

the vermilion sportsman



*"Published quarterly by The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.,
A non-profit organization, founded in 1968 and dedicated to the improvement of Lake Vermilion"*

Vol. 33, No. 2

1800 MEMBERS

COOK & TOWER, MN

MAY 2007

President's Message

As I look out at the lake in late March, I think it's going to be one of the earlier ice-outs for a long time. That usually means an early spawning and an earlier dispersion of the wily walleye to deeper water. We'll see if this holds true or not in a very short time now. However, if we don't get significant rain this spring, the lake is going to be at an all-time low level so be very, very careful because there are going to be many additional hazards lurking just beneath the surface!

Well, you can disregard everything I said in the opening paragraph. After a brief trip south to attend a meeting hosted by Minnesota Waters on Testing and Monitoring for Road Salt in our Lakes and Rivers we went through a good old-fashioned Minnesota blizzard that will delay the ice-out date for a couple of weeks at least! Right now we're making more ice not melting it! Such is the life up north!

In our February issue of "the Sportsman," we included a DVD about "Minnesota's Lakes at Risk." We would very much like to hear comments from you (both good and bad) about this DVD. Do you think this is a viable method to get the word out? In our continuing effort to educate, we may use this method of disseminating information again. Also, if anyone received a DVD that will not play in his or her machine, please let us know and we'll see if we can replace it.

We are intensifying our "Invasive Species Prevention" efforts, led by Bob Wilson. We want to expand our coverage, vary our boat inspection dates, and cover more launch sites. In order to expand we will need more volunteers to man the launches. Please contact Bob or any of the board members to sign up if you can help. Please see Bob's article in this edition.

Greenwood Township held a hearing on the Lake Vermilion Management Plan on the 21st of March. The county staff is working to resolve discrepancies on the zoning map and the Planning Commission is set to bless the plan on April 12, 2007. No specific date has been set to present it to the County Commissioners as yet.

The wheels are turning, but very slowly!

Nothing more to report this issue regarding the 3 Bays on Vermilion nor the Minntac Tailings Water discharge.

The Board voted to give memberships to the Minnesota Waters Association to Greenwood, Vermilion Lake, Breitung and Beatty Townships and to the cities of Tower and Cook plus the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. We hope this will aid them in making decisions about land use that will protect and preserve our precious resource — Lake Vermilion.

I wish you all the best of luck on opening day and throughout the coming year! Enjoy your lake!

Walt Moe, President

**SPORTSMEN'S CLUB OF LAKE
VERMILION, INC.**

**39th ANNUAL MEETING
and DINNER**

**Friday, August 10
Fortune Bay Resort**

**"Please mark your calendar
and plan to attend."**

**John Stetson, expedition manager
for this winter's Global Warming
101 Expedition (led by Will Steger)
will be our featured speaker.**

**Watch for more information in the
July issue of the newsletter."**

Vermilion Water Levels

What was the occasional hot topic out at the old fishing hole last year? Even more likely, it was a part of the conversation you were having with your dock builder as he was installing the new extension. Yup, Vermilion's low lake water level is the answer. How many times last summer did you hear this phrase, "I have never seen Vermilion so low" or "I had to replace my I/O lower unit because of a rock I never knew was there?"

Guess about the water level no more. Included in this article are some water level facts from the **Minnesota DNR** plus some information about what water level measurements are being taken on a regular basis. We'll start with the facts below:

The period of record is 10/3/1950 to 3/30/2007

(Recorded data is in feet above sea level, 1929 Datum)

Highest Level Recorded	-	1359.26 ft	(5/28/2001)
Lowest Level Recorded	-	1356.07 ft	(11/28/1976)
Recorded Range Difference		3.19 ft	
Average Water Level	-	1357.39 ft	(based on 14,066 readings)
Last Reading	-	1356.98 ft	(3/30/2007)

Notice the lake has varied in level from high to low by 3.19 feet during the recorded 57 years of its water level history. Notice also that the "last reading" available as of the moment, is still higher than the recorded low in 1976 by 10.9 inches. One more point, on 3/30/07 we were 4.9 inches below the average Vermilion water level over the recorded period. In the early April timeframe this article is being written, water is flowing over the Pike River dam, a welcome sight.

To visualize the varying lake levels over the years look at the compressed chart on Page 4. Over 14,000 readings went into developing the plot. One of the interesting characteristics of Lake Vermilion from the past shown on the graph is that some remarkable rebounds in water levels have occurred following low water periods.

Unfortunately, we are in a dry cycle now coming from a wet cycle prior to 2005. Go to <http://climate.umn.edu> and click on "**drought status**" to explore what the experts predict for N.E. Minnesota for the next few months. Here are some clues from that same website; "spring and summer precipitation totals will need to far exceed normal for surface water systems to recover quickly from 2006 deficits. This is possible, but not climatologically likely. In keeping with the dry pattern established in 2006, snowfall totals during winter 2006-2007 have thus far been well short of average (as of 2/21/07). Much of the northern two thirds of northern Minnesota reported snow depths that rank historically below the 5th percentile." This is not the optimistic beginning analysis we would like to see! Let's hope our area exceeds the predicted expectations by a wide margin.

Collecting Data

On Vermilion, the standard procedure has been for volunteers at the lake to call or mail gage readings to a DNR collection site. Currently, the lake has two active volunteers performing this work. This data, up to 1988, was recorded mechanically by a meter system and the readings passed to the DNR by hand or mail. With reduced funding, metal plates indexed like a long thermometer were permanently installed on solid structures like bridges and docks. These water level gages are read about 20 times per month. Today, a large network of volunteers exists in the state to provide water level gage readings for over 1000 lakes the DNR monitors.

Gages can be found at several locations on Vermilion. Look for long rectangular metal plates about 3 to 3.5 feet long and 4 inches wide with numbers on them in feet. A few locations where you could find them on Vermilion would be the Moccasin Point Pier, Wakemup Narrows on the retaining wall beside the County dock, the Southwest piling of

Vermilion Water Levels-Continued

the bridge to Isle of Pines (bring binoculars or a boat) and the East Two Rivers bridge into Tower on 169-the left upstream wingwall. When you find one, add the calm water level number on the gage to "1350.0" and the result will be the elevation in feet above sea level of the current lake level. If the bottom of the plate is out of the water, get out your ruler and add on the remaining difference in 1/10 fractions of feet. Using the chart on the previous page will indicate how your reading compares with past performance. To check into the data further, go to the <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us> website and click on "Lake Finder." Type in Vermilion and you will be rewarded with the data presented in this article. All of the raw ASCII data readings are also available which can be graphed in MS-Excel similar to the one shown or others you choose to construct.

As a part of a recent pilot program, the DNR Waters Division purchased three continuous water level gage systems to be installed on high profile lakes in the state. In June of 2006, one of these continuous gages was

installed on Lake Vermilion near the outlet dam to the Vermilion River in cooperation with the Vermilion Dam Lodge Resort and owner Ed Tausk. The equipment was connected to a telephone line and the gage began to send data to the DNR office in St. Paul. The results from this fully automated, up-to-the hour, water level and rainfall measurement information system will become available in a graphical format on the above mentioned website. This combination of real time water level and rainfall data will present new opportunities for analysis by the DNR hydrologists.

Thanks to the following DNR Waters Division staff for their assistance with this article.

Amy Loiselle, Area Hydrologist
Sandy Fecht, Surface Water Hydrologist
Greg Kruse, Surface Water Hydrologist

Bob Wilson, SCLV Board

ATTENTION LAKE LEVEL WATCHERS!

The DNR and MPCA have installed a gage at the Vermilion dam that reports near real-time water levels and water flows which are available to view on the DNR Website at this link: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/csg/index.html>. At the little drop down menu above the map select "Lake Vermilion outlet near Buyck" and hit go. You can then get current water level and discharge flows and graphs showing recent trends. Pretty neat stuff.

SPORTSMEN'S CLUB WEB SITE <http://www.LakeVermilion.com/SCLV>

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(All Area Codes 218)

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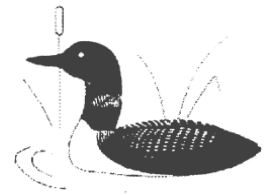
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SCLV Board Meetings are held monthly on the second Wednesday, and are open to all SCLV members. Check with a board member for time and location.

Vermilion Lake (69-0378), St. Louis Co. **Reported Lake Levels 1950 - 2006** DNR Waters Lake Level Minnesota Monitoring Program



Loon Watch



From this past “winter” storm, one would question if this was really spring, but the mailman verified it was when I received my annual loon packet from Pam Perry. Some of you might recognize her name. She is the Nongame Wildlife Lake Specialist and Minnesota Loon Watcher coordinator for the DNR in Brainerd. She not only requests the results of our loon population survey, but how many volunteers and their hours. As she explained to me on the phone, count the hours each person spent on the survey as the Nongame Wildlife Program can receive matching federal dollars. I also send our results to Maya Hamady, divisional wildlife supervisor for the DNR in Grand Rapids, and Carrol Henderson who is the DNR Nongame Wildlife supervisor for the state of Minnesota.

