



2021 Spring Hearings Background Information

DNR Fisheries Management rule proposal questions and advisory question
Wisconsin Conservation Congress advisory questions

- In 2021, the Spring Hearings will be entirely virtual. The online public input questionnaire will open on April 12 at 7 p.m. and will close on April 15 (open 72 hours). The Spring Hearings questionnaire and background information will be posted at dnr.wi.gov, search “[Spring Hearing](#).” Spring Hearings questionnaires will NOT be printed this year.
- The majority of the DNR Fisheries Management questions are rule proposals, with one advisory question to gain additional input on a separate in-progress rule (Question 24). Spring Hearings rule questions occur in odd years, since the Legislature does not review administrative rules in even years.
- Following the Spring Hearings, these proposals will be reviewed at the Conservation Congress statewide convention, adopted by the Natural Resources Board, signed by the Governor and reviewed by the legislative standing committees. Natural Resources Board meetings and any legislative hearings are additional opportunities for public input on these proposals. All Spring Hearings proposals are slated to go into effect in spring 2022, contingent upon review timelines.
- The use of standardized toolbox regulations for the vast majority of these proposals help keep regulations consistent.
- Questions and comments on DNR Fisheries questions may be sent to: Meredith.Penthorn@wisconsin.gov.

DNR Rule Questions

QUESTION 1: Walleye Ceded Territory Regulation – Multiple waters in Ashland, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer and Vilas counties

This proposal would apply to the following waters:

- Big Falls Flowage (Rusk County)
- Crowley Flowage (Price County)
- Dairyland Reservoir (Rusk County)
- Elk River (entire) (Price County)
- Flambeau River, including waters of the North Fork Flambeau River, between Turtle-Flambeau Dam and Thornapple Flowage Dam (Ashland, Iron, Price, Rusk, and Sawyer counties)
- Grassy Lake (Price County)
- Lac Sault Dore (Soo Lake; Price County)
- Ladysmith Flowage (Rusk County)
- Lower Park Falls Flowage (Price County)
- Phillips Chain (Duroy, Elk, Long, Wilson lakes and connecting waters combined) (Price County)
- Pike Lake Chain (Amik, Pike, Round, Turner lakes and connecting waters combined) (Price and Vilas counties)
- Pixley Flowage (Price County)
- Solberg Lake (Price County)
- South Fork Flambeau River (entire) (Price, Rusk and Sawyer counties)
- Thornapple Flowage (Rusk County)
- Upper Park Falls Flowage (Price County)

The current harvest regulation (3-fish daily bag limit, no minimum length limit but only 1 may be over 14") is no longer suitable for the listed walleye populations amid the declining trends in natural recruitment that they have exhibited in the last 15 years. Fishing regulations that allow anglers to keep walleye of any size are not the proper fit for populations with dwindling recruitment. Young walleye in low to moderate abundance, including those stocked as a stopgap rescue attempt, should not be immediately available for harvest in ailing or recovering populations.

We do not have a complete time series to analyze for any of the listed waters, but even a cursory glance at fall electrofishing surveys reveals declining patterns in natural walleye recruitment in all these lakes. For example, in Solberg Lake catch rates averaged 31 walleye fingerlings/mile (range 1.3–76) in 14 fall electrofishing surveys 1987-2003, compared to an average of 4.2 fingerlings/mile (range 0.5–19) in 10 surveys since then. In Lac Sault Dore, where in 2001 we recorded our management area's highest measure of walleye recruitment, catch rates dropped from an average of 82 fingerlings/mile range (range 7.8 – 222) in 10 fall assessments 1991-2002 to 9.4 fingerlings/mile (range 0.9-13) in 4 fall electrofishing surveys 2004-2019. The declining trend is apparent even in Round Lake, still one of our best-producing and our most-studied walleye populations.

Currently, the sanctioned fishing regulations do not offer a good option to manage angling harvest in walleye populations with declining recruitment and slow growth. New information on walleye growth should be available from ages estimated by scales and spines collected in spring 2020. In theory, growth rates may have increased in response to lower rates of recruitment.

Applying the standard Ceded Territory regulation (15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 1 > 24" may be kept, daily bag of 3) to a slow-growing population would serve to increase adult walleye density toward our objectives; however, that change would also limit anglers' harvest opportunity beyond what they've been accustomed to for nearly 50 years.

QUESTION 2: Walleye experimental regulation – Escanaba Lake, Vilas County

The current regulation has established a high-density walleye fishery (~10 adults/acre) with low, stable natural recruitment, and has resulted in no legal harvest of walleye since 2003, except for 9 walleye harvested by tribal member set lines in the winter of 2019. As a result of the regulation, only one legal walleye (>28") has been produced and she has not been harvested, making the fishery essentially unavailable to harvest-oriented anglers. Escanaba Lake is an experimental fisheries research lake and there is a pressing need to understand walleye population responses to the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin default regulation and the level of production overharvest that may be occurring in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin joint walleye fishery and walleye population responses to it (please see [Embke et al. 2019](#)). The proposed regulation change would address the two objectives of understanding walleye population responses to the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin default regulation and to prolonged production overharvest (125% of annual production), including whether overexploitation negatively influences adult walleye abundances and recruitment. Because of the compulsory creel census, Escanaba Lake is likely the only lake in the world where these objectives could be tested.

The proposed regulation is in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin walleye regulation toolbox. The establishment of a harvest quota and walleye opening day of the second Saturday in June annually is not and is being proposed for experimental research purposes. This proposed regulation change will allow anglers to legally harvest walleye to address the proposed regulation change objectives. Therefore,

anglers will be directly involved in the experiment. Walleye population responses to the default regulation on Escanaba Lake will be compared to responses of other walleye populations with the same regulation in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin using standardized long-term monitoring data. Adult abundance, recruitment, and exploitation responses will be compared among lakes to test for similarities and differences to inform Ceded Territory of Wisconsin walleye management. Understanding walleye population responses to production overharvest is critical for managing the joint walleye fishery in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin. Knowledge gained from Escanaba Lake could be used to inform the safe harvest model for walleye in the Ceded Territory of Wisconsin.

Anglers would be notified of the transition to catch-and-release only through the DNR website, news releases in area news sources, signs, and other methods of communication.

QUESTION 3: Walleye – Clear and Katherine lakes, Oneida County; Anvil Lake and Lake Laura, Vilas County

