

Quality Sunfish Management Comment Sheet

Angler surveys tell us that sunfish, primarily bluegill and pumpkinseed, are among our most prized gamefish in our state. In fact, Minnesota anglers harvest around 16 million sunfish each year, making them our most harvested fish.

Unfortunately, our love for sunfish has negatively impacted size quality. Minnesota angler attitude surveys between 1987 and 2017 found that anglers were generally satisfied with the number of sunfish they caught, but were often dissatisfied with size. Today, an increasing number of everyday anglers, professional guides, resort owners, and fishing celebrities are expressing concern about declining sunfish size quality. At the same time, sunfish numbers have generally increased in DNR lake surveys, suggesting an overall increase in sunfish densities- a trend often linked to size quality decline.

Reduced limits have been shown to be an effective tool to maintain or improve size quality. DNR fisheries staff remain on the lookout for populations that may benefit from increased protection from an additional regulation. This is very much a social question, however. Regulations only work if anglers support them.

You can help by answering a few questions using this comment sheet to share your thoughts with us.

1. Lake(s) name _____ Any Lake

Please list specific lake(s) and/or note that you are submitting a general comment that applies to any lake with biological potential to benefit from reduced limits by checking Any Lake check box.

2. What is your name and home zip code?

Name _____ Home zip _____

3. Which of the following best describes you:

Lakeshore owner Local resident Non- Local MN resident Out-of-State resident

4. Do you typically stay at a local resort: No Yes

5. Approximately how many times did you fish for sunfish in the past 12 months? _____

6. Which lake(s) did you fish for sunfish in the last 12 months? _____

7. Would you support the following:

- A 5 fish bag limit for sunfish if it is expected to improve size quality
- A 10 fish bag limit for sunfish if it is expected to maintain current size quality
- I do not support reduced limits for sunfish
- A 5 fish bag limit for crappie
- I do not support a reduced limit for crappies.

Please provide any additional comments on the back of this form! Only individually submitted comments will be considered. Please return your comment sheet via: **Standard mail** or **hand delivery to:** MN DNR Area Fisheries, 1035 South Benton Drive, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379, Or **Email** to joe.stewig@state.mn.us Questions or comments can also be directed to the Area Fisheries Office by calling 320-223-7867.