



## Lake Erie Increased Yellow Perch and Walleye Allowable Catches

**YPSILANTI, MI** – Fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—agreed to a total allowable catch (TAC) of 10.375 million pounds of yellow perch and 5.924 million walleye for 2017. (Yellow perch are allocated in pounds and walleye are allocated by number of fish.) These TAC recommendations represent a 13% increase for yellow perch and a 20% increase for walleye. Specific allocations of both species are presented below by jurisdiction.

The Lake Erie Committee’s TAC recommendations are produced after extensive, lakewide biological assessments, analyses, discussions, and consultations with stakeholders. The recommendations are consistent with the status of Lake Erie’s fish populations, taking into the account the goal of stable harvest.

Overall, the Lake Erie Committee believes that yellow perch populations are stable, though stock status varies by basin and, thus, the TAC varies across management units. In contrast, walleye populations are managed as a single stock and are increasing lakewide. These conditions support the recommended increases to the yellow perch and walleye TACs. The individual provincial and state governments adhere to and implement the TAC recommendations consistent with their respective regulations and management objectives.

The Lake Erie Committee operates by consensus and relies on biological assessments to inform their TAC recommendations. The Lake Erie Committee also supports the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, or LEPMAG, a structured process that engages commercial and recreational fishers. LEPMAG, which has existed since 2010, reflects the committee’s interest in involving the fishing community in actions related to management of Lake Erie’s percid fisheries.

### YELLOW PERCH

The proposed yellow perch TAC is the result of deliberations among the jurisdictions and with stakeholders through the LEPMAG process. Based on science and those deliberations, the Lake Erie Committee recommended a 2017 TAC of 10.375 million pounds of yellow perch, a 13% increase from last year’s allocation of 9.208 million pounds.

The five jurisdictions on the lake share Lake Erie’s yellow perch under an area-based formula. Pursuant to the 2017 TAC recommendation, Ontario will receive 4.868 million pounds, Ohio 4.525 million pounds, Michigan 0.279 million pounds, New York 0.093 million pounds, and Pennsylvania 0.611 million pounds.

The yellow perch fishery is divided into “management units,” which generally correspond to the eastern, central, and western basins of Lake Erie. The Lake Erie Committee has strived to maintain harvest stability while still responding to

### Lake Erie increased TACs

*Continued on page 8*

### In this issue...

MN boaters urged to get educated.....	2
Large trout stocked in SE Michigan.....	2
Discovery of silver carp in St. Croix River	3
2016 ballast water management report ...	3
NMMA backs proposal for Wis sanctuary	4
Gander Mountain files for bankruptcy.....	4
Footbridge closed at Black River Falls ....	4
NY Instructional Shooting Clinics .....	4
May 6-7 is Ohio’s free fishing weekend... 4	
IL Boat Registration .....	5
Mich offering \$1 million for solutions .....	5
Saginaw Bay Walleye Clinic, May 9-10 ...	5
New angling regs on Lake George smelt 5	
Kelly Turturro New Region 3 Director.....	5
Bipartisan action on Sportsmen’s Act.....	6
Rapala voted most popular .....	6
Becoming an Outdoors Woman in U.P....	6
Record nbr of extended growth walleye ..	7
Women’s Guided Fishing Trips .....	7
DNR issues final Little Presque Isle .....	8
White Lake boating access to close .....	8
Expanded Lk Mich lake trout harvest .....	9
ODNR supports Aquatic Stewardship .....	9
MN parks and trails need boost .....	10
Angler Achievement Awards Program... 10	
National Concealed Carry Reciprocity... 10	
DNR sees increase in Master Angler ....	11
Women in Nature Outdoor Skills .....	11

## Lakes Michigan/Huron Fisheries Workshops

This workshop will focus on the latest results from 2016 research and monitoring efforts. There is no cost to attend. Thursday, **April 20**, 2017, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. South Haven Moose Lodge, 1025 Wells St. South Haven, MI 49090. [Full Agenda Workshop details: MI Sea Grant fishery-workshops/](#)

### Other workshops:

Taylor (Lake Erie/Detroit River)  
Thursday, **April 20**, 7–9 p.m.  
American Legion Post #200, 11800  
Michael St, Taylor, MI 48180  
[Register Online](#)

Oscoda (Lake Huron)  
Wednesday, **April 26**, 6–9 p.m.  
American Legion Oscoda, 349 S.  
State St, Oscoda, MI 48750  
[Register Online|Agenda](#)

Cedarville (Lake Huron)  
Thursday, **April 27**, 6–9 p.m.  
Clark Township Community Center,  
133 E. M-134, Cedarville, MI 49719  
[Register Online|Agenda](#)

Harvey/Marquette (Lake Superior)  
Wednesday, **May 24**, 6–9 p.m.  
Chocoday Township Hall, 5010 US-  
41, Harvey, MI 49855  
[Register Online](#) ✧

## Minnesota (and all) boaters urged to get educated before season begins

Just as the “rules of the road” are learned before getting behind the wheel of a car, the same should be done before getting on a boat and taking the helm.

[U.S. Coast Guard](#) statistics indicate that \*80 percent of boating deaths occurred on boats where the boat operator had never received boating education instruction. Before hitting the water this summer, take a boater’s education course.

The [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators](#) (NASBLA) along with state, federal and nonprofit partners are encouraging boaters to enroll in a boating education course prior to the kickoff of the 2017 boating season.

The annual [Spring Aboard – Take A Boating Education Course](#) campaign informs and motivates boaters to prepare for the boating season by providing information on how to enroll in a boating knowledge or skills based education course. The campaign emphasizes enrollment in courses verified as meeting the national boating knowledge or skill standard.

“We know that an educated boater is safer on the water,” said Stephanie Weatherington, NASBLA president. “With today’s wide variety of courses available, there’s a course for everyone’s schedule.”

Boaters have multiple options from classroom courses offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and United States Power Squadrons to online offerings.

“There’s no reason to head out on the water without knowing what you’re doing, and spring is the perfect time to take a course before the summer boating season begins,” Weatherington said.

Minnesota requires anyone ages 12 to 17 years old, unsupervised and operating a boat over 25 horsepower to have a safety certificate. A safety certificate is also needed for anyone ages 14 to 17 and operating a personal

## Large trout stocked in SE Michigan's Huron River and Spring Mill Pond

The Michigan DNR recently stocked 3,350 adult trout in the Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area (Oakland County) and Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area (Livingston County).

The Huron River was stocked with 900 brown trout and 1,650 rainbow trout, both sized 15-21”. Spring Mill Pond was stocked with 200 brown trout and 600 rainbow trout, also measuring 15-21” long.

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 then 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 through April 28 anglers are limited to flies-only, catch-and-release fishing. Youth under the age of 12 may keep one fish between 8 and 12”. Beginning April 29, all baits are allowed and anglers may keep up to five trout over 8”, but only three over 15”.

Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area is closed to fishing March 15 through March 31. From April 1 through April 28 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”. Beginning April 29, all baits are allowed and anglers may keep up to five fish over 8”, but only three fish over 15”.

See [2016-2017 Michigan Fishing Guide for complete regulation details](#). ✧

watercraft unsupervised. For a summary of Minnesota’s regulations and available courses, visit: [mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety).

For more information about the Spring Aboard campaign visit [nasbla.org/spring](http://nasbla.org/spring).

