

## **2014-2 BARBLESS HOOKS**

Background:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) just completed a review of trout fishing regulations in southeast Minnesota in general. Among recommended changes is the removal that barbless hooks be used while fishing special seasons and certain river reaches. The rationale for removing the barbless hook requirement arises from two stated reasons. 1. Regulations are often complex, and, where possible should be simplified. 2. Studies do not conclusively prove that the use of barbless hooks reduces trout mortality.

Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America (MN IWLA) agrees that there are no conclusive studies we know of that cite reduced mortality resulting from barbless hooks while fishing for trout. However MN IWLA believes that fishing sport fishing should encourage the use of barbless hooks in general. MN IWLA observes the following:

1. Fisheries managers increasingly use catch and release regulations as a necessary tool in maintaining healthy fish populations. (slot limits are also included in catch and release)
2. We are moving toward re-cycling port fishing populations in general.
3. Fish are easier to release, and, with less injury to both fisher, and fish than with barbed hooks. There is significant evidence among fish populations of fish with damaged mouth parts due to being caught multiple times and released. While there may currently be no conclusive studies with regard to direct mortality, the condition of returned fish is an outdoor ethics issue. The reduction of injuries to the fishing public is also a desirable outcome.
4. Fishing with barbless hooks has become increasingly popular. Success rates (per cent of fish landed) are not markedly different than when fishing with barbed hooks over time. Manitoba, Canada regulations require the use of barbless hooks though-out the entire province. Anglers report that they support the barbless regulation. Those who fish with bait can buy hooks manufactured with bait holder built into the hook design.

MINNESOTA DIVISION IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA RESOLVES:

1. MN DNR revise Minnesota stream trout regulations to require use of barbless hooks in all cases
2. MN DNR is urged to review the option used in Manitoba (Manitoba Model) that requires the use of a single barbless hook for all sport fishing

*Submitted by W. J. McCabe Chapter*