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THE WISCONSIN
FISHING REPORT

Spring 2014 • An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management program • fishingwisconsin.org

Bringing more walleye to Wisconsin's waters

Wisconsin walleye fishing is good and with a new initiative only plans to get better

Walleye have long been part of the fabric of life for the people who have lived in Wisconsin and a lure bringing visitors to the shores of its lakes and rivers. Musky may be the state's official state fish, but angler surveys show that walleye own anglers' hearts.

Now, a $13 million, two-year funding package spearheaded by the Governor's office and the Department of Natural Resources and unanimously approved in June 2013 by legislators aims to put more walleye on people's plates and more money in local businesses' cash registers.

The plan, called the ***Wisconsin Walleye Initiative***, is stocking more large fingerling walleye in waters where walleye populations have decreased in recent years A growing body of research looking at declines in walleye populations in the Upper Midwest is finding a bunch of contributing factors, but points to drought and long-term environmental changes unfavorable to walleye as the main culprits. The belief is that stocking larger walleye, and more of them, will increase their chance of surviving and one day successfully reproducing in the wild before winding up on the end of a line.

The heart of the plan is to significantly increase stocking of the larger walleye that research shows can survive better, often at rates up to 30 times that of their smaller brethren, says Mike Staggs, Wisconsin's outgoing fisheries director (see Dear Wisconsin Angler column on page 3)

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To do that, the $13 million includes more operating money for DNR hatcheries to raise more of the larger fish, and invests in upgrading infrastructure at state fish hatcheries so they can increase their production capacity for the larger walleye. The initiative also delivers a one-time $2 million competitive grant program aimed at helping tribal, municipal and private fish hatcheries increase their capacity to produce more fish and provides money for DNR to contract with these hatcheries to stock the larger walleye.

When all is said and done after two years, the state expects to stock up to eight times as many larger fish as otherwise, reaching hundreds of lakes, and be winding up much needed hatchery upgrades that were identified in a 2011 comprehensive study of the hatchery system.

"Northern Wisconsin is an important beneficiary of this, but there are other parts of the state that will absolutely benefit from this," Staggs says. "Southern lakes, which aren't known to have a lot of natural reproduction, will get more of the fish they need to sustain good walleye fishing.

"I think people are going to notice that there's better walleye fishing if we're able to stock over several years."

As soon as the ink dried on the state budget June 31, 2013, DNR hatcheries, biologists and propagation staff mobilized to ramp up production of the larger walleyes. Rather than shipping fish out of the hatcheries after a few months as what are known as "small fingerlings," fish 1.5- to 2-inches long, the hatcheries now had the operating funds to keep the fish at the hatchery longer.

Growing fish to the larger size, 6 to 8 inches, a size often referred to as "extended growth, EG" or "large fingerlings," is significantly more expensive because the food is more expensive. After hatching, the younger walleye live in ponds that are fertilized and feed on the plankton and other organisms that grow in the pond. Walleye destined for EG status are fed minnows purchased from private fish farmers and are kept at lower densities in more ponds, which makes them more labor intensive.

By the time the last state stocking truck delivered its load of walleye, DNR hatcheries had produced a record 416,506 extended growth walleye for stocking. The department bought another 23,975 from private fish farmers using initiative funds. Altogether, 100 lakes were stocked, up from 35 in a typical year.

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2014 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout
March 1 (5 a.m.) to April 27

General Hook and Line Inland
May 3 to March 1, 2015

General Inland Trout
May 3 (5 a.m.) to Sept. 30

Largemouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
May 3 to March 1, 2015

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Catch-and-Release
May 4 to June 20

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
June 21 to March 1, 2015

Large and Smallmouth Bass
Southern Zone
May 3 to March 1, 2015

Musky – Northern Zone
May 24 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone
May 3 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike
May 3 to March 1, 2015

Walleye
May 3 to March 1, 2015

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)
Sept. 6 to Sept. 30

Free Fishing Weekend
June 7 - 8, 2014 summer
January 17-18, 2015 winter

http://www.pinterest.com/wdnr/

FYI

Find links to fishing licenses, season dates, regulations, where to fish and more at: ***fishingwisconsin.org***

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

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Follow "fishwisconsin" on Twitter. Subscribe at ***fishingwisconsin.org***

Dear WISCONSIN ANGLER

Editor's Note: This "Dear Wisconsin Angler" column will mark the last for Mike Staggs. Mike will be hanging up his work waders and retiring this spring after leading the fisheries program for the past 17 years. We wish Mike good luck in his retirement with plenty of tight lines and even more full live wells.

Welcome to Wisconsin – home of the best and most diverse fishing in the country. We offer more waters than dedicated anglers could fish in several lifetimes…an incredible array of fish to catch…and some rare ones just to appreciate.

Fishing is a cornerstone of Wisconsin's culture and economy. We rank second in the country in the number of days nonresidents spend fishing here, and if we had Florida's weather and year-round open water, we'd probably be number one.We are extremely proud to help provide you with outstanding fishing, great memories and a break from your daily stresses.

Fishing is a great way to relax and enjoy the outdoors. Give yourself that license to relax; it can make you forget about your day-to-day worries. That's a big part of fishing — it's the cheapest form of therapy you can get.

If you're looking for ways to save some money this year – take your family and friends fishing! There's good fishing close to where you live, and the cost of basic tackle, bait and a license is a bargain compared to restaurants, movies or video games. And the fish you keep are a tasty, healthy and a great addition to your dinner menu!

We work hard to improve fishing in Wisconsin. This year we are embarking on a walleye initiative that should put more walleye in your live well and on your dinner table in the coming years.

Please take a few minutes to read more about how we put your fishing license dollars to work. We're committed to make fishing even better in Wisconsin, and we hope your time on the water reflects that in 2014. I hope the forecasts provided by many of our biologists help you understand how your favorite fishing spot is faring or where you might want to cast your line, next.

The fishing licenses and stamps you buy, your vocal and financial support of our program, and your time and labor are critical to conserving and enhancing Wisconsin fish populations and fishing opportunities for now and in the future. Sit back, read up, and then hit the water to enjoy great fishing and the memories of a lifetime. And while you're at it, save some time to take someone fishing who's never been before, or hasn't been in a long time. We've got a first-time buyer discount license that might just fit the bill. The memories you make will last a lifetime for you and them, and you can feel good that you'll be investing in the future of Wisconsin's fishing.

Recently retired fisheries director Mike Staggs with an armful of walleye...why wouldn't he be smiling?

I hope to see you on the water!

Michael Staggs

Initiative targets walleye: angler favorite and a cornerstone of tourism industry

continued from page 1

Most of the fish were stocked in northern Wisconsin because DNR filled the stocking requests submitted by biologists when they thought the state was quite limited in how many larger fish it could produce. In 2014 and 2015, the fish will go statewide.

"The increased funding provided by the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative allows us to significantly increase stocking of the larger extended growth walleye but we think the demand will exceed the supply," says Steve Avelallemant, longtime DNR fisheries supervisor in northern Wisconsin and one of the leaders of the initiative effort. "We need to prioritize to make the most effective and efficient use of the fish able to be produced under the initiative."

The stocking guidelines DNR will use call for setting up a priority system for stocking waters with public access. The qualifying candidate waters would be divided into four categories based on fisheries management priorities, Avelallemant says.

Lakes will be stocked at different rates and every other year to help DNR hone in on the stocking rate and kinds of lakes that produce the best survival. "If stocking five walleye per acre is more effective than stocking 10 or 15 per acre, we'll reduce that rate in subsequent years and be able to stock more lakes." Likewise, the reverse is true.

Avelallemant and other managers say the stocking is needed in some lakes to boost natural reproduction, particularly as a prolonged drought in northern Wisconsin and other parts of the Midwest grinds on and as climate trends result in less runoff, clearer water and more plants.

More walleye in the water will lead to more walleye in the boat and on the table. Photo: Wisconsin DNR

"Walleye lay a boatload of eggs, but even in the best of situations, the number of young fish hatched that survive to their first year fluctuates widely," Avelallemant says. "They are strong every three to four years. The problem is, they haven't had a strong year class for up to a decade in some lakes."

Newly hatched walleye like a lot of water and stable spring conditions – neither of which Wisconsin has had for a long time. Just in the last two years we've had some of the earliest and the latest ice outs on record, he says.

"The walleye initiative helps us keep enough walleye in there so when all the planets align, they are there to do their thing," he says.

Staggs is appreciative for the support shown to the initiative. "We've got the opportunity to try something on a large scale in the face of changing environmental conditions," he says. "We think that over the next few years the tribes and resorts, guides, bait dealers, marinas and all of the other local businesses that depend on good fishing will benefit and Wisconsin will become the destination for walleye fishing in the Midwest."

WHERE ARE THE FISH GOING?

Walleye stocking strategy: Stocked in waters with a reasonable chance of success that must have public access.

Lake priority: Candidate waters will be assigned to one of the management priorities:

Priority 0 - natural reproduction
Priority 1 - research projects
Priority 2 - restoration
Priority 3 - maintenance

Ranking criteria: Waters within each priority category will be ranked by biological considerations (recruitment success and population density) and economic and social considerations (business development, cooperative efforts and public access).

Genetics: Placement of the fish will be guided by current genetic principles.

Scoring: A weighted scoring system will be used to evaluate all candidate waters.

For more information and a list of proposed waters go to *dnr.wi.gov* and search "walleye".

Science in the spotlight

How have walleye and bass populations changed in the past 30 years? What conditions are associated with these changes? Under what conditions could bass eat enough walleye to cause walleye populations to decline? What management actions could reverse walleye declines? In what lake types do we think these actions will be most effective? A research project hopes to answer some of these questions.

Walleye are an important sport fish in Wisconsin, and understanding how their abundance is affected by environmental conditions as well as interactions with other species can help biologists identify policies that will be most effective in preserving walleye populations.

This research is an ongoing collaborative project between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW-Madison, and UW-Stevens Point. We are also collaborating with research staff from Minnesota and throughout the Great Lakes region to better understand this issue that affects us all. This work is funded by an external grant from the United States Geological Survey.

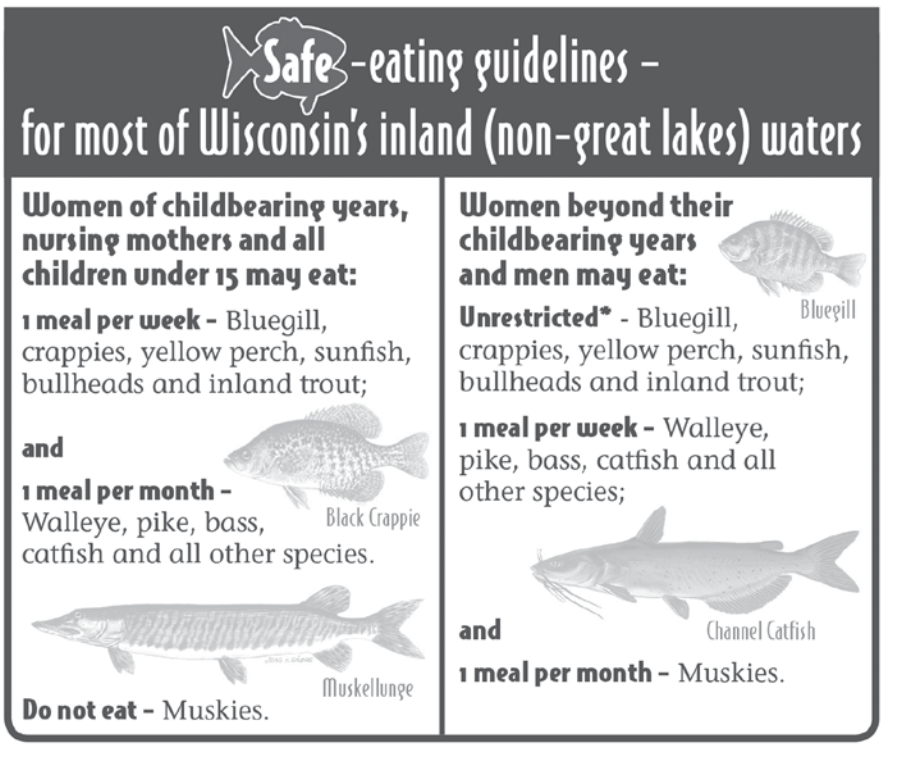
Results to date include:

- Adult walleye density has declined in 80% of lakes in the Ceded Territory with naturally reproducing walleye populations. Reproduction has declined in 67% of lakes, and reproduction is lowest in smaller, less productive lakes in the western part of the state.

- Largemouth bass abundance has increased in 93% of lakes statewide, and abundance is highest in in smaller lakes in the western part of the state.

- Diets from hundreds of largemouth bass collected in 4 northern Wisconsin lakes indicate that largemouth bass rarely eat walleyes.

- Gretchen Hansen, DNR Research Scientist



Exceptions to the safe-eating guidelines apply to 140 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

Fabulous Fisheries Projects

Woody habitat transforms Cedar Lake

BALDWIN - A large scale woody habitat infusion project was completed in Cedar Lake, St. Croix and Polk counties during the winters of 2004 through 2013. The project consisted of constructing and installing approximately 15 to 40 fish cribs per year in colonies throughout suitable areas in the lake, to mimic an aquatic plant bed. Overall, 12 colonies and 361 fish cribs were installed.

Cedar Lake was often referred to as the "Dead Sea". Poor water quality from excessive algal blooms during summer blocked sun light which limited aquatic plant growth. Bass and panfish species and habitat were scarce. The woody habitat helped replace the loss of aquatic plant beds until long term water quality issues can be resolved.

This project was a cooperative project with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The project was sponsored, funded and implemented in cooperation with the Star Prairie Fish and Game Club and the Cedar Lake Management and Rehabilitation District. Numerous volunteers helped secure funds, collect, cut and haul materials, and build and place structures. Special sleds were constructed to haul individual cribs over the ice to their final destinations.

Results were phenomenal. Bluegill and crappie populations have blossomed. Bass, walleye and musky fishing have also been enhanced. Angler activity and success has steadily risen. The Department has been recognized by several partnership groups for exceptional achievements in fisheries management, creating excellent fishing opportunities and working cooperatively with the citizens of Wisconsin. Our hope is to formally document fishing success through a future creel survey! *Marty Engel, Baldwin*

Volunteers hauling recently constructed fish cribs over the ice to the final location. The cribs fall through the ice as it melts. Photo by: Kelly Spaniol

Muskies by the numbers

HAYWARD - In conjunction with DNR Science Services in Spooner the Hayward Field Unit is using PIT tags (Passive Integrated Transponder) to obtain critical information about our muskellunge populations. PIT tags are about the size of a grain of rice and are implanted into the body of the fish. When scanned with a reader the tags transmit a number identifying the fish. Thousands of stocked and wild fish have been tagged so far and recapture information is starting to come back yielding interesting results.

This project will provide important information on growth and survival of stocked fish as well as naturally born fish. Having tagged fish in these lakes will make it easier to determine population size and will allow us to track the fish used for broodstock in our hatchery operations. The information gained from these PIT tags will feed into decisions on stocking and regulations.

Muskies at the Governor Thompson Hatchery that were implanted with PIT tags and are ready to be stocked into the Chippewa Flowage.

Recapture information is being collected by DNR fisheries crews, local guides, and avid musky anglers using hand held PIT tag readers. Funds to purchase tags and readers came from the Chippewa Flowage Property Owners Association, the Chippewa Flowage Resort Owners Association, the Big Chip Fish Fest, and Muskies Inc.. Al McElroy, Scott Johnson, Al Hoeft, and Mike Persson volunteered to help tag 3,000 fingerling muskies this spring at the Spooner Hatchery that were stocked into the Chippewa Flowage.

We are now collecting information on growth of individual muskellunge on a variety of different types of musky lakes (stocked, naturally producing, flowages, natural lakes). These tags will also give us an idea of how fish move around in chains of lakes and over dams and other barriers. *Max Wolter, Hayward*

Fisheries Operations Crew removing one of seven large culverts from the Mukwonago River, opening the river for navigation for the first time in over 60 years. Photo taken by Benjamin Heussner.

Helping fish move on the Mukwonago River

EAGLE - The DNR – Southeast Inland Fish Team has removed the seven culverts from the the Mukwonago River. The Mukwonago River is host to 58 different fish species and is a Class II trout stream. Removing the culverts has improved navigability, fisheries habitat, and water quality. Many partners have contributed to this effort including: local municipalities, Southeast Wisconsin Fox River Commission, South Eastern Wisconsin chapter of Trout Unlimited, Nature's Classroom Institute, East Troy High School, and the Kettle Moraine Natural History Association. During the fall of 2013, the remaining culverts were removed and the river was opened for navigation for the first time since the 1950s'. This coming June, fish habitat will be enhanced within the project area using coconut fiber roles, boulders, brush bundles and course woody structure. The WDNR along with volunteer groups will continue to monitor the improvements in the biological diversity, habitat, and water quality. *Benjamin Heussner, Eagle.*

Walleye looking up on the Wisconsin River

WISCONSIN RAPIDS - Spring 2014 marks the 12th year that the temporary walleye slot regulation has been in effect on the Wisconsin River from Grandfather Dam in Lincoln County to the Prairie Du Sac Dam in Sauk County. As of spring 2014 this rule will be permanent instead of temporary. The rule reads; only walleye and sauger from 15 but less than 20 inches may be kept except one fish may be over 28 inches, and it has been popular with anglers. The public have voted on this rule 3 times (2001, 2006, and 2013) and have strongly supported the rule. The new regulation has maintained the harvest rate of fish 15 to 20 inches while providing catch-and- release as well as trophy opportunities.

A tradition worth passing on

MADISON - Angler Education instructors introduce people of all ages to Wisconsin's fishing tradition, so they can make it their own. Join in by attending an angler education instructor certification workshop and bring the love of fishing to your school or community center. As an instructor, you will have access to classroom materials and opportunities to share your ideas for successful fishing programs. A growing list of workshops is found at *dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/anglereducation/index.html.*

FIN'tern Ryan Kilian helps a young angler from the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

All about Fish

The Aquatic Resources Education Program has a boatload of information and teaching materials to help you learn and teach about fish, fishing, and fish habitat. Check it out at *dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/anglereducation/TeachingMaterials.html.*

Fishing in the Neighborhood (FIN)

This past summer 10 interns were stationed at non-profit organizations around the state to offer fishing opportunities to children in low-income neighborhoods, particularly in communities of color – Hmong, Hispanic, Native American, and African American.

Family members were encouraged to participate at special events. The length of sessions varied from 1 to 8 weeks, depending on format and needs of the community. Look for news about summer FIN programs in Madison, Milwaukee, Green Bay, and other communities to be determined, this spring.

Adopt a Tackle Loaner Program Site

Many of our loaner site managers need help maintaining the gear at their sites. This would be a great service project for high school students, scouts, fishing clubs or civic organizations. Please review the list to find a site near you and lend a hand *dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/anglereducation/loanerContacts.html.*

Free Fishing Weekend – Not just for kids!

June 7 & 8, 2014 and January 17 & 18, 2015

Please remember to include adults who may have missed the boat as youngsters, in your Free Fishing Weekend plans! Schedule an introductory fishing clinic for community members or just invite a neighbor along on an outing. More information and a planning form are found at dnr.wi.gov. Search for "free fishing weekend."

What do you want to fish for in 2014?

Undecided? Choose your fish target and read on!

