

# THE VERMILION



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*To Protect  
and Improve  
Lake Vermilion*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**H**appy Spring, Lake Neighbors and Friends,  
As colleagues and I write our newsletter messages in late March, we gaze out seeing the sun shining brightly on an ice-covered lake. Personally, I'm betting on an early ice-out (my pool guess is April 1, which would be a record breaker). Whatever the date is, I'm fairly certain that, with our warmer than normal spring weather to date, we'll have open waters by the time you receive this publication in early May. With the "season opener," and I'm not referring to fishing only, the VLA has a whole host of projects and team work that kicks off.

With a potentially early ice-out, our beloved loons will make their return soon afterward. Our loon nest platform teams will place several structures throughout the lake to provide alternatives to shoreland nesting sites that are more vulnerable to predation. Boaters are encouraged to maintain safe distances of at least 200 feet if you encounter a platform or natural nesting site. An exciting new project this year is our work to provide a live loon nest cam for one of our platforms. Thanks to a new father-son volunteer team, along with an enthusiastic member whose home provides great access for the cam and connectivity, we're hopeful this will provide members and others new insights into the loon's nesting habits and behaviors. Look for more information on page 3.

With the fishing opener just a few days away, we're pleased once again to have Matt Hennen, our local Tower DNR Large Lake Biologist|Fish Division, sharing his extensive Annual Fisheries Update in this edition. In early April, Matt shared a virtual presentation of similar findings with our VLA Board, the Fishing Guides League, and the Resort & Tourism Association. We're fortunate to have Matt's advanced expertise in our region and his work over several years for trend analysis. There are always new findings and various perspectives to share about the fisheries, and we appreciate the opportunity to have open dialogue.

The VLA expanded our fisheries team led by Terry Grosshauser this winter/early spring as a result of extensive Vermilion fishing pressure last season and the expectation of the same this year. You'll see that this collaborative group is encouraging use of Voluntary Fishing Conservation Guidelines on page 16.



Pat Michaelson  
VLA President

Don't get nervous if you spot an unidentified flying object (UFO) this spring/summer propelling over Pine Island and into Big Bay. With the help of a new veterinary scientist volunteer, and at the request of Matt Hennen at the DNR, we'll be doing monthly drone observations of the cormorants and their nesting habitat on Potato Island from just after ice-out through late September. Many are eager to have more accurate cormorant data over a period of time and we're hopeful these fly-overs will assist in that effort.

With spring's arrival and our yard and shoreline work underway for the season, now is the time to consider participation in our new Lake Steward program led by Wayne Suoja, VLA's Shoreline Restoration and Water Quality leader. Along with volunteer Jeff Forester, they will guide this important work, adapted from a similar initiative on Gull Lake, engaging property owners to "score" our shorelines utilizing an easy 10-question "quiz." Based on our scores, they'll provide guidance for improvements for those of us who may have opportunities to make changes that will enhance our shorelines to protect water quality and improve critical habitat for birds, fish and other northwoods creatures. See page 5 for next steps in the program.

For the sixth year, Jeff Lovgren, our Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) leader, submitted a grant application for spring 2021-22. We are grateful for the support from the St Louis County AIS Prevention Program for the funding of our plan focused on Prevention, Early Detection, and Containment. The VLA's AIS crew is our largest volunteer team, working on various components of this program to protect this

**Continued on next page**

**Cover photo: "Just a three-year old boy and his walleye" by Jamie Kitzman, one of our 2020 Photo Contest winners.**

# Live from Lake Vermilion!

*Coming Soon... from the VLA's very own Loon NestCam*

By Noel and Chris Sederstrom

When we head north to Lake Vermilion, we can't wait for the water, the wind, the smell of the pine trees—it's not only a breath of fresh air but food for the spirit. And later, when we hear the loons calling to each other, we realize we've been away too long.

There's something about our Lake Vermilion loons. They help make our troubles seem far away, and their loon family somehow becomes part of our family. When they suddenly appear around the end of the island, we call to each other and go running to see how many there are and, later in the summer, to see if there are any



little ones riding along with Mom and Dad.

With a long lens and a little patience, it's possible to get close enough to one of our Lake Vermilion loons for a great photo. Some even have a degree of trust in their human counterparts. Now wouldn't it be great to be able to watch them up close?

It's with great pride and anticipation that a few of us are actively working on boosting our Lake

Vermilion loons' visibility to the outside world, to share the magic of these amazing creatures.

Look for our Live Loon NestCam to pop up on the Vermilion Lake Association website and a VLA YouTube channel in the next month or so.

We're trying to do this the right way, of course. We'll be protecting the privacy of the loon family, and their human neighbors, so please don't attempt to physically visit the site. But if we do our setup work right, you can keep an eye on them on your phone, computer or even your big screen smart TV in late May, June and July.

## *VLA Volunteer Opportunity: Throwing a rake can be loads of FUN....and helps protect Lake Vermilion*

**A**IS Sentries needed on both East and West ends. Sentries are trained in Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) identification, then working with our Sentry Leader, monitor specified boat launches 3-4 times per season, gathering weed samples for visual inspection and reporting. Contact Pat Michaelson, VLA Volunteer Program Leader, if you have an interest in learning more about this boat-er-friendly opportunity; [plmichaelson@gmail.com](mailto:plmichaelson@gmail.com).

## *President's Message....from page 2*

lake gem. We can always use more "hands on deck" with our AIS team, specifically Sentries interested in "throwing a rake" to assess lake vegetation, and a new volunteer who will explore an innovation to assist our boat launchers with "clean, drain, dry" at less frequently used accesses.

We are very excited to be planning for our Annual Member Meeting after last summer's (COVID) hiatus. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, August

7th from 3-7 p.m. at Camp Vermilion. Mark your calendars, plan to join us, and watch for more details in our summer newsletter.

Enjoy this spring edition highlighting other VLA activities and please reach out to me with any questions or suggestions you may have.

**Be Safe, Pat Michaelson, VLA Volunteer Program Leader and President**

# Donations

The Vermilion Lake Association has qualified as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). Your charitable gifts and membership dues are generally tax deductible for federal income



Lake Association has three funds to which gifts may be directed. Any size gift is appreciated and acknowledged.

tax purposes. Please consult your tax professional.

To accommodate a wide range of donor interests, the Vermilion

**General Fund:** Gifts to this fund are used for a broad range of lake association activities.

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Fund:** Gifts to this fund are used to prevent new AIS infestations and to manage infestations already present.

**Shore Lunch Site Improvement Fund:** Gifts to this fund are used to improve and maintain Lake Vermilion's eight shore lunch sites.

## How to Make a Donation

If you'd like to send a check, please make it payable to "Vermilion Lake Association, Inc." and mail to the

address below. If you wish, you may direct your donation to a specific fund.

All gifts are appreciated and acknowledged. Please include your name, email, and mailing address.

If this is a memorial gift, please let us know who the gift is in memory/in honor of.

