



## Lake Michigan Program field sampling activities

This Lake Michigan information is from field sampling activities during 2019 that were provided by Lake Michigan Program (LMP) biologists as well as other Lake Michigan fishery management agencies. Many of our LMP fishery reports can be found on the Lake Michigan pages of the [Ifishillinois.org](http://Ifishillinois.org) website along with specific information on stocking sites and numbers. Sport fish creel and other Lake Michigan research reports from the Illinois Natural History Survey are available on UIUC's [www.Ideals.illinois.edu](http://www.Ideals.illinois.edu) website.

### **New Salmon and Trout Stocking Targets for 2020**

During summer 2019, the Lake Michigan Committee adopted new salmon and trout stocking targets for the four states. The new targets include lakewide increases in

stocking for Chinook salmon, brown trout, rainbow trout, and coho salmon, and a reduction in lake trout stocking at the Mid-Lake Reef in 2021. Increased stocking was considered by managers after favorable results were obtained from the most recent Predator-Prey Ratio estimate of Chinook salmon and alewife biomass. Associated auxiliary indicators also were positive showing large fish in the angler harvest and fall weir returns. The changes specific to Illinois are an increase in Chinook salmon stocking from 150,000 to 180,000 fingerlings and the addition of 25,000 skamania-strain rainbow trout. Other species remain at previous stocking levels: coho salmon 300,000; brown trout 110,000; arlee-strain rainbow trout 60,000; and lake trout 120,000. The additional rainbow trout will be stocked at North Point Marina, bringing the total of skamania-strain rainbow trout stocked in Illinois waters to 75,000.

DNR is working cooperatively with Westrec Marinas to add angler

access at North Point Marina. We also continue using the stocking tube at various locations to deliver fish from the stocking truck into the water. In the past few years, we have found that using the tube is less stressful on the fish than traditional stocking methods. Ideally, this equates to better survival for our stocked fish and better returns.

### **Alewife Abundance Remains Low in Lake Michigan**

Forage fish assessments are conducted by the USGS Great Lakes Science Center. Two lakewide surveys are conducted annually – a bottom trawl survey with multiple tows at seven sample stations (trawl depths from 30 to 508 feet) and an acoustics/mid-water trawl survey sampling at multiple transect locations around the lake in waters 33 to 787 feet deep. The lakewide estimates of forage fish abundance and biomass (weight), including alewife, derived from these surveys are used by the Lake Michigan **Lake Michigan Program**

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## Before You Launch: Your 10-Point Spring Boating Checklist

Boating season is getting started and if you haven't already, it's time to prep your boat. Consider this quick "Get the Boat Ready" checklist you can use to get started. Registration: Is your boat's registration up-to-date? Safety equipment: Some items, like fire extinguishers, have short life spans. Plug: Make sure you remember (or find out) the location of your boat's drain plug. Mechanics: Check the engine and mechanical

**More info? Before You Launch: [10-Point Spring Boating Checklist](#)** or find more information and advice for keeping your boat in tip-top shape on sites like [TakeMeFishing.org](http://TakeMeFishing.org). ✧



## Invasive carp eDNA sampling results cause retesting on three Michigan inland lakes

Environmental DNA (eDNA) testing by the Michigan DNR and the USFWS revealed no evidence of genetic material from bighead and silver carp in Houghton Lake in Roscommon County, Long Lake in Hillsdale County or Cass Lake in Oakland County. The retesting in late 2019 was in response to results of similar surveys previously conducted as part of an aquatic invasive species early detection project conducted collaboratively by the DNR and Michigan State University.

### Initial results

As part of a study comparing traditional fish surveys using nets and electrofishing to eDNA sampling, the DNR and staff from MSU sampled 22 inland Michigan lakes from 2016 to 2019. Almost all the lakes showed no presence of invasive carp eDNA. However, the MSU results indicated that one sample each from Houghton, Long and Cass lakes contained DNA from the *Hypophthalmichthys* genus, which includes invasive bighead and silver carp. The lab analyzed 37 samples from Long Lake, 48 samples from Houghton Lake and 40 samples from Cass Lake.

The three positive samples from MSU were retested at the USFWS Whitney Genetics Lab in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Those results confirmed the genetic sequence was for bighead carp in the Long and Cass lake samples and silver carp in the Houghton Lake sample.

### Follow-up surveys

Confirmation by the Whitney lab prompted the DNR and USFWS to undertake repeat sampling on all three lakes. Follow-up sampling of Long and Houghton lakes in 2019 found no silver or bighead carp eDNA in the 40 samples from Long Lake and the 430 samples taken from Houghton Lake.

Results of repeat sampling of Cass Lake in October 2019 indicated that one of the 120 samples taken was positive for silver carp eDNA. The positive sample came from the southeast portion of the lake, within approximately 200 meters of the 2018

sample that was positive for bighead carp. Quality assurance protocols in the sampling process and laboratory analysis give no indication the results were in error.



An additional 60 samples taken from Cass Lake in December 2019 showed no bighead or silver carp eDNA.

Repeated detections of the same species over time would increase the concern of potential live individuals being present. Based on the current information, it is unlikely that there are live bighead or silver carp in any of the three lakes.

It is possible for DNA to be introduced from other sources, such as boats or fishing equipment used in another state where invasive carp are present that are then transported and used in these lakes.

No live bighead, silver or black carp have been captured through many efforts including commercial fishing, recreational angling observations and scientific sampling in any of the Great Lakes since 2002. Similarly, no bighead, silver or black carp have been caught in any of the fish population assessments conducted in Michigan's inland lakes during that same time frame.

### What is Michigan doing to prevent invasive carp?

“Along with our participation in eDNA surveillance efforts, we continue to be diligent with early detection efforts, such as conducting fish population surveys, increasing awareness among anglers and maintaining an [invasive carp reporting website](#) for anglers to share any suspicious catches or observations,” said Herbst. ✧



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#### Position Statement

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

### Inland Seas Angler

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## 230+ inland fisheries surveys in 2019 yield key data, insights

Did walleye stocking on an inland lake help grow its yellow perch population? Do changing water levels alter fish movement? Are more salmon returning to home waters? Finding answers to questions like these is a big part of why the Michigan DNR does fisheries surveys and, in fact, conducted more than 230 such surveys last year alone!

In 2019, staff from eight DNR fisheries management units completed 132 surveys of inland lakes and 101 stream surveys. Anyone fishing those waters might have seen crews collecting key data on state fisheries. So just what are crews looking for?

According to Randy Claramunt, Lake Huron Basin coordinator, surveys fall into three categories:

- Evaluating management actions.
- Understanding status and trends.
- Finding answers to new questions or concerns.

“Each management unit is responsible for determining if actions,

like fish stocking or habitat improvement projects, had the desired effect,” Claramunt said. “For example, [last year the DNR stocked more than 21 million fish](#) across Michigan. Surveys help us evaluate whether stocking resulted in better recreational fishing in certain areas or improved a lake’s overall health.”

Other annual surveys help managers track the status and trends of fish communities and important aquatic habitat on different lakes, providing a picture of these lakes geographically and over time.

Claramunt said streams throughout the state are handled a little differently, through two types of status and trends surveys: fixed sites and random sites.

