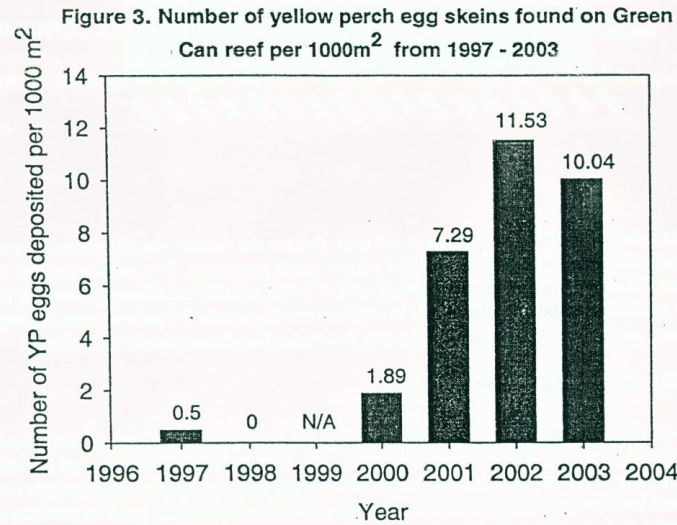


Egg deposition

The Department has conducted SCUBA dives since 1997 to assess the egg deposition of yellow perch on the Green Can Reef just south of the Milwaukee Harbor (Figure 3). Since 2000, when the 1998 year-class matured, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of egg skeins on the reef, peaking at 11.53 per 1000m² in 2002. This trend continued in 2003 with over 10.04 egg masses per 1000 m². Egg deposition in 2004 should remain high because the majority of fish caught by anglers and assessment gear continue to be the 1998 year-class (Figure 2).



Yellow perch abundance

Biologists working with the Yellow Perch Task Group have developed a statistical catch-at-age model for yellow perch in Wisconsin's waters of Lake Michigan. Similar models are used to manage other Great Lakes fisheries including yellow perch and walleye in Lake Erie, lake whitefish in Lake Michigan, and lake whitefish and lake trout in Lake Superior. Information from Wisconsin DNR assessments and surveys are used as inputs for the model. Results show a sharp decline in numbers (Figure 4) and biomass (Figure 5) since 1990, with modest increases because of the 1998 year-class of yellow perch. Spawning stock biomass (Figure 6) has improved since regulations went into place in the mid 1990's. A female yellow perch in 2002 laid fifteen times more eggs than a female in 1990 because of the larger females present in 2002 and the decrease in mortality due to the current regulations. As the 1998 year-class drops out of the fishery in a couple of years, it will be prudent to maintain current protective regulations.

Figure 4. Population estimate (number) of yellow perch in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan

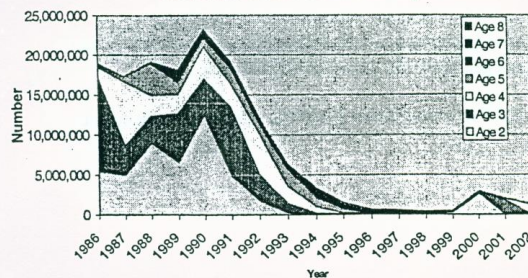
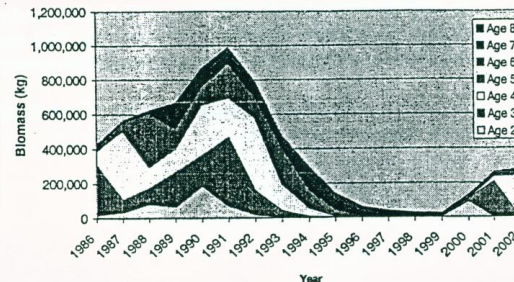


Figure 5. Population estimate (biomass) of yellow perch in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan



Lake Michigan Zone 3 Yellow Perch Mean Length

