

Wisconsin Anglers - Plan your fun!

Fish as Art Calendar 2015 - It's Free!



THE WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT



Spring 2015 An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management program fishingwisconsin.org



Wisconsin anglers' most favorite table fare?

2015 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout
March 7 (5 a.m.) to April 26

General Hook and Line Inland
May 2 to March 6, 2016

General Inland Trout
May 2 (5 a.m.) to Sept. 30

Largemouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
May 2 to March 6, 2016

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Catch-and-Release
May 2 to June 19

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
June 20 to March 6, 2016

Large and Smallmouth Bass
Southern Zone
May 2 to March 6, 2016

Musky – Northern Zone
May 23 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone
May 2 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike
May 2 to March 6, 2016

Walleye
May 2 to March 6, 2016

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)
Sept. 5 to Sept. 30

Free Fishing Weekend
June 6 - 7, 2015 summer
January 16 - 17, 2016 winter



Dear WISCONSIN ANGLER

Another fantastic fishing season approaches. I hope you all are ready for it. I know I will be.

Please take a few minutes to read about how we put your fishing license dollars to work last year. Our fisheries biologists, technicians, hatchery and education staff are committed to make fishing even better in Wisconsin, and we hope your time on the water reflects that in 2015.

Our world-class fishing opportunities make Wisconsin waters a special place, and one of the greatest gifts we can give someone is to connect them to the great outdoors. Take a friend fishing — it's a gift that will last a lifetime.

I'd like to ask all anglers to continue to care for our fisheries. By working together, we can keep Wisconsin fish and lakes healthy and reel in many, many more great memories and fish.

Wishing you tight lines in 2015!

Director,
Fisheries Management

Wisconsin fish are fun to catch and great to eat

A new initiative aims to bring new anglers to the table... the dinner table.

Do you know someone who missed the fishing boat as a kid? Perhaps they were raised vegetarian and have decided they want to flesh out their diet a bit. Are you or they interested in sustainable, local foods?

Wisconsin waters are teeming with hungry fish. Help someone learn how to land one on their dining table for a tasty, healthy meal with a low food miles score by directing them to these classes.

Classes began this winter to teach adults what they've been missing - knot-tying, casting, fish identification and preparing the catch for the table. There is still time to get involved with the spring class in Madison.

Madison-Fitchburg Class Schedule – DNR Service Center, 4 sessions
A spring session is scheduled for Madison beginning April 15. Get your taxes in early so you can relax and learn how to fish your local waters.

Indoor: Wednesdays – April 15, 22, and 29, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. We'll go until 8:30 on 4/29/15 when we cook our catch at the Willy Street Coop - East. Fishing: April 25, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Contact Samantha.Allen@wisconsin.gov at the DNR to register, 608-261-6431.

Classes are free, but we request a \$25.00 deposit to save your spot. The deposit is refunded at the first class.

Contact Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov, 608-266-2272 if you like to help at any of these class sessions or plan one for your area. We especially need people to take novices fishing.

For more information, go to the the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov and search "Fishing for Dinner".

ALL GOOD THINGS IN MODERATION. EXCEPT FOR FISHING.
takemefishing.org



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

F Y I 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)

SIGN UP for Fisheries Updates. Go to fishingwisconsin.org to sign up and stay informed on fisheries issues.



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Fabulous Fisheries Projects

Easing into the future through streambank protection

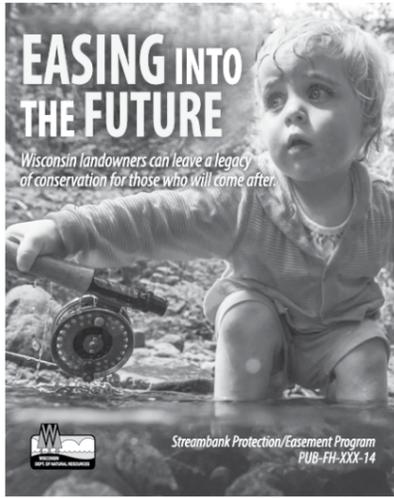
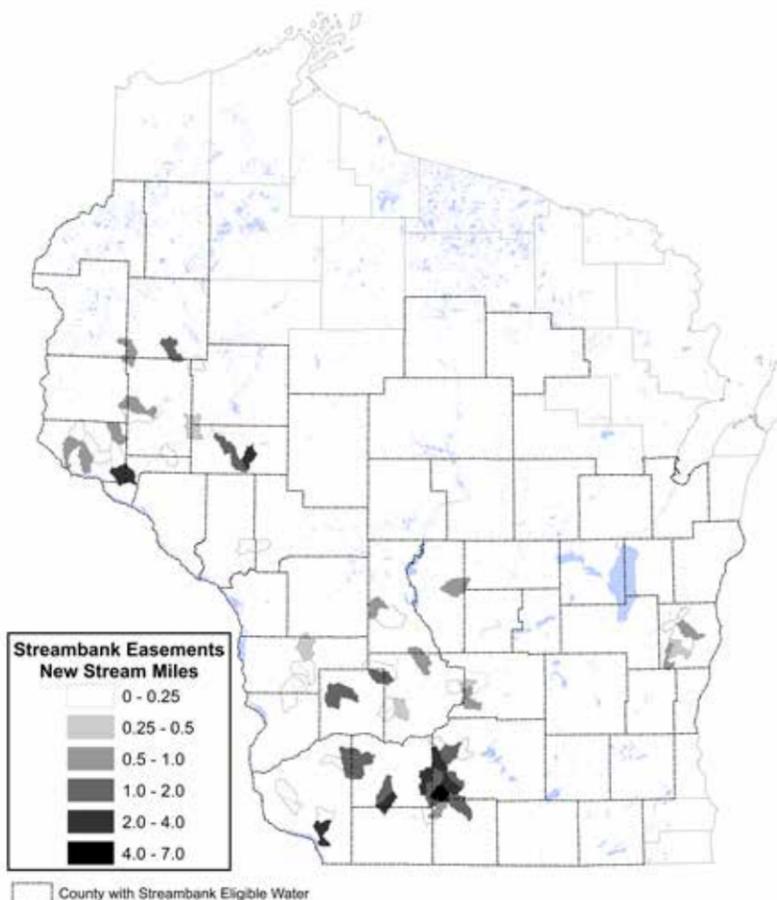
MADISON - In 1989, the Stewardship Streambank Protection Program was established to protect stream corridors and provide public fishing access. During 2014 and winter of 2015 fish biologists across the state have been busy securing public fishing easements along our best trout and smallmouth bass streams. By the time fishing season opens, inland trout and smallmouth bass stream anglers will find many new public access sites across Wisconsin with the majority found in the driftless region.

According to recent trout angler surveys, the lack of time and angler access to inland trout streams was a significant reason for reduced participation in the sport of trout fishing. Streambank easements in most cases secure a 66 foot public walk-in access along each bank of the stream as it passes through private land enrolled in the program. Designated parking and walk-in trails may also be provided. Such access work will reduce time commitments to find places to fish and open many miles of private land to the public. Fisheries biologists and land agents are currently discussing Streambank Protection easements with 387 landowners across the state. By June of 2015, 50-75 miles of new public accessible areas for trout and smallmouth bass stream fishing are forecasted.

County	Forecast of Additional Access (stream miles)	County	Forecast of Additional Access (stream miles)
Dane	12.3	Grant	11.9
Iowa	9.7	Pierce	6.1
Vernon	4.5	Richland	4.4
Eau Claire	3.9	Sheboygan	3.6
Pepin	2.9	Sauk	2.7
Dunn	2.3	Green	1.9
Lafayette	1.3	Portage	1.1
Juneau	1.1	Barron	1.0
Adams	0.9	Columbia	0.7
Marquette	0.4	Jackson	0.4
Chippewa	0.2	Lincoln	0.2
Monroe	0.2	Waushara	0.2
Trempealeau	0.1	Crawford	0.1

The Department maintains maps for streams and DNR properties that are eligible for stream bank protection funding. Over 3,070 miles of streams located in 44 counties are eligible (below).

New fishing access opportunities for trout and smallmouth bass streams



How do I find these fishing easements?

Public Access Lands (PAL) Atlas or the Public Access Lands mapping application

A Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Public Access Lands Atlas and its companion mapping application is now available online. The atlas highlights the significant increase in public access to Wisconsin lands made possible through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, as well as other lands open to the public for outdoor recreation. The Public Access Lands mapping application is a map-based system that allows you to locate and obtain information on public access properties. "If you are looking for a place to fish, hunt, trap, or enjoy any of Wisconsin's outdoor activities this atlas will help you find public lands to do so," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. From state natural areas to state trails, lakeshores to rivers, Wisconsin has a wealth of public lands for your enjoyment. Here you can create your own online map or download PDF maps from the PAL atlas and search for places based on outdoor activities.

Go to dnr.wi.gov and search "Atlas".

Trout habitat improvements on the Tomorrow for today

WISCONSIN RAPIDS - On the Tomorrow River between 2011 and 2014, two segments of trout habitat work were completed on fishing easements leased by Trout Unlimited. The projects totaled 1185 feet upstream of Keener Road (2011) and 965 feet downstream of Keener Road (2014). A total of 60 lunger structures were installed in sets of from 3 to 6 and mid-stream cover included 115 boulders and 7 logs. The project provided a much needed channel narrowing and enhanced flow regime with the placement of 5 wing deflectors spanning 800 feet over the two projects and the construction of an island in the section upstream of Keener Road. The projects were funded by a grant from Natural Resources Conservation Service and completed jointly by DNR staff and volunteers from the Frank Hornberg TU Chapter.



A new lunger structure awaits anglers to the Tomorrow River.

A little help for walleye

PEWAUKEE - The newly formed chapter of Walleyes for Tomorrow (WFT) had a banner inaugural year accomplishing many tasks including a fish sticks project, assisting in large fingerling stocking efforts, fry hatchery construction & operation, a catch & release incentive program and successful fundraising. Under the leadership of Tom Koeppe and Mike Underwood, the WFT chapter efficiently manufactured a lake side fry hatchery. During the spring of 2014, the chapter successfully captured adult walleyes and collected twelve full hatching jars of walleye eggs. Approximately 4 million walleye eggs were successfully incubated, hatched and fry were stocked back into Pewaukee Lake. In March of 2014, the Pewaukee chapter implemented a successful fish sticks project off of Walk's Island providing much needed woody structure to Pewaukee Lake. The chapter has established over 170 members and attendance at meetings and support during fundraising events has been remarkable.



A young lake sturgeon stocked from a streamside rearing facility finds its way into the Milwaukee harbor.

Lake sturgeon assessment in Milwaukee Harbor

MILWAUKEE - Since 2006, DNR fisheries crews have been stocking lake sturgeon in the Milwaukee River from a streamside rearing facility located at Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg. Over the past 2 years, we have set gill nets to capture juvenile lake sturgeon using the soft sediment and habitat found in the Milwaukee Harbor. In 2013, we captured 11 lake sturgeon ranging in age from 2 to 4 years old. In 2014, we caught 15 lake sturgeon that we stocked in 2011 - 2013 from our streamside facility. Results indicate that these lake sturgeon are surviving well, growing fast and using the harbor and estuary as a nursery area. Based on growth rates observed during this assessment, we anticipate lake sturgeon can reach 50 inches in about 10 years at which time they might start to migrate up the Milwaukee River to spawn.

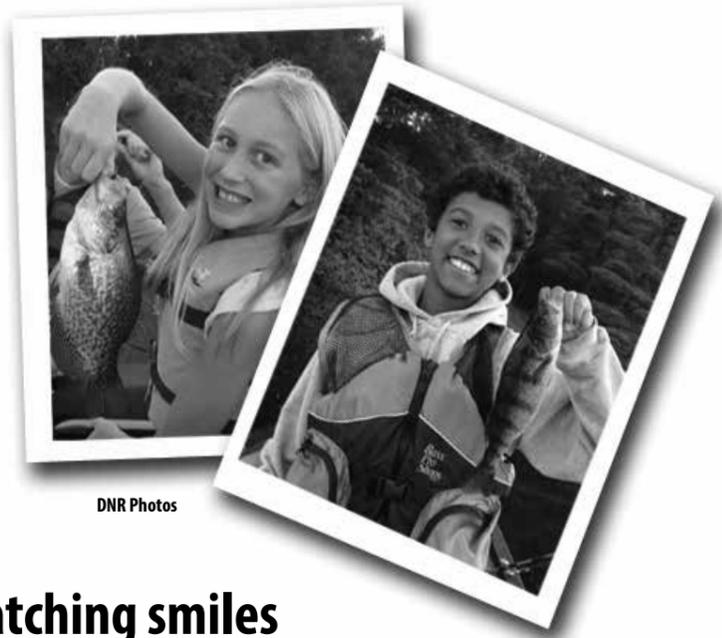
In-stream habitat improvements on the Yellow River

BARRON - An in-stream habitat improvement project was recently completed on a 0.5-mile stretch of the Yellow River at Becker Park in Barron. Funds for the project originated from a restitution settlement that was to be used in the Red Cedar River watershed. The purpose of the project was to improve in-stream fish habitat and fishing opportunities on the Yellow River by increasing in-stream habitat and habitat complexity. Eric Berge, Mike Christner, and Jere Fisk from the stream habitat crew based out of Spooner installed 50 yards of rock and boulders, created several pools, and utilized large woody debris to create wing deflectors and log jams. The Yellow River is one of the best local options for stream smallmouth bass anglers, and the stretch of stream where the habitat work was completed receives extensive use due to its close proximity to Barron; therefore, the public benefits of this project are expected to be highly significant.

If you build it, they will come - large woody habitat restoration

EAU CLAIRE - Large woody habitat restoration projects were conducted on Lake Wissota and Lake Holcombe in 2014. Trees along the shoreline were dropped into the lake providing critical spawning, nursery and adult fish habitat as well as resting and loafing habitat for wildlife. Large-wood habitat is particularly important in these waterbodies because of the lack of aquatic vegetation due to the stained water and sandy substrate. Twenty trees were dropped into Lake Wissota near Camp Kenwood and along the State Park boat landing. Ninety trees were dropped into Lake Holcombe at three locations on Xcel Energy property. These projects could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of the Lake Holcombe and Lake Wissota Improvement Associations along with Xcel Energy.





DNR Photos

Catching smiles

Wisconsin Fishing Photo Gallery

You know the fish are there. You've caught them. Now, be a proud angler and let everyone know it. Submit your fishing photos and they will be displayed proudly on the fisheries website.

What kind of photos should you send? How about big fish photos, little fish photos, lots of fish photos, kids and fish photos, dogs and fish photos, and fish and fish photos. Get the picture? All things fish. Or if the fish didn't cooperate, beautiful fishing scenery would be just as good. We all know that we've got a great state to fish. Let's show it.

A few things to consider - Your fish should be legally caught in Wisconsin waters. Not all photos submitted may be selected for inclusion and only those photos appropriate for all age groups will be considered.

Send your photos to:

wifishphotos@wisconsin.gov

Your email should include:

- ❖ the photo (the higher the resolution, the better),
- ❖ the species (if known), date of catch, and location of catch,
- ❖ if at all possible, a length and/or weight of the fish,
- ❖ photographers name, and
- ❖ a short description of the photo - one or two sentences is fine.

Note: Please be aware that by submitting a fishing photograph, you are granting the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources a non-exclusive license to use and reproduce the photograph for all such purposes as the department may deem appropriate.



FISH WISCONSIN!
Free Fishing Weekend • June 6-7, 2015

EAT FISH, BE HEALTHY

Eating your catch can be part of a healthy, balanced diet. Fish are generally low in unhealthy saturated fats and high in protein. Fish contain vitamins and minerals and are the primary food source for healthy omega-3 fats. Studies suggest that omega-3 fats may be beneficial during fetal brain and eye development, and eating modest amounts of fish containing these healthy fats may lower the risk of heart disease in adults. Health experts recommend that fish be included as part of a healthy diet.

However, fish may take in pollutants from their environment and food. Mercury and PCBs are the contaminants of greatest concern in fish, prompting recommendations that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish from many waters throughout the nation. You can get the health benefits of eating Wisconsin's fish while also reducing potential health risks from unwanted pollutants by following Wisconsin's fish consumption guidelines.

Safe-eating guidelines -
for most of Wisconsin's inland (non-great lakes) waters

<p>Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:</p> <p>1 meal per week - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p>and</p> <p>1 meal per month - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species.</p> <p>Do not eat - Muskies.</p>	<p>Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:</p> <p>Unrestricted* - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p>1 meal per week - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species;</p> <p>and</p> <p>1 meal per month - Muskies.</p>
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Exceptions to the safe-eating guidelines apply to 145 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 (continued)

Milwaukee Estuary Fish Spawning Project

MILWAUKEE - In 2006, DNR fisheries constructed a 0.6-acre fish spawning reef at the upper limits of the Milwaukee Estuary, just below the abandoned North Avenue Dam with funding provided by Walleyes for Tomorrow and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The project was undertaken to partially replace the loss of



A spawning reef in the Milwaukee estuary.

historical spawning habitat destroyed by channelization. The reef was designed to accommodate spawning requirement of lake sturgeon, walleye and a variety of non-game species. The reef elevation was constructed below the long-term average Lake Michigan level. Falling lake levels and a record low in January 2013 left some areas of the reef exposed to desiccation. In 2013, funding from the Fund for Lake Michigan and the DNR Office of Great Lakes, and an easement from the River Revitalization Foundation enabled DNR fisheries to lower portions of the existing reef to accommodate lower lake levels, and expand it by an additional 0.3 acres.

Reconnecting waters: fishway passes fish

PARK FALLS - To evaluate the effectiveness of the fishway at Winter Hydroelectric Project on the East Fork Chippewa River in Sawyer County, DNR's fish team based in Park Falls installed electronic equipment (purchased by the U.S. Forest Service) to continuously detect and record uniquely-coded PIT tags surgically implanted in sturgeon that may swim over submerged antennas placed in and near the fishway. The tags are similar to those used for pet identification. Synchronized date-time stamps on each record allow us to determine upstream and downstream direction of fish movements. Renewable World Energies, owner of the Winter Hydroelectric Project, operates the fishway annually from

April 15 to June 1 and for two weeks in late September to coincide with the seasonal movements of spawning fish in spring and juvenile fish in fall.

By spring 2014 forty-five tagged sturgeon were at large downstream of the Winter Hydroelectric Project and 36 more tagged adults roamed the river upstream from the dam. Despite several glitches, the equipment recorded the movement patterns of six tagged sturgeon near or through the fishway in spring 2014. Of the four tagged sturgeon that passed through the fishway, one returned downstream within a half hour, another returned after 16 days, and two remained upstream of the dam. Our tag recorders in the fishway did not detect adult sturgeon movements over the 2-week period of fishway operation in fall 2014. In addition to the electronic records, hydropower project operators have reported visual observations of several sturgeon in the fishway when tag detectors were not yet installed or not functioning properly.

Because of its extraordinary qualities, the East Fork Chippewa River is designated as an "Outstanding Resource Water" and as a candidate for inclusion under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. From dam construction in 1953 until the fishway was installed in fall 2011, the diversion dam at the Winter Hydropower Project was the only physical barrier to fish movements on East Fork Chippewa River. For nearly 60 years the 7-foot-high structure had fragmented aquatic habitat and segregated the fish and wildlife communities

in this high-quality watershed. Providing safe upstream and downstream fish passage at this dam would restore connectivity and functionality of the river ecosystem in 295 stream miles throughout the watershed, including 85 miles on the mainstem.

Our time and effort spent to capture the 81 individuals tagged to date suggest a sturgeon population in low abundance consisting mainly of large, old fish and few new recruits. Sturgeon typically do not move for spawning every year. Male sturgeon reproduce in 2-year cycles, and the eggs of adult females mature in 3- to 5-year cycles.



