



Leech Lake Update, June 2010
Walker Area Fisheries Office
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Greetings!

This update is part of a series of reports the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is sending to Leech Lake area resorts, businesses and others interested in DNR activities on Leech Lake. The goal of these messages is to keep you up to date with our findings and current activities on the lake. Earlier updates are available by visiting <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/walker/index.html>. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or comments, would like copies of previous updates not posted on the website, or if you would like to be added to the mailing list. **Please note new email addresses for Doug and Harlan at the end of this document.**

2011-2015 Leech Lake Management Plan

- The Leech Lake Advisory Committee (LLAC) met 11 times from August 2009 through March 2010 and provided recommendations to the DNR on key Leech Lake management issues, such as walleye fry stocking and double-crested cormorant management. Materials reviewed by the LLAC and its recommendations to the DNR can be found at <http://mndnr.gov/fisheries/management/llfmp.html>.
- Based largely on input from the LLAC process the DNR has drafted a 2011-2015 Leech Lake Fisheries Management Plan. Public input on this management plan will be sought during July 1-31, 2010. Information considered by the committee and its final report are available at www.mndnr.gov/leechlake.
- Public comment on the management plan can be provided by:
 1. Visiting [www.mndnr.gov/leechlake] from your home computer and clicking through brief online questionnaire;
 2. Visiting the Walker Public Library to complete online or using paper copies;
 3. Visiting the Walker Area Fisheries Office to complete paper copies.

Walleye Regulation Review

- Concurrent with the updating of the Leech Lake Management Plan, the existing walleye regulation (18-26" protected slot limit, 4 fish in possession, one of which can be longer than 26.0") will be formally reviewed during September/October 2010.
- Public comment will again be sought. Any potential changes to the walleye regulation would likely go into effect at the start of the 2011 fishing season.





2009-2010 Muskellunge Assessment

- Until now no comprehensive muskie assessment has been completed on Leech Lake. That's right – one of the most recognizable muskie fisheries in North America has not been formally assessed because traditional survey tools have limited success on Leech Lake. Now that I have your attention...
- In 2009 DNR initiated a two-year muskie study to garner population estimates by genetically fingerprinting individual fish in place of traditional tagging methods. The ONLY way this project will be successful is for anglers to collect scale samples from fish they catch on Leech Lake during the 2009 & 2010 fishing seasons.
- If you fish muskies on Leech this year you can help! When you catch a muskie, please spend 30 seconds to do the following:
 - With the fish is still in the net, gently lift the back out of the water and use a pocket knife at a 90° angle to scrape 3-5 scales towards the tail (right). You will have to apply moderate pressure to the knife to dislodge scales; this will not hurt the fish.
 - Slide the knife blade under the scales so they rest on top, then set the knife (with scales) in the bottom of the boat out of the way and continue with your normal photo/release routine.
 - After you release the fish, place scales into envelope obtained from Walker Fisheries office, record date, length, and location, and store in a location where air can dry the sample (i.e. NOT a ziplock bag, glove box, or other air-tight container longer than one day). If samples are not allowed to dry, they will decompose and become unusable.
 - Either drop off at Walker office on your way out of town, mail directly, or contact our office to make delivery arrangements.
- Every fish counts!
- Feel free to contact the Walker Fisheries office with questions, concerns, and to obtain packets with instructions and scale envelopes.
- This project is funded by the Hugh Becker Foundation and the Brainerd Lakes Chapter of Muskies Inc.





2010 Operational Plans

- With volunteer assistance, 22.5 million walleye fry were stocked from 28 April to 8 May, 2010. Fry were distributed throughout all major bays; bay-specific amounts were determined based on proportion of total littoral acres (≤ 15 -ft. deep).
- Under the supervision of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, DRM, double-crested cormorant control will continue until the management goal of 500 active nests is achieved.
- Volunteer assistance with Large Lake sampling was thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed last year. Persons interested in assisting staff this year should contact Doug Schultz, Large Lake Specialist. The schedule consists of seining during July, trawling during August, and gill netting during September.

2010 Fishing Opener

- What a start to 2010! Leech Lake was home to approximately 2,000 boats on Opening Day and another 1,000 boats on Sunday.
- The preliminary estimated total fishing pressure during opening weekend was about 81,000 angler-hours (ah); this is the fourth highest total on record behind 1998 (122,500 ah), 1999 (93,800 ah), and 1991 (92,707 ah).
- The mean walleye catch rate across all anglers during opening weekend was 0.302 walleye/hour; this is slightly above the 1991-2009 average of 0.270 walleye/hour for the same time period. Parties specifically targeting walleye had an average catch rate of 0.782 walleye/hour and harvest rate of 0.397 walleye/hour, meaning about one-half of the walleye caught by walleye fishermen were harvested.
- Through mid-June, the respective catch and harvest rates for walleye anglers averaged 0.900 and 0.425 walleye/hour. Both statistics are above the long-term average and are similar to last year.



If you have questions, comments, or requests please contact:

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or

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