Want more information? Contact the county biologist dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html

WALLEYE

BARRON COUNTY

Red Cedar Lake - 1,897 acres. Red Cedar Lake is consistently one of the best walleye lakes in Barron County and is maintained through good natural reproduction. Current regulation: The walleye fishery is managed with an 18-in minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit as the base regulation, but is subject to change based on tribal declarations. Access information: There are three public boat landings on Red Cedar Lake. Balsam Lake and Hemlock Lake are connected to Red Cedar Lake and a navigable channel allows boat passage through all of the lakes

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Namakagon Lake - 3,227 acres. A 2011 survey found a moderate density adult walleye population. Twenty five percent of the walleye surveyed were between 15 and 20 inches in length. Strong natural reproduction continues to provide walleye angling opportunities. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, but only one fish over 14 inches may be kept. Daily bag limit subject to ceded territory adjustments Access information: There are four public boat launches on the lake. The most popular launches are at the Chequamegon National Forest Campground and a state owned landing off of Hwy M. The walleye population has been maintained through natural reproduction since 1993 and has the highest walleye density of surveyed lakes in Bayfield County. The 2013 Governor's fishing opener was held on Namakagon Lake and due to a late spring the fishing occurred on the ice.

BROWN COUNTY

Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay - Strong spring walleye runs are common on the Fox, Menominee and Peshtigo Rivers providing anglers ample opportunities to catch large numbers of migrating walleye. Anglers fishing in the rivers usually jig or cast for walleye. Those anglers willing to fish on Green Bay should try trolling near Genoa Beach, off the Menominee River and along reefs on the east shore of Green Bay for the best fishing. The size of these walleye can be impressive with the largest fish over 30 inches in length and weighing in at over 10 pounds. Current regulation: 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. Access information: There are many good boat launches in the area. Good shore fishing opportunities exist on the Fox, Menominee and Peshtigo Rivers. Check the Lake Michigan page for access information. *dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html*

CLARK/JACKSON COUNTIES

Upper Black River (above Black River Falls dam) and lower Black River (below Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse and Trempealeau Counties. Black River, upper and lower: Information based on electrofishing results and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate was up at 51/mile in 2013 as compared to 42/mile in 2012, and was up for legal size (15") and larger fish at 8/mile in 2013 over 5/mile in 2012. Maximum size fish captured in 2013 was 24 inches. Lower river total catch rate was up at 13.6/mile compared to 12.7/mile in 2012, and was lower for legal (15") and larger fish in 2013 at 2.7/mile compared to 3.3/mile in 2012. Maximum size fish captured in 2013 was 28 inches Regulation: 15" minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit. A tagging study was initiated for lower Black River walleyes in 2008 and continued into 2013. Please report catching any tagged walleyes. More tag returns will improve results and guide future management of the lower Black River.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Upper Mississippi River Pools 9 & 10, Crawford, Grant and Vernon counties
20,561 acres of open water and backwater lakes and approximately 65-miles in length. Walleye and sauger continue to be highly sought after recreational fish on the Mississippi River. Electrofishing surveys conducted in the fall of 2013 showed good numbers of walleye ranging from 15 to 22 inches as well as many fish below 15 inches. Anglers also have a good chance of catching a trophy walleye over 28 inches. This year was above average for young of the year walleye production with average size fish being greater than 7.5 inches. Sauger is just as plentiful with many fish in the 12 to 17-inch range. Fall young-of-year electrofishing surveys showed above average production for sauger with average size greater than 6.5 inches. Predictable fishing patterns for both walleye and sauger include fishing deep water near the lock & dams dam in fall, winter, and early spring. Walleye tend to congregate below the lock and dams in the spring, in flowing sloughs in early summer, and near wing dams during late summer and fall. The Mississippi River is open year round for both walleye and sauger. The combined daily bag limit is 6 fish in total with a 15-inch length limit on walleye and no minimum length limit on sauger. There are many access sites on the Upper Mississippi River. These sites range from unimproved gravel landings with limited parking to multi-lane blacktop landings with parking for many vehicle/trailers. These sites are maintained by various State, Federal, and County Agencies and may require and access permit. 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 *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/*

DANE COUNTY

Lake Monona - 3274 acres. Monona is the "sleeper" walleye water in the Yahara chain. Both spring and fall electrofishing surveys had well represented catches of legal (15") and larger fish with some true trophy fish exceeding 25 inches coming off the north shore. Current regulation: Monona is under the default regulation of 3 fish bag, 15" length limit Access information: Excellent boat launches on the west shore at Olin park, east shore at Starkweather creek and the south shore off Tonywatha trail. A county launch/access fee is required from Dane county parks. Monona receives no stocking for walleye. Fish migrate freely up the Yahara river from downstream lakes Waubesa and Kegonsa.

DODGE COUNTY

Fox Lake - 2,625 acres. Walleye catch rates for 2013 spring fyke netting were 64/net night, compared to 45/net night in 2007. Walleye up to 28.2 inches were sampled and 24% of the fish were over 18-inches (minimum length limit). Walleye 2013 fall electrofishing catch rate was 98/hour, compared to 78/hour in 2012, 116/hour in 2011, a high of 160/hour in 2010 and comparable to the 10-year average of 93/hour. The number of young of the year (YOY) was 12/hour in 2013, compared to 11/hour in 2012, 4/hour in 2011, 21/hour in 2010 and a high of 78/hour in 2009. In 2013, 11% of the walleye sampled during fall electrofishing were over 18-inches and the majority of walleye were 14 - to 15.9-inches in length, representing fish from the large year-class produced in 2009 Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length, 3 fish daily bag on walleye. Access information: Public boat launches and shorefishing sites: Clausen Park on Mill Creek outlet channel and Town Park (northwest side). In 2013, DNR stocked 47,323 small fingerling (2-inch) walleye into Fox Lake.

DOOR/KEWAUNEE COUNTIES

Green Bay waters - Although the 2013 creel estimates are not yet available, walleye fishing in the Door and Kewaunee areas of Green Bay is expected to continue to be very good in the coming years. The level of walleye harvested in Green Bay waters along these counties annually during 2010 - 2012 constituted three of the four highest walleye harvest levels in our data timespan (beginning 1986). This is largely due to recent outstanding walleye natural reproduction in southern and western portions of Green Bay. In 2013, a survey of the Sturgeon Bay local spawning population survey indicated the area population is in very good condition in both numbers and size at age. Furthermore, the data suggest that, although stocking still takes place in the area, naturally recruited walleyes are contributing to the population. The strong 2003 year class still has a presence in the area both from stocked and naturally recruited fish and most of these fish are well into the mid-20 inch range or greater. Walleye fingerlings were not stocked in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay in 2013 as we have transitioned to an every-other year stocking schedule. However, fall young-of-the-year surveys in 2013 indicated that local natural reproduction was very good with the highest catch per effort recorded since this survey was resumed in 2008 in the Sturgeon Bay area. This is consistent with a very strong 2013 year class that was measured by surveys in other parts of Green Bay. If first year survival is good for the 2013 year class, the forecast for walleye fishing in this area looks very good for the future. Current regulation: The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Tributary Stream to Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. Access information: There are many boat launches in the area including several in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay; Peninsula State Park is one of the sites that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess* for a listing of some of the launches in the area. Some of the better shore fishing sites can be found around the city of Sturgeon Bay and along Potawatomi State Park early on in the fishing season.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

St. Louis River Estuary - 12,000 acres The spring 2012 index survey of adult walleye showed a good population with plenty of fish well above the legal size. 76% of all walleye captured and released during the survey ranged from 18-27 inches. The average length of all walleye was 20.5 inches, and female walleye were generally larger than male walleye. Current regulation: Open May 10 through March 1; 15-inch minimum length; daily limit is two fish. Access information: Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to *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. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. The estuary's walleye population is surveyed and managed collaboratively with Minnesota DNR. From 1989 through 1993, Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR stocked over 450,000 fingerling walleye. Minnesota DNR continued stocking fry annually until 2006.

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

Lake Eau Claire and Eau Claire River - 860 acres. Spring 2013 survey revealed a strong walleye population of 6.7 fish/acre. Well above the average for northern Wisconsin lakes. Natural reproduction has been strong the past several years in Lake Eau Claire and the Eau Claire River system and walleye fishing should be good to excellent. The current walleye regulation is a 15 inch minimum length limit. The main boat landing is on the north shore of Lake Eau Claire and is county owned. A small user fee is required to use this landing.

Wildlife technician, Nick Neuens, holding a pair of 28-inch walleyes captured during a DNR fyke net survey on Patten Lake during 2011.

FLORENCE COUNTY

Patten Lake - 255 acres. Patten Lake is the best walleye lake in Florence County. However, the walleye population plummeted to a record low in 2011, estimated at 0.97 adults/acre. A walleye rehabilitation project by the DNR and Patten Lake Association has been underway since 2011 and the population is now on the rebound with many young fish present. Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit Access information: 1 public boat landing on the SW corner of the lake. This lake became overrun with black bullheads, which halted any significant walleye reproduction (which is what caused the walleye population to drop). The walleye population is still fairly low, likely around 1-2 adults/acre, but expect this population to take off in the upcoming years into the 4-8 adults/acre range as the abundant young walleye mature!

FOREST COUNTY

Lake Metonga - 2,157 acres. This lake boasts a very strong walleye population, estimated at 4.9 adults/acre during 2013. Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 3 fish daily bag limit. Motor trolling is permitted. Access information: There is a nice boat landing on the north end of the lake and a large campground with boat launch on the south end. This lake had a poor walleye population for many decades. The Mole Lake Chippewa Community has done extensive walleye rehabilitation on this lake over the past 5 to 10 years, which has increased the walleye population 5-fold, creating what is now the largest walleye population in Forest County.

IOWA COUNTY

Twin Valley Lake, Iowa County
150 acres. The walleye population in Twin Valley Lake has been improving over the last 10 years as the result of an improved stocking program. Extensive fishery surveys in 2013 revealed a good population of adult fish from 13" to 16". Growth in this lake is slower than other waters in the area with the fish maturing at a smaller size. There are some fish in the 18" to 24" range with a occasional fish in the 28" to 30". Because of the small size of the lake and the extremely heavy fishing pressure on it, the walleye fishery should be viewed as adding variety and uniqueness to the anglers fishing experience with the possibility of perhaps catching a legal fish. Current regulation: Minimum length limit 18" with 3 bag. Access information: Located in Gov. Dodge State Park. Park Sticker/fee required. There is a pretty decent hard surfaced boat ramp that will handle most any size boat with an associated pier. A good, hard surfaced parking lot provides more than ample parking. There is some shore fishing opportunity associated with the boat ramp and parking area as well as with the main picnic area. The best shore fishing is associated with the dam and associated banks but accessing this requires a 1/3 mile walk from CTH "Z". Boating on the lake is restricted to electric motors, oars, paddles, etc. – no gas motors. There is row boat and canoe rental located lakeside along with concessions. Gov. Dodge is the 2nd. largest State Park as well as being one of the most heavily used parks in the state. Camping, swimming beach, pet area, picnic areas, hiking trails, horse trails, etc. are all available.

IRON COUNTY

Gile Flowage - 3,384 acres. The Gile Flowage contains a quality walleye fishery supported by consistent levels of natural reproduction. As a result of the consistent reproduction, anglers should expect to see proportionally higher numbers of the younger, more aggressive walleye. Despite this, larger fish are available; a recent 2012 netting survey (targeting mature, adult walleye) found that 59% were 15 inches or larger, including several fish either at, or near, 30 inches and over 10 pounds! Current regulation: No minimum length limit, but only one over 14 inches, bag limits adjusted following ceded territory regulations (check for public notices at access points). Access information: 4 public boat landings

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - 13,545 acres. Walleye anglers seeking some good fishing, in a primarily undeveloped northwoods setting, should try the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage (TFF). Although a bit overwhelming at first (by nature of its sheer size), persistent anglers will likely understand why many successful TFF fishermen don't stray too far away. Adult walleye densities have consistently been estimated at over 4 fish per acre (above Northern WI averages), which is supported solely through phenomenal levels of natural reproduction. A 2013 netting survey, targeting adult walleye, resulted in high numbers of walleye sampled with an average length of 14 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, bag limits adjusted following ceded territory regulations (check for public notices at access points). Access information: 6 public boat landings, camping available

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River - 10,000 lake acres plus 27+ river miles 2013 was a colossal walleye recruitment year for Lake Koshkonong/Rock River system. Fall 2013 sampling yielded 159 young-of-year (YOY) walleye per hour (104 per mile), beating 2004's record of 50 per mile. The 2013 year class will create even better fishing when it reaches the current 15-inch minimum length limit in 4 to 5 years. Current regulation: Seasons are open year-round on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. 15-inch minimum length, 5 fish daily bag on walleye. Motor trolling is allowed on Lake Koshkonong as far downstream as the Highway 59 bridge at Newville. Access information: Dalman Royce County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam Opportunities for large flathead catfish exist. In fall 2013, DNR Fisheries Crews sampled a 35-inch flathead from the Rock River above Lake Koshkonong. Through the assistance of local cooperative groups, the Bark River Hatchery stocked 3,000,000 walleye fry into Lake Koshkonong/Rock River in 2013.

DNR Fisheries Technician, Kendal Patrie with a walleye from Lac Sault Dore during a 2013 spring fyke netting survey. Photograph: Greg Rublee.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Yellowstone Lake - 450 acres The walleye population in Yellowstone has been stable over the last 10 years. It still offers anglers an opportunity to catch trophy sized walleye as well as table fare. Fall electrofishing surveys in 2013 revealed a good adult fishery. One hundred seventy-five adult walleye were sampled. They ranged from 12.0 to 23.2 inches with an average size of 15.6 inches. Fifty-two percent were within the 15 to 18 inch slot available for harvest. Ten percent were greater than 18 inches. While the maximum size collected on this survey was 23.2 inches, the lake does support a fishable population of walleye greater than 24 inches in total length. Current regulation: Only walleye between 15 and 18 inches may be harvested. The daily bag limit is 2 game fish in total. Access information: 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 available. There is also a bait shop with boat rental located lakeside.

LANGLADE COUNTY

Enterprise Lake - 505 acres with a good naturally reproducing population; 14-18" protected slot; Angler reports have been good and suggest the walleye population is growing as expected under the current regulation

Sawyer Lake - 149 acres with a good naturally reproducing population; Only 1 walleye over 14" allowed; 2010 adult population estimate of 2.6 per acre

LINCOLN COUNTY

Wisconsin River and its impoundments (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions)
About 5,000 acres of prime, naturally reproducing walleye water; Seasons, length limits, and bag limits vary on this system, please refer to the regulations booklet for water specific regulations; Adult population estimates range from 2-5 per acre

Rice Reservoir - 2,274 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" length limit; 2012 adult population estimate of 3.0 per acre at full pool

Spirit Reservoir - 1,667 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" length limit; 2005 adult population estimate of 2.9 per acre.

OCONTO COUNTY

White Potato Lake - 978 acres. The walleye fishery is maintained through stocking by the DNR and White Potato Lake Sportsman's Club. The late spring in 2013 reduced walleye catch rates compared to previous surveys however, of the over 800 fish collected 72% were greater than 15 inches. 15-inch minimum / 5 fish per day Anglers can choose from 6 boat landings to access White Potato Lake. The average depth of this lake is 5 feet and there is an abundance of vegetation.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Oneida County
A spring, 2013 survey estimated an adult walleye population of 4.0 per acre on 123-acre Spider Lake. Most fish were between 11 and 16 inches. A single night of electrofishing on 219-acre Chain Lake (part of the Sugar Camp Chain) found good numbers of walleye of all sizes up to 25 inches. Buckskin (634 acres) had abundant 12-15 inch walleye, with a few larger fish up to 23.7 inches. Spider has a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye, while on Chain and Buckskin there is no minimum length limit, but only 1 fish may be over 14 inches.

PRICE COUNTY

Lac Sault Dore - 561 acres. Our spring 2013 capture rate of 2.3 walleye per net-night did not reflect the desired moderate to high population density of 4-8 adults per acre, though some spawning adults may have eluded capture in fyke nets if they moved upstream in the Elk River as we suspect. Walleye size structure was within the desired range—59% were 15 inches or longer and 34% were at least 20 inches. Currently, there is no minimum length limit on walleye, but a proposed rule change, if approved, would allow anglers to keep only one walleye over 14 inches beginning in 2016. Anglers' bag limit on walleye is usually reduced for tribal harvest. On the south shore DNR maintains a public boat landing with access from County Highway W that is suitable for launching most boats and pontoons. A shallow-water boat landing is accessible from County Highway S on the north shore. The 6-foot reservoir drawdown over winter 2010 – 2011 greatly reduced the abundance of Eurasian water milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant that had reached nuisance density by 2008.

RUSK COUNTY

Pulaski Lake - 126 acres. Comparable with other populations maintained by stocking, estimated walleye density was 3.1 adults per acre in spring 2013. Two-thirds were 15 inches or longer, and 6% were at least 20 inches. The minimum length limit is 15-inches, and the daily bag limit is typically reduced for tribal harvest. The modest public boat landing on the southeast shore has a concrete ramp with vehicle and trailer parking along Pulaski Lake Road.

DNR Creel Clerk, Donna Sorenson with a walleye from Connors Lake during 2013 spring fyke netting survey. Photo: Greg Rublee.

SAWYER COUNTY

Connors Lake - 429 acres. Estimated population density was 2.5 adults per acre in spring 2013 when 41% of walleye captured in fyke nets were longer than the 15-inch minimum length limit and 15% were at least 20 inches long. The walleye population fell slightly short of the goal for moderate adult density (3 – 5 adults per acre), but it exceeded the range of desired sizes (25 – 35% should be 15 inches or longer). Natural reproduction sustains the fishery—no walleye were stocked since 1951. New recruits joined the adult population at sluggish rates in 2002 – 2009, but a strong 2010 year class should be approaching legal size. Bag limits on walleye are adjusted to accommodate tribal harvest and posted at the landings—usually 2 or 3 walleye may be kept daily. Boats may be launched free of charge at the public landings, but an annual park sticker or daily vehicle admission fee is required to use the picnic areas, swimming beaches, trails, and campgrounds within the Flambeau River State Forest.

Chippewa Flowage - You could say that walleye are back in the Chippewa Flowage, but in fact, they never left. Recent population estimates in the flowage found 3.1 adult walleye per acre and almost half of the fish in the 2013 netting survey were over 20 inches! This is a very different type of walleye population than what the flowage was known for (lots of small fish). Stocking efforts have been ramped up in recent years and leading to more year classes coming up in the system. May is a great time to target walleye and the crappie fishing is red hot then as well. Access points are scattered throughout the flowage. Over 90% of the shoreline is wild and undeveloped making for some of the best fishing scenery around.

VILAS COUNTY

Eagle Chain - 3,586 acres. Results from a spring 2013 adult walleye population survey found a range of 0 .8 to 7.0 fish/acre for the lakes in the chain. The top waters in the chain were Yellow Birch (7.0), Cranberry (6.4) and Catfish (5.2). Current regulation: No minimum length limit, but fish from 14" to 18" may not be kept. There is a daily limit of three fish total for the chain with only one fish greater than 18 inches allowed. Access information: There are several public and private landings that provide access to the chain. The lakes are connected by navigable segments of the Eagle River. This chain of 10 lakes provides good fishing opportunities year round for walleye. The chain is not stocked and has consistently good natural walleye recruitment.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Lauderdale Lakes - 841 acres. The walleye stocking program on the Lauderdale Lakes is paying off as evidenced by a 2013 comprehensive fish survey that sampled 319 walleyes with an average length of 15.5 inches. The largest walleye was 24.5 inches and 76% of the fish in the sample were over 15 inches. Minimum length limit is 15 inches and the daily bag limit is 5. Access information: There are three Town of LaGrange public boat launches with parking and launch fees on the lake. One is located

off State Hwy 12/67 on Sterlingworth Drive. One is located on West Shore Drive, and one is located on Ridge Road from Bubbling Springs Drive and County Hwy H. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and privately stocked fish include walleye, northern pike, and smallmouth bass.

