

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

Report No. 97

REPORT ON THE SETTING OF COMMERCIAL NETS IN
ELK LAKE, AUGUST 12th to 23rd, 1931

On about August 18, 1931, a Mr. Felix Jaundrows, Commercial fishermen living at Elk Rapids, spoke to a member of the Fisheries Institute party (then located in Antrim County), telling of the large numbers of obnoxious fish being seen in Elk Lake. He expressed his desire to set a number of trap nets in this lake to catch suckers and obnoxious fish. All other fish were to be returned to the lake and a warden was to accompany him whenever the nets were to be lifted.

Mr. Jaundrows had some five or six hundred names attached to a petition asking that he be permitted to set nets in the lake for the purpose mentioned. He had intended to send this petition to the Fish Division.

Permission was obtained from Mr. Fred A. Westerman, head of the Fish Division, to set the nets for one week; continuation of net setting thereafter depending on the results obtained during this week.

Four trap nets were set on August 12th at a depth of approximately 30 feet and at various locations. On August 16th these nets were lifted. The results were as follows:

Net on west side, 5 black bass, 5 rock bass, 2 bullheads, 3 suckers.
Net on north side, 21 black bass, 35 rock bass, 3 suckers, 3 pike.
Net on east side, 32 black bass, 22 rock bass, 4 suckers.
Net on east side, 14 black bass, 15 rock bass, 4 suckers, 1 perch.

Three of the nets were left where they had previously been set. On August 18th these were lifted with the following results:

Same location, 3 black bass, 7 rock bass.
3 black bass, 36 rock bass, 1 bullhead, 3 suckers,
2 pike.
2 black bass, 7 rock bass, 2 bullheads.

The three nets were then set in the south end of the lake and were lifted five days later (August 23rd). The following fish were taken;

Nets on south end of lake, 16 black bass, 3 rock bass, 1 bullhead,
 9 suckers.
 5 black bass, 4 suckers, 1 pike, 1 catfish.
 20 black bass, 5 rock bass, 31 suckers,
 1 pike.

Totals for the ten net sets were:

Black bass	121
Rock bass	135
Pike	7
Suckers	65
Bullhead	61
Catfish	1
Perch	1

Conservation officers Mark Crow and Henry Fike accompanied Mr. Jaundrows each time the nets were lifted.

Although the experiment was not at all profitable for the fisherman, it was of considerable value to local residents, and the results were quite pleasing to the conservation officers and members of the Fisheries Institute party.

Conclusions:

1. No obnoxious fish were taken. There are, undoubtedly, some undesirable fish present but they appear to be not nearly so abundant as local residents imagined.
2. Another attempt might be made at some other time of year but it is doubtful whether further netting is necessary. A majority of the fish may have been at levels other than those at which the nets were set, but, had obnoxious fish been at all plentiful some would have been caught. It is doubtful whether anyone could be gotten to carry on the netting in the near future even if it should be desirable.
3. The nets indicated that the lake contains an abundance of game fish. Many of the bass were quite large. Local residents and others were both pleased and surprised at the results.

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Of the 336 fish taken, only one, a small pike, was gilled.

Proper publicity was given through the newspapers by Officer Mark Crow of Traverse City. Although the experiment failed in its purpose, it may be regarded as quite successful in that it has given local residents valuable information and has changed their notions regarding the fish population of the lake, and also furnished the lake survey party with additional information regarding the fish fauna of the lake.

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