

COMING  
IN 2019!

# Fish On...Wisconsin! It's catching.

Two of the most anticipated words in fishing become the foundation of an initiative

## THE WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT

Spring 2019

An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management program

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



### 2019 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout  
January 5 (5 a.m.) to May 3

General Hook and Line Inland  
May 4 to March 1, 2020

General Inland Trout  
May 4 (5 a.m.) to Oct. 15

Largemouth Bass  
Northern Zone Harvest  
May 4 to March 1, 2020

Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone Catch-and-Release  
May 4 to June 14

Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone Harvest  
June 15 to March 1, 2020

Large and Smallmouth Bass  
Southern Zone  
May 4 to March 1, 2020

Musky – Northern Zone  
May 25 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone  
May 4 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike  
May 4 to March 1, 2020

Walleye  
May 4 to March 1, 2020

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)  
Sept. 7 to Sept. 30

Free Fishing Weekend  
June 1 - 2, 2019 summer  
January 18 - 19, 2020 winter



### Dear WISCONSIN ANGLER

Welcome to the 2019 Wisconsin Fishing Report. Please spend a few minutes and review this publication. You'll learn how the men and women in the fisheries program take pride in making your fishing better. The fabulous fisheries projects highlight many of the interesting and lesser known projects that our staff work on and many of these are in partnerships with external groups that are instrumental in completing this critical work around the State.

In 2019, the fisheries program will be focusing on enhanced communications to you, our stakeholders. Social media has become an important tool in distributing our messages. You can tune in to Facebook and watch our staff in real time as they work and you can learn more about the resources you use. You can follow our tweets to get up to date information on events and activities. We'll also be adding some podcast materials.

Finally we will be embarking on a new *Fish On...Wisconsin!* initiative that has been developed to build participation in the sport by engaging new and existing anglers and to increase public awareness of the fisheries program and available fishing opportunities. Look for it!

Good luck with your 2019 fishing!

*Justin Hg*  
Director,  
Bureau of Fisheries Management

### Catch and Release... Responsibly

*Catch and release has become popular with many anglers, but it only works if the fish is around for the next hook set.*

Catch-and-release fishing has been an important part of recreational fishing for quite some time, and the practice continues to increase in popularity with many state anglers. As anglers have come to value many fish species more for their sporting qualities than as table fare - including trout, bass and muskellunge - catch-and-release fishing has grown immensely.

There are waters that are managed with catch and release regulations to improve the fishery, but, for the most part, fisheries programs don't actively promote catch and release fishing. They leave that decision to the angler. Of course, there are occasions - such as during a closed season or with fish that do not meet the minimum length required - the release decision is made for them.

Fish responsibly. Alter your method or your gear to minimize hooking mortality. That may mean going to different hook or setting the hook a little sooner. Apply deeply hooked fish to your bag limit and release the fish that have a good survivable hookup.

In some cases, if fish are badly hooked (for instance, in the gills) or are obviously stressed, you may not be able to successfully release them. However, every attempt should be made for a positive release.

Please follow these guidelines to improve the health of your released fish:

- 1 Fishing Conditions: Please consider**  
The stress extreme water temperatures have on fish if you plan on releasing your catch.
- 2 Reeling in the Fish**  
Fish should be retrieved as quickly as possible.
- 3 Handling the Fish**  
Keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Use wet hands or wet gloves to handle the fish.
- 4 Unhooking the Fish**  
If the fish is deeply hooked, cut the line and release the fish.
- 5 Reviving the Fish**  
Gently rock the fish from side to side until it can maintain its balance. When the fish begins to struggle, let it swim away.

Following the above guidelines will help improve the fish's chance of survival after release and allow another angler to enjoy the thrill of catching a quality Wisconsin fish.

For more information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "responsible release"



[https://www.instagram.com/wi\\_dnr/](https://www.instagram.com/wi_dnr/)

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



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



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



Follow us on Twitter. <https://twitter.com/DNR>

# Fabulous Fisheries Projects

## Evaluation of the Oconomowoc River electrical barrier using acoustic telemetry

Electrical fish barriers have been proven effective in reducing the spread of invasive species including Silver and Bighead carp. Acoustic telemetry technology enables fisheries researchers to track migration of individually numbered fish. In June of 2018, 17 common carp were collected, implanted with ultrasonic acoustic transmitters and released back into the Oconomowoc River. Acoustic receivers were strategically placed in the Oconomowoc River upstream of the confluence of the Rock River. The goal of the study is to determine the effectiveness of the DNR electrical fish barrier located on Northside Drive in the Ixonia Township. Objectives include preventing the upstream migration of common carp in spring and promoting downstream migration in fall. Common carp are a highly



Researchers implant an acoustic transmitter into an adult common carp. Photo: Mark Baldock, fisheries technician, Horicon.

invasive, non-native fish species that is detrimental to water quality, native aquatic plants and native fish species. This project is a cooperative partnership with the DNR, the Lac La Belle Lake Management District and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Cooperative Fisheries Unit. The electrical barrier has been maintained and operated by the DNR fisheries staff for over 30 years. Annual survey data indicates a long term downward trend in common carp abundance in Lac La Belle. Contact Information; Benjamin Heussner, benjamin.heussner@wisconsin.gov (414) 303-0109

## Lake Superior nearshore fishery evaluation

The Lake Superior fisheries team gained a new project biologist to aid ongoing projects and begin leading monitoring and research efforts of the nearshore, cool-water fishery of Lake Superior. Specifically, we will be collecting information on walleye, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, northern pike, and brown trout. This project is largely focused around the Chequamegon Bay area, and during 2018 sampling efforts, we tagged over 2,200 fish of these species and intend to tag even more in 2019. We ask anglers fishing the Chequamegon Bay area to be on the lookout for tags, record the tag color and code, and report it to staff at the Bayfield office. This information is extremely valuable to us and will be instrumental in developing and carrying out our new Lake Superior Fisheries Management Plan. = Dray Carl, fisheries biologist - Bayfield

## Sand Creek trout habitat improvement project

Phase II of the Sand Creek trout habitat improvement project was completed upstream of the town of Sand Creek in the summer of 2018. Sand Creek is a coldwater stream that originates in Chippewa County flows west into Dunn County prior to emptying into the Red Cedar River 9.5 miles later. Phase II, led by Trout Habitat Specialist, Nate Anderson, consisted of two, 1000-ft sections of bank stabilization with the addition of trout habitat to the stream such root wads, plunge pools, boulder clusters and riffles. This project connects with a project done in the 1980s making for 4,700 ft of continuous trout habitat improvement work. An-



Nate Anderson places a LUNKER structure on an outside bend in Sand Creek which will provide overhead cover for trout.

glers can access the stream at a parking lot off 1342nd Ave. and fish along the 4,700 ft of continuous easement that provides fishing access to the public. Sand Creek is well known locally for the potential to produce trophy brown trout and has some of the best inland size structure in the state for brown trout. Joseph Gerbyshak - fisheries biologist, Eau Claire

## Woody habitat and shoreline fishing improved on Lake Winnebago

DNR fisheries staff recently completed a fish sticks project to improve woody habitat and increase shoreline fishing opportunities at Asylum Bay on Lake Winnebago. The project included constructing 15 fish stick complexes along Asylum Bay Point Park. The park is one of the most heavily used shoreline fishing areas and provides some of the best shoreline angling opportunities around Lake Winnebago. The DNR and Winnebago County have maintained a cooperative agreement to ensure that the property is open to the public and provides adequate access to Lake Winnebago. The fish sticks project should provide valuable spawning habitat and refuge for various fish species, particularly largemouth bass and panfish. Wood will also serve as habitat for a variety of wildlife species such turtles, waterfowl, and herons that use exposed logs for feeding, sunning, and resting areas. Therefore, this fish sticks project will provide better fish and wildlife habitat, increase educational awareness for habitat projects, and create better fishing opportunities for anglers of all age classes. The project was funded by the Lower Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Damage Assessment Program - Adam Nickel, fisheries biologist, Oshkosh



Habitat crew anchoring down a fish stick complex. Inset, completed fish stick complex.

## Put and take trout stocking creel project

In the Spring of 2018, ten streams where the DNR stocks catchable-sized rainbow trout were evaluated for angler participation, catch and harvest.

Catchable-sized trout are stocked in some streams that are unable to support trout populations throughout the year because they get too warm in the summer, and in some streams to increase the trout abundance for opening day. We wanted to measure the amount of angler use of these stocked fish and answer the question does catchable sized trout stocking increase the chance of having a successful fishing trip. We conducted angler creel



Fishing waters stocked with catchable-sized trout can increase your catch rate by over 4 times more than an average trout stream.

surveys on 1 stream in Rock County, 4 streams in Green County and 5 streams in Columbia County. We made counts of anglers and vehicles in parking lots and then interviewed people fishing to see what they caught. For all of the streams combined we measured opening weekend effort at 5 angler hours/mile of stream per day. That is relatively low compared to opening day efforts on some of our more famous trout streams but is about average for

the rest of the season. The catch rate, on the other hand, was very high. We estimated from our angler interviews that the total catch rate was 1.25 trout per hour. These streams had very high catch rates when compared to 16 oth-

er creel surveys that were conducted in Wisconsin from 1965-2015 where the average catch rate was 0.3 trout per hour for opening weekend. So, if you want an opening weekend trout fishing spot that is not too crowded, and your chances of catching trout are 4 times better than the average stream, consider a stream stocked with catchable-sized trout! A list of these streams is published on the DNR website <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/trout/catchabletrout.html>.

## Musky tagging project provides a better understanding of fish behavior

Hayward is known for big muskies, so it's appropriate that they are the focus of several research projects in the area. Over 24,000 muskellunge have been implanted with small microchip tags called PIT tags (these are the same tags used to track lost pets). DNR



An angler fishing with a guide on a Sawyer County lake shows off his catch. This musky, along with thousands of others, was tagged so information can be collected on it in the future. Guides and anglers have teamed up with the DNR to increase numbers of tagged fish and tag return data.

crews have been using these tags for decades, but in recent years anglers and guides in the Hayward area had a chance to be involved as well. Muskies Inc. members, guides, and other anglers were given scanners to check for tags in muskies they captured while angling. To date, those anglers have been responsible for 10% of the over 900 captures of tagged muskellunge in Hayward area lakes. Starting in 2018, several guides were also permitted to start tagging fish they caught with their clients. Guides tagged enough muskies last year to supplement DNR tagging efforts by 48%. Already, the project has yielded interesting information on fish movement, growth, and catch and release effects. For example, one guide caught the same fish twice in the span of three days with different clients. That stands as testimony that proper handling of musky can make the experience of being caught easy on the fish since it started feeding again almost immediately. It's also a nice reminder that catch and release provides oppor-



Fisheries technician Mara Duke with one of several Chinook Salmon captured and released in Fall of 2018 immediately downstream of the failing South Shore Grade crossing on Nebagamogon Creek. Photo: Paul Piszczek



tunities for the next angler Continuing to partner with Muskies Inc. and anglers to tag more muskies will inevitably lead to more interesting results and a better management of our state fish.

### South Shore grade culvert removal

The DNR has partnered with local groups and agencies to pursue removal of the 45-foot high South Shore Railroad grade over Nebagamon Creek, a classified trout stream and major tributary to the Bois Brule River. Due to declining demand for rail service to the area, this rail line was abandoned and stopped receiving maintenance, leading to deterioration of the concrete culvert and earthen embankment of the



Fisheries technician Brandon Wambach holds two smallmouth bass that were tagged for the study.

crossing. Failure of the downstream wing-walls has created a pile of concrete debris in the culvert outlet that blocks upstream fish migration and could potentially lead to a catastrophic failure of the embankment that would compromise downstream habitat in Nebagamon Creek and the Brule River. - Aaron Nelson, fisheries technician

### Menomonee River fish passage

The Menomonee River was historically modified by dredging and the construction of concrete-lined channels for flood management and navigation. Concrete-lined channels functioned as barriers to riverine and wetland fish spawning and nursery habitats. In 2016, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District completed a total of 1.5 kilometers of concrete channel removal and river naturalization projects on the Menomonee River, open-

ing up 27 kilometers to migrating fish. DNR staff conducted electrofishing surveys to mark fish with PIT tags in the Menomonee River downstream of the former barrier. DNR staff then constructed a PIT antenna on the river to assess passage through the reconstructed section. Fish detected moving about included northern pike, white sucker, smallmouth bass, and golden redbreast. - Laura Schmidt, fisheries biologist - Milwaukee



### Trimbelle River trout habitat improvement project

The Trimbelle River is a Class II trout stream originating in northern Pierce County with over 20 miles of classified trout water. Because of its proximity to the twin cities, exceptional fishery and lack of in-stream habitat and erosion issues, the Trimbelle River has been the focus of over 3 miles of trout habitat improvement work within the past decade. Prior to this project, banks were high, vertical and heavily eroded with very little in-stream habitat present in this shallow, sandy bottomed stretch of stream. This project, completed by Trout Habitat Specialist Nate Anderson and crew, included 4,000 feet of intense habitat improvement work located 2,000 feet above and below a bridge making fishing access much easier. Work began with invasive box elder tree removal in the winter of 2017 and followed with bank grading, bank rock installation and instream habitat including in-stream boulders, root wads and spawning riffles. This was a collaborative project with partners including NRCS and Kiaptuwish Chapter of Trout Unlimited contributing funds and many hours of volunteer work. - Kasey Yallaly-Fisheries biologist, Baldwin

## Records are meant to be broken - many in 2018

The Wisconsin record fish program saw considerable action in 2018. Twenty-two records were either broken or found their way on the list for the first time. Four fish records were from the traditional "by weight" category, 6 fish records were from the recently created "live release" category and 12 fish records were from the alternate method category (most of those by bow and arrow or spear gun).

There is usually some kind of story to tell with a record fish. For some of the more interesting stories from 2018, read on...

### All in the Family

Erika Carter of De Pere bettered the pumpkinseed sunfish record with a 8.75-inch fish caught and released on July 4, 2017 from Lake Noquebay in Marinette County. Not to be outdone, Brenda Carter (Erika's mother) from DePere caught and released a 9-inch pumpkinseed on July 3 of this year from Lake Noquebay in Marinette County



Brenda Carter with the fish - a 9" pumpkinseed - that bettered her daughter's record from the previous year.

### Déjà vu all over again

Dale Fahrni of Arena, WI enjoyed the holiday season in 2015 when he used a bow and arrow to take a 20-1/2", 4 lbs. 8.6 oz spotted sucker on December 26 from the Wisconsin River in Richland County. Fast forward to 2018...Fahrni shot a 22", 5 lbs. 6.7 oz. spotted sucker on April 21 from the Wisconsin River in Richland County

that bettered the 2015 record by almost half a pound.

### Records ARE meant to be broken

Record duration: 2-1/2 months

Jason Behrens of Arcadia shot a 56-1/8", 19 lbs. 5.4 oz. longnose gar on May 24 from the Mississippi River in Trempealeau County. The fish broke the current record by almost a pound.

Noah Renner of Mauston shot a 54-1/2", 22 lbs. 12.8 oz. longnose gar on August 4 from the Mississippi River in Vernon County. The fish broke the record set by Behrens only two and half months earlier by over 3 pounds.



Mahnke grass carp and Hill grass carp (inset)

Record duration: 2-1/2 hours

Michael Mahnke of Waukesha shot a 38-1/4", 34 lbs. 7.2 oz grass carp on August 5 from the Mississippi River in Grant County. The fish broke the existing record by over a pound and a half.

Tim Hill of Lancaster shot a 40-3/4", 39 lbs. grass carp on August 5 from the Mississippi River in Grant County. Hill's record bested Mahnke's record, set 2-1/2 hours earlier, by about four and half pounds.

For more information on record fish, visit [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/recordfish/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/recordfish/)

## Science in the spotlight

### Fisheries Research Initiates Four New Research Projects in 2018-2019

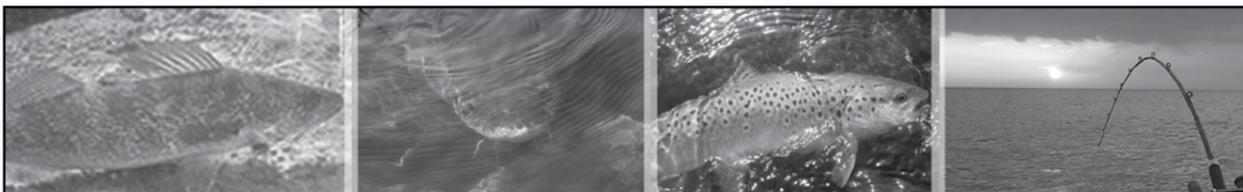
The Fisheries Research Team in the Office of Applied Science began four new studies focused on high priority research needs of the fisheries management program in 2018-2019. The new studies focus on 1) walleye, 2) lake sturgeon, 3) trout, and 4) the fisheries of Lake Michigan.

Natural recruitment in some walleye populations in northern Wisconsin has declined over time. The **Walleye Comparative Recruitment Study** is a collaborative effort between Fisheries Research and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission comparing within-lake and watershed characteristics of walleye populations with long-term, sustainable natural recruitment versus populations where natural recruitment has declined over time (Project Lead, Dr. Stephanie Shaw, Boulder Junction).

Recreational angling for lake sturgeon has increased in popularity over time in Wisconsin; however, potential hooking mortality of lake sturgeon has never been evaluated. The **Lake Sturgeon Hooking Mortality Study** will test for hooking mortality rates and stress associated with angling for this ancient sportfish in Wisconsin (Project Lead, Dr. Stephanie Shaw, Boulder Junction).

Beavers and their associated dams and lodges may influence trout populations in Wisconsin streams by altering habitat, stream flow, and water temperature regimes. The **Trout-Beaver-Water Temperature Interactions Study** will experimentally test for the effects of beaver presence/absence on trout populations and their habitats throughout Wisconsin (Project Lead, Dr. Matthew Mitro, Madison).

The food web of Lake Michigan has likely changed over time due to introductions of invasive species. Therefore, the diets of native and stocked fish species may have also changed, which has the potential to influence fish carrying capacity. The **Lake Michigan Predator:Prey Ratio Study** is examining current salmonid diets, which will be used in a predator-prey model to inform salmonid stocking quotas based on the abundance of available forage within the lake (Project Lead, Dr. Iyob Tsehaye, Madison). - Greg G. Sass, Ph.D., Fisheries Research Team Leader



## LEAVE NO LINE BEHIND

When monofilament fishing line is disposed of improperly, it can cause serious problems for wildlife, people, boat propellers and the environment. The DNR is coordinating a pilot project to collect this fishing line and recycle it into new products such as tackle boxes and fish habitat structures.



PVC monofilament collection bin

Fishing line causes problems when left in the water or put in the trash.

For more information: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/FishingLine.html>

# Catch memories that you'll never release!

## Find your fish and water in 2019.

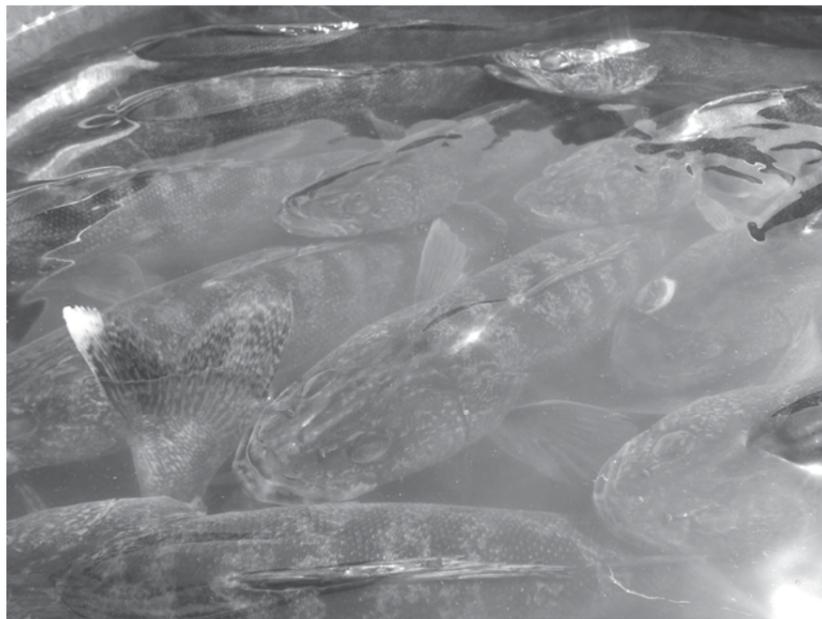
Interested in a water? Want more information? Contact the local fisheries biologist [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html)

### WALLEYE



#### ■ BROWN, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTY

**Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay** Since 2012, the DNR has assessed the magnitude of Walleye spawning migrations into the Fox River located in southern Green Bay and into the Oconto, Peshtigo and Menominee Rivers found along the west shore of Green Bay by using daytime electroshocking. Electrofishing is conducted just below the dams in these rivers to capture fish. During 2018 electroshocking runs, DNR captured 1,828 Walleye that ranged in length from 14" to 31". In 2018, the spring run was later than normal and was very short in length likely due an unusually cold spring with a fast warm-up. Look for Walleye in these rivers shortly after ice-out through the spring until water temperatures are consistently above 50F. DNR also assesses the Walleye population during the fall to look at young of year (YOY) production and year class strength. In 2018, during our nighttime YOY Walleye electroshocking surveys on the lower Fox River and on lower Green Bay, Walleye from 7" to 26" were captured. The majority of captured Walleye were YOY walleye indicating that 2018 was a very good year for Walleye production. Early indications are that the 2018 year class will surpass the record 2013 year class as measured in the fall of their first year for the most YOY captured. Walleye



A tank of Otter Lake walleye captured during a 2018 fisheries survey.

from the exceptionally large 2013 year class are now in the 20" to 24" range and were commonly caught by anglers and seen in DNR surveys in 2018. It is likely that this year class and others produced from 2014 through 2018 will carry the fishery in the near future. The rules vary by location and anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Wisconsin-Michigan Boundary, Tributary Stream to Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are many good boat launches in the area. Good shore fishing opportunities exist on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo Rivers. Check the Lake Michigan page for

access information. [www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/Tributary-Access.html](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/Tributary-Access.html). Since 2007 the only poor year class was the 2012 year class. Recruitment in the 2010's has been exceptional with good year classes produced regularly providing anglers the opportunity to catch good numbers of Walleye from Green Bay and its tributaries.

