

FISHERIES LAKE SURVEY

LAKE WASHINGTON

Area: 2,433.91 acres Littoral Area: 2,266.04 acres Shore Length: 10.28 miles	Mean Depth: 8 feet Maximum Depth: 17 feet Average Water Clarity: 3.2 feet
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Stocking report

Fish [Stocked](#) by Species for the Last Ten Years

Year	Species	Size	Number	Pounds
2015	Walleye	fry	2,283,693	22.3
2013	Walleye	fry	2,270,912	19.2
2011	Walleye	fry	114,000	1.0
	Walleye	fry	2,349,000	18.1
2009	Walleye	fry	1,169,357	11.0
	Walleye	fry	884,771	9.6
	Walleye	fry	395,770	3.6

Stocking Notes

- 1 - indicates fish purchased and stocked by private citizens and sporting groups.
- 2 - indicates fish purchased by the DNR for stocking.

Stocking Fish Sizes

Fry - Newly hatched fish that are ready to be stocked usually called "swim-ups". Walleye fry are 1/3 of an inch or around 8 mm.

Fingerling - Fingerlings are one to six months old and can range from a size of one to twelve inches depending on the species. Walleye fingerlings range from three to eight inches each fall.

Yearling - Yearling fish are at least one year old. A one-year-old fish can range from three to twenty inches depending on the species. Walleye yearlings average from six to twelve inches.

Adult - Adult fish are fish that have reached maturity. Depending on the species, maturity can be reached at two years of age. Walleye reach maturity between the ages of four and six years.

Length of Select Species Sampled - All Gear Combined

Species	Number of fish caught in each category (inches)													Total
	0-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+	
black bullhead	8	2	6	5	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
black crappie	8	46	152	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	218
bluegill	301	102	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	406
bowfin (dogfish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	7
brown bullhead	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
common carp	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
channel catfish	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
green sunfish	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
hybrid sunfish	5	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
largemouth bass	8	1	6	2	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
northern pike	0	0	0	0	0	8	29	27	3	0	0	0	0	67
pumpkinseed	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
smallmouth bass	2	1	1	1	7	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
walleye	0	0	17	13	3	83	29	2	0	0	0	0	0	147
white sucker	0	0	0	1	25	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
yellow bullhead	0	2	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
yellow perch	172	99	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	275

Report a Violation in Progress



To report a violation, call 800-652-9093 24 hours a day, or key in #TIP on your cell phone.

Include important information

All violations reported through our online form will be investigated. Please provide as many details as you can to help the Conservation Officer with the investigation.

- Location: It is especially important to include the county and nearest town to the violation.
- Violator's identity: If you know the identity of the individual(s) committing the violation, please indicate their name(s) on the form.
- Contact information: Indicate on the report form if it is all right for a Conservation Officer to contact you to follow up on the request.

Remain anonymous

If you wish to remain completely anonymous, you must contact TIP by phone.

Stay safe!

Never put yourself in a dangerous position, and never take the law into your own hands.

STATUS OF THE FISHERY

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Washington Lake was designated infested with Eurasian watermilfoil in 1999. The plant spread prolifically and formed dense mats around the lake, was subject to some herbicidal treatments in subsequent years, and as recently as 2014 and 2016 has been at nearly undetectable levels around the lake. Monitoring efforts for the species continue. In 2015, zebra mussels were discovered in the lake. Lakeshore owners retrieving their docks in the fall of 2016 report that the mussels are increasing as their dock structures were covered in adjoined mussel shells. What impact the filter-feeding organisms will have on the lake's fish populations and food web relationships is unknown. One concern with zebra mussels and increasing water transparency is the idea of thermal-optical habitat area loss. Too much transparency could change the ecology of the lake and resulting habitat conditions could favor species other than walleye, the present primary fisheries management species.

A standard survey was conducted at Washington in 2016 to monitor the lake's fish population. In 2016, a total of 22 species, plus Hybrid Sunfish, were sampled in the gill and trap nets, by spring night-time electrofishing, or with traditional (0.25") shoreline seining. The lake was well mixed on 7/25/16, with oxygen near the surface being 9.1 mg/l, and 7.7 mg/l just off the bottom. Water clarity was poor (2.9 feet) due to an algae bloom. Neascus parasites (black spot), which are common throughout Minnesota, were observed on Northern Pike, Walleye, and Yellow Perch.

