



Inland Seas Angler

# GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT®

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## Mich and Ill sign pact on Invasive Carp Project at Brandon Road Lock/Dam *Project made possible by funding from both states as well as the Federal Government*

LANSING – The governors of Illinois and Michigan agreed to work jointly to protect the Great Lakes from invasive Asian carp species. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Gov. JB Pritzker announced an intergovernmental agreement between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) which allows Illinois to use up to \$8 million in funds appropriated in 2018 by the Michigan Legislature to support the pre-construction engineering and design (PED) phase of the Brandon Road Ecosystem Project.

Further strengthening the path forward, the State of Illinois also signed a separate PED agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the initial Brandon Road design. The

state will serve as the non-federal sponsor, agreeing to help fund design of a portion of the project and to further advance full project design efforts to approximately 30 percent completion.

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam in the Chicago Area Waterway System near Joliet, Illinois, is a critical pinch point for keeping bighead, silver and black carp—the invasive Asian carp species of greatest concern—out of the Great Lakes. The Brandon Road project would install layered technologies including an electric barrier, underwater sound, an air bubble curtain and a flushing lock in a newly engineered channel designed to prevent invasive carp movement while allowing barge passage.

"Preventing invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes was a day one

priority for my administration. We know it's been a priority for a lot of others, but we needed to take action, and that's what today's action represents," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "The Great Lakes support 1.3 million jobs, including over 350,000 jobs right here in Michigan. That's why after decades of work, today Michigan, along with the State of Illinois and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has taken a historic step towards protecting the Great Lakes from Asian carp. I am determined to continue to use every tool at my disposal to keep harmful invasive species from damaging the Great Lakes ecology and our economy."

"The Great Lakes are a priceless natural resource that support the **Pact on Invasive Carp Project**

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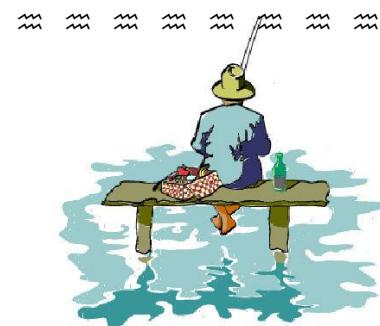
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## 2021 – A Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council Milestone Year

Help us celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Send us photos, with a short narrative, of what fishing was like in the 70s and we will publish them online and in the newsletter. What a great trip down memory lane.

2021 is a milestone year for the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council. It is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding – 50 great years of fishing, educating and serving the sportfishing conservation community.

Send photos via email to [glsfc@comcast.net](mailto:glsfc@comcast.net) or via snail mail to Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, P.O. Box 297, Elmhurst, IL 60126



## NY Bureau of Fisheries highlights and accomplishments of 2020

1. Our dedicated hatchery staff stocked over **four million** trout and salmon this spring in record time and without the help of volunteer anglers who usually assist in this effort. Wild fish egg collections were also difficult, but we worked adaptively to get the job done and even learned how we may be more efficient in the future. Our staff placed the mission first and never quit!

2. We had to cancel our fishing boat survey and prey fish assessment on Lake Ontario, but we collected biological data on salmon and trout caught during July and August to assess the age structure, growth, and condition. We also conducted a diet study to evaluate the type and size of prey fish being eaten by salmon and trout in Lake Ontario.

3. The Lake Erie creel survey was executed as planned and the fishing continued to be, well, phenomenal again this year!

4. After two and a half years of hard work we now have a [New York State Trout Stream Management Plan](#) that will guide our efforts and improve the fishing experience for a diverse trout stream angling public.

5. On the warm water side of management, the completion of a [three-year study on black bass \( largemouth and smallmouth\) in streams](#) has resulted in a proposed rulemaking that will improve management and streamline regulations. Electronic angler surveys on panfish and Oneida Lake walleye served through this newsletter helped us learn more about angler opinions on creel and size limits.

6. Caledonia Fish Hatchery, the actual birthplace of fish culture for this country, received a long-awaited and much needed renovation. The historic main hatchery building will now stand straight and support all new plumbing and rearing tanks for improved fish production.

7. We are also now in our third year of taking gametes from wild fish to improve the vigor of our brown trout

breeding stock. All indications so far are that growth and survival of the new strain in the hatchery are comparable to our current domestic Rome strain. We hope to transition to this new strain for all brown trout stocking by 2023.

8. Staff completed yet another successful sea lamprey treatment on Cayuga Inlet in 2020, ensuring that the Cayuga Lake salmonid fishery will be buffered from these predatory invasives for at least the next three years for continued top-notch fishing.

9. To the west, cisco restoration efforts continued on Keuka Lake with the stocking of 80,000 fall fingerling fish raised by the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

10. Region 5 staff completed a successful reclamation of Murphy Lake in Hamilton County as the first step in restoring the brook trout population.

11. Region 3 staff conducted a comprehensive electrofishing survey on Esopus Creek, which served as a catalyst for changing the designation of this stream from Stocked to Wild Quality, providing baseline data for a three-year evaluation of the management change.

12. Lake Erie Fisheries Unit staff completed the first-ever year-round angler survey of the upper Cattaraugus Creek watershed to estimate angler effort, catch, and harvest.