Delavan Lake - 2072 acres. Delavan Lake continues to grow plenty of walleyes. A spring, 2013 fish survey sampled males that averaged 16.7 inches with the largest at 20.4 inches. 90% of the males were over the quality size of 15 inches. Females from spring sampling averaged 21 inches with the largest at 26.7 inches. 100% of the females were over 15 inches. The fall, 2013 fish survey collected 74 walleyes that averaged 14 inches with the largest fish measuring 24 inches. 82% of the fall fish were over 15 inches. 40% of the spring and fall samples combined were 18 inches or longer. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 18 inches and daily bag limit is 3. Access information: Public boating access with parking and launch fees is provided at the Town of Delavan launch ramp at the north end of the lake off State Hwy 50. The DNR hatchery crew collected 4,996,000 walleye eggs from Delavan Lake in spring, 2013 for propagation and stocking into southern Wisconsin lakes.

■ WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2,580 acres. A 2013 survey found a low density adult walleye population. However, excellent natural reproduction of walleye in 2011, 2012, and 2013 should bolster population levels. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit subject to ceded territory adjustments Access information: There is a concrete boat landing and public fishing pier near the city campground off of State Highway 63. Though natural reproduction is inconsistent from one year to the next, walleye are self-sustaining on Shell Lake and no documented walleye stocking has occurred since the 1970's.

■ WASHINGTON COUNTY

Big Cedar Lake - 932 acres. An adult population estimate from our 2013 survey yielded an estimate of 1,955 adult fish, or 2 walleye per acre in Big Cedar Lake. This density is about average for a stocked walleye system. Lengths ranged from 8 - 26 inches and averaged 16 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 15 inches, with a daily bag of 5. Access information: A public boat launch can be found on Gonring Drive. Walleyes for Tomorrow – Washington County Chapter runs a Portable Walleye Hatchery or "Walleye Wagon" at Big Cedar Lake. The wagon houses 12 incubation jars where fertilized walleye eggs taken from the lake are hatched out to fry. In early spring the wagon is normally stationed near the boat launch at Gonring Drive and Walleyes for Tomorrow chapter members welcome anglers to check out the operation that contributes millions of walleye fry to Big Cedar Lake.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Lac LaBelle - 1154 acres. Average length – 16 inches. Population estimate – 3 adults per acre. Current regulation: 20 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: Shore fishing opportunities near the Oconomowoc River inlet can provide fast action. The public boat launch is located on south end of Lac LaBelle near the public beach area on Wisconsin Avenue. A healthy adult walleye population continues to support natural reproduction of walleye in Lac LaBelle, as revealed by continued fall electrofishing surveys. Walleyes on Lac LaBelle provide excellent angler catch and release opportunity, but creel sized fish greater than the 20 inch minimum length limit are hard to come by.

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 acres. Average length – 15 inches. Population estimate – 2 adults per acre. Current regulation: 18 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3. Access information: The public boat launch is located on the Oconomowoc River upstream of Oconomowoc Lake near the Okauchee Lake dam on Wisconsin Ave. Oconomowoc Lake has an excellent size structure for walleye, smallmouth bass and muskellunge. Oconomowoc Lake has a moderate level of walleye natural reproduction indicated by fall electrofishing surveys.

■ WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Winnebago System (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne and Poygan and the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers)165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System walleye population is one of the healthiest populations in the state and the future is very bright! Our 2013 assessment data indicated a balanced fishery with numerous strong year classes contributing to the fishery, but none more than the boomer 2008 year class. This year class (age-5) constituted 55% of the adult male population and 47% of the adult female population, correlating to high numbers of males in the 16-18" range and females between 19 and 21." The most interesting result observed in 2013 was the number of females that were handled during stock assessments. DNR crews handled 4,749 female walleye in 2013, which is almost twice as many as any other year dating back to when surveys began in 1989. This increase in the number of females is a direct response to the very strong 2008 year class, as many of the females from this year class reached maturity and spawned for the first time as 5 year old fish in 2013. Forecasting ahead to 2014, the 2008 year class should continue to dominate the adult female population. Whereas the adult male population will likely be a different story due to maturation of males from the strong 2011 year class. Anglers reported catching high numbers of smaller fish (12-13") from this year class in 2013, but these fish should for the most part be harvestable sizes (14-15") at age-3 in 2014. So to sum things up, the fishery should be able to provide anglers with some good action on "eater" size walleye, while also allowing ample opportunities to catch larger fish over 20". In fact, DNR staff captured 111 fish over 26" during 2013 stock assessments, highlighted by a 29.6" fish that weighed 12.92 pounds. Current regulations: 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 length limit for either species. Access information: There are numerous access points around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses 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*).

MUSKELLUNGE

■ ASHLAND COUNTY

Upper Clam Lake, Day Lake Flowage, Spider Lake, Moquah Lake, Mineral Lake and English Lake - > 1,400 total acres. These lakes, located within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest just off County Road GG between Clam Lake and Mellen, offer musky anglers a couple unique opportunities. Above average numbers of musky result in relatively-high catch rates for anglers, and with the 28-inch minimum length regulation (except for Upper Clam Lake), anglers have the opportunity to harvest a smaller-sized musky if they so desire. Add in the natural beauty and solitude the area has to offer, and you've got an opportunity that should make for some good memories! Current regulation: 28-inch minimum length (Upper Clam Lake 40-inch minimum length), daily bag limit of 1 fish. Access information: 5 public boat landings, camping available

■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

Upper Eau Claire Lake - 996 acres. Upper Eau Claire Lake has a low density muskellunge population, with an excellent size structure. In a recent muskellunge population estimate, 38% of muskellunge were greater than 40 inches. The largest fish was 47.2 inches. Angler reported catches in the past few years have included fish over 50 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit of 40 inches with a bag limit of one fish. Access information: The town boat launch was improved in 2013 and offers good access. Since Upper Eau Claire Lake has very clear water, muskellunge anglers often target the fish in deep water or at night.

■ BROWN/DOOR COUNTY

Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries and bays and the Fox River, Brown, Door, Oconto and Marinette. - 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 with the largest being just over 40 pounds. Many other captured fish were in the 20 to 30-pound range. Male fish appear to recruit to the population at a younger age, but female fish attain larger ultimate size. Fall electroshocking surveys have shown decreasing numbers of musky in the river in fall, but warm river temperatures may account for much of the decline. Currently this population depends on stocking to maintain the population since natural recruitment has been extremely limited. Since 2010 we have spawned ripe musky from the Fox River, raised the eggs at the Besadny Fisheries Facility and stocked over 16,000 fall fingerlings back into the river and bay to enhance the population.

The population trend of adult Great Lakes strain muskellunge in Green Bay waters is unknown. Currently stocking maintains the population with few natural recruits captured during surveys. Increasing stocking numbers the past three years should increase the number of musky in Green Bay in upcoming years. The population appears to be spreading out from the Fox River and lower Green Bay as surveys have found good numbers of musky in the Menominee, Peshtigo Rivers and the Sturgeon Bay area. Both boat and shore anglers had a good 2013 fishing year that saw many large fish landed and several fish over 55" harvested during a one week period this fall. Current regulation: Starting April 1, 2014, the regulation for musky on Green Bay in Wisconsin waters will be one fish with a 54 inch minimum length limit. The season runs from May 24 through November 30 except on the Menominee River where the season runs from May 15 through November 30. Access information: Most musky anglers launch their boat from the Fox Point Landing or the Metro Ramp on the Fox River, Carmody Ramp on Little Sturgeon Bay, or the Menominee River Ramp.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Holcombe Flowage - 3890 acres. The forage base is excellent in this system and large muskellunge are present. A 50-inch fish is possible from this water. Fall angling for large muskellunge is very popular and the scenery during the fall color season is exceptional. Numerous boat landings are present on the flowage. The minimum length for muskellunge is 40 inches and the daily bag limit is 1 fish. Quality fishing for smallmouth bass and black crappie is also present.

■ CLARK COUNTY

Mead Lake - 320 acres. Total catch rate and catch rate of legal (40") and larger fish was up over rates from the last survey conducted in 2012. Spring 2013 net catch of all sized muskellunge was 1.4 per net lift and 40"+ was 0.2 per net lift. Spring 2012 net catch rates of all sized muskellunge was 0.5 per net lift and 40"+ was 0.03 per net lift. Fish captured in 2013 ranged from 11 – 48 inches. In 2012, size range was 10 – 42". Access: there are two public boat launches on Mead Lake and a public fishing dock. The dock is located at the west end of the lake.

Rock Dam Lake - 118 acres. Total catch rate and catch rate of legal (40") and larger fish was up slightly over rates from the last survey conducted in 2005. Spring net catch of all size muskellunge was 0.3 per net lift and 40"+ was 0.05 per net lift. Spring 2005 net catch for all fish was 0.1 per net lift and 40"+ was 0.04 per net lift. The largest musky caught in 2012 was 40" and in 2013 was 50". Access: there is one public boat landing on the northwest end of the lake.

Cody Forrest, a young angler who volunteered to help survey the muskellunge population on Wabikon and Riley Lakes, with fisheries technician Brad Shucha, showing off a 45-inch Wabikon Lake musky.

Upper Black River, Clark and Jackson Counties, and lower Black River, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Black River, upper (above Black River Falls dam), and lower (below Black River Falls dam): Results are based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed. Upper river total catch rate of muskellunge in 2013 was similar to 2012 at 4/mile. For fish 40"+, catch rate was up slightly in 2013 to 0.4/mile over 0/mile in 2012. Maximum length of muskellunge captured in the upper river in 2013 was 40 inches. Lower river total catch rate of muskellunge was up significantly in 2013 (3.5/mile) than 2012 (0.9/mile). Catch rate of muskellunge larger than 40" was also up at 1.1/mile over 0.1/mile in 2012. Maximum length of muskellunge caught in the lower river in 2013 was 45 inches. Anglers reported catching muskies larger than 50 inches in both the upper and lower stretches of the Black River during 2013. Regulation: Mead Lake, Rock Dam Lake and the Black River have a 40 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1 fish.

■ DANE COUNTY

Lake Wingra - 345 acres. Wingra was the subject of comprehensive netting surveys in 2013. Crews netted 77 fish with an average length of 34 inches. While not as beefy as their downstream brethren in lake Monona, good numbers of fish make Wingra a pleasant "action" type lake. Current regulation: 45", 1 fish Access: Boat access can be had of Knickerbocker street at the Wingra boat house and rental. Slow No-wake regulation apply. Shore fishing opportunities are best adjacent to Vilas park on the lakes' north shore. Virtually all the shoreline on lake Wingra is under public ownership, with essentially no private piers or lawns. This makes Wingra an island of aesthetic fishing in a metropolitan environment!

Lake Monona - 3274 acres. Monona reigns as the destination for BIG musky on the Yahara chain. Spring 2011 surveys netted 279 fish with 15 reaching the legal 45" limit (5.4%). Our population estimate was .0.37 fish per acre, squarely in the range of what are considered "good" musky water densities. The big fish seen was 48.3 inches and exceeded 35 lbs! Current regulation: 45 inches, 1 fish, season goes to December 31. Access; Excellent boat launches on the west

shore at Olin park, east shore at Starkweather creek and the south shore off Tonywatha trail. A county launch/access fee is required from Dane county parks. Monona is in its 8th year of a comparison study of Leech lake strain muskellunge.

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

Lake Eau Claire and the Eau Claire River
890 acres. Anglers who focus their effort in the river upstream of the flowage should do well during late spring and summer months and then focus their attention back to Lake Eau Claire in the late summer and early fall. The forage base is good in this section of river and consistent stocking by the DNR has created a desirable fishery with some larger fish present. The minimum length for muskellunge is 40 inches and the daily bag limit is 1 fish. Quality smallmouth bass and perch fishing is also present.

FLORENCE COUNTY

Brule River Flowage - 500-600 acres. This flowage has trophy potential with fish over 50 inches present. The population is in the 0.25 adults/acre range providing a good possibility of action. Current regulation: 40-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish daily bag limit. Access information: One public boat landing near the mouth of the Brule River. This flowage is a border water between WI and MI, located at the headwaters of the Menominee River. The southern half of the flowage (everywhere south of the Brule River) can be fished with a WI fishing license. To fish the northern half of the flowage you must have a MI fishing license. Approximately 90% of the water frontage is owned by WE Energies and is left in a natural state.

IOWA COUNTY

Twin Valley Lake - 150 acres. Twin Valley Lake has probably the highest density of 30"+ muskies per acre of any lake in the state at 1 fish per acre. Many of these fish are older males from 36" to 39". There are a few females in the 40" to 41" range with a occasional fish around 44". Fishing pressure on muskies in this lake is extreme but still catch rates are good. Body condition of these fish is acceptable but not excellent as the lake does not contain either suckers or redhorse. Current regulation: Minimum 40" with 1 bag Access information: Located in Gov. Dodge State Park. Park Sticker/fee required. There is a pretty decent hard surfaced boat ramp that will handle most any size boat with an associated pier. A good,

Jake Thompson, DNR Fisheries Technician, with a 48.5" musky caught during 2013 spring Castle Rock Lake survey, Adams and Juneau counties.

hard surfaced parking lot provides more than ample parking. There is some shore fishing opportunity associated with the boat ramp and parking area as well as with the main picnic area. The best shore fishing is associated with the dam and associated banks but accessing this requires a 1/3 mile walk from CTH "Z". Boating on the lake is restricted to electric motors, oars, paddles, etc. – no gas motors. Row boat and canoe rental is located lakeside along with concessions. Gov. Dodge is the 2nd. largest State Park as well as being one of the most heavily used parks in the state. Camping, swimming beach, pet area, picnic areas, hiking trails, horse trails, etc. are all available.

IRON COUNTY

Turtle River System Lakes: Cedar-Catherine-Fisher Lake chain, Spider Lake, Oxbow Lakes, Echo Lake, Rice Lake, Pike Lake, Lake Of The Falls - > 2,000 acres in total. Upstream of the illustrious Turtle-Flambeau Flowage, the Turtle River and its incorporated lakes offer some of the best musky fishing opportunities in northern Wisconsin. Numbers, as far as muskies go, are better than average (in the majority of these lakes) when compared with other musky waters. Natural reproduction sustains these musky fisheries, and that, in combination with higher than average numbers of fish, typically results in a moderate size range of fish caught either by hook and line or survey nets. However, these lakes do have the potential to grow the occasional, very large musky as evidenced from netting survey records of fish measuring greater than 50 inches! Current regulation: 40-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 1 fish. Access information: 6 public boat landings along with a number of private resort access points

LANGLADE COUNTY

Enterprise Lake - 505 acres; Stocked at 0.5 fish per acre in alternate years; 2006 adult population estimate of 0.48 per acre with very good size quality as shown by fish up to 46" captured

Summit Lake - 282 acres; Stocked at 0.5 fish per acre in alternate years; 2010 adult population estimate of 0.43 per acre; Consider this more of an action lake with fish up to 42" common

LINCOLN COUNTY

Wisconsin River and its impoundments (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions),
About 5,000 acres of prime, naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place on these waters; Adult population estimates range from 0.1 to about 0.3 per acre; Parts of this system may be considered more action type waters (Lake Mohawksin) but the whole system has true trophy potential that these lower adult densities help to maintain.

Rice Reservoir - 2,274 acres of naturally reproducing muskellunge water; No stocking takes place; The adult population estimate is in the range of about 0.25 per acre at full pool; Consider this more of a lower density, high size quality water with true trophy potential; Our nets routinely catch big, fat, and healthy fish in the upper 40" range on this system.

Wisconsin River, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, Wood, Adams and Juneau counties
The muskellunge population in the Wisconsin River has been surveyed in recent years in various flowages from Merrill downstream to Castle Rock Lake. These surveys show that muskellunge have great growth and the system is capable and is in fact producing trophy size (50 inch) fish. In the 2013 fish survey of Castle Rock Lake, 111 muskies were caught. Of the muskies that were at least stock length (30 inches), 65% were at least of quality length size (38 inches), 35% were at least of preferred size (42 inches), and 15% were at least of memorable size (45 inches). The largest fish caught was 48.5 inches. Current regulation: The minimum length limit for muskellunge is 45 inches with a daily bag limit of one. 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. *dnr.wi.gov/lakes/lakepages/Default.aspx* Multiple waterbodies on the Wisconsin River system are Class A1 waters, these waters are best known as "trophy waters" for their ability to consistently produce a number of large fish, but overall the abundance of muskies may be relatively low. These waterbodies include: Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, Lake Dubay, Mosinee Flowage, Lake Wausau, Stevens Point Flowage, Wisconsin River sections in Stevens Point and Whiting, Biron Flowage, Petenwell Lake, and Castle Rock Lake. All other sections of the river are Class B waters, meaning these waters provide good fishing. A large number of muskies in the river are tagged with orange internal anchor tags, placed on their belly between their pectoral and pelvic fins. Anglers should report this valuable recapture information by calling the telephone number on the tag. The information reported should be the tag number, fish length, and as much information as they want to give about the location of where the fish was caught.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Caldron Falls Reservoir and High Falls Reservoir - 1,018 and 1,498 acres. Both fisheries are maintained through a combination of stocking and natural reproduction. The density of musky is higher in Caldron Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are not uncommon. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length / 1 fish per day Access information: There are 4 boat landings on Caldron Falls and 5 on High Falls. Shore fishing opportunities are excellent. Most of the shoreline lies within the Peshtigo River State Forest and is undeveloped.

Andrew Notbohm, WDNR fisheries technician with a 49" Okauchee Lake Muskellunge captured in the 2013 spring fyke netting survey. Picture Taken By: Steven Gospodarek, WDNR fisheries technician.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Spider and Gilmore lakes - We found moderate numbers of naturally-reproducing muskellunge, with lengths up to 42.2 inches during 2013 netting on Spider Lake (123 acres). We captured 10 muskellunge up to 44 inches during a single night of electrofishing on Gilmore Lake (301 acres).

POLK COUNTY

Wapogasset & Bear Trap lakes - 1,436 acres (both lakes combined). Thirty percent of the muskellunge handled in a 2013 netting survey were 40 inches or larger. The average length was 36.5 inches and the largest muskellunge was 50 inches. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length limit Access information: There are two boat landings on Wapogasset and one on Bear Trap. The southernmost boat landing on Wapogasset Lake is operated by the town of Garfield, and is best suited for handling larger boats. Wapogasset muskellunge are capable of reaching large sizes with the lake's diverse forage base that includes abundant white sucker and redhorse populations.

RUSK COUNTY

Potato Lake - 534 acres. Fyke nets captured 4.4 muskellunge per net-night in spring 2013—a rate nearly 5 times higher than the average rate in musky populations sustained by natural reproduction. Twelve percent were at least 42 inches long. Stocking large fingerlings in alternate years and managing harvest under statewide regulations have maintained the desired moderate to high population density (0.3 – 0.4 adults per acre) and the desired share (10 – 20%) of memorable-size fish 42 inches or longer in this highly productive lake ecosystem. Boat access is available at two public landings and several private resorts.

SAWYER COUNTY

Lake of the Pines - 273 acres. Our capture rate of 1.5 muskellunge per net-night in early spring 2013 fyke nets reflects the high population density that was estimated at 0.85 muskies ≥ 30 inches per acre in 2009. Anglers should enjoy fast fishing action, but the current level of abundance (4 – 8 times higher than the goal) may be hindering the population's size structure. Ten to twenty percent should be at least 42 inches long, but the proportion of muskies 42 inches or longer in early spring fyke nets did not exceed 2% in 2009, 2010, and 2013. Growth rate may slow in this relatively small lake, if abundant muskellunge compete among themselves for yellow perch, their favorite food. Fourteen muskellunge 26 – 36 inches long that were captured and tagged in 2009 and 2010, then captured again in 2013, had gained on average only 3 inches in 3 or 4 growing seasons. Musky harvest is managed under statewide regulations—40-inch minimum length; one daily. Boats may be launched free of charge at the public landing. An annual park sticker or daily vehicle admission fee is required to use the picnic areas, swimming beaches, trails, and campgrounds within the Flambeau River State Forest.

