



Commissioner’s Order #1 ML 2020: Amend Walleye Season and Walleye Limits to Make Adjustments to Manage Fisheries in the 1837 Ceded Territory (Mille Lacs)

Date: December 1, 2020

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

Supersedes: Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rule 6264.0400, subd. 4, item F, referring to the catch and release angling season and possession restriction for walleye: Mille Lacs Fishing Regulations as published in the 4 May 2020 State Register (44 SR 1261)

BACKGROUND

Each year a harvestable surplus is set for walleye in Lake Mille Lacs by a joint management process between the state and the eight Chippewa Bands that are signatories to the Treaty of 1837. The harvestable surplus is the pounds of fish that can be taken safely from Lake Mille Lacs while ensuring sufficient walleye remain in the lake for a healthy population. The harvestable surplus for 2021, which is allocated between the State of Minnesota and the eight Chippewa Bands, will not be determined until January 2021. However, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is confident that the harvestable surplus will be similar to the 2020 harvestable surplus; therefore, for the winter 2020/2021 fishing season, state anglers may take a limited harvest above the incidental kill rate that occurs from catch and release fishing. The winter 2020/2021 fishing season will commence December 1, 2020, and extend through February 28, 2021, 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 a limited harvest during the ice fishing season and stay within the projected state share of the 2021 harvestable surplus.

For all other species, the Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rule adopted on May 4, 2020, 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 12:01 a.m. on December 1, 2020, and continues to 11:59 p.m. on February 28, 2021. While a person is on or angling in Lake Mille Lacs, the possession limit for walleye is one, provided:
 - 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 northern pike, perch, and panfish, and the existing regulations for all other species, continue unaffected by this order.



Sarah Strommen, Commissioner

Date: November 23, 2020