Welcome to Wisconsin — home of the best and most diverse fishing in the country. We offer more waters than dedicated anglers could fish in several lifetimes... an incredible array of fish to catch... and some rare ones just to appreciate. Fishing is a cornerstone of Wisconsin’s culture and economy. We rank second in the country in the number of days nonresidents spend fishing here, and it has had Florida’s weather and year-round open water, we’d probably be number one.

The 2012 Wisconsin Fishing Report can only hint at the great fishing opportunities awaiting you in the state. I hope the forecasts provided by many of our biologists help you understand how your favorite fishing spot is faring, based on the fish surveys and management actions we’re taking to make your fishing better.

The fishing licenses and stamps you buy, your vocal and financial support of our pro-management actions, the hours of labor, donated millions of dollars for equipment and supplies or secured such at a reduced cost, and jawboned local officials, private property owners and industry to take measures benefiting walleye production. 3) DNR and partner groups have pursued an aggressive research program to unlock the secrets of walleye in a vast, ever-changing system, to apply that knowledge, and to be committed to it over the long-term.

One of the things I tell the public is, keep your eyes on the prize,” Arrowood says. “The other thing I tell the public is, if you put a quarter-inch fry in the lake, it’s going to be a while before it’s in your frying pan.”

— Lisa Gaumnitz, public affairs manager, DNR

The Ultimate Catch
Wisconsin fishing in the palm of your hand!

FISH ON... WISCONSIN
The Fish are Waiting Wisconsin Anglers — Plan those special days on the water with the 2012 Year of Fish calendar.

Calendar includes: important fishing dates, moon phases, game fish identification, monthly forecasts, and resources to keep you in touch with Wisconsin Fishing.

Available for download at dnr.gov/fish

Feature articles include:

A Lake Winnebago success story

“Cleaner and clearer, the lake is becoming a walleye factory.”

OSHKOSH. — Twenty years ago wall-eye fishing on Lake Winnebago stank. Literally. Scant rain and snow in the late 1980s dried up walleye reproduction and the fishing with it going the growth of smelly algae blooms, recalls Mike Ar-rowood, a 40-year resident of Fond du Lac. “My kids used to call it Winnesep，“ he says.

Ideal conditions on Lake Winnebago led to the 5th largest hatch of walleye on record in 2011. DNR photo.

“Lac. “My kids used to call it Winnipesic,” he says.

What a difference 20 years makes. To-day, the state’s largest inland lake is significantly cleaner and clearer and fishing for ‘ol’ marble eyes on the Winnebago chain of lakes is “superb,” says Arrowood, chairman of the board of directors of Walleye for Tomorrow. “Most anybody can fish on Winnebago now and catch ‘walleyes.”

Natural reproduction of this frying pan favorite in the past decade overall has been the best it’s been in a generation, provide...
Fabulous Fisheries Projects

Fish getsa swim

PARK FALLS — The culmination of many years of negotiations between Flambeau Hydro, DNR, and USDA Forest Service has led to the construction of a nature-like fishway at the Winter Hydroelectric Project. The fishway will eliminate the only obstacle to free fish movement in the East Fork Chippewa River and opens up 85 miles of high-quality habitat in a wild and undeveloped corridor upstream and downstream passage for the entire fish community and other aquatic species.

The fishway is a careful placement of boulders, rock, and stone to create a stair-step series of 14 pools and v-shaped weirs (each gaining ~6 inches elevation). It was completed under bittern, snow-covered conditions in December 2011. Migrating sturgeon, suckers, walleye, and four redhorse species, should ascend the fishway next spring to spawn. We expect young-of-the-year fish to move into the stream in June and fall. Minnows, darters, smallmouth bass, sunfishes, and other riverine species should use the fishway throughout the year.

McGee Lake brook trout captured during an October 2008 survey. Photo: Dave Sabel

Break trout back in control

ANTIGO — McGee Lake opened to fishing in 2011 for the first time since the 23-acre spring pond was renovated in fall 2006. Renovation was necessary to remove an invasive largemouth bass population that had the native brook trout teetering on the edge of elimination. The bass were eating every trout naturally reproduced and most of those being stocked in an attempt to maintain a trout fishery. The renovation was successful at completely removing all the predatory bass. Native brook trout fish fed from the pond prior to the renovation and transferred from the connecting trout stream downstream had repopulated the lake. They are successfully spawning and reproducing once again and are growing at tremendous rates providing anglers with good action, big fish, and the chance for a memorable fishing experience.

Get the lead out! Use non-lead tackle.

dnr.wi.gov/fish/ for more information

Many hands create pride of a community

FITCHBURG — Lake Belleview, a widening of the Sugar River in southern Dane County was stocked in fall, 2010 through summer 2011. The lake underwent a gambit of dredging, re-introduction of native fishes, native plant reseeding, and installation of water control devices to recreate an off-channel ‘oxbow’ environment characterized by clear water, a healthy littoral zone and a diverse fishery.

This project illustrates an integrated approach to re-establishing all elements of a healthy lake including its shoreline, plants, fishes, and aesthetics. This was a cooperative effort between the Village of Belleview, Town of Montrose, the Upper Sugar River Watershed association, Dane County, NRCS, private consultants Underwater Habitat Investigations LLC and Agrecol, and DNR. We expect a ecologically balanced and healthy oxbow lake as a community asset. The lake will provide opportunities for water based recreation and enjoyment of natural scenic beauty.

New fishing opportunity for Marathon County

WAUSAU — Over the past two years, Marathon County Parks has been working in partnership with the DNR to develop an accessible area with a popular fishing and swimming lake. The site is the Sunnyvale Park Lake in Marathon County. When completed, the project will have an accessible parking area with an asphalt walkway leading to a new fishing pier. The new pier will provide access to a newly restored fishing location that has been dredged and improved with fish cribs. In addition to these exciting improvements, the DNR will stock catchable size rainbow trout in the spring that will be available for the fishing opener. The project has been funded mostly with a County Conservation Aid Grant, with some services provided and funded through the DNR fisheries.

More fish getta swim

MILWAUKEE — A 1000-foot fish passage around the Mequon-Thiensville Dam on the Milwaukee River was completed in 2011 allowing fish from the lower 20 miles of the Milwaukee River to migrate around this dam and access at least another 12 miles of river. The fishway was designed to pass northern pike up a series of nine, 0.8-foot steps but many other species will also use the fishway to navigate around this dam including smallmouth bass, redhorse, walleye, sunfish, shiners, lake sturgeon and trout and salmon.

Many fisheries around the country and world have been completed in recent years but the evaluation of how effective they are in passing targeted fish is very limited. In 2011, the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, Ozaukee County Fish Passage Program, the Village of Thiensville, UW-Milwaukee WATER Institute and minor cooperation from the DNR installed a camera system to monitor the up and downstream migration of fish.

The fishway was completed in early 2011 and the camera system was installed for testing in time for the fall spawning migration run of salmonids. The system has detected a variety of fish movement through the fishway including northern pike, channel catfish, smallmouth bass, redhorse, steebelhead, brown trout, coho and Chinook salmon.

Future plans call for the camera to live stream to the internet so that this project can be used as an educational tool for the public. The camera and PIT tag system was replaced with improved equipment in time for the spring 2012 spawning run.

The $4-million project is being managed by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District with funding assistance by the USEPA Great Lakes Office and US Fish and Wildlife Service. DNR fishery staff and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff provided technical planning and design assistance. Construction will be completed in time for the spring of 2013 season.

