

## Review of Angling Regulations on MN/WI Border Waters

At our annual border waters meeting on September 30, 2011 - I agreed to take the lead in pulling a group together to review existing season, length, and bag limits on the MN/WI border waters. As stated at the meeting, MN DNR has several reasons to initiate this discussion:

1. Our experimental regulation (sunfish – daily limit of 10) on Pools 5, 5A, and 8 will sunset on March 1, 2015. At, or before, this end date we would like to have a standardized regulation for the entire MN side of the MN/WI reach of the Mississippi. At this time there seems to be strong angler support for maintaining the 10 fish limit, so going back to 25 may not be well accepted by our public. Ideally, something less than 25 and more than 10 would allow us to have a uniform regulation on this reach of the river.
2. Angling regulations on the MN/WI border have not had a broad review for a long time (20+ years?). During that time our MN inland water regulations have been changed significantly and are generally more conservative than those on the border waters. In general terms, our inland regulations have moved toward lower daily bag limits and more protection of large fish (i.e. 1-over regulations for walleye and northern pike vs. minimum size limits).
3. With the threat of Asian carp growing, we think it is time to be more proactive in how we manage our sport and commercial species. We are not suggesting that current levels of harvest are unsustainable given relatively stable habitat and fishing effort. However, we know that Asian carp could have a devastating impact on native species and we do think more conservative/proactive approaches to harvest are worth considering. In recent discussions about Asian carp, we have consistently stated that maintaining quality habitat and robust native fish populations are critical in minimizing the potential effects that Asian carp may have in our waters. Allowing unlimited commercial harvest of some native species and very “liberal” angling regulations for predator species may be counter to our overall efforts against Asian carp.
4. As a result of our discussions at the border waters meeting, there seemed to be consensus that we should take a look at opening a C&R only season for lake sturgeon on the Mississippi River.

To get the discussion started, I have compiled existing regulations for the various river reaches of the Minnesota/Wisconsin border waters of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers (see attached tables). I highlighted discrepancies within a river segment with red fill. I did not try to highlight all of the differences between river segments. For the most part, we are pretty consistent on angling regulations within river segments. I also highlighted a few items in red text that illustrate some fundamental differences in approach between the two states. This is not to suggest one is better than another, but rather to identify areas where anglers from the respective states may be engrained.

On the next few pages, I have drafted some questions that are intended to stimulate discussion and identify potential starting points for our workgroup. I tried to present these as open ended as possible, so please use the comment fields to expand on any thoughts you might have. I'm sure there are many other questions that could be included, so please feel free to send those out to the group. Also, please forward to others from your agency that should be included in this discussion.

### Discussion Questions

Where appropriate, reply on a scale of 1 (least important/low) to 5 (most important/high)

Questions 1-4 attempt to assess how you view the importance of standardizing regulations across **ALL** border water reaches of the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers.

**Question 1** – How important is it to your office and/or agency to have **identical bag limits** for all MN/WI border water segments?

Importance (1-5) =

Comments:

**Question 2** – How important is it to your office and/or agency to have **identical seasons** for all MN/WI border water segments?

Importance (1-5) =

Comments:

**Question 3** – How important is it to your office and/or agency to have **identical length limits** for all MN/WI border water segments?

Importance (1-5) =

Comments:

**Question 4** – How important is it to your office and/or agency to have regulations that are **consistent with inland/statewide regulations** of your state?

Importance (1-5) =

Comments:

Questions 5 – 8 attempt to identify species specific regulations that may be considered for changes. Please specify in comments if you are referring to a particular reach (i.e. Upper St. Croix, Lower St. Croix, or Mississippi river) or if you are referring to the entire MN/WI border of the two rivers.

<b>Question 5 – Of the species listed in the attached tables, which do you think should have <u>bag limits</u> adjusted?</b>	
<b>Comments by species</b>	
Species =	
Higher or Lower?	
Species =	
Higher or Lower?	
Species =	
Higher or Lower?	
Species =	
Higher or Lower?	
Species =	
Higher or Lower?	
General Comments:	

<b>Question 6 – Of the species listed in the attached tables, which do you think should have <u>length limits</u> adjusted?</b>	
<b>Comments by species</b>	
Species =	
Drop, add or modify?	
Species =	
Drop, add or modify?	
Species =	
Drop, add or modify?	
Species =	
Drop, add or modify?	
Species =	
Drop, add or modify?	
General Comments:	

**Question 7** – Of the species listed in the attached tables, which do you think should have the season adjusted?

		Comments by species
Species =		
Drop, add or modify?		
Species =		
Drop, add or modify?		
Species =		
Drop, add or modify?		
Species =		
Drop, add or modify?		
Species =		
Drop, add or modify?		
General Comments:		

**Question 8** – Of the species listed in the attached tables, which do you most commonly hear about from anglers that think regulations should be adjusted?

