

# Ol' Man River

Where walleye is king

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# WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT



Spring 2010

An annual publication of the DNR's Fisheries Management Program

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



Whether you're fishing from shore or boat, Wisconsin is a great state to fish. Keep our fishing tradition alive. Plan a family fishing outing. Take a friend or acquaintance fishing. The memories, just like the fish, are out there waiting. Can you catch them? Photo: Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

## In Focus

### Mississippi River backwaters: an angler's paradise

Backwaters entice anglers with a variety of fishing opportunities.

**LA CROSSE** – Mississippi River backwaters include all sloughs, lakes, ponds and side channels in the river's floodplain. From Prescott, Wis., to Dubuque, Iowa, the Mississippi contains more than 131,000 acres of backwaters swimming with warmwater fish species including largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, northern pike, pumpkinseed and yellow perch. The Mississippi offers the greatest variety of sport fishes anywhere in Wisconsin and most fish have year-round open seasons.

Fall fish surveys throughout many of the river's 10 Navigation Pools bordering Wisconsin in the last three years showed consistent catches of backwater game fish. The highest catch rates per hour of game fish were found in the northeast portion of Pool 9, followed by the Lawrence and Target lakes area in Pool 8, upper Pool 5A, Trempealeau Lakes area in Pool 7, and the Goose Island and Stoddard area of Pool 8.

Anglers can focus their efforts on a variety of backwater species:

**Northern pike** – Good news for northern pike anglers. Recent surveys have shown many northern pike greater than 18 inches, with a few measuring greater than 40 inches. For northerns less than 18 inches, surveys have shown a 16-fold increase in numbers. While these fish currently are not part of the fishery, they will be shortly with excellent northern pike fishing to follow. Overall, it is suspected that recent cooler summers have increased northern pike growth, survival and reproduction. Northerns can be found in shallow, weedy backwaters just after ice-out in early spring for about one month. During the summer heat, they are often found near cooler tributary mouths, deeper backwaters and under vegetation canopies. As with many other backwater fish, northerns congregate in backwater areas to overwinter. Typical open water baits include large spinners, spoons and casting plugs. Successful winter anglers often tip-up fish with large shiners.

(see **Mississippi River Backwaters** p. 15)

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### What do you think?

We've been providing an annual fishing report to anglers for almost 10 years. Please tell us what you like and what we should do better.

Look for an online survey at: [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org)

We'd appreciate your thoughts.

## Leave a legacy Pledge to take someone fishing

**MADISON** – There are no fees and no meetings; it is not a club. Anglers' Legacy is simply about making a promise to introduce someone NEW to fishing. As you "take the pledge" you join people from across the nation who are also passing on the fishing heritage.

If you care about the future of fishing, commit and take at least one new person fishing this year. Show them what you already know about having fun on the water. It may be a challenge for you and an humbling experience, but a great way to build relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

Go to [fishingwisconsin.org](http://fishingwisconsin.org) to take the pledge – then take someone fishing.



A lake trout is proudly displayed at the end of a father/son fishing trip on Lake Superior. Photo: Mike Staggs

clip and give

### I PROMISE TO TAKE YOU FISHING

This year I promise to take you fishing because I want to give back what someone once gave me – the special gift of fishing.

TO

FROM



Anglers' Legacy

clip and give

F  
Y  
I

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

If you have more fishing questions, call toll-free 1-888-WDNRFo (1-888-936-7463) or visit [dnr.wi.gov/contact/](http://dnr.wi.gov/contact/) for a live chat.



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

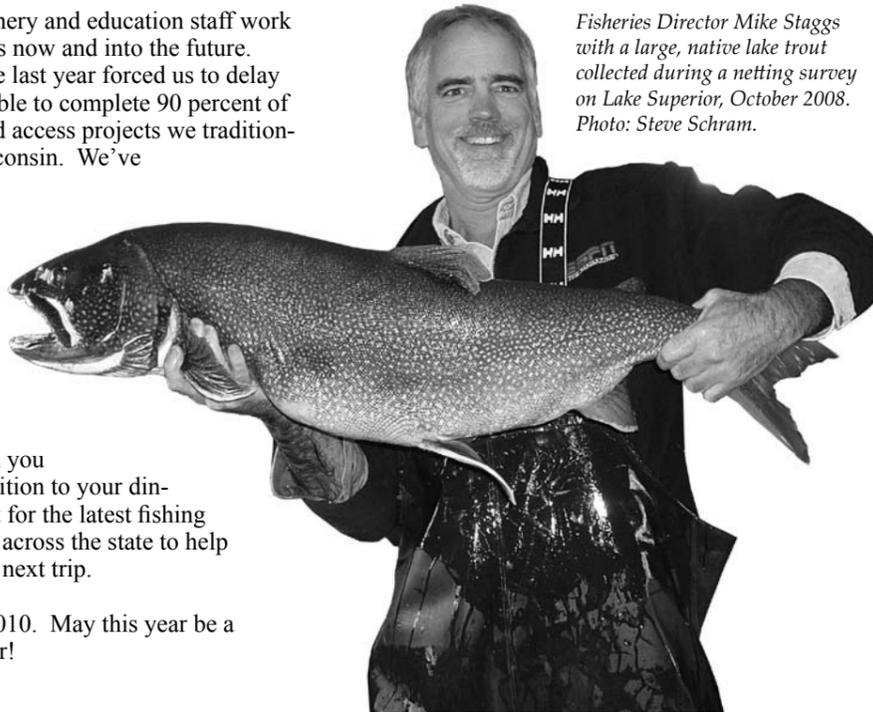
# Dear Wisconsin Angler,

2009 was a challenging year for families across Wisconsin. We were glad then, as we are now, to help provide you with outstanding fishing, great memories and a break from your daily stresses.

Our fish biologists, technicians, hatchery and education staff work hard to keep fishing good for families now and into the future. Budget reductions and a hiring freeze last year forced us to delay some of our work but we were still able to complete 90 percent of the stocking, surveys, and habitat and access projects we traditionally do to make fishing better in Wisconsin. We've highlighted a lot of that work here in this report.

If you're looking for ways to save some money this year – take your family and friends fishing! There's good fishing close to where you live, and the cost of basic tackle, bait, and a license is a bargain compared to restaurants, movies or video games. And the fish you keep are a tasty, healthy and free addition to your dinner menu! Take a look in this report for the latest fishing tips and hotspots from our biologists across the state to help you find a great fishing spot for your next trip.

Thanks for fishing in Wisconsin in 2010. May this year be a GREAT one. I'll see you on the water!



Fisheries Director Mike Staggs with a large, native lake trout collected during a netting survey on Lake Superior, October 2008. Photo: Steve Schram.

## 2010 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout  
March 6 (5 a.m.) to April 25

General Inland Trout  
May 1 (5 a.m.) to Sept. 30

Large and Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone Catch and Release  
May 1 to June 18

Large and Smallmouth Bass  
Northern Zone  
June 19 to March 6, 2011

Large and Smallmouth Bass  
Southern Zone  
May 1 to March 6, 2011

Musky – Northern Zone  
May 29 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone  
May 1 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike  
May 1 to March 6, 2011

Walleye  
May 1 to March 6, 2011

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)  
Sept. 4 to Sept. 30

### New shore fishing opportunities in 2010

**Burnett County** – Fishing pier on Clam River Narrows in the Clam Narrows County Park. The Clam River Narrows connects Upper Clam Lake & Lower Clam Lake.

**Chippewa County** – Fishing platform on the Yellow River in Lake Wissota State Park. This is the second shore fishing facility in the park.

**Kewaunee County** – L-shaped fishing pier and platform located on the Ahnapee River in Blahnik County Park.

**LaCrosse County** – T-shaped floating pier on Pettibone Lagoon in a City of LaCrosse Park on the Mississippi River.

**Marinette County** – T-shaped floating pier on Caldron Falls Flowage of the Peshtigo River in Governor Thompson State Park. This pier is designed for ice anglers during the winter.

**Monroe County** – T-shaped floating pier and two stations on Perch Lake in the City of Sparta.

**Pierce County** – Fishing pier and five stations on Nugget Lake in Nugget Lake County Park. Also a fishing pier on the Mississippi River adjacent to Sea Wing Park in the town of Diamond Bluff.

**Waushara County** – Fishing pier and platform on the Library Park Millpond in the City of Wautoma.

## Ol' Man River's MARBLE EYES

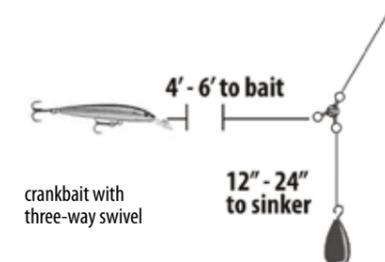


The upper Mississippi River is a very productive river system with large populations of walleye in Pool 9 near Genoa and Pool 10 near Prairie du Chien. In the fall of 2008, DNR conducted electrofishing surveys in Pools 9 and 10 as part of a long-term monitoring strategy. These surveys showed that this natural reproducing system is very productive. Catch-per-unit-effort (CPE) for adult walleye was 275 per hour in Pool 9 and 108 per hour in pool 10. Walleye ranged in size from 12 to 28 inches with large numbers of fish 12 to 15 inches in length. During 2009, many anglers reported catching good numbers of walleye just under the 15-inch length limit. Many of those fish will grow into the fishery in 2010. There should be plenty of fishing opportunities and action for the next couple of years as these fish move through the fishery.

Fishing the Mississippi River can be very challenging. Large river walleye follow a movement pattern that corresponds to the changes in flow, water temperature and season. An increase or decrease in the water level by just an inch can produce a dramatic change in fish movements. Seasonal changes can also influence where walleye and sauger will be found. Here are a few tips on when and where to target walleye in the Mississippi River.

### SPRING

In early spring, as water temperatures reach 45-50 degrees Fahrenheit, walleye and sauger begin a migration from overwintering areas to spawning grounds. These spawning areas can be found in tributaries, along riprapped shorelines

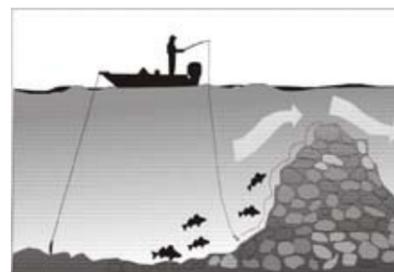


of side channels, or main channel borders that have a slow to moderate current. These spawning fish are found over gravel to coarse, sand bottoms. Males typically appear at spawning areas first and are usually the last to leave. Females show up, spawn, and for the most part leave spawning areas within a day. There is typically a daily pattern for these spawning fish with movement to shallow water at night, early evening, or early morning, and movement towards deeper water during daylight hours. During early morning or night, fish shallow casting 1/8- to 3/8-ounce jigs tipped with ringworms, twister

tails, or Gulp along the shoreline in six to 12 feet of water. Casting shallow, diving crank baits can also be effective when the fish are up shallow. During daylight or peak light periods, trolling in 12 to 20 feet near spawning areas can produce good numbers of quality fish. Stick baits rigged with a three-way swivel and bell sinker can be an effective way to target deep water walleye in a river system. The key to this method is to keep the weight and lure on the bottom. The size of the weight will be dependent on the depth of water, size of the lure, line diameter, and the amount of current at the site.

### SUMMER

During the summer, walleye are scattered throughout the main channel, side channels and in sloughs that have flowing water. Areas to key-in on include riprapped shorelines, wingdams and closing dams. Wingdams usually have plenty of water flowing over and around them and can be very productive for summer walleye. Walleye that are actively feeding are typically on the up-



Fishing a wing dam

Anchoring upstream of a wingdam and casting plugs onto the top of this structure nearest to the main channel border can be very effective for targeting ac-

tively feeding walleye. Start by casting on top of the wingdam and reel slowly bouncing the lure off the top and down the front face of the wingdam. If fish aren't biting, change lures or retrieval speed. Reposition the boat by moving the anchor rope to a side cleat or changing the position of the motor, which will cause the boat to shift laterally along the front of the wingdam. This provides an opportunity to fish more of the wingdam without having to start the motor and lift the anchor.

### FALL

In late fall and early winter, walleye and sauger can be found in deeper water below the locks and dams and the mouths of tributaries. The most active fish can be found in 16 to 40-feet of water. Use 3/8- to 1/2-ounce jigs tipped with a minnow or gulp and jig, drag, or hold the jig six to 12 inches off the bottom. This method can provide good action for even those finicky walleye. If fish aren't biting, vary lure color, jig retrieval speed, or jig distance off the bottom.

The Mississippi River is a great place to fish but is full of navigational hazards. Boaters who are unfamiliar with these waters should proceed with caution when navigating side sloughs and main channel borders to avoid turning a fishing or recreational outing into a disaster. Always remember to wear your personal flotation device and have a great time fishing.

For more information on fishing conditions, contact a local sports shop, the area Chamber of Commerce, or check the web at [idofishing.com](http://idofishing.com) for up-to-date fishing reports and river conditions.

– Patrick Short, fisheries biologist, Prairie du Chien



## Wild Rose approaching full bloom

The state fish hatchery is ready to meet all challenges.

Four years ago the Department of Natural Resources embarked on a three-phase plan to renovate the century-old Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery to meet

fish were “large fingerlings” about five inches long, and should grow large enough to start being caught by anglers this summer.



Walleye, northern pike and lake sturgeon will be raised at Wild Rose's coolwater facilities. Photo: HDR/FishPro

environmental standards and continue to meet stocking needs.

As we begin a new decade, the Wild Rose hatchery is now in the home stretch.

The coldwater production facilities are complete and fish production is in full swing. This past year saw the first fish raised in the \$15.9 million coldwater facilities stocked into Lake Michigan waters. All told, 150,000 coho salmon and 60,000 Seeforellen trout made their debut into the big pond's harbors. The

The coolwater facilities for raising northern pike, walleye, lake sturgeon and musky were completed in late 2009 and rearing is scheduled to begin this spring.

A third and final phase is also scheduled to begin this year and will restore the wetlands, springs and headwaters of the stream that was damaged when the hatchery was first built more than 100 years ago.

The fish aren't the only ones benefiting from the new facilities. The new

elaborate education center is a must-see for visitors of all ages with live aquaria, interesting exhibits and fun games that help tell the story of Wild Rose and fisheries management.

From the education center, visitors can stroll down the wooden walkway and back in time to the hatchery's historic village where renovated buildings and raceways from the early 1900s await them. A picnic area allows visitors to stop and enjoy a packed lunch, much as people have done for the past century.

Last fall, the Wild Rose Education Center won Outstanding Project of the Year Award in the category of “Education” given by the American Fisheries Society, highlighting the importance of aquatic education.

Additionally, in the summer of 2009, Wild Rose's new coldwater fish rearing facilities received an Award of Excellence in Engineering from the international Association of Conservation Engineers.

There's no doubt that Wild Rose is now an award-winning facility that benefits anglers and non-anglers alike. Next time you're in the area or looking for a day trip, come see for yourself.

### Wild Rose Hatchery Business Hours



Summer: Open Wed.-Sunday, Memorial Day through Labor Day; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Walk-in tours - 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Fall (after Labor Day): Open Fri.-Sunday, October: Open Fri. and Sat.

N5871 State Rd. 22, Wild Rose, WI 54984

Questions? (920) 622-3527 ext. 209

## Fish disease VHS still a concern

Anglers should continue to do their part to minimize spread.

VHS disease remains a major concern and threat to fishing in Wisconsin, underscored by the news in January that evidence of the virus has been found in low levels in fish from areas of Lake Superior, including Duluth-Superior Harbor.

VHS does not affect people or pets but it can infect and kill several dozen different species of fish, including both game and bait fish. Symptoms of the disease include bleeding from the skin, muscles, and internal organs, bulging eyes and bloated abdomens. Healthy fish can be infected by swimming in VHS-contaminated water or by eating VHS-positive prey fish.

To contain the virus, the DNR developed rules to regulate the transport of live fish, bait and water, and to teach boaters and anglers about preventative actions. So far, these efforts seem to be paying off; statewide surveillance efforts show that VHS has not spread beyond Lake Michigan, the Lake Winnebago system, and Lake Superior.

So, remember to do your part. Drain all water from fishing and boating equipment when leaving the lake or entering the state.

Do not move live fish or fish eggs away from any water with the exception of minnows purchased from a registered Wisconsin bait dealer, taken away in up to 2 gallons of water, and used under certain conditions.

Use leftover minnows again on the same water, or use them on other waters if you did not add lake or river water or other fish to the bait container.

Use dead fish for bait only on the waters from which they were taken or if they were preserved by a method that does not require freezing or refrigeration.

For more information on VHS and a complete list of VHS rules please visit: [dnr.wi.gov/fish/vhs/](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/vhs/)

— Nick Legler, health biologist, Madison



**ENJOY YOUR CATCH**

**SAFE EATING GUIDELINES FOR MOST OF WISCONSIN'S INLAND WATERS**

<p><b>Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers, and all children under 15 years of age may eat:</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per week</b> - bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, sunfish, bullhead, inland trout, and</p> <p><b>1 meal per month</b> - walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and all other species</p> <p><b>Do not eat</b> - musky</p>	<p><b>Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:</b></p> <p><b>Unrestricted</b> - bluegill, crappie, yellow perch, sunfish, bullhead, inland trout:</p> <p><b>1 meal per week</b> - walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and all other species, and</p> <p><b>1 meal per month</b> - musky</p>
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There are 148 waters where exceptions to this advice apply, including the Great Lakes. More stringent consumption advice applies where fish have higher concentrations of mercury, PCBs or other chemicals. Go to [dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption) for more information.



## Tackling a lead problem

Time to get your tackle box in order. Consider it a rite of spring along with cleaning out the garden and the garage. While you are sorting the sinkers and the spools, the DNR is asking that you consider swapping out the lead tackle for less toxic tackle.

Lead can poison people and animals such as loons, bald eagles, trumpeter swans, great blue herons and snapping turtles. All it takes is one lead sinker to kill a 12-pound loon.

Sean Strom, a DNR wildlife toxicologist, explains that lead poisoning from ingested tackle usually occurs in one of two ways: a lead jig head is swallowed by a fish which is then eaten by a waterbird, or lost lead tackle is picked

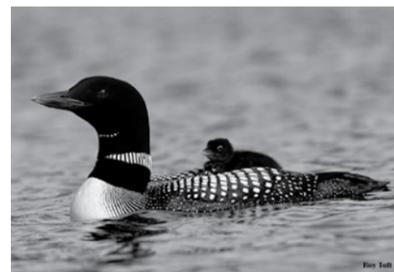
up along with small stones and grit from the bottom of lakes by water birds to help digest food.

In 2006 the DNR implemented a Wildlife Health Program that included performing necropsies on every dead loon that was recovered. “We could see lead sinkers on x-ray images of the loons that had ingested lead tackle,” Strom says.

