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THE AGE OF BLUEGILLS FROM THOMPSON (HOWELL) LAKE,  
LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

by

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On October 24 and 25, 1940, 136 bluegills were taken from Thompson Lake, at the City of Howell, Michigan, by trap netting. These fish were measured and scale samples taken. They were jaw-tagged and transplanted into Pasinski Pond, Livingston County.

The scale samples were taken in to the Institute for Fisheries Research laboratory in Ann Arbor, where they were cleaned and mounted and age determinations were made.

The following table gives the average size for each age-group:

Average Size and Age of Bluegills from Thompson Lake

(Fish taken Oct. 24-25, 1940)

Number of fish	Average standard length (millimeters)	Average total length (inches)	Estimated weight (ounces)	Age-group
9	54	2 3/4	0.17	I
74	69	3 1/2	0.39	II
46	83	4 1/4	0.70	III
3	108	5 1/2	1.69	IV
4	124	6 3/8	2.61	VI

The bluegills from this lake are considerably smaller than the average for the state. On the average, bluegills reach legal size in Michigan during their fourth summer of life, or at 3 years of age. The fish from Thompson Lake at the end of their 4th summer of life averaged  $4 \frac{1}{4}$  inches, or  $1 \frac{3}{4}$  inches below legal size. The fish at the end of their 7th summer of life are but  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches over legal size, while the state average is about 8 inches.

It is suggested that no further plantings of bluegills be made in this lake. The planting records show that in 1938 and 1939 no bluegills were planted. The large number of 2 and 3 year old fish present in the lake show that the spawning facilities are more than adequate and that further stocking would only aggravate an already overabundant population of bluegills.

Whether these bluegills are of a "stunted race" or not may be shown in the next two years by the growth made by the bluegills transplanted to Pasinski Pond. If the fish in Pasinski Pond make good growth, and a further sampling of bluegills from Thompson Lake shows that the "stunted" condition still exists, it will be shown that the fish are not of a "stunted race"; and that the conditions in Thompson Lake are in some way unfavorable to growth of bluegills. The lake should then be surveyed to determine what the conditions are, and what the limiting factor or factors are, and if possible make the necessary corrections.

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