

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CREEL SURVEY REPORT
LAC COURTE OREILLES
SAWYER COUNTY**

2016-2017



Treaty Fisheries Publication

March 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regularly conducts fishery surveys of area lakes and reservoirs to gather information on species composition, population size, reproductive success, size/age distribution, and growth rates. The information from the netting and electrofishing surveys helps the WDNR determine the best management practices for that body of water. Another important aspect of a fishery is the amount of harvest that is occurring on the lake. This information is collected by creel census or creel survey.

On lakes in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin, harvest of fish is divided between sport anglers and the six Chippewa tribal bands. The six Chippewa tribal bands harvest fish under rights governed by federal treaties of 1837 and 1842. Most tribal fish harvest is done by spearing during a short period in the spring. All speared fish are individually counted by tribal creel clerks, allowing for a complete “census” of the tribal fish harvest in the spring.

Information is collected on the effects of sport angler harvest on fish populations. Because it would be impractical and costly to conduct a complete “census” of the fish harvested by sport anglers on area lakes, a creel survey is conducted to estimate the amount of fish harvested by sports anglers.

A creel survey is a sampling tool used to measure the fishing activities of the sport anglers and to estimate the amount of fish harvested on a body of water. Creel surveys are designed to have a creel clerk on a lake, work random shifts, and forty hours each week throughout the fishing season. Each month these shifts cover a sample of all the daylight hours. Creel clerks travel their lakes using a boat, snowmobile or vehicle to count and to interview anglers.

The information collected from anglers during the interview includes the species of fish being targeted, catch and harvest, lengths of harvested fish, and hours of fishing effort. Typically, only anglers that have completed their fishing trip are interviewed because it provides the most accurate information and it avoids the need to disturb anglers while they are fishing.

You may have encountered one of the DNR creel clerks on a recent fishing trip. The survey only takes a moment of your time and we appreciate your cooperation during an interview. The information collected gives the DNR valuable knowledge required for management of the fishery.

The data collected during the survey is processed by a computer program and summarized by month to calculate estimates of the total fishing pressure, fishing effort directed at each species, catch and harvest rates, and the number of fish caught and harvested.

This creel survey report will provide you with four types of estimated information for this body of water:

1. Overall fishing pressure
2. Fishing effort directed at each species
3. Catch and harvest rates
4. Numbers of fish caught and harvested.

Also included in this report are physical information about the lake, discussion of results of this survey and detailed summaries by species.

GENERAL LAKE INFORMATION

Location

Lac Courte Oreilles is located south of Hayward in Sawyer County.

Physical Characteristics

Lac Courte Oreilles covers 5,039 acres with a maximum depth of 90 feet. Water clarity is clear. There are three public boat landings around the land. The main one is located on the north end off Hwy K.

Seasons Surveyed

An open water creel survey was conducted from opening day of gamefish season on May 7, 2016 and concluded at the end of October. Winter creel was conducted from December 1 through the close of the gamefish season on March 5, 2017.

Harvest Regulations

The following seasons, daily bag limits, and length limits were in place on this lake in 2016-2017:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Bag Limit</u>	<u>Min. Size</u>
Walleye*	05/07-3/05	3	15"
Largemouth Bass	05/07-3/05	5	none
Smallmouth Bass	06/18-3/05	1	18"
Muskellunge	05/28-11/30	1	40"
Northern Pike	05/07-3/05	5	none
Panfish	all year	25	none

*Walleye 20-24" protected, 1>24"

SPECIES CATCH AND HARVEST INFORMATION

Angling information is summarized on a single page for each species. If a page for a particular species is not present in the section, it is because no one reported fishing

for that species and/or none was caught. Each species page has up to five graphs covering the following:

FIGURE 1 ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

Total calculated number of hours during each month that anglers spent fishing for this species.

FIGURE 2 ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

Calculated number of hours it takes an angler to catch or harvest a fish of this species. Only information from anglers who were **specifically** targeting this species are reported.

FIGURE 3 ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

Calculated number of fish of this species caught or harvested by all anglers. This estimate also includes **incidental** catch and harvest of fish by anglers that were not specifically targeting this species.

FIGURE 4 LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

All fish of this species measured by the clerk during the entire creel survey season.

FIGURE 5 AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED

Average length and the largest fish of this species harvested each month. Only those fish measured by the creel clerk are reported.

Seasonal Angler Effort Summary

The table provides a summary by month of the total angler hours and total angler hours per acre. In addition, the table compares county average and ceded territory average to current survey results.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this survey was possible because of the efforts of the following Treaty Assessment Staff: Gene Hatzenbeler, Todd Brecka, Misty Rood, Jill Sunderland, Jake Jacobson and Mac McInroy. We would especially like to recognize the efforts of our creel clerk Matt Kufahl who collected the angler interviews.

The Department would like to thank Michelle Horman of Trails End Resort, as well as Chris and Wanda Headley. They generously allowed the department to keep a boat or snowmobile at their property during this survey.

We would also like to thank all the anglers who took the time to offer information about their fishing trip to the survey clerk. Without your cooperation, this survey would not have been possible.

Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes can be obtained from the Treaty Fisheries Biologist in Spooner or WDNR Webpage.

Questions about the report can be directed to
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Spooner, WI 54801
Phone: (715)635-4164
Email: Gene.Hatzenbeler@Wisconsin.gov

WALLEYE

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

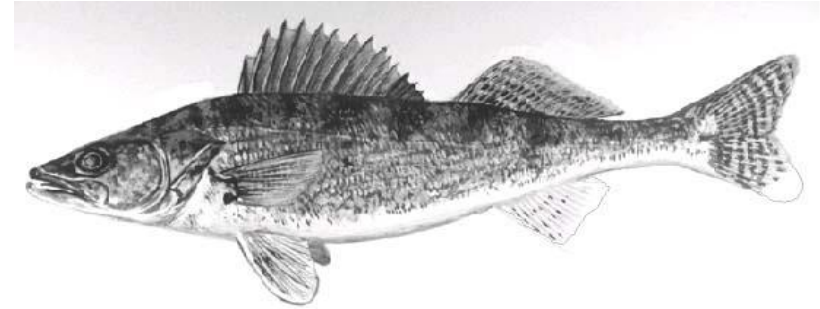
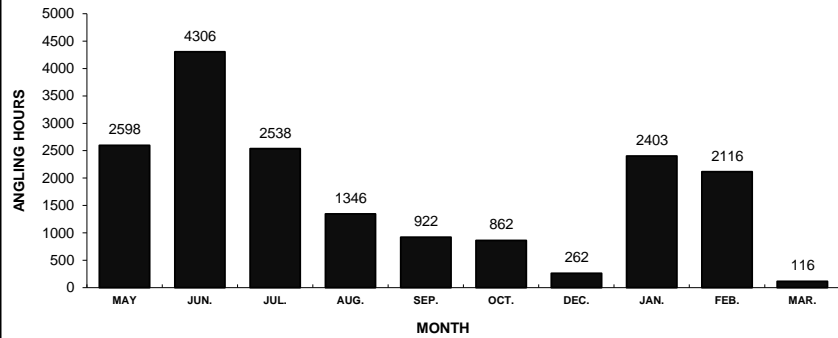


