



Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT[®]

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Federal Court Finds Cormorant Mass Killing Policy Illegal

Ruling may end management of fish-eating birds in 24 eastern states

Washington, DC – A federal court has ruled that “depredation” orders under which tens of thousands of double-crested cormorants are killed each year were illegally issued, according to a ruling posted today in a lawsuit filed by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The court found that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) clearly violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in authorizing killing double crested cormorants in 24 states east of the Mississippi without current data or adequate scientific analysis.

In 2014, the FWS extended until 2019 an open-ended approval for “lethal removal” of double-crested cormorants “committing or about to commit predation” on fish—the primary diet of the much-maligned

black migratory bird—in the covered states. These depredation orders remove the legal protection these large migratory birds would otherwise enjoy under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The claimed rationale is to protect sports fishing and aquaculture, principally catfish farms, although scant evidence exists to prove that the birds appreciably impact fish populations.

In challenging the depredation orders, PEER recruited some of the leading cormorant researchers, including the Service’s own, now-retired, top expert, Dr. Kenneth Stromborg, a wildlife biologist with more than 40 years of experience, as co-plaintiffs. The order issued by U.S. District Judge John D. Bates found that FWS violated its legal obligations by –

- Failing to take the required “hard look” at the environmental consequences of its actions, instead just “wholesale recycling” outdated analyses done years ago;
- Ignoring a range of suggested non-lethal alternatives; and
- Limiting its review to options “which would not result in changes to current management strategies.”

“The court found the Fish & Wildlife Service guilty of biological malpractice,” stated PEER Staff Counsel Laura Dumais, noting that the court deemed the FWS violations so blatant that it did not need to reach all of the issues raised in the suit. “This ruling is a step toward ending slaughter as the principal American strategy for managing wildlife.”

Cormorant Mass Killing Policy

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Long term plans to keep Asian carp out of Great Lakes

The long term mission to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes is working, and the just-released 2016 Asian Carp Action Plan shows natural resources professionals from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and our federal, state, and local partner agencies and organizations are busy developing and implementing new and increasingly effective ways of keeping the invasive fish from moving into Lake Michigan and beyond.

For those who may not know, Asian carp imported to the U.S. to clean fish farm and retention ponds escaped into the Mississippi River more than 40 years ago, and spread into the Illinois River 30 years ago. Two species of Asian carp—silver and bighead carp—consume the plant and animal plankton that sportfish

rely on.

Illinois and the IDNR personnel are on the leading edge of efforts to reduce Asian carp numbers where they exist in the upper Illinois River, and keep those remaining from using the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal as a pathway to the Great Lakes.

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee’s 2016 plan includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ installation of a third electric fish barrier in the canal at Romeoville; evaluation of new control measures and technologies; and, stepped up contract fishing on the upper Illinois and lower Des Plaines rivers to remove tens of thousands of Asian carp to keep them out of the canal and away from the barriers.

Keep Asian carp out

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Free walleye fishing classes

The Michigan DNR and Fishmas Charters have partnered to offer free walleye fishing classes this summer.

The two-hour class is part of the DNR's [Recreation 101 program](#) and will include discussion of the seasonal habits of the elusive walleye, proven techniques for finding fish and a question-and-answer session.

Classes will run from 6 to 8 p.m. at the following parks:

- [Sterling State Park](#) (Monroe County): Friday, May 20
- [Algonac State Park](#) (St. Clair County): Friday, May 27
- [Silver Lake State Park](#) (Oceana County): Sunday, June 12
- [Ludington State Park](#) (Mason County): Friday, July 22
- [Burt Lake State Park](#) (Cheboygan County): Friday, Sept. 2

Captain Ken Clark of Fishmas Charters in Whitehall will teach the classes. Walleye enthusiasts of all skill levels are invited to take part in these free classes.

There will be a drawing at the end of the program for two lucky participants to go out with Clark for an hour of fishing directly after the program. Winners must have a valid fishing license to participate in the fishing excursion. Participants 17 and younger must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Picnic tables will be provided, but participants may want to bring lawn chairs.

Classes may be canceled in the event of severe weather. For more information or to RSVP, please contact the location of the class you wish to attend. For more information about Fishmas Charters, please visit [www.FishmasCharters.com](#).

Volunteers offer their time and knowledge at no charge to the DNR or class participants. The Recreation 101 program, which began with several state parks in 2011, is now offered statewide in Michigan state parks and many community recreation agencies through collaboration with the Michigan Recreation and Park Association. Rec 101 offers nearly every recreational

pursuit, from archery to ziplining. [www.michigan.gov/rec101](#).

[Inside Michigan's Great Outdoors](#) subscribers are always the first to know about reservation opportunities, state park events and other outdoor happenings. Visit [www.michigan.gov/dnr](#) to subscribe now.

The classes are free to attend, but a Recreation Passport is required for vehicle entry into state parks. ♦

Annual Lake Huron lake trout assessment set to begin

The Michigan DNR has begun its annual spring lake trout assessment in Lake Huron and continues through mid-June. This year's survey will mark the end of service for the 69-year-old research vessel Chinook, as the department's new Lake Huron research vessel Tanner, named in honor of former DNR Fisheries Division Chief and DNR Director Dr. Howard Tanner, will enter service in late May.

The data from this survey are used by the DNR and partner agencies to manage lake trout populations in the main basin of Lake Huron.

The survey will be completed by a six-member crew aboard the R/V Chinook in April and early May, and then by the R/V Tanner in late May and June. DNR staff will set 6-ft.-high nylon gill nets on the lake bottom at 14 survey stations from Drummond Island in the north to Port Sanilac in the south. At each survey station, the survey nets will be set overnight at four depths ranging 30 to 200 ft.

Although the Lake Huron food web and ecosystem are rapidly changing, the division efforts have documented stable adult lake trout catch rates and continued increases in wild lake trout reproduction and recruitment. In fact, adult lake trout catch rates have increased in northern and north central Lake Huron. ♦



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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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Publisher

Dan Thomas, 630/941-1351

Editor

Jeanette Thomas

Webmaster

Joe Nutt, nuttcajbn@sbcglobal.net

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Be on the lookout for early season boating conditions and hazards

Boaters eager to hit newly thawed lakes and rivers across the state should be on the lookout for debris in the water and the potential for ice-damaged ramps at public water accesses.

Fluctuating water levels in the early spring can dislodge logs and other debris making them a navigational hazard to boaters. Lakes and rivers that have experienced major flooding in recent years can be especially problematic.

The Minnesota DNR and local governments maintain an extensive system of 2,898 public water access sites throughout the state. As the ice goes out, DNR crews begin working to inspect and repair launch ramps, and put the docks in at the DNR-maintained public water access sites—but they haven't reached all of them yet. This work will be

accomplished statewide over the next few weeks and hopefully completed by the May 14 fishing opener.

Winter weather is always a challenge to Minnesota's public water access sites. As lake ice expands and pushes against the shore during the winter months, it can push and buckle the concrete plank structures like an accordion. This phenomenon, called "ice jacking," often leaves the boat ramp unusable. Boaters can help by inspecting ramp conditions before launching their watercraft. If a boat ramp is not yet ready for use, boaters can locate alternate access sites by visiting www.mndnr.gov/wateraccess.

Suggestions for early spring boat launching include:

- Check the ramp for broken planks and ensure the gravel is firm.
- Have hip boots or waders

- available in case you need to enter the water to help guide the boat and trailer, especially where docks are not yet available.
- Lower the motor only after you are sure there is enough clearance.
- Watch for free floating obstructions in the lake or river.

Boaters are also reminded to make safety a priority, especially when water temperatures are dangerously cold. Each year, 30 percent of boating deaths occur on cold water. Nearly all could be prevented by wearing a life jacket; the vast majority involves men ages 20-60 years old. Learn more at www.mndnr.gov/boatingsafety. For more info: www.mndnr.gov/wateraccess. ♦

Candidates' support of hunting, shooting, fishing vital to capturing the sportsman vote

Despite the remaining uncertainty and turmoil surrounding our nation's potential presidential candidates, and countless state and local elections on the line in 2016, one thing is certain: Those candidates who fail to support hunting, sport shooting and fishing, will ultimately fail to win the votes of American sportsmen. And with nearly 14 million hunters, over 20 million recreational shooters and more than 33 million anglers, that is a lot of votes lost—enough that it could change the outcome of an election.

This fact was driven home recently when AnglerSurvey.com and HunterSurvey.com surveyed anglers, hunters and shooting enthusiasts regarding their intention to vote in the upcoming presidential elections and how important support of fishing, hunting and sport shooting issues were in casting their vote. Those who said they intend to vote were high in both surveys with 92% of AnglerSurvey respondents and 94% of HunterSurvey respondents planning to vote for our next president this November.