13. Two new [state records](#) (white bass, rock bass) and one state record tie (pumpkinseed) were established as part of the [Angler Achievement Awards Program](#).

14. Like many states nationwide, New York experienced an incredible surge of fishing license sales. Determining ways to retain new anglers will be a Bureau priority in 2021.

15. In an effort to encourage anglers to get out on the water while still staying safe, Fisheries staff visited over 1,300 fishing and boating access sites to post guidance related to COVID-19 spread prevention. ♦



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### Position Statement

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

## Inland Seas Angler GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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# USFWS impact statement new management program to control cormorants

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has announced action that entails the establishment of a new permit for state and federally recognized tribal fish and wildlife agencies for the management of cormorants. The need for this action is to address conflicts and economic damage associated with cormorants while addressing possible impacts on the environment.

Through public scoping and input from various federal and state agencies and the public, the Service identified key issues to consider and evaluate in the NEPA process. These issues focused on the following subject areas: (1) reduction of predation-related losses of wild and publicly stocked fisheries; (2) reduction of predation-related losses of stocks at aquaculture facilities; (3) reduction of predation-related losses of federally listed and candidate fish species; (4) reduction of the adverse effects by cormorants on habitats important to bird species of concern through habitat destruction, exclusion, and/or nest competition; (5) reduction of adverse effects on personal property and vegetation, particularly where cormorants nest; (6) reduction of adverse effects on human health and safety; (7) increasing flexibility to federal, tribal, and state agencies to address spatial and temporal complexity of conflicts; (8) ensuring the trust responsibility of the Service to maintain sustainable populations of cormorants; and (9) increasing the level of transparency and accountability of the Service's decision-making process.

This program would establish a new permit option under 50 CFR part 21 (special double-crested cormorant permit) that would be available to state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies in the 48 contiguous United States. A new permit would allow these agencies to manage conflicts associated with double-crested cormorants specifically on state or tribal-managed lands and waters in their jurisdiction. The Service may

issue a permit to reduce conflicts involving depredation at state- and tribal-owned-operated aquaculture facilities (including hatcheries); impacts to health and human safety; impacts to federally threatened and endangered species (as listed in under the Endangered Species Act, ESA) and state-listed species identified in their state- or tribal-specific legislation as threatened or endangered; species listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in State Wildlife Action Plans, where take activities to prevent depredation on aquatic Species of Greatest Conservation Need may occur only in natural or public waters; damage to state or tribal property and assets; or depredations of wild and publicly stocked fish managed by state fish and wildlife agencies or federally recognized tribes and accessible to the public and all tribal members.

Those states and tribes not wishing to obtain this new permit could apply for depredation permits (50 CFR 21.41) to address conflicts with cormorants within the scope of conflicts established in the no action alternative, which does not apply to wild or publicly stocked fisheries. Commercial aquaculture facilities experiencing conflicts associated with cormorants could continue to apply for individual depredation permits (50 CFR 21.41). The intent of this alternative is to allow state wildlife management agencies and tribes sufficient flexibility within predefined guidelines to address conflicts caused by cormorants within their respective boundaries. This new special permit would apply to any state- and tribal-owned-or-operated aquaculture facility that produces fish, or other aquatic organisms, that are susceptible to cormorant predation or impact during any stage of production, and/or immediately following release into natural or controlled environments. Under Alternative A, commercial aquaculture facilities and personal

property owners experiencing conflicts associated with cormorants would continue to apply for individual depredation permits (50 CFR 21.41).

This permit would not apply to any efforts to prevent depredation or harm to privately owned animals (e.g., hobby animals, pets or similar) that are raised free-range or otherwise released to the wild. Private landowners may apply for a depredation permit (50 CFR 21.41) to alleviate damage to some types of property (i.e., buildings and infrastructure; vehicles and equipment; some types of vegetation; and display animals, such as zoo exhibits). Under this alternative, the Service would maintain primary authority for the management of cormorant populations but would authorize the individual states and tribes to implement the provisions of this alternative within the guidelines established by the Service. The Service would expect states and tribes issued this new special permit to prioritize their allotted take to entities/instances most in need of conflict resolution, and would encourage them to conduct monitoring to assess the efficacy of control activities. States and tribes would be responsible for compiling all take they and their authorized subpermittees conduct under this special permit and report that take annually to the Service. Subpermittees may be employees of state and tribal wildlife agencies, Wildlife Services employees, and employees of federal and state agencies or private companies specializing in wildlife damage abatement and under direct control of the permittee.

Additional conditions would include restrictions on when lethal take can occur, a requirement to use lethal removal only in conjunction with an established nonlethal harassment program, and additional conditions and restrictions similar to

## New program to control cormorants

*Continued on page 11*

# 2021 Sturgeon Spearing Season Updates

**DNR Offers Drive-Thru Registration Stations; Season Opens Feb. 13**

**OSHKOSH, Wis.** – Every year, thousands flock to Lake Winnebago and Upriver Lakes to participate in the sturgeon spearing tradition. With the 2021 sturgeon spearing season fast approaching, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds both seasoned pros and first-timers that there are some important changes to this year's registration process.

The 2021 season on the Winnebago system begins **February 13** and runs a maximum of 16 days or until any pre-determined harvest caps are met.

