



2024 Great Lakes fisheries surveys wrap-up: *Highlights from annual assessments on Michigan Great Lakes*

Every year from April to November, the Michigan DNR is on the Great Lakes, surveying the important and diverse Great Lakes fisheries. Crews from research stations in Marquette, Charlevoix, Alpena and Harrison Township gather data on fish populations, fish health and the presence and effects of invasive species. It's vital information that directly informs fisheries management decisions—such as stocking levels or regulated catch limits—and provides data to help gauge the success of past actions.

With surveying for 2024 wrapped up, DNR fisheries biologists are now synthesizing the findings and preparing for next year's surveys.

Interested in what the surveys found? Check out highlights from each research station's survey efforts.

- [Lake Superior and northern Lake Michigan](#) (Marquette Fisheries Research Station)
- [Lake Michigan](#) (Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station)
- [Lake Huron](#) (Alpena Fisheries Research Station)
- [St. Clair-Detroit River System](#) (Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station)

Lake Superior and northern Lake Michigan

The crew of the research vessel (RV) Lake Char began work on Lake Superior as soon as the ice melted and

continued through early November. The Marquette Fisheries Research Station's work focuses on lake trout, though species studied this year also included lake whitefish and burbot.

Data from the spring 2024 Lake Superior surveys showed a slight increase in adult lake trout populations in nearly all areas. The summer juvenile lake trout survey indicated slight increases in recruitment (reproduction and survival) on the west side of the Keweenaw and Munising areas and a slight decline in all other locations, with stable populations overall. During the field season, 257,100 feet (48.7 miles) of assessment gill net was deployed for these surveys at 123 sampling stations across the lake.

Great Lakes fisheries surveys
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Help spread the word –

Unsafe Ice Conditions in your community

The Wisconsin DNR needs your help spreading critical ice safety messaging across the state. We're asking you, our partners, to assist in communicating this important safety reminder that no ice is ever 100% safe ahead of what's sure to be a busy period on the ice.

Recent temperature swings have created rapidly changing ice conditions in many parts of the state, and our DNR wardens have already responded to several incidents of recreational vehicles going through the ice. We've already recorded [six fatal UTV incidents in 2025](#), with four of those involving UTVs going through the ice. There has also been one [ice-related snowmobile fatality](#).

With sturgeon spearing kicking off last weekend and other popular fishing activities in full swing on our lakes and rivers, we're asking for your help getting the word out to your communities.

To make it easier for you to amplify this critical safety message, we've created [a series of graphics, social media posts and images](#) that you can download and use in any communications you plan to issue on this topic.

Credit to the Wisconsin DNR is appreciated but not required ✧

Sea lamprey making a comeback and threatening Great Lakes fish populations

It's a species of fish that's survived at least four major extinction events and remained largely unchanged for over 300 million years and now work is underway to contain a spike in sea lamprey across the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission says since the pandemic, the prevalence of sea lamprey has increased in all five Great Lakes thanks to control efforts largely being suspended at the height of COVID-19.



“Control effort in 2024 continued at pre-pandemic levels, but elevated and variable adult sea lamprey abundances should be expected over the next year or two before turning back downward,” said Ethan Baker, the chair of the commission.

The **Invasive Species Centre** in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., says this species may have been here since the 1800s, at one point even collapsing the commercial fishing sector for years in the 1950s.

“Actually in their native range, which is in the Atlantic Ocean, these are parasites that don't actually kill their hosts but in the Great Lakes we don't have that kind of co-evolutionary link so they do act as predators,” said Rebecca D'Orazio, an Aquatic

Invasive Species Specialist with the Centre. “I think the number is that each individual can kill up to 40 pounds of fish over their 12-month feeding period.”

According to D'Orazio, the vampire-like fish uses the suction cup portion of its mouth to attach itself to a fish and then uses its raspy tongue and teeth to dig into the flesh of the fish. Once they're latched on, they rasp through the fish's scales with their tongue and feed on the fish from the inside out.

While sea lamprey has a particular taste for lake trout it is also known to eat salmon, brown trout and even lake sturgeon. The good news is they do not attack humans.

While this invasive species is not expected to be eradicated, efforts to control sea lamprey which were suspended during COVID-19 have returned and both the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Invasive Species Centre say there are some early indicators that those populations are coming back down.

The sea lamprey control program, administered by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, relies on exploiting sea lamprey vulnerability when they are congregated in Great Lakes tributaries, at either the larval or adult stages of their [life cycle](#). Lampricides—pesticides selective to lampreys and the primary sea lamprey control tactic—are deployed to kill larval sea lampreys in the tributaries, while a combination of barriers and traps are used to prevent the upstream migration and reproduction of adult sea lampreys.

See [Sea Lamprey Control in the Great Lakes](#) for more information on the various sea lamprey control techniques. ✧



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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

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Bill introduced to extend Great Lakes Restoration Initiative another 5 years

The Great Lakes delegation within the U.S. House of Representatives wasted no time in its efforts to get one of the key pieces of funding for Great Lakes cleanup and restoration programs authorized for another five years.

A group of sponsors that included U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D., Mich.), and others said it has introduced the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative of 2025, a bill that would reauthorize the GLRI program for another five years at \$500 million a year starting in 2027. The current funding level is \$475 million a year. Since its inception in 2010, the GLRI has been used to help fortify Chicago-area barriers designed to help keep invasive carp out of Lake

Michigan, build and restore wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, fight algal blooms, and remove toxic sediment.

About \$4 billion has been spent on such projects so far.

GLRI money has been used on several Toledo-area projects over the years, including a man-made wetland near Maumee Bay State Park that was built to help improve water quality. “Water is life,” said Alicia Smith, Toledo-based Junction Coalition executive director. “In Toledo, we’ve felt the fear of turning on our taps and finding poison [microcystin, Lake Erie’s chief algal toxin] instead of nourishment. We’ve watched children suffer from preventable illnesses, families forced to choose between bottled water and paying bills, and

elders question whether the waters they grew up cherishing will ever be safe again.”

She added that the GLRI is about people, not policy.

Most recently, GLRI money has been used to improve two Maumee River islands in South Toledo near Walbridge Park, Clark Island and Delaware/Horseshoe Island. The combined \$13.5 million of work includes \$8.15 million from Gov. Mike DeWine’s H2Ohio program and \$5.4 million in GLRI money released by the U.S. EPA.

The U.S. Senate passed its five-year reauthorization of the GLRI on December 4, but the companion House bill died after Congress adjourned for its holiday recess ✧

Ohio DNR stocked 46 million fish in 2024 across Ohio

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio DNR stocked more than 46 million fish in Ohio’s lakes, ponds, rivers and streams in 2024. Eleven different species of fish were stocked during the spring, summer, and fall at 228 locations statewide. Annual fish stockings play an important role in providing excellent fishing for Ohio’s 849,000 licensed anglers.

The Division of Wildlife operates six state fish hatcheries that raise sport fish for stocking in Ohio waters. Ohio’s hatcheries raise saugeye, walleye, yellow perch, rainbow trout, steelhead trout, brown trout, muskellunge, hybrid-striped bass, blue catfish, channel catfish, and bluegill.

Most of Ohio’s fish populations are sustained through natural reproduction such as crappies, smallmouth bass, and Lake Erie walleye; however, stocking expands and diversifies fishing opportunities in waters where existing habitats do not support some fish populations.

