



Northern Pike and Muskellunge Regulations Proposals



Michigan Department of Natural Resources



Outline

- **Management plans and biology of northern pike and muskellunge**
- **Evaluation of current regulations**
- **Development of current proposals**
- **Discussion**



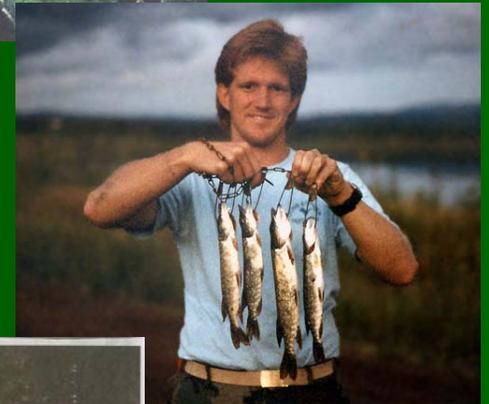
Northern pike management plan

- **Goal V. Provide a variety of NOP fishing opportunities within a science-based management system**
 - Current regulations do not adequately address management needs
 - Lost potential
 - Complicated regulations
 - Conflicts exist
 - We can't manage every northern pike fishery on a lake-by-lake basis



Current northern pike regulations

- Statewide 24-inch MSL, 2-fish possession limit
- No MSL, 5-fish possession limit (110 waters)
- 30-inch MSL, 2-fish possession limit (8 waters)



Trophy catches during Pike Fest in Amasa

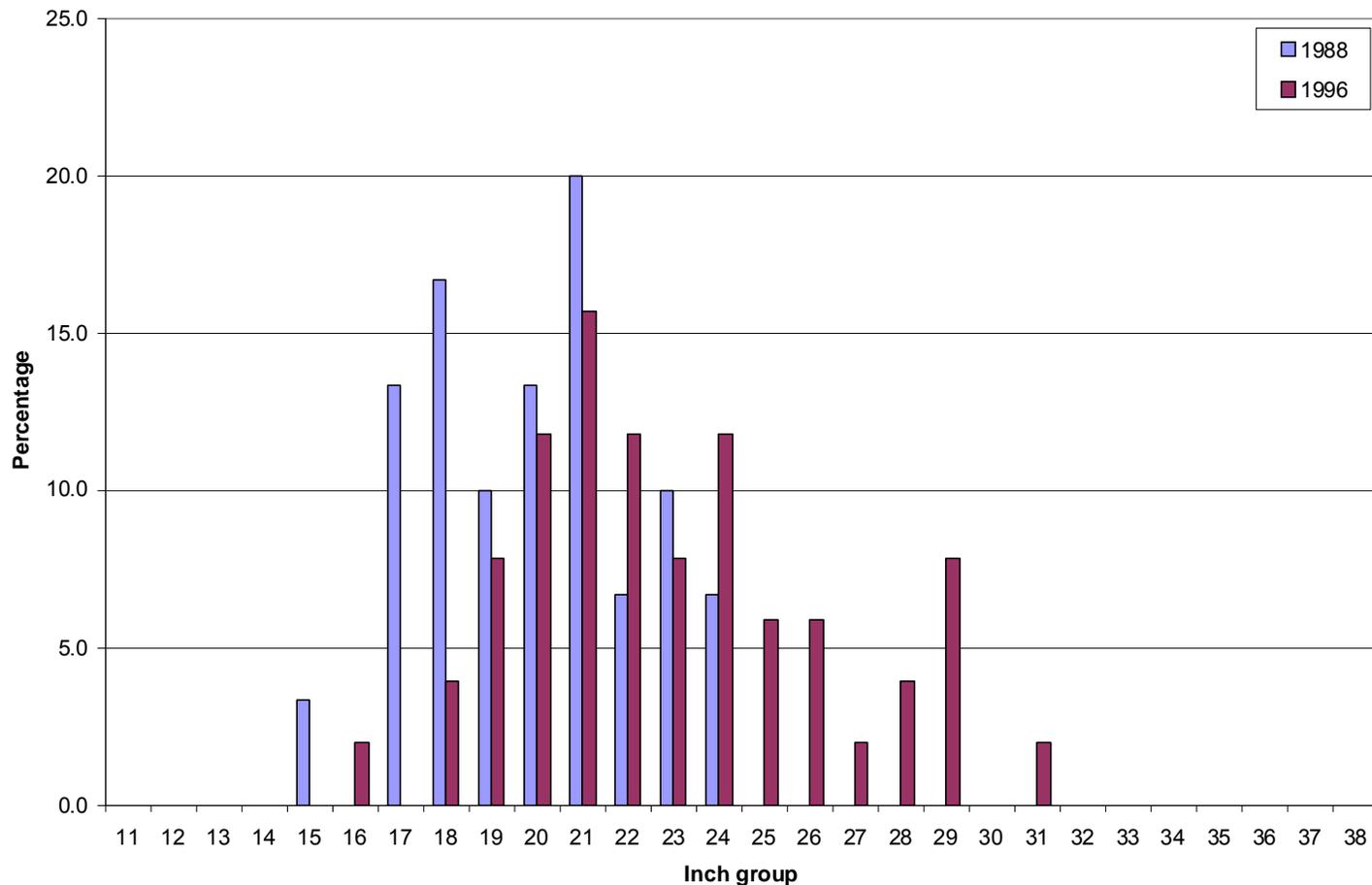
Tyler Lovato, left, of Crystal Falls and Kurt LaVacque of Amasa took first and second place in the Jan. 30-31 Pike Fest Weekend sponsored by the Rusty Sawblade of Amasa. The two Forest Park freshmen were fishing together with tip-ups when LaVacque was the first to pull up his 36-inch, 14-pound northern pike. Within minutes Lovato hauled in the 43-inch, 25-pound, first place winner. They could not be hooked into divulging their ice fishing location. (Lovato photo)

