



Michigan DNR's draft Saginaw Bay walleye/yellow perch plan

A healthy, abundant walleye population is a big part of Michigan's fisheries, and Saginaw Bay is no exception. These native fish provide exciting opportunities for world-class recreational fishing and play an important ecological role as a top predator.

The Michigan DNR has updated its plan for Saginaw Bay recreational fishing. The [draft Walleye and Yellow Perch Recreational Management Plan for Saginaw Bay](#) is available for review and comment.

Jeff Jolley, the DNR's Southern Lake Huron Unit manager, said this draft plan reflects the status of the recovered walleye population and the department's management effort

toward maintaining diverse fishing and harvest opportunities for both walleye and perch. "The harvest opportunities Saginaw Bay has been providing since recovery of the walleye population are a big draw for anglers," Jolley said.

The walleye population collapsed in the 1940s and remained that way until alewife numbers declined in Lake Huron during the early 2000s. With newly hatched walleye fry released from the predation threat of alewives, their survival immediately increased and the population began to recover—as did angler catch and harvest. Despite fast growth and quality-sized fish present, adult yellow perch abundance within Saginaw Bay has declined as walleye have expanded,

and perch remain a focus of improvement.

The content of this management plan reflects significant input from several individuals and groups. The Saginaw Bay Walleye and Yellow Perch Workgroup were generous with their time, patience, and contributions to this effort. These individuals represented citizen and nongovernmental organization input to help craft management visions and goals. They persevered and were great and gracious partners as we worked through a virtual process that was imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lake Huron Citizen Fishery Advisors also provided a respectful and valuable platform for discussing the various relevant topics.

Draft Sag Bay walleye/perch plan

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Walleye anglers wanted: Fishing to improve scientific research

The Northern Highland Fishery Research Area (NHFRA) is looking for walleye anglers to help contribute to data collection for a project studying the effects of predetermined harvest pressures on a previously unexploited walleye population. The season opener for this effort was Saturday, June 8.

This walleye study will take place on Escanaba Lake; however, the NHFRA is comprised of five lakes (Escanaba, Nebish, Palette, Spruce and Mystery), all of which are open to public angling.

Since 1946, these lakes have been continuously managed for experimental fisheries research. A mandatory creel survey of all anglers who fish the NHFRA has allowed scientists to gather over 75 years of data on angler demographics and harvest, leading to one of the largest creel datasets in the world.

To help with walleye research, anglers are needed to harvest enough walleye to meet the annual quota. If the quota is met before the season's closing day, March 2, 2025, walleye fishing is prohibited until the following second Saturday in June.

The following walleye [fishing regulations](#) are now in place on Escanaba Lake:

- 15-inch minimum length limit
- 20-24 inch protected no harvest slot length limit
- Daily bag limit: Three walleye, with only one walleye over 24 inches allowed

Restrictions vary among the NHFRA's other lakes due to various research project needs, but current restrictions on all lakes can be found by visiting the [Fish the NHFRA](#) homepage. ✧

Field & Stream returns to print

Nashville, TN – [Field & Stream](#), the legendary outdoor-lifestyle brand with origins dating back to 1871, returns to mailboxes for the first time in nearly four years as a print publication. The all-new Journal, now en route to [1871 Club](#) Premium & Print tier members, features 160 pages of great storytelling, expert advice, beautiful photography, and more.

This issue marks the first edition of the Field & Stream Journal since the pre-eminent outdoors brand was acquired in January by country music superstars Eric Church and Morgan Wallen, alongside a group of experienced brand builders. As promised, the Field & Stream team is returning the publication to where it belongs: in the hands of those who love the outdoors and the tales that come from being there.

“Relaunching Field & Stream in print feels like opening day in more ways than one,” said Field & Stream Editor-in-Chief Colin Kearns. “It’s the start of a new season and the beginning of a renewed journey with our readers.”

The inaugural 2024 Field & Stream Journal, officially out on June 5th, features a rich mix of stories, including: a horse-packing adventure in British Columbia; personal essays of fathers and sons and their mutual love for wild places; a ranking of the best top-water lures ever; and trout-fishing tips for this summer’s cicada invasion. Eric Church also shares a tale of his own in the first installment of his brand-new F&S column, “Church Country.” His story, titled “Seed Ticks,” recounts the first time he visited the property where he would eventually build a fishing cabin. The humorous—and, at times, nail-biting—yarn takes readers on an outdoor adventure with his wife and father-in-law, complete with a car chase, jungle survival and a full-fledged war on microscopic bloodsuckers. ✧

Prepare now to boat safely this summer

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR urges water enthusiasts to check boat equipment and review basic safety tips to prepare for the upcoming water season.

“Safety is an important part of water fun,” said Lt. Darren Kuhn, DNR boating law administrator. “Wisconsin rivers and lakes can be relaxing and family-friendly places to spend a spring day when you put safety first and respect the water.”

