



Thousands of Atlantic salmon released into Irondequoit Creek



Volunteers Joe Alexander and Rich Morton scoop up the Atlantic salmon while Jason Hanselman, fishery technician at the Fish Hatchery at Powder Mills Park, operated by the Riedman Foundation, in Pittsford,

holds a gate to keep the salmon in one area on April 8, 2026. The hatchery was asked to raise 4,500 Atlantic salmon by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and release them into

Irondequoit Creek. Atlantic salmon are native to Irondequoit Creek.

Officials say raising the salmon in local water helps them return later in life. The fish develop a “chemical imprint” of Irondequoit Creek, which acts like a beacon and guides them back when it’s time to spawn, Mitchell said.

This marks the first year Atlantic salmon have been released into Irondequoit Creek through the program. The fish were delivered to the hatchery in October, and it will take about two years for them to mature. That’s the earliest officials expect to see whether any return to spawn.

According to the DEC, Irondequoit Bay was last stocked with Atlantic salmon in 1995, while the creek itself was last stocked in 1987. Most salmon migrate to Lake Ontario within a year of release, typically in the spring.

DEC officials said Irondequoit Creek is surveyed annually as part of the Lake Ontario Tributary Creel Survey, which runs from September 15 to April 15. ✧

Anglers Act will prohibit the

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The Fish Hatchery at Powder Mills Park released thousands of Atlantic salmon into Irondequoit Creek this week as part of an effort to restore the species to its native waters. The hatchery, operated by the Riedman Foundation, received about 4,500 Atlantic salmon from the New York State DEC last fall, said Ron Mitchell, the hatchery’s general manager. The fish, known as yearlings, are about six inches long.

The House approved legislation

U.S. House approves bill to protect lead ammo, tackle

recently (H.R. 556), the "Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act", introduced by House Committee on Natural Resources. This legislation will prohibit bans on lead ammunition and tackle use on federal lands or waters, except where supported by site-specific, population-level data, and where consistent with the laws and regulations of the state where the unit is located.

The Protecting Access for Hunters and

Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture from banning the use of lead ammunition or tackle on federal land or water that is under their jurisdiction and made available for hunting or fishing activities, unless such a ban is backed up by site-specific data and done in coordination with state wildlife agencies. In addition, the Secretaries may not issue regulations regarding the lead content of ammunition or tackle to be used on federal lands or waters. ✧

Wisconsin's general fishing season opens May 2; new regulations in effect

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds anglers the 2026 – 2027 general inland fishing season will open statewide Saturday, May 2. Several [new regulations and season structures](#) are now in effect, and anglers are encouraged to review the regulations before hitting the water.

With more than 15,000 inland lakes, 42,000 miles of perennial streams and rivers, 1,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline and 260 miles of the Mississippi River, there are plenty of great places to wet a line over opening weekend and all season long.

No matter where anglers decide to fish, all Wisconsin residents and nonresidents age 16 or older are required to purchase a fishing license. Annual resident licenses cost \$20 each, or purchase a spousal license for \$31 so you and your spouse can fish together. All fishing licenses and stamps can be purchased online via [Go Wild](#), at a [registered sales location](#) or at [DNR Service Centers](#).

What's New for 2026 – 2027?

Several [new regulations, season structures and bag limits](#) have been implemented this season. These changes include:

- The statewide [inland trout season](#) opens April 4 and runs through October 15, 2026.
- The [muskellunge season](#) opens May 2 on all inland waters of the state. There is no longer a separate season for the Northern Zone.
 - The muskellunge season structures for the Great Lakes, Green Bay and Michigan/Minnesota boundary waters are unchanged.
- A catch-and-release season for lake sturgeon will occur [on select waters](#) from June 6, 2026 through March 7, 2027.
- New lake and species-specific bag and length limits are in place on specific waters across the state.

Anglers can find a full list of the 2026 – 2027 fishing regulation changes along with the full 2026 – 2027 [hook and line fishing](#) and [trout fishing regulations](#) on the DNR's [Fishing Regulations webpage](#).

Protecting the Resource

As anglers head out to their [favorite fishing locations](#) across the state, the DNR would like to share these reminders:

- Help minimize the spread of [aquatic invasive species](#) by removing plants and animals from boats before and after launching, draining all water from compartments and never moving live fish away from any waterbody.
- To prevent the spread of fish diseases, remove all water, aquatic vegetation and/or mud from fishing equipment before leaving their fishing location. All fishing equipment, including boats, trailers, boots, waders, nets and float tubes, should be thoroughly cleaned and dried before being used again.
- If not keeping your catch, follow [proper fish handling protocols to ensure a safe release](#).
- Follow [safe boating procedures](#) and always wear a life jacket when on the water.
- Review all the [rules and regulations](#) for the waters you intend to fish.

Anglers can also find additional information on the DNR's [Fishing webpage](#) or by contacting their local [fisheries biologist](#). ✧



“Give a man a fish and he has food for a day; teach him how to fish and you can get rid of him for the entire weekend.”

Zenna Schaffer



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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

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Lake Erie daily limits announced for 2026 fishing season

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Lake Erie anglers can expect the 2026 season to again offer world-class fishing, according to the Ohio DNR. As walleye from Lake Erie’s recent large hatches continue to grow, anglers can expect even more “Fish Ohio” sized walleyes to be caught in The Walleye Capital of the World. A Lake Erie “Fish Ohio” walleye is a fish measuring 28 inches or more in length.

Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch 2026 quotas were announced by the Lake Erie Committee on March 27. All angler daily harvest limits remain unchanged in Ohio for 2026 and will be in effect through April 30, 2027.

Yellow perch populations continue to struggle in most of Lake Erie, however a stable yellow perch population in Lake Erie’s west zone should provide good fishing in 2026.

