

Thank You and Good Fishing

Sources:

¹Managing Muskie in Minnesota

2007, Sue Schroeder, David C. Fulton, Robert A. Dodd
Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology University of
Minnesota, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology
University of Minnesota.

²Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike

Management through 2020, 2008 This plan was created by MN DNR and
Stakeholders from the Esocide Workshops including public input over a 2
year period and will be used as a management plan through year 2020.

³Fish Community Response to Muskie Introduction in Minnesota Lakes,

MN DNR M.Knapp., S.Mero, and D. Bohlander. 2007.

⁴Interactions between Walleyes and Four Fish Species with Implications for Walleye Stocking, 2005

ANDREW H. FAYRAM,
MICHAEL HANSEN, TIMOTHY EHLINGER
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Fisheries
Management and Habitat Protection

⁵Catch and Release Fishing Effectiveness and Mortality

2004, P. Reiss, BS. a, M. Reiss, PhD.b, J. Reiss, BS.c a CEO, Acute Angling,
Inc.; b Dept. of Material Science, Univ. of Maryland; c Lab. Supvr., Dept. of
Neurobiology, RutgersUniv.

⁷Introduction and management of Northern Muskellunge in Iron Lake Michigan 1984, D.H. Siler and G.B. Beyerle

⁸Esocide workshops, MN DNR, 2006-2008 {Groups involved, Sportsmen
for Responsible Musky Management [A group comprised of Northerns Inc.
and The MN Dark House Anglers Association], Minnesota Muskie Alliance,
Muskie Inc., Outdoor writers, Concerned Northern Pike and Muskie
stakeholders that are unaffiliated with any organization.}

Minnesota Muskie Alliance (MMA) is a not for profit organization
comprised of all 11 Minnesota Muskie inc. Chapters.

If you have any questions or would like to view any of this research in its
entirety send an e-mail to muskietruth@yahoo.com we will return your
request as soon as possible.

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MINNESOTA MUSKIES

Now We Really Know!

For many years these fish were misunderstood by the people
who fished them and those who tried to manage them as a
natural resource. Now most of the questions about Muskies
have scientifically sound answers.

Muskies! Who Needs Them?

Several generations of anglers have subjected Northern Pike to
over-harvest; this coupled with the loss of spawning habitat
and water pollution has in many cases this created “Hammer
Handle” lakes. When all the big predator fish are gone, the
rough and stunted fish can take over and can damage the
fishery. Muskies introduced into these damaged lakes will take
the place of that former top predator by helping to control
rough fish as well as stunted fish naturally.

A 2006 University of Minnesota Survey shows a growing
need for new Muskie lakes stating. “**Adjusted estimate of
licensed Minnesota anglers who report fishing for Muskie
is 14% [168,000 resident anglers]**”¹

Muskies and Spearing

Spearing Muskies is illegal in Minnesota. There are spearing
bans on 26 lakes due to the fact they are trophy lakes, brood
stock lakes, or lakes that need the additional protection of
small Muskies due to low natural numbers. As stated in the
2020 Long Range Large Pike and Muskie plan “**Any new
lakes will not have any spearing bans.**”²⁻⁸ We will continue
to work with the spearing community to assure their future as
well.

How will Muskies affect a Lake?

Lakes like; Winnibigoshish, Leech, Lake of the Woods, Vermillion and Mille Lacs and the Mississippi River are some of the best fisheries for Walleye and Panfish in the state. These are the quality lakes anglers have enjoyed for hundreds of years; all contain Muskies, some for thousands of years.

The MN DNR in 2007 conducted an extensive study on all 41 stocked Muskie lakes; here is their final result: **“The lack of negative (or any) trends across all species, lakes, and lake classes, the tendency for most lakes to be within or above the lake class (suggests) that the fish species in this study have coexisted well with Muskies in these types of lakes and at the densities the MN DNR manages Muskies”**³

A 2005 study from Wisconsin looks into how different species interact with one another; this is the conclusion on Muskies. **“Because muskellunge abundances were positively correlated to walleye abundances, direct competition or predation is unlikely to be occurring between these two species.”**⁴

How Do They Decide What to Stock?

The MN DNR has a stringent list of requirements and research that must be met before they stock any variety of fish. This study involves both social and biological issues. They assess the forage as well as the need for the fish from public requests. Then they call public meetings to get input and answer any concerns.

Are Muskies Trouble?

Anglers who oppose Muskies have used excerpts of field notes from Wisconsin, they have wrongly been used as actual studies; the Wisconsin DNR has reviewed, discredited and discounted them as having been taken out of context. Musky Troubles has also mentioned a 1984 technical report from Michigan on Iron Lake;⁷ it was managed as a Muskie brood-stock lake and wrongly overstocked for decades, resulting in problems that would arise with any species that are over abundant in a lake, Minnesota manages Muskies for trophy not numbers

Will They Overpopulate Our Lake?

A healthy population of Muskies is a low number of large trophy fish. Most lakes where they are stocked have very little or no natural reproduction. These populations depend on stocking for their future. The MN DNR monitors the population very closely. There are no examples of overpopulation or damage to the fishery in the state of Minnesota from Muskie stocking.³

Catch and Release Is Important!

Any fish species can benefit from catch and release of its large specimens, Muskie require this extra protection mainly because populations are so low the value of an individual fish is very high. Delayed mortality can be a problem when fish are mishandled or improperly released. However; fish mortality can be very low when artificial lures (optimized tackle) and correct fish-handling techniques are used as found in this 2004 study. **“Relatively low levels of fish mortality are associated with catch and release fishing. Scientific evidence further indicates that the use of selected optimized tackle and techniques can then further reduce catch and release mortality rates.”**⁵

Thank You

We hope this information will help you understand a bit more about these fabled fish. Muskies are also an enticing family sport fish as well; it's not just a Mans activity. They can also be important to local lakes, lakeshore owners and surrounding communities; since there are roughly 100 waters with Muskies out of more than 10,000 thus making them highly attractive. Resorts and local businesses have prospered from areas having great Muskie fishing. Muskies are an important ingredient in Minnesota's reputation of having some of the best overall fishing in North America.

If you have questions or concerns call your local or State DNR office to discuss this information.

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