

Wild Rice (Manoomin) Abundance and Harvest in Northern Wisconsin in 2000

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Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission

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MANOOMIN (WILD RICE) ABUNDANCE AND HARVEST IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN IN 2000

INTRODUCTION

As part of its wild rice management program, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) conducts annual surveys of wild rice abundance on northern Wisconsin waters. These surveys provide a long term data base on wild rice abundance and annual variability in the ceded territory.

GLIFWC also conducts an annual survey to estimate the amount of wild rice harvested off-reservation in the Wisconsin ceded territory. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) cooperates with this survey by providing the names and addresses of state wild rice harvest license purchasers, so that both state and tribal harvest can be estimated. The 2000 survey was similar in design to a survey first conducted in 1987, and repeated each year since 1989.

METHODS

Abundance Estimation

A select group of thirty lakes and 10 river or flowage sites have been ground surveyed most years since 1985; abundance information from these waters is used to derive a yearly index of rice abundance in the ceded territory. The index is derived by multiplying the number of acres of rice on each water surveyed by a factor ranging from 1 to 5 which relates to rice density (1=sparse, 5=dense) and then summing the values derived for each of the 40 waters. In addition to abundance information, ground surveys include information on habitat suitability (e.g. abundance of competing vegetation, presence of beaver, obvious development impacts). Ground surveys were conducted from mid-July through mid-August.

Aerial surveys of some of these waters, and additional waters not ground surveyed, were conducted on August 4nd and 10th. Aerial survey information is limited to an estimate of the size and approximate density of the rice beds. These surveys provide abundance information from waters not ground surveyed, help verify ground estimates of manoomin acreage, occasionally fill in survey gaps when ground crews are unable to access lakes, and help the Commission direct ricers to the more productive stands.

One lake, Rice Lake in Polk County, with an average abundance index of 188 (1985-1999) was not surveyed in 2000. Thus, when comparisons are made between 1999 and 2000, data for this lake was suppressed for 1999 as well. For comparisons between 2000 and long term averages, an index was estimated for this lake by applying the ratio between the long term overall index and the 2000 overall index (2408/5674) to the long term index for Rice Lake (188). This produced an estimated index of 80 for this water in 2000.

Harvest Estimation

Slightly different techniques were used to estimate harvest by tribal and state ricers. Tribal members who wished to harvest rice off-reservation were required to obtain an off-reservation harvesting permit validated for ricing. This permit was obtained by 897 individuals in 2000. When individuals obtained their 2000 permit, they were asked if they harvested rice the previous year. Twenty-four percent (34/144) of the individuals who indicated they had riced in 1999 ("active" ricers) were surveyed by phone as well as eight percent (58/753) of the remaining permit holders ("inactive" ricers) (Table 1).

The number of tribal members actually harvesting off-reservation in 2000 was estimated by extrapolating the percent of active respondents in the active and inactive groups (Table 1). Since the "active" group reported harvesting appreciably more rice per license than the "inactive" group, separate harvest estimates were made for each group.

Table 1. Summary of 2000 tribal off-reservation manoomin harvest survey sampling.						
GROUP	TOTAL NUMBER	# SURVEYED	PERCENT SAMPLED	PERCENT ACTIVE OFF-RESERVATION	EST.# ACTIVE OFF-RESERVATION	
"ACTIVE"	144	34	24	44.1%	64	
"INACTIVE"	753	58	8	6.9%	52	
TOTAL	897	92	-	-	116	

¹ Based on activity the previous year; see discussion in text.

One tribal family, with 4 ricing licenses, that is known to be unique in its level of harvesting activity from previous years surveys, reported a harvest that far exceeded that of other tribal ricers. Because of this, the average harvest reported by all other active ricers was extrapolated to the other 60 estimated ricers in the active group, and this family's harvest was added to that estimate to estimate the total harvest for the active group.

