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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: August 17, 2015  
RESUBMITTED: September 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

**Subject:** Fisheries Order 215.15A  
Statewide Warmwater 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, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue Orders to regulate the taking of fish in the waters of this state.

Discussion and Background:

Fisheries Order 215 establishes the statewide warmwater species sport fishing regulations. There are several regulation changes proposed for this Order and include: requiring the registration of all bass tournaments, instituting a new Catch-and-Delayed-Release (CDR) bass fishing season on 12 waters for registered bass tournaments only, expanding Walleye fishing opportunities while reducing Yellow Perch possession in Saginaw Bay and River, restructuring the combined daily possession limit set on bass, Walleye, Northern Pike, and Flathead Catfish, increasing the protection of large Walleye in Little Bay de Noc, increasing the daily possession limit of Northern Pike in St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair and Detroit River, modification of Lake Erie Walleye information process, removal of duplicate regulation and consolidate FO-208 into this Order. The term warmwater is replacing the term coolwater throughout the Order including the title. The recommendation is to enact this Order for immediate effect.

Bass Tournament Registration

The Department has been working closely with bass angling groups who have recommended mandatory bass tournament registration. This will allow the Department to improve our understanding of tournament effort and provide additional biological information about bass fishing tournaments in Michigan. As a result, the Department recommends that all bass tournaments register online using the Department's Michigan Fishing Tournament Information System (<http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/fishingtournaments/>). Mandatory bass tournament registration will result in a broader opportunity for the Department to collect information to monitor bass tournament effects on bass populations. Once a tournament has been registered online, the Department is notified of the upcoming event including a contact person to follow up with. Registration will enable the Department to develop relationships with these important angling groups, which will benefit bass populations in Michigan.

Bass Season CDR Change

In the spring of 2015, a year-round Catch-and-Immediate-Release (CIR) bass fishing season was approved by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) after a thorough review in response to a written proposal received from Michigan Bass Nation requesting new bass fishing opportunities. An additional bass angling opportunity was later identified by the group during NRC discussions, Catch-and-Delayed-Release (CDR) bass fishing. Bass tournament anglers indicated that a CDR season would enable them to

Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 2

expand bass fishing opportunities further during the year-round CIR season. However, anglers participating in a CDR tournament would need to legally possess bass in their livewells during the closed possession season. Given that all bass would be released back into the waters upon completion of the tournament, the Department was open to learning more about this opportunity.

There is some biological uncertainty about what effects CDR may have on bass populations. As a result, the NRC requested a small group of lakes be chosen through collaborative efforts between bass organizations and the Department where CDR events could be monitored. A list of potential waters was chosen based upon their importance to the bass organization as well as whether or not there had been some type of historical survey information on bass. Several public meetings were held by Fisheries Division where staff met with anglers to provide information and receive feedback about this new CDR opportunity. Based upon angler input, the following Lower Peninsula waters were proposed as the list of waters where the CDR bass tournaments will be permitted (see map below):

- 1) Lake Charlevoix (Charlevoix County)
- 2) Burt Lake (Cheboygan County)
- 3) Mullet Lake (Cheboygan County)
- 4) Houghton Lake (Roscommon County)
- 5) Hardy Dam Pond (Mecosta and Newaygo Counties)
- 6) Muskegon Lake (Muskegon County)
- 7) Gull Lake (Barry and Kalamazoo Counties)
- 8) Gun Lake (Allegan and Barry Counties)
- 9) Portage Chain of Lakes (Livingston and Washtenaw Counties)
- 10) Kent Lake (Livingston and Oakland Counties)
- 11) Cass Lake (Oakland County)
- 12) Pontiac Lake (Oakland County)

The Department proposes the following regulations: CDR bass fishing tournaments will only be permitted on the listed waters above from the last Saturday in April – December 31. All bass fishing tournaments, including CDR bass fishing tournaments, must register online using the Michigan Fishing Tournament Information System prior to taking place (<http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/fishingtournaments/>). This regulation change will result in an expansion of bass fishing opportunities for tournament anglers to engage in CDR fishing for bass earlier in the year than currently allowed and it will provide the Department with more information related to bass fishing tournaments around the State.