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

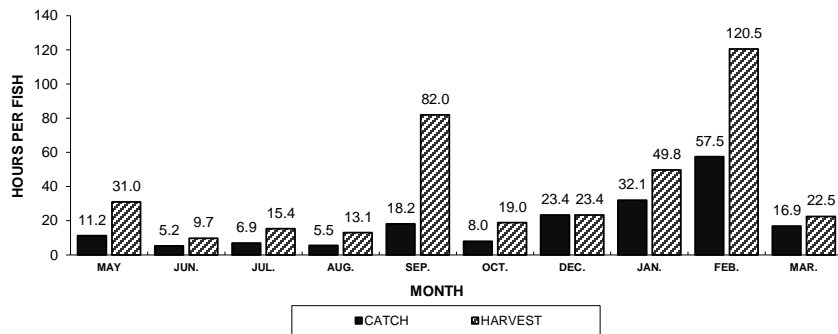


FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

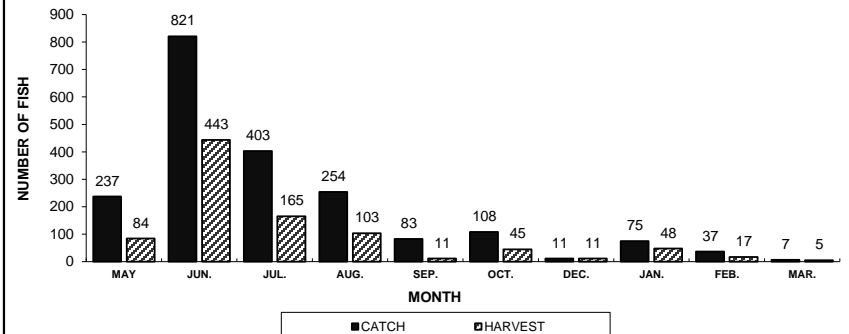


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

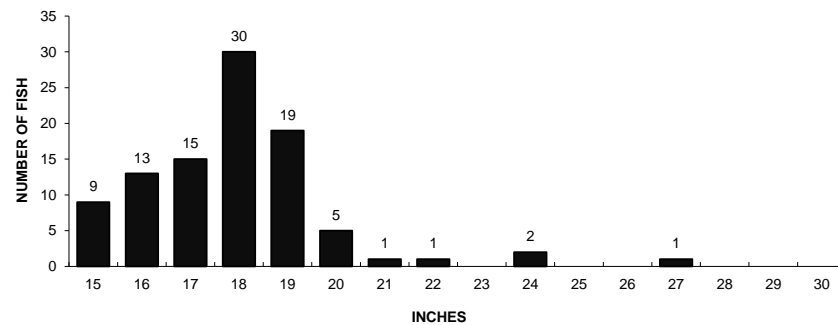
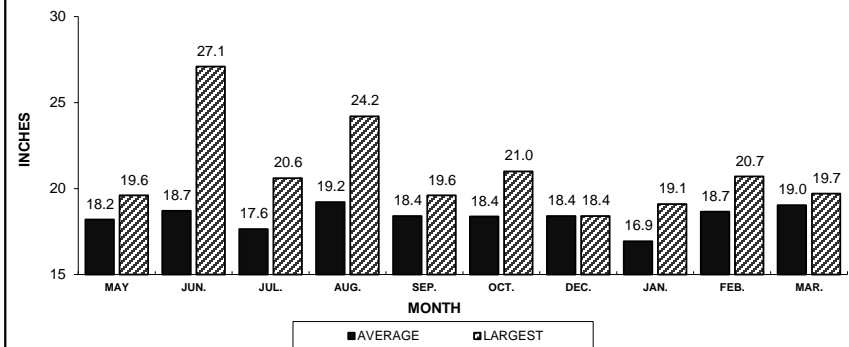


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED



NORTHERN PIKE

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

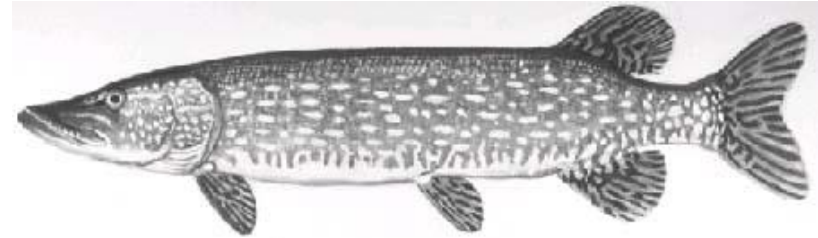
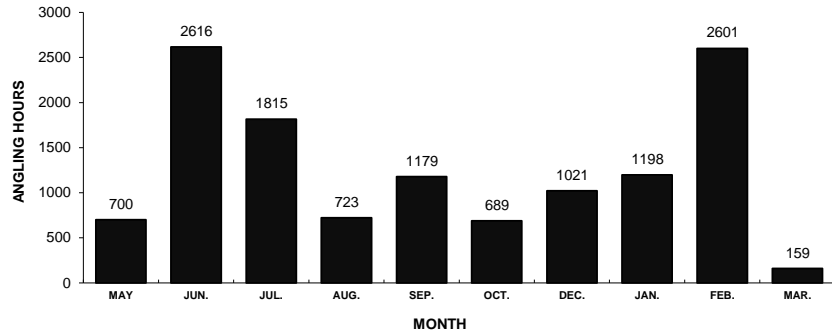