State ricers were required to obtain an annual ricing permit. A mail questionnaire was mailed to each of the 396 individuals who obtained a state ricing license. The number of active ricers and total harvest was estimated by expanding the results reported by the 219 (55%) respondents to the state survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Abundance Estimation

Ground survey results and abundance information for the 40 waters surveyed annually are reported in Figures 1 and 2, and Table 2. In addition, abundance estimates for 49 additional waters surveyed only from the air are listed in Table 3. A total of 1,664 acres of wild rice were estimated for these 89 surveyed waters. Andryk (1986) estimated that the Wisconsin ceded

territories supported approximately 5,000 acres of rice in 1985, a year with an abundance index considerably higher than in 2000.

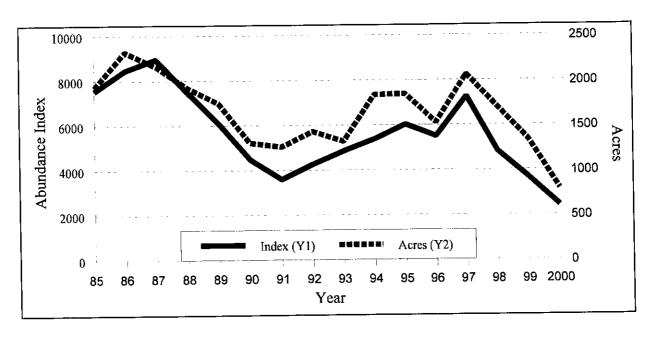


Figure 1. Manoomin acreage and abundance index from 40 Wisconsin rice waters surveyed annually from 1985-2000.

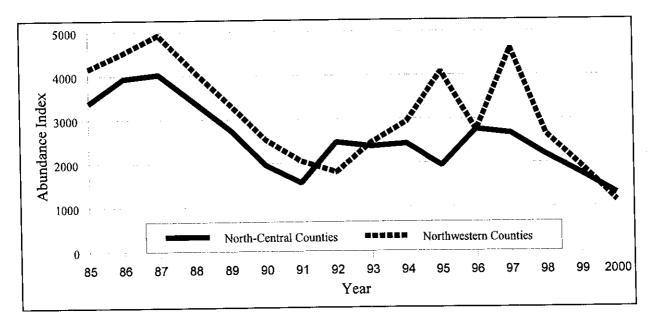


Figure 2. Manoomin abundance index from 40 Wisconsin rice waters surveyed annually from 1985-99; northwestern versus north-central Wisconsin waters (Highway 13 used to separate northwestern from north-central waters).

