



Congress approves Public Lands package, President signs *A Win in Congress for Fish, Wildlife Public Lands and conservationists*

A long awaited package of provisions for sportsmen’s access and habitat conservation, the Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47) was advanced by the House of Representatives, and went to the President’s desk, and he signed the bill on Wednesday, March 13. A number of the provisions within S. 47 are access-oriented priorities of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF).

Introduced in January by Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus (CSC) Member Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK), S. 47 was passed by the U.S. Senate on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 92 – 8, and most recently on a strong bipartisan vote of 363 - 62 in the U.S. House—all within the first two months of the 116th Congress.

Priority provisions for CSF include:

- Authorizing the transportation of archery equipment through National Park Service (NPS) Units.
- Permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund with 3% or \$15 million – whichever is greater – of annual appropriations made available for the purpose of securing additional access for hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other outdoor related activities (Making Public Lands Public Initiative). Recent studies estimate there are nearly 10 million acres of public lands in the west that are open to sporting activities, but the general public is currently unable to access these parcels due to a number of reasons. This provision, along with other provisions in S. 47, will help

address this by truly making public lands public.

- Requiring Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands to be open for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting unless specifically closed.
- Directing the NPS, BLM, USFS, and USFWS to develop strategies for providing access to areas where hunting, fishing, target shooting and other recreation are allowed but cannot be reasonably accessed by the public.
- The package includes the NSSF-priority Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act, also known as the “Range Bill.” The “Range Bill” would give states more flexibility to allow for Pittman-**Public Lands Package**

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MN certifies huge lake sturgeon as new catch-and-release state record

Minnesota has a new state record lake



sturgeon so large that anglers had to drill five holes to fit the 6-½’ long fish through the St. Croix River ice. The Minnesota DNR has certified the fish as a state catch-and-release record.

Early on in the effort to catch the fish on February 9, record holder Darren Troseth knew he had something special on the line. “I’ve seen a lot of big sturgeon in my life, but I was stunned when I got a look at it,” Troseth said.

Troseth and his fishing companion, John Kimble, were ice fishing on the St. Croix near Bayport. To get away from other anglers, they were at a location they had never fished before. When he hooked the record fish, Troseth was fishing out of a double hole he’d prepared. With his auger battery about to die, he was able to drill a third hole—but the fish still did not fit.

So Troseth took to Facebook to put out a call for help to anyone in the area with an auger. Within a few minutes, two anglers who Troseth and Kimble had never met before showed up with an auger and expanded the hole. Now with five holes, the sturgeon could barely fit through.

Lake sturgeon record

Continued on page 9

Walleye tracking at Monroe Lake

The Indiana DNR is studying the movements of walleye at Monroe Lake using radio telemetry. A radio tag has been surgically implanted in walleye. The IDNR will be tracking the tagged fish throughout the entire lake. The end result will be a better understanding of walleye movement and habitat. This will in turn allow biologists to manage for a better walleye fishery and improved walleye fishing at Monroe Lake.

In 2018, DNR fisheries biologist Sandy Clark-Kolaks and team implanted electronic transmitters in 33 walleye. A yellow spaghetti tag was attached to the back of each of the radio tagged walleye to make identification easy. These tags are serially numbered so that individual fish can be identified by sex and length. However, some of these tags may be lost as the year progresses. The radio transmitter antenna is approximately 14" long and provides a reliable mark of the tagged fish, although there is no serial number on the antennae.



Radio Tag



Radio tag inserted into belly of walleye

Based on research from other states walleye are known to frequent standing timber in coves during the spring after spawning, and to be highly mobile early in the season. As

midsummer approaches, walleye tend to move deeper and to settle into a reduced home range.

Every week, the walleye team races around the entire 11,000-acre lake near Bloomington tracking the fish. The work has already yielded some interesting information. An example is that multiple spawning sites have been located throughout the lake including some tributaries. Also, each series of sightings have been placed on a lake map to provide a progressive record of the walleye distribution. As the year progresses new walleye relocation maps will be posted to provide insight to anglers on walleye locations and aid them in improving fishing success.

If you catch a tagged walleye, please write down the tag number, **RELEASE THE FISH**, and report the catch. You can call the South Region Fisheries Office at (812) 279-1215 and ask for Sandy or Bob. You will be asked to provide the date, location of capture and tag number. If the yellow spaghetti tag is no longer on the fish, the fish should still be released, and reporting the capture would still be appreciated. I can be reached by email (sclark-kolaks@dnr.IN.gov).

PLEASE BE AWARE:

Some of the fish have been found above the causeway, which is an idle zone. In order to find and locate all the fish, the tracking boat may be traveling at speeds greater than idle speed. As always caution and courtesy will be used by the boat operator. ✧

Hunter and Boating Safety Education Courses

Register now for Hunter Safety Education and Boating Safety Education courses from the IDNR. Spring classes are being scheduled. For class dates and locations: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety/Pages/VolunteerServiceCoordinators.aspx>. ✧



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Position Statement

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

Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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Greater opportunities to weigh in on proposed rules at Spring Hearings

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife Spring Hearings & Wisconsin Conservation Congress' Annual County Meetings will be held in each county of the state, on Monday, **April 8**, starting at 7 p.m. People interested in natural resources management will have the opportunity to provide their input and testimony on proposed rule changes and advisory questions relating to conservation and fish and wildlife management in Wisconsin.

This year's Spring Hearings will offer additional opportunity for the public to weigh in. The DNR and WCC will provide an online option for input for those people who aren't able to attend a hearing in person or for those who'd rather provide input at the hearing using their smart phone. For security, and to ensure the integrity of the results, individuals will be required to sign in to use the online version, just as they do in person. People who want to attend in person can find [meeting locations \[PDF\]](#) on the DNR website.

The [2019 Spring Hearing questionnaire \[PDF\]](#) is available by searching the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov, for keywords "[Spring Hearings](#)." An online input form will go live at 7 p.m. on April 8 until 7 p.m. on April 11.

"This is the first year we have offered an alternate way for citizens to provide feedback on the Spring Hearing questions," said Larry Bonde, Chair of the WCC. "We know there are citizens who work second shift, have little children at home, are farming, or for other various reasons can't physically be there, but want to be heard. We are excited to provide a greater opportunity for input to those people who want to be a part of the process but otherwise couldn't participate."

People who attend a hearing in person but would rather provide their

input using the online option instead of the paper form, can choose to get a random verifiable number (RVN) at the hearing instead of an input form. The RVN can then be entered into the online form when prompted. Providing an RVN will allow your input to be compiled along with the input provided by the in-person attendees in the county in which you attended. People who are unable to attend a hearing can still provide their input using the online tool. Responses gathered this way (without a random verifiable number) will be compiled and considered as part of the overall input (not county specific).

The Spring Hearing input process allows the public the opportunity to comment and register their support or opposition to DNR proposed rule changes as well as Congress proposals that could someday become the rules that regulate fishing, hunting, trapping and other outdoor recreation activities in Wisconsin. This year the DNR will be presenting 49 proposed rule change questions for input.

