



## Biologists to speak at Fishery Commission meeting in Milwaukee Lakes Erie and Ontario meetings to be held in Niagara Falls, Ontario

Fisheries biologists from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ontario, USFWS and USGS will be among those presenting information at the upcoming Upper Lake Committees Meeting sponsored annually by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

The Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron Committees meet to assess the status of fish communities, discuss Great Lakes issues and plan future management activities. The Upper Lake Committees meeting will be held March 21-23 at the Intercontinental Milwaukee. The meeting will feature a presentation on the "State of Lake Michigan."

The Lake Huron Committee meeting will begin Monday March 21 at 1 PM; the Lake Michigan Committee meeting will convene March 22 at 9 AM, and the Lake Superior Committee meeting begins at 11 AM on March 23.

The Lower Lakes Committee Meeting comprised of Lakes Erie and Ontario will be held March 30-April 1 at the Marriott Niagara Falls Fallsview Hotel. Fisheries experts from Ontario, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, USFWS and USGS will be among those making presentations at that meeting. The Lake Erie Committee Meeting will

begin Wednesday, March 30, at 1 PM and the Lake Ontario Committee Meeting will begin Thursday, March 31, at 3 PM.

This is a unique opportunity for anglers to come and hear talks on a variety of Great Lakes topics. This year, Lake Michigan will be a major focus of the discussion.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission Upper and Lower Lake Committees Meetings are free and open to the public. Those interested in attending, or for more information, are asked to contact Haley Tober of the commission at [htober@glfc.org](mailto:htober@glfc.org) or 734-669-3014. ✧

## DEC: Atlantic sturgeon show encouraging signs for population recovery

A joint Federal and State 2015 Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon Survey

shows the highest number of Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson River in the 10-year history of the survey and the trend of the results show an increasing juvenile sturgeon abundance, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos has announced.

"Juvenile Atlantic sturgeon are at the highest level recorded in the Hudson River in the last 10 years. These survey results are an encouraging sign for the recovery of Atlantic sturgeon," Acting Commissioner Seggos said. "We are cautiously optimistic that, with our continued vigilance and efforts to protect this species, Atlantic sturgeon will have a secure future."

Commercial fishing rates for Atlantic sturgeon exceeded the ability of the fish to replenish themselves in the late 1980s and early 1990s. New York led the way in conservation through implementation of a harvest

moratorium for Atlantic sturgeon in 1996. In 1998, an amendment of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic sturgeon resulted in a coast wide moratorium on Atlantic sturgeon harvest for 40 years and aimed to protect two generations of females in each spawning stock.

The juvenile Atlantic sturgeon abundance survey began in 2006 as part of the DEC's Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda. The survey was designed by DEC in collaboration with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and was implemented to track the response of Atlantic sturgeon to the closure of commercial sturgeon fisheries. Since sturgeon are a long-lived species, with Hudson River fish beginning to spawn at 10 to 20 years old and living as long as 60 years, signs of recovery were expected to be

### Atlantic Sturgeon

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## Michigan Inland Lakes Convention April 28-30

The biannual Michigan Inland Lakes Convention returns to Boyne Falls April 28–30. This year's conference, titled Science and Leadership: A Formula for Successful Lake Protection and Management, will be held at Boyne Mountain Resort. Registration is now open online.

Three days of educational presentations, discussions and in-depth workshops focusing exclusively on Michigan's inland lakes will be offered. Dozens of Michigan nonprofit, business and governmental exhibitors will showcase their projects, resources and services.

Lake enthusiasts of all kinds – researchers, water resource professionals, local leaders, residents and vacationers alike – are invited to partake in workshops and presentations that will engage, educate and empower. On April 28 participants can choose among a variety of workshops, including aquatic plant identification and management, fish management, the roles of local government in lake protection, and volunteer training for the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. On April 29 and 30 participants can choose from multiple concurrent sessions, such as climate change, invasive species, effective communication skills, lake law and shoreline protection.

The Convention is a cooperative effort between the many public and private organizations that make up the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership (MILP), including: Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc., the Michigan Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society, Michigan State U., Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership, Michigan DNR, Michigan DEQ, and the Michigan State University Institute of Water Research.

The MILP promotes collaboration between locals, professionals, researchers and agencies in order to advance stewardship of Michigan's inland lakes. For more information, visit [michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu/](http://michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu/). ✧

## Annual Ohio Boating Summit March 23

The Ohio DNR will hold the second annual Ohio Boating Summit on Wednesday, March 23, at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center, 2201 Fred Taylor Dr on the Columbus campus of The Ohio State U. People interested in paddling, fishing or boating in Ohio are encouraged to attend this summit.

The summit will provide an opportunity for a number of experts to share their experiences and create a dialogue between ODNR boating constituents, boating partners and the public. This summit will encourage a forum for networking while educating attendees on the current topics and trends in boating in the Buckeye State.

Presentation topics include:

- Paddling Destinations
- The Ohio River: Unveiling Ohio's Best Kept Boating Secret
- Life Jacket Trends and the Wear It! Campaign
- Innovations in Side Scan Sonar
- Examining Factors of Recreational Boating Accidents
- Caesar Creek Marina Project
- Post-Summit OSU Student and Professional Networking Reception

The one-day conference will be held from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. New this year, immediately following the summit, is an OSU and ODNR networking reception that is free for students and professionals. Registration is \$25 for individuals, \$10 for groups of six or more and students are free with a valid student ID. Continuing education credits for this event are available. Lunch is available for \$11.50 for people who preregister for the summit.

Register online or by credit card, check or cash the day of the summit beginning at 8 a.m. or contact Dawn Potter: [dawn.potter@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:dawn.potter@dnr.state.oh.us), 614-265-6412, or Susan Sheley: 614-265-6485, [susan.sheley@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:susan.sheley@dnr.state.oh.us). Info: <http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/boatingsummit>. ✧



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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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## DNR invites entries for trout and salmon stamp contests

Trout and salmon have been capturing the imagination of artists since at least the time of early cave paintings in France some 14,000 years ago, scholars say.

In celebration of Wisconsin's world class inland trout waters and productive Great Lakes fisheries, the DNR is inviting entries for an inland trout stamp design contest and a Great Lakes salmon and trout stamp design contest for the 2017 year stamps. Artwork must be submitted by July 1, 2016. The concurrent contests are open to those ages 18 and older—youth contests are planned for the 2018 editions.

Subject matter for stamps must feature species of trout and salmon found in Wisconsin's waters or appropriate subject matter relating to trout and salmon fishing. Artists are not limited in their choice of colors or medium, but the medium selected must be of permanent quality such as pen and ink, oil, watercolor etching or pencil.

Once the artwork has been submitted, DNR will create an online gallery and open the voting through the Web and Facebook in July. The top 10 entries from the online voting will then move to a final round of judging by a panel of three to five judges with expertise and interest in trout, salmon and wildlife art.

