

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LOWER TURTLE LAKE

2021 – 2022 CREEL SURVEY REPORT

BARRON COUNTY



Treaty Fisheries Publication



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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regularly conducts fishery surveys on lakes and reservoirs to gather information on species composition, population size, reproductive success, size/age distribution, and growth rates. The information from the netting and electrofishing surveys helps the DNR determine the best management practices for that body of water. Another important aspect of a fishery is the amount of harvest that occurs on the lake. This information is collected by creel census or creel survey.

On lakes in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin, the harvest of fish is divided between sport anglers and the six Ojibwe tribal bands. The six Ojibwe tribal bands harvest fish under rights governed by federal treaties of 1837 and 1842. Most tribal fish harvest is done by spearing during a short period of time in the spring. All speared fish are individually counted by tribal creel clerks, allowing for a complete “census” of the tribal fish harvest in the spring.

We also measure the sport angler harvest to assess its impact on the fishery. It would be highly impractical and very costly to conduct a complete census of every angler who fishes on a lake. A creel survey is conducted to estimate the amount of fish harvested by sports anglers.

A creel survey is an assessment tool used to sample the fishing activities of sport anglers and estimate fish harvest on a body of water as well as other fishery parameters such as sizes of fish harvested. Creel clerks perform random counts of people fishing, as well as conduct interviews of anglers that have completed their fishing trips on randomly selected days and shifts. The survey is conducted during daylight hours throughout the open season for gamefish from the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March. Creel surveys are not conducted in November when fishing effort is low, and ice conditions are often unsafe.

The information collected from anglers during the interview process includes the species of fish being targeted, catch and harvest, lengths of harvested fish, and hours of fishing effort. Typically, only anglers that have completed their fishing trip are interviewed because it provides the most accurate information and avoids the need to disturb anglers while they are fishing.

You may have encountered one of the DNR creel clerks on a recent fishing trip. We appreciate your cooperation during an interview. The survey only takes a moment of your time, and it provides the DNR with valuable information required for management of the fishery.

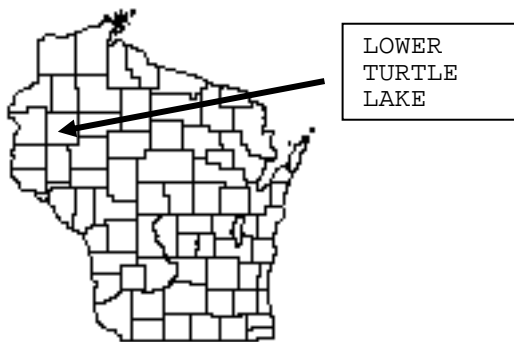
The data collected during the survey is processed by a computer program and summarized by month to calculate estimates of the total fishing pressure, fishing effort directed at each species, catch and harvest rates, and the number of fish caught and harvested.

This creel survey report will provide you with four types of estimated information for this body of water:

1. Overall fishing pressure
2. Fishing effort directed at each species
3. Catch and harvest rates
4. Numbers of fish caught and harvested.

Also included in this report are physical information about the lake, a discussion of results of this survey and detailed summaries by species.

GENERAL LAKE INFORMATION



LOCATION

Lower Turtle Lake is in Barron County near the town of Turtle Lake.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lower Turtle Lake is a 276-acre drainage lake with a maximum depth of 24 feet. Littoral substrate consists primarily of sand, with lesser amounts of muck and gravel.

SEASONS SURVEYED

The period referred to in this report as the 2021-22 fishing season ran from May 1, 2021 through March 6, 2022. The open-water creel survey ran from May 1 through Oct. 31, 2021, and the ice fishing creel survey ran from Dec. 1, 2021 through March 6, 2022.

FISHING REGULATIONS

The following seasons, daily bag limits and length limits were in place on Lower Turtle Lake during the 2021-22 fishing season:

SPECIES	SEASON	BAG LIMIT	MIN. SIZE
Largemouth Bass	5/ 1-3/ 6	5	none
	C&R all other times of year		
Smallmouth Bass	5/ 1-3/ 6	5	none
	C&R all other times of year		
Musky	5/ 29- 12/ 31	1	40"
	On open water only		
Northern Pike	5/ 1-3/ 6	5	None
Walleye	5/ 1-3/ 6	3	18"
Panfish	Open all year	25	None
Rock Bass	Open all year	None	None

SPECIES CATCH AND HARVEST INFORMATION

Summaries of angling effort, catch and harvest information for each species are in Table 1 and Figures 1-8, along with a comparison of these statistics with the previous creel survey in Table 2. Information about species with fishing seasons extending beyond March 7 should be considered minimum estimates. Each species page has up to five graphs depicting the following:

- DIRECTED FISHING EFFORT**
The estimated number of hours during each month that anglers spent fishing for a species.
- TOTAL CATCH AND HARVEST**
The estimated number of fish of the indicated species caught or harvested by all anglers, regardless of targeted species.
- SPECIFIC CATCH AND HARVEST RATES**
The estimated number of hours it takes an angler to catch or harvest a fish of the indicated species. Only information from anglers who were specifically targeting that species is reported.
- LENGTH DISTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FISH**
All fish of a species that were measured by the clerk during the entire creel survey season.
- LARGEST AND AVERAGE LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH**
The largest and average (mean) length of a species of fish harvested. Only fish measured by the creel survey clerk are reported.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this survey was possible because of the efforts of the following treaty assessment staff: Gene Hatzenbeler, Todd Brecka, Misty Rood, Bill Sobaski and Ben McNulty. We would especially like to recognize the efforts of our creel clerks Kallie Thompson and Madison Irons who collected the angler interviews.

The department would like to thank Joe and Marie Koran. They generously allowed the department to keep a boat at their property during this survey.

We would also like to thank all the anglers who took the time to offer information about their fishing trip to the survey clerk. Without your cooperation this survey would not have been possible.