Check that your boat and trailer lights and safety equipment are in working order to save time and frustration at the boat launch. A full checklist of required equipment is available on the last page of the [Wisconsin Boating Laws and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

It’s also important to inspect your life jackets for wear and tear. Most inflatable jackets should be checked for leaks every six months, and the cartridge should be checked before each use. The jacket manufacturer’s website should have instructions on how to check your life jacket status.

Follow the safety tips below and enjoy Wisconsin’s great lakes and rivers with family and friends.

[Sign up now to take an online boater education course.](#)

Always wear a properly fitted and fastened life jacket when you’re on or near the water. A life jacket will keep you on top of the water if you walk off an unexpected drop-off, a wave or current overpower you or you fall out of a boat.

Enjoy the waters sober and know your limits. Alcohol blurs a person’s judgment, reaction time and abilities.

River shorelines and sandbars pose unseen dangers. Higher, fast-moving water can tax an individual’s boating, paddling and swimming skills.

Keep an eye on the weather and always tell someone where you are going.

Be ready for the unexpected, and always wear your life jacket. [Learn more boating safety tips on the DNR’s Boat Safety webpage.](#) ✧



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

Inland Seas Angler

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Sault tribe challenges Michigan fishing deal, chides ‘preposterous’ rules

Michigan’s largest Native American tribe is appealing the legal agreement that allocates fishing rights in Michigan’s portion of the Great Lakes, arguing that as a sovereign nation, the tribe can’t be forced to follow rules crafted without its consent.

In an appeal filed in the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians seeks a trial to challenge the [latest Great Lakes fishing decree](#), a document that dictates how five Native American tribes and the federal and state governments share access to Michigan’s Great Lakes fish. The agreement, finalized last year, covers nearly 19,000 square miles in lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior, where Michigan tribes retained fishing rights in the 1836 Treaty of Washington.

Speaking to reporters, Sault Chairperson Austin Lowes argued that because the tribe didn’t sign the agreement, it has a treaty right to decide when, where and how Sault tribe members fish. “This treaty predates Michigan’s very existence,” Lowes said, “and the fact that we have to get Michigan to agree to how we can fish in the waters that we ceded is absolutely preposterous.”

Officials with the Michigan DNR did not respond to an inquiry about the appeal. Nor did attorneys for other tribes that signed the decree. The Sault tribe’s lawsuit is the latest controversy in a years-long struggle to rewrite fishing rules in lakes fundamentally changed by invasive species and other factors.

Since arriving on ocean-going cargo ships in the 1980s, quagga and zebra mussels have invaded every Great Lake but Superior, [hogging nutrients](#) and leaving less food for fish. The whitefish that have long sustained livelihoods for tribal fishers are [near the brink of collapse](#), while some salmon species favored by recreational

anglers have also grown scarce. That has [created tensions](#), with tribal, recreational and state-regulated commercial fishers all seeking a slice of an ever-smaller pie.

The Sault tribe wants access to more fish species, and more fishing territory, with less oversight by the state government.

First crafted in 1985, the [decree](#) has been renegotiated several times. But after tensions erupted at the bargaining table, the latest update was negotiated largely without the Sault tribe’s involvement. In addition to the state and federal governments, four tribes signed onto the legal agreement in 2022: The Bay Mills Indian Community, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

But the Sault tribe refused to sign the document, and filed a host of objections to its terms. Nonetheless, U.S. District Court Judge Paul Maloney [finalized](#) the decree in August 2023, binding all parties to its terms.

With the whitefish that sustain tribal fisheries in [alarming decline](#), tribes negotiated access to new fishing locations, species, and gear. In perhaps the most controversial change, the new agreement allows tribal fishing boats to use gillnets in certain locations and at certain times of year.

But Sault tribe officials complain the decree locks their fishers out of prime waters, while imposing too many restrictions on gillnets, blocking tribal fishers from catching certain species, and wrongly requiring them to report catch data to the state. “Quite simply, it’s falling short of meeting the needs of our members,” Lowes said. He added that some areas off-limits to the

tribe are “essentially in the backyard of several of our fishermen.”

Any expansion of Sault tribe fishing rights would likely anger non-tribal fishing groups, which have already filed their own [appeal](#) to the decree.

A group called the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources, which represents recreational anglers and charter boat captains, objects to the use of gillnets, arguing it could threaten the lakes’ fisheries. Gillnets are walls of netting that stretch across the water, ensnaring the gills or other body parts of passing fish. Unlike trap nets, which allow anglers to remove accidentally-caught species and toss them back alive, gillnets are generally lethal.

Restrictions on gillnet fishing were a key component of the earlier decree, and Michigan spent millions buying out tribal gillnet fishers amid a conversion to trapnets. Gillnetting requires less labor, making fishing more cost-effective. With far fewer whitefish in the lakes today, tribal anglers have found it increasingly difficult to make money catching fish by trapnet.

But Amy Trotter, CEO of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and treasurer of the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources, argued allowing tribal fishers to use gillnets would harm already-struggling populations by killing fish that accidentally get ensnared in the nets. “We do have concerns about the biological impact of that,” she said, along with concerns about how regulators would enforce limits on gillnet fishing.

