



## Lake Erie walleye numbers near all-time high, future is bright

Cleveland’s iconic journalist D’Arcy Egan says “Lake Erie walleye fishing’s ‘Golden Era’ officially returns with record catches, big hatches.” The folks at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife tend to agree with Egan. They say using results from the 2020 integrated Statistical Catch-at-Age Analysis (SCAA) model, the estimated abundance of 116.354 million age-2 and older walleye in 2020, and the harvest policy described above, the calculated mean Recommended Allowable Harvest (RAH) for 2020 was 13.466 million walleye, with a range from 10.012 (minimum) to 16.921 (maximum) million walleye.

Based on the 2020 integrated SCAA model, the 2019 west-central population (MU1-3) was estimated at 47.132 million age-2 and older walleye (Fig 1). An estimated 24.617 million age-4 (2015 year class) fish comprised 52% of the age-2 and older walleye population. Age-2 (2017 year class) walleye represented the second largest (21%) and age-5 (2014 year class) the third largest (10%) components of the population. Based on the integrated model, the number of age-2 recruits entering the population in 2020 (2018 year class) and 2021 (2019 year class) are estimated to be 86.404

and 77.942 million walleye, respectively (Fig 2). The 2020 projected abundance of age-2 and older walleye in the west-central population is estimated to be 116.354 million fish.

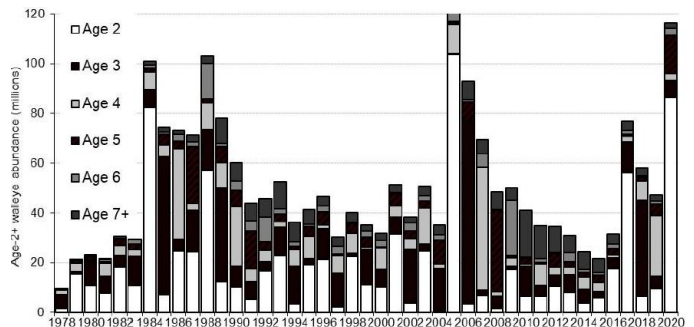


Fig 1 Abundance at age for age-2 and older Walleye in Lake Erie's west and central basins from 1978-2019, estimated from the latest ADMB integrated model run.

### Lake Erie walleye numbers

Continued on page 10

### In this issue...

- Sportfishing Industry asks Governors ..... 2
- New Mississippi River regs in effect..... 2
- LEC sets Perch and Walleye catches ..... 3
- DEC reduces Oneida walleye egg take... 4
- Firearm accidents at record low level ..... 4
- Hudson River striped bass season starts 4
- PFBC amends Atlantic striped bass regs 5
- PFBC offers online resources ..... 5
- New fishing regs in effect..... 6
- Forest Preserves of Cook Cty trout..... 6
- Trout stocking delayed in Huron River .... 7
- NY Trout & Salmon Fishing Season..... 7
- State extends comment period for draft .. 7
- Invasive Species cost to Ontario..... 8
- DNR approves 10-yr Trout Management 8
- Walleye, Sauger, Hybrid regs change..... 9
- In-person portion of Hearings canceled... 9
- DNR issues regs to protect Mille Lacs... 10
- Dubarry Park new locale for program.... 11
- Chicago lakefront closed to fishing..... 11
- NY fishing & hunting, spring turkey ..... 11
- IN fishing and hunting licenses updates 11
- Zebra mussels expand..... 11
- Penn modified trout season ..... 11
- OH suspends sale of non-resident ..... 11
- DEC changes striped bass fishing regs. 12
- Sportsmen generate nearly \$1 billion .... 13
- Grass Carp Briefing ..... 14
- More than 50 invasive carp captured .... 15

## Blessings of the Season

## Happy Easter

### Lake Erie Fish Ohio Report

The daily bag limit for walleye in Ohio waters of Lake Erie is 6 fish per angler, and the minimum size limit is 15 inches. The daily bag limit for yellow perch is 30 fish per angler in all Ohio waters of Lake Erie. The trout and salmon daily bag limit is 2 fish (singly or in combination) per angler. The minimum size limit is 12 inches. Black bass (largemouth and smallmouth bass): The daily bag limit is 5 fish (singly or in combination) per angler with a 14-inch minimum size limit. A Lake Erie fishing permit is required for nonresidents from

January 1 to April 30, 2020 when fishing Lake Erie and areas immediately upstream in creeks, rivers, and tributaries.

Effective January 1, 2020, it is legal to use three rods per angler in the Lake Erie Sportfishing District.

Effective March 1, 2020 the spring bag limit for walleye will remain at 6 fish, with the exception of Sandusky Bay and the Sandusky River, which will remain at 4 fish March 1st through April 30th.

See the [Ohio Fishing Regulations](#) for more information. ✧

## Sportfishing Industry asks Governors to support recreational fishing

Amid growing closures and restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) recently sent letters to each of the fifty governors requesting that they keep recreational fishing opportunities and businesses open as much as possible.

The [letters](#) were delivered to the governors' offices on Friday, March 27.

"In no way do we want to stand in the way of states' efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and recognize that in certain cases fishing access restrictions are warranted," said Mike Leonard, ASA's vice president of Government Affairs. "In general, ASA believes that recreational fishing should be promoted as a safe outdoor activity compatible with physical distancing guidelines."

"Given that recreational fishing provides health benefits associated with being outdoors, and a source of food for many individuals, we support state efforts to maintain fishing opportunities while keeping physical distance, and to allow sportfishing businesses to stay open as much as possible," said Leonard.

ASA is monitoring state parks and fisheries agencies responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing updates on its [website through an interactive map](#). In addition, ASA is working with states to have recreational fishing-related businesses be considered "essential" and therefore allowed to remain open in some form to help facilitate fishing opportunities for the public.

### COVID-19 Relief Bill Signed into Law

On Friday, March 27, President Trump signed into law a \$2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to provide relief to Americans and businesses during the COVID-19 crisis.

Notably for small businesses, the CARES Act includes \$350 billion for

a new Paycheck Protection Program to help small businesses make payroll and cover expenses from February 15, to June 30. If the employer maintains the payroll, the loan would be forgiven.

The administration soon will release more details including the list of lenders offering loans under the program. In the meantime, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has prepared [a guide](#) to help small businesses and self-employed individuals prepare to file for a loan.

Companies who are in need of a quick infusion of a smaller amount of cash to cover immediate needs are encouraged to read the [Small Business Association's \(SBA\) Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#).

ASA is currently working with the SBA to set up a conference call in the near future with ASA members to explain the Paycheck Protection Program and other economic assistance opportunities. ASA will provide an update as soon this call is scheduled.

If you have any questions, please email [Mike Leonard](#) or call 703-888-7796. ✧

## New Mississippi River Regulations In effect April 1

LA CROSSE, Wis. – New fishing regulations for the Wisconsin-Minnesota boundary waters of the Mississippi River went into effect on April 1, 2020. The Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources worked cooperatively to develop identical regulations for Pools 3 to 9 of the Mississippi River, down to the Minnesota border with Iowa. In Wisconsin-Iowa boundary waters, only walleye and sauger regulations changed. Anglers should also note that on the Minnesota side of the river, the regulations went into effect on March 1, 2020. ✧



• Established 1972 •

### President

Daniel N. Thomas, *Illinois*

### Vice President

*Open*

### Secretary

Michael D. Sanger, *Wisconsin*

### Treasurer

Thomas G. Couston, *Illinois*

### DIRECTORS

*Illinois* – Robert Gaik

*Indiana* – Mike Schoonveld

*Michigan* – Open

*Minnesota* - Dave Koneczny

*New York* – Thomas Marks

*Ohio* – Rick Unger

*Ontario* – Darryl Choronzey

*Pennsylvania* - Ed Kissell

*Wisconsin* – Robert Wincek

### Position Statement

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

### Inland Seas Angler

#### GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

### Publisher

Dan Thomas, 630/941-1351

### Editor

Jeanette Thomas

### Webmaster

Chad Lapa

© Copyright 2020 by Great Lakes Basin Publications, the *INLAND SEAS ANGLERS-GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT* is the newsletter of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, a federally recognized not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and recognized for tax-deductible giving by the federal government.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of GLSFC, its officers or staff. Reproduction of any material by paid-up members is encouraged, but appropriate credit must be given. Reproduction by others without written permission is prohibited.

