

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Box 2565
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54903
Phone: (414) 424-3059

NEWS RELEASE

OSHKOSH --- The 1979 sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago is fast approaching! This year the season opens on February 10 and continues through March 1.

Spearers on Lake Winnebago in 1978 experienced almost ideal conditions. Opening day saw excellent water clarity, with visibility extending to the lake bottom throughout most of Lake Winnebago, and travel on the ice presented no problems. These conditions prevailed through the entire 19-day season, resulting in the most successful harvest since 1972.

The total harvest on Lake Winnebago in 1978 was 1,246 fish. These fish had an average length of 56 inches and an average weight of 46 pounds. Seventeen of the fish taken weighed in over the 100 pound mark. The largest of these was a 77 inch fish that tipped the scales at 120 pounds. It was taken by Arno Lau of Hilbert. *The largest fish taken in 1978 was a 79 inch, 100 pound fish taken by Daniel Volmer of Hilbert.*

There is no spearing season on Lakes Poygan, Winneconne and Butte des Morts in 1979.

Spearers trying their luck on Lake Winnebago this year, are once again reminded that the minimum size limit on sturgeon is 45 inches. It is an opportunity to harvest a trophy fish and if there is the slightest doubt as to whether or not a fish is of legal length -- do not throw the spear!

All spearers must have a \$^{5.50}2.50 sturgeon spearing license and be at least 14 years of age. Spearers 14 and 15 years old are not required to have a hook and line fishing license in order to obtain a spearing license, but everyone else must have a current fishing license along with a sturgeon spearing license.

Persons under 14 years of age are not authorized to spear sturgeon. The license must be carried by the person at all times while fishing for sturgeon by means of a spear. A sturgeon tag is furnished with each license and must be immediately locked to the tail of the fish after it is speared.

cont
Sturgeon spearing licenses will be available throughout the season, however after the opening weekend, they will be available only from the county clerks (Winnebago, Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie and Waushara Counties) and the Department of Natural Resources' stations at Oshkosh or Calumet Harbor. Any persons losing their license may obtain a duplicate from the county clerks or Department of Natural Resources for \$1.00.

On the same day a sturgeon is speared, it shall be registered at an official DNR registration station by not later than 6:00 p.m. At the station, a registration tag will be attached to the fish and both that tag and the fisherman's own sturgeon tag shall remain attached until the fish is consumed.

Lake Winnebago contains a number of sturgeon that have DNR tags affixed to their dorsal fins. It is very important that anyone spearing a tagged fish bring it to the attention of the registration station. The information gathered from these tags will be of considerable value in the management of the Lake Winnebago sturgeon population. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Spearers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the pamphlet, "Wisconsin Spearing and Netting Regulations for 1979" -- ¹⁹⁸⁰ as all regulations will be strictly enforced. Should you have any questions, contact your local conservation warden.