



2011 Lake Sharpe Fishery Projections

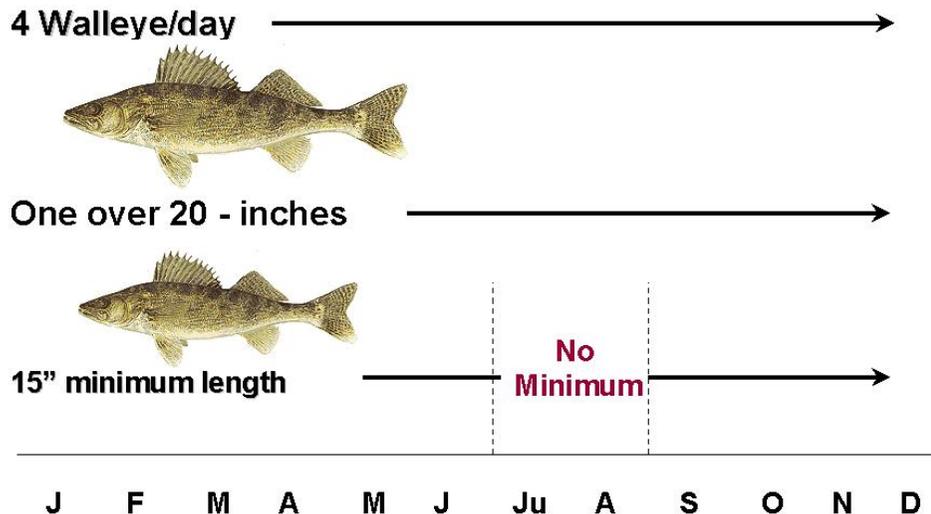
Each year, biologists working on Lake Sharpe collect information on fish populations from many fisheries surveys conducted throughout the year. They also collect information on angler use and harvest of those populations through creel surveys. By looking at trends in fish populations and angler use and harvest, predictions can be made about fishing on Lake Sharpe for 2011.

Walleye

Regulations for Lake Sharpe Walleye

Walleye limits for Lake Sharpe are the same as the South Dakota statewide standards of 4 fish daily and 8 in possession. The daily limit may include only one walleye 20 inches or longer, year-round, and a 15-inch minimum length limit is in effect during all months except July and August.

Walleye Regulations for Lake Sharpe



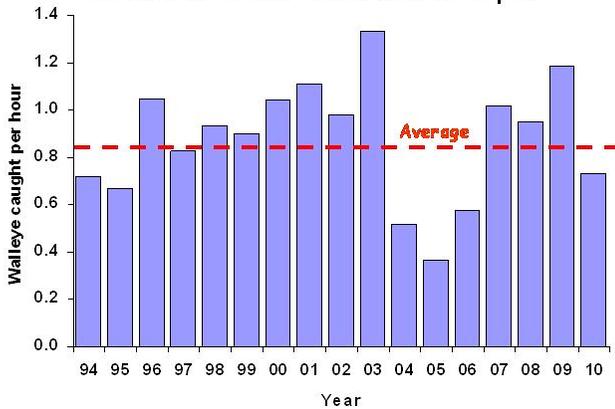
Walleye Fishing Trends for 2011

Fishing activity peaks at different times in different areas on Lake Sharpe. Fishing usually is best in the spring and fall in the upper region, near Pierre, and then progresses downstream to the lower third of the lake. During Mid-May, fishing improves in the lower third of the reservoir and remains good throughout the summer.

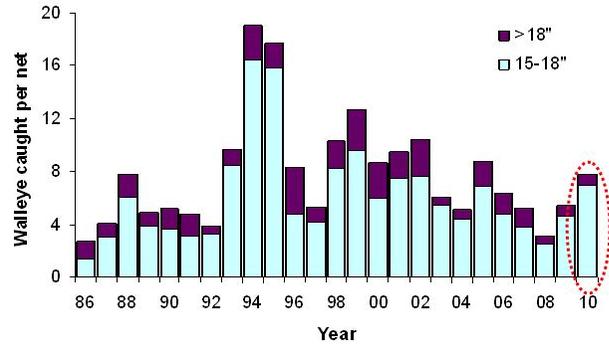
A walleye population, as with any fish population, has many ups and downs due to many factors, such as weather, water conditions, food resources, and angler harvest. In 2010, the walleye abundance index was 22 fish per net, which is near the average of 23 fish per net. The increase in abundance was largely due to good production of young walleye in recent years.

The abundance of harvestable size fish (over 15 inches) increased during 2009 and 2010. Walleye produced in 2007 and before are growing past the minimum length limit and will provide great angling opportunities. Of the 22 walleye caught per net in 2010, on average, 8 walleye per net exceeded 15 inches.

Number of walleyes caught per hour decreased in 2010 due to tough fishing conditions and high inflows of water into Lake Sharpe.