Someone said to me, “What’s the big deal about counting loons? Who cares?” Well, all of the above, as well as most all members of the club. It feeds the DNR information as to the fluctuation of the loon population and the conditions that may influence it and their nesting success or failure. Our lake is of particular interest because we have the longest consecutive counting record of any lake in Minnesota, 23 years, and this gives the DNR and any other like organization a good basis for study. Pam wrote a note at the top of her form letter to me saying, “Sixty-three volunteers — wow! Good job, so many loons!” In St. Louis County there were 412 loons counted, and we on Vermilion had 248 of them. “Good job” indeed! We have a great group of people on Vermilion and in our club who support our projects!

About this time, I bet the loons from the Gulf are winging their way north. They’ll nest here in May to early June. Since the eggs must be kept at a constant temperature for 27-31 days, you’ll see only one of a pair on the lake at a time. Both adults share in the incubation duties and will exchange places, from sitting on the eggs to feeding and patrolling, every couple of hours. So early on, you may think there are not as many loons as the year before. Thus, the middle of July is the best time to see both adults. If their nesting has been successful, the chicks are off their parents’ backs, big enough to see and easy to count.

This year our survey date will be Monday, July 16, with the alternate date Wednesday, July 18, only in the event of inclement weather. In that event you will be called by 8 a.m. as we are at our territory by 9 a.m. There are times when the regulars cannot do their territories and we need alternates. If you are interested in doing the loon count, please let me know. The Sportsmen’s Club address is: Box 696, Tower, MN 55790, or give me a call: (218) 753-3549.

Thanks,
Mardy Jackson

P.S. The DNR is planning to collect dead loons again this year to determine the cause of mortality when possible. If you find a dead loon, put it in a plastic bag and chill it down as soon as possible (a freezer is fine) to prevent tissue deterioration. Then call Pam Perry and they will arrange transport to a DNR office.

Pam’s phone number is:
(218) 833-8728.

Address is: Pam Perry
Nongame Wildlife

Lake Specialist

DNR Headquarters
1601 Minnesota Dr.
Brainerd, MN 56401

Do Your Part to Protect Loons

- **Watch loons from at least 200 feet away.** Close encounters can be deadly for swimming and nesting loons. Use binoculars from a safe distance.
- **Use non-lead fishing sinkers and jigs.** Ingesting one sinker or jig will kill a loon.
- **Avoid use of islands before July 15th of each year.** Loons prefer islands for nesting.
- **Protect native vegetation on all shores.** Loons often nest on natural shorelines and use natural materials to build their nests.
- **Conserve electricity.** Mercury emissions contaminate lakes and loon food.
- **Dispose of household garbage at a collection site.** Garbage draws raccoons, foxes, gulls, and eagles, which prey on loon eggs. Trash can ensnare wildlife like loons.
- **Be an ethical angler.** Never fish or cast near loon nests or swimming loons, and properly dispose of extra bait and trash on land.
- **Keep dogs and cats away from loons and nests.** Pets disturb nesting loons and destroy loon eggs.
- **Use only phosphorus-free fertilizers on shorelands, and only if needed.** Fertilizer that runs off into lakes increases aquatic plant growth, making it difficult for loons to swim and find food.
- **Report any unusual loon activity or harassment of loons to your lake’s Loon Watcher.** Find out who is the official Loon Watcher on your lake and report your observations to him or her.
- **Monitor water quality or invasive species.** Check with your lake association for ways that you can help.

(Continued on Page 6)

STATE OF MINNESOTA

2006 Loon Watcher Summary

County	Lakes	Adults	Chicks
Aitkin	20	71	23
Anoka	7	8	2
Becker	14	60	19
Beltrami	10	51	23
Carlton	2	3	1
Cass	52	279	70
Chisago	4	13	3
Clearwater	1	2	1
Cook	1	3	0
Crow Wing	62	202	64
Douglas	3	10	2
Grant	1	0	0
Hennepin	2	6	0
Hubbard	28	155	56
Isanti	1	2	0
Itasca	15	117	15
Kanabec	1	2	1
Kandiyohi	1	2	2
Lake	3	17	1
Mille Lacs	1	2	UK
Morrison	4	33	9
Ottertail	19	101	24
Pope	1	2	UK
Ramsey	6	9	1
Scott	1	2	0
Sherburne	7	18	3
St. Louis	25	340	72
Stearns	18	46	17
Todd	9	36	22
Wadena	1	2	UK
Washington	5	11	5
Wright	17	33	5
Totals	342	1,638	441



ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Loon Survey Records for 2006

Lake	Adults	Chicks
Ban	2	0
Burntside	31	12
Caribou	2	0
Clear	2	1
Dinham Lake	2	3
Eagles Nest	5	0
Eagles Nest #4	2	0
East Bass (Schuber)	2	1
Elephant	2	1
Ely Lake	4	3
Horseshoe	2	2
Jacobs	2	1
Jamer	1	0
Little Long	6	5
Little Pequaywan	3	0
Long	2	1
Long	2	0
One Pine	2	2
Pequaywan (Upper)	4	0
Sunset	4	0
Thirteen	2	1
Vermilion	248	36
West Bass (Cameron)	2	1
White	2	2
Whiteface Reservoir	4	0
Totals	340	72

Do Your Part to Protect Loons

(Continued from Page 5)

- **Be a responsible boater.** Never chase loons or run motorboats or personal watercraft over areas where loons have been seen. Loons and loon chicks have died from being hit by boats and propellers.

Practice and teach wildlife
stewardship... always!

s.s.gillum & s. lewis 9-2006

The Trust for Public Land acquires 60-acre island on popular Lake Vermilion

In March 2007, TPL acquired Wolf Island in Wolf Bay of Lake Vermilion in northern Minnesota to hold for eventual conveyance to the Superior National Forest.

Wolf Island, also known as Knott's Island is a 60-acre island in northern Minnesota's Lake Vermilion. Wolf Island was at risk of being lost to development because of its beauty and proximity to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Lake Vermilion, 24 miles long, is Minnesota's fifth-largest lake and is home to walleye, northern, muskie, bass and bluegill populations, and was once named by National Geographic® as one of the nation's ten most scenic lakes.

This effort was funded, in part, through contributions from individual members of the Dayton family who have a long history on Lake Vermilion, the Scrooby Foundation, and the Quetico Superior Foundation. It is the intention of the previous landowners, TPL and Wolf Island donors to add the property to Superior National Forest and have it be available for public use. Because Wolf Island is of historical and cultural significance, TPL is working with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa during TPL's holding period to seek the Band's input on interim management of the property.

Local area resort and landowners feel very upbeat about the conveyance.

"This is a great opportunity," said Ed Tausk, owner of Vermilion Dam Lodge for more than 10 years. "As a

guide to the lake and someone who has seen a lot of resorts close, being able to offer one more destination for travelers is a huge plus. It's a 'win-win' for everyone when there is access to explore an island with a great history and natural wildlife. It would be a shame to see it sub-divided and developed for private use."

Wolf Island's history was documented by John Jaeger, a prominent Minneapolis architect who homesteaded the island after first visiting it in 1906. TPL has raised about half of the \$1.5 million purchase price and is seeking additional donations to the Northwoods Land Protection Fund for the balance of the purchase price to hold the island for permanent protection by Superior National Forest.

The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places. In Minnesota, TPL has protected more than 30,000 acres valued at more than \$60 million including the recent acquisition and protection of the Chainsaw Sisters Mudro Lake portage access adjacent to the BWCAW, an addition to the future Neenah Creek Regional Park in St. Cloud, the creation of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary east of downtown St. Paul and the most prominent portion of historic Pilot Knob in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. For more information, visit TPL on the web at www.tpl.org.

2007 Red-necked Grebe Survey

Have you seen this bird on your lake? The DNR Nongame Wildlife Program is asking the public to report sightings of Red-necked Grebes. These birds are about 18-20 inches in length, smaller than a loon, but they also dive and carry their striped chicks on their backs. They nest along shorelines, sometimes in groups, building floating nests in emergent vegetation.



If you observe Red-necked Grebes on your lake or another lake, please contact Pam Perry at

ONE SIMPLE THING YOU CAN DO TO HELP PROTECT LAKE VERMILION

This may sound crazy, but doing something that could make a significant contribution toward the long-term protection of Lake Vermilion may be as simple as changing your light bulbs. Yes, light bulbs. By now, most of us have seen the odd-looking, squiggly-shaped compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) sitting next to the familiar incandescent ones in hardware stores and home centers. We think they look interesting and they are advertised to last much longer, but we usually end up choosing the old style bulbs because CFLs are 4 to 5 times more expensive. The reality, however, is that even though they are pricier up front, they more than pay for themselves: A typical 100 watt CFL can save about \$60.00 compared with the 10 energy hungry incandescent bulbs a consumer would have to buy (and buy electricity for) over the CFL's projected 5-year life. So they last about 10 times longer and use only a quarter to a third of the electricity of the traditional bulb which has changed very little since it was invented by Thomas Edison over 100 years ago. The incandescent light bulb is, in fact, the most obsolete technology in our homes and businesses, converting less than 10% of energy into light.

