

Public Muskie Lakes



1. Spring Lake
2. Kinkaid Lake
3. Shelbyville Lake
4. Otter Lake
5. Fox Chain
6. Shabbona Lake
7. Lake Carlton
8. Pierce Lake
9. Lake George
10. Evergreen Lake
11. Wheel Lake
12. Shovel Lake
13. Heidecke Lake
14. Forbes Lake
15. Mill Creek
16. Staunton City Lake
17. Johnson Lake
18. Sterling Lake
19. Lake Sule
20. Lake McMaster
21. Lake Storey
22. Spring Lake
23. Argyle Lake
24. Johnson Sauk Trail
25. Lake of the Woods
26. Canton Lake
27. Pana Lake
28. Big Lake
29. Lake Mingo
30. Hennepin Hopper Lake
31. Deep Lake
32. Double T Lake
33. Goldeneye Lake
34. Canvasback Lake



2005 STATEWIDE MUSKIE STOCKING SUMMARY

DATE	SIZE	LAKE NAME	NUMBER	SOURCE
08/25	10.0	Banner Marsh - Johnson Lake	600	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Banner Marsh - Wheel Lake	350	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Banner Marsh - Shovel Lake	200	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Shabbona Lake	850	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Lake Carlton	76	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Lake George	167	Illinois
08/25	10.0	Staunton City Lake	84	Illinois
08/25	10.0	JEPCSWA - Prairie Lake	200	Illinois
08/26	10.0	Mill Creek Lake	366	Illinois
08/26	10.0	Wildlife Prairie SP - Deep Lake	25	Illinois
08/26	10.0	Double T SFWA	64	Illinois
08/26	10.0	Heidecke Lake	1,955	Illinois
08/26	10.0	Hennepin-Hopper Lake	98	Illinois
08/30	10.2	Hennepin-Hopper Lake	902	Illinois
08/30	10.2	Lake Mingo (R)	325	Illinois
08/30	10.2	Lake Shelbyville (R)	563	Illinois
08/30	12.3	Lake Shelbyville (R)	1,342	Illinois
08/30	10.2	INHS-Ohio (R)	600	Illinois
08/31	10.2	Sam Dale Lake (R)	300	Illinois
08/31	10.2	INHS-Sam Parr (R)	350	Illinois
08/31	10.2	Kinkaid Lake	2,000	Illinois
08/31	10.2	Pierce Lake (R)	300	Illinois
09/01	10.2	INHS-Lake Carroll (R)	250	Illinois
10/18	12.6	Lake Shelbyville	3,525	Indiana
10/18	12.6	Otter Lake	765	Indiana
10/18	12.6	Evergreen Lake	926	Indiana
10/20	12.6	Lake Shelbyville	2,000	Indiana
10/20	12.6	Fox Chain O'Lakes	1,000	Indiana
10/20	12.6	Sterling Lake	150	Indiana
10/20	12.6	INHS-Sam Parr (R)	300	Indiana
10/21	12.6	Lake of the Woods	63	Indiana
12/21	11.0	Shabbona Lake	125	Minnesota
12/21	11.0/22.0	Fox Chain O'Lakes	314/20	Minnesota

TOTAL: 21,155

INHS - Illinois Natural History Survey
(R) - Research

2005 GREEN GENE STOCKING SUMMARY

DATE	SIZE	POPULATION	NUMBER	STOCK	SOURCE
Sam Dale Lake					
08/31	10.74	North Spring Lake, IL	300	Illinois	Jake Wolf Hatchery
08/19	9.09	Cave Run Lake, NY	306	Ohio River	Clark E. Minor Hatchery - KY
09/23	10.27	Clear Fork Lake, OH	306	Ohio River	Kincaid Hatchery - OH
11/16	10.03	Leech Lake, MN	196	Up Miss. River	Little Fall Hatchery - MN
TOTAL: 1,108					
Lake Mingo					
08/30	10.51	North Spring Lake, IL	325	Illinois	Jake Wolf Hatchery
09/28	9.21	Chautauqua Lake, NY	196	Ohio River	Chautauqua Hatchery - NY
10/11	9.09	Leech Lake, MN	163	Up Miss. River	Lake Carroll Hatchery - IL
11/15	10.03	Leech Lake, MN	30	Up Miss. River	Little Fall Hatchery - MN
TOTAL: 714					
Pierce Lake					
08/31	10.62	North Spring Lake, IL	300	Illinois	Jake Wolf Hatchery
09/24	10.27	Clear Fork Lake, OH	302	Ohio River	Kincaid Hatchery - OH
10/10	9.25	Leech Lake, MN	166	Up Miss. River	Lake Carroll Hatchery - IL
TOTAL: 768					

GRAND TOTAL: 2,590

Total Illinois muskie = 925
Total Ohio River drainage muskie = 1,110
Total Upper Mississippi River drainage muskie = 555

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION I

DISTRICT 1: JO DAVIESS, STEPHENSON, WINNEBAGO, BOONE, DEKALB, OGLE, AND CARROLL COUNTIES

SHABBONA LAKE - This lake was built in 1974 and first opened to fishing in 1977. The lake is 319 acres and the basin was shaped and designed with Sport Fish Restoration funds. Standing timber, stump fields, fish cribs, anchored trees, rock piles, fish piers, a gravel road bridge, and a cement block house provide some very interesting structures for the angler. The shoreline is well-vegetated with a variety of aquatic plants including water lily.

