



## Wisconsin stocked Chinook salmon outperform Lake Michigan average

MADISON – Chinook salmon stocked by the Wisconsin DNR survive very well and contribute substantially to the state’s strong Lake Michigan fishery, new research from the USFWS and DNR shows.

As the lake’s top predator, it’s common for both stocked and wild Chinook to travel hundreds of miles to feed as they mature and at any given time during the summer, state anglers may catch Chinook stocked by Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois or Indiana. However, the ongoing three-year cooperative research project shows Wisconsin-stocked fish have an above average likelihood of surviving to harvest and are being caught in comparatively large numbers in an area stretching from Door to Kenosha counties.

At the same time, state anglers are benefiting from natural reproduction of wild fish from

Michigan streams and tributaries to Lake Huron. "Wisconsin offers a world class recreational fishery and DNR’s Lake Michigan stocking efforts continue to play a key role in sustaining this resource and its multimillion dollar economic impact," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. "This study reinforces the importance of our high quality hatchery efforts while supporting the value of ongoing investments in our fisheries operations."

Dave Boyarski, DNR fisheries supervisor for northern Lake Michigan, said the department has been working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Fish Tag and Recovery Lab near Green Bay to tag Chinook fingerlings as well as collect and analyze the tags from the heads of recovered fish. Chinook salmon tagging for the recent multistate project began in 2011 and the analysis involved some 46,000 recovered tags.

The coded wire tags resemble tiny pieces of pencil lead and are inserted through a mechanized process that has proven more efficient and less stressful to the fish than previously used hand-held methods. During 2014 alone, state fisheries managers in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan tagged and released more than 2.9 million Chinook salmon bound for the waters of lakes Michigan and Huron. Wisconsin DNR’s Wild Rose and Kettle Moraine Springs hatcheries contributed about 824,000 of that total.

Illustrating the excellent returns of fish stocked by Wisconsin’s hatcheries, from 2011 to 2013 Wisconsin provided 38 percent of all the Chinooks that were stocked in Lake Michigan. Yet from 2012 to 2014, Wisconsin stocked fish

### Wisconsin stocked Chinook

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## New MI fishing regs for 2015-2016 season in effect

The Natural Resources Commission finalized several regulations impacting the 2015-2016 fishing season at its meeting on April 9.

Due to the Natural Resources Commission’s temporary loss of regulatory authority, several regulations were not determined in time for the start of the 2015-2016 angling year (April 1) and consequently were not printed in the hard-copy version of the Michigan Fishing Guide. However, there are several areas of the guide that have an orange star to indicate that changes possibly would be forthcoming.

A few of the changes are highlighted below; full details are now online at [Michigan.gov/fishingguide](http://Michigan.gov/fishingguide) and in the PDF file available for download below.

### New Hook Restriction:

- New hook restrictions are in place to protect against salmon snagging in some waters.

### Bass Fishing Season Changes:

- Catch-and-immediate-release (CIR) fishing for bass is now allowed all year, statewide (unless otherwise closed to fishing). Please refer to the printed fishing guide for waters closed to fishing (Sylvania Wilderness Area, designated trout waters closed to fishing, etc.).

### Great Lakes Trout and Salmon Regulations:

- **Lake Huron** lake trout and splake regulations: MH-1 and MH-2 lake trout and splake regulations have changed from season of May 1–Sept. 30 to Jan. 1–Sept. 30 to align all of **Lake Huron** into one season.

*Continued on page 9*

## Spring workshops offer info on status of lakes Erie, Huron and St. Clair fisheries

The Michigan DNR, Michigan Sea Grant, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center and other agencies will participate in numerous regional workshops this spring highlighting research and information about the fisheries of Lake Erie, the Detroit River, Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair.

The workshops are free and open to the public and will provide valuable information for anglers, charter captains, resource professionals and other community members interested in attending.

Fish populations and angler catch data, native species, forage fish surveys, invasive species, updates on fisheries management activities, and other related topics will be the focus of these workshops.

The 2015 **Lake Erie/Detroit River fishery workshop** is set for Thursday, April 16, 6 to 9 p.m. It will be held in partnership with local host, Huron Valley Sportfishing Club, at the American Legion Post #200, 11800 Michael St. in Taylor.

The 2015 **Lake Huron fishery workshop** dates and locations include:

- ▶ Oscoda - Thursday, April 23, 6 to 9 p.m.  
Camp Inn Lodge, 3111 U.S. 23 South in Oscoda Township
- ▶ Cedarville - Tuesday, April 28, 6 to 9 p.m.  
Les Cheneaux Sportsman's Club, M-134 in Cedarville
- ▶ Bay City - Thursday, April 30, 6 to 9 p.m.  
Knights of Columbus Hall, 360 S. River Road (M-13) in Bay City

Preregistration is requested. Workshop registration and details are available online on the Michigan Sea Grant website <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/explore/fisheries/fishery-workshops/>. ✧

## Ohio awards more than \$575,000 for marine patrols

Twenty-three Ohio communities will receive \$575,745.53 from the Ohio DNR to support local marine patrol units. These assistance funds represent a continued effort to keep Ohio waterways safe and enhance recreational boating experiences.

The 2015 Marine Patrol Assistance Grants will help local law enforcement agencies provide emergency response to boating-related incidents, conduct routine waterway patrols and purchase safety equipment for use on marine patrol vessels. The recipient agencies are located in counties statewide, including large urban areas such as Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton and Montgomery counties, as well as smaller communities located in Knox, Pickaway and Scioto counties.

In 2012, Ohio had a record 435,310 registered recreational watercraft, ranking ninth nationally. Among this total are a rapidly growing number of registered canoes and kayaks that has more than doubled since 2001 and now represents one of every four watercraft registered in Ohio. As many as 3 million Ohioans enjoy recreational boating statewide each year. Additional boating information and a list of Marine Patrol Assistance Grant recipients is available online at [ohiodnr.gov/watercraft](http://ohiodnr.gov/watercraft).

The ODNR Division of Watercraft administers Ohio's boating and scenic rivers programs. The funding to support local marine patrol units comes from the state's Waterways Safety Fund, which is comprised of the state motor fuel tax, watercraft registration and titling fees, as well as funds provided by the U.S. Coast Guard. The ODNR Division of Watercraft oversees watercraft registration and titling operations, provides funding to local communities for education, enforcement and boating access facilities, educates the public and enforces boating laws on Ohio's waterways. ✧



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### Position Statement

Representing a major interest in the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council is a confederation of organizations and individuals with a concern for the present and future of sport fishing, our natural resources and the ecosystem in which we live. We encourage the wise use of our resources and a search for the truth about the issues confronting us.

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## Birds identified as hosts of Lyme disease

Birds are more important than previously recognized as hosts for Lyme disease-causing bacteria, according to a recent study published in the journal *PLOS ONE*. The bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is responsible for Lyme disease, was known to be carried by white-footed mice, wood rats, western gray squirrels, and other small mammals, but fewer studies have looked at the role of birds as reservoirs.