The 46 million fish stocked in Ohio last year were of five life stages: 31.8 million fry, 13.4 million fingerlings, 236,701 advanced fingerlings,

514,032 yearlings, and 105,101 catchable fish. These life stages included the following sport fish:

- Fry (less than 1 inch long): saugeye (15.6 million), walleye (13 million), yellow perch (2.1 million), and hybrid-striped bass (1.1 million).
- Fingerling (1 to 2 inches long): saugeye (7.6 million), walleye (4 million), yellow perch (1 million), and hybrid-striped bass 748,217).
- Advanced fingerling (6 to 12 inches long): blue catfish (151,663), channel catfish (61,899), and muskellunge (23,139).
- Yearling fish (7 to 12 inches long): brown trout (23,233), channel catfish (24,647), and steelhead trout (466,152).
- Catchable fish (6 inches or longer): channel catfish (6,271), bluegill (12,233), brown trout (2,603), and rainbow trout (83,994).

The Division of Wildlife’s current and historical fish stocking records can be viewed via the [DataOhio portal](#) in the [Fish Stocking Database](#). Use the dataset to explore stocking locations

and plan your next outing. Anglers ages 16 and older are required to hold a valid Ohio fishing license on all public waters. Check the current [fishing regulations booklet](#) before your next trip.

Ohio’s [state fish hatcheries](#) are open to the public and offer activities such as birding, hiking, and archery. Each fish hatchery will host an open house in 2025: March 29 (St. Marys), April 5 (Hebron and Senecaville), April 12 (Castalia and Kincaid), and May 3 (London). Each open house runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Since 1950, the [Sport Fish Restoration](#) program has dedicated permanent funding to fishery conservation through federal excise taxes on sport fishing equipment, import duties on fishing tackle and pleasure boats, and the portion of the gasoline fuel tax attributable to small engines and motorboats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service annually apportions these funds that the Division of Wildlife uses to produce and stock fish, acquire habitat, conduct research and assessment surveys, provide aquatic education, and secure fishing access. ✧

Be careful when riding ATV/UTVs in winter

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR urges the public to be mindful of dangerous winter conditions when operating recreational vehicles, especially on frozen waterbodies. There have already been [two fatal UTV crashes](#) and [one fatal snowmobile crash](#) in the state this year, with two of those accidents occurring on frozen waterbodies.

Frost, ice and fresh snow on winter roads or trails can cause slippery conditions. Remember to stay sober, wear proper safety gear and be careful when slowing down and approaching turns. If your winter outing involves travel over a waterbody, remember that every waterbody has its own characteristics. Check if the lake has inlets, outlets or narrows, is spring-fed or has currents, which can thin the ice.

Here are a few more safety tips to keep in mind when operating recreational vehicles during winter.

- Remember that ice is never completely safe under any conditions.
- The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Fishing clubs, and bait shops are the best sources for current ice conditions.
- Wear proper clothing, including a personal flotation device or a float coat to help you stay afloat and to slow body heat loss.
- Never consume alcohol or drugs before or during your ride.
- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas.
- Carry a cell phone, and let people know where you are going and when you'll return home.
- Slow down when traveling at night.
- Watch for pressure ridges or ice buckling. These can be dangerous due to thin ice and open water.
- In addition to these safety tips, the DNR reminds riders to check trail conditions ahead of time by contacting your county forestry and/or parks department, local clubs or viewing [Travel Wisconsin's Snow Report](#).

Visit the DNR's [Ice Safety webpage](#) for more information on staying safe on the ice. ✧

Wisconsin NRB Meeting Feb. 26

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (NRB) will meet in-person for the February meeting to consider proposed rulemaking documents and other matters.

The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on **Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025**, in public meeting room G09, State Natural Resources Building (GEF 2), 101 South Webster Street, Madison, Wisconsin. The Board will act on items 1-4 and 7 [as listed on the agenda](#).

[The public is encouraged to watch the February meeting on the DNR's YouTube channel](#).

The deadline to register for public appearance requests and to submit written comments is 11 a.m. on **Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025**. Remote testimony from the public via Zoom may be accepted. In-person public appearances are also welcome.

During the February meeting, the Board will be considering:

- Request that the Board adopt germane modifications to Board Order AM-05-22, proposed rules affecting chapter NR 439 to simplify, reduce and make more efficient the reporting, recordkeeping, testing, inspection and determination of compliance requirements for sources of air contaminants
- Request that the Board adopt Emergency Board Order WM-11-24 (E) and Board Order WM-12-24, proposed rules affecting chapter NR 10 related to revising white-tailed deer management unit boundaries
- Request that the board adopt Board Order FH-01-23, proposed rules affecting chapter NR 25, relating to trawling regulations on Lake Michigan

The Board will also receive informational updates on the Governor's proposed 2025-27 budget as it relates to the DNR, a report on the 2024-25 deer season, an update on the 2024 elk season and the proposed timeline to update the DNR's beaver management plan. ✧

DNR seeks volunteers with hunting skills to instruct students

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR is looking for individuals to volunteer to help others enjoy safe and ethical hunts. There are fun options to share your hunting expertise, enthusiasm and stories with novices of all ages who are interested.

You could become a mentor, lead a learn-to-hunt outing or hold a workshop to teach new hunters how to cook meat from harvested deer. Opportunities abound. Here are the fulfilling and satisfying ways you can share your skills with others.

Mentor A Novice

If you prefer a one-on-one opportunity, consider becoming a mentor. Learn about the [Mentored Hunting Law](#) on the DNR's website. This program allows novice hunters to hunt within arm's reach of a qualified mentor without first completing a Hunter Education course.

Classroom Instructor: Teach or Assist

Consider joining the roster of Learn to Hunt volunteer instructors. The [Learn To Hunt](#) program has learning in the classroom, coupled with time in the field, followed by a hunt with a mentor. Local groups usually host a program. You could ask to lead an educational hunt outside of the regular hunting season.

[Hunter Education](#) covers ways to help your community by teaching injury-prevention and lifesaving actions while positively influencing the attitudes and actions of other resource users.

Many Skills in Your Toolbox

If you are eager to share a wide variety of knowledge, this is likely your option. [Outdoor Skills Workshops](#) offer deer-processing skills, safe firearm handling techniques, shooting basics and tips for cooking wild game.

For more information on these opportunities, contact Emily Iehl at Emily.Iehl@wisconsin.gov or Logan Planer at Logan.Planer@wisconsin.gov. ✧

Michigan DNR stocks 10.7 tons of fish statewide

The DNR worked hard this past fall to stock fish in waters across Michigan—fish that will provide anglers with more opportunities in seasons to come. The fall 2024 effort saw DNR crews stock seven different species at 78 locations throughout the state; in all, 590,504 fish, weighing in at 10.7 tons, were added to Michigan waters.

“It was another exceptional fall fish stocking season, enhancing fishing opportunities throughout Michigan,” said DNR Fish Production Program manager Aaron Switzer. “Combined with our successful spring and summer stocking efforts, that brings the total for 2024 to more than 9.7 million fish stocked in Michigan’s waters.”

The number and type of fish stocked vary by hatchery, as each facility’s ability to rear fish differs due to water supply and temperature. In Michigan, there are six state and three cooperative hatcheries that work together to produce the species, strain and size of fish needed by fisheries managers. These fish must then be delivered at a specific time and location for stocking to ensure their success.

