



Scientists turn invasive carp into traitors to slow their Great Lakes push

Wildlife officials across the Great Lakes are looking for spies to take on an almost impossible mission: stop the spread of invasive carp. Over the last five years, agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota DNR have employed a new seek-and-destroy strategy that uses turncoat carp to lead them to the fish's hotspot hideouts.

Agency workers turn carp into double agents by capturing them, implanting transmitters and tossing them back. Floating receivers send real-time notifications when a tagged carp swims past. Carp often clump in schools in the spring and fall. Armed with the traitor carp's location, agency workers and commercial anglers can

head to that spot, drop their nets and remove multiple fish from the ecosystem. *(The system works! See page 3)*

Kayla Stampfle, invasive carp field lead for the Minnesota DNR, said the goal is to monitor when carp start moving in the spring and use the tagged fish to ambush their brethren.

"We use these fish as a traitor fish and set the nets around this fish," she said.

[Four different species](#) are considered invasive carp: bighead, black, grass and silver. They were imported to the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s to help rid southern aquaculture farms of algae, weeds and parasites. But they escaped Mississippi River and have used it as a super highway to spread north into rivers and streams in the nation's midsection.



Minnesota DNR Invasive Carp Field Lead Kayla Stampfle inspects the components of a telemetry receiver that tracks tagged invasive carp in the Mississippi River near La Crosse. The solar-powered receiver can transmit real-time notifications of the movements of tagged invasive carp.

Invasive carp traitors

Continued on page 4

In this issue...

Practice Ice Safety.....	2
Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs partner to capture 323 invasive carp .	3
Continuation of Invasive carp traitors	4
Lake trout season for L Superior opened MN webinar on outdoor on-ice sports.....	5
Outdoors enthusiasts spent \$394 billion.	5
IDNR Wildlife Rehab Facilities Grant	5
Fish-tracking network grow strong	6
Lake trout research underway	6
Great Lakes Habitat Restoration:	
Partnering to Promote Fish Production	7
Fishing groups sue 13 tire makers over rubber preservative deadly to salmon .	8
New Mich L Huron Basin Coordinator	9
NY State recreational saltwater fishing license survey	9
Register for 2024 Central Ill Youth Goose Hunt	9
LARE applications due Jan 15	9
PA cold weather life jacket requirement .	9
ASA to participate in major sport-fishing conference.....	9
Other Breaking News Items	10

Striped bass public hearings in New York

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)

released the [Draft Addendum II to Amendment 7 to the _____ Fishery](#)



[Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass \(PDF\)](#) for public comment. This Draft Addendum presents background on ASMFC's management of striped bass commercial fisheries. the addendum process and timeline, and a statement of the problem. This document also provides management options for public consideration and comment. New York State will be hosting an in-person hearing to receive public comments, **Monday, Dec 18**



from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at DEC Region 3 Headquarters, 21 S. Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, NY. A listen-only live stream link for each hearing is included on [DEC's public calendar](#). Submit written comments by **[December 22, 2023](#)** at 11:59 p.m. (EST). ✧

Practice Ice Safety on All Waterbodies This Winter

Changing temps make ice unpredictable

MADISON, Wis. – The DNR urges the public to practice ice safety on all of Wisconsin’s waterbodies and remember that no ice is safe ice.

Frigid overnight temperatures often leave a thin layer of ice across smaller bodies of water, but that ice is not strong enough to support the weight of a person or machine.

“After we have these first cold nights, we start to see the early ice forming. It may look solid to the naked eye, but it’s not,” said Lt. Jacob Holsclaw, DNR Off-highway Vehicle Administrator. “There can be cracks and changes in the ice thickness that you won’t see until it’s too late.”

Temperature swings, strong winds, currents, underground springs feeding lakes and rivers vary widely across Wisconsin, and even across a given lake or river. These factors and more are why no ice is ever considered safe, especially not this early in the season.

Get Ice Status from Local Sources

The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. If your plans include access to or use of an ice-covered waterbody, contact your local fishing clubs, bait shops or outfitters for ice conditions.

“These places routinely check ice conditions and can give you the best and most current conditions,” said Holsclaw. “If you can plan your outing without any travel over ice, do it. And if you are going to be on some ice, let someone know your plans and follow them.”

Conditions Vary on Waterbodies

Each waterbody can have its own characteristics. Check if the lake has inlets, outlets, narrows that have currents or is spring-fed, all of which can thin the ice. Some smaller lakes can have aerators that are run throughout the winter, either covering a large area towards the center of the lake or may have smaller aerators placed by private property landowners adjacent to their shore and piers.

It is equally as important to stay alert for pressure ridges or ice heaves.

These can be dangerous due to thin ice and resulting open water. They are often created, move or grow with changes in temperatures and high winds. Pressure ridges and ice heaves can happen on Wisconsin’s largest lake, Lake Winnebago, a popular home to sturgeon spearers, and the Bay of Green Bay.