In a letter last year to the Conservation Congress, Marge Gibson of the Raptor Education Group, Inc., wrote, “Last year alone we treated 20 trumpeter swans, 15 bald eagles and five common loons with lead poisoning.” And those were just the sick animals that were found. Statistics indicate that less than 5 to 10 percent of injured or sick wild animals are ever discovered. Switching to non-lead tackle is a fairly inexpensive and easy way to make a difference. Sinkers and jigs are also made from safer materials such as: steel, tin,

tungsten, bismuth, pewter, ceramic, densified plastic and glass.

These alternatives are available on the Internet and in some bait and tackle shops. Consider asking your favorite



Loons are susceptible to lead poisoning. Photo: Roy Toft

bait/tackle shop to carry lead alternative fishing tackle. LoonWatch ([northland.edu/loonwatch](http://northland.edu/loonwatch)) maintains a list of non-lead tackle suppliers. Other sources of information are the Raptor Education Group ([raptoreducationgroup.org](http://raptoreducationgroup.org)) and DNR's website ([dnr.wi.gov/fish/pages/gettheleadout.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/pages/gettheleadout.html)).

“Our goal is to educate anglers so they create a demand for non-lead products,” says Candy Schrank, a DNR environmental toxicologist in the fisheries program. “If you don't want to replace your whole tackle box, at least consider replacing some of the smaller sinkers.”

Get the Lead Out! is a campaign aimed at educating anglers about the impact of lead fishing tackle on loons and other wildlife. Dispose of your lead tackle properly—do not throw it in a lake or trash can. Take it to your local household hazardous waste collection site or a scrap metal collector/recycler.

Schrank says moving away from lead tackle is part of responsible fishing. Responsible fishing includes knowing and obeying the law and fishing regulations; being considerate of others; getting permission before fishing on private land; being careful not to spread diseases, invasive species and litter; and recycling used fishing line.

— Natasha Kassulke, Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine

# Fabulous Fisheries Projects

## Using technology to track a living fossil

**PARK FALLS** - Microchips are helping fish biologists learn more about and carefully manage, populations of Wisconsin's living fossil, the lake sturgeon. The information they yield supports a unique, family fishing tradition and preserves a species that has been swimming in Wisconsin waters for more than 150 million years.

Three teams of fish biologists and technicians from DNR's Hayward, Park Falls and Mercer offices captured and inserted the microchips into 791 sturgeon on the Manitowish, Chippewa and Flambeau rivers from 2005 to 2009.

The microchips, or PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tags, can be detected when the DNR runs a hand-held scanner alongside the fish. Biologists can match the number of the fish and tap into past records about fish size, gender, movement and location of capture. Harvested fish are scanned as well by volunteers at registration stations during the fall hook-and-line season so that DNR can carefully monitor and control the harvest.

The information is particularly important for lake sturgeon for several reasons: it's identified as a "Species of Concern" under Wisconsin's Endangered Species Act and a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, and because the fish are slow-growing, late maturing and require special management. Female lake sturgeon don't spawn until they are 20 to 25 years old, and then only every three to five years, so rebuilding a population can take generations.

Based on results from the project that suggested that anglers were harvesting more than the 5 percent cap considered safe, DNR increased the minimum length limit and effectively reduced basinwide harvest from 78



Alison Canniff with juvenile sturgeon captured by gillnet in North Fork Flambeau River. Photo: Greg Rublee

and 66 in 2005 and 2006 to six, three, and four in 2007-2009.

The monitoring has also yielded interesting insights into the fish's movements, longevity and growth. A 52½-inch sturgeon marked with a cattle tag in 1984 at age 24 and recaptured in 2009 grew only 1½ inches in 25 years. A 60-inch female tagged in 1994 grew less than an inch in 15 years.

— Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## Making fishing better on the Mississippi River

**LA CROSSE** - Fish and wildlife habitat along Wisconsin's western coast continues to improve. The project on Pool 8 of the Mississippi River, south of La Crosse, is mid-way through construction to rebuild more than 20 islands and restore backwaters. The habitat has been lost over the years due to the long-term effects of the impoundment created by Lock and Dam 8 in the 1930s.

The project's large size – eventually more than 3,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat will be restored – requires that it be built over several years. Pool 8, Phase III, as its name implies, is the third habitat project implemented in the lower pool. Phase I was completed in 1993 and Phase II, also known

as Stoddard Islands, was completed in 1999. Construction on Phase III is scheduled to continue for at least two more years.

The project is co-sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota with funding for construction provided by the Environmental Management Program. Twenty-six Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects have been constructed along Wisconsin's stretch of the Mississippi River since 1986. That work has improved habitat on more than 30,000 acres on the Wisconsin side alone and does not include the Phase III project.

— Jeff Janvrin, fisheries biologist, La Crosse

## Spring pond project aims to restore native brook trout

**BOULDER JUNCTION** – DNR fisheries crews from Antigo and Woodruff are mid-way through dredging spring ponds near Boulder Junction to improve brook trout habitat and natural reproduction of this angler favorite.

The eight small interconnected spring ponds are located two miles south of Boulder Junction and form the headwaters of North Creek, a tributary to Trout Lake. The system has historically been a Class I brook trout water capable of producing fish larger than 12 inches, but natural siltation and beaver activity have nearly halted natural trout reproduction. The DNR and local anglers also have noticed a steady decline in trout numbers during the past 20 years.

Dredge operations will resume again in late May 2010 to complete the work. Past projects have shown that trout respond quickly without the need for stocking, which preserves the genetic stock and wild character of the trout.

Once the project is complete, it's expected to take about five years for the trout population to rebound. Northwoods Chapter of Trout Unlimited is an important partner in this project and has paid for all diesel fuel to operate the dredge.

— Mike Vogelsang, fisheries supervisor, Woodruff

## Walleye rearing partnership benefits anglers

**RIB LAKE** – Anglers will find more of their favorite target – walleye – in Taylor County in coming years thanks to efforts by local conservation clubs and the DNR.

For the past two years, the Rib Lake Area Fish & Game Association and Spirit Lakes Improvement Association joined forces with DNR to raise and stock nearly 11,000 large walleye fingerlings into eight county lakes where stocking is needed to restore, establish, or maintain desired walleye fisheries. Walleyes raised to six to nine inches and stocked in fall survive better than small fingerlings stocked in early summer at 1.5 to 2.5 inches, especially in waters with abundant largemouth bass.

The groups' cooperative rearing agreement helps meet the growing demand for large walleye fingerlings, which exceeds the state hatchery system's capacity. They get small fingerlings from the DNR's Governor Thompson Fish Hatchery in July, buy forage from licensed bait dealers, and raise the fish to large fingerling size. In October, volunteers harvest and plant large walleye fingerlings according to DNR prescriptions. Recent refinements the groups made to their rearing process more than tripled annual production from historic averages. The Esadore Area Lake Association contributed financial support in 2008.

— Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## Habitat work a boon to Lake Superior trout

**BAYFIELD** – A 2009 study shows that Lake Superior tributaries and trout are already benefitting from habitat work done a year ago to reclaim stream beds from sand



Before (above) and after (below) stream habitat improvement project on the Little Sioux River, Bayfield County. Photo: Josh Dumke

deposited as a result of beaver dams and logging a century ago.

Graduate researcher Josh Dumke evaluated the effects of a stream habitat improvement strategy DNR fisheries staff have commonly used in the basin. DNR crews have worked to remove brushy debris and beaver dams from the streams, allowing sand to flush downstream uncovering the gravel/cobble bottoms that trout and salmon need for spawning.

Before and after comparisons with an unaltered reach on the Little Sioux River in Bayfield County showed that the DNR habitat work is already paying off. One year after it was completed, the number of young trout and their food (aquatic invertebrates) has increased, with more gains expected in the future.

The improvement work narrowed the channel by 25 percent and increased water velocity by 32 percent. As sand was flushed, the stream bed dropped by 60 percent, exposing four times more gravel/cobble, while the unaltered station remained unchanged during the study period.

— Dennis Pratt, fisheries biologist, Superior, and Mike Seider, fisheries biologist, Bayfield

## Free clinics, stocked ponds get kids hooked on fishing

It's easier than ever to get kids started fishing.

For parents who haven't fished much or don't have their own gear, specially stocked and regulated urban ponds, loaner fishing equipment, and free youth fishing clinics are great ways to introduce youngsters to this great pastime. They are all part of increased efforts by the DNR to boost fishing in urban areas and among youngsters whose parents may not fish.

### Try "urban" waters

The 60 or so "urban waters" in the state are ponds or lagoons where stocking and special regulations are aimed at increasing the odds that kids will reel in fish. If you live in southeastern Wisconsin, there is an urban fishing water nearby (see sidebar). The DNR annually stocks thousands of rainbow trout in urban ponds and the Milwaukee County House of Correction Fish Hatchery stocks various species in the urban ponds in Milwaukee County.

### Free fishing clinics

DNR works with volunteers from local fishing clubs to conduct instructional kids fishing clinics each winter and spring. 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. Thanks to the tireless efforts of hundreds of volunteers, thousands of kids are taught the basics of fishing each year.

### Tackle loaner program

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 tackle are available free for loan through DNR outlets located throughout the state.

### Angler education

Finally, DNR offers angler education instruction workshops so that adult volunteers can learn how to start youth fishing programs in their community and pass on their love of this pastime. Workshop attendees are provided guidance and given ideas to help them introduce children to basic fishing skills and connect them with Wisconsin waters.

Help get kids started fishing. Make it a family outing and have fun.

— Matt Coffaro, urban fisheries biologist, Milwaukee

For more information, contact: Matt at (414) 263-8614.

## Urban Fishing Waters

### Southeast Region

**Kenosha County:** Anderson Park, Bong Children's Pond, Poerio Park; **Milwaukee County:** Brown Deer Park, Dineen Park, Estabrook Park, Franklin High School, Greenfield Park, Holler Park, Humboldt Park, Jackson Park, Juneau Park, Kosciuszko Park, McCarty Park, McGovern Park, Miller Park, Mitchell Park, Oak Creek Parkway, Saveland Park, Shoetz Park, Scout Lake, Sheridan Park, Washington Park, Wilson Park; **Ozaukee County:** Harrington Beach Quarry, Mequon Rotary Park East and West, Puckett's Pond, Schowalter Park, Willow Brooke Park; **Racine County:** Gorney Park, Johnson Park, Lockwood Park, Pritchard Park, Quarry Lake, Reservoir Park; **Sheboygan County:** Sheboygan Quarry, Memorial Park, River Park Lagoon; **Walworth County:** Ceylon Lagoon, Congdon Park, Millpond Park Pond; **Washington County:** Boot Lake, Hartford Millpond, Homestead Hollow Park, Kewaskum Millpond, Regner Pond, Sandy Knoll Park, Wells Lake; **Waukesha County:** Calhoun Park, Foxbrook Pond, Heyer Park North and South, Lepper Dam Millpond, Lions Park-Overland, Menomonee Park, Minooka Park, Muskego Park, Nixon Park, Regal Park, and Woodfield North and South

### Northern Region

**Langlade County:** Remington Lake; **Lincoln County:** Mirror Lake

### Northeast Region

**Brown County:** Manger Lagoon - City of Green Bay



# Fabulous Fisheries Projects

## These "fish sticks" attract food for fish

**BAYFIELD COUNTY** – Mere months after felled trees were dragged across the ice on Upper Eau Claire Lake as part of a grass-roots partnership to restore fish habitat in its nearshore areas, hundreds of fish are using the trees.

The new habitat results from work done by the Eau Claire Lakes Property Owners Association and the Eau Claire Conservation Club with DNR fish biologist Scott Toshner who found willing property owners to let them place more trees in the shallow water



A musky with "fish sticks" on Upper Eau Claire Lake. Photo: Scott Toshner

in front of their property on Upper, Middle and Lower Eau Claire lakes. "Our hope is that this winter an additional 400 trees will be placed providing habitat for fish in these lakes in spring 2010," Toshner says.

The Eau Claire Chain project grew out of an earlier project on Bony Lake, another lake in the same chain, where property owners in 2007 launched one of the largest shoreland habitat restoration efforts in Wisconsin.

The next year, the Eau Claire Conservation Club got involved on Upper Eau Claire Lake, and 2009 saw a continued effort on Bony, Middle Eau Claire and Upper Eau Claire lakes by the club, the property owners and the DNR.

To date, 395 trees have been placed in Bony Lake, where there were only 89. Upper Eau Claire has added 98 trees and Middle Eau Claire, 49 trees.

"These trees are very important habitat because they provide refuge, forage, cover and spawning areas for pretty much every fish in the lake for at least part of their life cycles," Toshner says. "The turtles, ducks, kingfisher, otter, mink, beaver and other wildlife are using them at the same time."

Additional fish sticks projects are scheduled for Upper, Middle and Lower Eau Claire Lakes as well as Bony Lake and the Pike Chain of Lakes. The partners learned recently that their "fish sticks" project will receive \$15,000 in federal stimulus funding.

– Lisa Gaumnitz, public affairs manager, Madison

## Returning lake sturgeon to the Milwaukee River

**NEWBURG** – For the fourth year in a row, DNR teamed up with the Riveredge Nature Center, Inc. in 2009 to raise lake sturgeon for release in the Milwaukee River.

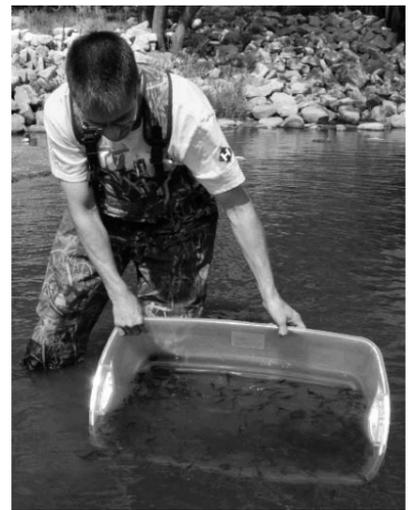
The partners aim to restore this ancient species to the Milwaukee River, where large numbers of the fish lived before 1900. Once deemed so polluted that no fish species could survive, the restoration effort helps highlight the progress the DNR, Milwaukee and others have made in cleaning up the river.

The partners got the eggs from Wolf River sturgeon in the spring and brought them to a streamside rearing facility on the Milwaukee River on April 25, 2009. Nature center volunteers, with guidance from DNR staff, raised the fish throughout the year and the sturgeon were released into the river on October 3, 2009.

The DNR stocked 27 lake sturgeon in 2006, 158 lake sturgeon in 2007, 767 lake sturgeon in 2008 and 1,042 in 2009. With knowledge gained in these four years, we are optimistic that we can annually produce more than 1,000 sturgeon for the Milwaukee River.

In addition, lake sturgeon stocked in the Milwaukee River as part of this project have been picked up in assessments around the lake and have been caught by anglers in the Milwaukee area. Based on these observations, the sturgeon seem to be surviving well after stocking with some of the caught and released sturgeon originally stocked in 2005.

– Brad Eggold, fisheries supervisor, Milwaukee



Young lake sturgeon are stocked into their new Milwaukee River home. Photo: Brad Eggold

## Fish cribs golden for Silver Lake

**OCONOMOWOC** – New fish cribs in the city's Silver Lake create golden fishing opportunity for anglers in 2010. DNR fisheries crews turned 30-foot pine trees into 8-foot-square fish cribs and allowed the cribs to sink through the ice during spring thaw. The trees were donated by a local citizen interested in supplementing the coarse, woody structure available for fish in this 284-acre lake. The natural red pine timbers

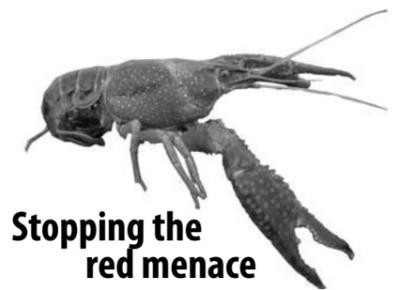
and branches provide cover and food for a variety of fish species.

A summer scuba survey revealed that the cribs were doing their job: abundant and diverse panfish and game fish were using them in 18 feet of water. Working closely with the Silver Lake Management District, DNR fish biologists and technicians are now planning and getting permits for more cribs and tree drops in early 2010.

– Benjamin Heussner, fisheries biologist, Waukesha



DNR biologist Frank Pratt (foreground) shows how to use a dip net to sample aquatic insects during a session of the River Rats program. Pratt and Sue Benson of the Cable Natural History Museum started the program in the Namekagon River in 1989, after an Adopt a Stream pilot project on Hatchery Creek, 1986-88. Over the last 24 years over 1,500 youngsters and their parents have done hands-on river science as part of the River Rats partnership. Photo: Joe Krahn



## Stopping the red menace

**GERMANTOWN** – Wisconsin anglers can breathe easier for now – the red swamp crayfish has met its match.

The November 2009 chemical treatment of a Washington County subdivision pond where the destructive crayfish was found for the first time in Wisconsin in August 2009 appears to have worked. Populations of this aggressive, rapidly reproducing crustacean have been knocked back, if not eliminated.

That's good news because the crustacean is potentially a serious threat to fish populations: it eats fish eggs and clips off the aquatic plants that fish need for spawning, feeding and shelter. The red swamp crayfish's rapid reproduction, ability to live out of water and move over land had fisheries officials worried that it could get into nearby Lake Michigan tributaries and cause problems.

The crayfish was discovered by a citizen and reported to the DNR. DNR staff and cooperators from University of Wisconsin-Madison trapped more than 2,000 of them in the next two months, but more remained and DNR determined that trapping alone wouldn't work. So fisheries officials worked with subdivision property owners to develop a control plan, including chemical treatment of the pond.

– Lisa Gaumnitz, public affairs manager, Madison

## Science in the spotlight

### Wisconsin has stock in walleye

**SPOONER** – Wisconsin state fish hatcheries produce millions of walleye fry and fingerlings annually to create a fishery where there is no natural reproduction, and to sustain a satisfactory walleye fishery in lakes with inadequate reproduction.

General knowledge of stocking approaches and outcomes is used to guide hatchery production, however, fish man-

agement biologists also attempt to tailor stocking to individual lakes by selecting a particular size walleye to stock or a unique method of stocking such as "scatter planting." In these instances, stocked lakes are periodically surveyed to evaluate the contribution of the hatchery-produced walleye to the lake's population. The evaluation is straightforward in lakes with no natural reproduction; all walleye collected can be attributed to the stocking program. In lakes with natural reproduction, documenting survival of stocked walleye requires a few additional steps, starting when the walleye are very young.

Fish research staff located in Spooner cooperate with hatchery staff to mark walleye fry before the fish are stocked or reared to a larger size. Fry are fragile and require a unique marking approach. Walleye fry are held in an oxytetracycline (OTC) bath for six hours prior to stocking in lakes or rearing ponds. The OTC is absorbed and incorporated into bony structures. The mark is revealed back in the laboratory when a bony

structure is exposed to ultraviolet light under a microscope. An inner ear bone, called an otolith, is formed in three-day-old walleye fry and can be extracted from walleye fingerlings collected during lake surveys conducted by fisheries staff. The otolith is mounted on a glass slide and polished before examining it under ultraviolet light to reveal the OTC mark. A gold halo appears near the center of the otolith indicating the fish was marked as a fry in the hatchery when the otolith was much smaller.

