STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: July 15, 2013
RESUBMITTED: August 12, 2013

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Fisheries Order 215.14
Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, provides the Natural Resources Commission the exclusive authority to regulate the taking of fish in this state.

Discussion and Background:

Fisheries Order 215 establishes regulations for coolwater sport fishes including statewide and special regulations. The Department proposes to add 15 waters to the list where northern pike may be harvested at any size with a daily possession limit of five fish with only one pike allowed greater than 24 inches, remove three waters from the northern pike no minimum size limit regulation category, and make one minor editorial change to this Order.

Fifteen waters are proposed to be added to the waters where northern pike may be harvested at any size except only one greater than 24 inches is allowed within the daily possession limit of five fish. Waters proposed for this regulation have high northern pike densities and below-average growth. It should be noted that several of the newly proposed waters in Antrim County are part of a chain of lakes (each listed separately) and another water body (Ryerson Lake, Newaygo County) have no public access site except through an outlet or inlet to the lake.

Additions:
Chief Lake, Manistee County
Cut River, Roscommon County
Diamond Lake, Newaygo County
Horsehead Lake, Mecosta County
Houghton Lake, Roscommon County
Nichols Lake, Newaygo County
Ryerson (Long) Lake, Newaygo County
Beals Lake, Antrim County
Benway Lake, Antrim County
Ellsworth Lake, Antrim County
Hanley Lake, Antrim County
Scotts Lake, Antrim County
St. Clair Lake, Antrim and Charlevoix Counties
Wilson Lake, Antrim County
Crystal Lake, Montcalm County

Three waters are proposed to be removed from the northern pike no minimum size limit category and moved into the northern pike 24 – 34-inch protected slot limit regulation administered by Fisheries Order 206.

Removals:
Michigamme Reservoir, Iron County
Peavy Pond, Iron County
Schlatter Lake, Keweenaw County

We have one proposed clarification to the Order. There is confusion regarding the entry for Backus Creek, Mud Lake and Little Mud Lake waterfowl floodings in Roscommon County. The Department proposes to clarify these names to "Backus Creek from the stream mouth upstream, including all tributaries", "Little Mud Lake Flooding", "Backus Creek Flooding", and "Backus Lake Flooding". This change will help improve clarity for anglers and law enforcement personnel.

The proposed modifications to this Order have been vetted through various public forums as part of Fisheries Division's annual regulation process. Twelve public meetings were conducted across the state this spring to discuss this year's regulation proposals. At the conclusion of the public meetings, the majority of stakeholders were either neutral or in support of these proposals. Additionally, Fisheries Division staff coordinated with local Law Enforcement staff for their input on these proposals and reported that law enforcement staff was in support of these changes. Several of the above waters are within National Forest boundaries and U.S. Forest Service staff has also been contacted about the proposed changes within this Order.

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on August 8, 2013, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appears on the Department's July 2013 calendar and may be eligible for approval on September 12, 2013.

James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
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William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

FISHERIES ORDER

STATEWIDE COOLWATER REGULATIONS FOR LARGEMOUTH BASS, SMALLMOUTH BASS, NORTHERN PIKE, WALLEYE, MUSKELLUNGE, CHANNEL CATFISH, FLATHEAD CATFISH, YELLOW PERCH, SUNFISHES, AND WHITE BASS
Order 215.14

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission by section 48703a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.48703a, it is ordered that effective April 1, 2014, the following section(s) of the Fisheries Order shall read as follows:

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 POSSESSION LIMITS

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT	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 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
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

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
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: 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/fishing), 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

ANTRIM COUNTY
Beals Lake
Benway Lake
Ellsworth Lake
Hanley Lake
Scotts Lake
Six Mile Lake (Antrim and Charlevoix Counties)
St. Clair Lake (Antrim and Charlevoix Counties)
Wilson Lake

BARAGA COUNTY
Vermillac (Worm) Lake

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY
Deer Lake
Fox Lake
Geneserath Lake
Six Mile Lake (Antrim and Charlevoix Counties)
St. Clair Lake (Antrim and Charlevoix Counties)

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
Net River
Net River Wide Waters
Runkle Lake
Winslow Lake

LEELANAU COUNTY
Florence Lake

LUCE COUNTY
East Lake
Muskallonge Lake

MACKINAC COUNTY
East Lake
Millecoquins Lake
South Manistique Lake

MANISTEE COUNTY
Bar Lake
Chief 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 (Crystal) Lake (T18N, R17W, S2, 3)
Horsehead Lake

MECOSTA COUNTY
Haymarsh Lake

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

MISSAUKEE COUNTY
Missaukee Lake

MONTCALM COUNTY
Crystal 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)

NEWAYGO COUNTY
Diamond Lake
Nichols Lake
Ryerson (Long) Lake

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
All lakes of the Ocqueoc River watershed 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
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 from the stream mouth upstream, including all tributaries, Little Mud Lake Flooding, Backus Creek Flooding, and Backus Lake Flooding
Cut River from the river mouth at Houghton Lake upstream to CO 100 just downstream of Higgins Lake.
Houghton Lake
Lake St. Helen

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

Note 4: A non-transferable 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-215.14, 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 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, 2013, and is assigned number FO-215.13.

This Order shall take effect on April 1, 2014, and shall remain in effect until amended/rescinded.

Issued on this 12th day of September, 2013.

J. R. Richardson, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission