(22 114) 22 — 1 — Resolution 1, 2014
Grant

22-01-14

Title: The Harvest of Bait Minnows on VHS Affected Waters

The Problem: Current WI DNR regulations prohibit the harvesting of bait minnows in VHS affected waters for personal use.

There was a time when a fisherman could bring a seine net along on a fishing trip and secure bait minnows for personal use. Unused bait minnows were returned to the same waters upon completion of the day's fishing activities. Securing, using, and returning unused, live bait minnows to the same waters on the same day as they were netted has absolutely no effect on the spread of VHS.

This law has no effect whatsoever on the spread of VHS. If the WI DNR fears fishermen will take these bait minnows to "other waters", they should ramp up their law enforcement efforts and stiffen penalties to the point where doing so would cause the offenders to think twice before doing so. In addition, wildlife biologists have discovered VHS doesn't survive in warm water temperatures. Banning the use of seine nets for personal minnow gathering during the warm summer months in warm waters makes no sense whatsoever.

The rules should return to the following:

Bait minnows may be harvested, where allowed, by the following methods only:
• Hook and line.
• With seines no more than 35 feet long with a mesh no larger than one-half inch stretch measure in inland waters. Fifty-foot lengths of seine may be used in Minnesota and Iowa boundary waters.
• With dip nets no more than eight feet in diameter or square.
• With traps no more than 24 inches long and 16 inches in diameter or square with a throat measuring one-and-a-half inches or less. All traps must bear their owner's name and address and be emptied at least once every 48 hours. Minnows traps on trout streams must be checked at least once every 24 hours.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Grant County on April 14, 2014 recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the Department to take action to correct this situation by introducing rule change allowing for the daily harvest & return of bait minnows on VHS affected waters for personal use.

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