### Address Change:

Send six weeks in advance with old mailing label to GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT, P.O. Box 297, Elmhurst, IL 60126, (630) 941-1351 or [glslc444@gmail.com](mailto:glslc444@gmail.com).

## Lake Erie Committee sets Yellow Perch and Walleye catches for 2020

ANN ARBOR, MI – The binational Lake Erie Committee (LEC), composed of fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania—the five jurisdictions that manage the Lake Erie fishery—set total allowable catches (TACs) for 2020 of 7.805 million pounds of yellow perch and 10.237 million walleye. Yellow perch are allocated in pounds and walleye are allocated by number of fish. These TACs represent a decrease for yellow perch from 8.552 million pounds of fish last year and an increase in walleye from 8.531 million fish. Specific allocations of both species are presented below by jurisdiction.

TAC decisions are made by consensus of the LEC. These decisions are reflective of the status of Lake Erie’s fish populations and consider the goal of sustainable harvest each year. The allocations are determined by the LEC after extensive, lakewide biological assessments, analyses, discussions, and consultations with stakeholders. The individual state and provincial governments implement the TAC in their jurisdiction in accordance with their respective regulations and management objectives.

### Walleye

Guided by the Walleye Management Plan, the LEC set a 2020 lakewide walleye TAC of 10.237 million fish, a 20% increase over the 2019 TAC of 8.531 million fish. The increased TAC reflects strong recruitment during the previous few years and expected increases in population size. The Province of Ontario and the states of Ohio and Michigan share the TAC based on a formula of walleye habitat within each jurisdiction in the western and central basins of the lake. Under a 2020 TAC of 10.237 million fish, Ohio will be entitled to 5.232 million fish, Ontario 4.408 million fish, and Michigan 0.597 million fish. Jurisdictions in eastern Lake Erie are outside of the TAC area, but harvest limits are set consistent with lakewide objectives.

### Yellow Perch

Yellow perch TAC decisions are the result of deliberations among scientists, managers, and stakeholders through the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, known as “LEPMAG.” Based on science and those extensive LEPMAG discussions, the LEC set a 2020 combined TAC of 7.805 million pounds of yellow perch.

The yellow perch fishery is divided into four management units, which generally correspond to the eastern, east-central, west-central and western basins of Lake Erie. The LEC has strived to maintain sustainable harvest while responding to changing population trajectories. The LEC acknowledges that there has been poor recruitment of yellow perch in the central basin and expects that the TAC could continue to decline there.

The five jurisdictions on the lake share Lake Erie’s yellow perch under an area-based formula. Pursuant to the 2020 TAC, Ontario will receive 3.737 million lbs., Ohio 3.139 million lbs., Michigan 0.192 million lbs., New York 0.203 million pounds, and Pennsylvania 0.534 million lbs. As with walleye, each Lake Erie jurisdiction is responsible for allocating its portion of the TAC.

### Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG)

Since 2010, the LEPMAG has served as the primary method to incorporate stakeholder needs and objectives into the decision-making process regarding harvest of walleye and yellow perch. The LEPMAG consists of senior representatives from all provincial and state jurisdictions on the lake, recreational fishers, commercial fishers, and other interested organizations. Through the LEPMAG, fishery managers and stakeholders work together to identify the harvest policies for Lake Erie percid that meet the needs of all stakeholders while maintaining stability in the percid fishery. Michigan State University’s Quantitative Fisheries Center

facilitates the LEPMAG process. Walleye are now being managed under the Walleye Management Plan, which was developed through the LEPMAG and formally adopted by the LEC in December, 2015. The LEPMAG is also advising the LEC as it seeks to finalize a yellow perch management plan in 2020.

### Lake Erie Committee (LEC) and Total Allowable Catches (TAC)

The LEC’s work is facilitated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a Canada and U.S. agency on the Great Lakes. Each year the committee reaches consensus TAC decisions for walleye and yellow perch. The TAC represents what the committee considers as a sustainable level of harvest, as guided by recommendations from the Yellow Perch and Walleye Task groups. The individual agencies allocate the TAC through setting commercial fishing quotas and recreational fishing daily limits intended to maintain annual harvest levels within the TAC.

The table below reflects the distribution of the 2020 **yellow perch** TAC within each management unit for each agency. Units are expressed in millions of pounds.

Mgmt Unit	Agency	'20 TAC
1	Ontario	0.857
	Michigan	0.192
	Ohio	1.061
	Total	2.110
2	Ontario	0.922
	Ohio	1.099
	Total	2.021
3	Ontario	1.579
	Ohio	0.978
	Pennsylvania	0.462
	Total	3.020
4	Ontario	0.379
	Pennsylvania	0.072
	New York	0.203
	Total	0.654
◇	Lakewide	7.805

## DEC Reduces 2020 Oneida Lake Walleye Egg Take

**Oneida's walleye population is at highest levels in more than 30 years and expected to thrive**

New York announced that in order to help further limit the community spread of COVID-19, DEC is adhering to social distancing restrictions to protect staff and the state's essential hatchery operations. As a result, DEC is reducing this spring's walleye egg take on Oneida Lake and will not stock walleye fry into Oneida Lake in 2020.

Traditionally, DEC staff from fish hatcheries across the state assemble at the Oneida Hatchery to assist with a massive, weeklong effort that involves the netting and spawning of thousands of fish. Egg collection efforts will be primarily for fingerling production needs, reducing the number of eggs needed.

While Oneida Lake is typically stocked with 150 million fry, the lake will not receive fry this year. The lack of stocking should not impact the Oneida Lake walleye fishery, as the adult population is abundant and at [numbers higher than in more than three decades](#). This, coupled with a strong year class will enter the fishery in 2020, should provide walleye fishing this year and for the immediate future.

The reduced egg take operations will begin once the water temperature rises and walleyes begin running Scriba Creek to spawn. To protect both staff and the public, all DEC hatcheries are temporarily closed to visitors.

While enjoying the outdoors, follow the [CDC/New York State Department of Health guidelines](#) for preventing the spread of colds, flu, and COVID-19:

- Keep at least 6' between you and others.
- Avoid close contact.
- Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer.
- Avoid surfaces that are touched often, such as doorknobs, handrails, etc. ✧

## Firearm Accidents at Record Low Level

NEWTOWN, Conn. – The National Shooting Sports Foundation reported that unintentional firearm fatalities reached their lowest level ever, according to the latest data from the National Safety Council's just-released Injury Facts Report 2018.

The report shows fatal firearm accidents at their lowest level since record keeping began in 1903. With approximately 100 million gun owners in the country, the data demonstrates that firearms can be safely owned and used and accidents prevented as long as secure storage guidelines are followed. "Securely storing firearms when not in use is the No. 1 way to help prevent accidents, thefts and misuse," said Bartozzi.

The National Safety Council data showed that for 2018 there were 458 firearm fatalities, accounting for less than 1% of unintentional fatalities from all principal causes. In the last two decades (1998-2018) accidental firearm deaths have declined by 47%. "Even one accidental firearm fatality is one too many," said Bartozzi. "We're aiming for zero, and this is great progress."

With reports of many people purchasing their first firearm due to safety concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, Bartozzi reminds new gun owners to use the safety device that came packaged with their new firearm when their gun is not under their direct control, to strongly consider using an additional safety device such as a lock box or lockable gun case, and to take advantage of the many gun safety resources at [ProjectChildSafe.org](#), such as [this video](#) on the 10 commandments of firearm safety.

Also, with so many children at home because of COVID-19-related school closures, Bartozzi encourages parents to take time to have "the talk" with their kids about gun safety and to use tools such as the McGruff on Gun Safety videos and a video on how parents can talk to their children about gun safety on the Project ChildSafe website. Learn more at [ProjectChildSafe.org](#). ✧

## Hudson River striped bass season starts

Striped bass recreational fishing has begun in the Hudson River and tributaries. These fish spend most of their time in coastal waters but return to the fresh water of the Hudson each spring to spawn. Stripers commonly reach lengths of more than three feet and weights exceeding 30 pounds. For people who fish the Hudson for sport, the striper is a favorite catch.

Striped bass are cooperatively managed along the [Atlantic coast by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#) (AFSMC). To reduce harvest, end overfishing, and reduce fishing mortality, ASMFC initiated and approved new regulations for recreational and commercial fishing for Atlantic striped bass. These regulations take effect immediately.