In addition to muskie, the lake's predator population includes largemouth bass in substantial numbers, walleye, smallmouth bass, and hybrid striped bass supplementally stocked yearly. The prey population includes gizzard shad, yellow perch, golden shiners, white suckers, brook silversides, and carp.

The lake was initially stocked with 30,000 tiger muskie fry in 1976. The stocking success was excellent with 53 tiger muskie collected in the fall electrofishing survey of 1976. The lake was again stocked with 286 tiger muskie fingerlings in 1980.

Two state record tiger muskie were claimed from Shabbona Lake; the first in 1982 from the original stock and the second in 1986 from the supplemental stock.

From 1983 to 1989 the lake was stocked with 2,229 pure muskie at 11" in size from the Carlton Silt Basin and Muskie, Inc. This stocking effort has been a success since two state records came from the 1985 stocking at 34 pounds, 3 ounces in 1994 and a latter state record in 1997 at 37 pounds, 13 ounces.

From 1990 through 1999 - 4,812 muskie 8" to 12" were stocked from Jake Wolf Hatchery or through a purchase by the Shabbona Lake Sportsmen's Club. Muskie will be stocked only in odd years beginning in 2001 with 638 fish or 2 per acre followed by 638 fish in 2003.

April trapnetting for walleye (1997-2002) yielded 283 muskie with two estimated to be over 40 pounds. With reduced efforts in 2003, 28 muskie were captured.

The long-awaited barrier net was completed on August 4, 1998 completely blocking the exit of larger fish over the spillway. Prior to the net's installation, members of Muskie, Inc. collected 22 muskie below the dam in the Indian Creek tailwaters. A similar September survey found only one muskie. The 2003 fishing season was very good for muskie anglers and the 2005 season will be the same.

There is a 48" size limit on muskie at Shabbona Lake with a limit of one per day.

PIERCE LAKE - This 162-acre lake was built in 1960. It was completely drained in 1970

due to a defective valve. The lake's predators in addition to muskie include largemouth and smallmouth bass, and walleye stocked supplementally each year. Among the many prey species are gizzard shad, brook silversides, white suckers, and carp.

A muskie stocking program was begun in 1983, and to 1989 - 1,274 large fingerling muskie (11") were stocked from the Carlton Silt Basin, state hatcheries, and Muskie, Inc.

The muskie sign-in program from 1987 to 1991 has reports of 59 fish caught with 42% of these fish being harvested. Creel data from 1993 found an estimated 30 muskie caught with none reported as being harvested. Creel data from 1999 estimated 50 muskie caught with 3 estimated harvested.

An Illinois Natural History Survey study was begun in 1990 to determine the comparative survivability of stocked 4", 8", and 10" fish. In 1990 - 3,335 muskie were stocked as part of this study of which 1,000 were 10" fish. The study was continued in 1992 and 3,772 muskie were stocked of which 709 fish were 10" in size. The lake was monitored through 1997. The preliminary results were that no survival occurs on muskie stocked under 8.0" in size.

From 1997 to 2003, Jake Wolf supplied 1,301 muskie 10" - 13" and the Flatlanders Muskie, Inc. supplied an additional 330 muskie with 51% of these fish over 20" and 79% from the Leech Lake Strain. Jake Wolf production was good in 2003 and Pierce Lake was stocked with 824 - 6.0 to 10.0" fish. The lake is now part of a statewide muskie genetic survival study and will continue to receive generous stocks of muskie from strains throughout the country. In 2004, 300 - 11 inch muskie were stocked from Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery as part of the genetic study.

From 1997 through 2002, 60 muskie were taken below the dam with 25 of them taken during the wet 2000 year. This generated interest from the Flatlanders in installing a barrier net to prevent fish escapement. Initial planning and fund-raising began in 2001, but by mid-2002, the State Water Survey determined a net could not be installed due to possible dam failure. Retrieval of muskie below the dam will continue in future years.

The Lake and Willow Creek tailwaters has a 48" size limit on muskie with a limit of one per day.

DISTRICT 2: ROCK ISLAND, HENRY, BUREAU, LASALLE, LEE, AND WHITESIDE COUNTIES

LAKE GEORGE - This 167 acre lake in Rock Island County was built in 1966 and has a maximum depth of 62 feet with an average depth of 24 feet. Because Lake George is located near a heavily populated area, it receives between 200 and 350 man hours per acre fishing pressure.

Other predators in Lake George, in addition to muskie, are largemouth bass, walleye, and striped bass hybrids which are stocked supplementally each year. The main prey species

in the lake since 1990 is gizzard shad.

The lake was first stocked with pure muskie fingerlings in 1983. By 1993, Lake George had developed into one of Illinois' premiere muskie lakes especially for muskie over 40 inches. In 1993 and 1994, Lake George suffered some mortalities to larger muskie. Approximately 50 muskie, 36 to 42 inches died. The cause could not be determined. Lake George was not stocked with muskie in 1995, but was stocked with 167, 12 inch Leech Lake strain muskie fingerlings purchased by the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc., in 1996 and 1997. In 1997, the state also stocked 169, 10" muskie. In 1998, the lake was doubled stocked again to make up for muskie lost in 1993 and 1994 with the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. purchasing 169 muskie. In 1999, the lake received 1000, 4 inch muskie; 334, 11-13 inch muskie from state stockings. The lake also received 170, 11 inch muskie from the Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. In 2000, the state stocked 167 - 10.0" muskie and 167 - 11.0" muskie. In 2001, the state stocked 334 - 11.2" muskie. In 2002, the state stocked 334, 6.8 inch muskie and 167, 11.9 inch muskie. In 2003, 332 - 10 inch muskie were stocked. Muskie were not stocked in 2004.