Questions about the report can be directed to
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Additional copies of this report and those covering other local lakes, can be obtained from the DNR Spooner Service Center or online at:
<http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/north/trtycrlsruvs.html>

WALLEYE

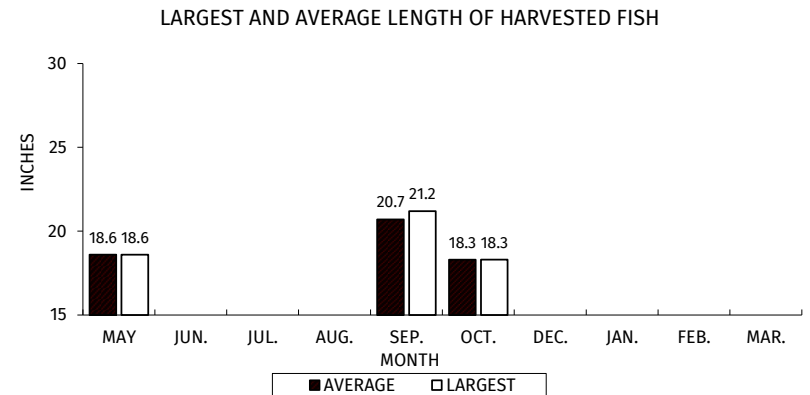
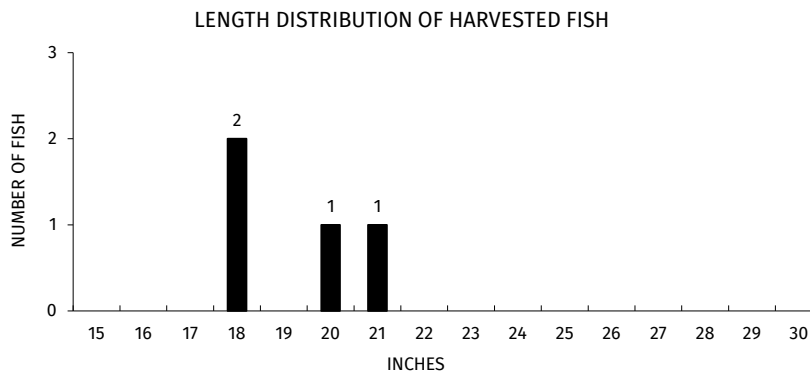
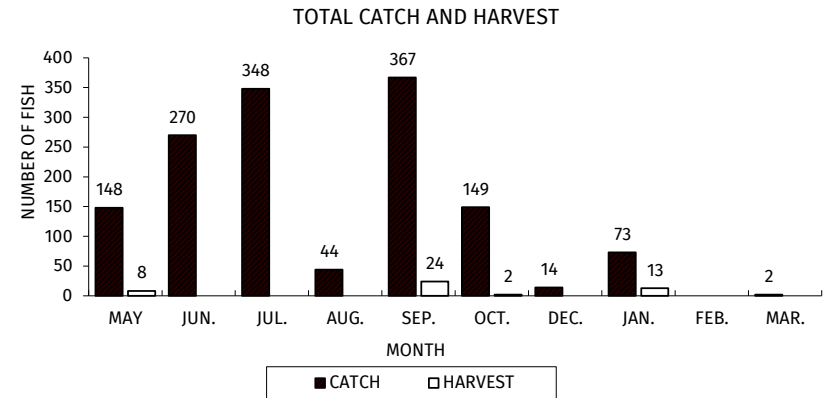
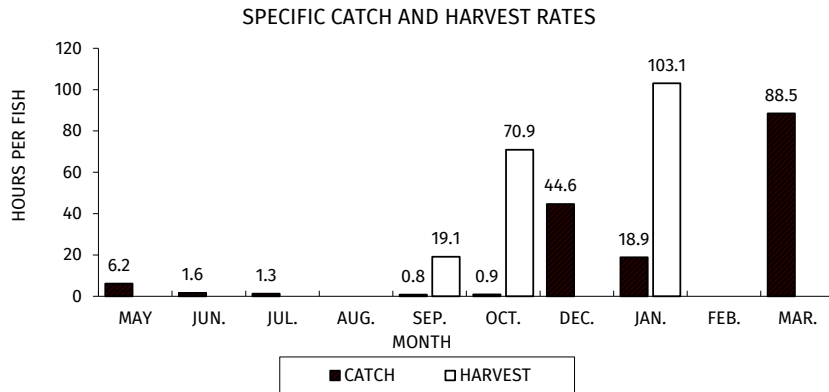
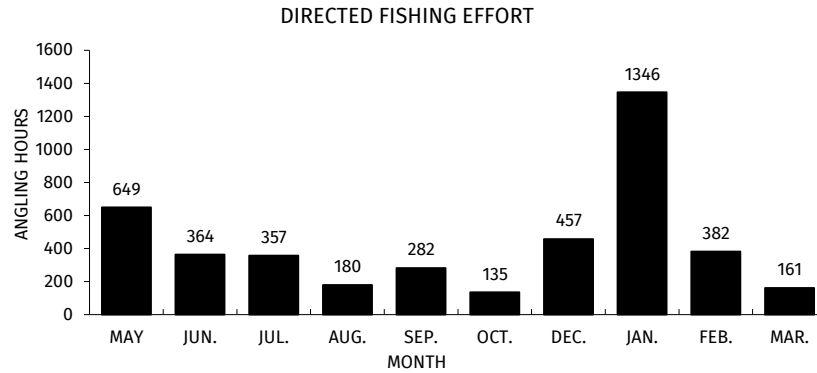
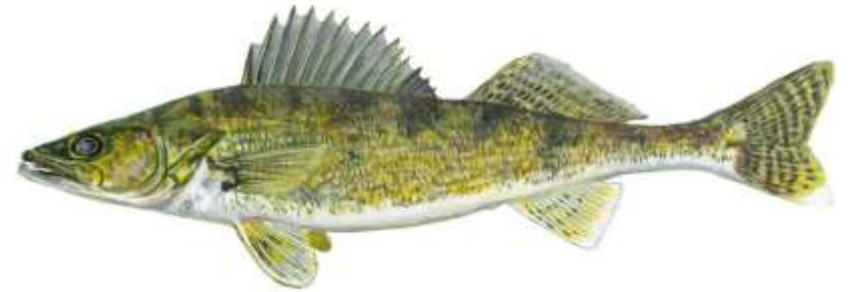
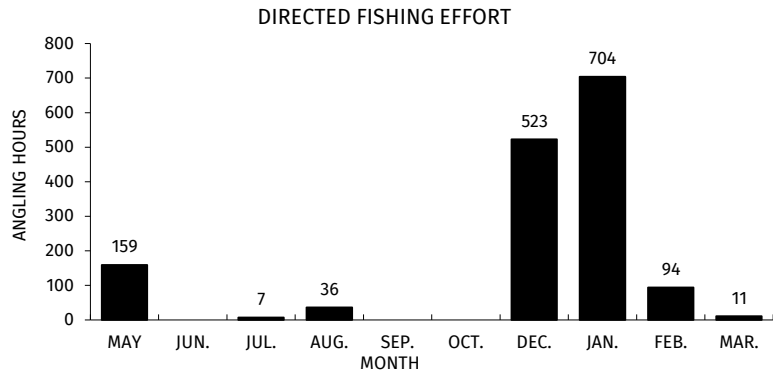


Figure 1. Walleye sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.



