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Craig Wilson  
Babe Winkelman

# MN-FISH NEWS



## “Official Newsletter” of the MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation & Coalition

April 2021

### A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT by Ron Schara

First of all, thanks for being a member of MN-FISH and for your support of our primary mission. And that is? To give Minnesota anglers a voice in the legislative decisions made by our elected officials and to function as a watchdog over fish management decisions made by the DNR.

At the moment, only a few fishing-related bills have been introduced and/or discussed in the legislative committees. The most significant is a bill to change Minnesota’s walleye limit statewide from six to four fish, daily and in possession. Your MN-FISH board voted to support this bill largely recognizing the impact of our advanced angling skills and how social media attracts angling crowds to hot walleyes lakes in a matter of hours. It should be noted a four-walleye limit is not likely to make walleye fishing better, but may reduce exploitation of walleye populations as angling pressure increases. If you have an opinion about walleye limits, please reach out to your legislators and email them your thoughts.

In February, DNR fisheries officials and MN-FISH met via Zoom. (See board member Tom Neustrom’s full report on page 2.) Our goal is to have a series of meetings with the DNR in the future to voice the concerns of the MN-FISH membership.

Looking ahead, the 2022 Legislature will be writing a bonding bill, which is our chance to generate funding for modernizing state walleye hatcheries, expanding life sports (fishing, hunting, bird watching, etc.) in schools, repairing, expanding and/or building new public boat accesses and funding a massive stunted pike program, etc. This will be a focus for MN-FISH next year.

Your thoughts and ideas are welcome. Again, thanks for being on the MN-FISH team and please make sure your membership is up-to date. Let’s not let the A in apathy stand for Angler!



### GET ON-BOARD!

**JOIN US** by going to MN-FISH.com and signing up for a FREE 2-Year Charter membership, a \$35 Founding or \$250 Life Membership. Your donation and participation will help to grow our coalition so we can voice your concerns, lobby and negotiate better legislative fishing programs and policies to secure the future of sportfishing here in Minnesota.

Tight lines!

### MEET MN-FISH LEADER DAVE OSBORNE

Dave Osborne has been active as a MN-FISH board member since the day the organization was formed. Why? First of all, Dave is an avid, avid angler – both summer and winter. His passion is fishing!



Secondly, Dave is the CEO and owner of Clam Corporation, based in Rogers, Minnesota - a leading manufacturer of CLAM portable ice fishing shelters,

accessories, Blackfish clothing and gear, All-Terrain Bass Jigs and more.

“I’m proud to be on the MN-FISH Board of Directors as I want to make a difference by giving back and continuing to make fishing a vital part of the lives of every Minnesota angler,” said Dave. “Fishing is an important part of living in Minnesota and we want to continue this for generations of Minnesotans to come.”



### A SPECIAL GIFT TO MN-FISH “SHARES OF STOCK”

MN-FISH member Jane Kingston has donated “shares of stock” to MN-FISH, the first-ever such gift to the organization. Ms. Kingston said the stock donation was in memory of Donald LeRoy Bellerud, LaVerne Mae Eilola, Thomas M. Peterson and David Gary Santelli. THANK YOU Jane Kingston for your generous donation! If you are interested in supporting MN-FISH though

a tax-deductible donation, please contact us at info@mn-fish.com.



“Leading the Way to Minnesota’s Fishing Future”





## MINNESOTA FISHING FACTS



**Over 1.4  
Million  
Anglers**



**11,842 Lakes  
5,400 Fishable**



**90,000  
Miles of  
Shoreline**



**18,000 Miles  
of Fishable  
Rivers & Streams**



**162  
Species  
of Fish**



**825,000  
Registered  
Boats**



**#1 in  
\$\$ Spent  
in Freshwater  
Fishing**



**Supports Over  
43,000 Fishing  
Related Jobs**



**\$2.8 Billion  
in Retail  
Spending**



**Generates  
\$271 Million in  
Tax Revenue**

## MN-FISH MEETS WITH DNR OFFICIALS by Tom Neustrom

On February 11th, members of the MN-FISH board met via Zoom with key members of the DNR to voice concerns of our membership and get a better understanding of the DNR's position on three main subjects: walleye stocking, live bait trapping and tournament fishing.

### **m** DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Minnesota DNR was represented by Deputy Commissioner Bob Meier, Fisheries Chief Brad Parsons, and Fisheries Managers Doug Schultz from Leech lake and Eric Altenna from Little Falls. MN-FISH attendees included Tom Neustrom, Ron Schara, John Peterson, Garry Leaf and Frankie Dusenka.