Ice Safety Basics

Here are a few basic ice safety tips to remember:

- Carry a charged cell phone, and let people know where you are going and when you’ll return home. Leave a written note.
- Wear proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or a float coat, to help you stay afloat and to help maintain body heat.
- Wear ice creepers attached to boots to prevent slipping on clear ice.
- Carry a spud bar to check the ice while walking to new areas.
- Carry a few spikes and a length of light rope in an easily accessible pocket to help pull yourself – or others – out of the ice.
- If you fall in, remain as calm as possible. While attempting to get out of the water, call for help. Anyone who attempts to rescue you should use a rope or something similar to avoid falling through themselves.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas or at night.

Check out [the DNR’s Ice Safety webpage](#) for more information on staying safe on the ice, including tips for creating ice claws and what to do if you fall through ice. ✧



• Established 1972 •

President

Daniel N. Thomas, *Illinois*

Vice President

Open

Secretary

Michael D. Sanger, *Wisconsin*

Treasurer

Thomas G. Couston, *Wisconsin*

DIRECTORS

Illinois – Robert Gaik

Indiana – Mike Schoonveld

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 2023 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 glslfc444@gmail.com.

Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs partner to capture 323 invasive carp

Largest single capture in Minnesota/Wisconsin waters

The Minnesota DNR has confirmed the capture of 323 invasive carp on Thursday, Nov. 30 in Pool 6 of the Mississippi River, near Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Species captured were 296 silver carp, 23 grass carp, and 4 bighead carp. This is the largest single capture of invasive carp that has occurred in Minnesota to date. The capture was made possible by tracking tagged invasive carp, which led agency staff and contracted commercial fishers to them for removal.

“Tagging and tracking of invasive carp by the DNR and its partners is working and leading to the successful removal of fish in Minnesota,” DNR Invasive Carp Coordinator Grace Loppnow said. “Wisconsin DNR crews located six tagged invasive carp in Pool 6 last week. Those detections, along with observations by our contracted commercial fisher, led to the successful removal of these invasive carp.”

DNR crews will follow up with additional netting at this location over the next week. The Minnesota DNR and partners will continue to track and capture invasive carp yet this year for as long as river conditions allow. DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also be examining the fish captured this week to evaluate age, reproductive condition, and information about the origin of these fish.

“While it is certainly concerning that we have captured this large number of invasive carp in Pool 6, it is likely that these adult fish moved upstream from other locations and were not the result of reproduction in Minnesota waters. DNR will continue to evaluate the data and work with its partners to learn everything we can, while we also work to remove additional fish,” said Loppnow.

Increased reports of invasive carp and data from tagged fish indicate that fish were moving in the Mississippi River in spring 2023 during the

extended springtime flooding. It is likely that the high-water conditions allowed invasive carp and other fish to move upstream past open dams. Invasive carp tend to congregate in the spring and fall and all the previous large captures have happened in these seasons. The previous largest capture of invasive carp was 51 in spring 2020, in similar conditions after an extended period of flooding in 2019.

Additional Invasive Carp Management Efforts

The DNR and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have been testing new invasive carp capture techniques for use in Minnesota waters. Six invasive carp—five silver carp and one grass carp—were captured and tagged during a five-day operation in October in Pools 6 and 8 of the Mississippi River.

Three new technologies developed by USGS were successfully deployed during the October operation:

- Floating gill nets that entangle jumping carp
- Speakers attached to a buoy to help direct invasive carp movement through sound
- Remotely operated kayaks that can be used for surveys and herding fish

The new technologies are being tested and adapted now for more extensive use. The DNR and many partner agencies and organizations have been testing and implementing a wide range of invasive carp prevention technologies and methods for more than a decade.

The DNR is using a wide range of efforts to manage invasive carp, including tagging and tracking invasive carp to better understand and exploit their movements, contracting with commercial fishing operations to target invasive carp, and developing and testing new methods to capture invasive carp. To date, no evidence of

invasive carp reproduction has been observed in Minnesota waters. For additional information please visit [Invasive Carp | Minnesota DNR \(state.mn.us\)](https://state.mn.us/invasive-carp)

The agency is also working closely with stakeholders to evaluate potential management options in the Mississippi River. This includes consideration of a carp barrier project at Lock and Dam 5, near Whitman, Minnesota. The DNR expects to have recommendations for actions available by the end of 2023 and those results will inform an update of the [Minnesota Invasive Carp Action Plan](https://state.mn.us/invasive-carp-action-plan).

