

MANITOBA'S RECREATIONAL ANGLING STRATEGY

Managing our World-class Fisheries



Manitoba 

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Recreational angling draws hundreds of thousands of Manitobans and visitors to lakes, rivers and ponds to enjoy the diverse and vibrant fishing opportunities that Manitoba has to offer. Angling also generates significant economic, social and cultural benefits for our province.

Recreational angling is important in Manitoba because:

- More Manitobans fish than participate in any other single outdoor activity. Approximately 14 per cent of Manitoba adults fish, in addition to many children and rights-based harvesters.
- Manitoba is one of a few jurisdictions in North America that continues to see increasing angler participation. Approximately 190,000 angling licences are sold each year, of which approximately 150,000 are sold to Manitoba Residents.
- Angling generates approximately \$600 Million in annual economic benefits.
- Manitoba is home to over 150 lodges and outfitting businesses catering to anglers.
- While fishing does occur in urban areas, it is primarily a rural activity, generating vital employment and economic benefits for many communities and businesses across Manitoba.

Science-Based Approach to Fisheries Management

- Manitoba has the responsibility to sustainably manage our fisheries.
- Many fisheries are mixed-use and support domestic harvest, commercial fishing and recreational angling activities. Manitoba must balance the needs of all resource users.
- Manitoba collects fish population data and harvest information from numerous fisheries. This information is used to inform decisions on the sustainable management of fisheries.

GROWING PRESSURE ON MANITOBA'S FISHERIES

Each year, angling grows in popularity. In 2020-21, many Manitobans stayed closer to home due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. While total licence sales decreased slightly, angling licence sales for Manitoba Residents increased by eight per cent in 2020-21.

As angling participation continues to increase, Manitoba is responding to the growing demand for enhanced fishing experiences by creating new angling opportunities, strengthening fish population monitoring and implementing new measures to protect our fisheries.



MANITOBA IS INVESTING IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Manitoba is investing in our fisheries, now and into the future, by:

- modernizing our angling regulations to become the leader in recreational fisheries management across North America
- making significant financial and human resource investments to improve the monitoring and sustainable management of our world class fisheries
- strengthening links between fisheries and enforcement staff to protect our valuable fish populations
- prioritizing fish stocking to the most valuable and best uses for Manitobans and visiting anglers
- investing in fisheries enhancement through a newly endowed \$20 Million trust for the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, with continuing investments each year
- advancing progress toward the eco-certification of commercial fisheries

WHAT ANGLING REGULATION CHANGES ARE BEING PROPOSED?

The following pages outline Manitoba's proposed plans to transform recreational angling.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK.



OUTCOMES OF MANITOBA'S RECREATIONAL ANGLING STRATEGY

Enhance Protection

- Possession limits and size restrictions will be modified to enhance protection of fish stocks.
- New protection measures will lower the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species.
- Collection of fisheries data on high-use recreational angling lakes and commercially-fished lakes will be enhanced to monitor fish populations and better inform the management of our world-class fisheries
- Ten percent of licence revenues will support fisheries enhancement through the newly established Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund.

Increase Opportunities and Local Benefits

- New opportunities to fish year-round will be introduced, providing more opportunities for anglers and increasing economic benefits to local businesses that cater to anglers.
- Trophy fisheries will be promoted.

Simplify Regulations and Reduce Red Tape

- Regulations will be streamlined and easier to understand.
- Red tape will be reduced for Manitoba Seniors.

Add Flexibility

- A new short-term, low-cost licence will be available.
- A new option to carry your angling licence electronically will be introduced.
- Angling licences will continue to be available online and in-person with participating vendors.

Strengthen Enforcement

- An enhanced partnership between fisheries and enforcement staff will strengthen compliance with commercial fishing and recreational angling regulations.

TIMELINE FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

APRIL 1, 2023

Implementation of Manitoba's Recreational Angling Strategy will require amendments to both provincial and federal fisheries regulations. Therefore, changes are proposed to take effect on April 1, 2023.



MODERNIZING MANITOBA'S ANGLING LICENCES

Moving to a Single Annual Licence Type

Manitoba is proposing to move to one annual licence for each residency type, moving away from the current two-tier licence system of conservation and regular licences:

- Implementing one possession limit for all licence types for each fish species

Adding a New Licence Type

Manitoba is proposing to add a one-day license for Manitobans, Canadians and non-residents.

- A one-day licence creates a low-cost option for anglers who may only fish one or two days per year.

