

Dept. of Natural Resources: 2022 wild rice harvesting season updates

Posted on Friday, Aug 19, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced changes to wild rice waters with date regulations (specific harvest times) for the 2022 wild rice harvesting season.

When waters that are designated for wild rice have a date regulation, harvesting wild rice is only permitted after an open notice has been posted on-site and [online by the Great Lakes Indian, Fish and Wildlife Commission \(GLIFWC\)](#).

Following a rule change in June 2022, 38 waters will no longer be date-regulated and four additional waters have been added to GLIFWC's date-regulated list including:

- Chippewa Lake in Bayfield County
- Island Lake in Vilas County
- All county- and state-owned beds within the Minong Flowage in Douglas County
- Pacwawong Lake in Sawyer County

A complete list of affected waters is available on [GLIFWC's Off-Reservation Wild Rice Harvest Regulations webpage](#).

Date regulation of certain wild rice waters is a way to ensure the waters are conserved by preventing damage from premature harvest. Most of Wisconsin's more than 300 wild rice waters do not have regulated opening and closing harvest dates. On some waters, the opening and closing dates for wild rice harvesting are regulated jointly by the DNR and GLIFWC.

In response to varying levels of rice productivity, harvest pressure and public

accessibility, the DNR worked with a wide variety of partners to make changes to the administrative rule, which identifies the list of water bodies and the dates that the harvest of wild rice can occur.

Although the change in harvest regulations will significantly shorten the list of waters that are date-regulated for harvest, the change will result in more harvestable crops being conserved through date-regulation. The DNR, GLIFWC, Wisconsin Tribal Nations and other partners remain dedicated to wild rice conservation across the state through various restoration and habitat management programs.

Harvesting wild rice in lakes is allowed with [a wild rice harvest permit](#). Additionally, certain publicly owned beds of rivers, streams and flowages (including DNR properties) may require specific permission from the appropriate federal, state or county property manager. Consult with the latest county plat or tax records to determine ownership of the beds of these waterways.

It is illegal to harvest or gather wild rice in any area of the state of Wisconsin between sunset and 10 a.m. On lakes and flowages not subject to a specific wild rice season and on all rivers and streams, rice may be harvested whenever it ripens.

Wild rice maturity ranges from late August through September across the state and differs by water body and rice beds within them.

As the season progresses, GLIFWC will post wild rice waters opening dates to its [Off-Reservation Wild Rice Harvest Regulations webpage](#), along with openings for date-regulated waters, which are also posted at commonly used boat landings at least 24 hours before opening. [DNR email updates are also available](#).

Wild rice is part of Wisconsin's natural landscape. Beds of wild rice help maintain good water quality, and they provide food and habitat for waterfowl and many other types of wildlife. Protecting and managing wild rice will help ensure many wildlife species persevere for all to enjoy. Wild rice is also a culturally significant plant to Wisconsin's Native American tribes, who have a personal and longstanding connection to wild rice.

Harvesting wild rice is an excellent way to put nutritious and delicious natural food on the table while enjoying time outdoors.

It is essential to be aware of land ownership before entering wild rice water. Privately owned wild rice beds are not subject to state harvesting regulations, but harvesters must seek landowner permission before entering. Wild rice waters within tribal reservation boundaries are typically limited to tribal members for harvest. Contact tribal authorities for more information.

Learn more about wild rice harvesting on [the DNR's Wild Rice Harvesting webpage](#).