



## NY will stock Lake Ontario with 1 million salmon in 2023, expects 'excellent' fishing season

New York and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry have agreed to a 10% increase in Chinook salmon stocking in Lake Ontario this year, for a total of 985,180 fish. The decision to increase salmon stocks in Lake Ontario was based on a number of factors, primarily the lake's burgeoning alewife population. Alewife is the main food source for Lake Ontario salmon and trout.

Last year, the total biomass for two-year-old alewife increased, and it's predicted to stay at similar levels through 2024, said Chris Legard, Lake Ontario unit leader for DEC Bureau of Fisheries. Chinook salmon were also a bit bigger in 2022, Legard said, based on the average weight of a three-year-old Chinook salmon caught in the open

lake in August. The threshold weight specified in the Lake Ontario Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is 18.4 lbs. In 2022, the average weight of a Chinook increased to 20.7 lbs.

Lake Ontario salmon have been tipping the scales above the threshold for the last few years. Fatter salmon are "an indicator of predator/pray balance," Legard said. "When there are too many salmon and not enough prey, the size of the fish will go down." It's looking good," Legard added. "We're looking forward to the 2023 fishing season and expect that salmon trout fishing in Lake Ontario will be excellent again this year."

There are seven salmon stocking sites in NY, including the Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Altmar. The approximately 90,000 extra stocked salmon in 2023 will be spread evenly among all sites except the Salmon

River. "We already stock the Salmon River hatchery with 300,000 Chinook salmon, considerably more fish than the other sites get," Legard said, noting that number is three times the number of fish stocked at the other sites.

That means Salmon River anglers should see no difference in the number of spawning salmon this year. Open water anglers, however, increased their chances of landing a Chinook by ten percent.

### 2023 Chinook salmon stocking targets:

- Niagara River – 89,930
- Eighteen Mile Creek (Olcott) – 126,330
- Oak Orchard Creek – 126,330
- Genesee River – 126,330
- Oswego River – 126,330
- Salmon River – 300,000
- Sackets Harbor (Black River) – 89,930 ✧

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## DNR increases Lake Michigan chinook stocking goal for 2023

The Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan will be stocked with more chinook salmon in 2023 but all other salmon and trout species will be unchanged, according to a plan recently announced by the DNR.

This year's DNR Lake Michigan stocking goals are 1.3 million Chinook salmon, up from 1.2 million in 2020-22, as well as 500,000 coho salmon, 460,000 steelhead, 450,000 brown trout and 50,000 brook trout, the same levels as in the previous plan.

The five species are raised in state

fish hatcheries and stocked by DNR staff, sometimes (as with most Chinook salmon) in partnership with local clubs that help maintain net pens at sites along Lake Michigan.

In addition to the state-raised fish, 45,000 lake trout will be reared and stocked in 2023 in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This year's lake trout goal is unchanged from 2020-22 but is a dramatic decrease from the 296,778 lakers stocked in 2019 and the yearly average of 621,930 stocked from 2010-19. ✧

## IDNR Lake Michigan Fisheries Program Public Meeting - March 16, 2023

The Illinois DNR is holding an informational meeting on the Lake Michigan fishery. Topics of discussion will be salmon and trout management, Lake Trout restoration and spawning reef mapping, and the status of nearshore fish populations in Illinois waters (Yellow Perch, Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass). Fisheries agencies instituted adjustments to the salmon and trout management strategy in 2013 and 2017-2018 by reducing predator stocking levels lakewide. Changes were necessary to compensate for increases in natural reproduction and declines in prey fish, including alewife. Recent improvements in salmon food resources precipitated a stocking increase in 2020, and another one is proposed for 2023. These stocking changes will be discussed at the meeting.

Please join us on March 16, 2023 in Des Plaines. Time will be reserved after the presentations for questions and open discussion of other matters of mutual concern. 9511 W. Harrison Street, Room 207, Des Plaines, IL 60016 ✧

## Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop, April 5 and April 13

Join us for a seminar on fish biology, ecology, and fisheries workshop happening in Lake Michigan. Workshop features speakers from Illinois DNR, Loyola University, and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant. Workshop topics include:

- Economics of sport fishing
- Importance of coastal wetlands to yellow perch
- Latest Illinois DNR fisheries report for southern Lake Michigan

The seminar is free, but we ask that you register so we can send information and additional resources. You may attend in-person or online. For more information and Zoom link, contact Peter Euclide at [peuclide@purdue.edu](mailto:peuclide@purdue.edu)

**Register:** <http://bit.ly/IISG-fisheries-2023>

**Wednesday, April 5, 2023**

6:00-8:00PM Central Time  
Wilmette Harbor Club  
20 Harbor Drive, Wilmette, IL 60091  
[Google Map](#)

**Thursday, April 13, 2023**

6:00-8:00PM Central Time  
Virtual Zoom Event ✧



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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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## DNR to host 2nd Public Meeting on Lake Michigan lake trout population

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds the public of the second meeting in a series of four public meetings of the Lake Michigan Lake Trout Commercial Harvest Stakeholder Group to present information and gather public feedback on the Lake Michigan lake trout population.

The second public meeting is on Monday, March 20 in Cleveland, WI, and all members of the public are welcome to attend and participate.