**Vermilion Lake Association, Jerry Lepper, Treasurer, P.O. Box 696, Tower, MN 55790**

Donate online at <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/get-involved/donate/>

*Your Supports Helps the Vermilion Lake Association  
Make a Beautiful Lake Even Better!*

## Board of Directors and Officers 2021

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## “SAVE THE DATE”

*Vermilion Lake Association Annual Meeting • August 7,  
2021 from 3-7 p.m. • Camp Vermilion, Cook, MN*

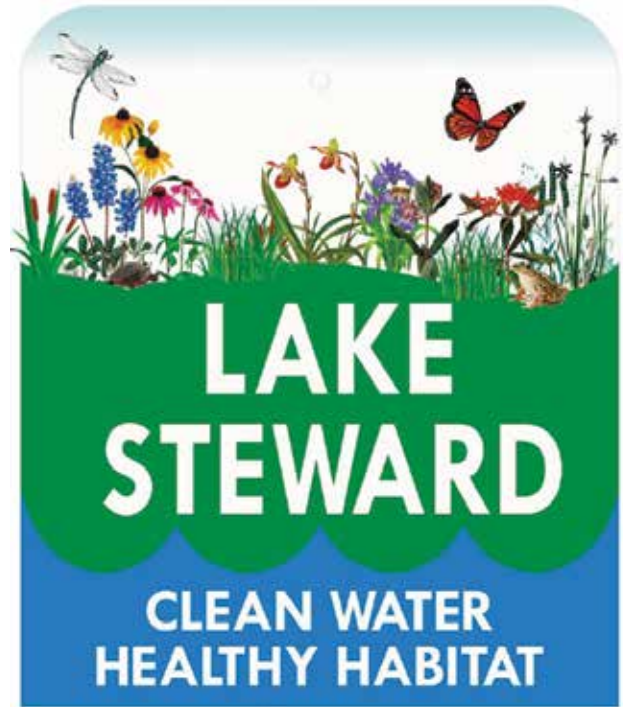
# Become a Vermilion Lake Steward

By Wayne Suoja and Jeff Forester

**M**innesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR), working with the Vermilion Lake Association (VLA) and the North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), has launched the Lake Steward Program by using a 10-question quiz to “Score Your Shore”. Afterwards, a VLA volunteer will visit the participant’s property and follow up with the owner to learn their goals and hopes for the property. Owners who qualify and decide to become a Lake Steward are awarded a beautiful sign with the VLA logo (see at right) to be displayed at the end of their dock.

Lake Vermilion has many unique types of shoreline, and even if you decide not to become a Lake Steward, you can still protect the aquatic habitat and water quality. Your VLA volunteer can talk with the property owner about steps they can take to improve their shoreline. The MLR, VLA, and SWCD can provide information to property owners about companies that can do restoration, plant suggestions, and matching grant opportunities.

If you are interested in improving the shoreline habitat on your property, the SWCD is piloting a project to assist landowners with planting a shoreline buffer. Over the course of a couple select days this fall, a Conservation Corps Crew will be working on Lake Vermilion to restore or enhance a handful of landowner projects. If you are interested in taking part of this opportunity, start by taking the Lake Steward Quiz! The VLA volunteers will help you determine if this opportunity will be a good fit for your property and goals. You can also contact Becca Reiss, the North St. Louis SWCD at [becca@nslswcd.org](mailto:becca@nslswcd.org) or 218-288-6143.



### *How to become a Lake Steward*

- Take the quiz here: <http://mnlakesandrivers.org/> and click on Score Your Shore.
- A VLA volunteer will visit your property and make recommendations if needed.
- When qualified receive a Lake Steward sign with the VLA logo.

For more information and if you want to participate, please contact Jeff Forester from MLR at [jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org](mailto:jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org) or Wayne Suoja (VLA Board member) at [wsuoja@frontiernet.net](mailto:wsuoja@frontiernet.net) or call 218-753-2162.

*Featuring Lake Vermilion's "Most Unwanted" Species...the fourth in a series.*

## **Zebra Mussels** **(*Dreissena polymorpha*)**

### ***What are they?***

Zebra mussels are small fresh-water animals with D-shaped shells. They're typically ¼" to 1¼" long. The shells have alternating yellow and brown stripes which give the mussels their name. A zebra mussel will attach to hard surfaces – natural or manmade – like rocks, docks, pipes, and other mussels. They are native to parts of Eastern Europe and Western Russia.



**Zebra mussels with a penny to show actual size.**

### ***Are zebra mussels common in Minnesota?***

They're not everywhere yet but have expanded rapidly to popular lakes in the southern 2/3rd of Minnesota where the limestone-based water chemistry provides suitable habitat. Zebras generally move to new lakes and rivers hitchhiking on boats, in residual water, and on other equipment, like docks and boat lifts.

### ***Do zebra mussels create problems?***

Big problems! Where the habitat is ideal, they can expand to thousands of individuals per square foot on all available hard surfaces. An individual zebra mussel can filter a quart of water a day, removing microscopic algae at the bottom of the food web for young fish. The clearer water allows light to penetrate deeper, promoting excessive vegetation growth. Everything changes.

### ***Is Vermilion's habitat suitable for zebras?***

Like much of the Arrowhead, our calcium levels and pH are not a good match for zebras. No zebra mussels have been found in Lake Vermilion, despite almost certainly having been introduced by the many boats which launch here each year. But there is one location where we might be at risk – East Two River – which empties into Pike Bay. Depending on rainfall, East Two's water chemistry varies significantly during the season and, at times, may have calcium levels and pH suitable for zebras.

### ***So, what are we doing to protect Vermilion?***

Our public access and resort AIS inspectors are carefully examining boats entering our lake for any attached vegetation or animals, including zebras. And our early detection sentries are watching for new infestations near our launches. A special team focuses on East Two River due to the risks mentioned above.

### ***What can property owners and visitors do?***

If you see a suspicious plant or animal that you don't recall seeing at that location before, call the VLA AIS Hotline 218-288-1080. An AIS Detector will respond to help make an identification.

### ***Where can I get more info on zebra mussels?***

Use Google or visit this DNR webpage: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquaticanimals/index.html>

# Strengthening the AIS Team at Lake Vermilion

In our last newsletter, we described our 2021 AIS prevention plan as looking a lot like our 2020 plan. That's a good thing. It means our threat environment is stable, our strategy is on track, and we can focus on making our current processes more robust and efficient.



any situation we might encounter. We're partitioning our AIS activities into about 10 categories with volunteer leaders, co-leaders and workers empowered to handle each. The categories range from early detection to resort partnerships to public education to financial administration. We'll tell you more about these categories and introduce the volunteers involved in future newsletters.

Want to pitch in? Please contact VLA Volunteer Program Leader Pat Michaelson at 612-306-7702 or [plmichaelson@gmail.com](mailto:plmichaelson@gmail.com).

**Jeff Lovgren is the AIS Program Co-Leader**

Equally important, it gives us a chance to focus on building leadership depth and "bench strength" to assure our AIS program has the capacity to handle

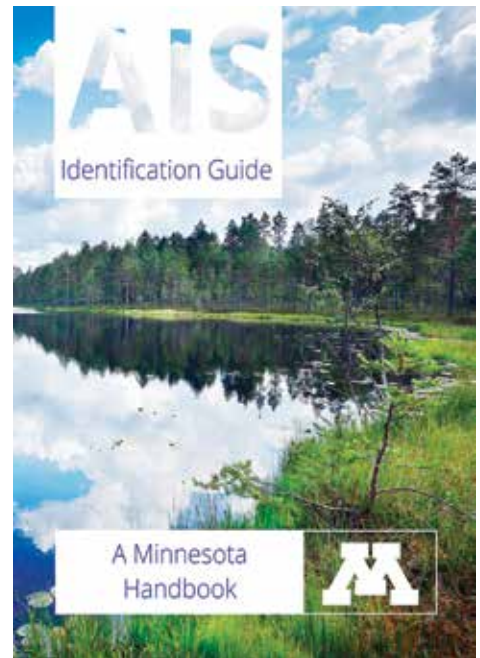
## *An AIS Identification Guide to Help You Help Our Lake*

Lake Vermilion welcomes all the help she can get to protect against invasive species. If you're a cabin owner or frequent lake visitor and you'd like to become better at identifying aquatic species at Lake Vermilion, we suggest you obtain a copy of the same identification guide used by our trained AIS Detectors and volunteer access sentries.

The spiral-bound reference is water-resistant and called ... what else ... AIS Identification Guide. It's produced by the Minnesota AIS Research Center and is available in-person or online at UM Bookstores for about \$40. ISBN 978-0-692-90536-4. It's an outstanding reference which belongs on every cabin coffee table.

Questions? Please contact AIS Program Coordinator Jeff Lovgren at [lovgren.jeff@gmail.com](mailto:lovgren.jeff@gmail.com), or 218-290-7793.