“The role of birds in the maintenance of Lyme disease bacteria in California is poorly understood,” said lead author Erica Newman, a UC Berkeley PhD student. “This is the most extensive study of the role of birds in Lyme disease ecology in the western United States, and the first to consider the diversity of bird species, their behaviors, and their habitats in identifying which birds are truly the most important as carriers.”

Moreover, the birds in the study that were found to be important hosts of Lyme disease bacteria — such as American robins, dark-eyed juncos and golden-crowned sparrows — are coincidentally ones that are commonly found in suburban environments.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tick-borne illness in the United States. [There are approximately 300,000 cases each year](#), with the large majority occurring in the eastern United States.

Morgan Tingley, an ornithologist at the University of Connecticut who was not part of this study, underscored the significance of discovering which birds are carriers of Lyme-disease bacteria.

“Birds are much more capable of carrying diseases long distances than the small-mammal hosts typical of Lyme disease, and so may constitute an under-appreciated component of Lyme disease ecology,” said Tingley. “Particularly as we look to the future, birds may end up playing a larger role in disease ecology than other animals

because of their ability to quickly and easily move long distances and to new habitats. In the same way that airplanes can help spread disease across nations, birds do the same thing for our ecosystems.”

Lyme disease is spread to humans through the bite of infected ticks. The black-legged deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) transmits *B. burgdorferi* in the eastern and north-central regions of the United States, while the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) spreads the bacteria in the West.

The bird and tick samples in this new study came from 14 sites in northwestern California. The study included multiple natural habitats, ranging from savannas and grasslands to chaparral and dense woodlands.

The researchers took blood samples from 623 birds representing 53 species, and they also carefully removed and identified ticks that they found on the birds. They collected a total of 284 juvenile ticks — more than 99 percent of which were western black-legged ticks — consisting of 192 larvae and 92 nymphs.

Lyme disease bacteria were detected in 57 of the 100 birds that carried ticks. Among the ticks themselves, 13 percent of the larvae and nearly 25 percent of the nymphs were infected with *B. burgdorferi* or related spirochetes.

Among the 23 species of birds that were infected, the study authors highlighted the lesser goldfinch, the oak titmouse, and the dark-eyed junco as birds that harbored more subtypes of Lyme disease bacteria than others. In addition, the golden-crowned sparrow was infected more frequently than other species.

The researchers also found, for the first time in birds, another species of Lyme disease spirochete that is closely related to *Borrelia burgdorferi*. That spirochete, named *Borrelia bissettii*, has been known to cause a Lyme disease-like illness in people in central and southern Europe. Furthermore, this bacterium

was the most common of the *Borrelia* species found in birds.

“The fact that we found this particular bacterium for the first time in birds in California is notable because of the ease with which birds can distribute spirochetes to different regions,” said co-author Robert Lane, a medical entomologist at UC Berkeley. “It is worth watching to see if this spirochete expands in this state.”

<http://entomologytoday.org/2015/03/10/birds-identified-as-hosts-of-lyme-disease/> ✧

## Tightened walleye regulations continue on Upper Red Lake

Beginning Saturday, May 9, walleye regulations on Upper Red Lake will be more restrictive than past open water seasons. The daily bag and possession limit will be two walleye, and anglers must immediately release all walleye 17- to 26-inches long. Only one walleye in possession may be longer than 26 inches.

These regulations are in response to a record winter harvest, during which state anglers harvested 140,000 pounds of walleye. Walleye regulations were tightened during the winter season and will remain restrictive for the open water season.

“High walleye catch rates and ideal ice travel conditions attracted a record number of walleye anglers to Upper Red Lake this winter,” said Gary Barnard, Bemidji area fisheries supervisor. “Winter fishing pressure was 1.75 million angler-hours, 75 percent higher than the previous record high observed in 2014.”

Upper Red Lake harvest restrictions are necessary to comply with a joint walleye harvest plan agreement with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. For more information on Red Lake and other fishing regulations, see [www.mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing](http://www.mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing).

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## Lake Erie anglers should expect good fishing again in 2015

### Walleye and yellow perch bag limits announced

Anglers in pursuit of Lake Erie's sport fish should experience another successful year as they pursue a variety of fishing opportunities in 2015, according to Ohio DNR.

"Similar to 2014, we expect fishing to be good again this year, especially when you consider the mix of species and sizes that are seasonally available to Ohio anglers on Lake Erie," said Jeff Tyson, Lake Erie fisheries program manager for the ODNR Division of Wildlife. "While fishing success will vary among species and seasons, the lake's population of walleye, yellow perch, black bass, white bass and steelhead are all stable, with a very broad distribution of sizes for each species."

As a result of the 2015 quota allocation, the walleye daily bag limit is four and the yellow perch daily bag limit is 30 per angler in Ohio waters of Lake Erie until April 30, 2015. The daily bag limit will be six walleye from May 1 through February 28, 2016. From March 1 through April 30, 2016, the daily walleye bag limit will be four. A 15-inch minimum size limit is in effect during the entire season for walleye. The yellow perch daily bag limit is 30 from May 1 through April 30, 2016, with no minimum size limit. Lake Erie anglers can find walleye and yellow perch bag limit information at ODNR offices, in special publications at bait and tackle shops and at [wildohio.gov](http://wildohio.gov).

Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch fisheries are managed through an interagency quota system that involves Ontario, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction regulates their catches to comply with quotas and minimize the risk of over-fishing these species. Quotas for the upcoming fishing season are determined through consensus agreement by these jurisdictions through the Lake Erie Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, which were just recently announced for 2015.

#### Walleye

Ohio walleye anglers in 2015 will catch fish mostly from the 2011, 2010, 2009, 2007 and 2003 hatches, with some fish from the 2008 and 2012 year classes. Walleye from the moderate 2010 hatch will range from 18-23", while walleye from the 2007 hatch will be more than 20". The 2003 and 2007 hatches are likely to carry most of the Central Basin fisheries. These walleye will contribute to the population that has a good number of fish over the 26" range. Large walleye from the strong hatch in 2003 will continue to provide "Fish Ohio" opportunities (greater than 28"), with this year class nearing the size that may give Ohio a new state record walleye.

#### Yellow Perch

Expect good perch fishing in 2015, with the largest fish in the eastern areas of the Central Basin. Perch anglers should encounter fish ranging from 7 to 13 inches from the 2012 through 2007 hatches in this year's fishery, with major contributions from the 2012, 2010, and 2008 year classes. Fish from the average-to-better hatch in 2007 will contribute fish in the greater than 10-inch range.

