



# Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

## Fisheries Information Sheet

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

POOLS: 3-12

2025

### Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requires tournament organizers to hold a permit for fishing tournaments with more than 20 boats, more than 100 people, are held with a catch-hold-release format, are held on a trout stream, have more than \$10,000 in prizes awarded, or for any bass tournament that allows culling. For additional information about fishing tournaments in Wisconsin, please see: [Fishing tournaments | Fishing Wisconsin | Wisconsin DNR](#). If none of the above apply, a free tournament registration is required. In addition, registrations are required even if the tournament is regional in nature (where specific waters to be fished are not identified) or if participants are not required to register in advance. This analysis includes historical fishing tournaments and a newly implemented small tournament application starting in 2024.

### Methods

This analysis encompasses eight counties in Wisconsin: Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford and Grant. Permit approvals within these counties are managed by three field stations, each responsible for specific sections of the Mississippi River. The Alma field station oversees Pools 3 through 5a, the La Crosse field station is responsible for Pools 6 through 8, and the Prairie du Chien field station manages Pools 9 through 12, extending to the Wisconsin state line. All relevant data for this analysis were obtained from the Fisheries Management Information Systems (FMIS) where permits are submitted.

For this analysis, permit applications were extracted from FMIS. Relevant data, including permit type, target species, waterbody and number of participants, were utilized. This data was used to determine tournament usage on the Mississippi River and desired target species. Results were calculated from the information reported by the tournament organizer (Table 2 and 3). Any discrepancies were cross-referenced with original application materials and, if necessary, clarified with field station

personnel. Small self-registered fishing tournament data was used to calculate the number of tournaments and participates within a pool (Figure 2).

All fishing tournaments that were withdrawn, denied, incomplete or canceled were removed from this analysis.

## Applications

Table 1. Tournament applications, locations and type (2025)

Applications		Tournament Location		Type of Tournaments	
Received	125	Pools 4-5a	28	Catch-Hold-Release	98
Withdrawn	1	Pools 6-8	33	Catch and Keep	10
Cancelled	1	Pools 9-12	62	Immediate Release	15
Denied	0				
<b>Total Approved and Held</b>	<b>123</b>				

## Results

Table 2: Total number of tournaments, anglers, boats, fishing hours and prize value awarded (2025)

Effort/Prizes	2025
Tournaments	123
Anglers	7390
Boats	3317
Hours Fished	998
Prizes Awards	\$1,440,332

Table 3: Number of fish registered and release rates by species (2025)

Species	Number of Fish Registered	% Released
	2025	2025
Basses <sup>1</sup>	17,673	99%
Walleye <sup>2</sup>	2650	92%
Panfish <sup>3</sup>	533	1%
Catfish <sup>4</sup>	159	0%
Northern Pike	161	24%
Rough Fish <sup>5</sup>	597	0%
All Species	23,798	93%

<sup>1</sup>Basses includes largemouth and smallmouth.

<sup>2</sup>Walleye includes walleye, sauger and saugeye.

<sup>3</sup>Panfish includes crappies, bluegill, sunfish and yellow perch.

<sup>4</sup>Catfish includes flathead and channel catfish

<sup>5</sup>Rough fish includes alewife, buffalo, bullhead, bowfin, common carp, freshwater drum, gars, suckers, quillback, redhorses and other minnows.

Note: Catch, number of anglers, number of boats and prize money data were retrieved from reports submitted by the tournament organizers. Currently 29 out of 123 tournament reports have not been submitted.