\* Where the level of operator education was known. ✧



• Established 1972 •

### President

Daniel N. Thomas, *Illinois*

### Vice President

*Open*

### Secretary

Michael D. Sanger, *Wisconsin*

### Treasurer

Thomas G. Couston, *Illinois*

### DIRECTORS

*Illinois* – Robert Gaik

*Indiana* – Mike Schoonveld

*Michigan* – Tom Hamilton

*Minnesota* - Dave Koneczny

*New York* – Thomas Marks

*Ohio* – Rick Unger

*Ontario* – Darryl Choronzey

*Pennsylvania* - Ed Kissell

*Wisconsin* – Robert Wincek

### 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.

### Inland Seas Angler

#### GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

### Publisher

Dan Thomas, 630/941-1351

### Editor

Jeanette Thomas

### Webmaster

*Open*

© Copyright 2017 by Great Lakes Basin Publications, the *INLAND SEAS ANGLERS-GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT* is the newsletter of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, a federally recognized not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and recognized for tax-deductible giving by the federal government.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of GLSFC, its officers or staff. Reproduction of any material by paid-up members is encouraged, but appropriate credit must be given. Reproduction by others without written permission is prohibited.

### Address Change:

Send six weeks in advance with old mailing label to GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT, P.O. Box 297, Elmhurst, IL 60126, (630) 941-1351 or [glslfc@comcast.net](mailto:glslfc@comcast.net).

## DNR reports first discovery of invasive silver carp in St. Croix River Bighead carp also found during proactive monitoring

The Minnesota DNR has confirmed the first capture of a silver carp on the St. Croix River. The invasive carp was caught by a commercial angler near Prescott, Wis., during proactive monitoring in partnership with the DNR.

“This news is disappointing but not unexpected,” said DNR invasive fish coordinator Nick Frohnauer. “The silver carp was captured within viewing distance of the St. Croix’s confluence with the Mississippi River. In 2014, two silver carp were found in the Mississippi only a short distance upstream from where the St. Croix and Mississippi meet.”

The silver carp caught on the St. Croix was 33 inches long and weighed 13 pounds.

One bighead carp was also caught by the commercial angler, who was working in conjunction with a DNR fisheries biologist. Bighead carp have previously been caught at this same location and further upstream on the St. Croix.

Frohnauer noted that while the DNR is concerned about the potential impacts of invasive carp in the St. Croix River, the individual fish that have been captured do not indicate reproduction or an established population of either bighead or silver carp in the St. Croix.

“The location where the carp were captured is a well-known over-wintering area for several species of fish,” Frohnauer said. “At this time, it is hard to predict if these individuals would have moved further upstream the St. Croix River, or back into the Mississippi River when water temperatures warm up in the spring.”

Immediate follow-up sampling was not possible on the St. Croix, as colder weather led to the river icing up. Once the ice clears, DNR staff will work with commercial anglers to survey for additional invasive carp near Prescott.

Additionally, the DNR will sample at the King Power Plant near Bayport, Minn., where bighead carp have been caught in the past. A

commercial angler netting under the ice near the Bayport marina early in 2017 did not catch any invasive carp.

The DNR Invasive Species Program has built partnerships with state and federal agencies, conservation groups, university researchers and commercial businesses collaborating to prevent the spread of invasive carp:

- The DNR is an active partner in the Upper Mississippi River invasive carp workgroup, which is working to limit the impact of invasive carp. The group includes representatives from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and several federal agencies.

- In partnership with the DNR, the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota is testing carp deterrents in Mississippi River locks and dams. They have installed acoustic speakers at Lock 8 and modeled flows through the gates at dams 2 and 8.

- DNR fisheries leads a comprehensive sampling program to monitor population expansion, population changes, and impacts of management actions. As part of this partnership with the commercial fishing community, a DNR field biologist was on site when the commercial angler captured the silver carp and bighead carp on the St. Croix.

The deterrent testing and sampling programs have been funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund with proceeds from the state lottery.

Invasive carp have been progressing upstream since escaping into the Mississippi River in the 1970s. These large fish compete with native species and pose a threat to rivers and lakes. While no breeding populations have been detected in Minnesota waters, individual fish have been caught in the Mississippi near the Twin Cities, the St. Croix River and the Minnesota River.

Invasive carp captures must be

reported to the DNR immediately. Call 651-587-2781 or email [invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us). Take a photo and transport the carp to the nearest fisheries office or make arrangements for it to be picked up by a DNR official. ✧

## Great Lakes Seaway Ballast Water Group releases 2016 ballast water management report

CLEVELAND – The Coast Guard announces the release of the Great Lakes Seaway Ballast Water Working Group’s 2016 Summary of [Great Lakes Seaway Ballast Water Management activities](#).

The Great Lakes Seaway Ballast Water Working Group is a bi-national collection of representatives from the United States Coast Guard, the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Transport Canada - Marine Safety & Security, and the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.

The group’s mandate is to develop, enhance, and coordinate binational compliance and enforcement efforts to reduce the introduction of aquatic invasive species via ballast water and residuals.

In 2016, 100 percent of vessels bound for the Great Lakes Seaway from outside the Exclusive Economic Zone received a ballast water management exam. In total, the BWWG assessed all 8,488 ballast tanks, during the 466 vessel transits in the 2016 navigation season.

This is the seventh consecutive year that BWWG agencies ensured the examination of 100 percent of ballast tanks entering the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the group anticipates continued high ship compliance rates for the 2016 navigation season. ✧

## DNR Accessibility Advisory Council's March 21 meeting postponed to April 17

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources announced that the Accessibility Advisory Council's meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, has been postponed and rescheduled for 10 a.m. Monday, **April 17**. The meeting still will take place at the Glassen Education Building, Rose Lake Shooting Range, 14500 Peacock Road (between Lansing and Clark Roads), in Bath (Clinton County).

[The April 17 meeting agenda is available on the council's webpage.](#)

The Accessibility Advisory Council was created by the DNR in 2007. The council's purpose is to make recommendations to the DNR director and staff regarding accessibility, as well as provide input, advice and guidance on the development, management and planning associated with providing accessible recreation opportunities to all users statewide.

The meeting location is barrier-free. Those needing additional accommodations (such as interpretive services) to fully participate in this meeting, seeking information about this meeting or wishing to address the council on accessibility issues should contact the DNR Finance and Operations Division at 517-284-5946 (TTY/TDD711 Michigan Relay Center for the hearing impaired) at least seven business days before the meeting. ✧

## NMMA backs proposal for Wisconsin sanctuary

The National Marine Manufacturers Association has announced its support for the proposed Wisconsin-Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary. The NMMA says the sanctuary would protect the region's maritime history and 37 known shipwrecks in the area and would foster recreational boating, fishing and tourism. ✧

## Gander Mountain officially files for bankruptcy

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Gander Mountain announced a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing on Friday, March 10. The Minnesota-based retailer plans to close 32 of its 162 stores in the coming weeks and seek a buyer. Company officials expect to hold an auction in mid-April with an anticipated closing date of May 15. The March 10 filing listed \$500 million in liabilities, with one unpaid vendor—California's Vista Outdoor Sales, the parent company of Federal Ammunition—owed \$15 million. Other unpaid vendors include Pure Fishing, Normark, Carhartt, Smith & Wesson and Remington.

The following stores are closing:  
Alabama (4), Georgia (3)  
Illinois (3) – Champaign, Algonquin, Springfield  
Indiana (2) – Merrillville, Greenfield  
Minnesota (3) – Rogers, Mankato, Woodbury  
New York (1) – New Hartford  
North Carolina (2), Tennessee (1)  
Texas (10), West Virginia (1)  
Wisconsin (2) – Eau Claire, Germantown ✧

## Footbridge closed at Black River Falls

The Michigan DNR has closed a footbridge leading to Black River Falls on the Gwinn Forest Management Unit in Marquette County.

