



2023 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

TIGER CAT CHAIN, SAWYER COUNTY

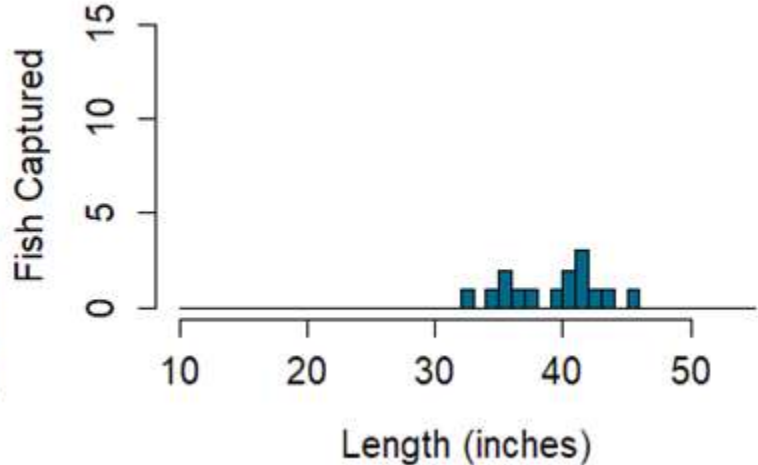
Report by Evan Sirianni

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the Tiger Cat Chain from May 10-11, 2023. The primary target was muskellunge, but useful data was also gathered on northern pike, black crappies and yellow perch. Twelve nets were set overnight for one night, which resulted in 12 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey was conducted on May 29, 2023 to target largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and bluegills and included 10.9 miles of shoreline. 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.

MUSKELLUNGE



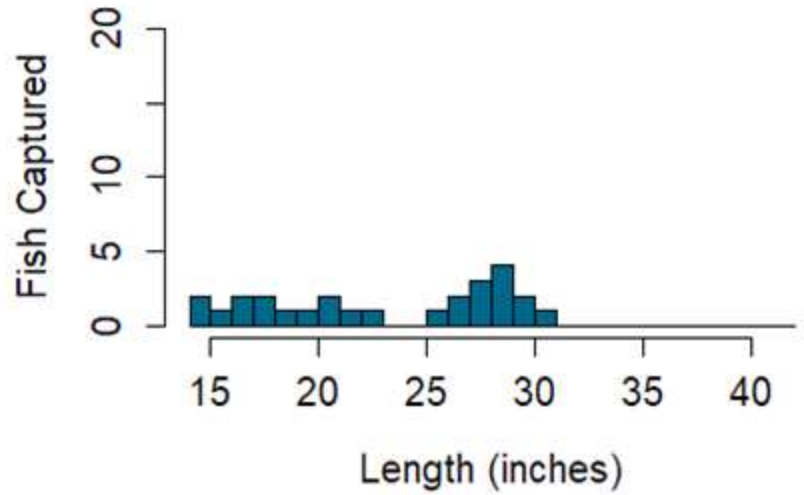
Captured 1.3 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 30''$	93%
Memorable Size $\geq 42''$	20%



NORTHERN PIKE



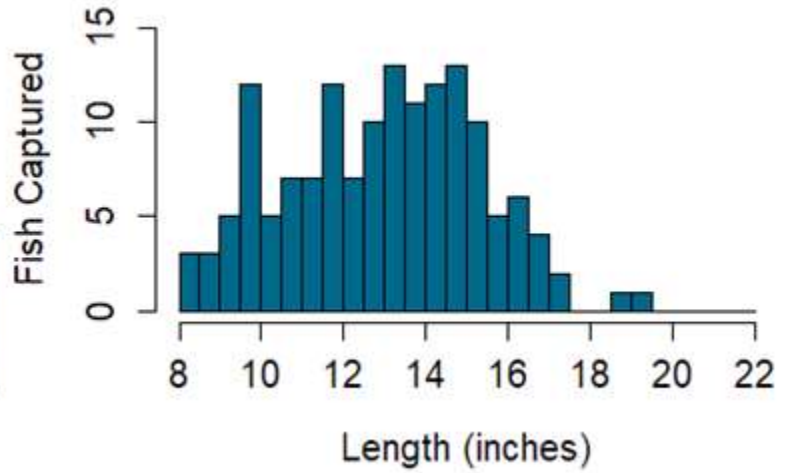
Captured 5 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 21''$	58%
Preferred Size $\geq 28''$	27%