Pools within the fishway. Photo: Kendal Patrie

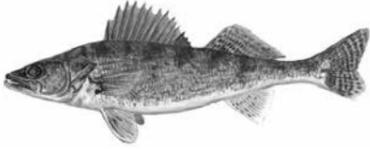
We plan to expand our tagging effort to include young sturgeon and other fish species to evaluate the fish community's use of the fishway. Information on fish movements will eventually allow us to fine-tune the seasonal timing of fishway operation prescribed in the federal license for the hydroelectric project.

Wisconsin fishing: a veritable smorgasbord

Choose your fare in 2015 and head to the water!

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

WALLEYE



■ BARRON COUNTY

Bear Lake - 1,348 acres

A 2014 fisheries survey indicated a lower density walleye population with excellent size structure. There were 216 walleye captured during the fyke netting survey and 73% were over 18 inches, and 32% were over 24 inches. Current regulation: The Bear Lake walleye fishery is managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit as the base regulation, but is subject to change based on tribal declarations and harvest. Access information: There are 4 public boat landings on Bear Lake. The landing off 28 ¾ Ave is the most popular access. The Bear Lake walleye fishery is maintained through stocking. The DNR has been stocking large fingerling walleye into Bear Lake in an attempt to increase the walleye population.

■ BROWN, OCONTO and MARI- NETTE COUNTIES

Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay

Strong spring walleye runs are common on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo Rivers providing anglers ample opportunities to catch large numbers of migrating walleye. Since access points in many of these rivers open in early March, hardy anglers brave cold temperatures to have the opportunity to catch many walleye and perhaps the "big" one. Most anglers jig or cast baits slowly for walleye in early spring. Late spring or summer anglers should try trolling near Geano Beach, off the Menominee River or 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 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-



Shore and boat anglers fish for walleye in De-Pere on the Fox River.

Michigan Boundary, Tributary Streams 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, Oconto and Peshtigo Rivers. Check the Lake Michigan page for access information. www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html. Results from our 2014 fall electrofishing index surveys on the Fox River and Green Bay show that the relative abundance of young of the year (YOY) walleye were again above average in 2014. This follows 2013 which was banner year for

walleye. Since 2007 YOY production on the Fox River has been above average seven of eight years and above average year classes on Green Bay were produced in 2008, 2013 and 2014. With many strong year classes in the fishery, the future of walleye fishing looks very good.

■ BURNETT COUNTY

Yellow lake - 2283 acres

A 2014 spring sample found a good size structure on Yellow Lake. Walleye averaged 16.1 inches with ¾ of the fish being above the minimum length limit. Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit subject to ceded territory adjustment. Access information: There are three public access ramps on Yellow Lake off of Jeffries Rd., Lake Ave, and Yellow Lake Rd,

■ CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHA- WANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

The **Winnebago System** includes the four lakes (**Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan**) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System walleye population is one of the most robust populations in the state and is set to continue producing great walleye fishing opportunities! In 2014, fisheries staff tagged 5,046 male walleye and 1,746 female walleye in the Wolf River during the spring electrofishing assessment. The spring assessment data indicated a balanced fishery with numerous strong year classes of mature walleyes. Fisheries staff also conducted the annual Lake Winnebago trawling assessment that targets young of the year fishes, including walleye. The trawling survey indicated three strong walleye year classes in the system: 2008, 2011, and 2013. The strong 2008 (2nd highest year class on record) and 2011 year classes have been contributing to the fishery, but the 2013 year class (3rd highest year class on record) will also begin adding to the fishery in the near future. Anglers reported catching many 7- to 9- inch walleye throughout the summer which can be attributed to the strong 2013 year class. Walleye from the 2013 year class will likely range around 12 inches this summer and should reach 14-16 inches in 2016. Therefore, exceptional walleye fishing opportunities should continue to persist throughout the Winnebago System in 2015 and the foreseeable future. In addition, 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". The 2014 bottom trawling survey also indicated a below average year in young of year forage base numbers, thus walleye may be more interested in what anglers provide for baits. 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 dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess. A telemetry study to determine the course movements of adult walleye in the Winnebago System was completed in 2013. The project involved the surgical implantation of 100 sonic tags into adult walleye on the Winnebago System during 2011 spring assessments. The project provided us with some very interesting information and multiple movement trends were observed. For example, in all three springs the average male walleye spent an additional 2-4 weeks longer in the Wolf and upper Fox Rivers than the females. This is to be expected given the spawning nature of Winnebago System walleye and the main reason why males constitute the majority of the fish caught in the spring fishery on these rivers. We also observed a large movement of fish out of Lake Winnebago into the Upriver Lakes in late fall of each year. These data indicate that the majority of the adult fish in the system overwinter in the Upriver Lakes. Another interesting result was that 40% of the female walleye tagged on the lower Fox River below Eureka spawned in Lake Puckaway.

■ CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE and MONROE COUNTIES

Lake Arbutus - 840 acres,

Clark and Jackson Counties, **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. **Lake Arbutus:** based on spring fyke net results and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per net lift. Total catch rate in spring of 2014 was 6.8/net lift and catch rate of 15"+ fish was 1/net lift. Largest walleye captured was 26". The last spring netting survey was conducted in 2010. Total catch rate was lower than 2014 at 0.6/net lift. Catch rate of 15"+ fish was also lower at 0.4/net lift. **Black River, upper and lower:** 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 significantly lower at 4.3/mile in 2014 as compared to 51/mile in 2013. Catch rate was also lower for legal-size (15") and larger fish at 0.9/mile in 2014 over 8/mile in 2013. Largest fish captured in 2014 was 24 inches. Lower river total catch rate was lower at 11.8/mile in 2014 compared to 13.6/mile in 2013. However, catch rate was higher for legal (15") and larger fish in 2014 at 3.6/mile compared to 2.7/mile in 2013. Largest fish captured in 2014 was 28 inches. Regulation: 15" minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit for Lake Arbutus and Black River. Other Information: A tagging study was initiated for lower Black River walleyes in 2008 and continued into 2014. Please report catching any tagged walleyes. More tag returns will improve results and guide future management of the lower Black River.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Otter Lake - 661 acres

There has been a history of stocking walleye in Otter Lake and stocking rates have increased due to the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative. In 2013 extended growth walleye were stocked at 10/acre, and a 2014 fall electrofishing found many age one walleye, indicating good survival of stocked fish. A 2014 spring fyke net survey found impressive size structure in the adult population. The mean length of walleye captured was of 20 inches and the largest walleye was 28 inches. Current regulations: 15-inch minimum length, 5

bag limit Access information: 4 public boat landings.

■ DODGE COUNTY

Fox Lake - 2,625 acres

Walleye 2014 fall electrofishing catch rate was 103/hour, compared to 98/hour in 2013, 78/hour in 2012, 116/hour in 2011, a high of 160/hour in 2010 and comparable to the 10-year average of 98/hour. The number of young of the year (YOY) was 13/hour in 2014, compared to 12/hour in 2013, 11/hour in 2012, 4/hour in 2011 and a high of



A football of a walleye is collected from Otter Lake, Chippewa County during a recent fisheries survey.

78/hour in 2009. In 2014, 18% of the walleye sampled during fall electrofishing were over 18 inches and the majority of walleye were 15.0 to 16.9 inches. Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length, 3 fish daily bag on walleye. Access information: Clausen Park on Mill Creek outlet channel, Town Park (northwest side), shorefishing at CTH A bridge.

■ DOOR and KEWAUNEE COUNTIES

Green Bay waters

Although the 2014 creel estimates are not yet available, the level of walleye caught in Green Bay waters along these counties annually over the previous 10 years has gone up considerably. This likely is largely due to very good walleye natural reproduction in southern and western portions of Green Bay over that time span. In 2013, a survey of the Sturgeon Bay local spawning population indicated the area population was in very good condition in both numbers and size at age. Furthermore, the data suggested that naturally recruited walleyes are contributing substantially to the population. Fall young-of-the-year surveys in 2014 indicated that local natural reproduction was relatively good. Assuming good survival of the very strong 2013 year class that was measured locally, as well as in other parts of Green Bay, the forecast for walleye fishing in this area looks positive. Current regulation: The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Tributary Streams to Green Bay and 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.



Walleyes are collected from a Shawano-area lake in 2014.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Whitefish Lake - 848 acres

A 2014 fisheries survey indicated a moderate density walleye population with a fair size structure. There were 394 walleye captured during the fyke netting survey and 21% were over 18 inches, with largest fish caught measuring 28 inches. Current regulation: The Whitefish Lake walleye fishery is managed with an 15-in minimum length limit and 5 fish daily bag limit as the base regulation, but is subject to change based on tribal declarations and harvest. Access information: There is 1 public boat landings on Whitefish Lake. The landing was recently improved and with the water levels back up in the lake makes for an easy access. Whitefish lake has a naturally reproducing cisco population, has a maximum depth of 102 feet and is a seepage lake, meaning it has no inlets or outlets. During the drought of the previous decade water levels on Whitefish Lake dropped approximately 5 feet. In the past few years the water levels have returned to normal.

St. Louis River Estuary - 12,000 acres

Spring 2013 adult index survey showed a good population with abundant legal-size fish; 70% of all walleye captured and released during the survey ranged from 18-27 inches. Average length of all walleye captured and released was 23 inches, and female walleye were generally larger than male walleye. Current regulation: Open May 9 through March 1; 15-inch minimum



Volunteer Rick Linder (l), and fisheries technicians Russ Warwick (m) and Scott Braden (r) hold walleye from a spring netting survey in the Hayward Lakes area. Photo: Max Wolter.

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: Lo-

cated 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.

FLORENCE COUNTY

Brule River Flowage (WI-MI boundary water) The Brule River Flowage is one of the few places in Florence County where you can go and expect to catch a walleye. The typical population in this flowage is between 2 and 3 adults/acre. Since this flowage is a boundary water one should consult the regulations book before fishing the flowage.

Patten Lake - 255 acres

A walleye rehabilitation project intended to return Patten Lake to a high density walleye population is starting to show dividends. This population dropped to less than 1 adult/acre in 2011, but since 2011 walleye reproduction has been impressive. There are now quite a few young fish that are starting to reach maturity and adding to the population. The walleye regulation on this lake was returned to the statewide 15 inch minimum length limit in 2014 and this will help us get to our "high density" goal for this lake.

FOREST COUNTY

Butternut Lake - 1,292 acres

The 2014 adult population was estimated to be 2.7 walleye/acre with approximately 90% of the adults being over 15 inches. Butternut Lake has a protected slot regulation in place allowing anglers to keep fish outside of the 14 to 18-inch range.

Lake Metonga - 2,157 acres

A major walleye rehabilitation project conducted by the Mole Lake Chippewa Community is showing major dividends. Lake Metonga has rebounded from 0.8 adult walleye/acre in 2007 to a population estimated at 4.9 adults/acre in 2013. The current population makes Lake Metonga a very attractive walleye destination with a high number of fish and a good size structure (with 74% of the adults over 15 inches). An 18-inch minimum length limit, which was put in place to help rehabilitate this population, is still in place while we continue to monitor the population.

Lily Lake - 211 acres

Lily Lake continues to be one of the more stable high density walleye lakes in Forest County. The 2014 walleye population estimate was 6.1 adults/acre, making it the highest density walleye population in Forest County. Lily Lake is managed under the statewide 15-inch minimum length limit.

GREEN LAKE COUNTY

Little Green Lake - 466 acres

28' deep This productive body of water supports a decent walleye fishery, supported by stocking. Recent estimates put the population at between 2-3 adults per acre. Males on average were 16.7" and females averaged 23.5". The lake is full of forage, so the bite can sometimes be tough. Most harvest take place on the ice. Three public and one private landing provide adequate access.

Upper Fox River including Lake Puckaway

This premier walleye fishery is part of the Winnebago system and in most years produces good year classes of walleye. The Princeton dam is the upper boundary for the system and there is a 15" minimum length-limit above the dam. The Puckaway population is partially supplemented by a portable hatchery operated by the Lake Puckaway Protection and Rehabilitation District. Best fishing occurs in the spring although resident fish can be caught in the river and lake at most times of the year.

IRON COUNTY

Pine Lake: If its walleyes for the table you seek, Pine Lake should be on your list of destinations. Pine Lake is 312 acres and located just north of Mercer. Recent surveys indicate strong natural reproduction and high adult walleye densities (8.0/acre). Although very few trophies are present (only 1% larger than 20 inches), Pine produces plenty of "eater" walleyes. These abundant walleyes keep forage fish numbers down, intensifying competition, and providing anglers with a good opportunity for fast action. Additionally, the smaller lake size helps shorten the learning curve for new anglers and is less daunting for anglers looking to try a new body of water. Currently, there is no minimum length limit, but only 1 fish over 14 inches is allowed. There is good access just off of Hwy. G.

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage: The Turtle Flambeau Flowage (TFF) offers over 13,545 acres of water to explore. This is prime walleye water, with adult densities consistently recorded above 4.0/acre, placing it above average for northern Wisconsin. Its enormous size encompasses numerous river and stream inlets, river channels, old lake beds, stump fields, flats, rock reefs, and island complexes to fish. Here, you could fish all week and not fish the same spot twice. Although most anglers target walleyes, TFF also hosts a fine musky, smallmouth bass, and panfish fishery as well. And, since the TFF is located in a largely undeveloped landscape, fantastic fishing is complemented by phenomenal scenery, providing anglers with a unique outdoor experience. There are 6 public boat launches located around the TFF and over 60 campsites to accommodate anglers looking for some A+ fishing and a little solitude.



Fisheries supervisor, Justine Hasz, holds a nice walleye captured during a DNR survey on Lake DuBay in 2014.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River - 10,000 lake acres + 27+ river miles

Fall 2014 sampling yielded 8 young-of-the-year (YOY) walleye per mile, compared to 2013's record high of 104 per mile and second record year of 50 per mile in 2004. Sauger YOY catch rate was 25 per mile in 2014. 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. Access information: Dalman Royce County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam. Through the assistance of local cooperative groups, the Bark River Hatchery stocked 962,054 walleye fry and 1,515,682 northern pike fry into Lake Koshkonong/Rock River in 2014.

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.

Crystal Lake - 74 acres with a good naturally reproducing population with the bulk of the fish in the 16-20" range; 15" length limit; 2014 adult population estimate of 3.9 per acre.



Evan Sniadajewski, LTE fisheries technician, with a walleye from a fyke netting survey on Rib Lake, Taylor County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

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** (Lake Nokomis System) - 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 **Jersey City Flowage** - 404 acres of naturally reproducing walleye water; 15" length limit; 2014 spring netting survey showed a nice population with strong numbers in the 12- to 20-inch range

MARATHON COUNTY

Lake Dubay - 6000 acres

Lake Dubay was surveyed for walleye in 2014 using fyke nets and electrofishing. A total of 672 walleye were captured at a rate of 3.3 fish per net-night. Average length from fyke nets was 13.7 inches and 28% of the fish caught were greater than 15 inches and 7% greater than 20 inches. Fall recruitment electrofishing gave an abundance of 23 age-0 walleye per mile. In general the population is stable, compares well to other local walleye fisheries, and will continue to provide harvestable fish. Current Regulation: No closed season, harvest slot 15"-19.9", fish 20" to 28" may not be kept and only one fish over 28" is allowed, bag limit is 5 fish 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. Anglers should carefully review the regulations each year. Beginning in 2014 the tributary rivers to Lake Dubay now fall under the harvest slot regulation.

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. Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit / 5 fish per day Access information: 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

Three Lakes Chain A spring survey found abundant walleye centered on 11 inches with good numbers of fish under 16 inches. **Squirrel Lake** - 1,317 acres. We estimated an adult walleye population of 3.5 per acre. Most fish were between 12 and 14 inches, with solid numbers up to 20 inches. **Two Sisters Lake** - 719 acres. We estimated 2.8



Evan Sniadajewski, LTE fisheries technician, Walleyes from fyke netting survey on Le Tourneau Lake, Price County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

adult walleye per acre with good numbers up to 20 inches. **Long Lake** - 113 acres. Spring electrofishing found fair numbers of 11- to 13- inch walleye coming up, with a few larger fish.

PRICE COUNTY

Phillips Chain of Lakes —1,236 acres. Early spring fyke nets captured walleye at a rate nearly 2½ times higher in 2008 than in 2014. Long and Wilson lakes experienced the greatest declines, while catch rate increased in Duroy Lake and remained relatively unchanged in Elk Lake. We did not estimate walleye density in 2008 or 2014, so we do not know whether the population meets our objective for 3 – 5 adults per acre in the Chain. Our indices of walleye size structure were generally within the objective range (20 – 40% at least 15 inches), though walleye in Elk Lake fell short of the goal in both years. Currently, walleye of any size may be kept. A proposed fishing regulation should improve the size distribution of the walleye population in the Phillips Chain. Focusing angler harvest toward abundant, slow-growing walleyes of intermediate size 10 – 13 inches while allowing conservative harvest of one walleye > 14 inches should increase the proportion of adult walleyes longer than 15 inches. If approved, the proposed rule would take effect in April 2016: “Walleye of any length may be kept, but only one can be over 14 inches.”

Solberg Lake —859 acres. Despite several measures of poor reproductive success in the last decade, our netting survey immediately following the spring 2014 thaw revealed that walleyes in Solberg Lake approached or attained the objectives that anglers helped to define in the 2010 Fishery Management Plan. Our capture rate of 62 walleyes per net-night suggests that population density was moderately high and near the desired range of 4 – 7 adults per acre. The majority can be attributed to strong year classes produced in 2010 – 2012 when recruitment of young walleyes to the adult population was not evaluated. Thirty-nine percent were ≥ 15 inches (Goal: 30 – 40%) and 2% were at least 20 inches long (Goal: 3 – 7%). The population’s size structure should improve under our proposal to continue to allow walleye of any size to be kept, except only one walleye 14 inches or longer may be harvested per day. If approved, the new rule would take effect in 2016. Improved boat access is available at the County Park and several resorts.

Butternut Lake —1,006 acres. Anglers can expect fast fishing action for “eater-size” walleyes 11 – 13 inches in Butternut Lake. Teams from the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources found that their spring 2014 estimate of 6.6 adult walleyes per acre in Butternut Lake was near the middle of the objective range (4 – 8 adults/acre). While density was moderately high as desired, only 14% of walleyes were 15 inches or longer compared with our goal to have 30 – 50% at least 15 inches long. The apparent deficit in the proportion of preferred-size walleyes stems from weak year classes produced in 2009 and 2010 followed by much stronger year classes in 2011 and 2012. Size structure should improve as 2- and 3-year-old fish grow to preferred size

under current regulations that permit anglers to keep walleyes of any size, but only one may be longer than 14 inches. Planned renovations to the state-owned Hoffmann’s Rocks Landing should correct occasional problems caused by power-loading boats onto trailers at the ramp.

SAWYER COUNTY

Sand Lake - 949 acres

The lake offers a unique fishing experience that many anglers drive a long way to distant lakes to have. Sand currently has a dense walleye fishery at around 8 adults per acre. That has translated into very high angler catch rates that are comparable to unexploited Canadian waters. But here’s the catch, walleye in this lake are currently managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit which has helped the population rebound from a major dip in the late 90’s. That means that legal fish are rare. But if you are looking for fast walleye action and a lot of fish in the 14- to 17- inch range, Sand is definitely worth a stop. The regulation may change in the future to allow more harvest, but in the meantime, anglers are enjoying this unique experience. There is a public boat launch off of County Road F.