A candidate's position on

sportfishing issues is important to anglers, with 72% of respondents saying it will impact their choice of candidate. Twenty-eight percent said it will not affect their decision. Among hunters and anglers, however, a candidate's stance on gun and hunting issues is absolutely critical. Nearly 96% of those surveyed said a candidate's positions on the topics will affect their voting decision, while just over 4% said they will not.

"Hunting, sport shooting and recreational fishing are activities that participants are most often extremely passionate about; so much so that it has a direct impact on how they vote," says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at HunterSurvey.com, ShooterSurvey.com and AnglerSurvey.com. "Few sportsmen are willing to support a candidate who doesn't support positions that are friendly to hunting, shooting and fishing, regardless of where they may stand on other issues."

Authenticity can provide candidates an added bump among

sportsmen, meaning those who not only support sporting issues, but understand them first hand through their own participation, have an advantage of winning over hunter and angler support.

Thirty-eight percent of anglers said if a candidate was known to fish, it would make them more likely to vote for them. On the hunting and shooting side, those surveyed placed more importance on a candidate's need to "be one of them." Those candidates who actually engage in hunting and recreational shooting saw their personal involvement winning potential votes from nearly 71% of those surveyed on HunterSurvey.com.

To help continually improve, protect and advance hunting, shooting and fishing, all sportsmen and sportswomen are encouraged to participate in the bi-monthly surveys at HunterSurvey.com, ShooterSurvey.com and/or AnglerSurvey.com. Every other month, participants who complete the surveys are entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 gift certificates to the sporting goods retailer of their choice. ♦

Anglers should expect good Great Lakes lake trout fishing

Each year the Michigan DNR assesses lake trout populations in lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron, to determine trends in their populations and their status toward being self-sustaining. The results of the 2015 surveys and outlook for 2016 for each lake are as follows:

Lake Superior

Lake trout abundance is monitored annually in the spring for adult abundance and summer for juveniles. Lake trout abundance in Michigan waters of Lake Superior has remained stable over the past 10 years following a decline from peak abundances in the late 1990s.

Juvenile lake trout numbers in the survey declined following the same trend seen since 2011. Sea lamprey-induced mortality, the major source of lake trout deaths, continued to remain above the target level as it has since 1992. The 2016 outlook is to expect similar populations of adult and juvenile lakers as seen in 2015.

Lake Michigan

During the 2015 season, lake trout were sampled in northern and eastern Lake Michigan from May to June, with more than 1,500 fish collected. Overall, survey catch rates were lowest in northern Lake Michigan and

higher in Grand Traverse Bay and the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan. Lake Trout catch rates have been increasing from Arcadia to Naubinway and were above the 10-year average in 2015. Survey catch rates were lower than the 10-year average in southeastern Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay. A broader range of ages and sizes is being seen in northeastern Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay.

Numbers of deposited lake trout eggs remain low but were higher in 2015 compared to the previous two years and there is evidence of natural recruitment here. Because of reductions in Chinook salmon numbers and expanding lake trout populations, the DNR expects to see higher catch rates of lake trout that should include larger fish in 2016.

Lake Huron

The 2015 surveys of lake trout populations showed a continued trend to becoming self-sustaining. From the eastern Upper Peninsula to the Thumb coast, the 2015 surveys documented that wild lake trout now comprise 69% of the fish under 21" and most of the fish under 29". Survey catch rates of wild lake trout have increased dramatically since 2004. Stocked lake

trout also were collected and ranged from 3 to 22 years old. Lake trout survey catches also showed a continued rapid expansion of age composition, which indicates a low annual mortality for adult lake trout.

Sea lamprey wounding rates decreased 58% from 2014 to only five per 100 fish in 2015, the lowest value since 1970. Survival of stocked lake trout showed a continued decline, reduced by an estimated 81% since 2009, and has shown no sign of improvement since the 2003 stocking that coincided with alewife collapse in Lake Huron. The DNR expects to see stable numbers of lake trout in 2016 with a continued decline in the survival of stocked fish and increasing numbers of wild fish here.

"These data indicate that Lake Superior continues to be a self-sustaining lake trout fishery and the other Great Lakes are continuing on that track," said Gary Whelan, DNR fisheries research program manager. "The data also show anglers should expect continued good fishing for lake trout in our Great Lakes waters in the upcoming season."

For more information on lake trout in Michigan: [Michigan Fish & How To Catch Them web page.](#) ♦

Catch and release properly to help fish survival

Anglers can boost the odds of fish surviving catch and release with methods that avoid damage to fish.

"Fish can be injured by hooks, stress and being pulled from deep water," said Brad Parsons, central region fisheries manager with the Minnesota DNR. "We remind anglers to keep the fish's survival in mind when planning to catch and release."

Fish hooked in the mouth almost always survive. Setting the hook quickly helps avoid hooking a fish in the stomach or gills. Jigs, circle hooks and active baits like crankbaits are more likely to hook a fish in the mouth. Barbless hooks or pinched barbs can help, but where a fish gets

hooked is more important than the presence or absence of a barb.

Quickly landing a fish, minimizing its time out of water and handling the fish firmly but carefully all help it survive after release. By all means take photos, but it helps to have the camera ready and to have pliers that work well for taking hooks out. Cutting the line and leaving the hook in is also a good option.

Deep water and also warm water temperatures increase the stress put on fish when caught and released. Anglers tend to do more fishing and catch more fish in warm weather, but these are also important times to take special care during catch and release.

Here are a few more tips:

- Wet your hands before touching a fish to prevent removal of their protective slime coating. Rubberized nets help, too.
- Unhook and release the fish while it is still in the water, if possible, and support its weight with both hands or with a net when removed from the water. Never lift them vertically.
- Hold a fish firmly but gently. Don't drop it.
- Do not place fish you plan to release on a stringer or in a live well.
- Revive a fish by cradling it under the belly and gently moving it back and forth in the water until it swims away. ♦

Comments needed on rules for Mississippi River Corridor

Proposed rules aimed at protecting the metro portion of the Mississippi River are now available for public comment. The proposed rules will replace a 37-year-old order that currently regulates development in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. Designated in the 1970s, the MRCCA is a 72-mile land corridor along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities area governed by special regulations.

After five years of public participation in developing the proposed rules, the DNR is embarking on the final and formal phase of rulemaking and is seeking public comment on the proposed rules.

The Minnesota DNR published the notice of hearing to adopt rules. During this period, an administrative law judge will review the proposed rules and take public input through a formal comment and public hearing process.

Submit written comments to the judge and/or provide oral comments at one of three public hearings:

Tuesday, June 14, 4:30 p.m.

Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center
8395 127th St. East, Hastings

Wednesday, June 15, 4:30 p.m.

Greenhaven Golf Course
2800 Greenhaven Road, Anoka

Thursday, June 16, 10 a.m.

Mississippi Watershed Mgmt. Org.
2522 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis

Comments may be submitted online at <https://minnesotaoah.granicusideas.com>.

Written comments may also be mailed or faxed to:

Admin. Law Judge Eric L. Lipman
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert St.
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, MN 55164-0620
Fax: 651-539-0310

For proposed rules, maps, and other info www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/rules/mrcca/index.html. ♦

Spring fish and wildlife hearing results

More than 4,300 people came out to participate in the 2016 Spring Fish and Wildlife Hearings and Wisconsin Conservation Congress county meetings that were held in every county statewide on April 11.

The public hearings provide citizens with an opportunity to comment and indicate preference on a wide range of proposed fish and wildlife management issues, Conservation Congress advisory questions, and to submit resolutions for rule changes they would like to see in the future. Statewide hearing results and the questions are available on the Spring Rules Hearings page of the DNR website or go to dnr.wi.gov; search "[spring hearings](#)."

A majority of voters favored ideas to shorten the beaver and otter trapping seasons by two to four weeks on non-trout waters and create a local public notice and input process to change certain fish regulations on inland waters. Citizens also supported the Wisconsin Conservation Congress' advisory proposals relating to the removal of waterfowl blinds on public lands and the creation of a Wildlife Conservation Stamp.

Meeting results, along with written comments on the evening's questions and DNR recommendations, are used to advise the state Natural Resources Board. This year's results will be reviewed at the board's May 25 meeting in Madison. Votes are non-binding and are presented to the Natural Resources Board as a gauge of the public's support or non-support for proposed changes.

