

Hello All,

Zebra Mussel Alert

The DNR AIS specialist, Tim Plude, will be checking Farm Island Lake for zebra mussels. He plans to do this in the next few weeks, possibly the week of November 4 - 8th, however that date is weather and ice dependent.

Stevo's Lawn Landscaping Dock & Lift was removing docks and lifts by the south access and they were pretty certain that they saw Zebra Mussels on a piece of dock/lift. Board member Jim Hausauer contacted Tim with the DNR and they want to check and verify for zebra mussels in FIL.

Tim asked me to let property owners know that he will be coming by boat and will pull up to their shoreline to check boat lifts and docks, etc. He'll be wearing the green DNR jacket with a small yellow DNR patch on the jacket.

Better safe than sorry - if you think you see a zebra mussel be sure to contact Tim Plude at 218-203-4354 or Timothy.Plude@state.mn.us. The DNR has checked veliger (baby zebra mussels) samples in the past 3 years and has been snorkeling in the past 2 years and has not seen signs of zebra mussels.

Here's to "No zebra mussels".

Walleye Electro-fish Survey Results Fall 2019

The DNR met with FILIA board members Cindy Chuhanic, Dennis Kraimer and Cheryl McDonough, along with association member Kevin McDonough, to discuss their 2019 Fall electro-fish assessment, which was done the evening of October 1, 2019. Electro-fishing is when they temporarily stun the fish so they can assess how well the fish are reproducing. On Farm Island this is performed in 6 sites around the lake.

Based on their findings, on October 8th the DNR stocked a total of 425 lbs. of fingerlings, for a total of about 12,000 fish. These fingerlings, which came from the Brainerd area, are of the same strain as the fry stocked in spring, and satisfies the need to stock a lake with the appropriate strain of fish.

Here is a synopsis of the DNR report.

1. Last October, due to the timing of the survey and exceedingly cold weather we were not able to sample well. As such, we decided to electro-fish in the spring to see if we could identify surviving one year old fish from the 2018 year class, i.e. surviving fry from last year

2018. While we did sample other ages of walleye (from 11-21 inches) we observed no yearlings, suggesting that the 2018 year class was at the very least not strong. On October 1st we conducted our 2019 fall electro-fishing assessment and also found no yearling Walleyes, further corroborating our belief that the 2018 year class was poor.

2. Having a poor year class now and then is generally not too much of an issue, however, having several in a row will be noticeable in the angling. Besides the absence of yearling Walleyes in last night's sampling, we also observed low-to-average numbers of Young-of-the-Year (YOY) Walleye from the 2019 year class. The positive news is 2019 year class was relatively large sized, averaging almost 7 inches long (generally speaking the larger regarding survival). The sampling this season did not appear to be affected by cold weather as we saw many other fish of many species. This did also include a good number of YOY Perch, which are a primary forage for the young Walleye.

3. The sky is not falling, but based on these findings and based on surplus in their rearing ponds, in fall of 2019 the DNR will stock fingerlings to Farm Island – up to 440 lbs. They won't know if there will be any surplus until after all of the regular stocking is completed later in October or November.

4. The bottom line is that the 2016 year class is the last strong one we have observed. The 2017 appeared to be rather moderate in strength, while the 2018 was absent. The 2019 year class appears rather low in abundance, but good sized, so it is feasible for this year class to be rather moderate too.

5. The DNR will continue to do their annual fry restocking in the spring of each year.

6. The DNR will continue to do their Fall electro-fish assessment each year.

The board asked the DNR if there are any grants available for fish stocking, and they were not aware of any. The board will look to the DNR for further guidance.

Your comments and questions are welcome.

Sincerely,

Cheryl McDonough

FILIA Treasurer/Secretary

filialake@gmail.com

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