Citizens may also submit ideas to address conservation needs or concerns they observe through the WCC resolution process. County residents have the option to run for a seat on the Conservation Congress and to vote for the WCC delegates to represent them on the Conservation Congress. However, providing input on resolutions or participating in the WCC election will continue to require in-person participation.

People interested in attending the hearings are encouraged to review the questionnaire online prior to the April 8 hearings and should arrive at the hearing location early to register before the hearings begin at 7 p.m.

For additional information on the Spring Hearings, please visit dnr.wi.gov and search key words "[Spring Hearings](#)." ✧

Grants aim to get more people hunting and fishing

Application deadline [April 4](#)

Groups that help people become hunters or anglers – or keep on hunting or fishing – can apply for grants from the Minnesota DNR.

"Minnesota's hunting and fishing tradition is still strong but we're seeking to address a steady decline in the percentage of people who hunt or fish," said Jeff Ledermann, DNR education and skills supervisor.

Priority in awarding grants will go to programs for new and diverse audiences and those with an ongoing impact rather than one-time events. Types of activities could include fishing or hunting educational programs, clinics, workshops, camps, or funding for fishing and hunting equipment and transportation.

"Potential applicants should know that this has been a very competitive grant process, so we're advising groups to consider how their programs provide ongoing support for people who want to hunt or fish," Ledermann said.

Groups may apply for this round of grants through **April 4**. The grant program began in 2015 and this is the fifth round of grants. In this round, awards will range from \$5,000 to \$49,999. A total of \$300,000 in grant funds is available in this fifth-round cycle. Funded projects must be located in Minnesota and completed by June 30, 2020.

As in the last round, there is no required funding match. Organizations are nonetheless encouraged to include a cash or in-kind match in their project proposal. In-kind contributions can be in the form of labor, materials, or services. Match amounts will be considered in the selection process.

To learn more about the DNR's work in recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3), and to find grant application requirements, visit mndnr.gov/r3. Grant details and a list of award winners can be found at the link under "Help others discover." ✧

Rainbow trout sampling for Finger Lakes **March 21-22**

New York DEC Regional Director Paul D'Amato 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 21**, 9 a.m., at Naples Creek, just north of the village of Naples, Ontario County, at the Rt. 245 bridge; and
- Friday, **March 22**, 10 a.m., at Cold Brook (Keuka Inlet) in the hamlet of Pleasant Valley, Steuben County.

During sampling, data will be collected for each fish, including length, weight, sex, and spawning condition. A scale from the fish is used to determine age and growth rate. Sampling results will be available to the public at the DEC Region 8 Fisheries Office prior to the April 1 opening of the "inland" trout fishing season. Anglers wanting to fish for trout before April 1 are reminded that trout fishing is open year-round in the main bodies of the Finger Lakes. ✧

Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery – Women's Fly Fishing: Damsels Fly **April 13**

Damsels Fly, hosted by the Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited in partnership with the Michigan DNR Outdoor Skills Academy, is an all-day workshop for women who are new to fly fishing. You'll learn enough of the basics to get you out fishing with confidence—gearing up, casting, knots, insect identification, fly tying, safety, finding and reading the water, and more.

No equipment or experience necessary, but do dress for the weather. Cost is \$25, which includes lunch and giveaways. Limited to 25 participants. [Register for Women's Fly Fishing](#). For more info, contact [Shana Ramsey](#) at 269-668-2876. ✧

Trout releases begin **March 8**

COLUMBUS, OH – More than 100,000 rainbow trout will be stocked this spring in 66 Ohio public lakes, creating excellent fishing for anglers across Ohio. The first rainbow trout release is scheduled for **March 8**, at Adams Lake in Adams County.

Rainbow trout releases will take place across Ohio from March 8-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 by calling 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543).

By stocking these lakes throughout the state, good fishing is available for anglers of all ages to get out and enjoy quality spring trout fishing in a family-friendly environment. Many stocked locations will feature special angler events, including youth-only fishing on the day of the trout release.

Rainbow trout are raised at Ohio's state fish hatcheries and measure 10-13 inches when they are stocked by the ODNR Division of Wildlife. The daily catch limit for inland lakes is five trout.

Anglers age 16 and older must have an Ohio fishing license to fish in state public waters. Ohio fishing licenses are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase. An annual resident fishing license costs \$19. A one-day fishing license costs \$11. The one-day license may also be redeemed for credit toward the purchase of an annual fishing license.

Licenses and permits can be purchased online at wildohio.gov and at participating agents throughout the state. A complete list of participating license sales agents can be found at wildohio.gov.

The SFR program is a partnership between federal and state government, industry, anglers and boaters. When anglers purchase rods, reels, fishing tackle, fish finders and motor boat fuel, they pay an excise tax. The federal government collects these taxes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers and

IDNR sends \$29 million to 89 parks across Illinois

Parks, forest preserves, and playgrounds across the state are about to see a big boost. Nearly \$30 million dollars is on its way to park districts, forest preserves, and cities or towns across the state of Illinois. The Illinois DNR says the money will be split between 89 parks in the state. The grants are, in some cases, the only way communities could pay for park upgrades, said Ed Cross, a spokesman for the department.

"These grants will help a number of projects that may not have been doable otherwise," Cross said. "It's a reimbursement program that will go to over 80 communities across the state that are looking to do some pretty incredible work." Cross said the money comes from the state's cut of Illinois' real estate transfer tax.

"This is one of those things that people can kinda see a little bit of return on investment in the state as well," Cross said.

The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program has been sending that money to local parks since 1987.

Cross said when this year's state contribution is combined with local dollars, almost \$60 million will be spent on parks under the program. Many of the communities receiving a grant are using the money to buy land to expand parks. Others are using the money for upgrades to existing green spaces. ✧

Trout Releases *continued*

disburses these funds to state fish and wildlife agencies. These funds are used to acquire habitat, produce and stock fish, conduct research and surveys, provide aquatic education to youth, and secure and develop boat accesses.

For a list of trout stocking dates and locations, go to wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/fishing/trout-stocking-dates. ✧

Hand-netting season opens **March 1**, dip netting **March 20**



Hand-netting season opened **March 1**, while the dip-netting season starts up Wednesday, **March 20**. Both seasons close May 31. A Michigan fishing license is required.

The following species can be taken during both seasons: bowfin, carp, gizzard shad, goldfish, 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 and other streams, as noted.

All other waters are closed to these activities. Full season details, as well as descriptions of dip netting and hand netting, are available on page 23 of both the 2018 (available now) and 2019 Michigan Fishing Guide (available March 1), posted at Michigan.gov/Fishing.

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, gizzard shad, minnows and smelt 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 webpage](#).

Questions? Contact [Christian LeSage](#), 517-284-5830 or [Elyse Walter](#), 517-284-5839 ✧

Ginseng hunters reminded about March deadline

American ginseng hunters are being reminded that uncertified root may not be possessed after **March 31** without a weight receipt, according to the Ohio DNR. Anyone planning to keep uncertified ginseng beyond the deadline must schedule an appointment to get it weighed and documented.