The new regulations for the Hudson River and its tributaries are:

- Slot size limit: 18"-28" total length
- No fish smaller than 18" or greater than 28" may be kept
- Season date: April 1 – Nov. 30
- Daily possession limit of one fish/angler

States along the east coast are strongly recommending the use of non-offset circle hooks for 2020. These hooks will become mandatory for the 2021 striped bass fishing season. Catch and release practices contribute significantly to overall fishing mortality and circle hooks work effectively to reduce release mortality in the recreational striped bass fisheries. ✧

## PFBC amends Atlantic striped bass regs, announces mandatory circle hook requirement

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced changes to striped bass fishing regulations within the Delaware Estuary, Delaware River, and West Branch Delaware River.

Due to the negative impact on the fishery, harvest and terminal tackle restrictions are needed to help rebuild the coastal stock.

In accordance with a fisheries management plan adopted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board intended to reduce fishing mortality by 18%, the PFBC will change minimum size requirements and slot limits for harvesting striped bass in the Delaware Estuary, Delaware River, and West Branch Delaware River, and enact a mandatory circle hook requirement for anglers using bait while fishing for all species within the Delaware Estuary. These changes are effective beginning April 1, 2020.

These regulation changes, tackle and registration requirements do not apply to inland populations of striped bass or hybrid striped bass. Please see the [2020 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary Book](#) for minimum size and creel limits for inland waters.

### Minimum Size Limits for Harvesting Striped Bass (coastal)

Under the new minimum size limits, anglers will be permitted to harvest one striped bass per day that measures at least 28" but less than 35" in the Delaware Estuary (from the Pennsylvania line upstream to Calhoun Street Bridge) during the periods January 1 through March 31 and June 1 through December 31. During the period from April 1 through May 31, anglers may harvest two striped bass daily that measure at least 21" but less than 24". In the Delaware River (from the Calhoun Street Bridge upstream) anglers will be permitted to harvest one striped bass per day that measures at least

28" but less than 35" year-round.

### Non-Offset (In-line) Circle Hook Requirement

To further meet the requirements of the ASMFC, the PFBC will require anglers who use bait to fish in the tidal Delaware Estuary, including tributaries from the mouths of the tributaries upstream to the limit of tidal influence, to use non-offset (in-line) circle hooks. The use of non-offset circle hooks is required over offset circle hooks because of their proven ability to hook fish in the mouth, simplify hook removal, and reduce injury to the released fish. Therefore, to address targeted and non-targeted striped bass release mortality, the circle hook requirement will apply to anglers targeting any fish species with bait in the tidal Delaware Estuary. For the non-tidal Delaware River, non-offset (in-line) circle hooks are strongly recommended when anglers target any species with bait. ✧

## PFBC offers online resources for paddlers and boaters

HARRISBURG, Pa – During a time when many Pennsylvanians are unable to, or are being advised not to leave their homes, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) encourages boaters and paddlers to take advantage of a wealth of online, educational resources.

Many of these resources, designed to enhance knowledge of boating regulations and best safety practices are free of charge, while some providers charge nominal fees for services. This online learning library can be accessed through a computer, phone, or tablet. These online educational experiences will help the entire family learn how to be a safe boater and direct them to the best local boating or paddling destinations when you are ready to spend time on the water.

**Online Courses Offered:**  
**Boating Safety Education Certificate and Boater Safety Courses**

A Boating Safety Education Certificate (BSEC) is required by the PFBC for anyone who operates a personal watercraft, and for those born on or after January 1, 1982 who operate a boat powered by motors greater than 25 hp. Although in-classroom boating courses are not taking place at this time, boaters can earn a boating safety education certificate through online courses. There are two courses approved:

• [Boat Pennsylvania Course Opens In A New Window](https://www.boat-ed.com/pennsylvania/Opens_In_A_New_Window) ([https://www.boat-ed.com/pennsylvania/Opens\\_In\\_A\\_New\\_Window](https://www.boat-ed.com/pennsylvania/Opens_In_A_New_Window))

• [Pennsylvania Boater Safety Course Opens In A New Window](https://www.boaterexam.com/usa/pennsylvania/Opens_In_A_New_Window) ([https://www.boaterexam.com/usa/pennsylvania/Opens\\_In\\_A\\_New\\_Window](https://www.boaterexam.com/usa/pennsylvania/Opens_In_A_New_Window))

The courses cost \$34.50 each. Those who successfully complete the course receive a temporary certificate valid for 60 days from date of issue and can receive a permanent certificate from

the PFBC for additional \$10 fee. At this time, please allow additional time for processing and delivery.

### Paddlesports Online Learning

While not required, the PFBC recommends that anyone paddling a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard complete basic safety training from an accredited source, such as the American Canoe Association or certified PFBC instructors. There are several online resources available to increase paddling knowledge, listed below.

**BoaterExam.com:** This free course ([www.boaterexam.com/paddling](https://www.boaterexam.com/paddling)) is sanctioned by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard.

**AmericanCanoe.org:** The American Canoe Association offers online resources and an online course ([https://www.boat-ed.com/paddlesports/Opens\\_In\\_A\\_New\\_Window](https://www.boat-ed.com/paddlesports/Opens_In_A_New_Window)) for \$24.50. ✧

## New fishing regulations in effect **April 1**

MADISON, Wis. – A suite of updated Wisconsin DNR fishing regulations went into effect on **April 1, 2020**, to provide good opportunities and help fulfill management goals.

### Statewide and Regional Fishing Regulation Changes

- A continuous catch-and-release season for bass at all times of the year outside the harvest season will apply statewide, except where refuges or closed areas are in effect. This season will apply to inland, outlying and most boundary waters, and no bass may be harvested during the catch-and-release bass season. Waters with a current continuous bass harvest season will not see any changes.

- The daily bag limit for cisco and whitefish will change from 25 lbs. and one fish to 10 fish in total. This change will improve consistency in harvest limits and reduce pressure on cisco and whitefish populations.

- The closing date of the muskie fishing season will be December 31 on open water in the Northern Zone north of US Highway 10, including Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters and outlying waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay north of Waldo Boulevard in Manitowoc. Open water is considered to include any conditions that do not allow ice to be used as a platform for fishing.

- On the Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters, the musky season will open on June 1 and the minimum length limit for musky will be 50”.

- For lake sturgeon fishing on Lake Superior, the minimum length limit will be 60” and only one sturgeon may be harvested per year.

- On the Lake Winnebago System, the daily bag limit for walleye and sauger will decrease to three in total, with only one being a sauger. No size limit will apply. The Winnebago System includes Lakes Buttes des Morts, Winneconne, Poygan, Winnebago and all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam. This includes the Fox River from Lake Winnebago upstream to the dam above Princeton and all its

to the dam in the city of Shawano and all its tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including Cincoe lake, Partridge Crop lake and Partridge lake in Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago counties.

- In water bodies of Shawano and Waupaca counties, excluding the Winnebago system and in Lake Koshkonong, the Rock River from the Indianford dam upstream to the lower Watertown dam, the Bark River from the mouth upstream to the former Hebron Dam at Hwy. 106, the Crawfish River from the mouth upstream to and including the Hwy. 19 bridge, Koshkonong Creek from the mouth upstream to County Hwy. B, and the tributaries of these rivers up to the first dam in Dane, Jefferson and Rock counties, the daily bag limit will also be three walleye, but with a minimum length limit of 18”.

- For the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage and connected water bodies, including Trude Lake, the Bear River, the Flambeau River upstream of the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage at Murray's Landing, the Little Turtle River, and the Manitowish River upstream of the Flambeau River to the Rest Lake Dam, including Benson, Sturgeon and Vance lakes, the regulation for walleye will be a minimum length limit of 12” with only one fish over 15” allowed, and a daily 3 bag limit.

### Local Fishing Regulation Changes

- The refuge for the Mink River downstream to the river's mouth at Rowley Bay in Door County will change to March 1 to June 15. Between these dates, the fishing season will be closed in the refuge.

- Fishing in the Fox River refuge below the DePere Dam will be prohibited March 1 to May 31.

Additionally, a variety of regulations have changed on local waters and will be described in the 2020-21 Hook and Line Fishing Regulations and Trout Fishing Regulations. For more regs, visit the DNR website [here](#). ✧

## Forest Preserves of Cook County Spring '20 trout fishing season

**More than 4,000 pounds of fish will be added to trout fishing lakes**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is pleased to announce the 2020 spring inland trout fishing season, which opened on Saturday, April 4, at Axehead Lake (Park Ridge), Belleau Lake (Park Ridge), Sag Quarry East (Lemont), Horsetail Lake (Palos Park) and Green Lake (Calumet City).

