

# Inland Seas Angler GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

A Publication of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council http://www.great-lakes.org

November 2018 Vol. 29, No. 11

# State to reduce stocking of Chinook salmon in Lake Ontario Status of Lake Ontario Alewife and 2019 NYSDEC Stocking Plans

### **Background:**

- Lake Ontario supports a world class fishery for trout and salmon and in years of good growth produces the largest Chinook salmon in the Great Lakes, with some individuals exceeding 40 pounds.
- The primary prey fish in Lake Ontario is the alewife, a type of herring native to the Atlantic Ocean that invaded the Great Lakes over 100 years ago.
- Lake Ontario Chinook salmon feed almost exclusively on alewife, requiring large numbers of alewife to support a voracious appetite that allows a salmon to grow to over 30 pounds in four years.

### In this issue...

place to fish 5   ODNR hosts hunt for disabled hunters 5   DEC Stocks Lake Sturgeon Upstate 5   Pond owners urged to dispose of 6   ornamental aquatic plants properly 6   PFBC appoints new Executive Director 7   Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence 7   'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken 7   2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers 8   Remaing firearm deer permits 8   Spring Turkey applications 8   Evaluating native fish to proposed 8   separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois 8   River Waterway 9   Boat launch construction under way 11	Predicting spread of AIS by lake currents 2 Ohio's trout stockings
ODNR hosts hunt for disabled hunters5   DEC Stocks Lake Sturgeon Upstate5   Pond owners urged to dispose of   ornamental aquatic plants properly6   Michigan: More than 21M fish stocked6   PFBC appoints new Executive Director7   Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence7   Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app7   'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken7   2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers8   Remaing firearm deer permits8   Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits8   Spring Turkey applications8   Evaluating native fish to proposed   separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois   River Waterway	place to fish5
DEC Stocks Lake Sturgeon Upstate5 Pond owners urged to dispose of ornamental aquatic plants properly6 Michigan: More than 21M fish stocked6 PFBC appoints new Executive Director7 Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence7 Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app7 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken7 2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers8 Remaing firearm deer permits8 Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits8 Spring Turkey applications8 Evaluating native fish to proposed separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois River Waterway9 Boat launch construction under way11 Mandatory life jacket requirement	ODNR hosts hunt for disabled hunters5
Pond owners urged to dispose of ornamental aquatic plants properly	DEC Stocks Lake Sturgeon Upstate 5
ornamental aquatic plants properly	Pond owners urged to dispose of
Michigan: More than 21M fish stocked6 PFBC appoints new Executive Director7 Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence7 Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app7 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken7 2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers8 Remaing firearm deer permits8 Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits8 Spring Turkey applications8 Evaluating native fish to proposed separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois River Waterway9 Boat launch construction under way11 Mandatory life jacket requirement	ornamental aquatic plants properly 6
PFBC appoints new Executive Director 7 Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence 7 Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app 7 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken 7 2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers 8 Remaing firearm deer permits 8 Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits 8 Spring Turkey applications	Michigan: More than 21M fish stocked 6
Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence 7 Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app 7 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken 7 2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers 8 Remaing firearm deer permits	PERC appoints now Executive Director 7
Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app	Chautaugua Laka wallowa raawraanaa 7
Hunt Wild Wisconsin Mobile app	Chaulauqua Lake walleye resurgence 7
Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken	Hunt wild wisconsin mobile app
2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers 8   Remaing firearm deer permits	Do Not Eat advisory for deer taken 7
Remaing firearm deer permits	2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers 8
Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits 8 Spring Turkey applications	Remaing firearm deer permits8
Spring Turkey applications	Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits 8
Evaluating native fish to proposed separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois River Waterway	Spring Turkey applications8
separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois River Waterway	Evaluating native fish to proposed
River Waterway	separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois
Boat launch construction under way 11 Mandatory life jacket requirement 11	River Waterway9
Mandatory life jacket requirement11	Boat launch construction under way 11
	Mandatory life jacket requirement
Wisconsin ice fishing class	Wisconsin ice fishing class11

- In 2016, Lake Ontario fisheries management agencies were concerned about declining numbers of adult alewife in future years due to consecutive, poor alewife reproduction in 2013 and 2014. These poor year classes will continue to affect the overall stability of Lake Ontario's alewife population for several more years.
- In 2016, the Lake Ontario Committee (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation [DEC] and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Forestry and [OMNRF]) announced that stocking levels for Chinook salmon and lake trout would be adjusted down 20% in 2017 to reduce predator demand on adult alewife in order to protect the valuable fishery.

Ohio hunters and anglers now have

the option to purchase multiyear

hunting/fishing licenses, according to

3-year, 5-year, 10-year and lifetime

and multiyear licenses online at

wildohio.gov or at participating

agents. An Ohio driver's license or

state identification must be associated

of the ODNR five district offices or

headquarters in Columbus. At this

time, lifetime licenses cannot be

hunting or fishing licenses.

with the customer's account.

obtained through an agent.

on ODNR's website:

Residents of Ohio can now buy

Hunters can obtain single-year

Those looking to score a lifetime license should <u>apply online</u> or at any

Here's more information found

the Ohio DNR.

# • Chinook salmon and lake trout stocking targets remained at the 20% reduced level for 2018.

### The 2018 Alewife Bottom Trawl Survey

- The alewife population is monitored with bottom trawls in early spring, largely before alewife leave their over-wintering habitat (near bottom in deep water).
- Alewife were not distributed evenly around the lake in spring 2018, with more alewife in Ontario than in NY waters (Figures 1 & 2; larger circles=larger catches).
- Growth and condition of alewife declined across all age classes, meaning less energy transferred to predators for every alewife eaten.

### Reduce stocking of Chinook

Continued on page 10

Multiyear Hunting/Fishing Licenses offered in Ohio

Lifetime License Pricing Structure:

- Youth 3-year hunting \$28.60
- Youth 5-year hunting \$47.58
- Youth 10-year hunting \$95.16 Hunting or Fishing
- Youth lifetime \$430.56
- Adult 3-year \$54.08
- Adult 5-year \$90.22
- Adult 10-year \$180.44
- Adult lifetime \$468
- Senior 3-year \$28.60
- Senior 5-year \$47.58
- Senior lifetime \$84.24

"Youth multiyear and lifetime licenses are available to any Ohio resident 17 years old and younger at the time of purchase. Senior multiyear and lifetime licenses are available for Ohio residents age 66 and older born on or after January 1, 1938.  $\diamondsuit$ 

# Predicting spread of aquatic invasive species by lake currents

Knowledge of aquatic invasive species (AIS) dispersal is important to inform surveillance and management efforts to slow the spread of established invaders. We studied dispersal of invasive potential Eurasian ruffe (Gymnocephalus and golden cernua) mussel (Limnoperna fortune) larvae in Lakes Michigan and Erie using a threedimensional particle transport model. Ruffe is currently in Lake Superior and northern Lake Michigan, while Limnoperna has not yet invaded the Great Lakes. We predicted larval transport during several spawning seasons (individual years) from several major tributaries and ports that are most prone to invasion because of their significant recreational and commercial usage.