#### Saginaw Bay and River Walleye and Yellow Perch

Yellow Perch are considered one of the most important and most sought-after species in Lake Huron, especially in Saginaw Bay, and angler hours on Lake Huron during the past 20 years has mirrored the decline in Yellow Perch abundance. In 2013, members of the Lake Huron Basin Team (LHBT) began drafting a report that captured the life history, long-term trends, and current status of Lake Huron's Yellow Perch populations. This report highlighted the major impacts of invasive species on Lake Huron's ecosystem and offered a framework for discussing management options in Saginaw Bay to address the declining Yellow Perch population.

Included in the report was a discussion of the relatively recent collapse of alewife populations in much of Lake Huron and the subsequent recovery of walleye in Saginaw Bay. It is estimated that the abundance of age-2 and older walleye in Saginaw Bay now exceeds 2.5 million fish. While the walleye population explosion is viewed by managers as a success story, one of the undesirable results is an imbalance in the predator/prey ratio in Saginaw Bay, with our most recent survey efforts showing the highest Walleye

Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 3

population *and* the lowest recorded forage base biomass in the past 25 years. As a result, Yellow Perch are now considered the primary forage of most predators in the system, including cormorants, Northern Pike, and especially Walleye. Yellow Perch are reproducing well, yet estimates are that greater than 99 percent of each year's production is not surviving past age 1.

In light of the current situation in Saginaw Bay, the report outlined several possible management actions to improve Yellow Perch) implementing cormorant control, 3) lowering the daily bag limit on Yellow Perch, 4) reducing commercial harvest and effort on Saginaw Bay Yellow Perch, and 5) reintroducing Lake Herring into Saginaw Bay. While it is understood these actions cannot reverse the impacts of invasive species on the Lake Huron ecosystem, it is anticipated that these management actions, collectively, may help to improve the predator/prey ratio in Saginaw Bay and thereby improve Yellow Perch survival.

#### *Process*

To begin the process of reviewing information contained in the Yellow Perch report and finalizing best management strategies, the LHBT discussed and refined potential options during the summer of 2014 before presenting them to the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee (LHCFAC) in October 2014. Significant discussions on this issue took place at the October meeting, as well as at the January 2015 and April 2015 meetings of the LHCFAC, with a final set of options (for WAE and YEP regulation changes) confirmed during the April meeting. Additionally, the topic was a major agenda item at 2 of 3 Sea Grant workshops hosted by Michigan Sea Grant. Also, Fisheries Division held a special public meeting in Bay City on June 4 to discuss the issue and explain the proposed management actions. Finally, a separate briefing paper was prepared and posted on the Fisheries Division's website to inform anglers about the proposals and direct them to a dedicated Email box, which was made available to the public from May 28-July 1.

#### *Results*

Public input on the proposal has been substantial. In addition to significant discussion during the LHCFAC meetings, turnout and participation at the Sea Grant workshops was equally impressive, with a two-hour block dedicated to this issue at the Oscoda and Bay City workshops. In preparing for the Sea Grant meetings, several questions were developed and presented to workshop attendees. These questions were specific to the Walleye and Yellow Perch issue and were meant to gauge public opinion on the proposed management options.

Attendance at the Oscoda workshop was 82, and there were 102 in attendance at the Bay City workshop. Attendance at the special meeting in Bay City was 41. Feedback from the workshops was overwhelmingly in support of the proposed management actions, with a majority of attendees supporting the 13" MSL and bag limit of 8 on Walleye, and a reduction in the Yellow Perch bag limit to 25.

In addition, 173 emails were received via the Email box as of July 10. Similar to the meetings, there was good support to liberalize Walleye regulations and further protect Yellow Perch.

#### *Recommendation*

The LHBT met on June 9 to review the results (to date) of the public meeting, the Sea Grant Workshops, the Email box, and LHCFAC input. At that meeting, a majority of Team members supported a 13" MSL and bag limit of 8 on Walleye, and a Yellow Perch bag limit of 25, yet there was not consensus on a given option for Walleye. After follow-up communications, the LHBT reached a consensus to adopt regulation changes that: 1) were in the best interest of an abundant and now density-dependent walleye population, 2) were significant enough to contribute to a reduction in the Walleye population, which in turn will contribute to reduced mortality on Yellow Perch, and 3) would leave some room to be more liberal with

Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 4

the Walleye bag limits in the future should the outcome and/or angler effort prove to be lower than expected. Therefore, the proposed recommendation for Walleye and Yellow Perch regulations are: A 13" MSL and a daily bag limit of 8 for Walleye, and a daily bag limit of 25 for Yellow Perch. These regulations will apply to the Great Lakes waters of MH-4 and in the Saginaw River upstream to Center Road Bridge. Seasons will remain unchanged.