If you'd like to consider becoming a volunteer access sentry, please contact Volunteer Program Leader Pat Michaelson at [plmichaelson@gmail.com](mailto:plmichaelson@gmail.com), or 612-306-7702.



## *VLA Caps make a great present!*



They're here! Wear your new caps proudly to show your support for your lake association. The price is right: \$15, plus \$3 shipping for any number of caps to one address. Free local pickup. Check out the three style choices at our website [VermilionLakeAssociation.org/caps](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org/caps).

**For more info, contact Sheri Sawatzky at 218-780-8178 or email [sherisawatzky@gmail.com](mailto:sherisawatzky@gmail.com).**

# Status of the Lake Vermilion Fishery



## 2021 Angling Prospects

Lake Vermilion continues to be a solid multispecies fishery that provides both catch and harvest opportunities for several species. The annual DNR survey in 2020 indicated that walleye abundance is near record highs throughout the lake despite the seemingly higher than normal fishing pressure that occurred. The high walleye abundance is due to recent strong year-classes that were mostly under 15 inches in the fall of 2020. These fish should provide ample catch and harvest opportunities in 2021 and beyond. Also, an abundance of walleyes over 20 inches will continue to provide memorable catch opportunities throughout the lake while also ensuring plenty of broodstock.



Matt Hennen  
Large Lake  
Specialist DNR

Anglers seeking muskellunge (muskie) will find opportunities for fish with trophy potential as a significant portion of the population are 50 inches or larger. Anglers targeting smallmouth bass should find them throughout the lake. East Vermilion has fewer but on average larger fish than West Vermilion, which has higher numbers of smaller fish. Additionally, largemouth bass can be found in low numbers overall, but certain areas of West Vermilion provide the best catch opportunities. Although low in abundance overall, northern pike can be found in specific areas providing catch and harvest opportunities with the possibility to catch fish up to 40 inches. Additionally, black crappie and bluegill will continue to provide angling opportunities. Whitefish and cisco (tullibee) offer harvest opportunities primarily during the fall sport gill-netting season.

Anglers are reminded that a special regulation exists

for walleyes where all fish from 20 to 26 inches must be immediately released. There is a four walleye possession limit with only one fish over 26 inches allowed. Anglers are also reminded that since 2019, northern pike are managed under the northeast zone regulation requiring release of all fish between 30 and 40 inches, only one allowed over 40 inches, and a two fish possession limit. For darkhouse spearing, you are allowed two pike but only one may be over 26 inches. All other fish species are managed under current statewide fishing regulations.



**A muskie captured during the 2019 lake assessment.**

## *Fishery Management*

Lake Vermilion is comprised of two major basins, East Vermilion (east of Oak Narrows) and West Vermilion (west of Oak Narrows), that are significantly different in terms of habitat and fish communities. The lake is part of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Large Lake Monitoring Program which includes annual fisheries population assessments, water quality monitoring, zooplankton monitoring, aquatic invasive species surveillance, and regularly scheduled creel surveys on the 10 largest lakes in Minnesota. Since 1984, standardized fish population assessments have included a variety of sampling gears to collect various fish species at different life stages. The gears include gill nets, trap nets, shoreline seines, and electrofishing boats. Fisheries assessments are standardized so that the same sampling gear is used at the same locations during the same time of year to best track population trends over time. Length, weight, age, and other data are collected for fish of management concern.

The current management plan for Lake Vermilion was designed to guide fisheries management for a six-year period from 2017 to 2022. Since 1971, DNR has annually operated the walleye spawn take and hatchery at the Pike River, a major tributary to Lake Vermilion. A small portion of the walleye fry produced annually at the Pike River Hatchery are put back into Lake Vermilion. In the previous 10 years, between 5 and 15 million fry have been stocked annually. DNR's walleye spawn take operations were suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19 safety

concerns, resulting in no walleye fry being stocked. However, natural reproduction of wild walleye fry is high in Lake Vermilion and one year without “put back” stocking will likely be unnoticeable to anglers.

A muskellunge stocking program began in 1987 with the goal of establishing a low density, high quality muskie population in Lake Vermilion. The most recent management plan calls for a base stocking quota of 3,000 fingerlings annually with up to 2,000 surplus fingerlings per two-year period, as available. DNR's muskellunge spawn take operations were also suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19 safety concerns. Therefore, no muskellunge fingerlings were stocked into Lake Vermilion in 2020 due to a lack of availability statewide. Recent surplus stocking along with natural reproduction should help offset any negative impacts from the missed stocking event.

## *Walleye*

In 2020, the DNR's annual fall gill-net survey produced the highest lakewide walleye catch rate in the 37 years of standardized sampling in Lake Vermilion at 20.4 fish/net. High catch rates were observed throughout the lake even after substantial fishing pressure had occurred during the spring and summer of 2020 based on anecdotal observations. The significant increase in catch rates from the previous two years was driven by recent strong recruitment. The 2020 East Vermilion walleye catch rate of 23.3

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fish/net ranked as the third highest catch rate historically in that basin. The West Vermilion catch rate of 16.0 fish/net ranked as the second highest catch rate historically in that basin.

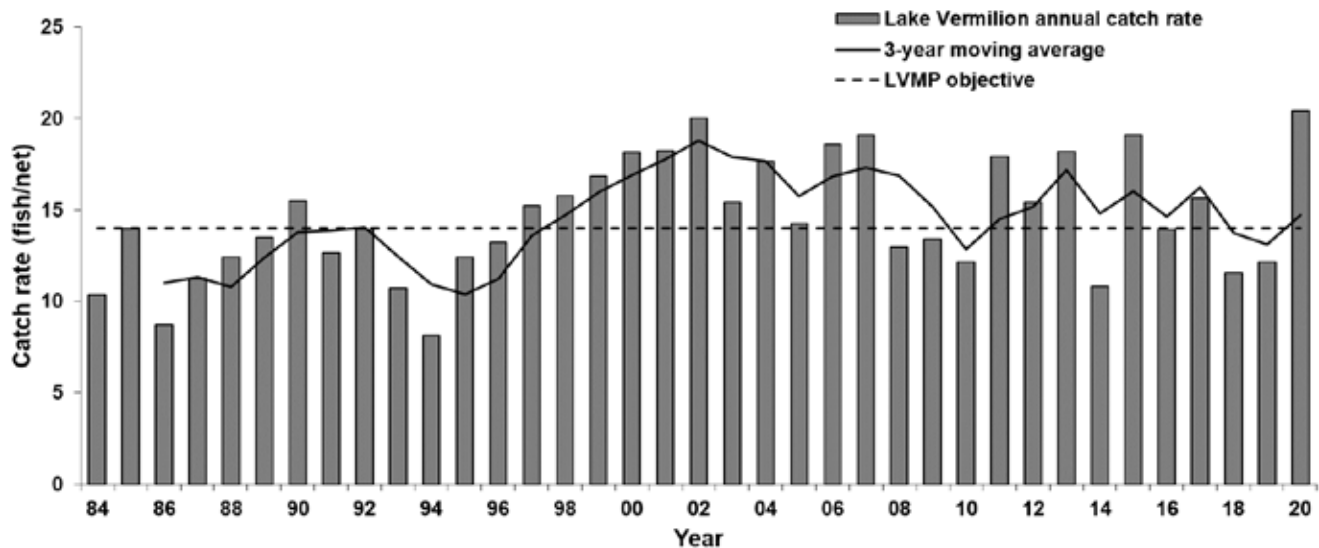
The average length of walleyes captured in the fall 2020 gill-net survey was about 14 inches. It was the smallest average size since 2008, which can be attributed to the recent strong year classes that produced exceptionally high catches of fish under 15 inches throughout the lake. These fish should provide substantial catch and harvest opportunities over the next several years. Additionally, high catch rates of fish 20 inches and larger will continue to provide memorable catch opportunities throughout the lake while also ensuring plenty of broodstock.