Gill nets sampled high numbers of Walleye (143) for a catch rate of 9.5/net, which was within the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The 2012 and 2014 catch rates were similar at 9.5 and 8.3/net, respectively. Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=15), under various stocking regimes, were variable, ranging from 2.2 to 41.2/net with an average of 13.9. The latest stocking regime (2,266,000 fry every other year) was initiated in 1991. Gill net catch rates during this regime (1999, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2016) ranged from 5.8 to 19.0/net with an average of 12.0. In 2016, gill netted Walleye were 9.2 to 25.9 inches long with an average of 16.8. Approximately 78% of the gill net catch was 15 inches or longer, indicating a quality size structure.

In 2016, Walleye were age-1 through age-15 with twelve year classes being represented. In the gill nets, age-1's, 2's, 3's and 5's accounted for 20%, 29%, 26% and 15% of the catch, respectively. The 2015, 2014, 2013, and 2011 year classes would all be ranked as moderate in size. The contribution from non-stocked years (natural reproduction) was 37% of the gill net aged fish, mainly due to the substantial 2014 year class. The contribution from fry stocked years was 63%. It was unknown if that 63% came from the fry stocking, natural reproduction, or some combination of both. Analysis of gill net age data, from 1991 to 2016 (n=8 assessments), indicated that only one strong year class (2006) was produced during a non-stocked year (n=12). Fry stocked years (n=13) produced six strong year classes

during that time period. Overall, growth could be categorized as moderate. Gill nets sampled low numbers of Northern Pike (67) for a catch rate of 4.5/net, which was within the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The 2014 catch rate was similar at 3.5/net. Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=15) were mostly low, ranging from 0.0 to 8.5/net with an average of 3.3. This indicated that recruitment was low (<5/net) most years at Washington Lake. Northern Pike were 17.4 to 32.2 inches long with an average of 24.4. Approximately 31% of the gill net catch was 26 inches or longer, indicating a size structure with some opportunities for larger fish. Fish were age-1 to age-6 with six age classes being present. Growth was fast in recent years.

Gill nets sampled moderate numbers of Yellow Perch (189) for a catch rate of 12.6/net, which was within the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=15) were highly variable, ranging from 0.2 to 54.7/net with an average of 12.5. Yellow Perch were 5.1 to 9.6 inches long with an average of 6.2. Only four fish were 8 inches or longer, indicating a poor size structure, as far as perch anglers would be concerned. Yellow Perch ages were estimated to be age-2 to age-6 with four year classes present. Age-2 fish accounted for 78% of the gill net sample, indicating consistent recruitment and/or predation. Recent growth could be categorized as moderate.

Trap nets failed to sample any Black Crappie in 2016, as was the case in 2014. These two years produced the lowest catch rates ever recorded since trap netting began in 1951. Trap nets had not sampled good numbers of Black Crappie since 1983 (5.5/net). Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=14) were with an average of 3.7. This likely

mostly low, ranging from 0.0 to 22.6/net indicated that trap nets, in early August, often don't do a good job of sampling Black Crappie at Washington Lake. Gill nets sampled moderate numbers of Black Crappie (218) for a catch rate of 14.5/net, which was above the normal range for lakes similar to Washington and the highest ever recorded at Washington.

The 2014 gill net catch rate was the lowest on record (1.2/net). Catch rates from 1957 to 2016 (n=14) were generally low, ranging from 1.2 to 14.5/net with an average of 5.7. After examining many decades of data, gill nets usually did a better job of sampling Black Crappie than trap nets did. Gill netted Black Crappie were 4.8 to 14.4 inches long with an average of 8.5. Approximately 75 of the gill net catch was 8 inches or longer, while 6% were 11 inches or longer, indicating a decent size structure. Black Crappie were age-1 to age-8 with six year classes present. Age-2 (2014) fish made up 91% of the sample, indicating a strong year class that averaged 8.2 inches in late July, 2016. That year class should be at least 9 inches long by the spring of 2017. Growth was moderate.

