



Lake Erie Walleye, Yellow Perch 2023 Hatch Results – *Great walleye fishing to continue*

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Results from Lake Erie trawl surveys revealed that walleye hatches were exceptional and yellow perch hatches were below average in 2023, according to the Ohio DNR.



Anglers can expect great walleye fishing in Lake Erie to continue following another exceptional hatch in 2023.

“Based on these results, anglers can continue to expect many years of remarkable walleye fishing,” ODNR Division of Wildlife Chief Kendra Wecker said. “The Walleye Capital of the World will have great fishing for years to come thanks to another favorable hatch.”

Although the yellow perch hatch was below the long-term average, anglers in the western basin of Lake Erie can expect some seasonally good fishing for yellow perch during the summer of 2024.

Data from annual trawl surveys conducted by the Division of Wildlife are combined with those collected by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to indicate the combined success of spawning and early life survival of walleye and yellow perch in the western basin. In the central basin, Ohio’s trawls are used in conjunction with other agency surveys to gauge hatch success.

Results allow biologists to estimate how many young fish will enter the catchable population two years later. These indices are a key piece of information used by the inter-agency Lake Erie Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to determine annual levels of safe harvest for walleye and yellow perch.

Walleye

In an unprecedented run of great walleye hatches, four of the survey’s top five hatches have occurred during the past six years. The 2023 western basin walleye hatch index was 132 fish per hectare (a standard measure of catch per area), well above the average of 56, the fifth largest in the survey’s 36-year history.

In the central basin, a trend of exceptional walleye hatches continued with a survey result of 42 young-of-year walleye per hectare, well above **Lake Erie Walleye, Perch 2023**

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Learn to ice fish this season! (MN)

Ice fishing is a fun way to get out and enjoy winter in Minnesota! There’s nothing quite like traveling out on a frozen lake, drilling through the ice with an auger, scooping out the slush and getting some time to catch fish through the ice. You might also be interested in spearing northern pike through the ice. If you want to try ice fishing or expand your skills, the Minnesota DNR has a variety of helpful tips and how-to guides available for free. Check out our [learn to ice fish webpages](#) for general pointers and guides on how to catch a variety of fish species through the ice.

We also have an archive of outdoor skills and stewardship

webinars that step through these skills. The archive includes webinars on ice fishing for panfish, northern pike, lake trout and lake sturgeon, and darkhouse spearing. Head to the [DNR website](#) and search for “ice fishing.” The free webinars are part of the DNR’s Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series, which aims to give participants quick, relevant information on upcoming seasons and events, and skills to help enjoy these opportunities. Live webinars happen each Wednesday at noon, are free to join and registration is required. For general information and fishing regulations, you’ll also want to visit the [DNR fishing page](#) ✧

Learn to Ice Fish (WI)

This five-session workshop will teach you the basic skills to find and catch fish through the ice and prepare them for the table. The workshop is broken into segments, including two indoor sessions, two ice fishing outings near Madison and one cooking class. Fishing licenses will be waived for anglers with less than two years of fishing experience, but participants must obtain a [DNR Customer Identification Number](#).

Refreshments and ice fishing gear will be provided.

- **Tuesday, Feb. 6 and Wednesday, Feb. 7, 6 – 8:30 p.m.** Classroom sessions at DNR Hdqtrs, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI
- **Saturday, Feb. 10 and Sunday, Feb. 11, 9 a.m. – noon**, Ice fishing outings on lakes around Madison, WI. Exact location TBD during workshop.
- **Monday, Feb. 12, 5:30 – 9 p.m.** Velma Hamilton Middle School Culinary Arts Room, 4801 Waukesha Street, Madison, WI

Anglers must attend the indoor sessions to be eligible for the fishing outings and cooking session. This class is free. Your registration confirms your attendance.

To Register: Visit the DNR's [course list on Go Wild](#) and enroll in the "Fishing For Dinner" course in Dane County. You will need your [DNR Customer Identification Number](#) to register.

Registration Deadline: January 25, 2024

Questions: Contact Cal Sinclair at Calvin.Sinclair@wisconsin.gov or 608-419-2078 or Theresa Stabo at Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov or 608-577-6332.

Can't make the workshop but still want to learn how to catch and cook fish? Check out our tips for [getting started in fishing](#) or head to the [Go Wild course list](#) to explore upcoming opportunities. ✧

Prepare to Ice Fish

Visit the DNR's [Fish Equipment for Loan webpage](#) to find a loaner site with ice fishing equipment. Locations with ice fishing equipment will have an "IF" next to their name. Essential gear is available; however, sites do not offer ice augers. Hours and available equipment vary, so contact the site in advance and create a plan to pick up the gear. Continue the fishing fun after Free Fishing Weekend by [purchasing a fishing license](#).

The next Free Fishing Weekend will take place June 1 – 2, 2024. ✧

Inland Trout early catch and release season open

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds anglers that early catch and release season for inland trout is open. On designated inland waters, anglers can target any of Wisconsin's four inland trout species through May 3, 2024 using artificial tackle only. Any trout caught need to be immediately released. Check the [Guide to Wisconsin's Trout Fishing Regulations](#) for more information. Once the general hook and line season opens on May 4, 2024, anglers can keep the trout they catch, provided length requirements are met and bag limits are observed.

