



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

2019 Summary of Fishing Tournaments in Wisconsin

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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

667 Applications were received
23 applications were withdrawn
20 applications were cancelled
0 applications were denied
624 applications were approved and held
397 catch-hold-release tournaments (64%)
149 catch and keep tournaments (24%)
121 immediate release tournaments (19%)

Notable Results

31 more tournaments were held in 2019 than in 2018; an increase of 5.3% from 2018 to 2019.

Prize value awarded increased by \$997,743 from 2018 to 2019.

Number of largemouth and smallmouth bass registered increased by 12,417 and walleye increased by 7,258 from 2018 to 2019.

Figure 1: Permitted Fishing Tournaments by County in 2019

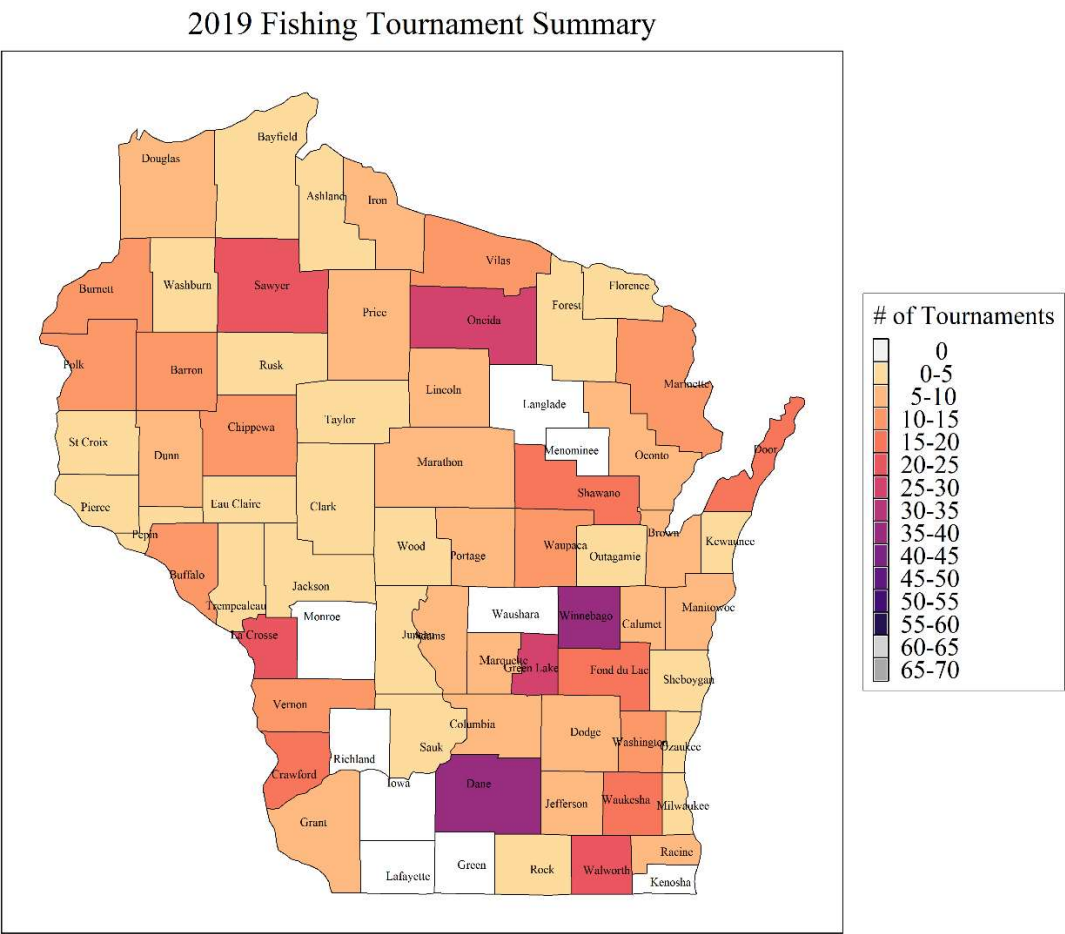


Figure 2: Species summary for fishing tournaments from 2009 – 2019

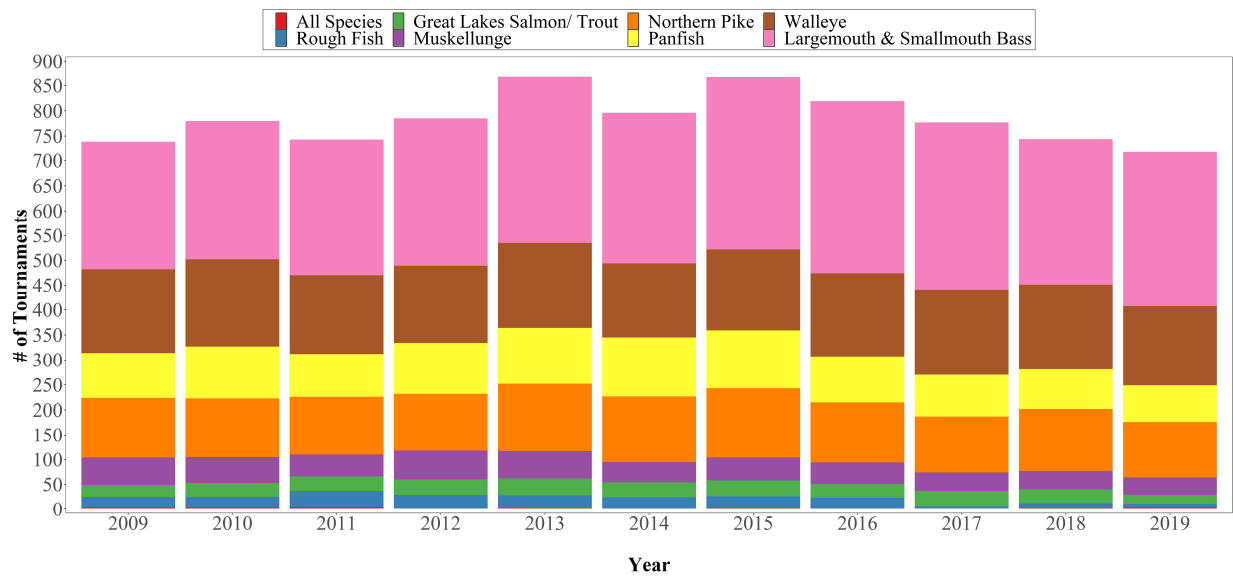


Table 1: Number of tournaments, projected effort, and prize value awarded 2017 - 2019