Ohio’s Lake Erie Angler Daily Limits (May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027)

- Walleye: 6 fish per day, 15" minimum length requirement
- Yellow perch, west zone (approximately Toledo to Huron): 30 fish per day
- Yellow Perch, central zone (approximately Huron to Fairport Harbor): 10 fish per day
- Yellow Perch, east zone (approximately Fairport Harbor to Conneaut): 20 fish per day

Lake Erie walleye and yellow perch fisheries are managed through an interagency quota system. Each jurisdiction regulates its catches with annually determined harvest levels that ensure sustainability.

Walleye

Angler harvest rates set a new record high in 2025, and exceptional fishing is expected again in 2026. Above-average hatch success in eight of the past 11 years has sustained an abundant lake-wide population of walleye, and fish from the large 2015 year-class will provide trophy opportunities in upcoming seasons.

Yellow perch

Recent years have provided seasonally and regionally variable angling success for yellow perch. In 2026, the best fishing is expected in July and August in the west zone, where more consistent hatch success has resulted in better angling opportunities. Ohio’s central and east zones have both experienced low angler catch rates, as below-average hatches have resulted in decreased abundance. In the central and east zones, the best opportunities to catch limits are late in the fall near harbors as large adult perch migrate inshore to find baitfish.

Lake Erie fishing reports, information on Lake Erie research and management programs, fisheries resources, maps, and links to other Lake Erie web resources are available at wildohio.gov. The 2026-27 fishing regulations can be found via the [HuntFish OH app](#), on wildohio.gov, or at locations where fishing licenses are sold. ✧

US Supreme Court refuses Michigan's immunity claim in Line 5 case

The U.S. Supreme Court has left standing a decision that allows Enbridge Energy to sue the state of Michigan over its efforts to shut down a controversial oil-and-gas pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac.

Michigan has spent years trying to shut down Enbridge’s Line 5 on the grounds that its two parallel pipes running along the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac pose too big a risk to continue operating within the environmentally sensitive juncture that connects Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Enbridge sued Michigan in federal courts, but the state [argued it is immune under the doctrine of sovereign immunity](#).

“We are disappointed by the Supreme Court’s decision not to review this important issue of state sovereignty,” said Danny Wimmer,

press secretary for Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel. “We will continue to fight for the people of Michigan on these vital issues concerning the Line 5 pipelines in the Straits.”



The [state lost in lower courts](#) and the Supreme Court’s decision makes those decisions the final word on that

question, which allows Enbridge to sue Michigan for attempting to use its regulatory power to scuttle Line 5 and stop the company from going forward with a project to encase the line in a tunnel under the straits. The company says the pipeline is already safe, but

the tunnel will make Line 5 an even safer means of transporting crude oil and natural gas liquids through the region.

“Line 5 is operating in accordance with federal law, interstate commerce regulations, and international treaty obligations,” said Enbridge spokesperson Ryan Duffy in an e-mail to Michigan Public Radio. “These frameworks recognize the essential role Line 5 plays in meeting the energy needs of the Great Lakes region and supporting its economic vitality.”

Multiple legal battles remain both on the substantive questions of law and the safety of the pipeline project, but also on the process and forum for those arguments. The Supreme Court heard arguments in February on a [separate dispute over whether the case belongs in state or federal courts](#). ✧

Berkley reinvents the inline spinner with the Dough Rider

An innovative inline spinner with a built-in Scent Vent Technology powered by PowerBait Dough.

Berkley is redefining inline spinner performance with the all-new Dough Rider, an innovative lure that combines flash, vibration and scent into one versatile fish-catching package. Built around Berkley's proven scent technology, the Dough Rider features a built-in Scent Vent pocket designed to hold PowerBait Dough and release a continuous scent trail that gives anglers confidence they're fishing smarter.

The Dough Rider offers proven spinner performance with scent dispersion thanks to its Scent Vent technology, giving anglers a powerful crossover tool for a wide range of conditions and species. Versatile enough for lakes or rivers, the Dough Rider delivers both eye-catching flash, vibration and scent attraction to draw fish in and keep them committed.



Offered in multiple sizes, colors, and profiles, the Berkley Dough Rider can be burned through current or finessed in calmer water, making it a versatile option for targeting trout, panfish, bass, and bluegill. Available in both classic barrel and lifelike minnow styles, it gives anglers the flexibility to adapt their presentation while maintaining the added advantage of scent with PowerBait Dough.

The Dough Rider takes a proven inline spinner design and adds the scent advantage Berkley is known for.

"It's a true crossover lure that appeals to both spinner anglers and dough anglers, giving one solution that works across conditions and fisheries."

KEY FEATURES:

- Holds PowerBait Dough to release a scent trail that triggers more bites
 - Offered in multiple sizes, colors and styles for various conditions and species
 - Includes a trial pack of PowerBait Dough, grab additional colors to stay on the bite
 - Available in barrel and realistic minnow profiles
 - Available sizes: 1/16 • 1/8 • 1/4 • 3/8
 - Colors: Chartreuse/Black • Firetiger • Pink Silver • Rainbow • Yellow Coach Dog • Black/Silver • Rainbow • Citrus Shad • Midnight Purple • White/Silver
- About \$6.49 ✧

Michigan DNR introduces new fishing regulations for 2026 season

The 2026 Michigan fishing season has now started, introducing a series of new regulations for anglers across the state. These rules, approved by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, will remain in effect through March 31, 2027.

The Michigan DNR updated possession limits, size requirements and gear definitions for various species to manage state fisheries. The changes impact popular fishing spots including Lake Superior, the Menominee River and specific lakes in the Upper Peninsula.

New daily possession limits are now in place for Lake Superior. At Stannard Rock and Big Reef, the daily limit is restricted to one lake trout or splake combined.

In Marquette County, the DNR implemented new walleye regulations for Lake Independence and Teal Lake. These waters now have a 15-in. minimum size limit. Walleye between 18 and 23 in. are part of a protected

slot limit and must be released, though anglers may keep one walleye larger than 23 in. as part of their five-fish daily possession limit.