The most important feature of CFLs, however, is their stunning potential to reduce the production of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The U.S. government estimates that if every American household replaced just one bulb with a CFL, it would have an impact equal to taking a million cars off the road. If every American converted to CFLs, we could reduce oil imports by millions of barrels and eliminate the need to build thousands of megawatts of new polluting power plants.

So how can changing your light bulbs to CFLs help protect Lake Vermilion? In the most direct way, using less electricity will reduce the amount of airborne pollution, in the form of mercury and acid rain, falling into our lake. Most of the electricity generated in Minnesota and other Midwestern states is produced at coal-burning power plants which have been proven to be the primary source of airborne mercury and sulfur dioxide pollution in our area of the country. Mercury accumulates in the fish we enjoy eating and

acid rain alters the ecological balance affecting all plant and animal life in the water. On a larger scale, using less electricity could help slow the effects of climate change. There is little disagreement over the fact that the earth is experiencing climate change in the form of warming temperatures. There is plenty of disagreement over what is causing this warming trend. If you accept the premise that this warming is even partially caused by human production of greenhouse gases, however, it would seem logical that reduced consumption of electricity reduces production of greenhouse gases and, therefore, potentially slows climate change. What does climate change mean for Lake Vermilion? While no one knows for sure, I recently listened to a forum on climate change on Minnesota Public Radio featuring experts from the University of Minnesota who made some sobering predictions. If the warming trend we have recently been experiencing in Minnesota continues into the years and decades to come, the most probable result will be a change in the rainfall patterns; specifically, there will be much less precipitation. We are currently concerned with the extremely low level of Lake Vermilion; imagine if this trend continues and becomes worse. The other likely result of a warming climate in our area would be a change in the types of trees and other vegetation which could survive here. The pines, spruce and other conifer type trees which currently dominate the landscape would die and be eventually replaced by oaks, maples and other deciduous trees currently seen north of the Twin Cities. While that may not seem to be a terribly negative change, a very rapid warming of the climate could more quickly kill existing trees and leave a period of decades in which "scrub" type vegetation would dominate until the deciduous forest could establish itself. True, these are just predictions, but they are based upon solid scientific data.

Please consider replacing your bulbs with CFLs. Not only will you save money, you will help to preserve Lake Vermilion and the surrounding north woods that we love so much!

Dale Lundblad - Board Member

Protect our forests from “bad bugs”; don’t move firewood

By Mike Albers, DNR, Division of Forestry, Forest Health Specialist

Most cabins and lakeshore homes are nestled into forest settings because Minnesotans like trees and feel at home in the woods. We burn up the wood from dead and diseased trees and even bring firewood from home to fuel bonfires and wood stoves while up north. Did you know that firewood harbors insects and diseases and that they can be inadvertently spread to new locations by transporting it? Moving firewood around the state, Midwest, and even country has never been too much of an issue. News about yet another exotic insect or disease in this country seems so distant to our experience because we are so removed from the usual points of introduction; until now. Finding that firewood is the primary means of spread of emerald ash borer (EAB) out of quarantined areas in Michigan has changed our views about firewood movement and, hopefully, our actions here in Minnesota.

Transporting firewood is problematic. Firewood travels at 55 mph and so do the forest pests hiding inside. And, EAB is not the only “bad bug” lurking in firewood. Oak wilt, Asian longhorned beetle, Sirex woodwasps, gypsy moths and “bad bugs” we don’t even know we have can hitchhike on firewood from New York, Michigan and from our own backyard. So, in just a few short hours, EAB or another forest pest could be unknowingly spread into the forests of Minnesota.

Emerald ash borers spend most of their life cycles hidden between the bark and the wood. If the tree dies or is cut down, the EAB will survive and adults will emerge during the growing season to start the life cycle over again in nearby live ash trees. Currently, the entire lower peninsula of Michigan, parts of Maryland and all of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio are under EAB quarantines.

Wisconsin officials have imposed limits on the movement of firewood into and within the state because they recognize the economic and ecologic risks that EAB and other bad bugs pose. Where states have attempted to eradicate EAB, removing all ash trees within a ½ mile of the site, the cost has been about \$1 million per site. Where EAB is estab-

lished, it has eliminated all ash trees; cities and towns have been stripped of their street trees and lowlands forests were decimated. State and federal quarantines restrict the transportation of infested nursery stock and forest products, but restrictions on firewood do not address the vast amounts of firewood moved by the public so may not be effective in protecting our state’s resources.

In light of this information, Minnesota DNR is proposing to restrict firewood brought into state campgrounds and onto DNR administered state lands in order to protect our forests from EAB and other exotic pests that cause harm. The DNR is requesting that campers, hunters, anglers and other recreationists use “approved” firewood while on DNR lands. Approved firewood is:

- Purchased from an approved dealer (approved by Dept of Agriculture or Natural Resources).
- Purchased/ provided at the state facility.
- Clean, untreated dimensional lumber.

Moving personal firewood supplies from your home to your cabin or lake home is not regulated like transporting them into state campgrounds. It’s up to you to prevent the “bad bugs” from moving into the trees and forests near your land. So, leave your firewood supply at home and make sure that your firewood supply is purchased from an approved dealer near your destination.



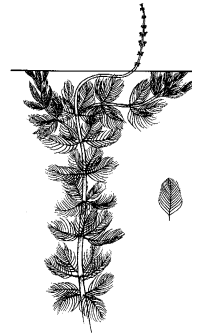
“Invasive Species”

by Bob Wilson

Although I'm writing this piece in early April and can still see ice on the lake, it feels like spring is coming. The winter gear is being put away, but at the same time there is a little fresh snow on the ground this morning. Nevertheless, this time is the time of year to plan our Invasive Species Program for the summer. Before I get into the activities we will implement, I'm going to provide a brief sketch of the progression of "invasives" in the state and a few headlines of the efforts being taken to manage and control them to set the stage. It's not a pretty picture. These excerpts are from the **Minnesota Waters Organization** and the **Minnesota DNR**.

The threat continues!

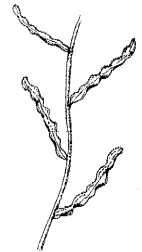
- * Eurasian Milfoil has now spread to 190 lakes with 13 new infestations in 2006!
- * Curly leaf Pondweed is present in over 800 lakes!
- * Zebra mussels are in four inland lakes, three of them in the popular Brainerd Area!
- * Rainy, Namakan, the Rainy River & Lake of the Woods are now designated "infested" for Spiny Waterflea. Crane Lake will soon receive this designation.
- * Quagga mussels have recently been found in the Lake Superior, Duluth/Superior harbor.



**EURASIAN
MILFOIL**

Costs of managing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are high!

- * The Bay Lake Association raises \$120,000 per year to control Eurasian Water Milfoil!
- * Basset Creek Watershed taxpayers contributed over \$300,000 in a multi-year effort to control Curly Leaf Pondweed in Medicine Lake!
- * The Mission Lake Association, Crow Wing County spent \$70,000 in one year of a three-year control effort!
- * Lake Washington in Meeker County spends \$60,000 per year on control efforts!



**CURLY LEAF
PONDWEED**

It seems obvious that spending money and effort on prevention is much preferable to cleaning-up after the infestation. Keep in mind, some AIS are essentially impossible to control and clean-up. As you know, Lake Vermilion has Rusty Crayfish and a little Curly Leaf Pondweed in at least one bay. Rusty Crayfish do seem to be diminishing, but they have decimated many weed beds and have adversely affected those spawning areas for some fish species.

According to Minnesota Waters, the Minnesota DNR is under funded with respect to AIS and unable to aggressively pursue prevention and control action across the state. That leaves counties, local associations, towns and townships to shoulder at least some of the responsibility for AIS public education and prevention specifically for their lake(s). Your SCLV has been active in this area for the past several years and in 2007 we are going to spend more and do more in an attempt to raise public awareness.

Here is what we plan to do in the 2007 summer season!

*In partnership with the Minnesota DNR we are renting a large roadside billboard for five months from approximately May through September. The theme pictured will be "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" from the National Campaign. Wildlife Forever, a conservation organization, is making contractual arrangements in our behalf and negotiating similar contracts for the DNR throughout the state. However, billboards available in locations we would like to rent are very difficult to find. We preferred a sign on Highway 53 between Virginia, MN and the exit onto Highway 169 to Tower visible from the northbound lane. Only one billboard became available in this location and was taken before we could act. The SCLV Board settled for a billboard opposite the Pike Sandy Coop on Highway 169 visible from the northbound lane. It will not serve as a reminder for west end lake traffic, but it is the only sign we could rent this season that covers any part of Lake Vermilion. It should also remind people heading to Ely, Burntside, Shagawa and the boundary waters to clean their boats and trailers.

Watch for the sign. It should be up in early May and it will be lit at night.

* Boat inspections for AIS will continue this summer. The schedule is somewhat different than in 2006.