Teal and Lost Land lakes - 1,024 and 1,264 acres. Both lakes have good numbers of muskellunge with the size to back it up. These lakes are a great bet for a 40-inch plus fish. Teal Lake offers more rocky habitat with stained water, Lost Land has huge expanses of weedbeds where muskies can be targeted. This lake system has become one of the most consistent producers of muskellunge for the Hayward Area Lakes Fall Musky Tournament.

SHAWANO COUNTY

Cloverleaf Chain - 323 acres. A fyke net survey conducted in 2013 showed a moderate level musky density with 26% over 40 inches and the largest at 47 inches. Current regulation: Statewide default (40 inch minimum and 1 daily bag) Access information: Boat launch of County Highway Y.

VILAS COUNTY

Manitowish Chain - 4,238 acres. A 2004-05 survey captured 472 muskellunge and a population estimate of .22 fish per ace was calculated. The largest muskellunge captured was a 49 inch female. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum, 1 fish bag limit Access information: There are several public and private landings that provide access to the chain. The lakes are connected by navigable segments of the Trout and Manitowish Rivers. This chain of 10 lakes provides diverse fishing opportunities for muskellunge. Some lakes are deep and clear with cisco based forage while others are shallow and have abundant aquatic vegetation. This is a stocked fishery receiving 1,800 large muskellunge fingerlings in even numbered years.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Pewaukee Lake - 2437 acres. Average length – 34 inches. 2012 population estimate – 0.35 adults per acre. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and Smoky's bait shop on the east side. Pewau-

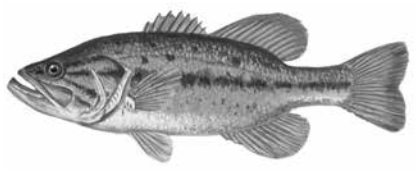
kee Lake is home to the largest musky density in southeastern Wisconsin. Not only do the muskies in Pewaukee boast an average size of 34 inches, anglers annually catch a few fish over 50 inches. Abundant yellow perch, black crappie and bluegills make up an excellent forage base for this thriving musky population. The DNR propagation program provides an excellent muskellunge product that is stocked annually.

Okauchee Lake - 1210 acres. Spring netting in 2013 revealed an average length of 40 inches. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There are two public launches on Okauchee Lake found at the Golden Mast Restaurant and the DNR launch. The DNR boat launch is located just east of the Okauchee Lake dam on Road T, north of Wisconsin Avenue. The Golden Mast boat launch is located off of Lacys Lane north of East Wisconsin Avenue. Okauchee Lake has a maximum depth of 94 feet and has an excellent cisco population which provides an additional forage base resulting in above average growth rates. Okauchee Lake is a great option for catching a trophy muskellunge.

■ WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Winnebago System (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne and Poygan and the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers) Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Shawano, Waushara, Waupaca and Winnebago - 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. Great Lakes spotted strain muskellunge were stocked throughout the Winnebago System during the years 2002-2007. During this time span, 613,248 fish were stocked (589,643 fry; 1,162 small fingerlings; 22,397 large fingerlings; 40 yearlings; and 6 adults). Angling pressure targeting muskies has increased in recent years and anecdotal reports indicate that some very nice fish (>45") have been caught. A commercial rough fishing seining operation on Lake Butte des Morts in the fall of 2013 captured 5 muskellunge ranging in size from 38.9-51.7 inches. Current regulations: The current regulation for muskellunge is a daily bag limit of 1 fish with a minimum length limit of 50". Access information: There are numerous assesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a system map or the DNR's Boat Access Website to search for launch information near where you want to fish (*dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess*).

LARGEMOUTH BASS



■ ASHLAND COUNTY

Long Lake - 111 acres. Largemouth bass anglers looking for some nice-sized fish should consider making a trek to Long Lake near Mellen, WI. A 2013 electrofishing survey captured moderate numbers of quality-size largemouth bass (≥ 12 inches) at 10 per mile of shoreline surveyed (above the 60th percentile amongst statewide populations). However, what really stands out about these largemouth are their size; 65% of the fish captured were 15 inches or larger, and one fish was measured at over 20 inches. Anglers fortunate enough to experience the good fishing Long Lake has to offer are asked to use discretion if choosing to harvest bass. In a small lake such as Long, excessive harvest could quickly reduce the number of larger fish present in the population. Current regulations: 14-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish Access information: 1 public boat landing.

A student volunteer proudly displays a nice Cloverleaf Chain largemouth bass.

■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

Lake Owen - 1,323 acres. Lake Owen has a moderate density largemouth bass population, but also has a good number of quality-sized fish. In a recent electrofishing survey, 32% of the largemouth bass were greater than 15 inches. The largest bass was 17.7 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit and 5 fish daily bag limit. In 2014, largemouth bass may be harvested when the regular fishing season begins the first Saturday in May. Access information: There are two public boat launches on Chequamegon National Forest property that borders the lake. Since there is not a minimum length limit, anglers are encouraged to harvest a variety of bass.

■ BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pools 5a and 6 - 2013 fall electrofishing surveys showed good numbers above and below the 14-inch length limit. Overall, nearly 31 adult and juvenile largemouth bass were captured per hour. Two-thirds of surveyed largemouth bass were greater than 12 inches, while nearly one in three largemouth were greater than the 14-inch length limit. Surveyed fish topped out at just over 20 inches. Current regulation: 14-inch minimum length; 5 in total with smallmouth bass. Access information: Check DNR website for access locations in both pools. Conditions continue for great largemouth bass reproduction signaling good fishing into the foreseeable future.

■ BURNETT COUNTY

Dunham Lake - 243 acres. A high density largemouth bass population provides excellent angling action and harvest opportunity for anglers on Dunham Lake. Catch rates of largemouth bass over 12 inches in a 2013 survey exceeded 89% of surveys of similar Wisconsin waterbodies. Current regulation: There is no minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of five for largemouth bass on Dunham Lake. Access information: There is a public boat launch on the north side of the lake off Old 35 Road.

■ CRAWFORD/GRANT COUNTIES

Upper Mississippi River Pools 9 & 10, Crawford, Grant, and Vernon - 20,561 acres of open water and backwater lakes and approximately 65-miles in length. Smallmouth and largemouth bass are fast becoming a favorite of many Mississippi River anglers. Large numbers of fish, both above and below the 14-inch length limit, can be found up and down the river with 3 to 5 pound fish being common. A catch-and-release mentality among fishermen has had positive impact on the fishery as handful of fish over 6 pounds are caught each year. Smallmouth bass are most commonly caught in areas with good water flow along rock, riprap, or on wingdams. Largemouth bass frequent backwater lakes, island points, peninsulas, and areas with moderate flow. A couple of areas that showed good concentrations of bass include Capoli Slough near Lansing, IA, Gremore Lake near Prairie du Chien, WI, and Sny McGill backwater complex near McGregor, IA. Access information: There many access sites on the Upper Mississippi River that ranges from unimproved lane gravel landings with limited parking to multi-lane landings with blacktop parking for many vehicle/trailers. These sites are maintained by various State, Federal, and County Agencies and may require and access permit. 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 *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/*.

■ DODGE COUNTY

Fox Lake - 2,625 acres. Largemouth bass catch rates for 2013 fall electrofishing were 48/hour, compared to 79/hour in 2012 and 67/hour in 2011, with fish ranging from 2.6- to 20-inches. Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length, 1fish daily bag on largemouth bass. Access information: Public boat launches and shorefishing sites: Clausen Park on Mill Creek outlet channel and Town Park (northwest side). While not a true musky lake, Fox Lake does boast an occasional 45-inch musky.

■ FLORENCE COUNTY

Fay Lake - 282 acres. Fay Lake has a moderate density of largemouth bass, estimated at 2 adults/acre during 2013. The size structure of this largemouth bass population is very impressive with 45% > 14 inches and 11% > 18 inches. Current regulation: 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 fish daily bag limit Access information: There is a public boat landing on the NW corner of Fay Lake. Most of the shoreline is owned by the USFS and is kept in a natural state. There is a resort with multiple cabins built over the water creating a unique experience, for information call Fay Lake Resort @ 715-674-3829.

■ FOREST COUNTY

Trump Lake - 172 acres. This lake has the highest density largemouth bass population in Forest County at nearly 14 adults/acre. This extremely high density began having negative impacts on the bass population so the bass regulation will be changed starting in 2014. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, protective slot between 14 and 18 inches, 3 fish daily bag limit (only 1 can be over 18 inches). Access information: There is a public boat landing on the East end of Trump Lake. This is "hands down" the best place to go for "action" bass fishing. The new regulation will allow for increased harvest of largemouth bass, so don't feel bad taking a few for the table…you will actually be helping the overall population.

Pickerel and Crane lakes - 1,640 acres. This two-lake chain is a bass angler's dream. Crane Lake has a high density of largemouth bass (estimated at 6.2/acre) and Pickerel Lake has a moderate density (just under 2/acre). Crane Lake is the "action" water, with most bass in the 12 to 14-inch range. Pickerel Lake is just the opposite with 61% of the bass over 14 inches, with a high percentage of fish between 18 and 20 inches. Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish daily bag limit Access information: There are two public boat landings on Crane Lake and three on Pickerel. Boats can travel through a culvert to have access to both lakes. The current 18-inch minimum length limit has greatly increased the size of largemouth bass in Pickerel Lake. Prior to this regulation only 38% of the population was > 12 inches, now 82% of the bass are > 12 inches. The average size of largemouth bass has also increased from 11.9 inches to 14.2 inches, creating a very quality bass fishery.

■ IOWA COUNTY

Twin Valley Lake - 150 acres. Twin Valley Lake has a good but not outstanding population of largemouth bass. The average size of the bass is good with a variety of sizes including some 15" to 19" fish. Current regulation: There is no daily bag limit or length limit on Panfish Access information: Located in Gov. Dodge State Park. Park Sticker/fee required. There is a pretty decent hard surfaced boat ramp that will handle most any size boat with an associated pier. A good, hard surfaced parking lot provides more than ample parking. There is some shore fishing opportunity associated with the boat ramp and parking area as well as with the main picnic area. The best shore fishing is associated with the dam and associated banks but accessing this requires a 1/3 mile walk from CTH "Z". Boating on the lake is restricted to electric motors, oars, paddles, etc. – no gas motors. Row boat and canoe rental is located lakeside along with concessions. Camping, swimming beach, pet area, picnic areas, hiking trails, horse trails, etc. are all available.

■ IRON COUNTY

Wilson Lake - 162 acres. Largemouth bass anglers looking for an opportunity to catch a lot of fish, while keeping some for the frying pan, should head to Wilson Lake near Mercer, WI. Optimal bass habitat, along with a robust population of largemouth, continues to produce strong numbers of young fish. For this reason, anglers should not be shy about keeping smaller bass; those under the protected slot (< 12 inches). However, it is encouraged that bass above the protected slot (> 16 inches), are released, to help improve the quality of the fishery. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, but bass from 12 through 16 inches may not be kept, daily bag limit of 5 fish. Access information: 1 public boat landing

■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Ripley - 418 acres. Largemouth bass catch rates for 2013 fall electrofishing were 58/hour, compared to 66/hour in 2012, 114/hour in 2011 and 67/hour in 2010, with fish ranging from 2.1- to 18.6-inches. Current regulation: 14-inch minimum length, 5 fish daily bag on largemouth and smallmouth bass. Access information: Public boat launch located on Island Lane off Hwy 12 on the south side of the lake. Something that the angler might find interesting: (stocking history, record fish, habitat work, etc). Lake Ripley produced the state record largemouth bass in 1940 and the record still stands.

Rock Lake - 1,370 acres. Largemouth bass catch rates for 2013 fall electrofishing were 41/hour, compared to 31/hour in 2012, with fish ranging from 2.1- to 17.2-inches. Current regulation: 14-inch minimum length, 5 fish daily bag on largemouth and smallmouth bass. Access information: Public boat launches: CTH B (north side), Mill Pond (east side), Sandy Beach Park (south side) and Elm Point Road Launch (southwest side). Shorefishing stations provided by City of Lake Mills on east side of lake. Additional shorefishing on east and west shores of Mill Pond.

DNR fisheries technician Top Moon Lee with a Pigeon Lake largemouth.

■ KENOSHA COUNTY

Powers Lake - 459 acres. The average length of largemouth bass collected during a 2013 fish survey was 11.5 inches. 49% of the bass were over the quality size of 12 inches. 17% were over 14 inches and the largest bass in the sample was 16 inches. Current regulation: The minimum length limit is 14 inches and the daily bag limit is 5. Access information: A public boat launch ramp with parking and launch fees is located on the north side of the lake off of County Highway F. Powers Lake is stocked by the DNR with walleye and northern pike.

LANGLADE COUNTY

Rabe Lake - Help us eradicate largemouth bass from this 6-acre, naturally reproducing brook trout spring pond; No length limit and daily bag of 5 fish; It is south of STH 64 so it is available for harvest the first Saturday in May; Please take your 5 home today!

Rolling Stone Lake - 672 acres; Naturally reproducing largemouth bass population; High density and high size quality fishery

LINCOLN COUNTY

County forest lakes - Hidden Gems on the County Forest – Lincoln County has hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS's and explore, you just might find that secret hot spot!

MARATHON COUNTY

Lake Emily - Lake Emily was surveyed in 2013 where we captured 106 largemouth bass in our nets and 34 fish electrofishing. The length structure was good with 58% of the catch greater than 12 inches and 22% of the fish greater than 14 inches. The largest bass caught was 21 inches. The estimated population of adult largemouth bass in Lake Emily is 1100 fish or about 11 adult fish per acre. Lake Emily should provide great bass action in the coming year. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length limit, 5 bass in total may be kept. Anglers can access the lake in two locations: From the Lake Emily County Park boat landing on the east end of the lake off Lake Drive, or at a small access point near the end of Edgewater Drive. Portage County operates a very nice and well used camp ground on the lake. They have a smaller number of units available on the South shore and a larger unit with more amenities on the North shore.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Upper Scott Flowage - 586 acres. This flowage has good populations of both largemouth and smallmouth bass. Fish up to 20 inches for both species were collected during the last survey. The lower portion of the flowage contains an abundance of backwater habitat for largemouth while the upper portion of the flowage is more riverine which provides suitable habitat for smallmouth. Access information: The best landing is Cox Landing on Highway 180 just north of Marinette.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Minocqua Chain - There is no minimum length limit on bass in the 5,841-acre Minocqua Chain of lakes. Tomahawk is the largest lake on Minocqua Chain at 3,392 acres. A spring, 2013 survey of 6.1 shoreline miles on Tomahawk, turned up a catch of 61 largemouth, with most of the fish running 10 to 14 inches in length. Mid-teens size largemouth were prevalent on Gilmore, Pier, West Horsehead and Willow Lakes.

POLK COUNTY

Big Butternut Lake - 384 acres. Big Butternut Lake has a high density largemouth bass population, but also has plenty of quality-sized, heavy fish. In a recent electrofishing survey, 21% of the largemouth bass that were greater than 10 inches were also greater than 15 inches. The largest bass was 18.5 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit and 5 fish daily bag limit. Access information: There is one boat landing with a fishing pier on the southwest side of the lake.

RACINE COUNTY

Browns Lake - 396 acres. Special fishing regulations on Browns Lake continue to produce a largemouth bass population with good size structure. A 2013 fish survey sampled bass up to 17.5 inches and the average length was 13.5 inches. Most of the bass in the sample were 15 inches. 77% of the bass were over the quality size of 12 inches and 14% were over 16 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 16 inches and daily bag limit is 5. Access information: Public boating access with parking and launch fees is available at Fischer County Park off Highway 11. The DNR also stocks walleye into Browns Lake.

A first time license buyer on her first fishing trip with the first fish she caught: A nice 20-inch smallmouth bass. It's easy to get hooked on Wisconsin fishing.

Eagle Lake - 515 acres. The largemouth bass population in Eagle Lake continues to grow. A spring, 2013 fish survey sampled 72 largemouth bass with an average length of 14.9 inches. The largest bass in the sample was 18.0 inches. 84% of the bass in the spring sample were over the quality size of 12 inches. Most of the bass were between 15 inches and 16 inches. A fall, 2013 fish survey showed plenty of one and two year old fish in the population which bodes well for the future. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 22 inches, and daily bag limit is 1. Access information: Public boat launches with parking and launch fees are located at the north side of the lake off Church Road in Eagle Lake County Park, and on the west side of the lake off Minnetonka Road. Eagle Lake is managed with special fishing regulations designed to produce more big gamefish and panfish.

ST CROIX COUNTY

Lake Mallalieu - 270 acres. Lake Mallalieu is locally known for its outstanding bass fishing. Largemouth bass dominate, however smallmouth bass are also common. During the spring 2013 survey DNR crews sampled 276 bass of which 48% where 14 inches and greater. Our largest bass was 21.3 inches and weighed 6 pounds 3 ounces. Both largemouth and smallmouth in the 14-18 inch range are common. Current regulation: There is a 14 inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit 5 in total. Access information: The City of Hudson maintains a public boat access and a fishing pier on STH 35 between Hudson and North Hudson. Lake Mallalieu is part of the Willow River drainage.

SAUK COUNTY

White Mound Lake - 104 acres. The 2013 comprehensive survey on White Mound Lake showed a largemouth bass population density of 50 per acre, with 11 per acre over 14 inches. The electrofishing catch rate for largemouth bass 15 inches and larger was 31 per mile of shoreline sampled, ranking in the 100th percentile when compared with several drainage basins in southern Wisconsin. The combination of a high bass density and good size structure makes White Mound Lake a great place for both hot fishing action, and quality-sized fish. Current regulation: The minimum length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass is 14 inches, and the daily bag limit is 5 fish. Access information: White Mound Lake is located within White Mound County Park which is maintained by Sauk County. There is one paved boat launch located on the northeast side of the lake. There is parking available for 11-15 vehicle-trailer units, and there is a fishing pier located near the boat ramp. Most of the eastern shore of the lake provides excellent shore fishing access, as does the shore along the face of the dam, and also the bay on the southwest side of the lake. In addition to providing excellent angling opportunities for bluegills and largemouth bass, Camping in a peaceful, natural setting is offered at White Mound County Park.

SAWYER COUNTY

Tiger Cat Flowage - 1,012 acre. The lake is loaded with great bass habitat. The Tiger Cat is comprised of 6 lakes that are connected by channels and there is an abundance of shallow vegetated islands in the southern portion of the flowage (referred to locally as "The Everglades"). This complexity of habitat makes for a very unique northwoods largemouth bass fishing environment. Bass are abundant and many fish are between 14 and 16 inches with potential for 20-inch fish. Statewide regulations apply for bass. Boat access can be found off of Twin Lakes Roud, Tiger Cat Dam Road, and Hwy 77.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Lauderdale Lakes - 841 acres. A comprehensive fish survey in 2013 showed a robust largemouth bass population consisting of several year classes. 45% of the bass in the samples were quality size (over 12 inches) and 21% of the bass were over 14 inches. Bass up to 20 inches were sampled and the average length was 11.5 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 14 inches and daily bag limit is 5. Access information: Three Town of LaGrange public boat launches with parking and launch fees are located off State Hwy 12/67 on Sterlingworth Drive, on West Shore Drive, and from County Hwy H to Bubbling Springs Drive to Ridge Road.

