



Record High Chinook Salmon Fishing on Lake Ontario in 2017 Boat Angler Survey Finds 2017 Chinook Salmon Catch Rates Highest in More Than 30 Years

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced that Lake Ontario Chinook salmon fishing quality in 2017 was the highest recorded in more than 30 years.

"The New York State waters of Lake Ontario provide a world famous recreational fishery for trout and salmon, and our numbers show that fishing success is as good as it's been in decades," Commissioner Seggos said. "Lake Ontario consistently ranks as the most heavily fished water in the state and provides some of the best angling opportunities in North America. I encourage all anglers to fish this magnificent waterbody for large trout and salmon in 2018."

As part of the State's fisheries management efforts, DEC has

surveyed Lake Ontario boat anglers to estimate fishing quality and fish harvest annually since 1985. Chinook salmon fishing has been exceptional since 2003, and survey results reveal that anglers experienced the highest catch rate ever recorded during the 2017 fishing season. DEC estimates that Lake Ontario boat anglers caught 96,226 and harvested 53,871 Chinook salmon in 2017.

Chinook or "king" salmon are the largest and most sought-after Pacific salmon in the Great Lakes and are an excellent fighting fish. Lake Ontario produces some of the largest Chinook salmon in the Great Lakes, with many fish exceeding 30 pounds or more. The fishery is currently supported by both stocked and naturally reproduced fish.

Excellent Chinook salmon fishing in Lake Ontario is expected to continue into 2018, and anglers are encouraged to head out on the water for a chance to catch the "king" of the Great Lakes.

Senator Tom O'Mara, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said, "It has been my great pleasure, throughout my life, to fish trout and salmon on Lake Ontario. It is one of the world's great angling experiences and for those of us who can't wait to return,

we certainly value everything New York State invests to protect its integrity and quality."

Lake Ontario and its embayments and tributaries support thriving populations of fish, including a variety of salmon, trout, bass, walleye, yellow perch, and panfish. New York's Lake Ontario waters comprise more than 2.7 million acres. A recent statewide angler survey estimated more than 2.6 million angler days were spent on Lake Ontario and major tributaries. The estimated value of these fisheries exceeded \$112 million annually to local economies.

Under the 2018-19 Executive Budget Proposal, Governor Cuomo's NY Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative provides \$19.5 million for state land access projects and \$4 million for fish and wildlife infrastructure.

Additional information on fishing Lake Ontario can be found at DEC's [Great Lakes/Niagara River/St. Lawrence River Fishing](#) webpage, which contains a link to the [I FISH NY Great Lake Fishing Brochure](#). You can also send an email to fwfish@dec.ny.gov with your name and address to order the brochure. (See also *1985 – 2017 Lake Ontario Fishing Boat Survey elsewhere here*)

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GLSFC suffers equipment failure

It's been a horrendous year so far. Our system was down for the better part of two months. We were hoping they could restore it, but unfortunately no luck. We lost our hard drive and data base with thousands of names/addresses.

Our backup system failed also – and attempts at data recovery failed as well. We just bought a new computer and have keyed in what e-mails we have a paper record of. So please help us get the word out and have your associates send us their contact info at glslfc@comcast.net.

Thanks.

Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshops- March 20 & 27 FREE - no registration required

Learn about food-web changes, yellow perch fisheries, lake trout reproduction and the evolving relationship between people and fisheries in southern Lake Michigan. For more information, contact Mitch Zischke at mzischke@purdue.edu or 765-494-9717. Or find him on Twitter @TheAussieWahoo. Refreshments will be served.

Two locations & dates:

March 20, 2018, 6-8:30pm CT
Chicago Maritime Museum
1200 W 35th St. #0E-5010
Chicago, IL 60609
[Google Map](#)

March 27, 2018
6pm-8:30pm CT
North Point Marina
701 North Point Drive
Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096
[Google Map](#) ✧

Parks Canada kills thousands of fish with Whirling Disease

Parks Canada has so far killed and removed up to 30,000 fish from Johnson Lake and its surrounding streams and wetlands as it continues to try and eradicate whirling disease from the 18-hectare lake.

It was the first time the disease was detected in Canada. In response, Parks implemented a three-year plan to remove all fish from the lake. Click on the following two sentences to access the full story.

The disease is not harmful to humans. "The biggest vector is humans moving live fish around watersheds," said Nelson-Chorney. On top of removing fish, Parks Canada has also closed all critical habitat for west slope cutthroat trout throughout the park, banned felt soled wading boots and implemented a catch and release policy for all fish, except for two lake trout from Lake Minnewanka. ✧

DNR releases new Lake Michigan Fisheries Management Plan

The Michigan DNR has completed the agency's first Lake Michigan Fisheries Management Plan. The plan can be found online through a partnership with Michigan Sea Grant at mdnrlmfmp.wordpress.com/.

The plan sets long-term vision and goals for the Lake Michigan fishery and establishes a process to continuously involve the public to seek alignment on shorter-term strategies and tactics.

The plan focuses on five goals: (1) Healthy aquatic ecosystems and sustainable fish populations, (2) Providing diverse fish opportunities, (3) Strategic resource partnerships, (4) Strategically focused assessment and decision support tools, and (5) Strategic funding of plan priorities.

For more information, contact Jay Wesley at 269-685-6851, ext. 117 or wesleyj@michigan.gov. ✧

Register for beginner fly-fishing weekend for youth-adult pairs

A youth paired with an adult can join other youth-adult pairs to learn the basics of fly fishing from experienced instructors from evening on Friday, April 27, to afternoon on Sunday, April 29, near Lanesboro. [Full Story](#)

To participate, youth must be 11 to 17 years old as of April 27, and adult and youth must each have less than 5 hours of fly-fishing experience. The registration fee is \$130 per pair and includes meals, lodging, guiding services, equipment and additional materials. Sponsorships to offset registration fees may be available from angling and conservation organizations. This event is limited to 20 youth-adult pairs.

Apply [online](#). For more information, contact Groebner at 507-359-6049 or deborah.groebner@state.mn.us. ✧



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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.

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2018 Black Lake sturgeon season harvest results

Michigan DNR officials announced the 2018 sturgeon harvest season on Black Lake (in the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula) ended after two and a half hours Saturday, Feb. 3, with seven fish being harvested.



The fishing season, which included spearing or hook-and-line fishing, was scheduled to run February 3-7, or until the harvest quota had been reached. DNR officials set a harvest quota of six fish.

There were 426 registered anglers on the ice Saturday, up from 332 the year before.

The first four sturgeon were harvested before 8:30 a.m. after an 8 a.m. start. The first fish was a 58-inch female that weighed 45 pounds, while fish number two was a 41-inch female that weighed 16 pounds. Fish three was the largest fish of the season, a 72-inch female that weighed 99 pounds. Fish four was a 56-inch male that weighed 36 pounds. The fifth fish was a 69-inch female that weighed 73 pounds. The sixth fish was a 53-inch male that weighed 31 pounds, and the final fish was a 64-inch female that weighed 66 pounds.

The sturgeon fishing hotline indicating the season was closed was updated at 10:23 a.m., which officially closed the season. DNR law enforcement officials and other department personnel were embedded in the on-ice fishing communities and were able to quickly report harvested fish this year, as well as to quickly contact all lake sturgeon anglers on the ice and close the season.

For more information on sturgeon in Michigan, visit michigan.gov/sturgeon. ✧

Trout fishing awaits anglers at Castalia State Fish Hatchery

COLUMBUS, OH – Exceptional trout fishing opportunities on Cold Creek, one of Ohio's most unique streams, await fishing enthusiasts who enter and are drawn in a special lottery conducted by the Ohio DNR.

A half-mile section of the creek, located at the Castalia State Fish Hatchery in Erie County, will again be open to a limited number of anglers on selected dates between April 14 and November 30.

Anglers interested in fishing the trout stream must submit an application and a non-refundable \$3 application fee between March 1-31 to be eligible for the random drawing. Applications may be completed online at wildohio.gov or by calling 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543) to obtain a paper form, which must be returned via mail. Only one application is allowed per person. More information about the lottery can be found at wildohio.gov or by calling 800-WILDLIFE.

There will be one season for adults (May 7–November 30), and one for youths (June 11–August 10). Two bonus early-bird Fridays have been added on April 14 and April 21, with morning and afternoon slots to be filled. Morning and afternoon slots are also being filled on Fridays in May and June and during all youth event dates. Applicants of the youth lottery must be between the ages of 4 and 15 when they apply. Approximately 100 adult and 90 youth permits will be issued. Individuals selected to participate will be allowed to bring two adults and three youths under the age of 16 (no more than six people total). Participation is determined by a computer-generated random drawing, which will be held in early April.

The results of the adult drawing will be posted on the division's website at wildohio.gov. Successful youth applicants will be notified by mail. This year, all permits will be mailed. Applicants not chosen will not be notified.

Additional angling opportunities created by successful fall fish-stocking season

The Michigan DNR announced the totals from its 2017 fall fish-stocking efforts. The DNR stocked nine different species totaling 834,175 fish that weighed nearly 11.5 tons. Fish were stocked at 76 locations throughout the state.

Fall fish stocking in 2017 consisted of nine species that included brook trout, brown trout, coho salmon, lake trout, Eagle Lake and steelhead strain rainbow trout, lake sturgeon, walleye and muskellunge.