*Process*

Significant discussion has taken place both within the LHBT and with the public regarding the importance of being vigilant with Walleye and Yellow Perch populations in Saginaw Bay, and being proactive as managers to ensure that both are trending in the right direction. Since this proposal represents a dramatic change from current regulations, with the goal to reduce Walleye density (albeit modest), further modifications to the Walleye regulations may be necessary in the near future. Note that while our model estimates that the Walleye population can withstand a 50% increase in harvest, the uncertainty with this regulation change is future angler behavior. Also, Saginaw Bay biodata from the previous year's monitoring is typically reviewed in February and March, missing the window to include a regulation change for printing in that season's fishing guide. Consequently, we need the ability to be more responsive than our current 2-year regulation cycle allows and are proposing a decision process for Saginaw Bay walleye regulations similar to what has been implemented for Lake Erie. Specifically, we are proposing that walleye regulations for MH-4 and the Saginaw River NOT be listed in the fishing guide for the 2016-2017 fishing seasons and beyond, and instead anglers will be directed to call a Hot Line number each spring for the latest information on Walleye regulations in MH-4.

While it is possible that these proposed regulations, if approved, may be in place for several years, it is equally possible that modification will be necessary in response to current conditions/abundance as data dictates. The metrics we will use to assess these proposed Walleye regulations are 1) Walleye growth rates--not to exceed 110% of state average and 2) a spawning stock biomass at or above the 20% unfished level. In the future, additional metrics will be added as we develop a more comprehensive set of criteria to guide recommendations on Walleye management in the Bay.

Combined Possession Limit

Since 1951, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, and Walleye have been managed as a combined daily possession limit of five fish. In 1993, Flathead Catfish were added to the combined possession limit category but the possession limit remained at five fish. Anglers requested that the Department consider separating these fish from the combined daily possession limit as a means to increase angler opportunities. Current regulations allow for the combined daily possession limit of up to five total fish including: up to five Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass, up to five Walleye, up to two Northern Pike, or up to five Flathead Catfish in any combination totaling five (5). Departmental review concluded that there was no biological benefit to retaining the combined possession limit and there was support from staff to modify the regulation. As a result, eliminating the combined possession limit is proposed. This proposal will allow anglers to possess up to five Smallmouth or Largemouth Bass, up to five Walleye, and up to five Flathead Catfish, separately. The general statewide Northern Pike possession limit will remain at two (2) per day. The proposed change will result in an increase to angler opportunities as they will be able to possess additional fish as part of their daily possession limit. However, the Department believes that this will result in only a modest increase in harvest given that most bass are released and Flathead Catfish fishing is very specific. In most cases, this will generally allow some anglers to harvest a few "other" species as incidental catch.

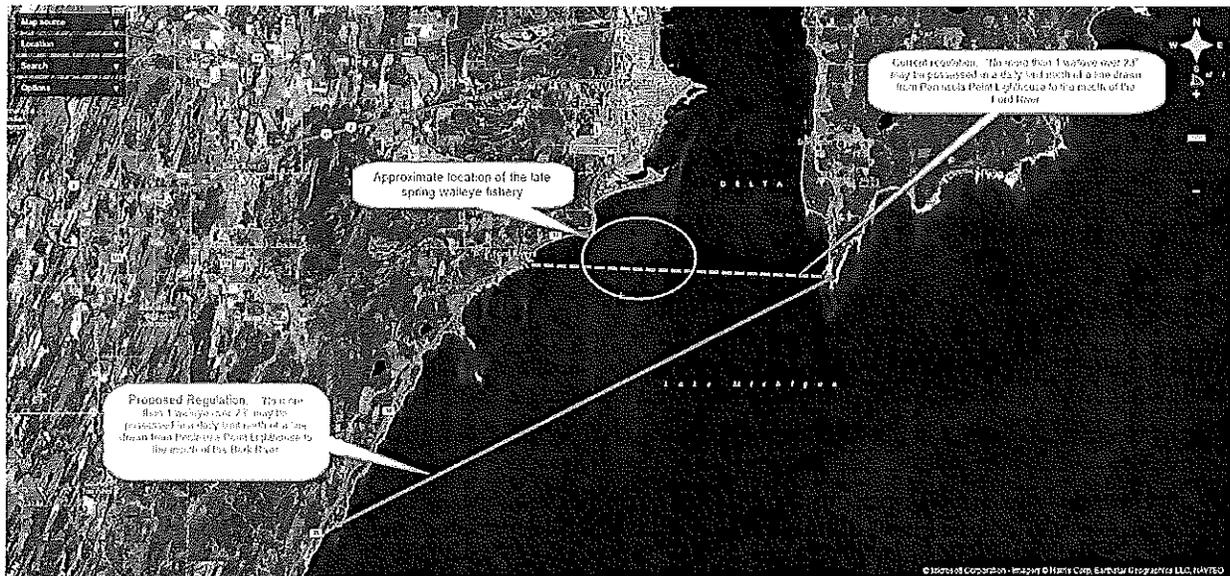
Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 5