A new daily possession limit of five fish has also been established for burbot across the state. Specific details regarding this change are located on page 12 of the 2026 Michigan Fishing Regulations. The department provided clarification on equipment used for trout and salmon. A bead used on a hook, or attached to the line no more than 4 inches above a single-pointed hook, is now officially defined as an artificial lure.

Underwater spearfishing opportunities have expanded to additional Great Lakes waters, though some areas remain excluded. While anglers no longer need to submit monthly reports for this activity, they are still required to obtain a free spearfishing license.

The DNR issued a correction regarding the print version of the

2026 fishing guide. On page 16, the print manual incorrectly describes the Lake Michigan southern boundary as the border between Michigan and Wisconsin. The boundary is actually the border between Michigan and Indiana, which has been corrected in the digital version of the regulations.

Anglers can purchase 2026 fishing licenses through the Michigan DNR Hunt Fish app or the department's website. The app also provides tools for reporting harvests and accessing the full text of current regulations. For questions regarding the new rules, the DNR has designated Lucas Nathan at 517-599-9323 and Christian LeSage at 517-449-7073 as primary contacts.

A new catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon on the Menominee River is scheduled to begin the first Saturday in June. This season will apply to the waters between the Grand Rapids Dam and the Sturgeon Falls Dam and will run through the first Sunday in March. ✧

The Ten Protocols of Fish Handling

EGO® Fishing shares widely accepted standards for sustainable catch-and-release

Caldwell, ID – In the modern era of angling, a successful catch is no longer measured solely by the selfie or poundage in the cooler, but by the health of the fish upon release. As pressure on our waterways increases, the responsibility of the angler evolves from simple participation to active resource stewardship.

EGO Fishing recognizes that the transition from the hook to the water is the most critical window in a fish's life cycle—a high-stress period where technical gear and precise handling determine long-term survival. To bridge the gap between performance and conservation, we have established the following 10 protocols. These are not merely suggestions—they are the benchmarks required to ensure that every trophy caught today remains a viable part of the ecosystem tomorrow.

Protocol I: Pre-Contact Hydration

The fish's primary defense against infection is the mucosal slime coat. Dry skin or abrasive boat surfaces act as a desiccant, stripping this layer. Protocol: Anglers should thoroughly wet their hands and any contact surfaces before touching the fish. If your hands aren't wet, do not make contact.

Protocol II: Non-Abrasive Netting Selection

Legacy nylon netting is a known cause of fin-splitting and scale loss. Protocol: Utilize specialized rubber or PVC-coated netting. The smooth surface of a rubber mesh hoop on an **EGO S2 Slider** cradles the fish while maintaining the integrity of the slime coat and preventing hook snags.

Protocol III: Submerged Hook Extraction

Air exposure is a primary stressor that leads to metabolic collapse. Protocol: Once the fish is secured in the hoop, keep the net submerged while preparing tools. Perform the

unhooking while the fish is still in the water whenever the situation allows.

Protocol IV: Bilateral Weight

Distribution

Gravity is an unnatural force for aquatic species—vertical holds by the jaw can cause internal organ displacement or skeletal damage. Protocol: Always provide a horizontal cradle. Use one hand for a controlled jaw grip and the second hand to support the belly, distributing the fish's mass evenly.



Protocol V: Linear Revival Dynamics

Fish gills function as one-way valves designed for forward-moving water. Protocol: When reviving, hold the fish upright and move it in a slow, forward-only motion. Never pump a fish backward, as this causes the gill filaments to collapse and hinders oxygen exchange.

Protocol VI: The Breathing Benchmark

A simple metric for survival: If you can't breathe, they can't breathe. Protocol: Limit total out-of-water exposure to the duration you can comfortably hold your own breath. If the fight was grueling, the fish requires immediate and extended water immersion.

Protocol VII: Geometric Interception

The danger zone for both the angler and the fish is the final ten feet at the boat. Protocol: Use the extended reach of the **S2 Slider** to intercept the fish

further from the gunwale. This minimizes the violent, high-stress thrashing that occurs when a fish is brought too close to the boat's vibration and shadows.

Protocol VIII: Tool Readiness & Staging

Fumbling for gear while a fish is on the deck is the leading cause of avoidable mortality. Protocol: Pliers, grippers, hook remover, and camera must be staged and accessible before the first cast of the day is made.

Protocol IX: Ocular and Branchial Avoidance

The gills (branchial arches) and eyes are the most vulnerable anatomical points. Protocol: Keep fingers clear of the gill plates and eye sockets. Any damage to the vascular gill structure is typically fatal, regardless of how strong the fish swims away.

Protocol X: Autonomous Release Verification

A successful release is a hand-off, not a toss. Protocol: Maintain a gentle grip on the fish in a swimming position until it regains full equilibrium. Do not release the fish until it demonstrates an active, autonomous kick to exit your grasp.

The Future of the Catch

By adhering to these 10 Protocols of Fish Handling, anglers transition from passive observers to active participants in the long-term health of our fisheries. The integration of advanced landing tools, such as the **EGO S2 Slider**, with scientifically-backed release techniques ensures that every encounter – from the initial strike to the final release – is managed with the highest level of precision. Ultimately, the survival of the resource depends on the critical window of time between the net and the water—these protocols serve as the definitive roadmap for the modern, conservation-minded angler to ensure that today's trophy is tomorrow's sustainable success ✧

An autonomous underwater vehicle is in Lake Erie collecting data for scientists

CLEVELAND – Scientists and engineers are tracking an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) in Lake Erie as part of a research project to better understand the lake's ecosystems. Members from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, along with fisheries ecologist Steve Ruberg, are part of the project.

Argonaut, which operates the Davis Aerospace and Maritime High



School with CMSD, was asked to assist, too. Several of its students suited up for the hands-on learning experience.