The Spring Hearings also provide an opportunity for citizens of each county to elect Wisconsin Conservation Congress delegates to represent them on natural resource issues. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only advisory body in the state where citizens elect county delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the DNR. ♦

No relief in sight for small harbors in the Great Lakes

The harbormaster in Leland says the federal government needs to spend emergency funds to dredge the channel there. The channel is about six feet deep, the minimum needed for large yachts and the Mishe-Mokwa, the largest ferryboat that takes visitors to the Manitou Islands.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' district office in Detroit has recommended that emergency funds be used to dredge the channel between Lake Michigan and Leland, but that decision will be made at the national level. Recreational harbors in the Great Lakes have had maintenance trouble for at least a decade. In 2007, a yacht trying to get into Portage Lake in Manistee County ran aground and eventually sank.

Since then, Congress has increased the amount of money the Army Corps has to maintain federally designated harbors around the country, but the increase hasn't made much of a difference for the recreational harbors. The federal government taxes cargo shipped in the U.S., and those dollars are supposed to be used for harbor maintenance. Not all of that tax money makes it back to the harbors, however.

The chair of the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition, Chuck May, says about \$600 million of harbor maintenance fees still disappear each year into the general budget. The coalition hopes eventually all the tax money will come to the harbors in the future. But Chuck May is also worried about a new development.

The Corps has traditionally been responsible for the channel in and out of a harbor. Recently, some money has been appropriated to dredge areas inside harbors in large ports, areas that have been maintained by the local government. May says if that trend continues, it will increase demand on the harbor maintenance fund. "That's obviously something we feel is inappropriate and wrong." ♦

Lake Michigan stocking efforts contribute to diverse angling opportunities

Wisconsin DNR 2016 plans call for stocking 2.3 million

MILWAUKEE – After stocking more than 2.6 million fish into the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan in 2015, the DNR is relying on recent harvest data and survey research to implement its Lake Michigan stocking plans for the coming year.

At the same time, the DNR is employing a variety of techniques and monitoring efforts to ensure that stocked fish have the greatest chance for survival given the challenging predator to prey ratio in Lake Michigan. Brad Eggold, DNR southern Lake Michigan fisheries supervisor, said the DNR's stocking efforts are part of a strategy that complements natural reproduction in the lake and its tributaries to provide diverse angling opportunities.

"We are committed to sustaining and improving the world-class fishery in Lake Michigan while recognizing that the makeup of the fishery may change over time," Eggold said. "Based on the best available science and our own management experience, we stock strategically to optimize returns while taking advantage of natural reproduction to maximize efficiency. We also work closely with our neighboring states and the feds to manage the resource."

Overall, 2016 Wisconsin stocking numbers are expected to total 2.3 million Chinook and coho salmon as well as brown and rainbow trout. Chinook salmon will again represent the greatest number of fish stocked into the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan as plans call for the release of 808,254 Chinook, down from 823,496 for 2015. In 2013, Chinook salmon stocking was reduced by 30% because of concerns over declining alewife populations. This year's stocking plan continues to reflect those concerns as recent survey data indicates record low levels of alewives and other forage fish due to predation and invasive quagga mussels removing nutrients from the water.

Estimates by the USFWS indicate that natural reproduction currently accounts for more than 60%

of all Chinook in Lake Michigan and the stocking plans by Wisconsin and other states attempt to factor in the impact of these wild fish.

Eggold said the above-average survival rate of Chinook stocked by Wisconsin means anglers here benefit both from stocked and naturally produced fish that spend a significant amount of time feeding along the lake's western shore during the summer and from the stocked fish that return to spawn in the fall. DNR continues to review its Chinook stocking distribution and is working with stakeholder groups using net pens in five locations and a subset of those to study whether this rearing and release technique improves fish growth and returns.

While Chinook account for the single largest number of fish introduced each year, DNR's efforts to stock hundreds of thousands of coho salmon, brown trout and rainbow trout at more than 40 locations along the Lake Michigan coast support diverse angling opportunities, said Dave Giehtbrock, DNR fisheries culture section chief.

"Rearing and stocking salmon and trout are among our most important management activities," Giehtbrock said. "We appreciate stakeholder interest in our propagation efforts as well as the support we've received to improve our hatchery facilities."

For 2016, the department intends to stock 676,637 brown trout (820,954 in 2015), 460,094 coho (539,129 in 2015) and 390,004 rainbow trout (432,665 in 2015). Additionally, some 12,500 Great Lakes spotted musky are being produced and 3,500 lake sturgeon are being reared as part of a reintroduction project in the Milwaukee and Kewaunee Rivers.

In 2016, the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan should also receive about 800,000 lake trout produced by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To learn more about [Lake Michigan fisheries management](#) including [historic stocking trends](#) visit

the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov, and search "[Fishing Lake Michigan](#)." ♦

DNR asks anglers to report tagged walleyes

The Michigan DNR recently jaw tagged 3,000 walleyes in a number of Saginaw Bay tributary rivers. Anglers are asked to collect information on



tagged fish they catch and to report it to the DNR. 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 and where 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 percent 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. You can also report tagged walleyes online at michigandnr.com/taggedfish/.

Anglers can keep the fish, of course, or release it if they prefer. Anglers are reminded that in order to be eligible for a reward, photos are required of the flattened tag. If the fish is released and an angler is not interested in being eligible to receive a reward, the tag should not be removed from the fish's jaw.

The tagging operation occurs each spring on the Tittabawassee River and other Saginaw Bay tributaries during the walleye spawning run. ♦

Eagle Marsh berm blocks Asian carp pathway to Great Lakes

Asian carp have one less pathway to the Great Lakes, thanks to the completion of a project of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC).

The project—a barrier at Eagle Marsh Nature Preserve in Ft. Wayne, Indiana—is intended to keep Asian carp from transferring between the watersheds of the Wabash River in Indiana and the Lake Erie watershed, through the Maumee River.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified the wetland as a significant pathway for the potential of Asian carp migration to the Maumee River and Lake Erie.

Working closely with the USACE, NRCS designed a berm that was built at the Eagle Marsh site to restrict Asian carp entry into the Great Lakes. Wetland Reserve Program funding was used to build the berm through the WRP easement. The berm is 1.7 miles long and averages 7.5 ft. high. Construction took about three months and used

177,000 cubic yards of compacted fill. The project cost about \$4.4 million.

“Staff members from several divisions of Indiana DNR have been actively involved in blocking this pathway ever since its potential was first identified in 2010,” DNR director Cameron F. Clark said. “There were many moving parts that needed to be kept on track. Led by DNR deputy director John Davis, our team has worked diligently with the other partners to get this project completed in a timely and efficient manner. We’re proud of the role DNR played in reaching this goal.”

The project required the involvement of many government agencies. The first phase closure consists of the entire berm, with the exception of a small notch (350 feet long) that will be built to the approximate 50-year flood elevation. A mesh screen was installed the length of the notch up to the top of the berm at both ends to prevent

alteration of the flood crests, with a screen opening that will block Asian carp at elevations that exceed the 100-year, 1 percent chance flood event. The second phase will remove the screen and fill in the notch but cannot be completed until all flood risk in the area has been mitigated.

Asian carp are widely considered to pose a grave threat to the ecological health, stability and value of the Great Lakes. Preventing the introduction of Asian carp into the Great Lakes is a national priority.

Another aquatic pathway of concern is the Chicago Area Waterway System. The USACE has constructed an electrical dispersal barrier in Romeoville, Illinois, to assure that Asian carp do not move up the CAWS and access the Great Lakes. In addition, the ACRCC, with Ohio DNR taking the lead, is working to develop closure options for two additional aquatic pathways in Ohio (Little Killbuck Creek and the Ohio-Erie Canal). ♦

Muskie range expanding in northern Indiana

The list of northern Indiana waters where muskies can now be found continues to expand—a trend DNR biologists say is not a good thing.

Although muskie fingerlings are stocked each year into eight lakes in the region to provide muskie fishing, muskies are now showing up in waters where no DNR stockings or legally permitted private stockings have occurred. Not all lakes are suitable for muskies, a large predatory sport fish. The DNR stocks them in lakes with an overabundance of forage fish, such as gizzard shad. In lakes where forage fish aren’t abundant, muskies could outcompete native sport fish such as largemouth bass and northern pike for food.

“Our biggest concern is that some fish may find suitable spawning habitat, reproduce, and eventually compete with other fish,” said Jeremy Price, northern Indiana fisheries supervisor. “So far muskie reproduction has been limited in

Indiana. We would like to keep them where they are.”

In March biologists captured a 37” muskie in Lake Wawasee while sampling for northern pike.

Last month an angler caught a 46” muskie at Simonton Lake. Another muskie was spotted moving through the South Bend fish ladder on the St. Joseph River near the Bodine Fish Hatchery. Hatchery personnel say this is a rare occurrence.