While the competing appeals make their way through the courts, the latest decree remains in effect. Sault tribe attorney Ryan Mills said its anglers are abiding by its terms. ² ✦

DNR euthanizes Atlantic salmon infected with bacterial kidney disease

The 30,000-plus fish were a fraction of statewide fish production, stocking efforts

The Michigan DNR announced that fisheries staff had to euthanize just over 31,000 Atlantic salmon that were sick with bacterial kidney disease, or BKD.

In early April, routine pre-stocking inspection of fish being reared at the Harrietta State Fish Hatchery, in Wexford County, found bacterial kidney disease was present. Staff at the Michigan State University Aquatic Animal Health Lab noted signs of active disease and confirmed the presence of *Renibacterium salmoninarum*, the bacterium that causes BKD.

BKD is a bacterial disease known to cause mortality in trout and salmon and is believed to be largely responsible for the decline in Great Lakes Chinook salmon populations in the mid-1980s.

A prescribed 28-day antibiotic treatment was completed May 17, but unfortunately, the treatment was not fully effective in eliminating the infection. Subsequent to completion of the antibiotic treatment, another group of fish was sent to the lab for analysis. During the analysis, internal signs of active disease were still noted.

“The bacteria that causes bacterial kidney disease is listed as a Level 1 restricted pathogen in the Model Program for Fish Health Management in the Great Lakes,” said Ed Eisch, DNR Fisheries Division Assistant Chief Ed Eisch. “Fish that are positive for Level 1 restricted pathogens can be stocked where the pathogen is already known to exist, but only if they are free of signs of disease. This lot of fish still shows signs of active BKD so they cannot be stocked.”

According to Aaron Switzer, DNR Fish Production Program manager, it isn't overly surprising that this treatment was not fully successful.

“These fish were sick enough that a significant portion of the fish were not feeding well,” he said. “That means that the antibiotic, which was mixed in with their feed, was not being eaten at the rate necessary to eliminate the pathogen.”

The good news: The DNR stocks 20 million to 30 million fish annually into Michigan's public waters, so there are still many quality fishing opportunities across the state for Michigan's anglers.

Harrietta is not the only DNR hatchery that was rearing Atlantic salmon. The Platte River State Fish Hatchery, located approximately 15 miles west of Traverse City, also reared Atlantic salmon. The fish at Platte were healthy and were stocked in four locations:

- Torch Lake received 15,883 fish.
- The Au Sable River in Oscoda and the Thunder Bay River in Alpena each received 25,000 fish.
- Lake Huron's Lexington Harbor received 40,000 fish.
- Additionally, the St. Marys River at Sault Ste. Marie will be stocked this week with just under 27,000 fish.

“Having to make the decision to dispose of these diseased fish hurt, but it was clearly the right thing to do,” said Eisch. “The Atlantic salmon fishery is highly valued, but first and foremost, we have a public trust responsibility to protect the aquatic resources of the state of Michigan. Stocking fish known to be actively suffering a disease outbreak would be counter to that.”

Michigan's hatchery system is currently undergoing infrastructure updates to address a large backlog of deferred maintenance needs that have accumulated over the years due to inadequate major maintenance funding. Some of those upgrades are aimed at improving biosecurity, which will reduce the likelihood of a similar issue in the future.

For more on fish and aquatic diseases, visit Michigan.gov/FishHealth. Learn more about the DNR's fish production program and hatcheries and weirs at Michigan.gov/Hatcheries. ✧

DEC public meetings to discuss Lake Ontario fisheries management research

New York DEC will conduct a public meeting on Wednesday, July 17, in Mexico, Oswego County. The annual meeting will highlight Lake Ontario sport fisheries and discuss with anglers a wide array of management actions and research taking place on the lake and its tributaries. “This informative meeting provides an opportunity for the public to learn about DEC's adaptive approach to ensuring Lake Ontario fishery efforts remain robust and productive,” DEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar said. “Angler feedback is critical to DEC's management approach and all anglers and outdoor enthusiasts interested in Lake Ontario are encouraged to attend.”

The Eastern Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Association is hosting the July 17 meeting in DEC's Region 7: Wednesday, July 17, beginning at 7 p.m. VFW Hall, 5930 Scenic Avenue, Mexico, NY 13114

No registration is required to attend. For more information, contact Chris Legard, Lake Ontario Unit Leader, at chris.legard@dec.ny.gov or 315-654-2147.