In Ohio, the harvest season for ginseng runs from September 1 to December 31 each year. All harvested ginseng must be certified by the ODNR prior to export from the state to verify its weight and legal origin. Federal law requires that all state lots of ginseng be separated and totaled by the year. Because of this necessity, all uncertified ginseng must be weighed and accounted for each year.

Appointments for weight receipts are available for the first and third Wednesday in March at the designated locations listed below, and the division requests that these appointments be scheduled at least three business days in advance.

- District One Office, 1500 Dublin Rd, Columbus 43215, 614-582-7213
- District Three Office, 912 Portage Lakes Dr, Akron 44319, 330-245-3054
- Wolf Creek Wildlife Area, 961 South S.R. 78 SW, Malta 43758, 740-589-9930
- Cooper Hollow Wildlife Area, 5403 CH & D Road, Oak Hill 45656, 740-682-7524
- District Five Office, 1076 Old Springfield Pike, Xenia 45385, 937-372-5639, ext. 5033

Ginseng is a slow-growing perennial herb that is highly valued in the United States and worldwide for its alleged medicinal traits. Due to its value and significant harvest pressure, regulation on both harvest and export are necessary to ensure survival of the species.

Additional information about American ginseng and harvest regulations can be found in the publication [Ohio's Green Gold](#) available on wildohio.gov. ✧

Wildlife Council deer hunting proposals

The Ohio Wildlife Council heard proposals for Ohio's 2019-2020 white-tailed deer hunting season dates and bag limits at a recent meeting. The proposed season dates are nearly identical to previous seasons.

Overview of proposed deer hunting seasons for 2019-2020:

- Deer archery: Sept. 28, 2019-Feb. 2, 2020
- Youth deer gun: Nov. 23-24, 2019
- Deer gun: Dec. 2-8 & 21-22, 2019
- Deer muzzleloader: Jan. 4-7, 2020

Deer bag limits were proposed to remain the same for all counties. The statewide bag limit was proposed to remain at six deer, only one of which may be antlered, and a hunter cannot exceed a county bag limit.

As the first step toward electronic permitting in the future, it was proposed that hunters be allowed to carry either a printed or electronic version of their valid deer or turkey permits. Hunters are currently required to validate printed deer and turkey permits by filling them out. It was also proposed to allow hunters to transport their deer or turkey to their residence or temporary lodging without a game tag being attached to the animal, as long as their permit is properly filled out and the hunter remains with the animal.

It was also proposed to change the name of the antlerless deer permit to deer management permit. Another proposal is to require hunters who harvest a deer within a disease surveillance area (DSA) to deliver the head to an inspection station only during the seven-day gun season rather than all firearm seasons.

For a list of the proposed rule changes: wildohio.gov.

A hearing on all the proposed rules will be held at the ODNR District One office on **March 21**, at 9 a.m. The office is located at 1500 Dublin Road, Columbus 43215.

The council will vote on the proposed rules and season dates on April 10, after considering public input. ✧

2019 trout fishing opportunities await anglers at Ohio's Castalia Fish Hatchery

COLUMBUS, OH – Exceptional trout fishing opportunities at 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 Friday, May 3, and Friday, Nov. 29.

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 3–November 29), and one for youth (June 10–August 9). Morning and afternoon slots are being filled on Fridays in May and June for adult events 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 online 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.

Special fishing rules are in effect for these events to ensure that a quality fishing experience is maintained throughout the season.

One of these rules prohibits catch-and-release fishing, with wildlife officials requiring anglers to keep all fish that they catch. The daily bag limit will be five trout per angler, and there are no minimum length limits.

Anglers will be required to check in at the hatchery upon arrival, and check out at the end of their session. Fishing sessions will be open from 7-11 a.m. for adult events, except for Friday sessions in May and June, which will conform to the morning and afternoon time blocks. For the youth events, anglers will be assigned to one of the two sessions per day (7-11 a.m. or 11 a.m.-3 p.m.). All anglers age 16 and older will need a valid 2019 Ohio fishing license when fishing at Castalia.

An Ohio resident annual fishing license costs \$19; a one-day fishing license costs \$11. Those anglers who purchase a one-day fishing license may later return it to a license agent to receive credit toward purchase of an annual fishing license. ✧

Top Sportfishing equipment brands for 2018

FERNANDINA BEACH, FL. – Sportsmen are spending millions on fishing equipment, but which brands are they buying? Southwick Associates surveyed more than 11,000 anglers in 2018 through their online AnglerSurvey.com consumer panel to identify the top brands.

In 2018, some of sportfishing's most frequently purchased brands include:

- Top combo brand: Shakespeare
- Top fluorocarbon fishing line brand: Seaguar
- Top monofilament fishing line brand: Berkley Trilene
- Top soft bait brand: Zoom
- Top spinner bait : Strike King
- Top leader brand: Ande
- Top fly line brand: Scientific Angler (3M)
- Top fly brand: Umpqua
- Top fish finder/sonar brand: Humminbird

- Top fishing clothing brand: Columbia
- Top waders/wade boots/chest wader brand: Frogg Toggs
- Top tackle box brand: Plano
- Top bait bucket/aerator brand: Frabill
- Top scale, grip, measuring device brand: Rapala
- Top trolling motor brand: Minn Kota
- Top cooler brand: Coleman

A variety of key fishing products are examined in the Southwick Associates *2018 Fishing Participation and Equipment Purchases Report*. This in-depth resource illustrates angler's participation and shopping behaviors, including the percentage of sales occurring across different retail channels, brand purchased, price paid, and demographics for anglers buying

specific products. Additional information tracked includes total days spent per activity, type of fishing, and targeted species.

In addition to the topline report covering angler's participation and equipment purchases, an annual report on participation and equipment purchases of bass anglers is also available. The bass angler report provides the industry with an in-depth profile, estimated expenditures along with trend insights on the specific market.

Custom, confidential research is also available to help understand brand awareness/perceptions, identify products most desired by consumers, optimal pricing, and more. To purchase a report or discuss custom research, contact Nancy Bacon at Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com.

✧

DEC completes annual aerial survey of Adirondack moose

New York DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the completion of an aerial Adirondack moose survey that takes place each year as part of a collaborative study of the health of New York's moose population. A total of 83 groups of one or more moose were observed during the survey's 175 sightings, with all appearing healthy.



After an absence of 120 years, moose recolonized New York in the 1980s. Since that time, biologists have been routinely monitoring moose in the state, informing the public about moose, and responding to situations where moose come into conflict with people.

DEC wildlife staff conducted the helicopter flights in January over seven days and approximately 42 hours of flight time. The survey divides the Adirondack park into grids and records every moose or group of moose seen. The survey crew then flies over to the sighting location, takes a GPS point, determines the number of animals, the age and sex of each animal, and notes general habitat characteristics for each moose sighted.

