

2020-2021 Turtle-Flambeau Flowage & Trude Lake Fishing Regulations*

FISH SPECIES	OPEN SEASON	DAILY LIMIT**	LENGTH RESTRICTIONS
WALLEYE	May 1 - March 6	3	12" minimum length, only 1 > 15"
MUSKELLUNGE	May 29 – Dec. 31 (open water only)	1	40" minimum length
NORTHERN PIKE	May 1 - March 6	5	None
LARGEMOUTH BASS	May 1 - March 6	5	Only fish < 14", except 1 > 18"
LARGEMOUTH BASS	All other dates	0 (Catch and Release Only)	
SMALLMOUTH BASS	May 1 - June 18	0 (Catch and Release Only)	
SMALLMOUTH BASS	June 19 - March 6	5	Only fish < 14", except 1 > 18"
PANFISH (Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Crappie, Perch)	Open All Year	10 in total	10" for Crappie *No size limit for bluegill, perch, pumpkinseed
ROCK BASS	Open All Year	None	None
BULLHEADS AND ROUGH FISH	Open All Year	None	None
LAKE STURGEON	No Open Season	0	

*This is an abbreviated summary of seasons, size and bag limits. For complete fishing regulations please refer to the official Fishing Regulations Booklet.

**No person may be in possession of, or have under their control, more than the daily bag limit for the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage while fishing on the Flowage.

CHIPPEWA INDIAN HARVEST

A 1983 federal court decision reaffirmed the rights of Chippewa Indians to hunt, fish and gather wild foods within the ceded territory of northern Wisconsin. The Flowage has supported a walleye spear fishing harvest since 1984. Safe harvest levels are determined annually so that the combined harvest of anglers and spear fishers does not endanger the future of the walleye population.

INFORMATION

For more information about the fishery and fishing regulations on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage please contact:

Mercer Ranger Station
Department of Natural Resources
5291N Statehouse Circle
Mercer, WI 54547
(715)- 614-5120
Jason.Folstad@wisconsin.gov
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/turtleflambeau/>

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication is available in Braille, audio cassette, large print or computer format upon request. To order, call (608)-266-8204.

PUBL-LF-020



The Fishery of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage:

➤ Fish Population Status



Turtle-Flambeau Flowage & Trude Lake

Fishing Regulations 2021

The Fishery of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage

The Turtle-Flambeau Flowage remains one of Wisconsin's premier destinations for providing a true wilderness experience with countless fishing opportunities. The Flowage offers something for every type of angler, from trophy Musky fishing to notable panfish populations. This fishery provides good numbers of exceptional sized panfish (bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch). The TFF muskellunge fishery has a history of producing 50 inch plus specimens and although found in relatively low densities, most are quality size. Although perhaps the TFF is most famous for a naturally reproducing and self-sustaining walleye fishery, the Flowage is also home to a world-class smallmouth bass fishery. All of these fishing opportunities are available to anglers while also providing an unparalleled wilderness experience.

Although well-respected for its fishery, the TFF is also well-known as a "scenic waters area," which identifies the wild character (e.g. undeveloped shorelines and abundance of wildlife) it has to offer. Therefore, the value of the flowage not only lies with its exceptional year-round fishery, but also with its natural beauty, keeping anglers and outdoor enthusiasts returning year after year. So, whether you are pursuing one of Wisconsin's most desirable gamefish, looking for an outdoor adventure, or just interested in enjoying the beauty of the outdoors, the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage is a destination that you will not be disappointed in!