The volunteer muskie creel program from 1987 to 1991 recorded 106 legal muskie caught with 90 being released. Creel report data from 1994 reported 83 muskie caught with only 3 harvested. The lake has a 36 inch size restriction on muskie with one fish per day creel limit. In 1999, thirteen trapnets set overnight in April resulted in the collection of 9 muskie greater than 33 inches. The largest was over 35 pounds. In 2002, 28 trapnets set overnight resulted in the collection of 37 muskie greater than 24 inches. In 2003, 10 trapnets resulted in the collection of 23 muskie greater than 25 inches. The lake has a good number of 40 inch plus muskie with several muskie collected near the Illinois state record. Lake George is scheduled to be stocked in 2004 with one, 12 inch muskie per surface acre. With the large gizzard shad population that has developed in Lake George, muskie fishing is tough because of the prey density.

LAKE CARLTON - This 76.7 acre lake was built in 1969 with a maximum depth of 27 feet and an average depth of 12 feet. The lake was originally stocked with tiger muskie in 1978. Pure muskie were not stocked until 1983. Since then, 1,478 - 12 inch muskie have been stocked in the lake. The 75 - 11.5 inch muskie stocked in 1995 were purchased by the Illinois Chapter of Muskie, Inc. In 2002, 76 - 11.9 inch muskie, and in 2003, 76 - 11.0 inch muskie were stocked by the State. Muskie were not stocked in 2004. Lake Carlton possesses high water clarity with visibility occasionally extending down 15 feet. The lake has numerous bays, points, and extremely shallow flats of submerged vegetation and water lotus beds.

Lake Carlton, although only 77 acres, has been the number one muskie lake for almost every year since 1987. The lake has produced more legal sized muskie than any other lake in the state. Creel data from 1994 found a catch of 148 muskie and a harvest of only three. The fishing pressure was reported as 606 man hours per acre. Lake Carlton should remain as one of Illinois' premiere muskie lakes for years to come. The fall electrofishing survey in 1995 produced five muskie in excess of 40 inches. Ten trapnets set in April of 1998 resulted in the collection of 32 muskie greater than 28 inches. Eleven trapnets set in April of 1999 resulted in the collection of 29 muskie greater than 30 inches and five

trapnets in April 2000 collected 11 muskie over 33 inches. Twelve trapnets in 2001 resulted in the collection of 23 muskie greater than 19 inches. Six trapnets set in April of 2002 resulted in the collection of 29 muskie between 30 and 46.5 inches. Fourteen minutes of night electrofishing resulted in the collection of 4 muskie. Two of the muskie were greater than 42 inches. Five trapnets set overnight in April of 2003 resulted in the collection of 12 muskie greater than 26 inches. The muskie body condition showed improvement in 2003. The lake has a 36 inch size restriction on muskie with a one fish per day limit.

DISTRICT 3: HENDERSON, KNOX, MCDONOUGH, MERCER, AND WARREN COUNTIES

MCMASTER LAKE - This 142 acre watershed impoundment located in the center of the 2,500 acre Snakeden Hollow State Fish & Wildlife Area has several unique physical and chemical features to support a quality muskie fishery. The lake is 56 feet deep in the central main basin with adjacent shallow gravel bars, abrupt dropoffs, numerous bays, points and islands, a standing timber area, extensive shallow flats of submerged vegetation, and cattail flats. The lake also possesses extremely high water clarity with visibility occasionally extending down to 30 feet.

The Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskie, Inc. and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have cooperated in the stocking of 1,580 Leech Lake strain muskie (9 to 16 inch) during the 1991 through 2004 period. In 2005, this unique lake will offer anglers a limited density muskie fishery with fish ranging up to 50 inches. A 42 inch minimum length limit with a one fish/day limit is enforced at Lake McMaster (formerly Snakeden Hollow Lake).

LAKE STOREY - This 133 acre public lake located near Galesburg in Knox County has been home to muskie since 1976. A fall water level drawdown of 6 feet for the purpose of predator-prey balance is an annual fish management practice. The lake is heavily fished with an estimated annual pressure of 400 to 800 hours/acre for all fish species.

Both muskie and tiger muskie have been stocked on an infrequent basis over the past 24 years. The first stocking of tiger muskie in 1976 resulted in a 20 pound 13 ounce state record in August, 1982. The largest muskie caught to date from Lake Storey was a 52 inch fish caught in October, 2004. The Mississippi Valley Chapter of Muskies, Inc and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have cooperated in the stocking of 1,637 Leech Lake Strain muskie (6 to 16 inch) during the 1993 through 2004 period. Lake Storey has the potential of producing a 30 pound plus natural muskie during the 2005 fishing season. A 42 inch minimum length limit with a one fish per day limit is enforced on muskie at Lake Storey.

DISTRICT 4: PEORIA, FULTON, AND STARK COUNTIES

WHEEL LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Wheel Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 1996. This lake has received 350, 8 to 12 inch muskie each fall since 1996.

In 1998, Wheel Lake received an additional 100 Leach Lake strain muskie through the funding of Muskie Inc. and in 1999 received an extra 2000, 4 inch muskie in June from Jake Wolf Hatchery. On April 1, 2000, the new minimum length limit was raised to 42 inches with a 1 fish per day limit.