#### Black Bass

Smallmouth fishing is expected to be fair but improving. Smallmouth catch rates increased in 2014 compared to 2013 and were the highest observed since the mid-1990s. Smallmouth bass caught should be excellent size (14-22", weighing up to 6 lbs.). The best fishing for smallmouth bass will continue to occur in areas with good bottom structure, which is the available habitat across much of the entire Ohio nearshore area and islands areas. Continuing the trend from previous years, largemouth fishing should be excellent in 2015. This emerging fishery is producing high catch rates and some large fish in nearshore areas and harbors across Ohio's Lake Erie. All black bass must be immediately released from May 1 through June 26, 2015. Beginning

June 27, 2015, the daily bag limit for bass will be five, with a 14-inch minimum length limit.

#### Steelhead

Steelhead anglers should enjoy another year of great fishing in 2015 in Ohio's Lake Erie open waters and in tributaries. Peak summer steelhead action on Lake Erie can be found offshore from June through August between Vermilion and Conneaut, with catches measuring 17 to 29 inches. Most Lake Erie anglers troll for steelhead in deep waters using spoons with divers or downriggers until fish move close to shore in the fall. The daily bag limit remains at five fish per angler from May 16 through August 31, 2015, and two fish per angler between September 1, 2015, and May 15, 2016. A 12-inch minimum size limit is in effect throughout the year.

#### White Bass

White bass continue to provide excellent seasonal fishing opportunities in the Maumee and Sandusky rivers and in the open lake. The 2015 catch will be dominated by fish from the 2012, 2011 and 2010 year classes. Fish from 2007 could be as large as 16 inches. Anglers should focus on major Western Basin tributaries during May and June and nearshore areas of the open lake during the summer. There is no white bass daily bag limit or size limit.

#### Other Species

Bays, harbors and main lake shorelines offer excellent fishing for panfish, as well as occasional northern pike and muskellunge in vegetated areas.

Anglers are reminded that fishing conditions on Lake Erie can change hourly, and adjustments are often necessary to improve success.

Information on the ODNR Lake Erie research and management programs, fisheries resources, fishing reports, and maps and links to other Lake Erie web resources are available at [wildohio.gov](http://wildohio.gov). ✧

# DEC adopts new freshwater fishing regulations

New New York freshwater fishing regulations went into effect April 1, 2015

The modifications to the sportfishing regulations are a result of a two-year process which included biological assessment, discussions with anglers and a formal 45-day public comment period. DEC used public input to finalize the changes. These regulations were published in the 2015-16 Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide which became available at all license sales vendors in March.

Highlights of the final changes include:

## New or Modified Regulations Pertaining to Sportfish Species:

- Establishing a closed statewide season for sauger.
- Increasing the minimum size limit for muskellunge to 40 inches and adjusting the season opener to the last Saturday in May.
- Providing consistency between the proposed statewide muskellunge regulation changes and the existing muskellunge regulations for specific waters.
- Increasing the minimum size limit for muskellunge to 54 inches in the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River.
- Increasing the minimum size limit for walleye at Honeoye Lake from 15 to 18 inches.
- Establishing year-round trout seasons, with catch and release fishing only from October 16 through March 31, at specific streams in Western New York:
- Initiating a catch and release season for trout for sections of the Salmon River (Franklin County) and Ninemile Creek (Onondaga County), and extend the catch and release season at Fall Creek (Cayuga Lake).
- Establishing a special trout regulation of a daily creel limit of five fish with no more than two fish longer than 12 inches, for some waters in Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and St.

Lawrence counties, as well as for Little River and Oswegatchie River (St. Lawrence County), and Oriskany Creek (Oneida County).

- Establishing an all-year trout season, with a 12-inch minimum size limit and daily limit of three fish, at Hinkley and Prospect Reservoirs in Herkimer and Oneida counties, North Lake in Herkimer County, and for an additional section of the North Branch Saranac River in Franklin and Clinton counties.
- Establishing an all year season, with a 12-inch minimum size limit and daily limit of three fish, for both trout and landlocked salmon at Millsite Lake in Jefferson County.
- Expanding the current special trout regulation for Pine, Boottree, Town Line, Deer and Horseshoe ponds (St. Lawrence County) to the entire set of waters that are a part of the Massawepie Easement.
- Expanding the current trout and salmon special regulations for the Fulton Chain of lakes to the connected water body Old Forge Pond.
- Establishing a 15-inch minimum size limit for lake trout and clarify that the statewide regulations apply for other species for Owasco Outlet (Cayuga County).
- Modifying trout and/or salmon regulations for Star Lake and Trout Lake (St. Lawrence County), by increasing the minimum size limit for trout to 12 inches and reducing the daily creel limit to three. Add landlocked salmon to species with an open year-round season for Star Lake.
- Establishing an open year-round trout season for Sylvia Lake (St. Lawrence County), with a 12-inch minimum size limit and three fish daily creel limit, with ice fishing permitted.
- Extending Great Lakes tributary regulations upstream to the section of the Genesee River (Monroe County) from State

Route 104 Bridge upstream to the Lower Falls.

- Exempting Old Seneca Lake Inlet from the Finger Lakes tributary regulations.
- Clarifying, in regulation, a definition for “catch and release fishing” and defining how incidental catches of untargeted fish are to be handled.

Additional changes/modifications took place on following issues:

- ▶ Elimination of special regulations that are no longer warranted:
- ▶ Regulations Pertaining to Baitfish and Other Non-Game Fish:
- ▶ Regulations Pertaining to Gear and Angling Methods:

The complete list of sportfishing regulation changes can be viewed under “Recently Adopted (Previous Twelve Months)” on DEC’s website at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov). All comments received were categorized and reviewed for substance, and staff responses were compiled. A summary of the “Assessment of Public Comment” is available on the Department of State website at [www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm). ✧

## NY accepting public comment on new Striped Bass regs

The emergency regulations changing the open season, minimum length and possession limit for [Striped Bass](#) that went into effect on March 17, 2015 have been published in the April 1, 2015 issue of the [State Register](#). Comments will be accepted from April 1, 2015 through May 18, 2015. Send comments to Carol Hoffman, NYSDEC, 205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1, East Setauket, NY 11733 or e-mail comments to [FW.Marine@dec.ny.gov](mailto:FW.Marine@dec.ny.gov) with "Proposed Rulemaking Part 10 Sporting Regulations and Part 40 Marine Fish (Striped Bass)" in the [subject line](#). ✧

## IL boat owners: check registration

Illinois boat owners should check their current three-year boat registration/decal and renew their registration if it expires on June 30, 2015. Renewing watercraft registration can be done online at [www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov) or call 866-867-3542. Have available the watercraft's Illinois registration number, the first six characters of the watercraft's hull ID number, the first three letters of the registered owner's last name, and a credit card. For details and fees, check the IDNR website: [www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/boating](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/boating).

