



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: August 14, 2023
RESUBMITTED: September 18, 2023

<p>APPROVED</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">,20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)</p>

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Fisheries Order 252.23
Statewide - Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling Regulations

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, 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 252 establishes regulations for lake whitefish, round whitefish, cisco, rainbow smelt and arctic grayling. The Department proposes one regulation change to arctic grayling fishing regulations to allow anglers to lawfully fish for grayling. Nearly a century ago, grayling populations flourished in several locations in Michigan until loss of habitat and overharvest resulted in a population collapse. The Department’s recent efforts through the Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative to reintroduce grayling into several waters will provide anglers with fishing opportunities for this iconic species. However, a provision currently listed in the order prohibits anglers from trying to fish for this species. Grayling broodstock are being raised in the State’s fish production system and excess fish will need to be stocked into several waters as grayling inventory increases over time. Therefore, the Department recommends removing the text that makes attempting to fish for grayling unlawful as these waters are currently trout waters that already contain fishable trout populations and stocking grayling would put anglers in a difficult spot.

Given that the proposed change will liberalize grayling fishing regulations, the recommendation is to implement the change for immediate effect. If supported, the Department will increase angler awareness by adding the change to the online digital version of the Fishing Guide and through a prerecorded message for the Regulation Hotline at 888-367-7060.

Issue Pros and Cons

Anglers will benefit from removal of the text that makes it unlawful to attempt to fish for grayling stocked into waters with other trout populations. There are no cons identified.

Biological

There is no biological reason to prohibit anglers from fishing for stocked grayling in waters where trout are already part of the fish community. Grayling broodstock will be reared in a fish

production facility and protected from angling effort; however, grayling stocked into other waters are being stocked for fishing opportunities.

Social

Grayling fishing opportunities will generate excitement and anglers will enjoy targeting them as the populations grow.

Economic

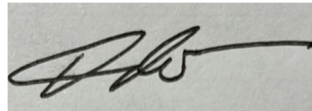
The Department does not expect the proposed changes to have any significant budgetary or personnel implications.

Recommendation:


Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order was submitted for information and consideration on September 14, 2023, at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's September 5, 2023, calendar and is eligible for approval on October 12, 2023.



Randy Claramunt, Chief
Fisheries Division



David Shaw, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



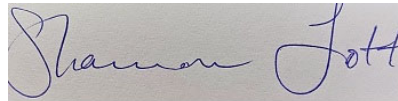
Sara Thompson, Chief
Wildlife Division



Jeffery J. Stampfly, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



Shannon Lott
Natural Resources Deputy

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

M. Scott Bowen, Director

Date

FISHERIES ORDER

Statewide - Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling Regulations Order 252.23

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Department of Natural Resources by Part 487 and Part 491 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.48701 to 324.48740, it is ordered on October 12, 2023, the following section(s) of the Fisheries Order shall read effective October 13, 2023, as follows:

The following regulations are established for Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish (also referred to as Menominee), Cisco (also referred to as Lake Herring), Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling:

As used in this order the following definition is provided:

1. Great Lakes Connecting Waters: refers to specific bodies of water in Michigan that connect the Great Lakes. The designated connecting waters are the St. Marys River, the St. Clair River (begins at the Fort Gratiot Light), Lake St. Clair, and the Detroit River (begins at the imaginary line extending due south of the Windmill Point Light, Wayne County, and ending at the imaginary east/west line drawn through the most southernly point of Celeron Island).

Seasons - General

Except as otherwise noted in FO-200 and FO-254, the fishing and possession seasons on non-designated trout streams and all other inland waters, Great Lakes, Great Lakes Connecting Waters, and other waters not otherwise closed to fishing are open for the entire year for all Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco and Rainbow Smelt.

Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish and Cisco

Size and daily possession limits for Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish and Cisco

On all waters, there is no minimum size limit for Lake Whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), Round Whitefish (*Prosopium cylindraceum*) or Cisco (*Coregonus artedii*). On all Great Lakes, Great Lakes Connecting Waters and Type F lakes (see FO-254) the daily possession limit shall be ten (10) fish in any combination, except the daily possession limit shall be up to an additional ten (10) Round Whitefish in Lake Superior. On inland waters, the daily possession limit shall be five (5) Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, or Cisco in any combination. The daily possession limit for Cisco shall be zero (0) for Indiana Lake (Cass County). See FO-205 for inland waters that differ from the five (5) fish daily possession limit.

Rainbow Smelt

Size, daily possession limits and gear for Rainbow Smelt

On all waters, there is no minimum size limit for Rainbow Smelt (*Osmerus mordax*). The daily possession limit for Rainbow Smelt on all waters of the state shall be 2 gallons. See FO-219 for spear, bow and arrow, or crossbow seasons and FO-229 for netting seasons.

Arctic Grayling

Size, daily possession limits, and season for Arctic Grayling

A person shall not at any time take, ~~attempt to take,~~ or possess any Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) from any waters over which this state has jurisdiction.

This order shall be assigned number FO-252.23, and is titled "Statewide - Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling Regulations".

This order supersedes the order titled "Statewide - Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling Regulations," effective April 1, 2022, and was assigned number FO-252.22.

This order shall take immediate effect on October 13, 2023 and shall remain in effect until amended/rescinded.

Issued on this 12th day of October 2023.

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

Thomas Baird, Chair
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

M. Scott Bowen
Director