Fish research staff examine walleye fingerling and yearling samples annually so biologists can develop tailor-made stocking programs and document successes. Refining stocking approaches contributes to a more efficient, cost-effective hatchery program and ultimately happier anglers.

– Jeff Kampa, fisheries research biologist, Spooner



A happy angler presents the fruits of his labor – a nice Wisconsin walleye. Photo: Jeff Kampa

# Where to wet a line in 2010

## Regional fishing forecasts

### Northern Wisconsin



#### LAKE SUPERIOR

The Lake Superior fishery largely depends on naturally reproducing native and introduced fish species. One of the most important components of maintaining natural reproduction is restoring and protecting fish habitat. Managing Lake Superior tributaries has focused on reclaiming in-stream habitat especially in headwater areas. Poor land management over the past 100 years has left most of the tributaries inundated with sediment, which buries critical trout and salmon spawning habitat. During 2009, fisheries crews continued habitat work to help flush legacy sediments, bringing the total restored habitat to nearly 20 miles. Habitat projects like these will help to further improve self-sustaining trout and salmon populations. On the Bois Brule in Douglas County, the most well known of these tributaries, about 13,000 trout and salmon returned to the stream to spawn last season.

Habitat work not only benefits in-stream fisheries in the tributaries but also contributes to the open lake fishery. Tributaries provide naturally produced brown trout, steelhead, and coho and Chinook salmon to Lake Superior every year. Trolling near the river mouths in Iron, Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas counties is a dependable tactic for catching trout and salmon in spring and fall. Coho salmon returning to spawn in the streams are most commonly caught and average about 19-22 inches. About 180,000 brown trout and splake are stocked each year to enhance the shallow water fishery. Wading from shore near river mouths and fishing near marinas where trout and salmon congregate also can provide prospects for anglers without boats.

– Michael Seider, senior fisheries biologist, Bayfield

#### ASHLAND COUNTY

**Chequamegon Bay** – Year round fishing opportunities persist in Chequamegon Bay. However, May and June are excellent months to target trophy smallmouth bass in the shallow waters. Spring 2009 surveys found 42 percent of the spawning smallmouth bass were greater than 18 inches. Spring is a great time to fish for walleye, too. Chequamegon Bay supports a low density but trophy-sized walleye population with average length of almost 22 inches. In 2009, walleye stocking was resumed to supplement the population since natural recruitment is very limited in the western end of Chequamegon Bay. Conservative fishing regulations have greatly helped establish these trophy fisheries. Past studies showed the resurgence of native populations of northern pike and walleye has decreased survival of stocked fish. Brown trout and splake are stocked annually to continue to provide a diverse fishery. Fall is a good time to target brown trout when they are staging near river mouths. The average length of brown trout caught is about 20 inches but recently more fish topping 25 inches have been showing up.

Before venturing out on Lake Superior, anglers are strongly encouraged to check weather conditions and forecasts. Visit [dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakesup](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakesup) for more specific information about the Lake Superior fishery.

– Michael Seider, senior fisheries biologist, Bayfield

#### BARRON COUNTY

**Silver Lake** – The adult walleye population is estimated at 1.7 fish per acre or 588 fish. Largemouth and smallmouth bass are present, but many are less than 14 inches. There are few northern pike, but the lake has some quality-size fish over 30 inches. Panfish numbers generally are low but a few nice-sized fish have been collected.

**Duck Lake** – The adult walleye population is estimated at 5.4 fish per acre or 544 fish. This is above average for local lakes, but many of the walleye are less than 16 inches. Largemouth bass numbers are low but some larger bass are present. Northern pike generally run small and skinny. Most pike are in the 20- to 24-inch range. Bluegill sizes are average for local lakes with most fish topping out at 7.5 to eight inches.

**Turtle Creek** – Several years of intensive trout habitat restoration work as well as an aggressive stocking program have turned this water into one of the top local trout streams. Additional stream habitat restoration work is planned for summer 2010 downstream of Highway D and upstream of the 6th Street parking area. Anglers fishing late in the season will be able to explore this habitat restoration work.

– Heath Benike, senior fisheries biologist, Barron

#### BAYFIELD COUNTY

**Apostle Islands** – Surveys in 2009 showed that the Apostle Islands region supports healthy populations of naturally reproducing lake trout with more than 95 percent of the lake trout in the fishery comprised of wild fish. In early spring, lake trout are found in relatively shallow water but move into deeper water as the temperature increases. Catch rates are generally highest in June and July. The average lake trout caught is about 22 inches with fish exceeding 32 inches caught each year. Spawning surveys show the population is healthy with lake trout growing larger than 40 inches and often living 30-plus years with some fish living to be over 50 years old. Two fish refuges adjacent to important spawning areas are closed to sport and commercial fishing and are critical to sustaining the Apostle Islands fishery and allowing fish to grow very old.

– Michael Seider, senior fisheries biologist, Bayfield

#### BURNETT COUNTY

Largemouth bass and bluegill provide the fishing action in Burnett County and it doesn't matter which lake you fish. Angler catch rates for largemouth run about 10 times higher than the rest of the state. Size limits and a strong catch-and-release ethic caused populations to increase, but growth rates declined. The chance of catching one larger than 16 inches isn't very good. Still, catching lots of 11- to 15-inch bass on light tackle is a fun day on the water. Bluegill is the main panfish in all the county lakes and they can be large with eight-to-10-inches fairly common, especially in lakes around Siren and Grantsburg.

**Yellow Lake** – This lake is always a good choice for walleye anglers. The adult population estimate is 4.6 per acre. About 77 percent are greater than the 15-inch length limit.

– Larry Damman, fisheries biologist, Spooner

#### DOUGLAS COUNTY

Fishing in the open lake portion of Lake Superior in Douglas and Bayfield counties is a very different experience than fishing in the Apostle Islands, yet catch rates can be just as good. Surveys show wild lake trout are becoming more abundant. However, lake trout are still stocked each year and make up only 20 to 30 percent of angler catch. Conservative fishing regulations and sea lamprey control has been critical to lake trout rehabilitation throughout Lake Superior. In addition to lake trout, trolling in the western arm of Lake Superior produces coho and Chinook salmon and walleye.

Another fishing destination in western Lake Superior is the St. Louis River, an 11,000-acre waterbody in Douglas County. Although the lower portion of the river is highly developed, the habitat in the upper

game fish on Upper St. Croix due to their large numbers and decent size. In 2009, pike averaged 19 inches and the largest pike surveyed was 36 inches. Largemouth bass populations have more than doubled since 1997 and smallmouth bass numbers have declined slightly in the same period. Both bass species average between 12 and 13 inches but can reach 19 inches or more in the lake. Bluegill and black crappie are abundant with better than average size structures. The 2009 survey revealed high numbers of black crappie in the six- to eight-inch range, which may indicate good crappie fishing in the next couple of years. Several boat launches around the lake provide angler access.

**Whitefish Lake** – Walleye numbers have increased on Whitefish Lake according to 2009 surveys. This increase is likely due to several strong year classes since the last survey in 2004. Whitefish Lake is 832 acres with a maximum depth of 102 feet. The average walleye size in the 2009 survey was 16.6 inches with a maximum size of 28.2 inches, which is typical of deep clear lakes in the area but exceptional at a regional level. Whitefish has a healthy cisco population, which is becoming increasingly rare. Few northern pike are present but those found



A beautiful smallmouth bass caught in Chequamegon Bay in June by angler Jayme Seider. Photo: Michael Seider

river is pristine and supports a diverse mix of species including walleye, northern pike, musky, smallmouth bass and panfish. Improved water quality and restrictive fishing regulations have created a prosperous sport fishery. Documented natural reproduction and the 50-inch minimum length limit for musky should contribute to a healthy fishery with future trophy opportunities. The walleye fishery also looks healthy with recent surveys finding 33 percent of the adult walleye between 20 and 25 inches.

**Upper St. Croix Lake** – Anglers looking for a balanced fishery including walleye, small and largemouth bass, northern pike and an occasional musky along with a good bluegill and black crappie fishery should consider this lake. Upper St. Croix Lake covers 855 acres with a maximum depth of 22 feet and it is the headwaters of the St. Croix River. Survey results from 2009 reveal a walleye population that remains around three adult walleye per acre, which is the state management objective for walleye lakes. Walleye captured in 2009 ranged in length from 10.7 to 27.2 inches and averaged 15.6 inches, which is slightly greater than other area walleye lakes. Northern pike are a popular

are of exceptional sizes, similar to large and smallmouth bass populations. The lake has very clear water conditions. Water levels in this seepage lake are about five feet below normal due to an extended drought. The DNR-owned boat landing was reconstructed in fall 2009, but due to low water levels it may still be difficult to launch large boats there.

– Scott Toshner, fisheries biologist, Brule

#### IRON COUNTY

**Turtle-Flambeau Flowage** – Survey information gathered in 2009 revealed that the 13,500-acre Turtle-Flambeau Flowage located in southern Iron County continues to support the county's most abundant population of walleye. Adult walleye population estimates show that the number of fish has remained the same since the last comprehensive survey in 1997. At four adult walleye per surface acre, this fish population is stable and its numbers continue to be above the regional average. Although the flowage has always been known as a "catch-and-keep" type fishery with the majority of fish





A 55-inch musky taken from a Bayfield County lake in summer of 2009. Photo: Photographer unknown

at edible size, current data show definite size structure improvements with 31 percent of the population between 15 and 20 inches, which is up since 1997.

The musky population also has improved over the past 12 years. Surveys show that musky abundance is similar from 1997 to 2009 but the size structure has dramatically improved. In 1997, 17 percent of the fish sampled were 40 inches and longer while no fish were captured exceeding 45 inches. In the spring of 2009, 31 percent of the fish sampled were 40 inches or longer while eight percent exceeded 45 inches. There was no evidence of natural musky reproduction and the population and fishery remains dependant on stocking.

On the panfish front, survey results show no measurable difference in the average size of fish, but total densities of bluegill, pumpkinseed and yellow perch appear to have increased. Panfish anglers who have fished the TFF in the past know that the flowage has always produced above average sized panfish and now with increased numbers, those folks fishing for panfish should experience a lot more fishing action.

The TFF supports an exceptional smallmouth bass fishery in terms of numbers and average size. Pound for pound, the smallmouth is known for its exceptional fighting ability. "Smallies" found in the flowage are easily caught in summer and are extremely robust for their length. These exceptionally heavy fish provide anglers with an extraordinary angling experience.

– Jeff Roth, fisheries biologist, Mercer

## LANGLADE COUNTY

**Goto Lake** – This is a small lake at only 28 acres, but it is the deepest lake in the county at 82 feet. There is walk-in/carry-in access from a DNR parking lot on the lake's west side. The east half of the lake is privately owned. A 2009 survey found walleye, northern pike, brook trout, yellow perch, black crappie and green sunfish. A privately stocked walleye population was estimated at 2.9 per acre, which is a good density for a stocked population. Most were in the 20- to 27-inch range. No evidence of walleye natural reproduction was found and only five pike were captured ranging from 21 to 32 inches. Two six- to seven-inch brook trout were captured, which is not surprising since Goto Lake basically is a big spring pond and has brook trout streams flowing in and out. Perch were numerous but most were small at five to eight inches. Only nine crappies were captured but they were quality size ranging from five to 14 inches. Green sunfish were abundant and ranged from three to five inches.

**Phlox Lake** – A 2009 comprehensive survey on this 45-acre impoundment on the Red River found northern pike were common

with the majority between 15 and 25 inches. The largemouth bass population also was abundant with many in the 11- to 17-inch range. Panfish were abundant and mostly on the small side but patient anglers will be rewarded with perch up to 8.5 inches, bluegill up to seven, crappie up to 10, and yellow bullhead to 14 inches.

**Stream trout waters** – Stream trout are doing well despite a seven-year drought. In 2009, trout numbers were up substantially from the previous year in most streams surveyed. This includes the East Branch of the Eau Claire River, Hunting River, Evergreen River, Spring Brook and Red River. In-stream trout habitat projects were started on the Hunting River (Highway T wayside reach) and the Evergreen River (between the railroad bridge and Menominee Reservation off Highway M). The Hunting River project is a two-year project slated for summer 2010 completion. The Evergreen River project may take two more summers (2010 and 2011) to finish.

– Dave Seibel, fisheries biologist, Antigo

## LINCOLN COUNTY

**Lake Mohawksin** – This 1,910-acre impoundment on the Wisconsin River in Tomahawk is one of the premier all-around fisheries in Lincoln County. In 2009, a comprehensive survey found strong, self-sustaining populations of walleye, musky, northern pike, smallmouth bass and panfish. The walleye population was estimated at 4.7 adults per acre, which is above average for northern Wisconsin walleye waters. Most walleye were in the 11- to 20-inch range and about 22 percent of adults were over the minimum 15-inch length limit. There is a strong musky population with many fish up to 45 inches long. Northern pike are abundant; the bulk of which are 13 to 30 inches long. Lots of panfish are present. Perch are common up to 11 inches, bluegill up to nine, pumpkinseed up to 7.5 and crappie up to 11 inches.

**Stream trout waters** – Stream trout are doing well despite a seven-year drought. In 2009, trout numbers were up substantially from 2008 in most streams surveyed. This includes the Prairie River where trout were up 20 percent and near historic highs. In 25 years of surveys at one Prairie River station, total trout numbers have only been this high or higher four other years (2001, 1995, 1994 and 1976). History has shown that stream trout numbers routinely fluctuate three-fold and years of fewer trout likely are coming. An in-stream trout habitat project will be started and likely completed this summer on a newly acquired DNR property on the Prairie River. The property is immediately above Highway J and this project will tie in nicely with projects done right below Highway J and right above this new property.

– Dave Seibel, fisheries biologist, Antigo

## ONEIDA COUNTY

**Gilmore Lake** – A comprehensive survey of this lake found abundant northern pike, musky, largemouth bass and panfish, along with fewer stocked walleye. Most pike are 17 to 26 inches, but a few fish up to 34 inches have been found. About 71 musky were handled during the survey, with sizes from 30 to 47 inches. Largemouth bass eight to 16 inches long were fairly numerous while few smallmouth were captured. The walleye population was reasonable for a stocked population, at 1.6 per acre. Walleye ranged 12 to 29 inches, peaking at 20 inches. There were abundant small panfish, but anglers willing to sort will find seven-inch bluegill and pumpkinseed, seven- to nine-inch crappie and eight- to 11-inch yellow bullhead.

**Squash Lake** – A recent walleye survey on Squash Lake found about two adults per acre. Most walleye were 13 to 20 inches in length. Largemouth bass were abundant with size centered on 14 inches.

**Minocqua Chain** – A survey on the Minocqua Chain found low to average density walleye populations. Kawaguesaga had the

highest density (3.4 per acre), but more small fish with a peak at 15 inches. In Minocqua, two walleye per acre were found and good numbers of all sizes from 13 to 30 inches. Overall walleye numbers were low in Tomahawk at 1.3 per acre, but there are trophy-class walleye up to 32 inches in length. Both species of bass were abundant on the Chain, with good numbers up to 16 or 17 inches. Northern pike showed good numbers out to the low 30-inches range. Most musky ranged 36 to 45 inches and the largest was 50.5 inches. Panfish showed moderate abundance but good size potential.

**Trout waters** – Despite a seven-year drought, a survey of Bearskin Creek found excellent brook trout natural reproduction. Most trout were seven inches or smaller. The largest brook trout was 12 inches and the largest brown was 8.2 inches. Look for stocked brown trout in Dorothy Lake; rainbows are planned for Perch, Hawk and Little Bass lakes. Brook trout will go into Mercer Springs and Brown, Gudogast, Scott and Starks creeks.

– John Kubisiak, senior fisheries biologist, Rhinelander

## POLK COUNTY

**Big and Little Blake lakes** – Largemouth bass are abundant in these waters. Bass growth is slower than average and most of the bass collected were less than 14 inches long. Northern pike and musky have been captured in low numbers in each lake, but the fish were in excellent condition. The musky classification will be upgraded on this water because of a higher than expected population. Bluegill size structure has improved in recent years with bluegill size structure topping out in the 7.5- to 8.5-inch range.

**Deer Lake** – Musky have been present in moderate numbers. The largest fish measured was 44.6 inches and weighed just under 30 pounds. Northern pike also are present in low numbers but some quality fish exist here. Largemouth bass were abundant and growth and size structure appears to be declining with many bass in the 11- to 13-inch range. Bluegill size structure was average with most fish in the 6.5- to 7.5-inch range.

**Largon Lake** – Largemouth bass and northern pike dominate this small lake. A 32-inch minimum length limit has been in place since the mid 1990s and northern pike abundance is strong with many fish in the 28- to 36-inch range. Largemouth bass provide another quality fishery with larger than average size fish present. Bluegill size structure is average with most fish in the 7.5- to eight-inch range.

**Poplar Lake** – Largemouth bass and northern pike are the primary game fish in this small western lake. Bass size structure is slightly below average but densities have improved when compared to past surveys. Bluegill top out in the 7.5- to eight-inch range.

**Clam River** – About 2,500 feet of stream habitat improvement activities occurred on the Clam River in the McKenzie Creek Wildlife Area off 60th Street. Bank covers, rock weirs and deflectors were added to improve habitat for large brown and brook trout.

**South Twin Lake** – DNR fisheries and City of Amery staff upgraded the existing aeration system on South Twin Lake in downtown Amery. Two new compressed air pumps and aeration lines were installed, and several aeration lines were repaired. The new aeration system will double the amount of compressed air in the lake when compared to the previous aeration system and should prevent or minimize future fish winterkills.

– Heath Benike, senior fisheries biologist, Barron

## PRICE COUNTY

**Murray Creek and Little Elk River** – Anglers should have good opportunities for catching native and stocked trout in Murray Creek

near Park Falls and in Little Elk River near Phillips. Electrofishing in July 2009 revealed that portions of both streams had reproducing brook trout at satisfactory numbers and size. In Little Elk River, 29 percent of brook trout five inches and longer were eight to 11.3 inches long. Some brook and brown trout stocked into portions of Little Elk River were still available in mid summer.

