

# GO WILD Wisconsin Anglers!

Get your license to outdoor adventure



# THE WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT



Spring 2016 An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management program [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org)

## FISH ON...WISCONSIN!



Take Me Fishing Photo

### 2016 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout  
January 2 (5 a.m.) to May 6

General Hook and Line Inland  
May 7 to March 5, 2017

General Inland Trout  
May 7 (5 a.m.) to Oct. 15

Largemouth Bass  
Northern Zone Harvest  
May 7 to March 5, 2017

Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone Catch-and-Release  
May 7 to June 17

Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone Harvest  
June 18 to March 5, 2017

Large and Smallmouth Bass  
Southern Zone  
May 7 to March 5, 2017

Musky – Northern Zone  
May 28 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone  
May 7 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike  
May 7 to March 5, 2017

Walleye  
May 7 to March 5, 2017

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)  
Sept. 3 to Sept. 30

Free Fishing Weekend  
June 4 - 5, 2016 summer  
January 21 - 22, 2017 winter



### Dear WISCONSIN ANGLER

#### What's NEW with fishing in 2016?

Well, for a start, I am. I'm Justine Hasz and I became the director of Wisconsin's fisheries program in August 2015. I am excited and proud to be working with Wisconsin's dedicated fisheries staff and serving customers like you.

We have several new regulations that could impact your fishing in 2016.

- Trout regulations have been overhauled with a new, simpler system to make your fishing experience easier and to give you more opportunities to get out and enjoy our coldwater resources.
- A new panfish alternate regulations initiative hopes to increase quality fishing experiences for our beloved panfish on about 100 lakes statewide.
- This past summer, trolling rules were implemented across Wisconsin with all counties allowed to troll at least one hook, bait or lure.

Finally, when you buy your license this year, you will notice that we're making it easier for you to enjoy the outdoors. **Go Wild** will now be your license to outdoor adventure in Wisconsin.

Enjoy your fishing in 2016, and remember...take someone with you.

Hope to see you on the water!

*Justine Hasz*

## What kind of angler are you?

Identifying angler behaviors and participation patterns will help grow the sport.

A recent study looked at fishing license data covering 2004-2013 for 12 states, including Wisconsin, to provide regionally and nationally representative portraits of anglers. Highlights included:

- **Anglers are not nearly as avid as we like to think.** Overall fishing participation is relatively stable from year to year, however, the pool of individual anglers actually fluctuates greatly—about the same number of people joins and leaves the angling population each year. The study showed those most likely to come and go are female anglers, those between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and residents of urban communities.
- **Die-hard anglers are a small group:** Out of the pool of roughly 33 million people who fish each year, only four percent of the licensed anglers purchase a fishing license every year (10 out of 10 years). Almost half of the anglers purchased a license only one out of 10 years.
- **Participation fluctuates greatly year-to-year:** Close to half of all licensed anglers do not renew their licenses in any given year. The typical angler buys

a license about three out of every 10 years throughout their fishing lifetime.

- **Female anglers lapse more:** In recent years, the growing number of female anglers has received a great deal of attention, but the percent leaving the sport is still about 13 percent higher than the rate for men.
- **Younger anglers lapse more:** About 39 percent of the anglers in the 55-64 age group leave the sport compared to about 55 percent among anglers 18-24 years of age.
- **Urban residents lapse more:** Residents of urban communities, who make up about 10 percent of the angling population, leave the sport about 13 percent higher than those anglers living in rural communities and about seven percent higher than those living in suburban communities.

American Sportfishing Association. "U.S. Angler Population: Who Comes and Who Goes." Report one of six in a series. Produced by Southwick Associates. September, 2015.

ALL GOOD THINGS IN MODERATION. EXCEPT FOR FISHING.

[takehomefishing.org](http://takehomefishing.org)



<http://www.pinterest.com/wdnr/>

F Y I

Find links to fishing licenses, season dates, regulations, where to fish and more at: [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org)



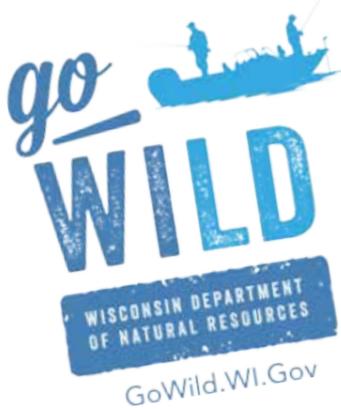
Find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/WIDNR](http://facebook.com/WIDNR))  
Watch us on YouTube ([youtube.com/user/WIDNRTV](http://youtube.com/user/WIDNRTV))



SIGN UP for Fisheries Updates. Go to [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org) to sign up and stay informed on fisheries issues.



Follow "fishwisconsin" on Twitter. Subscribe at [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org)



# Going Wild in 2016

**Looking for outdoor adventure?** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is making it easier than ever to get out and **Go Wild** by offering key licenses and registrations all in one place. The new **Go Wild** system puts a license to excitement right at your fingertips, 24 hours a day.

### Over the water and through the woods

Go hunt, go fish, head out on the trails or load up the boat. You can Go Wild with these activities and more. To start, simply visit GoWild.WI.Gov or stop at one of more than 1,000 DNR license sales vendors and customer service locations.

The new Go Wild system secures your license and registration information online and makes it available on your personal conservation card – no more worries about losing your one and only copy. GoWild.WI.Gov also acts as a portal to help you plan your adventure and make the most of Wisconsin's great outdoors.

## GO WILD (24-7, 365)

**Hunting licenses** - Deer, turkey, duck, pheasant, goose, small game and more

**Fishing licenses** - General licenses, inland trout stamp, Great Lakes salmon and trout, sturgeon hook and line and more

**Conservation Patron licenses** - Your best value, the Conservation Patron licenses include state trail passes and vehicle registration stickers

**Boat, ATV and UTV registrations**

**Trapping and harvesting licenses**

Are you ready to GO WILD?

Get set and go! DNR wants you to enjoy all the recreational options Wisconsin has to offer. From trophy hunting to world-class trout streams to an unparalleled network of state parks, trails and natural areas, you'll find endless opportunity for adventure.

## EAT FISH, BE HEALTHY

Eating your catch can be part of a healthy, balanced diet. Fish are generally low in unhealthy saturated fats and high in protein. Fish contain vitamins and minerals and are the primary food source for healthy omega-3 fats. Studies suggest that omega-3 fats may be beneficial during fetal brain and eye development, and eating modest amounts of fish containing these healthy fats may lower the risk of heart disease in adults. Health experts recommend that fish be included as part of a healthy diet.

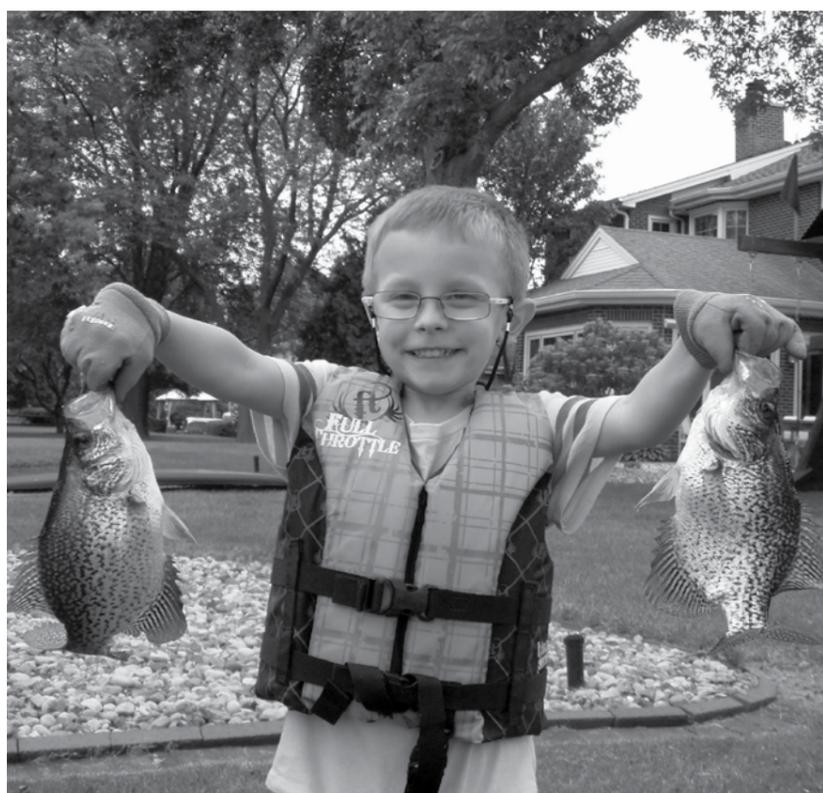
However, fish may take in pollutants from their environment and food. Mercury and PCBs are the contaminants of greatest concern in fish, prompting recommendations that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish from many waters throughout the nation. You can get the health benefits of eating Wisconsin's fish while also reducing potential health risks from unwanted pollutants by following Wisconsin's fish consumption guidelines.

**Safe-eating guidelines -**  
for most of Wisconsin's inland (non-great lakes) waters

<p><b>Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per week</b> - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per month</b> - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species.</p> <p><b>Do not eat - Muskies.</b></p>	<p><b>Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:</b></p> <p><b>Unrestricted*</b> - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p><b>1 meal per week</b> - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species;</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per month</b> - Muskies.</p>
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Exceptions to the safe-eating guidelines apply to 145 waterbodies including the Great Lakes, larger rivers, and some inland lakes where fish have been found to have higher concentrations of contaminants. For more information go to [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption)

Doctors suggest that eating 1-2 servings per week of low-contaminant fish or shellfish like this baked walleye can benefit your health. Little additional benefit is obtained by consuming more than that amount, and you should rarely eat more than 4 servings of fish within a week.



Fishing Wisconsin is fantastic fun. A young angler is all smiles with two black crappies caught from the west shore of Lake Winnebago. Photo: Dave Riess.

## Set the hook and reel in the rewards on a fantastic opportunity

The Guide to Wisconsin Hook and Line Fishing Regulations, 2017-2018 will once again contain a limited number of advertisements for sport fishing products and services at very attractive prices.

Think about it; a sale message would impact almost 1.3 million active, license carrying anglers in this vital long-lived medium (anglers refer to the publication throughout the year for season guidelines, bag and length limits). Don't miss this great opportunity to reach all of Wisconsin's anglers.....in one publication!

Advertising in the pamphlet is focused access to Wisconsin's large fishing market.... now over \$1.4 billion in direct expenditures strong. Your advertising message will be distributed to over a million of the state's most active anglers just as interest begins to build prior to the fishing season opener. Backed with high-demand circulation, the pamphlet is one of the most effective ways to reach Wisconsin's profitable angling market.

### Some important numbers

- Over 1.25 million licenses issued annually (9th highest in the nation)
- 2.3 billion fishing related economic activity and supports more than 21,500 jobs
- 337,000 nonresident anglers fished in Wisconsin in 2011, spending a total of 6.7 million days and \$211 million on retail goods.
- The average Wisconsin angler fishes for 18 days a year
- 3rd ranked nonresident fishing destination

The revenue generated through advertising is used to offset the cost of development, printing and distribution for the Department of Natural Resources and enables more funding to go directly back into Wisconsin fisheries management.

Advertising sales inquiries can be directed to: [karl.scheidegger@wisconsin.gov](mailto:karl.scheidegger@wisconsin.gov).



**FISH WISCONSIN!**  
Free Fishing Weekend • June 4-5, 2016



# New trout regulations and driving have something in common

## We asked:

In 2011, we solicited multiple forms of stakeholder input to review the inland trout fishing regulations. We conducted public meetings, an online survey, two mail surveys, and created a stakeholder task force.

## You spoke:

Trout anglers asked for more quality fishing opportunities, less confusing regulations and fewer special regulations.

## We listened:

- The early catch and release season, on inland streams and connected springs and spring ponds where it currently exists, will begin on the first Saturday in January and end on the Friday preceding the first Saturday in May at midnight.
- The harvest season will still begin at 5:00 AM on the first Saturday in May and has been expanded by two weeks from September 30 to October 15 on inland waters.
- The 5-day closure between early season and opening day has been eliminated.
- Categories for inland trout regulations have been reduced from 4 to 3 with the development of a:

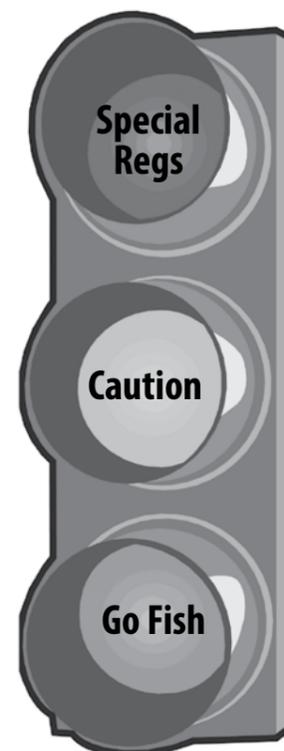


### STOP LIGHT CONCEPT

Inland waters have been assigned one of the following categories:  
**Green** = Go Fish – No length limit, bag limit 5, no bait restriction  
**Yellow** = Caution – 8-inch minimum length limit, bag limit 3, no bait restriction  
**Red** = Special regulations. Read and understand the regulations before fishing.

- Special regulation types have been reduced from over 40 to 10.
- Regulation changes on streams will have clear boundaries, such as road crossings.
- Inland lakes and ponds now have a consistent statewide open season from the first Saturday in May to the first Sunday in March and a daily bag and length limit that match the county base regulation.
- Great Lakes tributaries are now displayed in black in the regulation pamphlet to more easily identify those waters.

For details on the regulations and the trout regulation maps (with the green, yellow and red streams), please refer to the *Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations, 2016-2017* or the online version at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/regulations/troutregs.html>.



Trout anglers can now use the stoplight concept while fishing. Green streams are least restrictive, followed by yellow, with red streams the most restrictive (i.e., special regulations).

## Aquatic invasive species – preventing the spread

As we all start to plan for the upcoming season, it is important to consider how a few simple steps can help protect the lakes and rivers we love. Taking the time, every time you go fishing, to inspect your equipment; remove any attached plants, animals or mud; drain all water from equipment and livewells; and never moving live fish away from a body of water can help to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Invasive species can prevent us from enjoying our lakes and rivers by making boating, fishing and swimming difficult, if not impossible. Once introduced, the costs to manage invasive species are extremely high and eradication is often impossible. Wisconsin has more than 12,600 rivers and streams that flow through 15,000 lakes and millions of wetland acres, most of which do not currently have invasive species. This means there are a lot of lakes and rivers we can protect by taking actions to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

### What are aquatic invasive species?

Aquatic invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and pathogens that live in lakes or rivers that cause economic, environmental, and recreational harm, or affect human health. Examples of invasives currently in WI are: zebra mussels, round gobies, curly-leaf pondweed, rusty crayfish, and purple loosestrife. Species become invasive when they are introduced to a new environment where predators, parasites, or pathogens don't exist. They generally are also aggressive, reproduce quickly, mature early, and eat the food our native species need. These characteristics enable invasive species to outcompete our native plants and animals. By outcompeting natives, they open up additional habitat space for themselves. Aquatic invasive species have been brought to Wisconsin through human activities, including ballast water, the aquarium trade, and aquaculture. Once in Wisconsin, invasive species are easily moved around by hitching a ride on boats, trailers, boots, waders and other equipment, or in bait buckets and livewells.

### Tips for anglers to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species:

#### Boating anglers

Most boaters already perform the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! guidance of “Inspect, Remove, Drain, Never Move.” However, even boaters that diligently check their boats for invasive species may not know that the lower unit on outboard motors can carry enough water to transport thousands of zebra mussel veligers. After you remove your boat from a lake or river, drop your motor back down to a 90 degree angle to allow water to drain before securing the motor for the ride home.

#### Wading anglers

Several species, like New Zealand mudsnails and faucet snails, are small enough to fit in the tread of our boots and waders. To help prevent the spread small invaders, take extra care to inspect and remove any attached plants, animals or mud. It's helpful to carry a small stiff bristle brush in your vehicle to brush the dirt and small bits of materials out of the tread of boots and from in the nooks and crannies around shoe laces.



#### Shore anglers

There are several invasive species that can be difficult to see with the naked eye, including spiny waterfleas and zebra mussel veligers. Diseases and pathogens that kill or harm fish are also spread by transporting lake or river water. As a reminder, it is illegal to move water or live fish away from a lake or river. Transporting your catch on ice to keep it fresh is a good alternative.

#### Reporting

If you find a species that you think is invasive, report it by following the instructions listed on this DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/report.html>

- Korin Franklin

## Motor trolling now a state-wide option for Wisconsin anglers



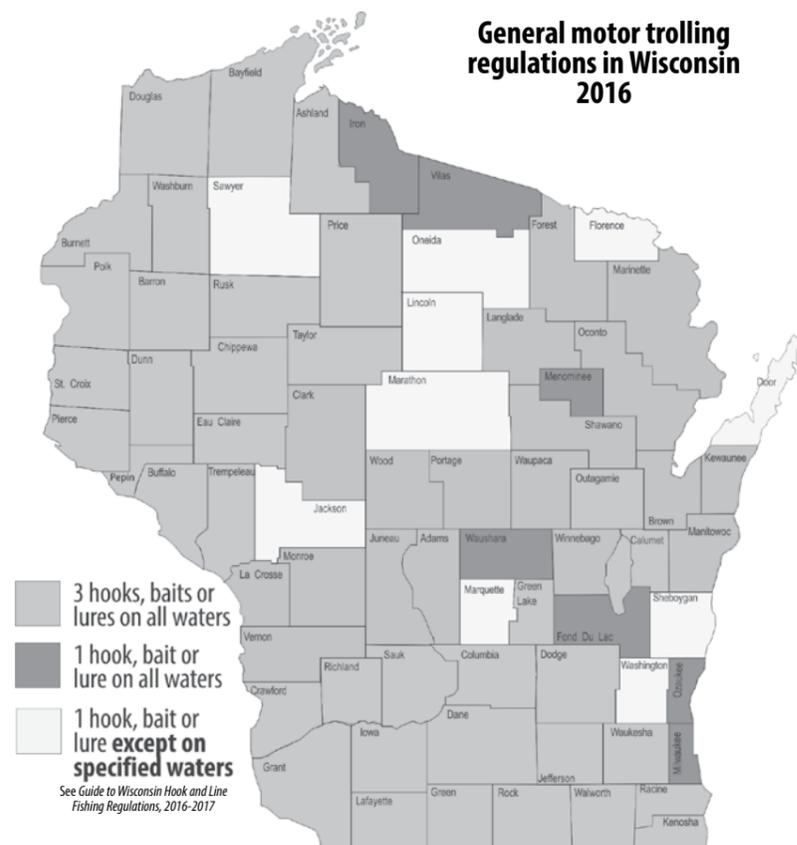
Motor trolling is trailing a lure, bait, or similar device used to attract or catch fish from a boat while being propelled (forwards or backwards) by a motor or a sail or while being towed by a boat being propelled by a motor or sail.

Motor trolling is legal on all inland waters with either:

- 1 hook, bait or lure/person: maximum of 2 lines trolled per boat or
- 3 hooks, baits or lures/person with no maximum number of lines per boat.

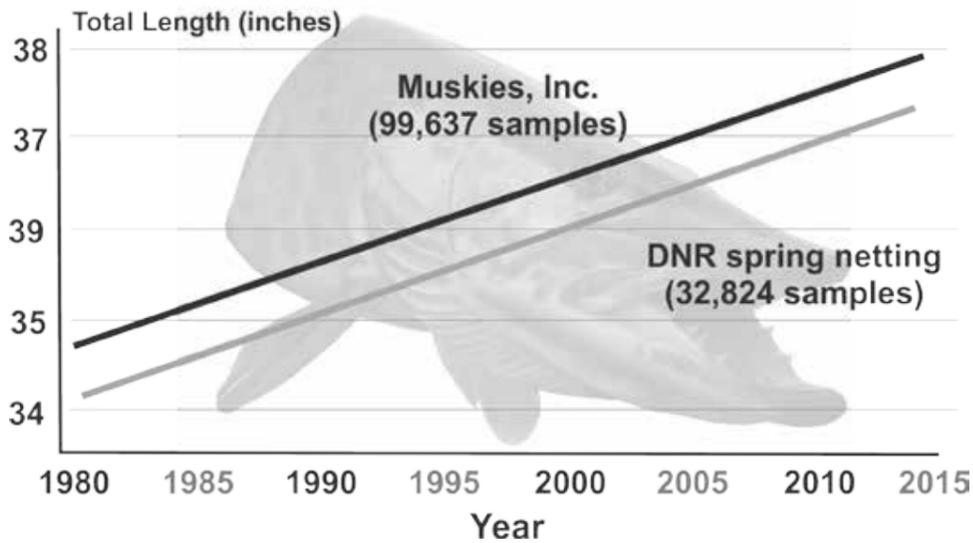
An angler who holds a disabled permit that authorizes trolling is not subject to the line restrictions. They and any assistant accompanying them in the same boat may troll in any way that does not exceed the 3 hooks, baits or lures restriction. A disabled trolling permit also allows the holder and an assistant to fish with an electric motor.