Later this year, DEC will announce two additional public meetings to be held in western New York this fall and winter. For more information on Lake Ontario fisheries management, visit DEC's website. ✧

Indigenous input & inclusion in sea lamprey research & management

The GLFC facilitates cross-border cooperation in research and management to control invasive sea lamprey and improve fisheries in the Laurentian Great Lakes. Represented within this region are diverse Tribes and First Nations who have inherent rights to lands and waters and hold distinct perspectives, experiences, and visions for how the Great Lakes should be treated and cared for. These understandings and sources of expertise are often underrepresented and actively excluded from decisionmaking processes. The “3I project,” funded through the GLFC’s Sea Lamprey Research Program and led by Dr. Andrea Reid (citizen of the Nisga’a Nation) of the Centre for Indigenous Fisheries at the University of British Columbia (UBC), seeks to engage with indigenous communities in the Great Lakes about their experiences with sea lamprey and their control. Dr. Reid is joined by many colleagues in this work, including UBC PhD student Alexander Duncan (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation) and Dr. Beth Nyboer (Assistant Professor of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia

Tech) who are helping to co-lead much of the work in community contexts. This special issue of the Pulse on Science: Research Briefs newsletter highlights Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) efforts to bridge Indigenous and Western knowledges through research co-production, relationship-building, and collaborative scholarship. A lamprey caught as bycatch from a fish harvester from the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Photo: Alexander Duncan, SON The 3I project responds to repeated calls for indigenous-led research and the need for indigenous perspectives and values to inform decision-making for the successful and equitable management of aquatic resources. The project objectives are to enhance collective understanding of indigenous perspectives of and experiences with sea lamprey and their control in the Great Lakes, and to identify research and management priorities as well as wise practices to guide future work. These objectives are being achieved through a combination of indigenous research methodologies and social science approaches, including virtual gatherings and semi-structured

interviews with fishery personnel and Indigenous knowledge holders.

The work is guided by an Indigenous Advisory Council (formed in 2022) comprising four women who represent different Tribes and First Nations across the Great Lakes and who hold extensive knowledge of traditional lands and waters and ethical research practices. Research agreements are being co-developed with partner Tribes and First Nations to uphold accepted research practice, respond to community priorities, and ensure maintenance of indigenous data sovereignty. To support outreach and engagement, the team will be distributing informational and interactive materials (e.g., maps, summary control reports specific to each Nation), and hold community events to share the findings. To learn more and stay up to date, visit the project’s webpage at <https://www.cif.fish/sea-lamprey>. Mattes, W. P., & Kitson, J. C. (2021). Sea lamprey control in the Great Lakes: A Tribal/First Nations Representative’s perspective. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*, 47, S796-S799. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2021.08.011> ✦

PFBC seeks applications for boating infrastructure grant program

HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is requesting proposals from interested parties seeking funding through the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. BIG is a federal grant program administered by the PFBC in cooperation with the USFWS. This program provides grants for transient moorage (tie-ups) serving recreational motorboats 26 feet and longer.

BIG grants are economic engines for local communities that benefit traveling boaters by offering safe overnight dockage and easy access to towns and waterfronts. Grants may be made to public and private operators of open-to-the-public boating facilities, including municipal agencies (cities,

townships, counties, etc.), state agencies, and other government entities.

The deadline for submitting proposals is July 31, 2024.

Eligible activities include the construction, renovation, and maintenance of transient tie-up facilities. Boating infrastructure refers to features that provide stopover places for transient non-trailerable recreational vessels to tie up. These features include transient slips, day docks, floating docks and fixed piers, navigational aids, and dockside utilities including electric, water, and pumpout stations.

The grant program will reimburse recipients for up to 75 percent of the

costs for project design and engineering, development, expansion, and major rehabilitation. Successful applicants must agree to provide a minimum 25 percent grant match and be willing to enter into a long-term agreement to keep the facility open to the public for its useful life.

The program is a reimbursable grant program. Grant funds will be disbursed to the recipient only after the project sponsor certifies expenditures have been made. Grant funds are awarded under the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program authorized by the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Act of 1998 and funded by excise taxes on motorboat fuel. ✦

Walleyes for Wounded Heroes tours CMP's Laser Shot Simulators

On April 19, 2024, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) hosted the Walleyes for Wounded Heroes non-profit organization within the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center, located on the grounds of the Camp Perry National Guard Training Facility in Port Clinton, Ohio.

Walleyes for Wounded Heroes (W4WH) was formed to provide veterans, first responders and gold star families positive outlets through chartered fishing events on Lake Erie—hoping to reconnect with the healing power of nature. Through the support of donations by individuals, civic/service organizations, businesses, fundraising events and other contributions, W4WH is able to cover all lodging, meals, entertainment and transportation for each outing.

During the April excursion, harsh spring winds cut the planned boating trip short and left the group searching for an alternative. They decided to take a chance on an unknown facility—the nearby Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center—and were presented a guided tour of the CMP's indoor electronic air gun range and Laser Shot simulators.

The simulators were new territory to the visitors from W4WH, but, fortunately, CMP's Catherine Green and Alana Kelly were there to provide personal instruction on how to hit the targets and how to navigate the courses of fire. Heroes, captains and staff from W4WH participated in the Practical Shooting and Steel Challenge courses loaded into the simulator—just a few examples of the over 100 possibilities offered in shotgun, rifle and pistol modes. “The camaraderie was wonderful to see as they supported each other and had a genuinely good time,” Green said. “Some Heroes went through the courses multiple times, and it made me so happy to see the sport give them so much delight.”