Walleyes captured in gill nets in 2020 ranged from 0 to 23 years old. Lakewide catch rates of age-0 (2020 year-class), age-1 (2019 year-class), age-2 (2018 year-class), age-4 (2016 year-class), age-5 (2015 year-class), age-7 (2013 year-class), and ages-8 and older fish were at or above historical averages. The catch rate of age-2 fish was the highest ever observed for an age-2 cohort. This follows an above-average catch rate of that year-class as an age-1 cohort in 2019, suggesting strong recruitment. The catch rate of fish ages-8 and older exceeded the 75th percentile for the second consecutive year and for the 10th time in 11 years. Following implementation of size protective walleye regulations in 2006, the catch rate of these

older fish has drastically increased.

The most recent strong walleye year-class was produced lakewide in 2016 and preliminary estimates indicate 2018 and 2019 could also be strong year-classes. The most recent weak year-class occurred lakewide in 2017. In East Vermilion, the most recent strong year-class was produced in 2016 and preliminary estimates indicate 2019 could be strong. The last weak year-class was produced in 2017. In West Vermilion, consistent moderate to strong recruitment has occurred annually since the last weak year-class in 2013. The 2018 cohort will likely be the first strong year-class in West Vermilion since 2014 and a potential banner year-class overall.

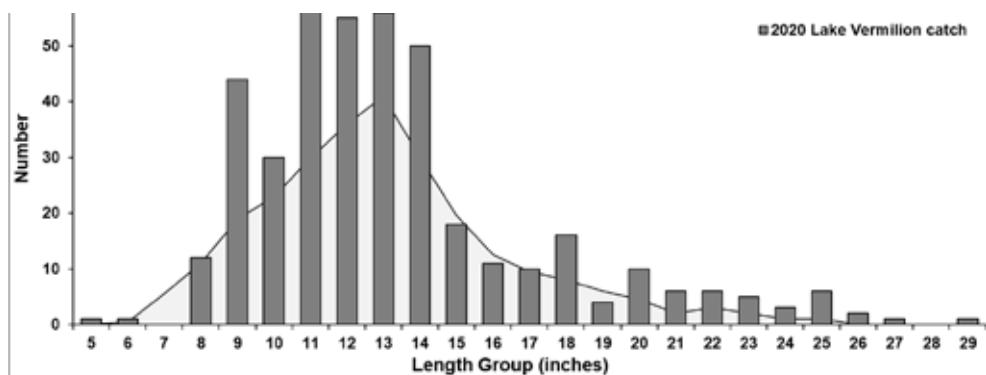
Fall electrofishing provides useful information on abundance and growth of young-of-the-year (YOY) walleyes near the end of their first growing season. In Lake Vermilion, both the catch rate of YOY walleyes and average length of fish captured help predict future year-class strength. In 2020, the lakewide catch rate of YOY walleyes of 72.0 fish/hour fell below the 25th percentile of previous surveys. Below average catches of YOY fish occurred in East Vermilion while catches below the 25th percentile were recorded in West Vermilion. The average length of fish captured lakewide was 6.3 inches, which was the highest average size ever recorded.



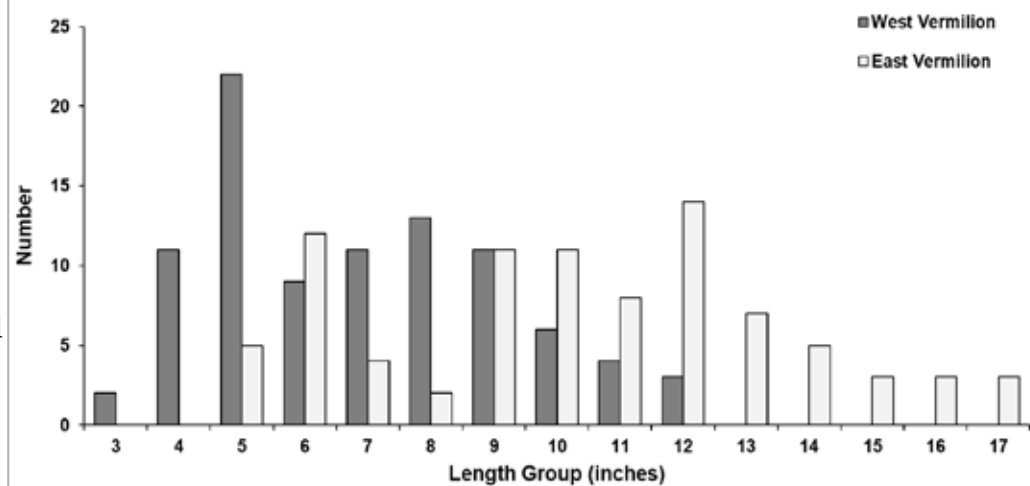
**Figure 1.** Gill-net catch rate (fish/net) of walleye in Lake Vermilion from 1984-2020. The horizontal dashed line represents the management plan objective. The solid line represents the 3-year moving average.

## Muskellunge

Muskies provide an important catch-and-release sport fishery on Lake Vermilion. The muskie population was established via a stocking program that began in the late 1980s with the goal of providing a low density, high quality fishery. In 2020, DNR had planned to conduct the second year of a two-year effort to get a population estimate of adult muskies in Lake Vermilion. Due to safety concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic, that assessment was not completed. Options for obtaining population estimates in the future are being evaluated. During the most recent assessment conducted in 2019, muskies averaged 44.7 inches in length and over 10-percent of the fish sampled were 50 inches or larger.



**Figure 2.** Length frequency distribution of gill-net captured walleye (dark bars) in Lake Vermilion in 2020 in relation to the historic median length frequency distribution from 1984 to 2019 (light gray).



**Figure 3.** Length frequency distribution of smallmouth bass captured during spring electrofishing in East Vermilion (light gray bars) and West Vermilion (dark gray bars) in 2020.

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### *Smallmouth Bass*

Smallmouth bass are found throughout Lake Vermilion and they provide an important fishery. Spring electrofishing targeting primarily smallmouth bass habitat has been conducted almost annually since 1989 as the primary assessment of the population. Based on survey results, smallmouth bass abundance has generally increased over the last three decades. Recent surveys indicate that the trend in increasing numbers continues in West Vermilion, but abundance has stabilized in East Vermilion. Abundance and size structure are very different between the two basins, as West Vermilion tends to have higher numbers with much smaller fish on average when compared to East Vermilion. During the most recent management planning process, it was decided that bass assessment frequency could be reduced to once every three years and still adequately monitor the population. However, due in part to recent stakeholder concerns, sampling was conducted in 2020 for the second time in 3 years.

The lakewide catch rate of smallmouth bass during spring electrofishing in 2020 was 60.3 fish/hour. This was a slight decline from 2018, but near the average for catch rates in the five surveys since 2014. The East Vermilion catch rate of 44.0 fish/hour was similar to the 2018 survey and near the average of surveys since 2014. The West Vermilion catch rate of 93.0 fish/hour was down from the record high in 2018 (145.0 fish/hour), but was average over the past five surveys. The average length of fish captured in West Vermilion was 7.4 inches and no fish over 13 inches were sampled. In contrast, the average length of fish sampled in East Vermilion was 10.8 inches and about one-fourth were over 13 inches. The fish ranged from 1 to 15 years old and each year class from age-1 (2019 year-class) to age-10 (2010 year-class) was represented in the sample indicating consistent recruitment.

Overall, the smallmouth bass population in Lake Vermilion displays a stable to increasing trend in abundance based on electrofishing, gill net, seine, and creel data. Length and age distributions of fish indicate that recruitment to the fishery should continue to bolster the population in the near future.

Abundance continues to remain higher in West Vermilion, but fish are smaller on average due to slower growth compared to East Vermilion.