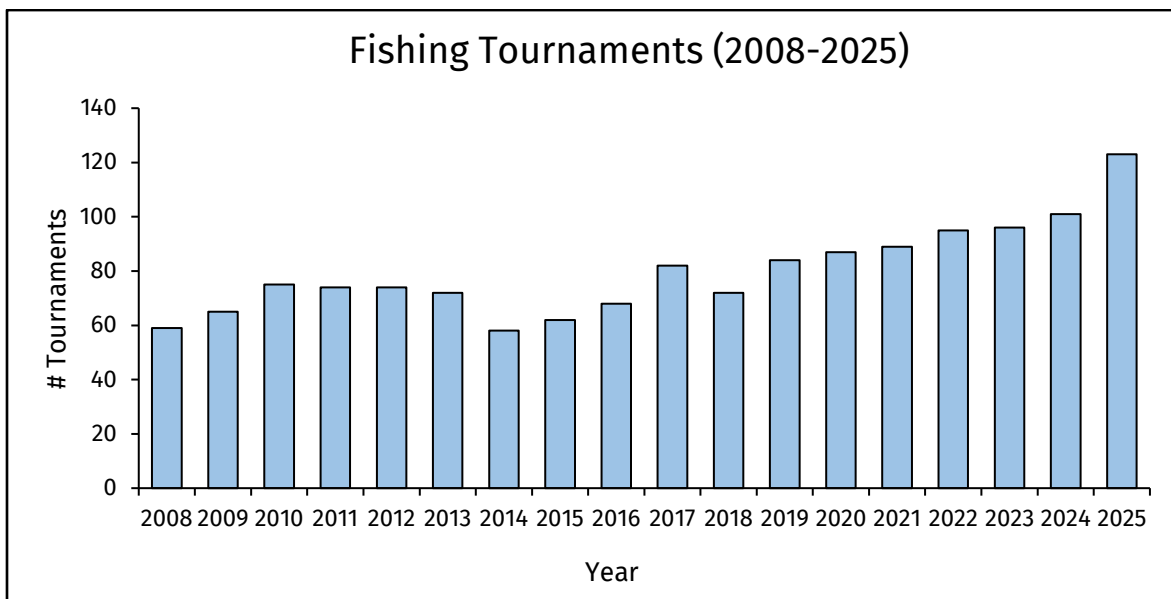


Figure 1. Approved Mississippi River Fishing Tournaments Permits (2008-2025)

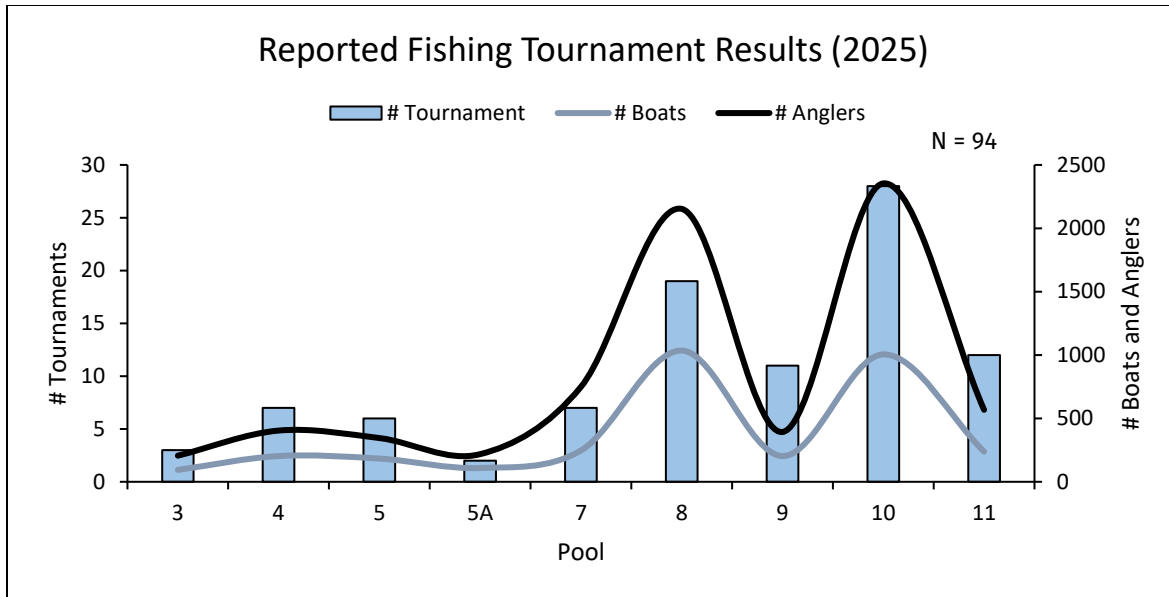


Figure 2. 2025 Reported Mississippi River Fishing Tournament Results. Results are not currently up to date, missing 29 out of 123.