LARGEMOUTH BASS



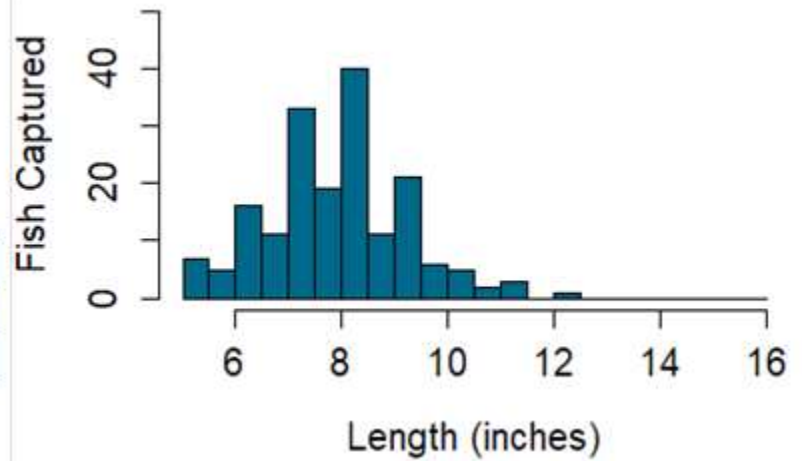
Captured 15 per mile ≥ 8 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 12''$	64%
Preferred Size $\geq 15''$	20%



BLACK CRAPPIE



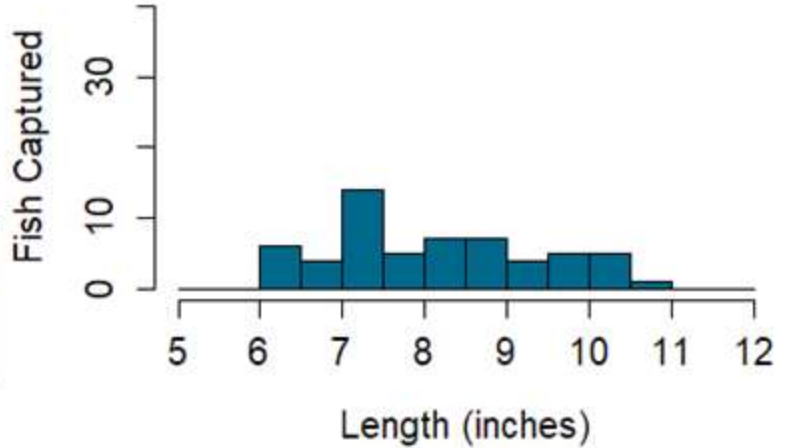
Captured 20 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	49%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	6%



YELLOW PERCH



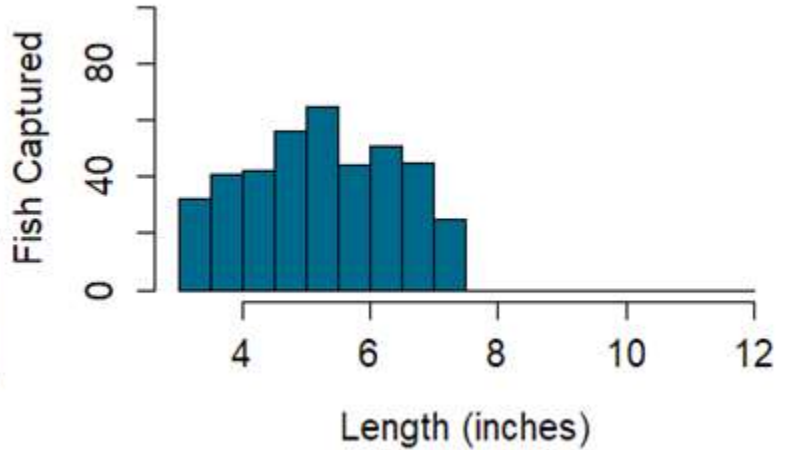
Captured 5 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	50%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	10%