### *Largemouth Bass*

Largemouth bass are a minor component of the Lake Vermilion fishery and are primarily found in West Vermilion. They do provide fishing opportunities and typically have low harvest rates. Spring electrofishing is the standard assessment technique to assess largemouth bass populations in Minnesota. However, Lake Vermilion surveys have historically targeted smallmouth bass habitat because it is much more abundant in the lake. Largemouth bass were first captured during the standard electrofishing survey in West Vermilion in 2013 and have continued to be rarely encountered. However, in 2020, the West Vermilion catch rate was 2.0 fish/hour for the second consecutive survey. Largemouth bass are not abundant and are limited to specific areas of preferred habitat in the lake. However, DNR electrofishing, gill net, and creel data suggests a stable or increasing population primarily in West Vermilion.

### *Northern Pike*

Northern pike are generally found in relatively low numbers in Lake Vermilion but are an important gamefish for some anglers. Ice-out trap-net surveys have been done periodically to obtain size structure information on the northern pike population and additional data is collected during annual fall gill-net assessments. Ice-out trap netting was not conducted in 2020, however 12 northern pike (0.6 fish/net) ranging in length from 22.2 to 38.4 inches were captured in gill nets. The gill-net catch rate was at the 25th percentile of previous catches in Lake Vermilion. Overall, a declining trend in northern pike abundance has been observed lakewide over the past three decades. At the same time, the size structure has shifted towards larger fish which can partially be attributed to protected slot limit regulations that have been in place since 2003.

## *Yellow Perch*

Yellow perch are a primary forage species in Lake Vermilion that also provide some incidental angler harvest. The 2020 lakewide gill-net catch rate of 34.9 fish/net was the highest catch rate observed since 2013 and also surpassed the historic 75th percentile. However, there continues to be a notable difference in catch rates when comparing the basins. The 2020 East Vermilion catch rate of 15.6 fish/net was an improvement from 2019 (10.7 fish/net) and slightly above the 25th percentile for that basin. In contrast, the West Vermilion catch rate of 63.8 fish/net was the second highest ever observed in that basin. Overall, East Vermilion yellow perch catch rates have displayed a decreasing trend since the early 1990s which is likely due to a combination of factors including habitat loss and increased predation. On the other hand, West Vermilion catch rates have displayed an increasing trend and have also continued to fluctuate cyclically typical of perch populations.

The average length of yellow perch captured in 2020 was relatively small at 7.2 inches compared to historic averages. This was driven by very high numbers of 5 and 6-inch fish captured primarily in West Vermilion. The catch rate of fish 9 inches and larger, which are typically the size anglers prefer to harvest, was below average. Fish captured in gill nets ranged from 1 to 11 years old. A high proportion of fish from age-2 to age-4 in the sample indicate consistent recruitment in recent years which may continue to bolster gill-net catch rates in the future.

## *Bluegill and Black Crappie*

Bluegills provide significant catch and harvest opportunities in Lake Vermilion, while black crappies are generally a minor component of the fishery that can on occasion produce very good fishing. Trap-net catches and creel data indicate greater abundance of both species in West Vermilion compared to East Vermilion. Summer trap-netting targeting panfish did not occur in 2020 because sampling frequency was reduced in the current management plan. Alternative sampling methods are being evaluated to provide useful data on relative abundance and size structure of panfish populations.

## *Aquatic Invasive Species*

Aquatic invasive species are nonnative animals and plants that do not naturally occur in Minnesota waters and cause varying levels of ecological and economic harm. Lake users should follow Minnesota's aquatic invasive species laws to prevent introduction and minimize the spread of nonnative species. Several invasive species are present at varying levels in Lake Vermilion including Chinese mystery snails, curly-leaf pondweed, *Heterosporis sutherlandae*, purple loosestrife, rusty crayfish, and spiny waterflea.

## *Double-crested Cormorants*

Double-crested cormorant nest counts could not be conducted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nest counts from 2013 to 2019 stabilized around 330 nests following the peak of 434 in 2012. No new nesting colonies have been established outside of Potato Island. Population control was conducted from 2013 to 2015; however, cormorant control efforts were suspended in 2016. In the absence of control, no significant changes in the number of nests has occurred, but cormorant foraging has undoubtedly increased compared to control years. In 2021, DNR will not conduct cormorant control on Lake Vermilion. However, the cormorant colony will continue to be monitored and the data collected will be reported.

## *Fishing Tournaments*

Historically there have been relatively few permitted fishing tournaments on Lake Vermilion when compared to other popular Minnesota lakes. Recently, between five and nine permitted tournaments have occurred each year. The DNR is responsible for regulating fishing tournaments and manages them in a manner that will protect fish populations and minimize conflict with other lake users. DNR permits are required for fishing tournaments that meet certain conditions and permits have been issued for the following tournaments in 2021:

**May 17: Minnesota Bass Federation (maximum 100 anglers/50 boats)**

**May 22: City Auto Glass Walleye Classic (maximum 250 anglers/125 boats)**

**May 23: Amateur Bass Series (maximum 100 anglers/50 boats)**

**July 31: Up North Bass (maximum 60 anglers/30 boats)**

# It's the Law: Dispose of Unwanted Bait in the Trash not the Lake

All of us want to be good stewards of the lake, and part of that involves not inadvertently introducing aquatic invasive species (AIS) or pathogens such as bacteria, viruses and parasites into the ecosystem. Releasing unwanted bait such as minnows, crawlers and leeches into the lake has the potential to introduce these contaminants.

Many people who dump bait into the lake have the misconception that they are doing some good by feeding hungry fish or that it's cruel to put bait in the trash. Those compassionate feelings are entirely understandable; however, the potential for spreading diseases to other baitfish or gamefish and AIS is simply too great of a risk. Fish diseases such as viral hemorrhagic septicemia can be spread in this manner, as well as AIS such as zebra mussel larvae.

Let's take viral hemorrhagic septicemia as an example of how the introduction of a pathogen can wreak havoc on the ecosystem. First discovered in European fish stocks in the 1930s, viral hemorrhagic septicemia was found for the first time in the Great Lakes in 2005, and in Wisconsin's Lake Winnebago in 2006. It is a threat to more than 25 fish species including muskies and walleye. Fish can be infected by eating infected fish or coming into contact with the virus by water passing through their gills. For more detailed information, both the Minnesota and Wisconsin DNR's have a webpage dedicated to this topic.

Another example of how invasive species can have detrimental effects on NE Minnesota's boreal forest ecosystem has to do with earthworms. Earthworms

are not native to most Minnesota forests, but are now there because anglers release them as unused bait. They alter soil structure, seed beds and nutrient cycles, and kill plant roots.



In Minnesota, the law mandates that you must dispose of unwanted bait such as minnows, leeches and crawlers in the trash. It is unlawful to release bait into a waterbody or release aquatic animals from one waterbody to another. If you want to save your bait, refill the bait container with bottled or tap water. Use care not to pour minnow or leech water into the lake; nor the dirt from crawler containers. These concepts are described in point 3 on the Clean In Clean Out page on the DNR's website. Check out the webpage: [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/prevents/preventspread\\_watercraft.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/prevents/preventspread_watercraft.html) for specific information on this topic.

Two of the Vermilion Lake Association's main goals for a long time have been to prevent the spread of AIS and fisheries management. This simple change in habit can go a long way to protecting the lake we all love so much.

**Article submitted by John Yocum and Terry Grosshauser**

## Check it out!!!

Have you checked the Vermilion Lake Association website lately? Under "Fishing News and Videos," there are links to key websites with fishing reports, news articles, and other information. There is also a recently added collection of videos showing techniques, tactics

and tips for catching various species of fish in Lake Vermilion, as well as information on such topics as life cycle, habits and habitat of the fish in the lake. Under "Shore Lunch Sites" there is a link to an easy-to-print PDF map with GPS coordinates and additional info.