Anyone wishing to participate in the season will need a 2023-2024 fishing license and an inland trout stamp, which are good until March 31, 2024, and can be purchased through [Go Wild](#), the DNR's license portal, or an [authorized license agent](#). As of April 1, 2024, anglers will need a 2024-2025 fishing license and inland trout stamp. All anglers are encouraged to continue to practice responsible catch and release and reduce their reel and fish handling time as much as possible. Tips on releasing your catch responsibly can be found on the [DNR's responsible catch and release webpage](#). You can also find more information on trout fishing on the [DNR's trout fishing webpage](#) ✧



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Position Statement

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

Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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Lake Ontario April prey fish survey results and Alewife assessment (2023)

Summary

The April bottom trawl survey and Alewife population assessment provides science to inform Lake Ontario fisheries management. The 2023 survey included 215 trawls in the main lake and embayments and sampled depths from 6.5 to 252 m (21 – 827 ft.). The survey captured 1,012,178 fish from 32 species with a total weight of 12,136 kg (26,700 lbs.). Alewife were 92% of the catch by number while Rainbow Smelt, Deepwater Sculpin, and Round Goby comprised 3%, 3%, and 1% of the catch respectively. To improve the accuracy of prey fish biomass and density estimates we reanalyzed trawl sensor data from each of three participating survey vessels and created vessel-specific relationships predicting how bottom trawl bottom contact time, wing width, and area-swept varies with depth.

Total Alewife biomass increased in 2023 due to growth and survival of the abundant 2020 year class (now age-3) and an abundant 2022 year class (age-1). The 2023 mean Alewife biomass was the largest since whole lake sampling began in 2016 and was the ninth largest value observed in the modern time series (1997-2023, maximum value in 2000 = 91.8 kg·ha⁻¹). The 2023 Alewife density (6795 n·ha⁻¹) was the greatest density observed in the modern time series. These high biomass and density values are due to above average Alewife reproductive success in 2020 and 2022. Simulation modeling suggests the 2024 and 2025 Alewife biomass index may be substantially higher than the 2023 observations.

In 2023, the Rainbow Smelt biomass index increased relative to the 2022 index, as did the biomass index for Cisco. In contrast, Emerald Shiner and Threespine Stickleback biomass values continue to be low (< 0.01 kg·ha⁻¹). Three Bloater were captured during the 2023 survey. Hydro-acoustic sampling conducted during the bottom trawl survey estimated prey

fish densities in pelagic habitats not sampled by the bottom trawl (3 m below the surface to 3 m above the lake bottom) and these densities were hundreds to thousands of times lower than bottom trawl-based densities. These results support the idea that, in April, when the warmest water is on the lake bottom, Alewife and most other pelagic prey fish are near the lake bottom and can be effectively sampled with bottom trawling.

Full report: [2023 Lk Ontario April PreyfishAlewifeReport.pdf \(glfc.org\)](https://glfc.org/2023-Lk-Ontario-April-PreyfishAlewifeReport.pdf)

Why study Lake Ontario prey fish?

Lake Ontario fisheries are important to Canadian and U.S. economies, with an estimated annual economic value of US\$440 million in New York in 2017. The salmon and trout fisheries are managed by altering salmonid stocking levels to stay in balance with lake productivity and prey fish availability. This management approach requires reliable information about prey fish populations like Alewife. Alewife are native to the Atlantic Coast and likely gained access to Lake Ontario in the 1860's through canals. Since annual prey fish surveys began in 1978, Alewife have been the most abundant fish in Lake Ontario and have supported most of the lake's predators. Over time, food web productivity and prey fish abundance have declined and are likely driven by declines in mineral nutrient concentration (i.e., phosphorus). Concerns related to having sufficient prey fish abundance to support the lake's salmonids have resulted in the management agencies taking an adaptive approach and adjusting stocking numbers based on prey fish biomass, and other indicators. Multiple stocking adjustments (reductions and increases) have been made, first in the mid-1990s and again from 2016 – present. In addition to Alewife population information, surveys also illustrate the status and spatial distribution of other prey fishes and native species of restoration or conservation interest.

This report presents the results from the multi-agency 2023 Lake Ontario April prey fish survey and Alewife assessment. Results are tailored to inform the Fish Community Objectives: “Increase prey fish diversity—maintain and restore a diverse prey-fish community including Alewife, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt, Emerald Shiner, and Threespine Stickleback” and “Maintain predator/prey balance—maintain abundance of top predators (stocked and wild) in balance with available prey fish”. This research is also guided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Ecosystems Mission Area, Species Management Research Program to “provide science that is used by managers, policy makers, and others for decisions that protect, conserve, and enhance healthy fish and wildlife populations”

How are Alewife population age structure and year class abundance determined?

