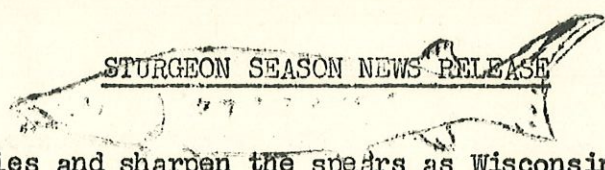


Feb 1959 Sturgeon News release



Darken your shanties and sharpen the spears as Wisconsin's largest trophy fish will soon be fair game again.

Sturgeon fishing begins on Lake Winnebago and Little Lake Butte des Morts on Wednesday, February 11 and extends through March 1. The spearing season on lakes Poygan, Winneconne and Big Lake Butte des Morts starts Saturday, February 14, 1959, but is open only 3 days through Monday, February 16, 1959.

The spearing season for last year was limited to Lake Winnebago where 464 fish weighing 23,000 pounds were harvested. In 1957, with all four lakes open, 1,273 fish were speared weighing 52,846 pounds. The size difference between lakes shows the average weight of speared fish from Lake Poygan to be 25 pounds, while from Lake Winnebago, the average is nearly 50 pounds per fish.

Ice varies at the present time from 22 to 35 inches with snow presenting a minor travel problem at the time of this writing. Water clarity varies throughout all lakes, but generally visibility can be considered improved over last year, especially along the east shore of Lake Winnebago.

The bag limit for speared sturgeon, is one fish per season. The minimum size remains at 40 inches.

No special license is needed, other than the regular fishing license and a legal 1959 sturgeon tag costing \$1.00 which shall be locked to the tail of the sturgeon immediately after it is speared.

Other general regulations have been briefed up and emphasized by conservation wardens to help keep sturgeon fishermen out of trouble. Regulations will be strictly enforced as the sturgeon requires utmost protection.

During the coming season, sturgeon may be taken only by hand-operated spears between sunrise and sunset. No spears are allowed in fishing shanties before the sturgeon spearing season opens or after the season closes, nor between sunset and sunrise while the shanties are occupied.

All sturgeon tags must be in possession of the owner of the tags and they may be left in shanties only if the shanty is occupied in person by the owner of the tags.

All fishing shanties shall have the name and address of their owner painted on the outside and the door of each shanty or enclosure, shall be equipped with a latch which permits the door to be opened from the outside while it is occupied.

Fishermen may fish other species with hook-and-line during the open season while spearing sturgeon, but no fish other than sturgeon may be speared. Previous years catfish and rough fish were legal for spearing, but in 1959, such spearing is banned for better protection of the sturgeon.

It is unlawful for any person to cut, use or maintain a hole larger than 12 inches in diameter or square for the taking of fish in any manner through the ice, except for dip-netting or skin diving purposes; however, during the open season for spearing sturgeon, it shall be legal to cut, use and maintain holes of unrestricted sizes from 24 hours before and continuing through such season. Regulations prohibit holes larger than 12 inches in diameter or square, after the spearing season closes; however, this should not hamper fishermen who desire to leave their fishing shanties after the sturgeon season, as it would be legal for them to leave the holes freeze over and maintain the 12 inch hole for hook-and-line fishing. Persons moving their shanties during the season and after, are reminded that Wisconsin law provides a maximum penalty of \$100 for neglect to place a guard around the openings in the ice.

Research points out that concern of extinction is not the problem, but that overharvest of a slow-growing fish may easily ruin future spearing. Studies of the sturgeon population in Lake Poygan during the fall of 1958, showed that only 15 per cent of the fish were large enough to spear. There is a large number of fish between 30 and 40 inches, so spearers will have to look close before throwing their spear. Known length decoys and measured marks visible on the bottom of the shallow lakes would help spearers estimate a sturgeon length. The attraction of sturgeon spearing is the chance to spear a trophy fish, not the harvest of 7 to 10 pounds which would live to be a real trophy for their children 20 or 30 years hence.

Within 24 hours after a sturgeon is speared, it shall be registered in the county where taken at a registration station. At the station, a registration tag will be attached to the fish and both that tag and the fisherman's own \$1.00 sturgeon tag shall remain on the fish until it is prepared for eating. Below is a list of registration stations:

The following will operate from February 14 through February 16, from 10:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.:

- . Richter's Landing - northeast ice road on Lake Poygan.
- Winneconne - on the ice on the east shore of Lake Winneconne.
- Niemuth's Road (North shore) - directly south of the ice road from
the mouth of Elder Creek.

Public road - south shore on ice off from Herbst's and Brettschneider's.

The following stations will operate from February 11 through March 1, from 10:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.:

Oshkosh Area Headquarters, 905 Bayshore Drive.

Neenah Police Station.

Waverly Beach - on ice along main ice road from beach.

Sherwood - Ray Hayes' filling station.

Fairy Springs Boat Landing - 1-1/2 miles north of Calumet County Park Road.

Stockbridge - the building next to road leading to the lake.

Brothertown - in old garage building on highway through the Village.

Calumet Harbor - State fisheries station.

\$10 REWARD FOR TAGGED STURGEON

An incentive for the return of information useful to fish biologists will be offered for the third year when the sturgeon spearing season gets underway Wednesday, February 11, 1959.

Between 900 and 1,000 sturgeon are now carrying numbered tags which, when turned in at a registration station, will entitle the spearer to a \$10 reward. The tags are mostly on the back fin, but some are on the tail or snout. If you are lucky enough to spear a tagged sturgeon, do this:

Lock your \$1.00 sturgeon tag into place and take the fish to the nearest registration station. The attendant will record and keep the numbered tag, remove the innards, cut off the two front fin bones, and return the registered fish to you. That qualifies you for a \$10 reward which is sent by check to your home within 30 days.

The sturgeon must be dressed at the registration station to qualify for the reward.

If the tagged sturgeon has eggs, you can keep those too, except for a small sample required by the fish biologists.

Conservation Department officials emphasize that every sturgeon tagged is not a legal 40 inch fish, so do not judge the size of the fish merely by recognizing a tagged one swimming past your hole.

The officials said biological studies of sturgeon are dependent on the cooperation of sportsmen. Biologists already know a lot about the species and are aiming at a perpetual harvest.