In general, fish are reared in Michigan’s state fish hatcheries anywhere from one month to 1 1/2 years before they are stocked. Most fish in Michigan are stocked in the spring, but some fish are stocked in the fall because they require less time and fewer resources to rear in hatcheries, and may adjust better to new environments as they are younger and more adaptable to change.

Seven species were stocked this fall: Atlantic salmon, brook trout, brown trout, lake trout, rainbow trout (Eagle Lake and steelhead strains), walleye and muskellunge.

- Marquette State Fish Hatchery (near Marquette) stocked 28,403 fall fingerling and 606 adult brook trout that weighed a combined 1,835 pounds. These fish were stocked at a

total of 30 locations in the Upper Peninsula. Marquette also stocked 425 adult lake trout that weighed 1,169 pounds at two locations in the Upper Peninsula.

- Platte River State Fish Hatchery (near Traverse City) stocked one location in Lake Huron with 30,000 Atlantic salmon weighing 991 pounds.
- Oden State Fish Hatchery (near Petoskey) stocked 82,000 fall fingerling brown trout that weighed 4,494 pounds and 82,919 rainbow trout that weighed 2,681 pounds. These fish were stocked at four locations in the Upper and Lower peninsulas.
- Thompson State Fish Hatchery (near Manistique) stocked 47,014 Great Lakes strain muskellunge that weighed 5,410 pounds at 20 locations in the Upper and Lower peninsulas.
- Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery (west of Kalamazoo) stocked 1,578 Great Lakes strain muskellunge fall fingerlings that weighed 198 pounds at five locations. Wolf Lake also stocked 300,891 fall fingerling steelhead weighing 3,379 pounds in three locations

DNR fisheries management units also stocked fall fingerling walleye this year.

- The Southern Lake Michigan Management Unit stocked 7,030 Muskegon strain fall fingerlings weighing 518 lbs. in seven locations.
- The Central Lake Michigan Management Unit stocked 2,205 Muskegon strain fall fingerlings weighing 200 lbs. in four locations.
- The Lake Erie Management Unit stocked Lakeville Lake with 2,082 Muskegon strain fall fingerlings weighing 136 lbs.
- The Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit stocked Little Bay de Noc with 5,351 fall fingerlings (Little Bay de Noc strain) weighing 478 lbs. in five locations.

The DNR welcomes visitors to its state fish hatcheries and interpretive centers

to witness firsthand the fish rearing process and to learn about Michigan’s waters. For more information or to plan your trip, visit Michigan.gov/Hatcheries.

To find out if any fish were stocked in your favorite fishing spot, visit the DNR’s fish stocking database at michigandnr.com/fishstock/. ✧



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- [Lake Michigan](#) (Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station)
- [Lake Huron](#) (Alpena Fisheries Research Station)
- [St. Clair-Detroit River System](#) (Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station) ✧

Arctic grayling reintroduction begins with May 12 ceremony at Oden State Hatchery

The effort to reintroduce Arctic grayling to Michigan waters will enter its next phase with a ceremony Monday, May 12, at the Oden State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center in Alanson, Michigan.

At this event, the Department of Natural Resources will provide a total of approximately 400,000 grayling eggs to the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. These partners will reintroduce the eggs at locations along the North Branch of the Manistee River, the Maple River and the Boardman-Ottaway River.

What are Arctic grayling?

Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*)—often referred to simply as “grayling”—are a freshwater fish in the salmonidae (salmon) family. They have a unique and striking appearance, with a prominent, sail-like dorsal fin and often iridescent markings. Grayling can be found in the Arctic Ocean and Alaska, as well as in rivers and streams of the northern U.S. and Canada.



Native to only Michigan and Montana in the Lower 48 states, grayling historically were found in coldwater streams in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula and were common in the Manistee and Au Sable rivers—the city of Grayling, Michigan, along the Au Sable, is named after the Arctic grayling. Despite the importance of grayling as a food source, sport fish and cultural resource, habitat

destruction, unregulated timber harvest and pressures from non-native fish species led to the extirpation (local extinction) of grayling from Michigan by 1936.

Why are Arctic grayling being reintroduced?

In 2016, the DNR, in partnership with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, announced a proposed initiative to reintroduce Arctic grayling to the state, creating the Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative, or MAGI. Consisting of more than 50 partners, the MAGI seeks to establish self-sustaining populations of this historically and culturally significant species within its historical Michigan range.

Previous attempts have been made, without success, to bring back Arctic grayling to Michigan waters, but new technologies and methods have improved the likelihood of effective reintroduction. The grayling eggs being reintroduced will be placed in streamside incubators that will allow them to imprint on the waters in which they are placed, helping them thrive. MAGI partners will closely monitor the hatching and development of the fry, as well as follow up on how they move through these systems as they grow.

The return of grayling to Michigan is a years-long process, and this initial handoff of eggs begins the reintroduction phase of this effort. In November 2023, three Michigan lakes were stocked with Arctic grayling that

were surplus from the DNR’s grayling broodstock. While establishing the broodstock was an important milestone in the reintroduction process, this stocking did not (and was not intended to) establish a self-sustaining wild Arctic grayling population.



More details on the Arctic grayling reintroduction event will be released as available. Learn more about the Michigan Arctic Grayling Initiative at migrayling.org, or plan your visit to the Oden State Fish Hatchery at Michigan.gov/Hatcheries. ✧

DNR's Eastern UP Citizens' Advisory Council to meet **Feb. 19**

The Michigan DNR’s Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizens’ Advisory Council is scheduled to hear updates on forest health and invasive species, fisheries regulation proposals, snowmobile trail conditions and winter boating access site partnerships when the council meets next week. The meeting will take place virtually in a web conference from 6 to 8:30 p.m. EST **Wednesday, Feb. 19.** ✧

Vessel and Dealer Reporting Requirements Reminder

NOAA's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) would like to remind all of our federally permitted vessel owners and dealers that they must be up-to-date with all fishing trip reports and dealer reports in order to renew their permits. Vessels are required to [complete an eVTR for every fishing trip](#) in both state and federal waters. This is true for all trips, no matter the species being fished or caught, including American lobster, and includes trips with fishing efforts in which no fish are caught.

Vessel operators for commercial and for-hire vessels must have their reporting device onboard the fishing vessel and have all effort and catch information entered on that device before arriving at port. The vessel operator then has 48 hours to submit their eVTR to GARFO. For owners and operators of private recreational tilefish vessels, they must submit an electronic trip report within 24 hours

of returning to port after any trip where they fished for or retained tilefish. Federal Dealers must submit their dealer reports weekly by midnight Tuesday, the following week. If a federal dealer does not purchase any fish from a vessel, then they must submit a negative report for that reporting week

The dealer that purchases fish directly from a vessel should be reported on that vessel's eVTR. This same dealer is required to submit a dealer report. Packout facilities not involved in the purchase do not need to be listed in the eVTR and have no reporting requirements.

The eVTR number is critical in linking dealer reports to eVTRs. Federal vessels must provide dealers with the full 14 digit eVTR number for each trip being offloaded. Federal dealers are required to report the eVTR numbers from all purchases from

federally permitted vessels. They also must report the name, permit number, and hull number of vessels from which landings are purchased. To ensure we get the most accurate information, federal dealers must report the most up to date vessel information in their reporting software. Dealers who report through SAFIS should routinely update and ensure that their "favorites" (Vessels and Fishers) and file conversion tables are correct.

