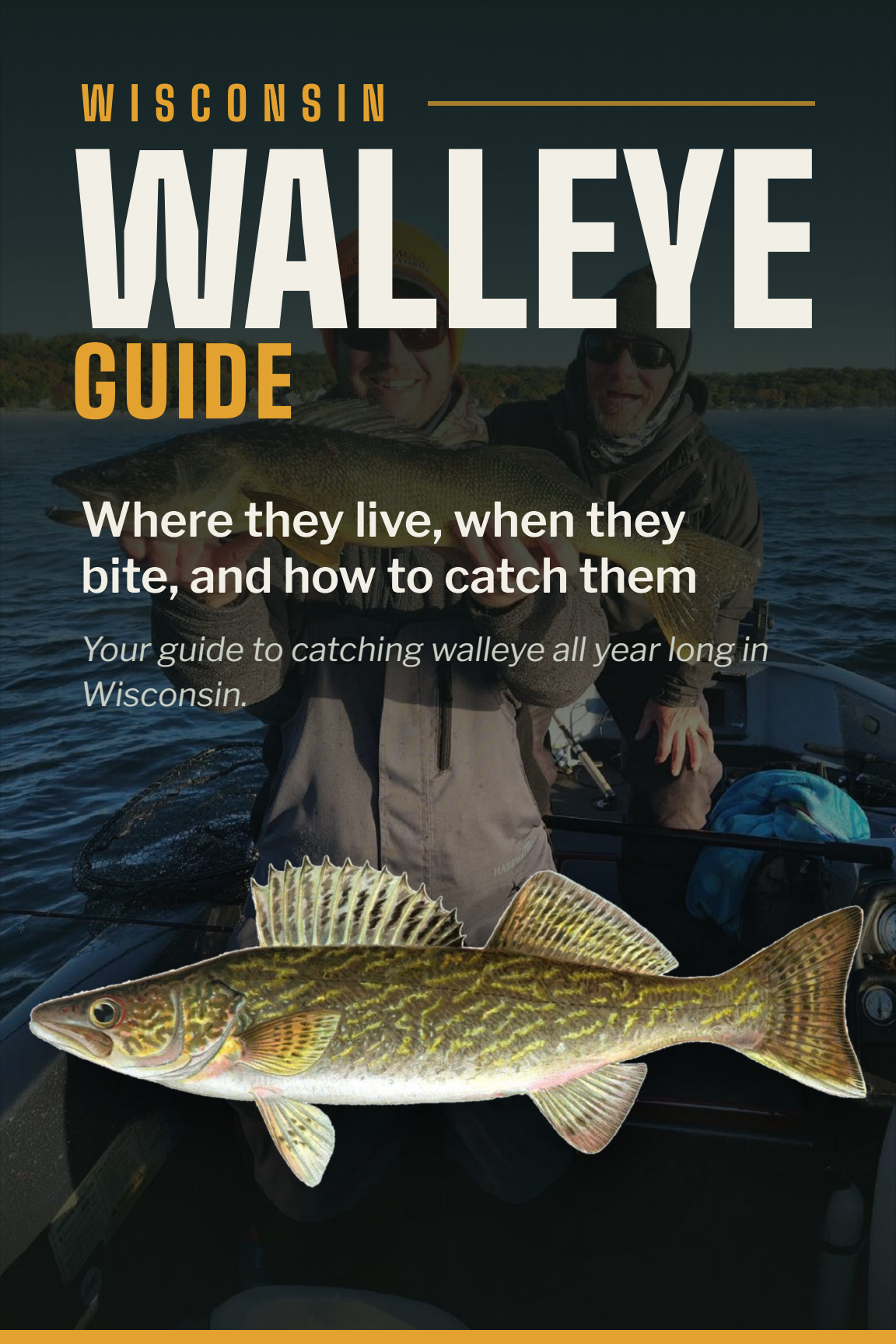
WISCONSIN

WALLEYE GUIDE

Where they live, when they bite, and how to catch them

Your guide to catching walleye all year long in Wisconsin.



WISCONSIN

WALLEYE

Guide

Where they live, when they bite, and how to catch them



Wisconsin Walleye 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 2026-10-10. 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.