Researchers will use the data from the 2019 survey to refine DEC's estimate of the Adirondack moose population, which most recently numbered approximately 400 animals. In addition to estimating moose population size, scientists involved in this collaborative study also aim to improve the understanding of moose survival and reproductive rates and to assess moose diet and health. This information is important to reduce human-moose conflicts and

to properly manage moose populations in New York State.

Outside of New York, moose mortality has been linked to a parasite known as the winter tick (*Dermacentor albipictus*). High tick loads on moose can lead to fewer calves being born as well as poor condition from blood loss that can lead to death. While a few moose with winter ticks have been documented in New York in the past, there was no evidence of winter tick infestation noted in 2019's survey.

Currently there are six moose in New York that carry GPS collars, which allow biologists to track their movements and determine the number of calves that are born to adult females. Adult female moose usually have one or two calves in late May or early June every other year. In past aerial surveys, biologists have seen a ratio of approximately 0.5 calves per cow. This year, the calf-to-cow ratio was approximately 0.37 calves per cow, and no twin calves were observed during the survey.

In New York, most moose are located in the Adirondack Mountains and the Taconic Highlands along the Massachusetts and Vermont borders, though young male moose occasionally will wander south of the Adirondacks in search of suitable areas to establish a home range. Moose are primarily browsers, feeding on the leaves, twigs, and buds of hardwood and softwood trees and shrubs. An adult moose eats 40 to 60 pounds of browse every day.

DEC and its research partners are also seeking information from the public regarding moose sightings to provide data for this study. If a moose is seen, the [public can fill out this online form](#).

For additional information about Moose in New York, please visit: [DEC Moose Webpage](#); [DEC Moose Management Webpage](#); [DEC Moose Facts Webpage](#).

DNR considers drawdown of Swan Lake after discovery of common carp

Discovery of common carp in Nicollet County's Swan Lake is prompting the Minnesota DNR to consider a temporary lowering of the lake's water level.

"It appears we've discovered the common carp population early," said acting Nicollet area wildlife manager Stein Innvaer. "Fortunately, that provides us with time to thoroughly consider our options before habitat and water quality are impacted."

There are few options available to control carp but lowering water levels is a proven management technique and has been done on Swan Lake before. Lowering lake levels could create conditions conducive to a winterkill. A partial draw down of water levels has already begun because of unusually high water levels the last two years. Current plans are to lower the lake level by one foot. However, it may need to be lowered even more.

"Habitat and water quality right now are good," Innvaer said. "However, high water levels are killing off important aquatic vegetation. Clear water and a high diversity of desirable vegetation are important features that make Swan Lake a premier waterfowl destination."

At more than 10,000 acres, Swan Lake is widely considered North America's largest prairie pothole lake. Swan Lake saw its last drawdown in 2005, an action that was successful in dealing with the carp population at that time. Drawdowns mimic droughts, which can act as a reset mechanism to allow native vegetation to re-establish and improve water clarity in shallow lakes and wetlands.

DNR wildlife managers plan to meet with the public to inform them about the problem with carp and possible solutions. A meeting date has not yet been set.

Questions: stein.innvaer@state.mn.us; or 507-225-3572. ♦

Natural Resources Board hears concerns over new Lake Superior fishing agreement

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board voted 5-2 to pass an emergency rule that puts into practice a new Lake Superior Fishing Agreement between two Native American tribes and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, but some sports anglers and board members say they weren't included or informed as the agreement was negotiated.

The agreement has drawn the ire of sports anglers and board members who say they weren't included or informed as the agreement was negotiated. The Red Cliff and Bad River Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa [negotiated and signed a new agreement](#) in December with the DNR for management of the Lake Superior fishery. The last 10-year agreement expired in 2015, but state officials and tribes have been operating under extensions of the agreement.

The emergency rule lasts 150 days, after which a permanent rule, that reflects the details of the agreement, goes into place.

One of the aspects of the new agreement that has upset sport anglers is a new commercial whitefish season that will be held for three weeks during October.

The board amended the emergency rule to prevent state commercial anglers from taking part in the October season until more data can be obtained to ensure the season would not harm or put more pressure on the Lake Superior fishery.

Officials with the DNR and tribes have said the new agreement preserves and protects the Lake Superior fishery. However, sport fishermen and women say the new agreement was reached in secret, doesn't include adequate public input, or address biological concerns.

Scott Bretting, president of the Apostle Islands Sports Fishermen's Association, spoke via Skype during the meeting. He said the agreement isn't preserving the resource, but "destroying" it. "This agreement has taken areas that are key to

sportfishing only and encouraged to destroy it with commercial fishing with indiscriminate gill netting," Bretting said.

George Meyer, executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, said they respect the treaty rights of the Red Cliff and Bad River tribes. However, he said sportfishing opportunities have declined during present and past negotiations, noting there will be "significant" impacts to state sport anglers. "The horse is out of the barn. The fishing agreement is signed," said Meyer. "You all can't do anything about it."

Brad Ray, Lake Superior fisheries biologist with the DNR, told board members that they monitor commercial boats and regularly exchange data with the tribes. He noted that he's met with them about holding more frequent meetings to maintain the sustainability of the resource under the agreement. "We do plan to continue to monitor the impacts through our existing surveys," Ray said.

Ray added they have metrics to oversee whether problems occur under the agreement. He noted the agreement has tasked the DNR with developing a population model for whitefish. He said they also do assessments of various fish. Ray said bycatch, or fish that are caught incidentally while fishing for other species, is about 5 percent, which equates to about 1,100 fish each year. "There is some bycatch, and we recognize that," he said.

Ray said DNR staff believe bycatch mortality may be lower during the proposed October whitefish season. There are more than 300,000 acres of refuges that protect fish from commercial and recreational fishing that provide high-quality spawning habitat for fish, Ray said.

Board member Terry Hilgenberg said the board would not be intimidated by the threat of litigation over the agreement. It's unclear who would bring a lawsuit over the agreement. Although, Bretting with

the Apostle Islands Sports Fishermen's Association, has previously said they're exploring all options and have not ruled out a lawsuit. "I would certainly hope the record is clear that on future negotiations and future agreements that we do a better job," Hilgenberg said.

Dr. Fred Prehn, chairman of the Natural Resources Board, said he's been assured by the DNR that it will approach the process for reaching an agreement differently next time. Still, Prehn joined board member Greg Kazmierski in voting against the emergency rule. He acknowledged anglers' concerns that commercial fishing with gill nets in the Chequamegon Bay would push sport anglers further out into the lake, posing safety concerns.

"What's a big concern for me is the safety of small boats," Prehn said. "A lot of us with 16-, 17-, 18-foot boats head off from the shoreline to fish that beautiful bay. You go past Madeline (Island) up into the outer islands and you are taking some chances."

Because the agreement has already been signed, there is little the board can do to change course.

During the next 150 days, Prehn said he'd like the board to be informed what impact the emergency rule is having. Also, before the DNR brings a permanent rule to the board, Prehn said he wanted assurances that if there are adverse impacts to the Lake Superior fishery during the 150 days, that the department and tribes will meet to discuss the impact of those actions.

