

Original: Fish Division
cc: Institute for Fisheries Research
Education-Game

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September 19, 1947

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Report No. 1130

Demonstration Netting in Black, Burt, and Mullet Lakes,

Cheboygan County, Michigan

July 25 to August 2, 1947

by

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RECEIVED
SEP 22 1947
FISH DIVISION

The Fish Division of the Michigan Department of Conservation conducted a brief netting demonstration on three of the large lakes in Cheboygan County during the period of July 25 to August 2, 1947. The nets used were so called "small-subs" or trap nets. This type of net is very satisfactory, for fish are captured alive and unharmed and can be released at once. Also they are generally efficient.

The Conservation Commission has recently adopted a new policy in respect to the planting of warm-water fish. Results from fisheries investigations have indicated that almost without question the fish in our lakes reproduce each year in more than sufficient quantity to make up for those fish which are removed by angling. However, the fishing public is in many instances unconvinced and consequently the Fish Division is currently committed to a certain amount of demonstration netting. It is felt that if fishermen could see for themselves that there are far more fish present than are ever caught, much good

will be accomplished. Also, much information can be obtained from the netting as to the relative abundance of the various game species in the lake where the netting is being done. A third item of interest is that investigations conducted at Big Bear Lake, Otsego County, have demonstrated that suckers may be profitably removed from many of our inland lakes with no ill effect on the game fish population.

This particular demonstration was conducted during the last part of July and the first days of August because the tourist season was then at its peak and it was the Department's wish that as many people as possible witness the operations.

Commercial fishermen were hired to operate their gear in the lakes listed below. Setting and lifting were under the immediate supervision of Conservation Department employees.

The three lakes chosen were selected because all three were reported to have at best only fair fishing. Black Lake in particular was the subject of numerous complaints.

Results of the demonstration were reasonably satisfactory. However, it soon became evident that catches in the nets would not compare very well with those obtained in the spring or fall. This might have been anticipated from past experience but it was hoped that fish would be captured in sufficient numbers to make a good showing.¹ Comparison of results obtained in mid-summer with those obtained in early spring or late fall indicates that spring and fall are the best fishing times -- whether for nets or for hook and line. It is suggested as an

¹Also trap nets of this type have fished well in mid-summer in smaller, shallower lakes (I.F.R. Reports No. 590, 653). Also see results from Craig Lake, Branch County, Michigan.

explanation that during mid-summer food is readily available to the game species. Young fish are very numerous, insect life is abundant, and bottom organisms such as crayfish are easily obtained. Consequently, game species which are fish eaters for the most part do not have to move about much in search of food. If the fish are not moving about much the nets will only take those fish which are in the immediate vicinity. Results of the demonstration are tabulated below (Tables I, II, III).

Table I.--Results of Demonstration Netting in Black Lake, Cheboygan and Presque Isle Counties, Michigan.

July 25 to August 2, 1947.

Date	Net number	Wall-eye	Rock bass	Small-mouth	N. Pike	Pumpkin-seed	Muskellunge	Perch	Bull-head	Sturgeon	Dog-fish	Mullet (Anisurum)	Mullet (Rubreques)	Sucker	Total
July 25, 1947	1	5	28	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	40
	2	15	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	29
	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	23	25
July 26, 1947	1	15	38	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	66
	2	15	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	27
	3	17	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22	40
July 28, 1947	1	29	36	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	2	6	86
	2	24	6	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2	5	57
	3	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33	38
July 29, 1947	4	...	16	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	8	26
	2	12	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	17
	5	16	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	...	10	46
July 30, 1947	4	...	9	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	2	6	21
	2	37	5	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	8	51
	5	3	8	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	1	30
July 31, 1947	4	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	6	13
	2	15	4	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	31
	5	49	3	4	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	12	...	5	75
August 1, 1947	6	13	16	6	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	42
	2	14	11	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	43
	5	11	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	...	5	26
August 2, 1947	6	11	12	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	27
	2	15	12	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	33
Total	...	323	227	90	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	44	10	187	889