So where are these muskies coming from? “There are two possibilities,” Price said. “Some may be moving from waters where stockings occur and others may be the result of illegal transfers by fishermen.” Given the number of muskies now present in the St. Joseph River, Price thinks the bulk of them may be coming from Skinner Lake in Noble County at the headwaters of the Elkhart River. Skinner is a lake that the DNR stocks with muskies. The muskie, or muskies, now in Lake

Wawasee also may have come from Skinner Lake.

“Wawasee drains through Turkey Creek into the Elkhart River, so a fish may be able to swim downstream out of Skinner, make a left turn, and then back upstream to Wawasee,” Price said. “It’s possible but not likely.” Instead Price thinks muskies may be caught by anglers in nearby Webster, Tippecanoe or Barbee lakes, hauled in a livewell, and then released into Wawasee. The DNR has stocked Webster, Tippecanoe and Barbee lakes with muskies for decades.

A separation between watersheds does not allow fish to swim directly from these lakes to Wawasee. Likewise, the outlet of Simonton Lake is small and not conducive to fish migration. Transferring fish from one lake or stream to another is illegal in Indiana. The regulation is designed to prevent introductions of fish that may have adverse effects on native fish. ♦

Bait regs changed to protect against spread of invasive species

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission has approved fishing regulations that affect bait harvest and use. These regulations went into immediate effect.

[Fisheries Order 245](#) establishes regulations that protect the state's resources while minimizing the spread of pathogens, such as VHS and aquatic invasive species, to uninfected waters. Special regulations place restrictions on the minnow trade and anglers and where baitfish is used.

In response to the discovery of VHS in Michigan waters of the Great Lakes, the DNR implemented in 2007 a comprehensive set of regulations. These regulations aimed at restricting the spread of VHS into disease-free waters affected recreational anglers, wholesale fish dealers, state-licensed commercial fishermen, private aquaculturists and retail bait outlets.

All the changes are highlighted below and also are reflected in the online version of the 2016-2017 Michigan Fishing Guide, available at Michigan.gov/fishingguide.

Fish Disease Regulations:

- All personally collected bait is required to be used on the same water in which it was collected.
- The state's VHS-positive, surveillance and free management zones have been removed.
- The list of susceptible fish species has been updated and expanded.
- The restriction on the use of roe (fish eggs) in the exclusion zones has been removed, as fish eggs have not been documented moving VHS.
- All commercially harvested bait in November and December is required to be tested and certified as disease-free, as this period represents 80% of the total annual minnow harvest in Michigan.
- A spring disease test is required for bait harvested in five zones of the Huron-Erie Corridor by the commercial bait industry to continue to monitor VHS. ◇

DNR studies northern IN crappie populations

Catching nearly 5,000 black crappies in one day at Shipshewana Lake might be an angler's dream, but for Steve Donabauer the catch was nearly a nightmare. Donabauer, a DNR fisheries biologist, caught them in late April in two trap nets as part of a region-wide study of crappie numbers and sizes. Most were small. Where crappies are over-populated, competition for food can be intense.

The first-of-its-kind study will help DNR biologists understand crappie populations in northern Indiana's lakes. Previous information on crappies has been limited because they are difficult to catch in standard surveys.

"We bought some newly designed trap nets that can target crappies, especially in the spring," Donabauer said. "The huge catch at Shipshewana Lake obviously proved they work." The traps worked so well that Donabauer removed them after the first day. Enough was enough.

In addition to Shipshewana Lake in LaGrange County, DNR biologists sampled seven other lakes. They were Simonton Lake in Elkhart County, North Twin Lake in LaGrange County, Hudson Lake in LaPorte County, Mill Pond in Marshall County, Big and Skinner lakes in Noble County, and Lake Gage in Steuben County.

Of the eight lakes, Skinner Lake ranked second behind Shipshewana with 1,889 black crappies. Another 94 white crappies also were trapped. "The biggest crappie we caught at Shipshewana was only 9 inches long," Donabauer said. "At Skinner, only 23 crappies were 10 inches or bigger."

In contrast, 146 crappies were trapped up to 13 inches long at Mill Pond. Hudson Lake produced 84 crappies up to 12 inches with nearly half more than 10 inches. At Big Lake, 74 crappies were caught and nearly all were 10 inches or larger. North Twin Lake provided only four crappies. None were captured at Lake Gage. ◇

State record fish program to include catch-and-release records

Minnesota's state record fish program will now include catch-and-release length records for lake sturgeon, flathead catfish and muskie. State records for sturgeon, flathead catfish or muskies can now be set without harvesting the fish; however the traditional catch-and-keep records for all species will remain an option. Guidelines and application forms are available at www.mndnr.gov/recordfish, while fishing regulations and season dates can be found at www.mndnr.gov/fishmn. Anglers who catch large fish also have the option of participating in the Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame's Master Angler program, which recognizes 60 fish species. Information about that program is available at www.fishinghalloffamemn.com/master-anglers. ◇

Cormorant Mass Killing Policy

Continued from page 1

In addition, states such as Texas and South Carolina allow private citizens to kill unlimited numbers of double crested cormorants, making the orders' implementation particularly problematic and unpredictable.

"The Court found that the Service crossed the line," added Dumais, pointing to the Court's finding that it was inappropriate for FWS to simply renew the earlier depredation orders until it found the resources to conduct a proper review. "The Court wisely noted that allowing agencies to excuse themselves from complying with NEPA because of budget woes would eviscerate the statute, since many agencies would make that very argument."

The court, however, stopped short of ending the depredation orders immediately and instead called for additional briefing on an appropriate "remediation plan." [Read the court ruling; Look at the PEER suit.](#) ◇

DNR spring fisheries surveys signal great opportunities on waters statewide

Justine Hasz, fisheries director for the Wisconsin DNR, said spring survey work on lakes and rivers around Wisconsin indicates healthy fish populations and great opportunities for anglers based on the walleye, bass, northern pike, panfish, trout, muskies and even catfish netted and promptly released by fisheries crew.

Lake Wissota, a 6,300 acre impoundment of the Chippewa River, is well known for its trophy musky. However, the catfish fishery has been gaining popularity and during the spring 2016 fisheries survey, flathead catfish over 20 lbs. were a frequent occurrence with flatheads over 40 lbs. not uncommon.

"Wisconsin remains among the top three angling destinations in the nation and for good reason," Hasz said. "While fishing is a passion for many, it is also an economic driver for the state, with an estimated 1.2 million anglers producing a \$2.3 billion economic impact, according to the American Sportfishing Association. That impact becomes

clear as tens of thousands of anglers take to Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes, rivers and 13,000 miles of trout streams for opening day.

Walleye continue to be an important target for anglers and since 2013, the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative has worked to rebuild and enhance walleye populations statewide. The fish that have been stocked should reach legal size over the next two to three years.

In 2015, Wisconsin stocked 760,000 extended growth walleyes, eclipsing the 2014 record of 720,000. For 2016, DNR intends to stock some 827,000 of the six to eight inch fingerlings, including some 229,000 fish from private and tribal fish farms and 598,000 from DNR hatcheries.

The trout population continues to make gains throughout the state and this year anglers will find 14 streams with upgraded classifications as well as 27 that for the first time have been documented as sustaining trout populations. Six of the newly classified streams have earned the

coveted Class 1 designation.

Also new for anglers in 2016 will be simplified trout regulations designed to create more uniformity for anglers who fish on different trout streams and within small geographic areas. Under the new system, maps online and in the regulation pamphlet will indicate one of three regulations:

- Green means go fish, with no length limit, a bag limit of five fish and no bait restrictions;
- Yellow means caution, with an 8 inch length limit, a bag limit of three fish and no bait restrictions; and
- Red means special regulations are in place. Anglers are advised to stop and understand the regulations before fishing.

Anglers targeting panfish also will find new, experimental bag limits to optimize panfish size on high potential lakes capable of producing large panfish. On these lakes, identified in the fishing regulations book, daily bag limits reflect efforts to limit harvest during spawning season or prevent overharvest of any one species. ♦

New waterways projects enhance Michigan

To enhance boating in Michigan, there are a number of exciting waterways projects taking place across the state.

State-owned facility projects to take place in 2016:

- East Tawas State Harbor – new docks with utilities.
- Fayette Historic State Park Snail Shell Harbor – construction of a new dock system and electrical.
- Belleville Lake East Boating Access Site – site reconstruction.
- Otsego Lake State Park Boating Access Site – site reconstruction.
- Silver Lake State Park Boating Access Site – completed in late 2015 and projected to open this year.
- Dodge Bros. State Park #4 Boating Access Site – completed in 2015 and will open this year.
- Beaver Island Municipal Marina – reservations will be taken on the Central Reservation System.

Grant-in-aid facility projects completed in 2015:

- City of Menominee – River Park – new launch ramp.
- City of Menominee – 18th Street – new launch ramp.
- City of Essexville – Smith Park – new launch ramp, lighting and signage.

