



Golden Rules

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- navigate the regulation handbook
- identify species of fish using a key

METHOD: Students will answer questions in their booklet. Students will work in small groups to determine whether or not they may keep their paper “catches.”

MATERIALS:

- 1) Slips of paper with dates, waterbodies, and fish images
- 2) Current copies of the Wisconsin DNR Fishing Regulations
- 3) Three boxes or bowls

● See Appendix M for A Key to Common Wisconsin Fish, Fish Identification Cheat Sheet, Fish Images, and Game Fish, Rough Fish, Minnows. (Laminate the key for outdoor activities.)

PREPARATION: For a class of 20, copy at least 35 images of fish and write different lengths on each one. Use images from Appendix M or from DNR publication FH-500, *Wisconsin Fishing*, or use the fish Wildcards with the information covered. Place the fish in one box or bowl. Write random dates on 14 slips of paper and place them in another bowl. Write 14 different Wisconsin waterbodies and their counties on slips of paper and put them in the final bowl.

SETTING: Indoors or outdoors

DURATION: One or two 45-minute periods

VOCABULARY: Total daily bag limits, coloration, creel clerk, possession limit

STANDARDS:

Physical Education: F 8.2, 8.4, 12.1.

Environmental Education: B.12.13, D 8.5, 12.4, 12.6, 12.7, 12.9.

BACKGROUND: Being able to navigate the regulations handbook is a fishing skill that is just as important as knowing how to cast a line or tie a knot. As part of this lesson, students will be asked to identify the fish they “catch.” If fish identification is not a skill the students

currently have, you may want to refer to the **Which Fish is This?** lesson in the *Hook, Line, & Thinker: Science Guide* for instruction ideas.

OPENING: Have students read **Golden Rules** through the **Species Specific** section. Ask them to work with a partner to answer the **General Regulations** questions or discuss the questions as a class. Students should understand that the restrictions are not arbitrary, rather they are made to protect the health and safety of fish and anglers.

MAIN ACTIVITY: Place students in groups of about three. Have each group draw two slips of paper from the waterbodies bowl, two slips from the dates bowl and six fish from the fish bowl. Each group will also need a regulations handbook and a Fish Identification Cheat Sheet or key.

Students will record their first body of water and their first date on their **Catch and Keep** log in their booklets. The first three fish they caught will be from this date and location. Students will identify the fish, using the cheat sheet in Appendix M if necessary, and decide whether or not it is legal to keep the fish by using the regulations handbook. Students should record whether or not they kept the fish and, if not keeping the fish, give a reason why with a supporting page number from the regulations. The second date and location will be used for fish numbers four, five, and six.

CLOSING: Have students do the **Bag Limit Scavenger Hunt** on their own, or assign it as a take home exercise.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION: What are two reasons for Wisconsin to have fishing licenses?

ANSWERS: License sales help fund fisheries management work including habitat restoration and stocking. They also provide for tracking the number of anglers and offer a broad general measure of fishing pressure.

Which game fish are not covered by the general fishing license alone? *Trout and salmon have special stamps.*

EXTENSIONS:

Regulations Quiz Bowl. Divide the group into two or three teams. Place a bell on a table in the front of the room and have one person from each team come up to the table. Ask the

contestants questions from the regulations; the first person to ring the bell gets to answer. Correct answers earn two points, incorrect answers lose one. Devise enough questions from the regulations for several rounds so everyone gets a chance to play. Be sure to

include questions pertinent to the area students are likely to fish.

In Depth: Have students complete the [Cheap Date](#) activity to discover how fishing can be inexpensive, compared with other recreational activities.

● *If you have downloaded this booklet, please see the appendix that follows for additional materials.*



3 Golden Rules

Actually, we might call them “Golden Regulations.” In the 2007–2008 fishing season, over one million people spent 21 million days casting their lines into Wisconsin waters. That’s a lot of time and a lot of anglers. Imagine if all these anglers were able to keep as many fish as they wanted, regardless of species. Overfishing, especially on smaller lakes and with popular fish, could eliminate certain fish populations. Historically, many species of fish suffered because of overharvest. To sustain our diverse fishery and aquatic ecosystems, anglers observe regulations. An important one you’ll learn about in these pages is the requirement for anglers to have a fishing license.