Bone Lake, Iron County



Current 24-inch MSL lake

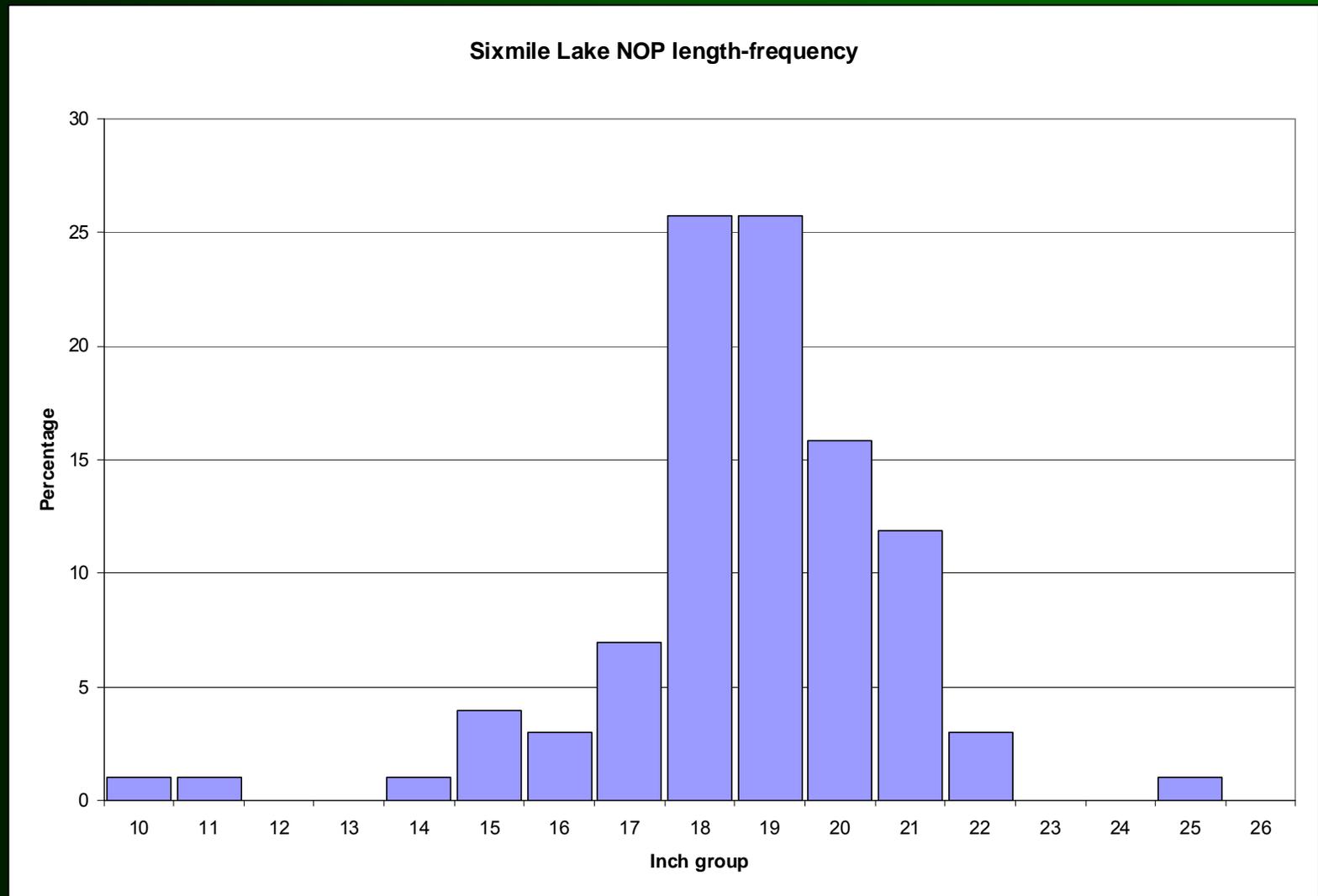
Length-frequency of NOP in June surveys of Indian Lake