GARFO Port Agents will be available in person at the Maine Fishermen's Forum at the Samoset Resort in Rockport, Maine from February 27 - March 1 2025 to answer questions industry may have.

Finally, as of January 31, 2025, the Fish Online iOS eVTR reporting app will no longer be accepted for submitting eVTRs. Operators may use any other [approved reporting devices](#) including the [FishOnline eVTR Web app](#). ✧

DNR 2025 Sturgeon Spawning Regulations

The 2025 sturgeon spawning season is here! Make sure you are up to date on all the [regulations](#) before taking to the ice. This year's season began on February 8, running until any of the harvest caps are met or for 16 days, whichever comes first. This year's harvest caps are:

Waterbody	Juvenile Females	Adult Females	Males
Lake Winnebago	280	717	1,002
Upriver Lakes	70	80	250
Winnebago System	350	797	1,252

Daily harvest reports can be found on the [DNR's sturgeon spawning webpage](#) throughout the season. A season forecast has been posted to the spawning webpage. Additionally, [the 2024 chironomid \(redworm\) report is](#)

[now available for review](#). Redworms are a primary source of food for lake sturgeon and can be a good indicator ahead of the season. ✧

Wisconsinites invited to join WCC Process

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) invites all Wisconsinites to take part in its annual spring hearing process.

The WCC is an independent organization of residents that advises the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on how to responsibly manage Wisconsin's natural resources.

Each year residents have an opportunity to submit ideas as resolutions to the WCC.

Wisconsinites can submit proposed resolutions via the online process now through February 24, 2025. Resolutions must meet the following criteria:

1. The concern must be of statewide impact.

2. The concern must be practical, achievable and reasonable.
3. The concern must be within the mission and vision of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress.

An individual citizen may submit no more than two resolutions per year. Those interested in submitting a resolution are encouraged to reach out to the [resolution review committee](#) or their [WCC County Chair](#) for guidance in drafting a resolution.

[Additional tips on preparing a resolution are available on the WCC and DNR's Spring Hearings webpage.](#)

Resolutions will be accepted until February 24, 2025. At the close of the submission process, the resolutions will be reviewed by a committee of WCC delegates to ensure they meet the criteria for inclusion and will be prepared for the spring hearing agenda and online input, which kicks off on April 14 and will close on April 16.

For further information or questions, contact Terri Roehrig, Executive Committee Member of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, at 920-540-2775. ✧

Surviving a cold dunk

Ontario Out of Doors Editor Ray Blades took a virtual cold-water immersion course run by the **Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC)** recently. The two-evening Beyond Cold Water Boot Camp was led by Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht from the **University of Manitoba**. Giesbrecht is a renowned expert in cold-water immersion prevention and rescue techniques.

You might have heard someone say there's no point wearing a life jacket because hypothermia will kill you in minutes anyway. But Giesbrecht said hypothermia only causes a small percentage of cold-water immersion deaths. That's because during the average cold-water immersion incident, it takes about 30 minutes to become hypothermic, an hour to lose consciousness, and another half hour to face the risk of cardiac arrest or ventricular fibrillation leading to death. While immersion is eventually deadly, most rescues happen within two to three minutes, if the incident is witnessed.

Most fatalities during a cold-water immersion incident are, in fact, due to drowning, which is actually submersion. This frequently happens when a person without a personal flotation device (PFD) suddenly falls unprepared into cold water. Surprise and panic cause them to gasp and take in water, which can quickly lead to drowning. Drowning also happens when a person not wearing a PFD loses physical function, generally due to hypothermia.

Another myth is drowning victims have no chance of being revived. In fact, there is often hope when water temperatures plummet. In one incident, a person who was underwater for 66 minutes was brought back.

Four phases

There are four phases of cold-water immersion.

1: The cold-water response is the initial reaction as the person's skin gets cold. This lasts for up to two

minutes and is characterized by the person treading water to keep afloat while trying to control gasping and hyperventilation.

2: Cold incapacitation occurs when muscles and nerves get cold. It happens two to 20 minutes after immersion. Strength and motor skills deteriorate during this period.

3: Hypothermia starts around 30 minutes after immersion. Core body temperature drops from 37 to 35°C. Just over a quarter of cold-water immersion fatalities (27%) happen in this phase.

4: Rescue collapse can happen just prior to, during, or after rescue. Accompanied by mental relaxation and decreased adrenalin, it is also caused by a loss of core heat that continues after the rescue and leads to fatality. It is little known to most non-professionals. Yet, it is at this time, when we think the victim is out of the worst danger, when 17% of deaths occur. Luckily, it can be mitigated by post-rescue practices.

The 1-10-1 rule

If you fall in, you need to act to survive. Knowing the 1-10-1 rule will help you make critical decisions.

You have:

- One minute to get your breathing under control during the cold-water response.
- Approximately 10 minutes of meaningful movement.
- Approximately one hour before you become unconscious due to hypothermia.

Once breathing is under control, your priority is to pull as much of your body out of the water as you can, say onto a capsized boat. If you are not wearing a PFD, stay with the boat. Meanwhile if you are, assess whether rescue is probable. If not, decide whether or not to swim to shore and stick with that decision. If you can't reach shore in 45 minutes, don't try.

Signal to ensure potential rescuers know your predicament. If your boat is being swamped and you have a phone, call emergency response before you find yourself in the water.

When wearing a PFD, float on your back with elbows tight to your side and arms across your chest. Keep your legs together and, if possible, bend at the hips. This minimizes heat loss from your armpits and groin.

If two or more are overboard, huddle in a circle facing each other to keep together and conserve heat. This also makes you easier to see from a distance. Whatever the plan, stick together, and signal.

If you fall through the ice, use ice picks to get a foothold on the surface where you came from, and then go horizontal and kick to get onto the ice. Once on this ice, stay prone to distribute your body weight and crawl back along your tracks until you are certain you are on good ice. Once ashore find means to warm up as soon as possible. Every ice angler should have a reliable fire-starting kit. If incapacitated, signal for help.

Saving others

If you see someone in the water, immediately call emergency responders. If it is safe to help and you have support from others, do what it takes to get the person out of the water. Throw lines, help a person into a boat or onto the shore or safe ice. Never try to rescue if you are alone or do not have the proper safety gear yourself.

Also if the victim has been in water long, and you can get them out safely, keep them in a horizontal position and wrap them in a "burrito" of warm blankets or plastic sheeting until first responders arrive. Keep the person inactive to mitigate the risk of rescue collapse.

A warm drink to warm up the core is helpful if you have it. Hot chocolate is best.

These are a few things we learned. Basics. Take the course. It could help save a life—maybe even your own. For more information visit: www.csbc.ca

Don't go onto cold water without:

Floatation: Drowning is the thing you can most easily take precautions against by simply wearing a PFD or floatation suit.

Signaling device: When battling the hypothermia clock, the best strategy is to get out of the water and make people on shore see you and understand your dire circumstance. Signaling devices are key. They should be easily available in your boat or attached to your PFD too. Whistles, flares, or mirrors or even a cell phone could mean the difference between life and death.

Re-boarding device: Your boat should have a ladder or rope that is easily reached from outside, with foot loops to help the climb in.