Following a summary of the first meeting, the focus of this meeting will shift to lake trout mass-marking and movement patterns in Lake Michigan. The public can join in-person or virtually by [registering via Zoom](#).

Info can be found on the [DNR's Lake Michigan Fisheries webpage](#), including a recording of the first meeting.

Additional opportunities to provide input on and learn about Lake Michigan's lake trout population will take place at Lakeshore Technical College's Lake Michigan conference room:

- Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 6 p.m. focused on Lake Trout Population and Forecast Models
- Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 6 p.m. focused on Working Group Discussion and Input

More info is available about these sessions on the DNR's [event webpage](#) or the [Lake Michigan fisheries webpage](#). ✧

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## Canada tightens ballast water regulations

Canada's Minister of Transport Omar Alghabra recently announced funding of C\$12.5m (\$9.2m) to launch the Ballast Water Innovation Program, part of its Oceans Protection Plan. The program, a central component of the Government of Canada's efforts to advance the implementation and enforcement of the 2021 Ballast Water Regulations, will play an important role in further reducing the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River by investing in innovative solutions to ballast water management.

Evidence shows that ballast water management systems are an effective solution in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, said Transport Canada in a press release. However, most ballast water management systems have been developed for warmer, salt-water conditions typically encountered by ocean-going vessels. Great Lakes regional water conditions are cold, fresh and sometimes heavily sedimented. These water conditions can pose a challenge to ballast water management systems in the region.

To address these challenges and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, the new program will undertake four initiatives.

It will fund research projects that ensure ballast water management systems are optimized for unique water environments in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; aim to provide innovative solutions to ensure the successful implementation of the country's new ballast water regulations and prevent the entry and spread of invasive aquatic species in the region; enable the government to deepen its technical expertise relating to ballast water management system issues; and inform Canada's discussions with the US and at the International Maritime Organization towards more compatible rules and increased environmental protections.

Transport Canada is now accepting applications for research funding from Canadian vessel owners and operators, Canadian port authorities, not-for-profit organizations, public-sector organizations and academia until May 10. Approved projects are expected to begin in 2023.

Canada's 2021 Ballast Water Regulations address its commitments under the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 and require the use of ballast water management systems. ✧

## Public Notice: USACE planning to dredge Vermillion Harbor

The US Army Corps of Engineers is planning to dredge Vermillion Harbor Erie County OH this year, and is requesting your comments. The USACE anticipates the need to dredge and place sediment excavated from the authorized federal navigation channels of Vermillion Harbor, which is located on the southern shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Vermillion River, in order to maintain sufficient water depths for shallow draft commercial and recreational navigation. Federal navigation channels within the harbor include the Lake Approach Channel, Entrance Channel, and River Channel.

The dredging operation is tentatively scheduled to be performed between July 1st and September 15th of 2023. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the USACE with their comments regarding the proposed dredging of Vermillion Harbor. Please review this public notice and send your comments in writing by **March 1st** to the following e-mail address:

[VermillionDredging@usace.army.mil](mailto:VermillionDredging@usace.army.mil) . For more info: [FY23 Vermillion Dredge Public Notice \(army.mil\)](#) ✧

## March DNR meetings: land review, fisheries, wildlife, parks and more

Michigan DNR is committed to providing Michigan residents the opportunity to share input and ideas on policy decisions, programs and other aspects of natural resource management and outdoor recreation opportunities. One important avenue for this input is at meetings of the public bodies that advise the DNR and, in some cases, also set policies for natural and cultural resource management. Frequently check the [DNR boards, commissions, committees and councils webpage](#) for updates.

The links below will take you to the webpage for each group, where you will find meeting details such as location and agenda (when finalized). Please check these pages often, as meeting details may change and sometimes meetings are canceled.

### March meetings

- [Off-road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup](#) – Thursday, March 16, 2 p.m. (Contact: Jessica Holley-Roehrs, 517-331-3790).
- [Western Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council](#) – Tuesday, March 21, 6 p.m. EDT (Contact: Stacy Welling Haughey, 906-226-1331).
- [Michigan Wildlife Council](#) – Wednesday, March 22, 9 a.m. (Contact: Pam Vance, 517-284-6056).
- [Lake Erie/St. Clair Citizens Fishery Advisory Com](#) – Thursday March 23, 10 a.m. (Contact: Jim Francis, 517-242-3593).
- [Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council](#) – Friday, March 24, 10 a.m. (Contact: Kimberley Korbecki, 517-582-3220)
- [Michigan Freedom Trail Commission](#) – Friday, March 31, 11 a.m. (Contact: Sheri Giffin, 517-231-1299). ✧

## International Game Fish Association announces 2023 Fishing Hall of Fame inductees

This year's inductees include IGFA World Record consummate and tournament champion Roberta G. Arostegui; fly-fishing adventurer and trailblazer, Kay Brodney; conventional and fly-fishing master angler, captain and writer Dean Butler; distinguished Avalon Tuna Club member and conservation advocate, Gerald A. Garrett; and marine resources champion and fishing apparel pioneer Bill Shedd.

