



## Commission unveils interactive web-based visualization tool for fish stocking data

**Ann Arbor, MI** – The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) announced the launch of an interactive, web-based visualization tool designed to enhance public and fishery manager access to fish stocking data in the Great Lakes. This innovative tool is a significant step forward in fishery management, allowing users to explore more than seven decades of stocking events with unprecedented ease and accuracy. Users can access the data by visiting <http://fsis.glfsc.org/>.

Fish stocking has long been a vital practice for fishery rehabilitation and supplementation, with more than 400 million fish released into the Great

Lakes and their tributaries in the past ten years. Despite the critical role of these data, access has historically been limited to static tables and cumbersome queries. The new website changes that by providing a dynamic and interactive platform for users to visualize these data through maps, charts, and tables.

### Key features of the new tool:

- **User-friendly interface:** Allows easy exploration of fish stocking data through interactive maps, charts, and tables.
- **Standardized and accurate data:** Extensive collaboration with more than 40 agency staff from 15 offices to ensure data accuracy and standardization.

- **How-to guides:** Comprehensive guides to help users navigate and utilize the tool effectively.
- **Real-time data access:** Users can download datasets or dynamically link to the data, and agency staff can upload and correct data directly on the site.
- **Ticket tracker system:** Registered users can file trouble or suggestion tickets to improve the site.
- **Secure and reproducible data:** All data and site code are backed up at an offsite location, ensuring security and reproducibility.

**Interactive tool for fish stocking**  
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## DNR schedules online auctions for confiscated fishing/hunting equipment **Aug. 23 and Oct. 4**

The Minnesota DNR has scheduled two public auctions of confiscated fishing, hunting, and trapping equipment. The auctions, which will be held online **August 26** and **October 7**, include equipment that was confiscated following serious game and fish violations.

Following are additional key dates:

- A list of equipment to be auctioned will be available about a month before each auction at the [Hiller Auction Service website](http://hillerauction.com) (hillerauction.com).
- The bidding catalog for each auction will be available at the Hiller Auction Service website on **Aug. 22 and Oct. 3**. The catalog will include a written description and photos of each item.
- Online bidding for the auctions begins **Aug. 23 (first auction)**

**and Oct. 4 (second auction).** Onsite inspection is available at Hiller Auction Service in Zimmerman on **Aug. 23 and Oct. 4** from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- The auctions will begin closing at 5 p.m. on **Aug. 26 and Oct. 7**. All equipment will be sold as-is, including all defects or faults, known or unknown. Once they've been purchased, items cannot be returned. Background checks are required of anyone who successfully bids for a firearm.  
Revenue from confiscated equipment auctions will go into the Game and Fish Fund, which is the DNR's primary fund for delivering fish and wildlife management and law enforcement. For more information, see [DNR Enforcement's auction page](http://mndnr.gov/enforcement/auctions) (mndnr.gov/enforcement/auctions). ✧

## New name, same fish: Largemouth bass are now Florida bass

Genetics studies confirmed what many anglers and biologists have believed for a long time—Florida bass are special! Florida's most popular freshwater game fish has a new name. The [American Fisheries Society](#) established the Florida bass as a separate species from the largemouth bass. This means that in most of Florida (except the western Panhandle) what was known as a largemouth bass is now called a Florida bass.

This name change will affect how the fish is referred to in regulations and other communications. However, it will not affect anglers fishing for this iconic freshwater sport fish.

According to [the recent research publication by Yale University](#), the study used advanced genetic analysis and determined Florida bass to be its own species. The research also identified the range of Florida bass to be larger than once believed, including not only Florida, but also parts of Georgia, South and North Carolina.

The scientific names of these two bass also changed. Largemouth bass, previously *Micropterus salmoides*, is now the scientific name for Florida bass. Largemouth bass are now *Micropterus nigricans*.

Understanding and conserving fish species is crucial for sustainable recreational fishing and biodiversity preservation. The classification of species plays a key role in these efforts. Black basses (*Micropterus spp.*) are well-known freshwater fish and highly popular for recreational fishing. This new understanding of black bass diversity, distribution and classification provides a critical foundation for better managing and conserving these important and iconic fish. It will aid in ensuring their continued conservation and sustainable use for future generations.

[To learn more about the Florida bass name change](#) go to MyFWC.com, click on "Freshwater Fishing," select "Black Bass Management" and click on "Florida Bass. ✧

## Cheater's Boat Sold for \$96,288.50

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio DNR announced that the fishing boat seized from Chase Cominsky, 37, of Hermitage, Pa., was sold through an online auction. Cominsky and Jacob Runyan, 44, of Ashtabula, were convicted in May 2023 of felony cheating and misdemeanor animal



ownership charges.

The forfeited boat, a 22-foot Ranger, was sold in an online auction that closed on July 23. The winning bid for the boat was \$82,000 with a final price of \$96,288.50 including fees and taxes. The boat was offered for sale with its motors and trailer.

*The boat, which was forfeited, was sold in an online auction.*

With this money, the Division of Wildlife will purchase a new Lake Erie law enforcement patrol vessel for Ohio Wildlife Officers.

In 2022, the Division of Wildlife received a report of individuals cheating during a walleye fishing tournament in Cleveland. The resulting investigation seized a boat, motors, and trailer and penalties included a three-year fishing license revocation for both individuals.

