#2 38-02-13

TITLE: Darkhouse Spearing on Wisconsin / Minnesota Boundary Waters

THE ISSUE:

Spearing northern pike through the ice is permitted in Michigan, Minnesota, six other states, and the Lake Superior basin of Wisconsin (but nowhere else in Wisconsin).

Allowing the spearing of northern pike through the ice on select waters in Wisconsin is consistent with the WDNR's mission statement, and would provide an additional recreational opportunity.

Spearing northern pike is traditional in the Mid-West, and is more resource friendly than typical hook and line techniques. A hooking mortality study revealed that a large percentage of fish that are hooked and brought through the hole in the ice die as a result. A darkhouse spearer is selective and decides if they are going to harvest a fish, or just let the fish swim by, thereby eliminating unintended mortality.

Regulations could be crafted to restrict the season dates and reduce the daily bag limit for spearing. Other restrictions similar to the regulations for the spearing of lake sturgeon on the Winnebago system could also be considered. An individual engaged in dark house spearing for northern pike could also be required to purchase an additional permit, and report their harvest.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Conservation Congress at it annual meeting held in Marinette County on April 08, 2013 recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the WDNR to introduce a rule change regarding the sustainable and responsible harvest of northern pike through the ice by the method of spearing in a dark house on the WI/MN portion of the Mississippi River.

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