“At fixed sites, we annually estimate fish population abundance – usually trout in coldwater streams and smallmouth bass in warmer waters – on a three-year rotation, while random site surveys are

intended to give a species snapshot and show relative abundance,” he said. “We collect in-stream habitat data at all our status and trends sites.”

Fisheries managers use that third category, discretionary surveys, to answer questions or address current concerns, perhaps something raised by a local biologist, an angling group or a lake association. Such surveys might be conducted to assess habitat suitability for a threatened and endangered fish species.

No matter the type of survey, DNR fisheries managers use the resulting information to strategize their actions, detect early indicators of invasive species, recognize developing threats to fish and habitat health, and much more. If you’d like to learn about the DNR’s lake and stream surveys, especially in your part of the state, contact the [fisheries management unit](#) in your area.

Questions? Contact [Randy Claramunt](#) at 231-622-3820. ✧

### Register for Women’s Wilderness Weekend

Women interested in a women’s-only event at Patoka Lake to learn outdoor skills [April 24-26](#) have until [April 10](#) to register. The event will start at the Patoka Lake Nature Center and includes overnight camping for the duration of the weekend. Ages 16 and older can participate in activities including in-depth archery lessons, kayaking, kayak fishing, Dutch oven cooking, basic bush craft, wild edibles, wilderness first aid, yoga, trap shooting, rifle, boating, self-defense, beginner birding, beginner bow hunting, hunting basics, more.

Meals provided on Saturday and Sunday. Camping will take place in the modern electric campgrounds. Registration is \$65 per participant. For more info or to register, call 812-685-2447. This event is being sponsored by the Dubois County Shooting Sports Instructor Council. Patoka Lake ([on.IN.gov/patokalake](http://on.IN.gov/patokalake)) is at 3084 N. Dillard Road, Birdseye, IN 47513. ✧

### [Illinois Spring Trout Season opens April 4](#)

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The 2020 Illinois Spring Trout Fishing Season will open [April 4](#) at 56 ponds, lakes and streams throughout the state. An early opportunity at select trout sites – the Spring Catch-and-Release Fishing Season – will open March 21. No trout may be kept during the catch and release fishing period, but anglers can keep trout after the opening of the regular season beginning April 4.

Two traditional spring trout fishing locations are closed this year. The Waddams Creek site at Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Recreational Area and Manners Park Pond in Taylorville will be temporarily removed from stocking for site maintenance purposes. For more information on trout seasons and other Illinois fishing opportunities, check the website at [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org). The 56 locations that will be open for the spring trout season are listed here: [Illinois Spring Trout Fishing Season Locations](#). ✧

### "State of Lake Ontario" meetings moved to Fall

Since the mid-1990s New York has held public annual State of Lake Ontario (SOLO) meetings in Oswego, Monroe and Niagara counties in the spring to inform the public of the results of fisheries assessment/research programs conducted during the previous year’s field season. In 2016 DEC began conducting meetings each fall to present and receive feedback on results of the lake-wide preyfish survey conducted in April/May. To be more efficient, NY DEC will now combine the content of those meetings into a single venue that will be held in the fall. While results from some fisheries assessment programs will not be completely available at the time of these meetings, DEC will continue to convey additional information through updates and annual reports posted on the [DEC’s Lake Ontario Unit web page](#). ✧

## NY Upcoming BOW Events

**Women's Hunter Education Course - Western New York, [April 4, 2020](#)**, 8 - 5 p.m. Springville Field & Stream, 8900 Chaise Rd, Springville NY 14141, **FREE [Contact Region 9 Hunter Education](#)** for more info and to register.

**Women's Hunter Education Course- Adirondacks, [April 25, 2020](#)**, 9 - 5 p.m. Hague Fish & Game Club, 488 West Hague Rd, Hague NY 12836, **FREE [Contact Region 5 Hunter Education](#)** for more info and to register.

**Women's Bowhunting 101 Workshop – Catskills, [May 16-17, 2020](#)**, 8 - 4 p.m. Amahami Girl Scout Camp, 434 Page Pond Rd, Deposit NY 13754 **Registration:** Registration will open in late March. **[Contact BOW](#)** for more information.  
✧

## Free NY Fishing Clinics

Free Sport Fishing Events are fishing programs where participants can fish for free; no freshwater fishing license or enrollment in the Recreational Marine Fishing Registry is required. In addition to fishing, participants can learn about fish identification, fishing equipment and techniques, fisheries management, angling ethics and aquatic ecology.

In addition to the Free Sport Fishing Events, 2020 free fishing days are as follows: February 15-16 (Presidents Day Weekend), **[June 27-28](#)** (Free Fishing Weekend), **[September 26](#)** (National Hunting and Fishing Day) and **[November 11](#)** (Veterans Day) have also been newly designated as Free Fishing Days. During these days, anyone can fish the fresh waters of NY and no license is required. **This table is routinely updated, so check back often for a fishing program near you!** ✧

## PA awards [grant to introduce Hispanic families to angling](#)

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Pennsylvania PFBC announced that [Berks Nature Opens In A New Window](#), a non-profit conservation organization serving Berks County, has been awarded a \$10,000 grant that will be used to provide fishing-related programs to Hispanic families.

"Berks Nature is an outstanding organization we're proud to partner with," said Rick Kauffman, PFBC District 6 Commissioner. "The Hispanic community contributes so much to our communities across Berks County, and we believe we can develop some really great experiences for families that form a connection and an appreciation for fishing and conservation right here at home."

Programs that will be offered with the *Vamos A Pescar* ("Let's Go Fishing") grant funding include educational sessions on basic fishing instruction, fish identification, and cooking techniques. Programs will be led by certified PFBC Fishing Skills Instructors and Berks Nature staff who are bilingual. Programs are tentatively scheduled in May, June, and July and interested participants should continue to follow the Berks Nature [calendar of events](#).

Berks Nature is among 16 organizations in 12 states to be awarded grants totaling more than \$100,000 through the RBFF program.

"According to the [2019 Special Report on Fishing](#), Hispanics are participating in fishing at a record-setting level," stated RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson in a [news release](#) announcing the national list of grant recipients. "Better yet, members of this audience average more days on the water than their general market peers. This makes for a tremendous opportunity to engage the Hispanic audience and foster future generations of participants."

For more info on the George H.W. Bush *Vamos A Pescar* Education Fund, visit [www.takemefishing.org/educationfund](#) ✧

## Keep Michigan's waters great – don't dump your bait

Last March, new boating and fishing laws regarding the release of baitfish, the collection and use of baitfish and cut bait, and the release of captured fish took effect.

Simply put, the law says that unused baitfish, whether purchased or collected, must be disposed of on land or in the trash—never in the water. If anglers collect baitfish from the waters where they're fishing, it can be used only in those same waters. Similarly, Seth Herbst, the DNR's aquatic species and regulatory affairs manager, said that anyone catching and releasing fish is required to release those fish back into the same waters where they were caught.

"The department wants to be clear that, even with the new law, people are still allowed to catch and release fish during the appropriate seasons—they're just encouraged to use extra care to ensure no invasive species or pathogens are spread," Herbst said. Moving fish from one body of water to another increases the risk of spreading invasive species and fish health concerns, like heterosporis (a parasite of yellow perch) and viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (a serious disease that can harm many fish species). These can easily spread to new locations when water is carelessly transferred via a boat's undrained bilge, live well or ballast tank, and when unused bait is disposed of improperly.