NORTHERN PIKE

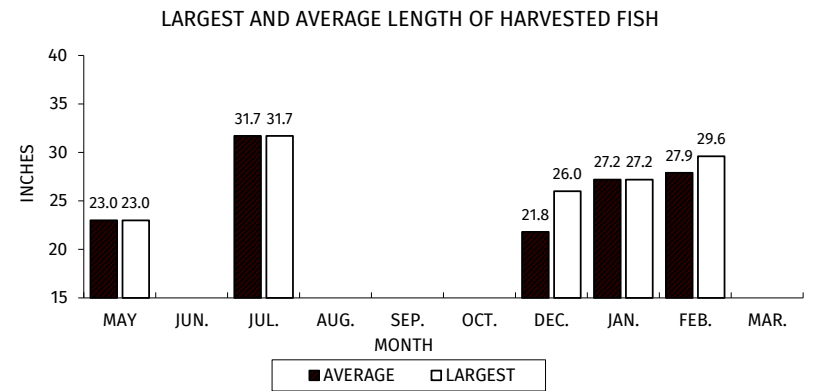
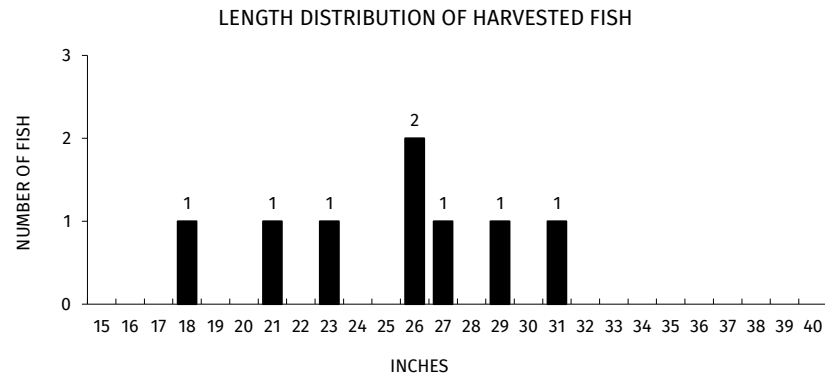
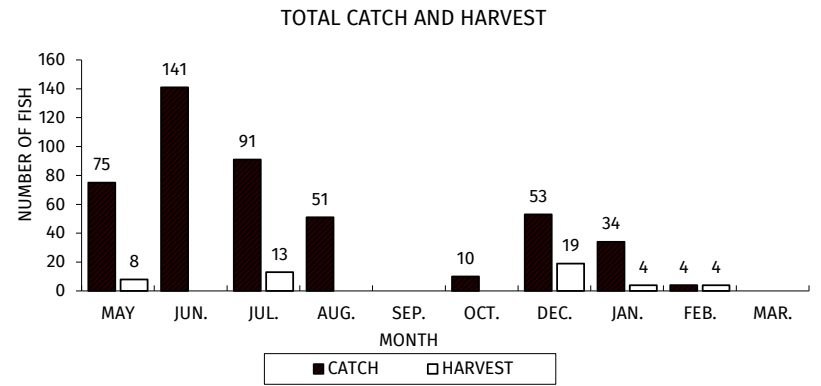
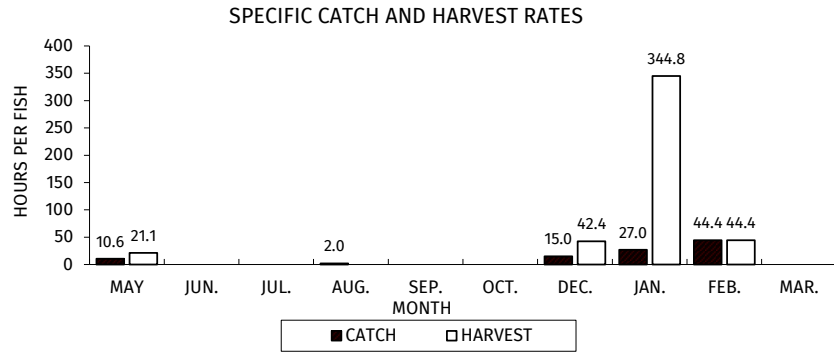


