



Stakeholder Feedback On The Management of Smallmouth Bass In Green Bay

Introduction

On Nov. 4 and 6, 2024 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) hosted public meetings in-person and online in Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Meetings were intended to update the public on current smallmouth bass management and research and to gather feedback on a proposed regulation change regarding the extension of the catch and release season for smallmouth and largemouth bass in Green Bay and northern Lake Michigan waters. In total, 73 people attended the two public meetings (Table 1).

Table 1. Attendance from both meetings broken down by in-person vs online (N=73). For online attendance all DNR and government employees were excluded, along with online attendance lasting less than 20 minutes.

ATTENDANCE LOCATION	IN-PERSON	ONLINE
Green Bay	13	17
Sturgeon Bay	31	12

Methods

To collect feedback on the status of the fishery and the proposed regulation, stakeholders were presented with six questions. Stakeholders who took part online were sent the questions via a short survey. Forty-eight attendees submitted their responses in-person or online. All responses received online and in person were combined and the results were summarized (Figures 1-6).

Results

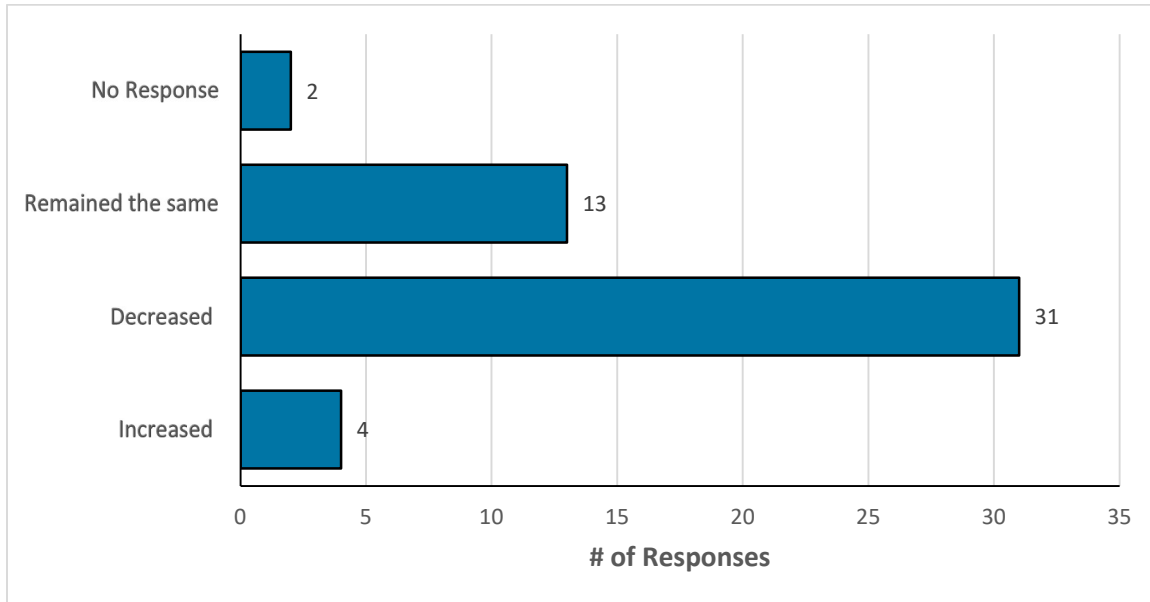


Figure 1. Responses to question: 'Over the last 5 years, in your opinion, have smallmouth bass populations in Green Bay?' Six online attendees responded to this question in the chat during the Green Bay meeting. These responses were not included as all online attendees were sent a link to the formal questionnaire.