Depending on release location, larvae traveled distances ranging from < 1 km to tens of kilometers (in some cases over 100-200 km, depending on species) during 2-3 weeks of drift Dispersal distances time. from nearshore locations (i.e. rivers and ports) were smaller than from offshore deballasting locations near ports. Limnoperna dispersal distances were larger than ruffe due to stronger seasonal currents and longer drift period. Settlement areas resulting from offshore releases were larger than for nearshore releases and larger for Limnoperna than for ruffe. Model favorably results compared to spread of ruffe observed and Dreissena spp. mussels in Lake Michigan. Our modeling effort suggests that larval advection by lake currents is an important AIS dispersal mechanism in the Great Lakes. It also emphasizes the importance of effective surveillance programs that maximize early detection of new introductions before lake current dispersal obviates containment and prevention of spread and impacts.  $\diamond$ 

# Ohio's trout stockings offer more fishing opportunities

Catchable rainbow and yearling brown trout will be released again this year in the Malabar Farm region as part of a pilot project to evaluate the suitability of both species for future stockings in the area, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

The Inn Pond across from the Malabar Farm Restaurant will receive rainbow trout, and Switzer Creek on Malabar Farm State Park property will receive brown trout. All fish were scheduled to be released before Veterans Day weekend this year.

Anglers who fish the Mohican River will also have additional opportunities to catch 11-inch to 14inch rainbow trout beginning later this month. Rainbow trout will be released to provide a fall through spring fishing opportunity in the lower portion of Clear Fork of the Mohican River, below Pleasant Hill Dam through Mohican State Park in Ashland County. Brown trout will not be released in this location.

A recent ODNR Division of Wildlife study of Ohio's trout streams that indicated summer water temperatures are too warm to sustain brown trout populations in this area. One rainbow trout release took place in October and another release will take place in mid-November. There is a two-fish daily bag limit and no minimum size limit in this location. Anglers should be aware that these regulations are different than the regulations for brown trout in the upper portion of Clear Fork in Richland County and the Mad River, where fisheries are still supported by annual stocking of yearling brown trout, a 12-inch minimum size limit and a daily bag limit of two fish.

Rainbow trout are also stocked every spring in public lakes and ponds across Ohio as long as areas are ice-free and accessible to anglers.

For more information: Kevin Kayle, 614-265-6347, kevin.kayle@dnr.state.oh.us. ♦



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 Chad Lapa

© Copyright 2018 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 glsfc444@gmail.com.

# President Trump Signs Water Resources Bill into Law Boaters stand to gain with president's signing

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Trump, on October 23, signed into law America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (S. 3021), also known as WRDA, which authorizes water resource projects and policies nationwide to be administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018" (S. 3021) takes important steps to advance infrastructure solutions—like restoring wetlands and dunes to reduce flood and storm damage—that are more cost-effective for Americans.

The 2018 WRDA bill contains funding authorizations and policy changes for a wide range of Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) civil works water projects including funding of environmental-restoration programs and dredging of smaller harbors. It is a big win for Everglades restoration, as well as boaters.

The bipartisan measure passed the Senate earlier this month with a nearly unanimous vote - 99-1. The Act will, among other provisions, authorize federal funding for water infrastructure projects, expand the country's water storage capabilities, upgrade wastewater, drinking and irrigation systems, well as as authorize or reauthorize water infrastructure projects and programs. The House passed the bill unanimously last month.

The act will also deauthorize \$4 billion in water resources development projects that Congress deems are no longer viable for construction due to a lack of local support, a lack of resources or when they deem that the project is no longer relevant or feasible.

Infrastructure has long been a priority for the President, and the White House unveiled its long awaited infrastructure plan in February.

The 53-page <u>document</u> lays out Trump's vision: To <u>turn</u> \$200 billion in federal money into \$1.5 trillion for fixing America's infrastructure by leveraging local and state tax dollars and private investment.

The White House said the plan will create \$1.5 trillion for repairing and upgrading America's infrastructure. Only \$200 billion of that, however, would come from direct federal spending. The rest is supposed to come from state and local governments, which are expected to match any federal allocation by at least a 4-to-1 ratio. States have gradually assumed more of the responsibility for funding infrastructure in recent years, and the White House says it wants to accelerate that trend.  $\diamond$ 

# Lake Superior Research Institute documents non-native zooplankton in western Lake Superior

The U. of Wisconsin-Superior's Lake Superior Research Institute (LSRI) has confirmed the presence and range expansion of non-native zooplankton in western Lake Superior.



Nitokra hibernica female (left), Thermocyclops crassus female with eggs (right)

LSRI's taxonomists made the discovery this summer in zooplankton samples collected during exploratory monitoring that was motivated by recent, local occurrences of nonnative zooplankton. Samples were collected weekly May through September of 2018 from the Superior Entry to the Duluth-Superior Harbor (46°42'26.6"N, 92°0'45.4"W),

Superior, WI.

LSRI taxonomists documented the first occurrence of the nonnative copepod Thermocyclops crassus in Lake Superior, which was previously discovered by researchers at Cornell University in samples collected from western Lake Erie in 2014-2016. Schaefer and Fanberg also confirmed the continued presence of the non-native mysid Hemimysis anomala, which was

initially discovered nearby in Lake Superior's Allouez Bay in 2017 by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

LSRI's team also documented the presence of three non-native harpacticoid copepods that have extended their range in the Great Lakes to western Lake Superior. The species include Nitokra hibernica (native to Eurasia), Heteropsyllus nunni (native to South Atlantic and Gulf Coast), and Schizopera borutzkyi (native to the Black Sea basin). While these harpacticoids are established in some of the other Great Lakes, this discovery marks the first documentation of these benthic copepods in western Lake Superior. The history of their establishment and range within Lake Superior remains unknown; LSRI is currently pursuing funding for analysis of historical samples from the Duluth-Superior Harbor area that could give insight to an earlier arrival of these benthic copepods.  $\diamond$ 

# Skipwith nominated

President Donald Trump announced Aurelia Skipwith as his nomination for the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and <u>Secretary of the</u> <u>Interior Ryan Zinke</u> applauded his decision. Skipwith currently holds the title as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in the Department of the Interior.

for USFWS Director

Aurelia previously served as Assistant Corporate Counsel at Alltech, Inc. Skipwith earned her B.S. in biology from Howard University, M.A. in molecular genetics from Purdue University, and J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law. She is the first African American and third woman to ever be nominated to the position.

"For the past year and a half while she served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary, I've come to know Aurelia Skipwith as а professional, scientist and a passionate conservationist, and I know she will be an incredible Director of the USFWS," said Secretary Zinke. "She has helped lead some of my top priorities for getting more people to enjoy our public lands, like expanding access for hunting and fishing, recognizing National Urban Refuge Day, and designating sites on the African American Civil Rights Network."

"I am deeply honored that President Trump has considered me for the role of Director of the USFWS," said Skipwith. "During the past 18 months as Deputy Assistant Secretary, I have had the distinction to work with dedicated people of the Service to ensure the implementation of this Administration's and Secretary Zinke's policies to protect our species, increase public access, and ensure science is at forefront of our decisions. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to lead the Service in achieving a conservation legacy second only to President Teddy Roosevelt."  $\diamond$ 

### Lake Mille Lacs anglers allowed 1 walleye starting Dec. 1 Walleye population increasing, but some year classes remain below normal

Winter anglers on Lake Mille Lacs will again enjoy a walleye harvest this winter. Similar to last season, anglers will be allowed to keep walleye on Mille Lacs starting Dec. 1, with no bait restrictions and a limit of one walleye 21-23", or one fish over 28".

According to the results of the 2018 population estimate, the abundance of walleye 14 inches and longer in the lake was 727,000 fish. This is up significantly from the population estimates in 2013 and 2014, both of which were around The fall gill net 250,000 fish. assessment also showed that the total pounds of mature walleye sampled increased significantly from 18.9 pounds per net last year to 27.7 pounds per net this year, mostly due to an increase in mature females. Because of this result, the DNR selected a regulation that allows anglers to keep walleye from 21-23 inches, which focuses the harvest on mature female fish.

# 2013 fish still strong, but stronger year classes needed

While hopeful for a continued increase, the DNR is taking a cautious approach to interpreting the results of the population estimates. The 2013 year class continues to dominate the population, accounting for about 40 percent of the fish caught, but year classes hatched since 2013 show mixed results.