We annually interpret Alewife ages from sagittae otoliths (ear stones) to estimate the abundance of each Alewife year class (all the fish born in a particular year). Ages are interpreted for 500 to 1300 Alewife from multiple interpreters using compound microscopes, and reflected light. Year class abundances were estimated using an age-length key developed from annual age interpretations and length frequency distributions. Tracking the abundance of each year class through time allows us to estimate survival and growth and then predict how the Alewife population may change in the future.

RESULTS

Survey timing, extent, and catch: The 2023 April bottom trawl survey conducted 215 trawls in main lake and embayment sites (Fig.1), at depths from 6.5 to 252 m (21 – 827 ft.).

Lake Ontario prey fish / alewife

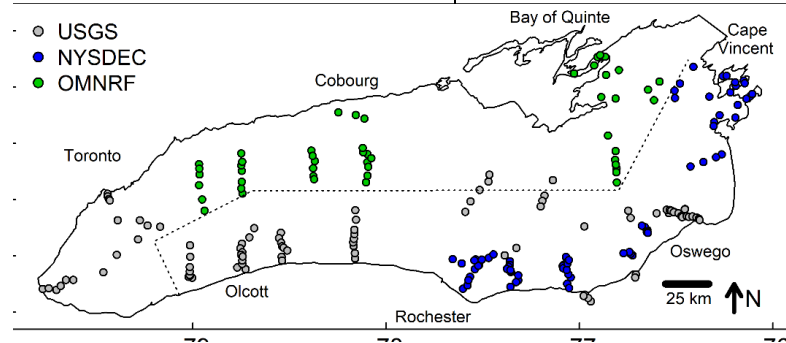
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Lake Ontario prey fish / alewife

Continued from page 3

The survey captured 1,012,178 fish from 32 species with a total weight of 12,136 kg (26,700 lbs.) and 288 kg (634 lbs.) of dreissenid mussels. Numerically, Alewife were 92% of the catch while Rainbow Smelt, Deepwater Sculpin, and Round Goby, comprised 3%, 3%, and 1% of the catch respectively.

Fig 1. Lake Ontario bottom trawl sites from the 2023 multi-agency April prey fish survey



Alewife biomass, density, and condition indices

The 2023 Alewife biomass and density indices increased relative to 2022 and were among the highest values estimated in the modern time series, 1997 to 2023. While the adult biomass index was predicted to increase in 2023, the above average catches of age-1 Alewife (2022 year class) contributed to both the greater biomass and density increases observed in 2023. The biomass estimate for the 2022 year class (captured as age-1) was slightly below the high value observed for the 2020 year class. We note that the adjustments to the vessel specific area swept estimates shifted some of the biomass and density values relative to previous year's figure. These shifts tended to increase these index values compared to estimates

continued next column

Pelagic fish biomass indices (non-Alewife)

The Rainbow Smelt biomass index increased relative to the 2022 index as did the biomass index for Cisco, Emerald Shiner and Threespine Stickleback, biomass estimates continue to be low.

Native species of interest – Bloater

Three Bloater were captured during the 2023 April survey. Bloater are a native pelagic prey fish that was extirpated from Lake Ontario and is currently being reintroduced. This species closely resembles Cisco, therefore identification is confirmed using genetic analyses of fin tissue. Nine of the fifteen Bloater recaptured

based on a single area swept relationship applied to all vessels. Alewife condition, measured as the predicted weight of a 165 mm fish (6.5 inches), declined in 2023 relative to 2022 which is expected given the observed increases in biomass and density.

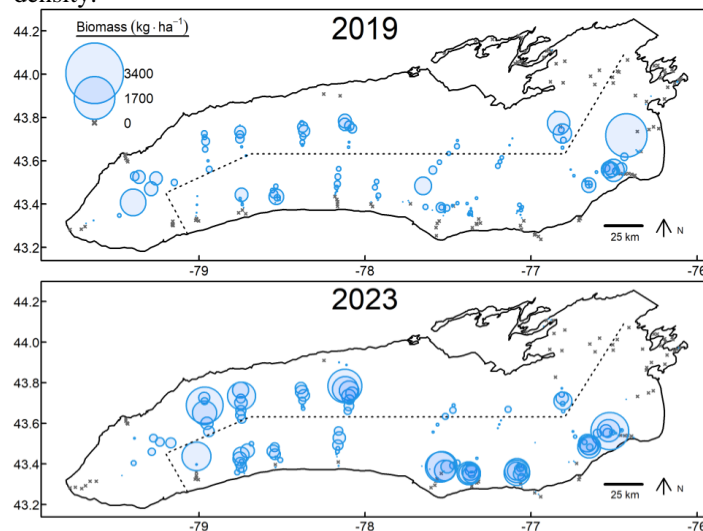


Figure 2. Biomass distribution of Alewife (all ages) in Lake Ontario from the April bottom trawl survey, 2019 -2023. Dotted line represents the U.S. – Canada border.

since stocking began were caught in the April bottom trawl survey, highlighting this survey's value for tracking the restoration progress. Recaptured Bloater are most likely encountered within a relatively narrow depth range from 75 – 95 m (247 – 314 ft.) along L. Ontario's southern shore.