Little Bay de Noc Walleye Possession Change

The Department proposes to expand the zone where only one (1) Walleye greater than 23 inches may be retained in the daily possession limit in Little Bay de Noc. The current regulation is found in Little Bay de Noc north of a line drawn from Peninsula Point Lighthouse to the mouth of the Ford River in Delta County (see image below). In recent years, ice anglers have discovered a large number of staging adult Walleye in the vicinity of the Ford River in southern Little Bay de Noc (northern Green Bay) during late February and the first two weeks of March. This area straddles the current one (1) over 23 inch boundary line for Little Bay de Noc. A local angling club brought forth concerns regarding the harvest of many large Walleye just south of the boundary line while a short distance north those same fish would fall under a more restrictive harvest regulation. Over the last two years, the creel clerk has noted that fish are easy to catch and that limits of large Walleye are common. Anglers may also have difficulty determining their location relative to the boundary line without a GPS, and the location of this fishery in relation to the boundary line also can cause difficulty for law enforcement officers to determine. The current one (1) over 23 inch Walleye regulation is a social regulation supported by many local anglers. Extending the zone south from the Ford River to the Bark River to protect a larger area will result in better enforcement and less confusion for anglers. This proposed regulation was supported by anglers at the August public meeting and local law enforcement staff.



St. Clair System Northern Pike Possession Limit Increase

Northern Pike fishing on the St. Clair system (Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and Detroit River) is important and the winter ice fishery has historically been a major component. Historically, the winter fishery consisted of private shanties, permanent rental shanties, and also generated a cottage industry for spearing decoys, spears, and shanties. Recently, concerns have been raised that Northern Pike spearing on these waters has been dramatically reduced due to the low daily possession limit of two fish (reduced statewide from 5 to 2 Northern Pike, daily in 2002). The common complaint has been that it is too much effort to cut a large hole and set up a shanty or too expensive to rent a shanty for the daily possession limit of two (2) Northern Pike.

Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 6

The goal of the statewide Northern Pike harvest reduction was to reduce fishing morality. This was especially important on smaller water bodies and waters that have lost Northern Pike spawning habitat due to lake level manipulations and loss of marsh areas. Although many inland waters have seen a reduction in Northern Pike habitat, habitat for this species on Lake St. Clair has improved over the past 40 years. Where the lake was once characterized as having low water clarity and sparse aquatic plants, conditions have shifted to clearer water and extensive areas of aquatic vegetation. This shift in habitat has had a negative impact on species such as Walleye, but has improved populations of fish that are sight predators, such as Smallmouth Bass, Muskellunge, and Northern Pike that do well with increased vegetation.

Annual spring trap net surveys in Anchor Bay of Lake St. Clair indicate an increasing trend in Northern Pike populations since the survey began in 2002. Data from this survey indicates a large component of the catch exceeds the minimum size limit of 24 inches and there has not been any change in size structure over time, indicating the 2 fish bag limit has not reduced exploitation. In addition, Northern Pike growth rates in Lake St. Clair are well above the statewide average, with age-1 to age-4 fish growing as much as 5 inches faster than the statewide average. Therefore, the Department proposes to increase the daily possession limit on Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and Detroit River to five (5) Northern Pike. This will result in expanding angling opportunities in an area with a large population.