The 2014 and 2015 year classes remain below normal. The 2016 year class, which is now 13-15 inches in length, appears close to average compared to the last 15 years. This is significant because if it survives it will only be the second average-orabove year class since 2008. The 2017 year class, now between 9-12" in length, was well represented in the gill nets, but it's too early to tell whether these fish will comprise an above average year class.  $\diamondsuit$ 

# Top three online tools to boost fall fishing

Lake Michigan Chinook and coho salmon are making their spawning runs up Lake Michigan tributaries now, and while flooding has made fishing in some areas challenging, anglers are encouraged to check out a trio of online resources to monitor fishing conditions and enjoy an exciting fall fishery.

"The fish are definitely swimming up rivers to spawn," says Laura Schmidt, DNR fisheries biologist for southern Lake Michigan. "The flooding is making it difficult to access some areas, but we are hopeful the water conditions will improve soon and that anglers all along Lake Michigan can enjoy this exciting fall shore fishery."

Great fall fishing for shore and pier anglers can be had right in the heart of Wisconsin's urban center on tributary waters. Anglers can use these resources to find good shore fishing spots and understand fishing conditions and what baits and presentations are working.

1. DNR's Lake Michigan Outdoor Fishing Report is a weekly compilation of the reports that nine DNR creel clerks compile describing what they're hearing from anglers about what species are biting, where, and on what baits.

2. DNR's 50 places within 60 minutes of Milwaukee is an interactive online guide and a downloadable, printable pocket guide to steer anglers to many sites in and around Milwaukee. Find fishing locations, directions, distance and driving time from downtown Milwaukee and the dominant fish species. Get the link to the interactive site and to the PDF now: go to dnr.wi.gov and search "Milwaukee fall fishing."

3. DNR's Lake Michigan Tributary Access webpage provides PDF maps showing public access spots to tributaries all along the shoreline. Download and print out the maps you want. Get the maps on <u>dnr.wi.gov</u>, search "Lake Michigan tributary." ◆

## Convenience is key when choosing a place to fish

Recreational anglers cite a lot of reasons for choosing their favorite locations to fish, but one thing it better be is close to home. <u>AnglerSurvey.com</u> recently polled anglers on what was most important to them when choosing a place to cast a line and found that nearly 60 percent of them placed proximity to home as a key factor.

In the survey where respondents could cite multiple factors that play into their decisions, past fishing success (47%), having a quiet place to fish (45%) and the availability of fish, particularly those they are seeking to catch (44%) were also very important. Other factors in order of how many respondents selected them include:

- Water quality (24%)
- Location is recommended by a friend or family member (14%)
- How much it costs to fish there (13%)
- Available parking (12%)
- Nonboat access (8%)
- The size of the body of water (7%) "Fishing is an activity that can be

enjoyed for an hour or two before or after work or school or when there is a little down time in a person's life, so convenience and the ability to run out, fish and get back home are first and foremost in many anglers' minds," says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at HunterSurvey.com,

and

ShooterSurvey.com AnglerSurvey.com.

To help continually improve, protect and advance hunting, shooting and other outdoor recreation, all sportsmen and sportswomen are encouraged to participate in the bimonthly 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. ♦

# ODNR hosts hunt for disabled hunters

The Ohio DNR hosted 20 disabled American veterans from Ohio for a guided archery hunt at Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park over the October 5-7 weekend. The ODNR divisions of Forestry, Wildlife and Parks and Watercraft partnered with the Buckeye Hero Hunt Committee, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services and volunteer groups to provide this opportunity for Ohio's veterans to hunt white-tailed deer. Twenty deer, 16 antlerless and four bucks, were harvested over the weekend.

"This is an opportunity that ODNR is honored to be able to provide as we thank and support the men and women who have served our country," said Robert Boyles, Ohio's state forester. "We are pleased to partner with the Buckeye Hero Hunt Committee for our Ohio veterans who have sacrificed so much for us."

Numerous volunteers assisted the Buckeye Hero Hunt Committee to assist the veterans with their hunt and provide meals, lodging and equipment. Veterans applied to participate in the hunt, and the event was free for participating veterans.

The ODNR Division of Forestry works to promote the wise use and sustainable management of Ohio's public and private woodlands. This hunt provided an opportunity to effectively manage the damage whitetailed deer cause to the forest ecosystem in a specific area of Zaleski State Forest. White-tailed deer can have substantial negative impacts on forest health and regeneration due to the browse of tree seedlings and herbaceous plants. Hunting is the most effective way to control deer populations, and the ODNR Division of Forestry is thrilled to create this great opportunity for veterans.

The ODNR Division of Forestry works to promote the wise use and sustainable management of Ohio's public and private woodlands. To learn more about Ohio's woodlands, visit forestry.ohiodnr.gov. ♦

# DEC Stocks Lake Sturgeon Upstate

New York fisheries staff are busily stocking state-threatened lake sturgeon into several New York waters this month. The stocking effort is designed to help restore this threatened species.

Some 4,000 lake sturgeon were stocked in October. They were raised from eggs taken on the New York Power Authority property, and raised at DEC's Oneida Hatchery in Constantia. The USFWS and the U.S. Geological Survey were also involved in the egg take. Some of the eggs were taken to the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Genoa, WI, where they were hatched, and the young sturgeon reared there are now returning to New York waters.

Lake sturgeon from New York's inland waters are smaller on average and may grow to as much as three to five feet in length and 80 pounds as adults. These fish feed on the bottom and eat primarily aquatic insects, worms, snails, clams, and crayfish. Specimens caught in Oneida Lake have also been found to consume zebra mussels. Larger sturgeon have also been found to consume round gobies.

One thousand sturgeon averaging about six inches long will be stocked into the following waters: Black Lake; Oswegatchie River; St. Regis River; Raquette River; Salmon River; and Genesee River. Approximately 500 lake sturgeon will be stocked in Oneida Lake and the St. Lawrence River at Massena. Two-thousandfive-hundred fish will be stocked into Chaumont Bay, Cayuga Lake, and the St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg.

Bottom fishing with worms is likely to attract sturgeon, so that practice should be avoided in sturgeon waters. If an angler accidentally hooks a sturgeon, he should release it as quickly as possible and try not to remove it from the water. Always support its full weight across its abdomen; do NOT hang it by the gills or tail. Do not touch its gills or eyes. <>

# Pond owners urged to dispose of ornamental aquatic plants properly

MADISON – With winter fast approaching, many pond owners are clearing out ornamental aquatic plants and animals before their ponds freeze over. But some plants, like water hyacinth, water lettuce and parrot feather that can make a pond beautiful and healthy in the summer, are nonnative and highly invasive species and should not be thrown away into lakes, rivers or wetlands. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources urges pond owners to properly dispose of these aquatic invaders.



Water hyacinth can form dense colonies that cover entire ponds and lakes making boating, fishing and other water activities difficult

"Water gardeners love these plants because they are easy to care for and grow, but they may not be aware that they are also prohibited species in Wisconsin and can potentially block waterways and choke out native habitats," says Alex Selle, an aquatic invasive species coordinator for the DNR West-Central Region. 715-831-3278 or alexander.selle@wisconsin.gov

into If released natural waterways, these plants can reproduce very quickly and potentially produce thousands of seeds that can be spread by wind or water. Left uncontrolled, the plants can form dense colonies that cover entire ponds and lakes making boating, fishing and other water activities difficult. These dense colonies can also degrade water quality by reducing oxygen levels during dieback important for fish and blocking sunlight that keeps native aquatic plants alive.