Table 2	Table 2 Manoomin acre	eage dens	sity and	abundar	nce index f	rom 40 V	Viscons	in waters t	or 199	7-2000, a	and the 19	85-2000	means.				
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COUNTY	WATER	2000 EST. ACRES	2000 EST. DENSITY	1999 EST. ACRES	1999 EST. DENSITY
Barron	Bear Lake	12	medium	9	sparse-medium
Bayfield	Chippewa Lake	20	sparse-dense	not surveyed	not surveyed
Burnett	Carter's Bridge - Loon Lake	70	dense	70	dense
2	- Gull Lake	35	medium	45	medium-dense
	Clam River Flowage	42	dense	38	dense
	North Fork Flowage	45	dense	35	dense
	North Lang Lake	3	medium-dense	3	medium-dense
	Phantom Flowage	50	medium-dense	30	sparse-dense
	Rice Lake ¹	7	medium	5	sparse-medium
	Rice Lake ²	7	medium-dense	5	medium
	Rice Lake ³	2	sparse	1	sparse
	Spencer Lake	2	sparse	6	dense
	Yellow Lake	12	sparse-medium	15	sparse-medium
Douglas	Lower Ox Lake	7	medium	7	medium-dense
Douglas	Minong Flowage (Smiths Bridge)	6	medium	40	medium-dense
	Radigan Flowage	16	medium	8	medium-dense
	St.Croix River/Cutaway Dam	4	medium-dense	5	medium
	Upper Ox Lake	7	dense	6	dense
Forest	Hiles Millpond	3	sparse-medium	4	sparse-medium
rotest	Little Rice Lake	20	medium	40	sparse-dense
Iron	Gile Flowage	3	medium-dense	not surveyed	not surveyed
11011	Little Turtle Flowage	8	dense	8	dense
Oneida	Big Lake	11	dense	10	medium-dense
	Cuenin Lake	12	medium	25	medium-dense
	Scott Creek Impoundment	6	medium-dense	5	medium
	The Thoroughfare	90	medium-dense	80	medium-dense
	Wolf River ⁴	14	dense	12	dense
Polk	Joel Flowage	16	medium	13	medium-dense
TOIR	Little Butternut	6	medium	8	medium-dense
	Rice Lake ⁵	2	sparse	0	-
Sawver	West Branch Chippewa River	18	medium-dense	14	medium
Vilas	Aurora Lake	62	medium-dense	62	medium-dense
, 1100	Devine Lake	4	medium-dense	6	sparse-dense
	Frost Lake	13	medium	15	medium-dense
	Irving Lake	40	medium-dense	40	sparse-mediur
	Island Lake	40	medium-dense	22	sparse-mediur
	Lower Ninemile Lake	8	medium-dense	8	medium-dens
	Mickeys Mud Lake	0	-	3	medium
	Mud Creek ⁶	22	medium-dense	16	medium-dens
	Nixon Lake / Creck	4	dense	4	medium-dens
	Rest Lake	4	medium-dense	4	dense
	Rice Creek 7	10	dense	8	dense
	Rice Creek ⁸	12	medium	12	medium
	Round Lake	4	medium-dense	6	dense
	Upper Ninemile Lake	60	medium-dense	45	sparse-dense
Washburn	Long, Mud, & Little Mud Lakes	30	medium-dense	30	medium-dens
	Trego Flowage	7	medium-dense	14	medium-dens

NE of Trade Lake, (T37N, R18W, S10); ² NE of Hertel, (T39N, R14W, S15); ³ W of Frederic, (T37N, R18W, S36); ⁴ NW of Lennox; ³NW of Frederic; ⁶E of HWY 17; ⁷N of Big Lake; ⁸N of Island Lake

Survey results and field observations indicate that 2000 was an exceptionally poor year for wild rice across the state. The 2000 abundance index decreased 34% from 1999, a poor year itself, to the lowest level observed since surveys were initiated (Table 2). The 2000 index was 44% of the long-term index average (1985-2000). Marked declines were noted in the indices for both northwestern and north-central waters (Figure 2). For northwestern waters, most of the decline was attributable to the near total failure at Clam Lake, which normally supports some of the larger rice beds in the state. The decline among the north-central waters was more evenly distributed, with 13 of 18 waters showing stable or decreasing indices. Overall, 20 of the 39 waters surveyed showed a decline from 1999, 10 showed an increase and 9 were essentially unchanged.

It remains difficult to determine why rice changes in abundance on either the regional or local scale because the environmental factors that influence abundance are not well understood. Wild rice is affected by a variety of factors, and the relative impact of each varies by year. Some of these factors, such as spring temperatures and water levels, can affect rice regionally, and may account for instances where beds in the north-central counties display one trend in abundance while those in the northwestern region may show another. At the other extreme, a localized impact can cause a stand to fail while those around it flourish. Furthermore, those factors that might explain some of the variation in rice abundance are not being monitored systematically. Thus, explanations about changes in rice abundance remain largely a matter of conjecture.

Annual variability in rice abundance may be inversely related to the amount of water flow through the system. Relatively open systems such as rivers and flowages appear to vary less in rice abundance than relatively closed lake systems. Although open systems may still experience boom and bust years, the level of abundance tends to be closer to the average level most years. This may be because some environmental variables, such as nutrient availability or spring water temperatures, are more consistent in these systems from year to year.

