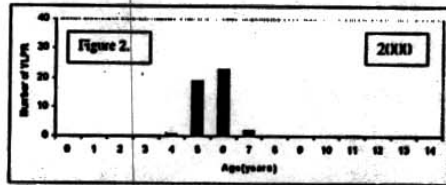
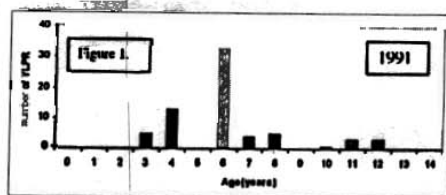




Keeping track of the perch in our area lakes



...ment biologists will be hold-
 ...
 Sports and Activities Manager, 6:30 p.m.
 Everyone is invited to come and discuss any
 fisheries concerns/comments you may have.
 There will also be a display and demonstrations
 on hand.

Over the last few months, Fisheries Management staff have been collecting information on local perch fisheries.

Perch fishing, in general around the area, has been quite 'hit and miss' this year. Since January, we have been conducting an angler survey on Lower Mann Lake, to document the amount of angler effort that has taken place on the lake.

Lower Mann has been a lake historically known to winter kill, but has supported a perch fishery this past year. Effort and harvest were extremely high in January with large perch being captured,

but has since decreased to minimal levels with very few perch being caught. Other lakes we have collected data on include Stoney Lake and Bonnie Lake. Bonnie Lake did not have a fishery this winter after suffering a winter kill in 2000.

We have also been collecting perch information from Vincent Lake. Perch fishing has been slow at Vincent Lake this year. The historically large numbers of anglers that populated the ice on Vincent in the past were not present this year.

Vincent Lake is an example of one of the many perch fisheries in the province that have been over exploited by anglers in past years. Only a few winters ago it was not uncommon to see hundreds of perch get taken home by anglers in a single day. It was common to find a wide range of age classes present in the population and perch as old as 10 or 11 (Figure 1).

Today we find a small range of age classes with the oldest fish being 6 or 7 (Figure 2). The perch being kept by anglers have become smaller and smaller, and anglers are keeping more of these small perch. This is a scenario that we are seeing on many area lakes. Fewer larger fish mean anglers harvest smaller and smaller fish in order to be 'successful'.

By not releasing any of these small perch we are at risk of not allowing these small perch to become older, larger adults, and the sport-fishery then collapses.

In some lakes around the province more restrictive perch limits have been placed on specific lakes to deter overharvest and restore perch populations.

A bag limit of five perch/day has been used on these lakes, a strategy that may be useful on St. Paul area lakes. Other options could include closures, and size restrictions.

If you have any comments concerning the above or would like more information please contact Fisheries Management in St. Paul at (780) 645-6313 (dial the rite line at 310-0000 first if calling long distance).