LAKE: Wood Lake  COUNTY: Taylor  YEAR: 2019

Wood Lake is a 62-acre drainage lake located about 7 miles east of Rib Lake, WI. The average depth is 12 feet, and maximum depth is 33 feet. Water color has a moderate brown stain (Secchi depth = 5 feet). The lakebed is 10% sand, 20% gravel, 15% rock and 55% muck and supports a low density of aquatic vegetation. Submerged woody structure was plentiful along the shoreline. Taylor County maintains a public boat landing, beach, and campground on the west shore.

On May 30, 2019 when estimated water temperature was about 68°F, WDNR assessed largemouth bass and bluegill populations by electrofishing. Wood Lake’s shallow boat ramp prevented us from launching our large electrofishing boat that we traditionally use with two dippers. Instead, we used our mini-boom shocker and one dipper to sample the entire shoreline (1.38 mile) in 0.93 hour for gamefish, including 0.68 mile sub-sampled for all species in 0.48 hour.

**Largemouth Bass**

We captured 75 largemouth bass that ranged 2.6 – 15.5" and averaged 12.2" long. Electrofishing catch rates of 53 bass ≥ 8" per mile or 78 per hour indicated high population abundance. Among bass 8" and longer, 21% were legal-size bass ≥ 14", but only 3% were at least 15". Bass population abundance decreased, and its size improved somewhat since our last assessment in 2010 when late spring electrofishing captured 83 bass per mile or 190 per hour ≥ 8", 7% were legal-size bass, and less than 1% were ≥ 15". Slow-growing bass in high abundance should continue to offer fast fishing action and adequate predatory pressure to curb panfish abundance and keep them growing fast for good bluegill and crappie fishing.

**Bluegill**

In late spring 2019 we dip-netted 151 bluegills at electrofishing capture rates of 185 fish ≥ 3" per mile and 263 per hour. Though still representing moderate population abundance, those capture rates increased 5 times and 3.5 times since our 2010 assessment. Bluegill size structure was satisfactory, but not exceptional. They ranged 1.5 – 8.7" and averaged 4.5" long. About 28% of bluegills ≥ 3" in our sample were at least 6", 17% were 7" or longer, and 11% attained 8". The proportion of keeper-size bluegill ≥ 7" decreased from 53% in 2010, but the population’s share ≥ 8" did not change in our most recent surveys.
Black Crappie

Though it’s not our preferred method to evaluate black crappie population status, our late spring electrofishing sample included 16 crappies that ranged 2.5 – 11.7” and averaged 8.5” long. We don’t know how to interpret electrofishing catch rates of 22 crappies ≥ 5” per mile or 31 per hour. Nonetheless, our catch demonstrates that crappies can attain 11” and longer in Wood Lake, suggesting that crappie population abundance is sufficiently moderated to provide good panfish angling. Promoting a voluntary daily limit of 5 crappies could spread the harvest opportunity among more anglers.

Our sample also included eight golden shiners, a johnny darter, three northern pike 18.7–20.3”, three pumpkinseed 5.3–6.8”, seven white suckers 7.4–18.3”, and 40 yellow perch 2.5–5.9” long.

For questions or additional information contact:

Jeff Scheirer, Fisheries Biologist
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
875 4th Ave. S.
Park Falls, WI 54552
715-762-1354
Jeffrey.Scheirer@wisconsin.gov