



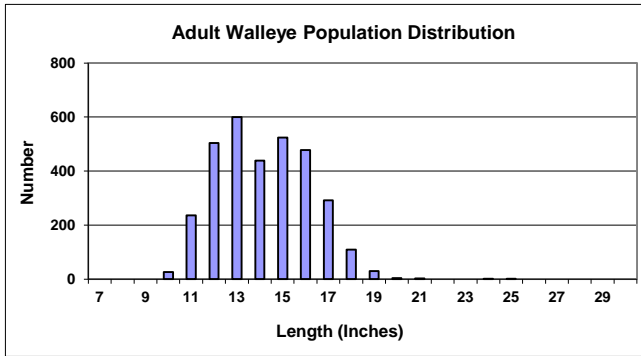
WISCONSIN DNR  
FISHERIES INFORMATION SHEET

LAKE: BIG PORTAGE

COUNTY: VILAS

YEAR: 2016

The Department of Natural Resources surveyed Big Portage Lake, Vilas County, from April 22<sup>nd</sup> through June 8<sup>th</sup>, in order to assess the status of the walleye and smallmouth bass populations. Big Portage Lake is a seepage lake with predominately sand and rubble substrates. It has a surface area of 638 acres, 6.8 miles of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 40 feet. Big Portage Lake's walleye and smallmouth bass populations are sustained entirely through natural reproduction.



\* Note: Adult walleye are defined as all sexable walleye (regardless of length) and those of unknown sex  $\geq$  15 inches in length.

Walleye



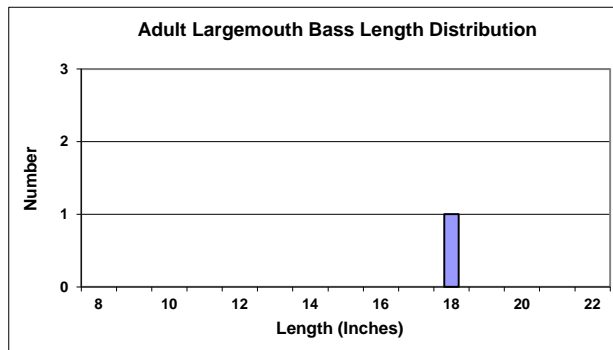
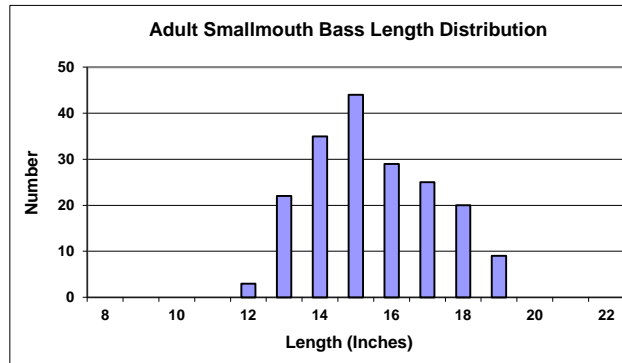
During four days of fyke netting, 1,457 adult walleye were captured and marked with a fin clip. A crew then sampled with an electrofishing boat and captured 177 adult walleye. During electrofishing 46% (82 of 177) of captured walleye bore the fin clip given during fyke netting. The largest walleye captured was a 25.2-inch female.

Based on those results, Big Portage Lake was estimated to contain 3,244 adult walleye (5.1 /acre). An estimated 44% of adult walleye were 15 inches long or larger.

Smallmouth Bass



Survey crews were able to capture and mark a sufficient number of smallmouth bass from Big Portage Lake to estimate the population size. During sampling conducted through June 8<sup>th</sup>, 187 smallmouth bass eight inches or larger were captured. Of those smallmouth captured, 87% were 14 inches long or larger, with the largest measuring 19.9 inches. The smallmouth bass population in Big Portage Lake (eight inches or larger) was estimated to be 307 fish (0.5/acre).



Largemouth Bass



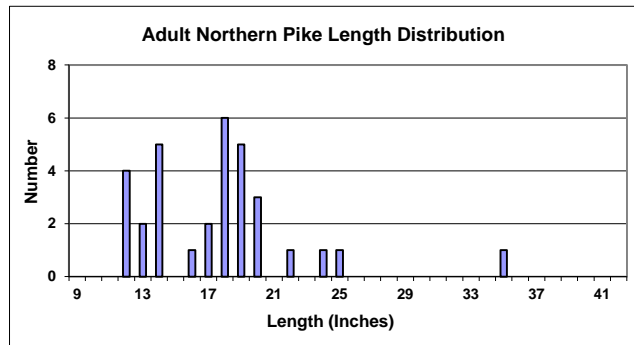
Only one largemouth bass (18.7 inches) was captured during our survey efforts on Big Portage Lake.

**Northern Pike**



32 adult northern pike were captured during our surveys on Big Portage Lake. Of those pike captured, all but one (97%) were less than 26 inches long. The largest northern pike captured was a 35.2-inch female.

\* Note: Adult northern pike are defined as all sexable northern pike and those of unknown sex  $\geq$  12 inches in length.



**Other Species**

In addition to the game fish mentioned above, seven species of fish were captured during fyke netting and electrofishing sampling of Big Portage Lake. Yellow perch, rock bass, and white sucker were common in our surveys. Other species sampled in low numbers included bluegill, pumpkinseed, bluntnose minnow, and mimic shiner.

A creel survey will be conducted on Big Portage Lake throughout the 2016-17 fishing season. Creel clerks Marty Kiepke and Rich Cechal will count and interview anglers and examine their catch. The information gathered will be used to estimate fishing effort in addition to angler catch and harvest.

**Table 1. General Fishing Regulations for Big Portage Lake, Vilas County, 2016**

FISH SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	DAILY LIMIT	MINIMUM LENGTH
Walleye	May 7 - March 5	3	No minimum length, 14-18" no harvest slot, 1 fish over 18" allowed
Largemouth Bass	May 7 - March 5	1 in total with SMB	18 inches
Smallmouth Bass	May 7 - June 17 (C&R) June 18 - March 5 (Harvest)	1 in total with LMB; harvest season only	18 inches
Muskellunge	May 28 - Nov. 30	1	40 inches
Northern Pike	May 7 - March 5	5	None

A brief summary of selected fishing regulations for Big Portage Lake is included above (Table 1). While the regulatory information provided was current at the time the surveys were conducted, it is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for the current fishing regulation pamphlet. You may obtain a copy of current fishing regulations when you purchase your fishing license, or download a copy from our web site at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/regulations/>

This report is interim only; Watch for finalized summaries at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/north/trtysprngsrvys.html>. Creel survey results should be available by June 2017 at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/north/trtyslrvys.html>. For questions, contact:

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For answers to questions about fisheries management activities and plans for Big Portage Lake, Vilas County, contact:

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