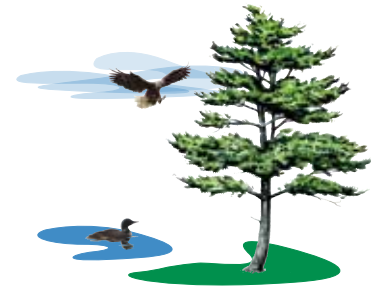


LAKE METONGA NEWS

Volume 2021: No. 3



Association Update

Mark Truymen

By the time you read this, the ground will probably be white and the lake frozen. Another summer season has passed and the docks are on shore and many cottages have been put away until spring.

Hopefully, 2022 will bring an end to the pandemic, and we can get back to normal. Because of the pandemic, we were unable to hold our major fundraiser, Weeds'n'Walleye Banquet for two years. Although our treasury is still currently very solid without the banquet revenue, we have been going backwards financially.

I personally want to thank all of the individuals who included additional donations with their 2021 membership renewal. These donations were our primary source of revenue this year outside our DNR CB-CW grant. Thank you for the extra support!

Speaking of membership renewal, it's that time again! Be on the lookout to receive this in the mail shortly. I would like to ask everyone to complete and return promptly as we do not send reminders, and it makes it much easier on our secretary and treasurer.

Continued on page 2...



Lake Metonga News

Trueman continued...

Even though we had to cancel our fundraising banquet, we were able to hold our annual meeting on schedule. With the High School auditorium off-limits, we were able to hold the meeting at the Mole Lake Conference Center with a tour of their fish hatchery, which was very well attended. We also held our annual July 4th picnic and boat parade with 18 entries and all had a very good time. 2021 also brought our very successful bullhead removal program and Julie will inform you more about that later in this newsletter.

Although we will not be eligible for a grant in 2022, we will be asking the DNR for permission to do some milfoil treatment to try to stay ahead of the growth and test the effectiveness of a new chemical. We'll keep you posted on that as we get closer to spring.

For many years, Forest County has provided LMA with a portion of the county's Veterans Park camping proceeds to help with the lake association's milfoil treatment expenses. Since we haven't treated for several years now, the LMA board recently voted to return the last several years of this money to the county, totaling \$12,400 to help with the recent improvement costs for the park.

Lastly, the board and myself want to thank Gary Mueller, our past president, for all the work and knowledge that he has put into that position for the last six years. He has been a great mentor to me and there's no way I could replace him. The good news is he's my neighbor and I can easily track him down when I need his advice.

Thanks again for your continued support and remember to check out our website and Facebook page.