Figure 2. Northern Pike sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

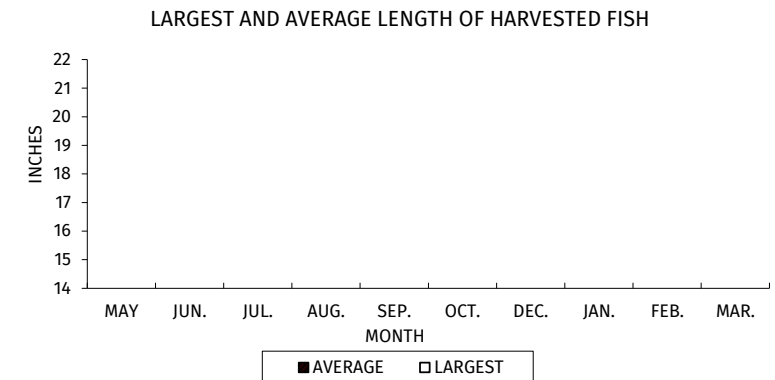
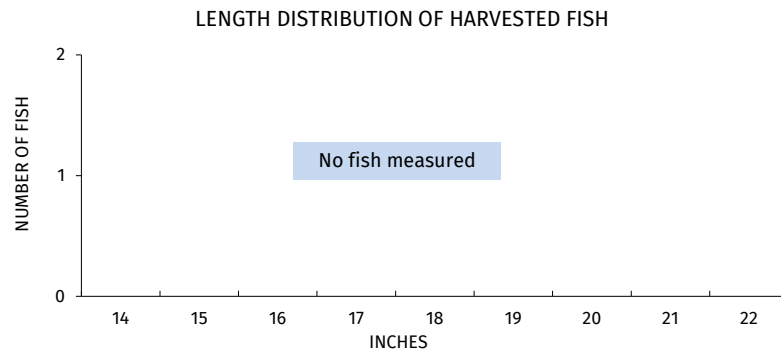
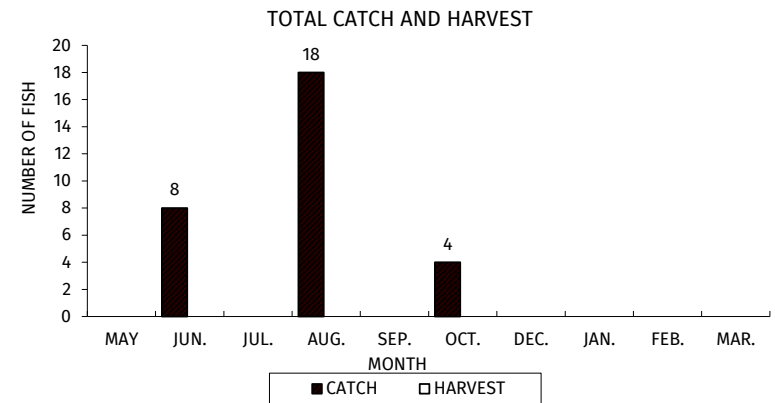
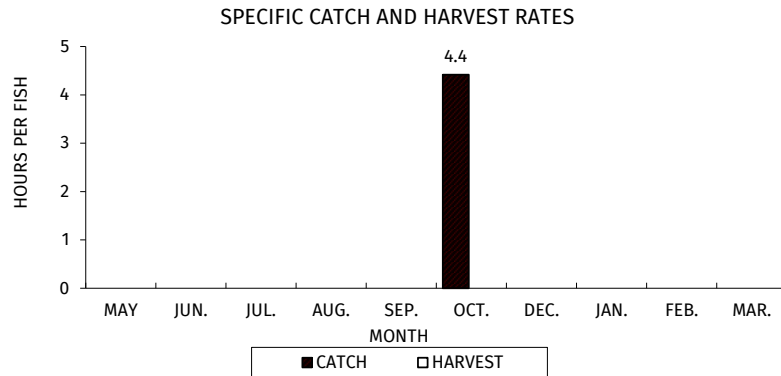
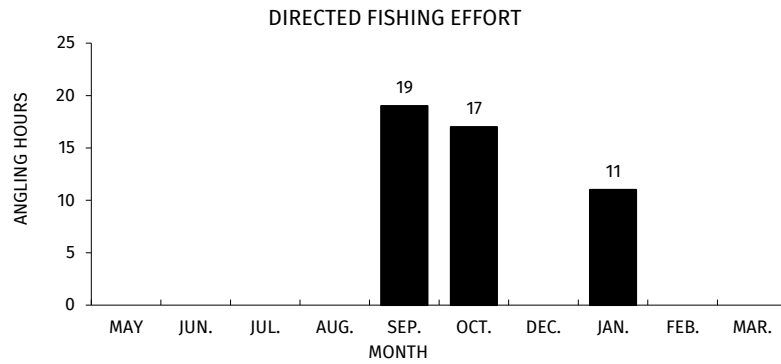
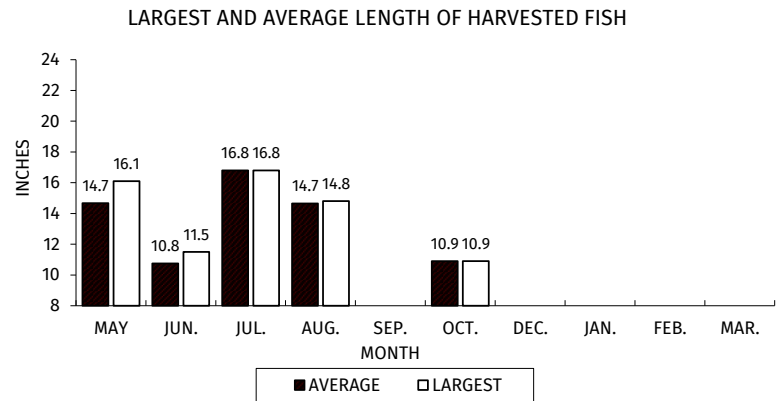
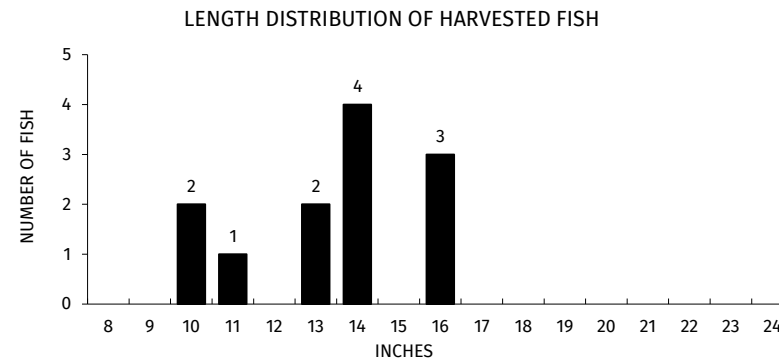
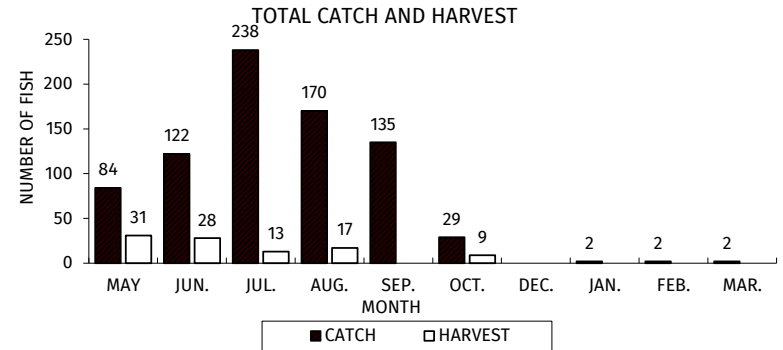
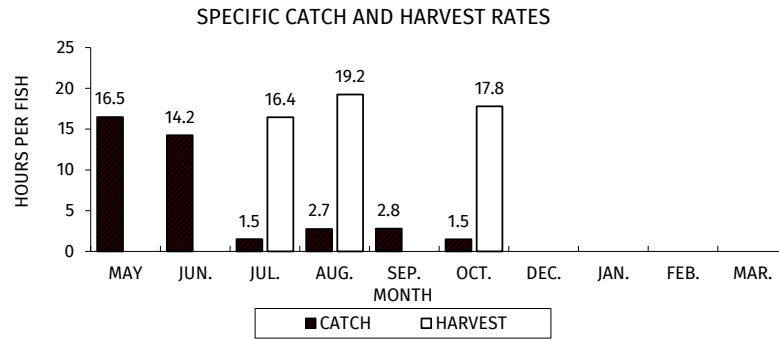
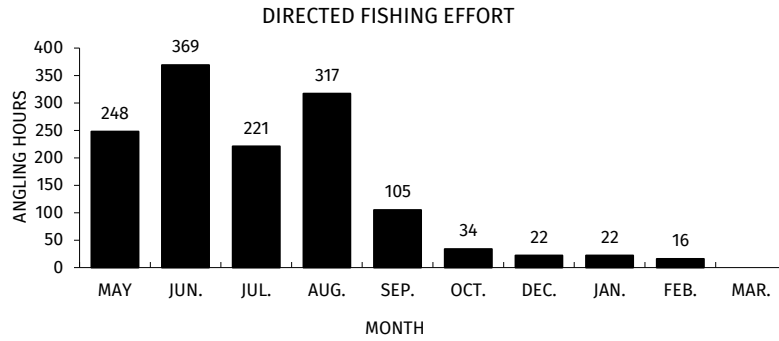


