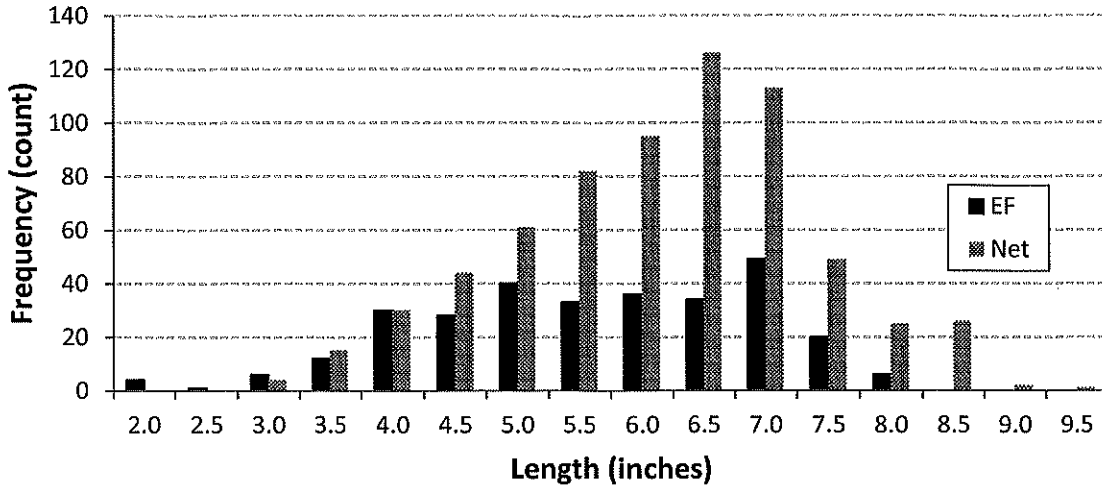
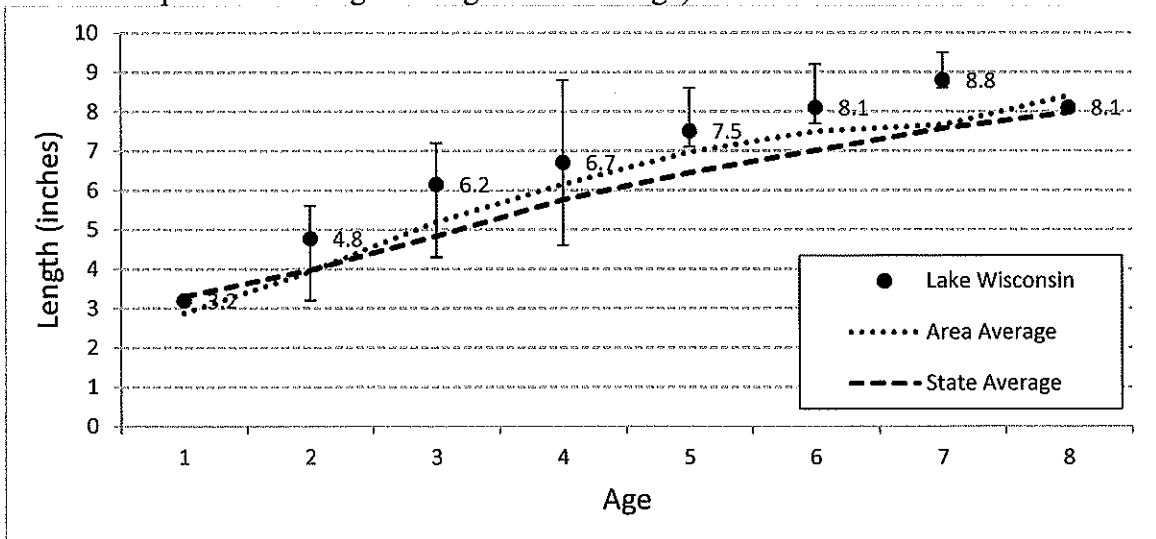


