

Citizen Resolution # 610121

(For Hearing Officer completion)



Changing the state wide muskellunge size limit from 40 inches to include a slot size to better promote both harvest potential and trophy potential.

In 2012 the state size limit on muskellunge was increased from 34 to 40 inches. The average male musky seldom reaches 40 inches based average growth rate published by the DNR. This size limit favors the harvest of mature females capable of reproducing and fish near what many would classify as a “trophy muskellunge” (50 inches or larger).

According to the DNR, Wisconsin Muskellunge Waters by Tim Simonson, “The combination of effective regulations and voluntary catch-and-release of large muskellunge is the best way to realize the full potential of our waters to produce trophy muskellunge.” The 40 inch limit restricts fishermen who target muskellunge as table fare to harvest fish that have accumulated mercury and PCBs for approximately 9 years, based on average muskullunge growth rates published by WDNR. Since the size limit on muskies was increased in 2012, walleye and panfish regulations have become more restrictive on many bodies of water; walleyes are now commonly managed with slot sizes.

It makes sense to apply this tactic to our muskellunge fishery as well; a restrictive slot limit could better balance the harvest of male muskies while protecting both the mature female population capable of reproducing and fish on the cusp of trophy status. This would provide opportunities for those anglers wanting to keep a musky, they could then keep a 47 inch fish as table fare or a 32 inch fish that would likely be healthier and tastier to eat with less potential or no potential to become a trophy.

Be it Resolved, On April 12th, 2021 that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting, would you support the Wisconsin Conservation Congress work with the DNR to support replacing the limit on muskellunge from the current one fish over 40 inches to a slot limit of one fish from 30 inches to 36 inches OR one fish over 50 inches (Leaving the lakes with special regulations the way they are)?

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