According to Green, the group was timid upon first arrival, but once they began shooting through the simulator courses, they were quickly soothed by the ease of its use and the enjoyable atmosphere. As time went on, individuals within the group encouraged each other to continue trying the challenging yet entertaining courses.

“They were cheering each other on, laughing and having a great time,” Green added. Walleyes for Wounded Heroes staff member, JoAnn Stewart, echoed Green's interpretation of the event by saying, “We received rave reviews about the Laser Shot night. They had so much fun.”

The CMP currently houses two Laser Shot simulators within the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center in Ohio and additional simulators at its Alabama locations in Anniston and Talladega. The simulators, like all of CMP's marksmanship facilities, are open for public use each week—no previous experience required—and may be rented for large groups. Find hours and more information at <https://thecmp.org/ranges/cmp-competition-centers/>.

About Walleyes for Wounded Heroes:

Walleyes for Wounded Heroes, Inc., (W4WH) provides opportunities for our nation's current or former uniformed members of the United States Armed Forces, sworn Law Enforcement Officers, sworn Fire Fighters and sworn or affirmed Emergency Medical Responders, all of whom have been injured from combat operations or line-of-duty service. Charter captains and private boat owners take the Wounded Heroes walleye fishing for a 4-day event annually during the last week of June at no charge. Learn more through the W4WH website at <https://w4wh.com/>

The Civilian Marksmanship Program is a federally chartered 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation. It is dedicated to firearm safety and marksmanship training and to the promotion of marksmanship competition for citizens of the United States. For more information about the CMP and its programs, log onto www.TheCMP.org. ✧



Asian carp measures delayed

Squabbling between the state of Illinois and the US federal government is delaying measures planned to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. For example, electrical and acoustic barriers, an air bubble curtain, a flushing lock, and an engineered channel are at issue. Conservationists and environmentalists say Illinois is responsible for the delays because they have not signed the Project Partnership Agreement. Among the reasons, the state is no longer willing to provide funding. Conversely, the state does not want to bear the responsibilities for hazardous waste sites, and other costs and liabilities. The groups don't see construction starting until 2025. Nearly a million pounds of invasive carp were pulled from the Illinois River in one day last November. This is more than all that was harvested in 2022. This (harvest) event was two locks and 45 river miles below the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Large populations of invasive carp in one place make it harder for fish to find food and suitable spawning habitats. This increases the likelihood that invasive carp could surge and move further toward the Brandon Road lock. ✧

DEC announces changes to recreational flounder and scup fishing regs

The New York State DEC announced new recreational fishing regulations for summer flounder and scup for the 2024 season. The new regulations, approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), meet the requirement for all states, including New York, to reduce recreational summer flounder harvest by 28 percent and scup harvest by 10 percent while balancing the preferences of New York anglers.

Summer Flounder

ASMFC previously approved six options that New York and Connecticut could utilize to meet the 28 percent reduction requirements. Based on feedback from New York's recreational fishing community and feedback received by Connecticut from its recreational fishing community, New York and Connecticut advanced a seventh option that better meets the needs and preferences of anglers in both states, as well as ASMFC requirements.

ASMFC approved this new option on March 25, 2024.

The 2024 summer flounder season opened May 4 and will go through October 15. It uses a split-size limit to preserve an extended fishing season while maintaining a smaller minimum size for the beginning of the season.

On May 4, the possession limit is set at three fish with a minimum length of 19 inches. Effective August 2, the minimum length increases to 19.5 inches and the possession limit remains at three fish. The season closes after October 15.

Scup

The minimum length for scup caught recreationally by vessel-based anglers has increased by one-half inch, from 10.5 to 11 inches. All other aspects of New York's recreational scup fishing regulations remain unchanged. The minimum length limit for recreational anglers from shore remains unchanged at 9.5 inches. The recreational scup season for all anglers opened May 1

and goes through December 31. Recreational anglers may possess 30 fish per day throughout the season and from September 1 through October 31, anglers aboard licensed party/charter boats may possess 40 fish.

Changes to the regulations for both species have initially been adopted as an emergency regulation so that they are in place prior to the start of the fishing season, anglers can be notified in adequate time, and New York can comply with ASMFC requirements.

For current fishing limits, check [DEC's Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations](#). Anglers must enroll in the annual no-fee [Recreational Marine Fishing Registry](#) before fishing New York's Marine and Coastal District waters or when fishing in the Hudson River and its tributaries for "migratory fish of the sea." Anglers can enroll for the registry online, by phone (1-866-933-2257, option 2), or by visiting a license-issuing agent location. ✧

Automated sampling equipment may aid in tracking microscopic invasive species

When it comes to managing ecosystems to address the problem of aquatic invasive species, knowing where they are and in what numbers can be critical in helping prevent the spread. To that end, an Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant faculty scholar is automating sampling equipment for keeping track of the invasive spiny water flea to make the process easier and more efficient.

