

Chapter NR 20

FISHING: INLAND WATERS; OUTLYING WATERS

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(Sections 29.085 and 29.174, Stats.)

NR 20.01 Purpose; general restriction. Seasons, bag limits, possession limits and other regulations for fishing in Wisconsin waters are established in this chapter. No person may take, catch, kill or fish for fish of any variety in excess of the daily bag limit, by means other than hook and line, during other than the open season or possess or control any fish in excess of the possession limit or below the minimum size limit, except as expressly provided in this chapter.

History: 1-2-56; am. Register, December, 1957, No. 24, eff. 1-1-58; renun. from WCD 20.01 to be NR 20.01, Register, November, 1970, No. 179, eff. 1-1-71; reprinted to correct error, Register, April, 1984, No. 340; r. and recr. Register, November, 1986, No. 371, eff. 12-1-86.

NR 20.0125 License waiver. (1) On the first Sunday of June each year, no fishing license is required to fish the inland or outlying waters.

(2) The license waiver of sub. (1) does not apply to commercial fishing license requirements.

History: Cr. Register, April, 1987, No. 376, eff. 5-1-87; am. (1), Register, April, 1989, No. 400, eff. 5-1-89.

NR 20.015 Definitions. For the purpose of this chapter, the following terms are defined as follows:

(1) "Artificial fly" means a single hook dressed with fur, feathers, hair, silk, tinsel, thread or similar material to imitate the natural food of trout.

(2) "Artificial lure" means a bait designed to attract fish which does not include any natural bait.

(2d) "Attached", for the purpose of s. 29.148 (4), Stats., means affixed to the sturgeon carcass immediately in front of the tail.

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- (2m) "Business day" has the meaning given it in s. 421.301 (6), Stats.
- (2r) "Current validated sturgeon carcass tag", for the purpose of s. 29.148 (4), Stats., means an unused tag of the current year validated according to the requirements of s. NR 20.18 (2).
- (3) "Fisher" means any person engaged in fishing.
- (4) "Fishing" includes taking, capturing or killing fish or fishing for fish of any variety at any time in the waters of the state.
- (4a) "Muskellunge" means fish of the species *Esox masquinongy* and includes muskellunge - northern pike hybrids.
- (5) "Green Bay" means those waters of Lake Michigan located to the west of the Green Bay-Lake Michigan line.
- (6) "Green Bay-Lake Michigan line" means a line commencing at the northwest side of the Northport dock where it joins the shoreline in section 33, T33N, R29E; then running northeasterly to the range light (signal light) on Plum island; then running along the north and west shore of Plum island to the U.S. coast guard station; then running northerly to the southwesterly point on Shellswick dock, which is located on Lobdell's point on Washington island; then running along Shellswick dock to the shoreline of Lobdell's point; then running along the west shore of Washington island to Boyer's Bluff light; then running north to its terminus at the Wisconsin-Michigan boundary line.
- (7) "Lake Michigan" means those waters of Lake Michigan located east of the Green Bay-Lake Michigan line.
- (8) "Openly exposed" means open to view by a person in a passing vehicle.
- (8m) "Position fishing" means fishing from a boat in a manner where the fishing line extends vertically into the water while the boat is maneuvered by the use of a motor.
- (9) "Safe harvest" means a level of harvest that incorporates an appropriate margin of safety, estimates of the population and acceptable exploitation rates which will reasonably prevent harvest of more than 35% of the population of adult walleyes or 27% of the population of adult muskellunge. The margin of safety assures that the true safe harvest is not exceeded in more than 1 of 40 cases. For waters where a population estimate has not been made, a regression model based upon population estimates from other waters will be used. The margin of safety used depends upon the age of the population estimate was made and whether a regression model was used.
- (10) "Secretary" means secretary of the department of natural resources.
- (11) "Setline" means a line with one or more hooks fastened to it and designed to be set or left unattended in the water for the purpose of taking fish.
- (12) "Set or bank pole" means a pole equipped with line with one or more hooks fastened to it, designed to be used for fishing from the banks of lakes or rivers and set or left unattended.

(13) "Telemetry device" means any device attached or implanted in fish that transmits a sonic or electronic signal to aid in fishing.

(13m) "Troll" or "trolling" means fishing by trailing any lure, bait or similar device that may be used to attract or catch fish from a boat propelled by a means other than drifting or rowing. Casting and immediate retrieval of a bait, lure or similar device while the motor is running or position fishing is not trolling.

