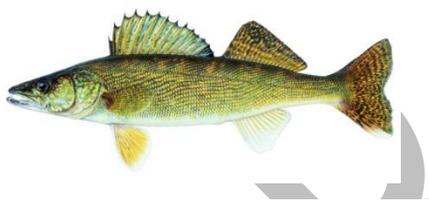




Summary of Fishery Surveys Mercer Lake, Iron County, 2015

Mercer Lake is a medium hard water drainage lake with predominantly sand, rubble, and muck substrates. It has a surface area of 184 acres, 4.2 miles of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 24 feet. The Mercer DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted the following fishery surveys on Mercer Lake in 2015: an early-spring electrofishing survey targeting walleyes and northern pike populations, an early-spring fyke netting survey targeting muskellunge, a late-spring electrofishing survey to assess bass and panfish populations, and a summer fyke netting survey to assess panfish populations. 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, and reflect the percentage of the adult population sampled larger than the specified size.

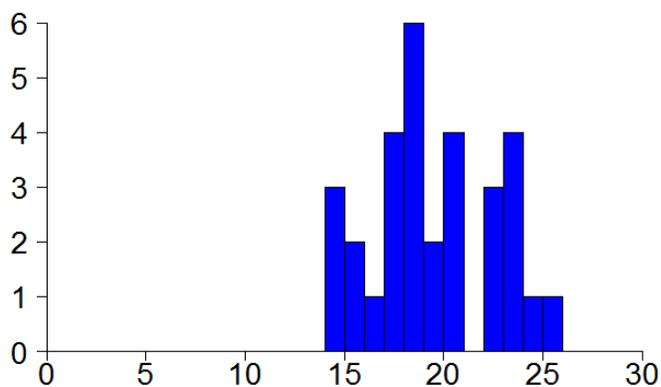


Walleye Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 15 in.)	90
Preferred (> 20 in.)	42
Memorable (> 25 in.)	3

Fish Captured

Walleye



Length (inches)

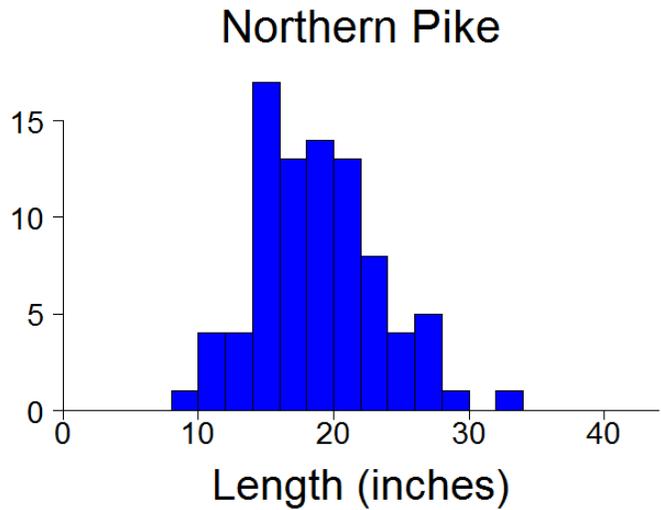
We captured a total of 19 individual walleyes during our targeted, early-spring electrofishing survey at a rate of 5.3 /mile. Walleyes ranged in length from 14.9” - 24.9” and averaged 19.0”. Ten additional walleyes were sampled during non-targeted surveys are also included in the above figures to better depict the walleye population’s size distribution. These results suggest that adult walleyes are currently present in relatively low densities, although most walleye present are of quality size.



Northern Pike Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 21 in.)	36
Preferred (> 28 in.)	3
Memorable (> 34 in.)	0

