



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 1, 2024

**APPROVED**  
**February 1, 2024**  
MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
*Brooke Parmelee*  
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Fisheries Order 240.24  
Sturgeon Regulations – Statewide  
EMERGENCY ORDER

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, authorizes the Director and the Natural Resources Commission (Commission) to issue orders to regulate the taking of fish in the waters of this state. Under Part 411 of that Act, if “the department determines that any fish . . . are in danger of depletion or extermination and require additional protection in any designated waters or area within the state, the department may issue an order suspending or abridging the open season on fish . . . .” MCL 324.41103(1).

Discussion and Background:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Department) is announcing the cancellation of the 2024 Black Lake sturgeon season, which was scheduled to start Saturday, February 3, 2024.

A harvest limit is set for each Black Lake sturgeon season. The harvest limit is crucial to the long-term viability of the sturgeon in the lake. With the current ice conditions and depletion of ice on Black Lake, the Department cannot safely station personnel on the ice. Those personnel are the key to ensuring that harvests are tracked effectively, and the season is ended immediately once the harvest limit is reached. The 2023 season, for example, only lasted 65 minutes. Without the ability to promptly track harvests and immediately end the season once the limit is reached, there is a serious danger that anglers will exceed the harvest limit. If that occurs, it could deplete the sturgeon population in Black Lake such that it would take many years for the population of this slow-growth fish to recover.

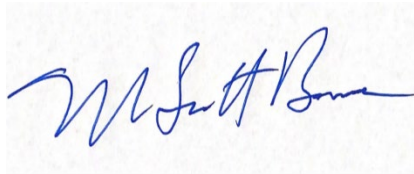
In addition to protecting the lake sturgeon population, the safety of anglers and staff is critically important, and the Department does not want to provide an incentive for anglers to venture onto the unsafe ice on Black Lake. The Department encourages all anglers across Michigan to use extreme caution while on the ice as we have been experiencing above average temperatures.

This is an unprecedented situation. The Department could not have known that ice conditions would be so bad until shortly before the season was scheduled to begin. Thus, the Department is issuing this order on an emergency basis. It will act to promptly notify the anglers and public as soon as possible.

Effective February 2, 2024, the fishing season details determined by the Director and Commission under subsection (G) and communicated by the Department on January 9, 2024, are negated. The season is cancelled in 2024.

This Emergency Order canceling the 2024 Black Lake sturgeon season will conserve and protect the resource while protecting anglers and staff due to a lack of safe ice for this event.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Scott Bowen", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

M. Scott Bowen, Director

Date: February 1, 2024

# FISHERIES ORDER

## STURGEON REGULATIONS - STATEWIDE

### Order 240.24

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Part 411 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.41101 to 324.41105, it is ordered on February 1, 2024, the following section(s) of the Fisheries Order shall read effective February 2, 2024, as follows:

#### 1) Fishing for Lake Sturgeon

- A) Except on waters where specific regulations are in place, as identified in paragraph 4) Special Provisions, fishing for lake sturgeon on all waters of the State shall be prohibited.

#### 2) Mandatory Registration of Harvested Lake Sturgeon

- A) On waters where harvest of lake sturgeon is allowed as specifically identified in paragraph 4) Special Provisions:
- i) Except as otherwise specifically provided in paragraph 4) Special Provisions, anglers are required to register lake sturgeon harvest within 24 hours. Anglers must report their harvest online ([www.michigan.gov/registerfish](http://www.michigan.gov/registerfish)), toll-free by calling 844-345-FISH(3474), or in person at any DNR Customer Service Center during normal state business hours with advanced notice of arrival.

#### 3) Harvest Limit

- A) On waters where harvest of lake sturgeon is allowed as specifically identified in paragraph 4) Special Provisions, an angler shall not harvest more than one (1) lake sturgeon per year.

#### 4) Special Provisions:

- A) Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River (St. Clair, Macomb, and Wayne Counties)
- i) Fishing seasons
- a) The hook-and-line harvest season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - September 30, inclusive.
- b) The hook-and-line, catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
- ii) Size Limit
- a) Between 42 and 50 inches, inclusive.
- B) Detroit River (Wayne County)
- i) Fishing season
- a) The hook-and-line, catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
- C) St. Marys River from Soo Locks/Compensating Works downstream to the De Tour Village and Drummond Island ferry terminals to the south, and from Hay Point to Cherry Island then north to the International boundary for the northeast (Chippewa County)
- i) Fishing season
- a) The hook-and-line, catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
- D) Portage and Torch Lakes, all waters including Portage River, Portage Canal, and north and south entry (Houghton County)
- i) Fishing season

- a) The hook-and-line, catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
- E) Ontonagon River (Ontonagon County), from the mouth of Lake Superior up to the Victoria Dam Road
  - i) Fishing season
    - a) The hook-and-line, catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
- F) Otsego Lake (Otsego County)
  - i) Fishing seasons
    - a) The hook-and-line harvest season for lake sturgeon shall be July 16 - March 15, inclusive.
    - b) Fishing for lake sturgeon shall be prohibited from March 16 - July 15, inclusive.
  - ii) Size Limit
    - a) 50 inches minimum.
- G) Black Lake (Cheboygan/Presque Isle County) – the fishing season details determined by the Director and the Commission under subsection will set conditions for the fishing season no later than January 15 each year and will be posted on the DNR website. The 2024 season is canceled.
- H) Menominee River
  - i) All regulations governing fishing for lake sturgeon and the take of lake sturgeon in the Menominee River system are established in Fisheries Order 205: Michigan-Wisconsin Boundary Water Regulations.
- I) All Other Waters of the State not specifically identified in this Paragraph 4) Special Provisions
  - i) Fishing season
    - a) No fishing season for lake sturgeon.

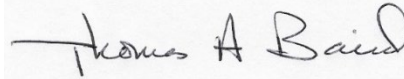
This order shall be assigned number FO-240.24 and is entitled "Sturgeon Regulations - Statewide."

This order supersedes the order entitled "Sturgeon Regulations - Statewide," which became effective September 15, 2023, and is assigned number FO-240.23.

This order shall take immediate effect on February 2, 2024 and shall remain in effect until amended/rescinded.

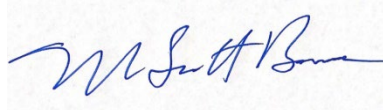
Issued on this 1st day of February 2024.

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