- Harrietta Fish Hatchery stocked 33,698 fall fingerling Wild Rose strain brown trout at one location.
- Marquette Fish Hatchery stocked 65,615 fall fingerling and adult brook and lake trout at 52 locations.
- Oden Fish Hatchery stocked 135,683 fall fingerling Eagle Lake rainbow trout and three Black Lake strain lake sturgeon at four locations.
- Platte River Fish Hatchery stocked 134,000 fall fingerling coho salmon in one location.
- Thompson Fish Hatchery stocked 302,442 fall fingerling steelhead at six locations.
- Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery stocked three species of fall fingerlings. These included 150,764 fall fingerling steelhead at two locations. Wolf Lake also stocked 1,365 northern strain muskellunge fall fingerlings and were stocked at three sites. Lastly, 10,606 Muskegon strain fall fingerling walleye were stocked at six sites.
- Several DNR Management Units (Northern Lake Michigan, Lake Erie and Southern Lake Huron) also stocked fall fingerling walleye in 2017. The Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit stocked 2,929 Bay De Noc strain fall fingerling walleye while the Lake Erie and Southern Lake Huron management units stocked 7,250 Muskegon strain fall fingerling walleye.

michigan.gov/hatcheries and michigandnr.com/fishstock/ ✧

Water-Quality Monitoring Program aids restoration of Great Lakes

A new water-quality monitoring program, established by the U.S. Geological Survey, can provide scientists and managers with the best available data to help evaluate the health of Great Lakes ecosystems and improve water quality for recreation and commercial fishing.

As part of the monitoring program, USGS collected samples and used state-of-the-art sensors to gather water-quality data for 30 major Great Lakes tributaries 2011-2013. Using scientific models to analyze the data, scientists were able to more accurately estimate the amounts, or loads, of sediment and nutrients entering the Great Lakes from tributaries than by using traditional techniques. The program is highlighted in a new [USGS publication](#).

"The approach we developed as part of the USGS water monitoring

program provides an enhanced understanding of short-term variability and long-term changes in the quality of water from tributaries," said Dale Robertson, a USGS scientist and the lead author of the report.

Scientists collected and processed water-quality information from tributaries located in a wide range of land-use settings. Water-quality information included water flow; concentrations of total [phosphorus](#), total [nitrogen](#) and [suspended sediment](#); and data from sensors, such as [turbidity](#).

"Taken together, the water-quality and input information from these rivers provide a broader and more accurate picture of how water from tributaries influences the environmental health of the Great Lakes, which are a multi-billion dollar per year resource," Robertson

said. Due to the new methodology, the annual load estimates resulting from this water-quality monitoring effort may be different from previously released estimates by the USGS and other entities, according to Jon Hortness, the USGS Great Lakes Program Coordinator.

The USGS Great Lakes tributary monitoring program can help evaluate the overall effects of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative management efforts. The USGS monitoring program, its new scientific modeling approach and its water-quality estimates for 2011 through 2013 are [published in the Journal of Great Lakes Research](#).

For more information about USGS water studies in the Great Lakes and Midwest, please visit the [USGS Upper Midwest Water Science Center](#) or the [USGS Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) websites. ✧

NY Sea Grant and DEC offer \$200,000 for Great Lakes Basin Projects

Eligible projects will enhance community and capitalize on NY water-based recreation and tourism

Ithaca, NY. – New York Sea Grant and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced \$200,000 is available for Great Lakes ecosystem-based management projects through the New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program, which is administered by New York Sea Grant in partnership with DEC. Up to \$25,000 is available for each project.

"These grants support eco-based recreation and tourism projects and reinforce Governor Cuomo's statewide efforts to connect more New Yorkers with the outdoors," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "Not only do these grants protect our environment, they support recreation and tourism, major drivers of New York's Great Lakes Basin economy."

"These small grants create opportunities for stakeholders to build upon the unique natural strengths of their communities to enhance environmental quality, resiliency, and the economic benefits intrinsically

tied to New York's Great Lakes coastal resources," said New York Sea Grant Associate Director and Cornell University Cooperative Extension Assistant Director Katherine Bunting-Howarth, Ithaca, N.Y.

[New York Sea Grant](#) (leaves DEC's website) application instructions are available online. Proposals must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. EST on May 1, 2018. A webinar to help applicants will be held March 19 at 10 a.m. For more information, contact New York Sea Grant at 315-312-3042.

Proposed projects must use a complete ecosystem-based approach rather than a single issue or single species focus, incorporate stakeholder participation, and address key priorities in the New York Great Lakes Action Agenda. Those priorities include enhancing community resiliency and ecosystem integrity through restoration, protection, and improved resource

management; and enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities that capitalize on the rivers and lakes, scenic beauty, and natural and cultural resources that define the character of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region.

Eligible projects may include planning, design, implementation, information management tool development, demonstration projects, and targeted educational outreach.

Not-for-profit organizations, county and local government or public agencies, municipalities, regional planning and environmental commissions, and educational institutions, including, but not limited to, public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities are eligible to apply.

The New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program is funded through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and Article 14 of Environmental Conservation Law. ✧

Asian Carp Business Process Analysis

Illinois DNR is sharing a [Business Process Analysis and Action Plan](#) as a guide to bolster current removal activities and further reduce the spread of Asian carp in the Illinois Waterway, as well as protect native Illinois species.

Illinois DNR has used contracted commercial fishers to reduce populations in the upper Illinois Waterway significantly, with more than **6.3 million lbs. of Asian carp removed to date**. These fish have been used by Illinois companies, with only a few having to be disposed of in landfills. Populations at the leading edge have shown a more than 93% reduction, as compared to levels found in 2012. Data suggest that extending efforts further downstream can increase effectiveness.

Private sector and market forces can be expanded, with desirable products for domestic and international markets to help drive removal efforts downstream. Employing the private sector may require far fewer governmental dollars in the long run than many other alternatives, and leverages the ongoing success of current business activity. We have identified a goal of removing of 20–50 million lbs. of Asian carp from the lower Illinois River to achieve maximum effect on populations at strategic locations.

While this report outlines Illinois fisheries in general, it makes eight recommendations to support local and regional economies that will provide needed tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments, as well as increase overall employment in surrounding areas. The Action Plan has recommended a \$32 million investment over seven years to build the fishery market, and add value through very specific actions that are reasonable and achievable. When implemented, the plan can protect the Great Lakes, Illinois rivers and lakes, and serve the nation with a replicable plan to further prevent the spread of and reduce the impacts of Asian carp. [The Final Report and Action Plan can be downloaded here.](#) ✧

Spring Trout Season opens April 7

The 2018 Illinois Spring Trout Fishing Season opens on April 7 at 54 lakes and ponds throughout Illinois. Fishing licenses and Inland Trout Stamps for those interested in fishing for trout are available at DNR Direct license and permit vendors, and online through the IDNR website.

For a list of locations stocked for the spring trout season and more details:

- Anglers will need both a fishing license and an Inland Trout Stamp to participate, unless they are under the age of 16, blind, disabled, or are an Illinois resident on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces.
- The Spring Catch-and-Release Fly Fishing season opens at nine sites on March 24. Anglers can use fly fishing gear to catch trout at that time, but they cannot keep the fish. All trout must be released until after the opening of the regular spring trout season, which begins at 5 a.m. on April 7. Anyone attempting to take trout before the legal harvest season opening will be issued citations.
- The IDNR stocks more than 80,000 rainbow trout each year, with 54 ponds, lakes and streams throughout the state being stocked for the spring season, and an additional 80,000 trout stocked for the fall season.
- No trout may be taken from any of the stocked sites from March 15 until the Spring trout season opens at 5 a.m. on April 7. For more information on trout seasons and other Illinois fishing opportunities, go to: www.ifishillinois.org.

For more information about all site regulations, anglers should contact individual sites that will be stocked with catchable-size trout. Not all sites open at 5 a.m. on opening day. Anglers are reminded to check the opening time of their favorite sites prior to the opening date. <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/Illinois-Spring-Trout-Fishing-Season-Opens-April-7.aspx>. See [trout stocking locations here.](#) ✧

Carp Identification

Juvenile Asian Carp Identification

The Michigan DNR developed a video to assist anglers and the general public in identifying juvenile Asian carp. Many people don't realize that juvenile Asian carp pose a threat to the state's Great Lakes. Juvenile Asian carp can be confused with common baitfish – such as gizzard shad, emerald shiner, spottail shiner, etc. Because bait is often transported across state lines, including from areas with breeding populations of Asian carp, it would be easy for juvenile Asian carp to make their way into the bait supply without anyone realizing it. This video showcases five characteristics viewers can use to distinguish between juvenile Asian carp and common baitfish. These characteristics include color, scales, eyes, mouths and keels.

Black and Grass Carp Identification

The black carp is one of four species of Asian carp that threaten waterways in the central U.S. Black carp (www.asiancarp.us) consume native freshwater mussels and snails that live in our large rivers.

Black carp closely resemble grass carp, which are more common in large rivers of the central U.S. We do not have a reliable method to tell them apart based on external characteristics, but the photos in the [Black and Grass Carp Identification Guide](#) give general characteristics, which can help. When in doubt, report the fish to the appropriate management agency as listed below.

Reporting a Captured Black Carp

To report a black carp captured in the Central U.S. from the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio or Wabash rivers, call one of the numbers below during regular business hours or report the fish to your local natural resource agency. Fish should be held cold, on ice, not alive, until passed to a natural resource agent.

Illinois DNR: 217-557-0719
So. Illinois U.: 618-453-6089
USGS: 573-876-1866

See the [Black and Grass Carp Identification Guide](#) here. ✧

New northern pike fishing regs coming for fishing opener

New regulations for catching and keeping northern pike will be the most significant change anglers will see when they open up the 2018 Minnesota Fishing Regulations Booklet.

Anyone who wants to keep pike in Minnesota's inland waters needs to take a close look at these regulations and be prepared to measure the pike they want to keep starting on the Saturday, May 12, fishing opener.

The new pike harvest regulations apply to inland waters of the state.

- North-central: Limit of 10 northern pike, but not more than two pike longer than 26 inches; all from 22 to 26 inches must be released.
- Northeast: Two pike; anglers must release all from 30 to 40 inches, with only one over 40 inches allowed in possession.
- South: Two fish; minimum size 24 inches.