Ohio wildlife officers have statewide authority to enforce wildlife regulations and protect state lands, waterways, and property. As state law enforcement officers, they contribute to public safety in their local areas and Ohio's great outdoors. They also speak to hundreds of clubs and groups about conservation and wildlife programs, perform fish and wildlife surveys, and provide technical advice and instruction about wildlife management issues, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor related recreation.

Anyone who witnesses a wildlife violation in Ohio can call 1-800-POACHER (1-800-762-2437). Reports are kept anonymous. ✧



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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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## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service promotes Public Access to Hunting and Fishing

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced 53 new distinct hunting and sport fishing opportunities on approximately 211,000 acres nationwide in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Twelve national wildlife refuges, managed by the Service, are proposing to open and expand opportunities for hunting and fishing. These refuges are in Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. These include first ever hunting opportunities on Green River National Wildlife Refuge, expanded waterfowl and archery deer hunting on newly acquired acres at Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge and expanded fishing on Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois is proposing to close 111 acres to hunting for other visitor uses, including camping.

“Hunting and fishing are traditional recreational activities deeply rooted in America’s heritage. Today, nearly 80% of Service stations offer hunting and fishing access that helps boost local economies and connects people with nature,” said Service Director Martha Williams. “We are pleased to expand access and offer new opportunities that are compatible with National Wildlife Refuge System purposes and are committed to responsibly manage wildlife health and these areas for the benefit of future generations.”

Increasing access to public lands and waters is a central component of the administration’s approach to conservation, including locally led and voluntary efforts to conserve and protect U.S. lands and waters under the [America the Beautiful initiative](#).

The Refuge System is an unparalleled network of 571 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts. There is a national wildlife

refuge within an hour’s drive of most major metropolitan areas. More than 68 million Americans visit refuges every year. National wildlife refuges provide vital habitat for thousands of species and access to world-class recreation, from fishing, hunting and boating to nature watching, photography and environmental education.

Hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities contributed more than \$394 billion in economic expenditures in communities across the United States in 2022, with hunters and anglers accounting for over \$144 billion in expenditures, according to the Service’s [National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#).

The survey also found that, in 2021, an estimated 39.9 million Americans over the age of 16 fished and 14.4 million hunted.

The best available science, analyzed as part of this proposed rulemaking, indicates that lead ammunition and tackle can have negative impacts on wildlife, and that exposure to lead has negative impacts to human health. The Service is engaged in a deliberate, transparent process of evaluating the future of lead use on Service lands and waters, working with our state partners, and seeking input from other stakeholders and the public. In the interim, we will not allow for any increase in lead use on Service lands and waters, and this proposed rulemaking would not increase the new use of lead on refuges.

The Service seeks comments from the public on the proposed rule for 30 days, beginning with publication in the Federal Register on August 2, 2024. The notice will be available at <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number: FWS-HQ-NWRS-2024-0034, and will include complete details on the proposals on the national wildlife refuges and how to submit your comments.

A complete list of all refuges opening or expanding opportunities is available in the new rule. View an [online list](#). The Service intends to finalize the proposed changes in time for the upcoming 2024-2025 hunting seasons.

Under the [National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997](#), the Service permits hunting and fishing along with four other types of wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife photography, environmental education, wildlife observation and interpretation, when they are compatible with an individual refuge’s purpose and mission.

[Hunting](#), within specified limits, is currently permitted on 400 wildlife refuges and 36 wetland management districts.

[Fishing](#) is currently permitted on 343 wildlife refuges and 35 wetland management districts. The Service manages hunting and fishing programs to [ensure sustainable wildlife populations](#) while also offering other wildlife-dependent recreation on public lands. ✧

### Outdoor skills and stewardship

The Minnesota DNR invites people interested in outdoor skills to check out the summer program schedule for the Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series. The Series webinars are free and offered year-round, though registration is required. Visit the Outdoor Skills and Stewardship webpage of the [Minnesota DNR website](#) ([mndnr.gov/discover](http://mndnr.gov/discover)) for the registration portal, more information about upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars.

Some subjects include:

- Introduction to North Shore fishing
- Orienteering for fun and survival ✧

## Minnesota DNR seeks input on proposed special fishing regulations

The Minnesota DNR is asking for input on several special fishing regulation proposals.

One set of proposed regulations currently under consideration comes in response to growing angler concerns about crappie and the increased pressure on these fish populations from winter fishing. On seven lakes in Otter Tail County and one in Lac qui Parle County, the Minnesota DNR is proposing to reduce the crappie daily limit to five.

“If we implement these limit reductions, we will carefully evaluate them as part of a separate fisheries research project to try to figure out which lakes and kinds of crappie populations benefit from reduced limits, because not all do,” said Jon Hansen, Minnesota DNR fisheries program consultant. “In some lakes where crappies don’t live very long, reducing the limit just means fish are lost to natural causes instead of being available for anglers to catch.”