Additional Background on Invasive Carp in Minnesota

Invasive carp have been moving upstream since escaping into the Mississippi River in Arkansas in the 1970s. These fish compete with native species and silver carp can jump out of the water, posing a risk to boaters. Individual invasive carp have been caught as far upstream as Pool 2 of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area (bighead, grass and silver), the King Power Plant on the St. Croix River by Oak Park Heights (bighead and silver), and just downstream of Granite Falls in the Minnesota River (bighead).

State and federal funding sources, including the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund, have provided key funding for the DNR invasive carp detection and response program. Invasive carp captures in Minnesota must be reported to the DNR immediately by calling 651-587-2781 or emailing invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us. People are asked to take a photo and transport the carp to the nearest DNR fisheries office or make arrangements for it to be picked up by a DNR official. A [permit can be requested](#) to keep captured invasive carp for consumption or disposal.

More information about invasive carp is available on the [DNR website](#)



Invasive carp traitors

Continued from page 1

The carp are [voracious eaters](#)—adult bigheads and silvers can consume up to 40% of their bodyweight in a day—and easily out-compete native species, wreaking havoc on aquatic ecosystems. There is no hard estimates of invasive carp populations in the U.S. but they are believed to number in the millions.

State and federal agencies have spent a combined \$607 million to stop the fish, [according to figures The Associated Press compiled](#) in 2020. Spending is expected to hit \$1.5 billion over the next decade.

But wildlife and fisheries experts say it would be nearly impossible to eradicate invasive carp in the U.S. Just keeping them out of the Great Lakes and protecting the region's \$7 billion fishing industry would be a success.



MN DNR Technician James Stone works to remove a floating solar-powered telemetry receiver from the Mississippi River near La Crosse.

Fisheries experts have employed a [host of defenses](#), including electric barriers, walls of bubbles and herding the carp into nets using underwater speakers. But the fish still have made their way up the Mississippi as far as northern Wisconsin and [grass carp have been found in Lake Erie, Lake Michigan and Lake Ontario](#), leaving fisheries managers racing to blunt the incursion.

Agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife managers have built a network of receivers extending from the St. Croix River in far northern Wisconsin to the Gulf of Mexico to record tagged invasive carp's movement, with

periodic data collection. The first receivers were deployed in the Illinois River in an effort to stem migration into Lake Michigan in the early 2000s.

Beginning around 2018, managers started placing new, solar-powered receivers around the Great Lakes region that could track tagged carp and send instant notifications to observers. The real-time notifications reveal where carp may be massing before a migration and illuminate movement patterns, allowing the agencies to plan round-up expeditions to remove carp from the environment and tag more traitor fish.

The receivers are essentially a raft supporting three solar panels and a locked box with a modem and a computer that records contacts with tagged carp. The receivers can pick up signals from tagged fish over a mile away, Fritts said.

He estimated each receiver costs about \$10,000. The federal [Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014](#) authorized a multi-agency offensive against invasive carp in the upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins, allowing the USFWS to spend on the devices through its existing budget.

Agencies have deployed the devices in Lake Erie, a stretch of the Mississippi between the Illinois and Missouri borders, the Illinois River and Chicago-area riverways, Fritts said.

The USFWS has set up four real-time receivers in the Mississippi backwaters extending from Davenport, Iowa, to the Missouri border. [The U.S. Geologic Survey has set up more than a dozen devices](#), including receivers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers in Illinois; and the Sandusky River in Ohio.

The Minnesota DNR began deploying real-time receivers in the Mississippi backwaters forming the Minnesota-Wisconsin border around La Crosse three years ago. The agency had four receivers out this year, funded largely through federal grants. Plans call for

seven next year. Wildlife agencies are still consolidating data on how many invasive carp that real-time tracking has helped them remove, U.S. Fish and Wildlife fisheries spokesperson Janet Lebson said.

But they say the traitor fish tactic is worthwhile, pointing to results in the Mississippi from the Illinois-Iowa Quad Cities to the Iowa-Missouri border. Real-time tracking there has helped wildlife managers and anglers as much as double the poundage of invasive carp pulled from that area of river annually, said Mark Fritts, a fish biologist and telemetry expert in the USFWS's La Crosse office.

The strategy has drawn muted criticism from the fisheries industry because managers return tagged invasive carp to the wild where they can breed, said Marc Smith, policy director at the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional Center. But wildlife agencies need every weapon they can get against the carp, he said.

"In theory, it works," Smith said. "We think the rewards outweigh the risk. We have to throw everything we can at them. I wouldn't want to take anything off the table." Stampfle and fish technician James Stone spent three hours in the Mississippi and Black rivers backwaters around La Crosse on a recent November day removing the receivers for the winter. She said the work is worth it.

"When are these fish moving? If we can figure that out, it gives us a fighting chance," Stampfle said as she guided her flat-bottom boat back to the landing. "Can we keep up with them? I don't think anyone can answer that accurately. It's still unknown territory. It's an uphill battle on a very slick slope. You just pray you have a foothold."