"The best way to dispose of your aquatic pond plants is to drain as much water from them as possible, bag them and dispose in your garbage pick-up," Selle says. The bag will keep any plant fragments, like leaves, roots and seeds, from dispersing when the plants dry out.

There are ways you can help prevent the spread of aquatic plants commonly used in aquaculture:

- Build your aquatic gardens away from natural waterways and flood zones.
- Learn to recognize invasive species.
- Purchase and plant non-invasive and native plants.
- Check plant orders for unwanted invasive hitchhikers.
- Do not use invasive plants, fish, crayfish or snails in your garden.
- Do not release any plants, fish or invertebrates into natural waters.
- Consult the <u>list of regulated aquatic</u> <u>invasive species [PDF]</u> found on the DNR website.

DNR staff request that anyone who sees any of these invasive species while enjoying the natural areas of Wisconsin, report the location using the agency's <u>online reporting form</u>. For more info search: <u>dnr.wi.gov</u>, for <u>aquatic invasive species</u>.  $\diamondsuit$ 

# Michigan: More than 21 million fish stocked in 2018

Rainbow trout, Chinook salmon, steelhead and seven other species and one hybrid were among the 21,116,476 fish—weighing 333 tons—stocked in Michigan's public waters so far this year.

DNR staff made 381 trips to nearly 800 stocking sites including Great Lakes, inland lakes and rivers. Eighteen specialized trucks traveled 103,618 miles and 2,619 hours to deliver the valuable cargo.

The number and type of fish stocked varies depending on stocking requests, hatchery rearing assignments, and the source and temperature of each facility's rearing water. <u>Michigan has six state</u> <u>hatcheries</u> and two cooperative hatcheries that together produce the species, strain and size of fish requested by fisheries managers. These fish are delivered at a specific time and location to ensure their survival and success.

Each hatchery has stocked the following fish (details on weight and sites are available on the DNR's fish stocking webpage):

• Harrietta State Fish Hatchery (west of Cadillac) stocked 1,126,801 brown and rainbow trout.

• Marquette State Fish Hatchery (near Marquette) stocked 549,765 yearling lake trout, brook trout and splake (a hybrid of lake trout and brook trout).

• Oden State Fish Hatchery (near Petoskey) stocked 659,638 brown and rainbow trout.

• Platte River State Fish Hatchery (near Honor) stocked 2,137,473 fish including yearling Atlantic and coho salmon and spring fingerling Chinook salmon. • Thompson State Fish Hatchery (near Manistique) stocked 1,011,134 fish including yearling steelhead and spring fingerling Chinook salmon.

• Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery (near Kalamazoo) stocked 1,154,861 fish including yearling steelhead, spring fingerling Chinook salmon, Great Lakes strain muskellunge and channel catfish.

A cooperative teaching hatchery at Lake Superior State University (in Sault Ste. Marie) stocked 34,973 Atlantic salmon.

This year's total included 14.4 million walleye spring fingerlings and fry. These fish are reared in ponds by the DNR and tribal partners, with extensive support provided by local sporting organizations. The fish were stocked at 125 inland lakes and rivers and seven Great Lakes sites.  $\diamond$ 

# PFBC appoints new Executive Director

HARRISBURG – The PFBC Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to appoint Tim Schaeffer to the role of Executive Director. Schaeffer will assume his duties beginning November 13, 2018.

"I'm extremely honored and grateful the board of to commissioners for the opportunity to lead such a great agency," said Schaeffer. "I'm excited to get to work." As executive director. Schaeffer will return to the PFBC where he previously served as Director of Policy and Planning from 2008-2017. Currently, he is Deputy Secretary for the Office of Water for the Pennsylvania Programs Environmental Department of Protection. He resides with his family in New Cumberland, Cumberland County.

"Tim's experience speaks for itself and it gives us great pleasure to present him with this opportunity," said Eric Hussar, PFBC Board President. "We look forward to seeing how he's going to lead us into the future and advance our mission."

Schaeffer will replace Executive Director John Arway, who retired November 3. ♦

# Chautauqua Lake walleye resurgence

Based on a recent survey, Region 9 fisheries staff have determined that the walleve population in Chautauqua Lake is rivaling levels last seen in the 1990's when catching a limit was considered easy. The walleye population continues to rise based on excellent spawning success in 2014 and 2015. What's even more exciting is that another exceptional year class of walleye was produced this past year that should maintain quality walleye fishing over the next decade. Not only are the fish plentiful, but they are also big. Fish over 25" are not uncommon, and the average size of walleye in Chautauqua is now over 18". Contact the DEC Region 9 office for more information.  $\diamond$ 

### Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile app Has everything hunters need to take their time in the outdoors

to the next level

New for fall 2018, the <u>Hunt Wild</u> <u>Wisconsin mobile application</u> has everything hunters need to improve their time in the outdoors.

"Hunt Wild Wisconsin is going to help our hunters from day one they can find new public lands, take a look at the regulations, and much more—all in one place," said DNR Secretary Dan Meyer. "This is something our staff has worked extremely hard to roll out for fall hunting seasons—I think people are going to love using this app.

Find new public lands to explore, brush up on the regulations, or listen to podcasts; users can do it all with Hunt Wild Wisconsin. With mobile mapping, up-to-the-minute shooting hours, and much more, we've given you all the tools to focus on what's important—enjoying your time in the outdoors."

To download this free hunting app on a mobile phone, simply search "Hunt Wild Wisconsin" in the <u>iTunes</u> <u>app store</u> or <u>Google Play store</u> on the mobile device. Be sure to check out a <u>helpful tutorial</u> to help navigate the app and learn its features. This free mobile app has tons of features that will help improve your time in the field.

For users with Android phones, it is important to note that this app is primarily intended for Android versions 8.0 and above. Android phones with version 7.0 may not have access to some mapping capabilities within the app and Android versions 6.0 and below will be unable to install the application—this is to help ensure a quality experience for our users. For support regarding the Hunt Wild Wisconsin mobile application, contact HuntWild@wisconsin.gov. ♦

### os Words to ponder &

Don't mess with old people; they didn't get old by being stupid.

## 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken within five miles of Clark's Marsh

The Michigan departments of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Natural Resources (DNR) issued a 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken within approximately five miles of Clark's Marsh in Oscoda Township. The advisory is due to high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid) found in a single deer taken about two miles from Clark's Marsh, which borders the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base. PFOS is one type of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) chemical.

One deer out of twenty tested around the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base was found to have high levels of PFOS. The level of PFOS in the muscle of the deer was 547 parts per billion, exceeding the level of 300 ppb at which action is recommended. PFAS was either not found or was at low levels in muscle samples from the other 19 deer. Although only one deer of this group tested at such high levels, the advisory was issued to protect the health of anyone eating venison taken within approximately five miles of Clark's Marsh. The state has plans to test more deer from this area.

The five-mile radius encircles the Wurtsmith base property and covers what the DNR has estimated to be the expected travel range of deer living in or near the marsh. The area covered by the deer consumption advisory issued can be described as: From Lake Huron west along Aster Street, west on Davison Road, north on Brooks Road, east on Esmond Road, north on Old US 23, north on Wells Road, west on River Road, north on Federal Forest Road 2240, north on Lenard Road, north on Indian Road, and East on E. Kings Corner Road (along the county line) toward Lake to Lake Road, to Lake Huron (see map).∻

# Michigan's 2019 Lake Michigan stocking numbers/sites

One last change was made to decrease more Chinook, brown trout, and coho to maintain Chinook stocking at 504,000 in 2019 and to stay under our predator cap. Steelhead stocking will not change because we are in the middle of a mass marking study.

