

A FIELD GUIDE TO LOCAL FISHERIES RESOURCES



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2012 Little Falls Area Fisheries Guide

Protecting Habitat - What can you do?

- Maintain natural vegetation (trees, shrubs, and tall grass) in a 50-foot strip to protect your shoreline from runoff and erosion.
- Properly maintain your septic system.
- Refrain from establishing sand blankets over valuable spawning substrates such as rock and gravel.
- If you must fertilize, use low (no) phosphorus products. This will help reduce problem algae blooms.
- Aquatic plants are not weeds. Valuable aquatic plants like bulrushes provide a number of benefits to the lake including:
 - Fish and wildlife habitat (food and shelter)
 - Protection of shorelines from erosion
 - Water quality improvements (nutrient processors)
 - Primary producers in the aquatic food chain

Helpful Contacts - How You Can Get Involved

The following list contains various agencies and organizations that you may want to contact regarding management of aquatic resources and adjacent lands.

DNR Division of Ecological & Waters - Area Hydrologist - Morrison, Todd and Mille Lacs Counties - (320) 616-2450. Stearns, Benton, Sherburne and Wright Counties (320) 255-2976. Mille Lacs, Aitkin, Kanabec, Crow Wing and Southern Cass Counties (218) 828-2605. The DNR Hydrologist is a necessary contact for anyone planning to do work within lake basins and stream beds. A permit is often necessary prior to conducting work within water bodies or below the Ordinary High Water.

DNR Aquatic Plant Management (320) 616-2450 ext 235. An Aquatic Plant Specialist should be contacted prior to beginning any project that alters existing plant communities. APM staff are also available to help create Aquatic Plant Management Plans in conjunction with lake associations and other local groups.

SWCD Offices and Local Water Plan Coordinators are primary contacts for people wishing to do projects along shoreline areas. These offices may have cost-share funding available to help complete certain types of “environmentally friendly” projects. Shoreline property owners are strongly encouraged to contact local county offices prior to beginning any activities altering shoreline habitats. Local Water Planners may be located in either the SWCD or a county office and are often excellent sources of information regarding Best Management Practices and overall lake improvement.

County Planning and Zoning Offices can provide information about zoning ordinances, regulations, and setback requirements for lake and stream shore property owners. They are responsible for activities above the Ordinary High Water.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency - (218) 828-2492. The MPCA is responsible for monitoring the water quality of our lakes. Water clarity information is gathered via the Citizen Lake Monitoring Program which consists of water transparency measurements (secchi disk) by volunteers on each participating lake.

Local units of government such as cities and townships may also have regulatory authority pertaining to shoreline property uses in selected areas.

WELCOME

...to the lakes and rivers within the Little Falls Fisheries Management Area. This management area includes Morrison, Benton, Todd and Mille Lacs Counties along with a few lakes in Stearns and Crow Wing Counties. Roughly 90 fishing lakes and 24 streams are found in the Little Falls work area.

Surveys of fish populations and aquatic habitats are carried out on each managed lake or stream at regular intervals. Large or intensively managed lakes are sampled more frequently than small lakes that receive light use. Fish sampling on lakes is conducted using a variety of gear types including trapnets, gillnets, seines and electrofishing. Gillnetting is most useful in capturing fish during the summer when they frequent deep water habitats while trapnets and electrofishing gear work best in spring and fall when more fish are in the shallows. On lakes, electrofishing is most effective at night as it is easier to approach fish under cover of darkness. Stream sampling consists primarily of daytime electrofishing which is effective in shallow, moving water. Creel surveys are conducted periodically on our waters to measure fishing effort and success.

Fish and habitat survey reports contain information on fish populations such as abundance, sizes, ages, and growth rates. Along with fish information these reports include information on water chemistry, shoreline and watershed characteristics, aquatic vegetation diversity, distribution and abundance, and other habitat attributes. These reports are also instrumental in the development of lake and stream management plans. Management plans outline goals and objectives for each lake/stream fish community and the activities and practices that will be undertaken to reach those goals. All DNR surveys and management plans are available to the public. If you are interested in information on a particular body of water, or would like to review the current management plan, stop in at our office in Little Falls. We are located on the north end of Little Falls on Haven Road. Our phone number is (320) 616-2450.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Tables summarizing management practices and best fishing opportunities are found on pages 3 through 6. These tables provide a quick reference to help you find a lake or stream that supports the species you prefer to fish. The Management Practices section tells you if the lake is stocked and the species that are stocked. Lakes with special fishing regulations are noted in this table and the specific types of regulations will be described in the lake descriptions found throughout the rest of this guide. The columns labeled Keep Small Northern Pike and Limit Bluegill Harvest denote lakes where we suggest anglers practice selective harvest of smaller fish and throw back larger ones to help improve or maintain these fisheries. Explanations of why we feel these voluntary harvest changes may help to improve fishing are found beginning on page 22. The Best Fishing Opportunities portion of the tables lists the species that are well represented in DNR sampling and most targeted by anglers on that specific body of water. Other species may be present but usually in low numbers.

Lakes and streams with popular shore fishing sites or public fishing piers are also identified in the Management Practices section. Maps showing the locations of all fishing piers in Minnesota are available at DNR offices.

Brief descriptions of each lake and stream are also provided in this guide. These descriptions provide additional information regarding lake/stream characteristics, fish populations, fishing opportunities, regulations and harvest suggestions.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES MORRISON COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
ALEXANDER	2,730	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
CEDAR	253	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
CROOKNECK	168	N	N	N	Y	N	N
FISH TRAP	1,303	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
GREEN PRAIRIE FISH	178	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
LONG	120	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
PEAVY	123	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
PLACID	459	N	N	N	N	N	N
PIERZ FISH	170	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
PINE	197	N	N	N	Y	N	N
ROUND (Northeast)	134	N	N	N	N	Y	N
ROUND (Camp Ripley)	121	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
ROUND (Bergstrom)	95	N	Y	N	N	N	N
SHAMINEAU	1,626	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
SULLIVAN	1,221	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
SYLVAN	655	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y

BENTON COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
LITTLE ROCK	1,450	N	N	N	N	N	Y
MAYHEW	131	N	Y	N	N	N	Y

CROW WING COUNTY LAKE

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
PLATTE	1.674	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

TODD COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
BASS (Grey Eagle)	95	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
BASS (Burtum)	113	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
BEAUTY	237	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
BIG	277	N	Y	N	Y	N	N

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
BIRCH, BIG	2,108	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
BIRCH, LITTLE	838	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
CEDAR	158	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
CHARLOTTE	148	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
COAL	167	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
DOWER	79	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
FAIRY	295	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
GUERNSEY	125	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
HORSESHOE	118	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
LADY	207	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
LATIMER	186	N	Y	N	N	N	N
LILY-LONG	154	N	N	N	N	Y	N
LONG (Burtrum)	372	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
LONG (Higgins)	215	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
MAPLE	367	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
MARY	104	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
MILL	160	N	N	N	N	N	N
MONS	86	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
MOOSE	124	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
MOUND	273	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
PEPIN	41	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
PINEISLAND	234	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
SAUK,BIG	2,094	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
SAUK, LITTLE(Longbridge)	268	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
STAR	47	N	N	N	N	Y	N
SWAN, BIG	918	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
SWAN, LITTLE(Pillsbury)	149	N	N	N	N	Y	N
THUNDER	194	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
TURTLE	104	N	Y	N	N	N	N