VILAS COUNTY

Cisco Chain - 4,025 acres

Results of surveys conducted in the spring of 2014 on Big and Mamie lakes found 10.1 and 10.2 adult fish/acre respectively. These two waters are the best producers of walleye in the chain. Current Regulation: This is a boundary water with Michigan. There is a 15 inch minimum length limit on Big, West Bay, and Mamie. These three waters can be fished using a Wisconsin fishing license. Access Information: There are public landings with limited parking on Big and Mamie Lake as well as several of the lakes on the Michigan side of the chain. Several resorts and marinas also provide access to the chain. All the lakes are connected by navigable segments of the Cisco Branch of the Ontonagon River. This chain of 14 lakes provides good fishing opportunities year round for walleye. The chain is not stocked and has consistently good natural walleye recruitment.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Delavan Lake - 1906 acres

15.3” average length, max up to 24” in 2012 and 2013 surveys Current regulation: 18” minimum length limit, 3 daily bag Access information: A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at STH 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800’ away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the STH 50 boat launch.

WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2513 acres

Walleye fishing has rebounded on Shell Lake in recent years. Fish hatched in 2011 and 2013 represent the best year classes in the last ten years. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit subject to ceded territory adjustment. Access: Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Pike Lake - 522 acres

An adult population estimate from our 2014 survey yielded an estimate of 2,170 adult fish, or 4.2 adult walleye per acre in Pike Lake. This density is above average for area lakes and typical of a naturally reproducing walleye system. The maximum length observed was 25.2 inches and average was 16.6 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 Lake Drive in Hartford on the northeast side of the lake. Shorefishing opportunities can be found in Pike Lake State Park along the west side of the lake. Wisconsin has an abundance of excellent natural walleye waters with healthy and genetically unique walleye populations. These waters do not need to be stocked in order to maintain a viable walleye fishery. Pike Lake is the only lake in southeast Wisconsin sustained solely by natural reproduction.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Lac LaBelle - 1154 surface acres

Average Length – 16 inches. Population estimate – 3 adults per acre. Current regulation: 20-inch minimum length limit, 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 surface 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.

MUSKELLUNGE



ASHLAND COUNTY

Upper Clam Lake, Day Lake Flowage, Spider Lake, Moquah Lake, Mineral Lake, English Lake These lakes make up over 1,400 acres in total. Although they are not connected, they are all within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest between Mellen and Clam Lake. Recent surveys continue to document high catch rates of fish in the 25- to 35-inch range. They may not boast trophy fisheries, but can provide excellent action. For anglers looking to tangle with their first musky, or have a multiple fish day, give one of these lakes a try. There is currently a 28-inch minimum length (except Upper Clam Lake: 40-inch minimum length), daily bag limit of 1 fish. Public boat launches provide access to the lakes, and there are many camping options in the area.

BARRON COUNTY

Rice Lake - 859 acres

Rice Lake is a top choice for anglers interested in catching large musky. In the 2014 spring netting survey, there were 78 fish captured that were over 30 inches, and 27% that exceeded 40 inches. The largest musky handled was 48.5 inches. Rice Lake muskellunge are protected with a 50 in minimum length limit. There are several boat landings on Rice Lake; however, the landings off East Orchard Beach Lane and South Main Street are the best landings, especially for larger boats. Rice Lake is a drainage lake on the Red Cedar River. Being a drainage lake on a larger river system, it has abundant sucker and redbone populations, both of which are preferred musky prey items. With such a strong prey base the growth rates and body condition of Rice Lake musky are excellent.

BROWN, DOOR, OCONTO and MARINETTE COUNTIES

Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries and bays and the Fox River

Annual assessments to determine the status of the Green Bay muskellunge population have been conducted on the Fox River using fyke nets and fall electroshocking for many years. Fyke nets set in the Fox River this past May were filled with many large musky with the largest being just over 40 pounds. Many other captured fish were in the 20- to 30- pound range. Anglers also see large Musky, regularly catching fish greater than 50” on local waters. The regulation for musky on the Fox River, Green Bay tributaries and the Wisconsin waters of Green Bay is one fish with a 54-inch minimum length limit. The 2015 season runs from May 23 through November 30 on most of these waters except on the Menominee River where the season runs from May 15 through November 30. 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. 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 fall fingerlings back into the river and bay to enhance the population. Over the past five years we have stocked more than 19,000 Great Lakes Spotted Musky back into the Fox River and Green Bay.

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

The Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. 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 (over 45”) have been caught. In the fall of 2013, a commercial rough fishing seining operation on Lake Butte des Morts captured 5 muskellunge ranging in length from 38.9 to 51.7 inches. In 2014, the commercial rough fishing seining operation cap-



Jeanette Wendler, LTE fisheries technician, Muskellunge from fyke netting survey on Solberg Lake, Price County. Photo: Greg Rublee.





Brian Spangler, DNR fisheries technician in Barron, hoists a hefty 50 inch musky from Wapogasset Lake, Polk County. Photo: Aaron Cole.

tured 24 muskellunge ranging in size from 40.3 to 51.2 inches. In fact, 4 of the 24 muskellunge sampled were greater than 50 inches including the 51.2 inch giant that weighed 41.5 pounds. Nonetheless, there are some good fishing opportunities that exist for trophy sized muskellunge throughout the Winnebago System. The current open season for muskellunge is May 2, 2015 – December 31, 2015 with a daily bag limit of 1 fish and a minimum length limit of 50". 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. 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. The 2014 commercial rough fishing seining operation ran one seine haul during the first week of November and sampled 2 muskellunge. A second seine haul was then conducted during the second week of November and 22 muskellunge were captured. Both seine hauls covered about the same area of the lake and were conducted with similar methodology, indicating that some type of muskellunge movement was occurring in the system. Water temperatures fell from 44°F during the first week of November to 35°F in the second week that may have spurred some fall muskellunge movement in the system.

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

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 based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate of muskellunge in 2014 was relatively similar to 2013 at 3.4/mile in 2014 and 4/mile in 2013. For fish 40"+, catch rate was the same in both years at 0.4/mile. The largest muskellunge captured in the upper river in 2014 was 41.9 inches. Lower river total catch rate of muskellunge was down slightly in 2014 (2.1/mile) compared to 2013 (3.4/mile). Catch rate of muskellunge larger than 40" was also down at 0.5/mile compared to 1.1/mile in 2013. The largest muskellunge caught in the lower river in 2014 was 46.8 inches. Anglers reported catching muskies larger than 50 inches in both the upper and lower stretches of the Black River during 2014. The Black River has a 40 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1 fish.

■ GREEN LAKE COUNTY

Little Green Lake - 466 acres. Little Green is one of the few lakes in this part of the State to provide a musky fishery. It is a stocked fishery and receives an annual quota of fall fingerlings from the state and also gets some supplemental stocking by local lake groups. Angler caught fish typically average around 38", but fish upwards of 50" have been caught in recent years. Little Green falls under the standard statewide regulation for musky; opening on the first Saturday in May and ending on December 31st. The minimum length limit is 40" with a bag of one.

There are three public access points around the lake and one private landing located at Todd's Landing.

Big Green Lake - 7,346 acres. Big Green Lake has been stocked with musky since the early 80's. It is currently being managed as a low density "trophy" fishery. Although numbers are on the low side; more anglers are beginning to target them and are reporting seeing more fish. With Green Lake's extreme depth and forage base, these fish have the capability to grow big and live long. We have seen fish approaching the 50" mark. Green may be a little challenging to fish, but there is a chance to land a "trophy". There are a number of boat landings, around the lake, providing good access. Some of these require a fee.

■ IRON COUNTY

Trude Lake: - 781 acres. In 2014, crews targeted muskellunge during a spring netting survey. Muskellunge were measured up to 45 inches. 57% of the individuals surveyed were larger than 38 inches, and 17% were larger than 42 inches. Good numbers of quality-sized fish are waiting for anglers in Trude. Currently, there is a 40-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 1 fish. There is a public boat launch on the lake, or access is possible through the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage.



Andrew Notbohm, WDNR fisheries technician with a 52" Oconomowoc Lake Muskellunge captured during the 2014 spring fyke netting survey. Photo: Steven Gospodarek

Turtle River Lakes (Turtle River System Lakes: Cedar-Catherine-Fisher Lake chain, Spider Lake, Oxbow Lakes, Echo Lake, Rice Lake, Pike Lake, Lake Of The Falls): With over 2,000 acres in total, all lakes connected to the Turtle River system provide fantastic musky fishing opportunities. Fall electrofishing surveys on these waters continue to document strong muskellunge reproduction and notable numbers of adult fish. The relatively high densities of adult fish with a balanced size structure equates to good action and the occasional chance at a trophy for anglers. There is good access from 6 different public boat launches and many other 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 (Lake Nokomis System) – 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-inch range on this system

■ LINCOLN, MARATHON, PORTAGE, WOOD, ADAMS and JUNEAU COUNTIES

Wisconsin River - 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. The Wisconsin River has ample forage fish and diverse habitats to support a healthy population of muskellunge. Each flowage is unique, providing anglers diverse fishing opportunities. The minimum length limit for muskellunge is 45 inches with a daily bag limit of one. Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNR's 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 - 1,018 acres
High Falls Reservoir - 1,498 acres Population information: Both fisheries are maintained through a combination of stocking and natural reproduction. The density (fish/acre) of musky is higher in Caldron Falls than in High Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are present in both flowages. 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.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Three Lakes Chain. We found good numbers of muskellunge up to 47 inches.

Squirrel Lake - 1,317 acres. Muskellunge in our nets ranged from 33 to 45 inches.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Solberg Lake —859 acres. We did not estimate muskellunge density for comparison with our goal of 0.1 – 0.2 adults per acre, but we believe that our capture rate of 0.6 muskies per net-night in early spring 2014 reflects the desired low to moderate population abundance. Though low sample size limits our confidence in assessing the size structure, muskellunge in Solberg Lake surpassed our objectives that 20 – 40% should be at least 38 inches and 10 – 20% should be 42 inches or longer. Age analysis of fin bones sampled from mid-size muskies will help us determine whether natural reproduction has contributed enough new recruits to sustain the adult population at objective levels since stocking large fingerlings was suspended in 2000. To accommodate the unusual preference expressed by Solberg Lake anglers to occasionally harvest a muskellunge, the 28-inch minimum length limit was selected as an alternative to the 40-inch length limit which took effect statewide in 2012. Because a strong catch-and-release ethic is deeply seeded among avid musky anglers and because no promotion of selective harvest is necessary or desirable to attain our goals for the musky population in Solberg Lake, we anticipate no change in angler harvest, regardless of the regulation in effect.

■ SAWYER COUNTY

If a musky angler could design their dream lake from scratch it might come out looking a lot like **Whitefish Lake** in Sawyer County. Whitefish is 800 acres of crystal clear water and has a depth of 105 feet! The lake is stocked every 3 years with Lac Courte Oreilles-strain muskellunge. What makes this lake unique for Wisconsin is the forage base that musky have access to. The lake has a strong population of white sucker and yellow perch and an abundance of cisco, all favorite musky snacks. Not surprisingly, big musky are frequently seen in DNR surveys. There is good weed growth throughout the lake that holds musky, but fish also suspend. The uniqueness of this lake makes it a challenge for anglers, but the rewards can be great. There is a public boat ramp off of State Hwy 27. The statewide length limit applies and trolling is allowed.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

Shawano Lake – 6063 acres Recent surveys indicate abundance and size structure metrics rank Shawano Lake in the upper 75th percentile when compared to other trophy muskellunge waters statewide. In the 2014 spring netting survey, 42% of muskellunge sampled were over 40 inches with the largest fish at 49.3 inches. Anecdotal reports from anglers indicate muskellunge over 50 inches are now being captured. Current Regulation: Statewide default (40-inch minimum length limit and 1 daily bag) Access information: Multiple public accesses are found on Shawano Lake with the primary boat ramps located at Swan Acres Rd, Cecil Village Park, Stark Rd, and County Park. Huckleberry Harbor in the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel has multiple ramps and a large parking area. Shawano Lake and connected water bodies can provide anglers



A nice, 44-inch musky taken from a recent survey of Lake Wingra in Dane County. With fish captured up to 49.2 inches, the Wingra population was estimated at 1.7 per acre for fish over 30", qualifying it as an action fishery.

with many options for muskellunge fishing. Boats can navigate between Shawano Lake, Washington Lake and Wolf River Pond via the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel.

■ VILAS COUNTY

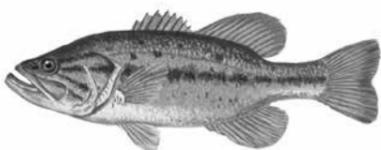
Eagle Chain - 3,586 surface acres
Results from a spring 2013 adult muskellunge population survey found that the chain supports a population of 0.36 fish per acre. This is a fairly abundant population level when compared to other waters in northern Wisconsin. The chain has the potential to produce large fish due to its diverse forage base that includes: redhorse, white sucker, yellow perch and even cisco in several of the lakes. Current Regulation: 40-inch length limit and a daily limit of one fish. 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 stocked with over 1,600 large fingerling muskellunge in even numbered years. Numerous musky fishing tournaments take place each year on the Eagle Chain.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Pewaukee Lake - 2,437 surface 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 Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. Pewaukee 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.

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 surface acres
Species population information: Spring netting in 2014 revealed an average length of 39 inches including a 52-inch, 46-pound female. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There is one public boat launch for Oconomowoc Lake located on the Oconomowoc River. Anglers looking to fish this exceptionally clear water lake need to navigate a 1/2 mile of the Oconomowoc River below the Okauchee dam to reach the main lake.

LARGEMOUTH BASS



■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

Lake Owen - 1,323 acres
Lake Owen currently has a moderate density, good size structure largemouth bass population. The catch rate of largemouth bass in the spring 2014 electrofishing survey was down by 30% from prior years but the size structure had improved. The average length for largemouth bass was 14.4 inches with the largest fish sampled measuring 20 inches. Current regulation: There is a no minimum length limit and 5-fish daily bag limit on largemouth bass which makes it a great option for the "harvest-oriented" bass angler. Anglers are encouraged to harvest largemouth bass. In addition, the early catch and release season for largemouth bass in the northern region was discontinued. The catch and release season for smallmouth bass is still in effect. Access information:



Kirk Olson, DNR LTE, with a nice 20" largemouth bass taken during an electrofishing run on Lake Owen, Bayfield County Photo: Scott Toschner.

There are two boat landings on Lake Owen both located within the Chequamegon National forest. Lake Owen is part of a study to discern whether regulations and stocking of large fingerling walleye can be effective in increasing walleye numbers and decreasing largemouth bass numbers.

■ BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pool 5 and lower Pool 4 2014 fall electrofishing surveys showed good numbers above and below the 14-inch length limit. Overall, nearly 34 adult and juvenile largemouth bass were captured per hour. Twenty seven percent of surveyed largemouth bass were greater than 12 inches, while one in five largemouth were greater than the 14-inch length limit. Surveyed fish topped out just shy of 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. The 2014 survey showed great survival for this year's largemouth bass hatch signaling good fishing into the foreseeable future.

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

The **Winnebago System** includes the four lakes (**Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan**) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles Fisheries staff conducted several bass/panfish spring electrofishing surveys in Lake Winnebago, Lake Butte des Morts, and Lake Poygan in 2014. Several areas were sampled on Lake Winnebago including Asylum Bay, Little Point-Black Wolf Point, and Black Wolf Point-Comfort Point. Sampling was also conducted on Lake Butte des Morts in Sunset Bay and on Lake Poygan in Boom Bay. A total of 141 largemouth bass were captured during the surveys. Largemouth bass catch rate was highest in Asylum Bay (52.3 fish/hour of electrofishing) while Boom Bay had the lowest catch rate (2.5 fish/hour of electrofishing). The majority of largemouth bass sampled in Lake Winnebago were sub-legal (81.2%), averaging 12.4". However, several larger fish were captured including a 20.7-inch largemouth bass. Fisheries staff is currently analyzing age structures that were taken from a subsample of fish to further assess largemouth bass age and growth in the Winnebago System. Current regulations: The bass season is open year around with a daily bag limit of 5 fish and a minimum length limit of 14". 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. 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. Although largemouth bass angling is often overlooked on the Winnebago System, multiple angling opportunities exist in the system, particular in Lake Winnebago bay areas. The number of bass tournaments on the Winnebago System continued to show an increasing trend in 2014 making up 27% (19 of the 70) of permitted tournaments on the system.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Otter Lake - 661 acres
Otter Lake has one of the best largemouth bass fisheries in Chippewa County. A 2014 spring electrofishing survey found 53 largemouth bass per mile and the 67% of those fish over 12 inches. Along with good numbers of largemouth bass, Otter Lake has a history of producing trophy fish, too. Historic surveys have found numerous largemouth bass over 20 inches and the largest fish captured in 2014 was 22 inches. Current regulations: 14 inch minimum length, 5 bag limit Access information: 4 public boat landings

■ CRAWFORD, GRANT and VERNON COUNTIES

Upper Mississippi River Pools 9, 10, and 11 20,561 acres of open water and backwater lakes in a 65-mile stretch river. Smallmouth and largemouth bass are a favorite fish species for many anglers on the Upper Mississippi River. There are large populations of largemouth bass in Pools 9-10-11 but good concentrations can be found at Cold Springs near Lynxville, WI, in Gremore Lake near Prairie du Chien, WI, and along Stateline Slough near Cassville, WI. There are many fish in the 3 to 5 pound range with handful of fish over 6 pounds being 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, main channel borders, and sloughs with moderate flow. The Mississippi River has minimum length limit of 14 inches for bass, a 5 fish in aggregate bag limit, with no closed season. Access information: 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/

■ DODGE COUNTY

Fox Lake - 2,625 acres
Largemouth bass catch rate for 2014 fall electrofishing was 114/hour, compared to 48/hour in 2013 and 79/hour in 2012, with fish ranging from 2.1 to 17.9 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, Town Park (northwest side), shorefishing at CTH A bridge. While not a true musky lake, Fox Lake does boast an occasional 45+ inch musky.

■ FLORENCE COUNTY

Cosgrove Lake - 91 acres
Preliminary surveys of Cosgrove Lake show a tremendously large largemouth bass population. An effort will be made in 2015 to estimate the size of this population, but all indications show that it is the most abundant

largemouth population in Florence County. The fish tend to be in the 10 to 15-inch range....a great place to go and catch fish!

■ Keyes Lake - 202 acres

A 2012 survey showed that Keyes Lake has one of the more abundant largemouth populations in Florence County at 5 adults/acre. Typical of high density populations, the size structure is not amazing, but approximately 20% of the fish are over 14 inches and some large fish were observed.

■ Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes - 548 acres

The SECL is another system with a high density of largemouth bass (estimated at 7.4 adults/acre). With 22% of the fish over 14 inches and a few fish observed over 20 inches this is one of the few high density systems that does have trophy potential.

■ Sea Lion Lake - 123 acres

Sea Lion lake has a very average abundance of largemouth bass for Florence County (3.4 adults/acre). The reason this population is special is because of the ability to produce large fish. A whopping 10% of the bass sampled during a 2012 survey were over 18 inches and 1.5% were over 20 inches. Great place for those bass anglers who want it all (size and numbers).

■ Patten Lake - 255 acres

Patten Lake is the Florence County lake with the best trophy largemouth potential. This is because the density of fish is low enough (1.1 adults/acre) to allow extremely fast growth rates and good body condition. You likely won't catch many fish, but you have a chance at a true trophy. During the last survey of Patten Lake approximately 22% and 4% of the fish captured were larger than 18 and 20 inches, respectively.

■ IRON COUNTY

Wilson Lake: Want to catch fish all day? Want to keep the kids busy reeling in fish? If yes, then think about paying a visit to Wilson Lake near Mercer, WI. A 2014 shocking survey resulted in over 32 largemouth bass/mile of shoreline. 45% of the individuals in this survey were larger than 12 inches, and over 30% were at least 14 inches. Wilson also has good numbers of smallmouth bass, which were surveyed at 21 fish/mile of shoreline in the same survey. With the catch rates and size structure noted in this survey, Wilson is sure to make for a fun trip. Currently, there is no minimum length limit, but bass from 12 to 16 inches may not be kept. Access exists via a public boat launch.