**Butternut Lake** – Fall 2008 and spring 2009 surveys allowed sportfish population comparisons to goals outlined in the 2005 Butternut Lake Fishery Management Plan. Walleye density was midway between the desired range of four to eight adults per acre, but population size structure fell short of the target, which specifies that 30 to 50 percent of walleye 10 inches and longer captured by netting in early spring should be at least 15 inches. One year after rule changes were designed to increase the proportion of larger fish by limiting harvest of walleye over 14 inches, densities improved slightly from 19 percent in 2003 to 21 percent in 2009. Capture rates for musky ranked in the 81st percentile among spring netting surveys on similar "fast-action" musky waters, suggesting that musky density remains above the goal of 0.2 – 0.3 adults per acre. Anglers are encouraged to selectively harvest a musky 34 to 40 inches long once in a while to help attain goals for musky, perch and walleye. Netting in fall 2008 found that black crappie in Butternut Lake exceeded anglers' expectations for size (42 percent of crappie five inches and longer were at least 10 inches long), but netting capture rate reflects fewer fish following a season with high angling success. Local anglers support more restrictive panfish harvest regulation to moderate the boom-and-bust cycles in crappie numbers. Yellow perch are plentiful in the six- to eight-inch range, but spring netting yielded none longer than 10 inches. Bluegill are starting to make a comeback. The Butternut Lake Fishery Management Plan is posted on DNR's website at [dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/upchip/fisheries/reports.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/upchip/fisheries/reports.htm).

– Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## RUSK COUNTY

**Lower Flambeau River Flowages** – Strong river currents, canyon-like shorelines, dark-stained water and fish moving long distances between dams challenged surveyors in this series of reservoirs, so it is uncertain that results from fall 2008 and spring 2009 surveys reflect the true status of sportfish in Big Falls, Dairyland, Ladysmith, and the Thornapple flowages. Nonetheless, it is possible to cautiously compare findings from those surveys with goals that anglers helped define in 2005.

Partner groups considered a very good walleye fishery as four to eight adults per acre and 25 to 30 percent at least 15 inches long. Spring 2009 capture rates indicated low walleye density, but spawning walleye may move to the free-flowing river segments and elude net capture in the impoundments. Small samples suggest that walleye in these flowages probably have the desired size distribution.

Anglers wanted better fisheries for black crappie with a goal that 20 to 30 percent of all crappie five inches and longer captured by fyke netting in early fall should be 10 inches or longer. If experimental application of a technique developed in Missouri is valid for assessing crappie populations in northern lakes, fall 2008 capture rates of zero-to-three crappie per net-night indicate very low abundance in each flowage. Although not enough fish were measured to confidently evaluate population size structure, 29 to 33 percent of crappie in the small samples were at least 10 inches long.

Electrofishing capture rates for smallmouth bass seven inches and longer ranged from 16 to 28 per hour in the four flowages compared to 50 to 100 bass per hour, the measure of desired abundance. Proportions of bass 14 inches or longer ranged from zero percent in Thornapple Flowage to 29 percent in Dairyland and Ladysmith, suggesting that smallmouth did not achieve the target range of 40 to 60 percent.

Four bluegill longer than three inches were found in 12.5 miles of shoreline electrofishing, so expectations for a substantial bluegill fishery probably are unrealistic in light of habitat conditions. Sparse aquatic plants and many young walleye are not a prescription for abundant bluegill of decent size.

Results from recent surveys about the effects of the 30-foot reservoir drawdown in 2007 or the ongoing habitat enhancement project at Dairyland Flowage were inconclusive.

– Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## TAYLOR COUNTY

**Wood Creek** – Harsh conditions stemming from prolonged drought and beaver dams forced trout to concentrate in spring-fed reaches of Wood Creek southeast of Rib Lake. A July 2009 survey at five stations confirmed that natural reproduction sustains a viable fishery with brook trout up to 13 inches long and brown trout to 17.5 inches. Size and numbers for both species were highest near Trout Avenue. For now anglers should avoid the headwater reaches downstream from Wood Lake where there has been extremely low stream flow and no trout.

**Spirit and North Spirit lakes** – Anglers of all skill levels can pick from a variety of fishing opportunities the Spirit Lakes offer. Novice and avid musky anglers should enjoy fast-action with a decent chance to land one of memorable size. Netting in spring 2009 yielded 31 musky ranging 29.5 to 42.5 inches. Musky abundance and size structure were better in North Spirit Lake where 42 percent were 38 inches or longer. The low-density walleye populations in both lakes were comprised entirely of older adults 21 to 29.5 inches long with no evidence of natural reproduction—annual stocking maintains the walleye fishery (see story on page 4). Largemouth bass were twice as abundant in North Spirit Lake, but Spirit Lake held a greater proportion of bass 15 inches or longer (62 percent versus 26 percent). Families can find good panfish fishing as long as size is not too important. Black crappie and yellow perch were plentiful in both basins, but



Fisheries technician Greg Rublee holds two large walleye (largest 29.5 inches) captured in spring 2009 in fyke nets in Spirit Lake, Taylor County. Photo: Kendal Liebzzeit

very few were found to be longer than eight inches. Just over half of the bluegills measured were six to seven inches long.

**Diamond Lake** – Those seeking a relaxed fishing experience on a small lake with light boat traffic and the added amenities of a county park should consider a trip to the 49-acre Diamond Lake, located about 20 miles west of Medford. Spring 2009 surveys found mainly largemouth bass and bluegill each in moderate to high numbers with 59 percent of bluegill six inches or longer and 38 percent of bass at least 15 inches long. A low-density population offers bonus fishing for 21- to 27-inch walleye. The slow-no-wake ordinance is friendly toward small boats.

– Jeff Scheirer, fisheries biologist, Park Falls

## VILAS COUNTY

**Long and Big Sand lakes** – For the first time in Vilas County fishing history there will be lakes with a 50-inch minimum regulation on musky. Through cooperative efforts of the Headwater Chapter of Muskies Inc., the local lake districts and Department of Natu-

ral Resources, this special regulation goes into effect on Long and Big Sand lakes this spring. These lakes are located in Northeastern Vilas County just east of the town of Phelps. The lakes are connected by a half-mile long thoroughfare. Both lakes have the potential to produce trophy musky if given enough protection. Currently, there are a few big fish in these lakes and it will take 10 to 15 years to see the full impact of this regulation change. These may not be good lakes to fish this year but keep an eye on these waters for future big fish potential.

**Long Lake** – Long Lake also has a new walleye regulation in 2010. In an effort to increase adult walleye numbers, re-establish natural recruitment, and control rainbow smelt numbers, an 18-inch minimum length limit and a three fish (\*) bag limit was placed on the lake. The illegal introduction of smelt into this lake has ruined the healthy natural walleye population. The Department of Natural Resources, Long Lake of Phelps Lake District and the Phelps Chamber of Commerce are promoting smelt awareness and stocking the lake with large walleye fingerlings on an annual basis. The goal is to see natural walleye recruitment return to this lake.

\* Please note: Long Lake is in the ceded territory and the bag limit may be lower on an annual basis based on tribal declarations.

**Lac du Flambeau area Lakes** – Covering 144 square miles of western Vilas County, the Lac du Flambeau Indian reservation offers some overlooked fishing opportunities. There are 260 lakes located in or on the reservation border. State, tribal and town boat landings provide access to most of the larger lakes. When it comes to big water in the county, four of the top 10 largest lakes by acreage are located within the reservation.

**Lac du Flambeau reservation lakes** provide a range of fishing opportunities. No special tribal license is required to fish these waters, but you do need a Wisconsin fishing license. Most reservation waters have special regulations regarding walleye and musky harvest. Consult the Wisconsin fishing regulation pamphlet for lake-specific rules. These waters are stocked and monitored by the

Lac du Flambeau Tribal Natural Resource Department; call (715) 588-3207 for more information.

– Steve Gilbert, fisheries biologist, Woodruff

## WASHBURN COUNTY

Only a handful of Washburn County's many lakes are walleye waters, but there are a few exceptional ones.

**Minong Flowage** – Minong Flowage supports a thriving adult walleye population of seven per acre as well as many juveniles. If you're catching sub-legal walleye, try a different spot. The big boys won't be in the same habitats as the cigars.

**Shell Lake** – Shell Lake has had several huge walleye hatches in recent years with fall fingerling counts running around 100 per mile. Twelve- to 14-inch walleye dominate the fishery now but a no-minimum size limit applies.

**Long Lake** – Long Lake's adult walleye population has only been running around two per acre, but fast growth results in a quality fishery. A third of the population is greater than 20 inches with 30-plus inch trophy fish out there. The 2005 year class was the best in 15 years and those fish will run 17 to 20 inches this spring.

Trout anglers will want to check the updated website [co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/info/huntfishwild.htm](http://co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/info/huntfishwild.htm). Locations for 18 backwoods trout ponds in the Washburn County Forest can be found there. Two-inch long brook trout stocked at ice out grow to nice eating size by fall and can reach 18 inches in just a few years. The best fishing is in fall and first ice when most other trout waters are closed.

– Steve Gilbert, fisheries biologist, Woodruff

Interested in fishery areas?

<http://dnr.wi.gov/fisheryareas>

# Northeastern Wisconsin



## CALUMET COUNTY

Calumet County's eastern half houses several lakes and streams that are popular with anglers. Bass, northern pike and rock bass fishing can be very good during the summer on the Chilton Millpond, South Branch of the Manitowoc River and the Killsnake River.

– Steve Hogler, fisheries biologist, Mishicot

## DOOR COUNTY

**Tributary streams** – Steelhead are stocked annually in Heins, Hibbards and Whitefish Bay creeks. These streams are scenic and provide anglers with a good small-stream fishing experience. Increasing water levels in Lake Michigan have raised the number of steelhead and other fish found in these streams during spring and fall runs.

**Inland Lakes** – Surveys over the past several years on Kangaroo and Clark lakes indicate good fish populations and anglers targeting smallmouth bass and walleye in both lakes. Northern pike ice fishing can be good on Kangaroo Lake. The panfish population on Kangaroo Lake is dominated by yellow perch and rock bass while bluegill is more common in Clark Lake. Anglers seeking solitude should give Europe Lake a try. Fishing may be a little slow but an occasional smallmouth bass or panfish may be caught.

– Steve Hogler, fisheries biologist, Mishicot

## GREEN BAY/LOWER FOX RIVER

The Lake Michigan creel survey estimated that anglers caught more than 160,000 walleye from Green Bay and the Lower Fox River in 2008 and kept about 48,000 of those fish. During March and April in the Lower Fox River, the catch rate improved to one fish for every 1.1 hours of fishing. Fall surveys documented strong year classes of walleye from 2008 and 2009 with catch rates of young-of-the-year walleye almost three times greater than the long-term average in those years. Anglers should find plenty of 20- to 26-inch fish from a strong 2003 year class and a lot of small fish action as the 2008 year class begins to recruit to the fishery.

Green Bay musky fishing should be fantastic. While fall 2009 wasn't particularly great in terms of catch rate, huge schools of forage fish comprised of gizzard shad and emerald and spotfin shiners were present. This healthy forage base resulted in some massive fish and there were plenty of 50-plus inch fish caught and released that would have weighed in at over 45 pounds. DNR netting surveys in the spring of 2009 captured

197 adult musky of amazing sizes from the Lower Fox River and Green Bay. The average fish size has continued to increase as this re-established population matures. The average fish length was 43.5 inches. Twelve fish were larger than 50 inches and 30 fish were larger than 48 inches. Anglers pursuing musky on Green Bay need to be prepared with an adequate-sized landing net and a good pair of pliers and side cutters for removing hooks. Oh, and make sure to have your camera ready.

– David Rowe, fisheries biologist, Green Bay



All smiles with a 50-inch Green Bay musky. Photo: Tim Simonson

## GREEN BAY (MARINETTE, OCONTO, BROWN AND KEWAUNEE COUNTIES)

A sizeable 2009 yellow perch year class along with several years of moderate to

good year classes since 2003 is good news for anglers. The 2009 ice fishing season resulted in nearly equal proportions of two, three and four-year-old yellow perch harvested. Those fish averaged 8.2 inches. In 2009, perch fishing throughout the bay was spotty during early summer but improved dramatically beginning in August. Many of the fish caught were seven to eight inches and 2 years old (2007 year class), which suggests accelerated growth rates compared to most years. Those fish should continue to provide quality yellow perch angling opportunities in 2010.

Brown trout shocking surveys in the lower Menominee River resulted in a record low number of browns. Catches averaged eight fish per hour compared to 20 to 30 fish per hour in the past few years. However, the fish that were caught were quite impressive, averaging more than 28 inches with an occasional fish in the mid-30 inch range weighing more than 20 pounds. Large numbers of whitefish were found during November 2009 sampling, and a few anglers caught whitefish by hook and line. Spring walleye fishing in the Menominee, Peshtigo and Oconto rivers is very good with most fish in the 21- to 24-inch size group. Walleye catches in the surrounding areas of Green Bay have been exceptional for the past few years and continue to be dominated by the 2003 year class.

The Department of Natural Resources continues annual stocking of brown and rainbow trout, and Chinook and coho salmon in Upper Green Bay. These fish will provide future opportunities for stream angling and trolling.

– Tammie Paoli, fisheries biologist, Peshtigo

## KEWAUNEE COUNTY

**Tributary streams** – Following the spring melt, anglers target large migrating steelhead, northern pike and suckers in the Kewaunee and Ahnapee rivers and Stony Creek. The steelhead run begins in late March and in many years continues through the end of April. Recent spring runs have been much better than runs in the early 2000s. While many anglers focus on fishing the large streams, anglers should not overlook small streams such as Silver and Stony creeks.

Summer tributary fishing for smallmouth bass should be very good in lower sections of the Kewaunee and Ahnapee rivers. Those seeking catfish, bullhead, panfish or a few yellow perch should try fishing the Algoma or Kewaunee harbors.

In mid-September, salmon spawning migrations begin and if stream flows are good, fishing should be excellent in most tributary streams, first Chinook, followed by coho, brown trout and steelhead, until the rivers freeze. Most fishing activity is on the Kewaunee River.

When it comes time for ice fishing, try the lower reaches of the Kewaunee River for steelhead and brown trout.

**Inland lakes and streams** – Bass fishing is fair and panfish fishing is good in Kewaunee's small lakes, with many anglers targeting panfish in the winter. East Alaska Lake is stocked with small numbers of musky that provide anglers with a unique fishing opportunity. Although density is low, anglers catch several 40-plus inch musky nearly every year. Krohns Lake located southwest of Algoma is stocked annually with rainbow trout and is an excellent place to take a kid fishing. Several streams, including Scarboro and Little Scarboro creeks and the upper East Twin River have either stocked brown trout or native brook trout that provide anglers with inland trout fishing opportunities.

– Steve Hogler, fisheries biologist, Mishicot

## MANITOWOC COUNTY

**Tributary streams** – Following the spring melt, anglers can hook steelhead, brown trout and northern pike in larger tributaries including the Manitowoc, Branch, East Twin and West Twin rivers. While many focus on fishing the large streams, anglers shouldn't overlook small streams such as Silver and Fischer creeks. Looking for a different fishing experience? Try dip-netting suckers or smelt as they migrate upstream.

Anglers fishing in tributary streams during summer can catch a variety of fish. Smallmouth bass fishing should be very good in lower sections of the Manitowoc and Branch rivers. Northern pike anglers should try fishing the lower Manitowoc or West Twin rivers. Those seeking catfish, bullhead, panfish or a few yellow perch should try fishing in the Manitowoc and Two Rivers harbors.

In mid-September, salmon spawning migrations begin and if stream flows are good, fishing should be excellent. The Chinook run is followed by the coho run, then brown trout and steelhead runs until the rivers freeze.

Try the lower reaches of the larger rivers such as the Manitowoc and West Twin rivers to ice fish for steelhead and brown trout.

**Inland lakes** – Recent surveys show that most lakes in the county are largemouth bass and panfish lakes. Larger lakes such as Long, Cedar, Pigeon and Wilke lakes have a mix of bass population sizes that will provide anglers with some good angling. Bass are present in smaller lakes but in lower numbers. Fishing is fair and walleye are stocked in several lakes including Bullhead, Pigeon, Silver and Harpts lakes. Northern pike fishing is good in several lakes including Silver, Cedar and Long lakes. Panfish, mainly bluegill, yellow perch and rock bass are popular with local anglers despite low numbers and small sizes in some lakes. Horseshoe Lake is stocked annually with trout and is very popular with anglers during the winter.

– Steve Hogler, fisheries biologist, Mishicot

## MARINETTE COUNTY

**Lake Noquebay** – A 2009 survey on the 2,000-acre Lake Noquebay near Crivitz resulted in more than 600 walleye, 500 largemouth bass and 3,000 panfish captured. The primary predator was the largemouth bass, with more than 350 captured during netting and another 173 caught by electrofishing. Catch rates for largemouth bass were about 20 fish per mile indicating a very good population. The largest bass captured was 22 inches and the average length was 13.5 inches. More than 600 walleye were handled in the surveys, but several were captured more than twice. It is estimated, using the ratio of unmarked fish to marked fish, that Lake Noquebay houses about 0.5 adult walleye per acre or 1,200 fish. The largest walleye caught was 24 inches and the average size was 14.9 inches. Panfish, including bluegill, black crappie, pumpkinseed, rock bass and yellow perch, were captured in large numbers during surveys. All species were numerous and large. Bluegill was the most dominant panfish species with an average size of 6.2 inches and the largest fish at 9.5 inches. Black crappie were impressive with the average size being 8.6 inches and the largest fish caught at 13 inches. Overall, Lake Noquebay is a good fishing destination.

**Menominee River and flowages** – Surveys performed in 2009 on the Menominee River and its flowages documented abundant smallmouth bass fisheries. Those fisheries are in very good condition with smallmouth bass larger than 14 inches common. Evening surveys were performed at Big Quinnesec Flowage on the Menominee River in May and October of 2009 and showed a good fishery with abundant northern pike, walleye, bass and bluegill. One-mile sections of the Menominee River near Sturgeon Falls, Miscoano Island, Grand Rapids and Lower Scott Dam also were sampled and revealed abundant juvenile and adult smallmouth bass. Other notable game fish found during the river surveys included northern pike, musky, walleye and channel catfish. All of the flowages and river reaches have public landings and shoreline fishing opportunities. The Peshtigo River and its flowages also provide similar smallmouth bass fisheries.

– Mike Donofrio, fisheries supervisor, Peshtigo

## LAKE MICHIGAN AND GREEN BAY (DOOR, MANITOWOC AND KEWAUNEE COUNTIES)

Chinook salmon stocking reductions in 2006 have now nearly taken full effect in the population as fish from that stocking year class returned to the 2009 creel as 3-plus year olds. Once again, the results of a lake-wide marking program indicate a substantial contribution of naturally recruited fish to the population of Lake Michigan Chinook with a 2008 estimate of approximately 50 percent of young salmon being "wild" fish. Chinook size continues to trend upward from near historic lows in 2007. The average size of a fish returning to the Strawberry Creek Weir in Sturgeon Bay increased from 2008 levels.

An apparent change in whitefish feeding and/or distribution patterns in Green Bay several years ago created an unprecedented ice fishery for this species in the area. Winter creel estimates for 2009 indicated whitefish again provided good action for ice anglers. Population assessments and stock size estimates completed in 2009 indicate the area whitefish spawning stock(s) are robust and recruitment is strong.