At normal pool the 350 acre lake is composed of a deep final cut section and a large series of strip mine wheel cut lakes. The wheel cut portion (280 acres) contains a maze of points, islands, flooded brush and diverse aquatic vegetation, while the final cut portion (70 acres) has a maximum depth of 60 feet and rocky structure.

The Spring 2005 trapnet survey collected 21 muskie in 16 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 26 to 44 inches long. This catch rate was half the 2004 survey, but the quality of fish remained high.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, and gizzard shad. Other fish species present are smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, yellow bullhead, carp, green sunfish, and yellow perch. There is a 25 horse power limit at Banner Marsh.

SHOVEL LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Shovel Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 1999. In 1999, this lake received 200, 11 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery in September and 250, 11 inch fish from the Banner Marsh Rearing Ponds in October. From 2000 - 2003, Shovel Lake received 200 - 10.0" muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery in August. On April 1, 2000, the new minimum length limit was raised to 42 inches with a 1 fish per day limit.

The Spring 2005 trapnet survey collected 31 muskie in 16 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 28 to 41 inches in length. This catch rate was half of the 2004 survey, but the quality of fish has increased.

Shovel Lake was enlarged to over 200 acres by the end of 2000. It is a "T" shaped final cut strip mine lake (74 acres) with a maximum depth of 65 feet that was attached to approximately 100 acres of littoral zone surrounding deep water pockets (25 acres of strip mine ponds).

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, walleye, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad. There is a 25 hp limit at Banner Marsh.

JOHNSON LAKE (BANNER MARSH) - Johnson Lake was added to the muskie stocking priority list in 2001. In 2001, this lake received 2,174 - 11 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery in October, and 725 - 10 inch muskie in 2002. In 2003, a stocking of 1,333 - 10 inch muskie from Jake Wolf Hatchery occurred in September.

The Spring 2005 trapnet survey collected 21 muskie in 16 trapnet nights of effort. The fish ranged from 25 to 36 inches long. These results are identical to the 2004 survey.

Johnson Lake is approximately 600 acres and is composed of a maze of deep strip mine water connected to shallow flats of flooded trees.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, bluegill, white and black crappie, walleye, channel catfish, northern pike, carp, and gizzard shad. There is a 25 hp limit at Banner Marsh.

CANTON LAKE - Canton Lake was added to the muskie stocking program in 2000 and received 2,500 fish at 3.5 inches long. In 2001, it received 650 muskie at 10 inches long and then in 2002, it received 250 muskie at 6.8 inches long. In 2003, the lake received 2500 muskie at 4 inches long.

The Spring 2005 trapnet survey collected 6 muskie in 14 trapnet nights of effort. These fish ranged from 34 to 37 inches long. This is identical to the 2004 trapnet survey.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, yellow bass, channel catfish, carp, and gizzard shad. The City of Canton has various user fees for boat use and a 85 horse power motor limit.

DEEP LAKE (WILDLIFE PRAIRIE STATE PARK) - Deep Lake is located at Wildlife Prairie State Park which is west of the city of Peoria. This 14.3 acre lake was formed in 1987 by damming a deep ravine. The maximum depth is 32 feet and 60% of the basin contains flooded timber.

Deep Lake was added to the muskie stocking program in 2001 and received 25 fish at 11.8 inches in 2001 and 25 fish at 11.4 inches in 2002, and 25 fish at 10 inches in 2003. The minimum length limit is 42 inches and boat access is limited to portable boats.

DOUBLE T STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA - This site is located 3 miles northwest of Canton and was acquired by the state of Illinois in September 2001. The big lake is approximately 64 surface acres in size and has very steep and deep profile that is typical of a stripmine lake. This lake was added to the Muskie stocking list in 2002. In 2002, 179 muskie from 10 to 13 inches were stocked from Jake Wolf hatchery. And in 2003, 64 muskie at 10 inches long were stocked from Jake Wolf Hatchery.

The Spring 2005 trapnet survey collected 24 muskie in 20 trapnet nights of effort. These fish ranged from 22 to 31 inches long.

The lake's major fish species are largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, carp and gizzard shad. The current muskie regulation is a 42 inch minimum. A concrete boat ramp was installed in 2005 and the lake is electric motors only.

DISTRICT 5 : MARSHALL, PUTNAM, TAZEVELL, AND WOODFORD COUNTIES

SPRING LAKE NORTH - (Tazewell County) In 1978, Spring Lake was divided into two distinct waters for the purpose of capital improvement and the restructuring of the fish population. Prior to 1916, Spring Lake was part of the Illinois River system as a lateral freshwater marsh. In 1916 it was separated from the river by a high levee and has remained a separate body of water. From 1916 until 1981, the quality of the fishery habitat

and the fish population declined due to rough fish populations such as carp and bullheads. In 1981 the lake was treated with rotenone to remove the existing fish population and encourage the growth of aquatic vegetation. The key to the rehabilitation was the re-establishment of lush aquatic vegetation which had occurred by summer of 1983.

Always a shallow water, Spring Lake today has an average depth of 2.9 feet. Of the 578 acres of water, at least 75 percent is covered with 17 different species of aquatic vegetation by late May of each year. The majority of this coverage was Eurasian milfoil until 2004. The tremendous spring recharge from the bed of the lake amounts to 52 acre feet a day, creating very cold water temperatures under the insulating layer of vegetation for the majority of the summer months. This is a unique situation and only occurs in Spring Lake within the State of Illinois. The resulting temperature regime and water quality is excellent habitat for muskie.