Effort/Prizes	2017	2018	2019
Tournaments	577	593	624
Anglers	68,512	95,052	78,999
Boats	20,911	19,786	18,865
Hours Fished	1,667,224	2,137,774	2,196,312
Prizes Awarded	\$4,097,692	\$4,502,751	\$5,500,494

Table 2: Catch numbers and release rates for events registering species from 2017 – 2019

Species	Number of fish registered			Percent fish released		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Basses ¹	35,038	27,929	40,346	98%	98%	98.6%
Walleye ²	16,016	25,698	18,440	79%	63%	64.5%
Panfish ³	9,042	8,820	8,842	28%	15.5%	26%
Muskellunge	834	505	739	99.8%	100%	99.9%
Northern Pike	2,688	3,195	2,780	42.5%	43%	30%
Rough Fish ⁴	10,951	22,245	12,519	1.17%	1.44%	13%
Great Lakes ⁵	9,262	9,309	5,529	9.44%	4.8%	14.5%
Other ⁶	892	7,043	1,636	12.4%	3.6%	9.5%
All Species	84,723	104,744	90,831	62%	45%	64%

¹Basses includes largemouth and smallmouth.

²Walleye includes walleye, sauger, and saugeye.

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

⁴Rough fish includes 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 93 out of 624 tournament reports have not been submitted.