Spring 2013 — An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ Fisheries Management program — fishingwisconsin.org

Angler education program celebrates 25 years

A quarter century of teaching Wisconsin fishing reaches many

MADISON — The Angler Education Program celebrated its 25th Anniversary in late 2012. Since 1987, instructors have reached nearly 100,000 youngsters in the Junior Angler program and countless more at informal clinics.

Angler Education instructors introduce people of all ages to Wisconsin’s fishing tradition, so they can make it their own. From classroom programs, to after-school activities, to women’s fly fishing classes or outings for veterans that help them find solace at the water’s edge, anglers are helping to spark a love affair with our rich and varied fishery.

Join in by attending an angler education instructor certification workshop and bring the love of fishing to your school or community center. As an instructor, you will have access to classroom materials and opportunities to share your ideas for successful fishing programs. A growing list of workshops is found at dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/anglereducation/index.html

Adopt a Tackle Loaner Program Site

Many of our loaner site managers need help maintaining the gear at their sites. This would be a great service project for you or civic organizations. Please review the requirements and bring the same tool to our trout anglers in the future. It’s that easy.

Theresa Stabo, Fisheries Educator

Thanks for stepping up! We appreciate the help.

Dear WISCONSIN ANGLER

There’s no other way to say it...Wisconsin offers some fantastic fishing! Our fisheries staff work hard to keep it that way for the 1.4 million anglers - residents and nonresidents, alike - that routinely fish our waters.

We realize that there is competition for everyone’s time. Recent research on angler preferences and behavior suggests that there are too many activities which make it difficult to find time for a great fishing experience. Wouldn’t it be nice to have more than 24 hours in a day? Especially if the major preference and behavior suggests that there are too many activities which make it difficult to find time for a great fishing opportunity. Wouldn’t it be nice to have more than 24 hours in a day? Especially if the major preference and behavior suggests that there are too many activities which make it difficult to find time for a great fishing experience.

Consequently, we’ve been trying to make fishing easier so that you don’t have to work real hard to enjoy Wisconsin’s great fishing.

Take someone fishing who’s never been fishing before, or hasn’t been fishing in a long time and they’ll be able to take advantage of our First-Time Buyers license ($55 for residents - nonresidents get a break, too). As a recruit, you might be eligible for recruitment points and a reduced-price license for your next fishing license purchase. It’s that easy.

If you don’t have a lot of time, why not try out one-day fishing license? Have a great time and upgrade to an annual license. It’s that easy.

For our technologically savvy anglers, we now have an on-line searchable regulations database. Don’t have your regulation pamphlet with you? No problem. Just go to the DNR website (dnr.wi.gov), search for “fishing regulations” and you’ll have access to the on-line regulation database for Wisconsin’s inland lakes. We will be working on bringing the same tool to our trout anglers in the future. It’s that easy.

The 2013 Wisconsin Fishing Report can only hint at the great fishing opportunities awaiting you. You’ll find that the forecasts have been slightly modified this year. They’ve been categorized by the fish species for which you might be interested in fishing. Our biologists have identified waters based on fish surveys and management actions where you might have success in 2013. It’s that easy.

Sit back, read up, and then hit the water to enjoy great fishing and the memories of a lifetime.

This would be a great service project for high school students, recruits, fishing clubs or civic organizations. Please review the planning form can be found at dnr.wi.gov.

Free Fishing Weekend — Not just for kids!

June 1 & 2, 2013 and January 18 & 19, 2014

Include adults who may have missed the boat as youngsters, in your Free Fishing Weekend plans! More information and a planning form can be found at dnr.wi.gov.

It’s that easy.

Michael Staggs
Director, Fisheries Management
Yellowstone Lake fishery transformed

BRANDON - A cooperative project undertaken after a fisheries management plan was started to transform a fishery dominated by carp, bullheads and stunted crappie, the Yellowstone Lake fishery is better than ever. Recent surveys collected walleye ranging from 10.5 to 22.5 inches, channel catfish 27 to 27 inches, and many of those females soon spawning for the first time. Historically, populations of this slow-growing, late maturing fish were important to the system. Due to destruction of habitat, numbers declined to levels that no longer supported a fishery. From 1997 until present, DNR has collected eggs and milked from adult sturgeon below the Kilburn Dam in Wisconsin Dells. Eggs are hatched and raised at the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery. Over 250,000 sturgeon have been stocked, about 2,800 of these fish were stocked as yearlings and tagged with uniquely numbered PIT tags which will provide valuable age validation and movement information. In 2006, a monitoring program was started to track the progress of restoring the population. The project has been very successful and is a partial success without the cooperation and generous assistance of Menominee Tribal Energy, staff at the dam, and DNR staff from multiple regions. — Tom Haverty and Jennifer Bergman, fisheries biologist, Wisconsin River.

Sturgeon return to a nation

KESHENA FALLS — A cooperative effort to restore lake sturgeon to the Wolf River within the Menominee Nation territory. For the first time in nearly 100 years, sturgeon have been caught in the Wolf River below the Shawano Dam and transformed up-stream to the Wolf River within the Menominee Nation Reservation. To accomplish this, 100 sturgeon each year are being captured from the Wolf River below the Shawano Dam and transferred upstream to the Wolf River within the Menominee Nation Reservation. All sturgeon are marked with PIT tags, a tracking technology that makes them easier to track. Those tags show promising preliminary results. 78 percent of the females and 64 percent of the males spawned at Keshena Falls in 2012, and almost half of the fish Resident and non-resident fish will benefit from increased habitat and water quality, and salmon and steelhead will benefit from improved water flows and habitat. — David Bartz, fisheries biologist, Wisconsin River.

Electrofishing delivers eggscellent results

RACINE - The future remains bright for our stocking quotas on Lake Michigan for chinook and coho salmon and rainbow and brown trout. — DNR's Southeastern Wisconsin Fish Team and partners removed two culverts in 2012 from the Mukwonago River and plan to remove the remaining five this summer. The river is home to 58 different fish species and a Class II trout stream, so the culvert removals will benefit fish into the future. — Dale Eggold, fisheries supervisor, Milwaukee.

Culvert removal aids Mukwonago River

EAGLE — A project underway to remove seven culverts from one of southeastern Wisconsin’s largest trout streams aims to improve habitat, water quality and navigability. DNR’s Southeastern Wisconsin trout community is improving both the fish habitat and water quality in the stream. — Ben Heuemer, fisheries biologist, Milwaukee.

Fishing For Wisconsin!”

 upgrade improves popular Fox River fishing area

GRAND RIVER - Access to the Upper Fox River and lock channel at Grand Rapids has been improved to allow better habitat and fishing at this popular location under a cooperative project by DNR crews, private contractors and Wisconsin Department of Transportation staff. The project redacted the “main” flow of the Fox River from the old lock channel back to the river channel. The old lock channel was closed with two small culverts installed to allow some river water to flow into the locked channel. The old lock channel will function as a slack water system, providing habitat for northern pike, largemouth bass and panfish species. — Ben Heuemer, fisheries biologist, Milwaukee.
PANFISH

Sometime pesky, extremely prolific and always popular

We love panfish fishing for many reasons. They fight like crazy for their size. They’re abundant in nearly every lake, river, creek and pond in Wisconsin. We can go “bluegill fishing” on almost any lake regardless of size, panfish are the answer. No matter where you are in Wisconsin, you don’t have to travel far to fish panfish. Crappies, sunfish, perch and bluegill are just a short drive away from a body of water well populated with panfish.

Panfish fishing is an excellent way to introduce fishing to kids. Some might call them the “kids’ fish,” but catching them is a wonderful pastime everyone can enjoy. There is no need for a fancy boat, expensive rods and reels and large tackle boxes full of expensive lures. Just the opposite.

Worms, crickets, small minnows and tiny lures can entice a panfish bite. Canoe poles and johnboats can replace the expensive gear. It’s not very glamorous, but panfish fishing provides a great alternative to “serious” fishing. Without really trying, panfish can give you a taste of what fishing is supposed to be – relaxing, easy, and just plain fun.