Mean size went from 19.9 to 22.9



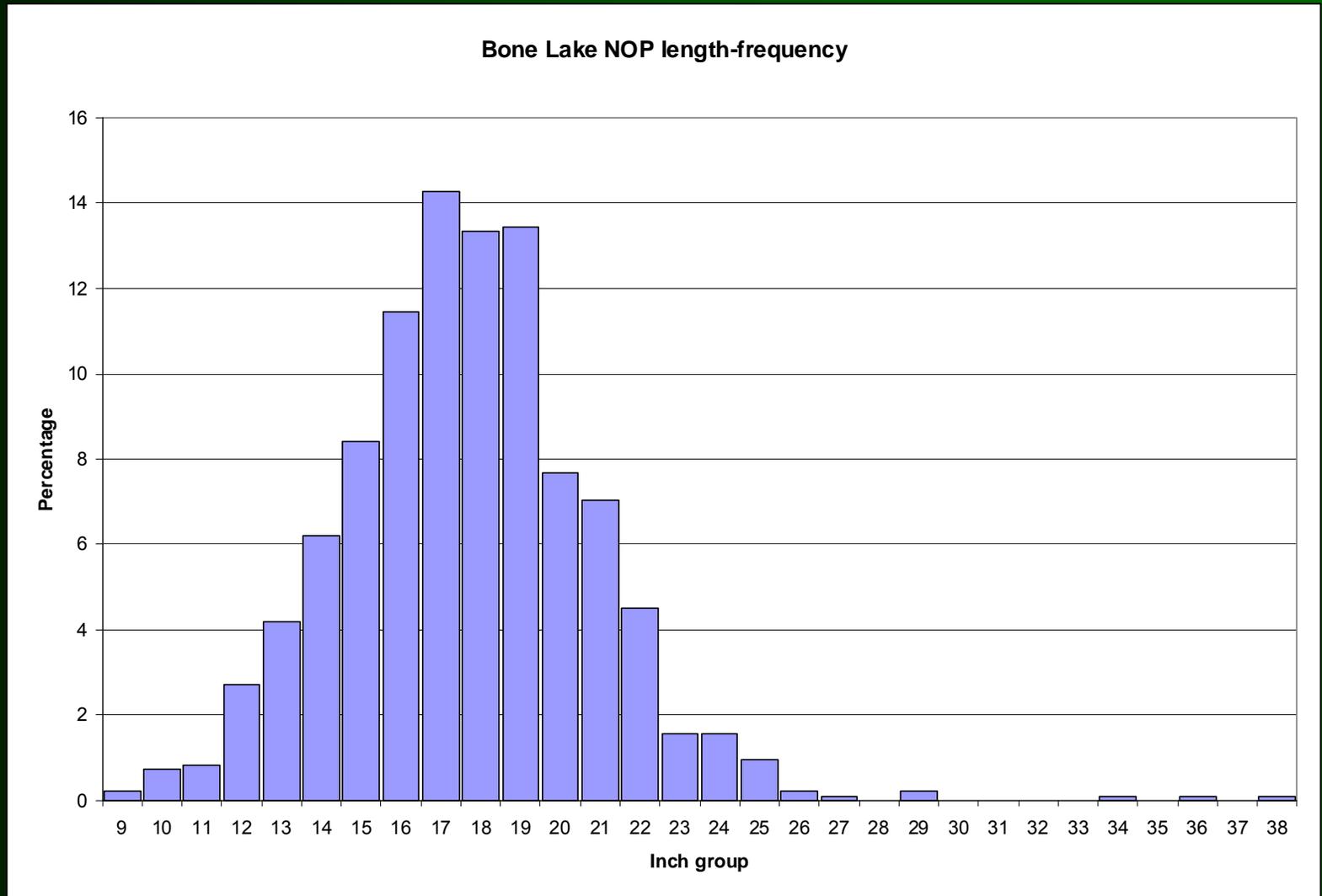
Current no-MSL lake



Would be a catch and release fishery under the 24-inch MSL



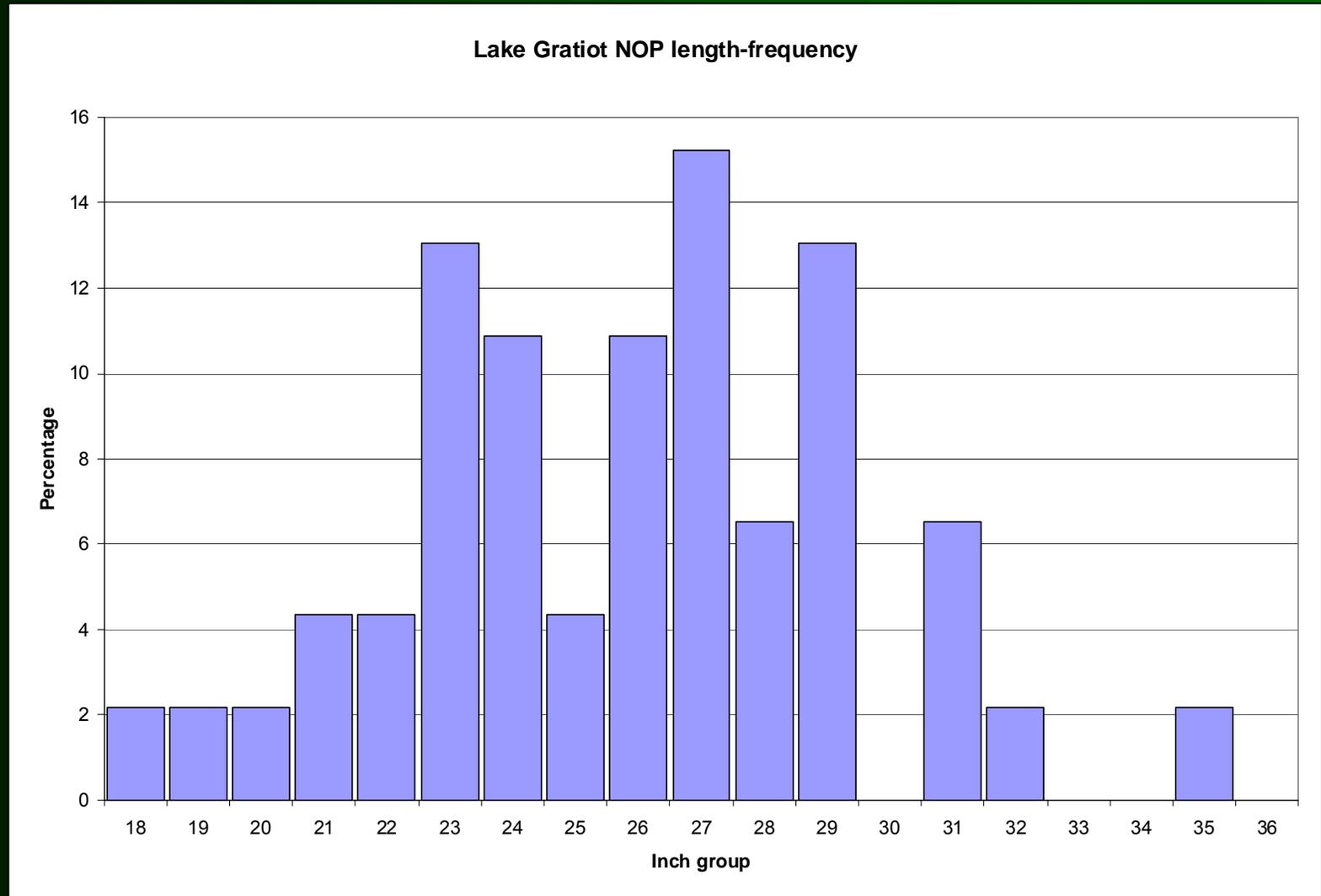
Current no-MSL lake



Example of lake that still produces big pike with no-MSL