Largemouth bass

General Regulations

To help keep fisheries healthy, the DNR has an overlying set of regulations that all Wisconsin anglers must follow. DNR conservation wardens enforce these regulations. It is the responsibility of every angler to know them before going fishing. Each of the restrictions has a sensible explanation and reason behind it. See if you can figure out why the DNR has the following five regulations:

- 1) It is illegal to fish in any waters of the state without a Wisconsin fishing license.
- 2) It is illegal to possess a fish that is within a protected size range (“slot” limit) or below the minimum length limit for the waterbody being fished.
- 3) It is illegal to release unused bait into Wisconsin lakes, ponds, rivers, or streams.
- 4) It is illegal to fish for a species during a closed season for that species even if you release the fish you catch.
- 5) It is illegal to leave any fish line unattended. When fishing in open water, anglers must remain within 100 yards of their lines.

Species Specifics

Beyond the general rules that all anglers must follow, specific rules apply to each species of game fish and body of water in Wisconsin. These rules can change from year to year based on fish populations and the health of different bodies of water. It is important to always have a copy of the current DNR fishing regulations with you so that you can refer back to them when you catch a fish. Many fish are regulated by **total daily bag limits** (the number you can keep in a day from all Wisconsin waters). For this reason, you need to be able to identify each species of fish you catch. Knowing that you can only keep one northern pike on your local lake isn’t helpful if you don’t know when you’ve caught a northern pike!

There are three important things to consider when identifying your fish:

- The overall size and shape of the fish:
Is it round like a bluegill? Long like a musky?
- The size, shape, and position of the fins:
Is the dorsal fin ray-shaped, like on a pumpkinseed? Is it pointed like a whitefish?
- The pattern of markings: Is it spotted like a brown trout? Striped like a perch?

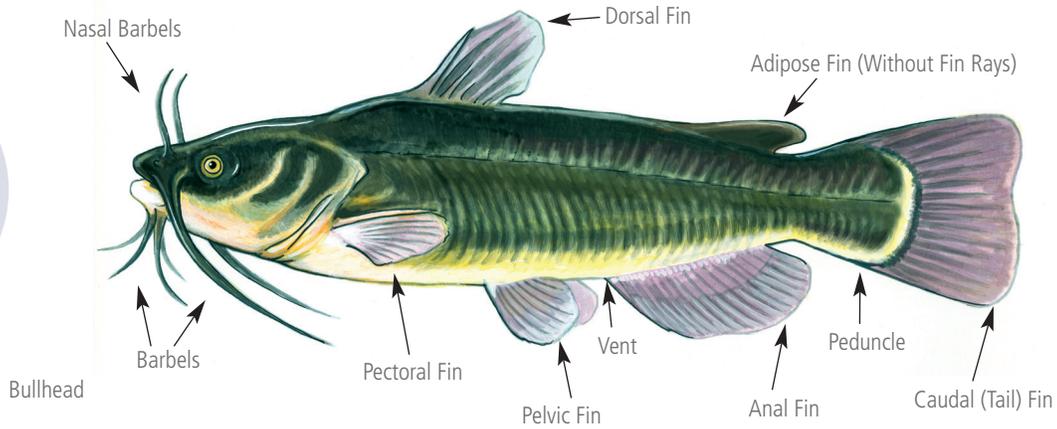
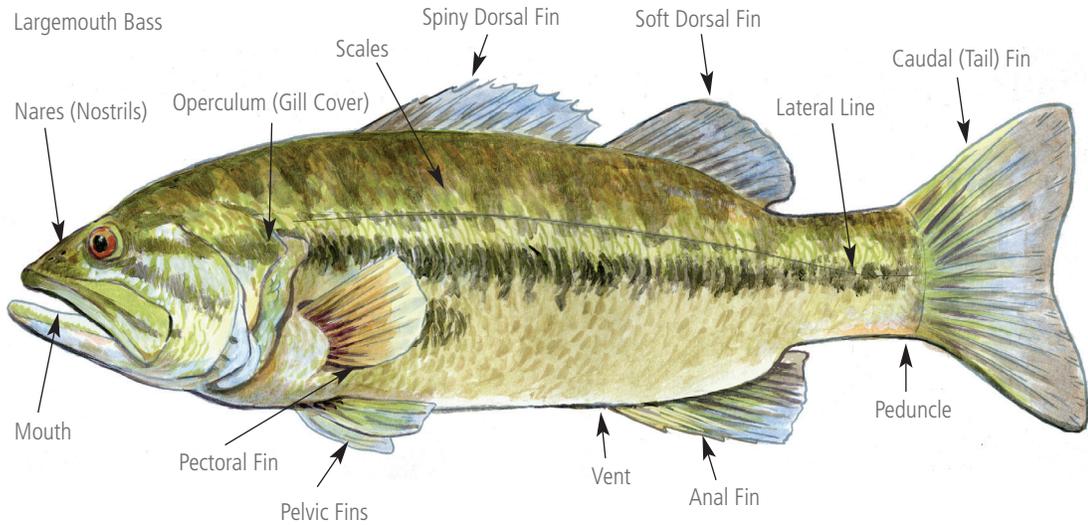
Practice identifying the fish you are most likely to catch on your fishing trip and quiz yourself regularly.