Figure 3. Smallmouth Bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

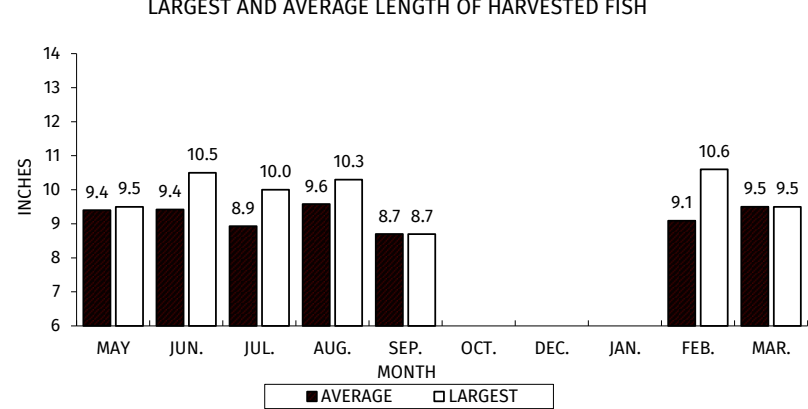
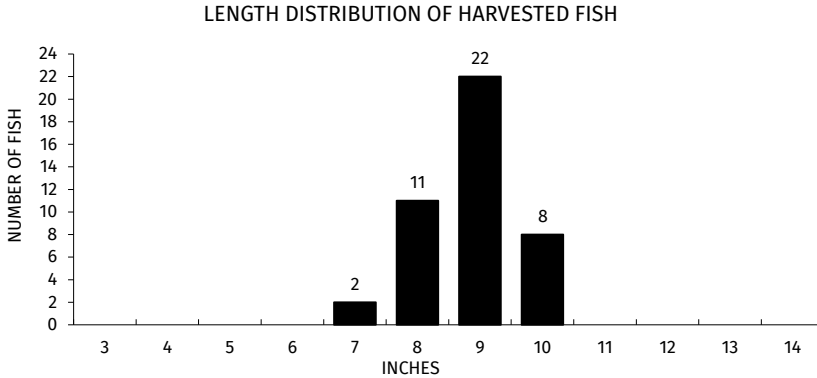
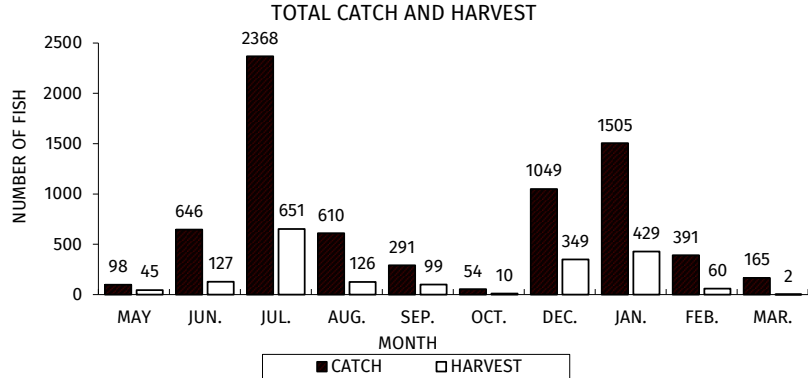
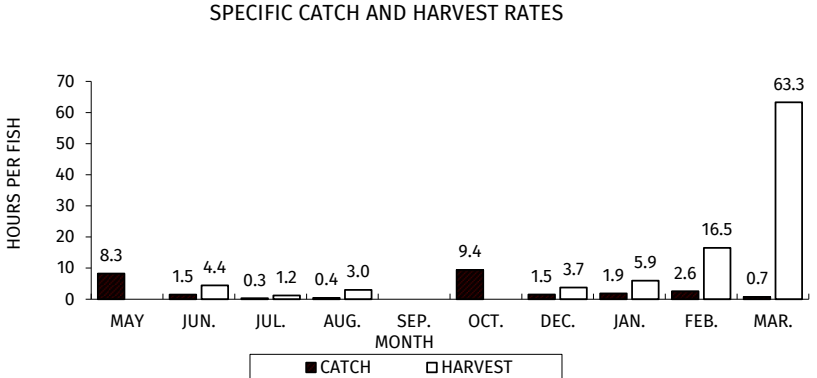
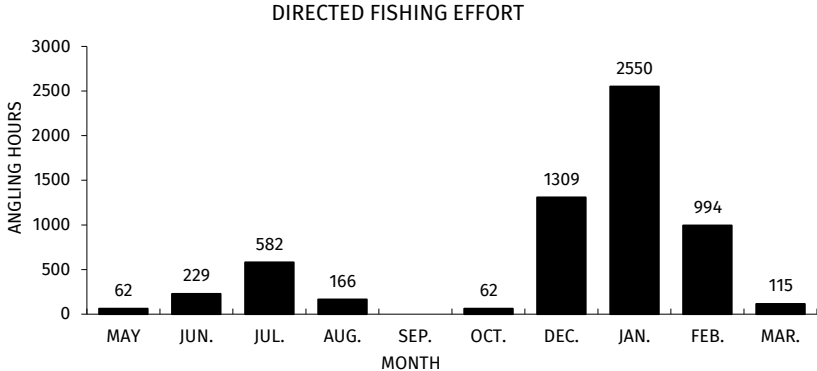
LARGEMOUTH BASS



