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*\*Special note\**

A church directory for much of the Lakes Edition area can be found in section two.

# Lake Koshkonong – slot or not?

By Adam Walton of Pike Pole Fishing Guide Services

There’s been quite a bit of buzz the last few years in regards to enacting a slot limit on Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system. The fact that’s occurring is a good thing. It shows many anglers care deeply about the future of this fishery. Anyone who has fished the Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system for any number of years has seen the up and down cycle of the walleye population and size. What’s concerning to many of these anglers is the bigger fish population appears to be going down. Not only are they seeing it, data and surveys obtained by the DNR also supports this finding. So that brings us as a group to a crossroad. What changes can be implemented that will better protect walleyes and also appeal to most anglers?

There actually are a few options to look at. Enacting a slot limit is the option getting the most attention, but if we look deeper into this, it may not be a good option right now. Let me explain. I’ve had the opportunity to sit down with DNR fishery managers and pick their brains on this topic. Along with discussing Lake Koshkonong’s fishery, I was able to view data obtained over the years from both netting surveys and shocking surveys. What stuck out the most was the huge inconsistent walleye spawning and stocking survival numbers. The fishery managers stated, from their experience, in order for a slot to work, a system needs to have consistently higher numbers of natural or stocked “replacement” fish coming back into a system.

So how do we know how many new walleyes are coming into a system? The DNR conducts a “Young of the Year” survey annually to analyze the previous spring walleye spawn. Crews travel “X” amount of miles in a boat and use a boom-shocking device to count the number of walleye hatched that spring. (Large fish are not part of this data.) Once crews complete their time on the water, they calculate how many walleye per mile they found. Past data, which is listed in the table below, shows that these numbers are all over the board. Some years have a great survival rate, but many are quite low. As one can see, this data supports the inconsistent spawning behavior seen on the Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system. For a slot limit to work as intended, this up-and-down cycle must be balanced first.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007			
Walleye/Mile	7	13	55	4	9	20			
Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	15	4	7	9	2	104	8	6	20

“Young of the Year” reporting data from 2002 to 2016. (Graphic submitted by Adam Walton)



Adam Walton displays a sizable Lake Koshkonong walleye. (Photo submitted by Adam Walton)

Slot limits work great on other systems such as the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin system. But using the slot limit success seen on that system as an example of what the Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system could become is not a fair comparison for a couple of reasons.

One, the Wisconsin River system is much larger than the Rock River system. The Wisconsin River spans 430 miles and is located entirely within the Wisconsin border. The Rock River spans 299 miles throughout Wisconsin and Illinois. Only about a third of the river is located within the Wisconsin border. So, if we don’t include the Illinois section of the Rock River, we’re comparing a 430-mile system to a system roughly 100 miles long. That’s not exactly apples to apples.

Secondly, the Wisconsin River has awesome spawning habitat locations for walleyes, making for good, consistent spawning numbers each year (again,

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## Welcome to EDGERTON!

Please join us at the boyhood home of Rascal author Sterling North and his “ringtailed wonder” pet raccoon...

Restored to look exactly as it did when the famed story took place, in all of its 1918 splendor, the Sterling North Childhood Home Museum and Literary Center is open for tours on Sundays, April through December, from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

**Sterling’s memoir was made into a 1969 Disney movie and a 1970s Japanese cartoon... Come see where the story took place.**

**The North house will also be open for tours on Saturday, October 28, 2017 for the 12th Annual Edgerton Sterling North Book & Film Festival.**



The North home has been restored and refurbished with period furniture.



Thomas Sterling North had a distinguished career as a journalist and author



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