For the upcoming sturgeon spearing season, the DNR is implementing a contactless registration process at registration stations. To ensure the safety for the public and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, all DNR registration stations are now drive-thru only and have been relocated to boat landings, city parks and government building parking lots for the 2021 season.

To help with the new registration

process, the DNR is asking speakers to place harvested sturgeon on tailgates or in an easily accessible location and remain in their vehicles throughout the registration process. This change allows the DNR to collect the critical data necessary to effectively manage the Winnebago system sturgeon fishery while keeping speakers, spectators and staff safe.

Data collected from harvested fish help implement the harvest cap system and set caps for future seasons. The DNR remains committed to returning registration station locations to local businesses for future seasons following the pandemic.

The 2021 season will also be the first year where spear size and tine arrangement will be restricted. A new regulation limits the maximum spearhead width to 18 inches, and tines can only be arranged in a single plane. Additional information can be found in the [2021 sturgeon spearing regulations](#).

Home to one of the world's largest self-sustaining lake sturgeon

populations, Wisconsin's Winnebago system has an estimated 42,000 adult lake sturgeon. Approximately 12,200 sturgeon spearing licenses were sold for the 2021 season. Harvest caps for the 2021 Winnebago system spearing season are set at 430 juvenile females, 950 adult females and 1,200 males.

Speakers must carry a paper copy of their sturgeon spearing license while spearing. A receipt of purchase, driver's license or GoWild card will not be accepted as proof of a spearing license. Any harvested sturgeon must be presented by the speaker at a DNR-operated registration station by 2 p.m. on the day the fish was speared.

To help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our communities safe and healthy, speakers and spectators are reminded to wear a mask, wash their hands, carry hand sanitizer, and stay 6 feet apart.

More information on the 2021 Winnebago system sturgeon spearing season is available [here](#). Learn more about the DNR's response to COVID-19 [here](#). ♦

## DEC to host virtual info session on Habitat Management Plans for Fish Creek, Swallow Bluffs, and Collins Landing Wildlife Management Areas, **Jan 19**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is holding a virtual public information session on Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) for Fish Creek, Swallow Bluffs, and Collins Landing Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) on **Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021** from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

"Wildlife require a variety of habitats for propagation and survival and habitat for some species changes over time. DEC manages Wildlife Management Areas to ensure these properties provide suitable habitats for wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation," said Randall Young, Region 6 Director. "We encourage residents and other stakeholders to join us for this virtual session."

The event will feature an hour-long presentation about the WMA's

history, habitat goals, and planned management actions, followed by a question-and-answer period.

**WHAT:** Virtual public information session on Habitat Management Plans for Fish Creek, Swallow Bluffs, and Collins Landing WMAs

**WHEN:** Tuesday, **Jan. 19, 2021**

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Consistent with Executive Orders issued by Governor Cuomo and in keeping with measures designed to limit the spread of COVID-19, the meetings will be conducted by teleconference. This presentation will be recorded and made available to the public after the session. [Use this link to register for the event](#) or go to any one of the WMA's listed below on DEC's website to register for the public information session.

[Fish Creek WMA](#) is located in the towns of Macomb and De Peyster, St. Lawrence County. It is 4,537 acres consisting of wetland, forest, grassland, and shrubland. It is a popular destination for hunting, trapping, fishing, and bird watching.

[Swallow Bluffs WMA](#) is located in the towns of Lisbon and Waddington, St. Lawrence County. It is 55 acres consisting of forest, grassland, and shrubland. It is a popular destination for bird watching, specifically bank swallows.

[Collins Landing WMA](#) is located in the towns of Alexandria and Orleans in Jefferson County. It is 51 acres consisting of wetland, forest, and grassland, and used as a destination for waterfowl, turkey, and deer hunting, as well as bird watching. ♦

## MN's 2020 fish stocking successful, despite challenges

Anglers can look forward to positive results from fish stocking that the Minnesota DNR conducted in 2020, despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the vast majority of fish in Minnesota waters are the result of natural reproduction in healthy habitats, stocking can provide angling opportunities where they might not otherwise exist.

"This ended up being a productive year for fish stocking even as COVID-19 changed how we performed our work," said Brian Nerbonne, DNR central region fisheries manager. "Our staff were able to find creative ways to stock fish in Minnesota waters."

In mid-April, the DNR canceled its 2020 egg collection operations for walleye, northern pike, muskellunge and steelhead because the work could not be done safely under COVID-19 guidelines.

Without its own source of newly hatched fish (known as fry), the DNR could not stock its rearing ponds where fry grow larger (into fingerlings) before being released into Minnesota's waters. But hatchery operations were able to continue with COVID protocols, and other sources of fry and fingerlings helped fill the gaps.

### Walleye stocking

Collecting walleye eggs from spawning fish in the wild is a labor-intensive effort that requires teams of six to eight people working closely together. The DNR collects and fertilizes eggs each spring to hatch, raise and then release fish either as tiny fry or larger fingerling size. These fish are then stocked in Minnesota waters that have low or no natural reproduction.

This year, instead of relying on the usual spring egg collection, the DNR was able to use fish produced from other sources. DNR fisheries crews harvested and stocked 42,000 pounds of 1-year-old walleye from rearing ponds that did not suffer winterkill in 2019. In addition, the DNR purchased about 40,000 pounds

of fingerling-sized walleye from private producers.