(14) "Unattended line" means a line where the person using the line is not actively directing attention to it. Failure to immediately respond to a line upon indication of a bite shall be prima facia evidence that the line is unattended.

History: Cr. Register, December, 1976, No. 252, eff. 1-1-77; renum. (1) and (2) to be (3) and (4), cr. (1) and (2), Register, December, 1982, No. 324, eff. 1-1-83; reprinted to correct error in (2), Register, April, 1984, No. 340; cr. (5), Register, December, 1984, No. 348, eff. 1-1-85; cr.(4g) and (4t) Register, March, 1986, No. 363, eff. 4-1-86; cr. (2m), Register, June, 1987, No. 378, eff. 7-1-87; emerg. cr. (4d), eff 5-5-89, cr. (4d) and (4e), Register, November, 1989, No. 407, eff. 12-1-89; cr. (2g), Register, December, 1989, No. 408, eff. 1-1-90; cr. (4b), Register, January, 1991, No. 421, eff. 2-1-91; cr. (6), Register, October, 1991, No. 430, eff. 11-1-91; cr. (4a), Register, December, 1991, No. 432, eff. 1-1-92; renum. (6) under s.13.93 (2m) (b) 1, Stats., Register, March, 1992, No. 435; renum. (4b) to (6) to be (8) to (14), cr. (5) to (7), Register, March, 1992, No. 435, eff. 4-1-92; cr. (2d) and (2r), Register, January, 1993, No. 445, eff. 2-1-93; r. (2g), cr. (8m) and (13m), Register, April, 1994, No. 460, eff. 5-1-94.

NR 20.02 Waters classified; hook and line fishing in outlying waters. (1) For the purpose of regulating hook and line fishing in the outlying waters, the closed seasons, size limits, bag and possession limits, number of hooks and lines and ice fishing regulations shall be the same as those prescribed for the inland waters of the county in which such outlying waters are located, except as otherwise specifically provided in the following table:

Species	Area	Open season	Daily bag limit	Minimum length (in.)
(a) WALLEYE AND SAUGER (Bag limit means total of all)	1. Lake Michigan and Green Bay except the Fox river from its mouth upstream to the dam at DePere	At all times	3	No size limit
	2. Fox river from its mouth upstream to the dam at DePere	First Saturday in May to March 1 March 2 to the day before the first Saturday in May.	3 1	No size limit 28
	3. Lake Superior	At all times	5, of which no more than one may be a walleye over 20 inches long	No size limit for sauger; 15 for walleye
(b) NORTHERN PIKE	Lake Michigan and Green Bay	At all times	5	No size limit
(c) YELLOW PERCH	Lake Superior	At all times	5	No size limit
	Green Bay	Continuous	25	No size limit
	Lake Michigan	Continuous	50	No size limit
	Lake Superior	Continuous	50	No size limit

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Species	Area	Open season	Daily bag limit	Minimum length (in.)
(d) TROUT AND SALMON	1. Lake Michigan and Green Bay, except as provided in subd. 2.	All year except the open season for lake trout is from May 1 through Labor Day, except as provided in subd. 2.	5 in total of which only 2 may be lake trout, except as provided in subd. 2.	10
	2. Lake Michigan, within the following area: From the end of the south pier at the entrance of the Sturgeon Bay ship canal on a course of 136° from true north for 17.5 statute miles, then west for 16.8 statute miles to the end of the Algoma north pier, then along the north side of that pier to the shore of Lake Michigan, then north along the shore to the base of the south pier at the entrance of the Sturgeon Bay ship canal, then along the south side of that pier to its end.	All year except there is no open season for lake trout.	5 in total of which none may be lake trout. No person may possess lake trout when fishing in this area of Lake Michigan.	10

a hook with a maximum gape size of one-half inch from point to shank. During this period, fishing with hook and line is prohibited between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise on all streams tributary to Lake Michigan and Green Bay except the Menominee river, Oconto river and its tributaries and the Fox river.

(4) **EXPERIMENTAL WATERS; PERMITS; REPORTS.** (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch or kill fish or fish for fish in the waters of Nebish, Spruce, Mystery, Escanaba and Palette lakes situated in sections 34 and 35, township 42 north, range 7 east, and sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12, township 41 north, range 7 east, Vilas county except under the following conditions:

1. Fishing in such waters is authorized only under permit, which may be secured at the checking stations indicated by posted signs in the immediate area.

2. Fishing in such waters is restricted to hook and line or rod and reel with fishing in Spruce lake further restricted to the use of artificial lures only and except that cisco may be taken in Palette lake by means of dip nets or seines described under s. NR 20.11 (2).