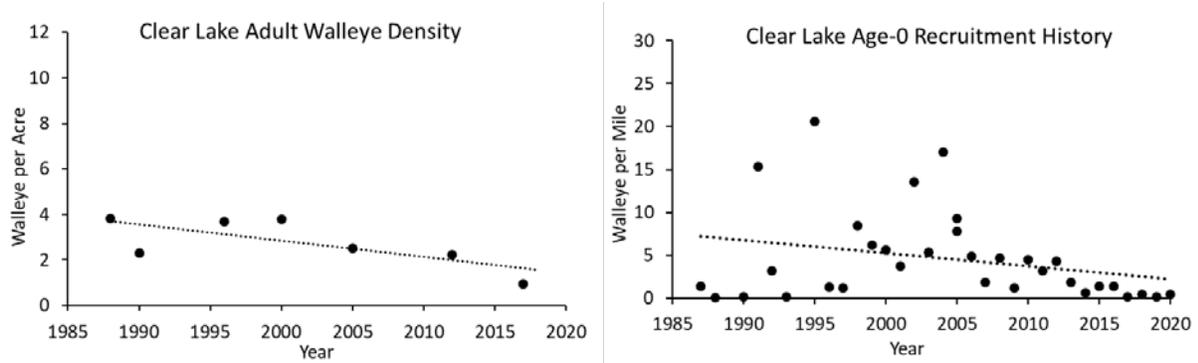
The proposed walleye regulation is an *18-inch minimum length limit but fish from 22 to 28 inches may not be possessed and daily bag limit of one walleye*. This regulation is more restrictive than the 18-inch minimum length limit option currently in the Fisheries Management regulations toolbox, and is protective of larger walleye, but still allows some angler harvest of 18-22” fish. It also allows the opportunity to harvest a trophy walleye over 28 inches. We believe the 1 fish daily bag limit (instead of 3) sends a message to anglers that fish numbers are low, and harvest must be limited. However, closing these lakes to walleye harvest is not warranted. Neither harvest nor a lack of adult fish were the initial causes of decline in these lakes, but we cannot support previous levels of harvest with reduced numbers of young fish coming up into the adult population, which is an early indicator of population decline. The causes of recent declines in regional walleye populations is unknown, but research studies are looking into it. If this regulation proves to be protective of the walleye population in these lakes of concern, then we will consider adding it to our regulations toolbox for other walleye populations in need of rehabilitation.

Wisconsin DNR’s Walleye Team has held a series of public meetings to gather input on walleye issues as they draft a new statewide walleye management plan. One frequent comment from anglers is a desire for more protection than the 18-inch minimum length limit and 3-fish bag limit provide in lakes needing rehabilitation. The proposed regulation allows limited harvest of mid-sized fish while protecting larger females, and also offers trophy potential. Preliminary results from a random survey mailed to licensed anglers found that 30% of respondents express interest in harvest of walleyes over 28 inches, with about half of that group saying they would “always” harvest that size of fish. This regulation is also supported by the draft management plan for these lakes of concern, which staff from DNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and Lac du Flambeau (LDF) have been developing.

CLEAR LAKE, ONEIDA COUNTY

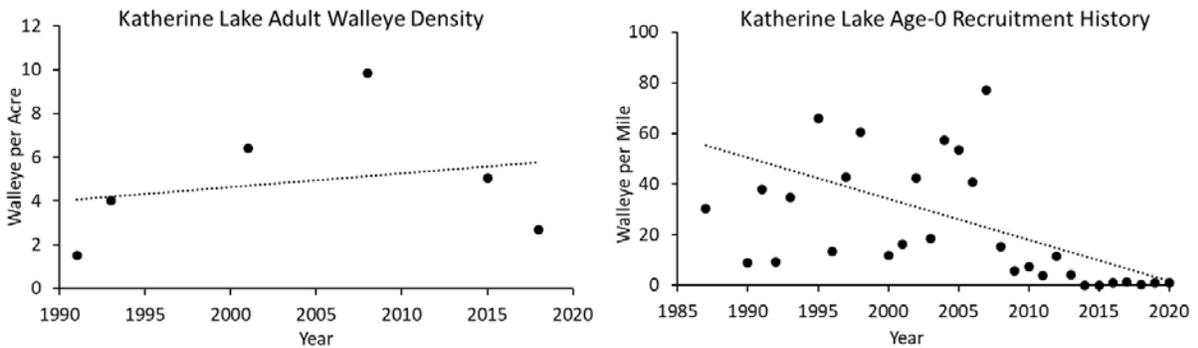
Adult walleye density estimates indicate a decline in the number of walleye per acre in Clear Lake (below, left). Additionally, walleye natural reproduction (NR) has declined over time with nearly no NR most recently (below, right). No walleye stocking occurred in Clear Lake until 2017. During 2017 and 2018, a total of 60,170 small-fingerling walleye were stocked. In 2019, 8,728 large-fingerling walleye were stocked at a rate of approximately 10 large-fingerlings per acre (standard Wisconsin DNR rate)

which will continue every other year. Additionally, the Lac du Flambeau tribe stocked 4,352 large-fingerling walleye in 2020.



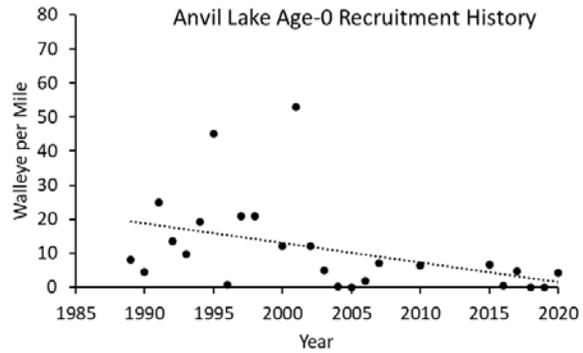
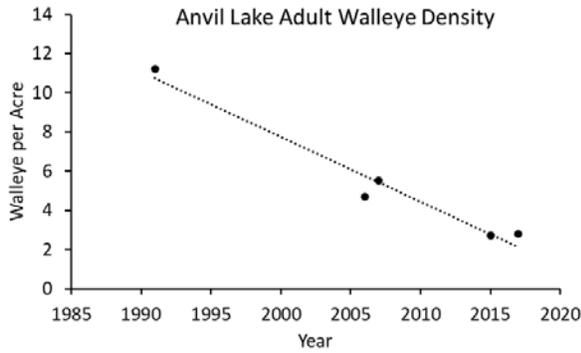
KATHERINE LAKE, ONEIDA COUNTY

Adult walleye density estimates indicate a decline in the number of walleye per acre in Katherine Lake (below, left). Additionally, walleye NR has declined over time with nearly no NR most recently (below, right). No walleye stocking occurred in Katherine Lake until 2017. During 2017 and 2018, a total of 36,661 small-fingerling walleye were stocked. In 2019, 5,233 large-fingerling walleye were stocked at a rate of approximately 10 large-fingerlings per acre (standard Wisconsin DNR rate) which will continue every other year.



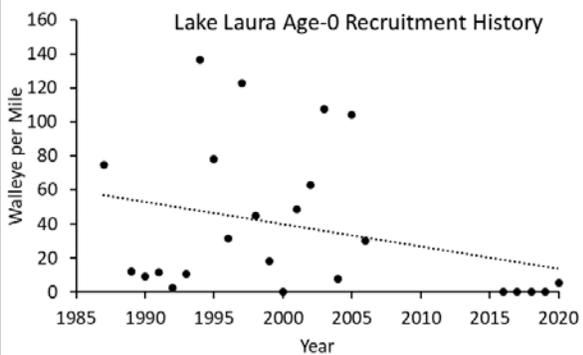
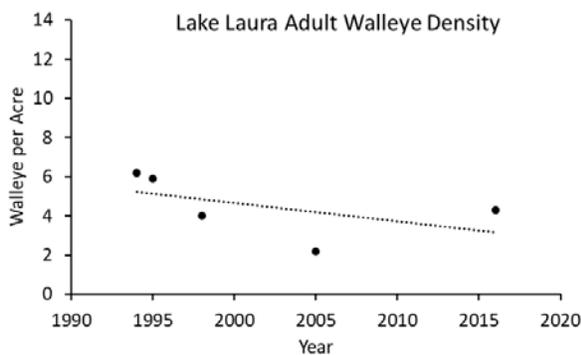
ANVIL LAKE, VILAS COUNTY

Adult walleye density estimates indicate a decline in the number of walleye per acre in Anvil Lake (below, left). Additionally, walleye NR has declined over time with nearly no NR most recently (below, right). A total of 5,187 small-fingerling walleye were stocked in Anvil Lake in 1991. No other walleye stocking occurred between 1990 and 2019. In 2020, a total of 14,464 small-fingerling walleye were stocked into Anvil Lake.