Boat Inspection Schedule

May 11, the Friday before the walleye opener on the 12th.

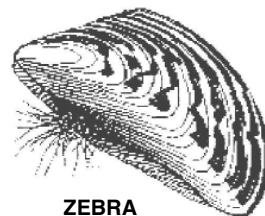
May 25 & 26th, the Friday & Saturday leading to Memorial Day on the 28th.

June 22nd & 23rd, the Friday & Saturday before the week of July 4th.

August 31 & September 1st, the Friday & Saturday before Labor Day on Sept 3rd.

Public Ramps — Hoodoo Point, Moccasin Point, Timbuktu & Everett Bay (possibly).

Ramp Captains will be calling the regular inspectors as the time approaches. We are also looking for more inspectors to help. See the article on this request elsewhere in this issue.



**ZEBRA
MUSSEL**

* Provide laminated plastic ID cards to the public with pictures of Lake Vermilion's fish on one side and the common "Invasive Species" pictured on the backside. Partner with the local DNR on this effort.

* Buy Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) time cautioning the public to clean their boats and trailers of AIS before entering the lake.

* Contact Fishing Tournament Directors to please advise their participants to inspect and clean their equipment before entering the lake.

* Work with the Minnesota DNR to place larger and more colorful, attention getting, AIS prevention signs at public ramps.

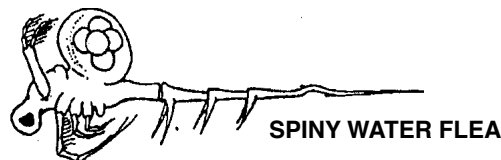
Invasive Species are a very serious, potentially costly problem. **HELP PROTECT LAKE VERMILION**

Spiny Water Fleas Found in Rainy Lake System

Spiny waterfleas, an invasive zooplankton species, were discovered in Rainy Lake, Namakan Lake, and Crane Lake in 2006. A number of connected lakes in the area may also be infested or will shortly become infested, including Sand Point Lake, Kabetogama Lake, the Rainy River, and Lake of the Woods. Spiny waterfleas are native to Europe and were probably transported to the Great Lakes in the ballast water of cargo ships. They have since been spread to a number of inland waters, most likely by anglers and boaters.

Spiny waterfleas often displace native zooplankton, which are an important food source in the early life stages of many species of fish, including walleye. Fish often do not feed on spiny waterfleas due to their large size and the presence of a sharp spine. Some lakes have experienced major ecological changes after the introduction of spiny waterfleas. The waterfleas can also become a nuisance to anglers, collecting on fishing lines and downrigger cables.

The presence of spiny waterfleas in these lakes is of particular concern to Lake Vermilion because there are a number of anglers in the area who fish these lakes in addition to fishing Lake Vermilion. Spiny waterfleas or their eggs could easily be transferred between lakes by careless anglers or boaters. The eggs of spiny waterfleas are particularly hardy and can survive



SPINY WATER FLEA

long after the waterfleas themselves die. Anglers and boaters who use these lakes should follow guidelines established to prevent transferring invasive species between different bodies of water.

- Remove aquatic plants and animals, including gelatinous or cotton-batting-like material from fishing lines, downrigger cables or anchor ropes.

- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash, do not throw in lake or along shoreline.

- Drain water from boat, motor, bilge, livewell, minnow pails, and other bait containers.

- Either spray the watercraft and gear with hot high pressure or hot tap water (above 140 degrees F or 60 degrees C for at least one minute), or dry the watercraft and gear thoroughly for at least five days before transporting to another water.

For additional information on spiny waterfleas and other invasive species go the DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us, or call the Tower DNR Fisheries office at 218-753-2580.

Summary of 2006 Fish Population Assessment for Lake Vermilion

Introduction

Lake Vermilion is part of the statewide Large Lake Program, an intensive fisheries management program on the 10 largest lakes in Minnesota. The Large Lake Program was started in 1984, when it became apparent that more detailed biological information was needed to properly manage these important lakes. A Large Lake Specialist was assigned to each lake to manage the program at the area level. The Large Lake Program includes annual population assessments, annual water quality monitoring and regularly scheduled creel surveys. Creel surveys are scheduled on Lake Vermilion for two consecutive years out of every six years. Creel surveys were done in 2002 and 2003. The next cycle of creel surveys will be in 2008 and 2009.

A variety of sampling gear is used during population assessments to collect the various fish species and life stages. Gill nets are used to sample cisco, northern pike, yellow perch and walleye. Trap nets are used to sample muskie, bluegill and black crappie. Beach seines are used to sample young-of-the-year walleye and perch. An electrofishing boat is used to sample smallmouth bass and young-of-the-year walleye. Sampling for each gear type is conducted at the same time and place each year in order to determine population trends for the major species. Data is also collected on length, weight, age and growth for each of the major species.

The results of the 2006 fish population assessment are presented in the balance of this report. We encourage anyone with questions or comments to contact the Tower Fisheries office or stop by our office for a visit. We are located just west of Tower on Highway 169.

Duane Williams, Large Lake Specialist
Phone: 218-753-2580, ext. 224
e-mail: duane.williams@dnr.state.mn.us
Joe Geis, Area Fisheries Supervisor
Phone: 218-753-2580, ext. 222
e-mail: joe.geis@dnr.state.mn.us

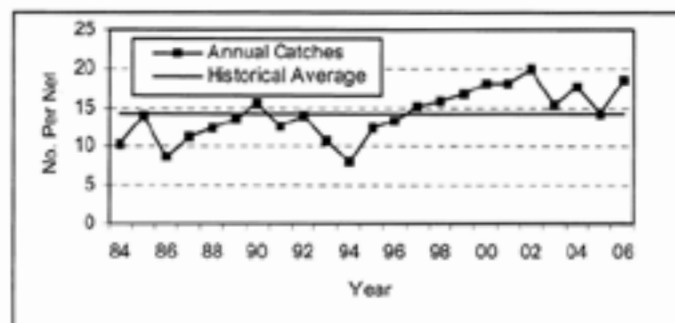
WALLEYE

The walleye gill net catch in the fall of 2006 was 18.6 fish/net, the second highest walleye catch ever observed on Lake Vermilion (Figure 1). The current high level of the walleye population is due to strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003. Walleye numbers have been somewhat variable in recent years, due in part to poor reproduction in 2000 and 2004.

There are often differences in fish populations between the two major lake basins, East Vermilion and West Vermilion, and some of the assessment data is analyzed separately for the two lake basins. The 2006 walleye gill net catch on East Vermilion was slightly higher than the catch on West Vermilion. Historically, walleye gill net catches are usually higher on East Vermilion, while the average size is larger on West Vermilion.

Walleye populations in large natural walleye lakes often fluctuate in response to strong and weak year classes. Generally, strong year classes of walleye are produced about every three years, which is usually enough to maintain a good population. Because fish production is limited by lake productivity, it would be impossible for lakes to sustain strong year classes every year. Lakes with excessive walleye harvest tend to have highly variable reproduction and walleye abundance. Lakes with low walleye harvest tend to have more stable populations.

Figure 1. Walleye Gill Net Catches, 1984-2006.



Walleye sampled by gill nets had an average length of 13.4 inches, slightly above the historical average. When the gill net catch of walleye is examined by size class, the catch of 12-14 inch walleye was well above the historical average (Figure 2).

These fish are from strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003 and will provide good angling opportunities in 2007. The gill net catch of 10-11 inch walleye was below the historical average, reflecting poor reproduction in 2004.

The gill net catch of 16-18 inch walleye was also slightly below average, due to poor reproduction in 2000.

Small walleye are nearly always more abundant than medium and large fish, although this is not reflected in the gill net catch. The experimental gill nets used for population assessments do not sample small fish very well and they are under-represented in the gill net catch. Walleye are not sampled at maximum efficiency until they are about 13 inches long. The decline in the gill net catch of fish larger than 13 inches represents the effects of mortality and declining abundance. Healthy walleye populations will have good numbers of fish across a wide range of size classes. Heavily exploited walleye populations tend to have high numbers of small fish and much lower numbers of large fish.

Walleye year class strength can be represented by indices that are calculated from gill net catches of each year class for each year of netting (Figure 3). An index of 100 would be considered average. The

strongest year classes produced in recent years were the 2001, 2002 and 2003 year classes. It appears the 2002 year class may be the strongest produced on Lake Vermilion in a number of years. The 2002 year class is especially strong in West Vermilion, while the 2003 year class is stronger on East Vermilion.

The weakest year classes of walleye produced in recent years were the 2000 and 2004 year classes. Poor reproduction in 2000 and 2004 was probably related to unusually cool spring weather in those years. Weak year

classes of walleye on Lake Vermilion are often related to cool spring and summer weather, which can negatively affect egg survival and first-year growth. Nearly all of the major fish species in Lake Vermilion had poor reproduction in 2000 and 2004.

It takes at least two years to calculate a year class strength index for any individual year class, therefore indices have not yet been calculated for the 2005 and 2006 year classes. One year of netting indicates the 2005 year class may be weaker than average, especially on West Vermilion.