Spiny water fleas are native to European and Asian waters but were introduced to the Great Lakes in the 1980s, likely in ballast water. [These microscopic zooplankton](#) eat other zooplankton, which are the base of the Great Lakes food web, but spiny water fleas have spikes on their long tails, so they are not a desirable food item. Their populations have grown and, today, they can be found

throughout the Great Lakes.

"Traditionally, the way we sample aquatic microorganisms, including the water flea, is to throw a net out into the water and pull it up slowly. This is cumbersome and you are only able to do one sample at a time," said [Sachit Butail](#), a professor of mechanical engineering at NIU.

With input from scientists at NOAA, he has worked to improve the design of an automated device for sampling aquatic microorganisms to expand its capacity and accuracy. This motorized device that is lowered into the water has six chambers—water passes through a net into one of the chambers. Each time the device is brought up out of water, it revolves, securing a water sample for analysis. This allows for the

collection of multiple samples in different locations in one field day.

"The new robot, which is in the shape of a glider and has an attached net, is an early step toward developing new ways to offset the effort that is traditionally required to sample water flea in deep waters," said Butail.

Looking to the future, he sees the potential of widespread use of this technology in addressing aquatic invasive species. "I hope that one day robotic technology will become integrated with citizen science," said Butail. "My hope is that at some point, we can have citizen scientists directly control robots that record underwater videos. I think that the scale at which that would give us data about invasive species would be really significant." ✧

Continued from page 8

Objectives:

- Integrated index score of 40 or greater which contains important metrics of sustainability, recruitment, and fishery quality.
- Recruitment: Mean catch-per-unit-effort of age-0 Walleye greater than 20 fish/10 min bottom trawl tow in at least 3 of 5 consecutive years.
- Growth: Mean length of age-3 Walleye is no greater than 424 mm (16.7 in), which is 110% of the statewide average length at age 3.
- Reproductive potential: spawning stock biomass (i.e., total weight of fish in population that are spawning age) is greater than 20% of the unfished level.
- Angler-targeted catch rate: Open water targeted catch rate of Walleye greater than 0.4 fish/hr.

Goal 2. Protect or restore connectivity to spawning and nursery habitats, like estuaries and nearshore areas, in the bay and tributary rivers essential to supporting a self-sustaining population.

Goal 3. Maintain and expand fishing access where feasible to maximize fishery participation.

Goal 4. Pursue and advocate for current and new research that addresses information gaps, which is needed to inform fishery management and policy.

Yellow Perch

Yellow Perch Vision: A Yellow Perch population that 1) supports diverse angling and harvest opportunities, 2) is self-sustaining, and 3) contributes to a balanced prey base while not being the dominant prey item.

Goal 1. Promote a resilient Yellow Perch population that has recreational angling and harvest opportunity, consistent recruitment to age 1, and acceptable size-structure.

Objectives:

1. Integrated index score of 22 or greater which contains important metrics of sustainability, recruitment, and fishery quality.

2. Recruitment: Mean CPUE of age-1 and older Yellow Perch above 200 fish/10 min bottom trawl tow in at least 3 of 5 consecutive years.

3. Growth: Mean length of age-3 Yellow Perch is no greater than 201 mm (7.9 in), which is 110% of the statewide average length at age 3, at least 3 of 5 consecutive years.

4. Angler catch-rate: Mean angler-nontargeted catch rate is greater than 1 fish/hr in the open water and ice fishery combined.

Goal 2. Protect or restore connectivity to essential spawning and nursery habitats.

Goal 3. Pursue and advocate for current and new research that addresses information gaps needed to inform management and policy.

Visit the draft plan at Michigan.gov/DNR/Managing-Resources/Fisheries/Walleye. Send all comments via email to DNR-Fish-SaginawBayPlan@Michigan.gov.

Whether you're targeting walleye, perch or other popular species, be sure to get a current fishing license. Visit Michigan.gov/Fishing for all the information you need to get started. ✧

Volunteers needed for Wisconsin tackle loaner sites

Have a little time on your hands to help others learn to fish? About half of the DNR's 54 loaner sites are located at state parks and they need help maintaining the rods and reels used at fishing clinics. Loaner sites also are at DNR offices and partner organizations. Site hosts would appreciate organizations or individuals adopting a loaner site and giving the gear periodic tune-ups. The quantity of gear at loaner sites ranges from a handful of fishing rods to dozens, depending on the site. Spin casting combos (those with closed-face reels) are most common. However, some sites also have spinning gear (open bail), fly rods and ice fishing poles. To get involved, contact a gear loan site to schedule a volunteer time.

Find a site near you on the DNR's Tackle Loaner Web page. ✧

Why join the National Professional Anglers Association?

Forestville, WI – Ask any serious angler about the National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA) and you still might get some head-scratching, despite the fact that top finishers in the last two Bassmaster Classics—and the past two champions—are members of the organization.

What is the NPAA?

The NPAA organization helps tournament anglers, guides, charter captains, fishing industry folks, and other aspiring anglers turn their "Passion into Profession."

The NPAA also provides resources, conferences, networking opportunities, and frequent member-only media content that helps members grow in their careers to exemplify NPAA's core tenets of determination, commitment to the sport, focus on professionalism, and ethics.