Non-motorized watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, paddle boats or sail boards, are no longer required to be titled/registered in Illinois, unless the vessels have a motor or sail. Non-motorized watercraft owners are required to purchase an Illinois Water Usage Stamp for \$6.00 per calendar year (for each of their first three vessels, and \$3.00 ea. for any additional vessels) ✧

## New look of FOID card

State streamlined the process for residents to obtain a gun permit. The Illinois State Police no longer are accepting paper applications for the Firearm Owner Identification card, which a resident must obtain before buying a gun or ammo. Starting March 16, FOID card applications are only accepted through the agency's website or by a paper alternative [call center](#). Residents under the age of 21 and Amish applicants will be required to complete the call-in paper application.

ISP also made changes to the login for both the concealed carry license and FOID applications. Applicants will no longer be required to obtain an Illinois digital ID through the Department of Central Management Services. New applicants and returning CCL applicants will be required to register with the ISP online system.

Transaction costs will be \$2. [For more information check out the ISP website.](#) ✧

## Minn fishing facts

The DNR compiled these Minnesota fishing facts in preparation for the May 9, 2015 fishing opener.

### Anglers and waters

- There are about 1.5 million licensed anglers in Minnesota.
- About 500,000 people are expected to fish on opening day of the walleye and northern pike season, Saturday, May 9.
- Minnesota has 11,842 lakes, 5,400 managed by DNR Fisheries. There are 18,000 miles of fishable rivers and streams, including 3,800 miles of trout streams.
- Average annual expenditure per angler is about \$1,500.\*
- 162 species of fish can be found in Minnesota waters.

### Participation and the economy

- Fishing contributes \$2.4 billion to the state's economy, ranking Minnesota fourth in the nation for angler expenditures.\*
- Fishing supports 35,400 Minnesota jobs.\*
- Minnesota ranks second in resident fishing participation at 32%, second only to Alaska.\*
- Minnesota is the third most-popular inland fishing destination in the country.\*
- Minnesota ranks sixth among states with the highest number of anglers. The top three states are Florida, Texas and Michigan.\*

### Who goes fishing

- Most resident anglers—855,000 of them in fact—are from urban areas. The remaining 474,000 resident anglers live in greater Minnesota.\*
- Men account for 66% of resident anglers; Women 34%.\*

### Fishing habits

- More time is spent fishing on lakes than in rivers and streams.\*
- The average Minnesota angler spends 15 days fishing each year, with 84% never fishing anywhere else but in Minnesota.\*
- The most sought-after fish species, in order of preference, are crappie, panfish, walleye and northern pike.\* →

## MI - Becoming an Outdoors-Woman June 5-7 in the U.P.

Women seeking to improve their outdoor skills can now register for the 18th annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) summer program, offered the weekend of June 5-7 at Bay Cliff Health Camp, in Big Bay, located approximately 30 miles north of Marquette, Michigan.

Sponsored by the Michigan DNR, this BOW program offers instruction in more than two dozen types of outdoor activities, including kayaking, wilderness first aid and survival, lake and fly-fishing, fly-tying, geocaching, shooting sports, boating and mountain biking — to name just a few.

Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with numerous amenities, including a pool, sauna, tennis courts, hiking and biking trails and easy access to Lake Superior. The BOW summer program also includes special evening programs, such as hikes, group bonfires and more.

The \$185 registration fee includes all food and lodging, as well as most equipment and supplies.

Class information and registration materials are available online at [www.michigan.gov/bow](http://www.michigan.gov/bow), and registration can be paid online at [www.michigan.gov/estore](http://www.michigan.gov/estore). The summer program typically fills quickly—in fact, half the spots already are filled—so early registration is encouraged. The deadline for registration is May 15. A limited number of BOW scholarships are available to help low-income participants; the scholarship deadline is May 1.

For info: [www.michigan.gov/bow](http://www.michigan.gov/bow) or contact Sharon Pitz, 906-228-6561, or e-mail [pitzs@michigan.gov](mailto:pitzs@michigan.gov). ✧

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\*2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ([www.census.gov/prod/www/fishing.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/fishing.html)) ✧

## DEC draft Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda 2015-2020 Public comments accepted until May 15

New York DEC released a draft of the *Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda 2015-2020*, a six-year blueprint for conserving the Hudson River estuary and its surrounding valley. Public comment on the draft will be accepted until May 15.

“The goal of the *Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda* is to present a shared vision and opportunities for action for the tidal river and its valley, from the dam at Troy to the Verrazano Narrows,” said DEC Commissioner Joe Martens. “DEC developed the draft *Action Agenda* with the input of many community groups and citizens throughout the region over this past year and I encourage all stakeholders to share their thoughts. The *Action Agenda* supports Governor Cuomo’s initiatives to promote stewardship of the estuary’s magnificent natural resources for future generations and to enhance tourism and economic opportunities, while also improving resiliency in these times of a changing climate and extreme weather.”

When final, the *Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda 2015-2020* will build on past projects, partnerships and action plans by charting a course to achieve clean water; resilient communities; a vital estuary ecosystem; conservation of estuary fish, wildlife, and habitats; preservation of the river’s natural scenery; and enhanced opportunities for education, river access, recreation and inspiration.

To view the Draft Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda: [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html). Public comments on the draft will be accepted until May 15, 2015. Comments can be emailed with “Action Agenda” in the subject line to [hrep@dec.ny.gov](mailto:hrep@dec.ny.gov). In addition, comments can be mailed to: NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program, 21 South Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, NY 12561 ✧

## Large trout stocked in Clinton & Huron rivers and Spring Mill Pond

The Michigan DNR recently stocked adult trout in the Clinton River at Riverside Park, Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area, and Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area.

The Clinton River was stocked with just over 400 brown trout from 16 to 18 inches and 300 rainbow trout ranging from 20 to 22 inches. The Huron River was stocked with 1,500 brown trout sized 16 to 22 inches and nearly 1,500 rainbow trout sized 16 to 22 inches. Spring Mill Pond was stocked with nearly 200 brown trout sized 16 to 18 inches and nearly 600 rainbow trout sized 16 to 22 inches.

This annual stocking activity uses unneeded brown and rainbow trout broodstock from Michigan’s state fish hatcheries. Every year there are surplus adult trout in the hatchery system, which are stocked in special regulation areas.

Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area is closed to fishing October 1 through March 31. From April 1-24, anglers are limited to flies-only, catch-and-release fishing. Youth under the age of 12 may keep one fish between 8 and 12 inches. Beginning April 25, all baits are allowed and anglers may keep up to five trout over 8 inches, but only three over 15 inches.

At Spring Mill Pond from April 1-24, anglers are limited to artificial lures only, catch-and-release fishing. Youth under the age of 12 may keep one fish between 8 and 12 inches. Beginning April 25, all baits are allowed and anglers may keep up to five fish over 8 inches, but only three fish over 15 inches.

