



**WISCONSIN DNR
FISHERIES INFORMATION SHEET**

LAKE: BIG (Cisco Chain)

COUNTY: VILAS

YEAR: 2008

The Department of Natural Resources surveyed Big Lake, Cisco Chain, Vilas County, from May 2 through May 7, 2008, to determine the health of its fishery. The primary objective of the survey was to estimate the abundance of the lake's adult walleye population. Big Lake is a shallow, fertile, drainage lake with predominantly sand and gravel substrate. Big Lake has a high-density of small walleye. It has a surface area of 771 acres, 13.8 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 30 feet.

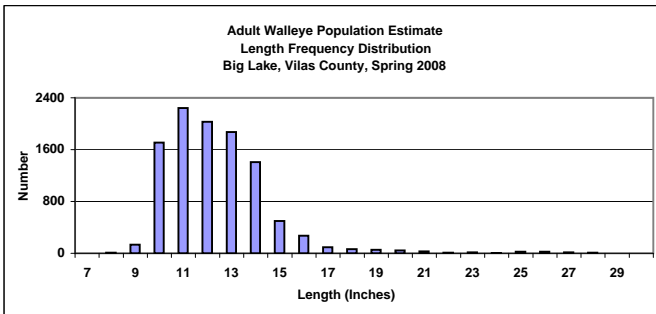


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of 10,562 adult* walleye estimated to be in Big Lake, Cisco Chain, Vilas County, based on a spring 2008 survey.

* Note: Adult walleye are defined as all sexable walleye and walleye of unknown sex ≥ 15 inches long.

Walleye

We conducted a mark-recapture survey of Big Lake's adult* walleye population from May 2-7, 2008. We captured and marked (fin clipped) 1,524 adult walleye in four days of fyke netting. Two crews sampled Big Lake with electro-fishing boats on May 7th and captured 482 adult walleye. Nearly 14% (67 of 482) of those walleye had been marked during fyke netting.

Based on those results, we estimated that 10,562 adult walleye (13.7/acre) inhabited Big Lake. Approximately 11% (1,165 of 10,562) of adult walleye were 15 inches long or larger. The largest walleye we captured was a 28.7-inch female.

Smallmouth Bass

Smallmouth bass were an incidental catch in our survey of Big Lake. Our sampling was not done during the peak of the smallmouth bass spawning season. We captured 16 smallmouth bass, 8 inches or larger, during our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling. Eight of those smallmouth were over 14 inches long. The largest smallmouth bass we captured was 17.1 inches long.

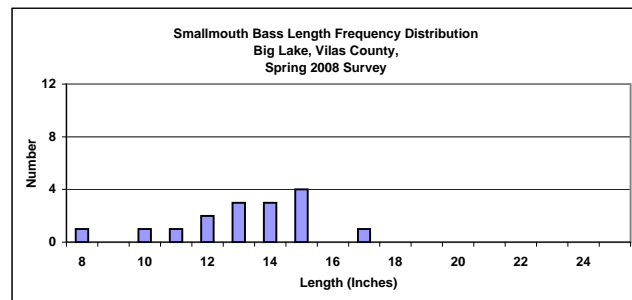


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution of 16 smallmouth bass ≥ 8 " captured during a fisheries survey of Big Lake, Cisco Chain, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

Northern Pike

We captured 119 adult* northern pike in fyke nets fished in Big Lake from May 2-5, 2008. Only three of the adult northern pike we captured were 26 inches long or larger. The largest northern pike we captured was a 29.2-inch female.

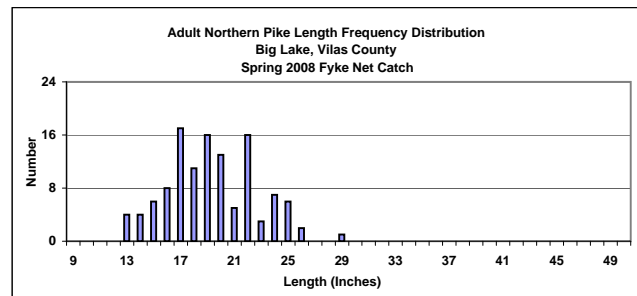


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution of 119 adult* northern pike captured in fyke nets during a fisheries survey of Big Lake, Cisco Chain, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

* Note: Adult northern pike are defined as all sexable northern pike and northern pike of unknown sex ≥ 12 inches long.

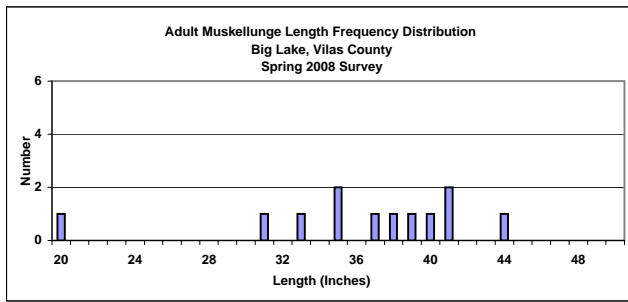


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution of 12 adult* muskellunge captured during a fisheries survey of Big Lake, Cisco Chain, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

Muskellunge

We captured 12 adult* muskellunge during our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling of Big Lake. Seventy-five percent (9 of 12) of the adult muskellunge we captured were 34 inches long or larger. Four of those muskellunge were 40 inches long or larger. The largest muskellunge we captured was a 44-inch female.

* Note: Adult muskellunge are defined as all sexable muskellunge and muskellunge of unknown sex \geq 20 inches long.

Other Species

We captured seven species of fish in our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling of Big Lake in addition to the game fish mentioned above. Yellow perch were the most abundant fish species in our fyke net catches. We also caught moderate numbers of black crappie, bluegill, pumpkinseed, rock bass, white sucker and yellow bullhead. In-water sampling will conclude with a survey of young-of-year walleye in fall 2008.

We are also conducting a creel (angler harvest) survey on Big Lake this year. Creel clerk Lynn Robinson will count and interview anglers and examine their catch throughout the 2008 open-water fishing season.

Table 1. General Fishing Regulations for Big Lake, Vilas County, 2008

FISH SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	DAILY LIMIT	MINIMUM LENGTH
Walleye	May 3 - March 1	3	15 inches
Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass	May 3 - June 20 (C&R) June 21 - Nov. 30 (Harvest)	None 5 in total	14 inches
Muskellunge	May 15 - Nov. 30	1	40 inches
Northern Pike	May 3 - March 1	5	None

A brief summary of selected fishing regulations for Big Lake is included above (Table 1). While the regulatory information provided was current at the time the surveys were conducted, it is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for the current fishing regulation pamphlet. You may obtain a copy of current fishing regulations when you purchase your fishing license, or download a copy from our web site at:

<http://www.dnr.wi.gov/fish/regulations/>

This report is interim only; data and findings should not be considered final. Results of creel surveys should be available by June 2009. If you are interested in a summary of the creel survey or want an update on this year's fyke netting and electro-fishing survey results, contact:

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