Barriers down, fishing up

MILWAUKEE — Both fish from Lake Michigan and anglers will benefit from removal of a barrier to fish passage along the Menomonee River in Milwaukee County. A 1000-foot section of a concrete lined stream reach, constructed in 1964 for flood control purposes, will be removed and replaced with an enhanced channel in 2013 enabling fish to move over 20-miles upstream to the Lepre Dam in Menomonee Falls, Waukesha County. The enhancement will enable fish to access historical spawning habitat and provide unique fishing opportunities and eliminate a navigation and safety hazard.

Eight Annual Kids’ Fishing Day - Third grade students from Park Falls and Butternut elementary schools enjoy the day at Coolidge Springs Trout Ranch near Fifield WI. The event generates enthusiasm and, hopefully, a life-long interest in fishing. Photo: Dan Michels
While many anglers throughout Wisconsin will be fishing for "trendy" spe- cies such as walleye, sauger, bass, or musky there are a select few anglers that will search out one of Wisconsin’s best kept secrets…catfish. That’s right, catfish. If you are one of those anglers that scoff when you hear that word you may want to read on. Wisconsin supports great catfish fisheries that can provide many fish, large fish, and good eating fish all in the same day.

Wisconsin is home to 8 species of catfish, although two of these species are the primary focus of catfish anglers—the channel and flathead catfish. Like many anglers throughout the United States, the majority of Wisconsin catfish anglers prefer the channel catfish. Why? For the most part, channel catfish are widespread, obtain a large size and are easily caught. Flathead catfish are more elusive, take more effort to locate, are more difficult to catch, and are usually caught in smaller numbers.

Channel and flathead catfish are considered riverine species, but are found in a variety of waters. The channel catfish is most wide spread, found in all sizes of rivers and flowages throughout the state. Flathead catfish are associated with larger riverine systems, but can also be found in flowages and small rivers which are associated with large rivers.

Both species are migratory and it can vary by season or even weeks where anglers may find them. Usually, a catfish population will overwinter in deep pools associated with slower current. In the spring when the water temperature rises near the mid 50’s, the catfish will move in search of spawning areas, where they will stay for most of the summer. As fall approaches, they will move back to the overwintering areas. Catfish do move, and learning where they are during any given season or time period will help increase your odds of having a successful trip.

HOW TO FIND THEM

Both species relate well to woody debris. What’s woody debris? Woody debris is a natural collection of logs, branches, or trees or parts thereof found in rivers or streams. In rivers or streams, start your search by fishing near woody debris located near deep runs or pools. Deep will be relative to the water you are fishing. Start by fishing directly above the woody debris and continue down the side ending just below. Try to maintain a quiet boat or walk softly if shore fishing as you ease downstream. More woody debris will increase your opportunity for success. If you find yourself in a river without woody debris, focus on deep holes. Catfish inhabit woody debris, use falling debris, or associated with large wood and river/creek mouths are good areas to focus your efforts.

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Wisconsin has numerous waters supporting channel catfish populations. Try the Fox River in Racine county, Silver Lake in Kenosha county, Lake Poygan in Winnebago county, Beaver Dam lake and Beaver Dam River in Dodge county, Rock River in Jefferson and Rock counties, Chippewa River in Dunn, Pepin, Eau Claire and Chippewa counties, Lake Holcombe, Lake Wissota, and Dells Pond in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties, Wolf and Fox River systems associated with Lake Winnebago, Lake Mendota in Dane county, Lower Sugar River in Dane and Green counties, Yellowstone Lake in Lafayette county, Pecatonica River in Iowa, Lafay- ette, and Green counties, Lower Red Cedar River from the Lake Menomonie dam in Menomonie to the Chippewa River, Lower St Croix River from St. Croix downstream the Mississippi River, Wisconsin River from Merrill downstream to the Mis- sissippi River and the Mississippi River.

Anglers looking for flatheads should find success on the Mississippi River, the Chippewa River and flowages, Lower St. Croix River, Lower Red Cedar River, Rock River between Lake Koshkonong and Fort Atkinson, Wolf and Fox River systems associated with Lake Winnebago, and the Lower Wisconsin River from the Dells to the Mississippi River.

Catfish can be filleted like most other species. The days of using the skimming pliers are long gone. If you like going old school and fry your catfish up whole, then skinn- ing pliers will be needed. Catfish fillets can be grilled with the skin left on. The skin peels off easily after cooking. For those who take pride in the culinary skill of smoking fish, catfish taste great smoked.

Like other outdoor activities Wisconsin has to offer, catfishing has something for everyone. Try something different this year and go catfishing. It’s the perfect choice. You might just catch the largest fish of your life.

Wisconsin Fishing Report - 2012

Channel catfish, Ictalurus punctatus
State record: 44 pounds 0 ounces, Wisconsin River, 1962

Flathead catfish, Pseudoplatyystoma
State record: 74 pounds 5 ounces, Mississippi River, 2001
Lake trout angling, the most popular sport fishery in Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior, occurs primarily in two distinct portions of the Apostle Islands National Scenic Area and the western arm. The Apostle Islands region supports healthy populations of naturally reproducing lake trout, while the western end still needs stocking to maintain high catch rates. Although lake trout are still stocked down the western end each year but they still only make up to 20 to 30 percent of larger catch. No matter where you are fishing, June and July are great months to target lake trout with September a close second. The average length of lake trout caught throughout the year is about 22 inches, but fish exceeding 35 inches are still needed to spread throughout Chequamegon Bay. As the water temperature rises, the walleyes tend to spread throughout Chequamegon Bay. — The lower portion of the river is highly developed but the habitat in the upper river is pristine and supports a rich variety of fish. The Brill River is located in the Northeast corner of Barron County, the river is the place to go. The Brill River offers opportunities for anglers who like easy wading and the chance to fly fish. This river is wide, shallow and open, great for dropping a fly along the grass river banks. - Mark Stanley, Fisheries Technician, Barron.

**BAYFIELD COUNTY**

**Upper Eau Claire Lake** — Anglers looking for a quality fishing experience for musky, walleye and smallmouth bass will find Upper Eau Claire Lake to be their liking. Survey results from 2011 show walleye up to 28 inches and musky and smallmouth bass up to 48 and 19 inches, respectively. Although numbers of these gamefish are generally lower than other area lakes the quality fishing opportunity is second to none. Bluegill, black crappie and yellow perch make up the panfish community and have average to above average size. — Scott Toshner, fisheries biologist, Brule.

**BOWHUNTER**

Hack Noyes will resume after the vessel was out of service this year for a well-earned re-fit, the workhorse of the Lake Superior bowfishing fleet. The vessel is invaluable to fisheries biologists and is critical in the resurgence of many native species. Bowfishing has been gradually reduced over the last 20 years due to the resurgence of many native species. However, DNR staff has continued to stock salmonids offshore with small boats. Stocking fish into deeper water and spreading their availability is a variety of habitat appears to increase their survival and angler catch rates. Next year, offshore stocking from the R/V Hack Noyes will resume after the vessel was out of service this year for a well-earned re-fit. Following the successful completion of the re-fit, the workhorse of the Lake Superior bowfishing program should be ready for another 60 years old.