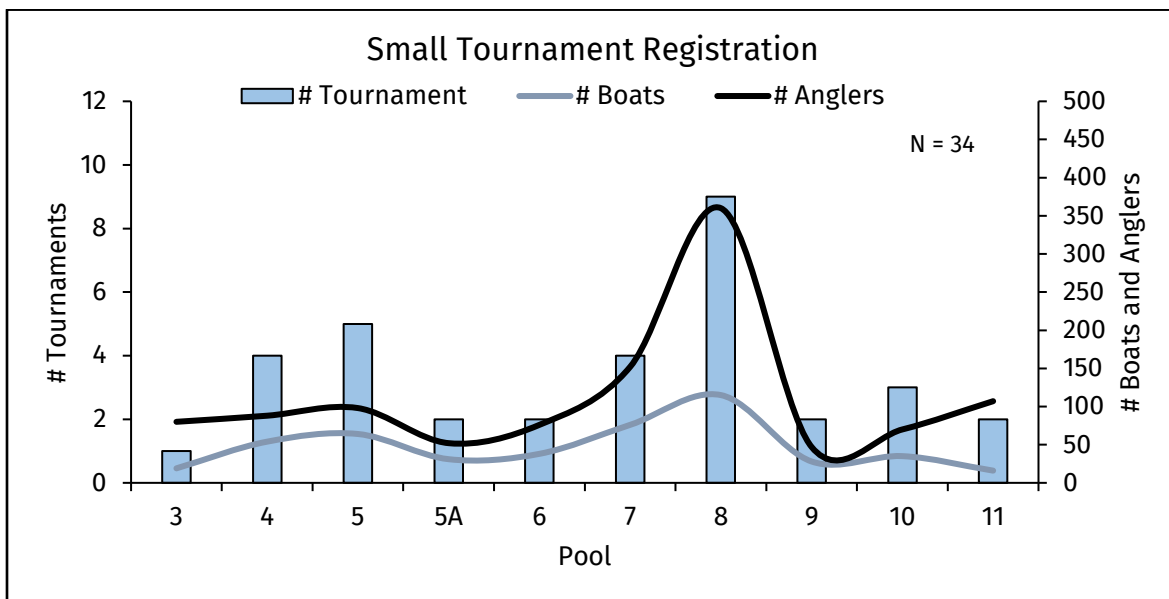


Figure 3. 2025 Mississippi River Small Self Tournament Registration (Note: Some tournaments were weekly events and were only counted once for consistency). Small Fishing Tournaments do not require a fee but do require registration starting of 2024.

## Discussion

The Mississippi River is a boundary water between Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. This report is based solely on data collected through Wisconsin fishing tournament application process and, therefore, represents only a portion of the total fishing

tournaments held on the Mississippi River. As such, the findings should be interpreted with consideration of these limitations.

Additionally, in 2025, seven fishing tournaments were specifically ice fishing events. All tournaments that were Catch-Hold Release tournaments were bass-specific except one targeting crappies. 78% of Catch-Hold-Release, Catch and Keep and Immediate Release fishing tournaments were for bass species. There was a 21% increase in fishing tournaments in 2024. Pool 10 had the highest number of fishing tournaments (33). Pool 8 had the highest small tournament registration (9). The most popular pools seem to be indicative to where larger cities are located; pool 4 (Alma, WI), pool 8 (La Crosse, WI), pool 10 (Prairie Du Chein, WI). Applicants from seven different states held fishing tournaments on the Mississippi River.

## **Acknowledgements**

For answers to questions about fisheries management activities on the Mississippi River (Pools 6-8) contact:

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