

Results of Lake Owasso Fish Kill Evaluations

Lake Owasso suffered a significant fish kill in the fall of 2013 at the time of ice up. Large numbers of dead adult Walleye, Muskellunge and Bluegill were observed. The cause of death was suspected to be an unanticipated and unpreventable natural event likely due to some sort of super saturation of gases in the water column.

DNR staff from the East Metro Fisheries Office conducted population assessments this spring. Assessments included setting trap nets immediately after ice out and electrofishing the week of May 12. Assessments revealed good populations of Northern Pike and Crappie are present. Multiple year classes of Walleye were sampled but in lower numbers than a similar investigation last year. No Muskellunge were sampled by either trap netting or electrofishing. Bluegill and Largemouth Bass are present, but in low numbers.

Lake Owasso will be re-stocked with Walleye fry and Largemouth Bass adults this spring. The Walleye fry stocking will be evaluated in the fall, and Walleye fingerlings may be stocked in the event the success of the spring fry stocking was unsatisfactory. Muskellunge fingerlings will be stocked in the fall. There are no plans to stock Bluegill as it is thought they will recover on their own through emigration from Lake Wabasso or Bennett Lake or by natural reproduction of the remaining adults.

Northern Pike fishing and Black Crappie fishing should be good. Fishing for Walleye may be somewhat diminished from last year. Muskellunge populations will take 6 or 7 years to recover. Largemouth Bass populations may take two or three years to recover.

Bluegill in Lake Owasso have historically been over abundant and of very poor quality. The Bluegill that survived the fish kill are expected to grow rapidly and become high quality by the end of the summer. It is hoped that by stocking predators and not Bluegill that the Bluegill population will be less abundant but of much higher quality.