#### ■ BURNETT/WASHBURN COUNTIES

**Middle McKenzie Lake.** Middle McKenzie Lake on the Washburn/Burnett County line is a low-density walleye lake (~1 fish/acre). However, lower numbers typically mean greater size. This is the case with Middle McKenzie lake. The average length of adult walleye was 20 inches and 55% of walleye sampled were greater than 18 inches. No minimum length limit, five fish daily bag limit. Access: Concrete boat launch located off of Racine Drive on the Northwest side of the lake.

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

**The Winnebago System** includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System continues to produce some of the best walleye fishing opportunities in the Midwest. Annual surveys conducted by DNR staff and local volunteers con-

at age 4; 82% by age 5; and 99% by age 6). Therefore, it will take a few more years for the 2016 cohort of females to make their first spawning runs. Lastly, the annual Lake Winnebago trawling assessment revealed measurable 2017 and 2018 walleye year classes which should help contribute to the adult population in future years. The trawling survey also revealed a weak year class of gizzard shad (0.4/ YOY trawl). Gizzard shad can often drive walleye fishing success on the system and this year's weak hatch could set up for a productive 2019 walleye bite. The system is open year round for walleye and sauger. There is a combined daily bag limit of 5 fish, of which only 1 may be a sauger. There is no minimum size limit for either species. There are numerous access points around the Winnebago system. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>). DNR fisheries staff has tagged 173,707 walleye on the Winnebago System since 1993. The program relies on anglers to report any tagged fish they catch by mailing them to the Oshkosh DNR office (625 East County Road, Y Oshkosh WI 54901) or emailing them to [dnrwinnebagoSystemtagreturns@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrwinnebagoSystemtagreturns@wisconsin.gov). Anglers are encouraged to check their walleye catch for tags and report them properly. Anglers that return tags can expect a mailed certificate that provides information about the tagged fish they caught. -Adam Nickel, Fisheries Biologist, Oshkosh

#### ■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**Otter Lake** - 661 acres. The walleye population in Otter Lake in eastern Chippewa County is booming in part thanks to the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative. Otter Lake has been stocked with 6,600 extended growth walleye (6"-8") bi-annually. A walleye population estimate was conducted in the spring of 2018 and it was calculated that there were 7.3 adult walleye per acre, which is about double the statewide average for lakes containing walleye. Since there is no documentation of natural reproduction, stocking is the main reason for the robust walleye population. The walleye fishery here flies under the radar as bluegill and largemouth bass are the primary target on Otter Lake. Most the walleye were between 17" and 21", which is a great eating size. The walleye regulation on Otter Lake is a three fish bag limit and they must be between 15-20 inches except one may be over 24 inches. Joseph Gerbyshak - fisheries biologist, Eau Claire

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

**Arbutus Lake** - 840 acres and the **upper Black River** (above the Black River Falls dam), and **lower Black River** (below the Black River Falls dam). Catch rates are based on 2018 electrofishing results **Arbutus:** Total catch rate was 41.5/mile, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 4.7/mile and maximum length captured was 28". The last comparable survey was conducted in 2014. Total catch rate was 15.5/mile, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 0.4/mile and maximum length captured was 24". **Black River, upper:** Total catch rate was 21.3/mile, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 5.2/mile and maximum length captured was 24". In 2017, total catch rate was 9/mile, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 2.6/mile and maximum length captured was 24". **Black River, lower:** Total catch rate was 18.2/mile, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 3.1/mile and maximum length captured was 26". In 2017, total catch rate was 7.7/mile, catch rate

of 15"+ size fish was 2/mile and maximum length captured was 26". Regulation: Black River upstream of CTH OO (T26NR2W Sections 20 and 21 - Clark County) walleye from 15 inches but less than 20 inches may be kept, except 1 fish may be over 24 inches/ daily bag limit 3 fish (Ceded Territory standard walleye regulation). For the Black River downstream of CTH OO, Clark County, and Arbutus Lake minimum length is 15 inches and daily bag limit is 5 fish.



Jennifer Bergman, Fisheries biologist out of Wisconsin Rapids, with a walleye from New Lisbon Lake, Juneau County.

Access Information: Arbutus - West Arbutus Landing near the Hatfield dam, Arnolds Creek Boat Landing, and North Arbutus Boat Landing. Upper Black River - Halls Creek Canoe Landing and Black River State Forest unimproved landings off Palm and Brickyard Roads (Jackson County), and DNR boat landing off Opelt Avenue (Clark County). Lower Black River - 3rd Street Canoe Landing (City of Black River Falls), Perry Creek Landing, Mason's Landing, Irving Township Canoe Landing, Highway 108 Landing near Melrose, WI, North Bend Landing off CTH VV, and Highway 35 landing in Van Loon Bottoms. The lower Black River (downstream of the Black River Falls dam) has a continuous (year-round) fishing season for walleyes.

#### ■ GREEN LAKE COUNTY

**Little Green Lake** - 466 acres. 2018 - Relative abundance was up from 2013, though average size was down at 14.9" (20" in 2013). 79% of fish sampled were > 15". Current regulation: 15" length limit, bag of 5. Three public developed access sites and one private

#### ■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Lake Koshkonong/Rock River** - 10,000 lake acres and 27+ river miles. 2018 spring electrofishing surveys yielded high quality adult walleye catches. A total of 802 walleye were captured with a length range of 11.5 to 22 inches and an average length of 14.7 inches. With the current 15-inch minimum length limit 25% of the catch was legal. There is a year-round open season on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. 15-inch minimum length and 5 fish daily bag limit on walleye. Access information: Dalman County Park, Groeler Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam. With assistance of local cooperative groups, the DNR's Bark River Hatchery stocked 4.9 million walleye fry into Lake Koshkonong/Rock River in 2018.

#### ■ LA CROSSE COUNTY

**Mississippi River, Pool 8** - 22,656 acres. Fall Sampling of adult walleye during 2016 through 2018 in the tailwater of Pool 8 near La Crosse shows some improvement from the previous years. During the last three years, we've av-



eraged 79 walleye per hour of electro fishing. From 2010 through 2015, we saw an average of 35 per hour; about half of later years. This recent increase is likely due to an above average reproduction year in 2015 when we saw our fourth largest reproductive event since 1983. These walleyes should mostly be

able. There is also a bait shop with boat rental located lakeside. - *Bradd Sims Fisheries Biologist - Dodgeville*



Kimberly Kubler, Fisheries technician, Dodgeville holds a trophy walleye from Yellowstone Lake. Anglers can expect more walleye over 24 inches this year over previous seasons.

larger than the 15-inch legal minimum length limit during 2019. Beyond 2019, there may be fewer harvestable walleye in pool 8. Surveys in 2016 through 2018 that measure production of young fish, showed a decline of 39 percent from the long-term average. Despite this recent decline, there is no 1983 to 2018 long-term trend in production of young fish. Catchable sauger numbers were a bit below average in 2016-2018. We caught 43 sauger per hour while the long-term average was 59. The good news is the 2015-2018 combined abundance estimates were near the long-term average. These fish will continue to be in the population in 2019. Generally, Mississippi River walleye and sauger numbers are associated with spring and summer climate conditions. Thus, reproduction or survival of young fish during their first year of life fluctuates annually. Presently, the Mississippi River walleye and sauger bag limit is six fish in combination, with a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye and no length limit on sauger. The season is open year-round. Wisconsin and Minnesota fishing regulations may significantly change starting in 2020. Please attend the April 8, 2019 Spring Conservation Hearing in your county to register your opinion on these proposed changes. The best way to find a boat landing is to go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html). Increasingly, river municipalities are charging boat access fees. - *David Heath, La Crosse.*

## ■ LAFAYETTE COUNTY

**Yellowstone Lake** - 450 acres. The walleye population in Yellowstone has been stable over the last 15 years. It still offers anglers an opportunity to catch trophy sized walleye as well as table fare. Spring netting surveys in 2018 revealed a good adult fishery. Eight-hundred and forty adult walleye were sampled. They ranged in size 11.0 to 29.0 inches with an average size of 16.8 inches. Eleven percent were within the 15 to 18 inch slot available for harvest. Forty percent were greater than 21 inches and 20% were greater than 28 inches. Yellowstone supports a trophy walleye fishery with 10 percent of the fish greater than 24 inches. Large walleye are protected to help prey upon the carp, bigmouth buffalo, and bullheads. Only walleye between 15 and 18 inches may be harvested. Daily Bag Limit is 2 game fish in total. There are two boat launches available and one canoe launch. There are multiple fishing pads for disabled anglers. Shore fishing opportunities are ample. Yellowstone Lake is located in Yellowstone Lake State Park. Camping, swimming beach, pet area and picnic areas are all avail-

## ■ MARATHON COUNTY

**Lake Wausau and Big Eau Pleine Reservoir Lake Wausau:** 1851 acres which is product of 3 major tailwaters which includes the Wisconsin River, Big Rib River, and the Eau Claire River. **Big Eau Pleine Reservoir:** 6348 acres which is product of the Big Eau Pleine River and eventually feeds into the Wisconsin River Flowage system via Lake DuBay. **Lake Wausau:** In Spring of 2018, 60% if the 119 stock sized fish netted were 15" or greater. The average length of walleye was 16.8" and a maximum length observed was 27". **Big Eau Pleine Reservoir:** In 2018 DNR cooperators col-



Fisheries technician Chelsea Barnaby with a 29-inch walleye captured in Amacoy Lake fyke nets in May 2018.

lected 224 walleyes in fyke nets. Approximately 25% of these fish were 20" or greater, and ~64% of the fish were from 15-20". Lake Wausau: The minimum length is 15", but walleye from 20" to 28" may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 28" is allowed. The daily bag limit is 5. Big Eau Pleine Reservoir: The minimum length is 15", but walleye from 20" to 24" may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 24" is allowed. The daily bag limit is 3. Lake Wausau: Shore fishing opportunities are numerous with vast amount of public parks and bridges throughout the system Boat access can be taken advantage of at numerous locations, including landings at Bluegill Bay Park, Oak Park, Memorial Park, DC Everest County Park, near the Schofield Dam, and near Kort Street. Big Eau Pleine: Boat access can be taken advantage of at 12 locations, including Lisa's Landing, George's landing, and landings near CTH O, CTH S, and CTH C. Walleye fishing on Wisconsin River flowages yields different opportunities depending on where you fish. On Lake Wausau, many folks tend to target tailwaters at dams various times of year. Also, fishing in the tailwaters of Lake Wausau provides ample opportunity to catch quality sized small-mouth bass as well several species of sucker and redbreast, including the rare black redbreast. Fishing on the Big Eau Pleine tends to be more focused on

fishing via boats, where trolling tends to work well. Both waters consistently produce moderately strong year classes, annually, whereas stronger year strong year classes are produced inconsistently every 1-7 years when optimal environmental conditions arise. Additionally, both systems have the high productive capacity and can have algal blooms during parts of the year.

## ■ OCONTO COUNTY

**White Potato Lake** - 978 acres. During the last survey, 1,005 walleye were collected. Walleye ranged in length from 7.9 to 24.5 in and averaged 15.9 inches. Walleye were reaching legal size (15 in) by age 4. Compared to other lakes in the area, walleye growth and abundance was good. 15-inch minimum length / 5 fish per day. Anglers can choose from 6 boat landings to access White Potato Lake. The average depth of White Potato Lake is less than 5 feet. The walleye fishery has been primarily maintained through stocking by the White Potato Lake Sportsman's Club. Anglers have good success in May and early June before the water warms and aquatic vegetation makes trolling difficult. The ice fishing jamboree in January draws a very large crowd.

## ■ ONEIDA COUNTY

**Manson Lake** - 236 acres. A recent spring survey shows a relatively low-density walleye population. The majority of walleye sampled were of legal size with the largest measuring just over 27 inches. Manson Lake does have its fair share of rock hazards to be aware of, most are depicted on the lake map in the kiosk at the public boat launch. The public boat launch is located just off Hwy 8.

**North Nokomis Lake** - 476 acres. A 2018 walleye population estimate shows a relatively low adult walleye density. The naturally reproducing walleye population is supplemented by alternate year small fingerling stocking. Larger walleye feed on cisco found within the lake which helps to produce some hefty fish. The largest walleye sampled in 2018 measured over 28 inches. A special walleye length regulation is in place which consists of a minimum length of 18 inches. A public boat ramp is located off Hwy D. *Zach Woiak, fisheries biologist, Rhinelander*

## ■ POLK COUNTY

**Big Butternut Lake** - 384 acres. In a 2018 fisheries survey, the density of adult ( $\geq 15$  in) walleye was estimated to be 2.6 fish/acre, which is considered very good for a stocked population. The size structure of the walleye population was also good. Of the 322 walleye handled in the survey, 60% were 18 inches or larger. The Big Butternut Lake walleye fishery is managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit, 3 fish daily bag limit. There is one public boat landing on the southwest shoreline of Big Butternut Lake off South Shore Dr. There is also a fishing pier west of the boat landing for shore anglers. Big Butternut is a fertile lake with quality populations of other gamefish and panfish species.



Austin Fischer, wildlife LTE technician, with a Walleye from Random Lake

## ■ PRICE COUNTY

**Pike Lake Chain of Lakes** - 1905 acres. Adult walleye density fell short of the goals that stakeholders helped to develop in the 2015 Fishery Management Plan for the Pike Lake Chain, located just north of State Highway 70 midway between Fifield and Minocqua. Our targets were 4-6 adults per acre in Round Lake, 2-4 adults per acre in Pike and Turner lakes, and 1-3 adults per acre in Amik Lake. By comparison, estimated population density in spring 2018 was 2.1 adults per acre in Round Lake and about 1 adult per acre in the other lakes. Annual fall electrofishing surveys suggest that lower-than



Hayward fisheries biologist, Max Wolter displays a nice-sized Whitefish Lake walleye.

average production and/or survival of young walleyes in 2013, 2014, and 2015 did not contribute enough young recruits to replace the adults that died from angling and natural causes. That 3-year gap in walleye recruitment is now affecting adult numbers. In Round Lake 28% of walleyes in fyke nets were  $\geq 15$  inches, meeting our goal to have 20-40% at least that long. Higher proportions of large fish (63-80%) in Amik, Pike, and Turner lakes at first glance would seem good, but in this case exceeding our size objective reflects a shortage of young fish coming into the adult population. Stronger year classes produced in 2016 and 2018 offer promising signs for improvement. With walleye populations sustained without stocking, Pike and Round lakes serve as "experimental controls" to measure year-to-year variation in natural walleye recruitment in the ongoing evaluation of stocking under the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative. A creel survey will estimate fishing pressure and harvest in the 2018-2019 season. Anglers may keep walleye of any size, but only one may be over 14" in their daily bag limit of 3 walleye from Pike, Round, Turner, and Amik lakes combined. The U.S. Forest Service maintains a landing suitable for most boats on the west shore of Round Lake. DNR offers a shallow-water access landing on the east side of Round Lake and an unimproved carry-in access on the east side of Pike Lake. Boaters can access Amik and Turner lakes only by connected waters, and municipal ordinances regulate boat speed in certain hours and areas. - *Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist*

## ■ RACINE COUNTY

**Tichigan Lake/Fox River** - 280 lake acres and 7 river miles. Recent surveys have shown the positive results of ongoing DNR and private stocking efforts, with a 17.8" average length and maximum of 25.7". Catch rates during recent monitoring surveys indicate a strong population of walleye utilizing Tichigan Lake and the connected reaches of the Fox River. Multiple boat launches on the river and a small carry-in access on the lake make Tichigan an attractive destination for walleye and many other species. 18" minimum length limit, 3

daily bag. Access information: A public boat launch at Bridge Road on the Fox River and two launches in the Village of Waterford provide boating access to the river and Tichigan Lake. A small carry-in access on the lake near Fir Lane provides access for non-motorized users and ice anglers.

## ■ RUSK COUNTY

**Amacoy Lake**—287 acres. From netting and electrofishing surveys at ice-out in



Fisheries technician, Joelle Underwood, with a beautiful Oneida County walleye captured during a recent netting survey.

May 2018 we estimated walleye density was 6 adults per acre in Amacoy Lake—more than most populations sustained primarily by stocking. Staff at Governor Thompson State Fish Hatchery grow walleye to 6–8 inches long and stock 15 large fingerlings per acre into Amacoy Lake in fall of odd-numbered years. Walleye size structure in Amacoy Lake should satisfy most anglers—35% of walleye captured in fyke nets were 15 inches or longer, 9.4% were ≥ 20 inches, and 8.4% were at least 25 inches long. Three walleyes between 15 and 20 inches may be kept, except one fish may be over 24". —Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist

## ■ SAWYER COUNTY

**Whitefish Lake** is known locally for its unique bathymetry (it's 110 feet deep!) and rare fish species (it has lake whitefish!). A 2018 DNR fyke netting survey found that the walleye population is doing quite well too. Crews captured an average of 32 adult walleye per net, a higher relative abundance than what is observed on most other lakes in the area. But more impressive than the abundance was the size. Of all walleye captured, 93% were over 15 inches and 34% were over 20 inches. Even with the more restrictive 18-inch length limit that is currently in place on the lake, a large portion of the walleye are legal-sized. Despite the strong survey numbers, catching walleye in Whitefish can still be challenging. The lake is also home to one of the densest cisco populations in northwest Wisconsin. Walleye keying in on those cisco may behave differently than walleye in non-cisco lakes. Anglers willing to put in the time to solve Whitefish's puzzle can be rewarded greatly! There is a town boat ramp on Maiden Lane off of State Highway 27.

## ■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Random Lake** - 209 acres. During 2018 spring fyke netting and boom electrofishing surveys a total of 328 Walleye were captured and marked. The mark and recapture samples yielded an adult Walleye population estimate of 2.0 Walleye/acre. Lengths ranged from 7.5 inches to 26.5 inches with an average length of 20.4 inches. The large size of Walleye in Random Lake allows anglers the opportunity to catch many fish of harvestable size. 77% of all Walleye sampled were of legal harvestable size! 18 inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag. There is a public boat launch and shorefishing opportunity at Lake View Park, Random Lake, WI.

