

Summary

Muskies and Walleyes have co-existed in the same bodies of water for centuries, and all evidence shows that they will continue to do so. Many premiere Walleye lakes also happen to be excellent Muskie fisheries as well. This would not be possible if Muskies were decimating the Walleye populations, as some people seem to suggest.

A great example of this would be in the state of Minnesota, where there are numerous lakes fished heartily for both species. Lake of the Woods, Lake Winibigoshish, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs Lake, and Lake Minnetonka are all top of the line Walleye fisheries that also happen to hold large numbers of Muskies as well.

Do Muskies eat Walleyes? Occasionally at most, and in far less numbers than the amount of fish taken yearly by Walleye anglers. Based on Science, numerous Studies, and Statistics, “Muskies eat all the Walleyes” has proved to be a completely false and misleading statement.

There is room in the lake for both species to exist and thrive, and there is room **on** the lake for anglers of both species.

Whether you're a Walleye angler, or a Muskie angler, hopefully you've gained a bit more knowledge about how these fish can, and do inhabit the same waters in harmony.

Further Information

You can find out more information, and view the complete results of some of the studies mentioned in this brochure by doing an internet search.

You may also be able to get more information by calling your local Department of Natural Resources office.

If you'd like extra brochures, please contact Brad Waldera at (701)- 642-1952, or by e-mail at bradwaldera@yahoo.com

Sources of information

Diets of Muskellunge in Northern Wisconsin Lakes- By Michael A. Bozek and Thomas M. Burri

Muskellunge Biography: The Basics- Butler, M.T. 2004.

What do Muskies eat anyway?- Duane Williams, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Report

What Do Muskies Really Eat?



A short summary of the connection and interaction between the Muskellunge and the Walleye.

Introduction

The Muskellunge is one of the most mysterious fish to ever swim in our lakes, and there are many misconceptions and misunderstandings about them, and about what their regular diet consists of.

After reading the information contained in this brochure, you'll have a better understanding of the Muskie, it's diet, and the ways in which the presence of Muskie may actually benefit your lake, such as their controlling of undesirable fish populations.

People have been hesitant to have Muskies stocked into their lakes, as they feared Muskies would consume a substantial amount of other game fish, most notably, the Walleye.

In certain fishing circles you'll hear it said that "Muskies Eat All The Walleye", even though studies have proven conclusively that this is just not the case.

It's been proven that NO changes in game fish populations have occurred due to the introduction of Muskies into the lake, and there has been no negative impact shown toward other species of game fish.

Muskie Behavior and Food Preferences

Feeding studies show that other fish make up 95-98% of the Muskies diet, although they will at times also eat Insects, Crayfish, small mammals, and Waterfowl. They are a natural predator, and like all predators, are opportunists. Studies have shown that even when they're abundant, other game fish actually made up a very small part of the Muskies diet.

Fishermen have reported Muskies attacking Bass and Walleye as they were being reeled in. This may have given the impression that Muskies are significant predators of other game fish, when in fact; the Muskie was simply reacting naturally to the struggling fish due to their predatory instincts.

Muskies generally take advantage of the most abundant prey species available that are of sufficient size. Studies have shown that given the opportunity to choose, Muskies preferred soft grade, high protein based fish such as Suckers, Tullibee, Ciscoes, Bullheads, Carp, and minnows.

The truth is that even though it's been proven that Muskies do have a preferred food source, they are opportunistic predators, and occasionally consume other game fish. The amount of other game fish eaten by Muskies is extremely minimal compared to the amount of game fish such as Walleye that are annually harvested by anglers.

Facts, Studies, and Statistics

There have been numerous studies done as long ago as 1952, all coming to the same conclusion. Game fish such as Walleye make up a very small part of a Muskie's diet. In one particular study, the stomach contents from 1092 Muskies were evaluated. The results proved that a Muskie's diet is quite diverse, and that in 74% of the sample fish, only one prey item was present. Muskies do not feed constantly and consume fish after fish, as some people would have you believe.

Walleye ranked extremely low in the Muskies' diet. In the 1092 study fish, only 5 contained traces of Walleye. This study collected Muskies from 34 separate bodies of water, including lakes with large populations of Walleye. Despite the abundance of Walleye in those lakes, Walleye proved to not be a very important food source for Muskies. In fact, during the study, Muskies and Walleyes were observed in very close proximity to one another. The percentage of Walleye found in the stomach contents of Muskies was a mere 3.4%. Sunfish, Crappie, and various minnow species were eaten much more frequently.

In no instances in any of the study lakes did Walleye prove to make up the primary or even secondary food source choice for Muskies.