Lake Erie is where people play, but Capt. Drew Ferguson, founder and CEO of Argonaut, said it's also where important work happens both on land

and beneath the surface. "Freshwater is such a valuable resource. We've got the resources. We've got the interest. Cleveland's got the can-do attitude," Ferguson said.

I learned about the AUV from a Facebook post from [Share the River](#). The nonprofit focuses on education and recreation along the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie. Its founder, Jim Ridge, is following the progress and connected me to Ferguson. Ferguson said this kind of learning is a game-changer for young people pursuing careers in the aerospace and maritime industries.

"They're also actively involved in the problem solving because nothing on the water ever goes without some challenge during the excursion," Ferguson said. "So, it's really neat. And again, it's building on that adventure."

The AUV's mission is to travel beneath the ice. It has various sensors and instruments to collect different types of data to help scientists better

understand lake ecosystems, as well as the behavior and health of aquatic life, everything from plankton to fish.

The data collected will provide a baseline for future studies. Ferguson said when he hears people talking about lake access, this type of work is what fires him up, because it's something students can utilize for a lifetime.

"When you have a student that is able to engage and be a part of developing solutions and innovation that is being appreciated and extending globally- that's access," Ferguson said.

He added that while the invitation to take part in the AUV project came as a surprise, [Argonaut](#) and its students are always ready to jump in and keep learning. "It's just like any other adventure at sea. Something comes across the horizon, and we react, and we respond, and we find ourselves engaged in another great adventure," Ferguson said. You can track the AUV [online](#). It's expected to be in the lake for a few more days. ✧

WI DNR new opening day for inland trout harvest season

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds anglers that the 2026-2027 inland trout season will open on April 4 and run through October 15, 2026, increasing harvest opportunities throughout the state's inland streams, springs and spring ponds.

This year's trout harvest season opens a month earlier than prior seasons. Trout populations are strong across most Wisconsin waters and this additional month of harvest will provide more fishing opportunities during a time of the year when other fishing seasons are generally closed. This season change was strongly supported by the public during the DNR and Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2025 Spring Hearings.

Anyone wishing to participate in this season will need a 2026-2027 general fishing license and inland trout stamp, which are both valid until March 31, 2027, and can be purchased through [Go Wild](#) or at one of many [in-](#)

[person license sales locations](#).

The DNR reminds anglers that there have been some changes to the trout daily bag and length limits this year, providing additional harvest opportunity on waters where trout populations are abundant and additional harvest is encouraged to meet management goals.

Consult the [Guide to Wisconsin's 2026-2027 Trout Fishing Regulations](#) for specifics. The earlier open harvest season for trout does not apply to inland lakes and ponds. For those waters, the traditional first Saturday in May opener still applies. In 2026, this season opens May 2. No changes have been made to the trout season dates or bag limits on Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Green Bay or Green Bay tributaries.

As the season kicks off, anglers are reminded to be mindful of [aquatic invasive species](#). To prevent the spread, anglers are encouraged to

disinfect their gear and follow these guidelines:

- **Inspect** your waders, boots, watercraft and equipment.
- **Remove** any attached aquatic plants or animals (before launching, after loading and before transporting on a public highway).
- **Drain** all water from boats, motors, waders and other equipment.
- **Never move** live fish away from a waterbody.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash.

Buy minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer. It's important to note that anglers may take leftover minnows away from any state water and use them again on that same water, and leftover minnows may be used on other waters only if no lake or river water or other fish were added to their container. ✧

DNR to begin spring steelhead egg collection on Little Manistee River

Love fishing for steelhead? Collection of steelhead eggs at the Little Manistee River Weir in Stronach (Manistee County), Michigan, is tentatively scheduled to begin Tuesday, April 14. The facility is open to the public for up-close viewing during egg-collection operations. This annual egg collection is popular viewing for anglers, students and anyone interested in learning more about fish.



[Steelhead](#) provide sport fishing opportunities for both open-water fishing on the Great Lakes and tributary stream fishing, making the species a favorite of many anglers. Yearling steelhead produced through hatchery operations are stocked in

select tributaries of all the Great Lakes.

Since 1968, the Little Manistee River Weir has served as the sole source of winter-run steelhead eggs for fish hatcheries in Michigan and the main source for Ohio and Indiana. This year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources plans to collect 4.6 million eggs. Thompson State Fish Hatchery (in Manistique) and Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery (in Mattawan) will receive 3.7 million of those eggs, Ohio will receive 500,000 eggs and Indiana will receive 400,000 eggs.

DNR egg-take operations begin with the installation of the weir boards and jump screens by mid-March to stop the upstream steelhead migration in the Little Manistee River. Once pumps are turned on at the facility, fish are diverted into holding ponds. Fish usually ripen (become ready to reproduce) during the month of April and egg collection begins, continuing until the established egg quota has been reached.

During egg collection, unripe or "green" steelhead (those that are not yet ready to reproduce) are held in

maturation ponds or counted and passed upstream to sustain the Little Manistee River wild steelhead run. Steelhead that are spawned during operations are also passed upstream and many eventually return to Lake Michigan, as this species is capable of spawning multiple times. Once the quota of eggs is reached, the jump screens are removed and all remaining fish are allowed to migrate upstream. Boards will remain in place to block the upstream migration of invasive [sea lamprey](#).

Egg-collection schedule
Planned spring steelhead egg-collection dates for this year are April 14, 15, 16, 21 and 22. This is subject to change, based on the ripeness and number of fish present. Eggs will be taken each day between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., and the public is welcome to view the process.

To check on the status of the egg-collection schedule, call the Little Manistee River Weir hotline at 231-775-9727, then press 8.

Learn more about DNR fish hatcheries and weirs at Michigan.gov/Hatcheries. ✧

DNR and Wisconsin Conservation Congress hosted Spring Hearing

Learn about local natural resources management

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) invited the public to attend the annual Fish and Wildlife Spring Hearings held in their county on Monday, April 13, at 6 p.m. to learn about and provide input on resource management in the state. [An online opportunity for public input](#) was also available from 6 p.m. on April 13 through 6 p.m. on April 15.