Current 30-inch MSL lakes

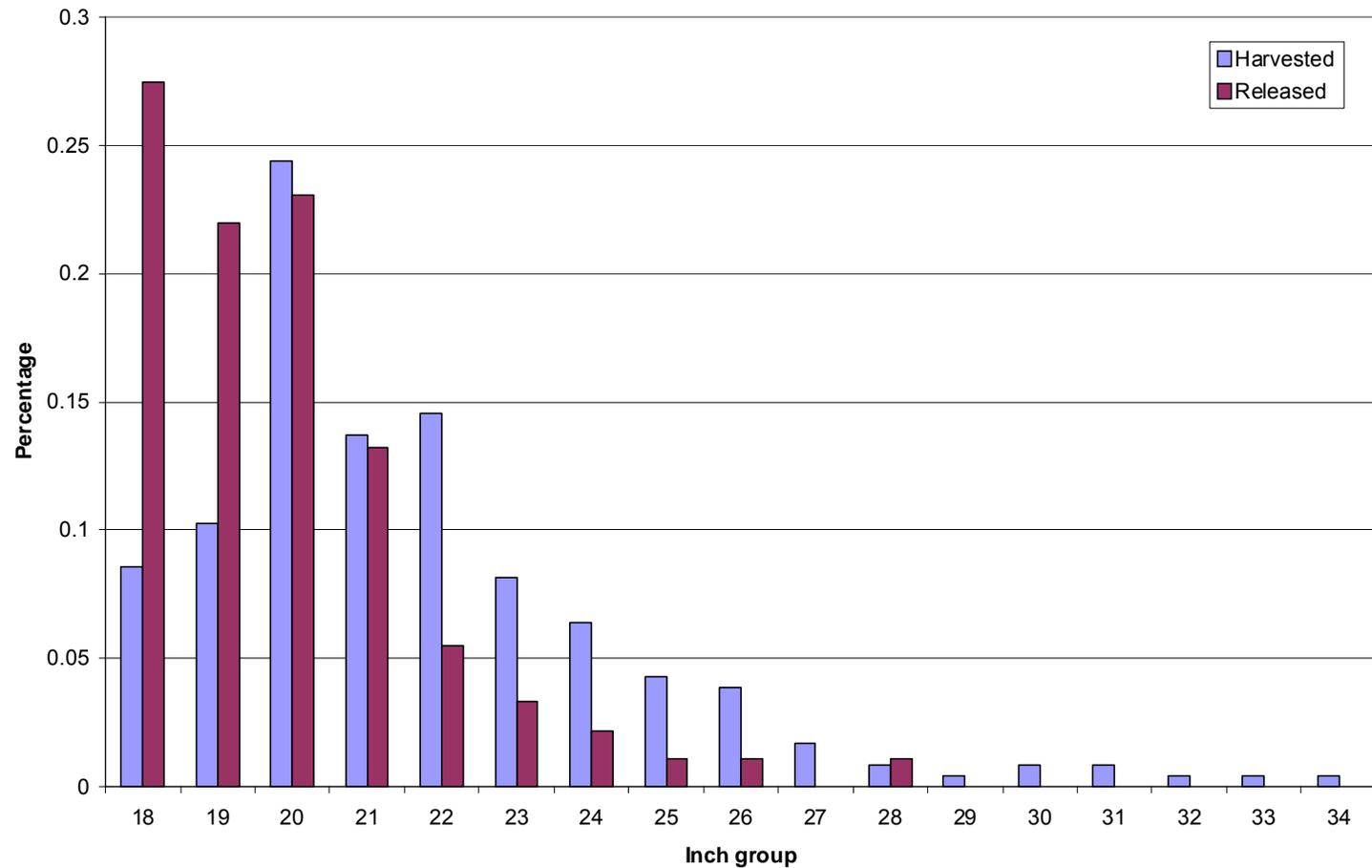


Research show increase in NOP 20-30 inches, but not over 30



Angler behavior - release

Length-frequency of harvested and released northern pike in two no-MSL lakes



What sizes of northern pike do anglers release?