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

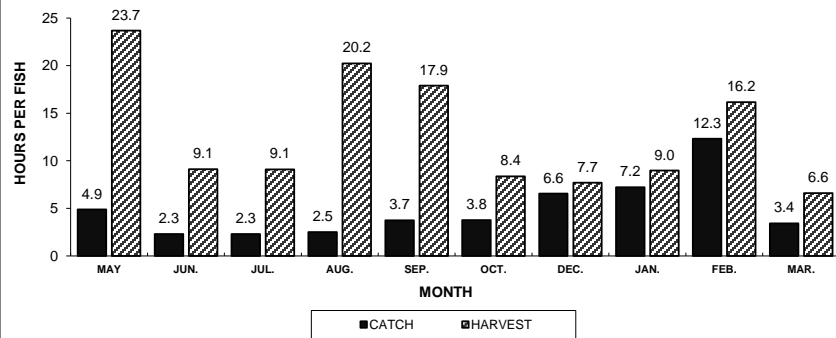


FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

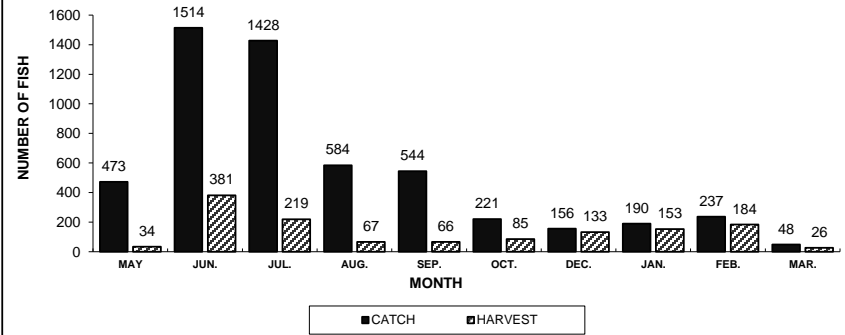


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

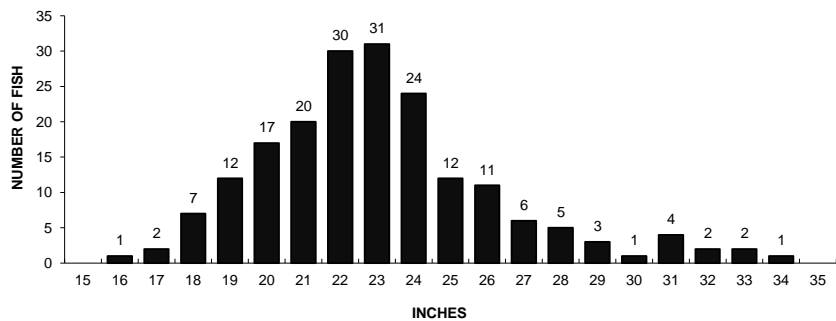
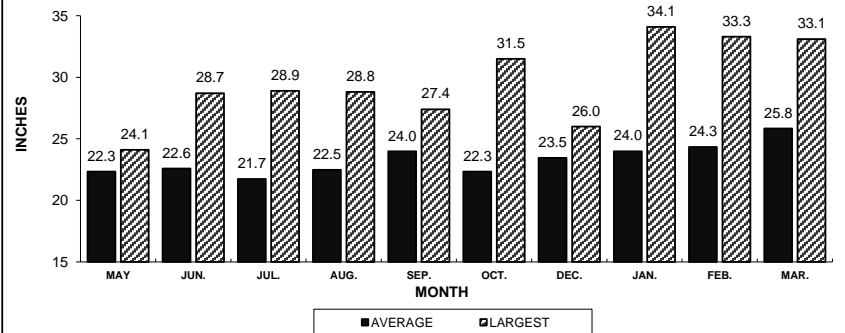
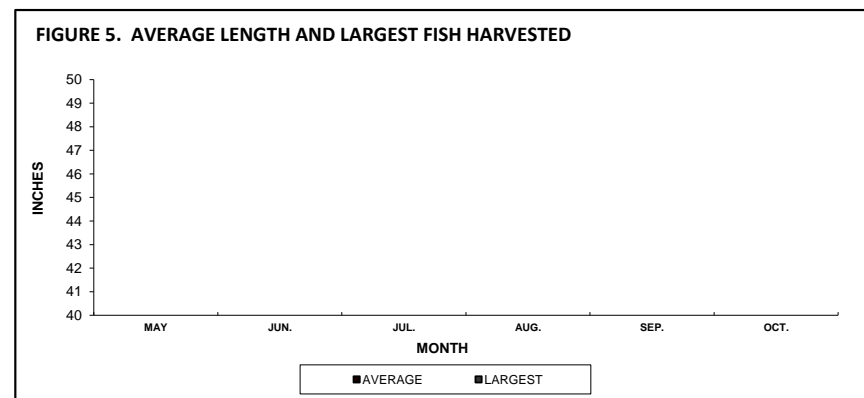
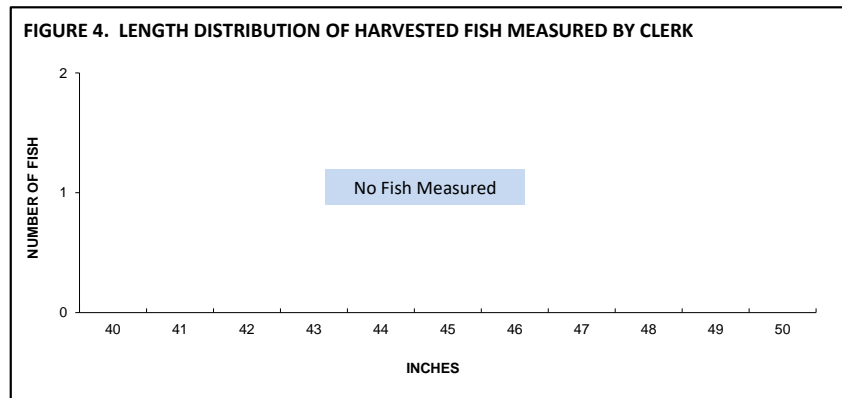
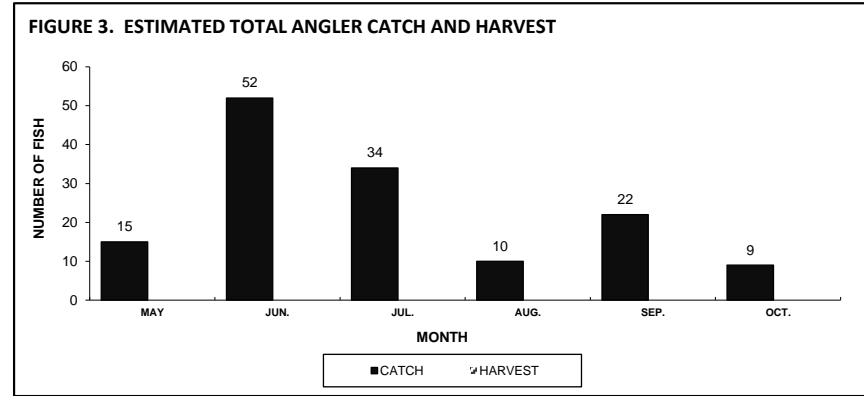
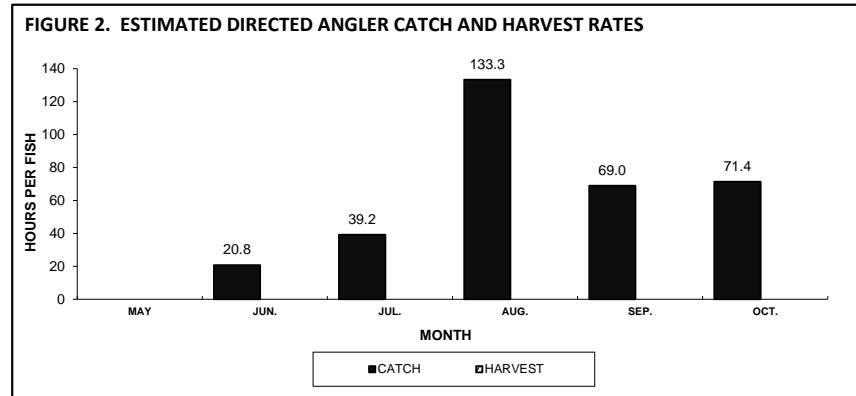
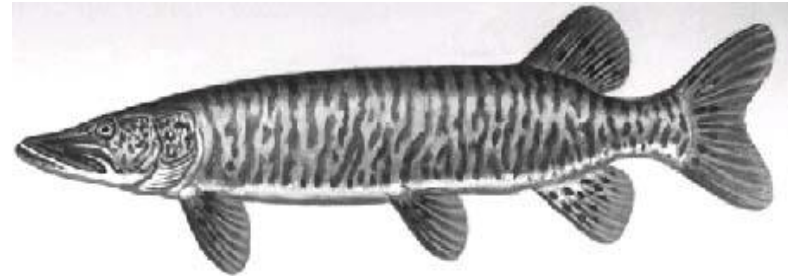
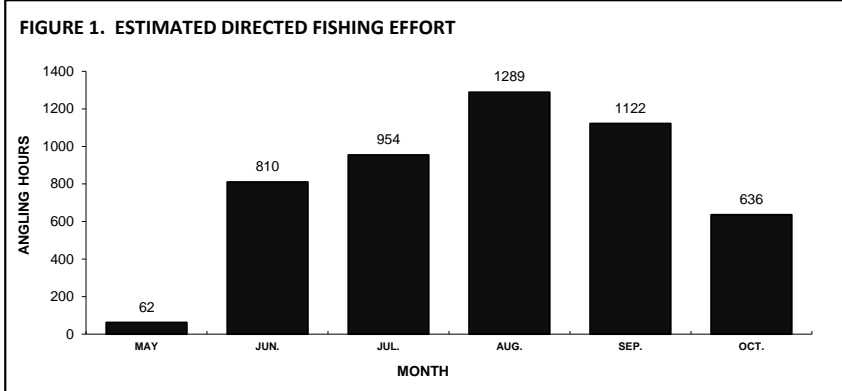


