

## FISHING REPORT, TOM DUBENSKY

### Spring/Summer 2023 Report:

Lake Somerset fish came through the 2022/23 winter in great shape with a mild winter and moderate ice season. As we moved into spring, we had a rapid warm up that made it difficult to time the spawning of different species. This spring I didn't see many other boats fishing the walleye opener at the end of April, we caught a few, but caught a very large 28-inch walleye the week before the season opened, and that fish is still in the lake! During the rest of the spring, I caught a several year classes of walleyes showing survival from several stocking campaigns in the past. When I was able to fish later in the summer the Bass were very active and had great success on 10–16-inch fish with the occasional larger fish, up to 20 inches. This is the third year where I have not had channel cats spawning on my shoreline, and I am pretty sure the originally stocked population is almost gone, although the ones that remain are very large! If there is interest in restocking catfish in the future let me know, so far only one angler has reached out on restocking catfish.

### Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Fishing Forecast:

- Walleye – a popular fish that we frequently stock. These fish represent a true put and take fishery as they are unlikely to successfully spawn in Lake Somerset. In October, 2023 we will be stocking fingerlings, 2600 to be exact, 6–8-inch fish **PLEASE thank our board for their support of our stocking program!!!!** The Walleyes in our lake already, will be more accessible and eager to bite as we move into fall and winter.
- Northern Pike. I have seen some large pike caught this year and evidence of natural reproduction, but as always this is a marginal fishery in lake Somerset. I did get a report of a VERY large pike in the 45-inch range being taken (that is an unusually large fish) and if anyone has a picture that would be great to see. Some of our biggest pike are seen during ice fishing which is right around the corner.
- Largemouth Bass – the most common predator fish in our lake system. The bass population is strong and has some real nice trophy fish available. Keep in mind that releasing most of the bass back into the lake helps keep our fishery strong. Much of the fishing effort during the summer targets bass and our population seems strong.
- Sunfish including Bluegill, Red Ear and Pumpkinseed – these fish are doing well on the lake, reproduce very well and in some cases may spawn multiple times in the summer. They are great eating and are good average size. They should be our focus for harvest when we want that fresh fish meal. Due to the persistence of zebra mussels, I am considering using some of the stocking funds in 2024 to add more Red Ears (as they eat the mussels)
- Black Crappie – are doing well and the average size seems to have improved in the last two years. There is a strong year class of 7-9-inch fish that should be good sized this winter.

### Lake development and impact on fishing:

Our lakeshore is now almost fully developed, when I first moved to the lake there was a significant number of undeveloped shorelines that provided fish habitat and nursery cover. Today most of our shore line is developed, and most of that habitat is gone. Consider allowing some aquatic plants and natural cover to exist on part of your lake shore, as these promote better survival rates of young fish. Another way to help promote our fishery is to place wood structure or rocks under your dock where smaller fish can hide and grow.

**Spring fishing tournament** – I have gotten some feed back that there may be interest in a fishing tournament, which could be fun and help better gauge our fishery, if you are interested in helping set this up, let me know via email.

I can be contacted at [tomdubensky@yahoo.com](mailto:tomdubensky@yahoo.com).

**Past Seven Years of Stocking at Lake Somerset**

2017 Walleye 3800

2018 Walleye 3600

2019 Walleye 3100

2020 Walleye 3000

2021 Red Ears 4000

2021 Walleye 2300

2022 Walleye 2800

2023 Walleye 2600 (ordered for delivery Oct-Nov)