Michigan Waterways Commission Update

The Michigan State Waterways Commission advises, considers and makes recommendations to the DNR's Parks and Recreation Division on the development and improvement of 82 state and grant-in-aid harbors and more than 1,300 boating access sites. In 2015, the Waterways Commission and DNR Waterways Program worked on:

- Improvements to state harbors and boating access sites that totaled more than \$10 million from 2010-2015.

This does not include the \$21 million of investment into the emergency dredging program.

• A survey to determine harbor improvement needs for future investment of Waterways funds. This resulted in a \$45 million list of proposed facility improvements and dock replacements over the next five years.

• A recommendation to adopt a new Transient Fee Policy defined by length of vessel rather than slip size.

• Supporting the transition of surplus lands at Au Gres State Harbor to the City of Au Gres.

• Increasing reservations for slips from 1,400 in 2014 to 2,024 in 2015 in Straits State Harbor.

• Initiating a number of new projects slated for Naubinway Harbor Breakwater, Wyandotte-Bishop Park Marina and Cedarville Marina. ♦

Pennsylvania Yellow Perch Record

A Yellow Perch caught in Erie's Presque Isle Bay has been named by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) as the new [state record](#) for the species.



Brian Clark, of Edinboro, Erie County, was fishing in about 20 feet of water in the bay at 11:30 a.m. on March 30 when he hooked the record fish. The catch measured 15 15/16 inches and weighed 2 pounds, 14 ounces.

The weight of the fish surpassed the previous record by 3 ounces. That fish was caught in Presque Isle Bay in March 2010 by Erie resident Jeffrey Matts. ♦

Keep Asian carp out

Continued from page 1

Earlier this spring, IDNR and partner agencies and contract fishermen tested a new strategy for deploying nets and driving fish into them, hauling more than 13,000 silver and bighead carp weighing more than 96,000 pounds out of a backwater river pit near Morris in just over a week. Check the IDNR Facebook page at this link to see photos of the operation: [Fish netting photos](#)

Contract fishing is a key to reducing the numbers of Asian carp in the upper Illinois River. Watch a video about it on the IDNR YouTube channel at this link: [Contract fishing video.](#) ♦

DEC opens boat access on the Lower Esopus Creek in Ulster

The New York State DEC celebrated a new fishing access and car-top boat launch on the Lower Esopus Creek off Sandy Road in the Town of Ulster. This is DEC's first fishing access on the Lower Esopus Creek and covers 200 feet of frontage. It was designed to withstand large fluctuations in water level and be accessible given the steep grade.

This strategically located access, close to the Thruway and the City of Kingston, gives residents and visitors an attractive place to fish for popular warm water fish such as bass, walleye, perch, and sunfish, or to launch a canoe or kayak and explore the Esopus. The enhancements at this site will also provide children a new, safe place to experience the outdoors.

Site enhancements include: A fishing platform with floating docks, concrete paths, boat launch for canoes and kayaks, three picnic tables, and a 12-car parking area. ♦

Check Your Boat Registration

The IDNR reminds boat owners in Illinois to check their three-year boat registration/decal and renew their registration if it expires on June 30, 2016. Renewing can be done online at www.dnr.illinois.gov or by phone 866-867-3542. To renew registration, have available the watercraft's Illinois registration #, the first six characters of the watercraft's hull ID #, the first three letters of the registered owner's last name, and a credit card. 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 each for any additional vessels). ♦

Free Fishing Weekend Events in Wisconsin June 4 - 5, 2016

Check your state for info on their programs

Life's a *fishing* picnic! Especially on Wisconsin's Free Fishing Weekend, June 4 - 5, 2016. **Residents and nonresidents are welcome!**

Fish anywhere!

Fish anywhere in Wisconsin without a license or trout stamp on Free Fishing Weekend. This includes all inland waters and Wisconsin's side of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. So, pack up the family or call your friends and head to the water for fishing fun!

Need fishing gear?

No fishing gear? No problem. We have fishing pole that you can borrow at many state parks and DNR offices. Contact a [Tackle Loaner site](#) at one of several state parks and DNR regional offices to borrow one. Call the DNR staffer or partner listed for each site to find out what specific equipment is available and to arrange to pick it up. New for this year: State Parks and Recreation Areas are waiving entrance stickers for the whole weekend, so pick your day.

Host a Free Fishing Weekend event!

If you would like us to post your event on our Web site, just fill out and return this [Free Fishing Weekend Planning Form \[PDF\]](#) by May 25, 2016 and you'll be good to go! Details are on the form. We'll post your events as we learn of them.

Attend a Free Fishing Weekend event!

Dozens of free fishing clinics are offered on Free Fishing Weekend by many fishing clubs, local parks departments, community centers and civic organizations. Learn the basics and fish using equipment provided at most of these events. We'll post Free Fishing Weekend clinics here as we learn about them. Please check back often for updates.

More fishing opportunities

The Department of Tourism lists events at [The Great Outdoors - Fishing.](#) ♦

DEC, NY Sea Grant launch Great Lakes web portal

New York DEC and New York Sea Grant have launched the “New York’s Great Lakes” website that will serve as an information clearinghouse and portal through which users can access specific resources related to grant funding, research projects, and the priorities of New York’s Great Lakes Action Agenda. Information categories at www.nyseagrant.org/nygreatlakes include: About NY’s Great Lakes, Coastal Processes, Education, Energy, Fisheries, Funding Opportunities, Great Lakes Action Agenda, Great Lakes Communities, Invasive Species, Natural Ecosystem and Habitat, Recreation and Tourism, and Water Quality. The “Contact Us” feature on the site allows users to submit comments and questions to Great Lakes Watershed Coordinators designated by the NYSDEC. Users may also subscribe to the NY Great Lakes Basin listserv for news, funding opportunity notices, and events. ♦

DNR to collect muskie eggs from Detroit River

The Michigan DNR again this spring will collect eggs from Great Lakes muskie in the Detroit River to be reared at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery and stocked in Michigan waters this fall. Collecting [Great Lakes muskie](#) eggs began in 2011 in an effort to rear a type of muskie that is native to most Michigan waters. In 2015, some 800,000 eggs were collected from the Detroit River. Those eggs produced nearly 30,000 fall fingerlings that were stocked in 16 inland lakes and rivers, two of which will serve as broodstock lakes for egg collections in the future. The DNR’s goal this year is to collect at least 500,000 eggs to meet the target of 40,000 fall fingerlings for stocking the state’s waters. ♦

DNR releases walleye fry into Mille Lacs Lake

Nine months after increasing its management efforts on Mille Lacs Lake, the Minnesota DNR recently released 10 million walleye fry into the lake as part of a major research project. The mosquito-sized baby walleye were released over several days starting May 5 at various locations around the lake. Given a special chemical marker, the fry can be differentiated from wild walleye by fisheries biologists. When biologists survey the lake’s young fish this fall, they will be able to compare the number of wild walleye to the stocked ones.

This comparison will provide an estimate of the wild fry hatched in the lake this spring. Mille Lacs currently has enough spawning walleye, but if natural production ever dropped to a level where stocking became necessary, the information from the study will also help DNR determine an appropriate stocking rate. ♦

Dam Management Grant Program announced

The Michigan DNR has approved two Dam Management Grant Program projects totaling \$350,000. These projects will help remove obsolete structures or repair functioning dams, resulting in improved fisheries, aquatic resources and public safety.

The two projects funded this year are:
► The city of Corunna, \$301,500 to fund the Corunna Dam #379 removal project located on the Shiawassee River (Shiawassee County).

► The DNR Fisheries Division, \$48,500 to further fund the Big Creek Impoundment repair project (Crawford County)

Anyone interested in learning more about the Dam Management Grant Program, including detailed [descriptions of approved grant projects](#), should visit michigan.gov/dnr-grants. ♦

New website provides information, insight on Michigan’s invasive species

Residents struggling with invasive species or seeking help on how to identify plants, insects and animals considered invasive are invited to explore the state’s new Michigan Invasive Species website—www.michigan.gov/invasives—for answers and assistance. The site is a collaborative effort among the state’s three “Quality of Life” agencies: the Michigan departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality and Agriculture and Rural Development. Each of the three departments oversees different aspects of invasive species management. The site houses a growing catalog of [resources for classrooms](#) and residents interested in becoming more involved in the fight against invasive species. Posters, brochures, videos and guidebooks are available for download. ♦

Morris Honorary Chair National Hunting and Fishing Day

National Hunting and Fishing Day has named Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris to serve as the honorary chair for NHF Day 2016. Morris is one of the country’s foremost leaders working to ensure natural habitats, wildlife and the outdoors remain healthy for future generations to protect and enjoy. This annual event takes place Saturday, September 24, with activities taking place across the country. Morris joins a distinguished group that has included Jim Shockey, Eva Shockey, Craig Morgan, Bill Dance, T. Boone Pickens, Louise Mandrell, Hank Williams Jr., Jeff Foxworthy, Wade Boggs, Arnold Palmer, the USA Olympic Shooting Team, Tony Stewart and others. For more information, visit www.nhfday.org. ♦

Fish stocking creates numerous fishing opportunities throughout Michigan

The Michigan DNR is in the middle of its new fish stocking season, and this spring people will see DNR fish stocking trucks releasing their prized recreational cargo at hundreds of lakes and streams throughout the state.