The top three entries will be ranked and put on display at the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair from Aug. 4-14.

To learn more, visit [DNR.wi.gov](http://DNR.wi.gov) and search "[Trout Stamp Contest](#)." Entries will be accepted starting immediately and must be delivered or postmarked by July 1, 2016 and sent to the Wisconsin Great Lakes Salmon and Trout Stamp Contest or the Wisconsin Inland Trout Stamp Contest, Attn: Trout Coordinator, Wisconsin DNR (FH/4), Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921. Questions may be directed to Joanna Griffin, DNR trout coordinator at [Joanna.Griffin@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Joanna.Griffin@Wisconsin.gov) or 608-264-8953. ✧

## PA Youth Trout Days March 26, April 9

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's popular Mentored Youth Trout Days program has proven that kids are eager to fish, especially when they have a special opportunity to spend a day with their mentors before the traditional rush of opening days of trout season.

The growing program is scheduled for March 26 and April 9. And, as it has done each successive year, the PFBC has fine-tuned the program based on angler feedback. For this year, only kids will be allowed to keep two trout.

On these two days, participants can fish in any PFBC stocked trout water. Kids can keep two trout, which must measure at least seven inches.

The March 26 Mentored Youth Trout Day takes place in 18 SE counties, including: Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill and York.

The following weekend – April 2 – kicks off the Regional Opening Day of Trout Season in the same 18 southeastern counties.

A second Mentored Youth Trout Day will be held on April 9, the Saturday before the April 16 statewide opening day of trout season.

A majority of the trout waters will be stocked in advance of the mentored youth days.

"It's important for anglers to visit the PFBC [stocking page](#) for an updated list so they know exactly what waters are being stocked," said Brian Wisner, Director of the PFBC Bureau of Hatcheries. "We don't want mentors and kids inadvertently showing up at waters which have not been stocked."

To participate, adult anglers (16 years or older) must have a valid fishing license and trout/salmon permit and be accompanied by a youth. Youth anglers must obtain a free PFBC-issued permit, or a voluntary youth fishing license. Both are available at [www.GoneFishingPA.com](http://www.GoneFishingPA.com) ✧

## Workshops available for becoming fishing instructors

Two workshop opportunities are available in northeast Ohio this spring for individuals who are interested in becoming certified Passport to Fishing instructors. Both workshops are scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Wildlife District Three Headquarters, 912 Portage Lakes Drive, Akron. The dates are April 17, 2016 and April 23, 2016. Participants are only required to attend one class.

Workshops are free but pre-registration is required as seating is limited; call Ken Fry, Division of Wildlife at (330) 245-3030. Participants must be at least 18 years old and will be required to participate in a background check. By becoming certified instructors, attendees will help connect youths with the outdoors. Resources available to instructors include grants, equipment, brochures, and training.

Passport to Fishing was developed by USFWS. Workshops teach volunteers the basics of fishing and how to run a four-station fishing program with a fishing event. These instructors then go back to their communities, with a written curriculum and training aids, to teach youngsters and beginning anglers. ✧

## Upcoming Go FishIN Crew Captain Workshops

Go FishIN Crew Captain workshops are scheduled this month: March 17 - [Indianapolis](#) and March 31 - [Fort Wayne](#). The workshops are free for adults (e.g., educators and youth leaders) and cover fish biology, Indiana's aquatic ecosystems, fish management in Indiana, basic angling skills, and angler ethics. Participants will become crew captains and can then take this knowledge and these skills to their classrooms and community. Crew captains also can receive sport fishing educational materials and borrow fishing equipment from the DNR to carry out the program. ✧

## PFBC adds public fishing easements

At its quarterly business meeting late last month, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) purchased three easements and one property along Erie County's Elk Creek, further expanding the public fishing corridor along the popular steelhead stream.

"The steelhead fishery in Lake Erie and its tributaries is a popular destination for anglers and generates tremendous economic benefits to the region," said PFBC Executive Director John Arway. "And our Fishing and Boating Access Strategy ranks this watershed as the top priority for access improvement statewide. With the addition of these easements today, we're greatly increasing the opportunities for anglers to fish this stream."

The access areas include:

- Easements of 1,175 and 870 linear feet along Elk Creek in

Fairview Township, Erie County. The easements are located off of Elk Valley Road downstream of Fairview Township's Struchen Flats property and were acquired for \$18,000 and \$13,500 respectively. The addition of these two easements creates a 1-mile corridor of connected public access.

- An easement of 410 linear feet along Elk Creek in McKean Township, Erie County, acquired for \$5,500. The easement area is located off of Rick Road upstream of the PFBC's Rick Road access.
- Approximately 1,600 linear feet of frontage on Elk Creek on eight acres of land in McKean Township, Erie County. The PFBC purchased the land for \$100,000. The property is located immediately west of Interstate 79

at the end of Skinner Road near McKean.

To date, the PFBC has acquired more than 20 miles of public fishing access in the Erie watershed through easements and land purchases under the Erie Access Improvement Program.

Also, the Board approved an \$80,000 grant to the Wildlands Conservancy as part of a \$413,000 project to construct two boat launch facilities on the Lehigh River water trail and provide signage along the entire length of the trail. The sites are known as the Walnutport access in Walnutport, Northampton County, and the Treichler's Bridge access in North Whitehall Township, Lehigh County. The PFBC previously awarded the conservancy a \$270,000 grant in 2012 for the project. ✧

## Bighead carp caught on Minnesota River

A bighead carp was caught by a commercial angler on the Minnesota River near New Ulm, according to the Minnesota DNR. The 25-lb. male fish is the first bighead carp and second invasive carp confirmed in the Minnesota River. A grass carp was caught in the same location in December.

"We have suspected that bighead carp have occasionally entered the Minnesota River from the Mississippi River, but this is the first confirmed capture," said DNR Invasive Fish Coordinator Nick Frohnauer. "This individual capture does not indicate reproduction or an established population of invasive carp in the Minnesota River."

"The DNR is concerned about the potential impacts of invasive carp in the Minnesota River watershed and has several projects in the works with partners around the state," Frohnauer said.

- Minnesota State University, Mankato has funding through the DNR to evaluate the Minnesota River

for barrier potential to prevent spread of invasive carp. This includes floodplain analysis and habitat suitability for carp life stages. Data collection and analysis has begun, with a final report to the DNR due by December 2017.

- The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota has funding through the DNR to evaluate potential deterrents for Mississippi River Locks and Dams. They have installed acoustic speakers at Lock 8 and modeled flows through the gates at Dam 8.

- DNR Fisheries has identified high value aquatic resources (i.e. lakes) in the Minnesota River watershed that could be protected with barriers in tributary streams. Adjacent property owners and respective county officials have been briefed on the project and site locations, with completion targeted for fall 2016.