Let’s take a look at some of the fishing tips for panfish in Wisconsin:

Bluegill - No matter where you are in Wisconsin, you can’t get away from the bluegill. “Are you a yellow perch or bluegill person?”

Bluegills are fine fish that seem to want to taste everything in front of them. They have even been known to nibble on swimmeres at one time. Some anglers like to place a bobber down to the shallow spawning beds from which they are popular for bluegill fishing. Today, many anglers fish with light-weight rods and reels. During the summer, anglers will likely have the best luck fishing from a boat in water because bluegills are not fussy and will bite at almost any small bait like insects, insect larvae or other invertebrates. Because of their small mouths, anglers should use small hooks. Bluegills suck in their prey rather than striking at it, so a bobber helps signal a bite. Setting the hook at the first sign of a bite is usually successful as long as the hook and line are small. Be prepared for a fight, though, as soon as the bluegill realizes it is hooked.

State record bluegill: 4 lbs. 8 oz. caught on 08/12/67, Gile Flowage, Iron County.

Crappies - Crappie fishing is very popular in the spring, when aggressive males will strike at almost anything that comes near their nests. Crappies are prolific, the larger during the summer and fall is more difficult, as crappies seek out deeper or shallow brush for shelter. Ice fishing for crappies is also very popular on some lakes, as crappies remain active over winter.

Anglers are almost certain to have their best luck near submerged structures. During spring spawning, crappies near emergent vegetation close to shore. In summer try deep drop-offs or river channels, especially if you find one with submerged logs or brush piles. Some anglers even refer to these spots as “crappie holes,” because of the tendency of crappies to congregate in them. If you have no success in one area, try another spot because crappies move around freely. You can be found at almost any depth from the surface to the bottom, depending upon season and weather. Crappies feed throughout the day with peaks in the evening and early morning. Light tackle is almost universally the best equipment for crappies, especially if they are feeding high up in the water column. The more sensitive the rod the easier it is to detect a crappie’s light bite.

Crappies don’t strike baits hard; they sort of gently suck the bait into their mouths. Small minnows, sometimes called “crappie minnows,” are the most popular crappie bait, often used in combination with a light jig. Crappies will also hit on worms, insect larva and a wide variety of artificial lures such as spinners and spoons. Wet and dry flies are popular when crappies are on their spawning beds. Small, tear-shaped hooks make good bait used alone or in combination with grubs.

State record black crappie: 3 lbs. 11 oz. caught on 05/04/03, Cranberry Marsh, Monroe County.

Yellow perch - Some anglers claim yellow perch are so willing to be caught that they will bite at almost any small bait like insects, insect larvae or other invertebrates. Because of their small mouths, anglers should use small hooks. Yellow perch in the winter. Ice anglers fish exclusively off the bottom. On some lakes, anglers fish in 40 to 60 feet of water with a tip-up. Yellow perch in the winter. Ice anglers fish for perch with short jig jigs, jigs with different types of grubs, such as worms or mussels are the bait of choice among many Wisconsin ice anglers.

State record yellow perch: 3 lbs. 4 oz. caught in 1954, Lake Winnebago, Winnebago County.

2013: A year for panfish

Anglers and others are invited to share their expectations for fishing success in Wisconsin at more than 600 sites across the state in February and March. In February, anglers are invited to participate in the 2013 Statewide Panfish Observations. Anglers are also invited to participate in the 2013 All-Tackle Observations. Anglers are invited to participate in the 2013 Panfish Observations. Anglers are also invited to participate in the 2013 All-Tackle Observations.

“..." We want to hear from the public on what they want from their panfishing experience to help guide us in developing a statewide plan for managing panfish populations," says Joanna Griffin, the Department of Natural Resources fisheries specialist coordinating the effort.

The public meetings mark the opening phases of statewide outreach efforts by Department of Natural Resources’ fisheries management to better connect with anglers in Wisconsin. These first meetings will focus on panfish management although other local fishery concerns may be covered at the meetings, she says.

Attendees at the meetings will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire to help DNR understand their concerns, issues and priorities for panfish. The questionnaire and background materials presented at the meeting will be available online throughout March and April. DNR has long had management plans in place for game fish species such as walleye, bass, musky and northern pike, and biologists and some anglers believe such attention is necessary for panfish.

“We know there have been proposals in recent years and again this year to reduce the daily 25 fish limit on panfish on select lakes. This is consistent with data analyses and modeling efforts, lead us to believe we need to take the next step and develop a management plan.”

As a category, panfish are by far the most common fish caught by anglers in Wisconsin. Wisconsin anglers reported catching 88 million fish in the 2006-2007 license year, of which 57.7 million were panfish, according to a statewide mail survey done that year. About 25.7 million of those panfish were kept.

“We hope the feedback we get from anglers can help us understand whether to stay the course, or if we want changes in their panfishing experience that could require us to do something different, depending on the particular waterbody and its capabilities.”

To keep abreast of panfish issues, go to dnr.wi.gov and search for “panfish plan”.

2013: A year for panfish

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**WALLEYE**

**Cranberry Lake, Price County**
512 acres. The wALLEYE of Cranberry Lake are part of a study to evaluate the walleye population at 233 fish or 14 pounds. 3% of the walleyes are 20 inches or longer. 100% of the walleyes were over the legal minimum of 18 inches. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 3 fish. Walleye anglers seeking walleye should target the Lake Winnebago system, via the Fox River, the Wisconsin River, and the connecting riverine portions, Lincoln County. **Lake Geneva, Walworth County**
320 acres. Based on spring 2012 netting results, this lake is 14 pounds. 35% of the walleyes were 15 inches or larger. Adult walleye density is relatively low at about 1 per 2 acres of water. The adult fish sampled in spring spawning surveys were above the 15” length limit. Although Lake Geneva is a large, deep, cold lake with exceptional water quality, the walleye population is maintained primarily by stocking, and 186,000 walleye fingerlings are stocked in alternate years. Walleyes For Tomorrow raised and stocked an additional 1.8 million walleye fry for the first time in 2012.

**Lake Delavan, Walworth County**
2072 acres. The walleye population in Delavan Lake, Walworth County is 2.724 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15” length limit; 2012 adult population estimate of 3.0 per acre at full pool. **Lake Geneva, Walworth County**
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**Silver Lake, Kenosha County**
464 acres. A spring 2012 survey estimated the adult walleye population at 233 fish or 14 pounds. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit or closed season. Access to the landing is by a single lane dirt road off of Hwy 47. There is an improved public boat launch with parking on the northeast side of the lake. The special regulations on this lake are part of a study to evaluate the effects of high exploitation rates on walleye populations.

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Mississippi River, Pierce to Grant coun- ties: The walleye population was 2,627 fish, or a density of 4.5 fish/acre. The majority of the fish sampled were between 5-10 inches with an average length of 15.7 inches. 15 inch minimum length limit, with a daily bag limit of 5 fish. The walleye population is not decreasing, and the south shore of the Chain of Lakes is not permitted on Amik Lake. A radio telemetry study in the late 1980s revealed that 15% of the walleyes greater than 10 inches were 15 inches or longer. The walleye population in Lake Wausau is excellent with fish ranging from 7.8 to 20.4 inches. Public access site on the Wisconsin River near the township and county. Each site has a minimum length limit, a 3 bag limit and a 3,294 acres and 5,139 acres, respectively. Wisconsin Fishing Report - 2013

Lake Pepin, Pepin County

25,000 acres. Forty-two percent of saugers sampled during 2012 were greater than 14 inches. Sauger averaged 13.6 inches and ranged to 22.5 inches. Current population: No length limit. Daily bag limit is six in total. Access information: 12 ½ Avenue, Pepin, Wisconsin. The walleye population in Lake Pepin was weighed and nearly 6.5 pounds. It’s likely this fish swims Lake Pepin a time or two.

Rainbows Flowsage, McMicken Lake, Oneida County

A spring survey estimated the adult walleye population of 3.3 acres per Rainbow Flowsage (based on a total of 2,035 acres). Most fish are between 14 and 18 inches. The 18-inch minimum length limit on Rainbow Flowsage is a good match for the walleye population in this section of river.

