



2022 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

LAKE HAYWARD, SAWYER COUNTY

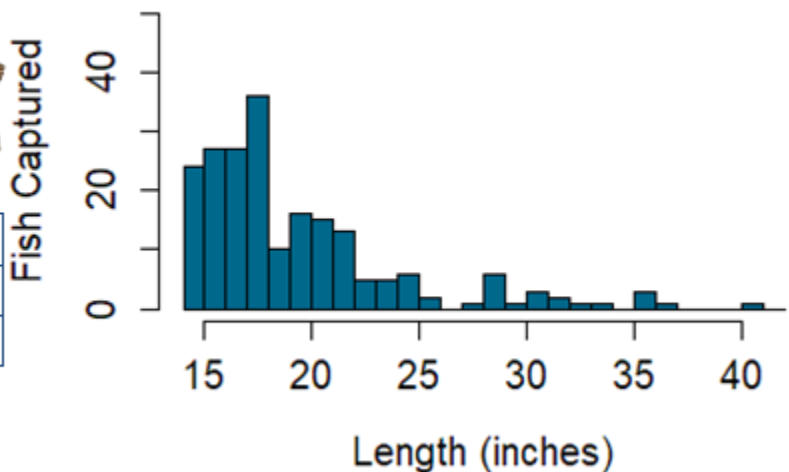
Report by Max Wolter

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Lake Hayward (a.k.a. Hayward Lake) from April 17-19, 2022. The primary species targeted were Northern Pike and Walleye, but useful data were also gathered on Black Crappies and Yellow Perch. Up to eight nets were set overnight for two nights, which resulted in 16 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey was conducted on June 1, 2022 to target Largemouth Bass and Bluegill and included 2.5 miles of shoreline. 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.

Northern Pike



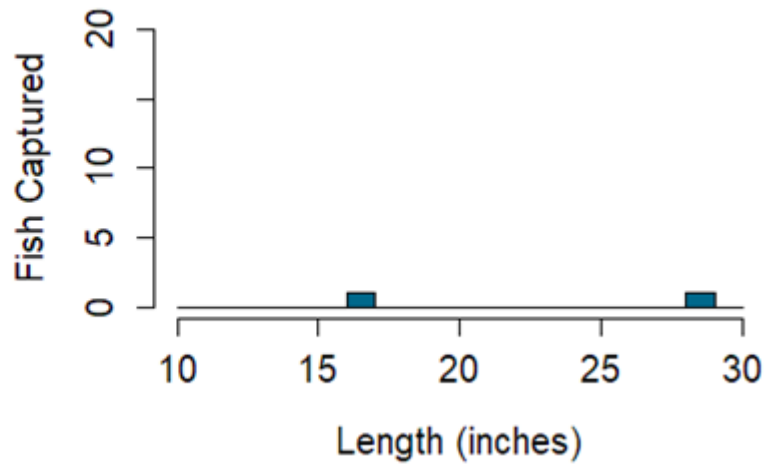
Captured 15 per net-night \geq 14 inches	
Quality Size \geq 21"	25%
Preferred Size \geq 28"	9%



Walleye (Adult)



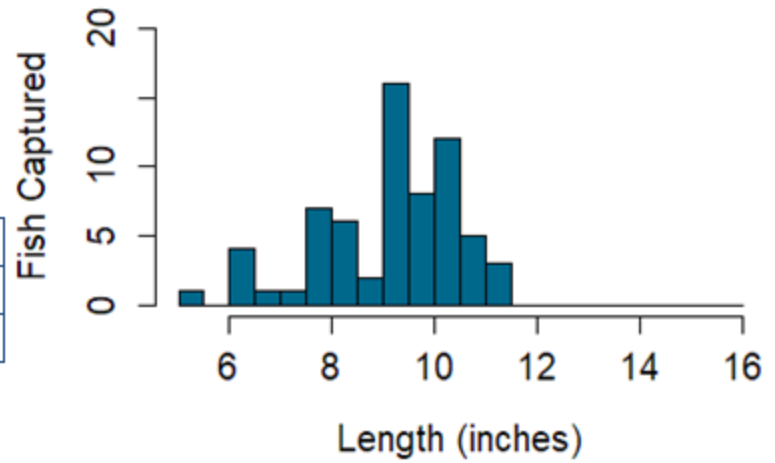
Captured 0.2 per net-night ≥ 10 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 15''$	100%
Preferred Size $\geq 20''$	100%