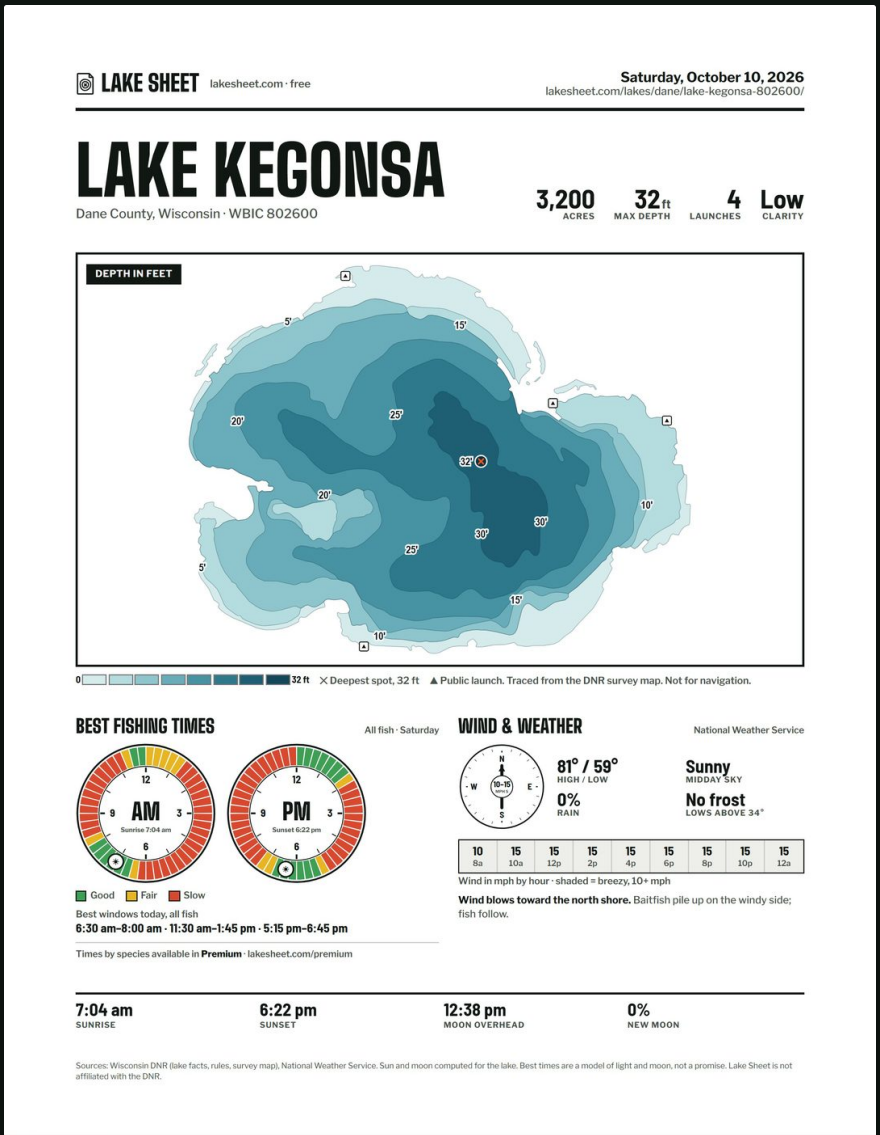
Lake Sheet is not affiliated with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Lake facts come from DNR survey and stocking records as published by Lake Sheet; see the sources at the back of the book.

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.