Picks and rope: On ice, everyone should have easily-accessible ice picks, ropes (preferably in a throw bag) and a knowledge of what to do if you break through. ✧

Knowles-Nelson Grant applications due **Mar 3**

Upcoming deadline for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Nonprofit Conservation Organization (NCO) funding. Grant applications are due **March 3, 2025**. The Wisconsin DNR will consider all complete applications received by this date. Application materials are located on the [DNR's Stewardship webpage](#). If you are considering an application, please contact your [regional Project Manager](#). Please also ensure your appraiser contacts [DNR's Review Appraiser](#) prior to beginning their work.

Luke Roffler, NCO Grant Manager,
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Prog.
Wisconsin DNR

141 NW Barstow St.

Waukesha, WI 53188

luke.roffler@wisconsin.gov 608-294-8017 ✧

Minnesota reaps windfall from epic comeback of lake trout in Lake Superior

Now, the once-endangered fish could become a star in the state for stocking other lakes

Once-rare lake trout in Lake Superior are doing so well that state biologists will use the fish to stock the species in lakes around the state, officials have announced.

This fall, the DNR successfully harvested lake trout eggs from fish captured in two nets set along the North Shore just north of Duluth. Crews transported 18 male-female pairs to the DNR work station at the French River, stripping them of eggs and milt. The fish were then returned to the lake.

Cory Goldsworthy, DNR Lake Superior fisheries supervisor, said the trial has given the agency confidence to vacate its previous and less efficient lake trout stocking routine. For about 20 years, crews have taken long trips each fall to Mountain Lake—a deep-water inland lake on the Canadian border—to net the fish needed to fulfill Minnesota's lake trout stocking needs.

The change, starting next fall, will be historic because lake trout in Lake Superior were ready to collapse in the early 1960s from over-fishing and devastation from the invasive sea lamprey. Joint efforts by conservation partners throughout the Great Lakes culminated around 2017 with full revival of the species and a return to commercial fishing of the species in Minnesota waters.

"It's kind of a good story to tell," Goldsworthy said. "We busted our butts to rehabilitate lake trout in Lake Superior and now the population is doing so well we are using those adult fish for inland stocking programs."

The news about capitalizing on [the turnaround of lake trout](#) in Lake Superior coincides with the opening of the annual sport fishing season and

runs into October of 2025. The Minnesota daily bag limit on Lake Superior is three lake trout of any size. Inland lake trout fishing in Minnesota opened December 30 for lakes entirely inside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. For other inland lakes, the season opened January 13. All inland fishing of lake trout in Minnesota ends March 31.

Goldsworthy said the comeback of lake trout along the North Shore and elsewhere in Lake Superior has proven durable, buoyed most recently by a [giant boom in lake herring](#), also called cisco, a key forage species. The 2022 population boom in ciscoes should provide stable nutrition for lake trout for another 20 years, Goldsworthy said.

The state halted the stocking of lake trout into Lake Superior in 2015 because natural reproduction was doing so well. By now, at least 98% of the population is wild, or naturally produced. In 1980, only 6% of the population was wild.

In the most recent annual fisheries report for the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior, the DNR recorded a catch of 16.6 lake trout per 1,000 feet of net in the fall of 2023. That was the fourth-best catch in the previous 10 years. The same survey recorded the highest number of juvenile lake trout netted since 2005—another sign of strength.

Currently, the DNR stocks seven Minnesota lakes with lake trout. They are Pennington Mine, Sagamore Mine and Big Trout Lake in the greater Brainerd area, Little Trout and Gun lakes near International Falls, Grindstone Lake in the Hinckley area and Iron Chief Complex near Buhl. ✧

Continued from page 1

Great Lakes fisheries surveys

The RV Lake Char surveyed waters around Isle Royale in spring to assess the status of lake trout populations around the island. The crew also conducted surveys in the deepest waters of Lake Superior (and all the Great Lakes)—about 1,320 feet—to survey siscowet lake trout populations. The RV Lake Char crew finished the survey season with lake trout survey work at Klondike Reef, a remote location 40 miles from shore, in October and then surveyed nearshore lake trout spawning reefs near Munising in early November.

Nearshore Great Lakes fisheries assessment work from Upper Peninsula ports involved 10 miles of trawling in Lake Michigan's Little Bay de Noc and Big Bay de Noc. In addition, over 25,000 feet of survey gill net was used in four locations in northern Lake Michigan (Big Bay de Noc, Little Bay de Noc, Naubinway and Manistique) and two locations in southern Lake Superior (Keweenaw Bay and Huron Bay). Catch data from these fall surveys provide useful metrics for assessing fish community change and populations of species including walleye, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, northern pike, lake sturgeon and invasive Eurasian ruffe.

This winter, the Marquette Fisheries Research Station staff will perform maintenance in preparation for the 2025 field season and process the samples and data collected during 2024. These surveys provided data for collaborations with researchers from Purdue University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, State University of New York-Brockport, Michigan Technological University and Michigan State University.

Lake Michigan

Three surveys accounted for the majority of the Great Lakes survey work for the Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station staff and the survey vessel (SV) Steelhead in 2024.

Spring gill net survey

Since 1997, the DNR has participated in a spring gill net survey, in collaboration with other Lake Michigan agencies. The objective is to assess recreationally, commercially and ecologically important fish populations, with a focus on lake trout, burbot, lake whitefish and yellow perch in Michigan waters. The information collected is used to inform ongoing research and management efforts for multiple species in Lake Michigan. Due to the broad area covered and multispecies focus, this survey provides the most comprehensive information on the status of adult Lake Michigan fish populations.

The spring gill net survey was conducted at eight ports this year: St. Joseph, South Haven, Saugatuck, Grand Haven, Arcadia, Leland, Elk Rapids and Charlevoix. Across all ports, more than 100,000 feet of experimental bottom gill net was deployed and provided data on more than 5,000 fish.

Lakewide acoustic (forage fish) survey

From late August to early September, the SV Steelhead and crew conducted the prey fish survey, a multiagency effort measuring the abundance of alewife, rainbow smelt, bloaters and other prey fish throughout Lake Michigan. This survey uses hydroacoustic (high-precision, recordable fish finder) gear. Results inform research and interjurisdictional trout and salmon management around predator/prey balance and lower food web changes in Lake Michigan, including the lakewide “predator-prey ratio” analysis to ensure prey fish can support the lake's salmon and trout populations.

The hydroacoustic survey comprised 25 sections spanning nearshore and offshore regions around the basin. Areas surveyed this season by the SV

Steelhead stretched from waters offshore of Beaver Island in the north around the Michigan shore to St. Joseph in the south.

Strong offshore winds Aug. 2–21 resulted in persistent coldwater upwelling along the eastern shoreline. These environmental conditions likely changed normal fish distributions and abundance estimates relative to previous survey years. Despite this challenge, preliminary results suggest relatively similar densities of age-1 (1+ years old) alewife and higher abundances of bloaters compared to previous years. However, young-of-year alewife abundance was estimated to be very low in 2024.

Bottom trawl survey

The SV Steelhead crew completed the annual bottom trawl survey in September and October at three of the ports sampled during the spring gill net survey (Saugatuck, South Haven and Grand Haven), as well as at the port of Pentwater. Ten trawl samples were collected at each port, covering a range of water depths from 25 feet to 120 feet. This survey provides information on the overall status of the nearshore fish community, including the presence, range expansion and effects of invasive species, and the status of yellow perch recruitment.