The Minnesota DNR is also proposing either new regulations or changes to existing experimental and special fishing regulations for the 2025

fishing season that address the following topics:

- Saganaga and Sea Gull lakes (Cook County) walleye
- Sauk River Chain of Lakes (Stearns County) catfish
- Basswood Lake (Lake County) northern pike
- Garden Reservoir Chain and Birch Lake (Lake County) northern pike
- Basswood Lake (Lake County) sunfish
- Little Sauk Lake (Todd County) regulation simplification multiple species
- Rochester area lakes (Olmstead County) multiple species

The DNR is taking input on these proposals via an [online survey](https://mndnr.gov/fishregs) (mndnr.gov/fishregs) that is available through Friday, Oct. 7. For additional details or to comment directly by email, U.S. mail or phone about proposals, contact the [area fisheries office](https://mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries) (mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries) for the proposal(s) on which you wish to comment. General input may also be submitted to Jon Hansen at

[jon.hansen@state.mn.us](mailto:jon.hansen@state.mn.us) or 651-259-5239, or via U.S. mail to Fishing Regulations/Jon Hansen, Box 20, Minnesota DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

The Minnesota DNR is also hosting in-person open houses in each county where the proposed changes would apply and one in the Twin Cities metro area to cover all proposals.

For those who want to attend one of the in-person meetings, information can be found on the [Minnesota DNR website](https://mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing/fishing-regulations-meetings.html)

(mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing/fishing-regulations-meetings.html) or by calling an [area fisheries office](https://mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries) (mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries). The meetings will take place on various dates between Tuesday, **Sept. 10**, and Thursday, **Sept. 24**. The metro area open house will be from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. September 9 at the DNR’s Central Office, 500 Lafayette Road in St. Paul.

Notification of the proposed changes to special fishing regulations has been posted at the accesses to each lake included in the proposal. ✧

## Regulation change will increase walleye limit to 2 on Mille Lacs Lake

### *Early season conditions allow for increased late season fishing opportunity*

Effective Aug. 16, Mille Lacs walleye anglers can harvest up to two walleyes through Nov. 30. Both fish can be 18-20 in. long or one can be 18-20 in. and the other must be longer than 28 in.

“With high angler catch rates last fall, we opted for setting conservative fishing regulations this season because we expected high catch rates to continue,” said Brad Parsons, Minnesota DNR fisheries section manager. “Indeed, fishing was great for the first two months of the season. But with the catch and release regulation and windy and rainy weather, fewer people than expected fished Mille Lacs so far this season, creating room for more harvest.”

As of July 15, state-licensed anglers had harvested about 26% of their allowed walleye take.

Based on meteorologists’ projections for a hot and dry summer, along with data on the fishery and past angler effort, the originally planned regulation starting August 16 would have allowed anglers to keep one fish 21 to 23 in. or longer than 28 in.

Population surveys suggest that Mille Lacs currently has relatively high numbers of walleye 18-20 in. long. Expanding the possession limit and moving the size to that size range allows anglers to catch and keep the “eaters” many prefer.

“We hope that anglers come out and take advantage of this opportunity to fish walleye on Mille Lacs,” Parsons said. “Anglers have advocated for relaxing walleye regulations to increase harvest opportunity when conditions allow, and this is one of those times.”

State-licensed anglers share the harvest on Mille Lacs with Ojibwe tribes that retain fishing rights by treaty. To conserve the fishery, an annual safe harvest level is set through discussion and agreement between the state and the tribes, with each party setting regulations to stay within their share of the harvest.

As of July 15, state-licensed anglers had harvested around 24,000 lbs. from a potential harvest of 91,550 lbs. Tribal fishing harvest has been 53,671 lbs. of the allowed 65,950 lbs.

Complete Mille Lacs Lake fishing regs and regularly updated angler surveys that show ongoing state-licensed angler catches are available on the [Minnesota DNR website](https://mndnr.gov/millelacslake) (mndnr.gov/millelacslake). ✧



## Interactive tool for fish stocking

*Continued from page 1*

"This project represents a significant advancement in how we manage and interact with fish stocking data," said Commission executive secretary Marc Gaden. "By making these data more accessible and user-friendly, we are supporting better fishery management and fostering greater public engagement."

The development process identified and addressed several data issues, from typos to the need for standardization, ensuring the integrity of the information presented. The site also supports advanced data requests through a web portal (REST API), allowing technical users to create custom applications and visualizations which are linked to real-time data. An R package has been developed to facilitate data use in the common statistical software, further expanding the tool's versatility.

The public-facing site requires no login and aims to attract a wide range of users, from fishery managers and policy makers to anglers and the general public. This transparency and accessibility are expected to enhance the understanding and appreciation of fishery management efforts across the Great Lakes basin.

This project was supported by the Science Transfer Program, which seeks to make scientific information more accessible to inform fishery management decisions. The project to develop this tool was led by Adam Cottrill of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Future Developments:** Looking ahead, the Commission hopes to incorporate recovery data and additional features into a second version of the site. This expansion will require further data standardization and collaboration among a total of 35 agency offices in the Great Lakes basin. The Commission is committed to continuous improvement and user

## New state-record Largemouth Bass Record broken after 37 years



New York's Cayuga Lake has a concrete reputation for great bass fishing.

On July 11, James

Brittenbaugh of Pennsylvania smashed the 37 year old largemouth bass record by over a pound while fishing in preparation for an upcoming bass tournament on Cayuga Lake, Cayuga County. Caught on a senko, his record-breaking catch weighed in at 12 pounds 6 ounces and measured 25 inches! Congratulations James!

