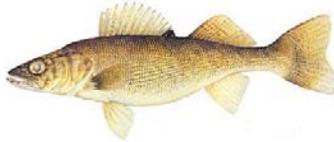


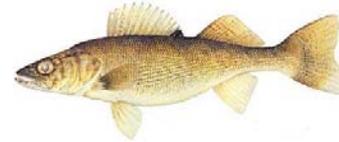
2010 Lewis and Clark Lake Fishery Projections



Annual fisheries surveys take place on Lewis and Clark Lake to monitor trends in fish populations. Electrofishing, gill netting, hoop netting, and seining are used to collect information that helps biologists monitor trends in numbers and sizes of fish of each species. Angler surveys are conducted during some years to gather information on angler use and harvest. These long-term trends in fish population status and angler use are used by biologists to make management decisions and determine regulations.



Walleye/Sauger/Hybrid



Did you know that the spawning seasons of walleye and sauger naturally overlap and they sometimes spawn together, forming hybrids? Walleye/sauger hybrids can also spawn. Of all four Missouri River reservoirs in South Dakota, Lewis and Clark Lake has the highest percentage of walleye/sauger hybrids. This means many of the fish caught by anglers in Lewis and Clark Lake that look like pure walleye or sauger are in fact hybrids.

Regulations for Lewis and Clark Lake Walleye/Sauger/Hybrid

These regulations apply to waters of the Missouri River from Gavins Point Dam upstream to Fort Randall Dam.

- **4 fish daily/8 fish in possession**
- **Minimum length limit of 15 inches year-round***
- **High-grading or culling of walleye/sauger/saugeye is prohibited**

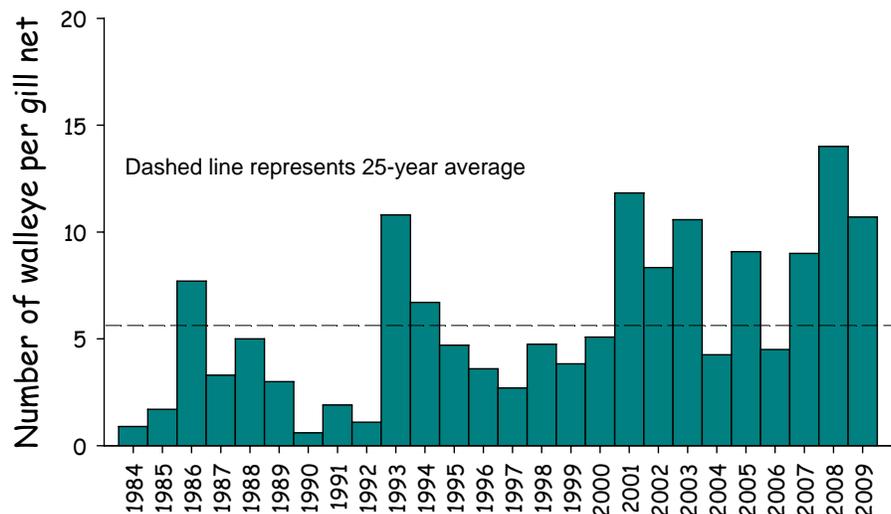
*There is NO minimum length restriction in July and August and only one fish in the daily limit may 20" or longer from the Nebraska border upstream to Fort Randall Dam.

Walleye trends for 2010

Walleye abundance is monitored through an annual September gill net survey. The average number of walleye per gill net is compared with the data from previous years to detect changes in abundance. The overall trend in Lewis and Clark Lake has been a slow increase in abundance over the last 20 years, with the highest abundance occurring in 2008. Although down slightly from 2008, abundance in 2009 was still nearly double the 25-year average.

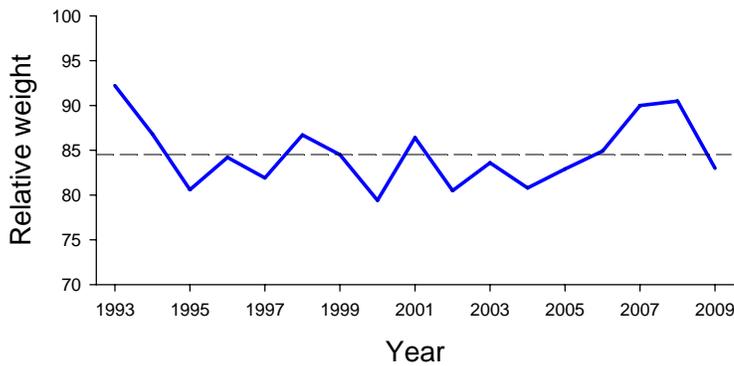
The young walleye produced during each year are referred to as that year's year-class of fish. The majority of the current population is from the 2007 and 2008 year-classes with a few fish from older year-classes. The 2007 and 2008 year-classes were especially strong. Fish from the 2007 year-class provided much of the angling opportunity in the summer of 2009, while the 2008 year-class should be available for angler harvest in the summer of 2010.

