



# 2021-2022 SPRING FISHERIES SURVEY SUMMARY

## WINDIGO LAKE, SAWYER COUNTY

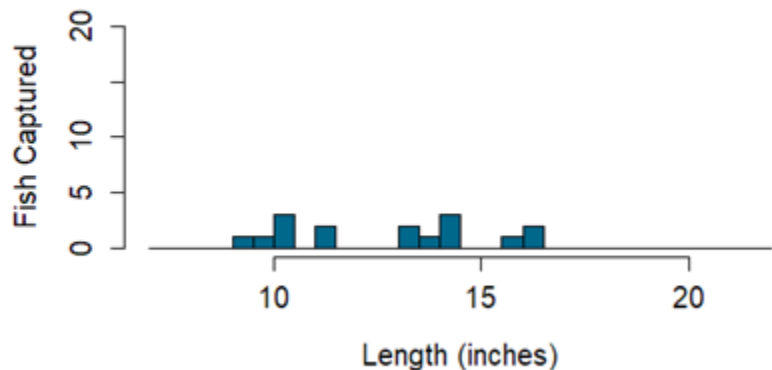
Report by Max Wolter

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Hayward Fisheries Management Team conducted a spring electrofishing survey on Windigo Lake on June 6, 2021 to target Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass and Bluegill. The electrofishing survey included four miles of shoreline. We also conducted a fyke netting survey from May 9-11, 2022. The primary species targeted were Northern Pike, Walleye and Black Crappies. Up to eight nets were set overnight for two total nights, which resulted in 16 total net-nights of effort. 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.

### SMALLMOUTH BASS



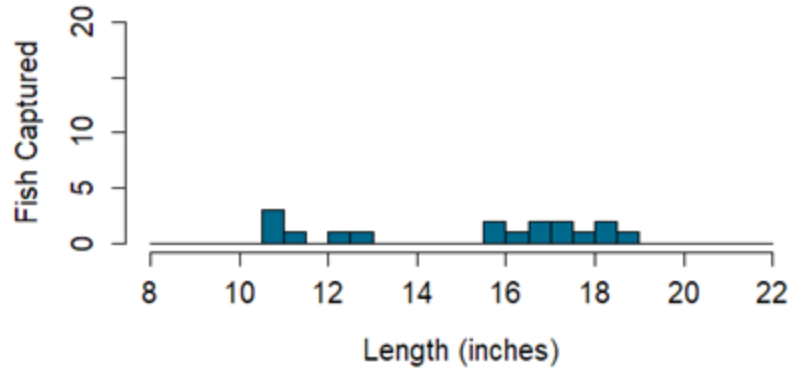
Captured 4 per net mile $\geq$ 7 inches	
Quality Size $\geq$ 11"	69%
Preferred Size $\geq$ 14"	38%
Memorable Size $\geq$ 17"	0%



### LARGEMOUTH BASS



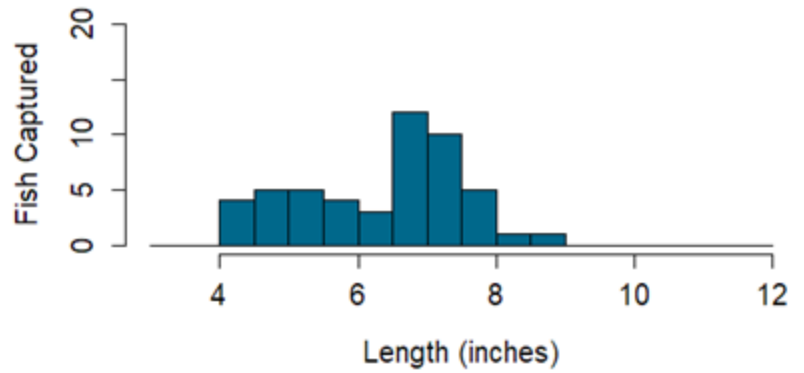
<b>Captured 4.3 per mile <math>\geq</math> 8 inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq</math> 12"</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq</math> 15"</b>	<b>65%</b>