Elected unanimously by the IGFA Board of Trustees, the 2023 class will join 141 legendary anglers, scientists, conservationists, writers and fishing industry leaders whose contributions to sport fishing are forever preserved and celebrated in the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame.

"From championing conservation efforts to breaking glass ceilings in angling itself, each of these individuals has simultaneously worked to make our sport more prestigious and ensure it can be enjoyed for generations to come," said IGFA President Jason Schratwieser. "They have earned their place within the Fishing Hall of Fame, and we couldn't be more honored to induct them."

The 2023 IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at Johnny Morris' [Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium](#) in Springfield, Missouri. The 2023 class will take their honored places alongside fishing luminaries, including Isaak Walton, Michael Lerner, Francesca LaMonte, Zane Grey, Mary Orvis Marbury, Ernest Hemingway, Ted Williams, George H.W. Bush, Bill Dance, Mark Sosin, Lee and Joan Wulff, Flip Pallot, Alfred C. Glassell Jr., Kip Farrington and Curt Gowdy, among others. ✧

## New gar possession limit effected March 1 on all state waters

*Anglers will find this and other changes in the 2023 fishing regulations booklet*

Spearers, anglers and bow fishers will be allowed to keep up to 10 gar — the toothy, prehistoric fish native to Minnesota waters — starting March 1, when a new gar possession limit is in effect on all Minnesota inland and border waters.

The limit applies to longnose and shortnose gar, which previously could be kept in unlimited numbers, and is among other new regulations in the 2023 Minnesota Fishing Regulations booklet.

The gar regulation change is part of a larger effort to sustainably manage gar and other native fish including buffalo, sucker, freshwater drum, bowfin, goldeye and bullhead, because they are critical contributors to aquatic ecosystems. The gar limit was established after 2021 legislation requiring the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources determine and set a limit for that species.

"It's a first step toward a more proactive and conservative approach to managing these native 'rough fish' species," said Shannon Fisher, fisheries monitoring and regulations manager. "We value these native fish. They are important elements of healthy rivers and lakes, and yet we don't know a ton about them."

While the DNR has less information about gar compared to fish species like walleye, pike or bass, DNR research is underway to track their populations, with initial results expected in the latter part of 2024. Additionally, the DNR will form a new work group with members of conservation organizations, members of the bow fishing community and interested stakeholders to identify conservation strategies for other native rough fish.

"Historically there have been a lot of misconceptions about fish like gar. People thought that having gar around as predator fish created competition

for fish like walleye. We know that's not the case," Fisher said. "The more we learn, the more we find out that these fish have important roles and value in the ecosystem."

### Other new regulations

Other fishing regulation changes for 2023 include opening the Vermillion River in Dakota County to a catch-and-release season that mirrors the season in place for southeastern Minnesota, which allows catch and release trout fishing from January 1 each year to the mid-April stream trout season opener. Additionally, the brown trout catch-and-release only regulation applies to the entire Vermillion River starting March 1.

New and modified regulations will also be in effect for a variety of other waters. Anglers are advised to check the regulations book for regulation details for these waters, listed here alphabetized by county:

- Big Sandy Lake and connected waters, Aitkin County
- A portion of the upper Turtle River chain of lakes, Beltrami County
- Three Island and Turtle River lakes, Beltrami County
- Fox Lake, Beltrami County
- Caribou Lake, Itasca County
- Round Lake, Itasca County
- Otter Tail Lake, Otter Tail County
- West Battle Lake, Otter Tail County
- Cloquet and Otter rivers of Island Lake Reservoir, St. Louis County.

The 2023 Minnesota fishing regulations are [available online](#) ([mndnr.gov/fishing](http://mndnr.gov/fishing)) and anywhere Minnesota fishing licenses are sold. ✧

## Michigan gets new Fish Chief

Randy Claramunt has been named the next chief of the Michigan Fisheries Division. Randy assumed this new role effective March 5, taking over for current Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter, who retires at the end of April. The overlap in Randy's assumption of this role and Jim's retirement will allow for a smooth transition.

Randy is well known, having served the DNR in a variety of capacities, most recently as the Lake Huron Basin coordinator. Before that he was a research biology specialist, as well as the interim Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station manager and supervisor for the Habitat Management Unit. Prior to joining the DNR, Randy gained quality experience with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, first as a fisheries biologist and then as interim natural resources director. He earned a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife from Michigan State University and a master's degree in aquatic ecology from the U of Illinois.

Randy's experience, approachability, energy, and passion for the resource — as well as for the people and partners who enjoy and help care for Michigan's fisheries — put him in an excellent position to lead the division through the many opportunities and challenges ahead. His extensive background in fisheries management within Michigan, other states and Tribal governments will ensure continued success on key initiatives, create new avenues for staff growth and engagement, and further cement Michigan's reputation for healthy, thriving fisheries and one-of-a-kind recreational opportunities. ✧

## Renew your hunting and fishing licenses

Remember that most hunting and fishing licenses expire **March 31**. You can purchase your annual hunting or fishing license for 2023-24 now. If you're looking for a year of fun outside, hunting and fishing are the perfect ways. ✧

## Registration opened **March 1** for Becoming an Outdoors-Woman

Registration for the annual Indiana Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) workshop, open to women ages 18 and older, opened **March 1**. This year's BOW workshop will be held **May 5-7**, at Ross Camp in West Lafayette. The BOW program is designed for women to learn outdoor skills in a relaxed, low-pressure environment. Participants will choose four activities from more than two dozen offerings, including fishing, archery, wild edibles, wildlife tracking, and outdoor cooking.