DNR Secretary Preston Cole made a commitment to the board to make sure the chair of the Natural Resources Board is engaged regularly in ongoing negotiations. "You have my commitment that we will over-excel in terms of our communication strategy to the board when these things occur," Cole said. ✧

Spring Turkey Applications

2019 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits still available after the lottery drawings will be sold over the counter by DNR vendors beginning on **March 12**. For more information: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/TurkeyHunting.aspx>. ✧

Public Lands Package

Continued from page 1

Robertson funds to be used for the development and maintenance of public recreational shooting ranges. These funds have been provided through excise taxes paid by firearms and ammunition manufacturers since 1937 with more than \$12 billion raised to date

S. 47 includes critical provisions to increase public access to hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreational shooting and is truly a win for sportsmen and women across the country, to conserve millions of acres of lands for American families to enjoy for generations.

Said Congressman Jeff Duncan (SC), "This legislation is a win for the entire conservation community so we all can continue to enjoy God's beautiful creation. The passage of S. 47 marks a historic day for land and water conservation and sportsmen's access." ✧

Lake sturgeon record

Continued from page 1

With the help of his fishing companion, Troseth was able to land the lake sturgeon. He quickly measured the fish at 78", took photos and returned the fish to the river to potentially be caught again another day.

Five DNR fisheries staff, two DNR conservation officers and the state record certification official reviewed Troseth's state record fish application and supporting documents. After concluding that all requirements had been met, the DNR officially certified Troseth's sturgeon as the new state catch-and-release record. mndnr.gov/recordfish. ✧

Lake Mille Lacs open-water walleye harvest proposed for 2019

State and bands agree on safe harvest level

Anglers on Lake Mille Lacs will have an opportunity to keep some walleye during the open-water season this year. This follows several seasons of catch-and-release fishing on the lake.

Last year, state anglers stayed well under the lake's safe-harvest allocation for walleyes. With an improving walleye population, the DNR will allow some walleye harvest when the season opens Saturday, **May 11**. The DNR will announce the Mille Lacs walleye regulations for the upcoming season in mid-March.

"We're happy to announce that, with some very conservative fishing regulations over the past three years, walleye are now at a level where we can cautiously allow anglers to start keeping some fish during the open-water season," said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen.

"This is good news for anglers, Mille Lacs area businesses and the resource," Strommen added. "I want to thank the bands for their ongoing collaboration and the Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee for its continued input and discussions with the DNR in managing the walleye fishery on Mille Lacs."

Mille Lacs Band DNR Commissioner Bradley Harrington said, "The upward trend of the walleye population reflects the conservation efforts of both the state and the Ojibwe tribes with harvest rights in Mille Lacs Lake.

"While it is critical that combined harvest limits should continue to allow for the recovery of walleye, we join the state in cautious optimism about the trend in increasing spawning biomass. Within our teachings accepting the gifts from the lake while respecting the manidoo by avoiding taking too much is the best way to honor our gifts from the creator."

The DNR is considering allowing the walleye harvest during the cool-water periods in the spring and fall. The agency is exploring a variety of

regulation options, and will be discussing the alternatives with the Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee, a group of local businesses, fishing experts and community leaders that help advise the agency on Mille Lacs fishing regulations and other issues.

The state and the bands recently agreed on a safe harvest level of 150,000 pounds of walleye, which provides a state allocation of 87,800 pounds. Under the catch-and-release only regulation last year, walleye angler kill totaled just over 47,000 pounds.

"While the walleye population is on a positive trajectory, we need to strike a careful balance between expanding harvest opportunities and conserving the fishery for future angling opportunities," said Brad Parsons, DNR fisheries chief.

The walleye safe harvest level for Lake Mille Lacs is determined annually. It is based on population status and predictions of how harvest will affect the walleye population in the future. State anglers share the safe harvest level with eight bands of Chippewa that have fishing rights under an 1837 treaty. By agreement, the bands and the state are required to monitor harvest according to their respective allocations.

There continues to be good news about the walleye population. The improving Mille Lacs walleye population is bolstered by a 2013 year class of fish that has been protected by regulations and is just starting to produce young fish that appear to be surviving.

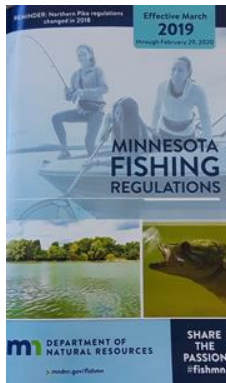
The DNR encourages all Minnesotans to visit Lake Mille Lacs to fish the other abundant species that the lake has to offer. The lake is widely recognized as one of the nation's top smallmouth bass and muskellunge fisheries.

More information about Lake Mille Lacs can be found on the DNR website at mndnr.gov/millelacslake.

✧

Check 2019 MN fishing regulations before heading out

Anglers will find a variety of regulation updates when they open up the 2019 Minnesota fishing regulations, including a continuous fishing season on South



Dakota border waters, fall trout fishing in Rushford, and changes for walleye regulations on large lakes like Leech, Kabetogama and Lake of the Woods.

Before going fishing, anglers should be sure to check page seven of the fishing regulations that details what's new for 2019.

The 2019 Minnesota Fishing Regulations booklet is available **March 1** online and anywhere Minnesota fishing licenses are sold. It includes the following regulation changes:

Striped Bass Cooperative Angler Program

You can share your fishing trip information and help biologists understand and manage New York's striped bass fishery. Here's how it works: Fill out a logbook provided by us whenever you fish on the Hudson River (by boat or shore). Record general location, time, gear used, what you caught (or if you didn't catch anything), and return the logbook when you are done fishing. You'll receive an annual newsletter summarizing the information in addition to the latest news regarding regulations and the river. Whether you catch-and-release or take home a keeper, you can be part of the [Hudson River Striped Bass Cooperative Angler Program](#). Join today by contacting: Jessica Best at jessica.best@dec.ny.gov or 845-256-3009. ✧

- A continuous season begins Friday, March 1, for walleye, northern pike and bass on South Dakota border waters of Big Stone, Traverse, Mud and Hendricks lakes.
- The 17- to 28-inch protected slot limit for walleye in Namakan, Kabetogama, Sand Point, Little Vermilion and Crane lakes is now a protected slot limit of 18 to 26 inches.
- On Lake of the Woods, the DNR reduced the combined possession limit for sauger and walleye to six. Of that, no more than four may be walleye.
- On the Rainy River and Fourmile Bay of Lake of the Woods, the spring walleye season from March 1 to April 14 is changed to catch-and-release only.
- Anglers will no longer have a protected slot limit for walleye in Leech Lake, but the bag restriction remains.
- Anglers will no longer have special regulations for northern pike in Lake Vermilion in St. Louis

Mitchell State Park – Steelhead Fishing Clinic **March 23-24**

The Outdoor Skills Academy pro-staff will present various strategies and techniques for chasing Michigan's "chrome torpedoes." Feel free to bring your own gear, if possible, or if you're new to steelheading, some equipment is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The classroom portion of the clinic will be at the Hunting and Fishing Center; then Sunday morning we will hit the water and show you how to fish and what to look for on the beautiful Manistee River. **Cost for this class is \$40**, which includes lunch, some tackle and instruction. [Register online for the Steelhead Clinic. Limited to 50 students](#)

For more info: Edward Shaw, 231-779-1321 or shawe@michigan.gov. ✧

County, East and West Sylvia lakes in Wright County, Sturgeon Lake in Pine County and Big Fish Lake in Stearns County.