#### **Walleye Stocking**

According to fisheries chief Brad Parsons, DNR fisheries managers use a combination of science and common sense to manage state fisheries. The DNR is committed to continued stocking waters where a management plan is in place, but relies primarily on natural reproduction to maintain consistent walleye numbers. He also reminded us that over-stocking of walleyes does not mean better fishing. In fact, in many instances, it can lead to a negative walleye harvest.

MN-FISH requested and was granted an annual review of DNR stocking summaries to better understand stocking levels by region, in comparison to regional requests for fry and/or fingerlings.

With more than 100,000 additional fishing licenses sold in 2020, questions were raised on how MN-FISH could help the DNR promote the sale of the Walleye Stamp – an optional \$5 validation to your fishing license that supports private sector stocking to supplement current DNR stocking. The DNR supports private stocking that meet specific criteria established by the agency. However, walleye cannot be introduced into lakes that have not previously been managed for the species.

#### **Live Bait Trapping/Transportation**

MN-FISH voiced growing concerns from live bait trappers, bait dealers and state anglers over minnow shortages due to strict AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) trapping/transportation regulations, especially for fatheads, spottail shiners and golden shiners. The DNR responded by telling us these AIS regulations cannot be deregulated as its spread threatens fish, wildlife, plants and the health of our ecosystem.

The DNR prohibits trapping spottail shiners in Up-

per Red, Lake Winnibigoshish and Mille Lacs when the water temperature reaches 55 degrees. That's the temperature zebra mussels become active and the DNR does not want a spread of them through contacts with bait being trapped and sold publicly.

However, since no VHS (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia) has been found in Minnesota waters to date (except for Lake Superior), some regulations could be lifted in the future to benefit trappers and anglers. Brad Parsons ended the live bait discussions by telling us that due to strict invasive species regulation, private sector, "commercially grown" live bait may become the best way to meet the growing demands for live bait in the future.

#### **Tournament Fishing**

There was discussion for having all tournaments, regardless of size permitted with the DNR to create public awareness prior to events. Support for limiting the number of fishing tournaments on a given body of water, per month/or year, were also aired and discussed for future review.



With an increasing number of tournaments on Minnesota lakes, complaints are coming in from lake associations and recreational users trying to access boat ramps on weekends and holidays. One solution discussed was having the DNR work with event organizers to schedule more events on weekdays to reduce weekend pressure and preserve access space for other recreational users.

MN-FISH voiced support of walleye and bass tournaments going to a Catch, Photo & Release (CPR) format to reduce fish stress and mortality, especially those held during the months of July and August, as well as spring bass tournaments when bass are being transported several miles from their spawning beds to weigh-in sites.

The meeting with the DNR in February was informative, enlightening and highly productive. Our mission was to provide the DNR with valuable input and feedback from MN-FISH anglers and industry stakeholders to assist them in their critical decision-making process.

**MN-FISH.com**

We encourage MN-FISH members to comment on these issues, either directly to MN-FISH or on our Facebook page.

## MN-FISH ICE FISHING SWEEPSTAKE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Two winners have been awarded the top prizes in the WIN-A-MN-FISH Ice Fishing Dream Package prize drawing that took place on March 31st.

Grand prize winner is Owen Tisland from LaPorte, MN who won the Sportsman Lodge Ice Fishing Dream Trip for 4 people (3 nights lodging/2 full day of fishing) valued at \$1,870. His trip will take

place next winter on Lake of the Woods.

Second place prize winner is Mandy Nienas of Duluth. She wins the \$1,500 Ice-Gear Dream Package that includes a CLAM Nanook XL FishTrap fish shelter, a StrikeMaster Lithium 40 volt electric auger, and a 46 piece Team Northland Fishing Tackle ice tackle assortment.



## MN-FISH PRIORITIES & GOALS FOR 2021 by Steve Pennaz

Even though COVID-19 challenged us and tried to put a damper on most of our MN-FISH missions in 2020, we were still able to achieve many of our goals as highlighted in past e-newsletters.

As our country and state continue to recover, MN-FISH has been focused on setting a list of priorities for 2021-22, to include:

**Hire Executive Director** - We expect to hire an Executive Director in the next few months. This position will oversee strategic planning, administration, fundraising, member development, communication and other responsibilities as assigned by the board. MN-FISH will still rely on its strong volunteer committees for the bulk of its work.