STEARNS COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
SYLVIA	81	N	N	N	N	N	Y

STREAMS & RIVERS

Lake or Stream	Acres	Special Regulations	Walleye Stocking	Muskie Stocking	Keep small Northern Pike*	Limit Bluegill Harvest*	Shore/Pier Fishing
MISSISSIPPI RIVER	NA	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
CROW WING RIVER	NA	N	N	N	N	N	Y
RUM RIVER	NA	N	N	N	N	N	Y
LITTLE ROCK CREEK	NA	N	N	N	N	N	Y

BEST FISHING OPPORTUNITIES MORRISON COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
ALEXANDER	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
CEDAR	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
CROOKNECK	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
FISH TRAP	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
GREEN PRAIRIE FISH	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
LONG	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
PEAVY	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
PLACID	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
PIERZ FISH	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
PINE	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
ROUND(Northeast)	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N
ROUND(Camp Ripley)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
ROUND (Bergstrom)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
SHAMINEAU	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
SULLIVAN	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
STANCHFIELD	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
SYLVAN	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N

BENTON COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
LITTLE ROCK	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
MAYHEW	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N

CROW WING COUNTY LAKE

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
PLATTE	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N

MILLE LACS COUNTY

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
SHAKOPEE	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
BLACK BASS	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N

TODD COUNTY

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
BASS (Grey Eagle)	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
BASS (Burtrum)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
BEAUTY	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
BIG	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
BIRCH, BIG	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
BIRCH, LITTLE	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
CEDAR	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
CHARLOTTE	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
COAL	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
DOWER	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N
FAIRY	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
GUERNSEY	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
HORSESHOE	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
LADY	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
LATIMER	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
LILY LONG	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
LONG (Burtrum)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
LONG (Higgins)	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
MAPLE	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
MARY	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
MILL	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
MONS	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
MOOSE	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
MOUND	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
PEPIN	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
PINE ISLAND	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
SAUK, BIG	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
SAUK, LITTLE (Longbridge)	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
STAR	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
SWAN, BIG	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
SWAN, LITTLE (Pillsbury)	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
THUNDER	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
TURTLE	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N

STEARNS COUNTY LAKES

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
SYLVIA	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N

STREAMS & RIVERS

Lake or Stream	WALLEYE	NORTHERN PIKE	LARGEMOUTH BASS	SMALLMOUTH BASS	SUNFISH	CRAPPIE	MUSKIE	CATFIISH
MISSISSIPPI RIVER	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
CROW WING RIVER	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
RUM RIVER	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
LITTLE ROCK CREEK	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y

Bullheads and Catfish

Bullheads: Several lakes in the Little Falls Management Area hold good populations of large bullheads in the 11 to 15 inch range. The following is a list of some of the better bullhead lakes in the area:

Todd County: Little Birch, Big Birch, Big Swan, Little Sauk, Long, Guernsey, Maple, Cedar, Big Lake, and Mound

Mille Lacs County: Shakopee

Morrison County: Sullivan

Channel catfish: are present in the Mississippi River and these lakes:

- **Benton County:** Little Rock
- **Todd County:** Little Birch
- **Stearns County:** Sylvia

MORRISON COUNTY LAKES

Alexander

Alexander is the largest lake (2,730 acres) in the Little Falls work area. With its size and available structure, Alexander can provide a myriad of fishing experiences. Primary management on this lake is directed at maintaining the walleye population. Alexander's substantial walleye fishery is the result of regular stocking. Since 1995, fry stocking has produced an abundance of fishable walleyes. Muskies are stocked every other year. Muskies of all sizes and exceeding 50 inches, inhabit the lake which is known for good muskie catch rates. Anglers are encouraged to release all muskies to increase the lake's potential for producing trophy fish. Both largemouth and smallmouth bass are well represented in Alexander's fish community due to excellent habitat availability and variety. Trophy sized bass of both species have been reported by anglers. The northern pike population is characterized by a desirable size structure and average abundance. Roughly half of the pike exceed 24 inches long and fish more than 40 inches have been observed in recent DNR nettings. The quality of the pike population is currently being managed by experimental regulations which require the release of all pike between 24 and 36 inches. Anglers can help maintain this quality population by voluntarily releasing larger pike. Alexander is also a popular destination for crappie anglers, especially during spring and winter. Eating-size crappies are readily available and fish up to 15 inches have been measured during DNR trapnet assessments. Bluegills in the 6 to 7 inch range are relatively common in Alexander, though more larger-sized fish have been observed in recent years.

Cedar

Large northern pike are the trademark of this deep, clear water lake. A prey base consisting primarily of tullibees supports a quality northern pike population capable of producing fish in the 20-pound range. To help sustain this quality pike fishery, conservation regulations have been implemented which require the release of all pike smaller than 40 inches. Cedar also provides excellent opportunities for largemouth bass with some in the 15 to 19 inch range. A walleye stocking program was started in 2001 and has produced an excellent fishery. Walleye in excess of 26 inches are now present with good numbers of fish in many size groups. To help sustain the walleye population a bag

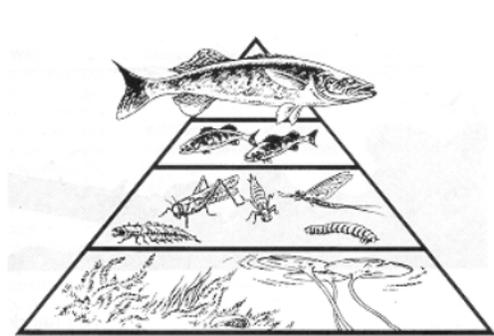
limit of 2 fish has been put in place. Additionally, the crappie limit was reduced to 5 fish to rebuild this population. A public access has been purchased and developed to facilitate angling opportunities. Access can also be gained for a small fee through the private campground located on the east shoreline. A popular swimming beach is also present at the campground.

Crookneck

Big largemouth bass are the main attraction on Crookneck Lake, which is characterized by an abundance of aquatic vegetation. Bass up to and exceeding 20 inches continue to be present, but anglers should try to limit their bass harvest as reproduction is limited and the population is somewhat low. Abundant northern pike likely limit the bass population. Most pike in Crookneck are 2 to 4 pounds offering good opportunity for eating-size fish. Increased harvest of these smaller northern pike is desired because of their impacts on the fish community. Abundant pike grow slowly and limit yellow perch numbers which are a critical prey species.