Other assessments

Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station staff also used small vessels for targeted surveys in 2024. Staff assisted Central Michigan University researchers with scuba surveys of mussel populations in large rivers and continued a multiyear assessment of spawning reefs in northern Lake Michigan. Reef assessments included characterization of habitat quality, deployment and collection of egg-sampling gear, and tagging of lake whitefish with acoustic tags to assess movement and spawning site use.

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Lake Huron

The 2024 field season for the Alpena Fisheries Research Station and research vessel (RV) Tanner began in April with the annual spring lake trout assessment. The crew surveyed 14 locations in U.S. waters of Lake Huron from Drummond Island to Port Sanilac to determine the abundance and distribution of both young and adult lake trout. The catch rate of adult lake trout was similar to that of recent years, and most young lake trout (both hatchery-reared and wild-born) continue to be collected in northern Lake Huron.

Following the conclusion of the lake trout survey in late May, commercial fishery sampling in June, and tending Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System, or GLATOS, receivers for fish movement studies in July, the RV Tanner completed a sonar and trawl survey of outer Saginaw Bay that targeted cisco. Cisco are important Great Lakes species that help maintain healthy predator species and provide fishing opportunities, as well as serve as an indicator of ecosystem health. Because of this, cisco are a focus of ongoing restoration efforts by multiple natural resource agencies around Lake Huron.

In the fall, the RV Tanner crew completed the annual Saginaw Bay fish community survey. This survey is done each September in partnership with the Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station and RV Channel Cat, and the 2024 Saginaw Bay assessment covered 16 net stations and 24 trawl sites. Survey catches showed a high abundance of young-of-year walleye in the bay (the second highest on record!), and adult walleye gill net catch rates that were similar to recent years' numbers. However, both gill net and trawl catch rates of adult yellow perch in Saginaw Bay remained very low. A highlight of the survey was an encounter with two juvenile lake sturgeon, confirming their survival from ongoing stocking efforts in the Saginaw River system.

Soon after departing Saginaw Bay, the RV Tanner once again made its way to the eastern Upper Peninsula for an annual fish community survey in the Les Cheneaux Islands, where the gill net catch rate of yellow perch increased, and other indicators of perch population health were within sustainable ranges.

St. Clair-Detroit River System

The field season in Great Lakes waters of southeast Michigan kicked off with northern pike, mooneye and smallmouth bass tagging in Lake St. Clair and tributaries during March, April and May. The tags, which are surgically implanted into fish and send a signal to receivers in GLATOS, allow scientists to track movement of fish throughout the region and the Great Lakes as a whole. While data from northern pike and mooneye tagging is still coming in, the results from smallmouth bass tagging suggest that Lake St. Clair smallmouth bass exist in multiple, smaller subpopulations rather than one large lakewide population. These subpopulations occupy well-known areas of the lake such as Anchor Bay and the Mile Roads and appear to mix very little with smallmouth bass from other locations.

The annual lake sturgeon assessment in the North Channel of the St. Clair River showed continued recruitment of young lake sturgeon into the adult population—which means that young lake sturgeon are surviving into adulthood. The North Channel sampling location is considered a “hot spot” for young lake sturgeon, and this is supported by DNR survey data. During the past 27 years, survey crews have encountered individual fish from each year class born between 1997 (the year the survey began) and 2019 (the most recent year class that, because of their age and size, can effectively be caught by the sampling gear). In 2024, the DNR tagged 24 juvenile lake sturgeon in the North Channel with tags that are detected by GLATOS (like the northern pike, mooneye and smallmouth bass mentioned above) and more will be learned about the specific movements and habitat use by these fish in the coming years. New

molecular analysis of fin clips from captured lake sturgeon shows that most fish larger than 63 inches are females, while those less than 63 inches long are evenly split between males and females.

Since 2021, DNR staff have completed lakewide surveys on Lake St. Clair in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The partnership completed a netting survey that targeted larger-bodied fish in offshore areas of the lake in 2024, complementing other netting and electrofishing surveys completed in 2021 through 2023. These surveys will be conducted on a rotational basis to monitor any changes that occur in Lake St. Clair and inform future fisheries management decisions.

The 56-year-old RV Channel Cat made a weeklong trip to Lake Erie in early August to conduct a bottom trawl survey that documented walleye and yellow perch reproduction and an abundance of 8-inch and larger yellow perch. The RV Channel Cat and crew then returned to Lake St. Clair to collect lake sturgeon using 35 individual trawl tows. The individual sturgeon captured in this survey, which sometimes exceed 100 pounds, are rarely encountered in the North Channel survey efforts described earlier. August concluded for the crew with a micro-mesh gill net survey to describe the Lake St. Clair forage fish community. Micro-mesh gill nets were deployed at six locations and commonly captured logperch, yellow perch and round goby.

The RV Channel Cat closed out the year with a trip to Lake Erie in early October for the annual walleye assessment. Catch rates in the survey gill nets were the third highest observed since 1992, and the catch included many year classes (ages) of fish, which represents strong walleye reproduction in Lake Erie since 2015.

For more info the DNR manages Michigan's fisheries for current and future generations, visit Michigan.gov/Fishing. ✦

Research shows how low levels of Water Contamination impact fish behavior & survival

A research team spearheaded by Michigan State University scientists has recently published findings in two journals detailing the impacts low levels of water contamination have on the behavior, simulated growth and survival of fish. The studies were published in [Environmental Science & Technology](#) and [Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry](#).

[Cheryl Murphy](#), a professor in the [MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife \(FW\)](#) and director of the [MSU Center for PFAS Research](#), helped lead the team, which included [Janice Albers](#), a former doctoral student in FW and current fish biologist at the U.S. Geological Survey; [Lori Ivan](#), a senior research associate in FW; [Michael Jones](#), a professor emeritus in FW; and [Juan Steibel](#), an adjunct professor in FW.

Also on the team were scientists from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Mississippi State University and the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center.

In [Environmental Science & Technology](#), Murphy and her team examined the difference in gene expression, behavior patterns and expected population trends between two populations of an Atlantic killifish, one that had evolved tolerance to industrial pollution and one that had not. In these experiments, offspring of these two populations were exposed to low levels of contaminants, including methylmercury (MeHg) and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB126), and control conditions.

Of the Atlantic killifish studied, findings showed gene expression changes in both the unevolved population and—contrary to what some might think—the population that had evolved tolerance to these contaminants.

“What’s really interesting is that people are assuming that the fish evolved to the contaminants are going to be fine, but we’re showing that there are still some genes being expressed when the fish are exposed, ultimately affecting their behavior,” Murphy said. “There’s enough adaptation for the population to survive, but they’re just not thriving. They’re only able to persist.”

Novel [research](#) led by Albers that was published earlier in [Environmental Science & Technology](#) allowed scientists in this study to identify the specific fine-scale behavior patterns being altered by contaminants. Murphy said identifying these behavior patterns granted her team the ability to link them to specific gene expression changes—an innovative approach that has hardly been explored in this field until now.

“When scientists reported behavioral measurements before, they usually used gross measurements such as average swimming speed,” Albers said. “What this new method does is it generates fine-scale behavior differences, and because we now have these keen differences, we can link them to actual gene expression which hasn’t been possible before. This lets us figure out what types of genes are linked to behaviors and what the potential population outcomes could be for species.”

Ivan said one of the challenges when doing ecological risk assessments is to be able to translate individual effects into impacts for entire populations.