The White Earth Nation assisted by stocking fry and fingerlings in several Becker County lakes and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe provided walleye fry that the DNR stocked in a handful of lakes. All told, the DNR stocked over 82,000 pounds of walleye, representing about 71% of stocking originally planned for the year.

"We have reason to be grateful despite a challenging year. We appreciate the creativity of our partners and DNR staff who found ways to locate and raise fish to stock," Nerbonne said.

### Muskie work-around

Muskie stocking also helps grow populations for future angling. In a typical year, the DNR stocks about 28,000 muskie fingerlings in 35 to 40 lakes.

In late spring, Muskies Inc. chapters in the Twin Cities, north metro of the Twin Cities and Fargo Moorhead purchased year-old muskies from a private grower who had fish that survived the winter of 2019. Fish donated to the DNR grew over the summer at the DNR's Waterville hatchery, where they increased in size by another 5 inches. The DNR was able to stock about 1,370 of these larger muskies. DNR crews also harvested and stocked nearly 600 yearlings that survived the winter of 2019 in natural rearing ponds.

"The muskies grown at the hatchery had over 91% survival in ponds through the summer, which is outstanding," said Craig Soupir, the DNR's Waterville area fisheries supervisor. "And these 17-inch muskies that were stocked will provide an opportunity in the coming years for us to learn important information about yearling stocking."

The DNR expects larger fall yearlings to have higher survival rates, and by stocking them, the agency may be able to achieve population numbers similar to those reached by stocking larger numbers of small fish.

### Trout stocking continues

2020 presented little disruption to the usual stocking patterns for most trout species. Brook and brown trout, and two strains of rainbow trout, are raised using eggs and sperm from captive broodstock. The young fish are grown for several months in hatcheries, and were already growing there when the pandemic started. More than 400,000 rainbow trout, more than 40,000 each of brown trout and brook trout, 35,000 steelhead and 2,200 lake trout were stocked in lakes and rivers during the spring and summer.

Anglers curious about stocking efforts can check stocking reports for lakes across Minnesota by searching the DNR LakeFinder on the DNR's [fishing webpage](#), or by contacting a DNR [area fisheries office](#). Full information from 2020 will be available online in the future. ♦

## MN DNR reminds Ice Anglers: "Safety first"

The recommended minimum thickness for walking on new, clear ice is 4 inches. Wait for 5 to 7 inches before heading out on an ATV or snowmobile, and keep cars off until there's 8 to 12 inches. Anyone planning to drive out in a truck, should wait until there's at least 12 to 15 inches of ice. Double these minimums for white or snow-covered ice.

- Wear a life jacket or float coat on the ice (except when in a vehicle).
- Carry ice picks, rope, an ice chisel and tape measure.
- Check ice thickness at regular intervals; conditions can change quickly.
- Bring a cell phone or personal locator beacon.
- Don't go out alone; tell someone about trip plans and expected return time.

Before heading out, inquire about conditions and known hazards with local experts ♦

## **DEC launches ice fishing creel survey on Lake Champlain Surveys conducted through March 2021**

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the launch of an ice fishing creel survey that will be conducted on the New York waters of Lake Champlain starting this week through March.

"Lake Champlain is one of New York's top fishing destinations and ice fishing is a very popular component of the State's overall fishery," said Commissioner Seggos. "As such, there is a need to periodically monitor what anglers are targeting and catching so we can evaluate and adjust our management practices as needed."

This ice fishing survey is part of a larger, two-year effort to survey both ice and open water anglers. Data gathered during these surveys will serve as a baseline to help DEC Fisheries biologists better understand angler use and expectations, while also informing management actions on Lake Champlain.

The 2021 ice fishing survey will take place at four access points: Plattsburgh Boat Launch on Cumberland Bay; Willsboro Bay Boat Launch; Bulwagga Bay Campground; and South Bay Boat Launch. Anglers coming off the ice will be asked to participate by providing information about their day of fishing and allowing DEC creel agents the opportunity to collect biological data on their catch. Collected data will include target species, number caught, and size. Voluntary participation in the survey gives anglers the opportunity to contribute to future Lake Champlain management decisions.

A [copy of the Lake Champlain Ice Fishing Creel Survey plan](#) can be found on DEC's website. A report summary of the survey results will be made available later in 2021. ♦

## **Wis Walleye plan for Florence, Forest, Marinette Oconto Counties Virtual Meeting Jan. 19**

MADISON, Wis. – The DNR will host a public meeting to discuss updating the [Wisconsin Walleye Management Plan](#) for Florence, Forest, Marinette and Oconto counties. The meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 6:30 p.m. Individuals interested in walleye management for Florence, Forest, Marinette and Oconto counties and who would like to participate should contact Max Wolter at [Max.Wolter@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Max.Wolter@wisconsin.gov) or 715-634-7429. Pre-registration is required.

The current walleye management plan serves as a guide for one of the most sought-after fish species in Wisconsin and outlines seven goals and strategies for walleye management. The updating process will include a review of the existing plan, an analysis of available data and trends and significant public input on angling and management preferences.

