



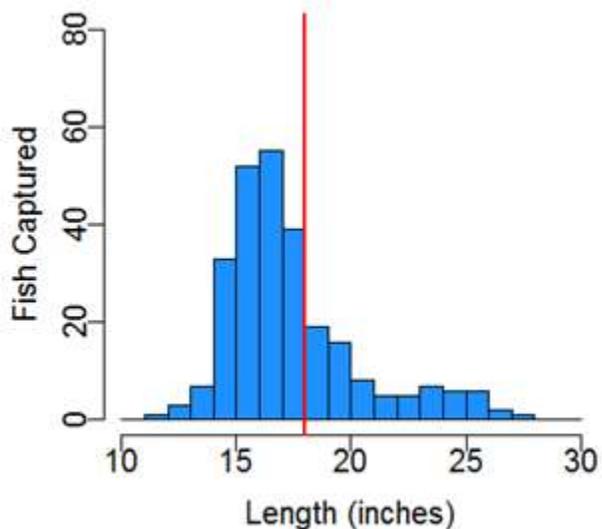
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Big Sissabagama Lake, Sawyer County, 2015

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Big Sissabagama Lake from April, 2-5 2015 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, and black crappie populations in the lake. Twelve nets were set overnight for 4 nights which resulted in 36 total net-nights of effort (several nets were removed early or compromised by weather). An electrofishing survey conducted on June 8, 2015 documented the status of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and bluegill. Eight miles were shocked throughout the lake. 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 (Adult)



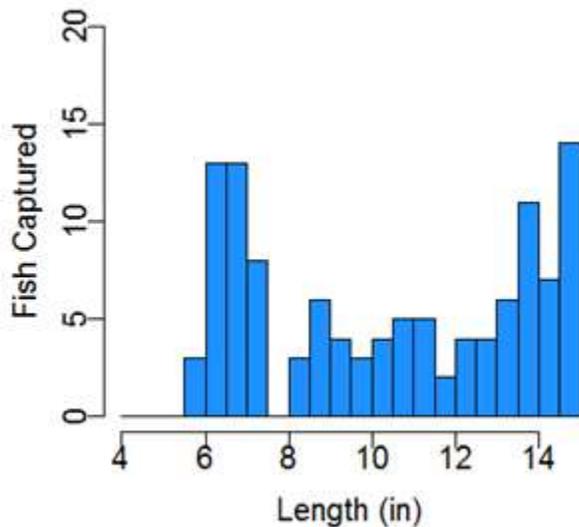
Captured 7 per net-night \geq 10 inches	
Quality Size \geq 15"	83%
Legal Size \geq 18"	28%



Walleye (Juvenile)