### Brown Trout stocking plan

Site	2016	2018	Proposed	
Bark River	22,000	0	0	
Manistique	10,000	0	0	
Big Bay De Noc - Hallsteads	28,500	0	0	
Little Bay De Noc	20,000	0	0	
Menominee	17,500	20,000	30,000	
Petoskey	20,000	20,000	15,000	
Elk Rapids	15,000	0	0	
Leland	20,000	0	0	
Glen Arbor	15,000	30,000	20,000	
Platte Bay	30,000	60,000	40,000	
Frankfort	46,000	60,000	50,000	
Arcadia	15,000	0	0	
Manistee	30,000	75,000	60,000	
Ludington	56,000	91,000	81,000	
Pentwater	19,000	0	0	
White Lake	19,000	0	0	
Muskegon	19,000	0	0	
Grand River	15,000	0	0	
Holland	24,000	0	0	
Saugatuck	19,000	0	0	
South Haven	8,000	0	0	
St. Joseph	19,000	0	0	
New Buffalo	19,000	0	0	
Total	506,000	356.000	296.000	

### Chinook stocking plan

		Curi	rent	Prop	osed
Site	2016	2018	2019	2019	2020
Escanaba	12,000	0	0	0	0
Manistique	34,000	80,000	0	0	69,000
Medusa	72,000	0	80,000	72,000	0
Boardman	60,000	75,256	0	0	62,306
Manistee River	22,000	0	0	0	0
Little Manistee River	150,000	208,000	248,000	228,000	208,000
Big Sable River	38,000	0	0	0	0
Muskegon River	18,000	0	25,256	25,000	0
Grand Haven	59,000	0	100,000	89,306	0
Holland	15,000	40,000	0	0	35,000
Black River	15,000	75,000	0	0	55,000
Saugatuck	16,000	75,000	0	0	75,000
St. Joseph	48,000	0	100,000	90,000	0
Total	559,000	553,256	553,256	504,306	504,306

### Coho Salmon stocking plan

Site	2016	2018	Proposed
Escanaba	26,259	51,259	46,000
Manistique	0	0	0
Boardman River	87,530	87,530	78,500
Platte River	800,000	725,000	724,000
Manistee River	87,530	87,530	78,500
Sable River	43,765	43,765	40,000
Muskegon	0	40,000	35,000
Grand River (Lansing)	50,000	50,000	38,000
Grand River (Lyons)	200,719	100,719	83,000
Rogue River	25,000	35,000	35,000
Grand River (Ada)	0	90,000	85,000
Saugatuck	0	40,000	35,000
St. Joe River (Berrien			
Springs)	131,295	101,295	86,000
Galien River	21,883	21,883	19,981
Total	1.473.981	1,473,981	1.383.981

♦

# Remaining firearm deer permits

A limited number of Illinois firearm and muzzleloader deer permits are available over-the-counter from DNR Direct license and permit vendors through <u>December 2</u>, or until quotas are exhausted. Find a vendor: <u>www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR/Pages/Lice</u> <u>nsePermitVendors.aspx.</u> ◆

# Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits

Illinois Archery Deer and Archery Fall Turkey seasons are open through January 20, 2019. Permits are available over-the-counter at DNR Direct license and permit vendors. Find a vendor: www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR/Pages/Lice nsePermitVendors.aspx. <a href="https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR/Pages/Lice">https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR/Pages/Lice</a>

# Spring Turkey Applications

Resident hunters can apply for the first lottery for 2019 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits online. Application deadline for the first lottery for these 2019 turkey permits is December 1, 2018. For more info: www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/ TurkeyHunting.aspx. ♦

# Evaluating native fish to proposed separation of Lake Michigan from Illinois River Waterway

At Brandon Road Lock and Dam (<u>http://hdl.handle.net/2142/101445</u>)



The Brandon Road Lock and Dam (BRLD) location is currently a focal point for developing a barrier to keep the four Asian carp species (i.e., Silver, Bighead, Grass, and Black) from entering Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes Basin. This location is being considered because it connects the Illinois River to the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) and, ultimately, Lake Michigan. While the possible effect of the proposed barrier on commercial and recreational navigation is being widely debated, the impacts of the barrier on millions of dollars in aquatic resources restoration projects and decades of management efforts are less thoroughly considered.

In addition to blocking movements of non-native Asian carps, any barrier will also potentially eliminate upriver connectivity that is important to a variety of native fishes and freshwater mussels (hereafter referred to as mussels). Based on surveys of native fishes, we know that fish distribution and species richness in the Illinois River are steadily improving. However, very little is known about how or when fish move between habitats, and to what degree any of these might have been utilizing the lock chamber at BRLD to move upriver.

The development of an upstream fish barrier, impassable by either nonnative or native fishes, has potential unintended consequences for populations of native fish. We summarized long-term trends in aquatic resources to illustrate both what is known and what is uncertain about a barrier that interrupts upriver connectivity. This includes details about several potential impacts that were developed using the best and most comprehensive information collected by the IDNR-Division of Fisheries (IDNR-DF), Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS), and from the peer-reviewed literature.

The summary focuses on longterm trends in species richness and presence or absence over time, found in the neighboring tributary rivers including the Des Plaines River, DuPage River, Kankakee River, Fox River, and upper Illinois River. The primary impact of the proposed barrier project on native fish and mussels is the blockage of upriver fish movement from the Illinois River and its tributaries, past BRLD into the Des Plaines River and CAWS. Improvements in aquatic habitat quality and connectivity through dam removals upstream of BRLD have, and will continue to open additional

aquatic habitat. Long-term fish community surveys in the Des Plaines River suggest numerous species of fish currently pass through the lock at BRLD, and that this helped some native fishes and functional groups such as the pollution intolerant Rosyface shiner (Notropis rubellus) re-establish in these formerly degraded reaches after conditions improved (Pescitelli 2017). Despite a record of improvement (similar to fishes) over recent decades, mussel diversity and numbers are currently limited in the Des Plaines River above BRLD. Recruitment of these invertebrates requires both a source of young and the fish-hosts to carry them into newly improved habitats. Data suggest there is a strong source of young below BRLD: seventeen species of mussels not currently present above BRLD have been documented just 21 kilometers or less below BRLD in the Dresden Pool of the upper Illinois River (an easily covered distance for fish). Thus, any reduction in upriver connectivity will be a threat to the ongoing improvement in both upstream fish and mussel populations.

The extent to which the current fish community above BRLD relies on connectivity through the lock to maintain community stability is uncertain. Though it appears likely increases in species continued richness upriver of BRLD would be truncated after implementation of a barrier, further targeted investigations into trends in recruitment, movement, and abundance may help guide choices of appropriate mitigation efforts. This information could also inform efforts to prioritize the management, translocation, or stocking used to supplement fishhosts required for rehabilitation of mussels if a barrier is implemented at BRLD.

Read full report: INHS2018\_29.pdf ↔

### Great Lakes Basin Report

### Reduce stocking of Chinook Continued from page 1

• The relative numbers of alewife at a given size and age (color) in 2018 are presented in Figure 3. Please note that each color represents the same "year class" in all three graphs. A year class is those fish produced in a given year, and they will always belong to that year class. For example: the 2015 year class is yellow when measured at age 1 in the top graph of Figure 3, and remains yellow as age 2 fish in 2017 (middle graph) and as age 3 fish in 2018 (bottom graph).

• A large number of alewife were produced in 2016 and first measured as age 1 fish in 2017 (2016 year class; green bars in middle graph of Figure 3). This was great news and a good start towards population recovery. Their abundance at age 2 in 2018 (green bars in bottom graph), however, indicates a marked decline in their numbers, likely due to heavy predation.

• A below average year class was produced in 2017 (age 1 fish in 2018; dark blue bars in bottom graph in Figure 3). Their numbers will likely decline markedly by spring 2019.