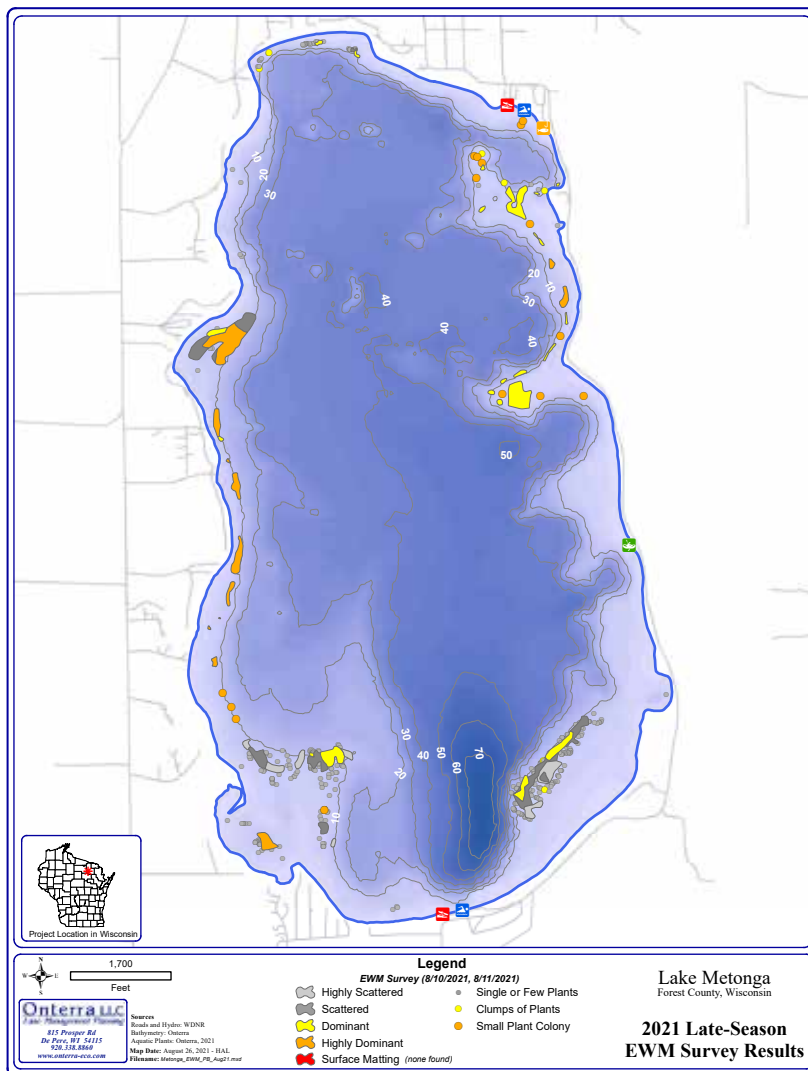
Milfoil Under Control on its Own. For Now...

Gary Mueller, Aquatic Plants and Invasive Species Committee

The annual Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) survey of the lake was conducted on August 10 and 11 by Onterra, LLC. The LMA contracts with Onterra to provide this as part of our ongoing management plan.

The good news: EWM was not much of a nuisance this year. And, with our 10-Year Management Plan in place, we should be able to address any treatment issues as they develop in future.

After twenty years of treatment "trial and error", the LMA is well positioned to develop a sound treatment protocol with new, environmental-friendly materials which are much more concentrated and require a very short contact time while targeting strategic targets. Unfortunately, this comes at a 50% premium to earlier products to something around \$1500 an acre.





2021 Bullhead Reduction Program

Julie Janquart, Fisheries & Habitat Committee

As publicized in the last newsletter issue, the LMA Board with the assistance of Greg Matzke, DNR Fisheries Biologist and Mole Lake Hatchery Fisheries Biologist, Mike Preul, determined that the population of bullhead in Lake Metonga were once again negatively impacting walleye recruitment in our lake, thus warranting another aggressive program of electroshocking and annual monitoring.

With the history of a successful campaign ten years prior that decreased the bullhead population to positively impact walleye, the LMA board in cooperation with Mike Preul, made the commitment to adopt the same approach of spring electroshocking combined with a program for removing bullhead minnows during mid-summer by lake property owners and concerned volunteers.

At their June 10, 2021 meeting the LMA Board unanimously approved a 2021 budget of \$10,000 for the program. With a total cost of \$2,496.00 (harvesting equipment, incentives, collection program operation) and a \$7,500 contribution to Mole Lake Fisheries for their spring electroshocking effort, LMA expended a total of \$9,996.22 in 2021. As you read the article in this newsletter regarding the 2021 fall survey it will become clear that this is proving to be money well spent to improve the fisheries in Lake Metonga!

**Watch for info on next year's
2022 Bullhead Minnow Harvest
early next spring.**

We encourage everyone to participate if you can!

Almost a Million Bullhead Minnows Removed!

*Greg Matzke, Fisheries Biologist
Bureau of Fisheries Management, WDNR*

From what was reported to me from your Lake Association's Fisheries and Habitat Committee, this is what I have for the juvenile bullhead removal numbers:

924,194 age-0 bullheads removed over 27.33* hours of effort, which is a catch rate of 33,811 bullheads removed per hour.