Fall electrofishing is used to sample young-of-the-year walleye and help determine reproductive success for the year. The 2006 fall electrofishing catch of young-of-the-year walleye was 84 fish/hour, slightly below the historical average (Figure 4). Electrofishing catches have varied widely on Lake Vermilion, due in part to differences in year class strength. East Vermilion usually has

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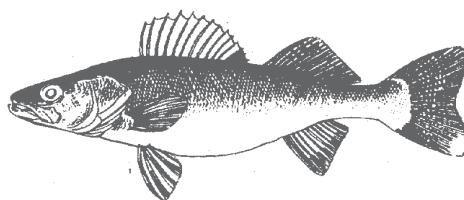


Figure 2. Walleye Length Frequency From Gill Nets, 2006.

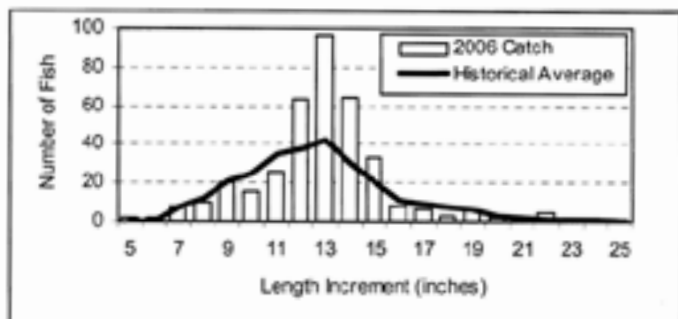
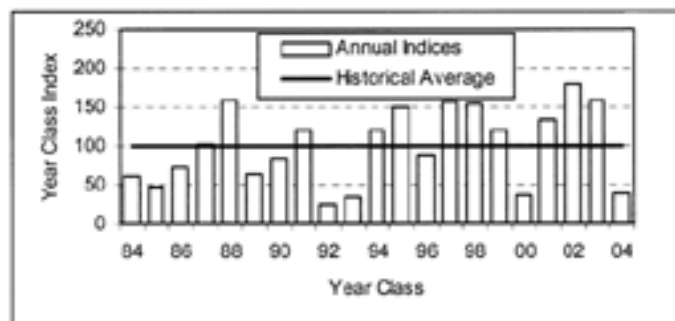


Figure 3. Walleye Year Class Strength Indices, 1984-2004.



Summary of 2006 Fish Population Assessment for Lake Vermilion

(Continued from Page 13)

higher electrofishing catches of young-of-the-year walleye than West Vermilion.

The average length of young-of-the-year walleye sampled by electrofishing was 6.0 inches, well above the historical average. Data from our sampling program indicates growth of young-of-the-year walleye is an important factor in eventual year class strength, with large fast growing young-of-the-year walleye producing strong year classes and small slow growing fish producing weak year classes. It is believed large young-of-the-year walleye have better over-winter survival than small fish. The mean length of young-of-the-year walleye can be used with the total number caught in a predictive model that will give a good indication of how strong a year class will be. The mean length and total catch indicate the 2006 year class will probably be slightly stronger than average.

Angling prospects for walleye in 2007 are very good. Strong year classes produced in 2002 and 2003 will provide good numbers of fish that will be 12-15 inches long at the beginning of the fishing season. On average, these fish can be expected to grow about two inches during the summer. Larger fish will be available to anglers from several strong year classes produced from 1997 to 2001, although these year classes have been greatly diminished by several years of fishing. Anglers may not catch as many small walleye as usual, due to poor reproduction in 2004.

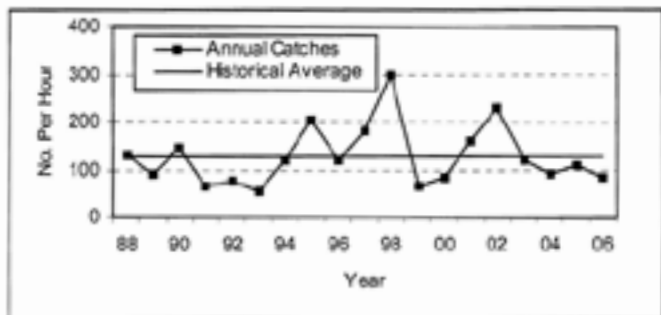
Poor reproduction in 2004 can be expected to impact fishing in 2008 and 2009.

In an effort to maintain fishing quality, the DNR implemented a special regulation for walleye on Lake Vermilion in 2006. The new regulation is a 17-26 inch protected slot with one fish allowed over 26 inches, and includes a four fish bag limit. Anglers must immediately return to the lake all walleye 17-26 inches long, inclusive. One walleye over 26 inches long is allowed in the daily and possession bag limit. Anglers fishing Lake Vermilion may only have 4 walleye in their daily and possession limit.

A more restrictive walleye regulation was adopted because fishing pressure and walleye harvest have increased in recent years. Creel surveys in 2002 and 2003 documented the highest walleye harvest ever observed on Lake Vermilion, well above the safe harvest level established for the lake. Consistent harvest above the safe harvest level could have negative consequences for the walleye population. The new slot limit will help keep harvest at a safe level, while allowing anglers to keep eating sized fish. Adding the 4-fish bag limit will also help keep harvest at a safe level and will be consistent with regulations recently adopted on other large walleye lakes in Minnesota.

The new regulation will be evaluated when the next cycle of creel surveys are done in 2008 and 2009. Hopefully, the new regulation will succeed in keeping harvest below the safe harvest level established for the lake.

Figure 4. Historical Electrofishing Catches of Young-Of-The-Year Walleye, 1988-2006



NORTHERN PIKE

The 2006 gill net catch of northern pike was 1.1 fish/net, which is near the historical average (Figure 5). Gill net catches of northern pike have historically been fairly stable at a relatively low level. West Vermilion usually has higher gill net catches of northern

pike than East Vermilion.

The average

length of
northern pike
sampled by
gill nets was

26.0 inches,

slightly above the historical average. A wide size range of northern pike were sampled, although the total sample size was only 22 fish. Reproduction of northern pike is usually fairly consistent from year to year, although a stronger than average year class was produced in 2001. Angling prospects for northern pike in 2007 should be similar to recent years.

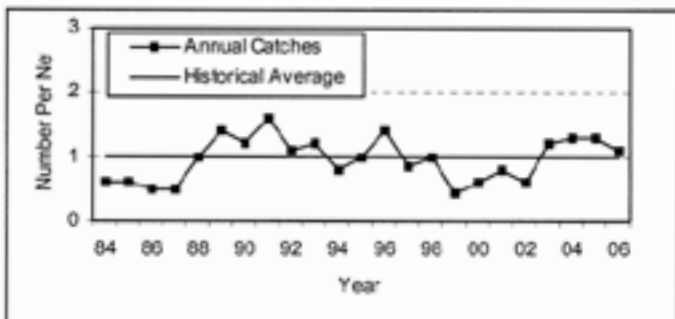
A special regulation for northern pike went into effect on Lake Vermilion in 2003. The new regulation is a 24-36 inch protected slot, with one fish allowed over 36 inches. All northern pike 24-36 inches long must immediately be returned to the lake. The bag limit remains at three fish. The new regulation is part of a statewide initiative to improve the size structure of pike populations in a number of lakes across the state. Historical fishing records indicate the number of medium and large pike has declined dramatically in Minnesota lakes over the past 50 years.

YELLOW PERCH

The 2006 gill net catch of yellow perch was 30.4 fish/net, slightly above the historical average (Figure 6). Perch gill net catches have been above average since 2002. Gill net catches of perch are usually similar between East Vermilion and West Vermilion,



Figure 5. Northern Pike Gill Net Catches, 1984-2006.



in 2006.

The average length of perch sampled by gill nets was 8.3 inches, well above the historical average. The large average size was due to above average numbers of 8-10 inch perch sampled on East Vermilion. Strong year classes of perch were produced in 2001 and 2002, while poor year classes were produced in 1999, 2000 and 2004.

Perch fishing is relatively insignificant on Lake Vermilion, with most of the harvest coming from anglers fishing for other species. There are more large perch in East Vermilion and most of the harvest comes from that lake basin. Perch in East Vermilion grow faster than West Vermilion perch, probably because they feed extensively on juvenile rusty crayfish that are abundant in that area of the lake. Perch are also an important food item for several species of gamefish, including walleye and northern pike.

BLUEGILL

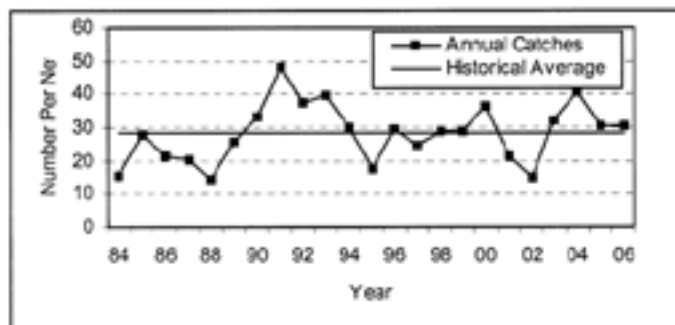
The 2006 trap net catch of bluegill was 15.4 fish/net, one of the lowest bluegill catches ever observed on Lake Vermilion (Figure 7). The low bluegill catch was due in part to poor reproduction in 2000 and 2004. Bluegill are much more abundant in West Vermilion and trap net catches there are always much higher than catches on East Vermilion.