For more information on the new zone regulations visit mndnr.gov/pike or contact a local area fisheries office. Contact information can be found in the fishing regulations booklet, available online at mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing ✧

2017 IDNR Division of Fisheries Year In Review

IDNR Chief of Fisheries, Dan Stephenson, has shared some 2017 highlights from the Illinois DNR. Thanks to angler support through programs like the Illinois Fish Management Fund and the Wildlife and Fish Fund (fishing license sales and Illinois share of the federal excise tax on fishing equipment), the DNR is working to improve fishing opportunities, fish habitat and fisheries management in Illinois.

There have been many accomplishments made in 2017, and many more to come for 2018! Read the [Year In Review Report](#) here. ✧

Remington begins Chapter 11 Bankruptcy proceedings

Remington has officially struck a deal to file for chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Remington made the announcement in a [news release](#), which states a prepackaged reorganization will be filed with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, which is headed by Stephen Feinberg's Cerberus Management.

As reported in the [Bloomberg](#) article: "*Holder of the gunmaker's \$550 million term loan will take an 82.5% equity stake in Remington while third-lien noteholders get 17.5% of the company and four-year warrants for a 15% stake. Creditors will also provide a \$100 million debtor-in-possession loan to finance operations throughout bankruptcy.*"

The unfortunate news from Remington Outdoor Co. falls in line with a trend being seen across the firearm industry. When Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in the polls, customers suddenly lost all fear that guns could become strictly regulated, so sales in-turn dropped off as well, and this is what a good portion of the industry is dealing with today.

Here is copy from the Remington news release:

Remington Outdoor Company Announces Restructuring Support Agreement with Creditors for a Comprehensive Financial Restructuring and \$145 million of New Capital
Normal Operations Will Continue During Restructuring Period
Remington's Liquidity and Competitiveness Enhanced
All Claims including Trade Payables to be Honored ✧

Deadline to remove fish houses approaching

The deadline for anglers to remove fish houses from lakes in the region is approaching quickly.

Removal dates are determined by state and geography. ✧

March is the time for spring coho fishing

The most consistent action for catching spring coho from the Lake Michigan shoreline is in March. This is right after the ice goes out until the near-shore water temps reach 48–50 degrees — at which point the coho move offshore. However, cohos can be caught from shore from January to mid-April if conditions are right.

A few places you can fish: East Chicago Marina break wall; BP Whiting Discharge; Hammond Marina break wall; Portage Lakefront Park; Port of Indiana Shore Fishing Site; and Michigan City (pier at Washington Park, or DNR/Coast Guard Access in the inner harbor). Fishing access can be found using the [Where to Fish Finder](#).

Most coho taken by shore anglers are caught on live bait. Up to three rods are permitted, which can increase the odds of catching a fish. Practically any spinning rod spooled with 6-10 pound test monofilament line will work for fishing for live bait. Usually, the best tactic is a simple bobber rig. Suspend a size-2 to size-6 hook about 4-6 feet under a bobber. Bait with small spawn sacs, salmon skein, tube jigs tipped with waxworms, small pieces of shrimp, nightcrawlers or minnows.

Helpful tip: Experiment with a mix of bobbers and bottom rigs and switch to the presentation that works best. Fishing on bottom is more likely to result in other fish such as brown trout or whitefish.

Anglers will need both a fishing license and a trout stamp. You can find the [DNR fishing reports online](#). ✧

NY hunting safety statistics for 2017 Past five years safest on record

The 2017 hunting seasons in New York saw the second-lowest number of hunting-related shooting incidents (HRSIs) on record, 19. Also in 2017 DEC started tracking tree stand injuries for the first time. DEC recorded 12 incidents statewide. ✧

Indiana DNR Rec and Fishing guides available online

1. Your guide to Indiana's best values in outdoor recreation is available now at dnr.IN.gov/5280.htm. And your guide to Indiana fishing is available now at wildlife.IN.gov/2347.htm.

2. Annual Entrance Passes for state park properties can be purchased in person at the gatehouse or offices of state park properties during business hours, at the Indiana Government Center South in Indianapolis during business hours, or at innsgifts.com.

3. Indiana resident passes cost \$50. For individuals 65 years old or older, the price is \$25. Annual passes for vehicles with out-of-state license plates are \$70. Normal daily gate fees for residents at most properties are \$7 per in-state vehicle. For more information on Indiana state park properties, visit stateparks.IN.gov.

4. Fishing licenses can be purchased and printed at INHuntFish.com. They can also be purchased at retailers, county clerks and most DNR properties throughout the state. ✧

Group Fishing Permit policy

IDNR has traditionally issued free Group Fishing Permits to large organized groups, and this will continue in 2018. However, beginning this year, the Division of Fisheries will issue **Free Group Fishing Permits only in instances in which groups of hospital patients or nursing home residents will be fishing as part of therapy programs.**

Youth and social groups planning fishing events and activities are reminded that youth under the age of 16 do not need to have a license to fish, while adults accompanying or chaperoning the youth, or participating in a group fishing event, will now need to have an Illinois fishing license. ✧

Stop the spread of Invasive Species

Remove, Drain, Dry: As the boats come out of storage, be aware of invasive species that pose a threat to our lands and waterways. To fight the spread of aquatic invaders, the IDNR is asking residents to "be a hero—transport zero." The best way to stop the spread of invasive species is to remove, drain, and dry your boats after use in any Illinois waterway.

Aquatic invasive species (AIS), like zebra and quagga mussels, round goby, and the fish disease VHS, can reduce or eliminate native species in local waters, making fishing for lunker smallmouth or a trophy walleye more difficult. Invasive plants can also overgrow and choke waterways, which degrades fish habitat and impedes your ability to boat and fish. Preventing the spread of AIS is essential to reducing environmental impacts and economic losses and also to preserving our waters so that we can fish and boat for many years to come.

Unfortunately, AIS are easily transported by the equipment used by anglers, quite unintentionally and often unnoticed. AIS can be spread from one infested waterbody to another when they stick to boats, trailers, waders, and fishing gear, or when they hitch a ride in bilge, live well, or bait bucket water.

But not all bodies of water are infested with AIS, and with your help, anglers can help to stop the spread of AIS. So, how can you help prevent the spread of AIS? It's simple: Be a Hero—Transport Zero. Just a few simple steps – Remove, Drain, Dry – can make a big difference in keeping Illinois waters free from AIS. ✧

Hunter and Boating Safety Courses

Register now for Hunter Safety Education and Boating Safety Education courses from the IL DNR. Check the IDNR website for class dates and locations: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety/Pages/VolunteerServiceCoordinators.aspx>. ✧

Michigan's hand netting season open; dip netting opens March 20

The Michigan DNR reminds anglers about netting seasons as we get closer to spring. The hand netting season is now open, and closes May 31, while the dip netting season opens Tuesday, **March 20**, and also closes May 31.

The following species can be taken during both seasons: bowfin, carp, goldfish, gizzard shad, longnose gar, smelt and suckers. Waters open to hand netting include all Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, the Detroit River and the St. Marys River including all tributaries to those waters from the mouth to a half-mile upstream. Waters open to dip netting include all Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula streams, except Designated Trout Streams.

All other waters are closed to these activities; visit michigan.gov/dnrdigests for full details.

The use of seines, hand nets and dip nets for minnows is allowed all year on all waters (except Designated Trout Streams and those waters closed to minnow harvest) while cast nets can be used for alewives, minnows, smelt and gizzard shad all year on the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, the Detroit River and the St. Marys River.

For those interested in dipping for smelt later this spring, visit the [DNR's smelt dipping and fishing opportunities page online](#). ✧

New recreational skills classes for women and families in Minn

Women and families can learn outdoor recreational skills in a supportive atmosphere by registering for any of a wide range of hands-on learning opportunities in the newly released 2018 *Becoming an Outdoors Woman* and *Becoming an Outdoors Family* catalog. For more info: visit mndnr.gov/bow or 888-646-6367.

Rainbow trout sampling dates for Finger Lakes

New York State DEC announced the dates and locations for the annual sampling of the rainbow trout run in Finger Lakes tributaries. This year, sampling is scheduled for:

- Thursday, March 22, 9 a.m., at Naples Creek, just north of the Village of Naples, Ontario County, at the Route 245 bridge
- Friday, March 23, 10 a.m., at Cold Brook (Keuka Inlet) in the hamlet of Pleasant Valley, Steuben County.

DEC is conducting the sampling to aid in the ongoing assessment of Finger Lakes fisheries management practices and to provide up-to-date information for the opening day fishing forecast. ✧

Becoming an Outdoors Woman

Registration is open for the IDNR 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' Workshop on June 8-10 at the Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Illinois. 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' workshops are designed to provide introductory instruction and experiences in many outdoor-related activities and skills. The cost per person is \$240, which includes meals, lodging, four instructional classes, use of class materials/supplies, transportation during the workshop, and more. Registration materials can be downloaded from the BOW webpage www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/BOW. Register soon, as only a few reservations are left (there is a limit of 90 participants). ✧

IL DNR Fisheries 2017 – 2022 Strategic plan for the conservation of Illinois Fisheries

For the full 28 page report: [Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022](#) ✧

More than 2,000 people earn Michigan's Master Angler status in 2017

It was another great year for Michigan fishing, as 2,176 anglers representing 24 states and Canada submitted catches recognized in the state's Master Angler program – a significant increase over 1,807 Master Angler fish in 2016. The program, in place since 1973, recognizes large fish caught by recreational anglers and has more than doubled since 2014.

Of the entries accepted by the Michigan DNR, 1,250 were in the catch-and-keep category while 926 were in the catch-and-release category. A total of 266 anglers received certificates for fish placing in the top five for both categories.