The smallmouth bass fishery continues to be a gem along portions of Door County's shoreline and 2010 should be no exception. Spring population assessments in Little Sturgeon Bay and Sturgeon Bay areas provided evidence that the smallmouth density is in good condition. Size structure appears to be very good as 25 percent of fish captured measured between 18 and 22 inches with the largest fish approaching 23 inches. Future smallmouth fishing opportunities are optimistic as preliminary information suggests recruitment has been very good with sub-adult fish well represented in addition to positive summer and fall young-of-the-year assessments.

Walleye fishing in the area continues to be excellent due to outstanding walleye reproduction in southern and western portions of Green Bay. The strong 2003 year class is still well represented by many fish in the lower to middle 20-inch range. Although walleye stocking in Door County waters has been sporadic the past several years, fish stocked in 2003 and 2004 should continue to contribute to the creel. The number of walleye caught incidentally during spring smallmouth bass surveys suggests a good local population.

– Scott Hansen, fisheries biologist, Sturgeon Bay

## LAKE MICHIGAN (MANITOWOC AND KEWAUNEE COUNTIES)

The Lake Michigan fishery offers abundant fishing opportunities for all anglers who can choose to fish from piers, the shore, small or large boats, or from charter boats at the major ports of Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Kewaunee and Algoma.

During April and May anglers target brown trout and steelhead that are nearshore. Summer months find anglers targeting Chinook and coho salmon, and brown trout within several miles of the shore, and steelhead farther offshore. During the warm summer months, when favorable wind conditions push warm surface water offshore and bring cold water nearshore, fishing from the piers and breakwalls can be fantastic with lucky anglers landing a mixed bag of salmon and trout. Summer fishing for yellow perch in Hika Bay off of Cleveland also can be very good. As the weather cools in fall, most anglers target Chinook salmon that begin to stage near river mouths for their annual fall run. Some anglers however continue to fish farther offshore for steelhead and immature salmon until weather conditions on the lake prevents safe fishing. During mild winters, brown trout fishing can be good from the shore or from piers.

– Steve Hogler, fisheries biologist, Mishicot

## OCONTO COUNTY

**White Potato Lake** – This 978-acre lake is one of the more popular fishing destinations in Oconto County and for good reason. White Potato Lake is a large, shallow lake that warms quickly and has ample amounts of aquatic vegetation, which results in fast growth. There are a variety of fish species to pursue and plenty of access. In a 2008 survey, the walleye abundance was estimated at just under four adults per acre. Northern pike also were prominent with plenty of fish



Elliot Hoffman, fisheries technician, holding a flathead catfish captured during a DNR fyke net survey on the Wolf River, Waupaca County. Photo: Al Niebur

in the 24- to 30-inch range. Musky are present, and while at low numbers, the average fish surveyed was 38 inches. Largemouth bass were common with an estimated density of 1.4 adults per acre, but they grow very fast with 21 percent of adult fish exceeding 14 inches. Panfish are common, grow fast and are decent sizes. The average lengths were 6.3 inches for bluegill, 7.3 inches for yellow perch and 9.3 inches for black crappie.

**Wheeler Lake** – This 293-acre seepage lake sees a lot of fishing pressure but maintains a healthy fishery. The largemouth bass population is doing better than ever and was

estimated at 6.1 per acre in a 2008 survey. There was fair size structure with eight percent of adult bass caught electrofishing larger than 15 inches. Northern pike were common and estimated at 1.2 per acre with good size structure. Fourteen percent of adult fish were larger than 28 inches. Walleye continue to be the most sought after species by anglers according to creel survey results and their abundance was estimated at 2.6 adults per acre.

– David Rowe, fisheries biologist, Green Bay

## SHAWANO COUNTY

**White Clay Lake** – Anglers looking for quality fishing might want to consider White Clay Lake. DNR 2009 surveys showed abundant (six pike per acre) northern pike. Average size also was good (17.4 inches with 52 percent over 21 inches) with several pike up to 37 inches. Largemouth bass populations appeared to be above average with 76 percent of the catch over the legal size limit. Walleye were found in low numbers (1.2 per acre) but showed good size with some fish up to 28 inches. Approximately 8,000 walleye are stocked on a biennial basis. Panfish surveys indicate a healthy bluegill population with more than 44 percent exceeding six inches. In addition, yellow perch and crappie were sampled with 34 percent of the crappie larger than eight inches.

**Shawano Lake** – Routine annual surveys on Shawano Lake indicate largemouth bass populations are in good shape. During 2007 fall assessments, approximately 12 bass per mile were captured during electrofishing with 22 percent longer than 14 inches. Panfish anglers can expect continued good angling for bluegill and crappie. Bluegill catch rates averaged 266 bluegill per hour of electrofishing with fish up to eight inches long. Northern pike numbers appear to be down from past surveys; however, size structure has improved with 21-inch and larger pike making up a significant percent of the catch. Walleye are still at very low densities with most of the population comprised of larger (greater than 20 inches) adults from year classes produced in the 1990s. Musky have continued to provide a great fishery with several 45- to 50-inch musky captured/observed during our fall assessments. This past year the Department of Natural Resources stocked 2,500 musky fingerlings. In 2010, department staff is planning to conduct fyke netting surveys on Shawano Lake to obtain more comprehensive information on the entire fish community.

– Al Niebur, fisheries biologist, Shawano

## UPPER FOX BASIN

**Montello, Buffalo and Puckaway lakes** – These shallow impoundments are highly productive and exhibit above average growth for most species. Largemouth bass and northern pike grow extremely well. Walleye on Lake Puckaway and the Fox River also grow very fast and most attain legal size by the time they are three or four years old.

**Big Green Lake** – Wisconsin's deepest inland lake continues to be one of the area's most popular destinations. Known for its stocked lake trout fishery, the warmwater component of Big Green remains very popular. Smallmouth bass, northern pike and walleye are targeted annually by anglers for their trophy potential. A low density stocked population of musky exists and some are beginning to appear in the angler's creel. Reports of fish in the 40-inch range are common. Bluegill is known to reach trophy sizes and should remain a popular year round catch.

**Little Green Lake** – This lake offers a unique opportunity for anglers in this part of the state to target musky. Many anglers catch and release here and the chance to catch a 50-inch fish exists. Each year, fish in the upper 40-inch range are reported. The lake also contains a healthy population of largemouth bass, northern pike and walleye. Bluegill, crappie and yellow perch will continue to be popular ice fishing targets.

## WAUPACA, SHAWANO AND OUT-AGAMIE COUNTIES

**Wolf River** – The Wolf River continues to provide diverse angling opportunities. Surveys conducted throughout the river showed good populations of various game fish and panfish. Game fish catch was mainly comprised of smallmouth bass with fewer numbers of walleye, largemouth bass, flathead catfish and northern pike. Smallmouth bass catch rates were the highest in the reach between Shawano and Shiocton with as many as 11 bass caught per hour of electrofishing. Smallmouth bass size averaged 9.4 inches with 21 percent over the legal size (14 inches). Annual hoop net surveys conducted near Gills Landing captured good numbers of channel catfish. Channel catfish size averaged 21.3 inches and ranged from 12.8 to 34.8 inches. The largest channel catfish sampled weighed in at 17.2 pounds. Adult flathead catch was down from past surveys. A total of 130 flatheads were captured ranging in size from 4.3 to 49.3 pounds.

– Al Niebur, fisheries biologist, Shawano

## WAUPACA COUNTY TROUT STREAMS

**Radley Creek** – Anglers looking for action-oriented fishing should try Radley Creek.

Although overall trout numbers are down from recent years, this stream still produces most area streams. Recent electrofishing surveys show above average density with over 29 percent of the adult catch over the legal size limit (nine-inch minimum). Anglers can access the stream from many properties and parking areas in the Radley Creek Fishery Area.

**Waupaca River** – Recent electrofishing surveys conducted on the Waupaca River show a promising trout fishing future. Young-of-the-year numbers were up 200 percent from the last time the river was surveyed and 180 percent higher than the 10-year average. Total adult numbers are down from past years, however, density of larger trout (greater than 15 inches) have been holding steady in the special regulations water. Anglers have a good chance of catching a trophy trout with densities of 15-plus inch fish as high as 42 trout per mile. The “wild trout” stocking program has been very important to bolstering trout populations in the Waupaca River. Annually, the river is stocked with 18,000 feral brown trout fingerlings. Past studies have shown that stocked “wild trout” comprise almost 40 percent of the adult population.

– Al Niebur, fisheries biologist, Shawano

## WINNEBAGO SYSTEM (WOLF AND UPPER FOX RIVERS, LAKES WINNEBAGO, BUTTE DES MORTS, WINNECONNE AND POYGAN)

The Winnebago system should continue to be a “go to” destination for anglers in 2010. For the past few years the system has been producing nice walleye, bass and panfish catches. Clearer water and more submerged weeds have benefitted almost all fish species by providing more spawning beds, cover and feeding areas. An added benefit of the increased vegetation is clearer water as the plants act as natural filters, slowing the water and allowing suspended materials to fall out and preventing re-suspension of finer bottom material. Anglers are reaping the benefits from these improvements in the form of more fish on their pole or in the live well.

The Winnebago system’s walleye population continues to be among the top in the Midwest and the spring walleye run on the Wolf River is famous. Since the start of the millennium, the system has had only two really poor year classes. Five of them are among the largest the system has seen in the last 25 years. In April 2009, Oshkosh DNR fisheries staff, along with volunteers, captured and tagged almost 16,000 walleye.

Over half of the 12,000 males captured were 16 inches or larger and 20 percent were 18 inches or more. For females, just under half the 2,900 sampled were 22 inches or larger, with 10 percent 25 inches and larger.

Anglers seeking less “toothy” quarry will find the system’s bass fishing to be on par with the last couple of years, with small-to medium-size fish common throughout the system. Fish that are 18-plus inches occasionally show up but anglers will realistically see most fish falling in the 12- to 16-inch range. Smallmouth on Lake Winnebago continue to show increases in both number and size, while the clearer water and abundant vegetation have helped to provide increased habitat for largemouth.

Panfish numbers and sizes have been reaching the radar of non-specialist anglers for the last couple of years. The resurgence of rooted vegetation has been a boon to panfish throughout the system. The large year classes of yellow perch from 2004-2007 are now in the range of six to 10 inches. Anglers who are able to catch these fish should be rewarded with some tasty meals.

– Kendall K. Kamke, senior fisheries biologist, Oshkosh

# Southeastern Wisconsin



## SOUTHERN LAKE MICHIGAN, INCLUDING SHEBOYGAN, OZAUKEE, MILWAUKEE, RACINE AND KENOSHA COUNTIES

**Open lake fishing** – Anglers can expect good Chinook fishing and bigger fish in Lake Michigan again in 2010. Chinook caught in 2009 seemed larger, with reports of more 20-pound fish being caught than in recent years, and that trend is expected to continue. A reduction in Chinook stocking implemented lakewide in 2006 to bring the Chinook numbers more in line with the forage base is likely contributing to lower angler harvests than the record-setting 2007 haul – but bigger fish. Fewer Chinook mean better growth and survival of Chinook in coming years, provided that the prey base remains sufficient.

Coho salmon stocking contributes significantly to the Wisconsin coho harvest. Through an angler-driven fundraising effort, Wisconsin and Illinois sport anglers provided more than \$47,000 to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to raise 400,000 additional yearling coho that were stocked in 2008. It appears that the stocking increase coupled with good fishing conditions contributed to an improved coho harvest in 2009 compared to 2008. However, due to budget concerns,

Steelhead catches in recent years have been average at best. Steelhead strain management in Wisconsin is now being altered. Historically, adult Skamania strain fish were transported in the fall from the Root River Steelhead Facility to Kettle Moraine Springs Fish Hatchery, where they were held until they were ready to spawn the fol-

lowing January/February. VHS rules now prohibit the transfer of live fish to a hatchery. Skamania were last stocked in 2008, but additional numbers of Chambers Creek and Ganaraska strain fish will be stocked to make up the difference.

**Nearshore fishing** – Shore anglers enjoyed some good fishing in July and August working harbors and river mouths for Skamania steelhead. These fish are staging in anticipation of their early fall spawning run. The Chambers Creek and Ganaraska strains should also provide some action for anglers in late winter and early spring.

Brown trout fishing in southern Lake Michigan was good in the spring and fall of 2009. Browns provide a consistent near-shore fishery during cold months, especially at warmwater discharges and near river mouths. Fish diet studies in the Milwaukee Harbor show that brown trout are feeding on round gobies and the browns stay in the harbor for an extended time. This continues to draw shore and boat anglers who target brown trout in the harbor throughout the year.

Yellow perch numbers in Lake Michigan are slowly showing signs of improvement, but overall the population is still low. The

2002, 2003 and 2005 year classes now contribute most significantly to the sport harvest, and the 2005 year class dominates annual DNR surveys. Perch are averaging 10 inches long and should significantly contribute to the 2010 sport catch.

Walleye stocking in the Milwaukee River was discontinued in 2008 due to VHS concerns. However, previously stocked walleye have shown good survival and high growth rates. Walleye anglers can be found throughout the lower Milwaukee River, the Menomonee River and canals, as well as in the harbor.

**Tributary fishing** – In 2009 favorable fishing conditions in area tributaries throughout the fall led to a moderate salmon run. In fall 2010 anglers can expect good Chinook and coho returns, provided the river water levels remain conducive for upstream fish migration. Spring and fall steelhead runs have not been strong in recent years. Anglers can generally look for Skamania in the Sheboygan, Milwaukee and Root rivers as water temperatures start to cool in mid-September. Chambers Creek usually follow in late fall and can be found through March and early April. Ganaraska enter the streams as early as late November and December and again from late March

through April. In spring 2009, the return of steelhead to the Root River Steelhead Facility was the strongest in the past five years. With good conditions in spring 2010 anglers can expect a good run, probably similar to 2009.

For up-to-date fishing information, call the Southern Lake Michigan Fishing Hotline at (414) 382-7920.

– Pradeep Hirethota and Cheryl Peterson, Southern Lake Michigan fisheries, Milwaukee

## KENOSHA COUNTY

**Hooker Lake** – Much of this lake’s shoreline is undeveloped and anglers who want to get away from the crowds will enjoy fishing here. Largemouth bass is the primary predator in this 87-acre lake located near the Village of Paddock Lake. Northern pike are present and stocking supplements the population. Most of the bass collected in recent surveys were between 11 and 13 inches with a few fish up to 19 inches long. Plenty of 20- to 23-inch northern pike provide good action for ice anglers. A public boat launch site is located on the lake’s north side.

**Rock Lake** – The most common gamefish collected during 2008 surveys was largemouth bass. Thirty-two percent of the bass in the sample were larger than 14 inches and included 18- and 19-inchers. The Department of Natural Resources stocks this lake with legal-size brown trout. The lake is 52 acres and 33 feet deep and has excellent water quality. Public access is available at a carry-in access site on the lake’s south end.

**Silver Lake** – Surveys confirm the presence of a healthy largemouth bass population in this 464-acre lake near the Village of Silver Lake. Largemouth bass average 13 inches and there are bass 18 inches long in the lake. Musky up to 48 inches, 22-inch walleye and 38-inch northern pike also swim these waters. Bluegill dominate the panfish population and 12-inch crappies have been reported. The Department of Natural Resources stocks the lake with musky, walleye and northern pike. Public access is available at a DNR boat launch site off Highway B on the lake’s west side.

– Douglas Welch, senior fisheries biologist, Sturtevant



DNR Secretary Matt Frank and sons enjoy a successful day at a Salmon Unlimited outing on Lake Michigan, June 2009. Photo: Matt Frank

## RACINE COUNTY

**Browns Lake** – This 396-acre lake near Burlington in western Racine County is popular with anglers seeking northern pike and largemouth bass. The DNR walleye stocking program is beginning to pay off. Surveys collected several walleye between 17 and 23 inches long. Anglers can access the lake at the County Park on the lake's southeast side off Highway 11.

– Douglas Welch, senior fisheries biologist, Sturtevant

## SHEBOYGAN, WASHINGTON AND OZAUKEE COUNTIES

**Milwaukee River** – Smallmouth bass anglers should do well anywhere along the Milwaukee River in Washington, Ozaukee or Milwaukee counties. As with most stream-dwelling smallmouths, these fish are generally not as long or heavy as their lake-living counterparts; but they are abundant in the main stem of the Milwaukee River and Cedar Creek. Wherever you find smallmouths (and they're abundant from the river mouth at Lake Michigan upstream into central Washington County), you also will find rock bass. Quite easy to catch, rock bass are often fish fry centerpieces.

**Random Lake** – For musky action, try Sheboygan County's Random Lake. This good-sized shallow, marshy lake has been a consistently good musky producer since it was originally stocked in the late 1970s. There also is pretty decent largemouth bass fishing.

**Onion River** – Trout anglers have it pretty good on Sheboygan County's Onion River. Thanks to lots of help from area conservation clubs and angler trout stamp dollars, the Onion no longer needs brown trout stocking. Generally, if you fish from Highway E upstream for several miles you are going to catch only wild brown trout with a possible stocked rainbow in the mix. Thanks to all the habitat work and a protective 15-inch size limit, one bag and artificial lures-only fishing regulation, this stretch of the Onion holds a very good wild trout population. Caution – wild trout can be hard to catch!

**Pike and Big Cedar lakes** – Walleye anglers will do well to try Washington County's Pike and Big Cedar lakes. Walleye in Pike Lake remain all wild fish. It seems when they turn on they really bite; when they are off, they are very hard to catch. Pike also holds some large bluegill and decent perch. Big Cedar, despite supporting a stocked walleye population, remains an excellent largemouth bass lake. Its walleye are not real abundant, but they do get very large. For the most part it's bass on the weedy north end and walleye and large northerns from the much deeper and rocky south end. Little Cedar has been quite quiet in recent years, but the lake has a decent walleye and northern pike population.

**Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine** – For some very scenic fishing, consider using a canoe on any of the several small, largemouth bass lakes within the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Crooked, Mauthe, Lake Seven, Forest and Auburn lakes, to name a few, all offer good bass and panfish angling in beautiful surroundings.

– Ben Heussner, fisheries biologist, Waukesha

## WALWORTH COUNTY

**Turtle Lake** – This 140-acre lake located in the Town of Richmond in northwest Walworth County is a good spot for anglers seeking action. DNR fish surveys in 2009 produced many chunky bass between 11 and 13 inches with some between 18 and 19 inches. Yellow perch are common and some eight- and nine-inch fish were sampled during the survey. Bluegill are abundant. Other fish in the lake include warmouth, pumpkinseed, black crappie, smallmouth bass, northern pike and walleye. The DNR stocked walleye in 2008. There is plenty of undeveloped shoreline and very good water quality, which makes for an aesthetically pleasing experience. The Town of Richmond public boat launch ramp is located on the lake's west end.