Fish stocking is a valuable tool used by fisheries managers to restore, enhance and create new fishing opportunities in Michigan's inland lakes, streams and the Great Lakes. The DNR's Fisheries Division accomplishes this task by rearing fish at its six fish production facilities located throughout the state, cooperatively managing up to 50 rearing ponds and 13 imprinting net pen locations, and maintaining a fleet of 18 specialized fish stocking vehicles. Over the course of a typical year the DNR will stock roughly 20 million to 25 million fish weighing nearly 400 tons, including eight species of trout and salmon and four coolwater species such as walleye and muskellunge. Beginning in mid-March and ending in early June, the DNR fish stocking trucks will travel well over 100,000 miles to stock between 700 and 1,100 locations. michigandnr.com/fishstock/ ♦

Indiana Free fishing days: May 21, June 4-5

The next free fishing day is May 21. On this day, Indiana residents do not need a license to fish in Indiana's public waters. Free Fishing Weekend is June 4-5. [More information.](#) ♦

Cook County, Ill. Gun and Ammo Tax

On June 1, 2016, Cook County's new ammunition tax takes effect, at a rate of one cent to five cents per round of ammunition. The ammo tax comes on top of the existing gun tax [regime](#) of \$25 per gun. ♦

2016 Pure Michigan Hunt winners take home their prizes

Applications for 2017 Pure Michigan Hunt on sale now

Mike Scherzer of Freeland, Jeff Kresnak of Caledonia and Makayla Fleetwood of Bloomingdale—the most recent winners of the Pure Michigan Hunt drawing—all came to February's Natural Resources Commission meeting in Detroit to take home their winnings.

Each won 2016 hunting licenses for elk, bear, antlerless deer and spring and fall turkey, as well as first choice at a managed waterfowl hunt area on opening morning. In addition to the hunting licenses, winners also received an ultimate prize package. Valued at more than \$4,000, each prize package is made up of donations from Michigan businesses and organizations.

The 2016 Pure Michigan Hunt drawing drew 35,336 applications purchased by 13,736 individuals, generating \$176,680 that will fund wildlife habitat restoration in Michigan. Applications for the 2017 Pure Michigan Hunt went on sale March 1. Hunters may purchase as many \$5 applications as they like. Go to www.mi.gov/pmh.

Twenty-one Michigan hunters have won the Pure Michigan Hunt since the drawings started in 2009. The additional prize package that the winners take home changes annually based on the Michigan businesses and organizations that join the Pure Michigan Hunt. Past years' winners have received rifles, shotguns, crossbows, pop-up blinds, camouflage clothing packages, guided hunts, etc.

Pure Michigan Hunt winners now can transfer one or all of their licenses to another eligible hunter. This will allow hunters—and their friends and family members—to buy as many Pure Michigan Hunt applications as they want for both themselves and others. Winners now have the ability to give one or more of their licenses away to whomever they choose or keep all of the licenses for themselves. ♦

2015 Michigan commercial fishing harvest steady, value down 7% as price of whitefish cools

The Michigan DNR recently released [data from its 2015 state-licensed commercial fishing season](#). Combined, the state-licensed commercial fishery caught nearly 3,401,000 pounds of fish with an estimated wholesale dockside value of more than \$5.4 million prior to processing, marketing and retail sales.

While the state's total harvest in pounds was nearly identical to 2014, the fishery's estimated gross dockside value was down nearly 7 percent. The decrease in the fishery's value is almost exclusively attributed to a 12.5-percent decline in the wholesale price of lake whitefish. Lake whitefish accounted for more than 66 percent of the state-licensed harvest by pounds and 88 percent of the gross value in 2015.

Participation in the fishery in 2015 remained constant from the previous year. Of the 50 state licenses issued, 32 were actively fished by 22 separate businesses. Twelve of these businesses fished in Lake Huron, five in Lake Michigan, three in Lake Superior and two in Lake Erie. Together, these businesses added an estimated \$25 million to the state's economy and approximately 300 fishing and fishing-related jobs.

A [full breakdown of the harvest and dockside value](#) of the 2015 state-licensed commercial fishery, including details for each individual lake, is available online. Visit michigan.gov/fishing and then click on "Managing Michigan's Fisheries" and scroll down to the Commercial Fish Management & General Information section.

This section also provides an in-depth description of Michigan's commercial fishery, photos of the fishers in action, maps of the Great Lakes with recent commercial fishing activity, as well as links to recipes and locations where Michigan fish can be purchased. ♦

Indiana grants to address sediment, logjam problems

Seven Indiana counties will fix sediment and logjam problems in lakes and rivers thanks to \$554,000 in grant funding from the DNR. The grants are part of the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program.

Nine projects were selected in seven counties for spring 2016. They involve 10 lakes and three rivers. The projects were selected in a competitive process from among applications submitted by local sponsors. The grantees must share at least 20 percent of the cost.

Sediment removal will increase public access to lakes through selective dredging of inlets and areas used by boaters. Logjam removals should reduce erosion caused by streams diverted by the obstructions. Also, the clearing will improve access for boats, kayaks and canoes.

[DNR grants to address sediment and logjams.](#) ♦

ODNR Awards 24 Communities more than \$576,000 in Marine Patrol Grants

COLUMBUS, OH – Twenty-four Ohio communities will receive a total of \$576,152.93 from the Ohio DNR to support local marine patrol units. Provided by the ODNR Division of Watercraft, these assistance funds represent a continuing effort to keep Ohio waterways safe and enhance recreational boating experiences.

The 2016 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 Ohio's more populated counties such as Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton and Montgomery, as well as smaller communities located in Erie, Pickaway and Scioto counties. ♦

New Go Wild licensing system makes it easier for anglers to buy, display licenses

Buying a license is easy and convenient through the new Go Wild licensing system, with online access available 24-7. Visit [GoWild.wi.gov](#), one of more than 1,000 vendor locations or a Wisconsin DNR service center to purchase licenses. While the GoWild licensing system allows several new ways to display proof of your license purchase including use of a personal conservation card, authenticated driver's license and pdf display on mobile devices, anglers fishing in boundary waters must use the paper printouts as law enforcement officials in the surrounding states do not have access to the Wisconsin database.

Residents born before January 1, 1927, do not need a license and resident members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty are entitled to obtain a free fishing license when on furlough or leave.

Anglers can buy a one-day fishing license that allows them to take someone out to try fishing, and if they like it, the purchase price of that one-day license will be credited toward purchase of an annual license.

The general Wisconsin fishing season runs from May 7, 2016 to March 5, 2017. To learn more about statewide fishing regulations and rules that apply on specific lakes, visit [dnr.wi.gov](#) and search "fishing regulations." For a complete calendar, search "fishing season dates."

Anglers can find fish species information, boat access sites, shore fishing areas, lake information and regulations by downloading the free [Wisconsin Fish & Wildlife](#) mobile app, which includes a full array of fishing information. DNR has tackle loaner sites in 50 locations, including many state parks, making it easy for people to enjoy fishing if they don't have their own equipment or if they left it at home. ♦

DEC proposes Hunting and Trapping Rule Changes for 2016

The New York State DEC is now accepting public comments on several regulatory proposals for hunting black bear and white-tailed deer and for fisher trapping and general trapping regulations. Public Comments on Deer and Bear Hunting Regulations are accepted through June 25, Fisher and General Trapping Regulations through June 10.

"These proposals are a result of our science-based management approaches combined with substantial feedback from hunters and trappers," said Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos. "We continue to focus efforts to provide more hunting and trapping opportunities in the state"

The proposed changes for deer and bear hunting will increase opportunities for junior hunters to take bears, rescind an antlerless-only rule from 2015 in portions of southeastern New York and the Lake Plains, reduce antlerless harvests in two management units in the western Adirondacks, and clarify when special season tags may be used by bow and muzzleloader hunters.

The proposed changes for fisher trapping reduce the trapping season in selected Adirondack Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in Northern New York where populations have declined in recent years and establish a limited open trapping season in select WMUs in Central/Western New York to provide new opportunities for sustainable use of this natural resource.