The DNR is seeking public feedback on stocking priorities, regulation acceptance and agency resource allocation. The public is invited to give input on the process through:

- Comments on walleye management preferences and issues via this [public input form](#)
- Detailed random mail/online surveys of fishing license holders (both resident and non-resident) to scientifically gauge angler attitudes about management options
- Regional virtual meetings with stakeholder groups and individuals to discuss local management issues and partnership opportunities

Future walleye meetings for other counties are on the DNR's [public meetings calendar](#). ♦

## **Wis Walleye plan for Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Winnebago Counties Virtual Public Meeting Jan. 26**

The WI. DNR will host a public meeting to discuss updating the [Wisconsin Walleye Management Plan](#) for Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie and Winnebago counties. The meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 6:30 p.m. Anyone interested in walleye management for Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie and Winnebago counties and who would like to participate should contact Max Wolter at [Max.Wolter@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Max.Wolter@wisconsin.gov) or 715-634-7429. Pre-registration is required. ♦

## **Register for the Ontario Invasive Species Forum, March 1-4**

The Invasive Species Centre is taking the 2021 Ontario Invasive Species Forum virtual. We're looking forward to bringing invasive species partners, stakeholders and practitioners from across Ontario together to share information on the status of invasive species management.

Here's what you need to know:

- **Date:** Monday, March 1 – Thursday, March 4, 2021
- **Location:** Via GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar
- **Registration deadline:** Monday, Feb. 22, 2021

The forum features sessions about a variety of topics, including Emerging Threats, Preparing for the Future/Risk Assessment and Celebrating Successes. We also encourage you to share this event with your partners and colleagues. We're looking forward to having a broad group of participants coming together to learn and share knowledge about invasive species management.

Info:

<https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/events/ontario-invasive-species-forum/> ♦

## Fisheries staff place habitat structures in central Indiana lakes

Habitat structures are valuable not only for anglers, but also for fish. Besides being advantageous to anglers by congregating fish, structure provides food and shelter for fish. Many impoundments in Indiana have limited habitat structures due to decomposition of woody material over time and a lack of natural inputs. While Indiana is addressing these issues in larger impoundments through the [reservoir habitat improvement program](#), projects are also being undertaken at smaller public waters.

For the past two years, the central Indiana district fisheries office has improved structure in several smaller public impoundments through the placement of donated materials. To date, local home improvement stores have donated more than 300 unsold Christmas trees for use as fish structure. In 2020, these donations were used to create 72 fish habitat structures that were placed in Plover/Sandpiper pits, Stone Arch Lake, Beaver Bottom Lake, and Whitewater Lake. These repurposed Christmas trees would have gone to a landfill if they hadn't been donated, making this a win-win for business and the environment. The structures were placed near high-use bank-fishing areas, around fishing piers, and in other shallow-water areas where they can be accessed by both shore and boat anglers. Most structures are placed in 4 to 8 feet of water to provide shallow-water habitat for fish and to make the fish easy for anglers to locate.

Please note that adding fish habitat structures to public waters requires a permit in accordance with the Lake Preservation Act (Indiana Code 14-26-2) and Indiana Administrative Code (312 IAC 11-4-7). Individuals cannot place Christmas trees into public waters without a permit.

To locate a fishing area near you, see our recently updated [Where to Fish Map](#). Find info about fish habitat structures you can install at your private pond or lake on [our website](#).

## Pact on Invasive Carp Project

*Continued from page 1*

livelihoods of thousands of Illinoisans and attract visitors from across the globe. Protecting the lakes is a top priority for my administration, which is why I included funding for Asian Carp mitigation efforts in my bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I am pleased to announce this new partnership with the State of Michigan which, along with additional support from the federal government, will allow the construction of protective measures to begin at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam."

The intergovernmental agreement, finalized on December 24, supports the State of Illinois' role as the non-federal sponsor of the PED phase of this United States Army Corps of Engineers project and outlines a collaboration process allowing MDNR's input in decision-making regarding the design work.

The PED, finalized by both the State of Illinois and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on December 29, stipulates Illinois cover 35%, of the projected PED costs. With Michigan's \$8 million financial commitment through the intergovernmental agreement, IDNR will contribute the remaining \$2.5 million to complete the project. The funding was made possible by Governor Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois bipartisan capital plan.

"Michigan and Illinois agree on the importance of keeping invasive carp out of the Great Lakes, and natural resources staff from both states have been working together to support the Army Corps' actions to deter and remove invasive carp in the waterway," said MDNR Director Dan Eichinger. "This agreement is the natural progression of our existing partnership as we take steps toward a more permanent solution to prevent this serious threat to the economy and ecology of the Great Lakes." (*cont →*)

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Have questions about fishing or fisheries management near you? Contact your [district fisheries biologist](#). ♦

"Long in planning, we're pleased to finally put these agreements into action, allowing us to move the project to its next steps—planning and design—and, ultimately, construction," said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan. "While the process is still in its early stages, we're pleased to be a part of this partnership and look forward to sharing updates with other Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces throughout the design process."

It is predicted that the arrival of live bighead, silver or black carp in the Great Lakes could have drastic effects on the region's \$7 billion fishery, \$16 billion boating industry and other tourism-based industries, property owners, recreationalists and others dependent on the Great Lakes and its tributaries.

An electric dispersal barrier installed in the waterway near Romeoville, Illinois in 2002 to prevent invasive species from moving into and out of the Great Lakes has since been supplemented by two additional electric barriers in the same location. A fourth more powerful barrier at the Romeoville site is expected to be operational in 2021.