Fish Trap

Fish Trap Lake is known for its many bays and islands which provide a wide variety of habitats for fish. The lake supports a decent population of walleye with natural reproduction and stocking both contributing to the fishery. Walleyes of all sizes are present and fish up to 30 inches reside here. Northern pike are found in good numbers though the bulk of the population is less than three pounds. The northern pike population is currently being managed by experimental regulations which require the release of all pike between 24 and 36 inches. Anglers are encouraged to keep small pike and release large ones to help restore balance to the lake's fish community. Largemouth bass of all sizes are plentiful, making Fish Trap a great action lake. During recent years, crappie fishing has been excellent year-round. High spawning success and good growth are responsible for the improved crappie fishery. Nice sized bluegills (7 to 9 inches) have also become more prominent in the angler's catch in recent years. Fishing pressure for panfish has intensified with the improved bluegill and crappie populations making these species more vulnerable to excessive harvest. We encourage anglers to limit their take of larger size panfish so quality can be maintained.



FOOD PYRAMID

To produce and sustain a 10-pound walleye requires about 100 pounds of yellow perch each year. One hundred pounds of yellow perch consume one ton of minnows. These minnows need five tons of insects to survive and the insects need 50 tons of plants for their support. As you can see in the diagram above, aquatic plants and some forms of algae (called primary producers) are the foundation needed to support fish populations in a lake. Beds of aquatic plants attract insects and forage fish, and is one of the first places to start looking for your favorite fish.

Green Prairie Fish

Though lacking in structure, Green Prairie provides numerous fishing opportunities. Panfish are probably the most popular targets, with sunfish and crappies producing year-round action. Again, anglers should try to limit their harvest of large panfish if they wish to maintain quality. This is especially important in a small lake such as Green Prairie. Walleye are present in fishable numbers and the best fishing is usually during spring and winter. Largemouth bass and northern pike are relatively plentiful. A public swimming beach is located on the south side of the lake.

Long

This is a typical bass/panfish lake with abundant vegetative cover along the shoreline. Bluegill and crappie exist in numbers and sizes that should interest panfish anglers. Northern pike numbers are average with a chance for fish up to 10 pounds. Electrofishing sampling suggests largemouth bass are present in moderate numbers with a good proportion of fish over 16 inches. The lake association has stocked the lake at times with walleye fingerlings to provide additional opportunities for this species.

Peavy

Clear water and abundant submerged vegetation are prominent characteristics of Peavy Lake. Crappies are a popular species, especially during spring and winter. Northern pike are present in modest numbers and most are small. A fair population of largemouth bass is also available to anglers. Bluegill between 7 and 8 inches can be found.

WOOD AND WATER



Bluegill

Fallen trees and old logs help stabilize shoreline areas and increase diversity of habitat for fish and insects. Almost all fish species utilize overhanging trees, fallen logs, brush piles and other forms of woody cover. This habitat provides fish with spawning and resting areas, food, shade and protection from predators. Proper shoreline management should include leaving wood in and over the water. Dedicate a portion of your shoreline for establishing some woody habitat and think twice before you pull out that dead tree.....you may be taking someone's home!

Pierz Fish

Located near Pierz, this lake is a noted producer of big bass. A special regulation is in place requiring the release of all bass between 12 and 20 inches. One bass exceeding 20 inches is allowed in the six fish limit. This regulation should ensure that large bass will continue to reside in the lake. Crappie fishing is popular during the spring when the fish move into shoreline areas. Bluegills are plentiful, but numbers of larger sunnies (over 8") are limited so we suggest restraint when harvesting bigger sunfish. Pierz Fish supports healthy populations of northern pike and walleye which can result in good catches for anglers pursuing these species.

Pine

This clear water lake contains desirable populations of largemouth bass and crappie. Bass over 5 pounds and crappie exceeding 1 pound are available to anglers willing to look for these fish. Some large northern pike (30+ inches) have been recently sampled however most pike are small and slow growing.

Placid Reservoir

This body of water was created by the Pillager Dam on the Crow Wing River. The reservoir is inhabited by a wide variety of gamefish and roughfish because of the movement of fish through the Crow Wing River system. Gamefish and panfish net catches tend to be low although walleye, northern pike, smallmouth and largemouth bass, crappie and sunfish are present. Walleye fishing tends to be best during the fall when walleyes move from shallow river areas into the deeper reservoir.

Round (Northeast)

The Platte River flows through Round Lake resulting in a diverse fish community. Moderate numbers of walleye and northern pike inhabit the lake. Northern pike are caught year-round while walleye fishing is best in the spring. Few largemouth bass were observed during spring electrofishing but some big bass are present. Most summer and winter anglers target panfish on Round Lake due to the presence of quality size crappies and sunfish. Winter seems to be the best time for crappies. Access is gained via the Platte River from the county road downstream of the lake.

Round (Camp Ripley)

Bordering on the Camp Ripley Military Reservation, this small (121 acre) lake can provide a great diversity of fishing experiences. Spring and winter walleye fishing can produce good catches and fish over 10 pounds are caught each year. Muskies exceeding 20 pounds cruise the lake in addition to decent numbers of northern pike. Trophy size largemouth bass (over 6 lbs.) are also occasionally reported. Panfish abound in this lake, but few are large enough to interest anglers.

Round (Bergstrom)

Located in north-central Morrison County, Round is one of those small, out-of-the-way lakes that can produce an enjoyable outing to anglers willing to give it a try. Walleye thrive in Round Lake and the population contains a large percentage of bigger fish (over 4 lbs.). Walleye fingerling stocking was reinitiated in 1998 when the access became public. Crappies also fare well in this lake with fish in the 1/2 to 1-pound range often available. A favorable largemouth bass population exists, with fish up to 5 pounds caught in spring DNR electrofishing. Northern pike are found in numbers higher than desired so we encourage anglers to harvest them, especially fish under 3 pounds. High pike numbers often reduce the success of our walleye stocking due to predation.

Shamineau

Shamineau is a large, scenic lake which offers a wide array of fishing opportunities. Northern pike are a primary target. The northern pike population is currently being managed by experimental regulations which require the release of all pike between 24 and 36 inches. Harvesting small pike may benefit the lake's walleye population as would the release of larger pike. The lake currently supports good numbers of walleye in all size ranges, including some trophies. You might want to try night fishing due to the clear water. Muskies are stocked in Shamineau every other year and a variety of sizes are present with the largest exceeding 30 pounds. We encourage anglers to release all muskies to help develop the lake's trophy potential. For the bass angler, Shamineau is well known for giving up largemouths in the 5 to 6 pound class. Crappie fishing can be productive any time of year, but spring and late winter are the best times. Crappies up to 15 inches are known to inhabit the lake. Bluegill fishing is most popular during summer and winter. Most bluegills are in the 6 to 7 inch range.

Sullivan

Sullivan Lake is a 1,221 acre basin connected to a larger but shallower basin, Platte Lake. Walleye are the primary management species in Sullivan Lake. Abundant rocky shoreline provides habitat for spawning walleyes, and the population is augmented by regular stocking. Sullivan often provides good spring and summer walleye fishing. Winter fishing is mainly directed at northern pike and panfish. A survey in 2012 showed an abundance of 1 to 2 pound walleye. The lake is noted for producing large bluegills (over 9 inches) and crappie (10-12 inches) especially during winter and spring. The big bluegills in Sullivan Lake grow slowly and may be over 10 years old. Anglers should bear this in mind when harvesting these fish as it will be difficult to replace them. Anglers and spearers are also encouraged to limit their harvest of large northern pike as they play a key role in balancing the fish community. Sullivan Lake's largemouth bass population is characterized by moderate numbers of fish in a variety of sizes.