The mean length of bluegill sampled by trap nets was 5.8 inches, slightly below the historical average. Above average



(Continued on Page 16)

Figure 6. Yellow Perch Gill Net Catches, 1984-2006



Summary of 2006 Fish Population Assessment for Lake Vermilion

(Continued from Page 15)

numbers of 4-inch bluegill were sampled from a strong year class produced in 2002. A moderately strong year class was also produced in 2001, while poor year classes were produced in 2000 and 2004.

Anglers can expect fair bluegill fishing in 2007, with the best fishing being on West Vermilion. Anglers may catch more small fish than usual from the strong year class produced in 2002. There are larger fish available to anglers from strong year classes produced in 1997 and 1998, although fish from these older year classes are not nearly as abundant as they were a few years ago.

BLACK CRAPPIE

The 2006 black crappie trap net catch was 1.1 fish/net, slightly below the historical average (Figure 8). Trap net catches of crappie have been relatively stable in recent years. Crappie numbers have historically been relatively low on Lake Vermilion, although a few areas of West Vermilion seem to have higher numbers of fish. Crappie trap net catches are usually higher on West Vermilion than East Vermilion.

The mean length of black crappie sampled by trap nets was 7.6 inches, slightly below the historical average. The catch of 4-5 inch

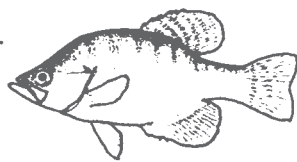
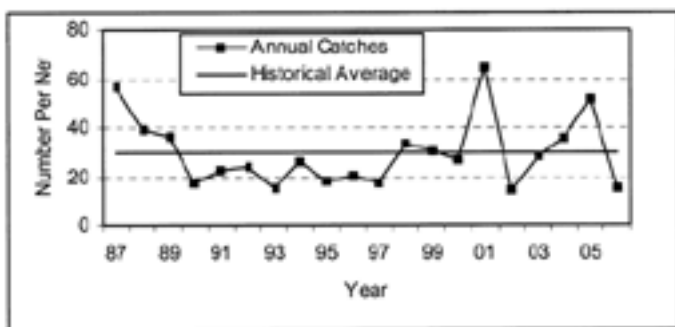


Figure 7. Bluegill Trap Net Catches, 1987-2006.

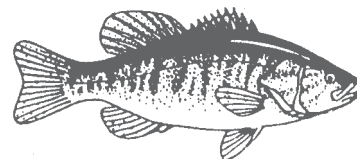


crappie was well above average, indicating a strong year class was likely produced in 2005. A strong year class was also produced in 2001, while poor year classes of crappie were produced in 2000 and 2004.

Angling prospects for crappie in 2007 are about average. Crappie from the strong 2001 year class will be about 11 inches long this spring. Fishing will be hurt slightly by poor reproduction in 2000.

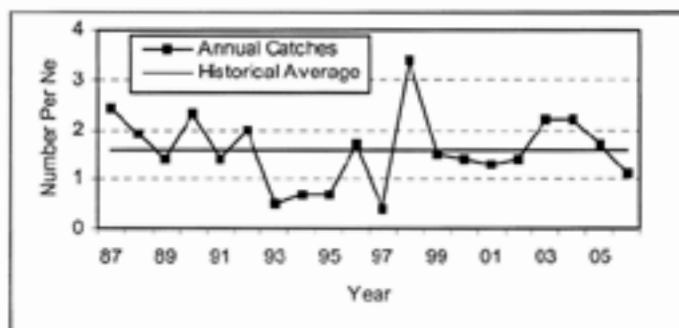
SMALLMOUTH BASS

An electrofishing boat is used as the standard sampling gear for smallmouth bass because they are not often caught in standard assessment nets. The 2006 smallmouth bass catch was 36.7 fish/hour of electrofishing, slightly above the historical average (Figure 9). Electrofishing catches of smallmouth bass have been relatively stable in recent years, after unusually high catches in 1999 and 2001. Sampling was not done in 2000 due to poor weather. The smallmouth bass catch was higher on East Vermilion than West Vermilion, although bass catches are usually higher on West Vermilion.



Smallmouth bass sampled by electrofishing had a mean length of 10.2 inches, which

Figure 8. Black Crappie Trap Net Catches, 1987-2006.

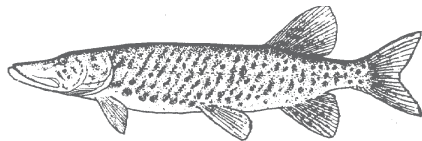


is near the historical average. Moderately strong year classes of bass were produced in 2001 and 2002, while poor year classes were produced in 2000 and 2004. A very strong 1997 year class dominated the population for a number of years, although the influence of this year class is now starting to diminish.

Angling prospects for smallmouth bass are good in 2007. Fish from the strong 1997 year class are now over 16 inches long. There are also good numbers of bass about 12 inches long available from a moderately strong year class produced in 2001.

MUSKIE

Muskie population assessments are done every four years, with East Vermilion and West Vermilion being done in different years due to the large size of the lake. Spring trap net assessments were done on East Vermilion in 2005 and on West Vermilion in 2006. The combined trap net catch for 2005 and 2006 was 1.5 fish/net, slightly higher than the previous catch in 2001 and 2002. Trap net catches of muskie have



been gradually increasing since the first set of assessments was done in 1993 and 1994. The mean length of trapnetted muskie was 44.5 inches, with 15% of the muskie sampled over 50 inches long. The largest muskie caught was 54.7 inches long.

A 48-inch minimum length regulation for muskie will go into effect on Lake Vermilion in 2007. The goal of the new regulation is to maintain the quality of the muskie fishery

that has been developed on the lake. This regulation will also be adopted on a number of other muskie lakes in Minnesota.

EXOTIC SPECIES

Several exotic species have become established in Lake Vermilion in the last 20 years. Rusty crayfish were first observed in 1986 and have since become extremely abundant in the eastern part of the lake. Purple loosestrife, a flowering plant that grows in wetlands and along shorelines, has been found at a number of locations on Lake Vermilion. Heterosporis, a microsporidean fish parasite, has been found in a number of lakes in Minnesota and recently identified in several fish from Lake Vermilion. Curly leaf pondweed has been found in Everett Bay and Niles Bay in recent years. Curly leaf pondweed is an aquatic plant native to Europe, although it has been present in areas of the United States and southern Minnesota for many years.

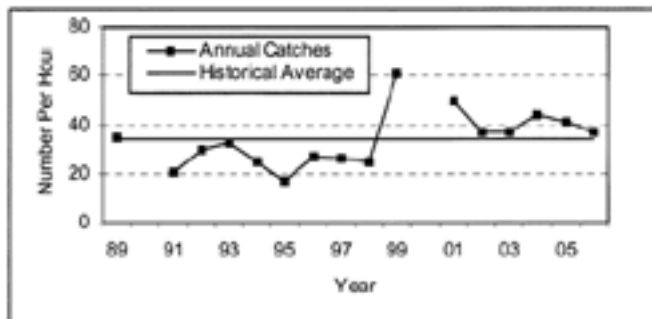
The DNR has taken several steps to prevent the spread of exotic species. It is now illegal to transport exotic species, infested water and aquatic vegetation from lake to lake. The DNR also established a program to educate the public about exotic species and inspect boats at some public accesses. The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion has conducted voluntary boat inspections several times a year since 2004.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

There has been an increase in fishing tournaments on Lake Vermilion in recent years, generating some concerns among other lake users. The DNR considers fishing tournaments to be a legitimate activity on Minnesota lakes, as long as prescribed regulations and guidelines are followed. Area and Regional Fisheries staff will work within the framework of state regulations to manage tournaments on Lake Vermilion in a manner that will protect fish populations and minimize conflict with other lake users. Permits from the DNR are needed for most fishing tournaments. Permits have been issued or applications received for the following

(Continued on Page 18)

Figure 9. Smallmouth Bass Electrofishing Catches, 1989-2006.



Summary of 2006 Fish Population Assessment for Lake Vermilion

(Continued from Page 17)

tournaments on Lake Vermilion in 2007:

- May 19: City Auto Glass Walleye Classic, 100 boats
- June 2: Reel Em In On Lake Vermilion Walleye Tournament, 60 boats
- July 20-21: Minnesota Muskie Trail Tournament, 100 boats
- August 10-11: Lake Vermilion Muskie Challenge, 60 boats

FISH STOCKING

The Minnesota DNR operates a major walleye egg-take operation and hatchery at the mouth of the Pike River on Lake Vermilion. Walleye produced at the hatchery are used for stocking programs in northeastern Minnesota and other areas of the state. A portion of the fry produced from this egg-take are stocked back into Lake Vermilion each year, although it is not known if these stocked fry contribute to the walleye population. Large natural walleye lakes usually have sufficient natural reproduction to maintain a healthy population and seldom benefit from additional stocking.