Because of its proximity to the Jake Wolf Hatchery, North Spring Lake has been used as a brood source for muskie the past ten years and has provided most of the early muskie stocks for statewide stocking each year. In an effort to collect fish for egg production, extensive population assessment data has been gathered since 1991. We know quite a lot about the size structure and age of the population as well as growth. It appears that growth of female fish is excellent when compared to nation-wide populations. Growth of male muskie is in the normal range when making a similar comparison. There is a big difference in the length at age between sexes! A 32 inch female is usually 4 years old, whereas a 32 inch male is 5 years old, on average.

North Spring Lake is stocked every third year at a rate of between 2 and 3 fish per acre. It has been observed that significant cannibalism occurs if muskie are stocked every year. Young muskie are especially vulnerable to 1 and 2 year old male muskie at North Spring Lake.

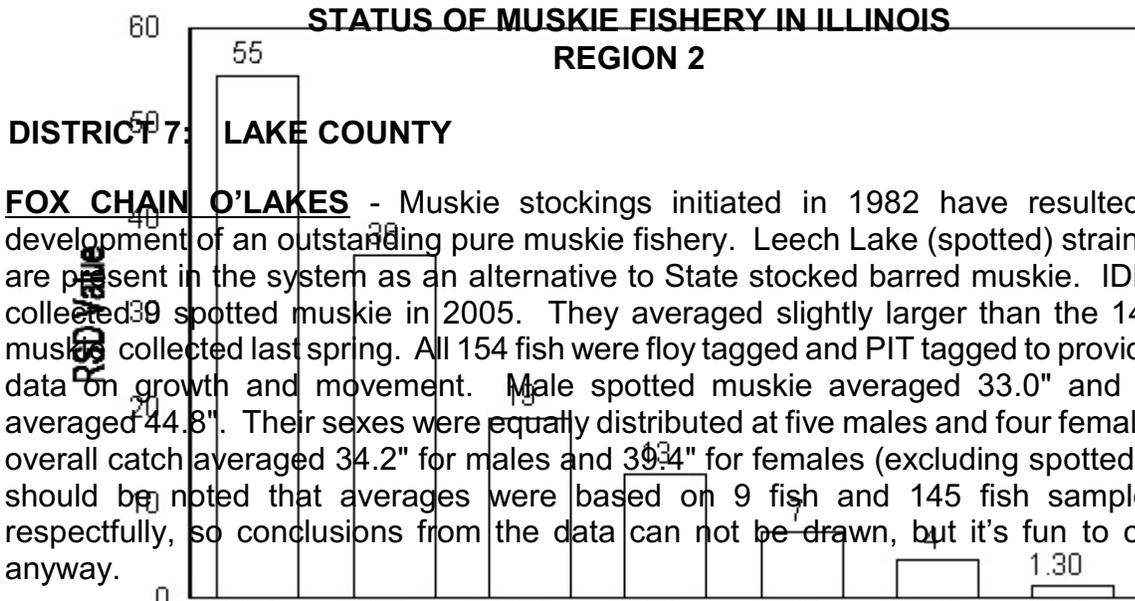
A muskie tagging project is in its seventh year on North Spring Lake. It is important to gain information regarding growth of fish by sex and age as well as potential egg production data. This tagging project should answer many questions concerning muskie biology in Illinois.

Fishing for muskie on North Spring Lake is a challenge. The water temperatures rise quickly and usually result in fish feeding actively in late March. Aquatic vegetation usually becomes thick and hard to fish no later than May 15th of each year and lasts until the lake closes for regular waterfowl season. The narrow window of opportunity between the middle of March and mid-May results in some excellent fishing. The fish are then refuged by the thick vegetation until the following year. In 2004, North Spring Lake was treated using the chemical Fluridone as a herbicide for Eurasian milfoil. The treatment resulted in opening large areas of the lake for the remainder of 2004. Good muskie fishing resulted in July and August of 2004. There are a number of large fish in the population available to muskie fishermen.

North Spring Lake has three useable boat ramps and is accessible by the Manito Blacktop,

12 miles south of Pekin. No fuel or services are available; however, camping and food is. There is a 25 horsepower limit at Spring Lake

Fox Chain Muskie Population Data, 2005



FOX CHAIN O'LAKES - Muskie stockings initiated in 1982 have resulted in the development of an outstanding pure muskie fishery. Leech Lake (spotted) strain muskie are present in the system as an alternative to State stocked barred muskie. IDNR staff collected 39 spotted muskie in 2005. They averaged slightly larger than the 145 other muskie collected last spring. All 154 fish were floy tagged and PIT tagged to provide future data on growth and movement. Male spotted muskie averaged 33.0" and females averaged 44.8". Their sexes were equally distributed at five males and four females. The overall catch averaged 34.2" for males and 39.4" for females (excluding spotted fish). It should be noted that averages were based on 9 fish and 145 fish sample sizes, respectfully, so conclusions from the data can not be drawn, but it's fun to compare anyway.