For additional information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “motor trolling”



## Muskellunge size is on the rise in Wisconsin

The prospects for muskellunge fishing throughout the state are excellent for 2016 and beyond. Trends in the average lengths of muskellunge captured in Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) spring netting surveys indicate that the size-structure of musky populations continues to improve. The average length of all muskies captured has increased steadily since at least 1985. Also, the percentage of 45" and larger muskies caught from Wisconsin waters has continued to increase through time. These trends are evident in WDNR spring netting surveys as well as catches registered by Muskies, Inc., members from Wisconsin waters. The trends between angler-caught fish and those caught by netting are very similar, indicating that Muskies, Inc., registration data are a very good indicator of changes seen in musky populations based on netting surveys.



## More panfish for the pan

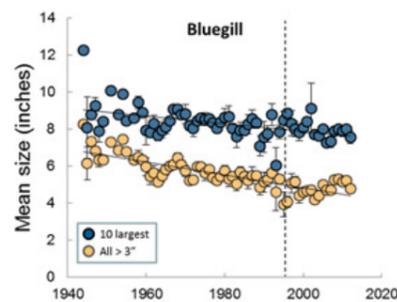
Between 2011 and 2014, fisheries biologists with the Department of Natural Resources solicited public input on all aspects of panfish management. They found that although anglers are not interested in sweeping changes to statewide panfish regulations, they are interested in addressing specific lakes with overharvest issues. With this in mind, the Department developed a regulation package to increase panfish size on close to 100 selected lakes where harvest appears to be a problem. The regulation package was supported at the 2015 spring hearings and will go into effect in April, 2016. A thorough evaluation will be conducted in 2021 and the findings shared with the public to decide what to do next.



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



Distribution of approximately 100 study lakes identified through fisheries biologists and angler surveys with populations of panfish that exhibited poor size and decent growth.



Decline in mean size of bluegill over time. Dashed vertical line indicates 1998 panfish bag limit change from 50 to 25.

### NEXT STEPS and EVALUATION

**April 1, 2016** – Regulations go into effect (pending NRB and governor approval)

**2019 – 2021** – Regulation evaluation sampling; electrofishing and angler surveys

**Fall/Winter 2021** – Initial evaluation complete, results distributed, public meetings held

### Proposed regulations

An effective regulation has to be restrictive enough to affect harvest but still be socially acceptable. Finding a regulation that strikes the balance between effectiveness and angler acceptance can be very challenging.

The following three options explore that tradeoff and will be applied to the study lakes (the lakes are all identified in the *Guide to Wisconsin Hook and Line Fishing Regulations, 2016+2017*):



*The panfish are stunted in this lake; we need to keep more fish!*

**Reality:** Stunting usually occurs because high numbers of small panfish lead to slow growth and then few large fish. There are multiple causes of stunted panfish populations, including a lack of predators, overabundant aquatic vegetation, or simply a big year class of fish. For bluegills, stunting can also occur if all the large males are harvested and smaller males opt to reproduce at a younger age as opposed to grow larger before reproducing. Reversing stunting can be difficult because there may be several reasons the fish are growing slow. Historically, the DNR encouraged anglers to harvest as many fish as possible to address stunting but this often does not work because anglers tend to keep the largest panfish they can catch. Thus, anglers are encouraged to keep small fish.

*Panfish are pretty much the same in every lake.*

**Reality:** The lakes across Wisconsin are incredibly variable and the panfish populations living in those lakes are just as variable. Panfish populations seem to vary most strongly with lake size, lake productivity, and angling pressure. How a panfish population responds to certain management actions will depend on a combination of those factors and one size rarely fits all. In some lakes, panfish have high levels of natural mortality and rarely live past nine—if anglers don't keep them they're lost. Yet in other lakes panfish grow to nearly 10 years old and a minimal amount of fishing pressure can totally change the population. While other lakes are highly productive and very large such that panfish can sustain excessive fishing pressure year after year and still provide a quality fishery.

*All bluegills grow at the same rate.*

**Reality:** Bluegills grow relatively fast in the first 3-5 years of life, but once they reach sexual maturity growth slows considerably because some energy is being diverted to reproduction. Bluegill growth rates vary by lake size, habitat, predator abundance and water temperature. In Wisconsin, bluegill can usually grow to

3–5 inches in 3 years and up to 8 inches in 7-9 years. In extreme cases, bluegill may reach 11 years. Bluegill ages are estimated by counting annular rings that form within various structures, much like rings in a tree. Scales are often used to determine bluegill age, because they can be easily removed without killing the fish. However, biologists also use otoliths (tiny bones in the fish's inner ear - see photo at right) to provide more accurate age estimates.

*Bluegill have simple life histories.*

**Reality:** Bluegill spawning begins as water temperatures warm into the upper-60's. Bluegills have one of the most complex and interesting spawning behaviors of all freshwater fish. Males build saucer shaped nests in the shallow water areas of lakes. Often many males will nest together in colonies. The largest males usually are set up in the middle of the colony. Females come in and pick out a male (or often several males) to pair up with and drop eggs. There are also male bluegills that are referred to as "sneakers" or "mimics". These smaller males do not build their own nests but will either "sneak" in to try and fertilize a female's eggs in another nest or will have the coloration to "mimic" a female allowing them to get in close enough to fertilize females in another nest.

*All panfish anglers are alike and they all want the same thing.*

**Reality:** We conducted a panfish angler survey from mid-February 2013 to the end of April 2013. The responses were diverse. About one-third of the anglers are satisfied with the numbers of panfish they catch, one-third are not, and the remaining are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Some anglers prefer to catch a lot of fish that are smaller in size, while others prefer to catch fewer fish that are larger in size. Almost one-half of the respondents are satisfied with the current regulation. The other half would like to see a regulation change. All panfish anglers who responded to the survey are not the same. The survey will be used to develop a panfish management plan and address the diversity of angler preferences and opportunities.

# Fabulous Fisheries Projects

## Replacing old structures improves trout habitat

Upper Big Roche-A-Cri Creek is a Class 1 trout stream in the central sands area of Waushara and Adams counties. The stream contains a very strong naturally reproducing population of brook trout. Brown trout are present, but in limited numbers. The stream has been a target for public land acquisition (Big Roche a Cri State Fishery Area) and is one of the more popular streams throughout central Wisconsin.

During the summers of 1979 and 1980 a very intensive trout habitat development project was completed on a 4,700 foot portion of the upper part of the stream. Work that was completed included the installation of forty three jetted overhead bank covers totaling two thousand three hundred eight feet. Many rock wing deflectors and brush bundles were installed. During the fall of 2012, on an annual shocking run, it was documented that nearly 75 percent of the installed structures were failing and should be replaced. Not only was it visually unappealing, but structures were not providing habitat for fish.



The Wisconsin Rapids trout team replaced 25 of the original 43 structures on upper Big Roche-A-Cri Creek.

Beginning in the summer of 2014 and continuing through the summer of 2015, the Wisconsin Rapids trout team removed nearly all of the failing covers. New materials were brought in to replace the old covers. Due to maintenance issues for the future, many areas that previously had overhead covers were left alone. Some of the previous structures were removed and then replaced with logs for overhead cover. The team replaced 25 of the 43 original covers, totaling 1,184 feet in length. Other improvements that were made to the stream included the installation of 24 logs to provide overhead cover, 30 boulders, 2 rock deflectors, 6 root wads, 2 digger logs, 5 plunge pools and 3 half logs. *Jason Spaeth, Fisheries technician, Wisconsin Rapids*

## Realigning a Mole

Cooperating Partners: Ozaukee County Fish Passage Program

Location: Hillcrest Road, Saukville, Ozaukee County

The purpose of this project is to improve the ecological function of a 0.6 mile reach of Mole Creek and its floodplain within state owned easements. The project improves habitat for a cool-cold water aquatic community including trout. Historic stream channelization to accommodate agricultural land uses is one of the most significant



factor limiting the streams potential. During the late summer/early fall of 2014 and 2015, Plymouth fisheries technicians excavated a new stream channel. The new channel was constructed off-line to minimize impacts to the flowed channel. Once excavation was complete the new meandering channel was put online and the old agricultural ditch was filled in. An ongoing vegetative management plan is in place to restore a forested riparian corridor, replacing or reducing the existing reed canary grass. *Will Wawrzyn, Travis Motl and Tanya Meives*

## Timber! – tree drops create fish habitat

A tree drop project was conducted on Lake Eau Claire during the fall of 2015 to help restore large woody habitat that has been lost by logging and shoreline devolvement. The WDNR work with the Lake Eau Claire Association to drop 50 trees along the shoreline that will provide critical spawning, nursery and adult fish habitat as well as resting and loafing habitat for wildlife. Large wood habitat is particularly important to fish in Lake Eau Claire because of the lack of aquatic vegetation due to the stained water and sandy substrate. The trees will also provide a buffer from wave action, which will help prevent erosion improving water quality. - *Joseph Gerbyshak, fisheries biologist, Eau Claire*



Felled trees that will provide vital habitat for fish and wildlife in Lake Eau Claire.

## Wood and trout make a great combination

In September 2015, the Wild Rose Habitat Operations crew utilized woody debris to improve trout habitat and navigability on one mile of the South Branch Oconto River, a Class 1 trout stream. The crews used chainsaws and gas-powered winches to cut and reposition trees to make the woody debris



Cutting and repositioning trees on the South Branch of the Oconto River, 2015

more beneficial as trout habitat in the stream. Many of the trees were willows planted in the 1930's and 1940's that have fallen or were leaning into the stream, impeding navigation and creating wider, shallower areas. Crews will tackle another section of the South Branch Oconto in 2016. This project was funded by inland Trout Stamp funds.



The new fishing pier is delivered to the Chippewa Flowage and awaits deployment in spring of 2016.

## Accessible fishing pier coming to the Chippewa Flowage in 2016

The Chippewa Flowage is one of Wisconsin's most historic fisheries and it's about to get a little easier to access. The Department of Natural Resources, with support from several local partners, has purchased an accessible fishing pier that will be in place for the start of the 2016 open water season. The pier will be located at the CC North Boat Landing in Dorazio Bay. This is a fantastic location in the spring for panfish, bass, and even musky. This pier is a great addition to the Chippewa Flowage which is the original home of Fishing Has No Boundaries, a now nation-wide organization focused on getting anglers with disabilities out fishing.



Largemouth bass and walleye utilizing the "fish sticks" just a few weeks after they were installed in Keyes Lake. (Photo Credit: Eric Engbretson - [www.underwaterfishphotos.com](http://www.underwaterfishphotos.com))

## Keyes Lake "Fish Stick" Project

A "Fish Stick" project was completed in February 2015 in an attempt to improve the near shore fish habitat of Keyes Lake in Florence County. Approximately 200 trees were taken from an upland source and moved to 8 designated sites on the lake. This addition of near shore woody structure will benefit the fish and wildlife community that uses Keyes Lake with the main intent to increase natural reproduction and abundance of bluegill, black crappie and largemouth bass.

This project could not have been completed without the help of Florence County and the Keyes Lake Association. Florence County Forestry and Parks donated the trees, had the trees cut, and donated the heavy equipment and manpower to move trees. The Keyes Lake Association purchased anchoring materials and donated a lot of manpower to this project.

## Science in the spotlight

### Do stricter angling regulations increase the size of northern pike?

Minimum length limits combined with reduced bag limits were initiated in 1995 to try to improve size-structure in Wisconsin's Northern Pike populations. So how did these stricter regulations work? Fisheries Research and Fisheries Management biologists evaluated the effectiveness of a 26 inch-two fish daily bag limit (26/2) and a 32 inch-one fish daily bag limit (32/1) in contrast to a less stringent no-minimum length-5 daily bag limit, the statewide regulation prior to 1995 and the current northern Wisconsin regulation. They used average length and maximum length (average of top ten largest pike sampled in each lake) to assess size-structure changes un-

der the stricter regulations. In comparison with the no- minimum regulation, the 26/2 regulation lakes showed a modest 1/2-inch increase in mean length but no change in maximum length. The 32/1 regulation improved maximum size by over 4" but had no measurable effect on average length. It appears that higher minimum lengths and reduced bag limits can improve some aspects of Northern Pike size-structure in some but probably not all Wisconsin lakes. Analyses are underway to better understand which kinds of lakes are most likely to benefit from stricter northern pike regulations. *Dan Oele and Andrew Rypel, Science Services*

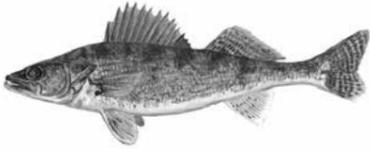


# The fish are waiting

## Where is your fishing adventure going to take you in 2016?

Want more information? Contact the local fisheries biologist [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html)

### WALLEYE



#### ■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

**Chequamegon Bay Lake Superior.** Walleye catch rates have increased recently with the majority of walleye being around 17 inches. This is likely a result of recent stocking in the Chequamegon Bay. 5 in total, only 1 over 20 inches. Minimum length limit 15 inches. Access information: [http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/sl/?Viewer=Boat\\_Access](http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/sl/?Viewer=Boat_Access) Chequamegon Bay has a history of producing walleye over 25 inches.

**Diamond Lake** - 341 acres. A spring survey in 2015 found 90% of walleye over 20 inches with few fish less than 20 inches. The adult population was estimated at 1.3 per acre and is considered low. The lake presents a good opportunity to catch a trophy size walleye to photo and release. Diamond Lake has a boat ramp off of Pioneer Road. Regulation: 15-inch minimum with 20 to 28 inches protected and only one over 28 inches. - *Scott Toshner, fisheries biologist, Brule.*

#### ■ BROWN, OCONTO and MARINETTE COUNTIES

**Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay.** Strong spring walleye runs are common on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo rivers providing anglers ample opportunities to catch large numbers of migrating walleye. Because access points in many of these rivers open in early March, hardy anglers brave cold temperatures to have the opportunity to catch many walleye and perhaps the "big" one. Most anglers jig or cast baits slowly for walleye in early spring. Late spring or summer anglers should try trolling near Geano Beach, off the Menominee River or along reefs on the east shore of Green Bay for the best fishing. The size of these walleye can be impressive with the largest fish over 30 inches and weighing in at over 10 pounds. The rules vary by location and anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Wisconsin-Michigan Boundary, Tributary Streams to Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pam-



Zach Lawson, DNR fisheries biologist from Mercer, holds a nice Iron County walleye collected from a Spring 2015 survey.

phlet for season and harvest rules. There are many good boat launches in the area. Good shore fishing opportunities exist on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo rivers. Check the Lake Michigan page for access information. [www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html) Walleye from the exceptionally large 2013 year class will be of legal size this year resulting in high catch rates of 15"-18" fish. Anglers may need to sort through many smaller fish to catch larger walleye. Results from 2015 fall electroshocking young of year surveys indicate that the 2015 year class of walleye was average on Green Bay while the 2015 year class of walleye from the Fox River was below average. Despite only fair recruitment in 2015, the walleye fishery on the Fox River and Green Bay should be very good for many years.

#### ■ CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

**The Winnebago System** includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System walleye population continues to be one of the top producing walleye fisheries in the nation and should continue to produce great fishing opportunities in 2016! Fisheries staff tagged 2,752 male walleye and 437 female walleye in the Wolf River during the spring electrofishing assessment. The spring assessment data indicate a balanced size structure with numerous strong year classes of mature walleyes. Fisheries staff also conducted the annual Lake Winnebago trawling assessment that targets young of the year fishes, including walleye. The trawling survey indicated three strong walleye year classes in the system: 2008, 2011, and 2013. The strong 2008 (2nd highest year class on record) and 2011 year classes have been contributing to the fishery, but the 2013 year class (3rd highest year class on record) will add to the fishery soon. Anglers reported catching many 10-12 inch walleye throughout the summer due to the strong 2013 year class. Therefore, exceptional fishing opportunities for "eater" sized walleye should continue to persist throughout the Winnebago System in 2016 and there should also be ample opportunities to catch larger fish over 20". The 2015 bottom trawling survey also indicated a below average year in forage base numbers, thus walleye may be more willing to take the bait in 2016. The system is open year round for walleye and sauger. There is a combined daily bag limit of 5 fish, of which only 1 may be a sauger. There is no minimum length limit for either species. There are numerous access points around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>). DNR fisheries staff has tagged walleye annually on the Winnebago System since 1993. In that time span, 158,638 walleye have been tagged on the system. The walleye tagging program relies on anglers to report any tagged fish they catch by mailing them to the Oshkosh DNR office (625 East County Road, Y Oshkosh WI 54901) or emailing them to [dnrwinnebagosystem-tagreturns@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrwinnebagosystem-tagreturns@wisconsin.gov). Anglers are en-



Is there a state record walleye on the loose? Fisheries technician Brad Betthausen holds a 17.5-pound walleye that was netted Dec. 16 in Lake Wazee in Jackson County. The unofficial weight of the fish was one-half pound short of the state record set in 1933.

couraged to check their walleye catch for tags and report them properly. Anglers that return tags can expect a mailed certificate that provides information about the tagged fish they caught.

#### ■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**Lake Wissota** - 6,148 acres. Lake Wissota consistently has excellent natural reproduction of walleye making for a stable walleye fishery. It was estimated from a 2015 fisheries survey that Lake Wissota contains 1.3 walleye per acre. This may seem low compared to other lakes, but after studying a contour map, unproductive water can be quickly eliminated making for a successful fishing trip. There are also trophy fish to be had on Lake Wissota with walleye up to 10 pounds caught in the survey. No minimum length, but walleye from 14" to 18" may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 18 is allowed. The daily bag limit is 3. Access information: There are 7 boat landings - *Joseph Gerbyshak, fisheries biologist, Eau Claire*

#### ■ CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE, MONROE and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**Upper Black River** (above Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and **lower Black River** (below Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. **Black River, upper and lower:** based on electrofishing results and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate was up slightly at 5.7/mile in 2015 as compared to 4.3/mile in 2014. Catch rate was also up for legal size (15") and larger fish at 1.3/mile in 2015 over 0.9/mile in 2014. Lower river total catch rate was down at 6/mile in 2015 compared to 11.8/mile in 2014. Catch rate for legal (15") and larger fish was also down in 2015 at 2/mile compared to 3.6/mile in 2014. Maximum size fish captured in 2015 was 28.9 inches. 15" minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit. A tagging study was initiated for lower Black River walleyes in 2008 and continued into 2015. Please report catching any tagged walleyes. More tag returns will improve results and guide future management of the lower Black River. - *Dan Hatleli, fisheries biologist, Black River Falls.*

#### ■ CRAWFORD and VERNON COUNTIES

**Mississippi River Pool 9** - Over a three day period in October 2015, DNR electrofishing crews collected three hundred and forty-two adult walleye by electrofishing at night in the near-shore areas and around winddams. In our sample, adult walleye were between 10 to 27-inches with the largest measuring 27.5-inches. Catch-per-unit-effort was approximately ninety-eight adult walleye per hour. Our fall young-of-year (YOY) survey results in Pool 10 showed very good reproduction during the spring of 2015 with catch rates at 166 YOY walleye per hour, which is the second best year for walleye reproduction since 1993. The Mississippi River is open year round for walleye. The daily bag limit is 6 fish with a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye. There are many boat



Patrick Short, DNR fisheries biologist assisting from Crawford County, holds a 20+ inch walleye captured and released in the St. Louis River, Douglas County, during a spring 2015 survey. Photo: Paul Piszczek.

and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. Check out the following websites for more details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html). The waters of Pool 9 are part of the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America. The refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa



River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois and has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) and a Globally Important Bird Area.

## ■ DOOR and KEWAUNEE COUNTIES

**Green Bay waters** - The rate of walleyes caught per hour in Green Bay waters of Door and Kewaunee Counties continues at a high level relative to the 20 year running average. Although 2013 catch rates dropped below the 20 year average of 0.15 walleyes per hour fished, 2014 rebounded to 0.28 walleyes per hour fished. Success in this area is likely due largely to periods of very good walleye natural reproduction in other portions of Green Bay and its tributaries over the last 15 years. Furthermore, walleyes recruited from the Sturgeon Bay area are likely contributing to the fishery



Sam Hetzel, Creel clerk with a 27.3-inch walleye from a fyke netting survey on the Island Chain of Lakes, Rusk County. Photo taken by Evan Sniadajewski.

based on results from the last Sturgeon Bay spawning assessment in 2013. Although the 2015 fall young-of-the-year survey turned up few walleyes recruiting from the local population, 2013 and 2014 young-of-year indices were the highest measured over the last eight years in Sturgeon Bay and suggest these years will contribute well to the future of the adult population. Local recruitment as well as good to excellent walleye production in recent years from other parts of Green Bay and its tributaries, particularly the very strong 2013 year class, indicates the forecast for walleye fishing in this area looks promising. The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Tributary Streams to Green Bay and Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are many boat launches in the area including several in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay; Peninsula State Park is one of the sites that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess> for a listing of some of the launches in the area. Some of the better shore fishing sites can be found around the city of Sturgeon Bay and along Potawatomi State Park early in the fishing season.