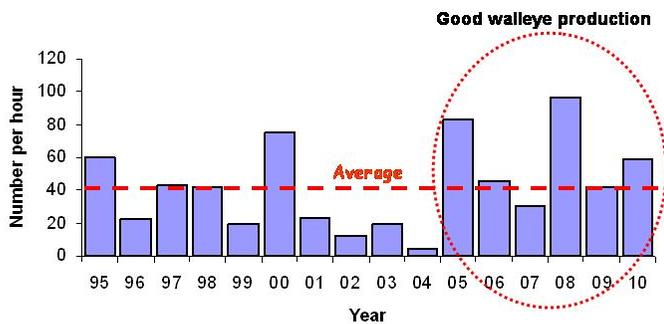


Harvestable size (> 15 inches) walleye numbers in Lake Sharpe have increased slightly.

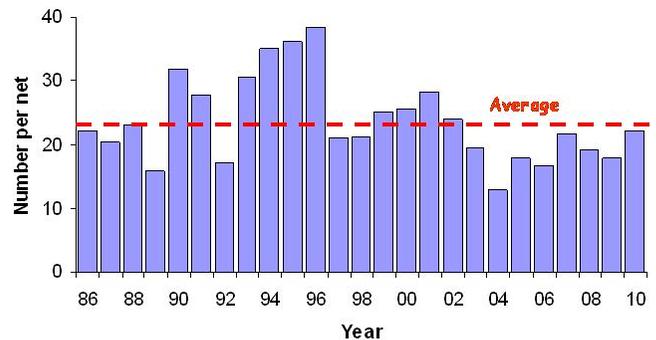


The future is bright for Lake Sharpe. During the years of 2005 through 2010, Lake Sharpe experienced average or above average production of young walleye. These fish began to reach harvestable size (> 15 inches) and will continue in the upcoming years. However, small walleye will also make up a large portion of the catch in 2011.

Walleye production has been good the past 6 years on Lake Sharpe.

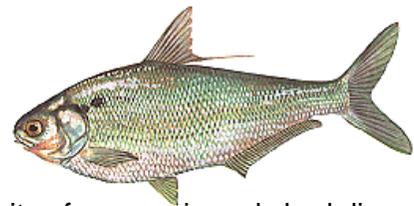


Lake Sharpe walleye population with its ups and downs during the past years.



How easy fish are to catch is influenced by many factors including the number of adult walleye in the population, ages of fish (younger fish bite better), and how much food is available. If the fish have a limited supply of food, catch rates generally increase due to hungry fish. In 2010, walleye catches were slower due to the drastic increase in water flows into Lake Sharpe especially from the Bad River. The sediment in flows made the water downstream from the Bad River extremely turbid and difficult to fish. In 2011, the catch of walleye by anglers should be good with an abundance of young walleye currently in the population.

Gizzard Shad: Lake Sharpe's Primary Forage



In Lake Sharpe, gizzard shad are the primary prey species. The majority of young gizzard shad die each winter due to cold water temperatures and a few adults survive each winter. In the spring, these adults spawn and produce thousands of young that feed Lake Sharpe fish for the rest of the year. If spawning conditions are not ideal for gizzard shad, there will be less food for walleye and other predator species. When conditions are right, adult gizzard shad will produce a high number of young, providing ample food for all predatory fish in Lake Sharpe.

In Lake Sharpe, fishing patterns develop due to the reliance of walleyes and other fish on young gizzard shad as food. In the spring, when gizzard shad numbers are low, walleye are easier to catch. In the summer, as the gizzard shad become large enough for walleye to eat, walleye are harder to catch because they have full stomachs. In the fall, walleye become more susceptible to anglers as they migrate upstream and concentrate in the upper end of Lake Sharpe.

Smallmouth Bass

Smallmouth bass are found throughout Lake Sharpe, but the best fishing is in the lower half of the reservoir. Smallmouth bass are the second most common species caught (walleye are most commonly caught) by anglers in Lake Sharpe. Shore fishing opportunities are best in May and June.