**BARRON COUNTY**

Granite Lake — Anglers looking for wall-eye action without all the pressure of the bigger lakes should look at Granite Lake. Located in the Northwest corner of Barron County, the 154-acre lake has great potential to be a great sleeper walleye lake. Survey results in 2011 reveal that 54 percent of all walleyes surveyed were over legal size and the majority were between 15 to 18 inches. The fishery in Granite Lake also includes a low density brown trout population, but with larger fish present (85 percent over 14 inches). Panfish numbers were generally low, but with some good sizes. Bluegills ranged from 3 to 8.5 inches and black crappies and yellow perch were in the 3- to 11-inch size range.

Peskin Lake — If you are looking for a lake that has a little bit of everything, then the 150 acre Peskin Lake is the place to go. Results from surveys in 2010 show that northern pike and largemouth bass numbers are very strong. Many pike were in the 24- to 30-inch range and were in great condition. The largemouth bass population is abundant but with large fish being common. There are a lot of bass in the 14- to 18-inch range with a few 20-inch fish collected during the survey. A respectable bluegill and black crappie fishery is present. Walleyes are also present, but in lower numbers. Many of the walleyes surveyed were in that mid 20-inch range. If you are lucky you can set your hook into to the one musky that was seen during the survey. The lake is not managed for musky but there is a rogue fish or two roaming the waters.

Brill River — Located in the Northeast corner of Barron County, Brill River has a moderate brown trout population and a low density brook trout population. With water temperatures being manageable, Brill River is managed from the Barron/Washburn county line up to 26th Ave. The Brill River has a moderate number of brown trout in the 8- to 12-inch range with occasional fish reaching 18 inches. The Brill River offers opportunities for anglers who like easy wading and the chance to fly fish. This section of river is wide, shallow and open, great for dropping a fly along the grass river banks. - Mark Stanley, Fisheries Technician, Barron.

**Douglas County**

**Upper St. Croix Lake and Lake Nebagamon** — Wood will be more prevalent in both Upper St. Croix Lake and Lake Nebagamon due to the efforts of local citizens and lake groups starting in 2012. A project that increases the amount of wood in the water will use whole trees from upland sources to replicate wood that falls into the water on its own. Much of the historic wood in our nearshore areas has been removed over time due to logging and cabin development. Restoring this woody habitat helps not only fish but wildlife and water quality as well. — Scott Toshner, fisheries biologist, Brule.
**FLORENCE COUNTY**

Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes (SECL) — The SECL is located in northeast Florence County between the cities of Florence and Iron Mountain. M-Consisting of 9 lakes covering 548 acres, it is one of the largest bodies of water in Florence County. The chain has a diverse fish population, providing lots of fishable structure for anglers. If you catch a walleye or northern pike, look no further than the Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes. Surveys conducted in 2011 estimated the total adult largemouth bass population in the SECL to be 4,061 fish (7.41 acres). The most common sizes of largemouth bass were 10 to 20 inches, but trophy-sized fish were captured during our survey with the largest bass being 21.4 inches long. Trophy-sized bass are present in the area. The panfish population is comprised mostly of largemouth bass, with an average size over 4 adults per acre in 2011. Due to the high abundance of bass the majority are under 15 inches, ranging from 8 to 14 inches. Trump Lake does have an 18-inch limit length with a bag limit of 1 fish, so plan on releasing nearly every bass you catch. With a good chance of constant action this would be a good place to take kids or inappropriately angled fishers angling.

**IRON COUNTY**

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage — Anglers seeking that quality walleye fishing experience, in a beautiful wilderness setting, should consider taking a trip to the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage (TFF). With adult densities consistently over 4 adults per acre, and typical young-of-the-year recruitment surveys estimating several times regional averages, walleye are the dominant gamelike species in this dark-stained flowage. The TFF is known for good numbers of “water-size” walleye, and during a recent 2011 spring netting survey, 54% of the walleye sampled were 15 inches or greater. Due to low water clarity, and the abundance of rock and wood habitat, anglers should consider altering their techniques when pursuing walleye in the TFF. For more information on what to expect visit www.wildwoodinh.com. Turtle-Flambeau Flowage is a good size structure. Nearly 30 percent of the 187 (47 percent) fish sampled were at least 14 inches. The aggressive nature of high quality walleye species, along with the food protection of a 14 to 18 inch near-hatch trout slot, ensures quality smallmouth bass action for years to come.

**LINCOLN COUNTY**

Prairie River — 2011 trout numbers increased 12 percent from 2010 to approximately 4,900 per mile (4 inches and larger). This density of trout is the sixth highest in 21 consecutive years of surveys and is 118 percent of the long-term average. Brook trout numbers were up and brown trout numbers were down. Anglers can expect to find decent numbers of trout in the area. Brook trout numbers were over the legal length limit and 31 per five-mile stretch of trout and anglers alike. The work, funded by trout stamp dollars and donations from regional Trout Unlimited chapters, is about three-quarters complete and the trout are responding well to their new homes. Brook trout typically make a 30 to 50 percent of the total trout population with fish up to 10 inches common and a few reaching 13 to 14 inches. Brown trout are common up to 14 to 15 inches with some occasionally pushing the 20-inch mark. Wolf River below Post Lake Dam — This is a superb shore fishing site with easy access, ample parking, a good boat ramp, bath- rooms, a new fishing platform and a picnic area. A variety of species, including quality specimens, can be caught right from shore. Who needs a boat to experience quality fishing?!!! Walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike, muskellunge, largemouth bass, rock bass, crappie, perch and bullhead are all common in the river above the dam and provide anglers with good action. Be aware that gamelike species are common on this part of the Wolf River. Also, this is a fish refuge to protect spawning walleye, muskellunge, and bass from April through May. No fishing is allowed in the refuge which runs from the dam downstream 75 feet to the bottom of the first rapids. There is considerable shore fishing opportunity, including the fishing platform, downstream from the refuge so that shouldn’t stop anglers from coming in April and May. — Dave Seibel, fisheries biologist, Antigo

**LANGELODGE COUNTY**

East Branch Eau Clair River — Brook trout numbers are 138 percent above the long-term average and in 2011, were the second highest all time based on 26 years of surveys, including the last 23 consecutive. In the better sections, there is one yearling or older trout for every 11.5 inches of stream bottom (5,500 per mile). Of course trout are not lined up nose to tail. They are in their usual lairs: woody cover, undercut banks, under shrubbery, brush and rocks, and riffles.

**ONEIDA COUNTY**

Boom—Rhinelander Chain — A spring sur- vey was started on the Wisconsin River below the Rainbow Flawage dam and followed ice-out downstream. We found that the vast major- ity of walleye in this system migrate into the Wisconsin River to spawn. We estimated a spawning population of 1,950 adult walleye in the river, with most fish running 13 to 18 inches. Smallmouth bass appear to be occurring in the flowage area and smallmouth walleye—20-inch walleye as the walleye catch was winding down. Good numbers of largemouth with size centered on 14 inches were found in the more vegetated sections. We sampled brown northerns ranging from 4 to 7.5 inches, but good numbers up to 29 inches. We captured low numbers of muskellunge over the year, down from 25 in 1998. For 2011 the TFP requested for 2012. The 50 muskel- unge captured averaged 39.5 inches, with 46 percent over 40 inches and 10 percent over 45 inches. True to the fishery’s reputa- tion, a few trophy-sized black- fin (or dogfish), including some 30-inch fish. Panfish abundance was moderate, with a nice density of brown bullheads and black crappie. Size potential was mod- erate, with plenty of crappies using the stump fields. Backwater bays like Bass Lake and Peggy Slough produced high numbers of panfish. Muskellunge Lake — We estimated 1.5 adult walleye per acre during our spring survey of Muskellunge Lake, with about 84 percent of the fish 14 inches or larger. We
estimated 2.4 largemouth bass per acre, with about a third of the bass over 14 inches. Very few of the 144 northern pike captured exceeded 23 inches, although the largest was 32.2 inches. We captured 29 adult muskellunge with 35 percent of muskies over 40 inches and the largest 47.5 inches. Nine juvenile muskies were provided from other lakes to provide evidence of recent recruitment. Muskellunge were found in their typical areas: yellow perch and crappie, while the bluegill and pumpkinsided became less abundant.