# MN DNR Creel Survey on Lake Vermilion

**T**he Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Tower Area Fisheries will be conducting an angler creel survey on Lake Vermilion beginning May 15, 2021. DNR creel clerks will be traveling the lake by boat and conducting interviews of anglers fishing Lake Vermilion during the 2021 open water season. The creel clerk will ask anglers a few questions about their fishing trip for that day and record information on the fish species caught. Angler interviews will also include creel clerks taking measurements of fish that anglers keep in some cases. Additionally, Minnesota DNR Enforcement pilots and a local contractor will conduct aerial boat counts to obtain information on angling effort.



Fisheries managers rely on creel surveys to collect information on fishing pressure, catch, harvest, and size distribution of several important fish species in Lake Vermilion. This information when combined with scientific data collected during standard fisheries population assessments is used to make informed fisheries management decisions. Angler participation is an essential part of this study so we ask that you

are patient with the creel clerks and provide information that is as accurate as possible. Since 1984, 12 creel surveys have been conducted on Lake Vermilion with the most recent being in 2015.

Requests for additional information or questions can be directed to Matt Hennen at the Tower Area DNR Fisheries Office at 218-300-7810 or by emailing [matthew.hennen@state.mn.us](mailto:matthew.hennen@state.mn.us).

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## Help protect Lake Vermilion by using Amazon Smile, Part IV



**Jerry Lepper**  
VLA Treasurer

**I**would like to thank all of those who used Amazon Smile during this past Holiday Season. I especially enjoyed reading your notes sent in with Membership Renewals stating how you were using Amazon Smile as much as possible when shopping.

When you shop at Amazon, go to the [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) website, designating The Vermilion Lake Association as your charity.

If you have started to shop at Amazon.com and then



remember you want to use Smile, leave everything in your shopping cart, log off Amazon and then log back in using Smile.Amazon.com. Your purchases will still be in your shopping cart and Vermilion Lake Association will receive the Amazon half-percent donation on qualifying purchases.

Thank you for helping the Vermilion Lake Association protect and improve Lake Vermilion.

# Lake Vermilion Conservation Fishery Recommendations

Lake Vermilion is experiencing a large increase in fishing pressure. With the Canadian border closure, the resorts, fishing guides, launch inspectors and others are all reporting a substantial increase in fishing pressure, probably unprecedented. Resort owners, fishing guides, Bois Forte, and the VLA Board of Directors are concerned this increase in fishing pressure could, and likely will have an adverse impact on the fishery. It is expected this fishing pressure will continue into 2021. Therefore, a committee was formed to address this issue, with the intent of providing recommended approaches to the public for reduced fishing limits, called "conservation limits". Conservation limits have been successfully implemented in Ontario. These regulations in Canada involve a different license (at a reduced cost). In our case, these would be recommendations, and will not be enforced by the DNR. To our knowledge, no one else in Minnesota has attempted to implement "recommended conservation limits". The MN DNR does offer a conservation license at a modest reduction in cost for residents only. The committee developed Lake Vermilion conservation limits as a recommendation for those people fishing the lake. Basically, these are the same conservation limits that the MN DNR uses for the



Terry Grosshauser  
VLA Board Member

conservation licenses. The recommendations shown below include the limits on fish and size recommendations as well. The sizes are recommendations from the team to help preserve the quality of the fishery. The following table (see below) compares the current DNR regulations and the conservation recommendations.

We all need to consider the facts that it is not only fishing pressure but new electronics, social media on hot bites, and fishermen are just smarter and able to catch more fish of all kinds. We all need to consider the resource is limited and we cannot continue to catch small walleyes under 10 inches from deep water and throw back several dead walleyes before keeping one. Keep the fish as part of your limit if the stomach is sticking out of the gullet. Do not throw back deeply hooked fish after trying to extract the hook. These activities cannot be controlled under any regulations and require the fisher person to act responsibly on their own and practice more careful release of the fish so that more people can enjoy the fight and experience.

We plan to have a waterproof card with the conservation recommendations for distribution by guides, resorts, businesses, marinas, and at launch sites this summer. We thank you for your effort to follow these recommendations.

***Recommended Conservation Limits are on a voluntary basis and do not reflect the regulation mandated by the DNR.***

SPECIES	MDNR Regulations Possession Limit	Recommended Conservation Possession Limit
<b>Walleye</b> WALLEYE SLOT 20-26" 1 can be over 26"	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b> (Min. 12", Max. 18")
<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	<b>6</b> (any combination)	<b>0</b> (Catch & Release Only)
<b>Smallmouth Bass</b>		<b>3</b> (Less than 18")
<b>Crappie</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b> (Less than 13")
<b>Bluegill</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b> (Less than 9")
<b>Perch</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b> (Less than 12")
<b>Northern</b> NORTHERN SLOT 30-40" 1 can be over 40"	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b> (Less than 30")
<b>Musky</b>	<b>1</b> (54 inch or above)	<b>0</b> (Catch & Release Only)

# Leave No Trace at Shore Lunch Sites

By Mike Ptak, VLA member/volunteer

One of the more popular activities on Lake Vermilion is going to a shore lunch site. There are eight designated locations spread out across the lake to enjoy a picnic and perhaps cook up some fresh fish with family and friends. Each site has a dock, picnic table, fire ring, and latrine.

We expect a busy summer again this year with the Canadian border being closed indefinitely. Remember to be respectful and leave it cleaner than when you arrived. This means packing out all your garbage, including bottles, cans, and food scraps. (Food scraps attract unwanted wildlife.) Cutting of trees is not allowed. A lot of work goes into digging latrines—please no garbage in pits! All toilet paper belongs in the latrines, not along the trail leading up to the latrines.

The intended purpose is to enjoy a lunch and perhaps a fire in the provided ring or cooking grate. Try to limit your time so others may enjoy, or share with



other boaters. What a great way to meet other lake lovers!

The sites are monitored by volunteer Vermilion Lake Association members who do a wonderful job of keeping things in repair and clean for everyone's use. If anything is amiss or perhaps in need of attention, please call one of the two coordinators listed below.

John Zweig/West End: 218-750-3971  
Mike Ptak/East End: 612-986-7984

A map with shore lunch site locations, and GPS bearings, are listed on the VLA website: <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lake-Vermilion-Shore-Lunch-Site-Map-1.pdf>

For more information on "Leave No Trace": <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

**Above: Amelia Michaelson gives a "thumbs up" to the clean shore lunch site at Bear Creek.**

## Why should I become a member?

With this edition of the Vermilion you may be reading this newsletter courtesy of the expanded free distribution of this special issue. Normally, this newsletter is reserved for distribution to our members. The Vermilion Lake Association is probably the largest, most active lake association in the state. We have approximately 2,800 members, many of whom provide valuable time as volunteers. So, if you are not a member, here are several reasons to join.



Dwight Warkentin  
VLA Vice-President

- You are contributing to help preserve a resource you value.
- You are supporting the development and maintenance of the many amenities the Lake Association provides to the lake such as:

- Prevention of the introduction of aquatic invasive species
- Use of the shore lunch sites
- Preservation of our loon population
- Use of the navigational beacons

➤ By receiving this newsletter quarterly, you stay informed about issues that can impact your enjoyment of the lake.

**Continued on next page**

# Spring Fishing Tips and Tricks

**S**pring fishing on Lake Vermilion is some of the best fishing for BIG FISH all year! The shallow bite is a blast and can reap big benefits!

Key Presentations:

**Jigs-** 1/8 - 1/4 oz... colors vary as well as brand...but my favorite jigs for pitching in shallow are the Odd Ball Jigs made by "Bait Rigs"...these jigs tipped with a big minnow or soft plastic paddle tail and minnow style baits are deadly...as you walk the jig back to the boat from the shoreline, the jigs stand the minnow straight up and down keeping the hook out of the rocks and easy for the fish to grab. Less snags = more fish!!

**Lindy Rigs-** 1/16 – 3/8 oz walking sinkers, colored Gamakatsu hooks in size #4, but for big minnows I use #2 hooks. Shallow gravel areas can be loaded with fish and long lining lindy rigs can be a deadly presentation.