Sylvan Reservoir

This reservoir was created by placement of the Sylvan Dam on the Crow Wing River. The Gull River also empties into the reservoir. Spring crappie fishing is the main attraction to Sylvan. Many shore fishermen target northern pike around the Fishermen's Bridge with an occasional walleye also showing up. Bluegills are also pursued, especially in the Gull River arm of the reservoir. An improved shoreline fishing area is located near the bridge.

BENTON COUNTY LAKES

Little Rock

Located 10 miles north of St. Cloud on U.S. Hwy. 10, this shallow lake (17 ft. max.) is characterized by a lack of aquatic vegetation and poor summer water clarity (under 2 feet). Walleye and crappie dominate the angler's catch. Little Rock supports a substantial walleye population which is the result of excellent natural reproduction. The best walleye fishing generally occurs during spring and winter when water clarity is better. Crappie populations change dramatically due to annual variations in spawning success. Highest fishing success tends to occur when a strong crappie year class grows into the 8 to 10 inch range. Crappie fishing is also most productive during spring and winter. Due to the lake's proximity to the St. Cloud metro area, hot walleye and crappie bites often bring high numbers of anglers to the lake. Perch have provided additional fishing opportunities. Little Rock is also inhabited by good populations of northern pike and channel catfish, with fish over 10 pounds a distinct possibility. Bluegill and largemouth bass are also found in the lake.

Mayhew

Like Little Rock Lake, Mayhew's summer turbidity and lack of vegetation make spring and winter fishing the popular alternatives. Crappies are the most abundant fish targeted by anglers. Crappies are usually present in high numbers which can produce fast action. A modest walleye population is maintained through regular fingerling stocking. Largemouth bass and bluegill abundance is relatively low, though quality size individuals of each species can be found. Northern pike numbers are moderate with 3 to 5 pound fish comprising a good portion of the population. Perch also attract anglers during the winter.

CROW WING COUNTY LAKE

Platte

Platte Lake is a large (1,674 acres), shallow basin (18 ft. max.) with lush aquatic vegetation and a connection to Sullivan Lake. An abundance of shallow, weedy areas make ideal habitat for northern pike spawning and rearing resulting in a chronically high pike population. Panfishing is popular throughout the year as the lake is known for its potential to put out quality size bluegill and crappie. Please restrict your harvest of these large panfish to help maintain these quality populations. Those big sunnies are likely 8 to 10 years old or more! Some nice bass also make Platte Lake their home.

Value of Aquatic Plants



If you are thinking of how to rid your shoreline of those "water weeds" consider these facts:

All aquatic life is dependent upon water plants.
Plants are the primary producers in the aquatic food chain.
Fish are dependent on aquatic plants for food and shelter.
Water purification is a result of a healthy plant community.
Aquatic plants protect shorelines from erosion.
Plants provide food and shelter for wildlife.
You may want to reconsider!

MILLE LACS COUNTY

Shakopee

The Rum River flows through this lake adding to the diversity of species within the fish community. A significant winterkill occurred during the winter of 2000-01 reducing the numbers of walleye, bass, and panfish. Populations of these species have since recovered due to immigration through the Rum River system and DNR stocking efforts. Northern pike are found in good numbers and quality size fish (over 30 inches) are common. Spearing is quite popular here and quality-size panfish also draw anglers. Largemouth and smallmouth bass also reside in Shakopee Lake.

TODD COUNTY LAKES

Bass (Grey Eagle)

Located in Grey Eagle, this lake is characterized by clear water (13+ ft. clarity) and a typical bass/panfish community. Largemouth bass and northern pike are well represented with most bass in the 1 to 3 pound range and pike in the 2 to 6 pound range. The walleye population is of moderate abundance with early winter being the best time to catch them. Bluegill and crappie are present in fair numbers, however some sorting may be required when seeking a meal of sunfish. A fishing pier is located on the north end of the lake.

Bass (Burtrum)

This deep, clear lake is noted for producing large northern pike and walleye. Healthy populations of tullibee, suckers and shiners support these large predators. Pike over 40 inches and walleye over 30 inches have been observed during recent DNR sampling and fishing reports indicate anglers also see large fish. "Conservation Regulations" require release of all northern pike under 40 inches to help maintain quality in this small lake. Also, the walleye bag limit has been reduced to 2 fish and the bass limit is 1 fish. Spring and winter appear to be the best seasons to fish walleye. Largemouth bass are found in good numbers. This lake is located northwest of Burtrum.

Beauty

Beauty is a typical central Minnesota lake supporting good populations of bass, northern pike and walleye. Bass over 18 inches and pike exceeding 30 inches can be found along with good numbers of both species to provide action. Walleye fishing typically peaks during the spring and winter seasons. Bluegill and crappie are abundant with "eating-size" panfish readily available during most of the year.

Big

Big Lake is typified by an abundant northern pike population that occasionally produces larger fish (over 15 lbs.). Largemouth bass numbers are good and bass over 5 pounds are caught each year. A significant population of crappies in the 8 to 10 inch range is usually characteristic of Big Lake. Most sunfish are small due to their high abundance and corresponding slow growth, but some exceed 7". Walleye are present in low numbers as fingerling stocking efforts have been hampered by high pike populations.

Big Birch

Big Birch is a large lake (2,108 acres) that straddles the Stearns/Todd County border. A state forest campground with a fishing pier is located on the southwest side of the lake. Big Birch Lake contains numerous areas of rocky and vegetated fish "structure". The lake supports an excellent walleye population; as strong year classes have been generated by stocking in recent years. Eating-size walleye are abundant although trophy size fish can be caught. The northern pike population is currently being managed through experimental regulations which require the release of all pike between 24 and 36 inches. One pike over 36 inches is allowed in a three fish limit. Recent angling reports suggest that more large pike are being caught and quality is improving. Largemouth and smallmouth bass inhabit Big Birch and both species are known to provide good action. Smallmouth bass over 20 inches have been sampled by DNR electrofishing. Panfishing has become more prominent on Big Birch in recent years as anglers have keyed in on increased abundance of 7 to 8 inch bluegills. Crappie are found in modest numbers with some large specimens (12-14+ inches) observed in recent years.

Little Birch

This lake is connected to Big Birch by a small inlet stream. A barrier is in place on this stream to limit fish migration. Little Birch contains good numbers of walleye due to a combination of natural reproduction and stocking. Anglers report consistent walleye action year-round with a chance to catch a trophy of over 30 inches. The northern pike population shows a desirable size structure with many fish in the 4 to 10 pound range. Smallmouth bass are plentiful due to an abundance of rocky shoreline habitat. Smallmouth of all sizes can be caught and fish over 18 inches are regularly reported. Bluegill and crappie populations are targeted by anglers due to adequate numbers and a fairly good percentage of desirable sized fish. A moderate number of largemouth bass also reside in Little Birch. An occasional channel catfish may be caught here also.

Throw back the small ones?

For decades anglers have thrown back small fish so they will grow up to be keepers. Often those are the fish you should consider keeping. Smaller sized fish tend to taste better and contain fewer contaminants than larger fish. Many lakes typically contain an overabundance of small fish; especially bluegills and northern pike. Through years of releasing small fish and harvesting bigger ones, we have helped to create lakes which have high populations of small, slow growing fish.