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Figure 4. Largemouth Bass sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

YELLOW PERCH



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Figure 5. Yellow Perch sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

BLUEGILL

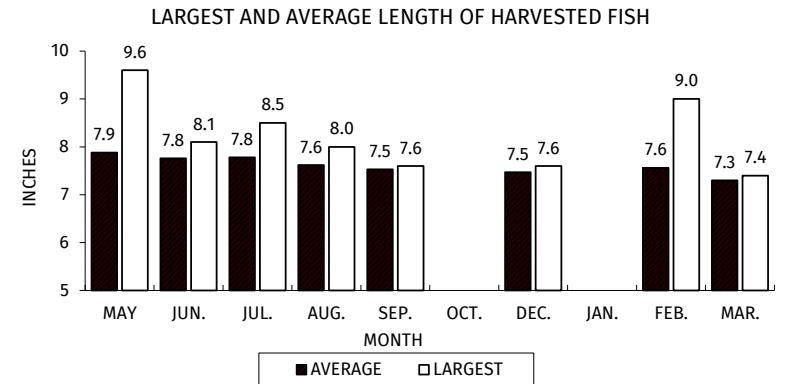
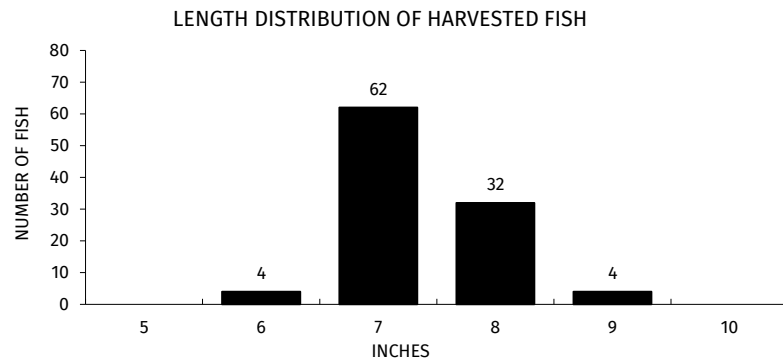
