

GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

FISH LIMITS Chapters 41:07:03

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 8, 2022	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 7, 2022	Watertown
	Finalization	April 7-8, 2022	Watertown

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Proposed changes:

Remove special regulations for walleye when fishing through the ice for the lower portion of Lake Francis Case, which include:

1. Requiring anglers to keep the first four walleye caught (PETITION)
2. Length limits (15-inch minimum and statewide one over 20-inches daily) are not in effect

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Current walleye regulations for the lower portion of Lake Francis Case, while fishing through the ice, include:

1. The first four walleyes caught must be kept
2. Length limits (15-inch minimum and statewide one over 20-inches) do not apply

A proposal was made by the commission at their January 2022 meeting, in response to a petition, that would remove the requirement that the first four walleyes caught be kept, while fishing through the ice in the lower portion of Lake Francis Case.

The department recommended a change from the original January proposal at the March commission meeting, to remove the current exemption to length limits while fishing through the ice on the lower portion of Lake Francis Case. This recommended change was incorporated into the proposal at the March meeting. The current proposal, if adopted, would result in walleye regulations being consistent for all areas of Lake Francis Case, during all times of the year.

Specific regulations for walleye harvest, when fishing through the ice on the lower end of Lake Francis Case, were enacted in 2001 in response to public concern over high mortality of walleye caught from deep water and then released. The intent of the regulations was to reduce post-release mortalities by prohibiting release of walleye and limiting the number of walleyes caught during a fishing trip. There is evidence to support the idea that post-release mortality increases at deeper depths.

The special walleye harvest regulations for the lower portion of Lake Francis Case, when fishing through the ice, is the only case in the state where a regulation specifically requiring fish to be harvested exists because of potential post-release mortality. However, the same issue occurs at other locations during various times of the year, including in the lower portion of Lake Francis Case during the summer.

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

The following are proposed draft changes that are intended to incorporate the recommended changes adopted by the Commission.

41:07:03:03. Daily, possession, and length limit restrictions on special management waters -- Additional restrictions described. Daily limit, possession limit, length limit, and additional restrictions on special management waters are described as follows:

(8) In Lakes Francis Case and Sharpe, the minimum length limit for walleye is 15 inches from September 1 through June 30. ~~However, in Lake Francis Case, length limits for walleye do not apply to any angler while fishing through the ice from the northern, east-west Gregory-Charles Mix county line downstream to Fort Randall Dam, and such angler may not return or release to the water any walleye;~~