

# Summary of Fishing Tournaments in Wisconsin in 2015

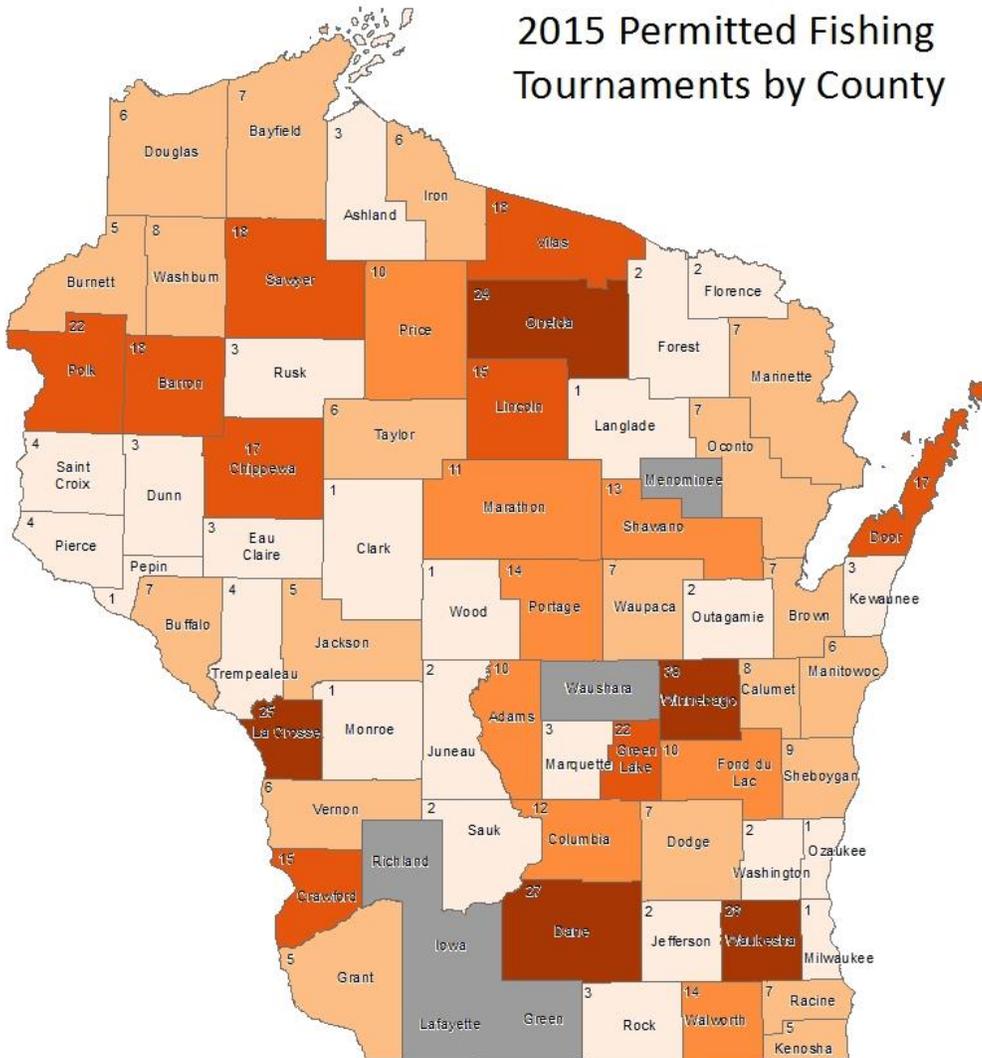
Joseph Lechelt

Bureau of Fisheries Management

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## Applications

- 625 applications for fishing tournaments were received
  - 41 applications were either withdrawn or the tournament cancelled
  - 584 applications were approved and held
    - 369 catch-and-release tournaments (63%)
    - 79 immediate release tournaments (14%)
    - 136 catch and keep tournaments (24%)
    - 118 ice fishing tournaments (20%)
    - 59 Great Lakes tournaments (10%)
    - 243 bass specific catch-and-release tournaments (42%), which is the single most popular tournament type and target fish.

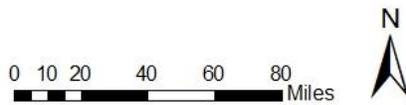


**Figure 1.** Wisconsin DNR Permitted Tournaments by County in 2015; the number of tournaments are shown in the corner of each county

## Distribution

Tournaments took place in 66 counties throughout Wisconsin (Figure 1).

Top counties included Winnebago (39), Waukesha (28), Dane (27), LaCrosse (25), Oneida (24), Green Lake (22), Polk (22), and Barron (18).



Map by Mitchell Johnson 2016

## Notable Results

- 23 more tournaments were held in 2015 than in 2014; an increase of 4% (Table 1)
- Prizes awarded were up more than \$1,000,000 in 2015 compared to 2014; an increase of 24% (Table 1)
- The number of bass registered increased from 2014 to 2015 by more than 5,500 fish (Table 2)
- The number of walleye registered were similar in 2014 and 2015; however, the percentage of walleye released decreased by 12% in 2015 (Table 2)

**Table 1. Number of tournaments, projected effort, and prize value awarded 2012-2015**

Effort/Prizes	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tournaments	566	610	561	584
Anglers	74,980	76,121	71,123	80,641
Boats	18,695	17,435	15,561	18,263
Hours Fished	1,890,519	1,752,463	1,922,623	2,095,382
Prizes Awarded	\$4,526,748	\$3,640,070	\$3,203,968	\$4,230,367

**Table 2. Catch numbers and release rates for events registering species from 2012-15.**

Species	Number Fish Registered				Percent of Fish Released			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bass (Largemouth and Smallmouth)	39,966	30,748	27,723	33,240	98%	97%	99%	96%
Walleye*	20,765	19,562	16,867	17,639	66%	75%	72%	60%
Great Lakes (Salmon/Trout)	19,506	12,515	9,981	11,253	0%	0.1%	0.02%	1%
Panfish**	7,001	8,101	5,465	8,243	24%	22%	15%	19%
Muskellunge	1,117	944	832	1,221	100%	99%	100%	100%
Northern Pike	2,463	3,049	2,359	2,720	36%	38%	45%	30%
Rough Fish***	18,385	15,389	20,032	13,542	2%	1%	0.05%	5%
All Species	109,046	90,726	87,663	91,322	49%	51%	49%	51%

\*Walleye includes walleye, sauger, and saugeye

\*\*Panfish includes crappies, bluegill, sunfish, and yellow perch

\*\*\*Rough Fish includes buffalo, bullhead, bowfin, common carp, freshwater drum, gars, suckers, quillback, redhorses, and other minnows



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
 Fisheries Management Bureau, 101 S. Webster St, Madison, WI 53707