The wooden bridge crosses a small, deep gorge in the rocks that channels water from the river during flooding. The waterfalls are a popular attraction south of Ishpeming, especially during spring runoff. Due to severe deterioration creating an unsafe condition, the footbridge that has been in place providing access to view the Black River Falls in Ely Township (T46N R28W Section 10) has been closed. A DNR crew recently barricaded the wooden bridge. ✧

## NY Instructional Shooting Clinics

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) firearm instructor Jackie Emslie is offering three shooting clinics in the Hudson Valley, near Poughkeepsie, NY. No experience necessary. Registration is required.

**May 9 (9 am - 4 pm) - Rifle and Pistol Clinic** – women 12 and older (girls under 18 must be accompanied by a woman 21 or older) Cost: \$45

**May 13 (9 am - 4 pm) - Rifle and Pistol Clinic** – women 12 and older (girls under 18 must be accompanied by a woman 21 or older) Cost: \$45

**June 17 (9 am - 12 pm) -**

**Introduction to Rifle Shooting** – for men, women or young persons at least 12 years old (boys or girls under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult 21 or older) Cost: \$20

Information and registration forms are here:

- [HVSA+2017+FIREARMS+COURSES+V01.pdf](#)
- [hvsa+wot+20170513+rifle+pistol.pdf](#)

Questions? Contact Jackie Emslie at 914-475-4901 or [jslie@earthlink.net](mailto:jslie@earthlink.net)  
Kelly Stang, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754, 518-402-8862,

[Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov)  
[www.dec.ny.gov/education/68.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/68.html)

✧

## May 6-7 is Ohio's free fishing weekend

On **May 6-7**, state residents are invited to take part in the annual free fishing weekend. Ohio's Free Fishing Days are open to all Ohio residents and extend to all of Ohio's public waters, including Lake Erie and the Ohio River. This is the only weekend all year that does not require anyone 16-years-old or older to obtain a fishing license. The Free Fishing Days weekend offers Ohioans of all ages the chance to experience the fun of catching a fish. Here are some helpful tips for taking a youngster out fishing. ✧

## IL Boat Registration

The IDNR reminds boat owners in Illinois to check their three-year boat registration/decals and renew their registration if it expires on **June 30, 2017**. Renewing watercraft registration can be done online through the IDNR website at [www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov). Renewal can also be done by phone by calling 1-866-867-3542. For details on Illinois watercraft registration requirements and three-year boat registration fees, check the IDNR website at [www.dnr.illinois.gov/boating](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/boating).

Non-motorized watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, or sail boards in Illinois, 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). An agent fee of \$0.50 is charged per vessel. The 2017 Illinois Water Usage Stamp is valid through December 31, 2017. Water Usage Stamps are available over-the-counter at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR/Pages/LicensePermitVendors.aspx>. ✧

## Michigan offering \$1 million for solutions that stop Asian carp

Michigan is looking for any and all solutions to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. The state has set aside \$1 million to develop a global contest. It's called the Michigan Invasive Carp Challenge, and the Michigan DNR is welcoming all possible solutions. Michigan's legislature and governor allocated \$1 million to develop a global invasive carp challenge. Details on how much prize money will be offered are being worked out. Officials also haven't determined how many winners might be chosen.

The challenge will go live this summer in collaboration with crowdsourcing company InnoCentive. [Michigan Invasive Carp Challenge](#) ✧

## Saginaw Bay Walleye Clinic, May 9-10

### Featuring Hall of Fame pro Mark Martin

The Michigan DNR will offer an in-depth opportunity to learn about Saginaw Bay walleye fishing **May 9 - 10**, at the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center in Bay City, Michigan.

The two-day Saginaw Bay Walleye Clinic will begin May 9 with a tips and techniques session, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Instructors Captain Mark Martin – Walleye Trail World Champion and full-time Hall of Fame professional walleye fisherman – and Captain Brandon Stanton of Team Gunsmoke Sportfishing and Guide Service will cover the equipment and skills needed to catch Saginaw Bay walleye. The class will take the novice angler through rod and reel selection, rigging and presentation techniques, and natural history tips about walleye in Saginaw Bay.

On the second day, running 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., participants will have an opportunity to experience hands-on, one-on-one time with Martin's pro-staff as they board pro boats and fish Saginaw Bay. Cost for the clinic is \$165, which includes lunch both days and pro boat trips. Participants are encouraged to bring the fishing gear they already have.

Registration is limited to 28 participants. [Sign up for the Saginaw Bay Walleye Clinic in the Michigan e-Store](#). ✧

## New angling regs on Lake George smelt fishing

### Dip-netting is prohibited

Smelt season is closed from **April 1 to May 15**; Use or possession of smelt is prohibited during the closed season. Smelt season is open from **May 16 to March 31**: Any size smelt may be taken; Daily limit is 25. **DIP-NETTING FOR SMELT IS PROHIBITED AT ALL TIMES**. This information can be found on page 29 of the [2017-2018 New York Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide](#). ✧

## Kelly Turturro New Region 3 Director

Kelly Turturro has been appointed to the position of Regional Director for NY DEC's Region 3, which includes Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan and Westchester counties.

Ms. Turturro began her career with DEC in 2006 as a Senior Attorney and was promoted to Regional Attorney in May 2015. In addition to serving as Regional Attorney, Kelly has served as Acting-Regional Director since June 2016. Prior to coming to DEC, Ms. Turturro worked as an Associate Counsel for the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

"Kelly is truly dedicated to DEC's mission and is a proven leader with wide ranging knowledge of the complex issues. She is a credit to this agency and a terrific ambassador for DEC in the Lower Hudson Valley," Commissioner Seggos, said.

Ms. Turturro holds a B.A. in Political Science from Le Moyne College and earned her J.D. Cum Laude from Pace University School of Law. She was admitted to New York State Bar in March 2002. She and her husband Michael live in New Paltz with their daughter. ✧

## Mushroom Collecting

No license is required for mushroom collecting in Illinois, but mushroom collectors always need landowner permission. On public sites, mushroom collectors must adhere to approved regulations and hours. Collection of mushrooms is allowed in many IDNR state parks, fish and wildlife, and other recreation areas, but it is prohibited in any area designated as a dedicated nature preserve. Areas under the jurisdiction of the IDNR that offer spring turkey hunting are not open to mushroom collecting until after 1 p.m. daily during turkey season to ensure the safety of all site visitors. Mushroom collectors should call ahead to the IDNR site they intend to visit to learn of any site-specific regulations. ✧

## Senate bipartisan action on Sportsmen's Act of 2017

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) praised the U.S. Senate's bipartisan reintroduction of [S.733](#), the Sportsmen's Act of 2017 and the quick action to favorably report it out of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Similar legislation was agreed upon by both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate late last year, but stalled in a joint House-Senate conference committee. The bipartisan legislative package expands and enhances sportsmen's access by making federal lands throughout the nation "open unless closed" for fishing, hunting, recreational shooting, and other outdoor activities.

The legislation is sponsored by Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), both members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, along with CSC leaders Sens. Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.).

The proposed legislation would:

- Reauthorize federal lands are "open unless closed" policy for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting;
- Allow transport of bows and crossbows on National Parks lands;
- Exempt film crews of three or less from commercial filming fees and additional permits;
- Implement the "Hunt Unrestricted on National Treasures" (HUNT) Act, improving access to federal lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation;
- Increase states' authority to allocate Pittman-Robertson funds for construction and maintenance of public recreational shooting ranges;
- Permanently establish the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council Advisory Committee to advise the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on wildlife and habitat conservation, hunting, and recreational shooting issues. ✧

## Rapala lures and knives voted most popular again

For more than a decade, Rapala® hard baits and knives have been America's most beloved.