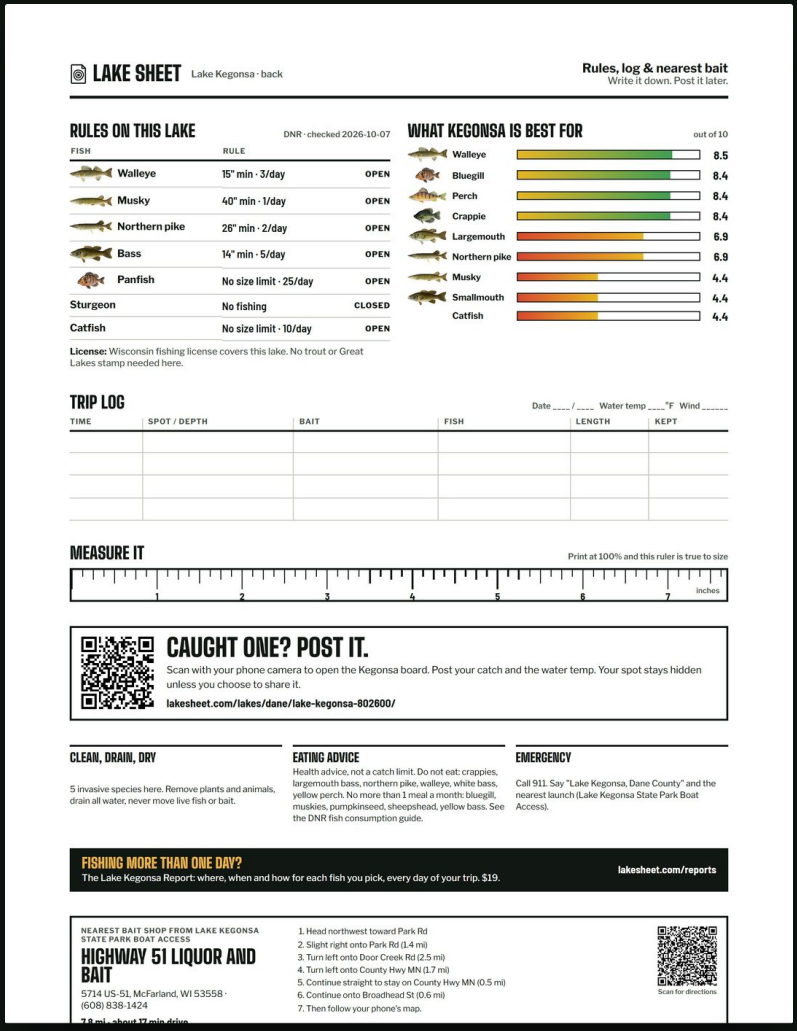
7:04 am	6:22 pm	12:38 pm	0%
SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON OVERHEAD	NEW MOON

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 built to be used, not just read. Read Chapter 1 once so you can tell a walleye from a sauger. After that, jump to the month you're fishing in Chapter 3, find a lake in Chapter 7, and use Chapter 6 to plan where to start on it.

IF YOU HAVE ONE EVENING

1. Look up your lake's free Lake Sheet (page 2).
2. Read your month in Chapter 3.
3. Tie on the jig and minnow from Chapter 5.
4. Be on the water for the last hour of light; the sheet's best-times dials help you plan around dusk, dawn and the moon.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO WALLEYE

1. Chapter 1: what you're after.
2. Chapter 4: buy the budget kit.
3. Chapter 5: learn the slip bobber first.
4. Chapter 10: the questions everyone asks.

The QR codes. Every lake in the picks, the worked examples and the "lakes everyone fishes" list has a code. Scan it with your phone camera and you land on that lake's free Lake Sheet: its depth map (where the lake has one), best-times dials, wind by the hour, launches, the lake's own rules and, when one is in our list, the nearest bait shop. Rivers and Green Bay don't have Lake Sheets, so they have no code.

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. Before you keep a fish, check the current rules. The fastest way is the rules box on your lake's Lake Sheet.



CHAPTER 1

MEET THE WALLEYE

The walleye is Wisconsin's most-wanted fish at the dinner table, and one of its hardest to figure out. It is the largest member of the perch family in North America, not a pike, whatever your grandfather called it. Everything that makes walleye tricky to catch, and everything that makes them catchable, comes from one thing: their eyes.

1.1 How to tell a walleye · **1.2** Walleye, sauger and saugeye · **1.3** Size and growth · **1.4** The eyes · **1.5** What walleye eat · **1.6** Spawning · **1.7** How walleye live

1.1

HOW TO TELL A WALLEYE

WALLEYE

Sander vitreus



TELL IT BY	Big glassy eyes, a white tip on the lower lobe of the tail, and a dark blotch at the back of the first (spiny) dorsal fin.
LOOKS LIKE	Sauger: spots on the first dorsal fin, no dark blotch, no white tail tip. Saugeye is a walleye–sauger cross. Wisconsin rules count all three together.
COLOR	Olive to gold back and sides with faint dark saddles, white belly.
SIZE	Most catches weigh about 1.5 lb. A 10-lb walleye is rare in Wisconsin. Females grow larger than males.
WISCONSIN RECORD	18 lb 0 oz, 35.0 in — Tony Brothers, High Lake, Vilas County, Sept. 16, 1933
EATS	Mostly other fish: yellow perch, minnows, darters, bullheads and freshwater drum, plus crayfish, insects and worms. Fry eat zooplankton.