Lake Wisconsin 2017 Fishery Survey-Size Distribution and Length at Age

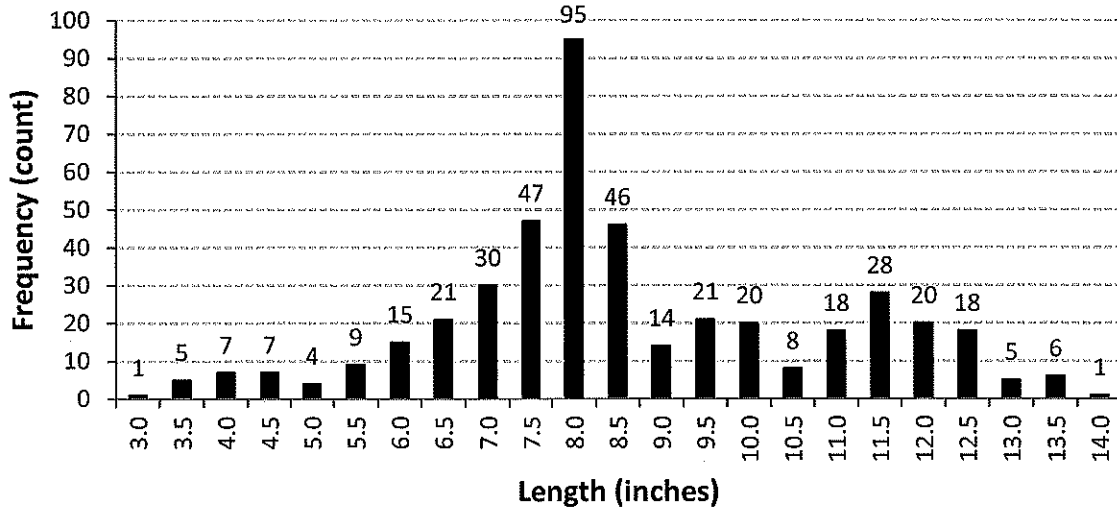
Bluegills are common in Lake Wisconsin in areas of shallow, vegetated habitat. This includes the many bays such as the Harmony Channels, Wiegand's Bay, Moon Valley, Gruber's Grove, and Whalen's Grade. The 2017 survey showed decent size structure with good numbers of fish larger than 7 inches. The length frequency of bluegills sampled in 2017 is here, and data from both electrofishing and netting are shown:



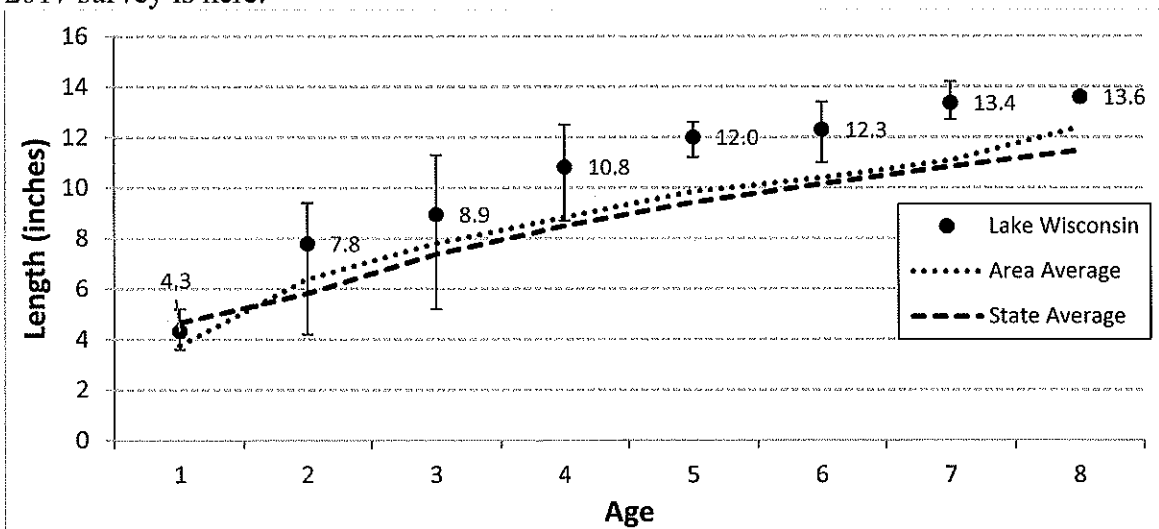
Bluegills grow faster in Lake Wisconsin relative to other lakes in the area, and the state as a whole. The average length at age for Lake Wisconsin bluegills is here (note that the error bars represent the range of lengths for each age):