The Turtle-Flambeau Flowage: Fish Population Status

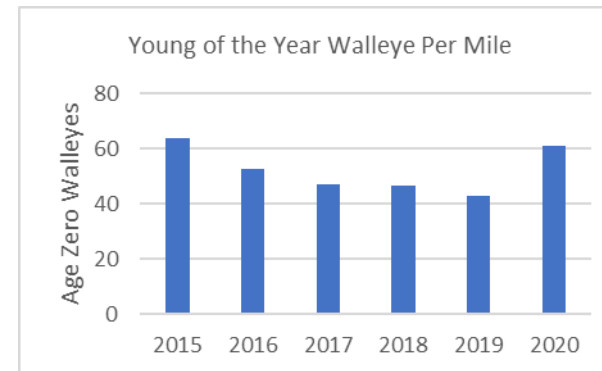
Walleye

The Turtle-Flambeau Flowage contains a self-sustaining walleye population, where no stocking is needed to assist the population and/or fishery. Past survey work suggests that while the walleye population is biologically healthy, the TFF could be a more productive fishery. A 2016 comprehensive survey estimated the adult walleye population at 2.8 fish/acre. This density is lower than historic levels documented on the Flowage (around 4 fish/acre), and below management goals (4-8 adults/acre). Adult size structure is also below management goals, where only 24% of adults sampled in 2016 were > 15", but management goals set a 30-50% objective. Harvest pressure has been identified as one of the major drivers of these population changes, and therefore, we implemented a new walleye size limit starting in 2020: **12" minimum length, but only 1 > 15"; 3 fish/day bag limit**. This regulation is designed to reduce harvest pressures on all juveniles and adult females. The regulation should help improve both numbers and the size of walleyes available.

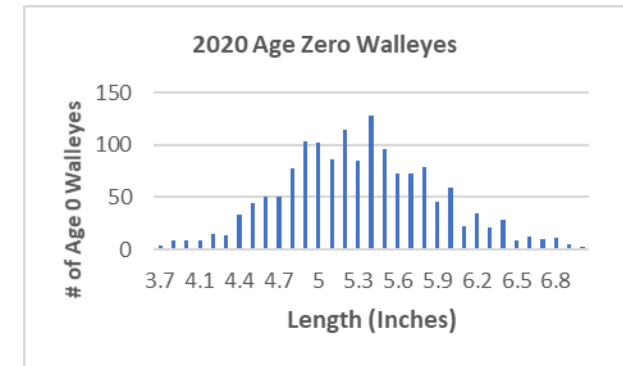
It's not all doom and gloom for the walleye fishery, however. Recent fall surveys have shown that from 2015-2020, the TFF has produced very strong natural year classes. Most of these fish are currently 7' -13" and not yet able to spawn. While a bulk of the population is currently comprised of these juvenile fish, the TFF remains a stellar walleye fishery.

With Covid-19 shutting everything down before the 2020 field season was about to start. The only field work done on the TFF in 2020 was the fall electro fishing surveys looking for young of the year walleye and musky. These surveys are done to determine how successful of a year class the adult walleye and musky populations produced in the flowage in a given year.

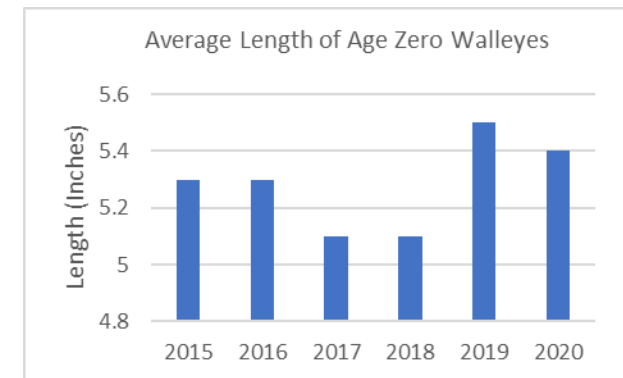
A young of the year (yoy or age zero) is a fish that was born in the spring and is surveyed that same fall. The flowage consistently has good walleye reproduction and 2020 was no different. How successful a given year class is determined by how many fish are captured per mile while shocking the shoreline. In Walleyes anything over 20 yoy's per mile is considered good. The flowage often exceeds that by double or triple and often has excellent reproduction rates, usually ranking in WI's top 10 on a given year.



Age zero walleye's can drastically range in size. Not only throughout the population but in different locations in the Flowage. Places with high densities of yoy walleyes will produce slightly smaller offspring (4" to 5"). In areas with lower densities of yoy walleyes their average size will be an inch or so larger (6" to 7").



The new regulation implemented in 2020 is designed to protect these good year classes until they reach adulthood.



The 2020 fall surveys yielded no young of the muskies. With adult muskies existing at relatively low densities stocking is needed to maintain the trophy fishery the TFF offers. Muskies are stocked in the fall, averaging around 12 inches in length and are done on a every other year rotation. In the fall of 2021 around 1,400 yoy muskies will be stocked at several locations throughout the flowage. This population exhibits strong survival of stocked fingerlings helping maintain a well-balanced age and size distribution with plenty of old fish that provide some serious trophy potential.