3. The provisions of this section shall apply to such waters throughout the year.

4. All permits are valid only for the date issued and shall be turned in at the checking stations at the termination of each day's fishing activities by the fisher.

5. There is a continuous open season with no daily bag limit or size limit for all species of fish contained in these waters except for the following: In Nebish lake, no person may take smallmouth bass from 9 to 12 inches long and there is a daily bag limit of 5 for smallmouth bass; in Palette lake, no person may take smallmouth bass less than 16 inches long, there is a daily bag limit of 2 for smallmouth bass and there is no open season through 1991 for lake trout; and in Spruce lake, no person may take largemouth bass less than 12 inches long and there is a daily bag limit of 2 for largemouth bass.

6. All fish taken pursuant to this section shall be exhibited to the department or its agents at the checking station for examination, identification and marking.

History: 1-256; am. (3) (a) 28-56 and 71, (3) (am) 7, cr. (3) (am) 3 a, 7 a and 24 a and r. (4) (c) 1 and 2, Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. (3) (c) 2, 3, and 4, Register, October, 1975, No. 238, eff. 11-1-75; am. (3) (am) (intro.), (c) 2, 3, and 4, r. (4) (c) Register, November, 1975, No. 239, eff. 12-1-75; am. (4), r. (5) (a) 3 and cr. (7) and (8), Register, December, 1976, No. 252, eff. 1-1-77; am. (7) (a) and (b), Register, March, 1977, No. 255, eff. 4-1-77; am. (3) (c) 2 to 4, Register, December, 1977, No. 264, eff. 2-1-78; am. (3) (a) 69, (am) 3, and 24, (b), (4) (a) 5, Register, December, 1978, No. 276, eff. 1-1-79; r. (3) (c) 4.1, cr. (8) (c) and am. (3) (c) 4.b, Register, December, 1979, No. 288, eff. 1-1-80; emerg. cr. (7) (c), eff. 4-1-80; cr. (7) (e), Register, October, 1980, No. 298, eff. 11-1-80; am. (7) (e) and r. (8) (a) 1, a., Register, December, 1980, No. 300, eff. 1-1-81; reprinted to correct error, Register, April, 1981, No. 304; am. (2) (c) 4, e., Register, August, 1981, No. 308, eff. 9-1-81; am. (3) (a) 14, (3) (c) 4, d., (4) (a) 2, and 5, Register, December, 1981, No. 312, eff. 1-1-82; am. (3) (c) 3, and 4, intro., b., d. and f., r. and recr. (7) (e), renum. (8) to be (9), cr. (8), Register, December, 1982, No. 324, eff. 1-1-83; renum. (3) (c) 1, and 2, to be (3) (c) and (d) and am., renum. (3) (c) 3, and 4, to be (3) (d) 1, and 2., renum. (3) (c) 4, j, to be 2.i, Register, April, 1983, No. 328, eff. 5-1-83; am. (3) (d) 1, and 2, intro. and h., (4) (a) 5, r. (3) (d) 2.a., r. and recr. (7) and (8), renum. (9) to be (8) and am. (8) (b), cr. (8) (d), Register, December, 1983, No. 336, eff. 1-1-84; am. (3) (d) 2, e., Register, September, 1984, No. 345, eff. 10-1-84; am. (3) (d) 2, intro. (4) (a) 2, and 5., (7) (d) and (8) (b), cr. (7) (e), Register, December, 1984, No. 348, eff. 1-1-85; r. (3) (d) 2, i., Register, September, 1985, No. 357, eff. 10-1-85; cr. (7) (f) and (g), am. (8) (a), (b) and (c), Register, December, 1985, No. 360, eff. 1-1-86; renum. (3) (am) 26, to be 27., cr. (3) (a) 11, and (3) (am) 26, r. and recr. (3) (am) 3, and 24., Register, November, 1986, No. 371, eff. 12-1-86; am. (4) (a) 5, Register, April, 1987, No. 376, eff. 5-1-87; r. and recr. (3) (d), Register, June, 1987, No. 378, eff. 7-1-87; r. (3) (a) 50., am. (3) (am) 13., cr. (7) (h), Register, Decem-

ber, 1987, No. 384, eff. 1-1-88; am. (3) (c), Register, July, 1988, No. 391, eff. 8-1-88; r. and recr. (4) (a) 5., Register, June, 1989, No. 402, eff. 7-1-89; emerg. cr. (4m), eff. 8-4-89; r. (5) to (8), Register, December, 1989, No. 408, eff. 1-1-90; am. (3) (a) 14., Register, September, 1990, No. 417, eff. 10-1-90; am. (3) (c), Register, December, 1990, No. 420, eff. 1-1-91; am. (3) (a) 69. and (3) (am) 9., r. (3) (am) 2., Register, February, 1991, No. 422, eff. 3-1-91; r. (3) (am) 17. 1., Register, March, 1992, No. 435, eff. 4-1-92; am. (3) (am) 10., Register, November, 1993, No. 455, eff. 1-1-94.

