

Original: Fish Division

cc: Mr. Stowell

Mr. A. T. Stewart

Mr. Eschmeyer

Mr. Ruhl



INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

COOPERATING WITH THE

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ALBERT S. HAZZARD, PH.D.
DIRECTOR

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ADDRESS
UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
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REPORT ON BLUEGILLS IN MYERS LAKE,

GENESEE COUNTY

This report is another in the series on "too many fish." It has already been demonstrated that in Ford Lake, South Twin Lake and Section Four Lake, in the Pigeon River State Forest, perch were too abundant to reach a "catchable" size; in Standard Lake, near Vanderbilt, perch and rock bass were stunted; in Clear Lake, near Glennie, bluegills and other sunfish were decidedly stunted; in Miller Lake, Cass County, and Minnewaukon Lake, St. Joseph County, bluegills were overabundant and most of them were failing to reach legal size. There are undoubtedly a few hundred more lakes in the state where the fish are growing very slowly because of an overabundance of them.

A letter from Mr. Westerman on May 6th indicated that Mr. G. E. Stowell of Byron believed Myers Lake (Sec. 28 and 29, T. 5 N., R. 5 E., Argentine Twp., Genesee County) to be overpopulated with bluegills. On May 18th Dr. Hazzard and the writer, with Mr. Stowell's help, obtained specimens of the fish from Myers Lake (by seining) and a study of the rate of growth has since been made.

Examination of a very few large-mouthed bass showed these fish to have fair but not rapid growth and examination of the scales of a few perch and black crappie indicated that both had relatively excellent growth.

The bluegills, though, were doing very poorly. Seven year old fish had an average length of slightly under six inches. Mr. Stowell indicates that in the last few years few legal-sized bluegills were taken while formerly the lake was a good bluegill lake.

Stocking records for Myers Lake for the last four years are recorded as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Large-mouthed Bass</u>	<u>Bluegills</u>	<u>Perch</u>
1934	800 (6 mo.)	1200 (5 mo.)	1000 (7 mo.)
1935	300 (4 mo.)	2000 (5 mo.)	5000 (7 mo.)
1936	350 (4 mo.)	1500 (4 mo.)
1937	450 (3 mo.)	1500 (3 mo.)*	10,000 (7 mo.)

* Listed as Meyers (Argentine Twp.)--probably Myers

The bluegills planted were probably too few to appreciably influence the total population--if they were effective the stocking obviously must have done more harm than good for fish of the size planted were already overabundant. It is obviously impossible for a hatchery to have a check on the growth of fish in all the waters in the hatchery district and numerous errors, such as the stocking of bluegills in Myers Lake, are certain to occur.

Stocking with bass and especially with perch might well be continued--stocking with bluegills should obviously be discontinued. In addition, a large percentage of the bluegill spawning beds should be destroyed each year for several years to reduce the number of bluegills present and the breeders (and any other bluegills obtainable) might well be seined and removed. It is believed that the bluegills will again reach a fair size and have reasonably rapid growth after this method has been employed for several years.

Size and Age of Fish From Myers Lake,
Genesee County

Species	Number	Age (Summers Old)	Length	
			mm.	Inches
Largemouthed Bass	1	2	124	4.9
	1	3	201	7.9
Bluegills	2	1	43.5	1.7
	5	2	65.0	2.6
	2	3	76.5	3.0
	4	4	101.75	4.0
	10	5	123.3	5.1
	11	6	141.54	5.6
	4	7	148.75	5.9
Perch	1	3	190.0	7.5
	1	4	203.0	8.0
Black Crappie	5	3	160.4	6.3
	2	4	196.5	7.7
	1	5	221.0	8.7
	1	7	236.0	9.3

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By R. W. Eschmeyer
Assistant Aquatic Biologist