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Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay, Brown County and Manitowoc counties: Strong spring runs of walleye and sauger should provide good opportunities for walleye and saugers. The average walleye population is 2,627 fish, or a density of 4.5 fish/acre. The majority of the fish sampled were between 5-10 inches with an average length of 15.7 inches. 15 inch minimum length limit, with a daily bag limit of 5 fish. The walleye population is not decreasing, and the south shore of the Chain of Lakes is not permitted on Amik Lake. A radio telemetry study in the late 1980s revealed that 15% of the walleyes greater than 10 inches were 15 inches or longer. The walleye population in Lake Wausau is excellent with fish ranging from 7.8 to 20.4 inches. Public access site on the Wisconsin River near the township and county. Each site has a minimum length limit, a 3 bag limit and a 3,294 acres and 5,139 acres, respectively. Wisconsin Fishing Report - 2013

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Clam River Flowage, Burnett County

359 acres. A spring 2012 survey captured 13 fish, an average length = 37.6 inches, range = 22.0 to 48.0 inches, 2.5 fish/acre. Over half of the adult population were less than 35 inches long, with the majority of the fish in the 25 to 30-inch range. This Flowage is self-sustaining, with the last documented stocking occurring in the 1950’s.

Snipe Lake, Vilas County

239 acres. A spring 2012 netting survey captured 28 fish, 35.9 inch average length, 1 fish bag limit, 1 fish per angler, 1 campsite. The lake is known for its quality muskie fishing.

Pewaukee Lake, Waukesha County

2437.24 surface acres. Average depth = 24 feet. Maximum depth = 72 feet. The lake is known for its quality muskie fishing.

Muskellunge

The density (fish/acre) of musky is highest in Caldron Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are not uncommon. 40-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish per angler, 1 campsite. Anglers seeking some musky action on this lake should venture to upper Caldron Falls. pewaukee Lake is not for all, however. About 4 miles of gravel road and a boat landing best suited for smaller rigs can be found between those two areas. The density of musky is excellent. Most of the shoreline lies within 25 feet of the water. Canoes are frequently used. During the summer, most anglers targeting muskie fishing occur on the Fox River, the east side of the lake, and the south portion of the lake. However, others will cast when likely habitat is located in situations where increased harvest will likely benefit the muskie population in question as well as the overall fish community.

Wisconsin River and its impoundments (Lakes Alice, Mohawkin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions)

3,089 acres of prime, naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place on these waters. Adult population estimates range from 0.1 to about 0.31 per acre. Past studies of this system has shown that muskie abundance and harvest is impacted by other impoundments in the system that are larger than this and have spawned ripe musky from the Fox River, raising the eggs at the Badgerie Fishery Facility and stocked on 13,000 full fingerlings back into the river and bay to enhance the population. Most of the muskie fishing occurs on the Fox River, the east side of the lake at lower flask stream, and in the Flambeau River State Forest.

Okawkee Lake, Waukesha County

312.43 acres. Average depth = 11 feet. The lake is known for its quality muskie fishing.

Rice Lake (Nokomis System)

2.274 acres of naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place; The adult population is in the range of about 0.25 to 0.5 fish per acre; Consider this more of a lower density, high quality water with true trophy potential. Our nets routinely catch big fish, and healthy, fish in the upper 40” range on this system.

Day Lake Flowage, Ashland County

625 acres. 28-inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1 fish, 1 public boat landing, camping available. The 28-inch minimum length limit is a water quality protection in response to“Weedie” impact. The muskellunge population have been conducted on the Fox River, the east side of the lake, and the south portion of the lake. However, others will cast when likely habitat is located in situations where increased harvest will likely benefit the muskie population. The densities and harvest rates of musky are higher in Caldron Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are not uncommon. 40-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish per angler, 1 campsite. Anglers seeking some musky action on this lake should venture to upper Caldron Falls. Pewaukee Lake is not for all, however. About 4 miles of gravel road and a boat landing best suited for smaller rigs can be found between those two areas. The density of musky is excellent. Most of the shoreline lies within 25 feet of the water. Canoes are frequently used. During the summer, most anglers targeting muskie fishing occur on the Fox River, the east side of the lake, and the south portion of the lake. However, others will cast when likely habitat is located in situations where increased harvest will likely benefit the muskie population in question as well as the overall fish community.

Mead Lake, Clark County

320 acres. Results based on spring 2012 netting. The lake is mostly shallow with frequent areas of little to no channel. Flat bottom boats are basically a necessity other than during periods of high water. Canoes are frequently used. During low water, it is often necessary to pull the boat over a sand bar. Larger boats and boats in particular are a bad idea unless the operator really knows the river. Generally, fish get hit in the spring and it allows larger boats to get from the landing below the dam upstream to the dam if using caution and avoiding the rock bars.

Upper Black River, Clark and Jackson counties, and lower Black River, Jackson, Monroe, and Polk counties

As of October 2012: Wisconsin musky waters (fishingwisconsin.org) and identical to the statewide average rate greater muskellunge abundance and higher quality stock have spawned ripe musky from the Fox River, raising the eggs at the Badgerie Fishery Facility and stocked on 13,000 full fingerlings back into the river and bay to enhance the population. Most of the muskie fishing occurs on the Fox River, the east side of the lake at lower flask stream, and in the Flambeau River State Forest.

Mason and Evergreen lakes, Sawyer County

15,345 acres. 40-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 1 fish, 6 public boat landings, camping available. At 13.545 acres, and with a forage base consisting of red and white, horse, white sucker, cisco (in some areas), etc. The Turtle-Flamboueau River system has true trophy potential that has the potential to produce some big muskies. A recent spring 2011 netting survey captured 66 musky with less than expected effort. Of those fish, 45% were 38 inches or better and 20% were 42 inches or better. In addition, during the 2012 open-water season, there were at least two 50-inch plus fish caught, 1 male (>80 inches) and 1 male (>55 inches). The majority of muskies were stocked as fingerlings. Fishing on the Turtle-Flamboueau River from 2004 to 2012, females continued to be ripe with eggs to end of the survey on May 17. All but one of the females had about 5 eggs with almost five times as many yarling stock muskellunge captured compared to those stocked as fingerlings.

Mason and Evergreen lakes, Sawyer County

1390 acres combined. Mason 990 acres = Evergreen 200 acre Evergreen Lake had greater harvest rates, far fewer boat landings, and far more persons per acre in Evergreen Lake than in Mason Lake. Catch rate of muskellunge ≥ 20 inches in fishy lakes was 3x greater than Evergreen Lake in Mason Lake and to the statewide average rate.
Lake Redstone, Sauk County
Lake Redstone, Sauk County is one of the larger lakes in the state and is known for its muskellunge population. The lake is 216 acres and has a 286-inch minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. There is a large public boat launch operated by the WDNR.

Bone Lake, Polk County
Bone Lake is located in the heart of the Polk County area. The lake has a 140-acre minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. Bone Lake is a great place to fish for muskies.

Big Elkhart Lake, Sheboygan County
Big Elkhart Lake is located in the Sheboygan County area and has a 400-acre minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. The lake is a great place to fish for muskies.

Lake Monoma, Dane County
Lake Monoma is located in the Dane County area and has a 200-acre minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. The lake is a great place to fish for muskies.

Largemouth Bass
Largemouth bass populations in Wisconsin are relatively high, with many lakes having significant populations. The largest bass population in Wisconsin is found in Lake Wausau, which has a 1,781-acre minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. The lake is a great place to fish for largemouth bass.

Delavan Lake, Walworth County
Delavan Lake is located in the Walworth County area and has a 2012-acre minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. The lake is a great place to fish for largemouth bass.
of Lakes boasts a very high density (7.4
mouth bass fishing. The Spread Eagle Chain
Florence County waters
relationship. The population and balance the predator prey
meal? This lake has an abundant population
lakes’ east side off of county Highway E,
showing a take to Caroline Lake near Mellen, WI. Roads
to Caroline can be rough, and a sand boat landing area
west. Caroline’s buckeemouths are worth the effort. A
2012 electrofishing survey captured good
numbers of quality-size largemouth bass (≥
12-inches) at 18.1 per mile of shoreline
(average above the 80th percentile amongst statewide populations). However, what really
stands out about the largemouth are their size; half of the fish caught were
between 15 inches or larger, and over 20 inches was measured
at over 20 inches. Anglers fortunate enough to
to experience the good fishing Caroline has to offer are asked to use discretion if choosing
to harvest bass. In a small lake such as Caroline, especially harvest capacity could greatly
reduce the number of larger fish present in the population.