## ■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

**St. Louis River and Estuary** - 12,000 acres. Spring 2015 adult index survey showed a good population with abundant legal-sized fish; Most walleye captured and released during the survey ranged from 18-27 inches. Average length of all walleye captured and released was 23 inches, and female walleye were generally larger than male walleye. Season opens May 14 through March 1; 15-inch minimum length; daily limit is two fish. Best access points are Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of

Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> for complete information. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. The estuary's walleye population is surveyed and managed collaboratively with Minnesota DNR. From 1989 through 1993, Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR stocked over 450,000 fingerling walleye. Minnesota DNR continued stocking fry annually until 2006.

**Upper St. Croix Lake** - 855 acres. A spring survey in 2015 found 20% of walleye over 20 inches with good numbers of fish under 20 inches. The adult population was estimated at 2.9 per acre. Upper St. Croix has a DNR ramp off Hwy A, and an additional 4 boat launches mostly on the west side of the lake. Regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit with 20 to 24" protected slot limit.

## ■ FLORENCE COUNTY

**Brule River Flowage** - 550 acres. Approximately 1/2 of this flowage is considered MI water. A 2015 survey showed a moderate abundance of walleye (2.8 adults/acre) with approximately 53% of the fish being > 15 inches. 15-inch minimum length limit. There is one public landing at the mouth of the Brule River (just north of the town of Florence). This flowage is where the Brule River (WI) and the Paint River (MI) meet and form the Menominee River. The southern half of the flowage can be fished with either a WI or MI license, but the northern half requires a MI license to fish.

## ■ FOREST COUNTY

**Lake Metonga** - 2,157 acres. A 2013 survey showed a high abundance of walleye (4.9 adults/acre) with approximately 56% of the fish being > 15 inches. 15-inch minimum with a 20 to 24 inch protected slot with one fish over 24 inches allowed. There are two public boat landings (one just south of town on the north shore and one at the campground on the south shore). A decade ago this walleye fishery was nearly non-existent. A walleye rehabilitation plan which included removing over 25,000 bullheads from the lake was carried out by the Mole Lake Chippewa Community. Since the removal, walleye reproduction has taken off producing a very impressive walleye population.

## ■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Lake Koshkonong/Rock River** - 10,000 lake acres plus 27+ river miles. Fall 2015 sampling yielded 6 young-of-the-year (YOY) walleye per mile, compared to 8/mile in 2014, and 2013's record high of 104 per mile. 2013's large year-class will provide excellent fishing opportunities in 2016. The sauger population also has several good year-classes present for anglers to enjoy. Seasons are open year-round on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all game-fish except muskellunge. 15-inch minimum length, 5 fish daily bag on walleye. Best access points are Royce Dalman County Park, Groeller Road, Klemmer Park and the City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam. Through the assistance of local cooperative groups, the DNR's Bark River Hatchery stocked 2,120,134 walleye fry and 634,487 northern pike fry into Lake Koshkonong/Rock River in 2015.

## ■ LANGLAGE COUNTY

**Enterprise Lake** - 505 acres with a good naturally reproducing population; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily limit but only 1 over 24"; Angler reports have been good and suggest the walleye population is growing as expected under the current regulation.



Fisheries technician, Josh Kucko, with a nice Pipe Lake walleye during the spring 2015 fyke netting survey.

**Rose Lake** - 112 acres with a stocked population estimated in 2015 surveys at 0.9 adults per acre with the bulk of the fish in the 17-27" range; 18" length limit, 3 daily bag limit.

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Wisconsin River and its impoundments** (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions) - about 5,000 acres of prime, naturally reproducing walleye water; Seasons, length limits, and bag limits vary on this system, please refer to the regulations pamphlet for water specific regulations; Adult population estimates range from 2 to 6 per acre.

**Rice Reservoir** (Lake Nokomis System) - 2,274 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily bag limit but only 1 over 24"; 2012 adult population estimate of 3.0 per acre at full pool.

**Spirit Reservoir** - 1,667 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily bag limit but only 1 over 24"; 2005 adult population estimate of 2.9 per acre.

**Jersey City Flowage** - 404 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily bag limit but only 1 over 24"; 2015 adult population estimate of 5.2 per acre with the bulk of the population in the 13-20" range

## ■ MARATHON and PORTAGE COUNTIES

**Stevens Point Flowage** - 2,000 acres. Stevens Point Flowage was surveyed in 2015. A total of 1025 walleye were captured at a rate of 3.2 fish per net-night. A total of 57% of the fish caught were larger than 15 inches and 37% were within the harvest slot (15 to 20 inches), and 2% were 28 inches or larger. Fall recruitment electrofishing showed an abundance of 41 young-of-year walleye per mile. These results suggest a stable population in the Wisconsin River, and other fall recruitment work confirms these results.



Evan Sniadajewski, Fishery technician; 26.5-inch walleye from early spring fyke nets in Rib Lake, Taylor County. Photo taken by Jeff Scheirer

Year-round season, harvest slot 15"-20", fish 20" to 28" may not be kept and only one fish over 28" is allowed, bag limit is 5 fish total. Access: Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through the DNR online boating access site. Access to the Stevens Point Flowage is available at several boat landings and parks. Shore fishing is available at Bukolt Park in

the City of Stevens Point and this site offers excellent springtime walleye action. Maps are available through the DNR online boating access site.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Bearskin & Mercer lakes** 400 and 257 acres. Spring surveys found abundant walleye centered on 12 inches in both lakes with good numbers of fish under 16 inches. The adult population was estimated at 8.9 per acre on Bearskin. Bearskin has a DNR ramp off Lakewood Road, while Mercer Lake only has walk-in or resort access, with a future ramp proposed on DNR land. Regulation: no minimum length limit, but only 1 walleye may be over 14 inches.

**Bolger Lake** - 119 acres. We estimated an adult walleye population of 4.6 per acre, excellent numbers for a stocked fishery. Most fish were between 12 and 18 inches. Regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit with 20 to 24" protected slot limit.

**Spider Lake** - 123 acres. We found fair numbers of 13 to 17-inch walleye and estimated the adult population at 2.8 per acre. Regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit with 20 to 24" protected slot limit.

## ■ POLK COUNTY

**Pipe and North Pipe lakes** - 357 acres (combined) A 2015 fisheries survey indicated a lower density adult walleye population for the two lakes combined (0.8 fish per acre) with respectable size structure. There were 168 walleye captured during the fyke netting survey and 42% were 18 inches or larger. The walleye fishery in Pipe and North Pipe lakes is managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. There is one public boat landing located between the two lakes off 220th Ave. There are also several state-owned islands on the south end of Pipe Lake, which make an excellent spot for taking a lunch break. The Pipe Lake protection district worked with the Wisconsin DNR and a private contractor during the winters of 2013 and 2015 to install twelve fish stick complexes (approximately 70 whole trees) around the state-owned islands on the south end of the lake. These structures replicate naturally-fallen trees and make excellent fish habitat.

## ■ SAWYER COUNTY

**Grindstone Lake** is a deep, clear, 3,176 acre natural lake in Sawyer County that is known as a great walleye destination. Recent surveys found fyke net catches of walleye that averaged 29 adult fish per net night with 71% being over 15 inches. The population is supported by strong natural recruitment and is managed with a 14-18 inch protected slot, where anglers can harvest 3 walleye, one of which may be over 18 inches. Grindstone holds complex habitat that includes expanses of rock bars and deep weeds. There is a public boat launch off of County Highway K.

## ■ TAYLOR COUNTY

**Rib Lake** - 320 acres. Located in the Village of Rib Lake, Rib Lake is a shallow lake with turbid water that is a popular open-water and ice-fishing destination. Spring surveys from 2015 yielded a population estimate of 0.7 adult walleyes per acre. Fyke nets averaged 8.3 walleyes ≥ 10 inches per net-night with 19% greater than 15 inches and 14% at least 20 inches long. During spring 2015 netting, crews handled over 500 walleyes, mostly juveniles, pointing toward a bright angling future as those young fish grow to catchable size. Rib Lake's walleye population is supported mainly by stocking large fingerlings raised by the Rib Lake Area Fish & Game Association in cooperation with the DNR. Angling harvest is managed under a daily bag limit of 3 walleyes,

a 15-inch minimum length limit, a protected slot from 20 to 24 inches, and only 1 walleye over 24 inches allowed. Rib Lake offers two public boat landings with boarding docks, a campground, two shorefishing piers and a nearby park. The Rib Lake Area Fish & Game Association maintains a winter aeration system to increase dissolved oxygen and reduce the chance of "winterkill" from oxygen depletion beneath the ice.—*Chad Leanna, Fishery Technician*

## ■ VILAS COUNTY

**Snipe Lake** - 239 acres. Results of a survey conducted in the spring of 2015 found an abundant adult walleye population with 9.3 fish per acre. Currently most (96%) of the adult walleye are less than fifteen inches in length. 15-inch minimum length limit with a 20 to 24-inch protected slot limit with one fish over 24 inches allowed. There is a county landing on the west end of the lake off Wilderness Trail Road. The landing includes a small park with restrooms. In the 1960's the fish community of Snipe Lake was dominated by black crappies and largemouth bass with no walleye present. Today the lake has an abundant naturally reproducing walleye fishery and largemouth bass and black crappie are rare.

## ■ WALWORTH COUNTY

**Delavan Lake** - 1,906 acres. Recent surveys have shown the positive results of the 18" minimum length limit on walleye, with a 15.3" average length and maximum of 24". Multiple boat launches and a large town park for shorefishing make Delavan an attractive destination for walleye and many other species. 18" minimum length limit, 3 daily bag limit. A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at STH 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16-acre Town of Delavan park at the STH 50 boat launch.

## ■ WASHBURN COUNTY

**Long Lake** - 3,290 acres. Long Lake walleye ranged from 11.7 to 30.0 inches. The average length was 17.0 inches. The population estimate was 2.6 fish/acre, which is above the Ceded Territory average for stocked fisheries (~1.0 fish/acre). An estimated 16% of the population was over 20 inches. 21% of the walleye sampled were above the 18 inch limit. 18-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 3 fish. There are four public boat launches located on Long Lake. From North to South: Blackhawk Rd, off CTH-B, Hank's Dr. off Todd Rd., Boat Landing Rd. off CTH-D, and Sunset Bay Rd. off Schnacky Rd. (east side). Long Lake walleye grow quickly compared with other Washburn County lakes. Walleye typically reach 18 inches in five years.

## ■ WASHINGTON COUNTY

**Little Cedar Lake** - 246 acres. A population estimate from our 2015 survey yielded 498 adult fish, or 2 adult walleye per acre in Little Cedar Lake. This density is average for area lakes and typical of a stocked walleye system. The maximum length observed was 25.6 inches and average length was 18.6 inches. Minimum length limit is 15 inches, with a daily bag limit of 5 fish. A public boat launch can be found at Ackerman's Grove County Park off CTH Z on the southeast side of the lake.

## MUSKELLUNGE



## ■ BROWN, DOOR, OCONTO and MARINETTE COUNTIES

**Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries and bays and the Fox River.** Species population information: Annual assessments to determine the status of the Green Bay muskellunge population have been conducted on the Fox River using fyke nets and fall electroshocking for many years. Fyke nets set in the Fox River this past May were filled with many large musky with the largest being just over 40 pounds in weight. Many other captured fish were in the 20 to 30-pound range. Anglers also see large musky, regularly catching fish greater than 50" on local waters. The regulation for musky on the Fox River, Green Bay tributaries and the Wisconsin waters of Green Bay is one fish with a 54-inch minimum length limit. Most musky anglers launch their boat from the Fox Point Landing or the Metro Ramp on the Fox River, the Suamico Boat Launch on the Suamico River, Carmody Ramp on Little Sturgeon Bay or the Menominee River Ramp. With 5,616 fingerling and 6,348 yearling musky stocked into the Fox River and Green Bay in 2015, the future of musky fishing on the bay



*A common sight in the spring. A large musky is handled carefully on the Tiger Cat Flowage, Sawyer County, during an early-season survey.*

is bright. Stocked fingerlings were produced from eggs collected from the Fox River and raised at the Besadny Anadromous Facility. Yearlings were the result of a cooperative project between Wisconsin DNR and Michigan DNR. Michigan spawned musky from Lake St Clair and transferred small fingerlings to Wild Rose Hatchery after disease testing was complete. These fish were raised

at Wild Rose until they reached an average size of nearly 14". Survival of this size musky is very high which should be noticed by anglers in 5 to 7 years.

## ■ CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

**The Winnebago System** includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles Great Lakes spotted strain muskellunge were stocked throughout the Winnebago System during the years 2002-2007. During this time span, 613,248 fish were stocked (589,643 fry; 1,162 small fingerlings; 22,397 large fingerlings; 40 yearlings; and 6 adults). Angling pressure targeting muskies has increased in recent years and some anglers reported catching some trophy sized fish in 2015 (>50"). Some larger fish were also sampled during 2014 commercial rough fish seining operations on Lake Butte des Morts. There were 24 muskellunge captured ranging from 40.3-51.2 inches and 4 of the 24 muskellunge sampled were greater than 50 inches. Commercial rough fish seining is scheduled for Lake Butte des Morts and Lake Poygan in 2016 to collect more information about the population. Nonetheless, some good fishing opportunities particularly for trophy sized muskellunge do exist throughout the Winnebago System. The 2016 open season for muskellunge is May 7, 2016 – December 31, 2016 with a daily bag limit of 1 fish and a minimum length limit of 50". There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a system map or the DNR's Boat Access Website to search for launch information near where you want to fish (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>). There were 650 yearling Great Lakes spotted muskellunge stocked in the Winnebago System during 2015, marking the first stocking event since 2007. DNR staff inserted PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tags and applied right ventral fin clips to 235 fish that were stocked in the upper Fox River and 261 fish that were released in Lake Poygan. There were also 154 fish stocked with right ventral fin clips in Lake Butte des Morts. The stocking effort should help to bolster the muskellunge population. The PIT tags will also help DNR staff track survival, growth, and movement of fish when they are recaptured. Anglers who catch a muskellunge on the Winnebago System can help with management efforts by checking their fish for fin clips and reporting it to the Oshkosh DNR office.

## ■ CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE, MONROE and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**Upper Black River, Clark and Jackson Counties, lower Black River, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties, and Potter Flowage, 348 acres, Jackson County.** Black River, upper (above Black River Falls dam), and lower (below Black River Falls dam): Results based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate of muskellunge in 2015 was relatively similar to 2014 at 4.3/mile in 2015 and 3.5/mile in 2014. For fish 40"+, catch rate was the same in both years at 0.4/mile. The maximum length of muskellunge captured in the upper river in 2015 was 42 inches. Lower river total catch rate of muskellunge was down slightly in 2015 (1.4/mile) compared to 2014 (2.1/mile). Catch rate of muskellunge larger than 40" was the same in both years at 0.4/mile. The maximum length of muskellunge caught in the lower

river in 2015 was 46.5 inches. Potter Flowage: based on spring 2015 netting results and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per net lift. Total catch rate was 0.3/net lift, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.02/net lift and maximum length captured was 40". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2012. Total catch rate was 0.1/net lift and no fish larger than 40" were captured. Both the Black River and Potter Flowage have a 40-inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1 fish.

## ■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**Lake Wissota** - 6,148 acres. Lake Wissota is classified as A1 musky water meaning that it has ability to consistently produce a number of large musky. A 2015 fisheries survey confirmed that classification. Over 100 musky were captured during a 2015 fisheries survey with musky up to 52". However, natural reproduction of musky on Lake Wissota is limited, so it is stocked with fall fingerlings that average 12" at a rate of 2,500



*Paul Piszczek, fisheries biologist in Superior, handles a 45+ inch muskellunge captured and released in the St. Louis River, Douglas County. Photo: Minnesota DNR*

per year to sustain this trophy fishery. The minimum length limit is 40" and the daily bag limit is 1. 7 boat landings are available.

## ■ DANE COUNTY

**Lake Monona** - 3,274 acres. 2015 spring fyke nets captured 217 fish: 91 males, 96 females and 30 of undetermined gender. The largest by sex were a 48.8-inch female and a 43.2-inch male. These are fish that routinely exceed 25 lbs! The length distribution shows a robust number of fish between 30 and 40 inches: Current population estimates are around 0.4 fish per acre. Recapture efforts scheduled for 2016 will tighten the estimate. Best accesses are on the lakes' east shore at Olbrich park, and on the west shore at Olin park. Both launches require a daily launch fee. Good shorebased opportunities exist at both of these City of Madison parks, although the habitat at Olin is more diverse. Many Monona musky carry a PIT tag. This marker helps assess growth through time. Monona enjoys a sleeper walleye fishery as upriver migrants swim up from lake Waubesa. Panfishing is excellent, with great opportunities present in Turville and Squaw bays.

## ■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

**St. Louis River and Estuary** 12,000 acres. Over 180 adult spawning musky were captured and released during a spring 2013 index survey. Average length approximated 40 inches. 12% of all fish in the survey exceeded 45 inches. Open May 28 through November 30; 50-inch minimum length with a daily limit of one fish. Best access points are at Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible



picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> for complete information. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. The muskellunge population is surveyed and managed collaboratively with Minnesota DNR and managed primarily as a trophy fishery. Wisconsin DNR stocked Wisconsin strain muskellunge from 1983 to 2004 (43,171 total of two sizes of fingerlings) and Minnesota DNR stocked two strains (Shoepack and Leech Lake) from 1985 to 2005 (45,525 fingerlings and 4,231 yearlings. Minnesota DNR also stocked 7,533 tiger muskies from 1988 through 1990; these have not been captured in recent surveys and likely exist only in low numbers, if at all.

## ■ FLORENCE COUNTY

**Brule River Flowage** - 550 acres. One-half of this flowage is located within MI. A survey of the musky population in this flowage found what appears to be a low-to-moderate abundance of muskellunge. The size structure is quite good with 42% of the fish captured being over 38 inches, and nearly 11%



Cheryl Masterson, DNR fisheries technician assisting from Milwaukee County, holds a 47-inch muskellunge from fyke netting survey on Spirit Lake, Taylor County. Photo taken by Jeff Scheirer.

over 44 inches. 40" minimum length limit in the "boundary water" section. There is a public landing located near the mouth of the Brule River (just north of the town of Florence). This is a naturally reproducing musky population that does not need any stocking to maintain a quality fishery.

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Long Lake** - 373 acres. During a 2015 electrofishing survey, crews sampled muskellunge at a rate of 1.4/mile ranging from 19.9 to 42.5 inches. Although true trophy specimens appear to be rare, Long Lake has the potential to provide a quality musky action for fish in the 30 - 40 inch range.

**Turtle-Flambeau Flowage.** With over 13,500 acres of vast stump-fields, shallow cabbage flats, rock bars, log jams, and open water, the TFF provides trophy musky anglers with a chance at a true trophy. Although surveys conducted during 2015 were not targeting muskellunge on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage, we still sampled multiple individuals in excess of 45". While pursuing the fish of a lifetime, the TFF also provides a spectacular wilderness experience. There is good access from 6 different public boat launches and many other private resort access points.

## ■ LAFAYETTE COUNTY

**Yellowstone Lake** - 450 acres. The musky population in Yellowstone is a low density quality fishery. Population estimates have shown only 1 musky for every three acres. Anglers will find catch rates much lower than other area lakes supporting musky. However, fish caught tend to run larger on average than other musky waters in the area. Ninety-two individual adult muskies were

sampled during the spring netting and fall electrofishing surveys in 2015. They ranged from 23.0 to 46.5 inches with an average size of 35.4 inches. Forty-seven percent were greater than 36 inches. Thirteen percent were greater than 40 inches. Catch and Release Only. Two boat launches and one canoe launch are available. Multiple fishing pads for disabled anglers are located along the northeast portion of the lake. Shore fishing opportunities are ample. Yellowstone Lake is located in Yellowstone Lake State Park. Camping, swimming beach, pet area and picnic areas are all available. There is also a bait shop with boat rental located lakeside. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

**Enterprise Lake** - 505 acres; Stocked at 0.5 fish per acre in alternate years; 2006 adult population estimate of 0.48 per acre with very good size quality as shown by fish up to 46" captured; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag limit.