Black Crappie



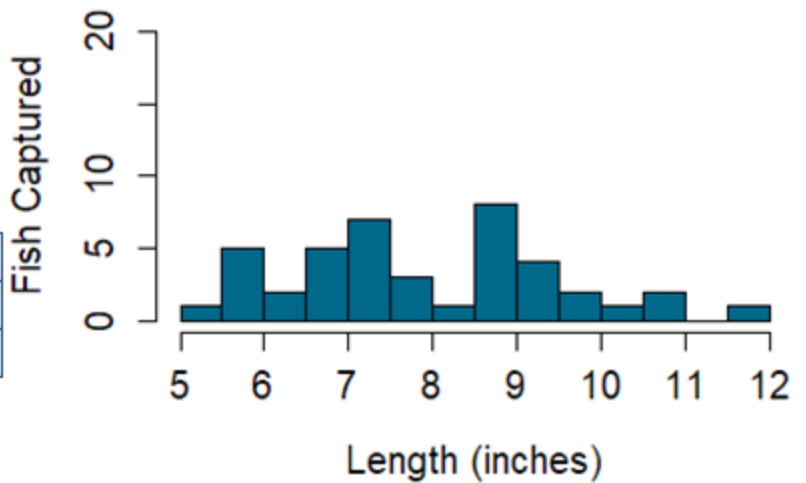
Captured 4.1 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	78%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	30%



Yellow Perch



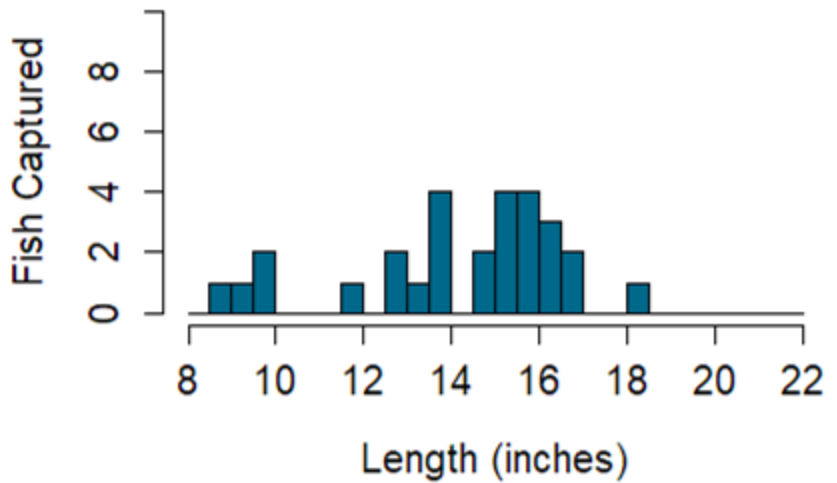
Captured 2.6 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	45%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	10%



Largemouth Bass



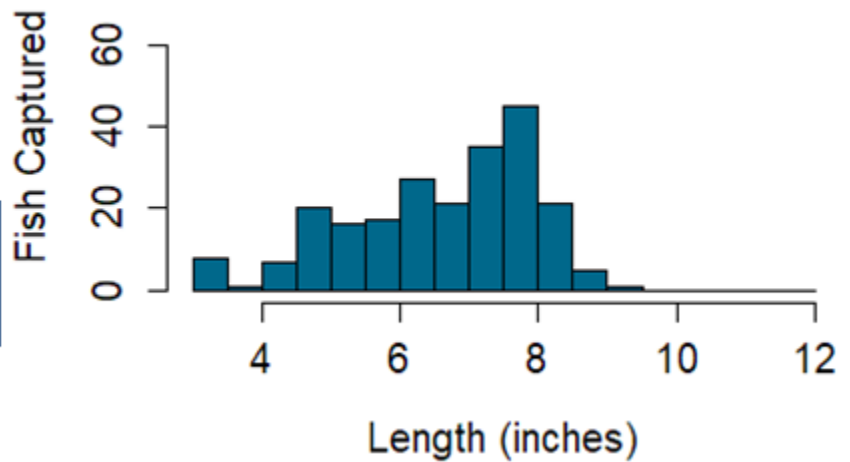
Captured 12 per mile \geq 8 inches	
Quality Size \geq 12"	82%
Preferred Size \geq 15"	50%