The Clinton River upstream of Dequindre Road is not classified as a trout stream. Therefore, trout fishing is open year-round with an 8-inch minimum size limit and a five-fish daily possession limit, no more than three of which may be 15 inches or greater.

See the [2015 Michigan Fishing Guide](#) for complete regulation details. ✧

## Time to try for trout: MN Opener April 18

Conditions are ripe to give trout fishing a try anywhere on Minnesota’s 3,800 miles of trout streams after fishing opens April 18 on inland trout streams statewide.

The DNR has purchased more than 38 miles of angling easements since 2009 that grant public access to fishing. In total, the DNR owns 515 miles of trout stream easements, and another 1,228 miles flow through public land such as county, state, or federal forests and parks. Stream conditions should be ideal for fishing this spring.

Trout populations have increased for a number of reasons, including habitat improvements made by the DNR, local governments and agencies, conservation partners like Trout Unlimited, and conservation-minded people.

The possession limit for brook, brown and rainbow trout, and splake, is five combined, with not more than one longer than 16 inches. In Lake Superior streams, different regulations exist below posted boundaries, and anglers should check for special regulations on the streams where they plan to fish.

For more information on trout fishing, see [www.mndnr.gov/fishmn/trout](http://www.mndnr.gov/fishmn/trout). For information about southeastern Minnesota streams, call the Lanesboro area fisheries office at 507-467-2442, and for information about streams in the rest of the state, call Nerbonne at 651-259-5205. ✧

## IL Spring Trout Season open

The 2015 Spring Trout Fishing Season in Illinois began April 4. The catchable trout program is made possible through the sale of inland trout stamps to those anglers who participate. Unless exempt, anglers must have a valid Illinois fishing license and an inland trout stamp. For a list of sites for the spring catchable trout program: [Spring Trout Fishing Season](#). ✧

## Mille Lacs walleye limit to 1; night muskie and bow fishing allowed

Mille Lacs Lake anglers will be able to keep one walleye 19- to 21-inches long or one over 28 inches when fishing opens on Saturday, May 9, and an extended night fishing closure will again be in effect beginning the Monday after the opener.

The restrictive walleye regulations are necessary to keep walleye harvest within the lake's established safe harvest level.

"The new regulations reflect our commitment to improve the walleye fishery as quickly as possible and stay within the state's 1837 Treaty safe harvest allocation yet continue to provide walleye angling opportunities," said Don Pereira, fisheries chief for the DNR.

The 2015 regulations for Mille Lacs Lake are:

- **Walleye** – Limit of one and the fish must be 19- to 21-inches long or longer than 28 inches. Night closure from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. May 11 to December 1.
- **Northern pike** – Limit of 10. One fish may be longer than 30 inches only if two fish shorter than 30 inches are caught on the same trip and in possession.
- **Bass** – Limit of six smallmouth and largemouth bass in combination. Only one smallmouth bass may be longer than 18 inches.

Mille Lacs' walleye safe harvest level was reduced from 60,000 to 40,000 pounds in 2015 so more fish potentially survive and spawn to improve the walleye population. State anglers can harvest up to 28,600 pounds of walleye. The eight Chippewa bands with 1837 Treaty harvest rights can harvest up to 11,400 pounds of walleye.

Last year, Mille Lacs anglers could keep two walleye 18- to 20-inches long or one longer than 28 inches.

A night fishing closure, enforced from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., will begin Monday, May 11, and extend to Tuesday, December 1.

"This set of regulations is designed to minimize the likelihood that a catch-and-release only walleye fishing regulation would be needed later in the season to stay within the state's safe harvest allocation," Pereira said.

Like last year, anglers may keep up to 10 northern pike. A change—suggested and supported by the Mille Lacs input group—this year allows one of those fish to be longer than 30 inches only if an angler has first caught at least two northern pike shorter than 30 inches on the same trip and has them in immediate possession. Angling season for northern pike runs from May 9 through March 27, 2016.

"There was too much pressure on large northern pike last year when anglers and spearers could harvest one fish longer than 30 inches without restriction," Pereira said. "So this year we're experimenting with an earn-atrophy concept that requires anglers to harvest more abundant smaller fish before they can take home a big fish."

Mille Lacs' relaxed smallmouth bass regulations remain in effect. The smallmouth bass season begins May 9 and allows anglers to harvest smallmouth bass from the walleye opener until the last Sunday in February 2016. Anglers may keep six smallmouth and largemouth bass in combination, but only one smallmouth bass may be longer than 18 inches.

"The continuation of liberal northern pike and smallmouth bass regulations speak to the fact these species can withstand additional pressure because their populations are at or near record highs," Pereira said. "The current walleye regulation and the extended night fishing closure will protect upcoming year classes of young walleye and adult spawning stock, and help ensure the harvest stays within the safe harvest level."

There will be two exceptions to the night fishing ban this year for muskellunge and bow fishing. Beginning Monday, June 8, muskellunge anglers may fish at night

with artificial lures longer than 8 inches or sucker minnows longer than 8 inches. Bow fishing for rough fish only also will be allowed at night beginning June 8 provided no angling equipment is in a boat.

"Night muskie fishing and bow fishing for rough fish are popular on Mille Lacs," Pereira said. "Last year, all boats had to be off the water at night. This year, we've listened to stakeholders and adjusted the regulations to accommodate night fishing methods that are expected to have no impact on the walleye we're trying to protect."

Pereira said the suite of regulations reflects significant fish population changes at Mille Lacs. Walleye numbers are at a 40-year low. Northern pike numbers are at record highs. The smallmouth bass population has been increasing since the 1990s. Tullibee and perch populations, both important forage species, are relatively low.

Fish populations likely are being influenced by many factors including a management approach that focused too much walleye harvest on too narrow a size range of fish. An adequate number of spawners remain in the lake and sufficient walleye continue to hatch each year. The problem is that since 2008, not enough young walleye are surviving to maturity and replenishing the population.

"We're encouraged by walleye hatched in 2013," Pereira said. "That year class shows strong signs that more of those fish are surviving and will mature."

Other factors contributing to the changing fishery on Mille Lacs and possibly influencing the survival of young walleye include clearer water that may limit suitable habitat and increase vulnerability to predation, longer growing seasons related to climate change that may favor other species, and the indirect impacts of a variety of invasive species in the lake, including zebra mussels, spiny water fleas and Eurasian watermilfoil. ✧



**Wisconsin stocked Chinook***Continued from page 1*

accounted for some 49 percent of stocked fish harvested throughout the lake and 57 percent of the stocked fish taken in Wisconsin waters.

The results of the analysis show the fish stocked by Wisconsin DNR appear to survive at better than average rates and account for a relatively large percentage of the stocked Chinook salmon harvested throughout Lake Michigan, Boyarski said. In addition, anglers are benefiting from strong reproduction among wild Chinook, which accounted for about 60 percent of the total harvest throughout Lake Michigan in 2014.