Once federal funding is secured through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Work Plan, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers anticipates a three to four-year timeframe for completing the initial Brandon Road design before negotiating a Project Partnership Agreement with the State of Illinois (supported by other Great Lakes States and Provinces) for the initial construction effort and the remainder of project design to reduce the possibility of invasive carp migration into Lake Michigan.

As the Brandon Road project moves forward, current efforts will continue, including the electric barriers near Romeoville and expanded nonstructural measures, including focused commercial fishing, monitoring and prescribed netting to reduce the risk of spawning or of small fish movement through the existing lock and dam.

For more information: [MVR.USACE.Army.mil/GLMRIS-BR](http://MVR.USACE.Army.mil/GLMRIS-BR) ♦

## Wisconsin provides Chinook salmon eggs for Indiana's stocking program

The Indiana DNR recently received 168,000 Chinook salmon eggs thanks to a partnership with the Wisconsin DNR.

Chinook salmon are highly prized by anglers, and the species makes up a significant portion of the fish stocked into Indiana's Lake Michigan waters. Indiana does not have the infrastructure to spawn Chinook salmon, so the DNR relies on partners in other states for eggs.

Kept at Mixsawbah State Fish Hatchery, the Chinook eggs will be hatched and raised until spring 2021, when fingerlings will be stocked.

"Partnerships are crucial for our Lake Michigan program, and we're very grateful to Wisconsin DNR for going above and beyond to get these eyed eggs," said Rob Ackerson, hatchery manager at Mixsawbah State Fish Hatchery.

Hatchery managers refer to newly fertilized eggs as green eggs. Several weeks after fertilization, the eyes of the salmon embryo become visible, signaling the egg is viable. At that point, the eggs are referred to as eyed eggs.

Although Wisconsin harvested enough green eggs to meet Indiana's egg request, an unusually low number of viable eggs has resulted in shortages. Wisconsin was only able to provide Indiana with enough eyed eggs to meet just over half of Indiana's production goal of 225,000 Chinook salmon. By the time the poor eye-up was determined, it was too late to obtain more eggs from any source, because the Chinook spawning run had ended.

"While we're disappointed to not have our full complement of Chinooks for the 2021 stocking year, we'll continue to roll with the punches this unpredictable year has delivered," said Ben Dickinson, Lake Michigan biologist for Indiana DNR. "We will (*cont→*)

## MN DNR seeking applicants for Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee

The Minnesota DNR is seeking applications from Minnesota residents interested in serving on the statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee. Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. **Friday, Jan. 22**. The DNR established the advisory committee in 2013 to help guide the agency's AIS prevention and management activities. Members provide advice and diverse perspectives to the DNR invasive species program.

Committee members consider programmatic direction, emerging research needs, communications and funding strategies. The committee meets eight times a year either online or in a central Minnesota location. Due to COVID-19, meetings are currently being held using an online format. The AIS Advisory Committee is a core element of the DNR's partnership approach to addressing aquatic invasive species. The committee comprises 15 members. The DNR is seeking three new members to join the committee, with term lengths of three years.

Advisory committee members can expect to spend between 6-16 hours per-month preparing for and attending meetings during their three-year terms.

**How to apply** - The DNR is accepting applications [online](#). Advisory committee data are classified as private under state law, except for what is specifically listed in statute as public. For more information, contact [Heidi Wolf](#). ♦

make Indiana's Lake Michigan fishery the best we can with the cards we're dealt."

For more information about Mixsawbah State Fish Hatchery, visit [wildlife.IN.gov/5465.htm](#).

More information about Lake Michigan fishing is at [wildlife.IN.gov/3625.htm](#). ♦

## DEC seeks circle hook requirement for recreational striped bass fishing season



DEC has released a new proposed regulation for public review and comment that would require the use of circle hooks when recreational fishing for Atlantic striped bass. This proposed regulation would reduce release mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries as required by the [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#) (ASMFC). Catch-and-release practices contribute significantly to overall fishing mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries and circle hooks work effectively to increase survival. The Atlantic coast-wide harvest of [Atlantic striped bass](#) is managed by ASMFC.

DEC is accepting public comments on the proposal through **March 8, 2021**. The proposed regulation includes all New York State waters where recreational fishing for Atlantic striped bass occurs, including coastal waters of Long Island and New York City, the Delaware River, and the Hudson River to the Federal Dam in Troy, New York. The full text of the proposed regulation can be found on [DEC's website](#).

Comments on the proposed circle hook regulation should be sent by **March 8, 2021** to [fw.marine@dec.ny.gov](mailto:fw.marine@dec.ny.gov) or by mail to: Division of Marine Resources, 205 N. Belle Mead Rd. Suite 1, East Setauket, NY 11733. After reviewing public comments, DEC will be adopting and publishing a final regulation. The [open seasons and size limits](#) striped bass in all New York waters have not changed for 2021. ♦

## New WI lake trout bag limit for Lake Michigan

The Wisconsin DNR re-implemented a lake trout bag limit and season for Lake Michigan beginning January 1, 2021. The new bag limit and season mirrors previous lake trout regulations. The season will now run from March 1 to October 31 with a new daily bag limit of two lake trout. The DNR assessed the regulations from 2017 through 2019. Although 2020 data has yet to be tabulated, the data indicates that sport angler lake trout harvest did not increase significantly.