Harvest Estimation

Responses were obtained from 92 tribal permit holders and 219 state licensees. Survey respondents were asked to report all harvest which occurred under their permit. For state licensees, this included on-and off-reservation harvest; for tribal members it included only off-reservation harvest, since no permit is required to harvest on-reservation. Nineteen of the tribal and 190 of the state licensees surveyed reported harvesting rice in 2000. The total number estimated active in each group was 116 tribal members and 344 state licensees (Table 4).

Tribal harvesters active off-reservation reported making from 1 to 20 ricing trips, averaging 2.3 trips. Tribal survey respondents made a total of 109 off-reservation harvesting trips, gathering 7,173 pounds of green rice (Appendix 1), with an extrapolated total harvest estimate of 14,925 pounds in 268 trips, an average of 56 pounds per trip (Table 4). The total off-reservation harvest per active license averaged 129 pounds.

Table 4. A comparison of tribal (off-reservation) and state manoomin harvest in 2000.							
	NUMBER OF PERMIT HOLDERS	ESTIMATED NUMBER ACTIVE	AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRIPS	AVERAGE HARVEST/ TRIP	AVE. HARVEST/ ACTIVE LICENSE	TOTAL ESTIMATED HARVEST / TRIPS	
TRIBAL	897	116	2.3	56	129	14,925 / 268	
STATE	396	344	2.6	31	81	27,698 / 881	
TOTAL	1,293	460	2.5	37	93	42,623 / 1,149	

In comparison, active state licensees reported making from 1 to 23 ricing trips, averaging 2.6 trips. Collectively, state survey respondents made 487 trips and harvested a total of 15,303 pounds of green rice (Appendix 1), an average of 31 pounds per trip. The total harvest per active state license averaged 81 pounds (Table 4).

The amount of rice harvested per individual varied greatly (Table 5). A single state ricer reported harvesting 2,700 pounds, while the unique tribal family mentioned above reported harvesting 5,675 pounds under 4 permits.

Eighty-seven percent of the state-licensed respondents gathered rice in 2000, versus 14% for the tribes. Differences in permit systems between the two groups accounts for the different activity levels observed. The tribal ricing permit is a simple check-off category on a general natural resources harvesting permit available at no cost to tribal members. The category is frequently checked by individuals whose primary interest is one of the other harvest activities listed on the permit. The state permit is a unique license available for a fee, and thus is rarely obtained by individuals without a strong intention of ricing. The tribal activity rate is also lowered because members are asked to respond only if they harvested rice off-reservation. When on-reservation rice beds have good stands, many tribal ricers concentrate their efforts there.

The data collected in this survey can be used to estimate off-reservation harvest by tribal permit holders, and both total and off-reservation harvest by state licensees. It cannot be used to estimate on-reservation harvest by tribal members, who are not required to have a permit to harvest on-reservation.

Using the approach to estimate harvest described above in the Methods section, total off-reservation harvest for tribal permit holders was estimated at 14,925 pounds of green rice (Table 4). The total harvest for state permitees was estimated at 27,698 pounds, with all but 290 pounds of it coming from off-reservation waters. Thus, the total off-reservation harvest was estimated at 42,333 pounds, with tribal ricers accounting for 35% of the harvest.

This harvest estimate is nearly identical to the 1999 off-reservation harvest estimate of 42,752 pounds (David, 2001), with both the state and tribal harvest estimates being very similar between years. Manoomin harvest tends to vary with abundance as well as other factors (Figure 3).

Table 5. Distribution of harvest among active respondents to the 2000 harvest survey.					
TRIBAL			_		
POUNDS OF GREEN RICE	INDIVI	PERCENT OF			
HARVESTED	NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL HARVEST		
0 - 50	5	26.3	2.4		
51 - 100	4	21.1	4.7		
101 - 150	4	21.1	6.6		
151 - 200					
201 - 300	2	10.5	7.2		
301 - 500					
501 - 1000					
1001 +	44	21.1	79.1		
STATE					
POUNDS OF GREEN RICE	INDIVI	PERCENT OF			
HARVESTED	NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL HARVEST		
0 - 50	119	62.6	16.9		
51 - 100	40	21.1	20.5		
101 - 150	13	6.8	10.4		
151 - 200	9	4.7	10.9		
201 - 300	3	1.6	4.2		
301 - 500	1	0.5	2.1		
501 - 1000	4	2.1	17.4		
1001 +	1	0.5	17.6		

