

Department of Natural Resources

Chapters:

Adopted Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rules:

6264

MILLE LACS LAKE FISHING REGULATIONS

PUBLISHED **05-04-2026**
EFFECTIVE **05-04-2026**
EXPIRES **11-04-2027** (18 months)

Please see the attachment for language of this expedited emergency game and fish rules package relating to Mille Lacs Lake Fishing Regulations.

1.1 **Department of Natural Resources**

1.2 **Adopted Expedited Emergency Game and Fish Rules: Mille Lacs Lake Fishing**
1.3 **Regulations**

1.4 **6264.0400 DESIGNATED SPECIAL MANAGEMENT WATERS.**

1.5 *[For text of subparts 1 to 3, see Minnesota Rules]*

1.6 **Subp. 4. Mille Lacs Lake and associated tributaries special management**
1.7 **regulations.**

1.8 A. This item applies while a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its
1.9 associated tributaries to the posted boundaries; The angling season for northern pike begins
1.10 at 12:01 a.m. May 9, 2026, and continues to 11:59 p.m. March 31, 2027. The daily and
1.11 possession limit for northern pike is five. All northern pike in possession must be less than
1.12 24 30 inches or less in length or greater than 36 inches in length. All northern pike that are
1.13 24 to 36 greater than 30 inches in length, inclusive, must be immediately returned to the
1.14 water. A person's possession limit may not include more than one northern pike over 36
1.15 inches in length.

1.16 B. ~~The possession limit for smallmouth bass is one.~~ This item applies while a
1.17 person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its associated tributaries to the posted
1.18 boundaries; The catch-and-release season for largemouth and smallmouth bass is continuous.
1.19 All largemouth and smallmouth bass caught before May 23, 2026, must be immediately
1.20 returned to the water. The harvest season for largemouth bass begins at 12:01 a.m. May 23,
1.21 2026, and continues to 11:59 p.m. February 28, 2027. The harvest season for smallmouth
1.22 bass begins at 12:01 a.m. May 23, 2026, and continues to 11:59 p.m. September 13, 2026.
1.23 Beginning at 12:01 a.m. September 14, 2026, all smallmouth bass must be immediately
1.24 returned to the water. Except as otherwise provided in this subpart, during the general inland
1.25 harvest season for largemouth and smallmouth bass, the daily and possession limit is three
1.26 in aggregate for largemouth and smallmouth bass. All largemouth and smallmouth bass in

2.1 possession must be ~~21 inches or greater~~ less than 17 inches in length. All largemouth and
2.2 smallmouth bass less than 21 inches 17 inches or greater in length must be immediately
2.3 returned to the water. Waiver of the size, possession, and season restrictions for largemouth
2.4 and smallmouth bass under this item is permitted for a limited number of bass-fishing
2.5 tournaments each year. When determining whether to grant a waiver for a tournament, the
2.6 commissioner must consider:

2.7 (1) tournament size;

2.8 (2) expected participation;

2.9 (3) potential to generate public interest and local economic activity; and

2.10 (4) conservation and biological health of the fishery.

2.11 C. Except as provided in items D and E, this item applies for night fishing on
2.12 Mille Lacs Lake. Mille Lacs Lake is closed to the taking of fish between the hours of 10
2.13 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily during the period commencing beginning at 10 p.m. on the Monday
2.14 following the Saturday two weeks prior to the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend May
2.15 11, 2026, and ending at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, four weeks after the date of commencement.
2.16 During the closure, no person shall be on the waters of Mille Lacs Lake while having in
2.17 possession any equipment whereby fish may be taken. Spearing is prohibited from December
2.18 1 through April 30. A person may not have a spear in possession while on or fishing in
2.19 Mille Lacs Lake during this period 6:00 a.m. August 31, 2026. Beginning September 1,
2.20 2026, the ban on night fishing is lifted.

2.21 D. Beginning June 6, 2026, at 10:00 p.m., Mille Lacs Lake is open to fishing for
2.22 muskellunge and northern pike at all times of day, including between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00
2.23 a.m. daily. Angling for, harvesting, and possessing species other than muskellunge and
2.24 northern pike between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. is prohibited. Only artificial muskellunge
2.25 and northern pike lures greater than eight inches in length, measured from the front of the

3.1 eye of the lure to the end of the trailing hook, or sucker minnows greater than eight inches
3.2 in length may be used or in possession.

3.3 E. Beginning June 1, 2026, at 10:00 p.m., Mille Lacs Lake is open to bowfishing
3.4 for carp and native rough fish between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. daily. A person must not
3.5 have any angling equipment in possession while bowfishing under this item. Angling for,
3.6 harvesting, and possessing species other than carp and native rough fish while bowfishing
3.7 during these hours is prohibited.