INSTRUCTORS:

Underlined content is not provided in student manual.

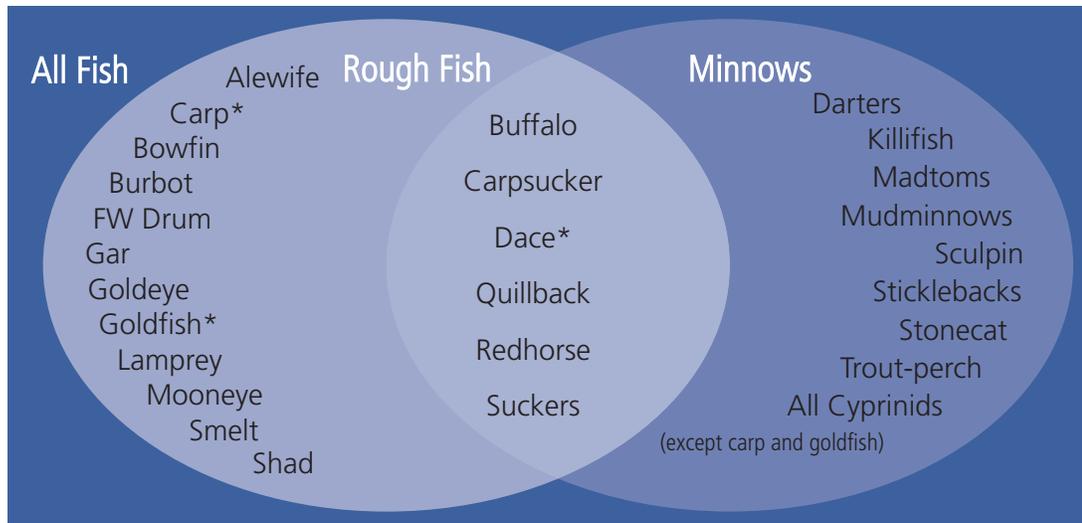
3

- 1) The fishing license is vital to funding fisheries projects such as habitat restoration or improvement, stocking, education, hatchery operations, fish population estimates, and access development.
- 2) By setting slot limits, the DNR tries to keep a healthy breeding population of fish in a waterbody. Fish below legal limits are often immature and have not yet bred.
- 3) To prevent the introduction of new species or diseases, unused bait should not be released. The bait may be of a species not currently present in the water being fished, or it may harbor a disease that has not yet been introduced to the waterbody. By taking your bait with you, you protect the integrity of the waterbody. This is especially important with the threat of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS).
- 4) Even catch and release can kill a fish, especially if not done properly. This rule protects fish from being overharvested.
- 5) Unattended fishing lines are a hazard to waders, swimmers, water skiers and other recreational water users, as well as wildlife.