**Geneva Lake** – Plenty of big walleye swim these waters. Surveys in 2009 produced walleye up to 30 inches long and 13 pounds. Most of the walleye sampled were between 22 and 28 inches. The population estimate for walleye over 18 inches long was

2,700 or one for every two acres of water. At 5,262 acres and 135 feet deep, Geneva Lake is the largest lake in DNR's Southeast Region. The lake supports healthy populations of large and smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, lake trout, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch and rock bass. The Department of Natural Resources stocks walleye every other year and annually stocks lake and brown trout. Water quality is excellent and the lake is popular with recreational boaters and anglers. The best times to fish this lake and avoid summer crowds are early in the morning and later in the evening. Municipally owned public boat launches are located in the City of Lake Geneva, the Village of Fontana and the Town of Linn.

**Lake Como** – Lake Como is a 946-acre, relatively shallow (deepest spot is nine feet) lake located north of Geneva Lake in central Walworth County. It's not as crowded as nearby Geneva Lake which makes it a good alternative for anglers, especially those who are after bass. Surveys in 2009 collected largemouth bass up to 18 inches long. Bluegill dominates the panfish community. Other panfish include black crappie and yellow perch. The lake's east end is bordered by completely undeveloped shoreline, which makes for an aesthetically pleasing fishing experience. A recently improved public boat launch site is located on the lake's north side.

– Douglas Welch, senior fisheries biologist, Sturtevant

## WAUKESHA COUNTY

**Pewaukee Lake** – If there is one thing you can still count on, it's big muskies and lots of them on the 2,500-acre Pewaukee Lake – the county's largest lake. The Department of Natural Resources continues to stock up to 2,500 10-inch fall fingerlings annually on this lake and an October 2009 fishing tournament recorded a phenomenal catch rate of 27 musky in eight hours ranging from 34 to 46 inches long. Many fish are caught using sucker rigs and trolling is permitted throughout Waukesha County, which has been a proven technique during warmer summer months.

**Okauchee Lake** – Okauchee Lake, another Waukesha County musky destination, has incredible growth rates with an astounding 42-inch average length reported by 2009 tournament anglers. Okauchee Lake has more than 12 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 90 feet, supporting a forage base consisting primarily of cisco, panfish and yellow perch. Okauchee Lake is a favorite among largemouth bass anglers because of the population's incredible size and numbers. Popular fishing techniques include a drop shot or Texas rig along weed edges and steep drops offs.

**Oconomowoc Lake and Lac La Belle** – Oconomowoc Lake and Lac Labelle have special regulations that protect female walleye past the age of 4, enabling them to spawn at least once before they can be caught. Due to higher than average abundance of the adult spawning stock, natural reproduction is strong on both systems. A 2009 survey documented above-average walleye natural reproduction on Lac La-Belle four consecutive years from 2006 to 2009.

**Pine Lake** – Pine Lake's diverse habitat continues to provide anglers with various opportunities. Abundant largemouth and smallmouth bass are found along the rocky shoreline and course woody structure. Big walleye can be caught trolling near the thermocline in summer months as they are targeting cisco as their primary forage base.

**Nagawicka Lake** – Nagawicka Lake is a good choice when searching for trophy smallmouth bass. Anglers continually report fish larger than 20 inches being caught and released. Abundant zooplankton provides for ample forage resulting in excellent smallmouth growth rates. Anglers prefer using live bait along rocky shorelines throughout the season.

– Benjamin Heussner, fisheries biologist, Waukesha



## South Central Wisconsin



## COLUMBIA COUNTY

**Lake Wisconsin/Wisconsin River** – Anglers are reporting good catches of large walleye and sauger with lots of fish larger than 20 inches due to the success of the 20- to 28-inch no-harvest size limit on walleye and sauger, which began in 2002. Anglers continue to report good catches of larger walleye and sauger, with reports during 2009 of walleye greater than 28 inches becoming common and 24-plus inch sauger as well. A 28.5-inch, 8.92-pound sauger caught in Lake Wisconsin in fall 2009 has been submitted to the Department of Natural Resources to be certified as a new state record. The fall 2009 recruitment survey

indicates an above-average walleye year class, making two years in a row of good year classes.

Lake sturgeon work continues on both Lake Wisconsin and the river below the Prairie du Sac (PDS) dam. Although few fish were captured during the 2009 fall population estimate on Lake Wisconsin, the estimate was similar to the 2008 estimate. Both estimates show a stable fishery. About 1,450 lake sturgeon larger than 50 inches can be found in Lake Wisconsin. A fifth estimate below the Prairie du Sac dam was done in fall 2009. It showed that the fishery had decreased to 133 sturgeon (larger than 50 inches), down from 200 a year ago. The decline may be associated with the high harvest in 2005 of 75 fish. A female lake sturgeon only reproduces every four years and these fish are now returning to Prairie du Sac four years later in reduced numbers. Survey work has shown that the lake sturgeon congregating below the dam are predominately fish that will spawn the following spring.

Radio tracking continues on the 16 adult sturgeon implanted with tags in October 2007. Monitoring showed all of these fish overwintered at two locations below the Prairie du Sac dam. During April 2008, all had disappeared from the Wisconsin River, with several being located in the Mississippi River. Fall 2008 monitoring noted at least eight of them to be back in the Wisconsin River. The battery life for these tags

is six years. Further monitoring will allow the movement behavior of this fishery to be documented. Tracking in 2009 was limited with no new findings.

**Lake Columbia** – The annual, late fall electro-shocking survey confirmed a major change in this fishery, due to warm lake temperatures for a longer time period (April – November), because of increased power production. The once dominant largemouth and smallmouth bass fishery has declined to near zero levels. No recruitment

has been noted since 2004. No stocked hybrid stripers were sampled in the 2008 fall survey, but several anglers reported excellent catches during 2008. Large hybrids are known to be impacted by higher temperatures, which hold less oxygen. Channel catfish numbers were similar to 2007, but less than previous years, and flathead catfish numbers, which had been increasing over the last several years, declined. Shad and small bluegill continue to be abundant. Because of increasing water levels, DNR crews were unable to access the lake to sur-



A young angler proudly displays his first lake sturgeon - a 59-inch fish caught in the Lower Wisconsin River. Photo: Bradd Sims

vey it in 2009. The lake is open year round and allows for carry-in boats and outboard motors at the public access on the lake's south end. A fish refuge is present near the power plant on both sides of the center dike.

**Swan Lake** – Swan Lake is a natural lake formed on the Fox River with lake depths of 80 feet and a primarily sand bottom. The lake usually has good water clarity and has a very diverse fishery including many riverine fish species. An extensive lake survey in 2009 found a decent population of 675 adult walleye that ranged in size from 14 to 26 inches and 2,744 largemouth bass with numerous fish topping 20 inches. Smallmouth and white bass were present at good sizes. A stocked musky fishery also provides action with the presence of 45-plus inch fish. Crappie, bluegill, yellow bass, perch and channel catfish round out the fishery.

**Tarrant Lake** – This 25-acre impoundment within the Village of Cambria was refilled during spring 2007. The dam washed out in June 2004 and had been drained to allow for reconstruction and some near shore dredging. Bass and bluegill restocking is occurring. The 2007, 2008 and 2009 fall surveys suggest the fishery is on its way back. This used to be a phenomenal little fishery, especially used by local kids.

**Silver Lake** – This 70-acre, groundwater fed lake lies in the City of Portage. The lake has always been plagued by stunted bluegill, but they provide good action for kids. It has low density largemouth bass, though some are dandies. You'll also find low-density, natural reproducing northern pike, limited large walleye from volunteer stocking and any given summer evening there will be three to four boats casting for musky. Poor forage base results in slower musky growth but still 40-plus inch fish are present.

**Lake George** – This 36-acre groundwater fed lake is located just south of Portage off Highway P. Boat ramp use on the lake's north side depends on adequate lake levels. Access can be made off Highway G on the lake's south side. Outboard motors are not allowed. Largemouth bass, northern pike (smaller sizes), bluegill, yellow perch and crappie comprise the fishery.

**Long Lake** – The 69-acre Long Lake is located in the floodplain of the Wisconsin River, west of Portage. There is a little bit of everything here, but the lake is noted for bass, northern pike, crappie and bluegill. Musky also are present. Atypical low winter oxygen was noted during the severe winter of 2007-08 and again in 2008-09 because of deep snow depth, with some dead fish observed, but it is "restocked" with Wisconsin River floodwater. There is a poor boat access on the lake's east side.

**Spring Lake** – This deep 24-acre lake is located just below Park Lake in Pardeeville. There is a boat ramp on the lake's south side. Outboard motors are not allowed. Fish from downstream Swan Lake can enter via the Fox River connection. A fall 2004 shocker survey found the lake to be alive with fish including nice bluegill, some crappie, largemouth bass, walleye, northern pike and a few musky.

**Lake Wyona** – This 93-acre lake is located in a shallow impoundment of the Duck Creek system at Wyocena. A ramp is located at the upstream end of the lake in the County Park. Heavy rains in June 2008 caused the dam to fail. The 2008 "pre-flood" survey found a very nice largemouth bass, crappie and bluegill fishery to be developing, following years of carp domination. The lake always supported a decent northern pike fishery.

**Crystal Lake** – Located southeast of Pardeeville is the 27-acre, groundwater-fed Crystal Lake. This requires a half mile walk, no developed access, but aesthetics are worth the effort. The lake is deep and has clear water with good vegetation. Bass, bluegill, crappie and perch are present.

– Dan Fuller, fisheries technician, Poynette

## DANE COUNTY

Dane County hosts great fishing for cold, cool, and warmwater fishing enthusiasts. With more than 19,000 acres of lakes and 20-plus trout streams, opportunities abound.

Survey efforts in 2009 focused on Lake Mendota to provide current population estimates for northern pike and walleye. Another goal was to gather data to evaluate the longstanding size and bag limits that went into effect in the early 1990s. Fyke net catches were modest due to the on-again, off-again nature of spring weather. Crews captured 300 pike ranging from 10 to 42.5 inches. The average Mendota pike was 25.7 inches and weighed 5.96 pounds. Sixteen percent of pike exceeded 34 inches. Wall-eye numbers tallied 1,443 fish from 11 to 29.4 inches. The average walleye was 16.9 inches and 3.13 pounds, with 25 percent of all fish exceeding the minimum legal 18-inch size. Population estimates will be completed this spring based on recovery of fin-clipped fish.

Crews noted some impressive catches of quality-size bluegill and catfish as well as a possible state record yellow bass, a three-pound, 16.7-inch specimen. Musky fishing on the Madison chain has never been better, with many substantiated accounts of 50-plus inch fish caught and released.

Fall index sampling of other lakes noted a consistently superior largemouth resource on Lake Monona. Lake Waubesa yielded impressive bluegill samples with very strong numbers of fish seven inches and greater. Lake Wingra boasted its best water clarity in memory since the removal of 48,000 pounds of carp in March 2008. Anglers report good musky action.

Trout anglers will enjoy a wide range of trout experiences in Dane County. DNR crews and partners worked extensively in 2009 to add in-stream habitat, remove nuisance vegetation and establish convenient access. Fly fishing anglers will appreciate the tree-free banks of Kittleston Valley Creek, West Branch Sugar River and perennial favorite, Black Earth Creek. Dane County streams generally have a bag limit of three with a nine-inch minimum size limit, that provides spinner and bait anglers lots of choices. Quality, harvest-size fish are abundant in Elvers Creek, Primrose Branch and Story and Garfoot creeks. The opportunity to land a true trophy can be had on the Upper Sugar River and Mt. Vernon Creek.

– Kurt Welke, fisheries manager, Fitchburg

**Crystal Lake** – (border of Dane and Columbia counties) This 500-acre wetland, all of a sudden, became a lake when the underlying hydrology broke loose in the mid 1980s. Now, 20 years later, the fishery has settled down and is starting to experience change. In 1999 a population estimate found the largemouth bass greater than 10 inches to be 37 per acre, a very high level. The bluegill numbered 185,000 in mid-April 1999, with angler harvest of 85,000 documented by the end of June. Another 5,000 to 15,000 bluegill die annually from the late spring bacterial outbreak of *Columnaris* and likely another 20,000 are harvested or die from natural mortality the rest of the year. Thus, two-thirds of the harvestable size fish are gone by year's end, only to be replenished by next year's recruitment, due to an outstanding growth rate of 8.2 inches in five years. The huge bass population also plays a role in thinning out numbers of bluegill less than five inches.

Another bass population estimate was conducted in 2004. Numbers (greater than 10 inches) had dropped from 37 per acre in 1999 to 22 per acre, still a high level compared to other waters. A largemouth bass virus (not VHS) was not detected in tests during 2001, but was found in 2006 and possibly played a role in the decline. With the declining bass number, the bluegill growth rate dropped to 7.6 inches after five years. An increase in growth of curly leaf pondweed, which grows earlier in the

spring has also made it more difficult to harvest bluegill. However, carp presence is becoming more noticeable and yellow bass are now showing up in angler catches, demonstrating change.

As lakes age, habitat and the fishery change. Crystal still supports an above average bass population with better than average growth. In 2009, the lake experienced very high lake levels that closed adjoining roads and limited boat access and shoreline access to the lake during May and June, which typically is the heaviest fishing period. It is yet to be seen how this low harvest period during 2009 will affect future fishing success.

**Fish Lake** – The most recent survey in 2003, found a good opportunity to catch and release largemouth bass under the 18-inch size limit. Largemouth bass in Fish Lake have slow growth rates because the predator-prey relationship with panfish is hampered by dense milfoil beds allowing bluegill to escape predation. Thus, they are abundant but don't grow to quality size, though a fair number of seven-inch fish exist. Although the largemouth bass are slow growing, they are long lived and fish up to 16 years old are present. Carp are abundant and nutrient levels from agricultural runoff over the years have decreased water quality. Water levels fluctuate, impacting boat ramp usability. Mud Lake, connected by a road culvert, contained good populations of quality size yellow bullheads and seven- to nine-inch crappie in 2003. Oxygen typically gets very low in Mud Lake during winter.

– Dan Fuller, fisheries technician, Poynette

## GRANT AND IOWA COUNTIES

Trout populations here are in the best shape in 40 years for overall numbers, average size and distribution. Brook trout reproduction and distribution appears to be at an all time high. The entire coulee region should provide outstanding trout fishing for the foreseeable future. Adult wild brown trout average 10 to 14 inches with big trout measuring 14, 15, 17 and 18 inches, and trophies measuring 19 or 20 inches.

**Lower Wisconsin River** – Overall fisheries in the Lower Wisconsin River (LWR) are in very good shape. The walleye population of 15- to 18-inch fish has significantly increased and a fair increase in the number of 19-plus inch fish has been noticed. Anglers report that the number of medium and larger walleye caught downstream has improved significantly since the 18-inch size limit went into effect.

Channel catfish populations are in good shape and continue to be the most important fishery on the lower part of the LWR. The smallmouth bass population has a good number of fish with a number of medium and larger fish. Almost all of the bass anglers on the LWR practice catch and release and the population is improving as a result.

There are also decent populations of bluegill and crappie located in the quiet still-water areas of the river. These are little utilized fisheries and would provide good fishing for those wanting to specifically target these fish.

Northern pike throughout the LWR and musky in the uppermost part of the LWR provide pretty good action for anglers targeting these species.

**Blackhawk Lake** – A "No Size Limit" regulation has reduced the over-population of medium-size bass. The current population still consists of good numbers but the fish are much heavier for their body length and there are more large fish. The current regulation will be kept in place this year. The crappie population remains in pretty good shape for number and size distribution. The bluegill population is in very good shape with good numbers of all sizes of fish. There is also a decent bonus walleye fishery.

A recently developed northern pike population with a significant number of large

fish has provided a very heavily-used ice fishery for the past couple of years, but the population has been very heavily harvested and is not expected to continue to meet its recent success in upcoming years. The Blackhawk Lake Recreation Commission purchased 400 large fingerlings for the lake this year. Fingerling survival should be very good because of their large size, but it will be three years or more before these fish significantly contribute to the fishery.

**Cox Hollow Lake** – The lake is sporting its best population of pumpkinseed sunfish in terms of numbers and size. These fish battle hard, are very colorful and bite readily. They do have a tendency to be a little grubbier than bluegills and have very large rib cages and therefore less "meat." I tend to recommend that anglers keep the bluegills rather than pumpkinseeds unless deeply hooked. The lake also contains yellow perch. Most of these fish are small but there are some decent-size perch in the population. The bluegill fishery remains dominated by a moderate number of medium and larger fish with only limited number of smaller fish in the lake. Large, young-of-the-year walleye have been stocked and a few of these fish have now made the legal 18-inch size limit.

**Twin Valley Lake** – A massive summer kill of crappie occurred in 2008 reducing the crappie population to only a fraction of what it had been. This will result in larger fish but significantly reduced catch rates. Bluegill numbers, while reduced, remain very good at the small to medium size and there are sufficient numbers to provide a very good catch rate. These fish will run from 5.5 to 6.75 inches with a few fish up to 7.25. There are fairly decent numbers of yellow perch in the lake with some being large enough to keep. The largemouth bass population has been protected by catch-and-release regulation. The number of bass is not particularly high but there are very good numbers of large fish. The lake has developed a decent walleye population of fish 12 to 15 inches, and although growing well, have not been in lake long enough to reach the legal limit. There are a few very large walleye in the lake. The number of musky stocked in the lake has been reduced and this has resulted in catch rates that are more normal along with fish in much better condition and heavier bodied. While not a producer of trophy musky, the number of 36- to 40-inch fish is outstanding for a small lake.

– Gene Van Dyck, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

## GREEN COUNTY

While Green County provides only modest lake fishing possibilities, river and stream anglers can choose from several waters and fishing opportunities. The Sugar River and mouths of larger systems like Sylvester and Allen creeks see seasonal action for warmwater fish like bass and catfish, and coolwater species like walleye and northern pike.

Trout anglers have widespread access on easement and fee title parcels along the New Glarus Branch, Hefty Creek and Dougherty creeks. Reports and maps can be found on the fishing page of the DNR website at [dnr.wi.gov/fish/](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/)

– Kurt Welke, fisheries manager, Fitchburg

## ROCK COUNTY

**Rock River** – Part of Lake Koshkonong resides in Rock County, but the dominant county water resource is the Rock River. Tailwater fisheries at four dams provide most of the action. These dams are at Indianford, two in Janesville and one in Beloit. Anglers can expect to catch a variety including walleye, northern pike, channel catfish, black crappie, white bass, bluegill and yellow perch. The Rock River is one of the state's most fertile systems. While the heavy nutrient load sometimes causes algae blooms, the system also incites rapid



fish growth. Most communities along the river welcome anglers and provide opportunities for shore fishing and public access. Common carp are abundant and provide action for anglers and archers. Anglers should be aware that if you catch a carp and choose not to keep it, you may legally release it. It is illegal to leave dead fish or fish parts in the water or on the banks of public waters and lands.

**Turtle Creek** – This is an exceptionally beautiful natural stream and boasts a high level of species diversity of game fish and non-game species. Most anglers on Turtle Creek seek smallmouth bass, but walleye, catfish and northern pike are present especially in the lower reaches near Beloit. Several darter species are present as well as the endangered gravel chub.