LAURA LAKE, VILAS COUNTY

Adult walleye density estimates indicate a decline in the number of walleye per acre in Laura Lake (below, left). Most concerning is that walleye NR has declined over time with no NR for at least 5 straight years (below, right). A total of 13,872 small-fingerling walleye were stocked in Laura Lake in 1991. No other walleye stocking occurred between 1990 and 2019. In 2020, a total of 21,380 small-fingerling walleye were stocked into Laura Lake.



QUESTION 4: Bass protected slot limit – Butternut and Franklin lakes, Forest County; North Nokomis Lake, Oneida County; Nugget Lake, Pierce County; White Mound Lake, Sauk County; and the Tiger Cat Chain of Lakes, Sawyer County

The proposed regulation is a 14-18-inch protected slot limit with 1>18 inches allowed to be kept, and daily bag limit of 5.

Butternut and Franklin lakes: The proposed regulation will allow anglers to reduce the abundance of smallmouth bass, which will allow increased growth rates and body condition for the population as a whole. This regulation will also reduce bass abundance by focusing the harvest on smaller fish (rather than larger fish), which will increase the size structure of the population. Reduced abundance of smallmouth bass would not only improve the smallmouth bass fishery in Franklin Lake, but it may have an impact on panfish and non-game fish populations which would have a positive impact on the fishery as a whole.

North Nokomis Lake: The current bass regulation does not allow the management goal of reducing the abundance and increasing the size structure of largemouth bass to be met because the majority of adult largemouth bass (88%) are under the 14” minimum length regulation and are not subjected to harvest

(PSD-14 value of 12). The current bass regulation is not the best choice to reach the management goal of increasing the size structure of smallmouth bass while maintaining a low adult density. Survey results show an adult smallmouth bass PSD-14 value of 44. I would like to add protection to the adult smallmouth bass with intent to increase the PSD-14 value to 50-70 and maintain a low adult population density.

The proposed 14" to 18" protected slot, 1>18" regulation is expected to improve the size structure and lower the abundance of largemouth bass by allowing harvest of the abundant largemouth bass <14" and protecting fish within the 14" to 18" allowing them to reach memorable size. The proposed regulation is also expected to increase the size structure of smallmouth bass while maintaining a low adult density. This regulation is the best fit from the WDNR toolbox to reach the management goals for both species.

Nugget Lake: Currently largemouth bass are in high densities in Nugget Lake with a CPUE of 65 bass per mile of shoreline. Bass also exhibit a poor size structure with only 5% of fish >14 inches and an RSD14 of 5.6. Growth rates of largemouth bass in Nugget Lake are very poor with mean length at age for all age classes well below the statewide average for lakes in the same classification. Bass were aged using otoliths. Growth rates plateau once fish reach the ages of 5-6 years old with mean lengths of 5- and 6-year-old fish at 11.4 inches and 12.8 inches, respectively. With the current status of the population, angler harvest of largemouth bass is extremely limited given the size structure of the population with very few fish above the current 14-inch minimum length limit. Therefore, the high density of fish under the minimum length limit is likely the driving factor in the poor growth rates because of high intraspecific competition. The poor size structure and high densities of largemouth bass have been present in Nugget Lake in the previous survey from 2010 with a CPUE of 84 fish/mile and only 23% of bass >14 inches. Since then the size structure has further declined. Reducing the density of largemouth bass would also potentially reduce predation on the small walleye fingerlings that are stocked biannually as well as reduce predation on the naturally reproduced walleye that were documented in the 2018 survey.

White Mound Lake: In short, largemouth bass abundance has increased to very high levels and there has been a corresponding decline in bass growth based on mean length-at-age. Population size structure has declined in recent years based on size-specific electrofishing CPUE and size specific mark-recapture population estimates. Largemouth bass abundance increased by 99.5% in White Mound Lake from 1999 to 2019 based on late spring electrofishing data collected in 1999, 2007, 2013, and 2017. Currently, White Mound Lake has the highest largemouth bass abundance of any lake in the area (Columbia and Sauk counties) and ranks among the highest in bass abundance compared to other lakes in its lake class (complex, warm, dark), and statewide.

White Mound Lake has shown the ability in recent history to produce large numbers of bigger bass despite very high population density and average growth rates, as evidenced by the CPUE14 of 62.4 fish/mile in 2013. Since that time, overall abundance has increased, and growth has declined, while abundance of larger bass has dropped precipitously. There are indications that harvest played a role in the drop in number of larger bass and they are not being replaced as quickly due to slow growth. It is the hope of the local biologist that the willingness of anglers to harvest bass can be directed toward smaller individuals, reducing competition and improving growth. Protecting larger bass will help to restore population size structure. Cessation of high density extended growth walleye stocking (20/acre,

even years) will eliminate a sizeable amount of competition among predators in the lake as well, further improving bass growth.

Tiger Cat Chain: Largemouth are a featured species in the Tiger Cat Flowage with a lot of value to local anglers (evidenced by feedback from Fishery Management Plan, WCC Citizen Resolution). The current population has some elements of quality, but there are indications that better bass size and abundance could be achieved with a regulation that pushes harvest towards smaller individuals while offering more protection for larger bass.

QUESTION 5: Bass size limit removal – Katherine Lake, Oneida County, and Upper and Lower Buckatabon lakes, Vilas County

This proposal would remove the size limit (no minimum length limit) for largemouth and smallmouth bass on Katherine Lake in Oneida County and Upper and Lower Buckatabon lakes in Vilas County, and retain the daily bag limit of 5 bass in total. The current regulation is a 14-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of 5 bass in total.

Katherine Lake: The current bass regulation does not allow the management goal of reducing the overabundant bass populations (5.6 adult largemouth bass per acre and 7.3 adult smallmouth bass per acre) to be met because the majority of adult largemouth (93%) and smallmouth Bass (98%) are under the 14” minimum length regulation and are not subjected to harvest.

Upper and Lower Buckatabon lakes: There are large numbers of largemouth bass present in Upper and Lower Buckatabon lakes and most of them (85%) are under the legal limit to keep. Likely due to the current 14” length limit, there is a stockpiling of smaller largemouth bass present that may be competing with other species, like walleye, and negatively affecting populations by direct and/or indirect competition (Fayrum et al. 2005; Kelling et al. 2016).

No minimum length limit for bass is part of the fisheries regulation toolbox and is utilized to reduce predation/competition and maximize yield in high density populations. An elimination of the 14” length limit will make all bass vulnerable to harvest and in turn reduce the number of bass present in Upper and Lower Buckatabon lakes.

QUESTION 6: Largemouth bass size limit removal – White Potato Lake, Oconto County

This proposal was initiated by the White Potato Lake Sportsman’s Club (WPLSC). This regulation change is social in nature and the biological justification for this proposal enhancing largemouth bass size structure or reducing abundance is limited. In 2019, a subsample of 83 largemouth bass was aged from 2 to 15 years old. Bass are reaching legal size (14 in) around age 6 and growth was average at most ages compared to the mean length at age for bass in northern Wisconsin.

