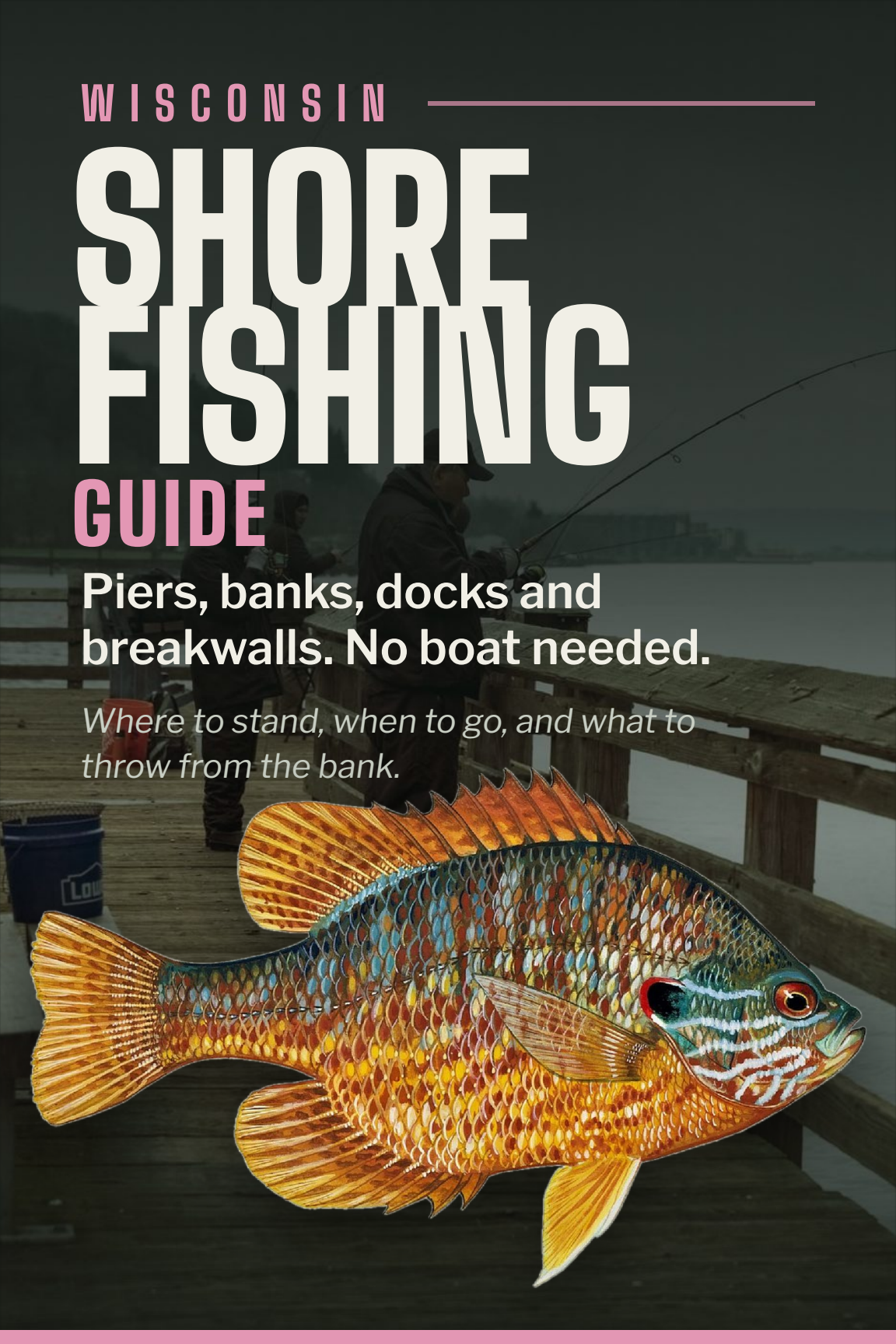
WISCONSIN

SHORE FISHING GUIDE

Piers, banks, docks and breakwalls. No boat needed.

Where to stand, when to go, and what to throw from the bank.



WISCONSIN

SHORE FISHING

Guide

Piers, banks, docks and breakwalls. No boat needed.