The distribution of ricing effort and harvest has tended to reflect the distribution of rice waters in the state, and the abundance of rice on those waters (Figure 4). Sixty-seven waters were reported riced in 2000, down from the over eighty waters reportedly riced in 1999, perhaps reflecting the poor crop. Nearly all (99%) of the harvest reported by surveyed state licensees came from waters within the ceded territory (Appendix 1). Approximately 32% of the harvest reported by specific location (i.e. harvest from "unnamed" waters excluded) by respondents to the 2000 harvest survey came from sites planted by the WDNR, the U.S. Forest Service, GLIFWC, or other seeding cooperators.

Opinions of Respondents

Annual abundance: Individuals were asked if they felt the 2000 wild rice crop was better, the same, or worse than the 1999 crop. Among the 144 active respondents with an opinion, 64% felt 2000 was worse than 1999, 21% felt both years were about the same, and just 15% were of the opinion that 2000 was better than 1999. Several individuals commented that it was not just worse, but "far worse" or "terrible", and some who felt both years were about the same noted that both were very poor. It appeared that those who felt 2000 was the better year tended to rice only one or two waters that had good stands that year.

These opinions were fairly similar to the results from the abundance surveys of 40 rice waters discussed above, which found declines in abundance on 51% of the waters, little change in abundance on 23% of the waters, and increases on 26%.

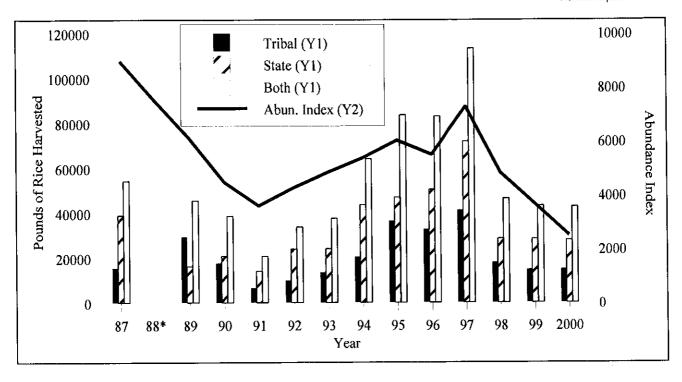


Figure 3. Harvest trends versus abundance index, 1987-2000 (* no harvest estimates for 1988).

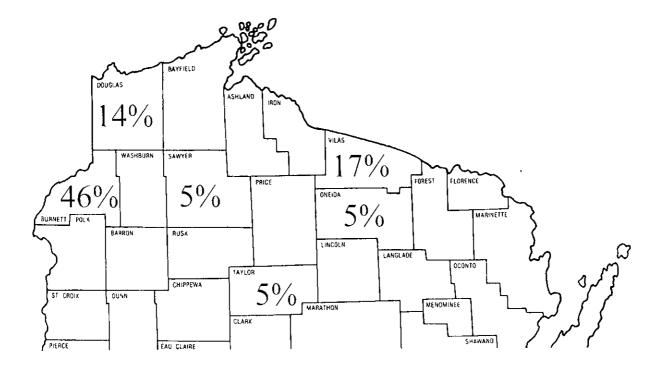


Figure 4. Distribution of counties accounting for 5% or more of the manoomin harvest reported by respondents to the 2000 harvest survey, tribal and state harvesters combined.

<u>Comments</u>: Respondents offered a variety of comments and opinions, although relatively few consistent themes surfaced.

Nine individuals indicated that early rain and hail storms damaged the beds or limited their harvest, and another commented on the overall very poor crop. Two felt the crop was very wormy, and one indicated that plants were shorter than average this year. One noted that the crop was the poorest he had witnessed in over 20 years of ricing.