Approximately 1000 Leech Lake strain (spotted) fingerlings, provided by the South of the Border Chapter of Muskie, Inc. and 1000 Spring Lake strain (barred) fingerlings were stocked as a supplement to the biennial IDNR stocking program. The Chain's muskie stocking target is 2130 fingerlings every other year to maintain their abundance and size diversity. The 2000 fingerlings stocked in 2005 were in excess of that stocking goal.

The spring trap net catch rate of 2.9 fish per trap net night exceeded Management Objectives established by the Esocid Task Group of 0.3 fish per spring trap net night. Nice job boys! To date the largest muskies collected by IDNR staff were two 49.5 inch fish both exceeding 31 pounds collected in 2003 and 2005. Tagged fish have been reported from all lakes in the Chain and in the Fox River as far south as Yorkville and north into Wisconsin.

Population indices remained similar to last year. Fifty-five percent of the sample exceeded 36 inches long (RSD-36 = 55), 13 percent of the sample exceeded 42 inches long (RSD-42 = 13) and 4 percent of the sample exceeded 46 inches long (RSD-46 = 4) and 2 fish exceeded 48 inches which translated into an RSD-48 = 1.3. The longest fish was 49.4 inches. Each of the past few years fish exceeding 48" have been collected indicating fish are reaching "legal" size! Muskie fishing should continue to remain excellent with what appear to be successful year classes of smaller size fish moving through the population.

STERLING LAKE - This small 74.4 acre lake is managed cooperatively with the Lake County Forest Preserve District. It has received intermittent muskie (pure) fingerling stockings from either Muskie Inc. or the IDNR since 1990. An electrofishing (April, 2000) catch per unit effort (CPE) of 4 fish per hour exceeded the stocking evaluation goal of 1 fish/hour warranting continuation of the stocking program. Trap net data also exceeded stocking criteria of 0.3 fish per trap net night at 1.5 muskie per trap net night. Spring trapnets set in 2004 yielded 4 fish in 8 trap net nights of effort (0.5 fish per net). As above these data exceed Management Objectives. Fishermen reported several fish at least 48" long in 2003, 2004, and 2005 so trophy size fish inhabit this small muskie lake. The concession stand was closed all of 2005 so shore fishing was your best bet. In 2005 the State stocked approximately 150 Spring Lake strain barred muskie in Sterling Lake. There is a 48 inch length limit and 1 fish per day creel limit on this lake.

DISTRICT 9: GRUNDY, KENDALL, WILL, AND KANKAKEE COUNTIES

HEIDECKE LAKE - As part of a research project, 1,955 acre Heidecke Lake which is located in Grundy County near Morris received an initial stocking of pure muskellunge in 1980. Annual additions of these fish (which were extensively-reared, purchased fish) commenced in October of that year. Field data from these early stockings indicated slightly accelerated growth rates and fair recruitment. Tiger muskie were initially stocked in 1981 and were released on an almost annual basis through 1997. Tiger muskie released from 1993 through 1997 were "minnow-finished", larger in size and released later in the year.

Pure muskellunge stockings ceased in 1986 with the completion of the research project. In 1999 when surplus fish produced by the state hatchery system became available, pure muskellunge were once again released into Heidecke and continue to be released on a biennial schedule. Early-spring trap netting in 2004 resulted in the capture of 23 muskellunge, which was one fish less than the preceding year's collection. Pure muskellunge captured in 2004 ran larger than the previous year's survey, ranging from 780mm/30.7" to 1025mm/40.4". These fish had an overall average length of 903mm/35.6" compared to 791mm/30.9" for 2003. Most all muskies captured exhibited good body condition with an average relative weight of 94. All fish were floy tagged and no recaptures from the preceding year were collected. Similar effort expended in April, 2005 yielded somewhat disappointing results as a total of 8 pure muskellunge were collected. These fish ranged in length from 762mm/30.5" to 930mm/37.2" and averaged 828mm/32.6". All but one of these muskies were males and all were tagged with both Floy (external) and PIT (internal) tags. Ancillary sampling conducted in late September resulted in the observation of numerous muskellunge while electrofishing for black bass. These fish ranged from recently stocked fingerlings to larger adults exceeding 38 inches. The incidence of anglers catching muskie has been increasing steadily as the population grows in both number and size. With the continued recruitment of young fish, it should not be long before this lake once again produces fish in the 30-pound class.

A perched cooling lake, Heidecke came become very rough under windy conditions. Collins Generating Station has been decommissioned which eliminates thermal loading to Heidecke and results in an ambient lake. There is no horsepower limit and boat and motor rental are available at the lake concession. Heidecke Lake is open to fishing from April 1st to mid-October, closing ten days prior to the opening of the Central Zone waterfowl season.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 3

DISTRICT 10: CHAMPAIGN, DEWITT, FORD, IROQUOIS, LIVINGSTON, MCLEAN, PIATT, AND VERMILION COUNTIES

EVERGREEN LAKE - This lake was first stocked with muskie in 1990. In 2005, 926 12.6-inch muskie were stocked from the State Hatchery System. During the fall survey in 2005, the catch per hour of muskie was 5. Approximately 60% of the muskie were over 30 inches in length, and 20% were over 38 inches.

In 2002, a netting survey was initiated to monitor the muskie population. Each spring, frame nets are used to collect muskie. The muskie are tagged with an internal tag; the tag has an individual number so each fish can be tracked over time. From this information we can determine growth rates and condition of each fish over time. It has also provided some information on escapement from the lake for certain muskie. The McLean Co. Parks and Recreation Department has worked with local anglers to erect a barrier below the spillway to lower the escapement potential of muskie downstream.