Wilson Lake, Iron County
162 acres. No minimum length limit, but
bass from 12 through 16 inches may not be kept, daily bag limit of 5 fish. Public
boat landing. Largemouth bass anglers looking for an opportunity to catch a lot of fish, while keeping some for the
taking pan, should head to Wilson Lake near Mer-
ner, WI. Optimal bass fishing is along with a
robust population of largemouth, continues to produce strong yields of young fish
coming up in the population. For this reason,
anglers should not be shy about keeping
smaller bass; those up to the protected
closed slot (less than 12 inches). However, it is
encouraged that bass anglers harvest a limited
dimension (greater than 16 inches), are released, to help improve
the quality of the fishery.

Mead Lake,Clark County
320 acres. Results are based on electrofishing
survey of spring 2012 and catch rates expressed
as average number of fish captured per mile of shoreline surveyed (fish/mile).
Largemouth is the dominant bass species in Mead
Lake. Total catch rate was up at 12/mile in 2012 as compared to 4.8/mile in
the last survey conducted in 2008. Catch rate of legal (14") and larger fish was also
up to 3.4/mile in 2004 in 2006. Mead largemouth bass population experienced a
drop between 2004 and 2008 surveys. Good news is the 2012 survey indicated the
population is recovering.

Lake Emily, Dodge County
Lake Emily is a small, fertile lake in Dodge
County offering largemouth bass fishing opportunities. 2012 largemouth bass catch rates
for fall electrofishing were 54/hour, compared to 24/hour in 2006 and 58/hour in
2003. The number of largemouth bass over
14-inches (current legal harvestable size)
was 20% in 2012, compared to 14% in 2006
and 23% greater than 14 inches and 1.5% greater
than 18 inches. Since these lakes are con-
nected it offers the best of both worlds, an
opportunity to catch a big bass or a
trout. Largemouth bass are
an 18-inch minimum length limit for bass, which is in place to improve
parrish size structure... it has also created this great bass fishery!

Lakes in Lincoln County
Hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass
were sampled. Most of these are on county forest lands. Get your maps or
GPS and explore, you just might find that
secret hot spot.

Caroline Lake, Ashland County
130 acres. 14-inch minimum length limit,
2012 electrofishing bag limit of 5 fish. Largemouth bass fishing. Largemouth bass anglers looking for
some nice-sized fish in a remote, wilderness
setting should consider canoeing a take
to Caroline Lake near Mellen, WI. Roads
getting to Caroline can be rough, and a sand boat landing area
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Rock Lake, Jefferson County
A direct comparison of bass catch rates for 2012 fall electrofishing were 31/hour, compared to
50/hour in 2011, 51/hour in 2010 and the 10-
year average of 50/hour. Largemouth bass
length ranged from 2.1 to 17-inches with 11%
in Mead Lake. Total catch rate was up at
12/mile in 2012 as compared to 4.8/mile in
the last survey conducted in 2008. Catch rate of legal (14") and larger fish was also
up to 3.4/mile in 2004 in 2006. Mead largemouth bass population experienced a
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population is recovering.

Two sizable smallmouth bass captured during a

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Two sizable smallmouth bass captured during a
off 190th Ave. Half Moon Lake is one of four large-mouth bass-warehvy lakes in Polly’s County that does not have a minimum length limit for largemouth bass.

Pequaga Lake, Washburn County

453 acres. Spring survey of 2009 sampled largemouth bass over 12 inches at the rate of 22.6 per mile of shoreline, which ranks it in the 80th percentile statewide. There were 2 largemouth bass in the sample that were larger than 14 inches. There is a minimum length limit of 5 inches, with a daily bag limit of 5. A public boat ramp and trailer parking lot is on the south shore, equidistant from the east and west ends of the lake. Swan Lake is a naturally occurring lake on the Fox River system with a maximum depth of 82 feet.

Manitowoc and Kewaunee counties

Under 140 acres. Recent surveys have shown most lakes in Manitowoc County are largemouth bass lakes. Larger lakes such as Long, Cedar, Pigeon Pond, and Grouse Court, and a boat launch is located off of Golden Drive. Another is found near the end of 1st Drive at south end of lake. Pequaga Lake has a healthy population of largemouth bass, but no documentation of fish stocking since 1954.

Mississippi River – Pool 5, Buffalo County

Good numbers and above the 14-inch length limit. 14-inch minimum length; 5 in total with smallmouth bass. Dairyland Pow- er Landing, Belvidere Slough Landing, 10th Street Landing, Upper and Lower Spring Lake Greenings. Great reproduction continues for largemouth bass signaling good fish- ing into the foreseeable future.

Mason Lake, Adams County

Mason Lake was surveyed in May 2012. The lake is 42 acres in size and the largest fish was 20 inches. Of the fish caught 22% were over 14 inches in length. Largemouth bass catch rate from spring electrofishing was high at 111/mile. Summer bass population is 3 per 100 feet of shoreline. Both lakes have a good boat ac- cess currently and parking. A park sticker is required. Both lakes are very heavily fished. Both lakes are electric motors only. Con Hollow Lake is on a 14-inch length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass (LMB). It has a good population of large- mouth bass in the 10” to 13” range with a fair population of larger fish up to 20”. Twin Valley Lake currently has a 14” length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass. It has a fair population of LMB in the 10” to 12” range with a fair population of larger fish up to 20”. Blackhawk Lake (210 acres.) has a good boat access and parking in the Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area. A local park sticker is required and priced the same as the State Parks. The lake has a slow-on- wake regulation. Blackhawk Lake currently has a 14 length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass but a recommended vol- unteer “harvest slot” of 9” to 13”. It has an outstanding population of largemouth bass including a large number of 14” to 20” fish.

Stevens Point Flowage, Portage County

The Stevens Point Flowage was surveyed in 2009. The average size was 140 inches and the largest fish was 20 inches. Of the fish caught, 39% were greater than 14 inches in length. Of the fish sampled, 14-inch minimum length limit has been increasing since 2009, catch rate from summer electrofishing has increased from 3 to 19.2/mile in 2012. Good numbers and above the 14-inch length limit. 14-inch minimum length in total with smallmouth bass. Both lakes have a good boat ac- cess currently and parking. A park sticker is required. Both lakes are very heavily fished. Both lakes are electric motors only. Con Hollow Lake is on a 14-inch length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass (LMB). It has a good population of large- mouth bass in the 10” to 13” range with a fair population of larger fish up to 20”. Twin Valley Lake currently has a 14” length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass. It has a fair population of LMB in the 10” to 12” range with a fair population of larger fish up to 20”. Blackhawk Lake (210 acres.) has a good boat access and parking in the Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area. A local park sticker is required and priced the same as the State Parks. The lake has a slow-on- wake regulation. Blackhawk Lake currently has a 14 length limit and 5 bag limit regulation on largemouth bass but a recommended vol- unteer “harvest slot” of 9” to 13”. It has an outstanding population of largemouth bass including a large number of 14” to 20” fish.

Big Lake (Hwy K), Vilas County

850 acres. A recent survey found that 85% of the bass were greater than 15 inches in length. Catch and release only. Access to the lake is by one of two state boat landings. One is located on the south shore of the lake about 1/2 mile off of County Highway K. The other is located in the state forest campground in the Northwester corner off Hwy P. This lake is the largest in the state that is catch and release for bass during the entire game fish season.

Middle Eau Claire, Bayfield County

Lower Eau Claire Lake and Lake Nebagom- bie, Door County

(810, 708, and 846 acres respectively) Mid- dle Eau Claire average length = 12.5 inches, range = 6.5 to 60.5, 5% greater than 16 inches and 46. Lower Eau Claire average length = 11.7 inches, range = 6.7 to 19.1, 5% greater than 16 inches in 26%. Lake Nebagomin aver- age length = 14.7 inches, range = 7.2 to 19.0, 5% greater than 16 inches in 28%. Minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 2.0 fish. There are no public boat launches. All lakes have potential for 20+ ” fish. All very clear and provide excellent perch and crayfish are a popular diet item in these lakes.