## ■ TAYLOR COUNTY

**Chequamegon Waters Flowage** (also called Miller Dam Flowage)—2714 acres. Though we typically gauge the abundance and size structure of walleye populations by early spring netting at ice-out, we gained some insight about walleye stocking success in Miller Dam Flowage from the incidental catch in fyke nets targeting black crappies there in fall 2017. To establish and maintain a bonus fishery for walleye in an impoundment with habitat better suited for other species, the Miller Dam Lake Association has purchased and stocked walleyes at a rate of 0.5 large fingerling per acre annually since 2007—nearly 16,200 fingerlings in total. The walleye bycatch included fish in many length and age classes, suggesting that fish stocked as fingerlings are surviving and growing to the sizes that anglers like to catch and release or keep. The 40 walleyes in our crappie sample ranged from 14.5 to 26.5 inches and averaged 21.3 inches long. Additional predation from walleyes will help control panfish abundance and keep bluegills and crappies growing at satisfactory rates. Anglers may take 3 walleyes per day from 15" but less than 20", except one fish may be over 24". —Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist

## ■ VILAS COUNTY

**Twin Chain (North & South Twin Lakes)** 3,430 acres. A spring 2017 DNR survey estimated the Twin Chain is home to approximately 3.7 adult walleye per acre. Of those adult walleye 39% were 15 inches or larger; adult walleye ranged in length from 11 to 29 inches. Future fishing should be ensured with recruitment of walleye from the above average 2016 & 2017 year classes. Current regulation: Combined daily bag limit of three (3) where walleye from 15" but less than 20" may be kept, except one fish may be over 24". Excellent public access is available at 3 landings: In the Town of Phelps, located off Millerville Lane, off Highway 17; Town of Conover, Lakota Road, off Highway K; Town of Conover, Twin Lake Road, off Highway K.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Oconomowoc Lake** - 818 surface acres Average Length - 16 inches. Population estimate - 2 adults per acre. 18-inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3. The public boat launch is located upstream of Oconomowoc Lake on the Oconomowoc River, downstream of Upper Oconomowoc Lake on the north side of Wisconsin Avenue. Depending upon the size of your vessel, navigating the Oconomowoc River can be challenging during low flow conditions. A healthy adult walleye population and excellent habitat continues to support limited natural reproduction of walleye in Oconomowoc Lake. Supplemental stocking of small fingerling walleyes from Lake Mills State Fish Hatchery has boosted recruitment as indicated by continued fall electrofishing surveys. Clear water, cisco, rocky shores and steep drop-offs make Oconomowoc Lake a quality fishing destination for multiple species.

## MUSKELLUNGE



## ■ BROWN, DOOR, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTIES

**Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries and bays and the Fox River.** Annual assessments to determine the status of the Green Bay Muskellunge population have been conducted on the Fox River using fyke nets and fall electroshocking for many years. Fyke nets set in the Fox River this past May were filled with many large Musky. Female Musky averaged 50.7"



Dan Hatleli, Fisheries biologist Black River Falls, holds a 49.9 inch Muskellunge captured during an April 2018 electrofishing survey of the lower Black River. This fish is one of several 40"+ Muskies collected within a 4 mile segment below the Black River Falls dam. Photo taken by Eric Kramer, Fisheries technician, Black River Falls.

in length and 35 pounds in weight. The largest female Musky was 55.9" in length and weighed 42.5 pounds. Male Musky averaged 44.1" in length and 20.9 pounds in weight. The largest male was 49.6" in length and 33.7 pounds in weight. Fall electroshocking surveys on the Fox River captured many Musky in 2018 that were between 40" and 50" in length. Musky anglers have reported catching legal size Musky greater than 54" in length from the waters of Green Bay this past summer and into fall. The regulation for musky on the Fox River, Green Bay tributaries and the Wisconsin waters of Green Bay is one fish with a 54 inch minimum size. Most musky anglers launch their boat from the Fox Point Landing or the Metro Ramp on the Fox River, the Suamico Boat Launch on the Suamico River, Carmody Ramp on Little Sturgeon Bay, the ramp at Geano Beach or the Menominee River Ramp. During 2018, DNR stocked 1,600 fingerling Great Lakes Strain Musky into the Fox River and Green Bay from eggs that were collected from Musky captured in the Fox River in May 2018. Since stocking resumed in 2010, DNR has stocked 33,852 fingerling and 16,121 yearling Musky into Green Bay making the future of Musky fishing on the bay bright.

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

**Upper Black River** (above the Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and **lower Black River** (below the Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Catch rates are based on 2018 electrofishing results. Black River, upper: Total catch rate was 4.8/mile, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.4/mile and maximum size captured was 40". In 2017, total catch rate was 3/mile, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.4/mile, and maximum size was 43". Black River, lower: Total catch rate was 2.6/mile, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.7/mile and maximum size captured was 49". In 2017, total catch rate was 1.4/mile, catch rate of 40"+ size fish was 0.3/mile and maximum size captured was 49". 40 inch minimum length-limit / 1 fish daily bag limit. Upper Black River - Halls Creek Canoe Landing and Black River State Forest unimproved landings off Palm and Brickyard Roads (Jackson County), and DNR boat landing off Opelt Avenue (Clark County). Lower Black River - 3rd Street Canoe Landing (City of Black River Falls), Perry Creek Landing, Mason's Landing, Irving Township Canoe Landing, Highway 108 Landing near Melrose, WI, North Bend Landing off CTH VV, and Highway 35 landing in Van Loon Bottoms. The 4 mile stretch of the Black River downstream of the Black River Falls Dam consistently yields one of the highest densities of 40"+ muskellunge found in annual surveys.

## ■ COLUMBIA and SAUK COUNTIES

**Lower Wisconsin River.** 92.3 miles The Lower Wisconsin River supports a trophy musky fishery from the Prairie du Sac Dam downstream 6 miles. Anglers can expect to see above average size and weight for muskies in this stretch of river. Electrofishing surveys during October and November of 2017 & 2018 sampled a good adult population with an average size of 37.2 inches. Twenty seven percent of the adults were 40 inches or greater. 50-inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1. Public boat launch and accessible bank fishing opportunities are located thru out the Lower Wisconsin River way.



Fisheries technician Mara Duke with a 49.5" St. Louis River musky captured and released during the 2018 survey.

There is a public boat launch close to the dam at Veterans Memorial Park. A fee is required to use the launch at this park. Boaters should use caution near the dam as many rock bars, wing dams, and shallow sand breaks are present in the river channel. Geologist have found that over a million year ago the Wisconsin River flowed east to the Atlantic Ocean Drainage. This east flowing version of the Wisconsin was named the Wyalusing River. It is believed that glaciers dammed the Wyalusing River in the Prairie du Chien area diverting the flow to the west and south as we know it today. The Lower Wisconsin River includes 92.3 miles from the Prairie du Sac dam to the Mississippi River. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist - Dodgeville

## ■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

**St. Louis River and Estuary** - 12,000 acres. 230 muskellunge captured and released in 2018 fyke net survey; average length of 40.3 inches, with a range of 20.4 inches to 52.5 inches. 45 individuals (20%) were

45-inches or longer, 9 individuals (4%) exceeded the 50-inch minimum length limit. Open May 26 through November 30; 50-inch minimum length with a daily limit of one fish. Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. Features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> for complete information. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. Paved parking and portable restrooms. Barker's Island Landing: Located in the City of Superior at the end of Marina Drive. Features restrooms and paved parking. Loon's Foot Landing: Located in the City of Superior just west of the Nemadji River. Restrooms and paved parking. A cooperative study with Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR and the University of Minnesota was started in 2017 to determine non-spawning habitat use and seasonal movement by muskellunge throughout the St. Louis River and near shore areas of Lake Superior. 60 muskies were surgically implanted with hydro-acoustic transmitter "tags" and their movements were monitored by a network of 40 acoustic receivers throughout the St. Louis River and Estuary from Fond du Lac dam downstream to the entries of the Duluth-Superior Harbor. In the first year of monitoring, 40 percent of the tagged muskies ventured into Lake Superior; 25 percent remained there for more than a month. Receivers used by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for lake sturgeon research in Lake Superior recorded one musky in Bark Bay of Lake Superior near Cornucopia and another musky was documented swimming all the way over to Chequamegon Bay near Washburn. Lake Superior Chapter of Muskies, Inc has provided volunteers to assist with field work through the duration of the study. - Aaron Nelson, Fisheries Technician

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Lower Eau Claire Lake** - 784 acres. Lower Eau Claire Lake offers a low-density trophy muskie fishery. Seventeen muskie were sampled netting in the spring of 2018. They ranged in length from 31 to 48 inches and averaged 38 inches. The largest musky surveyed weighed 38 pounds. Thirty eight percent of the fish sampled were greater than 40 inches in length. Muskie anglers willing to put in many hours could be rewarded with a rare trophy. 40 inch minimum length limit, one fish daily bag limit. Concrete launch located on the southern end of lake at Mooney Dam County Park



Fisheries biologist Scott Toshner holds a 48-inch muskellunge captured in Lower Eau Claire Lake.

## EAU CLAIRE, DUNN and PEPIN COUNTIES

**Lower Chippewa River.** The reservoirs on the lower Chippewa River are well known for their musky populations and



A muskellunge collected during a 2018 fyke net survey on Twin Valley Lake. Photo: Lloyd Meng

trophy potential, but the riverine portion (downstream of Eau Claire) does not get the credit it deserves for producing big musky. The forage base in the riverine portion of the lower Chippewa River is second-to-none with moon-eye, shad and numerous sucker species readily abundant. It is no surprise that stocking efforts are paying off and the lower Chippewa River is producing very nice musky. Stocking on the river in Eau Claire has been so successful that it has been expanded to Caryville and Durand. Check the river level prior to embarking to ensure it is at a safe level. The daily bag limit is one fish and it must be at least 40". - Joseph Gerbyshak - fisheries biologist, Eau Claire

## GREEN LAKE COUNTY

**Little Green Lake** - 466 acres. This stocked Musky fishery is one of the few in this part of the state. Survey results from 2018 showed relative abundance stable compared to past surveys. Mean length of fish handled was just under 39" with the largest fish sampled at 45.5" and all fish > 34". 40" minimum, with a bag of 1. Good access with 3 developed, public landings and one private resort landing. Some access sites require a fee.

## IOWA COUNTY

**Twin Valley Lake** - 136 acres. The Muskellunge population in Twin Valley Lake is classified as an A2 fishery and anglers can expect higher catch rates of fish in this classification. Spring surveys yielded a total catch of 71 fish with a mean length approaching 37 inches. In fact, 18% of Muskies surveyed were over 40" with a maximum length of 43". With the yearly stocking of Muskies in Twin Valley Lake, anglers can be sure that exciting musky angling will continue in 2019 and beyond. Minimum length limit of 40 inches with a daily bag limit of 1. Twin Valley Lake is located in Governor Dodge state park. A state park sticker or daily pass is required, and one public boat launch is available. Only electric trolling motors are permitted on Twin Valley Lake. Governor Dodge is the third largest state park in Wisconsin. Camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, and horseback riding are permitted within the state park and a public beach and picnic area are provided. - Justin Haglund, fisheries biologist - Dodgeville

## IRON COUNTY

**Pine Lake:** Those who are looking to tangle with their first musky or are seeking a good musky action lake in the Northwoods might consider Pine Lake. Located a few miles north of Mercer, Pine Lake sizes up at 312 acres and has a nice boat launch just off of Hwy G. Recent surveys indicate strong natural reproduction and above average adult muskellunge densities. While only 4% of the adults surveyed in 2018 were larger than 38", there are good numbers

of fish in the mid-30" range, and a few larger fish are present. The smaller lake size helps shorten the learning curve for new anglers and can be a good choice for windy days. Currently, there is a 40" minimum length limit, 1 fish daily bag limit.

## LANGLADE COUNTY

**Summit Lake** - 282 acres with a high density stocked fishery; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily; Most fish are in the 30-40 inch range with some females reaching the mid to upper 40's; The shallow water boat landings on the east shore probably keep the bigger boats away; It would be a good place to try out that new fishing kayak and land a nice muskie while sitting on the water!

## LINCOLN COUNTY

**Squaw Lake** - 79 acres; The adult population is high density but fish tend to top out in the mid 40-inch range; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily; Good boat landing with parking on the northeast shore; Don't let the small size of the lake discourage you, it fishes much larger with lots of aquatic vegetation, several points with deep rock, an inlet and an outlet, and other structure to fish

## MARINETTE COUNTY

**Caldron and High Falls.** The musky fisheries are maintained through a combination of stocking and natural reproduction. The density (fish / acre) of musky is higher in Caldron Falls than in High Falls but large fish are present in both flowages. 50-inch minimum length / 1 fish per day. There are 5 boat landings on Caldron Falls and 6 on High Falls. Shore fishing opportunities are excellent. Musky were stocked in High Falls for the first time in 2017. A 50-inch minimum length limit went into effect in 2018.



The lower Chippewa River, from Eau Claire to the Mississippi River, has the potential to produce trophy caliber musky.

## ONEIDA COUNTY

**Hasbrook Lake** - 307 acres. 2018 Spring surveys showed a healthy naturally reproducing muskellunge population with an average size near 40 inches. The largest muskellunge sampled stretched to 48 inches. The regulation is the statewide 1 fish over 40 inches. A public boat launch with good access is located on the southwest end of the lake off Hasbrook Road.

**North Nokomis Lake** - 476 acres. Recent spring surveys captured 44 muskellunge and showed good size structure. The average length of adult muskellunge sampled was 38.5 inches with the largest measuring just over 47 inches.

Cisco are part of the forage base and help to add on the pounds for producing heavy fish. The regulation is the statewide 1 fish over 40 inches. A public boat ramp is located off Hwy D.

## POLK COUNTY

**Bone Lake** - 1,781 acres. In the 2017-2018 survey, the adult ( $\geq 30"$ ) musky population for Bone Lake was estimated to be 0.36 fish/acre. This is considered a moderate density. Size structure of Bone Lake musky was good. Of the 354



Fisheries technician, Kristina Pechacek, with a tank Oneida County musky captured during a spring fyke net survey.

musky handled  $\geq 30$  inches, 26% were  $\geq 40$  inches, with fish up to 48.5" present. Bone Lake musky are managed the 50-inch minimum length limit; 1 fish daily bag limit. There are two public boat landings. The north landing is off 250th Avenue and is the better of the two landings. The north landing also has a fishing pier, picnic shelter, and restroom. The south boat landing is off Dueholm Drive. Muskellunge were initially stocked into Bone Lake in 1935, and the lake has been managed for muskellunge since then.

## RUSK COUNTY

**Amacoy Lake** - Our higher-than-average capture rate of muskellunge in early spring 2018 fyke nets suggests that anglers should find fast fishing action in 278-acre Amacoy Lake, located between State Highway 40 and the Chippewa River about 4½ miles south of Bruce, WI. In moderately high abundance the population appears to have enough food to grow at a satisfactory rate and produce plenty of large fish. Among 86 adult muskies 30 inches or longer, 59% were at least 38 inches and 23% were at least 42 inches. Only one fish in our nets attained 45 inches, but Amacoy Lake anglers have reported their encounters with bigger fish. We injected a uniquely-coded microchip into the cheek of each musky captured in 2018 to measure their growth and estimate their density, if we can sample the population again in spring 2019. To avoid crowding and intense food competition that can impair growth, we'll continue to stock 12-inch muskies in odd-numbered years, but at a reduced rate of 0.5 fingerling per acre. Rusk County maintains a public boat landing and shorefishing access on the west side. Though most anglers release their catch, Amacoy Lake has the standard Northern Zone musky harvest regulation (1 fish at least 40" may be kept daily from the last Saturday in May to November 30). -Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist

## SHAWANO COUNTY

**Shawano Lake and Washington Lake.** Shawano Lake = 6,215 acres; Washington Lake = 75 acres. The DNR conducted a comprehensive fisheries survey of Shawano and Washington lakes using fyke nets and electrofishing in spring 2018. A total of 39 different muskies

were captured during the spring comprehensive fisheries survey ranging in length from 18.9 – 50 inches with an average length of 38.6 inches. Shawano Lake is classified as an A1 muskellunge fishery, meaning it is considered a low density, trophy fishery. Results from the 2018 survey suggest that Shawano Lake is living up to its trophy potential. While catch rates of muskellunge were low, anglers should have the opportunity to catch a fairly large muskellunge in these lakes as just over half of the muskies captured in spring surveys were  $\geq 40$  inches and five muskies were  $\geq 45$  inches in length. 40 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of one. Access information: There are 11 boat access and canoe access points scattered around Shawano and Washington Lakes as well as several additional fishing piers set up for shore anglers during the summer and access points for ice fishermen during the winter. The muskellunge fishery in Shawano and Washington Lakes is sustained by stocking large fingerling muskellunge at a rate of approximately 2,500 fingerlings (0.4 per surface acre of water) every other year. The management goal for the muskellunge in these lakes is to provide a low density, fast growing musky fishery where anglers have the opportunity to catch fish up to 50 inches or larger.

## ■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Random Lake** - 209 acres. During 2018 spring fyke netting surveys and spring electrofishing surveys 37 Muskellunge were captured. Lengths ranged from 27.5 inches to 41.0 inches with an average size of 34.5 inches. While trophy potential is limited, Random Lake offers excellent Musky action. 40 inch minimum length limit and 1 fish daily bag. There is a public boat launch and shore-fishing opportunity at Lake View Park, Random Lake, WI.



Fisheries biologist Addie Dutton, Plymouth, holds a musky collected in a 2018 survey.

## ■ VILAS COUNTY

**High Lake** 764 surface acres. Veteran and novice muskellunge anglers alike should anticipate good action on High Lake. A spring 2018 fyke net and electrofishing survey targeting gamefish was used to evaluate the muskellunge population. From this sampling, 86 muskellunge were captured, with a length range of 16-45 inches. Of those 86 muskellunge captured approximately 16% were greater or equal to 40 inches; average length captured was 36 inches. Alternate-year large fingerling stocking, some limited natural reproduction and an exceptional forage base, all factor in to provide solid muskellunge fishing. Current statewide regulations apply: 40 inch minimum length, 1 fish daily bag limit. Public access information: one landing off County Highway B, approximately 7 miles northeast of the Town of Boulder Junction.



Fisheries technician Kyle Olson holding a 50 inch, 40 pound female muskellunge captured in a fyke net on Pewaukee Lake.

## ■ WASHBURN COUNTY

**Shell Lake** - 2,513 acres. Shell Lake offers a low-density trophy muskie fishery. Thirty-four muskie were sampled netting this spring. They ranged in length from 24 to 50 inches and averaged 40 inches. Fifty-nine percent of the fish sampled were greater than 40 inches in length. Muskie anglers willing to put in many hours could be rewarded with a rare trophy. Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Pewaukee Lake** - 2437 surface acres. Average Length – 34 inches, population estimate – 0.5 adults per acre. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. The 2018 spring netting survey on Pewaukee Lake revealed action opportunities are available for muskellunge with above average abundance and trophy potential. The largest muskellunge netted during the spring survey was a 50" female weighing over 40 lbs.

## LARGEMOUTH BASS



## ■ BARRON COUNTY

**Staples Lake** - 340 acres. Staples Lake has an abundant largemouth bass population with good size structure. The catch rate of largemouth bass was high (88.3 fish/mile) during the 2018 spring electrofishing survey. However, unlike most small lakes with high largemouth bass catch rates, the size structure of was also good, as 51% of the bass handled were 14 inches or larger, and the largest bass was 20.5 inches. Largemouth bass in Staples Lake are managed with the statewide, 14-inch minimum length

limit and five fish daily bag limit. There is one boat landing on the northwest corner of Staples Lake off County Line St. Staples Lake is a shallow (17 ft. max. depth) and fertile lake. Anglers will also find respectable populations of other popular sportfish species in Staples Lake.

## ■ CRAWFORD and GRANT COUNTIES

**Mississippi River Pool 10.** 10,135 Acres and 34 miles of open water. The DNR surveyed backwater lakes, sloughs, and side channels in the fall of 2018 near Bagley, WI to determine the health of the fishery. Largemouth bass was the dominate games species in our survey survey with catch-per unit effort for largemouth bass at 9 fish per hour. The size of largemouth ranged from 10 to 19 inches with the largest bass being 19.1 inches. Many bass were in the 4 to 5-pound range and it not uncommon to catch 6-pound-plus fish in Pool 10. Continuous Open Season, 14" minimum length with a 5-fish daily bag limit. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. Check out the following websites for more details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>; [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Upper\\_Pool\\_10.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Upper_Pool_10.pdf); [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Lower\\_Pool\\_10.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Lower_Pool_10.pdf). The waters of Pool 10 are part of the Upper



Amy Lesik shows off her catch of a nearly 21" largemouth bass on Lake Hallie in Chippewa County.

Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America. The refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois and has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) and a Globally Important Bird Area.

## ■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**Lake Hallie** – 79 acres. Lake Hallie is situated between Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls in southwestern Chippewa County. A 2018 electrofishing survey showed a healthy largemouth bass population with many fish near or exceeding the 20" mark. Since Lake Hallie is only 79-acres, it should make locating these 'bucket mouths' a little easier. Lake Hallie is a fertile body of water making aquatic vegetation abundant in the summer months, so top-water lures may be a necessity for putting fish in the boat. The largemouth bass regulation on Lake Hallie is a five-fish bag limit with a 14" minimum length limit. -Joseph Gerbyshak – Fisheries Biologist, Eau Claire

## ■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Lower Eau Claire Lake** - 784 acres. This lake holds an above average number of largemouth bass when compared to similar lakes. A 2018 population survey found 15 bass/mile of shoreline. The average length of largemouth bass was 12.8 inches with the longest fish measuring 17.1 inches. Lower Eau Claire Lake is a good lake for those looking to catch fish or to harvest bass for a meal. No minimum length limit, five fish daily bag limit. Concrete boat launch located at the Mooney Dam County Park on the southwest end of lake.