At the in-person spring hearings, DNR staff and WCC delegates were on hand to discuss local issues of importance, answer questions from the public and open a dialogue between the public, the DNR and the WCC about areas of interest and concern. The WCC also held delegate elections at each

meeting. Two of the five WCC seats were up for election in each county.

Finally, the public was invited to provide feedback on a variety of fish, wildlife and other natural resources-related topics as part of the spring hearing process. The public was encouraged to provide feedback through a QR code available at spring hearing locations on April 13, or online from 6 p.m. on April 13 through 6 p.m. on April 15.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is the only statutory body in the state where the public elects delegates to advise the Natural Resources Board and the DNR on responsibly managing natural resources for present and future

generations. The WCC accomplishes this through open, impartial, broad-based actions. Learn more about the WCC and how to become involved in resource management decisions on the DNR's [Wisconsin Conservation Congress webpage](#).

Event Details

What: Wisconsin Conservation Congress & DNR Fish and Wildlife Spring Hearings

When: April 13, 2026, 6-9 p.m.

Where: The meeting location for each county was found on the [Spring Hearing Locations List online](#)

What: Online Spring Hearing Public Input

When: Began at 6 p.m. on April 13 - 6 p.m. on April 15

Where: Virtual, on the DNR's [Spring Hearing webpage](#) ✧

Indiana DNR establishes permanent invasive carp harvest permit

The Indiana DNR has established a new permanent rule that became effective in December 2025 ([312 IAC 9-10-28](#)) creating an invasive carp harvest permit. This new permit opens new avenues for large-scale removal of invasive carp, fosters economic opportunities, and protects native fish populations and recreational users.

Invasive carp species, including silver, grass, and black carp, have become a significant issue across the Midwest negatively impacting native fish populations and recreational activities like boating and fishing.

The new permit is free to encourage commercial fishing interest in removing these fish from public waters and help protect native ecosystems. Permit holders may use gill nets and seines in approved locations, gear types that are otherwise unauthorized for commercial fishing. Anglers must submit a fishing request before harvest specifying the date, location of their fishing, and gear to be used.

All native fish (bycatch) must be immediately released upon capture, and all gear must be attended at all times; no overnight sets are allowed.

Detailed reports of harvested pounds along with bycatch must be submitted to DNR within seven days of fishing.

Harvested invasive carp must not be transported live and are required to be packed on ice or dry when moved to a market or processor.

Interested individuals can find additional information by visiting wildlife.IN.gov/licenses-andpermits/permits-commercial-licenses or by emailing CarpHarvestPermit@dnr.IN.gov ✧

Lake Huron Fisheries Workshops - April 2026, in-person & via zoom

We invite you to join us this spring for the 2026 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops. These spring fishery workshops are free, open to the public, and offer current research and information related to the status of Lake Huron fisheries. [Register here.](#)

Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State U – in partnership with the MI DNR, USGS Great Lakes Science Center, USFWS, Tribal, and local fishery organizations – annually offer these evening regional workshops to provide valuable information for anglers, charter captains, resource professionals, and community members.

Upcoming Lake Huron-connected workshop dates include:

- **Lake Huron: Saginaw Bay**
 - April 21, 6-8pm EDT
 - Hybrid via Zoom and in-person at the Bay County Community Center, Bay City
 - [Register here](#)
- **Lake Huron: Les Cheneaux & St Marys River**
 - April 28, 6-8pm EDT
 - Hybrid via Zoom and in-person at Clark Township Community Center, Cedarville
 - [Register here](#)

Workshops are FREE and open to the public; however, pre-registration is REQUIRED for each workshop (especially to receive access/log-in details for the hybrid event). [Sign up here.](#) Please contact Michigan Sea Grant, Brandon Schroeder (schroe45@msu.edu) or Katelyn Brolick (brolickk@msu.edu), with any questions regarding Lake Huron workshops.

Please pass along, promote and share with any and all who may be interested in participating; and we hope you will plan to join one or more of these educational online opportunities yourself!

Looking to host a fishing tournament?

Wisconsin DNR regulates fishing tournaments or organized competitive fishing events where money or prizes are awarded. Larger tournaments and some specialized tournaments are monitored and regulated through a paid permit system, but smaller tournaments (those less than 20 boats or 100 participants) need to be registered each calendar year.

The process is free of charge and helps the DNR manage regulations and fish populations and to avoid crowding or conflicts among water-body users. Tournament organizers can submit their registrations using simple online or paper forms that ask for organizer contact information and event information, including water-bodies to be fished, dates, target species and expected number of boats or participants.

Registrations are required by law to be submitted no later than 72 hours before the start of a tournament. [Fishing Tournaments web-page](#) for more info, permit and registration forms. ✧

SONS of Lake Erie release over 1,500 trout into Lake Erie

The SONS (Save Our Native Species) of Lake Erie stocked more than 1,500 brown trout into Presque Isle Bay, Pennsylvania, that they raised throughout the winter at their hatchery off the Bayfront Parkway. The SONS received fingerlings in November and raised them throughout the winter at their hatchery off the Bayfront Parkway. Once they get about seven inches or so in size, they are ready to be released into the bay. The hatchery manager said it was a challenge this winter due to persisting cold temperatures, but all in all, a success.

“These are all anywhere from 7-10” long. The idea is that they will go out into the lake, come back in a couple of years, and hopefully a couple of trophies will be the result,” said Jack Bock, hatchery manager for the SONS of Lake Erie. ✧

Ojibwe Spring Fishing Season starting soon

Wisconsinites reminded of protected tribal right to fish

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR reminds Wisconsinites of the protected tribal right to fish in certain Wisconsin waterways and the legal consequences they could face if found interfering with that right during the upcoming Ojibwe spring fishing season.

