

# Indian Lake Walleye Stocking Program Fact Sheet

## **Fishery Management Goals:**

Maintain a balanced and stable fish community with size structures that afford desirable fishing opportunities for large mouth bass, small mouth bass, yellow perch, bluegill, and walleye. The development of a secondary fishery for trout as a cold water species would be desirable, if primary goals are met.

## **Background:**

Indian Lake at approximately 500 acres is one of the largest lakes in Somerset County. Our lake has always had a reputation of good largemouth bass fishing, along with good catches of yellow perch and bluegills as well. Starting in 2013, based on a study by Aquaculture Specialists and an extensive fish analysis as well, it was discovered that we had an imbalance in our fish population. It was determined that our lake was dominated by too many yellow perch. How does this situation affect fishing and water quality?

When perch dominate a fish community, they compete intensely with young largemouth bass and each other for food. Their primary food source is zooplankton, small animals that live in the water. The zooplankton feed primarily on algae, the single cell plants that drift in the water and give it a green or brown color. If the algae is not controlled, it can be responsible for “blooms” that make the water look like pea soup.

A dense perch population can over graze zooplankton, eliminating the primary food source for young bass and the main means of algae control. The result is small perch, low numbers of game fish and algae blooms. Algae blooms reduce water clarity, thereby shading out and eliminating rooted aquatic plants. Largemouth bass, especially young ones, depend on rooted aquatic plants for cover.

## **Why Walleyes:**

Walleye are popular freshwater game fish native to the state. Walleye are voracious predators that prefer spiny rayed forage fish, such as yellow perch. In many waters, walleyes have demonstrated the ability to control over abundant yellow perch populations without adversely affecting largemouth bass or smallmouth bass populations.

## **Walleye Stocking:**

Our stocking program began in 2013 and to date we have introduced approximately 10,000 fingerling walleye. Because of staggered years of walleye introduction, fish of various size and age class are being caught. The fingerling walleyes being stocked are 5-7 inches long. They are large enough to avoid predation and they grow quickly to legal size in a few years.

## **Sporting Qualities:**

Walleyes are a very popular game fish specie in Pennsylvania. They strike hard and can put up a solid fight on light tackle. Walleyes prefer low light conditions because their specialized eyes are sensitive to bright light. Therefore, walleye fishing is best at dawn, dusk or on cloudy days. Walleyes also prefer cool water, so they will be offshore in cooler water in the summer. As water cools in the fall, they move

inshore and can be easily caught from the shore. Walleyes are also active in the winter and can be caught through the ice. Because their flesh is white, flaky, and mild in flavor, walleye are popular table fare. Also, they grow large enough to yield boneless fillets of generous proportions. With the established population of mature walleye present, we anticipate more anglers hooking up with these toothy predators within the next few years. More importantly, we expect to observe reductions in perch abundance in these waters. It is this criteria, and its associated benefits, by which we will measure the success of the program.

Ps...next month I hope to present additional facts of various fish species and our management goals.

Lynn Shimer