Lake Whitefish

Lake Whitefish are native to Lake Ontario and once supported important commercial fisheries in both U.S. and Canada. The whole lake spatial coverage of the April bottom trawl survey provides a unique perspective for understanding Lake Whitefish distribution and population status. The species is rarely encountered in U.S. waters during the April survey but is

more regularly captured in Canadian water near or within the Bay of Quinte.

Naturally reproduced Lake Trout

Lake Trout restoration in Lake Ontario began in the 1970s and the lake-wide coverage of the April trawl survey can inform the status of the restoration. Catches of naturally reproduced juvenile Lake Trout (total length < 500 mm) are generally rare, but these fish have been encountered more frequently in trawls near the Niagara River beginning in 2012. The large density observed in 2019 in Canadian catches resulted from sampling a transect that was not normally surveyed but is adjacent to the Niagara River in Canadian waters. ✧

750k lbs. of invasive silver carp harvested from Illinois River

OGLESBY, Ill – The Illinois DNR says a record amount of invasive silver carp have been pulled from an Illinois River impoundment using seine nets. Between November 27 and December 6, commercial fishers and biologists pulled 750,000 pounds of invasive carp from the Starved Rock Pool, an impoundment near Oglesby, Ill.

The IDNR [says](#) it was the single largest fish removal undertaken by the agency and “is believed to be a record for freshwater harvest within the United States.” “Clearly, this removal technique is highly effective, but it is also highly dependent on water levels and water temperature,” said Brian Schoenung, IDNR aquatic nuisance species program manager. “This past week provided near perfect conditions, which facilitated the record-breaking haul of fish.”

The harvest is part of an Illinois program to suppress the population of invasive silver and bighead carp, formerly known as Asian carp, in state waterways through commercial fishing. Should the invasive fish reach Lake Michigan and become established in the Great Lakes, they are estimated to have a major disruptive impact on fisheries and recreational boating.

Silver carp can injure people by leaping from the water when disturbed and both species would likely compete with native fish for food and habitat.

Commercial fishing in the Illinois River is intended to reduce the number of fish attempting to pass electric barriers in Romeoville, which is upstream of a chokepoint in the Chicagoland waterway system where fortifications are planned at

the Brandon Road Lock and Dam on the Des Plaines River.

In 2022, fishers removed 350,000 pounds of silver carp using seine nets. Illinois says approximately 1 million pounds of fish are removed from state waterways each year.

Last year, Illinois launched a program to rebrand the fish as “[copi](#)” in a bid to make the fish more palatable to consumers.

Great Lakes advocates say Illinois [still needs to sign an agreement](#) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to allow fortification plans to move forward at Brandon Road.

Michigan and Illinois agreed this year to [jointly pay \\$114 million](#) toward covering non-federal costs of the \$1.3 billion project, which is scheduled to begin construction in 2024. ✧

2023 Lake Ontario Survey Summary - Another Great Year of Fishing on Lake Ontario

The Lake Ontario creel survey recently wrapped up another season, and preliminary results indicate:

- Excellent Chinook salmon fishing in 2023. Angler catch rates for Chinook during the 2023 fishing season were the second highest in the 37-year survey and 40% above the 10-year average.
- Relatively smaller Chinook (kings) compared to the long-term average, but still running about 18.4 pounds for an age-3 fish.
 - Higher catches of Atlantic salmon across all areas. Although still relatively rare, catches of this native species are on the rise with catch rates 82% above the 10-year average in 2023.
- Decent brown trout fishing. West area anglers targeting browns struggled a bit in the spring and larger browns were reportedly harder to come by across all areas, but the “cookie-cutter” 2 to 4

pound browns were plentiful in the east and east central areas, and lake-wide seasonal catch rates placed 8% above the 10-year average.

- Below average catch rates for steelhead and lake trout. Catch rates for these species may have been affected in 2023 because they are targeted less when Chinook fishing is good. Lake trout abundance may also be down due to the record high numbers of parasitic lamprey observed in 2022. Fortunately, lamprey numbers have come down in 2023.

More details can be found in the survey’s monthly reports posted on the [Lake Ontario Fisheries Management and Research page](#), and the full survey report will be available in early 2024. The Lake Ontario creel survey continues in the tributaries from now until next

spring, so be on the lookout for DEC creel agents and reports in the coming months. ✧



Regulation amendment for select steelhead rivers

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission recently adopted regulation changes to establish a daily possession limit of one (1) rainbow trout 20 inches or greater year-round on select rivers, effective April 1, 2024. The amendment will be a new component of the current daily possession limit regulation covering Type 3 and Type 4 waters where five (5) fish, but no more than three (3) trout 15 inches or greater with only one (1) rainbow trout 20 inches or greater are allowed.

The selected rivers are listed below by type regulation category. Where a confluence is mentioned, that simply means the point where two flowing bodies of water join together.



Type 3 waters

- **Bear Creek (Manistee County):** upstream boundary, County Road 600; downstream boundary, confluence with the Manistee River.
- **Carp River (Marquette County):** upstream boundary, confluence with Morgan Creek (T47N, R25W, S4); downstream boundary: Lake Superior.
- **Manistee River (Manistee County):** upstream boundary, Tippy Dam; downstream boundary, Railroad Bridge below M-55 (T21N, R16W, S6).
- **Muskegon River (Muskegon and Newaygo counties):**

upstream boundary, Croton Dam; downstream boundary, M-120.

