

2022 Chautauqua Lake Spring Muskellunge Broodstock Survey and Egg take

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Region 9 fisheries and the Chautauqua Hatchery conducted the annual spring muskellunge egg take and population survey from April 25th through May 6th, 2022. Six trap nets were fished for two weeks to collect eggs for hatchery production and to monitor the adult muskellunge population, which is the primary broodstock source for stocking in New York State waters. A total of 222 muskies were collected for a catch rate of 2.6 muskies per net night. While this is down from the record catch rate in 2017 (5.8/night), and slightly lower than the average catch rate since 2013 (3.4/night), it is still higher than the long-term average catch rate for this survey since 1978 (1.8/night). Recognizing that catch rates during spring surveys can be highly variable from year to year, the results from the 2022 survey suggest that the musky population in Chautauqua Lake remains stable or above average in terms of abundance. The largest musky collected during the 2022 survey was just over 48 inches and weighed 30lbs. Data has not been fully analyzed, however, a good portion of muskies caught during the survey were over 40 inches. Around 40 pairs were mated for hatchery production and will provide all of the pure strain muskellunge fingerlings for NY stockings. Overall, Chautauqua Lake should continue to provide quality musky fishing opportunities this season.

Top: Fisheries Technicians Kevin Smith (left) and Kyle Jones (right) with a trophy Chautauqua musky; Bottom: Crew tending nets and checking muskies for sex and condition.