**Pelican Lake** — We found a nice mix of species in Pelican Lake. The walleye population was estimated at 2.4 adults per acre, and 86 percent of the fish were 15 inches or longer. We estimated 1.5 northern pike per acre with an average length of 20.4 inches. Pelican Lake has an eight-inch minimum length limit on muskellunge and we had a moderate muskie catch of 86 adults, but excellent size with 48 percent over 24 inches and the two largest fish 49.5 inches. We also picked up a good number of naturally-reproduced juvenile muskies. We handled 176 largemouth bass with size centered on 15 inches. Perch and bluegill size and numbers were quite good, although we did not see the 6-plus inch bluegill that were present in a 2005 survey. Pelican is the only area lake with a bass population, and we saw a moderate number, running 12 to 15 inches.

**Trout waters** — Look for stocked brown trout in Dorothy Lake and Beaverskin River; rainbows are planned for perch, Hawk and Little Bass lakes, and brook trout for Mercer Springs. Electrofishing surveys on noisy Crooked Creek found high numbers of wild brown trout under 7.5 inches, with low to moderate numbers of larger fish. The largest trout captured were 11.5 inches. Crooked Creek had low to moderate numbers of brown trout under 8 inches, and the largest trout was 11.3 inches. For anglers who find the 7.6-mile stream state record golden shiner to be too high a hurdle, Beaverskin Crooked shows good numbers of central madinumon with state record potential. — John Kubisak, Senior Fisheries biologist, Rhinelander

**PRICE COUNTY**

**Big Butternut** — Located in the village of Luck, in Polk County, Big Butternut has great fishing opportunities. A big beat with a large fishing pier that extends out into the lake, along with ample white-bait fishing areas, there are plenty of opportunity to catch fish. Survey results from 2011 indicated that over 100 bass over 8 inches were caught in the first week of the season, on the rise, with the estimated at 104 adult walleyes and 48 largemouth 8.5 to 11 inches. Compared to 2003 when the survey results revealed 388 adult walleyes in the lake or 1.9 fish per acre. The survey showed the last 8 years increased the lake’s size. Most of the wallies surveyed were in the 16- to 22-inch range with yellow perch being the most dominant species. The size structure is on the low end with 75 percent of walleyes under 12 inches.

**Sand Lake, Grindstone Lake, Round Lake, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Windfall Lake** — These clear-water lakes are among the best for catching a trophy brown trout. Anglers are encouraged to harvest legal-size brown bass in order to maintain dominance by wallies. Ice fishing for walleyes is popular on Round Lake and Sand Lake, as they are large enough to attain desirable size. — Jeff Scheirer and Kendal Libert, Fish & Parks Fisheries Team

**SAWYER COUNTY**

**Namekagon River** — This Federally designated Wild and Scenic River has some of Wisconsin’s largest trout streams. After several years of good spawning success, the Namekagon River from Hayward upstream to Telemark has far more wild brown trout than ever before. One in five brown exceeds 15 inches. Angling pressure makes this big trout water, so be prepared to fish during low light periods and test your fly fishing skills by matching the hatch. Anglers are encouraged to fish for browns during the late in the season when water temperatures are less than 70 degrees in order to increase the odds of successful live release. Anglers should be aware that special regulations (including artificial lures only) apply from Hospital Road (near Lake Hayward) upstream to Pacawagon Creek. Anglers fishing in the Namekagon River should check their regulations booklet and signs posted at points of access for specific-fish information. Downstream at Hayward, the river flows through a naturally a warm-water stream with excellent fishing for smallmouth bass and muskellunge. Keep an eye out for the occasional sturgeon which DNR has been stock in an attempt to restore this large predator to its historic range. The place to look is the Ojibwe namekagon river, the Place of Sturgeon. Brock trout are abundant in some of the smaller, colder streams that feed the Namekagon. Anglers are encouraged to voluntarily release all smallmouth bass 7 to 9 inches, to help keep the peak of the Namekagon itself, as biologists strive to improve habitat to keep those speckled beauties in a system that is becoming too warm for them.

**Murphy Flowage** — Murphy Flowage, a 171-acre impoundment on Henlock Creek in the scenic Blue Hills, offers diverse opportunities for outdoor recreation in a quiet, remote setting. Electrofishing capture rates in spring 2011 indicated largemouth bass and bluegill populations in moderate to high abundance. Among bass 8 inches and longer, nearly thirty percent were 15 to 19.5 inches. Bluegills had a moderate-size—twenty-eight percent were at least six inches, but only four percent were 7 inches or longer. Consult the electrofishing regulations pamphlet for special bass restrictions on panfish, bass, and pike. Anyone planning a relaxing picnic or family gathering will enjoy the new day-use shelters and campground. — Jeff Scheirer and Kendal Libert, Fish & Parks Fisheries Team

**Amacay Lake** — Recent surveys yielded mixed views of fishing prospects in 274-acre Amacay Lake, located 5.5 miles north of Whitehall, just west of Bristol, WI. Muskellunge stocked as 12-inch fingerlings grew to provide fast fishing action for adults up to 14 1/2 inches. A low density population of older walleye 18 to 29 inches long suggests that predation by many largemouth bass limits the contribution of small wild walleye fingerling stocks. Eleven percent of bass exceeded the 14-inch minimum length limit. Sixteen percent of size structure of panfish populations would disappoint most anglers. Bluegill and yellow perch 5 to 7 inches were plentiful, but almost none were longer than 8 inches. Crappies averaged 8.2 inches, and in early spring twelve percent were 10 inches or longer. Anglers are encouraged to practice catch-and-release ethic sustain “quality” musky fishing in the lakes, so anglers are encouraged to voluntarily release legal-size smallmouth bass over 14 inches that are caught. Smallmouth bass are plentiful, but many anglers report catching a few 8- to 10-inch rock bass, which are just as tasty as bluegills when cared for properly (chilled quickly).
TAYLOR COUNTY

Rib River — Anglers should find trout fishing opportunities and improve public access to the Big Rib River within DNR’s Rib River Fishery Area, located about 10 miles southeast of Rib Lake, WI. Anglers can fish from shore or float in a drift boat and can move from one pool to another or from the right-of-way along River Road.

The river can be slow moving, and small- to medium-sized trout can be found in small- to low-flowing coldwater streams. Trout fishing in the Rib can be very productive as the water temperature drops into the fall range. As the water cools into the fall range, trout move into deeper water and are more likely to feed. Trout fishing in the Rib can be slow-moving, and the water temperature can fluctuate rapidly. Trout fishing in the Rib can be very productive as the water temperature drops into the fall range. As the water cools into the fall range, trout move into deeper water and are more likely to feed. Trout fishing in the Rib can be slow-moving, and the water temperature can fluctuate rapidly.
The sheen of Chinook salmon justifies its name “King”, and the average size in Lake Michigan DNR continues evidence of the natural stocking of brown and rainbow trout, and Chinook salmon into Big Green Bay. The fish will provide future opportunities for stream angling and trolling. - Tammi Paoli, fisheries biologist, Green Bay.