Here is a breakdown of the most popular 2017 Master Angler entries by species:

- 228 bluegill.
- 121 pumpkinseed sunfish.
- 118 smallmouth bass.
- 111 crappie.
- 95 rainbow trout.
- 93 freshwater drum.
- 90 channel catfish.
- 62 cisco (lake herring).
- 59 lake trout. ✧

Ohio sheriff offers free firearm training to teachers

Receives hundreds of applicants within hours

Butler County (Ohio) Sheriff Richard Jones has offered firearm training courses to teachers free of charge in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, and the response has been eye opening. "We thought we'd get 20, 25 signed up. We had 50 within the first hour. We had 100 within 2 hours, we had 300 within like 5 hours. We offered to teachers first, then we start getting calls from a secretary that works in the school, janitors that work in the school," Sheriff Jones [said](#). ✧

2018 Spring fish and wildlife rules hearing questionnaire available online

MADISON – The questionnaire package for the 2018 DNR spring fish and wildlife public hearing and annual Conservation Congress county meeting and the list of meeting locations is now available for review on the DNR website.

On April 9, there will be [72 public hearings \[PDF\]](#), one in each Wisconsin county starting at 7 p.m. where people interested in natural resources management have an opportunity to provide their input by non-binding vote and testimony to the DNR and the Conservation Congress on proposed natural resource related advisory questions that may impact future rule changes.

The hearings, held annually on the second Monday in April, are combined with the county meetings during which attendees can introduce and vote on citizen resolutions to address natural resources related issues.

To view the [2018 spring wildlife and fisheries questionnaire package \[PDF\]](#) or for information about the process search the DNR website dnr.wi.gov for "[spring hearings](#)." ✧

2018 annual licenses now available

Annual Indiana fishing and hunting licenses are now available for purchase. The 2017 annual fishing and hunting licenses expire on March 31. If you purchased your license online last year, just log into your account, confirm your information, and purchase your new licenses. Indiana residents can purchase a Hunt/Fish Combo license for just \$8 more. Not only can you hunt AND fish for just a few dollars more, but the DNR receives \$58 in federal funds that go directly back into conservation to help us continue to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife recreation activities ✧.

DNR reminds new hunters to sign up for safety classes

Michigan DNR conservation officers remind new hunters that it's not too early to sign up for safety classes. All first-time hunters born on or after January 1, 1960, must successfully complete a hunter safety course.

First-time hunters shouldn't wait until the last minute to sign up for a safety course, especially if they are considering a springtime hunt. The first step in ensuring an enjoyable hunting experience is to know how to do it safely and legally. Classes tend to fill up in the fall, so now's the time to learn.

A course typically is comprised of two to five sessions with a total class time of 10 to 12 hours. Classes usually are conducted at outdoor clubs, schools, police stations and camps. In addition to traditional classroom courses, home-study and online courses—which use a self-paced method followed by a field day of material review and testing—are available.

Online vendors are fee-based and there may be a minimal charge for classes and field days. Hunter education is a partnership between the DNR Law Enforcement Division and more than 2,500 **volunteer instructors**.

In addition to taking a safety course, the DNR encourages all hunters to review the [Michigan Hunting and Trapping Digest](#) for other essential information before taking to the field. ✧

2018 licenses available

Illinois fishing, hunting and sportsman combination licenses for 2018 are now available from DNR Direct license and permit vendors throughout Illinois or online through the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov. The new license year in Illinois begins on April 1, and 2018 licenses are valid through March 31, 2019. ✧

Asian carp barrier to Great Lakes holds in recent Indiana floods

When ecologists realized that a marsh near Fort Wayne, Ind., could be the Asian carp's back door into the Great Lakes, they rushed to close it.

Floods like those seen recently are exactly what they feared: a comingling of waters of the carp-tainted Wabash River, which flows into the Mississippi, and the Maumee River, which flows into Lake Erie.

Rainfall amounts as high as 7 inches in parts of northern Indiana did not pose a threat to the 1.7-mile berm completed in late 2015 to separate the Midwest's so-called continental divide through the Eagle Marsh. But the floods did serve as a reminder that the berm was needed and reinforced that the path's discovery came just in time.

Asian carp are considered one of the greatest threats to the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery industry. They have [transformed the ecosystems](#) in areas they've infested, including the Mississippi River, since being introduced in the South.

The [primary threat for Asian carp entry](#) to the Great Lakes remains through the man-made Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. A series of electric barriers are designed to deter further migration, but an [Asian species evaded the barriers](#) and was caught in June just miles from Lake Michigan.

That a small stretch of land at Fort Wayne, nearly 100 miles from both lakes Michigan and Erie, could provide the second best path into the Lakes might not have been considered if not for a chance encounter in December 2009. It was just six months before spawning populations of the invasive species were found in the Wabash River.

The berm does have a weak spot—a 300-foot gap that allows the comingling of waters in the event of a 50-year flood so as to prevent flooding of neighbors in the area. It is covered with a chain-link barrier with 2-inch openings to prevent mature fish from passing through. ✧

Catchable trout releases to begin in March

More than 100,000 rainbow trout are expected to be released this spring in 64 Ohio public lakes and ponds, creating excellent fishing opportunities for anglers all across Ohio. Releases will take place across Ohio March 2-May 19 as long as areas are ice-free and accessible to anglers. Information about the trout releases, including updates to the schedule due to weather and stocking locations, is available at wildohio.gov or call 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543). For a list of trout stocking dates and locations, go to wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/fishing/trout-stocking-dates. ✧

Fishing Info Booklet

The *2018 Illinois Fishing Information* guide is available at many IDNR license and permit vendor locations, and in PDF format online at: <https://www.ifishillinois.org/regulations/2018FishingGuide.pdf>. Regulations in the guide are effective April 1, 2018-March 31, 2019. Printed copies will be available soon. A reminder to anglers that Illinois Free Fishing Days for 2018 will be during the Father's Day weekend – June 15-18. ✧

2018 trout stocking beginning

Illinois Fish Hatchery personnel will begin stocking rainbow trout in select lakes throughout the state this month. Dates and times will vary depending on weather, but stockings are expected to be completed by mid-April. Stream stockings will occur later in April, closer to the opening day of the stream trout season on April 28. Anglers are reminded that in addition to a regular fishing license, a trout and salmon stamp is required to fish for trout. ✧

Outdoor Indiana magazine features state fish hatcheries

Outdoor Indiana, the state's premier magazine, delivers the wonders of the Hoosier outdoors to subscribers' homes and offices six times a year in 48 pages of vibrant color. For the best of state parks, lakes, wildlife, forests, trails, hunting, fishing, wildflowers and outdoorsy people, plus inside information from DNR experts, [subscribe](#) for \$15 per year or \$28 for two years. Follow the magazine staff on [Facebook](#). ✧

Alpen Optics closes doors after 22 years

Alpen Optics has ceased all operations and closed its doors. Company owners Tim and Vickie Gardner cited family health issues, competitive dynamics and factory production challenges as the reasons for the abrupt closure. ✧

Interested in playing a bigger role in deer management

Head to your local CDAC meeting this March and let your voice be heard.

Wisconsin County Deer Advisory Councils will begin spring meetings in mid-March to start the antlerless harvest quota and permit-setting process for the 2018 deer seasons. Various deer season structure options for each county will be discussed by councils. All CDAC meetings are open to the public, including opportunity to provide feedback. A [meeting schedule](#) and more information is available at keyword "[CDAC](#)." If you are unable to make it to a CDAC meeting, you can also review and comment on preliminary recommendations through an online survey on the CDAC Web page from April 2-12. Check out the [deer metrics page](#) – here, you'll find harvest and population trends and other helpful info for where you hunt. ✧

Public hearings set for proposed fish, wildlife rule changes

The Indiana Natural Resources Commission has scheduled two hearings to receive public comment on a package of proposed rule changes that include wild turkey hunting, nuisance wild animals, and a proposed new bobcat hunting & trapping season.

For a complete list of proposed amendments with additional information about each proposal, see wildlife.IN.gov/2362.htm.

The first hearing was March 14, and the second is, March 22, starting at 5:30 p.m., at Mounds State Park, Pavilion, 4306 Mounds Road.

Public comments can be [submitted online](#), locate the "comment on this rule" link in the Rules Docket for the Wildlife Rule Amendments. Comments also can be mailed to: Natural Resources Commission; Indiana Government Center South; 100 North Senate Ave., Room N103; Indianapolis, IN 46204. The deadline for submitting public comments is midnight March 23. ✧

Lake Huron Spring Fisheries Workshops

Michigan Sea Grant in partnership with the Michigan DNR, the USGS Great Lakes Science Center, and local fishery organizations will host four regional workshops locally along Lake Huron's coastline. These annual spring Lake Huron fisheries workshops bring communities together with fisheries research and management partners to discuss research findings, management updates, and fishing trends.

Four evening workshops, hosted across the state, are open to the public and will offer valuable information for anglers, charter captains, resource professionals and other community members interested in the Lake Huron fishery.

Workshop dates and locations include:

Standish (Saginaw Bay)

Tuesday, April 10 (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.)

Saganing Tribal Center
5447 Sturman Rd., Standish, MI
48658

Uby/Bad Axe

Thursday, April 19 (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
Uby Fox Hunter's Club
2351 Uby Rd., Bad Axe, MI 48413

Rogers City

Tuesday, April 24 (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
Rogers City Area Seniors and
Community Center
131 Superior St., Rogers City, MI
49779

Cedarville

Thursday, May 3 (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
Clark Township Community Center
133 E. M-134, Cedarville, MI 49719
Workshops are open to the public at no cost; however, pre-registration is requested. Register online at: <http://events.anr.msu.edu/2018LakeHuronFisheries/>

Visit [Michigan Sea Grant online](#) for latest details and updates on fisheries workshops around the state. Please contact Brandon Schroeder, Michigan Sea Grant (989-354-9885 or schroe45@msu.edu) with any questions regarding Lake Huron workshops.

