



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

2017 Summary of Fishing Tournaments in Wisconsin

MEGHAN STIRLING

Fisheries Permitting Coordinator
Madison, WI
Meghan.stirling@wisconsin.gov

DAN OELE

Fisheries Data Analyst
Madison, WI
Daniel.oele@wisconsin.gov

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requires tournament organizers to hold a permit for fishing tournaments which contain 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 any tournament for bass that allows culling. For additional information about fishing tournament in Wisconsin, please see: [Fishing tournaments | Fishing Wisconsin | Wisconsin DNR](#)

Applications

632 Applications were received
 29 applications were withdrawn
 26 applications were cancelled
 0 applications were denied
 577 applications were approved and held
 386 catch-hold-release tournaments (67%)
 148 catch and keep tournaments (25.5%)
 101 immediate release tournaments (17.5%)

Notable Results

12 fewer tournaments were held in 2017 than in 2016: a decrease of 2.04% from 2016 to 2017.

Prize value awarded decreased by \$179,417 from 2016 to 2017.

Number of largemouth and smallmouth bass registered increased by 4,444 and walleye increased by 4,324 from 2016 to 2017.

Figure 1: Permitted Fishing Tournaments by County in 2017

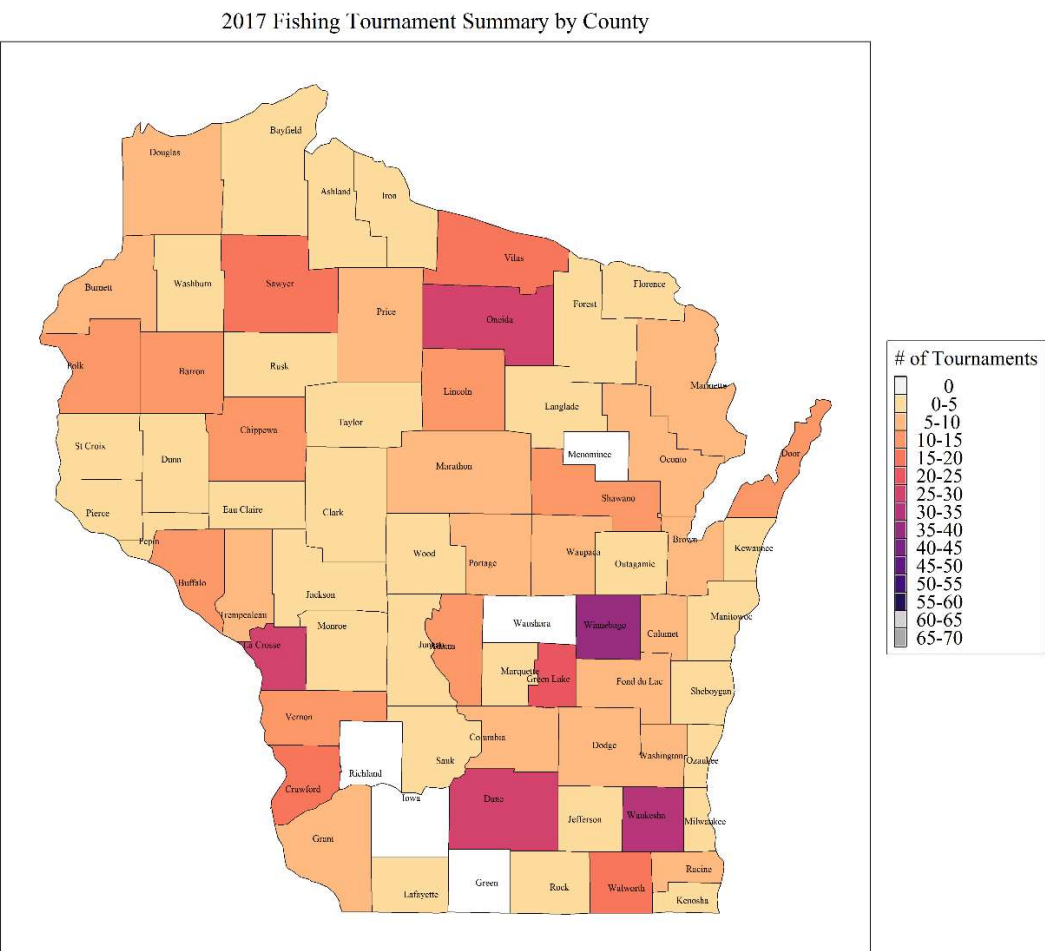


Figure 2: Species summary for fishing tournaments from 2009 – 2017

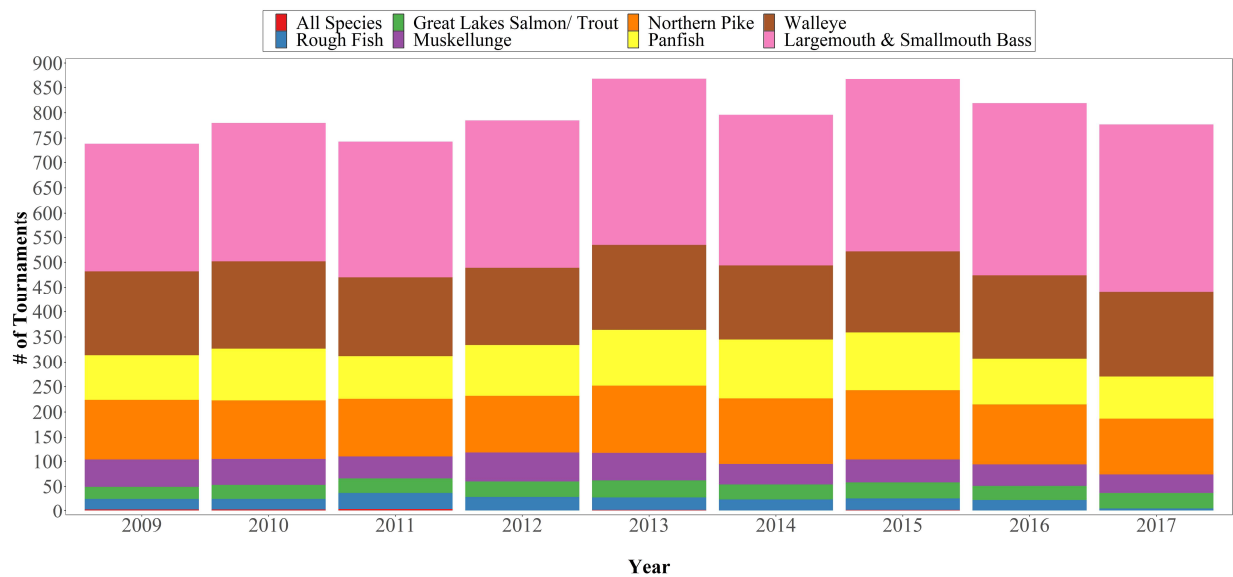


Table 1: Number of tournaments, projected effort, and prize value awarded 2015 - 2017

