



Interior Sec’y increasing access to hunting and fishing on 1.4 million acres

Includes new opportunities at 74 National Wildlife Refuges and 15 National Fish Hatcheries

U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced from Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge a proposal for new or expanded hunting and fishing opportunities at 74 national wildlife refuges and 15 national fish hatcheries managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) across more than 1.4 million acres.

“President Trump is committed to expanding public access on public lands, and this proposal is executing on that directive by opening and increasing more access to hunting and fishing by the Fish and Wildlife Service at more stations and across more acres than ever before,” said Secretary Bernhardt. “Hunting and fishing are more than just traditional pastimes as they are also vital to the conservation of our lands and waters,

our outdoor recreation economy, and our American way of life. These refuges and hatcheries provide incredible opportunities for sportsmen and women and their families across the country to pass on a fishing and hunting heritage to future generations and connect with wildlife.”

The proposal would increase the number of units in the Service’s [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) where the public may hunt from 377 to 382, and the number where fishing would be permitted would be increased from 312 to 316. The proposal would also formally open lands on 15 hatcheries of the [National Fish Hatchery System](#) to hunting or sport fishing for the first time.

The following are proposed new or expanded hunting and/or sport

fishing opportunities for stations in the states of Illinois and Missouri:

●**Great River National Wildlife Refuge:** Expand season date ranges and method of take for existing big game hunting and expand season date ranges for existing upland game hunting to align with state regulations on 4,217 acres.

●**Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge:** Expand existing upland game hunting and existing sport fishing to 884 new acres. Expand method of take for existing big game hunting to further align to state regulations on 1,885 acres.

The proposal also outlines a comprehensive revision and simplification of all refuge-specific **Increasing access to hunting/fishing**

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Lake Superior fisheries meeting, **June 25**

The public is invited to learn about how the Wisconsin DNR manages the fisheries resources of Lake Superior, get updates about recent Lake Superior initiatives and provide thoughts and concerns about current management strategies at a public meeting in Ashland. The meeting will take place on **June 25**, 2019 at 6 p.m. at WITC-Ashland campus, 2100 Beaser Ave, Ashland, Wisconsin.

During this public meeting, the department will share information on how we manage this unique resource, get public input and ideas on how to most effectively engage stakeholders in current and ongoing management issues, and introduce the public to the new staff working on these issues.

Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world.

Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior, its embayments, and tributaries offer diverse sport, charter and commercial fishing opportunities. The department strives to provide a healthy, sustainable environment to protect and enhance the Lake Superior fisheries for all users. "Lake Superior supports year-round fishing opportunities that significantly contribute to the economic viability of the area," said Brad Ray, DNR Lake Superior fisheries supervisor.

Due to the significant, community-wide impacts of the Lake Superior fishery, the department actively engages diverse stakeholders to develop, implement, and evaluate **Lake Superior fisheries meeting**

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Asian carp DNA found in Lake Calumet, only 7 miles from Lake Michigan

CHICAGO (AP) – Officials say genetic material from Asian carp has been detected near Lake Michigan, but a follow-up search turned up none of the invasive fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service posted results recently from sampling conducted in the Chicago Area Waterway System in early April.

Most of the 401 water samples were negative, but six registered DNA hits for silver or bighead carp in Lake Calumet, a few miles from Lake Michigan. Scientists say if the fish become established in the Great Lakes, they could out-compete native species.

Asian carp DNA has been found repeatedly in Lake Calumet and other spots beyond electric barriers intended to block them. Agency crews searched for live Asian carp but found none.

The eDNA hits could arise from a dead fish or genetic material transported from the bilge water of passing ships. Following the positive eDNA results, Fish and Wildlife Service personnel responded to Lake Calumet. No silver or bighead carp were found.

In any case, the location of the Asian carp eDNA is disconcerting to conservationists that are fearful about the prolific breeders invading Lake Michigan.

Lake Calumet is roughly 30 miles upstream from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' electric barriers near Romeoville. It's also beyond the T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam on Chicago's Far South Side where Asian carp have been found. In June 2010, a 19-pound bighead carp was netted by a commercial fisherman in Lake Calumet. More recently, [in June 2017](#), a lone silver carp was captured below the T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam, prompting a sweeping dragnet of Chicago-area waterways.

The Illinois DNR will continue to conduct routine testing for Asian carp

in Chicago-area waterways including Lake Calumet. The Fish and Wildlife Service has tested for eDNA in the Chicago-area waterway system since 2013. Routine testing has revealed Asian carp DNA above the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in the past. In fall 2018, eDNA from silver and bighead carp were found near an inlet of the Chicago River in the area of 31st Street and Kedzie Avenue.

Last month, Gov. J.B. Pritzker wrote a letter to the Corps of Engineers authorizing the agency to move forward with preconstruction, engineering and design for a channel with additional Asian carp deterrents at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. A final version of the plan, which was approved by the Corps of Engineers' top general, included the installation of an electric fence, a [bubble barrier and underwater speakers](#).

While pledging more support toward the project than his predecessor, former Gov. Bruce Rauner, Pritzker, too, has expressed concerns about the estimated cost of construction ballooning from \$275 million to \$778 million. The project, which has seen significant delays, would be finished in 2025 at the earliest, according to officials.

"I am committed to protecting Lake Michigan and making the State of Illinois more resilient to a variety of threats, including Asian carp, climate change, flooding, and the risks posed by outdated infrastructure," Gov. Pritzker wrote in a letter to the Corps of Engineers. "My administration is ready and willing to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on these issues. I ask that we continue the conversation and include our Great Lakes neighbors, who also recognize the urgency of this issue and are critical strategic and financial partners, as we work to implement a solution that benefits everyone at the table." ✧



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Position Statement

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

Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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New Pennsylvania record Lake Trout

On May 11, 2019, angler Keith Miller, 73, of Cranberry Township, Venango County joined friends with God's Grace Sport Fishing, a charter company, for a scouting trip for the upcoming summer fishing season on Lake Erie. Departing from the North East Marina in Erie County, Miller along with Captain Lane Brown ventured between 2 and 2.5 miles off shore, fishing in an area known as "The Mountain."

At around 4:30 p.m., the boat was trolling above 55 feet of water when a fish struck on an Orange Crush UV Copper colored Michigan Stinger spoon on 30-pound braided line.

"I could tell it was a lot bigger than the ones we'd been catching," recalled Miller, who said the crew had already boated several lake trout in the 14-pound range earlier that day. "At first it was like dead weight, but then the fish started taking quite a bit of line and put up a really great fight."

After an approximately 15-minute tug of war, Miller says the

large lake trout appeared at the surface of the water and the crew immediately suspected it could be a state record contender. Upon boating the fish, a preliminary weight taken using a handheld scale indicated the lake trout was approximately 31 pounds. If accurate, Miller's catch was heavier than the previous state record lake trout weight of 29-pounds, 4-ounces, also caught in Lake Erie in 2012 by an angler from Nazareth.



"It was almost like one of those 'You've got to be kidding me' moments," said Miller. "We're just out there fishing for fun and all of the

sudden you might have a state record on your hands."

The crew immediately pulled its remaining lines from the water and headed back to shore where the fish was transported to Poor Richard's Bait and Tackle in Fairview, where a certified scale is located. At 6:40 p.m., a weigh-in was conducted under the supervision of PFBC Waterways Conservation Officer Matthew Visosky, where the lake trout tipped the scales at 31-pounds, 13-ounces, exceeding the previous record by two-pounds, nine-ounces. Miller's fish measured 40-inches in length with a girth of 24.25-inches.

As is required for state record consideration, in addition to a witnessed weigh-in and PFBC in-person inspection, Miller completed an official state record fish application including color photographs, which was reviewed by PFBC officials and confirmed. State record fish are judged only by weight and must exceed the previous state record by at least two ounces. ✧

NOAA and partners welcome fish back to Michigan Creek after dam removal

As part of restoring the Kalamazoo River watershed from hazardous waste contamination, the Alcott Dam was removed from Portage Creek in Michigan, reopening the creek to fish and other wildlife.



With the Alcott Dam on Michigan's Portage Creek now removed, [fish can move up and down stream](#) through an additional 1.5 miles of habitat that was previously

unreachable. NOAA and partners expect more fish species and other organisms in the food web will reenter the area. The project also provides increased flood protection to surrounding communities.

Along with the dam removal, the project also restored habitat in and along Portage Creek. Roughly 3,000 feet of the creek upstream of the former dam was enhanced with new rocky shallow areas and native plants along the banks and surrounding [wetland areas](#). Fifty thousand cubic yards, or more than 15 Olympic-sized swimming pools of material, was also removed from the area to help contain stormwater in the event of heavy rains and flooding.

The dam removal was part of a plan to [restore areas of Portage Creek and the Kalamazoo River](#) by reconnecting rivers, streams, wetlands, and upland habitat for fish

and wildlife to move freely. The project will also enhance those habitats to be more diverse. Fish species important to local ecosystems and recreation economies, including brown trout, smallmouth bass, golden redhorse, and white suckers, call the Kalamazoo River watershed home. ✧

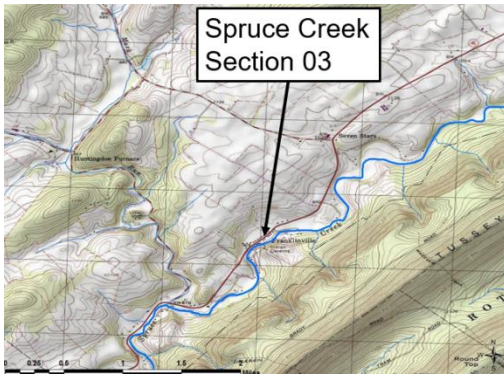
VA seeks new members for Caregiver and Family Advisory Board

In a [Federal Register notice](#), VA officials said they are seeking nominations for the board, which was established in 2017 to study and provide recommendations on caregiver and family needs, programs, services and benefits. ✧

PFBC Seeks Comment on Spruce Creek Fishing Reg Changes thru June 24

HARRISBURG, Pa (June 4) – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is seeking public comment on proposed changes to fishing tackle regulations along a section of Spruce Creek located in Huntingdon County.

At its next meeting on July 15 and 16, the Board of Commissioners



will consider a proposal to add Spruce Creek, Section 03 to its Catch-and-Release All Tackle Program. This designation would allow anglers to use any form of tackle, including both artificial lures and live bait, to catch fish and release them immediately.

Spruce Creek, Section 03 is currently managed with Commonwealth Inland Waters angling regulations. The section of creek contains a significant wild brown trout population and was added to the PFBC's list of Class A Wild Trout Streams in January of 2019.

A previous proposal to add this section of creek to the PFBC's Catch-and-Release Artificial Lures Only Program was tabled during the Commission's April 2019 meeting so that the "all tackle" proposal could be considered and allow adequate time for public comment.

The latest proposal has been posted in the PA Bulletin, which can be located [here](#).

Public comment on this proposal will be accepted through June 24, 2019. Persons with comments, objections or suggestions concerning the designation proposal are invited to submit comments electronically by completing the form at www.fishandboat.com/regcomments, or submit comments in writing to the

Executive Director, Fish and Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. Comments submitted by facsimile will not be accepted.

Recently, the 13-acre Indian Caverns property near the Village of Franklinville, Huntingdon County was acquired by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) for conservation purposes to include conveyance of the riparian land to the PFBC for public fishing access to the portion of Spruce Creek flowing through the property. This portion of the stream was formerly closed to public angling when privately owned and operated as a commercial limestone cave attraction; however, it now provides approximately 0.15 river-miles of new public fishing access to Spruce Creek. As such, Spruce Creek, Section 03, was established and extends approximately 800 linear stream feet upstream from the vehicle access bridge to Indian Caverns located along State Route 45. ✧

Women's Guided Fishing Trip on Lake Ontario, July 6th, July 14th, or August 11th

Oswego Marina, Oswego, NY; **Cost: \$150 per person.** Enjoy a 6-hour guided fishing trip for king salmon, coho salmon, brown trout, and/or steelhead with Captain Dave Wilson aboard his 28-foot Baha Cruiser!

All fishing equipment is provided, no fishing experience necessary, and it's open to women age 18 and over.

- *Pre-registration is required.*
- *Max 4 women per trip.*

Contact Captain Dave Wilson at (315) 481-5716 or by email for more information, and to register. ✧

New York Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife App – Pocket Ranger®

The Official New York Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife App was created in a collaborative effort between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and ParksByNature Network.



✧

NY BOW Workshop **Sept 13-15**

The next BOW workshop will be September 13-15, 2019 at the Silver Bay YMCA Retreat in Silver Bay, NY (Adirondacks). **Registration will open in June 2019.**

Courses that will be offered in fall may include: basic fishing, fly fishing, archery, crossbow, shotgun and rifle shooting, kayaking, hiking, camping, nature photography, wild edible plant identification, boat and trailer towing, hunter education, Dutch oven cooking, wilderness survival, and much more! *New Courses being offered this year: K-9 First Aid, Hawk Watching, Intro to Hobby Farming, and Basic Self-Defense for Women!!* ✧

DNR completes spring survey of Isle Royale lake trout populations

The Michigan DNR recently surveyed the unique Lake Superior lake trout populations located at Isle Royale.



The DNR conducts this survey every five years, and it yields data essential for the proper management of the fishery resources around the island.

The research vessel Lake Char deployed gill nets around the island to capture the lean, siscowet and redbfin strains of lake trout—the types of trout known to cruise the deeper waters around the island complex. Fisheries managers collect and use this abundance, health and species data to better manage and ensure the long-term health and sustainability of these unique fish populations.

“Survey data indicate the lake trout populations around Isle Royale remain healthy and are expected to continue providing world-class recreational fishing for years to come,” said Edward Baker, the [Marquette Fisheries Research Station](#) manager. “A highlight of the survey was capture and subsequent release of a redbfin lake trout that was 53 inches long and weighed 34 pounds.” ✧

Women’s fishing events in June

Are you an outdoorswoman interested in learning how to fish? Consider joining us at one of the upcoming women’s Learn to Fish workshops at Potato Creek State Park, IN:

- June 15 - [Women's Learn to Fish with Lures](#)
- June 27 - [Women's Learn to Kayak Fish](#) ✧

Brown trout stocked in northeast Indiana waters

Several northeast Indiana water bodies were recently stocked with nearly 4,000 brown trout averaging 8 inches in length. Trout from Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery in Kentucky were stocked by DNR fisheries biologists into the Oliver Lake chain in LaGrange County (Oliver, Olin, Martin lakes), Pigeon River at County Road 1100 West on the LaGrange-Steuben County line, Solomon Creek at County Road 33 in Elkhart County, and the Little Elkhart River at County Road 10 in Elkhart County.

The bag limit for trout in inland waters, not including Lake Michigan or its tributaries, is five fish per day with a minimum size of 7 inches. No more than one of these can be a brown trout. Anglers 18 years and older will need an Indiana fishing license and a trout/salmon stamp to fish for trout.

Anglers are advised that sections of Solomon Creek and The Little Elkhart River are designated as year-round “catch-and-release” only and “artificial lures or flies only” trout fishing areas. These sections include Solomon Creek from County Road 33 downstream to the Elkhart River and the Little Elkhart River from County Road 43 downstream to County Road 16, except for waters along Riverbend Park from C.R. 16 upstream to the pedestrian footbridge.

Brown trout taken from the Oliver Lake chain must be at least 18 inches in length. For more info: wildlife.IN.gov/5457.htm. ✧

👉 THINK ABOUT IT 👉

The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of government power.

Woodrow Wilson

Discipline without freedom is tyranny; freedom without discipline is chaos.

Cullen Hightower

Report marked or tagged fish

Want to report a trout or salmon with a missing adipose fin? It could have a Coded Wire Tag so there are special instructions you should follow! You can find those instructions here: [Coded Wire Tags](#).

Michigan anglers can help in the monitoring of Great Lakes salmon and trout populations. Many of these fish have been marked with a small coded-wire tag, which is implanted in the head of the fish, but invisible to the naked eye.

Marking programs are implemented for a variety of reasons, including estimating fish growth, mortality, exploitation, and movement. Your cooperation is an essential component of these programs, and successful fish marking programs will result in more abundant and healthier fish for the sport fishery.

Methods of externally marking fish include branding, tattooing, and optical pattern recognition. Internal tags or marks include both artificial and natural marks. Artificial marks include implanted wire tags, dyes on otoliths (“ear bones”) or other hard parts, visible implants, and radio and ultrasonic implants. Natural internal marks include genetic marks, chemical / elemental marks, and biological marks (e.g., unique parasites, others). All of these various methods are used extensively, and each has unique advantages that are dependent on the goals of the marking program. ✧

Ohio: Controlled Hunting Applications coming June 1

Applications will soon be accepted for controlled deer and waterfowl hunts for the 2019-2020 season, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. The application period opens Saturday, **June 1**, and runs through Wednesday, July 31. ✧

Great Lakes Fishery Commission unveils project to combat invasive species

DETROIT, MI – The Great Lakes Fishery Commission has unveiled plans at its annual meeting for a \$22 million FishPass project in Michigan that seeks to better combat invasive species by sorting them out from native fish.

FishPass, which will be located on the Boardman River in Traverse City, Michigan, is a project aimed at solving one of the world's most difficult fishery management challenges: how to pass fish around barriers and dams while still blocking harmful species like sea lampreys. FishPass is the capstone of a 20-year whole-river restoration project on the Boardman River.

Jim McKane, the Commission's chair, explained: "Tens of thousands of dams fragment habitat throughout the Great Lakes basin. This fragmentation is not always conducive to fishery restoration or management. That said, those dams also block invasive sea lampreys, each one of which will destroy 40 pounds of Great Lakes fish. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission believes technology can be developed to have it both ways: to automatically sort a mixed assemblage of fish so that

desirable species can pass an obstruction and destructive species like sea lampreys can be stopped."

FishPass will be constructed on the Boardman River in downtown Traverse City at the location of the existing, but deteriorating, Union Street Dam. It will consist of a sea lamprey barrier just upstream of the to-be-removed dam, a channel downstream of the sea lamprey barrier to test fish-sorting techniques and technologies, and a natural river channel for recreation and normal river flow. The location also will be an improved city park so that visitors can observe the "living laboratory" that FishPass will provide.

Many of the FishPass Partners were on-hand for the unveiling. In addition to members of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, officials present included Jim Carruthers, mayor of Traverse City; Mark Wilson, a councilor for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; Marty Coburn, city manager of Traverse City; Gary Whelan, program manager for the Michigan DNR; Frank Dituri, director of public services for Traverse City; Carl Platz, Great Lakes program

manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Brett Fessel, a biologist with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

"The final design for FishPass reflects the project's engineering requirements, the agencies' fishery management goals, and the community's desires," said Doug Stang, the Commission's vice-chair. "The Commission and its partners have held scores of public meetings and workshops over the past few years to ensure the project is sound and is a welcomed addition to Traverse City. The design that was unveiled demonstrates we have hit the mark—a project where form meets function and has the potential to change the way fisheries are managed, both in the Great Lakes basin and worldwide."

The Army Corps of Engineers, in collaboration with the firm AECOM, developed the FishPass design with input from the partners and the community. Construction of FishPass should begin in early 2020. For more information about FishPass, and to see the final design, visit <http://www.glfsc.org/fishpass.php>. ✧

U.S. Coast Guard mobile app tracks boating conditions on Great Lakes

As the nation's recreational boating safety coordinator, the Coast Guard works to minimize loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and environmental harm. Our boating safety program involves public education programs, regulation of boat design and construction, approval of boating safety equipment, and vessel safety checks for compliance with federal and state safety requirements. The Coast Guard Mobile App supports these missions by providing the essential services and information most commonly requested by boaters.

Features of the app include: state boating information; a safety equipment checklist; free boating safety check requests; navigation

rules; float plans; and calling features to report pollution or suspicious activity. When location services are enabled, users can receive the latest weather reports from the closest NOAA weather buoys as well as report the location of a hazard on the water.

The app also features an Emergency Assistance button which, with locations services enabled, will call the closest Coast Guard command center.

The Boating Safety Mobile app was not designed to replace a boater's marine VHF radio, which the Coast Guard strongly recommends all boaters have aboard their vessels. The app was mainly designed to provide additional boating safety resources for mobile device users.

The app is self-contained, so personal information is stored on the phone and is not sent to the Coast Guard unless the user chooses to send it. The Coast Guard does not track a user's location, and the app does not track a user's location unless the app is being used.

The USCG Boating Safety App features include:

- Find the latest safety regulations
- Request a vessel safety check
- Check your safety equipment
- File a float plan
- Navigation Rules
- Find the nearest NOAA buoy
- Report a hazard
- Report pollution
- Report suspicious activity
- Request emergency assistance ✧

Steelhead and Brown Trout stomachs especially important for Diet Study in 2019

Anglers can submit stomachs from walleye and all trout and salmon species at freezer drop site locations around Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Less common species like brown trout and steelhead are especially important because it is hard for agency biologists to collect large numbers of these species in all regions.

Michigan State University is leading a comprehensive study of trout, salmon and walleye diets in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. This far-reaching effort would not be possible without the contributions of many partner organizations and individuals.

Exotic invaders like quagga mussel, spiny water flea, and round goby have changed the Great Lakes, and gamefish are forced to adapt to resulting changes in forage fish abundance and composition. Anglers can help scientists to figure out how different fish species are adapting in different parts of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron by providing stomachs for the Huron-Michigan Predatory Fish Diet Study.

How to submit samples

To submit stomach samples after a fishing trip, follow these four easy steps:

1. **Decide if you will collect stomachs from this fishing trip.** It is not necessary to collect stomachs from every fishing trip taken over the course of the year.

2. **Remove stomachs from ALL fish of each species that you are collecting.** It is not necessary to collect stomachs from all species, but if you collect one stomach from a steelhead then collect stomachs from **all** steelhead caught during that trip. It is especially helpful to collect less-common species like steelhead, brown trout, and Atlantic salmon even if you do not collect more common species like Chinook salmon and lake trout.
3. **Place entire intact stomach into plastic bag with data tag.** Make sure to include only one stomach per plastic bag. Researchers prefer intact stomachs with no punctures or holes, and will not accept ripped, open, stomachs with large holes, or prey separated from the stomach. These stomachs might be missing small or heavily-digested food items that can bias the study.
4. **Freeze or ice stomachs immediately and deposit in freezer at drop site.**

Full instructions and freezer drop sites are available at MichiganSeaGrant.org/diet. Diet study [signs](#) are also posted at access sites around Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. [Data tags](#) are available at some drop sites and can be printed at home.

Huron-Michigan Diet Study

WANTED! Lake trout, steelhead, brown trout, Chinook salmon, coho salmon, Atlantic salmon and walleye stomachs from Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.

REASON: Researchers are trying to better understand where and when these predatory fish are eating gobies, alewife, smelt, and other food items in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

1 – Decide if you will collect stomachs from this fishing trip.

2 – Remove stomachs from ALL fish of each species that you are collecting.

3 – Place stomachs and ALL contents into plastic bag with data tag.

4 – Freeze or ice stomachs immediately and deposit in freezer at drop site.

DO NOT cut bend in the stomach

Cut intestine where it exits stomach

Cut esophagus where it enters stomach

Diet Study Data Tag

Date caught: _____

Pond Name: _____

Species: _____

Length (in inches): _____

Angler's Name: _____

Date of Release: _____

Data tags, list of freezer drop sites, video, and full instructions at: MichiganSeaGrant.org/diet

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

USGS science for a changing world

Sea Grant MICHU 17-705



Check your boat registration

The IDNR reminds boat owners in Illinois to check their three-year boat registration/decal and renew their registration if it expires in 2019. Renewing watercraft registration can be done online through the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov or by phone at 1-866-867-3542. To renew registration, have available

the watercraft's Illinois registration number, the first six characters of the watercraft's hull ID number, the first three letters of the registered owner's last name, and a credit card. New or renewed three-year watercraft registrations will expire on September 30 in the calendar year of expiration. For details on

Illinois watercraft registration requirements and fees, check the IDNR website at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/boating/Pages/default.aspx>. Unpowered watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, or paddle boards in Illinois are no longer required to have a Water Usage Stamp. ✧

Endangered Mussels to gain protected habitat in Midwestern States

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on June 4, designated critical habitat for four endangered freshwater mussels found in 18 states in the East and Midwest, marking a major legal victory for the species and for the Center for Biological Diversity.

The four colorfully named mussels — snuffbox, spectaclecase, sheepsnose and rayed bean — range from Wisconsin and New York to Alabama and from Kansas to Virginia.

Snuffbox

“Freshwater mussels are



America’s most endangered group of animals, so it’s fantastic that these four incredibly important creatures will get habitat protection,” said Tierra Curry, a senior scientist at the Center. “Those safeguards will benefit these mussels along with the health of rivers across 18 states.”

The mussels were protected under the Endangered Species Act in 2012, but the Fish and Wildlife Service took no action to designate critical habitat for them until after the

Center sued the agency in July 2018.

Under the agreement the agency must propose protected habitat areas for the mussels by November 30, 2024. That protection will require anyone conducting a federally funded or permitted project in the mussels’ habitat to consult with the Service to ensure the area is not damaged. Species with federally protected critical habitat are more than twice as



likely to be moving toward recovery as species without it.

Sheepsnose

The eastern United States has more species of freshwater mussels than anywhere in the world, but the region has already lost more than 23 kinds to extinction. Freshwater [mussels](#) are highly sensitive to water quality. They feed by filtering small particles from the water, improving water quality but accumulating pollutants in their bodies.

Species Background

The **rayed bean**, small and bean-shaped, was once found in 10 states, from Tennessee north into Canada. It has been lost from more than 70 percent of its former range and today

is found only in small populations in Tennessee, West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania. It has been declining for decades and was first placed on a federal waiting list for Endangered Species Act protection in 1984.

The **snuffbox**, a medium-sized, yellow mussel, was once common in 18 states, ranging from Alabama to Canada. It has declined by more than 60 percent and has been lost from four states. It was first placed on a federal waiting list for Endangered Species Act protection in 1991.

The **sheepsnose** is 5 inches long with an oval shell. In the past it was commercially harvested to make jewelry and buttons. It has declined by 70 percent and was identified as being in need of federal protection in 2004. Sheepsnose are currently found in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

The **spectaclecase** is 7 inches long with a narrow shell and is currently found in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Very few of its surviving populations are known to be reproducing. It has declined by 70 percent and was first identified as being in need of federal protection in 1984. ✧

Illinois 2019 Spring Wild Turkey Preliminary Harvest totals 15,189 birds

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Illinois turkey hunters harvested a preliminary statewide total of 15,189 wild turkeys during the 2019 Spring Turkey Season. This year’s total is up compared with the 2018 statewide turkey harvest of 13,494. The statewide preliminary total includes the 2019 Youth Turkey Season harvest of 1,364 birds, compared with the 2018 youth harvest of 1,143 turkeys. The statewide record total was set in 2006 when 16,569 turkeys were harvested.

Spring turkey hunting was open in 100 of Illinois’ 102 counties. The 2019 season dates were April 8-May 9 in the South Zone and April 15-May 16 in the North Zone. The Youth Spring Turkey Season was March 30-31 and April 6-7 statewide.

Turkey hunters this spring took a preliminary total of 6,607 wild turkeys during all season segments in the South Zone, compared with 5,507 last year in the south. The North Zone preliminary harvest total this year was

8,582 wild turkeys, compared with 7,987 in northern counties in 2018.

The top five counties for spring wild turkey harvest in the South Zone in 2019 were Jefferson (480), Randolph (383), Marion (328), Union (310), and Pope (310). The top five North Zone counties for spring turkey harvest this year were Jo Daviess (541), Fulton (402), Pike (381), Hancock (344), and Adams (331). Totals by county: [IDNR 2019 Spring Wild Turkey Preliminary Harvest Totals](#) ✧

Increasing access to hunting/fishing

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hunting and fishing regulations in all 50 states to more closely match state regulations while continuing to ensure safe and compatible opportunities. The Service worked closely with the states in preparing the proposed rule.

"Well managed hunting and fishing are the backbone of conservation in this country, but inconsistent or overly complex regulations can act as a disincentive," said Service Principal Deputy Director Margaret Everson. "By aligning our refuge regulations with our state partners, we are reducing confusion and the regulatory burden on the American public, helping ensure the tradition and benefits of hunting and fishing can continue."

Hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities contributed more than \$156 billion in economic activity in communities across the United States in 2016, according to the Service's [National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#), published every five years. More than 101 million Americans—40 percent of the U.S. population age 16 and older—pursue wildlife-related recreation, including hunting and fishing.

The Service will seek comments from the public on the proposed rule for 45 days, beginning with publication in the *Federal Register* in coming days. The notice will be available at <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number: FWS-HQ-NWRS-2019-0040, and will include details on how to submit your comments. The Service intends to finalize the proposed changes in time for the upcoming 2019-2020 hunting seasons. An interim copy of the proposed rule is [now available](#).



A complete list of all refuges and hatcheries included in the proposal is available in the proposed rule and [online](#).

For more than 145 years, the National Fish Hatchery System has worked collaboratively with tribes, states, landowners, partners and stakeholders to promote and maintain healthy, self-sustaining populations of fish and other aquatic species. There are 70 national fish hatcheries visited by more than two million people each year. Hatcheries offer opportunities for viewing the operations and learning about fish, as well as activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, sightseeing, nature study, birdwatching and photography.

The Refuge System is an unparalleled network of 567 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts. There is a national wildlife refuge within an hour's drive of most major metropolitan areas. More than 55 million Americans visit refuges every year. National wildlife refuges provide vital habitat for thousands of species and access to world-class recreation, from fishing, hunting and boating to nature watching, photography and environmental education.

Under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the Service permits hunting and fishing along with four other types of wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife photography, environmental education, wildlife observation and interpretation, when they are compatible with an individual refuge's purpose and mission. [Hunting](#), within specified limits, is currently permitted on 340 wildlife refuges and 37 wetland management districts. [Fishing](#) is currently permitted on 278 wildlife refuges and 34 wetland management districts. ✧



Lake Superior fisheries meeting

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management goals and activities. In July 2017, the department began work to update the Lake Superior Fisheries Management Plan and intends to release the first draft for public comment by the end of this summer.

"The goals and objectives established in the plan will guide practical management of Wisconsin's Lake Superior fisheries to benefit the state's citizens within the productive capacity of the resources. The public participated extensively in the making of the plan, so it will reflect the type of management desired for Lake Superior and its tributaries," Ray said.

In December 2018 the department signed a new Lake Superior Fishing Agreement with the Red Cliff and Bad River Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa. Originally signed in 1986, this agreement has guided harvest and designated refuges, restrictive use areas, and open fishing zones. Lake trout quotas, seasons, tagging, enforcement, home-use fishing, and information exchange are also described in the agreement.

"In addition, there have been some recent personnel changes in the staff tasked with managing this unique resource and we would like to take the opportunity to introduce the public to the new staff and provide an overview of both new and core aspects of the Lake Superior management program," Ray said.

For more information regarding Lake Superior management, contact Brad Ray at 715-779-4036 or via email at Bradley.Ray@Wisconsin.gov. To learn more about Lake Superior fishery management, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keywords "Lake Superior fisheries management."



“Gun Free Zones,” the “Silent Killer” of our generation!

"Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it."

Mark Twain

"The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money."

Margaret Thatcher

"The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference — they deserve a place of honor with all that is good"

George Washington

Without guns in this country, all other amendments become null and void, simply because “We the People” will lose our power of enforcement.

Anonymous

"Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of him — better take a closer look at the American Indian."

Henry Ford

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

John Adams

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Enbridge Inc. said it will go to court after failing to strike a deal with Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on building an oil pipeline tunnel beneath the channel that connects Lakes Huron and Michigan

[Great Lakes mavors' group endorses plan to fight Asian carp](#)

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Cities Initiative has endorsed a \$778 million plan developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which recently sent the proposal to Congress

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Researchers are experimenting with a Rube Goldberg-esque mix of tactics to control hearty, nonnative fish that re-engineer nutrient-rich Midwest waters.

[Invasive mussels challenge commercial whitefish fishing in the Great Lakes](#)

Estimates of whitefish biomass in northern Lake Huron dropped 45% from a peak in 1997, when the mussels began to widely colonize the lakes, through 2017, when quagga mussels had succeeded in covering much of the lake bottom.

[DNR plants coho in Port Sanilac harbor](#)

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has planted 49,000 coho salmon in Port Sanilac's harbor, which will be the first time in 30 years that the DNR has planted coho in Lake Michigan.

[Superior, Erie, Ontario at or above record May levels](#)

Lakes Erie, Ontario and Superior are at record high levels this year, causing damage and disasters from Minnesota to New York.

[EPA to clean up Lake Michigan canal of century-old pollutants](#)

The EPA plans invest \$26 million to remove 60,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment in Indiana's Lake George Canal, which connects Lake Michigan to the Calumet River.

[Smith: DNR seeking input for Lake Michigan stocking plan](#)

Fisheries scientists from Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources are requesting public comments on plans for Lake Michigan salmon and trout stocking programs. [Read the full story by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.](#)

[Preservationists want to turn Chicago's lakefront into a national park](#)

In response to multiple attempts over the past decade to build private facilities on Chicago's protected lakefront, nonprofit advocacy group Preservation Chicago says it hopes to pursue a national park designation for the city's waterfront and accompanying parks to protect them

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