Please help promote and share with any and all who may be interested in participating; and we hope you will plan to join one of these educational opportunities yourself!

Brandon Schroeder

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Sec. Zinke Partners with Congress on Bipartisan Bill to Fix National Parks

Marks important component of Trump's infrastructure for rebuilding America's infrastructure

WASHINGTON –U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke joined U.S. Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Angus King (I-ME), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and others to introduce a bipartisan bill to rebuild America's National Parks. The proposed bill would use up to \$18 billion in revenue derived from energy produced on federal lands and waters to establish a special fund within the Treasury specifically for "National Park Restoration". The bill follows the blueprint laid out in Secretary Zinke and President Trump's budget proposal, the Public Lands Infrastructure Fund. The Alexander/King bill's cosponsors are: Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Steve Daines (R-MT), Cory Gardner (R-CO), and Thom Tillis (R-NC). This bill fulfills one of the priorities laid out in President Trump's [legislative framework for rebuilding America's infrastructure](#).

"This legislation will help address the over \$11 billion maintenance backlog at our national parks, including the \$215 million backlog of projects in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," **Senator Alexander said.** "The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of America's greatest treasures – and it has a tremendous economic impact in East Tennessee, attracting nearly twice the visitors of any other national park. Addressing the maintenance backlog will help attract even more visitors and create more jobs for Tennesseans. We must continue to work together to find solutions to the many challenges facing our public lands, and this legislation takes an important step toward doing that."

While National Parks have enjoyed historic visitation over the past few years, many Americans have

never been to a NPS site and are unfamiliar with what infrastructure they hold. Here's a quick look at National Park Service infrastructure across the board:

- More than 5,500 miles of paved roads
 - More than 1,700 bridges and tunnels
 - More than 17,000 miles of trails
 - More than 1,300 campgrounds
 - More than 24,000 buildings including more than 500 visitor centers, 425 park lodges and hotel buildings, 3,870 housing units and more than 3,700 bathrooms
 - More than 1,000 miles of water pipelines
 - More than 1,500 water systems
 - More than 1,800 wastewater systems
 - More than 500 electrical systems
- ◇

Ohio's Spring Aboard campaign offers boating education for all ages

In Ohio, a boater education course is required for anyone wanting to operate a boat over 10 horsepower who was born after January 1, 1982. Ohio's boater requirement can be met by taking and passing an approved boating education course (classroom, online or home study), or by taking and passing a proficiency exam. For a summary of Ohio's regulations and available courses, go to: watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/coursesearch.

To kick off the boating season, free classroom courses are being offered around the state on Saturday, March 24:

- Northwest Ohio – Maumee Bay State Park, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 419-836-6003 or email maumeebay.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us to reserve your place.

- Northeast Ohio – Shaker Lake Nature Center, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 216-361-1212 or email cleveland.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us to reserve your place.
- Southwest Ohio – East Fork State Park, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 513-734-2730 or email cincinnati.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us to reserve your place.
- Central Ohio – Alum Creek State Park, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 740-548-5490 or email alumcreek.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us to reserve your place.
- Southeast Ohio – Scioto Watercraft Field Office, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 740-353-7668 or email michael.campbell@dnr.state.oh.us to reserve your place.

Working in partnership with the states, many course providers,

including Ace Boater, BoatEd and BoaterExam, will be offering course discounts for students who enroll in or complete a course during the *Spring Aboard* campaign. Course providers and offerings vary between states so individuals should check with their local course provider or state boating agency to find out which courses are accepted in their area. Ohio requires that completed courses meet the national boating education standards for powerboat rental or operation, as verified by NASBLA. To ensure a course qualifies, look for the NASBLA-approved logo.

The *Spring Aboard* campaign is open to participation by all states, territories, boating education organizations, instructors and course providers. For more information about the *Spring Aboard* campaign, visit springaboard.org. ◇

1985 – 2017 Lake Ontario Fishing Boat Survey

Preliminary Summary for April 15 - September 30, 2017

Each year since 1985, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation surveyed boats operating in New York waters of Lake Ontario's main basin from April through September. The data collected from counts and interviews of fishing boats are used to manage Lake Ontario's multi-million dollar trout and salmon fishery and provide valuable data on other fish species. Most of the survey results presented here are preliminary, April 15 – September 30 (5.5 month) lake-wide averages, and may not reflect fishing quality (catch rate =number of fish caught per charter boat angler hour) experienced during some months and in some areas of Lake Ontario. A final 2017 survey report will be available in spring 2018. Lake Ontario angler effort directed at trout and salmon remained relatively stable for more than a decade, however, recently declined. In 2017, record low fishing effort is largely attributed to high water levels on Lake Ontario negatively impacting access to the lake (e.g., numerous boat launches were closed into early July; fewer useable marina docks available).

Despite limited access to the lake, those able to fish experienced good to excellent fishing quality. Chinook salmon catch rate reached a record high, and coho salmon catch rate was among the highest in the 33 years surveyed. Rainbow trout catch rates improved from recent years across much of the NY shoreline. Atlantic salmon fishing quality remained good and similar to the improved levels observed in recent years. Conversely, brown trout catch rate remained low for a third consecutive year, with below average fishing quality across much of the NY shoreline. The reduced catch rate for lake trout was partly attributed to excellent fishing for other trout and salmon species (i.e., fewer anglers targeted lake trout as fishing for other species remained good). High Lake Ontario water levels are also the likely cause for record low effort targeting smallmouth bass in 2017. Fishing quality for bass was, however, improved and was the highest since 2006.

Fishing Effort

Total fishing effort (i.e., effort targeting all fish species) has been declining since the early 2000s (**Fig. 1**). Until recently, the decline was attributed to the coinciding decline in effort targeting smallmouth bass (see Smallmouth Bass summary below). Fishing effort targeting trout and salmon, however, was relatively stable from the early 2000s through 2015, then declined in 2016 and 2017.

Total fishing effort declined to a record low in 2017 (39,964 boats, a 26% decrease compared to the previous 5-year average), likely due to extremely high water levels on Lake Ontario. From early May and into early July numerous public and private launches along the entire NY shoreline were closed or available for only limited use, and many marina docks were nearly or completely submerged and not

usable. Also, many boaters were concerned about floating debris. Effort targeting trout and salmon also declined to a record low (35,865 boat trips April 15 – September 30, a 21% decrease compared to the previous 5-year average; **Fig. 1**). The greatest declines in effort targeting trout and salmon occurred during May and June (-53% and -41% compared to previous 5-year averages, respectively); however, fishing effort was also below average in other months of the open lake season (range: -19% [April] to -8% [September]).

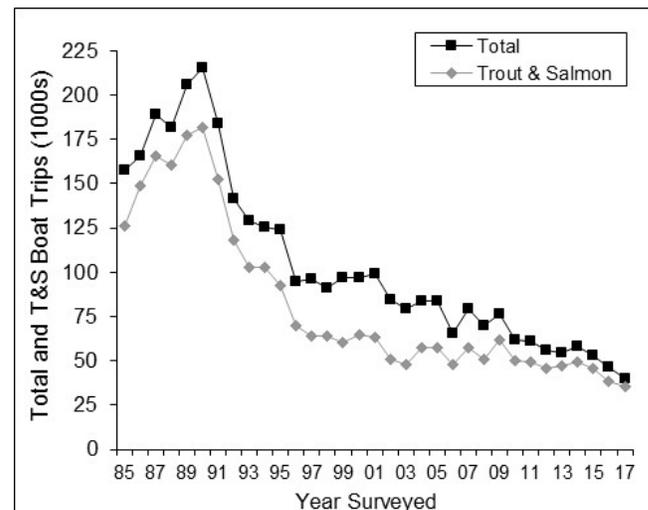


Fig 1. Estimated total fishing effort, and trout and salmon fishing effort (April 15-Sept.30).

Trout and Salmon Catch and Harvest

From April 15-September 30, anglers caught an estimated 162,341 trout and salmon, comparable to the previous 5-year average (-5.5%). Anglers harvested 58% of the catch. Each year since 2003, Chinook salmon dominated trout and salmon catch (2017: 96,226 fish, 59% of total catch) and harvest (2017: 53,871 fish, 58% of total harvest). Brown trout or rainbow trout have often been the 2nd most commonly caught and harvested species. In 2017, rainbow trout was the 2nd most commonly caught (22,556 fish) and harvested (12,015 fish) species, followed by brown trout (17,092 and 10,604 fish, respectively). Lake trout represented about 9% of angler catch and harvest (15,444 caught, 8,592 harvested) in 2017. Coho salmon represented over 6% of trout and salmon caught (10,630 fish). Atlantic salmon represents a relatively small component of the fishery (0.2% of total catch in 2017).

Trout and Salmon Fishing Quality

"3 in Any Combination" Species – Lake Ontario has a diverse trout and salmon fishery and provides anglers the opportunity to target another species when fishing quality for their preferred target declines. The four most sought after species are Chinook salmon, brown trout, rainbow trout and

coho salmon. DEC fishing regulations permit a daily harvest limit of “3 in any combination” of these four species. The 2017 catch per angler hour for these four species combined increased 45% from the 2016 estimate and 16% compared to the highs observed 2003-2016 (Fig. 2).

Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon 5.5-month lake-wide catch rates were at the highest levels during 2003-2017 (Fig. 3). The 2017 catch rate (0.14 fish per angler hour) was a record-high, and a 54% increase over the 2003-2016 average. The increase was primarily due to excellent fishing during July and August in all regions and above average fishing in much of the lake into September.