Fun fact: Cayuga Lake is now home to the smallmouth bass AND largemouth bass state records, both of which were released back in the lake.

James' catch is a great reminder of the incredible bass fishing our state has to offer. Did you know five New York waters made it in Bassmaster Magazine's Top 100 Best Bass Lakes in the country? The St. Lawrence River (Thousand Islands) is ranked as the best bass water in the nation, and Lake Erie/Upper Niagara River is ranked seventh! Lake Champlain, Cayuga Lake, and Oneida Lake made the list as well, and are in Bassmaster Magazine's Top 25 Northeastern Best Bass Lakes of 2024. Many waters across the state also offer exceptional bass fishing, and New York continues to be a destination for world class fishing ✧

feedback, ensuring the tool remains relevant and useful.

For more information and to access the new visualization tool, please visit <http://fsis.glfrc.org/>. ✧

## New ballast water regs for Great Lakes

New ballast water regulations designed to hinder the transport of aquatic invasive species within our Great Lakes will come into effect at the end of the year. They will require vessels entering the Great Lakes to transition to modern ballast water systems that cleanse water of organisms before release. The new regulations also include a program for a transition to the new water systems for vessels travelling only within the Great Lakes. Prior to 2006, a new aquatic invasive species was being introduced to the Great Lakes about every eight months. In 2006, new regulations required ships coming from other continents to switch their ballast water while in salt water.

The problem, which the Great Lakes Commission's Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species has been studying for years, is Great Lakes vessels which use ballast water are moving these invasive species from one location to another within the Great Lakes. The new regulations will tackle this problem. ✧

## Release Your Catch Responsibly

One of our favorite sounds in the summer is the sound of a fishing line being reeled in.

Once you've got the fish reeled in, if you don't plan to keep it, **R.E.L.E.A.S.E.** it.

- Reduce reel-time with fish.
- Encourage the use of rubber nets and cradles.
- Literally wet hands before handling fish.
- Easy access to unhooking tools.
- Always use two hands to support fish.
- Stick to 60 seconds or less of exposure time.
- Enable fish to recover in water before letting them go.

Release your catch responsibly and give another angler the opportunity to catch that fish. ✧

## Climate change contributes to shift in Lake Erie's harmful algal blooms

Lake Erie's harmful algal blooms have started sooner and had longer peak periods over the past decade compared to earlier years, newly released data shows. Warming temperatures linked to climate change are a cause, according to researchers for NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, with interactions among species likely playing a role as well.

The NOAA scientists discussed the shift and forecast a moderate to above-moderate algal bloom for the lake's western basin this summer during a briefing last month at Ohio State University and Ohio Sea Grant's Stone Laboratory, off the coast of Put-in-Bay on Lake Erie.

Algal blooms occur when cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, grow out of control due to a combination of excess nutrients, weather patterns and other ecological factors. The blooms can be a serious public health problem because some types of cyanobacteria produce toxins. Microcystin, for example, can lead to skin rashes, gut problems and liver and kidney issues. Relatively high levels of it in August 2014 prompted a two-day

shutdown of Toledo's public water supply, which comes from Lake Erie.

"We were certainly caught off guard, and the impact was hundreds of thousands of people were without drinking water," said Sean Corson, director of the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science. The total economic impact of the 2014 water crisis was around \$65 million, he said.

Even when toxic strains aren't the problem, algal blooms can still affect Ohio's lake-focused businesses and other activities. Aside from the ugliness of neon green scum, people can't distinguish between toxic and non-toxic strains by eye. Such uncertainty discourages lake-based activities, such as beach visits and fishing. Blooms also add to costs for water treatment plants.

Out-of-control cyanobacteria don't provide good eating for the rest of the lake's food web, either. And they contribute to so-called dead zones, areas with very low levels of dissolved oxygen that can't support aquatic life.

For more than a decade, NOAA has worked with partners in the state,

including the Ohio Sea Grant Program, the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg University, the Ohio State University and the

University of Toledo, to forecast the severity of the blooms in Lake Erie's western basin. It's the shallowest part of the lake, with abundant fish. Water is likely to warm faster and blooms flourish there more readily than elsewhere in the lake. Water in Lake Erie generally moves from west to east.

Last year's bloom was significantly larger than the smaller-than-average event researchers had predicted. So the forecast team took a closer look at the data.

From 2012 through 2023, Lake Erie's algal blooms have generally started in July, compared to the previous decade when blooms usually kicked in during August, said NOAA oceanographer Rick Stumpf, who plays a leading role in the forecasting program. The lake's algal blooms during the past decade also have had longer peak periods, resembling plateaus instead of short spikes. ✧

## Bloody red shrimp found in Lake Superior raises worry of another invasive species

A solitary bloody red shrimp was found in the Twin Ports Harbor, raising fears that the light-hating, zooplankton-eating invasive critters have found their way to Lake Superior. If it does represent the beginning of an invasion, it would be the first in many years for Lake Superior. But the tiny shrimp may have been dead on arrival after being dumped from a cargo ship — environmental officials can't be sure.

It was collected last July on Allouez Bay on the east side of the port in Superior as part of routine surveying for

invasive species, and identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service some months later. "We have no way of knowing how it got here," said Doug Jensen, invasive species specialist with the Sea Grant program at the U of Minnesota, Duluth.