Reducing Red Tape for Manitoba Seniors

Manitoba is proposing to remove the requirement for Manitoba seniors to obtain an angling licence.

- Manitoba seniors would be required to show proof of age (65 years or older) while angling.
- Manitoba seniors would be responsible for ensuring they follow all angling regulations.

Licence Fees

Manitoba is proposing to implement modest fee changes to reflect the move to one annual licence type and the addition of a new one-day licence option.

- Manitoba will continue to maintain some of the lowest angling licence fees across Canada.
- Anglers who typically purchase a regular licence will pay slightly less.
- Anglers who typically purchase a conservation licence will pay slightly more.

Licence Type	Manitoba Residents	Canadian Residents	Non-Residents
1-Day	\$8.40	\$12.60	\$19.95
Annual	\$23.10	\$37.80	\$57.75

**The licence fees noted above include sales taxes. However, an administration fee will be applied at the time of purchase.*

Carrying your Angling Licence

Manitoba is proposing to remove the requirement to sign your angling licence, meaning anglers may carry either an electronic or paper copy of their licence.

- Anglers must be able to show their licence to a Conservation Officer upon request.

Residency Definitions

Manitoba is modifying residency definitions to create consistency between angling and hunting licences and permits.

ANGLING SEASONS AND LIMITS

ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES, BETTER PROTECTION

Species-specific Seasons

Manitoba is proposing to implement species-specific seasons, which will allow anglers to fish year-round for some species.

Possession Limits

Manitoba is proposing to implement one possession limit for all licence types by fish species.

- Possession limits for some fish species will be consistent with the current conservation limits, whereas possession limits for other fish species will be consistent with current regular limits.
- Lake specific regulations will still apply to protect vulnerable fish populations or create unique angling experiences.

Protection of Large Fish

Manitoba is proposing to implement new size restrictions to protect large fish, enhancing opportunities to catch trophy-sized fish.

Closed to All Angling Areas

- Manitoba is proposing to strategically close some areas to all angling from the first Monday in April, to and including the third Friday in May, to protect spawning fish.
- Proposed “closed to all angling” areas include:
 - o the Red River and its tributaries, to the first impassable barrier between Lockport and Lake Winnipeg
 - o the Assiniboine River, downstream of the Portage Diversion to Highway 240
 - o Dauphin Lake and its tributaries
- Indigenous rights-based harvesters can continue to fish for food in these closed areas.



A NEW TOOL TO HELP PLAN YOUR NEXT FISHING ADVENTURE

The Manitoba government recently launched **Lake Information for Anglers**, a new interactive website that provides valuable fisheries information in an accessible format. For more information, visit www.manitobafisheries.com.

Anglers can access the site to view lake contour data, fish stock assessment data, boat launch photos and fish stocking records.

Lake Information for Anglers is a great tool to help plan your next fishing adventure to one of Manitoba’s world class fishing destinations.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SEASONS AND LIMITS BY SPECIES

SPECIES	SEASON	POSSESSION LIMIT	SIZE RESTRICTIONS
WALLEYE / SAUGER	<p>SOUTHERN DIVISION: Open 3rd Saturday of May, to and including the last Sunday of Spring Break Closed 1st Monday in April, to and including the 3rd Friday in May</p> <p>NORTHERN DIVISIONS: Open 3rd Saturday in May to and including Last Day in April Closed May 1, to and including the 3rd Friday in May</p> <p>Anglers must not target Walleye or Sauger during the closed season. Anglers must immediately release all Walleye and Sauger incidentally caught during the closed season.</p>	4	<p>One may exceed 55 cm</p> <p>None may exceed 70 cm</p>
NORTHERN PIKE	Open year-round	4	<p>None over 75 cm between and including 1st Monday in April and the 3rd Friday in May</p> <p>One may exceed 75 cm None may exceed 90 cm outside period above.</p>
LAKE TROUT	<p>SOUTHERN DIVISION: Open November 1, to and including September 14 Closed September 15, to and including October 31</p> <p>NORTHERN DIVISIONS Closed during spawning, to be determined upon further consultation</p>	1	None may exceed 65 cm
LAKE STURGEON	<p>SOUTHERN DIVISION: Open June 16, to and including April 30 Closed May 1, to and including June 15</p> <p>NORTHERN DIVISIONS Open July 1, to and including April 30 Closed May 1, to and including June 30</p> <p>Conservation closures on the Winnipeg River and the Nelson River systems remain in place.</p>	0	N/A
SMALLMOUTH BASS	Open year-round	4	<p>One may exceed 40 cm</p> <p>None may exceed 45 cm</p>
CHANNEL CATFISH	Open year-round	4	None may exceed 60 cm
STOCKED TROUT	Open year-round	3	<p>One may exceed 45 cm</p> <p>None may exceed 60 cm</p>
BLACK CRAPPIE	Open year-round	6	None may exceed 35 cm
YELLOW PERCH	Open year-round	25	N/A
LAKE WHITEFISH	Open year-round	10	N/A
BLUEGILL AND PUMPKINSEED	Open year-round	10	N/A
ALL OTHER SPECIES	Open year-round	No proposed changes	No proposed changes