I would think that the data submitted to me likely wasn't all of the removals, as it is always hard to get 100% compliance with reporting. But, in previous years when we conducted our fall surveys (see pages 4-6), I would see schools of age-0 bullheads in the lake, and this year we did not see any juveniles. All the bullheads that we saw were quite large.

So, yes, I believe that your group made a substantial dent in the age-0 bullhead population, and it is very likely that if your group is able to withstand the amount of effort you put into removing age-0 bullheads on an every year basis, the problem may go away all together, or at a minimum keep the population in check to the point that we can have significant natural reproduction of walleye on a very regular basis.

**Beyond these volunteer hours to catch the minnows, many LMA volunteers offered several hundred additional hours of their time to develop and administer the program to ensure its success.*

To all Volunteers that Helped with the 2021 Bullhead Minnow Removal Project

We want to say "THANK YOU" for participating in the Bullhead Minnow Removal this year.

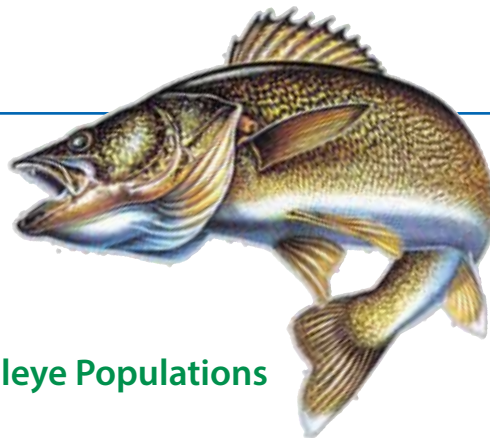
You have made a difference this year and we hope that you will continue to support these efforts again next year. Be proud to share this information with your lake neighbors! Hopefully, they will join us to tackle this bullhead problem in the future.

Sincerely,

Fisheries & Habitat Committee,
Julie Janquart, LMA Board Representative



VS.



Encouraging Fall Survey of Bullhead Versus Walleye Populations

Greg Matzke, Fisheries Biologist
Bureau of Fisheries Management, WDNR

We did the fall electro-fishing survey on the night of 9/29. This survey is designed to assess the amount of walleye natural reproduction that occurred in the lake this year. We use our electro-fishing boats and cruise along the shallow areas (typically near shore) of the lake, and collect all of the walleye we see <12.0 inches. We then age a sample of the walleye captured to put them into the proper age categories (age-0, age-1, age-2 and older). Then we assess the abundance of these year classes by calculating the number caught per mile electro-fished.

This survey (see page 6 for full report), does a very good job of assessing the age-0 fish (fish born that year), and a pretty good job of assessing the age-1 fish (how many survived from the year before). The reason I say “pretty good” for the age-1 fish is that some lakes it works very well, and some lakes it seems like the age-1 fish are not fully vulnerable to the type of survey.

All of that said, here are the benchmarks that I typically use for these surveys for age-0 fish:

- Anything over 20 age-0/mile is considered a solid year class (one that is abundant enough to survive in decent numbers to adulthood), that can typically maintain a walleye population if we get this level of reproduction at least once every 3-5 years or so.
- An abundance of 35-80 age-0/mile is really good recruitment (abundant enough that you will get a good number of these fish to survive to adulthood), and will typically grow a population when these fish become adults.
- Over 80/mile is very high reproduction, which is a great thing...but a year class of this size will typically start to show signs of competition within this cohort of walleye (meaning that they typically won't grow as fast), so the size of these fish will remain smaller for longer and typically have a worse survival rate, so

when it is over 80/mile then I really look at the size of the fish. If they are smaller, than survival might be lower and the year class may not have quite as much impact on the adult population.

- Long story short...the more abundant they are, the better (unless growth rates drop too low).

I am sure most of your Lake Group knows the recent history of walleye recruitment on Metonga, but I will recap it quickly. Metonga never showed any high levels of natural reproduction, and the lake was dependent on stocking, which was marginally successful (creating a low to moderate abundance of adult walleye).

