

Fisheries Management Zone 10

Northern Pike



Northern pike have a wide distribution throughout Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 10 and have colonised new lakes over the past three decades. Since the late 1990's, the northern pike population has had lower abundance and smaller average sizes than other northern zones. They are the third most sought after species by recreational anglers.

Proposed regulation change for FMZ 10 northern pike

We are proposing to change regulations for northern pike in FMZ 10 to work towards achieving the stated objectives:

- increase the number of mature/large ($\geq 525\text{mm}$) northern pike;
- reduce angling mortality of large northern pike in zone lakes; and
- continue providing year-round angling opportunities and improve fishing quality.

Option 1: Maintain status quo

- Size limit: Sport licence - not more than 2 greater than 61 cm, of which not more than 1 is greater than 86 cm. Conservation licence - not more than 1 greater than 61 cm, none greater than 86 cm.
- Season: open all year
- Sport licence-6 and conservation licence-2

Option 2: Modify size limits

- Size limit: **none between 70 - 90 cm, and not more than 1 greater than 90 cm.**
- Season: open all year
- Sport licence - 6 and conservation licence - 2

Option 3: Modify size limits

- Size limit: Sport licence - **not more than 1 greater than 61 cm, none greater than 86 cm.** Conservation licence - **none greater than 61 cm.**
- Season: open all year
- Sport licence - 6 and conservation licence - 2

FMZ 10 Fisheries Management Plan

Recent monitoring data was used to compare benchmarks for health indicators like abundance, growth and age structure (**Table 1**). The number of adult-sized northern pike in FMZ 10 lakes is the lowest of all northern zones. The average age of pike in FMZ 10 lakes is also below the objective, suggesting that populations are stressed, with low abundance, low average size, and poor age structure.

Indicator	Survey data	Status
Number of northern pike greater than 500mm (number of fish per net)	0.15 fish per net (lowest in northeast)	Unsustainable
Number of northern pike age groups	3.85 average year classes (stressed)	Unhealthy
Average age of northern pike greater than 500mm	5.7 years old (stressed)	Unhealthy
Growth rate (millimetres/year) for northern pike greater than 500mm in length	175mm per year (comparable to other zones)	Improving
Average total length of largest 5% of northern pike	648 mm (lowest among northern zones)	Unsustainable

Table 1 FMZ 10 Northern Pike Comparison

Reason for the proposed regulation change

The ministry, with advice from the FMZ 10 Advisory Council, is proposing a change in regulation to improve the quality of the northern pike populations. Regulation Option 2 has been applied in northwestern Ontario and has helped maintain and/or increase the abundance of larger northern pike. Option 3 will encourage the development of mature northern pike and address concerns about retention and consumption of large fish.

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