



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

2021 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

720 Applications were received
42 applications were withdrawn
7 applications were cancelled
1 application was denied
670 applications were approved and held
479 catch-hold-release tournaments (71.5%)
121 catch and keep tournaments (18%)
135 immediate release tournaments (20%)

Notable Results

127 more tournaments were held in 2021 than in 2020; an increase of 23.4% from 2020 to 2021.

Prize value awarded increased by \$222,063 (8%) from 2020 to 2021.

Number of largemouth and smallmouth bass registered increased by 935 (3%) and walleye increased by 5,847 (58.5%) from 2020 to 2021.

Note: The COVID pandemic may have led to a significant decrease in tournaments occurring in 2020.

Figure 1: Permitted Fishing Tournaments by County in 2021

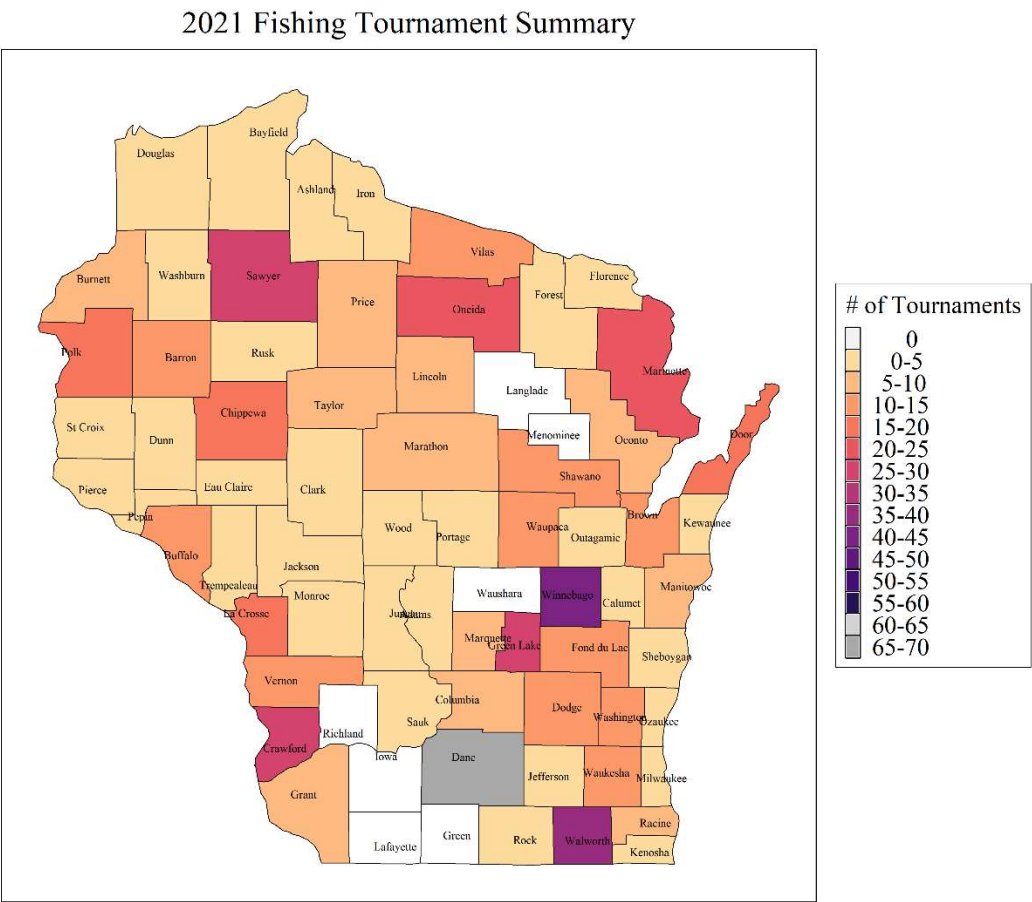


Figure 2: Species summary for fishing tournaments from 2009 – 2021

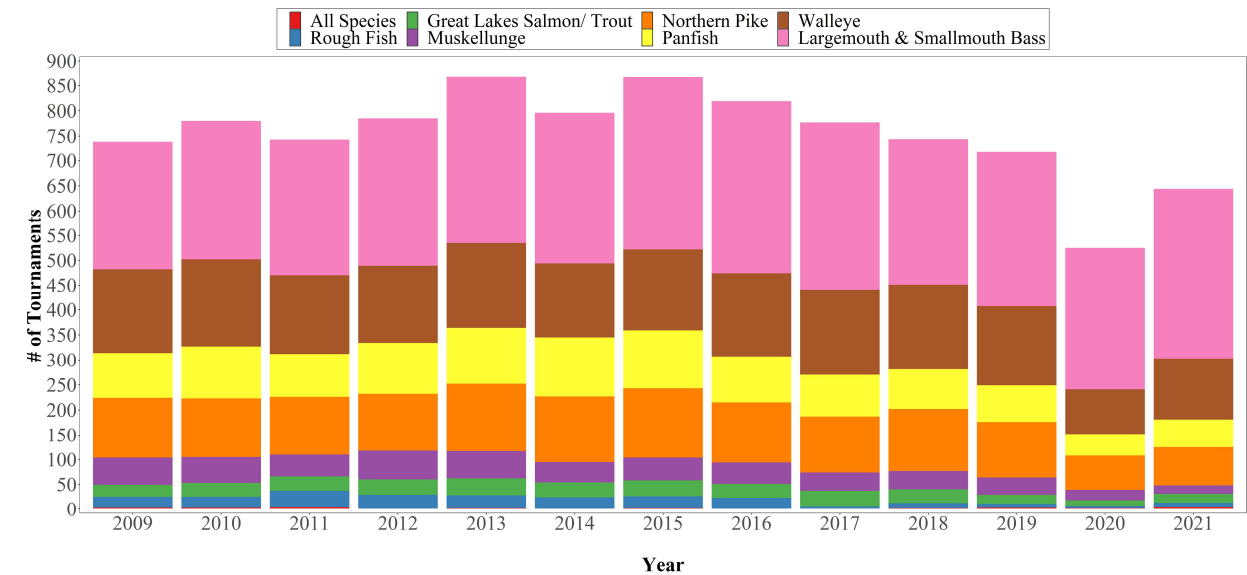


Table 1: Number of tournaments, projected effort, and prize value awarded 2019 - 2021

Effort/Prizes	2019	2020	2021
Tournaments	624	543	670
Anglers	78,999	56,132	68,139
Boats	18,865	13,354	17,124
Hours Fished	2,196,312	2,260,024	1,014,027
Prizes Awarded	\$5,500,494	\$2,687,838	\$2,909,901

Table 2: Catch numbers and release rates for events registering species from 2019 – 2021

Species	Number of fish registered			Percent fish released		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Basses ¹	40,346	31,984	32,919	98.6%	99%	98.7%
Walleye ²	18,440	9,986	15,833	64.5%	79%	71%
Panfish ³	8,842	4,570	5,600	26%	20%	19%
Muskellunge	739	343	426	99.9%	100%	100%
Northern Pike	2,780	1,931	1,611	30%	44%	39%
Rough Fish ⁴	12,519	2,971	3,175	13%	0.9%	4.7%
Great Lakes ⁵	5,529	3,431	3,107	14.5%	0%	1.1%
Other ⁶	1,636	1,541	652	9.5%	10%	36%
All Species	90,831	56,757	63,323	64%	74%	73%

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 150 out of 670 tournament reports have not been submitted.