To Review Proposals and Submit Comments

For more detailed explanations of all [proposed regulations](#) and for instructions on submitting comments, go to DEC's website.

Comments on the proposed deer and bear hunting regulations must be received by June 25, 2016.

Comments on the proposed fisher and general trapping regulations must be received by June 10, 2016. ♦

Three New Gander Mountain Stores to Open in the Fall

Nation's fastest-growing outdoors retailer adding Colorado, Pennsylvania & Texas locations

ST. PAUL, MN – The wait is almost over for many outdoor enthusiasts in Colorado, Pennsylvania and Texas, as new [Gander Mountain](#) stores will be opening in their neighborhoods soon. Finishing touches are being put on a trio of new stores, and grand opening celebrations are being planned for this fall in Parker, CO, Warrington Township, PA, and Frisco, TX, as the nation's fastest-growing outdoors retailer's unprecedented expansion continues. Since 2012, Gander Mountain has added more than 55 new stores between the Atlantic Coast and the Front Range of the Rockies

The Parker store will be 57,000 sq. ft. and located within the Crown Point development at 18420 Cottonwood Dr., near the northeast corner of E470 and S Parker Rd (Colorado 83) in the southeast Denver metro.

The Frisco store will be 52,000 sq. ft. and is in the Eldorado Marketplace, near the northeast corner of Eldorado Parkway and Dallas North Tollway in the north Dallas metro.

The Warrington Township store will be 52,000 sq. ft. and is located at

100 Easton Rd in the Warrington Crossing development, near the junction of County Line Rd and Easton Road in the north Philadelphia metro near Horsham Air Guard Station.

In addition to adding more than 55 new stores throughout the country since 2012, Gander Mountain has remodeled more than 85 of the company's existing stores to bring the best in outdoor gear and service to its customers across the country. More new store announcements are expected soon.

In 2012 and 2013 new Gander Mountain stores opened in:

Albany, GA	Lewisville, TX	Round Rock, TX
Charlottesville, VA	Lafayette, IN	San Antonio, TX
Dothan, AL	Mesquite, TX	Tampa, FL
Florence, AL	Monroe, NC	Tuscaloosa, AL
Gastonia, NC	Opelika, AL	Valdosta, GA
Morrisville, NC	Rogers, MN	Winston-Salem, NC

In 2014 Gander Mountain opened 23 new stores:

Algonquin, IL	Gadsden, AL	Newnan, GA
Arlington, TX	Greenfield, IN	North Charleston, SC
Augusta, GA	Johnson City, NY	Pensacola, FL
Avon, IN	Lake Worth, TX	Raleigh, NC
Champaign, IL	Mt. Juliet, TN	Waco, TX
Chattanooga, TN	McDonough, GA	West Houston, TX
Charlotte, NC	Mobile, AL	Woodbridge, VA
Fenton, MO	Montgomery, AL	

In 2015 and 2016, Gander Mountain has announced or opened stores for:

Chesterfield, MO	Lansing, MI (2016)	Parker, CO (2016)
El Paso, TX	Marion, IL	Snellville, GA
Frisco, TX (2016)	Monroeville, PA (2016)	Tulsa Hills, OK
Laredo, TX	Myrtle Beach, SC	Warrington, PA (2016)
Killeen, TX (2016)	O'Fallon, IL	Youngstown, OH

Gander Mountain has more than 160 conveniently-located outdoor lifestyle stores in 27 states. For the nearest store location call 800-282-5993 or visit [www.GanderMountain.com](#).

Gander Mountain is also the parent company of Overton's ([www.overtons.com](#)), the leading supplier of boating accessories and watersports equipment for boaters, anglers, waterskiers and paddlesports enthusiasts. ♦

Annual report: DNR Fisheries 2015 highlights

A report highlighting the activities of the Michigan DNR's Fisheries Division in 2015 is now available online at [Michigan.gov/fishing](#). There are two components of this year's report:

- A [16-page document](#) with full details of the division's work completed in the year.
- An [8½ by 8½ printed trifold brochure](#) that visually summarizes the content.

The 2015 Annual Report focuses on the programs and work completed in an effort to maintain and improve Michigan's fisheries. The report categorizes the division's work within the goals it developed as part of its five-year strategic plan published in March 2013. Highlights include dam removal efforts, habitat work, fishing regulation changes, outreach and education efforts, state-record fish, fish stocking, partnerships, fish health and disease, prevention of aquatic invasive species, and much more. The DNR welcomes input from readers of the annual report. Send comments DNR-Fish-ccomplishments@michigan.gov. ♦

How sunshine cuts blood pressure - and makes you thinner!

New research reveals benefits that AREN'T linked to vitamin D

Even taking skin-cancer risk into account, scientists say the sun is healthy. Research indicates it protects us against a wide range of lethal conditions. Specifically, sun exposure prompts our bodies to produce nitric oxide that helps defend our cardiovascular system

The sun has got his hat on, our moods feel lighter and we are gripped by a desire to soak up some solar rays. But no, we keep being told: the threat of skin cancer makes this potentially lethal.

Now, however, scientists are discovering a positive side to sun-worshipping. Even taking the skin-cancer risk fully into account, they say that getting a good dose of sunshine is statistically going to make us live longer, healthier and happier lives. Emerging research indicates that sunlight may protect us against a wide range of lethal or disabling conditions, such as obesity, heart attacks, strokes, asthma, and multiple sclerosis. Sunshine has also been shown to boost our libidos and general mood.

This is not simply about vitamin D—which our skin manufactures from sunlight. The vitamin helps us build healthy bones and teeth and may protect against bowel cancer. But new research indicates that solar rays benefit our bodies in multiple other ways. Scientists now believe, for example, that exposure to sun prompts our bodies to produce nitric oxide, a chemical that helps protect our cardiovascular system—and the feel good brain-chemical serotonin.

LACK OF SUN AS BAD AS SMOKING

A major clue about sunshine's benefits has emerged from a study of nearly 30,000 Swedish women whose sunbathing habits have been followed for 20 years. In March investigators, from the world-renowned Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, concluded that avoiding the sun is actually as bad for you as smoking. The study, in the Journal of Internal Medicine, found that 1.5 women in 100 who reported

they had the highest exposure to ultraviolet light (by sunbathing up to once a day) were found to have died during the two decades, compared with three in 100 for women who said they had avoided sunbathing.

The avid sunbathers had a significantly lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease and other conditions that were not related to cancer, the research explains. Dr. Pelle Lindqvist, the epidemiologist who led the study, says the research also found that: 'Non-smokers who avoided the sun had a life expectancy similar to smokers in the highest sun exposure group, indicating that avoiding the sun is a risk factor for death of a similar magnitude to smoking.'

OLDER PEOPLE NEED MORE

Dr. Richard Weller, senior lecturer in dermatology at Edinburgh University, last year published a report in the journal Maturitas warning that older people in particular need to get into the sun more. 'Advice on healthy sun exposure needs to be reconsidered,' he urges. 'The older population is particularly sun-deprived as shown by low blood levels of vitamin D and lack of outdoor activity.' He adds that there is a reduction in cardiovascular disease and deaths from all causes with increased sun exposure. Two years ago, Dr. Weller's team established that exposure to sunlight may lower people's blood pressure and thus cut their risk of heart attack and stroke. This benefit has nothing to do with vitamin D.

Instead, it is due to the fact that when our skin is exposed to the sun a compound—called nitric oxide—is released in our blood vessels which in turn lowers blood pressure by causing blood vessels to widen. Dr. Weller told Good Health: 'It also appears that sunlight alters the way that our genes behave. Last year, Cambridge University scientists showed that the expression of 28 per cent of our entire genetic make-up varies from season to season.'

SUN HELPS REDUCE INFLAMMATION

The Cambridge investigators reported in the journal Nature Communications that in winter we increase the activity of inflammatory immune-system genes—to combat infectious bugs—and in summer we increase the activity of anti-inflammatory genes. Chronic inflammation is linked to modern epidemics such as heart attacks, diabetes and cancer. Such inflammation results from our immune systems fighting infectious invaders. But this comes at a cost—as the tissue damage caused by long-term inflammation can itself cause disease. The Cambridge research indicates that sunlight may prompt our bodies to switch down the inflammatory response.

'As well as nitric oxide and gene expression, I think there will be other factors that we have yet to discover,' says Dr. Weller. 'There is a correlation between more sun and less disease in a variety of conditions such as multiple sclerosis and atherosclerosis (where arteries are clogged by fatty substances known as atheroma).' However, the causal link is yet to be shown.

