

5 Facts about Yellow Perch in Lake Nipissing



1. Yellow Perch Biology

Yellow perch is an abundant species that thrives in warm-to-cool water habitats and is most plentiful in open water with moderate vegetation, clear water and bottoms of muck or sand and gravel.

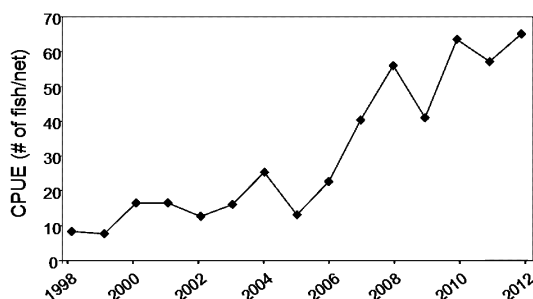
Yellow perch plays a dual role in Lake Nipissing, as both predator and prey. Both roles are important for the function of the ecosystem and need to be considered in future resource management decisions.

Spawning occurs over vegetation in shallow waters in early spring when water temperatures reach 6°C. Males first spawn at two to three years and on average female yellow perch reach sexual maturity at three years of age or 15.5 cm (approximately six inches).

2. Status of Yellow Perch

Current studies indicate yellow perch is now the most abundant sport fish in the lake and has recently experienced a six-fold increase in population numbers. (Figure 1)

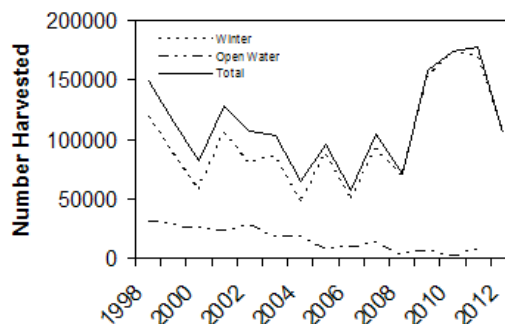
Figure 1: Abundance of yellow perch in Lake Nipissing.



Over the past few decades, the harvest of perch on the lake has been relatively stable. Now that the yellow

perch population is on the rise in Lake Nipissing, there has also been an increase in the harvest of perch (Figure 3). The increased abundance of yellow perch may be in response to a declining walleye population. Additionally, as a predator of young walleye, an increasing population of yellow perch means even more stress for the lake's walleye population, already stressed due to decades of overfishing.

Figure 2: Angler harvest of yellow perch on Lake Nipissing.



3. Value of Yellow Perch

Yellow perch can play a growing role in the Lake Nipissing fishery and are a significant contributor to the local economy.

Lake Nipissing is the seventh most fished lake in Ontario, including the Great Lakes. It has been a premier fishing destination in northeastern Ontario for decades. Each year anglers spend 50,000 hours on average fishing for perch on the lake.

Following recent changes to the perch fishing regulations, it is predicted that the species will make an even greater contribution to the local economy.

4. Managing the Yellow Perch Fishery

The government is managing the yellow perch population at appropriate levels to maintain and sustain the broader Lake Nipissing ecosystem.

Some of the key yellow perch management opportunities identified in the Fisheries Management Plan include:

- The possibility for growth in fishing effort applied to the species
- Potential benefits to the walleye fishery and its recovery if fishing pressure is directed onto perch and away from walleye.

To make the most of these opportunities, it will be important to continue the annual yellow perch monitoring and assessment program on the lake. The program tracks the number of yellow perch, helps set sustainable harvest levels and evaluates regulations and management actions.

5. Yellow Perch Fishing Regulations

As part of the draft Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan, new fishing regulations are now in place to increase fishing opportunities for yellow perch.

As of Jan. 1, 2014, yellow perch catch and possession limits have been increased. In addition to increasing fishing opportunities for perch, the regulation change will also have a positive impact on the stressed walleye fishery.

Now that yellow perch is the most abundant sport fish in the lake, as a predator of young walleye it is also considered a possible threat to the walleye recovery on Lake Nipissing. Reducing the perch population by focusing more fishing effort on the species will have a positive benefit for walleye, while expanding the overall sport fishing opportunities on Lake Nipissing.

The changes to the yellow perch regulations for Lake Nipissing are highlighted in Figure 3.

Open Season	Catch (Possession) Limit	
	Sport Licence	Conservation Licence
January 1st to March 15th 3rd Saturday in May to Oct 15	50 (50)	25 (25)

Figure 3: Changes to yellow perch regulations for Lake Nipissing effective Jan. 1, 2014

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For more information about how you can contribute, please contact:

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