"While it's disappointing this carp was found," Frohnauer said,

"these actions and others are still important and valuable in helping prevent the long-term spread of invasive carp across the state."

Invasive carp have been progressing upstream since escaping into the Mississippi River in the 1970s. These large fish compete with native species and pose a threat to rivers and lakes. While no breeding populations have been detected in Minnesota waters, individual fish have been caught in the Mississippi near the Twin Cities, in the St. Croix River, and now in the Minnesota River.

Invasive carp captures must be reported to the DNR immediately. Call 651-587-2781 or email [invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us). Please take a photo and transport the carp to the nearest fisheries office or make arrangements for it to be picked up by a DNR official. To learn more about invasive carp, visit: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasive-carp/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasive-carp/index.html). ✧

### Ill Spring Trout Fishing Season opens April 2 Catch-and-Release Fly Fishing-Only Season opens March 19

The 2016 Illinois spring trout fishing season opens on April 2 at 50 ponds, lakes and streams. Prospect Park in Moline has been added to the list of spring trout fishing locations.

The Spring Catch-and-Release Fly Fishing-only season will be available at nine sites beginning on March 19. Fly fishing anglers can use fly fishing gear to catch and release trout at nine selected sites. No trout may be kept during the fly fishing-only period, but anglers can keep trout after the opening of the regular season beginning April 2.

The Illinois catchable trout program is funded through the sale of Inland Trout Stamps. The IDNR stocks more than 80,000 rainbow trout each year in bodies of water where trout fishing is permitted during the spring season.

No trout may be taken from any of the stocked sites from March 11 until the spring trout season opens at 5 a.m. on April 2. Anyone attempting to take trout before the legal season opening will be issued citations.

All anglers – including those using fly-fishing gear who intend to release fish caught before April 2 – must have a fishing license and an Inland Trout Stamp, unless they are under the age of 16, blind or disabled, or are an Illinois resident on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces. The daily catch limit for each angler is five trout. Not all sites open at 5 a.m. on opening day. Anglers are reminded to check the opening time of their favorite trout fishing location prior to the season.

For more information on trout seasons and other Illinois fishing opportunities, check the website at [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org). Illinois fishing licenses and Inland Trout Stamps are available at DNR Direct license and permit locations, including many bait shops, sporting goods stores and other retail outlets. For a location near you, check the IDNR website at this link: <http://dnr.illinois.gov/DNRDirectMonitor/ VendorListing.aspx>. ✧

### Another successful year for DNR's Master Angler program

Michigan announced the 2015 results from its Master Angler program, which since 1973 has recognized large fish caught by anglers.

This past year, 1,542 anglers representing 15 states and Canada submitted catches that were recognized as Master Angler fish. That's a better-than-50-percent increase over the 987 fish recognized in 2014. The large increase likely stems from the simplification of the Master Angler application.

Of the entries accepted in 2015, 899 were categorized as “catch and keep” and 643 were categorized as “catch and release.”

Here is a breakdown of the most popular 2015 entries by species:

- 142 bluegill
- 124 crappie
- 118 walleye
- 89 channel catfish
- 87 freshwater drum
- 82 smallmouth bass

Master Angler entries for 2015 included six state records, including smallmouth bass (9.33 pounds, caught on Hubbard Lake by Greg Gasciel of Rhodes), quillback carpsucker (8.52 pounds, caught on Hardy Dam Pond by Garrett Reid of Nashville), quillback carpsucker (9.42 pounds, caught on Hardy Dam Pond by Blake Wilson of Lake Ann), black buffalo (44.54 pounds, caught on the Grand River by Sage Colegrove of Muskegon), white perch (2.0 pounds, caught on Bear Lake by Cindy Lou Cordo of North Muskegon) and freshwater drum (28.61 pounds, caught on Gun Lake by Mark Leep of Middleville).

Submissions already are being accepted for the 2016 Master Angler program, and will continue to be accepted through January 10, 2017. Download an application at [michigan.gov/masterangler](http://michigan.gov/masterangler). Anglers are encouraged to submit their applications as they catch their fish and to not hold them until the end of the year. ✧

### Ohio trout releases begin March 11

Just over 100,000 rainbow trout are expected to be released this spring in 64 Ohio public lakes and ponds, creating excellent fishing opportunities for anglers all across Ohio. The first rainbow trout release was scheduled for March 11, at Adams Lake in Adams County.

Rainbow trout releases will take place across Ohio from March 11 - May 7 as long as areas are ice-free and accessible to anglers. Information about the trout releases, including updates to the schedule due to weather and stocking locations, is available at [www.wildohio.gov](http://www.wildohio.gov) or by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE (945-3543).

Stocking these areas are expected to create opportunities for anglers of all ages to get out and enjoy quality spring trout fishing in a family friendly environment. Many stocked locations will feature special angler events, including youth-only fishing on the day of the trout release. The daily catch limit for inland lakes is five trout.

Anglers age 16 and older must have an Ohio fishing license to fish in state public waters. The 2016-2017 fishing license is now available, and is valid through February 28, 2017. An annual resident fishing license costs \$19. A one-day fishing license costs \$11 for residents and nonresidents. The one-day license may also be redeemed for credit toward the purchase of an annual fishing license.

The SFR program is a partnership between federal and state government, industry, anglers and boaters. When anglers purchase rods, reels, fishing tackle, fish finders and motor boat fuel, they pay an excise tax. The federal government collects these taxes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers and disburses these funds to state fish and wildlife agencies. These funds are used to acquire habitat, produce and stock fish, conduct research and surveys, provide aquatic education to youth and secure and develop boat accesses. ✧

## 2016 Black Lake sturgeon season harvest results

Michigan DNR officials announced the 2016 Black Lake sturgeon harvest season ended after one hour Saturday, February 6, with seven fish being harvested. The fishing season, which included spearing or hook-and-line fishing, was scheduled to run February 6-10, or until the harvest quota had been reached. The allocation of sturgeon for Black Lake anglers this year was seven fish, although DNR officials set a quota of six fish.

There were 261 registered anglers on the ice Saturday, down from 303 the year before. Most anglers preregistered Friday, February 5, which allowed for a much more streamlined process. Anglers of all ages and genders participated, including a good number of supervised youth.

According to the DNR, the first two sturgeon were harvested by 8:15 a.m. The first was a 50-inch male that weighed 26 pounds, and the second was a 56-inch male weighing 42 pounds. Fish three was a 70-inch female that weighed 96 pounds, taken at 8:22 a.m. Fish four was a 42-inch male weighing in at 16 pounds and was taken at 8:40 a.m. The fifth fish was harvested at 8:50 a.m. and was a 58-inch female that weighed 42 pounds. The sixth and seventh fish

harvested were a 40-inch female (13 pounds) and a 46-inch male (20 pounds), both taken around 9 a.m.