Once Mole Lake Fisheries started the bullhead removals, walleye natural reproduction really kicked into gear, with high reproduction and very high survival of stocked walleye. Once walleye recruitment got to a level where the population was able to maintain itself through natural means, the stocking was stopped and the population took care of itself, creating the great walleye fishery that has been in Lake Metonga for the past decade or so, (see figure 1).



Figure 1. Adult walleye abundance in Lake Metonga before and after bullhead removal.

Remember, the population didn't fix itself, it was completely correlated to the efforts by Mole Lake Fisheries to remove bullheads. Removing bullheads is hard work, and it is expensive to put forth the effort needed to control the population. When Mole Lake Fisheries stopped removals, we had all hoped that the higher abundance of adult walleye would keep the bullhead population in check. As it has turned out, without the bullhead removals by Mole Lake the bullhead population began to rebound. Apparently, there is not enough predation on the bullhead population – walleye likely don't eat a lot of bullheads in Metonga.

During the years where bullhead removals did not occur, walleye reproduction rates dropped back to what they were like prior to bullhead removal, and if walleye reproduction stayed at these rates the adult population would decline, likely to the levels it was in the past marginal walleye fishery.

As many of you are aware of what happened this year: Mole Lake Fisheries really went after the adult bullheads, and your Lake Group became the "natural predator" on juvenile bullhead that Metonga had been lacking.

Our assumption for the outcome of these activities included:

- Walleye reproduction would go up substantially this year with the bullhead removal.
- But, bullheads would also remain present in the fishery for some time, as it takes awhile to get them out of the lake.
- It might not be a huge year class, .but next year would likely be a really nice year class of walleye.

We did the survey on 9/29 to see if our assumption was correct — would walleye reproduction go up? I am happy to report that it did!

The last two years (2019 and 2020) walleye recruitment averaged three age-0 walleye per mile, and this year thanks to your bullhead removal efforts we got 34.1 age-0/mile in Metonga, which is basically the same level of reproduction that we saw in 2017 and 2018 before bullheads started impacting walleye again, see Figure 2.

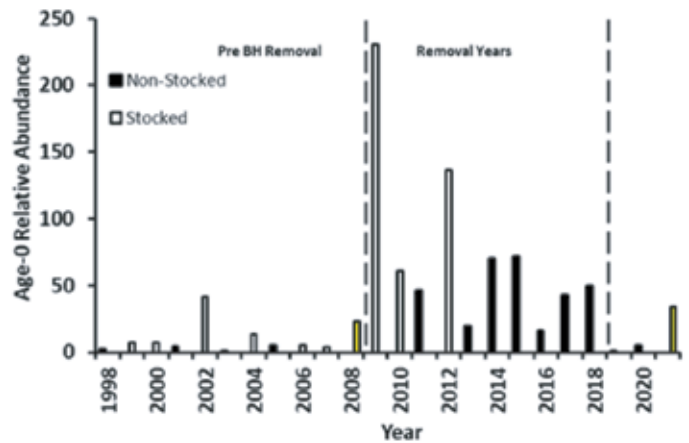


Figure 2. Walleye reproduction, indexed using relative abundance during fall electro-fishing surveys, in Lake Metonga (1998-2021).

Going back to my typical benchmarks mentioned earlier, this will be a year class that will increase the adult population when they become adults. During the survey, we did still see a pretty abundant adult bullhead population (about 20/mile), but we did not see any juvenile bullheads, which means your Lake Group did a great job cleaning up the juveniles. Continued juvenile removals are the only way that we can keep this population low, and have continued high walleye reproduction in the years to come.

Notes Regarding Figures 1 and 2.

Regarding walleye population changes through the years, it is important to remember that there are two main aspects to assess: 1) the abundance of adult walleye (what determines whether it is a good walleye fishery or not), and; 2) walleye reproduction (an indicator of what the walleye population will be like in the future, when the fish become adults).

