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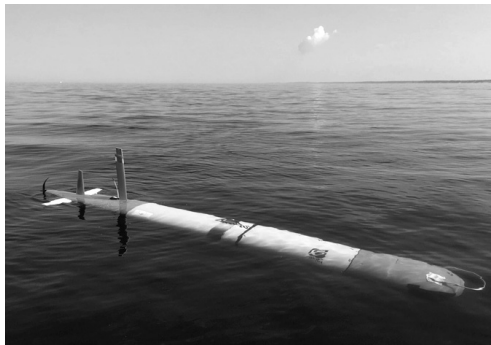
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DRONE RESEARCH VESSELS ARE ON THE GREAT LAKES

Michigan Radio | By Lester Graham Published July 20, 2023 at 4:58 PM EDT

The government is using three uncrewed research vessels in the Great Lakes. These autonomous vessels are gathering data on fish. One vehicle is on the surface on northern Lake Michigan. Another is on Lake Erie.

There's also a long-range autonomous underwater vehicle (LRAUV) that's mapping fish distribution. It's being deployed out of harbors from Frankfort in Lake Michigan down to Benton Harbor inland.



A long-range autonomous underwater vehicle (LRAUV) is mapping fish populations in Lake Michigan.

The U.S. Geological Survey along with conservation agencies from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ontario are partners in these experimental uses of the uncrewed vessels. The USGS said in a release that diesel-powered conventional research vessels are relatively loud and that might have an impact on the data collected because fish could be scared away by the noise.

The surface vehicles, called saildrones, are wind-powered and can stay out on the water 24 hours a day for months, gathering data. Having more data always makes scientists happy. It can be used to determine the validity of other research where data was gathered by crews on conventional boats.

The operators say notices about the autonomous vessels have been sent to the U.S. Coast Guard to provide to mariners.



A saildrone in Charlevoix headed out to northern Lake Michigan.

FISHING REPORT

Here's a few pictures that confirm a great fishing season especially walleye success and perhaps a forecast into the upcoming steelhead season.



L to R SONS Director Jack Bock holds the nice walleye he caught recently, Capt. Dick Torelli sent us this great photo taken after a successful charter aboard the Ciao' and recently retired Erie Police Detective, Pat Haller shows off this nice steelhead he caught while out fishing with Bill Brown and Bill Jr.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Let us know if you can help out by emailing sonslakeri@aol.com or text 814-882-7296.

Saturday August 26th

1-4 Family Affair Camp Ground
kids casting practice and fishing
Volunteers needed

Friday September 8th

9:30 – 12:30 East Waterworks
Pond PISP McDowell High School
Intermediate unit Volunteers
needed

Saturday September 30th

2-6 PM PA Steelhead Association's
Fall Run Banquet at Pleasant
Ridge Park go to pasteelhead.com
for more info and
to purchase tickets.



SONS 2023 MEMBERSHIP BUTTON

You can get one at any of our meetings. If you would like one mailed to you, send \$3.00 to the S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie PO Box 3605 Erie, PA to cover mailing costs.

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FISHING TOURNAMENTS DRAW INTEREST

The Erie Pennsylvania Sportfishing Association held its annual Summer Slam fishing tournament on July 29th and 30th. There were 25 boats entered into the event. The participants were divided between pros and amateurs. The pros were judged for a total weight of 12 fish each day and the

amateurs could submit 6 fish. There was also a big fish category for each day in each division. A prize in each category was awarded for each days result and a grand prize in each division for a total weight for both days.

We have helped out every year at the event by moving and inspecting and

marking the fish entered. We accept donations of fish from the participants which we use for our fish fry's. Thanks to the contestants we collected enough donated fish to hold them again this year.

The tournament director is Alysha Nemet who was assisted by Paul Olszewski, Ray Haly and other EPSFA members.



Team Renegade took over 1st place in the amateur division



Team Vision Quest won 1st place pro division



The biggest fish for both days of the EPSFA tournament was a 11.5 pound steelhead caught by team Pursuit of Freedom who also won the 1st day Amateur Division



ANOTHER TOURNAMENT CHEAT CAUGHT

According to an article written by Dac Collins of Outdoor News another cheating incident occurred on July 30th in Dunkirk NY.

This incident follows in the wake of the Weight Gate scandal that rocked the professional fishing world in October 2022 .

