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Mr. Shust

Mr. Warren

Institute for Fisheries Research

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

COOPERATING WITH THE

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ALBERT S. HAZZARD, PH.D.
DIRECTOR

ADDRESS
UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS ANNEX
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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AN EXAMINATION OF STATE LINE LAKE, GOGEBIC COUNTY,

TO DETERMINE ITS PROPER CLASSIFICATION

by

A. S. Hazzard

State Line Lake (T. 44 N., R. 43 W., Sections 29 and 32), located partly in Michigan and partly in Wisconsin, has been the subject of considerable local agitation because of conflicting regulations of the two states. Mr. Raymond Rigoni, Secretary of the Bessemer Township Conservation Club, brought this matter to the attention of the Department and requested a survey to determine whether State Line Lake should not be placed in the "pike lake class" in order to correspond with Wisconsin's regulations for their part of this lake. (Wisconsin permits fishing for pike and other species not protected by other law on May 15 in this lake.)

Mr. Warren and I met Conservation Officer Herman Strough at Marinesco and we proceeded to the lake which at present must be entered by the public from the Wisconsin end. With the aid of an outboard motor (loaned by Conservation Officer Bloomquist) we cruised the entire lake.

The total area of the lake is probably about 200 acres divided almost equally between the states. The shoreline is extremely irregular with numerous bays and points. The shores are well wooded with second growth aspen, birch and conifers. There are about five cottages on the Wisconsin portion and about three on the Michigan part. Along the shore the bottom

is partly rocky and partly sand and muck, and pulpy peat in deeper water. Aquatic vegetation is common in the bays and other protected areas and in the outlet. The water was of a reddish color and rather turbid, a condition common to many lakes in this area at this time of year.

Schools of fair sized perch and a number of small bluegills or sunfish were seen in the shallow outlet which runs from the landing for about 1/4 mile through a marsh before the lake proper is reached.

Mr. Strough reports that at present pike and bass are about of equal importance in the catch and that pike seem to be increasing. Mr. Rigoni told us earlier that he had seen some nice catches of pike taken there this summer.

Apparently Michigan fishermen resent the fact that Wisconsin people can fish the lake May 15 while they must wait till June 25 unless they take out non-resident Wisconsin licenses (which some do).

The fish habitat in State Line Lake appears equally suited to pike and to bass and bluegills, being similar in character to much of the Cisco chain of lakes.

Since pike are a dominant species, the designation of this lake could properly be changed. Opening the lake on May 15 and closing it March 15 would permit a better harvest of pike, perch and crappies (reported to be present). This should work to the advantage of bass and bluegills even though a few of these fish may be killed before they can be legally kept. Predation by pike especially is believed to be a controlling factor (not always detrimental however) in the abundance of bass and bluegills.

For the above reason and in order to make the opening dates of the two states uniform, it is recommended that the designation of State Line Lake be changed to the pike class.

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

A. S. Hazzard, Director

Report typed by V. Andres