- Anglers will no longer have special regulations for walleye in Pearl Lake in Stearns County.
- Within the city limits of Rushford, anglers in the fall will be able to catch-and-release stream trout in Rush Creek.

Before making changes in any regulation, the DNR evaluates the regulation, shares what's found in the evaluations and angler surveys, hosts public input meetings in the fall, and reviews comments from the public about the regulations. The DNR also considers goals of individual lake management plans.

"We're always trying to improve fish populations and make fishing better or more sustainable, and we sincerely value the public's input in this process," Stevens said.

For more information about fishing in Minnesota visit mndnr.gov/fishing. ✧

Help DEC count eels: Hudson River Estuary Eel Research Project

New York DEC is seeking volunteers to help study eels in streams of the Hudson River estuary. Volunteers check special cone-shaped nets for tiny see-through "glass eels" as they enter the freshwater streams of the Hudson River estuary from their spawning grounds more than 1,000 miles away in the Atlantic Ocean. The young eels are counted, weighed, and released upstream, and environmental conditions are recorded. The Eel Project takes place at 15 different sites from Richmond Creek in Staten Island to the Poestenkill in Troy. DEC provides all training and gear. [Learn more about community science and eel research](#) or contact Aidan Mabey at aidan.mabey@dec.ny.gov. ✧

DEC Falconry, Wildlife Rehabilitator, and Leashed Tracking Dog Exams **April 12** Registration Deadline **March 22**

New York DEC announced examinations are scheduled for **April 12**, for individuals seeking a license to practice the sport of falconry, become a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator, or use leashed tracking dogs to find wounded or injured big game animals. The exams will run 10 a.m. to noon at most DEC Regional Offices across the state. A list of [DEC Regional Offices](#) can be found on DEC's website. The deadline for registering to take any of these free exams is Friday, **March 22**. [Exam registration forms](#) can be found on DEC's website. To apply for any of these exams, visit the DEC [Special Licenses Unit](#) website and complete an exam registration form. Applicants can mail, fax, or email the completed form to: NYS DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752 Phone: 518-402-8985, Fax: 518-402-8925, Email: SpecialLicenses@dec.ny.gov ✧

Mitchell State Park - Walleye Fishing Clinic **April 14**

This class will cover how Outdoor Skills Academy pro-staffers Steve Berry, Matt Peterson and representatives from Fishbone Custom Lures spend their days chasing trophy walleye – everything from which rod and reel to use to how to use your electronics. DNR staff members will be on hand to answer any rules and regulations questions you may have. Plus, tips from a master taxidermist on how to care for your trophy fish when you catch it and want to have it mounted. Cost is \$20, Limited to 50 students. [Register online for the Walleye Fishing Clinic](#) For more info: Edward Shaw, 231-779-1321, shawe@michigan.gov. ✧

Fish house removal deadline looms

Minnesota DNR Conservation Officers will be out on the lakes reminding anglers about the upcoming deadlines to remove their ice fishing shelters: **March 4** in the south and **March 18** in the north. In addition, they will remind them to do their part in keeping lakes clean by picking up trash, even if it doesn't belong to them. ✧

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, **April 26-28**

The annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop three-day event is **April 26-28** at Ross Camp in West Lafayette, IN (9225 W. 75 S. West Lafayette, IN 47906). The BOW workshop is open to women ages 18 and older and is limited to 100 participants. Registration begins **March 1** at IndianaBOW.com. The cost for the workshop is \$215 and includes equipment, meals and lodging. The program is designed for women to learn outdoor skills in a relaxed, low-pressure environment. Participants will choose four activities from more than two dozen offerings, including fishing, archery, wild edibles, wildlife tracking, shooting muzzleloader guns and outdoor cooking. Meals are provided Friday evening through Sunday lunch in the dining hall. We also work with our caterers to provide options for vegetarians. Iced tea, lemonade and water will be available throughout the weekend. ✧

New Ohio hunting and fishing licenses now available

Starting Friday, **March 1**, outdoorsmen will be able to purchase their 2019-2020 hunting and fishing licenses at wildohio.gov and at hundreds of participating agents throughout the state. ✧

More BOW workshops **June 7-9**

Registration is open for the IDNR 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' Workshop on **June 7-9** at the Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Illinois. BOW 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. For registration materials: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/BOW/Pages/default.aspx>. ✧

DNR seeks input on Porcupine Mtns Park

The Michigan DNR is seeking input to help shape a new management plan that will guide the future of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, located in the western Upper Peninsula. People are invited to share their opinions by **March 24** via an online survey. A link to the survey is available at Michigan.gov/Porkies. At roughly 60,000 acres, Porcupine Mountains State Park is Michigan's largest state park. It is home to 35,000 acres of old-growth forest (protected from logging by the formation of the park in 1945), roaring waterfalls, miles of rivers and streams, more than 90 miles of hiking trails, 21 miles of Lake Superior shoreline and spectacular sweeping vistas.

Lake of the Clouds, the Summit Peak observation tower and the scenic Presque Isle River corridor are just a few of the many popular natural attractions. It offers a range of recreation opportunities, including camping at modern and rustic campsites and cabins, backcountry camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, disc golfing, hunting, fishing and wildlife and scenic viewing. For more info: Debbie Jensen at 517-284-6105 or via email: JensenD1@michigan.gov ✧

IDNR 2019 Wingshooting opportunities schedule

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois DNR, in cooperation with a number of partners and co-sponsors, today announced its schedule of wingshooting clinics to be held at sites throughout Illinois from March through mid-November.

Wingshooting clinics are intended to provide instruction and improve the shooting skills of beginning shooting students as well as experienced hunters. Most clinics are conducted on weekends at IDNR sites, cooperating gun clubs and shooting ranges, hunting preserves, and farms.

Youth/Women's Wingshooting Clinics are designed to provide instruction on safely shooting a shotgun successfully at flying clay targets. Girls and boys ages 10-15, young adults ages 16-18, and women of all ages are eligible to participate. Each clinic starts with a morning shotgun safety presentation, followed by a short small group hands-on shotgun orientation session with each group's wingshooting instructor. After a lunch break, students spend the afternoon in the field shooting flying clay targets on presentations designed for beginning and novice shooters. Most youth/women's clinics are provided at no cost to participants, or have a nominal registration fee. Shotguns, shotshells, clay targets, safety glasses and hearing protection are provided.