(See related article "Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs partner to capture 323 invasive carp on page 3) ♦

Lake trout season for Lake Superior opened Dec. 1

BAYFIELD, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds anglers that the [Lake Superior's lake trout season](#) is open. The season runs until September 30, 2024 or until the harvest cap is met.

Licenses and stamps can be purchased [online through the Go Wild system](#) or at any [license sales location](#). All regulations apply.

Lake trout are managed in Lake Superior using a quota system with different allocations for different user groups. The Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior are divided into two management units: WI-1, which encompasses all waters from Superior to Bark Point (known as the Western Arm), and WI-2, which includes waters from Bark Point to the Michigan border (known as the Apostle Islands region).

Each of these management units has its own harvest quota based on their respective lake trout populations and typical fishing pressures, and recreational harvest is monitored through sport fishing surveys.

A daily bag limit of three lake trout may be harvested from the Western Arm waters, and only two may be harvested from the Apostle Islands region. In both management units, lake trout must be at least 15 inches long, and only one fish over 25 inches may be kept.

The Apostle Islands region's lake trout quota is generally updated on a 3-year cycle, with the proposed 2024-2026 quota currently in the final stages of the rulemaking process.

As currently proposed, the new quota includes a recreational allocation of 15,000 lake trout, which is about an 18% increase from the current quota. [The Natural Resources Board \(NRB\) will vote on the proposed quota at their meeting on December 13.](#) The public is invited to testify and provide written comments on issues before the board. [Learn more about submitting comments or registering to speak before the NRB on the NRB's webpage.](#) ✧

Minnesota DNR webinar focus on outdoor on-ice winter sports, and owls

The Minnesota DNR invites people interested in wildlife to check out the Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship webinar. On Wednesday, **Dec. 13**, Sparky Stensass, founder and executive director of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, will discuss northern Minnesota's owls, and how to find and photograph these captivating birds. People travel from across the continent and globe to see the owls at Sax-Zim Bog, where there have been 10 owl species recorded in winter.

The webinar is free and offered year-round, though registration is required. Visit the Outdoor Skills and Stewardship webpage of the [Minnesota DNR website](#) (mndnr.gov/discover) for the registration portal, more information about upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars ✧

Outdoors enthusiasts spent \$394 billion last year

The USFWS and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has released the results of the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The survey, coordinated by USFWS shows that U.S. residents over the age of 16 took over 1.7 billion trips in 2022 to participate in outdoor activities like fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, recreational boating, and target shooting. In doing so, outdoor enthusiasts spent an estimated \$394 billion on equipment, travel, licenses, and fees last year alone. Each National Survey is a wealth of information allowing stakeholders, researchers, and agency partners to examine changes in recruitment, participation, and retention in outdoor activities over time. Find [additional survey resources for current and past surveys.](#) ✧

IDNR Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities Grant Award

Springfield, IL – The Illinois DNR announced the latest recipient of a grant for projects funded through the Wildlife Preservation Fund grant program.

The Wildlife Preservation Fund provides grants under the Illinois Non-Game Wildlife Protection Act. Five percent of non-federal dollars deposited into the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund are committed to grants through this program. The Act provides for a voluntary check-off designation on state income tax return forms, allowing individual taxpayers to make charitable donations to the fund.

These contributions provide grants to help with maintenance of existing Illinois wildlife rehabilitation facilities that care for threatened and endangered species. Eligible uses of grant funds are limited to structural repair and maintenance of existing buildings, pens, cages, and appurtenant facilities used to take care of threatened or endangered wildlife species.

IDNR has awarded the following grant through the program:

Willowbrook Wildlife Center – \$4,000 for the center, which is within the Forest Preserve of DuPage County, to install a shallow pool drain in the rehabilitation bird enclosure to facilitate the drainage, cleaning, and refilling of the water source within that enclosure. Willowbrook Wildlife Center rehabilitates about 10,000 sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals annually.

Eligible grant recipients must possess a current wildlife rehabilitation license or permit issued by IDNR and must have provided care for threatened or endangered wildlife during the three-year period preceding the date of their grant application.

Go online for information about applying for a future Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities grant. Find dates for upcoming grant opportunities online. ✧

Fish-tracking network grows strong under leadership of MSU

East Lansing, MI — When driving on turnpikes, some people mount E-ZPass transponders to their car windshields so they can use special lanes that allow drivers to pass through without stopping at traditional highway tollbooths. The car transponders are radio frequency devices that are detected by antennas underneath the E-ZPass signs vehicles travel under. As they enter and exit the lanes, travel information is recorded by the transponders.

In the Great Lakes, populations of fish are managed in a similar way.

Chris Vandergoot, an associate professor in Michigan State University's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, is the director of the Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System, or GLATOS.