■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Ripley - 418 acres
Largemouth bass catch rate for 2014 fall electrofishing was 74/hour, compared to 58/hour in 2013 and 67/hour in 2012 with fish



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.

ranging from 2.2- to 18.4-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. The current state record largemouth bass (11 pounds, 3 ounces) came out of Lake Ripley in 1940.

Rock Lake - 1,370 acres
Largemouth bass catch rate for 2014 fall electrofishing was 37/hour, compared to 41/hour in 2013 and 31/hour in 2012, with fish ranging from 2-18 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). Shore-fishing stations provided by City of Lake Mills on east side of lake. Additional shore-fishing on east and west shores of Mill Pond.

■ LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Yellowstone Lake - 450 acres
The largemouth bass population in Yellowstone has been improving over the last 10 years. It offers anglers above average opportunities to catch trophy-sized largemouth bass with an abundance of bass over 16 inches available. Spring electrofishing surveys in 2014 revealed a good adult fishery. One hundred thirty three largemouth bass



Lloyd Meng, fisheries LTE technician, holding largemouth bass sampled from Yellowstone Lake in October of 2014. Photo: Bradd Sims

were sampled. They ranged from 9.0 to 19.6 inches with an average length of 14.8 inches. Fifty-seven percent were greater than 15 inches. Twelve percent were greater than 18 inches. While the maximum length collected on this survey was 19.6 inches, the lake does support a fishable population of largemouth bass greater than 20 inches. Current regulation: Only bass between 12 and 15 inches may be harvested. Daily bag limit is 2 game fish in total. Access information: Two boat launches and one canoe launch are available. Multiple fishing pads for disabled anglers are located along the northeast portion of the lake. 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

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; 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

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 and explore, you just might find that secret hot spot!

■ 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 back-water habitat for largemouth while the upper portion of the flowage is more riverine, providing suitable habitat for smallmouth. Current regulation: (check special regulations for WI-MI boundary waters) Access information: Cox Landing - Highway 180, north of Marinette.

■ MARATHON COUNTY

Big Bass Lake - 174 acres
Big Bass Lake was surveyed by electrofishing in 2014, we captured 33 largemouth bass during summer and 67 during fall for an average catch rate of 45 fish/hour. The size structure has improved since 2008 when the current regulation was put in place. The percentage of fish greater than 12 inches has increased from 25% in 2005 to 40% in 2014. Current regulation: The daily bag limit is 3 bass in total; only bass less than 14 inches may be kept; except one fish may be over 18 inches. Access: The Town of Bevent maintains a boat landing off of Lake Road. Additional Information: The lake provides good action for largemouth bass and also the opportunity to harvest fish less than 14 inches, with the potential for harvest of one bass over 18 inches.

■ MARQUETTE COUNTY

Buffalo and Montello Lakes - 2,210 and 286 acres Both of these lakes have recently been refilled following drawdowns; Buffalo was completely drawn down for 2 years, as part of a dam renovation project which includes a new fish way, and Montello was partially drawn down in 2013 to help control nuisance vegetation. Buffalo Lake was refilled this spring. These lakes have historically provided phenomenal bass fishing with average size, growth and abundance of bass being above average, particularly following improvements to the existing habitat. We would expect that the improvements in depth and plant community, following these drawdowns, will provide some great fishing for northern pike, largemouth bass and panfish species. Newly improved landings on Buffalo provide good access. There is only one public landing on Montello Lake just north of Montello.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Minocqua and Kawaguesaga Lakes - There is no minimum length limit for bass on Minocqua Chain. Spring electrofishing found abundant largemouth and smallmouth up to 15 inches.

Squash Lake - 396 acres. Largemouth are somewhat more abundant, but we found both species of bass up to 16 inches.

■ POLK COUNTY

Balsam Lake - 1,901 acres
Balsam Lake currently has a high density, low size structure largemouth bass population. The catch rate of largemouth bass in the spring 2014 electrofishing survey was considered very high at 72.4 fish/shoreline mile. Of the 579 largemouth bass handled, 81.5% of the fish were between 8 and 15 inches and only 4.8% were greater than 15

inches. Current regulation: There is a no minimum length limit and 5 fish daily bag limit on largemouth bass which makes it a great option for the "harvest-oriented" bass angler. Anglers are encouraged to harvest small largemouth bass. By thinning the population of largemouth bass in Balsam Lake, their size structure should improve. Access information: There are four boat landings on Balsam Lake. At 1,901 acres, Balsam Lake is the largest lake in Polk County.

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Lake Thomas - 32 acres
Lake Thomas was surveyed in 2012 and we captured 23 largemouth bass/ hour using electrofishing. The size structure included fish caught from 10 to 19 inches. 63% of the catch was greater than 14 inches and the largest bass caught was 19 inches. Lake Thomas will continue to provide great action for bass as there were abundant young fish ready to move into the harvestable size range. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length limit, 5 bass in total may be kept. Access: The Town of Stockton maintains a boat landing off of Lake Thomas Road. Lake Thomas is stocked annually with rainbow trout and offers this added fishery.

■ RACINE COUNTY

Browns Lake - 396 acres
Species population information: Action water, with 13.1" average length, 17.0" maximum length (2014 survey) Current regulation: 16" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag Access information: A public boat launch on the southeast side of the lake at a Racine County Park. The park also features a large parking lot and a sand beach.

■ SAUK COUNTY

Mirror Lake - 139 acres
While only an average "numbers" fishery, Mirror Lake has good size structure and offers anglers the opportunity to catch larger bass. During two electrofishing surveys in the spring of 2014, 195 largemouth bass larger than 8 inches were captured. Of these, 47% were larger than 14 inches, ranking in the 86th percentile statewide for lakes smaller than 794 acres. Current regulation: Minimum length limit is 14 inches, daily bag limit is 5 fish. Access information: Mirror Lake is located just southwest of the Village of Lake Delton, near Wisconsin Dells. There are three boat launches on Mirror Lake. One is located within Mirror Lake State Park on the eastern shore of the lower part of the lake. The second is located at the end of Lakeview Rd. off of State Highway 23 on the northern shore of the upper part of the lake near the inflow of Dell Creek. The third is a carry-in only access located along State Hwy. 23 near the Dell Creek inflow. There is also shore fishing access in Mirror Lake State Park (fishing pier), and at the site of the dam that forms Mirror Lake (reached from Burritt Ave.). Mirror Lake offers anglers a good panfish fishery, with bluegills up to 9.5 inches and black crappies up to 13 inches. Yellow perch and white crappies may be caught as well. Smallmouth bass, while not common, are also present in Mirror Lake.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

Shawano Lake - 6063 acres
Spring boomshocking surveys captured moderate numbers of largemouth bass with an average size of 12.6 inches and some bass up to 20.0 inches. Approximately 37% of the bass catch was over 14 inches. Current regulation: Statewide default - 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag. Access information: Multiple public accesses are found on Shawano Lake with the primary boat ramps located at Swan Acres Rd, Cecil Village Park, Stark Rd, and County Park. Huckleberry Harbor in the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel has multiple ramps and a large parking area.

■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Lake Geneva - 5401 acres
Species population information: 14.1" average length, 20.5" maximum length (2013 survey) Current regulation: 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag. Access information: Six public boat launches are available on Geneva: Lake Street in Fontana (west side), E Geneva Street in Williams Bay (north side), Chapin Road (north side - no parking), Wrigley Drive in Lake Geneva (northeast side), Hillside Road (southeast side) and Linn Road (south side). Shorefishing opportunities are available at several parks and municipal fishing piers across the lake.



Fisheries technicians Josh Krall (left) and Rick Dauffenbach (right) holding two big Delavan Lake largemouth bass. Photo: Luke Roffler

Delavan Lake - 1906 acres
Species population information: 15.4" average length, max up to 20" in 2012 and 2013 surveys Current regulation: 18" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag Access information: A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at STH 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the STH 50 boat launch.

Whitewater Lake - 640 acres
Species population information: Action water, with 11.9" average length, 22.5" maximum length (2010 survey) Current regulation: 14" minimum length limit, 5 daily bag Access information: A small public boat launch on the east side of the lake off E Lakeshore Drive, another small public boat launch on the west side of the lake off Kettle Moraine Drive, and a large boat launch and parking lot on the north side of the lake in the Kettle Moraine State Forest (park sticker required). The KMSF offers shorefishing, camping, hiking and other activities as well.

Lake Beulah - 812 acres
Species population information: Action water, with 11.2" average length, 19.0" maximum length (2006 survey) Current regulation: Largemouth bass from 12" to 16" may not be kept. The daily bag limit is 5. Access information: A public boat launch on the south side of the lake at Wilmers Landing Road (large parking lot about 1000' away from the launch). Double D's Pub hosts a weekly "All Night Fishing Tournament" for bass on Lake Beulah.

■ WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2513 acres
Along with smallmouth bass and walleye, largemouth bass have increased in number recently in Shell Lake. 2013 survey data showed 34% of largemouth bass sampled were above the 14 inch minimum length limit. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. Access: Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Okauchee Lake - 1210 surface acres
Species population information: Average length – 15 inches with above average abundance. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Access information: There are two boat launches found on Okauchee Lake; the DNR boat launch on upper Oconomowoc Lake and The Golden Mast Restaurant on the west basin of Okauchee. Okauchee Lake has a maximum depth of 94 feet and has a very diverse and abundant aquatic plant community.

Eagle Spring Lake - 270 surface acres
Species population information: 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 improve growth rates.

Big Muskego Lake - 2200 surface acres
Species population information: Average length – 14 inches. Current regulation: 18 inches minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There are three public boat 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 bass. Restrictive regulations provide exciting catch and release opportunities for bass and pike.

■ WAUSHARA COUNTY

Big Hills, Little Hills, Johns and Witter's Lakes - 133, 81, 73 and 51 acres respectively
All four of these fairly small, pothole lakes have had the 14" length limit removed in an attempt to reduce bass density and improve size structure of the populations. There are opportunities for high catch rates and harvest of small bass in encouraged. All of these lakes are highly developed with good access.

SMALLMOUTH BASS



■ BARRON COUNTY

Rice Lake - 859 acres
The Rice Lake smallmouth bass population has an impressive size structure, but is often overlooked by anglers. During the spring 2014 fyke netting and electrofishing surveys, nearly half of the smallmouth bass handled were 15 inches or greater and 14.5% were at least 18 inches. The largest smallmouth bass captured was 19.7 inches. Current regulation: The Rice Lake smallmouth bass fishery is managed with the statewide bass regulation- 14-inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. Access information: There are several boat landings on Rice Lake; however, the landings off East Orchard Beach Lane and South Main Street are the best landings, especially for larger boats. Anglers will likely have the best luck for smallmouth bass in the south basin of the lake.

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

Lake Arbutus, 840 acres, Clark and Jackson Counties, **upper Black River** (above Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Coun-



A typical Platte River smallmouth bass being released after a recent WDNR electrofishing survey. Photo: Braadd Sims

ties, and **lower Black River** (below Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Results below are based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of lake shoreline or river surveyed (#/mile) **Lake Arbutus:** Total catch rate in spring of 2014 was 7.4/mile and catch rate of 14"+ fish was 3.4/mile. The largest smallmouth captured was 19". The last spring electrofishing survey was conducted in 2010. Total catch rate was higher than 2014 at 9.4/mile. However catch rate of 14"+ fish was lower than 2014 at 1.7/mile. **Black River, upper and lower:** Smallmouth is the dominant bass species in the upper and lower river. Upper river total catch rate in fall of 2014 (72/mile) was similar to that of 2013 (77/mile). Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was the same between the two years at 7/mile. Lower river total catch rate was down in 2014 at 3.1/mile compared to 5.6/mile in 2013. Catch rate for legal (14") and larger fish was similar between the two years at 0.7/mile in 2014 and 0.8/mile in 2013. The largest bass captured in the upper river was 19" and 18" for the lower river. Current regulation: 14-inch minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit for Lake Arbutus and the Black River.

■ DOOR COUNTY

Green Bay waters of Door County
The smallmouth bass fishery continues to be great along portions of Door County's shoreline and the trend is expected to continue in 2015. Although the 2014 creel data are not yet available, smallmouth catch per effort had been trending upward over the previous two years with recent catch per effort well above the long term average. Some stronger, younger age classes that were documented in the most recent spawning surveys should still be well represented in the population suggesting 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 since the mid-1990s. 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 Streams to Green Bay and 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 2014 Sturgeon Bay fisheries staff conducted a smallmouth bass survey in Detroit Harbor of Washington Island. The last survey conducted here was in 1997. Survey results should be available early 2015.

■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

Lake Nebagamom - 914 acres
Lake Nebagamom has both good numbers and size structure of smallmouth bass. A

electrofishing survey completed in 2014 revealed average length of smallmouth bass was 14.4 inches. The largest smallmouth bass sampled was 19 inches. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish with a catch and release season from the fishing opener to the 3rd Saturday in June. Access: Concrete boat launch in the village of Lake Nebagamom.

■ FOREST COUNTY

Butternut Lake - 1,292 acres
Butternut Lake has what is considered a moderate to high density smallmouth bass population with a relative abundance of just over 25 fish per mile during an electrofishing survey in 2014. The population is comprised of some really nice-sized fish with 74% of the population over 14 inches and 20% over 17 inches.

Franklin Lake - 891 acres
Franklin Lake has what appears to be a more abundant smallmouth bass population than Butternut Lake. Size structure is slightly lower, but still some very quality fish with approximately 40% and 22% of the fish being over 14 and 17 inches, respectively.

■ GRANT COUNTY

Platte River - 25 miles of smallmouth water
The Platte River supports a good population of smallmouth bass. Recent surveys sampled 101 young of the year, yearling, and adult smallmouth from 2.1 to 18.2 inches with an average size of 8.2 inches. Twenty two percent of the adult smallmouth were 12 inches or greater. Current regulation: Fourteen inch minimum with a daily bag limit of 5. Access information: The Platte River supports just over 25 miles of fishable smallmouth bass water. It is currently absent of public fishing access via stream bank easements. Anglers may access the stream via road crossings or permission from private landowners. There are canoe access points located at Ellenboro, Big Platte Road, and a public boat access just upstream from the Mississippi River at Indian Creek Road and West Banfield Road. The Platte River offers anglers an excellent opportunity to catch smallmouth bass in a driftless area small stream environment. It is becoming a popular stream for canoe and kayak fisherman. The Platte River is currently identified as a focus stream within the statewide Stream Bank Easement protection program. This program allows for the purchase of public access along identified priority streams including the Platte River. Any properties enrolled in the program will allow for public access along the Platte River for fishing only. More information can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/streambank/> or you may simply type "streambank" in the search box located on the DNR homepage.

■ IRON COUNTY

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - 13,545 acres.
A 2014 shocking survey sampled smallmouth bass at a rate of 7.5 individuals/mile of shoreline. 72% of the individuals were over 12 inches, 34% were over 14 inches, and 5% were over 17 inches. These fish are built like footballs, with many 4-5 pound fish available to anglers. Currently, there is 15-inch length limit with a daily bag limit of 2 fish. There are 6 public boat launches for access, and many campsites and privately owned resorts for accommodations.

■ 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.

Wolf River downstream from Post Lake dam downstream to the Menominee County line; Excellent brown bass population with most

fish in the 10-16" range; Fish the boulders and woody habitat anywhere in the Wolf River in Langlade County.

■ 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 and PORTAGE COUNTIES

Wisconsin River

In 2014, the Wisconsin River again proved impressive for smallmouth bass production. Electrofishing catch rate of smallmouth bass ranged from 5.5 fish per hour to 30 fish per hour. The highest catch rate was near Brokaw at 44 fish per hour and 10% of the catch was greater than 14 inches. Below Lake Wausau catch was 24 fish/hour, with 17% of the catch greater than 14 inches; below Dubay Dam 6 fish/hour (100% larger than 14 inches); and below the Stevens Point Dam 15 fish/hour with 14% greater than 14 inches. Once again the catch of young-of-year fish was excellent throughout the river segments. 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



A football of a smallmouth bass comes to the boat on the Wisconsin River in Lincoln County. Photo: Jon Hansen

access points for every segment. Maps are available through the DNR online boating access site. There is one special regulation on the Wisconsin River in Portage County, an 18 inch minimum length limit and a bag limit of 1 fish from below the Stevens Point Flowage Dam to AITech Park Spillway.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Mildred Lake – 191 acres. Spring electrofishing turned up abundant smallmouth under 16 inches.

Squirrel Lake – 1,317 acres. Both species of bass were moderately abundant with excellent size and a few fish up to about 20 inches.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Phillips Chain of Lakes —1,236 acres.
Late spring electrofishing surveys in 2008 and 2014 both revealed that the Phillips Chain's smallmouth bass population fell far short of the goals set in the 2008 Fishery Management Plan, suggesting perhaps that our objectives for abundance (25 – 50 smallmouth bass ≥ 7 inches per electrofishing hour) and size structure (50 – 70% at least 14 inches long) may be too ambitious in comparison to the area's highest quality smallmouth bass fisheries. Most recently Elk Lake had the highest smallmouth bass



Fisheries biologist John Kubisiak with a 19.1" smallmouth bass and a 20.1" largemouth bass captured during spring, 2014 netting on Squirrel Lake, Oneida County. Photo: Steve Timler.

abundance and best size structure of the Phillips Chain's four lakes. We do not know why overall our electrofishing capture rate decreased nearly two-thirds from 2008 to 2014, though it's possible that crayfish, the favorite food of smallmouth bass, had experienced a similar decline. Because of the strong catch-and-release ethic among bass anglers, we suspect that few bass are taken under statewide harvest regulations. A late spring 2014 survey in nearby Solberg Lake in the same watershed revealed that smallmouth bass there also did not attain objectives for size and number. If our spring 2020 surveys show similar results in these waters, we should revise the Fishery Management Plans to reflect more realistic objectives for their smallmouth bass populations.

ST CROIX and POLK COUNTIES

St. Croix River - The St. Croix River from St. Croix Falls to Stillwater, Minnesota is free flowing for 29 miles. The St. Croix River has an abundance of game fish including bass, walleye, musky, catfish and lake sturgeon; however the river's most abundant game fish species is smallmouth bass. During late summer of 2013, DNR electrofishing crews sampled 298 smallmouth bass ranging from 2.2 to 18.8 inches. Smallmouth in the 8- to 14-inch length range were common. Eighteen percent of the population was over 14 inches and 5% was over 17 inches. There is a 14 inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of five in total. The season on the Wisconsin/Minnesota boundary water is different than inland waters. The bass season begins May 23 on the St. Croix River. Boat access available includes Interstate Park Landing in St. Croix Falls, two National Park Service Landings at Osceola and Somerset, and the Two Springs landing near Houlton. Small boat river craft under 25 horsepower is advised. The St. Croix River lies within the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway. Upstream travel beyond the high bridge near the Arcola sand bar is prohibited to prevent the spread of exotic species.

SAWYER and RUSK COUNTIES

Serious smallmouth bass anglers know you should never overlook rivers and streams. But still the Chippewa River in Sawyer and Rusk Counties receives less angler attention than the surrounding lakes. Creel data show this river (and others like the Namekagon and Flambeau) are as high quality smallmouth fisheries as any northwoods lake. About 40% of smallmouth caught on the Chippewa River are over 14 inches and angler catch rates are often 2-3 times higher than in lakes. There are many public access points up and down the Chippewa River after it flows out of the Chippewa Flowage and with a little coordination anglers can design a float trip to hit lightly fished water. This river also holds decent numbers of musky and deeper holes can have good walleye fishing. Smallmouth bass in the Chip-

pewa River follow the statewide regulations for bass.