**Summit Lake** - 282 acres; Stocked at 0.5 fish per acre in alternate years; 2010 adult population estimate of 0.43 per acre; Consider this more of an action lake with fish up to 42" common; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag limit.

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Wisconsin River and its impoundments** (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions) - about 5,000 acres of prime, naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place on these waters; Adult population estimates range from 0.1 to about 0.3 per acre; Parts of this system may be considered more action type waters (Lake Mohawksin) but the whole system has true trophy potential that these lower adult densities help to maintain; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag limit.

**Rice Reservoir** (Lake Nokomis System) - 2,274 acres of naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place; The adult population estimate is in the range of about 0.25 per acre at full pool; Consider this more of a lower density, high size quality water with true trophy potential; Our nets routinely catch big, fat, and healthy fish in the upper 40" range on this system; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag limit.



Zach Lawson, DNR fisheries biologist displays a nice Turtle Flambeau Flowage muskellunge from a recent fyke netting survey.

## ■ MARINETTE COUNTY

**Caldron Falls Reservoir** (1,018 acres) and **High Falls Reservoir** (1,498 acres) Both fisheries are maintained through a combination of stocking and natural reproduction. The density (fish / acre) of musky is higher in Caldron Falls than in High Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are present in both flowages. 40-inch minimum length / 1 fish per day There are 5 boat landings on Caldron Falls and 6 on High Falls. Shore fishing opportunities are excellent. Most of

the shoreline lies within the Peshtigo River State Forest and is undeveloped.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Bearskin Lake** - 400 acres. During spring netting, we captured 21 immature muskellunge and 20 adults (up to 43.3 inches). We also picked up 21 immature muskies (11 to 24 inches) during fall electrofishing, including a number of young-of-year tigers (hybrid northern pike x muskellunge). Bearskin has good natural reproduction and is regulated with a 28-inch minimum length limit.

## ■ POLK COUNTY

**Deer Lake** - 807 acres. Deer Lake is a good "numbers lake" for musky with moderate size structure. During the spring 2015 musky survey there was 159 musky handled that were at least 30 inches, and 33% of those were greater than 40 inches. The largest musky handled was 46.2 inches. Deer Lake muskellunge are managed with the statewide 40-in minimum length limit. There is one boat landing on Deer Lake and it is located on the far west end of the lake off 140th Ave. Deer Lake has a long history of being managed as a muskellunge lake. It was first stocked with muskellunge in 1967.

## ■ RUSK COUNTY

**Dairyland Reservoir** - 1,745 acres. Spring electrofishing and netting surveys showed Dairyland Reservoir's musky population at low to moderate density with very good size structure. Spring fyke netting yielded a capture rate of 0.4 muskies per net-night with 83% of our sample 38 to 46 inches. Early spring electrofishing captured 13 muskies, many of which were small 9- to 20-inch fingerlings and yearlings, indicating adequate recruitment from natural reproduction and stocking. Stocking occurs every other year at a rate of 0.5 fingerlings per acre. This large reservoir of the Flambeau River offers ample forage and has a history of producing large muskies. There are five public boat launches and several shore fishing piers located at the county parks.

## ■ SAWYER COUNTY

Musky angling is a growing sport, and new musky anglers looking for their first fish would be wise to check out three spots in Sawyer County: **Spider Chain, Tiger Cat Chain, and Mud/Callahan.** These three lake chains lie on the North Fork of the Chief River and hold some of the highest density populations of musky in the Midwest. Spider Lake in particular boasts an adult muskellunge population that is about three times higher than the Wisconsin average and creel data shows the "fish of 10,000 casts" can be caught here at about double the rate of most other musky lakes. As a result of the higher density, size is often on the smaller side, which may be all that a young musky angler can handle! Each lake has a public boat ramp.

## ■ SHAWANO COUNTY

**Shawano Lake** - 6,063 acres. Recent surveys indicate abundance and size structure metrics rank Shawano Lake in the upper 75th percentile when compared to other trophy muskellunge waters statewide. In the 2014 and 2015 spring netting survey, 42% of muskellunge sampled were over 40.0 inches with the largest fish at 49.3 inches. Anecdotal reports from anglers indicate muskellunge over 50.0 inches are now being caught. Statewide default (40-inch minimum length limit and 1 daily bag). Multiple public accesses are found on Shawano Lake with the primary boat ramps located at Swan



Conservation Warden Joe Paul and family are all smiles with a 47-inch muskellunge from a fyke netting survey on Worcester Lake, Price County. Photo taken by Evan Sniadajewski.

Acres Rd, Cecil Village Park, Stark Rd, and County Park. Huckleberry Harbor in the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel has multiple ramps and a large parking area. Shawano Lake and connected water bodies can provide anglers with many options for muskellunge fishing. Boats can navigate between Shawano Lake, Washington Lake and Wolf River Pond via the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel. - Al Niebur, senior fisheries biologist, Shawano

## ■ VILAS COUNTY

Little Saint Germain - 980 acres. Results from a spring 2015 adult muskellunge population survey found that Little Saint Germain supports a quality muskellunge population. Since the special length limit was placed on the lake in 2002 the number of fish greater than 40 inches has increased dramatically. This lake has the potential to produce trophy fish. The largest muskellunge captured in our survey in 2015 was 50.9 inches in length. 45-inch minimum length limit and a daily limit of one fish. There is a public, in addition to several private landings, that provide access to this lake. The public landing with abundant parking is located on the west end of the lake off of Tobin Lange Road. The lake is stocked with large muskellunge fingerlings on a regular basis. Little Saint Germain is the most popular fishing lake in Vilas County with pressure at around 100 hours acre in most years.

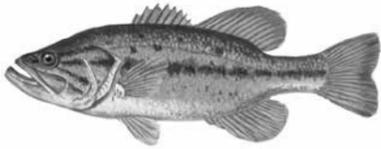
## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Okauchee Lake - 1,210 surface acres. Spring netting revealed an average length of 40 inches and an adult density of 0.16 fish per surface acre. 40-inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. There are two boat launches found on Okauchee Lake; the DNR boat launch on upper Oconomowoc Lake and The Golden Mast Restaurant on the west basin of Okauchee. Okauchee Lake has a maximum depth of 94 feet and has an excellent forage base which includes a high abundance of cisco.



A father and son survey team show their hard work with a 38-inch musky from a spring 2015 fyke netting survey in Rib Lake, Taylor County. Photo taken by Jeff Scheirer.

## LARGEMOUTH BASS



**Mississippi River – Pool 6** 2015 fall electrofishing surveys showed good largemouth bass numbers above and below the 14-inch length limit. Overall, nearly 74 adult and juvenile largemouth bass were captured per hour. Forty four percent of surveyed largemouth bass were greater than the 14-inch length limit, while nearly one in ten were greater than 16 inches. Surveyed fish topped out just shy of 20 inches. 14-inch minimum length; 5 in total with smallmouth bass. Check DNR website for access locations. Pool 6, spanning 14 miles, was created in 1936 with the completion of Lock and Dam 6 near Trempealeau, WI.



Steven Gospodarek and Kyle Olson pictured holding a pair of 23" largemouth bass captured during fall electrofishing on Pewaukee Lake. Photo taken by Benjamin Heussner.

## CRAWFORD and GRANT COUNTIES

**Mississippi River Pool 10** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources surveyed backwater lakes in Pool 10 of the Mississippi River to determine the health of the fishery. Largemouth bass that were collected ranged from 3.9 – 19.7 inches. The average size for largemouth bass was 11.3 inches with 50% of the sample being larger than 12.0 inches. Larger bass in the 3 to 5 pound range are not uncommon and each year a handful of 6-pound-plus fish are caught each year by tournament anglers. Year-round season, 14" minimum length with a 5-fish daily bag limit. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. Check out the following websites for more details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html) The waters of Pool 10 are part of the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America. The refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois and has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) and a Globally Important Bird Area.

## DANE/COLUMBIA COUNTIES

**Crystal Lake** - 590 acres While only an average "numbers" fishery, Crystal Lake has good size structure and offers anglers the opportunity to catch larger bass. During two electrofishing surveys in the spring of 2015, 278 largemouth bass larger than 8 inches were captured. Of these, 33% were larger than 14 inches, ranking in the 62nd percentile statewide for lakes smaller than 794 acres. Several bass larger than 20 inches were collected in the survey. Minimum length limit is 14 inches; daily bag limit is 5 fish. Crystal Lake is located between Lodi and Prairie du Sac, and sits on the Dane/Columbia County line. There is one public boat launch on Crystal Lake and it is maintained by the DNR. It is located on the south shore of the lake on Crystal Lake Road. Shore fishing access exists along most of the south shore of the lake along Crystal Lake Road. Crystal Lake offers anglers a good panfish fishery, with abundant bluegills, black and white crappies, and yellow perch. Crappie action can be particularly hot in the spring time fishing from shore. Also, 258-acre Fish Lake is less than 1 mile from Crystal Lake, has good public access via a boat ramp and a county park, and offers quality bass fishing in a quiet setting; gas motors are not allowed on Fish Lake.

## DODGE COUNTY

**Fox Lake** - 2,625 acres. Largemouth bass catch rate for 2015 fall electrofishing was 161/hour, compared to 114/hour in 2014, 48/hour in 2013 and above the 10-year average of 69/hour. A large year-class of largemouth bass produced in 2015 should provide ample angling opportunities in the upcoming years. Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length, 1 fish daily bag on largemouth bass. Public boat launches and shorefishing sites: Clausen Park on Mill Creek outlet channel, Town Park (northwest side), shorefishing at CTH A Bridge. While not a true musky lake, Fox Lake does boast an occasional 45+ inch musky.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Upper St. Croix Lake** - 855 acres. Twenty percent of largemouths caught in 2015 electrofishing surveys were over 15 inches, with the largest measuring 20 inches. A moderate abundance of largemouth was found at 14 largemouth bass/mile of shoreline. There is a 14-inch minimum length limit for bass. Public access is available at a DNR landing off of CTY A and 4 additional landings on the west side of the lake. - Scott Toshner, fisheries biologist, Brule

## DUNN COUNTY

**Lake Eau Galle** - 351 acres. Lake Eau Galle is locally known for its outstanding largemouth bass fishing. During the spring of 2015, DNR survey crews sampled 367 bass of which 50% were 14 inches and greater, and 14% were 18 inches and greater. Our largest bass was 21.5 inches and weighed 6 pounds 10 ounces. There is a 14-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit 5 in total. The Village of Eau Galle maintains a public boat access in town on the south end of the lake and Dunn County has a fishing pier and boat access at Pine View Park which is located on the east shore off CTH Z and 70th Avenue. Lake Eau Galle is a popular pan fish lake, both black crappie and bluegill are abundant. Bluegill up to 9.3 inches and crappie up to 11.7 inches were sampled during the survey. Northern pike are also present in low densities, however fish up to 37 inches were present.

## JACKSON and TREMPÉALEAU COUNTIES

**Potter Flowage**, Jackson County, 348 acres, **Trow Lake**, Jackson County, 43 acres, and **Lake Marinuka**, Trempealeau County, 98 acres. Potter Flowage: Total catch rate was 5.7 per mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 3.5/mile and maximum length captured was 20.7". Of the total catch, 62% of bass were 14"+. Trow: Total catch rate was 3 per mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 1.5/mile and maximum length captured was 16.6". Of the total catch, 50% of bass were 14"+. Marinuka: Total catch rate was 16 per mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 0/mile and maxi-



Fox Valley Technical College student volunteers with largemouth bass captured during netting surveys in Upper Red Lake, Shawano County.

mum length captured was 13.5". 14-inch minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit.

## LANGLADE COUNTY

**Rabe Lake** - Help us eradicate largemouth bass from this 6-acre, naturally reproducing brook trout spring pond; No length limit and daily bag of 5 fish; Harvest season opens the first Saturday in May; Please take your 5 home today!

**Rolling Stone Lake** - 672 acres; Naturally reproducing largemouth bass population; High density and high-size quality fishery; 14" length limit, 5 daily bag limit; Harvest season opens the first Saturday in May.

## LINCOLN COUNTY

**Hidden Gems on the County Forest** - Lincoln County has hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS's and explore, you just might find that secret hot spot! 14" length limit, 5 daily bag limit; Harvest season opens the first Saturday in May.

## MARATHON COUNTY

**Mud Lake**. Mud Lake was surveyed by electrofishing in spring 2015 and largemouth bass were captured at a rate of 37 fish/ hour. The size structure included fish from 8 to 18 inches, average size was 12.7 inches. In total, 57% of the fish were larger than 12 inches and 68% of the catch was greater than 14 inches. 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 bass in total may be kept. There is a town boat landing off of Lovers Lane. Panfish regulations for Mud Lake will change when the new panfish rule takes effect on April 1, 2016.

## OCONTO COUNTY

**White Potato Lake** - 978 acres. Previous surveys showed that White Potato Lake has a decent largemouth bass population. The average length of bass collected during the last survey was 14 inches and fish up to 20 inches were collected. Since White Potato Lake is relatively shallow (average depth = 5 ft.) and there is a lot of aquatic vegetation, bass can hide and feed just about anywhere around the lake. 14-inch minimum / 5 fish

per day. Anglers can choose from 6 boat landings to access White Potato Lake. There is no early catch-and-release season for largemouth bass on White Potato Lake even though it is within the northern bass zone.

## ONEIDA COUNTY

**Minocqua Chain** (Tomahawk, Mid, Minocqua and Kawaguesaga Lakes were surveyed) - We found abundant largemouth up to 15 inches and low numbers of larger fish on all lakes in the Chain and estimated high-density populations of 7.1 per acre on Minocqua and 10.1 per acre on Kawaguesaga. There is no minimum length limit for bass on Minocqua Chain with a goal of thinning out over-abundant smaller fish.

## POLK COUNTY

**White Ash Lake** - 153 acres. White Ash Lake has a solid largemouth bass population with excellent size structure. There were 59 largemouth bass collected during the spring 2015 survey and 41% of which were at least 15 inches long. There were three bass over 20 inches collected, with the largest being 21 inches. The largemouth bass fishery in White Ash Lake is managed with the statewide 14-inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. There are two boat landings on White Ash Lake. The one on South White Ash Lane is the better landing of the two. White Ash Lake is a productive shallow lake (9 ft. max depth) that is part of the Apple River system.

## PORTAGE COUNTY

**Lime Lake**. Lime Lake was surveyed by electrofishing in spring 2015 and largemouth bass were captured at a rate of 30 fish/ hour. The size structure included fish from 6 to 19 inches, average size was 13.1 inches. In total, 76% of the fish were larger than 12 inches and 47% of the catch was greater than 14 inches. 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 bass in total may be kept. There is a Town boat landing off of Lime Lake Road. Panfish regulations for Lime Lake will change when the new panfish rule takes effect on April 1, 2016.



Claire Sniadajewski, angler guided by brother and fisheries technician Evan Sniadajewski; largemouth bass from Le Tourneau Lake, Price County. Photo taken by Evan Sniadajewski

## PRICE COUNTY

**Le Tourneau Lake** - 124 acres. Le Tourneau Lake is a small, fairly shallow lake with average depth of 11 feet and moderate weed density that is popular among panfish and bass anglers. During a late spring 2015

electrofishing survey DNR crews captured 33 largemouth bass per shoreline mile. At moderate abundance the largemouth bass population showed fair size structure (31% were 14 inches or longer) and excellent growth potential (3% were at least 20 inches long). The current harvest regulation is a daily bag limit of 5 largemouth bass with a minimum length limit of 14 inches. An unimproved boat landing with limited space for parking is adjacent to Price Lakes Road.

## ■ SHAWANO COUNTY

**Loon Lake** - 327 acres. Spring boomshocking surveys captured moderate numbers of largemouth bass with an average size of 12.7 inches and some bass up to 20.0 inches. Approximately 47% of the bass catch was over 14 inches in length. Statewide default - 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag limit. Two boat accesses on south shore.

**Upper and Lower Red Lakes** - 195/196 acres Spring boomshocking surveys captured moderate numbers of largemouth bass with an average size of 12.9 inches and some bass up to 20.6 inches. Approximately 54% of the bass catch was over 14 inches in length. Statewide default - 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag limit. Multiple boat accesses are found on each lake. Good shore fishing opportunities on Lower Red Lake off Gresham Village Park. Anglers venturing over to Upper and Lower Red Lakes should concentrate their effort during spring, late fall, and winter months due to the extensive growth of submergent aquatic plants which can limit the ability to fish it effectively during the summer.

## ■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Lake Geneva - 5,401 acres Recent bass surveys on Lake Geneva have produced very good catch rates and size structure, including a 14.3" average length and 21.5" maximum length. Anglers are reporting excellent fishing days, particularly in the fall. 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit. Six public boat launches are available on Geneva: Lake Street in Fontana (west side), E Geneva Street in Williams Bay (north side), Chapin Road (north side - no parking), Wrigley Drive in Lake Geneva (northeast side), Hillside Road (southeast side) and Linn Road (south side). Shorefishing opportunities are available at several parks and municipal fishing piers across the lake.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Pewaukee Lake** - 2,437 surface acres. Average length - 12 inches with average abundance and excellent trophy potential. 14-inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; Nagawaukee County Park launch on the west side and Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. Pewaukee Lake has excellent largemouth bass size structure with top tournament creels averaging greater than 4 lbs. per fish.

**Eagle Spring Lake** - 270 surface acres. Average length - 9 inches. No minimum length limit - largemouth bass and smallmouth bass from 14 inches to 18 inches may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 18 inches is allowed. The daily bag limit is 3. The public launch is located on the lakes' east side off of county Highway E, near Eagle Spring Pub. This lake has an abundant population of largemouth so anglers are encouraged to harvest bass less than 14" to help reduce the population and improve growth rates.

THE NEXT BEST THING TO FISHING IS TALKING ABOUT FISHING.  
takemefishing.org

## SMALLMOUTH BASS



## ■ BARRON COUNTY

**Red Cedar River** - Red Cedar River from CTH W to the Barron-Dunn County line (~19.5 river miles). The Red Cedar River offers an impressive smallmouth bass fishery that is often overlooked by anglers. The smallmouth bass population has excellent size structure. Of the 166 smallmouth bass greater than 8 inches collected during the summer 2015 survey, 33% were 15 inches or larger. There was also a fair number of fish over 18 inches, with the largest over 20 inches. The Red Cedar River smallmouth bass fishery is managed with the statewide



Steven Gospodarek - WDNR fisheries technician holding a 23" smallmouth bass captured during fall electrofishing on Oconomowoc Lake, Waukesha County. Picture taken by Benjamin Heussner

bass regulation- 14-inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. Barron County has several well-marked and maintained river accesses. These would include the accesses at County Highways W, OO, D, I, and AI. Anglers will likely have the best luck targeting any deeper pool habitat you can find. Your best bet would be to float a canoe, kayak, or small jon boat and fish the pools. Along with smallmouth bass, anglers also have a good chance of catching a few walleye or even tying into a musky.

## ■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

**Atkins Lake** - 176 acres. Atkins has a high-density smallmouth population with trophy size potential. In a 2015 spring electrofishing survey 70% of smallmouths captured were over 15 inches and the largest was 20 inches. The abundance of 20 smallmouth/mile of shoreline is considered high especially in light of the impressive size structure. Atkins has a 14-inch minimum length limit. Public access is located at a county boat launch on the northeast end of the lake.

## ■ BURNETT COUNTY

**Upper St. Croix River**. Upper St. Croix River-between the confluence with the Namekagon River and St. Croix Falls (Burnett County and WI/MN border). St. Croix River smallmouth bass numbers have increased since the hard winter in 2013-14. Catch rates have increased since a lower 2014 catch. The 2015 average length was 7.0 inches, with five fish over 18 inches sampled. 15% of the sample was 14 inches or greater. 14-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. There are several boat and canoes launches on the Upper St. Croix River. Visit the National Park Service website for more information: <http://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/maps.htm> The St. Croix River supports a very diverse fishery with populations of smallmouth bass, musky, northern pike, channel catfish, lake sturgeon, and more.

## ■ CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE, MONROE and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**The upper Black River** (above Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and **lower Black River** (below Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Results below are based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile) **Black River, upper and lower:** Smallmouth is the dominant bass species in the upper and lower river. Upper river total catch rate in 2015 (73/mile) was similar to that of 2014 (72/mile). Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was lower in 2015 (3.5/mile) than 2014 (7/mile). Lower river total catch rate in 2015 (3.8/mile) was similar to that of 2014 (3.1/mile). Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was slightly higher in 2015 at 1.2/mile compared to 0.7/mile in 2014. Maximum length of bass captured in the upper river was 18.3" and 18.4" for the lower river. Regulation: 14-inch minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit.