• In 2018, "larger" size alewife that support both alewife spawning and food for large Chinook salmon are primarily composed of age-2 (2016 year class, green bars), age 3 (2015 year class, yellow bars), and age 6 fish (2012 year class, black bars). Alewife numbers in these year classes will decline markedly by spring 2019. • As expected, catches of age 4 (2014 year class; red bars) and age 5 (2013 year class; light-blue bars) alewife were poor. The extremely long, cold winters of 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 contributed to the poor 2013 and 2014 year classes, and these poor year classes will continue to affect the overall stability of Lake Ontario's alewife population for several more years.

• The adult alewife population in 2019 will be composed primarily of alewife ages 2, 3, and 4, and will likely experience additional stress over the next several years. The Lake Ontario Committee (LOC) remains committed to maintaining a high-quality Chinook salmon fishery. While there is hope that a relatively strong 2018 alewife year class will be detected in 2019, concerns regarding instability in the adult alewife population have increased.

### <u>New York State 2019 Stocking</u> Plans

• In response to intensified concerns regarding Lake Ontario's alewife population, DEC must take additional action to protect the long-term sustainability of the trout and salmon fishery.

• Failure to act will serve to extend the severity and duration of adult alewife population instability, with greater potential impacts to the sportfishery. When the adult alewife population is comprised of a broader number of age classes we will consider adjusting stocking back to normal levels.

• DEC will further reduce Chinook salmon stocking by an additional 20% in 2019. On average, approximately 50% of Lake Ontario's Chinook salmon originate from natural reproduction ("wild" fish).

• Approximately 50% of Chinook salmon will be raised by sportsmen in net pens, which increases fish survival on average by 2 times.

• Lake trout stocking in 2019 will remain at the 20% reduced level. Due to hatchery production issues, lake trout stocking was 23% below target in 2016 and 50% below target in 2017. Also, unlike Chinook salmon that are to be stocked in 2019 and are not yet in the hatchery, lake trout planned for stocking in 2019 are already in the hatchery and six months old.

• Combined salmon and trout stocking by DEC in Lake Ontario in 2019 will still exceed 2.7 million fish (Table 1). Given favorable wind and water temperature patterns, excellent fishing should continue in 2019.

Table 1. Anticipated NYSDEC 2019 stocking targets for LakeOntario.

Species	Life Stage	NY Stocking
		Policy 2019
Chinook Salmon*	Spring Yearlings	1,056,960
Lake Trout	Yearling equivalents	400,000
Rainbow Trout	Spring Yearlings	615,700
Brown Trout	Spring Yearlings	400,000
Atlantic Salmon	Spring Yearlings	50,000
Coho Salmon	Fall Fingerlings	155,000
Coho Salmon	Spring Yearlings	90,000
		2,767,660

\*Many Chinook salmon will be raised by sportsmen in "net pens," which increases their survival by approximately 2X



Fig 1-Maps showing adult (Age 2+=2 and older) Alewife bottom trawling sites and catch level for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Larger circles represent larger catches of Alewife; "X" = no Alewife caught at that trawl site.



Fig 2-Maps showing Age 1 Alewife bottom trawling sites and catch level for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Larger circles represent larger catches of Alewife; "X" = no Alewife caught at that trawl site.



Fig 3-Lake-wide age structure of Alewife for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Higher bar height = more fish of that size. The color representing an alewife year class remains the same in successive years. For example the 2015 year class is yellow in 2016 when they were age 1 (top graph), and remains yellow as age 2 in 2017 (middle graph) and age 3 in 2018 (bottom graph).  $\Leftrightarrow$ 

## Boat launch construction under way in DEC Region 7

DEC staff completed a new concrete launch ramp at the Susquehanna River Cannon Hole Boat Launch in Tioga County. Also under way is the reconstruction of the Mud Lock Boat Launch on Cayuga Lake in the Town of Aurelius. This project will provide a much improved launch ramp, new boarding dock and paved parking and ramp access. The Mud Lock project should be complete by early November. Contact the DEC <u>Region 7 office</u> for more information.  $\diamond$ 

## Mandatory life jacket requirement begins November 1

HARRISBURG - The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is reminding boaters that beginning November 1 through April 30, they are required to wear a life jacket while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or on any canoe or kayak. The requirement applies all to Pennsylvania waters. No boating trip should ever begin without wearing a life jacket, especially this time of year. Even on sunny days when air temperatures are comfortable, water temperatures are quickly dropping. Boaters, especially those in kayaks and canoes, are at greater risk for sudden cold water immersion. A life jacket can keep you afloat and alive. ৵

# Wisconsin ice fishing class starts Jan 28

This 5-session class begins with indoor practice sessions to prepare you for ice fishing and culminates with a potluck feast. You'll learn about Wisconsin's fishing tradition and how to keep it sustainable, and then you'll learn how to prepare your catch for the table. All gear and supplies are provided. Registration deadline January 22. Cost: \$0. However, they do ask for a \$15 refundable commitment deposit to reserve your spot, which will be returned to you upon arrival at the first class. For more info and to register:

<u>Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov</u>, 608-577-6332. <u>registration form]</u> ♦

Happy Thanksgiving



## **Ohio's 2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**

COLUMBUS, OH - Ohio's 2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is now available at parks.ohiodnr.gov/research, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The SCORP, completed every five years, provides up-to-date information on statewide outdoor recreation priorities and current recreation trends in the state. The SCORP is a reference document for state officials for allocating federal and state grants among projects proposed by public outdoor recreation providers, such as park districts, cities, counties, villages and townships around the state.

Below are some noteworthy highlights from the 2018 SCORP:

• Interest in camping is growing nationally, with those age 18 to 34 accounting for nearly half of all new campers.

• Interest in fishing continued to grow nationally, with 44 percent of new anglers being between 6- and 17-years-old and 46 percent being female.

• Trails are highly popular with Ohioans, with 90 percent walking or

hiking a trail a few times a year and approximately a third walking or hiking a trail monthly.

• Bicycling on paved trails remains popular in Ohio with 55 percent of households doing so at least a few times a year.

• The top three wildlife activities for Ohioans are wildlife viewing, nature photography and bird watching.

• Interest in paddleboarding and stand-up paddleboarding grew from 4 percent to 10 percent in Ohio from 2013 to 2018, which is consistent with national trends.

• Activities such as disc golf, mountain biking, rappelling/rock climbing, backcountry camping, enjoying splash pads/spray parks and horseback riding have continued to show increased participation in Ohio.

The SCORP, funded with assistance from the National Park Service, is a federal requirement for the state to receive Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies. LWCF provides significant funding assistance to local public outdoor recreation providers through Ohio's LWCF competitive grant program, as well as supporting the acquisition of new and the improvement of existing ODNR public recreation lands.

ODNR will be accepting grant applications for the LWCF local grant program until Thursday, Nov. 15, 2018. Although the federal LWCF Act officially expired at the end of September 2018, LWCF funds are currently available for Ohio's LWCF grant program. Local government entities, such as villages, counties, townships, park districts and cities, are encouraged to apply for LWCF assistance for the acquisition. development and rehabilitation of public outdoor recreational areas. Applicants are encouraged to review the 2018 SCORP; project alignment with SCORP findings is one component of the LWCF scoring process.

ODNR administers the federal LWCF grant program for Ohio. This fund provides up to 50 percent reimbursement assistance. Many local parks that Ohioans enjoy today were made possible through this federal program. To download a grant application or learn more about the LWCF, go to realestate.ohiodnr.gov/outdoor-recreation-facility-grants. ♦

# Efforts continue to reintroduce Arctic grayling in Michigan

It's been a little over two years since the Michigan DNR, in partnership with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, announced a new initiative to bring back a long-gone historical species—Arctic grayling—to the Great Lakes state. Michigan's Arctic Grayling Initiative—with more than 45 partners, including state and tribal



governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses and universities—is committed to reintroducing this culturally significant species, with steady progress made since June 2016.