Note: For a complete history of NR 20.04 see the history note for NR 20.04 as it appeared in the December, 1974 Administrative Register.

NR 20.06 Prohibited fishing under particular conditions. (1) (a) *Waters and methods.* No person shall take, capture, or kill fish of any variety or fish for fish during the closed season for trout in streams and creeks containing trout except that rough fish may be taken by hand.

(b) *Trolling.* No person may fish in inland waters of the state by the method of trolling, except in the waters of Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Polk, Racine, Rusk, Taylor, Washburn and Waukesha counties, the Wisconsin river including sloughs, bayous and flowages from county trunk A east of Tomahawk, Lincoln county, downstream, except Lake Mohawksin, the Chippewa river including sloughs, bayous and flowages up to the flowing portion of all tributary streams from the Holcombe flowage, Chippewa county, downstream, the Fox river from Buffalo lake downstream to the DePere dam and the following named lakes and rivers including their flowages and sloughs:

1. Adams county—Mason
2. Ashland county—Kakagon
8. Calumet county—Lake Winnebago
9. Chippewa county—Chain; Long 32-8
10. Clark county—Arbutus
13. Dane county—Crystal; Kegonsa; Koshkonong; Mendota; Monona; Waubesa
14. Dodge county—Beaver Dam; Fox; Sinnissippi
15. Door county—Clarks; Kangaroo
17. Dunn county—Menomin; Tainter
18. Eau Claire county—Altoona; Eau Claire
19. Florence county—Halsey; Twin Falls flowage
20. Fond du Lac county—Lake Winnebago
21. Forest county—Butternut; Franklin; Lucerne; Metonga; Pickerel; Pine; Wabicon
24. Green Lake county—Big Green; Maria; Puckaway
27. Jackson county—Arbutus
28. Jefferson county—Koshkonong; Rock
29. Juneau county—Kilburn flowage
30. Kenosha county—Elizabeth
32. La Crosse county—Neshonoc
34. Langlade county—Post (Lower); Post (Upper); Rolling Stone

- 35. Lincoln county—Spirit R. flowage
- 37. Marathon county—Big Eau Pleine reservoir upstream to the first state hwy. 153 bridge
- 38. Marinette county—Chalk Hills flowage; High Falls reservoir; Noquebay
- 39. Marquette county—Buffalo
- 43. Oconto county—Christy; Machickanee (Stiles pond); White Potato
- 44. Oneida county—Columbus; Rainbow flowage; Sugar Camp; Thunder; Willow flowage
- 50. Portage county—Little Eau Pleine flowage upstream to the first county hwy. 'O' bridge
- 51. Price county—Pike; Round
- 54. Rock county—Koshkonong
- 56. St. Croix county—Cedar
- 57. Sauk county—Redstone
- 58. Sawyer county—Chetac; Grindstone; Lac Court Oreilles; Nelson; Round; Whitefish; Windigo
- 59. Shawano county—Shawano
- 60. Sheboygan county—Sheboygan marsh
- 65. Walworth county—Beulah; Como; Delavan; Geneva; Whitewater
- 67. Washington county—Big Cedar; Pike
- 69. Waupaca county—Partridge; White
- 70. Waushara county—Poygan
- 71. Winnebago county—Butte des Morts; Little Butte des Morts; Poygan; Rush; Winnebago; Winneconne

(c) *Fishing near dams.* It shall be unlawful for any person to take, capture, or kill fish of any variety or fish for fish by means other than hook or line within 200 feet of any fishway, lock or dam in the inland waters at any time.

History: 1-2-56; am. (2), Register, December, 1956, No. 12, eff. 1-1-57; am. (1) (c) and (2), Register, December, 1957, No. 24, eff. 1-1-58; am. (1) (b), Register, April, 1958, No. 28, eff. 5-1-58; am. (2), Register, August, 1958, No. 32, eff. 9-1-58; am. (1) (b), Register, October, 1958, No. 34, eff. 1-1-59; am. (2), Register, August, 1959, No. 44, eff. 9-1-59; am. (1) (b), r. and recr. (2), Register, December, 1959, No. 48, eff. 1-1-60; am. (1) (b) and (2), Register, December, 1960, No. 60, eff. 1-1-61; am. (2), Register, August, 1961, No. 68, eff. 9-1-61; am. (1) (b), Register, August, 1961, No. 68, eff. 9-1-61; am. (1) (b); cr. (1) (d) and (e), Register, December, 1961, No. 72, eff. 1-1-62; am. (1) (e), Register, July, 1962, No. 79, eff. 8-1-62; am. (1) (b), Register, April, 1963, No. 88, eff. 5-1-63; am. (1) (b); r. (2), Register, December, 1964, No. 108, eff. 1-1-65; am. (1) (a) and (c); r. (1) (d) and (e), Register, December, 1966, No. 132, eff. 1-1-67; r. and recr. (1) (b), Register, October, 1969, No. 166, eff. 1-1-70; am. (1) (b), Register, June, 1970, No. 174, eff. 7-1-70; renum. WCD 20.06 to be NR 20.06, Register, November, 1970, No. 179, eff. 1-1-71; am. (1) (b), Register, October, 1973, No. 214, eff. 1-1-74; am. (1) (b), Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. (1) (b) (intro.), r. (1) (b) 61 and 68, Register, November, 1975, No. 239, eff. 12-1-75; am. (1) (b) (intro.), Register, December, 1976, No. 252, eff. 1-1-77; am. (1) (b), Register, December, 1978, No. 276, eff. 1-1-79; printing error corrected, Register, July, 1979; am. (1) (b) 21., 24. and 64., Register, December, 1980, No. 300, eff. 1-1-81; am. (1) (b) 35., 44. and 58., Register, December, 1982, No. 324, eff. 1-1-83; am. (1) (b) 37., 50. and 64., Register, December, 1983, No. 336, eff. 1-1-84; am. (1) (b) (intro.), r. (1) (b) 42. and 64., Register, November, 1986, No. 371, eff. 12-1-86; am. (1) (b)

(intro.), Register, July, 1988, No. 391, eff. 8-1-88; am. (1) (b) (intro.), Register, December, 1989, No. 408, eff. 1-1-90; am. (1) (b) 9. and 18., Register, March, 1992, No. 435, eff. 4-1-92; cr. (1) (b) 8. and 20., Register, January, 1993, No. 445, eff. 2-1-93; am. (1) (b) (intro.), Register, April, 1994, No. 460, eff. 5-1-94.

NR 20.07 Prohibited methods of fishing. (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by the Wisconsin Statutes or by department order:

(a) No person may take, catch, or kill fish or fish for fish of any kind with more than 3 hooks, baits or lures.

(b) No person may:

1. Fish with an unattended line in any waters.

2. Fish by snagging, fouling or attempting to hook fish other than in the mouth.

3. Keep any fish hooked other than in the mouth.

4. Fish with the aid or use of any firearm or pellet gun in any manner or by any means other than angling or trolling.

5. Use a telemetry device attached to or implanted in fish to aid in fishing.

(c) No person shall use as bait or possess or release any minnows or other fish except trout on any waters or shores of such waters which have been chemically treated for trout management and which are so identified and designated by signs posted on the shores thereof by the department of natural resources.

(d) No person shall place minnow traps in waters which have been chemically treated to reestablish a trout fishery.

(e) No person shall use minnows as bait while fishing through the ice in Green Lake, Green Lake county except where the lake is 50 feet or less in depth.

(f) Any fish taken into actual possession, unless released immediately, shall be included as part of the daily bag limit.

(g) Landing nets 3 feet or less in diameter or a gaff may be used for the purpose of landing fish legally hooked.

(h) No person may take, catch or kill fish or fish for fish in open water using a free-floating or anchored, buoyant device with attached hook and line, which is not held or otherwise controlled by the fisher, commonly known as jug fishing, except under a setline or bank pole license issued pursuant to s. 29.36, Stats.

(2) (a) No person may, except as expressly authorized, possess or control on any of the inland or outlying waters or shores of inland or outlying waters at any time any gun, bow and arrow, spear, net or similar device that might be used for the purpose of taking, catching or killing fish.

(b) No person other than the licensee or licensee's designee or department agent may raise, remove, or otherwise tamper with commercial gear set in Wisconsin inland and boundary waters.

(3) It shall be lawful to take rough fish by hand at any time in all waters.