A native of the Caspian Sea in Europe, it was first found in the Great Lakes in 2006 near Muskegon in Lake Michigan, and since then in Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Ontario.

The shrimp grow up to half an inch

long, and swarm in concentrations up to 300 hundred per cubic yard, he said. They don't like light, hanging out in the shadows of docks and boats, and coming out to feed on zooplankton at night.

That means they could compete with other zooplankton-eating fish. On the other hand, in the fish-eat-fish world below the surface, the bloody shrimp could represent a new kind of food for species of fish that eat native freshwater shrimp. ✧

## ICAST 2024 – Best of category & best of show award winners

Orlando, FL – On July 18th, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) announced the award for Best in Show at ICAST 2024 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida.

Of the 41 category winners voted on by members of the media and retail buyers at the New Product Showcase sponsored by Fishing Tackle Retailer, the PENN Fathom Electric Reel from Pure Fishing, Inc. took home the prized Best in Show Award.

“The New Product Showcase is one of the most important elements in the fishing industry” said Glenn Hughes, President of ASA. “The category winners and the best of show announcements are the culmination of years of research and development and truly shape the future of our industry. Congratulations to Pure Fishing on winning this year’s Best of Show Award and thank you to the great folks at Fishing Tackle Retailer for sponsoring again this year.”

“It means a lot after the several years we put into this and for the members of our team to be recognized” said Ben Joyce, PENN Senior Product Manager at Pure Fishing. “You can continue to expect improved innovation from us this year and beyond.”

The PENN Fathom Electric is the world’s first reel with an integrated battery, providing anglers with incredible torque and power. With an easy-to-use LED display screen showing a true line counter, auto-stop functionality, and angler-friendly customizable settings, the PENN Fathom Electric is available in three sizes (30, 50, 80), with an array of accessories.

Almost 1,000 products were submitted to the New Product Showcase in 2024, including rods, reels, accessories, electronics, and apparel. This year’s

showcase also included expanded fly fishing categories and boasted submissions from more than 260 companies.

“ICAST is the most important week in the business of fishing and Fishing Tackle Retailer’s platforms are all about the business of fishing” said Angie Thompson, Publisher at Fishing Tackle Retailer. “To be able to sponsor the New Product Showcase, the biggest event in ICAST, is an incredible honor. Our Mission is to make sure all retailers know about new products, and how to use and sell them.”

ICAST is the largest fishing trade show in the world, bringing over 14,000 people from 75 countries to Orlando this summer to see the newest products and brands in the sportfishing industry. Hosted by ASA, this year’s show included more than 635 exhibitors and more than 950 brands in the fishing industry.

By the time the fanfare of ICAST’s opening day began to wind down, a legion of exhibitors began steadily flowing into the ICAST Best of Category Awards Reception. Arguably the highlight of the show, the revamped awards reception featured an all-new stage and a grand room packed with manufacturers vying for a coveted “Best of Category” trophy and a ticket to compete for overall Best of Show in the New Product Showcase sponsored by Fishing Tackle Retailer.

In a concert-like atmosphere, winners made their way to a stage helmed by ASA President, Glenn Hughes, and Vice President of Communications Mary Beth Long. Together, the duo handed out 41 trophies and 41 coveted tickets to the Best of Show competition.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full list of this year’s winners. ✧

## Apply through **Aug. 16** for special youth deer hunts

Hunters can apply for special youth deer hunt permits through Friday, **Aug. 16**. The number of permits for each hunt is limited. Individual hunts will be held in several state parks on various dates in the fall. These firearms hunts are for youth who are ages 12-15 at the time of the hunt and are accompanied by an adult.

The youth archery hunt in the Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area in Sherburne County is for youth ages 10-17. Youth archery hunters at the Camp Ripley Archery Hunt in Morrison County can be ages 12-17.

Special youth deer hunts are different from the statewide youth deer season, which takes place October 17-20 and does not require an application. For more info: [Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website \(mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/special-deer-hunts.html\)](https://mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/special-deer-hunts.html).

In most instances, hunters may only possess and use nontoxic ammunition when participating in a special hunt in a Minnesota state park; however, nontoxic ammunition requirements do not apply to special youth hunts in the shotgun-use area if hunters remove all parts of harvested deer from the field, including the entrails. Where nontoxic ammunition is required, bullets, slugs, muzzleloader ammunition and other single projectiles must be made entirely of nontoxic material approved by the USFWS. For deer hunting, this typically means copper ammunition.

For more details about nontoxic ammo: [Minnesota DNR website \(mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/special-deer-hunts.html\)](https://mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/special-deer-hunts.html).

**Contact:** [Todd Froberg](#), big game program coordinator, 651-470-5018 ✧

## Upcoming Programs to Expand Your Outdoor Skills

### Fishing Programs


Outdoor skills programs offered by the Wisconsin DNR and partners provide great opportunities to gain hunting, trapping, shooting and fishing experience. These programs are open to the public and cater to a variety of skill levels, schedules and interests. Fishing licenses are required for anglers ages 16 and older. Get yours in advance on [Go Wild](#).