“The DNR fully supports Ojibwe sovereignty and the rights of tribal members to hunt, fish and gather in the Ceded Territories. These rights are guaranteed by federal treaty and affirmed by the judicial system,” said DNR Secretary Karen Hyun. “Any interference with tribal members engaged in this traditional practice is illegal and will not be tolerated. The safety of Ojibwe fishers is a top priority for the DNR, and any reports of violence or other harassment of tribal members exercising their treaty rights will be swiftly addressed.”

Each tribal fishing season, tribal citizens harvest using various methods, including spearing and netting. The harvest usually begins shortly after the ice melts, typically by mid-April. This year, the season is expected to begin earlier due to the mild winter Wisconsin has experienced. The tribal harvest is not a date-regulated activity, and as a result, there is neither an open nor closed season. The DNR collaborates with the Ojibwe tribes and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) to uphold these tribal rights.

“Tribal members must be able to exercise their treaty rights in safety,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “Anyone who unlawfully interferes with the exercise of those rights should be prepared to face the consequences.”

“The spring harvest signifies a time of renewal and reinforcing bonds with the resource and tribal communities,” said Jason Schlender, GLIFWC Executive Administrator. “GLIFWC looks forward to assisting our member

tribes with their seasonal activities in cooperation with our agency partners to ensure safety and a bountiful harvest.”

Part of the collaboration between the DNR and the Ojibwe tribes includes working together to set a safe harvest limit for every walleye and muskellunge lake in the Ceded Territory. These safe harvest limits ensure that the walleye and muskellunge harvests do not adversely affect each lake’s fishery.

There are 2,300 lakes larger than 25 acres in the Ceded Territory, including 919 walleye lakes and 623 musky lakes. Each year, the Ojibwe tribal citizens fish a portion of these lakes outside of reservation boundaries during their spring harvest season. Tribal citizens rely on these lakes to preserve their cultural heritage and any fish harvested act as a vital food source for their communities.

By March 15 of every year, each tribe declares how many walleyes and muskellunge it intends to harvest from each lake based on the safe harvest limits. Harvest begins shortly after the ice melts, with nightly fishing permits issued by the tribes to their members to harvest a specific number of fish.

All fish that are taken are documented each night by a tribal clerk or warden who are present at boat landings. Once the declared harvest is reached in a given lake, no additional permits are issued for that lake, and the harvest ends. GLIFWC provides daily reports to the DNR for all fish harvested off-reservation by spearing or netting in the Ceded Territory.

Tribal Rights

In the mid-1800s, the Lake Superior Ojibwe Tribes ceded more than 22,000 square miles of tribal territory across Northern Wisconsin, including all or parts of 30 counties through a series of treaties with the United States federal government.

When the Ojibwe ceded lands to the federal government, they maintained their rights to hunt, fish and gather off reservation land within the Ceded Territory. However, after Wisconsin became a state, state and local officials frequently assumed statehood superseded Ojibwe treaty rights and regulated or prohibited off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering by tribal members.

In 1983, a federal court ruling reaffirmed the Ojibwe had the right to hunt, fish and gather off-reservation in the Ceded Territory, including the right to catch fish by spearing and netting.

Interfering With Tribal Rights

It is illegal to interfere or attempt to interfere with tribal citizens who are exercising treaty rights, including the spring harvest of walleye. Prohibited conduct against any tribal citizen includes, but is not limited to, stalking, obstructing access to lakes, recklessly operating watercraft, creating hazardous wakes, threatening violence and committing acts of violence.

The Ojibwe spring harvest, which includes spearfishing, is an integral and respected part of Wisconsin’s history. The DNR is actively engaged with GLIFWC, tribal law enforcement officers and local sheriff’s offices to protect tribal rights not only for the upcoming season but for generations to come and will continue to work to ensure all who participate are able to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Anyone violating tribal rights could be charged under several Wisconsin laws, fined up to \$10,000 and sentenced up to 9 months in prison. Additionally, any tribal member whose rights are violated may bring civil action for damages and seek a restraining order.

✧

Here's how to Protect Lake Sturgeon while Fishing This Spring

DNR reminds anglers of lake sturgeon fishing regulations and rehabilitation efforts

Anglers fishing Michigan's rivers this spring may unexpectedly find themselves with a lake sturgeon on the line. While encountering one of these iconic fish can be memorable and exciting, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources reminds anglers that special regulations exist for lake sturgeon, and fishing for lake sturgeon is prohibited except in a few locations in the state.

Can anglers fish for lake sturgeon?

In the Lower Peninsula, lake sturgeon may be encountered in waters such as Manistee Lake, the Manistee River, Muskegon Lake, the Muskegon River, the Grand River, the Kalamazoo River and Saginaw Bay and its tributaries. However, it is unlawful to fish for lake sturgeon in these locations, and any lake sturgeon incidentally caught while targeting other species **must be immediately released**.

If you unintentionally catch a lake sturgeon, follow these steps to ensure a safe release for the fish:

- Do not hold the sturgeon in a vertical position by its head, gill covers or tail.
- Do not touch the fish's eyes or gills.
- Handle the fish as little as possible and only with wet hands.
- Keep the fish in the water, if possible.
- Release the fish as quickly as possible.

Waters with sturgeon possession seasons include Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River, Otsego Lake, the Menominee River and Black Lake. Waters with catch-and-immediate-release only sturgeon fishing seasons include the Detroit River, the St. Marys River, Portage-Torch Lakes and the Ontonagon River.

In all other waters in the state of Michigan, it is unlawful to fish for lake sturgeon (see Page 15 of the

[Michigan Fishing Regulations](#) for detailed information related to lake sturgeon).

Anglers can report incidental (unintentional) capture of lake sturgeon and report illegal harvesting or targeting of lake sturgeon at Michigan.gov/EyesInTheField or by calling the DNR's Report All Poaching hotline, 800-292-7800.