Largemouth bass was the 2nd most abundant gamefish collected in White Potato Lake during the last comprehensive fisheries survey (2019). The relative abundance of largemouth bass increased between 2013 and 2019 from 5% to 7% however, size structure diminished between surveys. Largemouth bass growth was below average from age 8 and older compared to the mean length at age for bass in northern Wisconsin. Largemouth bass growth also appeared to decline at all ages between the 2013 and 2019 surveys. Bass are reaching legal size (14 in) between ages 6 and 7. A population estimate was not generated in either survey, however, CPUE still suggests that this population is expanding. Harvest

does not appear to be impacting the population because in 2019, a creel survey indicated that out of the 4,058 largemouth bass that were caught, only 131 were harvested.

The WPLSC stocks large fingerling walleye in alternate years based on our recommendations (5/acre). We (DNR) have evaluated walleye reproduction & recruitment (2008 – 2012), estimated walleye fishing mortality with a tag/reward study (2013), adjusted our stocking strategy (2014; 10 small fingerling/acre to 35/acre), and are now requesting large fingerling walleye (2020) to enhance this fishing opportunity. Walleye density has declined dramatically from 3.8 adults/acre in 2008 to 2.1/acre in 2013 and finally 0.6 adults/acre in 2019.

The impression among anglers and club members is that the increase in bass abundance has caused a decline in walleye survival and adult abundance. Even if bass abundance decreases as a result of this regulation change, the change in stocking strategy by DNR from small to large fingerlings will help increase adult walleye density.

QUESTION 7: Northern Pike 40-inch minimum length limit – Lake Tomah, Monroe County

The current northern pike fishing regulation (32" minimum size limit, one fish daily bag limit) on Lake Tomah appears to be effective in maintaining a northern pike population with quality size pike from fishing mortality, but the 40" minimum size limit may allow more fish to achieve trophy size. Local anglers have expressed their support for more trophy pike opportunities in Lake Tomah. In 2017, a local Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) resolution passed (29 to 4, in favor) supporting a 40" minimum length limit for northern pike in Lake Tomah. The regulation was rejected at the WCC warmwater committee meeting, with the understanding that the DNR La Crosse fisheries crew was in the process of evaluating whether raising the minimum size limit would have the potential to increase the number of trophy northern pike. Surveys of the adult northern pike population in 2017 and 2018 indicated that pike growth rates were high and there is the potential for fish to achieve lengths exceeding 40". Increasing the minimum size limit has the potential to reduce fishing mortality of large pike (≥ 32 ") and increase the number of trophy northern pike in the lake.

Length at age, from a 2018 WDNR survey of spawning adult fish, indicated good growth, with mean length at age in the top 50% of northern pike populations within the lake class (Fig. 1). In addition, 47% of females reached 32" or larger in less than 7 years (the maximum possible age of pike in Lake Tomah) and one individual achieved 41.3" by age 6.

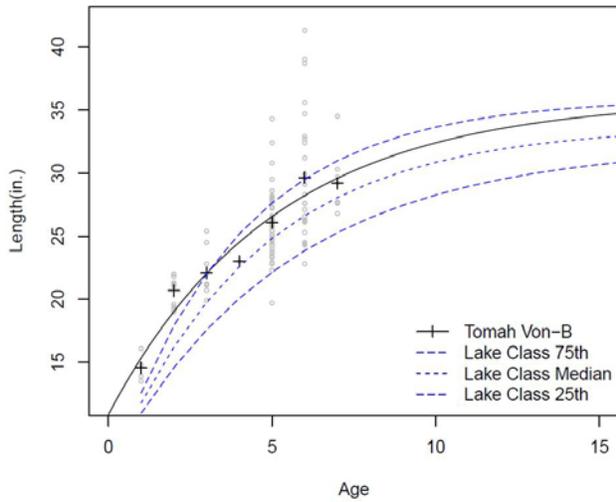
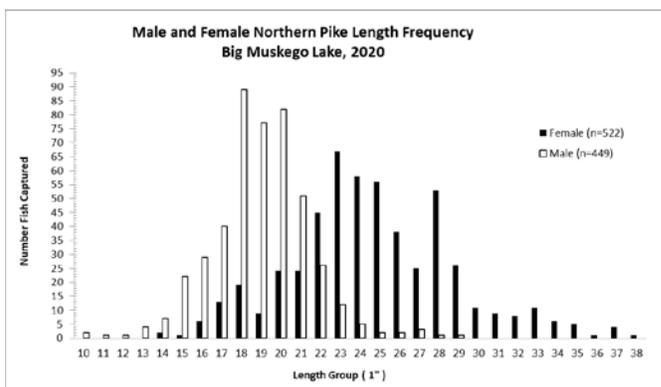


Fig 1. Mean length at age (black crosses), individual lengths (grey circles), and fitted Von-Bertalanffy growth curve (black line) for northern pike in Lake Tomah compared to 25th percentile, median, and 75th percentile predicted lengths at age from northern pike populations in the simple-warm-turbid lake class (blue dashed lines).

Northern pike densities in Lake Tomah were relatively low in 2018 (2.1 ± 0.6 fish per acre, population estimate $\pm 95\%$ CI) and density dependent growth is not currently a concern. The mean density for 19 northern Wisconsin lakes was estimated at 7.9 fish/acre (Margenau et al. 1998), and an analysis of 12 lakes in northern Minnesota indicated that lakes with densities less than 12 fish/acre had high growth rates, not limited by density dependence to the same extent as populations with higher densities (Pierce et al. 2003).

QUESTION 8: Northern Pike protected slot limit – Big Muskego Lake and Bass Bay, Waukesha County; Long, Wilson and Irogami lakes, Waushara County

Big Muskego Lake/Bass Bay: The current 40-inch size limit and daily bag limit of 1 provides maximum protection from angler harvest and is working well in maintaining a naturally reproducing pike population with improved size structure. Implementation of the 40-inch size limit occurred in 2011 and by 2015 - female pike revealed a value of 36% RSD28. In 2020, 135 northern pike found in our sample were greater than 28 inch, while 86% of the females were greater than 21 inches.



Pike in Big Muskego have maintained above average growth based on age samples taken in 2008, 2015 and 2019. This system will likely sustain considerable angler harvest under the proposed slot size, consistent recruitment levels, balanced size structure with a significant number of females in the protected slot and above average growth rates that will continue to grow new recruits into the protected slot.

Long, Wilson and Irogami lakes: Nearly all lakes in Waushara County are highly developed, lack suitable habitat or don't have the forage base to support trophy and quality northern pike populations. Long Lake is one of the lakes in Waushara County that has the potential to grow quality and trophy northern pike. Irogami, being attached to the deep water of Silver Lake is also a lake that has potential to grow large northern pike. This proposal would allow increased harvest opportunity of small (<26") pike and reduce harvest pressure on females, allowing the use of an underutilized but readily available male resource.