Lastly—in this world of rampant inflation—NPAA members have access to discounts on key fishing/marine manufacturers' products, with or without official sponsorship. The cost of membership starts at a mere \$50 a year for Student Anglers, with Pro Members shelling out just \$100 annually. The money you can potentially save on fishing necessities is worth the price alone. Why wouldn't you join?

Any angler serious about creating a career out of their passion for angling should look at the successes of our members and take a step toward solidifying their success as an angling professional by joining NPAA today.

The National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA) is a non-profit, member-based association dedicated to sportfishing. The NPAA's membership is composed of professional guides, tournament anglers, angler educators and sportfishing/marine industry professionals who are passionate about the sport. For more NPAA partner, member and industry news, go to www.npaa.net ✧

Collecting eggs to maintain world-class fisheries

It's simple math really: Zero eggs equals zero fish for future stocking programs. So, the spring walleye and steelhead egg collections by the Michigan DNR are critical components of the strategy for maintaining world-class fishing opportunities in the Great Lakes State. Walleye fishing (and the fish fries that follow) are a quintessential part of Midwest culture. Whereas this species does reproduce naturally in some large rivers and northern Michigan lakes, many of the popular walleye fisheries in the state are dependent on stocking. The DNR uses two donor populations to supply the eggs for statewide stocking programs.

Lower Peninsula – Muskegon River

The DNR's 2024 walleye egg collection efforts began on the Muskegon River on March 26. Personnel from the Southern Lake Michigan and Central Lake Michigan management units used an electrofishing boat to capture adult walleye downstream of Croton Dam in Newaygo County.



Walleye were transported to holding pens at the Pine Street boating access site, where a fish-processing assembly line was created. One Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery employee stripped eggs from a female walleye into a bowl. Another person collected milt from a male walleye, then added the milt to the bowl to fertilize the eggs. Both male and female walleye

were released back into the river after these steps.

A third hatchery worker added the eggs to a bucket where they were mixed with a type of fine clay that coated the eggs and prevented them from clumping together. Next, the eggs were poured into a mesh bag in the river to water-harden for about an hour. This step is crucial as fresh eggs are very fragile.

Finally, the eggs were loaded into buckets and transported to the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Van Buren County. The same process was repeated on March 28, April 2, and April 4, except some of the eggs collected on April 2 went to the Platte River State Fish Hatchery in Benzie County. In total, over 31 million walleye eggs were collected from 195 male-female pairs on the Muskegon River this spring.

Upper Peninsula – Little Bay de Noc

Meanwhile, in Delta County, although a mild winter in the Upper Peninsula with low snowfall and mild temperatures led to earlier than normal ice-off conditions on Little Bay de Noc, egg take efforts were completed on April 10, 12 and 14, which were close to the long-term average dates over the past 30 years. Staff from the Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit collected ripe female and male walleye for the egg take with trap nets and electrofishing gear in the Whitefish River.

Staff from the Thompson State Fish Hatchery in neighboring Schoolcraft County came over to Little Bay de Noc on the scheduled egg-take days to process the fish. In total, 120 pairs of walleye were spawned with approximately 13 million eggs collected. Once all walleye were spawned for the day, the fertilized

eggs were transported back to the hatchery's cool-water facility and placed in incubation jars to reside until hatching.

One unique part of the spring operations on Little Bay de Noc is the continuation of a long-term adult



walleye tagging project led by research staff from the Marquette Fisheries Research Station during the annual egg take.



Walleye used for the tagging project are either fish returned to the bay after being used for egg-take operations or fish that were not used and deemed "extra" fish. For over 30 years, several hundred adult walleye have been jaw-tagged—with small circular bands that attach around part of the jaw—and then released.

Collecting eggs

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Collecting eggs

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Each tag has a unique number stamped on it. When anglers catch and report a tagged fish, this gives researchers information on the movements and habits of individual walleye in the northern Green Bay area of Lake Michigan.

The walleye collected on the Muskegon River and Bay de Noc this spring will remain inside the hatcheries until they reach the fry stage. At that point, they will be moved into rearing ponds located throughout the state to grow to size suitable for stocking. Many of these fish will be stocked in June when they are around 1-2 inches in length, whereas walleyes from a few ponds will be held until October and stocked at around 6 inches long.

Steelhead efforts

Steelhead capture the attention of a diverse swath of anglers. Whether you're trolling the vast waters of the Great Lakes, quietly waiting for that bite on a deserted beach or standing waist deep in an ice-cold stream, steelhead fishing offers year-round opportunities.

To create, enhance, and supplement this amazing Michigan fishery, steelhead eggs are collected every spring at the Little Manistee River Weir in Stronach in Manistee County.

This process typically begins in March when grates are lowered on the weir structure to stop the upstream migration of lake-run rainbow trout, more commonly called steelhead. Once large numbers of steelhead have gathered below the weir, pumps are activated that flood the facility ponds and raceways, offering steelhead a passageway.

