Located just outside the city limits of Phillips, Minnow Lake is a 10-acre seepage lake with clear water, maximum depth of 30 feet, and no inlet or outlet streams. Muck is the predominant lakebed material. Price County and Elk Township own adjacent parcels on the north shore for public access. The unimproved site is suitable for shorefishing, carrying in canoes and kayaks, but not for launching boats from trailers. In late spring 2019 when water temperature was 71°F, WDNR assessed largemouth bass and bluegill populations by electrofishing. In this first survey to quantitatively describe Minnow Lake’s fishery, we used our small electrofishing boat to sample the entire shoreline (0.56 miles) in 0.40 hours, collecting all fish species encountered. Submerged woody material was abundant, and depth often exceeded 6 feet just offshore. Conductivity seemed unusually high for an acid bog lake—we had electrofishing power to spare at the low-range setting. Besides bass and bluegill, our sample included one black crappie 11.5", one pumpkinseed 6.6", and no other fish.

**Largemouth Bass**

We caught 21 largemouth bass that ranged 3.1 – 13.6" and averaged 10.5" long. Electrofishing catch rates of 29 bass ≥ 8" per mile or 40 per hour indicated moderate population abundance. Legal-size bass ≥ 14" were absent in our sample—most (71%) were 11 – 13". As the predominant (and perhaps only) predator in the fish community, largemouth bass are apparently effective in controlling bluegill recruitment.

**Bluegill**

In late spring we dip-netted 56 bluegills at electrofishing capture rates of 82 fish ≥ 3" per mile and 115 per hour, indicating the low to moderate population abundance that is essential to keep bluegills growing at a satisfactory rate. Bluegill size structure was excellent. They ranged 1.5 – 9.5" and averaged 6.1" long. About 54% of bluegills ≥ 3" in our sample were 7" or longer, 37% were at least 8", and 24% were over 9". The modest public access to Minnow Lake probably limits fishing pressure and size-selective harvest of large male bluegills, allowing the population to self-regulate its reproductive success by social and behavioral mechanisms.
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