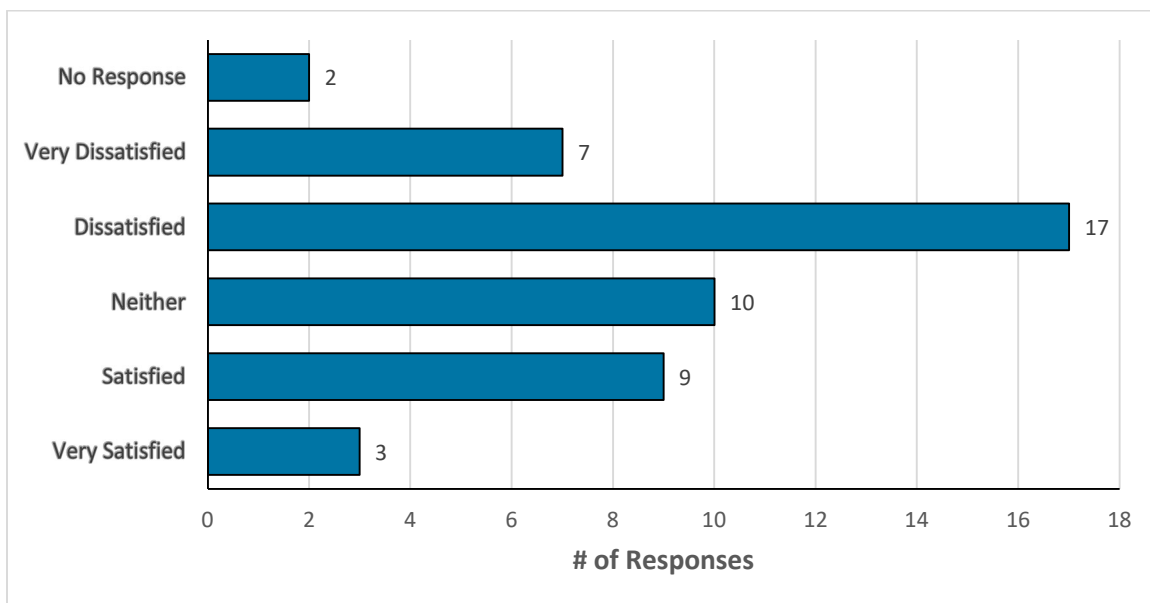


Figure 2. Responses to question: 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the current smallmouth bass fishery in Green Bay?'

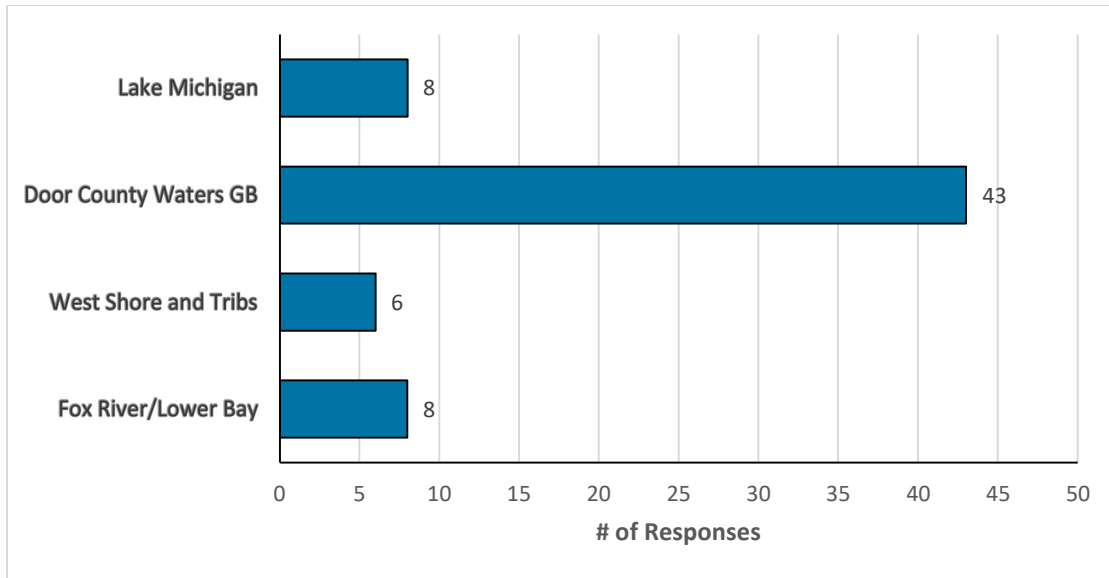


Figure 3. Responses to question: ‘What location(s) do you primarily fish on Green Bay and/or Lake Michigan (select all that apply)?’