For the period 2012-2017, we determined which month/region (West, West/Central, East/Central, East; produced the highest Chinook salmon catch rate, and then compared fishing quality for each month/region relative to this standard. In this analysis, August 2017 in the West Region produced the highest relative Chinook fishing quality (assigned value = 1.0) among all months/regions during 2012-2017. This analysis confirmed angler reports of much improved fishing quality in 2017 compared to recent years (2012- 2016 average). The 2017 5.5 month average catch rate was positively influenced by good to excellent fishing during July and August in all regions of the lake. April 15 - September 30 catch rates for all regions were well above respective 2003-2016 averages (range: +41% [West] to +126% [East/Central]).

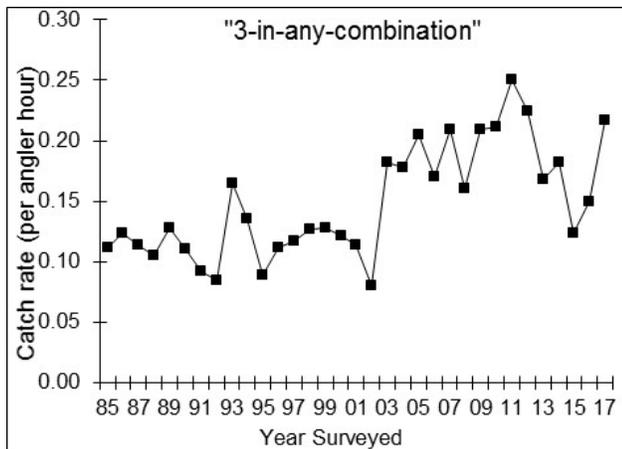


Fig 2. Catch rate (charter boat catch per angler hour) of the “3-in-any-combination” species (i.e., All salmon/trout combined), April 15-September 30, 1985-2017.

Coho Salmon

Following two consecutive years of near record low coho salmon catch and harvest rates, 2017 rates improved dramatically (Fig. 4). Coho salmon catch rate in 2017 (nearly 0.02 fish per angler hour) was the highest since 2010 and well above the long-term average (+54%). Catch rates were above average each month April - September and in the West, East/Central and East regions.

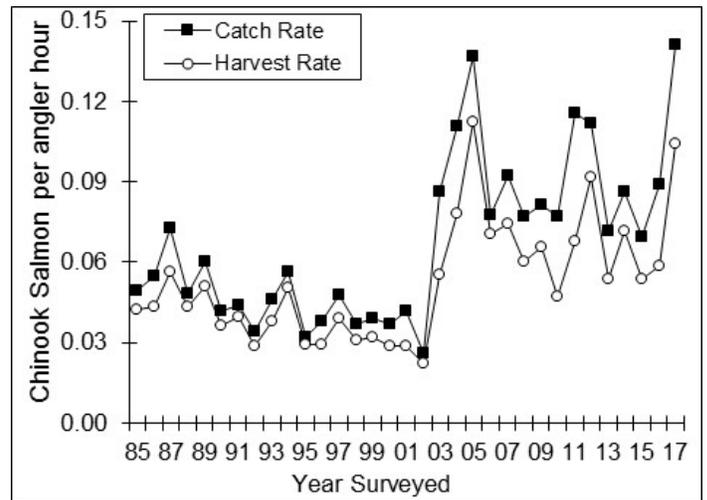


Fig 3. Chinook salmon catch rate and harvest rate April 15-September 30, 1985-2017. Catch and harvest rates are number of fish per charter boat angler hour.

Rainbow Trout

Each year from 2008-2014, rainbow trout catch rates were among the highest recorded (Fig. 5). Rates declined markedly in 2015, and improved marginally in 2016. In 2017, catch rate (0.03 fish per angler hour) improved 46% from 2015. Catch rates were well below average April through June, but well above average July through September. Regional catch rate was average in the East/Central region, and rates were above average along the rest of the NY shoreline.

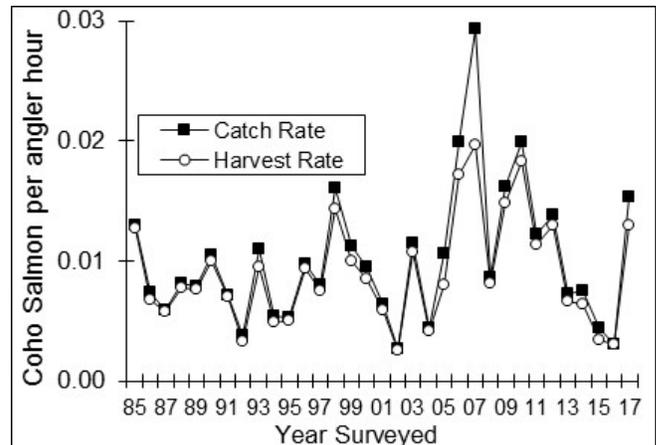


Figure 4. Coho Salmon catch rate and harvest rate April 15-September 30, 1985-2017. Catch and harvest rates are number of fish per charterboat angler hour.

Brown Trout

The 2017 brown trout catch and harvest rates (0.03 and 0.02 fish per angler hour, respectively) remained among the lowest recorded for the 3rd consecutive year, and were 20% and 29% below respective long-term averages (Fig. 6). Brown trout catch rates were above the long-term average in May and September (+82% and +47%, respectively), and below average June through August (range: -47% [August] to -27% [July]). Catch rates were above average in the West region and below average in the other three regions.

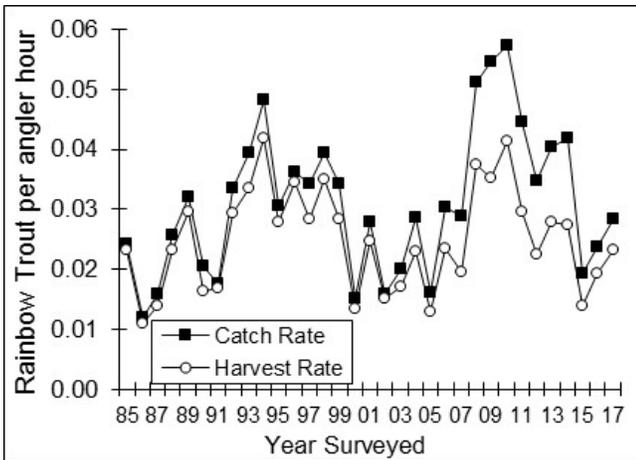


Fig 5. Rainbow trout catch rate and harvest rate April 15-September 30, 1985-2017. Catch and harvest rates are number of fish per charterboat angler hour.

Lake Trout

In recent years, lake trout catch rates improved from lows observed through much of the 2000s (Fig. 8), coinciding with increased adult abundance as well as a likely increase in angler effort targeting lake trout during periods of relatively lower catch rates for other species. The 2017 lake trout catch rate (0.03 fish per angler hour) was about a 47% decrease compared to 2015 and 2016 (Fig. 8), and is partly attributable to excellent catch rates for other trout and salmon species (Fig. 2; i.e., likely less angler effort specifically targeting lake trout). Catch rates were below average during April and July through September, above average in May, and average in June. Catch rates were above average in the West region and below average in the other three regions.

Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic salmon are rarely observed in the survey, and during 1995-2008 catch rates were the lowest recorded (average = 0.00003 fish per angler hour). From 2009-2017, catch rates improved substantially. In 2017, the catch rate of Atlantic salmon (0.0004) was about 12.6-fold higher than the 1995-2008 average.

Smallmouth Bass Fishing Effort and Fishing Quality

Fishing effort directed at smallmouth bass declined from the early 2000s through 2010, then remained at a lower and relatively stable level 2010-2016 (Fig. 8). In 2017, effort targeting smallmouth bass during the traditional open season (June 17 to September 30 when the survey ended) declined to the lowest recorded level (2,294 boat trips; -59% compared to the 2010-2016 average). Reduced effort was largely due to high Lake Ontario water levels and limited access to the lake. Effort targeting bass during the pre-season catch and release period remained low, similar to recent years (198 boat trips April 15-June 16, 2017). Smallmouth bass catch rate in 2017 (0.7 bass caught per angler hour; June 17 - September 30) was the highest since 2006 and a 94% increase compared to the 2010 record low

Smallmouth bass anglers harvested 23% of all bass caught during the traditional season (9,342 fish).

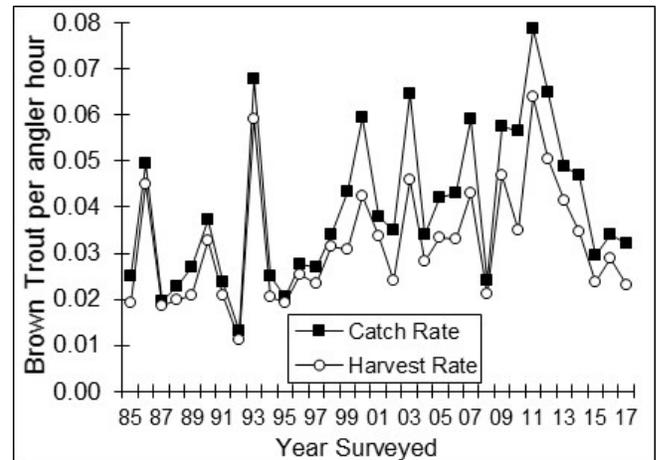


Fig 6. Brown trout catch and harvest rate April 15-Sept 30, 1985-2017. Catch and harvest rates are number of fish per charterboat angler hour.