No matter when or where you fish, always remember to dispose of unused bait in the trash and return catch-and-release fish to the waters where they were caught. These simple steps can make a huge difference in the health of Michigan's waters, and the fish that live in them. For more information, visit the [Laws section](#) of the [Michigan.gov/Invasives](#) website or [Seth Herbst](#) at 517-284-5841. ✧

## Donegal and Minsi lakes refilling after dam repairs

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced the refilling of two popular lakes, Donegal Lake in Westmoreland County and Minsi Lake in Northampton County, is underway following lengthy dam rehabilitation.

Minsi Lake, a 117-acre impoundment located within Northampton County's Minsi Lake Wilderness Area is fed naturally by East Fork Martin's Creek. The lake was drained in 2017 when the previous dam was deemed structurally deficient. A \$4.9 million rehabilitation project was completed in December 2019.

Both lakes are expected to refill at a pace of about 2-3 feet per week, with the lakes approaching full capacity in approximately 6 weeks. Refilling is intentionally performed slowly to allow the earthen portion of the dams to adequately saturate and to allow engineers to monitor new concrete dam structures which will be placed under a tremendous amount of pressure for the first time as water is

introduced. Both facilities will be subject to weekly inspections to ensure safety and monitor performance.

Water quality in both lakes will be monitored ahead of trout stocking events planned at each location in the coming weeks. Minsi Lake is scheduled to be stocked on March 24, ahead of the Regional Mentored Youth Trout Day on March 28. Donegal Lake is scheduled to be stocked on April 1, ahead of the Statewide Mentored Youth Trout Day on April 11. Both lakes will be stocked with rainbow trout and golden rainbow trout during the preseason period, with additional rainbow trout to be stocked throughout the spring and fall.

Volunteers are welcome to attend the stocking events and participate in placing the trout into the lakes. A complete [2020 Adult Trout Stocking Schedule](#) and information about the [mentored youth programs](#) can be found on the PFBC website ([www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)).

Both Donegal Lake and Minsi Lake are regulated as [Stocked Trout Waters](#) and are closed to all fishing (including taking of minnows) from March 1 to 8 a.m. on their respective opening days of the trout season, except for Mentored Youth Trout Day. The lakes are also managed under a temporary special fishing regulation requiring catch and release/no harvest for all species except trout. Anglers fishing for trout should follow [Commonwealth Inland Waters](#) regulations.

Beginning in spring 2020, PFBC biologists and hatchery staff will begin to implement multi-year restocking plans at the lakes, which include the introduction of fingerling-sized warmwater gamefish including largemouth bass, as well as various panfish and minnows. Over time, these stockings will result in self-sustaining populations of fish that contribute to a diverse and successful fishery and regulations will be adjusted to allow for harvest. ✧

## Zebra mussels discovered in Delta Lake, which supplies water to Rome Hatchery

New York announced invasive zebra mussels were discovered in Delta Lake, which supplies water to DEC's Rome Fish Hatchery in late January 2020. DEC immediately launched an investigation and through water testing at the hatchery confirmed the presence of zebra mussel veligers (larvae) in an outdoor raceway. Rome is one of DEC's largest hatcheries with annual production totaling nearly 160,000 lbs. of brook, rainbow, and brown trout. DEC is developing short- and long-term strategies to limit the spread of this invasive species and ensure the hatchery returns to normal production. More information will become available as DEC continues to investigate and research the problem.

Out of an abundance of caution, DEC is adjusting its stocking regimen for 2020. Fish from the Rome hatchery will only be stocked in waters currently inhabited by zebra

mussels. DEC fisheries managers are currently determining the type and number of fish stocked into individual waterbodies this year; some waters may receive a reduction or increase in stocking, while other waters will not be stocked.

Alterations in stocking are also envisioned for 2021. DEC is investigating alternative options to maximize hatchery production so as many waters as possible can be stocked.

New York has more than 7,000 lakes, ponds, and rivers that could be exposed to dozens of harmful [aquatic invasive species](#) (AIS). One of the main ways to transfer AIS between waterbodies is recreational water vehicles. Aquatic invasive plants and animals such as hydrilla, water chestnut, Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, and Asian clams are easily transported on boats, boat trailers, and recreational gear.

[State regulation](#) requires water recreationists to take reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of AIS and New York is expanding boat steward programs across the state, particularly in popular, high-use areas. In-person interactions with boaters, anglers, and other recreational water users raises awareness about aquatic invasive species and practices (cleaning, draining, and treating) that reduce the chance of spreading aquatic invaders.

DEC advises boaters and anglers to check boats, trailers, and other fishing and boating equipment for any plants or animals that may be clinging to it. Be sure to check bunks, rollers, trim tabs and other likely attachment points on boats and trailers. Following a thorough inspection, DEC encourages boaters to follow the CLEAN, DRAIN, and DRY standard. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48221.html>. ✧

## ACRCC releases 2020 Asian Carp Action Plan

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee announced the release of the [2020 Asian Carp Action Plan](#), the partnership's comprehensive portfolio of projects focused on Great Lakes protection.

"More than two dozen agencies—at all levels of government, in the United States and Canada—are banding together to keep Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes," said U.S. EPA Region 5 Administrator Kurt Thiede. "We are committed to doing what is necessary to protect the Great Lakes from this threat."

The updated Action Plan incorporates aggressive new prevention and control efforts, including expanded Asian carp population reduction measures along established fronts, large-scale field trials of potential barriers and deterrent technologies, and actions to address the growing black and grass carp threats. The Action Plan also addresses priorities for early detection and monitoring of all life stages of Asian carp, contingency response, secondary pathway mitigation, and stakeholder communication and outreach.

"The 2020 Action Plan builds upon a decade of hard work," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Lakes Regional Director Charlie Wooley. "We continue to work with our partners to develop and implement the best tools and strategies to keep bighead and silver carp out of the Great Lakes."

Key initiatives for 2020 include:

- Large-scale field testing of potential new Asian carp deterrent technologies, including underwater sound (acoustics) and carbon dioxide.
- Increased use of focused commercial fishing to remove adult Asian carp in the upper Illinois River in support of population reduction goals.
- Use of fishery stock assessment data and tools to direct the timing and location of Asian carp harvest efforts for maximum impact.

- Increased support for interagency grass carp response and monitoring efforts in Lake Erie, with expanded capacity for capture and removal.
- Continued efforts to address the growing threat from black carp in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers, including development of detection tools and strategies.

The Action Plan also includes support for the continued operation of the electric dispersal barriers in the Chicago Area Waterway System. In 2020, the Corps will complete the construction of the final electric dispersal barrier in Romeoville, Illinois.

"This system will be the most powerful of the three previously built barriers and provide unparalleled capacity to defend the Great Lakes against Asian carp. After safety testing, this system should be online in early 2021," Colonel Aaron Reisinger of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stated.

In addition to the electric dispersal barriers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is also the federal lead on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study and the corresponding Brandon Road Lock and Dam project in Will County, Illinois. Although not included within the 2020 Asian Carp Action Plan strategy, the Brandon Road project represents an additional key prevention and control planning effort focused on Great Lakes protection.