Wisconsin Shore Fishing Guide
First edition, October 2026

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Read this first. Fishing rules change every year and differ by lake. Everything about seasons, sizes and bag limits in this book is for the 2026–27 season, checked 2026-10-08. Always check the current Wisconsin DNR rules and your lake's own rules before you fish. Depth maps are not for navigation. Ice is never guaranteed safe. You are responsible for your own safety and for following the law.

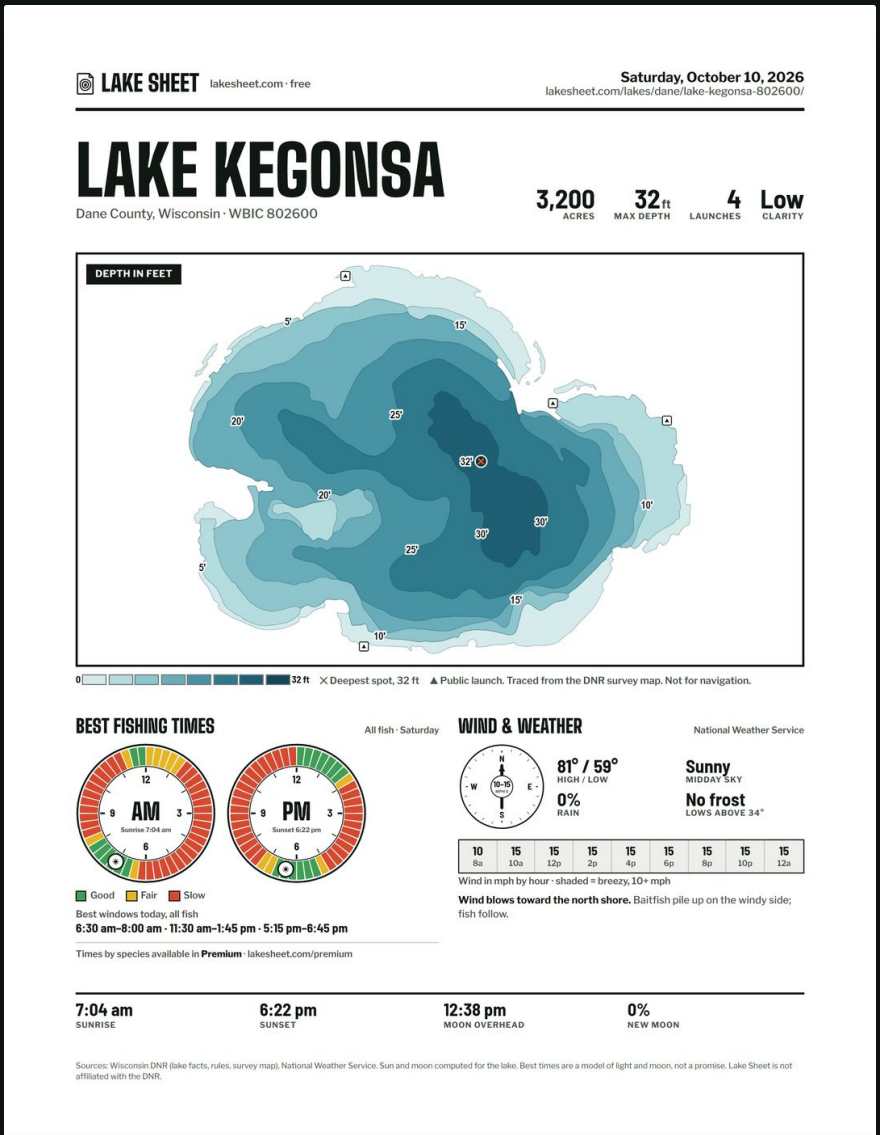
Lake Sheet is not affiliated with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Lake facts come from DNR survey and stocking records as published by Lake Sheet; see the sources at the back of the book.

lakesheet.com

FREE WITH THIS BOOK

YOUR FREE LAKE SHEET

Free for more than 4,600 Wisconsin lakes: two printable pages, made for the boat. This is the real sheet for Lake Kegonsa.



