



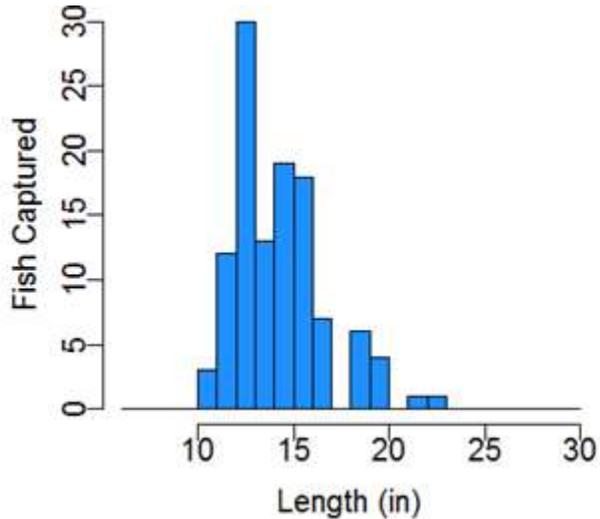
## Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Chippewa Flowage (East), Sawyer County, 2014

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the east side of the Chippewa Flowage on May 2 and 3, and May 12 and 13, 2014. The earlier netting effort targeted walleye and northern pike and included 11 total net nights of effort, while the later netting effort targeted muskellunge and black crappie and totaled 15 net nights of effort. An electrofishing survey was conducted on May 28 and 29, 2014 to document the status of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and bluegill but also provided useful data on juvenile walleye. Six miles were shocked throughout the east side of 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)



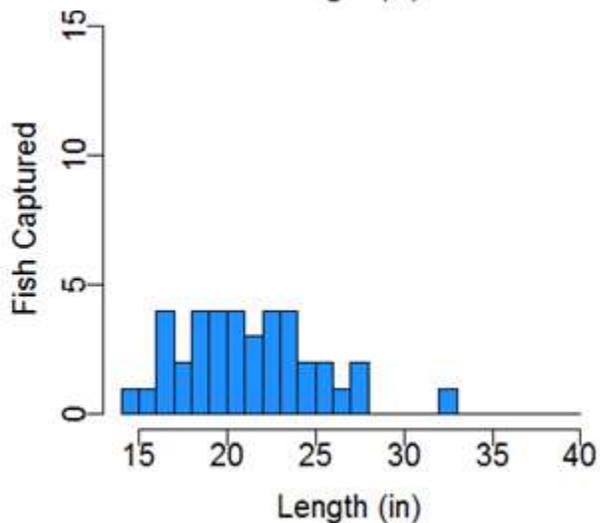
<b>Captured 10 per net-night <math>\geq</math> 10 inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq</math> 15"</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq</math> 20"</b>	<b>2%</b>



### Northern Pike



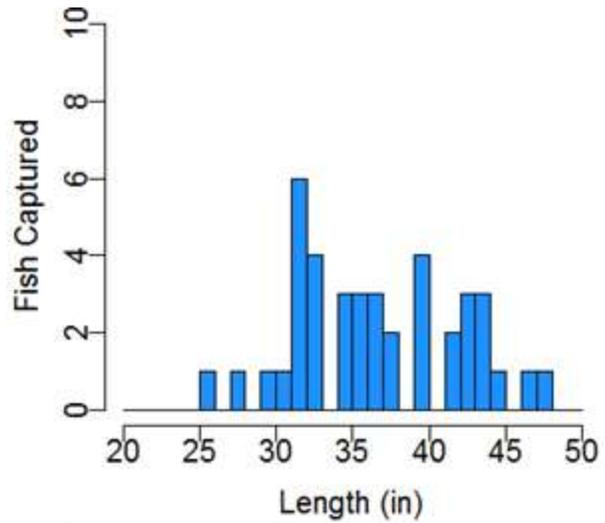
<b>Captured 4 per net-night <math>\geq</math> 14 inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq</math> 21"</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq</math> 28"</b>	<b>3%</b>



