



2020-2022 Fishing Seasons

ATTENTION ANGLERS

FREE FISHING DAYS
Residents of North Dakota
may fish without a resident
fishing license on June 6-7,
2020, December 26-27, 2020,
June 5-6, 2021 and December
25-26, 2021.



The North Dakota Game & Fish Department announces the following summary of regulations and changes for the 2020-2022 fishing seasons.

This summary of regulations covers the two year proclamation period of April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022. A fishing year is defined as being from April 1 of one calendar year through March 31 of the following calendar year. During each of the two fishing years, an angler must possess a valid fishing license for the respective season. Rules and regulations can be found in the 2020-2022 Fishing Guide Booklet available when you purchase your license. Please retain the booklet for the two year period.

AREA	SEASON	STATEWIDE DAILY AND POSSESSION LIMITS		
All Waters of the State except for those listed below.	Open to all fishing April 1 through March 31 of each fishing year.	Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
OWLS Pond State Fair Pond	Closed to fishing at night (sunset to sunrise).	* Walleye, Sauger, Saugeye, or Combination	5	10
		Northern Pike	5	10
Lightning Lake McDowell Dam	Open to all open-water fishing. Closed to all ice fishing.	Yellow Perch	20	40
		Bluegill	10	20
State Fair Pond	Closed July 4 to July 16, 2020, and July 4 to July 22, 2021.	White Bass	20	40
		Crappie	10	20
Portions or all of the following waterfowl rest areas: Sheyenne Lake, North Golden Lake	Closed to all fishing September 20 through November 30 or when conditions allow for ice fishing (whichever comes first). Open to all fishing all other times.	Trout	3	6
		Salmon	5	10
All national wildlife refuges and easement national wildlife refuges are closed to fishing except the following (contact refuge headquarters for designated open areas and special restrictions):		Burbot (Ling)	10	20
		Channel Catfish	* East of ND Highway 1 West of ND Highway 1	5 no limit
Arrowwood, J.Clark Salyer, Lake Darling (and all waters within the Upper Souris refuge boundary), Lake Ilo, Long Lake, and Tewaukon national wildlife refuges	Open to shore and/or ice fishing April 1 through March 31 in designated areas. Open to boat fishing May 1 through September 30 in designated areas. Closed to all boating October 1 through April 30.	Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, or Combination	3	6
		Muskellunge (pure or hybrid)	1	1
Lake Alice and Lake Audubon (southern half of lake) national wildlife refuges	Open to ice fishing only. Closed to all other fishing and all boating.	Paddlefish (legal snagging only)	Season limit of 1 (tagged)	
		Nongame Fish (Other than legal live baitfish)	no limit	no limit
Dakota Lake, Hobart Lake, and Sibley Lake (Griggs County) easement national wildlife refuges	Open to all fishing April 1 through September 30 and December 1 through March 31. Closed to all fishing and boating October 1 through November 30.	Smelt	5 gallons	5 gallons
		*Legal Live Baitfish	150	150
Lake Ardoch, Rose Lake, and Silver Lake (Benson County) easement national wildlife refuges	Open to shore and/or ice fishing from April 1 through March 31. Contact refuges for specific areas and times open to boat fishing.	Leeches	300	300
		Frogs	24	24
Closed to Fishing	That portion of the Red River below the Drayton Dam for a distance of 150 feet. From or within 100 feet of the bridge located between North and South Lake Metigoshe. Areas near the Garrison Dam Tailrace so posted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No person shall fish or boat in areas posted by the Game and Fish Department as rearing ponds, spawning areas, or other closed areas.	Salamanders	24	24
		Crayfish	48	48
GENERAL	Daily limit is a limit of fish harvested from midnight to midnight. No person may harvest or possess more than North Dakota's daily limit of fish while on the water or on the ice or actively engaged in any manner of fishing. Possession limit is the maximum number of each legally taken fish species that a person may have in their actual possession during any phase of any single fishing trip of more than one day. Game fish are bluegill, burbot, channel catfish, chinook salmon, crappie (black and white), largemouth bass, muskellunge (pure and hybrid), northern pike, paddlefish, sauger, saugeye, smallmouth bass, sturgeon (pallid, shovelnose, and lake), trout (brown, lake, rainbow, and cutthroat), walleye, white bass, yellow perch, and zander. Nongame fish are all species not named as game fish or legal live baitfish. Unoccupied fish houses must be removed from all waters beginning March 15 until ice-out. It is illegal to leave fish houses on any federal refuge land, Corps of Engineers land, Bureau of Reclamation land, or on any state-owned or managed land after March 15 of each year. It shall be illegal to take, possess or transport any of the following species of fish in North Dakota. All of the following must be immediately released back into the water from which they were caught: pallid sturgeon, shovelnose sturgeon and lake sturgeon.	Snapping Turtle	One annually (legal only between July 1 and November 15)	
		* Zander are included as part of the walleye, sauger, saugeye combination in Spiritwood and Alkali lakes (Stutsman Co.).		
* In the Red and Bois de Sioux rivers, Channel Catfish limit is 5 regardless of the number of state or provincial licenses purchased by angler.				
* Aggregate of all legal species.				
EXCEPTIONS TO STATEWIDE FISHING LIMITS				
RED AND BOIS DE SIOUX RIVERS UP TO THE FIRST VEHICULAR BRIDGE OR CROSSING ON ANY OF THEIR TRIBUTARIES		NORTHERN PIKE - Daily 3, Possession 3		
LIGHTNING LAKE		WALLEYE, SAUGER, SAUGUEYE, OR COMBINATION - Daily 3, Possession 3		
OWLS POND		TROUT - Catch & release only from Apr 1 through June 30.		
STATE FAIR POND		ALL SPECIES - Catch & release only.		
KRAFT SLOUGH		TROUT - Catch & release only from Apr 1 through July 31.		
MISSOURI RIVER, LAKES SAKAKAWEA, OAH, ASHTABULA, AUDUBON, DARLING AND TSCHIDA	YELLOW PERCH - Daily 10, Possession 20			
	SMALLMOUTH BASS - Daily 5, Possession 10			

