

MUSKIE CONCERNS FOR MINNESOTA LAKES

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Thoughts and Concerns:

- Only about 1% of Minnesota's licensed anglers fish for muskie
- Too many MN lakes are designated muskie lakes
- Walleye anglers contribute more to MN economy than muskie anglers
- DNR lacks statistics on what muskie eat

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WHAT FISH SPECIES IS LAKE MILLE LACS MANAGED FOR?

Lake Mille Lacs has been turned into a trophy lake for everything but what originally made it the "queen of walleye lakes" in Minnesota. Reportedly, 90 percent of the fishermen and women came to Mille Lacs for walleyes. Unfortunately, DNR Fisheries gurus have micromanaged the lake to death, and have effectively avoided what the real demise of the walleye population is. Tribal netting, though reported to be limited, continues. Muskellunge fishing is at its best. DNR Fisheries claims both have little effect on the Mille Lacs walleye fishery. Netting and muskies appear to have been given Pope status and remain untouchable.

My recommendations: 1) Turn the voluntary walleye stamp into a mandatory Lake Mille Lacs walleye stamp. Allow the governor to negotiate with the tribes a financial agreement to eliminate netting on the lake. That seemed to work on Leech Lake and other lakes where netting — by Native Americans or commercially — was being done years ago. 2) Make keeping muskies mandatory to reduce this huge predator's herd.

Lake Mille Lacs cannot be a trophy lake for all species or for all fishermen. Let's focus on the 90 percent who prefer walleyes.

*Paul Dyrstad
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