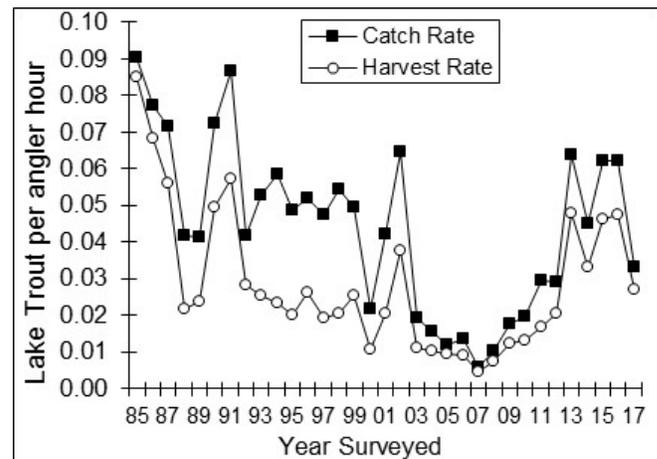


Fig 7. Lake trout catch and harvest rate April 15-Sept 30, 1985-2017. Catch and harvest rates are number of fish per charter boat angler hour.

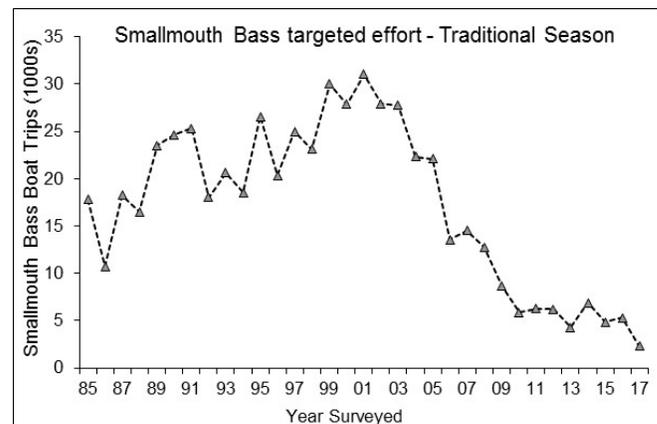


Fig 8. Est fishing effort targeting smallmouth bass during traditional season (3rd Saturday in June – Sept 30 when the creel survey ends), 1985-2017.

DEC issues guidance to avoid conflicts with coyotes

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) issued the agency's annual guidance on preventing conflicts between people and coyotes as spring temperatures approach.

"Coyotes are an integral part of our natural ecosystem and provide many benefits to New Yorkers, but can cause conflicts if they become accustomed to human interaction and food sources," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "We strongly encourage all New Yorkers to do their part and follow our common sense tips to ensure coyotes remain wary of people and minimize the chance of conflicts."

With the onset of warmer weather, many of New York's resident coyotes will set up dens for pups that will arrive this spring. Coyotes are well adapted to suburban and even some urban environments, but for the most part they will avoid contact with people. However, conflicts with people and pets may result as coyotes tend to be territorial around den sites during the spring through mid-summer period as they forage almost constantly to provide food for their young.

There are recommended steps residents and visitors can take to reduce or prevent conflicts:

- Do not feed coyotes and discourage others from doing so.
- Unintentional food sources attract coyotes and other wildlife and increase risks to people and pets. To reduce risks:
 - Do not feed pets outside.
 - Make any garbage inaccessible to coyotes and other animals.
 - Fence or enclose compost piles so they are not accessible to coyotes.
 - Eliminate availability of bird seed. Concentrations of birds and rodents that come to feeders can attract coyotes. If

you see a coyote near your birdfeeder, clean up waste seed and spillage to remove the attractant.

- Do not allow coyotes to approach people or pets.
- Teach children to appreciate coyotes from a distance.
- If you see a coyote, be aggressive in your behavior – stand tall and hold arms out to look large. If a coyote lingers for too long, then make loud noises, wave your arms, and throw sticks and stones.
- Do not allow pets to run free. Supervise all outdoor pets to keep them safe from coyotes and other wildlife, especially at sunset and at night. Small dogs and cats are especially vulnerable to coyotes.
- Fenced yards may deter coyotes. The fence should be tight to the ground, preferably extending six inches below ground level and taller than four feet.
- Remove brush and tall grass from around your home to reduce protective cover for coyotes. Coyotes are typically secretive and like areas where they can hide.
- Contact your local police department and DEC regional office for assistance if you notice that coyotes are exhibiting "bold" behaviors and have little or no fear of people. Seeing a coyote occasionally throughout the year is not evidence of bold behavior.
- Ask your neighbors to follow these same steps.

The Eastern coyote can be found in rural farmlands and forests, and occasionally in populated suburban and urban areas. In most cases, coyotes avoid people as much as possible. In fact, coyotes can provide many exciting opportunities for New Yorkers. However, if coyotes learn to associate people with food (such as,

garbage or pet food), they may lose their natural fear of humans, and the potential for close encounters or conflicts increases.

It is important to keep pets safe. Cats allowed to roam free are at risk. To protect your cat from coyotes and other hazards keep your cat indoors. Owners of small dogs also have cause for concern. Small dogs are at greatest risk of being harmed or killed when coyotes are being territorial during denning and pup-rearing. Small dogs should not be left unattended in backyards at night and should remain supervised. Owners of large and medium sized dogs have less to worry about, but should still take precautions.

If coyotes are seen repeatedly during the daytime in a human-populated area or in close proximity to residences, follow the above recommendations to reduce or prevent potential problems. If coyote behavior remains unchanged or becomes threatening, please report this to the local DEC office, as this may indicate that some individual coyotes have lost their fear of people and there may be a greater risk that a problem could occur.

For additional information about the [Eastern Coyote](#) and preventing conflicts with coyotes, visit these DEC websites:

Eastern Coyote - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9359.html>

Coyote Conflicts - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6971.html>

[Feeding Wildlife: a wrong choice](#) - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/74763.html>

[Tips to Eliminate Wildlife Conflicts](#) - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/89522.html>

Regional DEC Wildlife Offices - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html>

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Anglers re-write state fish records in catch-and-release and by weight categories

MADISON – Records are made to be broken, and anglers quickly proved this truism in the first year of Wisconsin's new program recognizing catch-and-release state record fish. Traditional state records for fish by weight also fell in 2017, but the bigger story was the multiple first-time records hauled in by two anglers.

"We're happy that some anglers have taken advantage of the new Live Release record fish category. We're expecting a lot more activity in 2018 as more people learn about this exciting opportunity," says Karl Scheidegger, the Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist who coordinates the state record fish programs.

Catch and release state records

Rod Eberly of Appleton secured a spot in state fishing history when his 17.75-inch white bass, caught and released May 8, 2017, was recognized as Wisconsin's first ever catch and release record. His record, however, was short-lived.

Anglers nab catch and release fish records

Kevin Larson of Hudson knocked Eberly off the leader board with the 18-inch white bass he caught and released on Cedar Lake in St. Croix/Polk counties on August 23. Larson edged out Eberly's bass out by a quarter of an inch.

Erika Carter of De Pere became the first female angler to set a new catch and release record in Wisconsin and bested an existing catch and release record. Carter caught and released an 8.75-inch pumpkinseed sunfish on July 4 from Lake Noquebay in Marinette County. Her haul bested the 8.25-inch pumpkinseed sunfish Eric Amenda from Germantown caught and released May 28 from Pleasant Lake in Waushara County.

Other initial records set in 2017 in the catch and release category that were still standing as of February 1, 2018, are:

- Aaron Fuchs of Baraboo wrestled a 47-inch flathead catfish on September 3 from the Wisconsin River in Sauk County. The fish was returned to the water with a ceremonial SPLASH!
- Dennis Wilkerson of Twin Lakes caught and released a 10.5-inch rock bass on June 10 from Powers Lake in Kenosha County.
- Ben Halfen of Prairie du Sac caught and released a 10.5-inch bluegill on June 16 from Reynard Lake in Bayfield County, establishing the first live release state record for bluegill.
- Jacob Holmstrom from Danbury caught and released a 53.0-inch musky on June 24 from a Burnett County lake.

DNR recognizes live release records by length for specific fish species meeting qualifying lengths. The angler is required to submit an official record application and photos showing the fish lying along a ruler or other measuring device, and with the angler, which are reviewed and certified by DNR fish biologists.

Traditional by weight state fish records

Anglers in the traditional state fish record categories landed 11 new records in 2017, with two anglers accounting for six of them. DNR recognizes anglers who have legally taken the largest fish on record by hook and line, as well as those fish that have been taken by alternate methods including spearing or bowfishing.

Independence Day was more than just fireworks for 12-year-old Parker Welch of Merrill, Wis. The sixth-grader set three hook and line records on July 4, 2017:

- She established the first-ever record for stonecat with her 9.3-inch, 5.4-oz. fish caught from the Wisconsin River in Lincoln County; established the first-ever shorthead redhorse record with an 18.9-inch, 1-lb. 12.1-oz. fish

caught from the Prairie River in Lincoln County; and bettered the existing golden redhorse record by about 1/4 pound with a 21-inch, 3-lb., 1.4-oz. fish caught from the Prairie River in Lincoln County.

- Shawn Schmidt of Denmark Wisconsin established a new alternate method (spear-gun) record for yellow perch with a 14-3/4-inch, 8-oz. fish taken from Lake Michigan in Kenosha County on June 22, 2017.
- Schmidt also broke his own existing alternate method (spear-gun) record with a 16-inch, 2 lbs. 7.7-oz. yellow bullhead taken from Silver Lake in Washington County on June 29, 2017. The fish bettered the record by over 1-1/4 pounds. Schmidt was one of six anglers to set traditional records in the opening months of the 2017-8 fishing season, listed in this [June 20, 2017, news release](#).

These records bring his alternate method (spear-gun) record total to seven, for rock bass, bluegill, black bullhead, yellow bullhead, round goby, yellow perch and pumpkinseed.

For more information on state record fish and the process anglers should take if they have caught a fish that might be a state record by weight or under the new live release program, visit dnr.wi.gov and search "record fish."

Anglers who want to pursue state records for less well-known fish species will want to make sure they do not possess [endangered and threatened fish species](#).

