

OUTDOORS

CALL OF THE WILD

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have a unique hunting, fishing or outdoors tale.
Call the Journal at 285-7411

DNR NEWS BRIEFS

Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness
(Rough Guidelines for New Clear Ice Only)


2" or less
STAY OFF!!

4 Inches
Ice Fishing

5 Inches
Snowmobile or ATV

8-12 Inches
Car or Small Pickup

12-15 Inches
Medium Truck

 **Department of Natural Resources**

CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

Reminder: Ice is not safe right now

Ice is forming on some lakes, rivers and ponds around Minnesota, but DNR conservation officers warn it is too early to venture out.

“The thin layers of ice forming on some Minnesota waters right now are not safe,” said Maj. Greg Salo, operations manager, DNR Enforcement Division. “A few days of cold temperatures don’t create ice strong enough to hold a person.”

According to Salo, three people died last winter after falling through the ice.

The DNR recommends anyone heading out on the ice should: carry a set of ice picks, check with a local bait shop or resort—ask about ice conditions—and measure the ice.

- DNR clear ice thickness recommendations are:
- 4 inches for walking.
 - 5 inches for a snowmobile or ATV.
 - 8-12 inches for a car.
 - 12-15 inches for a medium-sized truck.

For more information, visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/thickness.html.

Upper Red Lake walleye regulations revised

Walleye regulations will be more restrictive on Upper Red Lake following record walleye harvests the past winter and summer, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Effective Dec. 1, anglers can only keep three walleye, and the possession limit is also three. Anglers must immediately release all walleye from 17- to 26-inches. Only one walleye in possession may be longer than 26 inches.

“More restrictive walleye regulations are not an indication of any biological problems with the walleye population on Upper Red Lake,” said Gary Barnard, Bemidji

area fisheries supervisor. “The current walleye fishery is in excellent shape, but the great fishing has attracted considerably more angling pressure, which resulted in walleye harvest exceeding the safe harvest range for the first time since walleye angling reopened in 2006.”

The DNR and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa jointly developed a harvest plan for Red Lake’s walleye stocks in 2006 prior to reopening the fishery that governs walleye harvest on an annual basis. The plan allows for some excess harvest in an individual year, but requires a regulation adjustment to manage harvest back within a target range on a three-year average.

Harvest reduction scenarios were the topic at an Upper Red Lake Citizen Advisory Committee meeting in late September.

“Previous advisory meetings were easier when we were relaxing regulations, but everyone on the committee understands the importance of protecting this fishery and adhering to our joint harvest plan,” said advisory committee member Joe Corcoran.

The regulation package had full support from the committee as the best way to balance harvest reduction with business and angler interests, Corcoran added.

Mille Lacs open to pike spearing; walleye regulation unchanged

Dark-house spearing of northern pike will be allowed at Mille Lacs Lake for the first time since the winter of 1982-83, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Anglers and spearers can keep 10 northern pike, of which only one may be longer than 30 inches. Anglers also will be able to fish for northern pike for a longer period of time this winter. The close of the northern pike angling season will be extended from mid-February to the last Sunday in March.

“With the high number of northern pike under 30 inches, we’re providing more opportunity to harvest these surplus fish,” said Rick Bruesewitz, DNR Aitkin area fisheries supervisor.

The lake’s walleye fishing regulations will not change this winter.

Anglers can continue to keep two walleye from 18- to 20-inches, except one out of the two walleye anglers can keep can be longer than 28 inches.

“We’ll continue to protect small and large walleye by extending the existing walleye regulation,” Bruesewitz said.

Although the catch of bass in winter is extremely rare, anglers on Mille Lacs are exempted from the statewide catch-and-release regulation that begins in mid-September. This means anglers may harvest smallmouth bass from the opener until the last Sunday in February. Anglers may keep six fish, only one of which may be longer than 18 inches.

For more information on Mille Lacs Lake, visit www.mndnr.gov/millelacslake.

Bitter winter has impact on gypsy moth

Experts caution: More cold weather won’t eliminate the population

MDA REPORT

Last winter’s harsh temperatures have resulted in some positive benefits – a decline in the state’s gypsy moth population.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture captured approximately 500 moths this year in traps around the state. That’s a major shift from last year’s count of over 71,000 moths.

“We knew going into this survey season that our numbers would be down,” said Kimberly Thielen Cremers, MDA’s Gypsy Moth Program supervisor. “Studies have shown extended stretches of extreme cold have an impact on gypsy moth eggs as they overwinter. However, we cannot let our guard down over this invasive insect.”

In fact, University of Minnesota research has shown gypsy moth egg masses can survive a harsh winter if located below the snowline.

“While the decrease in moths is good news, we know they will bounce back quickly,” said Brian

Aukema of the forest insect laboratory at the University of Minnesota. “A single surviving egg mass will produce more than 500 hungry caterpillars.”

The placement of survey traps throughout the state also affected 2014 trapping numbers.

“We placed 60 percent fewer traps in the quarantined counties of Lake and Cook this year,” said Thielen Cremers. “We know a reproducing population is established there; 90 percent of the moths caught in the state in 2013 were in those two counties, so this year we placed more traps ahead of that established population to keep on top of the spreading gypsy moth infestation.”

Gypsy moth caterpillars, which are not native to North America, eat the leaves of many trees and shrubs. Severe, repeated infestations can kill trees, especially when the trees are already stressed by drought or other factors.

For more information on gypsy moth, go to www.mda.state.us/gypsymoth.

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