- Aug. 8: [Learn To Fish](#), Devil's Lake State Park (Baraboo)
- Aug. 13: [Learn To Fish: Milwaukee County](#), Lincoln Park (Milwaukee)
- Aug. 14: [Learn To Fish: Dane County](#), Olin Park (Madison)
- Aug. 14: [Learn To Fish: Milwaukee County](#), Mitchell Park (Milwaukee)
- Aug. 16: [Learn To Fish](#), Devil's Lake State Park (Baraboo)

### DNR to host Family Fun Day at Brule State Fish Hatchery Aug. 17

**BRULE, Wis.** – The Wisconsin DNR, along with some clubs will host their annual Family Fun Day at the [Brule State Fish Hatchery](#) in Brule on **Aug. 17**, 10am-3pm. This free, family-focused event will feature stream shocking and fish filleting demonstrations, guided hatchery tours, fly tying, casting and youth archery lessons, firefighter activities for juniors and t-shirt painting. Guests will also have the opportunity to participate in catch-and-release fishing and canoe trips on the Brule River.

The Brule F.H. raises seeforellen brown trout for stocking into Lakes Michigan and Superior. Although the hatchery is located within the Brule River State Forest, vehicle admission stickers are not required on the day of the event. A valid [Wisconsin fishing license](#) is required for anyone age 16 or older to fish.

More info on the open house is available on the [DNR Events Calendar](#) 

- Aug. 21: [Learn To Fish: Dane County](#), Filene Park (Madison)
- Aug. 22: [Fishing Drop-In Session](#), Mirror Lake State Park (Baraboo)
- Aug. 28: [Learn To Fish: Dane County](#), Vilas Park (Madison)
- Aug. 30: [Learn To Fish](#), Mirror Lake State Park (Baraboo)
- Sept. 11: [Learn To Fish: Dane County](#), Wingra Park (Madison)
- Oct. 2: [Learn To Fish: Dane County](#), Law Park (Madison)

### Hunting and Shooting Programs

- Aug. 12: [Women's Open Trap Shooting](#), Northwoods Wildlife & Wetlands Club (Mercer)
- Aug. 17: [Intro To Archery For Adults](#), Mead Wildlife Area Center (Milladore)


### Find your perfect fishing spot in Wisconsin

You don't need a boat to find places to fish in Wisconsin. People of all abilities can fish at state parks with shore fishing and accessible fishing piers. Whether you are near [Copper Falls State Park](#) in northern Wisconsin, [Potawatomi State Park](#) in the eastern part of the state, [Mirror Lake State Park](#) in central Wisconsin or any park in between, there are unique and accessible spots around the state waiting for you to cast a line. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act, every fishing pier the Wisconsin DNR builds is accessible to people with disabilities. The accessible fishing piers are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, are wider to offer enough room for turning around and have lower railings and rod holders so that anglers can cast out and fish.


You can use the [interactive map on the Find a Park page](#) to explore fishing opportunities at state parks by filtering the map to "Fishing" in the "Activities" section. You can also use


- Aug. 20: [Women's Wingshooting Night](#), North Bristol Sportsman's Club (Sun Prairie)
- Aug. 26: [Women's Open Trap Shooting](#), Northwoods Wildlife & Wetlands Club (Mercer)
- Sept. 9: [Women's Open Trap Shooting](#), Northwoods Wildlife & Wetlands Club (Mercer)
- Sept. 21: [Intro To Archery For Adults](#), Crex Meadows Wildlife Area (Grantsburg)

Learn more and find instructions to register for classes on the [DNR's Events page](#). Make sure to check back often throughout the season – new events are added as they are scheduled.

If you'd like to host an outdoor skills program, contact: Hunting, Trapping and Shooting: [Emily Iehl](#); Fishing: [Theresa Stabo](#) 

### Apply through **Aug. 16** for prairie chicken hunt lottery

Hunters can apply through Friday, **Aug. 16**, to be chosen for one of 125 permits for the 2024 Minnesota prairie chicken hunting season. The nine-day prairie chicken season begins Saturday, Sept. 28, and is open to Minnesota residents only. The hunt takes place in northwestern Minnesota from St. Hilaire south to Breckenridge. Hunters who are awarded a permit in the lottery are required to purchase a prairie chicken hunting license prior to hunting. Hunters can find details about the season on the [Minnesota NR website](#) ([mndnr.gov/hunting/prairiechicken](http://mndnr.gov/hunting/prairiechicken)). **Contact:** [Nate Huck](#), resident game bird specialist, 218-203-4311 

the map to find other amenities like accessible campsites, cabins and fishing piers. Some state parks are also home to [tackle loaner sites](#). 



## More than 9.1 million fish stocked in 2024 means plentiful Michigan fishing

Anglers can look forward to great fall fishing, due to successful spring and summer fish stocking by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The DNR stocked a total of 9,118,112 fish that weighed nearly 321 tons and consisted of 10 different species and one hybrid.

Fish stocking is an important activity to provide both Michigan residents and visitors with quality fishing opportunities. These efforts also bring an estimated \$4.2 billion into the state's economy and help support [a Great Lakes fishery valued at more than \\$7 billion](#). To complete the task of stocking, 17 specialized trucks started in early spring and took 451 trips—traveling more than 100,000 miles and 2,829 hours—to 691 stocking sites. Releasing fish early in spring can reduce their loss to major bird predators, like cormorants, whose peak migration times come later in the season.

“We had another excellent spring and summer stocking season that will bring ecological benefits and fishing opportunities to Michigan anglers,” said Aaron Switzer, DNR fish production manager. “Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our staff, healthy, high-quality fish were reared and delivered to stocking sites in excellent condition. The numbers produced and stocked met the targets for most areas.”

