

Six fish species are considered abundant in Lake Wissota: walleye (*Sander vitreus*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), silver redhorse (*Moxostoma anisurum*), and emerald shiner (*Notropis atherinoides*). An additional nine species are considered common: channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), flathead catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*), muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*), northern pike (*Esox lucius*), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), golden redhorse (*Moxostoma erythrurum*), shorthead redhorse (*Moxostoma macrolepidotum*), golden shiner (*Notomigonus crysoleucas*), and troutperch (*Percopsis omiscomaycus*).

Three species are considered rare on Lake Wissota: bigmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*), warmouth (*Lupomis gulosus*), and creek chub (*Semotilus atromaculatus*).



Figure 13. Green Heron on Lake Wissota, 2009.

Photo courtesy of Jessica Soine.

on Lake Wissota (Figure 14) (Konkel, 2007).

Critical Habitat Areas on Lake Wissota provide more than 180 acres of critical wildlife habitat along more than 6.4 miles of shoreline (11% of the 56 total miles of shoreline around the lake) (Konkel 2007). Some of the fisheries and wildlife that benefit from these areas include: walleye, northern pike, musky, largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, bluegill, yellow perch, lake sturgeon, catfish, suckers, waterfowl, eagles, kingfishers, geese, coots, double crested cormorants, great blue herons, other shorebirds, songbirds and upland birds, muskrat, beaver, otter, deer, mink, turtles frogs, toads, snakes and salamanders.

Critical Habitat Areas also provide an important buffer for the shoreline, which reduces erosion and absorbs nutrient runoff. Wave action is absorbed by submergent and emergent vegetation that reduce the force of the waves as they reach the shore. Vegetation also traps nutrients that run off the shoreline and into the lake during rain events. A copy of the Critical Habitat study can be obtained from the LWIPA website (www.lwipa.net) or from the WDNR website (http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/critical_habitat/)

The wildlife in Lake Wissota ultimately depend on organisms a little further down the food chain, the macroinvertebrates (insects, crustaceans, etc.), which are an important food source for many organisms. The macroinvertebrate community in Lake Wissota was inventoried during 1993-94 (Delong and Mundahl 1995) and demonstrated that the late-winter drawdowns of the lake had negative consequences for the macroinvertebrates

Wildlife Habitat

The wildlife habitat available on Lake Wissota was assessed during a critical habitat area study conducted on 25 September 2006. Critical Habitat Areas are identified areas that provide food, shelter, or spawning/nesting habitat for wildlife (Figure 14) and invertebrates or areas that provide important navigational or scenic beauty locations for the public. **Critical Habitat Areas may also be identified because of their importance in maintaining water quality.** Critical habitat areas are NOT docks, rafts, or boathouses, etc. Twelve Critical Habitat Areas have been designated

that inhabited the littoral zone (near-shore area) of the lake. (Properly timed water-level fluctuations may not have the same negative consequences that the late-winter drawdowns had on the invertebrate community). As a base level in the food chain, the macroinvertebrate community affects the entire lake system. Maintaining a stable condition in the lake littoral zone, the

most diverse area of a lake system, is therefore crucial to maintaining an ecologically sound body of water (Wetzel 2001). The macroinvertebrate community is scheduled to be re-inventoried during 2009-10 and this study will help determine how the macroinvertebrate community may have changed since the reduction of the late-winter drawdowns.



Figure 14. Critical Habitat Areas (highlighted in yellow and labeled with LW_#) for Lake Wissota (from Konkel, 2007).