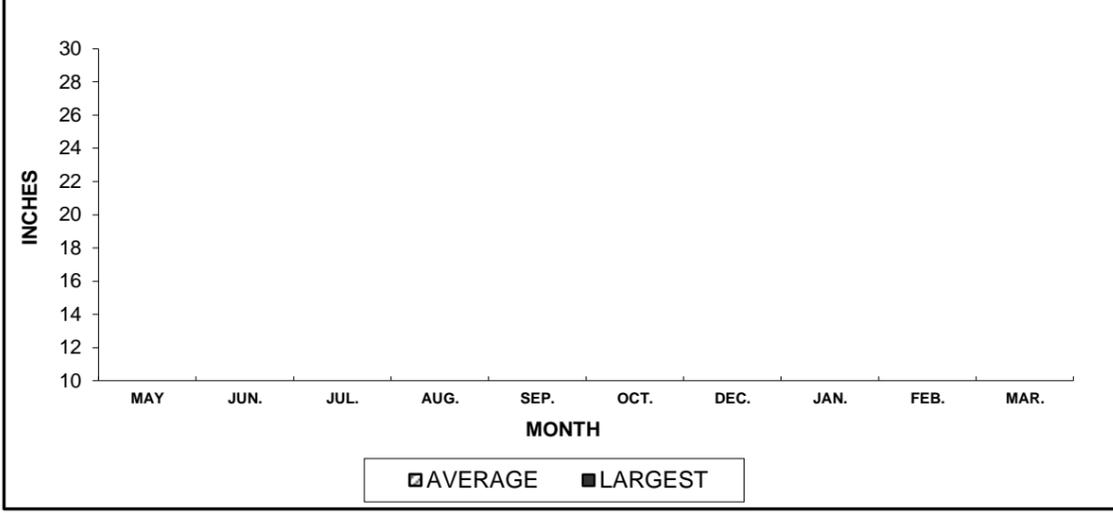
**FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST**



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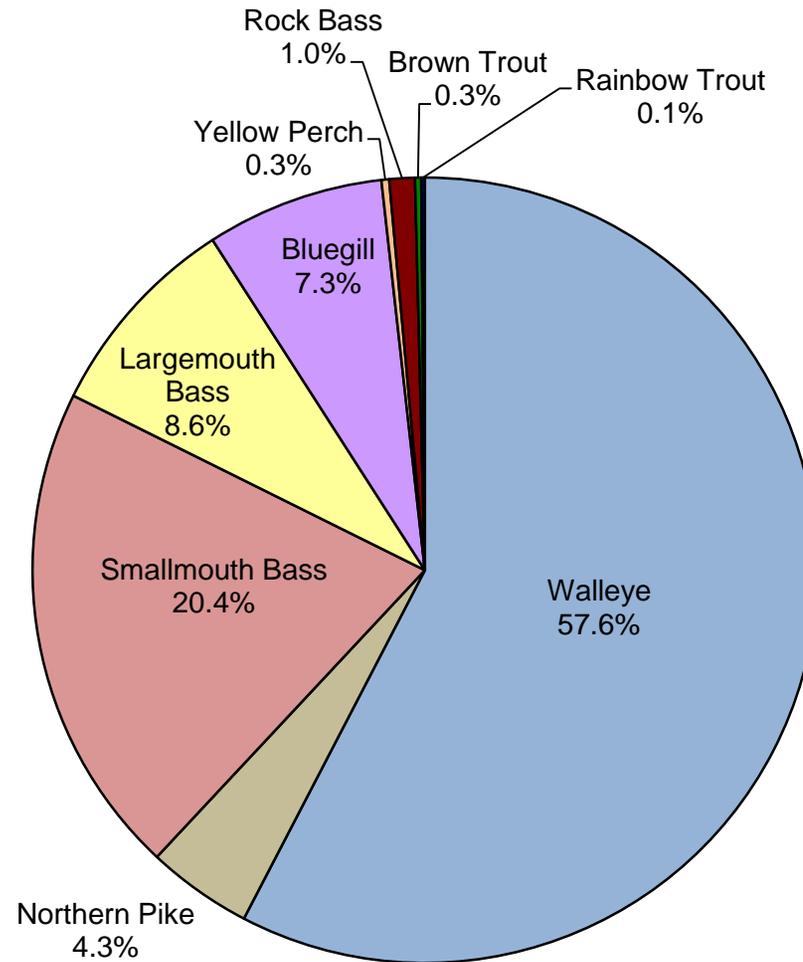


**FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED**



## TOTAL ANNUAL ANGLER DIRECTED EFFORT BY SPECIES Whitefish Lake 2014-15

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.



# SEASONAL ANGLER EFFORT SUMMARY

## 2014-15

Estimated angler fishing effort on Whitefish Lake for each month surveyed and by season. March includes data collected to the end of gamefish season.

Month	Number of Angler Party Interviews	Total Angler Hours	Total Angler Hours/Acre	Douglas County Average Hours/Acre	Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre
May	25	672	0.8	3.9	5.1
June	49	1561	1.9	4.6	6.4
July	45	1641	2.0	4.6	6.9
August	43	1521	1.8	3.2	5.4
September	28	747	0.9	1.6	3.3
October	29	344	0.4	0.5	1.5
December	2	517	0.6	1.3	1.1
January	11	339	0.4	2.2	1.6
February	12	382	0.5	1.5	1.5
March	2	17	0.0	0.2	0.2
*Summer Total	219	6486	7.8	18.5	28.6
*Winter Total	27	1255	1.5	5.2	4.4
Grand Total	246	7741	9.3	23.8	33.0

\*"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 this 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 if you wish to compare effort on this lake to others.

**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.

**Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre** is the average angler effort in hours per acre for inland lakes in the ceded territory surveyed between 1990 and 2013. This value can be used to compare this lake to other lakes in the ceded territory.

**CREEL SURVEY HISTORY/SYNOPSIS**

WHITEFISH LAKE, DOUGLAS COUNTY

CREEL YEAR: 2014-15

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)</b>	<b>PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL CATCH</b>	<b>SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)</b>	<b>TOTAL HARVEST</b>	<b>SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)</b>	<b>MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH</b>
Walleye	5434	57.9%	3448	1.6	1058	5.1	17.2
Northern Pike	409	4.4%	57	40.3	11	67.1	30.0
Smallmouth Bass	1920	20.4%	1142	2.1	165	13.7	17.1
Largemouth Bass	808	8.6%	154	7.2	13	61.0	18.3
Bluegill	691	7.4%	2933	0.3	1052	0.7	7.4
Yellow Perch	30	0.3%	38	6.3	0	NA	NA
Rock Bass	99	1.1%	374	0.7	84	1.2	8.5
Brown Trout	24	0.6%	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Rainbow Trout	14	0.4%	0	NA	0	NA	NA

CREEL YEAR: 1991-92

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)</b>	<b>PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL CATCH</b>	<b>SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)</b>	<b>TOTAL HARVEST</b>	<b>SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)</b>	<b>MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH</b>
Walleye	5626	80.1%	1500	3.8	400	14.1	16.5
Northern Pike	223	3.2%	52	128.2	12	128.2	27.6
Smallmouth Bass	1123	16.0%	226	5.6	78	16.2	15.5
Largemouth Bass	0	0.0%	9	NA	7	NA	12.9
Bluegill	46	0.7%	39	2.6	7	0.0	9.7
Yellow Perch	0	0.0%	16	NA	9	NA	NA
Rock Bass	6	0.1%	30	0.5	18	0.5	NA
Rainbow Trout	3	0.04%	0	0.0	0	0.0	NA