MAY STOP YOU GETTING FAT

Scientists are discovering sunlight may even help us keep slim and healthy, according to studies by the Universities of Southampton and Edinburgh that kept mice on high-fat diets while they were exposed to the spectrum of ultraviolet light found in sunshine. The results show that ultraviolet radiation may suppress the development of obesity and the symptoms of type 2 diabetes. These benefits were again independent of the effects of vitamin D, the researchers report in the journal Diabetes in 2014. Instead they believe the effects are again as a result of the sun boosting production of nitric oxide. The suggestion is that without enough nitric oxide in the

bloodstream, insulin may not work properly, allowing diabetes to set in.

Other research indicates that being exposed to plentiful sunlight may reduce our risk of stroke. Epidemiologists have used weather-satellite records to determine how much sunlight more than 16,000 people living across the U.S. individually experienced over a period of 15 years. The University of Alabama analysis revealed that the more sunshine someone experienced, the lower their risk of stroke. The study in the journal, Annals of Neurology in 2013, called for further research.

We all tend to feel happier when the sun is out, and this is not simply a matter of morale. Research shows that the main wavelength of light in sunlight stimulates sensors in our retina which regulate our body clock. This in turn regulates the amount of melatonin, the sleep hormone, that our bodies release. Studies such as a report by Sweden's Uppsala University last month in the journal PLOS One show disruption of melatonin levels is linked to depression, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

CAN HELP KIDS' EYESIGHT

Lack of sunlight has physical effects on children, too. A study by the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence in Vision Science in 2009 found those who spend most of their time indoors have a significantly increased incidence of 'high myopia'. The researchers believe that the neurotransmitter dopamine is responsible. It is known to inhibit the excessive eyeball growth that causes myopia. Sunshine causes the retina to release more dopamine.

Sunlight also lifts men's libidos, according to an Austrian study of 2,299 men published in 2010. Hormone experts at the University of Gratz discovered that the men's levels of the male sex hormone testosterone peak in the month of August, and fall in the winter, hitting their lowest levels in March.

MAY HELP YOU LIVE LONGER

Could such physical benefits actually outweigh the risk of developing skin

cancer? The official NHS guidance clearly says not. 'There is no safe or healthy way to get a tan from sunlight,' it states, adding that we should try to stay in the shade between 11am and 3pm from March to October, to cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses during these times, and to use at least SPF15 sunscreen. Dr. Weller acknowledges that people who live in sunnier climates have more skin cancer, because solar radiation mutates DNA and generates free radicals that may cause cancers to develop. But, he argues, we have no proof that sunlight shortens life.

In fact, the epidemiology suggests that overall, people who have more sunlight tend to live longer, even though their population gets more skin cancer.'

Dr. Weller is supported by Martin Feelisch, the professor of experimental medicine at Southampton University who has also been studying sunshine's role in keeping us healthy—in particular the effect of sunlight-stimulated nitric oxide to protect our cardiovascular systems by lowering blood pressure. Professor Feelisch warns that avoiding sunlight or using sunblock constantly could be a new risk factor for heart disease—and more people die from heart disease than skin cancer. 'We believe current public health advice, which is dominated by concerns of skin cancer, needs to be carefully reassessed,' he argues. 'It's time to look at the balance of risk for skin cancer and cardiovascular disease.'

He does not recommend, however, that we spend hours sunbathing.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lindqvist, the author of the new Swedish study, says: 'We know in our population, there are three big lifestyle factors [that endanger health]: smoking, being overweight, and inactivity. 'Now we know there is a fourth—avoiding sun exposure.'

WHEN TO USE SUNSCREEN

We should also be more sparing in our use of sunscreen as it may block the benefits of sunshine, Dr Lindqvist

says. 'If you're using it to be out longer in the sun, you're using it in the wrong manner. However, if you are stuck on a boat and have to be out, it's probably better to have sunscreen than not to have it.' Thanks to our new scientific appreciation of sun, the balance does seem to need redressing towards enjoying it in healthy moderation.

Read more:
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3570267/New-research-reveals-sun-benefits-AREN-T-linked-vitamin-D.html#ixzz47hCfuFZN> ♦

Successful walleye egg-collection

Walleye egg-collection operations wrapped up April 29 when the final batch of eggs was collected in Fergus Falls, MN. In all, more than 4,500 quarts of walleye eggs were collected at 10 operations throughout the state.

Roughly one-third of the 360 million fry anticipated to hatch this year will grow in rearing ponds throughout the summer and then be stocked as fingerlings in 362 lakes this fall. The other two-thirds of the fry are stocked directly into 302 lakes within a few days of hatching.

It's important to note that 85 percent of walleye caught by anglers are naturally produced. Many Minnesota lakes have excellent natural walleye reproduction without any stocking, but in some lakes, the walleye fishery exists solely because of stocking. Individual lake management plans prescribe the timing and amount of any stocking based on the available habitat, prey availability and past success. Not all lakes can benefit from stocking.

Walleye eggs collected this way have a much higher hatching success rate than what occurs in nature. However, maintaining good water quality and natural spawning habitat with a healthy adult population can produce many more walleye than hatcheries can provide. Each lake that has an egg collection operation is restocked with fry to more than compensate for the egg collection activity. www.mndnr.gov/lakefind. ♦

Kite Festival May 20-22

Great Lakes Kite Festival at [Grand Haven State Park](#) (Ottawa County):

This fantastic kite-flying event is perfect for the whole family. Enjoy incredible kite ballets, kites as big as school buses and the world's largest outdoor kite store. For more information, visit www.MACKite.com or call 616-846-7501. ☐

50 years of salmon stocking in Michigan

In April of 1966 no one expected that an out-of-the-box fisheries management idea would accelerate Michigan's fishing reputation and effectively change the face of the state's sportfishing industry. [Read the whole salmon stocking story online!](#)

◊

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[Work completed on Asian carp barrier to Great Lakes](#)

The \$4.4 million project at the Eagle Marsh Nature Preserve in Fort Wayne is designed to block floodwaters and prevent carp from crossing from the Wabash River watershed into the Maumee River watershed, which empties into Lake Erie.

[Banned PCBs still haunt Great Lakes](#)

PCB emissions may still threaten residents of Chicago and other Great Lakes communities, according to a recently published study that calls for legislation to control the largest sources of the longtime pollutant.

[Seneca Nation to break ground on \\$6M wind turbine project](#)

Seneca Nation officials say a \$6 million project will construct wind turbines on the nation's Cattaraugus Territory on Erie Road in Irving, N.Y.

[Committee recommends support of application for National Marine Sanctuary](#)

A coalition in Oswego, N.Y., is pursuing a designation for southeastern Lake Ontario as a National Marine Sanctuary.

[COMMENTARY: Salmon doomed? Call me a Great Lakes skeptic](#)

All the doom and gloom talk about Lake Michigan and declining numbers of alewife and salmon has big lake anglers on edge

[AuSable River takes center stage on fish farming](#)

The debate over whether to allow fish farming on a grand scale is casting a wide net over Michigan. Bills have been introduced in both the State House and State Senate, either calling for an outright ban on so-called aquaculture, or to jump into it in a big way. Citing an

[St. Lawrence River is 'slowly dying,' U.S. environmental group warns](#)

An American environmental group is calling on the Canadian and U.S. governments to act to safeguard the St. Lawrence River, saying the waterway which runs along the border is "slowly dying."

[Lake Huron water levels rise steadily to '98 mark](#)

As of the beginning of March, Lake Michigan-Huron's level was 29 cms above the 100-year average and seven cms higher than the same time last year, and the highest the lake has been since 1998 for this time of year

[Great Lakes fisheries expert: Time to forget salmon, go for native species](#)

The lake trout used to be the fish to catch in the Great Lakes. But by the 1950s, severe overfishing and an infestation of an eel-like, blood-sucking parasite called the sea lamprey had drastically reduced the number of lake trout and other fish.

End

Michigan's free Fishing Weekend June 11-12

Don't miss your chance to explore Michigan's world-class fisheries—for FREE! Come on out as part of the 2016 Summer Free Fishing Weekend. The Michigan DNR reminds everyone the annual Summer Free Fishing Weekend is June 11 & 12. That weekend, everyone—residents and nonresidents alike—can fish without a license, although all other fishing regulations still apply. Visit [Michigan.gov/freefishing](#) for all things related to this weekend, including help with event planning and promotion, a registration form for official events, and a chart identifying activities occurring throughout the state. ♦

Michigan Fisheries Research Vessel at Public Open House in Alpena May 23

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will host a public open house in Alpena Monday, May 23, and an online live tour Friday, May 20, for its soon-to-be dedicated fisheries research vessel (R/V), the 57-foot-long R/V Tanner

The open house, hosted at the Alpena Fisheries Research Station located at 160 E. Fletcher St., will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. Vessel staff will answer questions about the new vessel and the DNR Fisheries Division's Great Lakes survey program, while providing an up-close look at this state-of-the-art research tool. ♦