LAKE SHEET lakesheet.com · free

Saturday, October 10, 2026
lakesheet.com/lakes/dane/lake-kegonsa-802600/

LAKE KEGONSA

Dane County, Wisconsin · WBIC 802600

3,200	32 ft	4	Low
ACRES	MAX DEPTH	LAUNCHES	CLARITY

DEPTH IN FEET

5' 15' 20' 25' 32' 20' 10' 30' 30' 25' 5' 15' 10'

0 32 ft · ✕ Deepest spot, 32 ft · ▲ Public launch. Traced from the DNR survey map. Not for navigation.

BEST FISHING TIMES

All fish · Saturday

AM — Sunrise 7:04 am

PM — Sunset 6:22 pm

Good · Fair · Slow

Best windows today, all fish
6:30 am–8:00 am · 11:30 am–1:45 pm · 5:15 pm–6:45 pm

Times by species available in **Premium** · lakesheet.com/premium

WIND & WEATHER

National Weather Service

81° / 59°
HIGH / LOW

0%
RAIN

Sunny
MIDDAY SKY

No frost
LOWS ABOVE 34°

10	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
8a	10a	12p	2p	4p	6p	8p	10p	12a

Wind in mph by hour · shaded = breezy, 10+ mph

Wind blows toward the north shore. Baitfish pile up on the windy side; fish follow.

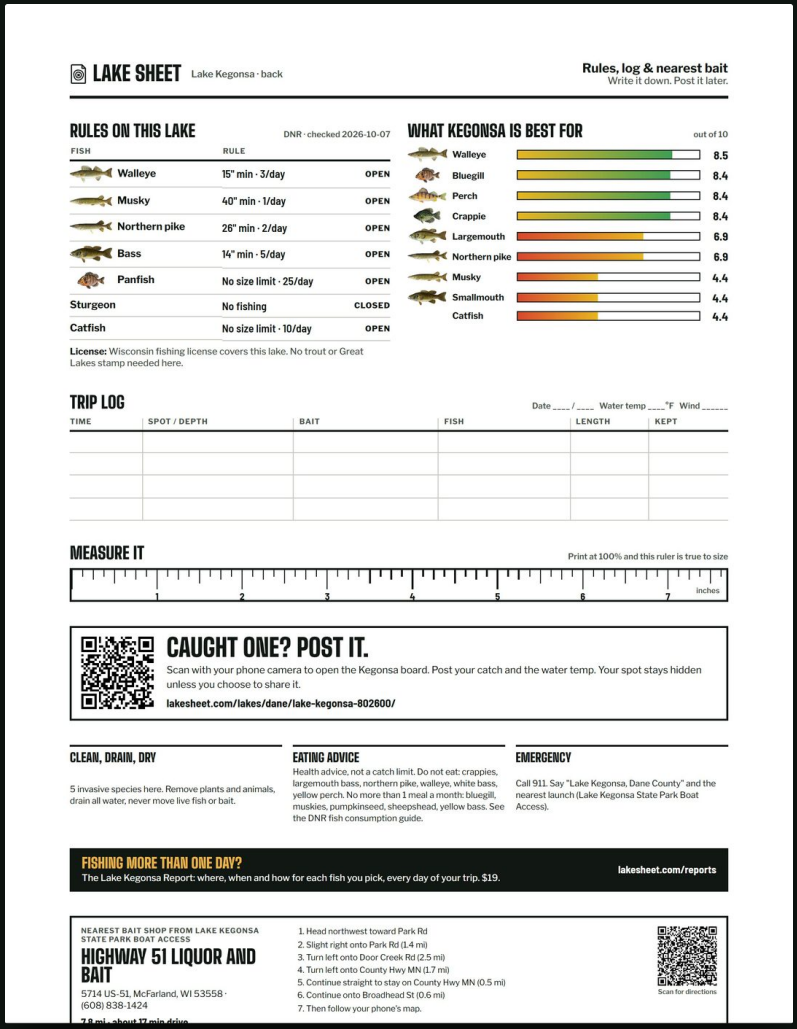
7:04 am	6:22 pm	12:38 pm	0%
SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON OVERHEAD	NEW MOON

Sources: Wisconsin DNR (lake facts, rules, survey map), National Weather Service. Sun and moon computed for the lake. Best times are a model of light and moon, not a promise. Lake Sheet is not affiliated with the DNR.