Several waters were specifically mentioned as needing "help", including Bear Lake (Barron); Long Lake (Burnett); Mud Lake (Oakland Twn, Burnett), where a culvert setting was thought to be a problem, and Blockhouse Lake (Price) where the respondent wondered if the aerator which had been installed on that lake may have been detrimental to the rice. Four individuals commented on how well the seeding effort at Crex Meadows Wildlife Area was proceeding, and two individuals indicated seeding rice, one at the Gresham Chain in Vilas County (13 pounds, source not stated), and one on the "Rust Flowage near Drummond," Bayfield County (using "a little rice from Dilly").

Comments related to regulations included three people who felt lake posting needed to be improved, and three who felt lake opening information needed to be more easily available. Two felt that Aurora Lake (Vilas) opened too early. One suggested adding a space on the lake posting sign to indicate the year, a change that was made for the 2001 season.

Finally, one individual shared the following: "We "donated" the harvested rice to the bottom of the lake, having flipped the canoe. Man, Allequash has one mucky bottom. Let us know if the canoe paddle ever does float to the surface!"

<u>Potential Waters for Seeding</u>: Respondents suggested 22 different waters which might be candidates for seeding. Sites named are listed in Appendix 2.

LITERATURE CITED

- Andryk, T. 1986. Wild rice wetland inventory of northwest Wisconsin. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Administrative Report 86-4. 51 pp.
- David, P.F. 2001. Wild rice abundance and harvest in the Wisconsin Ceded Territories in 1999. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Administrative Report 01-02. 16 pp.

Appendix 1. R	cicing trips and pounds of green mano						
		TRIBA	0.000	STA		COMBINE	
COUNTY	WATER	TRIPS F	OUNDS		POUNDS		POUNDS
ASHLAND	KAKAGON SLOUGHS Subtotal			4 4	160 160	4 4	160 160
BARRON	BEAR LAKE Subtotal			19 19	246 246	19 19	246 246
BAYFIELD	CHIPPEWA LAKE			5	119	5	119
	TOTOGATIC LAKE			4	85	4	85
	Subtotal			9	204	9	204
BURNETT	BLACK BROOK FLOWAGE BRIGGS LAKE	4	230	3 10	51 600	3 14	51 830
	CARTERS BRIDGE	4	50	6	210	7	260
	CLAM FLOWAGE		30	29	959	29	959
	CLAM RIVER			4	70	4	70
	GASLYN LAKE		4 4 1	3	0	3	0
	HAY CREEK FLOWAGE		- '	1	3	1	3
	MUD HEN LAKE		-, 11 - 11	3	55	3	55
	NORTH FORK FLOWAGE			7	314	7	314
	NORTH LANG LAKE	1000	20.000	1	10	1	10
	PHANTOM FLOWAGE	3	120	83	3,805	86	3,925
	UNNAMED WATER	54	3,800	2	27	56	3,827
	YELLOW LAKE YELLOW RIVER	I U = -		1	49 44	1 2	49 44
	Subtotal	62	4,200	155	6,197	217	10,397
DOUGLAS	BEAR LAKE			1	5	1	5
	MINONG FLOWAGE	1	45	15	180	16	225
	MULLIGAN LAKE	1	35	5	125	6	160
8	RADIGAN FLOWAGE	1	80	10	395	11	475
	ST. CROIX FLOWAGE	1	85	2	45 112	2 4	
	ST. CROIX RIVER UPPER OX LAKE	!	65	2	85	2	
-	UNNAMED WATER	26	1,875	1	15	27	
	Subtotal	30	2,120	39	962	69	
DUNN	UNNAMED WATER Subtotal			2 2	42 42	2 2	
FOREST	LITTLE RICE FLOWAGE			1	12	1	12
	RAT RIVER			1	2	1	2
	WABICON LAKE			1	6	1	
	Subtotal			3	20	3	20
IRON	LITTLE TURTLE FLOW. Subtotal	3 3	120 120	5 5	5997020	8	
LANGLADE	MINIWAUKAN LAKE Subtotal			1 1	98 98	1	
LINCOLN	WISCONSIN RIVER Subtotal			4 4		4	
MARQUETTE	E NESHKORO MILLPOND Subtotal			7 7			
(Appendix 1 c	continued on the next page.)						

