

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Commissioner's Order #1 ML 2026

Amend Lake Mille Lacs Yellow Perch Fishing Regulations

Date: January 29, 2026

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

Modifies the daily and possession restrictions for yellow perch on Lake Mille Lacs from Commissioner's Order #3 ML 2025 Mille Lacs Lake Winter Fishing Regulations as published on December 1, 2025 (50 SR 521) under authority in Minn. R. 6264.0400, subp. 4.D.

BACKGROUND

Each year a harvestable surplus is set for yellow perch 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 safely from Lake Mille Lacs while ensuring enough remain in the lake to sustain a healthy population. The state's share of the harvestable surplus of yellow perch for the 2026 season was set at 36,500 pounds. The state previously set a daily and possession limit of ten yellow perch for state-licensed anglers on Lake Mille Lacs in Commissioner's Order #3 ML 2025 Mille Lacs Lake Winter Fishing Regulations (50 SR 521).

As of January 18, 2026, harvest of yellow perch by state-licensed anglers on Lake Mille Lacs in the winter of 2025-26 was about 17,000 pounds. Yellow perch harvest patterns from past seasons along with creel survey data from 2026 indicate that under the current regulation the state will reach its share of the harvestable surplus before the end of February. To ensure

the state's share remains within the harvestable surplus limits, the daily and possession limits for harvest of yellow perch by state-licensed anglers on Lake Mille Lacs is reduced from ten to five.

The state is modifying the yellow perch angling regulation pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 97C.005, subd. 3. Beginning at 12:00 a.m. on February 9, 2026, the yellow perch daily and possession limit on Lake Mille Lacs will be five. This regulation will remain effective until 11:59 p.m. on November 30, 2026.

For all other species, regulations set in the Commissioner's Order #3 ML 2025 Mille Lacs Lake Winter Fishing Regulations as published on December 1, 2025 (50 SR 521), or in the Expedited Emergency Rule adopted on April 28, 2025 (49 SR 1193), remain 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, beginning at 12:00 a.m. on February 9, 2026, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on November 30, 2026, while a person is on or fishing in Lake Mille Lacs or its associated tributaries to the posted boundaries, the daily and possession limit for yellow perch is five.

Fishing regulations for all other species on Lake Mille Lacs, including walleye, northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, cisco, and panfish, are unaffected by this order.


Sarah Strommen, Commissioner

Date: January 29, 2026

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