1. **Depth map** traced from the DNR survey, deepest spot marked (traced lakes)
2. **Lake facts:** acres, max depth, launches, clarity
3. **Best times** from the sun and moon on AM and PM dials
4. **Wind and weather** by the hour, and which shore the wind hits
5. **Sun and moon** times for the lake
6. **Sources and date** on every fact

THE BACK OF THE SHEET

RULES, LOG & NEAREST BAIT



LAKE SHEET Lake Kegonsa · back

Rules, log & nearest bait
Write it down. Post it later.

RULES ON THIS LAKE

DNR · checked 2026-10-07

FISH	RULE	
Walleye	15" min · 3/day	OPEN
Musky	40" min · 1/day	OPEN
Northern pike	26" min · 2/day	OPEN
Bass	14" min · 5/day	OPEN
Panfish	No size limit · 25/day	OPEN
Sturgeon	No fishing	CLOSED
Catfish	No size limit · 10/day	OPEN

License: Wisconsin fishing license covers this lake. No trout or Great Lakes stamp needed here.

WHAT KEGONSA IS BEST FOR

out of 10

Walleye	8.5
Bluegill	8.4
Perch	8.4
Crappie	8.4
Largemouth	6.9
Northern pike	6.9
Musky	4.4
Smallmouth	4.4
Catfish	4.4

TRIP LOG

Date ____ / ____ Water temp ____°F Wind _____

TIME	SPOT / DEPTH	BAIT	FISH	LENGTH	KEPT

MEASURE IT

Print at 100% and this ruler is true to size

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 inches

CAUGHT ONE? POST IT.

Scan with your phone camera to open the Kegonsa board. Post your catch and the water temp. Your spot stays hidden unless you choose to share it.

lakesheet.com/lakes/dane/lake-kegonsa-802600/

CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY

5 invasive species here. Remove plants and animals, drain all water, never move live fish or bait.

EATING ADVICE

Health advice, not a catch limit. Do not eat: crappies, largemouth bass, northern pike, walleye, white bass, yellow perch. No more than 1 meal a month: bluegill, muskies, pumpkinseed, sheepshead, yellow bass. See the DNR fish consumption guide.

EMERGENCY

Call 911. Say "Lake Kegonsa, Dane County" and the nearest launch (Lake Kegonsa State Park Boat Access).

FISHING MORE THAN ONE DAY?
The Lake Kegonsa Report: where, when and how for each fish you pick, every day of your trip. $19.
lakesheet.com/reports

NEAREST BAIT SHOP FROM LAKE KEGONSA STATE PARK BOAT ACCESS

HIGHWAY 51 LIQUOR AND BAIT

5714 US-51, McFarland, WI 53558 · (608) 838-1424

7.8 mi · about 17 min drive

1. Head northwest toward Park Rd
2. Slight right onto Park Rd (1.4 mi)
3. Turn left onto Door Creek Rd (2.5 mi)
4. Turn left onto County Hwy MN (1.7 mi)
5. Continue straight to stay on County Hwy MN (0.5 mi)
6. Continue onto Broadhead St (0.6 mi)
7. Then follow your phone's map.

Scan for directions

1. **This lake's rules** for every fish, from the DNR
2. **What the lake is best for,** rated by fish
3. **Trip log** and a true-size **ruler**
4. **Invasive species** and eating advice
5. **Nearest bait shop** we know of, with turn-by-turn directions
6. Scan to post your catch

lakesheet.com

Find your lake, print it, take it in the boat

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for anyone who fishes without a boat: new anglers, old hands who sold the boat, kids on a city pond, and anyone who wants to fish before work or after supper without hooking up a trailer. It doesn't repeat the basics of tying a knot or reading a bobber; the **Start Fishing** guide in this series does that. It shows you where you're allowed to stand, when the fish come within reach, and how to fish from the bank better than most people fish from boats.

IF YOU HAVE ONE EVENING

1. Pick a lake from Chapter 8 or search yours on lakesheet.com.
2. Use Chapter 3 to find a drop-off you can reach from a pier or launch.
3. Check the wind on the sheet and stand on the shore it hits (1.5).
4. Rig a slip bobber (5.5) and fish the last two hours of light.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO SHORE FISHING

1. Chapter 2: where the public can fish, and where it can't.
2. Chapter 4: the light bank kit and pack list.
3. Chapter 5: cast farther, snag less.
4. Chapter 7: piers, rocks and waves. Read it before Lake Michigan.

