

# Glenwood Area Fisheries Newsletter

Minnesota Department  
of Natural Resources

Spring/Summer 2013

## Late ice-out results in record setting walleye egg-take for the Glenwood Hatchery

Each year, staff from the Glenwood fisheries office travel to Grand Rapids to assist in the state's largest walleye egg-take operation located on the Cut Foot Sioux narrows feeding into Lake Winnibigoshish. It's a job that can drag out for over a half-month, or, as was the case this past spring, a total of 3 days—the fastest start to finish on record. A total of 460 quarts of eggs were taken the first day alone, also an all-time record.



The 2013 spawning run was unique as you might guess. Ice-out dates were the latest on record for many parts of the state and while central Minnesota lakes were starting to loosen up the first week in May, lakes in northeastern Minnesota remained tight. Spawning operations at Brainerd, Park Rapids and Bemidji started ramping up earlier than Cut Foot and by May 10th, those operations had extra eggs available.

Not knowing what the outcome

Years ago, Glenwood Fisheries would operate its own egg-take operation on Boss Creek—an inlet stream feeding into the northeast end of Lake Osakis. Back in those days, a big day might have been 50 quarts. As demand grew for more and more walleye stocking, it became evident that little Boss Creek just wasn't up to the task. The Cut Foot run on the other hand is huge by comparison so it made sense to drop Boss Creek and commit entirely to Cut Foot, fully sharing staff between the Glenwood and Grand Rapids offices to get the job done. Since that time, Glenwood has generally accepted about 50% of the eggs taken at Cut Foot.

might be at Cut Foot, the Glenwood Hatchery accepted over half its egg capacity from the previously mentioned Areas. An additional 150 quarts was all that was needed from Cut Foot to fill out our quota.

As of May 20th, Glenwood was at full capacity with over 800 quarts of walleye eggs from 4 different spawning runs across northern Minnesota. A unique year indeed, but one that illustrates the seamless cooperation Fisheries staff operate under when mother nature throws us a curveball.

## Some area lakes suffer winterkill

The winter of 2012/13 resulted in what used to be considered a normal consequence for some area lakes—winterkill. Normally, several of our smaller, shallow basins run out of dissolved oxygen sometime in mid-February due to a combination of no sunlight (lack of photosynthesis) and oxygen-gobbling bacteria busy decomposing organic matter at the lakes bottom. Fish become stressed and eventually die before the ice goes out in the spring.

Most of the time winterkill is only “partial” in that not every fish in the lake dies. Usually a few fish are able to hold on, often more than people generally think. This seems to be the case for lakes effected this past winter. Based on ice-out observations, it appears that substantial winterkill occurred on Ann and Westport lakes in Pope County, and Hattie Lake in Stevens County. Pope County's Lake Emily also appears to have suf-

fered some winterkill, but many fish made it through thanks in part to flowing water from Outlet Creek through the lake to the Chippewa River.

Winterkill can be beneficial when it comes to small ponds used to rear walleye fingerlings. When walleye fry are stocked into these rearing ponds in the spring, you can imagine how much better they will survive if there aren't hungry adult fish swimming around looking for a meal.

Depending on the water body in question, winterkill can be a bad thing or a good thing. Bottom line is that climate change is handing us less severe winters resulting in later ice-up and earlier ice-out dates on average. For several Area lakes and the majority of our walleye rearing ponds, winterkill appears to have become the exception rather than the rule.

## The 2013 lake survey season— lakes on the list

Each year, the Glenwood Area Office conducts 12-18 lake surveys and population assessments on Area lakes. These surveys provide important information which we use to plan management activities. Data are collected using gill-nets, trapnets seines and electrofishing equipment. The information is compiled, analyzed and written into a report during the winter months, with a completed version available to the public by summer of the following year. Fisheries surveys essentially fall into one of two categories: Full surveys (FS) include an evaluation of the fishery as well as vegetation, water chemistry, bottom substrates and shore and watershed features. Lake population assessments (PA) are the most common and evaluate the relative abundance and size structure of the fish community. Most Area lakes are on a 3-5 year rotation schedule. Survey dates, net site locations and electrofishing stations are all standardized so that historical comparisons can be made. Following is a list of lakes proposed for 2013:

<i>Carlos</i>	**
<i>Chippewa, Big</i>	FS
<i>Chippewa, Little</i>	PA
<i>Cowdry</i>	PA
<i>Lobster</i>	PA
<i>Maple</i>	PA
<i>Mary</i>	FS
<i>Stowe</i>	PA
<i>Pelican (Grant Co.)</i>	PA
<i>Amelia</i>	PA
<i>Leven</i>	PA
<i>Villard</i>	PA

\*\* *Carlos part of an ongoing statewide study*

## Several lakes will receive walleye fry stockings for spring 2013

Local anglers are often unaware of the source of the walleyes in their live wells. Specifically, were they spawned naturally in the lake, are they the result of fingerling stocking or did they come from fry stocking? Contrary to what many believe, some of the best walleye fishing can come from relatively simple and inexpensive fry stocking— those walleyes that were the size of mosquitoes, stocked immediately after they've hatched in the Glenwood Hatchery.