Usually if you’re studying a whole population, that means the damage has already been done,” Ivan said. “What we try to do in ecotoxicology is find ways to collect behavioral information at sub-organismal levels of biological organizations that are easier to measure and scale them up to represent whole populations.”

Understanding behavior can be complicated because scientists often study a select few species that can survive in the laboratory and extrapolate observed behaviors to natural populations. Nevertheless, Murphy said behavior remains a powerful tool to know when something is wrong with an organism in its environment, and when a typical behavior is impaired, it signals additional factors—such as contaminants—are at play.

In [Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry](#), research similarly focused on how yellow perch and zebrafish—in addition to Atlantic killifish—responded to MeHg and PCB126. The team also tested the hypotheses that zebrafish serve as a good surrogate species to represent the behavioral patterns and population outcomes of other fish species, and that the inclusion of model uncertainty in these simulations is important to accurately gauge outcomes.

Based on how each species behaved when exposed to different contaminants, a mix of growth and survival outcomes were generated using computer simulations for the Atlantic killifish, yellow perch and zebrafish. These results didn’t support the hypothesis that zebrafish are representative of the other two fish species.

Murphy and her team additionally concluded that including model uncertainty, a degree of ambiguity around the parameters and range in behavior responses, adds value to ecological risk assessments because it provides a more conservative estimate of impact. This conservative estimate, the team argues, depicts a more realistic characterization of how toxicants alter growth and population outcomes.

“If we take these species and all the uncertainty associated with developing models and incorporate

them together properly, we should get a more protective estimate of risk since we don't have other information to go on," Murphy said.

The assessments and models used in these studies can be applied to any contaminant, according to Murphy. She said population managers can also utilize the data to evaluate the risk of extinction for certain species.

"We found some trends and genes that suggested things that were really interesting, but there's a lot more to be explored," Murphy said. "Our data set could be used to further hypotheses, but, overall, I think we've just opened up some methods and ways of linking ideas together, and we hope that inspires the scientific community to build on these efforts and develop stronger linkages between genes, behavior and population impacts." ✧

2025 Black Lake sturgeon season results announced

After only 17 minutes of fishing, this year's sturgeon season on Black Lake (in Cheboygan and Presque Isle counties) ended at 8:17 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1. The season, which included spearing and hook-and-line fishing, was scheduled to run February 1-5, or until the harvest quota of six lake sturgeon had been reached.

The Michigan DNR set the harvest limit for the season at six fish, though anglers were allocated a season quota of seven sturgeon by agreement with tribal governments. This limit was placed to accommodate the expected number of anglers and anticipate the possibility of near simultaneous harvest of more than one fish. Such a scenario occurred this year, as a seventh fish was harvested before notification of the season closure could be sent out. There were 797 registered anglers this year. The harvested sturgeon ranged in size from 43.5 inches to 64 inches long and weighed 18.2 pounds to 78.3 lbs. ✧

2024 National Recreational Fishing Highlights

NOAA's accomplishments & highlights in recreational fisheries & fishing.

NOAA Fisheries made significant strides in 2024 to advance and promote sustainable recreational fisheries and fishing opportunities across the nation. Our work was guided by the [National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy](#) and associated [implementation plans](#). At the suggestion of anglers, we updated the Policy in 2023 to better reflect the interests of the recreational fishing community. The combined recreational implementation plans identify nearly 150 agency commitments, affirming our dedication to sustainable and accessible recreational fisheries for the benefit of the nation.

Our work in 2024 helped to:

- Strengthen and enhance data collection and partnerships, Improve fish habitat, Educate new anglers, Support sustainable recreational fisheries, among other actions, through collaboration and community.
- These accomplishments demonstrate our dedication to fostering a thriving recreational fishing sector and healthy marine resources.

Engaging anglers, scientists, and managers to advance the [National Policy for Saltwater Recreational Fisheries](#) was the hallmark of NOAA Fisheries Recreational Fisheries Initiative in 2024. The RecFish Initiative and the Office of Habitat Conservation partnered again in 2024 to restore habitats important to the recreational community through collaborations with the National Fish Habitat Partnerships and anglers. [Projects in South Carolina, Oregon, and Hawaii](#) engaged anglers and students from [traditionally underrepresented communities](#) to foster learning, restore habitat, and improve data. [Veteran](#), family, and youth participation shined at [five events](#) with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Park Trust.

Education and scientific understanding were important aspects of our work. We co-hosted a seminar on [Emerging Challenges and Solutions in Marine Recreational and Non-Commercial Fisheries](#) with Dr. Andy

Danylchuck, UMass Amherst, at the American Fisheries Society annual meeting. We co-sponsored the [7th International Billfish Symposium](#) with the International Game Fish Assoc. We also joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a formal partner on the [Sport Fishing and Boat Partnership Council](#).

Critical to public confidence, sound science, and fisheries management was our work to collaboratively strengthen the state-federal recreational fishing data collection partnership. Led by the Office of Science and Technology, the intent is to improve scientific accuracy, precision of catch and effort estimates, and credibility while better meeting regional data needs. We hosted 15 listening sessions with the public, state, and regional partners. The inputs from these and other discussions will inform how we collaboratively reshape the data partnership over the next year. We also [tested improvements to the Fishing Effort Survey](#) to enhance recreational fisheries data quality and will analyze data from the year-long study in early 2025. ✧

Peavey Mart closing

The company that owns Peavey Mart—a popular Canadian retailer for farmers, anglers, and hunters—is closing all 96 stores nationwide. Peavey Industries LP announced the closure on January 28, including that it has obtained creditor protection and will immediately begin closing sales. Some 90 Peavey Mart and six Main Street Hardware locations will be shuttered. The Red Deer, Alberta-based company cited "unprecedented challenges" in an industry experiencing record-low consumer confidence, inflationary pressures, rising operating costs, supply disruptions, and challenging regulatory environment. Just last week, the agricultural retailer announced it was closing 22 locations in Ontario and Nova Scotia by May as part of organizational restructuring ✧

Minnesota DNR fisheries rulemaking proposals open for public comment

The Minnesota DNR is asking for the public to comment on proposed rules about fishing methods that, if adopted, would go into effect in March 2026. The rules propose increasing the maximum allowed distance between hooks in tackle configurations with multiple hooks from 9 to 18 inches. The rulemaking also allows for the use

of certain automatic hook-setting devices for ice fishing that currently are not allowed and includes clarification of the definition of "hook." These changes would allow anglers to use a wider range of commercially available products and be more practical for bait commonly used. The changes are anticipated to reduce the number of swallowed hooks and deep hook sets, thereby decreasing hooking mortality without posing a threat to conservation.

Comments can be submitted through Thursday, March 20, by email

to bethany.bethke@state.mn.us or mail to Bethany Bethke, Fisheries Rules and Regulations Coordinator, Fish and Wildlife Division, Minnesota DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

More Information, including the proposed rule language and contact information for comments, is available on the [fisheries rulemaking page of the DNR website](http://mndnr.gov/input/rules/fisheries/index.html) (mndnr.gov/input/rules/fisheries/index.html). ✧

And for the Shooting Sports...

Help Pass H.R. 38 – The Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act!

New legislation, H.R. 38, the Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, was introduced in mid-January in the U.S. House and Senate. The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA), a national gun rights organization, has launched a 60-second TV ad campaign in favor of this legislation to be aired on major cable TV channels.