Consolidation of Lake Michigan Yellow Perch Regulations

Fisheries Order 208.11 governs Yellow Perch harvest in Lake Michigan waters below the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel (excluding the Grand Traverse Bays). This Order has been in place since the early 1990s and anglers have been supportive of the Lake Michigan Yellow Perch possession limit as it stands. This Order is up for renewal as written. However, the Department recommends consolidating FO-208 into FO-215 where other Yellow Perch regulations are listed. This will simplify regulatory administrative efforts for the Department and will have no effect on anglers.

Lake Erie Walleye Possession Limit Procedure Change

In 2011, Lake Erie Walleye possession limit regulations were presented in this Order in the total allowable catch (TAC) table format. The Order indicated specific ways which the Department would notify anglers of future changes and indicated that a special publication would be produced. During the past several years, anglers have learned to call the angler hotline to obtain Lake Erie Walleye possession limit information. This information is also posted on the Department's webpage and sent out via press release annually. As a result, the Department no longer intends to print a special publication with the Lake Erie Walleye possession limit information since it has been determined to no longer be necessary. The Department recommends removing the special publication reference listed in the Order.

Removal of Huron River Bass Regulation

The Huron River in Washtenaw County, from Mast Road Bridge in Dexter downstream to Delhi Road Bridge, is closed to Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass possession. This regulation has been in effect for decades and provides anglers with a unique bass angling opportunity. The same regulation is listed in Fisheries Order 206 and therefore is deemed no longer necessary to keep in this Order. This action will result in removal of a duplicate regulatory entry from this Order and will remain listed in FO-206, where it is currently in effect.

*Issue Pros and Cons*

The mandatory bass tournament registration will benefit the Department by collecting more information concerning bass and the new CDR opportunity. The changes proposed for the Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River will increase angler harvest opportunities for Walleye as well as increase protection for Yellow Perch. The proposal to eliminate the combined possession limit will expand angler harvest opportunities. Anglers of Little Bay de Noc have requested increased protection of Walleye greater than 23 inches, which is a socially motivated regulation supported by local anglers. The increase of the Northern Pike daily possession limit in Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and Detroit River will expand angler opportunities in a dense population area. The consolidation of FO-208 into this Order will benefit the Department. The removal of the requirement for the Department to produce a special publication annually for the Lake Erie Walleye possession limit will reduce costs. The removal of a duplicate regulation will benefit the Department. There are no cons associated with these changes given that most regulations are liberalizations to regulations (increased angler opportunities) or an increase for the protection of some species initiated by anglers.

*Biological*

A majority of bass anglers voluntarily release the bass they catch; however, there is some uncertainty regarding the new CDR bass fishing opportunity. Given this the biological and social concern, it makes sense to initiate the new opportunity on sub-set of waters to monitor bass populations over time. Saginaw Bay has a very large Walleye population and anglers report catching many fish just short of the 15 inch minimum size limit. Managers recognize that the Saginaw Bay area is predator heavy so an increase on Walleye harvest will benefit both anglers and the population.

*Social*

Bass fishing is very popular in Michigan and throughout the nation. A large proportion of Michigan's anglers identify themselves primarily as bass anglers and they are supportive of efforts to expand opportunities. Anglers are extremely supportive of increased opportunities including liberalization of daily possession limits which are proposed above. Anglers are also supportive of increasing the protection of large spawning fish because they know that larger females often produce many more eggs than do smaller and younger females.

*Economic*

Increases to angling opportunities often results in a boost to angler participation, which can result in some type of positive economic gain. Popular fisheries can attract many anglers and their families to an area for brief visits or extended stays. It is difficult to ascertain with any certainty how much economic growth an area may experience due to a change to fishing regulations; however, expanding opportunities should result in some type of positive benefit to the local area.

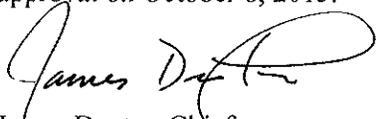
Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass,  
Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge,  
Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch,  
Sunfishes, and White Bass (FO-215.15A)

September 14, 2015

Page 8

Recommendation:

This Order was submitted for information on September 10, 2015, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appears on the Department's September 2015 calendar and may be eligible for approval on October 8, 2015.



