FISHERIES MANAGEMENT REGULATION TOOLBOX

Science-Based Standards For Management Success

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Fisheries Management has developed the Regulations Toolbox of standardized regulation options for various fish species. The Toolbox helps maintain regulation consistency while allowing for diverse fishing opportunities and flexibility in fish population management.

The Regulation Toolbox offers a "stoplight" (i.e. red, yellow, green) regulation category system for trout and four regulation categories for other game fish. Each category represents a management goal.

Fisheries biologists consider applying a new toolbox regulation to a waterbody when the management goal, fish population or waterbody conditions for that waterbody changes. We strongly encourage you to contact a local fisheries biologist if you have an idea for a regulation change on a waterbody you like to fish.

Trout And Salmon

Green and yellow regulations are the county base standard regulations, while red regulations are considered special regulations.

Key To Trout Toolbox Regulations

Bn = Brown Trout

Bk = Brook Trout

Rw = Rainbow Trout

Trout And Salmon	Management Goal				
Regulation	**Promotes Harvest**	**Promotes Harvest - Quality-Size Fish**	**Promotes Quality Size fish**	**Promotes Trophy Potential**	**Improves Catch Rates**
Green: 5 trout, no minimum length limit	Bn Bk Rw				
Yellow: 3 trout over 8"	Bn Rw	Bk	Bk		Bk
Red: 10 trout in total, no minimum length limit	Bn		Bn		
Red: 5 in total: brown and rainbow trout no minimum length limit, brook trout under 9"	Bn Bk Rw		Bk	Bk	-
Red: 5 trout in total, brown trout and rainbow trout no minimum length limit, all brook trout caught shall be immediately released	Bn Rw		Bk	Bk	Bk
Red: 5 trout under 12"	Bn Bk Rw	-	Bn Bk	Bn Bk Rw	
Red: 3 in total; brown and rainbow trout over 12"; brook trout over 8"		Bn Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw		Bn Bk Rw
Red: 2 trout over 12"		Bn Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw		Bn Bk Rw
Red: 1 trout over 14"		Bn Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw	Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw
Red: 1 trout over 18"			Bn Bk Rw	Bn	Bn Bk Rw
Red: All trout caught shall be immediately released			Bn Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw	Bn Bk Rw

Game Fish

Shaded cells are current statewide default regulation for each species group. Regulations on outlying and boundary waters may differ based on agreements made with other states and authorities.

Species	Fishery, Population, Or Ecosystem-Level Objective			
	Consumptive Opportunity	**Quality Opportunity**	**Memorable Opportunity or Fishery Rehabilitation**	**Trophy Opportunity or Biomanipulation**
	Utilize self-sustained, high density, slow-growing populations; Maximize yield; Reduce predation/competition	Sustain/Increase Densities; Maintain current conditions	Maintain/increase density of moderate/large adults; improve reproduction; Increase predation beyond current conditions	Increase survival/density of large/old individuals; Maximize predation on smaller fishes
Largemouth and Smallmouth bass	No minimum length limit **or** 14" to 18" protected slot, 1>18" 5/day	14" minimum length limit 5/day	18" minimum length limit 1/day	22" minimum length limit 1/day
Walleye, Sauger and hybrids	14" to 18"protected slot, 1 > 18" **or** One over 14" **or** No minimum length limit 5/day	15" minimum length limit 5/day **or** Ceded Territory: 15" min. with 20-24" protected slot and 1>24" 3/day	18" minimum length limit 3/day	28" minimum length limit 1/day
Northern Pike	No minimum length limit 5/day	26" minimum length 2/day 25-35" protected slot 2/day or 5/day	32" minimum length limit 1/day	40" minimum length 1/day
Muskellunge	No minimum length limit	40" minimum length limit	50" minimum length limit	
Catfish	No minimum length limit 25/day	No minimum length limit 10/day	--	--
Panfish	No minimum length limit 25/day	No minimum length 25/day	No minimum length limit 10/day	--

Fisheries Management Data

Biologists use a variety of data sources to determine how fish populations are doing in a given waterbody, if a regulation is a good fit for the waterbody and whether the regulation will be effective at meeting the desired management goal. The DNR considers this biological information as well as public input when implementing regulation changes. When developing a citizen resolution, it's helpful to work with your local biologist for insight on appropriate regulations for the species and waterbody of interest. Find a biologist by county.