## ■ FOND DU LAC COUNTY

**Auburn Lake** - 90 acres. During a 2018 spring electrofishing survey 74 Largemouth Bass were captured. This catch rate is equivalent to 26 Largemouth Bass/mile. Lengths ranged from 5.5 inches to 19.5 inches with an average size of 11.8 inches. While trophy potential is limited, Auburn Lake offers great Largemouth Bass action with opportunities to fish from shore, kayak, canoe, or even small boat as this small lake is located within the northern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. 14 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish daily bag. Much of the shoreline of Auburn Lake is within the northern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and open for shorefishing. There is also a public boat launch located at N1783 Lakeshore Dr. Campbellsport, WI on the north end of the lake.

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Fisher Lake** - 482 acres. During all surveys conducted on Fisher Lake in 2018, crews documented good numbers of largemouth bass. An electrofishing survey showed that 50% of individuals were larger than 12" and 19% were larger than 15". This largemouth population provides anglers with a good opportunity for quality numbers of quality fish. Abundant shallow vegetation and near-shore wood make targeting bucket-mouths in Fisher a blast. Currently, the largemouth bass regulation on Fisher Lake is a 14" minimum length, 5-fish daily bag limit.

## ■ LA CROSSE, TREMPAULEAU and VERNON COUNTIES

**Mississippi River, pools 7 and 8 and upper 9** — 53,850 acres. Largemouth bass fishing on the Mississippi River near La Crosse is well known. There are professional bass tournaments almost every



A hawg largemouth bass collected from a Little Lake Butte des Morts survey.

summer weekend, and some very large tournaments are scheduled annually. Since the late 1990's, largemouth bass numbers have doubled on this large





Kyle Olson and Steven Gospodarek, fisheries technicians holding a pair of 21 inch largemouth bass captured during a spring electrofishing survey on Lower Genesee Lake. Photo: Benjamin Heussner

river. Fall 2018 electro fishing samples in pools 7, 8 and upper 9 from Trempealeau, WI downstream to Lansing, IA showed steady or improved numbers. In the reach of Pool 7 near the mouth of the Black River, catchable-size bass have increased four-fold when last sampled in 2014. Average size of these fish increased over one inch to 13.2 inches; 36 percent of these fish were over 14 inches. The catch rate for catchable-sized largemouth (2.8 fish per hour) was the same as 21 other comparable Mississippi River surveys, and less than 10. In the Black River Channel area bordering the cities of La Crosse and Onalaska, largemouth bass abundance was the same as 2014 (9.8 fish per hour). Average length of catchable size bass remained the same as 2014 (13.2 inches) and 19 percent were over 14 inches in 2018. In the Reno Bottoms area, which extends along the Minnesota side from the Upper Iowa River upstream to Dam 8, fifty percent of catchable largemouth bass were over 14 inches and the average size was 14.2 inches. Abundance was the same as 2014 (3.3 fish per hour) and was the same as 21 other comparable Mississippi River surveys, and less than 10. In Wisconsin waters of the Mississippi River, five total bass at least 14 inches long can be kept daily. The season is year-round. Wisconsin and Minnesota fishing regulations may significantly change starting in 2020. Please attend the April 8, 2019 Spring Conservation Hearing on your county to register your opinion on these proposed changes. The best way to find a boat landing is to go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html). Increasingly, river municipalities are charging boat access fees. David Heath, fisheries biologist, La Crosse.

## LANGLADE COUNTY

**Rabe Lake** – help us eradicate largemouth bass from this 6-acre, naturally reproducing brook trout spring pond; No size limit and daily bag of 5 fish; Harvest season opens the first Saturday in May and ends on October 15 with the trout season; Please help out the brookies and target bass for removal here. They are great tasting from this cool spring water!; Boat ramp with parking Stocked trout lakes managed for put-and-take trout: Crooked Lake, Pence Lake, Rogers Lake, and Townline Lake; 5 daily and no size limit; Help us make these stocked trout lakes the best they can be by targeting and removing the trout eating largemouth bass!

## LINCOLN COUNTY

Stocked trout lakes managed for put-and-take trout: Ament Lake, Henson Lake, Larson Lake, Moraine Lake, and Tahoe Lake; 5 daily and no size limit; Help us make these stocked trout lakes

the best they can be by targeting and removing the trout eating largemouth bass!

## OCONTO COUNTY

**Townsend Flowage** - 476 acres. Townsend Flowage has a respectable largemouth bass population. The average length of bass collected in 2016 was 13 inches and fish up to 19 inches were collected. Thirty percent of largemouth bass collected were over the 14-in minimum length limit. Since Townsend Flowage is relatively shallow (average depth = 9 ft.) and there is a lot of aquatic vegetation and flooded timber, bass can hide and feed just about anywhere around the lake. 14-inch minimum / 5 fish per day. There are several well-developed boat landings and several undeveloped access points available for smaller boats/canoes. There is no early catch-and-release season for largemouth bass on Townsend Flowage even though it is within the northern bass zone.



Fisheries technician Chelsea Barnaby with a largemouth bass captured by electrofishing in Sailor Creek Flowage near Fifield in May 2018.

## OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

**Black Otter Lake** - 78 acre impoundment Black Otter Lake may be a small impoundment, but it is home to an impressive largemouth bass fishery. Catch rates of largemouth bass during a 2018 electrofishing survey (55 fish/mile) were in the 88th percentile relative to statewide data. Further, the population contained a strong representation of legal size fish as 32% of the fish sampled were larger than the 14" minimum length limit. Thus, Black Otter Lake provides a quality action fishery for largemouth

bass, while also producing memorable size fish in excess of 20". 5 fish daily bag limit, 14" minimum length limit There is a public boat landing off Lake Shore Dr. on the west shore of the lake. There is also a publicly accessible fishing platform near the dam on the northwest corner of the lake.

## POLK COUNTY

**Ward Lake** - 82 acres. Ward Lake has an abundant largemouth bass population, which makes it an excellent option for the harvest-minded bass angler or anyone interested in fast angling action. With the high abundance, the size structure and growth rates of largemouth bass are poor. Most bass are between 8-12 inches, but bass up to 21.5 inches have been captured in electrofishing surveys. Since Ward Lake has a no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit, anglers are able (and encouraged) to harvest bass less than 14 inches. Increasing the harvest of small (<14 inch) bass should increase the size structure of the population. Ward Lake has one boat landing and it is located on the southwest side of the lake off 80th St. Ward Lake is considered a seepage lake. Like most seepage lakes, the water level can fluctuate from year to year.

## VILAS COUNTY

**Fishtrap Lake** 329 surface acres. Bass fishing aficionados should find a good mix of numbers, size and habitat types when fishing Fishtrap Lake. A spring 2018 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources survey targeting gamefish was used to evaluate the fishery of Fishtrap Lake. During netting and electrofishing a total of 596 largemouth bass were captured, with an average size of approximately 12 inches. From that sample of largemouth bass 17% were equal to or greater than 14 inches; the largest largemouth bass captured was 19.0 inches. Current statewide regulations apply: 14 inch minimum/5 fish daily bag limit. Challenging access exists by two means: small craft can use the High Lake boat landing off County B and navigate through a culvert into Fishtrap Lake. A state boat landing off Dam Road, which requires a 4-mile boat trip up the Manitowish River.

## WALWORTH COUNTY

**Lake Geneva** - 5401 acres. Recent bass surveys on Lake Geneva have produced very good catch rates and size structure, including a 14.3" average length and 21.5" maximum length. Anglers are reporting excellent fishing days, particularly in the fall. 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag. Six public boat launches are available on Geneva: Lake Street in Fontana (west side), E Geneva Street in Williams Bay (north side), Chapin Road (north side - no parking), Wrigley Drive in Lake Geneva (northeast side), Hillside Road (southeast side) and Linn Road (south side). Shorefishing opportunities are available at several parks and municipal fishing piers across the lake.

## WASHBURN COUNTY

**Bass Patterson Lake** - 187 acres. This lake holds an abundant largemouth bass population. A 2017 population estimate found 10 bass/acre and 82 bass/mile of shoreline. A 2017-18 DNR creel survey also found bass to be the second most harvested fish. This is a great lake to bring kids looking to catch fish or to harvest bass for a meal. No minimum length limit, five fish daily bag limit Concrete boat launch located at the end of Bass Lake Rd, east of Springbrook, WI.

## WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Middle Genesee Lake** - 98 surface acres Average Length - 13 inches with average abundance and excellent trophy potential. 14-inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. A newly renovated DNR managed boat launch is located on Gen-

esee Lake Road. A spring electrofishing survey showed Genesee Lake has excellent largemouth bass size structure with fish up to 21 inches. Lower Genesee Lake is stocked with catchable size trout in spring, quality northern pike and above average bluegill size structure.

**Eagle Spring Lake** - 270 surface acres Average Length - 9 inches. No minimum length limit - largemouth bass and smallmouth bass from 14 inches to 18 inches may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 18 inches is allowed. The daily bag limit is 5. The public launch is located on the lakes' east side off of county Highway E, near Eagle Spring Pub. This lake has an abundant population of largemouth so anglers are encouraged to harvest bass less than 14" to help reduce the population improve growth rates.

## SMALLMOUTH BASS



## ASHLAND and BAYFIELD COUNTIES

**Chequamegon Bay - Lake Superior** ~34,000 acres. Chequamegon Bay deserves its reputation as a trophy smallmouth fishery. Smallmouth Bass caught in spring by fisherman average about 17.5 inches with about 10% of fish caught measuring over 19 inches. Many year-classes contribute to the population and we consistently see fish older than 20 years. May 4 through June 14 is catch and release only. From June 15 to March 1 one fish over 22 inches can be kept. Second Landing and Kreher Park are the most popular access points. Prior to the current regulation, size structure of Chequamegon Bay smallmouth was much smaller, and fish had much shorter average lifespans. The current fishery has greatly increased abundance, average size, and lifespan of these fish and gives anglers a greater opportunity to tangle with trophy fish!

## BARRON COUNTY

**Red Cedar River** - Red Cedar River from the Rice Lake Dam to the Barron-Dunn County line (~30 river miles). The Red Cedar River has a respectable smallmouth bass fishery that is often overlooked by anglers. The smallmouth bass population has good size structure.



A happy angler catching her very first Smallmouth Bass on near the Kakagon Sloughs in Chequamegon Bay.



Fisheries biologist, Lawrence Eslinger with a Smallmouth Bass from the Namekagon River, Sawyer Co.

Of the 119 smallmouth bass 8 inches and greater collected during a recent survey, 45% were 15 inches or larger, and a few fish were over 18 inches. The Red Cedar River smallmouth bass fishery is managed with the statewide bass regulation, 14-inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. Barron County has several well-marked and maintained river accesses. These would include the accesses at County Highways O, W, OO, D, I, and AI. Along with smallmouth bass, anglers also have a good chance of catching a few walleye or even tying into a musky.

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

**Arbutus Lake** (840 acres, Clark and Jackson Counties), **Upper Black River** (above the Black River Falls dam, Clark and Jackson Counties), and **lower Black River** (below the Black River Falls dam, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties). Catch rates are based on 2018 electrofishing results (expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of lake shoreline or river surveyed). **Arbutus:** Total catch rate was 3.5/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 1.5/mile, and maximum size captured was 19". The last comparable survey was conducted in 2014. Total catch rate was 3.1/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 1/mile, and maximum size captured was 18". **Black River, upper:** Total catch rate was 104.3/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 8.7/mile and maximum size captured was 17". In 2017, total catch rate was 59/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 14/mile and maximum size captured was 17". **Black River, lower:** Total catch rate was 9.8/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 0.6/mile and maximum size captured was 17". In 2017, total catch rate was 1.1/mile, catch rate of 14"+ size fish was 0.3/mile and maximum size captured was 16". Regulation: 14 inch minimum size limit / 5 fish daily bag limit. Access Information: Arbutus – West Arbutus Landing near the Hatfield dam, Arnolds Creek Boat Landing, and North Arbutus Boat Landing. Upper Black River – Halls Creek Canoe Landing and Black River State Forest unimproved landings off Palm and Brickyard Roads (Jackson County), and DNR boat landing off Opelt Avenue (Clark County). Lower Black River – 3rd Street Canoe Landing (City of Black River Falls), Perry Creek Landing, Mason's Landing, Irving Township Canoe Landing, Highway 108 Landing near Melrose, WI, North Bend Landing off CTH VV, and Highway 35 landing in Van Loon Bottoms. A separate survey of the extreme upper end of Lake Arbutus conducted in April of 2018 yielded a total catch rate of 50.6 smallmouth bass per mile and catch rate of 14"+ bass of 34.7/mile. Approximately 70% of the fish captured during this survey were 14" or larger.

## LANGLADE COUNTY

When targeting smallmouth bass think big water and rocky water. Smallmouth bass prefer boulder and rocky habitat and in Langlade County, the **Wolf River** has 46 miles of rocks galore. Anywhere downstream from the Post Lake dam east of Elcho all the way downstream to the Menominee County line is prime smallmouth water. Parts of the Wolf River grade to coldwater and are better suited for trout, but warmer stretches hold plenty of smallies. Most fish are in the 10-16" range, but there are smallies up to 20" present. There is a 14" minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 bass. Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May. Right below the Post Lake dam there is a county park with a fishing dock and plenty of shore fishing opportunities. This is a popular area. There is also a boat ramp to launch small boats and canoes and kayaks. Throughout the county, the Upper Wolf River Fishery Area provides ample public walk-in access to the Wolf River.

## LINCOLN COUNTY

**The Wisconsin River** and its impoundments cut the county in half and provide 50 miles and over 5,000 acres of top-notch brown bass fishing opportunities. The Wisconsin River system throughout the county produces high density and high size quality populations. The majority of fish are in the 12-18" range, but fish over 20" are caught. There is a 14" minimum size limit and a daily bag limit of 5 bass. Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May. The impoundments all have several boat ramps and between state, county, and utility company land, there are plenty of shore fishing opportunities.

## MARINETTE COUNTY

**Chalk Hills Flowage** - 866 acres. Data collected in 2016 demonstrated an average length of bass collected was 15 inches and fish up to 20 inches were measured. There are scattered areas of rock and aquatic vegetation that provide good smallmouth bass habitat. 14-inch minimum / 5 fish per day. Anglers can choose from 4 boat landings from Pemene Falls to the Chalk Hills dam. This section of the Menominee river supports diverse habitat with shallow river water (less than 5 feet) above Chalk Hills. The impoundment has a maximum depth of 30 ft and 80% of the impoundment is greater than 3 ft.

## ONEIDA COUNTY

**Hasbrook Lake** - 307 acres. Smallmouth bass show a healthy population with trophy potential. The largest smallmouth handled in recent surveys measured just over 20 inches. A sizable number of fish over 14 inches are also present. A public



Sawyer County Fisheries biologist Max Wolter with a nice Grindstone Lake smallmouth. Photo by Jeff Evans.

boat launch is located on the southwest end of the lake off Hasbrook Road.

**Katherine Lake** - 524 acres. This is an action fishery. The size structure tends to run a little small with most fish between 10 to 15 inches, but bigger fish are present. A public boat ramp with a required fee is located on the west side of the lake off Oneida Street.

## SAWYER COUNTY

**Grindstone Lake** (3,0176 acres) in Sawyer County is home to a popular smallmouth bass fishery. That popularity is in part due to anglers catching them at a high rate of one smallmouth per every hour fished. Remarkably, in Grindstone anglers catch more smallmouth than bluegill! Size of smallmouth is excellent as well. Of all adult smallmouth captured in a DNR shocking survey in 2018, 65% were over 14 inches and 22% were over 17 inches. The largest smallmouth observed in the survey were over 20 inches. DNR creel data tells us that most anglers fishing Grindstone are releasing smallmouth voluntarily. A recent regulation change put even more



Happy angler holding a 23" Pewaukee Lake smallmouth bass. Photo: Mark Kromptich

emphasis on catch and release with the hopes of further improving size of this already impressive population. Starting in 2018, the minimum length limit for smallmouth was increased to 18 inches and the daily bag limit was reduced to one. There is a state owned launch to access the lake off of County Hwy K.

## WASHBURN COUNTY

**Shell Lake** - 2,513 acres. Smallmouth bass are abundant in Shell Lake. Spring sampling yielded 260 smallmouth bass with an average length of 13 inches and a catch rate of 31 fish/mile of shoreline. The maximum size was 19 inches and 55% were greater than 14 inches. No minimum length limit, five fish daily bag limit. Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

## WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Oconomowoc River** - 17 river miles. Average Length - 13 inches. 14" minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Numerous rural and urban road crossings downstream of Lac La Belle provide public access with right-of-way rules applying. This shallow river system favors canoe and kayak anglers, resulting in less angling pressure and quality smallmouth angling opportunities. The seventeen miles of river provide a diversity of habitat resulting in excellent wildlife viewing and fishing. Portage is required for paddlers at Northside Drive

**Pewaukee Lake.** Average length - 15 inches, maximum length 23 inches. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum

length limit, daily bag limit of 5. There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. In addition to trophy smallmouth bass potential, Pewaukee Lake also provides above average large-mouth bass angling.

## NORTHERN PIKE



## BARRON COUNTY

**Chetek Chain of Lakes** - The Chetek Chain of lakes is 3,763 acres and consists of Prairie, Chetek, Tenmile, Pokegama, and Ojaski lakes.

The Chetek Chain has a low density, high size structure northern pike population. Although anglers will not likely catch a lot of northern pike on the Chetek Chain, they stand a good shot at catching quality northern pike in the 30-40-inch range. Northern pike on the Chetek Chain are managed with a 26-inch minimum length limit and two fish daily bag limit. There are 11 public boat landings throughout the Chetek Chain. There are also two public fishing piers on the Chetek Chain, one is at Brown's Landing on Prairie Lake and the other is on the south end of Pokegama Lake off CTH D.

## BROWN, DOOR, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTIES

**Green Bay and tributaries.** The late, wet springs of 2013 and 2014 provided favorable conditions for northern pike spawning. Those two excellent year classes will continue to provide anglers an opportunity to catch memorable pike over 34 inches. Because the vast size of the bay reduces competition between top predators and because it hosts an abundance of prey fish such as yellow perch, gizzard shad, and round gobies, we do not see stunted populations of pike as is commonly seen in many inland lakes. In winter, using a tip-up with a large shiner or dead smelt fished just off of the bottom in shallow water can work well. Current regulation for Green Bay and major tributaries: Open all year. Daily limit is 5. No size minimum. Current regulation for all other Green Bay tributaries: Open 1st Saturday in May to 1st Sunday in March. Daily limit is 5. No minimum length limit. There are numerous boat access and tributary access locations along Green Bay. See the following websites for detailed information. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>; <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>. In early spring, adult northern pike migrate from Green Bay in tributaries and ditches to spawn in shallow wetlands, often travelling dozens of miles. Because of this behavior, pike in Green Bay are very susceptible to poor year classes during dry springs. The critical time period for spawning, incubation, hatching, and finally fry migration back to Green Bay is from late March through May. The record-breaking blizzard in mid-April 2018 caused many adult pike to perish underneath two feet of snow in roadside ditches and shallow streams and wetlands.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Red Lake** - 253 acres. Red Lake spring netting survey in 2018 resulted in a above average number of northern pike with an average of 6 fish per net lift which is higher than 75% of similar lakes. Pike ranged in size from 13 to 30 inches with an average length of 19 inches. 18% of the pike captured were over 20 inches. A harvest opportunity as well as the chance to catch a memorable size pike in Red Lake through the ice or on open

water. Current regulation: no minimum length, daily limit 51 public boat launch off the southwest side of the lake.

**St. Louis River and Estuary** - 12,000 acres. 2,714 northern pike captured and released in 2018 fyke net survey; a subsample of 773 measured had an average length of 22.6 inches, with a range of 9.0 inches to 41.0 inches. 227 individu-



The business end. Close up of a St. Louis River northern pike caught and released during 2018 field work.

als (29%) exceeded the 26-inch minimum length limit, 54 individuals (7%) were 32-inches or longer. Open May 5 through March 1; 26-inch minimum length with a daily limit of two fish.

**Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier:** Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. Features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> for complete information. **Oliver Landing:** Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. Paved parking and restrooms. **Barker's Island Landing:** Located in the City of Superior at the end of Marina Drive. Features restrooms and paved parking. **Loon's Foot Landing:** Located in the City of Superior just west of the Nemadji River. Restrooms and paved parking. The northern pike fishery of the St. Louis River is sustained entirely by natural reproduction with adult pike spawning along marshy



Handling a good-sized northern pike can be a challenge, but it's a challenge that is often met.

shoreline areas throughout the estuary. The walleye and musky fisheries in the St. Louis River may receive more attention from anglers, however the northern pike fishery provides additional open water and ice fishing opportunities for anglers wanting to keep fish for consumption or sport anglers looking for quality to trophy sized pike. The St. Louis River pike fishery has not been sampled intensively, but northern pike over 40-inches have been documented in fisheries surveys dating back to the mid-1970's. - Aaron Nelson, Fisheries technician

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Lake Koshkonong** - 10,000 acres. 2018 spring netting surveys of Lautz Bay on Lake Koshkonong yielded some quality northern pike catches. A total of 340 northern pike were captured with a length range of 8.2 to 34.7 inches and an average length of 21.1 inches. With the current 26-inch minimum length

limit 16% of the catch was legal. There is a year-round open season on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. 26-inch minimum length and 2 fish daily bag limit on northern pike. Royce Dalmann County Park, Groeler Road. With assistance of local cooperative groups, the DNR's Bark River Hatchery stocked 1.1 million northern pike fry into Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River in 2018.

## JUNEAU COUNTY

**New Lisbon Lake (Lemonweir River)** - 122 acres. A fyke-net survey was conducted in the spring of 2018 to target northern pike. Overall the lake has a low to moderate density high quality northern pike fishery. During the survey, 66 northern pike were caught, and one was a recapture. Relative abundance was 2.1 fish per net night. Fish ranged in size from 20.3" to 37.4" with an average size of 26.5". 93.9% of the fish were of quality size (21") or larger, 31.8% were preferred size (28") or larger and 6.1% were memorable size (34") or larger. Statewide regulation; 26" minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 2. A public boat launch and shore fishing opportunities are available at the City of New Lisbon's Riverside Park & Campground off Hog Island Road.

Northern pike are the first gamefish to spawn in the spring and can begin to immigrate to spawning habitat when water temperatures are very cold, 33°F, often before ice goes off the lake. The Lemonweir River has extensive backwaters and the Little Lemonweir has backwaters with northern pike spawning habitat. This survey focused on waters near the I-94 bridges and the New Lisbon dam. Likely fish were missed due to their immigration behavior and survey nets had to be pulled twice due to a cold front that refroze the lake for a week and prior to a snowstorm that brought up to 20" of snow in the area.

## OCONTO COUNTY

**Peshigo Flowage, Bear and Munger lakes, Lake John.** All 3 lakes were surveyed in 2017. In Bear & Munger Lakes, 79 pike were collected and ranged in length from 9.4 to 31.4 inches. Only 5 pike over the minimum length limit of 26 inches were collected. Pike averaged 20.2 inches. In Lake John, only 2 northern pike over the 26-inch minimum length limit were collected however, 42 pike were collected between 23 and 25 inches. No minimum length / 5 fish per day. There is a boat landing on Munger Lake; Bear Lake is accessed via a navigable channel from Munger Lake. Two boat landings are available for anglers on Lake John. The fishing regulations for northern pike will change on the opening day of fishing in 2019. The previous minimum length limit for northern pike was 26

inches and a 2-fish daily bag limit. The new fishing regulation for pike will be no minimum length limit and a 5-fish daily bag limit.

## RACINE COUNTY

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

## ST CROIX COUNTY

**Squaw Lake** - 129 acres. Squaw lake is a fertile seepage lake located in western St. Croix county. The spring netting survey resulted in a large population of northern pike with an average of 18 fish per net lift. Pike ranged in size from 7 to 35 inches with an average length of 23 inches. 31% of the pike captured were over 25 inches. With a decent size structure and an abundant population there is plenty of harvest opportunity as well as the chance to catch a memorable size pike in Squaw Lake through the ice or on open water. Squaw lake is aerated during winter, however, a winter kill occurred in 2014 leaving mostly pike and crappie remaining. Panfish, pike and bass were restocked and now have viable populations. Previously, the pike population relied almost completely on



Oshkosh biologist, Adam Nickel, with a chunk of a northern pike from a recent netting survey.

stocking, however, this past survey has likely documented natural reproduction. No minimum length, daily limit 5 1 public boat launch off the southeast side of the lake from 100th st

## SAWYER COUNTY

Attention fans of pickled fish: the **Chippewa Flowage** has some pike for you! The "Big Chip" is known as a major Northwoods fishing destination for musky, walleye, and crappie. Northern pike are another species that anglers catch commonly. Interestingly, pike are not believed to be native to the Chippewa Flowage! Pike are certainly well-established now. A recent DNR netting survey found 25 pike per net lift, a relatively high rate. Anglers coming to fish the Chip are being encouraged to catch and keep pike in an effort to control their abundance and hopefully improve pike

size in the future. Pike on the Chip provide fast action, both during open water and through the ice. Areas to focus on include weedy bays like Chicago, Moss Creek, Chief Lake, and Minnesota Bay. Keeping pike may not be everyone's favorite thing to do, but it's a good way to help the fishery while also supplying your next fish fry or stocking up on picklers! We particularly encourage harvest of smaller pike. There are no size restrictions for pike, but the bag limit of 5 per day still applies. There are numerous boat landings on the lake, including State-owned ramps on County CC and County B.

## WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Big Muskego Lake** - 2200 surface acres. Average Length - 22 inches with fish observed up to 40 inches. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. There are three public launch-



Fisheries technician Josh Krall holding a 36.1" 11.5 lb female pike from a recent spring survey.

es located on the lakes' east, south and southeast sides found on Boxhorn and Durham Drive. Big Muskego is shallow lake averaging 3 feet deep and has heavy aquatic plants and big northern pike. The conservative minimum length and bag limits provide exciting catch and release opportunities for both bass and pike.

## WAUPACA COUNTY

**Weyauwega Millpond** - 253 acres. The DNR conducted a spring fyke netting survey of Weyauwega Millpond from March 20 - April 2, 2018, primarily targeting northern pike. A total of 389 northern pike were captured during the fyke netting survey, ranging in length from 9.1 to 31.3 inches and averaging 19.6 inches. Given that it has only been five years since Weyauwega Millpond was drawn down for an extended period of time, it is likely that the number of larger pike in the millpond will only increase in the future. Anglers can expect plenty of action when targeting northern pike with the fishery only getting better in the future as more northern pike will have time to grow to larger sizes following the drawdown. 5 northern pike with no length limit. Weyauwega Millpond has two public boat launches, one on the south side of the millpond off North Lake Street and the other located near the dam off Old Mill Street on the east side of the millpond. Anglers can also fish from the fishing dock located in Peterson Park on the north side of the Millpond near the intersections of Lakeshore Drive and 3rd Street. Weyauwega Millpond was drawn down to the original river channel from July, 2011 through April, 2013. The purpose of this drawdown was to reduce undesirable vegetation by dessication and freezing, increase depth by flushing and compaction of sediments, and promote growth of emergent vegetation along shorelines. The fishery has recovered nicely following the drawdown. Weyauwega Millpond also provides a nice largemouth bass and bluegill fishery.



Angler Becky Slattery shows off a fine pike caught through the ice on a tip up in Sawyer County.

## PANFISH



### BARRON COUNTY

**Chetek Chain of Lakes.** The Chetek Chain of lakes is 3,763 acres and consists of Prairie, Chetek, Tenmile, Pokegama, and Ojaski lakes. The Chetek Chain is a consistent producer of 7-9 inch bluegills and 8-11 inch crappies. Panfish populations in the Chetek Chain are managed with a 25 fish bag limit, no minimum length limit. There are 11 public boat landings throughout the Chetek Chain. There are also two public fishing piers on the Chetek Chain, one is at Brown's Landing on Prairie Lake and the other is on the south end of Pokegama Lake off CTH D. The Chetek Chain is an extremely productive "panfish factory" that commonly undergoes heavy algae blooms during summer.

### BROWN, DOOR, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTIES

**Green Bay.** Year class strength for yellow perch has been good in recent years, with moderately strong year classes since 2015 represented in southern Green Bay surveys. A mix of small, younger fish and larger, older fish in the 10-13 inch range will provide fishing opportunities throughout the upcoming season. Sport fishing harvest is estimated from an annual creel survey. Open water harvest of yellow perch in 2017 was 117,412 fish, up from 72,223 fish in 2016. Much of the open water harvest (45%) was by boat anglers launching at ramps in Door and Kewaunee Counties, followed by boat anglers in Oconto County (26%). The mean length of open-water harvested yellow perch was 8.6 inches in 2017. Open water harvest estimates for 2018 will be available in early 2019. Winter harvest is influenced largely by ice conditions, daily bag limits, angler effort, and abundance of adult perch. The winter of 2018 was the best year for perch fishing in the last 7 years. An estimated 35,966 yellow perch were harvested between January 1 and March 15, 2018. If decent ice forms early and lasts into March, ice fishing for perch should be just as good or better than last winter. Anglers often have good luck catching perch in harbors or river mouths in the fall months, with Oconto Park II and Oconto Harbor being hotspots in October 2018. Up to date fishing information can be found at on the DNR website, keywords 'Green Bay fishing report'. Current regulation: Open May 20 to March 15. Daily limit is 15 yellow perch. No minimum length. There are dozens of boat and shore access locations to fish for yellow perch

on Green Bay. Check out the following websites for more details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>. The oldest and largest yellow perch recorded by DNR crews in recent years was 15.5 inches, weighed 1.8 pounds, and was aged at 12 years old. It was caught near Suamico in June 2011.

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

**The Winnebago System** includes four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) and two main river systems (upper Fox and Wolf Rivers) and associated tributaries upstream to the first dam. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System should provide anglers with quality panfishing opportunities in 2019, largely due to strong year classes of yellow perch, black crappie, and bluegills in 2016. 2018 spring fyke net catches observed for yellow perch on Lake Winnebago (251/net night) and the Fox River in Oshkosh (146/net night) were in the 98th percentile relative to statewide data. Catch at both locations were dominated by 7-9" fish. Catch rates of yearling and adult yellow perch during 2018 fall bottom trawl assessments on Lake Winnebago were the 2nd highest observed since 2011. The size structure of yellow perch handled during October trawl assessments was favorable as 76% of the fish handled were 8-10". The 2016 year class of yellow perch should provide one more quality year of fishing in 2019. Black crappie captured during October trawl assessments exhibited a similar size structure to yellow perch, with 77% of the captured fish measuring 8-10". The best black crappie fishing is normally in spring when fish come into the shallows to spawn, while yellow perch fishing is usually best between July and September. The season is open year round for panfish with an aggregate daily bag limit of 25 fish and no minimum length limit on any species. There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system ranging from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town access at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>).



Yellow perch collected from Lake Wausau in a 2018 survey.

### CLARK and JACKSON COUNTIES

**Arbutus Lake** (840 acres, Clark and Jackson Counties) and **Indian Creek Flowage** (550 acres, Jackson County).

**Black Crappies**  
Arbutus: Total catch rate was 26.3/net lift, catch rate of 9"+ fish was 3.7/net lift,

catch rate of 10"+ fish was 3.4/net lift, and maximum size captured was 12". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2014. Total catch rate was 6.8/net lift, catch rate of 9"+ fish was 3.7/net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.9/net lift and maximum size captured was 14". Indian Creek Flowage: Total catch rate was 37.7/net lift, catch rate of 9"+ fish was 22/net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 8.9/net lift, and maximum size captured was 13". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2011. Total catch rate was 28.4/net lift, catch rate of 9"+ fish was 17.4/net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 6.3/net lift and maximum size captured was 13".

#### Bluegills

Arbutus: Total catch rate was 0.8/net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 0.3/net lift, no 8"+ bluegills were captured, and maximum size was 7.5". In 2014, total catch rate was 1.1/net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 0.8/net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.5/net lift, and maximum size captured was 9". Indian Creek Flowage: Total catch rate was 20.6/net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 14.8/net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 4.4/net lift, and maximum size captured was 9". In 2011, total catch rate was 9.5/net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 5.4/net lift, 8"+ catch rate was 0.4/net lift, and maximum size captured was 9".

#### Yellow Perch

Arbutus: Total catch rate was 4.6/net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.6/net lift and maximum size captured was 12". In 2014, total catch rate was 4.5/net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.6/net lift, and maximum size captured was 12". Indian Creek Flowage: Very few yellow perch were captured during both the 2011 and 2018 surveys.

**Regulation:** Arbutus - no minimum size limit/10 daily aggregate bag limit and Indian Creek Flowage - no minimum size limit/25 aggregate bag limit. Access Information: Arbutus - West Arbutus Landing near the Hatfield dam, Arnolds Creek Boat Landing, and North Arbutus Boat Landing. Indian Creek Flowage - Jackson County landing off Eckern Road. Accessible fish facilities in our area are available at Lake Wazee, Black River Flowage, and Teal Flowage in Jackson County, Mead and Arbutus Lakes in Clark County, and Second Lake, Arctic Springs Pond, Lake Henry, and Bugle Lake in Trempealeau County.

### CRAWFORD and GRANT COUNTIES

**Mississippi River Pool 10** - 10,135 Acres and 34 Miles of open water. The DNR surveyed backwater lakes in October and November 2018 near Glen Haven, WI to determine the health of the fishery. The bluegill population was healthy with many bluegills in the 5 to 9.1-inch range and the largest bluegill in our survey topped out at 9.1 inches. Catch-per unit effort for adult bluegill was at 7 fish per hour. Panfish are the most targeted fish on the Mississippi River and provide excellent angling opportunities during open water and the winter fishery. Ice anglers should continue to find success in the backwater lakes up and down the river. However, anglers should beware of thin ice near flowing sloughs and areas entering backwater lakes. Continuous open season, with a daily bag limit of 25 bluegills. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. Check out the following websites for more details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Upper\\_Pool\\_10.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Upper_Pool_10.pdf) [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Lower\\_Pool\\_10.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Lower_Pool_10.pdf). The waters of Pool 10 are part of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America. The refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois

and has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) and a Globally Important Bird Area.

### DANE COUNTY

**Lake Wingra** - 336 acres, max depth 14 feet. Bluegills- long considered stunted, our recent survey indicates the bluegills are increasing their sizes, up to 8" in Lake Wingra. The carp removal efforts have increased water clarity, which allows a site feeder like the bluegills to forage more efficiently and with the carp reduced, the places for the fish to hide from predators has increased with the aquatic plants now thriving. There are still plenty of smaller bluegills out there, so if catching some fish with young kids or constant action is what you are after, consider panfishing on Lake Wingra. Regulations are no minimum length limit, daily bag of 25 for all panfish, open all year.



Fisheries technician Kendal Patrie with a black crappie from a fall 2018 netting survey. Photo: Jeff Scheirer

### GREEN LAKE COUNTY

**Green Lake** - 7,346 acres. Panfish populations are difficult to sample in Wisconsin's deepest inland lake and though sample sizes were small, size structure generally runs high. Black Crappie sampled in 2016 averaged 11.3" and Bluegill had an average size of 7". Fish can be difficult to find and most are targeted through the ice and in the spring just after ice out. No length limit, 25 in total. There are numerous public, developed access sites. Most require a fee.

### IOWA COUNTY

**Twin Valley Lake** - 136 acres. Twin Valley Lake yields a high-density population of panfish including Bluegill, Black Crappie, Pumpkinseed and Yellow Perch. Spring electrofishing surveys yielded a catch rate of 755 Bluegill per mile. Overall, Bluegill size structure has increased dramatically from a mean length of 4.5 inches in the mid 2000's, to a mean length of 6.5 inches (maximum length of 7.8 inches) in 2018. Black Crappies, Pumpkinseeds and Yellow Perch, although in lower numbers, were also present during spring surveys. Anglers can expect good angling opportunities for panfish, especially during the ice fishing season. Previous regulations allowed for the unlimited harvest of panfish; however, the general statewide regulation (25 fish in total, no minimum length limit) has been implemented as of January 1, 2019. Twin Valley Lake is located in Governor Dodge state park. A state park sticker or daily pass is required, and one public boat launch is available. Only electric trolling motors are permitted on Twin Valley Lake. Governor Dodge is the third largest state park in Wisconsin. Camping, fish-

ing, hunting, hiking, and horseback riding are permitted within the state park and a public beach and picnic area are provided. - Justin Haglund fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

## ■ IRON COUNTY

**Turtle-Flambeau Flowage (TFF):** With 13,545 acres of water to explore, the TFF has a lot to offer anglers: vast expanses of habitat types, plenty of room to get away from other boats, a scenic wilderness experience, 66 remote campsites accessible via water only, and an impressive panfishing opportunity. Results from a 2018 fyke-netting survey suggest that panfish are present in decent numbers and the fish available are of impressive sizes. Bluegills ranged in length from 5-9", 32% of which were larger than 8". Black crappies ranged in length from 5.3-12.9", 42% of which were larger than 10". Anglers should note the 10" minimum length limit on



Perch fishing is popular all year, with anglers targeting them in both open water and ice fishing seasons.

black crappies and the 10-fish daily bag limit for panfish on the TFF. There is good access from 6 different public boat launches as well as many other private resort access points.

## ■ JUNEAU COUNTY

**New Lisbon Lake (Lemonweir River) - 122 acres.** A fyke-net survey and electrofishing survey was conducted in the spring of 2018 to target panfish. The lake has black crappie, white crappie, bluegill, yellow perch and pumpkinseed. Overall the lake provides a decent crappie and bluegill fishery, size structure for yellow perch is poor yet an occasional nice size fish can be found. Crappies ranged in length from 3.2" to 14.2", 41.4% of the crappies were of quality size (8") or larger, 11.9% of the fish were preferred size (10") or larger and 2.2% were memorable size (12") or larger. Bluegills ranged in length from 3.4" to 10.0", 81.5% of the fish were quality size (6") or larger, 8.1% were preferred size (8") or larger, and 2.2% were memorable size (10"). Yellow perch ranged in length from 5.1" to 10.6", 6.1% of the fish were quality size (8") or larger. State-wide regulation; 25 daily aggregate bag limit. A public boat launch and shore fishing opportunities are available at the City of New Lisbon's Riverside Park & Campground off Hog Island Road. Other fish species caught during the survey included typical fish you'd find in a flowage system: bullheads, bowfin, common carp, golden shiner, grass pickerel, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, shorthead redhorse, walleye, white sucker, and rock bass.

## ■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Lake Koshkonong - 10,000 acres.** 2018 spring netting surveys of Lautz Bay on Lake Koshkonong yielded some quality panfish catches. A total of 260 bluegill were measured with a length range of 4.1 to 9.9 inches and an average length of 6.8 inches. A total of 255 yellow perch were measured with a length range of 4.5 to 12.5 inches and an average length of 9.1 inches. A total of 156 black crappie were measured with a length range of 4.1 to 13.3 inches and an average length of 8.2 inches. Lastly, a total of 255 pumpkinseed were measured with a length range of 3.8 to 8.7 inches and an average length of 6.2 inches. There is a year-round open season on the

Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. No minimum length and 25 fish daily bag limit on panfish. Royce Dalman County Park, Groeler Road

## ■ LA CROSSE, TREMPPEALEAU and VERNON COUNTIES

**Mississippi River, pools 7 and 8 and upper 9, Trempealeau, La Crosse and Vernon counties— 53,850 acres.** Panfish sampled in pools 7, 8 and upper 9 during the fall of 2018 from Trempealeau, WI downstream to Lansing, IA showed steady numbers. Overall, catchable size panfish abundance has remained the same since last sampled using electro fishing in 2014 (13.8 panfish per hour). The greatest bluegill abundance was seen in the Black River Channel area bordering the cities of La Crosse and Onalaska (12.4 per hour). This was followed by the Black River Mouth area located in Pool 7 (2.9) and the Reno Bottoms area, which extends along the Minnesota side from the Upper Iowa River upstream to Dam 8 (1.9). The greatest yellow perch abundance was seen in the Black River mouth area (12.9 per hour) followed by the Black River Channel (4.4) and Reno areas, (0.2). In the Black River Channel area, average catchable size bluegill increased by 1.4 inches to 5.7 inches since 2014, and twenty percent were over 7 inches. Average size of bluegill in the Black River mouth (4.7 inches) and Reno areas (6.0) did not change. Yellow perch size stayed the same in the Black River Channel area (7 inches) and increased by 1.3 inches in the Black River mouth area to 7.8 inches. Here twenty-one percent of catchable size fish exceeded 9 inches. Since 1993, Pool 8 bluegill have increased over 1.5 times, possibly due to a resurgence of aquatic plants. Black crappie have decreased by about 20 percent and yellow perch have more than doubled. The daily bag limit for Wisconsin waters of the Mississippi River is 25 bluegill and sunfishes combined, 25 yellow perch and 25 crappie. There are no minimum size limits and the season is year-round. Wisconsin and Minnesota fishing regulations may significantly change starting in 2020. Please attend the April 8, 2019 Spring Conservation Hearing on your county to register your opinion on these proposed changes. Access information: The best way to find a boat landing is to go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper\\_Mississippi\\_River/map.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html). Increasingly, river municipalities are charging boat access fees. - David Heath, fisheries biologist, La Crosse.



