

# Lake Minnetonka Hennepin-Carver Counties

## Summary of 1995-96 Winter Angling (Creel) Survey

### November 29 - March 19

14,004 acres

1,111 interviews / 1,844 anglers

#### Fishing Pressure:

Total hours of fishing: 270,258                      Hours per acre of water: 19.3  
 77,092 estimated fishing trips                      Weekday/Weekends-Holiday use split: 39%/61%  
 79% fish house anglers (54% permanent-25% portable) and 21% open-ice anglers  
 Fishing use: 43% Lower Lake, 36% Upper Lake, 21% North and West Bays

#### What People Fished for:

Sunfish                      44%  
 Crappie                      22%  
 Northern Pike              21%  
 Walleye                      12%  
 Perch, Bass, and  
 No Preference              each <1%

#### How Anglers Rated Overall Fishing Quality:

Poor                      10%  
 Below Average              14%  
 Average                      32%  
 Above Average              33%  
 Excellent                      11%

#### Values for Harvested Fish

Species/Type	Number Harvested	% of caught fish kept	Avg. hours spent for each kept fish	Avg. Length (inches)	Length Range
Sunfish	182,678	45	0.6	7.1	3-9.9
Crappie	18,426	58	4.8	9.0	6-14
Northern Pike	5,940	32	20.4	20.2	15-34
Yellow Perch	3,814	9	1.7	--	4.5-10.4
Walleye	1,204	60	50.0	17.7	11-21
Largemouth Bass	746	54	9.0	13.7	12-19

#### Values for Released Fish

Species/Type	Number Released	Avg. hours spent for each rel. fish	Avg. Length (inches)	Length Range
Sunfish	222,320	0.5	4.8	2.5-8.4
Yellow Perch	38,769	0.6	4.4	2.5-8.4
Crappie	13,206	8.1	5.6	3-13
Northern Pike	12,409	10.3	18.6	8.5-35
Walleye	796	50.0	14.6	5-21
Largemouth Bass	640	27.0	13.3	3-23

#### Fish Growth Rates (from 1992 DNR Survey or Similar-Lake Values)

Age	Bluegill <sup>a</sup>		Lg.mouth Bass		No. Pike		Walleye		Crappie <sup>b</sup>		Perch	
	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)
2	2.6	<0.1	5.3	0.1	15.9	0.9	10.2	0.3	3.9	<0.1	4.7	<0.1
3	3.8	<0.1	8.1	0.2	19.8	1.8	13.4	0.7	6.2	0.1	5.7	0.1
4	5.1	0.1	10.7	0.6	23.1	2.7	16.3	1.4	7.8	0.3	6.4	0.1
5	6.0	0.1	12.8	1.2	26.0	3.9	18.7	2.2	9.2	0.4	6.9	0.1
6	6.7	0.2	14.5	1.8	28.6	5.1	20.3	2.8	9.9	0.5	7.4	0.2
7	7.0	0.3	15.9	2.5	30.6	6.2	21.3	3.3	10.8	0.7		
8	7.2	0.3	17.3	3.3	34.2	8.6	22.1	3.8	11.8	0.9		
9	7.6	0.4	18.4	4.1	35.9	9.9	24.8	5.5	12.8	1.2		
10	7.8	0.4	19.0	4.6	36.6	10.5	25.6	6.1				
11	8.2	0.5	19.7	5.2			26.4	6.8				
12			20.0	5.5			26.9	7.2				

<sup>a</sup> the most commonly caught sunfish

<sup>b</sup> values for white crappie species

**Lake Minnetonka      Hennepin-Carver Counties**  
**Summary of 1996 Summer Angling (Creel) Survey**  
**May 15 - October 31**

14,004 acres      2,553 interviews / 4,809 anglers

**Fishing Pressure:**      **Est. Avg. Number of Active Boats on Lake:**  
 Total hours of fishing: 516,461      Weekdays: 203  
 Hours per acre of water: 36.9      Weekends-Holidays: 544  
 65% boat anglers/35% shore anglers      Estimated fishing trips: 117,558  
 Fishing use: 43% in Lower Lake, 27% in Upper Lake, 30% in North and West Bays  
 Hours of non-fishing water use: 2,302,606      Hours per acre of water: 201.3

**What People Fished for:**      **How Anglers Rated Overall Fishing Quality:**  
 Sunfish 35%      (Average rating of fishing quality on 10-point scale--  
 Largemouth Bass 26%      1-poor, 10-excellent; 2,945 total responses)  
 Northern Pike 13%      Sunfish Anglers 7.6  
 No Preference 10%      Largemouth Bass Anglers 8.5  
 Walleye 9%      Northern Pike Anglers 7.6  
 Crappie 3%      Walleye Anglers 7.6  
 All Others 2%      Muskie Anglers 8.4  
 (Muskie, Smallmouth Bass, Carp)      No-Pref./SM Bass/Carp Anglers 7.2