FIG 1.1 Walleye. Big glassy eye, gold-olive flank and a white tip on the lower lobe of the tail.

Old-timers call walleye walleyed pike, yellow pike, grass pike, glasseye, perchpike, dory or jack. The scientific name, *Sander vitreus*, means roughly "glassy-eyed": *vitreus* refers to the big, glassy eye. In Ojibwe the walleye is *Ogaa*, and it is the main fish harvested by Ojibwe tribes in Wisconsin.

1.2
WALLEYE, SAUGER AND SAUGEYE

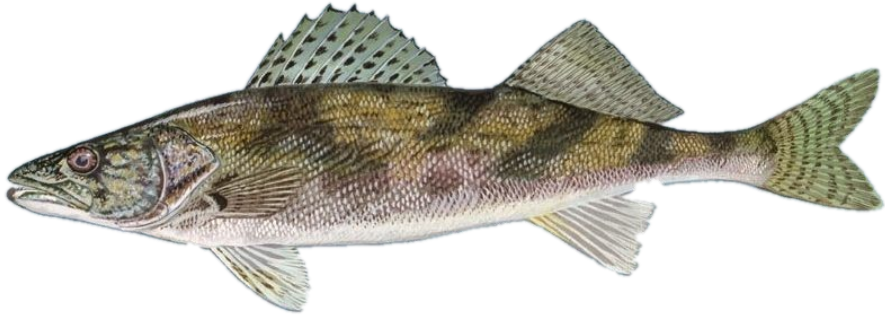


FIG 1.2 Sauger. A close cousin of the walleye in the big rivers and the Winnebago system. Note the spots on the first dorsal fin.

	WALLEYE	SAUGER	SAUGEYE
First dorsal fin	Dark blotch at the back, no spots	Rows of dark spots	Varies; hard to tell
Tail	White tip on the lower lobe	No white tip	Varies
Where in Wisconsin	Lakes and rivers statewide	Big rivers (Mississippi, Wisconsin, Rock) and the Winnebago system	Where both live, mostly rivers
Wisconsin record	18 lb 0 oz	6 lb 6.7 oz	8 lb 14.7 oz

Wisconsin rules count walleye, sauger and their hybrids together toward one daily bag, so you don't have to be sure which one you caught to stay legal on bag. You do on size: on some waters the minimum length is different for walleye and sauger. Check the rules on your Lake Sheet.

1.3
SIZE AND GROWTH

Females grow faster and bigger than males. Males mature at 2 to 3 years, at 12 to 13.5 inches; females at 4 to 5 years, at 15 to 17 inches. On average walleye live about seven years, but much older fish turn up: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports walleye as old as 29.

AGE	TYPICAL LENGTH	TYPICAL WEIGHT
1 year	5 in	0.7 oz
2 years	10 in	5.4 oz
3 years	14 in	1.45 lb
4 years	19 in	2.1 lb
5 years	21 in	–
6 years	23 in	–
7 years	26 in	–

From the Wisconsin DNR's walleye species leaflet, which gives no weight unit for ages 5 to 7, so we leave those blank. Growth varies a lot from lake

to lake: fish grow faster in rich southern lakes than in cold, clear northern ones.

The records. Wisconsin's hook-and-line record walleye weighed 18 lb 0 oz and measured 35.0 inches. Tony Brothers caught it on High Lake in Vilas County on September 16, 1933, and it still stands. The live-release (length) record is 33.75 inches, caught by John Kutka on the Peshtigo River in Marinette County on April 6, 2021.

1.4
THE EYES

A walleye's eye has a reflective layer behind the retina called the *tapetum lucidum*. It gathers dim light, which is why the eyes glow in a flashlight beam, the same way a cat's do. It also makes bright light uncomfortable.

That one fact explains most walleye behavior:

- **In clear water**, walleye stay deeper and in darker places by day and move into the shallows at sunset and after dark to feed.
- **In stained or muddy water**, and on cloudy days, they can feed through the day.
- **Wind** that roughens the surface (anglers call it "walleye chop") cuts the light and makes them bolder.
- **Under the ice**, they keep feeding all winter, especially at first ice and just before ice-out.

> **USE IT**
> Plan trips around low light: the hour around sunset and sunrise, cloudy and windy days, and after dark. The best-times dials on your Lake Sheet are a sun-and-moon planning guide (dawn, dusk, moonrise and moonset), not a bite forecast.

1.5
WHAT WALLEYE EAT

Newly hatched walleye must find food within three to five days or they die. They drift with the current eating zooplankton, then insect larvae, then fish.

Adults eat mostly other fish. In Wisconsin their favorites are yellow perch, minnows, darters, bullheads and freshwater drum, with crayfish, insects, leeches and worms filling in.

Walleye and perch are tied together. Big walleye eat yellow perch, and yellow perch eat walleye fry. Lakes with good perch usually have good walleye, and over-harvesting walleye can leave a lake full of small, stunted perch.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR BAIT

Match the hatch: a perch-colored crankbait or jig, a shiner or fathead minnow, a leech in summer. In spring and fall, when walleye are fattening up, bigger minnows catch bigger fish.

1.6

SPAWNING

Walleye are among the first Wisconsin game fish to spawn. Only northern pike go earlier: pike spawn in flooded marsh grass as the ice breaks up, at 34 to 40°F, and are usually done when walleye start. Walleye begin moving to spawning areas soon after the ice goes out, when the water is 38 to 44°F, and spawning peaks at 42 to 50°F. That means late March to early April in the south (the Rock River, the Madison lakes, the Wolf River) and mid-April to early May in the north.

- **Where:** wind-swept rocky shorelines, flooded wetlands, and gravel in inlet streams and rivers. Females usually spawn in four feet of water or less.
- **How:** males arrive first and can outnumber females seven to one. Walleye don't build nests or guard eggs; they scatter them at night. A female lays about 50,000 eggs on average, usually all in one night.
- **The eggs** hatch in about 26 days at 40°F, 21 days at 50 to 55°F, and 7 days at 57°F.

The famous runs: walleye from the Lake Winnebago system can swim up to 100 miles up the Wolf River to spawn in its marshes, walleye run up parts of the Wisconsin River from its flowages, and on Green Bay big females run up the Fox River to the De Pere dam. Section 2.3 tells you where and when.

1.7

HOW WALLEYE LIVE

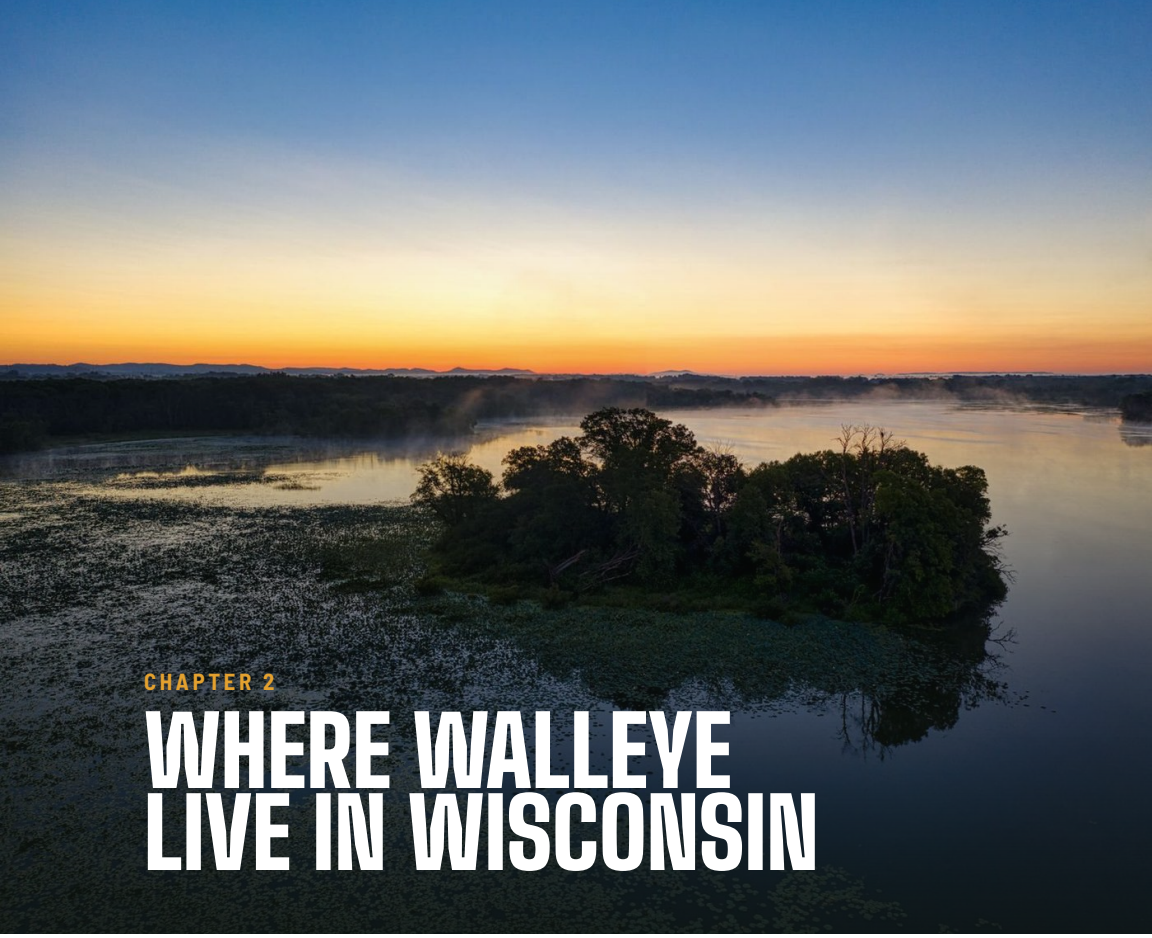
Walleye live near the bottom and travel through open water in loose schools. They follow the food and seldom stay in one spot for long, which is why a spot that was hot yesterday can be empty today. They prefer water of about 68 to 75°F in summer and avoid warmer water when they can. That's why, as lakes warm in July, walleye go deeper or find shade in weeds and stained water.

REMEMBER

- Low light = feeding time.
- Find the food (perch, minnows) and you find walleye.
- Schools move. If the bite stops, move too.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Fishing bright, calm, clear shallows at noon in summer.
- Staying on yesterday's spot after it stops producing.
- Calling it a "walleyed pike" at the bait shop.



CHAPTER 2

WHERE WALLEYE LIVE IN WISCONSIN

Walleye are native to Wisconsin's big rivers and the Great Lakes, and over the last hundred years they've been stocked into lakes across the state. Today, the DNR says, the walleye is present throughout Wisconsin. This chapter shows you where the best water is, what kinds of lakes hold walleye, and how to tell in two minutes whether your lake has them.

2.1 Native waters · **2.2** The northern lakes · **2.3** Rivers · **2.4** The Great Lakes · **2.5** Stocking and the Walleye Initiative · **2.6** Does my lake have walleye?

2.1
NATIVE WATERS

Before stocking, walleye lived in the Mississippi, Wisconsin, Wolf, Fox, Rock, Black, Chippewa and Flambeau rivers and their major tributaries, plus Lake Michigan (including Green Bay) and Lake Superior. Through the 1900s they were stocked into inland lakes all over the state. That history explains where walleye reproduce on their own today: mostly in the big river systems and the large, connected northern lakes.

2.2
THE NORTHERN LAKES

The far north is walleye country. Lake Sheet has free sheets for more than 4,600 Wisconsin lakes as of October 2026, with more added each week. The DNR fish survey lists walleye in 1,114 of them. The counties with the most:

COUNTY	LAKES WITH WALLEYE IN THE DNR SURVEY	LAKES WHERE WALLEYE ARE "ABUNDANT"
Vilas	202	10
Oneida	136	2
Sawyer	77	12
Bayfield	73	3
Washburn	52	5
Iron	49	6
Burnett	31	2
Price	28	9
Barron	28	–
Forest	27	3

Lake Sheet data from DNR fish survey records, October 2026. "–" means none of that county's published lakes carry the DNR's "abundant" label.