Wading the Southwest Driftless streams during the summer months is a fun way to introduce young anglers to fishing. Garrett Sims of Ridgeway, WI poses with a smallmouth bass he caught and released while wading the Sinsinawa River. Photo: Bradd Sims.

will build "practice" nests before settling in on one and will actively guard the eggs and larvae from predators.

## ■ DOOR COUNTY

**Green Bay waters of Door County** The smallmouth bass fishery along the Green Bay waters of Door County has gained national acclaim in recent years. Although the 2015 creel data are not yet available, the catch per effort from angler surveys for each of the past few years has been at or above the running 20 year average of 0.72 smallmouth bass caught per hour fished. Net catch rates during the 2015 smallmouth bass pre-spawn survey of the Sturgeon Bay/Little Sturgeon Bay areas were lower than the 2009 survey for this area suggesting that abundance in these areas has declined from previous high levels or that pre-spawn distribution was atypical this past spring. Periods of good recruitment coupled with excellent growth rates over the last decade should still provide some very good smallmouth bass fishing to come in Green Bay waters of Door County. The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for smallmouth fishing rules in the Tributary Streams to Green Bay and Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are many boat launches in the area including several in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay; Peninsula State Park is one of the sites that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess> for a listing of some of the launches in the area. One of the better shore fishing sites is the George K. Pinney County Park (formerly the Olde Stone Quarry Park) that is located at the north side of the mouth of Sturgeon Bay. The male smallmouth bass



Ben Kubisiak with an 18.2 inch smallmouth caught and released in the Wisconsin River in Oneida County on July 26, 2015. Photo: John Kubisiak.

## ■ FLORENCE COUNTY

**Brule River Flowage** - 550 acres. (Half the flowage is located in Michigan). A survey of the bass population conducted in 2015 showed that this flowage contains the most abundant smallmouth bass population in Florence County. The size structure of the population is also quite impressive with 31% and 8.3% of the fish being larger than 14 and 17 inches, respectively. 14-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of five fish. This flowage is in the northern bass zone where catch and release of smallmouth bass is required from the general opener in May to the third Saturday in June. This is a boundary water with the state of Michigan. These same regulations apply on the Michigan waters of this lake. There is a public landing located near the mouth of the Brule River (just north of the town of Florence). This flowage is very scenic, with high rock walls, many islands and riverine sections.

## ■ FOREST COUNTY

**Butternut and Franklin lakes** - 1,292 and 892 acres, respectively. A survey of both of these lakes in 2014 revealed very impressive smallmouth bass populations. The population in each lake is considered very abundant. The size structure of these populations is quite desirable with roughly 20% and 13% of the fish captured in Butternut and Franklin Lakes being greater 17 inches. 14-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of five fish. There is a USFS boat landing on each lake. Both of these lakes have low development with most of the shoreline being owned by the USFS.

## ■ GRANT COUNTY

**Sinsinawa River** - 3.5 miles (smallmouth bass water). The Sinsinawa River supports a healthy population of smallmouth bass. Recent surveys sampled 426 young of the year, yearling, and adult smallmouth from 1.4 to 17.0 inches with an average adult size of 10.8 inches. Thirty two percent of the adult smallmouth were 12 inches or greater. Fourteen-inch minimum with a daily bag limit of 5. The Sinsinawa River supports just over 3.5 miles of fishable smallmouth bass water. It is currently absent of public fishing access via stream bank easements. Anglers wishing to fish from shore will have to gain permission from private landowners. The Sinsinawa River is a tributary to the Mississippi River. It originates just west of Cuba City flowing 9 miles before entering Illinois where it flows an additional 12

miles before joining the Mississippi River. The term Sinsinawa is thought to be derived from the Algonquian language of the Mesquakie-Sauk and Potawatomi meaning rocky middle or stoney stream. - *Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist – Dodgeville*

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Gile Flowage:** - 3,384 acres. A 2015 electrofishing survey sampled smallmouth bass at a rate of 21.3/mile of shoreline ranging in length from 9 – 18.1 inches. Of the 85 individuals sampled, 56% were over 14 inches, and 12% were over 17 inches. The Gile smallmouth bass population offers a high quality angling opportunity for a healthy balance of good numbers and quality sized fish.



*A nice Upper St. Croix River smallmouth bass caught in early summer.*

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

**Enterprise Lake, Sawyer Lake, and Rose Lake;** All of these are now naturally reproducing populations following introductory stockings by the lake associations; The Sawyer and Rose populations are still expanding and growing and are made up of mostly small fish in the 12-16" range; Enterprise Lake has a low density, high quality smallie population; Sawyer and Rose have a 12-16" protected slot and Enterprise has a 14" minimum length limit; All have a daily bag of 5 and a harvest season that starts the third Saturday in June

**Wolf River** downstream from Post Lake dam downstream to the Menominee County line; Excellent brown bass population with most fish in the 10-16" range; Fish the boulders and woody habitat anywhere in the Wolf River in Langlade County; 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit; Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May.

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Wisconsin River** and its impoundments (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions) – about 5,000 acres of high density and high quality smallmouth bass populations; 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit; Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May.

**Jersey City Flowage** – 404 acres of high quantity and quality naturally reproducing brown bass water! 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit; Harvest season starts the third Saturday in June.

## ■ MARATHON and PORTAGE COUNTIES

**Wisconsin River.** In 2015, smallmouth bass populations appeared excellent on the Wisconsin River. Summer electrofishing catch rate of smallmouth bass ranged from 9 fish/ hour to 34 fish/ hour. The highest catch rate was below the Stevens Point Dam in the Whiting Flowage ( 34 fish/hour) and 17% of the catch was greater than 14 inches. Below Lake Wausau Dam in the Mosinee Flowage catch was 25 fish/hour, with 21% of the catch greater than 14 inches; below Dubai Dam 9 fish/hour and 28% were greater than 14 inches; and at Brokaw above Lake Wausau 13 fish/ hour with 17% greater than 14 inches. Once again the catch of young-of –year fish was excellent and ranged from 4 to 8 fish/hour across all of the river segments. No closed season; 14-inch minimum length limit; bag limit is 5 bass in total. Access: Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through the DNR online boating access site. There is one special regulation on the Wisconsin River in Portage County, an 18-inch minimum length limit; bag limit of 1 fish from below the Stevens Point Flowage Dam to Spillway.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Bearskin Lake** – 400 acres. Bearskin has a low-density smallmouth population with trophy size potential. We estimated 1.4 adult smallmouth per acre, with peaks in abundance at 11 and 18 inches. Bearskin has an 18-inch minimum length limit on bass to promote predation on the invasive rusty crayfish.

## ■ RUSK COUNTY

**Lower Flambeau River Flowages,** Big Falls, Dairyland, Ladysmith, and Thornapple flowages offer plenty of smallmouth bass fishing opportunities. Late spring electrofishing captured an average of 15 smallmouth bass per mile across the four flowages, reflecting moderate population abundance. Dairyland and Ladysmith flowages had the best size structure with 17% and 16% of smallmouth measuring 14 inches or more. These four flowages all follow the northern zone smallmouth bass regulation: a catch-and-release season from the fishing season opener to the third Saturday in June followed by a harvest season that ends on the first Sunday in March. During that period the daily bag limit is 5 fish and the minimum length limit is 14 inches. Each flowage has at least one public boat ramp, and several have other amenities for outdoor recreation. - *Chad Leanna, fisheries technician, Park Falls*

## ■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Sheboygan River** downstream of Sheboygan Falls to Lake Michigan 2015 surveys yielded an average length of 7 inches, with a maximum length of 18 inches. The average length was skewed lower because of abundant young fish in the samples. The average catch rate for this section of the river was an outstanding 109 smallmouth bass per mile. There is a "Do Not Eat" resident fish species on this section of the Sheboygan River. The best public access sites are Esslingen Park and the Roy Sebald Sheboygan River Natural Area in the City of Sheboygan and the Kohler Municipal Garage in the Village of Kohler. Other species an angler can expect to find in the Sheboygan River include rock bass and northern pike as well as Lake Michigan trout and salmon species that migrate upstream during the fall.

## ■ VILAS COUNTY

Smoky Lake - 610 acres. A survey of the bass population conducted in 2015 found a healthy bass fishery. Smallmouth bass are the dominate gamefish in this lake and an estimate of the number of fish present greater than eight inches in length was 4.1 per acre. The largest smallmouth bass captured during this survey was 19.1 inches. 14- inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of five fish. Smoky Lake is also in the northern bass zone where catch and release of smallmouth bass is required from the general opener in May to the third Saturday in June. This is a boundary water with the state of Michigan. These same regulations apply on the Michigan waters of this lake. Access to the lake is by a town of Phelps boat landing. It is located on the south shore of the lake off of state Hwy 17. Smoky Lake contains rainbow smelt, an exotic species, which can have negative impacts on the native fish community.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 surface acres. Average length – 15 inches. 14" minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5. The public boat launch is located upstream of Oconomowoc Lake on the Oconomowoc River, downstream of Upper Oconomowoc Lake on the north side of Wisconsin Avenue. Rocky substrate, deep drop offs and woody structure provides excellent habitat for smallmouth bass on Oconomowoc Lake. Recent fall electrofishing surveys have consistently revealed excellent size structure and abundance of smallmouth bass with good trophy potential.

## ■ WOOD COUNTY

**Wisconsin Rapids Flowage** - 504 acres. The Wisconsin Rapids Flowage provides a good smallmouth bass fishery. The flowage was surveyed in the spring and fall of 2015. Of the smallmouth bass caught, 80% were at least quality size (11"), 59% were at least preferred size (14") and 11% were at least memorable size (17"). The largest smallmouth bass caught was 19.5", this flowage does have the potential to produce trophy fish (20"). General inland waters regulation – minimum length limit of 14" with a daily bag limit of 5 in total with largemouth bass. There are two boat launches on the flowage and one walk-in access portage. The walk-in access portage and a boat launch is located off of Reddin Road, one boat launch is located off of South Biron Drive.

## NORTHERN PIKE



## ■ BARRON COUNTY

**Butternut Lake** - 141 acres. Following the winterkill of 2013-2014, Butternut Lake currently has a very abundant northern pike population as evidenced by a 2015 electrofishing survey. Most of the northern pike in Butternut Lake are 18-22 inches long. Northern pike in Butternut Lake are managed with the statewide regulation - no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. There are two boat landings on the south end of the lake; both are located off 29th Ave. Butternut Lake is a lake that has a history of periodic winterkills. Winterkills occur when dissolved oxygen levels get reduced to lethal levels due to decomposition of organic material and respiration. Northern pike is a species that is more tolerant of low dissolved oxygen. The northern pike



*Fisheries technician Josh Krall holding a 36.1" 11.5lb female pike from the 2015 spring survey on Eagle Lake, Racine County.*

population took off following the most recent winterkill. Anglers are encouraged to harvest northern pike in Butternut Lake to help rebalance the fish community.

## ■ BROWN, DOOR, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTIES

**Green Bay and tributaries.** The late, wet springs of 2013 and 2014 provided favorable conditions for northern pike spawning. In coming years, anglers can expect good numbers of age-2 and 3 northern pike in the bay. Most of those fish will be in the upper teen to low 20-inch range in 2016, with a few fast-growing females making it to the upper 20-inch range by age-3. Because the vast size of the bay reduces competition between top predators and because it hosts an abundance of prey fish such as yellow perch, gizzard shad, and round gobies, we do not see stunted populations of pike as is commonly seen in many inland lakes. In winter, using a tip-up with a large shiner or dead smelt fished just off of the bottom in shallow water can work well. Current regulation for Green Bay and major tributaries: Open all year. Daily limit is 5. No minimum length limit. Current regulation for all other Green Bay tributaries: Open 1st Saturday in May to 1st Sunday in March. Daily limit is 5. No minimum length limit. There are numerous boat access and tributary access locations along Green Bay. See the following websites for detailed information. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html> In early spring, adult northern pike migrate from Green Bay in tributaries and ditches to spawn in shallow wetlands, often travelling dozens of miles. Culverts that are undersized or improperly set can prevent adult pike from accessing prime wetland habitats. Many partner agencies (federal, county, tribal) have been working to identify and replace poor culverts in streams connected to Green Bay.



## ■ CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE, MONROE and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**Sportsman Lake**, 285 acres, **Potter Flowage**, 348 acres, **Trow Lake**, 43 acres, **upper Black River** (above the Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and **lower Black River** (below the Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Catch rates for Sportsman Lake, Potter Flowage, and Trow Lake are based on spring 2015 netting results and for the Black River, catch rates are based on 2015 electrofishing results. **Sportsman Lake:** Total catch rate was 11 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0/net lift and maximum length captured was 25". **Potter Flowage:** Total catch rate was 0.2 per net



Fisheries biologist, Kurt Welke and volunteer hold a pair of, nice-sized northern pike collected from Lake Mendota, Dane County.

lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.17/net lift and maximum length captured was 36". Of the total catch, 90% of pike were 26"+. **Trow Lake:** Total catch rate was 2.5 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.6/net lift and maximum length captured was 40". Of the total catch, 25% were 26"+. **Black River, upper and lower:** Results based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate of pike was 2.2/mile, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.4/mile and maximum length captured was 27". Lower river total catch rate of pike was 0.9/mile, catch rate of 26"+ pike was 0.2/mile and maximum length captured was 31.9". Black River upstream of Highway 10 and Sportsman Lake – No minimum length limit/daily bag limit of 5 fish. For Potter Flowage, Trow Lake and the Black River downstream of Highway 10 – Minimum length limit of 26"/daily bag limit of 2 fish.

## ■ DANE COUNTY

Lake Mendota - 9,842 acres. Spring standardized fyke netting in 2014 captured 556 pike ranging from 10 to 41 inches. The average pike measured 29 inches. The population estimate was 2681 fish or 0.27 per acre. The literature suggests this estimate may underestimate pike abundance by perhaps 25-40%. As the natural top level predator in this system, pike harvest is regulated to a 1 fish limit and a 40" minimum length limit. Numerous public accesses ring the shoreline. Excellent maps can be found at: <http://www.danewaters.com/resource/maps.aspx> Mendota has great late fall trolling and early ice opportunities. Anglers have the potential to land a truly large fish. Be prepared to practice efficient catch and release with sub-legal fish.

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Island Lake** - 352 acres. Recent survey efforts resulted in 156 northern pike ranging from 10 to 33 inches. Although the average length was only 17.5 inches, the above average density should provide anglers with above average catch rates and a good harvest opportunity. Due to a recent increase in the northern pike population, anglers are encouraged to harvest pike to assist in main-

taining stability in the fish community. Currently, there is no minimum length limit and a total daily bag limit of 5 northern pike for Island Lake.

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

**Rolling Stone Lake** – 672 acres; Naturally reproducing, high density pike population; We did a survey here in 2012 and the bulk of the fish we saw then should be in the low to mid-20" range now; No minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit.

**Upper and Lower Post Lakes** – 1,135 acres; Naturally reproducing, high density pike population; The majority of the pike are in the 16 to 28" range; 26" minimum length limit, 2 daily bag limit.

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Jersey City Flowage** – 404 acres; Naturally reproducing, high density pike population; 2015 survey estimated the adult population at 3.7 per acre with the majority in the 18 to 28" range; No minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit.

**Spirit Reservoir** – 1,667 acres; Naturally reproducing pike population; 2005 adult population estimate of 2.8 per acre signaling a high density population; At that time most pike were in the 15 to 22" range; No minimum length limit, 5 daily bag limit.

## ■ MARATHON and PORTAGE-COUNTIES

**Stevens Point Flowage** - 2,000 acres. Stevens Point Flowage was surveyed in 2015, a total of 301 northern pike were captured at a rate of 1.7 fish per net-night. Overall, 67% of the fish caught were greater than 21 inches, and 6% were larger than 32 inches, average length was 22.5 inches. The current



Fish technicians Steve Surendonk and Brad Ryan with a 38-inch northern pike captured during a fall survey on the lower Menominee River.

length frequency shows several large year classes of fish ready to move through the fishery in future years. No closed season, 32 inch minimum length limit, bag limit 5 in total. Access: Access to the Stevens Point Flowage is available at several boat landings and parks. Shoreline fishing is available at Bukolt Park in the City of Stevens Point. Maps are available through DNRs online boating access site.

## ■ OCONTO COUNTY

**Reservoir Pond** - 413 acres. The 2015 fisheries survey revealed a healthy pike population with fish averaging 20 inches in length. Several fish between 25 and 30 inches were collected. No minimum length / 5 fish per day. There are several boat landings around the lake (some are undeveloped). Reservoir Pond can also be accessed from Horn Lake.

Reservoir Pond is relatively shallow but there are ample weedy flats and other habitat types that make this a local hotspot. Channels connect other lakes nearby (Horn Lake, Little Horn Lake, and Explosion Lake). Altogether, this "chain of lakes" totals over 600 acres.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Thunder Lake** - 1,835 acres. We found abundant northern pike during spring netting. Most fish were 17 to 23 inches, while the largest pike was 36.2 inches.

## ■ RACINE COUNTY

**Eagle Lake** - 515 acres. A spring netting survey in 2015 produced an incredibly high catch rate of northern pike in Eagle Lake, with a 27.1" average length and 36.1" maximum length. The lake is clearly capable of producing big fish at a 40" minimum length limit, with a very strong forage base of panfish and pike spawning habitat throughout the lake. Ice fishing action is off the charts, though the lake is very popular during hard water so get there early. 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag limit. A public boat launch with a large parking lot on the northeast side of the lake off Church Road at Eagle Lake County Park, another public boat launch with a large parking lot on the west side of the lake off Minnetonka Drive, and a third public boat launch on the south side of the lake off Eagle Road. The County Park provides shorefishing opportunities and other family activities. Eagle Lake currently has restrictive harvest regulations for several species following a recent chemical treatment. This allows northern pike to grow to trophy size of 40" and beyond.

## ■ WASHBURN COUNTY

**Long Lake** - 3,290 acres. Long Lake northern pike ranged from 10.5 to 38.0 inches, with six fish over 30 inches. The average length was 20.5 inches. 44 % of the northern pike sampled were above 21 inches. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. There are four public boat launches located on Long Lake. From North to South: Blackhawk Rd, off CTH-B, Hank's Dr. off Todd Rd., Boat Landing Rd. off CTH-D, and Sunset Bay Rd. off Schnacky Rd. (east side). Long Lake's cisco population likely helps bolster numbers of larger pike and walleye in the lake. Research has shown that larger pike prefer cisco as prey, if available.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Big Muskego Lake** - 2,200 surface acres Average length – 22 inches with fish observed up to 40 inches. 40- inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 1. There are three public launches located on the lakes' east, south and southeast sides found on Boxhorn and Durham Drive. Big Muskego is shallow lake averaging 3 feet deep and has heavy aquatic plants and big northern pike. The conservative minimum length and bag limits provide exciting catch and release opportunities for both bass and pike.

## PANFISH



## ■ BUFFALO COUNTY

**Mississippi River – Pool 6.** 2015 fall electrofishing surveys showed good bluegill numbers. Overall, nearly 65 adult and juvenile bluegill were captured per hour. Thirty four percent of surveyed bluegill were greater than six inches, while nearly one in five were greater than seven inches. Surveyed fish topped out just shy of nine inches. Daily limit 25 in total for bluegill and pumpkinseed (sunfish). Check WDNR website for access locations. Winona, MN is adjacent to Pool 6 and offers additional launch locations.



Fox Valley Technical College student volunteers showing off a large catch of bluegill and other panfish sampled during spring fyke net survey in Upper Red Lake, Shawano County.

## ■ CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

The Winnebago System includes four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) and two main river systems (upper Fox and Wolf Rivers) and associated tributaries upstream to the first dam. - 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles

Yellow perch are the most sought after panfish species within the Winnebago System and catch rates were well below average during recent 2015 netting surveys. Despite the lower abundance, some anglers were able to find success during the 2014 fishing season, particularly on catching nice fish (over 9"). These angler reports were consistent with survey results indicating that a high percentage of the adult population is comprised of fish larger than 9" (52.3% for females and 30.1% for males). The yellow perch fishery on the Winnebago System is a boom/bust fishery driven heavily by variable year class strength, and unfortunately recruitment of yellow perch has been limited in recent years. The good news is that perch grow rapidly, meaning it won't take long for the next strong year class to recruit to harvestable lengths.

Black crappie exhibit a similar boom/bust cycle as described for yellow perch. However, very strong year classes of black crappie in 2009 and 2010 have provided exceptional crappie fishing over the last couple years. Catch rates of black crappie in recent bottom trawl assessments have been decreasing, but these year classes still dominate the population and should provide good fishing opportunities for quality 11.0 to 12.5" fish.

Recent surveys indicate that the bluegill population within the Winnebago Pool Lakes is predominantly composed of 6-6.9" fish (47.8% of male population and 35.0% of female population), while also containing a respectable contribution of quality fish that are 7" or longer (31.2% of males and 15.4% of females). Age data show that the majority of the fish are 3-4 years old and exhibiting growth rates above the state average.