- **Pere Marquette River (Mason County):** upstream boundary, Reek Road (Indian Bridge); downstream boundary, Old U.S. 31.

Type 4 waters

- **Betsie River (Benzie and Manistee counties):** upstream boundary, Kurick Road; downstream boundary, M-22.
- **Little Manistee River (Lake, Manistee and Mason counties):** upstream boundary, Johnson's Bridge (Johnson Road); downstream boundary, 300 feet above the Little Manistee River Weir.
- **Pere Marquette River (Lake and Mason counties):** upstream boundary, upstream edge of the boat ramp/slide at Gleason's Landing; downstream boundary, Reek Road (Indian Bridge).
- **Pere Marquette River – Big South Branch (Mason, Newaygo and Oceana counties):** upstream boundary, confluence with Beaver and Winnebago creeks; downstream boundary, confluence with the Pere Marquette River.

- **Prairie Creek (Ionia and Montcalm counties):**
- **Rogue River (Kent County):** upstream boundary, Rockford Dam at East Bridge Street; downstream boundary, confluence with the Grand River.
- **Whitefish River including East and West branches (Delta County):** upstream boundary, from 38th Road (USFS 2236); downstream boundary, U.S. 2 bridge in T41N, R21W, S28.
- **White River – North Branch (Oceana County):** upstream boundary, Arthur Road; downstream boundary, confluence with the main branch.

The new fishing regulations came in response to public comment to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission in support of lower bag limits for steelhead to increase catch and release opportunities in certain rivers that support natural reproduction of steelhead.

The regulation changes will be reflected in the 2024 fishing regulations booklet, which will be available at Michigan.gov/DNRRegs in March 2024, and on the [Michigan DNR Hunt and Fish app](https://Michigan.gov/DNR_Hunt_and_Fish) April 1, 2024.

Michigan DNR Hunt Fish, an official app of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, provides a mobile path to buy and store hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle and snowmobile licenses and permits, report harvests, access guides and digests, and get the latest outdoor recreation updates. Make future online fishing license purchases even quicker by selecting auto-renew at checkout to automatically receive licenses in the future.

The DNR manages Michigan's fisheries resources for current and future generations by making scientific, research-based decisions and regulatory recommendations. Regulations are one tool the DNR uses to implement management strategies to protect, conserve and improve Michigan's fisheries. Learn more about the DNR's efforts at Michigan.gov/Fishing. ✧

Watch for Moose

Motorists should be aware that moose are rutting at this time of year. For those rural areas that have moose populations, wildlife managers say moose will be wandering around looking for mates and walking into roads without paying attention to vehicles. Take precautions to avoid colliding with these large critters. You can do this year-round, but with tracks and evidence of critters more visible with snow on the ground, winter is one of the best times. ✧

Registration open for ‘Becoming an Outdoors Woman’ program in the UP

The Michigan DNR announced registration is open for this winter’s “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” weekend workshop, as well as several upcoming Beyond BOW events.

The weekend workshop is set for February 23-25, 2024, in Marquette County. This winter will mark the 23rd annual winter BOW gathering for women, 18 and older, who are seeking an opportunity to improve their outdoor skills in a relaxed, noncompetitive atmosphere.

The BOW program is sponsored by the DNR and offers instruction in two dozen different types of indoor and outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, archery, winter camping and shelter building, ice fishing, winter biking, wilderness first aid, wood burning, snowshoe along with several new features, such as wild game butchering, and nature journaling.

Instructors provide basic and advanced teaching that is tailored to each participant’s individual ability. The program also includes special evening programs during the weekend. BOW participants stay and take their classes at the Bay Cliff Health Camp, a universally accessible facility overlooking Lake Superior, which is situated about 30 miles north of Marquette, near Big Bay. Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with amenities including a sauna and hiking trails with access to northern hardwood forests and Lake Superior.

The \$300 registration fee includes all food and lodging, as well as most equipment and supplies, except as noted in the registration materials. Scholarships are also available on a limited basis.

In addition to the traditional winter weekend workshop, several smaller Beyond BOW events are upcoming including:

Harlow Lake Cabins and Snowshoe, Jan. 19-21, 2024, Marquette County. The Wetmore Landing, Little Presque Isle and Harlow Lake area offers 19 miles of hiking trails. This

area boasts a Lake Superior shoreline trail that goes along Little Presque Isle Point, a loop along Harlow Lake, and a view from the top of Hogsback Mountain, which is one of the highest points in the Upper Peninsula. Additional trails lead you to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain, Top of the World and Bareback Mountain. The North Country Trail also passes through this area.

In the evenings, enjoy the seclusion and quiet of rustic log cabins tucked away among the birch and pine woodlands of Harlow Lake. The one room log cabins can accommodate up to eight people, though we will only have 4 participants in each cabin to keep things comfortable. Participant cabins will be located on the Harlow Lake peninsula.

