



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fisheries Information Sheet

LAKE: Rice Reservoir Chain **COUNTY:** Lincoln/Oneida

YEAR: 2023

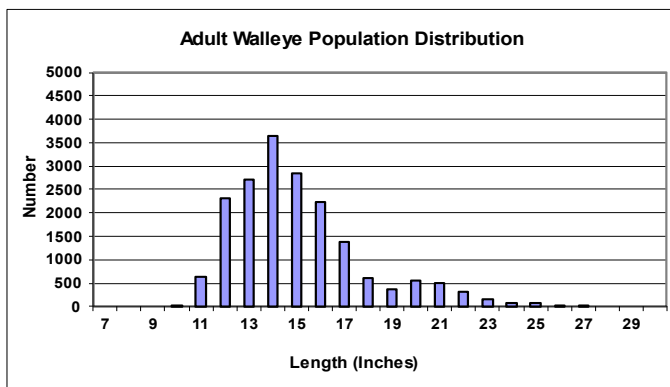
Introduction

The Department of Natural Resources conducted an extensive survey of the Rice Reservoir Chain (also referred to as Nokomis Chain), encompassing Rice River Flowage, Lake Nokomis, Bridge and Deer Lakes in Lincoln and Oneida counties. This report presents combined survey findings for Rice, Nokomis and Bridge. Deer Lake results are presented in an individual survey report. The primary focus was on estimating the abundance of adult walleyes, however, muskellunge, bass, and panfish were also targeted during this survey. The Rice Reservoir Chain is a shallow, stained water, lowland reservoir system with predominately sand substrate and areas of gravel, rubble and muck. It has a surface area of 3,764 acres, 72.1 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 33 feet. All fisheries within the chain are sustained solely by natural reproduction.



WALLEYE

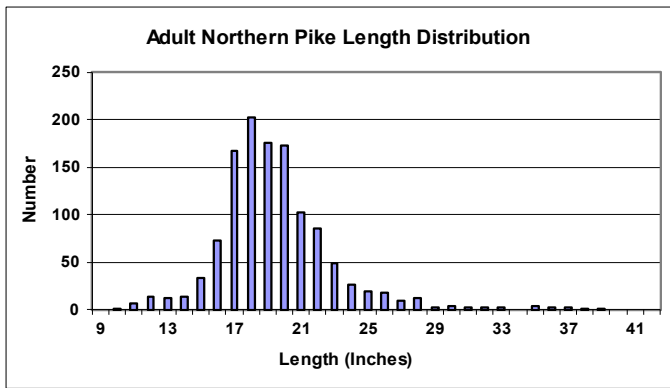
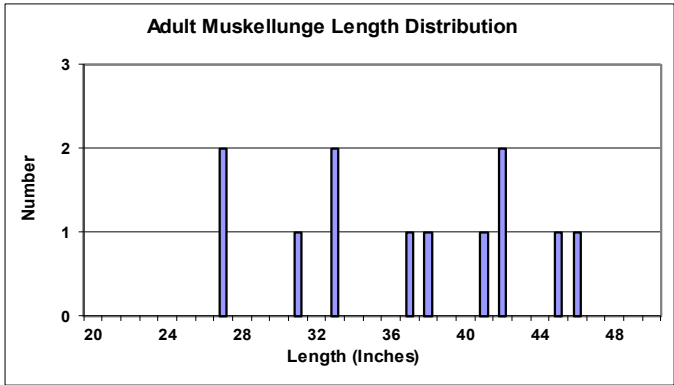
A mark-recapture survey of the Rice Reservoir Chain's adult walleye (sexually mature or ≥ 15 inches) population was conducted from April 17 through May 3. During 15 days of fyke netting, 4,921 adult walleyes were captured and marked with a fin clip. Five crews sampled the Rice Reservoir Chain with electrofishing boats on May 3 and captured 920 adult walleyes. Of those walleyes, 27% (251 of 920) bore the fin clip given during fyke netting. Based on those results, the Rice Reservoir Chain was estimated to contain 18,483 adult walleyes (4.9/acre). An estimated 50% of adult walleyes were 15 inches long or larger. The largest walleye captured was a 27.2-inch female.