Current Regulations: The season is open year round for panfish with an aggregate daily bag limit of 25 fish and no minimum length limit on any species.

Access Information: There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system ranging from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town access at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>).

## ■ CLARK, JACKSON and TREMPEALEAU COUNTIES

**Sportsman Lake**, 285 acres; **Potter Flowage**, 348 acres; **Trow Lake** (Lower Merrillan Pond), 43 acres; and **Marinuka Lake**, 98 acres. Very few panfish were captured in Sportsman Lake in 2015. Black crappies, bluegills, and yellow perch were recently stocked by the Clark County Land Conservation Department, Central WI Fur, Fin, and Feather Club, Black River Sportsman Club, and DNR with the intent of improving panfish populations in the lake.

### BLACK CRAPPIE

**Potter Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 37 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.6/net lift and maximum length captured was 12". Of the total catch, 13% of crappies were 8"+ and 1.5% were 10"+.

**Trow:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 40 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.2/net lift and maximum length captured was 10.5". Of the total catch, 49% of crappies were 8"+ and less than 1% were 10"+.



Evan Sniadajewski, Fishery technician; bluegills from Le Tourneau Lake, Price County. Photo taken by Jeff Scheirer

**Marinuka:** Total catch rate was 53 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.04/net lift and maximum length captured was 10.5". Of the total catch, 57% of crappies were 8"+ and less than 1% were 10"+.

### BLUEGILL

**Potter Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 52 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.03/net lift and maximum length captured was 8". Of the total catch, 3% of bluegills were 7"+ and less than 1% were 8"+.

**Trow:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 35 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 1.7/net lift and maximum length captured was 8.5". Of the total catch, 57% of bluegills were 7"+ and 5% were 8"+.

**Marinuka:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 67 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 1.3/net lift and maximum length captured was 8.5". Of the total catch, 28% of bluegills were 7"+ and 2% were 8"+.

### YELLOW PERCH

**Potter Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0/net lift and maximum length captured was 8.5".

**Trow:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 25 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 1/net lift and maximum length captured was 11.5". Of the total catch, 3% of perch were 10"+.

**Marinuka:** Total catch rate in 2015 was 8 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 2/net lift and maximum length captured was 11.5". Of the total catch, 23% of perch were 10"+. Regulation: All lakes listed - no minimum length limit/25 daily aggregate bag limit for panfish. Other Information: Accessible fish facilities in our area are available at Lake Wazee, Black River Flowage, and Teal Flowage in Jackson County, Mead and Arbutus Lakes in Clark County, and Second Lake, Arctic Springs Pond and Lake Henry in Trempealeau County.

## ■ DODGE COUNTY

**Beaver Dam Lake** - 6,542 acres Black crappie catch rate during 2015 fall electrofishing was 100/hour with fish up to 12 inches available. Yellow perch catch rate was 110/hour with fish reaching 10.6 inches. Panfish: bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, crappie and yellow perch open all year, no minimum length, 25 fish (in total) daily bag. Boat launches and shorefishing available at: City of Beaver Dam at Waterworks, Edgewater, and Tahoe Parks (east shore), Town of Fox Lake at Spring Road (northeast shore). Dodge County Park (west shore), DNR launches at Fish Camp (east shore) and Mill Road (north shore). Shorefishing at Hwy G bridges (south and west shores). Beaver Dam Lake offers plentiful channel catfish angling opportunities with fish up to 24-inches present.

## ■ DOOR, KEWAUNEE and MANITOWOC COUNTIES

**Manitowoc and Kewaunee county lakes** are all less than 140 acres, **Door County lakes** 250 to 1,200 acres. Inland lakes in Manitowoc County are small and easy to fish with small boats. Panfish, mainly bluegill, yellow perch and rock bass are popular with local anglers. Most lakes have abundant panfish although in some lakes they average less than 6" in length. Best bets for shore fishing include Long Lake and Gass Lake. Other lakes have good boat launches. Experienced anglers or beginners can spend an enjoyable day of fishing on these lakes.

Lakes in Kewaunee County are also small in size. East Alaska, West Alaska, Heidemann, and Krohns Lakes all have public access and are great places for family fishing because they can be fished from small boats. Panfish are abundant in these lakes so the fishing action can be very good, however large panfish may be hard to find.

Door County Lakes are much larger than lakes in the other counties. Kangaroo Lake has good numbers of yellow perch, bluegill and large rock bass. Spring yellow perch fishing is very popular off of the causeway (Highway E). Clark Lake has seen increasing numbers of bluegill and rock bass. Panfish in these lakes have good size structure with good numbers of 8" panfish in them. The Forestville Flowage provides shore fishing opportunities and has good numbers of black crappie in it. Anglers may also find some nice bluegill and yellow perch.

Current regulation: Statewide rules, except for Silver Lake, Manitowoc County which has a 10 panfish bag limit.

## ■ GRANT and CRAWFORD COUNTIES

**Mississippi River Pool 10.** Fall electrofishing surveys conducted in Pool 10 showed good populations of black and white crappie 9 to 14 inches, bluegill 5 to 9 inches, and yellow perch 6 to 13 inches in length. Although these species can be found throughout the backwaters of Pool 10, anglers should target areas such as Ambro Slough backwater complex, Harpers Slough backwater complex, Sunfish Lake, Sturgeon Slough, and McGregor Lake. The efforts to enhance and rehabilitate these backwater lakes



Two slab black crappies from an early season fyke netting survey.

have greatly improved the fishery in Pool 10 which makes this body of water a great place to fish year-round. Continuous open season with daily bag limit of 25 bluegill, 25 yellow perch, 25 crappie and no minimum length limits.

Access information: There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. Check out the following websites for more details. [http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html) The Mississippi River in Pool 10 offers a variety of unique fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities. The river lies in a valley which is surrounded by majestic bluffs. This valley was scoured out by floodwaters that were released from melting glaciers thousands of years ago. Those floodwaters created a mosaic of habitats which are constantly changing as the river meanders downstream through main channels, side channels, sloughs, around backwater lakes and islands, and over wing dams, closing dams, mud flats and sand bars. Navigating the river can be a little intimidating at first with the rivers mix of habitats, varying water depths, and flows but it's worth the effort to get out and see the mighty Mississippi River.

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Grand Portage** (144 acres) and **Mercer** (184 acres) Lakes are conveniently located in the Town of Mercer. What these lakes lack in trophy panfish, they make up for in numbers. 2015 panfish netting surveys found only 18% of the 471 bluegills sampled in Grand Portage and 40% of the 614 bluegills sampled in Mercer Lake to be larger than 6 inches. However, in both lakes, bluegills were sampled at very high catch rates (over 100 fish per net-lift). Anglers looking for an opportunity for fast-paced panfishing action close to town should give this duo a try. Both lakes have good boat landings right in town.

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

**Rolling Stone Lake** - 672 acres. Year in and year out, this lake just keeps producing numbers of quality bluegill, crappie, and perch. It is no secret to anglers as evidenced by the hundreds of ice anglers out there year after year; It probably benefits from partial winterkills, almost on an annual basis, due to the abundance of aquatic plants in this shallow lake burning up the oxygen under the ice; These winterkills probably help to maintain balance of predators and prey and keep the abundant young panfish thinned out enough to allow fast growth to occur.

**Hidden Gems on County Forest** - Langlade County has hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS's and explore, you just might find that spot you don't want your neighbor to know about! Check the regs pamphlet as 8 lakes in Langlade County will have new panfish regs starting this year.

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Lake Alice** - 1,369 acres; Bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie, and perch; Good habitat

+ good water quality = good fishing, enough said.

**Hidden Gems on County Forest** - Lincoln County has hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS's and explore, you just might find a spot you'd never tell your relatives about! Check the regs pamphlet as 6 lakes in Lincoln County will have new panfish regs starting this year.

## ■ MARATHON and PORTAGE COUNTIES

**Stevens Point Flowage** - 2,000 acres. Stevens Point Flowage was surveyed in 2015, a total of 1,311 black crappie were captured at a rate of 7.4 fish per net-night. Average length was 9.6 inches and 68% of the fish caught were greater than 10 inches. Survey results indicate another strong class of fish moving through the fishery, which will be available to anglers in the coming year. No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Access to the Stevens Point Flowage is available at several boat landings and parks. Shoreline fishing is available at Bukolt Park in the City of Stevens Point. Maps are available through DNR's online boating access site.

## ■ MARINETTE COUNTY

**Lake Noquebay** - 2,398 acres. Big bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and perch can be found in Lake Noquebay located just northeast of Crivitz. The last survey (2014) revealed numerous bluegill over 8 inches and crappie over 10 inches. Noquebay has good weed growth in certain areas of lake and the water is moderately stained. 25 in total (bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, crappie). Lake Noquebay can be accessed from



You are never too young (or too old, for that matter) to enjoy Wisconsin's panfishing opportunities. Photo - Jon Hansen.

a boat ramp located on the northwest side of the lake on Boat Landing Road or from Lake Noquebay County Park.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Gilmore Lake** - 301 acres. During spring netting, we found good numbers of crappies centered on 9 inches with a few fish reaching 11 inches. We also found abundant 6 and 7-inch perch with lower numbers up to 9.5 inches.

**Boom-Rhineland Chain.** During netting on Bass Lake, Boom Lake and Rhineland Flowage, we found abundant crappies centered on 8 inches, with a few fish up to 11 inches. Perch were scattered from 5 to 10 inches.

**Sugar Camp Chain.** Dam Lake had extremely abundant 6-7 inch crappies, with lower numbers up to 9.5 inches. Crappies on Chain Lake had a broad peak from 7 to 9.5 inches, likely made up of multiple yearclasses.

**Carroll Lake** – 352 acres. Abundant bluegill centered on about 6.5 inches, with good numbers up to 8 inches.



A basket of bluegills from Washburn County will make a great dinner (or two). Photo: Jon Hansen

**Indian Lake** – 397 acres. Abundant 4-7 inch bluegill, with moderate numbers up to 8 inches.

## ■ POLK COUNTY

**Deer Lake** - 807 acres. Deer Lake is a lake that offers excellent fishing for the main panfish species (i.e., bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch). During the spring 2015 netting and shocking surveys, there were high catches of 7 to 8.5-inch bluegills, 8 to 10-inch crappies, and 8 to 11-inch yellow perch. Panfish in Deer Lake are managed with the statewide regulation- 25 fish bag limit and no minimum length limit for bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch (in aggregate). There is one boat landing on Deer Lake and it is located on the far west end of the lake off 140th Ave. Deer Lake is one of the best lakes in Polk County in terms of water quality.

## ■ PORTAGE COUNTY

**Lime Lake.** Lime Lake was surveyed by electrofishing in spring 2015. Bluegills were captured at a rate of 271 fish/ hour. The size structure included fish from 2.0 to 8.5 inches, average length was 5.0 inches. In total, 29% of the fish were larger than 6 inches and 2.4% of the catch was greater than 8 inches. As of April 1, 2016, no minimum length limit, no closed season, bag limit 10 panfish in total. There is a town boat landing off of Lime Lake Road.

## ■ PRICE COUNTY

**Le Tourneau Lake** —124 acres. Le Tourneau Lake offers a great harvest opportunity for black crappies, but their size structure was disappointing. Fyke netting capture rates were 69 crappies per net-night in fall 2014 and 50 crappies per net-night in spring 2015, indicating high population abundance. Even though 31% of the crappies in fall nets and 42% in spring nets were over 8 inches, very few grew to 10 inches. Netting showed that bluegills were less abundant with good size structure. Capture rates were 20 and 17 bluegills per net-night in fall and spring netting surveys, and in both samples 65% were over 7 inches. By contrast, late

spring electrofishing capture rate revealed higher bluegills abundance (204 per mile), and their size structure was lower with only 10% at least 7 inches. Le Tourneau Lake has the statewide daily bag limit of 25 panfish in any combination. An unimproved boat landing is located off Price Lakes Road, but parking space is limited. —Chad Leanna, fishery technician, Park Falls

## ■ RUSK COUNTY

**Dairyland Reservoir** —1,745 acres. Surveys in the fall 2014 and spring 2015 showed that Dairyland Reservoir supports a black crappie population in low to moderate abundance with above average size structure. Fall fyke nets captured 2.9 crappies per net-night, and 54% were 10 inches or longer. Early spring nets captured 4.7 crappies per net-night with 69% of them 10 inches or larger and 23% at least 12 inches long. Effective in April 2016 Dairyland Reservoir have a new panfish harvest regulation, allowing anglers to keep up to 15 panfish per day, but only 5 of any one species. There are five public boat launches located around the flowage and multiple shore fishing facilities at the county parks.

## ■ SAWYER COUNTY

**Nelson Lake** is a 2,715 acre lake in Sawyer County. Nelson Lake has a history as a big panfish producing destination. Recent surveys have found that while size has decreased somewhat, numbers of bluegill and crappie are at an all-time high. In a 2014 netting survey fisheries crews found 79% of bluegill were over 6 inches and crappie were captured at a rate that is close to double the average for the area. Several stretches of shoreline have been improved with “fish sticks” and tree drops that create an excellent place for anglers to start targeting panfish in the spring. In an effort to promote better size of panfish, the regulations on Nelson Lake are 10 panfish (all species combined) per day.

## ■ SHAWANO COUNTY

**Upper Red Lake** - 195 acres. Recent surveys conducted on Upper Red Lake indicate abundant populations of bluegill with 30% of catch over 6.0 inches and 2% over 7.0 inches. Although size structure is less than optimal this lake can provide good action. Other panfish include black crappie, pumpkinseed, and yellow perch. Panfish regulations are statewide default. Upper Red Lake has two boat launches with some shore fishing opportunities. Anglers venturing over to Upper Red Lake should concentrate their effort during spring, late fall, and winter months due to the extensive growth of submergent aquatic plants which can limit the ability to fish it effectively during the summer.

## ■ TAYLOR COUNTY

**Rib Lake,** —320 acres. Rib Lake boasted high numbers of black crappies with fair size structure. Capture rate in our fall 2014 fyke netting survey was high at 108 crappies per net-night, and 92% measured 8 inches or more, but none were over 10 inches. High abundance usually means mediocre size in panfish populations. Growth rate was slightly below the statewide average—Rib Lake crappies reached an average length of 8.6 inches in 5 years (n=18). A bumper 2009 year class now 7–9.5 inches should provide anglers with plenty of action and harvest opportunity for several more seasons. A new regulation will be in place for 2016, allowing a daily bag limit of 25 panfish with a maximum of 10 fish of any one species. Rib Lake has a campground and two public boat launches: one off State Highway 102 and one with a fishing pier off Lake Shore Drive.

## ■ WAUPACA COUNTY

Waupaca Chain O Lakes - 724 acres. Recent surveys indicate moderate populations of bluegill with 12% of catch over 7.0 inches and some bluegill up to 8.9 inches. Black crappie, pumpkinseed, and warmouth are also found in moderate abundance. The Waupaca Chain has multiple boat launches. The Waupaca Chain O Lakes is a unique collection of 22 interconnected lakes in Southwestern Waupaca County. —Al Niebur senior fisheries biologist, Shawano

## ■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Delavan Lake - 1,906 acres. Black crappie averaging 10” (max of 11.5”) and bluegill averaging 7.1” (max 9”) – 2012 survey No minimum length limit, 25 daily bag A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at STH 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800’ away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the STH 50 boat launch.

## ■ WASHBURN COUNTY

Long Lake - 3,290 acres. Long Lake black crappie ranged from 3.8 to 11.8 inches in spring 2015. The average length was 8.0 inches. 41% of the black crappie sampled were above 10.0 inches. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 fish. There are four public boat launches located on Long Lake. From North to South: Blackhawk Rd, off CTH-B, Hank’s Dr. off Todd Rd., Boat Landing Rd. off CTH-D, and Sunset Bay Rd. off Schnacky Rd. (east side).

## ■ WOOD COUNTY

**Wisconsin Rapids Flowage** - 504 Acres. The Wisconsin Rapids Flowage provides a good crappie fishery. The flowage was surveyed in the spring of 2015. Over 90% of the crappies caught were at least quality size (8”), 71% were at least preferred size (10”) and 22% were at least memorable size (12”). General inland waters regulation – daily bag limit of 25 panfish. There are two boat launches on the flowage and one walk-in access portage. The walk-in access portage and a boat launch is located off of Reddin Road, one boat launch is located off of South Biron Drive.

## CATFISH



## ■ JEFFERSON and DODGE COUNTIES

**Lake Koshkonong/Rock River/Crawfish River/Bark River** - 10,000 lake acres + 80+ river miles (Rock River), 48+ river miles (Crawfish River), 29 river miles (Bark River). 2015 catfish hoop netting on the Rock River produced channel catfish ranging from 11.5 to 30.5 inches and up to 12 pounds. Flathead catfish ranged from 12.8 to 42.5 inches and up to 46.7 pounds. Seasons are open year-round on the Rock/Crawfish/Bark rivers and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. Catfish (channel, flathead) open all year with a 10 fish daily bag and no minimum length limit. Best access points are Royce Dalman County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jef-



Fisheries technician Josh Krall with a big Fox River channel catfish from the Waterford impoundment in the summer of 2014. Photo: Luke Roffler

erson below Jefferson Dam, Rock River Park in Johnson Creek, Kaul Park in Ixonia. Opportunities for large flathead catfish (42+ inches) exist in all major rivers in Jefferson and Dodge Counties.

## ■ OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO and WAUPACA COUNTIES

**Wolf River.** Recent hoop net surveys conducted on the Wolf River indicate moderate to high numbers of channel catfish with over 72% of fish over 20.0 inches and the largest fish at 34.7 inches. Flathead catfish were found in lower numbers but exhibited good size with 80% of catch over 30.0 inches and the largest at 41.9 inches. Current regulation: Channel catfish: 25 in total, open all year. Flathead catfish: Daily bag limit of one fish and only flatheads from 30 to 36 inches or over 42 inches may be possessed. Season follows statewide gamefish season. Multiple public and private boat accesses are located throughout the Wolf River from Fremont upstream to Shawano. Good shore fishing areas are found at public accesses in Fremont, Gills Landing, New London, and at multiple properties in the Lower Wolf River bottoms state lands. Catfish are known to be nocturnal feeders and anglers tend to have better angling success by targeting these fish during early evening and night-time hours. Channel catfish are fairly opportunistic feeders and will eat a wide variety of food items including nightcrawlers, cut-bait, and smaller live bait while flathead catfish almost exclusively target larger live fish presentations. Catfish populations in the Wolf River exhibit high seasonal movement during spring warm-up with fish traveling many miles from wintering sites in the lower river and Upriver lakes to over-summer habitat throughout the upper river. Recent radio telemetry studies in the Wolf



Fisheries biologist Laura Stremick-Thompson with a flathead catfish from the Rock River in 2015.

River indicate most flathead catfish prefer habitat associated with large wood structure.

## PORTAGE COUNTY

**Biron Flowage** - 2,100 acres. During the Biron Flowage hoop net survey in summer 2015, we captured a total of 566 channel catfish at a rate of 21 fish per net-night. Fish ranged in length from 9 to 28 inches and averaged 18 inches. Of these fish, 70% were larger than 16 inches and 23% were greater than 21 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 the DNR online boating access site. Anglers in central Wisconsin can enjoy fishing sections of the Wisconsin River where abundance of channel catfish is at or above the statewide catch average. Bluebird Landing on the north end of the flowage offers excellent shoreline fishing access.

## RACINE COUNTY

**Fox River** - 6.5 miles from Waterford up to the Racine-Waukesha county line. Recent catfish surveys on the Fox River produced very high catch rates of 20"+ channel catfish, including fish up to 30" and 10 pounds. The highest catch rates were upstream of the dam in Waterford to the Racine-Waukesha county line. Multiple boat launches and several shorefishing areas provide very good public access. No length limit, 10 total catfish. One public boat launch at the Waterford Dam off N River Road and another public boat launch upstream of the impoundment off Bridge Road. Excellent shorefishing access at the park immediately above and below the Waterford Dam.

## INLAND TROUT



## ADAMS COUNTY

**Fordham Creek** - Fordham Creek is a Class I trout stream and contains naturally reproducing brook, rainbow and brown trout. The stream is surveyed annually. In 2016, relative abundance for brook, brown, and rainbow trout were 219, 382, and 87 fish/mile, respectively. Relative abundance of all three species is down from 2015. 40% of the adult brook trout caught were 8" or greater. 25% of the adult brown trout and 6% of the adult rainbow caught were 12" or greater. Inland trout season; New regulation for the 2016-2017 trout season - Daily bag limit of 3 in total: Brown and rainbow trout over 12"; brook over 8". Anglers have access to Fordham Creek through State owned land along County Hwy J and 8th Drive, and access with a fishing easement upstream of where the creek crosses County Hwy J. New in 2015, additional stream easement was purchased downstream of County Hwy J bridge and upstream of the 8th Avenue bridge. Fordham Creek is one of the few fisheries in Central Wisconsin that contains brook, brown, and rainbow trout. Trout habitat work was completed in the summer of 2009.