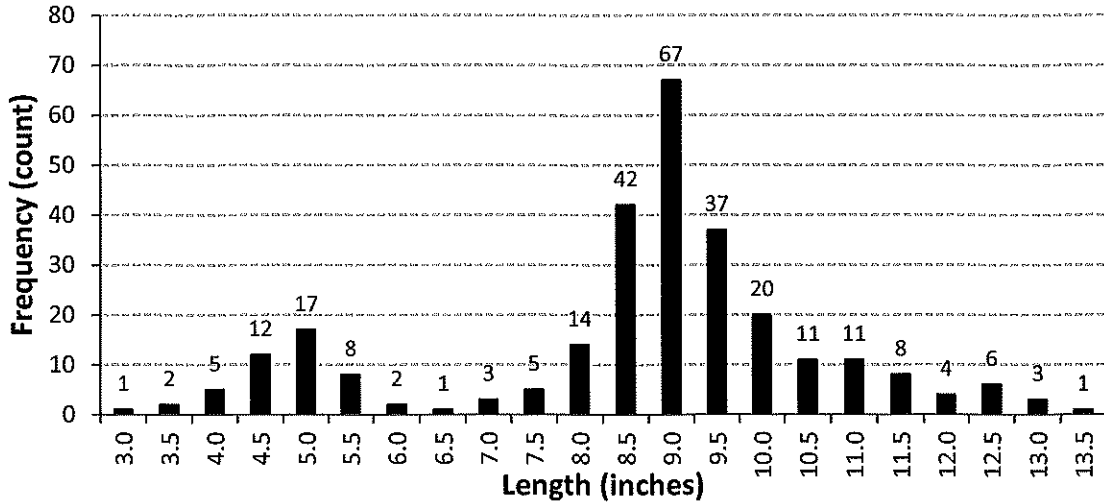
Lake Wisconsin has a nice population of black crappies which offers anglers a quality fishing opportunity. Early spring netting is the most effective way to sample crappies; 446 were captured during March and April netting in 2017. The data indicate that size structure is very good, with fish 10 inches or larger comprising 29% of the sample. The length frequency of crappies captured during spring netting is here:



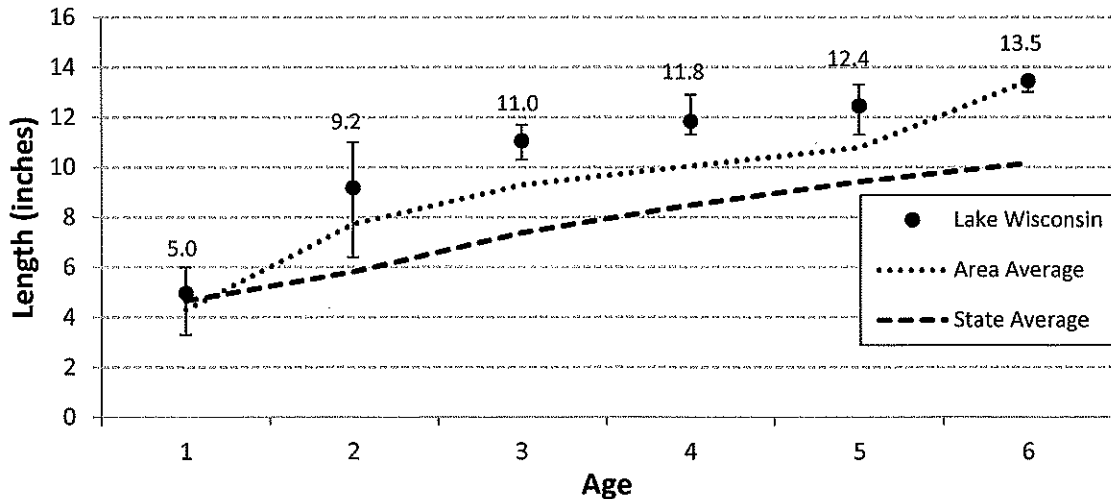
Black crappies grow fast in Lake Wisconsin, and the peak in the length frequency corresponds to fish that are around 2 years old. Black crappie growth in Lake Wisconsin is better than other area lakes and the state as a whole due to the abundance of small forage fishes for crappies to eat. The average length at age of black crappies from the 2017 survey is here:



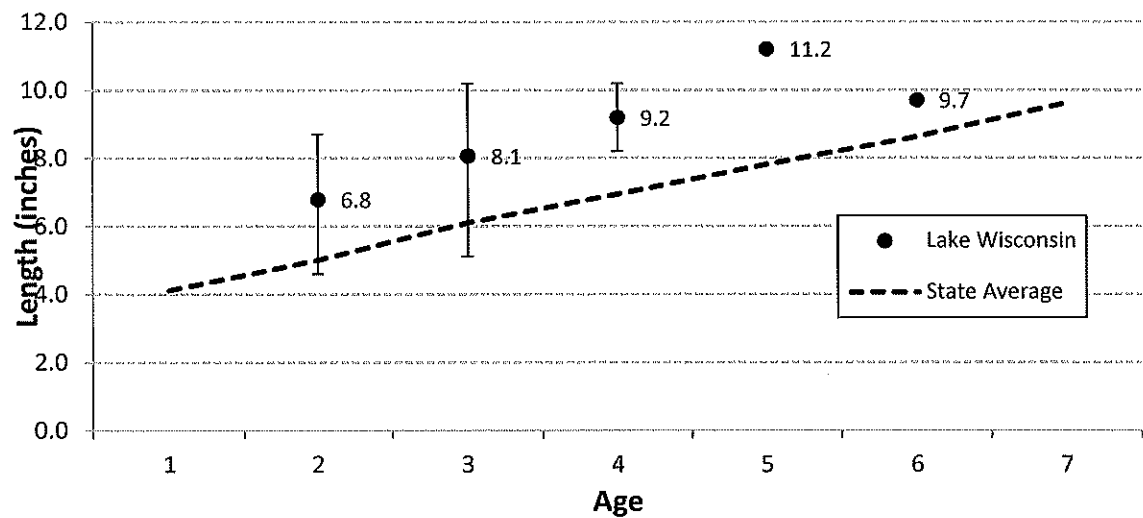
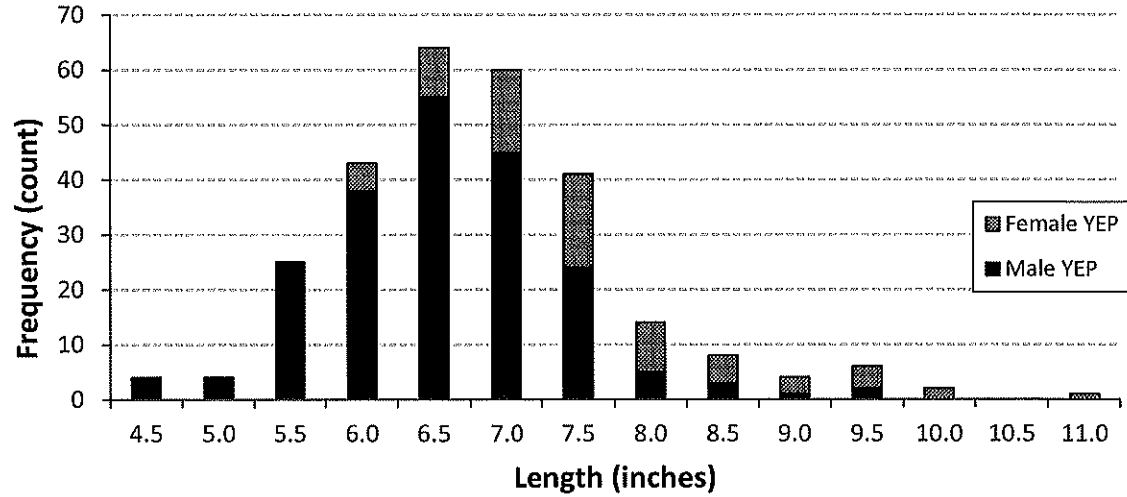
White crappies are also found in Lake Wisconsin and help to provide a quality panfish angling experience. In total, 280 white crappies were collected during March and April netting, and size structure is very good with 25% of the sample larger than 10 inches. The length frequency for white crappies is here:



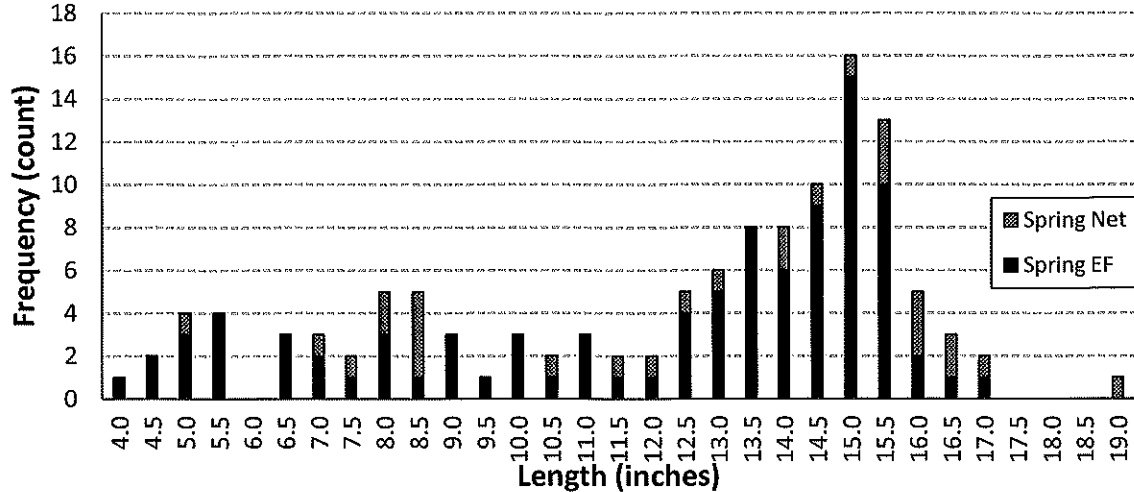
The two peaks in the length frequency correspond roughly to age 1 and age 2 fish, or the 2016 and 2015 year classes. It appears that 2015 was a good year for both black and white crappies as age 2 fish were most common in both samples. White crappies grow faster in Lake Wisconsin than area and state averages, again due to the abundance of small forage fishes. The average length at age of white crappies calculated from 2017 data is here:



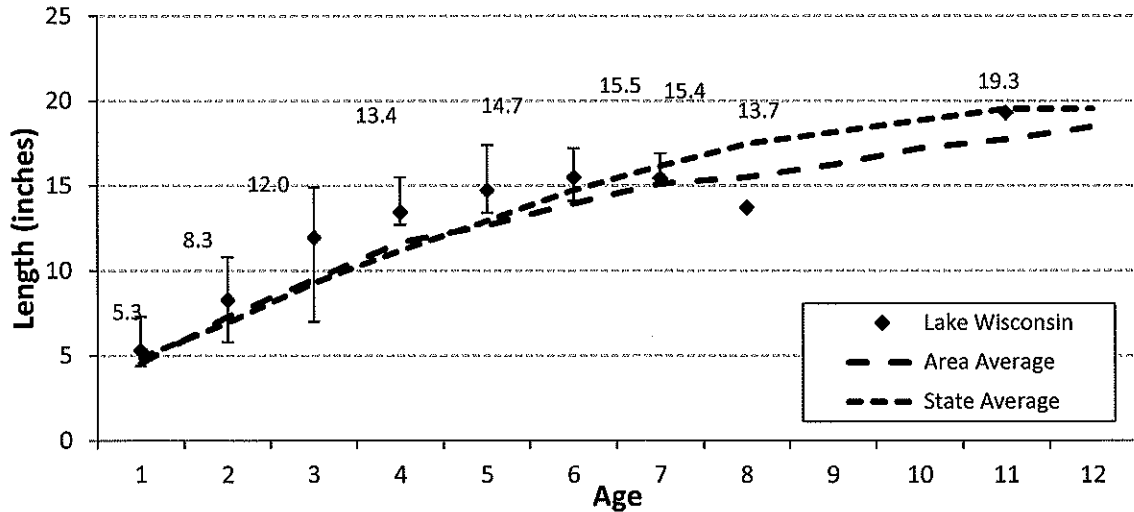
Yellow perch are most effectively sampled during early spring netting, and 282 were collected during March and April netting in 2017. Yellow perch grow fast in Lake Wisconsin compared to the state average but relatively few live past age 3, likely due to a combination of harvest and predation by species like walleye, sauger, and others. The length frequency distribution and average length at age are presented in the two graphs here:



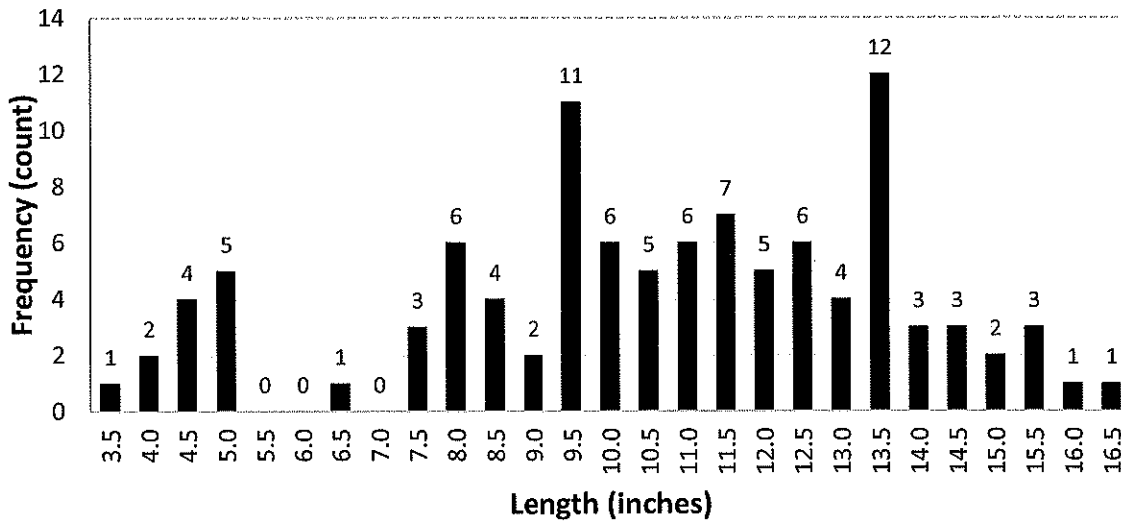
Largemouth bass are more common in Lake Wisconsin in areas of shallow weedy habitat like bluegills, however they are rare throughout the vast areas of open rocky shoreline in the main part of the lake. Largemouth bass were most effectively captured by electrofishing in May, but a small number of fish were also collected in nets in March and April of 2017. The length frequency distribution is shown here:



Largemouth bass grow faster in Lake Wisconsin than area or state averages, reaching legal harvest size of 14 inches as early as age 3, and they average over 14 inches by age 5. The average length at age graphs is shown here:



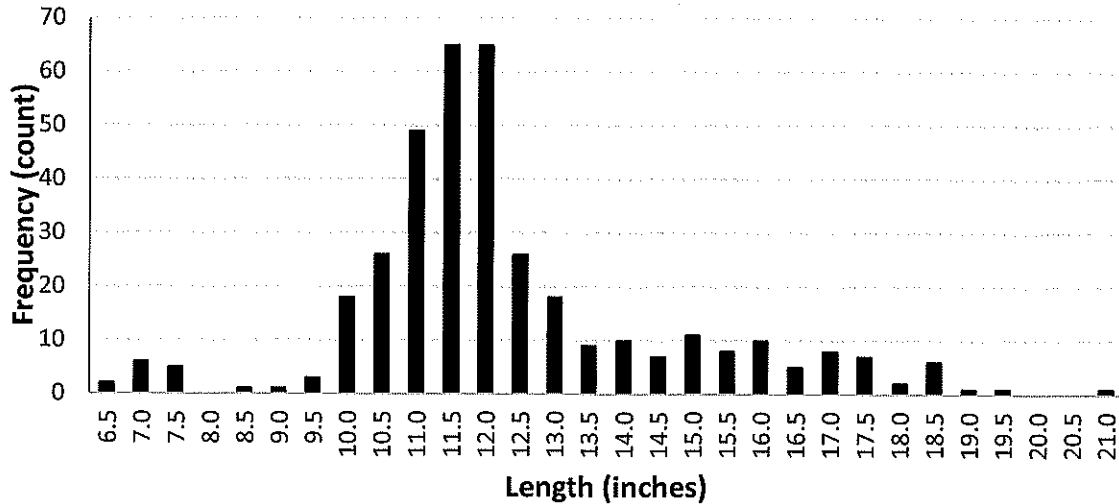
Smallmouth bass are relatively common in Lake Wisconsin in areas of rocky shoreline, and were most effectively sampled during May electrofishing in 2017. The length frequency distribution is here:



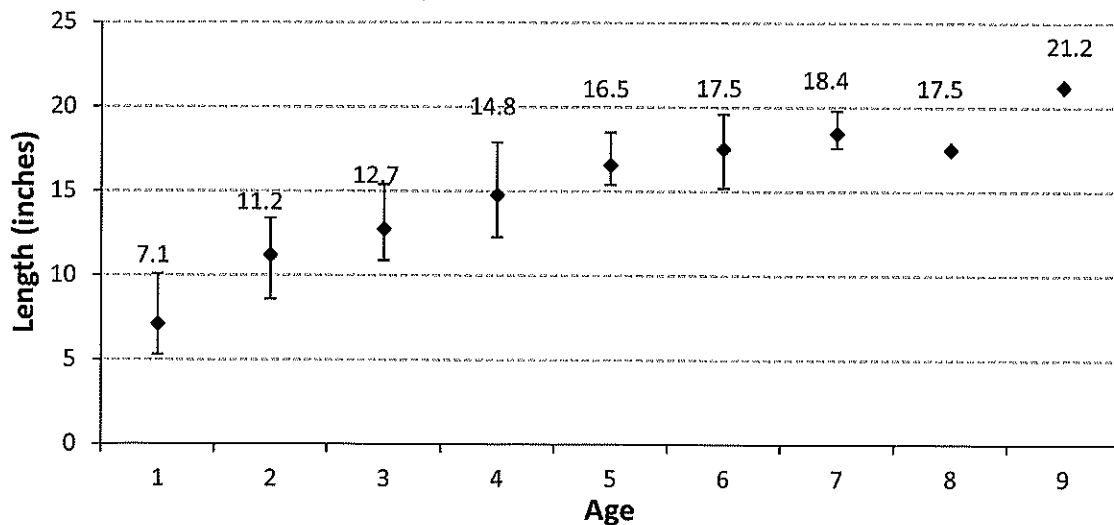
Smallmouth bass in Lake Wisconsin grow faster than area and state averages, with some fish reaching the legal harvest size of 14 inches as early as age 4, and averaging over 14 inches by age 6. The average length at age of smallmouth bass sampled in 2017 is here:



Saugers were most effectively sampled during early spring electrofishing in the Wisconsin River near Wisconsin Dells. This sampling corresponded with walleye and sauger spawning. The length frequency distribution from early electrofishing is below. Notice the peak in the distributions, which corresponds primarily with age 2 fish from the large year class produced in 2015.



Saugers in Lake Wisconsin grow at rates similar to walleyes, but generally do not live as long as walleyes, and this is in keeping with differences in life history between the two species. Saugers reach the minimum harvest size of 15 inches as early as age 3 and average over 15 inches by age 4. The average length at age graph for sauger collected in 2017 is here:



Prepared May 21, 2018 by Nathan Nye, WDNR Senior Fisheries Biologist, Columbia and Sauk counties.