Fish Captured



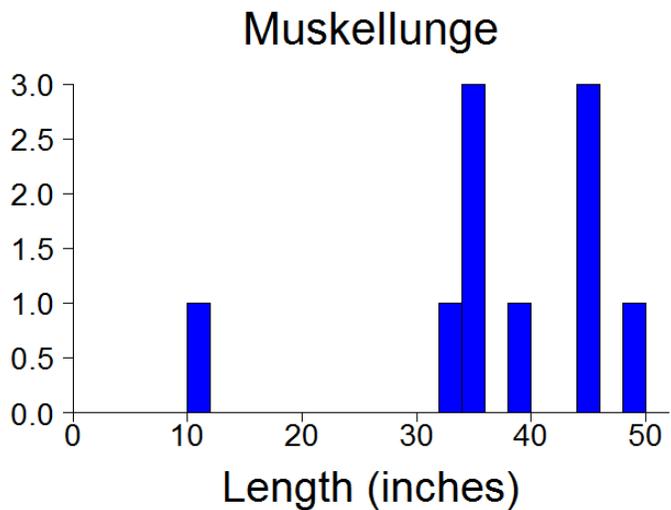
During our targeted early-spring electrofishing survey, we sampled a total of 9 individual northern pike at a rate of 2.5/mile. 72 additional northern pike were sampled during later surveys and were included in the above figures to better represent the population size distribution. These results suggest that northern pike are currently at low-moderate densities in Mercer Lake, and while many individuals are relatively small, some may be of acceptable size to anglers.



Muskellunge Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 30 in.)	100
Preferred (> 38 in.)	56
Memorable (> 42 in.)	44

Fish Captured



During our spring sampling efforts we sampled a total of 10 individual muskellunge ranging from 11.5"- 48.5" inches. The targeted fyke-netting survey sampled muskellunge at a low rate of 0.2/net-night. These data suggest that muskellunge are currently present in low densities, but the population exhibits a quality size structure.

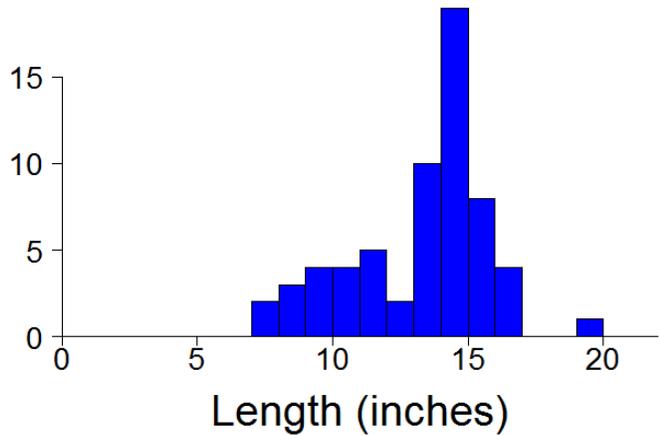


Largemouth Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 12 in.)	73
Preferred (> 15 in.)	22
Memorable (> 20 in.)	0

Fish Captured

Largemouth Bass



The targeted late-spring electrofishing survey sampled a total of 43 largemouth bass at a rate of 12.0/mile. Largemouth bass ranged in length from 8.3” – 16.3” and averaged 13.7”. Largemouth bass were consistently sampled during additional, non-targeted survey efforts throughout the spring. These results suggest that largemouth bass are currently present in moderate densities and the population exhibits a balanced size distribution.

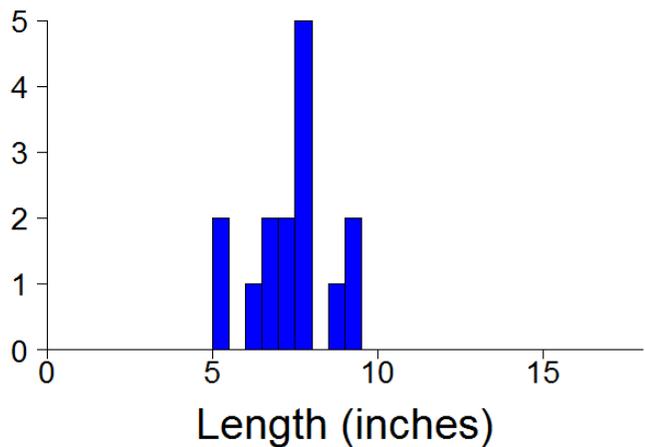


Black Crappie Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 8 in.)	20
Preferred (> 10 in.)	0
Memorable (> 12 in.)	0

