

I am writing from experience on Pelican Lake in Ottertail County, but I believe these ideas apply to other lakes as well. Property owners , tax-paying residents of the lake have the right to use the lake, and muskellunge stocking/fishing interferes with those rights. The following activities are severely impacted.

Swimming: This includes paddle-boarding, wind-surfing, tubing, etc. I, personally, have an aversion to swimming with predator fish nearly as large as I am, and I'll add that any contact a child might have with a large muskie could be extremely frightening and traumatic if not dangerous. They simply do not belong in our lake where families enjoy recreation in the water.

Enjoying nature: It is a fact that muskellunge will eat baby loons and ducks. These birds are already under pressure from development, competition for food (also related to muskie) and other environmental factors. Muskellunge are not native to this part of Minnesota and they are disrupting the balance of the lake ecosystem directly, and indirectly by the influx of invasive species on fishing boats from other areas.

Fishing: People who fish that I have spoken to are convinced that a decline in numbers of fish such as crappie and sunfish is related to the muskie population. These are people who have fished these waters for years and have seen normal fluctuations. The DNR's contention that they have been stocking muskellunge in Pelican since the 80's only points out that now there are too many, and they are affecting native species. The increased size limit is making this problem worse.

I recently watched a muskie go through some very dramatic death throes near the end of our dock on Broadwater. It then sank to the bottom, and the next day resurfaced to be washed ashore on our beach. We measured it at 48 inches and it took two men to get it into a wheelbarrow so it could be buried. There literally was not enough space to bury such a large fish on the shore as we usually do with fish that wash up. We have lived on this beach for more than 60 years and have never seen a fish this large in our lake. It clearly does not belong here.

As the Department of Natural Resources is not responsive to these issues, I ask the Minnesota Legislators to enact a law to prohibit stocking muskellunge in Pelican, or in any other lake where they are not native or where residents are opposed to stocking.

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