



## DNR drafts walleye management plan for inland waters



A healthy, abundant walleye population is a big part of Michigan's fisheries. These native fish provide exciting opportunities for world-class

recreational fishing and play an important ecological role as a top predator. Though several local, regional and Great Lakes-centric walleye plans exist, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has drafted the first statewide walleye plan focused on inland waters.

Seth Herbst, the DNR's aquatic species and regulatory affairs manager, is leading the initiative. He said this draft plan was developed to guide the department's management effort toward maximizing both angler satisfaction and the ecological benefits of walleye fisheries.

"Walleye is a high-priority species for management in Michigan because of its ecological, social and cultural significance," Herbst said. "Walleye fishing is a big draw for anglers."

Although walleye reside in the Great Lakes, rivers and inland lakes, Herbst said this draft plan takes a narrow focus on inland waters—primarily inland lakes—because the walleye management in those other bodies of water is primarily addressed in various other existing management or rehabilitation plans.

The new walleye management plan for inland waters aims to provide an overview of:

- The status of the species in Michigan.
- The biology and ecology of inland walleye populations.
- Angler perceptions about walleye management and fishing opportunities.

### Walleye Management Plan

*Continued on page x*

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## So. Lake Michigan Regional Fishery Workshop

**April 22, 2021, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**  
to registrants on the morning of April 22

Zoom linked will be emailed  
[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Registration is now open for the 2021 Southern Lake Michigan Fishery Workshop. The workshop will include presentations from biologists, educators, and fishery managers with Michigan DNR, USFWS, MSU and Michigan Sea Grant. Topics will include salmon and trout diets, updates on stocking levels, and other fishery management issues. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions through the Q&A box on Zoom via computer.

**Deadline to register is Wednesday, April 21.**Contact: Katelyn Brolick at [brolickk@msu.edu](mailto:brolickk@msu.edu)

**7 p.m. Introduction and Michigan Sea Grant Updates**  
**Dan O'Keefe – SW District Educator, Michigan Sea Grant**

**7:10 p.m. Great Lakes Mass Marking Program**

**Matt Kornis – Fish Biologist, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

**7:40 p.m. Huron-Michigan Predator Diet Study**

**Brian Roth – Associate Professor, MSU (Tentative)**

**8:20 p.m. Harvest Limits and Other Management Updates**

**Jay Wesley – Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator, MDNR**

**8:40 p.m. Multispecies-Predator Prey Ratio Project**

**Kelly Robinson – Assistant Professor, MSU**

**9 p.m. Adjourn ♦**

# DEC announces finalization of trout stream regulations

*Took effect on April 1 for 2021 Trout Opener*



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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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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the finalization of new trout stream regulations that took effect on April 1, 2021, and help improve the management of inland trout streams across the state. The new regulations support the objectives of the five management categories of DEC's [Trout Stream Management Plan](#) and significantly increase trout stream angling opportunities by allowing fishing year-round. In addition, DEC launched a new interactive [Trout Stream Fishing Map](#) to provide anglers with information about how and where to find their preferred type of trout angling opportunities.

"These newly finalized trout stream regulations will help DEC implement our ongoing approach to trout stream management, which is based in science and developed transparently with public input," Commissioner Seggos said. "These regulations not only extend fishing opportunities, but also balance the desires of New York State's diverse trout stream anglers with our responsibility to manage these resources to their fullest ecological and recreational potential. And the new interactive Trout Stream Fishing Map launched recently adds to the incredible resources available on the DECInfo Locator, making it easier than ever before to access information about New York's outdoor resources."

The Trout Stream Management Plan's categories, objectives, and strategies were developed to achieve outcomes identified by a diverse audience of anglers that participated in more than 20 public meetings held

across the state. These changes also reflect DEC's continuing efforts to simplify regulations whenever possible to make fishing more accessible and enjoyable. The rulemaking eliminates more than 20 types of special regulations associated with trout stream reaches, reducing 26 regulations to four, while sustaining a consistent level of resource protection.

The new regulations are:

- Daily creel limit of five trout per day with no more than two longer than 12 inches statewide and for reaches categorized as Wild or Stocked in effect from April 1 through October 15;
- Daily creel limit of three trout per day with no more than one longer than 12 inches for reaches designated as Wild-Quality or Stocked-Extended in effect from April 1 through October 15;
- Daily creel limit of one trout per day, any size, for reaches designated as Wild-Premier in effect from April 1 through October 15; and
- Creation of a statewide catch-and-release trout season in effect from October 16 to March 31. During this period anglers are restricted to artificial lures only and must promptly release all trout caught.

Some exceptions apply for certain stream reaches. The new 2021 fishing regulations guide lists the new regulations with descriptions of the applicable stream reaches. A listing of how publicly accessible trout stream reaches are categorized is also available in DEC's [Categorization of New York State Trout Stream Reaches \(PDF\)](#), available at DEC's website. ✧

## DNR adjusts how married anglers and hunters buy combination licenses

Both members of married couples who want to purchase a combination angling or hunting license in person will need to be present at the sales location starting February 18, when the Minnesota DNR began requiring both spouses to provide and verify their own complete customer records on file to purchase a combination license.