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Sheboygan River - downstream of Sheboygan Falls to Lake Michigan 2014 surveys yielded an average length of 8 inches, with a maximum length of 18 inches. The average was skewed lower because of abundant young fish in the samples. We saw above average catch rates of up to 60 smallmouth bass per mile. Current regulation: There is a "Do Not Eat" resident fish species on this section of the Sheboygan River Access information: (best access point(s), shore-fishing opportunities, etc.) The best public access sites are Esslingen Park and the Roy Sebald Sheboygan River Natural Area in the City of Sheboygan and the Kohler Municipal Garage in the Village of Kohler. Other species an angler can expect to find in the Sheboygan River include rock bass and northern pike as well as Lake Michigan trout and salmon species that migrate upstream during the fall.

VILAS COUNTY

Trout Lake - 3,816 acres: A creel survey conducted in 2013 found that anglers caught 1,183 bass during the open season and harvested four. The largest smallmouth bass harvested was 19.9 inches. Current regulation: 18 inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of one fish. Trout Lake is also in the northern bass zone where catch and release of smallmouth bass is required from the general opener in May to the third Saturday in June. Access information: Access to the lake is by one of two state boat landings. One is located on the north east shore of the lake off of County Hwy M. The other is located in the state forest campground in the south east corner off Hwy M. This lake is one of the largest in the county and the deepest at 119 feet. Trout Lake is a very scenic lake with 16.0 of its 19.0 miles of shoreline in public ownership.

WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2513 acres Shell Lake continues to hold good numbers and size structure of smallmouth bass. A creel survey completed in 2014 revealed average length of smallmouth bass harvested was 16.0 inches complimenting high survey catch rates near this size in 2013. Current regulation: 14 inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. Access: Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 surface acres Species population information: 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 have consistently revealed excellent size structure and abundance of smallmouth bass with good trophy potential.

Lac LaBelle - 1154 surface acres Species population information: 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 downtown 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 rehorse and yellow bass.

Nagawicka Lake - 970 surface acres Species population information: Average Length - 14 inches. Current regulation: 14" minimum length, daily bag limit of 1 Access information: The public launch is located on the lakes' east side off of Mariner Drive. Rocky substrate and woody structure provides awesome habitat for smallmouth bass. White suckers and panfish is the primary forage base. Trophy-size northern pike are also present as well as a decent walleye population.

WOOD COUNTY

Wisconsin Rapids Flowage - 504 acres We caught some really nice smallmouth bass below the Biron Dam during our 2014 fall tail-water electrofishing survey. Smallmouth bass ranged from 10.8 to 19.8 inches. Wisconsin Rapids flowage has great habitat for smallmouth bass giving anglers a great fishing opportunity. Current Regulation: Open season is May 2 - March 6. 14 inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 in total (smallmouth bass with largemouth bass). Access: Wisconsin Rapids Flowage has two boat launches one is located off of Reddin Road and the other is located off of South Biron Drive.

NORTHERN PIKE



BARRON COUNTY

Upper Turtle Lake - 427 acres There were fair catches of quality northern pike in the fall 2014 electrofishing survey. The largest fish handled was 33 inches. Current regulation: Northern pike in Upper Turtle Lake are managed with the statewide regulation-no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. Access information: There is a boat landing and fishing pier on the south end of the lake off Highway 8. Upper Turtle Lake is an all-around solid fishing lake. Anglers should not overlook the other outstanding fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, panfish, and walleye on Upper Turtle Lake.

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Middle Eau Claire Lake - 880 acres A 2013 netting survey found relatively low numbers but better than average size structure. The average length was 20 inches and the largest fish handled was 40 inches. Current regulation: Northern pike are managed within the northern region regulation-no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. Access information: There is a boat landing off of Hwy 27. Middle Eau Claire Lake is a good fishing lake for multiple species, even though walleye numbers have declined in recent years good panfish, largemouth and smallmouth bass and muskellunge fishing is present.

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

The Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles Species Population Information: In the spring of 2013 fisheries crews set fyke nets on Lake Poygan to assess the status of the northern pike population following a fish kill caused by high water temperatures during the summer of 2012. The results of

the netting indicated that the population was still very healthy and that a high percentage of fish larger than the 26" minimum length limit were still present. In fact, 59% of the female pike handled in the survey were larger than 26", with the largest fish being 35.1". The presence of large northern pike was also observed during commercial rough fishing operations conducted on Lake Butte des Morts in the fall of 2013 and 2014. In 2013, fisheries staff collected 32 northern pike from the seine that were all greater than 30" with the largest fish measuring 40.3 inches. In 2014, fisheries staff collected 39 northern pike during the seining operation ranging from 23.0-40.0 inches. Although no northern pike captured were able to tip the scales to 20 pounds, there were several fish captured in the 16- to 18- pound range. Northern pike fishing on the system can be challenging due to an abundant amount of natural forage; however, the 2014 annual Lake Winnebago trawling survey indicated lower forage base numbers than previous years. Therefore, this year could be a good year to put some extra effort into searching for northern pike on the system. Current Regulations: The current open season for northern pike is May 2, 2015 - March 6, 2016 with a daily bag limit of 2 and a minimum length limit of 26". 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. 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. Something Interesting: The abnormally high water temperatures observed over the 4th of July weekend on Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, Poygan, and Partridge in 2012 caused mortality of an estimated 600-800 northern pike. Unfortunately, most of the mortalities observed by DNR staff were larger fish. As a result of the fish kill, DNR staff set fyke nets in spring 2013 to evaluate the effects of the fish kill on the overall population. Results from the netting indicated that despite the fish kill, the adult female population was still comprised of a high percentage (59%) of fish larger than the 26" minimum length limit. In comparison, 60% of the adult female population was composed of fish larger than 26" in 2009, which was the last year of data collection before the fish kill. These data indicate that it was unfortunate to see so many larger northern pike die in 2012, but the effects to the overall population were minor. The population still contains a high percentage of both legal-sized and trophy-sized fish.

CLARK, JACKSON, LA CROSSE, MONROE and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

Olson's Flowage, Jackson County, 253 acres, **upper Black River** (above the Black River Falls dam), Clark and Jackson Counties, and **lower Black River** (below the Black River Falls dam), Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Catch rates for Olson's Flowage are based on spring 2014 netting results and for the Black River, catch rates are based on fall 2014 electrofishing



Top Moon Lee, DNR fisheries technician, holding a northern pike captured during spring fyke net surveys

results. **Olson's Flowage:** Total catch rate was 1.9 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 1.5/net lift and maximum size captured was 37". The last netting survey was conducted in 1992. Total catch rate was 2.8 per net lift, catch rate of 26"+ fish was 2.6 per net lift and maximum size captured was 35". **Black River, upper and lower:** Results based on electrofishing surveys and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per mile of river surveyed (#/mile). Upper river total catch rate of pike increased to 1.7/mile in 2014 compared to 0/mile in 2013. No pike 26" or bigger were captured in either year. Lower river total catch rate of pike was lower in 2014 (2.3/mile) than 2013 (3.9/mile). Catch rate of larger pike (26"+) was similar in 2014 (0.5/mile) to 2013 (0.6/mile). The largest pike captured in the lower river in 2014 was 34 inches. Regulation: Black River upstream of Highway 10 – No minimum length limit/daily bag limit of 5 fish. For Olson's Flowage and the Black River downstream of Highway 10 – Minimum length limit of 26"/daily bag limit of 2 fish.

■ GREEN LAKE and MARQUETTE COUNTIES

Lake Puckaway - 5,039 Acres, 5' average depth

This lake continues to be the premier northern pike fishery for this area. The "bite" is typically controlled by forage availability and gizzard shad, the primary forage, appear to be down. High densities and good size structure, with good numbers in the 28-30" range, should provide plenty of action. There are three good access points on the south shore in the village of Marquette and two developed landings on the north shore. The north shore landings can be tricky when water levels drop during the summer months.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

Rolling Stone Lake – 672 acres

Naturally reproducing, high density pike population; We did a survey here in 2012 and the bulk of the fish we saw then should be in the low to mid 20" range now.

■ 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 biologist Tammie Paoli holds a large female northern pike captured during a spring spawning survey led by UW-Green Bay.

■ MARATHON and PORTAGE COUNTIES

Lake Dubay - 6000 acres

The northern pike population in Lake Dubay from the 2014 survey indicates the population is low density with net catch at 0.42 fish per net-night. However 68% were larger than 21 inches and 26% greater than 28 inches. Current Regulation: No closed season, no minimum length limit, 5 fish bag limit. 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.

■ MARINETTE, OCONTO, BROWN and DOOR COUNTIES

Green Bay and tributaries

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 length 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. In winter, using a tip-up with a large shiner or dead smelt fished just off of the bottom in shallow water can work well. Current regulation for Green Bay and major tributaries: Open all year. Daily limit is 5. No length-minimum. Current regulation for all other Green Bay tributaries: Open 1st Saturday in May to 1st Sunday in March. Daily limit is 5. No length minimum. Access information: There are numerous boat access and tributary access locations along Green Bay. See the following websites for detailed information. In early spring, adult northern pike migrate from Green Bay in tributaries and ditches to spawn in shallow wetlands. Year class strength of northern pike is highly dependent on winter and spring precipitation and availability of quality wetlands. The late springs of 2013 and 2014 have been beneficial for northern pike production. A whopping 15,911 fry were recorded exiting a 16.5 acre wetland enhancement project area during the spring of 2013. By August of their first year, northern pike young would be around 10-13 inches. Many would be of a size desired by anglers by the time they are 2 and 3 years old.

■ OCONTO COUNTY

Bear Lake - 78 acres & **Munger Lake** - 97 acres

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. 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.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Thunder Lake - 1,835 acres. Experienced a substantial winterkill, but we still saw good numbers of northern pike in a June survey. Most fish measured in the teens and low 20s, while the largest pike was 26.9 inches.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Phillips Chain of Lakes —1,236 acres. Early spring fyke nets captured northern pike at a slightly higher rate in 2014 versus 2008, indicating a small increase in pike abundance in the Phillips Chain of Lakes, an impoundment connecting Duroy, Elk, Long, and Wilson lakes near Phillips, WI. Catch rates in Long and Wilson lakes doubled from 5 years earlier. The increase in pike abundance did not diminish their size struc-

ture. Rather, the proportion of pike over 28 inches in the Chain also doubled. Though pike were of low or even negative interest to stakeholders who helped draft the 2008 Fishery Management Plan, northern pike are easily catchable much of the time, providing additional angling opportunity under statewide fishing regulations.

■ RACINE COUNTY

Eagle Lake - 515 acres

Species population information: 25.8" average length, 29.5" maximum length (2013 survey) Current regulation: 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag Access information: A public boat launch with a large parking lot on the northeast side of the lake off Church Road at Eagle Lake County Park, another public boat launch with a large parking lot on the west side of the lake off Minnetonka Drive, and a third public boat launch on the south side of the lake off Eagle Road. The County Park provides shorefishing opportunities and other family activities. Eagle Lake currently has restrictive harvest regulations for several species following a recent chemical treatment. This allows northern pike to grow to trophy size of 40" and beyond.

■ ST CROIX COUNTY

Pine Lake - 107 acres

Pine Lake (Baldwin) is locally known for bass and pan fishing, however northern pike are the predominate game fish in the lake. During spring of 2014, fishery crews sampled 422 pike ranging from 11 to 39 inches. The adult population estimate was 4.4 adults per acre. Pike in the 22- to 32-inch length-range were common. Seventy percent of the population was over 21 inches and 30% was over 26 inches. Six fish were sampled over 35 inches. Current regulation: There is no minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 in total. Access information: The St. Croix County Parks Department maintains a public park, boat landing and shore fishing stations on the east side of the lake. The boat landing is located about 4 miles north of the Village of Baldwin. Take 110th Avenue 1/2 mile west of STH 63, then go 1.5 miles north on 205th Street. Pine Lake (Baldwin) is a very fertile, productive fishing lake. The lake is supported by two aeration systems that oxygenate the lake during winter periods. Bluegill and black crappie are common. Quality largemouth bass fishing is also available.

■ SAUK COUNTY

Lake Delton – 249 acres

During a fyke netting survey in the spring of 2014, 241 northern pike were captured. Of these, 46% were larger than 28 inches, 19% were larger than 32 inches, and 14% were larger than 34 inches. Two individuals larger than 40 inches were captured. Lake Delton offers the chance to catch large northern pike, particularly through the ice in the winter. Current Regulation: Minimum length limit is 26 inches, daily bag limit is 2 fish. Access information: Lake Delton is located in the Village of Lake Delton, near Wisconsin Dells. There is one boat launch located in a bay on the south side of the lake at the intersection of Canyon Dr. and Adams St. The launch is paved, there is a boarding dock, and there is parking available for 11-15 vehicle-trailer units. There are two additional smaller ramps located on the northwest end of the lake; one on Hiawatha Dr., and one on Clare Isle Dr. There is also good shore fishing access on the north end of the lake consisting of a free public fishing pier accessed from Dam Rd., and all along the shore in the area of the breach along CTH A. Something that the angler might find interesting: Following the draining of Lake Delton due to the breach along CTH A during the June 2008 flooding, the northern pike population rebuilt itself without the aid of stocking. The lake was repopulated by fish that moved downstream from Mirror Lake, where excellent northern pike natural reproduction occurs due to abundant spawning habitat.

■ SAWYER COUNTY

Lake Chetac - 2,400 acres

Lake Chetac offers great pike fishing for those looking for above average size. Chetac is a very productive lake that offers good angling for many species, but pike are the biggest predator in the lake and offer top end size. A netting survey in 2013 found roughly 1 in 4 pike to be over 28 inches with some fish approaching 40 inches. Pike are moderate to low density in Chetac which allows them to get to better sizes. There are several public boat ramps on Chetac and Birch Lake (connected). Statewide bag limits apply.

■ TAYLOR COUNTY

Chequamegon Waters Flowage —2,714 acres. Consistent with the 2010 assessment, our early spring 2014 netting survey reflected a northern pike population in moderately high abundance with better-than-average size structure in Chequamegon Waters Flowage. This shallow and fertile impoundment on the Yellow River, locally known as Miller Dam Flowage, is located about 20 miles west of Medford, WI. Percentages of quality- and preferred-size pike



Chad Leanna, LTE fisheries technician, hoists two northern pike from a fyke netting survey on Chequamegon Waters Flowage (Miller Dam), Taylor County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

(78% and 15%) increased slightly from 2010 when 68% were 21 inches or longer and 11% were at least 28 inches long. This minor improvement may be associated with a corresponding small increase in the abundance of pike's favorite food, yellow perch. Proportions of memorable-size pike over 34 inches remained stable at 2 – 3%, even though fishing pressure directed toward pike is perceived to be high. Because the population meets or exceeds its size objectives (5 – 10% ≥ 28" and 1 – 2% ≥ 34"), current management under statewide harvest regulations is adequate, and no changes are anticipated at this time. If pike grow as fast as we suspect in this fertile system, restricting the harvest of large fish with a high minimum length limit could reveal Miller Dam's potential to produce trophy-size northerns 44 inches and longer.

■ VERNON, TREMPLEAU, and LA CROSSE COUNTIES

Mississippi River, Pools 7 and 8, Trempealeau, La Crosse and Vernon counties—37,270 acres. Northern pike numbers sampled in pools 7 and 8 during the springs of 2008 through 2014 from Genoa to Trempealeau, Wisconsin showed increasing numbers. Catch rates from spring netting have doubled from the period 2008–2011 to the period 2012–2014. Anglers are reporting a similar increase in northerns. Sixty-one percent of pike were over 21 inches; 15 percent were over 28 inches while five per-

cent were larger than 30 inches. The largest northern pike we've sampled was 42.5 inches and weighed over 22.5 pounds. Presently the Mississippi River season is open year-round, with a bag limit of five fish with no size restrictions. Access information: The best way to find a boat landing is to go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/ or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=2147484334. Increasingly, river municipalities are charging boat access fees.

■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Lake Geneva - 5401 acres
Species population information: 26.2" average length, 33.0" maximum length (2013 survey) Current regulation: 32" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag Access information: Six public boat launches are available on Geneva: Lake Street in Fontana (west side), E Geneva Street in Williams Bay (north side), Chapin Road (north side - no parking), Wrigley Drive in Lake Geneva (northeast side), Hillside Road (southeast side) and Linn Road (south side). Shorefishing opportunities are available at several parks and municipal fishing piers across the lake.

Delavan Lake - 1906 acres
Species population information: 22.7" average length, 30.0" maximum length (2013 survey) Current regulation: 32" minimum length limit, 1 daily bag Access information: A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at STH 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the STH 50 boat launch.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Lower Phantom Lake - 373 surface acres
Species population information: 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.

Big Muskego Lake - 2200 surface acres
Species population information: 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 conservative minimum length and bag limits provide exciting catch and release opportunities for bass and pike.

PANFISH



■ BROWN, DOOR, MARINETTE and OCONTO COUNTIES

Green Bay - The challenge for anglers continues to be finding schools of perch as they follow food sources and preferred water temperatures. Open water harvest of yellow perch in 2013 was 215,422 fish (66,236 lbs) compared to 148,980 fish (29,752 lbs)

in 2012. Similar to recent years, the majority of the open water harvest (39%) was by boat anglers launching at ramps at Door and Kewaunee Counties. Boat anglers launching in Oconto County experienced an uptick in perch harvest, with 24% of the open water harvest in 2013, compared to 11% in 2012. Boat anglers launching in Brown County accounted for 19% of the harvest while the remaining 18% of harvest was by pier, shore, or stream anglers, or by anglers who responded to the moored boat survey. The 2014 open water harvest estimates will be available by spring of 2015. Harvest of perch through the ice continues to be a minor component of the overall harvest, with an estimated 19,139 fish taken between January 1 and March 15, 2014. 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. Growth rates of yellow perch in the productive waters of Green Bay are much faster than most inland lake populations. For example, a 4-year old perch from the Bay averages 10 inches, while a 4-year old fish from most inland lakes would be around 6 inches.

■ BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River - Pool 5 and lower Pool 4
2014 fall electrofishing surveys showed good numbers of yellow perch. Overall, 32 adult and juvenile yellow perch were captured per hour. Nearly 10% of surveyed yellow perch were greater than eight inches. Surveyed fish topped out just over twelve inches. Current regulation: Daily limit 25. Access information: Check DNR website for access locations in both pools. The 2014 survey showed great survival for this year's yellow perch hatch signaling good fishing into the foreseeable future. Bluegill: Population information: 2014 fall electrofishing surveys showed a healthy bluegill fishery. Overall, nearly 40 adult and juvenile bluegill were captured per hour. One in five surveyed bluegill were greater than six inches, while twelve percent 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. How rare is a 10-inch bluegill on the Mississippi River? Recent surveys have measured nearly 30,000 bluegill, and only one exceeded the 10-inch mark. If you catch one, enjoy its uniqueness. It's a special fish!

■ BURNETT COUNTY

Yellow Lake - 2283 Acres
A 2014 spring electrofishing survey found a very good bluegill population in Yellow Lake. Bluegill averaged 7.1 inches with 62% of the sample being greater than 7.0 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 fish. Access information: There are three public access ramps on Yellow Lake off of Jeffries Rd., Lake Ave, and Yellow Lake Rd.