Moonlight Snowshoe Hike, Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, 5:30 p.m. EST, West Branch, Ogemaw County. Have you always wanted to go snowshoeing in the moonlight? Well, here’s your chance! Participants will meet at the trailhead about 3 miles North of West Branch (must have a Recreation Passport or Michigan State Day Pass to park). You will have the opportunity to snowshoe between 1.5 and 4 miles. We will start with a 1–2 -mile loop, bringing us back to the vehicle parking lot. Participants will have the option to stop here or continue with a different 2 -mile loop. If there is not enough snow to snowshoe, this will become a winter hike.

DIY Backcountry Meals, Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2023, 5:30-7 p.m. EST, Marquette, MI 49855 There’s nothing wrong with classic backcountry freeze-dried meals but have you ever considered making your own meals from items at the grocery store? In this class, you can expect to enjoy at least six homemade backcountry meals using a variety of ingredients. Expect this to be a hands-on class and to go home with recipes to use in the future. You will be able to sample all meals and will leave full!

Class information, registration materials and scholarship applications, are available online to print at Michigan.gov/BOW. **Payment and registration materials should be sent to the address on the registration paperwork in Marquette.**

Finally, we have some save the date information for weekend BOW events scheduled for later into 2024:

- Summer weekend workshop, Bay Cliff Health Camp, Marquette County - May 31-June 2, 2024.
- Fall weekend workshop, Camp Daggett, Charlevoix County - Oct. 25-27, 2024.

For more information on the winter BOW program, e-mail at DNRBOW@michigan.gov. ✧

Five paid internships offered in the Chesapeake Bay

Each summer, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office and [Chesapeake Research Consortium](https://ChesapeakeResearchConsortium.org) team up to offer several paid summer internships primarily for college students. In summer 2024, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office will offer five internships covering a range of Chesapeake Bay science-related topics. Each paid internship will run 12 weeks (mid-May through mid-August). The application deadline is **January 28, 2024**. There are two different programs.

The Chesapeake-Student Recruitment, Early Advisement and Mentoring (C-StREAM) Program is for college students who identify as people of color and/or who are first-generation college students. These internships are for undergraduate students who will enter their sophomore, junior, or senior year of college this fall, or for recent college graduates (including graduate students). Visit the [C-StREAM website](https://C-StREAM.org) for details on the program. We are offering two positions through C-StREAM for summer 2024:

[Contact us](#) with questions on any of these Chesapeake Bay internships. ✧

Milestone reached in continuing Arctic grayling reintroduction effort



In early November, three Michigan lakes were stocked with Arctic grayling. These fish are surplus from the establishment of a grayling brood stock as part of the Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative. The initiative has been underway since Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources began a partnership aimed at reintroducing this iconic species to Michigan waters in 2015.

The full partnership now includes nearly 50 stakeholder and partner groups, along with the general and angling public.

Four hundred grayling were stocked at Alger County's West Johns Lake, 300 at Penegor Lake in Houghton County and nearly 1,300 in Manistee County's Pine Lake. The fish were taken from the Marquette State Fish Hatchery in Marquette and represented year classes from 2019 and 2021.

"When starting a year-class of brood stock, you always start with more than you will need in the end to allow for potential losses to disease, mechanical issues, et cetera," said Ed Eisch, assistant chief of the DNR's Fisheries Division. "Such losses never materialized with the two year-classes that were stocked. The numbers needed to be thinned down to levels

that are safe to carry into the future at the Marquette hatchery."

With the third year-class recently clearing their requisite health inspections, it is highly likely that there will be additional surplus available for stocking again next fall.

The Arctic grayling, called "Nmégos" by indigenous people, was an important connection to nature as it provided a substantial food source for the Anishinabek people's subsistence.

This connection has been lost for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians community and the Anishinabek people through the extirpation of the Arctic grayling from Michigan. The arctic grayling reintroduction initiative, with the supporting partners, provides a way to reconnect the Anishinabek people with their culture and heritage.

"There is a strong Tribal interest in reclaiming what was lost. To recapture what has been lost takes more effort, but as a Tribe, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is committed to this project because it is the right thing to do," said Larry Romanelli, Ogema Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

At the October meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, fishing regulations were modified so that it is now legal for an angler to attempt to catch, but not harvest, Arctic grayling.

"We're excited to be able to provide this opportunity for Michigan's anglers to try to catch an Arctic grayling this early in the reintroduction initiative," said DNR Fisheries Division Chief Randy Claramunt. "Anglers need to be aware, though, that any grayling that they catch must be released. They cannot be harvested." The lakes the grayling are stocked in are open to fishing from the last Saturday in April until October 31.

Arctic grayling are known to be susceptible to handling stress when caught by recreational anglers. Anglers are encouraged to use single,

barbless hooks and to allow the fish to remain in the water when taking them off the hook. Actions such as these will reduce the chances that the released fish will die.

Now that the three lots of future broodstock have been developed, the Little River Band, the DNR and other partner groups are eyeing spring of 2025 as the likely timeline for the first eggs to go into remote site incubators. While it would be great to start earlier, females of one year class need to be spawned with males from a different year class. This results in the most genetically fit fish possible by avoiding the potential or crossing siblings.



