

Sixtown Pond Big Panfish Initiative (Survey #: 622006)  
 Les Resseguie, Region 6 Fisheries

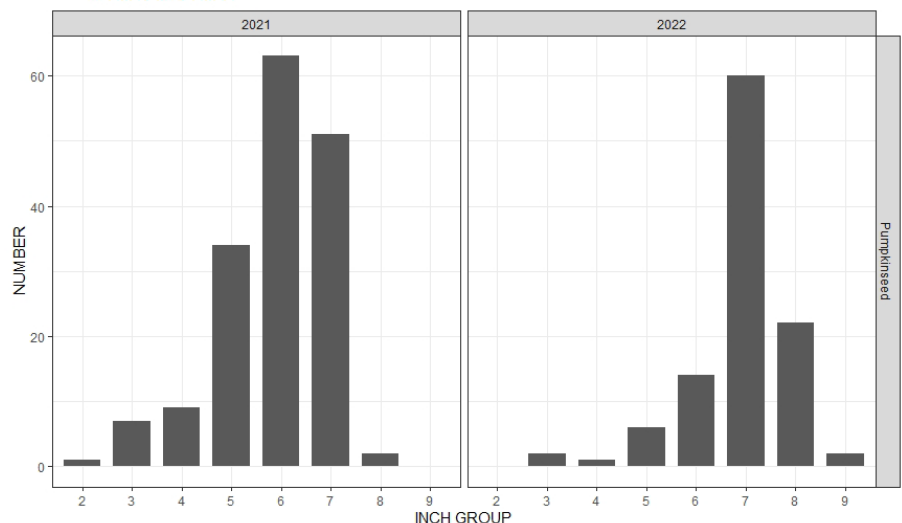
06/12/2023

Sixtown Pond (aka Crystal Lake) is a 169-acre waterbody in the Town of Henderson in Jefferson County with a maximum depth of 24 feet and mean depth of 14 feet. Public access is available at a NYSDEC maintained cartop boat launch located on southwest shoreline off County Route 178. Popular sportfish found in Sixtown Pond are largemouth bass, northern pike, walleye, yellow perch, brown bullhead, black crappie, bluegill and pumpkinseed sunfish. The walleye fishery is currently supported by annual fry stocking. Sixtown Pond was selected to be part of the Big Panfish Initiative (BPI; NYSDEC 2021) and effective April 1, 2022, special sunfish regulations were adopted with an open season year-round, minimum length of eight inches, and daily limit of 15 fish.

In 2021, an initial trap-netting survey was conducted to provide baseline data for the evaluation of the experimental BPI regulations (Resseguie 2022) with additional surveys planned each year through 2025. Sampling methodology followed the New York State Sunfish and Crappie Trap Netting Protocol (Loukmas 2021). In 2022, three trap nets were set overnight on May 9 – 13, resulting in a total of 12 net-nights of effort. Surface water temperatures ranged from 58-65°F.

In 2022, pumpkinseed sunfish again dominated the panfish catch (n=107) followed by bluegill (n=50) and black crappie (n=25) resulting in catch rates of 8.9, 4.1, and 2.1 fish/net-night, respectively. Similar to 2021, bluegill and black crappie were poorly represented in 2022; therefore, population metrics were not calculated as the samples were not likely representative of the population.

Figure 1. Length Frequency Distribution of Pumpkinseeds from Sixtown Pond in 2021 and 2022



In 2022, pumpkinseed sunfish lengths ranged from 3.5 – 9.5 inches (Figure 1), averaging 7.4 inches. Stock density indices were calculated to evaluate size structure in the population and allow for comparisons between years and the other lakes with the same regulation. The Proportional Stock Density (PSD), and Relative Stock Density for preferred (RSD<sub>p</sub>) and memorable (RSD<sub>m</sub>) were 91.6, 29.0 and 0, respectively (Table 1). These values indicate that the pumpkinseed catch was dominated by fish in the “quality” size class (i.e., 91.6% of pumpkinseed were 6-8 inches) while 29% were preferred size and none were of memorable size. Relative weights (W<sub>r</sub>; an index of condition) were calculated for each size class (Table 1) and were comparable to the statewide averages





## Literature Cited

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Loukmas, J. 2021. New York Sunfish and Crappie Trap Netting Protocol. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Fisheries. Albany, NY

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