Appendix 1. R	licing trips and pounds of green mano							
COUNTY	WATER	TF TRIPS	RIBAI	L DUNDS	STA	TE POUNDS	COMBINE	D TOTAL POUNDS
0001111	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	11111 0		301100	11(11.0	1 001100	11(11 0	TOONDO
ONEIDA	BIG LAKE		^	400	3		3	
	BIG LAKE THOROUGHFARE Subtotal		2 2	130 130	15 18		17 20	1,080 1,180
			_			1,000		1,100
POLK	JOEL FLOWAGE				10		10	
	LT. BUTTERNUT LAKE UNNAMED WATER				7		7	52
	Subtotal				20	-	3 20	0 371
PRICE	BLOCKHOUSE LAKE				1		1	0
	LOWER STEVE CK. FLOW. SPRING CREEK				1 4		1 4	25 11
	WILSON FLOWAGE				4		4	120
	Subtotal				10		10	156
RUSK	FIRESIDE LAKE		1	5			1	5
1.001.	Subtotal		1	5	0	0	1	5
CAMAZED	CHIPDEWA BIVED				,	00	,	20
SAWYER	CHIPPEWA RIVER NAMEKAGON RIVER				1 3		1 3	20) 25
	NELSON LAKE				1		1	35
	PACWAWONG LAKE		5	298	29		34	
	PHIPPS FLOWAGE UNNAMED WATER		4	200	8		12	
	Subtotal		9	498	44		2 53	
							ļ <i>.</i>	·
TAYLOR	CHEQUAMEGON WATERS FLOW. MONDEAUX FLOWAGE				9		9	
	Subtotal				16 25		16 25	
		:						
VILAS	ALLEQUASH LAKE AURORA LAKE		1 1	30 70	1		13 27	
	EAGLE LAKE		'	70	1		1	
	IRVING LAKE				17		1	
	ISLAND LAKE				3		3	
	MANITOWISH RIVER MANN FLOWAGE				10			
	NIXON CREEK/LAKE				2		1	
	PLUM LAKE				1			
	RICE CREEK				6			
ŀ	RICE LAKE UPPER NINEMILE FLOWAGE				23		1	
	Subtotal		2	100				
WASHBURN	DILLATE] .	1 45		4-
WASFIBURIN	DILLY LAKE LONG LAKE				4		1	
	MUD LAKE							
	POTATO CREEK				2			
	ROCKY RIDGE LAKE YELLOW RIVER				3		l .	
	Subtotal				14		1	_
MALICULARA	CANAMILE DOND				_			
WAUSHARA	SAXVILLE POND Subtotal				3	5 5 5	1	
						-		
GRAND TOTA	AL	1	09	7,173	487	7 15,303	596	22,476

Appendix 2. Waters suggested for seeding by respondents to the 2000 wild rice harvest survey.					
COUNTY	WATER				
Ashland	Prentice Park				
Barron	Hemlock Lake at Bolger Flowage inlet Lake Montanis (suggested twice)				
Bayfield	Namekagon River, above dam on Namekagon Lake Rust Flowage, near Drummond Siskiwit Lake				
Burnett	Amsterdam Sloughs Yellow River				
Douglas	Allouez Bay Muskrat Lake Pokegema Bay St. Croix Flowage				
Marathon	McMillian Marsh				
Polk	Long Trade Lake Lotus Lake (suggested twice)				
Price	Sailor Lake				
Richland	Lower Wisconsin River				
Sawyer	Mosquito Brook Creek/Flowage Smith Lake				
Washburn	Davis Flowage Little Long Lake Yellow River Flowage near Spooner				