

**ORDER OF
THE STATE OF WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD
AMENDING RULES**

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board proposes an order to amend s. NR 25.06 (2) (b) 1., relating to commercial fishing for yellow perch in zone 1 (Green Bay).

FH-07-07

Analysis Prepared by Department of Natural Resources

1. Statutes interpreted.

Sections 29.014 (1), 29.041 and 29.519 (1m), Stats.

2. Statutory authority.

Sections 29.014 (1), 29.041, 29.519 (1m) (b) and 227.11 (2) (a), Stats.

3. Explanation of agency authority to promulgate the proposed rules under the statutory authority.

The proposed rule increases the annual commercial fishing harvest limit for yellow perch on Green Bay, which is part of Lake Michigan and is an “outlying water”. Commercial fishing harvest limits are authorized under s. 29.014 (1), Stats., which directs the department to establish and maintain any bag limits and conditions governing the taking of fish that will conserve the fish supply and ensure the citizens of this state continued opportunities for good fishing, while s. 29.041, Stats., provides that the department may regulate fishing on and in all interstate boundary waters, and outlying waters.

Section 29.519 (1m) (b), Stats., grants discretion to the department to establish commercial fish species harvest limits after giving due consideration to the recommendations made by the commercial fishing boards. It also specifies that the limitations on harvests must be based on the available harvestable population of fish and in the wise use and conservation of the fish, so as to prevent over-exploitation. Finally, s. 227.11 (2) (a), Stats., expressly confers rulemaking authority on the department to promulgate rules interpreting any statute enforced or administered by it, if the agency considers it necessary to effectuate the purpose of the statute.

4. Related statute or rule.

Section 29.014, Stats., “Rule-making for This Chapter”; s. 29.519, Stats., “Commercial fishing in outlying waters”; and ch. NR 25, Wis. Adm. Code, “Commercial Fishing – Outlying Waters”.

5. Plain language analysis of the proposed rule.

SECTION 1 of the proposed rule changes the annual total allowable commercial harvest of yellow perch from zone 1 (Green Bay) from 60,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds.

6. Summary of and preliminary comparison with any existing or proposed federal regulation that is intended to address the activities to be regulated by the proposed rule.

There are no existing or proposed federal regulations intended to address the recreational or commercial

harvest of yellow perch on the Great Lakes.

7. Comparison of similar rules in adjacent states (Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Michigan).

There is no commercial harvest of yellow perch elsewhere in Green Bay or Lake Michigan.

8. Summary of the factual data and analytical methodologies that the agency used in support of the proposed rule and how any related findings support the regulatory approach chosen for the proposed rule.

The Department uses a long-term database to assess trends in the Green Bay yellow perch population and to develop recommendations for recreational and commercial harvest limits. The database includes an annual creel survey, regular monitoring of commercial catches, commercial catch reports, and an annual trawl survey of Green Bay. The data are incorporated into a statistical catch-at-age model to estimate the numbers of yearling and older yellow perch in Green Bay. The annual trawl survey also provides an index of natural reproduction. The data demonstrate a steady decline in Green Bay yellow perch abundance through the 1990's, but indicate that exceptionally good natural reproduction in recent years has revived the population and justifies some relaxation of current harvest limits.

9. Analysis and supporting documentation that the agency used in support of the agency's determination of the rule's effect on small businesses under s. 227.114, Stats., or that was used when the agency prepared an economic impact report.

Wisconsin now has 68 individuals licensed as commercial fishers on Lake Michigan (including Green Bay). All 68 are small businesses, or conduct fishing operations with other licensees as part of a small business – often a family business where commercial fishing licenses are held by 2 or more family members. Of these 68 licensees, 21 currently hold permits to harvest yellow perch from zone 1 (Green Bay). Existing rules allocate the total zone 1 allowable harvest among these 21 licensees by percentages, and each permittee's harvestable percentage is then expressed in pounds.

10. Effects on small business, including how the rule will be enforced.

The only directly affected small business are the 21 commercial fishers with Green Bay yellow perch quotas. Any adjustment of commercial harvest limits will affect those businesses. The proposed rule increases the annual harvest commercial limit from 60,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds, so it is clear that as many as 21 small businesses will be beneficially affected by the proposed rule, assuming that the increase is not offset by an equivalent decline in the market price of yellow perch. Indirectly affected small businesses include fish wholesalers, restaurants, and other businesses that provide services to commercial fishers. The indirect effects are also expected to be beneficial.

Commercial fishing harvest limits on Green Bay are enforced by the Department's conservation wardens, county district attorneys and county circuit courts, through the use of citations and civil or criminal complaints under the provisions of ch. 29, Stats.

11. Agency contact person (including e-mail and telephone number).

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SECTION 1. NR 25.06 (2) (b) 1. is amended to read:

NR 25.06 (2) (b) 1. The total allowable commercial harvest in zone 1 for any license year may not exceed ~~60,000~~ 100,000 pounds.

SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE. This rule shall take effect the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin administrative register as provided in s. 227.22 (2) (intro.), Stats.

SECTION 3. BOARD ADOPTION. This rule was approved and adopted by the State of Wisconsin Natural Resources Board on December 5, 2007.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin _____.

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By _____
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

(SEAL)