The workshop is for women who have never tried these activities, but have hoped for an opportunity to learn; who have tried them but are beginners hoping to improve; or who know how to do some of the activities, but would like to try new ones. Women who enjoy the camaraderie of individuals with similar outdoor interests and who seek time away to reconnect with nature are also candidates for BOW.

Registration, which closes when there are 100 registrants, can be done at [IndianaBOW.com](http://IndianaBOW.com). The cost for the workshop is \$275, which includes all equipment, meals, and lodging. ✧

## Wisconsin Local Assistance & Federal Rec. Trails Program combined grant application due **May 1**

The application deadline for the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Grant, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Federal Recreational Trails Programs (RTP) is approaching. The combined grant application for 2023-2024 funding is due by **Monday, May 1, 2023**. The DNR will consider all complete applications received by this date. Application materials are located at; <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stewardship/ApplyLUG>. If you are considering a May application, please contact your [regional Project Manager](#). ✧

## The value of the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes Fisheries Commission recognizes that fishing on the Great Lakes is valued at over \$8 billion USD, and represents the most valuable freshwater fishery in the world. This doesn't even take into consideration the value of fish captured, released or harvested by recreational and sport anglers, or fish harvested by First Nations for commercial, food, social or ceremonial purposes. We also know that extreme weather and other human activities have and continue to cause significant stress on Great Lakes ecosystems and biodiversity.

The federal government has committed to protect 30% of Canada's oceans, lands, rivers and lakes by the year 2030. So far, Canada has designated two "national marine protected areas" on the Great Lakes — Lakes Huron and Superior — many others along Canada's coastline, and recently announced \$800 million to establish four large "indigenous conserved and protected areas" across northern Canada. What these conservation initiatives mean to nature and people is not widely understood. The process being used to designate and conceive these protected areas seems to still be a "work in progress." What's becoming evident however, is that stakeholders are growing increasingly vocal about their interest in being consulted about the location and protection of future sites. ✧

## Subscribe to the Indiana State Parks newsletter

Find out about upcoming events, deals, and everything new with Indiana State Parks. You can sign up to receive this bi-monthly newsletter by [subscribing here](#). The March/April issue of [Outdoor Indiana magazine](#) features a cover story on the land the Division of Land Acquisition protected in 2022 and much more. Become part of Outdoor Indiana. \$15 a year, or \$28 for two years. ✧

## Wisconsin publishes 2022 Fish Stocking Summary

*Over Six Million Fish Stocked throughout Wisconsin Waterbodies*

**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin DNR released the 2022 stocking numbers for inland waterbodies and the Great Lakes. Over six million fish were stocked in 2022 to fill stocking quotas established by fisheries biologists.

Every year, the DNR raises millions of yearling and fingerling fish to stock into waterbodies across the state. Stocking helps boost natural fish populations, maintain or restore existing fisheries, and support recreational fishing opportunities. Stocking is also used to evaluate management actions or propagation techniques.

DNR fish crews stocked these species into inland waters across the state in 2022.

Species	# Stocked
Brook trout	232,896
Brown trout	315,981
Lake sturgeon	12,421
Lake trout	78,099
Largemouth bass	114,241
Muskellunge	41,970
Northern pike	48,181
Rainbow trout	267,198
Walleye	1,588,918

Following is a list of the fish stocked into Lake Michigan (LM), Lake Superior (LS) and their tributaries in

2022.

Species	# Stocked
Brook trout (LM)	50,021
Brown trout	475,701 (LM) 140,839 (LS)
Chinook salmon (LM)	893,650 145,095*
Coho salmon (LM)	412,273
Lake sturgeon (LM)	4,185
Lake trout (LS)	88,027
Muskellunge (LM)	3,029
Steelhead (LM)	850,772 150,497*
Splake (LS)	47,770
Walleye (LS)	109,850

*\*These fish were raised by the Michigan DNR and were stocked by Wisconsin DNR staff.*

These numbers include large fingerling walleye purchased by the DNR from private growers or tribal hatcheries that contributed to filling walleye stocking quotas. These numbers do not include fish supplied by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the stocking of fry or any other private or tribal hatchery stocking events. Visit the DNR's [stocking database](#) to view stocking data from previous years or stocking numbers for a specific location. ✧

## Talk with fisheries staff at spring 'Conversations & Coffee' meetings

Have questions about fishing in Michigan and 2023 fishing regulations? Check out these upcoming virtual "Conversations & Coffee" events, focusing on fisheries management around the state, to get answers and talk with Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisheries staff.