3.8 ~~D. F.~~ The commissioner may modify seasons and limits under Minnesota Statutes,
3.9 section 84.027, subdivision 13, or sections 97A.0451 to 97A.0459, to accommodate tribal
3.10 declarations for fish harvest in the 1837 Ceded Territory in compliance with the court ruling
3.11 in *Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa v. Minnesota*, 119 S.Ct. 1187 (1999). Changes shall be
3.12 posted at water access sites and the Department of Natural Resources website.

3.13 ~~E. G.~~ While a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its associated tributaries
3.14 to the posted boundaries, the possession and daily limit for Northern cisco (tullibee) is ten
3.15 fish.

3.16 H. This item applies while a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its
3.17 associated tributaries to the posted boundaries. Beginning at 12:01 a.m. May 9, 2026, the
3.18 daily and possession limit for walleye is three fish, which must be 17 inches or greater in
3.19 length and only one of which may be greater than 20 inches in length. All walleye less than
3.20 17 inches in length must be immediately returned to the water. This item is effective until
3.21 11:59 p.m. February 28, 2027.

3.22 I. While a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its associated tributaries
3.23 to the posted boundaries, angling for burbot is catch and release only. All burbot must be
3.24 immediately returned to the water.

4.1 J. While a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its associated tributaries
 4.2 to the posted boundaries, the daily and possession limit for yellow perch is five fish.

4.3 ~~F. K.~~ While a person is on or fishing in Mille Lacs Lake or its associated tributaries
 4.4 to the posted boundaries, fish that are taken by angling and not immediately released into
 4.5 the water after capture are considered to be in possession and part of the bag limit. Once a
 4.6 fish has been reduced to possession, culling or live-well sorting (the act of exchanging one
 4.7 fish for another) is not allowed, except that culling or live-well sorting before meeting a
 4.8 bag limit of fish reduced to possession is allowed for largemouth and smallmouth bass.

4.9 ~~G. L.~~ Unless otherwise specified, this subpart applies to the following waters.

4.10	Name	Location	County
4.11 4.12	(1) Mille Lacs	T.42-45, R.25-28, S.Various	Aitkin, Mille Lacs
4.13	(2) Borden Creek	T.44, R.25, S.5	Aitkin
4.14	(3) Seastade Creek	T.45, R.26, S.22	Aitkin
4.15 4.16	(4) Marmon (Twenty) Creek	T.45, R.25, S.32	Aitkin
4.17	(5) Grave Creek	T.45, R.25, S.8	Aitkin
4.18	(6) Peterson Creek	T.43, R.25, S.5	Mille Lacs
4.19 4.20	(7) Thains River (Malone Creek)	T.42, R.25, S.2	Mille Lacs
4.21	(8) West Sucker Creek	T.42, R.25, S.18	Mille Lacs
4.22	(9) South Sucker Creek	T.42, R.25, S.18	Mille Lacs
4.23 4.24	(10) Garrison (Borden) Creek	T.44, R.28, S.12	Crow Wing
4.25	(11) Seguchie Creek	T.44, R.28, S.36	Crow Wing
4.26	(12) Reddy Creek	T.45, R.26, S.23	Aitkin
4.27	(13) Whitefish Creek	T.43, R.27, S.7	Mille Lacs
4.28	(14) Seventeen Creek	T.44, R.25, S.17,18,29	Aitkin

5.1	(15)	Cedar Creek	T.43, R.25, S.15	Mille Lacs
5.2	(16)	McCleans Creek	T.45, R.27, S.34	Aitkin
5.3	(17)	unnamed	T.43, R.25, S.8	Mille Lacs
5.4	(18)	unnamed	T.42, R.26, S.11	Mille Lacs
5.5	(19)	unnamed	T.42, R.26, S.22	Mille Lacs
5.6	(20)	unnamed	T.43, R.27, S.8	Mille Lacs
5.7	(21)	unnamed	T.43, R.27, S.6	Mille Lacs
5.8	(22)	unnamed	T.43, R.27, S.21	Mille Lacs
5.9	(23)	unnamed	T.44, R.27, S.31	Crow Wing
5.10	(24)	unnamed	T.44, R.28, S.36	Crow Wing
5.11	(25)	unnamed	T.44, R.27, S.4	Aitkin
5.12	(26)	unnamed	T.45, R.27, S.25	Aitkin
5.13	(27)	unnamed	T.44, R.25, S.29	Aitkin
5.14	(28)	unnamed	T.44, R.25, S.31,32	Aitkin
5.15	(29)	unnamed	T.44, R.28, S.24	Crow Wing
5.16	(30)	unnamed	T.44, R.28, S.13	Crow Wing
5.17	(31)	Rum River Outlet	T.43, R.27, S.33	Mille Lacs

5.18 *[For text of subparts 5 to 58, see Minnesota Rules]*

5.19 *[For text of subpart 59, see State Register, volume 49, page 1197]*

5.20 *[For text of subparts 60 to 154, see Minnesota Rules]*

5.21 **REPEALER.** The expedited emergency amendment to Minnesota Rules, part 6264.0400,
5.22 subpart 4, published in the State Register, volume 49, page 1193, April 28, 2025, is repealed.