### Muskellunge



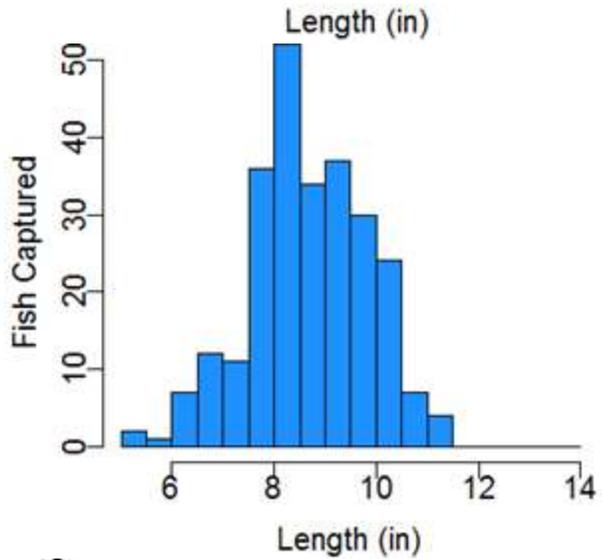
<b>Captured 2.7 per net-night <math>\geq 20</math> inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq 30</math>"</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Memorable Size <math>\geq 42</math>"</b>	<b>23%</b>



### Black Crappie



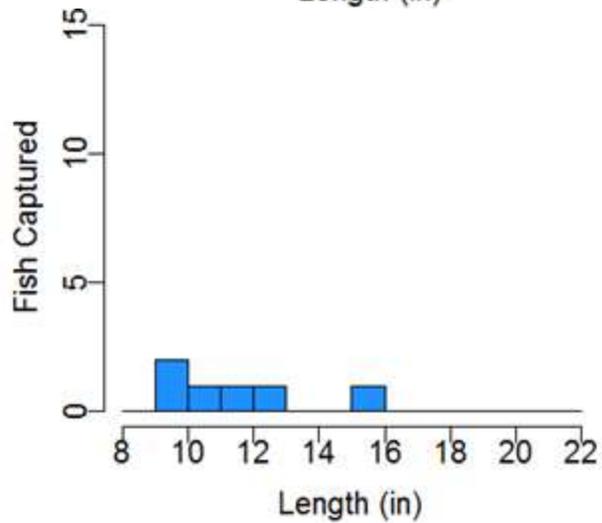
<b>Captured 17 per net-night <math>\geq 5</math> inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq 8</math>"</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq 10</math>"</b>	<b>14%</b>



### Largemouth bass



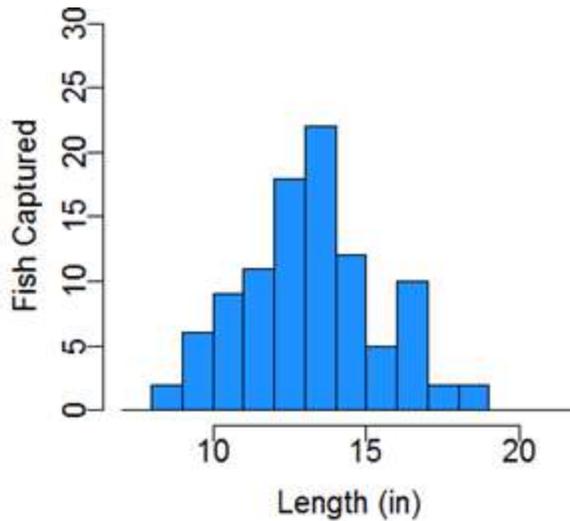
<b>Captured 1 per mile <math>\geq 8</math> inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq 12</math>"</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq 15</math>"</b>	<b>16%</b>



### Smallmouth bass



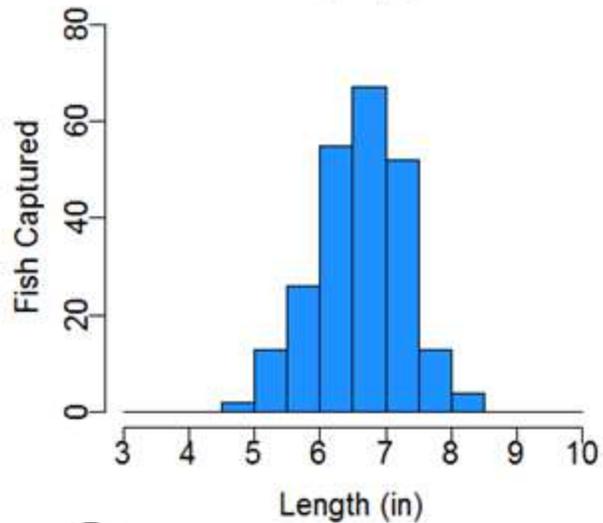
Captured 17 per mile $\geq$ 7 inches	
Quality Size $\geq$ 11"	81%
Preferred Size $\geq$ 14"	31%
Memorable Size $\geq$ 17"	4%



