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AN ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE FISH FAUNA OF THE DOUGLAS LAKE REGION (MICHIGAN) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MORTALITY OF THE SPECIES.

ROY J. COLBERT.

In this study of the fish fauna of the Douglas Lake (Michigan) region special attention was given to the mortality of the various species found and it is thought that the data collected in this connection have a direct bearing on the general ecology of the species involved. In order that the data on the mortality might be more easily understood, records of species frequency were taken for several typical habitats and a general survey of the intra-lake distribution of the species made. The collection of fishes from which the data were gathered includes several hundred specimens taken during the summer sessions of 1913 and 1914 at the University of Michigan Biological Station at Douglas Lake.

Opportunities for procuring data on these particular problems were especially favorable. Doughas Lake affords an ample variety of aquatic habitats which are easily accessible for study. The shores of the lake are covered with their natural growth of vegetation and timber, and as yet neither the inlets nor the outlet, Mapie River, have been dredged or changed to any large extent. The lake and its adjacent waters may be divided into the following units for the purpose of this study: North Lake, that part of Doughas Lake west of Fairy Island and Robert's Point; North fishtail Bay; Bessey Creek region together with the other small inlets of the lake; and Maple River (See map, Fig. 2). Each of these regions has a condition or set of conditions distinguishing it from the others and encouraging the predominance of certain species of fish.

The prevailing winds of the region blow from the west and north-west, hence North Lake, the part of Douglas Lake west of Fairy Island and Robert's Point, is seldom disturbed by heavy winds and waves, and the aquatic vegetation, especially Myriophyllum and Potomogeton, has a better chance to grow. This is particularly true immediately west of Fairy Island. In this region the pilec-pickerel, Esox lucius, and the rock bases, Amblophies rupestris, are very common, and along the marshy shellows of the west shore the cat fish, Amieurus melas, nest and are found in great abundance.

and are found in great abundance.

North Fishtall Bay affords two somewhat different habitats. The north portion is a quiet bay surrounded by a thick pine and codar

seen all through the summer in the very shallow water near the bank. the adults still guarding them. Several schools of small catfish were seed, Eupometis gibbosus, were found both summers early in July with forest. The water increases in depth very gradually from the shoals along the shore. The bottom here is covered with a thin layer of defeeding there, and (2) to learn what fishes come into the habitat to frequency of the various species belonging in this habitat, breeding and habitut was studied from two standpoints: (1) to ascertain the relative cayed vegetation and the yellow water lilies, Nymphaea americana, Polomogeton, and Myriophyllum are very abundant. This particular Several nests of the callish, Amieurus melas, and the pumpkin

ing to the habitat, and breeding and feeding there. The following toward the shore. The trap in this position collected the fishes belongalmost to the shore on either side and with the open mouth of the trap in the lay, about 100 feet from the shore, with the wings extending The frequency study of this habitat was made by placing a fyke net

table gives the results of six days typical collecting.

1. Funnkin seed, Euromoth pibboara. 2. Blue zill, Lepoma spillritte. 3. Sucker, Calodomia cummersanii. 4. Cat iish, Amieurus melas.	Species. Number. Average size. Prequency	TABLE NO. 1.
 24 14	Number	-
100 m.m. 108 m.m. 276 m.m. 177 m.m.	Average size. Frequency.	
 .583 .223 .094	Frequency.	

accident species are from deeper water and were in this habitat presumably by trout perch, Percapsis gullatus, were taken in the net. Both of these the table, two specimens of the yellow perch, Perca flavescens, and one During the two summer's work, in addition to the species listed in

to note in what direction each fish entered the net, i. e., whether it was coming in from the lake or going out into deep water. The following table gives the results of six days collecting with the gill net: set across the bay just outside the fyke net. Particular care was taken To determine what species enter the habitat to feed, a gill not was

TABLE NO. 2.