A walleye fry marking project is being considered for Lake Vermilion and several other walleye egg-take lakes, possible beginning in 2008. Walleye fry would be marked by immersion in an oxytetracycline bath, which leaves a permanent mark on bony structures in the inner ear that can be identified at later stages of life. There is no other effect on the fish. Marking stocked walleye fry will help determine how much stocked fry contribute to the walleye population and allow estimates of wild fry production to be calculated. Marked walleye fry would be stocked for a number of years at various rates to determine optimal stocking rates. Similar marking projects have been done on several other large walleye lakes in recent years and have contributed greatly to the understanding of walleye reproduction in these lakes.

An intensive muskie stocking program was started on Lake Vermilion in 1987, using Leech Lake strain fingerlings. All muskie stocked since 1993 have been fin-clipped to help evaluate natural reproduction. The

current stocking rate on Lake Vermilion is 5,000 fingerlings every other year. The stocking rate will likely be reduced to 4,000 fish beginning in 2008. Fewer fish are needed to maintain a population of muskie once it has become well established. There also appears to be some natural reproduction occurring, based on the presence of muskie without fin-clips in the 2005-2006 population assessments.

The DNR and the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion cooperatively operate a controlled northern pike spawning area at Sunset Creek on the west end of the lake. The spawning area is stocked with brood fish and the water level is maintained at an optimal level for spawning and the production of fingerlings.

HABITAT and WATER QUALITY

Preserving fish habitat and water quality continues to be a management priority on Lake Vermilion. Increased shoreline development in recent years could result in the loss of aquatic habitat and degradation of water quality. The DNR has several programs that protect fish habitat and water quality, primarily by regulating shoreline alterations and the removal of aquatic plants. Aquatic vegetation and shallow near-shore areas both provide critical habitat for a number of fish species. Counties and other local units of government also have regulations that protect habitat and water quality. Individual property owners can also take a number of steps to manage their shoreline in an environmentally sound manner. For more information on properly managing lakeshore, as well as other DNR programs, go to the DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us

‘A Viral Fish Virus’ — from Wisconsin DNR

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin anglers can no longer use imported bait unless it meets strict testing requirements and they can't move live fish from the Great Lakes or the Mississippi River under an emergency rule adopted Wednesday to contain an exotic virus that causes fish to bleed to death. The Great Lakes states have been bracing for the viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus, which kills fish by causing massive internal bleeding. The virus poses no threat to humans, but wildlife officials warn it could wreak havoc with fish populations and commercial and recreational fishing.

Michael Staggs, director of the fish management bureau in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, said the Great Lakes has become home to some 250 invasive species. But the virus is worse than any of them, he said.

"It doesn't just show up there and compete with the native species. It kills a broad range of fish," Staggs said.

The virus has caused significant muskie and walleye kills in Lakes Huron, Erie and Ontario and probably has spread into Lake Michigan, where it could cause huge kills this spring, Staggs said. New York and Pennsylvania have adopted rules this year to contain the virus. Michigan is drafting similar measures.

Wisconsin officials fear the virus could spread to Lake Superior and into the Mississippi River through the Illinois River, which connects to Lake Michigan. From there it could spread to inland waters, endangering bluegills, trout, salmon, bass, muskies, northern pike, walleye and perch, according to the DNR.

The Natural Resources Board, which oversees the DNR, adopted the rule unanimously with little discussion recently in a conference call. The measure has been implemented.

Under the rule:

- Possessing and using bait fish, including crayfish and frogs, from outside Wisconsin that haven't been tested for the virus is prohibited. Staggs said the state Department of Agriculture has been testing fish imported to Wisconsin by bait shops and bait wholesalers for the virus, but the rule is designed to stop individual anglers from driving to another state and returning with bait such as minnows.

- Possessing and using dead bait is prohibited except in Lake Michigan or the waters where the bait originated. The virus can survive in dead bait that has

been frozen, Staggs said.

- Moving live fish and eggs from the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, as in live boxes or buckets, is not allowed unless tests for the virus are negative.

- Boaters must drain all water from bilges, ballast, buckets and live wells immediately after leaving the Great Lakes or the Mississippi — the first time the state has ever required that. Staggs said the virus can live in water for up to two weeks.

The rule will be in effect for 150 days. The DNR can then ask the state Legislature to extend it another 120 days.

Bait sellers fear the rule will force them to raise prices.

Dave Gollon, owner of Dodgeville-based Gollon Bait and Fish Farm, which imports bait from other states, said he might have to spend hundreds of dollars per test and he's fed up with the government's inability to stop invasive species from pouring into the Great Lakes.

"Everybody's going to end up paying the price again because of our government's failure to respond in an arena they should be," Gollon said.

"I think people will just have to be ready for the price of bait to go up," said Scott Gartner, owner of Bob's Bait and Tackle in La Crosse, which gets its bait from Gollon.

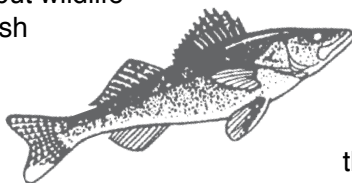
George Meyer, executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, told the board the regulations make sense.

"We understand that these restrictions will cause economic dislocations on the bait industry and that truly is unfortunate," Meyer said in a statement he read to the board. "However the ecologic damage and the economic damage... requires the imposition of these restrictions."

Michael Sanger of Oak Creek, a Great Lakes fisherman and the Wisconsin delegate to the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, said he hasn't spoken with the council about Wisconsin's rules. Speaking for himself, he said the new regulations are no big deal.

"If it stops that virus from getting inland, it's probably worthwhile," Sanger said. "Everything is slow motion on saving the Great Lakes. Every year there's two or three more invaders."

Staggs told the board no one knows how the virus arrived in the lakes. One possibility is through ballast water discharge from oceangoing ships, he said.



Living with Wildlife – Geese Got You Down?

Cindy Hagley, Minnesota Sea Grant, 218-726-8713, chagley@umn.edu

People who work in natural resources or water quality disciplines and interact with the public get a lot of questions every year related to geese problems. Knowing a little bit about Canada geese can help make it easier for us to live with each other.

Those of us who grew up in the 1960s and 70s got very excited by the rare sound of Canada geese migrating overhead in spring and fall. Nowadays the much more routine sight of geese is just as likely to trigger very different emotions because they have become a nuisance in many areas. What has changed? The geese that migrate through the state are actually a different subspecies of Canada goose than the ones that have adopted our urban lakes and lawns and often remain throughout the winter. Populations of the pesky giant Canada goose, nearly eliminated from the region by the 1930s through wetland drainage and uncontrolled hunting and egg collection, have recovered and found everything they need to survive right in our backyards, including public parks, golf courses, beaches, playgrounds, and lawns.

The problem is that too many geese can result in significant concerns** including:

- fecal contamination;
- water quality problems, including nutrient and bacteria additions;
- aggressive bird behavior, especially during breeding seasons;
- interference with human activities like picnics and swimming;
- aircraft collisions and airport approach safety;
- disease transmission among birds;
- erosion and grazing damage where waterfowl congregate.

(**D.L. Sperling, Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, December 1998.)

So what can you do if geese have moved in with you? Probably the simplest solution is to try and see the world from a goose's viewpoint. Geese are often nuisances because they are looking for the same real estate as humans – nearby water, lots of grass (their preferred food source), and few places where predators can hide. As our shorelines become more developed and urbanized, we create more and more habitat for geese, but there is good news – some simple solutions not only reduce goose problems but also help protect the water quality of our lakes and streams. Reducing the size of your lawn and increasing the native shrubs and perennials near the water's edge will



Adult geese and goslings can cause problems for lawns.

make your property less attractive to geese, especially if there is dense, native vegetation along the shoreline. Doing this removes the feeding habitat and eliminates their "escape route" from predators. Shorelines that are allowed to grow over with tall grasses and shrubs are not only less attractive to geese but also help to reduce water quality impacts from erosion, sedimentation, and nutrients that can come from urban lawns. Not only that, but less lawn means less of your time at the lake is spent on lawn care!

Many more suggestions for goose control can be found at: www.wnrmag.com/stories/1998/dec98/geese.htm.

wrc.coafes.umn.edu

www.seagrant.umn.edu

www.extension.umn.edu

www.shorelandmanagement.org



From Shore to Shore is made possible by Minnesota Sea Grant, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center and University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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Volunteers wanted for summer season boat checks!