Delavan Lake - 2072 acres. Delavan Lake remains an excellent largemouth bass destination. A fish survey in 2013 revealed the presence of several year classes. Bass up to 20 inches and 5 pounds were sampled and were in excellent condition. The average length was 12.9 inches. 59% of the sample was over the quality size of 12 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 18 inches and daily bag limit is one. Access information: A Town of Delavan public boat ramp with parking and launch fee is located on the northeast end of the lake off State Hwy 50.

Geneva Lake - 5262 acres. The largemouth bass population in Geneva Lake exhibits excellent size structure. A 2013 fish survey sampled bass up to 21 inches long and the average size was 14.1 inches. 66% of the bass were over the quality size of 12 inches, and 56% were over 14.0 inches long. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 14 inches, and the daily bag limit is 5. Access information: Five municipal boat launches with parking and launch fees are located in the Villages of Fontana and Williams Bay, the city of Lake Geneva, and the Town of Linn. Geneva Lake also supports a good population of cisco that serve as excellent forage for gamefish in Geneva Lake.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Pewaukee Lake - 2437 acres. Average length – 12 inches. Current regulation: 14 inches minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Access information: There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and at Smokey's bait shop on the east side. Abundant yellow perch, bluegill and crappie provide excellent largemouth bass growth rates on this highly productive milfoil lake. There is good trophy potential for both largemouth and smallmouth bass in Pewaukee Lake as indicated by recent electrofishing surveys.

Eagle Spring Lake - 270 acres. Average length – 9 inches. Current regulation: 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 3. Access information: The public launch is located on the lakes' east side off of county Highway E, near Eagle Spring Pub. Looking for a nice meal? This lake has an abundant population of largemouth so anglers are encouraged to harvest bass less than 14" to help thin the population and balance the predator-prey relationship.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Chequamegon Bay - Population information: Chequamegon Bay deserves its reputation as a trophy smallmouth fishery. Spring surveys have shown the average length of smallmouth to be around 18 inches. Many year classes contribute to the population and we consistently see fish older than 20 years. Current regulation: May 3 through June 20 is catch and release only. From June 21 to March 1 one fish over 22 inches can be kept Prior to the current regulation, the average length of Chequamegon Bay smallmouth was only 14 inches and most fish were less than 10 years old. The current fishery gives anglers a greater opportunity to tangle with trophy fish!

Middle Eau Claire Lake - 902 acres. A 2013 survey found a low density smallmouth bass population with good size structure on Middle Eau Claire Lake. Electrofishing survey of smallmouth bass found fish up to 20 inches in length. Current regulation: There is a 14 inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of five for smallmouth bass. Catch and release only until the 3rd Saturday in June. Access information: There is a concrete boat landing off of State Highway 27. Catch and release fishing is popular when the smallmouth bass are tending nest, due to exceptional water quality and visibility.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Holcombe Flowage - 3890 acres. A spring 2013 survey showed many quality-sized smallmouth bass were present in the flowage especially in early spring. The flowage is likely the overwintering area for smallmouth bass in the Chippewa, Flambeau and Jump rivers. When the water temperatures reach above 55 degrees, many of these fish will run up the various rivers that feed the flowage for the summer months. Anglers that target this spring movement can do exceptionally well. A similar downstream movement is present in the fall as well. The statewide bass regulation of a 14 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag of 5 is in effect and most of the flowage is in the southern bass zone.

CLARK COUNTY

Upper Black River (above Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and lower Black River (below Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau counties. Black River, upper and lower: Smallmouth is the dominant bass species in the upper and lower river. Upper river total catch rate was down at 77/mile in 2013 compared to 122/mile in 2012. Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was down to 7/mile compared to 13/mile in 2012. Lower river total catch rate was also down at 5.6/mile in 2013 compared to 7.7/mile in 2012. Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was down to 0.8/mile in 2013 compared to 2.9/mile in 2012. Maximum size of fish captured in the upper river was 19" and 18" for the lower river. Regulation:

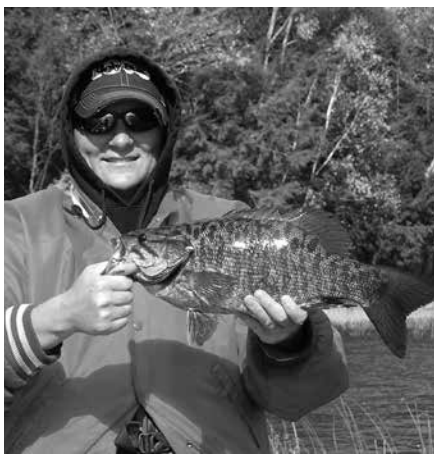
14 inch minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit.

DANE COUNTY

Lake Mendota - 9842 acres. Smallmouth bass are the bonus fish available to anglers in the Yahara chains' largest lake. Both spring and fall surveys, especially along the rocky shores off Second Point and Maple Bluff have yielded strong catches of this scrappy bass. Fish up to 20 inches are present, however the vast majority fall in the 11 " to 16" range. Current regulation: 1 fish , 18" length limit Access; Multiple boat launches surround the lake . There is a plethora of shore fishing opportunities, especially for those who can wade, off public shorelines on the UW campus and Governors island on the lakes NE shore.

DOOR COUNTY

Green Bay - The smallmouth bass fishery continues to be fantastic along portions of Door County's shoreline and the trend is expected to continue in 2014. The most recent spawning survey (2009 Sturgeon Bay/Little Sturgeon Bay areas) indicated younger age classes (4 - 6 yrs.) were well represented; suggesting that by 2014 there should be a good number of fish between 18 and 20 inches (or larger) in the population. Survey data have demonstrated smallmouth size at age has been steadily increasing within the past decade. This has been reflected in the sport catch as fish in excess of 7 pounds have been reported from tournaments in recent years. Current regulation: The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for smallmouth fishing rules in the Tributary Stream to Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. Access information: There are many boat launches in the area including several in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay; Peninsula State Park is one of the sites that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess* for a listing of some of the launches in the area. One of the better shore fishing sites is the George K. Pinney County Park (formerly the Olde Stone Quarry Park) that is located at the north side of the mouth of Sturgeon Bay. In 2013 a smallmouth bass was caught during a local tournament that was reported to weigh nearly 8.5 lbs.



DNR fisheries technician, Kendal Patrie with a smallmouth bass from Connors Lake during a 2012 fall fyke netting survey. Photo:Jeff Scheirer

IRON COUNTY

Gile Flowage - 3,384 acres. The Gile Flowage contains one of the most robust smallmouth bass fisheries in the northern part of the state. A 2013 bass survey resulted in a catch rate of 22 smallmouth (≥ 7 inches) per mile of shoreline surveyed, which falls above the upper 90th percentile amongst statewide populations. Of the 129 smallies sampled of at least 7 inches during the survey, a striking 49% were 14 inches or larger and 10% also measured at or above 17 inches. Since the no minimum, 14-18 inch protected slot regulation was implemented (2008), the size structure of the smallmouth bass population is showing improvements. However, the numbers of smallmouth bass remain at levels above management goal objectives. Therefore, some selective harvest of bass less than 14 inches is encouraged to further benefit the smallie population as well as the entire fish community. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, but bass from 14 to 18 inches may not be kept, and only one fish over 18 inches is allowed, daily bag limit of 3 fish Access information: 4 public boat landings

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - 13,545 acres. In addition to its renowned walleye fishery, the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage also harbors a high-quality smallmouth bass fishery. Surveys were conducted in 2012 to evaluate the flowage's bass population and to examine their food preferences. Those surveys documented a relatively high catch rate of smallies (14 ≥ 7 inches per mile of shoreline surveyed; upper 85th percentile amongst statewide populations) with a good size structure (of the smallmouth captured of at least 7 inches, 46% were also 14 inches or larger). The food study found that smallmouth bass focused their foraging efforts on crayfish throughout the open-water period (crayfish comprised 84% of all food contents found in smallmouth stomachs). Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 2 fish Access information: 6 public boat landings, camping available

LANGLADE COUNTY

Enterprise Lake, Sawyer Lake and Rose Lake - All of these are now naturally reproducing populations following introductory stockings by the lake associations; The Sawyer and Rose populations are still expanding and growing and are made up of mostly small fish in the 12-16" range; Enterprise Lake has a low density, high quality smallie population

LINCOLN COUNTY

Wisconsin River and its impoundments (Lakes Alice, Mohawksin, and Alexander, Grandmother and Grandfather Flowages and the connecting riverine portions), About 5,000 acres of high density and high quality smallmouth bass populations

MARATHON COUNTY

Wisconsin River, Marathon and Portage counties
The smallmouth bass population is surveyed each year on the Wisconsin River during summer. From 2006 to 2013, average electrofishing catch rate of smallmouth bass was 11 fish per hour from Merrill to Wausau and on average 31% of the fish were greater than 14 inches; 25 fish/hour were caught from Rothschild to Mosinee and 27% were 14 inches or larger; catch was 13 fish/hour below Dubay Dam with 23% larger than 14 inches; and at Whiting 35 fish/hour with 29% greater than 14 inches. As in the past 2013 had a large number of young-of-year fish in the catch, and the Wisconsin River should definitely be on any anglers list of places to visit for smallmouth bass fishing.
Current regulation: No closed season; 14 inch minimum length; bag limit is 5 bass in total. 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. There is one special regulation on the Wisconsin River in Portage County, an 18 inch minimum length (bag of 1) below the Stevens Point Flowage Dam to AlTech Park Spillway. Access is excellent as well, with many small parking spots along West River Drive and one boat landing, and a fishing pier at the end of Wisconsin Street in Stevens Point.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Tomahawk Lake - Spring electrofishing on 6.1 miles of 3,392-acre Tomahawk Lake turned up a catch of 84 smallmouth, mostly 8 to 15 inches. Tomahawk has good numbers of both species of bass, with largemouth usually found in vegetated bays and smallmouth relating to the many rock bars and main-lake structure.

SAWYER COUNTY

Connors Lake - 429 acres. Our electrofishing capture rate of 23 smallmouth bass per hour during the 2013 bass spawning period was just below the range (25 – 50 per hour) selected to represent the desired moderate population abundance. A third of the smallmouth bass in our sample was 14 inches or longer, compared with our goal for preferred sizes (50 – 70%). Thirteen percent were at least 17 inches long, attaining the objective (10 – 20%) for a moderate share of memorable-sized fish. Most of the smallmouth bass were captured along shores with submerged woody structure that provides cover and rocky bottom material that harbors crayfish, their favorite food. Smallmouth bass were exceptionally plump for their length, often resembling footballs. The minimum length limit on smallmouth bass and largemouth bass is 14 inches with a daily bag limit of 5 fish in total. The 2014 – 2015 smallmouth bass season remains catch-and-release only from May 3 to June 20 in the Northern Bass Management Zone. Beginning in 2014 largemouth bass may be harvested in that period, and both species may kept from June 21 to March 1. Anglers are encouraged to catch-and-release smallmouth bass to protect and possibly improve the population's size structure.

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Sheboygan River - 2013 surveys yielded an average length of 6 inches, with a maximum length of 17 inches. The average was skewed lower because of abundant young fish in the samples. We saw impressive catch rates of up to 204 smallmouth bass per mile. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 14 inches, with a daily bag of 5 Access information: One of the best wadable sites we sampled was upstream of CTH C near Sheboygan Falls.

VILAS COUNTY

Turtle Chain - 945 acres. A recent survey found that 62% of the bass were greater than 14 inches. The largest bass captured was 19.3 inches. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum 5 bag Access information: There is a public landing off of Highway W on South Turtle. There is another public landing on the channel between Rock and North Turtle. The lakes in the chain are dark water with lots of rocky shoreline. May and early October are the best times to target smallmouth bass on this chain.

WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2,580 acres A 2013 survey found a high density smallmouth bass population with good size structure on Shell Lake. Electrofishing catch rates of smallmouth bass greater than 15 inches exceeded 99% of surveys of similar lakes in Wisconsin. Current regulation: There is a 14 inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of five for smallmouth bass on Shell Lake. Access information: There is a concrete boat landing and public fishing pier near the city campground off of State Highway 63.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

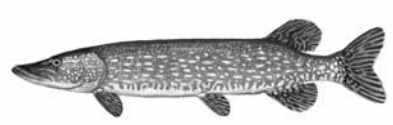
Oconomowoc Lake - 818 acres. Average length – 15 inches. Current regulation: 14" minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Access information: The public boat launch is located upstream of Oconomowoc Lake on the Oconomowoc River, downstream of Upper Oconomowoc Lake on the north side of Wisconsin Avenue. Rocky substrate, deep drop offs and woody structure provides excellent habitat for smallmouth bass on Oconomowoc Lake. Recent fall electrofishing surveys continually show excellent size structure and abundance of smallmouth bass with good trophy potential.

Lac LaBelle - 1154 acres. Average length – 12 inches. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Access information: Shore fishing opportunities near the Oconomowoc River inlet can provide fast action. The public boat launch is located on south end of lake near down town area on Wisconsin Avenue. Trophy smallmouth, large flathead catfish, abundant walleye and giant muskellunge lurk in this unique fishery. The forage base consists of white suckers, golden red horse and yellow bass.

WAUPACA COUNTY

Little Wolf River - Recent electrofishing surveys indicate high quality smallmouth bass populations with catch rates of 14-inch and larger bass averaging 16.3 bass per river mile (ranks above the 90th percentile for northern smallmouth bass waters). Current regulation: Statewide default – 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag. Access information: Access is limited to road crossings for wade fishing. Most anglers float the river between road crossings from Manawa dam downstream to County Highway X. This reach has numerous put-in and take-out areas.

NORTHERN PIKE



BARRON COUNTY

Beaver Dam Lake - 1,163 acres. There were 448 northern pike collected in the 2013 survey. The majority (79%) ranged from 15-20 inches. Anglers will have the best luck for numbers of northern pike in Norwegian Bay (the east side of the lake); whereas, the numbers of northern pike on the main lake will be fewer but the fish tend to be larger. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, 5 fish daily bag limit Access information: Beaver Dam Lake has a total of 5 public boat landings. There is also a fishing pier off Highway 63 on the north end of Cumberland. In addition, there is a nice campground owned by the City of Cumberland on Eagle Point. The maximum depth of Beaver Dam Lake is 106 ft., making it the deepest lake in Barron County and the sixth deepest lake in Wisconsin.

CLARK COUNTY

Rock Dam Lake - 118 acres, Total catch rate was 2.9 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.4/net lift and maximum length captured was 34". The last netting survey was conducted in 2005. Total catch rate was 5.2 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 1.8 per net lift and maximum length captured was 35".

Sherwood Lake - 117 acres. Total catch rate was 3.9 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.2/net lift and maximum length captured was 27". The last netting survey was conducted in 2005. Total catch rate was 7.3 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.5 per net lift and maximum length captured was 36".

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. - Upper river total catch rate of pike dropped to 0/mile in 2013 compared to 1.3/mile in 2012. Catch rate of larger fish (26"+) was down to 0/mile over 0.4/mile in 2012. Lower river total catch rate of pike was higher in 2013 (3.9/mile) than 2012 (2.4/mile). Catch rate of larger pike (26"+) was slightly higher in 2013 (0.6/mile) than 2012 (0.5/mile). Maximum size of pike captured in the lower river in 2013 was 37 inches. Regulation: Rock Dam Lake, Crystal Lake, and Black River upstream of Highway 10 – No minimum length limit/daily bag limit of 5 fish. For Sherwood Lake and the Black River downstream of Highway 10 – Minimum length limit of 26"/daily bag limit of 2 fish.

IRON COUNTY

Gile Flowage - 3,384 acres. The Gile Flowage has a long history of being known to produce high numbers of northern pike, as well as the ability to grow the occasional 40-incher. A recent 2012 spring netting survey resulted in high catch rates of pike, most being on the smaller side; however, several pike at or above 34 inches (including one 38-incher) were sampled. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 Access information: 4 public boat landings

Lake Six - 148 acres. Pike anglers looking for a remote adventure, with the possibility of some extremely fast action, should consider trying Lake Six located deep within central Iron County. Past surveys have documented very high numbers of pike (high enough where their numbers are actually inhibiting growth rates), and with the 2014 regulation change (reversion back to the statewide no-minimum length limit, daily bag of 5 fish), anglers will have plenty of opportunity to keep some fish for the frying pan or pickle jar. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 Access information: 1 public boat landing

LANGLADE COUNTY

Rolling Stone Lake - 672 acres. Naturally reproducing pike population; We did a survey in 2012 and even though the numbers have not been completely analyzed, I feel confident in saying that there is a high density pike population present; The size quality is not the greatest since a big portion of the population is made up of young fish, but if these fish continue to grow and get thinned out some, which usually isn't a problem on this popular ice-fishing destination, good pike fishing should continue for years to come!

LINCOLN COUNTY

Spirit Reservoir - 1,667 acres. Naturally reproducing pike population; 2005 adult population estimate of 2.8 per acre signaling a high density population; At that time most pike were in the 15-22" range

DNR fisheries technician Ryan Zernzach with a shapely northern pike retrieved from a Pigeon Lake fyke net.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Green Bay and tributaries, Marinette, Oconto, Brown and Door counties
Northern pike inhabiting the productive waters of Green Bay have a wide variety of forage to grow quickly. It is not uncommon for anglers to report catching fish in the upper 30 to low 40-inch size range. 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 northerns as is commonly seen in many inland lakes. 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. Access information: There are numerous boat access and tributary access locations along Green Bay. See the following websites for detailed information. *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/.*

OCONTO COUNTY

Bear Lake, Munger Lake and Lake John - Bear and Munger Lakes - Northern pike averaged 18.8 inches and ranged in length from 8.6 to 29.8 inches during the last survey. The adult density of northern pike was 6.0 / acre and above average compared to other lakes in northeast Wisconsin. Lake John - Northern pike accounted for 8% of the fish collected during the last survey. Pike ranged in length from 5.6 to 31.5 inches and averaged 19.8 inches. The last population estimate was conducted in 2009 and showed an adult density of approximately 3.1 pike per acre. Current regulation: 26 inch minimum length / 2 fish per day Access information: Bear and Munger Lakes – A boat landing is located on Munger Lake off of Lake John Road. Bear Lake can be accessed through the channel connecting the lakes. Lake John - A single boat landing is located off of Hatchery Lane.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Various Lakes - In 2013, we journeyed to the middle of nowhere, surveyed with nets and electricity, and found the fish populations to be really good. Pier Lake (257 acres) and Willow Lake (395 acres) both have solid pike populations, with good numbers of fish out to the mid 30s. The largest pike was a 40.1 inches, from Willow. Chain Lake (219 acres) and Gilmore Lake (301 acres) have abundant pike from about 18 to 30 inches.

SAUK COUNTY

Devils Lake - 375 acres. The 2013 comprehensive survey on Devils Lake showed a high quality northern pike population with individuals larger than 40" present. The survey indicated that for northern pike larger than 14 inches, 47% were also larger than 32 inches, and 13% were larger than 38 inches. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 32 inches; daily bag limit is 1 fish. Access information: Devils Lake is located within Devils Lake State Park. There is one paved boat launch with a boarding dock and one gravel carry-in canoe launch; both are located on the southwest side of the lake. There is parking available for 6-10 vehicle-trailer units and 11-15 vehicles. There is also a paved boat launch on the northeast end of the lake with 11-15 vehicle parking stalls. Shore fishing opportunities exist along the entire south shore and also on the north shore. Gas motors are not allowed on Devils Lake. In addition to providing excellent angling opportunities for northern pike, Devils Lake also has high quality yellow perch and bluegill populations, and offers good fishing for stocked brown trout.