Work continues by several partner groups to collect stream data to determine which watershed will be selected to receive the first eggs in this initiative.

Visit [Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative \(migrayling.org\)](https://migrayling.org) to learn more about this exciting effort. ✧

Lake Michigan Net Pen Public Meeting **Jan 16**

The Wisconsin DNR will hold a public meeting to present information and discuss the use of net pens for salmon rearing on Lake Michigan.

The meeting will take place on Tuesday, **Jan. 16** at 6 p.m. at Lakeshore Technical College's Manitowoc Room in Cleveland, Wisconsin. The meeting will also be available virtually via [Zoom](https://zoom.us). DNR staff will present the results of the 2015-2021 net pen study. Stakeholders can share ideas and input on the use of the net pens ✧

\$350,000 in Grants Awarded to Finger Lakes Watershed Projects

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced \$350,000 in grant awards to help partners in the Finger Lakes watershed restore and protect water quality. The eight projects funded through DEC's Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program complement federal, private, and DEC grant programs, as well as achieve the goals outlined in the Great Lakes Action Agenda and aid the implementation of clean water plans in the Finger Lakes. This is the first round of grants awarded through the program.

"The Finger Lakes region is an environmental, recreational, and economic treasure and investing in sustainable watershed practices in the Finger Lakes and across the state is essential," said Commissioner Seggos. "The \$350,000 grants awarded today will help advance key projects in the Finger Lakes watershed to improve water quality, promote thriving fish and wildlife habitats, and implement sustainable watershed practices benefiting the region's communities and economy vitality."

The grants awarded will help municipalities, soil and water conservation districts, colleges and universities, and not-for-profit organizations fund projects designed to preserve and protect the Finger Lakes watershed. DEC's Finger Lakes Watershed Hub administers the grants as part of its work to promote enhanced collaboration and coordination by bringing stakeholders together to share scientific expertise and find solutions necessary to better understand, protect, and address the water quality issues confronting the Finger Lakes.

Central and western New York's Finger Lakes watershed is the combined area of the 11 glacially formed Finger Lakes and their watersheds, consisting of

approximately 4,600 square miles in all or parts of 13 counties, and includes three of the 10 largest lakes within New York State. The Finger Lakes watershed is contained in the Seneca-Oneida-Oswego and Genesee River drainage watersheds, which ultimately flow north to Lake Ontario.

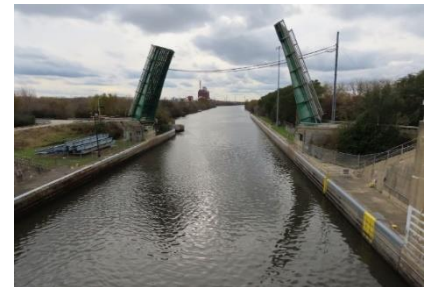
Funding will be used to implement projects to restore and protect water quality by: monitoring and supporting research to better understand and address the issues and vulnerabilities facing the Finger Lakes; planning and implementing best management practices; and supporting education and outreach programs to increase public understanding of Finger Lakes natural resources, build community involvement, and encourage future stewardship.

These grants augment funding recently supplied to other Finger Lakes projects. To date, New York State has awarded more than \$371 million in grants to reduce the frequency of harmful algal blooms by targeting phosphorus and nitrogen pollution. Of these projects, 55 were in [DEC Regions 7 and 8](#) (which include the Finger Lakes region), totaling \$47 million through Water Quality Improvement Project and Nonpoint Source Planning grants, and an additional \$14 million in land acquisition projects to protect more than 2,000 acres.

To date, more than \$14 million has been invested in HABs research and development, pilot projects to mitigate HABs, and advanced monitoring. In addition, since 2017, 19 implementation project grants totaling more than \$10 million have been awarded to the Owasco Lake watershed through various New York State grants for critical water quality protection and improvement practices. These include projects that cover nutrient management planning, Owasco Flats restoration, cover crops, streambank stabilization, and land acquisition. ✧

MN DNR looking to fill 200 paid summer internships

Minnesota DNR is looking for passionate and dedicated students interested in learning more about natural resource careers through paid summer internships. DNR summer interns gain valuable training, build meaningful experience and help create a healthy, sustainable, and inclusive Minnesota. The DNR has a wide variety of internship opportunities throughout the state, including in fisheries, forestry, park operations, watercraft inspections, communications and more. Interns work 20 to 40 hours per week and receive a competitive wage of \$19 per hour. To be considered for an internship, fulfilling an academic requirement or receiving academic credit is required.



To review the internship opportunities and apply for those of interest, visit the state of Minnesota [careers website](#) opens in a new browser tab. "Search for jobs" from the toolbar. In the External Applicants box, select "Search for jobs now" and select "View all jobs." Filter by "Natural Resources Dept." in the Agency category and "Student Worker and Internships" in the Job Family category.

Applications will be accepted through **January 31**. Positions will start in May and June.