Table II.--Results of Demonstration Netting in Burt Lake, Cheboygan County,
Michigan. July 25 to August 1, 1947

Date	Net Number	Wall-eye	Rock bass	Perch	Small-mouth	Pumpkin-seed	Northern pike	Rainbow trout	Sucker	Total
July 25, 1947	1	40	4	1	...	...	...	...	12	57
	2	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
	3	10	9	3	...	...	...	...	14	36
July 26, 1947	1	14	7	...	...	...	...	...	2	23
	2	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
	3	2	10	5	...	...	...	...	5	22
July 28, 1947	1	45	4	...	...	...	...	...	23	72
	2	5	11	...	1	...	...	...	1	18
	3	7	19	22	1	1	1	...	6	57
July 29, 1947	1	17	5	7	...	...	...	...	6	35
	3	7	7	3	6	...	...	...	3	26
	4	9	13	1	6	...	...	...	3	32
July 30, 1947	1	13	2	2	...	...	...	...	5	22
	3	...	7	3	...	...	...	...	...	10
	4	5	11	...	1	...	...	...	2	19
July 31, 1947	1	10	16	2	...	...	...	...	4	32
	3	3	23	4	2	...	...	...	...	32
	4	6	4	1	4	...	...	...	2	17
August 1, 1947	1	11	4	...	...	...	...	...	14	29
	3	3	40	1	2	...	...	...	1	47
	4	...	5	...	4	...	...	1	3	13
Total	...	207	212	55	27	1	1	1	106	610

Table III.--Results of Demonstration netting in Mullet Lake, Cheboygan County, Michigan.

July 26 to August 2, 1947.

Date	Net number	Wall-eye	Rock Bass	Small-mouth	Northern pike	Perch	Pumpkin-seed	Bull-head	Carp	Dog-fish	Sucker	Total
July 26, 1947	1	6	9	1	1	...	...	4	...	...	3	24
	2	...	6	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	13
	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	10
July 28, 1947	1	6	12	4	...	1	1	7	...	2	1	34
	2	7	8	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	19
	3	6	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
July 29, 1947	1	3	8	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	5	18
	2	3	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7
	3	...	1	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	6
July 30, 1947	1	7	9	1	...	1	...	2	...	...	5	25
	2	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	3
	3	4	8	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	14
July 31, 1947	1	7	28	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	7	46
	2	7	7	7	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	22
	3	5	13	5	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	26
August 1, 1947	1	7	10	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	3	22
	2	3	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
	3	1	5	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	10
August 2, 1947	1	1	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	9
	2	4	12	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	20
	4	3	4	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	22
Total	...	86	154	36	3	8	1	23	1	3	54	369

While the nets were being lifted the public was encouraged to come out on the lakes and see for themselves what was in the nets. Usually people turned out in fair numbers, and generally the operation was well received. Many people expressed surprise at the number of fish captured. It is unfortunate ■■■■ that summer visitors cannot be present in the spring or fall when the nets fish much more effectively.

Black Lake was netted with similar gear in the late fall and early winter of 1939 (See Institute Report No. 595, 1940). At that time the nets averaged 48 game fish per lift. During the summer of 1947 the nets averaged 28 game fish per lift. It should be mentioned that in 1939 the capture of game species was incidental and that the major effort was devoted to catching suckers. On Burt Lake the nets were operated for about a month in the late winter and early spring of 1947. They averaged 26 game fish per lift as compared with 24 game fish per lift in July, 1947. However, it was only the last few lifts at Burt Lake in the spring that really brought up the average. Earlier lifts caught almost entirely suckers. At Mullet Lake in the spring of 1947 the nets averaged 115 game fish per lift as compared with 14 per lift in July.

The July demonstration in all instances was affected by certain things. Firstly, in all lakes the nets were set where they could be readily accessible to people wanting to watch. These places were not necessarily the best fishing places. Also, all the lakes are large, and the nets could^{not} be expected to catch more than a fairly representative sample of what was present. We think the catch compares quite favorably with past netting results on other lakes at this time of the year.

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