We captured 1.2 muskie per net in 2002, 2.6 per net in 2003, 2.1 per net in 2004, and 2.5 per net night in 2005. Approximately 95% of the muskie captured in 2005 were larger than 30 inches, 33% were larger than 38 inches, and 9% were larger than 42 inches. The muskie exhibited ideal weights at all sizes. Muskie have now been in Evergreen Lake long enough to allow them to reach a large size. The muskie population in this lake is developing nicely and starting to show its true potential. A muskie collected during the 2005 spring netting survey was over 49.5 inches and weighed more than the current state record.

Evergreen Lake has two boat ramps and has a 10 horsepower limit on all boats. In order to launch a boat on Evergreen Lake, a sticker must be purchased. The stickers can be purchased at the boat ramps, Comlara Park Visitor's Center, or by calling 309/726-2022.

LAKE MINGO - In 2002 muskie were first stocked into Lake Mingo as part of a research project conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey. The project is titled *Evaluation of Growth and Survival of Different Genetic Stocks of Muskellunge: Implications for Stocking Programs in Illinois and the Midwest*. Muskie have been stocked each year since 2002. The muskie are exhibiting great growth rates and survival. Lake Mingo should have a great muskie fishery within a few years. For more information regarding Lake Mingo and Kennekuk Cove County Park call 217-442-1691.

DISTRICT 11: CLARK, COLES, CUMBERLAND, DOUGLAS, EDGAR, MACON, MOULTRIE, AND SHELBY COUNTIES

MILL CREEK LAKE - Located approximately 8 miles west of Marshall, in Clark County. This lake has a surface area of 731 acres, with a maximum depth of 60 feet, and an average depth of 22 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the Clark County Park District (217-889-3901) collects a boating access fee. A 42-inch minimum length limit with a one (1) fish per day creel limit is in effect for muskie.

This lake was stocked initially in fall of 1999 with pure muskellunge to diversify the fishery and take advantage of outstanding habitat, water quality, and abundant adult gizzard shad and white suckers for forage. Recent reports indicate that this fishery is beginning to develop well, with numerous fish over 36" being caught in '03 and a 44" fish caught in 2004. A stocking success survey in fall 2004 turned five muskies, of which two were boated. The largest fish boated was 35.6 inches. The largest fish observed was in the 40" class. This fishery is expected to develop into a high quality trophy fishery in the near future and will be worthy of fishing effort in 2006 with muskie fishing prospects are rated as fair to good.

LAKE SHELBYVILLE - Located in Shelby and Moultrie Counties in east-central Illinois. This lake has a surface area of 11,100 acres, with a maximum depth of 67 feet, and an average depth of 18.9 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available, with a fee assessed on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (217-774-3951) boat ramps, and free access

on state park or Corp gravel boat ramps. A 48" length - 1 fish daily creel limit will remain in effect. The limit is in effect in the headwaters up to the Corps of Engineers project boundary and extends below the dam, downstream to the State Route 128 bridge near Cowden.

Pure muskellunge were first stocked in Lake Shelbyville in 1978. It wasn't until 1988, however, that somewhat consistent year-to-year stockings of 5,500 fingerlings per year were initiated. Compared to the know potential longevity of this species, this fishery is still relatively young compared to the many well known fisheries in northern United States and Canada. In recent years this lake has developed into an outstanding muskie fishery. In fall 2002 the Professional Muskie Tournament Trail set a record for any previous tournament for the catch rate per fisherman and in the spring 2003 the total number of fish caught in a tournament (later broken on the Madison Chain of Lakes)! This attest to the increased quality of this fishery! Several fish are reported each year exceeding 50 inches. Muskie fishing prospects are rated as excellent!

Two major muskie tournaments were held on Lake Shelbyville in the fall of 2005. The catch for each tournament was 29 and 28 fish, while the largest fish caught were 44" and 43", respectively. Muskie numbers remain good on the lake and at the spillway area below the dam. Fishing prospects for 2006 remain good to excellent for numbers and size. Located approximately 8 miles west of Marshall, in Clark County. This lake has a surface area of 731 acres, with a maximum depth of 60 feet, and an average depth of 22 feet. Public boat launching facilities are available and the Clark County Park District (217-889-3901) collects a boating access fee. A 42-inch minimum length limit with a one (1) fish per day creel limit is in effect for muskie.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 4

DISTRICT 13: CASS, CHRISTIAN, LOGAN, MASON, MENARD, MORGAN, AND SANGAMON COUNTIES

PRAIRIE LAKE (Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area) - Initial stockings in 1999 on this newly constructed lake included the standard largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish which was followed by a stocking of pure muskies. It received 210, 10"-12" fingerling muskies in October of that year. This is a relatively small lake for muskies and has a sunfish forage base so growth rates may be a little slower than larger lakes with gizzard shad. On the other hand, the lake is deep, steep-