Pumpkinseed and Bluegill collected during a 2018 fyke net survey on Twin Valley Lake.. Photo by Justin Haglund

## ■ MARATHON COUNTY

**Lake Wausau and Big Eau Pleine Reservoir.** Lake Wausau: 1851 acres which is product of 3 major tailwaters which includes the Wisconsin River, Big Rib River, and the Eau Claire River. In



Fisheries technician Chad Leanna with a bluegill from a fall 2018 netting survey. Photo: Jeff Scheirer

Spring of 2018, we netted 612 yellow perch (4-11.5", where 15% of adults were over 8") and 1721 black crappie (2.5-12", where 40% of adults were over 8"). Both species were fairly compared to most lakes, yet similar to many large impoundments. Late-spring electrofishing yielded 220 bluegill (2.5-8.5", where 38% of adults were over 6") which lower than typical, pumpkinseed were also less abundant (29 sampled) and ranged from 2.5-7", yet 75% of adults were 6" or greater. No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is 25, 25 panfish may be kept, but only 10 of any one species. Shore fishing opportunities are numerous with vast amount of public parks and bridges throughout the system Boat access can be taken advantage of at numerous locations, including landings at Bluegill Bay Park, Oak Park, Memorial Park, DC Everest County Park, near the Schofield Dam, and near Kort Street. Panfish create a strong fishery in Lake Wausau with numerous areas to fish. Due to its popularity, the lake can have high angling pressure from time to time, yet there are numerous opportunities to hit productive habitat if anglers vary their location across the impoundment. This is especially true during the winter months.

## ■ MARINETTE COUNTY

**Lake Noquebay - 2,398** Big bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and perch can be found in Lake Noquebay located just northeast of Crivitz. Bluegill over 8 inches and crappie over 10 inches are not uncommon. Additionally, nice sized yellow perch and pumpkinseed can also be expected. Lake Noquebay has good weed growth in certain areas of lake and the water is moderately stained. 25 in total (bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, crappie). Lake Noquebay can be accessed from a boat ramp located on the northwest side of the lake on Boat Landing Road or from Lake Noquebay County Park. Due to its size, fishing Lake Noquebay on a windy day can be difficult because there are few places to get out of the wind.

## ■ RUSK COUNTY

**Amacoy Lake—278 acres.** High catch rates of black crappies and bluegills in our spring 2018 netting and electrofishing surveys point toward the crowding and intense food competition that can impair growth rate and lead to mediocre size structure in panfish populations. Anglers content with catching 6- to 7-inch bluegills and 9-inch crappies should find plenty of table fare in Amacoy Lake. Crappies in spring nets averaged 8.7 inches long, and half were at least 9 inches, but only one crappie was 10 inches or longer. Bluegills had the same run-of-the-mill size structure. Bluegills  $\geq 7"$  comprised 30% and 13% of our netting and electrofishing samples, but the longest bluegill in our spring surveys was 7.8 inches. We hope someday walleyes stocked at a rate of 15 large fingerlings per acre in odd-numbered years will add enough predatory pressure to better control panfish abun-

dance and improve their size. Anglers may keep 25 panfish of any size or species daily. - Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## ■ SHAWANO COUNTY

**Shawano Lake and Washington Lake** Shawano Lake = 6,215 acres; Washington Lake = 75 acres. Results from the 2018 comprehensive fisheries survey of Shawano and Washington Lakes have shown that Shawano and Washington Lakes provide great opportunities for panfish fishing. A total of 1,618 black crappies were caught in the spring fyke netting survey for a catch per unit effort (CPUE) of 17.2 per net night. The average size of black crappies caught in the spring fyke netting survey was 7.3 inches, with 37% of the fish captured being  $\geq 8$  inches, 6.5% being  $\geq 10$  inches, and black crappies as large as 12.4 inches captured. These results show there are good numbers and sizes of black crappies for anglers to target. A total of 2,512 bluegill were also captured in the spring fyke netting survey for a CPUE of 26.7 bluegill per net night. The average size bluegill captured in the fyke netting survey was 6.4 inches with 74.7% being  $\geq 6$  inches, 23.6% being  $\geq 7$  inches, and the biggest bluegill captured being 8.5 inches. Additionally, bluegill CPUE in the spring electrofishing survey averaged 90 bluegill per mile of electrofishing with the average size bluegill captured in the spring electrofishing survey being just under 5 inches. 25 fish aggregate bag limit among all panfish species. There are 11 boat access and canoe access points scattered around Shawano and Washington Lakes as well as several



A pair of crappies from a 2018 night survey on Lake Butte des Morts.

additional fishing piers set up for shore anglers during the summer and access points for ice fishermen during the winter. Over the past couple of years, many anglers have also reported catching good numbers of yellow perch with plenty of fish being harvestable size.

## ■ TAYLOR COUNTY

**Chequamegon Waters Flowage** —Locally called Miller Dam Flowage, this 2,714-acre impoundment, located on the Yellow River about 18 miles northwest of Medford, continues to offer quality panfish angling, despite the substantial fishing pressure it receives year-round. Keeper-size crappies  $\geq 9$  inches long comprised 68% of our fall 2017 fyke net catch, and 41% in that sample were preferred-size crappies at least 10 inches long. Ring counts on ear bones extracted from 15 fish revealed that crappies in Miller Dam grew to 9.5 inches in 6 years, slightly below the regional average length of 10.1 inches at age 6. Even with a somewhat slower-than-average growth rate, 6% of the population had longevity to reach 11 – 13 inches. As part of a broad-scale, 5-year evaluation that began in spring 2016, an experimental harvest restriction seeks to protect nesting crappies and bluegills when they are most vulnerable to angling. During the months of May and June, anglers on

Miller Dam Flowage may keep 15 panfish, but only 5 of any one species. During the remainder of the season, a daily bag limit of 25 panfish may be kept in any combination. Taylor County maintains a boat ramp, pavilion, swimming beach, playground, toilets, and parking off County Highway G near the dam, and the U. S. Forest Service has a campground and fishing pier on the east shore. Miller Dam Lake Association operates a lake aeration system to provide an open-water refuge to reduce the risk and severity of winterkill—fish mortality from dissolved oxygen depletion in the ice-covered season. —Jeff Scheirer, fishery biologist, Park Falls

## ■ WALWORTH COUNTY

**Delavan Lake** - 1906 acres. Black crappie averaging 10" (max of 11.5") and bluegill averaging 7.1" (max 9") - 2012 survey No minimum length limit, 25 daily bag. A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at State Highway 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the State Highway 50 boat launch.

## ■ WASHINGTON COUNTY

**Big Cedar Lake** - 937 acres. During 2018 spring electrofishing surveys a total of 414 Bluegill were captured. Which is equivalent to 69 Bluegill/mile. Lengths ranged from 1.0 inches to 9.0 inches with an average size of 5.3 inches. Anglers willing to target Bluegill, will be rewarded with lots of action and some larger potential since 33% of the Bluegill captured were 6 inches or larger! No minimum length limit, 25 panfish may be kept, but only 10 of any one species. Many public boat launches are around the lake, but the most maintained launch can be found off Gonring Drive in West Bend. With the new experimental panfish regulation, Big Cedar Lake is seeing increased length in Bluegill populations and allowing anglers the opportunity to catch larger fish throughout the year.

## ■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Pewaukee Lake** - 2437 surface acres Pewaukee Lake provides a variety of pan fishing opportunities. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25. There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. The 2018 spring netting and electrofishing surveys on Pewaukee Lake showed much improved size structure for panfish with many fish measured over 8 inches. Harvest opportunities are present for a diversity of panfish in Pewaukee Lake.

## CATFISH



## ■ COLUMBIA COUNTY

**Swan Lake (Upper Fox River)** (407 acres, maximum depth 82 feet) Swan Lake on the upper Fox River in Columbia County provides quality fishing opportunities for several species. A comprehensive fishery survey of Swan Lake in 2018 found channel catfish present at greater abundance than other lakes in Columbia and Sauk counties. During the later spring netting portion of the survey in late April 2018, channel catfish were caught at a rate of 2.2 fish/net night. In total, 140 channel catfish sampled ranged from 7.9 to 29.9 inches. Of the 138 fish sampled that were larger than 11 inches, 32% were larger than 24 inches and the largest catfish sampled

weighed 13.6 pounds. In 2018, anglers reported that fishing for channel cats really picked up as spring transitioned to summer, with fishing near the bottom in 15-20 feet of water producing consistent catches. Swan Lake is also known for producing channel catfish through the ice, particularly late ice.

## ■ COLUMBIA, DANE and SAUK COUNTIES

### Lower Wisconsin River at Prairie du Sac

The Prairie du Sac Dam tailwater area of the lower Wisconsin River from the Prairie du Sac Dam downriver to the old railroad bridge in Sauk City provides a quality catfish angling opportunity. During a fall 2017 netting survey at Prairie du Sac, DNR collected 63 flathead catfish ranging from 23 to 46 inches in length and 5 to 52 pounds in weight. Flathead catfish numbers in the Prairie du Sac area of the lower Wisconsin River increase each fall as the water cools and the fish move up from downriver areas to reach deeper wintering habitat closer to the dam. Live fish are the best bait and should be fished



Fisheries technician Chelsea Barnaby with a channel catfish captured in Butternut Lake fyke nets in May 2018. Photo: Jeff Scheirer

near the bottom in deeper holes in the fall. Fishing for channel catfish can also be very good in the Prairie du Sac Dam tailrace. Target the fast water at the base of the riffle below the discharge from the power house. Channel catfish congregate and feed in this area right below the outfall from the power turbines. Cut bait or stink bait are the best options. Boat access and shore fishing are provided year-round at VFW Park in Prairie du Sac. Shore fishing access is also provided directly below the dam by Alliant Energy. Please note that because catfish concentrate in large numbers in the deep areas below the Prairie du Sac Dam to overwinter, the season for catfish is closed from the Prairie du Sac Dam downriver to the old railroad bridge at Sauk City from November 30-the first Saturday in May.

## ■ IOWA and RICHLAND COUNTIES

**Lower Wisconsin River** - 92.3. The Lower Wisconsin River supports a good population of flathead catfish. Anglers can expect to see above average catch opportunities for flatheads in the Lower Wisconsin River. Hoop net surveys during July of 2018 sampled a good adult population with an average size of 37.8 inches. Sixty-one percent of the adults were 30 inches or greater. Fourteen percent were 40 inches or greater. No length limit with a daily bag limit of 10 catfish in total. Public boat launch and accessible bank fishing opportunities are located thru out the Lower Wisconsin River way. The Lower Wisconsin River has a braided sand channel navigable by shallow drafting boats. Boaters should use caution as many sand bars and shallow sand breaks are present in the river channel. Geologist have found



Garrett and Sam Sims with a trophy flathead catfish typical of the Lower Wisconsin River near Lone Rock, Wisconsin. Photo: Bradd Sims.

that over a million year ago the Wisconsin River flowed east to the Atlantic Ocean Drainage. This east flowing version of the Wisconsin was named the Wyalusing River. It is believed that glaciers dammed the Wyalusing River in the Prairie du Chien area diverting the flow to the west and south as we know it today. The Lower Wisconsin River includes 92.3 miles from the Prairie du Sac dam to the Mississippi River. - Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

## ■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Rock River** - From the mouth of Lake Koshkonong upstream 4.5 miles. During 2018 hoop netting surveys a total of 232 channel catfish and 27 flathead catfish were captured. Channel catfish lengths ranged from 9 to 31 inches with an average size of 23.8 inches. Flathead catfish lengths ranged from 22 to 43 inches with an average size of 32.5 inches. There is a year-round open season on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. No minimum length and 10 fish total daily bag limit on catfish. There is a public boat launch at Groeler Road.

## ■ KENOSHA and RACINE COUNTIES

**Fox River** -35 miles from the Racine-Waukesha County line down to the Wisconsin-Illinois state line. Recent catfish surveys on the Fox River produced very high catch rates of 20'+ channel catfish and flathead catfish, including fish up to 37" and 24 pounds. Multiple boat launches and several shorefishing areas provide very good public access. No length limit, 10 total catfish, open year round. Boat launches at Bridge Road north of Waterford, in Waterford,



Fisheries biologist Tim Parks holds a hefty channel catfish collected from a Lake Wausau survey.

at County Highway JB, and at County Highway F. Canoe/kayak launches in Waterford, Rochester, and at County Highway C near Wilmot. Excellent shorefishing access at various parks and public areas along the river.

## ■ PORTAGE and WOOD COUNTIES

**Biron Flowage** - 2,187 acres. Species population information: In 2018, a summer hoop-net survey was completed targeting channel catfish. Channel catfish ranged in size from 12.2" to 30.2" with an average size of 19.7". They are fairly abundant, overall great catfish fishing opportunity for anglers. Catfish (channel and flathead) daily bag limit of 10 in total. There are multiple boat launches including: 1) Near Anchor Bay Bar & Grill off N Biron Drive; 2) Galecke Park off Park Drive; and 3) Blue Heron off Blue Heron Lane. Channel catfish will eat a variety of food types including plant matter, detritus, invertebrates, although adults are primarily piscivorous (they eat fish) and are opportunistic feeders.

## LAKE STURGEON



## ■ CHIPPEWA, EAU CLAIRE, DUNN and PEPIN COUNTIES

**The Lower Chippewa River** (Lake Holcombe downstream to the Mississippi River) offers anglers an opportunity to harvest a lake sturgeon greater than 60 inches during the hook-and-line season, which runs from the first Saturday in September through the end of the month. If an angler intends to harvest a fish, they must first purchase a harvest tag and, if successful, register their catch. Thirteen lake sturgeon were harvested in the 2018 season, which is slightly above the long-term average of ten since the 60" minimum has been in place. The majority of the harvest was downstream of the Dells Pond Dam. Anglers also reported catching numerous sublegal fish, a sign of a healthy sturgeon population. Night crawlers or cut bait presented in deep holes of the river is a good combination for a successful sturgeon fishing trip. Joseph Gerbyshak - Fisheries biologist, Eau Claire

## ■ SAUK and DANE COUNTIES

**Lower Wisconsin River** - 92.3 The Lower Wisconsin River supports a healthy population of shovelnose sturgeon. Shovelnose are present in fishable numbers in the Lower Wisconsin River providing



An 85lb lake sturgeon captured on the Chipewewa River at Jim Falls during a spring spawning survey.

Anglers a good opportunity to catch this ancient species. Electrofishing surveys during May of 2018 sampled 729 adults which ranged in size from 20 to 31 inches (fork length) with an average size of 25.1 inches. Fifty-three percent of the adults were 25 inches or greater. The season for shovelnose sturgeon on the Lower Wisconsin River from the Prairie du Sac dam downstream is open all year with no size limit and a daily bag limit of 3 shovelnose sturgeon total. Public boat launch and accessible bank fishing opportunities are located thru out the Lower Wisconsin River way. The Lower Wisconsin River has a braided sand channel navigable by shallow drafting boats. Boaters should use caution as many sand bars and shallow sand breaks are present in the river channel. Shovelnose sturgeon have long life span reaching ages over 20 years. They are also a species which grow very slow. Via tagging studies, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fisheries staff have found that adult shovelnose sturgeon will grow less than 1/2 inch in eleven years. That's an average of only 45 thousandths of an inch per year!! The Lower Wisconsin River includes 92.3 miles from the Prairie du Sac dam to the Mississippi River. *Bradd Sims, Fisheries biologist - Dodgeville*

## INLAND TROUT



## ADAMS COUNTY

**Big Roche a Cri Creek** - Big Roche a Cri Creek is a Class 1 trout stream from the headwaters to CTH W and Class 2 trout water down to Big Roche a Cri Lake. The



Bradd Sims, Fisheries biologist, Dodgeville holds a shovelnose sturgeon from the 2018 surveys. All shovelnose sturgeon captured receive a PIT tag for future data analysis. Photo: Kimberly Kubler.

stream has naturally reproducing brook and brown trout. Since 2007, the stream has been surveyed annually at a site in the Class 1 section. Adult brook trout catch rates fluctuate annually, average is 422 per mile. In 2018, the adult catch rate was 595 per mile. The catch rates of stock (5"), quality (8") and memorable (12") size fish were above the 90th percentile compared to other brook streams in Wisconsin. The largest brook trout in the survey was 14.7". Adult brown trout catch rates are much lower than brook trout, in 2018 catch rate was 26 fish per mile and this is below the 33rd percentile compared to other streams with brown trout. Catch rates of memorable (15") size brown trout was 12 per mile and is a moderate to high catch rate compared to brown trout streams in Wisconsin. Early catch and release season, Inland trout season; Daily bag limit of 3 in total with a minimum length limit of 8". Access: Anglers have access to the stream with Big Roche a Cri State Fishery Area, 813 acres of State owned land, and multiple road crossings. Locations of parcels can be found on the Department's website. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/pal/application.html>. A trout habitat maintenance project was completed in the summer of 2015 off of Archer Drive. This project replaced 25 overhead covers and improved the 4,700-foot section of stream with the addition of 24 logs, 30 boulders, 2 rock deflectors, 6 root wads, 2 digger logs, 5 plunge pools and 3 half logs. In addition, 13 Christmas tree bundles using 935 trees were installed to narrow up a total of 650-feet of stream. Brown trout stocking was discontinued in 2016 due to evidence of natural reproduction and for the protection of the brook trout population.

## BARRON COUNTY

**Upper Pine Creek** - The 6.5 mile stretch of Upper Pine Creek from its headwaters (west of HWY 25) to the Dallas Flowage is Class I trout water for both brook and brown trout. Recent electrofishing surveys on Upper Pine Creek found 1,000-3,000 brook trout/mile and 1,000-2,000 brown trout/mile. Highest trout densities are found in the headwaters. Lower densities and larger fish are found as you go downstream. Upper Pine Creek trout are managed with a no minimum length limit and a five fish daily bag limit. There are several public fishing easements on this portion of Upper Pine Creek off CTH U, 16th St., and 4 1/2 Ave. Anglers can also access the stream from other road crossings. Upper Pine Creek is typically one of the best streams in Barron County for trout natural reproduction.

## BUFFALO, JACKSON and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

**Area Trout Streams** - 81% of surveyed streams showed stable to increasing brook trout reproduction. Brown trout reproduction was generally stable. Adults: 62% of surveyed streams showed stable to increasing catch rates of adult brook trout. Brown trout adult catch rate was stable to increasing in 86% of surveyed streams. Legal: Most area streams converted to a no-size limit regulation in 2016. However, pre-2016

legal size regulations per individual stream are used to evaluate changes in current catch rates of legal size brook and brown trout. For brook trout, 62% of streams showed a decrease in numbers of legal size fish and for brown trout, 62% of streams showed stable numbers of legal size fish with 29% increasing. Area trout populations were generally in good shape in 2018 with plenty of adult size fish heading into the 2019 season and good reproduction rates to sustain populations. Although catch rates of legal size fish were down,



A nice brown trout caught and released by a local fly angler on Borah Creek during the summer of 2018. Photo by Bradd Sims

survey and angler results indicated an increase in size quality. Supplemental trout stocking from DNR and Cooperative hatcheries continues to help bolster trout populations throughout the area. A habitat restoration project was completed in Eagle Creek, Buffalo County, this past year. Many thanks to our partners in the Cooperative Trout Rearing program and Habitat Restoration program for providing more stocked fish, fishing access, and better habitat for our area streams! Please see the Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations for applicable size and bag limit restrictions for the streams you fish.

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

**Copper Creek** (including its north and south branches). Entire length of Copper Creek (4.3 mi), North Branch Copper Creek (6.1 mi) and South Branch Copper Creek (5.35 mi). Copper Creek (including North and South Branches) supports high densities of brown trout (up to 1,200 brown trout >5 inches per mile) and lower densities of brook trout (up to 600 brook trout >5 inches per mile). Brown trout up to 17 inches and brook trout up to 12 inches were captured in electrofishing surveys since 2017. 5 trout in total, no minimum length The DNR owns 3.1 miles of public streambank access through streambank easements and purchase of lands along the Copper Creek (North and South Branches included). To view the locations of public land and public streambank easements on Copper Creek go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Public Access Lands Map" or "TROUT tool".