These events cover local and statewide regulation changes and other topics related to managing fisheries and aquatic natural resources on inland lakes and streams and the Great Lakes. They're also great opportunities to meet fisheries managers and biologists, provide feedback on regulation proposals, and discuss local issues and management activities. Get specific questions answered at one of the DNR Fisheries Division's "Conversations & Coffee" virtual meetings:

### Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit

- Tuesday, March 14, 7 to 9 p.m.  
Contact: [Darren Kramer](#)

### Lake Superior Management Unit

- Wednesday, March 29, 6:30 to 8 p.m. EDT  
Contact: [Patrick Hanchin](#)

### Lake Huron Management Unit

- Tuesday, April 4, 6 to 7 p.m.  
Contact: [Randy Claramunt](#)

### Lake Erie Management Unit

- Tuesday, April 4, 7 - 8 p.m.  
Contact: [Sara Thomas](#)

### Southern Lake Michigan Management Unit

- Tues., April 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Contact: [Brian Gunderman](#)

For detailed meeting and contact information, visit the ["Conversations & Coffee" webpage](#). ✧

## Lake Huron fishery further protected from invasive sea lampreys

DETROIT, MI – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Detroit District and Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) are pleased to announce the completion of a \$1.67 million permanent sea lamprey trap on the East Branch Au Gres River in Iosco County, Michigan. The completion of the project represents a long-standing partnership between USACE and GLFC to control invasive sea lampreys and protect the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery.

Sea lampreys, parasitic fish that suck blood from other fish (e.g., lake trout and Pacific salmon), invaded the Great Lakes through shipping canals and devastated Great Lakes fisheries in the mid-1900s. Each sea lamprey can kill up to 40 pounds of fish per year. An estimated 4,500 sea lampreys enter Lake Huron from the East Branch Au Gres River each year. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission coordinates the sea lamprey control program that has reduced populations in the Great Lakes by about 90% since they first invaded, saving nearly 100 million pounds of fish each year.

Since sea lampreys are most vulnerable to capture as they move from lakes into tributaries to spawn, the control program relies on physical barriers to block their upstream migration during the spring, thereby reducing the population. Specially designed traps are built into or placed immediately downstream of sea lamprey barriers to remove the spawning sea lampreys from the system and support assessment efforts of the control program.

“Historically, portable assessment traps were operated in the East Branch Au Gres River, however the capture rate was quite low,” said Steve Check, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District project manager. “The new permanent trap was purposefully constructed to create higher water flows at the entrance to attract sea lampreys, which we expect to result in much higher catch rates.”

“We use every tool we can do keep the population of sea lampreys in check,” said GLFC Chair Jim McKane. “Traps not only remove sea lampreys from the system before they can spawn, but also provide a critical way to assess the adult population and gauge the success of the sea lamprey control program. The East Branch Au Gres River is one of nearly 60 tributaries trapped as part of the control program’s network and we look forward to seeing this new trap in operation this spring. We appreciate the support from Congressman Jack Bergman and Michigan Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters for their work to protect and improve the Great Lakes.”

Check continued: “The new East Branch Au Gres trap will ultimately serve as a model for similar trap construction projects in the future. It is a low-cost, versatile design that will only require minor adjustments to work in other systems and the maintenance requirements are relatively minor.”

The project was funded under the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program (GLFER), which is carried out by the USACE in partnership with the GLFC. Through the program, state, federal, and tribal representatives solicit, develop, and prioritize projects for construction by USACE. Projects eligible under the GLFER authority include those that involve aquatic and terrestrial habitat restoration that promote the natural reproduction and stability of fish communities, as well as those that aid in the control of the introduction or spread of invasive species in the Great Lakes.

The contractor, Great Lakes Dock and Material, LLC, based in Muskegon, Michigan, began construction on the project in November 2022. USACE approved the completion of the project on January 24, 2023, with plans to have the contractor return to the site in

the spring to complete grass planting and seeding.

Additional federal funding for the project was made possible by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources provided the property for the trap, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will oversee maintenance of the structure. ✧

## Ontario protecting walleye from illegal angling

The Ontario government is safeguarding walleye from illegal fishing practices by ensuring anglers are only keeping fish of a legal size. Sylvester Gutkowski of Winnipeg, Manitoba pleaded guilty to possessing fish of a prohibited size. He was fined \$2,700 and was also suspended from fishing in Ontario for one year. James Morrisette and Lorrie Morrisette both of Winnipeg, Manitoba pleaded guilty to fishing without a license. Each was fined \$200.

The court heard that on the evening of September 3, 2022, conservation officers were conducting a patrol of Caribou Falls north of Kenora and observed a group of people camping. During the contact it was determined that the group had been angling on the Winnipeg River and Gutkowski had nine illegally sized walleye. Both James and Lorrie Morrisette had been angling and neither had a valid license.

Justice of the Peace Daphne Armstrong heard the case in the Ontario Court of Justice, Kenora, on December 6, 2022.

To report a natural resource problem or provide information about an unsolved case, members of the public can call the ministry TIPS line toll free at 1-877-847-7667. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS. ✧

## State awards \$3.6 million for invasive species projects

The state of Michigan announced 35 projects will share \$3.6 million in grants through the [Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program](#).

The program – cooperatively implemented by the Michigan departments of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and Natural Resources – addresses prevention, detection, eradication and control of aquatic (water-based) and terrestrial (land-based) invasive species in Michigan through four key objectives:

- Preventing the introduction of new invasive species.
- Strengthening the statewide invasive species early detection and response network.
- Limiting the spread of recently confirmed invasive species.
- Managing and controlling widespread, established invasive species.