## ASHLAND COUNTY

**Marengo River.** There are approximately 20 river miles located in Ashland County between Government Road and the Bayfield County line. 2015 electrofishing sur-

veys results suggest that anglers can expect low-moderate densities of brook and brown trout, but some quality fish are available. Minimal overhanging cover and wide mean stream width makes this stretch of river conducive to both spin-casting and fly fishing. Additionally, in this stretch of river, anglers have a chance to catch naturally reproducing brook, rainbow, and brown trout in the same water!

**Cammerer Lake and Bay Spring:** Both of these small lakes (Cammerer 19 acres, Bay Spring 2 acres) offer an opportunity for anglers interested in chasing trout in non-moving waters. These lakes are stocked annually with trout (rainbow trout in Cammerer and brook trout in Bay Spring).

## BARRON COUNTY

**Turtle Creek.** There is an 8-mile stretch of Turtle Creek that is classified trout water, but some of the best trout water is from CTH D to Silver Creek. The brook trout population in Turtle Creek is typically 150-400 trout per mile during electrofishing surveys. With this moderate density of trout, the population is comprised of 6 to 12-inch brook trout, with the occasional fish up to 15 inches. Beginning in 2016, the Turtle Creek trout regulation will have no length limit and a five fish daily bag limit. Anglers can access the stream from the parking areas off CTY D, 6th St, and 5 1/2 St. There are fishing piers off CTY D and 6th St. This area is part of the Barron County forest. Extensive instream habitat work was conducted on Turtle Creek between CTH D and 5 1/2 St, and also upstream and downstream of the fishing pier off 6th St.

## BUFFALO, JACKSON and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**Area trout streams** - This information is based on results of 70 trout stream survey sites that were surveyed in summer of 2015. Reproduction: Overall increase in brook trout and stable brown trout reproduction. Adults: Overall increase in catch rate of brook trout. Brown trout catch rate remained stable. Legal (depending on regulation): Overall increase in catch rate of brook trout and stable catch rate of brown trout. Other Information: drought conditions in 2012 affected reproduction and adult trout densities leading into the 2013 season, and combined with drought conditions in the latter part of 2013, adult and legal-size densities were generally adversely affected during 2014. However, 2015 surveys found brook trout populations had rebounded and brown trout populations remaining relatively stable. These surveys also found some systems such as the Elk (Trempealeau County), Buffalo, Trempealeau, and Beaver showing fairly significant brook trout population increases over last year. Supplemental trout stocking from DNR and cooperative hatcheries have helped bolster trout populations through the drought years of recent past, reducing adverse effects. Habitat restoration projects in 2015 improved stream conditions and angler access in the North and South Branches of Beaver Creek and Borst Valley Creek (Trempealeau County). Many thanks to our partners in the Cooperative Trout Rearing program and Habitat Restoration program for providing more stocked fish, fishing access, and better habitat for our area streams! Regulation: Please see the *Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations, 2016-2017* for applicable length and bag limit restrictions for the streams you fish.

## BURNETT COUNTY

**North Fork of the Clam River** - Approximately 17 miles of Class I-III trout water. This stream supports good natural reproduction for both brook and brown trout. 2015 surveys show a 6.0-inch brook trout average with 66% above 5.0 inches (max length: 11.5 inch) and a 6.0-inch brown trout average with 20% above 9.0 inches (max length: 16.0 inch). No minimum length limit, 5 fish bag limit (new 2016 regula-

tion) A large portion of the river boundary is within the Clam River Fishery Area in Southeastern Burnett County and provides public access via parking spots, trails, and at bridge crossings. This link provides maps of the area: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/FisheriesAreas/590clamriver.html>.

## CHIPPEWA and DUNN COUNTIES

**Sand Creek** - 7.5 miles. Sand Creek meanders through Chippewa and Dunn Counties before it empties into the Red Cedar River. Sand Creek is popular among anglers because of the quality trout fishery and ease of public access. Access can be found at numerous state easements or state fishery areas that are scattered along the stream. The fishery transitions from a brown trout dominated stream in the lower reaches to primarily a brook trout fishery further up in the watershed. Trout populations in Sand Creek remain healthy as corroborated by 2015 electrofishing surveys. Trout densities are modest, averaging approximately 1,000 fish per mile, but the opportunity to catch a trophy fish is what keeps anglers coming back with approximately 60 brown trout per mile over 18". To protect the trophy fishery of Sand Creek, special regulations are in place from 10th Street downstream - only 1 trout over 18" may be kept and only artificial lures can be used. Upstream from 10th street - 5 trout can be kept of any length.

## COLUMBIA COUNTY

**Rowan Creek.** - Rowan Creek offers 4 miles of Class I trout water and 8 miles of Class II trout water. The subject segment begins at Highway 51 and continues upstream for 0.7 miles of Class I trout water. Rowan Creek flows over a sand and gravel bottom in its upper reaches and natural trout reproduction is very high. Two intensive habitat improvement projects were completed in 2011 and 2014 on a total of 0.7 miles of Rowan Creek in Rowan Creek Fishery Area. These proj-



Elliot Hoffman, DNR Fisheries Technician, holding a brook trout captured in a Waupaca County trout stream.

ects, upstream of Highway 51 in Poynette, created better habitat for holding larger trout in an area where numbers of smaller trout were historically very high. A 2015 trout survey showed that anglers in this stretch will have the opportunity to catch brown trout up to 18 inches, the occasional brook trout, and rainbow trout which are stocked early in the spring at around 9 inches and reach nearly 13 inches by the end of summer. Current regulation: Beginning with the



Fisheries biologist Luke Roffler holding two big Bluff Creek brown trout in 2014

catch and keep trout season in 2016, Rowan Creek follows the county base regulation for Columbia County which is an 8-inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. Access information: This segment of Rowan Creek flows through Rowan Creek Fishery Area, a collection of State-owned land parcels which provide access to Rowan Creek at several points along its length upstream of Interstate 39/90/94. Anglers can access the subject segment described above from a parking lot off of Highway 51, as well as walk in access from East Street south of Tomlinson Rd. Hinkson Creek is a Class II tributary stream that enters Rowan Creek just upstream of County Highway J near Poynette. Hinkson Creek offers anglers access via Hinkson Creek Fishery Area parcels on Kent Rd. and McMillan Rd., and it supports a mixed brook and brown trout fishery. Daily length and bag limits on Hinkson Creek match those on Rowan Creek.

## DUNN, PIERCE and ST CROIX COUNTIES

**Area trout streams.** This area has approximately 600 miles of classified trout stream. Many large, popular brown trout streams can be found in Pierce County and the southern portion of St. Croix County. Numerous small brook trout streams can be found in Dunn County. DNR crews monitor approximately 26 streams and 42 sites annually. 2015 electrofishing surveys show trout populations rebounding following two years of drought. During the 2016 season anglers will notice large numbers of small trout and unusually high numbers of large trout in area streams. Two and three year old brown trout populations will be less than normal during the 2016 season. Regulations may vary, be sure to check the *Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations 2016-2017* for regulations on these streams. Most streams can be legally accessed off public road bridge right-of-ways. Anglers must keep their feet wet or ask permission from landowners. For additional public access go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Atlas" An early catch and release trout fishing season applies to the entire three county area. It begins Saturday, January 2 at 5 a.m. and ends Friday, May 6th at midnight. The general open season is now May 7 at 5 am through October 15th.

## GRANT COUNTY

**Little Grant River** - 9.0 miles (trout water) The Little Grant River supports a healthy population of brown trout. Recent surveys sampled 476 young of the year, yearling, and adult brown trout per mile ranging from 2.1 to 18.8 inches with an average adult length of 10.5 inches. Thirty three percent of the adult brown trout sampled were 12 inches or greater. Govier Road upstream to Milner Road: 3 trout under 12 inches may be kept. The remaining sections have an 8 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag of 3. There are approximately 2.75 miles of public fishing easements along the Little Grant River from Govier Road upstream to Milner Road. Remaining trout water may be accessed by gaining permission from landowners or by accessing the stream from road right of ways. While the Little Grant River supports some natural reproduction of

brown trout it is also stocked annually with approximately 850 small fingerling brown trout. Anglers may also catch smallmouth bass in the lower portions of this stream starting near county road A. - *Bradd Sims fisheries biologist, Dodgeville*

## ■ GRANT, IOWA and RICHLAND COUNTIES

**Southwestern Wisconsin streams.** The trout populations in the streams in southwest Wisconsin continue to be near all-time highs. The vast majority of this fishery is composed of naturally reproducing self-sustaining brown trout fisheries. There has been a slight decrease in the overall number of trout from the record high populations of 2010 thru 2013 as precipitation patterns the last couple of years have led to a decrease in spring flow output and subsequent decrease in the base stream flows. While on the better streams this impact has been fairly small, the smaller and weaker streams have been significantly impacted. Regardless, the over-all trout fishery remains in outstanding condition. The streams as a whole not only contain large numbers of trout, the number of 10 to 13-inch is as good if not better than anywhere in the state outside of the coulee region. There are also fairly good populations of 13 to 15-inch fish along with a few 16 to 18-inch fish. Fish over 18 inches are a real rarity in the trout streams. If you are really interested in fish of this size you would want to fish the large cool water streams at the very lower end or below the trout water where the population of forage fish is adequate to support fish of this size. As with any unusually large fish, if this is what you wish to target you will need to be willing to put in large amounts of time and effort and then hope to get lucky. The base trout regulation covering these counties is a 8" minimum length limit and 3 daily bag limit. Additional regulations used in the area to provide a diversity of fishing opportunities for varied angler interests include a 12" min. x 2 bag; a 12" max. x 3 bag and catch and release only. A significant amount of the trout water on the better streams in the area have Fisheries Management (access and management) Easements on them. The locations of these easement are available on the DNR web site. - *Gene Van Dyck, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville*

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

New trout regs are in effect this year – check the rules!

Brook Trout – **East Branch Eau Claire River** downstream from STH 45; Spring Brook immediately upstream from Antigo and downstream of Antigo; McGee Lake; South Branch Oconto River

Brown Trout – **Evergreen River; Wolf River; Hunting River; Saul Spring; South Branch Oconto River**

Stocked Lakes – **Jack** (rainbows), **Pence** (browns), and **Townline** (rainbows)

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

New trout regs are in effect this year – check the rules!



*Elliot Hoffman, DNR Fisheries Technician, holding a large brown trout captured in a Waupaca County trout stream.*

Brook Trout – **Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; New Wood River**

Brown Trout – **Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; Big Rib River**

Stocked Lakes – **Tahoe** (rainbows), **Henson** (brooks), **Larson** (rainbows), **Moraine** (rainbows)

## ■ MARINETTE COUNTY

**Thunder Lake** - 135 acres.; **South Branch Pemebonwon; North Branch Pemebonwon Upper Middle Inlet; KC Creek; North Fork Thunder River.** Thunder Lake is an opening day hot spot for trout anglers. Annually, rainbow trout are stocked before opening weekend (first Saturday in May). For anglers wanting to target brook trout, the South Branch Pemebonwon, North Branch Pemebonwon, Upper Middle Inlet, KC Creek and the North Fork Thunder River all have good brook trout populations. Over 6,500 brook trout are stocked each year in both the North & South Branches of the Pemebonwon (13,000 total). NOTE: Trout fishing regulations have changed for 2016. Be sure to review the new regulations before your next outing. All of these streams can all be accessed from various road/stream crossings.



*DNR Fish technicians Ronald Rhode and Brad Ryan hold a 33-inch male brown trout collected during a fall survey on the lower Menominee River.*

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Trout waters** - Brown trout are stocked in Dorothy Lake and Bearskin River; rainbows are planned for Perch Lake, Hawk Lake and Little Bass Lake, and brook trout for Mercer Springs. **Dorothy Lake** – 96 acres. Stocked in fall with 6-inch brown trout. A spring, 2015 electrofishing survey turned up a few 5 to 7-inch brown trout, along with small bluegill, largemouth, smallmouth and wall-eye. Water levels were down 5 or more feet in recent years due to prolonged drought, but rebounded in spring of 2015. Directions: From Hwy 47 in Lake Tomahawk, east on Hwy D, second left north on Rainbow Road. DNR boat landing is the first road to the right.

## ■ PORTAGE COUNTY

**Tomorrow River below Amherst;** Hwy A and Hwy T. Surveys since 2010 indicate at Hwy A brown trout on average are captured at a rate of 216 fish/mile with 14% larger than 12 inches, catch rate was 211 fish/mile in 2015. At Hwy T the 5 year average for brown trout is 215 fish/mile and 11% larger than 12 inches, catch rate was 185 fish/mile in 2015. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; from Amherst Dam to Durant Road all trout minimum length is 8 inches; the bag limit is 3 fish in total. Below Durant Road the minimum length is 18 inches, gear restriction is artificial lures only; the bag limit is 1 fish in total. Access: The Tomorrow River can be accessed from numerous road crossings and from parking areas along the Richard Hemp Fishery Area.

**Emmons Creek.** Fall survey work on Emmons Creek for 2015 captured brown trout at a rate of 1600 fish/mile which is comparable to the long term average of about 1500 fish/mile. 22% were larger than the 7 inches. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; no minimum length, the bag limit is 5 fish. Access: Emmons Creek is accessible from Stratton Lake Road parking areas, walk-in access on the Ice Age Trail, and other road crossings in Portage as well as Waupaca County. DNR has completed habitat improvement work on 4,500 feet upstream and 2,300 feet downstream from Stratton Lake Road.

**Flume Creek.** Fall survey work on Flume Creek for 2015 captured brown trout at a rate of 118 fish per mile which is less than the 147 fish/mile in 2014. 2% of brown trout were larger than 12 inches. Brook trout numbers were greater than 2014 at 394 fish/mile, but slightly lower than the long term average 426 fish/mile. 14% of brook trout were larger than 8 inches. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; brown trout and rainbow trout minimum length is 12 inches, brook trout over 8 inches; the bag limit is 3 fish in total. Access: Flume Creek has good access from road crossings and can also be accessed through portions of the Flume Creek Fisheries Area. The section on the Flume that is surveyed each year is from Hwy T to Hwy A. This area had two beaver dams removed in 2013 and is still recovering from this degradation of habitat.

**Tomorrow River above Amherst;** Nelsonville and Richard Hemp Fishery Area. Surveys for 2015 indicate at Nelsonville brown trout were captured at a rate of 700 fish/mile, the average is 799 for browns. Brook trout were captured at a rate of 130 fish/mile and the average is 117. At Richard Hemp FA, brown trout numbered 350 fish/mile, and brook trout 125 fish/mile. The average for browns is 450 and for brooks it is 160. While brook trout are generally less plentiful, harvestable fish were recorded above and below Nelsonville for both brook trout and brown trout. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; Amherst Dam to Clementson Road- 2 fish over 12 inches, gear restriction is artificial lures only; Upstream of Clementson Road browns and rainbows over 12 inches; brooks over 8 inches, bag limit is 3 fish in total Access: The Tomorrow River can be accessed from numerous road crossings and from parking areas along the Richard Hemp Fishery Area.

## ■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Onion River and its tributaries** - 10 miles of Class I brown trout waters 2015 surveys yielded an average length of 7 inches, with a maximum length of 17 inches. One site had a catch rate of 931 fish per mile which ranks it around the 86th percentile when compared with other all other brown trout waters statewide. Upstream of CTH E – daily bag limit 2, minimum length limit 12 inches, artificial lures only. Downstream of CTH E – daily bag limit 3, minimum length limit 8 inches, no gear restrictions. The best access is from the bridge at CTH E and a number of points along CTH U just southwest of Plymouth. Upstream of CTH E anglers will find extensive habitat work in a number of stretches and this is generally where we find the larger fish in our surveys.

## ■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Bluff Creek 1.75 miles. Annual trout monitoring on Bluff Creek results in very high catch rates of adult brown trout up to 19". Ongoing habitat restoration projects continue to provide high quality, fishable stream reaches for local and visiting anglers. Current regulation: 12" minimum length limit, 2 daily bag limit. Public access and parking is available off CTH P south of the intersection with Reliance Road. Nearly all of Bluff Creek is contained within the Kettle Moraine State Forest, allowing users open access to the stream. Multiple stretches of habitat enhancement projects provide excellent fishing for those with the patience to get

a lure or bait to drift into the overhanging structures.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Lower Genesee Lake** - 98 surface acres. Average length – 9 inches. 9-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 3. The recently renovated public launch for Lower Genesee Lake is found on Lower Genesee Lake Road.

## ■ WAUPACA COUNTY

Two Story Trout Lakes – **Bass, Skunk, Mirror, Little Long, Waupaca Chain of Lakes.** Acres: Bass (19), Skunk (14), Mirror (14), Little Long (4), Waupaca Chain (724) Bass, Skunk, Little Long and Mirror Lakes are annually stocked with catchable-size rainbow trout. Occasionally, these lakes may receive larger brood-size brown trout from Wild Rose Hatchery. The Waupaca Chain of Lakes has a unique brown trout fishery that is entirely supported by natural reproduction from the Emmons Creek (connected trout stream). Bass, Skunk Mirror and Little Long: No minimum length limit and 3 daily bag limit. Waupaca Chain of Lakes: 12-inch minimum length limit and 2 daily bag limit. Public boat launches are found on Bass, Little Long and the Waupaca Chain of Lakes. Shore fishing opportunities are especially good on Bass, Mirror and Little Long Lakes where anglers have access from County or City park lands. Skunk Lake provides a unique fishing experience since the lake is completely undeveloped and is accessed by a hiking trail. In typical two story lakes bass and bluegill are common species that inhabit the shallower near shore areas during the summer while trout are usually inhabit the cold oxygenated deeper water. Trout fisheries are usually maintained through stocking unless the waterbody has a nearby connected coldwater tributary that provides spawning and juvenile rearing habitat.

## LAKE STURGEON



## ■ BURNETT COUNTY

**Upper St. Croix River.** Upper St. Croix River-between confluence with the Namekagon River and St. Croix Falls (Burnett County border and WI/MN border). Lake sturgeon sampled in 2015 ranged from 17.0 to 58.5 inches. The average length was 28.0 inches. 90% of the sturgeon sampled in 2015 were juvenile sturgeon (less than 45 inches). The Upper St. Croix River offers a good opportunity to catch lake sturgeon, though most will be from 20 to 30 inches. Anglers who fish during the sturgeon catch and release season should take special care while handling fish once landed. Land the fish, photograph it (if you choose to), and release it quickly to reduce stress and ensure survival. Current regulation and season: Catch and release only. (New for 2016). June 16 – March 1. There are several boat and canoes launches on the Upper St. Croix River. Visit the National Park Service website for more information: <http://www.nps.gov/sacn/plan-yourvisit/maps.htm> Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR both use yellow dangler tags on the Upper St. Croix River to mark fish that have been sampled. These marked fish allow DNR staff to track fish movement and growth. Wisconsin anglers are encouraged to report tagged Upper St. Croix River sturgeon to Wisconsin DNR in Spooner. Please report the 5 digit dangler tag number, total length of the fish, approximate location caught, and date caught to Craig Roberts-Wisconsin DNR Fisheries biologist: 715-635-4095 or [craig.roberts@wisconsin.gov](mailto:craig.roberts@wisconsin.gov).

## PIERCE, POLK and ST CROIX COUNTIES

**Lower St. Croix River.** The St. Croix River and Lake St. Croix from St. Croix Falls to Prescott, Wisconsin covers approximately 52 miles. DNR records and monitoring from Wisconsin and Minnesota show lake sturgeon populations in the lower St. Croix River are continuing to improve both in density and size distribution. A few fish have been reported caught and released in the 80-inch, 130-pound range. Because of these improvements new opportunities will be available this year for anglers to catch and release sturgeon throughout most of the open water and ice fishing season. There is now a catch



It takes three to hold this St. Croix River lake sturgeon. The fish was almost 80" and estimated to be about 125 lbs. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.

and release season from June 16th through March 1st. Anglers are allowed to harvest one lake sturgeon 60 inches or greater during the 1st Saturday (Sept. 3rd, 2016) in September through September 30th. A harvest tag is required and the harvest must be reported no later than 6 pm the day after the fish is caught. The sturgeon season will remain closed during the spring spawning period, March 2 through June 15. Boat access available in Wisconsin includes: Interstate Park Landing in St. Croix Falls, two National Park Service Landings in Osceola and Somerset, Two Springs landing near Houlton, and Lake Front Park and Kings Landing in Hudson. Fees are charged at the Hudson landings. The St. Croix River is boundary water between Wisconsin and Minnesota. It lies within the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway. Upstream travel beyond the High Bridge near the Arcola sand bar is prohibited to prevent the spread of exotic species.