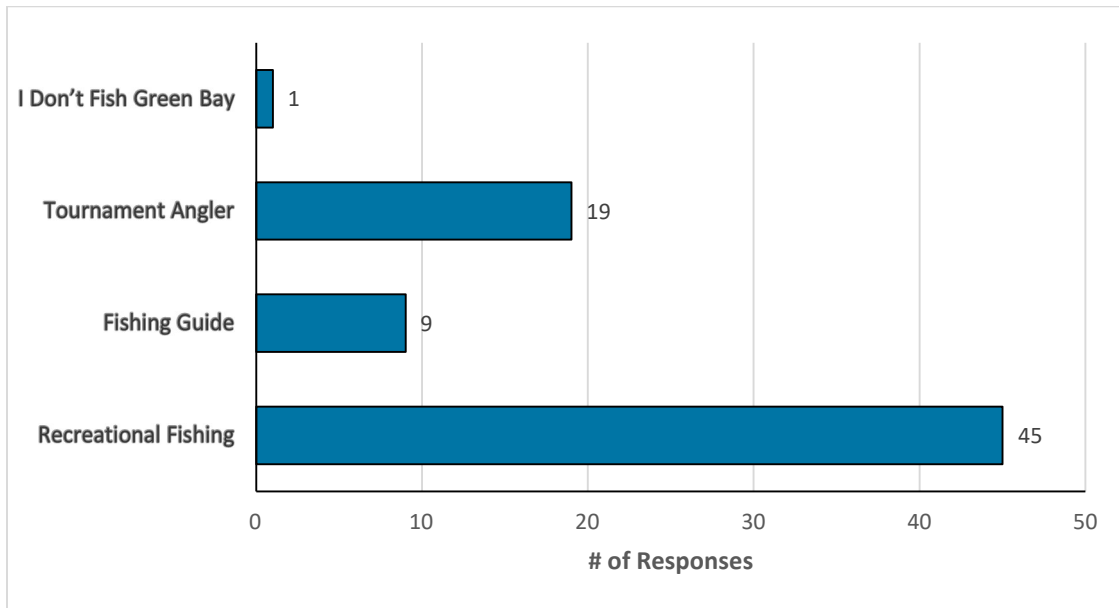


Figure 4. Responses to question: ‘Which best describes your fishing activities on Green Bay (select all that apply)?’