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED



MUSKELLUNGE



SMALLMOUTH BASS

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

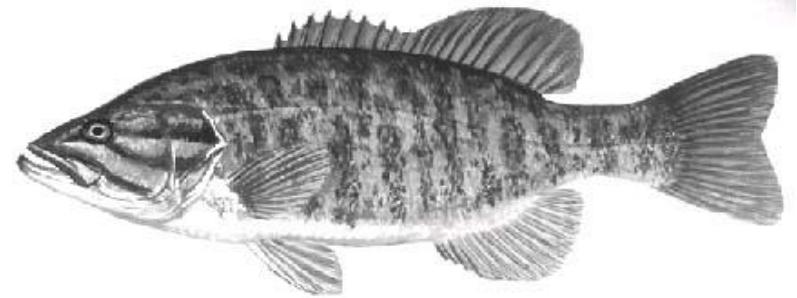
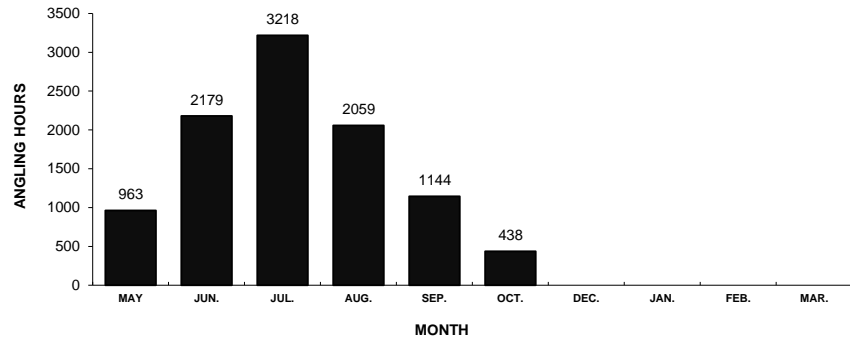


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

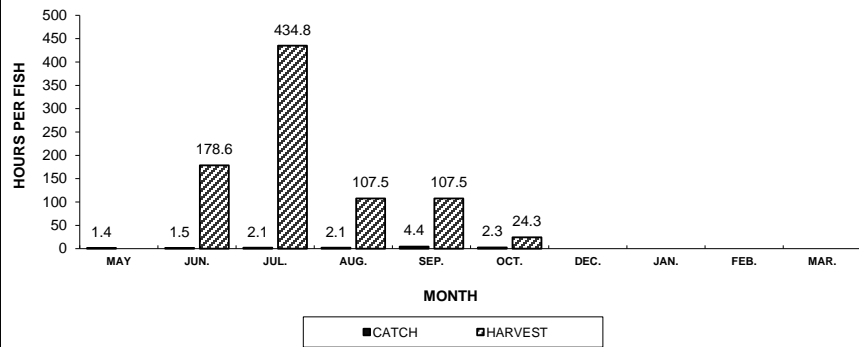


FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

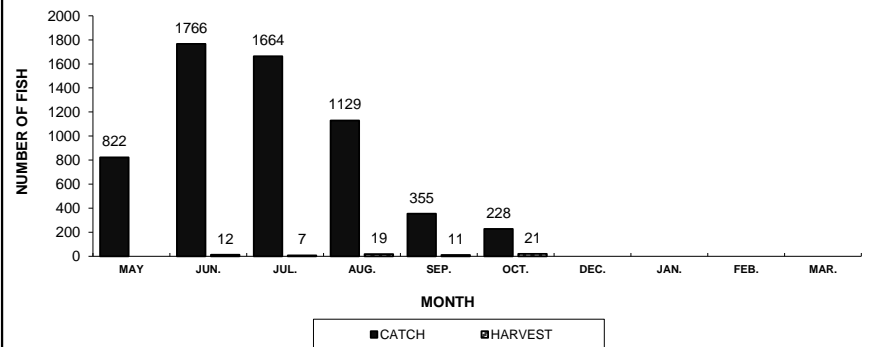


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

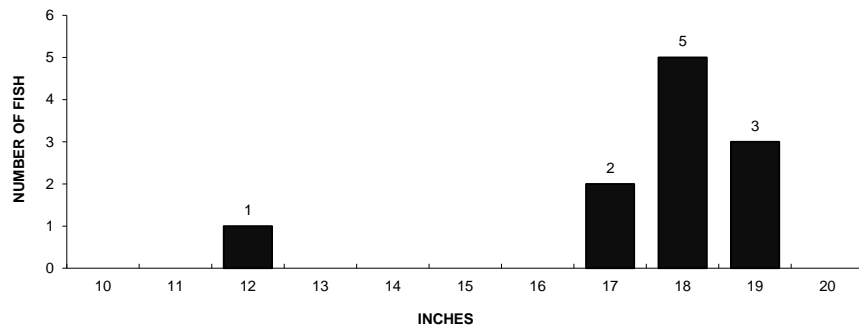
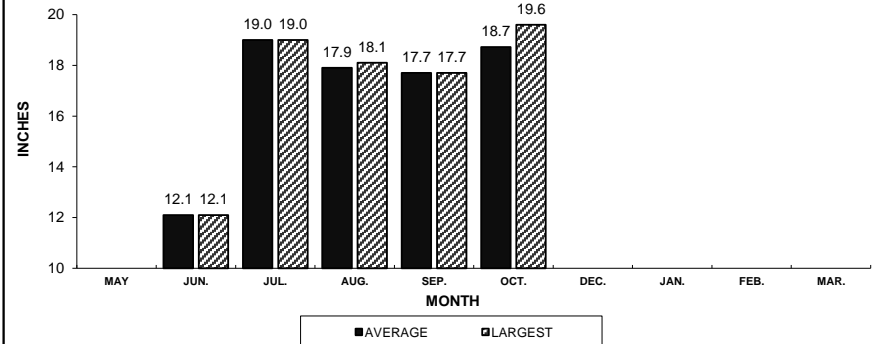


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED



LARGEMOUTH BASS

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

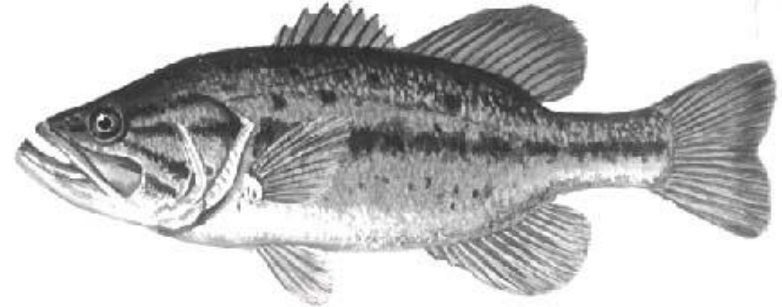
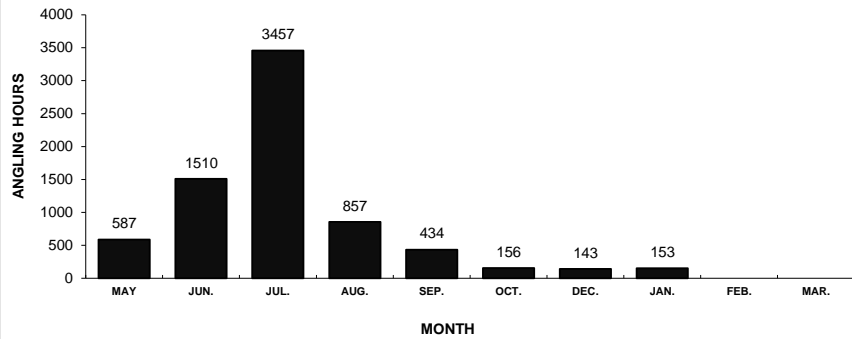