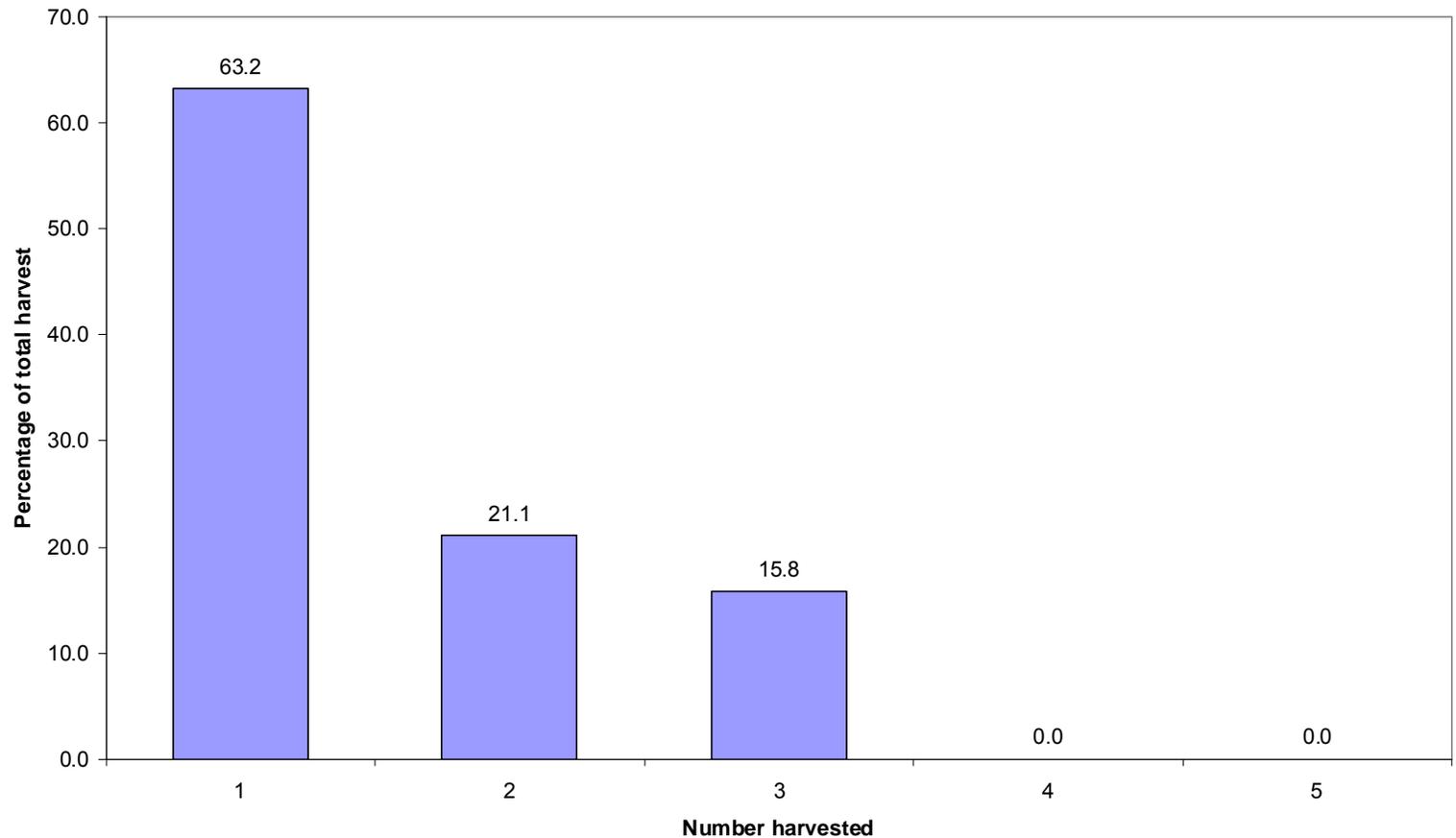
Possession limits

- Inland lakes 2001-2010
 - About 0.5% of anglers harvested 2+ NOP
- Lake St. Clair
 - 1.8% of LSC anglers targeted NOP
 - 2.4% harvested or released at least 1 legal NOP
 - Of those harvesting/releasing 1+ NOP, only 0.7% harvested a bag limit (which were mostly walleyes)



Possession limits

Percentage of total NOP harvest accounted for by various bag limits in Houghton Lake (2001-2002)