Brad Eggold, DNR fisheries supervisor for southern Lake Michigan, said the study demonstrates the benefits of Wisconsin's investment in the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery where the majority of Wisconsin Chinook salmon are reared. The results also reinforce the importance of multistate cooperation and the involvement of anglers throughout the region.

Charles Bronte, senior fisheries biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said the multistate effort was initiated in an attempt to understand the growth and survival of Chinook, their movement throughout the connected waters of lakes Michigan and Huron and levels of natural reproduction. These measures are critical to the DNR for managing Chinook in response to a changing base of forage fish.

"If we're going to find the answers, we need this kind of coordinated research among all the states in the region that stock Chinook because the fish don't stay in one place," Bronte said. "What we learn from this work will help guide best practices for producing healthy fish throughout the region, maximize returns and provide further insight into the conditions essential for these fish to thrive."

Other important insights gleaned from the work include the fact that natural reproduction now accounts for some 60 percent of the Chinook population from the combined year

classes 2011, 2012 and 2013. However, lower lake levels and stream flows during 2012 and the subsequent harsh winter contributed to a reduction in successful natural spawning and survival for the 2013 year class of Chinook, which was only 37 percent wild fish.

The team of experts said more work and more time will be needed to assess whether natural reproduction will rebound following the difficult 2013 cycle. Disruptions in the lake's food web caused by invasive mussels and other species also bear further monitoring and will influence future management decisions.

"The study reinforces the importance of science-based management efforts and provides a wealth of information that we intend to share with our stakeholders," Boyarski said. "In the months ahead, we'll use what we are learning to examine our own management practices and implement strategies that increase the return on our stocking and management efforts going forward."

To learn more about the research and the Lake Michigan fishery, search the DNR website [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "[Fishing Lake Michigan](#)" and "[chinook salmon research](#)." ✧

**New MI fishing regs***Continued from page 1*

- **Lake Michigan** lake trout regulations: MM-1, MM-2, MM-3 and MM-4 have changed to the following: minimum size limit shall be 15 inches and the maximum size limit shall be 27 inches, except the daily possession limit shall not include more than one (1) lake trout at 34 inches or greater. In MM-5, MM-6, MM-7 and MM-8 the minimum size limit has been changed to 15 inches. In MM-1, MM-2, MM-3, MM-4 and MM-5, the lake trout daily possession limit has been reduced from three (3) to two (2).

**Inland Trout and Salmon Regulations:**

- Regulations affecting brook trout minimum size limits have changed, and there is a new regulation creating

the Upper Peninsula's Brook Trout Restoration Areas.

The 2015 Michigan Fishing Guide is available at all major retailers and online at [Michigan.gov/fishingguide](http://Michigan.gov/fishingguide). ✧

**DNR asks anglers to report tagged walleye**

The Michigan DNR is set to jaw tag nearly 3,000 walleyes in Saginaw Bay this spring. Anglers are asked to collect information on tagged fish they catch and to report it to the DNR.

The DNR has tagged more than 100,000 walleyes in that water body since 1981. Jaw tagging is part of a long-term research project to monitor survival and harvest rates and to learn about walleye movement. The program depends on anglers to report when they catch a tagged walleye, as well as the fish's length, weight (if known) and tag identification number. Once reported, anglers will receive a letter back detailing the history of their fish.

About 10% of the tags include a \$100 reward for reporting the tag. Each tag is stamped with a unique identifying number and a P.O. Box address. If anglers prefer, they can report their tagged walleyes online at [www.michigandnr.com/taggedfish/](http://www.michigandnr.com/taggedfish/).

Anglers can keep the fish, of course, or release it if they prefer.

"This information is essential to measuring the health of the population" said David Fielder, a research biologist out of the DNR's Alpena Fisheries Research Station. "Besides ensuring the walleye fishery remains sustainable, we also annually estimate the population size with the aid of these tag reports."

The tagging operation occurs each spring on the Tittabawassee River when walleyes are in the river for spawning. They are collected with electrofishing boats that temporarily stun the fish, which are then tagged and released back into the river. After spawning, walleyes migrate back into Saginaw Bay. Some walleyes will migrate out of the bay and into other parts of Lake Huron. ✧

## Is gun ownership really on a downward trend in America?

According to a recent survey by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, gun ownership in the United States has fallen by almost 20 percent since the 1970s. A report by the General Social Survey (GSS) found that around 32 percent of Americans either own a firearm or have one in their household in 2014, compared to the nearly 50 percent in 1973.

But is gun ownership really on a downward trend? The release of the report was quickly met by skepticism, especially by gun rights supporters who pointed out that GSS is sponsored in part by anti-gun organizations, which may cast some doubt on the survey. Author and pro-gun advocate John Lott also wrote in an opinion piece on [Fox News](#) that GSS director Tom Smith previously supported gun control measures. On the opposite side, gun control advocates warmly supported the report and made mention of the GSS' reputation as one of the best sources of data on societal trends.

That said, the recent report by GSS has been both contradicted and supported by other survey firms. According to [Gallup](#), gun ownership in America has actually remained

relatively stable, save for a big increase in the early 1990s and the resulting slump in the early 2000s. The difference between today and 43 years ago in the number of gun owners is almost negligible—42 percent in 2014 as compared to 43 percent in 1972. Going further back, Gallup reported that 49 percent of American households claimed to own a gun in 1960. The Pew Research Center, on the other hand, does support GSS by reporting similar numbers, lending to the speculation by many that while guns are still selling at a brisk pace, it may be that more guns belong to fewer people.

Which study is to be believed? The federal government does not keep a census of gun owners, so the only data available is compiled by independent firms and the FBI's background check report, which only records requests for background checks.

While these surveys are important in gauging public opinion, some say that there are many factors impacting their accuracy. Steve Sanetti, president of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), wrote that how survey participants are polled—whether in-person or

anonymously through the phone—can have a major effect on the results.

“The GSS finds that 32 percent of Americans own firearms or live with someone who owns one, a decrease when compared to GSS ownership rates from the 1970s and 1980s. But who would argue that these are very different times? In this era of government mistrust and information breaches, would you tell a stranger whether you own firearms or not—or freely offer other personal or family information you deem private?” Sanetti wrote.

Criminologist Gary Kleck also previously said that these kinds of surveys could be “hit-or-miss.” He noted that the Gallup survey, which was based on anonymous telephone calls, resulted in more participants answering that they owned a firearm.

Also, studies commissioned by the NSSF have found that the number of new gun owners is on the rise, and when taken with the FBI's report of increasing background checks and a Pew survey that found American approval of gun rights at its highest in years, many speculate that gun ownership is actually increasing.

“Gun ownership declining?” asked Sanetti. “Don't believe it.” ✧

## Steelhead egg collection to occur on Little Manistee

The Michigan DNR soon will be collecting steelhead eggs at the Little Manistee River weir in Stronach.