The number and type of fish produced vary by hatchery, as the source and temperature of the water determine which fish can be raised in that location. Fish are reared in Michigan's state fish hatcheries anywhere from one month to 1 1/2 years before they are stocked.

In Michigan there are six state and two cooperative hatcheries that work together to produce the species, strain and size of fish needed for fisheries

managers. These fish must then be delivered and stocked at a specific time and location to ensure their success.

Each hatchery stocked the following fish this spring:

- **Marquette State Fish Hatchery (near Marquette)** stocked 323,710 yearling lake trout, brook trout and splake (a hybrid of lake trout and brook trout) that in total weighed 41,771 pounds. This hatchery stocked 90 inland and Great Lakes sites.
- **Thompson State Fish Hatchery (near Manistique)** stocked 1,171,696 fish that included yearling steelhead and spring fingerling Chinook salmon. These fish weighed 102,442 pounds in total. This hatchery stocked 64 sites (the majority located on the Great Lakes).
- **Oden State Fish Hatchery (near Petoskey)** stocked 762,074 yearling brown trout and rainbow trout that in total weighed 112,704 pounds. Oden also stocked 3,689 adult brown and rainbow trout that in total weighed 8,148 pounds. This hatchery stocked 159 inland and Great Lakes sites.
- **Harrietta State Fish Hatchery (in Harrietta)** stocked 684,487 yearling brown trout and rainbow trout that in total weighed 84,812 pounds. This hatchery stocked 200 sites (the majority located inland).
- **Platte River State Fish Hatchery (near Honor)** stocked 2,272,494 fish that included yearling Atlantic salmon, yearling coho salmon and spring fingerling Chinook salmon that in total weighed 161,396 pounds. Platte River also stocked 31,514 skamania steelhead obtained from the Indiana DNR that in total weighed 4,314 pounds. This hatchery stocked 23 sites (the

majority located on the Great Lakes).

- **Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery (near Kalamazoo)** stocked 1,485,711 fish that included yearling steelhead, yearling muskellunge and spring fingerling Chinook salmon that in total weighed 123,381 pounds. Wolf Lake also stocked 22,067 channel catfish obtained from the Ohio DNR, that in total weighed 670 pounds. This hatchery stocked 51 sites (the majority located on the Great Lakes).
- **A cooperative teaching hatchery at Lake Superior State University (in Sault Ste. Marie)** stocked 19,285 Atlantic salmon weighing 1,849 pounds into the St. Marys River.

Included in this year's total fish stocked were 2.4 million walleye spring fingerlings. These fish, reared in ponds by the DNR with extensive support provided by local sporting organizations, were stocked at 61 inland lakes and rivers and Lake Michigan.

Some hatcheries will also provide fish for a few additional stockings (consisting of brook trout, Atlantic salmon, walleye, lake sturgeon and muskellunge) to be made this fall. The lake sturgeon will come from the cooperative hatchery in Tower, Michigan that is operated with Michigan State University.

The public is welcome at any of Michigan's state fish hatcheries to see the fish rearing process firsthand. For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/Hatcheries](https://Michigan.gov/Hatcheries).

To find out where many of these fish were stocked, go to DNR Fish Stocking Database at [michigandnr.com/fishstock](https://michigandnr.com/fishstock). ✧

## Sault Tribe restocks U.P. waterways with walleye, whitefish

The Sault Tribe transported and released more than 1.1 million walleye fingerlings into waters of the eastern UP and northern Lower Peninsula in early June, a slight drop from the 1.4 million released last year. A week later, Sault Tribe staff released 45,421 whitefish fingerlings from the Pine River's mouth.

In 2023, the tribe was responsible for a third of the total walleye released in Michigan. Walleye are also released by Michigan researchers. The release efforts have generated an estimated \$2.5 million for the commercial fishing industry and \$2.14 million in sport fishing activity, according to a press release from the tribe.

Whitefish are also a backbone of the commercial fishing industry as they account for [about 85%](#) of the catch in Michigan. Searching for a [solution](#) to the declining whitefish population, the tribe decided to release whitefish in the summer this year, and the most yet—a huge increase from last fall when only about 8,500 whitefish were released. The tribe has released whitefish for three years now.

Sault Tribe fisheries biologists collect eggs from adult fish and then fertilize and incubate the eggs until they hatch. Upon hatching, the fish are raised in ponds until they grow large enough to be released. This year, the walleye were transported to 10 different lakes, with 312,000 going to St. Martin's River and 170,000 going to Potagannissing River. ✧

## Cormorants continue to wreak havoc on Lake Ontario

HENDERSON HARBOR, New York – Cormorants, a fish-eating bird on Lake Ontario, continue to cause issues on Lake Ontario.

A massive kill of the bird 20 years ago at the hands of local fishermen made headlines back then, and now in 2024, one man involved thinks the problem is worse today.

Anglers in Henderson Harbor are forced to compete with the cormorant.



“We struggle a lot here in the Harbor,” said Butch Rympa.

The birds can eat up to two pounds of fish per day, and with thousands of cormorants calling Lake Ontario islands home, their appetite is taking fish away from anglers who make a living on the water.