**LAKE MICHIGAN (MANTITOWOC COUNTY)**

The Lake Michigan fishery offers abundant fishing opportunities for all anglers who can choose to fish from the shore, small or large boats or from charter boats in the major ports of Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Kenosha, or Algoma. During April and May anglers target brown trout and steelhead. By June they are in shallow nearshore areas where in the following months find anglers targeting Chinook and coho salmon and brown trout.
lakes but in lower numbers. Walleye are stocked in several lakes including Bullhead, Pig Creek and Peshtigo River. There are addi-
tional local fishing opportunities but walleye fishing is fairly good in several lakes including Silver, Ce-
dar and Long Lakes. Panfish, mainly blue-
gill, are fairly good and back-bay fishing is quite popular
with local anglers. Most lakes have abundant panfish populations with bass less than 6 inches. - Steve Hager, fisheries bi-
ologist, Green Bay

TRIBUTARY STREAMS — Fishing in Lake Michigan tributaries is generally good year-round. During the fall, steelhead fish enter the larger streams, including the Manitowoc River. Summer fishing in tribu-
tary streams offers many opportunities for anglers whether caving for bass or using a bobber for panfish. Smallmouth bass fishing should be very good in lower sections of the Man-
itowoc and Brunch Rivers. Those seeking cattail, bullhead, panfish or a few yellow perch should look the opportunities in small streams such as the Wautoma Creek. Smallmouth bass fishing in tribu-
tary streams provides good opportunities for many species of fish, including bluegill, pumpkinseed, black crap-
pie and white crappie. The fall run is followed by brown trout fishing for diverse fishing opportunities in the fall. Anglers looking for ice fishing oppor-
tunities should not over look the opportunities in small streams such as the Wautoma Creek. Smallmouth bass fishing in tribu-
tary streams provides good opportunities for many species of fish, including bluegill, pumpkinseed, black crap-
pie and white crappie.

MENOMINEE COUNTY

Bagley Flowage is a 240-acre impoundment on the Bruggers River, and provides good fishing for panfish, smallmouth bass, and muskellunge. The flowage is adjacent to the Bruggers River, a tributary of the Man-
itowoc River. The Bruggers River is a good fishery, and anglers should not over

MARQUETTE/WAUSHARA COUNTRIES

This portion of the state contains many small “pothole” lakes with excellent access. Most of these lakes are highly developed and experience heavy recreational use in the summer months. Their fisheries consist of size and growth tend to be slightly low. The Waupaca Chain of Lakes is also one of only a few in

WAUPACA COUNTY

Waupaca Chain of Lakes — Anglers look ing for for diverse fishing opportunities may be able to enjoy a walk on a public boat ramp and a scenic float trip should consider trying the lower Red River or Eau Claire River. Recent surveys of lake trout and whitefish show densities of smallmouth bass with some bass up to 19 inches. Red River canoe/kayak access are found at the Weed Dam near Gresham or County Land off Butternut Rd. With taking larger fish as they approach spawning. If the river flows, be cautious of severe rapid which should be portaged around. A good section of the Eau Claire River to float includes the section from Pella Dam down

Hartman Creek State Park (Allen, Mid and Hartman Lakes) — Families looking

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Trout (Nace) Creek—Habitat work completed on Trout Creek will help maintain this quality trout resource. This section of Trout Creek is a fine put-and-take fishery and indicate trout relative abundance at 1,568 per mile with over 20 percent of the trout larger than nine inches (the legal minimum length). Trout Creek has multiple areas for anglers to access the stream.

Waupaca River—Novice trout anglers may want to try the Waupaca River within the Waupaca city limits and downstream. This section of the river is managed as a put-and-take fishery and is annually stocked with 3,000,000 rainbow or brown trout. Good shore access is located at Riverview and Riverside parks and much of the water is easily wadeable. At Riverview park the DNR has recently completed a demonstration trout habitat project that should hold many fish. In addition, a short walking trail for challenged anglers is located near the Water Street Bridge. In the special regulation section of the Waupaca River, recent surveys indicate trout populations have been holding steady. Anglers fishing this section of water have a very good chance of catching a trophy-sized brown trout. — Al Nolte, fisheries biologist, Shawano

WINNEBAGO SYSTEM (WOLF AND UPPER FORER, RIVERS WINNEBAGO, BUTTE DES MORTS, WINNECONNE, AND POYGAN)

Why do we doubt her? Time and again she has shown she ultimately knows what’s best. After two years of low spring water levels and below average growth rates, Mother Nature opened her heavenly vaults and made up for this past year, resulting in above average water levels on the walleye spawning grounds of the Winnebago system in April of 2011. And there were plenty of medium-sized walleye up the rivers to take advantage. Fisheries crews were able to tag just over 12,000 walleye in April 2011, roughly 11,000 males and 1,000 females. The average size walleye off the Wolf River this year was similar to 2010. Males averaged 16.6 inches and 1.74 pounds while females were 21.5 inches and weighed 4.23 pounds. (Keep in mind that these are spawn-length weights, not summer weights.) Males ranged from 12 to 22 inches, with the vast majority (56 percent) in the 14.5- to 16-inch range. These are likely fish from the huge 2008 yearclass that grew well due to above average fish food and the staple of the spring fishery. Females had a broader size range, ranging from 15.5 to 22.5 inches. The majority (70 percent) was composed of younger females, in the 19.5- to 22-inch range. These are mostly females from the strong 2003 to 2005 yearclasses. Anglers caught 1.2 million females from the 2003 yearclass won’t be up spawning until 2014. These walleye took advantage of those good water levels and thanked Mother Nature by pulling off another big yearclass. Travelling surveys on Lake Winnebago showed an average catch of 10.44 walleye fingerlings per trial for the combined 3 rounds of trawling. This is the 5th largest hatch we’ve measured by our standardized surveys. Assuming average survival, this yearclass will provide good fishing and more importantly large numbers of spawning females beginning in the latter half of this decade and into the next. As always, please promptly report any tagged fish that you catch on the system to the Oshkosh DNR office.

Speaking of big yearclasses, travelling also showed that white bass pulled off the second largest yearclass ever reported from the system and drowned since the largest since 1996. That’s great news for those of us who like fast, hard hitting action and lots of it. These fish will become a dominant force in 3 to 4 years. Yellow perch are also seen to be growing strong in 2011, up to par with those from 2005 to 2007. Travelling surveys show a good yearclass of perch and especially gizzard shad, all important forage species. This was most likely the result of unusually cold water temperatures that we experienced through May and June last year. The cooler spring also likely played a part in bluegill and black crappie hatches returning to more levels than we saw in 2010.

Anglers could experience some very good white river walleye fishing this spring. Last fall, even into late November, there were LOT S 6.8 inches and 1.74 pounds while smallmouth in the lake. The population estimates for adult northern pike 1 per acre and big-water brown trout. Walleye and muskellunge are stocked by the DNR. Our fishery management plans call for a 24-inch walleye and especially gizzard shad, all important forage species. This was most likely the result of unusually cold water temperatures that we experienced through May and June last year. The cooler spring also likely played a part in bluegill and black crappie hatches returning to more levels than we saw in 2010.