For the eleventh year in a row, a majority of anglers participating in Southwick Associates' influential industry survey said Rapala hard baits and knives are the best.

Southwick's annual survey determines the brands and products that anglers purchase most frequently. Southwick's data were compiled from thousands of internet-based **AnglerSurvey.com** surveys. The year-long research is scientifically designed and weighted to reflect all U.S. anglers.

Comparing year-to-year data, Rapala baits have grown even more popular. Southwick's 2015 report showed that 23.3% of anglers favored Rapala baits. In 2016, Rapala's share increased to 24.6%.

Southwick's recent survey results confirm what the biggest names in fishing already know. Top pros who trust Rapala lures to catch more and bigger fish include multi-species angling legend Al Lindner, 2003 Bassmaster Classic Champion Michael Iaconelli, 2013 Forrest Wood Cup Champion Randall Tharp, saltwater aces Rick Murphy and George Poveromo, and walleye-circuit winner Chris Gilman.

### No. 1 in Knives

Rapala knives are growing more popular as well. Southwick's report shows that 18.4% of anglers favor them – that's up from 17.5% in 2015. From the birch-handled classics to efficient new electric models, Rapala knives make short work of turning fish to fillets. And that's why Rapala knives are used in more fish camps, on more charter boats and at more shore lunches than any other knife in the world.

[See Rapala Knives](#)

[See Rapala Lures](#)

✧

## Becoming an Outdoors Woman program in U. P.

Registration is open for this summer's "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" (BOW) program, which is set for **June 2-4** in Marquette County. This will mark the 20th annual summer BOW gathering for women, 18 and older, who are seeking an opportunity to improve their outdoor skills in a relaxed, noncompetitive atmosphere.

"Becoming an Outdoors Woman is a program where each individual is encouraged to learn at her own pace," said Sharon Pitz, BOW program coordinator in Marquette.

The summer BOW program offers instruction in more than two dozen different types of activities, including kayaking, wilderness first aid and survival, lake and fly fishing, field birding, paddleboard, geocaching, shooting sports, boating and mountain biking.

"Volunteer BOW instructors provide basic and advanced teaching that is tailored to each participant's individual ability, helping participants learn the basics in a short amount of time," Pitz said. The program also includes special evening activities during the weekend, including hikes, group bonfires and more.

BOW participants stay and take their classes at the Bay Cliff Health Camp, which is situated about 30 miles north of Marquette near Big Bay. Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with amenities including a sauna, pool, tennis courts, hiking and biking trails, along with easy access to northern hardwood forests and Lake Superior.

Early registration is encouraged.

The \$195 registration fee includes all food and lodging, as well as most equipment and supplies. The deadline for registration is **May 8**. A limited number of BOW Scholarships are available to help low-income participants with the cost of registration. The scholarship application deadline is **May 1**. Class information and registration materials are available online at [www.michigan.gov/bow](http://www.michigan.gov/bow). ✧

## Record number of extended growth walleye stocked in 2016; more in 2017 Fish from initial year of Wisconsin Walleye Initiative reaching harvest size this year

MADISON – The Wisconsin DNR stocked a record number of extended growth walleye fingerlings in key Wisconsin waters in 2016, even as fish from the initial year of the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative are expected to begin reaching harvest size this year.

In all, 797,815 of the 6- to 8-inch extended growth walleye were stocked in 150 Wisconsin waterbodies in 2016, up from the 760,969 fish stocked in 133 waters in 2015, said Dave Giebtbrock, DNR fisheries culture section chief. Gov. Scott Walker's proposed 2017-2019 biennial budget continues funding the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative at current levels for both years.

"We appreciate the vote of confidence in our program and the continued support for this important effort to restore and sustain Wisconsin as a premier walleye destination," Giebtbrock said. "This year, anglers can look forward to catching some of the 455,307 large fingerlings we stocked in 2013 with harvest opportunities increasing as more fish reach legal size in the years ahead."

In addition to the fish stocked during the first year of the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative in 2013, extended growth walleye stocking totaled 719,670 fish in 2014. Prior to the launch of the initiative, in 2012 the department stocked 142,121 extended growth walleye.



*Fish from the fall 2016 stocking in Lake Mendota averaged 7 inches in length.*

Through the years, the number of

lakes that are stocked with the larger fish has varied depending on the size of the waters and number of fish available. Lakes are stocked on a rotating basis and some lakes require a larger number of fish to reach the standard rate of 10 fish per acre needed to support a good recreational fishery. For example, Lake Mendota received 98,077 fish in 2016, none in 2015 and 97,751 in 2014.

Walleye are a favorite quarry for Wisconsin anglers and boost the economy by driving expenditures for lodging, dining, retail purchases, guided trips and tournament participation among other things. Wisconsin remains one of the top three fishing destinations in the U.S. with resident and nonresident anglers generating an economic impact of nearly \$2.3 billion per year, according to the American Sportfishing Association.

Giebtbrock said the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative fosters growth in the aquaculture industry, with some 245,000 fish coming from private and tribal hatcheries in 2016. The contributions from private hatcheries continue to climb, with some 239,000 in 2015 and 213,000 in 2014.

Justine Hasz, DNR fisheries bureau director, said support from the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative also has meant critical infrastructure improvements for the state hatchery system including a \$4.6 million investment at the Art Oehmcke Hatchery in Woodruff; a \$2.5 million investment at the Gov. Tommy G. Thompson State Fish Hatchery in Spooner and a \$1.1 million investment at the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery in Wild Rose.

"Modernization of these facilities contributes to the efficiency of our stocking program with enhanced fish health and better outcomes for anglers," Hasz said. "The improved facilities are functioning well and helping us get these young fish off to the best possible start so that anglers can enjoy great walleye fishing for years to come."

The Wisconsin Walleye Initiative is part of DNR's overall management strategy to help restore naturally reproducing populations in lakes that formerly supported native populations and improve walleye numbers in lakes that need regular stocking to maintain good fisheries.

While stocking the larger, extended growth fingerlings makes sense in some lakes, DNR also stocks approximately 1.4 million small fingerlings each year. DNR fisheries biologists develop stocking plans for the different sized fish based on specific lake conditions; in some lakes the smaller fingerlings perform very well and are more cost effective than the larger fish. ✧

### Women's Guided Fishing Trips on Lake Ontario

The Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program is once again teaming up with Captain Dave Wilson to offer some Beyond BOW Women's Guided Fishing Trips on Lake Ontario. Enjoy a 6 hour guided fishing trip for King Salmon, Coho Salmon, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and/or Steelhead with Captain Dave Wilson aboard his 28' Baha Cruiser. All fishing equipment is provided. No fishing experience necessary. The boat has an enclosed bathroom with plumbing! Open to women age 18 or over.

**July 9,** 2017 at 5:30 am or 1:30 pm

**July 23,** 2017 at 5:30 am or 1:30 pm

**July 30,** 2017 at 5:30 am or 1:30 pm

**August 5,** 2017 5:30 am or 1:30 pm

**August 6,** 2017 5:30 am or 1:30 pm

Oswego Marina, Oswego, NY

All the details are here: [Chartered+Fishing+Lake+Ontario+2017.doc](#). These fishing trips sold out last year, so reserve your spot early. Kelly Stang, NYSDEC, 518-402-8862, [Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov); [www.dec.ny.gov/education/68.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/68.html)

✧

## DNR issues final Little Presque Isle trails plan

The Michigan DNR issued its final decision on non-motorized trails designations at Little Presque Isle, a popular recreation site located a few miles northwest of Marquette in Marquette County.

Over the next few weeks, DNR staff will be finalizing a timeline for work on trails and signing expected to begin this spring.

“We are pleased to announce these new trails designations, which will help protect valuable natural resources and provide greater recreational opportunities at Little Presque Isle,” said John Pepin, DNR deputy public information officer. “These designations are the result of several months of work by DNR staff and consultation and input from user groups and the general public.”

A total of 17.2 miles of mountain bike trail will be designated for the non-winter biking season. In addition, 10.7 miles of winter fat tire bike route will be designated for riding from December 1 to May 1.

Through a previous public process during the 1990s, 19 miles of hiking trails were approved for Little Presque Isle.

In May 2015, the Friends of Harlow submitted a trails proposal to the DNR, seeking designation of 19.7 miles of non-motorized, multi-use trails at Little Presque Isle. However, with hiking already a permitted use at Little Presque Isle, the proposal was evaluated for designating mountain biking use on the existing hiking trail, as well as some new trails, which were created informally by the public.

For several months, a core team of field professionals from the DNR’s parks, wildlife and forest resources divisions compiled information and evaluated on-the-ground conditions along the proposed trails at Little Presque Isle. The new trail designations will govern non-motorized mountain biking and fat-tire winter biking at Little Presque Isle.

[www.michigan.gov/trails](http://www.michigan.gov/trails). ✧

## Lake Erie increased TACs

*Continued from page 1*

changing trends in each management unit. The proposed TAC represents nuances among the management units in abundance and biomass.

### WALLEYE

The Lake Erie Committee set a 2017 walleye TAC of 5.924 million fish, a 20% increase over the 2016 TAC of 4.937 million fish. The increased TAC recommendation reflects the strength of the walleye population and the committee’s goal to manage the lakewide fish stock sustainably while integrating stakeholder input into the process. Positive recruitment during the previous few years will translate into increasing walleye abundance over the coming years. Consistent with the committee’s Walleye Management Plan, this optimistic outlook for walleye allows for the maximum increase in the TAC for 2017.

The Province of Ontario and the states of Ohio and Michigan share the TAC based on a formula of walleye habitat within each jurisdiction in the western and central basins of the lake. Under a 2017 TAC of 5.924 million fish, Ohio will be entitled to 3.028 million fish, Ontario 2.551 million fish, and Michigan 0.345 million fish. Jurisdictions in the eastern end of the lake are outside of the TAC area and harvest limits there are set consistent with lakewide conditions and objectives.

As with yellow perch, the walleye TAC recommendation is the result of extensive discussions among scientists, managers, and stakeholders. Scientists and field biologists from all Lake Erie jurisdictions, meeting as the Walleye Task Group, share data and reach consensus on biological conditions. The task group’s walleye abundance estimates, which incorporate suggestions from LEPMAG, serve as the foundation for the Lake Erie Committee’s discussions and TAC recommendations. Also like yellow perch, each Lake Erie jurisdiction is responsible for implementing its portion of the TAC. ✧

## White Lake boating access to close mid-May to mid-August for improvements

The Michigan DNR announced the White Lake boating access site, located off of Duck Lake Road in Oakland County, temporarily will close from mid-May to mid-August for site improvements.

The DNR advises White Lake residents to plan ahead and launch their boats prior to the mid-May construction closure. From mid-March until the project begins, the DNR will supply a skid pier to assist residents with launching their boats.

The improvement project will include 17 additional parking spaces, a wider launch ramp, additional landscaping and improved vehicle circulation. The new site design will allow vehicles to both enter and exit off Duck Lake Road, reducing vehicle traffic for neighboring property owners.

This project is funded through the Michigan State Waterways Fund. The restricted fund, which is derived from boat registration fees and the Michigan marine fuel tax, helps fund the construction, operation and maintenance of public recreational boating facilities.

For more information about the White Lake boating access site project, contact Bill Althoff at Highland Recreation Area at [althoffw@michigan.gov](mailto:althoffw@michigan.gov) or 248-889-3750.

Boaters help fund more than 1,300 public boating access sites and 82 harbors in Michigan. All watercraft, unless exempt, must be registered with the Michigan Secretary of the State. Register all watercraft online, by mail or in person at the [Secretary of State](http://www.michigan.gov/boating). Boat registrations expire March 31 in the third year of issuance. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/boating](http://www.michigan.gov/boating). ✧

## Free Fishing Days

Illinois Free Fishing Days for 2017 are **June 16-19**, during the Father’s Day weekend. ✧

## Expanded Lake Michigan lake trout harvest opportunities now open

MADISON, Wis. – Expanded lake trout harvest opportunities took effect **April 15** in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan.

The rule takes into account current lake trout populations including the reestablishment of natural reproduction in some refuge areas and is not expected to affect long-term restoration efforts, said Brad Eggold, Great Lakes district fisheries supervisor for the Wisconsin DNR. The new five fish daily bag limit was developed following an extensive angler engagement process that included seven public meetings with total attendance of 500.

Other provisions of the new rule:

- Count the five fish daily lake trout limit as part of the overall five trout and salmon combined daily bag limit.
- Maintain closure of refuges, which are supporting some natural reproduction.
- Offer a continuous open season in 2017.
- Maintain the commitment to lake-wide lake trout restoration and promotion of a diverse salmon and trout fishery through

continued assessment of lake trout restoration goals and management actions.

During 2016, the Lake Michigan lake trout harvest totaled 19,137 fish, down 46 percent from 35,715 in 2015. The lake trout sport harvest has remained at or below levels considered necessary for recovery of the species since 1998.

While pursuit of lake trout may not be the primary motivator for anglers who head out with their own equipment or hire charters on Lake Michigan, the opportunity to catch more lake trout including the possibility of a trophy fish is likely to generate additional interest in the prized fishery. Each year, Wisconsin's Great Lakes fishing opportunities draw some 178,000 anglers (as measured by the sale of the Great Lakes Salmon and Trout stamp) who contribute \$114.3 million to the economy, according to the American Sportfishing Association.

DNR will hold a combined public hearing on the emergency rule and gather additional information for a permanent rule at a public hearing set for **June 22** 6 - 8 p.m. in the

ballroom at UW-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences, 600 E. Greenfield Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53204. Written comments can be sent to [DNRLAKEMICHIGANPLAN@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRLAKEMICHIGANPLAN@wisconsin.gov) or mailed to: Brad Eggold, Department of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Water Institute, 600 E. Greenfield Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53204. The deadline for comments is **July 7, 2017**.

The initial emergency rule will run 150 days with two expected 60 day extensions for a total of 270 days. For 2017, the new bag limit will therefore be in effect until December 31, 2017. The department intends to seek a permanent rule that would take effect as soon as possible upon expiration of the emergency rule extensions.

To view a recent presentation on Lake Michigan lake trout that informed development of the rule, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "[Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum](#)." For more information including recent presentations on broader Lake Michigan management topics, search "[Lake Michigan salmon and trout meetings](#)." ✧

## ODNR supports Aquatic Stewardship and Fishing Participation

COLUMBUS, OH – A total of \$190,000 was recently awarded to 43 different organizations, conservation clubs and communities from the Ohio DNR to increase aquatic stewardship and sport fishing participation in local communities. Provided by the ODNR Division of Wildlife, these assistance funds represent a continuing effort to promote aquatic stewardship and fishing participation in Ohio's communities, especially among young people.

Each year, the ODNR offers aquatic education grants to schools, parks and recreation departments, conservation groups, local governments and other nonprofit organizations wanting to sponsor an aquatic or angler education program. Partnering with groups and other agencies exponentially increases the

division's ability to support these programs and reinvest in local communities. Funding for these grants is derived from the federal Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) program. No state tax dollars are used for this activity. This is a user-pay, user-benefit program.

The SFR program is a partnership between federal and state government, industry, anglers and boaters. When anglers purchase rods, reels, fishing tackle, fish finders and motor boat fuel, they pay an excise tax. The federal government collects these taxes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers and disburses these funds to state fish and wildlife agencies. These funds are used to acquire habitat, produce and stock fish, conduct research and surveys, provide aquatic education to

youth, and secure and develop boat accesses.

All Aquatic Education Grant programs must include an opportunity for participants to engage in an aquatic education learning session and provide a hands-on fishing opportunity. Examples include youth fishing camps, family fishing programs and fishing clinics.

Grant applications are accepted for programs ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Multiple agencies may work cooperatively to conduct a program or event, but only one grant application may be submitted per program. A final report form must be submitted to the ODNR Division of Wildlife upon completion of the program.

Guidelines and application form can be found by emailing [aquatic.education@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:aquatic.education@dnr.state.oh.us). ✧

## MN state parks and trails need boost from users, taxpayers

The Minnesota DNR is asking for modest fee and general fund increases for Minnesota's state parks and trails system during the 2017 legislative session, and I want you to know why it's important to make an investment in these special places.

They are core pillars of the state's \$13.6 billion tourism industry, playing host to some 10.3 million park visitors and 1.8 million summer trail users. Local spending in Greater Minnesota communities from park visitors is approximately \$25.50 per person, per day, totaling \$246 million each year.

Maintaining state parks and trails is a huge job for the DNR, with 75 state parks and recreation areas; 60 state multi-purpose and water trails; thousands of miles of user-supported snowmobile and off-highway vehicle trails; and more than 2,000 boat ramps and fishing piers. Managing these assets is like running 75 small cities and thousands of miles of narrow roadways.

Here is our proposal:

- A year's worth of family fun in our state parks would increase by about the cost of a bag of cooler ice (\$5/annually; \$1/daily).
- Registration fee increases for ATVs (\$5/year), snowmobiles (\$10/year), and boats (\$1-15/year depending on watercraft size) would increase by less than the cost of a few gallons of gas.
- The cross-country ski pass would increase less than the cost of a block of ski wax (\$5/annually; \$2/daily).

Even with these increases, Minnesota's state parks and trails will continue to be a great value. Compared to the price of taking a family of four to a movie (\$35 or more, not including popcorn) or an amusement park (\$100 plus), our state parks and trails will remain an accessible option for family fun all across the state.

For more information, visit [mndnr.gov/supportoutdoors](http://mndnr.gov/supportoutdoors). ✧

## DEC's Angler Achievement Awards Program recognizes top catches in 2016

As reflected by the entries in the State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC's) Angler Achievement Awards Program, 2016 was another exceptional year for anglers fishing the freshwaters of New York State, DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos announced. In 2016, more than 130 entries were submitted into the program. Largemouth bass and smallmouth bass, New York's most popular sportfish species, made up more than half of the entries in the Catch and Release category.

The top five counties that were represented in 2016 were Suffolk, Warren, Onondaga, Essex and Chautauqua Counties. Two state records were either established or tied in 2016. A new state record freshwater drum was caught by Amelia Whalen from Lake Champlain on June 4, 2016. Her record-breaking fish weighed 29 lbs. 14 oz. In a rare occurrence, Patrick Hildenbrand captured a smallmouth bass that tied the state record established twenty one years ago in Lake Erie. The 8 lb. 4 oz. pot-bellied fish was caught from the St. Lawrence River on August 28, 2016. Other notable catches include an impressive 30 lb. 1 oz. tiger muskellunge caught from Lake Como (Cayuga County), a 35½ inch steelhead caught from the Salmon River (Oswego County), and a 38¼ inch lake trout caught and released from Lake Erie (Chautauqua County).

[Further information about the Angler Achievement Awards Program](#), including a downloadable application form and photo slideshow of fish entered can be found at DEC's website. Full program details and an entry form can also be found in DEC's current Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide. For additional information on the Angler Achievement Awards Program contact (518) 402-8891 or email [fwfish@dec.ny.gov](mailto:fwfish@dec.ny.gov). ✧

## U.S. Senate introduces National Concealed Carry Reciprocity Bill

The bill, [Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act \(S. 446\)](#), introduced by U.S. Senator John Cornyn, is a companion to the House of Representatives bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.). The proposed legislation, with 30 co-sponsors, would compel states to recognize concealed carry permits issued from other states that have concealed carry laws within their own borders—much in the same way a driver's license is recognized. The bill aims to eliminate the confusion of varying state-by-state laws and provide protection for Second Amendment rights for permit holders.

"This bill strengthens both the constitutional right of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves and the power of states to implement laws best-suited for the folks who live there," Sen. Cornyn said.

In addition to interstate recognition of concealed carry permits, the legislation protects states' rights concerning concealed carry. It respects the authority of a state to establish specific types of locations in which firearms may not be carried. Additionally, it respects a state's resident permitting requirements and maintains prohibitions against restricted individuals from carrying a firearm.

"This legislation provides an answer to the confusing patchwork of concealed carry permits, particularly with regard to states where laws make unwitting criminals out of legal permit holders for a simple mistake of a wrong traffic turn," said Lawrence Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel. "It safeguards a state's right to determine their own laws while protecting the Second Amendment rights of all Americans."

Cornyn introduced similar legislation in 2015 with 35 bipartisan co-sponsors and in 2014 as an amendment that garnered 57 votes. Hudson's House legislation, [H.R. 38](#) currently has 159 co-sponsors ✧

## DNR sees increase in Master Angler program

The Michigan DNR has announced the 2016 results from its Master Angler program. This program, in place since 1973, recognizes large fish caught by recreational anglers.

This past year, 1,807 anglers representing 24 states and the countries of Canada and Austria submitted catches that were recognized as Master Angler fish. That's an increase from the 1,542 fish recognized in 2015 and nearly double the 987 fish recognized in 2014. Of the entries accepted, 1,078 were in the catch-and-keep category while 729 were in the catch-and-release category. A total of 241 anglers received certificates for fish placing in the top five for both categories. ✧

## Apply for Firearm/Muzzleloader Deer Permits

Resident Illinois deer hunters can apply through **April 30** for the first lottery drawings for 2017 Illinois Firearm and Muzzleloader-only Deer Season permits. Hunters can apply online through the IDNR website at [www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov). The first lottery drawings for firearm and muzzleloader-only deer permits are for Illinois residents only. Resident hunters can apply in both the firearm and muzzleloader-only lotteries. The 2017 Illinois firearm deer seasons are November 17-19 (first season) and November 30-December 3 (second season). The 2017 muzzleloader-only permits may be used December 8-10 (and in the second firearm season, November 30-December 3). ✧

## Fishing Information Booklet

The 2017 Illinois Fishing Information guide is available at: [www.ifishillinois.org/regulations/2017\\_Fishing\\_Guide%20.pdf](http://www.ifishillinois.org/regulations/2017_Fishing_Guide%20.pdf). Regulations in the guide are effective through March 31, 2018. ✧

## Women in Nature Outdoor Skills Workshop

The Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs is offering a Women in Nature (WIN) Outdoor Skills Workshop on **April 29**, 2017 at the Camillus Sportsmen's Club, 5801 Devoe Rd., Camillus, NY 13031. It is open to women and girls age 12 and up. The event is free but registration is required. For info: [www.federationofsportsmen.com/wp/?page\\_id=32](http://www.federationofsportsmen.com/wp/?page_id=32). For questions or comments, contact: Kelly Stang, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, 518-402-8862, [Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Kelly.stang@dec.ny.gov). ✧

## Hunter and Boating Safety Education Courses

Check the schedule and register now for Hunter Safety Education and Boating Safety Education courses from the IDNR. Check the IDNR website for class dates and locations. The website link for all IDNR Safety Education course info: [www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety) ✧

## Accidental gun deaths hit record low, even amid recent boom in firearms sales

Gun sales are up, and accidental gun injuries are down, according to a report released last month by the National Safety Council. The NSC's "Injury Facts -2017 Edition" shows a 17% decrease in accidents involving firearms from 2014 to 2015, a period when gun sales soared. There were 489 unintentional firearms-related fatalities during that time period, the lowest total since record-keeping began in 1903, accounting for less than 1 percent of accident deaths. This decrease, which was the largest percentage decline of any category cited in the NSC's report, came in a year that saw record-high firearm sales. ✧

## New Upper Red Lake walleye regulations

Anglers fishing Upper Red Lake in northwestern Minnesota this spring will be able to keep four walleye of which only one may be longer than 17 inches.