Six of the seven fish taken had been captured before by Michigan State University and DNR sturgeon researchers during spring spawning runs or summer tagging surveys on either the Black River or in Black Lake.

The sturgeon fishing hotline was updated at 9 a.m., officially closing the season. In addition, signal cannons and sirens were used to indicate the season's end within minutes of the final fish being harvested. DNR law enforcement officials and other department personnel were embedded in the on-ice fishing communities and were able to quickly report harvested fish this year, as well as to quickly contact all lake sturgeon anglers on the ice and close the season.

“The unlimited entry fishery paired with a significant on-ice presence of DNR personnel allows for greater participation by anglers while protecting the population of lake sturgeon in Black Lake from overharvest,” said DNR fisheries biologist Tim Cwalinski.

“It was deemed a very successful season for angler participation, fish harvest, quick response times, and from a safety perspective.”

In addition, the Black Lake Sturgeon Shivaree event was held on the ice, offering a festive environment for the public, and was sponsored by many local groups. For more information on sturgeon in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/sturgeon](http://Michigan.gov/sturgeon). ✧

## Closure for walleye on inland waters around Saginaw Bay

The Michigan DNR reminds anglers that regulations approved by the Natural Resources Commission in October 2015 impact walleye and yellow perch recreational fishing in Saginaw Bay. The new regulations had immediate effect and will remain in place for the 2016 fishing season.

For walleye, the daily possession limit is eight (8) fish and the minimum size limit is 13 inches. For yellow perch, the daily possession limit is reduced from 50 to 25 fish.

The waters where these walleye and yellow perch size-limit and bag-limit

regulations apply are known as [Lake Huron management unit MH-4](#) but also include the Saginaw River up to the Center Street Bridge, which is immediately upstream of the Rust Avenue boat launch in Saginaw.

It is very important for anglers to remember that fishing seasons for walleye were not changed for these waters. The Saginaw River is considered inland water, so walleye season closes Tuesday, March 15, whereas the waters of MH-4 are considered Great Lakes waters and are open year round.

These regulation changes will be the starting point for a new management process where future possession and size limits will be tied to the status of the walleye population. If the population diminishes, the regulations will become more conservative, but if the population remains high, then regulations will remain liberal.

For more information, check out the DNR's [October press release](#), the [2016-2017 Michigan Fishing Guide](#), or call the Southern Lake Huron Management Unit at 989-684-9141. ✧

## Michigan awards \$3.6 million to combat invasive species

Michigan announced the award of 19 grant projects totaling \$3.6 million, under the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program. The program – a joint effort of three departments – is part of a statewide initiative launched in 2014 to help prevent and control invasive species in Michigan. This grant program seeks to strengthen partners' efforts in:

- Preventing, through outreach and education, new introductions of invasive species.
- Monitoring for the introduction of new invasive species and the expansion of current invasive species.
- Responding to and working to eradicate new findings and range expansions.
- Strategically managing and controlling key colonized species.

Grant amounts range from \$35,000 to \$350,000, and recipients include nonprofit organizations, universities, conservation districts and other units of government. The [full list](#) of grant recipients, project descriptions and grant amounts is available on [the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program Web page](#). [www.michigan.gov/invasivespecies](http://www.michigan.gov/invasivespecies)

✧

## DEC reminder: brush burning is prohibited through May 14

DEC reminds New Yorkers that with warming temperatures and dry conditions, residential brush burning in towns with less than 20,000 residents is prohibited from March 16 through May 14. With the lack of snow cover and unseasonably warm temperatures, experts believe conditions for wild fires will be heightened in the coming weeks. DEC posts a fire danger rating forecast map on a daily basis at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/68329.html>.

✧

## USFWS to distribute \$1.1 billion from Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson Acts

The USFWS is doling out \$1.1 billion to the states in the 2016 fiscal year. The funds were generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Acts and will go toward conservation efforts within each state.

The funding is raised from excise taxes laid out in the two acts, Pittman-Robertson for the sale of hunting equipment and Dingell-Johnson for fishing. The percentage of money paid by the hunting, boating, and angling industries on firearms, bows, and ammunition (Pittman-Robertson), and sport-fishing tackle, some boat engines, and small-engine fuel (Dingell-Johnson) helps pay for research, management, and enforcement performed by the various fish and wildlife agencies across the country.

Instead of going into the [U.S. Treasury](#) as it had done in the past, the money is kept separate and is given to the [Secretary of the Interior](#) to distribute to the States. The Secretary determines how much to give to each state based on a formula that takes into account both the area of the state and its number of licensed hunters and anglers.

Click [here](#) for the breakdown of funds for each state in the 2016 fiscal year. ✧

## Michigan: Hunting with Suppressors Now Legal

On February 11, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission voted to repeal the long-standing state prohibition on hunting with legally possessed firearm sound suppressors. With the repeal of Wildlife Conservation Order 2.1(6), Michigan becomes the 38th state to recognize the utility of suppressor technology for law-abiding sportsmen. ✧

## Families On The Water Program

Families On The Water is a pilot program from the Ohio DNR to get the whole family outdoors to learn about and enjoy boating and fishing, together. The 2016 program includes: Two workshops at Cabela's (Polaris) June 7 and 9, from 6-8pm each night.

- An all-day fishing and boating outing at Delaware State Park on Saturday, June 11, and
- An overnight campout at Delaware State Park on Friday, June 17, followed by a day of activities Saturday, June 18.
- Deadline to apply is May 1, 2016

Families must commit to attending all events associated with the program including a family interview and successfully completing an Ohio Boating Education Course (Home Study version) provided by ODNR. Participants will receive instruction on boat handling, pole rigging, fish species, fishing technique, tent set-up, campfire cooking and campground safety as well as advice on how to shop, what to buy, what resources are available and how to use them.

All materials, gear, boats, and equipment will be provided except that by June 7, participants 16 or older must have a valid Ohio fishing license. (May be purchased first night at Cabela's.) ✧

## FishBoatPA mobile app downloads top 33,500

A year after the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission launched its first mobile smartphone application – called [FishBoatPA](#) – more than 33,500 users have downloaded the free app, which shows anglers which waters have been stocked with trout and provides driving directions using a phone's GPS coordinates. The app has been a hit with anglers who, like much of the general public, are increasingly using smartphones. The "FishBoatPA" app is available for free on both [Google's Play Store](#) and [Apple's App Store](#). ✧

## Brick-and-mortar stores still play primary role as online sporting license sales trend upward

While a growing number of sportsmen embrace the availability and convenience of buying hunting and fishing licenses online, the longstanding tradition of standing in line at a local bait and tackle or sporting shop is alive and well. In fact, even as online purchasing trends continue to climb, the majority of licenses are still purchased in brick-and-mortar stores according to recent surveys conducted by [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com) and [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com).