### BLUEGILL



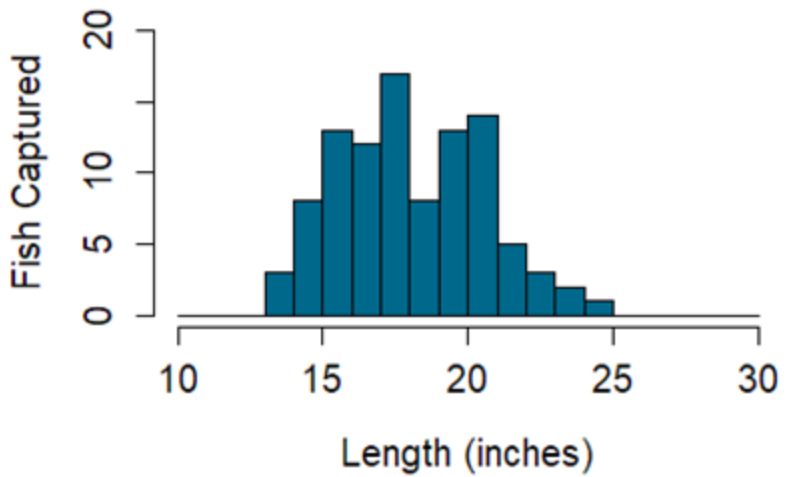
<b>Captured 20 per mile <math>\geq</math> 3 inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq</math> 6"</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq</math> 8"</b>	<b>4%</b>



### WALLEYE



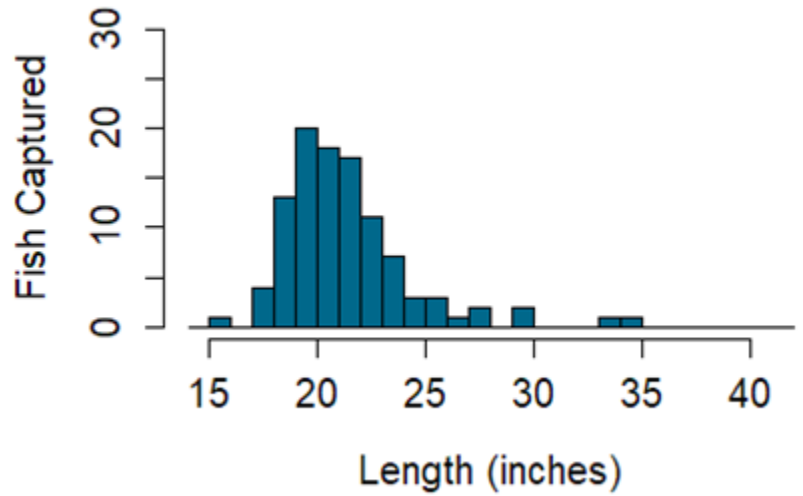
<b>Captured 6 per net-night <math>\geq</math> 10 inches</b>	
<b>Quality Size <math>\geq</math> 15"</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Preferred Size <math>\geq</math> 20"</b>	<b>25%</b>



### NORTHERN PIKE



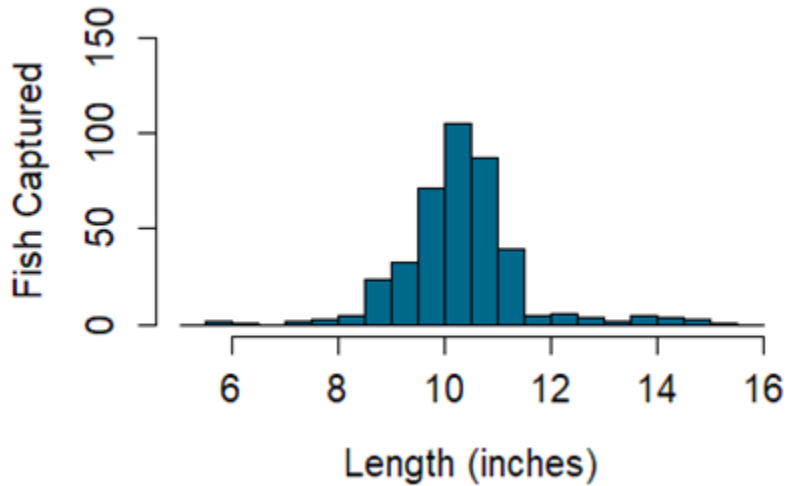
Captured 7 per net-night $\geq 14$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 21''$	46%
Preferred Size $\geq 28''$	4%