Fish Captured

Black Crappie



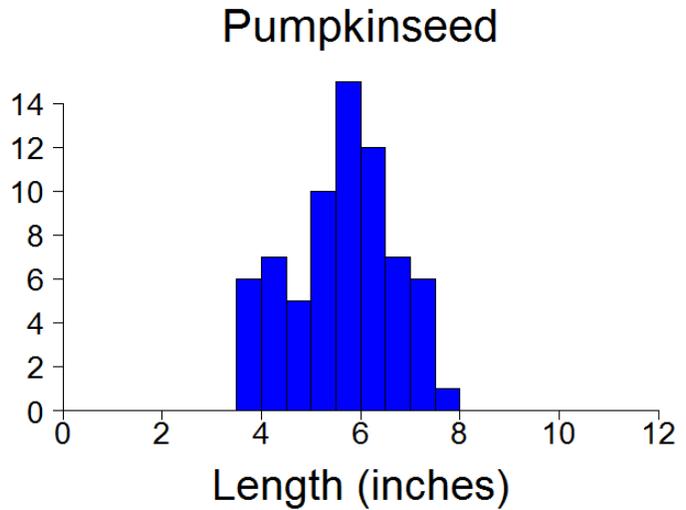
The summer fyke netting survey sampled a total of 13 black crappies at a rate of 3.3/net-night. Crappies ranged in length from 5.4” – 9.3” and averaged 7.5”. These results suggest that crappies are currently present in low densities, and most individuals present are relatively small.



Pumpkinseed Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 6 in.)	38
Preferred (> 8 in.)	0
Memorable (> 10 in.)	0

Fish Captured



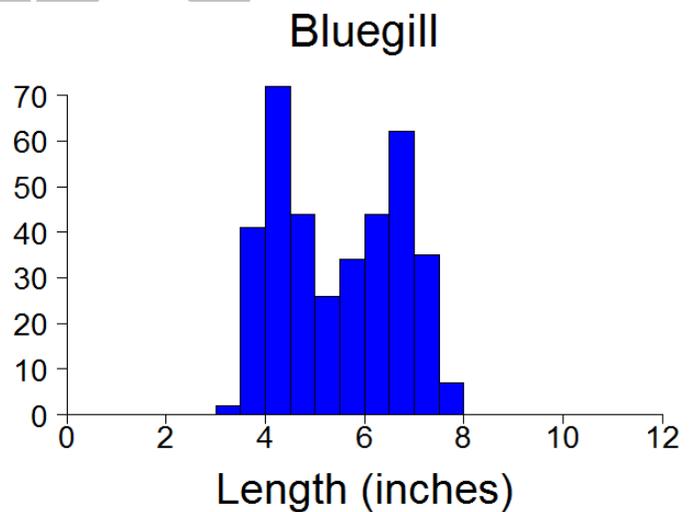
Targeted summer fyke netting surveys sampled pumpkinseeds at a rate of 17.8/net-night. Pumpkinseeds ranged in length from 3.5” – 7.7” and averaged 5.5”. Pumpkinseeds appear to currently be present in low-moderate densities and the population exhibits a relatively small size structure.



Bluegill Size Groups (PSD/RSD)

Size Class	% of Sample
Quality (> 6 in.)	40
Preferred (> 8 in.)	0
Memorable (> 10 in.)	0

Fish Captured



Targeted summer fyke netting surveys sampled bluegills at a rate of 153.3/net-night. Bluegills ranged in length from 3.0” – 7.9” and averaged 5.4”. Results from this survey suggest that bluegills are present in high densities but the population’s size structure is relatively small.

Additional Notes:

The Mercer Lake fishery currently appears to be well balanced, providing diverse opportunities for anglers. Most surveys conducted should accurately depict the status of fish populations. The early-spring fyke netting survey targeting muskellunge may be slightly under-representative of the adult muskellunge population abundance as a rapid warming trend immediately following ice-out likely caused some muskellunge to spawn prior to our targeted efforts. Regardless, data from subsequent surveys also suggest that the muskellunge population is at relatively low density but exhibits a quality size structure.

Largemouth bass currently appear to be the most prominent sport fish in the community. Although other gamefish are found in lower abundances than largemouth, trophy potential exists for all gamefish in the Mercer Lake fish community.

Panfish, on the other hand, appear to be rather abundant in Mercer Lake. These populations may provide an 'action' type fishery, but anglers should not expect much for size as trophy potential is low in these populations.

Yellow perch, bullheads, rock bass, redhorse, and smallmouth bass were also documented in low abundance in these surveys. For questions or additional results from 2015 survey work contact:

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Analyzed and Report By: Zach Lawson, Fisheries Biologist, Iron County, 9/15/15

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