The adult population is estimated every 3 years, and is displayed as the # of adults in the entire population. The reproduction level has been monitored annually, and is displayed as the # of age-0 walleye captured per mile of electro-fishing. Because we did not have GPS units for much of the older surveys, I have used the shoreline distance (7.9 miles) as the amount of effort during the juvenile walleye surveys.

Lake Metonga News

SUMMARY FISHING RECORD
Form 3600-63

Department of Natural Resources

County	Forest	Waters	Lake Metonga	MWBC: 394400
Sampling Objective	Gamefish Recruitment	Number and Locations of Stations (Habitat)		
Period Fished (Dates)	9/29/2021	Miles Actually Shocked =	9.83	Game All Source 0.47 GPS
		Acres =	1,991	LM
		Total Miles of Shoreline =	7.9	LM
		Total Miles of Shockable Shoreline =	9.8	GPS

GEAR

Boomshocker (Hours)	4.38	Time	Night	Day
Visual Hours	Time of Day	Haul Seine (Length)	Mesh Size	Area Covered
Angling (Hours)	Time of Day	Trap Net (No. of Net Lifts)	Mesh Size	Depth
Minnow Seine (No. of Hauls)	Area Covered	Gill Net (No. of Feet x No. of Lifts)	Mesh Size	Depth
Other (Hours or Lifts)	Boomshocker(s): 2 Dip Netter(s): 4	Mini-boomshocker(s): Dip Netter(s):	Characteristics Walleye Recruitment Code: NR	

FISHING RESULTS

	ENTIRE SHORELINE		Distance:	9.83 miles	Time:	4.38 hrs.
Walleye (Age 0+)	335	7.0		5.6 - 8.6	76.43 / hour	34.08 / mile
Walleye (Age 1+)	8	10.0, 10.7		10.0 - 11.9	1.83 / hour	0.81 / mile
Smallmouth Bass (age 0+)	36	3.0-3.4		2.5 - 4.9	8.21 / hour	3.66 / mile
Smallmouth Bass (age 1+)	32	6.5-6.9		5.0 - 7.4	7.30 / hour	3.26 / mile
Smallmouth Bass (Other)	12	7.5-7.9		7.5 - 9.9	2.74 / hour	1.22 / mile
Largemouth Bass (age 0+)	2	N/A		3.0 - 4.8	0.46 / hour	0.20 / mile
Largemouth Bass (age 1+)	10	5.6, 5.9, 6.2		5.0 - 6.6	2.28 / hour	1.02 / mile
Largemouth Bass (Other)	0	N/A		-	0.00 / hour	0.00 / mile
Northern Pike (age 0+)	0	N/A		-	0.00 / hour	0.00 / mile
Northern Pike (age 1+)	0	N/A		-	0.00 / hour	0.00 / mile
Northern Pike (Other)	0	N/A		-	0.00 / hour	0.00 / mile

ALL FISH STATION

	0.47 mi.	0.23 hrs.				
Bluegill	0	N/A		-	/ hour	/ mile
Yellow Perch	28	2.5-2.9		2.0 - 8.4	/ hour	/ mile
Black Crappie	0	N/A		-	/ hour	/ mile
Rock Bass	6	5.0-5.4		3.5 - 5.4	/ hour	/ mile
Common Shiner	21	6.5-6.9		5.0 - 7.4	/ hour	/ mile
Golden Shiner	2	4.5-4.9		4.5 - 4.9	/ hour	/ mile
White Sucker	10	5.0-5.4		4.0 - 10.9	/ hour	/ mile
Mottled Sculpin	2	N/A		2.8 - 2.9	/ hour	/ mile
Bullhead	0	N/A		-	/ hour	/ mile

OBSERVATIONS

Other Species	Abundance	Size Range	Other Species	Abundance	Size Range
Bullhead	19.88/mile	Large			

- 1) Tank Mortality: None 2) Weather: 55°F, Clear, Calm 3) H₂O Temp: 65°F 3) Reliability: High
- 4) Stocking: None
- 5) Comments: Mole Lake removed over 10,000 adult bullheads this year, the removal seems to have worked as intended with a solid year class of walleye produced. Age was estimated on all gamefish to define age breaks. No Juvenile BH observed, suggested the Lake Association did a good job on removals this year.
- 6) What was Collected: WE ≤ 12.0", Bass ≤ 10", NP ≤ 15.0" were collected the entire time. Boat that surveyed the East Shore also collected and removed all BHs (99 removed). All fish were collected for the last 0.47 miles on the East Shore (NE Corner).