The QR codes. Most lakes named in this book have a code. Scan it with your phone camera and you land on that lake's free Lake Sheet: depth map, best times, wind and which shore it hits, launches, the nearest bait shop and the lake's own rules.

The rules. Seasons, sizes and bag limits change every April 1, and many lakes have their own. Rules in this book are for the 2026–27 season. Rules about where you may stand (shorelines, bridges, dams, parks) can change too, and some are being argued in Wisconsin courts right now (2.9). When a sign and this book disagree, the sign wins.



CHAPTER 1

WHY SHORE FISHING WORKS, AND WHEN

A boat lets you reach every fish in the lake. You don't need every fish. For weeks at a time each spring and fall, and for an hour at each end of every summer day, a big share of a lake's panfish, bass, pike and walleye are within 40 yards of dry land. Shore fishing is the skill of being on the right bank at those times.

1.1 Why fish come to you · **1.2** The shore year, month by month · **1.3** Spring: the best weeks of the year · **1.4** Summer: early, late and after dark · **1.5** Wind blowing into your shore · **1.6** Fall: the second spring · **1.7** Weather and fronts

1.1

WHY FISH COME TO YOU

Fish go where three things meet: **food, cover and comfortable water.** The shallow strip along shore holds more food than any other part of a lake. Sunlight reaches the bottom there, so weeds grow; weeds hold insects, snails, crayfish and minnows; and those feed every fish you want to catch. Shallow water also warms first in spring and cools first in fall, so it's where fish go when the deep water is too cold or too warm.

The shore fish's world has **edges**: the line where weeds stop, where sand turns to rock, where the bottom drops from 4 feet to 12, where a dock's shade meets the sun, where a creek's warm water meets the lake. Fish travel and feed along edges. Your job is to find an edge you can reach with a cast.

WHAT DRAWS FISH TO SHORE	WHEN IT MATTERS MOST	WHERE TO LOOK
Spawning	Late March to July, by species	Shallow bays, sand and gravel flats, rock, flooded grass
Warm water	Spring, and sunny afternoons in fall	North shores (they get the most sun), shallow bays, inlets
Wind-blown food	Any windy day, May to October	The shore the wind blows into (1.5)
Low light	Dawn, dusk, overcast days, night	Weed edges and drop-offs close to shore
Cover	Midday, bright days	Docks, piers, fallen trees, lily pads
Current	All year	Inlets, outlets, below dams, around bridges

1.2

THE SHORE YEAR, MONTH BY MONTH

Water temperature runs the fish calendar. The months below are typical for southern and central Wisconsin; in the far north, push spring events one to two weeks later. Spawning temperatures are from the Wisconsin DNR's species pages and leaflets.

MONTH	WHAT'S WITHIN CASTING RANGE	BEST SHORE SPOTS	BAIT THAT WORKS
January–February	Panfish and trout under the ice; open water below dams	Dam tailwaters, warm-water outflows on Lake Michigan	Small jigs, waxworms, spawn sacs
March	Perch and early crappie as ice leaves; pike spawning (season closed inland)	North-facing bays, channels, harbors	Minnows, small jigs under a float
April	Crappie and perch shallow; walleye spawning (inland season closed until the first Saturday in May; the Mississippi and other boundary waters stay open, and spring below the Genoa, Alma and Lynxville dams is big shore walleye fishing)	Shallow bays, canals, rocky shores, river mouths	Minnows, 1/32-oz jigs, waxworms
May	Crappie spawning (61–68°F), bass moving shallow, walleye at night	Piers, docks, brush, rock and gravel, riprap	Minnows, small jigs, crawlers
June	Bluegill and pumpkinseed nesting, bass on and off nests	Shallow sandy and gravel flats, docks, piers	Worms, crickets, small plastics
July–August	Panfish on the weed edge; bass and walleye shallow at dawn, dusk and night; catfish at night	Piers that reach deep water, points, drop-offs near shore	Leeches, crawlers, slip bobbers
September	Fish return to the shallows as water cools	Weed edges, points, rocky shores	Minnows, crankbaits, spinners
October–November	Big perch, crappie, pike and walleye shallow; salmon and trout at Lake Michigan piers	Rocky points, river mouths, harbor walls	Minnows, spoons, stickbaits
December	Last open water; trout in harbors	Dam tailwaters, harbors, warm-water outflows	Spawn, small spoons

CLOSED MEANS CLOSED

In Wisconsin it's illegal to fish for a species during its closed season, even catch and release. Inland, northern pike and walleye seasons open May 2, 2026. Bass are catch and release only before the harvest season opens. Panfish, bullheads and catfish are open all year on general inland waters. Check your lake's own rules on its Lake Sheet.