For hunters, the practice of purchasing licenses online has grown 12 percent from what was reported in 2011, the first year HunterSurvey.com asked the question. In that same time frame, sales at local retail locations have dropped only two percent. So what locations have lost out as online purchases climb? License purchases at government offices and at "other" locations not specified in the survey

have each dropped five percent in that same time period.

On the fishing front, online license purchases have climbed 14 percent since 2011 with retailers taking a bigger hit in license sales from their angling customers than from hunters with 11 percent fewer sportsman buying fishing licenses from retailers. That said, local shops and big box store locations still account for half of total fishing license sales. In that same time, government offices are selling one percent fewer licenses and "other" locations are selling four percent less.

Southwick Associates is working with state agencies to help redesign their licenses and set better prices that boost agency revenues and provide angler and hunters with better license options.

"Online license sales will naturally continue to grow as more and more hunters and anglers take advantage of the convenience technology offers," says Rob

Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com), [ShooterSurvey.com](http://ShooterSurvey.com) and [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com). "But for local retailers and even larger chains that sell sporting licenses the opportunity to make additional sales of products that appeal to or are needed by hunters and anglers when they visit those locations to buy a license is still huge and will likely continue to be for some time."

To help continually improve, protect and advance hunting, shooting and fishing, all sportsmen and sportswomen are encouraged to participate in the bi-monthly surveys at [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com), [ShooterSurvey.com](http://ShooterSurvey.com) and [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com).. Every other month, participants who complete the surveys are entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 gift certificates to the sporting goods retailer of their choice. ✧

## Top Fishing Equipment Brands for 2015

Southwick Associates' has announced 2015 top brands for many angling product categories. This list has been compiled from the internet-based surveys completed in 2015 by [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com) panelists.

In 2015, sportfishing's most frequently purchased brands included:

- Top rod brand: Shakespeare (Ugly Stik, Sturdy Stik, etc.)
- Top reel brand: Shimano
- Top combo brand: Shakespeare
- Top fishing line brand: PowerPro
- Top hard bait brand: Rapala
- Top spinner bait brand: Strike King
- Top jig brand: Strike King
- Top sinker brand: Lindys
- Top swivel brand: Eagle Claw
- Top leader brand: Suffix
- Top fly line brand: Rio
- Top fly leader brand: Rio
- Top tippets brand: Rio

- Top wader brand: Simms
- Top clothing brand: Columbia
- Top raingear brand: Frogg Toggs
- Top landing net brand: Frabill
- Top bait bucket/aerator brand: Frabill
- Top fishing knife brand: Rapala
- Top fish scale brand: Berkley
- Top trolling motor brand: Minn Kota

The list above is only a fraction of all fishing categories tracked by Southwick Associates. Along with many other product categories, Southwick Associates also tracks the percentage of sales occurring across different retail channels, total spending per category, average prices, and demographics for anglers buying specific products. Additional information tracked includes total days spent fishing, type of fishing (fresh, salt and more), preferred

species and where they fish.

===You can stay abreast of consumer buying patterns and overall market trends by purchasing an annual subscription to Southwick Associates' bi-monthly Angler Participation and Equipment Purchases Reports. Greater insights are possible through custom reports that help companies learn where they lead or trail the competition. Custom, confidential research is also available to help identify products most desired by consumers, optimal pricing, and more. To purchase a subscription or learn more, contact Nancy Bacon at [Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com](mailto:Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com).

=Information for many other product categories is available from [Southwick Associates](http://SouthwickAssociates.com). Additional details available include total consumer spending by category, type of retailer, average retail prices, customer demographics, and more. ✧



## 'Basics of Fishing' Workshop March 23

If you are looking to learn more about basic fishing in order to start up a hobby or to take a child fishing for the first time, an introductory short-course on "Basics of Fishing" is available in Akron on March 23. The course will take place 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Division of Wildlife Ohio Headquarters, 912 Portage Lakes Drive, Akron, Ohio. Topics to be covered include an overview of fish identification, habitat types, handling, equipment selection, rigging, etc. Pre-registration is free but required as seating is limited. More details will be provided upon pre-registration. Call Joe Ferrara, ODNR, at 330-245-3003. ✧

## ILL scholarships available

The Friends of Volo Bog is offering an Entering College scholarship and a Continuing College scholarship for \$1,000 each to outstanding students interested in pursuing an environmental career. To be eligible for the Entering College scholarship the applicant must reside in Lake, McHenry, Kane, Cook, DuPage, Kendall, or Will County, attend a high school in one of these counties, have a minimum B average for the first three years, and plan to attend an accredited college or university.

The applicant should be planning to enter a career directly related to preserving the natural environment. To be eligible for the Continuing College scholarship, the applicant must be currently enrolled in an accredited college or university pursuing a degree directly related to preserving the natural environment, have a permanent residence in Lake, McHenry, Kane, Cook, DuPage, Kendall, or Will County, have graduated from a high school from one of these counties with a minimum B average, and currently hold a minimum B average in their college studies. Applications are due by March 31 for the school year starting in fall. Applications are available at [www.friendsofvolobog.org](http://www.friendsofvolobog.org). ✧

## Tournament info available online for Illinois anglers

The tournament fishing season will be busy again in 2016, as angling groups in the state have applied for more than 2,100 tournament permits to date. The Illinois DNR is now using an online application system through the [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org) website for fishing clubs and tournament organizers to apply for tournament permits, and is providing up-to-date tournament schedules through the website.

Anyone interested in tournament fishing in Illinois can go to the [www.ifishillinois.org](http://www.ifishillinois.org) website, click on the map on the homepage, find a body or bodies of water they're interested in, and see a list of approved and pending tournaments at the bottom of the webpages for those bodies of water. Tournament organizers will also use the online system to register fish harvest data from tournaments to assist fisheries management efforts throughout the state. [DNR 2016 Fishing Tournament Information](#) ✧

## DNR releases aquaculture net-pen report

Michigan has released the final recommendations on establishment net-pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes. The report states that, "While not recommending the pursuit of commercial net-pen aquaculture in the public waters of the Great Lakes, the state can and will continue to work within existing authorities to assist the industry in development of well-designed flow through, closed and recirculating aquaculture facilities." The reasons for the decision and the background leading to the recommendations are presented in the following link, [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdard/Synth-Paper-NetPENS-09Mar2016\\_516439\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdard/Synth-Paper-NetPENS-09Mar2016_516439_7.pdf). ✧

## New Michigan Fishing Guide available

The DNR has announced release of the 2016-2017 Michigan Fishing Guide, which includes rules and regulations effective April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2018. Copies of the two-year guide can be obtained at any location where fishing licenses are sold. It also is available in a user-friendly, electronic format online at [michigan.gov/fishingguide](http://michigan.gov/fishingguide). Again this year, excerpts of the new Michigan Fishing Guide are available in Spanish, Arabic and Chinese to better accommodate non-English speaking anglers. These documents – each five pages in length – are available online at [michigan.gov/fishing](http://michigan.gov/fishing) under the "Rules & Regs" button. ✧

## DEC seeking info in locating bear dens

State DEC wildlife biologists are seeking the public's help to learn about new black bear dens throughout New York. As part of DEC's ongoing monitoring of black bears, biologists routinely check on black bears during the winter den season. Bears may be fitted with a radio collar to help track their activities throughout the rest of the year and to relocate dens in subsequent years for monitoring cub production, condition, and survival.