“These changes will bring the DNR into compliance with state and federal laws that require collecting this information for angling or hunting license sales,” said Steve Michaels, licensing program director. “The information helps prevent licenses being sold to people with violations or unpaid fines.”

Customers will continue to pay the same price for combination licenses, which are discounted compared with purchasing two individual licenses.

When purchasing a combination license in person, both spouses must be present, and, if age 21 or older, also must provide their current Minnesota driver’s licenses or identification

cards. If both spouses are not present, the person present may purchase their part of the license and their spouse may obtain their license at a later date at no additional charge.

If a spouse does not have a record on file with the DNR, that spouse can create one with their full name, birth date, social security number. If they are a Minnesota resident age 21 or older, they also will need a current Minnesota driver’s license or current Minnesota identification card. They can create their record anywhere DNR licenses are sold, or call the DNR license center at 877-348-0498 or 651-297-1230 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. New resident customer records for people age 21 and over cannot be created online.

“Thank you to all our license purchasers for patience adjusting to these changes and for buying a license,” Michaels said. “Your license dollars pay for a great deal of DNR conservation work and leverage more federal funding that supports hunting and fishing opportunities and habitat work.”

The DNR offers the following married combination licenses:

- Angling, valid for fishing.
- Conservation angling, valid for half the possession limit, per spouse.
- Sports, valid for fishing for both spouses and small game hunting for one spouse.
- Super Sports, valid for fishing for both spouses, small game for one spouse, includes two state trout stamps, and waterfowl and pheasant stamps for one spouse. It also offers the choice of a firearm, archery or muzzleloader deer license for one spouse.
- Family nonresident angling, valid for one or both parents and dependent children under age 16.

More information about purchasing licenses, including license agent locations, is available on the [DNR website](#). Questions about licenses can be directed to the DNR Information Center at 888-646-6367, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, or via email at [info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us) ✧

## DEC has new opportunity for Youth Hunters

New York DEC announced a new opportunity for young hunters. The State Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget signed by Gov. Cuomo includes legislation that now allows youths ages 12 and 13 to hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow under the supervision of an experienced adult hunter in upstate counties that opt-in to participate.

Deer hunting is a valued tradition for many families that provides millions of pounds of quality food to New Yorkers while reducing the negative impacts of abundant deer populations on agriculture, forests, and communities. This new opportunity allows experienced, adult hunters to introduce the value of hunting to the next generation. Teaching these young people safe, responsible, and ethical hunting practices will ensure a rewarding experience every time they are afield. I encourage all upstate

counties to consider 'opting-in' to support New York's young hunters and their potential contributions to deer management.

For nearly two decades, youth aged 12 and 13 in New York have been safely hunting deer and bear with archery equipment and small game with firearms. Until now, New York was the only state that didn't allow 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt big game with a firearm. Environmental Conservation Law 11-0935 is a temporary measure that will pilot lowering the age through 2023, including the following provisions:

- Allows 12- and 13-year-old licensed hunters to hunt deer with a rifle, shotgun, or muzzleloading firearm in areas these firearms may be used during hunting season;
- Allows 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt deer with a crossbow during

the times when other hunters may use crossbows;

- Requires youth hunters to be supervised by licensed adult hunters at all times; and
- Requires the youth hunter and adult mentor to wear fluorescent orange or pink clothing and to remain at ground level while hunting deer with a crossbow, rifle, shotgun, or muzzleloader.

The legislation requires each county to "opt-in" to the program by adopting a local law allowing for 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt deer in accordance with ECL 11-0935. The legislation specifically excludes Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, and Westchester counties from the new program. DEC is [developing a new webpage listing counties that opt-in to participate](#). ✧

## DNR working with multiple agencies to remove invasive carp from Mississippi River

### First time for new method in Wisconsin/Minnesota waters

**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin DNR and neighboring state and federal agencies conducted an intensive invasive carp removal effort in Pool 8 of the Mississippi River near La Crosse beginning April 5. The innovative Modified Unified Method (MUM) combines netting and herding techniques to drive and concentrate invasive carp from a large area of water into a small zone for removal.

This is the first time MUM has been used in Wisconsin or Minnesota waters, including the first time it has been used anywhere across the country as an early detection and rapid response technique. The DNR worked with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), which lead the operation, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



This MUM exercise is part of a response to 39 silver carp and 12 grass carp that were captured in Pool 8 in March 2020. The goal was to remove invasive carp present in Pool 8, curb the potential for invasive carp reproduction and to prevent their establishment in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The operation also yielded more detailed information about any current invasive carp presence in Pool 8.

“Our expectation is that this innovative and aggressive approach will not only remove invasive carp from this area, but also help develop the technique for early detection and rapid response to any new invasions,” said Carli Wagner, MNDNR Invasive

Species Specialist. “Through this highly collaborative joint operation, we’re filling a gap in the toolbox for invasive carp response efforts.”