This year’s grantees have offered \$532,300 in matching funds and services to support these projects, leveraging a total investment of \$4,132,300.

### Expanding prevention, detection and management

Grant funds will support several early detection and response efforts for [watch list invasive species](#):

- Continuing survey and treatment of hemlock woolly adelgid in Oceana, Mason, Benzie and other counties along the Lake Michigan shoreline.
- Surveying and creating “trap trees” for spotted lanternfly across the Huron-Clinton Metroparks in Oakland and Macomb counties.
- Refining the potential for early detection of didymo (rock snot) using environmental DNA and testing environmental variables that may lead to stalk-producing “blooms.”

- Coordinating red swamp crayfish surveys across the Clinton and Rouge river watersheds.
- Initiating outreach and monitoring for watch list tree pests and diseases on the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians’ tribal lands.
- Treating known locations of mile-a-minute weed and expanding surveys in the vicinity of Albion in southwest Michigan.
- Coordinating Himalayan balsam survey, removal and outreach across the Upper Peninsula.

Funding also will support efforts to prevent the spread of invasive species:

- Testing the effectiveness of household cleaners to decontaminate waders, boats and equipment exposed to didymo and New Zealand mudsnails.
- Training paddle sport enthusiasts to decontaminate boats between uses and to look for and report aquatic invasive species.
- Spreading the “Clean, Drain, Dry” message using a mobile boat wash at popular boating access sites in southeast Michigan.
- Evaluating nitidulid beetle and oak tree cycles in the Upper Peninsula to better predict risk periods for spreading oak wilt.

### Support in every Michigan county

This year’s grants also support 21 regional [cooperative invasive species management areas](#), the network of partnership organizations working to manage and control invasive species and provide service to all 83 counties in the state. CISMA projects include enhanced education and outreach, technical assistance to landowners, and survey and treatment of high-priority invasive species.

### Program background and progress

In 2014 the state Legislature designated \$5 million in annual funding to address invasive species. This support substantially enhanced Michigan’s Invasive Species Program for aquatic organisms, supported a formal program for terrestrial species and initiated the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program.

This cycle marks the ninth year of program funding. To date, over \$32 million has been awarded to support 238 projects undertaken by units of government, nonprofits and institutions. Because of this program:

- More than 592,000 acres of land and water have been surveyed for invasive species.
- More than 51,000 acres have been treated for invasive terrestrial and aquatic plants.
- Through direct contact, including face-to-face interactions at boat washes, workshops, trainings and other events, 292,000 people have been reached with information about invasive species.
- An additional 41 million people were reached through grantees’ “passive impression” efforts, including mail, newspapers, social media and handouts.

### Over \$5 million requested

The program began accepting grant applications for this funding cycle in September 2022. A total of 42 applications were received, requesting approximately \$5.1 million in support. Grant applicants were asked to commit to providing at least 10% of the total project cost in the form of a local match.

The full [list of grant recipients, project descriptions and award amounts](#) is available on the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program website at [Michigan.gov/MISGP](http://Michigan.gov/MISGP). ✧

## Illinois spring trout fishing season opens **April 1** at 58 locations statewide

SPRINGFIELD – The 2023 Illinois spring trout fishing season will open Saturday, **April 1**, at 58 ponds, lakes, and streams throughout the state.

An early opportunity at selected trout sites – the spring catch-and-release fishing season – will open March 18. No trout may be kept during the catch-and-release fishing period, but anglers can keep trout after the opening of the regular season beginning April 1.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) stocks more than 80,000 rainbow trout each year in bodies of water where trout fishing is permitted during the spring season. An additional 80,000 trout will be stocked for the fall trout fishing season, which begins in October.

The Illinois Catchable Trout Program receives funding support from those who use the program through the sale of Inland Trout Stamps.

For the 2023 spring trout season, no trout may be taken from any of the stocked sites from March 13 until the season opens at 5 a.m. April 1. Anyone attempting to harvest trout before the legal harvest season opening will be issued citations.

All anglers, including those who intend to release fish caught before April 1, must have a fishing license and an Inland Trout Stamp unless they are under the age of 16, blind or disabled, or are an Illinois resident on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces. The daily harvest limit for each angler is five trout.

For more information on trout seasons and other Illinois fishing opportunities, check the website at [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org).

Illinois 2023 fishing licenses and Inland Trout Stamps are available now at IDNR license and permit locations, including many bait shops, sporting goods stores, and other retail outlets.

## Lake Champlain Management Cooperative to hold 'State of the Lake' meeting, **March 25**

The Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative, a working group of fisheries professionals from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is hosting a 'State of the Lake' meeting on March 25 for anglers and other individuals interested in the fisheries of Lake Champlain.

**Where:** SUNY Plattsburgh Hudson Hall, Lecture Room 106

**Address:** 317 Hudson Hall, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**When:** Saturday, **March 25**, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

This meeting is an opportunity for agency and university staff to provide updates on the status and trends of the fisheries and to hear from anglers. Information will be provided on restoration, research, assessment, and other work that has been accomplished over the past year, as well as work planned for the coming year. Species to be discussed include lake trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, muskellunge, walleye and bass. Time will be allotted for questions from the public. ✧

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For a list of locations, visit <https://www.exploremoreil.com/agentlocator>.