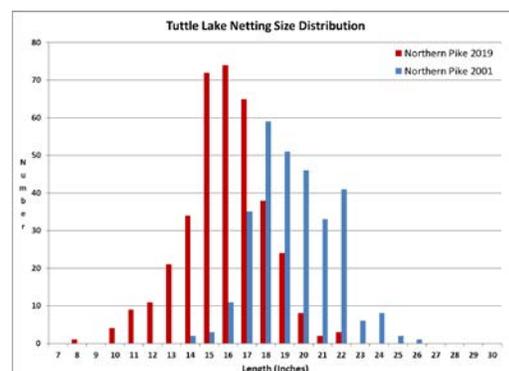
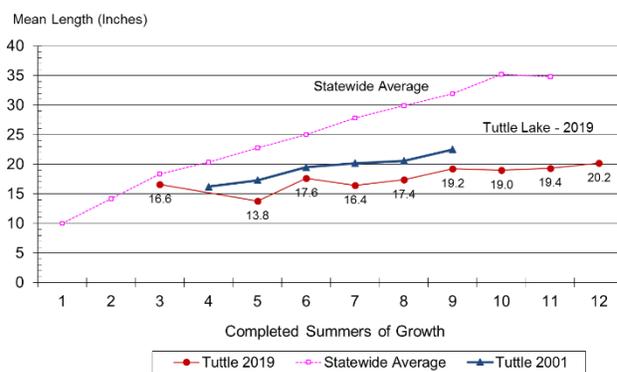
In 2018, a WCC advisory question (700318) was introduced asking to remove the size limit for northern pike on 7 lakes in Waushara county. This was a formal attempt by residence of Waushara to change a northern pike regulation they felt created a catch and release fishery for this species in this county. It passed overwhelmingly 56 to 1. These 2 lakes were not part of that resolution because anglers have and continue to catch some large northern on these two lakes.

Both Irogami and Long Lake have shown the potential to grow trophy pike over the years. Netting surveys have not always shown this, but DNR observations, angler testimony and photos show many fish caught over 35 inches in length on Long Lake. Both lakes have an average size ≥ 21 inches and show average to above average growth.

QUESTION 9: Northern Pike size limit removal – Tuttle Lake, Marquette County; Morris, Big Hills and Pine lakes, Waushara County

Tuttle Lake: Currently very few fish (none based on 2019 survey and only one in 2001) are reaching 26" and those that are, are females. Growth rates are very slow with fish up to 12 years of age barely reaching 20". This reg will allow the harvest of pike smaller than 26", help reduce density and improve growth rates and size structure of the pike population.

**Northern Pike Growth Rates
Tuttle Lake, Marquette Co.**



This proposal has support of the local Lake Association, was submitted as a local recommendation and passed overwhelmingly at the 2019 spring hearings.

Waushara County lakes: In 2018 a WCC advisory question (700318) was introduced asking the department to remove the size limit for northern pike on 7 lakes in Waushara county. It passed overwhelmingly 56 to 1. Lake Morris, Wilson and Pine are 3 of these lakes. Sufficient data did not exist

on the remaining lakes per discussions with Pike Team to pursue a rule change at this time. Most of the lakes are highly developed, lack suitable habitat and do not have the forage base to support fast growing northern pike populations. Over the years, many lakes have experienced northern pike populations which are high density, slow growing, and allow virtually no harvest because very few fish the minimum length limit. There have been numerous requests from other lakes in Waushara and Marquette Counties to remove the size limit on northern pike as well. We have been successful in implementing this change on a couple of lakes over the years.

This proposal would allow the harvest of smaller (<26") pike, allowing the available pike to be utilized, increasing harvest opportunities in these counties while potentially reducing density and improving growth rates and size structure of the remaining pike population. The data for the lakes included in this proposal show they are more suited for an action/consumptive regulation than the 26" quality regulation. The main evidence is the small mean lengths (Lake Morris = 19.2"; Big Hills Lake = 15.0"; Pine Lake = 15.6"). The densities of northern pike are variable with most waterbodies being moderate densities (1.8-3.1 fish/net night). Growth on these systems are all slower than the Southern Zone average growth and some such as Big Hills has substantially slower growth. Age-4 mean size for these water bodies are 17.6 for Lake Morris, 14.8 for Big Hills Lake, and 17.0 for Pine Lake.

QUESTION 10: Northern Pike protected slot limit – Parker Lake, Adams County

- Four fyke nets were set on 04/07/2019 and removed on 04/12/2019 for a total of 16 net nights and 120 pike were caught. CPUE ranged from 5.75-9.75/net night with an average of 7.5/net-night. Based on lake class, CPE is above the 3rd Quartile (3.4/net-night).
- Body condition, indexed by relative weight, ranged from poor to excellent with an average of poor/fair.
- Body condition measures indicated that some fish are getting plumper with length.
- Growth indexed using mean length at age-4 was 16.8," which is below the southern zone and statewide mean length at age-4 values (21.6" and 20.4").
- Northern pike length frequency distribution is positively skewed. Pike ranged in length from 12.3" to 36.0" with an average length of 17.5". Size structure indexed by PSD reflects the positive skewness of the length frequency distribution: PSD = 7; RSDQ=2 and RSDM=1
- Since 2016, The Parker Lake Association collected voluntary creel information from anglers. The length frequency distribution for pike that were caught and released by these anglers is like the length frequency distribution from the fyke-net.

QUESTION 11-12: Northern pike standard regulations – Portage County waters

In 2019 WCC Spring hearings, an advisory question (500418) about Portage County general northern pike regulations (county-wide) reverting to the statewide regulations overwhelmingly passed 4847-760.

Reverting to the statewide northern pike harvest regulation would simplify enforcement, reduce confusion among anglers and provide consistency with adjoining counties the currently follow the statewide general harvest regulations. Additionally, reverting to the statewide general northern pike regulations will allow for more diverse harvest opportunities for Portage County stakeholders.

Except for the Wisconsin River System and a few other special systems (riverine impoundments, two-story lakes), few Portage County waterbodies support northern pike populations exhibiting large size-

structure. Approximately, 85% of Portage County lakes are small, relatively shallow systems with simple fish communities (few species; <2 top carnivores). Additionally, 44% of Portage County lakes have history histories of winterkill and this could be underestimated due to non-reporting. Based on northern pike maximum size standards for lakes with winterkills and simple fish communities, 73% of Portage County lakes only have the capacity to reach maximum total lengths of 20.6" - 25.7". Thus, only 27% of Portage County waterbodies have the growth potential to consistently produce legal-size fish for potential harvest opportunities.

There are several waterbodies north of HWY 10 that should not implement the statewide 5-daily bag, no MLL. These exceptions include waters currently with special northern pike harvest regulations, including the Wisconsin River (WBIC 1179900) downstream of the Du Bay Dam, and Lake Jaqueline (WBIC 987100). There also are lakes exhibiting exceptional size structure and growth that should maintain the current regulation (2 fish daily bag limit and 26" MLL), including Jordan Pond (WBIC 1403600; PSD-21 = 40), and Collins Lake (WBIC 1412200; PSD-21 = 64).

QUESTION 13: Panfish protection – Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, Marathon County; Big Round Lake, Polk County; Cranberry Lake, Price County; Lake Chippewa, Sawyer County; Huron Lake, Waushara County

The proposed regulation is a daily bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate. The current regulation is a daily bag limit of 25 panfish in aggregate.

Big Eau Pleine Reservoir: In 2019, a proposed Citizen Resolution (370519) passed (46-8) to reduce panfish bag limits in the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. Local stakeholders were concerned about the amount of black crappie and yellow perch exploitation that was occurring in the reservoir and how that was diminishing the quality angling opportunities and the duration of the fishery throughout the year.

