

## **Anglers mail survey: 88 million fish caught, 33 million kept in 2006-07**

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**MADISON** – Anglers caught 88.2 million fish in Wisconsin during the 2006-07 license year of which they released nearly two thirds – or 55.1 million – according to results of a statewide mail survey of anglers.

Anglers spent more than 71 million hours on the water, and although walleye was their most targeted species, they caught more panfish than anything else, according to Brian Weigel, the Department of Natural Resources fisheries researcher who analyzed the results.

Anglers reeled in an estimated 57.7 million panfish, 10 million bass, 7 million walleye, 3.1 million northern pike and 1.6 million trout. They also caught 777,094 catfish and 233,101 musky.

“The ultimate measure of the success of our program is how many fish people are catching,” says Mike Staggs, Wisconsin’s fisheries director. “The numbers emphasize how good fishing is in Wisconsin – a lot of people catch a lot of fish.”

The surveys were sent out every two weeks to 2,500 anglers randomly selected from the automated database of current license holders. Anglers were asked if they fished during the two-week period, what fish they primarily fished for, and other general information like whether they belong to a sportsman’s club or other conservation group.

Anglers were also asked to fill in a grid with the date, county and lake or stream they fished, and for each species, the number of fish they caught and the number they kept.

The survey also delivered these interesting tidbits:

Lake Michigan was the most popular water to fish, with 6 percent of angler trips to the “big pond,” followed by Lake Winnebago, the Mississippi River and the Wisconsin River.

The top 10 waters accounted for only 26 percent of angler trips, meaning nearly three-quarters of anglers’ trips were made to other waters, hinting at the diversity of fishing in a state with 15,081 lakes and 42,000 perennially flowing miles of river.

Bass and musky were the fish released most often, with only 5.4 percent and 5.59 percent of those species harvested, respectively.

Ice anglers spent 15.2 million hours fishing, caught 14 million fish and kept nearly half of them, or 6.5 million.

The angler catch and harvest information complements statistics Wisconsin gets on fishing participation from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. That nationwide telephone survey occurs every five years, and results from the most recent survey were released in fall 2007.

That 2006 survey estimated that 1,394,000 anglers 16 years and older fished nearly 21 million days in Wisconsin in 2006 and spent \$1.6 billion. Nonresidents comprised 381,000 of the licensed anglers and accounted for nearly 3.8 million days fishing. Wisconsin consistently finishes among the top states nationally in every category of sport fishing along with Minnesota, California, Texas, and Florida.

Additional analysis of the USFWS information by the American Sportfishing Association indicated that fishing in 2006 supported 30,164 Wisconsin jobs, generated a total economic impact, or “ripple effect” of \$2.75 billion, and \$196 million in tax revenues for state and local governments.

### *Top targeted fish, by fish group*

|               | No. of fish caught | No. of fish harvested |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| All panfish   | 57,728,758         | 25,732,346            |
| Walleye       | 7,068,112          | 2,155,626             |
| All bass      | 10,073,286         | 550,335               |
| All trout     | 1,615,190          | 497,783               |
| Muskellunge   | 223,101            | 12,493                |
| Northern pike | 3,158,927          | 621,700               |
| Catfish       | 777,094            | 535,658               |
| Other         | 7,580,707          | 2,983,290             |
| Total fish    | 88,228,175         | 33,089,231            |

#### **USFWS study:**

[library.fws.gov](http://library.fws.gov) [PDF exit DNR]

#### **American Sportfishing study:**

[www.asafishing.org](http://www.asafishing.org) [PDF exit DNR]

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