Sun fish, Eupomotis gibbaus. Sucker, Catadomie con merzonii Pekerf pike, Exor Incia. Nuo gill, Lepomis palitake		Species.
30128	THE PROPERTY.	Number of
COADO	In.	Dia
∞⊃# <u>∞</u>	In. Out.	Direction.
221 m.m. 294 m.m. 360 m.m. 126 m.m.		Unb. Average size

of the gill net, it is quite evident they visit the habitat for feeding. water. time of feeding. tically the same, and as expected it occurs in both shallow and deep particular species all over the lake, except in very deep water, is practhe net and near the bottom where they feed. The frequency of this out. Catastanus commersanii, however, were taken on both sides of Lepomes pullidus were inside the enclosed area and were caught going lucius, which in every instance was gilled at night during the usual nets were emptied every morning and evening, and about as many of the various species were taken at one time as another, except Esox It will be seen from Table No. 2 that all Repomotis gibbosus and Since none were taken in either the fyke net or on the inside Esex lucius, however, belongs in a different habitat in deeper

cluding visitors, as shown by the combined collections, is as follows: The combined frequency of all species collected in this habitat, in-

result of the collections is as follows: the relative frequency of the species in the habitat, was not large. wind and waves have less sweep, a considerable patch of yellow water lilies, Nymphaea americana and Polomogeton. The fylic net was narrow, shallow shoal to a depth of 40 feet. It has, however, along the nearly like that of the lake proper. It gets about the same amount of of the trap toward the shore. The eatch, therefore, while it represents placed in this situation for a period of ten days with the open mouth edge of the step-off and in the shallows of the south side, where the wind and wave action; its bottom is sandy and drops abruptly from a The south bay of North Fishtail Bay presents a situation more

TABLE NO. 4.

 . 217 . 018 . 178 . 187 . 187 . 187	148 m.m. 213 m.m. 210 m.m. 332 m.m. 120 m.m. 116 m.m. 145 m.m.	<u> ನಿರಾಜಕಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್</u>	Punjskih sved. Erpanetis oʻlsbaris. admirist Santije-munijab black bass. Hieropirus doloricu Santije-munijab black bass. Hieropirus doloricu Santije. Distribusu expanetosisi Gatish. Gastionus expanetosisi Gatish pill. Expanet politicu Bibas (Bl. Larante politicu Hoch bass, Andopilira rumatris.
Frequency.	Average size. Frequency.	Number.	Species.

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The fish taken from this habitat were larger than those of the same species taken from the north bay. The presence of both the largemouth black hass, Micropterus salmoides, and the small-mouth black bass, Micropterus delomete, in the ratio of three to one, is a characteristic feature of this habitat.

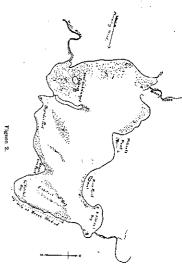
The lake proper has four types of habitats, each of which must be dealt with separately: (f) the shallows and shoats; (2) the deep water near the step-chf; (3) the mid-lake portion not exceeding 20 feet in depth; and (4) the deep cold water below the 20 foot line which includes most of South Fishall Bay. (See map, Fig. 2).

In the shouls and statiows of South Fishtail Bay schools of young perch, Perca flavescens, shiners, Notropis hudsonius, N. cannuga, and N. cornulus, young suckers, Catostomus commersonii, blunt-mosed minnows, Pinepholes notatus, and an occasional individual of the Johnny darter, Boleosoma nigrum, are found. Each of these species, however, is very abundant on the more rocky shouls between Grapevine and Bogardus Points, on the east side of Friry Ishand, and along the northeast side of the lake (See map, Fig. 2). The relative frequency of these various species is seen in the following table, the combined results of soven officeral long-shore scinings made at various times during the sessions of 1913 and 1914:

1. Yellow perch, Perca flarescens. 2. Stricker, Socialisation Commercialis. 2. Stricker, Socialisation Commercialis. 2. Stricker, Socialisation Socialisatio	Species. Number. Avera	TABLE NO. 6.
40-60 m.m. 30 m.m. 20-60 m.m. 20-40 m.m. 20-80 m.m. 20-80 m.m. 30 m.m. 10 m.m.	age size.	
.381 214 204 169 029 008 008 008	Average size. Frequency.	

Practically all of the records included in Table 5 were adults of the species, excepting the perch, suckers, and pumpkin seeds. The adults of these three species frequent the deeper water of the lake, but lay their eggs in the shallows where the young remain until they are large enough to avoid the enemies commonly found in the deeper waters. Since the young suckers and perch are so abundant they form a very important part of the life of this habitat.