Since 1968, the Little Manistee River weir has served as the sole source of winter-run steelhead eggs for fish hatcheries in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Yearling steelhead produced through hatchery operations are stocked in select tributaries of all the Great Lakes.

To provide a backup egg-take source in case of emergencies, another broodstock steelhead population is being developed on the Platte River in Benzie County. This population will be used only if the Little Manistee River spawning run fails to provide enough fish. Steelhead provide one of Michigan's

premier sport fishing opportunities for open water and stream fishing.

Egg-take operations begin by lowering the weir gates in mid-March. This stops the upstream steelhead migration in the Little Manistee River and diverts the fish into holding ponds. During the first two weeks of April the fish ripen and egg-take operations begin, although this year's harsh winter conditions could delay these operations by one to two weeks. These activities continue daily until the established egg quota has been reached.

During egg-take operations, unripe or "green" steelhead are counted and passed upstream to sustain the wild Little Manistee River steelhead run. Steelhead that are

spawned during operations also are passed upstream and many eventually return to Lake Michigan, as this species is capable of spawning multiple times. Once the quota of eggs is reached, the weir gates are removed and all remaining fish are allowed to migrate upstream.

Egg-take scheduling information is available from the Little Manistee weir hotline at 231-775-9727, ext. 6072. The facility is open to the public for up-close viewing during egg-take operations. Fish also can be observed in the river below the weir at any time. The weir had several upgrades completed in 2014 that will enhance visitors' steelhead viewing experience. [Little Manistee River weir online](#). ✧

## DNR stocking trout for stream opener, April 25

This spring, the Indiana DNR will stock more than 55,000 trout throughout the state in time for stream trout season, which starts April 25. Traditionally, the state has stocked only rainbow trout in all locations except the Brookville Lake tailwater on the Whitewater River, where brown trout are stocked in addition to rainbow trout. New this year, the state also will stock both brown and rainbow trout in LaGrange County, in the Pigeon River and the Oliver Lake chain.

The state's 2015 trout stocking plan and list of stocking locations is at [wildlife.IN.gov/3622.htm](http://wildlife.IN.gov/3622.htm). ✧

## Muskegon River walleye egg collection to occur this spring

The Michigan DNR plans to collect approximately 62 million walleye eggs from the Muskegon River that will result in 13.4 million fry for transfer to rearing ponds throughout the Lower Peninsula. These walleye will be raised to fingerling size (approximately 1.5 to 2.5 inches) and stocked in late spring or early summer in lakes and rivers throughout the state. ✧

## Fishing Information booklet

The *2015 Illinois Fishing Information* guide is available in PDF format through the IDNR website. Regulations in the guide are effective through March 31, 2016. A reminder to anglers, and would-be anglers: Illinois Free Fishing Days for 2015 are June 5-8.

[www.dnr.illinois.gov/fishing/Documents/IllinoisFishingInformation.pdf](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/fishing/Documents/IllinoisFishingInformation.pdf) ✧

## Platte River to receive 800,000 coho salmon stocked this spring

The Michigan DNR recently stocked coho salmon in the Platte River near the Platte River State Fish Hatchery in Beulah (Benzie County), Michigan.

The Platte River is the birthplace of coho salmon in the Great Lakes, following the species' experimental introduction there in 1966 to control the alewife population and to create a sport fishery. Today, nearly 50 years later, the Platte River State Fish Hatchery is the only hatchery in Michigan that rears coho salmon. The hatchery also serves as the primary egg source for the Great Lakes.

Each year more than 1.5 million coho salmon are reared at the Platte River State Fish Hatchery. Approximately half of those fish are stocked each spring directly into the Platte River, which flows through the hatchery's grounds. For eight days over the course of the first two weeks in April, 100,000 fish are stocked each day. Prior to that, the coho salmon are intensively cared for at the hatchery for 18 months, the most critical life stage for the fish. When stocked, these fish are typically between 5 and 7 inches long and are just beginning to smolt.

The smolting process causes physiological changes in juvenile salmon, resulting in imprinting to their home stream. Following the smolting process, the juvenile coho salmon will migrate to Lake Michigan to spend the next 18 months growing and maturing. Once mature, usually by the fall of the following year, they will migrate back to their home stream, spawn and complete the life cycle. ✧

## IL Free Fishing Days for 2015

Mark your calendars for the 2015 Illinois Free Fishing Days promotion on June 5-8. ✧

## Hunter and Boating Safety Education

Hunter Safety Education and Boating Safety Education courses from the IDNR are posted on the IDNR website, where class schedules are updated frequently. The website link for all IDNR Safety Education course information is [www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety). ✧

## IL Becoming an Outdoors Woman

Registration is open now for the IDNR 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' Workshop on June 5-7 at the Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Illinois. BOW workshops provide introductory instruction and experiences in many outdoor-related activities and skills. Class instruction is offered in a fun, non-competitive, and hands-on environment. BOW workshops are very popular, so register early. The cost of \$225 per person includes lodging, class instruction, use of equipment, transportation during the event, supplies and giveaways. Registration information is online at [www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/bo](http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/bo). ✧

## IL Camping Reservations

Make campsite and shelter reservations for many IDNR sites online through the Reserve America website at [www.reserveamerica.com](http://www.reserveamerica.com). For more info: <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/camping/campsvp.htm>. ✧

## 10-day jail term for illegally trading in snakehead fish

A Mississauga man has been sentenced to 10 days in jail for unlawfully trading in live snakehead fish. The 26-year-old male pleaded guilty to two counts of buying and two counts of selling various species of live snakehead fish and was sentenced to 10 days in jail. In addition to the jail term, the sentence included a one-year probation order.

Justice of the Peace Eileen Walker heard the case in the Ontario Court of Justice, Brampton, on March 20, 2015.

The ministry reminds the public that it is against the law to possess live invasive fish as they pose a serious threat to native species and ecosystems. Ontario banned the possession of live snakehead fish in 2005. To learn more about invasive species and what the province is doing to prevent and control the spread, visit the [Invasive Species](#) webpage. ✧

## Sea Grant Directors retire after years of service

Say a heartfelt “thank you” to Dr. Jeffrey Reutter, who retired from his position as Ohio Sea Grant Director on March 31 after 42 years of service. If you would like to express your appreciation for Reutter’s contributions to Ohio Sea Grant and Lake Erie, please visit [go.osu.edu/reutterthanks](http://go.osu.edu/reutterthanks).

Also, Jeffrey Gunderson, Director of Minnesota Sea Grant, follows Ohio Sea Grant’s former director Dr. Jeffrey Reutter into retirement. Reutter retired the day before Gunderson. ✧

## Boat sales increase 8.5% in 2014

Led by four segments that topped 40,000 in sales, the recreational boating industry finished 2014 with moderate growth of 6% in the main powerboat segments and 8.5% industrywide. Aluminum fishing and pontoon boats, small to mid-sized fiberglass outboards and personal watercraft were the top categories as the industry sold 226,494 boats [nationwide](#) last year, 17,804 [more](#) than it sold the previous year, Statistical Surveys reported.