Bears may den in a rock crevice, tree cavity, or under heavy brush or fallen tree. Since female bears generally give birth sometime in January or early February, a high-pitched squeal from the cubs may be audible if you are near a den. If anyone finds a bear den, DEC strongly urges the public to not approach or disturb the den, but simply to note the location and move away from the den site.

DEC requests anyone locating a bear den to contact their local DEC Wildlife office ([www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html)) with specifics about the den location, including GPS coordinates if possible. [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6960.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6960.html). ✧

## Archery Deer Site Permits

Archery deer hunting applications for the 2016-17 season are available and can be submitted through March 31 for the site drawings for Beaver Dam State Park and Goode's Woods Nature Preserve in Macoupin Co. Drawings for the site permits will be held on Friday, April 1. Both Beaver Dam and Goode's Woods require the harvest of an antlerless deer at the site prior to harvesting an antlered deer. Hunters can obtain an application from the park office at Beaver Dam State Park, 14548 Beaver Dam Lane, Plainview, IL 62685, (217-854-8020) or the IDNR website: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/FACTSheets/Pages/WestCentral.aspx>. ✧

## Vote YES on the SHARE Act

The U.S. House is about to get back to work on the SHARE Act – better known as the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015. Yes, you read that correctly. It's 2016 and the House is still debating a common sense act from last year.

Look at all the benefits for fishermen in this bill:

- It protects traditional fishing equipment containing lead from unwarranted federal bans.
- It will create more and better fishing by requiring federal land managers to support and facilitate access for fishing on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands.
- It prevents unnecessary closures of public water to fishing by implementing an "open until closed" management policy.
- It blocks the National Park Service from arbitrarily closing water to fishing without state approval like they did at Biscayne National Park.

Tell Congress to stop dragging their feet and pass the SHARE ACT. Let's get this done.

**Take Action** ➤ ✧

## IN Becoming an Outdoors Woman April 29 - May 1

Women can choose their own adventure at the annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop scheduled for April 29-May 1 at Ross Camp in West Lafayette, IN. The workshop is open to women age 18 and older, and limited to approximately 100 participants. Registration begins March 1 at [IndianaBOW.com](http://IndianaBOW.com). The cost is \$200 and includes all equipment, meals and lodging.

Participants will choose four activities from more than two dozen offerings, including fishing, archery, outdoor photography, wild edibles, wildlife tracking, shooting muzzleloader guns, and outdoor cooking. The workshop is for women who have never tried these activities but want the opportunity to learn; who have tried them but are hoping to improve; or who know how to do some of the activities but want to try new ones. ✧

## Atlantic Sturgeon

*Continued from page 1*

slow. This slow pace of recovery contributed to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listing Hudson River Atlantic sturgeon as Endangered in 2012. Encouragingly, biologist are now seeing a steady increase in the number of Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson River as the first protected fish are coming into their prime breeding years.

As identified in the NMFS Atlantic sturgeon status review, threats remain, including from accidental mortality when other fish are harvested along the Atlantic coast, habitat degradation, impingement and entrainment from water withdrawals, and mortality from vessel strikes. DEC continues to monitor these threats and evaluate and implement measures to prevent or mitigate their impact on Atlantic sturgeon. ✧

## Keep the government out of your gas tank

Americans are hearing about the dangers of high ethanol gas to their boats, cars, and small engines and are standing up and saying **NO**. As a result, support for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), the policy that mandates more and more ethanol in the fuel supply every year, has been steadily declining. In fact, the RFS has become so unpopular that even after big-money ethanol lobbyists poured millions of dollars into the Presidential primary in Iowa, the heart of ethanol country, they still lost at the polls. The Senate is debating a comprehensive energy bill. Two amendments have been filed that, if passed, would be monumental victories. **Now is the time to close the door on the RFS.** Keep up the momentum and contact your Senator today. ✧

## Wisconsin Conservation Congress spring hearings April 11

On April 11 there will be 72 public hearings, one in each county starting at 7:00 p.m. where individuals interested in natural resources management have an opportunity to provide their input by non-binding vote and testimony to the Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Board and the Conservation Congress on proposed rule changes and advisory questions relating to fish and wildlife management in Wisconsin.

County residents have the option to run for a seat on the Conservation Congress and to elect delegates from their county to represent their county views regarding natural resources on the Conservation Congress. Also, individuals have the opportunity to bring forth new conservation issues of a statewide nature to the attention of the Conservation Congress through the citizen resolution process. ✧

## DEC 2017-2018 Sportfish Regs available for Review

The NYSDEC is considering the following items for the next round of freshwater regulation changes. Proposals will actually be finalized and made available for public comment during the late summer of 2016. At this time the Department is soliciting feedback on what may be proposed later this year.

Some of those proposals include areas of:

Great Lakes and its tributaries, Finger Lakes, and Twenty Counties

### How to Submit Input

To submit input regarding any of the possible changes being considered, send an email with the following subject line: "Possible Freshwater Fishing Regulation Changes [ID number of the regulation you are commenting on]." For your convenience, each "Email a comment." link will fill in the To: and subject lines with the correct information. To ensure we receive and can properly review your suggestions, you must leave the subject line as it appears on the e-mail, and be sure to indicate the ID # (s) of the regulation(s) you are remarking on. Input will be collected through March 31, 2016. Click here to e-mail [Email a comment](#).

All input will be reviewed and considered. If accepted, it would become effective April 1, 2017. To review all state-wide proposals: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/73762.html> ✧

## 2016 DNR Recreation Guide available

Your guide to Indiana outdoors is [available online](#). Local retail outlets, state parks, lakes and other DNR properties will have free printed copies available this month. The DNR's 2016 Indiana Recreation Guide is the source for information on state parks, lakes, State Park Inns, fish & wildlife areas, state forests and other DNR properties. ✧

## Indiana reserved youth turkey hunts

Youth hunters can apply for reserved turkey hunts during the special youth wild turkey hunting season, April 23 and 24, on selected DNR properties. Youth hunters must be younger than age 18 on the day of the hunt.