Cedar

Located adjacent to U.S. Hwy. 71 north of Sauk Centre, Cedar is a clear water lake with abundant aquatic vegetation. Northern pike, largemouth bass and walleye are all found in decent numbers and a variety of sizes. Bluegill and crappie populations also draw anglers. Summer anglers tend to fish for northern pike, bass and sunfish while winter fishermen seek primarily crappie and walleye. Shore fishing opportunities exist on the west side of the lake.

Charlotte

Charlotte Lake is located on the south side of Long Prairie. Though small at only 148 acres, the lake is clear and deep (84 feet). Northern pike are abundant and mostly small in size, however large pike are occasionally taken. The walleye population is relatively low but fish up to trophy size have been captured in DNR nets. These large predators likely exist in Charlotte because they have a tullibee population to feed on. Largemouth bass are also present in fishable numbers. Sunfish are abundant but small. A public beach is located on the northeast end of the lake. A public access and fishing pier are located on the northwest side.

Coal

Coal Lake's northern pike population tends to rise and fall sharply. Currently, the pike population is in the moderate range and a few large individuals have been observed. Walleye are found in fair numbers with stocking and natural reproduction each contributing to the population. Largemouth bass fishing is good with lots of shoreline cover to fish. Although not known for really big sunnies, bluegills in the 7 inch range are relatively common. Crappie fishing success is variable year to year, however recent angling catches have documented fish in excess of 13 inches.

Dower

A small basin near Staples, this lake supports mainly northern pike and bluegill. Most pike are small and we encourage anglers to harvest them. The sunfish also run small and are plentiful. A few largemouth bass, walleye and crappie also reside in Dower. A fishing pier is located on the northeast end at the city owned park.

Fairy

Fairy is another lake with clear water and an excessively high northern pike population. The pike are small, slow growing and usually hungry. If you want to catch numbers of pickling size pike this may be a good lake to try. Fairy Lake attracts quite a few bluegill anglers primarily because the sunfish are abundant, easy to catch and taste good. Don't expect to catch bunches of big sunnies. Fairy can provide good bass fishing and the chance to hook some large bass (over 5 lbs.). Walleye numbers are fair at best and probably kept down by the high northern pike population. Fairy usually supports a favorable crappie population.

Guernsey

The Sauk River flows through Guernsey Lake providing a source of migrating fish and re-establishing populations after the winterkills that can occur here. Guernsey is best known for producing quality size bluegill (up to 10 inches) and crappie (up to 12 inches). Panfish grow fast in this fertile system resulting in an increased presence of large panfish. Northern pike are very abundant and fish over 30 inches are fairly common. A natural walleye population inhabits Guernsey and the Sauk River creating fishing opportunities for this species. Fishing for most species occurs in the spring and winter due to poor water clarity in summer months.

Horseshoe

Horseshoe is a classic hammer-handle northern pike lake characterized by overabundant, small, slow growing northern pike. Expect fast action if you go pike fishing here. Walleye are few in number despite stocking efforts due to heavy predation by pike. Horseshoe does have good populations of bluegill, crappie and largemouth bass. A fair number of bluegills over 7 inches are available and largemouth bass up to 7 pounds have been caught in the lake. Crappie are most often targeted in winter.

Lady

This lightly developed lake has a dense cattail fringe along much of its shoreline. Bluegills and crappie are the main attractions. Bluegills are abundant and fish exceeding 10 inches do exist. Crappie numbers are also good and most fish are of eating-size or larger. The extensive beds of emergent vegetation provide ideal habitat for bass and bass fishermen. A healthy population of largemouth bass was documented in a DNR electrofishing survey. Northern pike are abundant and the population is comprised mainly of small fish. Occasionally anglers find a few walleyes that probably migrate to Lady from Big Swan Lake.

Latimer

Though lightly developed, Latimer Lake suffers from poor water clarity during the summer months. The heavily agricultural watershed contributes a significant nutrient load to the lake creating turbid conditions. Crappies draw the most interest from anglers and good catches can be made all year long, though don't expect any big ones. Northern pike are fairly abundant with some exceeding 30 inches. Bluegills are found in modest numbers with a good portion over 7 inches. Walleye and largemouth bass are present in low numbers but large fish of each species inhabit the lake. The walleye population is maintained primarily through stocking, though some natural reproduction has been known to occur. Latimer also has a very abundant bullhead population.



Black Crappie

Lily and Long

These small lakes are part of the Fairy Lake chain. Generally, these lakes tend to produce more large crappies and bluegills than Fairy, possibly due to the more primitive access site. Bluegill over 8.5 inches and crappies over 11 inches have been sampled by DNR personnel. Abundant small northern pike are characteristic of both lakes. Respectable populations of largemouth bass can be found on both Lily and Long.

Long (Burtrum)

Anglers have a variety of worthwhile options while fishing Long Lake. Walleye are a primary species with natural reproduction and stocking providing anglers several size classes and the potential for a trophy. Best walleye catches occur during spring and fall. Northern pike are found in high abundance, well above desired levels which may result in reduced walleye survival. The northern pike population is currently being managed by special regulations which require the release of all pike between 24 and 36 inches. Fishermen are encouraged to harvest small northern pike to help us manage for a better walleye population. Quality size bluegills are available often attracting crowds when a hot bite is on. Crappies also draw anglers, especially during spring and winter. Largemouth bass are another species present in good abundance and a wide range of sizes.

Long (Higgins)

Long Lake's claim to fame is its ability to put out trophy size largemouth bass. Over the years, this lake has shown to be a consistent producer of bass in the 4 to 7 pound range. Bass fishermen should note that largemouth grow slowly in northern waters and it takes well over 10 years to produce a trophy bass, so release those big ones. An overabundance of northern pike has resulted in the discontinuing of walleye stocking, due to poor walleye fingerling survival from pike predation. Fair numbers of bluegill in the 7 to 9 inch range were observed in DNR nets suggesting panfish anglers may be able to catch a meal if they are willing to put in some time. Crappies are also present and may provide additional opportunities.

Maple

Maple is a medium size lake (366 acres) that experiences heavy fishing pressure at times. Most anglers visit the lake to pursue the quality size bluegill and crappie that reside here. Panfishing is good year-round and winter pressure can be considerable. Nice catches of walleye are commonly reported, especially during May and June. Northern pike are numerous and of quality size, anglers should have no problem finding fish in the 4 to 8 pound range. Pike in excess of 36 inches continue to be sampled by DNR nets. Good bass fishing can also be found on Maple with decent chances of hooking a 4 to 5 pounder.

Mary

This long, narrow lake has lots of shoreline to fish for its size (104 acres). Most fishing pressure is directed at bluegill which are abundant in the 6 to 8 inch range. The lake's potential to produce large crappies (12+ inches) draws anglers primarily during spring and winter. Decent size northern pike (3 to 4 lbs.) are fairly common with pike over 10 pounds a possibility. Spring walleye fishing has improved in recent years with respectable catches observed around opening day. The lake's extensive shoreline offers many places to cast for largemouth bass which are present in average numbers. Carp bowfishing has also caught on in the lake as a late spring time sport.