TREMPEALEAU COUNTY

Crystal Lake - 54 acres. Total catch rate was 2.9 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.2/net lift and maximum length captured was 31.4". The last netting survey was conducted in 2010. Total catch rate was 2.5 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 0.1 per net lift and maximum length captured was 27". Catch rates for the three lakes is based on spring 2013 netting results and for the Black River, catch rates are based on fall 2013 electrofishing results.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Lauderdale Lakes - 841 acres. A 2013 comprehensive fish survey revealed a northern pike population with good size structure. The survey sampled northern pike up to 39 inches and the average length was 24.2 inches. 74% of the northern pike in the sample were over the quality size of 21 inches and 26% were over the minimum length limit of 26 inches. Current regulation: The minimum length limit is 26 inches and the daily bag limit is 2. Access information: Three Town of La Grange public boat launches with parking and launch fees are located off State Hwy 12/67 on Sterlingworth Drive, on West Shore Drive, and from County Hwy H to Bubbling Springs Drive to Ridge Road.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Big Muskego Lake - 2200 acres. Average length – 26 inches. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There are three public launches located on the lakes' east, south and southeast sides found on Boxhorn and Durham Drive. This shallow system has heavy aquatic plants and big northern pike. The highly conservative minimum length limit provides exciting catch and release action for bass and pike.

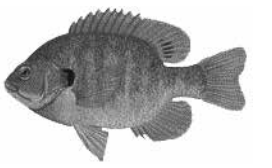
Lower Phantom Lake - 373 acres. Average length – 25 inches. Current regulation: 26 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 2. Access information: The public boat launch is located at the west end of Andrews Street, west of Main Street in the city of Mukwonago. There is a park and a public fishing pier located next to the boat launch. Lower Phantom Lake has excellent northern pike habitat with abundant aquatic plants. Recent stocking efforts have increased the northern pike abundance and reports of pike in the mid 30-inch range have been reported by anglers.

It's never too early to enjoy Wisconsin's northern pike fishing. A smile says it all! Photo: Scott Toshner

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Winnebago System (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne and Poygan and the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers) Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Shawano, Waushara, Waupaca and Winnebago counties - 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. Fisheries crews set fyke nets on Lake Poygan during spring 2013 to assess the effects of a northern pike fish kill caused by high water temperatures around the 4th of July weekend in 2012. The results of the netting indicated that the population was still very healthy and that the population still contained a high percentage of fish larger than the 26" minimum length limit. In fact, 59% of the female pike handled in the survey were larger than 26", with the largest fish being 35.1". These results were encouraging given that the fish kill the summer before mostly affected larger fish. The presence of large northern pike was also observed during a commercial rough fishing operation conducted on Lake Butte des Morts in the fall of 2013. Fisheries staff were present during this operation to collect biological data from captured gamefish and observed northern pike up to 40" with many more fish being 30" and larger. There is a lot of natural forage in the system most years which can make northern pike difficult to catch, but the population contains many trophy sized fish which justifies the effort. Current regulations: The current regulation for northern pike is a daily bag limit of 2 with a minimum length limit of 26". Access information: There are numerous assesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a system map or the DNR's Boat Access Website to search for launch information near where you want to fish (*dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess*).

PANFISH



ADAMS COUNTY

Castle Rock Lake, Adams and Juneau counties - 12,980 acres. Castle Rock Lake was surveyed in the spring of 2013. Size structure of the bluegill population was excellent, where 47% of the fish that were at least of stock length size (3 inches) were equal to or greater than quality length (6 inches) and 16% were equal to or greater than the preferred length (8 inches). Current regulation: No length limit, no closed season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Access: Angler access is excellent on Castle Rock Lake.

BARRON COUNTY

Chetek Chain of Lakes - The Chetek Chain consists of Prairie, Chetek, Tenmile, Pokegama, and Ojaski lakes. The total acreage for all lakes combined is 3,763 acres As documented in a 2012 survey, all lakes in the Chetek Chain contain robust populations of 7-9 inch bluegills and 8-11 inch crappies. Current regulation: 25 fish bag limit, no minimum length limit Access information: The Chetek Chain of lakes has 11 public boat landings. The Chetek Chain is an extremely productive "panfish factory".

BURNETT COUNTY

Devils Lake - 1001 acres. A 2013 electrofishing survey found a very good bluegill population. The average length of bluegills was 6.7 inches and over 40% of the fish surveyed were over 7 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 panfish Access information: There is a public boat launch on the south end of the lake.

Round Lake - 204 acres. A 2013 electrofishing survey found very good populations of black crappie and bluegill. Mean length of black crappie sampled was 9.0 inches, with 88% of the fish over 8 inches. Bluegill mean length was 6.7 inches and 79% of the fish captured were over 6 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 panfish Access information: There is a public boat access on the south end of the lake at the end of Stillson Road.

BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pools 5a and 6 - 2013 fall electrofishing surveys showed a healthy bluegill fishery. Overall, nearly 48 adult and juvenile bluegill were captured per hour. Almost one-half of surveyed bluegill were greater than six inches, while nearly one in four were greater than seven inches. Surveyed bluegill topped out at just over 9 inches. Current regulation: Daily limit 25 in total for bluegill and pumpkinseed (sunfish). Access information: Check DNR website for access locations in both pools.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Holcombe Flowage - 3890 acres. A spring 2013 fish survey documented that several strong year classes of black crappie were present. Top end fish were in the 11 to 13-inch range with a few bigger and another strong year class of 9 to 11-inch fish was present. Anglers will do best in Pine Lake,

Cranberry Lake and other backwater areas in the spring when water temperatures rise. Any woody structure or emerging vegetation present should hold fish. Numerous boat landings are present.

■ CLARK COUNTY

Rock Dam Lake - 118 acres. Black crappie: Total catch rate was 20.6 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.3/net lift and maximum length captured was 13.5". The last netting survey was conducted in 2005. Total catch rate was 13.4 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.04 per net lift and maximum length captured was 10". Bluegill: Total catch rate was 18.7 per net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 6.6/net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift, and maximum length captured was 8". The last netting survey was conducted in 2005. Total catch rate was 15.2 per net lift, catch rate of 7"+ fish was 0.7 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.04 per net lift, and maximum lengthcaptured was 8". Yellow perch: Total catch rate was 1.3 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.04/net lift and maximum length captured was 10". The last netting survey was conducted in 2005. Total catch rate was 1.6 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0 per net lift and maximum length captured was 6". Regulation: No minimum length limit/25 daily aggregate bag limit for panfish. Access information: Public access. ADA 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 and Lake Henry in Trempealeau County.

■ DANE COUNTY

Lake Waubesa - 2080 acres. Lake Waubesa, and adjacent (upstream) Upper Mud lake, are perennial open water and ice fishing destinations for bluegill and crappie anglers. Annually, the lakes south end attracts spring crappie fishermen as shallows warm. Bluegill fishing is generally tied to the weed beds that traditionally parallel the west shore, however, good habitat is readily accessible. Current regulation: 25 in total, no length restriction. Access: County launches can be found on the West shore at Goodland and Lakefarm parks. Babcock park, south of the Village of McFarland allows boat access from the east bank.

Lake Wingra - 345 acres While lacking in size structure , Lake Wingra is a fine panfish lake for families and young anglers who want the bobber to go down ! Annual shocking surveys continually demonstrate abundant bluegill numbers. 2013 surveys show the vast majority of fish between 4 and 6 inches but numbers can outweigh size where catching is involved. Current regulation: 25 in total, no length restriction Access: Excellent shore fishing opportunities exist along the Vilas park shoreline on Wingra's north shore. Wingra park offers both shoreline fishing and a boat rental concession.

■ FLORENCE COUNTY

Long and Fay Lakes - 340 & 282 acres. Both of these lakes have very high abundance of bluegill, black crappie and yellow perch. The size structure of the panfish is not great, with most fish below the preferred "keeper" size. These lakes have extremely high panfish abundance making them great places to take kids or beginners fishing and expect a lot of action. Current regulation: 25 fish daily bag limit. Access information: One public boat landing on each lake.

■ IOWA COUNTY

Twin Valley Lake - 150 acres. The panfish populations in Twin Valley Lake include bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch and pumpkinseed sunfish. All of these fishes are slow growing and the average size of the harvestable fish is less than desirable. However, there is a dense population of all of these contributing to an excellent bite rate. While the average size is not good, given the heavy fishing pressure on this lake for these

Local anglers and DNR volunteers, Dick and Chad Forrest, with very nice crappies from Long Lake.

fish many anglers must consider the size to be acceptable. Crappie while fluctuating greatly are the best of the panfish for size particularly right now with fish averaging 8" to 9" and occasional fish over 9". With a little effort and a little expertise, you can catch all of the 5.5" to 6.75" bluegill and pumpkinseed that you want along with 6.5" to 7.5" yellow perch. This is the place to take kids fishing if you want them to catch fish as well as have some fish to eat. Current regulation: There is no daily bag limit or length limit on panfish Access information: Located in Gov. Dodge State Park. Park Sticker/fee required. There is a pretty decent hard surfaced boat ramp that will handle most any size boat with an associated pier. A good, hard surfaced parking lot provides more than ample parking. There is some shore fishing opportunity associated with the boat ramp and parking area as well as with the main picnic area. The best shore fishing is associated with the dam and associated banks but accessing this requires a 1/3 mile walk from CTH "Z". Boating on the lake is restricted to electric motors, oars, paddles, etc. – no gas motors. Row boat and canoe rental is located lakeside along with concessions.

■ IRON COUNTY

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - 13,545 acres. By nature of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage's predator-dominated fish community, panfish in the flowage have typically been found in low numbers but at a very good average size. During the most recent angler creel survey conducted on the Flowage (2009-2010), harvested crappie, bluegill, and yellow perch averaged 11.3, 7.8, and 9.5 inches, respectively. Despite the fact that panfish numbers appear to have increased some over the past years, anglers should be aware that they're still in relatively low abundances, and that it will take a little effort to find concentrations of fish. However, those who put the time in will likely be rewarded with some quality-size fish. Current regulation: Daily bag limit of 10 panfish, minimum length limit on crappie of 10 inches Access information: 6 public boat landings, camping available

■ KENOSHA COUNTY

Lake Michigan and tributaries, Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties - In 2012 the sport harvest of yellow perch fell to the lowest in decades, with 9,115 harvested. The harvest seemed to rebound somewhat in 2013, but the majority of perch harvested were smaller, younger fish. In 2013 the yellow perch sport harvest was dominated by the 2010 year-class (58%), followed by the 2008 year-class (17%), which averaged 9 and 11.5 inches, respectively. The relatively strong 2005 year-class is now 8 years old and constituted only 8% of the harvest. The 2012 year-class is showing fast growth and reached a harvestable size of 9.5 inches, making up 5% of the harvest. The 2010 year-class of perch should continue to drive the fishery in 2014. The majority of perch harvest in the southern end of the lake comes from Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties. Current regulation: Open from June 16 – April 30. Daily bag limit is 5 yellow perch. No minimum length. There are many boat and shore access locations to fish for yellow perch. *dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/*

■ LACROSSE COUNTY

Mississippi River, La Crosse Area. Trempealeau, La Crosse and Vernon counties. The Mississippi River in the La Crosse area includes a total of 53,800 acres and stretches from the Village of Trempealeau downstream to the city of Lansing, IA. In 2007 through 2013 fall surveys, the Black River Channel region, including the Black River in La Crosse, Round Lake, French Lake and French Slough had the highest abundance of panfish (256 fish per hour) followed by Lawrence and Target lakes region on the Minnesota side (100 fish per hour), the Goose Island and Stoddard region (91 fish per hour), and the Trempealeau Lakes Region (89 fish per hour). The Reno region, in northeast Pool 9, had the lowest abundance (10.3 fish per hour). Really good news is yellow perch numbers have increased about 175 percent since 2006 in the La Crosse area. This increase, also seen in other upper Mississippi River regions, is associated with clearer water. If you are looking for a few large panfish the Reno region had the largest fish on average, although abundances are very low. The Trempealeau Lakes region had the second largest panfish followed by the Lansing, and Goose Island regions, and the Lawrence and Target lakes region. Panfish fishing is open year-round on the Mississippi River. In the Wisconsin portion of the Wisconsin-Minnesota and Wisconsin-Iowa boundary waters the daily bag limit is 25 each of yellow perch, rock bass and crappie and a daily bag limit of 25 bluegill and pumpkinseed in combination. There is fishing license reciprocity between Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. In other words, a Wisconsin licensed angler can fish in Minnesota or Iowa as long as they stay between the railroad tracks bordering each side of the river. However, anglers must obey the fishing regulations of the state they are fishing in. There are no minimum length limits on panfish throughout the entire reach of the Mississippi River bordering Wisconsin.

■ LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Yellowstone Lake - 450 acres. The bluegill population in Yellowstone has been steadily improving and now offers anglers an opportunity to catch many bluegill of good size. Electrofishing surveys in 2013 revealed a good bluegill fishery. Two hundred and eighty five bluegill sunfish ranged from 3.0 to 9.1 inches with an average size of 6.1 inches. Forty-nine percent were greater than 6 inches. The catchable size bluegills averaged 7.3 inches. Current regulation: Daily bag limit of 25, no length limit Access information: There are two boat launches available and one canoe launch. There are multiple ADA accessible fishing pads. Shore fishing opportunities are ample. Yellowstone Lake is located in Yellowstone Lake State Park. Camping, swimming beach, pet area and picnic areas are all available. There is also a bait shop with boat rental located lakeside.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

Rolling Stone Lake - 672 acres. Year in and year out this lake just keeps producing numbers of quality bluegill, crappie, and perch; It is no secret to anglers as evidenced by the hundreds of ice anglers out there year after year.

County Forest lakes - There are hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS and explore, you just might find that spot you don't want your neighbor to know about!

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

Lake Alice - 1,369 acres. Bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie, and perch; Good habitat + good water quality = good fishing.

County Forest lakes - There are hundreds of mostly smaller largemouth bass/bluegill type lakes; Many of these are on county forest land; Get out your maps or GPS and explore, you just might find a spot you'd never tell your relatives about!

■ MANITOWOC COUNTY

Manitowoc and Kewaunee County all less than 140 acres, Door County under 1200 acres - Inland lakes in Manitowoc County offer fishing opportunities for both experienced anglers and for families. Lakes are small and easy to fish with small boats under most weather conditions. Panfish, mainly bluegill, yellow perch and rock bass are popular with local anglers. Most lakes have abundant panfish although in some lakes they average less than 6". Best bets for shore fishing include Long Lake and Silver Lake. Other lakes have good boat launches. Lakes in Kewaunee County are also small in size. East Alaska, West Alaska, Heidemann, Krohns, and Shea Lakes all have public access and are great places for family fishing because they can be fished from small boats under almost any weather condition. Panfish are abundant in these lakes so the fishing action can be very good, however large panfish may be hard to find. Door County Lakes are much larger than lakes in the other counties. Kangaroo Lake has good numbers of yellow perch, bluegill and large rock bass. Spring yellow perch fishing is very popular off of the causeway (Highway E). Clark Lake has seen increasing numbers of bluegill and rock bass. The Forestville Flowage provides shore fishing opportunities and has good numbers of black crappie in it. Anglers may also find some nice bluegill and yellow perch. Current regulation: Statewide rules, except for Silver Lake, Manitowoc County which has a 10 panfish bag limit.

■ MARATHON COUNTY

Wisconsin River - Lake Wausau was surveyed in 2012 and the results showed a strong bluegill population with 39% of the fish greater than 6 inches. While size structure may be lower than some flowages, of note in this fishery is that abundance is high and action is consistent. Current regulation: No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Access: Angler access to Lake Wausau is excellent with boat launches at three city parks (Oak Island, Schofield, and Memorial Parks) and Bluegill Bay County Park. Rookery Bay is a favorite destination for local ice anglers targeting bluegill, the water is shallow and panfish plentiful. This bay is located off of the Rib River Channel where it flows under the Hwy N Bridge and into Lake Wausau. Ice anglers access mostly from a small park on the South side of Highway N across from Gulliver's Restaurant.

A happy angler and a nice 13 ¼-inch yellow perch caught on Green Bay waters off of Oconto Park, 2013.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Green Bay, Marinette, Oconto, Door and Brown counties - Good news for perch anglers: The 2010 year class of yellow perch was the 3rd largest in 30 years of surveys. In 2014, those 4-year old fish should range in size from approximately 9 to 12 inches. The key for anglers will be finding schools of perch as they follow food sources. Open water harvest of yellow perch in 2012 was 148,980 (29,752 lbs) compared to 254,942 fish (67,729 lbs) in 2011. The majority of the open water harvest (38%) was by boat anglers launching at ramps at Door and Kewaunee Counties, followed by boat anglers launching in Brown (26%) and Oconto County (11%). The remaining 25% of harvest was by pier, shore, or stream anglers, or by anglers who responded to the moored boat survey. The 2013 open water harvest estimates will be available by spring of 2014. Due to better ice conditions than the previous winter, the January to March 2013 ice fishing harvest estimate (35,216 fish) was much improved from than that of winter 2012 (9,767 fish). Current regulation: Open May 20 to March 15. Daily limit is 15 yellow perch. No minimum length. Access information: There are dozens of boat and shore access locations to fish for yellow perch on Green Bay.

Bagley Flowage - 281 acres. Big bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and perch can be found in Bagley Flowage located just north of Peshtigo. The last survey showed numerous bluegill over 8 inches and crappie over 10 inches. Bagley has good weed growth around the entire lake and the water is moderately stained. Current regulations: 25 in total (bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, crappie) Access information: Bagley Flowage can be accessed from a boat ramp located in the Peshtigo River State Forest on Bagley Road. Shoreline is undeveloped with virtually no houses.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Panfish lakes - Chain Lake, part of the Sugar Camp Chain, had good numbers of 6-8 inch bluegill in our 2013 survey. Most of the crappies in Chain were only 5-7 inches, with a few 8-10 inch fish. Gilmore had respectable crappie numbers centered on 9 inches and abundant bluegill under 7 inches. West Horsehead had abundant bluegill up to 7.4 inches. Buckskin had good numbers of perch averaging 8.2 inches. McNaughton Lake had high numbers of black bullhead up to 8 inches and perch up to 7 inches. Pier and Willow had abundant small perch, good numbers of bluegill over 7 inches and black crappie over 9 inches.

PORTAGE COUNTY

Wisconsin River – Stevens Point Flowage - Lakeside Bay is a consistent producer of black crappie and is especially popular with ice anglers. This bay is shallow and mostly of uniform depth of 4-6 feet. The crappie population in the Stevens Point Flowage was last surveyed in 2009, and comparisons to past surveys show the population has been consistent throughout the years; producing on average 10 inch black crappie. Current regulation: No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Access: Lakeside Bay has easy access through the boat landing at Lakeside Bar located off of Old Wausau Road North of Stevens Point, a small fee is charged.

Lake Emily, Marathon-Portage counties
Lake Emily was surveyed in 2013 with nets with a total of 400 black crappie captured. The size structure was excellent with 88% of the catch larger than 10 inches and 12% larger than 8 inches. The largest black crappie caught was 14 inches. Lake Emily is a popular destination for summertime fishing and ice fishing as well. Current regulation: No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Anglers can access the lake in two locations. From the Lake Emily County Park boat landing on the east end of the lake off Lake Drive, or at a small access point near the end of Edgewater Drive. There is also a fishing pier within the south shore campground. Portage County operates a very nice and well used camp ground on the lake. They have a smaller number of units available on the South shore and a larger unit with more amenities on the North Shore.

ST. CROIX COUNTY

Lake St. Croix or St. Croix River, St. Croix and Pierce counties - 8,213 acres or 25 miles of river from Prescott, Wisconsin to Stillwater, Minnesota. Our open water creel survey results show that substantial harvests of bluegill and black crappie occurred during 2013. Bluegill and crappie fishing is expected to remain strong during the 2014 season. Most bluegill harvested range from 7-9 inches and black crappie, 9-12 inches. The St. Croix River is open year round, the daily bag limit is 25 of each species and there is no minimum length limit. The Jaycee's Public Boat Access in Prescott is located on the Mississippi River just a short distance downstream from the mouth of the St. Croix River. The Town of Troy Boat Landing is located off of CTH F on South Cove Road. The City of Hudson also provides access at Lake Front Park. All boat landings require registration and a fee. Lake St. Croix is part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and has heavy recreational boat traffic during the summer months.