The first measurable indication of high panfish exploitation in the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir happened in a 2003 creel survey, which showed that targeted fishing effort for panfish makes up over 50% of the total fishing effort. Compared to all fish surveyed, black crappie and yellow perch harvest make up 68% of total fish harvest with black crappie making up the bulk of the harvest. The annual mortality of entire adult population is between 32-49%, based on catch curves. Additionally, there are four missing year classes between age-4 and age-12. This means that recruitment is sporadic year-to-year and may only successfully recruit to the population every 1-4 years in the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, which might impact the duration of the quality fishing opportunities. Typically, a reservoir crappie population able to support long-term sustainable levels of harvest will likely have more than one strong year class distributed amongst the age-classes, and gradually deplete over time if fish have average or better growth. Fortunately, growth of black crappie is average for ages 3-12, so reducing the bag limit may allow for reduction in harvest mortality, so more fish can grow and survive in multiple strong year classes in the the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir.

Big Round Lake: This proposal was initiated as a local resolution (490119) from 2019 that passed overwhelmingly and was also well supported as a WCC advisory question in 2020. Big Round Lake is one of the most popular lakes in Polk County for quality-sized panfish, especially bluegills. Big Round Lake bluegills typically face high angler harvest. Fishing pressure and harvest rates have been so great the panfish fishery has been described as one that is "pulse-fished" where there will be several good years of bluegill fishing and high angler harvest followed by several years of less desirable fishing and low angler use. During the most recent creel survey (2012), it was estimated that anglers harvested 57

bluegills/ac and their average length was 8.3 in, statistics few WI lakes can achieve or sustain. The two most recent SEII surveys (2012 and 2018) documented respectable bluegill populations, with good catches of fish over 8 in, but few bluegills over 9 in. A 10 panfish bag limit should help spread out harvest and improve the year-to-year consistency of the Big Round Lake bluegill fishery and improve the bluegill size structure. The mean length at age for Big Round Lake bluegills has typically met or exceeded both the Northern WI and Barron and Polk county averages. Since the Big Round Lake bluegill population has good growth rates and high angler harvest, this regulation is likely to help improve size structure, as documented in other productive waterbodies.

Cranberry Lake: Since 2004, citizens have voiced their concerns several times that fishing pressure and harvest above what is locally usual could jeopardize the high-quality angling opportunity that Cranberry Lake offers for black crappies, bluegills, and yellow perch. Although angling effort, catch, and harvest have not been quantified, the local Conservation Warden, a local fishing guide, a former WCC delegate, the single lakeside resident, and many anglers have reported high levels of angling use in both summer and winter and crowded roadside parking that far exceeds the designated spaces. Current fishing regulations allow anglers to keep 25 panfish of any size or species in total, and by nature anglers tend to selectively keep the largest panfish they catch. Though faster-than-average growth continues to produce higher-than-average proportions of preferred- and memorable-size panfish, anglers' perceptions, fears, and perhaps recognition of their own behavior gave rise to public concern about the future of this popular fishery. This proposal to restrict panfish harvest, using the aggregate daily bag limit of 10 panfish from the fishing regulations toolbox, aims not to correct a problem or to make fishing noticeably better. Instead, this rule change would serve to answer the public's call to proactively protect the exceptional angling opportunity they enjoy now against the potential consequences of heavy use that they observe at Cranberry Lake.

Lake Chippewa: Panfish have always been popular on the Chippewa Flowage and can contribute to a higher proportion of directed effort than other targeted species, but are rarely in the spotlight like muskellunge or walleye. Historically, crappie were the featured panfish species in the Chippewa Flowage, likely because they were most resilient panfish to the extreme winter drawdowns (often >10') that were common up through the 1990s. Bluegill and largemouth bass have become more abundant under the less extreme drawdown regime of the last two decades.

Ice fishing has been a contentious issue for all species on the Chippewa Flowage, particularly for crappie which anglers perceive to be very vulnerable to winter angling when water levels are lowered, leading to an ice fishing season closure and a bag limit of 15 crappies in 1998. In 2011, ice fishing for crappies was reopened and the general statewide limit of 25 aggregate panfish was reinstated the same year. While the drawdowns have been successful in restoring modest walleye recruitment and achieving other resource management goals, there are indications they are taking a toll on panfish abundance, particularly for bluegill (bluegill CPE from SE2s dropped 60% after the first two drawdowns and has remained at around 75/mile in most surveys since). Additionally, there is concern among the public that panfish are being overharvested, including considerable angst about ice fishing. This public concern led to the initiation of a WCC citizen resolution for a reduced panfish bag limit.

Huron Lake: Largemouth densities have been high since the first survey back in 2004. A proposal was introduced, approved and successfully applied to remove the size limit for largemouth in 2019. The goal is to reduce largemouth bass densities and improve size structure of the bass population. Often along

with this change, bluegill bag limit reductions are proposed to help protect their populations. Bluegill abundance has decreased 60% since the last survey in 2010, most likely due to harvest and predation by an over abundant largemouth bass population. Size structure has also declined. Our goal is to improve CPE of fish >3" to above 300 and improve PSD levels to >50%. Huron Lake is a small pothole lake, similar to many lakes in the area, that has little near shore habitat and is vulnerable to overharvest of panfish. The 14" minimum size limit for Largemouth bass was removed in 2019 and a bag limit reduction for bluegill to 10 will help to further protect the bluegill population. This proposal was put forth as a WCC Citizen Resolution in 2018, passed and was introduced as an Advisory Question in 2019, where it also passed. There is strong local support for this proposal.

QUESTION 14: Muskellunge trophy management – Namekagon River, Washburn and Burnett counties; Presque Isle Chain of Lakes, Vilas County

The proposed regulation is a 50-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of one fish. The current regulation is a minimum length limit of 40 inches and daily bag limit of one.

Namekagon River: The current regulation allows the harvest of 40" fish. This regulation will further preserve the larger fish in the system and promote preservation of adult muskellunge in the river. This regulation also would simplify regulations for anglers with the connecting St Croix River, which already has a 50" minimum. Now anglers would have one regulation on the float from Namekagon Trail (Namekagon River) to Riverside Landing (St Croix River).

Presque Isle Chain: Muskellunge anglers have expressed interest in increasing the number of trophy potential waters in Vilas County. Attitudes about muskellunge fishing have changed through time and currently anglers prefer to go to waters with potential to catch big muskellunge rather than waters with potential to catch many muskellunge (Isermann et. al 2011). Additionally, many anglers support catch and release, very few anglers harvest muskellunge they catch and the majority that do keep fish keep muskellunge > 50" for mounting rather than consumption. The 50" minimum is in the fisheries regulation toolbox and is intended to increase the density of large muskellunge.

QUESTION 15: Muskellunge size limit—Butternut Lake, Ashland and Price counties

The special 28-inch minimum length limit is no longer necessary to achieve our objectives, and there is no longer reason to continue promoting selective harvest of medium-size fish as a strategy to decrease musky abundance. Twenty years after DNR suspended musky stocking into 1,006-acre Butternut Lake, population density (estimated at 0.21 adults/acre in 2018) is once again within the desired range of 0.2–0.3 adults per acre. High musky density and intense food competition were blamed as the suspected causes for the declining musky size structure noticed in the mid- and late-1990s. Now back at moderate abundance, all measures of musky size structure have rebounded, and the population has attained our goal that 25–50% should be 38 inches or longer. Their growth rate outpaced the regional average for both sexes combined by 0.8–1.9" at ages 6–8.