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

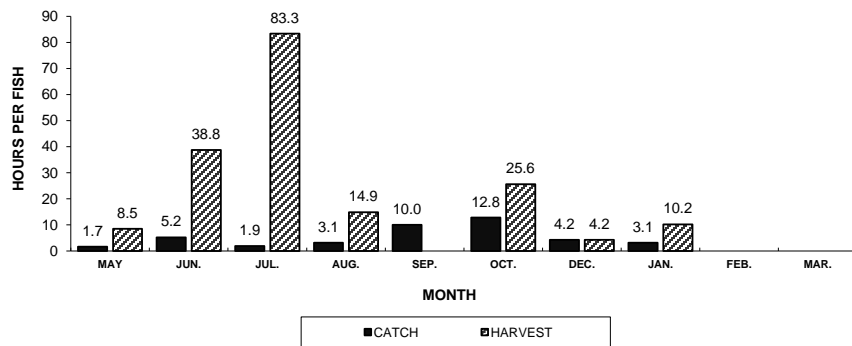


FIGURE 3. ESTIMATED TOTAL ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST

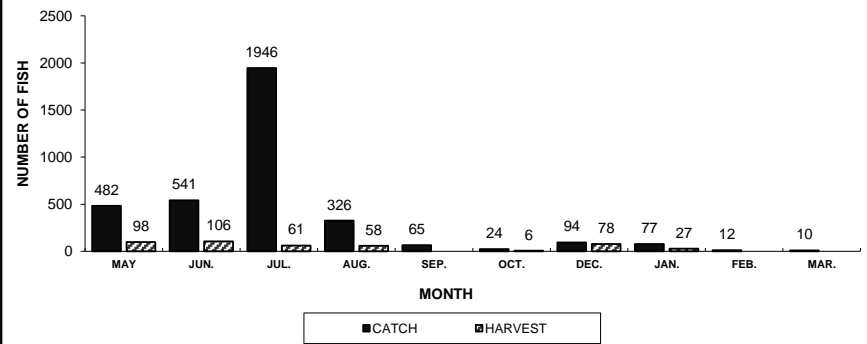


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

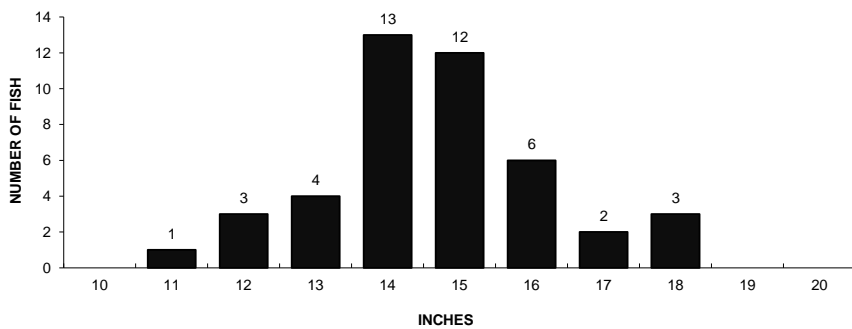
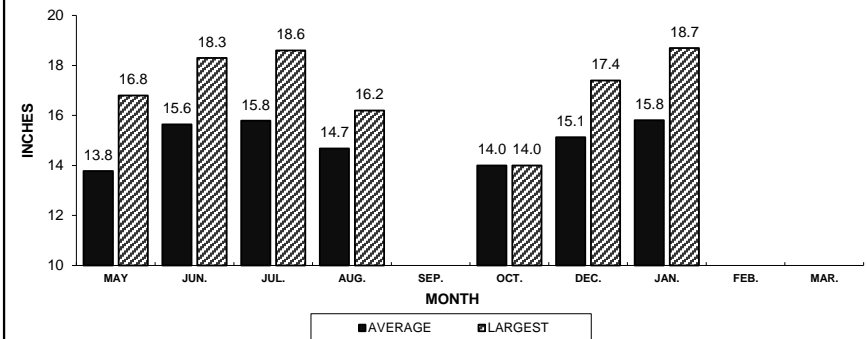


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED



BLUEGILL

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

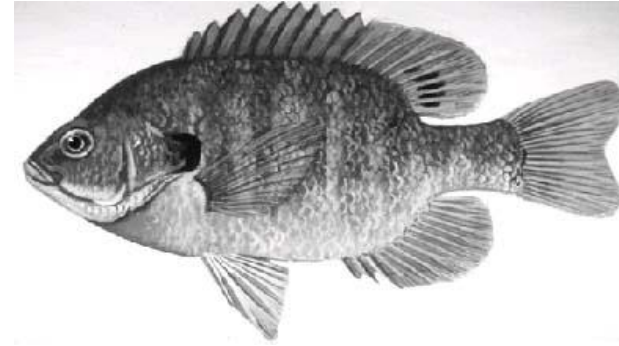
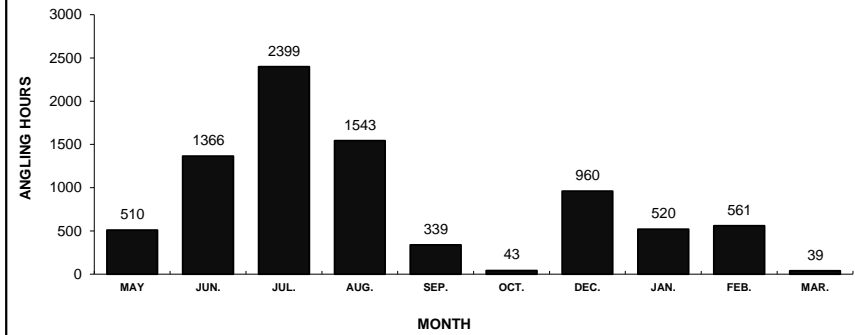


FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED DIRECTED ANGLER CATCH AND HARVEST RATES

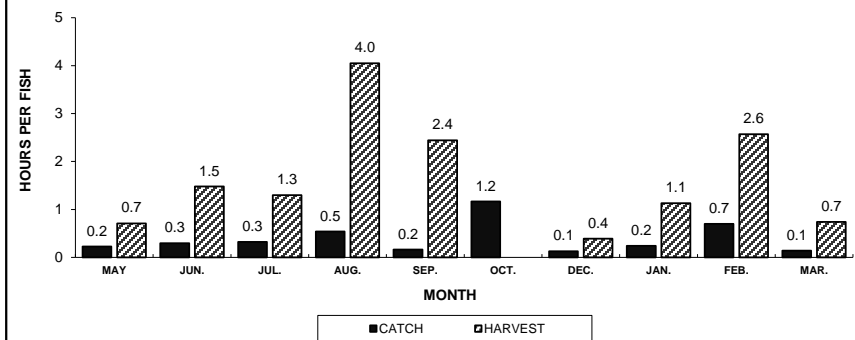


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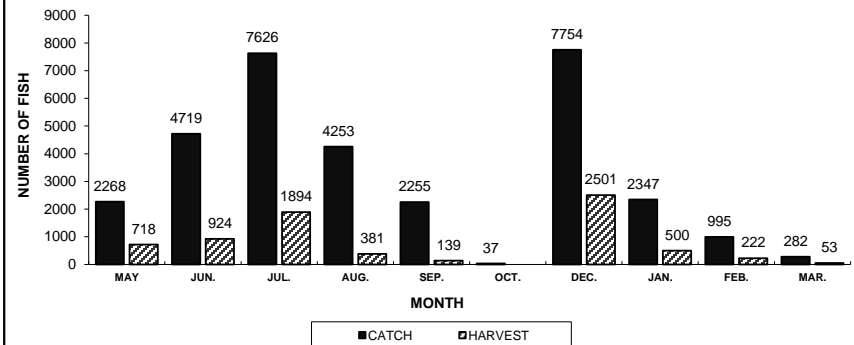


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

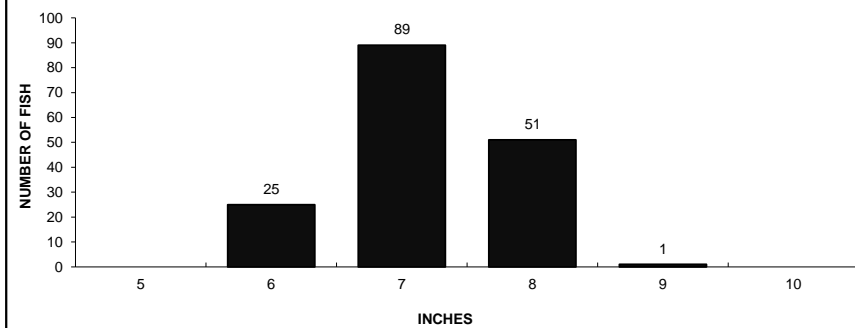
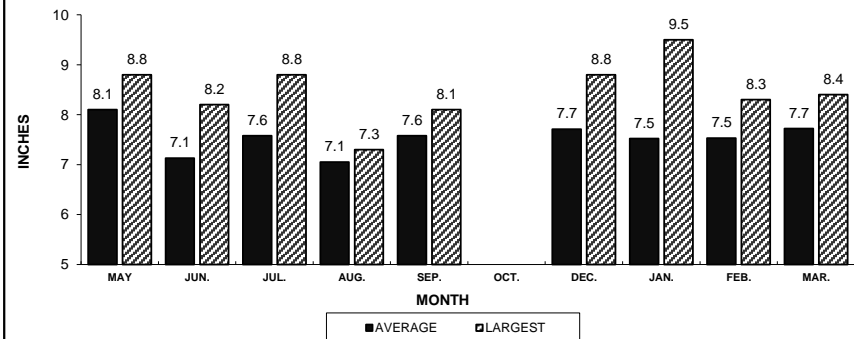


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED



BLACK CRAPPIE

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT

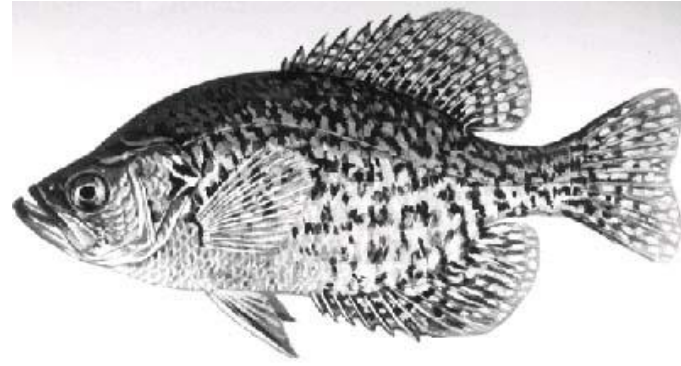
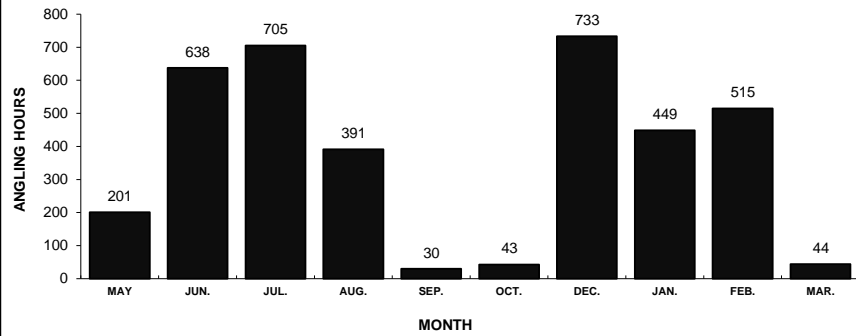


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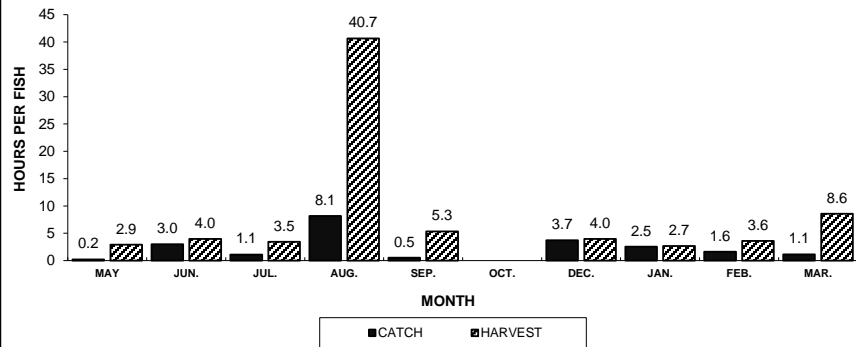


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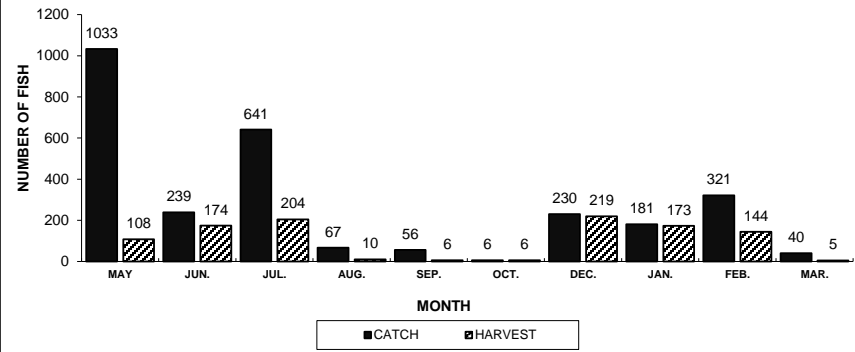


FIGURE 4. LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH MEASURED BY CLERK