What are lake sturgeon, and what makes them special?

Lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) are unique in appearance and characteristics. They have five rows of bony plates, called scutes, on their backs and sides, as well as whisker like barbels near their mouths.

Often referred to as "living fossils" or "dinosaur fish," lake sturgeon first appeared in the fossil record in the Mesozoic Era, 100 million to 150 million years ago. These fish are long-lived, with some documented at more than 100 years old.

Lake sturgeon are freshwater fish native to Michigan and found in North America throughout the Great Lakes, Mississippi and Hudson River basins, and are the only sturgeon species found in the Great Lakes. In addition to having high ecological significance, the species is an important cultural resource in the region. Due to overfishing and habitat loss and degradation, lake sturgeon abundance remains low throughout most of its historical range.

What efforts have been made to help lake sturgeon?

The State of Michigan listed lake sturgeon as a threatened species in 1994, more than 30 years ago. Since then, the DNR has partnered with tribal and federal agencies, as well as the public, to rehabilitate lake sturgeon in the state. The goals of these efforts are to conserve lake sturgeon populations that are currently self-sustaining and to rehabilitate

depressed or declining populations to self-sustaining levels so that lake sturgeon can be removed from the threatened species list.



As part of rehabilitation efforts, the DNR and partners stock lake sturgeon in several rivers and lakes in Michigan. Lake sturgeon are primarily raised in streamside rearing facilities: naturally produced eggs or larval lake sturgeon are captured in their natal (birthplace) river and brought into the rearing facilities, where they are protected from predators while still "imprinting" on their home water. This increases their survival and the chances that the sturgeon will return to the river in the spring (April through June) to reproduce as mature adults. Stocking is paired with special fishing regulations to aid rehabilitation efforts.

In the Manistee and Muskegon rivers – where fishing for lake sturgeon is prohibited – the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians has conducted lake sturgeon restoration activities since the early 2000s. Through streamside rearing, stocking, monitoring and research, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians has played the lead role in lake sturgeon rehabilitation efforts in their ancestral waters.

"Bringing back the sturgeon is bringing back our cultural heritage," said Patrick Wilson in the "Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Nmé (Lake Sturgeon) Stewardship Plan for the Big Manistee River and 1836 Reservation."

Protect Lake Sturgeon

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New reduced Lake Michigan whitefish quota in effect for commercial fishers

In December 2025, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved Department of Natural Resources recommendations to reduce commercial fishing quotas for whitefish in Lake Michigan by 40 percent in response to a dramatic population decline. Those quotas went into effect at the beginning of this year.

Scott Hansen is senior fisheries biologist for the DNR in Sturgeon Bay. He told WPR's "[Wisconsin Today](#)" that whitefish populations have been sharply declining in the lake for the last 20 years. He attributes the drop off largely to the explosion of invasive zebra and quagga mussels now blanketing the lakebed.

Hansen explained the mussels feed by filtering out phytoplankton, which happen to comprise the bottom of the food chain. The mussels are now outcompeting zooplankton, or animal-like plankton, that also rely on eating the phytoplankton. The starvation of zooplankton then ripples up the food chain.

"Young whitefish, the baby whitefish, are entirely dependent upon that zooplankton to sustain themselves to grow up," Hansen said. "What happens is there's a bottleneck there—that's what we assume is happening. And they're just not surviving to adulthood."

Native lake whitefish are one of several species of fish that commercial fishermen used to be able to gather from all over the Great Lakes to send to markets around America. But the changing of the Great Lakes and the invasion of zebra and quagga mussels have devastated their populations one by one, making them less and less viable for commercial fishing. In the Bay of Green Bay, the whitefish story is slightly different. Hansen said nutrient runoff in Green Bay is keeping the food chain better sustained for that region.

As a result, the bay's fishing quota remained the same compared to last year, though Hansen added that could change in the future.

For Paul LeClair, owner of [Susie Q Fish Company](#) in Two Rivers, the Lake Michigan whitefish quota reduction is actually negligible—he's already greatly reduced how much he fishes due to the shrinking population and lake conditions.

LeClair's family has been fishing in Lake Michigan for over 130 years. On "[Wisconsin Today](#)," he said that fishing the lake is in his family's blood. But over his lifetime, commercial fishing has become less and less a part of his business. "We're seeing less fish," LeClair said. "The weather seems to be getting worse. Every year, there seems to be more wind. We're lucky to get out two to three days a week."

He said about 75 percent of the business now comes from smoking fish they import, including from Alaska, rather than collecting it from Lake Michigan. That's a big change from previous generations. LeClair said his family used to commercial fish for chubs and smelts, as well as whitefish. But even whitefish is "not half of what it used to be just a couple years ago." "I think commercial fishing is just about on the way out," LeClair said. "There used to be 20 boats out of Two Rivers 100 years ago. Now, there's only one company left, and we have one boat."

LeClair agreed with Hansen's assessment that zebra and quagga mussels are the main culprits for the collapse of Lake Michigan's whitefish. He said his fishing boat had to switch from using trap nets to trawling the lakebed. "The only problem with the trawl is we get the quagga mussels that fill up the nets because they're a couple inches thick

on the bottom (of the lake)," LeClair said.

Hansen said that while the Bay of Green Bay's whitefish population shows some signs of holding on, there isn't much hope for the Lake Michigan side.

"Unless things change dramatically, unless something happens that's, frankly, short of a miracle on Lake Michigan, we will continue to see declines," Hansen said. ✧

Protect Lake Sturgeon

Continued from page 10

"This is a long-term commitment by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to restore this culturally significant species and for the Anishinaabek people to reconnect with their culture," said Archie Martel, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Fisheries Division manager.

A long-term commitment is indeed necessary: a female lake sturgeon may need 20 or more years to mature, and even then may only spawn once every three or four years—protection is critical to rehabilitation efforts. Spawning is a stressful event for fish, and if they are disturbed or harassed, it may jeopardize their ability to spawn successfully that year. "Observe, don't disturb" to allow these fish to produce the next generation of lake sturgeon in our waters.