**Values for Harvested Fish**

Species/Type	Number Harvested	% of caught fish kept	Avg. hours spent for each kept fish	Avg. Length (inches)	Length Range
Sunfish	445,642	49	0.6	7.3	4-9
Largemouth Bass	17,317	12	33.3	13.7	6-24
Northern Pike	16,284	14	7.9	22.8	16-34
Crappie	12,774	75	9.2	8.4	6-14
Walleye	6,860	59	12.8	17.7	11-25
All Others*	1,835	13	--	--	--

**Values for Released Fish**

Species/Type	Number Released	Avg. hours spent for each rel. fish	Avg. Length (inches)	Length Range
Sunfish	465,300	0.5	5.4	4-7.5
Largemouth Bass	122,478	2.2	14.8	4-25
Northern Pike	96,555	4.7	21.1	11-39
Walleye	4,795	24.4	15.5	7-25
Crappie	4,268	12.8	5.3	4-10
Muskie (incl. hybrids)	912	23.8	32.7	23-47
All Others*	11,384	--	--	--

\* Other fishes caught were yellow perch, smallmouth bass, rock bass, bowfin ("dogfish"), carp, and bullhead

**Fish Growth Rates (from 1992 DNR Survey or Similar-Lake Values)**

Age	Bluegill <sup>a</sup>		Lg.mouth Bass		No. Pike		Walleye		Crappie <sup>b</sup>	
	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)	Length (in)	Weight (lb)
2	2.6	<0.1	5.3	0.1	15.9	0.9	10.2	0.3	3.9	<0.1
3	3.8	<0.1	8.1	0.2	19.8	1.8	13.4	0.7	6.2	0.1
4	5.1	0.1	10.7	0.6	23.1	2.7	16.3	1.4	7.8	0.3
5	6.0	0.1	12.8	1.2	26.0	3.9	18.7	2.2	9.2	0.4
6	6.7	0.2	14.5	1.8	28.6	5.1	20.3	2.8	9.9	0.5
7	7.0	0.3	15.9	2.5	30.6	6.2	21.3	3.3	10.8	0.7
8	7.2	0.3	17.3	3.3	34.2	8.6	22.1	3.8	11.8	0.9
9	7.6	0.4	18.4	4.1	35.9	9.9	24.8	5.5	12.8	1.2
10	7.8	0.4	19.0	4.6	36.6	10.5	25.6	6.1		
11	8.2	0.5	19.7	5.2			26.4	6.8		
12			20.0	5.5			26.9	7.2		

<sup>a</sup> the most commonly caught sunfish

<sup>b</sup> values for white crappie species

## **Minnetonka 1996 Summer Angler Survey Summary-- cont.**

### **Fishing Tournaments:**

For the 11 permitted\* tournaments held during the survey period--

Total Number of Participants / Boats: 1,441 / 939

Est. hours tournament angling: 17,592 hours per acre of water: 1.3

Total bass brought to weigh-ins: 6,328 Avg. weight of weighed bass: 2.16 lb

Size range of largest bass reported for each tournament: 4.8-6.1 lb

On-site bass mortality, season sum: 52 fish % of weighed-in fish: 0.8%  
(Values do not include mortality after release or for fish not brought in)

Prize purse range: \$1,000 - \$273,000

\* fishing tournaments having either or both entry fees larger than \$10 or prize purses larger than \$2,000 must have a DNR permit; other smaller tournaments were also held on the lake

MN DNR tournament rules at the time of survey (1996), since changed

### **Summary of angler comments plus select remarks:**

*Reports of this season's fish catch, fishing conditions (91 total remarks)*

Lake is difficult to figure out this year (locally based pro angler)  
Poor fishing; too much boat traffic (Narrows Channel, July 7 [Sunday])  
Best bass lake in the country (out-of-state tournament angler)  
Sunfish fishing very good from June 14-21 in North and West Bays  
Good spot for walleye (party fishing Upper Lake)  
Walleye fishing improves after dark; fishing good until early June  
Great northern pike lake which improves in the fall  
Muskie fishing improves in September  
Certain Upper Lake areas are good for smallmouth bass

*Amount/availability of public access (26 total remarks)*

Parking situation poor  
There is adequate shore fishing, boat launch access; no more needed

*Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic vegetation (14 total remarks)*

Milfoil has improved fishing greatly Leave fish habitat alone  
Milfoil is tough to fish (I hate) milfoil

*Condition of public accesses; changes desired (13 total remarks)*

Place more road signs pointing out access locations

*Status of lake and fish populations (10 total remarks)*

Fishing has improved over the last couple years  
Over the past 30 years, water quality has continually improved  
Fishing used to be much better (especially for crappie)  
Size of sunfish is getting smaller

*Comments regarding fish management and regulation (9 total remarks)*

Put minimum size limits on all (non-roughfish) species  
Muskie stocking lowered quality of Halsted Bay northern pike fishing  
Early-season angling removes too many bass from spawning beds

*Comments/complaints about fishing tournaments (9 total remarks)*

There are too many tournaments... allow none 'til late June  
Provide special separate parking areas for tournament anglers

*Complaints about boat traffic, crowding, and safety (6 total remarks)*

Boats pass too closely (to shore anglers in channels)

*Law enforcement complaints/comments (5 total remarks)*

Conservation Officers should better enforce "too-many-line" violations