Mill

Mill Lake occasionally experiences partial winterkills which alter the fish community. The lake is most noted for its northern pike and panfish. Northern pike in excess of 10 pounds have been captured in DNR nets and overall abundance is good. The bluegill population consists of a high proportion of fish in the 6 to 8 inch range. Crappie populations are often very high and dominated by fish too small to interest most anglers. Harvest of these abundant, slow growing crappie may actually benefit the population. Mill Lake's largemouth bass population also varies due to spawning success and winterkill. A 2001 DNR electrofishing survey showed good numbers of bass greater than 15 inches.

Mons

Mons is a small, clear, deep lake (80 ft. max.) with a reputation for trophy walleyes. Mons Lake is capable of supporting an excellent walleye population via fingerling stocking and some natural reproduction. The presence of a tullibee population increases the chances of walleye attaining large size. Northern pike are found in moderate numbers with some reaching over 10 pounds. Largemouth bass are numerous and consistent spawning success makes many sizes available. Six to eight inch bluegill were common in a recent survey.

Moose

Moose is one of the most popular destinations in Todd County for panfish. Abundant 7 to 9 inch bluegills and 8 to 10 inch crappies attract fishermen all year long. A healthy population of largemouth bass inhabits the lake. To protect larger bass, special regulations are in place requiring the release of all bass over 12 inches. Hopefully, Moose Lake will remain a haven for big largemouth. Northern pike numbers in Moose have gone down in recent years and are considered low to moderate in abundance. Pike up to 40 inches are present, but anglers should expect to catch mostly 2 to 4 pound fish. Moose holds an average population of walleye, which is maintained by fingerling stocking. Spring and winter angling is most popular due to poor water clarity in summer months.

Mound

Nestled in the hardwood hills of southeastern Todd County, Mound is an aesthetically pleasing, clear water lake known for its big crappies. Though not always easy to catch, this lake has a tremendous crappie population with good representation of fish up to 14 inches. Mound also holds a good walleye population, mostly resulting from fingerling stocking. Walleye are found in a variety of sizes and several in the 4 to 8 pound range were captured in DNR nets. Small northern pike are abundant, however a fair number of pike over 30 inches are present. High catches of largemouth bass are commonplace, though small fish (under 12 inches) usually account for most of the action.

Pepin

This small lake (41 acres) is located adjacent to Swanville. Crappie and bluegill are abundant and anglers should be able to find some nice sized bluegills. Northern pike are also numerous, however don't expect to catch too many big ones. A few big largemouth bass are known to roam Pepin Lake, and anglers may also luck into an occasional walleye. A fishing pier is located on the northeast shore near the public access.

Pine Island

Pine Island is another lake dominated by small northern pike. These fish grow slowly, though a few have been known to reach 35 inches or better. Anglers often target crappie in Pine Island as the lake usually supports a desirable population of 10 to 12 inch fish. Excellent shoreline habitat and several bays exist for the pursuit of largemouth bass which are fairly plentiful. Walleye are present in modest numbers, but the population would likely be higher if northerns were not so abundant.



Walleye

Fish Stocking.....More is not necessarily better.

Walleye stocking has been an important part of maintaining populations in many of our area lakes. However, stocking is only effective in enhancing populations which lack adequate natural reproduction. Adding too many fish may reduce perch and other prey fish populations resulting in poor growth and an imbalanced fish community. Furthermore, stocking walleyes in a lake with abundant northern pike and few perch, has little chance of success. Extensive evaluation of a walleye population (e.g. natural reproduction checks, age and growth determinations from ice-out nettings and lake surveys) is often necessary to determine the appropriateness of stocking a particular lake.

Big Sauk

Big Sauk is probably the most heavily fished lake in the Little Falls work area. Big Sauk was known for its abundance of 7 to 9 inch bluegills but recent surveys suggest a significant decline in numbers. Crappies are abundant and 8 to 10 inch fish common. The lake usually abounds with northern pike of all sizes up to and exceeding 10 pounds, recent reports suggest pike numbers are lower than normal at the present time. The latest survey showed an abundant walleye population with eating-size fish common. The increase in abundance is attributed to recent success of fry stocking along with natural recruitment. Though largemouth bass are not found in great numbers, Big Sauk regularly grows some of the biggest bass in central Minnesota. Each year we receive several reports of bass over 6 pounds and some over 7 pounds being caught. A popular shorefishing spot is by the Highway 71 bridge.

Little Sauk (Longbridge)

The Sauk River flows through this medium sized lake (268 acres) which is a popular spot for panfish anglers. A public access has recently been purchased resulting in the implementation of "conservation" bag limits to maintain fishing quality. Sunfish over 10 inches long reside in the lake and fish in the 7 to 9 inch range are common. Crappies are abundant with many in the 1/2-pound range and some exceeding a pound. Crappies bite year-round and often provide good ice fishing. The bag limits for crappie and bluegill are 5 fish of each species. A large population of northern pike exists in Little Sauk with a significant percentage over 3 pounds. The bag limit on northern pike remains at 3 fish, but all pike between 24 and 30 inches must be released. Walleye are present in good numbers due to natural reproduction and migration through the Sauk River. All sizes of walleye can be caught but the limit is 2 fish. Largemouth bass also inhabit the lake and the bag limit is 1 fish. Some large yellow perch are present. The bag limit is 10.

Big Swan

This 918 acre basin provides a good variety of fishing experiences. The lake is a consistent walleye producer throughout most of the year. Stocking and natural reproduction both contribute to the walleye fishery. Northern pike are plentiful and some large fish potential exists due to protective regulations and favorable growth rates. While the northern pike limit was increased to six fish in 2013, a special regulation requires all pike 24-36 inches long must be released with one over 36 inches allowed in possession. Respectable catches of nice crappie and bluegill are reported by both open water and ice anglers. Extensive cattail and bulrush beds are found throughout the lake providing anglers with many places to look for fish. The largemouth bass population is characterized by moderate numbers and a good percentage of 3 to 5 pound fish.

Little Swan (Pillsbury)

Little Swan is a 149 acre basin with a maximum depth of 67 feet. With its deep water, the lake sustains a healthy tullibee population which helps support quality size northern pike. Pike over 30 inches are a trademark of Little Swan and were well represented in DNR test nets. The lake also supports a good panfish fishery. Crappie and bluegill are both found in desirable numbers and sizes. Largemouth bass occur in fishable numbers. The walleye population is low and likely results from migration up the Swan River into the lake.

NATURE'S WATER FILTER



Wetlands filter runoff from surrounding land, removing nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous. Wetlands also recharge groundwater supplies and provide seasonal fish habitat when connected to a lake or stream. The frequency, intensity and duration of floods have increased in recent history. Wetlands can reduce the frequency and severity of floods by holding water on the land and slowing down the input of water to rivers and streams.