The DNR is an equal opportunity and veteran-friendly employer. We celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion. To request an accommodation or alternative format of the applications, contact us at: ADA.diversity.DNR@state.mn.us opens in a new browser tab; 651-259-5016; or call using a preferred telecommunications relay provider. ✧

Snowmobilers: Sled Safe This Season

MADISON, Wis. – As Wisconsin receives measurable snowfall and many trails are anticipated to open for the first time this season, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is reminding snowmobilers to operate within their limits, stay sober and ride only on designated trails.

[In the early months of 2023, there were 16 fatal snowmobile crashes, with 10 involving alcohol.](#) Alcohol affects your risk perception and reaction time. If you choose to consume alcohol, wait until after you've safely returned home—it could save your life.

“Excessive speed, alcohol use and inexperience contribute to snowmobile crashes. Remember to ride responsibly and look out for yourself and others. Sober riding is always the best policy,” said Lt. Jake Holsclaw, DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator. “Snowmobiles and

drinking don't mix. Making the smart choice and abstaining from alcohol can save your life. Impairment of any kind, either by drugs or alcohol, can have tragic consequences.”

Early-Season Ice Safety Reminders

- Remember that ice is never completely safe under any conditions.
- The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Contact local sport shops to ask about conditions locally on the lake or river you want to cross.
- Wear proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or float coat should you fall through the ice and to help retain body heat.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas.
- Slow down when traveling at night.

- Know if the lake has inlets, outlets or narrows that have currents that can thin the ice.
- Watch for pressure ridges or ice buckling. These can be dangerous due to thin ice and open water.

In addition to these ice safety tips, the DNR reminds riders to check trail conditions ahead of time by contacting your county forestry and/or parks department, local snowmobile clubs, or viewing [Travel Wisconsin's Snow Report](#).

Remember – operating a snowmobile off a designated trail is considered trespassing and can damage private property.

Visit [the DNR's snowmobiling webpage](#) for additional information on [snowmobile safety classes](#), [regulations](#), [safety tips](#) and [how to register your snowmobile](#). ✧

Lake Erie Walleye, Perch 2023

Continued from page 1

the average of seven per hectare. This was the second highest of 34 survey years. Central basin walleye hatches are likely a small component of the lake-wide population, but tagging studies suggest that fish hatched in the central basin spend more time there compared to migratory walleye from the western basin. Good central basin walleye hatches provide local fishing opportunities when large schools of migratory walleye have left.

Western basin yellow perch

The western basin yellow perch hatch was below average but should contribute to the above-average population. The Ohio-Ontario survey index was 381 young-of-year yellow perch per hectare, below the average of 464. This year's results rank 18th of the survey's 36 years. In 2023, mid-summer and late fall yellow perch fishing in the western basin provided the best angler harvest rates observed in years. Hatch contributions from

previous years should continue the trend of good yellow perch fishing in 2024.

Central basin yellow perch

The central basin is split into two management zones for yellow perch, the central zone (Huron to Fairport Harbor) and the east zone (Fairport Harbor to the Ohio-Pennsylvania border). Hatch results were below average for both zones. The central zone index of 13 young-of-year perch per hectare was below the average of 38, and the east zone index of three per hectare was below the average of 37. The central and east zone hatches ranked 20th and 28th of the 34 survey years, respectively. Limit catches of large yellow perch were again common in the late fall near central basin harbors in 2023, indicating that good seasonal opportunities still exist despite lower populations.

“Lake Erie yellow perch are surveyed and managed as regional populations within management zones. Our surveys during the past decade have shown a trend of more consistent hatch success in the western basin,” said

Travis Hartman, Lake Erie Fisheries Program Administrator. “The Division of Wildlife uses these zones to monitor perch hatches and, by comparing results to previous years, determine safe harvest levels.”

Variability in regional hatch success is expected on Lake Erie because of the size of the lake, differences among basins, and prevailing weather conditions. Hatch success is largely determined by the timing and availability of favorable conditions for both spawning and survival of newly hatched yellow perch in the spring and summer. Strong lake-wide yellow perch hatches are rare. It is common to observe poor hatches in the central and east zones when those in the west zone are better. When conditions favor the central basin, the pattern is anticipated to reverse. Long-term data support these observations.

For more information on the Lake Erie fisheries and to find fishing reports, maps, and more resources, visit [wildohio.gov](#). Download the [HuntFish OH mobile app](#) for fishing information on the go. ✧

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

[State legislation could help put the Great Lakes' first offshore wind farm in Chicago](#)

A bill that would realize the Great Lakes' first offshore wind farm in Chicago is under consideration in the Illinois state senate but there are many unknowns, and the project is likely several years out from construction.

[Traverse City-based policy center appeals Michigan's Line 5 permit](#)

A permit to build a new section of the Line 5 pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac was granted last month, but several organizations argue it violates the Michigan Environmental Protection Act and that alternative options were not adequately considered.

[Threats to the Great Lakes](#)

Five threats to the Great Lakes to watch out for in 2024 include exotic species, plastic pollution, the Line 5 pipeline project, Canadian nuclear waste, and vanishing ice

End