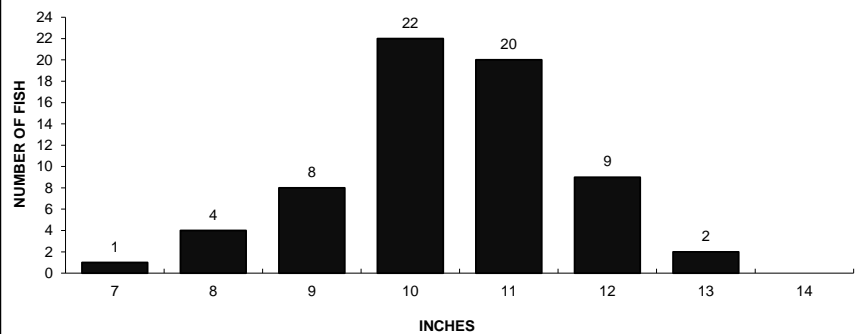
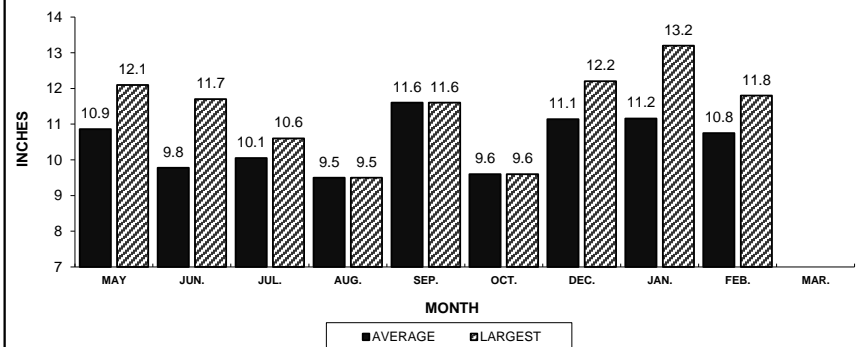
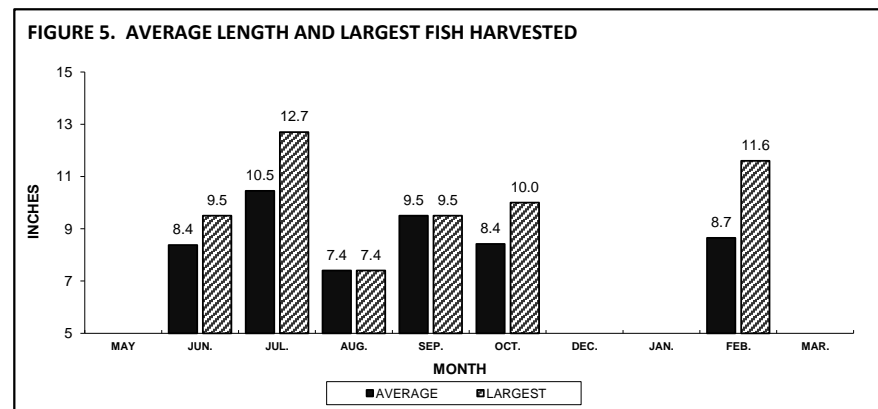
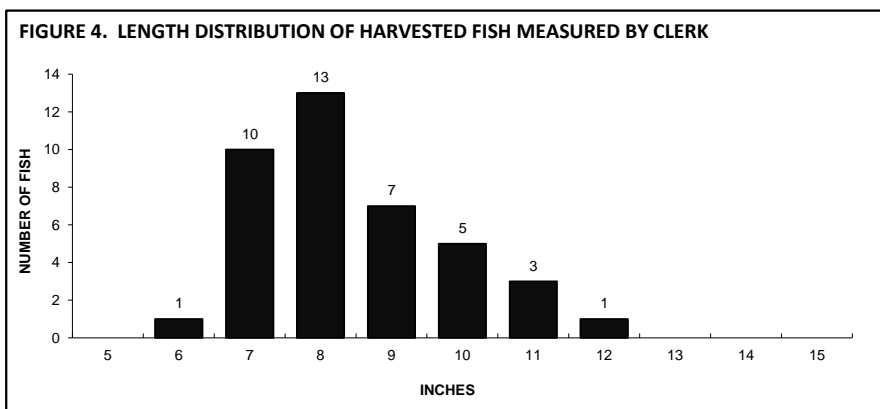
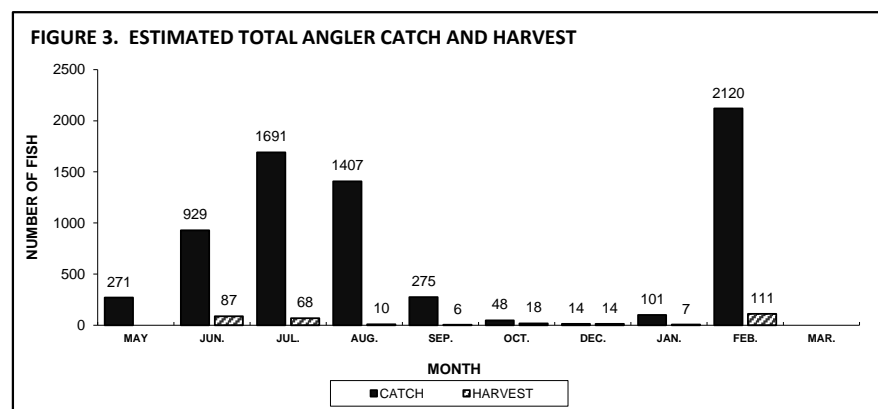
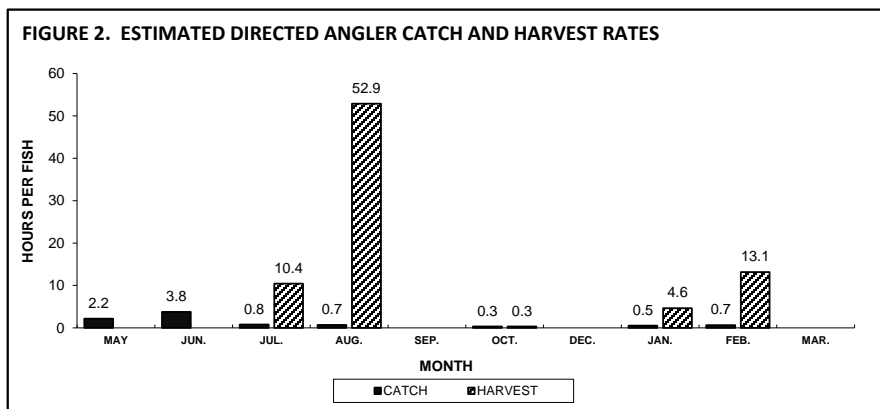
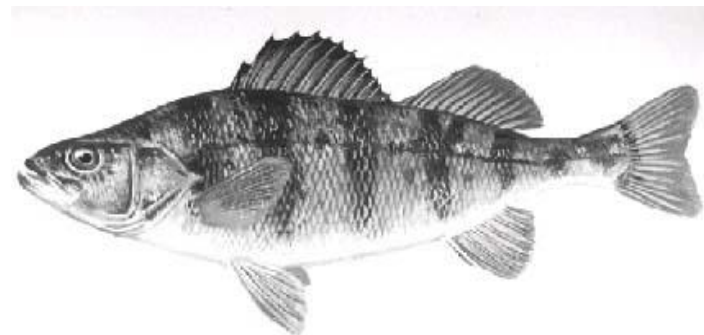
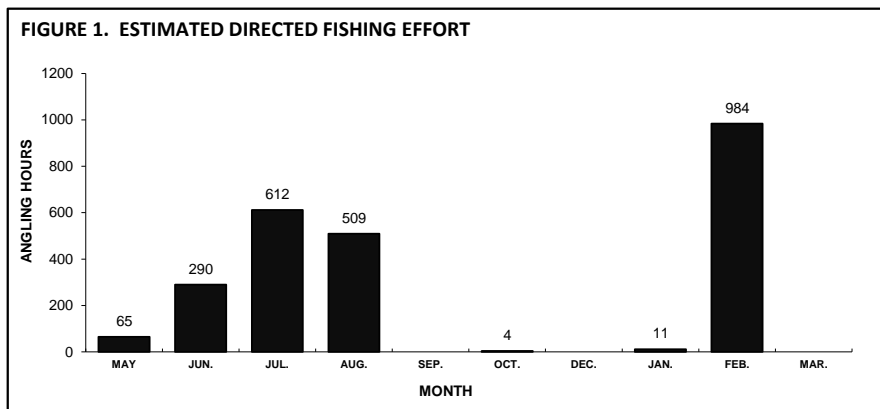


