

Estimating Winter Lake Angling Pressure from Ice Holes

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Abstract.—We evaluated the potential of using counts of old ice fishing holes to estimate winter angling effort with studies at one pond and three lakes. The pond study measured the ability to detect known numbers of previously augered holes. All (10/10) pond auger holes were found after 20 days and 30% (3/10) of them were found after 49 days. In addition, one false hole was counted. For all holes augered within a 49-day period, 65% (13/20) were correctly identified. We suggest that under lake conditions the identification rate is likely to approximate 50%. Consequently, the method is probably most effective for estimating fishing effort on a relative or categorical scale, such as none, low, medium, or high. The lake study was conducted to obtain an index of winter angling activity on three small inland lakes closed to fish harvest. Lake hole counts indicated greater than expected angling activity.