

## **Report From Agency**

### REPORT TO LEGISLATURE

NR 20, Wis. Adm. Code

Board Order No. FH-30-20  
Clearinghouse Rule No. CR 21-064

#### Basis and Purpose of the Proposed Rule

This rule provides good harvest opportunities for lake trout that will benefit recreational anglers while helping to keep lake trout and salmon populations in balance with the alewife prey base. While recreational lake trout harvest remains below safe harvest limits, a continuous season and daily bag limit of five allows anglers to keep more lake trout when they encounter areas with high densities of lake trout, or when salmon fishing is slow.

#### Summary of Public Comments

**Sport fishers requested to take a daily bag limit of five lake trout since reductions in stocking of salmon and rainbow trout were proposed. However, lake trout are not overabundant and have not yet reached federal population goals.**

A comprehensive stakeholder engagement effort occurred prior to the initial implementation of the 5-fish daily bag limit for trout, which demonstrated angler desire for lake trout harvest opportunity. Data showed that limited angler harvest was unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the ongoing lake trout rehabilitation effort. However, because lake trout still had not reached rehabilitation goals when the daily bag limit of 5 was first proposed, the Natural Resources Board directed the department to closely monitor harvest levels and make changes to the bag limit if lake trout harvest reached 75% or 90% of the safe harvest limit. While lake trout harvest has not reached those thresholds, the department continues to work with other agencies to ensure that progress toward achieving the population assessment metrics continues.

**There's concern that the system cannot sustain a commercial and sport fishery for lake trout. We do not have a commercial lake trout fishery because of various issues decades ago. The public should be informed of any discussions on a lake trout commercial fishery.**

The Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board has expressed interest in discussing the possibility of a commercial lake trout fishery. However, the department has not initiated a process to establish a commercial lake trout fishery. The multidisciplinary team working on assessing the lake trout population in Lake Michigan is conducting additional data analysis on the status of the population, and this process is not yet complete. Any future conversations on this topic would be fully accessible to the public.

#### Modifications Made

No changes were made to the rule.

#### Appearances at the Public Hearing

Bob Wincek, Wisconsin Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishing Clubs  
Jerry Fetterer, Angling Adventures LLC  
Bill Smith

#### Changes to Rule Analysis and Fiscal Estimate

No changes were made to the rule analysis or fiscal estimate.

#### Response to Legislative Council Rules Clearinghouse Report

The Legislative Council Rules Clearinghouse did not submit recommendations for changes to this rule.

#### Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Because of the higher bag limit and longer season, the rule is expected to have a positive economic impact on recreational angling businesses, including fishing guides and charter fishing businesses.

The rule is necessary in order to ensure a sustainable lake trout fishery over the long-term that provides an economic and natural resource benefit for all affected. The rule does not impose any compliance or reporting requirements nor would any design or operational standards be contained in the rule.

#### Response to Small Business Regulatory Review Board Report

The Small Business Regulatory Review Board did not prepare a report on this rule proposal.