This thorough search and removal effort lasted 10 days. Progressive areas of Pool 8 were closed for one to three days during this time, temporarily suspending commercial fishing and recreational use of portions of Pool 8. The operation paused Saturday and Sunday due to typically higher weekend boat traffic.

“We contacted commercial fishing operations and others who might be affected, with the mutual understanding that this temporary inconvenience will provide long-term benefits to the watershed, native species, commercial and recreational fishing, businesses and others in this part of the Mississippi River,” said Ben Larson, MNDNR Invasive Carp Field Lead.

In the Modified Unified Method developed by the USGS, block nets are used to create compartments or “cells” from which the fish can be driven. The USGS then uses electrofishing boats and boats outfitted with underwater speakers to herd carp from each cell. When a cell is cleared, another net is used to close the cell and prevent the fish from returning. This process is repeated one cell at a time, gradually reducing the area available to the carp and concentrating the fish into a harvest removal area, where a large commercial seine will be used to draw out the congregated fish. Native fish do not seem to respond in the same way, preferring to hide, rather than run, from the sound stimulus.

Five invasive carp previously tagged with acoustic transmitters complemented this effort by increasing effectiveness at targeting fish in Pool 8 and providing insights into their movements and other behaviors.

The DNR and other agencies will report the results when the operation and follow-up analyses are complete.

Do your part to help prevent the spread of [invasive aquatic species](#). Invasive carp captures must be reported to the DNR immediately. If you believe you have captured an invasive carp, please put it on ice and send a picture of the carp to Jordan Weeks, DNR Mississippi River Fisheries Biologist, at [Jordan.Weeks@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jordan.Weeks@wisconsin.gov) or 608-386-0970.

More information about [invasive carp](#) is available on the [DNR's invasive carp webpage](#). ✧

## Manage conflict with Canada geese



Most Canada goose conflicts occur during the nesting season from

March to June when they defend their nests. If a goose is expressing aggressive behavior (head pumping, hissing, honking, or flapping its wings), calmly leave the area while giving the bird and its nest space. Managing Canada goose eggs and nests can limit the number of Canada geese produced after nesting. If a Canada goose nest does not have eggs or birds in it, it can be destroyed at any time without a federal permit. Once eggs have been laid, you must first register with the USFWS [here](#) before taking action.

Remember, efforts to deter Canada geese will not be effective if supplemental foods such as bread or birdseed are provided. Habitat changes should be implemented prior to goose arrival to prevent future conflicts. ✧

## DEC Net Pen-Rearing Projects for Atlantic Salmon

*Following success of net pen programs for other species, DEC anticipates increased survival of stocked smolts in Lakes Champlain and Ontario*

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the deployment of two new pen-rearing projects for Atlantic salmon to begin this spring. To improve post-stocking survival and imprinting to the stocked water, experimental Atlantic salmon pen-rearing projects will be conducted in the Saranac River estuary in Lake Champlain and in the Salmon River in Lake Ontario. DEC is partnering with the Lake Champlain Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Plattsburgh Boat Basin on the Saranac River project and partnering with the Tug Hill/Black River Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Salmon River Lighthouse and Marina on the Salmon River project.

"Atlantic salmon are a highly prized sport fish," said Commissioner Seggos. "Working with our partners from Trout Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DEC hopes to increase the survival of stocked salmon smolts for greater returns of adults to tributaries for improved angling opportunities and spawning in these two major fisheries. I want to personally thank Trout Unlimited for helping make this possible as TU will be doing the day-to-day work to feed and care for these fish while they are in the pens."

Pen-rearing is a process in which young salmon (smolts) are stocked into net pens and held at the stocking site. At this life stage, the salmon will imprint on the river water and prepare to out-migrate to the lake system. The Trout Unlimited chapters will feed and care for the fish for approximately three weeks prior to release. DEC has been partnering with volunteer groups to pen-rear Chinook salmon and steelhead in Lake Ontario and Lake Erie for more than 20 years, and this method has improved the survival and imprinting for both species. This announcement is the first project to test if pen-rearing can have a similar

beneficial impact on stocked Atlantic salmon.

**Andrew Milliken, Project Leader and Complex Manager for Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office** said, "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service looks forward to working with DEC, Trout Unlimited and the Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative on this cutting edge project in the Saranac River to learn and improve returns of landlocked salmon to Lake Champlain tributaries, enhance tributary fisheries and increase natural reproduction."

**Rich Redman, President of Trout Unlimited Lake Champlain Chapter** said, "Landlocked Salmon are our chapter's priority. This is one step to restore wild Atlantic salmon to the Saranac River. Now is the time to restore the river habitat itself, to allow the cold water species like salmon to once again thrive."

**Wayne Weber, President of Trout Unlimited Tug Hill/Black River Chapter** said, "The Salmon River provides one of the most diverse angling opportunities in our region. Currently Atlantic salmon are a small portion of that opportunity. We are hoping the pen rearing project will provide greater returns to Salmon River therefore increasing the angler's chance of success."