Walleye Relative abundance 1984 - 2009

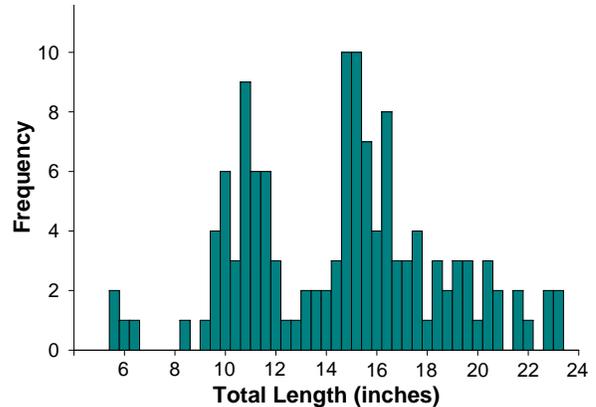


Relative weight is an index used to describe if fish are in good condition. High values indicate that the fish are plump and healthy, while low numbers can indicate an imbalance between walleye and its prey. Walleye relative weight values in Missouri River reservoirs are generally between 80 and 90 and only approach 100 when prey species are overly abundant. The moderate relative weights observed in 2009 were on the lower end of the normal range for Lewis and Clark Lake, but still comparable to previous years. Relative weights for fish in 2010 will depend on prey abundance.

Walleye condition decreased slightly from 2008 to 2009



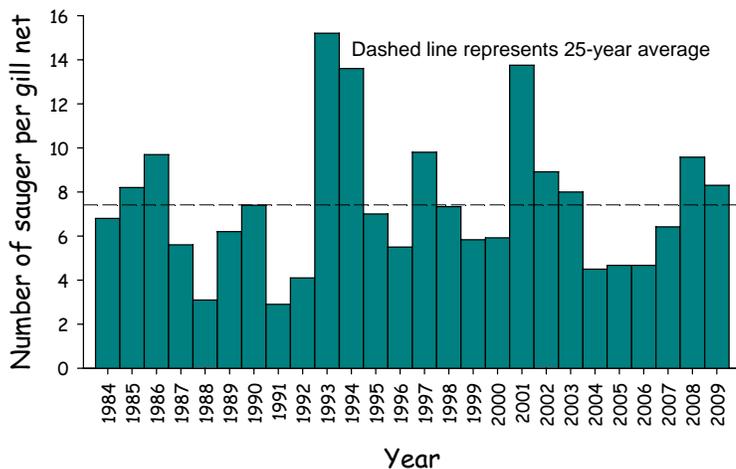
Almost half of the walleyes sampled in 2009 were longer than the 15 inch minimum size limit!



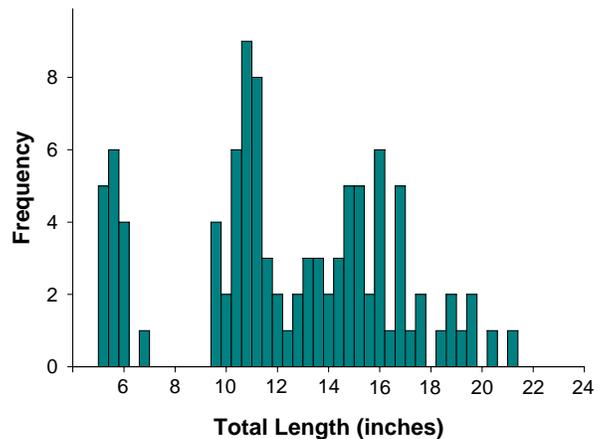
Sauger trends for 2010

Lewis and Clark Lake contains the most abundant sauger population in the state. The number of sauger caught per gill net in 2009 was above average and the sample had a balanced age distribution, indicating the relative stability of the population. As with walleye, sauger relative weights in 2009 were within the standard range of 80 to 90. About one third of sauger sampled in 2009 were above the 15 inch minimum. Fish from a large year-class in 2008 will soon be reaching harvestable size and anglers this year should once again find a large percentage of the sauger population over 15 inches.

Sauger relative abundance 1984 - 2009.



Approximately one third of the sauger sampled in 2009 were longer than the 15 inch minimum size limit!





Flathead and Channel Catfish

Regulations for Lewis and Clark Lake Channel and Flathead Catfish

These regulations apply to waters of the Missouri River from Gavins Point Dam upstream to the SD-Nebraska border where the river becomes entirely in SD.

- **5 fish daily/10 fish in possession (each)***

*There is no daily or possession limit on catfish from the Nebraska border upstream to Fort Randall Dam.

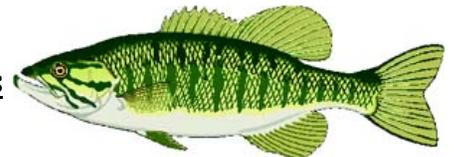
Channel catfish may be the best kept secret of the Missouri River reservoirs! Lewis and Clark Lake is no exception with excellent numbers and sizes present. Channel catfish were sampled up to 30 inches long and weighing over 10 pounds during 2009. The relative weight of channel catfish sampled in 2009 was above average, indicating plump and healthy fish. Angling opportunities for channel catfish are available throughout the entire Lewis and Clark reservoir system.