**Bears Grass Creek** - Bears Grass Creek originates in southcentral Eau Claire County and meanders north for 9 miles before emptying into the Eau Claire River. Bears Grass Creek is a Class II trout stream and the best stream in Eau Claire County for trophy brook trout. A 2018 fisheries survey shows that portions of Bears Grass Creek contain 100 brook trout per mile over 12" and numerous fish over 14". Easements that allow for fishing are present in the headwaters, but access downstream is limited to road-stream crossings. The current regulation is designed to foster the growth of these trophy fish. The regulation stipulates that brook trout over 9" cannot be kept, so these large fish can be caught again and the bag limit is five trout. - *Joseph Gerbyshak - fisheries biologist, Eau Claire*

## GRANT COUNTY

**Borah Creek** - 6.0 of classified trout water. Borah Creek supports a healthy population of brown trout. Recent sur-

veys sampled 504 adult brown trout per mile ranging from 7 to 16.6 inches with an average size of 9.1 inches. Ten percent of the brown trout sampled were 12 inches or greater. 3 trout under 12 inches may be kept. There are approximately 2.1 miles of public fishing available via public fishing easements. Remaining trout water may be accessed by gaining permission from landowners or by accessing the stream from road right of ways. Borah Creek is considered a class one trout fishery and maintains a fishable population of trout through

natural reproduction. The Harry and Laura Chapter of Trout Unlimited along with the help of private landowners and the NRCS recently completed instream trout habitat projects upstream of Bluff Road. - *Bradd Sims, fisheries biologist - Dodgeville*

## IOWA COUNTY

**Water: Gordon Creek** - 22.43 miles. Gordon Creek contains both class 1 and class 2 trout water, supporting a natu-



Sometimes you have to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Fisheries biologist, Zach Lawson with a brown trout caught during the early trout season.

rally reproducing population of Brown Trout. Stream surveys conducted at two locations upstream of County Hwy A indicated a total catch of 197 adult trout, estimating the relative abundance at 480 Brown Trout per mile. Average length was 9.1 inches with a maximum of 17 inches. Gordon Creek hosts a plethora of public access with over 4.5 miles of easements. HWY 78 upstream to Spring Creek Road: 3 trout under 12 inches. Upstream of Spring Creek Road: 3 trout in total over 8". There is streambank easement access on over 4.5 miles of Gordon Creek. - *Justin Haglund, fisheries biologist - Dodgeville*

## LA CROSSE, MONROE and VERNON COUNTIES

**Coon Creek and tributaries (Coon Creek Watershed)** Coon Creek, Bohemian Valley Creek, Rulland's Coulee Creek, Spring Coulee Creek and Timber Coulee Creek Though historic flooding in August of 2018 impacted streams throughout the watershed, recent electrofishing surveys have not shown major changes in adult trout numbers. A recent electro-

fishing survey on Timber Coulee Creek found similar numbers of adult brown trout before and after the August flood. However, numbers of young of the year fish (fish which hatched in spring of 2018) were lower than average, so it's possible that a modest dip in adult trout numbers may occur in the coming years. However, trout abundances on many of the impacted streams frequently exceed 1,000 adult trout per mile, so even modest declines won't result in significant changes to fishing quality. In fact, reduced numbers of young fish may result in increased adult trout growth rates on certain streams. Current regulation: Varies by waterbody, see the trout regulation pamphlet. The upper Coon Creek Watershed has many miles of angler streambank easement, which



Colton Wolosek, LTE fisheries technician out of Wisconsin Rapids, with a nice brown trout from an Adams County trout stream.

provide fantastic access to most of the streams in the watershed. Streambank easements are purchased by the DNR from private landowners and provide angler access along the stream banks and the DNR access to complete trout stream habitat restoration. To view the locations of public streambank easements in Wisconsin go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Public Access Lands Map" or "TROUT tool". A variety of angling regulations are in place in the Coon Creek Watershed. These regulations are aimed at providing a variety of trout angling opportunities and the DNR the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of various trout regulations. In 2016, the DNR enacted an experimental regulation on Bohemian Valley Creek (10 bag, no minimum size limit) to evaluate whether anglers could reduce densities and improve growth rates of trout.

## ■ LA CROSSE COUNTY

**Mormon Coulee Creek** - 16+ miles from its headwaters to its confluence with the Mississippi River. Mormon Coulee Creek boasts some of the highest trout densities in the region, with certain reaches exceeding electrofishing catches of 5,000 brown trout >5 inches per mile. Recent surveys indicate that adult trout densities have increased in recent years. Because the adult brown trout population is so robust, anglers are currently allowed to harvest 10 fish with no minimum size limit. The brown trout population in Mormon Coulee Creek is naturally sustained and no stocking occurs. 10 trout in total, no minimum length. Over the past several decades the DNR has acquired over 5 miles of streambank easement on Mormon Coulee. Streambank easements are purchased by the DNR from private landowners and provide angler access along the stream banks in perpetuity. To view the locations of public streambank easements in Wisconsin go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Public Access Lands Map" or "TROUT tool". The longest reach trout habitat work is located up and downstream of County Highway NN. The habitat work in this reach was completed in the late 90s and mid to late 2000s.

## ■ LANGLADE COUNTY:

**McGee Lake;** Super high size quality brookies; Most adults are over the legal size of 12" with many in the 15-18" range!; 12" minimum length limit, 2 daily, artificial lures only; Carry in boat

access on the east and south ends with parking; The entire shoreline is state owned and available to shore fishers but the south shore probably presents the best options for this type of fishing; McGee Lake would be a great place to catch that brook trout of a lifetime from a kayak or small boat!

## ■ MARATHON COUNTY

**Plover River** - The Plover River contains ~28 miles of Class I and II trout water supporting both brook and brown trout. It extends from CTH 153 to its headwaters in Langlade County. Recent electrofishing surveys on the Plover River suggest highest brook trout densities between Hatley and Hwy N, whereas brown trout densities were greatest north of CTH N. In 2018, surveys near CTH Z yielded 2162 brown trout per mile and 485 brook trout per mile. Size structure for brook trout is typical to above average in locations where prevalent, which in 2018, 34% of adult fish were 8" or greater and were observed growing to 12.5". Size structure from brown trout is considerable. In 2018, 37% of adult fish were 9" or greater and can reach a maximum of 18.5". 3 in total: brown and rainbow trout over 12", brook trout over 8". There are several public land parcels encompassing the stream including the Plover River Fishery Area where many locations can be accessed from the Ice Age Trail. There are also numerous other access points including bridges such as CTH N, CTH Y, Birnamwood Rd, or CTH Z, as well as public park access via the Village of Hatley. The Plover River trout populations are supported by natural reproduction. Also, there are numerous spring ponds and coldwater tributary refugia along the Majority of the Plover River.

## ■ MARINETTE COUNTY

**Thunder Lake** (135 acres) and the **Peshigo River (above Caldron Falls)** DNR stocks catchable sized brook and brown trout prior to opening day. Thunder Lake is an opening day hot spot for rainbow trout anglers. Between 3,000 & 4,000 rainbows are planted before opening



Aaron Cole, fisheries biologist in Barron, with a 15.4" brook trout from Lower Pine Creek. Photo: Tyler Sikora.

day. For anglers wanting to target brook and brown trout, the Peshigo River above Caldron Falls can be worth the trip. About 2,500 brook trout and 2,500 brown trout are stocked at various locations along the river. Thunder Lake: 3-fish bag; 8-inch minimum length limit. Peshigo River: Opening day to October 15 = 3-fish/bag; 8-inch minimum length limit. October 16 to November 15 = catch & release : artificial only Good access is available through McClintock Park, Goodman Park and along Benson Lake Rd.



Taylor Curron, Antigo Fisheries technician on the left holding a dandy female brook trout, and Dallas Moe, seasonal Fisheries technician on the right, holding a brilliant male brook trout from McGee Lake in Langlade County. The trout were surveyed in late October 2018.

## ■ MONROE COUNTY

**Little La Crosse River** - 18 miles from its headwaters to its confluence with the La Crosse River. The Little La Crosse River supports one of the highest density brown trout populations in Monroe County with electrofishing catches of brown trout >5 inches up to 2,000 fish per mile. In addition to high densities of brown trout, the stream also supports good numbers of larger fish (trout exceeding 15 inches). 10 trout in total, no minimum length. Over the past several decades, the DNR has purchased 7.8 miles public streambank access through streambank easements and purchase of lands along the stream. To view the locations of public land and public streambank easements on the Little La Crosse River go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Public Access Lands Map" or "TROUT tool".

## ■ PIERCE COUNTY

**Pine Creek** - 2.6 miles long. Pine Creek is a Class I trout stream located in southwest Pierce County near Maiden Rock, WI and contains both brook and brown trout. If you're looking for a rural and scenic location with the opportunity to catch trophy sized browns, Pine Creek is a great option with other great trout streams nearby. Brown trout are abundant and harvest is encouraged. The 2018 survey of the stream showed 3600 browns per mile with average numbers around 4500 browns per mile over the past 3 years and multiple fish over 20". Brook trout are also present but have been declining in recent years. A large section of intense trout habitat work was completed in 2007 and 2008 and much of the stream is mowed for easy access. 3 trout total; browns over 12" & brooks over 8". Pine Creek Fishery Area provides public access for most of the stream off of County Rd AA.

## ■ PORTAGE COUNTY

**Flume Creek** - Recent electrofishing surveys in Flume Creek near Rosholt indicate high brook trout densities 778 fish/mile, whereas brown trout densities were 382 fish/mile. Sizes of brook trout ranges from 2-11.5" (average = 5") and 21% of adults were 8" or greater. Sizes of brown trout ranges from 2-20" (average = 5.8") and 48% of adults were 9" or greater.

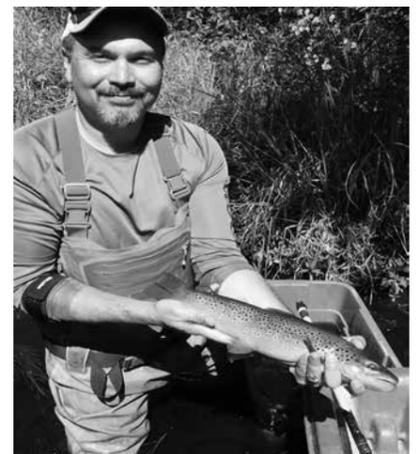
## ■ RICHLAND COUNTY

**Knapp Creek** - 18.35 miles (Class I water) Knapp Creek supports a large stretch of class I trout water with naturally reproducing Brown and Brook Trout. Stream surveys conducted at five locations indicated a total catch of 184 adult Brown Trout, estimating the relative abundance at 285 Brown Trout per mile and a maximum length of 17.3 inches. Brook Trout were also present, although can be found in greater numbers in tributaries of Knapp Creek. Knapp Creek hosts a plethora of public access and fishing

opportunities for those who wish to get off the beaten path and explore the vast countryside of Richland County. Upstream from STH 171: 3 trout under 12 inches. Upstream from CTH F at Excelsior to STH 171: 2 trout in total over 12 inches. State owned land and streambank easement access on over 6 miles of Knapp Creek. - Justin Haglund, fisheries biologist - Dodgeville

## ■ RICHLAND and SAUK COUNTIES

**Bear Creek** - Bear Creek rises in Sauk County and flows southwest, then south before joining the Wisconsin River in Richland County. Bear Creek offers approximately 12 miles of Class 2 trout water beginning 0.3 mile south of the intersection of State Highway 154 and State Highway 130 (T11N, R3E, section 29) and ending at the second Richland County crossing of State Highway 130 (T9N, R2E, section 23). The lower 8 miles of Bear Creek is considered a warm-water fishery. Upstream of Croal Hollow Road, Bear Creek is a mixed brook and brown trout fishery with brook trout slightly more abundant than brown trout. From Croal Hollow Road downstream to the end of classified trout water, brown trout are



Fisheries supervisor, Al Niebur with an 18" brown trout collected from the Plover River. Photo: Tim Parks

dominant with occasional brook trout present. Trout populations are most abundant between Croal Hollow Road and County Highway N. In this section, the banks of approximately 4.3 miles of Bear Creek are open to public fishing via easements on private lands and these easements saw habitat improvement projects completed in several phases between 2011-2015. Fishery surveys conducted annually at multiple points in this section indicate steady increases in overall brown trout abundance as well as abundance of larger trout since habitat work was completed. Bear Creek has a minimum length limit of 12 inches and a daily bag limit of 2 trout. The four classified tributaries of Bear Creek all follow county base regulations (8-inch minimum, 3 fish daily bag). Bear

Creek flows through Bear Creek Fishery Area, a collection of State-owned land parcels and easements on private lands which provide access to several miles of Bear Creek. Upstream of Croal Hollow Road, public access is very limited. Also, there are no developed parking lots for access to Bear Creek; parking is limited to the road shoulders, so anglers should exercise caution. There are public walk-in easements across the Spre-



Bears Grass Creek in Eau Claire County is an underutilized resource that contains excellent brook trout size structure.

cher property and the Fargen property upstream of County Highway N. Otherwise anglers may access the stream at road crossings. More information about the Bear Creek Fishery Area can be found here: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/fisheriesareas/110bearcreek.html> Bear Creek has four smaller tributary streams that are classified trout water. Croal Creek is a Class 2 brown trout stream, while McCarville Creek and Marble Creek are both Class 2 brook trout streams. Biser Creek is a Class 1 brook trout stream.

## SAWYER COUNTY

Have you ever wanted to try spring pond fishing for trout but don't want to slash through brush to get there? **Stress Springs Fishery Area** just south of Hayward (on Stress Road) offers anglers a unique fishing experience with super easy access. In fact, despite the name, there's really no stress involved. The spring ponds are right next to the road and DNR crews recently created additional trails around the ponds to allow good shore access at several casting spots. In the crystal-clear water of the springs you'll find native brook trout, some of them up to 14 inches. You'll have to leave the stringer at home though. These ponds are managed as a catch-and-release only fishery, and only artificial baits are allowed. This regulation is in place to preserve this unique fishing opportunity.

## SHAWANO COUNTY

**Middle Branch Embarrass River** upstream from Homme Pond - 25 miles of Class I and Class II trout waters above Homme Pond. In 2018, the DNR completed electrofishing runs at nine stations along the Middle Branch Embarrass River upstream from Homme Pond. Catch per unit effort (CPUE as the number of brook trout per mile of electrofishing) at these nine sites averaged 785.4 (range = 164.2 - 1,419.4) brook trout per mile of stream. Densities were highest in the upper sections of the stream near CTY HWY Z and Elm Road. Brook trout between 1.6 - 13.6 inches were captured with the average size being 5.7 inches. Anglers will have plenty of opportunities to catch legal size brook trout in this river as the brook trout CPUE for trout  $\geq 8$  inches averaged 80.9 (range = 28.8 - 171.6) per mile of electrofishing at these nine sites. Red from Homme Pond upstream to CTY HWY Z with a daily bag limit of 3 trout and a minimum length limit of 12 inches for brown trout and rainbow trout and 8 inches for brook trout. Green upstream from CTY HWY Z and below Homme Pond with a daily bag limit of 5 and no minimum size limit. Homme Pond also has a red regulation with a daily bag limit of 3 and no minimum length limit. Anglers can access the Middle Branch Embarrass River at 11 public road crossings

upstream from Homme Pond. The DNR also owns 80 acres of land on the north side of CTY HWY Z that provides access to this stream. The DNR stocks yearling rainbow trout every spring before the opener in Homme Pond as well as in the park off Hemlock Road just downstream from Homme Pond and the small rest stop on the west side of CTY HWY Q. The Village of Wittenberg also purchases yearling rainbow trout from a private hatchery and stocks them in Homme Pond every year.

## SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Ben Nutt Creek** - ~4.5 miles of Class I trout water During 2018 summer electrofishing surveys conducted downstream of Sumac Road, a total of 119 Brown Trout were captured. This equates to around 1451 Brown Trout/mile. The high density of Brown Trout ranks Ben Nutt Creek in the 91st percentile for Brown Trout streams statewide! Brown Trout lengths ranged from 4.5 inches to 15.5 inches with an average length of 8.3 inches. Although the trophy potential is limited, Ben Nutt Creek provides an action Brown Trout fishery with many access points and shorefishing opportunities for anglers hoping to fish with artificial lures. 12-inch minimum length limit 2 daily bag limit. Artificial lures only. Most of Ben Nutt Creek is in streambank protection easements or on state owned fishery areas. From Plymouth, WI take highway 67 south and find many opportunities along Sumac Rd. and County Highway ZZ. Much of the stream corridor has been cleared of brush allowing the opportunity for fly fishing in this Class I trout stream.



A nice brown trout from an Adams County trout stream arrives at the measuring board..

## WALWORTH COUNTY

**Bluff Creek** - 1.75 miles. Annual trout monitoring on Bluff Creek results in very high catch rates of adult brown trout up to 19". Ongoing habitat restoration projects continue to provide high quality, fishable stream reaches upstream and downstream of County Highway P. 12" minimum length limit, 2 daily bag. Public access and parking is available off County Highway P south of the intersection with Reliance Road. Nearly all of Bluff Creek is contained within the Kettle Moraine State Forest, allowing users open access to the stream. Multiple stretches of habitat enhancement projects, including thousands of feet of recently re-meandered stream channel, provide excellent habitat conditions and fishing opportunities

## WAUPACA COUNTY

**Waupaca River** - 15.5 miles of Class II trout water in Waupaca County from where Royalton Street crosses the river just east of the town of Waupaca, upstream to the Waupaca County/Portage County border. In 2018, the DNR completed electrofishing runs at seven stations along the Waupaca River upstream from the Waupaca Millpond in downtown Waupaca. Brown trout were captured at all seven stations. Mean brown trout catch per unit effort (CPUE

as the number of brown trout per mile of stream electrofished) was 305.4 brown trout per mile of stream sampled. Catch per unit effort ranged from 27.1 - 587.4 brown trout per mile of stream with the highest densities found in the upper sections of the river above US HWY 10. The Waupaca River is known for producing large brown trout with the average length of trout captured in all electrofishing surveys being 9.4 inches, 279 brown trout  $\geq 12$  inches captured, 48 brown trout  $\geq 15$  inches captured, and 2 brown trout  $\geq 20$  inches captured. Current regulation: Red from River Road upstream to Durant Road in Portage County. This section has a daily bag limit of 1 trout, a minimum length limit of 18 inches, and only artificial lures can be used. All other sections in Waupaca County have a yellow regulation with a daily bag limit of 3 trout and a minimum length limit of 8 inches. The Waupaca River from Frost Valley Road to WI HWY 54 is also open to catch and release angling using only artificial lures during the early catch and release season which runs from the first Saturday in January at 5:00 AM to the Friday preceding the first Saturday in May at midnight. There are many ways to access the Waupaca River including 10 public road crossings, four properties owned by the DNR, multiple fishing access easements, and six different city/county parks. The DNR has completed multiple habitat projects along various stretches of the Waupaca River including in the DNR Waupaca River Fishery Area near CTY HWY Q and in Riverview Park in downtown Waupaca. The DNR has plans to complete additional habitat work on the Waupaca River in Riverside Park off Royalton Street and DNR owned properties. The DNR also stocks yearling brown trout and/or rainbow trout each spring before the fishing opener in several of the parks/road crossings below the Waupaca Millpond dam, adult broodstock brown trout each fall in the same stretch of river, and occasionally stocks feral fingerling brown trout upstream of the Waupaca Millpond to supplement the naturally reproducing brown trout fishery found in the upper sections of this river.

## WAUSHARA and MARQUETTE COUNTIES

**Mecan River** - 10.2 miles, Class I and Class II. Brown trout numbers, in all inch groups, continue to exceed the 90th percentile in our trend site surveys. Density of trout tends to decrease as you move downstream with increased size structure. Lower stretches into Marquette County are deeper and not easily accessible by wading. Headwaters down to 14th Avenue in Marquette County - 8" minimum with a bag of 3. Downstream of 14th Avenue - 2 trout over 12", artificial lures only. Quality access through State Fishery areas and numerous road crossings.

## WAUSHARA COUNTY

**Lunch Creek** - 5.5 miles of Class I. 2018 survey - 1408/mile, average size 6.9" with fish up to 11". No length limit, bag of 5. Good access - Lunch Creek State Fishery Area and numerous road crossings.



Trout fishing is becoming more and more popular with Wisconsin anglers. Trout stamp sales have been consistently on the rise.



Kevin Mauel, fisheries technician and Christina Pechacek LTE fisheries technician show off a 19+'' brown trout captured in Bohemian Valley Creek (upper Coon Creek)

## ROUGH FISH



## LINCOLN COUNTY

**Jersey City Flowage** - 404 acres Run-of-the-river impoundment on the Tomahawk River. Recent surveys have shown there to be a robust and healthy population of bowfin (dogfish) - this neat and native species. Most fish are between 20 and 30 inches. Some tape out at close to 32" and would be a fish of a lifetime! Great place to go and add this species to your "life list" of total unique species caught in Wisconsin. Great fighting fish and if you are lucky to catch a spawning male you'll be amazed at the neon green colors! Find out for yourself!