Effort/Prizes	2015	2016	2017
Tournaments	584	589	577
Anglers	80,641	74,075	68,512
Boats	18,263	16,775	20,911
Hours Fished	2,095,382	2,203,263	1,667,224
Prizes Awarded	\$4,230,367	\$4,277,109	\$4,097,692

Table 2: Catch numbers and release rates for events registering species from 2015 – 2017

Species	Number of fish registered			Percent fish released		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Basses ¹	33,240	30,594	35,038	96%	98%	98%
Walleye ²	17,639	11,693	16,016	60%	75%	79%
Panfish ³	8,243	9,090	9,042	19%	16%	28%
Muskellunge	1,221	955	834	100%	99.9%	99.8%
Northern Pike	2,720	2,351	2,688	30%	34%	42.5%
Rough Fish ⁴	13,542	14,978	10,951	5%	0.01%	1.17%
Great Lakes ⁵	11,253	12,407	9,262	1%	0.01%	9.44%
Other ⁶	N/A	N/A	892	N/A	N/A	12.4%
All Species	91,322	87,381	84,723	51%	48%	62%

¹Basses includes largemouth and smallmouth.

²Walleye includes walleye, sauger, and saugeye.

³Panfish includes crappies, bluegill, sunfish, and yellow perch.

⁴Rough fish include alewife, buffalo, bullhead, bowfin, common carp, freshwater drum, gars, suckers, quillback, redhorses, and other minnows.

⁵Great Lakes includes all salmon and trout species.

⁶Other includes catch data submitted as "all species caught", "all gamefish", or gamefish not included in the above list.

Note: The catch numbers, number of anglers, number of boats, and prize money data were retrieved from reports submitted by the tournament organizers. Currently 24 out of 577 tournament reports have not been submitted.