Each project will compare two lots of Atlantic salmon smolts to evaluate the effectiveness of pen-rearing as a stocking method. One lot of Atlantic salmon will be stocked into net pens and held for approximately three weeks prior to release. A second lot will be directly stocked into the water at the same site when the smolts are released from the pens. A comparison of returns between the two stocking methods will determine if pen-rearing results in greater survival and homing than conventional, direct stocking.

For more information about salmon in New York State, visit DEC's

[Salmon](#) and [Atlantic salmon](#) websites. ✧

## DNR's walleye egg collection on Muskegon River

Muskegon River anglers may have noticed Michigan DNR personnel collecting walleye eggs below Croton Dam this spring. Electrofishing boats started, March 25, and concluded April 16.

"The annual Muskegon River egg take is a critical operation for state-wide walleye management," said Jim Dexter, DNR Fisheries Division chief. DNR estimated collecting about 32 million walleye eggs during this effort.

That collective egg take will result in fry (fish that have just hatched) for transfer to rearing ponds and direct fry plants throughout the Lower Peninsula. Walleye fry transferred to ponds will be raised to fingerling size (approximately 1.5 to 2.5 inches) and stocked in late spring or early summer in lakes and rivers throughout the state.

Lake Michigan and many inland lake walleye populations in the Lower Peninsula depend on the fingerlings produced from Muskegon River eggs. The size of the walleye spawning run in the Muskegon River is about 40,000 to 50,000 fish each year. DNR crews will strip milt (sperm) and eggs from approximately 500 adult fish, which will be returned to the river—except for 60, which will be sent to Michigan State University for fish health testing.

"This adult population consists of mostly stocked fish," said Ed Pearce, DNR fisheries technician supervisor who coordinates the egg take. "The Muskegon River has the largest run of walleye in the Lake Michigan watershed south of Green Bay."

Learn more about [how the DNR manages Michigan's fisheries](#) at [Michigan.gov/Fishing](#). ✧

## DNR says fish kills may be common during spring thaw



After ice and snow cover melt on Michigan lakes this early spring, it may be more likely for people to discover dead fish or other aquatic animals. While such sights can be startling, the Department of Natural Resources reminds everyone that it is normal, since winter conditions can cause fish and other creatures such as turtles, frogs, toads and crayfish to die.

"Winterkill is the most common type of fish kill," said Gary Whelan, DNR Fisheries Division research manager. "As the season changes, it can be particularly common in shallow lakes, ponds, streams and canals. These kills are localized and typically do not affect the overall health of the fish populations or fishing quality."

Shallow lakes with excess aquatic vegetation and soft bottoms are more prone to this problem, particularly

when a deep snowpack reduces sunlight for the plants. Canals in urban areas also are susceptible due to the large amounts of nutrient runoff and pollution from roads and lawns and septic systems that flow into these areas, especially from large storm events.

Fish and other aquatic life typically die in late winter but may not be noticed until a month after the ice leaves lakes. That's because the dead fish and other aquatic life are temporarily preserved by the cold water. Fish also may be affected by rapid changes in water temperature due to unseasonably warm temperatures leading to stress and, sometimes, mortality. That could be the case this year with the record or near-record cold temperatures and large snowfalls Michigan experienced this month and any rapid warming in the coming months.

Fish can become easily stressed in winter due to low energy reserves because feeding is at a minimum in winter. They are then less able to handle low oxygen and temperature swings.

"Winterkill begins with distressed fish gasping for air at holes in the ice and often ends with large numbers of dead fish that bloat as the water

warms," Whelan said. "Dead fish and other aquatic life may appear fuzzy because of secondary infection by fungus, but the fungus was not the cause of death. The fish actually suffocated from a lack of dissolved oxygen from decaying plants and other dead aquatic animals under the ice."

Dissolved oxygen is required by fish and all other forms of aquatic life. Once daylight is greatly reduced by ice and snow cover, aquatic plants stop producing oxygen and many die. The bacteria that decompose organic materials on the bottom of the lake use the remaining oxygen in the water. Once the oxygen is reduced and other aquatic animals die and start decomposing, the rate that oxygen is used for decomposition is additionally increased — that means that dissolved oxygen levels in the water decrease even further, leading to increasing winterkill.

For more info on fish kills in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/Fishing](https://www.michigan.gov/Fishing). The public is welcome to report fish kills at [Michigan.gov/EyesInTheField](https://www.michigan.gov/EyesInTheField); such reports are valuable to the DNR's ability to manage the state's aquatic resources. If you suspect a fish kill is due to non-natural causes, call the [nearest DNR office](#) or Michigan's Pollution Emergency Alert System at 800-292-4706. ✧

## Top Sportfishing Equipment Brands in 2020

Record numbers of Americans enjoyed the outdoors amid the pandemic in 2020, contributing to an increase in purchases of fishing equipment. Southwick Associates has identified the top brands in the market for 2020 based on more than 8,000 surveys completed by anglers through the Southwick Associates' AnglerSurvey online consumer panel.