In the ad, the public is encouraged to call in, support, and sign the CCRKBA petition backing the Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act. The legislation has gained not only the support of the CCRKBA, but also the NRA Institute for Legislative Action (NRA/ILA), Gun Owners of America (GOA), the U.S. Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF).

This legislation has a good chance of being passed with the help of concerned citizens across the country, pro-Second Amendment groups, and President Trump...but your help is needed!

Please sign the CCRKBA petition to pass this Legislation! [Click HERE](#) to view the CCRKBA ad, to read more about the Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act and the efforts to get it passed. ✧

NSSF welcomes U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo's Hearing Protection Act Introduction

WASHINGTON, D.C. – NSSF, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, welcomes U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo's (R-Idaho) [S. 364](#), the Hearing Protection Act, which would remove firearm suppressors from the list of definitions under the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA), eliminating onerous and duplicitious background checks. Instead, what is essentially a muffler for a gun would continue to be regulated under the 1968 Gun Control Act (GCA) with the same background check that is required for a retail firearm purchase. The legislation would also amend the statutory suppressor definitions to eliminate ambiguity that might lead to the criminalization of lawful firearm accessories.

"Senator Mike Crapo's Hearing Protection Act will have the federal government recognize firearm suppressors as accessories to a firearm that make recreational shooting and hunting a safer experience," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President and General Counsel. "These safety devices reduce the report of a firearm to a level that won't cause instant and permanent hearing damage. Despite Hollywood's depictions, they do not silence the sound of a firearm. The focus should be on removing barriers to safe and responsible use of firearms and

dedicating resources to ensuring actual firearms are safeguarded from those who should never possess them. Strict regulatory control of firearm accessories, and the parts of those accessories that have no bearing on the function of a firearm, is unnecessary and not the wisest use of federal resources. NSSF thanks Senator Crapo for his leadership for ensuring safe and responsible use of firearms and dedicating necessary resources where they are most needed."

Firearm [suppressors](#), legally but inaccurately referred to as "silencers," are devices that reduce the report of a firearm from a level roughly equal to that of a jet taking off which causes instant and permanent hearing loss to one that is safe, but still equal to a jackhammer. That decibel level will not permanently damage hearing. Suppressors work similar to a car's muffler, redirecting exhaust gases and was originally patented over 100 years ago by the same designer of car mufflers, Hiram Maxim.

Under current law, an individual purchasing a suppressor must locate a retailer that is regulated as a NFA Class III retailer, complete a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Form 4 with the model and serial number of the suppressor, and obtain two passport

photos and fingerprint cards from a local police department. The local chief law enforcement official must receive a completed copy of the application. Then the form, photographs and fingerprints must be sent to ATF along with a check to pay the \$200 tax. The customer can obtain the suppressor from the NFA Class III retailer upon an additional background

check through FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

Sen. Crapo's legislation would eliminate those requirements and make suppressors available with the same paperwork, markings, record keeping and background check approval that is required for a firearm. It would also clarify the definition of

suppressors, ensuring that components like mounts, baffles and end caps are not erroneously classified as standalone suppressors or "silencers."

Similar legislation, with the same title, was introduced as [H.R. 404](#) in the U.S House of Representatives by Congressman Ben Cline (R-Va.) ✧

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[Trump, Musk move to oust EPA staff in the Great Lakes region, including dozens responsible for protecting drinking water for 30 million in U.S. and Canada](#)

The Trump/Vance administration is moving to fire or force out more than 20% of the USPA's Chicago staff, including officials who enforce clean air and water laws and others dedicated to helping poor communities disproportionately harmed by pollution in the Midwest

[A new attempt to help whitefish, as they dwindle in Lake Michigan](#)

Scientists have teamed up to stock whitefish eggs in northern Michigan rivers to help the dwindling species rebound.

[How an eel-like bloodsucking invasive species nearly wiped out fishing in the Great Lakes](#)

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission has supported a new documentary, set to be released at the end of January, about the sea lampreys' devastation across the Great Lakes region.

[Where the DNR stocked 591,000 fish across Michigan](#)

The Michigan DNR stocked seven species of fish at 78 locations across Michigan this past fall, bringing the year's stocking total to 9.7 million fish. While most fish are stocked in the spring, and some in the summer, the final stocking round of 2024 included 590,504 fish during the fall.

[Plan to end walleye restocking concerns some in St. Lawrence County](#)

Walleye restocking efforts by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and local sportsmen's clubs have likely contributed to more walleye over the past few decades on the St. Lawrence River. Due to the success of the program, the DEC plans to stop restocking walleye in the river, leading to some concern among anglers and county legislators

[Great Lakes ice formations can be beautiful, but deadly. Why officials say stay off](#)

When ice piles up along Great Lakes shorelines, it can create spectacular blue ice, craggy piles and "volcanoes" that spray water high into the air, but officials say people should stay off shelf ice along the beach because it hides deadly secrets.

[Hearing and comment period set on potential Lake Michigan commercial fishing rule](#)

A process that could establish a commercial bycatch fishery for lake trout on the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan took another step forward January 22 when the Natural Resources Board approved a preliminary public hearing and comment

[COMMENTARY: Vance could be game-changing Great Lakes advocate](#)

As an Ohio senator and co-chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, JD Vance supported the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Now, as Vice President, Vance should use his powerful perch to enlist Trump and Congress in a noble cause: reauthorizing the GLRI

[Every sea lamprey's greatest fear](#)

The invasion of sea lampreys in the Great Lakes had devastating impacts on native fish until Vernon Applegate, a scientist and unlikely hero, found a control method.

[DNR: Efforts to restore the Arctic grayling continue](#)

This spring the Michigan Department of Natural Resources will include the once-native Arctic grayling in fish stocking efforts throughout the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

[Federal wildlife and sport fish restoration programs announce 2025 apportionments to states](#)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will distribute \$1.3 billion to states in 2025 through the federal wildlife and sport fish restoration programs. The Wisconsin DNR is set to receive \$38 million

[‘A crisis’: Lake whitefish survey paints an even more dire picture](#)

A new assessment of Great Lakes Lake whitefish populations indicates that even if we bring commercial fishing harvest to zero, the lakes are still headed toward extirpation

[Report says Line 5 tunnel project could cost 3 times initial estimate, as legal challenges persist](#)

A new report from an international think tank says shutting down Enbridge’s Line 5 pipeline may be a better avenue for the Canadian energy company because of increased competition from renewable energy, multiple concerns about the viability of the company’s pipeline tunnel project, and the cost of a reroute amid ongoing efforts to shut down the pipeline.

[Oberlin startup develops way to take ‘forever chemicals’ out of drinking water](#)

A startup company based in Oberlin, Ohio, has drawn \$2.9 million in private investment so far to remove PFAS, often called forever chemicals, from the nation’s drinking water. The company formed in 2019 to launch and license a chemical coating process that captures PFAS and isolates them for destruction during water treatment

[Could plastic-eating bacteria be a solution to microplastic pollution?](#)

Researchers from the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario, have developed a way to break down microplastics by genetically altering bacteria. The researchers selected bacteria often found at wastewater plants, because not all microplastics are filtered out before being released into a stream or river.

[DNR completes fall fish stocking program. Here’s where they released nearly 600K fish](#)

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources on Wednesday said it completed its 2024 fish stocking program by releasing nearly 600,000 fish into Michigan waterways during the fall.

End