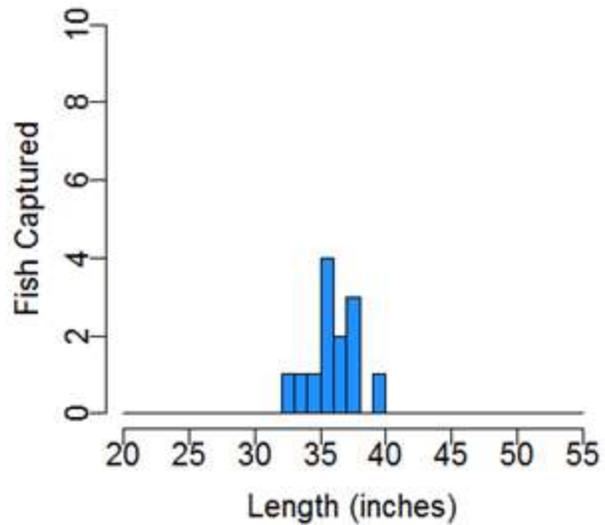
Captured 14 per mile \leq 15 inches



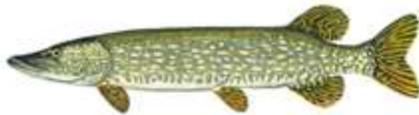
Muskellunge



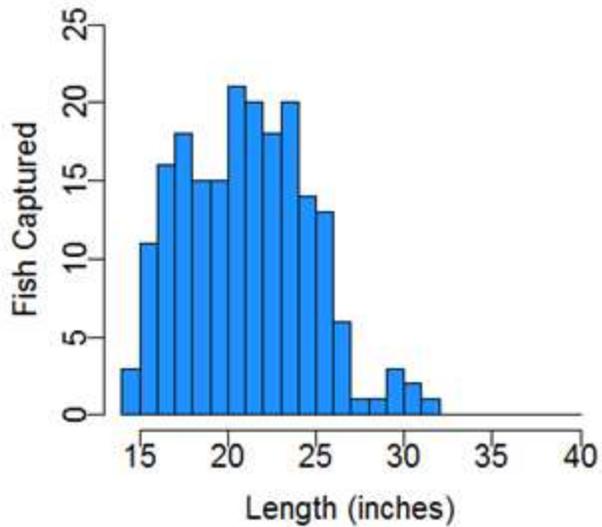
Captured 0.4 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 30"	100%
Memorable Size ≥ 42"	0%



Northern Pike



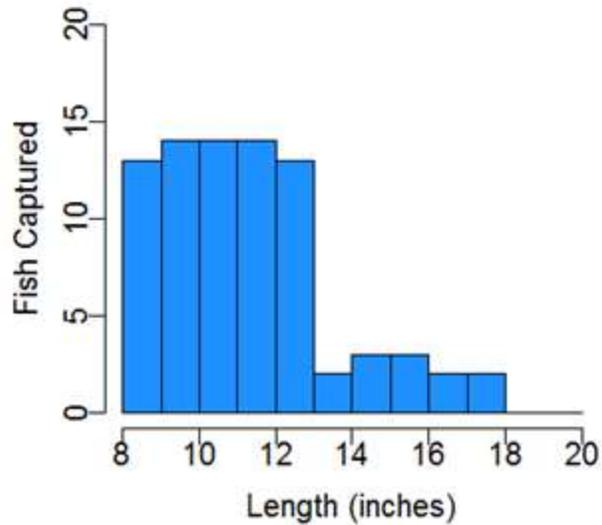
Captured 5.5 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 21"	50%
Preferred Size ≥ 28"	4%



Largemouth bass



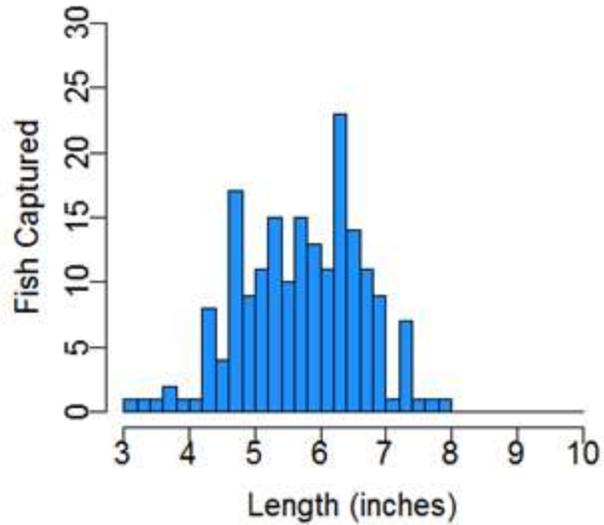
Captured 10 per mile ≥ 8 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 12"	31%
Preferred Size ≥ 15"	9%



Bluegill



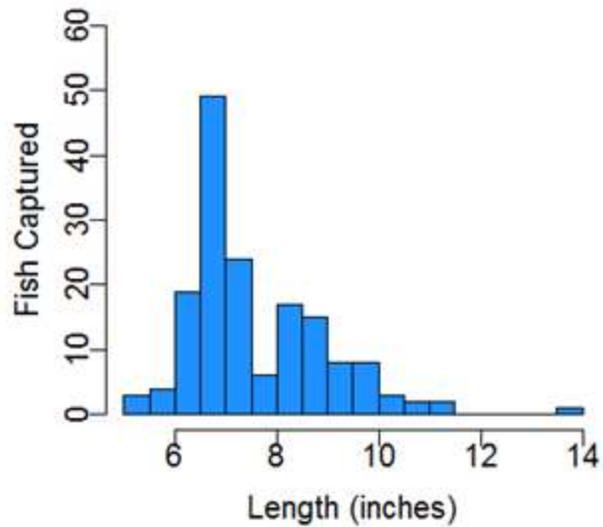
Captured 75 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	42%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	0%