These new regulations, effective on the walleye fishing opener Saturday, **May 13**, allow one more fish in the daily bag than the regulations that were in place in the winter.

"Harvest under the three fish bag limit resulted in approximately 109,000 pounds for the winter season," said Gary Barnard, area fisheries supervisor in Bemidji for the DNR. "There is still room within the target harvest range to allow an additional fish this spring."

Red Lake's walleye harvest is managed under a joint harvest plan, revised in 2015 by the Red Lakes Fisheries Technical Committee.

More information on Red Lake fishing regulations is available at [mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing](http://mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing). ✧

## Visiting IL State Parks

Visitors to Illinois state parks, fish and wildlife areas, and other IDNR-managed sites with spring turkey hunting programs in April and May are reminded that hunting areas are closed to activities other than spring wild turkey hunting from one-half hour before sunrise until 1 p.m. daily during the spring turkey season. The hunting area safety restrictions apply to all visitors, including mushroom collectors. For turkey season dates, check the IDNR website: [www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/TurkeyHunting.aspx](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/TurkeyHunting.aspx) ✧

☞ THINK ABOUT IT ☞

*Man does not live by bread alone. He has to handle some hot potatoes, know his onions, and be worth his salt. Little wonder man is in a stew.*

Gil Stern in *The Wall Street Journal*

## DNR to move muskie in effort to build inland broodstock

The Michigan DNR continues to make advancements in the state's Great Lakes muskellunge program, and activities this spring will add to those efforts.

Since 2011, the DNR's Fisheries Division has collected spawning Great Lakes strain muskellunge in the Detroit River. The collected eggs are reared at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan and stocked throughout the state in fall. Although the Detroit River is a natural source of this native strain, it presents several challenges.

Water temperatures on the Detroit River typically do not reach optimal levels for spawning until late May or early June, much later than smaller inland waterbodies. This results in a short rearing period and fish not reaching maximum size for stocking each fall. Additionally, the Detroit River's expansiveness makes it extremely difficult to efficiently find spawning fish.

To offset these issues, DNR fisheries staff has been working to establish inland broodstock lakes. Since 2011, Thornapple Lake in Barry County has been stocked with Great Lakes strain muskellunge to establish a population large enough to provide a spawning population. Starting in 2017, Lake Hudson, previously the long-standing broodsource for northern strain muskellunge, was selected as the department's second broodstock lake. When the populations are large enough, spawning fish will be netted

from these inland lakes rather than the Detroit River.

Because Lake Hudson and Thornapple Lake previously were both maintained as northern strain muskellunge broodstock lakes, the density of this species is higher than typical populations across Michigan. In order to reduce the numbers of competing predators in these waterbodies and to provide the best opportunity for the Great Lakes strain to succeed, DNR Fisheries Division will conduct trap and transfers this spring targeting the northern strain muskellunge.

Fish captured through these activities will be relocated to waters selected with the following criteria: absent of viable outlets to prevent escapement, suitable forage for adult muskellunge, not currently stocked with muskellunge (plus the two previous criteria) or have pre-existing northern strain muskellunge populations. Northern muskellunge from both Thornapple Lake and Lake Hudson have undergone disease testing to ensure fish diseases will not be transferred to any of the recipient waters.

Up to 100 northern strain muskellunge will be captured in Thornapple Lake and transferred to Lower Crooked Lake (Barry County), which has a small muskellunge population remaining from stocking in the early 2000s. Up to 20 additional fish may be stocked into Long Lake (St. Joseph County) to supplement an existing muskellunge

fishery. In addition, although northern pike will not be targeted during this effort, those captured will be transferred to areas downstream of Thornapple River dams located in Irving and Middleville. Northern pike can compete with muskellunge for food, and adult northern pike are potential predators of newly stocked muskellunge.

Up to 150 northern strain muskellunge will be captured from Lake Hudson and transferred to Orchard Lake (Oakland County). Orchard Lake is 850 acres located in a densely populated area. Although this will be a one-time stocking event, it should generate angler interest and excitement in an area currently lacking muskellunge fishing opportunities.

Following the transfer, muskellunge fishing opportunities on both Thornapple Lake and Lake Hudson should continue to be excellent due to their initial high densities. As the Great Lakes strain fish grow, they will provide even more exciting chances to hook a muskellunge.

In the future, fish reared as part of the DNR's Great Lakes strain muskellunge program will be stocked in Thornapple Lake and Lake Hudson as fall fingerlings or spring yearlings. Muskellunge generally are stocked in the fall, but Michigan and other states are experimenting with stocking of spring yearlings in an effort to increase survival of the Great Lakes strain fish. ✧

## U.S. Army's new service pistol – the Sig Sauer P320 – replacing the Beretta Service pistol

### Carry Optics Division Ready: The SIG Sauer P320RX

The SIG Sauer P320RX handgun and ROMEO1 reflex sight combo offers a wide window with a generous view of the field, a major aid when rapidly transitioning between multiple targets.

Mounting a compact reflex sight directly to the slide of a semi-auto handgun has become increasingly popular in recent years. Popular enough, that the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA) has [created a competitive division for Carry Optics](#) in both USPSA and [Steel Challenge matches](#).

During the early years the mounting process involved having a gunsmith machine a slide to accept the sight. Recently, a number of gun makers have begun offering guns machined from the factory to allow the mounting of several popular brands of reflex sights – including S & W, Glock, Walther and Sig Sauer. In 2016 SIG upped the ante with the introduction of their new P320RX—a factory pistol shipped with [a reflex sight already mounted](#), and ready for the range.

#### The gun

The pistol is the full-sized version of [SIG's P320](#), chambered for 9mm and wearing a SIG ROMEO1 reflex sight. In addition to the reflex sight the P320RX features suppressor-height SIG tritium night sights that are drift adjustable for windage and visible through the reflex sight window.



*With the ROMEO1 removed the P320 is legal in a number of USPSA/IDPA divisions, and the suppressor-height sights make a great sight picture!*

The gun has a 4.69-inch barrel, an overall length of 8.05-inches, and with the ROMEO1 installed the weight with an empty 17-round magazine is about 29 ounces. The barrel uses the proven 1:10 twist rate with 6-groove rifling. Like the rest of the P320 family it incorporates a stainless steel inner frame assembly, a stainless steel slide with a Nitron finish, and a polymer grip frame that includes a Picatinny rail on the dust cover. The polymer grip module features stippling on side panels, front and backstraps. Left side controls consist of a slide release, take down lever and a magazine release that is reversible to the right side.

The gun does not have a magazine safety, which will please most competitors. For cleaning, simply remove the magazine, check the chamber and lock the slide back. Turn the take down lever down, pull slightly back on the slide to drop the slide stop, and the upper unit slides off the front. Nothing fancy is required.

