



Muskellunge Management in the Elk River/Antrim Chain of Lakes

Natural Resources
Commission
May 2020

Survey and Study History

- Elk Lake and Skegemog Lake netting/electrofishing surveys
 - April 2008
- Angler creel surveys
 - April- October 2008
 - January- March 2009
- Spawning site monitoring/Fish movement tracking
 - April 2008 –October 2010
 - Netting, spotlight surveys
 - 24 implanted with telemetry tags (4 harvested, 2 assumed harvested)
- Angler Postcard/Online Surveys (Kovacs)



Management Plan for Muskellunge in Michigan

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*Movement patterns and spawning sites
of muskellunge *Esox masquinongy* in the
Antrim chain of lakes, Michigan*

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Nicholas Popoff**



What Was Learned...

- **Muskie in the Chain exhibit slow growth rates, but size structure is large**
- **Muskie spawn in two main locations; Clam Lake and the Torch River**
- **Females mature at total lengths as low as 40 inches though most (76%) were from 44 to 54 inches**
- **Population density is low; recruitment and exploitation are highly variable**



Muskie Regulations Review

- **2016 public proposal**
- **NRC request for review**
- **Staff reviewed and aligned waters with Statewide Musky plan**
- **Warmwater Resources Steering Committee support**
- **Public conversation in 2017 for 2018 implementation if approved**

What's Happening Now?

- **Spear fishing community meeting in Bellaire 2017**
- **Torch River 2021 regulation change**
 - **Proposing a spawning closure to protect spawning Muskellunge. Torch River would remain a Type 4 stream, with a spawning closure from May 1 to June 15.**
 - **This regulation change proposal is currently open for public comment.**



Muskie Fishing Regulations

- **1993 MSL increased from 30" to 42"**
- **2018 MSL increased from 42" to 46"**
 - **Beals Lake, Benway Lake, Ellsworth Lake, Hanley Lake, Scotts Lake, Wilson Lake, Intermediate Lake**
- **2018 MSL increased from 42" to 50"**
 - **Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, Torch Lake, Elk Lake, Lake Skegemog**
- **One (1) fish per licensed angler**