Chequamegon Bay - Lake Superior, Bay- field and Sawyer Counties

Chequamegon Bay deserves its reputa- tion as a trophy smallmouth fishery. Spring surveys have shown the average length of smallmouth to be around 18 inches. Many year-class increases to the population and we consistently see fish older than 20 years. May through June 14 is catch and release only. From June 15 to March 2 one fish over 22 inches can be kept. Prior to the current regulation, the average length of Chequa- megon Bay smallmouth was only 14 inches and most were less than 10 years old. The current fishery gives anglers a greater opportunity to tangle with trophy fish!

Florence County waters

Good smallmouth bass fishing can be found throughout the Menominee River (and it’s flowages) and lower sections of the Pine River. If you want to fish inland lakes, try Elkhorn Dam (4.4/acre) or test yourself for trophy smallmouth in Pattan (0.9/acre).

Green Bay waters of Door County

The smallmouth bass fishery continues to be exceptional along portions of Door Coun- ty’s shoreline and trend is expected to continue in 2013. Smallmouth size at age has been steadily increasing within the past decade and the size of the fish in the har- vest continues to impress. The most recent surveying (spawning survey 2009 Sturgeon Bay/Little Sturgeon Bay areas) indicated younger age classes (4 - 6 yrs) were well represented, suggesting strong recruitment in 2013. There should be a good number of fish in the range of 18” - 20” in the population. Fish in excess of 7 pounds have been reported from tournam- ents in recent years so the chance to catch a true trophy smallie in these waters exists. Further smallmouth fishing opportunities continue to look optimistic as sub-adult fish are well represented in the population and continue to be up in surveys and angler reports. The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for smallmouth fishing rules in the Tributary Streams to Lake Michigan waters section. Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are several state-owned fisheries in the area in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay. There are also several fisheries in the area that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for lake locations and angler’s field and Ashland counties

Upper Black River, Clark and Jackson coun- ties, Lower Black River, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau counties.

Black River, upper and lower: Smallmouth is dominant bass species in the upper and lower river. Results based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (8/mile). Upper river total catch rate was 277.5/ mile in 2012 over 102/ mile in 2012. Cut rate closed for legal (14”) and larger fish was down slightly to 15/mile compared to 14/mile in 2011. Lower river total catch rate was up at 7.7/mile in 2012 over 4.4/mile in 2011. Cut rate for legal (14”) and larger fish was up to 2.9/mile in 2012 over 1.2/mile in 2011. Smallmouth bass up to 20” were captured by DNREC sur- vey crews in both the upper and lower Black River in 2012.

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Mencer Fisheries Biology, Lawrence Eitinger with a 18.5 inch sampled during a recent netting survey on the Gile Flowsage. Photo - Jim Zarzynski.

County Park that is located at the north side of the mouth of Sturgeon Bay. Survey data have demonstrated increasing numbers of smallmouth bass in this area in recent years.

Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Branch and Fox Rivers - Peninsula Counties

These rivers see good smallmouth bass runs each year during May and continuing through early July while water temperatures remain the most productive for smallmouth bass. Anglers fish along state and county owned access points and large boulders that hold many fish. On the Manitowoc and Branch Rivers, pool habitat is limited so wading anglers should look for boulders and large woody debris. Bass capture rates were highest on the Branch River ranging in size from 6 inches to 16 inches with many over 10 inches. Bass anglers seeking smallmouth bass on the Fox River fish the rocks on the edge of the current near the DePrez Dam or other structures found in downtown Green Bay. 14-inch length minimum limit with a daily bag limit of 5. The Kewaunee River is in the northern Bass zone. The other rivers are in the southern bass zone. Kewaunee - State and County land between Footbridge and County Highway F. Manitowoc and Branch Rivers - river crossing. Fox River - launch at Fox Point or the Metro Launch. Habitat work in the Kewaunee River that was done in 1995 to improve adult habitat for migrating trout and salmon by narrowing the river channel to increase velocity and by placing large boulders as current breaks has provided smallmouth bass abundant clean rock for spawning and providing adult holding locations. Surveys conducted to monitor the smallmouth bass and salmon in 2004-2008 have documented increased usage of this area by smallmouth bass since completion of the habitat work.

Rock Lake, Jefferson County

2012 smallmouth bass catch rates were 21/ hour, compared to a high of 55/hour in 2011 and the 10-year average of 32/hour. Smallmouth bass ranged in size from 2.8 to 15.1 inches.

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage County

The smallmouth bass population is surveyed each year on the Wisconsin River through summer electrofishing. From 2010 to 2012, average catch rate of smallmouth bass was 18 fish per hour and on average 28% of the fish are greater than 12 inches. From the Wisconsin River from Merrill to Wausau, and from Rothschild to Mosinee had the largest fish. The number of young-of-year and from Rothschild to Mosinee had the Wisconsin River from Merrill to Wausau, the fish were greater than 14 inches. The 18 fish per hour and on average 28% of the average catch rate of smallmouth bass was summer electrofishing. From 2010 to 2012, Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage Counties had the highest number of young-of-year with over 1,056, 814 and 600 in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. 18-inch minimum length limit (bag of 1) be- yond existing regulations. Limiting this river school of smallmouth bass currently out there is not a problem. The minimum length limit pushes fish out beyond 20’ with fish over 5 fish fairly commonplace. Excellent boat launches exist around the river from with a minimum length limit of 20 inches. Smallmouth in Lac Courte Oreilles and Indian Lake, Oneida County 397 acres. The lake has an abundance of smallmouth bass population. In 2012 14-inch and 15-inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 5. The Menominee River is in the southern bass zone. The other lakes are in the northern bass zone. Indian Lake is managed with special fishing regulations designed to produce quality size gamefish. The lake has been stocked with northern pike ranging in size from 2.4 to 12.4 inches. Crews handled many fish over 34 inches, including one heavy 38-incher. As anticipated, a 2012 spring netting survey resulted in high catch rates of pickle-size (20 inches and smaller), along with the presence of a few fish at 30 inches, including one heavy 38-inch.

Lake Six, Iron County

48.8 acres. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5. 4 public boat landings. There is excellent habitat, as are the north shore- line and the County Boat Access/Park opportunities off Manawa City land on the west side of the lake. The minimum length limit is 20 inches. A boat landing is located off of Hatchley Lane on the south side of the lake.

Rolling Stone Lake, Langlade County 672 acres. Naturally reproducing pike population. Pike are in nearly every lake in Green Bay, and I have been pleasantly surprised by the absence of by pike in nearly every lake that I have surveyed. The highest density pike populations are in Put-in and Sea Lion Lakes. If you are looking for trophy pike, I can’t wait until next year; I just can’t make it that easy…start in Florence County.

Wisconsin River - Silt and sand bars dot the river this time of year. If you are looking for trophy pike, start by trying lake…..well the Stevens Point Flowage Dam to Al- Lona Lake, Oneida County 3,384 acres. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5. 4 public boat landings. The Gile Flowsage has a long history of being known to produce high numbers of northern pike, as well as the ability to grow the occasional 40-incher. As anticipated, a 2012 spring netting survey resulted in high catch rates of pickle-size (20 inches and smaller), along with the presence of a few fish at 30 inches, including one heavy 38-inch.

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Lake Monroe, Dane County In the shadow of the state capital, lake Men- domine is becoming one of the most popular smallmouth bass destinations. Fall 2012 samples captured 77% of fish with average length being 12.5”. Crews handled many fish over 18”. Locating fish in the 9842 acre lake may sound difficult but find rock and you’ll find smallmouth. The east shore is excellent habitat, as are the north shore- line and the County Boat Access/Park opportunities off Manawa City land. A restrictive 18” min- imum length limit pushes fish out beyond 20” with fish over 5 fish fairly commonplace. Excellent boat launches exist around the river from with a minimum length limit of 20 inches. Smallmouth in Lac Courte Oreilles and Indian Lake, Oneida County 397 acres. The lake has an abundance of smallmouth bass population. In 2012 14-inch and 15-inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 5. The Menominee River is in the southern bass zone. The other lakes are in the northern bass zone. Indian Lake is managed with special fishing regulations designed to produce quality size gamefish. The lake has been stocked with northern pike ranging in size from 2.4 to 12.4 inches. Crews handled many fish over 34 inches, including one heavy 38-incher. As anticipated, a 2012 spring netting survey resulted in high catch rates of pickle-size (20 inches and smaller), along with the presence of a few fish at 30 inches, including one heavy 38-inch.