## MARATHON, PORTAGE, WOOD, ADAMS and JUNEAU COUNTIES

**Wisconsin River** - Rough fish, including common carp, bigmouth buffalo, quillback carpsucker, etc. are plentiful in the Central Wisconsin River System making this a great destination for rough fish fishing. In general, numbers of carp and other rough fish decline the farther north you travel. There are no bag limits for rough fish. Access: Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNRs online boating access site. <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/lakepages/Default.aspx>. State records for bigmouth buffalo and quillback carp sucker are held in waters of the Wisconsin River. The state record bigmouth buffalo by hook and line was caught in Petenwell Lake, this fish measured 76lbs 8 oz. and was 49.5 inches long. The state record bigmouth buffalo using alternative methods was shot with a bow in 2015 in Castle Rock

Lake, this fish measured 87lbs 2 oz. and was 51.75 inches long. The state record quillback carp sucker using alternative methods was shot with a bow in 2016 on Petenwell Lake, this fish measured 12lbs. 4.8 oz. and was 26.0 inches long.

## SAWYER, WASHBURN and BURNETT COUNTIES

Ok, this one's only for the hard-core Fishheads: Anglers looking to try something completely new should visit the **Namekagon River** in Sawyer, Washburn, or Burnett Counties to try for the Redhorse Grand Slam. The Slam consists of catching all four of the redhorse species known to inhabit the Namekagon River in a single day. The four redhorse species include Shorthead, Silver, Golden, and the mighty Greater. Catch a bonus White Sucker on the same day and you enter truly rarified air with the Sucker Super-Slam. Good areas to target are deeper holes or runs in the reaches be-



Angler Becky Slattery and fishing assistant Calvin Wolter with a fine golden redhorse, one of four species needed to complete the Redhorse Grand Slam.

low Hayward and Trego. Fishing for redhorse and suckers does not require a tremendous amount of skill or experience, a worm set on the bottom will typically do the trick. But catching and correctly identifying the different species offers a unique challenge. Another bonus is that this experience can be enjoyed any time of year. There are no seasons, size, or bag limits for redhorse (but aren't known to be great table-fare). Be sure to send some pictures of you with your Redhorse Grand Slam to the local fish biologist!

## GL SALMON & TROUT



## ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, DOUGLAS AND IRON COUNTIES

**Lake Superior.** After a few years of reduced harvest, the Lake Trout population has rebounded and 2019 should continue to see high catch rates. The Lake Trout quota increased for the 2018 season and will be slightly higher for sport fisherman in 2019. In 2018, 14,949 Lake Trout were harvested in the Apostle Islands Region, the highest number since 2014 and anglers had their greatest success during the month of July. The average size of Lake Trout has increased over the last few years and is about 20 inches in DNR assessments, but fish exceeding 40 inches are caught, demonstrating true trophy potential. Lake Trout only: The Lake Trout season is open from December 1 through September 30. 15 inch minimum length, but only 1 over 25 inches. East of Bark Point: bag limit of 2; West of Bark Point: bag limit of 3. Trout (Rainbow, Brown, Brook, Splake) = 5 in total of which only 1 may be rainbow trout, 1 may be brook trout. Rainbow Trout must be greater than 26 inches, Brook

Trout must be greater than 20 inches, and all other trout must be greater than 15 inches. Salmon(Coho, Chinook, Pink, Atlantic) = 5 in total with no minimum length limit and no closed season Access information: <http://dnrm.wi.gov/DNRManagedLands/index.html?l=dRecLayer> Hatchery fish are still important in the Western Arm of Lake Superior. During the 2017 summer index a total of 173 Lake Trout were caught, and 54.9% were hatchery origin. However, naturally reproduced fish make up the majority of harvest.

## DOOR, MARINETTE AND OCONTO COUNTIES

**Green Bay and tributaries** Species population information (length range, average length, %over a specified length, adult densities - relationship to statewide avg., etc.): Brown trout stocked



Dray Carl, Lake Superior fisheries biologist with a 40-inch lake trout.

into the productive waters of Green Bay grow quickly. Most of the brown trout harvested by anglers are 2 or 3 years old. By autumn, a 2-year old brown would be around 23 inches, while a 3-year old brown would be around 29 inches. A rare brown trout over 32 inches may be 4-6 years old. An estimated 2,181 brown trout were harvested in Green Bay in 2017. Green Bay is slated to receive an additional 20,000 yearling brown trout annually beginning in 2019. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily limit is 5 trout/salmon in total. Minimum length is 10 inches. Anglers can troll for browns in the spring and summer months. There are numerous boat access locations along the shores of Green Bay. Check out this website for details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> Brown trout make fall migratory runs into the Menominee, Peshtigo, and Oconto Rivers. From late September into the winter months, shore anglers may have luck catching browns in these major tributaries. Here is the website to find detailed tributary access information. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/Tributary-Access.html>. Beginning with yearling brown trout stocked in 2017, all brown trout that are stocked into Wisconsin waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan receive an adipose fin clip. This is in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Green Bay Mass Marking Project. Also, beginning in 2017, Wisconsin only stocks seeforellen (German) strain of brown trout into the Great Lakes. The seeforellen strain is a "wild" strain, meaning that the broodstock (parents) are not held captive at a hatchery year-round. Instead, DNR fisheries crews collect broodstock from several tributaries to Lake Michigan each fall. These prospective parents are hauled to Besadny Anadromous Fish Facility in Kewaunee where gametes are collected weekly from mid-November into early December. After gametes are collected, adult brown trout are released into the Kewaunee River. Fertilized and disinfected eggs are brought to Wild Rose Hatchery, where they will be raised until stocking.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

**Bois Brule River - 44 miles.**

### BROWN TROUT

Total of 3,634 lake-run brown trout were counted passing the Sea Lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2017. 71% of all brown trout in Fall 2017 ranged from 18 to 24 inches, and the run peaked during early-August. In the upper river, the most recent survey (Summer 2016) found nearly 14% of resident brown trout were 12 to 20 inches long. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March 30 through November 15; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only two may be brown trout over 15 inches. Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 4 to September 30. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Brown trout are native to Europe and were initially imported over 100 years ago after the native brook trout fishery declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Today, lake-run and stream-resident brown trout in the Bois Brule River sustain themselves by reproducing naturally in the tributaries; no hatchery fish are added, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. Since these "wild" stocks respond strongly to their environments, such as the temperatures of the river and lake and flow of the river, their migration numbers and timing can challenge anglers of all skill levels. The lake-run brown trout count fluctuated between 3,000 and 4,000 for the last 14 years. Lake-run brown trout is the first of the three major fall migratory runs on the Brule and presents an early opportunity for anglers to fish the lower Brule River when fewer anglers are out. Fly anglers target lake-run brown trout by fishing streamers that imitate baitfish or sculpins, while gear anglers often use #3 or #4 Mepps or Blue Fox spinners, Little Cleo spoons, or Rapala-type stickbaits; whole night-crawlers are a popular option for live bait. -Aaron Nelson, Fisheries Technician

### COHO SALMON

Total of 4,482 were counted passing the Sea Lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2017. 70% of Coho salmon were 19 to 22-inches long, and 14% were 23 to 28-inches long. The peak of the coho salmon run occurred between mid-September through early-October. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March 30 through November 15; Minimum Length: 12 inches; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total; Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 4 to September 30. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Coho salmon are na-



Rainbow trout held by DNR fisheries supervisor Tom Meronek caught while electrofishing the Menominee River in November 2018

tive to the Pacific Coast, and they first established reproducing populations in the Bois Brule River in the 1970s from stocks introduced elsewhere in Lake Superior. Today, the stock is self-sustained by reproducing naturally in Lake Superior south shore tributaries, including the Bois Brule and its tributaries. Coho salmon migrate to the Bois



Chinook salmon held by DNR fisheries biologist Nick Legler at the Strawberry Creek salmon spawning facility on October 15, 2018. This fish measured 45.12 inches and 31.28 pounds, which was the biggest salmon based on length and fourth largest by weight processed at Strawberry Creek during 2018.

Brule primarily in the fall and early winter, although some migrate earlier, during the late summer. Environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of



Fisheries biologist Ericka Massa with a 20-inch lake run brown trout captured and released during a 2018 survey (Photo: Mara Duke)

fish and the timing of river migration. Since 1990, the average for Coho salmon runs on the Brule River is 2,269 but can range from the low of 1,001 during the fall of 2004 to a high of 5,380 seen in fall 1995. Whether grilled, baked, or smoked, Lake Superior coho salmon are a local delicacy, so they are highly sought after by anglers. Trollers use a variety of tactics on Lake Superior depending on the season and conditions, but common set ups include flasher and fly combos or stickbaits and spoons run off planer boards, while anglers fishing from shore or in tributary streams often find success with flashy spoons and spinners or brightly colored flies. -Aaron Nelson, Fisheries technician

### STEELHEAD

Total of 5,469 Steelhead were counted passing the Sea Lamprey barrier/fishway from Fall 2017 through Spring 2018. The fall migration makes up the majority of the steelhead run and peak steelhead migration occurred between early to mid-October of 2017. Half of the total ranged from 20 to 25 inches long and weighed three to five pounds. 16% exceeded the minimum length limit of 26 inches. Annual size and timing of the steelhead run varies relative to river and lake conditions, particularly during spring according to lake and river ice-out. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Down-

stream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March 30 through November 15; Minimum length: 26 inches; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only one may be a rainbow trout. Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 4 to September 30. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the



Fisheries technician Aaron Nelson with a 20-inch Lake Superior Coho salmon caught and released during survey work on the Brule River.

Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Steelhead are a lake-run form of Rainbow Trout, a non-native, naturalized species first imported to Lake Superior from the western United States over 100 years ago after the native brook trout fishery declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Currently, the steelhead fishery on the Brule River is self-sustained (i.e., wild), meaning no hatchery fish are added to the system, a rarity for many of today's high-profile and popular fisheries. The 26-inch minimum length limit was implemented in 1993 to allow Steelhead the chance to spawn at least once before they can be kept by anglers. As with many wild fisheries, environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration; this can challenge anglers of all skill levels. Annual steelhead runs on the Brule River typically fluctuate between 3,500 and 8,500 fish and are expected to continue changing as the population responds to short and long-term variations in river and lake conditions. -Aaron Nelson, Fisheries Technician

### Lake Michigan and Tributaries

Approximately 300,000 lake trout are stocked in Lake Michigan annually by



A Seeforellen Brown Trout held by DNR fisheries biologist Laura Schmidt on the Root River. This fish was captured to serve as hatchery broodstock. Seeforellen from the Root, Kewaunee and Sheboygan rivers are taken to DNR's C.D. "Buzz" Besadny Anadromous Fish Facility in Kewaunee where the fish are held until they are ready to spawn, typically mid-November through mid-December.

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Furthermore, evidence of natural reproduction has been documented through DNR surveys as well as in the sport fishery. A total of 20,345 lake trout were harvested in 2017 lake-wide, which was 7% below the ten-year average. Anglers from Kenosha to Sheboygan reported good catches of lake trout; accounting for 86% of the total lake trout harvest in Lake Michigan in 2017. The average size of lake trout harvested in 2017 was 25.9 inches and 6.8 pounds. Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon); 10 inches or larger in total length. The Mid-Lake Reef Complex is a refuge for lake trout. No lake trout may be targeted or possessed within the boundaries of the Mid Lake Reef Complex. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html> - Jason Meacham, fisheries technician

### COHO SALMON:

The coho fishing season typically starts off in the warmer southern waters of Lake Michigan and then progresses northward all the way to Sheboygan waters. Coho fishing was again phenomenal in 2017 when anglers harvested 119,686, which is well above the 10-



Fisheries technician Katie Alexson with a 28.2-inch, 8.2-pound Lake Superior steelhead captured and released during a survey on the Bois Brule River. Photo: Paul Piszczek.

year average harvest of 76,937. In 2018, coho were quality size with reports of several fish reaching 17-18 pounds! If weather patterns mimic that of 2016 and 2017, anglers can look forward to another good coho bite in 2019. Coho salmon are spawned at both the Root River Steelhead Facility (RRSF) in Racine and the C.D. "Buzz" Besadny Anadromous Fish Facility (BAFF) in Kewaunee. In 2018, 2,487 coho were captured at the RRSF and 1,480 were captured at BAFF. Between the 2 facilities, 1.4 million eggs were taken to be raised at Wild Rose Hatchery. This will translate to the goal of about 365,000 yearling coho that are stocked annually in Wisconsin waters. Wisconsin research indicates that coho stocked as yearlings are nearly twice as likely to be caught by anglers than coho stocked as fingerlings. Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>).

### BROWN TROUT:

Brown trout fishing in 2017 remained consistent with previous years with 20,398 fish taken. Anglers experienced many days of great brown trout fishing, from both boat and shore! Fishing should remain productive in 2019 through late fall and into the winter months at most ports along the lake, with the Milwaukee harbor being the most popular and productive brown trout fisheries. With round gobies providing an abundant food source, brown trout show good growth rates



Fisheries Technician Brandon Wambach with a 40.5-inch 27-pound female lake trout captured during the 2018 Lake Michigan lake trout assessment. This fish had a coded wire tag inserted prior to being stocked. From the number on the coded wire tag, we know this fish is a Lake Ontario Wild strain of Lake Trout. It hatched in 1991 and was stocked in 1992 by the US Fish and Wildlife Service at 6 Fathom Bank which is in Michigan waters of Lake Huron. That makes this fish 27 years old and over 350 miles away from its original stocking location!

and many reach the 15 to 20 pound range. Beginning in 2017, in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Green Bay Mass Marking Project, all Brown Trout stocked into Lake Michigan received an adipose fin clip. Also beginning in 2017, only the seeforellen (German) strain of brown trout is being stocked into Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan. The seeforellen strain stockings have remained consistent with 346,292 stocked in 2016, 368,509 stocked in 2017, and a 2018 goal of about 362,000 being stocked into waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay. We anticipate that the brown trout will continue to provide a strong fishery for both shore and boat anglers in 2019. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>).

### STEELHEAD:

Exciting news for steelhead, is that Skamania are once again being produced and stocked in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan. Over 70,000 Skamania were stocked during 2018 into the Keweenaw and Root Rivers, which is the first local stocking of Skamania since 2008 following the discovery of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia. With anticipation of new hatchery space to accommodate future steelhead production and fish health, Skamania are currently being produced with eggs from Indiana with intentions of building up Wisconsin's local stock to expand future production of this steelhead strain. This is encouraging for anglers, because different genetic strains of steelhead run upstream at different times, thus expanding the overall spawning run and opportunity to go stream fishing. Skamania steelhead generally run early summer through fall, Chambers Creek late fall to spring, and Ganaraska during spring, although run times vary depending on conditions. Also exciting and beginning in 2018, all steelhead stocked into Lake Michigan were marked with adipose fin clips and coded wire tags as part of a collaborative and lake-wide project to evaluate steelhead wild production, movements, growth, and stocking methods. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>).

### CHINOOK SALMON:

Lake Michigan provides fantastic fishing for salmon and trout, including Chinook salmon supported by stocking and wild production. A record high harvest of Chinook salmon occurred in year 2005, with almost 850,000 Chinooks caught and kept lake-wide, and

comparably high harvests occurred in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2012. Although harvest and abundance have since been lower, following ecosystem and management variability including stocking adjustments to balance predators and prey, many Chinooks continue to be caught, stocked, and size has improved. In 2017, over 1.3 million Chinooks were stocked lake-wide, over 64% of the Chinook population at age 1 were wild, and many Chinooks traveled to Lake Michigan from Lake Huron, collectively producing over 5 million fingerlings (from stocking, wild, and Huron). At the Strawberry Creek salmon spawning facility in Sturgeon Bay during October 2018, a total of 3,866 Chinooks were processed including several  $\geq 30$  pounds. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html>).

## Safe Eating Guidelines for Most of Wisconsin's Inland (non Great Lakes) Waters.

Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:

1 meal per week - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;

and

1 meal per month - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species.

Do not eat - Muskies.

Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:

Unrestricted\* - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;

1 meal per week - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species;

and 1 meal per month - Muskies.

Exceptions to the safe-eating guidelines apply to a number of waterbodies including the Great Lakes, larger rivers, and some inland lakes where fish have been found to have higher concentrations of contaminants.

For more information go to [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption)

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

# Getting Hooked on Wisconsin Fishing

Community/urban fishing program provides access to fishing fun!

## KENOSHA, MILWAUKEE, OUTAGAMIE, OZAUKEE, RACINE, ROCK, SHEBOYGAN, WALWORTH, WASHINGTON and WAUKESHA COUNTIES

**Urban Fishing Waters** Include the following; Kenosha County: Anderson Park, Bong Children's Pond, Milwaukee County: Brown Deer Park, Dineen Park, Estabrook Park, Franklin High School, Greenfield Park, Holler Park, Humboldt Park, Jackson Park, Juneau Park, Kosciuszko Park, McCarty Park, McGovern Park, Miller Park, Mitchell Park, Oak Creek Parkway, Saveland Park, Schoetz Park, Scout Lake, Sheridan Park, Washington Park, Wilson Park; Outagamie County: Appleton Memorial Pond; Ozaukee County: Harrington Beach Quarry, Mequon Rotary Park East and West, Pucketts Pond, Schowalter Park, Willow Brooke Park; Racine County: Gorney Park, Johnson Park, Lockwood Park, Pritchard Park, Quarry Lake, Reservoir Park; Rock County: Lions Park Pond Sheboygan County: Kohler-Andrae State Park Pond, Sheboygan Quarry, Memorial Park, River Park Lagoon; Walworth County: Ceylon Lagoon, Congdon Park Millpond Park Pond; Washington County: Boot Lake, Hartford Millpond, Homestead Hollow Park, Kewaskum Millpond, Regner Pond Sandy Knoll Park, Wells Lake, Wiedenbach Park Pond; Waukesha County: Calhoun Park, Delafield Rearing Pond, Foxbrook Pond Heyer Park North and South, Lapham Peak Pond, Lepper Dam Millpond, Lions Park-Overland, Menomonee Park, Minooka Park, Muskego Park, Nixon Park, Regal Park, and Woodfield North and South. County: Waukesha Lake size: Urban fishing waters are small lakes and ponds under 25 acres. Species population information: Average Length - 8 inches. Current regulation: Designated urban waters have a year-round season, no length limits, and

a special season (March 19 thru April 26, 2019) for juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers. They also have a daily bag limit of three (3) trout, one (1) gamefish (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, and northern pike), and ten (10) panfish (bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and bullhead) Access information: Shore fishing opportunities are found at all urban ponds. Stocking information is available seasonally on the Urban Waters Fishing Hotline at 414-263-8494 or toll free at 888-347-4563. Kids Clinics: Urban fishing waters are a great place to take kids fishing and many host free kids fishing clinics for both ice fishing and open water. For clinic information, visit the angler education page on the DNR website (<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/AnglerEducation/>). - Laura Schmidt, fisheries biologist, Milwaukee

## LANGLADE COUNTY

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

## LINCOLN COUNTY

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

## SAWYER COUNTY

Thousands of people visit Hayward, Wisconsin each summer. Many are serious anglers, but some may be beginners or just curious about fishing. **Shue's Pond** is in a small park located adjacent to downtown Hayward on 3rd and Kansas Street. There are picnic tables, a gazebo, and plenty of fishing access to the pond. Shue's Pond is connected to Smith Lake Creek and Lake Hayward and it's always full of panfish that are willing to bite. Shue's is a great location for kids or families that want to try fishing in an easily accessible spot with good odds of catching some fish. There are several bait shops within a few blocks of the pond. Kids under 16 can fish for free, anyone 16 and older needs a license to fish.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

**Regner Park Pond** - 2 acres The pond is stocked annually with rainbow trout from the state hatchery system. The City of West Bend also regularly stocks other species. Current regulation: Year-round season, no length limits, and a special season (March 9 thru April 26, 2019) for juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers. There is also a daily bag limit of three (3) trout, one (1) gamefish (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, and northern pike), and ten (10) panfish (bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and bullhead). Access information: (best access point(s), shore-fishing opportunities, etc.) Regner Park, 800 N Main Street, West Bend, WI 53090 Regner Park Pond was recently dredged and fish habitat was added to improve the angling experience. Other park amenities include trails, sports facilities and play areas, plus a summer swimming pond and winter ice rink.



## Close to Home series promotes shore fishing

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

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

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

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

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

## 2019 Wisconsin Fishing Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
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# Basic tackle box



Regulation pamphlet

Hooks

Non-lead sinkers

Pliers or hemostat

Fillet knife (if you plan on eating any fish)

Fishing license (print your own or on your phone)

Camera

Clipper or small scissors (to cut line)

Bobbers

Stringer/ fish basket

Tape measure

Small flashlight

Visit [takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org) for more information on fishing tackle.

