



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

2022 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

782 Applications were received
15 applications were withdrawn
0 applications were cancelled
4 applications were denied
763 applications were approved and held
468 catch-hold-release tournaments (61%) majority being bass specific
141 catch and keep tournaments (18.5%)
137 immediate release tournaments (18%)

Notable Results

93 more tournaments were held in 2022 than in 2021; an increase of 14% from 2021 to 2022.

Prize value awarded increased by \$685,091 (23.5%) from 2021 to 2022.

Number of basses registered increased by 13,295 (40%) and walleye increased by 6,022 (38%) from 2021 to 2022.

Note: The COVID pandemic may have led to a decrease in tournaments occurring in 2020 and 2021

Figure 1: Permitted Fishing Tournaments by County in 2022

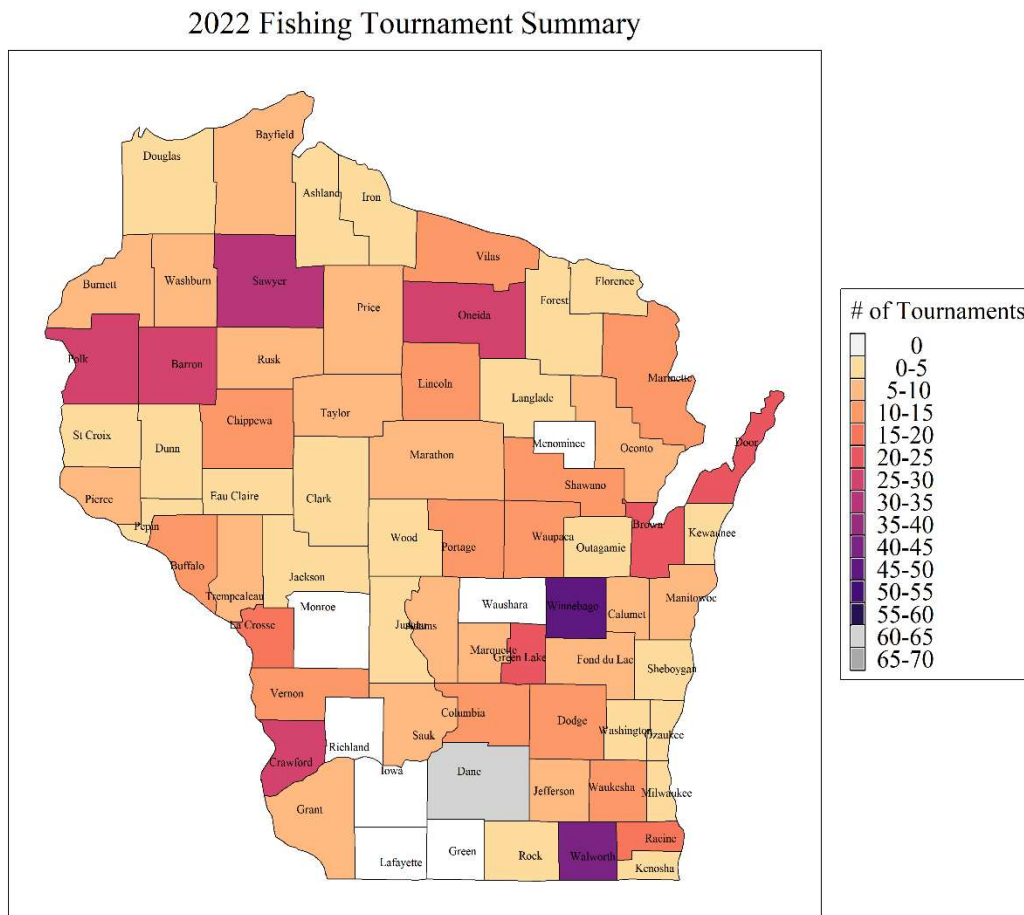


Figure 2: Species target summary for fishing tournaments from 2009 – 2022

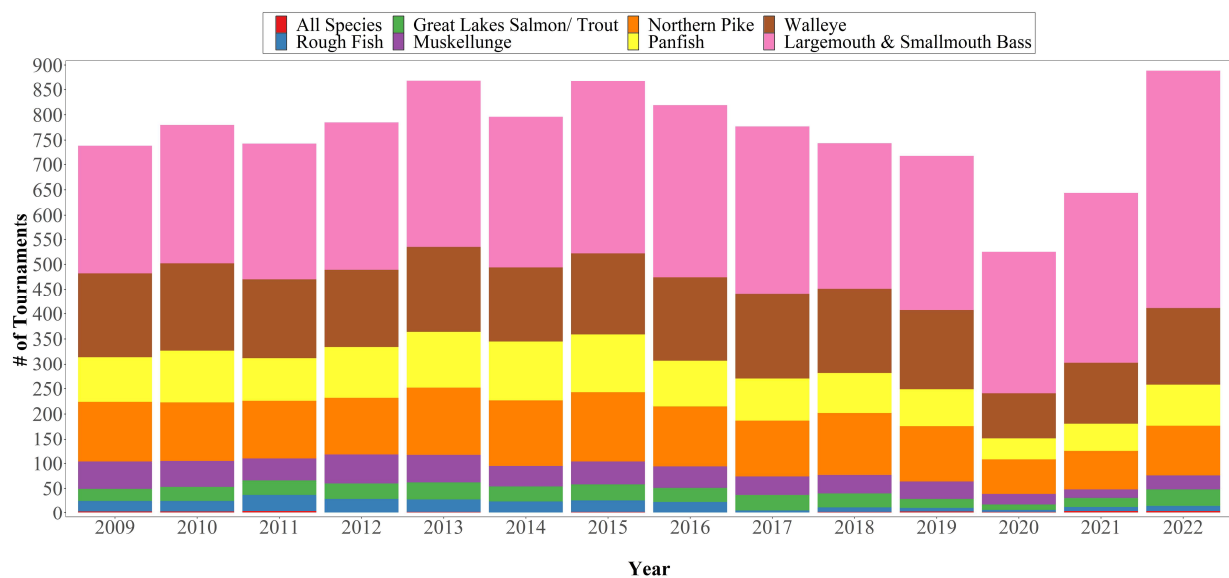


Table 1: Number of tournaments, projected effort, and prize value awarded 2020 - 2022

Effort/Prizes	2020	2021	2022
Tournaments	543	670	763
Anglers	56,132	68,139	73,725
Boats	13,354	17,124	17,132
Hours Fished	2,260,024	1,014,027	1,128,696
Prizes Awarded	\$2,687,838	\$2,909,901	\$3,594,992

Table 2: Catch numbers and release rates for events registering species from 2020 – 2022

Species	Number of fish registered			Percent fish released		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Basses ¹	31,984	32,919	46,214	31,984	32,919	46,214
Walleye ²	9,986	15,833	21,855	9,986	15,833	21,855
Panfish ³	4,570	5,600	10,122	4,570	5,600	10,122
Muskellunge	343	426	628	343	426	628
Northern Pike	1,931	1,611	2,483	1,931	1,611	2,483
Rough Fish ⁴	2,971	3,175	8,445	2,971	3,175	8,445
Great Lakes ⁵	3,431	3,107	7,717	3,431	3,107	7,717
Other ⁶	1,541	652	2,353	1,541	652	2,353
All Species	56,757	63,323	99,817	56,757	63,323	99,817

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 table.

Note: The catch numbers, number of anglers, number of boats, and prize money data were retrieved from reports submitted by the tournament organizers. Currently 190 out of 763 tournament reports have not been submitted.