The trigger is a partially pre-tensioned striker fired system. SIG specifications call for a trigger pull weight between 5.5 and 6.5 pounds. My trigger pull gauge showed the test gun was right at 6 pounds, with a very short take up and minimal creep.



*Removing and re-installing the ROMEO1 is quick and simple, and the appropriate hex wrench is provided.*

The P320 series was originally designed as a service duty pistol. Those guns always find their way

onto Action Pistol ranges—this is the same gun that SIG Team Captain Max Michel used (in the iron sight version) to win the Production Division at the 2016 Steel Challenge Nationals—setting a new World Record on the “Smoke & Hope” stage in the process. With a 6.86 second overall score, his average time to hit the five targets on each of the four scored runs was 1.715 seconds—from a holstered draw! The P320 can run.

#### The ROMEO1 sight

The ROMEO1 is a 1x30mm, 1x magnification, compact red dot reflex sight. It operates on a single, readily-available, CR1632 battery. The battery installs from the top of the sight and does not require removing the sight from the gun to replace the battery. Elevation and windage adjustments are made with calibrated adjustment dials (elevation on top and windage on the right side). The graduated, marked, adjustments are in 1 MOA increments. The LED dot measures 3 MOA and offers four daylight brightness levels and one night NV setting.

Whoever designed this sight has obviously spent a lot of time on action shooting ranges because the operating procedures are simple, direct, and positive.



*The ROMEO1 sight sits firmly in factory machined cuts and is secured by sturdy 1/8-inch hex screws. The suppressor-height sights clearly visible through the window.*

The only ‘operating controls’ on the sight are a pair of left side buttons—

one green arrow pointing up, and another pointing down. To turn the sight ON, momentarily depress either button. Press the DOWN arrow to reduce dot brightness and the UP arrow to increase it. To turn the sight OFF, depress and hold either button for two seconds. When the sight is turned back on it will automatically return to the last power setting selected. For those shooters who turn their dot ON in the Make Ready phase and OFF in the Unload and Show Clear phase, it doesn't get any easier. There is also an included plastic lens cover that snaps on and off to protect the lenses from the inevitable dust and airborne debris common on any range.

Another nice feature is the automatic 'Power Saving' mode. If there is no movement of the gun for a two-minute period the sight will automatically turn off to save battery power. The first movement of the gun turns it back on to the previously selected power setting. I actually timed this by laying the gun on a table with a stop watch and the two-minute turn off was dead on. Picking up the gun immediately turned the sight back on. This is of little advantage on the range, or the drive home, because normal body and vehicle movements will keep the sight on. But if you forget to turn off the sight and then put the gun up until the next match you won't have a dead battery—a handy feature for the forgetful!



*The included lens kit provides a sight adjusting screwdriver with a retractable rear flat point for the battery cover, a lens cloth, hex wrench and a snap on cover.*

The dot is 3 MOA. Many action shooters (this one included) prefer a larger dot size. But this dot is very bright! It actually looks bigger than the specifications indicate and I had to turn it down to the number 2 power setting for the accuracy tests to avoid 'dot bloom'. During a Steel Challenge match I did set it to full power and it performed well on 10 12-inch plates at 20 yards, and was more than bright enough for closer plates. The 'sight window' on the ROMEO1 is larger than those on the three reflex sights I have on my competition guns, and I liked that for the rapid transitions required in Steel Challenge.

Something else that impressed me was that the mounting screws that secure the ROMEO1 to the slide are sturdy 1/8-inch hex heads—instead of the skinny little 1/16-inch hex screws used by some other makers. I have stripped a few of those 1/16-inch screw heads and needed a machine shop (and some money) to get that screw out. That's not likely here, making shifting between the reflex sight and iron sights simple and trouble free.



*Removing and re-installing the ROMEO1 is quick and simple, and the appropriate hex wrench is provided.*

Start by zeroing the ROMEO1 from a sandbag rest at 25 yards. The adjustments were quick and positive, and the included small screwdriver made the process easy. The smoothly-radiused trigger was very comfortable, and the stippled grip module provided a positive hold. I had a variety of factory loads that included 115-, 124-, and 147-grain projectiles. I also included my Steel Challenge "mouse puff" (116.5 PF) handload that sends a 124-grain

coated Bayou bullet out the muzzle at about 940 fps. Some guns won't handle that load unless a lighter recoil spring is installed, but the SIG ran them easily.

Accuracy tests were next, and they were a very pleasant surprise! I consider "decent" semi-auto service pistol accuracy to be in the 2.5- to 3-inch range. The SIG exceeded those expectations by a noticeable margin.

Once that was done I ran the various loads through multiple target drills, and there was not a single malfunction in the 300-plus rounds, including the Bayou handload. That was followed by a 150 round Steel Challenge match, and no malfunctions there.

The SIG P320RX ships in a hard plastic box with two 17-round magazines, instruction manuals for both the gun and sight, a lens kit that includes the snap-on cover, a screwdriver that handles the sight adjustment and the battery compartment, a lens cleaning cloth, and a 1/8-inch hex wrench to remove and reinstall the sight; which can quickly make it a legal gun for USPSA Production or Limited, and IDPA in both SSP and ESP divisions. Or, a 17-round night sight-equipped home defense arm. That's a lot of versatility for one gun!

[For more info on the U.S. Army's selecting the Sig Sauer P320 to replace the Beretta Service Pistol, U.S. Army selection](#) ✦

## **Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

### **[Scientists say growth rate find may help control sea lamprey](#)**

Federal scientists have made a potentially important discovery about the invasive sea lamprey, a longtime enemy of Great Lakes fish. Experiments show the rate at which lampreys grow from larvae to adults may help determine whether they'll be male or female.

### **[Ballast water can harbor invasive viruses, study says](#)**

According to a recent study published by the American Chemical Society, ballast water entering the Great Lakes may contain viruses dangerous to wildlife and humans.

### **[DNR to begin collecting steelhead eggs in Little Manistee River](#)**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will soon be collecting steelhead eggs at the Little Manistee River weir in Stronach.

### **[Regulators boost yellow perch catch limit by 13 percent](#)**

Lake Erie's perch fishermen are getting ready to hit the deck and cast their nets wide after industry regulators handed down a hefty increase to this year's catch quota

### **[Gigantic waves on Great Lakes were as tall as two-story house](#)**

The Great Lakes are often called inland seas. Their waves can be as big as ocean waves in some cases. Here's a look at the largest waves ever recorded on each of the Great Lakes.

### **[Au Sable River anglers sue Grayling fish hatchery](#)**

The battle between a group of anglers and a fish hatchery on the East Branch of the Au Sable River in Michigan has moved to circuit court.

### **[Birding groups sue Ohio Air National Guard to block wind-turbine at Camp Perry](#)**

State and national birding groups sued the Ohio Air National Guard on Monday, asking a federal court to block construction of a large wind turbine at Camp Perry near Lake Erie.

### **[Marine sanctuary plan gains support in Algoma](#)**

The idea of including Door County as part of a proposed Wisconsin-Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary gained support Monday night at a hearing in Algoma.

### **[Setting the story straight on Great Lakes water levels](#)**

Just 5 percent of the Great Lakes were covered with ice as of March 1. The average coverage at this time for the last 40 years has been 43 percent, according to the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

### **[Trump's budget eliminates Sea Grant](#)**

The Trump administration appears ready to gut parts of the federal budget aimed at protecting waterways, conducting research and educating the public on environmental issues — including entirely eliminating funding for the Sea Grant program across the U.S.

### **[NYS senator looking into 'unfair' Canadian border rules for American anglers](#)**

A New York State senator is looking into a growing list of complaints lodged by New York anglers and charter boat captains about how they're being treated by Canadian officials on waterways shared by both countries.

End