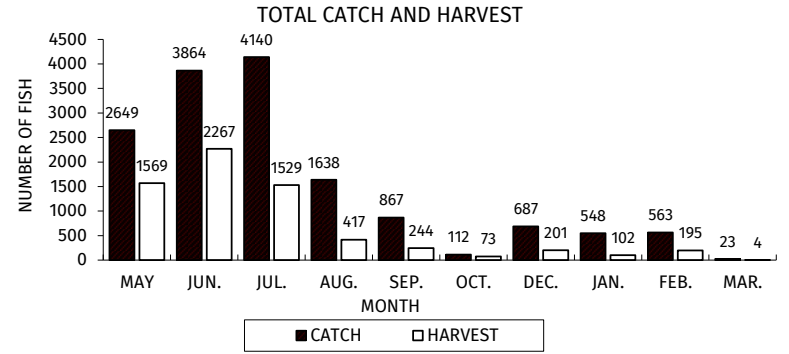
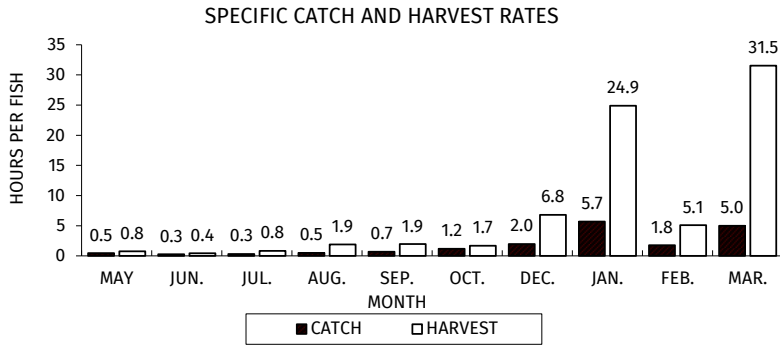
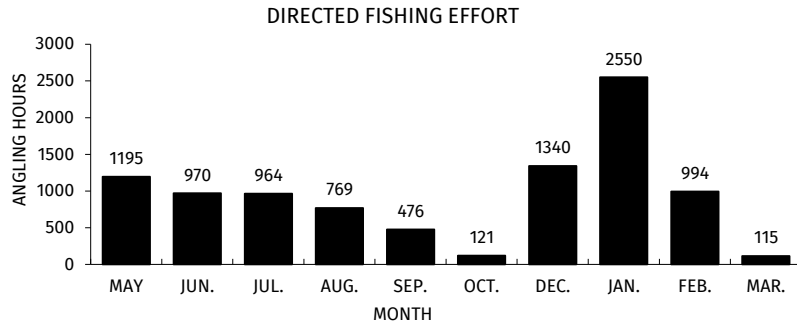
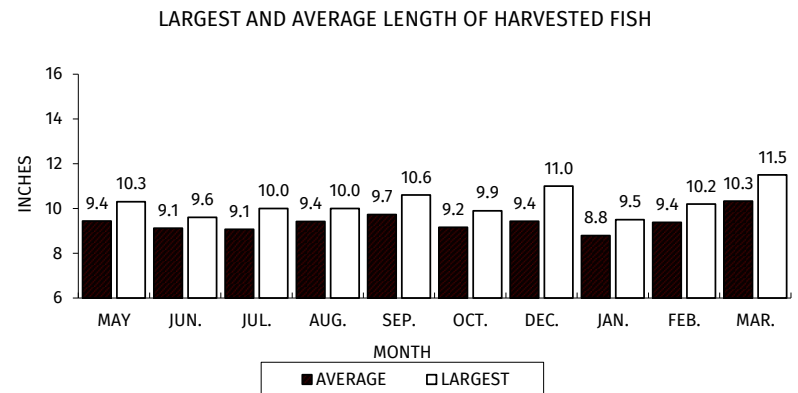
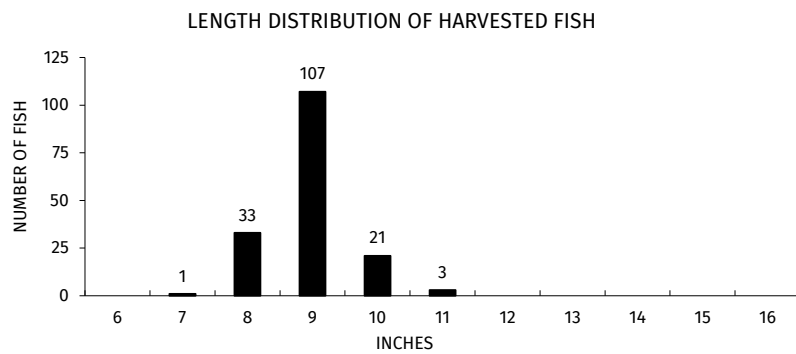
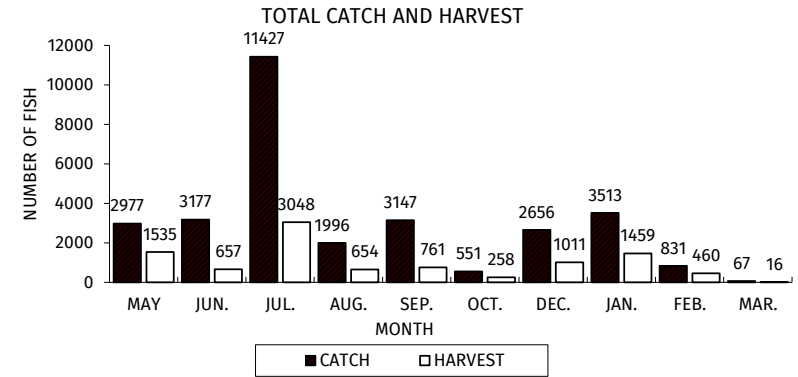
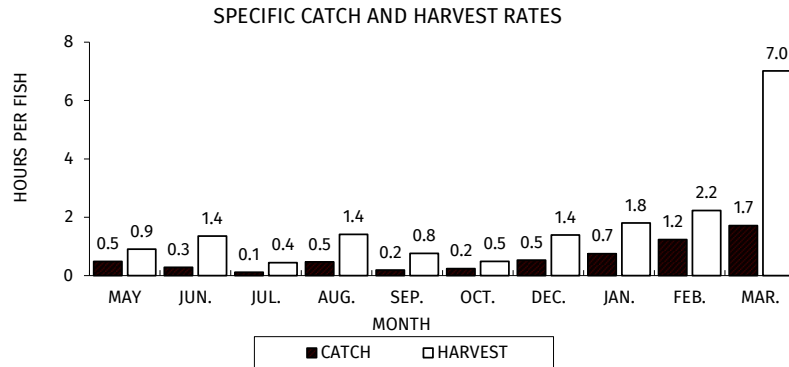
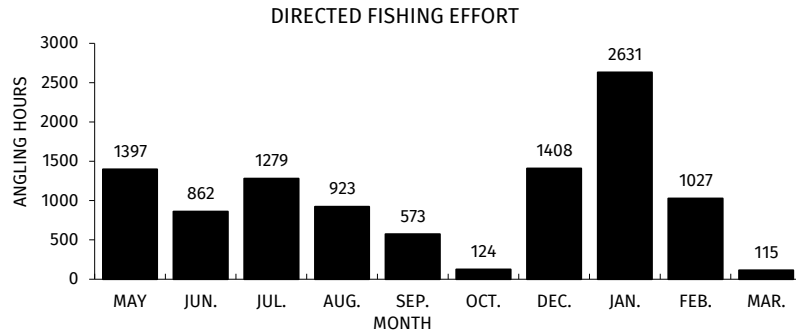
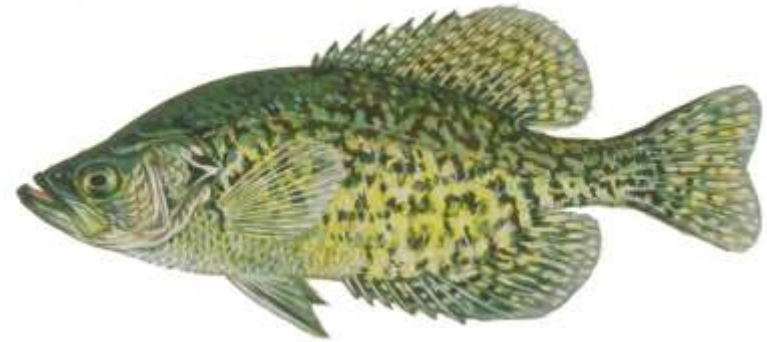