Trap nets sampled moderate numbers of Bluegill (331) for a catch rate of 22.1/net which was above the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The 2014 catch rate was 9.5/net. Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=14) ranged from 0.2 to 23.9/net, with an average of 12.7. In 2016, trap netted Bluegill were 3.4 to 8.2 inches long with an average of 5.2. Approximately 21% of the trap net catch was 6 inches or longer, but only 6% were 7 inches or longer. Gill nets sampled Bluegill up to 9.1 inches in length. Bluegill were age-2 to age-8 with seven year classes present. Age-2 and age-3 fish were well represented accounting for 38% and 53% of the trap netted fish, respectively. Growth was considered

moderate. Spring night-time electrofishing, targeting Largemouth Bass, sampled low numbers (16) of fish for a catch rate of 10.7/hr. The 2014 catch rate was similar at 11.6/hr. Historic catch rates (n=9), from 1993 to 2016, were variable, ranging from 8.7 to 40.1/hr. with an average of 16.7. Largemouth Bass were 4.9 to 17.3 inches long with an average of 12.3.

Largemouth Bass were age-1 to age-8 with eight year classes present. Growth was moderate. Electrofishing on Washington may not be as effective as it is on other lakes, due to an abundance of offshore emergent and submergent vegetation. Anecdotal reports from anglers (especially bass fishing clubs) mention Washington Lake as having a quality Largemouth Bass fishery.

Gill nets sampled moderate numbers of Smallmouth Bass (27) for a catch rate of 1.8/net, which was within the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The 2014 catch rate was at 2.7/net. Catch rates from 1951 to 2016 (n=15) were mostly low ranging from 0.0 to 2.7/net with an average of 0.7. Relative abundance increased in the 2000's, when compared to the 1950 through 1990's time period. In 2016, gill netted Smallmouth Bass were 8.9 to 19.7 inches long with an average of 15.6. Approximately 67% of the catch was 16 inches or longer, indicating a high quality size structure.

Spring night time electrofishing sampled low numbers (2) of Smallmouth Bass, as is usually the case, for a catch rate of 1.3/hr. The 2014 catch rate was also low (1.7/hr.). Historic spring electrofishing catch rates (n=9) were mostly low, ranging from 0.4 to 9.4/hr. with an average of 3.6. Electrofished Smallmouth Bass were 4.2 and 17.0 inches long. Smallmouth Bass were age-1 to age-9

with seven year classes present. Recruitment was somewhat inconsistent. Gill nets sampled low numbers of Channel Catfish (1) for a catch rate of 0.1/net. This was also the catch rate in 2012 and 2014. The 2016 fish was 17.1 inches long. It was unknown how this fish ended up in Washington Lake, but it likely immigrated up Washington Creek and swam over the outlet dam during a high water event.

Trap nets sampled low numbers of Common Carp (2) for a catch rate of 0.1/net, which was below the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The 2016 and 2014 catch rates tied the record low from 2008. Historic catch rates (n=14) were variable, ranging from 0.1 to 15.7/net with an average of 2.2. Trap net catch rates have been below the normal range since the 1979 survey. Trap netted Common Carp were 20.1 and 27.4 inches long. Gill nets sampled 0 Common Carp for a catch rate of 0.0/net which was below the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. Historic gill net catch rates, dating back to 1957, ranged from 0.0 to 1.4/net with an average of 0.5.

Gill nets sampled low numbers of Black Bullhead (39) for a catch rate of 2.6/net, which was below the normal range for lakes similar to Washington. The catch was also low in 2014 (1.8/net). The last time that Black Bullhead were sampled in moderate numbers was in the 2004 assessment (51.2/gill net). Historic catch rates from 1951 through 2016 (n=15) were generally low, ranging from 0.0 to 51.2/net with an average of 7.1. Black Bullhead were 5.0 to 14.9 inches long with an average of 10.4. Black Bullhead were not sampled in trap nets in 2016 or 2014, which tied the record low from 1951. Historic Black Bullhead trap net catch rates have been below the normal range 11 out of 13 times (85%) at Washington Lake.

Additional species sampled in the standard gill and trap nets included; Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Green Sunfish, Hybrid Sunfish, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, White Sucker, and Yellow Bullhead.

Seining (0.25" mesh) sampled 12 species; Johnny Darter, Banded Killifish, Bluegill, Bluntnose Minnow, Brook Silverside, Hybrid Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Log Perch, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, Smallmouth Bass, Tadpole Madtom, White Sucker, and Yellow Perch. Young of the year species sampled were; Bluegill (11), Bluntnose Minnow (2), Largemouth Bass (7), Smallmouth Bass (1), White Sucker (1), and Yellow Perch (433).

For More Information

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