MUSKELLUNGE

During fyke netting and electrofishing sampling through June 7, 12 adult muskellunge (sexually mature or ≥ 30 inches) were caught. Of the adult muskellunge, 42% (5 of 12) were 40 inches or longer, with the largest being a 46.6-inch female. Additionally, 3 juvenile muskellunge (15.8 – 22.7 inches) were also caught.



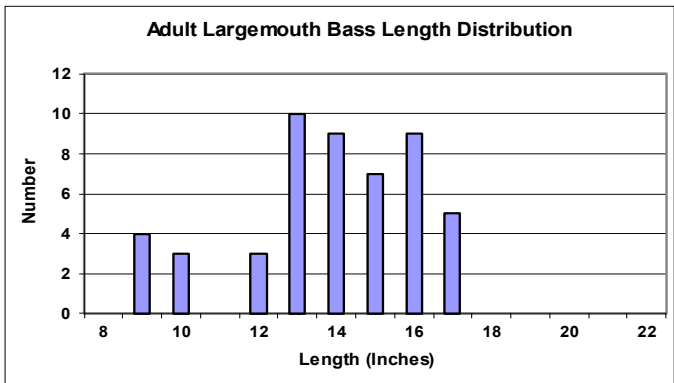
NORTHERN PIKE

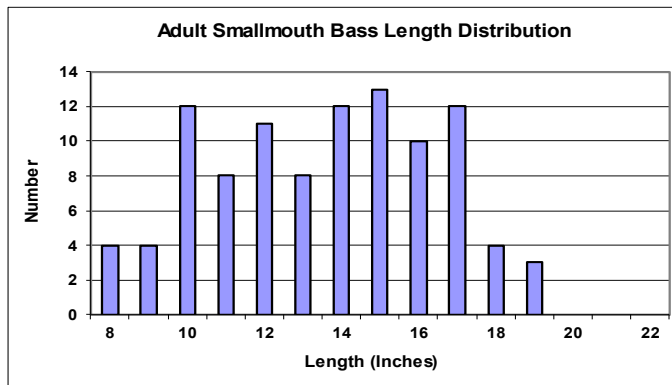
From April 26 through May 3, 1,222 adult northern pike (sexually mature or ≥ 12 inches) were captured via fyke netting in the Rice Reservoir Chain. Of the adult northern pike captured, 5% (65 of 1,222) were 26 inches long or larger. The largest northern pike captured was a 39.7-inch female.

LARGEMOUTH BASS



A total of 50 adult largemouth bass (≥ 8 inches) were captured. Of those largemouth, 60% (30 of 50) were 14 inches long or larger, and the largest captured was 17.7 inches long. During late-spring electrofishing surveys conducted June 5-7 across the Rice Reservoir Chain, largemouth bass were caught at a relatively low rate of 2.5 adults per mile (2.6/mi for all size bass).





SMALLMOUTH BASS

A total of 101 adult smallmouth bass (≥ 8 inches) were captured. Of those smallmouth, 54% (54 of 101) were 14 inches long or larger. The largest smallmouth captured was 19.2 inches long. During late-spring electrofishing surveys conducted June 5 and 7 across the Rice Reservoir Chain, smallmouth bass were caught at a moderate rate of 7.3 adults per mile (8.4/mi for all size bass).

OTHER SPECIES

In addition to the gamefish mentioned above, fyke netting and electrofishing sampling efforts in the Rice Reservoir Chain resulted in the catch of 16 species of fish. Black crappie, bluegill and yellow perch were common in survey catches. Other species caught included black bullhead, bowfin, burbot, common shiner, golden shiner, greater redhorse, northern hog sucker, pumpkinseed, rock bass, shorthead redhorse, silver redhorse, white sucker and yellow bullhead.

Table 1. Special fishing regulations for the Rice Reservoir Chain, Lincoln and Oneida counties, Wisconsin. Regulations for species not listed below follow the "General Inland Waters" rules found within the state fishing regulations pamphlet.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
walleye	May 6 - March 3	3	15 inches min. length, 20-24 inches no harvest slot, 1 fish over 24 inches allowed.
panfish	May 6 - March 3	25, but no more than 10 of any one species	none

Acknowledgements & Questions

This report was compiled by DNR fisheries technician Mark Love. For answers to questions about findings within this report, contact the treaty fisheries biologist. For questions regarding fisheries management activities on the Rice Reservoir Chain, contact the Lincoln County biologist.

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