There is no indication that new regulations would negatively impact Lake Michigan lake trout populations. Based on the positive Lake Michigan lake trout data and continued stakeholder support for revised lake trout regulations, the DNR will be pursuing permanent regulations for lake trout, including a continuous year-round open season and a daily bag limit of five lake trout. The pursuit of revised Lake Michigan lake trout regulations will occur in early 2021, and if approved, would be implemented by the summer of 2021. However, until permanent regulations are developed, an open season from March 1 to October 31 and a daily bag limit of two lake trout will be implemented on January 1, 2021. Contact: Brad Eggold, DNR Great Lakes District Fisheries Supervisor ♦

## DEC comments on Trout Stream Fishing Regs must be received by Jan 25th

There is still time to comment on the proposed fishing regulations for inland trout streams in New York. Anglers can find the text of the regulations and instructions for submitting comments on DEC's [website](#). DEC will accept public comments on the proposed rule changes through January 25, 2021. ♦

## Bald eagle successfully recovered in Indiana

The bald eagle is officially recovered in the state of Indiana. The bald eagle was previously listed as a species of special concern. In 2020, DNR biologists estimated Indiana supported about 300 nesting pairs across 84 counties. DNR reintroduced bald eagles to the state from 1985–1989, an effort funded by the [Indiana Nongame Wildlife Fund](#). In just 35 years, bald eagles went from nonexistent on the Hoosier landscape to a thriving population statewide. The recovery of the bald eagle is one of the greatest conservation success stories in Indiana. ♦

## WI Free Fishing Weekend Jan 16-17

Anglers of all ages are encouraged to explore the outdoors during Free Fishing Weekend. You can fish almost anywhere in Wisconsin without a license or trout stamp January 16-17, 2021. Most Wisconsin waters are included in this event, except for spring ponds. Before you go, review information about the [early trout season](#) and the [trout regulations](#). If you see a season date listed for a specific body of water, you're free to fish there, although some waters may be catch-and-release only. All other inland waters and Wisconsin's side of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River are open for you to test your skills and try your luck. Remember: All [regulations](#) and [seasonal restrictions](#) are still in force. Looking for kid-friendly fishing locations? [Check out our guide](#). ♦

### ☞ THINK ABOUT IT ☞

Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies.

Groucho Marx

It's easy to stand with a crowd; it takes courage to stand alone.

## Minnesotans fish free with kids Jan. 16-18

Take a Kid Ice Fishing Weekend is January 16 - Jan. 18.

During the weekend, Minnesota residents age 16 or older can fish or dark-house spear without an angling or spearing license if they take a child younger than 16 fishing or spearing. "Ice fishing is lots of fun and is another way to enjoy the outdoors," said Benji Kohn, volunteer mentor program coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "If you're looking to start ice fishing, check out our helpful information online." Check the DNR's [learn to ice fish page](#) for more information about ice fishing. ♦

## 2021 IN state park passes and permits now available

The 2021 Indiana state park passes, lake permits, off-road cycling permits, and horse tags are now available at property offices and front gates, and [online](#). A resident annual entrance pass costs \$50. A non-resident annual entrance pass for visitors who live outside the state costs \$70. Golden Hoosier Passports cost \$25 and are available to all Hoosier residents 65 and older. ♦

## Winter Special: 2 nights for 1 at State Park Inns

Winter is a great time to visit the beauty of the parks and enjoy savings at the Inns. From lodge rooms to cabins, inns offer accommodations located in the most beautiful places in Indiana. Turkey Run, Abe Martin Lodge, and Potawatomi Inn offer cabins as well as lodge rooms. Stay two nights for the price of one, Sunday–Thursday only, January 3 through February 25, 2021. Call and reserve at 1.877.LODGES1. ♦

# New Smelt Consumption Advisory for Lake Superior

## Elevated levels of PFAS found in rainbow smelt

**MADISON, Wis.** – Based on recent sampling results, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) are recommending a PFAS-based fish consumption advisory for Lake Superior. Due to the high levels of PFOS found in the samples, the DNR and DHS are updating the recommended rainbow smelt consumption advisory from an unrestricted amount to one meal per month for Lake Superior.

The sampling completed by the DNR found elevated levels of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), particularly the compound PFOS, in rainbow smelt in Lake Superior. PFAS are a group of over 5,000 human-made chemicals used for decades in numerous products, including non-stick cookware, fast food wrappers and stain-resistant sprays.

These legacy contaminants have made their way into the environment in a variety of ways, including spills of PFAS-containing materials, discharges of PFAS-containing wastewater to treatment plants and certain types of firefighting foams.

The risk of health problems increases with the amount of contaminated fish you eat. Following this advisory will help protect you from excess PFAS exposure found in fish. The advisory could change in the future as the DNR and DHS continue to learn more about the health risks from eating fish caught from this area and more fish data become available. As part of the DNR's statewide PFAS monitoring efforts to monitor fish tissue and water chemistry at select sites around the state, smelt were collected from two locations in Lake Superior in 2019 approximately 30 miles apart at sites near the Apostle Islands and off Port Wing. PFAS was detected in samples from both locations.

