

MN-FISH Leech Lake Muskies Movement and Survival Telemetry Study

This groundbreaking research, launched May 2025 on Leech Lake, will span three years and focus on understanding muskie survival through advanced telemetry.

This project represents a collaborative effort between MN-FISH, Bemidji State University (BSU), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). BSU will lead the day-to-day on-water monitoring and tracking, supported by a dedicated graduate assistant and his team.

The DNR will oversee the project, ensuring its success and gaining critical data to inform their fisheries management strategies.

Why Leech Lake? Leech Lake was chosen by the DNR as it is the mother of all stocked muskie fisheries in the state. In the first week in May it is where the eggs and brood stock originate for all of Minnesota's Mississippi-strain muskie stocking efforts.

The DNR needs data to show the effects from this new level of angling pressure, both in terms of mortality and in understanding how muskies use deep water habitat, where they are most vulnerable to Forward Facing Sonar. Also, through this study, we aim to uncover valuable insights into the behavior, growth, and survival rates of muskies in their natural habitat. By employing state-of-the-art telemetry devices, we will closely observe muskie movements and interactions. This will not only enhance survival efforts but also provide the DNR with essential information to refine their understanding and implementation of regulations, enhance stewardship, better develop habitat management, and stocking programs for muskies.

The information gleaned from this research will provide necessary data not only for Leech Lake, but all of Minnesota and beyond. Without this research, DNR will be unable to make informed decisions, or take any action, to manage both the resource and users. The MN-FISH Leech Lake Muskies Movement and Survival Study is a classic example of collaboration with vested stakeholders. It showcases the productivity of partnerships, in this case Minnesota DNR, Bemidji State University, MN-FISH and anglers. Not to mention, MN-FISH is taking a leadership role in the hottest topic in angling today.

This is poised to be the most significant muskie survival study ever conducted in the United States, and we are excited for the vital contributions it will make to preserving muskies while supporting the DNR's mission to sustainably manage Minnesota's natural resources. We ask you to support this critical muskie study.