

Pymatuning Reservoir

Crawford County

2024

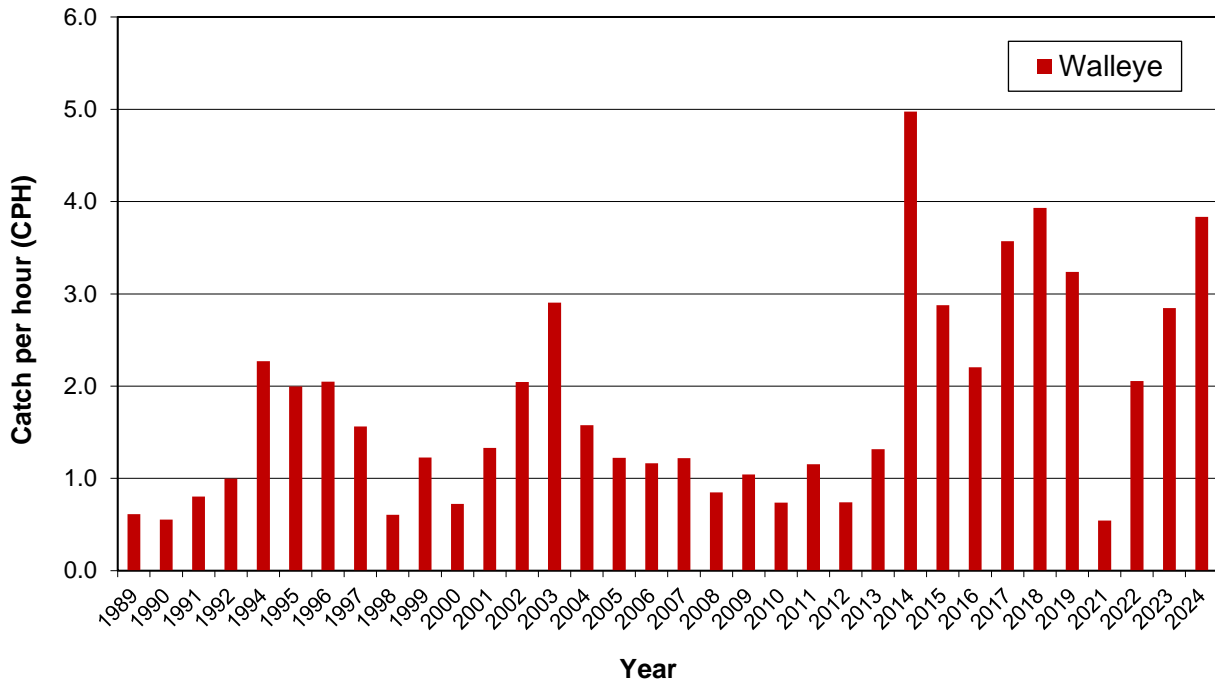


Area Fisheries Manager Tim Wilson with a large female Walleye from Pymatuning Reservoir

Spring Trap Net Survey

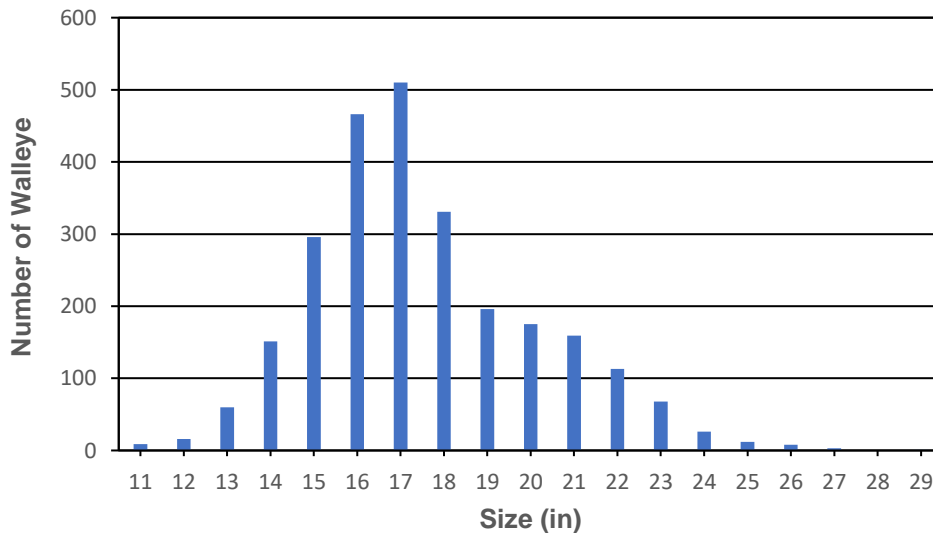
Fisheries Management Area 1 performed the annual Walleye population assessment for Pymatuning Reservoir between April 1st and April 12th, 2024. We recorded catch from 30 overnight trap net sets totaling 678 hours of soak-time. This survey caught 23 different fish species totaling 6,938 fish. A total of 2,601 Walleyes were captured, with an average size of approximately 17.2 inches. This survey yielded catch statistics of 3.8 Walleye per net hour. The 2024 Walleye catch per hour (CPH) was compared to all historic survey catch statistics since 1989 (Figure 1), showing an increase in catch for a third consecutive year following the historically low 2021 catch. Overall, large numbers of legal sized Walleye were found in Pymatuning Reservoir in 2024, along with an abundant Muskellunge population and improving panfish numbers.