**Slip Bobbers-** Bobber fishing is a blast! No matter how old you are, there is something about watching a bobber go down! I like Thill bobbers with the brass grommet on the top, the line slides through very easily and quickly without hanging up. Bobbers come in varying sizes to match the situation and the bait sizes. Be sure to have an assortment of pinch style sinkers, too. I prefer #4 hooks, and jigs as well.



**Crank Baits-** Depending on the area I'm fishing, I use varying sizes of crankbaits which run at different depths, have different wobbles and profiles. I like to use #4 and #5 Flicker Shads and 4-6" stick baits for trolling and casting, in both regular diving and shallow diving models. Play with your speed and presentation whether you cast or troll!!

At this time of year, key in on gravel shorelines, neck-downs, and areas with water coming in or flowing out. There are lots of areas on Vermilion that have little streams and drainage areas, these areas hold lots of "BETTER" fish! Don't be afraid to try fishing shallower than normal or even SUPER shallow with these techniques!

**By Steve Amundson Spring Bay Resort & Guide Service  
218-780-5941**

## *Become a member....from page 16*

➤ By supporting the Vermilion Lake Association you know your support is dedicated to protect and preserve the lake. We are a non-profit organization run by the generous support of volunteers.

Membership is reasonable (only \$15-25/year). An application is available on the back page of this news-

letter. You may think since you are not a property owner you do not need to join the association. But if you love coming to the lake for your vacation, please join and help us maintain this wonderful resource. Take a moment to send in your membership application today. You will be glad you did.



# The Spring Serenade

photo by Carolyn Brooks, VLA member

I noticed an ad on the TV about taking 15 seconds to turn everything off and listen quietly to the rain coming down. It made me think about where we live on Lake Vermilion and how special spring can be in our area, which is a bay with some marsh in the back of the bay. In spring the chorus of sounds can be amazing.



The Antique Angler

The haunting quiet in the Northwoods in the winter with barely a sound other than a chickadee at the bird feeder or distant crow calling turns to a chorus of sounds in the spring. In our area, the spring sounds or chorus start at dusk and if you take some quiet time to listen to nature returning to life, you will be surprised. Just remember to have a screen on your window

in the spring, the buzz of mosquitos is not what you want to listen to for the rest of the night.

Usually at dusk on the lake the human activity wanes and nature takes over. The first to join the chorus are the peepers which are really tree frogs that you

rarely actually see. The peeping starts randomly, but increases as more join the chorus. The peeping seems to go on for as long as you choose to listen. Interrupting the peeping every once in awhile is a bullfrog with a very loud couple of croaks; he is the bass in the chorus. He croaks a few times and then rests for awhile. Next, in the distance you hear old mister owl, the hoot, hoot, hoot of the owl will bring a smile to your face as you realize how wild nature can be. There may also be the buzz of the lake flies that hatch that day in the background.

Just when you think that you have heard it all, the resident pair of loons in the bay joins the chorus, first with a short call so they know where the other is and then when a distant eagle is observed by one of the loons, the calls take on a new, much louder emphasis that last longer and overrides the other chorus of sounds. Now, you will not hear these sounds as well if you have the background noise from a city. This is special. There is a famous movie about baseball where the ghost baseball player who is playing baseball at a field built for them asks, "Is this heaven?" and the answer is, "No, it is Iowa." In our case you could ask, "Is this heaven?" "No, it is Lake Vermilion."

# Lead-free tackle works!

And it protects  
our state bird,  
the common  
loon



## What's the problem with lead?



**Lead is toxic to wildlife.** Even in small amounts, it is lethal to loons, eagles, and trumpeter swans. It is estimated that lead is responsible for up to 25% of loon deaths.



**Loons pick up lost lead tackle** while gathering pebbles for their gizzards. Loons are also exposed when eating fish that have ingested lead.



**Lead is toxic to people,** both when handling lead products and in the manufacturing process.

### Teach your tadpoles!

Create a lead-free tackle box for your kids or grandkids.



### Non-toxic alternatives

- Tungsten
- Bismuth
- Steel
- Tin
- Glass
- Stone
- Metal composite



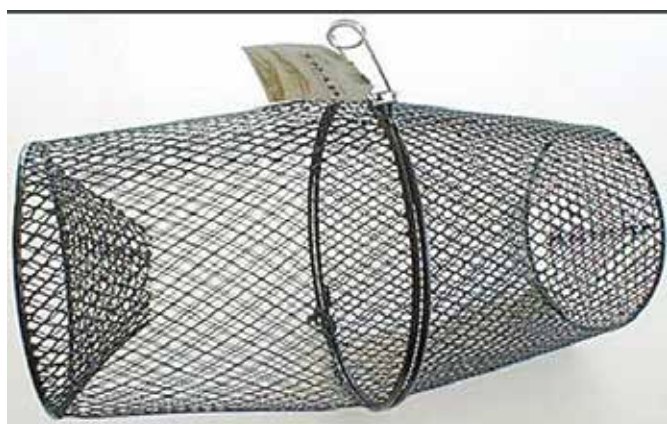
**Don't throw lead in the trash!**  
Bring it to your local *Household Hazardous Waste* dropsite.

For a list of **lead-free tackle manufacturers**, visit our website!

# The Scourge of Lake Vermilion: Part 2 - Trapping Rusty Crayfish

*Note: In the Winter 2021 edition of The Vermilion, Rich wrote about catching and eating rusty crayfish. For directions on how to prepare them, go to <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/wp-content/themes/sclv/newsletters/vla-newsletter-21q1/vla-newsletter-21q1.html>*

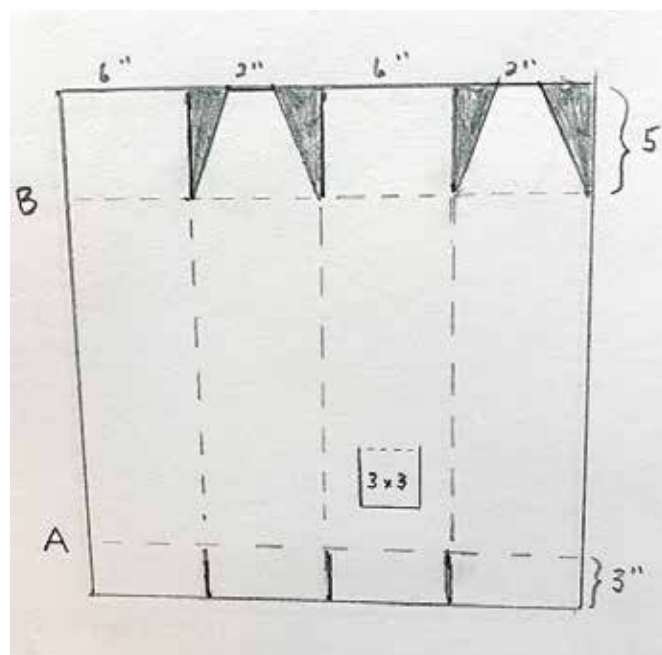
**H**ow to catch them: you need a crawfish trap. Where I'm located, I catch hundreds on rocky, gravel and sandy bottoms– I'm not sure if they are as prevalent on muck bottoms. They're not as numerous very early in the season, but come late May through September, watch out. You can buy a Frabill trap for \$25, a trap from Cabela's/Bass Pros for about 9 bucks, or make a simple but effective one for a buck or two each. Buy or make several. If you buy them, some are sold as minnow traps, and the opening is so narrow you might need to snip to make it a little wider (2" - 3") so the big boys can get in.



If you're inclined to build one, understand that if I can do this, most four-year olds can, if you trust them with wire cutters. Take a 2' x 2' piece of "hardware mesh" with 1/2" holes. A 2' x 8' roll of vinyl-coated mesh is about \$7 at Menard's, and mesh is also readily available at our local hardware stores (vinyl coating optional, will last a little longer). Note:

precision not required! These are crayfish, with brains the size of a grain of sand. I make one in about 15 minutes– you will do better. And you will surely over time improvise better plans!