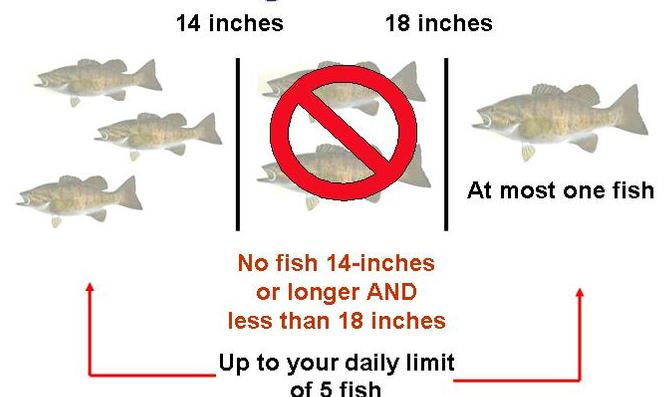
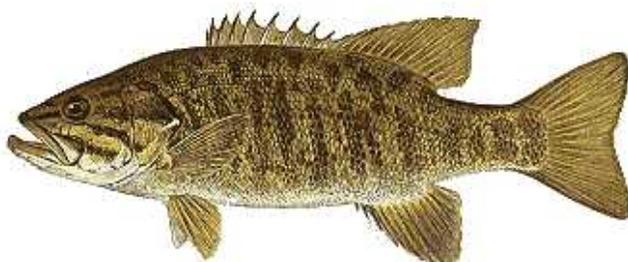
Smallmouth bass spawn in May to early June in Lake Sharpe. The male builds a nest in the shallows and attracts a female to his nest. The male will guard the nest and newly hatched fry for some time after hatching. After spawning, smallmouth bass will disperse from the shallows and cruise the "flats" for food during the summer, feeding to regain strength spent spawning. Walleye anglers often fishing the "flats" during June and July commonly catch smallmouth bass.

The size quality of smallmouth bass has increased over time in Lake Sharpe. In 2005, 24% of smallmouth bass collected in fish surveys exceeded 14 inches. In 2010, 68% of smallmouth bass exceeded 14 inches with some exceeding 18 inches. Smallmouth bass tend to slow in growth once they reach 15 inches and need a few more years of growth to surpass into larger sizes. The current smallmouth bass regulation is intended to allow harvest of smaller, younger bass and reduce the overall numbers of bass in the population. Thus, allowing room for more growth of bass within the population that are remaining. The quality of the Lake Sharpe's smallmouth bass fishery has improved.

Regulations for Lake Sharpe Smallmouth Bass

Only smallmouth bass less than 14 inches or 18 inches and longer may be taken, and of those 18 inches or greater, only one may be kept daily. Thus, all smallmouth bass must be released that are between 14 and 18 inches. The daily limit is five smallmouth bass, and the possession limit is 10.

Lake Sharpe Smallmouth Bass Regulations



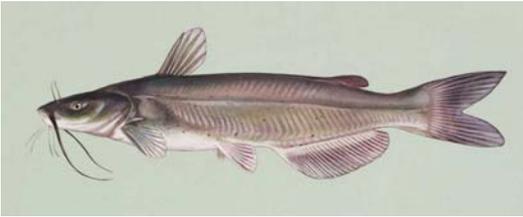
Rainbow Trout

The tailrace area below Oahe Dam is well known for trophy trout fishing. Anglers commonly catch large rainbow trout in the marina next to the tailrace during the winter and spring and in the tailrace throughout the year. In April, catchable rainbow trout (9-11 inches long) are stocked in the marina. This provides an excellent angling opportunity for kids and adults. In 2011, a stocking of rainbow trout will also be made in April near the LaFramboise Causeway fishing piers in Pierre to provide an easily accessible place for people fish for trout. Catchable rainbow trout that survive their first spring in Lake Sharpe can grow to a large size in the Oahe Dam tailrace, adding to the number of large rainbow trout available to anglers.



Channel Catfish

Channel catfish are found throughout Lake Sharpe and are abundant but overlooked by most anglers. Lake Sharpe channel catfish average 17 inches in length. Shore fishing with live, cut, or stink bait is especially effective and can be extremely fast during the summer months. Channel catfish are very long lived in the cooler waters of Lake Sharpe. Larger channel catfish in Lake Sharpe may be up to 25 years of age. Many areas throughout Lake Sharpe are good channel catfish fishing locations including the Oahe Tailrace, Farm Island's Hipple Lake, and Fort George.



White Bass

White bass in Lake Sharpe provides an additional sport fishery to anglers. The average size of Lake Sharpe's white bass is 14 inches which can provide a good tug on the end of a line. White bass concentrate in the months of Late-April, May, and June and can provide fast angling action during their spawning runs.

To fish for white bass look for them in May and June, especially in the upper third of the reservoir. Fish the windblown shorelines using jigs with plastic tails and small crankbaits. White bass are excellent to eat if served fresh with the red meat trimmed from the fillets.



Key Issues for 2011 for Lake Sharpe

- Catch of small walleye will be very common in 2011 due to previous years of good production of walleye. These small walleye are the future walleye fishery for Lake Sharpe.
- Good proportion of the walleye population exceeded the minimum length limit during fish survey in August, 2010.
- Smallmouth bass fishery provides an excellent fishery along side the walleye fishery.
- Trophy and catchable size rainbow trout fishing available in Oahe Marina and tailrace.
- Channel catfish abundance is good and can provide hours of angling enjoyment.
- White bass are found in abundance and of quality size in Lake Sharpe.
- Excellent shore fishing can be found in the upper reaches of Lake Sharpe
- Boating access is available on Lake Sharpe in most areas of the reservoir.



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