Some of the most frequently purchased brands in 2020 include:

- Rods – Bass Pro Brand
- Reels – Shimano
- Fishing Line – Berkley Fireline
- Soft Bait – Berkley PowerBait
- Spinner Bait – Strike King

- Hooks – Eagle Claw/Lazer Sharp
- Fish Finder or Sonar – Humminbird
- Footwear – Columbia
- Tackle Box – Plano
- Landing Net, Gaff – Bass Pro
- Bait Bucket, Aerator – Frabill

Topline results of the Southwick Associates consumer tracking study are available in the Fishing Participation and Equipment Purchases Report. This in-depth resource tracks fishing participation and equipment purchases for a broad range of products. Equipment purchase information includes the percentage of sales across different retail channels,

brand purchased, price paid, and demographics for anglers buying specific products. Additional participation information includes total days spent per activity, type of fishing, and targeted species. A separate report is also available focusing specifically on Bass Anglers.

Southwick Associates also develops custom research including market assessments, product development, customer segmentation, brand health, pricing, and more. To purchase a report or discuss custom research, contact Nancy Bacon at [Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com](mailto:Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com).

✧

## DNR conducted 200-plus inland fisheries surveys in 2020

How do changes in the shoreline habitat affect fish populations? How does recreational fishing affect inland fish populations? How does stocking influence angler success? Finding answers to questions like these is a big part of why the Michigan DNR does fisheries surveys—in fact, the DNR conducted 220 inland fisheries surveys last year alone.

In 2020, staff from eight DNR fisheries management units completed 125 surveys of inland lakes and 95 stream surveys, even in the face of the COVID pandemic. Anyone fishing those waters might have seen crews collecting key data on one of Michigan's world-class fisheries. So, just what do crews look for?

According to Jim Dexter, DNR Fisheries Division chief, surveys fall into three categories:

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

“Our management units stepped up this year and were able to safely conduct inland fisheries surveys to evaluate if management actions, like fish stocking or habitat improvement projects, had the desired effect,” Dexter said. “Surveys help us understand whether or not our management actions 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.

Dexter 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 or 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.

Throughout April and early May, the DNR also will offer virtual “[Conversations & Coffee](#)” meetings around the state, providing an informal opportunity to connect with local fisheries biologists and managers about the work they do. ✧

## DNR investigating amount of stocked female walleye from two hatcheries

**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin DNR announced the agency identified a potential issue with a disproportionate number of female hatchery-reared extended growth walleye.

The DNR conducted a preliminary analysis of hatchery-reared extended growth walleye sex ratios in 2019, which led to more in-depth research in the fall of 2020, including additional walleye from both the Art Oehmke and Governor Thompson fish hatcheries for histological (studying of the tissues) sex determination.

Although sex was unable to be determined in all samples, these preliminary investigations indicated hatchery-reared extended growth walleye showed sex ratios favoring females. Surveys of naturally reproduced walleye generally show

sex ratios closer to a one-to-one male to female or ratios skewed towards males. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that skewed sex ratios exist in other hatchery-reared species.

### DNR Investigating Cause

As a result of these findings, the DNR will conduct additional histological sex determination testing, a comprehensive review of hatchery practices, and an examination of more survey and past stocking data to better understand this issue and the extent of unbalanced sex ratios in hatchery grown walleye. An additional examination of naturally reproduced walleye sex ratios will also be conducted.

Although the cause of this sex ratio imbalance is unknown, DNR staff and other partners have initiated consultations with topic experts and

have begun reviewing relevant studies. Additional examinations of hatchery extended growth walleye will be conducted at multiple facilities in 2021.

Since the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative began, over 800,000 hatchery-reared extended growth walleye have been stocked annually into waterbodies across the State. Before the initiative, most stocked walleye were either fry or small fingerlings. It is unknown whether an uneven sex ratio exists in hatchery-reared fry or small fingerling walleye, which the DNR will also investigate.

The DNR will continue to raise walleye while conducting its investigation. Results will be shared and posted to the DNR’s [Wisconsin Walleye Initiative webpage](#) after the investigation ✧

## Volunteer to become a Striped Bass Cooperative Angler

[DEC is seeking participants](#) to join the [Striped Bass Cooperative Angler \(SBCA\)](#) Program to help biologists understand and maintain a healthy striped bass population. [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission \(ASMFC\)](#) requires New York State to provide catch information from its recreational fishery to manage this species. Volunteer anglers play a crucial role in helping DEC satisfy this requirement, and all anglers who fish for striped bass are invited to participate. Anglers who fish for striped bass north of the George Washington Bridge in the tidal Hudson River should email [HUDSONANGLER@DEC.NY.GOV](mailto:HUDSONANGLER@DEC.NY.GOV) or visit [DEC's Hudson River Striped Bass](#) to [learn more about the Hudson River Cooperative Anglers Program](#). In the tidal Hudson River, the recreational slot limit is 18 to 28 inches (not less than 18 inches nor greater than 28 inches) and the season is open **April 1 through November 30**.