HOW DOES THIS STRATEGY PROTECT WALLEYE POPULATIONS?

Manitoba is taking measures to protect Walleye and Sauger populations by:

- opening the walleye and sauger season one week later than the current opening date
- imposing a provincial possession limit of four walleye and sauger (combined) for all licence types
- increasing the protection of large, spawning-size Walleye through new size restrictions
- implementing closed to all angling areas to protect important Walleye and Sauger spawning grounds, and limiting fishing during spawning in areas that experience high angling pressure (excluding rights-based harvest for food)
- enhancing angler education initiatives
- strengthening enforcement to monitor compliance with fisheries regulations

A BALANCE BETWEEN INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTECTING OUR FISHERIES

Manitoba is experiencing an increase in angling and is introducing new opportunities to fish year-round. As a result of the increase in angler participation in our world-class fisheries, Manitoba is taking measures to enhance protection of fish populations through lowering possession limits for certain species, closing areas to licensed angling to protect spawning fish, and introducing new size restrictions to protect large fish.



AQUATIC LIVE BAIT HARVEST AND USE

LOWERING THE RISK OF THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Manitoba is proposing a ban of aquatic live bait harvest and use effective April 1, 2027:

- includes live bait fish and leeches
- does not include night crawlers or frogs

Risk associated with aquatic live bait use:

- Aquatic live bait fish and leeches are transported in water, which is a route for the movement of aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels.
- The threat of new introductions of aquatic invasive species and fish diseases into Manitoba waters is increasing, as new aquatic invasive species are found in neighbouring jurisdictions, across Canada and the U.S.
- The use and possession of live bait fish is prohibited in other jurisdictions across Canada, including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec. In Manitoba, live bait fish are already prohibited in Northern Manitoba Fishing Divisions, most provincial parks and stocked trout waters.

DID YOU KNOW?

Zebra mussel veligers (larvae) are microscopic and too small to see with the naked eye. Veligers are so tiny, they can be moved unknowingly to new waterbodies in any surface water including the water used to transport live bait fish and leeches.

ICE FISHING ENHANCED SAFETY

Identification on Ice Fishing Shelters

Manitoba is proposing that anglers must continue to include identification information on ice fishing shelters. However, anglers will be able to use their fishing licence information as an alternative, as follows:

- first and last name or valid angling licence customer ID number
- phone number

An address will no longer be required.

Rights-based harvesters can use their full name and phone number.

Removal of Ice Fishing Shelters

Manitoba is proposing that ice fishing shelters in Area B in the Southern Fishing Division be removed by March 15.



FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of Fisheries Offences

Manitoba resource enforcement and fisheries staff have recently joined under the Wildlife, Fisheries and Resource Enforcement Branch in the department of Agriculture and Resource Development. This strengthened partnership will focus enforcement efforts on the most serious fisheries, wildlife and resource infractions. It will also ensure that enforcement priorities are aligned with fisheries and wildlife priorities, and that it can respond to the changing landscape and needs.

Amendment to The Contravention Act

Manitoba is proposing to move the Ticketable Offences currently under the Manitoba Fishery Regulations, 1987, to the federal Contraventions Act. This will ensure that enforcement of the designated offences will be treated as contraventions, will be less onerous on the offender, and more proportionate and appropriate to the seriousness of the violation.

This will also give Manitoba the mechanism to effectively recover administrative court costs for summary convictions and ticketable offences.

Restitution

In addition to fines for offences or convictions, restitution will continue to apply as outlined in provincial legislation.

A young boy wearing a red cap and a blue life vest is fishing in a lake. He is holding a fishing rod and has a fish on the line. The background shows a calm lake with reeds and a blue sky.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK ON MANITOBA'S RECREATIONAL ANGLING STRATEGY

Please submit your written feedback on our proposed plans through EngageMB.