He said acoustic telemetry allows

fish to be tracked and monitored using sound. This process occurs using two pieces of equipment: acoustic transmitters surgically tagged within fish, and acoustic receivers stationed underwater.

"We're putting transmitters in these fish — some are as small as a Tic Tac, and some are as large as a double-A battery," Vandergoot said. "The other component to acoustic telemetry, unlike other telemetry systems, is receivers are deployed underwater. Whether they're in a river or a lake, they're sitting there listening for fish to swim by and for that transmitter code to go off."

After tagged fish swim by the receivers, data is collected and stored by the receivers for researchers to analyze.

Founded in 2010, GLATOS

operates underneath the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. It's a research collaborative made up of fishery organizations from the U.S. and Canada, including academic, First Nation, provincial and state sectors.

Tracking fish movement allows researchers to better understand not only how fish behave in the Great Lakes, but also how to manage and stock their populations.

The network of projects worked on through GLATOS allows for ample opportunity for data to be shared among members. If members have questions about their project or are interested in comparing data from other projects, they can use the data portal and obtain information from projects that've been previously uploaded. They can also connect with collaborators directly. To read the full story; [CLICK HERE.](#)

Lake trout research underway on Lake Ontario

Lake trout research underway on Lake Ontario is part of the U.S.-Canada Cooperative Science and Monitoring Initiative (CSMI) field year on the lake. Research collecting data on lake trout movement using acoustic telemetry tags is being led by the USFWS in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries, with outreach assistance from New York Sea Grant (NYSG).

The research team is using specialized tags that communicate with acoustic receivers stationed on the lake bottom. The tags will provide information about the migration patterns and habitats used by adult lake trout. This innovative technology is particularly useful for locating spawning habitats and will help to inform future restoration efforts for potentially degraded spawning sites.

More than 350 lake trout will be tagged in 2023. The tags' battery life allows for the fish to be tracked over

the next 10 years. This research has already produced a "first."

"This work in 2023 represents the first time a wild-produced lake trout has ever been tagged in Lake Ontario", said USFWS Fish Biologist Dimitry Gorsky, Ph.D. "Lake trout are a native species that is important to the ecosystem and to the world-class sport fishery on Lake Ontario."

Gorsky is based at the USFWS Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Basom, New York.

The local charter fishing industry is assisting the research from ports at Mexico Bay, in eastern Lake Ontario, and Wilson, along the western end of the lake. Captain Casey Prisco and First Mates/Captains Roy Letcher and A.J. Berry of Dirty Goose Sport Fishing Charters, based in Pulaski, New York, were contracted to help the research team catch lake trout for the tagging study.

"In late April and early May, lake trout in the eastern end of Lake Ontario were found in deeper water, making them hard to collect with

standard fisheries gear. Charter captains have a wealth of knowledge about the resource and are an efficient way for us to locate and collect the number of lake trout we need to tag," said USGS Biologist Alex Gatch of the USGS Tunison Lake Ontario Biological Station, Cortland, New York.

The tagged fish are returned to the water to resume normal behavior to assure quality data.

New York Sea Grant is providing public outreach support to inform angling, fisheries, and general public audiences about the value of this research.

NYSG Great Lakes Fisheries Specialist Stacy Furgal notes, "Tagged fish that are a part of this study are marked with an external orange-colored tag. If anglers catch a tagged lake trout they can choose to return it to the water, or if the fish is harvested, please contact Alex Gatch, agatch@usgs.gov, 607-753-9391 Ext 7540, to return the internal tracking tag." ✧

Great Lakes Habitat Restoration: Partnering to Promote Fish Production

New Regional Habitat Partnership between the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will support fish habitat restoration priorities in the Great Lakes.

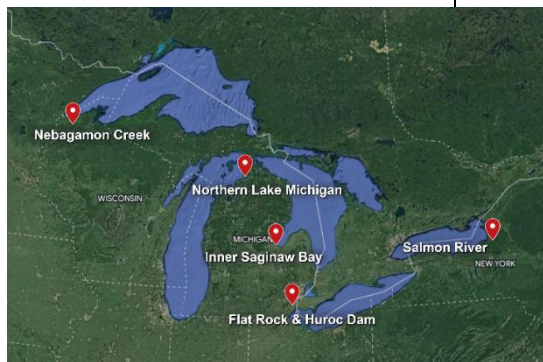
Degradation of coastal, nearshore, and riverine habitats has adversely affected fish communities and fisheries in the Great Lakes for more than a century. Now a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) is advancing restoration goals for important habitat for Great Lakes fish. Working with NOAA Fisheries through a Regional Habitat Partnership funded at \$4.8 million by NOAA, the Commission, along with local partners, is leading implementation of high priority projects as identified by [Lake Committees](#) across the Great Lakes.