"USGS staff continue to support the multi-agency efforts to address the threat of Asian carp to the Great Lakes. We remain committed to providing the information and tools our partners need to inform Asian carp management decisions," said Scott Morlock, U.S. Geological Survey Great Lakes and Missouri Basin Regions Deputy Director and Anne Kinsinger, Associate Director, U.S. Geological Survey Ecosystems Mission Area. ✧

## NMMA hosts Invasive Species Event on Capitol Hill

NMMA—in coordination with the Congressional Boating Caucus (CBC)—recently hosted a briefing event for nearly 100 congressional staff in Washington, D.C. to examine the environmental and economic problems created by aquatic invasive species (AIS). The event—titled "How Aquatic Invasive Species are Hurting Communities Throughout the Country"—featured opening remarks from Representative James Comer (R-KY-01) and Representative Joyce Beatty (D-OH-03).

According to Comer, AIS have had a harmful impact on the economy, including tourism and other sectors. Beatty noted that AIS are detrimental to boating and stopping and reversing the spread of AIS is a bipartisan issue that Congress can and should address.

Following the opening remarks, NMMA director of federal government relations, Clay Crabtree facilitated a dialogue about the billions of dollars AIS cost the U.S. each year and how Congress can help support policies, projects, and research to fight against AIS. Crabtree was joined on the panel by Marc Gaden PhD, Communications Director for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; Ron Brooks, Fisheries Director of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; and Mark Menendez, Professional Angler.

Dr. Gaden highlighted the importance of protecting the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery from Asian carp migrating north, while Mr. Brooks discussed the need for additional funding to combat AIS in the Mississippi River basin—which comprises 40 percent of the country.

In advance of the briefing, NMMA released two AIS factsheets:

- [NMMA AIS one pager](#)
- [NMMA AIS resource guide](#)

For more information, please contact NMMA director of federal government relations, Clay Crabtree at [crcrabtree@nmma.org](mailto:crcrabtree@nmma.org). ✧

## DEC adopts 2020 Great Lakes Fishing Regulations

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos recently announced the adoption of several fishing regulation amendments for New York's Great Lakes. These changes are designed to safeguard and expand certain fish populations while enhancing anglers' continued enjoyment of these world-class fisheries. Most of these regulations are a direct result of DEC's work with anglers during the past several years to identify desired outcomes for Lake Ontario sportfishery management. These amended regulations help DEC further improve Great Lakes Fisheries and build on progress to offer excellent year-round fishing.

"DEC received comments from more than 550 anglers on our [proposed regulations](#), and most were highly favorable, which reflects the importance of working with the fishing community to develop regulations that are protective of the resource and continue to offer quality fishing opportunities," Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "We greatly appreciate the public's support for our efforts to make New York's world-

class Great Lakes fishing even better."

The regulation amendments are effective immediately and include:

- Increasing fishing opportunity by opening the Lake Ontario/Lower Niagara River lake trout season on December 1 (formerly opened on January 1). The season will be closed from October 1 through November 30, and is now consistent with Province of Ontario regulations;
- Reducing the daily creel limit for rainbow trout/steelhead on the open waters of Lake Ontario (excluding the Lower Niagara River) to two fish per day to provide consistency with Province of Ontario regulations and help increase survival of steelhead, especially during periods of reduced fishing success for other species;
- Decreasing the brown trout daily creel limit on Lake Ontario tributaries (excluding the Lower Niagara River) to one fish/day to maintain high quality brown trout fishing opportunities from fall

through the spring;

- Increasing the minimum size limit for rainbow trout/steelhead to 25 inches to prolong high quality rainbow trout/steelhead fishing opportunities through the winter months on Lake Ontario tributaries (excluding the Lower Niagara River). The rainbow trout/steelhead minimum size limit for the open waters of Lake Ontario and the Lower Niagara River remains at 21 inches; and
- Eliminating unnecessary angling regulations on Spooner Creek and tributaries (Erie County) and the North Branch Clear Creek and tributaries (Erie County) from Taylor Hollow Road upstream to the outflow of Clear Lake by allowing fishing year-round.

[Details on these amended regulations](#) can be found at DEC's website. Questions regarding these regulations can be directed to [fwfishlo@dec.ny.gov](mailto:fwfishlo@dec.ny.gov) or Steve LaPan, Great Lakes Fisheries Section Head, at: NY DEC, P.O. Box 292, Cape Vincent, NY 13618. ✧

## Designated New York Free Fishing Events for 2020

Region/County	Name	Location	Date/Rain date	Time	Contact	Phone
9/ Wyoming	Free Learn to Catch a Fish Day	Silver Lake State Park, Silver Springs	May 16	11-3:00 pm	Douglas Kelly, NYS Parks,	585-493-3605
5/ Saratoga	Family Learn-to-Fish Program	Barney Road Park & Pool (Barney Pond), Clifton Park	May 30	9-2:00 pm	Jennifer Viggiani, Clifton Park Open Space,	518-371-6054
4/ Otsego	Father's Day Fishing Clinic	Neawha Park (Hodges Pond), Oneonta	June 21	11-3:00 pm	Patricia Leitenberger, - Trout Unlimited	607-434-6029
7/ Onondaga	Family Fishing Day	Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery, Elbridge	June 6	9:30-12:30	Jim Everard, NYS DEC or Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery	607-753-3095 or 315-689-9367
7/ Onondaga	Webster Pond Free Fishing Clinic	Webster Pond, Syracuse	Aug 8 (Rain Date: Aug 15)	8-5:00 pm	Chad Norton, Anglers Association of Onondaga	315-727-2922

✧

## Permanent catfish bow, crossbow and hand fishing regs

A suite of regulations aimed at providing sustainable bow, crossbow and hand fishing opportunities for catfish went into effect on March 1.

These regulations are part of a Wisconsin DNR permanent rule that establishes size and bag limits as well as season and gear restrictions for taking catfish with a bow and arrow, crossbow or by hand. In general, the daily bag limit will be five channel catfish and one flathead catfish with no size limit for either species. The bow and crossbow season will coincide with the rough fish spearing season, which is continuous on most waters. For hand fishing, the season will run June 1-Aug. 31, and no special gear, including snorkeling, spawning boxes, hooks, ropes or gaffes may be used to take catfish.

A rule in 2018 was established in response to a change in state law allowing catfish to be harvested with these methods. Previously, only rough fish could be taken by these methods. The size and bag limits, season dates and gear restrictions in both rules aim to protect overwintering and spawning catfish from overharvest while allowing the opportunity to harvest catfish with a bow, crossbow or by hand.

Bullheads and rough fish may also be taken with a bow, crossbow or by hand. For bullheads, the bow and crossbow season runs concurrent with the rough fish spearing season for the specific water body, while the hand fishing season runs from June 1 to August 31. No size or bag limits apply for bullheads or rough fish.

On boundary waters shared with Michigan and Minnesota, bow and crossbow fishing for catfish may only occur during the open rough fish spearing season, and only in the territorial waters of Wisconsin. Consult the [Spearing, Netting and Bait Harvest regulations pamphlet](#) for more details.

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

## MacGregor confirmed as Deputy Secretary of the Dept. of the Interior

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate, on February 25 voted to confirm Katharine MacGregor to be the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior with a 58-38 vote. MacGregor has been serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff exercising the authority of the Deputy Secretary since May of 2019

“On behalf of the millions of NRA member across the country, I want to congratulate Katharine MacGregor on her confirmation” said Jason Ouimet, executive director, NRA-ILA. “An avid outdoor enthusiast and sportswoman, MacGregor brings with her a deep knowledge of wildlife management and is committed to advancing opportunities for all Americans to enjoy our public lands. We thank President Trump for this important nomination and look forward to working with Deputy Secretary MacGregor to protect and promote America’s hunting heritage.”