Black Crappie



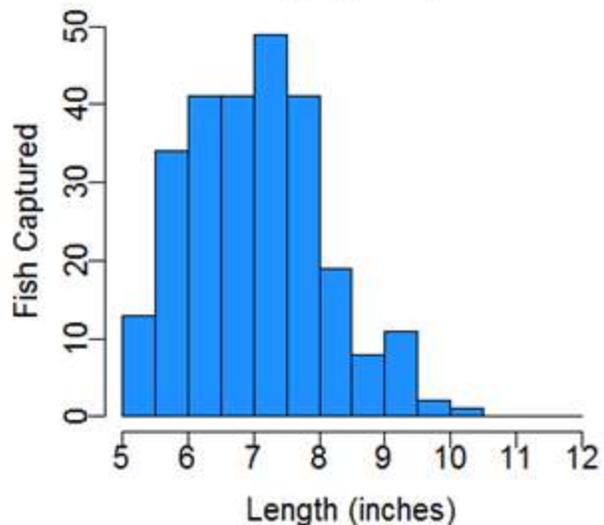
Captured 4.5 per net-night \geq 5 inches	
Quality Size \geq 8"	35%
Preferred Size \geq 10"	10%



Yellow Perch



Captured 7 per net-night \geq 5 inches	
Quality Size \geq 8"	16%
Preferred Size \geq 10"	0%



Summary of Results

Walleye were the primary target in the netting portion of this survey. Walleye captured were given a fin clip that could be used later to estimate the total population size. That analysis was not completed in time to be included in this report. Sissabagama Lake has struggled to naturally produce young walleye for many years at this point. Extended growth walleye stocking has been ongoing and limited signs of success are observable. 72% of the walleye captured in nets were younger fish that are still protected by the 18 inch minimum length limit while 28% were of legal

size. Electroshocking revealed a reasonable amount of survival of fish from the last few stocked year classes. The status of this population will continue to be monitored and stocking is planned to continue.

Muskellunge were not a primary target species but a handful were captured during this survey. Little is currently known about growth rate of muskellunge in Sissabagama Lake so fish captured in this survey were implanted with radio tags so their growth and movements can be tracked in the future.

Northern pike were captured at a moderate rate but with generally poor size. Anglers willing to harvest small pike are encouraged to do so as it may help restore balance to the pike population and the overall fishery.

Largemouth bass have been a species of interest in Sissabagama Lake after their numbers exploded in the early-mid 2000's. This survey indicates that abundance has declined somewhat but overall size (and presumably growth) is still poor with most fish being less than 14 inches. Anglers are encouraged to harvest small largemouth bass. Only one smallmouth bass was captured during the course of this survey.

The panfish population on Sissabagama has been popular with anglers in recent years, with crappie receiving a considerably amount of angling pressure. Our survey did not find large numbers of big crappie that anglers are targeting. It is not clear if this population has been "fished down" in recent years or if this survey simply did not capture the larger crappie. However, our netting effort did reveal a large year class of crappie that are currently around 7 inches. Bluegill and perch populations both offer some fish that are of a size that anglers would find acceptable, but average size of both is lower than desired.



DNR Creel Clerk Donna Sorenson holding a nice Big Sissabagama walleye.

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County
Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Russ Warwick (Fisheries Technician), and Scott Braden (Fisheries Technician), Donna Sorenson (Creel Clerk)
Special thanks to volunteers Rich Manning and Rick Peters
Reviewed and approved by Mike Vogelsang