12-year-old angler lands three state record fish in one day

In a year when anglers hauled in a stringer full of state record fish, Parker Welch's feat stood alone.

Parker Welch, 12, of Merrill, Wis., set three state fish records on July 4, 2017: for golden redhorse, shorthead redhorse, and stonecat.

The 12-year-old sixth grader from Merrill, Wis., set three fish records in a single day, spincasting a fish story that begins with the love between a daughter and her father and their appreciation for Wisconsin's lesser known fish: shorthead redhorse; golden redhorse; and stonecat. "It was exciting," says Parker.

Her fish story begins 40 years ago, when her dad was growing up on a resort on Pelican Lake between Rhinelander and Antigo. From the time Alan Welch could walk he was catching fish, and by the time he was his daughter's age he was guiding resort guests on fishing trips and cleaning the fish they caught for money to buy a new bike.

"I caught thousands of walleye and musky," Alan Welch says. "To keep it interesting, I got into fish identification and I'd start going after weird stuff—fish like gar and carp. They are harder to catch because people don't target them and there is no information on them."

When his daughter Parker was a toddler, Welch introduced her to fishing and the two became fishing buddies, a shared bond and commitment to the outdoors that mom Jackie Welch appreciates. Parker became an accomplished angler although the father and daughter mostly focused on lesser known species in surrounding lakes and streams.

Parker enjoys fishing, and continues to make time for it even as she maintains a 4.0 Grade Point Average in school, serves as the wrestling team manager, and shot her first buck this fall.

"I like spending time with my dad," Parker says. "Whatever he's trying to catch I try to catch too."

One day last year her father told her about his idea of trying to set multiple fish records. "I wanted to do it all on the same day so it was hard to beat," he says.

That the pair set out to accomplish the feat on July 4th was coincidental; they knew from fishing

those species before that the catching was easier when it was sunny and hadn't rained for a couple of days. Fishing from shore with nightcrawlers, Parker caught the shorthead red horse in the morning on the Prairie River. "At that point, I think we knew we could get all three in a day," Alan says. Parker caught the golden redhorse at noon, and then the pair went home until nighttime, when they went fishing on the Wisconsin River and caught the stonecat, a member of the catfish family whose name reflects its habit of hiding out under stones or logs during the day.

The fishing duo took Parker's catches to a meat market in Wausau to get them weighed. "Most of them had never seen a fish like that. We had some comments, but they were happy for us," Alan Welch says.

The daughter and father fishing duo are not ready to rest on their laurels. They're angling for two records this summer: greater redhorse and longnose sucker. ✧

IGFA Names 2018 IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame Inductees

DANIA BEACH, Fla. – March 1, 2018 – The [International Game Fish Association](#) (IGFA) recently named five angling greats and industry pioneers to the 2018 IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame class.

Elected unanimously by the IGFA Board of Trustees, the 2018 inductees include IGFA World Record leader Dr. Martin Arostegui, fly-fishing broadcasting pioneer John Barrett, master blue marlin angler Ralph G. Christiansen Jr., upstream dry-fly fishing legend Frederic Halford and modern tackle innovator Frank Johnson. The [IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame](#) recognizes extraordinary achievements in recreational fishing by anglers, captains, scientists, conservationists, writers or fishing industry leaders across the globe.

The 2018 class will be formally inducted on September 15, 2018, during a ceremony at the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame located in the

new [Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium](#) in Springfield, Missouri.

Dr. Martin Arostegui

Marty Arostegui holds more IGFA World Records than any other person in the history of the sport. He has fished since the age of three beginning in Cuba and then Miami, where he moved as a child. Perhaps his crowning achievement is becoming the first person ever to achieve the coveted IGFA Billfish Royal Slam on fly tackle.

In addition to his personal achievements, Arostegui has led his family to hundreds of [IGFA](#) and [International Women's Fishing Association](#) (IWFA) records. Serving as an IGFA Trustee since 2012, Arostegui loves giving back to the sport by presenting seminars on the ecology of the Everglades and writing articles in English- and Spanish-language fishing journals with a focus

on conservation methods, the use of circle hooks and fishing techniques for everything from bream to marlin. Arostegui resides in Coral Gables, Florida, and enjoys spending his time traveling and fishing with his family.

John Barrett

In 1989, John Barrett began creating television programming that would change the face of outdoor television. It began with a series titled, "Fly Fishing the World," an award-winning project that was the first fly-fishing-only television series ever produced. The show began airing on ESPN in 1990 and became one of the most popular outdoor programs for more than 22 years, exposing the greatest fly-fishing locations on earth to millions of viewers worldwide.

Barrett spent his adult life searching the world for anything that could be caught on a fly rod. Along the way he was joined by recognizable names such as Robert

Duval, Kevin Costner, Liam Neeson, Walter Payton, Chris Evert, John Denver, Henry Winkler, and Michael Keaton, just to name a few. The success of “Fly Fishing the World” on ESPN led to the network requesting more productions from Barrett, which led to “Fly Fishing America,” “Trout Unlimited” television, the “Fly Fishing Masters,” “L.L. Bean’s Guide to the Outdoors,” and other specials and series that included fly fishing as a core part of the projects. Barrett was also instrumental in the inclusion of fly fishing in ESPN’s Great Outdoor Games.

After more than 22 years of traveling the world, Barrett quietly walked away from television production when he sold his company. He now resides in Missoula, Montana, with his family, where he continues to fish.

Ralph G. Christiansen Jr.

Ralph Christiansen Jr. helped establish the Puerto Rico Game Fishing Association and, at age 30, became the youngest Commodore of the [Club Náutico de San Juan](#). He caught more than 700 Atlantic blue marlin, tagging and releasing most of them. Dedicated to conservation, he implemented a catch-and-release policy on his boat in the mid-1970s that continued throughout the remainder of his life. Christiansen became an IGFA International Committee Representative in 1978 and in 1996 he was appointed as a member of the Board of Trustees. He also remained active with [The Billfish Foundation](#). Christiansen passed away in February of 2009.

Frederic Halford

Generally accepted as the “father of modern dry-fly fishing” and the “high priest of the dry-fly,” Frederic Halford is most noted for his development of the dry-fly technique on English chalk streams. Born in Birmingham, England, in 1844, his first experience with fishing was in a small pond in London at the age of six. Halford first began fly-fishing on the chalk streams of Wandle at the age of 24 in 1868. At this time, the dry-fly was still in its infancy. In 1879, he met George Selwyn Marryat, with whom he studied and perfected dry-fly fishing technique and practice for the first of his many fly fishing books. Halford was a member of both the Houghton Fly Fishers and the London-based [Fly Fishers’ Club](#). Halford passed away in March of 1914.

Halford is largely credited for bringing casting techniques, equipment, entomological study and imitative fly tying into the forefront in France, Germany, and America, and his correspondence with Theodore Gordon is believed to have initiated an American revolution in modern fly fishing and tying.

Frank Johnson

You would be hard-pressed to find a successful offshore spread that doesn’t include Frank Johnson’s famous soft-headed [Mold Craft](#) lures. An engineer with an aerospace firm, Johnson bought a tool-and-die company in South Florida in early 1970 and began making tackle on the side. His inventions include the aluminum rod butt and certain types

of lure keepers, rod holders and outrigger clips. From his mold for a soft-plastic squid came the original SoftHead™ Hooker. In 2007, his Mold Craft Wide Range and Super Chugger lures were named first and second among the top ten lures of all time by Marlin magazine. He also developed the realistic Squirt Squid™, Tuff Hoo and fender teasers.

An accomplished angler in his own right, Johnson caught 1,000-pound marlin, bluefin tuna and countless other billfish. He was also a strong supporter of sport fishing conservation efforts. Johnson was active in the development of Broward County’s artificial reef program, consulted on the development of The Billfish Foundation’s tags and was instrumental in the planning of the original IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum. For nearly four decades, Johnson was active in encouraging education, advocacy and conservation on the south Florida fishing tournament circuit. Johnson passed away in September of 2016.

“There is no greater reward, honor or recognition in life than to be singled out by your peers,” said Mark Sosin, IGFA member and Fishing Hall of Fame member. “The 2018 inductees are some of the best in our sport and I’m honored their accomplishments are being recognized through membership in the Hall of Fame.”

To learn more about the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame and upcoming induction ceremony, please visit <https://www.igfa.org/About/HOFInductees>. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker pulls Lake Michigan national marine sanctuary nomination](#)

Gov. Scott Walker has rescinded a nomination to implement a National Marine Sanctuary in Lake Michigan that would have blanketed dozens of offshore shipwrecks with federal protections

[When will fish consumption advisories no longer be needed in the Great Lakes?](#)

A team led by Michigan Technological University and Northwest Indian College released a policy brief outlining what it would take to create a future where fish consumption advisories are no longer needed in the Great Lakes region

[Lake Ontario counties take regional approach to harbor dredging](#)

A regional plan developed by Niagara, Orleans, and two other Lake Ontario counties in New York calls for retaining a contractor to ensure the harbors are deep enough to handle the fishing and pleasure craft that use them

[Should Michigan's water withdrawal law be changed to help farmers?](#)

Last week, the first hearings were held on a bill in Michigan that would not only make it easier for farmers to get permission to draw large amounts of groundwater, but would also exempt certain data on agricultural water use from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

[Riparian property owners own a slice of the lake bottom, not the whole thing](#)

Essentially, lakefront landowners own a pie-shaped piece going out into the center of the body of water. While this rule applies to all inland bodies of water, the rule is different along any of the Great Lakes.

[Lake Erie ice shrinking faster than usual after recent warm spell](#)

A late-February warm spell combined with rainfall and the weekend winds slashed the ice cover on Lake Erie from about 80 percent last Saturday to just 34 percent on Tuesday. [Read the full story by The Buffalo News.](#)

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