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Upper Black River, Clark and Jackson counties.

Lake Emily, Dodge County
Northern pike abundance is high on this small furtive lake, with the adult northern pike population size at an estimated 4 fish per acre with fish up to 37.5 inches present. Northern pike catch rates for 2012 spring fyke netting were 12.0 fish/net, compared to 34.0 fish/net in 1999. In 2012, 9% of the northern pike sampled were greater than 26 inches in length (current northern pike size), compared to 15% in 2006 and 4% in 1999. The largest northern pike sampled was 33.5 inches. 3.7 inches female weighing 11.5 pounds. Small size and heavy aquatic vegetation make this lake difficult to access and growth rates and the presence of multiple year classes should provide for abundant angling opportunities. 

Lake Puckaway, Green Lake and Marquette counties
5,039 acres. The 32” minimum length limit and bag of one continues to keep densities of pike low and should result in high catch rates (16 fish/net night). 
Average length of adult pike was 25.7” with the largest fish sampled at 38.5”. 88% of fish sampled were above quality size (21”) with good numbers in the 25-30” range. Anglers can expect plenty of action when the forage base of gizzard shad is down. Adequate access sites are located around the lake. Two developed boat launches are located in the town of Mecan on the north shore and there are three good access points on the south shore in the town of Marquette. 

Tainter Lake, Dunn County
1,752 acres. Since spring of 2006 water levels have been stabilized on Tainter Lake with modifications to the hydro dam. We currently are seeing some beneficial changes in the fish population. In 2012 fisheries fyke net survey, a sub-sample of the Hay River Bay produced 139 northern pike sampled with modifications to the hydro dam. The last northern pike was in 2012 (2.4 miles). The black crappie population in Lake Wausau was surveyed in 2012, catch rate was 15.5 crappies per net lift. The largest fish handled at 38.5” 88% of fish sampled were above quality size (21”) with good numbers in the 25-30” range. Anglers can expect plenty of action when the forage base of gizzard shad is down. Adequate access sites are located around the lake. Two developed boat launches are located in the town of Mecan on the north shore and there are three good access points on the south shore in the town of Marquette. 

Big Mckenzie Lake, Burnett County
1,185 acres. In a spring 2012 netting survey, 45% of the catchable size northern pike were over 22 inches with a maximum depth of 25 feet. Use an ultra-light rod and reel with tube jigs in yellow or red colors. The Hay River Bay would be a great place to start. Bluegills should be a bonus. Our show is expected to continue and may still reach up to 10 inches by October 2013.
Lake Nancy, Washburn County 772 acres. In a spring 2012 netting survey, 19% of the crappies sampled were 9 inches or larger. No minimum length limit, 25 fish daily bag. The lake is located approximately 4 miles west of the town of Crandon along County HWY F. Lake Nancy is 86 acres, and has a state park and overlook that was constructed in 2007. Anglers seemed satisfied with the sizes of their fish, commenting that they were larger than in the previous year. 55% of the crappies and crappie numbers have also improved in the last several years as well. Both had record-year classes in 2011. Crappies were present in the lake the past 3 years with trawling and spring electrofishing surveys. From 2000 to 2012, 447 crappies were captured and 97% of them were 8 inches or larger. Crappies have been found in almost all of the lakes we sampled in the Lake County and the Lake County Conservation Foundation is planning to do a survey in 2013. Anglers can find them, many should be nearing 11-plus inches later this year. Bluegills have been less fished than crappies, but they are not surprising since they relate more to the shallower, lesser developed lakes rather than the open water areas of the lake. However, anecdotal information from panfish special- ists who fish the lake tell me that there are also good numbers of bluegills in the 6-8 inch size range that can be sought by doing a little searching for them. The season is open year round for panfish on the system. The daily bag limit is 25 fish in total, with no minimum length limit on any panfish species. There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi- lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved access points at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites re- flect both a potential for a better angling experience by having a map of the system to which to access near you which want to launch, or go to the Wisconsin DNR’s Boat and Shore Fishing Access Web- site to search for information (http:// dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boatsaccess.html). During July-September 2012 we collected creel data at seven sites for Lake Winnebago to assess angler harvest. Angler harvest rates for bluegill and crappie at the lake were chosen. Creel clerks worked on one landing group one weekend day and two weekday days. Days were ran- domly selected. Clerks stayed at each landing group for six hours to interview anglers. Clerks worked a total of 35 days during the survey; 14 weekend and 21 weekdays. During that time, the creel clerks inter- viewed anglers who had a total of 3740 surveys. The busiest area of the lake was definitely the south half. Angler harvest rates at southern locations were also the highest, close to the lake, ranging from 8.4-15.0 perch per angler. Northern half land had catch rates of 4.8-8.5 perch per angler. Over all, the mean number of perch kept per angler was 10.0 fish. Anglers that clerked interviewed during their 6 hours shifts harvested a total of 353 walleye, 625 crappie, 130 perch, and 25 rock bass. Thunk about that: 16,685 perch docu- mented by the creel survey in one weekend day, 3 days a week for just 6 hours a day. Keep in mind that we only “interpreted” anglers that kept fish, not all anglers or angler land- ings. These numbers don’t include property owners who come and go from their own landings, or the 1000’s of the thousand anglers who don’t keep fish, and don’t wish to participate in the creel survey. 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Fisheries biologist Nick Legler is proud to show Channel catfish in good numbers and anglers who view Wisconsin Fishing report. Photo: Brad Sims.

Wisconsin Fishing Report - 2013

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage Counties

Most bowfishing on the Central Wisconsin River have been in the past 5 years and information suggested continued success. The bluegill populations of some lakes are improved in numbers and size and high stock densities indicate many of the bowfishing are capable of producing bluegill averaging 8-9 inches during the winter months. No closed season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for each segment. Maps are available through DNRs online boating access site.

Irons Ford, Waushara County

Chippewa Flowage and Lake Chetac, Sawyer County (15,300 and 2,400 acres, respectively) Crappie in the 8 to 11-inch range are abundant in both lakes. Bluegills in the 6.5 to 8 inch range are also abundant and bluegill over 8 inches are frequently caught as well. 25 daily bags on both 10 only bluegill/day in Chippewa Flowage (2 launches on Cty. Hwy. CC, one off of Cty. Hwy. B, one near Winter Dam, some public access off of CC and tons of island camping opportunities Chetac (a.k.a. the Boss at East Shore) etc.). These lakes have a good mix of minnows and size. Both produce tons of crappie in the 8 to 11-inch range and 10 inchers to 12 inch. Access is good from 8-15 acres. Yellow perch are also present in good numbers and 8 to 10-inch fish can be found.

Silver Lake, Columbia County

70 Acres. General regulations for Wisconsin inland waters, except walleye has an 18 inch minimum length limit, with a daily bag limit of 5. A single boat landing located on Silver Lake Drive has a single paved ramp, 6-10 trailer stalls, and a restroom. A new ADA accessible fishing pier near the boat landing has recently been installed. The lake has a well-maintained blacktop parking lot. A 15-acre greenbelt area around Princeton.

Fox Hollow Lake and Twin Valley Lake, Iowa County

98 acres (150 and 2,400 acres, respectively) The lakes are located in Govt. Dodge State Park. Both lakes have a good boat access and parking. A park sticker is required. Both lakes are very heavily fished. Both lakes are electric motor only. Fox Hollow Lake has an 10 bag limit regulation on panfish. It has a good population of bluegill with a significant number of 8 to 9 inch. 9 inch Summer fishing for this fish is good but the water biters are limited to the large 12 inch big. The lake has a good size black crappie and yellow perch. Twin Valley Lake has no limit regulation on panfish. It has large numbers of both bluegill and black crappie. Currently the bluegill average 6.75” but very few if any fish over 7.5”. The black crappie average 7.75” with some fish in the 8” range but very few large fish. An occasional yellow perch is a bonus.