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

The Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. Acres and River Length: 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. Species Population Information: Panfishing opportunities have been increasing on the Winnebago System since the early 2000s mostly due to increases in aquatic vegetation within the pool lakes. Yellow perch are the most sought after panfish species and recent 2014 survey results indicated that the adult population was predominantly comprised of 6-7.9" fish (49.0% of females and 69.5% of males). However, the popula-



A happy, young angler shows off his first fish, a Wisconsin River bluegill from Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company's accessible fishing pier. Wisconsin River below the Rainbow Dam, Oneida County. Photo: Jeff Pennucci.

tion also boasted a relatively high percentage of fish 9" and larger (40.9% of females and 14.2% of males). The yellow perch fishery on the Winnebago System is a boom/bust fishery where fishing can be extraordinary when strong year classes of 2-3 year old fish persist. Unfortunately catch rates of yellow perch have been decreasing in recent years and we appear to currently be in a bust cycle. The good news is our perch grow rapidly, meaning it won't take long for the next strong year class to recruit to harvestable lengths. Black Crappie exhibit a similar boom/bust cycle as described for yellow perch. However, we did have a very strong year class of black crappie in 2010 that has provided exceptional crappie fishing over the last couple years. Catch rates of black crappie in recent bottom trawl assessments have been decreasing, but this year class still dominates the population and should provide good fishing opportunities for quality 10.5-11.5" fish. Recent surveys indicate that the bluegill population within the Winnebago Pool Lakes is predominantly composed of 6-6.9" fish (47.8% of male population and 35.0% of female population), while also containing a respectable contribution of quality fish that are 7" or longer (31.2% of males and 15.4% of females). Age data show that the majority of the fish are 3-4 years old and exhibiting growth rates above the state average. Current Regulations: The season is open year round for panfish with an aggregate daily bag limit of 25 fish and no minimum length limit on any species. Access Information: There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system. They range from multi-lane launch facilities with ample parking to small unpaved town access at road ends. Many of the larger, more developed sites require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Marsh-Miller Lake - 436 acres
Marsh-miller Lake, an impoundment of O'Neil Creek, is a productive system that has been known to produce quality panfish. A spring 2014 electrofishing survey found good numbers of panfish despite a moderate winterkill during the harsh winter of 2013-2014. Although panfish numbers were down compared to historic surveys, the winterkill may help the fishery by increasing growth rates making for bigger panfish in the upcoming years. Current Regulations: 25 fish bag limit, no minimum length limit Access information: Boat landing at Birch Point Resort

■ CLARK and JACKSON COUNTIES

Lake Arbutus, Clark and Jackson Counties, 840 acres; Olson's Flowage, Jackson County, 253 acres; and Arbutus backwater lakes (Emerald and Buckhorn), Jackson County, 30 acres (Emerald) and 49 acres (Buckhorn). Species Population Information: based on spring 2014 netting results and catch rates expressed as average number of fish captured per net lift. Yellow perch population characteristics were not recorded in 2014 for Emerald and Buckhorn Lakes.

BLACK CRAPPIE. - **Lake Arbutus:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 6.8 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.9/net lift and the largest fish captured was 14". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2012. Total catch rate was 15.5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 1.7 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 12". **Olson's Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 80 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 2.3/net lift and the largest fish captured was 11.5". The last netting survey was conducted in 1992. Total catch rate was 8.9 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.6 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 12". **Emerald:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 26.5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 2/net lift and the largest fish captured was 12.5". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 20.2 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.3 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 11". **Buckhorn:** Total catch rate was 68 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 3.3/net lift and the largest fish captured was 13". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 11 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift and maximum size captured was 11".

BLUEGILL. - **Lake Arbutus:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 1.1 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.5/net lift, and the largest fish captured was 9". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2012. Total catch rate was 4.6 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift, and the largest fish captured was 8". **Olson's Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 219 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 32/net lift and the largest fish captured was 9". The last netting



A nice keeper perch caught off of Oconto Park II in late summer.

survey was conducted in 1992. Total catch rate was 4.7 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.1 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 8". **Emerald:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 13.7 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.2/net lift and maximum size captured was 8". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 1.5 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0 per net lift, and the largest fish captured was 7.5". **Buckhorn:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 23.6 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.7/net lift and the largest fish captured was 8.5". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 3.9 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 0.4 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 8.5".

YELLOW PERCH. - **Lake Arbutus:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 4.5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.6/net lift, and

maximum size captured was 12". The last comparable netting survey was conducted in 2012. Total catch rate was 0.1 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 8". **Olson's Flowage:** Total catch rate in 2014 was 13.5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0/net lift and maximum size captured was 9". The last netting survey was conducted in 1992. Total catch rate was 2.8 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0 per net lift and the largest fish captured was 5.8". Regulation: Lake Arbutus no length limit/10 daily aggregate bag. Olson's Flowage, Emerald and Buckhorn lakes have no minimum length limit/25 daily aggregate bag limit for panfish. Other Information: 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.

■ CRAWFORD, GRANT and VERNON COUNTIES

Upper Mississippi River Pools 9, 10, and -20,561 acres of open water and backwater lakes in a 65-mile stretch of river. Panfish are the most sought after fish on the Mississippi River. Bluegill black and white crappie and yellow perch populations looked very good in DNR fall electrofishing surveys. In 2015, anglers should find abundant numbers of bluegill in the 6 to 8-inch range and crappies in 8- to 12-inch range. Yellow perch continue to increase in number and size and will provide excellent angling opportunities in the future. Ice anglers should continue to find success in the backwater lakes up and down the river. It is during this winter pastime when the Mississippi River brings wonderful experiences with great views, unique fishing opportunities, and fast action. However, anglers should beware of thin ice near flowing sloughs and areas entering backwater lakes. The Mississippi River has a bag limit of 25 fish for each species and a continuous open season. Access information: 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 an 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/ or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html Up-to-date fishing information may best be obtained on-line from In Depth Fishing in-depthoutdoors.com/community/forums/forum/fishing/species/pannies/

■ LA CROSSE, VERNON and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

Mississippi River, Pools 7 and 8 — 37,270 acres. Panfish numbers sampled in pools 7 and 8 during the fall of 2014 from Genoa to Trempealeau, Wisconsin showed good numbers. Areas sampled in these pools ranked average among all other similar Mississippi River locations sampled since 2011. Eight percent of bluegill was over 7 inches; one in ten yellow perch were greater than nine inches while 16 percent of crappies were over 10 inches. We found an unusually large number of yellow bass in the Black River Channel in the vicinity of the north side of La Crosse. If you want to catch this uncommon Mississippi River fish, this is the place to do it. We have not seen numbers like this anywhere else on this large river. Access information: The best way to find a boat landing is to go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/ or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=2147484334. Increasingly, river municipalities are charging boat access fees.

■ 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; It probably benefits from partial winterkills, almost on an annual basis, due to the abundance of aquatic plants in this shallow lake burning up the oxygen under the ice; These winterkills probably help to maintain balance of predators and prey and keep the abundant young panfish thinned out enough to allow fast growth to occur.



A basket of bluegills from Washburn County will make a great dinner (or two). Photo: Jon Hansen

Hidden Gems on County Forest – Langlade 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 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, enough said

Hidden Gems on 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 and explore, you just might find a spot you'd never tell your relatives about!

■ MANITOWOC, KEWAUNEE and DOOR COUNTIES

Manitowoc and Kewaunee County lakes are all less than 140 acres, Door County 250 to 1200 acres

Inland lakes in Manitowoc County are small and easy to fish with small boats. 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. Experienced anglers or beginners can spend an enjoyable day of fishing on these lakes. Lakes in Kewaunee County are also small in size. East Alaska, West Alaska, Heidemann, and Krohns Lakes all have public access and are great places for family fishing because they can be fished from small boats. 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. Panfish in these lakes have good size structure with good numbers

of 8" panfish in them. 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

Norrie Lake - 99 acres

Norrie Lake was surveyed with nets in 2012 during the summer. The lake appears to have had a consistent bluegill fishery with fish reaching 9 inches. The percentage of fish greater than 6 inches has remained steady since 2003 at 46% in 2012. The size structure was excellent with a strong class of 7 inch bluegill and a strong class of young-of-year fish. Current Regulation: No length-limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. Access: The Town of Norrie maintains a boat landing off of Norrie Road. Additional Information: Norrie Lake is a wall-eye initiative lake and received a stocking of extended growth walleye in 2014.

■ MARATHON AND PORTAGE COUNTIES

Lake Dubai - 6000 Acres

Lake Dubai was surveyed in 2014, a total of 1,965 black crappie were captured at a rate of 9.5 fish per net-night. Average length was 10.0 inches and 71% of the fish caught were greater than 10 inches. There appears to be a very strong class of fish moving through the fishery, which will be available to anglers for at least the next 2 years. Current Regulation: No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept. 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. Additional Information: In 2014 fisheries staff inserted floy tags near the dorsal fins of 960 black crappie in Lake Dubai. This information will be valuable in helping evaluate the fishery in the coming years. Anglers catching a tagged fish can assist the department by calling the telephone number on the tag and reporting the fish length, location caught, and the tag number.

■ MARINETTE COUNTY

Lake Noquebay - 2,398

Big bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and perch can be found in Lake Noquebay located just northeast of Crivitz. The last survey (2014) revealed numerous bluegill over 8 inches and crappie over 10 inches. Noquebay has good weed growth in certain areas of lake and the water is moderately stained. Current Regulations: 25 in total (bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, crappie) Access information: Lake Noquebay can be accessed from a boat ramp located on the northwest side of the lake on Boat Landing Road or from Lake Noquebay County Park.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Long Lake – 113 acres. We found good numbers of bluegill with some fish up to 7.5 inches.

Minocqua and Kawaguesaga Lakes Bluegill up to 8 inches.

Squash Lake – 396 acres. Bluegill up to 8 inches.

Squirrel Lake – 1,317 acres. Good numbers of 9- to 10-inch crappies and 7- to 9-inch perch. Three Lakes Chain. Abundant 7-inch perch, along with good numbers of 9-inch and a few 11-inch crappies.

Thunder Lake – 1,835-acres. Despite a large winterkill last year, Thunder had a bumper crop of small perch under 7 inches, fair numbers of crappies of all sizes up to 11 inches, and a moderate number of bluegill x pumpkinseed hybrids under 8 inches.

■ POLK COUNTY

Balsam Lake - 1,901 acres

Respectable numbers of 7-to 9-inch bluegills were documented in the spring 2014 electrofishing survey. Current regulation: Panfish in Balsam Lake are managed with the statewide regulation- 25 fish bag limit and no minimum length limit for bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch (in aggregate). Access information: There are four boat landings on Balsam Lake, all of which are capable of handling most boats. Balsam Lake also offers excellent fishing opportunities for yellow perch and black crappie.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Solberg Lake —859 acres. A netting survey in fall 2013 revealed that black crappies in Solberg Lake had attained angler-supported benchmarks for population abundance (10 – 20 crappies per net-night) and size structure (20 – 40% at least 10 inches). Our electrofishing capture rate in late spring 2014 was within the range (75 – 150 fish per hour) chosen to represent the desired moderate level of bluegill abundance. However with only 1% of bluegills over 8" in our survey, the bluegill population fell short of the ambitious length objective to have 15 – 20% at least 8 inches. A proposal to limit angler harvest to 5 sunfish, 5 crappies, and 5 perch (or 15 panfish daily) should help increase the percentage of bluegills over 8 inches and dampen the extreme fluctuations in black crappie abundance that often occur under current fishing regulations which allow anglers to keep 25 panfish of any size daily.



Evan Sniadajewski, LTE fisheries technician, Black Crappie from fyke netting survey on Thornapple Flowage, Rusk County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

■ SAWYER COUNTY

Moose Lake - 1,559 acres

Moose Lake offers a great setting to chase high quality crappie. Moose is located at the confluence of the West Fork of the Chippewa River and the Moose River and has dark stained water. Crappie are doing well in this lake and a recent DNR netting survey found about half of all crappie in the lake to be over 10 inches. The good crappie size can be attributed to an effective predator population of walleye that keep crappie from overpopulating and a 10 daily bag limit that has been in place for many years to prevent overharvest of large fish. Anglers looking to target 'slabs' in a beautiful northwoods setting should check out Moose. There are several public boat launches, a National Forest campground, and many miles of public shoreline and islands.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

Shawano Lake and Wolf River Pond - 6063 acres and 305 acres

Recent surveys conducted on Shawano Lake and Wolf River Pond indicates abundant populations of panfish. Electrofishing and netting surveys indicated moderate to high





You are never too young (or too old, for that matter) to enjoy Wisconsin's panfishing opportunities. Photo - Jon Hansen.

bluegill abundance with over 40% of catch over 6 inches and 20% over 7 inches. Black crappie were found at moderate abundance with 39% of catch over 10 inches. Yellow perch, rock bass and pumpkinseed were also found in moderate abundance. Current Regulation: Panfish regulations are statewide default for both waters. Access Information: Multiple public accesses are found on Shawano Lake with the primary boat ramps located at Swan Acres Rd, Cecil Village Park, Stark Rd, and County Park. Huckleberry Harbor in the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel has multiple ramps and ample parking. A large DNR property on the Southwest shoreline offers opportunities for wading anglers. Shawano Lake and connected water bodies can provide anglers with many options for fishing. Boats can navigate between Shawano Lake, Washington Lake and Wolf River Pond via the Shawano Lake Outlet Channel. The smaller waters are a nice option on windy days when Shawano Lake can be difficult to fish with smaller boats. The shallow nature of Shawano Lake offers opportunities for wading anglers – especially along the south shorelines off State Highway 22.

■ TAYLOR COUNTY

Chequamegon Waters Flowage —2,714 acres. Our capture rate of black crappies in fall 2013 fyke nets was near the upper end of the objective range (10 – 20 crappies per net-night) selected to represent the desired moderate population abundance—an increase of more than 4 times the capture rate in spring and fall 2010 fyke nets. Increased abundance can be attributed to the strong 2010 year class, represented by crappies 7.5 – 8.5 inches. The wide range of sizes indicates reliable recruitment with no missing year classes, so anglers can expect uninterrupted angling opportunity in foreseeable years. In our fall 2006, 2010, and 2013 surveys black crappies did not attain the desired size objective (30 – 50% at least 10 inches long). Age analysis using scales taken in fall 2010 revealed that mid-size crappies grew slower than average, so it is difficult to predict whether the 2010 year class will survive long enough to improve the population's size structure before the oldest crappies succumb to angling or natural causes of mortality. Our results reflect the cyclic nature of crappie populations whose abundance can vary with reproductive success and decline abruptly when anglers selectively harvest a high percentage of the largest adults. Fluctuations in crappie abundance related to harvest will probably continue under moderately heavy fishing pressure, but a proposal that would allow anglers to keep up to 5 sunfish, 5 crappies, and 5 perch (or 15 panfish daily) in May and June and 25 panfish daily the rest of the time may serve to increase the percentages of preferred-size

bluegills and black crappies and distribute the harvest more equitably among anglers and years.

■ WALWORTH COUNTY

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

■ WASHBURN COUNTY

Shell Lake - 2513
A 2013 survey showed large numbers of bluegill with approximately half of the sample being above 6 inches. Rock bass were the second most abundant panfish sampled with a mean length of 9.4 inches. Almost ¾ of rock bass were over 9 inches. Current regulation: No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 fish. Access: Concrete boat launch and public fishing pier near Hwy 63 in town of Shell Lake.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Okauchee Lake - 1157 acres
Crappie. 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 WDNR launch. The WDNR 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. A comprehensive spring netting survey implemented in 2013 and 2014 revealed excellent black crappie size structure and abundance.

Lower Genesee Lakes - 98 surface acres
Bluegill. Average Length – 7.5 inches. Current regulation: no minimum length, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: The public launch for Lower Genesee Lake is found on Lower Genesee Lake Road. This smaller kettle lake can provide a nice creel of bluegills. Lower Genesee Lake is stocked annually with trout in spring.

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 surface acres
Bluegill. Average Length – 6 inches. Current regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25. 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. Excellent habitat and water quality has resulted in a healthy gamefish population and excellent panfish growth rates. Spring netting efforts in 2014 revealed good numbers of large bluegills.

CATFISH



■ CRAWFORD, GRANT and VERNON COUNTIES

Upper Mississippi River Pools 9 & 10 - 20,561 acres of open water and backwater lakes and approximately 65-miles in length. Channel and flathead catfish remain a popular choice for anglers on the Mississippi. Channel cats show good numbers of fish in the 12- to 24-inch range with some nearing 30 inches. Flatheads also have good numbers of fish in the 12- to 24-inch range with a few large fish reaching 36 inches and longer. Channels can be targeted in backwater channels with moderate to fast flows and lots of woody debris. A popular method is using "stink bait" while deadline fishing from shore. Flathead are more commonly targeted in larger flowing channels behind wingdams and woody debris using live bait. Access information: 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 an 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/ or the US Fish and Wildlife Service website and download the pool maps fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/map.html

■ DANE COUNTY

While not known as a catfish lake, **Lake Mendota** is gaining a reputation as THE place to catch truly large specimens of Ole' Whiskers. Spring fyke netting efforts, confined largely to the lake's northern basin where the Yahara river enters Mendota, yielded 426 fish averaging 29.9 inches and 9.8 pounds. Net crews saw fish in excess of 36 inches and pushing the 20 lb. window. The mouth of Sixmile creek and off of rocky Maple Bluff are productive areas, as is lake Cherokee above STH 113. Cats bite easily on cut bait or large gobs of crawlers still fished on the bottom. Heavy line and sturdy poles are required. Catfish are delicious smoked but anglers should follow consumption advisories on large old, oily fish. Bring a camera as action begins with warming water in late spring when fish go actively on the bite. Shore fishing opportunities exist on Cherokee's east shore while boat fishing will allow best opportunities in the mouth of the Yahara at the upper end of the lake. Gov. Nelson State park off CTH M serves as a convenient launch site.

■ GRANT COUNTY

Grant River - 7.0 miles of channel catfish water
The Lower Grant River supports a fishable population of channel catfish. Recent hoop net surveys sampled 301 yearling, and adult channel catfish from 8.0 to 27.2 inches with an average size of 13.2 inches. Twenty eight percent of the sample was 15 inches or greater. Eight percent of the sample was 20 inches or greater. Current regulation: No length limit with a daily bag limit of 10. Access information: The Grant River does not currently have public accessible bank fishing opportunities for channel catfish. Walk in anglers may access the river via road crossings or permission from private landowners. The lower stretch is navigable by boat. Seasonal log jams determine the number of stream miles open for boating. Typically 2.5 to 5.0 miles are open. The nearest boat access is Potosi Point (no fee). Navigate upstream approximately 1 mile on the Mississippi River to the mouth the Grant River. The Grant River Recreation Area is located on the Mississippi River 3 miles downstream from the mouth of the Grant River. Run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the campground features a tent camping area, 63 large RV sites, 50 amp electrical service, sewer dump station, shower building, and boat launch. There is a boat ramp fee, check with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website for current rates.

■ JEFFERSON and DODGE COUNTIES

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River/Crawfish River/Bark River - 10,000 lake acres + 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 inches and 9 pounds. Flathead catfish ranged from 20.2 to 37 inches 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 and 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 (35+ inches) exist in all major rivers in Jefferson and Dodge Counties.

■ MARATHON and PORTAGE COUNTIES

Lake Dubay - 6000 acres
During the Lake Dubay 2014 survey we captured a total of 642 channel catfish at a rate of 3.1 fish per net-night. Of these fish, 90% were larger than 16 inches; 14% greater than 24 inches; and 4 % larger than 30 inches. Average size was 19.7 inches Current regulation: No closed season; no minimum length; bag limit is 10. Access: Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNR's online boating access site. Anglers in central Wisconsin can enjoy fishing sections of the Wisconsin River where abundance of channel catfish is at or above the statewide catch average.