Rev. 10-70	Signed (Compiler)	Gregory R. Matzke	Date	10/12/21
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Art In the Square



Chris Ebben, LMA Apparel Coordinator and Outreach Committee Member (left) and Michelle Bauer, LMA Facebook Administrator and Outreach Committee Chair (right) staffed the LMA booth at this year's Art in the Square event on September 18.

Although this year's event was not as well attended as in year's past, it was still nice to have the event go on after it was canceled last year due to Covid. And, even with the light attendance, Chris and Michelle sold a good deal of the new LMA apparel that Chris rolled out this year.

Visit our website for complete info on the LMA apparel line.

2021 Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW)

With the closure of the South Shore Landing (Veteran's Campground) for the entire summer, the 2021 Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) program focused on inspections at the North Landing (City Park) with more hours logged there than a typical season. Our four inspectors: Eric Lombard, Ella Bachard, Carter Bisonette and Emma Eisenschink, Program Coordinator did an excellent job working 351.5 hours total for just one landing.

We appreciate their efforts and especially want to thank Emma for her dedication to keeping the program running so smoothly! With the 2021 CBCW Grant reimbursement paperwork already submitted and the fund allotment being pro-rated due to the South Shore landing closure, we are expecting the reimbursement from the DNR to be less than is typically received making the LMA cost share larger. On a positive note, we expect both landings will be open for business next summer and we have already received DNR approval for the 2022 CBCW Grant application

LMA Outreach News

Michelle Bauer, Outreach Committee Chair

We have some new faces within the lake association outreach committee (myself included!). So, what have we been working on behind the scenes and where can we use your help?

Increasing membership: We're working on putting together some fliers (in addition to the emails we send) door to door to encourage more members. If you are a member please take a moment to ask your neighbor if they are signed up. Many don't realize we're here and all we do. We could use your help distributing in your "territory".

Social Media Presence: Over the last year we have created a Facebook page to share information. What was the most viewed post, you ask? What was happening on 4th of July Weekend!

Upcoming Events: As we do more in-person events we could use more volunteers behind the scenes, planning events and of course volunteering their time. Keep a look out for information on Kentuck Day, Art in the Square, Weeds'N'Walleye Banquet and more.

Education: Spend more time informing lake and wildlife enthusiasts (and residents) on water quality, wildlife endangerment, etc. Are you passionate about those areas? We could use your time and wisdom.

The overall message we have from outreach is we could simply use your help through increasing membership, volunteering your time and talent and attendance of the events. Please reach out! I'd love to hear from you

Eagle Cam Update

Mark Truymen

If you have been checking our website, you know the eagle cam has been down for a number of months. And now, it just came back on as of November 22. The reason is some type of malfunction of the camera or break in the line. We are working on fixing the problem but it's not everybody that wants to climb 80 feet to check for those problems. The nesting pair has actually been working on the nest in October, so we're guessing there'll be eggs in the nest again this spring. Cross your fingers and knock on wood that we can resolve the problem soon so we can watch a new eagle family evolve.

Lake Association Contacts:

4th of July Boat Parade & Picnic

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Apparel

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Newsletter/Website

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Weeds'n'Walleyes Banquet

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mueller@newnorth.net

Lake Metonga Association
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Crandon, WI 54520



View of eastern shoreline at sunset, November 15th at 4:13 pm. Photo courtesy Lynn Smith.