Cattail Lake, Iowa County

Blackhawk Lake, Iowa County

210 acres. There is a good boat access and parking at the Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area. The 10-acCREST PARK sticker is required and priced the same as the State Parks. The lake has a slow-no-wake regulation. Both fly and float tube are allowed. Blackhawk Lake is the nearest lake in the vicinity and maintains a very good population of varied size crappies including some "10" to 12" size. The lake contains a large number of small yellow perch but there are some larger fish.

Iowa County

Wisconsin River, Madison and Sauk Counties

The 12 mile stretch of the Wisconsin river covering river segments from Sauk City to Madison, including Mosinee Flowage, and Whiting Flowage. There were full of carp during our recent fish surveys in May of 2012. The largest channel catfish caught was 27.5 inches. No closed season; no minimum length limit; bag limit is 10. There are plenty of opportunities to catch fish on Centralia Flowage and Lake Chetac, and a bike trail. A boat launch is located off of 2nd Avenue S (Hwy 54/75) at Hanson Park. Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Safe eating guidelines for fish in Wisconsin, which is available online and at DNR Service Centers.

Fox River, Marquette, Green Lake and Waushara counties

Channel Catfish populations remain high and are one of the most sought after species on the river. The river is full of habitat that is ideal for this species. The population is extremely high and quite common around all areas. The median fish size is 9 inches. The average length of catfish there certainly remained fairly stable after a slight increase in 2012-13. The largest channel catfish on this segment was greater than 10 inches. Given the size of the catfish population there certainly could be one of the best forage fish in Wisconsin, and the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. There are no bag limits for rough fish. The season is continuous for waters in Marathom, Portage, and Adams Counties. The season is from April 21 to March 6 for Juneau County waters and shorelines. Angle access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNRs online boating access site. Look for a question on a gage mona- 

LAKE STURGEON

Wisconsin Lake, Wisconsin/Wisconsin, Columbia, Sauk and Dane counties

9,000 acre Lake Wisconsin, 27 river miles to Kilkber Dam, and 4 mile stretch below the Prairie du Sac Dam fall population esti- mates of adult sturgeon below the Prairie du Sac Dam show an increase in numbers in the last three years which is the highest number on the Wisconsin River. Fall population estimates on Lake Wisconsin, the adult population of lake sturgeon was estimated at 1,597 which was more than 2 fold. Close to half of the fish sampled in 2012 were in the harvest slot size of 30- 

Rock River, Jefferson and Dodge Counties

The Rock River in Dodge County has been producing impressive numbers of flathead and channel catfish, with reports of flatheads over 40+ inches present. Stretches of the Crawford River can also be productive for catfish. While fishing the rivers, look for tagged fish and report them to the address on the tag, or (920) 387-8767.

Wisconsin River, Marathon, Portage, Wood, Adams and Juneau counties

Wisconsin River System, Jefferson County

Rock River System, Jefferson County

Lake Wisconsin, the adult population of lake sturgeon was estimated at 5,977 which was a slight increase when compared to an es- timate done from 1976-1981. 60-inch mini- nern river lower half. There are very few sandbraided channels and water temperature and water depth changes directly. Care should be given while navigating the lower Wisconsin River.

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage Counties

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage Counties

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage Counties

Wisconsin River, Marathon, Portage, Wood, Adams and Juneau counties

Catch catfish except 40+ inches. No closed season; no minimum length limit; bag limit is 10. Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNRs online boating access site. Anglers can catch catfish year round on the Wisconsin River, even while ice fishing. Catfish are most active in the summer months where they can be caught on the bottom, or even by casting shallow running lures.

Lake Sturgeon

Wisconsin/Wisconsin River, Columbia, Sauk and Dane counties

Lake Sturgeon
and sufficient food is available in the lake, water temperatures. Due to extremely low appears to be better based on the good catch-
20 lbs. The total Chinook harvest in Lake ranging from 10 to 15 lbs, with many as big nook salmon from Lake Michigan tributar-
Wisconsin stocks approximately 1.1 million was 46% lower than the ten year average. - Although 2011 had the addition to the open water fishery. - Steelhead fishing was great for
Brown trout. - The brown trout fishery in Lake Michigan is supported through annual stocking. Brown trout fishing in 2011 was the best year, the fishing only 9 lbs fish harvested. However, in 2012 the fishery rebranded and strong all through the fall and into months of January through March. Anglers caught their limits of brown trout in the winter months in many ports, es-pecially the Milwaukee River and harbor. Some fish were over 200s. 2012 was a good year for brown trout fishing in all the ports from Kenosha to Port Washington. We hope the trend continues in 2013 with great success.
Steelhead. - Steelhead fishing was great for boat and shore anglers in 2011 producing 75,447 fish, 45% above the ten year aver-
age. In 2012, both stream and boat anglers had great success with all three strains of rainbow trout – charwomen, cutthroat, and the popular summer steelhead. However, a number of them will go through streams such as Twin Rivers, Ahnapee River and the Ke-
Creek or Whitefish Bay Creek. If 2013 is a low water year, the best bets will be fishing nearshore waters around the mid-20-inch range this past season, and I would expect 2013 to be even better.
Lake Superior, Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron counties. The Apostle Islands region supports popu-
lizations of naturally reproducing lake trout, while the western end still needs stocking to maintain high catch rates. The average lake trout caught throughout the year is about 22 inches, but fish exceeding 40 inches are caught each year, demonstrating true trophy potential. In recent years, lake trout, trout, the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior pro-
duces coho, brown trout, and lake trout. - Trout (rainbow, brown, brook, splake, lake) – 5 in total of which only 1 may be rainbow trout and 1 may be brook trout, but may be any lake trout with only 1 lake trout longer than 22 inches. Rainbow trout must be greater than 26 inches, brook trout must be greater than 26 inches, and all other trout must be at least 15 inches. The lake trout season is open from December 1 through September 30 while the season for all other trout is any total. Salmon (coho, Chi-
nook, pink, Atlantic) – 5 in total with no minimum length and no closed season. Brown trout seem to be getting bigger in the larger rivers. Most of the brown trout harvested over the past 20 years were caught in or near Sturgeon Bay, Door County, and Brown trout are also targeted and caught by Lake Michigan anglers, and mixed bags are common!
Lake Michigan Tributary Streams, Mani-
towoc, Kewaunee and Door counties Lake Michigan tributary stream fishing in 2013 will again offer anglers a wide variety of fishing opportunities. Anglers looking for ice fishing opportunities for steelhead and brown trout could try fishing the lower reaches of the larger rivers such as the Mani-
towoc, Kewaunee and West Twin Rivers. Because ice conditions can vary greatly in these areas, check conditions before heading out on the ice. If weather conditions are on the warmer side, anglers could try fishing open water above the dams in Mishicot and Photo that can be very productive for steel-
head and brown trout. Following the spring melt, tributary fishing can provide a variety of fishing opportunities. At this time of year, anglers can hook steelhead, brown trout or northern pike in many tributaries. In normal years with low flow anglers should try fishing farther upstream in large rivers or in smaller tributaries to avoid the crowds. Suggested locations include the upper Manistee River, Branch River, Stony Creek or Whitefish Bay Creek. If 2013 is a low water year, the best bet will be fishing nearshore waters around the larger rivers, in-cluding the Manistowoc River, East and West Twin Rivers, Ahnapee River and the Ke-
wae River. With the onset of full spawn-
ing migration in mid-september, tributary fishing can be fantastic! If lake level and stream flows are good, fishing should be excellent in most streams. For a little more solitude, try fishing smaller streams such as Hobbys Creek, Stony Creek, Silver Creek and East River. Anglers can find large numbers of steelhead in these areas. At this time of year, anglers can hook steelhead, brown trout or northern pike in many tributaries.
Lake Michigan Chinook salmon fishing on Lake Michigan was exceptional during 2012, and many anglers anticipate another good season for 2013. The best months for catch Chinooks are generally May-August, for open water trolling, and September-October for near-
shore and stream fishing. For bait, anglers commonly use dead salmon, sturgeon, and carp, trolled over a depth of water (total depth), with baits set at various depths below the surface depending on the water tem-
peratures, currents, and winds. Chinooks can also be caught near-shore from boats, docks and harbors, and through near-shore op-
portunities are generally best during spring and fall when near-shore conditions are cool, or during west winds when cool water is blown near-shore. Chinook fishing near-shore can also be good during the fall when mature Chinooks migrate into rivers for spawning. For boat, shore anglers commonly use salmon, live bait, spooms, and stick-
bait. Many opportunities are available for Chinook anglers along Lake Michigan’s entire shoreline, including many public boat launch facilities, harbors, piers, and charters. In addition to Chinook, other species including steelhead, lake trout, and brown trout are also targeted and caught by Lake Michigan anglers, and mixed bags are common!
produced an average catch rate of 1,200 trout per mile. These surveys consistently confirmed that streams 2 and 20 inches with an average length of 11 inches and 12 inches or larger. The minimum length limit on brown trout is 12 inches and the daily bag limit is 3. The Waupaca River, Menominee County. The blackwater of Portage County. Each fall the trout in the Tomorrow River are harvested. The majority of these two streams designated as trout water are within the state-owned McKee Creek Wildlife Area. Extensive trout habitat was conducted in recent years on McKee Creek downstream of Little River and on the Clam River upstream of 60th Street.