Anglers who fish for striped bass in New York's marine waters south of the George Washington Bridge should contact the Diadromous Fish Unit at [SHBCAPROGRAM@DEC.NY.GOV](mailto:SHBCAPROGRAM@DEC.NY.GOV) or visit [DEC's Striped Bass Cooperative Anglers](#). In marine waters, the recreational slot limit is 28 - 35 inches (not less than 28 inches nor greater than 35 inches) and the season is open **April 15 through Dec. 15**. ✧

## RBFF Annual Stakeholder Survey

McKinley Advisors, an independent consulting firm, administered a study on behalf of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF). Your participation helped ensure that RBFF's resources, activities, programs, and consumer-facing initiatives like the Take Me Fishing™ and Vamos a Pescar™ brand are helping to grow recreational fishing and boating. ✧

## Register for New York's Recreational Marine Fishing Registry

Before going fishing in New York's marine waters, anglers 16 years and older must enroll in the no-fee [Recreational Marine Fishing Registry](#). In 2020, DEC launched a new system for the sale of fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses on the updated [DEC Automated Licensing System \(DECALS\)](#). Anglers can register through [DECALS online](#), by calling **1-866-933-2257**, or visiting a [License Issuing Agent](#). Also, be sure to check New York's [Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations](#) for the current open size and regulations before you head out for your next fishing trip. Visit DEC's website for more information on [Saltwater Fishing](#). ✧

## NY 2021 Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide now available online

New for 2021, DEC streamlined its annual fishing regulations guide. With few exceptions, contents in the new guide are limited to only a summary of the laws and regulations anglers need to know before hitting the water. Taking a no-frills approach, ads and articles have been omitted, allowing for a better formatting and simpler lookup. Waterbodies are now listed alphabetically by region to make looking up regulations easier. The simpler approach also allowed DEC to significantly increase the size of print for easier reading. Lastly, the guide now measures 5½" x 8½" allowing anglers to easily keep a copy in their glovebox or tacklebox.

[The new guide](#) can be found at DEC's website for downloading and printing at home. Production of hard copies is underway and DEC expects to have guides at License Issuing Agents no later than the second week of April. Hard copies can be requested by emailing [FWFISH@DEC.NY.GOV](mailto:FWFISH@DEC.NY.GOV). ✧

## New interactive Trout Stream Fishing Map also launched

To provide additional information about how and where anglers can find their preferred type of trout angling opportunities, NYDEC is launching an interactive Trout Stream Fishing Map to provide a one-stop-shop for information about stocking, fishing access, season dates, and regulations on the [DECinfo Locator](#). All Wild-Quality, Wild-Premier, Stocked, and Stocked-Extended reaches are mapped, and DEC will complete the mapping of Wild categorized reaches later this year. Links to the [Trout Stream Fishing Map and a User Guide](#) are available at DEC's website.

With more than 65 interactive data layers, [DECinfo Locator](#) lets users see and download permits, former industrial site cleanup plans, water quality reports, and more based on where they live, work, or play. DECinfo Locator's outdoor activity data lets hikers, campers, hunters, and other adventurers plan forays into New York's natural wonders, whether that be locating a fire tower and planning a route, setting up a weekend of fishing, or just browsing the activities allowed on nearby state lands. Multiple information layers can be activated at the same time, allowing users to see the many ways DEC is working to protect and enhance the state's environment and recreational opportunities. ✧

## New 2021-2022 Indiana Fishing Regulations Guide available

The 2021-2022 Indiana Fishing Regulations Guide is now available to view online. Hard copies, which are free, are available at DNR properties and retailers. Highlights of the new guide include the 2021 Free Fishing Days, 2020 Fish of the Year winners, State Record Fish updates, Asian carp management, and tips for recreating responsibly. ✧

## Early/late season walleye harvest allowed on Mille Lacs

Early-season walleye anglers on Mille Lacs Lake will be able to keep one walleye 21-23 inches long or one longer than 28 inches. Summer will bring catch-and-release walleye fishing, with a mid-season closure, before the potential for a one-fish limit returns in the fall.

“Lower walleye harvest this winter is allowing us to offer some open-water walleye harvest this year,” said Brad Parsons, fisheries section manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. “We’re glad Mille Lacs anglers will have the chance to keep a walleye on opening weekend and Memorial Day weekend—two of the most popular times to fish during the year. We also hope to be able to allow some harvest this fall.”

The one-fish walleye limit will be in place from Saturday, May 15, through Monday, May 31. Walleye fishing will be catch-and-release from Tuesday, June 1, through Wednesday, June 30. A two-week closure—implemented to reduce hooking mortality—will be in place from Thursday, July 1, through Thursday, July 15. Catch-and-release walleye fishing will resume on Friday, July 16, and continue through Wednesday, Sept. 15.

After opening weekend, fishing hours on Mille Lacs Lake will be 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. for all species. Beginning Saturday, June 5, muskellunge and northern pike anglers using

artificial lures or sucker minnows longer than 8 inches can fish after 10 p.m.

The one-fish walleye limit is scheduled to resume Thursday, Sept. 16, through Tuesday, Nov. 30. During the late season, the DNR also will allow anglers to fish from 6 a.m. to midnight.