Fishing licenses and trout stamps also can be purchased online at <https://www.exploremoreil.com>.

For information about all site regulations, anglers should contact individual sites that will be stocked with catchable-size trout. Not all sites open at 5 a.m. on opening day. Anglers are reminded to check the opening time of their favorite sites prior to the open date. ✧

## DNR holding career fairs to recruit conservation officers

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is holding two open-house-style career fairs for anyone interested in learning about becoming a conservation officer. The career fairs are part of the agency's current CO Prep program application period, which runs through **March 31** and is for people without previous law enforcement experience.

The career fairs are Wednesday, March 15, from 4-7 p.m. at the DNR Central Office, 500 Lafayette Road in St. Paul, and Monday, March 20, from 4-7 p.m. at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, 2101 14<sup>th</sup> St. in Cloquet.

Anyone with at least a two-year degree and a love for the outdoors can apply for the CO Prep program, which is a key part of the DNR Enforcement Division's effort to create a workforce that more closely resembles the diverse communities it serves.

"We're looking for people who are hardworking and honest, and who possess a high degree of integrity," said Col. Rodmen Smith, director of the DNR Enforcement Division. "If they have those intrinsic traits, we can teach them to be good natural resources law enforcement officers."

Multiple DNR conservation officers, including those who have gone through the CO Prep program, will be at the career fairs to answer questions and share their perspectives on the career with attendees. Additional information, including a link to the application and location details, is on the [DNR website](http://DNR website).

Later this year, the DNR will open an application period for people with law enforcement experience who are interested in becoming a conservation officer. ✧



## 21 communities to share \$14.2 million in Michigan Grants for outdoor projects

Nearly three years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost two dozen of the hardest-hit Michigan communities are benefiting from \$14,178,900 in Michigan Spark Grants funding — a big boost toward creating, renovating or redeveloping public recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

“Every Michigander in every community deserves access to the great outdoors to connect with nature, exercise, and spend time with friends and family,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “These Spark Grants will fund a variety of public recreation projects across our state, including accessible trails at a Flint park, a rebuilt splash pad in Muskegon, and new bike racks, picnic tables and benches at a park in Sault Ste. Marie.

“Under the bipartisan Building Michigan Together Plan that I signed last year, we made the largest one-time investment ever in our state and local parks,” Whitmer said. “Now, we’re delivering those resources to move dirt and make a real difference in people’s lives while supporting good-paying jobs along the way.”

### [Open grant awards list](#)

Michigan Spark Grants, administered by the Michigan DNR, offer the DNR a chance to reach people in communities whose economic opportunities and public health were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This reimagined approach activates historic support for projects that provide safe, accessible public recreation facilities and spaces to improve people’s health, introduce new recreation experiences, build on existing park infrastructure and make it easier for people to enjoy the outdoors.

Two key ways these grants differ from the department’s existing recreation grant programs are that applicants can seek up to \$1 million

for a single project and there is no 25% match requirement.

In total, the DNR considered 462 applications requesting more than \$280 million — figures that far eclipsed what the department is used to. In comparison, the DNR’s top three recreation grant programs — the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Recreation Passport and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund — usually field a collective ask of around 150 applications seeking between \$50 million and \$60 million annually.

“The response was more than we could have imagined,” said acting DNR Director Shannon Lott. “Clearly, the Michigan Spark Grants opportunity and outreach have tapped into a critical need in many areas of the state, and we are proud to deliver support that will help create and restore the quality public recreation resources that we know can improve public health, anchor communities and strengthen a sense of place.”

Some of the funded projects in this round include:

- **\$1 million** to rehabilitate the St. John Street Neighborhood Memorial Park along the Flint River, in **Genesee County**, through improved and accessible trails, parking and a kayak/canoe launch, plus a new playground.
- **\$716,600** to revitalize Alford Park in Sault Ste. Marie, in **Chippewa County**, with the addition of accessible pedestrian paths and amenities such as bike racks, picnic tables and benches.
- **\$475,000** for replacement of the aging boardwalk at the Covert Park Beach and Campground, located along the Lake Michigan shore in **Van Buren County**.
- **\$393,000** to renovate the Marlette Community Park, in **Sanilac County**, with an accessible walking trail and playground equipment and updated pavilions.

- **\$250,000** to rebuild the city of Muskegon’s existing community splash pad, in **Muskegon County**.

All first-round grant recipients and project descriptions are available on the Michigan Spark Grants webpage.

### Building the program

This grant opportunity is possible because of the Building Michigan Together Plan, signed in March 2022, which included a historic \$450 million infusion of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding in our state and local parks. The DNR was tasked with administering \$65 million to:

- Leverage federal, state, local and private resources toward a sustainable public recreation development program.
- Provide a clear, simple and equitable grants distribution process in support of public recreation.
- Align project partners and community organizations so resources are maximized, and roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and balanced.

Recognizing that more needs to be done to help under-resourced communities overcome barriers in accessing grant opportunities, the DNR sought advice and perspective from philanthropic, planning and other groups with relevant expertise.

