

Commissioner's Order #2 ML 2019: Amend Walleye Season and Walleye Limits to Make Adjustments to Manage Fisheries in the 1837 Ceded Territory (Mille Lacs)

Date: December 1, 2019

Statutory authority: *Minnesota Statutes*, section 97C.005, subdivision 3

Supersedes: Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rule 6264.0400, subd. 4, item B, referring to the angling season for smallmouth bass and largemouth bass, and item F, referring to the catch and release angling season and possession restriction for walleye: Mille Lacs Fishing Regulations as published in the 6 May 2019 State Register (43 SR 1297)

BACKGROUND

Each year a harvestable surplus is set for walleye in Mille Lacs Lake by a joint management process between the state and the eight Chippewa Bands in accordance with the settlement reached in *Minnesota v Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa*. The harvestable surplus is the pounds of fish that can be taken safely from Mille Lacs Lake while ensuring sufficient walleye remaining in the lake for a healthy population. The harvestable surplus for 2020 will not be determined until January 2020. However, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is confident that the harvestable surplus will be similar to or higher than that set in 2019; therefore, state anglers may take a limited harvest for the 2019/2020 fishing season. The winter 2019/2020 fishing season will commence December 1, 2019, and extend through February 23, 2020, with the harvest restrictions outlined in the order below. This decision is based on the results of recent fisheries surveys that indicate the Mille Lacs walleye fishery can accommodate an ice fishery and stay within the projected state share of the 2020 harvestable surplus.

For all other species, the Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rule adopted on May 6, 2019, will remain in effect.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, pursuant to authority vested in me by law, including *Minnesota Statutes*, section 97C.005, subdivision 3, that:

1. The angling season for walleye begins at 12:02 a.m. on December 1, 2019, and continues to 11:59 p.m. on February 23, 2020. While a person is on or angling in Lake Mille Lacs, the possession limit for walleye is one as follows:
 - a. a walleye in possession must be from 21 inches in length to 23 inches in length, inclusive, or over 28 inches in length; and
 - b. all other walleye must be returned immediately to the water.
2. Fishing for all other species, including largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, perch, and panfish, and the existing regulations for all other species, continue unaffected by this order.

/s/ BARB NARAMORE
Barb Naramore, Deputy Commissioner

Date: November 19, 2019