The Lake Committees, which include representation by senior officials from state, provincial, and U.S. intertribal fishery agencies, conducted an extensive process to identify habitat constraints on native fish production and to prioritize restoration efforts during the next decade in each of the Great Lakes. High-quality connected habitats are important for sustained fish production—by protecting and improving habitat, fish communities and their associated fisheries can directly benefit. Fish habitat improvement techniques range from regional-scale actions that impact water quality and sediment erosion, to local actions that improve connectivity (e.g., dam removal) or restore open-lake physical habitat (e.g., reef construction). Selecting appropriate strategies and locations for habitat protection and improvement is critical. So, the development of priorities is an important step for progress toward protecting and improving fish habitat.

Prioritization Process

The prioritization process conducted by the Lake Committees yielded a set of priority projects in each Great Lake. A subset of six of the priority projects—ranging from shovel-ready to conceptual—was included as part of the regional partnership. All six

projects will directly contribute to fish production in areas identified by the Lake Committees as priorities. The six projects span the breadth of the Great Lakes with at least one project in each Great Lake, and will benefit a variety of fish species such as state-listed species (lake sturgeon) and targeted species in formal restoration plans (walleye, brook trout, Atlantic salmon, cisco, lake trout). Impairments addressed in these projects include degraded reef substrates, hydrologic barriers in tributaries, excessive in-stream bank erosion, and lack of productive capacity. The projects include four projects being addressed in the first wave of activity (detailed below) and two additional projects which will move forward in a second wave.



Map of the six project sites selected during the process. The Salmon River site includes two projects.

Additional Priority Projects Soon to be Addressed

In addition to the four ongoing projects highlighted above, two additional projects are planned for the future. The first is reef restoration in northern Lake Michigan (near Charlevoix, Michigan – exact location to be determined). This project will identify restoration locations and guide restoration actions for reef rehabilitation in northern Lake Michigan, improving habitat for lake whitefish, lake trout, and cisco. The second is additional in-stream habitat restoration in the Salmon River, Lake

Ontario (Oswego County, New York). This project will focus on restoration of natural erosion and sedimentation processes, and reconnection to the floodplain, in two reaches directly downstream of the Trestle Pool site to improve habitats for Atlantic salmon and other native species.

Strengthening Great Lakes Fisheries, Ecosystems, and Communities

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin include more than 10,000 miles of coastline that are home to more than 3,500 plant and animal species, some of which are found nowhere else on Earth. Yet, extensive human activity for more than a century has led to the loss of habitat for fish, negatively impacting fish production and fisheries in addition to other negative impacts on the region's rich and diverse ecosystems.

The new Regional Habitat Partnership between NOAA and the Commission is working to address critical habitat needs in priority areas of the Great Lakes, thereby contributing to healthy Great Lakes ecosystems and fisheries.

"NOAA is proud to partner with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission on these important efforts to restore habitat and bring benefits to Great Lakes fisheries and communities," said Carrie Selberg Robinson, director of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation.

"Habitat restoration efforts enacted through the partnership will further the Strategic Vision of the Commission and missions of project partners by restoring healthy Great Lakes ecosystems and sustainable fisheries and through the development of strategic alliances and partnerships," said James McKane, the Commission's chair.

For more info: <http://www.glfrc.org/pulse-on-science.php> ✨

Fishing groups sue 13 tire makers over rubber preservative that's deadly to salmon

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — The 13 largest U.S. tire manufacturers are facing a lawsuit from a pair of California commercial fishing organizations that could force the companies to stop using a chemical added to almost every tire because it kills migrating salmon.

Also found in footwear, synthetic turf and playground equipment, the rubber preservative 6PPD has been used in tires for 60 years. As tires wear, tiny particles of rubber are left behind on roads and parking lots, breaking down into a byproduct, 6PPD-quinone, that is deadly to salmon, steelhead trout and other aquatic wildlife when rains wash it into rivers.

“This is the biggest environmental disaster that the world doesn’t quite know about yet,” said Elizabeth Forsyth, an attorney with the environmental law firm Earthjustice, which is representing the fishing groups. “It’s causing devastating impacts to threatened and endangered species.”

The Institute for Fisheries Resources and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in San Francisco against Goodyear, Bridgestone, Continental and others.

In an emailed statement, Bridgestone spokesman Steve Kinkade said the company would not comment on the lawsuit, but that it “remains committed to safety, quality and the environment and continues to invest in researching alternative and sustainably sourced materials in our products.”

Several of the other tire makers did not immediately return emails seeking comment. The U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association, which is not named as a defendant, said in a statement last week that work is already underway to identify a chemical to replace 6PPD while still meeting federal safety standards. Forcing the companies to change too

quickly would be bad for public safety and the economy, it said.

“Our members continue to research and develop alternative tire materials that ensure tire performance and do not compromise safety, consistent with our industry’s commitment to sustainability and respect for the environment,” the association said in another statement.