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An exceptional northern pike was collected in a recent fish survey on Nagawicka Lake. Photo: Ben Heisey

Lake Wisconsin (Sauk and Columbia Counties) — A favorite for walleye fishing. Lake Wisconsin continues to provide an excellent opportunity for anglers to bring home some walleyes for the table as well as a good shot at some memorable big fish.

Lake Monona — In 2011, Lake Monona was surveyed revealing the obvious: this is a fish lake. Thirty-eight percent of all fish in the lake was fish. Monona fish are heavy for their length, and fish over 40 inches are not uncommon. Large lake bass numbers are abundant with fish over 20 inches. Less visible are exceptional numbers of walleye and smallmouth bass popula-
tions. Public parks provide beach access. Olin, Olbrich and Law park all put anglers in a good spot for walleye during this spring with legal sized yearling brook trout. Lower Geneva, Footed, Lower Nashotah and Ottawa Lakes will once again provide traditional trout angling opportunity throughout the spring.

Lake Wisconsin — An abundance of population of brown trout has been reported in this lake with good numbers of walleye as well.

Lake Michigan — Famous for its large sport fish and abundant numbers of smallmouth bass. Winter fishing efforts are recommend due to its abundance of cold-water fish like walleye, lake trout, brown trout and yellow perch.

Lake Michigan is the largest of the Great Lakes and the third largest freshwater lake in the world. It is located in the northeastern United States and northwestern Canada. Lake Michigan is known for its diverse fish population, including smallmouth bass, walleye, and rainbow trout.
view these trout fisheries. Gone are the days of stocking numerous large holdover trout every fall and broodstock fish returning to 12 to 24 inches. For the mainstay of these fisheries is the stock- ing of sizable numbers of fingerling brown trout. These fish have been shown to survive well in these systems while establishing natural reproduction. It is advantageous for trout living in these systems to have a smaller body size. Anglers will not see the 21- to 26-inch brown and rainbow trout of the past. Trophy fish in these systems will now be no 16 to 18 inches. There are still fewer fish over 20 inches, but anglers looking for these large fish will have to look further downstream on the Grant River.

**Platte River** — The lower portion of the Platte River offers good float fishing for smallmouth bass. Angling along with smallmouth bass, anglers can expect to catch an occasion- al walleye as well. As the river ap- proaches the city limits of Elkhorn, the Platte River supports a stable channel catfish fish- ery. While there are no public easements, anglers can gain public access and permission from private landowners. There is boat and trailer access located at the Ban- field road crossing. The Banfield landing is approximately one mile downstream from the confluence of the Platte and Little Platte Rivers. Another favorite among anglers is to take float trips down the Platte and Little Platte Rivers. There is a canoe access located on the Platte River at Ellenboon. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

**GREEN COUNTY**

Fishing season in Green County often kicks off with walleye and northern pike fishing in the dam tailraces below the Albany and Boscobel dams. Elsewhere along the Sugar River, seasonal opportunities exist as mi- grating walleye, pike, catfish and bass move up and down the Sugar River to spawn. Farther east along this area, smallmouth confluences are also attractive fishing holes as fish seek these mixing zones and the byproduct of these confluences. Trout fishing is making a resurgence as re- cent hatchery work along the Sugar River (New Glarus Branch) produce quality fish. Story creek west of Brooklyn harbor anglers can be pleased to watch walleye and largemouth bass. Anglers young will find good fishing action in Beckman Lake in the Brownstown- Cadiz Springs State Recreation area. In Monteclillo, Lake Montesian has easy shore access and plentiful panfish to keep bobbers busy.

**IOWA COUNTY**

Gordon Creek — With just over 4 miles of public fishing easement, Gordon creek supports one of the better brown trout fisheries south of highway 53. With an estimated 330 brown trout per acre and fish over 20 inches present, Gordon creek offers anglers the opportunity to catch trophy-size brown trout. Catch and release as well as harvest areas are located on Gordon Creek. Redregulation for the harvest area is a 12-inch minimum with a daily bag limit of 2 trout. With the support of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited, nearly one mile of additional public water has been completed. Fly and spin fisherman will find pas- sionate vegetation to their liking in parts of the public fishing access. Gordon Creek is located 1 mile upstream on the eastern side of Iowa County. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

**Blackhawk Lake** — The largemouth bass population of Blackhawk Lake has responded positiv- ely to the special “no length limit” regulation adopted by a voluntary harvest slot of 9 to 12.9 inches. The over- all population of bass has been reduced but the current population still consists of 18 to 24 inch fish numbers which are much heavier for their body length. Anglers can catch a more diverse mix. The bluegill and crappie populations remain in good shape for number and size distribu- tion. A local fish farmer, local bait shop, anglers and a co-op DNR project has led to purchasing larger size-of-year walleye fry for the lake. This effort has been successful in developing a decent brown trout fishery.

**LAFCETTE COUNTY**

Yellowstone Lake — Yellowstone Lake has a stable fishery for bluegill, largemouth bass, walleye, crappie and channel catfish with a rising population of smallmouth bass. Anglers can expect good to excellent fishing for bluegill, walleye, channel catfish, large- mouth bass, and smallmouth bass. Anglers will also see an increase in the crappies in 2012. Full surveys revealed a large popula- tion of crappies in the 7.5- to 8.5-inch range. The musky population is considered a low- density, high-quality fishery. Muskies up to 45 inches have been sampled with some anglers reporting catches near 50 inches. Yellowstone Lake is managed under special regulations so become familiar with them. Yellowstone Lake offers ample bank fishing opportunities on the north side of the lake with several accessible fishing pads avail- able as well.

Steiner Branch — Anglers looking to add brook trout to their species list will find the Steiner Branch offers the opportunity to catch trophy-size brown trout. Catch and release as well as harvest regulations so become familiar with them. Yellowstone Lake offers ample bank fishing opportunities on the north side of the lake with several accessible fishing pads avail- able as well.

Galena River — The Galena River is a productive smallmouth bass stream located known as the Fever River. It contains just over 17 miles of public fishing easements in and around the Benton city. Bass over 8 inches are abundant with the opportunity to catch fish over 14 inches. Anglers can find ample bank fishing opportunities while searching for that trophy smallmouth. There is a accessible fishing pad located on the “W.”

**Accessable shore fishing** — Area clubs and communities along with the Lafayette Coun- ty Sportsman Alliance have installed acces- sible bank fishing pads through out Lafayette County. Fishing visit: http://www.lafayettecounty. org. Access to these pads and riverine muniments and parks offering accessible bank fishing visit: http://www.fishtime.com. For a list of and links to the various smallmouth bass fishing is available at Yellowstone Lake. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville
ROCK COUNTY

Rock River — Tailwater fisheries below Rock River dams provide most of the fishing action and opportunity for Rock County anglers. These dams are barriers that concentrate fish on their spring spawning runs. While wade and pier anglers are widely sought after, these dams offer a grab bag of channel catfish, black crappie, white bass, bluegills and yellow perch. Anglers are cautioned when fishing these areas that anchors can become caught and effect boat stability. Crooky flows and wave action from the discharge require caution boating. Anglers should wear PFD's and have the necessary safety gear handy. Boat launches are well distributed along the river corridor. Most communities along the river welcome anglers and provide an abundance of opportunities for shore fishing. Common carp are abundant and easily recognizable. If you catch a carp and choose not to keep it, you may legally release it. Do not leave dead fish or fish parts in the water or on the banks of public waters and lands.