The Forest Preserves is stocking approximately 500 pounds of rainbow trout at Sag Quarry East; 1,250 pounds at Axehead Lake; and 1,250 pounds at Belleau Lake; while the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is stocking 700 pounds at Green Lake; and 600 pounds at Horsetail Lake. These are catchable sized rainbow trout, in the 0.5-1 pound size range.

There is a five trout per day creel limit with no size restrictions. No more than two lines per person with no more than two hooks per line may be used.

A valid Illinois sport fishing license with an Inland Trout Stamp is required for anglers 16 years of age and older. An Illinois sport fishing license is not required for Illinois residents who are disabled and have a State of Illinois disabled I.D. card showing a Class 2 or 2A disability or a Veterans Disability Card, and Illinois residents who are on active military duty and are home on leave.

For a list of all lakes and waters open to public fishing within the Forest Preserves of Cook County, visit [fpdcc.com/recreation/fishing](http://fpdcc.com/recreation/fishing) and download the Fishing Guide. The guide includes maps that show location and depth of each lake, as well as main fish species.

The public can contact the Forest Preserves' Fisheries Section at 708-403-6951 for further information. ✧

## Trout stocking delayed in Huron River and Spring Mill Pond

LANSING, MICH. – Fish-stocking efforts at two locations in southeast Michigan – the Huron River in Oakland County and Spring Mill Pond in Livingston County – are postponed until mid-May. The Michigan DNR made the decision to hold off on stocking the sites because the release of these particular trout traditionally is a big draw for anglers.

“These fish are retired broodstock – the mature fish we use for breeding – and they provide a unique opportunity for people to catch large trout right away,” said Ed Eisch, DNR fish production manager. “Most of our stocking efforts are for smaller fish and don’t have that immediate angler impact, because they take a year or two to reach legal catch size.”

The DNR’s decision is in line with the recommendations of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The release of the mature trout at these locations likely would attract crowds of anglers, creating a situation where it would be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain effective social distancing—a key in decreasing the coronavirus risk to Michigan residents.

The DNR has stocked adult trout in the Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area and Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area for many years. The stocking normally occurs in March for an early catch-and-release season.

When stocking efforts at the two sites resume, a mix of 3,400 adult brown trout and rainbow trout will be added between these waters. Every year, the DNR stocks millions of fish in hundreds of locations across the state. Explore fish-stocking efforts by year, location and species at the fish-stocking database at [Michigan.gov/Fishing](https://Michigan.gov/Fishing).

For additional details on the coming fishing season, see the 2020 Michigan Fishing Guide at [Michigan.gov/DNRDigests](https://Michigan.gov/DNRDigests) ✦

## New York Trout and Salmon Fishing Season open now

**State stocking more than 2.2 million catchable-size trout**

New York reminded New Yorkers that trout and salmon fishing season opened on April 1. New York’s coldwater lakes and streams offer springtime trout anglers the opportunity to pursue trout in a wide array of settings across the state. During the COVID-19 health crisis, getting outdoors and connecting with nature while angling is a great way to maintain mental and physical health.

Spring stockings will include 1.68 million brown trout, 424,860 rainbow trout, and 156,970 brook trout. Approximately 98,000 two-year-old brown trout 13-14 inches in length are included in the brown trout total. Nearly 1.6 million yearling lake trout, steelhead, landlocked salmon, splake, and coho salmon will be also be stocked by DEC this spring to provide exciting angling opportunities over the next several years. Almost 307,000 brook trout fingerlings will be stocked in more than 300 Adirondack lakes and ponds this spring and fall to provide unique angling opportunities for future years.

On many waters, due to the constraints imposed by the recent discovery of zebra mussels at Rome Fish Hatchery, anglers can expect to find some species substitutions and changes in trout numbers compared to what was stocked in 2019. Additional information about DEC’s strategic response to the discovery of this aquatic invasive species at the Rome Fish Hatchery and the impact on spring trout stocking is available [here](#). The list of waters stocked with trout in past years is available on the [DEC website](#).

Robust populations of wild trout in waters ranging from small headwater streams to large rivers like the Upper Delaware offer outstanding fishing opportunities for anglers ready to test their skills. Trout fishing is a sport that can be readily combined with a hike or paddle and lead to a truly memorable outdoor experience.

## State extends comment period for draft Lake Erie management plan

Michigan agencies have extended the public comment period for the draft Lake Erie Adaptive Management Plan until June 19. The goal is to ensure that residents who are interested have ample opportunity to offer their views on the draft plan, including at a public information meeting in early June. All previous comment period deadlines should be ignored.

The adaptive management plan—a companion document to the 2018 Michigan Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan—describes the status of water quality in Michigan’s portion of the Lake Erie Basin and includes a list of planning and implementation actions the state will take to achieve nutrient reduction targets set through the binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Annex 4 Subcommittee process.

Comments on the [draft adaptive management plan](#) will be accepted in the following ways:

- **Email** to [EGLE-LakeErieDAP@Michigan.gov](mailto:EGLE-LakeErieDAP@Michigan.gov).
- **Mail** to Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, Water Resources Division, Attn: Lake Erie AM DAP, P.O. Box 30458, Lansing, MI 48909.
- **Request a hard copy of the plan**, email or call Kimberly Passick at 517-284-5053 or [PassickK@michigan.gov](mailto:PassickK@michigan.gov).
- **Public information meeting in June**; more details to come.

For additional information, visit [Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP](https://Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP).

The state is taking proactive steps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Michigan. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in reducing the coronavirus risk to Michigan residents. For current and up-to-date information regarding the coronavirus visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) or [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://CDC.gov/Coronavirus). ✦

## Invasive Species cost to Ontario Municipalities and Conservation Authorities

Sault Ste. Marie, ON – A 2019 report from the Invasive Species Centre, calculates that Ontario municipalities and conservation authorities spend an estimated \$50.8 million per year on invasive species management. The cost is felt most in urban areas, where expenditures are estimated at over \$1 million annually per municipality.

When surveyed, invasive species managers in Ontario municipalities and conservation authorities indicated that emerald ash borer continues to be the costliest species. Collectively, close to \$30M was spent last year managing emerald ash borer alone. Other notable species include zebra and quagga mussels, gypsy moth, and invasive plants such as Phragmites and wild parsnip, which combined cost almost \$20M to manage.

These expenses will continue to increase if more invasive species are able to establish and spread in Ontario. For example, oak wilt, caused by an invasive disease that kills oak trees, has been found in Michigan less than 1 km from Windsor, Ontario. If this disease were to spread through Ontario's oak trees, the impacts would be devastating. In the GTA alone, preliminary estimates predict costs of \$66.5 million to cut and replace oak trees on city streets.

With species like oak wilt, proactive measures are necessary to protect our resources.

“Once a species is introduced into a new area you may have an opportunity to eradicate it, but once it becomes widespread, you are making huge investments just to protect your assets,” explains Robert Lambe, board president of the Invasive Species Centre, “Financially and ecologically, the best results come from preventing the introduction of invasive species to a new area and controlling them when they are at manageable levels.”

Management expenditures by municipalities and conservation authorities on invasive species are just a fraction of the total economic impact and do not include substantial

federal, provincial, and private expenditures. Ontario's ecological biodiversity, societal values, and natural resource industry are all experiencing impacts. The potential impacts on agriculture, fisheries, forests, healthcare, tourism, and the recreation industry from invasive species are estimated to be \$3.6 billion per year in Ontario. To learn more about these economic impacts, view the Invasive Species Centre's [factsheet](#).

“We may never be able to eradicate invasive species entirely, but we can help stop their spread by controlling or removing species as they arise, ultimately reducing the long-term costs of doing nothing,” says James Lane, Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry at the Regional Municipality of York and co-chair of the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario Urban Forestry Sub-committee. “In some cases, where they threaten the function of infrastructure or pose a risk to public health and safety, we don't have a choice. Invasive species in Ontario are coming at a cost, whether you realize it or not. They are impacting us all, in one way or another. They are not just a natural heritage issue.”

All Canadians can help to prevent the spread of invasive species and reduce the economic burden. Along with awareness, simple steps such as buying local firewood, cleaning boats, trailers, and outdoor equipment between sites, and properly disposing of bait can prevent new invasive species from arriving or spreading in Ontario. Any invasive species sightings can be reported to [EDDMapS Ontario](#) or Ontario's invasive species hotline at 1-800-563-7711.