Fry stocking tends to work best in lakes that have experienced winterkill. Such lakes are usually quite productive and have low water clarity. Following a winterkill, predator numbers are low, spring water temperatures rise quickly and fry tend to have good rates of survival. Lakes that have good populations of walleyes but where an occasional year class may be depressed or missing are also good candidates for fry stocking.

Some of the Area's best walleye lakes such as Mary, Andrew, Big Chippewa, Big Pelican and the Pomme de Terre chain are maintained mainly or in part by fry stocking.

The following lakes are scheduled to be stocked with fry for 2013:

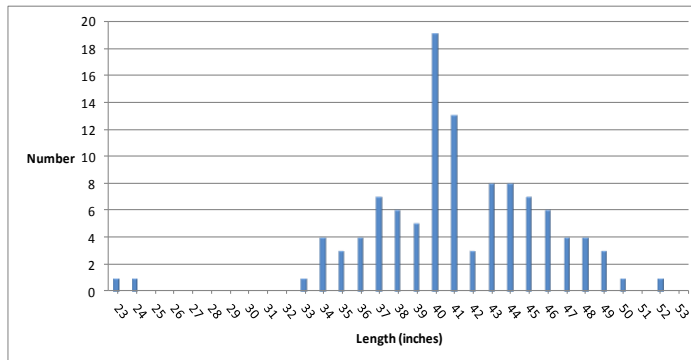
<i>Lake</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Ann</i>	370,000
<i>Barrett</i>	434,000
<i>Freeborn</i>	248,000
<i>Gilbert</i>	190,000
<i>Grants</i>	51,000
<i>Hattie</i>	459,000
<i>Ida</i>	1,673,000
<i>Long (Douglas Co.)</i>	201,000
<i>Long (Stevens Co.)</i>	620,000
<i>Lower Elk</i>	131,000
<i>Minnewaska</i>	6,420,000
<i>Miltona</i>	2,802,000
<i>Osakis</i>	6,832,000
<i>Pelican (Grant Co.)</i>	3,460,000
<i>Perkins</i>	516,000
<i>Pomme de Terre</i>	2,350,000
<i>Red Rock</i>	892,500
<i>Reno</i>	1,954,000

## Lobster Lake showing good numbers of muskellunge

Large-framed trapnets specially designed to capture muskellunge were deployed in Lobster Lake during the weeks of May 14 - 23. A total of 109 muskies were collected for measuring and immediately released unharmed. The survey is part of our muskie monitoring program that also includes Lake Milona and Oscar.

Spring muskie surveys are completed on each of the three lakes every 3-5 years. As water temperatures warm to about 50° F, adult muskellunge move into shallow water and are susceptible to capture with sampling equipment. The catch rate was 1.3 fish/net— above our management goal which is good news for muskie anglers.

An interesting side note is the condition of the fish as they are re-



moved from the traps. Fisheries staff handle thousands of individual fish every year, none compare to the strength and sheer power of an adult muskellunge. “We use a large, netted cradle to immobilize the fish during length and weight measurements. Without it, there’s no way we’d be able collect our data without the fish injuring itself or the handler— that’s how strong they are”, says Fisheries Specialist, Al Schmidt. “The difference is amazing when comparing the power of an adult muskie taken from a trapnet to one that’s just finished a fight off the end of an angler’s line”. After even a moderately long fight, they’re comparatively easy to pick up. It makes a guy appreciate how truly exhausted these big fish can be and how they must be handled quickly and carefully without grandstanding too long for the camera”.

## More lakes with zebra mussels

Since they were first found in this area in 2009, zebra mussels have now spread to a total of 17 lakes in the Alexandria - Glenwood area— 15 in Douglas County, 2 in Pope. It shows how fast they can spread when people aren’t careful. State and County inspectors as well as law enforcement are very busy at lake access points but can’t be everywhere, all the time. The bottom line is that people simply must take individual responsibility for their actions by thoroughly checking their watercraft to make sure all water is drained— including

the lower unit of the outboard motor. This requires a full tilting to the down position. Please be extra vigilant when visiting these lakes in Douglas County: Alvin, the Alexandria Chain, Brophy, Cowdry, Ida, Irene, Jessie, Milona, North Union, Stoney and Taylor. In Pope County: Emily and Minnewaska. Zebra mussel larvae are too tiny to see and can easily be spread if water is taken from one lake and expelled in another. This is why draining everything is so important. We all have take the time and do our part!

The Glenwood Area Fisheries Newsletter is published twice a year by the DNR Area Fisheries Office located at:

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