

Last weeks' electrofishing results by Little Traverse Bay Band tribal biologists.

It can all be found in the tables and figures below. Bottom line is that that they caught no young of year (age 0) walleye in part of our traditional electro-shocking route (5 Mile Point counterclockwise to Rainy River mouth) last week. They had to cut the route short (by the State Park) due to high waves. The graph at the bottom continues to show that catch rates of age-0 walleye were high in stocking years, and continue to be low in non-stocking years.

As laid out in former documents, plans, emails, and newsletters, the DNR goal was to stock walleye approximately 3-4 times (spring fingerlings) over a span of about 5 years. We accomplished that (2010, 2011, 2012) and both DNR and the CORA stocked spring fingerlings in 2014. Your fall fingerling stocking efforts were supplemental, and at what I would consider, relatively small but helpful stocking rates (number per acre). I would consider all three stocking efforts (DNR, tribes, BLA) a coordinated attempt to boost numbers through stocking, which would eventually lead to more adults. Adult catches (anglers and surveys) have shown that this has worked as 15-20 inch fish are showing up again. Continued suppression of wild walleye recruitment may continue into the future at Black Lake. We will learn more about that as we move into and through the next decade. I think it is very reasonable to project that the lake may need periodic stocking of spring fingerlings by DNR and the tribes in the future. I will not provide a timeline for that, because production of spring fingerlings in our DNR and tribal ponds is variable from year to year. Tribal production (spring fingerlings) sometimes becomes available (or surplus) and we are asked for potential regional stocking locations. Black Lake is always on our radar. That last sentence should be very clear from the coordinated stocking and survey efforts by the State of Michigan and tribal agencies. Stocking could happen next year, or five years from now. We can't predict that. What we can predict is that we will continue to look at production of wild fish (sometimes by angler reports, sometimes through surveys) and stock as needed. This would not necessarily require fall fingerling efforts, especially if DNR or the tribes have enough spring fingerlings to stock, when deemed necessary. Let's not paint ourselves in a corner by predicting future stocking years as data continues to accumulate year to year.

Years ago we formed the Black Lake Association Fish Committee. This committee would be responsible for absorbing our DNR and tribal information (plans, data, etc) and delivering it back to the BLA, residents, and anglers who fish Black Lake. This is not an easy chore, we understand, and I know many of you have done your best efforts and we commend you. We hope you will continue to do so. The BLA fish committee has always represented the BLA very well at our Inland Lakes Citizens Advisory Committee meetings, and have tuned in to issues for Black Lake, and beyond its shores (regional and statewide). All BLA members should thank these individuals (Virgil, Ron, Roger, and others). Our fisheries stocking efforts and plans since that 2007 BLA meeting were strengthened through the efforts of Virgil Smith. His calm demeanor and ability to listen/understand have gone a long way to improving DNR Fish Divisions relationship with the BLA.

Please pass along to your board members. Any more questions can be directed to me or my supervisor Dave Borgeson.

Written by: Tim Cwalinski, MDNR Fisheries Biologist

Recent walleye stocking history for Black Lake. Private stocking indicated by asterisk.

Year	Strain	Period stocked	Size (in)	OTC mark?	Number	Number/acre
2014	St. Marys	June	1.2	yes	147,200	14

2014	Muskegon	June	1.4	yes	57,488	5
2012*	St. Marys	Late Oct	6-7	yes	10,000	1.0
2012	Muskegon	June	2.1	yes	192,541	19.0
2011*	St. Marys	Late Oct.	6-8	yes	10,167	1.0
2011	Muskegon	June	1.8	yes	119,983	11.8
2010	Muskegon	early/mid June	2.0	no	196,130	19.4
2009*	St. Mary's Rv	late Oct.	6.0	yes	10,000	1.0
2008*	St. Mary's Rv	mid Oct.	5.5	yes	5,000	0.5
2008*	St. Mary's Rv	late May	8.0	yes	2,950	0.3