The factsheet and full study were conducted by the Invasive Species Centre in partnership with the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. ✧

## DNR approves 10-year Trout Management Plan

The Wisconsin DNR recently approved its first statewide [trout management plan](#). The plan provides direction for inland trout management in Wisconsin and will be in effect from 2020 to 2029.

The plan covers Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Lake Trout in inland lakes, ponds and streams, including tributaries of the Great Lakes upstream from impassible barriers such as dams and naturally occurring falls.

The inland trout management plan includes four primary goals:

- Protect, enhance and restore sustainable cold-water aquatic habitats and ecosystems;
- Protect, develop, enhance and restore trout populations and trout angling opportunities for the diverse preferences and needs of our participants;
- Collect, develop and use the best science to guide trout management decisions; and
- Maintain and expand partnerships and engage diverse anglers, stakeholders and the general public on trout management and angling opportunities.

The Wisconsin DNR trout team developed the trout management plan with the input of a stakeholder team composed of individuals representing various groups across the state, such as anglers, landowners and farmers. The trout team met twice with the stakeholder group at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to create the plan, and the stakeholder team also reviewed the draft plan.

In spring 2019, the department released a draft of the plan to the public and presented it at statewide public meetings for additional public input. The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved the plan at the October 2019 meeting. The final version of the plan will be used to guide trout management in Wisconsin over the next 10 years.

This plan can be accessed on the DNR website [here](#). ✧



## Walleye, Sauger and Hybrid regs to change on Lake Koshkonong

Fort Atkinson, Wis. – Effective April 1, anglers looking to harvest walleye, sauger and hybrids from Lake Koshkonong and connected waters may only keep three fish in total per day of a minimum of 18 inches in length. The continuous open season on these waters will remain in place.

The 18-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of three will apply to:

- Lake Koshkonong;
- the Rock River from the Indianford dam upstream to the lower Watertown dam;
- the Bark River from the mouth upstream to the former Hebron Dam at Highway 106;
- the Crawfish River from the mouth upstream to and including the Highway 19 bridge;
- Busseyville (Koshkonong) Creek from the mouth upstream to County Highway B; and
- the tributaries of these rivers up to the first dam in Dane, Jefferson and Rock counties.

The new size and bag limits will be more restrictive for these waters to reduce harvest pressure, but will still provide quality angling opportunities. Creel surveys (in 2019?) suggest that walleye were the species most frequently targeted by anglers. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources also estimated that walleye exploitation rates, obtained from a long-term tagging study, averaged over 40%, which exceeds the 35% threshold for sustainable harvest. Additionally, the recruitment of young walleye into the adult population can be highly variable based on annual fall fish surveys.

"This regulation change will help increase the density of adult walleye and hopefully reduce the need for walleye stocking in these systems," said DNR fisheries biologist Travis Motl.

Millions of walleye fry are stocked annually from the Bark River Fry Hatchery, a cooperative effort of

Horicon Fisheries staff and Friends of the Bark River Fry Hatchery. In addition, hundreds of thousands of small fingerling walleye are stocked in the system every other year from state hatcheries.

The department proposed the new regulation through the spring fish and wildlife hearings in April 2019 and previous years, during which the public in each county had an opportunity to provide input. Common questions asked during the public input process included why sauger were included in the new regulation.

An important part of the success or failure of a regulation is its enforceability. Department law enforcement reviewed the regulation and felt that making the regulation consistent across the visually-similar species and their hybrids would improve enforceability. Another frequently-asked question was whether a slot limit would be a better option. Currently, a slot limit is not a standard option in the suite of regulations used in walleye management outside the ceded territory. Further, successful walleye fisheries managed with a slot limit do not rely on intensive stocking like the Lake Koshkonong system but instead rely on consistent natural reproduction to produce young walleye each year.

Growth estimates from 2018 aging data suggest that the average walleye from the Lake Koshkonong system grows faster than both the statewide and southern Wisconsin averages. Therefore, walleye will reach a harvestable size quickly.

"Our estimates show walleye from the Lake Koshkonong system reaching 18 inches in 4-5 years," Motl stated. "This is a very productive system, and we're looking to manage for a high-quality walleye fishery."

To learn more about fishing regulations, visit the DNR website [here](#). ✧

## In-person portion of Spring Hearings canceled

MADISON, WI – In light of COVID-19, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and the Wisconsin DNR are closely following guidelines from the [Department of Health Services \(DHS\)](#), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization (WHO).

As such, the in-person portion of the 72 public meetings known as the Spring Hearings that were to be held in each county on April 13 is canceled. The public will continue to have the opportunity to provide input on the natural resources advisory questions from the DNR, Natural Resources Board (NRB), and WCC through the online input option.

The online input option will be provided through a link that will be posted on the [Spring Hearing](#) page and will go live at 7 p.m. on April 13. The online version will remain open for three days (72 hours). Results will be posted as soon as they are available.

Each year, citizens can recommend changes to natural resource issues through the submittal of citizen resolutions. In addition, two of the five WCC seats in each county are up for election.

Those who complete the online input form (April 13-16) will be able to see the resolutions that were submitted by individuals indicating they reside in that county.

"This is an unprecedented time in history and I'm glad that we have the online option so that we can continue to gather input on these important natural resource questions," said Dr. Fredrick Prehn, chair of the Natural Resources Board. "The NRB applauds the Conservation Congress' decision to utilize the online option only this year and do its part to minimize the effects of this virus on our citizens. I hope that everyone who has an interest in the issues being discussed will utilize the online option to provide their input." ✧

## Lake Erie walleye numbers

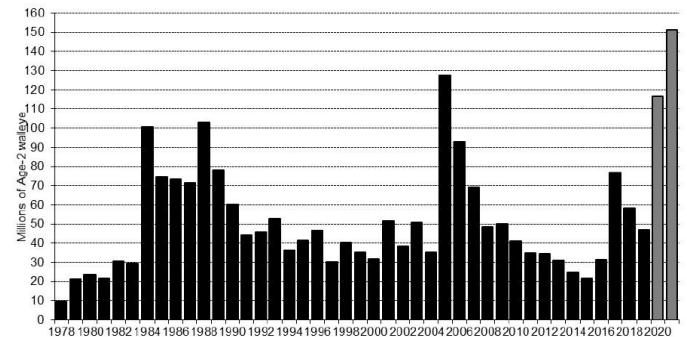
*Continued from page 1*

The Walleye Task Group (WTG) RAH range estimate is an AD Model Builder generated value based on estimating  $\pm$  one standard deviation of the mean RAH. AD Model Builder uses a statistical technique called the delta method to determine this standard deviation for the calculated RAH, incorporating the standard errors from abundance estimates at age and combined gear selectivity at age. The target fishing rate in the harvest policy was applied since the probability of the projected spawner biomass in 2021 (96.566 million kg) falling below the limit reference point after fishing at 60% FMSY in 2020 was less than 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the control rule ( $P^*$ ) to reduce target fishing rate and conserve spawner biomass was not invoked during the 2020 determination of RAH. In addition to the RAH, the Harvest Control Rule adopted by LEPMAG limits the annual change in TAC to  $\pm 20\%$  of the previous year's TAC. According to this rule, the maximum change in TAC would be (+) or (-) 20% of the 2019 TAC (8.53 million fish), and the range in 2020 TAC for LEC consideration would be from 6.825 million fish to 10.237 million fish.

Eager anglers and scientists will have to wait until at least August before numbers about likely spawning successes or failures, are known. But currently, fisheries biologists estimate there are about 100 million walleye, two years and older, in the entire lake. And next year, estimates place another 50 million entering that category.

"In 2018 we had the third-highest walleye index, and in 2019 we had the second-highest index behind 2003," explained Eric Weimer, fisheries biology supervisor at the

Ohio Division of Wildlife's research station in Sandusky. Despite the fact the 2003 walleye hatch was the largest since the Ohio Department of Natural Resources first implemented the current survey system, the combined 2018 and 2019 hatches offer unprecedented numbers of fish in the lake. The 2019 Lake Erie walleye hatch has been the second largest recorded.



**Fig 2** Estimated (1978 – 2019) and projected (2020 and 2020) number of age-2 walleye in the west-central Lake Erie Walleye population from the latest ADMI integrated model run.