Just over the stép-off, in water ranging from 10 to 20 feet deep in situations where the equatic vegetation is more or less abundant, the trout perch, Percopsis guitatus, and yellow perch, Perca fausaccans, are very abundant. Here also the schools of the log perch, Percha caprodes, are found, but the last species is by no means as abundant as the other two. The largest schools of the log perch were found



near the east shore of South Fishtail Bay, where during the first two weeks of July they were seen spawning in the shallow water. Adult minnows are also fairly frequent in this habitat. As will be seen later, the great majority of adult yellow perch thrown upon the beach by the waves were stranded while freding on the trout perch in this habitat, practically every individual having a half-swallowed trout perch in its mouth.

Over the submerged sand bar and on either side of it, where the reeds, Scirpnas spp., grow, also between Grapevine Point and Fairy Island, where the various water plants grow to within four to six freet of the surface, the habitat is slightly different. Here the bass, both M. dolomicu and M. salmoides, the pickerel-pike, Esax Incius, and the rock bass. Amblophice rapestris, are abundant. A trammel net placed with one end barely on the sand-bar, i. e. in about 10 feet of water, and the other end extending into water forty feet deep gave the following results during both sessions:

replicate admoides	1. Rock hass, Ambopites repetris. 135 m.m. 111-15 ft. 32 Steller, Galestram commercialit. 310 m.m. Attildiptis 33 Philiptin seed, Experie of bosses. 110 m.m. Attildiptis 25 Colone pilot, Base Jacque. 100 m.m. 210 m.m. 2	Species, Average size of water Number.	TABLE NO. 6.
200. 2010. 2010.		Prequency.	1

Aside from the fishes taken in the trammel net at a depth exceeding 20 feet, and listed in Table No. 6, the lake whitefish, Argyrosomus arteit cisen and the ling, Lota macalosa, are known to occur in very deep water. During the summers of 1913 and 1914, dead lake whitefish were found. Each had an injury on the ventral side of the body, near the caudal fin. This injury resembled the scar made by the lake lamprey. Many other spectes of fish were taken, as will be seen later, with the same type of injury. At the close of the 1914 session of the Biological Station a large specimen of the ling, Lota macalosa; was found almost dead under a beached boat near the Station clock after a heavy wind storm. This species belongs to the deep water near the

thermoeline, at a depth varying from 35 to 40 feet or more. In addition to the lake itself, Bessey Creck, the other smaller inlets and the outlet, Maple River, are important habitats for fishes. Bessey Creck is a sluggish stream varying from one to eight feet in depth. The bottom is covered with a deep layer of loose decayed vegetable matter and coze. A considerable amount of high grass, rustee, Scirpus americanus, and white water lifes, Castalia advantant, grow in the shallow water near the bank, and in many places in mid-stream. The banks are well wooded and shady. By frequent observations and seining it was found that the mud minnow, Unabra timi, is the dominant species of this habitat. The creek was seined several times and the combined data of the scinings are given below:

TABLE NO. 7.

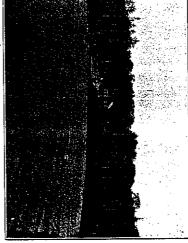
1	Speries.	Number	Average size.	J're-	Place in stream.
-	Mud infanow, Umbro Umi	190	85 m.m.	. 626	Distributed over bottom.
'n	Yellow perch. Perca flarescens.	30	100 11128)	,690	Near surface, mid-stream.
ü	Bue gill, Lepomia pallidue	18	50 11.10	.060	Mid-stream.
÷	Pumpkin seed, Eupomotia pib-		Cyoung		
n ça	Cayuga shiner, Natropia coungo	13	25 m.m.	.057	Mid-stream,
	tria.	12	102 m.	9	Mid-stroam
(m /4	Calfish, Amierus melas Pickerel-pike, Esox lucius	30.30	145 m.m.	22	At bottom of mid-stream. Under grass along bank.
÷	Large-mouthed black bass,		(young)		
	Mecropierus salmoides	_	30 m.m.	01.0	Mid-stream.
= 5	Sculpin, Cattus istalops		14 m.m.	22	Mid-stream. Mid-stream.