Participating fish & wildlife areas are: Atterbury, Chinook, Crosley, Deer Creek, Fairbanks Landing, Glendale, Goose Pond, Hillenbrand, Hovey Lake, Jasper-Pulaski, Kankakee, Kingsbury, LaSalle, Pigeon River, Roush Lake, Sugar Ridge, Tri-County, Wabashiki, Willow Slough and Winamac. Mississinewa and Salamonie lakes also are participating.

A limit will be placed on the number of hunters allowed to hunt a property on each hunting day. Registration is March 21 - April 1. Register in person or by phone during normal office hours for the one property wished to hunt.

The youth hunter may use any legal shotgun, bow and arrow or crossbow. The adult accompanying the youth hunter must not possess a firearm, bow and arrow or crossbow while in the field. The adult does not need to possess a turkey hunting license unless the youth is using an apprentice license, or unless the adult is calling turkeys. For more info: [2016 reserved youth turkey hunts on DNR properties](#) ✧

## Hoosier Women at Work Conference

This one-day conference will be March 26 at the Indiana State Library. Sponsors include: Indiana State Library, Indiana Historical Bureau, Indiana Women's History Assoc., and Indiana Humanities. The event will explore and expand knowledge of women's contributions to Indiana through their labor. Conference keynote speaker, Dr. Nancy Gabin, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies at Purdue University, will provide an overview and remarks at the luncheon. Cost is \$20. [More information](#) ✧

## DNR seeks volunteers for annual frog and toad survey

With spring approaching, the Department of Natural Resources is seeking volunteers throughout the state to assist with its annual frog and toad survey. Michigan's is the second-longest-running such survey in the country, after Wisconsin.

Declining populations of frogs, toads and other amphibians have been documented worldwide since the 1980s. Studies suggest amphibians are disappearing due to habitat loss, pollution, disease and collection.

Michigan's annual survey efforts help biologists monitor frog and toad abundance and distribution in the state. "We have collected a large, valuable data set to help us evaluate Michigan's frog and toad populations," said Lori Sargent, the DNR's frog and toad survey coordinator. "We're now able to start watching trends and thinking about how to slow down some of the species' declines."

The surveys are conducted by volunteer observers along a statewide system of permanent survey routes, each consisting of 10 wetland sites. These sites are visited three times during spring, when frogs and toads are actively breeding. Observers listen for calling frogs and toads at each site, identify the species present, and make an estimate of abundance.

Sargent said new volunteers are needed in all parts of the state, and that the program's continued success is dependent on strong volunteer support. Those interested in volunteering should contact Lori Sargent at 517-284-6216 or [SargentL@michigan.gov](mailto:SargentL@michigan.gov).

More information on the [frog and toad survey](#), and other projects supported by the Nongame Fish and Wildlife Fund, is available at [www.michigan.gov/wildlife](http://www.michigan.gov/wildlife) ✧

## GLFC lauds new legislation to advance fishery science

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission congratulated Representatives Mike Quigley (IL) and Dan Benishek (MI), and Senator Gary Peters (MI), for introducing new legislation aimed at advancing Great Lakes science. The bill, called the Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act of 2016, will authorize, for the first time, essential scientific research and assessments that support the basin's economically and ecologically valuable fishery, valued at between \$7 and \$14 billion annually.

The Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act empowers the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct monitoring, assessment, science, and research, in support of the binational fisheries within the Great Lakes Basin. Although the USGS, through its Great Lakes Science Center, has carried out many of these important functions for decades, it has never had explicit legislation supporting its work in the Great Lakes basin. This situation has

left the science center unable to discharge its duties fully and ill-equipped to address the new threats, challenges, and scientific information needs of the 21st Century. Indeed, the Great Lakes continue to fall considerably short compared to its coastal science counterparts, which typically are backed by strong laws like the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act.

"We must protect and improve the Great Lakes fishery, and science is the foundation of that mission," said Great Lakes Fishery Commission vice-chair David Ullrich, executive director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "A healthy fishery means a healthy environment and economy. The more we know about what is going on with the fishery, the more equipped we are to protect it and manage it well."

"The Act provides a needed, belated authorization for the Great Lakes Science Center," said Steve LaPan, chair of the Council of

Lake Committees, which represents the basin's fishery management agencies. "The act will enable the center to deliver on research essential to support and maintain the sport, commercial, and tribal fisheries of the Great Lakes basin."

Ullrich concluded: "Investing in a better understanding of the ecosystem is one of the soundest decisions we, as stewards of the resource, can make. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission joins with the management community and stakeholder organizations for thanking Congressmen Mike Quigley and Dan Benishek, and Senator Gary Peters, for their commitment to the health of the Great Lakes."

For details about the Great Lakes Fishery Authorization Act, and for an explanation of the historical circumstances that have left the Great Lakes Science Center without supporting legislation, please contact Dr. Marc Gaden of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission at 734-417-8012 or [marc@glfc.org](mailto:marc@glfc.org). ✧

## Food for Billions: Inland Fisheries and World Food Security

Reston, VA – Inland capture fisheries are much more crucial to global food security than realized, according to the first global [review](#) of the value of inland fish and fisheries.

The article, published in *Environmental Reviews*, showed that although aquaculture and inland capture fisheries contribute more than 40 percent of the world's reported finfish production, their harvest is greatly under-reported and value is often-ignored. Inland waters, which comprise about 0.01 percent of the earth's water, are lakes, rivers, streams, canals, reservoirs and other land-locked waters.

Topping the list of the value of inland fish and fisheries is food and economic security: these fisheries provide food for billions of people and livelihoods for millions worldwide. They are a primary animal protein consumed by many of the world's rural poor, especially

those in developing countries.

"Inland capture fisheries and aquaculture are fundamental to food security globally," said Abigail Lynch, a fisheries research biologist with the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center. "In many areas of the world, these fisheries are a last resort when primary income sources fail due to, for instance, economic shifts, war, natural disasters and water development projects."

Inland fisheries, the review showed, support at least 21 million fishers, many of whom live in low-income countries and rely on these fisheries for both subsistence and their livelihood.

Other important benefits that inland fisheries and aquaculture provide include recreation, cultural and even spiritual values, and their contribution to species' and ecosystem diversity. Because

sustainable inland aquaculture is more efficient, it is also often "greener" than raising poultry, pigs or cows.

The authors cautioned, however, that inland fisheries are more important than current research is able to document because harvest amounts are vastly underestimated, particularly in remote areas and in developing countries. For example, only one-third of countries with inland fisheries submit catch statistics to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization.