For more information on lake sturgeon, visit [Michigan.gov/Sturgeon](https://www.michigan.gov/Sturgeon). Report incidental capture of lake sturgeon and report illegal harvesting or targeting of lake sturgeon at [Michigan.gov/EyesInTheField](https://www.michigan.gov/EyesInTheField) or by calling the DNR's Report All Poaching hotline, 800-292-7800. ✧

Minnesota DNR open water fishing regulations for Upper Red Lake

Anglers fishing on Upper Red Lake during the 2026 open-water season that starts Saturday, May 9, will have a five-walleye possession limit, with only one walleye longer than 17 inches allowed. This is the same regulation that was in place for the 2025 open-water season.

“Upper Red Lake walleye have been managed at a level that, among other factors, resulted in a number of recent strong year classes,” said Andy Thompson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources area fisheries supervisor for Bemidji. “This regulation is an opportunity for anglers to keep abundant young walleye while also maintaining spawners at a level that continues to produce successful year classes.”

Spawning stock levels on Upper Red Lake have a “sweet spot” where

abundance is high enough to produce newly hatched walleye, known as fry, but not so high that young fish don’t survive well due to competition for food. Through this regulation, the Minnesota DNR is seeking to keep the fishery in this condition by focusing harvest on the plentiful immature fish under 17 inches, so that future numbers of spawning walleye aren’t higher than desired, and overall harvest doesn’t exceed agreed-upon levels established with Red Lake Nation.

Walleye management on Upper Red Lake is a collaborative effort between Red Lake Nation and the Minnesota DNR, governed by a joint harvest plan revised by the Red Lakes Fisheries Technical Committee in 2015 and again in 2025. Winter harvest regulations for 2026-2027 will

be determined after the summer fishing season and fall assessment netting.

The Upper Red Lake Citizen Advisory Committee reviews walleye harvest totals and regulation options, and provides recommendations for the state waters of Upper Red Lake. Current fishing regulations for Upper Red Lake are detailed on the [Minnesota DNR website](https://mndnr.gov/fishing/upper-red-lake-regulations.html) (mndnr.gov/fishing/upper-red-lake-regulations.html).

The DNR reminds anglers to protect Upper Red Lake and all Minnesota waters from aquatic invasive species by cleaning and draining watercraft and equipment, and putting unwanted bait in the trash. A decontamination station is available at the Tamarac River Big Bog Public Water Access, referred to locally as Homestead Park. ✧

2nd Amendment issues:

Congress, 24 State AGs, gun groups file Amicus supporting *NSSF v. James Cert Petition*

NSSF’s [petition for certiorari](#) to the U.S. Supreme Court in *NSSF v. James* is getting tremendous support from Congress, state attorneys general and Second Amendment and firearm industry advocacy groups. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is leading 21 additional senators in an [amicus brief](#) supporting NSSF in the challenge against New York’s law that allows for frivolous lawsuits against the firearm industry for the criminal misuse of firearms by remote third parties.

That law is in direct conflict with the bipartisan Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA). U.S. Rep. Russell Fry (R-S.C.) is [leading 54 of his House of Representatives colleagues](#) in an additional [amicus brief](#). Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen [is leading a coalition of 24 state attorneys general](#) in an amicus brief supporting NSSF’s cert petition, noting in a press release, “We don’t have a Second Amendment in this

country if we don’t have firearms manufacturers. The radical left is trying to kill the firearms manufacturing industry in this country one lawsuit at a time.” Adding to that support are amicus briefs submitted by [NRA](#), [Second Amendment Foundation](#), [American Free Enterprise Chamber of Commerce](#), [American Suppressor Association](#) and [Independence Institute](#). ✧

April workshops explore Great Lakes fishery research

Anglers, charter captains, resource professionals, local community members and others interested in current research and information related to the status of the Great Lakes fishery are invited to a series of April workshops (both virtual & in person).

Offered by Michigan Sea Grant and

Michigan State U, in partnership with the DNR, the U.S. Geological Survey Great Lakes Science Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local fishery organizations, the workshops will cover topics such as fish populations and angler catch data, forage or prey fish surveys, offshore fisheries and open-water fisheries, as

well as updates on fisheries management, citizen science opportunities for anglers and a variety of regional topics.

Visit the [Michigan Sea Grant fisheries workshops webpage](#) for more information (including registration details) on each workshop. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:**(Click on title or URL to read full article)**[Trump administration wants to cut Illinois out of Great Lakes carp plan](#)

The Trump administration announced plans to put Michigan officials in charge of a \$1.15 billion Chicago-area river barrier designed to keep invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes

[Little Traverse Bay Bands awarded \\$200K grant for whitefish restoration project](#)

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians is working to repopulate whitefish in Lake Michigan by reintroducing them in the Bear River. The USFWS gave the tribe a \$200,000 grant for the project. Through this tribal wildlife grant, the band will conduct habitat surveys to find ideal instream incubation areas in the river.

[Eating habits of grass carp alarms biologists](#)

A new study shows surprisingly flexible eating habits from invasive grass carp in Lake Michigan and Lake Erie suggesting these fish can survive and spread to new locations where their typical diet sources are scarce.

[Pennsylvania bill could increase fines for snagging fish like trout](#)

A bill has been introduced in the Pennsylvania Senate to increase the penalties for anglers who intentionally foul hook or snag a fish in the Commonwealth. The legislation would allow the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission to increase penalties for certain violations, such as snagging, without impacting other regulatory provisions

[Trump wants to 'save' Great Lakes from invasive carp as administration stalls funding for it](#)

President Trump said he's working to save the Great Lakes from invasive carp, but the announcement comes as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has paused funding for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project that aims to block invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes. The pause is part of a broader administrative review despite

End