1.3

SPRING: THE BEST WEEKS OF THE YEAR

From ice-out through June, a shore angler is at no disadvantage to a boat. Most fish move into water you can reach to warm up, feed and spawn (spawning temperatures are in Chapter 6).

- **Ice-out to April:** the first open water is along north shores, in shallow bays, channels and canals. Crappie and perch gather there first; a minnow or tiny jig under a float, fished slowly, is the whole technique.
- **May:** crappie spawn around brush, bulrushes and docks; largemouth and smallmouth build nests on sand, gravel and rock. Every one of those is a shore spot.
- **June:** bluegill and pumpkinseed nest in colonies of round, pale, plate-sized beds on sand or gravel. Fish just outside them.

Rules of thumb: fish the warmest water, fish afternoons in April, go small and slow, don't stand on nests, and don't fish for pike or walleye before May 2 on inland waters.

1.4

SUMMER: EARLY, LATE AND AFTER DARK

By July most lakes have warmed past what bass, walleye and bigger panfish like at midday, and the fish slide out to deeper weed edges and drop-offs. You still catch them from shore, but you have to pick your hours and your spots.

TIME	WHAT'S SHALLOW	HOW TO FISH IT
First light to 2 hours after sunrise	Bass, walleye, big bluegill, pike	Topwater for bass; slip bobber on the weed edge; spinners on points

Midday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Small panfish in shade	Fish under and beside docks and piers; drop a bobber in pockets of shade
Last 2 hours before dark	Bass, walleye, crappie, pike	Same spots as dawn; walleye move onto rock and gravel
After dark	Walleye, crappie, catfish, bullheads	Lighted piers and docks for crappie; bottom rigs for catfish; shallow crankbaits for walleye

The Lake Sheet's **best-times dials** mark the day's best windows on AM and PM clocks in green, yellow and red, worked out from the sun and moon (a planning guide, not a bite forecast); be rigged and fishing before the first green one opens. A summer spot also needs **depth close by**: a pier to the weed edge, a steep launch, a fast-dropping point (Chapter 3).

1.5 WIND BLOWING INTO YOUR SHORE

Wind is the shore angler's best friend. A steady wind pushes warm surface water, floating insects and plankton toward the downwind shore. Minnows follow the food, and bigger fish follow the minnows. The waves also break up the light and stir the water, so fish feel safe feeding shallow in daylight.

The rule: in spring, summer and fall, start on the shore the wind is blowing **into**, not the calm shore behind you. It's less comfortable, and you'll cast into the wind, but that's where the fish are.

The lake's page shows **the wind by the hour and which shore it hits**, so you can pick your spot before you leave home. On a lake with launches or parks on several sides, that one check can be the whole plan.

Using it: points and piers on the windward shore are best; cast across the wind, not straight into it; go heavier so waves don't drag your bait. **Exceptions:** in early spring a cold wind can chill the shallows, so fish the calm, warm side; after a cold front, fish slow and tight to cover.

How windy is too windy? If you can't keep your bait where you put it, or waves wash over your spot, move to a sheltered bay. On Lake Michigan piers, waves wash people off piers and breakwalls (7.1).

1.6
FALL: THE SECOND SPRING

As the water cools in September and October, baitfish crowd rocky points and shallows, and big perch, crappie, pike, walleye and bass follow. Fish the warm afternoon in late October, fish rock (riprap and causeways hold heat), and use minnows. During fall **turnover**, when the whole lake mixes, fishing can go dead for a few days; try a river or another lake.