MacGregor has served in several positions at the Department since joining the Trump Administration in January 2017, including Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary - Land and Minerals Management and Deputy Chief of Staff. MacGregor has worked on issues that include improving responsible domestic energy and mineral development, combating missing and murdered American Indians and Alaskan Natives, enhancing rural broadband and executing on other priorities.

Prior to joining the Department, MacGregor worked on Capitol Hill for 10 years, serving for two Chairmen of the House Natural Resources Committee. She is a native of Pennsylvania and a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. Over 200 elected leaders and external stakeholder organizations throughout the country expressed their support for Katharine MacGregor’s nomination for Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. ✧

## Fantastic trout fishing opportunities at Castalia Fish Hatchery

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Anglers interested in fishing Cold Creek in Erie County this year need to enter a special lottery drawing open now until **March 31** conducted by the Ohio DNR. Approximately 100 adult and 90 youth permits will be issued.

Cold Creek is one of Ohio’s most productive and unique fishing streams, and a half-mile section of the creek located at the Castalia State Fish Hatchery will be open to lottery winners on select dates between **May 1 and November 27**.

Anglers interested in fishing the trout stream are required to apply for the drawing with a non-refundable \$3 fee by **March 31**. Application information is available at [wildohio.gov](#) or by calling 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543). Mail applications are required to be postmarked by March 31. Only one application is allowed per person.

There is one season for adult anglers (May 1-November 27), and one for youth anglers (June 8-August 7). Applicants of the youth lottery are required to be between 4 and 15 years old when they apply.

Individuals selected to participate will be allowed to bring two adults and three youths under the age of 16. Participation is determined by a computer-generated random drawing in April. The results of the adult drawing will be posted at [wildohio.gov](#). Successful youth applicants will be notified by mail.

Anglers are required to check in at the Castalia State Fish Hatchery upon arrival, and check out at the end of their session. Fishing sessions are open from 7-11 a.m. for adult events, with the exception of special Friday sessions in May and June. For the youth events, anglers are assigned to one of the two sessions per day (7-11 a.m. or 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.). All anglers age 16 and older are required to possess a 2020 Ohio fishing license when fishing at Castalia.

The daily bag limit is five trout per angler, no minimum length. ✧

## 2020 Minnesota fishing regs changes

Anglers will find a variety of changes in the 2020 Minnesota fishing regulations booklet, including new possession and length limits on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border waters of the Mississippi River. This is the first comprehensive update of regulations on the Mississippi River border waters in nearly 70 years.

The new border waters possession and length limits for most gamefish species went into effect March 1, and were developed based on decades of biological data, as well as substantial public input during 2018 and 2019.

The new regulations for the Mississippi River border waters and Lake Pepin include lower possession limits, and changes to some length limits, for walleye and sauger, northern pike, channel and flathead catfish, shovelnose sturgeon, crappie, sunfish, yellow perch, and white and yellow bass. The changes are proactive measures that will help both states manage the effects that changing river conditions, invasive species and increased angling effectiveness have on fish. Wisconsin has approved identical regulations that will go into effect April 1.

Some examples include:

- Walleye and sauger limit has decreased from 6 to 4.
- Crappie, sunfish, and yellow perch limit has decreased from 25 to 15 each.
- White and yellow bass limit has decreased from 25 to 10.

With the exception of minimum size limits for bass (14 inches) and walleye (15 inches) implemented in 1990, possession and size restrictions for gamefish on the Minnesota and Wisconsin border waters of the Mississippi River had been largely unchanged for the last seven decades.

Page 7 of Minnesota's [new regulations book](#) highlights changes for 2020 throughout the state, including:

### Special regulations modified for several Minnesota lakes

- The 17-26 inch protected slot limit for walleye has changed to a 20-

24 inch protected slot, with only one over 24 inches allowed, on the following Itasca Cty. lakes: Moose, Split Hand, Swan and Trout.

- The 40 inch minimum length limit for northern pike in Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Crow Wing lakes (Hubbard Cty.) and Mitchell Lake (Crow Wing Cty.) has changed to a 24-36 inch protected slot, with only one over 36 inches allowed and a possession limit of three.

- The 26-44 inch protected slot limit for northern pike on Upper Red Lake has changed to a 30-40 inch protected slot, with only one over 40 inches allowed and a possession limit of three.

- The catch and release regs for largemouth bass on Turtle Lake (Ramsey Cty.) have changed to a 14-20 inch protected slot, with only one over 20 inches allowed.

- The 12-20 inch protected slot limit for smallmouth bass on Turtle Lake (Itasca Cty.) has changed to a 14-20 inch protected slot, with only one over 20 inches allowed.

### New special regulations

- Keeper limits for walleye on Green Lake (Kandiyohi Cty.), Horseshoe and Minnewawa lakes (Aitkin Cty.) dropped to three.

- The possession limit for black crappie in Mound Lake (Todd Cty.) has been reduced to five.

### Dropped special regulations

- Special regulations for northern pike have been dropped on the following lakes: Ada (Cass Cty.), Big (Beltrami Cty.), Big Carnelian (Washington Cty.), Elephant (St. Louis Cty.), Elk (Clearwater Cty.), Eunice (Becker Cty.), Little Cascade (Cook Cty.), Loon (Cook Cty.), Maud (Becker Cty.), Prairie (St. Louis Cty.), Ten Mile (Cass Cty.).

- Special regulations for muskellunge on Elk Lake (Clearwater Cty.) have been dropped.

- The 17-26" protected slot limit for walleye on Deer, Battle and Pickerel lakes has been dropped.

The new 2020 Minnesota fishing regs are [available online](#). ✧

## Lake Michigan Program

*Continued from page 1*

Technical Committee to estimate recruitment of alewife and other forage species and assess the potential impacts of stocked and natural salmon and trout on the forage community. From the bottom trawl survey, the estimated lakewide density of age-1 and older alewife was 0.06 pounds per acre, a decrease from 2018. Biomass of age-1 and older alewife also declined in the acoustic survey and the estimated year class strength of age-0 alewife in 2019 was below the long-term average. It is important to note that these two assessment methods sample different areas of the water column and differ in their ability to sample age-0 fish. Estimates from both surveys are incorporated into a lakewide model of alewife abundance for management purposes.

### **Illinois Sport harvest declines despite increases in fishing effort**

Total harvest of salmon and trout in Illinois waters declined by 5% between 2018 and 2019 counter to an increase in effort (angler hours) for both sport (+19%) and charter (+2%) anglers. We also noted changes to the composition of the catch. The most notable differences were that both charter (-15%) and sport (-13%) harvest of coho salmon dropped between 2018 and 2019. Harvest of rainbow trout increased for sport (+82%) and did not change for charters. Sport angler harvest of lake trout increased by 54% and charter harvest increased by 17% for this species. Chinook salmon harvest by sport anglers declined (-49%) but harvest by charter boat anglers increased (+4%). Our multi-species salmon and trout fishery continues to provide good fishing opportunities despite natural fluctuations in individual species abundances in Illinois waters.