### Bluegill



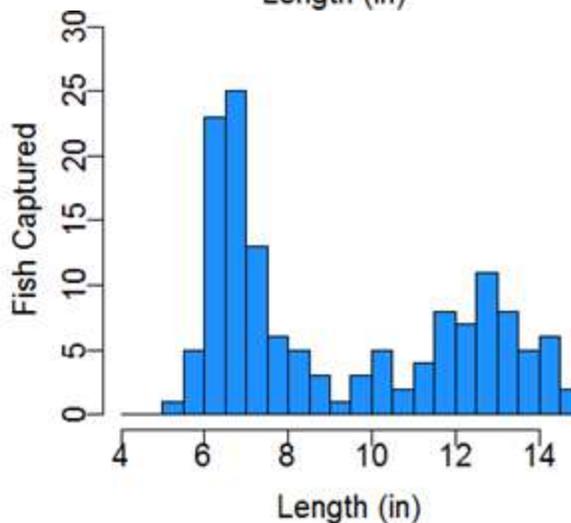
Captured 155 per mile $\geq$ 3 inches	
Quality Size $\geq$ 6"	82%
Preferred Size $\geq$ 8"	2%



### Walleye (Juvenile)



Captured 15 per mile  $\leq$  10 inches



## Summary of Results

Netting surveys were well timed for target species with the earlier effort occurring when water temperatures were between 40-41F and walleye and pike were spawning. The later netting effort occurring at water temperature of 53F when muskellunge were spawning and crappie were pre-spawn but staging in shallow water.

Walleye catch rates and sizes were both very encouraging in a lake that has not seen a large natural year class since 2007. A majority of walleye captured were between 12 and 16 inch young adults. Based on the size of these fish and the recruitment history in recent years it is reasonable to assume that many of these fish were likely stocked as extended growth fingerlings in recent years, although that cannot be determined conclusively since fish were not marked in those stocking events. Regardless, it is encouraging to see young adult walleye return to the system.

Northern pike were captured at a lower rate on the east side in 2014 than on the west side in 2013. Habitat for pike is more limited on the east side (less weeds, darker water). Size was generally poor with few fish over 28 inches. Small pike provide an excellent harvest opportunity for anglers throughout the Chippewa Flowage.

Muskellunge were captured at a higher rate than in the past several years. We believe this is because survey timing and net placement were ideal, not because of a sudden increase in adult population size which would be unlikely in a long lived species like muskellunge. While many fish over 40 inches were observed, the size of the population does not meet objectives established in the 2007 Fishery Management Plan. Muskellunge captured in fishery surveys on the Chippewa Flowage are being tagged which will provide information on growth rate and survival that will lead to better understanding of this population and assist management of this historic population.

Black Crappie were captured in moderate abundance and many quality size fish were captured. This population has remained relatively consistent over the last few years and continues to provide excellent angling opportunities. The apparent increase in young adult walleye will ideally keep numbers of small crappies in check which should provide faster growth of the remaining crappie.

Largemouth bass relative abundance in the electrofishing survey was considerably lower than expected. It is unclear at this time if this is reflective of an actual drop in abundance or if largemouth bass were simply not in the shallow water at the time of this survey. We suspect the latter based on angler reports from spring and summer of 2014.

Smallmouth bass were captured in much higher abundance than largemouth bass and we feel this survey provides an excellent representation of that population. The Chippewa Flowage provides many quality size smallmouth but fish approaching trophy size are relatively rare.

Bluegill were captured in moderate abundance and the size structure was similar to recent years. There are many “keeper” size bluegill in the Chippewa Flowage between 6 and 8 inches. But high quality fish over 8 inches are relatively rare. Angler harvest is probably the largest influence on bluegill size. A 2011 creel showed 197,000 bluegill were harvested during one summer, with 87% being 7 inches or greater.

Many young walleye were captured during the electrofishing survey as well. Walleye between 6 and 8 inches were particularly abundant and are most likely a combination of stocked extended growth fish and a small natural year class from 2013. While there is evidence that stocking is having some success, the ultimate goal is to return the Chippewa Flowage to a naturally self-sustaining walleye population.



**A net full of young adult walleye from the 2014 survey of the Chippewa Flowage.**

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County  
Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Russ Warwick (Fisheries Technician), and Scott Braden (Fisheries Technician)  
Special thanks to volunteers Tom Christianson, Chris Meyer, and Jason Stewart  
Reviewed and Approved by Steve Avellemant