"Our formal mission as an initiative is to restore self-sustaining populations of Arctic grayling within

its historic range in Michigan," said DNR Fisheries Division Assistant Chief Todd Grischke.

Michigan's history with the Arctic grayling is long and storied. A striking fish with a sail-like dorsal fin and a slate blue color on its body, it was virtually the only native stream salmonid (a family of fish that also includes salmon and trout) in the Lower Peninsula until the resident population died off nearly a century ago.

"The fact we have a town named after this fish indicates just how iconic it was, and still is, to many in this state," Grischke said. "When you add in other factors—such as the fact they're only native to Michigan and Montana out of all the lower 48 states—it just adds to their legendary status."

In the 19th century, Arctic grayling were found in many coldwater streams in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula and in one Upper Peninsula stream—and large populations of grayling flourished in the Manistee and Au Sable rivers offering anglers plenty of opportunity to catch these unique fish.

### Great Lakes Basin Report

### Arctic grayling cont.

But a variety of factors slowly erased their presence, including the cutting of Michigan's vast virgin forest in the 1800s. "Logging practices during that time period used streams to transport trees that were harvested. The streams carried logs to mills for processing," explained Grischke. "These practices greatly impacted the physical nature of those streams and basically destroyed stream habitats for fish, including grayling spawning areas."

Additionally, the cutting of the trees caused blockages in many of those same streams, often displacing grayling from where they lived, but this was just one issue that affected Michigan's Arctic grayling, another being the introduction of non-native fish species.

"Other types of trout were introduced into Michigan's waters to create additional opportunities for anglers to pursue—but a consequence of this action was that grayling couldn't compete with more aggressive fish like brown, rainbow or brook trout," Grischke said.

The other factor that led to the species' demise was overfishing, as people harvested grayling in large quantities with no possession limits or other regulations to stop them. The last native Arctic grayling on record in Michigan were caught in 1936. Since that time, natural resource managers have repeatedly looked for options to reintroduce the species.

"In the late 1800s and early 1900s they tried stocking millions of Arctic grayling fry into Michigan streams, but that didn't work," said Grischke. "And then in the 1980s we, the DNR, stocked hatchery-reared yearlings into lakes and streams, but again to no avail."

In each of these previous reintroduction efforts, something critical was missing that prevented these populations from flourishing, but the Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative hopes to rectify that. "We have learned from the previous reintroduction events and plan to capitalize on new approaches, dedicated partnerships and advanced technology," Grischke explained.

Much of the initiative's focus is detailed in its official action plan, reflective of the vast work to be done by various partners.

The group is gleaning as much information as possible from the state of Montana and its successful effort at re-establishing stable Arctic grayling populations. In addition to Michigan receiving help from biologists in Montana, both states also have been collaborating with Alaska.

"Within our action plan we've identified four focus areas and associated goals that were developed by all the partners and that we believe will give us the best chance of success moving forward," said Grischke.



The four focus areas of the action plan are **research**, **management**, fish production, and **outreach and education**.

focus area The research includes work-already under wayunderstanding on relationships between resident trout and grayling, prioritizing streams for grayling introduction and evaluating in-stream remote site incubators. These incubators allow fish to be reared and released directly in the streams to better allow them to imprint to the waters they hopefully will reproduce in later. Better imprinting means the initiative will be one step closer to establishing а self-sustaining population of Arctic grayling, which is the ultimate outcome of this effort.

The cost to reintroduce the fish will total around \$1.1 million, according to DNR Fish Chief Jim Dexter, with virtually the entire amount being supplied through private and foundation support. To date, nearly \$325,000 has been raised for the initiative. Contributors include the Consumers Energy Foundation, the Henry E. and Consuelo S. Wenger Foundation, Rotary Charities of Traverse City, Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, Oleson Foundation and Little Manistee River Watershed Conservation Council. Plans are under way to recognize donors at Oden State Fish Hatchery.

"A diverse group of partners has invested themselves toward attaining a shared goal, and that says something about the nature of this project," said Dexter. Funders are critical in financially supporting various projects within the initiative.

Goals for the **management focus area** will include evaluating key habitat criteria, establishing population goals, and working on regulations related to fishing for grayling.

The fish production focus area's work will center on experimenting with remote site incubator designs, ensuring fish health standards are upheld and maintaining a genetically diverse broodstock (fish used for breeding purposes) that will be housed at a hatchery facility.



Lastly, goals for the **outreach and education focus area** will be concentrated on informing the public about this initiative's efforts, identifying future partners and creating a stewardship plan.

"The goals of these focus areas will be accomplished by partner representatives working together," Grischke shared. "The only way this initiative will be successful is if we continue to work together towards our mission." For more info: www.migrayling.org  $^2$   $\diamond$ 

### Lake Huron's Charter Fishery Rebounded in 2017 while other lakes held steady

Lake Huron's charter fishery has changed dramatically since the crash of alewife and Chinook salmon in 2004, but charter fishing effort and resulting economic impacts climbed back above average in 2017. This resurgence was due in large part to the thriving walleye fishery on Saginaw Bay. The bay accounted for around 8% of all charter fishing effort on Lake Huron in 2005, but this has risen to around 40% in recent years. The graph above shows how Lake Huron charter fishing catch has shifted from salmon to walleye, while lake trout continue to provide good fishing (the total number of fish harvested rose from 23,883 in 2002 and 37,387 in 2017, Michigan DNR data). The overall economic impact of Michigan's charter fishery rose by 4.5% in 2017, with other lakes continuing to generate a steady flow of tourism.



Charter fishing on Lake Huron picked up steam in 2017 while other lakes held strong.

Walleye have been increasingly important to Lake Huron's charter fishery, rising from 6 percent of the harvest in 2002 to 61 percent in 2017

Charter fishing catch and effort statistics from 2017 are now available from the <u>Michigan D</u>NR' Charter Boat Reporting Program. Each year, the economic impact of charter fishing is calculated by <u>Michigan Sea Grant</u> based on the number of fishing trips that charter captains report to the DNR.

Despite the many problems that challenge the future of Great Lakes fisheries, charter fishing continues to provide an important component of coastal tourism. In fact, the economic impact of tourism generated by charter fishing in Michigan rose to \$25.4 million in 2017. This represents a 4.5 percent increase from 2016 to 2017 after adjusting for inflation.

### Lake Michigan holds steady

The Lake Michigan fishery has experienced a lot of uncertainty in recent years, but the lake's charter fishing industry has been <u>remarkably steady</u> since the late 1990s. Fluctuations in charter fishing effort (and resulting economic impacts) have not been closely linked to catch rates, in part because fishing success has ranged from good to fantastic since Chinook salmon recovered from a bacterial kidney disease (BKD) epidemic in the mid-1990s. In 2017, charter captains logged 12,122 fishing trips in Michigan waters of Lake Michigan, generating tourism that created over \$7 million in personal income and over 322,000 employment hours. This was very similar to the economic impact of 11,791 trips reported in 2016, and reflects the continued high level of interest in charter fishing for salmon and trout.

Lake Michigan offers anglers a variety of trout and salmon species, but Chinook salmon are often considered the premier gamefish. Charter fishing produced an average of 2.1 Chinooks per trip in 2017, which is similar to catch rates in 2015 and 2016. Prior to 2013, Chinook salmon targeted catch rates were much higher (up to 7.4 per charter trip) but fishing effort and economic impacts were similar.

