



**WISCONSIN DNR
FISHERIES INFORMATION SHEET**

LAKE: OXBOW

COUNTY: VILAS

YEAR: 2008

The Department of Natural Resources surveyed Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, from April 30 through May 28, 2008, to determine the health of its fishery. The survey was designed to take a comprehensive look at the lake's fishery. Oxbow Lake is a relatively infertile drainage lake with predominantly sand, gravel and rock substrate. Oxbow Lake has a moderate density walleye population dominated by small walleye. It has a surface area of 511 acres, 13.5 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 44 feet.

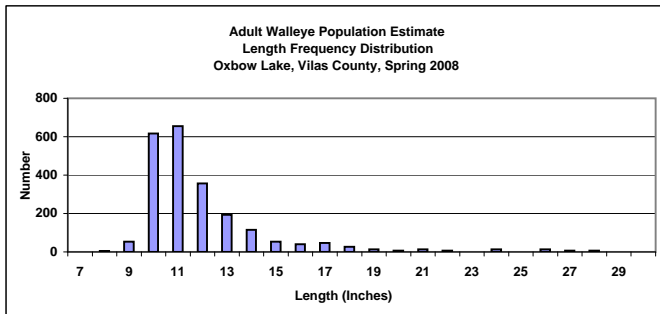


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of 2,238 adult* walleye estimated to be in Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, based on a spring 2008 survey.

* Note: Adult walleye are defined as all sexable walleye and walleye of unknown sex ≥ 15 inches long.

Walleye

We conducted a mark-recapture survey of Oxbow Lake's adult* walleye population from April 30 through May 4, 2008. We captured and marked (fin clipped) 473 adult walleye in 3 days of fyke netting. Two crews sampled Oxbow Lake with electro-fishing boats on May 4th and captured 228 adult walleye. Nearly 20% (45 of 228) of those walleye had been marked during fyke netting.

Based on those results, we estimated that 2,238 adult walleye (4.4/acre) inhabited Oxbow Lake. Nearly 16% (357 of 2,238) of adult walleye were 14 inches long or larger. The largest walleye we captured was a 28.2-inch female.

Smallmouth Bass

We were unable to capture enough smallmouth bass in our sampling of Oxbow Lake to estimate their abundance. We caught a total of 38 smallmouth bass 8 inches long or larger. Nine of those smallmouth bass were 14 inches long or larger. The largest smallmouth bass we captured was 16.6 inches long.

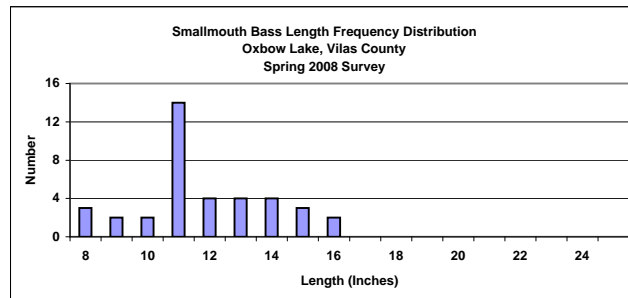


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution of 38 smallmouth bass ≥ 8 " estimated captured during a fisheries survey of Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, based on a spring 2008 survey.

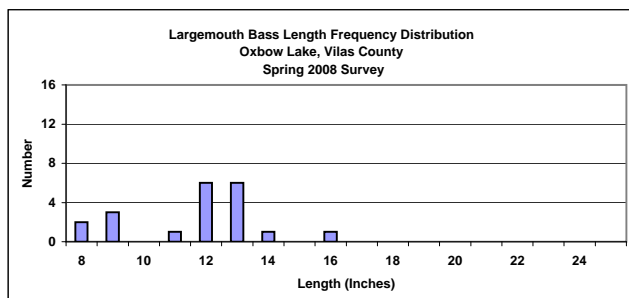


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution of 20 largemouth bass ≥ 8 " captured during a fisheries survey of Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

Largemouth Bass

We captured 20 largemouth bass, 8 inches or larger, during our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling of Oxbow Lake. Only two of those largemouth were 14 inches long or larger. The biggest largemouth bass we captured was 16.7 inches long.