Figure 6. Bluegill sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

BLACK CRAPPIE



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Figure 7. Black Crappie sportfishing effort, catch, harvest and length distribution on Lower Turtle Lake during 2021-2022.

FIGURE 8. TOTAL ANNUAL ANGLER DIRECTED EFFORT BY SPECIES
Lower Turtle Lake 2021-2022

This graph illustrates the percentage of time that anglers spent fishing for each species during the entire creel survey. The percentages are based on the species of fish anglers told the clerk they were fishing for, not what they actually caught. If a particular species is not present in the graph it is because no one reported they were fishing for that species.

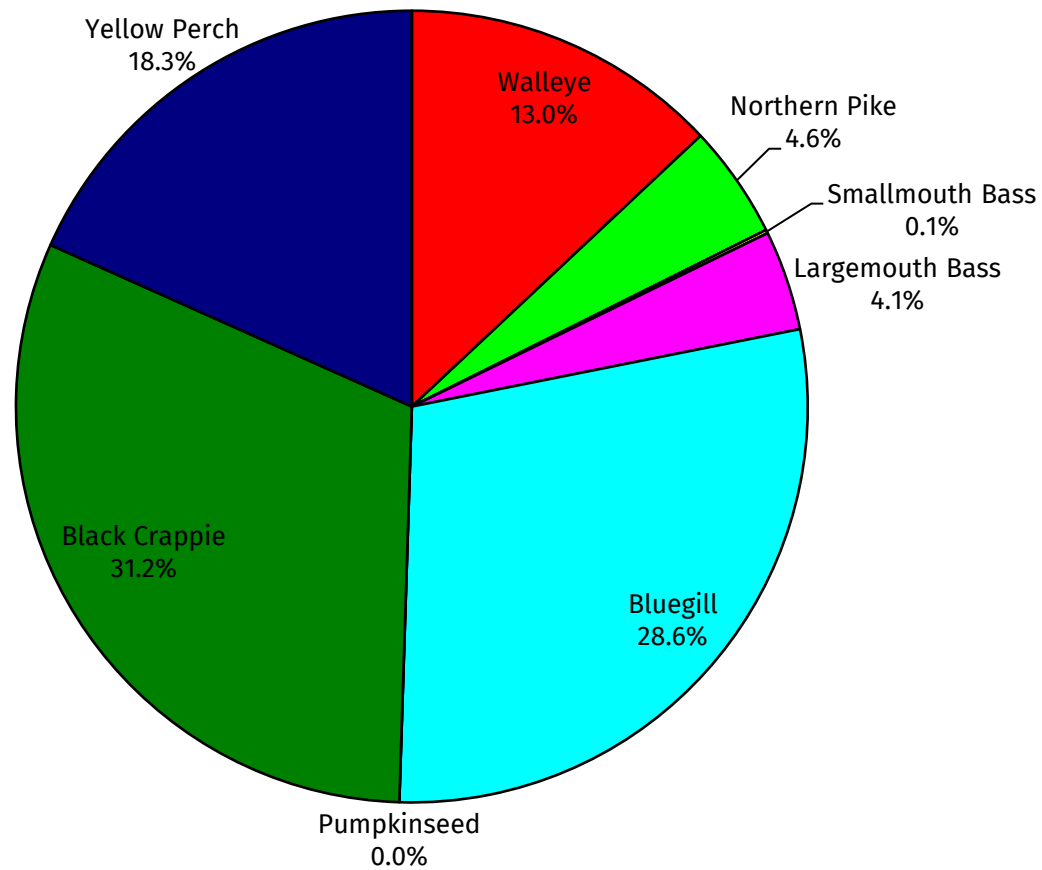


Table 1. Sportfishing effort summary for Lower Turtle Lake during the 2021-22 season compared to 2004-05 creel results of Lower Turtle Lake, Barron County and Ceded Territory averages.

Month	Number of Angler Party Interviews	Total Angler Hours	Total Angler Hours/Acre	2004-05 Total Angler Hours/Acre	Barron County Average Hours/Acre	Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre
May	35	1989	7.2	8.1	5.7	4.8
June	26	1700	6.2	7.6	8.1	6.2
July	26	1879	6.8	9.0	7.9	6.6
August	19	1339	4.9	4.7	5.6	5.2
September	19	1159	4.2	1.7	3.5	3.2
October	19	300	1.1	0.4	0.8	1.4
December	47	1612	5.8	3.1	1.6	1.1
January	100	3022	10.9	10.1	2.7	1.7
February	52	1093	4.0	8.4	2.8	1.6
March	9	207	0.8	2.1	0.3	0.2
Summer Total	144	8,366	30.3	31.5	31.6	27.4
Winter Total	208	5,934	21.5	23.7	7.5	4.6
Grand Total	352	14,300	51.8	55.2	39.0	32.0

Note: Summer is May-October; Winter is December-March

Number of Angler Party Interviews is the number of groups of anglers interviewed by the creel clerk. A party is considered the members of a group who fish together in the same boat, ice shanty or from shore. The clerk fills out one interview form for each group of anglers. The number of individual anglers actually contacted by the clerk is usually much greater than the number of groups listed in this table since most groups consist of more than one angler.

Total Angler Hours is the estimated total number of hours that anglers spent fishing on Lower Turtle Lake during each month surveyed.

Total Angler Hours/Acre is the total angler hours divided by the area of the lake in acres. This is useful in order to compare effort on Lower Turtle Lake to other lakes.

2004-05 Total Angler Hours/Acre is the total angler hours divided by the area of the lake in acres. This is from the previous creel survey that took place on Lower Turtle Lake.

County Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for county lakes that have been surveyed since 1990. This value is useful for fishing pressure comparisons with other waters.

Ceded Territory Average Hours/Acre is the average angler effort in hours per acre for inland lakes in the Ceded Territory that have been surveyed since 1990. This value can be used to compare Lower Turtle Lake to other lakes in northern Wisconsin.

Table 2. Comparison of creel survey synopses, Lower Turtle Lake, 2021-22 and 2004-05 fishing seasons.

CREEL YEAR: 2021-2022

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	4,313	13.0%	1,415	3.6	47	144.9	19.6
Northern Pike	1,534	4.6%	459	15.9	48	64.1	25.4
Smallmouth Bass	47	0.1%	30	12.3	0	*	**
Largemouth Bass	1,354	4.1%	784	3.7	98	42.6	13.9
Yellow Perch	6,069	18.3%	7,177	1.2	1,898	4.3	9.2
Bluegill	9,494	28.6%	15,091	0.7	6,601	1.5	7.7
Black Crappie	10,339	31.2%	30,342	0.3	9,859	1.1	9.4

CREEL YEAR: 2004-05

SPECIES	DIRECTED EFFORT (Hours)	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CATCH	SPECIFIC CATCH RATE (Hrs/Fish)	TOTAL HARVEST	SPECIFIC HARVEST RATE (Hrs/Fish)	MEAN LENGTH OF HARVESTED FISH
Walleye	2032	6.7%	353	11.2	113	21.8	17.5
Northern Pike	3554	11.7%	1083	4.8	339	11.1	23.2
Muskellunge	77	0.3%	5	15.7	0	*	**
Largemouth Bass	1497	4.9%	1489	1.6	91	37.6	15.6
Bluegill	7935	26.1%	20707	0.4	7366	1.1	7.0
Pumpkinseed	55	0.2%	60	6.4	22	12.8	6.6
Black Crappie	9391	30.9%	12783	0.8	6868	1.4	9.1
Yellow Perch	5826	19.2%	12861	0.6	2806	2.5	8.5

Note: If a species is not shown in a table, no data was collected by the creel clerks for that species.

* Indicates that no fish of this species were caught or harvested (depending on the column) by anglers who specifically targeted this species.

** Indicates that no fish were measured by the creel clerks for this species