James Dexter, Chief  
Fisheries Division



Gary Hagler, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



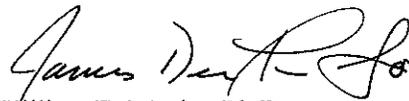
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief  
Wildlife Division



for Bill O'Neill, Chief  
Forest Resources Division



for Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division



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

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Director has authority.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Creagh, Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# FISHERIES ORDER

## Statewide Warmwater Regulations For Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, And White Bass Order 215.15A

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Department of Natural Resources by Part 487 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.48701 to 324.48740, ordered on October 8, 2015, the following section(s) of the Fisheries Order shall read as follows:

### A. For the purpose of this Order the following definitions are provided:

- 1) Catch-and-Immediate-Release (CIR): means the act of returning fish immediately to the water without injury and without holding in livewell or like object.
- 2) Catch-and-Delayed-Release (CDR): means the act of holding fish in a livewell or like object with a delayed release of the fish. All fish must be released without injury as soon as possible after weigh in back into the water body where caught.
- 3) Fishing tournament: means an organized competition among anglers with specific rules applying to that particular event.
- 4) MH-4: is a Lake Trout management unit which is bounded on the north by a line beginning on the shore on Au Sable Point in Iosco County at Latitude 44°20'N and extending eastward along said latitude to Longitude 083°10'W, then southward along said longitude to Latitude 44°10'N, then eastward along said latitude to Longitude 082°40'W, then southward along said line to Latitude 44°00'N, then westward along said line to shore about 2.6 miles southeast of Point aux Barques light in Huron County.
- 5) Tournament registration: means following the appropriate process to register a bass tournament with the Department.

The statewide seasons, size limits, and daily possession limits on all state waters shall be as listed below, except as otherwise ordered:

### B. 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 seasons that are specified below for each species of fish named in this Order.

#### 1. Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass:

- a. CIR fishing shall be permitted all year.
- b. CDR fishing shall be permitted for all registered bass fishing tournaments from the last Saturday in April - December 31 on the waters listed below:
  - 1) Lake Charlevoix (Charlevoix County)
  - 2) Burt Lake (Cheboygan County)
  - 3) Mullet Lake (Cheboygan County)
  - 4) Houghton Lake (Roscommon County)
  - 5) Hardy Dam Pond (Mecosta and Newaygo Counties)
  - 6) Muskegon Lake (Muskegon County)

- 7) Gull Lake (Barry and Kalamazoo Counties)
  - 8) Gun Lake (Allegan and Barry Counties)
  - 9) Portage Chain of Lakes (Livingston and Washtenaw Counties)
  - 10) Kent Lake (Livingston and Oakland Counties)
  - 11) Cass Lake (Oakland County)
  - 12) Pontiac Lake (Oakland County)
- c. On Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and Detroit River:
- 1) The possession season shall be the third Saturday in June - December 31.
- d. On Lake Michigan within one-half mile of the following islands of the Beaver Island Archipelago – Beaver, Garden, High, and Hog, Charlevoix County:
- 1) The possession season shall be July 1 - December 31.
- e. All other waters not otherwise closed to fishing:
- 1) The possession season shall be the Saturday before Memorial Day - December 31.
2. Walleye, Northern Pike, and Muskellunge:
- a. An area in the Green Bay portion of Lake Michigan, Menominee County, beginning at the intersection of the north boundary line of Menominee County with the west shoreline of the Bay in Section 3, T36N, R24W or approximate latitude/longitude (45.5505, -87.2637); thence east approximately 8 miles to latitude/longitude (45.5505, -87.101); thence south approximately 10 miles to the intersection with the state boundary at approximate latitude/longitude (45.444, -87.101); thence southwesterly and westerly approximately 36 miles along the state boundary in Green Bay, between the mainland of Michigan and the Door Peninsula of Wisconsin, to the mouth of the Menominee River, thence northeasterly along the shoreline of Green Bay to the point of beginning:
- 1) The possession season for Walleye shall be open for the entire year.
  - 2) The possession season for Northern Pike and muskellunge shall be May 15 - March 15.
- b. All other inland, Great Lakes, and connecting waters of the Upper Peninsula not otherwise closed to fishing:
- 1) The possession season shall be from May 15 - March 15.
- c. Inland waters of the Lower Peninsula not otherwise closed to fishing:
- 1) The possession season shall be from the last Saturday in April - March 15.
- d. Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, and Detroit River:
- 1) The possession season for Muskellunge shall be the first Saturday in June - December 15.
  - 2) 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:
- 1) 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:
- 1) The possession season shall be open for the entire year.

