



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service solicits input on Cormorant Management

As part of ongoing efforts to address conflicts between double-crested cormorants and wild and stocked fisheries, the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is announcing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) and soliciting public input on future management options. [Federal Register notice](#)

"Balancing the protection of native wildlife with economic and human [health](#) needs is fundamental to effective management practices," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt. "[This] action starts the process of improving management and further reduces conflicts with double-crested cormorants throughout the United State. The Service is also currently working with tribes, state fish and wildlife agencies and other

federal partners to assess comprehensive management options for cormorants across the United States. [Federal Register notice](#)

"I am pleased to see the Department is moving forward in the rulemaking process for the



degradation of double-crested cormorants. This is a desperately needed next step for Michigan's

First District, where over-population is threatening the health of our free swimming and recreational fisheries," said U.S. Rep. Jack Bergman (MI-01).

"The strong return of double crested cormorants is a significant conservation success. But in the absence of natural predators, cormorants are inflicting substantial depredation on both private and public aquatic resources. This effort by the Fish and Wildlife Service is necessary and appropriate to maintain a healthy ecosystem," said Former USFWS Director, Dale Hall.

**USFWS Cormorant Management**  
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## DNR issues ice warning for aerated lakes

The Minnesota DNR urges people to use caution on lakes with winter aeration systems.

Aeration creates areas of thin ice and open water that are extremely hazardous to people and pets. Open water areas can shift or change shape depending on weather conditions, and leaks may develop in airlines, creating other areas of weak ice or open water.

The updated list of aerated lakes and more information is available at [mndnr.gov/eco/lakeaeration](http://mndnr.gov/eco/lakeaeration).

Aeration systems help prevent winterkill of fish populations by adding oxygen to the lake and, in certain situations, help protect shorelines from ice damage. They are generally operated from the time the lakes freeze until the ice breaks up in the spring. About 260 lakes have aeration systems operating on

them this winter. Private hatchery operators also use aeration systems, usually on small lakes without public accesses.

A DNR permit is required to install and operate an aeration system. Permit holders must issue public notices, post warning signs and inspect the systems at least once every seven days. Private groups or citizens operating aeration systems generally are required to have liability insurance. DNR ensures permittees comply with all requirements and regularly inspect systems for safety.

Some municipalities prohibit entering into the thin ice marked area and/or prohibit the night use of motorized vehicles on lakes with aeration systems. Questions? Call a [regional or area fisheries office](#) or the DNR at 888-646-6367. ✧

## \$25 million proposed to restore natural resources in Michigan's Kalamazoo River

A [Consent Decree was announced](#) that includes \$25 million as a partial settlement to restore natural resources injured by releases of hazardous substances to the [Kalamazoo River](#) and Portage Creek, Michigan.

In addition to a partial settlement, the Consent Decree requires the settling party, NCR Corporation, to implement specified clean-up actions, pay an additional amount for future clean-up actions, and reimburse state and federal response and damage assessment costs.

There will be a 30-day commenting period. The proposed consent decree will be available on the [Department of Justice website](#).

Under the proposed settlement, NOAA and co-trustees will use \$25 million to plan and complete environmental restoration projects. These projects will both benefit injured natural resources, and compensate the public for lost recreational opportunities.

Restoration projects will be selected with public input. The Trustees invite interested parties to suggest habitat and recreational restoration project ideas to be considered as planning proceeds. [Project ideas can be submitted at the Trustees online portal](#).

From the 1950s to the 1970s, paper mills in Kalamazoo disposed of waste and wastewater that contained PCBs. Carbonless copy paper scraps containing PCBs as an ink carrier were used and disposed of during de-inking and as part of the production of new paper. PCBs were released into the soils, sediments, and surface water in the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek. This resulted in injuries to natural resources. Due to high levels of contamination in fish, advisories against human consumption of fish in any quantity are in place.

In 1990, the U.S. EPA designated areas downstream of the releases of PCBs as the Allied Paper,

Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site. The Trustees have previously used damages collected from bankruptcies for habitat restoration, including the [Alcott Street Dam removal in Kalamazoo](#).

The public is invited to review and comment on this Consent Decree, comments may be submitted on the [U.S. Department of Justice website](#). For more information about the settlement, please contact [Greg Baker](#). For more information about restoration planning and [submitting project ideas](#), please contact [Julie Sims](#). ✧

## PFBC approves removal of fishing license display reg

During its formal quarterly business meeting on January 28, Pennsylvania approved the removal of a long-standing regulation that requires anglers to display their fishing license on an outer garment while fishing. Under the amendment to Section 63.2 (PA Title 58), the outer garment display requirement will be replaced with a general possession requirement, which would require only that an angler carry the license on their person while fishing and present the license to a PFBC law enforcement officer upon request. Under the amended regulation, anglers who still wish to display their fishing license on an outer garment may continue to do so. Also, customers are reminded that when they purchase a fishing license online through [The Outdoor Shop \(pa.wildlifelicence.com\)](#), an electronic version of their fishing license is issued and may be saved and reprinted at no cost in the event of loss. **Anglers should note that the regulation change is not immediate and will take effect upon publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.** ✧



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### Position Statement

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

### Inland Seas Angler

#### GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

### Publisher

Dan Thomas, 630/941-1351

### Editor

Jeanette Thomas

### Webmaster

Chad Lapa

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## DEC Releases Proposed Blueprint to Guide New York's Artificial Reef Program

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the release of a proposal that will help shape the future management of the state's successful artificial reef program. The draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) helps assess and evaluate the continued use of existing offshore artificial reef sites, the expansion of some existing reef sites, and the development of new reef sites as proposed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in his [2020 State of the State Address](#).

"When complete, the Generic Environmental Impact Statement will create a blueprint for our marine fisheries program that serves an integral role in New York's fisheries management," said Commissioner Seggos. "Governor Cuomo recognizes the benefits artificial reefs provide for anglers, divers, and in the enhancement of New York's fishery resources. Through the Restore Mother Nature Initiative, New York continues to demonstrate the State's commitment to the ongoing success of the largest reef expansion in state history. Reefs provide habitat for fish species ranging from fluke to cod, all of which contribute to the success of New York's commercial and recreational anglers and the ongoing expansion of opportunities for regional tourism."

In the 2020 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo unveiled the new Restore Mother Nature initiative and committed to doubling New York's existing reef acreage by expanding seven existing sites and creating four new artificial reefs in Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. This expansion will be complete by 2022, resulting in an even stronger and more diverse marine ecosystem. Restore Mother Nature will be the nation's most aggressive program for habitat restoration and flood reduction,

funded in part by a proposed \$3 billion Environmental Bond Act.

DEC's [Artificial Reef Program](#) manages 12 artificial reef sites in New York State: two reefs in the Long Island Sound, two in the Great South Bay, and eight artificial reefs in the Atlantic Ocean that stretch from Rockaway to Shinnecock on the south shore and from Matinecock to Smithtown on the north shore. Governor Cuomo's [Artificial Reef Initiative](#), launched in 2018, is deploying large volumes of cleaned, recycled, and out-of-use materials from state agencies onto reef sites, including old Tappan Zee Bridge materials, former Canal Corporation vessels, retired Canal lock miter gates and lift bridge, retired New York Power Authority turbines, and former materials from the State Department of Transportation, among other materials. In November, the [Governor announced the final materials deployment for 2019](#), resulting in a total of 87 successful new patch reefs created over two years.

The state's artificial reefs are built out of hard, durable structures such as rock, concrete, and steel, usually in the form of surplus or scrap materials (e.g. vessels, dredge rock, and military vehicles, etc.). All harmful substances are removed from the material before it is deployed on the reef sites. As quickly as the material settles on the sea floor, the reef structure begins to fill with marine life. Fish like blackfish, black sea bass, scup, fluke, hake, and cod move in to check out the new structure. Lobsters and crabs take up residence, and encrusting organisms like barnacles, sponges, anemones, corals, and mussels cling to and cover the material. Over time, the structure teems with sea life, creating a habitat similar to a natural reef.

New York's marine resources are critical to the state's economy, supporting nearly 350,000 jobs and

generating billions of dollars through tourism, fishing and other industries. More than 500,000 anglers in the region will reap the benefits of the Governor's initiative, supporting the region's growing marine economy which accounts for approximately 9.7 percent of Long Island's total GDP.

In 1993, DEC completed a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) and Artificial Reef Plan, allowing for the State and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to issue permits to develop artificial reef sites through the placement of materials that meet program goals and objectives outlined in the GEIS. Funded through New York's Environmental Protection Fund, the SGEIS will update the existing GEIS to address advances in science and expertise surrounding artificial reef development since 1993.

The [Draft SGEIS is available for review through DEC's Artificial Reef webpage](#). Public hearings will be held on **February 10, 2020**, at 6 p.m. at DEC's Marine Resources Headquarters, 205 North Belle Mead Road, East Setauket.

DEC encourages the public to provide comments on the draft SGEIS; submit by email to: [ArtificialReefs@dec.ny.gov](mailto:ArtificialReefs@dec.ny.gov) (reference "Reef Program Draft SGEIS" in the subject of the email) or by mail to Christopher LaPorta, NYSDEC 205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1, East Setauket, NY 11733. Comments will be accepted through **February 21, 2020**.

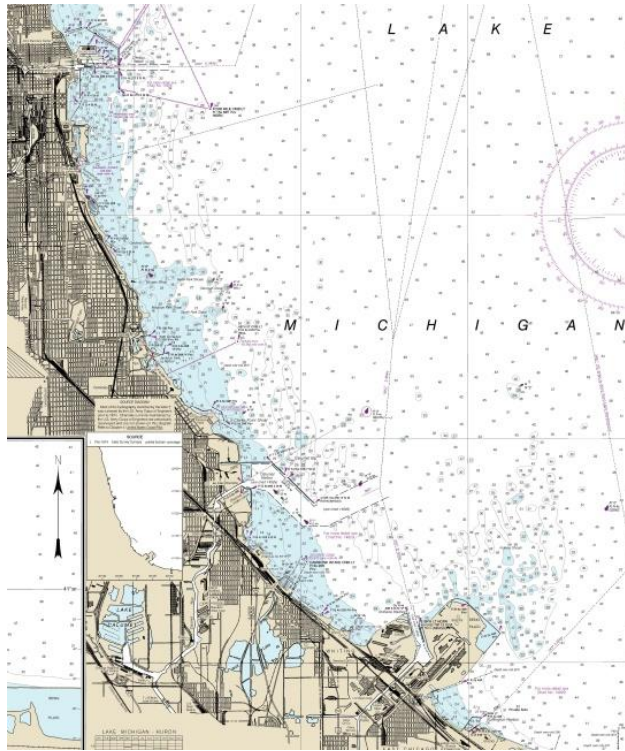
Artificial reef construction is part of Governor Cuomo's [NY Open for Fishing and Hunting](#), an effort to improve recreational activities for in-state and out-of-state sportsmen and sportswomen and to boost tourism opportunities throughout the state.

For more [information about DEC's Artificial Reef Program](#) visit DEC's website. ✧

## Marine Safety Unit Chicago seeks participation in Waterways Assessment

CHICAGO, IL – The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting a Waterways Analysis and Management System (WAMS) review of the Chicago and Calumet Harbors' Aids to Navigation (ATON). The purpose of this review is to ensure the existing aids are both efficient and effective. MSU Chicago invites all mariners, sailors, boat owners, recreational operators, and commercial stakeholders to participate in the 2020 WAMS. The area covered in this review includes all ATON encompassed in the Chicago and Calumet Harbors, which are listed specifically in Light List Numbers 19575-20301.

Individual mariners and interested maritime industry



representatives can provide input until [April 15, 2020](#). The survey is available in PDF format when requested, and may also be found online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TJDJLVR>. In addition to stakeholder input on ATON, the study will also consider comment on environmental concerns, user capabilities, technology, and available resources. The Coast Guard has no jurisdiction over dredging in these waterways, however any information gathered concerning incorrectly charted depths will be provided to the appropriate agencies.

For more information, questions or concerns, contact MSU Chicago: [D09-DG-MSUChicago-Waterways@uscg.mil](mailto:D09-DG-MSUChicago-Waterways@uscg.mil) or 630-986-2155. ✧

## Oneida Lake adult walleye population hits one million fish

New York announced that anglers have at least one million reasons to fish for walleye in Oneida Lake, according to a study with Cornell U. researchers who have been tracking the lake's walleye population for more than 60 years. The population of adult walleye was estimated to be one million fish in 2019, a level that has not been reached since the 1980s.

"It has been three decades since we've seen the Oneida Lake walleye population this abundant, and it is twice the size observed in any year since 1993," said Commissioner Seggos. "Oneida Lake is a nationally recognized fishery and we expect the fishing to be even better in the coming years, cementing New York's status as a world-class destination for anglers. This robust walleye population is due to DEC's responsive management and the dedicated research performed by Cornell University."

Randy Jackson, Associate Director of the Cornell Biological Field Station at Shackelton Point, said, "Walleye anglers took advantage of this booming population in 2019, and experienced catch rates over 0.5 fish per hour. With another large year class expected to recruit into the fishery in 2020, we expect walleye fishing to remain excellent in Oneida Lake for several years to come."

The DEC and Cornell study results represent a remarkable recovery of the adult population of walleye, which declined through the 1990s and has remained steady at around 400,000 fish since 2000. To rebuild the walleye population, DEC implemented special regulations and managed a growing population of cormorants on the lake. Large year classes of walleye in 2010 and 2014 have contributed to the walleye population increase, and another strong year class from 2016 is

anticipated to push the adult population even higher next year. DEC will continue to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop an approach for cormorant management to safeguard our fisheries from over-predation by these fish-eating birds.

To help manage the Oneida Lake walleye fishery, more than 150 million walleye fry (newly hatched fish only a few millimeters long) are annually stocked in the lake. The legal minimum size for walleye in the lake is 15 inches, and there is a reduced daily possession limit of three walleye. Walleye season runs from the first Saturday in May through March 15. For tips on fishing for walleye visit [DEC's Fishing for Walleye webpage](#). For additional NY walleye fishing destinations: [DEC's Statewide Walleye Fishing Opportunities webpage](#). ✧

## DNR approves 10-yr trout mgmt plan

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin DNR recently approved its first statewide [trout management plan](#). The plan provides direction for inland trout management in Wisconsin and will be in effect from 2020 to 2029. The plan covers Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Lake Trout in inland lakes, ponds and streams of Wisconsin, including tributaries of the Great Lakes upstream from impassible barriers such as dams and naturally occurring falls.

The inland trout management plan includes four primary goals:

- Protect, enhance and restore sustainable cold-water aquatic habitats and ecosystems;
- Protect, develop, enhance and restore trout populations and trout angling opportunities for the diverse preferences and needs of our participants;
- Collect, develop and use the best science to guide trout management decisions; and
- Maintain and expand partnerships and engage diverse anglers, stakeholders and the general public on trout management and angling opportunities.

The Wisconsin DNR trout team developed the trout management plan with the input of a stakeholder team composed of individuals representing various groups across the state, such as anglers, landowners and farmers. The trout team met twice with the stakeholder group at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to create the plan, and the stakeholder team also reviewed the draft plan.

In spring 2019, the department released a draft of the plan to the public and presented it at statewide public meetings for additional public input. The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approved the plan at the October 2019 meeting. The final version of the plan will be used to guide trout management in Wisconsin over the next 10 years. This plan can be accessed on the DNR website [here](#). ✧

## Regulations for catching some Ohio River fish change

The Indiana DNR has amended regulations for catching sauger, walleye, and saugeye on the Ohio River. The new rule, which took effect January 19, permits a bag limit of six Sander species, the collective term for these fish, in aggregate per day, a possession limit of 12 Sanders in aggregate, and a minimum length limit of 14 inches. Previous regulations permitted the take of 10 Sanders in aggregate per day, a possession limit of 20 Sanders, and had no minimum length limit. This DNR rule aligns Indiana regulations for the Ohio River with Kentucky regulations.

Sauger is the most sought after of the Sander species on the Ohio. During the winter and early spring, sauger congregate downstream of dams and provide prime angling opportunities; however, high harvest rates are not allowing the sauger population to reach its full potential.

The Ohio River Fisheries Management Team (ORFMT) analyzed long-term survey data and recommended these regulations in 2019 in an effort to increase the size and age structure and therefore the quality of the Ohio River sauger fishery as a way to ensure the sauger population remains sustainable for future generations.

For more info regarding the new regs, visit <https://www.IN.gov/nrc/files/Isa20007e.pdf>. ✧

## NY Free Fishing Weekend – Feb 15-16

Ice fishing is a great way to get outdoors during the winter months. **February 15-16** is a Free Fishing Weekend, where anyone can fish New York's waters without a fishing license. If you're an experienced angler, consider introducing a friend or family member to the sport. Or if you've always wanted to try ice fishing but don't know where to start, attend a [free fishing clinic](#) near you this winter. ✧

## Muskie School to be held **March 14**, at Waunakee HS

The Capital City Chapter of Muskies, Inc. announced that the 19th Annual Intermediate and Advanced Muskie School to be held on Saturday, **March 14<sup>th</sup>**, 2020. This unique all-day training opportunity will be held at Waunakee High School in Waunakee, WI and is **open to the public**.

If you want to improve your muskie fishing skills/knowledge, here is a great opportunity for you. This intense, all-day school offers classes such as row trolling, Lake of the Woods in Ontario, lure demonstrations in the pool, making wooden baits & spinner baits, Green Bay Muskie Fishing, Madison Chain Muskies, filming your muskie catch, Basic Muskie Fishing and lots of additional classes.

To promote youth involvement the tuition is reduced to only **\$10** for youth (17 or under). Tuition for adults is **\$35** (early-bird price) or **\$45** if fee received **on or after March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

Doors open at 7:30 and the program ends at 4:00 p.m. This is a very **affordable** opportunity to help muskie anglers learn much more about muskie fishing and to prepare for the 2020 season. For more info and to register online: [www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org](http://www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org).

The Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc. is a volunteer organization established in 1983 and has over 300 members residing primarily in central Wisconsin and in conjunction with other local fishing clubs has donated nearly \$100,000 to stock muskies in local lakes. Many generous donors including Abu Garcia, Fenwick and Westin Fishing provide support for the school.

**Contact:**

[www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org](http://www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org);  
Geoff Crandall, [crandall@msbnrg.com](mailto:crandall@msbnrg.com) (608-219-0164 mobile); or Steve Reinstra at [mpd339r@charter.net](mailto:mpd339r@charter.net) or 608-770-7131. ✧

## 2020 Black Lake sturgeon season lasts one day

This year's sturgeon season on Black Lake ended at 1:40 p.m., February 1—not quite six hours after the day's 8 a.m. start.

The fishing season, which included spearing or hook-and-line fishing, was scheduled to run February 1-5, or until the harvest quota had been reached. This year's allocation of sturgeon for Black Lake anglers was seven fish, although DNR officials set a harvest quota of six fish to reduce the risk of over-fishing.

There were 472 registered anglers on the ice Saturday, the highest total since the inception of



the open sturgeon fishery. Three of the six sturgeon harvested were males ranging from 44 to 60 inches in

length, and 16 to 51 pounds in weight. The three females ranged from 47 to 75 inches long, and 19 to 100 pounds in weight.

Participating anglers were notified of the season's end in a variety of ways: text alerts to those who provided cell phone numbers, a fishing telephone hotline, UAW Black Lake Conference Center siren, and ice shanty visits from DNR personnel. All methods were used within minutes of the final fish being harvested. DNR fisheries and law enforcement officials were embedded in the on-ice fishing communities and were able to quickly report harvested fish and contact all participating anglers about the season's close.

For more information on lake sturgeon in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/Sturgeon](http://Michigan.gov/Sturgeon). ✧

## Public Meeting for Bluefish and Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) are developing the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment to review and possibly revise the allocation of Atlantic bluefish between the commercial and recreational fisheries and the commercial allocations to the states. MAFMC and ASMFC are also developing a joint amendment to reevaluate and potentially revise the commercial and recreational sector allocations in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

### **February 27, 2020**

Stony Brook U., School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences  
Endeavor Hall, Room 120,  
Stony Brook, New York 11794

## Annual Lake Committees meetings scheduled for March 2020

### ● **Upper Lakes (Huron, Michigan & Superior)**

March 17-20, 2020,  
Delta (Marriott) Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront,  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON

The Upper Lake Committees Meeting serves as a forum for fishery management agencies to assess the state of the fish communities, discuss pressing Great Lakes issues, and plan future management activities. Throughout the week, there will be sessions for individual lake committees, a common session about Lake Whitefish, etc.

For more info: [2020 Upper Lake Committee Meetings](#)

### ● **Lower Lakes (Erie & Ontario)**

March 24-26, 2020  
Sheraton Hamilton Hotel,  
Hamilton, ON

The Lower Lake Committees Meeting serves as a forum for fishery management agencies to assess the state of the fish communities, discuss pressing Great Lakes issues, and plan future management activities. Throughout the week, there will be sessions for individual lake committees, a State of the Lake Report for Lake Ontario, etc.

For more info: [2020 Lower Lake Committee Meetings](#) ✧

## *Reminder:*

## GLSFC nominations

Nominations and elections for all GLSFC officers and directors are open this year. Ballots will be mailed next month to all clubs who are paid up and in good standing. All positions are open for '21-'22



## Michigan approves \$2 million in recreation grants for parks/trails

Michigan recently approved nearly \$2 million in Recreation Passport grant funding. The \$1,993,500 will be shared by 18 communities across the state for local park improvement projects, including playground renovations, sports and fitness facility improvements, and trail and walkway development.

View a full list and descriptions of the most recent Recreation Passport Grant Program recipients. Counties where funded grant projects have been approved include Alcona, Antrim, Bay, Benzie (two projects), Berrien, Genesee, Houghton, Lapeer, Lenawee, Mecosta, Midland, Ogemaw, Presque Isle, Saginaw, Sanilac, Schoolcraft and Wexford.

“Recreation Passport grants support local government efforts to offer residents and visitors quality recreation opportunities,” said Dan Lord, DNR grants manager. “Together, state and local governments work closely to improve quality of life and increase tourism in communities across the state.”

Funding for this program is derived from sales of Michigan’s Recreation Passport, required for vehicle entry into 103 state parks and recreation areas, 140 state forest campgrounds, hundreds of miles of state trails, historic sites, hundreds of boating access sites and other outdoor spaces.

When people choose to support the Recreation Passport program while renewing their license plate registration with the Secretary of State, our local communities benefit, too. The more people who participate in this program, the more is given back to our local communities.

Application materials for the next round of Recreation Passport grants, due **April 1**, are available at [Michigan.gov/DNRGrants](http://Michigan.gov/DNRGrants).

More info: 517-284-7268 or [DNR-Grants@Michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-Grants@Michigan.gov). ✧

## Indiana: 2020-2021 Fishing Regulations/ Guide now available

Pick up your hard copy of the 2020-2021 Indiana Fishing Regulation Guide this month from one of our properties or retailers. The guide is [now available online](#). Highlights of the new guide include: 2020 free fishing days, 2019 Fish of the Year winners, State Record Fish, crappie fishing locations and tips, and information about Indiana’s striped bass management program. ✧

## Advanced ice fishing class **Feb 21-23**

The Michigan DNR Outdoor Skills Academy will offer the [Advanced Hard Water School](#) ice fishing clinic at Mitchell State Park in Cadillac **February 21-23**. This three-day class will cover specific topics – each student will pick a topic of interest and will be assigned a pro fisherman from Team USA, HT Enterprises, Clam Outdoors, Vexilar or Ice Force – and will include time out on the ice and in the classroom. Cost is \$75, which includes some meals, bait and door prizes/goody bags. ✧

## Outdoor Skills Academy class **March 7-8**

The Michigan DNR Outdoor Skills Academy will offer the [Hard Water School](#) (ice fishing class) at Mitchell State Park in Cadillac, **March 7-8**. This two-day class covers everything from how to set up equipment and how and where to fish to ice safety and rules and regulations, with a focus on techniques for panfish, walleye and pike. Cost is \$25. The Outdoor Skills Academy offers in-depth, expert instruction, gear and hands-on learning for a range of outdoor activities at locations around the state.

See a full calendar of classes at [Michigan.gov/OutdoorSkills](http://Michigan.gov/OutdoorSkills). ✧

## DEC free indoor Ice Fishing Clinic **Feb 19**

New York DEC Region 1 I FISH NY program will hold an Indoor Ice Fishing seminar on **February 19, 2020**, from 7 to 9 p.m. The seminar will take place at the DEC Region 1 Headquarters at 50 Circle Road, Stony Brook, NY 11742. The seminar is geared anglers wanting to break into the great sport of ice fishing. DEC’s I FISH New York staff will cover ice safety, equipment, fish handling, and rules and regulations.

**Pre-registration required. Participation will be capped at 30 people.** Call the DEC’s freshwater fisheries unit at (631) 444-0283 or [email](#) to register. For more information on [statewide ice fishing opportunities](#) and [ice fishing](#) in general, visit DEC’s website. ✧

## NY Hunting Safety Statistics incident rate lowest in history

New York’s 2019 hunting seasons were the safest on record. DEC documented seven tree stand incidents and one fatality in 2019. Of the 12 Hunting Related Shooting Incidents that occurred last year, seven were two-party firearm incidents, five were self-inflicted, and one resulted in a fatality. All of these incidents could have been prevented if hunting safety rules had been followed. The one fatal incident was caused by a failure to positively identify the target. For more info: [DEC’s website](#). ✧

## Michigan Free Fishing Weekend **Feb. 15-17**

Anglers will not need a license to fish **February 15-17**. No fishing license is required during the annual winter [Free Fishing Weekend](#), February 15 and 16, and the DNR also is allowing free fishing on Monday, Feb. 17, to coincide with the time the license system is unavailable. All rules and regulations still apply. ✧

## Menominee River Area of Concern on path to delisting

MADISON, Wis. – After 30 years of pollution cleanup and restoration efforts, the Wisconsin DNR and Michigan DOE, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) are proposing to remove the [Lower Menominee River Area of Concern](#) from a list of the 43 most polluted places on the Great Lakes.

Both Wisconsin and Michigan provided the U.S.EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office with a preliminary report that summarizes the reasons for delisting. The U.S. EPA has taken the next step by seeking input on the proposed delisting from tribal representatives and the International Joint Commission. An additional public review opportunity will follow this step in the delisting process and is anticipated to occur in the next few months.

"This is a very significant improvement in the water quality for Green Bay, which, like every part of the state deserves safe, clean water. We will continue to work in this part of the state to ensure that Wisconsinites have access to clean drinking water coming from their taps and that businesses can thrive in areas not endangered by toxic sediment," said DNR Secretary-designee Preston D. Cole. "I am

happy to report that the DNR continues to strive for safe, clean water for every part of the state for both our public health and economic future."

The international Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the U.S. and Canada, signed in 1987, designated the Great Lakes rivers and harbors most severely affected by pollution and habitat loss as "Areas of Concern" or AOCs.

Michigan's Upper Peninsula and northeastern Wisconsin meet at the Menominee River, which flows into Lake Michigan's Green Bay. Environmental harm from historical pollution from coal tar, paint sludge, and arsenic earned the lower three miles of the river and the Green Bay shoreline – three miles north and south of the river mouth – an AOC designation.

The Lower Menominee River was listed as having six problems, called "Beneficial Use Impairments" in the AOC Program. All six of these impairments have been addressed, so now the agencies are proposing to "delist" or remove the Lower Menominee River from the international list of Great Lakes AOCs. This will be Wisconsin's first of five AOCs to be delisted.

The delisting proposal is made by the Wisconsin DNR Office of

Great Waters, Michigan EGLE and supported by the Lower Menominee River AOC Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees. All delisting review steps are expected to be completed in 2020. A public meeting is planned for April 2020 to give people more information about the delisting process, opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback.

In addition to pollution cleanup, many habitat restoration projects were also completed in the AOC. For example, fish passage was restored over the Park Mill and Menominee dams in 2016, returning an 18-mile stretch of prime spawning habitat for lake sturgeon. More than 133 acres of shorelands, wetlands and uplands were restored at Menekaunee Harbor and the South Channel, providing vital habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife.

Menekaunee Harbor is now cleaner, deeper and better able to accommodate recreational and commercial fishing boats. As a result of this cleanup effort, the harbor was chosen as one of the sites for Cabela's 2017 and 2019 National Walleye Tours—events that contribute to the revitalized economic prosperity of the area. ✧

### USFWS Cormorant Management

*Continued from page 1*

Public scoping for the rulemaking process began with the publication of the ANPR in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 2020 [Federal Register](#) notice, and will continue for 45 days until **March 9, 2020**. You may submit written comments by one of the following methods. Please do not submit comments by both. We do not accept email or faxes.

You can easily submit your comments and view the 84 comments provided to date:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FWS-HQ-MB-2019-0103>

• Electronically: Go to the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#): <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2019-0103.

**Comment Now!**

• By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-HQ-MB-2019-0103; USFWS, MS: JAO/IN, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

The Service seeks comments or suggestions from all concerned.

Please see the *Federal Register* notice for more details.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The Service will hold public scoping meetings in the form of multiple webinars in February.

**More information about the rulemaking process will be posted** <https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/double-crested-cormorants.php>, or [Jerome Ford, USFWS, 202-208-1050](#). ✧



## DEC and Mohawk Tribe announce first-ever State-Tribal Partnership for Area of Concern

### Unique St. Lawrence River Restoration will benefit region's ecosystem and cultures

The New York State DEC and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) announced the signing of a historic cooperative agreement that will help accelerate restoration of natural resources and traditional Native American uses within the St. Lawrence River Area of Concern (AOC) near Massena, New York, and the Akwesasne Territory. This cooperative agreement is the first of its kind across the United States portion of the Great Lakes and provides a new roadmap for coordinating studies and restoring natural and cultural resource uses between the two government agencies, while recognizing their unique jurisdictions and shared interests.

"The formalization of this agreement is the culmination of a new, exciting, and historic partnership between the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council and New York State," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "Representatives from each worked diligently over the past several months to finalize this formal agreement and I look forward to working together to restore the St. Lawrence region's habitat and wildlife for the benefit of current and future generations."

"When the Area of Concern was first identified in 1987, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe voiced the need to have Akwesasne recognized as an equal partner in remediating the serious environmental pollution inflicted upon our territory," the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council said. Tribal Council added, "Through the coordination of our environmental programs, which included the diligent efforts of SRMT St. Lawrence River AOC Program Manager Jessica Jock, our special position and environmental expertise is now acknowledged in the first state-tribal partnership throughout the Great Lakes Basin

under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement."

Areas of Concern are geographic areas around the Great Lakes that are environmentally degraded. In 1987, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement designated 43 AOCs in order to focus restoration work on these areas. The Massena area of the St. Lawrence River was originally listed as an AOC because of elevated levels of heavy metals and PCBs in sediments, wildlife, and water samples collected in the lower Grasse, Raquette, and St. Regis rivers. Significant progress is being made in remediating and restoring these waters, but more work remains.

To set the stage for this agreement between DEC and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, extensive consultations were held that culminated in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recognition of three administrative changes to the AOC's Remedial Action Plan. Key features of the cooperative agreement include:

1. Having representatives of both DEC and the SRMT serve as co-coordinators for implementation of the AOC's Remedial Action Plan;
2. Developing resource restoration plans to include both natural and cultural resources within the AOC; and
3. Enhanced outreach and education of surrounding communities to improve the understanding and support of the agencies efforts.

One immediate outcome of the state-tribal partnership will be the revitalization of the Remedial Advisory Committee to consist of members of the local Massena community and tribal representatives who will each embrace their collective role and responsibilities in

helping the governments' move toward ultimately delisting the St. Lawrence River as an Area of Concern.

The agreement also includes the formal renaming of this unique location from the "St. Lawrence River at Massena" to the "St. Lawrence River Area of Concern at Massena/Akwesasne" to better represent the AOC's geographic scope and the longstanding efforts of the Mohawk governments at Akwesasne to protect and enhance the water quality of territorial waterways. A new map has been developed that captures the extent of the Akwesasne Territory and identifies traditional use areas within the AOC. The map also identifies areas of the Akwesasne community that are overseen by respective Mohawk governments, which will now be used to better inform and coordinate efforts associated with the AOC's Remedial Action Plan amongst various environmental agencies and stakeholders.

[Map of St. Lawrence River Area of Concern at Massena/Akwesasne](#) ✧

### Misc PFBC issues

PA Fish Commissioners adopted changes to the seasons, sizes and creel limits within Lake Erie, its tributaries and Presque Isle Bay including peninsula waters, Erie County. To maintain regulatory consistency and simplicity, Lake Erie, Lake tributaries, Presque Isle Bay, and peninsular water walleye seasonal opening days were scheduled to coincide with Commonwealth Inland Waters (January 1 – March 14, 2020; and 12:01 a.m. on the first Saturday in May to midnight, December 31, 2020). The amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. ✧

## 2020 adult trout stocking schedules now available

Excitement for the spring trout fishing season begins now as the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission makes its 2020 adult trout stocking schedules available online and on the PFBC's "FishBoatPA" mobile app. Trout stocking schedules can be accessed quickly and easily through the increasingly popular, free [FishBoatPA mobile app](#) for smartphones, or at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com). The schedule is searchable by county, lists the waterways in alphabetical order, and indicates stocking dates and the species of trout that will be stocked. 2020 Pennsylvania fishing licenses are available for purchase online through *The Outdoor Shop*, [www.pa.wildlifelicense.com](http://www.pa.wildlifelicense.com), or by visiting any of the more than 700 retail license issuing agents across the state. To participate in trout fishing and keep trout, anglers ages 16 and older require both a fishing license and a trout/salmon permit. ✧

## ODNR provides \$250K in Boating Safety Education Grants across Ohio

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – Nineteen community boating safety education programs received a total of \$250,000 this year through the Boating Safety Education Grant, according to the Ohio DNR. Individual grant awards provided by ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft range from \$4,488 to \$24,513. Grants are funded by Ohio's recreational boaters through the Waterways Safety Fund, which is comprised of a share of the state motor fuel tax, watercraft registration and titling fees, and funding from the U.S. Coast Guard. This year's grants by Ohio county: [Boating Safety Grants across Ohio](#). ✧

## Mille Lacs safe walleye harvest level set

Minnesota DNR biologists and fisheries biologists from the eight Chippewa bands that retain fishing rights under terms of an 1837 treaty reached agreement on the 2020 Mille Lacs Lake safe harvest level for walleye. They established those levels on January 22, setting the walleye safe harvest level at 150,000 lbs., the same as last year. State-licensed anglers can harvest 87,800 lbs. of walleye during the 2019-2020 ice fishing season and the 2020 open-water season. Tribal fishing is subject to a 62,200-lb. limit during the same period.

Open water walleye regulations will need to consider this winter's harvest and the expected conditions during spring and summer. That work will occur during the next six weeks as winter walleye fishing comes to an end on Mille Lacs. The DNR will announce open-water fishing regulations for Mille Lacs Lake in late March. For more info: [mndnr.gov/millelacslake](http://mndnr.gov/millelacslake) ✧

## \$29.7 million in grants for Illinois park projects

IL Governor JB Pritzker has announced \$29.7 million in grants for 85 local projects which will help communities acquire open space and develop and improve recreational facilities throughout Illinois. "Investments in local park projects are good for families and recreation enthusiasts, helping them enjoy outdoor activities and making Illinois communities better places to live and work," Governor Pritzker said. "Parks projects also boost local economic development efforts and spur additional investment throughout the state."

For a list of this year's grant recipients: [https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/Governor-Pritzker-Announces-\\$29.7-Million-in-Grants-for-Illinois-Park-Projects.aspx](https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/Governor-Pritzker-Announces-$29.7-Million-in-Grants-for-Illinois-Park-Projects.aspx) ✧

## Indiana's new outdoor recreation five-year plan is available

The latest in a long line of five-year plans to help determine the future public outdoor recreation needs of all Indiana residents and plan for that future is available from the DNR. Just as similar organizations in other states, the Indiana DNR is required to create a comprehensive state-level outdoor recreation plan every five years. This planning process keeps Indiana eligible to obtain funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that DNR then re-grants to park boards in counties, townships, cities, and towns.

The new 140-page Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which covers 2016-2020 and includes the 2021-2025 Indiana Trails Plan, can be downloaded at [www.dnr.IN.gov/outdoor/4201.htm](http://www.dnr.IN.gov/outdoor/4201.htm). The site also includes information on how the study is done.

For more info: contact DNR Outdoor Recreation's Greg Beilfuss at 317-232-4071 or [gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov). ✧

## Gov wants \$3 million + in grants for Illinois recreation projects

Governor JB Pritzker recommended to two federal agencies more than \$3 million in federal grants for projects to help communities acquire open space for development of outdoor recreational facilities and meet the growing demand for improved trails. The grants, supported through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), are awarded by the National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration respectively. For a list of this year's recommended LWCF grants and project info: [https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/Gov-Pritzker-Recommend-More-Than-\\$3-Million-in-Grants-for-Illinois-Recreation-Projects.aspx](https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/Gov-Pritzker-Recommend-More-Than-$3-Million-in-Grants-for-Illinois-Recreation-Projects.aspx) ✧

## Anglers' Report confirms New York's World-Class Freshwater Fishing

New York DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos announced that the state's world-class fishing opportunities continue to draw anglers from near and far to New York's many productive freshwater sportfisheries. New data on angler effort, patterns, preferences, and attitudes was released recently as part of DEC's statewide survey of freshwater anglers, which helps DEC assess both the biological and human dimension aspects of managing New York's freshwater fisheries.

"New York is privileged to have an amazing diversity of freshwater resources," Commissioner Seggos said. "From remote Adirondack brook trout streams and ponds to the magnificent Great Lakes, our state's freshwater fisheries are among the very best in North America. DEC is committed to effectively managing these resources to maintain high-quality angling opportunities and the recreational and economic benefits they provide. These survey results reinforce what New Yorkers already know-freshwater angling in New York State is not only alive and well, it's thriving, and this survey will help guide our efforts in the years to come."

New York State offers world class fishing for a wide variety of cold water and warm water species. Whether it is smallmouth bass fishing on Lake Erie, brook trout fishing on a crystal-clear Adirondack lake, Pacific salmon fishing on Lake Ontario, fishing for stripers on the Hudson River, brown trout fishing on the Beaver Kill or fishing for panfish on a local pond, there is something special in New York for every angler. In its 2019 rankings, and for the first time ever, Bassmaster Magazine named the St. Lawrence River as the top bass fishing destination in the nation.

DEC has surveyed its licensed freshwater anglers once every decade since 1973. This survey was conducted in 2018, and summarizes the input provided by approximately 11,000 anglers that fished the

freshwaters of New York State during the 2017 calendar year.

Combined direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of freshwater angling in New York State totaled an estimated \$2.14 billion and supported 10,961 jobs in 2017. Of this total, out-of-state anglers contributed approximately 26 percent, or \$564 million. Freshwater anglers spent an estimated \$252 million at New York fishing destinations in 2017, and an additional \$204 million was expended at home or while traveling to fishing destinations. Purchases of fishing equipment and fishing-related equipment such as boats, motors, etc., generated an estimated \$1.8 billion in additional expenditures.

Results of the survey revealed significant increases in angler effort for a number of waters when compared to a 2007 angler survey. The Saranac River experienced the greatest increase in angler effort (150%) as more anglers visited to fish primarily for smallmouth bass and brown trout. There was an increase of 141% in the number of anglers fishing Irondequoit Creek, a Lake Ontario tributary near Rochester, with a focus primarily on brown trout and steelhead. The Delaware River in southeastern New York has long been popular for trout fishing, and angler effort increased by about 140% from 2007. Conesus Lake saw an increase of 155% in angler activity, with northern pike, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass among the lake's most popular species. Other waterbodies that experienced a marked increase in angling activity included Whitney Point Reservoir (76%), Lake Champlain (72%), and the Batten Kill (61%).

Freshwater anglers enjoyed an estimated 19.89 million angler days in 2017 in New York's inland and Great Lakes waters, slightly more than a similar survey conducted for 2007. Many anglers fished for warmwater gamefish (44%),

primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass. Coldwater gamefish were also popular (28%), including brown trout, rainbow trout, brook trout, steelhead, and Chinook salmon. Anglers fished primarily on inland lakes and ponds (49%), inland streams and rivers (25%), and the Great Lakes and tributaries (22%).

In his [2020 State of the State Address](#) Cuomo proposed the Restore Mother Nature initiative, the nation's most aggressive program for significant habitat restoration and flood reduction. Restore Mother Nature will reduce flood risk and revitalize critical fish and wildlife habitats by connecting streams and waterways, right-sizing culverts and dams, restoring freshwater and tidal wetlands, reclaiming natural floodplains, restocking shellfish populations and upgrading fish hatcheries, preserving open space, conserving more forest areas, replanting more trees, reducing contamination from agricultural and stormwater runoff, and expanding renewable energy. One of the goals of the initiative is to make New York the top state for recreational fishing. As part of a proposed \$3 billion Environmental Bond Act, New York would invest in its world-class fish hatcheries. The Governor's program will also improve New York's network of fishing access sites, hand launch boat sites, and public fishing rights with an emphasis on warmwater streams and rivers. Full results of [DEC's Statewide Angler Survey](#) can be found at DEC's website. ✧

### More Michigan Fishing Classes

[Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery - Beginner Fly Fishing for Women April 25](#)  
[Mitchell State Park - Bass Fishing for Beginners Clinic May 17](#)

## New interactive map highlights Great Lakes shipwrecks and their lore

The cold, fresh waters of the Great Lakes are literally littered with shipwrecks—pieces of history capturing chapters of a time when transport by water was as important as transport by land. Some, like the *Syracuse*, recall the Great Lakes' sailing heyday, when goods and people routinely plied the lakes along well-used routes. The *Syracuse*, a two-masted schooner carrying a cargo of coal, sank in Lake Huron on November 10, 1863.

Other shipwrecks speak to more recent times when steel behemoths like the 600-foot *Cedarville*, shepherding a cargo of limestone, collided with a Norwegian ship in the fog on May 7, 1965. Ten crew members died, and the ship, broken nearly in two, sank in more than a hundred feet of water. The *Syracuse* and the *Cedarville* are among 1,500 shipwrecks submerged in Michigan waters, making up one-quarter of the estimated 6,000 wrecks found throughout the Great Lakes.

Now, thanks to the recently launched Michigan Shipwrecks StoryMap, it's easy to learn about the mystery and tragedy surrounding

these ships. "This new tool gives divers, kayakers, snorkelers and armchair explorers a chance to learn more about these underwater archaeological sites and the circumstances that led to the shipwrecks," said Sandra Clark, director of the Michigan History Center. "It's a wonderfully interactive way to help people connect with this part of Michigan's maritime history."

The app map offers information about each ship, including:

- The difficulty level of diving to the wreck.
- Whether the wreck is accessible by kayak or canoe.
- The circumstances of the sinking.
- A description of the ship, with photos and drawings (if available).

The map also highlights Michigan's underwater preserves and water trails. Sonar image of the *Syracuse* wreck from October 2013. Some wrecks, such as the wooden bulk freighter *Daisy Day*, lie in as little as 10 feet of water and are suitable for beginning divers and visible to paddlers and snorkelers.

Others, such as the *Indiana*, a propeller vessel that went down in Lake Superior in 1858, are in more than 100 feet of water and require advanced diving skills. The map will be updated as more ships are discovered and more information becomes available.

Users may notice that some high-profile wrecks, such as the *Carl D Bradley*, which sank in Lake Michigan in November 1958, are not listed. Because crew members went down with these ships, they are considered underwater burial sites.

Clark reminds the public that Michigan law prohibits removal of any artifacts from shipwrecks. "The wrecks on the Great Lakes bottomlands belong to the people of Michigan," she said. "If everyone follows the rule of 'take only pictures and leave only bubbles,' we can ensure that these underwater time capsules will be available for future generations to explore, research and enjoy." Visit and explore both the story-map and public web app at [Michigan.gov/ExploreShipwrecks](https://Michigan.gov/ExploreShipwrecks). Contact: [Sandra Clark](mailto:Sandra.Clark@Michigan.gov), 517-335-2712 ✧

## K-12 students invited to enter Michigan Junior Duck Stamp Contest

Calling all young artists: The USFWS is [accepting entries for the 2020 Michigan Junior Duck Stamp Contest](#) administered by the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in Saginaw. Entries must be postmarked by **March 15**.

The USFWS has hosted the contest in Michigan since 1995 to boost education and awareness about North America's waterfowl and wetland resources. Sixteen-year-old Mandy He of Ann Arbor won in 2019 with her acrylic drawing of two Michigan mallard hens.

This year the program is expanding to accept all styles and types of two-dimensional visual artwork. All entries:

- Will be judged in four groups, according to grade level: K-3, 4-

6, 7-9 and 10-12.

- May feature one of the following species: whistling ducks, swans, geese, brants, dabbling ducks, diving ducks, sea ducks, mergansers, stiff tails or Hawaiian ducks.

In addition to first-, second- and third-place entries, judges will select a "best of show" winner that will be submitted to the Federal Duck Stamp Office and entered into the National Junior Duck Stamp Contest. The first-place art from the national contest is used to create a National Junior Duck Stamp. The Junior Duck Stamp is available for \$5 from the U.S. Postal Service and from many national wildlife refuges. Proceeds from stamp sales support conservation education and provide

awards and scholarships for participating students, teachers and schools.

Educators are encouraged to incorporate the contest into their classrooms by utilizing the [Junior Duck Stamp Program curriculum](#) to teach students about waterfowl biology and the importance of wetland habitats. Those wanting to include even more lessons and activities can register for the [DNR's Michigan's Wondrous Wetlands and Waterfowl middle school curriculum](#).

Entry information and rules can be found at [FWS.gov/JuniorDuck](https://FWS.gov/JuniorDuck).

Questions? Contact [Lionel Grant](#), Junior Duck Stamp state coordinator, 989-759-1669 ✧

## DEC exams for falconry, wildlife rehabilitator & leashed tracking dog licenses

New York exams for individuals seeking a license to practice the sport of falconry, become a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator, or use leashed tracking dogs to find wounded or injured big game animals are scheduled for **April 3**.

The exams will run 10 to noon at most DEC Regional Offices across the state. A list of Offices and registration forms can be found on the [DEC website](#). The deadline for registering to take any of these free exams is **March 13**.