■ MARQUETTE, GREEN LAKE and WAUSHARA COUNTIES

Fox River - Channel catfish numbers remain high and are one of the most sought after species on the river. The river is full of habitat that is ideal for this species. Recruitment is



A very healthy, 47" flathead catfish sampled during a DNR electrofishing survey on Pool 10 in 2014

typically very high and it is not uncommon to see several hundred fingerlings in our annual fall shocker surveys. Fish in the 2 to 5 lb. range are common. Flathead populations continue to remain stable and are also becoming more popular on the river. Catch rates in our recent hoop net surveys continue to remain stable. Since the implementation of the new regulation in 2009; the number of fish over 36" continues to increase. Over

half (53%) of the fish sampled in 2013 were in the harvest slot size of 30" to 36". Length and bag limits for each species follow the Winnebago waters regulation; Channel catfish – open all year, bag of 25, but only 24 if one flathead catfish is possessed, with no minimum length limit. Flathead catfish—open first Saturday in May until September 30, daily bag of one, 30" minimum but fish from 36" to 42" may not be kept. Plenty of developed access areas are located along the river from Montello to Berlin including areas around Princeton.

■ RACINE COUNTY

Fox River - 6.5 miles from Waterford up to the county line
Very high catch rates of 20"+ channel catfish, including fish up to 30" and 10 pounds
Current regulation: no length limit, 10 total catfish
Access information: One public boat launch at the Waterford Dam off N River Road and another public boat launch upstream of the impoundment off Bridge Road. Excellent shorefishing access at the park immediately above and below the Waterford Dam.

■ SHAWANO, OUTAGAMIE and WAUPACA COUNTIES

Wolf River - Recent hoop net surveys conducted on the Wolf River indicate moderate to high numbers of channel catfish with over 66% of fish over 20 inches and the largest fish at 33.8 inches. Flathead catfish were found in lower numbers but exhibited good size with 73% of catch over 30 inches and the largest at 42.7 inches. 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



Fisheries technician Josh Krall with a big Fox River channel catfish from the Waterford impoundment in the summer of 2014.
Photo: Luke Roffler

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. For additional information on DNR state land go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/. Movement studies conducted on flathead catfish in the Wolf River indicate high seasonal movement during spring warm-up with fish traveling many miles from wintering sites in the lower Wolf River and Upriver lakes to over-summer habitat throughout the upper Wolf River. Movement studies also show most flathead catfish prefer habitat associated with large wood structure.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Illinois Fox River - This report refers to the 12 mile reach from I-43 downstream to De-noon 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

Petenwell Lake - 23,173 acres

In 2014, we completed the first survey to ever target flathead catfish on the upper part of Petenwell Lake. We caught 67 flathead catfish ranging from 7.2 inches to 40.5 inches. The 40.5 inch fish weighed close to 40lbs. We caught 5 flatheads per mile while electrofishing, we were pleasantly surprised to catch this many fish and some very nice sized ones, too. Current regulation: No closed season; no minimum length; bag limit is 10 in total (channel and flathead catfish). Access: Petenwell Lake has multiple boat launches and opportunities for shore fishing. Search "Petenwell Lake" on our website dnr.wi.gov for public access locations. Additional Information: **Change for 2014!** Safe eating guidelines for catfish on Petenwell Lake are now more strict. Due to dioxin, PCB, and mercury testing, it is recommended to Do Not Eat catfish larger than 20 inches. Women up to age 50 (child bearing age) and children (under age 15) may safely eat 1 meal per month of catfish less than 20 inches. All men and women older than 50, may safely eat 1 meal per month of catfish less than 20 inches. For more information see our website and search "Consumption Guidelines".

LAKE STURGEON



■ CHIPPEWA and EAU CLAIRE COUNTIES

Lower Chippewa River - The Lower Chippewa River (Lake Holcombe downstream to the Mississippi River) offers anglers an opportunity to harvest a lake sturgeon greater than 60 inches during the hook-and-line season. If an angler intends to harvest a fish, they must first purchase a harvest tag and, if successful, register their catch. The 2014 season was most successful on the Lower Chippewa River since the 60-inch minimum length limit has been in effect. Nineteen lake sturgeon were harvested, a 26% increase from last year. The greatest harvest was from below the Dells Pond Dam and the Chippewa Falls Flowage where six fish were harvested at each location. Anglers also reported catching numerous sublegal fish, a sign of a healthy sturgeon population. Night crawlers or cut bait presented in deep holes of the river is a good combination for a successful sturgeon fishing trip.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Flambeau River - Hook-and-line sturgeon anglers enjoyed excellent success in September 2014, the eighth season after a higher minimum length limit and the reduced season length went into effect to address concerns about increasing pressure on Wisconsin's lake sturgeon fisheries. Anglers registered 12 lake sturgeon that measured at least 60 inches—the highest annual harvest in the Upper Chippewa Basin since more restrictive regulations took effect statewide in 2007. Anglers took seven sturgeon from Flambeau River, four from the Chippewa River, and one from the Jump River in Price and Rusk counties. The heaviest sturgeon weighed 70.5 pounds, and the longest sturgeon measured 70.0 inches. Our Fishery technicians examined the entrails and fin bones that anglers provided to help us manage this important fishery. The ratio of females to males harvested in 2014 was 3:1—identical to the sex ratio in the 2013 harvest. They also counted the rings on cross-sections cut from fin bones, similar to the way the age of trees is estimated. The eight sturgeon that were aged in the 2014 harvest were 30 – 45 years old. As intend-



Evan Sniadajewski, LTE fisheries technician, Lake Sturgeon from the East Fork Chippewa River, Sawyer County. Photo Taken By Jeff Scheirer.

ed, the revised rules dramatically reduced the harvest of females, allowing them to reproduce more than once before reaching harvestable size. Popular shorefishing spots include the tailwaters of dams on medium- and large-size rivers

INLAND TROUT



■ ASHLAND COUNTY

Beaver and Cammerer Lakes:

These lakes are 35 and 19 acres, respectively. Both put-and-take trout fisheries are stocked annually with legal-sized trout (brook trout in Beaver and rainbow trout in Cammerer). Both lakes are category 2: 7-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of 5. Access exists via boat launches at both lakes.

■ BARRON COUNTY

South Fork Hay River - There is a 2.7-mile stretch of the South Fork Hay River in Barron County that is classified trout water; however, some of the best trout water is closest to the Barron-Dunn County line. The trout water also extends into Dunn County. The brook trout population in the lower portion of the South Fork Hay River in Barron County commonly has electrofishing catch rates of 2,000 to 4,000 trout per mile, which is considered very high for the area. With the high density, most of the catchable trout are between 5-10 inches. Current regulation: South Fork Hay River is managed with a category 4 trout regulation, so the minimum length limit on brook trout is 8 inches with a 3 fish bag limit. Access information: Anglers can access some of the best trout water off 1450th Ave on the Barron/Dunn County line and CTY K. The South Fork Hay River is not stocked in Barron County and the brook trout population is maintained through natural reproduction.

■ BUFFALO, JACKSON and TREMPEALEAU COUNTIES

Area Trout Streams – Based on 2014 survey results. Reproduction: Overall increase in brook trout and stable brown trout reproduction. Adults: Overall decrease in catch rate of both brook and brown trout. Legal (depending on regulation): Overall decrease in catch rate of both brook and brown trout. Drought conditions in 2012 affected reproduction and adult trout densities leading into the 2013 season, and combined with drought conditions in the latter part of 2013, adult and legal size densities were generally adversely affected during 2014 as well. However, 2014 surveys found brook trout reproduction rebounding and brown trout reproduction remaining relatively stable. These surveys also found some systems such as the Elk (Trempealeau County), Buffalo, Trempealeau, and Halls showing signs of rebounding adult trout densities. Supplemental trout stocking from DNR and Cooperative hatcheries may bolster some negative effects of last couple year's drought.

Habitat restoration projects in 2014 improved stream conditions and angler access in Waumandee, Danuser, Yaeger Valley, and Eagle Creeks (Buffalo County), and Borst Valley and North Branch Beaver Creeks (Trempealeau County). Many thanks to our partners in the Cooperative Trout Rearing program and Habitat Restoration program for providing more stocked fish, fishing access, and better habitat for our area streams! Regulation: Please see the Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations for applicable size and bag limit restrictions for the streams you fish.

■ CHIPPEWA, DUNN and EAU CLAIRE COUNTIES

Elk Creek - 18 miles

Elk Creek meanders through Chippewa, Eau Claire and Dunn Counties before it empties into the Chippewa River. Elk Creek is popular among anglers because of the quality trout fishery and ease of public access. Anglers can access the creek at one of the numerous state easements or state fishery areas. Trout populations in Elk Creek remain healthy as corroborated by 2014 electrofishing surveys. The creek is dominated by brown trout, but brook trout are found scattered throughout the system too. Trout densities are high, averaging approximately 2,500 per mile. Generally, larger brown trout were found in the lower reaches, with fish over 18 inches present.

■ DUNN COUNTY

South Fork of the Hay River - Four miles of Class I trout water from the Dunn/Barron County downstream. The remaining 17 miles is Class II brook trout water. Electrofishing surveys on the South Fork during 2014 show the headwater region to contain brook trout density and quality (8 inches and greater) at the 95 percentile for the State of Wisconsin. Current regulation: The brook trout length limit is 8 inches and the bag limit is 3. Access information: The South Fork lies in the northwest corner of Dunn County. Most of the South Fork passes through private land, however road access is plentiful. Several public fishing easements are located near the CTH K crossing north of Connorsville, look for DNR signs posting public access. Legal size trout are stocked annually between the villages of Connorsville and Boyceville. An occasional trophy brook trout can be found in the South Fork.

■ GRANT COUNTY

Rountree Branch - 6.0 miles of trout water
The Rountree Branch supports a good population of brown trout. Recent surveys sampled 226 yearling and adult brown trout per mile ranging from 6.4 to 21.2 inches with an average length of 11.1 inches. Twenty seven percent of the brown trout sampled were 12 inches or greater. Current Regulation: Nine inch minimum with a daily bag limit of 3. Access information: The city of Platteville maintains public trails along much of the Rountree Branch. Anglers are able to access the stream from these trails. Historically the Rountree Branch did not support a population of brown trout. The stream was inundated with runoff from mining waste. During the late 1980's and early 1990's the University of Platteville, City of Platteville, local conservation groups, and DNR removed much of the mining waste contributing to the runoff. They also worked with local businesses and agriculture producers to develop runoff management plans. It did not take long for the water quality to improve. Brown trout were then introduced and the rest as they say is history. The Rountree Branch now supports a naturally reproducing population with no stocking needed.

■ GREEN LAKE COUNTY

Big Green Lake - 7,346 acres

Wisconsin's deepest inland lake and one of only three that contain Lake trout, contains a healthy, stocked Lake Trout fishery. These fish are slow growing, but long lived. Fish



DNR Fish technician Ronald Rhode holds a 27.3 inch male brown trout collected during a fall survey on the lower Peshtigo River.

from recent surveys measured 11.5 to 33.5" with an average length of 19.8". 59% of fish sampled were of quality size (20") or better. Lake trout season opens the first Saturday in January and runs through September 30th. Daily bag limit is 2 and the minimum length limit is 17". There are a number of developed landings around the lake and in the City of Green Lake. Some of these landings do require a fee.

■ IRON COUNTY

Weber and Plunkett Lakes: - At 61 and 48 acres, respectively, these put-and-take fisheries are stocked annually with legal-sized rainbow trout. The current regulation on both lakes is Category 2: 7 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. Both have access via public boat launches (note Plunkett's is carry-in).

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

Brook Trout – 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 – 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 – Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; New Wood River
Brown Trout – Prairie River; North Branch Prairie River; Big Pine Creek; Big Rib River
Stocked Lakes – Tahoe (rainbows), Henson (brooks), Larson (rainbows), Moraine (rainbows)

■ MARINETTE COUNTY

Thunder Lake (135 acres) **South Branch Pemebonwon, North Branch Pemebonwon, Upper Middle Inlet, KC Creek and North Fork Thunder River**

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). 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. Over 5,000 brook trout are planted each year in both the North & South Branches of the Pemebonwon (10,000 total). Current Trout Regulations: dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/regulations/troutregs.html Access information: All of these streams can all be accessed from various road/stream crossings.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Brown trout are stocked in **Dorothy Lake** and **Bearskin River**; rainbows are planned for **Perch Lake, Hawk Lake** and **Little Bass Lake**, and brook trout for **Mercer Springs**. **Mercer Springs** – 1.8 acres. Provides walk-in shore-fishing for stocked brook trout. Directions: Take Hwy 70 west of Minocqua 5 miles; south on Kilawee Road 1 mile; at the first bend make a right turn into shared driveway; left fork of the driveway leads to DNR parking area. Short walk-in trail to the spring ponds. **Perch Lake** – 23 acres. Stocked with rainbow trout. Oneida County Parks have a handicap-accessible fishing pier, picnic area and shelter. No boat motors allowed. Directions: Take Hwy K west of Rhinelander 7 miles; south on Washburn Lake Road 1 mile; east on Trout Creek Road ½ mile; south on County Park Road. **Rocky Run Creek** A stream survey in the middle reaches found abundant chubs and shiners, with low numbers of wild brook trout up to 8.9 inches.

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Tomorrow River below Amherst - Hwy A and Hwy T

Surveys since 2012 indicate at Hwy A brown trout on average are captured at a rate of 330 fish/mile with 14% larger than 12 inches. At Hwy T brown trout are captured at a rate of 380 fish/mile with 11% larger than 12 inches. Catch rate was lower in 2014 due to higher water levels affecting the efficiency of sampling. Current Regulation: Regular inland trout season; from Amherst Dam to Durant Road brown trout minimum length is 12 inches and brook trout 8 inches; the bag limit is 3 fish in total. Below Durant Road the minimum length for brown trout is 18 inches and for brook trout 12 inches, gear restriction is artificial lures only; the bag limit is 1 fish in total. Access: The Tomorrow River can be accessed from numerous road crossings and from parking areas along the Richard Hemp Fishery Area. See the Fabulous Fishing Project for more information on trout habitat work below Amherst.

Ditches 2 and 3

Ditch 3 was surveyed at Isherwood Road in 2012 and brook trout were captured at a rate of 95 fish/mile with 28% of larger than 7 inches. Ditch 2 was surveyed at Hwy F in 2013 and brook trout were captured at a rate of 305 fish/mile with 65% larger than 7 inches. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; minimum length is 7 inches; the bag limit is 5 fish. Access: The Ditches are accessible at most road crossings. Additional Information: Areas surveyed were upstream of County Hwy Z.

Emmons Creek

Fall survey work on Emmons Creek for 2014 captured brown trout at a rate of 1300 fish/mile which is comparable to the long term average of about 1500 fish/mile. 28% were larger than the 7 inches which is har-



Jennifer Bergman, Wood, Adams and Juneau County fisheries biologist, with a brown trout caught in the Tomorrow River, Portage County.

vestable size. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; minimum length is 7 inches; the bag limit is 5 fish. Access: Emmons Creek is accessible from Stratton Lake Road parking areas, walk-in access on the Ice Age Trail, and other road crossings in Portage as well as Waupaca County. Additional Information: Areas surveyed were upstream of Stratton Lake Road and on DNR lands in Waupaca County.

Flume Creek

Fall survey work on Flume Creek for 2014 captured brown trout at a rate of 147 fish per mile which is up from 80 fish/mile in 2013. 16% of brown trout were larger than 9 inches. Brook trout numbers were 364 fish/mile, which is lower than the long term average of 750 fish/mile, but up 300 fish/mile in 2013. 13% of brook trout were larger than 9 inches. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; brown trout and brook trout minimum length 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. Additional Information: Areas surveyed included near County Hwy T and Hwy A.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

North Branch Embarrass River

Electrofishing surveys conducted in 2014 indicated brook trout density for adult size fish has remained at high levels with catch rates ranking >90th percentile (when compared to statewide data) for 5+ and 8+ inch trout. Current regulation: Category 2 (7 inch minimum, 5 daily bag limit) Access Information: Fishing access is primarily limited to road crossings. Shawano County access is located at separate properties off County Highway D and A near Bowler.

■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Onion River and its tributaries - 10 miles of Class I brown trout waters

2014 surveys yielded an average length of 8.8 inches, with a maximum length of 16 inches. We saw catch rates of up to 741 fish per mile which puts it around the 83th 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



One of the most colorful fishes that swims in Wisconsin's waters, the brook trout, is returned from whence it came.

■ SAUK COUNTY

Dell Creek - Dell Creek offers nearly 12 miles of Class II trout water. Subject segment is 1.1 miles of Class II trout water from Simpson Rd. access lane upstream to South Avenue. Dell Creek flows over a sand bottom for almost its entire length and as a result natural reproduction is low. However there are several deep holes and cuts that combine with good water quality to provide good habitat for low densities of large trout. A 2013 trout survey showed that anglers in this stretch will have the opportunity to catch brown trout up to 16 inches and larger, brook trout from 8 to 12 inches, and rainbow trout which are stocked early in the spring at around 9 inches and reach nearly 13 inches by the end of summer. Current Regulation: Only artificial lures may be used, and all trout caught must be immediately released (Coon Bluff Rd. upstream to South Avenue). The remainder of Dell Creek has a 9-inch minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. Access information: This segment of Dell Creek flows through Dell Creek Wildlife Area, which provides access to Dell Creek over most of its length. Anglers can access the subject segment from a parking lot along Simpson Rd. and walk in via an access lane that leads to the creek. They may also access the creek from the bridge crossing at South Avenue. The confluence of Beaver Creek with Dell Creek occurs in this segment, giving anglers access to a stream predominantly populated by brook trout. The regulation on Beaver Creek is the same as for the Coon Bluff-South Avenue segment of Dell Creek. Anglers will also find that this stretch of Dell Creek is relatively free of overhanging brush, making it fishable with spinning tackle or fly rod.

restrictions Access information: The best access is from the bridge at CTH E and a number of points along CTH U just southwest of Plymouth. Upstream of CTH E anglers will find extensive habitat work in a number of stretches and this is generally where we find the larger fish in our surveys.

Chambers Creek - 1.5 miles of Class I brook trout waters

2014 surveys yielded an average length of 8.3 inches, with a maximum length of 11.5 inches. We saw catch rates of up to 183 fish per mile which puts it around the 49th percentile when compared with other all other brown trout waters statewide. Current regulation: Category 3: daily bag limit 3, minimum length limit 9 inches, no gear restrictions Access information: The best access is from the bridges at HWY 28 or CTH W just southwest of Cascade. As a Class I stream Chambers Creek is one of the few naturally reproducing brook trout streams in southeast Wisconsin.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Genesee Creek - this report references a 2 mile reach

Average length – 9 inches. A recent stream shocking survey revealed brown trout up to 17 inches. Current regulation: 9 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3. Access information: Access can be found at the Old Village Road, Hwy 59 and Hwy D road crossings. This small coldwater stream has consistent natural reproduction of brown trout providing good action.

Scuppernong River - The headwaters downstream 1 mile

Average length – 8 inches. Current regulation: Artificial lures only, catch and release

only. Natural reproduction and supplemental stocking provide good action in the headwaters located near Ottawa Lake Campground. Parking can be found along Hwy ZZ or the Ice Age Trail fee parking area.

■ WAUPACA COUNTY

Radley Creek - Electrofishing surveys conducted in 2014 indicated brown trout density for adult size fish was at high levels with catch rate ranking at the 90th percentile (when compared to statewide data) for 6+ inch trout and comparable to the 10 year average. Survey catch rates for legal size fish (9+ inches) are at moderate levels. Current Regulation: Category 3 (9 inch minimum,, 3 daily bag limit) Access Information: Fishing access is very good with multiple DNR managed properties off State Highway 22, Stratton Lake Rd, and Dayton Rd. The Radley Creek has had a long history of past habitat development projects that has significantly improved the quality of trout populations.

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 (over 15 inch trout) at 29 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 plantings of harvestable sized brown and rainbow trout. Anglers looking for good action early in the season may want to try this water.