**Fund Key Angler Initiatives** - MN-FISH is working with key legislators in both parties to fund key angler initiatives in 2022 through a bonding bill. Projects that have been identified for potential support include modernizing state wall-eye hatcheries, expanding youth fishing programs in schools, repairing, expanding or building new public boat accesses, funding stunted pike and panfish programs, and more. If you have feedback on programs that deserve funding, please contact MN-FISH at [www.MN-Fish.com](http://www.MN-Fish.com).

**Expand Current Board** - The MN-FISH board currently has 15 members, which is five short of the 20 board positions possible under current articles of incorporation. We are actively working to expand the board, looking to increase diversity, capacity and expertise.

### “State-of-Fishing”

**Schedule More Meetings with DNR** - To date, we’ve had three meetings with lead DNR officials, including one with DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen and two with Fisheries Chief Brad Parsons, among others. We plan to hold meetings in the future to share the concerns of MN-FISH members on a variety of topics including stocking, gamefish limits, two-line fishing, youth angling programs, live bait trapping, tournaments, accesses and more.

**Strengthen Member Communications** - With COVID, member communication suffered. We recognize this and have made the commitment to strengthen member and benefactor communication to not only share the work already accomplished, but also to highlight goals for the coming year.



## MN-FISH MISSIONS

Become a grassroots sport fishing, marine and angler advocacy network to give anglers and business stakeholders a voice before the State Legislature and DNR.

Seek greater reinvestment back into sport fishing of the estimated \$271 million in state taxes derived from Minnesota’s robust \$4.2 billion fishing industry.

Act as a watchdog and support DNR fish stocking policies and fish management programs when appropriate.

Support scientific and common-sense fish management of all gamefish species to “shorten-the-time-between-bites”.

Advocate and promote youth fishing recruitment and fishing programs in school curriculums.

Seek funding and assist in expanding the Minnesota Fishing Museum/Hall of Fame/Education Center programs and facility.

To restore, protect and enhance Minnesota Sportfishing for present and future generations of anglers to enjoy.

## YOUTH FISHING PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES by Nicole Jacobs

We all know what springtime in Minnesota means, open water fishing. Over 1.4 million anglers hit the water during this time to share the joy of fishing with family and friends. From the docks, piers and lakeshore of Minnesotas 10,000 lakes to the riverbanks of the Mississippi, families gather to fish.



With the rise of Covid, it is no surprise that there was a significant increase of new anglers fishing in Minnesota in 2020. People wanted to be outside with their families and explore fishing. With over 52,000

new anglers hitting the water, mostly youth; we wanted to highlight three fishing program opportunities to get your kids outside and involved in the great sport of fishing.

**Fishing in the Neighborhood (FIN)** - This program is put on by the Department of Natural Resources, which can be found on their website <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/fin>. It is led by two Fishery Specialists dedicated to the East and West Metro to increase fishing opportunities for families in the Twin Cities and educate them about environmental stewardship.

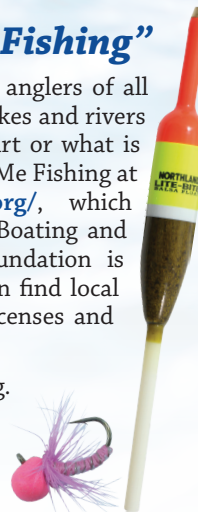
**Fishing for Life** - Tom Goodrich and the Fishing for Life team are dedicated to the growth of youth and family outdoor education. From ice fishing events to local trout ponds, the team has all the resources to get you fishing and continue fishing. This program can be found at <https://fishingforlife.org/>.

**School of Fish** - This fishing program is put on by Mike Frisch and information can be found at <https://fishingthemidwest.com/school-fish/>. School of Fish offers a 2.5-hour course for classroom education on Fishing 101, from knot tying to fish care. This class is dedicated for youth wanting to learn how to fish and for parents looking how to get them started. In addition, School of Fish offers a Walleye class on techniques, understanding electronics and more.

### “Keep Minnesota Fishing”

Minnesota is a gold mine for anglers of all kinds with an abundance of lakes and rivers to fish. Not sure where to start or what is in your area? Check out: Take Me Fishing at <https://www.takemefishing.org/>, which is put on by the Recreation, Boating and Fishing Foundation. This foundation is a dedicated site where you can find local fishing spots, buy a fishing licenses and more.

Happy Fishing.