Flathead catfish are also present in Lewis and Clark Lake and can provide angling opportunities for those willing to search for them. During 2009, flathead catfish up to 37 inches in length and over 10 pounds were sampled. It is likely that even larger catfish roam Lewis and Clark Lake waters!

Remember, harvesting channel and flathead catfish instead of walleye will help protect our walleye population as fishing pressure continues to increase.



Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass



Regulations for Lewis and Clark Lake Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass

These regulations apply to waters of the Missouri River from Gavins Point Dam upstream to Fort Randall Dam.

- **5 fish daily/10 fish in possession (in any combination)**
- **There are no minimum length restrictions on bass in Lewis and Clark Lake.**

Largemouth bass were sampled by electrofishing backwater areas in the Niobrara Delta. Number of largemouth per hour of electrofishing was among the highest on record and included fish near 18 inches long. Traditionally, the best largemouth bass angling on Lewis and Clark Lake has been found in areas of the Niobrara Delta containing aquatic vegetation. Largemouth bass should be in excellent condition if anglers choose to target them.

Smallmouth bass are abundant throughout the reservoir from Gavins Point Dam to the Fort Randall tailwaters. Most of the population is young and tends to be on the small side; however, some smallmouth bass up to 18 inches were sampled in 2009.

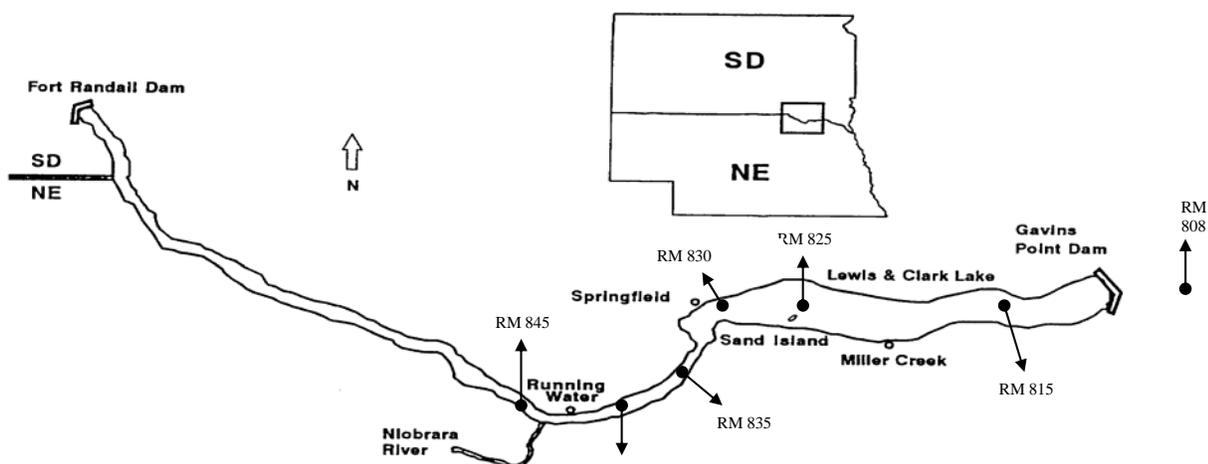
Points to Ponder

Gizzard shad are a seasonally available prey species. South Dakota is located on the northern edge of gizzard shad range, and gizzard shad are intolerant to extended periods of cold water temperatures. This commonly results in a large winter die-off of the juvenile gizzard shad present after the spawn. However, enough adults do typically survive to produce a year class of gizzard shad the following spring. Angler success is typically greater in the spring, before these prey fish reach a size desirable to sportfish like walleye and sauger. Later in the summer and fall, as large quantities of young gizzard shad increase in size and become available to predators, anglers can experience decreased success due to the amount of prey fish available. This depends upon the size of the year-class of gizzard shad present. Sampling in 2009 revealed abundant gizzard shad in Lewis and Clark Lake. Even with good numbers of harvestable sized predator species such as walleye, sauger and channel catfish present, angling success may have been affected by abundant numbers of gizzard shad.

Key Issues in 2010 for Lewis and Clark Lake

- Sedimentation is the most influential process occurring on Lewis and Clark Lake. Large amounts of sediment are deposited by the Niobrara River which contributes to the growing delta area near Springfield. As the physical characteristics of Lewis and Clark Lake change over time, anglers will need to adjust their fishing strategies.
- Annual netting surveys indicate a trend of increasing walleye abundance. Thanks in part to a strong 2008 year-class, there should be a large number of walleye available to anglers in the 15 to 22 inch range during 2010.
- The Lewis and Clark Lake sauger population continues to boast an excellent size structure with one third of the sauger sampled during fall gill netting above 15 inches in length. The strong 2008 year-class should provide good numbers of harvestable-sized sauger to anglers in 2010.
- Channel catfish numbers were down slightly 2009 but remained near the 5-year average. Size structure was improved and fish should be in excellent condition.

Lewis and Clark Lake



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