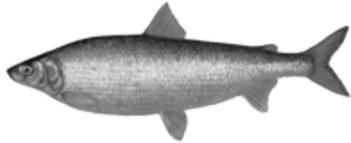
## PRICE and RUSK COUNTIES

In 2015 WDNR Fishery crews based in Park Falls captured 34 lake sturgeon by gillnetting in the **Flambeau River** in Price and Rusk counties. Of those, 10 fish were previously marked with PIT tags and 24 newly captured sturgeon received PIT tags. Lengths ranged from 40 to 60 inches. Gillnets also captured 26 additional lake sturgeon on the East Fork Chippewa River, including 14 recaptured fish and 12 newly tagged fish. East Fork Chippewa River sturgeon ranged from 50 to 72 inches and up to 100 pounds! Eventually as we tag and release more sturgeon over the years, tag returns will allow us to follow sturgeon movements, verify growth rates, and estimate population size.

Hook-and-line sturgeon anglers enjoyed a successful season in September 2015, the ninth season after a higher minimum length limit and the reduced season length went into effect to address concerns about increasing pressure on Wisconsin's lake sturgeon fisheries. Anglers registered seven lake sturgeon that measured at least 60 inches, matching 2010 as the third highest annual harvest in the Upper Chippewa Basin since more restrictive regulations took effect statewide in 2007. Anglers took six sturgeon from Flambeau River and one from the Chippewa River. The largest sturgeon weighed 83 pounds and measured 68 inches. Fisheries technicians examined the entrails and fin bones that anglers pro-

vided to help manage this important fishery. Rings on cross-sections cut from fin bones were counted similar to the way the age of trees is estimated. The seven sturgeon that were aged in the 2015 harvest were 34 – 41 years old. One sturgeon harvested in 2015 was PIT tagged. That sturgeon was tagged on April 28, 2010 when it was 59 inches long and 39 pounds, and it was harvested at 62 inches and 44 pounds on September 12, 2015 with an estimated age of 39 years. Mature sturgeon grow slowly, directing most of their energy towards reproduction. Popular shore fishing spots include the tailwaters of dams on the Flambeau and Chippewa Rivers. – Chad Leanna, fishery technician, Park Falls

## LAKE WHITEFISH



## BROWN, DOOR and KEWAUNEE COUNTIES

**Green Bay waters.** Lake whitefish have provided solid action for ice anglers on Green Bay since their impressive entry into the fishery in 2008; recent survey data suggest it will continue. Much of the action takes place at various locations along the east shore between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. Harvest rates for the 2014 ice fishing season were the third highest in the short time series and increased from the 2013 level. Population index surveys completed in 2015 suggest the whitefish spawning stock(s) in the area continue to maintain solid numbers thanks to some years of very good recruitment within the last decade. Preliminary young-of-year index data from late summer trawling in 2015 suggest production of lake whitefish could have been the highest on record for Green Bay. Barring any change in lake whitefish feeding and/or distribution patterns in Green Bay, the 2016 ice fishery should once again provide some good fishing. The bag limit for lake whitefish is 10 fish with no length limit. There are a number of access points between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess> for a listing of some of the launches in the area. Anglers are advised to check ahead locally for ice conditions before venturing out. Lake whitefish were extirpated from the Menominee River, Green Bay, over a century ago. However, whitefish have recently recolonized this river, showing up in robust numbers during the November spawning period. Although the spawning events have been well documented, actual outmigration of newly hatched whitefish in the spring has not been evaluated. During April of 2015, researchers from UW-Green Bay documented, for the first time, larval lake whitefish hatched in the Menominee River from the 2014 spawning event. Information such as this can be used to more effectively manage lake whitefish in Green Bay tributaries and to provide information to further study the lake whitefish spawning populations in the Menominee and other rivers.

## GL SALMON & TROUT



## ASHLAND, BAYFIELD and DOUGLAS COUNTIES

**Lake Superior. Brown trout**  
Brown trout make up about 10% of angler catch in Lake Superior and appears to be

increasing. The average size of brown trout from creel surveys is just over 20 inches, trophy fish in excess of 34 inches are reported throughout the year. Trout (Rainbow, Brown, Brook and Splake) = 5 in total of which only 1 may be rainbow trout, 1 may be brook trout. Rainbow trout must be greater than 26 inches, brook trout must be greater than 20 inches, and brown trout and splake must be greater than 15 inches. Access information: [http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/sl/?Viewer=Boat\\_Access](http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/sl/?Viewer=Boat_Access) Brown trout are stocked in Lake Superior because 1) they are extremely popular with anglers and 2) they live longer than most pacific salmon, meaning there is a greater opportunity for the stocked fish to eventually be caught by anglers.

## DOOR COUNTY

**Lake Michigan and tributaries.**

### Steelhead

Rainbow trout / steelhead are an important component of Lake Michigan's diverse fishery and the number of rainbow trout harvested from Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan during 2014 was above average with over 70,000 fish harvested (note: 2015 creel data hasn't been analyzed yet). Steelhead are stocked by the DNR into over 20 large and small tributary streams annually, which contributes to the lake fishery and also creates tributary fisheries during annual upstream spawning migrations. Steelhead spawning runs typically peak during April-May, but can begin in late summer and continue through winter depending on flow, temperature, and genetic strains. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten-inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>). Many steelhead projects are upcoming in Wisconsin including hatchery renovations, research on wild production, management plan updates, and possible coded wire tag mass marking.

### Chinook Salmon

Chinook or King salmon are among the largest of the Great Lakes salmonids, with the



Kirk Olson, LTE Fisheries Biologist in Superior, and shows a 20+ inch brown trout captured and released in the Bois Brule River, Douglas County. Austin Gabrielse (LTE Fisheries Technician in Brule, background) assisted with the survey. Photo: Paul Piszczek.

state record measuring 44 lbs. 15 oz. and 47.5 inches caught off Door County in 1994. Approximately 130,000 Chinook salmon were harvested from Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan during 2014, which is close to the 46-year long-term average but down compared to record highs of the past decade, including a peak of greater than 430,000 in 2007. Harvest estimates for 2015 are not yet available, but general reports indicate a decent year of salmon fishing with greater numbers of wild (unclipped) Chinooks caught compared to stocked (adipose clipped) Chinooks. Fall 2015 spawning runs for Chinook salmon were low, likely due in part to little rainfall, warm water temperatures, and a reduced population abundance lake-wide.

Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten-inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>). Chinook salmon depend on alewives for forage and alewife abundance is currently low, but managers will continue to evaluate and adjust stocking levels as needed to maintain



Fisheries biologist Nick Legler (front) and retired fisheries technician Ken Royseck (left) with a steelhead caught at the Besadny Anadromous Fisheries Facility in Kewaunee during spring 2014.

a balanced and diverse predator-prey community for Lake Michigan's fishery. Also, Chinook salmon continue to naturally reproduce in tributaries of Lakes Michigan and Huron (mostly in the State of Michigan and Canada) but Wisconsin anglers benefit by catching these naturally produced fish during the summer.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Bois Brule River.** County Highway B upstream to County Highway S, approximately 10 miles

### Brook trout

Summer 2015 survey found young-of-year, sub-adult, and adult fish ranging in length from 3 to 12 inches with weights up to one pound. Ten percent of all fish in survey exceeded 7 inches. 12+-inch fish are not common to this section of the Brule. Current regulation: Gear restriction: Artificial lures only; Season: Open first Saturday in May at 5:00 a.m. to September 30; Daily bag: 3 brook trout over 10 inches. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at the canoe landings at County Highway S (Stone's Bridge) and County Highway B. Fishing for the native brook trout in the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest is a truly unique fishing experience in Northern Wisconsin. Brook trout is the only native salmonid to the Brule River, and was often referred as "speckled" trout. The population declined dramatically in the late 1800s because of timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes that decreased available stream habitat. Brook trout stocking began in the late-1890s to rebuild the depressed population, and today's brook trout fishery sustains itself by reproducing naturally in the river and tributaries. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood installations are planned in the coming year as part of this habitat work.

### Brown trout

A total of 2,630 lake-run brown trout were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2014. This is lower than the previous two years, yet fairly consistent with the counts since 2005. 84% of all brown trout in Fall 2014 ranged from 18 to 24 inches, and the run peaked during late-August. Current regulation: Location: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open last Saturday in March through November 15; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only two may be brown trout over 15 inches. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy ac-



cess at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Brown trout is native to Europe and was initially imported over 100 years ago after native species (brook or "speckled" trout) declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Today, brown trout that return to the Brule River sustain themselves by reproducing naturally in the tributaries; no hatchery fish are added, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. Since these "wild" stocks respond strongly to their environments, such as the temperatures of the river and lake and flow of the river, their migration numbers and timing can challenge anglers of all skill levels. Brown trout are most active due low daylight and at night. Coupled with the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest, the migrating brown trout help create a truly unique fishing experience, if not an overall adventure unmatched by any other regional resource. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood installations are planned in the coming year as part of this habitat work.

#### Coho salmon

Total of 1,247 were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2014. This is lower than the previous two years, yet fairly consistent with the counts since 2009. Most coho salmon in Fall 2014 ranged from 19 to 22 inches, and the run peaked during mid to late-September. Current regulation: Location: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open last Saturday in March through November 15; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only two may be brown trout over 15 inches. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Coho salmon are native to the Pacific Northwest, and they first established reproducing populations in the Brule River in the 1970s from stocks introduced elsewhere in Lake Superior. The self-sustained stock is present today, with a migration period that peaks after the brown trout migration and before the steelhead migration. Environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood installations are planned in the coming year as part of this habitat work.

#### Steelhead (Rainbow trout)

Downstream from U.S. Highway 2, approximately 15 miles. A total of 4,420 steelhead were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway from Fall 2014 through Spring 2015. 66% of the fish ranged from 22 to 25 inches and 10% exceeded 26 inches (minimum length limit). Annual run counts and timing vary relative to river and lake conditions, particularly during spring according to lake and river ice-out. Current regulation: Season: Open last Saturday in March through November 15; Daily bag: 1 rainbow trout over 26 inches. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Steelhead is a non-native, naturalized species first imported from the western United States over 100 years ago after native species (brook or "speckled" trout) declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Today, the stock is self-sustained (i.e. wild), meaning no hatchery fish are added to the system, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. As with many wild stocks, environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration; this can challenge anglers of all skill levels. These wild fish, coupled with the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest, help create a truly unique fishing experience, if not

an overall adventure unmatched by any other regional resource. The 26" minimum length limit exists because that is the length at which most steelhead have spawned at least one in their natural environment.



Kevin Grand, LTE fisheries technician in Superior, handles a 20+ inch steelhead captured and released in the Bois Brule River, Douglas County. Photo: Paul Piszczek.

Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood installations are planned in the coming year as part of this habitat work.

## ■ KENOSHA, RACINE, MILWAUKEE, OZAUKEE and SHEBOYGAN COUNTIES

### Lake Michigan and tributaries.

#### Yellow perch

In 2014 the sport harvest of yellow perch rebounded somewhat from a low in 2013 to 9,306 harvested. The harvest in 2015 was similar, and the majority of perch harvested were smaller, younger fish. In 2015 the yellow perch sport harvest was dominated by the 2010 year-class (39%), followed by the 2012 year-class (24%), which averaged 11.1 and 9.0 inches, respectively. The 2011 year-class comprised 15% of the harvest and the 2008 and 2005 year-classes each contributed an additional 8%. The 2012 and 2010 year-classes of perch should continue to drive the fishery in 2016. The majority of perch harvest in the southern end of the lake comes from Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties. Current regulation: Open from June 16 – April 30. Daily bag limit is 5 yellow perch with no minimum length. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish for yellow perch. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

#### Brown trout

The brown trout fishery in Lake Michigan is supported through stocking, with over 600,000 fish stocked annually in recent years. Brown trout fishing stays strong all through the fall and into months of January through March. Anglers can catch good numbers of brown trout in the winter months in many areas, especially the Milwaukee River and harbor. With round gobies providing an abundant food source, browns show good growth rates and some fish reach the 15 to 20-pound range. In 2014, the brown trout harvest in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay was 23,324 browns, and 80% of those were caught among the ports from Kenosha to Sheboygan. We hope this trend continues in 2016. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger in total length. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

#### Rainbow trout

In 2014 rainbow trout fishing was above average, and 73,105 fish were harvested.

Anglers had success with all three strains of rainbow trout – Chambers Creek, Ganaraska and Arlee. In spring 2015 the steelhead run was strong despite late ice out followed by high stream flows. Wisconsin stocks about 400,000 rainbow trout annually into Lake Michigan. If the spring stream flows are ideal for fish migration, we may see a good steelhead run in 2016, in addition to the open water fishery. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; minimum length limit is 10 inches. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

#### Chinook salmon

Chinook salmon fishing was slightly below the long-term average in 2014, with 130,698 fish harvested. Stocking cuts that were made starting in 2013 and lower natural reproduction likely impacted the Chinook fishery in 2015, as Chinook fishing was generally slow. There is a significant proportion of the Chinook population that consists of naturally reproduced fish from Lake Michigan tributaries in the state of Michigan. Because of the increase in natural reproduction, combined with declined prey availability, the states surrounding Lake Michigan reduced stocking of Chinook salmon by 50% starting in 2013. The state of Michigan took the largest cut, and Wisconsin's share was a 34.5% reduction in the numbers of Chinooks stocked (from 1.1 million to just over 800,000). Tagging studies have shown Chinook movement throughout the lake, and some even migrate over from Lake Huron. In fact, in 2013 the one-year-old Chinooks caught by Wisconsin anglers in the summer fishery were 65% naturally reproduced. While summer caught fish represent a mixed population, the fall fishery will likely be impacted by Wisconsin's stocking cut in the future as fewer mature fish return to their stocking locations. The effects of reduced stocking will be evaluated in coming years. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; Minimum length limit is 10 inches. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

#### Coho salmon

The coho fishing season typically starts off in the warmer southern waters of Lake Michigan and then progresses northward all the way to Sheboygan waters. Coho fishing in 2015 was fairly consistent in May and early June in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee counties. About 400,000 coho are stocked annually in Wisconsin waters, and good coho fishing should continue in 2016 with suitable weather patterns. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; Minimum length limit is 10 inches. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

#### Lake trout

Approximately 700,000 - 800,000 lake trout are stocked in Lake Michigan annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Furthermore, evidence of natural reproduction has been documented through DNR surveys as well as in the sport fishery. The sport harvest has been over 25,000 fish since 2012, which reversed a trend of lower harvest numbers dating back to 2003. Anglers from Sheboygan to Kenosha reported good catches of lake trout, and it seems anglers are targeting this fish more in recent years. In 2015, lake trout were found near shore all summer and were consistently caught by boat anglers and, at times, by pier and shore anglers as well. Current regulation: Open from March 1 – October 31. Daily bag limit is 2; Minimum length limit is 10 inches. However, no possession of lake trout is allowed within the Mid-Lake Reef

Complex (see fishing regulations booklet for more details). There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>

## ■ MARINETTE, OCONTO and DOOR COUNTIES

**Green Bay and tributaries.** Brown trout stocked into the productive waters of Green Bay have plentiful forage to grow quickly. Most of the brown trout harvested by anglers are 2 or 3 years old. By autumn, a 2-year old brown would be around 23 inches, while a 3-year old brown would be around 29 inches. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily limit is 5 trout/salmon in total. Minimum length limit is 10 inches. Anglers can troll for browns in the spring and summer months. There are numerous boat access locations along the shores of Green Bay. Check out this website for details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> Brown trout make fall migratory runs into the Menominee, Peshtigo, and Oconto Rivers. From late September into the winter months, shore anglers may have luck catching browns in these major tributaries. Here is the website to find detailed tributary access information. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>



A proud angler is happy to show his catch - a brown trout taken from Sheboygan Harbor, Lake Michigan.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html> WDNR stocks around 126,000 brown trout yearlings into Green Bay. There are two strains that WDNR has stocked regularly for over 2 decades: Wild Rose domestics and Seeforellen. Much of the fishing success of a given year is dependent on survival of yearling brown trout that were stocked one to two years ago, as well as water temperatures which affects prey availability in nearshore areas where browns inhabit.

**Get the lead out!**  
Please consider using  
non-lead tackle.



[dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)  
for more information

# Getting Hooked on Wisconsin Fishing

Community/urban fishing program provides access to fishing fun!

The DNR has placed an added emphasis on promoting urban and community fishing in recent years. We are trying to get more young people involved in the sport of fishing. There are currently about 60 ponds or lagoons classified as Urban Waters. These water bodies have special regulations geared towards improving the fishing experience for young anglers. If you live in Southeast Wisconsin, there is an Urban Fishing water near by, for a list of designated waters refer to the Hook and Line Fishing Regulations. The DNR annually stocks thousands of rainbow trout in these waters. In addition the Hunger Task Force Fish Hatchery stocks various species in the Urban Waters located in Milwaukee County.

The tradition of fishing is not being passed on from one generation to the next as readily as it once was. There are many parents that would like to take their kids fishing but don't really know how to get started. To accommodate those folks the DNR works with volunteers from local fishing clubs to conduct instructional kids fishing clinics each winter and spring. Thanks to the tireless efforts of hundreds of volunteers, thousands of kids are taught the basics of fishing each year. I highly recommend the kids fishing clinics whether you are just getting started or have been at it for a few seasons. The clinics are free, highly informative and an all around good time. The volunteers teach the kids about fishing techniques, how to use the equipment, knot tying, safety, fish identification and much more.

## ■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Kohler-Andrae State Park Fishing Pond** - 1 acre. The pond is stocked annually with rainbow trout from the state hatchery system. The Friends of Kohler-Andrae Asso-

ciation also regularly stocks other species. Current regulation: Year-round season, no length limits, and a special season (1st Saturday in March up to the last Saturday in April) for juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers. There is also a daily bag limit of three (3) trout, one (1) gamefish (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, and northern pike), and ten (10) panfish (bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and bullhead). Access information: State park sticker required, parking for pond is located off Old Park Road. Kohler-Andrae State Park is near Sheboygan, Wisconsin and the home of majestic sand dunes, miles of golden beach, shimmering blue Lake Michigan water, whispering pines, an abundance of wildlife, charming hiking paths through dunes and forest, a pleasant boardwalk over Black River Marsh, a year-round 125-unit family campground, the Sanderling Nature Center with its nature exhibits, multi-media lecture hall and educational programs, and trails for horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY

**Remington Pond** - City of Antigo - 5 acres Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish Stocked with rainbow trout in the spring and brook trout in the fall. The Antigo Chapter of Trout Unlimited periodically stocks trout also for the kids to enjoy Open year around - no length limit, 3 trout per day, 1 bass or northern pike per day, 10 panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, perch, bullhead) per day New fishing dock to be constructed by Antigo Trout Unlimited and the City of Antigo in 2016!

## ■ LINCOLN COUNTY

**Mirror Lake** - City of Tomahawk - 4 acres Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish Stocked with rainbow trout in the spring and brook trout in the fall. Open year around - no length limit, 3 trout per day, 1 bass or northern pike per day, 10 panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, perch, bullhead) per day

## ■ SAWYER COUNTY

**Lake Hayward** is a great spot for kids to fish. Lake Hayward is a 191 acre impoundment located right in downtown Hayward, Sawyer County. There are numerous shore fishing opportunities for kids whether they are locals year-round or tourists passing through. One of the main areas to fish is the city park on 2nd street, just past Hayward's giant fiberglass musky! There is a handicap accessible fishing pier that is a great spot to try for panfish, bass, or pike. Panfish are 25 per day, pike are 5 per day, and bass are 5 per day with a 14 inch minimum length limit. And youngsters shouldn't overlook winter fishing either! When the ice is safe to access Lake Hayward it can be a great place to jig for panfish or catch pike on tip-ups.



## Close to Home series promotes shore fishing

Fifty places to fish from shore within 60 minutes of Milwaukee.

Fall may be the last thing on many anglers' minds this time of year, but when summer winds down, we don't want you to forget about the famous trout and salmon spawning run that takes place every year in and around Milwaukee's harbor mouths and rivers.

To make sure you get the most of your fishing experience, we've got information for anglers looking to fish the spectacular runs that highlight 50 places to fish from shore within 60 minutes of downtown Milwaukee.

And although it's not fall, you certainly don't need to wait for the leaves to change color to take advantage of these hotspots. They're great places to fish year-round.

Visit [http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/Documents/LakeMichigan/closetohome\\_letter.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/Documents/LakeMichigan/closetohome_letter.pdf)

# Basic tackle box



**2016 Wisconsin Fishing Report**  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
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