

**Resolution**  
**to support the adoption of**  
**Minnesota fishing regulations**  
**to protect**  
**all native fish, including fish that are legally designated as native “rough fish.”**

WHEREAS, the mission of the Izaak Walton League is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use of our natural resources;

WHEREAS, bigmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*) in Minnesota can live at least 112 years and reproduce infrequently;

WHEREAS, there are NO LIMITS to the harvest of bigmouth buffalo in Minnesota;

WHEREAS, there are at least 30 species of native fish managed as “rough fish” by the Minnesota DNR including widely divergent species such as bowfin (*Amia calva*), lake herring (*Coregonus artedi*) and the threatened black buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*);

WHEREAS, in the old food chain paradigm, fish production was a zero-sum game (the assumption being that if you removed one fish you would get more of another) leading to the widespread denigration of non-game native fish;

WHEREAS, the science of ecology now rejects simplistic food chains in favor of the more wholistic “food web”. We now understand that healthy intact ecosystems have many species, with many complex interactions. Removing any native species is much more likely to disrupt the ecosystem than increase the number of “game fish”;

WHEREAS, healthy, intact and species-rich ecosystems are less susceptible to invasive species. For example, many species of redhorse and bigmouth buffalo prey on zebra mussels. Bowfin and gar are effective predators on invasive common carp fingerlings. The same native species, which were maligned as “rough fish”, are in fact vital to a healthy and resilient ecosystem.

WHEREAS, the Minnesota DNR has extended bowfishing seasons and allowed the use of lights for shooting fish at night without reducing daily limits;

WHEREAS, the DNR gives inadequate protection for “endangered”, “threatened”, and “special concern” species, such as the “threatened” Black Buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*) or “special concern” species: Blue Sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) and Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*). The “limit” for ALL species of buffalo is “no limit”;

WHEREAS, people who harvest bigmouth buffalo and other native non-game fish are not even limited by the number of fish they can use. The harvested fish are routinely “disposed” of as fertilizer;

WHEREAS, despite the liberalized harvest methods and extended seasons, the Minnesota DNR has collected almost no data about non-game native fish harvest;

WHEREAS, in 2019, the DNR did collect data from two bowfishing tournaments and found 75% of the fish harvested were native species. Bowfishing teams averaged one fish every 2-3 minutes during the 10 hours of each tournament;

WHEREAS, anglers who “dispose” of native fish usually have misidentified the fish as a carp because they don’t know other native non-game fish exist. But once people are aware, they are usually able to appreciate and respectfully use the resource; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of reasonable regulations to conserve all native fish and their ecosystem is consistent with our mission;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Breckenridge Chapter of the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America supports the adoption of Minnesota fishing regulations that adequately protect **all** native fish, including fish that are legally designated as native “rough fish.” These regulations should address, but not be limited to, fishing limits, clarification of protection for “listed” species, education on identification of “rough fish” species, along with enforcement of wanton waste laws and other legal requirements.

Submitted by Tyler Winter and Tim Johnson