Northern Pike

We captured 42 adult* northern pike in fyke nets fished in Oxbow Lake from April 30 through May 2, 2008. Only two of the adult northern pike we captured were 26 inches long or larger. The largest northern pike we captured was a 27.2 inch female.

* Note: Adult northern pike are defined as all sexable northern pike and northern pike of unknown sex \geq 12 inches long.

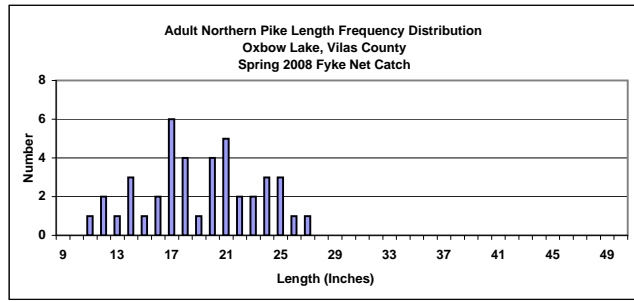


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution of 42 adult* northern pike captured in fyke nets during a fisheries survey of Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

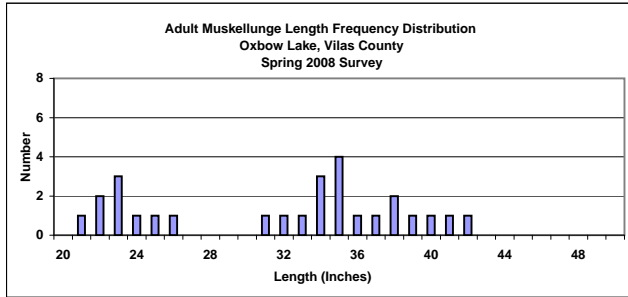


Figure 5. Length frequency distribution of 27 adult* muskellunge captured during a fisheries survey of Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, in spring 2008.

Muskellunge

We captured 27 adult* muskellunge during our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling of Oxbow Lake. Nearly 56 % of the adult muskellunge (15 of 27) we captured were 34 inches long or larger. Three of those muskellunge were 40 inches long or larger. The largest muskellunge we captured was a 42.2-inch female.

* Note: Adult muskellunge are defined as all sexable muskellunge and muskellunge of unknown sex \geq 20 inches long.

Other Species

We captured six species of fish in our fyke netting and electro-fishing sampling of Oxbow Lake in addition to the game fish mentioned above. Bluegill, pumpkinseed, rock bass and yellow perch were common in our fyke net catches. We also caught moderate numbers of black crappie and white sucker. In-water sampling will conclude with survey of young-of-year walleye in fall 2008.

We are also conducting a creel (angler harvest) survey on Oxbow Lake this year. Creel clerk Marty Kiepke will count and interview anglers and examine their catch throughout the 2008-09 fishing season.

Table 1. General Fishing Regulations for Oxbow Lake, Vilas County, 2008

FISH SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	DAILY LIMIT	MINIMUM LENGTH
Walleye	May 3 - March 1	3	No minimum, only one over 14"
Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass	May 3 - June 20 (C&R) June 21 - March 1 (Harvest)	None 5 in total	14 inches
Muskellunge	May 24 - Nov. 30	1	34 inches
Northern Pike	May 3 - March 1	5	None

A brief summary of selected fishing regulations for Oxbow Lake is included above (Table 1). While the regulatory information provided was current at the time the surveys were conducted, it is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for the current fishing regulation pamphlet. You may obtain a copy of current fishing regulations when you purchase your fishing license, or download a copy from our web site at:

<http://www.dnr.wi.gov/fish/regulations/>

This report is interim only; data and findings should not be considered final. Results of creel surveys should be available by June 2009. If you are interested in a summary of the creel survey or want an update on this year's fyke netting and electro-fishing survey results, contact:

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