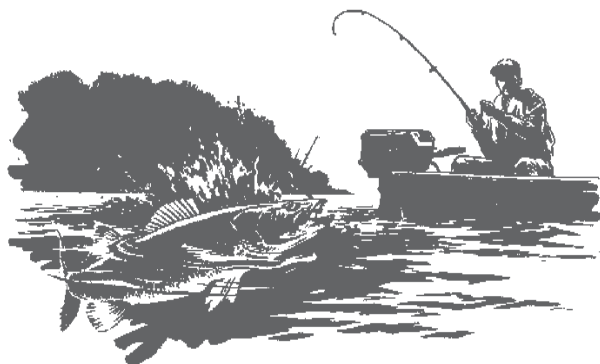
Each summer season your SCLV has been inspecting boats for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) primarily at public boat ramps. We perform these checks when trailer & boat traffic to the ramps might be peaking. Usually this corresponds with major summer holidays. The public ramps we staff are Hoodoo Point, Moccasin Point, Timbuktu and if we can obtain more volunteers, perhaps the Everett Bay Ramp. Each "shift" is about two hours long with two people or more on duty. We feel this is not difficult to handle and if the boat and trailer traffic is heavy, the time will pass quickly.

While at the ramp we inspect the equipment for any weeds and zebra mussels and ask the owner if there is water in the boat bilge and live well. If some or a combination of these conditions exist, we ask the owner to please remove the weeds, etc. and drain the bilge and live well water back some distance from the lake. We also distribute literature concerning the seriousness of transporting invasive species and identification cards and brochures picturing the various exotic species. As you know, Mille Lacs has Zebra Mussels, Leech has Eurasian Milfoil and Rainy now has Spiny Waterfleas to name just a few lakes currently affected. These are large lakes, and according to our surveys, boats and trailers do travel to Vermilion from them every summer. Our only real means of preventing a Vermilion invasion is public support and education. Boat checks are only one tool in our bag. See the Invasive Species article in this issue for other actions planned to shed light on the problem.

Can you help? If so, contact Bob Wilson, 1501 Echo Point, Tower, MN 55790 or call Bob on 218-753-5544 or E-Mail wcr4@yahoo.com. If you are new to this activity, we will train you. If we get enough new volunteers we will arrange for the MN-DNR out of St. Paul to hold a special class somewhere on or near Lake Vermilion. If you have been involved in past seasons, we will be in touch with you as the first boat check date approaches. Thanks for your consideration!

FISHING SEASON OPENS

SATURDAY, MAY 12



“It’s spring
fever... You
don’t quite
know what it
is you do want,
but it just
fairly makes
your heart
ache, you
want it so!”

MARK TWAIN

10 TIPS for 10,000

What Everyone Can Do to Preserve Our Water

Reprinted from: Initiative Foundation's IQ

1) **Keep it natural — restore your shore**

Preserving or installing a shoreline landscape that is rich in native species allows water to soak in rather than run off. Plants absorb nutrients, and vegetative buffers along shorelines also trap sediments that fill in wetlands and lakes. Natural erosion controls are more consistent with an “up-north” look than unnatural shoreline erosion treatments such as rip-rap.

2) **Know your lake & river rules**

Shoreline areas provide important habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and fish and are crucial for maintaining healthy populations of the native species that Minnesotans cherish. It is unlawful in Minnesota to knowingly alter shoreline, fish habitat, or aquatic vegetation without a permit from the Minnesota DNR. Upland permits are often required by the county or city — check local ordinances. Educate yourself about other water use rules, such as boat and water safety, installing permanent and floating docks, or hunting/fishing regulations.

3) **Appreciate aquatic plants**

Aquatic “weeds” are a critical life-support system for our lakes. With their amazing filtering abilities, native aquatic plants such as cattails and bulrushes are natural water purifiers — taking up nutrients and allowing sunlight to penetrate into the lake and create the base of the food chain. The rooted aquatic vegetation is also a veritable fish nursery. Work to minimize the removal of shoreline aquatic vegetation.

4) **Reduce your lawn**

The fertilizers and clippings from traditional lawns contribute to poor lake water quality. Install a native landscape and mow less. Once established, natural landscapes are less expensive and easier to maintain than traditional lawns. If lawn is desired, use only phosphorus-free fertilizers and maintain a lawn that is at least thirty feet from the lake. Keep native trees and vegetation, with their extensive root systems — they help stabilize the landscape, aid in groundwater recharge, and reduce runoff.

5) **Maintain your septic system**

Keep your septic system in good working order. Pump at least every three years (more if you use a garbage disposal), conserve water; properly dispose of harmful paints and household chemicals, fix leaky faucets, and consider service agreements with regular maintenance.

6) **Reduce roofs and roads**

Roofs, sidewalks, paved driveways, and roads increase the amount of water that runs off into our lakes. Run-off water carries fertilizers, household cleaners, paints, solvents, pesticides, and motor oil. Decrease the amount of hard surfaces on your property. Use newer, more pervious materials for sidewalks, driveways, and patios,

7) **Properly dispose of animal waste**

Controlling pet and livestock waste improves the quality of our waters. Pet and livestock waste can travel into our waters more easily than human-produced wastes, because they are not subject to the same wastewater treatment that human wastes are. Dispose of such wastes far from the water's edge to help ensure that bacteria, phosphorus and nitrogen from these wastes don't end up in our lakes.

8) **Be considerate of all lake & river users**

Shoreland owners and users value Minnesota waters in many different ways. Consider some of the many different ways we use our lakes: personal watercraft, boating, tubing, water-skiing, fishing, hunting, canoeing, wildlife-watching, and swimming. Part of being a good lake steward and neighbor is being considerate of everyone's values. Follow local watercraft rules and noise ordinances to help ensure a positive experience for everyone who uses Minnesota's waters for recreation.

9) **Support land conservation**

The donation or purchase of conservation easements is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect sensitive shorelines from development. Shoreland owners and users can help by maintaining records of changes to shoreline; keeping a watchful eye out for upcoming land sales or transfers; and encouraging donations (land or financial) to conservation easement programs, projects, committees, or land trusts.

10) **Show up. Speak up. Write a check.**

Decisions are made by those who show up and speak up. Join your lake association or river group. Give money, time, input, and feedback to support organizations working to protect Minnesota's waters for future generations. Share your knowledge with your neighbors and with those elected and appointed officials who represent you. Be vigilant.

Message from Amy Loiselle

To all who care for Lake Vermilion, please appreciate the native vegetation in the near shore area, both in the water and on the shore. It's the key to maintaining habitat and a high quality lake system. And if there is not much native vegetation present, consider how you can add some and still maintain your view and enjoyment of the lake.

Anyone with any questions regarding shore-line projects, please browse the DNR web site at www.dnr.state.mn.us and then please e-mail or telephone me with any questions, such as "Do I need a permit to do the project that I'm planning?"

Amy Loiselle, Area Hydrologist

MN DNR Waters Division

E-mail: AmyLoiselle@dnr.state.mn.us

Phone: 218-744-7450 ext. 2222

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NOTICE CONCERNING DUES

I've had inquiries from you members as to when to pay your yearly dues. Let me help explain.

At the end of November I mail out your membership cards for the forthcoming year. You may pay the dues then or wait awhile. Our bylaws state anytime up to our annual meeting in August. We then print our membership roster bringing it up to date, and hope all of your names are there.

If by chance you forget, well, we sure don't want to lose you. Your dues are welcome anytime. It just helps our record keeping.

Thank you,
Mardy Jackson
Membership Records
SCLV Board

MISSION STATEMENT of The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.

— To promote and enhance the outdoor experience of Lake Vermilion for present and future generations by

- Maintaining and improving the Lake Vermilion fishery
- Promoting "Catch and Release"
- Promoting safe boating practices
- Establishing and maintaining a "Night Navigational Aid System"
- Establishing and maintaining shore lunch/picnic sites
- Monitoring and protecting area wildlife

— To protect and improve the water quality of Lake Vermilion by

- Monitoring water quality in cooperation with interested government agencies
- Promoting shoreline preservation and re-vegetation
- Monitoring exotic species and preventing their spread
- Promoting sound conservation practices in the Lake Vermilion watershed

— To educate club members and the public regarding issues which impact Lake Vermilion by

- Publishing a periodic newsletter and distributing it to club members and the public
- Maintaining an internet website containing previously published newsletters and other information about the club and Lake Vermilion
- Publishing news releases and articles pertaining to club activities in other publications

Join us.

Add your voice to those of your neighbors and friends around the lake who share a love for Lake Vermilion.

Complete the membership form, DETACH THE ENTIRE PAGE and mail with your check, made payable to Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion.

Thank you.

☐ NEW MEMBER

(Check one, please)

☐ RENEWAL

SPORTSMEN'S CLUB OF LAKE VERMILION, INC.

Mardy Jackson, Membership Records

P.O. Box 696

Tower, MN 55790

Enclosed is \$10 for a single membership for one year (Jan. 1, 2007____ to Jan. 1, 2008____) or \$15/yr. for couple membership or \$20/yr. for the "family" membership or \$50/yr. for a business/organization in the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please send, also, Shoulder Patches at \$2.00 and Car Window Decals at \$1.00 each.

HELP US MAKE A BEAUTIFUL LAKE EVEN BETTER!



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Permit No. 25

↑ DETACH HERE ↓