		Comments by species
Species =		
Bag, season, or length?		
Species =		
Bag, season, or length?		
Species =		
Bag, season, or length?		
Species =		
Bag, season, or length?		
Species =		
Bag, season, or length?		
General Comments:		

Summary of Regulations by State and river reach. All dates listed are from the 2011-12 regulations booklets from each state.

Northern pike				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	May 14 – Feb 26	3	Only 1 > 30"	
WI Inland	May 7 – Mar 4 (north & south zones)	5 (north) 2 (south)	None (north) 26" min (south)	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Apr 30 – Mar 1	5	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Apr 30 – Mar 1	5	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Apr 30 – Mar 1	5	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Apr 30 – Mar 1	5	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	5	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	5	none	

Channel and Flathead catfish				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	Continuous	5 combined – only 2 FCF	Only 1 > 24"	
WI Inland	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	10 combined	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	25 combined	none	

Walleye and Sauger				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	May 14 – Feb 26	6	Only 1 > 20"	
WI Inland	May 7 – Mar 4	5	15" min	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Apr 30 – Mar 1	6	15" min (WAE)	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Apr 30 – Mar 1	6	15" min (WAE)	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Apr 30 – Mar 1	6	15" min (WAE)	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Apr 30 – Mar 1	6	15" min (WAE)	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	6	15" min (WAE)	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	6	15" min (WAE)	

Largemouth and Smallmouth bass				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	May 28 – Feb 26 Sep 12 – Feb 26	6 combined C&R only - SMB	none	
WI Inland	May 7 – Jun 17 (north) Jun 18 – Mar 4 (north) May 7 – Mar 4 (other)	0 5 combined 5 combined	C&R only 14" min 14" min	
Lower St. Croix – MN	May 28 – Mar 1	5 combined	14" min	
Lower St. Croix – WI	May 28 – Mar 1	5 combined	14" min	
Upper St. Croix – MN	May 28 – Sep 11 Sep 12 – Mar 1	5 combined 0	14" min C&R only	
Upper St. Croix – WI	May 28 – Sep 11 Sep 12 – Mar 1	5 combined 0	14" min C&R only	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	5 combined	14" min	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	5 combined	14" min	

Shovelnose sturgeon				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	
MN Inland	Closed	--	--	
WI Inland	Closed*	--	--	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Closed	--	--	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Closed	--	--	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Closed	--	--	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Closed	--	--	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	10	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	10	none	

\*except Wisconsin River below Prairie du Sac Dam – open all year, daily limit of 3, no size limit.

Lake sturgeon				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	
MN Inland	Closed	--	--	
WI Inland	Closed except for designated waters	1 per season in waters open to harvest	60" min	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Sep 4 – Sep 30 Oct 1 – Oct 15	1 per season 0	60" min C&R only	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Sep 1 – Sep 30 Oct 1 – Oct 15	1 per season 0	60" min C&R only	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Closed	--	--	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Closed	--	--	
Miss. River – MN	Closed	--	--	
Miss River - WI	Closed	--	--	

\*differences due to printing errors in both states for 2011-12 regulations booklets. Should have been Sep 3 to Sep 30 for harvest season.

Bluegill (sunfish)				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	Continuous	20	none	
WI Inland	Continuous	25 combined*	none	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	10 - Pools 5, 5A, & 8 25 – Pools 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	25	none	

\*includes bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, crappie and yellow perch

Yellow perch				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	Continuous	20	none	
WI Inland	Continuous	25 combined*	none	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	25	none	

\*includes bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, crappie and yellow perch



Crappie				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	Continuous	10	none	
WI Inland	Continuous	25 combined*	none	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	25	none	

\*includes bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, crappie and yellow perch

White bass				
	Season	Daily Limit	Length Limit	Suggested changes
MN Inland	Continuous	30	none	
WI Inland	Continuous	Unlimited	none	
Lower St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Lower St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Upper St. Croix – WI	Continuous	25	none	
Miss. River – MN	Continuous	25	none	
Miss River - WI	Continuous	25	none	