Steelhead are then guided into ponds where they will ripen for egg

collection. The spawning period for steelhead in streams begins in late March and continues through April. This is the same time frame that eggs are collected at the weir.

A day of egg collections begins by preparing the workspace for all the various steps that are necessary for success. Buckets for the individual collection and buckets for transportation to hatcheries must be cleaned and labeled. Cups for collecting milt from male steelhead must be numbered to spawn one female with one male. Egg treatment and disinfection solutions must be mixed to exact recipes to ensure eggs have the best chance at fertilization and survival.

Once staffers have everything prepared at their station, it's time to bring in the fish. Steelhead are moved from the ponds and through the raceway with a machine called a crowder, which that has a basket that herds the fish and can lift them into a large tank inside the facility.

Fish are then moved from the tank onto a table to determine ripeness and to sort males and females. Ripe fish are then put into a separate tank where they are sedated to assist with handling. Eggs are removed from ripe females using a small needle that blows compressed air into the body cavity, pushing the mature eggs out of the fish and into a small bucket. Milt from a mature male is captured in a paper cup and added to the bucket of eggs.

Next, a solution mixed for fertilization is added to the bucket, and in a matter of seconds the eggs will be fertilized. Spawned fish are moved to a recovery pond before being released upstream of the weir. On an average day, this process will happen over 200 times.

From this point, the eggs are disinfected, water-hardened and placed on an egg battery that cleans the mixed egg buckets with oxygenated river water. These are now healthy steelhead eggs ready for transport to waiting hatcheries where staff will rear the young fish over the next year.

The steelhead egg quota this year is just shy of 6 million eggs, which will support the stocking programs of Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

The efforts of DNR fisheries staffers to collect eggs each spring help provide sport anglers with hours and hours of fantastic walleye and steelhead fishing fun, along with countless meals eaten by resident families, individuals and visitors to Michigan from near and far—one example of the numerous things that help make the Great Lakes State great!



Check out previous Showcasing the DNR stories in our archive at Michigan.gov/DNRStories. To subscribe to upcoming Showcasing articles, sign up for free email delivery at Michigan.gov/DNREmail. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:**(Click on title or URL to read full article)****[Court of Appeals decision prevents company from bottling water near Lake Superior](#)**

In 2021, a start-up was denied a county permit that would've allowed the start-up to operate a pumping facility in Bayfield County, Wisconsin, near Lake Superior. The Wisconsin Court of Appeals' decision to prevent pumping is the latest development in a years-long legal battle

[Toxic forever chemicals are on the rise in Lake Michigan and have been detected in all of the Great Lakes](#)

Rain and contaminated air are major sources of PFAS contamination detected by a team of researchers in the Great Lakes. Airborne concentrations of PFAS are much higher near Chicago and other urban areas than at rural monitoring stations in northern Michigan and upstate New York.

[US establishes portion of eastern Lake Ontario as national marine sanctuary, first in New York](#)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration this week designated a 1,722-square-mile area in eastern Lake Ontario as America's 16th national marine sanctuary. The Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary is the first such sanctuary in New York, and only the third in the Great Lakes region.

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hears public on Line 5](#)

On Tuesday, hundreds of Wisconsin residents congregated for a multi-session public hearing on the controversial Enbridge Line 5 pipeline project. The hearing focused on the proposed construction of a new segment of the pipeline, some 40 miles of which would be constructed around and upstream of the Bad River Reservation.

[Drugs, microplastics, forever chemicals a growing concern in Great Lakes](#)

Scientists studying unregulated "emerging contaminants" say Ontario and the federal government need a coordinated plan to protect our water and health.

[DNR trying to boost dwindling perch numbers in Saginaw Bay](#)

Yellow perch used to be a common catch in Saginaw Bay and people would come to Michigan's Thumb from all over to fish for them. Now, the population is dwindling and the DNR is working to boost their numbers

[Study: PFAS building up in 3 of 5 Great Lakes](#)

A new study by researchers at the University of Indiana has broken down how PFAS circulates through the Great Lakes and shows that the so-called forever chemicals are building up in Lake Michigan.

[Bay of Green Bay nominated as National Research Reserve site](#)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has designated a National Estuarine Research Reserve bordering Green Bay on Lake Michigan. It is the 31st national site along the Great Lakes, coastal states, and territories

[SUNY Oswego announces new Great Lakes Research Institute](#)

In New York state, SUNY Oswego has announced the formation of a new institute to promote a greater understanding and awareness of the Great Lakes.

[Sturgeon remain rare in Great Lakes, but Detroit River's population thrives](#)

Despite the decline in Lake Sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes caused by overfishing and dam construction which limited access to spawning grounds, these fish have been able to recover in the Detroit River with the help of stocking programs and other regulations.

[Tiny plastic particles are big pollution threat to the Great Lakes](#)

It's no big secret that there's a pollution problem in the Great Lakes. Plastic containers floating in the water or washed up on shore. However, the bigger threat to the lakes comes from the smaller plastic pollution — some of it smaller than you can see with the naked eye

End