**Kiwanis Pond** – Trout fishing is available in the heart of Janesville. This 10-acre pond supports a two-story fishery of rainbow trout, bluegill and bass. The pond and the neighboring Lions Beach Pond are the result of sand and gravel mining operations. Depths are up to 37 feet and the cold waters support an annual stocking of 3,000 rainbow trout. A nice fishing pier and boat launch provides access. Only electric motors are allowed.

– Don Bush, fisheries supervisor, Janesville

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

**Rock River and Lake Koshkonong** – Every day is opening day on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong. Seasons are continuous for all game fish except musky. The river system takes in tributaries such as the Bark and Crawfish rivers. Fish freely move in and out of the lake and may move upstream as far as 48 river miles. An ice-out bite of northern pike and walleye is very popular on the Rock River. As the spring progresses, there are spawning runs of white bass, black crappie and catfish. Shore fishing opportunities abound along the Rock River upstream from the lake, through Fort Atkinson and up to the Jefferson Dam. The confluence with the Bark River in Fort Atkinson is popular, as is the mouth of the Crawfish River in Jefferson. A strong adult walleye population will provide excitement this spring. Large numbers of two-year-old walleye and sauger may provide a high catch rate, but take care in releasing these little fish. White bass and channel catfish action will be good as several year classes are present. The floods of 2008 also washed in large numbers of bluegill, crappie and perch, so anglers should have good luck on panfish. Zebra mussels were found in Lake Koshkonong in 2009. Please take care to properly remove all exotics and invasives from your boat prior to leaving Lake Koshkonong. Motor trolling is allowed on Lake Koshkonong as far downstream as the Highway 59 bridge at Newville.

**Lake Ripley** – A comprehensive survey was completed on Lake Ripley in 2009. Generally the lake supports strong populations of game fish including largemouth bass, northern pike and walleye. Walleye are stocked and are present at two per acre. While Lake Ripley is famous for producing the state record largemouth bass in 1940, the population today is typical of most good Wisconsin bass fisheries. Heavy fishing pressure limits the number of big fish, but catch-and-release angling leaves lots of mid-size legal fish. Many year classes of bass are present, but there are very few over 20 inches. A few smallmouth bass are also present. The large number of predators in the lake keeps the bluegill population from becoming stunted. Bluegill are fast growing and present in good numbers up to eight inches long.

– Don Bush, fisheries supervisor, Janesville

## SAUK COUNTY

**Devil's Lake** – This two-story brown trout fishery continues to grow in popularity. Typically 15 percent of the catch is



A father and son show the spoils of a day on Devil's Lake in Sauk County. Photo: Jayson Himebach

comprised of two-year-old trout (14 to 17 inches), which have survived one summer by seeking out the four-foot layer of oxygenated water just under the thermocline. Stocked at nine inches in April, they grow to 12 inches by fall. Anglers enjoy ice fishing for the trout using fathead minnows. This year, 5,000 rainbow trout and 10,000 brown trout will be stocked into Devil's Lake. The lake touts a trophy northern pike fishery with its 32-inch size limit. A 2006 ice-out netting survey found a low density, but a stable number of northerns over five years of similar netting since 1993. The survey noted good numbers of large females 32 to 41 inches, and good 2004 year class recruitment. Largemouth and smallmouth bass, and jumbo bluegills also are present. Only electric motors are allowed. The Department of Natural Resources has been operating a 24-inch siphon over the past four years to withdraw phosphorus before the lake turns over in the fall. Over time (10 to 15 years), the goal is to return the lake to a more pristine state with less filamentous algae and increased water clarity. Slower fish growth likely will be a trade-off.

**Lake Redstone** – Lake Redstone rose five feet during heavy rains in June 2008. A fishery survey did not occur in 2008 or 2009. The next survey is scheduled for 2012. A trend assessment of this fishery, from 1993-2004 was recently compiled. Largemouth bass monitoring from DNR shocking and an annual tournament since 1997 shows numbers close to average in 2003 and 2004, though the composition of 16-plus-inch fish is slightly less. Smallmouth bass are thriving with numbers similar to largemouth. They became established from stocking in 1998-99 by a local club and are now naturally reproducing. The stocked walleye fishery continues to provide an average fishery. Panfish data (crappie, bluegill and perch) reports a stable fishery over the time span. Redstone is a crappie factory, but heavily harvested at eight to nine inches (three years old). The red stone bluffs that line the lake's southern shoreline are very scenic.

**White Mound Lake** – The lake was raised to full pool in 2005 after a partial draw-down during winter 2003-04 to allow a large amount of sediment to be removed. The sediment had accumulated since the lake was constructed in the early 1970s. By reducing sedimentation and the resulting reduced aquatic vegetation growth, the lake's fish population is expected to find a better balance. Sampling in 2007 found plenty of small bluegill, though anglers were reporting more larger bluegill and crappie caught in deeper waters. The bass numbers (greater than eight inches) are up 27 percent compared to a 1999 survey and are 12 per acre, which is better than average for local lakes. A robust five per acre were from 14 to 17 inches. This small impoundment is surrounded by county park lands and provides a pleasant setting.

**Lake Virginia** – Monitoring continues after the lake was totally drained for replacement of the outlet structure and refilling in the spring of 2004. Restocking adult bass and bluegill has occurred. A 2009 survey found decent bluegill recruitment and no bass recruitment since the 2004 year class. Fish from the large 2004 largemouth bass year class are only seven to nine inches but are helping prevent an overpopulation of bluegill. Anglers last summer reported decent catches of nice sized adult bluegill. The super-size aeration system installed warmwater fish like bass and catfish and coolwater species like walleye and northern pike.

**Mirror Lake** – A fall 2009 electrofishing survey on Mirror Lake revealed a very good panfishery, probably the best size structure along with the best numbers of black crappie and bluegill that DNR crews have seen in the last 20 years on the lake. This 137-acre state park impoundment continues to support an excellent largemouth bass population as well. Native northern pike also are present and a very decent stocked walleye population supports a good fishery. There is a township boat landing on the lake's northwest side and very nice access in the state park. The name Mirror Lake is appropriate because the lake is well protected from winds by beautiful sandstone bluffs lined with white pine and oak trees.

**Lake Delton** – The dramatic breach and dewatering of this 267-acre lake in June 2008 will forever be remembered. Rebuilding of Highway A and the dam was completed in late fall and a successful chemical treatment of the existing fishery occurred on December 3, 2008. The stage is set for restocking in the coming years, with the potential for a fishing bonanza. The first fish stockings into Lake Delton in the spring of 2009 were large numbers of forage fish including white suckers, fathead minnows and golden shiners. These bait fish provided the food for the extensive game fish and panfish stockings that followed. Walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass, channel catfish, and bluegill were then stocked. An early fall 2009 electroshocking survey showed excellent survival and fabulous growth rates on all the fish species that were stocked and also showed the presence of large numbers of young-of-the-year black crappie, yellow perch and white bass established by adult fish reproduction from the upstream impoundment of Mirror Lake. Unfortunately, some young-of-the-year carp found their way into the lake as well, but Lake Delton isn't that well suited for carp and they shouldn't become a nuisance. No gizzard shad were found, which was a relief as they often out compete other desirable juvenile fish for food. The Lake Delton fishery is off to a fantastic start and it should provide excellent fishing within three to four years. The public boat landings on the lake were reconstructed and several rock fish reefs were added.

**Leland Pond** – The record rainfall (500 per inch flood) during August 2007 flooded out this 14-acre impoundment on the North Branch of Honey Creek, located in the Village of Leland. The lake and fishery survived, but another record flood in June 2008 caused major damage and the lake is now in a dewatered state. Repairs to the pond's infrastructure are complete and refilling should occur early this year with fish restocking to follow.

**Dutch Hollow** – This very deep, clear water impoundment (210 acres) occurs because of pumping water to offset leakage through the dam. The clear water can make daylight fishing difficult. A bass survey was done in 2006 for comparison to 1993, when numbers were very high (256 per hour of eight-plus inch fish collected by electroshocking). The 2006 value was 164 per hour, down 36 percent. However, the 2006 population estimate of 13 per acre of 10-plus inch fish is still a high value for local lakes. The lake is noted for large size bluegill and crappie. The 2006 survey found a good number of 16- to 24-inch walleye, supported by small fingerling stocking.

## SAUK AND COLUMBIA COUNTY TROUT STREAMS

Stocking wild strains of trout has been documented to provide two to three times better survival in trout streams. About 80 percent of the streams in these counties are stocked. The better streams in Columbia County are Rowan, Rocky Run, Jennings and Lodi Spring. While in Sauk County, try Dell, Honey, Rowley and Manley creeks for native brookies. Habitat work conducted on four stretches of Honey Creek (Class II brown trout) in western Sauk County is showing positive response and receiving high angler use. More work was done in fall of 2009. Deeper water along with habitat features have created living space for larger size fish. A project on 800 feet of a feeder stream to Lodi Spring Creek in southwestern Columbia County was conducted during April 2007. Here a channelized drainage ditch for 50 years was converted back to a trout stream. It responded by August 2007 with increases in the native population of brown trout of 10 times for young-of-year and yearlings, five times for nine- to 11-inch fish and doubling of the number of 12-plus inch fish. The summer 2008 survey found another doubling of both the nine to 11 and 12-plus inch size groups.

**Plenke and Pauquette ponds** – Plenke Pond in Reedsburg provides a fishing opportunity for kids and disabled anglers. Pauquette Pond in Portage is home to the Elks Club kids fishing day, usually the first Sunday in June. The event gets bigger every year.

– Dan Fuller, fisheries technician, Poynette



### Close to Home series promotes shore fishing

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# West Central Wisconsin



## ADAMS COUNTY

**Big Roche-a-Cri Lake** – A fair number of largemouth bass were captured and many more seen during a spring 2009 shocking survey on Big Roche-a-Cri Lake. Surveyed largemouth bass ranged in size from 5.3 to 18.9 inches. Panfish were plentiful with bluegill dominating. Bluegill ranged in size from three to 7.2 inches with an average size of 5.4 inches.

**Neenah Creek** – Good trout fishing should be expected here. Neenah Creek was surveyed in 2009 upstream from the confluence of Peppermill Creek. The survey captured 145 brown trout ranging from four to 14.4 inches with an average length of 8.1 inches. These results are similar to those found in the creek in 2008. The healthy trout population is supported through natural reproduction and habitat improvements initiated in 1983.

**Big Roche-a-Cri Creek** – Big Roche-a-Cri Creek was surveyed in 2009 west of Highway G. The survey captured 418 brook trout and two brown trout. The brook trout ranged in size from four to 13.4 inches with an average length of 7.1 inches. These results show more brook trout in the stream than in a 2008 survey, with a slightly lower average size. The healthy brook trout population in this portion of the Big Roche-a-Cri is supported through good natural reproduction and habitat improvements installed in this section in 1980. Good trout fishing should be expected at this site.

– Justine Hasz, senior fisheries biologist, Wisconsin Rapids

## BUFFALO COUNTY

**Mississippi River Backwaters** – Based on recent backwater shocking and netting surveys, fishing should continue to be good for many species here during 2010. Surveys found good numbers of bluegill, largemouth bass and northern pike. Many bluegill surveyed were in the six- to eight-inch range, with a few exceeding nine inches. Healthy largemouth bass populations continue on the Mississippi River, with many largemouth measuring above and below the 14-inch size limit. Some largemouth bass in the 15- to 17-inch range are available, while surveys have shown fish to range up to 20 inches. Good numbers of 24- to 30-inch northern pike are available, with some fish taping near 40 inches. Surveys also indicate above average numbers of young-of-the-year northern pike which suggests even better northern fishing in future years.

– Brian Brecka, fisheries biologist, Alma

## CHIPPEWA COUNTY

**Lake Wissota** – Anglers targeting walleye will notice that many of the fish they catch will be within the 14- to 18-inch no-harvest slot. Many anglers report that they are catching walleye in the 18- to 20-inch range. Fish of this quality have been absent from many anglers' creels, which indicates that the slot limit is working as planned. Musky anglers should find success in Little Lake Wissota, as well as in the Yellow

River area. Bluegill numbers are increasing with the vegetative increase.

– Bob Hujik, fisheries supervisor, Eau Claire

## EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

**Lake Altoona** – Recent surveys indicate a very healthy yellow perch population here. Perch up to 13 inches in length were sampled, with over 22 percent of the perch sampled greater than nine inches long. Growth rates for yellow perch were much faster than statewide averages. On Lake Altoona, a 5-year-old perch is approximately 10 inches long, compared to seven years old for perch from a statewide sample. Anglers will also find good numbers of black crappie and bluegill. Smallmouth bass outnumbered largemouth bass by three to one on Lake Altoona. Anglers will find some largemouth and smallmouth bass in the 20-inch range.

**Lake Eau Claire** – Anglers will find very good numbers of yellow perch, bluegill and black crappie in Lake Eau Claire. Recent surveys indicate over 23 percent of the black crappie are 10 inches or longer. Over 40 percent of the bluegills sampled ranged in size from seven to nine inches. Northern pike were sampled in fairly good numbers with the majority of fish in the 18- to 24-inch range. Largemouth bass outnumbered smallmouth bass by two to one. However, anglers will have the opportunity to harvest either species in the 19- to 20-inch range.

– Bob Hujik, fisheries supervisor, Eau Claire

## JACKSON COUNTY

**Arbutus backwaters** (Buckhorn and Emerald lakes) – It's time to give these lakes another try. Flooding and associated damage left Buckhorn and Emerald lakes drained for many years. In 2003, repairs to the Arbutus Power Canal caused both lakes to fill again. Since then, the Department of Natural Resources has stocked both lakes with northern pike, yellow perch, black crappie, largemouth bass, bluegill, walleye and musky. Spring 2009 netting and electrofishing surveys found bluegill (six to seven inches) and black crappie (7.5 to 8.5 inches) as the predominant panfish and largemouth bass (greater than 14 inches at 6.5 per mile) the main game fish. Bluegill attained sizes larger than eight inches and crappie larger than 11 inches. Bass were up to 20 inches long.

**Lake Arbutus** – (Clark County also) A fall 2009 electrofishing survey assessed walleye and yellow perch numbers here. Total walleye catch rates were 55 per mile in 2006, 25 per mile in 2008, and 53 per mile in 2009. Catch rates of legal size walleye increased from 3.5 per mile in 2006 to 6.5 per mile in 2008 to eight per mile in 2009. Yellow perch catch rates increased from two per mile in 2006 to six per mile in 2008 to eight



Fisheries technician, Ben Koski, poses with a 29-inch walleye captured during a walleye tagging study in the lower Black River in 2009. Photo: Dan Hatleli

per mile in 2009. The Hatfield Sportsman Club stocked yellow perch in 2008. Lake Arbutus is scheduled for more survey work in spring 2010.

**Black River** – (Clark/Trempealeau/Monroe/La Crosse counties also) For the upper Black River (upstream of the Black River Falls dam) total catch rates for walleye, smallmouth bass and musky decreased in 2009 compared to 2008. Walleye went from 27 per mile in 2008 to 17 per mile in 2009. Smallmouth bass went from 102 per mile in 2008 to 83.5 per mile in 2009. Musky went from seven per mile in 2008 to six per mile in 2009. Catch rates for legal size walleye went from 3.5 per mile in 2008 to two per mile in 2009. Legal smallmouth bass rates increased from seven per mile in 2008 to 13 per mile in 2009. Legal musky rates remained stable from 2008 to 2009.

For the lower Black River (downstream of the Black River Falls dam) total catch rates for walleye, smallmouth bass and musky also decreased. Walleye went from 31.5 per mile in 2008 to 12 per mile in 2009. Smallmouth bass went from 16 per mile in 2008 to eight per mile in 2009. Musky went from two per mile in 2008 to one per mile in 2009. Catch rates for legal size walleye decreased from six per mile in 2008 to two per mile in 2009. A good year class of 10- to 11-inch walleye was present in 2008 and these fish may recruit to legal size in the next couple of years increasing their catch rate. Catch rates for legal size smallmouth bass and musky remained low but stable. A tagging study for walleye in the lower Black River, initiated in 2008, continued in 2009 and will continue this year. So far, 1,026 walleyes have been tagged.

– Dan Hatleli, fish biologist, Black River Falls

## CLARK COUNTY

**Mead Lake** – The bass have bounced back after a 2007 fish kill. A fall 2009 electrofishing survey assessed the lake's largemouth bass population and recorded a total catch rate of 21 per mile and legal size catch rate of 11 per mile. That's not quite back to the rates recorded in 2003 (45 per mile with a catch rate of four legal size bass per mile) but it is a big improvement. Surveys a year after the fish kill found only five bass per mile overall and a catch rate of two legal fish per mile.

Handicapped accessible fishing facilities are available or under construction at some area lakes including Lake Wazee, Black River Flowage and Teal Flowage in Jackson County; Mead and Arbutus lakes in Clark County; and Second Lake and Arctic Springs Pond in Trempealeau County.

– Dan Hatleli, fish biologist, Black River Falls

## TROUT STREAMS (BUFFALO, JACKSON AND TREMPLEALEU COUNTIES)

Ongoing surveys of area trout streams found better reproduction of brook and brown trout and more 10- to 12-inch brook trout in 2008 than in the previous few years. Overall, adult trout densities were stable. This reproduction increase was reflected in 2009 surveys, which found higher adult densities and stable to higher densities of legal size fish – most notably for brook trout. These increased densities should provide anglers with more legal and larger trout in 2010. The Department of Natural Resources and cooperative hatcheries will stock about 35,000 brook, 37,000 brown and 16,000 rainbow trout to area waters prior to the 2010 season opener.

Also waiting for anglers are improved fishing conditions in several streams as a result of habitat restoration projects. Streams receiving restoration efforts in the past

couple years are Pine Creek, Traverse Valley Creek, Borst Valley Creek and Bruce Valley Creek, all in Trempealeau County; and Pigeon and French creeks in Jackson County. These projects were initiated and completed through efforts between landowners, local conservation clubs, county land conservation staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited and the Department of Natural Resources. Each project area has a public fishing easement, granted by the landowners, which allows anglers to access the stream by land and water.

– Dan Hatleli, fish biologist, Black River Falls

## DUNN COUNTY

**South Fork of the Hay River** – Nestled in northwest Dunn County is some of the best brook trout water in the county. The upstream four miles of the South Fork of the Hay River is listed as Class I (self-sustaining) trout water from the Barron/Dunn county line downstream. The remaining 17 miles, which passes through Connorsville and Boyceville is Class II water (requires supplemental stocking). Trout surveys in 2009 show the Class I portion to contain up to 5,000 brook trout per mile with six to 10-inch fish being abundant. Anglers seeking trophy brook trout (14 inches or more), should try the Class II waters between Connorsville and Boyceville. Recent and past surveys show this area to have low brook trout densities but excellent potential for quality (greater than 12 inches) and trophy brook trout up to 18 inches.