Sport harvest of yellow perch in 2019 (9,617 fish) decreased (-41%) compared to 2018 (16,229 fish) despite similar effort during April/September. Yellow perch harvest over this 6- month period has

been approximately 10,000 fish since 2015. However, anglers harvested an additional estimated 69,612 yellow perch during October 2018 through February 2019 and released a reported 500,000 yellow perch. Most (80-90%) sport-caught yellow perch were from the 2015 and 2016 year-classes which showed moderate (2016) to very good (2015) recruitment to the fishery as young-of-the-year in IDNR beach seine assessments.

### **Overall Yellow Perch abundance remains low; samples dominated by '15- and '16-year classes**

While gill net catches of adult yellow perch (average = 7 perch per 100 feet of net) remained low at our two annual sampling sites, 2019 catches were the highest since 2013. We like to see a perch population comprised of multiple year classes including older, larger individuals that anglers prefer and those that may have higher reproductive success. It was encouraging that the 2019 catch was made up of primarily age-3 (45%) and age-4 (46%) yellow perch. Yellow perch seining in 2019 yielded the third consecutive poor catch of young-of-year, including a catch of no young-of-year perch in 2018. Inconsistent natural recruitment, as documented in IDNR seine and gill net surveys and the INHS angler creel survey, continues to be an important factor preventing sustained population growth and abundance of the yellow perch population in southern Lake Michigan.

### **Interesting information from New Coded-wire Tag Study of Rainbow Trout**

The USFWS Great Lakes Fish Tagging and Recovery Lab began marking rainbow trout for the States in 2017 as part of a lakewide study of fish movements and natural recruitment in Lake Michigan. Coded-wire tags have been implanted in juvenile arlee-strain and skamania-strain (steelhead) rainbow trout at our Jake Wolf hatchery. Tags were recovered from eight rainbow trout in the fall by IDNR electrofishing at

four harbors, three of which were stocking locations. The tags are not site specific but are different by strain. Seven of the eight rainbow trout were skamania-strain and one was arlee-strain. Past studies have shown that arlees are typically caught by anglers earlier in the season than skamania and there is a greater tendency for skamania to be caught in the fall. Of interesting note was the large size-at-age of the sampled fish. The 1-year old rainbow trout (arlee) was 22 inches long; the six 2-year old skamania were 26 to 29 inches in length. Tagging of rainbow trout is expected to continue through 2021 with data from recaptures continuing through at least 2025.

### **Marking and Tagging of other trout and salmon continues**

Chinook salmon were marked with an adipose fin clip by USFWS at Jake Wolf Hatchery. Marking of Chinook salmon enables fishery managers to monitor natural recruitment and estimate impacts on the forage base. Chinook salmon no longer receive a coded-wire tag as the costs of tags and extraction were shifted to the rainbow trout study. From data collected in 2014-2015 on Chinook salmon by USFWS biotechnicians, we find that Illinois anglers catch 61% natural Chinook salmon during April-August with the remainder coming from Wisconsin (22%), Michigan (7%), Lake Huron (4%), and Indiana and Illinois (3% each). In addition, coho salmon were fin-clipped by Salmon Unlimited again last year as part of a study to monitor their survival and movements. Special thanks go out to all the anglers, charter captains, and Salmon Unlimited of Illinois members who have been instrumental in the collection of biological data and tags that make these studies a success.

### **Lake Trout Natural recruitment at newly mapped reefs**

Lake trout without a fin clip are being caught more frequently in Illinois waters and the USFWS reports that they constituted 37% of lake trout caught out of our northern ports

during summer 2019. All lake trout stocked in lakes Michigan and Huron receive a fin clip and coded wire tag to designate them as hatchery-origin fish. The largest proportion of Lake Michigan's unmarked spawning lake trout sampled in fall are in Illinois waters (>50% of sampled spawners annually since 2013). Smaller percentages of unclipped fish are being sampled as you move north through the lake (~25% Midlake Refuge; 4% Northern Refuge). Researchers from the Illinois Natural History Survey have been mapping the bathymetry of offshore reef structures in Illinois waters. These reef maps (available at [www.lfishillinois.org](http://www.lfishillinois.org)) are then used by IDNR to sample spawning lake trout in the fall. In addition to biannual sampling of Julian's and Waukegan reefs, DNR sampled the R4 in 2018 and Lake Bluff (10 mile) Reef in 2019.

### **Healthy Bass populations present in Illinois' Lake Michigan Nearshore**

From IDNR's annual summer harbors electrofishing surveys, we see that smallmouth bass abundance remains stable and abundance of largemouth bass is declining at some sites. Bass age-1 through age-13 represented a wide range of sizes. Quality size smallmouth bass ( $\geq 11$  inches) and largemouth bass ( $\geq 12$  inch) made up over 75% of our samples. A higher proportion of larger smallmouth bass were seen (18% at Memorable Size;  $\geq 17$  inches) compared to largemouth bass, the largest of which was 19 inches. Body weight-length relationships for both species showed bass to be in good condition and not limited by available food. Diet analysis suggested bass are taking advantage of round goby presence in the nearshore. Of note from last fall was the angler catch and release of the Illinois State record smallmouth bass from Monroe Harbor. The record fish weighed 7 pounds and 3 ounces and measured 22 ¼ inches long. ✧

## Michigan releases draft plan to improve Lake Erie water quality

LANSING – State leaders recently shared Michigan’s draft Adaptive Management Plan that will inform decisions and guide projects outlined in the Domestic Action Plan for Lake Erie, a targeted approach for improving water quality and reducing the amount of phosphorus entering the lake by 40 percent by 2025. Decreasing phosphorus inputs is intended to help reduce harmful algal blooms—caused when an overgrowth of algae produces toxins that can affect aquatic life, recreation, and the quality of drinking water.

“Michigan is surrounded by fresh water, and it is our job to take care of this resource, especially in the Western Lake Erie Basin where harmful algal blooms affect public health and our economy,” said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. “In June, I recommitted to reducing phosphorus in Lake Erie by 40 percent by 2025. It’s going to be a challenge to make the needed improvements to hit that commitment, but I will continue to push the state and our regional counterparts to use all the best management practices available to meet this challenge.”

The draft Adaptive Management Plan is available at [www.Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP](http://www.Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP).

The state will be accepting public comments about the plan from now through **March 24, 2020**. Comments are accepted via the following:

- **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
- **In person** at a public information meeting  
Monday, March 16, 2020  
6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Jones Hall, Baer Auditorium (Room 110)  
Adrian College  
112 S. Charles St.  
Adrian, MI 49221

- **Call** into the public webinar from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Thursday, **March 19**. To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5120308407661415427>

The Lake Erie Adaptive Management Plan is a collaborative effort between the departments of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and Natural Resources. The plan describes the status of water quality in Michigan’s portion of the Lake Erie Basin, outlines state actions to achieve nutrient reduction targets, and summarizes progress to date on achieving Michigan’s 40 percent phosphorous reduction goal.

According to MDARD Director Gary McDowell, Michigan’s Adaptive Management Plan allows the state to capitalize on current research projects.

“Adaptive management is a ‘learning by doing’ approach,” said McDowell. “We can test and evaluate projects outlined in our plan now, see what is working and what is not working, and then take corrective actions. We want to ensure the best outcomes for Lake Erie, and this plan will help us to do that.”