Sales of fiberglass outboards rose 10.1% for the year to 42,693 boats. [Aluminum fishing boats](#) gained 6.4% to 41,965 and aluminum pontoons rose 5.8% to 41,143. The industry enjoyed its third year in a row of sales that topped 200,000 as it continues its recovery from the Great Recession. Sales in 2013 were up 5.8% in the main segments and just 1.9% industrywide, finishing at 208,690, but the broader industry did better in 2014, in large part because of PWC sales, which climbed by 8,331, or 21.1%, to 47,864. ✧

## Hunters prepare for Ohio's 2015 wild turkey season

For many hunters, spring in Ohio brings the unmistakable sound of gobbling wild turkeys as Ohio’s annual hunt of this popular game bird begins. The 2015 Ohio spring hunting season opens Monday, April 20.

Hunters harvested 16,556 wild turkeys during the 2014 youth and spring turkey seasons. The total checked in 2013 was 18,391 wild turkeys.

Hunters are required to make their own game tag to attach to a turkey. Game tags can be made of any material (cardboard, plastic, paper, etc.) as long as it contains the hunter’s name, date, time and county of the kill. Go to the Turkey Hunting Resources page at [wildohio.gov](http://wildohio.gov) for more information about the game check process. ✧

## Ohio Approves 2015-2016 Hunting Regulations

A reduction in white-tailed deer bag limits and antlerless permit use during the 2015-2016 hunting seasons were among regulations approved by Ohio at its scheduled meeting on April 8. The council also voted to remove the peregrine falcon from Ohio’s list of threatened species.

Among the approved changes:

- Reduce bag limits in most counties, and remove antlerless permits in all but 10 counties. No county had a bag limit increase.
- Reduce the statewide bag limit of deer from nine to six.
- Suspend the antlerless-only muzzleloader weekend.
- Offer two additional days of deer-gun hunting, December 28-29, 2015.
- Move muzzleloader season to January 9-12, 2016.
- Move the start of fall turkey hunting to October 10, two days earlier than 2014.
- Add one straight-walled cartridge rifle, the .450 Marlin, to the existing list of legal hunting rifles during the deer-gun and youth deer-gun seasons.

The Ohio Wildlife Council also approved changes to Ohio’s list of threatened species. The peregrine falcon, previously threatened, was removed from the list. The population of peregrine falcons in Ohio, and throughout the eastern United States, has made a significant recovery through conservation efforts. The ODNR will continue to monitor peregrine populations, but on a smaller scale. This will allow biologists to focus on recovery efforts for other species which need additional attention. The Rufa red knot, previously unlisted, was added to Ohio’s list of threatened species.

Season dates and bag limits for migratory birds, including mourning dove, Canada goose, rail, moorhen, snipe, woodcock and waterfowl will be set in August. ✧

## DNR completes latest moose population survey

The 2015 moose population estimate in the western U.P. is 323, compared to 451 in 2013. From 1997 to 2007, surveys of prime moose habitat in Baraga, Iron and Marquette counties suggested the U.P.'s moose population was growing at a modest rate of about 10% per year. From 2009 to 2013, survey results showed an apparent change in that trend, with the growth rate slowing to about 2% per year.

"There is inherent uncertainty with any population survey, and due to the fact that the 2013 and 2015 estimates have some overlap in confidence intervals, the potential remains that the state's moose population has remained steady rather than declining," said Chad Stewart,

deer, elk and moose management specialist for the DNR. "However, Future surveys will be needed to identify any long-term trend for Michigan's moose population. Other states and provinces have reported declines in moose populations near the southern edge of North America's moose range, yet other populations are holding steady or increasing. Researchers in Michigan have hypothesized several potential causes for a possible decline of moose numbers in Michigan. Among potential factors:

- Back-to-back severe winter weather that negatively affected moose condition, survival and reproductive success.
- Year-round climatic changes, especially warmer temperatures

- that led to increased parasite loads on moose, weakening their overall condition.
- A possible increase in wolf predation on moose calves due to the region's lowered deer population.

The moose range in the western Upper Peninsula covers about 1,400 square miles. Every other year, DNR staff members survey most of that area from the air. In 2015, the flights covered all survey plots within the core moose area—where 80 to 90 percent of the western U.P. moose population is located—along with a sampling of the non-core plots as well.

For more information about moose in Michigan, visit [www.michigan.gov/moose](http://www.michigan.gov/moose) ✧

### **Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

#### **[Petition: Rename Lake Michigan 'Lake Wisconsin'](#)**

The petition, at [visitlakewisconsin.com](http://visitlakewisconsin.com), had [more](#) than 500 signatures Friday afternoon supporting the idea to rename the great lake separating Wisconsin and Michigan for the state to its west.

#### **[Petition aims to rename Lake Michigan 'Lake Wisconsin'](#)**

An online petition hoping to rename Lake Michigan "Lake Wisconsin" has amassed more than 400 signatures since it launched April 1

#### **[EDITORIAL: Congress must reel in Army Corps on dump of toxic dredge in Lake Erie](#)**

The Ohio congressional delegation needs to show the Corps that following the law, and doing the right thing for public [health](#), are not optional.

#### **[Michigan officials weighing idea of Great Lakes fish farming](#)**

Entrepreneurs may seek approval to establish fish farming in Michigan's Great Lakes waters, officials said — an undertaking that hasn't taken place before on the U.S. side of the lakes, although Canada has allowed commercial aquaculture in Lake Huron for decades.

#### **[Anglers spar over DEC preseason bass fishing ban](#)**

In New York, the Dept. of Environmental Conservation is mulling whether it should lift its ban on catch-and-release bass fishing in Region 6, which includes the eastern basin of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

#### **[Ohio projects to get more than \\$6 million from Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#)**

Ohio projects will get more than \$6 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative money for projects to prevent runoff from entering Lake Erie and restore wetlands and streams.

#### **[Walleye bag limit proposed by DNR](#)**

A daily bag limit of three walleyes would apply to all northern Wisconsin waters — regardless of Chippewa tribal spearing declarations or harvests — under a proposal released Wednesday by the Department of Natural Resources.

#### **[EDITORIAL: Army Corps misleads Congress, public on carp threat to Great Lakes](#)**

Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Corps commander, testified on Feb. 11 before a congressional subcommittee that the Corps had halted the advance of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. "That's just not true," said U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce

#### **[Senator Stabenow, Congresswoman Miller introduce bipartisan bills to stop Asian carp](#)**

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow and Congresswoman Candice Miller have introduced the Defending Our Great Lakes Act to stop Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes

End