The fishing organizations filed the lawsuit a week after U.S. regulators said they would review the use of 6PPD in tires in response to a petition from three West Coast Native American tribes. Coho salmon appear to be especially sensitive to the preservative; it can kill them within hours, the tribes argued.

The tribes — the Yurok in California and the Port Gamble S’Klallam and Puyallup tribes in Washington — asked the Environmental Protection Agency to prohibit 6PPD earlier this year.

*To those we love and see each day
And other loved ones far away
To all good friends whose
friendship means so much
And those with whom we're
somehow out of touch ...
Merry Christmas and Happy New
Year*

The agency’s decision to grant the petition is the start of a long regulatory process that could see it banned — one of several efforts on different fronts to recover salmon populations as well as the endangered killer whales in the Pacific Northwest that depend on them.

The chemical’s effect on human health is unknown, the EPA noted.

Forsyth said that as long as 6PPD remains in tires, the companies need a federal permit allowing them to harm species that are protected under the

Endangered Species Act. To do so, they would have to show that they’ve mitigated the harm to salmon to the fullest extent possible, which could mean funding stormwater improvements to keep the chemical from entering aquatic habitats.

No tire company has such a permit, the lawsuit said.

“This has been a problem that has been identified by the industry itself for more than a decade,” said Glenn Spain, the northwest regional director at Institute for Fisheries Resources. “You can’t just sit on your thumbs and hope it will go away. It will not go away.”

The commercial fishers represented by the groups depend on the fish for their livelihood, he said.

Replacing the chemical with another that will make rubber durable without killing fish is a tall task, but one the industry can tackle, Forsyth said: “We’re the nation that figured out how to get lead out of gasoline and still have our cars run. It would shock and surprise me if we cannot make a tire that does not kill up to 100% of coho returning to their native streams.”

Salmon spend their early months or years growing and feeding in freshwater streams and estuaries, before entering the ocean to spend the next few years foraging. They then return to the streams where they were born to spawn.

The chemical’s effect on coho was noted in 2020 by scientists in Washington state, who were studying why fish populations that had been restored in the Puget Sound years earlier were struggling.

“This chemical is ubiquitous in stormwater runoff,” Forsyth said. “It’s ubiquitous in aquatic habitats and is ubiquitous at levels that can kill coho salmon and harm salmon and steelhead at very minute levels.”

New Michigan Lake Huron Basin Coordinator

Doug Schultz will be joining Michigan Fisheries as the new Lake Huron Basin Coordinator. Mr. Schultz has over 18 years of experience with the MN DNR including 12 years as an Area Fisheries Supervisor. In his previous position, Doug supervised over 10 employees, managed a complex budget, and collaborated on the assessment and management of multiple water bodies with tribal nations. Doug has a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State U. and a master's degree from Southern Illinois U.

Doug has extensive experience in creating and managing teams including being Chair of the Walleye Technical Committee and serving on an interagency Cormorant Working Group which he will continue to do but as Michigan's representative. Doug has extensive inter-jurisdictional fisheries management experience working with tribal nations, local units of government, and the public on complex aquatic resource issues involving large inland lakes in Minnesota. These experiences will be very applicable in his new position.

Doug will be starting on January 1, 2024, and will be working out of the Alpena Fisheries Research Station. ✧

NY State recreational saltwater fishing license survey — feedback needed

NYSDEC is seeking feedback from anglers regarding saltwater fishing licenses. Currently, 23 of the 26 U.S. coastal states have a fee-based saltwater license. New York is exploring the potential for a similar license to provide revenue to enhance recreational saltwater fishing and management. Results of this brief and anonymous survey will help gauge interest in such a license and provide information on how the revenue could be used. The NYSDEC survey can be completed in a few minutes electronically. [Learn more >>](#) ✧

Register now for 2024 Central Illinois Youth Goose Hunt

SPRINGFIELD - Youth between the ages of 10 and 17 who would like to participate in the annual Central Illinois Youth Goose Hunt sponsored by the Illinois DNR can register now for the event, which is scheduled for January 15, 2024. Registration opened December 1 and closes December 31. To participate, youth hunters must **go online to register** and follow the instructions. First-time applicants will be given priority over previous participants.

All applicants must possess a valid Illinois hunting or sportsman's license, have a Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration number, and have a 20 gauge or larger shotgun. Youth hunt participants must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must possess a valid firearm owner's identification (FOID) card.

LARE applications due Jan. 15

The deadline for submitting Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grant applications is January 15, 2024. The LARE program strives to protect and enhance aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife while ensuring continued use of Indiana's publicly accessible lakes, rivers, and streams. The program provides technical and financial assistance to qualifying projects that reduce nonpoint sediment and nutrient pollution. Qualifying projects include logjam removal, wetland creation, dam removal, and others. To view a full list of qualifying project types, along with additional information about the LARE program, see lare.dnr.IN.gov. Applicants are encouraged to contact LARE staff regarding potential projects ahead of the application deadline. To learn more about LARE grant requirements or to submit an application, visit on.IN.gov/lare-manual.

