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**INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH**  
DIVISION OF FISHERIES  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
COOPERATING WITH THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR  
WOLF LAKE, VAN BUREN COUNTY

by

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At the last fisheries conference at Tippy Dam it was decided that Wolf Lake, located on the property of the Wolf Lake Hatchery (Van Buren County, Almena Township, T. 2S., R. 13W., Sec. 13, 14) should be opened to fishing. This lake has been closed to fishing ever since the hatchery was placed in operation. The Institute for Fisheries Research was requested to suggest the plans and regulations for the management of this lake.

Wolf Lake has an area of 24.9 acres and a maximum depth of about 37 feet. The following important species of fish are present in the lake: largemouth bass, bluegills, perch, rock bass, northern pike, pumpkinseed sunfish, black crappie, walleye, brook, brown and rainbow trout, green sunfish, longear sunfish, brown bullhead, common sucker, northern redhorse, cisco, carp, (goldfish reported present), and dogfish. There are also several species of forage fish present in the lake.

Carp, suckers and redhorse probably entered the lake through the outlet stream. It has been suggested that a weir or a dam be constructed in the outlet stream to prevent further migration of undesirable species.

Messrs. Jay Marks and Henry Hatt claim that carp, suckers and redhorse spawn in Wolf Lake. Therefore, the installation of a dam or weir on the outlet stream is not recommended for the present time. Later it might be decided to remove the fish population with poison and if this is done some barrier should be placed in the outlet stream.

At the present time it will not be feasible to conduct any population, tagging or other marking experiments because of the continual escapement of fish from the hatchery. Fertilization experiments cannot be conducted because of the continual discharge of food and other materials from the ponds and raceways directly into Wolf Lake.

If Wolf Lake is opened to fishing it would be desirable and important to obtain complete records of the total catch. Considering its small size, Wolf Lake contains a large number of species of game and coarse fishes. It would be extremely interesting to make a rather intensive study of this lake for several years and then to poison it and restock with fewer species and check the fish production again.

No stocking will be necessary to maintain the fish population of Wolf Lake. All species of fish present, including the trout, have adequate spawning facilities.

Some species of fish present in Wolf Lake (cisco, suckers, redhorse and carp) will seldom be caught by anglers. As these species probably constitute a large percentage of the total fish poundage in the lake, it is suggested that these fish be harvested by means of trap nets and/or gill nets. Suckers, redhorse and carp should be removed in the early spring by trap nets. Some arrangements can be devised for the deposition of such fish as are removed. This netting can be undertaken either by a

hatchery crew or by an Institute crew or a crew from both sources. Accurate records should be kept of the number and pounds of each species removed from the lake. Some experimental gill netting should be undertaken in the fall of the year to determine whether or not it would be feasible to remove ciscoes by this method.

If members of the local Isaak Walton League are sufficiently interested, spearing permits could be issued to groups of them to permit the removal of suckers, redhorse, cisco and dogfish.

To provide adequate information on the growth of fish of Wolf Lake, a fairly large series of scale samples should be obtained from all species of fish. These scale samples could be taken by members of the Institute during periods when they are checking the lake.

It would be desirable to have a man stationed at Wolf Lake at all times for the purpose of obtaining creel census records. It has been decided, however, that the expense would not be justified. Instead, every angler fishing on Wolf Lake should be required to make out a creel census report each day he fishes, on forms that will be provided at the lake. It is expected that a large number of anglers will fish the lake during the opening week of the season. It is therefore recommended that someone be on hand during the first few days and perhaps the first week of the season to see that a complete creel record is obtained and to see that all rules and regulations are complied with. A sample creel census blank is attached to this report.

Mr. Jay Marks has suggested that the Department purchase the piece of property on the east side of Wolf Lake and develop it as a fishing site. All people fishing the lake would then be required to enter the lake from this site. However, we are inclined to question the necessity

or desirability of this procedure because of the expense involved in making this site usable since the ground is rather low and marshy at this point. Furthermore, adequate roads and parking facilities are already present at the picnic grounds at Wolf Lake. The presence of more than one approach to the lake would make it more difficult to obtain complete creel census records from all anglers. Many anglers would bring families and friends along for a picnic and it would be rather inconvenient for them to leave their family at one spot and their car and boat at another spot. It is therefore suggested that a boat landing should be constructed (patterned after those built at public fishing sites) on the picnic grounds to permit the launching and removal of small boats. The rectangular holding pond between the community house and the pond overflow channel might be used for this purpose.

? ( It should be unlawful to anchor or leave boats unattended, or to store or leave boats on Wolf Lake or on State property for periods longer than 24 hours.

? All channels and raceways leading to or entering Wolf Lake are to be closed to fishing in order to lessen the danger of poaching in the lower raceways and to protect spawning trout from the lake. If necessary these channels should be blocked or at least posted.

Fishing should be permitted from sunrise to sunset only. The lake should be placed in the trout lake class so that it will be open in time to permit the fly fishermen to take advantage of early season fishing. If rainbows prove to be important in the catch, the legislature should be requested to place this lake on the list of those open to fishing for rainbow trout and other species during September, October and November.

? The daily limit on trout should be two fish per day. The reason for this limit on the number of fish is because of the large size of the

trout present in the lake. No changes in the daily or size limit of warm water fish are recommended at this time.

Since all of the special regulations suggested can be handled by Commission order under Act 230, Wolf Lake should not be placed in the class of experimental lakes.

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

Report approved by A. S. Hazzard

Report typed by E. F. Livingston