

2024 FISHERIES PRIORITIES

MISSOURI RIVER



DEPARTMENT MISSION

We serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.

Four major dams on the Missouri River in South Dakota created Lakes Oahe, Sharpe, Francis Case and Lewis and Clark. Walleye and smallmouth bass fisheries define the mainstem reservoirs and paddlefish fisheries currently exist in Lake Francis Case and below Gavins Point Dam. A salmon fishery exists in the coldwater habitat in Lake Oahe. The only free-flowing river sections in South Dakota are located below Fort Randall Dam and Gavin's Point Dam. Missouri River fisheries provide significant recreational opportunity and contribute greatly to the economies of towns along the river.

For the Missouri River Fisheries Management Area, general issues and priorities are provided, as are more specific issues and priorities for the upper and lower portions of the river system in South Dakota.

As part of fisheries planning efforts, priorities for each management area are established. Management issues are identified, and priorities created for work within the management area.

IDENTIFIED ISSUES

1. Current fish population and angler survey methods may not accurately represent fishery metrics.
2. Additional evaluations of fish stockings and regulations (harvest limits) are needed for proper decision making.
3. Involvement of multiple governing agencies makes management and long-term planning difficult.
4. Potential conflicts exist among increasingly numerous and sizable angler groups.

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Improve Surveys to Index Fisheries
2. Evaluate Stockings and the Impact of Regulations
3. Improve inter-Agency Coordination
4. Address Angler Group Conflicts

UPPER MISSOURI

IDENTIFIED ISSUES

1. Information on smallmouth bass fisheries is lacking.
2. Stocking of paddlefish in Lake Sharpe has not been evaluated.
3. The change in walleye population survey methodology a few years ago has made stocking decisions difficult.
4. There is a lack of information on fish loss through Oahe and Big Bend Dams during all flow regimes.

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Describe Smallmouth Bass Fisheries
2. Determine Lake Sharpe Paddlefish Population Status
3. Evaluate Lake Oahe Walleye Stockings
4. Document Fish Losses Through Dams

LOWER MISSOURI

IDENTIFIED ISSUES

1. Effects of zebra mussels on Francis Case fishery are unknown.
2. Contribution of stocked walleye juveniles to the Lewis and Clark walleye population, at older ages, is not well understood.
3. Paddlefish condition below Gavins Point Dam has decreased but the cause and extent has not been determined.

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Evaluate Lewis and Clark Lake Walleye Stockings
2. Francis Case Zebra Mussel Impacts
3. Paddlefish Condition Below Gavins Point Dam

