

Fishing in Minnesota’s Northwest Region . . .

(Continued from Page 8)

in the most recent fall survey. A new Walleye regulation of 4 fish in possession, 1 over 20.0 inches allowed in possession will be effective on Opening Day. This regulation will continue to be evaluated and revised in the future if needed.

Northern Pike catch rates were up from the previous survey with 4.2 fish/net in the fall sample. Catch rates have historically ranged from 4 to 6 fish per net and the lower management goal is at least 4.2 fish/net. New Northern Pike zone regulations (were put in place in 2018, and should benefit the Northern Pike population on Leech Lake.

Yellow Perch numbers in

the 2018 fall survey were lower than 2017 but higher than the all-time low in 2016. Sizes of Yellow Perch captured in the nets ranged from 5 to 13 inches with an average length of 8 inches. The Yellow Perch population in Leech Lake is showing a balanced population with approximately 40% of the perch sampled being 8 inches or larger.

A strong concern on Leech Lake is the impacts that zebra mussels will have in the future. Immature zebra mussel larvae, called veligers, were found in 2016. After an extensive search of the lake in 2017 and 2018 there was only one boat that was found to have any adult zebra mussels. Once veligers are found it generally takes a few years before the adult zebra mus-

sel population begins to dramatically increase. There are currently no known methods to control or reduce numbers of zebra mussels once they are found in natural systems. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) like zebra mussels are moved from infested to non-infested waters by anglers, boaters, and lake shore owners and can adversely impact lakes and fish populations. To avoid spreading AIS, lake users are required to remove all aquatic plants or animals from their watercraft and drain all water from their boat before leaving the access. Additional information on all of these topics can be found on the DNR website (www.dnr.state.mn.us) or by contacting the Walker Area Fisheries office.

Liberalized fishing opportunities

Lakes are opened to liberalized fishing when a fish population is endangered due to the lack of oxygen available in the water. These lakes are opened so that the public can take fish before they die. Lakes opened to liberalized fishing have signs posted at the public access or along the shore, and announcements will be made in the local newspaper and through the DNR Section of Fisheries central office in St. Paul.

Fish taken from lakes opened to liberalized fishing usually are lethargic and located near the bottom of the ice or near springs. Anglers should use caution and check ice conditions before beginning to fish on opened lakes. These lakes may be restocked

with fish next spring after ice-out.

Rules for taking fish from lakes opened to liberalized fishing:

The lakes are only open to liberalized fishing for a short

time period. So check the dates on posted signs or in local newspapers.

You are required to have a resident angling license to take fish on liberalized lakes.

You may take fish in any quantity for personal use from lakes opened to liberalized fishing.

You may sell rough fish. You may take fish by spear, gillnet, or angling (check each lake at the access site, gillnets may not be allowed at all lakes).

You may not use seines, hoop nets, fyke nets, or explosives to take fish.

All trespass laws are in effect and you should abide by them when accessing lakes.

Do not leave any trash or litter on the lakes and take home all fish that are caught.

PIER NOTES

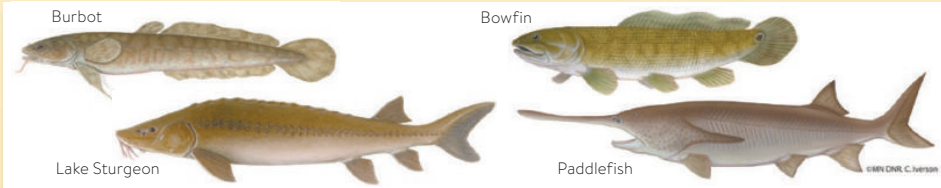
A take-along guide for fishing with kids



Fun Facts, Pop Can Rigs, Tackle Box, and Safety

Fishing Fun Facts

- There are more than 27,000 living species of fish worldwide. That’s more than all types of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds combined.
- Most fish have an air bladder that inflates and deflates to keep the fish from sinking like a stone or bobbing to the surface.
- Fish scales are laid down in rings each year (like tree rings) and can be used to age fish.
- In 2011, Minnesota was home to 162 species of fishes, in 26 families. These numbers increase as new non-native species establish themselves.
- Bowfin have gills, but can also use their swim bladder like a lung, coming to the surface every few minutes to gulp air. They can survive out of water for a considerable length of time. A farmer once found a live bowfin in moist soil while plowing a field that had been flooded a few weeks earlier.
- Catfish bodies are covered with taste buds instead of scales. These extra taste buds help catfish locate food in murky waters at the lake’s bottom.
- Burbot (also called eelpout) are the first fish to spawn each year. They’re the only fish in Minnesota to spawn under the ice.
- Freshwater drum are the noisiest fish in Minnesota! They produce a deep, rumbling sound during spring breeding season by rubbing tendons against their swim bladders. They are also known as croakers or sheepshead.
- With about 45 species, the minnow family is Minnesota’s largest fish family. The largest member of the minnow family in Minnesota is the carp.
- There are only two species of paddlefish in the world; one in China and one in North America.
- The name “walleye” refers to the large, milky pupils. The inner part of the walleye’s eye reflects light, allowing the fish to see in dark or murky water.
- Lake sturgeon are the largest fish in Minnesota, growing to over five feet in length and living up to (and beyond) 100 years.
- A raindrop falling in Lake Itasca travels down the Mississippi River and arrives downstream at the Gulf of Mexico in approximately 90 days.
- Lake Superior is the world’s largest freshwater lake. It is 20,364,800 acres in area.
- Minnesota is often called the land of 10,000 lakes, but the actual number is closer to 15,000.



mn DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES MinnAqua Program



For more fish and water trivia, see Appendices 7:5 and 7:6 in the MinnAqua Leader’s Guide, Fishing: Get in the Habitat! mndnr.gov/minnqua/leadersguide


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