

Pymatuning Reservoir

Crawford County

Spring 2011 Walleye Survey

Pymatuning Reservoir, Pennsylvania's largest inland lake, is located in Crawford County (PA) and Ashtabula County (OH). Over 14,000 acres of the 17,000 acre impoundment are within Pennsylvania. The reservoir is located in Pymatuning State Park, the commonwealth's largest state park. The DCNR feature page for Pymatuning State Park is a good resource for visitors (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/pymatuning.aspx>). Anglers are urged to carefully review the PFBC special regulations for Pymatuning Reservoir.

Area 1 Fisheries Management personnel performed our annual spring trapnet survey of Pymatuning Reservoir from March 22 through April 1st, 2011. The primary goal of the survey was to sample the reservoir's walleye population and evaluate the success of our stockings. A total of 42 overnight sets encompassing 977.84 hours of effort yielded a catch of 4,078 fish representing 21 species (Tables 1 and 2).

Lower catch rates for many fish species reflect the timing of our survey. Water temperatures were measured at around 38°F for the duration of our sampling effort. These thermal conditions were not ideal for collecting most warm-water species using trapnets.

Table 1. Species, number, and size range of sport fish captured during trapnet sampling of Pymatuning Reservoir by Fisheries Management Area 1 personnel from March 22 – April 1, 2011.

Species	Number	Size Range (inches)
Bluegill	59	2 - 8
Pumpkinseed	6	4 - 6
Black Crappie	66	2 - 14
White Crappie	2	13
Yellow Perch	256	4 - 12
Channel Catfish	257	12 - 27
Walleye	1,141	8 - 30
Muskellunge	21	32 - 47
Largemouth Bass	1	14

Table 2. Species and numbers of forage fishes and other species captured during trapnet sampling of Pymatuning Reservoir from March 22 through April 1, 2011.

Species	Number
Common Carp	2,049
Gizzard Shad	2
Spottail Shiner	46
White Sucker	17
Quilback	102
Spotted Sucker	1
Golden Shiner	11
Golden Redhorse	2
Yellow Bullhead	7
Brown Bullhead	31
Logperch	1

However, thermal conditions were ideal for catching walleye at their spawning time. Consequently, walleye dominated our catch this spring. The catch rate for juvenile fish was excellent, indicating the fingerling stocking program continues to be successful (Figure 1). Many of the sub-legal fish were 14 inches (Figure 2). These walleye will grow beyond 15 inches during the remainder of the spring and summer. More than 61% of walleye collected were over 15 inches, so plenty of legal fish are available to anglers right now (Figure 2).



A pair of nice Pymatuning Reservoir walleye

Figure 1. Catch per hour for legal and sub-legal walleye in Pymatuning Reservoir collected during spring trapnet surveys from 1989 – 2011.