"The limitations to valuing the benefits that inland fish and fisheries provide make it difficult to incorporate them into resource planning on a national or global scale, author Carleton University's Steve Cooke noted. "What is of great concern is that more than half of the inland fisheries' habitat is moderately or highly threatened, so populations may be lost even before they are documented." ✧

## Outdoor Skills Academy offers opportunities for hunters and anglers to learn from experts

Imagine you're interested in taking up golf and have the chance to get out on the links for some pointers from Tiger Woods. In a similar fashion, the Michigan DNR is offering an opportunity that comes close. Those who want to learn more about fishing and hunting can link up with expert instructors at the DNR's Outdoor Skills Academy.

"It's like Michael Jordan coming to help us teach basketball," said DNR park interpreter and academy director Ed Shaw. "These guys are the Michael Jordans of the fishing world." Shaw runs the academy out of the Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center at Mitchell State Park in Cadillac. Instructors include seven seasonal interpreters and seven pros, with the list continuing to grow.

Shaw has enlisted pro staff from fishing gear companies like Fish Bones Custom Lures, Clam Outdoors, Vexilar and HT Enterprises, who team up with DNR instructors to present hands-on clinics for newbies and experienced anglers and hunters who want to brush up on their skills. "They're professionals who know how to teach this stuff," Shaw said. "It's pretty cool to have a staff of experts. I've learned a lot from them."

Shaw said that while many people in the outdoor industry know about the academy and "people are coming out of the woodwork wanting to sponsor us," there are many hunters and anglers who still don't know about it. Some of the pro staffers said the same thing.

Norm Smith, an Outdoor Skills Academy pro staffer who is also on the pro staff at HT Enterprises, said he too wants to get the word out about programs like the academy's that help get people involved in outdoor recreation. "We're interested in helping people learn what we've learned over the years," Smith said. Smith has won many fishing tournaments and uses a technique

called "tight-lining" that tends to pique people's curiosity. Smith said tight-liners do well in tournaments and catch a lot of fish. "People want to learn about it," he said.

One big reason Smith got involved at the academy is his interest in "getting kids and more women out on the ice." That includes his wife, Teri, now in her second year of ice fishing. "We always cater to children when we're out fishing, and often give them a pole to help keep their interest," he said.



*A young angler happy with her catch enrolled in the academy's ice fishing clinic.*

DNR wildlife biologists and conservation officers are also part of the team that teaches students skills needed for outdoor pursuits like bear hunting. The Hunt and Fish Center had been offering classes on outdoor activities for several years. However, in 2014, Shaw and his staff – including Kevin Perry, John Zakrajsek, Chuck Fales, Dennis Hewitt and Ed Cieslinski – originated the academy.

More than 150 students – many of them new to hunting for bears – attended the academy's most recent bear hunting clinics in August, the same month the academy held its opening ribbon-cutting ceremony. Shaw said the Outdoor Skills Academy's unique brand of instruction is bringing people from

around the state to Wexford County to attend classes. In turn, the academy provides a boost to the local economy.

The academy's most recent Hard Water School – an ice fishing clinic held in early January – was filled to capacity, with about half of the participants driving to Cadillac from locations as far away as Farmington Hills, which is just about 200 miles away in Oakland County. "People are travelling in from other parts of the state for classes, spending \$400 or \$500," Shaw said. "We're putting heads in beds – people attending our programs are customers at local hotels, restaurants and gas stations."

The next upcoming classes include steelhead clinics April 2 and 9 and June 25, an open-water walleye clinic April 16, a turkey hunting class April 23, a beginners fly fishing clinic May 21, a beginners bass fishing clinic June 5 and bear hunting courses July 30 and August 7 and 13.

Students who take five Outdoor Skills Academy classes get a graduation certificate and their name listed on the academy website. There is no age limit for the class, but Shaw recommends students be at least 8 years old.

There is a cost for most of the classes ranging between \$25 and \$40; others are free. To learn more about the Outdoor Skills Academy or register for a class, visit [www.michigan.gov/outdoorskills](http://www.michigan.gov/outdoorskills). Catch upcoming stories by [subscribing to free, weekly "Showcasing the DNR" articles](#). Previous articles are available at [www.michigan.gov/dnr-stories](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr-stories). ✧

## **Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

### **[Increasing levels of flame retardants in smallmouth bass threaten Lake Erie fish consumers](#)**

Levels of hazardous flame retardants in most Great Lakes fish are declining – or at least researchers thought they were. But a new study shows that this isn't the case for Lake Erie smallmouth bass, an important game fish.

### **[Minnesota researchers draw battle line in Mississippi to stop Asian carp](#)**

A team of University of Minnesota scientists thinks it has figured out how to keep invasive carp from migrating up the Mississippi River: Blow them back with jets of water and freak them out with loud noises, air bubbles and underwater lights.

### **[Asian carp found in Missouri's Black River](#)**

This is the first Asian carp to be found in this part of the river; according to MDC officials, the invasive species has a thriving population in the lower Black River near the conflux of the White River in Arkansas.

### **[Blood sucking sea lamprey on increase in Lake Superior](#)**

After years of holding the sea lamprey at a relatively low population with a chemical that kills larva, numbers in Superior have been on the rise.

### **[Minnesota DNR may stop stocking lake trout on big lake](#)**

Last year, fisheries officials with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources proposed ending decades of lake trout stocking in Minnesota waters of Lake Superior after 2016

### **[House backs bill to boost hunting, fishing on public lands](#)**

The U.S. House approved a bill to expand access to hunting and fishing areas on public lands, extend protections for the use of lead bullets in hunting, and strip wolves of federal protections in four states.

### **[Plan to construct second super lock gets new life](#)**

In Ontario, the construction of a second Poe-sized super lock in the St. Marys River appears poised to clear a major hurdle that has prevented the estimated \$580-million U.S. project from receiving substantial funding in the United States federal budget.

### **[Fishermen hope 2015 steelhead surge on North Shore continues this year](#)**

After a historic Lake Superior catch last year, Minnesota fishermen are eager to see if numbers stay high in rivers and tributaries to Lake Superior this year.

### **[Two Great Lakes accomplish a rare winter feat](#)**

Lake Michigan and Lake Huron did something in January 2016 that has only occurred 10 other times since 1919. The water level went up on these Great Lakes from December 2015 to January 2016.

### **[Obama tries to cut Great Lakes budget: Why Congress objects](#)**

House representatives are already rallying to keep money flowing as they have done for the last two years.

### **[Great Lakes group enforces ballast water regulations on foreign ocean vessels](#)**

Recently, increased enforcement of the Clean Water Act by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard has tightened controls on ships dumping ballast water into the Great Lakes, which has caused billions of dollars in economic and ecological damages.

### **[COMMENTARY: Waukesha's water grab should be rejected](#)**

In order to secure the protection and viability of our magnificent Great Lakes for generations to come, the Great Lakes governors on the Compact Council must ensure that the core principles of the Great Lakes Compact are fully and truly honored.

End