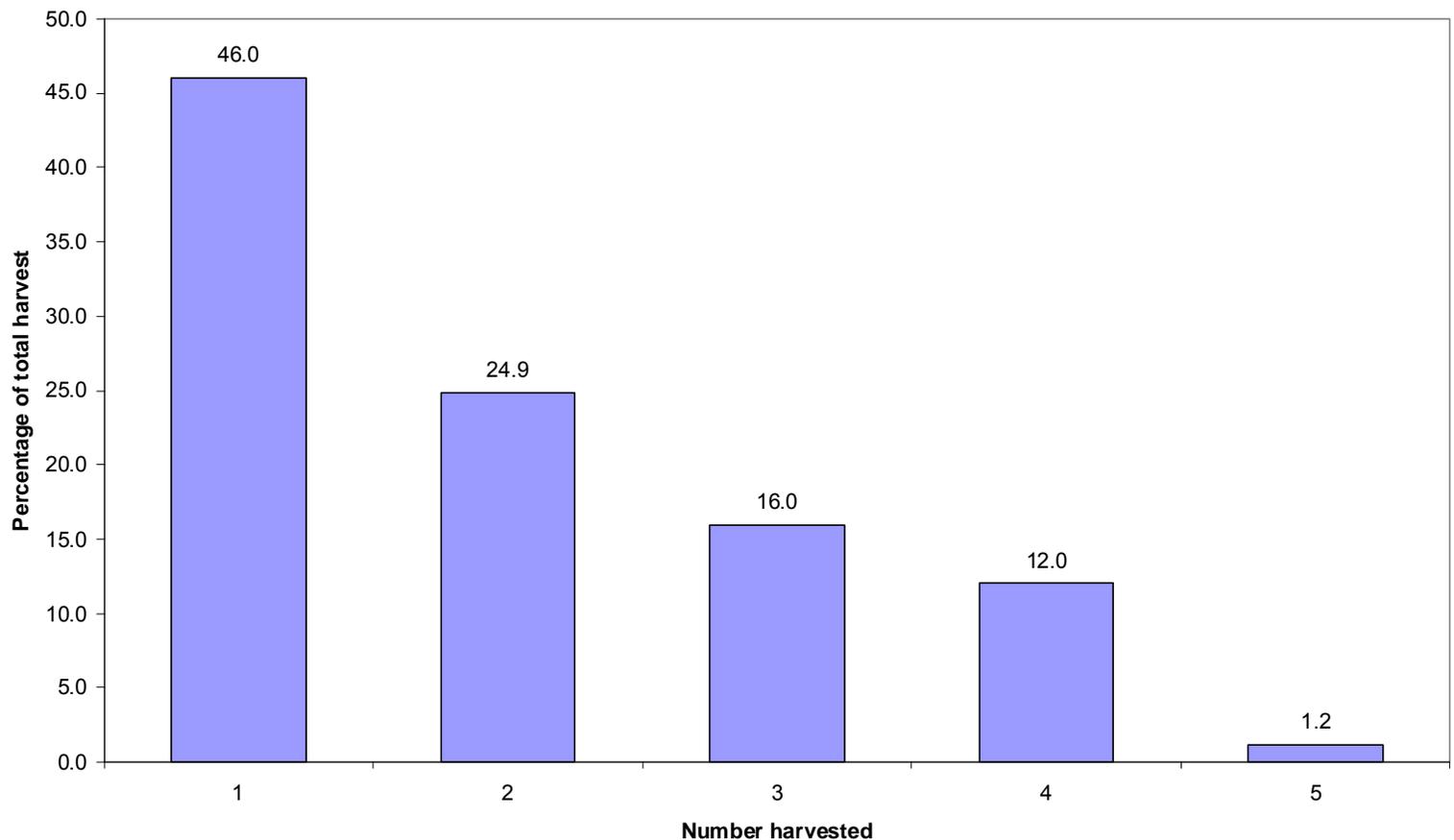


What did anglers harvest when bag limit was 5?



Possession limits

Percentage of total NOP harvest accounted for by various bag limits
in three no-MSL lakes (bag limit = 5)



Is the 5-fish bag useful in no-MSL lakes?



Sport fishing Proposals

- **Proposal 1**

- UP: no MSL, bag limit of 3 with 1 > 20"
- NLP: no MSL, bag limit of 2 with 1 > 24"
- SLP: 28" MSL, bag limit of 1

