

A Precursor to Collecting in Minnesota

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I have been in contact with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Section of Fisheries about rules and regulations governing the field trips of the 2022 NANFA meeting in Winona, Minnesota. At the deadline for the fall issue of *American Currents*, MDNR recommended members purchase angling licenses instead of issuing a collecting permit with conditions and stipulations. All members planning to participate in the collecting should download the 2021 angling regulations at:

https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/fishing/fishing_regs.pdf#20210301&view=fit

This document will provide an orientation. Search on the following key words: minnow, bait, invasive, infested water, endangered, and trespass.

MDNR noted the legal definition for minnows does not include darters. However, they did acknowledge most anglers who harvest bait cannot tell the difference between them, and at the time we went to press, they did express concern about collecting darters and other non-game, non-protected species which the definition omits.

One strict rule in the regulations is bait cannot be transported in water from the collecting site. Water must be either tap or bottled water to prevent the spread of invasive species. One issue yet to be determined is if NANFA would be issued a permit to transport fish in tap or bottled water from the Mississippi River which is infested waters (i.e., zebra mussels) even though the “cargo” will never be released into natural waterbody.

The reach of the Mississippi River where the annual meeting will be held is part of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and collecting fishes is prohibited. However, there are several state, county, municipal, and private accesses where these rules do not apply. Nevertheless, collecting will be legal only within the boundaries of these inholdings.

MDNR also expressed concern about fish being transported home to other states and members must comply with all local laws regarding this activity. NANFA always “preaches” this policy and will be repeated again before the 2022 field trips begin. Please remember even a single violation will tarnish NANFA and its members!

Updates will be reported in the winter and spring issues.