As shown by the table *Umbra limi* is by far the most frequent species in this habitat.

Maple River and the small streams coming into the lake, other than Bessey Creek, have been placed in the same group as regards type of habitat because they are more or less swift and clear, and offer about



GENERAL YEAR OF EAST SHORE OF SOUTH TWIN LAKE, LICKING SOUTH FROM STATION 1.



Michigan Geological and Biological Survey.

shib same sort of conditions. These stream belts are gived or clear sand; and if a mucky bottom exists at all, it is near the banks or in holes and bayous along the stream. In these places the Umbra timi and small Amisurus metas are abundant. Aside from these situations, however, Maple River and the small clear streams afford a group of species different from those found in any other habitat of the region. The brook front, Sauletinus fontinaits, is abundant along the small inlets and in Maple River five miles down stream from the lake. Besides Saletinus fontinaits, several other species, which did not occur in the other habitats, were found in Maple River in abundance. Etheostoma invites Notropis whipplit, Semotitus atronaculatus, and Rhinichthys atronacus were taken in numbers. Cottus idolops is also more abundant in Maple River than in Bessey Creek.

Douglas Lake and connecting streams may be seen to include the following 26 species, of which 23 (marked *) occur in the lake proper:

Daviln, Ania celea.

Common sucher, Calesingua commercenti.
Common sucher, Calesingua commercenti.

Ballish Mescalita antia corrict balanci.
Common shiner, Moropia corratura.
Common shiner, Moropia corratura.
Common shiner, Moropia collegit.
Bluta collegit.
Bluta collegit.
Bluta shiner.
Bluta shiner

With this determination of the fish fauna of the Douglus Lake Region and the general distribution of the species in mind, the skudy of the morbality of the species was begun. To this end one mile of beach was laid off along the east side of South Fishtail Bay (See map, Fig. 2). This section of beach was chosen because it receives the full sweep of the wind from across the entire lake, hence most floating fish, even on the far side of the late, are eventually beached somewhere within this mile. This strip of beach was gene over each evening and all of the beached fish of the measured, examined, and buried. The study of the beached fish was continued for a period of 40 consecutive days (July 10 to August 19, 1913), and was supplemented by a study of the beached fish on all shores of the lake. The following thing gives the results of the 40 days collecting on the mile of beach:

PAPERS ON ZOOLOGY OF MICHIGAN.

	Species.	Smallest.	Largest.	Size of majority of individuals.	Number injured.	Beached while feeding.	Other causes,	Total number beached.
3. To 3. Co 4. Su 5. Ro 6. Bi 7. Co 8. Su 9. Su 1. Co 1. Co 2. Lo 2. Lo 4. Pic	ellow perch. Perca flaceacens. out perch. Percapsis guitains. yligs shitter. Vaeropis caputains. yligs shitter. Vaeropis caputa. Och bass. Amblopites rappetris. to the bass. Amblopites rappetris. to the bass. Amblopites rappetris. mmon shitter. Vaeropis cornutus. mmon shitter. Vaeropis cornutus. mmon shitter. Vaeropis cornutus. miller, contrast politicas. taller, contrast politicas. taller, contrast percentains. taller, contrast metas. taller, contrast	25 m.m. 30 m.m. 30 m.m. 130 m.m. 70 m.m. 50 m.m. 30 m.m. 120 m.m. 80 m.m. 140 m.m. 80 m.m. 150 m.m.	280 m.m. 120 m.m. 120 m.m. 1400 m.m. 235 io.ia. 220 m.m. 105 m.m. 70 m.m. 130 m.m. 210 m.m. 210 m.m. 130 m.m. 130 m.m.	100 m.m. 80 m.m. 70 m.m. 300 m.m. 140 m.m. 140 m.m. 100 m.m. 100 m.m. 100 m.m. 150 m.m. 150 m.m. 165 m.m. 165 m.m.	1 2, 1 1		36 55 29 28 19 17	2.86 71 9 9 3 3 1 1 1
· 1	Fotal				42	82	3,735	3,85

In looking for the causers of death of the fish listed in Table 9, the following are at least to be consistered: (1) mechanical injury, (2) injury through attacks of other species, (3) the heaching of individuals white pursuing or swallowing prey, (4) accidental beaching while attempting to escape enemies, (5) disease and parasites.