FIGURE 5. AVERAGE LENGTH AND LARGEST FISH HARVESTED

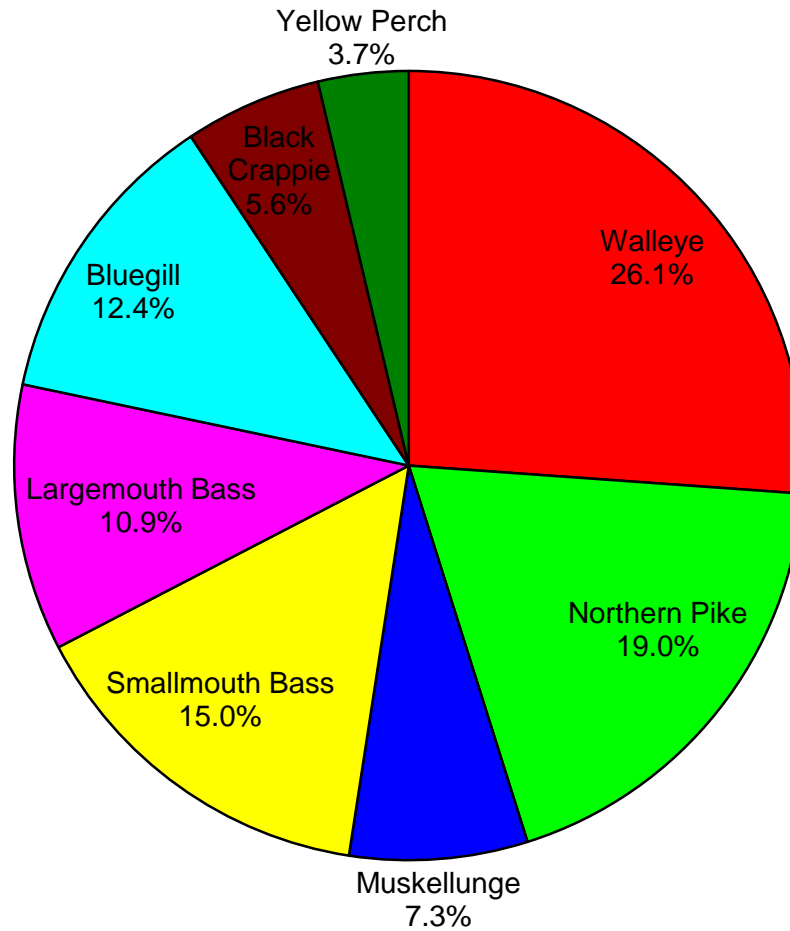


YELLOW PERCH



TOTAL ANNUAL ANGLER DIRECTED EFFORT BY SPECIES Lac Courte Oreilles Lake 2016-2017

This graph illustrates the percentage of time that anglers spent fishing for each species during the entire creel survey. The percentages are based on the species of fish anglers told the clerk they were fishing for, not what they actually caught. If a particular species is not present in the graph it is because no one reported they were fishing for that species.



SEASONAL ANGLER EFFORT SUMMARY

2016-2017

Estimated angler fishing effort on Lac Courte Oreilles Lake for each month surveyed and by season(Summer and Winter).

Month	Number of Angler Party Interviews	Total Angler Hours	Total Angler Hours/Acre	Sawyer County Average Hours/Acre	Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre
May	89	4561	0.9	4.8	5.1
June	139	10517	2.1	6.4	6.4
July	209	12200	2.4	6.0	6.9
August	116	7109	1.4	5.3	5.4
September	83	4185	0.8	4.5	3.3
October	75	1934	0.4	2.2	1.5
December	30	1655	0.3	0.5	1.1
January	83	3477	0.7	0.7	1.6
February	85	4276	0.8	0.6	1.5
March	11	259	0.1	NA	0.2
*Summer Total	711	40506	8.0	29.1	28.6
*Winter Total	209	9666	1.9	1.7	4.4
Grand Total	920	50172	10.0	30.9	33.0

*"Summer" is May-October; "Winter" is December-March

*March includes only data collected to the end of the gamefish season.

Number of Angler Party Interviews is the number of groups of anglers interviewed by the creel clerk. A party is considered the members of a group who fish together in the same boat, ice shanty, or from shore. The clerk fills out one interview form for each group of anglers. The number of individual anglers actually contacted by the clerk is usually much greater than the number of groups listed in this table since most groups consist of more than one angler.

Total Angler Hours is the estimated total number of hours that anglers spent fishing on this lake during each month surveyed.

Total Angler Hours/Acre is the total angler hours divided by the area of the lake in acres. This is useful if you wish to compare effort on this lake to others.

County Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for county lakes that have been surveyed since 1990. This value can be useful in comparisons as well.

Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for inland lakes in the ceded territory surveyed between 1990 and 2013. This value can be used to compare this lake to other lakes in the ceded territory.

CREEL SURVEY HISTORY/SYNOPSIS

LAC COURTE OREILLES LAKE, SAWYER COUNTY

CREEL YEAR: 2016-2017

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	17469	26.1%	2036	8.9	932	18.7	18.3
Northern Pike	12701	19.0%	5395	3.7	1348	11.0	23.5
Muskellunge	4873	7.3%	149	49.8	0		0.0
Smallmouth Bass	10001	15.0%	5964	2.0	70	149.3	17.9
Largemouth Bass	7297	10.9%	3577	2.6	434	27.9	15.1
Bluegill	8280	12.4%	32536	0.3	7332	1.1	7.6
Black Crappie	3749	5.6%	2814	1.4	1049	3.9	10.8
Yellow Perch	2475	3.7%	6856	0.8	321	15.7	8.9

CREEL YEAR: 2001-2002

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	27485	28.39%	1807	15.3	1127	24.5	19.6
Northern Pike	18726	19.34%	12830	2.3	2010	11.0	22.6
Muskellunge	21439	22.14%	358	66.7	0	NA	NA
Smallmouth Bass	11549	11.93%	6307	2.4	575	23.9	15.2
Largemouth Bass	4491	4.64%	1490	5.6	0	NA	NA
Bluegill	5337	5.51%	8729	0.7	1082	5.8	6.7
Pumpkinseed	542	0.56%	630	0.9	33	NA	6.6
Black Crappie	3975	4.11%	823	5.0	485	8.4	10.1
Yellow Perch	3253	3.36%	6314	1.4	516	13.1	9.1
Rock Bass	20	0.02%	725	NA	47	NA	8.7