- **Proposal 2**

- Statewide no MSL, bag limit of 3 with 1 > 32"
- Oppose slot limits

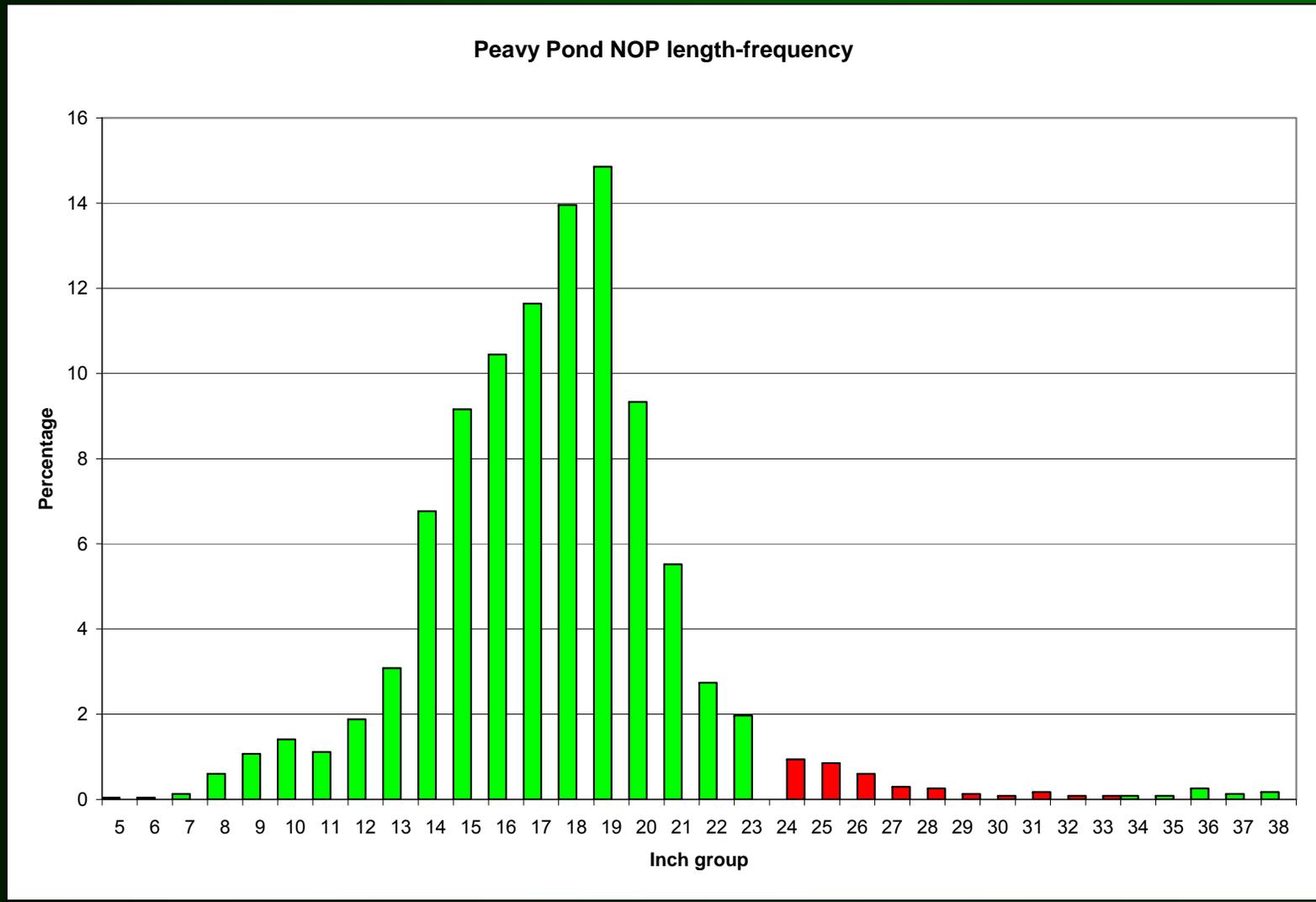


Fisheries Division Proposal

- **24-in MSL: largely accepted, simple**
- **Modify existing no-MSL regulation and 30-in MSL and create a 24-34” Protected Slot Limit**