Bluegill



Captured 228 per mile \geq 3 inches	
Quality Size \geq 6"	69%
Preferred Size \geq 8"	12%



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This netting survey was well-timed for Walleye and Northern Pike, capturing the start of spawning activity for each species. Nets were set immediately after ice out and covered a variety of habitat types. Water temperature was below the ideal range for capturing Black Crappies and Yellow Perch, but the results are still included in this report. The electrofishing survey was also well-timed for target species. Lake Hayward is a “Complex-Riverine” lake based on the DNR Fisheries lake class system. “Complex” refers to the number of gamefish present in the fish community. Riverine systems present challenges for both surveying and managing populations since fish can move from lake to river habitats. This report will compare catch rates from Lake Hayward in 2022 to other lakes of this same type.

NORTHERN PIKE

Northern Pike catch rates (15 per net night) were exceptionally high (99th percentile) compared to lakes in the same class as Lake Hayward. Pike were generally small (75% were under 21 inches), but the top-end size was excellent. A 40-inch pike was captured in the survey, along with several others over 35 inches. Pike anglers in Lake Hayward should expect action from a lot of smaller pike, with a chance for a true trophy. There is no minimum length limit for Northern Pike, and anglers may harvest up to five per day. Harvest of smaller pike is encouraged.



DNR fisheries technician, Evan Sniadajewski, with a 40-inch Northern Pike from Lake Hayward. Northern Pike are abundant in this lake, but some reach excellent size. Photo courtesy of Max Wolter

WALLEYE

Only two Walleye were captured in this survey, indicating a low abundance of the species. This matches previous surveys of Lake Hayward. The Walleye population is supported almost exclusively through stocking. Very little natural reproduction has been observed. However, stocked Walleye may not stay in Lake Hayward. Walleye have opportunities to leave Lake Hayward both upstream into Namekagon River and downstream over the dam. The Walleye regulation on Lake Hayward is a 15-inch minimum length limit, a 20-24-inch protected slot with only one fish over 24 inches, and a three fish daily bag limit.

MUSKELLUNGE

Muskellunge are present in Lake Hayward, and trophy-sized fish have been caught in past surveys and local Muskellunge tournaments. No Muskellunge were captured during this survey. Muskellunge may not have been shallow enough to be captured due to very cold water temperatures at the time of the survey. Future efforts will try to document the status of this population. Muskellunge are stocked periodically into Lake Hayward, but some may move into the river, like Walleye.

BLACK CRAPPIE

The Black Crappie catch rate was below average compared to lakes in the same class. Survey timing may have played a minor role in the catch rate, and higher rates may have been observed with a later netting survey. Still, Black Crappies in Lake Hayward have nice size, with about one in three being over 10 inches. The daily bag limit for panfish on Lake Hayward is 25 (for all panfish species combined).

YELLOW PERCH

Yellow Perch catch rate was about average compared to other lakes in this class. Yellow Perch in Lake Hayward have good size, with a large percentage of the survey catch being over 8 inches. The daily bag limit for panfish on Lake Hayward is 25 (for all panfish species combined).

LARGEMOUTH BASS

The catch rate for Largemouth Bass in Lake Hayward was close to average compared to lakes of the same class. Half of the Largemouth Bass captured in the survey were over 15 inches, offering a quality bass fishing opportunity for anglers focused more on size than catch rate. There is a 14-inch minimum length limit for bass and a five-fish daily bag limit. Smallmouth Bass are present in Lake Hayward, but none were captured in this survey. Smallmouth Bass likely prefer the riverine areas upstream from Lake Hayward more than the lake itself.

BLUEGILL

The Bluegill catch rate was above average compared to other lakes in this class. Despite being relatively abundant, the size of Bluegill was excellent. More than 10% of Bluegill captured were over 8 inches long. Lake Hayward has a strong reputation as a Bluegill fishery, both during open water and through the ice. The daily bag limit for panfish on Lake Hayward is 25 (for all panfish species combined).

Other species present include: White Sucker, Northern Hogsucker, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, Rock Bass, several species of redhorse, Brown Trout and various minnow species.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden and Evan Sniadajewski

Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole