STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: August 10, 2012

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215)
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Authority

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director to provide for better protection and preservation of fish, game and birds.

Discussion and Background

This Order administers statewide regulations for our coolwater sport fishes. There are several substantial changes being recommended to this Order including:

1) Adding a new muskellunge (including tiger muskellunge) statewide possession limit change from one fish per day to one fish per season;
2) Adding a provision requiring anglers who harvest muskellunge to get a muskellunge harvest tag;
3) Adding a provision to limit harvest on waters with no minimum size limit on northern pike to no more than one greater than 24 inches in the daily possession limit;
4) The addition of twelve waters and removal of two to the list of waters where northern pike may be taken at any size; and
5) Consolidation of Fisheries Orders: FO-214 Waters Where Northern Pike May be Taken at Any Size, FO-237 Special Sport Fishing Size Limits on Yellow Perch in Lake Huron Waters of Mackinac County and the St. Marys River and Lake Huron Waters of Chippewa County, and FO-239 Huron River No-Kill Bass Regulation, into this Order.

Over the past year, Fisheries Division has been working with the Warmwater Resources Steering Committee (WRSC), a public advisory group, to discuss various regulations and to specifically review muskellunge and northern pike regulation proposals. As a result, several regulation options were developed for muskellunge and northern pike. From March 26 through May 25, 2012, the public was given an opportunity to comment on the regulations developed and proposed by the WRSC and a muskellunge possession limit of one fish per angler per year was the most supported option. Anglers were also supportive of adding a provision to restrict harvest of northern pike to only one fish greater than 24 inches on the no minimum size limit waters. These regulations will serve to protect and enhance future muskellunge and northern pike populations for the anglers.

If this Order is approved, a Muskellunge Harvest Tag will be available for the next fishing season to enforce the new possession limit. All anglers who would like to harvest a muskellunge will need to attain a nontransferable Muskellunge Harvest Tag (at no cost) available at all license vendors. Anglers who do not possess the tag are required to release all muskellunge that they catch. The new Muskellunge Harvest Tag will allow the department to keep track of how many tags are provided to anglers and help us monitor the level of potential harvest that occurs annually. The new information will benefit future muskellunge management.

Several waters have been proposed to be added to the list of waters where northern pike may be taken at any size, plus two waters are being removed from the list and added to the new 24 to 34-inch protected slot limit list in Fisheries Order 206.

Additions:
Nawakwa Lake, Alger County
Trout (Carp) Lake, Chippewa County
Eight Point Lake, Clare County
Lyman Lake, Delta County
Millecoquins Lake, Mackinac County
South Manistique Lake, Mackinac County
Bass (East) Lake, Marquette County
Shag (Big) Lake, Marquette County
Pug Lakes, Montmorency County
Diamond Lake, Osceola County
Ocqueoc Lake, Presque Isle County
Tomahawk Flooding, Presque Isle County

Removals:
Pine Creek Flooding, Allegan County
Bass Lake, Kent County

We are also recommending that the following Fisheries Orders be consolidated into this Order: FO-214 Waters Where Northern Pike May be Taken at Any Size, FO-237 Special Sport Fishing Size Limits on Yellow Perch in Lake Huron Waters of Mackinac County and the St. Marys River and Lake Huron Waters of Chippewa County, and FO-239 Huron River No-Kill Bass Regulation. All of these Orders administer regulations for coolwater species. The Department will save administrative time and regulations for these species will be more concise if these four Orders are consolidated into one.

Law enforcement personnel have been involved in the process and are supportive of these recommendations. We are now implementing the changes statewide and this Order is part of a suite of Orders which governs muskellunge and northern pike regulations.

Recommendation

It is our recommendation that the changes proposed to Fisheries Order 215 as indicated above be approved to take effect on April 1, 2013. The changes will enhance future muskellunge fishing opportunities through protection from harvest and may enhance muskellunge size structure in some waters which would allow anglers with a means to harvest one fish by using the muskellunge harvest tag. Anglers will also benefit from the addition of lakes to the list of waters where northern pike may be taken at any size by being able to harvest smaller northern pike in waters with large northern pike populations and stunted growth.

This Order is being submitted for information at the September 2012 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission. This Order will be resubmitted for action at the October 2012 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission. This item appeared on the Department's September 2012 calendar, and is eligible for approval on October 11, 2012.

James L. Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

Scott Heather for
Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

ORDER

STATEWIDE COOLWATER REGULATIONS FOR LARGEMOUTH BASS, SMALLMOUTH BASS, NORTHERN PIKE, WALLEYE, MUSKELLUNGE, CHANNEL CATFISH, FLATHEAD CATFISH, YELLOW PERCH, SUNFISHES, AND WHITE BASS

Under the authority of sections 41101 through 41105, **48719** and 48721 of 1994 PA 451, ~~as amended, being~~ MCL 324.41101 through 324.41105, **324.48719** and 324.48721, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources on October 11, 2012, ordered that for a period not to exceed five years, the statewide seasons, size limits, and daily possession limits on all state waters shall be as listed below, except as otherwise ordered:

A. STATEWIDE SEASONS

A person shall not take, catch, or kill or attempt to take, catch or kill any of the species of fish named in this Order except during the possession seasons that are specified below for each species of fish named in this Order.

1. Largemouth bass and smallmouth bass
   a. Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, Detroit River
      i) The possession season shall be the third Saturday in June though December 31.
      ii) Catch-and-immediate-release fishing shall be permitted from the last Saturday in April to the Friday before the third Saturday in June. All bass caught during this period shall be immediately returned to the water.
   b. Lake Michigan within one-half mile of the following islands of the Beaver Island Archipelago – Beaver, Garden, High, and Hog, all in Charlevoix County
      i) The possession season shall be July 1 through December 31.
      ii) Catch-and-immediate-release fishing shall be prohibited on these waters prior to the possession season.
   c. All other waters not otherwise closed to fishing
      i) The possession season shall be the Saturday before Memorial Day through December 31.
      ii) Catch-and-immediate-release fishing shall be permitted from the last Saturday in April to the Friday before Memorial Day on all waters in the Lower Peninsula, including waters of the Great Lakes in the Lower Peninsula. Bass caught during this period shall be immediately returned to the water.
      iii) Catch-and-immediate-release fishing shall be permitted from May 15 to the Friday before Memorial Day on all waters in the Upper Peninsula, including waters of the Great Lakes in the Upper Peninsula. Bass caught during this period shall be immediately returned to the water.

2. Walleye, northern pike, and muskellunge
   a. Michigan's waters of Green Bay from the mouth of the Menominee River northward to the latitudinal line (45 degrees 15 minutes) located approximately 3 miles south of Rochereau Point
      i) The possession season for walleye shall be open for the entire year.
      ii) The possession season for northern pike and muskellunge shall be May 15 through March 15.
   b. All other inland, Great Lakes, and connecting waters of the Upper Peninsula not otherwise closed to fishing
      i) The possession season shall be from May 15 through March 15.
   c. Inland waters of the Lower Peninsula not otherwise closed to fishing
      i) The possession season shall be from the last Saturday in April through March 15.
   d. Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, and Detroit River
      i) The possession season for muskellunge shall be the first Saturday in June through December 15.
      ii) The possession season for walleye and northern pike shall be open for the entire year.
   e. All other Great Lakes and connecting waters of the Lower Peninsula not otherwise closed to fishing
      i) The possession season shall be open for the entire year.
3. Flathead catfish, channel catfish, yellow perch, sunfishes, and white bass
   a. All waters not otherwise closed to fishing
      i) The possession season shall be open for the entire year.

B. STATEWIDE SIZE LIMITS AND ~~DAILY~~ POSSESSION LIMITS

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT	~~DAILY~~ POSSESSION LIMIT
Largemouth bass Smallmouth bass **(See Note 1)**	14 inches	Five (5) **per day** in any combination, except no more than two (2) northern pike **per day**
Walleye **(See Note ~~1~~2)**	15 inches, except 13 inches on Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River	
Northern pike **(See Note 3)**	24 inches	
Flathead catfish	15 inches	
Muskellunge **(including tiger muskellunge) (See Note 4)**	42 inches	One (1) **fish per angling season**
Channel catfish	12 inches	Ten (10) **per day**
Yellow perch **(See Note 5)**	No size limit	Fifty (50) **per day**

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT	~~DAILY~~ POSSESSION LIMIT
Sunfishes: Black Crappie Bluegill Green Hybrid Longear Pumpkinseed Redear Rock Bass Warmouth White Crappie	No size limit	Twenty-five (25) **per day** in any combination
White bass	No size limit	Twenty-five (25) **per day** on Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair, St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River; Ten (10) **per day** on inland waters

Note 1: It shall be unlawful to possess any largemouth or smallmouth bass and any that are caught must be released immediately, in the area of the Huron River, Washtenaw County, starting at the Mast Road Bridge in the Village of Dexter (T1S, R5E, S32) downstream to the Delhi Road Bridge (T2S, R5E, S2).

Note ~~2~~1: The following waters have daily possession limits for walleye that differ from the statewide daily possession limit:

1. St. Clair River beginning at the Ft. Gratiot Light and Lake St. Clair:
   a. The daily possession limit may include one (1) additional walleye.
2. Little Bay de Noc:
   a. The daily possession limit shall not include more than one (1) walleye 23" or greater from Little Bay de Noc north of a line drawn from Peninsula Point Lighthouse to the mouth of the Ford River in Delta County.
3 Michigan's waters of Green Bay (from the mouth of the Menominee River northward to the latitudinal line (45 degrees 15 minutes) located approximately 3 miles south of Rochereau Point:
   a. March 2 through the Friday before the first Saturday in May the daily possession limit shall be one (1) walleye; and
   b. The first Saturday in May through March 1 the daily possession limit shall be five (5) walleyes.
4 Lake Erie:
   a. April 1 through April 30, 2011 the daily possession limit shall be five (5) walleyes.
   b. Beginning May 1, 2011, the daily possession limit for walleye will be based on Michigan's share of the annual total allowable catch (TAC) for walleye pursuant to the

categories in the table below. The TAC is reported in March of each year by the Lake Erie Committee, which is under the aegis of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

i) The daily possession limit for walleye will take effect on May 1 of each year and will be in place through April 30 of the following year.

ii) Prior to May 1 each year, a notice of the daily possession limit will be posted on the DNR's website (www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing), noted in a statewide news release, and noted in printed material that will be made available to the public via various outlets.

If Michigan's share of the annual TAC is	Then the daily possession limit for walleye shall be
greater than 108,364	six (6)
96,958 to 108,364	five (5)
85,551 to 96,957	four (4)
74,144 to 85,550	three (3)
62,737 to– 74,143	two (2)
less than 62,737	one (1)

Note 3: The following named waters shall have no size limit on northern pike and up to five northern pike may be retained **with only one (1) greater than 24 inches** in combination with other species as listed above:

ALCONA COUNTY
Badger Lake, (T28N, R3E, S35)

ALGER COUNTY
16 Mile Lake
Nawakwa Lake
Trout Lake

~~**ALLEGAN COUNTY**~~
~~Pine Creek Flooding~~

BARAGA COUNTY
Vermillac (Worm) Lake

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY
Deer Lake
Fox Lake
Geneserath Lake
Six Mile Lake

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY
Black River upstream of Tower Dam (includes Tower Pond) and tributary streams only
Silver Lake (T33N, R3W, S11, 12)
Wildwood Lake (T33N, R2W, S21)

CHIPPEWA COUNTY
Frenchman Lake (T44N, R6W, S23, 25, 26)
Trout (Carp) Lake

CLARE COUNTY
Eight Point Lake
Lake Thirteen

CRAWFORD COUNTY
Big Creek Impoundment (T28N, R1W, S24, 25)
River Lake (T28N, R2W, S30)
Pickerel Lake (Crawford and Oscoda Counties, (T24N, R1W, S24 and T28N, R1E, S19)

DELTA COUNTY
Chicago Lake
Carr Lake
Hamilton Lakes
Lyman Lake
Escanaba River upstream from first dam at US-2.

DICKINSON COUNTY
Sawyer Lake

EMMET COUNTY
French Farm Lake Flooding
O'Neal Lake Flooding

GLADWIN COUNTY
Lake Lancer

GOGEBIC COUNTY
Cisco Lake
Thousand Island Lake
Lindsley Lake
Poor Lake
Big African Lake
Little African Lake
Clearwater Lake
East Bay Lake
Fishhawk Lake
Indian Lake
Morley Lake
Record Lake
Chaney Lake

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY
Boardman Lake
Brown Bridge Pond
Lake Dubonnet

HOUGHTON COUNTY
Rice Lake

IRON COUNTY
Bone Lake
Buck Lake
Deer River
Hemlock Falls Reservoir
Indian Lake
Lake St. Kathryn
Michigamme Falls Reservoir
Michigamme Reservoir
Net River
Net River Wide Waters
Peavy Reservoir
Runkle Lake
Winslow Lake

~~**KENT COUNTY**~~
~~Bass Lake (T10N, R9W, S12,13,14)~~

KEWEENAW COUNTY
Schlatter Lake

LEELANAU COUNTY
Florence Lake

LUCE COUNTY
East Lake
Muskallonge Lake

MACKINAC COUNTY
East Lake
Millecoquins Lake
South Manistique Lake

MANISTEE COUNTY
Bar Lake

MARQUETTE COUNTY
Bass (East) Lake
Cedar Lake (T47N, R27W, S11)
Dead River Storage Basin
Engman Lake
Middle Branch Escanaba River
Big West Branch Escanaba River
Escanaba River Mainstream downstream to Boney Falls Basin (except Greenwood, Schweitzer and Cataract Reservoirs)
Shag (Big) Lake
Witch Lake

MASON COUNTY
Hackert Lake (Crystal Lake) (T18N, R17W, S2, 3)

MECOSTA COUNTY
Haymarsh Lake

MENOMINEE COUNTY
Westman Impoundment (incl. North and Hayward Lakes)

MISSAUKEE COUNTY
Missaukee Lake

MONTMORENCY COUNTY
Black River and tributary streams only
East Town Corner Lake
Pug Lakes (T31N, R2E, S4, 5)
West Town Corner Lake

MUSKEGON COUNTY
Big Blue Lake (T12N, R16W, S2, 3, 4)

OCEANA COUNTY
Round (Wykoff) Lake
Silver Lake

OGEMAW COUNTY
Lake Ogemaw

OSCEOLA COUNTY
Diamond Lake
Lake Miramichi
Rose Lake
Wells Lake

OSCODA COUNTY
Pickerel Lake (Crawford and Oscoda Counties (T24N, R1W, S24 and T28N, R1E, S19)

PRESQUE ISLE COUNTY
The Ocqueoc River and tributary streams. ~~upstream of, but not including, Ocqueoc Lake~~
All lakes of the Ocqueoc River ~~Watershed~~ **watershed** ~~lakes~~ **including** ~~(~~Ann, Bullhead, Ella, Emma, Ferdelman, Gorman, Horseshoe, Lost, Louise, Lower and Upper Barnhart, May, McIntosh, Moore, Mud, Nettie**, and Ocqueoc**~~)~~.
The Black River and tributary streams ~~only (not including Tomahawk Flooding)~~.
The following lakes of the Black River watershed: Francis Lake, **Tomahawk Flooding, East Town Corner Lake, and West Town Corner Lake.**

ROSCOMMON COUNTY
Backus Creek
Mud Lake and Little Mud Lake Waterfowl Floodings
Lake St. Helen

SCHOOLCRAFT COUNTY
Boot Lake
Crooked Lake
Kennedy Lake
Seney Wildlife Refuge Ponds
Stanley lake
Thunder Lake

Note 4: A nontransferable Muskellunge Harvest Tag must be obtained prior to harvesting any muskellunge. The tag has no cost and is available at all license vendors. A harvested muskellunge shall be immediately tagged with a validated Muskellunge Harvest Tag. Muskellunge harvest is limited to one (1) muskellunge per angler per year (April 1 – March 31).

Note 5: Yellow perch caught from Lake Huron waters of Mackinac County and the St. Mary's River and Lake Huron waters of Chippewa County shall be not less than 7 inches.

This Order shall be assigned number FO-215.13, and is entitled "Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass."

This Order rescinds the Order entitled "Waters Where Northern Pike May be Taken at any Size," effective April 1, 2010, and assigned number FO-214.10.

This Order rescinds the Order entitled "Special Sport Fishing Size Limits on Yellow Perch in Lake Huron Waters of Mackinac County and the St. Mary's River and Lake Huron Waters of Chippewa County" effective April 1, 2009, and assigned number FO-237.09.

This Order rescinds the Order entitled "Huron River No-Kill Bass Regulation," effective April 1, 2009, and assigned number FO-239.09.

This Order supersedes the Order entitled "Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass," which became effective April 1, 2012, and is assigned number FO-215.12.

This Order shall take effect on April 1, 2013. This Order shall remain in effect until March 31, 2018, or until this Order is amended/rescinded, whichever comes first. Although this Order may be reviewed and amended on an annual basis, a review of this Order shall occur no later than August 1, 2017.

Issued on the _____ day of _____, 2012.

Keith Creagh, Director

The Natural Resources Commission has reviewed this Order.

Timothy L. Nichols
Chairperson

Deb Whipple
Executive Secretary