Pennsylvania's cold weather life jacket requirement in effect

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Pennsylvania reminds boaters, anglers, and hunters that the annual cold weather life jacket requirement is in effect through April 30; boaters are required to wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or on any kayak, canoe, or paddleboard. The [requirement](#) applies to all Pennsylvania waters.

Boaters should be aware that water temperatures drop rapidly at this time of year, and even on sunny days when air temperatures are comfortable and warm, the water is already cold enough to cause cold water shock, hypothermia, and put your life at risk. A life jacket can keep your head above water until help arrives. Sudden cold-water immersion, or cold-water shock, occurs when a person is unexpectedly plunged into cold water resulting in an involuntary gasp where water is often inhaled. This uncontrollable reaction causes panic, hyperventilation, inhalation of water, and inhibits the ability of a person to swim. ✧

ASA to participate in major sportfishing conference

American Sportfishing Association Gives Anglers a Powerful Voice. Forestville, WI (November 13) – The National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA) announced an expanded relationship with the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) at its upcoming [2024 "Passion to Profession" NPAA Conference](#) in Ft. Myers, Florida, January 5 – 7, 2024. "For all of us working to earn a living in the sportfishing industry, networking is critical, and building the relationship between NPAA's diverse membership and ASA is an effective networking strategy. Individual anglers cannot lobby for the future of the sport on their own. They must become part of this larger network," says NPAA President, Pat Neu. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:**(Click on title or URL to read full article)****[In the battle against invasive carp, federal and state wildlife agencies try it all](#)**

State and federal agencies have spent millions of dollars to stop the spread of invasive carp still threatening the health of Great Lakes waters. Tools used to control invasive carp are varied but include electric barriers, walls of bubbles and underwater speakers used to net large numbers of carp

[New compound may expand sea lamprey control](#)

A newly discovered chemical compound, petromyzonol tetrasulfate — also known as 3sPZS — makes it difficult for invasive sea lamprey to find their breeding grounds and may be a new tool in the toolbox for controlling a parasite that threatens Great Lakes fish

[Why the Great Lakes have the gales of November](#)

Many who have lived in Michigan for a while know that November tends to have stronger storm systems and strong winds, especially over the Great Lakes. Several storms packing gale-force winds have landed in the history books for being destructive and deadly around this time of year, and there is a reason for that.

[Tetra Tech nabs \\$33 million contract](#)

Tetra Tech Inc. has garnered a \$33 million contract from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to design a new navigation lock on the Illinois River. The lock is one of eight on the Illinois Waterway system connecting Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River on the west side of the state; most of the locks are on the Illinois River. These locks adjust water levels to minimize elevation changes for ships navigating the waterways

[St. Lawrence Seaway sets latest closing date ever](#)

The St. Lawrence Seaway announced Friday the shipping channel's St. Lawrence River section will close on January 5, 2024. That's the latest scheduled closing since the Seaway opened in 1959.

[Tribal efforts lead to native wild rice as Michigan state symbol](#)

After years of Indigenous voices elevating the importance of a native keystone aquatic plant called manoomin, it's finally earning its place in Michigan history

[Is a bountiful fall walleye season for Lake Erie and the Detroit River a new thing?](#)

After spring spawning runs, walleye return to shallow waters of Lake Erie's western basin and up into the river during the fall season, leading to good reports of walleye catches.

[Wisconsin DNR adds 51 waters to its list of polluted waterways](#)

Wisconsin environmental regulators are proposing to add 51 new water bodies to the state's list of polluted waters for 2024, as well as 81 new listings for pollutants in waterways. Phosphorus and aquatic plants account for the majority of pollution under new listings.

[COMMENTARY: DNR agrees to move toward commercial take of lake trout in Lake Michigan](#)

Wisconsin DNR announced it is proceeding with the process to allow commercial fishing for lake trout in Lake Michigan. The DNR's decision to give a "yes" in principle to commercial take of lake trout in Lake Michigan is a significant change for Wisconsin fisheries management

[Invasive carp barrier could be delayed because Illinois has yet to sign agreement with U.S. Corps of Engineers](#)

The Army Corps of Engineers is set to start building a barrier near Chicago to keep invasive carp out of the Great Lakes next October. But Illinois still has not signed a Project Partnership agreement that would make it responsible for problems that arise such as environmental cleanups





As we reflect on 2023, our soldiers on active duty around the world, our nation's first responders, our country and its leaders, our own safety, health, family and all we have to be grateful for...our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and blessed and wonderful New Year in 2024.

"...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour..." Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas
and
best wishes for a safe and
Happy New Year