Hunter wingshooting clinics are hands-on and include extensive opportunities to shoot a variety of clay target presentations on sporting clays courses specifically designed for hunters. From ducks and doves to pheasants, quail and rabbits, hunters will find clay target presentations that resemble their favorite and most troublesome hunting shots. Hunter wingshooting clinics consist of two wingshooting sessions each day. A short briefing about shotgun safety and handling and on-range safety protocols occurs during the first 15 minutes of each 4-hour shooting session. The clinics are designed primarily to improve the wingshooting skills of hunters but are

not limited only to hunters. The clinics are designed for shotgun shooters with reasonable experience. Young shooters ages 12 to 15 must be in at least the "Intermediate" skill level category to enroll in these clinics. Young shooters 12 to 15 must also be accompanied by and shooting with an adult who is participating in the hunter clinic. Shotgun shooters 16 and older with beginning to advanced wingshooting skills who want to improve their shotgun shooting skills are encouraged to attend. The hunter clinic fee ranges from \$30 to \$35 per participant.

Clinics are taught by instructors certified by the IDNR. Many clinic instructors also have a National Sporting Clays Association (NSCA) instructor certification. The participant-to-instructor ratio is usually four-to-one. Participants are typically grouped with others of similar shooting ability.

The 2019 clinic schedule includes several special events. The IDNR Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program offers shotgun shooting classes as part of an extensive outdoor skills program. The Healing Outside of a Hospital (HOOAH) Program provides sporting clays shooting opportunities under the supervision of IDNR wingshooting instructors to active duty military personnel recovering from injuries, and to veterans with disabilities.

Another special type of wingshooting clinic involves combining a youth wingshooting clinic with a pheasant hunt. Advantages of this combination of activities for the participating young hunters include enhanced shotgun safety training, improved wingshooting skills and higher success when afield hunting. There are nine of these wingshooting clinic/pheasant hunts scheduled during the spring and fall in 2019.

For more information, check the IDNR website at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/wingshooting/Pages/default.aspx>.

✧

Prophetstown State Park expanded

Indiana's Prophetstown State Park is expanding under an agreement to purchase 134 acres on the southeast side of the park's existing footprint. The land, part of the park's original master plan, has been sought by the Indiana DNR since the 1990s.

The property will be purchased for \$1.1 million from the Opal Hatke Trust with funding provided through the Natural Resources Foundation from proceeds of existing sand and gravel mining leases at the park.

The purchase allows the DNR to consider future relocation of power lines located in the park, which have no direct electricity customers, and currently run from a sub-station east of the park to the Battleground sub-station west of the park. The DNR plans to eventually develop a lake on the property into a recreational facility for the state park. Duke Energy worked closely with the DNR to provide viable alternatives for the power line relocation that would avoid the lines running through the lake.

Purchasing the Hatke land allows the park to avoid the drawbacks presented by the other power line routing options, as well as allow for the development of a lake that will provide guests with water recreational opportunities previously lacking in the immediate area.

Prophetstown State Park is the state's newest park, created in 2004. In addition to traditional recreational opportunities, the park also provides hundreds of acres of restored tallgrass prairie and oak savannas, as well as abundant opportunities to learn about the Native people who once lived and traveled along the Tippecanoe and Wabash rivers. Prophetstown State Park includes The Farm, a 1920s farmstead that focuses on farm life during the 20th century in Indiana and is a favored attraction of park guests.

Park admission is \$8/car and includes admission to The Farm. For more about Prophetstown, see on.IN.gov/prophetstownsp. ✧

2018 Lake Winnebago Trawling Assessment Report

The Lake Winnebago bottom trawling assessment continues to be one of the most critical fisheries assessments conducted on the Winnebago System. As DNR staff and a host of volunteers boarded the Calumet in 2018, one of the big questions was how the historic 2018 spring snow storm would impact recruitment of various fish species within the Winnebago System, particularly walleye. A mid-April weekend snow storm that brought more than 30 inches of snow to some areas spurred dramatic changes in water levels throughout the basin. What began as a record dry spring quickly turned into record high water levels on the Wolf River as snow melted away. The 2018 trawling results revealed a few highlights including a measurable walleye hatch, strong catches of adult panfish, and record low catches of adult freshwater drum.

Another highlight of the 2018 survey was the continued support from local volunteers who are the driving force behind successfully completing the trawling survey. In fact, there are more than 400 volunteer hours that go into completing the survey each year to meet survey objectives.

Walleye

Despite varying water level conditions on the Wolf River in 2018, the trawling results indicated that a measurable walleye year class was produced. Although mid-April is often already past the peak walleye spawn in most springs, it appears that the high water levels produced from the snow storm still provided viable conditions for some walleye spawning success. The 2018 YOY walleye catch rate of 5.1/trawl was just above the long-term average of 4.5/trawl (Figure 1). The catch rate of 2.8 yearling walleye/trawl indicates strong survival from the 2017 year class (4.1 YOY/trawl). Therefore, the measurable 2017 and 2018 year

classes should contribute to the adult population in future years.

The strong 2016 year class (9.9 YOY/trawl, ranked 7th since 1986) was also well represented in the survey with fish measuring 11-13 inches during the October trawling. The strong 2016 year class is poised to contribute to the adult population and fishery in the near future. In fact, nearly 100% of males mature by age 3, meaning that males from this year class should make their first spawning run in 2019. Female walleye typically reach maturity between 4-6 years of age (~30% mature at age 4; 82% by age 5; and 99% by age 6). Therefore, it will take a few more years for the 2016 cohort of female walleye to make their first spawning runs.

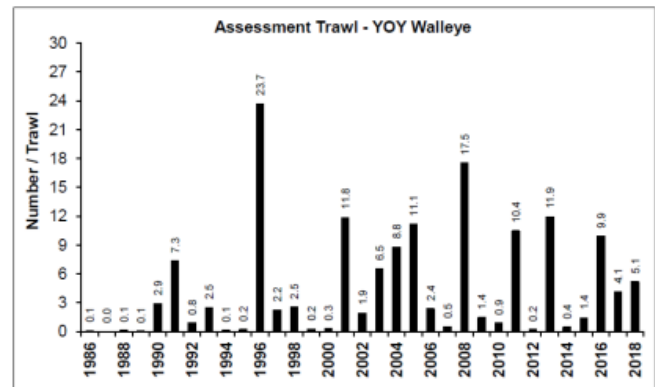


Figure 1. Average number of YOY walleye/trawl captured during fall bottom trawl assessments conducted from 1986-2018.

To read the full report on Lake Winnebago walleye, perch, Crappie, White Bass, etc.:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/documents/reports/WinnebagotrawlingReport2018.pdf> ✦

Elk update: hunting season wrap-up and population survey results

The 2018 elk hunting season stats are in, and the 2019 winter elk survey just wrapped up, providing a clear picture of where Michigan's elk population currently stands.

