

Crescent Lake Reflections



2024

Lake: Ice out: South - March 15, 2024

Ice out: North - March 16, 2024

This is the earliest ice out since recording started over 50 years ago. Some ice did return later but did not freeze completely over the lake.

First ice over: December 6, 2024

Birds: Just after the ice went out, a flock of migrating Mergansers arrived on the lake.

Fish: The Mole Lake Band harvested 90 walleyes in the Spring. The Native Americans voluntarily reduced the harvest from the higher allowed allocation (201 fish) because of the declining walleye population.

The DNR held a public meeting on June 4 to initiate a Walleye Lake of Concern (WLOC) project on Crescent Lake. The DNR indicated the purpose of the project is to engage with the public in forming a partnership to protect and enhance the walleye population. The DNR shared what they currently know about the decline of walleyes on northern Wisconsin lakes. Admittedly, there is much they do not know and understand about why the decline is occurring on many lakes. After this meeting the DNR started work on a revised set of regulations for walleyes and bass. A new special regulation for Crescent Lake is being proposed to reduce the allowable angling daily limit of walleyes to one fish. Also, a new special regulation for Crescent Lake on bass will drop the minimum size restriction. As the walleye population has been declining, the bass population has been increasing. The new bass regulation is intended to help control the growth of the bass population.

The Mole Lake Band conducted an electrofishing survey on Crescent Lake in early September. The main purpose was to obtain an updated estimate of the walleye population and a distribution of the range of sizes. Surprisingly, the survey showed that a significant number of large walleye fingerlings stocked in September of 2023 had survived. Based on these results, Mike Preul, Fisheries Biologist of the Mole Lake Band, proposed to the DNR that they revert to the default walleye regulation already in place on other ceded lakes. The ceded lakes regulation protects fish under 14" from being harvested by angling. This regulation would only be in effect until the new special regulation for Crescent Lake is adopted most likely in 2026.

The Crescent Lake Association approved a voluntary catch-and-release policy for walleye at the Fall Member meeting. A sign was posted on the kiosk at the boat landing.

Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM): For the second year in a row, no chemical treatment for EWM was allowed by the DNR. A survey of EWM in the lake showed the spread of EWM along the shoreline of the north lobe of the lake. Density varied from sparse to moderate-dense.

Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH to pull and remove EWM was done on the north end of the lake during the summer.

The Crescent Lake District residents approved the 2025 budget with a reduced levy to taxpayers.

Crescent Volunteer Fire Department: The Crescent Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) hosted an ice and cold-water rescue training session on January 27, 2024 on Crescent Lake, just off the shore of Crescent Lake Bible Camp (CLBC). Participants from the CVFD as well as surrounding fire departments suited up, practiced pulling each other from the water and using the airboat from Newbold Township that can safely move over the ice and shallow waters for rescue. Afterwards they had lunch and a training session at the CLBC Dining Hall. Fire Chief Keven Mahner and his crew are greatly appreciated by those of us on the lake and in our township for the focus and effort that they put into training.



Crescent Lake Bible Camp: Crescent Lake Bible Camp hosted a Winter Youth Retreat for Middle School and High School students in late January. As crazy as it sounds, the weather was perfect for an Ice Plunge and the kids and staff were game for a try! Luckily, the waterfront at the boating area is relatively shallow. So with four lifeguards on duty and a warming vehicle a few steps away, these kids took the plunge! A lot of laughter, screams, and jumping up and down made for memories that will last a lifetime!



Crescent Lake Association Member Meetings



Spring Meeting: The lake association's May member meeting featured a talk by Fire Chief Keven Mahner of the Crescent Volunteer Fire Department. Fire Chief Mahner talked about the training his team of volunteers undergoes to remain qualified and prepared for emergencies. He also talked about home fire safety and fire risk assessments conducted by the fire department for residents.



Annual Meeting: The annual member meeting in July featured speaker Michele Sadauskas, Oneida County Conservationist. Michele spoke about the lake classification system being adopted by her department. The goal is to group the 451 named lakes in the county based on certain characteristics to help identify those lakes that may need better protection. Crescent Lake is classified as a lower sensitivity lake due to its physical characteristics and higher health quality.

Fall Meeting: The Fall member meeting included an interesting talk and discussion of the Crescent Lake Fishery by Michael Preul, Fisheries Biologist of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, Mole Lake Band. Mike reviewed the records of the Crescent Lake walleye fishery that showed a dramatic decrease in the young walleye population starting in 2018. His opinion is the die-off of the rusty crayfish around 2010 is likely a factor in the reduction of the walleye population. Rusty crayfish attack aquatic plants to obtain food. As a result of the crayfish die-off, more plants have survived. This led to clearer water and a better habitat for warmer water fish like northern pike, bass, crappies and blue gills which are overtaking the walleye habitat.

July 4th Fireworks and Boat Parade: The boat parade and fireworks had to be postponed a day because of rainy weather on July 5. The following day turned out to be great for both events.



Twelve boats participated in the boat parade organized by Donna Stone. The Frasier Family's "Jaws" boat received top

honors. They were repeat winners. The Goldbach's boat took "Most Patriotic." The Leinss and Peterson families captured the prizes for most creative. Spectators along the parade route make it a fun event for those participating.

Fireworks: Mark Mergenthaler and Jack Geisel were mentored this year by Larry McKittrick and his son, Scott to coordinate the fireworks show. A total of 908 shots were fired over the 25-minute show. All went well thanks to the many volunteers that helped with setup of the mortars, loading and wiring the shells and cleanup after the show.



Friend of the Lake Award: Jim Gehrke presented the “Friend of the Lake” award to Cindy Hermel for her years of service to the Crescent Lake Association. Cindy served on the board of directors, wrote requests for grants of funds from the state, lead the effort to develop the Crescent Lake AIS Prevention and Planning Project, worked as the CBCW coordinator and along with her husband, pulled EWM with their pontoon boat for several years to control its spread. Cindy received a trophy and her name will be placed on the “Friend of the Lake” plaque at the Crescent Town Hall.

Northern Lights: The current cycle of solar activity (flares, sunspots, etc.) was peaking during 2024. As a result, those of us in Wisconsin were treated to numerous nights with brilliant displays of the aurora borealis (northern lights). This picture over the lake was taken by Donna Stone.



Acknowledgement: *The Crescent Lake Association Board of Directors would like to thank Maria Rudesill, Donna Stone and Terry Goldbach for their contributions to the Crescent Lake Reflections.*