Rainbow smelt are a small, silver fish that are non-native to Lake Superior. Some anglers will catch smelt through the ice, but the majority of smelt harvest occurs in the springtime as the fish migrate into nearshore areas to spawn. “The smelt migration run starts as spring arrives and winter ice cover dissipates which creates a popular local tradition of harvesting smelt for fish fries,” said Brad Ray, Lake Superior Fisheries Unit Supervisor. “It’s important for consumers to understand the potential risks associated with this new advisory.”

### Fish Tissue Results

In mid-December, the DNR received results from the contaminant samples taken from Lake Superior. Rainbow smelt, a popular sport fish and prey species for many predator fish and various bird species, had a high level of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate), one of the many types of PFAS contaminants.

“Eating fish that have high levels of PFAS may increase your risk for certain health effects,” said Dr. Jonathan Meiman, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Occupational and Environmental Health at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. “Limiting your exposure by choosing fish that are low in PFAS is the best way to reduce your risk while still maintaining the health benefits of fish consumption.”

Some health risks associated with PFOS, one of the thousands of PFAS compounds, include lower birth weight, possible links to increased risk of kidney and testicular cancer, harm to the immune and reproductive systems, increased cholesterol levels, and altered hormone regulation and thyroid hormones.

The DNR also received sample results from bloater chub, cisco/lake herring, lake whitefish, lake trout, and

siscowet lake trout in Lake Superior and crappie, yellow perch, channel catfish, carp, northern pike, walleye, and musky from the St. Louis River. The PFOS levels found in those fish do not warrant a [consumption advisory](#) change at this time.

Currently, the DNR and DHS are unaware of any other PFAS-based consumption advisories for other fish species in the Great Lakes. For consumption advice for other Great Lakes fish species based on toxic substances, such as PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) or mercury, please refer to the [statewide safe-eating guidelines](#). Additional consumption advice can be found on the DNR's [fish consumption webpage](#).

To learn more about PFAS and fish, visit the DNR's [PFAS webpage](#). For more information on PFAS and associated human health effects, visit the [DHS's PFAS webpage](#). ♦

## Comment period open for draft Sunfish and Crappie Management Plan

If you've ever fished for bluegill, pumpkinseed or crappie, you know that not only are they fun to catch, but also that they make an excellent meal. What if you had the opportunity to catch even bigger sunfish and crappie (think dinner plate size)? DEC just released a draft sunfish and crappie management plan that seeks to provide better angling opportunities by adjusting daily harvest and minimum size limits. This draft plan is based on recent research and an online angler survey that indicated support for more conservative sunfish fishing regulations.

The draft plan is available on DEC's [website](#), and DEC will accept public comments through **February 15, 2021**. ♦

## New program to control cormorants

*Continued from page 3*

all alternatives (use of nontoxic shot, decoys, use of nonlethal methods, protection measures for co-nesting species and non-target species, and additional protection 5 measures for cormorant chicks). In addition, states and tribes applying for the first time must consult with Wildlife Services for an assessment of the appropriate

level of take and provide recommendations of short-term measures to provide relief from depredation and long-term measures to help eliminate or significantly reduce the problem. Lastly, to minimize risks to co-nesting species that look similar to double-crested cormorants (e.g., neotropic cormorants, great cormorants, and anhingas), the Service would require states and tribes to report any other species of bird taken accidentally due to double-crested

cormorant management activities under this permit, along with the numbers of birds of each species taken. The Service would use this data to better track accidental take of these species when take of cormorants occurs, and recommend appropriate actions such as additional training of personnel, or avoiding areas where there is a high concentration of non-target species in the area. ♦



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

### Commercial fishermen sue Michigan over new restrictions

Many complain Michigan's new restrictions on commercial fishing would shut down their businesses. The state supplies much of the Great Lakes' whitefish, and there are warnings of looming shortages

### Ontario First Nation hopes new funding will end some water advisories

The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation is expanding its water system to deliver clean drinking water to hundreds of residents who have been grappling for more than a decade with seven drinking water safety advisories

### Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding hikes guaranteed through 2026

A bill has extended the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through 2026, a program which was previously set to end at 2021. The bill will increase the program's current funding level from \$300 million to \$375 million in the next

### Efforts to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes move forward under new agreements

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has signed an agreement with the State of Illinois to begin early work on an \$858 million project to prevent the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes

### Governor signs Lake Erie water quality bill

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine on Wednesday signed into law a bill to put in place a structure to monitor and coordinate various programs designed to fight toxic algal growth in Lake Erie and problems in other Ohio waters

### President signs Great Lakes mapping bill into law

The legislation prioritizes and updates federal maps used to respond to emergencies and protect habitats, species and structures along the Great Lakes that are most likely to be impacted by a potential oil spill or other major disaster.

### A once-bountiful fish was wiped out of Michigan. Now, researchers think they can bring it back

For decades, researchers have been trying to bring back the arctic grayling to Michigan without success. Now, more than 50 collaborators think bringing back the arctic grayling has a shot at success

### Gloves come off in fight over commercial fishing in Michigan

The few commercial fishing businesses that remain in Michigan are suing the state's Department of Natural Resources over changes to industry rules, stating that the new provisions will make commercial fishing all but