



Over the past three years, fisheries biologists with the Department of Natural Resources have asked for public input on all aspects of panfish management. They found that although anglers are not interested in sweeping changes to statewide panfish regulations, they are interested in addressing specific lakes with overharvest issues. With this in mind, the department proposed regulation options to increase panfish size on selected lakes where harvest appears to be a problem. The department has received input and is suggesting revisions to the initial proposal.

What we know

- 1) Restrictive regulations can improve the average size of bluegill and crappie if the fish have fast growth (as opposed to stunted and slow-growth).
- 2) For a regulation to be effective, it has to be restrictive enough to affect harvest.
- 3) Finding a regulation that strikes a balance between effectiveness and angler acceptance is challenging.

What we propose

The department has proposed applying three different harvest regulations on selected lakes and evaluating their performance over time.

The goal of this proposal is to increase the average size of bluegill and crappie on select lakes that are currently overharvested.

A total of 95 lakes from across the state were identified by the state's fisheries biologists as candidates for improvement (i.e., lakes where mean size of bluegill or crappie is less than desirable, most likely due to overharvest). See Figure 1 for map and Table 2 for complete list on back of page.

Original proposed regulations

During late summer of 2014 the department held 3 public meetings, an online survey, an online chat, and took public comment to see what anglers thought of the proposal with the following regulations:

- 1 A total of 25 panfish but no more than 10 of any one species (25/10).
- 2 A total of 15 panfish but no more than 5 of any one species (15/5).
- 3 A total of 25 panfish but no more than five of the **sunfish** (bluegill and pumpkinseed) may be over 7" (25/5 over 7").

What we heard

Generally anglers were supportive of the above proposal but had some suggestions.

The two major suggestions were to:

- 1) simplify the proposal and
- 2) focus regulations on the vulnerable spawning period.

Consequently, the proposal was revised to address those two suggestions:

NEW! Proposed regulations

The department is removing the 25/5 over 7" from the proposal and replacing it with a spawning season bag limit reduction so the new regulation proposal now includes the following three options:

- 1 A total of 25 panfish but no more than 10 of any one species (25/10).
- 2 A total of 15 panfish but no more than 5 of any one species (15/5).
- 3 A total of 15 panfish but no more than 5 of any one species during May and June, (15/5-seasonal) - 25 panfish in total the rest of the year.

NEXT STEPS

Spring 2015 – Proposed as Conservation Congress question

Spring 2016 – If passed, regulations go into effect

Winter 2022-2023 – First round of evaluation completed and results distributed

Summer 2023 – Adjustments considered and public feedback sought

Spring 2026 - Sunset of proposed regulations.

PANFISH STUDY LAKES



Figure 1. Distribution of 96 study lakes identified through fisheries biologists and angler surveys with populations of panfish that exhibited poor size, average growth and high fishing pressure.

Table 2. Panfish study lakes and the designated regulation option randomly assigned to each.

County	Lake/Chain Name	Regulation ¹
Adams	Crooked	15/5 Seasonal
Adams	Parker	15/5
Adams	Arrowhead	25/10
Adams	Camelot	25/10
Adams	Sherwood	25/10
Eau Claire	Eau Claire	25/10
Florence	Halsey	25/10
Florence	Sea Lion	15/5
Florence	Spread Eagle	15/5 Seasonal
	Chain of Lakes	
Forest	Wabikon & Riley (Wabikon)	25/10
Kenosha	Paddock	15/5 Seasonal
Langlade	Big Twin	25/10
Langlade	Long (T33N R10E S35)	25/10
Langlade	Moose	15/5 Seasonal
Langlade	White	15/5 Seasonal
Langlade	Crystal	15/5 Seasonal
Langlade	Lower & Upper Post	25/10
Langlade	Dynamite	25/10
Langlade	Meyer	15/5
Langlade	Mueller	25/10
Lincoln	Clara (T34N R8E S10)	15/5 Seasonal
Lincoln	Crystal	15/5

County	Lake/Chain Name	Regulation ¹
Lincoln	Hilderbrand	15/5 Seasonal
Lincoln	Echo	15/5
Lincoln	Rice Reservoir Chain	25/10
Lincoln	Hilts	25/10
Lincoln	Clara (T35N R07E S14)	15/5 Seasonal
Lincoln	Pesabic	15/5 Seasonal
Manitowoc	Bullhead	15/5 Seasonal
Manitowoc	English	15/5
Manitowoc	Long	15/5
Manitowoc	Harpt	25/10
Manitowoc	Pigeon	25/10
Marathon	Pike	15/5 Seasonal
Marathon	Lake Wausau	25/10
Marathon	Mud	15/5
Oconto	Caldron Falls	25/10
Oneida	Boom-Rhineland Chain	15/5 Seasonal
Oneida	Gilmore	25/10
Oneida	Oneida	15/5
Oneida	Squaw	15/5
Oneida	Moen Chain	25/10
Oneida	Carrol	25/10
Oneida	Madeline	25/10
Oneida	Indian	15/5
Portage	Emily	25/10
Portage	Lime	25/10
Price	Pike Chain	25/10
Price	Solberg	15/5
Price	Butternut	25/10
Price	Phillips Chain	15/5
Racine	Bohners	15/5
Rusk	Lower Flambeau River Flowages	15/5
Sawyer	Black Dan	15/5
Sawyer	Blueberry	15/5 Seasonal
Sawyer	Evergreen	15/5 Seasonal
Sawyer	Loretta	15/5 Seasonal
Sawyer	Mason	15/5 Seasonal
Sawyer	Osprey	15/5 Seasonal
Sawyer	Windigo	15/5
Sawyer	Connors	25/10
Sawyer	Lake of the Pines	25/10
Sawyer	Lost Land & Teal	25/10
Sawyer	Round (in chain)	25/10
Sawyer	Spring	25/10
Sawyer	Winter	25/10
Sawyer	Durphee	15/5
Sawyer	Lower Holly	15/5
Sawyer	Island	15/5 Seasonal
Shawano	White Clay	25/10
Sheboygan	Crystal	15/5 Seasonal
Taylor	Rib	15/5
Taylor	Chequamegon Waters	15/5 Seasonal

County	Lake/Chain Name	Regulation ¹
Vilas	Kentuck	25/10
Vilas	Little Saint Germain	25/10
Vilas	Palmer	25/10
Vilas	Pickerel	25/10
Vilas	High, Fishtrap & Rush	15/5
Vilas	Partridge	15/5 Seasonal
Walworth	Tripp	25/10
Washington	Big Cedar	25/10
Washington	Little Cedar	25/10
Washington	Silver	15/5
Waupaca	Graham	15/5
Waupaca	Hartman	15/5
Waupaca	School Section	25/10
Waupaca	Stratton	25/10
Waupaca	White	25/10
Waupaca	Shadow	15/5 Seasonal
Waushara	Witters	15/5
Waushara	Big Hills	25/10
Waushara	Irogami	15/5 Seasonal
Waushara	Kusel Lake	15/5 Seasonal
Waushara	Porters	15/5
Wood	Nepco	15/5

¹Regulation:

25/10 - a total of 25 panfish but no more than 10 of any one species.

15/5 - a total of 15 panfish but no more than 5 of any one species.

15/5 Seasonal - A total of 15 panfish but no more than 5 of any one species during May and June, 25 panfish in total the rest of the year.

For more detailed information and to keep up-to-date on panfish management in Wisconsin visit dnr.wi.gov and search "panfish plan."