The Lake Erie Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission set its lake-wide Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Ohio and the other state and provincial members of the Lake Erie Committee. The walleye TAC is a 20% boost over last year's 8.5 million fish, which was a 20% increase from the 7.1 million walleye in 2018. [More on Lake Erie on page 3.](#) ✧

## DNR issues regulations to protect Mille Lacs walleye

Walleye angling on Mille Lacs Lake will be catch-and-release only for this year's open water season, with the exception of the month of July, when walleye fishing will be closed.

Additionally, anglers will not be allowed to use live bait for any species in July, except sucker minnows greater than 8 inches in length for targeting northern pike and muskellunge.

The restrictive walleye rule for the open water season is due in part to a record ice fishing season on Mille Lacs this winter.

Poor ice conditions on other lakes focused attention on Mille Lacs, resulting in the highest fishing pressure there in 30 years: almost 30,000 pounds of harvest. This leaves only 57,800 pounds available for the state's open water season under the

safe harvest level established for 2020 by the state and the eight Chippewa bands that have treaty fishing rights.

"We know any summer walleye closure is disappointing, but anglers have told us they prefer a planned temporary closure in July to an unplanned one later in the season," said Brad Parsons, fisheries section manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "The addition of the live bait ban allows for the shortest closure to ensure we remain within the set allocation and support the long-term interest of the walleye fishery."

Walleye are particularly vulnerable in July because, as water temperature increases, so too does "hooking mortality"—the tendency for fish to die after being caught and released. By implementing fishing

restrictions when walleye are most vulnerable, and reducing angler take, anglers could potentially gain two months or more of late-summer and fall fishing.

Walleye season opens on Saturday, May 9 and continues through Monday, November 30.

### Other regulations

Mille Lacs also is a destination for quality bass, northern pike, and muskellunge fishing.

During the July live bait ban, anglers targeting northern pike and muskellunge can use sucker minnows greater than 8 inches in length.

More information about fishing regulations on Mille Lacs Lake, ongoing DNR management and research, and Mille Lacs-area recreation opportunities is available on the [DNR website](#) ✧

## Dubarry Park new locale for Ind. Urban Fishing Program

Dubarry Park, at 3698 Dubarry Road on Indianapolis' NE side, has been chosen to replace Riverside Park as a stocking location for the Indiana Urban Fishing Program. Riverside Park was no longer a feasible site due to water retention problems in the pond. Dubarry Park was chosen because it offers family friendly amenities like ample parking, playground equipment, restrooms, a picnic shelter and an abundance of shore fishing access at a convenient location within the city. The Urban Fishing Program involves the stocking of catchable size channel catfish in April, May and June at select city park ponds throughout Indiana. A subset of the program parks also receives spring rainbow trout stockings. Cities included in the program include Indianapolis, Avon, Carmel, Fort Wayne, Hobart, Lafayette, Terre Haute, New Albany and Evansville. For more info: [wildlife.IN.gov/7508.htm](http://wildlife.IN.gov/7508.htm) ✧

## Chicago lakefront closed to fishing

Smelt fishing is closed in the city of Chicago this year. The lakefront has been closed down to fisherman as well as all users. All boat launches within city limits are closed. Chicago Harbors are ready to go for boaters, but season opening is delayed. Go to <https://www.chicagoharbors.info/covid-19/> for more info. ✧

## New York fishing & hunting, spring turkey season starts **May 1**

New York spring turkey season opens **May 1** in all of Upstate New York north of the Bronx-Westchester County boundary. In addition, DEC's annual youth turkey hunting weekend will take place **April 25-26**. The youth turkey hunt for junior hunters aged 12 to 15 is open in all of Upstate New York and Suffolk County. ✧

## IN Fishing and hunting licenses updates

2019-20 annual licenses set to expire March 31, 2020 may continue to be used to hunt and/or fish until 11:59 p.m. on May 22, 2020. Licenses that would meet these requirements include: annual hunting licenses, annual fishing licenses, hunting & fishing combination licenses, youth licenses, Trout/Salmon Stamp Privileges, and Gamebird Habitat Stamp Privileges. If you do not have a 2019-2020 annual license or stamp, a new 2020-2021 annual license will be needed. For the upcoming 2020 spring wild turkey season, hunters will need a 2020 Spring Turkey License and valid Gamebird Habitat Stamp Privilege. ✧

## Zebra Mussels expand to 24 of 36 United States USACE district boundaries

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a study to investigate and determine (1) the current status of the zebra mussel invasion on USACE districts, and (2) the economic and structural impacts zebra mussels have on USACE infrastructure. The report found that zebra mussels are present within 24 of the 36 continental United States USACE district boundaries, although San Francisco and Galveston Districts have only isolated populations in non-USACE waters. Albuquerque and Omaha Districts appear to be the two districts most at risk for invasion. While infestations are common, 62% of the districts with USACE infested waters reported no or minimal impacts on the infrastructure or operation/maintenance costs. Those districts with impacts did not normally have cost figures readily available. It was also found that 12 districts have or have had zebra mussel monitoring programs in place.

For the full report: <https://erdc-library.erdc.dren.mil/jspui/bitstream/11681/35273/1/ERDC-CERL%20TR-20-2.pdf> ✧

## Pennsylvania modifies trout season

Amid concerns about the spread of COVID-19, Pennsylvania [announced changes for the 2020 trout season](#) intended to protect the safety of the public and staff, while preserving the opportunity to enjoy the fun and recreational health benefits of fishing. A single, statewide opening day for trout (for all Pennsylvania counties) will occur on Saturday, **April 18**, and a single Mentored Youth Trout Day will occur on Saturday, **April 11**. As a result of these changes, separate, earlier regional mentored youth and opening days will no longer occur in the 18 southeastern regional counties. The 2020 trout stocking schedule also will be accelerated, and volunteers will not be permitted to assist with stocking activities. The change in stocking procedures will not result in any reduction in the 3.2 million trout scheduled to be stocked statewide in 2020 ✧

## Ohio suspends sale of non-resident hunting/fishing licenses

In response to the public health situation with COVID-19 and the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Stay at Home Order, the Ohio DNR is temporarily suspending the sale of non-resident hunting and fishing licenses until further notice. "People entering the state are being asked to self-quarantine for a period of 14 days, making recreational travel unfeasible," said ODNr Director Mary Mertz. "We look forward to reopening license sales when hunters and anglers can safely return." Sales will resume when COVID-19 guidelines change or are lifted.

While individuals who currently possess a non-resident hunting or fishing license may hunt or fish in Ohio, they are asked to abide by ODH guidance and self-quarantine for 14 days before they do so. ✧

## DEC changes to 2020 Striped Bass Fishing Regulations

With striped bass seasons approaching, New York anglers are encouraged to get outside safely, practice social distancing during COVID-19 public health crisis

New York announced the adoption of new regulations for recreational and commercial fishing for Atlantic striped bass. These regulations, which take effect immediately, are to reduce state commercial and recreational harvests by 18 percent as required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Recreational striped bass seasons started on **April 1** in the Hudson River and tributaries and on **April 15** in marine waters. DEC reminds anglers to practice social distancing to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19.

The Atlantic coast-wide harvest of striped bass is managed by ASMFC. To address the finding that the striped bass resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing, ASMFC initiated and approved [Addendum VI to Amendment 6 \(PDF\)](#) of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass to reduce harvest, end overfishing, and bring fishing mortality to the target level in 2020.

After [presenting several options and seeking stakeholder input](#) last year, New York State adopted state fishing regulation changes that reflect ASMFC's Addendum measures and are in accordance with the FMP. The open seasons for striped bass in all New York waters have not changed. New York State worked cooperatively with other members of ASMFC to adopt consistent slot limit regulations and comparable season dates. The Addendum also requires all states to require the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait for the 2021 striped bass fishing season. Catch and release practices contribute significantly to overall fishing mortality and circle hooks work effectively to reduce release mortality in the recreational striped bass fisheries. Anglers are encouraged to use circle hooks in 2020 when using bait.

### 2020 Striped Bass Recreational Regulations:

In marine waters:

- Slot size limit: 28" - 35" total length  
(No fish smaller than 28" or greater than 35" may be kept)
- Season date: April 15 – Dec. 15
- Daily possession limit of 1 fish/angler

In the Hudson River and its tributaries:

- Slot size limit: 18" - 28" total length  
(No fish smaller than 18" or greater than 28" may be kept)
- Season date: April 1 – Nov. 30
- Daily possession limit of 1 fish/angler

In the Delaware River and its West Branch bordering Pennsylvania:

- Slot size limit: 28" - 35" total length  
(No fish smaller than 28" or greater than 35" may be kept)
- Season date: All year
- Daily possession limit of 1 fish/angler

### 2020 Striped Bass Commercial Regulations:

- Slot size limit: 26" - 38" total length
- Season date: May 15 – Dec. 15
- Note: Commercial harvest of striped bass is limited only to striped bass permit holders.