PLEASE SEE APPENDIX M
 Golden Rules: A Key to Common Wisconsin Fish
 Fish Identification Cheat Sheet
 Fish Images
 Game Fish, Rough Fish, Minnows

Game Fish, Rough Fish, Minnows



By state law all fish are "game" fish if not "rough" fish or "minnows." Game fish may not be harvested unless an open season is specified in Administrative Code.

fish, but not as "minnows" in Wisconsin. Although dace are also members of the minnow family, legally, they are classified as both a minnow and a rough fish. All members of the sucker family are considered rough fish for legal purposes; they are in the same *order* as minnows. Other fish legally referred to as "minnows," are in several different taxonomic families.

* Taxonomically, carp and goldfish are in the minnow family. Legally, however, they are classified as "rough"



Catch and Keep?

Use this chart as the basis for a fishing journal. Record your paper “catch” and whether or not you could keep your fish:

	SPECIES	LENGTH	DATE	LOCATION	BAG LIMIT	LEGAL?	WILL KEEP?
1	<u>Bluegill</u>	<u>7"</u>	<u>2/14</u>	<u>Wilson Lake, Iron County</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

INSTRUCTORS:
Underlined
content is not
provided in
student manual.

Bag Limit Scavenger Hunt!

Use the regulation book or go online (dnr.wi.gov/fish/regulations/dailybag.htm) to find out:

1) What is the total daily bag limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass during summer months?

5 in total

2) What is the total daily bag limit on muskellunge?

1

3) What is the daily bag limit for panfish on Sawdust Lake in Bayfield County?

10 in total

4) What's the difference between “daily bag limit” and “possession limit”?

The daily bag limit is the maximum number that you can keep in one day. The possession limit is the maximum number of a species that you can control or transport at any time. It is twice the daily bag limit and includes fish you may have in your car, cabin, or home.

5) Why can't you keep a slender madtom?

It is an endangered species.

6) Suppose that you go to a lake that has a bag limit of three for walleye and you catch three walleye. Later that day you want to go to another lake that also has a three-fish bag limit on walleye. What do you do?

You must either have a shore lunch of your first catch or take it home before fishing on the second lake. It is illegal to transport live fish away from the water. You may not possess (e.g. have in your freezer, etc.) the first three walleye you caught when fishing the second lake. Also, you may only keep a total of two more walleye for the day, even if you eat some of your catch because walleye has a total daily bag limit of five.

7) If you have questions about the fishing regulations, who do you call in your area?

Varies by region. The last page of the regulations handbook has regional phone numbers so you can contact your local conservation warden.

What about Trout and Salmon?

Regulations for trout and salmon that inhabit the Great Lakes and their tributaries are listed separately in the back of the general hook and line fishing regulations booklet. More detailed regulations for inland trout are outlined in a

separate booklet. Specific size and bag limits for trout are color-coded to a stream map of Wisconsin and vary from one stream to the next. It's important to be able to read a map and figure out where you are when you go trout fishing! You also need a trout or salmon stamp if you intend to fish for those species, in addition to a fishing license.

License Loop



You don't need special training or certification to fish, but you do need a license to wet a line when you reach driving age. Anglers age 16 and 17 pay less for a license, while fishing is free for those age 15 and under. Your license fees come back to you in the form of more fish to catch through habitat restoration or improvement, stocking, and hatchery operations. License fees fund education programs and places to fish along waterways.

The funding also enables fisheries biologists to conduct fish population surveys, and creel clerks to interview anglers, record their success rates and estimate fishing pressure. These assessments help set bag limits. In 1977, Wisconsin introduced an inland trout stamp followed by a Great Lakes trout and salmon stamp in 1982. Stamp sales fund salmon production and projects to restore or improve trout and salmon habitat.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
2009 Licenses/Approvals **09**
 Expires March 31, 2010
Issued: 05/24/2009 10:06 Agent: 001635 Transf: 033302478 Terminal: 31062587

THERESA M STABO
 Gender: F
 Hunt Cert #:
 Trap Cert #:
 MADISON, WI 53705
 UNITED STATES
 D/L # WI
 Hair: Brown Eyes: Hazel
 Hgt: 5'04 Wgt:
 Cust #: DOB: / /

404 - Inland Waters Trout Stamp	\$10.00
111 - Resident Husband/Wife Fishing (spouse)	\$0.00

Theresa Stabo
 Signature





Notes