sided, clear and has excellent woody cover and aquatic vegetation. We believe muskies will do very well. The Fall 2001 electrofishing survey produced five muskies in the boat. Four other fish were hit by the electric field, exploded out of the water and were gone before we knew what had happened. The five fish collected ranged in size from 26.2" to 32.3". The largest weighed 7.3 pounds. In the Fall survey of 2002 only seven muskies were collected and six of them were fingerling fish from a recent stocking. The largest fish we collected was 33" long and 8.7 pounds. Two hundred, 10" fingerlings were stocked in 2002. The lake received 210 fingerlings in the Fall of 2004 and again in 2005. No muskies will be stocked in 2006 and the stocking will become a biennial stocking receiving fish again in 2007. The largest muskie collected in the Fall 2003 survey was 37" long and weighed 12.1 pounds. The same is true for the 2004 lake surveys. We collected 9 muskies ranging up to 37". Reports of a 44" fish reached the district biologist in 2004. Although the largest fish collected in the 2005 population surveys was only 36.5", the largest fish reported by an angler was 46". This is tremendous growth for six year old fish. So the muskies appear to be doing extremely well at this little lake. Currently there is an unlimited horsepower limit but the entire lake is a No Wake Zone except for boats 10hp and less which can operate as normal. Two concrete ramps and campgrounds are found on site and there are rental cabins on the lake as well. For more information on Prairie Lake contact the site office 217/452-7741 or the district fisheries biologist's office at 309/543-3316.

DISTRICT 14/15: GREENE, JERSEY, SCOTT, MACOUPIN, AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

OTTER LAKE - Data received from the 2005 spring netting evaluation showed Muskie densities remain depressed. Only 18 Muskellunge were found during March of 2005. This total falls far short of the 9 year mean (37 fish) for this impoundment. The Muskie seen measured 26.3" to 41.7", and weighed 4.3 lbs. To 22 lbs. The length frequency breakdown is as follows: 4 fish (22.2%) ranged from 26" to 30". 10 individuals (55.5%) were 30" to 35". 3 Muskie (16.7%) measured 35" to 40", and 1 (5.6%) exceeded 40" in total length.

When fish are available, Otter Lake is receiving more than the standard 1 fish per acre stocking rate. Since the 2 - 100 year flood events, Muskie densities have plummeted in this water body. The IDNR - Fisheries has continued to stock 10" to 14" Muskellunge fingerlings since these monstrous flood events occurred. With more stable water levels over time, this population should rebuild, and create improved fishing opportunities in to the future.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS REGION 5

DISTRICT 21: ALEXANDER, JACKSON, PERRY, PULASKI, AND UNION COUNTIES

KINKAID LAKE - This lake was built in 1972 and first stocked with muskie in 1985. Muskie (MUE) habitat at Kinkaid is abundant with high water clarity, good depth, and 82 shoreline miles of necks, bays, and points. Weed beds can be found in certain shoreline areas.

Large numbers of spotted suckers are available and preferred as forage. Growth rates and conditions are exceptional. During early summer of 1996, it was discovered that a high number of MUE escape over the spillway during periods of heavy rain. Since June 1996, electro sampling by biologists has resulted in 230 MUE (28-47 inches in total length) being returned to the lake. At least 12 of these MUE had been rescued below the spillway, tagged and returned to the lake, and subsequently recaptured again below the spillway. One fish has been documented as going over the spillway on three separate occasions. During the Fall of 1998, a spillway barrier was installed across the dam to reduce MUE escapement during periods of high water flow. This barrier should greatly enhance opportunities to grow trophy MUE and keep them in the lake. There has been no confirmed MUE escapement since the installation of the spillway barrier. Sampling efforts will continue to assess the effectiveness of the spillway barrier and the resultant effect on the Lake's MUE population.

The largest documented MUE known from Kinkaid Lake was collected in an IDNR net in 2002. The female measured 50 inches and weighed 34.7 pounds (she had already lost most of her eggs). Kinkaid Lake was stocked with 2000 ten inch MUE during 2005. Spring 2005 trap netting resulted in the collection of 228 muskie with the largest fish measuring 48.6 inches and weighing 31.3 pounds.

If you catch a tagged MUE from Kinkaid Lake DO NOT REMOVE THE TAG. Please contact Shawn Hirst, District 21 Fisheries Biologist at 618/687-4546 with the following information: date of catch, length of MUE, tag number (If number is covered with algae simply scrap the algae away with your fingernail or a knife). Anyone providing a tag number will receive the history of that particular fish.

CANVASBACK LAKE - This 60 acre strip cut is located in the Denmark Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Muskie were first stocked in August 2002. This lake has a gravel boat ramp and a 10 HP motor limit. Muskie up to 37 inches have been caught at this site.

GOLDENEYE LAKE - This 125 acre strip cut is located in the Galum Area of Pyramid State Park in Perry County. Muskie were first stocked in August 2002. This lake has a gravel boat ramp and a 10 HP motor limit. Muskie up to 37 inches have been caught at this site.

STATUS OF MUSKIE FISHERY IN ILLINOIS RIVERS

FOX RIVER - Muskie occur in the Fox River as a result of escapement from stocking programs in Chain-O-Lakes, Lake Shabbona, and Lake Holiday. Although not abundant, they are common in many areas in Kane and Kendall Counties. Mouths of larger creek are preferred summer habitat, but can be found ranging throughout the free flowing areas of the river in especially at Montgomery and Yorkville. Muskie were sampled in the Fox River during 2004 as a part of Fall Sportfish Survey. A total of 9 Stations were sampled

in free-flowing sections of the river from Elgin to Silver Springs State Fish and Wildlife Area. Muskie were collected at Geneva, Batavia, Montgomery and Silver Springs. Most individuals were in the 35-40 inch size range, with the highest catch rate observed at Silver Springs.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; 217/785-0067; TTY 217/782-9175.

This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the IDNR Clearinghouse at 217/782-7498 for assistance.

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