ARCHERY AND SPEARFISHING

Archery fishing is legal from April 1 through March 31 of each fishing year.

Spearfishing is legal from May 1 through November 30 of each fishing year.

Game fish may not be taken with bow/arrows or spears. Archery and spearfishing is legal only in certain waters.

UNDERWATER SPEARFISHING

Underwater spearfishing is legal from May 1 through November 30 of each fishing year.

The following fish may not be taken with underwater spearfishing gear: smallmouth bass, muskellunge, paddlefish and sturgeon.

Underwater spearfishing is legal only in certain waters.

DARKHOUSE SPEARFISHING

Darkhouse spearfishing is legal from ice-up through March 15 of each fishing year.

Individuals who are required to possess a valid fishing license to participate in darkhouse spearfishing must first register with the Department.

Northern pike and nongame fish are the only legal species for darkhouse spearfishing.

Darkhouse spearfishing is legal only in certain waters.

PADDFISH SNAGGING

The snagging of paddlefish is legal May 1 through May 21 of each fishing year, in certain areas of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. Snaggers must possess a valid tag.

Yellowstone paddlefish shall be legal only from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Central Time) each day. Snaggers must immediately release all paddlefish on Snag and Release Days and immediately tag their one paddlefish on Harvest Days.

COMMERCIAL FISHING

Non-contract commercial fishing may be allowed in certain waters from May 15 through November 30.

The season for harvesting clams or mussels is closed. The season for harvest of turtles is closed.

NEW FOR 2020-2022

(Summary of Changes)

- Lake Ashtabula and Whitman Dam are added to the list of waters where darkhouse spearfishing is not allowed.
- The smallmouth bass daily limit is increased from 3 to 5 in the Missouri River and lakes Sakakawea, Oahe, Audubon, Darling, Ashtabula and Heart Butte.
- Area and time for paddlefish extended snag/release days is expanded.
- Fish may be filleted for transport, unless size limits apply, under the following conditions:
 - Each individual portion of the meat removed from a fish is considered a fillet (Fish cheeks and pectoral girdles (wings) are not considered as fillets and are legal to transport).
 - Two fillets are counted as one fish, and
 - The packaging of fish must be done in a manner so that the fillets can be readily separated and counted. If fillets are frozen, they must be packaged so that the fillets are separated and thus can be easily counted without thawing.

For additional fishing information
visit our website at gf.nd.gov

LICENSING BY COMPUTER OR BY PHONE QUICK - CONVENIENT - EASY

You can instantly purchase general licenses and also apply for most lottery licenses 24 hours a day - 7 days a week. Visa, Discover, MasterCard and American Express accepted.

Via the Internet
visit our website at
gf.nd.gov

Regular license fees apply with no service charge added. Applicants must print out their own license and those without a printer will receive a confirmation number to carry.

By Phone
call toll free
800-406-6409

In addition to the license fee(s), a service charge will be added. Service charge will vary depending on amount of transaction.

FISH SIZE RESTRICTIONS

Water Areas	It is illegal to take or possess:
Anywhere in the state	Muskellunge Less than 48 inches in Total Length
Lake Elsie Richland County	Walleye/Sauger Less than 14 inches in Total Length
Buffalo Lake (including connected waters north to Sargent Co. Rd. 1) Sargent County	
Jamestown and Pipestem Reservoirs upstream to and including the first bridge crossing Stutsman County	
All waters east of ND Highway 1 including the Red and Bois de Sioux rivers.	More than 1 Channel Catfish Greater than 24 inches in Total Length

A complete 2020-2022 Fishing Proclamation listing all regulations is available from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 North Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. (701) 328-6300.