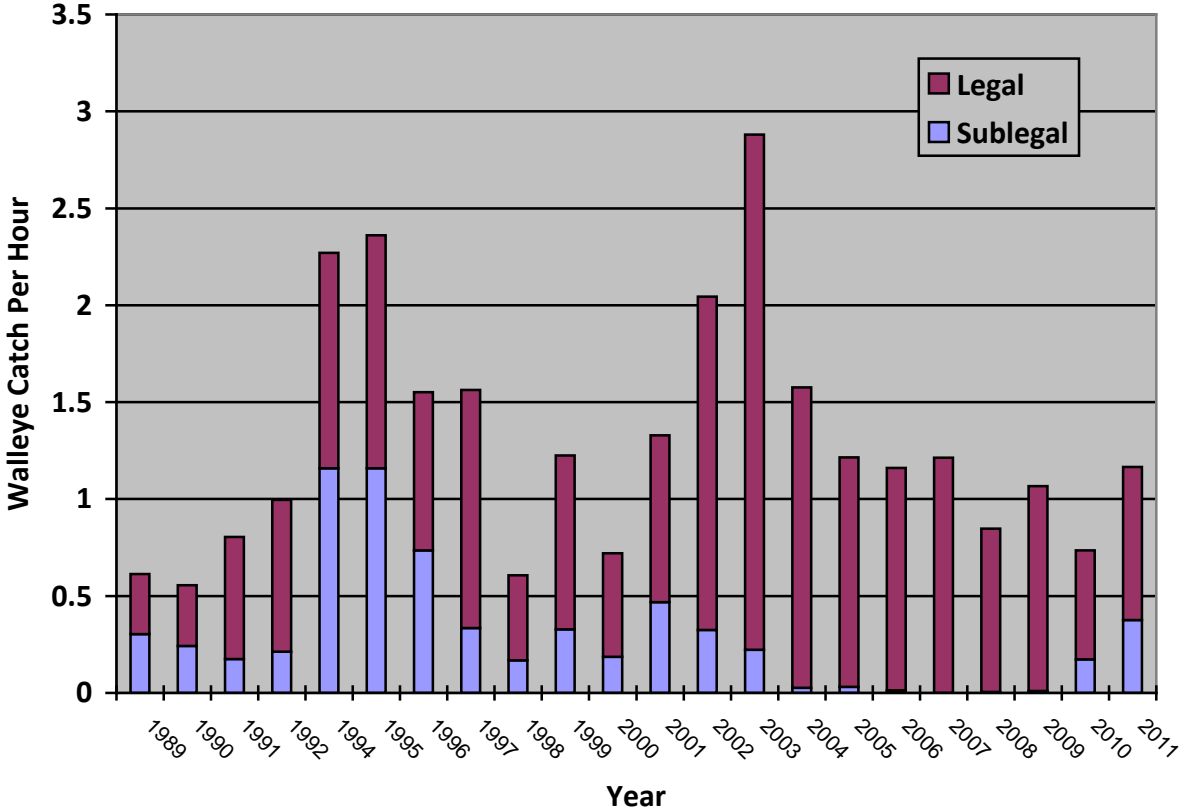
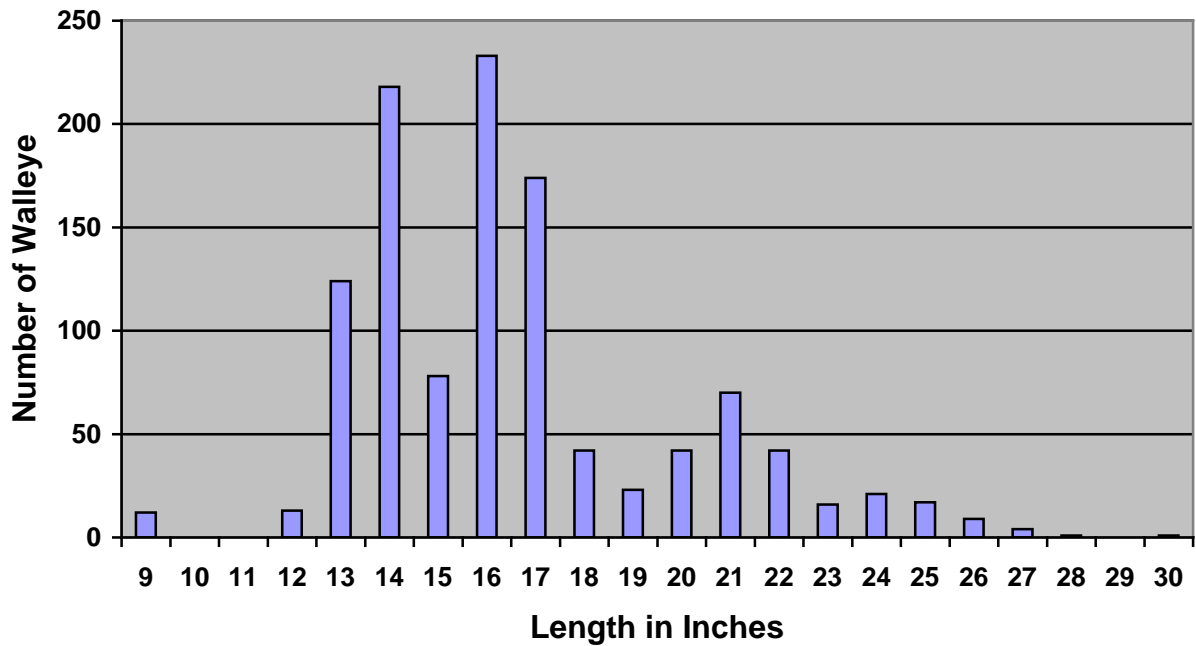


Figure 2. Size distribution of walleye from Pymatuning Reservoir collected during the spring 2011 trapnet survey.



Judging from angler success this spring, we are confident Pymatuning Reservoir maintains excellent populations of panfish and muskellunge. We were surprised to collect so many channel catfish while lake temperatures were low. Over 15% of the catfish collected were over 20 inches and anglers should have success targeting them in Pymatuning Reservoir this year.

Pymatuning Reservoir offers fisherman excellent opportunities for walleye. Collecting many sub-legal fish should translate into continued productivity of the walleye fishery. Very good angling opportunities also exist for panfish, channel catfish, largemouth bass and muskellunge.

-Area 1 Staff Biologists