Wild Bait Harvest Proposed Rule Summary

• ~65 commercial wild bait harvesters in WI

• ~265 wild bait harvest permit applications per year

• The primary species targeted by commercial wild bait harvest are chubs, suckers (incl. common white suckers), fathead minnows, mudminnows, dace, emerald shiners, common shiners, bluntnose minnows, and spottail shiners

• Wild bait harvest reporting is not currently required

• Goal of this rule: create, implement, and evaluate a wild bait harvest reporting system, address issues with the current rules, and develop a framework to address future issues

• This is an initial step in a larger comprehensive assessment of our current exotic/invasive/detrimental species strategy
Anticipated Timeline

- Fall 2023: Economic Impact Analysis and Internal Review
- Nov 2nd, 2023: Public Hearing on Rule Change
- December 2023: Rule review and NRB adoption
- Winter 2023: Governor’s Approval and Legislative Review (extending into Spring 2024)
- Summer 2024: Rule in effect
Wild Bait Harvest Proposed Rule Change

Main Topics

- Permit Duration
- Reporting Requirements
- Non-Standard Gear Use
- White Sucker Egg Take
- Commercial and Personal Minnow Harvest on VHS waters

Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR
Genetics Management Policy

- WI Statute - 2017 WI ACT 21 – “Aquaculture Bill” directs DNR to define the role and extent that genetics are involved in fish stocking.
- WI Administrative Code, NR 1.02(4), NRB Genetics Policy, eff. 2/2020.

  - Preserving the genetic integrity of fish stocks documented and proven to survive and thrive in WI waters is a central goal of fisheries management in WI.

  - All inland fish stocking shall be authorized by permit and shall be conducted to maintain the genetic boundaries of fish best adapted to those waters.

  - The department shall implement fish stocking strategies to ensure that fish stocked are best suited to survive and thrive in the unique ecological conditions found throughout WI.

  - These strategies shall be developed in partnership with private aquaculture to protect, sustain and improve the genetic integrity of native, nonnative and self-sustained fish populations.
Genetic Management Units
2024 Engagement Opportunities

• DNR staff visit WI private hatcheries throughout the state
• Develop a task group to gather input and discuss options
• DNR convenes public meetings to gather input and discuss options
2024 Wisconsin Aquaculture Association Conference

Thank you

Questions or comments

March 22, 2024 DNR.WI.GOV
Commercial and Personal Minnow Harvest

Current Regulations
No commercial or personal harvest of minnows on VHS-affected waters

Proposed Changes
None
Currently evaluating options to assess potential future changes
VHS Collected in Wisconsin