Recent results of fall walleye indexes at Black Lake. All data collected by MDNR Fisheries Division with the exception of 2010 when LTBB assisted, and 2013 through 2015 when LTBB did the entire survey.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Water Temp (F)</i>	<i>Hours Shocked</i>	<i>Miles Shocked</i>	<i>Age-0 walleye collected</i>	<i>No. age-0 per hour</i>	<i>No. age-0 per mile</i>	<i>Yearling walleye collected</i>	<i>Adults collected</i>	<i>% age-0 stocked (sample #)*</i>
1997	9/2	65	2.33	2.50	3	1.3	1.2	4	5	-
1998	8/24	76	2.00	1.00	9	4.5	9.0	1	7	-
1999	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2000	8/28,29	69	9.50	--	45	4.7	--	10	25	-
2005	9/12	74	3.83	7.62	1	0.3	0.1	1	2	-
2006	9/20	60	4.00	8.10	0	0.0	0.0	1	5	-
2007	9/18	64	4.00	8.77	1	0.3	0.1	0	9	-
2008	9/15	64	4.00	8.03	0	0.0	0.0	0	2	-
2009	9/15,16	70, 64	4.00	9.27	1	0.3	0.1	6	7	-
2010	9/14, 28	58-59	4.32	7.3	59	13.7	8.1	2	2	NA
2011	9/28	64	3.40	7.5	40	11.8	5.3	17	11	100 (19)
2012	9/26	60	3.33	7.1	103	30.9	14.5	4	7	100 (25)
2013	10/1, 2	62-65	3.08	6.0	2	0.6	0.3	6	3	NA
2014	9/30	62	2.78	7.66	15	5.4	2.0	0	13	67 (15)
2015	10/15	57	1.74	--	0	0.0	0.0	0	10	-

- many young walleye were observed in 1999 (but not netted) while looking for sturgeon with electrofishing gear in mid-August
- asterisk indicates that OTC analysis only completed for state fingerling stocking effort, since private stocking of fall fingerlings done after the fall evaluation
- good numbers of juvenile herring observed in 2008 and some during 2009, 2010, 2011
- **larger year classes in from 2010-2012, 2014 correspond with DNR spring fingerling walleye stocking efforts**
- 10 out of 15 age-0 walleye tested positive for OTC (indicating stocked fish) in the 2014 fall sample

Electrofishing routes:

2015 – 5 Mile Point south to near Onaway State Park (wind cut route short)

2014

Boat 1 – 5 Mile Pt (south of Black Rv mouth) south, then east to the mouth of the Rainy River

2013

Entire southern half of lake

2012

Boat 1 – 5 Mile Pt (south of Black Rv mouth) south, then east to the mouth of the Rainy River

2011

Boat 1 – 5 Mile Pt (south of Black Rv mouth) south, then east to the mouth of the Rainy River

2010

Boat 1 - Mouth of Black Rv south towards Rainy Rv mouth

Boat 2 – Rainy Rv mouth north

2009

Boat 1 – north of Rainy River mouth proceeding northwest past the Bluffs Bar area (east shore)

Boat 2 – Onaway State Park west towards UAW

2008

Boat 1 – Mouth of Black Rv south towards UAW

Boat 2 – Onaway State Park west towards UAW

2007

Boat 1 – Mouth of Black River north towards Zollner Road

Boat 2 – Onaway State Park west towards UAW

2006

Boat 1 – Mouth of Black Rv south towards UAW

Boat 2 – state forest campground shocking N/W

2005

Boat 1 - Onaway State Park west towards UAW

Boat 2 – state forest campground shocking N/W

2000

Mouth of Black River north towards Zollner Road

1997

Mouth of Black River north towards Zollner Road

Graph illustrating strength of walleye year classes in Black Lake based on fall catch of age-0 in given years. **Sampling was not conducted in 1999, 2001-2004.**