Discontinued stocking (formerly often at 1 or 2 large fingerlings/acre annually) likely contributed substantially more to the successful reduction in musky population abundance than angler harvest and the physical removal of 156 juveniles and adults in 2007. Under the current 28" minimum size limit 95% of the adult population is vulnerable to angling harvest versus 24% under the proposed 40" limit. Natural reproduction is now the sole source of new recruits to replace the adults that die to angling and

natural causes. Fish populations that can sustain themselves without intervention generally provide better angling opportunity than those that rely on stocking. This proposal will help to maintain Butternut Lake's musky population with better-than-average growth at the desired density and size distribution. The 40" minimum length limit will substantially increase protection of mature fish and assure a reliable source of naturally-produced recruits, so that we do not need to resume stocking to provide the fishery that stakeholders helped define in the [2005 Butternut Lake Fishery Management Plan](#).

QUESTION 16: Trout length and bag limit change--Mill Creek and Willow Creek, Richland County

Mill creek has very high natural recruitment of brown trout. Recruitment in Mill Creek (English Hollow Rd) as measured by yearling 4-8" trout CPUE averaged 601/mile for 2014-2019; this exceeds the 90th percentile (577/mile) when compared to class one streams in the driftless area from 2007-2014. The trend site located along Hwy E also has high recruitment measuring 228/mile from 2009-2019; this exceeds the 50th percentile when compared to class one streams in the driftless area from 2007-2014. High density of adult trout has created a dense population of fish in the 8-12-inch range. These high densities reduce growth potential and do not allow fish to reach larger size classes that are needed to provide quality-size fish potential. Allowing harvest of fish <12 inches along this stretch should reduce densities of young adults and increase growth potential, thereby increasing size structure.

Natural reproduction is high Willow Creek and its tributaries. Recruitment in Willow Creek as measured by yearling 4-8" trout CPUE averaged 550/mile for 2009-2019, this approaches the 90th percentile (577/mile) when compared to class one streams in the driftless area from 2007-2014. High natural reproduction, along with good recruitment to age 1 and above has created a dense population of fish in the 8-12 inch range. These high densities reduce growth potential and do not allow fish to reach larger size classes that are needed to provide quality fish potential. Allowing harvest of fish <12 inches along this stretch should reduce densities of adults and increase growth potential.

QUESTION 17: Brook Trout Management – Little Wolf River and connected creeks, Marathon, Portage, Shawano and Waupaca counties

The streams within the Little Wolf River watershed support some high-quality brook trout fisheries with both good numbers of brook trout as well as the opportunity to catch some large brook trout. The management goal for these streams is to maintain the high-quality brook trout populations and fisheries they support. The current red regulation with a 12-in minimum for brown trout is potentially giving brown trout a competitive advantage over brook trout in high-quality brook trout habitat by limiting angler harvest to only very large brown trout. Recent surveys in these streams have shown that brook trout are found in much higher abundance than brown trout, but that brown trout are moving into streams where they were previously not captured (e.g., Jackson and Bradley creeks) and brown trout numbers are increasing in habitats that tend to be suitable for brown trout (i.e., deeper pooling habitats with abundant bank cover). It is widely known in the upper Midwest that in some streams, non-native brown trout can outcompete and displace native brook trout when brown trout numbers get high enough. If brown trout numbers continue to increase, brown trout may outcompete brook trout in these streams in the future. A reduced minimum length limit for brown trout will allow anglers to help keep brown trout numbers lower in these streams. Additionally, the current red regulation (12-inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag for brown trout) to promote large brown trout appears to be unachievable in many segments and tributaries Little Wolf River. That alone suggests that the current

regulation ineffective at achieving realistic results. Shifting to yellow regulations in this system is the most logical management strategy.

QUESTION 18: Trout early catch-and-release season--Popple River, Forest and Florence counties; Plover River, Marathon and Langlade counties; and Waupaca/Tomorrow River, Portage and Waupaca counties

Waupaca/Tomorrow River: Currently, a short, 2.85-mile long segment of the Waupaca/Tomorrow River is closed during the early catch and release season to protect brown trout spawning habitat. However, 50 counties in Wisconsin have all inland streams open during the early catch and release season, and no significant declines in trout recruitment have been regularly documented. The early catch-and-release season has been implemented since 2014 in the segment of water upstream of this stretch, and trend brown trout abundance information provides no indication of recruitment impacts in this segment. Besides the positive brown trout abundance outlook in this upstream segment, other trout spawning locations are known to exist in both the Waupaca/Tomorrow River as well as in tributary streams such as Spring Creek and Bear Creek, so we believe that opening this short segment up will not have an adverse impact on brown trout recruitment while at the same time increase fishing opportunities and simplifying the regulations by applying the early season on the entire stream from STH 54 to the Amherst Dam.

Plover River: There are few early season trout fishing opportunities in Marathon County and a limited number of early season opportunities in central Wisconsin. Central Wisconsin trout anglers are seeking new opportunities for catch-and-release fishing beyond the few early season opportunities available in Portage, Marathon, Shawano, and Waupaca counties. The Plover River has a healthy brook and brown trout population and is annually monitored, making it a perfect candidate population for early season catch-and-release trout fishing. We anticipate that the early catch-and-release trout season will have little to no impact on trout populations in the Plover River. The early catch and release trout season has been established in all trout streams within 50 counties in Wisconsin since 2014. After 5 years of implementation, there has been little to no indication of any significant trout recruitment impacts due to the early season.

Popple River: Currently the Popple River is not open for the early catch-and-release season, even though biologically the Popple River is very similar to the other three main rivers in the area that allow early catch-and-release fishing. By adding the Popple River to the streams open for the early season, we will clean up the regulations from a biological standpoint and allow anglers to fish the Popple River early as well as the other rivers. Recently there has been interest from trout anglers to open the Popple River, and we have no rationale not to open it for the early season. The Popple River does get annual stocking events, and the early season would allow for some extra fishing opportunity to catch and release these fish prior to opening day.

QUESTION 19: Trout – Removal of late catch-and-release season on the Popple, Peshtigo and Rat rivers in Florence, Forest and Marinette counties

The current special regulations have spurred many questions from anglers that are confused by the late catch and release season, and they are under the impression that it is catch and release year-round. A few years ago, we extended the harvest season to an end date of October 15th (use to be the end of September). There doesn't seem to be enough angling pressure on these northern rivers to justify

maintaining the special regulation, and there are also some concerns about how the late catch and release season may impact spawning migrations of brook trout. I believe that the early season gets more fishing effort than the late season and these rivers would be best managed with the early catch-and-release season as opposed to the late catch-and-release season.

QUESTION 20: Trout bag limit increase and size limit removal – North Branch Pemebonwon River, Wausaukee River, South Branch Pike River in Florence and Marinette counties

Through the 2015 fishing season, the trout fishing regulations on these 3 streams was a 5 bag with a 7” minimum length limit. Beginning in 2016, the fishing regulation was changed to a 3 bag and an 8” minimum length limit. After an extensive evaluation of the trout stocking quotas, sampling data and available trout fishing opportunities, we believe increasing the bag limit and removing the minimum length limit on these streams, which are stocked annually with yearling trout, is appropriate in order to increase harvest of stocked trout and increase the diversity of local trout fishing opportunities.

QUESTION 21: Apply consistent regulations to Schoolhouse and Durphee lakes, Sawyer County

The main issue is enforcement and consistency. Wardens are struggling with having a lake in the chain (Durphee) with much more restrictive limits than the other (Schoolhouse). Similarly, it could be beneficial to the experiments in place on Durphee to have the same regs on a waterbody that is connected and receiving angler pressure. This proposal effectively aims to manage these lakes as one system (perhaps called the “Durphee/Schoolhouse chain”). See map:



Yellow arrow shows connection between the two lakes.