Hunt period 1, which targets elk outside of their traditional range, was 12 days long. From August 28-31, September 14-17 and September 28-October 1, 99 state hunters harvested 68 elk (28 bulls and 40 antlerless elk). In addition, all three Pure Michigan Hunt winners were successful during the first hunt period.

During hunt period 2, December 15-23, another 100 state hunters harvested 78 elk (30 bulls and 48 antlerless elk). All locations in the

northern tip of the state are open to hunting for this later hunt.

In order for regulated hunting to assist in managing elk, Michigan's elk population first must be evaluated. "Our population goal for elk is between 500 and 900 animals. This has been determined as the best balance for the forests, area agriculture and residents," Michigan Department of Natural Resources elk specialist Chad Stewart said. "Besides having an estimated population, knowing where they are located is also very important."

An aerial survey occurs in January, with a DNR airplane flying predetermined routes, or transects, to

locate elk. Once elk are found, the plane circles, and observers count how many are present and determine the number of males and females in the group.

Most of the elk population can be found within or adjacent to the elk range in the northeast Lower Peninsula. The Pigeon River Country State Forest makes up a large area of the elk range, and fields are planted and mowed to attract elk from the surrounding private land.

"We try to lure elk away from agriculture using different techniques to modify the forest," Stewart said. "We try to encourage elk to hang out in those modified locations."

More than 8,700 miles of transects were flown in nine days during the 2019 survey, with 834 elk sighted. No wildlife survey can count 100 percent of the animals because they move and are often under cover like trees, so a formula is used to establish a population estimate. Other states use similar formulas during wildlife surveys. The 2019 aerial survey determined an estimated elk population of approximately 1,196 elk, with a confidence interval of plus or minus 266.

“The survey tells us there are between 930 and 1,462 elk in Michigan,” DNR Wildlife Field Operations Manager Brian Mastenbrook said. “Based on this survey, past surveys, damage concerns and disease issues, we will continue to reduce the elk population slowly over the coming years with our regulated hunting seasons.”

The Natural Resources Commission has exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game.

The aerial elk survey takes place in January, when there is snow on the ground and leaves are off the trees, both conditions that allow the best view of elk from above. It is also after the elk hunting season is complete and before young elk are born, therefore the lowest point in the population during the year.

Additional information about elk and elk hunting in Michigan can be found at Michigan.gov/Elk. ✧

DEC postpones state of Skaneateles Lake fisheries meeting

Due to current weather reports for inclement conditions, the New York DEC is postponing the informational meeting on the current state of Skaneateles Lake’s fisheries originally scheduled to take place February 12, 2019 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Homer. DEC is rescheduling the meeting for a **mid-March date to be announced** 7-10 days in advance. ✧

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

[They’ll be biting on Lake Ontario this season, DEC says](#)

Fishing is good on Lake Ontario and it might be even better this year, according to New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation briefing on the “State of Lake Ontario.”

[Two Indiana bills could affect your access to Lake Michigan beaches](#)

Two very different bills on lakeshore access have passed the Indiana Senate and are now working their way through the House. One is cheered by advocates who want to ensure free use of the Lake Michigan’s beaches and the other is drawing criticism from

[New Soo Lock could bring mega boom to area economy](#)

More than 1,000 high quality jobs could be shipping into Sault Ste. Marie with plans of a new Soo Lock coming closer and closer to fruition

[Chicago is sinking. Here’s what that means for Lake Michigan and the Midwest](#)

In the northern U.S. and Canada, areas that once were depressed under the tremendous weight of a massive ice sheet are springing back up while others are sinking. The Chicago area and parts of southern Lake Michigan, where glaciers disappeared

[Lake Ontario water level is 16 inches higher than normal](#)

According to the International Joint Commission, Lake Ontario’s water levels are about 16” higher than normal for this time of year. People who live by Lake Ontario say they just don’t want to see another repeat of the intense flooding in 2017, which some

[Lake Michigan public use bill advances to Indiana House](#)

Lawmakers in the Indiana State Senate passed a bill that defines the permitted public uses of the Lake Michigan shore. This bill follows the Supreme Court’s decision upholding public access to Great Lakes shorelines

[Minnesota legislators consider new investment in DNR fish restocking](#)

Minnesota’s fish hatcheries would get a major checkup if a bill in the state Senate wins support for an advisory group to look over the shoulder of the Department of Natural Resources to improve walleye fishing.

Fishing Information Booklet

The *2019 Illinois Fishing Information* guide is available at: <https://www.ifishillinois.org/regulations/2019FishingGuide.pdf>.

Regulations in the guide are effective **April 1, 2019** through March 31, 2020. A reminder to anglers, and would-be anglers, that Illinois Free Fishing Days for 2019 will be during the Father’s Day weekend – **June 14-17**. ✧

DNR Recreation and Fishing guidebooks available

Your guide to Indiana’s best values in outdoor recreation is available now [online](#). The Indiana Fishing Guide is also available [online](#). The DNR’s 2019 Indiana Recreation Guide is the source for information on state parks, state forests, lakes, fish & wildlife areas, nature preserves, state park inns, and other DNR properties ✧

[U.S. Supreme Court won't change Indiana ruling: Lake Michigan's shoreline belongs to all Hoosiers](#)

The U.S. Supreme Court said that it would not review an Indiana Supreme Court ruling that the Lake Michigan shoreline, up to the point where the beach becomes soil, also known as the ordinary high water mark, is unquestionably owned by the state of

[Feds create Indiana's first national park on dunes of Lake Michigan shore](#)

As part of the spending measure approved Friday to avoid another government shutdown, Indiana got its first national park. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is now the Indiana Dunes National Park.

[Ohio's wildlife agency returns to good, old days – D'Arcy Egan](#)

In a major surprise, incoming Gov. Mike DeWine let sportsmen know last month he had been listening to a litany of complaints about the ODNR. DeWine quickly put his long-time statehouse lawyer Mary Mertz from the AG's office in charge of the ODNR.

[Hanley wants to make case for Coast Guard center](#)

The U.S. Coast Guard is interested in building a National Center of Expertise on the Great Lakes which will focus on combating oil spills, and Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, is very interested in housing the facility

[Monitoring algal blooms in the Great Lakes Basin](#)

NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory implements a variety of techniques to monitor algal blooms throughout the Great Lakes, specifically focusing on Lake Erie

[Lake Michigan to rise again — good for boats, bad for beaches](#)

Lake Michigan is expected to rise again this summer, thanks to ample rain and snow, making it easier for boats to get into harbors, but eating away at beaches

[What are your beach-walking rights on the lakeshore?](#)

Walking along the Lake Michigan shoreline is not illegal, but the issue nearly required a U.S. Supreme Court decision after a dispute erupted between beach-walkers and property owners in Indiana last year.

[Minnesota tribe asks: Can wild rice have its own legal rights?](#)

In Minnesota, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe passed a tribal law granting enforceable rights to wild rice that allow it to “flourish, regenerate, and evolve.” The law is part of a nationwide set of efforts to endow legal personhood to nature as a means