“Our projections strongly suggest that fall harvest can occur,” Parsons said. “However, predicting fishing pressure, catch rates and weather involves some uncertainty so we want people to recognize that the fall harvest will depend on how much of the state’s 2021 walleye allocation remains as we approach September. As always, we will monitor the factors that determine the state’s walleye take throughout the open water season.”

The state and the eight Chippewa bands that have treaty fishing rights agreed Mille Lacs could sustain a state harvest of up to 87,800 pounds of walleye this year, unchanged from 2020. During the 2020 season, state-licensed anglers took 66,748 pounds and tribal fishing took 33,113 pounds.

This year’s winter walleye harvest was about 16,000 pounds, about half of what it was in 2020. Lower catch rates for anglers, combined with fewer people fishing, caused harvest to return to normal levels after a big spike last year. That drop in walleye take gave the DNR more flexibility to

implement a one-fish limit during the early season and plan one for the late season.

Even with the drop in winter harvest, a two-week closure during what’s normally one of the hottest times of the summer remains necessary to protect walleye. As water temperature increases, so does hooking mortality. Protecting walleye during this vulnerable period can allow for many weeks of harvest during cooler times of the year.

To help avoid incidental catch of walleye during the two-week closure, anglers targeting northern pike and muskellunge can use sucker minnows longer than 8 inches. But anglers targeting all other fish species may not use live, dead, preserved or parts of minnows, night crawlers, worms, leeches or crayfish.

“Our goal with these regulations is to meet the state’s treaty obligations while also providing the best possible experience for anglers, recognizing that fishing and the anglers it brings are economically important to the Mille Lacs Lake area,” Parsons said.

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

## Pure Fishing to purchase Plano

Pure Fishing Inc., the world's largest fishing tackle company, announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to purchase Plano Synergy Holdings Inc. The purchase will include **Plano Synergy's 15 preeminent brands**, which specialize in tackle storage, catch management, hunting accessories and archery. This acquisition is the third for Pure Fishing in two years under the ownership of private equity firm Sycamore Partners.

“We are excited to welcome the iconic Plano and other brands into our industry-leading portfolio of Outdoor brands. These are storied brands within the fishing and hunting space that are beloved by outdoor enthusiasts worldwide and will perfectly complement our existing business,” said Pure Fishing CEO Harlan Kent.

The acquisition of these brands demonstrates Pure Fishing's continued commitment to growing its presence

within the outdoor sports industry while remaining a positive and compelling partner to its retail customers. To maximize global expansion opportunities and additional growth prospects within its Outdoor categories, Pure Fishing will continue to focus on ensuring supply chain excellence, delivering innovation, driving digital marketing and strengthening vendor partnerships. ✧

## Abu Garcia list of the top 10 of the Country's 100 best fisheries

*Famed fisheries with multispecies appeal top the list of the best places to kick off the next 100 years of Abu Garcia history.*

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (March 15, 2021)**

– The universal desire to catch more and bigger fish fueled the innovations that took Abu Garcia fishing equipment from the industrial age to the space age in the company's first 100 years. And while no one can say for sure what fishing will look like 100 years from now, the next century of Abu Garcia's history will be written wherever anglers fish to win, whether winning means a tournament victory or a day on the water they will never forget.

In celebration of its 100th anniversary, famed fishing equipment maker Abu Garcia announces the Top 10 in its list of the country's Top 100 Fisheries. A list designed to inspire curiosity and exploration as well as debate, the Abu Garcia Top 100 Fisheries list includes natural and man-made lakes, as well as rivers and sections of rivers, across 38 different states—all of them known for delivering the quality, quantity and species of fish most sought after by Abu Garcia loyalists.

Selected in collaboration with a panel of fishing-industry experts, these fisheries were chosen because they stand out in a host of areas. The Abu Garcia Top 100 Fisheries list places a premium on those fisheries that offer the best overall multispecies angling opportunities. The list also preserves space for those fisheries offering unparalleled species-specific fishing opportunities and experiences, whether it's chasing world-record-class redear sunfish on Lake Havasu, fighting a flathead on Santee Cooper or looking for the best five largemouth bass in Lake Guntersville. True trophy-quality angling opportunities for a wealth of different species, from bass to white sturgeon, are included in the list.

“The truth is, whatever fishery makes an angler excited to be fishing, that's the top fishery in the country. But the fisheries on the list, especially those in the Top 10, really separate themselves from the rest of the group for different reasons,” said Abu Garcia

Senior Vice President of Marketing Jon Schlosser. “In a country full of amazing angling opportunities from coast to coast, these are the places that really shine. It's on these fisheries and others like them where new anglers will experience the kind of success that propels them to a lifetime of fishing, and where necessity will drive innovation so that the next 100 years of Abu Garcia history is as celebrated as the first 100 years.”