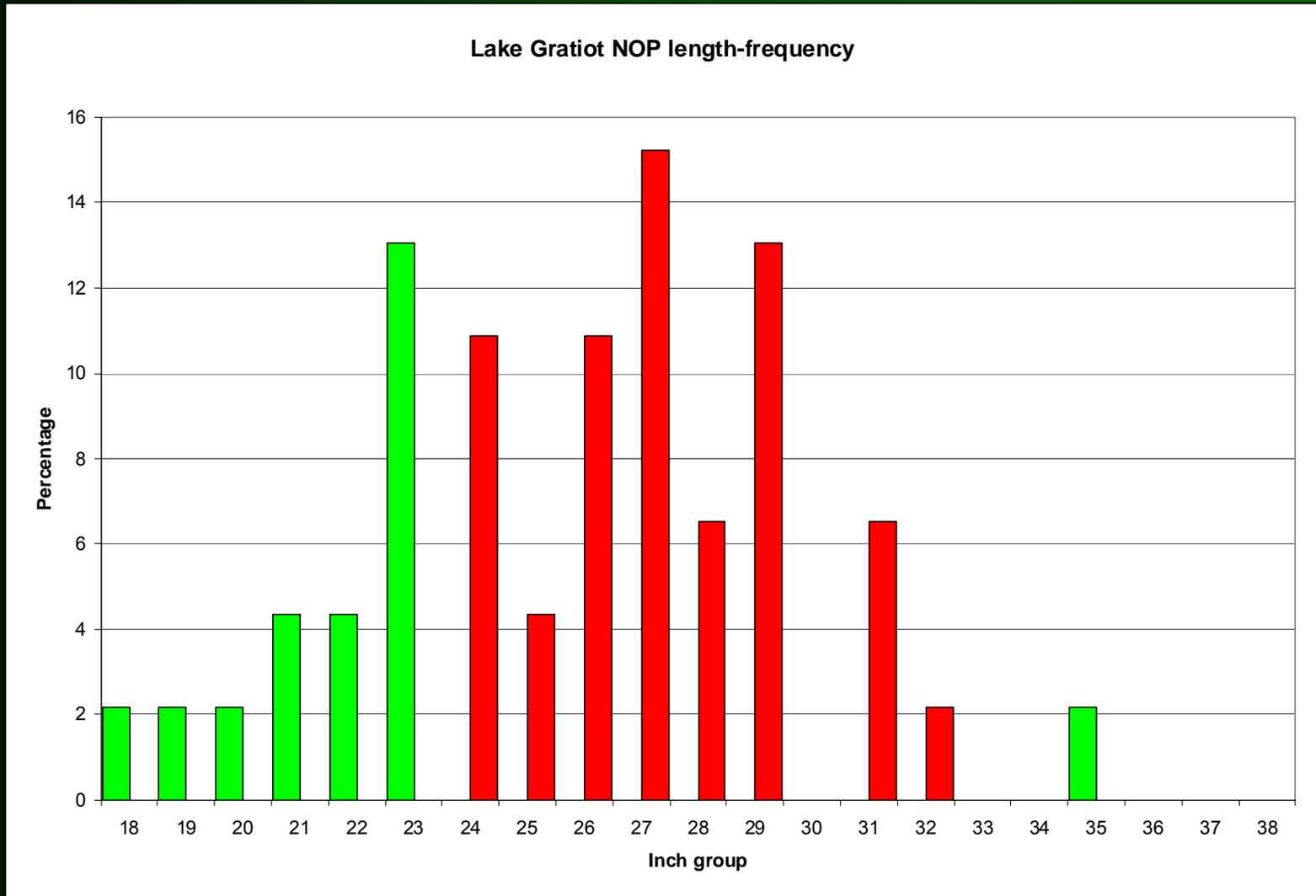
Current no-MSL lake



96.5% available for harvest with PSL



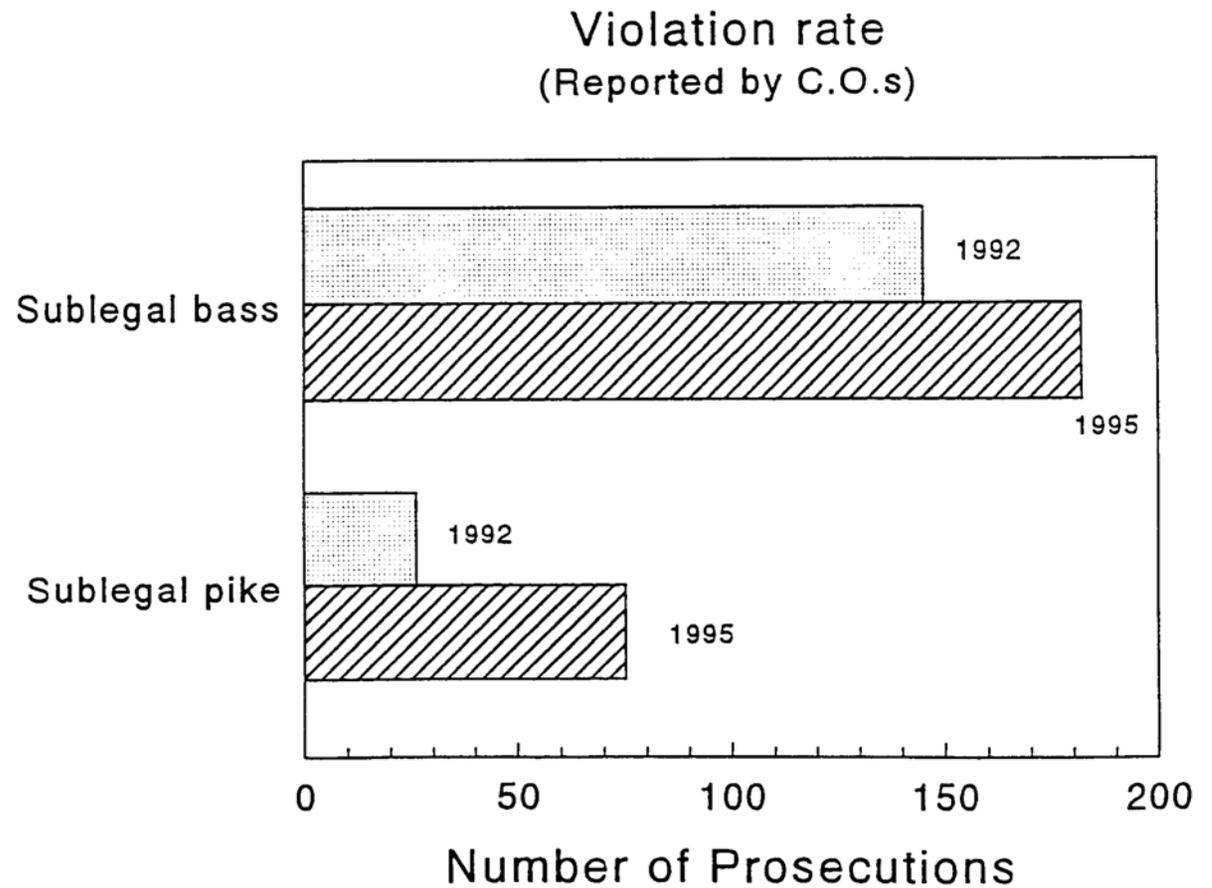
Current 30-inch MSL lakes



11% available with 30" MSL and 30% with PSL



Compliance and Patience





Regulations Proposal

- 24-inch MSL, 2-fish possession limit
- No MSL, 5-fish possession limit
only 1 \geq 24 inches
- Protected slot limit between 24 and
34 inches, 2 fish possession limit

Muskellunge





MUS management plan

- **Goal V. Provide a variety of fishing opportunities for muskellunge in Michigan.**
 - **Conflicts exist**
 - **Muskellunge waters are limited**
 - **Muskellunge remain absent or extremely rare in historical waters**
 - **Lack of a Great Lakes muskellunge rearing program**
 - **Develop a simple regulatory framework for managing muskellunge**



Current MUS regulations



- Statewide 42-inch MSL, 1-fish possession limit
- Variety of seasons, closed spearing lakes (43)
- 50-inch MSL on Thornapple



Constituent MUS proposals

- **Proposal 1**

- Statewide 46" MSL, bag limit: 1 or 2 per season (tag option)
- SLP: no closed season
- NLP and UP season: May 15 – March 15

- **Proposal 2**

- Statewide 32-34" MSL
- MUS should not be managed statewide basis with uniform objectives
- Okay with select trophy waters
- Seasons to coincide with WAE/NOP



Regulations Proposal

- **MSL options**
 - 38 inch
 - 42 inch
 - 46 inch
- **Possession options**
 - Harvest tag
 - Mandatory reporting
 - 1 or 2 fish per year
 - 1 fish per day
- **Season options**
 - later in year season opener

Thank You
please complete the survey



Great Lakes, Great Times, Great Outdoors

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