### Apprentice Falconry License

Apprentices are limited to possessing one bird, either an American kestrel or a red-tailed hawk. A [falconry study guide and examination manual](#) are available at no cost from DEC. The cost of a five-year falconry license is \$40.

To qualify for the Apprentice Falconry license, applicants must:

- score 80 percent or higher on the written exam;
- be at least 14 years of age;
- possess a valid New York State hunting license; and

## 2020 Licenses Available March 1

2020 Illinois Hunting, Fishing and Sportsman Combination licenses go on sale March 1 — and are valid through March 31, 2021. Illinois 2019 licenses are valid through March 31, 2020. Licenses purchased prior to March 1, 2020 are 2019 licenses that will be valid only through March 31, 2020. (Other licenses are also available soon). ✧

## ILL Hunter & Boating Safety Ed Courses

Register now for Hunter Safety Education & Boating Safety Education courses from the IDNR. Spring classes are being scheduled. Check the IDNR website for class dates and locations: <https://bit.ly/2S6FQWb>. ✧

maintain DEC-approved facilities for housing falconry raptors.

### Wildlife Rehabilitator License

Wildlife rehabilitators provide for the care of injured, sick, and orphaned wild animals for the purpose of returning rehabilitated animals to the wild. Prospective applicants are encouraged to gain experience by serving as an assistant to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. A [wildlife rehabilitator study guide and examination manual](#) are available at no cost from DEC. There is no cost for the license, which is good for five years.

To qualify for the Wildlife Rehabilitator License, applicants must:

- score 80 percent or higher on the written exam;
- be at least 16 years of age; and
- be interviewed by DEC Regional wildlife staff.

### Leashed Tracking Dog Handler

Leashed tracking dog handlers use their dogs to track and recover dead,

wounded, or injured big game. Leashed tracking dog handlers provide a valuable service in aiding hunters in locating wounded big game that otherwise may go unrecovered. A [leashed tracking dog study guide](#) is available at no cost from DEC. There is a \$50 license fee for the five-year license and a \$25 non-refundable application fee.

To qualify for a Leashed Tracking Dog Handler License, applicants must:

- score 80 percent or higher on the written exam; and
- possess a valid New York State hunting license.

To apply for any of these exams, visit the [NYSDEC Special Licenses Unit website](#) and complete an exam registration form. Applicants can mail, fax, or email the completed form to: NYSDEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752; fax: 518-402-8925; email: [SpecialLicenses@dec.ny.gov](mailto:SpecialLicenses@dec.ny.gov). For phone inquiries, contact 518-402-8985. ✧

## Sea Lamprey control in the Great Lakes

For decades the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and regional states have partnered to control sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. Without sea lamprey control, the world-class sport fisheries that anglers continue to enjoy wouldn't exist. The latest adult lamprey population estimates for 2019 are in and provide a good example of effective control efforts.

- Lake Ontario – Numbers of adult lampreys have been at or below target levels for the past seven years.
- Lake Erie – Adult sea lamprey abundance is above the target, but decreasing. Recent, strong walleye reproduction may be helping reduce sea lamprey abundance through walleye predation on juvenile lamprey, and estimated adult sea lamprey abundance declined markedly in 2018 and 2019. ✧

## Success in newly added water in Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control

Adding Hoisington Brook to the Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Program proved to be more important than biologists ever anticipated. The brook received its first-ever treatment in October 2019, and within six hours, thousands of larval sea lamprey emerged from the sediment. The results of this treatment exceeded expectations; more larvae were eliminated than surveys had predicted were in this short, narrow tributary. To learn more about what DEC and partner organizations are doing to control sea lamprey populations in Lake Champlain, visit [DEC's website](#). ✧

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

### **[Michigan House OKs bills that ban commercial perch fishing on the state's Great Lakes](#)**

A trio of Michigan House bills that impact commercial fishing on the Great Lakes are on their way to the Senate

### **[Anglers oppose Lake Erie wind turbine project](#)**

Anglers shared their oppositions to installing wind turbines in Lake Erie with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, making many of the same arguments that were brought up 10 years ago when the New York Power Authority was considering a Great Lakes Offshore Wind proposal.

### **[Lake Michigan water levels break monthly record high for the first time in more than 30 years](#)**

Persistent Midwestern rains — combined with warmer temperatures that led to earlier and faster snow pack melt — pushed the Lake Michigan water level to a record high for the month of January

### **[Plan to bury radioactive waste near Lake Huron is dead](#)**

After years of resistance from lawmakers and decision-makers on both sides of the border, plans to build the underground nuclear waste facility near the Canadian shore of Lake Huron have dried up

### **[Senators urge funding for new icebreaker for the Great Lakes](#)**

U.S. Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow are urging the Trump administration to include enough funding for the Coast Guard to get a new Great Lakes icebreaker in their 2021 budget

### **[Nevada contractor to begin \\$53M project to deepen channel for new Soo Lock in spring](#)**

Work to upgrade the Soo Locks and pave the way for creation of a new large lock will begin in the spring

### **[High Water, Lower Speeds: Proposed law would give Michigan law enforcement agencies authority to lower boating speed limits](#)**

The Department of Natural Resources and local municipalities could temporarily lower the maximum motorboat speed limit in Michigan waters “to protect life and property during high water conditions” under a new bill.

### **[Does lack of Great Lakes ice mean more evaporation and lower lake water levels?](#)**

Will the lack of Great Lakes ice cover this winter lead to lower water levels this summer? No, because evaporation may actually be lower in warm weather, and precipitation could be heavier

### **[As Asian carp inch closer to the Great Lakes, experts tackle possible solutions](#)**

Various invasive Asian carp species lie as close as nine miles of the Great Lakes, as experts explore options for the fight against the fish, from installing electric barriers to calling for congressional action

### **[Possible \\$23B nuclear burial site near Owen Sound stokes environmental fears, economic hopes](#)**

South Bruce, Ontario, is a step closer to becoming the home of an underground storage vault for Canada's high-level nuclear waste, a \$23-billion project that pits local economic realities against environmental fears

### **[New York's Erie Canal as a model of how to build big projects again](#)**

Despite decades of bipartisan calls for more federal investment in infrastructure, federal spending on it has fallen in half over the last 35 years. It's why local leaders often blame the federal government for their infrastructure problems. But the Erie Canal is a testament to the fact that they don't necessarily need the federal government to pursue big projects

### **[Record high water levels wreaking havoc on Great Lakes coastline cities](#)**

Record high water levels on the Great Lakes are wreaking havoc along Michigan's coastlines, swallowing beaches and houses, swamping sewer systems, flooding roads and public buildings and turning farm fields into lakes

### **[Weed in the Water: How does cannabis use affect our freshwater ecosystems?](#)**

With the recent legalization of cannabis in Canada and two Great Lake states – Michigan and Illinois – a unique research project aims to understand cannabis' potential impact on freshwater plants and animals

End