Check [DEC's Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations](#) for the most up-to-date information before going fishing. Make sure to enroll in the annual no-fee [Recreational Marine Fishing Registry](#) before going fishing in New York's Marine and Coastal District waters or when fishing in the Hudson River and its tributaries for "migratory fish of the sea" (e.g. striped bass). Anglers can enroll for the registry [online or by phone](#) or by visiting a [license issuing agent location](#).

While enjoying the outdoors, DEC advises New Yorkers to continue to follow the [CDC/New York State Department of Health](#)

[guidelines](#) for preventing the spread of colds, flu, and COVID-19:

- Try to keep at least six (6) feet of distance between you and others.
- Avoid close contact: shaking hands, hugging, and kissing.
- Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid surfaces that are touched often: doorknobs, handrails, and playground equipment.

For more [information about the benefits of being outdoors safely and responsibly](#), go to DEC's website. ✧

### DNR continues statewide fish stocking

Indiana DNR recently began spring fish stockings across the state. Biologists will coordinate statewide with city and county parks to gain access for stocking purposes. DNR is striving to ensure the safety of the public and staff. As stocking trucks are on the road and stocking fish, please remember to practice social distancing. Some egg collection efforts have been canceled for this year. Each year, DNR staff collect walleye and muskellunge (muskie) eggs from wild sources to sustain populations across the state. Though nearly all of Indiana's walleye waters are sustained through stocking, missing one year of stocking should not significantly impact walleye fishing. Saugeye and muskie fishing also look positive. Muskies are a long-lived species, and their lifespans temper the effect of missed stockings. For more info: visit [wildlife.IN.gov/5457.htm](http://wildlife.IN.gov/5457.htm).

For fish stocking inquiries: William Seegers, 812-526-2051, [wseegers@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:wseegers@dnr.IN.gov). For walleye and saugeye: Dan Carnahan, 812-789-2724, [dcarnahan@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:dcarnahan@dnr.IN.gov). For muskie inquiries: Jeremy Pricer, 260-244-6805, [jpricer@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:jpricer@dnr.IN.gov).

## Sportsmen generate nearly \$1 Billion in conservation funding

### *Fish, Wildlife, Outdoor Recreation and Local Communities Benefit from Excise Tax Revenues*

WASHINGTON – America’s sportsmen and sportswomen generated nearly \$1 billion in excise taxes last year that support state conservation programs. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced the disbursement of these funds, generated through excise taxes on hunting, shooting and fishing equipment and boat fuel to all 50 states and U.S. territories by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

To date, the Service has distributed more than \$22.9 billion in apportionments for state conservation and recreation projects. The recipient state wildlife agencies have matched these funds with approximately \$7.6 billion throughout the years, primarily through hunting and fishing license revenues.

“Our conservation model is funded and supported by America’s hunters, shooters, anglers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts. These stewards of conservation generated nearly a billion dollars last year alone and make our country’s conservation legacy the envy of the world,” said Sec. of the Interior David Bernhardt.

“When people pay taxes and fees, they want to know that their money is going to good use,” said Deputy Sec. of the Interior Katharine MacGregor. “These grants are a great example of fees paid by sportsmen and women being reinvested in opportunities for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities. We are proud to work with the states and appreciate their efforts to keep public lands open for dispersed recreation where appropriate for those who need to get outside.”

“These grants are the epitome of the great things that can happen when industry, hunters and anglers, and state and federal governments work together,” said Service Director Aurelia Skipwith. “As the administrator of these grants, the Fish and Wildlife Service is the linchpin in the circle of funding that arcs from the hunters and anglers generating these dollars as consumers, through

the states as conservation managers, and back to hunters, anglers, and recreational users as beneficiaries, for improved hunting, fishing and conservation opportunities. It is a role we are honored to play.”

Authorized by Congress through the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, these funds support critical state conservation and outdoor recreation projects. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program, which the Service administers, has long been considered the foundation of fish and wildlife conservation in the U.S.

State-by-state listings of the Service’s final apportionments of [Wildlife Restoration](#), [Sport Fish Restoration](#) and [State Wildlife Grant](#) funds for the Fiscal Year 2020 and more information about the [WSFR](#) program are online.

In a related announcement, the Service is awarding \$6.4 million in grants through its Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG) program. The funds help conserve and protect Species of Greatest Conservation Need and this year will be distributed to nine state fish and wildlife agencies. Several projects involve additional state fish and wildlife agencies working in partnership with these nine states.

“State fish and wildlife agencies play a crucial role in the conservation of America’s fish and wildlife and in delivering the promise of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation,” said Secretary Kelly Hepler of South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks and President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “The Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration (WSFR) Program provides funding to states to protect and conserve our nation’s fish and wildlife heritage today and for generations to come. Strong and enduring partnerships are essential to our success, and there is no better example than the WSFR program.”

“Federal funding attributed to excise taxes constitute about a quarter of the annual revenue we reinvest on behalf of anglers and boaters here in Pennsylvania,” said Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Tim Schaeffer. “Our allocation is largely driven by fishing license sales, and licenses purchased this spring will help to support trout stocking and other benefits enjoyed all year long across the Commonwealth. To increase convenience, we have made it easier than ever for anglers to go online, get their license and display it on their phone.”

“Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds coupled with sporting licenses are the lifeblood of state fish and wildlife agencies. These funds – generated solely by sportsmen and women – often account for 80% or more of state fish and wildlife agency revenue and are critically important to ensuring the completion of on-the-ground conservation, research and access projects,” said Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF) President Jeff Crane. “CSF applauds the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for promptly distributing these ‘user pays-public benefits’ funds in a timely manner.”

“The sportfishing industry is proud to support the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund through excise taxes on fishing equipment. We appreciate the Secretary’s leadership in releasing these important grants that are used to help fund essential conservation and recreational fishing participation efforts throughout the United States,” said American Sportfishing Association President Glenn Hughes.

“The firearm and ammunition industry is a longtime and proud contributor to the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund.

***Great Lakes States Contribution to Conservation Funding on page 15 bottom***

## Grass Carp Briefing on one large grass carp collected in Tittabawassee River, March 17

The Michigan DNR collected one large (> 40”) grass carp during a routine fish survey in the Tittabawassee River on March 17, 2020. The Tittabawassee River flows into Saginaw Bay in Lake Huron. The fish was tested for ploidy status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Fish Health Lab in La Crosse, WI and determined to be diploid, and therefore capable of reproducing.

To our knowledge, this is the first documented diploid grass carp to be captured in Lake Huron waters. The MDNR is aware of one other grass carp that was caught by a recreational angler in the Tittabawassee River in 2013, but ploidy testing wasn’t feasible by the time the fish was reported.

In response to the recent detection of the diploid grass carp, MDNR-Fisheries Division implemented a response action using electrofishing boats on March 23, 2020. The goal of the response action was to conduct targeted grass carp removal efforts at the location where the previous fish was captured and in other suitable grass carp habitat nearby to inform risk of establishment and future response strategies. No additional grass carp were captured or observed.

Additional response efforts were planned throughout the week but were halted in response to public risk and safety advisories pertaining to COVID 19. The grass carp that was

collected will be processed for otolith microchemistry analysis to determine its natal origin. This test will provide information on whether the fish was hatched in Great Lakes waters or if it was of aquaculture origin. The results from this analysis are not expected to be available until this summer.

The MDNR plans to conduct sustained response actions for grass carp in the Tittabawassee River and other connected waters throughout the 2020 field season to further assess risk of establishment. At this time, the risk is presumed to be low based on the absence of grass carp in the large number of sampling efforts that occur each year in the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw Bay (e.g., annual fish surveys for walleye assessment) that resulted in the single capture of the grass carp described above.

Plans for the sustained response actions will be finalized in the coming weeks in collaboration with Lake Huron partner agencies and will include surveillance activities during the 2020 field season. The goal of the sustained response actions is to provide insight on the risk of establishment and inform whether longer-term response actions are required, or whether continued surveillance through MDNR’s regular fishery surveys are sufficient.