Turfile Creek — Northwest of Beloit is Turfile Creek, one of the areas most scenic and healthy streams. While generally shallow, canoe and wading anglers can find smallmouth bass, walleye, catfish and northern pike in the woody habitat along deeper cut banks and below riffles. This stream offers excellent opportunities to see native biodversity as many non-game fishes and mussel species are well represented in Turfile Creek.

Kiwasin Pond — Even city folks can enjoy trout fishing within the Janesville area. The Kiwasin pond is a 10-acre, two-story fishery of rainbow trout and bluegills and bass. Depths are up to 37 feet and the cold waters support an annual stocking of 3000 rainbow trout. A nice fishing pier and boat launch provides access. Only electric motors are allowed. -- Kurt Welle, fisheries biologist, Madison.

SAUK COUNTY

Devils Lake — One of the most popular fishing spots in Sauk County is Devils Lake. Surrounded entirely by the state park and beautiful scenery, Devils Lake is a great spot for a family fishing outing. In a 2011 fall survey, DNR fisheries staff observed some very large yellow perch and northern pike. The steep dropoffs in the lake favor these fish that tend to live in deeper water and on the edges of the aquatic plants. The northern pike were especially impressive, and fish up to 40 inches and 18 pounds were caught. The department stocks catchable-size brown trout in Devils Lake and while the number of browns stocked has been reduced it still offers a good chance at 12- to 16-inch fish. The brown trout season stays open through the winter on Devils Lake, offering a chance to ice fish for these beauties, but remember to purchase your inland trout stamp.

Lake Redstone — Lake Redstone by Reedsburg was surveyed in 2010 and 2011 and is a great destination for walleye and muskie-lure. The plentiful forage means these fish grow fast and are in excellent condition, but can make the fish tricky to catch. The DNR population estimate for muskies showed a little more than 1 fish for every 3 acres of water, a moderate density. The population estimate for walleye showed 4.3 fish per acre which is more than twice the average for a stocked water. This means walleye fishing should continue to be very good. Smallmouth bass are continuing to do well after being introduced in 1998 and 1999. Black crappies also are abundant with a good number of fish in the 10- to 13-inch range. -- Dave Rowe, fisheries biologist, Payette.

Lower Wisconsin River (Sauk, Dane, Richland, Iowa Crawford and Grant counties)

The overall fisheries of the Lower Wisconsin River are in very good shape. The walleye population has seen a significant increase in the number of 15- to 18-inch fish. This increase is the result of the catch and return of these fish for persons wanting to specifically target these fishes. Northern pike are throughout the lower Wisconsin River and muskies in the uppermost part of the river provide pretty good action for anglers targeting these species. -- Gene Von Dyck, fisheries biologist, Dellsville.

URBAN FISHING WATERS

Urban fishing waters are small lakes and ponds under 25 acres that are conveniently managed with minimal impact. They are postcard worthy, have special regulations and their shoreline is accessible to the public.

Brown County: Maniger Lagoon - city of Greendale.
Langlee County: Remington Lake.
Lincoln County: Mirror Lake.
Kenshoa County: Anderson Pond, Bog Children's Pond, Poony Park.
Outagamie County: Appleton Memorial Pond.
Ozaukee County: Harrington Beach Quarries, Menomonee River Park East and West, Packets Pond, Schoonder Lake Park, Willow Brook Park.
Racine County: Greatly Park, Johnson Park, Lockwood Park, Prichard Park, Quary Lake, Reservoir Park.
Shiela County: Kohler-Andre State Park Pond, Shiowaqugy Memorial Park, Lake, Reservoir Park.
Walworth County: Ceylon Lagoon, Cong- don Park, Millpond Park Pond.
Waukesha County: Calhoun Park, Delalifer Reaing Pond, Foshbrook Pond, Heyer Park North and South, Lepre Dam Millpond, Lions Park-Overland, Memomon Park, Millpond, Munson Park, Myscape Park, Red Millpond Park, Regal Park, and Woodfield North and South.

Getting Hooked on Wisconsin Fishing

Urban fishing program provides access to fishing fun!

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has placed an added emphasis on promoting urban 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 urban anglers. If you live in Southeast Wisconsin, there is an Urban Fishing water for you to enjoy. For a list of the available waters refer to the Guide to Wisconsin Hook and Line Fishing Regulations, 2012-2013. The DNR annually stocks thousands of rainbow trout in these waters. In addition, the Milwaukee County House of Correction 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 go about teaching them. The DNR works with volunteers from local fishing clubs to conduct instructional kids fishing clinics each winter and spring. Thanks to the tireless effort 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.

The DNR also offers Angler Education instruction workshops. This program trains adult volunteers how to better incorporate fishing programs in their community. Instructors are provided guidance and given ideas to help them introduce children to basic fishing skills and connect them with W3 waters.

To accommodate teachers, scout leaders, church groups or anyone else that is interested in having a fishing outing with a bunch of kids, the DNR works with volunteers from local fishing clubs to conduct instructional instruction workshops. This program trains adult volunteers how to better incorporate fishing programs in their community. Instructors are provided guidance and given ideas to help them introduce children to basic fishing skills and connect them with W3 waters.

W3 women of childbearing age, nursing mothers, and all children under 15 years of age may eat:
1 meal per week - bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, sunfish, bullhead, inshore trout, and
1 meal per month - walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and all other species.
Do not eat - musky

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There are 153 waters where exceptions to this advice apply, including the Great Lakes. More stringent consumption advice applies where fish have higher concentrations of mercury, PCBs or other chemicals. Go to www.w3.gov/fish/kidsparents/urbanfishing.html for more information.

Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:
Unrestricted - bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, sunfish, bullhead, inshore trout.
1 meal per week - walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and all other species, and
1 meal per month - musky

Two proud anglers display their catch. The urban fishing program provides great opportunities to take youngsters fishing. Take advantage of them. Photo: Travis Meid

For more information contact: Matt Caffaro Statewide Urban Fisheries Biologist 414-267-8634
Or visit: http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/kidsparents/urbanfishing.html

Kids won't remember their best day watching television.
Visit takemefishing.org
Mississippi River anglers. Anglers generally favor perch, bass, or chunking a spinnerbait at a grassy point, or casting a frog through lily pads for largemouth bass. And please use the fishery resource wisely, follow advice about the number of fish you can safely eat, enjoy conservation efforts and introduce fishing strategies that will help to see fishing as much as you do. – Brian Brechta, fisheries biologist, DNR. Mississippi River backwaters—Mississippi River backwaters include all sloughs, lakes, ponds, and side channels in this river’s floodplain. From Presque Isle, Wisconsin, to Dubuque, Iowa, the Mississippi contains more than 131,000 acres of backwaters swimming with warmwater fish species including largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, northern snakehead, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch. The Mississippi offers the greatest variety of sport fish anywhere in Wisconsin and most fish have year-round open seasons.