The adaptive management approach will inform and improve best management practices for phosphorous reduction and target the most effective locations for their use. Increased promotion of the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program and reinstatement of the federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in targeted watersheds will provide support for implementing these practices.

The plan also supports the reduction of combined sewer overflows and the adoption of other agricultural conservation practices.

“The long-term health of the Great Lakes is vital to our way of life in Michigan,” said DNR Director Dan Eichinger. “Michigan’s comprehensive approach to

phosphorous reduction in Lake Erie will ensure a sustainable fishery, clean drinking water and safe recreational opportunities are available for future generations of residents and visitors.”

Since the Domestic Action Plan was finalized in 2018, the state has reached some milestones. Gov. Whitmer signed [Executive Directive 2019-14](#) reaffirming Michigan’s efforts to protect Lake Erie and implement the Domestic Action Plan. In 2019, the Great Lakes Water Authority met its phosphorous reduction targets. Also, EGLE has initiated several water monitoring projects in Michigan’s portion of the Maumee River watershed.

“While we have made some progress, such as reducing phosphorus loads from wastewater treatment plants, there is a lot more work that needs to be done,” said EGLE Director Liesl Clark. “Reaching our goal of a healthy Lake Erie is going to take some time. Using the Adaptive Management Plan, we can evaluate our progress along the way and adjust as we go to make sure the Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan is completed properly and protects public health and the environment.”

Michigan continues to work with Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania and New York; the Province of Ontario; Environment and Climate Change Canada; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on reducing the nutrient loading into Lake Erie through Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex 4, a binational group working to improve water quality in Lake Erie. To learn more about the group, visit <https://www.epa.gov/glwqa/us-action-plan-lake-erie>.

For more information on what Michigan is doing in the Western Lake Erie Basin or to view the Adaptive Management Plan, visit [www.Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP](http://www.Michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP).

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## New Wisconsin fishing regulations effective **April 1**

**MADISON, Wis.** – A suite of updated statewide, regional and local Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fishing regulations will go into effect on **April 1**, 2020, to provide good fishing opportunities for the public 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 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 pounds and one fish to 10 fish in total. This change will improve consistency in harvest limits among anglers and reduce pressure on inland 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 muskie season will open on June 1 and the minimum length limit will be 50 inches.
- For lake sturgeon fishing on Lake Superior, the minimum length limit will be 60 inches 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 tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam and the Wolf River from its mouth upstream 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, the Crawfish River and their tributaries, the daily bag limit will also be three walleye, but with a minimum length limit of 18 inches.
- 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 inches with only one fish over 15 inches allowed for harvest, and a daily bag limit of three.

### Mississippi River Fishing Regulation Changes Effective **April 1**

- In Pools 3 through 8 of the Mississippi River, the daily bag

limit for walleye and sauger will be four in total, with a 15-inch minimum length limit for walleye and none for sauger, and only one walleye or sauger over 20 inches allowed for harvest. In Pools 9 through 12, the daily bag limit for walleye and sauger will be six, with a 15-inch minimum length limit for walleye and none for sauger, a protected slot limit of 20 to 27 inches for walleye and only one walleye over 27 inches allowed for harvest.

- For panfish in Pools 3 through 9, the daily bag limit for white and yellow bass will be reduced to 10 of each with no size limit, while the daily bag limit for sunfish, crappies and yellow perch will be reduced to 15 of each with no size limit.
- The daily bag limit for shovelnose sturgeon in Pools 3 through 9 has been reduced to three, with no size limit.
- The regulation for northern pike in Pools 3 through 9 will be a daily bag limit of three with only one over 30 inches.
- For channel and flathead catfish in Pools 3 through 9, the daily bag limit will be 10 combined with only one catfish over 30 inches.

### 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 in Brown County will be prohibited from 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. To look up the regulations where you plan to fish, visit the DNR website [here](#). ✧

## Task force updates efforts to protect Buffalo Reef fish habitat

The multi-agency Buffalo Reef Task Force is looking for help from shoreline property owners in reporting flooding and ice shove events along Grand Traverse Bay. Over the past roughly 100 years, historic copper mine tailings from the Wolverine and Mohawk mines – called stamp sands – were deposited at a milling site along Lake Superior, located in the community of Gay in Keweenaw County.

Since that time, the stamp sands have been moved by winds and waves south down the shoreline roughly 5 miles, inundating natural sand beach areas and threatening to cover spawning habitat and recruitment areas important to Lake Superior whitefish and lake trout in and around Buffalo Reef.

The natural reef is situated beneath the waters of Grand Traverse Bay.

To help combat the threat posed to the reef and the harbor by the migrating stamp sands, various dredging efforts have taken place over the past couple of years. “The U.S. Corps of Engineers is developing a dredging plan to protect Buffalo Reef and associated juvenile fish habitat,” said task force member Stephanie Swart, Lake Superior coordinator for the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. “The plan must also protect shoreline property owners from flooding and ice shove.”

Property owners located between the community of Gay and Grand Traverse Point, including those situated south of the harbor, are asked to fill out a form. “Pictures are helpful, but dates and locations of flooding or ice shove will help the design team minimize future occurrence of these incidents,” Swart said.

Meanwhile, efforts to decrease the amount of stamp sands along the beach have been ongoing over the past few months. From November 14 through December 6, 2019, 175,000 cubic yards of stamp sands were removed from the original milling site

at Gay. This work included pulling a 25-foot-high bank of deposited sands back from the Lake Superior shoreline.

In addition, 13,255 cubic yards of stamp sands were removed from the Grand Traverse Harbor and another 32,677 cubic yards of material was moved from the adjacent beach in work that began January 2 and ended January 28. “The removal of stamp sands north of the breakwater provides some protection for the harbor, but is not a permanent solution,” Swart said. “With record high water levels expected for 2020, waves will continue to form a ridge of stamp sand along the shoreline that overtops the north jetty at Grand Traverse Harbor.”

For the short term, this ridge of stamp sands will have to be removed periodically. The task force is continuing its work to develop a long-term solution that protects juvenile whitefish habitat south of the harbor, while keeping the harbor open for fishing, boating and other recreation. The trough area, which is located directly north of the reef, will be dredged this spring. This winter’s dredging activities will enable the contractor to work in the trough once ice leaves the bay.

As these efforts are being undertaken, a team of engineers and scientists from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working with the task force to develop cost estimates and other details for three finalist action plans aimed at protecting the reef’s important Lake Superior fish habitat. After extensive consultation with the public and other stakeholders, the task force narrowed its list of 13 action plans under consideration to three.

The three finalist action plans include:

- Building a retaining wall to contain the stamp sands at the original pile, as well as the stamp sands dredged from the lake and beach.
- Building a landfill in an upland area near the community of Gay

for the stamp sands removed from the lake and beach.

- Placement of stamp sands removed from the lake and beach in the tailing basins at the former White Pine Mine in Ontonagon County.

The team of engineers and scientists is working to develop preliminary implementation cost estimates and to identify potential benefits and risks for each alternative. The task force will present the costs and benefits of the three designs to the public with the end goal of selecting the best alternative. After that, if funding is available, the selected alternative, or alternatives, will be fully designed and ready to be implemented.

===The reef project, funded primarily through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, is being executed in cooperation between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to save the 2,200-acre reef. Additional funding for the recent dredging efforts was provided by a special appropriation by the Michigan Legislature in late 2018 being administered by the Michigan DNR.