The total number of individuals of all species showing definite external injuries was low, something less than one-tenth of one per cent, and as may be seen in Table 9 these were distributed rather evenly among the several species in proportion to the total number beached. Many apparently normal fish, free from parasites and without any sign of injury, were beached which may have been killed by wave action either well out in the lake or at the edge of the shoal water where the high waves break.

Few if any specimens showed unmistakable injuries due to the attacks of other species. A few suckers bore circular wounds resembling lamprey marks but these wounds were of such a nature that they might have been due to any of several other causes.

In the "beached while feeding" column only those individuals were listed which were found with prey in the mouth. Perca flarescens was the heaviest loser in this way. Seventy-one beached specimens of this species had half-swallowed individuals of Percapsis guttatus in their mouths, and the Percapsidae in almost every case were adults. In addition to the specimens taken with prey in the mouth undoubtedly other individuals are beached while pursuing prey. Calesdonnus commercapiti, a bottom feeder, is known to come into shallow water at night while feeding and individuals of this species might easily be beached by a sudden storm.

The beaching of small fishes while attempting to escape larger par-

saing fishes was on more than one occasion observed. The young suckers, Notropi, and other young fishes are constantly preeved upon by the larger randvorous species and schools of the small fish are often forced to the shore line by the pursuers. Here an incoming wave completes the beaching.

Parasites certainly play an important part in the death of a large number of the individuals reaching the beach. With very few exceptions all of the Centrarchidae beached, i. e. Anabloptics rupestris, Leponis pallidus and Euponotis gibbosus were infected in the gill chambers with parasitic Copepads. Often this infection was very heavy although some specimens bore but a few of the gill parasites. Many suckers and Cyprinids contained worm systs in the body wall and in the skin. The parasitic worms were not examined, but Dr. La Rue (see report of the Director of the Biological Station for 1912)

reports a variety of forms and a heavy infection of several species of fish.

in the life of several species of fishes. Those fishes about two-thirds grown (see table for length of majority of individuals) were most often fined to streams by none. stricted habitats were represented by fewer individuals, and those conindividuals. On the other hand those species found in the more re-It is understood that Table No. 9 does not give complete data on the death rate of the species of the lake but it is considered suggestive. In the lake proper were represented on the beach by the largest number of species can not be estimated, the data in Table 9 indicate a critical size reaching shore and that the fish successfully caught and eaten by other spite of the fact that many dead fish are eaten by water birds before beached. Again, as might be expected, the species most abundant in

collected are given in Table 10. all beached fishes were measured, examined and identified. The data the entire shore line of the lake of 15 miles in a single day. On this trip In order that these data might be verified a trip was made covering

TABLE NO. 10.

Including a study of the shores about the whole lake (Ang. 3, 1913).

981		Total
205222111102211	240 mm 150 mm 103 mm 1103 mm 173 mm 173 mm 174 mm 204 mm 204 mm 205 mm 132 mm 132 mm 137 mm 107 mm	3. Smath-monthrel black bass, M. delemies 2. Large-monthred black hass, M. exhedets 2. Large-monthred black hass, M. exhedets 4. Pumphth seed, Magnatur elba- Marierya equipm. 4. Pumphth seed, Magnatur elba- Marierya equipm. 5. Compute place errantus 6. Compute erran
Number.	Average size. Number.	Species.
	Armer of total.	(nearly of states)

Norse:—Sevend dead specifices of "Johany dated." (Beleasan sigrara), were observed bying among the pebbles in the similations about Grope-vina Points and Sury Hand. Recruses of Their Ret of an Steinfeder They are an Hanoru topon the based as are the other species of deed this but thus remain I their Habitat and are to the mean part dated by the extrylish.

The figures in Tuble 10 show the same relations of species as those

beached. Catostomus commersonii and Notropis cayuga were the forms most often in Table 9, the true lake forms being the ones most often beached. In conclusion it may be said that Perca flueescens, Percapsis guitatus,

help in this work: The writer wishes to thank Dr. Max M. Ellis for suggestions and

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ARTHUR T. EVANS