Figure 1: Walleye catch per trap net hour (CPH) in Pymatuning Reservoir from 1989-2024.



High catch rates of Walleye in 2024 may be a result of high survival of stocked Walleye recorded in 2019 and 2020, with these year classes having reached large enough size to be captured in our nets. Size structure of the Pymatuning Walleye population is shown in Figure 2. The proportion of legal sized Walleye (15 inches or greater) in our catch was excellent in 2024 at 90.9%, an increase of 10% from 2022.

Figure 2: Size distribution of Walleye from Pymatuning Reservoir in 2024.

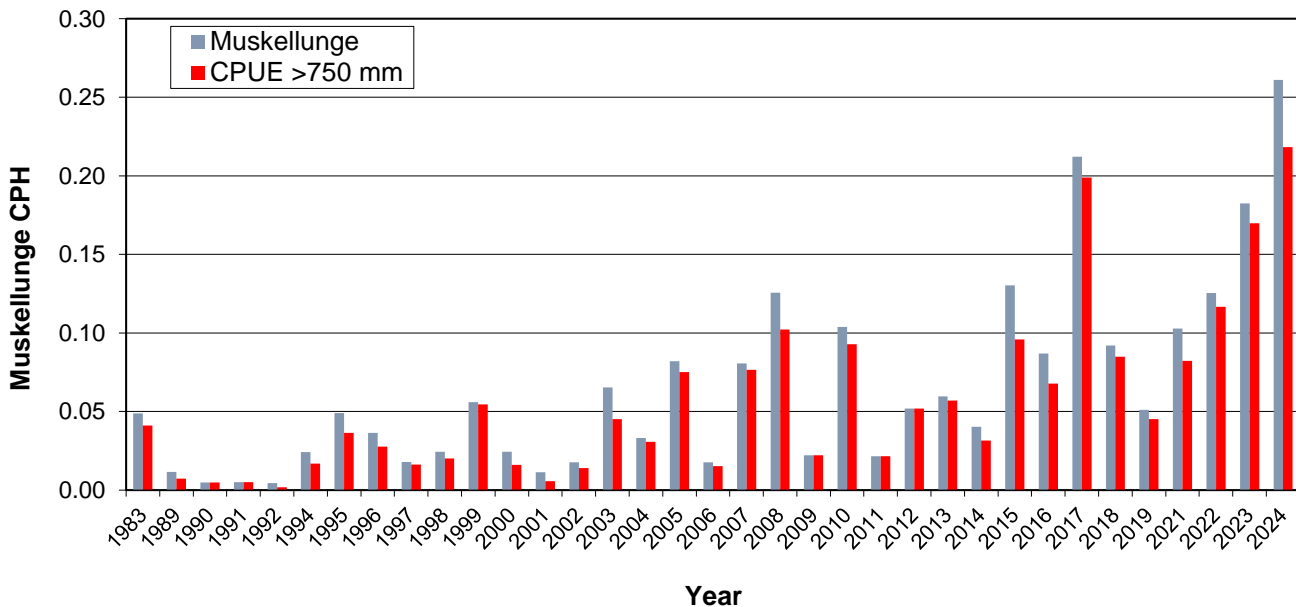




Fisheries Biologist Davis Fray with a healthy Pymatuning Musky

Muskellunge catch was extremely high in our 2024 trap net survey. Catch rates in 2024 were compared to all historic survey catch statistics since 1989 (Figure 3), with this spring yielding the highest recorded Musky catch per hour for Pymatuning Reservoir. Figure 3 also shows that the vast majority of Musky caught were greater than 750 mm (30 inches). Fifteen percent (15%) of Musky exceeded 40 inches, the longest Musky captured was 47.4 inches, and the heaviest weighed 35 pounds. High numbers of quality sized Musky make Pymatuning Reservoir an excellent choice for targeting these prized game fish.

Figure 3: Muskellunge catch per trap net hour (CPH) in Pymatuning Reservoir from 1989-2024.