SAWYER COUNTY

Lake Chetac - 2,400 acres. The lake has long been known as a panfish factory. A survey of panfish in 2013 found that was still very much the case. Relative abundances of black crappie and yellow perch were 12 times and 5 times higher than the average for the area. And for both species size is solid with many "keeper" fish. Bluegill are another big draw on Chetac. Abundance of bluegill was around average but size is good with 57% of bluegill in the last survey over 6 inches and many over 7 and 8. The current panfish regulation on Lake Chetac is 25 fish daily, of which only 10 can be bluegill.

Fishing is fun! A happy boy with stringer of Mississippi River bluegills Photo: Kurt Welke.

TAYLOR COUNTY

Sackett Lake - 63 acres. Walleye fingerlings raised and stocked in cooperation with area sportsmen serve to bolster the predatory pressure from largemouth bass to effectively control panfish abundance and maintain satisfactory size structure in the bluegill population. Half of the bluegills in our late spring 2013 electrofishing survey were 7 inches or longer. We found very few black crappies and yellow perch in our surveys. Taylor County maintains a boat landing, a swimming beach, and a picnic area on the northeast shore.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Lauderdale Lakes - 841 acres. Lauderdale Lakes supports a healthy bluegill population with good size structure. A comprehensive fish survey in 2013 sampled 390 bluegills. These fish averaged 6.2 inches and the largest was 8.5 inches. 59% of the sampled bluegills were over the quality length of 6 inches. Current regulation: The daily bag limit on panfish is 25 in total. Access information: The Town of La Grange operates three boat launches with parking and launch fees. One is located on Sterlingworth Drive off State Hwy 12/67. One is located on West Shore Drive. One is located on Ridge Road off of Bubbling Springs Drive.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Okauchee Lake - 1157 acres. Average length – 9 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: There are two public launches on Okauchee Lake found at the Golden Mast Restaurant and the DNR launch. The DNR boat launch is located just east of the Okauchee Lake dam on Road T, north of Wisconsin Avenue. The Golden Mast boat launch is located off of Lacys Lane north of East Wisconsin Avenue. Look for crappies in one of many shallow bays when the water temperatures rise to the low to mid 50 degrees. Spring netting in 2013 revealed excellent black crappie size structure and abundance.

Pine Lake - 711 surface acres. Average length – 7 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: The public launch is located on the lakes' north side off of highway K also known as Kettle Moraine Scenic Drive. Spring netting in 2013 revealed bluegills were found in good abundance and had an average size of 7 inches.

Golden Lake - 252 acres. Average length – 6.5 inches. Current regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: The public launch is located on the lakes' south side off of Highway 18. Golden Lake has a nice diversity of aquatic plants and a primarily sandy bottom. Panfish have a good size structure in Golden Lake.

WAUPACA COUNTY

Pigeon Lake and Marion Pond - 163 and 108 acres. Recent surveys conducted on both waterbodies indicate abundant populations of panfish. Netting surveys conducted in Pigeon Lake indicated high bluegill abundance with 36% of catch over 6.0-inches. Crappies and yellow perch were also found in lower numbers. Surveys conducted on Marion Pond indicate very high densities of bluegill, yellow perch, and black bullhead. The majority of these fish are the result of a strong year class hatched in 2010 and with current growth rates should reach harvestable size over the next summer. Current regulation: Panfish regulations are statewide default for both waters. Access information: Pigeon Lake has multiple accesses including five boat launches and a city park with ample shore fishing opportunities. Marion Pond has two boat launches and shore fishing opportunities at Wallace Park and Lions Point. Anglers venturing over to Pigeon Lake or Marion Pond should concentrate their effort during spring, late fall, and winter months due to the extensive growth of submergent aquatic plants which can limit the ability to fish it effectively during the summer.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Winnebago System (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne and Poygan and the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers) , Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Shawano, Waushara, Waupaca and Winnebago - Acres and river length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. Panfishing opportunities have been emerging on the Winnebago System over the last decade due to an increase in vegetation. Survey results from April 2013 indicated that the adult male yellow perch population was dominated by 6-7" fish (56%), while the adult female population was comprised mostly of larger 8.5-9.9" fish (63%). These size classes corresponded mostly with 2-3 year old perch with less than 7% of the adult population being 4 years of age or older. In comparison, fall trawling data collected in 2014 indicated that the majority of the population (66%) was composed of 6.0-7.4" fish. Given the growth rates of yellow perch on the system, these perch should mostly be in the 7.5-8.5" range by July 2014 which should provide some great harvest opportunities. The very abundant 2010 year class of black crappies provided some great fishing action in 2013, which should continue into 2014. Fall trawling data collected in 2014 indicated that the majority of these fish were in the 10-11" range. The bluegill population also showcases some nice sized bluegill, with 31% of the adult population being fish 7" and larger. Overall, the population is dominated by 6-6.9" fish (60%). Current regulations: The season is open year round for panfish on the system. The daily bag limit is 25 fish in total, with no minimum length limit on any panfish species. Access information: There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town accesses at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee.

VILAS COUNTY

Little Arbor Vitae Lake - 534 acres. A fall 2013 electrofishing survey found 56.4 crappies per mile of shoreline. Current regulation: 25 daily bag limit Access information: Access to the lake is by a very good public landing located off of highway 70. This is a very productive body of water and has good numbers of bluegill and yellow perch as well.

CATFISH

IOWA COUNTY

Ludden Lake - 43 acres. The channel catfish population in Ludden Lake has recently developed into a desirable fishery. Spring netting surveys in 2013 revealed a good adult fishery. One hundred five channel catfish were sampled. They ranged from 3.9 to 27.0 inches with an average length of 18.6 inches. Eighty two percent were greater than 18.0 inches. Current regulation: General statewide regulation with no length limit and a daily bag of ten. Access information: There is one public boat launch available and limited shore access near the boat launch and at the dam. There is one ADA accessible fishing dock. Ludden Lake is located next to the Ludden Lake golf course. The boat access is reached by driving through the golf course entrance and crossing the 8th fairway.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River/Crawfish River/Bark River, Jefferson/Dodge counties - 10,000 lake acres plus 80+ river miles (Rock River), 48+ river miles (Crawfish River), 29 river miles (Bark River). 2013 catfish hoop netting produced channel catfish ranging from 10.6" to 29.5" and 9 pounds. Flathead catfish ranged from 20.2" to 37" and 22 pounds. Current regulation: Seasons are open year-round on the Rock/Crawfish/Bark Rivers and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. Catfish (channel, flathead) open all year with a 10 fish daily bag and no minimum length limit. Access information: Dalman Royce County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam, Rock River Park in Johnson Creek, Kaul Park. Opportunities for large flathead catfish exist in all major rivers in Jefferson and Dodge Counties. In fall 2013, DNR fisheries crews sampled a 35-inch flathead from the Rock River above Lake Koshkonong.

Fisheries biologist, Laura Stremick-Thompson hoists a large flathead catfish collected from Lake Koshkonong.

■ KENOSHA COUNTY

Fox River - A fish survey with hoop nets was conducted on the Fox River above the Village of Silver Lake in Kenosha County in June, 2013. This section of river supports an excellent channel and flathead catfish population. Channel catfish averaged 17.5 inches and the largest was 31 inches. Flathead catfish averaged 26.7 inches and the largest was 36 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit and the daily bag limit is10 in total. Access information: Public boat launch with parking at Fox River County Park off of Cty Hwy F. First DNR documentation of flathead catfish in the Illinois Fox River. - *Doug Welch*

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Wisconsin River - Catfish populations are surveyed regularly on the Wisconsin River with summer hoop netting. In 2013 we surveyed the Stevens Point Flowage and found a great population of channel catfish. We captured a total of 232 catfish for a catch rate of 12 fish per net night, which was the largest number ever captured on this water. For this water 79% of the fish were greater than 16 inches, and 28% of the fish were greater than 24 inches. The largest fish captured was 28.5 inches. Current regulation: No closed season; no minimum length limit; bag limit is 10. Access: Stevens Point Flowage is accessible at the Dubay Dam boat ramp, and Bukolt Park boat ramp in Stevens Point and shore fishing is available at both access points. Other access includes Lakeside Bar boat ramp, the Hwy HH boat ramp, and the River Road boat ramp. Other shoreline access in available off of West River Drive, which has numerous parking areas where anglers can access the Wisconsin River. Catfish are a great sportfish for kids, they are easy to catch using basic tackle and they fight hard.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

Wolf River, Shawano, Outagamie and Waupaca counties - Recent hoop net surveys conducted on the Wolf River indicate moderate to high numbers of channel catfish with over 57% of fish over 20.0 inches and the largest fish at 34.5 inches. Flathead catfish were found in lower numbers but exhibited good size with 84% of catch over 30.0 inches and the largest at 43.1 inches. Flathead catfish population density and size structure appear to be trending upward. Current regulation: Channel catfish: 25 in total, open all year. Flathead catfish: Daily bag limit of one fish and only flatheads from 30 to 36 inches or over 42 inches may be possessed. Season follows statewide gamefish season. Access information: Multiple public and private boat accesses are located throughout the Wolf River from Fremont upstream to Shawano. Good shore fishing areas are found at public accesses in Fremont, Gills Landing, New London, and at multiple properties in the Lower Wolf River bottoms state lands.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Illinois Fox River - This report refers to the 12 mile reach from I-43 downstream to Denoon Road. Average length – 19 inches with fish up to 29 inches. Current regulation: no minimum length, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: Public boat launch is found in Big Bend River Park on Riverside drive. A 2012 DNR hoop net catfish survey revealed excellent abundance and a quality size structure.

■ WOOD COUNTY

Nekoosa Flowage - 486 acres. Catfish populations are surveyed regularly on the Wisconsin River with summer hoop netting. In 2013, we surveyed the Nekoosa Flowage in Nekoosa. We caught 374 channel catfish and our catch rate was 25 fish per net-night. Approximately 74% of the fish were greater than 16 inches and 2% of the fish were greater than 24 inches. The largest fish caught was 28.2 inches. Current regulation: No closed season; no minimum size; bag limit is 10. Access: Nekoosa Flowage has a boat launch at the Riverside Park in Nekoosa off of Hwy 73/54. Riverside Park has opportunities for the public to fish from shore and has a fishing pier.

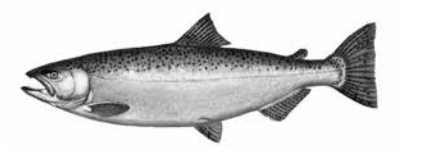
LAKE STURGEON

Flambeau River, Iron, Ashland, Price, Sawyer and Rusk counties. - The Flambeau River, including its North and South Forks, is one of a handful of Wisconsin waters that offers anglers a decent chance to catch lake sturgeon during the hook-and-line season each September. Population abundance is generally higher in the free-flowing river segments, but sturgeon are also known to inhabit the nine impoundments on this river system. Sturgeon season remains closed upstream from Turtle-Flambeau Dam as restoration of that sub-population continues. Popular shorefishing spots include the tailwaters of most dams, except below the

An educational opportunity: Children at play investigate a 72-inch lake sturgeon collected from the North Fork Flambeau River. Photo: Greg Rublee.

Turtle-Flambeau Dam and the Upper Dam in Park Falls where refuges prohibit fishing year round. The deeper natural pools scattered throughout the river system offer good prospects for success, too. Many anglers use night crawlers, cut bait, or commercially-prepared bait—some even use shrimp from the supermarket. Anglers must first purchase a harvest tag if they intend to keep a sturgeon, and harvest registration is mandatory at any of the seven cooperating stations in the area. On average four sturgeon per year have been taken from the Flambeau River since the 60-inch length limit became effective in 2007, but sturgeon 40 – 55 inches long in moderate abundance should offer plenty of high-quality angling opportunity. You do not need a harvest tag to catch and release sturgeon on waters open to sturgeon fishing during the hook-and-line season.

GL SALMON & TROUT



Lake Michigan, Door County - Chinook salmon fishing on Lake Michigan during 2013 was challenging at times but big Chinooks were caught, catch rates improved as the season progressed, and spawning runs during the fall were exceptionally good. Many anglers reported catching few Chinooks with a mixed bag of lake trout and rainbow trout during 2013, which is different from 2012 when Chinook salmon catch rates were very high. Many factors impact fishing conditions on Lake Michigan (e.g., wind, water temperature, fish abundance, invasive species, etc.) but two major and challenging factors during 2013 were water temperature and forage availability. Distinct temperature layers or zones commonly develop in Lake Michigan during the spring or summer, but unseasonably cool spring temperatures during 2013 partly delayed or prevented this temperature stratification from occurring. Conversely when Lake Michigan does stratify, Chinook salmon and other fishes concentrate within preferred temperature zones so it's somewhat easier for anglers to locate fish and place baits. Forage availability also impacts fishing success and well fed Chinooks can be difficult to catch. Total alewife and overall forage abundance in Lake Michigan are currently at record lows, but the 2010 and 2012 year classes of alewife were ok or average in abundance. These young alewives provided a fair amount of forage during 2013 and as a result many big Chinooks ≥20 pounds were caught. These large Chinooks were also seen in rivers during fall spawning migrations, and many Chinooks returned to spawn during 2013. The number of Chinooks processed at DNR's primary Chinook salmon spawning facility at Strawberry Creek in Sturgeon Bay, during 2013 was over 7,000, compared to only about 2,500 during 2012. Many factors and conditions related to fishing are unpredictable, but regardless there should be plenty of fish including salmon and trout available for anglers to catch on Lake Michigan during 2014.

Green Bay and tributaries, Marinette, Oconto and Door counties - Brown trout stocked into the productive waters of Green Bay have plentiful forage to 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. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily limit is 5 trout/salmon in total. Minimum length is 10 inches. Access information: Anglers can troll for browns in the spring and summer months. There are numerous boat access locations along the bay shore. Check out this website for details. *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. DNR stocks around 126,000 brown trout yearlings into Green Bay. Since the early 2000's, brown trout harvest was down considerably from the previous few decades. In an attempt to revitalize that fishery, DNR began stocking brown trout offshore in 2010 to move them away from nearshore predators at the stocking sites. We no longer stock fall fingerling brown trout into Green Bay because of suspected low survival of those small fish going into the winter months. We are seeing early indications that stocking less fish but doing it smarter is reaping major benefits. Harvest rates improved from 42 hours per fish in 2010 to 20 hours per fish in 2012. Much of the fishing success of a given year is reliant on survival of stocked fish, and water temperatures which affects prey availability in nearshore areas where browns inhabit.

Lake Superior, Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron counties - Lake trout still make up the bulk of anglers catch in the Apostle Islands region, yet abundance appears to have declined in recent years. Anglers have compensated by having greater success in their pursuit of coho salmon and brown trout. While the average size of coho and brown trout from creel surveys is less than 20 inches, trophy fish in excess of 34 inches are reported throughout the year. Current regulation: Trout (Rainbow, Brown, Brook, Splake, Lake) = 5 in total of which only 1 may be rainbow trout, 1 may be brook trout, and only 3 may be lake trout with only 1 lake trout longer than 25 inches. 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. The lake trout season is open from December 1 through September 30 while the season for other trout is all year. Salmon(Coho, Chinook, Pink, Atlantic) = 5 in total with no minimum length limit and no closed season Access information: *dnrmaps.wi.gov/DNRManagedLands/index.htm?l=dRecLayer* Coho salmon are produced naturally in the tributaries of Lake Superior, providing a fishery that is essentially free to the anglers of Wisconsin. Brown trout are stocked in Lake Superior because 1) they are extremely popular with anglers and 2) they live longer than most pacific salmon, meaning there is a greater opportunity for the stocked fish to eventually be caught by anglers.

Bois Brule River, downstream from U.S. Highway 2, Douglas County - 15 miles. 6,771 steelhead ascended the Brule River lamprey barrier/fishway during the fall 2012-spring 2013 season: 4,594 in the fall and 2,177 in the spring. The spring run was particularly notable. For the first time on record, over 400 steelhead ascended the fishway during three separate weeks. Further, the 2,177 steelhead in the spring was highest spring run on record. The record-breaking heavy snowfall and cold air temperatures during the spring in northern Wisconsin likely influenced the spring run. Current regulation: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2 - Open from the Saturday nearest April 1 through November 15; 26-inch minimum length; daily limit is one fish. Access information: Go to http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/ and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points are through designated areas only within the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at most points, especially from U.S. Highway 2, Carlson Road, Copper Range Campground, State Highway 13, or off Loveland Road at the Brule River lamprey barrier/fishway. Steelhead were last stocked in the spring of 2002, and a portion of those fish returned to spawn in the Brule between 2003 and 2010. By the spring of 2010, most of the stocked fish reached their maximum life span of 8-10 years. Beginning in the fall of 2010 and continuing to the present time, no stocked fish have been observed passing through the fishway. The current minimum length to harvest a steelhead is 26 inches,

Fisheries biologist Nick Legler and a young angler are all smiles with two Chinooks and a steelhead/rainbow trout caught near Algoma on Lake Michigan during 2013. Photo: Kevin Naze.

which allows steelhead to spawn at least once during their lifetimes. It is important to remember that steelhead spawn repeatedly throughout their lives. They are different than salmon, which spawn only once. Because of this, steelhead that are less than the 26-inch limit should be handled and released with extra care to ensure a better chance for future spawning and natural re-

production. This can reduce or eliminate the need for stocking.

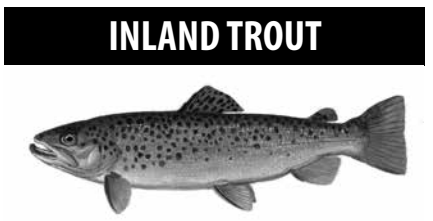
Lake Michigan and tributaries, Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties - The brown trout fishery in Lake Michigan is supported through annual stocking. Brown trout fishing in 2011 was poor, but in 2012 and 2013 the fishery rebounded and stayed strong all through the fall and into months of January through March. Anglers caught good numbers of brown trout in the winter months in many areas, especially the Milwaukee River and harbor. Some fish were in the 15 to 20 pound range. 2013 was a good year for brown trout fishing in all ports from Kenosha to Port Washington, and we hope the trend continues in 2014. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total, 10 inches or larger in total length.

Steelhead fishing was great for boat and shore anglers in 2012 producing 75,981 fish, which was the highest harvest since 1999. In 2013, boat anglers had success with all three strains of rainbow trout – chambers creek, ganaraska and arlee. The 2013 spring stream fishery suffered due to multiple flooding events after snowmelt and heavy rains. Wisconsin stocks about 500,000 rainbow trout annually into Lake Michigan. If the spring stream flows are ideal for fish migration, we may see a good steelhead run in 2014, in addition to the open water fishery. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total, 10 inches or larger in total length.

Chinook salmon fishing was outstanding in 2012, with 390,385 fish harvested. Early warming in March and April kept bait fish nearshore, thus salmon fishing started earlier than the past years. In 2013, Chinook fishing was generally slow; however, the fish were the biggest Lake Michigan anglers have seen in a long time. Chinooks over 20 pounds were reported routinely all summer, and a 36 pound, 42 inch behemoth was caught off Milwaukee in early August. There is a significant proportion of the Chinook population that consists of naturally reproduced fish from Lake Michigan tributaries in the state of Michigan. Because of the increase in natural reproduction, combined with declined prey availability, the states surrounding Lake Michigan reduced stocking of Chinook salmon by 50% starting in 2013. The state of Michigan took the largest cut, and Wisconsin's share was a 34.5% reduction in the numbers of Chinooks stocked. The impact of reduced stocking will be evaluated in the coming years. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total, 10 inches or larger in total length. Coho fishing in 2013 was on par with 2012 when 73,395 fish were harvested. The harvest in 2012 was 7.5% above the five year average harvest.

