

# 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  |                                      |                            |                           |                      |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
|  | 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 <b>or</b><br>14" to 18" protected slot, 1>18"<br>5/day                               | 14" minimum length limit<br><br>5/day   | 18" minimum length limit<br><br>1/day   | 22" minimum length limit<br><br>1/day   |
| Walleye, Sauger and hybrids    | 14" to 18" protected slot, 1 > 18" <b>or</b><br>One over 14" <b>or</b><br>No minimum length limit<br>5/day   | 15" minimum length limit 5/day <b>or</b><br>Ceded Territory: 15" min. with 20-24" protected slot and 1>24"<br>3/day | 18" minimum length limit<br><br>3/day   | 28" minimum length limit<br><br>1/day   |
| Northern Pike                  | No minimum length limit<br>5/day   | 26" minimum length limit<br>2/day<br>25-35" protected slot<br>2/day or 5/day  | 32" minimum length limit<br><br>1/day   | 40" minimum length limit<br><br>1/day   |
| Muskellunge                    | No minimum length limit  | 40" minimum length limit  | 50" minimum length limit  |   |
| Catfish                        | No minimum length limit<br>25/day  | No minimum length limit<br>10/day   | --  | --  |
| Panfish                        | No minimum length limit<br>25/day  | No minimum length limit<br>25/day   | No minimum length limit<br>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.](#)