Yellow perch from Pymatuning Reservoir ranging from 11 to 13 inches in length

Along with Walleye and Muskellunge, other fish such as panfish and catfish present attractive fisheries in Pymatuning Reservoir. Table 1 lists the number and size of game fish captured in spring 2024. Good numbers of quality sized Yellow Perch continue to support a healthy fishery. Bluegill catch was at its highest since 2018. Black Crappie catch showed an increase in 2024, from the past four years of low numbers (Figure 4), with 65% measuring over the minimum size limit of 9 inches. Abundant Channel Catfish, including trophy size individuals up to 30 inches, provide a great opportunity to catch large and hard-fighting fish.

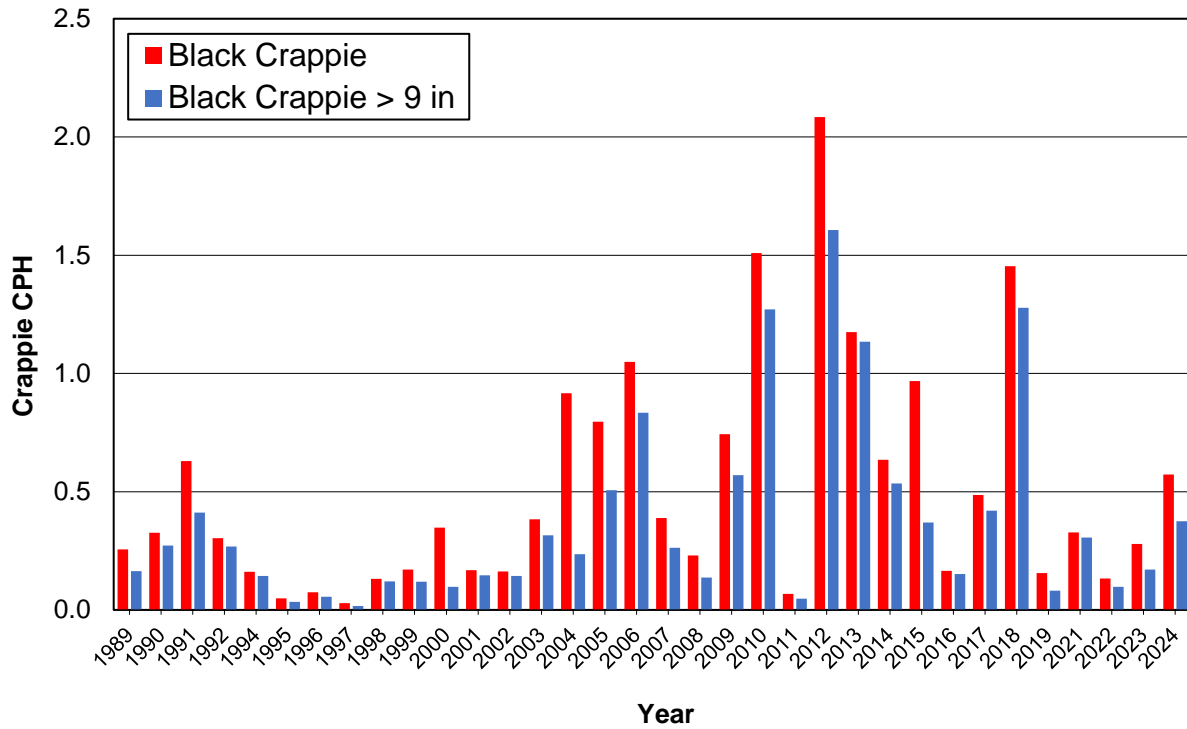
Table 1: Game fish species caught in trap net survey of Pymatuning reservoir, Spring 2024.

Species	Number	Average size (in)	Largest size (in)
Walleye	2601	17.2	29
Muskellunge	177	35.2	47
Black Crappie	388	8.7	14
Yellow Perch	305	8.3	13
Bluegill	216	6.3	8
Channel Catfish	824	17.1	30



Quality sized Black Crappie from Pymatuning Reservoir

Figure 4: Black Crappie catch per trap net hour (CPH) in Pymatuning Reservoir, 1989-2024.



Other fish species captured during the spring 2024 survey are listed in Table 2. Large numbers of catchable sized Brown Bullhead could provide good fishing opportunities, and Bowfin put up a great fight when hooked. Spottail Shiner, Gizzard Shad, and Alewife, along with the young of other species, provide a diverse forage base for the predators in Pymatuning Reservoir. A steady increase in number of the non-native White Perch has been observed since their discovery in Pymatuning Reservoir in 2017. It is important to avoid spreading fish and other aquatic organisms from one waterbody to another to prevent such unwanted introductions.

Table 2: Other fish species caught in trap net survey of Pymatuning reservoir, Spring 2024.

Species	Number Caught	Species	Number Caught
Brown Bullhead	240	White Bass	9
Yellow Bullhead	49	White Perch	244
Common Carp	35	Spottail Shiner	810
White Sucker	16	Gizzard Shad	146
Quillback	101	Alewife	692
Bowfin	13	Golden Shiner	31
Warmouth	1	Emerald Shiner	2