1.7
WEATHER, FRONTS AND WATER TEMPERATURE

- **Before a front** (falling pressure, clouds building): fish feed shallow. Often the best day of the week.
- **After a cold front** (blue sky, north wind): fish tuck into cover. Go smaller, slower, tighter to docks and weeds.
- **Muddy water after heavy rain:** in rivers, fish the slack water and eddies; in lakes, find clearer water near inlets.
- **A $10 thermometer** tells you more than any forecast. If the shallows are warmer than the water a cast out, fish close; if colder, fish deeper.



CHAPTER 2

FINDING A SPOT YOU'RE ALLOWED TO FISH

The best shore spot has fish, reaches deep enough water, and is open to the public. That last part trips up more shore anglers than the first two. Wisconsin's lakes and rivers belong to everyone, but most of the land around them doesn't. This chapter covers every kind of public shore spot, the rules that come with each, and what the law says about the water's edge.

2.1 The kinds of public shore · **2.2** Boat launches · **2.3** Fishing piers and accessible piers · **2.4** Parks · **2.5** Bridges and causeways · **2.6** Dams and spillways · **2.7** Points, riprap, inlets and docks · **2.8** The DNR's own shore list · **2.9** Your rights at the water's edge · **2.10** Urban fishing waters · **2.11** Big city lakes · **2.12** Loaner gear · **2.13** Reaching fish without a boat · **2.14** Thinking about a kayak?

2.1
THE KINDS OF PUBLIC SHORE

SPOT	WHAT TO KNOW	BEST FOR
Boat launches	Never block the ramp or dock; many have a pier	Panfish, bass, walleye at night
Fishing piers	Built for fishing; DNR piers are wheelchair accessible	Everything; kids
State parks and forests	Vehicle admission pass required to park	Panfish, bass, stocked ponds
County and city parks	Posted hours; stay clear of swimming beaches	Panfish, bass, catfish
Urban fishing waters	Ponds under 25 acres with special rules (2.10)	Kids, stocked trout
Bridges and causeways	Legal unless posted or banned locally	Crappie, walleye, catfish
Below dams	Hook and line OK within 200 feet unless posted	Walleye, catfish, white bass
Lake Michigan piers	Can close in bad weather; deadly in big waves (7.1)	Trout, salmon, perch

2.2
BOAT LAUNCHES

Every Lake Sheet lists each public launch on that lake, and launches are often good spots: they're dredged or built where the water drops off, and the dock reaches past the shallows.



FIG 2.1 A floating dock beside the ramp at a river boat landing. Fish the end and sides only when no one is launching, and step aside the moment a trailer backs down.

LAUNCH ETIQUETTE

- Park in car spaces, not trailer spaces.
- Fish off to the side of the dock.
- Reel in and step back for every boat.
- Come at dusk, not on a busy Saturday morning.

DON'T

- Cast across the ramp or toward a boat.
- Leave rods leaning on the rails.
- Clean fish at the launch: leaving fish parts on shore is illegal.
- Leave line, bait cups or trash.

2.3

FISHING PIERS AND ACCESSIBLE PIERS

A fishing pier is a launch with no boats, often reaching 6 to 12 feet of water. The DNR says every fishing pier it builds is accessible: wider for turning a wheelchair, with lower railings and rod holders.

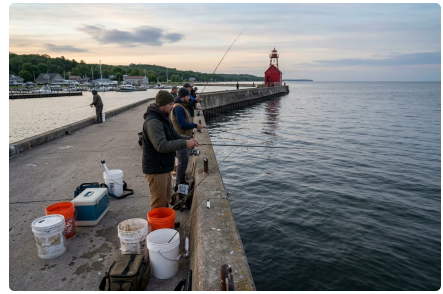

FIG 2.2 Anglers on a Lake Michigan pier at first light, buckets and coolers at their feet. Most of the Lake Michigan piers below are on the DNR's accessible list.

LAKE SHEETS FOR THE INLAND PIERS BELOW

Mauthe	Long (Fond du Lac)	Marl (Waupaca)
Boom	Wingra	Halfmoon
Mondeaux	Lake of the Pines	

Chequamegon Waters and Solberg are in Chapter 8.

WHERE	WHAT'S THERE	SOURCE
Lake Michigan: Kenosha	Kemper Center Pier, Navy Memorial Park, Simmons Island Marina, South Pier	DNR accessible fishing, Lake Michigan