BLUEGILL



Captured 138 per mile ≥ 3 inches	
Quality Size $\geq 6''$	30%
Preferred Size $\geq 8''$	0%



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The target species of the netting effort was muskellunge, with northern pike, black crappie and yellow perch as secondary targets. The survey was well timed for muskellunge with waters warming quickly during early spring. The target species for the spring electrofishing effort included largemouth bass and panfish. The electrofishing survey was timed well, with largemouth bass being found in the shallows and some on spawning beds. Panfish were occupying the shallows as well. The Tiger Cat Chain is a Complex-Cool-Clear lake according to the DNR fisheries lake classification system. "Complex" refers to the number of gamefish species within the body of water, and "Cool-Clear" refers to the clarity and water temperature of the lake compared to others across the state. This report compares catch rate results to lakes of the same classification of Complex-Cool-Clear.

MUSKELLUNGE

Muskellunge catch in the Tiger Cat Chain has been on the decline, so the survey targeted “musky” to continue tracking their population dynamics. Muskellunge were captured at a rate of 1.3 fish per net-night, which is between the 90th and 95th percentile of lakes in the same classification. A significant proportion of muskies (93%) caught were of a quality size of 30 inches and 20% of the fish being over a memorable size of 42 inches. The daily bag limit for muskellunge on the Tiger Cat Chain is one, with a 40-inch minimum length limit.

NORTHERN PIKE

Special attention has been brought to northern pike since they found their way into the Tiger Cat Chain. Northern pike impacts on other fish species native to the system have been a topic of concern. There were an average of five northern pike per net-night caught during the netting survey. That average is the 90th percentile of lakes of the same classification. A little over half of the northern pike caught were at or above 21 inches, and 27% of the northern pike were above a preferred size of 28 inches. Anglers are encouraged to harvest northern pike, and there is a daily bag limit of five northern pike per day with no minimum length limit.

LARGEMOUTH BASS

The electrofishing effort in late May was very successful in capturing largemouth bass in the Tiger Cat Chain. The water had warmed very quickly, and the bass were up in the shallows on spawning beds or roaming around. A capture rate of 15 fish per mile is close to the 75th percentile for lakes of the same classification. Largemouth bass that were at or above 12 inches in length made up 64% of the bass captured and 20% of the largemouth bass were above 15 inches. Smallmouth bass are present within the Tiger Cat Chain, however only one was captured during the survey. There is a daily bag limit of fish fish for the two species combined. Largemouth and smallmouth bass below 14 inches may be kept with one above 18 inches.

BLACK CRAPPIE

Tiger Cat Chain has a very high population of crappies; however, these fish tend to lean on the smaller side. Black crappie catch rates (20 per net-night) are close to the 95th percentile of lakes of the same classification. Crappies of a size greater than 8 inches made up around half of the individuals caught, and only 6% of the fish were greater than 10 inches. The daily bag limit of panfish on the Tiger Cat Chain is 25.

BLUEGILL

Bluegills on the Tiger Cat Chain, similar to the crappie, tend to run on the smaller side. A capture rate of 138 fish per mile puts Tiger Cat between the average and the 75th percentile for lakes of the same classification. The size of the bluegills captured was underwhelming, with only 30% greater than 6 inches and none over 8 inches. The daily bag limit of panfish on the Tiger Cat Chain is 25.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden, Evan Sirianni, Sam Lau and Dalton Mouritsen

Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole