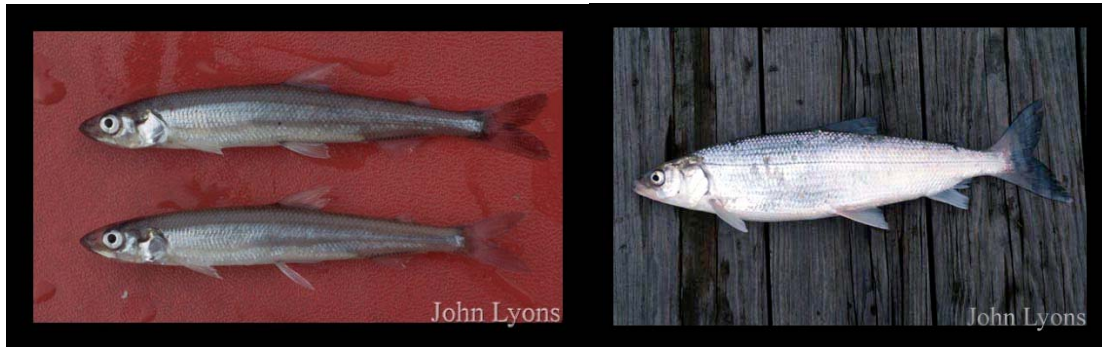


Using Dead Fish as Bait



Smelt

Lake Herring

Dead fish can be used as bait in Wisconsin waters, but with the threat of VHS, some restrictions have been put in place. Lake Herring (aka ciscoes, tullibee, lake chubs) are considered game fish and are subject to possession limits and regulations.

Great Lakes waters are defined as Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and their tributaries upstream to the first barrier impassable to fish.

Type of bait	Water where bait is used		
	Lake Superior	Lake Michigan	All Inland Waters
Frozen	Only if harvested from Lake Superior	Ok, regardless of harvest location	Only if harvested from the water where bait is used
Preserved*	Ok, regardless of harvest location	Ok, regardless of harvest location	Ok, regardless of harvest location

* preservation by a method that does not require refrigeration or freezing (see below)

Important Exception:

Legally purchased minnows that die while you are fishing (fish that died in the bait bucket) can be used that day on that water without being preserved. After you leave that water, these fish must be treated the same as all other dead bait and preserved before they can be used again.

Preservation of Dead Baitfish

Suggested methods of preservation that do not require refrigeration or freezing include storage in alcohol or mineral oil, or drying by packing the minnows in salt or a salt/borax mixture. For both of these methods, a storage period of 14 days at room temperature is suggested to reduce viability of any VHS virus that might be present. Please visit the [DNR VHS website](#) for more details on preservation techniques.