Grass carp have never been captured and reported in Lake St. Clair and only infrequently in Lake Huron. Specifically, since 1989 there

have been 12 grass carp captured and reported from Lake Huron waters. Of those captures that have a known ploidy status, all were determined to be sterile. The primary risk for grass carp introductions in Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron waters is from natural dispersal of grass carp present in Lake Erie. In recent years, the majority of grass carp captures have occurred in Lake Erie.

In addition, recent efforts have documented successful grass carp spawning in two of Lake Erie’s tributaries (Sandusky and Maumee rivers). Therefore, the most prudent investment and action to reduce overall risk of grass carp population expansion in the Great Lakes is to focus on the source population in Lake Erie. Accordingly, while the MDNR will conduct grass carp response actions and surveillance in the Tittabawassee River and connecting waters in 2020, the MDNR will continue to prioritize grass carp response efforts in Lake Erie. The available science indicates that Lake Erie is presumed to have a greater risk of establishment.

Targeted efforts in Lake Erie will result in indirect benefits to Lake Huron because those removal actions will reduce the risk of natural dispersal to other Great Lakes and connecting waters. Questions? Please contact Randy Claramunt, MDNR Lake Huron Basin Coordinator, at 231-622-3820. ✧

	<b>Sportfish Grants</b>	<b>State Wildlife Grants</b>	<b>Total Amount Issued</b>
Illinois	\$6,864,057	\$12,392,851	\$19,256,908
Indiana	\$4,949,917	\$10,259,479	\$15,209,396
Michigan	\$11,455,775	\$17,997,307	\$29,453,082
Minnesota	\$13,330,473	\$17,592,212	\$30,922,685
New York	\$8,201,051	\$15,687,703	\$23,888,754
Ohio	\$7,465,712	\$12,234,327	\$19,700,039
Pennsylvania	\$8,916,666	\$20,931,244	\$29,847,910
Wisconsin	\$11,719,682	\$17,654,380	\$29,374,062

### **Great Lakes States Contribution to Conservation Funding**

✧

## More than 50 invasive carp captured on Mississippi River

The Minnesota DNR is conducting an immediate response to the capture of 51 invasive carp on the Mississippi River. The invasive carp were caught by two commercial fishing operators near La Crosse and Trempealeau, Wisconsin, during routine spring netting March 6-8.

In response to this discovery, the DNR is working with the USFWS the U.S. Geological Survey, the Wisconsin DNR and commercial fishing operators to conduct large-scale netting, studies of the captured carp and increased monitoring. "This robust response will provide additional information about the population while removing any other invasive carp they happen to catch," said DNR invasive species unit supervisor Heidi Wolf.

When the commercial fishing operator operating near La Crosse saw what he thought were invasive carp, he contacted the DNR. The DNR invasive carp field crew assisted in removing and identifying the fish. The DNR identified 39 silver carp and 11 grass carp caught in Pool 8 of the Mississippi, just south of La Crosse, and one silver carp caught in Pool 6, about 20 miles farther upstream. All invasive carp recovered have been given to the USFWS to determine their age, size and gender.

"The location where these fish were caught is commonly netted because of concentrations of commercially valuable fish," said DNR invasive carp field lead Ben Larson. "This is the largest congregation of invasive carp we've seen this far upstream."

Invasive carp have been progressing upstream since escaping into the Mississippi River in Arkansas in the 1970s. These large fish compete with native species and pose a threat to rivers and lakes. No

breeding populations have been detected in Minnesota waters to date. Individual invasive carp have been caught as far upstream as Pool 2 of the Mississippi, near the Twin Cities (bighead, grass, and silver), the King Power Plant on the St. Croix River by Oak Park Heights (bighead), and just downstream of Granite Falls in the Minnesota River (bighead).

Previous captures of invasive carp in Minnesota have been individuals or small numbers of fish. This capture indicates an increase in the abundance of invasive carp in the Pool 8 portion of the river between Minnesota and Wisconsin, and is very likely related to the prolonged high water conditions on the Mississippi River during the summer of 2019. During high water, gates at the locks and dams on the river are kept open to pass flood waters. These "open river" conditions allow easier upstream movement of fish from downstream portions of the river, where invasive carp densities are higher.

The DNR has built partnerships with state and federal agencies, conservation groups, university researchers and commercial businesses to prevent the spread of invasive carp. The 2015 closure of the Mississippi River lock at Upper St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis was a major accomplishment of these efforts.

The DNR is actively engaged with several prevention efforts:

- The DNR is an active partner in the Upper Mississippi River Invasive Carp Workgroup. The group includes representatives from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and several federal agencies.
- In partnership with the DNR, the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

(MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota is testing and evaluating carp deterrents in Mississippi River locks and dams. Previously, MAISRC installed and evaluated a speaker system at Lock 8. Development of this technology will continue this year with the installation of an updated speaker system at this location.

- The DNR's Fish and Wildlife Division leads a program to monitor fish population changes and impacts of management actions. This includes maintaining important relationships with commercial fishing operators, as demonstrated in this instance.

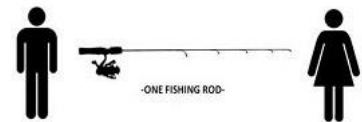
State funding sources, including the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund, have provided key funding for deterrent actions and the DNR invasive carp detection and response program.

Invasive carp captures must be reported to the DNR immediately. Call 651-587-2781 or email [invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us). Take a photo and transport the carp to the nearest DNR fisheries office or make arrangements for it to be picked up by a DNR official.

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

◇

### 6 Feet of Social Distance



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

### **[Corps of Engineers: Lake Michigan level breaks '86 record for March, near record levels expected in coming months](#)**

Lakes Michigan and Huron, along with Erie and St. Clair, set new monthly mean water level records for March, breaking the previous record from 1986, the Detroit District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Tuesday

### **[Walleye: Lake Erie population skyrockets. Again.](#)**

The 2019 walleye hatch in Lake Erie has been the second largest recorded since the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' first implementation of the current modern fish survey system. [Read the full story by Great Lakes Now.](#)

### **[Sporting Uncertainty: COVID-19 casts shadow over Great Lakes sports events](#)**

The competitive fishing season is arriving, but not to Detroit with the cancellation of the Detroit River walleye tournament near Trenton, Michigan last week.

### **[Record Ohio walleye run, huge crowds lead to license restrictions, Sandusky and Maumee River closings during pandemic](#)**

To minimize crowd size walleye fishing, Governor DeWine has banned the sale of non-resident fishing licenses. Individuals fishing are expected to still follow social distancing guidelines.

### **[Fish tale: Chances of Arctic grayling return to Michigan 'Very good'](#)**

Arctic grayling, a fish known for its sail-like dorsal fin that died out in Michigan in the 1930s, could be making a comeback in Michigan.

### **[Big walleye hatches mean increase in total allowable catches in Lake Erie](#)**

Under a binational agreement reached last week, Ohio, Michigan and Ontario are entitled to catch and harvest 10.2 million walleye — an increase of 20 percent over last year's 8.5 million fish.

### **[Fishing in the age of social distancing: Lake Erie is wide open](#)**

Ohio wildlife officials are keeping a close eye on fishermen, with Gov. Mike DeWine's stay-at-home mandate allowing them to go fishing if they avoid other anglers and maintain strict social distancing.

### **[Lake Michigan to break record, keep rising](#)**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' weekly report released Friday showed Lake Michigan has risen 1 inch over the past week and is now 5 inches above the March record set in 1986

### **[Guide Mike Hanson caught and released a rare lake sturgeon](#)**

Guide Mike Hanson was catching sauger and walleye Saturday on the Illinois River below the Starved Rock Lock and Dam when he caught the fish of a lifetime

### **[Is Niagara Falls a barrier against fish movement?](#)**

New research shows that fishes on either side of Niagara Falls—one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world—are unlikely to breed with one another.

### **[House Lawmaker works to keep Asian carp from Lake Michigan](#)**

Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) says she hopes to ensure the Army Corps of Engineers receives funding to start a multimillion-dollar project on an Illinois river to prevent the invasive Asian carp from entering Lake Michigan.

### **[DEC to retrofit Rome Fish Hatchery](#)**

Rome Fish Hatchery is undergoing work to mitigate zebra mussels discovered in late January in a lake that supplies water to the hatchery, one of the largest of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's dozen hatcheries.

### **[Walleye: Lake Erie population skyrockets. Again.](#)**

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources' 2018 and 2019 walleye surveys offer unprecedented numbers of fish in the lake

End