North Fork of the Clam Creek, Burnett County

The North Fork of the Clam Creek flows from the headwaters to Spencer Lake. During summer and fall surveys 2012, 32% of the catchable size brown trout were larger than 10 inches and 12 inches or larger. Twenty-eight fish were caught in the 12-inch or larger category. The brown trout were the most abundant of the three species and density was calculated to be 427 fish/mile. The average size changes, improvement of best management practices, and management of the Harvesting effort, the Steiner Branch now supports an extensive stream restoration program with stocking. For anglers looking to catch a brook trout, the Waupaca River Fishery Area is comprised of DNR managed lands county Hwy J. Fordham Creek is one of the best brown trout streams in the state. It contains brook, brown, and rainbow trout. Trout stocking work was completed in the summer of 2009.

Tomorrow River, Portage County

Each fish species in the Tomorrow River are surveyed. Surveys for 2012 indicate brown trout below Nesbuela are the highest they have been since 2005. We estimated the population at 1000 trout/mile, an increase over the previous 3 years when the average was 800 trout/mile. Above Nesbuela brown trout averaged 600 trout/mile. Brook trout in the river have generally been stable at about 100 trout/mile below Nesbuela, and 200 trout/mile above Nesbuela. In general, 80-90% of the brown trout in this entire reach were greater than 6 inches. Length weighted mean length was 8.6 inches (3.7 inches). Brook trout were also abundant, and 3 fish is in total. The Tomorrow River can be accessed downstream from the county Hwy J and from parking areas along the Richland Fishery Area. In 2012 two habitat projects were completed on the River, Lake, the Waupaca River Fishery Area. Project one was the addition of 800 feet of wing deflectors, and 800 feet of stream corridor bracing. The Water Street bridge that has a hard shoulder for easy access and several spurs to access the stream. The Waupaca River Fishery Area is comprised of DNR managed lands of harvestable fish were removed from the Waupaca River during recent surveys. The Waupaca River is a small stream managed primarily through stocking, and an extensive stream restoration program with stocking.

Clam River in 2 mile stretch; McKenney Creek 4 mile stretch. These streams have healthy populations of brook trout and brown trout. The Clam River upstream of Lake Meyers had nearly 500 brook trout per mile and McKenney Creek had 300 brown trout per mile. Brook trout average size is 3 inches. The daily bag limit is 5 fish. Daily bag limit allows. Anglers can access McKenney Creek off Highway W, and access the Clam River from 60th Street. The largest of these two streams designated as trout water are within the state-owned McKenney Creek Wildlife Area. As such, anglers have near-endless opportunities in a pristine area. Extensive trout habitat was conducted in recent years on McKenney Creek downstream of Little River and on the North Fork of the Clam River upstream of 60th Street.

Clam Creek and McKenney Creek, Florence County

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A satisfied trout angler and his catch from Rovean Creek. Columbia County. Photo - Nate Nye.

**Trout Fisheries in SW Wisconsin**

The trout populations of SW Wisconsin have been on a historic high for the past several years now – increased precipitation in recent years and more environmentally friendly land use in the watersheds which has led to increased ground water and subsequent increased spring flow and stream base flows resulting in more trout streams, more miles of trout water per stream, and better trout water quality for miles of trout streams. At the same time, better trout habitat as a result of numerous trout habitat improvement projects undertaken in recent years, effective targeted regulations, increased C&R practices of large numbers of anglers, conversion from “Do- mestic” trout to wild trout, dramatic increase in natural reproduction has resulted in end of season trout populations being tenfold or greater than historically. In fact, the trout populations at the end of the season are basically the same both for numbers and size structure as they are at the start of the season.

In other words, great trout fishing from the start of the season and throughout the season to the end of the season.

As a result of this spectacular fishing opportunity, there has been a dramatic increase in trout angling effort in the area. In fact, the most frequent question asked regarding trout fishing in the area is “Where can I go to get away from the other trout anglers?” This means that at least on the weekends, “There is nowhere. You just have to deal with it.” trout anglers have a significant amount of public access on our most important trout streams, we need to have a lot more. We have for some time had an aggressive program to procure public fishing access on our trout streams and this effort continues today. It is the single most important thing that we can currently do for trout anglers utilizing this part of the state.

Trout streams in Dane County

Welcome to the best trout fishing in the last 2 decades! Despite drought conditions that made summer 2012 fishing difficult, 2013 promises to be outstanding for trout anglers within driving distance to Dane county. Boosted by recent instream habitat project, excellent water quality, Dane county trout populations are robust and characterized by abundant, heavy, solid fish. Work in 2012 occurred on Kittleson Valley Creek, the upper reaches of Big Spring Creek, and lower Black Earth Creek near Mazomanie. Excellent access by both DNR and Dane County provide opportunities on small brook trout systems as well as the larger, well known waters such as Mt. Vernon Creek. A few exceptions, virtually all Dane County waters are under a 9” minimum length and 3 fish daily bag harvest regulation. Additionally, 4 area ponds get first time trout fisherman into the action with stockings for young anglers to enjoy.

Big Green Lake, Green County

7,346 acres. Wisconsin’s deepest inland lake and one of only a few that contain lake trout, contains a healthy, stocked lake trout fishery. These fish are slow growing, but long lived. Fish from recent surveys measured 11.5” to 33.5” in length with an average length of 19.8”. 99% of fish sampled were of quality size (20”) or better. Lake trout season opens the first Saturday in January and runs through September 30th. Daily bag limit is 2 and the length limit is 17”. There are a number of developed landings around the lake and in the City of Green Lake. Some of these landings do require a fee.

Florence County waters

This part of Wisconsin has many options for stream trout fishing. Lamont, Tangier, Woods and Wisconsin Creeks tend to have some of the highest brook trout abundance and are good places to look for action. The larger rivers (Brule, Pine and Popple) run too warm to hold high numbers, but certain areas can surprise you. The larger rivers are a great place to go for a paddle and look for a trophy brown or brook trout. Stop at the Wild Rivers Interpretive Center (corner of US2 and HWY 70) to plan your next trip.

Elyv and Brule creeks, Forest County

Forest County has a number of great trout streams. Some of the most popular are Elyv and Brule Creeks near the town of Atvi. The upstream sections of these streams tend to support high numbers of brook trout. Both of these streams have had a lot of habitat improvement work over the past few decades, including a long stretch downstream of where these two streams meet. This stretch holds predominately brown trout, while the upper stream featured large fish gutted up to 25 inches during a 2012 survey.

Get the lead out!

Please consider using non-lead tackle. dnr.wi.gov for more information