

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources****Commissioner's Order #2 ML 2025****Amend Walleye Regulations for Open Water Angling on Lake Mille Lacs****Date:** August 13, 2025**Statutory authority:** *Minnesota Statutes*, section 97C.005, subd. 3

Amends Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rule 6264.0400, subpart 4, item F, referring to the angling seasons and possession restrictions for multiple fish species: Mille Lacs Fishing Regulations as published in the 28 April 2025 State Register (49 SR 1193)

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**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 Ojibwe Bands that are signatories to the Treaty of 1837. The harvestable surplus is the pounds of fish that can be taken from Lake Mille Lacs while ensuring sufficient walleye remain in the lake for a healthy population. The state's allocation of the harvestable surplus for the 2025 season was set at 113,600 pounds. The state then set the walleye harvest and possession limit for the 2025 season for state anglers by Expedited Emergency Rule on April 28, 2025. Walleye regulations were set to a possession limit of two walleye 17 inches or greater, only one of which could be over 20 inches. While the prediction was that anglers would take around 80,000 pounds of walleye under this regulation, uncertainty about key modeling assumptions, including angler catch rates and the number of anglers choosing to fish the lake, meant the state recognized potential harvests could be lower or higher than that amount.

Angler hours and angler catch rates thus far in the 2025 season have been much lower than expected. Actual harvest data gathered to date and modeling for the remainder of the walleye season indicate that under the current regulation state anglers will harvest 40,000 pounds of walleye, or about 35% of the state's allocation, by the end of the 2025 season on November 30.

To enhance angler opportunity to harvest walleye on Mille Lacs while remaining within the state's walleye allocation, the state is modifying the walleye angling regulation beginning 12:01 a.m. on August 23, 2025, when the daily and possession limit will become three walleye 17 inches or greater, only one of which may be over 20 inches in length. All other walleye must be immediately returned to the water. Modeling indicates this regulation modification will increase the state harvest by less than 5,000 pounds, leading to a total harvest of about 40% or less of the state's allocation.

This regulation will remain effective until 11:59 p.m. on November 30, 2025. Beginning at 12:01 a.m. on December 1, 2025, the daily and possession limit for walleye on Lake Mille Lacs will revert to two walleye 17 inches or greater, only one of which can be over 20 inches. If the DNR's fall assessment netting indicates a change to winter regulations is needed, another regulation change starting on December 1, 2025, may be made.

For all other species, the Expedited Emergency Rule adopted on April 28, 2025, remains the same.

## **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. Beginning at 12:01 a.m. on August 23, 2025, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on November 30, 2025, while a person is on or fishing in Lake Mille Lacs or its associated tributaries to the posted boundaries, the daily and possession limit is three walleye 17 inches or greater, only one of which may be over 20 inches in length. All other walleye must be immediately returned to the water.

2. Beginning at 12:01 a.m. on December 1, 2025, while a person is on or fishing in Lake Mille Lacs or its associated tributaries to the posted boundaries, the daily and possession limit is two walleye 17 inches or greater, only one of which can be over 20 inches. All other walleye must be returned immediately to the water.

Fishing regulations for all other species, including northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, cisco, perch and panfish, are unaffected by this order.

  
Sarah Strommen, Commissioner

Date: 8 / 13 / 2025

**AGENCY CONTACT.** For additional information or to receive this document in an alternative format please contact: Brian Nerbonne, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, 1200 Warner Rd., St. Paul, MN 55106, Phone: 651-259-5789, Email: [brian.nerbonne@state.mn.us](mailto:brian.nerbonne@state.mn.us).