### Abu Garcia Top 100 Fisheries: The Top 10

1. St. Lawrence River (NY)
2. Lake St. Clair (MI)
3. Lake Erie (OH/PA/NY/MI)
4. Red River (ND/MN)
5. Santee Cooper (SC)
6. Lake Guntersville (AL)
7. Sam Rayburn Reservoir (TX)
8. Clear Lake (CA)
9. Lake Fork (TX)
10. Lake Chickamauga (TN)

### Abu Garcia Top 100 Fisheries Judges Panel:

Ken Duke – Managing Editor of Fishing Tackle Retailer

Mike Iaconelli – Abu Garcia pro staff member and former Bassmaster Classic champion

Dr. Keith Jones – Former VP of Product Development for Berkley and fish-behavior researcher

Ashley Nichole Lewis – Pacific NW-based fishing guide and host of “Breakout with Bad Ash”

Liz Ogilvie – Vice President and CMO of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA)

Jason Schratwieser – International Game Fish Association (IGFA) president

Malcolm Stewart – Supercross racing superstar and ultra-avid angler

For more information on the Abu Garcia Top 100 Fisheries list, to explore each fishery in detail and learn more about the best times,

places and ways to catch fish there, go to [www.abugarcia.com](http://www.abugarcia.com). ✧

### Walleye Management Plan

*Continued from page 1*

- A brief description of previous management efforts.

The plan also identifies several management goals that broadly address social and ecological characteristics of walleye fisheries, because both elements are key to successful future species management. The DNR Fisheries Division developed the draft “Management Plan for Walleye in Michigan's Inland Waters” with assistance from Michigan State University Fisheries and Wildlife Department faculty and in consultation with Tribal governments.

Learn more about the walleye species and management efforts at [Michigan.gov/Walleye](http://Michigan.gov/Walleye).

Michigan's annual fishing license is valid from March 1 of a given year through March 31 of the following year. Visit [Michigan.gov/Fishing](http://Michigan.gov/Fishing) for all the information you need to get started. ✧



Those were the days, my friend. Note the hand crank downrigger  
Jerry Pabst

## Check for zebra mussels in Marimo moss balls

Zebra mussels have recently been found in Marimo moss balls, a product sold at many aquarium and pet supply stores. Zebra mussels are an invasive species, meaning that they are not native to Indiana and have the potential to cause harm to Indiana's aquatic environment. Because of this, zebra mussels are illegal to possess. They are identifiable by the light and dark stripes on their shells that resemble those of a zebra.

These mussels may be very small and easily overlooked. If you observe zebra mussels on moss balls, be sure to destroy the moss balls, dispose of them, and drain your aquarium. For instructions on how to destroy and dispose of the balls, see [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's guidance](#).

If you find zebra mussels on moss balls from suppliers other than PetSmart or Petco, please contact [AIS@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:AIS@dnr.IN.gov) and provide: the source of the moss ball, the approximate date of purchase, and photographs of zebra mussels on the plant material. For more information on zebra mussels or other aquatic invasive species, [view our webpage](#). ✧

## Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair slated for Oct. 2 at Pere Marquette State Park

GRAFTON, Ill. – The Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair, traditionally held in June each year at Pere Marquette State Park, will be held Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021. The event was canceled in June 2020 due to health and safety concerns related to COVID-19.

For more than 30 years, the free Fishing Fair has been one of Pere Marquette's most popular family events, featuring catch-and-release fishing, casting stations, fishing instruction, info, and entertainment.

The event is hosted by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC), Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge (administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and Pere Marquette State Park (administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources). Dozens of local businesses and volunteers support the fair.

For more info on the Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair on its new date of October 2, 2021, call Pere Marquette State Park at 618-786-3323. ✧

## Economic impact comment period for Great Lakes fishing guide reporting rule

The Wisconsin DNR accepted comments on the potential economic impacts of a proposed rule. Proposed permanent rule FH-08-20 regulates fishing guide reporting requirements on the Great Lakes and their tributaries. These updates aim to enhance datasets for game fish such as walleye, lake trout, perch, lake whitefish, and others, as fishing guide reports are an important but underrepresented source of data on game fish harvest and fishing effort. This rule outlines specific information to be included in the reports, reporting methods and deadlines for reporting.

This comment period focused on economic impacts rather than other impacts of the rule. To review the economic impact analysis and draft rule, visit the DNR's [proposed permanent rules](#) web page. ✧

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

### [Smelt populations have crashed in U.S., devastating fishing industry](#)

The recent cold spell has meant ice fishing at more lakes in Michigan. Some anglers go after a tiny fish called smelt in the cold water. In the past, people went after them during spawning runs using dip nets. But smelt populations have

### [The loneliest place in North America is in Michigan](#)

The Stannard Rock Lighthouse, located 25 miles from the shore of Marquette in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, has the longest distance separating a lighthouse from shore on the continent.

### [Share your thoughts on Cuyahoga River with Ohio EPA](#)

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency are seeking public comments on the proposed removal of a beneficial use impairment within the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern.

### [Bills would ban lead in fishing gear, a bird killer](#)

A ban on lead use in fishing equipment is again being discussed by the Minnesota State Legislature

### [Canadian officials to Michigan Senate: Line 5 shutdown would wreck economy](#)

Keeping petroleum flowing through the Line 5 pipeline is imperative to the economy and energy security of Canada and the U.S., Canadian government, according to comments made by business and union representatives to a Michigan Senate panel earlier this