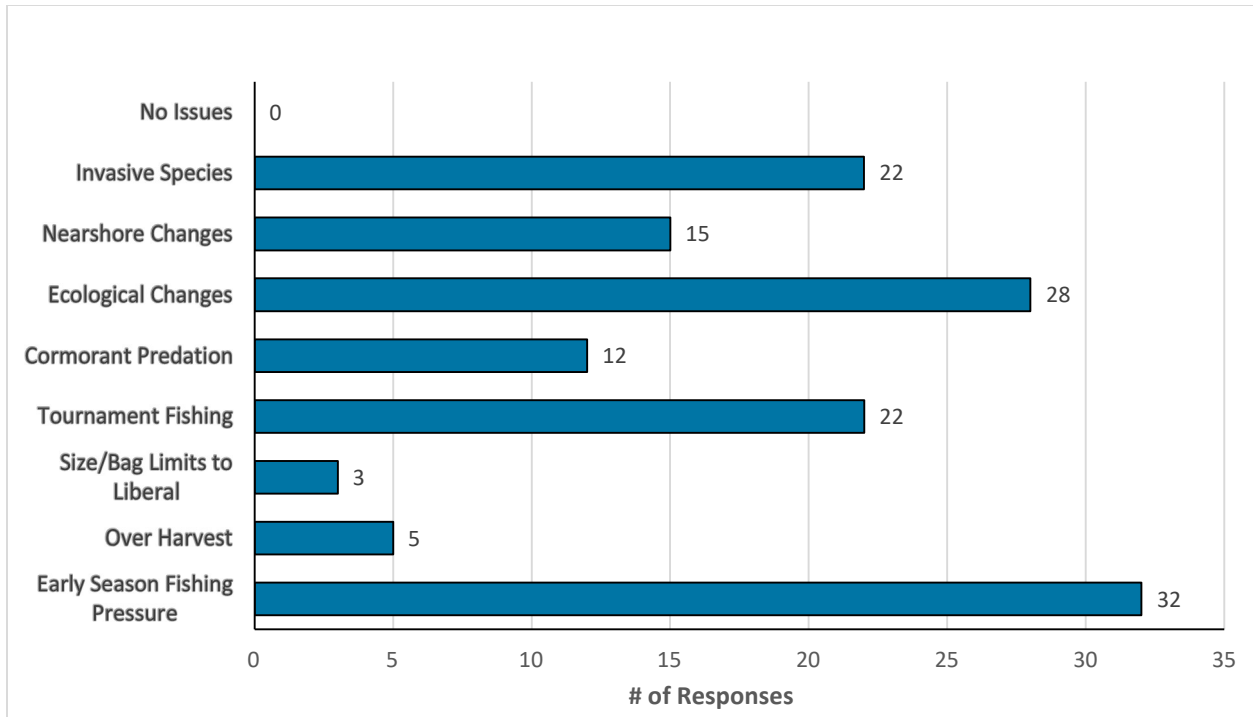


Figure 5. Responses to question: 'What factors do you think have the greatest impact on the quality of smallmouth bass fishing on Green Bay (select your top 3)?' Some attendees selected more than 3 factors. All responses were included.

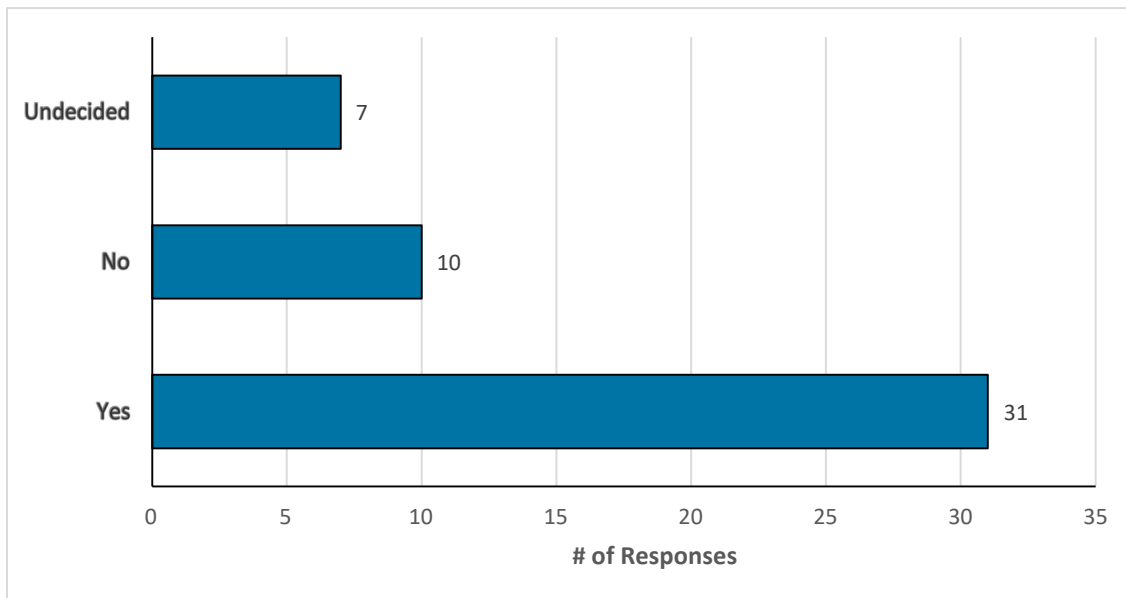


Figure 6. Responses to question: 'Do you favor extending the catch-and-release season until July 1 for smallmouth and largemouth bass across Green Bay and Northern Lake Michigan?'

Discussion

Results from this questionnaire highlight one of several opportunities for public input on smallmouth bass management for Green Bay. Additional input was received at prior smallmouth bass meetings (2017, 2019, 2022), through formal and informal public comments and via a prior Wisconsin Conservation Congress advisory question (2003). Spring hearings this April 2025 will provide another opportunity for public input on regulation changes proposed locally and statewide. Further details on the proposed smallmouth bass regulation change for Green Bay are summarized within the 2024 meeting recording available here –

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/GreenBaySmallmouthBass>.