GL SALMON & TROUT



■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

Bois Brule River, downstream from U.S. Highway 2 - 15 miles

Three primary migratory species: brown trout, coho salmon, rainbow trout (steelhead). Most recent tallied run distribution: brown trout 38%, steelhead 32%, coho salmon 28%; size range 20 to 30 inches. Annual run numbers and timing generally dependent on stream and lake conditions. Most recent survey peak run timing: brown trout - last week of August, coho salmon - first week of October, steelhead - second week of October. Steelhead also spring-run with variable peaks based on lake and river ice-out. Current regulation: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2 - Open last Saturday in March through November 15; 5 trout and salmon in total, only 2 may be brown trout and only 1 may be a rainbow trout. Legal lengths: brown 15", salmon 12", and rainbow 26" Access information: Go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/ and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at most points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Carlson Road, Copper Range Campground, State Highway 13, or at lamprey barrier/fishway off Loveland Road. Brown trout, coho salmon, and steelhead are non-native,

naturalized species that are self-sustaining and naturally reproduce in the Brule River, its tributaries, and Lake Superior. Species initially introduced many years ago when native species declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Brule River migratory stocks are essentially "wild" with no current artificial propagation to sustain, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. As with many "wild" stocks, environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration; this can challenge anglers of all skill levels. These "wild" stocks, coupled with the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest, help create a truly unique fishing experience, if not an overall adventure unmatched by any other regional resource. The steelhead stock is particularly vulnerable these days, and anglers are encouraged to keep the Brule "wild." Accurate identification is extremely important and often tricky; help fellow anglers properly identify steelhead. Handle and release sub-legal steelhead with extra care to ensure a better chance for future spawning and natural reproduction. 26" minimum length is in force because most steelhead at 26" have had the chance to spawn in the wild at least once.

■ KENOSHA, RACINE, MILWAUKEE, OZAUKEE and SHEBOYGAN COUNTIES

Lake Michigan and tributaries

Brown trout. - The brown trout fishery in Lake Michigan is supported through stocking, with over 700,000 fish planted annually in recent years. Brown trout fishing stays strong all through the fall and into months of January through March. Anglers can catch good numbers of brown trout in the winter months in many areas, especially the Milwaukee River and harbor. With round gobies providing an abundant food source, browns show good growth rates and some fish reach the 15 to 20 pound range. 2014 was a good year for brown trout fishing in all ports from Kenosha to Port Washington, and we hope the trend continues in 2015.



Business end of a migratory Lake Superior brown trout. Photo: John Lyons

Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/, dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html

Rainbow trout. - Species population information: In 2013 rainbow trout fishing was above average, and 58,311 fish were harvested. Trollers found good numbers of fish, and stream anglers caught the most rainbows since 2001. Anglers had success with all three strains of rainbow trout - chambers creek, ganaraska and arlee. In 2014 the steelhead run was strong despite an unusually late ice out followed by high stream flows. Wisconsin stocks about 400,000 rainbow trout annually into Lake Michigan. If the spring stream flows are ideal for fish migration, we may see a good steelhead run in 2015, in addition to the open water fishery. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information:

There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/, dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html

Chinook salmon. - Chinook salmon fishing was below average in 2013, with 145,301 fish harvested. The extremely cold winter followed by late spring warming likely impacted the Chinook fishery in 2014, as Chinook fishing was generally slow. 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 starting in 2013. In the future, Wisconsin and the other Lake Michigan agencies will work together to match stocking numbers of Chinook salmon with the available prey. Tagging studies have shown Chinook movement throughout the lake, and some even migrate over from Lake Huron. In fact, in 2013 the one-year-old Chinooks caught by Wisconsin anglers in the summer fishery were 65% naturally reproduced. While summer caught fish represent a mixed population, the fall fishery may be impacted by Wisconsin's stocking reductions as fewer mature fish return to their stocking locations. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/, dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html

Coho salmon. - The coho fishing season typically starts off in the warmer southern waters of Lake Michigan and then progresses northward all the way to Sheboygan waters. Coho fishing in 2014 was fairly consistent in late April and May in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties. About 400,000 coho are stocked annually in Wisconsin waters, and good coho fishing should continue in 2015 with suitable weather patterns. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/, dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html

Lake trout. - Approximately 700,000 - 800,000 lake trout are stocked in Lake Michigan annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Furthermore, evidence of natural reproduction has been documented through DNR surveys as well as in the sport fishery. The sport harvest in 2012 and 2013 was 29,094 and 27,240, respectively. These recent harvest levels have reversed a trend of lower harvest numbers dating back to 2003. Current regulation: Open from March 1 - October 31. Daily bag limit is 2; 10 inches or larger. However, no possession of lake trout is allowed within the Mid-Lake Reef Complex (see fishing regulations booklet for more details). Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/, dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fallfishing.html and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html

■ MANITOWOC, KEWAUNEE, DOOR, OCONTO and MARINETTE COUNTIES

Northern Lake Michigan and tributaries

Steelhead. - In 2013 rainbow trout/steelhead fishing was above average, and 58,311 fish were harvested in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan. Trollers found good numbers of fish, and stream anglers caught the most rainbows since 2001. Anglers had success with all three strains of rainbow trout - Chambers Creek, Ganaraska and Arlee. The 2014 creel data has not yet been analyzed, but weir returns and initial reports indicate a strong spring steelhead run in northern Lake Michigan. However,

catch might have been down slightly due to high flows and muddy water which made for tough fishing conditions. The summer trollers also caught fish and initial reports indicate an average season. Spring fishing for 2015 will depend upon spring flows and water clarity - best catches will occur if conditions are just right with good spring flows but not too high and not too muddy conditions. Summer fishing success will depend upon how much the lake warms and how the thermocline sets up. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/ Door County has many small tributaries with small rainbow trout/steelhead runs and less angling pressure. Larger rivers in Kewaunee and Manitowoc counties have larger runs but with more angling pressure. There are also a few smaller steelhead streams in Manitowoc and Kewaunee counties as well. Anglers can also find steelhead runs in the Oconto, Peshtigo, and Menominee rivers. Information on the tributaries: dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html Wisconsin



Angler Shawn Frye displays the brown trout he caught in Port Washington.

currently stocks about 400,000 rainbow trout (steelhead) annually into Lake Michigan. We use three strains that have different spawning times and habits to diversify the fishery (Chambers Creek, Ganaraska, and Arlee). We are currently conducting ground water studies and preparing to refurbish our Kettle Moraine Springs Fish Hatchery which has outdated and deteriorating infrastructure. With a refurbished hatchery we hope to increase rainbow trout production to past levels to carry the Lake Michigan rainbow trout fishery into the future.

Chinook. - For the past decade Lake Michigan has produced record annual catches of chinook salmon and the average for the past decade has been over 300,000 chinook salmon harvested annually. This success has not been consistent in every location in Wisconsin and has also varied from year to year. 2012 saw the 5th highest harvest on record in Wisconsin (390,000 chinook salmon) and the success was generally good in all areas of Wisconsin. 2013 saw a slightly below average harvest of 145,000 chinook salmon harvested. In 2013 fishing was slow in the northern areas during the first part of the summer and then picked back up in the later part of the summer. 2014 estimates are not in as of yet, but based on initial reports from anglers we have had an above average chinook salmon year in northern Lake Michigan. Fish size has also been variable over the past ten years with smaller than average fish in 2011 & 2012. This changed in 2013 when we had larger average sized fish with many large trophy-sized fish being landed. The estimates for 2014 are not in yet, but based on initial reports, the average size is still high but not as high as in 2013. Many factors affect chinook salmon fishing and





Aaron Breidert holding a nice Chinook salmon caught in Milwaukee.

populations in Lake Michigan. Factors that impact how fish bite and anglers ability to catch fish are generally not within our control and included weather, water temperature, currents, local availability of forage fish, and, for the fall runs, stream flow and clarity. Other factors that influence fish populations are overall lake-wide prey fish abundance, natural reproduction rates of chinook salmon, and stocking of trout and salmon. Total prey fish abundance in Lake Michigan have been at record lows, but 2010 and 2012 experienced good hatching and survival of alewife. These young alewives provided a fair amount of forage during 2013 and as a result many big Chinooks over 20 pounds were caught. These same prey fish likely fueled the larger sized fish in 2014 as well. Overall prey fish abundance is still very low and the driving force behind the overall low prey fish abundances is invasive species with the quagga mussel causing the most impact by reducing the available food for young prey fish. However, DNR fisheries managers have been working with our counter parts in the other states to adjust trout and salmon stocking levels accordingly to conserve prey fish abundance and continue the great trout and salmon fisheries that Lake Michigan has to offer. What will 2015 look like? Well,

that will depend upon a host of factors that are unpredictable, but regardless there should be plenty of chinook salmon available for anglers to catch on Lake Michigan during 2015. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger. Access information: There are many boat and shore access locations to fish. dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/ and dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html Tagging studies have shown Chinook movement throughout the lake, and some even migrate over from Lake Huron. In 2013 the one-year-old Chinook salmon caught by Wisconsin anglers in the summer fishery were 65% naturally reproduced. Most of this natural reproduction of chinook salmon occurs in Lake Huron tributaries and northern Michigan tributaries of Lake Michigan.

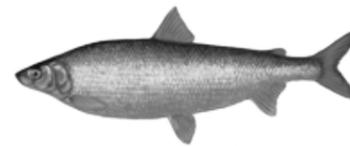
■ MARINETTE, OCONTO and DOOR COUNTIES

Green Bay and tributaries

Brown trout. - 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 shores of Green Bay. 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. To find detailed tributary access information, go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html DNR stocks around 126,000 brown trout yearlings into Green Bay. There are two strains that DNR has stocked for over 2 decades: Wild Rose domestics and seeforellen. The Wild Rose strain is a domestic strain, where adult broodstock are held in captivity at the Wild Rose Hatchery. Each fall, gametes are collected from the broodstock. After the eggs hatch, some fish remain at Wild Rose until stocking or are raised as broodstock. A portion of the young fish are transported to one of several smaller hatcheries throughout the state where the fish continue to be raised until they are stocked into Lake Michigan or Lake Superior. The seeforellen strain is a wild (feral) strain, meaning the adult broodstock are distinguished by a fin clip and are collected from the wild each fall by electrofishing boats. Adult fish are transported to Besadny Anadromous Fish Facility on the Kewaunee River, eggs are collected weekly for 4-6 weeks in November and December, and then fertilized eggs are taken to the Wild Rose Hatchery. The seeforellen strain originated in alpine lakes in Germany, and eggs for Wisconsin were obtained from New York DNR in the early 1990's. This strain is desired because it grows fast and spawns later in the fall than domestic strains. Therefore, it provides fishing opportunities for stream anglers well into the winter months. Much of the fishing success of a given year is dependent on survival of yearling brown trout that were stocked one to two years ago, as well as water temperatures which affects prey availability in nearshore areas where browns inhabit.

LAKE WHITEFISH



■ DOOR, KEWAUNEE and BROWN COUNTIES

Green Bay waters

The relatively new lake whitefish ice fishery in Green Bay continues to provide great action for ice anglers. Much of the action takes place at various locations along the east shore between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. Harvest rates for the 2014 ice fishing season were down from 2013 but still relatively good in the short history of this fishery. Population index surveys completed in 2014 suggest the whitefish spawning stock(s) in the area continue to maintain solid numbers thanks to good recruitment within the last decade. Recent spring juvenile gillnet surveys indicate that several modest year classes are present and should contribute to the fishery for the next several years. Barring any change in lake whitefish feeding and/or distribution patterns in Green Bay, the 2015 ice fishery should once again provide some good fishing. Current regulation: The bag limit for lake whitefish is 10 fish with no length limit. Access information: There are a number of access points between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. 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. Anglers are advised to check ahead for ice conditions before venturing out. Lake whitefish were extirpated from the Menominee River, Green Bay, over a century ago. However, fish began to return to this river during the 1990s and the spawning population has since grown to a robust level. Whitefish hatched in the Menominee, as well as other possible west shore Green Bay tributaries, are likely a major contributor to the whitefish ice fishery in Green Bay. In fact, over the last two years surveys revealed spawning condition lake whitefish were inhabiting tributaries other than the Menominee in November including the Fox, Peshtigo, and Oconto Rivers.

Wisconsin fish and fishing enthusiasts - Do you know your gamefish?

GAME FISH of WISCONSIN

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

FISH ON... WISCONSIN

Identification Key

- 1 Muskie/ling
- 2 Longmouth bass
- 3 Smallmouth bass
- 4 Northern pike
- 5 Warmouth
- 6 Pumpkinseed
- 7 White crappie
- 8 Walleye
- 9 Bowfin
- 10 Rock bass
- 11 Green sunfish
- 12 Sauger
- 13 Yellow perch
- 14 White bass
- 15 Black crappie
- 16 Shovelnose sturgeon
- 17 Flathead catfish
- 18 Channel catfish
- 19 Lake sturgeon
- 20 Lake trout
- 21 Brown trout (Great Lakes)
- 22 Chinook salmon
- 23 Rainbow trout
- 24 Brown trout
- 25 Coho salmon
- 26 Steelhead
- 27 Brook trout

There are a lot of fish to be found in Wisconsin's waters. In fact, there are about 160 different fish species in the state. A new poster captures a small portion of these fishes- Wisconsin's most common game fishes in all their colorful splendor. They look like they've just been pulled from the water! It's the perfect resource for anglers who want to learn to identify the fish they catch. The poster is also great for restaurants (place-mats?), tackle shops, resorts and don't forget...just plain bedroom walls. Tuck it into a tackle-box? The poster is available in several sizes for downloading and printing:

- Letter (8.5" x 11")
- Tabloid (11" x 17"0)
- Double tabloid (22" x 34")

Download address:
dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/GameFishofWis.html

Getting Hooked on Wisconsin Fishing

Community/urban fishing program provides access to 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

City of Antigo - Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish. Stocked with rainbow trout

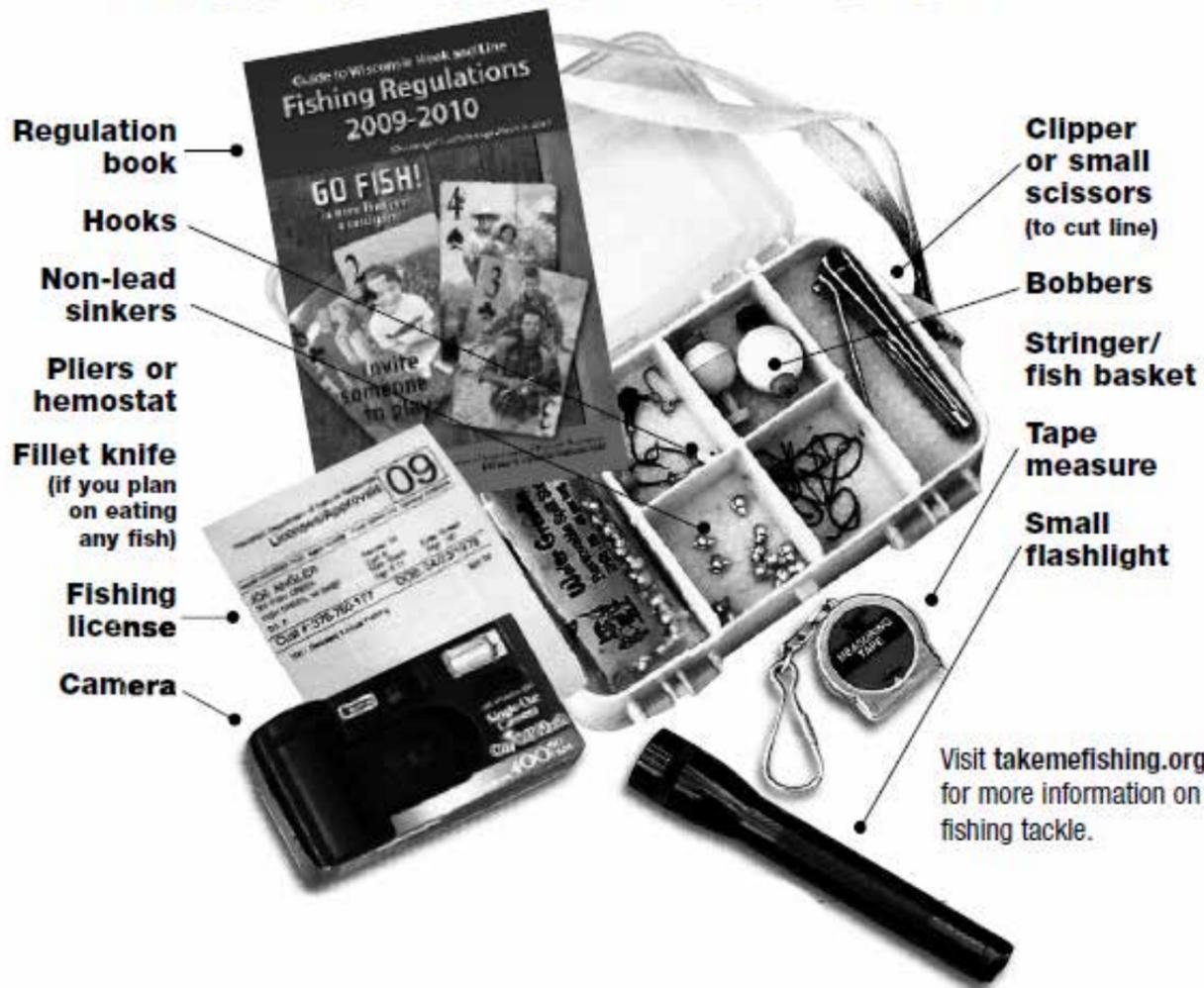


in the spring and brook trout in the fall. Trout Unlimited and Northwoods Sportsmens Club periodically stock trout also for the kids to enjoy. Open year around - no length limit, 3 trout per day, 1 bass or northern pike per day, 10 panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, perch, bullhead) per day

Mirror Lake, Lincoln County

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

Basic tackle box



Regulation book

Hooks

Non-lead sinkers

Pliers or hemostat

Fillet knife (if you plan on eating any fish)

Fishing license

Camera

Clipper or small scissors (to cut line)

Bobbers

Stringer/fish basket

Tape measure

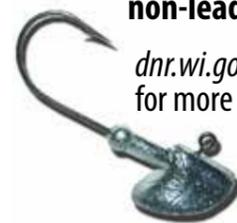
Small flashlight

Visit takemefishing.org for more information on fishing tackle.

Get the lead out!

Please consider using non-lead tackle.

dnr.wi.gov for more information



2015 Wisconsin Fishing Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921



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Science in the spotlight

Map shows locations of all Wisconsin fish species

Anglers and fish enthusiasts alike can now Interactive see where their favorite fish species have been found using an interactive DNR research tool which shows results from fish surveys dating as far back as 130 years. The online fish mapping tool is an interactive map database which lets

anyone search the more than 160 fish species found in Wisconsin by either county or habitat types.

"What's great about the fish map tool is you can see the big picture of where different species are found in the state," says John Lyons [Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Research Section], fisheries research scientist. "The tool lets you zoom in on specific bodies of water so you can see what kinds of fish are found in your favorite local lakes."

The tool offers a fun interactive application for anglers and there is a tutorial video located on the fish map tool website explaining how to use the map. (https://cida.usgs.gov/wdnr_fishmap/map/). Data points on the map are pinpointed by GPS coordinates and show the kinds of fish species were found during a given research collection outing. The fish map tool was created in partnership with the US Geological Survey

Center for Integrated Data Analytics and is used by DNR researchers to study long term trends for fish populations in Wisconsin.

Fish portraits: new video series

Research scientist John Lyons has produced a number of "fish portrait" videos for the Wisconsin DNR YouTube channel. In this video series, John introduces a fish species, details its typical length and weight, lifespan, population, and behavior. Even a seasoned angler is sure to learn something new about their favorite species in these videos.

Fish portraits available are: bluegill, carp, muskellunge, longnose gar, sturgeon (shovelnose and lake) and smallmouth bass. Check them out at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WIDNRTV>.



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