

Otisco Lake Fall Walleye Assessment Survey (Survey #:722070)

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Otisco Lake is in Onondaga County, near the city of Syracuse, New York. Otisco is the most easterly of the eleven Finger Lakes and is eighth in size at 1,877 acres. Otisco Lake was stocked by the department with walleye almost annually from 1990 to 2013. Starting in 2014, the Otisco Lake walleye stocking policy was changed from an annual stocking to biennial maintenance stocking. However, it should be noted that since that stocking change walleye have been stocked each year into Otisco Lake except 2014, 2016 and 2022, as surplus walleye have been available on nonscheduled stocking years.

This survey was conducted because recent gill netting surveys in 2014, 2018 and 2022 have resulted in walleye being caught that are believed to be from natural reproduction (wild). These wild year classes are based on walleye ages, using otoliths, that would be from non-stocked years. As no walleye were stocked in Otisco in 2022 a fall walleye electrofishing survey was conducted with the intent to collect wild young-of-year (YOY) walleye. The two survey sites were consistent with the fall walleye stocking assessment surveys which is used to assess survival of hatchery origin fish. Both sites are south of the causeway and cover approximately 1.7 miles of the shoreline. No YOY walleye were observed or collected, but 47 age-1+ walleye were collected. The average length of the collected walleye was 15.8 inches and ranged from 10.7 to 22.8 inches. Ages ranged from 1 to 9, with age-2 being most frequent (Figure 1). All walleye were aged using scale samples. Walleye were the survey target and no other species were collected.

The recommendation is to repeat the survey on the next non-stocking year to again attempt to collect wild YOY walleye.

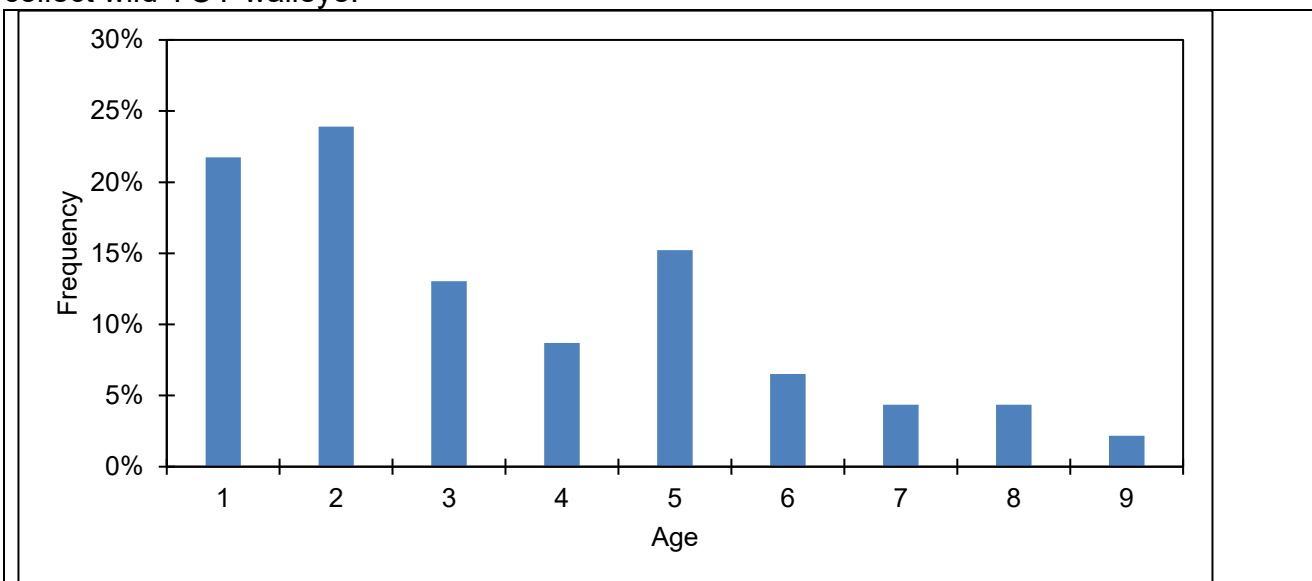


Figure 1. Age frequency distribution of walleye collected by boat electrofishing on October, 4 2022 from Otisco Lake, Onondaga County.

