

Sunfish fact sheet- 2015

Harvesting more is not better. Sunfish have a unique life history, **preserving larger males** has shown to be more effective in maintaining quality sunfish populations. WI study allowed unlimited harvest – result was a decrease in average size by two inches.



Figure 1 Female Bluegill lower left, male Bluegill upper right

- Larger males tend to get cropped off (MN, WI). They are the key driver of the maximum size any one individual can achieve in a population.
- To maintain sunfish population size structure, you can harvest female and mid-size male sunfish to not harm the population overall.
- Reduced bag limits have shown success (MN WI) with both 10 and 5 fish limits.
- Closed seasons are not practical – Sunfish spawn for long time (May-July) and a large proportion of harvest occurs in winter in MN.
- Sunfish in general, grow slowly – One inch per year is average in MN

- Maximum lifetime for Bluegill in MN – Approximately 10-14 years
Lakes chosen for potential 10 sunfish bag limit

Table1. Lakes for consideration of the 10 sunfish bag limit. Indicating average length, catch per net greater than 8 inches, Average length of the top 10 percent, percent over 7 inches, percent over 8 inches and percent over 9 inches from all previous survey efforts.

Lake	Average Length	Catch/net >8"	Average Length top 10%	% over 7"	% Over 8"	% over 9"
Maple	6.57	2.36	8.06	35.0	5.6	0.5
Moose	6.3	7.57	7.9	24.6	6.1	0.8
Long(Higgins)	6.11	3.34	8.55	33.4	10.6	1.7
Green Prairie Fish	5.88	1.06	7.82	17.2	2.7	0.3
Sullivan	6.36	1.68	8.31	38.1	18.0	2.2
Platte	6.33	1.81	8.5	41.5	12.3	0.0

- Comments accepted through October 4, 2015
- Comments accepted via phone, email, fax, mailed to

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- If approved, monitor from 2016-2026
- If observed increase in catch rate of >8" bluegill and /or increase in length of top 10%- Regulation would stay
- If no improvement- regulation would drop.
- There are lakes the reduced bag limit would not be effective (severely stunted, poor growth).