

Wisconsin Fishing Tournament Regulations

Tournament Permits

Any organized fishing activity, on any water of the state where competition is the primary intent, where prizes are awarded which, in total, have a value of more than \$500, where the total number of participants is greater than 40 individuals or 20 boats, where the waters to be fished are identified by name by the sponsor, and where participants are required to fish on the same dates require a permit from the WDNR. Permit applications can be obtained from the DNR Fisheries Biologist in the county where you plan to hold the tournament. Completed applications should be returned to the appropriate DNR Fisheries Biologist no sooner than one calendar year before and no later than 30 days before the starting date of the tournament. Results of the tournament must be reported to the appropriate DNR Fisheries Biologist within 30 days following the tournament. Forms are provided by the WDNR. A list of DNR Fisheries Biologists can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/fish/people/fisheriesbiologists.shtml>.

General tournament permit conditions include:

- No person may sponsor more than one tournament on the same body of water with starting dates separated by less than two weeks.
- Use of tagged fish is prohibited, except when specifically approved by the Department to enhance collection of data for management purposes as part of a scientific study, or when tagged fish are legally obtained from a licensed private fish hatchery and are planted under a stocking permit issued by WDNR.
- No person may sponsor a fishing tournament for a particular species of fish on the opening weekend of fishing season for that species on any water subject to the opening. (A change in the bag limit or size limit for a particular species constitutes a change in the season and is subject to this provision.)
- Except for tournaments on the Great Lakes, a fishing portion of any tournament may run for no more than 10 consecutive hours each day nor more than three consecutive days. The fishing portion of Great Lakes Tournaments is not limited.
- Any fish taken into actual possession by an individual and not released immediately shall be included as part of the individual's daily bag limit. An angler may possess a fish by common methods such as live well fish cradle, etc. only so long as is necessary to confirm it is legal. Any fish that is transported must be considered part of the angler's daily bag limit. Angling while detaining a fish is prima facie evidence that the fish has been reduced to the daily bag limit.)

Additional conditions may include:

- The permit shall identify areas where competitive fishing is prohibited to protect critical habitat or where habitat enhancement is underway.
- The Department shall identify areas where competitive fishing is prohibited to protect public rights, interests or safety, including designated swimming areas, mooring areas, access areas, navigational channels staging areas, beaches or other special use areas.
- The permit shall specify the method of fish holding and release of fish for tournaments where fish are reduced to possession, usually for purposes of recording, and live fish are then released to the water from which they came.
- The Department reserves the authority to require other than live fish release, contingent upon the weather conditions and water temperatures until the day prior to the start of the tournament. This provision is intended to prevent the release of live fish under conditions where to do so would constitute malicious waste of a natural resource under the provisions of Wisconsin State Statutes, Section 23.09.