For more information on the ongoing effort to save Buffalo Reef, visit [Michigan.gov/BufferReef](https://www.michigan.gov/BufferReef). ✧

## 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. Check the IDNR website for class dates and locations: <https://bit.ly/2ThvMdw>. ✧

## IDNR 2020 Wingshooting Clinic Schedule

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois DNR, in cooperation with partners and co-sponsors, will conduct wingshooting clinics 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 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 and successfully shooting a shotgun 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

### Becoming an Outdoors Woman (IL) **June 12-14**

Registration is open for the IDNR 'BOW' Workshop June 12-14 at the Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Ill. Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshops are designed to provide introductory instruction and experiences in many outdoor-related activities and skills. The cost per person is \$245, which includes meals, lodging, four instructional classes, use of class materials/supplies, transportation during the workshop, and more. The June workshop usually fills up fast, so don't delay in registering. Registration materials can be found at: <https://bit.ly/32C2PgZ>. ✧

participants while some have a nominal registration fee. Shotguns, shot shells, 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. The clinics consist of two wingshooting sessions each day. A short briefing about shotgun safety, handling and on-range safety protocols occurs during the first 15 minutes of each four-hour shooting session. The clinics, designed for shotgun shooters with reasonable experience, will improve the wingshooting skills of hunters and others who enjoy shooting sports. 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 fee is \$30 or \$35 per participant for hunter clinics.

### Wisconsin Sturgeon Spearing Season now history

Wisconsin ended the 2020 Winnebago System sturgeon spearing season with a total of 811 sturgeon harvested. On the final day, 69 fish were registered, 60 of which came from Lake Winnebago and 9 from the Upriver Lakes. The largest fish speared on Lake Winnebago the final day was 122.9 pounds and 72.7 inches by Richard Markowski and registered at Payne's Point. The largest sturgeon harvested from the Upriver Lakes this final day was 55.0 pounds, 59.3 inches by Robert Lange at Indian Point. ✧

The 2020 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 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 eight of these wingshooting clinic/pheasant hunts planned during the spring and fall in 2020.

To access the 2020 IDNR Wingshooting Clinic Schedule and information on registering for clinics, go to: [www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov). For more info: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/wingshooting/Pages/default.aspx> ✧

### PA mentored youth program

To participate in the mentored youth program, adult anglers (16 years or older) must have a valid fishing license and trout permit and be accompanied by a youth. Youth anglers must obtain a free PFBC-issued permit, or a voluntary youth fishing license (only \$2.90 including all fees). 2020 PA fishing licenses can be purchased online through *The Outdoor Shop* ([www.pa.wildlifelicenses.com](http://www.pa.wildlifelicenses.com)) or by visiting more than 700 license issuing agents. ✧

## Hudson River Striped Bass Anglers: DEC needs your help

Do you fish for striped bass in the Hudson River? Whether you catch-and-release or take home a keeper, you can be part of the [Cooperative Angler Program](#). Share your fishing trip information and help biologists understand and manage our striped bass fishery.

Here's how it works: Fill out a logbook we provide or record your trips on your smartphone using [DEC's Hudson River online logbook](#) whenever you fish on the tidal Hudson River (by boat or on the 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 recreational fishery information, in addition to the latest news regarding Hudson River regulations and the river.

For more information on the angler program and instructions on installing the Survey123 App to access the online logbook, visit [Hudson River Cooperative Angler](#) or email [HUDSONANGLER@DEC.NY.GOV](mailto:HUDSONANGLER@DEC.NY.GOV).  
✧

## Spring Turkey Applications

2020 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits still available after the lottery drawings will be sold over the counter by DNR Direct license and permit vendors beginning March 10. Go to the IDNR website for more information: <https://bit.ly/396Ccmw>.  
✧

## Mark your calendar for 2020 Free Fishing Days

This year's four free fishing days are **May 3**, **June 6-7**, and **September 26**. Indiana residents do not need a fishing license or a trout stamp to fish in public waters on these days. ✧

## Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, (IN)

**May 1-3**

The annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop is May 1-3 at Ross Camp in West Lafayette, IN. The workshop is open to women ages 18 and older and is limited to 100 participants. Registration began March 1 at [IndianaBOW.com](http://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, outdoor cooking and more. ✧

Find out more >>

## Thumb-area women's turkey hunt workshop in Tuscola County,

**May 15-16**

The Michigan DNR's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program is offering a turkey hunt workshop for women in Tuscola County. The program, scheduled for the weekend of **May 15-16**, is for women with no previous turkey hunting experience or for those who would like to expand on their skills and abilities. This free Beyond BOW event will be held in Cass City and is sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation, Cabela's and Ben's Great Outdoors. Shotguns, ammunition and lunch all will be provided. However, overnight lodging will be the responsibility of the participants. Enrollment is limited to 18. Deadline for registration is May 1. Class information and registration materials are available online at [Michigan.gov/BOW](http://Michigan.gov/BOW). This will be a rain or shine event. For further information, contact Michelle Zellar at 906-293-5131, ext. 4004, Ron Sting, 989-872-5300 or email [DNRBOW@michigan.gov](mailto:DNRBOW@michigan.gov). ✧

## Genesee River angler diarists needed

New York DEC is seeking angler observations as the agency begins its angler diary program on the Genesee River in Allegany and Wyoming counties. The diarist program aims to record data for trout and bass fishing trips on the Genesee River from the PA. line downstream through Letchworth State Park between **March 1 and October 31, 2020**. Angler observations will be used by DEC to help determine future fishery management actions for the Genesee River. For more info: [data collected during the last DEC angler diary program in 2017](#) or contact DEC Region 9 office: 716-379-6379 or: [fwfish9@dec.ny.gov](mailto:fwfish9@dec.ny.gov). ✧

## Upper and Lower Lake Committee Meetings canceled due to spread of COVID-19 virus

After thorough consideration and consultation with partners, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission on March 12 announced that the 2020 Upper and Lower Lake Committee meetings have been canceled. The action is due to the concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Upper Lakes Committee meetings were scheduled to take place March 16-19 in Sioux Saint Marie, Ontario, and the Lower Lake Committee meetings were scheduled to take place March 23-26 in Hamilton, Ontario. These meetings will not be rescheduled. This is the first time Lake Committee meetings have been canceled since the committees were formed in 1965.

## Famous Last Words

There is no difference between communism and socialism, except in the means of achieving the same ultimate end: communism proposes to enslave men by force, socialism by vote. It is merely the difference between murder and suicide.

*Ayn Rand* ✧

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

**[The damage of zebra mussels](#)**

The Rome Fish Hatchery stocks brown trout and brook trout for many lakes and streams in upstate New York. The hatchery gets its water supply from Delta Lake, which is contaminated with invasive zebra mussels

**[Chicago's Navy Pier to open transient-only docks in spring 2021](#)**

A full-service marina designed specifically for transient boaters will be opening in the spring of 2021 on Chicago's Navy Pier

**[State lawmakers swim away from Lake Michigan beach use, seawall disputes](#)**

Indiana lawmakers decided against proposing controversial changes to public access to Lake Michigan shorelines and instead opted to only create legislation allowing shoreline property owners to repair or replace damaged residential structures

**[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.

End