Thunder

Thunder is a relatively shallow lake that experiences an occasional partial winterkill. Northern pike, walleye, and perch comprise most of the fish community. Northern pike are usually quite numerous and easily caught year-round. A decent walleye population is maintained through regular stocking. Walleye fishing is generally most popular during the winter and spring. Yellow perch are abundant with a few reaching harvestable size. Crappies have become a more prominent member of the fish community with many in the 9—10 inch range common in recent electrofishing.

Turtle

This is a small basin (104 acres) connected to the Long Prairie River via Turtle Creek. Its waters support a viable tullibee population for walleye and northern pike to feed on. Pike numbers are fair while the walleye population is relatively low. Large northern (36+ inches) and walleye (30+ inches) cruise Turtle Lake though they are not always easy to catch. Largemouth bass, bluegills and crappies also make Turtle Lake their home, but numbers of these species are usually below average.

STEARNS COUNTY

Sylvia

Sylvia is another small basin with deep, clear water capable of supporting tullibees. A favorable walleye population resides here and trophy size fish are a possibility. The walleye population results from natural spawning success. Sylvia holds a considerable population of northern pike of various sizes including some over 30 inches. Smallmouth and largemouth bass are present with smallmouth being the most numerous. Crappies are targeted by some anglers, however most of the sunfish are considered to be too small. A fishing pier is located on the southwest end of the lake near the public access.

Watersheds - Why are they important?

A watershed consists of all of the land area that drains into a lake or stream. Fisheries managers have come to recognize that land use within a lake or stream's watershed has profound effects on fish populations and the aquatic environment in general. We must look beyond the shores of our lakes and streams in order to adequately manage aquatic ecosystems. Poor land use practices associated with improper agricultural activities, industrial uses, and residential and urban development often result in increased sedimentation, nutrient input and pesticide levels in our lakes and streams. To ensure the maintenance or improvement of fish populations and water quality, it will be necessary to employ proper land use practices throughout our watersheds.

RIVERS

Due to their flowing waters and extensive shallow water areas, rivers offer excellent opportunities for shore fishing, wading and float trips. River users should consult available canoe route maps and boating guides to identify safe boating areas on the Mississippi River, Sauk River, Long Prairie River, Swan River and Platte River.

Mississippi River

Four distinct stretches of the Mississippi River are found within the Little Falls work area due to the presence of 5 dams from Brainerd to St. Cloud. All four stretches support high quality smallmouth bass populations. The northernmost stretch from Brainerd to Little Falls currently has a bass population that appears to be increasing due to spring and summer conditions that have improved reproductive success. From Little Falls to St. Cloud smallmouth bass populations are also faring well with a variety of sizes available and excellent chances of catching bass over 4 pounds. Walleye fishing is consistently good throughout the river reaches due to excellent spawning habitat and reproductive success. Tailwater areas below dams are popular walleye angling sites during the spring. Deep water holes are the preferred walleye habitat during mid-summer and fall. Muskies also attract anglers to the river. The river muskie population is maintained through natural reproduction and all sizes are present up to trophy size (50+ inches). Special regulations require the release of all muskies to help sustain this unique, natural population. Northern pike and catfish are also sought by anglers. Catfish are most abundant in the southern reaches from Royalton to St. Cloud.

Crow Wing River

The Crow Wing River outlines much of the northern border of the Little Falls work area. Two dams are located on this river, the Pillager Dam and the Sylvan Dam. The river below the Sylvan Dam has a fish population similar to the Mississippi River. Walleye and smallmouth bass are the main species. The tailwater below Sylvan Dam is a popular spring walleye spot and, at times, also provides good bluegill catches. From Motley downstream to the Sylvan Dam northern pike and walleye are the primary targets. Smallmouth are also becoming more prevalent in these upper reaches. Fishing opportunities in the two impoundments (Sylvan Reservoir and Placid Reservoir) are described on pages 13 and 14 of this brochure.

Rum River

The upper Rum River flowing through Mille Lacs County is a scenic stream with a degree of remoteness unique to central Minnesota. The primary management focus has been on smallmouth bass, which are generally found in good numbers. Fish in the 12 to 18 inch range are fairly common. Decent populations of northern pike and walleye also inhabit the Rum River, but don't expect any trophies. The best catches of all fish species in the upper Rum occur during normal to high flow periods.

Little Rock Creek

This stream flows from southern Morrison County into Benton County and Little Rock Lake. Little Rock Creek is managed for stream trout with regular stocking of both brown white brook trout may also be present. Populations of these species vary considerably due to stream conditions though nice catches are occasionally reported. Much of the stream flows through private property, however access can be gained at road crossings and where the DNR holds easements.

PANFISH HARVEST SUGGESTIONS

The lakes noted in the tables on pages 4 through 9 contain fishable populations of panfish that are of desired size to anglers. In order to maintain fishing quality on these lakes we are asking that anglers voluntarily limit their harvest of larger panfish. Please take only what you really need and obey the possession limit, which is the same as the daily limit (20 bluegill, 10 crappie). On most of these waters it takes 6 to 8 years for a bluegill to reach a size acceptable to anglers, therefore there is great potential to over harvest these older fish. Many of our good panfish lakes are relatively small which also increases the chances that over fishing could impact the panfish populations.

NORTHERN PIKE HARVEST SUGGESTIONS

Many lakes in the Little Falls work area, as noted in the tables on pages 4 through 9, are characterized by overabundant populations of small northern pike. The pike are small primarily due to overpopulation and the lack of an adequate prey base. High pike populations often result in poorly balanced fish communities with few walleyes, perch, or bass and an abundance of small, slow growing sunfish. Northern pike prey heavily on smaller walleye, perch, and bass. Survival of stocked walleye fingerlings is low and walleye stocking has been discontinued on some lakes due to high pike predation. The bass populations are commonly made up of bigger fish because few small bass survive. Low perch populations are a problem because perch are an important prey species necessary in supporting good predator populations and growth rates. When perch are abundant, fewer walleye fingerlings get eaten by northern pike and walleye populations generally prosper. Additionally, perch help to control bluegill numbers so stunting or poor growth is less likely to occur. Typically, lakes with good perch populations are also the lakes with the quality size bluegills.

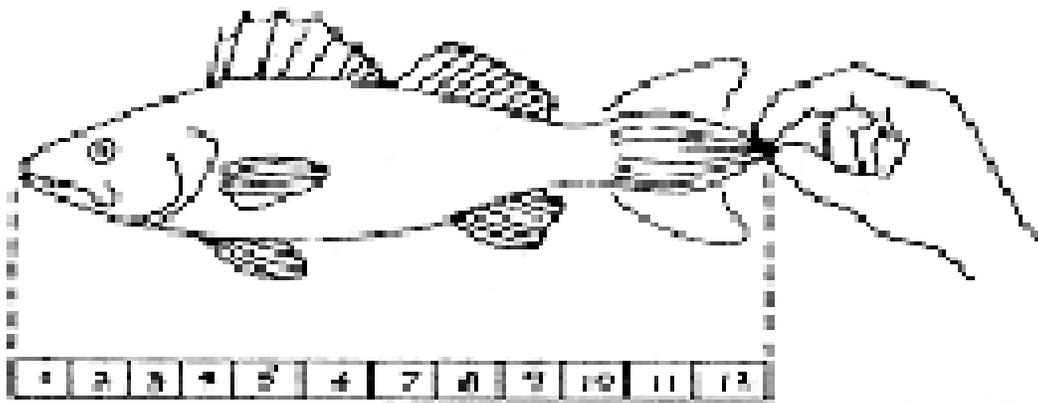
We strongly encourage anglers and spearers to harvest small northern pike (under 3 pounds) in the lakes noted in the table. Larger pike should be released as their numbers are usually quite low and they can help to provide desired fish community structure.

SPECIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

Special fishing regulations are being enacted on additional waters each year. It is becoming more important for anglers to be aware of these new rules and to comply with them. Regulations aimed at improving fishing quality have little chance for success if fishermen don't follow the rules. The following is a list of suggestions for all anglers:

1. Carry a ruler or tape measure to accurately measure your fish.
2. Make an effort to notice regulations signs at public access points.
3. Read your fishing synopsis and carry it with you when you go out.
4. Call your local DNR Fisheries office if you have questions.

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR FISH



Catch-and-Release



While fishing your favorite lake you land a 5-pound northern pike. So you knock it on the head, and put it on ice, right? Maybe not. You might consider letting the fish go. That way, it can grow even larger and give another angler a chance to have the same fun you just had. And if other anglers on the lake do the same thing, you could catch the fish they release.

Catch-and-release is an effective way for anglers to maintain the quality of fishing in their lake or stream. In most waters, it works by returning medium-sized fish (the keeper), so they can grow larger and be caught again. Most anglers want to catch fish for the frying pan and also tangle with the occasional lunker. By releasing certain sizes of fish (a practice known as selective harvest), anglers can do both. All it takes is knowing the right size of fish to keep, the right size to release, and how to properly release fish. Refer to the Minnesota Fishing Regulations synopsis for tips on proper methods of handling live fish you intend to release.

The Best Sizes of Fish to Release

Bluegill	-	8 inches and up
Crappie	-	10 inches and up
Smallmouth Bass	-	12 inches and up
Largemouth Bass	-	12 inches and up
Stream trout	-	11 inches and up
Northern Pike	-	24 inches and up
Walleye	-	18 inches and up
Muskellunge	-	All sizes

Catching a lunker is an experience every angler wants to remember. But you can preserve the memory of a big fish without killing and mounting it. One way is to photograph your fish before setting it free. Another is to record the length and girth of your fish before releasing it. Then, take these measurements along with a photo to a taxidermist and have a fiberglass or graphite mount made to look just like your fish.



Aquatic Invasive species in the Little Falls Area

Eurasian Water Milfoil (County)

Alexander Lake (Morrison Co)

Big Sauk Lake (Todd/Stearns Co)

Little Birch Lake (Todd/Stearns Co)

Shamineau Lake (Morrison Co)

Sylvia Lake (Stearns)

Mille Lacs Lake and tributaries (Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs)

Faucet Snails

Crow Wing River to the confluence with the Mississippi River

(Cass, Hubbard, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena)

Flowering Rush

Big Sauk Lake (Todd/Stearns)

Sauk River from Juergens Lake to Big Sauk Lake

Spiny Waterfleas

Mille Lacs Lake and tributaries (Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs)

Zebra Mussels

Little Rock Lake (Benton)

Mille Lacs Lake (Mille Lacs)

Ogechie Lake (Mille Lacs)

Onamia Lake (Mille Lacs)

Shakopee Lake (Mille Lacs)

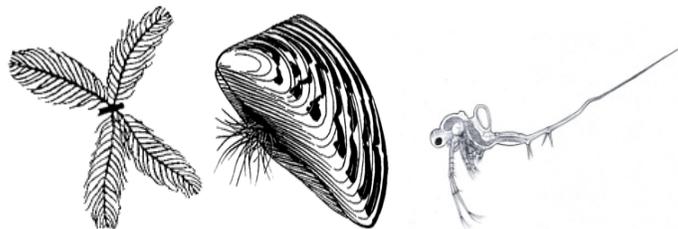
Crow Wing River downstream from confluence with the Long Prairie to the Mississippi River (multiple)

Long Prairie River (multiple)

Mille Lacs tributaries (Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs)

Mississippi River from mouth of Pine River in Crow Wing Co to Minnesota-Iowa border

Rum River



ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

DNR Website: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>

Little Falls Fisheries Area Website:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/littlefalls/index/html>

DNR Toll Free Phone: 1-888-646-6367

TIP (Turn In Poachers): 1-800-652-9093

Area Conservation Officers

Jeff Halverson, Staples: (218) 894-3577 - Northern Todd & NW Morrison
Rhonda Friese, Long Prairie: (320) 285-2949 - Todd, Central Area
Joyce Kuske, Little Falls (320) 745-2046 - Western Morrison
Paul Kuske, Little Falls: (320) 745-2023 - Eastern Morrison, South Crow Wing
Mike Lee, Isle: (320) 676-1847 - Northern half Mille Lacs Co.
Angela Londgren, Princeton: (320) 296-2970 - Benton Co., So. Mille Lacs Co.
Keith Bertram, Sauk Centre: (320) 256-2556 - Southern Todd, NW Stearns

*Canoe Route Maps: Good river maps for canoers and boaters are available for the Long Prairie River, Rum River, Sauk River and others across the state.

*Mississippi River Boating Guide: Good Mississippi River maps for boaters.

*Crow Wing River Canoe & Boating Guide: River map for canoers and boaters.

*Minnesota Boating Guide: A summary of boating laws and rules.

*Minnesota Fish Consumption Advisory: Guidelines for fish consumption from sampled lakes.

*County Public Water Access Maps: Map of all public accesses in selected county.

*Minnesota State Fishing Pier Map: Shows all DNR fishing piers in Minnesota.

Lake Contour/Depth Maps: Maps showing lake depth contours. Can be ordered from Minnesota's Bookstore, Phone: (651) 297-3000 or 1-800-657-3757.

Website: www.comm.media.state.mn.us

Maps are \$5.00 (paper) or \$7.00 (waterproof) each + tax and postage.

These materials are DNR or State of Minnesota publications and are available free of charge. Many are available at DNR offices, and all can be ordered via the DNR toll free phone number (1-888-646-6367). An order form is available at: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/orderform.pdf> Many are available for download on the DNR Website. <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/index.html>



Minnesota Waters - Fishing, Sharing, Caring

Teaching people about lake and stream ecology by teaching them to fish is the idea behind the MinnAqua program. Created by the Minnesota DNR in 1990, MinnAqua is a fishing education program designed to teach angling recreation as well as the ecology, conservation, and ethics of fishing.

MinnAqua works through cooperation and volunteerism. So, whether you're involved with a large community recreation program or a small group of volunteers who take some kids fishing, MinnAqua exists to meet your local needs - from small fishing events lasting only a few hours to aquatic education clinics lasting several days.

MinnAqua's six programs, listed below, are designed to bring fishing and aquatic education to as many Minnesotans as possible.

- urban angling
- school classroom materials
- mobile displays
- teacher in-service training
- specialty fishing and resource seminars
- volunteer training for youth programs

For more information call MinnAqua at:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - St. Paul
(651) 297-4919

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Duluth
(218) 740-2063