The issue came to a head in 2003 when local fisherman Ron Ditch and nine of his buddies took matters into their own hands.

“We had a major shoot and we knocked the population down considerably at the time,” said Ditch, who now works as a charter captain.

They killed 850 cormorants, but the bird is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the killers were each fined \$2,500.

The issue in 2003 was resolved when the Department of Environmental Conservation decided to start oiling the eggs to limit the population, but Ditch says the current situation is far worse.

“These birds that escaped the oiling of the eggs that will hatch, will begin to learn how to fly. Not only will they be able to fly, but they will learn how to fish,” Ditch said.

Some believe oiling the eggs isn't enough to mitigate the bird's population and think an open season on the cormorants could help control the population. It's similar to what Canada does.

“They can put a limit on it or whatever they have to do to try to get them in check, and keep the population in check,” Rympa said. ✧

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

[We're outnumbered by zebra mussels. Where they may be headed next](#)

The Great Lakes are full of zebra mussels, one estimate puts their population in the Great Lakes alone at 750 trillion. While projects are underway to try and reduce their numbers, their steady expansion to the Western U.S has many concerned

[Senators say \\$450M in federal funds secured for Soo Locks project](#)

U.S. Senators Gary Peters (MI) and Debbie Stabenow (MI) say they have secured the \$450 million in federal funding included in the Fiscal Year 2025 *Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* for the Soo Locks construction

**Other Breaking News Items: - continued****[COMMENTARY: One idea to curb the invasive Asian carp: Eat them](#)**

Midwestern states are spending millions every year to prevent invasive carp from entering rivers and lakes. Barriers might slow them down but stopping them completely may be impossible. Officials and researchers think, however, that the creation of

**[Wisconsin's Apostle Islands could become America's newest national park](#)**

The Apostle Islands could soon become Wisconsin's first national park, thanks to an effort by several federal lawmakers. Becoming a national park would attract more people to the Apostle Islands, sharing the natural beauty of the islands and shores of Lake

**[DEC recommends removing Monroe County lakeshore from 'area of concern' after 40 years of restoration work](#)**

For nearly 40 years, the New York Department of Conservation considered the Lake Ontario shoreline from Webster to Parma, New York, to be an Area of Concern (AOC). After four decades of restoration work, regulators recommend removing the lakeshore

**[Tribal partnership with UW-Madison combines ag research with Indigenous food knowledge](#)**

A partnership led by the Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition and the U of Wisconsin-Madison received \$10 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agricultural Systems program earlier this summer. The partnership builds on existing

**[Great Lakes whitefish struggle to survive as ice cover melts away](#)**

Biologists are investigating why whitefish numbers in the lower Great Lakes are cratering without adequate spawn classes to replace them. New evidence indicates the fish, which lay eggs on shallow reefs that rely on winter ice cover, are being squeezed

**[Manitowoc Salmon Derby winners and biggest fish, plus more news in the latest outdoors report](#)**

NE Wisconsin Great Lakes Sport Fishermen held its 49th annual Salmon Derby July 5-7 at the Manitowoc Marina. 362 people registered to participate. At the end of the three-day event, 1,295 fish were registered by participants, the highest number of fish

**[Lake Erie was at record levels in 2019. Where things stand, and a forecast, 5 years later.](#)**

Lake Erie water levels are slightly above average midway through July but a far cry from the record levels reached a few years ago. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers forecasts that water levels will fall in the coming months, but July is seeing an uptick from

**[Experts predict moderate Lake Erie toxic algae bloom](#)**

Lake Erie's annual algae bloom has begun to form weeks ahead of schedule off the coast of southeast Michigan, but scientists say they expect only a moderate bloom this year.

**[Climate change is hurting Lake Erie. Ohio is training a workforce to help](#)**

Climate change is altering Lake Erie: warmer water temperatures increase the risk of toxic algal blooms. Less ice cover in the winter can lead to more soil erosion. And its water levels are fluctuating at a faster rate. A new program at Ohio State University's

**[Michigan trying new approaches against invasive crayfish](#)**

Researchers are exploring new techniques to remove an invasive crayfish from Michigan waters, including pesticide treatments, introducing predatory fish, adding lights to traps, and increasing public awareness

**[A brief history of FishPass](#)**

After many years of planning, a state-of-the-art scientific facility has broken ground in Traverse City, Michigan. FishPass is an experimental fish passage system that will replace the aging Union Street Dam with a barrier that has the ability to sort and

**[Great Lakes 360 living museum opens in Niagara Falls](#)**

The Great Lakes 360 living museum is now open in Niagara Falls, New York. It is located inside the former Gorge Discovery Center at Niagara Falls State Park. There are 16 interactive exhibits featuring turtles, amphibians, insects and many species of fish,

**[As climate change alters lakes, tribes and conservationists fight for the future of spearfishing](#)**

As a result of warming waters, increasingly variable seasonal changes and lakeshore development, walleye numbers in some lakes are dwindling. Losing the species would mean losing a food source for Great Lakes community members, a sovereign right to fish,

**[NOAA seeks advisory council for proposed marine sanctuary in Pa. portion of Lake Erie](#)**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is seeking people to give advice about a proposed national marine sanctuary in Lake Erie adjacent to Erie, Pennsylvania. Adding a sanctuary would enable NOAA to protect the region's maritime  
End