QUESTION 22: Urban Fishing Pond – Pipke Park pond, Vilas County

There are currently no urban or community fishing waters located in Vilas County. Since the transfer of the pond to the town of Presque Isle, the town has created a very nice park around the pond with amenities including: hiking trails, fishing pier, benches, fitness equipment stations, disabled access and

Wilderness Veterans Memorial. The town has expressed interest in making this a community fishing pond and passed a resolution in favor of this.

QUESTION 23: Allowing the incidental harvest of carp on the Winnebago system by people who possess sturgeon tags and are otherwise legally participating in the sturgeon spearing season

- This question would not open the rough fish season, which is currently closed during the sturgeon spearing season; it would only allow carp to be incidentally harvested while a person is otherwise legally engaged in sturgeon spearing.
- The spearer would have to have a valid, unfilled sturgeon carcass tag for the incidental harvest of carp to be legal under this question.
- Spearers should still take measures to be sure of their target while spearing.
- This question was added to the Fisheries Management Spring Hearings question list by direction of the Secretary's Office and approval of the Natural Resources Board.

QUESTION 24 (ADVISORY): Lake Michigan Lake Trout Regulation Extension

The proposed regulation would maintain a daily bag limit of 5 in total for trout and salmon, including lake trout, on waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay and their tributaries, including Green Bay rivers and streams up to the first dam or lake. The proposal would also maintain a continuous open season for lake trout on Lake Michigan, Green Bay and major tributaries. The minimum length limit of 10 inches would remain the same. Sport fishing data indicate that lake trout harvest has been comfortably below harvest limits each year since the continuous season and daily bag limit of 5 were implemented.

- The NRB approved an increase in the Lake Michigan lake trout bag limit in July 2018. Prior to the increase, a total of two lake trout could be harvested as part of a total salmon/trout bag limit of 5 fish. The rule also created a year-long open season for lake trout. The previous rule only allowed harvest from March 1-October 31.
 - a. The NRB amended the rule to include a sunset clause (January 2021) to ensure that data was collected to assess the new rule to determine whether there were any impacts.
 - b. The DNR committed to annually evaluate sport catch of lake trout and revisit the rule if the following occurred (none of these have occurred):
 - i. 75% of quota (61,500): 3 bag will be assessed for the following season
 - ii. 90% of quota (73,800): 2 bag will be assessed for the following season
 - iii. If harvest has exceeded 75% of the current safe allowable harvest; and 2) more than half of the targets of the Lake Michigan Lake Trout Working group for Wisconsin waters are not met in a season, then the department will present a report to the Natural Resources Board describing options to sustainably manage lake trout, including rulemaking alternatives.
- Rationale for pursuing an emergency rule to extend the Lake Michigan lake trout regulations
 - The lake trout regulations reverted to the previous regulations on January 1, 2021.
 - Existing sport angler harvest information does not show any negative impacts of the 5-fish bag limit and continuous season regulations.
 - A permanent rule was not pursued in 2019 (with a 2020 effective date) because we didn't believe we had enough information to support a rule package considering NRB

requests relating to the original rule, as outlined above. However, we were able to gather some information in 2019-2020, which supports continuation of the five fish, year-round season.

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Questions

GREAT LAKES COMMITTEE

QUESTION 36: Great Lakes Trout and Salmon Stamp Fee Increase to Fund Cold Water Fish Hatcheries and Rearing Stations (160420) (Requires legislation)

This question has been asked in the past, but because it requires legislation, the DNR cannot directly increase the stamp fees. Per s. 20.37 (1) (ku), Stats., the Great Lakes trout and salmon stamp fees are used for trout and salmon rearing and stocking on outlying waters, administering the stamp program, and for certain sea lamprey control projects.

WARM WATER COMMITTEE

QUESTION 39: Allow unused Upriver Lakes sturgeon spearing carcass tag to be used on Lake Winnebago after the Upriver Lakes spearing season has closed.

The team and district fisheries supervisors and sturgeon biologist did discuss this issue and are neutral on the issue. This resolution would impact a relatively small percentage of spearers, and staff would be able to register the fish and have that harvest count against the appropriate harvest caps as long as the carcass tag is clear on what waterbodies can be fished.

The Winnebago Citizen Sturgeon Advisory Committee reviewed this question and noted that spearers are already aware of the potential early season closure on the Upriver Lakes, and the current tagging system works.

QUESTION 40. 50" Minimum Length Limit for Muskellunge in Waukesha County

Local biologist supports this proposal. Waukesha County has shown tremendous potential for muskellunge anglers due to an intensive stocking program. Both state and private sources of unspecified strains have been combined to create both trophy and action opportunities. Pewaukee Lake is our largest inland muskellunge water at 2,500 acres. Nestled in the heart of the southeast region, Pewaukee receives very high local fishing pressure as well as transient anglers. Pewaukee Lake stocking efforts provide additional angling opportunities downstream in the connected Pewaukee River and Illinois-Fox Rivers. The Illinois Fox River travels over 200 miles south before emptying into the Illinois River. Adult muskellunge migrate downstream occupying deep stretches throughout Racine and Kenosha Counties as well as Tichigan Lake. The Oconomowoc River feeds North, Okauchee, Oconomowoc, Fowler and Lac Labelle Lakes. Combined acreage of the Oconomowoc River chain of lakes covers 3,694 acres and 32 river miles before emptying into the Rock River. This regulation change proposal should consider water boundaries that are enforceable. Law enforcement has yet to be consulted on this proposal and public input needs to be collected to further gauge public support. The

high fertility of both the Oconomowoc and Illinois-Fox watersheds results in exceptional muskellunge growth rates. Okauchee and Oconomowoc Lakes have above average cisco populations also contributing to excellent growth. Further considerations may include expanding the counties to include Racine and Kenosha counties.

QUESTION 41: Stop fishing guides from gifting fish to paying clients

Section 29.539, Wis. Stats., states that no person may sell, purchase, barter, or trade, or offer to sell, purchase, barter, or trade or have in possession or under control for the purpose of sale, barter, or trade any game fish. This statute prohibits a licensed fishing guide from providing to a client fish caught by the guide during a guided trip in exchange for any compensation or reward. Whether a guide is permitted to gift the guide’s catch to the client without compensation or reward depends on a number of circumstances. Guides may not gift their catch to a client while on the water, as doing so places the client in violation of daily bag limits. However, guides may gift their catch to a client off the water without placing the client in violation of daily bag limits, provided the total number of fish possessed by the client is within the lawful possession limits for each species of fish.

Enforcement of s. 29.539, Wis. Stats., can difficult because it depends on the specific arrangements made between the guide and the client regarding the services to be provided by the guide and type of compensation, if any, that will be offered by the client, as well as the location where the exchange of fish occurs. In addition, guides often fish the same bodies of water repeatedly, sometimes taking out multiple clients per day. A guide who continually gifts the guide’s catch to the client may in effect catch the daily bag limit for a body of water more than once in the same day while evading enforcement (though exceeding the daily bag limit for the same water that same day is not legal).

TROUT COMMITTEE

QUESTION 57: Catch and release of brook trout on Nichols Creek (600220)

There might be justification for this proposal. It would be enhanced as part of a larger effort to remove brown trout, though the success of those efforts in other waters is uncertain. The proposed regulation is in the regulation toolbox to increase harvest of brown trout but protect brook trout.