**Elk Creek** – While Dunn County boasts many brook trout streams, only one high quality brown trout stream is found here. Elk Creek originates in Chippewa County and passes into Dunn County just east of the Village of Elk Mound at Interstate 94. It is classified as Class I brown trout water for three miles. Some of the best fishing on Elk Creek can be found just upstream from Elk Creek Lake off 410th Avenue. Surveys show brown trout populations range up to 3,500 trout per mile and are intermixed with a small population of brook trout. Brown trout average eight to 15 inches with fish reaching over 20 inches.

– Marty Engel, fisheries biologist, Baldwin

## JUNEAU COUNTY

**Petenwell and Castle Rock lakes** – These lakes, bordered by Adams, Juneau and Wood counties, provide the angler with a wide variety of fishing opportunities. The most common game fish species sought in these lakes are walleye, musky, catfish and white bass. Bluegill and black crappie are the most commonly found panfish. The musky fishery continues to grow stronger in numbers of fish and the number of anglers targeting them. Stocking of musky continued in 2009 for Petenwell Lake with the addition of 1,915 large fingerlings stocked from DNR hatcheries and 500 large fingerlings stocked from private hatcheries by the Petenwell Musky Challenge tournament. Since 2000, the DNR has stocked 31,722 large fingerlings and 100,000 fry-sized musky into Petenwell Lake. Local musky groups' stocking efforts add several thousand large fingerling musky to the lake. A full survey of the Petenwell Lake fishery is scheduled for spring.

**New Lisbon Lake** – A spring 2009 shocking survey was conducted on New Lisbon Lake and captured largemouth bass, grass pickerel, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch and pumpkinseed. This lake offers a variety of fish at average sizes.

**Lyndon Creek and Little Lemonweir River** – In 2009 stream surveys were carried out on Lyndon Creek and the Little Lemonweir River. Brook and brown trout were found at several sites along the Little Lemonweir.

– Justine Hasz, senior fisheries biologist, Wisconsin Rapids



## MISSISSIPPI RIVER BACKWATERS

(from page 1)

**Yellow perch** – Look for yellow perch fishing to continue to improve during 2010 and over the next several years. Recent surveys have shown an 11-fold increase in perch abundance. Most of this increase was from small fish, although perch larger than seven inches increased as well. With the increasing number of harvestable perch and high abundance of small fish, yellow perch fishing should be excellent in 2010 and beyond. Size structure will improve, with some fish reaching 15 inches. It is suspected that greatly increased water clarity over the last few years has favored perch growth and reproduction. The highest catch rates for large perch were found in upper Pool 6, followed by upper Pool 5, lower Pool 4, the Big Lake area near Lansing in Pool 9 and Lake Onalaska in Pool 7. Perch can be found in various locations in early spring. During April, soon after ice-out, look for them near their spawning beds in shallow, weedy water. During summer, they frequent clear, weedy backwaters. As with many other backwater fish, perch overwinter in backwater areas with no or little flow. Typical baits include small minnows, worms, night crawlers and small artificial baits.

**Largemouth bass** – Bass anglers can look for continued good fishing on the Mississippi River. Catch rates from surveys of large and small fish have remained steady over the last three years. The greatest numbers of large fish were found upstream of the Prairie du Chien area in Pool 10, followed by upper Pool 5A, upper Pool 6, south of Prairie du Chien, and the backwaters opposite Lansing, Iowa in Pool 9. A number of bass over 20 inches have been caught in the Goose Island area in Pool 8 and in waters surrounding the City of Prairie du Chien. Largemouth bass can be caught in the spring in various locations including the main channel and in backwaters. During fall, these fish congregate into over-wintering areas and by ice-over can be caught on jigs and minnows using a pole or tip-up. They can be more difficult to catch later in winter.

**Bluegill**– Mississippi River bluegill anglers can expect average to below average fishing in 2010. Not only have larger bluegills declined, there also are fewer smaller ones. The number of fish between three and seven inches in 2008 and 2009 declined 35 percent. Additional declines in small fish in the next two years are expected because of an apparent poor 2009 spawn blamed on cool June 2009 weather. Although there are now fewer bluegills in the backwaters of the Mississippi River, 2009 did show the largest proportion of fish over seven inches (8.4 percent). Fall surveys indicate average catch rates of bluegills over seven inches was greatest in upper Pool 5A, followed by the northeast portion of Pool 9, upper Pool 5, the Trempealeau Lakes area in Pool 7, upper Pool 6 and the Lawrence and Target lakes area of Pool 8. Bluegill can be found in various locations in the early spring after ice-out. During late May and early June, look for them on their spawning beds in backwater lakes. Local anglers often use a fly rod rigged with poppers to catch spawning fish. When the weather gets hot and spring flows subside, larger bluegills migrate to the main channel and side channels, and are often caught on wing dams and in woody snags in or near flowing water. As with largemouth bass, in the fall bluegills congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include worms, night crawlers, wax worms, small minnows and jigs.

**Crappie**– Mississippi River crappie anglers can expect below average fishing in 2010. The greatest catch rates of large fish were found upstream of Prairie du Chien in Pool 10, followed by the Harpers Slough area near Harpers Ferry, Iowa in Pool 10, upper Pool 5A, the northeast portion of Pool 9, the Goose Island and Stoddard area in Pool 8, and upper Pool 5. Crappies can be found in various locations in the early spring. During May, look for them for a brief period on their spawning beds in shallow water. After spawning, crappies migrate to the main channel and side channels, and are often caught in woody snags in flowing water. As with many other backwater fish, crappies

congregate in backwater areas with no or little flow to overwinter. Typical baits include small minnows and jigs.

**Catfish** – Fishing for catfish should be good again during 2010. During the last three years, summer catfish surveys showed consistent numbers of channel catfish larger than 15 inches. Channel catfish larger than 31 inches and flathead catfish larger than 43 inches lurk in the deep waters of the Mississippi River. After 2010, anglers may see fewer large fish because of a recent decline in small fish. This decline may be due to extreme floods during the summers of 2007 and 2008. Anglers can find channel catfish during the summer using worms, night crawlers, minnows and stink baits fished in deep, flowing water, often around snag piles in side channels. Flatheads or mud cats are frequently fished using large fish, often bluegills, at night just upstream of snag piles. During 2001, the state record 53-inch flathead catfish, weighing more



A proud boy after bluegill fishing on the Mississippi River. Photo: Dave Heath

than 74 pounds was caught in the Mississippi River.

– David Heath, fisheries biologist, La Crosse

## LA CROSSE, MONROE, VERNON AND CRAWFORD COUNTIES

Anglers fishing coulee region trout streams should experience great fishing in 2010. Above average reproduction in 2007 and 2008 produced two huge year classes of trout. While these fish are still relatively small, they should provide opportunities for anglers looking to catch some fish or just wet a line. Fisheries survey crews captured brown and brook trout up to 27 and 17 inches, respectively. Also, one local angler caught a 28.5-inch brown trout from an area stream. In addition to healthy trout populations, nearly one mile of trout stream improvement work was done this past year.

Anglers are used to hearing about how trout fishing in the Driftless Area will be on the opener, but there are other area fisheries that beg some attention. The Lower La Crosse River (below Lake Neshonoc) is a consistent catfish, smallmouth bass, northern pike and walleye producer for shoreline and small boat anglers. The Lower Black River (downstream of North Bend) holds many walleye and smallmouth bass along with an occasional musky.

– Jordan Weeks, fisheries biologist, La Crosse

## MARATHON AND PORTAGE COUNTIES

**Wisconsin River** – Wisconsin River (from Wausau to Stevens Point) summer survey results were consistent with past years. Smallmouth bass made up 62 percent of the total catch, then walleye (17 percent), followed by channel catfish (11 percent). Musky comprised about four percent of the catch. About 92 percent of the smallmouth bass were greater than 12 inches, but only 10 percent of the walleye were 15 inches or

greater, and channel catfish were all greater than 16 inches. Walleye fingerling catch below Dubai Dam increased from 19 fish per hour to 40 and below Rothschild from seven fish per hour to 14. This places Wisconsin River walleye recruitment numbers more in line with past years but still slightly lower.

**Stevens Point Flowage** – After the controversial 10-foot drawdown in summer 2008, a survey of the Stevens Point Flowage in 2009 proved that the drawdown did not adversely affect the fishery in this flowage. The most common species caught was bluegill (37 fish per net-night), followed by black crappie (seven per net-night), walleye (6.8), northern pike (five), and largemouth bass (0.7). Bluegill ranged from four to 10.5 inches and averaged 6.4; black crappie ranged from 5.5 to 15 inches and averaged 9.5; walleye ranged from seven to 30 inches and average 15.5; northern pike ranged from 10 to 38 inches and averaged 24; and largemouth bass ranged from nine to 20 inches and averaged 14 inches. Forty-eight percent of the walleye were greater than 15 inches and 35 percent of the total catch was of harvestable size at 15 to 20 inches. Of the 592 northern pike captured, about nine percent were at or above the minimum harvest size of 32 inches. Anglers should enjoy good catches of most of these species for the next several years based upon these favorable survey results.

**Trout streams** – Trout were surveyed in 2009 on local streams. On the Tomorrow River in east central Portage County above Nelsonville, brook trout numbers (about 150 per mile) were similar to 2008, but brown trout numbers (about 670 per mile) were down, by about 150 fish per mile. Below Amherst, brown trout numbers were similar to past years (110 per mile), but as usual, numbers were significantly less than above Nelsonville. Brook trout are absent from the Tomorrow River below Amherst. On Flume Creek in northeastern Portage County, the brook trout numbers were similar to past years at about 800 per mile. It appears that more fish are available for harvest. Fishing pressure along with numbers of brown trout have increased since new trout habitat was installed on Emmons Creek in southeastern Portage County. Brown trout numbers increased by about 100 fish per mile, but harvestable fish numbers stayed about the same. On the Plover River in eastern Marathon County, brook trout and brown trout numbers were up significantly. Brown trout increased from 583 to 953 fish per mile and brook trout increased from 213 to 586 fish per mile. In general, anglers will find all of these rivers easily accessible with lots of public access and many fishing easements.

– Tom Meronek, fisheries biologist, Wausau

## PIERCE COUNTY

**Plum Creek** – Plum Creek in southeastern Pierce County near Plum City contains approximately 12 miles of tremendous Class I brook and brown trout waters. Monitoring surveys conducted from 1999-2009 reveal Plum Creek brook trout populations range from 1,500 to 6,000 per mile with an additional 500 to 1,250 brown trout to boot. While six- to 10-inch brook trout are most common, a few trophy (14-plus inch) brook trout are present. The brown trout population averages larger (eight to 15 inches) with fish topping 20 inches. The Class I portion of Plum Creek begins just downstream of Nugget Lake County Park Dam and continues south to the Pierce/Pepin county line. For a cheap thrill, check out the trout pond (closed to fishing) in the town park within the Village of Plum City. You will be amazed by the size and girth of the brown and rainbow trout there.

**Trimbelle River** – The Trimbelle is an exceptional brown trout stream located just west of the town of Ellsworth. It is a moderate size Class II brown trout stream for more than 20 miles and originates southeast of River Falls, entering the Mississippi River near the village of Diamond Bluff. Annual surveys show Trimbelle holds 500 to 2,400 trout per mile. The most common sizes range from eight to 15 inches with an occasional fish exceeding 20 inches. The best trout water is found between Highway 35 (South) and Highway 10. However,

anglers may be surprised by the number of quality fish found upstream of Highway 10, especially in areas that have been restored through instream habitat improvement work.

– Marty Engel, fisheries biologist, Baldwin

## ST. CROIX COUNTY

**Cedar Lake** – Local anglers supported a 14- to 18-inch walleye protected slot-size limit rule change, which went into effect during spring 2008. With several years in a row of strong natural reproduction, many walleye have reached the slot and catch rates are getting exciting. Surveys show the adult walleye population increased from two per acre in spring of 2004 to 5.3 per acre in spring of 2009. The average size walleye was 14 to 17 inches with fish up to 27.5 inches. During the 2010 season there will be many walleye still in the protected slot, which should provide great catch-and-release action; however, many fish will reach lengths greater than 18 inches and be available for harvest. Cedar Lake is located in northwest St. Croix County near the Village of Star Prairie.

**Lake St. Croix** – The secret is out on beautiful 4,668-acre Lake St. Croix, which is part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway located near Hudson. The Wisconsin/Minnesota boundary water took top honors in the 2009 Professional Musky Tournament Trail (PMTT). According to PMTT editor Duane Landmeier, “The results were phenomenal and it turned out to be the best event that the PMTT has ever had for the amount of large fish caught and released.” The 2009 September catch-and-release tournament registered 33 musky with 29 of those fish being between the 40- to 50-inch class. At least 15 musky were greater than 45 inches and two reached the 50-inch mark. Musky fishing on Lake St. Croix should prove every bit as good this year.

– Marty Engel, fisheries biologist, Baldwin

## WOOD COUNTY

**Biron Flowage** – Spring netting and shocking and fall shocking surveys were carried out on Biron Flowage in 2009. Walleye remain the most sought after fish on the flowage and during the spring fyke netting survey a total of 242 walleye ranging in size from 6.7 to 27 inches were captured. Catfish numbers were impressive from the spring survey with 609 caught ranging in size from 16.8 to 26.8 inches. Northern pike also are an important predator fish in the system and 97 were captured during the survey with sizes ranging from 9.5 to 32.4 inches. Musky were captured for the first time in the 2009 netting survey with eight fish captured ranging in size from 29.87 to 35.1 inches. Other game fish sampled included smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and white bass. The panfish fishery is supported by healthy bluegill and black crappie populations. The bluegills surveyed ranged from 4.7 to 8.4 inches and the black crappie ranged 5.2 to 10.6 inches. Both species were caught in good numbers during the netting survey. The fall shocking survey produced evidence of successful natural walleye reproduction with 37 walleye tapping at under 10 inches in length. Anglers are now beginning to focus on this new fishery on the flowage. In 2009 a total of 931 large fingerling musky were stocked from private hatcheries by the 12 Apostles Musky Club and Consolidated Musky Club.

A spring netting and shocking survey on Nepco Lake captured a variety of species. A total of 83 walleye were surveyed ranging in size from 6.5 to 26.9 inches, 55 northern pike ranging from 9.5 to 37.4 inches and 12 largemouth bass ranging in size from 12.5 to 19.9 inches. The panfish captured showed large numbers of yellow perch, bluegill and black crappies and fewer pumpkinseed with good size ranges of each species. Nepco Lake provides the angler a nice species variety with the chance to catch some good sized game and panfish.

– Justine Hasz, senior fisheries biologist, Wisconsin Rapids.



### Free Fishing Weekend

Free Fishing Weekend is scheduled for June 5 and 6, 2010. It's a great way to launch long-term, community-based fishing programs. Start planning now and see our website for an event planning form, [dnr.wi.gov/fish/kidsparents/freefishingweekend.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/kidsparents/freefishingweekend.html)

### Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo

Event organizers are gearing up for another expo to be held May 13 and 14, 2010 at the Dodge County Fairgrounds near Beaver Dam. The fairgrounds are divided into "camps," each with a focus on a different outdoor skill such as fishing, shooting sports, archery, and more. If you'd like to help at the fishing camp, contact DNR Fisheries Technician Mark Baldock in Horicon at 920/387-7868, [mark.baldock@wisconsin.gov](mailto:mark.baldock@wisconsin.gov).

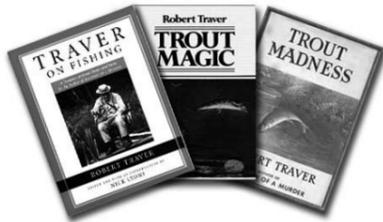
If you would like to take a class to the event, contact the Expo Planning Office in Middleton at (877) 947-3976, or email Heidi Hubble, [heidi.hubble@tds.net](mailto:heidi.hubble@tds.net).

Please contact Theresa Stabo, aquatic resources education director, for questions about these programs and opportunities, [Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov), (608) 266-2272.

### Publication Updates

The Angler Education program Hook, Line, & Thinker, designed for upper middle school and high school students, is now available on-line at [dnr.wi.gov/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/teaching.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/teaching.html). The program is divided into two sections; the Science Guide is aimed primarily at life sciences students while the Field Guide is aimed at physical education students or those in

after-school programs, summer camps, or other places that have the ability to provide an angling field trip. We encourage instructors to work together to give their students the full Hook, Line, & Thinker experience.



## Hook, Line and Bookmark

It's raining. Or maybe that cold wind has whipped up a few too many white-caps for comfort. When you can't actually physically fish, you can still enjoy some excellent fishing experiences by opening some classic works.

Some of the best and most genuine offerings come from regional authors. My three favorite regional fishing authors are George Vukelich (*North Country Notebook*, Vol's I and II), Mel Ellis (*Notes from Little Lakes*) and Gordon MacQuarrie (*Sporting Treasury*). Any of these musings get to the heart and

soul of those who fish and love what the rivers, streams, and lakes of Wisconsin mean to those who make them part of their lives.

Since fish and fishing have entered so prominently in where we settled and why, Virgil Vogel's *Indian Names on Wisconsin's Map* offers insight and understanding.

And my personal favorite is from Robert Traver, the pen name of Judge John Voelker, author of *Trout Magic*, *Trout Madness* and *Traver on Fishing*. If you have ever chased brooks, browns, rainbows, or steelhead, these writings will resonate with you.

You can't always fish, but much of the tradition and essence of fishing lives in the works of these outstanding regional anglers.

Enjoy!

-- Kurt Welke, fisheries biologist, Fitchburg

*I fish (my friend) because...*

*I love to  
because I love the environs where  
trout are found  
which are invariably beautiful  
and hate the environs where crowds  
of people are found  
which are invariably ugly...*

*because of all the television commercials  
cocktail parties  
and assorted social posturing which  
I thus escape  
because in a world where most men  
seem to spend their lives  
doing things they hate  
my fishing is at once an endless  
source of delight  
And an act of small rebellion*

*because trout do not lie or cheat  
and cannot be bought or bribed  
or impressed by power  
but respond only to quietude and  
humility, and endless patience*

*because I suspect that men are going  
along this way  
for the last time  
and I for one don't want to miss the  
trip*

*because, mercifully, there are no  
telephones on trout water  
because only in the woods  
may I find solitude, without loneliness*

*because bourbon out of an old tin  
cup always tastes better out there  
because maybe one day I will catch  
a mermaid  
and finally.....*

*Not because I regard fishing as being  
so terribly important*

*But because  
I suspect that so many of the other  
concerns of men are equally unimportant  
and not nearly so much fun*

-- from *Trout Magic* by Robert Travers.

### 2010 Wisconsin Fishing Report

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DNR Photos

## Catching smiles

*Wisconsin Fishing Photo Gallery:  
look for it in 2010*

You know the fish are there. You've caught them. Now, be a proud angler and let everyone know it. Submit your fishing photos to our soon-to-be online photo gallery 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 in 2010. 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](mailto: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.

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



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