Catch rates are calculated by the Michigan DNR, and these rates represent the number of Chinooks caught per trip targeting salmon and trout of all species. These targeted catch rates are used to exclude incidental salmon catches taken by anglers fishing for walleye, bass, or other fish that are targeted using different gear or methods.

### The resurgence of Lake Huron

Much of the angst surrounding declining Chinook salmon catch rates on Lake Michigan is related to the crash of Lake Huron's salmon fishery in 2004. After Chinook salmon targeted catch rates fell from 2.4 fish per charter trip in 2004 to 1.2 fish per trip in 2005 the Lake Huron charter fishery was cut in half.

Although Lake Huron's charter industry was never as large as Lake Michigan's, the impact of lost tourism and fishing opportunities was devastating to many coastal communities. From 2006 to 2015, Lake Huron captains logged fewer than 2,000 charter trips per year, but in 2016 things started looking up. Fishing effort rose to 2,154 trips in 2016—just below the long-term average of 2,176 (1990-2017). In 2017, Lake Huron rose above this long-term average for the first time since 2004 with 2,548 trips logged.

The economic impact of Lake Huron charter fishing has increased by roughly 45 percent since 2015. In 2017, charter fishing generated tourism that created over 90,000 employment hours and \$1.2 million in personal income for coastal communities on Lake Huron. When adjusted for inflation, this looks more like the good old days than the "collapsed fishery" we have heard so much about.

There are some big differences between today's Lake Huron charter fishery and the fishery of 2002, though. For one thing, Chinook salmon remain scarce in most of the lake for most of the year. In fact, anglers targeting salmon and trout caught fewer than one Chinook for every two trips taken in 2017. The resurgence in Lake Huron's fishery is not due to any recovery of Chinook salmon, but solid lake trout fishing, phenomenal walleye catch rates (over 25 fish caught per charter trip targeting walleye), and changing regulations on Saginaw Bay may have had positive impacts. Saginaw Bay now accounts for 41 percent of charter fishing effort on Lake Huron, up from a low of around 8 percent in 2005.

### Great Lakes Basin Report

Since 2015, anglers on Saginaw Bay have been able to keep up to eight walleye per day, and the minimum size limit was reduced from 15 to 13 inches. The long term biological goal is, in part, to reduce the number of walleye preying on yellow perch. Historically, yellow perch have been extremely important in drawing anglers to Great Lakes fisheries so this could be an additional boon in years to come.

While things do seem to be looking up on Lake Huron, it is also possible that 2017 was just an exceptionally good year relative to the "new normal." It would be premature to assume that other species have effectively filled in the gap left by the loss of Chinook salmon, but results from last year's charter season are definitely encouraging. Anecdotal reports from the 2018 season suggest that fishing effort and harvest may be a bit lower on Saginaw Bay because of high winds that result in cancelled trips and warm water that caused walleye to leave the bay earlier than usual.

### Other waters continue to offer world class fishing

Although salmon get a lot of attention when it comes to charter fishing, many Michigan waters offer incredible fishing opportunities for other species. Lake Erie provides fast fishing for walleye, with 2017 being no exception. Lake Superior's vast expanse of cold water attracts lake trout anglers. Some Superior charter captains offer trips that focus on casting or jigging, which offers a fun alternative to trolling methods used in most Great Lakes lake trout waters. The St. Mary's River hosts a run of Atlantic salmon, which is renowned for its tendency to jump repeatedly when hooked. Atlantics are also starting to show up regularly in northern and southern Lake Huron due to expanded stocking.

Detroit may be the largest urban center in Michigan, but it also provides some of the fastest fishing around. The St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and the Detroit River offer catchand-release charter fishing options on some of the best smallmouth bass and musky waters in the world. The musky is known as the "fish of 10,000 casts" but in 2017 charter fishing in Lake St. Clair produced an average of 2.7 fish per trip. Charter trips targeting bass on Lake St. Clair produced over 25 fish per trip in 2017. Yellow perch and walleye also provide great fishing for charter anglers who prefer to keep their catch. The Detroit River is a hotspot for walleye in the spring, and walleye charters harvested an average of 16 fish per trip in 2017.

No matter where you are in Michigan, quality charter fishing is never very far from your doorstep. <u>Michigan Sea</u> <u>Grant</u> helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the <u>U. of</u> <u>Michigan</u> and <u>Michigan State U</u>. and its <u>MSU Extension</u>, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the <u>NOAA-National Sea Grant</u> network of 33 university-based programs.  $\diamondsuit$ 

### Other Breaking News Items: (Click on title or URL to read full article

### These Michigan rivers might get the long-lost Arctic grayling

More than 45 Michigan organizations have kicked off a funding campaign to reintroduce the Arctic grayling, a fish that has been absent from the state for about a century

#### This sucks: U of M researchers hope to turn the 'salmon cannon' into a carp vacuum

In Minnesota, researchers are studying whether the salmon cannon, a flexible pneumatic tube, could be put to a new task: sucking up thousands of invasive common carp from the state's lakes and marshes.

### Ex-Trump adviser knocks support for Lake Erie wind project

A conservative energy research group led by a member of President Donald Trump's transition team is taking the administration to task for backing a project that would install six giant wind turbines in the middle of Lake Erie.

### Trump signs bill authorizing \$922 million Soo Locks project

President Trump authorized funding for the \$922 million Soo Locks project in Michigan's U.P. Trump signed into law "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018," part of which will go toward long-proposed improvements at the locks. The plan is to combine

#### Invasive fish new to north country spotted near Akwesasne

Two tench, invasive fish with no previous recorded sightings in the north country, were found in the American portion of St. Lawrence River last month. Tench are a Eurasian fish that can threaten native species and water quality

### Slow moving Asian carp response keeps lakes at risk

Nine years after testing revealed that invasive Asian carp may have breached barriers in the Chicago waterway designed to keep them out of Lake Michigan, the federal government, along with Great Lakes states, are still in pursuit of solutions to thwart the carp assault.

#### Great Lakes advocates fight for last straw

Single-use disposable plastic straws might not seem like they have a huge negative impact on the environment, but they add up to create a problem. Roughly 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes ecosystem each year

### Largemouth bass virus implicated in fish kill

After being absent for 15 years, the often-fatal largemouth bass virus is in a different body of water than where it previously was found, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

### COMMENTARY: Time's running out from stopping Asian carp from invading our Great Lakes

There is no greater threat to Great Lakes fisheries and wetland habitats than Asian carp. If we let Asian carp get into the Great Lakes on our watch, we will have failed current and future generations.

### Lake Ontario salmon stocking cuts: DEC remains steadfast despite criticism

The New York state Department of Environmental Conservation's recently announced decision to cut back on the stocking of Chinook salmon in Lake Ontario during 2019 by 20 percent is getting negative blowback from some charter boat captains and others.

### Great Lakes water levels expected to make moves as we go into fall

Great Lakes water levels typically decline in the fall. All the Great Lakes are currently forecast to go down in the next month, but recent high precipitation levels may prevent that decline

Couple asks U.S. Supreme Court to overturn Indiana ruling guaranteeing public access to Lake Michigan beaches

The U.S. Supreme Court has been asked to overturn the February ruling by Indiana's highest court that Lake Michigan's shoreline is open to all. The case has far-reaching ramifications, as the plaintiffs are asking the court to apply the water's edge standard to all land adjacent to all five Great Lakes

### DNR working to get rid of invasive Starry Stonewort algae found in seven Wisconsin lakes

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is asking boaters to thoroughly clean their boats to help stop the spread of an invasive species, starry stonewort, found in seven Wisconsin lakes

### State to reduce stocking of Chinook salmon in Lake Ontario in response to baitfish decline

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation will reduce the stocking of Chinook salmon in Lake Ontario by 20 percent next year in order to reduce the declines in the alewife populations that salmon prey on

End