See the diagram for the visual, but use your wire cutters to make cuts 6" apart on two opposing edges (no need to measure – each hole is 1/2", hence. . . you get it). That's 3 cuts on each of the two sides. Make the cuts 3" deep on one side, and 5" deep on the other.



On the side with 5" cuts, you want two of the "flaps" to be narrower, so trim out pieces as shown to make them about 2" wide.

Final cut is the trap door to place in bait and remove your meal. Cut on three sides, the fourth will be your hinge. You can fix it closed with a removable twist tie or piece of wire for easy access. Watch out for sharp wire edges cutting your hands here! Bend the edges down!

Fold the larger flaps on "Line B" all the way down flat for starters, about 180 degrees.

**Continued on next page**



## *A Big Reminder to Protect Lake Vermilion*

As you approach Cook on Hwy. 53, you can't miss this new reminder that a clean boat protects all lakes from aquatic invasive species. Let's all do our part statewide as responsible anglers and recreational boaters.

Additional information about Vermilion's AIS program can be found on the Vermilion Lake Association website.

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## *Crayfish Trapping...from page 21*

Fold the three long creases at 90 degrees each. Attach the two edges now with twist ties, bits of wire, zip-ties, clips--use whatever you have, forming the long box for the trap.

Reach in now, and push the 4 folded flaps together to form an opening like a "funnel" leading into the trap, no bigger than 2" to 3" in diameter (oblong, circle, square--the crawdads don't care). Fix the funnel edges together with the same wires, ties or what-have-you.

Finally, fold the 3" flaps to close the end of the trap. Affix these together.

Attach about a 10' (or more) cord/ old stringer/rope to the trap. Done.

Suggestion: Cut your wire mesh this winter if you winter away from our lake. Leave it flat for easy transport and assemble when you arrive.

### *Catching them*

OK, lots of debate about "da bait" but I haven't seen anything better than fish guts -- I mean, a whole carcass if it fits, or several small ones. I've also heard chunks of ham, chicken, dog kibble, a punctured cat food can--whatever floats your boat, but it's fish guts for me.

Throw your traps off of your dock or shore. The water can be deep or a foot or two shallow. They'll find it. I prefer a gravelly or sandy spot if available.

When I'm catching for a boil, I check the traps a few times a day, hold the crayfish in an extra minnow bucket to keep them fresh, then freshen the bait. I don't keep them in a live basket any more, as too many slip out.

BTW, you need a fishing license, and the limit is 25 lbs.

### *What if you don't eat them*

Sometimes I put out my traps and don't get around to cooking them. Some are too small to eat, but I don't release any of them. If I don't throw them in the pot, I will throw them in the campfire or bury them. I have tried dumping them up the road or woods 100 yards or more, only to find them marching back. Same thing when I put them in a 4' deep hole with steep sides. They are tenacious. I prefer only killing for food, but these critters are incredibly abundant and destructive, and don't belong here. My two cents.

# Simple Pleasures on the Lake

If you were like us, your usual activities may have been somewhat curtailed during the pandemic. In the spirit of social distancing, my husband and I found ourselves going into town less often and taking fewer trips in general. We found pleasure in the small attractions we had nearby, right on the lake.

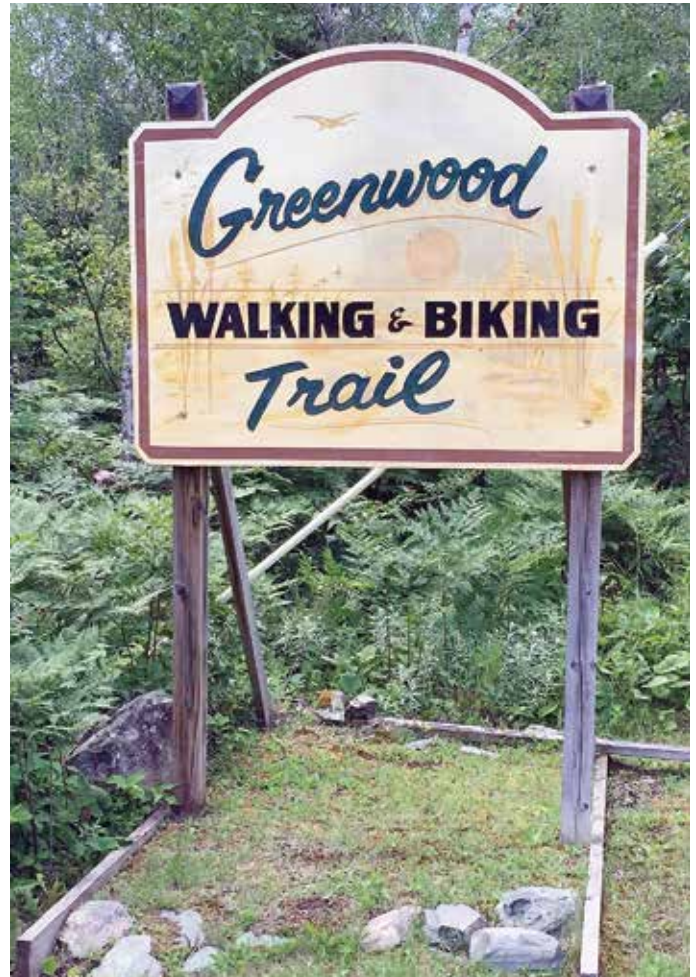


Lori Ptak  
VLA Newsletter  
Volunteer

One thing we took more advantage of was the Greenwood Walking and Biking trail, a small paved trail along Hwy. 77, down to Moccasin Point. We have boat-access only property, so we need to boat over to Shamrock Marina. We do our laundry in the shareholders lounge, buy an ice cream at the C-store, and head for

the trail. We often will bring along a book to trade for another book in the “Little Free Library”. There are touches of whimsy along the trail, such as “The Ladybug Crossing” and the bench with the fire-fly lady sculpture. Although we are not birders or wildflower experts, there are plenty of both to see. We seldom walk the trail when we do not see other hikers, joggers, bikers, or even skateboarders.

Do you have a favorite trail on or near Lake Vermilion? Let me know at [lori@ptak.org](mailto:lori@ptak.org).





Vermilion Lake Association

PO Box 696

Tower MN 55790

## *Volunteers Make the Difference*

The Vermilion Lake Association has been fortunate over the years to have a dedicated group of leaders and volunteers to staff our important activities. We are grateful for their help.

Please consider joining this team. We have needs for both workers and leaders, for those with only a few hours to spare, and for those who can make a larger time commitment.

If you think you may be interested, please contact Pat Michaelson, VLA Volunteer Program Leader, at 612-306-7702 (cell) or [plmichaelson@gmail.com](mailto:plmichaelson@gmail.com).

### **Vermilion Lake Association**

Sheri Sawatzky, Member Records • P.O. Box 696 • Tower MN 55790  
[sherisawatzky@gmail.com](mailto:sherisawatzky@gmail.com) • 218-780-8178

Membership year runs from Jan 1 through Dec 31

☐ 2021 New Member ☐ 2021 Renewal

Membership level

☐ \$15.00 Individual ☐ \$20.00 Couple  
☐ \$25.00 Family ☐ \$50.00 Business or Organization

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email (requested) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (requested) \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above.

## **Become a Member**

Join those who love Lake Vermilion as much as you do. Help us continue the many activities you've just read about.

Not sure? Check us out at our website [VermilionLakeAssociation.org](http://VermilionLakeAssociation.org). We're pretty sure you'll like our vision for the future and the work we have underway now to make Lake Vermilion even better.

Please mail a check with the form on this page or join at our website using PayPal or a credit card.

The Vermilion Lake Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

## **Do You Qualify?**

Trick question. Anyone can join the lake association whose mission it is to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. No need to be a property owner. No need to be a fisherman or a kayaker. Just someone who cares about our great lake and wants to protect her for the next generation.