### BLACK CRAPPIE



Captured 25 per net-night $\geq 5$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8''$	98%
Preferred Size $\geq 10''$	65%



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Electrofishing surveys in Windigo Lake are impacted by the extremely low conductivity of the water. This makes capturing fish via electrofishing more difficult and likely impacted catch rates for bass and Bluegill in this survey. As such, comparing catch rates for these species in Windigo to other lakes can be challenging. Netting surveys are more reliable but require good timing to capture target species. This netting survey was well-timed for Walleye, Northern Pike and Black Crappies. Nets were set shortly after ice out and covered a variety of habitat types. Windigo Lake is a “Complex-Cool-Clear” lake based on the DNR Fisheries lake class system. “Complex” refers to the number of gamefish present in the fish community. “Cool” and “Clear” refer to the temperature and water clarity relative to other lakes. This report will compare catch rates from Windigo Lake in 2021 and 2022 to other lakes of this same type.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Anglers interested in harvesting fish should be aware of a consumption advisory that is in effect for Windigo Lake. Read more about consumption advisories in the [Choose Wisely Guide](#).

## SMALLMOUTH BASS

The catch rate for Smallmouth Bass in Windigo Lake was below the median compared to lakes of the same class. However, we believe this is at least partially attributed to gear effectiveness. A variety of sizes of Smallmouth Bass appeared in this survey, but no large ones were captured. This has been typical of the Smallmouth Bass population in Windigo Lake, yet the specific reason for the lack of large Smallmouth Bass is unknown. There is no minimum length limit for bass and a 5-fish daily bag limit.

## LARGEMOUTH BASS

The catch rate for Largemouth Bass in Windigo Lake was below the median compared to lakes of the same class. However, we believe this is at least partially attributed to gear effectiveness. The size of Largemouth Bass was excellent, with a majority of those captured over 15 inches. There is no minimum length limit for bass and a 5-fish daily bag limit.

## BLUEGILL

Similar to bass, the Bluegill catch rate in the electrofishing survey was low. The size of Bluegill was fair, with many 6-inch and some 8-inch fish appearing in the survey. Panfish in Windigo Lake are currently managed with an experimental reduced daily bag limit of 15 total panfish and no more than five of any single species.

## WALLEYE

We captured six Walleye per net night, which is above average for lakes of the same class. The Windigo Lake Walleye population offered a range of sizes of adult fish, with about one in four over 20 inches. Walleye in Windigo Lake are naturally reproducing. There is no minimum length limit, but only one Walleye over 14 inches may be harvested, and the daily bag limit is three.

## NORTHERN PIKE

Northern Pike catch rates (seven per net night) were high in comparison to lakes in the same class as Windigo Lake. Pike were generally small, with only about half over

21 inches and a very small percentage over 28 inches. There is no minimum length limit for Northern Pike, and anglers may harvest up to five per day.

## BLACK CRAPPIE

Black Crappies were a standout species in this survey. Black Crappies were captured at a very high rate (>90<sup>th</sup> percentile for lake class), but also had very impressive size. Black Crappies captured in this survey were mostly over 10 inches, with a small percentage even eclipsing 15 inches. Panfish in Windigo Lake are currently managed with an experimental reduced daily bag limit of 15 total panfish and no more than five of any single species.



DNR fisheries technician, Evan Sniadajewski, with a Black Crappie from Windigo Lake. Photo courtesy of Max Wolter

Other species present include: White Sucker, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, Rock Bass and various minnow species.

Survey Crew: Max Wolter, Scott Braden and Evan Sniadajewski, with volunteer AnaSara Gillem  
*Reviewed and approved by Aaron Cole*