

Get ready to go fishing!

Opening day for Wisconsin fishing is traditionally the first Saturday in May. Hook and line fishing for many fish species on many Wisconsin waters begins on that day. However, to better manage Wisconsin fisheries, season dates are often specific to the species of fish as well as the water body.

Dates for fishing seasons are organized alphabetically by fish species. This information is provided for general orientation only. You must refer to a copy of the current fishing regulations to learn about the fishing dates and guidelines for the water body on which you plan to fish.

Year-round fishing waters

While these tables may be helpful in planning fishing trips, they

are not meant as a substitute for the dates provided in the various fishing regulations. Also please note that occasionally temporary or emergency rules are enacted that may change the fishing season dates for a species or waterbody. If that happens, please look for signs posted at boat landings.

Exceptions do exist. Not all Wisconsin waters follow the general dates for the hook and line or trout season. You must still consult the special county or boundary waters tables in the current Guide to Wisconsin hook and line fishing regulations to determine if any special season dates exist for the particular waters you plan to fish with hook and line.

If you are planning to fish for trout, you must consult the current Guide to Wisconsin trout fishing regulations for any exceptions. This is the only way to determine whether or not the waters you plan to fish follow the season dates for general inland waters.

Species not listed have no open season. For species that are listed, it is illegal to fish for those species during the closed season - this includes catch and release fishing. It is also illegal to take, transport, possess or sell within the state any wild animals specified by the DNR's endangered or threatened species list. Be sure to be familiar with the fish on this list.

- 2018-2019 fishing seasons**
Early inland trout (catch and release)
January 6 (5 a.m.) to May 4
- General inland trout**
May 5 (5 a.m.) to Oct. 15
- General inland fishing**
May 5 to March 3, 2019
- Largemouth bass northern zone**
May 5 to March 3, 2019
- Smallmouth bass northern zone catch and release**
May 5 to June 15
- Smallmouth bass northern zone harvest**
June 16 to March 3, 2019
- Large and smallmouth bass southern zone**
May 5 to March 3, 2019
- Musky - northern zone**
May 26 to Nov. 30
- Musky - southern zone**
May 5 to Dec. 31
- Northern pike**
May 5 to March 3, 2019
- Walleye**
May 5 to March 3, 2019
- Lake sturgeon**
Sept. 1 to Sept. 30 (hook-and-line)
- Free fishing weekends**
June 2-3, 2018 (summer)
January 20-21, 2018 (winter)
January 19-20, 2019 (winter)

Fish species list

- Bass, smallmouth and largemouth
- Bass, white
- Bass, yellow
- Bluegill (Panfish)
- Catfish (channel, flathead)
- Cisco (Lake herring)
- Crappie (Panfish)
- Gobies
- Muskellunge
- Northern pike
- Panfish
- Pumpkinseed (Panfish)
- Perch, white
- Perch, yellow (Panfish)
- Rock bass
- Rough fish & bullheads
- Ruffe
- Sturgeon, lake
- Sturgeon, shovelnose
- Sunfish (Panfish)
- Trout and salmon (includes early inland trout season)
- Trout, extended Lake Superior streams
- Walleye and sauger (includes hybrids)
- Warmouth (Panfish)
- Whitefish

The Wisconsin Fishing Report now available

Anglers planning their fishing trips for the general hook and line fishing season that opens statewide May 5 can get a line on where to go in 2018 in The Wisconsin Fishing Report.

The publication is available online and in hard copy at Department of Natural Resources service centers and in the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. It's full of great information and "where to fish" recommendations from fisheries biologists from around the state, says Karl Scheidegger, the Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist who coordinates the report and fisheries outreach efforts.

"Sometime an angler's most difficult question to answer is 'Where's my next fishing adventure?'" The Wisconsin Fishing Report can help them answer that question," Scheidegger says.

The Wisconsin Fishing Report is loaded with photos of the fish awaiting Wisconsin anglers in 2018. Madeline Roberts, water resources management specialist in Spooner, holds a 25+inch walleye from the St. Louis River in Douglas County. - Photo credit: Paul Piszczek



The Wisconsin Fishing Report is loaded with photos of the fish awaiting Wisconsin anglers in 2018. Madeline Roberts, water resources management specialist in Spooner, holds a 25+inch walleye from the St. Louis River in Douglas County.

to credit: Paul Piszczek

The report features forecasts by species turned in by DNR fisheries biologists for many popular waters in their area. The forecasts contain a mixture of recent fish survey results revealing species abundance and fish size, descriptions of habitat projects benefiting fish populations and anglers, reminders on new rules, and lots of photos of the impressive fish caught during DNR fisheries assessments and released for anglers' to enjoy pursuing.

Download the entire 20-page tabloid style newspaper or check out the individual species forecasts online. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search "fishing report."

People subscribing now to the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine will also receive a copy of The Wisconsin Fishing Report bound within the spring issue. The magazine is available for \$8.97 per year. Subscribe at 1-800-678-9472 or online at wnrmag.com.

Wild Rivers Guide

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