**C. Statewide Warmwater Regulations; Size and Possession Limits**

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Daily Possession Limit
Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass	14 inches	Five (5) per day in any combination
Walleye (See <b>Note 1</b> )	15 inches	Five (5) per day
Northern Pike (See <b>Note 2</b> )	24 inches	Two (2) per day
Flathead Catfish	15 inches	Five (5) per day
Muskellunge (including Tiger Muskellunge) (See <b>Note 3</b> )	42 inches	One (1) per angling season
Channel Catfish	12 inches	Ten (10) per day
Yellow Perch (See <b>Note 4</b> )	No size limit	Fifty (50) per day
Sunfishes: Black Crappie, Bluegill, Green Sunfish, Hybrid Sunfish, Longear Sunfish, 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

**NOTES**

1. **Walleye** - the following waters have daily possession limits that differ from the statewide daily possession limit:
  - a) St. Clair River beginning at the Ft. Gratiot Light and Lake St. Clair:
    - i) The minimum size limit shall be 13 inches.
    - ii) The daily possession limit may include one (1) additional Walleye.
  - b) Lake Michigan waters of Little Bay de Noc: that portion north of a line drawn from Peninsula Point Lighthouse to the mouth of the Bark River in Delta County.
    - i) The daily possession limit shall not include more than one (1) Walleye 23" or greater.
  - c) Lake Michigan waters of Green Bay: An area in the Green Bay portion of Menominee County, beginning at the intersection of latitude 45 degrees 30 minutes north with the west shoreline of the Bay in Section 24, T36N, R24W, thence east approximately 6 miles to the intersection of latitude 45 degrees 30 minutes north with longitude 87 degrees 10 minutes west, thence south approximately 10 miles to the intersection of longitude 87 degrees 10 minutes west with the state boundary, thence southwesterly and westerly approximately 36 miles along the state boundary in Green Bay, between the mainland of Michigan and the Door Peninsula of Wisconsin, to the mouth of the Menominee River, thence northeasterly along the shoreline of Green Bay to the point of beginning:
    - i) March 2 - the Friday before the first Saturday in May the daily possession limit shall be one (1) Walleye; and
    - ii) The first Saturday in May - March 1 the daily possession limit shall be five (5) Walleyes.

- d) Lake Huron waters of MH-4 including Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River up to Center Road Bridge:
- i) The minimum size limit for Walleye shall be 13 inches.
  - ii) The daily possession limit for Walleye shall be eight (8).
- e) Lake Erie:
- i) 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.
    - (1) 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.
    - (2) 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](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing)) and noted in a statewide news release.

Michigan TAC	Walleye Possession Limit
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)

2. **Northern Pike** - the following waters have daily possession limits that differ from the statewide daily possession limit:
- a) Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and Detroit River:
    - i) The daily possession limit for Northern Pike shall be five (5).
3. **Muskellunge** – in order to harvest Muskellunge from Michigan waters anglers are required to possess a valid Muskellunge Harvest Tag:
- a) Statewide:
    - i) 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).
4. **Yellow Perch** – the following waters have regulations that differ from the statewide regulations:
- a) Lake Michigan waters south of the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel (excluding the Grand Traverse Bays):
    - i) The daily possession limit shall be 35.
  - b) Lake Huron waters of Mackinac and Chippewa Counties and the St. Mary's River:
    - i) The minimum size limit for Yellow Perch shall be 7 inches.
  - c) Lake Huron waters of MH-4 including Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River up to Center Road Bridge (T12N, R4E, S35):
    - i) The daily possession limit for Yellow Perch shall be 25.

#### D. Bass Fishing Tournament Regulations

1. All bass fishing tournaments held in 2016 and thereafter shall be registered online using the Department's Michigan Fishing Tournament Information System at the following **website** <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/fishingtournaments/>.
2. Tournament directors shall verify all tournament participants and provide a unique registration receipt to all participating anglers. Tournament directors shall report tournament results to the Department by December 31, annually.

This Order shall be assigned number FO-215.15A, and is entitled "Statewide Warmwater 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 9, 2015, and is assigned number FO-215.15.

This Order supersedes the Order entitled "Yellow Perch – Lake Michigan," which became effective April 1, 2011, and is assigned number FO-208.11.

This Order shall take effect immediately upon signature and shall remain in effect until amended/rescinded.

Issued on this 8th day of October, 2015.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

John Matonich, Chairman  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh  
Director