## “Shorten-the-Time-Between-Bites”





# MN-FISH SPORTFISHING FOUNDATION & COALITION

PRSR MKT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MAILED FROM  
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PERMIT NO. 71

## Restore, Protect and Enhance Minnesota Sport Fishing

### MN-FISH COMMUNICATION LINKS

**MN-FISH News** – Every spring we will send an old-school, printed annual newsletter directly to you via U.S. mail. To ensure delivery, simply go to our MN-FISH website and look up your membership data to confirm that your physical address is correct. This is a FREE publication paid for by your donations.

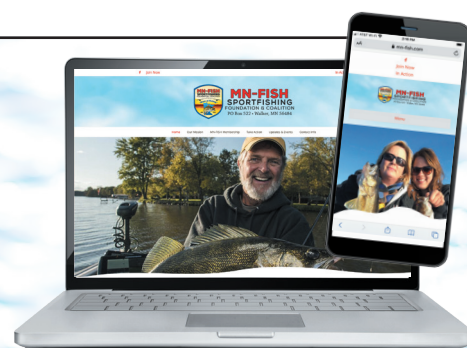
**MN-FISH E-News** – Each quarter (4X a year) you will receive an electronic E-Newsletter submitted to your email address. Look for occasional special issues when important hot topics arise. If you HAVE NOT been receiving emails from us in the past:

1. Check your JUNK MAIL where it's likely being redirected. If so, mark them as "NOT JUNK".

2. Go to MN-FISH website, click on membership and check to make sure the email address listed for you is correct. You are welcome to email us at [info@mn-fish.com](mailto:info@mn-fish.com) and we can confirm it for you as well.

**Social Media** – We have active pages on Facebook and Instagram. They are easy to find, just search MN-FISH Sportfishing on the platform. These pages will keep you informed on a daily/weekly basis on important issues, events, successes and special events. It's vital you follow Like and Share MN-FISH content.

You're a member of MN-FISH because aquatic resources and the recreational opportunities they provide are vitally important to



you. We don't take that responsibility lightly. Thus, we ask you to support our efforts by communicating and passing along our printed and e-newsletters to potential new members and following like and share our posts on social media. Communication takes more than one person, so PLEASE JOIN US.

### ENTER THE MN-FISH "TALL-TALES" CONTEST (For being the best liar!)

Hey Members, now is your chance to tell a "tall fishing tale" AND win a fishing prize for telling the best story.

**Here's an example:** Did you hear? One of my fishing buddies ended up in jail because he hooked a giant fish on the opening day of the season. Huh? Yah, by the time he landed that lunger the season had closed!

Get the idea of how to tell a MN-FISH Tall Fishing Tale? Email entries to: [info@mn-fish.com](mailto:info@mn-fish.com)



### CORPORATE BENEFACTOR SPONSORS - (Copper level or higher)

Johnson Outdoors, Rapala USA, Clam Outdoors, Vexilar Inc., Big Rock Sports, Metro Marine Dealers, Yamaha Motors, Evinrude Outboard, Northland Fishing Tackle, Reed Family Outdoor Outfitters, Otter Outdoors, Diawa Corp., HT Enterprise, Lake Master, Pradco, Aqua-Vu, EBSCO Industries, Normark Corp., Catchcover, Jiffy, Frankie's Marine, Lindner Media, Pennaz Multimedia, Ron Schara Productions, Rassat Outdoor Group, Fishing The Wildside, Trappers Landing Lodge, Arneson's Resort, Deco Pumps, Arrowhead Fulfillment, Rainy Lake Houseboats, Babe Winkelman Productions, Environmental Troubleshooters, Phillips Wine & Spirits, Factory Motor Parts, Village Bank, Fuller Wallner Law, Innovative Outdoor Solutions, Don Coffee Agency, Traditions Media, Timber Ghost Realty, Wired2Fish, Inc., Cannon Tackle, Leech Lake Distributors, Inc..

**Corporate membership supports MN-FISH grassroots advocacy work, legislative activities and public policy development to win pro-angler policy and legislative victories to Keep Minnesota Fishing. Please JOIN US!**

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 15 Minnesota Walleye/Pike Opener
- May 29 Minnesota Bass Opener
- June 5 Minnesota Muskie Opener
- Aug. 13-15 Game Fair 1<sup>st</sup> Weekend
- Aug. 20-22 Game Fair 2<sup>nd</sup> Weekend

[www.MN-FISH.com](http://www.MN-FISH.com)



**"Leading the Way to Minnesota's Fishing Future"**