Northern pike—After two excellent years of northern pike fishing, numbers of this aggressive predator appear to be returning to pre-2009 levels. Catches from our fall 2011 sampling efforts suggest abundance has dropped in half from the previous two years and are returning to levels seen prior to this. This drop is partly due to fewer large fish and not a reduction in recent reproduction. Of note, anglers targeting northern pike in the large-mouth bass have complained about the large number of pike stinking their lures. There are still adequate numbers of northern pike greater than 18 inches, with a few measuring over 24 inches. Overall, it is suspected that recent cooler summers during the late summer to early fall will improve, with some fish reaching 15 inches. It is suspected that greatly increased water clarity over the past few years has favored perch growth and reproduction. The highest catch rates for perch over 8 inches long per hour were found in the Big Lake area from the river waters of Wasbash, MN in Pool 4 (7), followed by the Goose Island and Stoddard area of Pool 8 (6.1), the Ambrogh Slough area in Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien (5.8), the northeast portion of Harpers Ferry, IA or the Harpers Slough area south of Harpers Ferry, IA in Pool 10 (5.9), and the Beaver Bottoms area of Pool 9 (5.9). Perch can be found in various locations in the early spring. During April, small perch, often ice-out, will fish for them on their way to or near their spawning beds in shallow, weedy water. During summer, they frequent clear, weedy backwaters. As with many other backwater fish, perch congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows, night crawlers and small artificial baits.

Largemouth bass—Bass anglers can look for continued good fishing on the Mississippi River. Catch rates from our surveys of the main channel have generally increased slightly over the last few years, and for the last four years have been about the same as the last few years. Most of this increase was from small, perch larger than seven inches, which dramatically increased over the last few years. Fall surveys indicate average catch rates of largemouth bass over seven inches was greatest in the Ambrogh Slough area in Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien (8.5), followed by the northeast portion of Pool 9 (6.1), the Harpers Slough area south of Harpers Ferry, IA in Pool 10 (5.8), the Big Lake area across the main channel from Wabasha, MN in Pool 4 (3.7), the Ambrogh Slough area in Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien (3.6), the northeast portion of Harpers Ferry, IA or the Harpers Slough area south of Harpers Ferry, IA in Pool 10 (3.6), and by the Beaver Bottoms area of Pool 9 (3.6). Crappie can be found in various locations in the early spring. During May, look for them on their first-time spawning on the beds in shallow, weedy water. After spawning, crappie move to the main channel and side channels, and are often caught in muddy snags in deep, flowing water. As with many other backwater fish, crappies congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows and jigs.

Channel catfish—Mississippi River catfish angling should be good again during 2012. Over the last five years, summer catfish surveys showed consistent numbers of channel catfish in Pool 10 near La Crosse. In the last 30 years, the only time channel catfish catch rates were higher were during the summers of 1993-1995. During 2011 we had the second largest average size of channel catfish recorded since routine surveys were started in 1982. The largest channel catfish on average were found the previous year in 2010. Channel catfish larger than 31 inches and flatheads or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows and jigs.

Channel catfish can be found throughout the summer using worms, night crawlers, minnows and stink fish fished in deep, flowing water, often around sturgeon piles in side channels. Flatheads, or muskie anglers often use a fly rod rigged with poppers to catch spawning catfish. When the weather gets hot and spring flows subside, larger bluegill migrate to the main channel and side channels, and are often caught on wing dams, rocky snags in deep, weedy water. As with many other backwater fish, crappies congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows, night crawlers, wax worms, small minnows and jigs.

Crappie—Mississippi River crappie anglers can expect average fishing during 2012. From our fall sampling, the catch rate of fish over seven inches has stayed about the same over the last five years. The good news is that for bluegill over 8 inches, catch rates have generally increased over the last five years. Fall surveys indicate average catch rates of crappie over seven inches was greatest in the Ambrogh Slough area in Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien (8.5), followed by the northeast portion of Pool 9 (6.1), the Harpers Slough area south of Harpers Ferry, IA in Pool 10 (5.8), the Big Lake area across the main channel from Wabasha, MN in Pool 4 (3.7), the Ambrogh Slough area in Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien (3.6), the northeast portion of Harpers Ferry, IA or the Harpers Slough area south of Harpers Ferry, IA in Pool 10 (3.6), and by the Beaver Bottoms area of Pool 9 (3.6). Crappie can be found in various locations in the early spring. During May, look for them on their first-time spawning on the beds in shallow, weedy water. After spawning, crappie move to the main channel and side channels, and are often caught in muddy snags in deep, flowing water. As with many other backwater fish, crappies congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows and jigs.

A happy young angler with a fine catch of bluegill, yellow perch and crappies from the Mississippi River. 2011. Photo by C. M. Stolaski.
larger than 2010, but did not differ much from most previous years. Walleyes over 26 inch only made up about 2 percent of the total population. 

In Pool 9, the fall 2011 catch rate was about 11/mile. Northern pike were also caught in Pool 9, with a fall catch rate of 8.0/mile. Sauger were about an inch shorter (10.4) than the long term average for that pool. The proportion of saugers to the total catch was about 26 percent. For larger walleye (fall), the fall 2011 catch rate for Pool 9 was about 11/mile. In the spring, the catch rate for saugers was about 3/mile and larger black bass were more abundant than largemouth bass. However, the best walleye and sauger fishing will be found for smaller walleye down the road. North

DUNN COUNTY

Lake Menomin — is a 1,405-acre, 34-foot deep lake located on the Red Cedar River within the city of Menomonie. It has a range of habitat and contains many types of aquatic plants and fish. After a major flood in 1952, Lake Menomin was surveyed during spring of 2011 using fyke nets and electrofishing gear to assess the health and status of the fishery. Northern pike are the most abundant game fish. The lake contained a remnant musky population, a by product of stocking upstream in the watershed. Don’t be surprised if one over 48 inches shows up on the end of your line. We also sampled 440 walleye up to 27.2 inches with 12 to 20-inch common fish. One night of electrofishing produced a large bass population, bass up to 19.7 inches. Smallmouth bass are also found in similar sizes and numbers. Blue

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Mississippi River, Pool 10 — Mississippi River backwater lakes are a great place to spend a day on the water. Backwaters provide year-round fishing opportunities for walleye, largemouth bass, northern pike, and walleye. One such productive Pool 10 backwater fishery is the Ambro Complex located north of Prairie du Chien. This complex is comprised of a series of lakes connected by sloughs that may be traversed from the Mississippi River’s main channel. Big Missouri, Upper, Double US, Fish, Greerome and Tilton are the largest lakes in the Ambro Complex. Recent electrofishing surveys of these lakes have shown good gear to assess the health and status of the fishery. Northern pike populations, of which 14 percent were over 10 inches, make up 60 percent of the population. Half Moon Lake — is a 6,000-acre, 10-foot deep lake located on the Red Cedar River near Menomonie. It has a range of habitat and contains many types of aquatic plants and fish. After a major flood in 1952, Lake Menomin was surveyed during spring of 2011 using fyke nets and electrofishing gear to assess the health and status of the fishery. Northern pike are the most abundant game fish. The lake contained a remnant musky population, a by product of stocking upstream in the watershed. Don’t be surprised if one over 48 inches shows up on the end of your line. We also sampled 440 walleye up to 27.2 inches with 12 to 20-inch common fish. One night of electrofishing produced a large bass population, bass up to 19.7 inches. Smallmouth bass are also found in similar sizes and numbers. Blue
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CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Lake Wissota — The adult walleye popula
tion was estimated at 6,437. This is down about 50% from 2006 when the total popula
tion was estimated at 13,017. The largest
to August 2011, there will be a major drop in muskellunge numbers. 

CRAWFORD/GRANT COUNTIES

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