The advisory group — with representation from the DNR, the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Michigan Association of Regions, the Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance, the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation — focused on staying true to the program’s intent in making recommendations on scoring criteria and application requirements. Members also advised on a strategy for

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fund disbursement, though the DNR is ultimately responsible for how and where to leverage this funding.

“We started meeting last summer to talk about how best to frame the grant opportunity and identify communities most in need of this economic support,” said Clay Summers, executive director of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, a member of the advisory group. “We took a lot of time and care in trying to define the program and streamline the application process, and the overwhelming response only reiterates the importance of these funds. The advisory group has been working together to continue to improve the process to try to alleviate the burden on the applicants.”

**Moving forward**

“The demand and raw value of this program tell us there is an even greater need to reach into those regions, build a stronger network of philanthropic support, and make certain that all communities have the knowledge, tools and confidence they need to take advantage of grant resources,” said DNR Director Lott.

Given the overwhelming interest in these first-round grants, the DNR will work with the advisory group to determine next steps and application timeline, as well as look at opportunities to work with Michigan’s broader philanthropic community on ways to remove additional barriers to grant funding. Approximately \$50 million in additional Michigan Spark Grants is expected to be awarded later this year.

Lott encouraged applicants who did not receive Michigan Spark Grant funding in this round to explore the department’s other recreation-centered grant opportunities, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Recreation Passport and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund programs. Applications for these three programs are due April 1 each year.

Learn more about the Michigan Spark Grants program — and all DNR-administered grant opportunities — at [Michigan.gov/DNRGrants](http://Michigan.gov/DNRGrants). ✧

**DNR finalizes plan for Whitewater Wildlife Management Area**

The Minnesota DNR has finalized an updated management plan for the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area. The plan will guide management of the popular hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching destination in southeastern Minnesota. The new plan, finalized after a public input process, reflects current public values and attitudes about how the land should be managed into the future. The final plan is available on the [Whitewater WMA page](http://Whitewater WMA page) of the DNR website ([mndnr.gov/Areas/Wildlife/Whitewater WMA.html](http://mndnr.gov/Areas/Wildlife/Whitewater WMA.html)). ✧

**Sturgeon season photos needed**

The Wisconsin DNR is looking for sturgeon spearers to submit photos that help tell a story through a [photo submission form](#). Photos could be of spearers with their catch, cutting in, shanty life, scenic views observed during the season or anything else that captures the spearing tradition. **Please make sure the photos are age appropriate.** Select photos will be used for future DNR outreach efforts. ✧

**U.S. Sen. JD Vance wants to keep the Great Lakes great**

Newly elected U.S. Sen. JD Vance will co-chair the U.S. Senate’s Great Lakes Task Force, replacing his predecessor Rob Portman at the helm of a group that pushes to protect the world’s largest freshwater lake system. Vance said his priorities in the job will include fully funding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, fighting invasive species like invasive carp, and ensuring the Lakes’ aging lock systems and infrastructure stay in good repair to allow the passage of cargo ships. ✧

**Ontario spends \$4 million fighting a \$3.6 billion invasive species problem**

TORONTO — Ontario only spends \$4 million annually to fight [invasive species](#) despite the \$3.6 billion economic impact they create, the province’s auditor general said in her annual report.

Bonnie Lysyk said Ontario does not track dozens of invasive species in the province and conservation officers have never laid a charge under the 2015 act that sets rules to prevent and control the spread of those species.

“Overall, our audit found that the Natural Resources Ministry is not effectively monitoring and managing the introduction and spread of harmful invasive species in Ontario,” Lysyk said. The auditor general said there were years-long delays in regulating invasive species after the province completed risk assessments. Those regulatory delays are contributing to both the introduction and spread of invasive species, Lysyk concluded.

The Natural Resources Ministry has only one staff member regularly performing risk assessment work, contributing to the delays in regulating invasive species,” she said.

The report found that the Carolina fanwort — an invasive aquatic plant that crowds out native plants, clogs irrigation systems and interferes with aquatic recreation — was not regulated until five years after an expert provided a risk assessment to the ministry.

Lysyk also found that the ministry has left at least 30 harmful terrestrial invasive plants unassessed and unregulated. One such example is the tree-of-heaven, which hosts the spotted lanternfly, a federally regulated invasive insect that destroys vineyards, fruits, vegetables and hardwood. ✧

**Other Breaking News Items:****(Click on title or URL to read full article)****[Michigan, Illinois propose \\$114M toward invasive carp fortifications](#)**

The governors of Michigan and Illinois are proposing to jointly pay \$114 million toward an infrastructure project that would stop invasive silver and bighead carp from moving into the Great Lakes via Chicagoland waterways. Combined, the two state appropriations would cover the total non-federal share of current estimated project costs for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam

**[Wisconsin DNR convenes group to study whether lake trout should be commercially netted on Lake Michigan](#)**

Last year the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board made a formal request to begin netting lake trout on Lake Michigan. To that end, the Wisconsin DNR formed the Lake Michigan Lake Trout Commercial Harvest Stakeholder Group, made up of about a dozen state residents, to provide input on the commercial harvest of lake trout