The coho fishing season starts off in the warmer southern waters of Lake Michigan and then progress northward all the way to Sheboygan waters. Fishing stayed consistent for coho throughout late spring and into the early summer months. Over 500,000 coho are stocked annually in Wisconsin waters, and good coho fishing should continue in 2014 with suitable weather conditions. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total, 10 inches or larger in total length Access information:

INLAND TROUT



ADAMS COUNTY

Campbell Creek - The brown trout population in Campbell Creek was surveyed in 2013. Brown trout were very abundant (972 fish per mile) compared to other trout fisheries in Adams County. The average size was 7.8 inches and largest fish caught was 14.2 inches. Of the fish that were of at least stock length (6 inches) three percent were at least of quality size (12 inches). Of the fish caught, 60 percent were equal to or greater than 7 inches (minimum length limit). Current regulation: Inland trout season; Category 2 – 7 inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of 5 fish. Access: Anglers have access to Campbell Creek through State owned land (Remnant Campbell Creek Fishery Area) off of County Hwy A. Addition information: Trout habitat work was completed in 2010 downstream of County Highway A.

ASHLAND COUNTY

Beaver, Cammerer and Pole Lakes - 35, 19, and 13 acres, respectively. These lakes in Ashland County are primarily managed as put-and-take trout fisheries, where the lakes are annually stocked with legal-sized trout (Beaver and Pole – brook trout, Cammerer – rainbow trout). Anglers interested in fishing these lakes are advised to contact local fisheries staff to verify that trout have indeed been stocked. Regulations: Category 2: 7 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Access information: Beaver and Cammerer Lakes have public boat landings, and Pole Lake has a walk-in access.

BARRON COUNTY

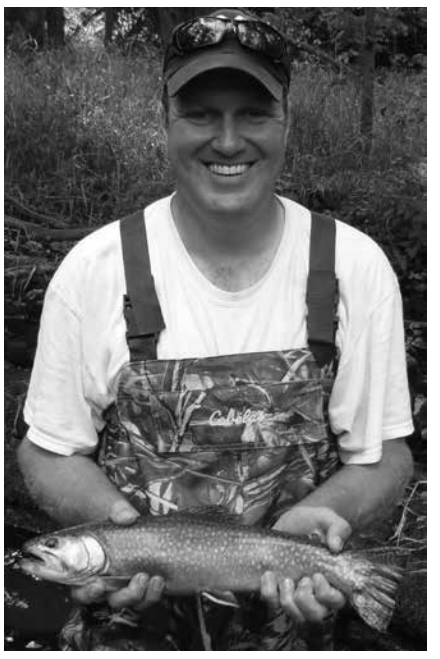
Brill River - There are 3 miles of stream near the village of Brill that is considered trout water. The Brill River has a respectable brown trout population with good size structure. The electrofishing catch rate during the 2013 survey was 510 fish/mile, which is good for the area. The Brill River has the potential to grow some larger brown trout. In 2013, 30% of the fish measured were 10 inches or larger, with the largest fish being 17.5 inches. Current regulation: There is a 12 in minimum length limit for brown trout and an 8 in minimum length limit for brook trout. The daily bag limit is 3 fish in aggregate. Access information: Anglers can access the Brill River from the stream crossings at 29th Ave, County Highway V, 27 ½ Ave, and 26th Ave.

BUFFALO COUNTY

Area Trout Streams Buffalo, Jackson and Trempealeau counties - Despite unfortunate reductions in our area trout populations, 2013 surveys still found very fishable populations throughout our management area. Future monitoring will gauge further impact to our trout populations of drought conditions in summer and fall of 2013. Supplemental trout stocking from DNR and cooperative hatcheries may bolster yhe negative effects of last year's drought. Habitat restoration projects in 2013 improved stream conditions and angler access in Waumandee and Danuser Creeks (Buffalo County), and North Branch Elk and North Branch Beaver Creeks (Trempealeau County).

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Spring Creek (Lodi), Columbia County - 10 miles. Trout surveys along the length of Spring Creek in Columbia County produced brown trout electrofishing catch rates ranging from 175 to 1,426 per mile. The highest trout density was found in the segment running through Goeres Park located in the City of Lodi behind the ball diamonds, including 125 brown trout per mile larger than 12 inches. The best chance for brown trout larger than 15 inches exists downstream from the second Highway 113 bridge crossing between the City of Lodi and Lake Wisconsin. Access to the creek is offered there through Spring Creek Fishery Area. Current Regulations: For all trout species: From the beginning of the classified trout water in Dane County downstream to the sewage treatment plant in Lodi (Columbia County), the minimum length limit is 9 inches and the daily bag limit is 3 fish, with all bait types allowed (base regulation for Columbia County). From the sewage treatment plant downstream to the first Highway 113 bridge crossing downstream of the City of Lodi, the minimum length limit is 15 inches, the daily bag limit is 1 fish, and only artificial baits are allowed. From the first Highway 113 crossing downstream to the end of the classified trout water, the regulation reverts back to the county base, 9 inch minimum and 3 fish daily bag, with all bait types allowed. Access information: Access to the fishable portion of Spring Creek is available primarily through Spring Creek Fishery Area, managed by the DNR. Good access is also available in Goeres Park, managed by the City of Lodi. In addition to providing excellent angling opportunities for brown trout, Spring Creek also offers the opportunity to catch legal-sized rainbow trout which are stocked each spring and hold throughout the summer. Also, Bohlman Branch Creek on the east side of Lodi is part of Spring Creek Fishery Area, and provides public access to a mixed brook and brown trout fishery. The regulation on Bohlman Branch Creek is the county base, 9 inch minimum and 3 fish daily bag limit.



Jason Spaeth, DNR fisheries technician, holding a BIG brook trout during the 2013 Big Roche-a-Cri Creek annual survey.

DANE COUNTY

Black Earth creek - 12 miles. A legendary stream, Black Earth Creek (BEC) rightfully earns its status as a premiere trout destination, regionally, statewide, and in the upper midwest. Surveyed annually, the 2013 assessment showed consistent good numbers of legal trout 9 inches and over. In the lower stream reaches where catch and release regulation apply, excellent numbers of fish over 14" exist. We sampled fish in excess of 20" in the Black Earth segement. Current regulation: As signed, 3 fish with a 9" length limit. In the area from South Valley Road,downstream, catch and release, artificial bait restrictions apply. Access: The Department holds a minimum of 10 individually accessible parcel along BEC. These properties are mowed on a semi-annual basis to allow angler access and freedom of movement along the stream corridor. Specific maps can be found at : http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/anglereducation/wheretofish.html An exotic invasive, the NEW ZEALAND MUD SNAIL, was sampled from BEC in late 2013. Anglers, specifically muddy waders and footwear, are the method of transport between streams. Anglers are advised to clean their gear before fishing other waters. For more information go to the DNR website, *dnr.wi.gov.*

Story Creek Southern Dane and Northern Green counties - Approximately 7 miles. For those who are willing to walk, Story Creek offers the lure of big fish, quiet, and solitude. Story Creek flows through the Brooklyn Wildlife Area (BWA) and offers a more wild fishing experience. The creek lends itself best to bait and spinner fishing as dense streambank vegetation can make flycasting difficult. Due to its relative remote character, Story holds some truly large and robust browns. Fortunate anglers may also catch brook trout in the upper stretches above the county line. The stream below Hwy 92 is easily wadeable and holds nice fish under the overhanging dogwood and elderberry that commonly line the bank. Current regulation: 3 fish bag, 9 inch length limit. Access; Walk in accesses from bellbrook Rd on the north, Tipperary and Alpine roads on the east property boundary, STH 92 (the county line) , and CTH X on the downstream portion, western edge of the state ownership.

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

Trout Streams in the Eau Claire Area., Eau Claire, Chippewa, Dunn and Pepin counties - The combination of the 2012 drought as well as the long hard winter and late spring in 2013 seem to have negatively impacted many class 2 trout streams in the Eau Claire Area. These class 2 streams which are dependent on stocking to provide good fishing have been providing very nice trout populations the past decade but densities of trout are down considerably at this time. Some examples of those streams are Bear, Arkansaw, Lower Plum and Lowes Creek. The good news is many of the Class 1 trout streams in the area which are not stocked and sustain themselves via natural reproduction seem to be holding their own with trout abundance in the 1500-6000 fish/mile range. Elk, Duncan, McCann and Hay Creeks are the top Class 1 waters in the Eau Claire area. Each of these streams has a state fishery area present and public access is common to abundant.

GRANT COUNTY

Little Grant River - 9.0 miles (trout water) The Little Grant River supports a good population of brown trout. Recent surveys sampled 355 yearling and adult brown trout ranging from 6.5 to 18.3 inches with an average size of 9.5 inches. Thirteen percent of the brown trout sampled were 12 inches or greater. Current regulation: Catch and release, artificial only from Govier Road upstream to Milner Road. The rest of the stream is under the base county regulation of a 9 inch minimum with a daily bag limit of 3. Access information: Access is walk in only. Public fishing easements starts 0.5 miles downstream of Badger Road and extends upstream for 2.8 miles upstream ending at Milner Road.

SW Wisconsin Coulee Region, Grant, Iowa and Richland counties - A couple hundred miles of water. The number of brown trout in the streams continues to be outstanding including a large number of quality fish and some memorable-size fish as well. There are some good brook trout fisheries in the far upper ends of some of the better streams but this really is not a brook trout area. The majority of these streams are now Class 1 naturally reproducing fisheries. Current regulation: Varied but no change from last year. Possible regulation changes are in the works but this is still a couple of years off with much public input still to be gathered. Access information: There are a couple hundred miles of fishing easements on the streams. Use the DNR Managed Lands on the Internet to find these areas. If you fish trout out here now you will be able to say that you fish in what are the "Good Old Days".

IRON COUNTY

Weber & Plunkett Lakes - 61 and 48 acres, respectively. For trout anglers looking for an enjoyable experience, these put-and-take inland trout lakes are annually stocked with legal-sized rainbow trout. Plunkett Lake (near Mercer) is a little more remote, with no shoreline development, while Webber Lake (near Hurley) sees increased activity with the nearby camping and lodging availabilities. Current regulation: Category 2: 7 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5 Access information: Both have public boat landings, but Plunkett's landing is best suited for smaller, carry-in boats.

LANGLADE COUNTY

Brook trout waters - East Branch Eau Claire River downstream from STH 45; Spring Brook immediately upstream from Antigo and downstream of Antigo; McGee Lake; South Branch Oconto River

Brown trout waters - Evergreen River; Wolf River; Hunting River; Saul Spring; South Branch Oconto River

Stocked Lakes - Jack (rainbows), Pence (browns), and Townline (rainbows)

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

Brook trout waters - Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; New Wood River

Brown trout waters - Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; Big Rib River

Stocked lakes - Ament (brooks), Henson (brooks), Larson (rainbows), Moraine (rainbows)

■ MARINETTE COUNTY

Thunder Lake - 135 acres. Thunder Lake is an opening day hot spot for trout anglers. Annually, 5,000 rainbow trout are stocked before opening weekend (first Saturday in May).

South Branch Pemebonwon, North Branch Pemebonwon, Upper Middle Inlet, KC Creek, North Fork Thunder River - For anglers wanting to target brook trout, the South Branch Pemebonwon, North Branch Pemebonwon, Upper Middle Inlet, KC Creek, and the North Fork Thunder River all have good brook trout populations. Access information: These streams can all be accessed from various road/stream crossings.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Trout waters - Brown trout are stocked in Dorothy Lake and Bearskin River; rainbows are planned for Perch, Hawk and Little Bass Lake, and brook trout for Mercer Springs. Mercer Springs fishery area is a spring pond complex located about 6 miles west of Minocqua, off Kilawee Road.

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Flume Creek - Flume Creek flows through northeastern Portage County and eventually into the Little Wolf River. Fall survey work for 2013 indicate brown trout are remaining stable but were down slightly from 100 fish per mile to about 80. Brook trout numbers for Flume Creek have averaged about 750 fish per mile, but were also lower at 300 per mile. These lower estimates can likely be attributed to a beaver dam in the middle of our survey transect. In general, Flume Creek has had consistent trout numbers and even with the lower numbers the harvestable size brook trout increased by 40% in 2013. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; brown trout length limit is 12 inches and brook trout is 9 inches; the bag limit is 3 fish in total. Access: Flume Creek has good access from road crossings and can also be accessed through portions of the Flume Creek Fisheries Area. There are several large tracts of DNR property east of Rosholt and there are also fishing easements on a large portion of Flume Creek.

■ ST CROIX COUNTY

Kinnickinnic River, St. Croix and Pierce counties - 15 miles of Class I trout water in St. Croix County and 10 miles of Class I water in Pierce County. 2013 electrofishing surveys show the majority of Kinnickinnic River brown trout population ranks consistently above the 95 percentile for overall trout density and quality (12 inches and greater) in the State of Wisconsin. Upstream from Lake Lousie Dam (lower dam in Glen Park) in the City of River Falls, Category 2 - a 7 inch minimum length limit and bag limit of 5. Downstream from Lake Lousie Dam in the City of River Falls to the St. Croix River, Category 5 – the daily bag limit is 5 trout under 10 inches, or 4 trout under 10" and 1 over 14 inches. Access information: Numerous access points are found within the Kinnickinnic River Fishery Area which lies upstream of the City of River Falls and along STH 65. Access downstream of River Falls is primarily limited to Glen Park in the City of River Falls and CTH F in Kinnickinnic River State Park.

■ SAWYER COUNTY

Namekagon River basin in Sawyer and Bayfield counties - A trout fishing paradise, no matter what kind of experience anglers are looking for. The main river from Hayward to Lake Namekagon is premiere brown trout water that consistently produces 20-inch fish. Access points are abundant and the river is great for wade fishing or floating. The adventuresome angler may be interested in exploring some of the coldwater tributaries and springs that feed the Namekagon to hunt big brook trout. Cap Creek, Big Brook, Mosquito Brook, and McDermott Creek all hold high density brook trout populations. Connecting spring ponds have difficult access but are lightly pressured and can hold big fish. Check local regulations before you set out.

■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Onion River and its tributaries - 10 miles of Class I brown trout waters. 2013 surveys yielded an average length of 8.5 inches, with a maximum length of 15 inches. We saw catch rates of up to 992 fish per mile which puts it around the 87th percentile when compared with other all other brown trout waters statewide. Current regulation: Upstream of CTH E – Category 5: daily bag limit 1, minimum length limit 15 inches, artificial lures only. Downstream of CTH E – Category 3: daily bag limit 3, minimum length limit 9 inches, no gear restrictions Access information: The best access is from the bridge at CTH E and a number of points along CTH U. Upstream of CTH E anglers will find extensive habitat work in a number of stretches and this is generally were we find the larger fish in our surveys.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Rosenow Creek - A 1/2 mile reach Average length – 7 inches. A recent stream shocking survey revealed brook trout up to 11 inches. Current regulation: 9 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3. Access information: Access can be found at the Oconomowoc high school property off of North Lapham Street. This small coldwater stream has consistent natural reproduction of brook trout providing good action.

Paradise Springs - A 1/2 mile reach Average length – 7 inches. Current regulation: 9 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3 downstream of Hwy N. Catch and release, artificial lures only Upstream of Hwy N. Access information: Access can be found on Hwy N north of Hwy 59 west of Eagle. Natural reproduction and supplemental stocking provide good action on both sides of Hwy N. Downstream, anglers can find brook trout hiding under a number of bank structures. Upstream of Hwy N features ADA access to a fishing pier located on the stocked pond.

■ WAUPACA COUNTY

Waupaca River - In the special regulation section of the Waupaca River, recent surveys indicate wild trout populations have been holding steady with electrofishing catch rates of large (>15 inch trout) above 25 per mile. Anglers fishing this section of water have a very good chance of catching a trophy-sized brown trout. Current regulation: Category 5 (18 inch minimum for brown trout and 12 inch minimum for brook trout and rainbow trout; 1 daily bag; artificial lures only) from River Rd upstream to Durant Road in Portage County. Category 2 (7 inch minimum,, 5 daily bag limit) for all water downstream of River Rd. Access information: Riverview and Riverside Park in the City of Waupaca have great access. A fishing trail for physically challenged anglers is located upstream of the Water Street bridge that has a hard service for easy access and several spurs to access the stream. The Waupaca River Fishery Area is comprised of DNR managed lands off County Hwy Q and Foley Rd. The downstream reach of trout water on the Waupaca River is managed primarily as a put and take fishery with annual stocking of harvestable sized brown and rainbow trout. Anglers looking for good action early in the season may want to try this water.

Trout Streams and Lakes - Electrofishing surveys conducted on streams in Shawano and Waupaca County show population density and size structure at or above average. Access information: In Waupaca County several fishery areas offer anglers ample opportunities to easily access trout streams. Anglers interested in fishing wild brown trout populations should try the Radley Creek Fishery Area or the multitude of trout stream easements on the South Branch Little Wolf and Trout Creek in the Iola Area. Anglers interested in fishing lakes stocked with trout may want to try Mirror, Bass, or Little Long in Waupaca County and Korth/Bahr in Shawano County. All these lakes have boat launches and Mirror and Little Long have shore fishing areas. Often overlooked streams are the smaller headwater tributary streams where densities of trout can be much higher than the larger trout waters. Anglers can expect to catch higher numbers of trout but the average size will tend to be smaller. Headwater tributaries to North Branch Embarrass River and Middle Branch Embarrass River in Shawano County and North Branch Little Wolf River in Waupaca County are worth exploring.

URBAN FISHING

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has placed an added emphasis on promoting Urban Fishing in recent years. We are trying to get more young people involved in the sport of fishing. There are currently about 60 ponds or lagoons classified as Urban Waters. These water bodies have special regulations geared towards improving the fishing experience for young anglers. If you live in Southeast Wisconsin, there is an Urban Fishing water near by, for a list of designated waters refer to the Hook and Line Fishing Regulations. The DNR annually stocks thousands of rainbow trout in these waters. In addition the Hunger Task Force Fish Hatchery stocks various species in the Urban Waters located in Milwaukee County.

The tradition of fishing is not being passed on from one generation to the next as readily as it once was. There are many parents that would like to take their kids fishing but don't really know how to get started. To accommodate those folks the DNR works with volunteers from local fishing clubs to conduct instructional kids fishing clinics each winter and spring. Thanks to the tireless efforts of hundreds of volunteers, thousands of kids are taught the basics of fishing each year. I highly recommend the kids fishing clinics whether you are just getting started or have been at it for a few seasons. The clinics are free, highly informative and an all around good time. The volunteers teach the kids about fishing techniques, how to use the equipment, knot tying, safety, fish identification and much more.

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

To accommodate teachers, scout leaders, church groups or anyone else that is interested in having a fishing outing with a bunch of kids, the DNR also runs a tackle loaner program. Rods, reels and terminal tackle is available free of charge at DNR outlets located throughout the state.

It's now easier than ever to get kids started in fishing. Make it a family outing and have fun. For more information contact: Matt Coffaro, Statewide Urban Fisheries Biologist 414-263-8614

Remington Pond, Langlade County
Stocked with rainbow trout in the spring and brook trout in the fall Trout Unlimited and Northwoods Sportsmens Club periodically stock 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

Mirror Lake, Lincoln County
Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish
Mirror Lake 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.

2014 Wisconsin Fishing Report
Wisconsin Department of
Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
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