This competitor in the Bart's Cove Walleye Duel was caught stuffing walleyes with fish to increase their weight. When the cheater's fish were cut open two of them were found to be stuffed with fish. The irony is that the cheater would have won first place even without stuffing them.

Locally our tournament committee members have been using metal detectors to scan for added lead weights.



SONS volunteer Mary Runser uses a metal detector wand to scan a walleye held by Jim Christianson at the recent EPSFA tournament in Erie

TEAM REEL 'EM IN BAGS FIRST PLACE

The Walleye Bash fishing tournament sponsored by Poor Richard's Bait Shop, the East End Angler Bait Shop, Sportsman's Warehouse, Muddycreek Tackle and Real Nutz Vodka Co, was held on August 11 & 13. Sunday August 13 was a rainday called after Saturday was cancelled due to weather.



Congratulations to team Reel 'Em In taking 1st place in today's tournament with a overall weight of 44.42#s. They also won the walleye Calcutta weighing in at 9.52

COMING SOON

Thanks to a \$11,000 grant from the PFBC's Lake Erie Access program a public access web cam will soon be on line at the Walnut Creek Access Area. The grant was awarded to the SONS of Lake Erie. The IT staff at Fish USA provided technical assistance and will host the site on their server along with our web page. They also will sponsor monthly fees and maintenance expenses along with the SONS and the PA Steelhead Association. The camera is intended to provide a real time view of Lake Erie conditions as well as the level of fishing activity at Walnut Creek.



A FEATHERED VOLUNTEER JOINED US

recently at one of our kid's events at Presque Isle's Waterworks pond. This Blue Heron shown on the left landed on the platform and decided to join in the fishing.

GODFATHER OF THE STEELHEAD FISHERY REMEMBERED

On Saturday August 5th a group of about 50 people including members of the Bob Hetz family and friends gathered at Avonia Beach in Fairview to dedicate a memorial to Bob Hetz for his lifetime service to the Lake Erie fishery. Bob, along with the 3-CU Trout Club raised millions of trout and steelhead that were stocked into Lake Erie tributaries A plaque which was sponsored by 3-CU, PA Steelhead Association, Trout Unlimited and the SONS of Lake Erie was erected in honor of his dedication and hard work near the mouth of Trout Run at Avonia Beach.



The above group of photos were taken at the Hetz Memorial dedication in the top left photo SONS VP Ed Kissell who spearheaded the memorial project addressed the group of the Bob Hetz family and friends. In the top right photo Bob's SON reads the inscription on the memorial plaque as shown below. In the bottom left photo Bob's family gather around the memorial for a picture

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

Our SONS Volunteer Appreciation picnic was held on Monday August 7th, 2023 at the Shade's Beach. This picnic is our way of thanking the over 130 volunteers for volunteering over a total of 850 times at 42 separate activities that we have organized and sponsored since July of 2022. If you consider that each volunteer donates about four hours' time that's 3600 hours total which according to standards is worth \$20.00/hr. calculates equivalent to \$72,000 worth of volunteer effort. All of these efforts by all of our volunteers make club the success that it is.

There were severe weather concerns that day but thankfully there was only a short period of a slight drizzle. We lucked out again. Only 100 of our invited guests attended.

Team Lubak under the direction of SONS director Kevin Lubak and his wife, Leslie and their family followed the tradition started by his father Ron Lubak who acted as the caterers again this year, Their planning and efforts again made for plenty of good food.

Thanks to all of our SONS directors and officers that spent hours planning, preparing and executing a great event.

Below are a few pictures taken at the Volunteer Appreciation picnic provided by Tom Pruzenski.



OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

Every year there is a core group of SONS volunteers that consistently continue to help out and keep things going. This year we would recognize Jack Bock and Joe Springer for their hundreds of volunteer hours in their capacity as part of our hatchery crew. Jack is our hatchery manager a Joe the grunt that keeps the place running in addition to their time they spend working at our many activities. Also recognized was Larry Lipinski who has spent countless hours refurbishing hundreds of donated fishing rods and reels which were distributed free of charge to different agencies as well as always being at our other activities. They were each presented with a nice sweatshirt embroidered with inscriptions acknowledging their individual contributions.

There was another segment of 49 of our volunteers that were recognized for their participation many of them who spent over 200 hours volunteering. . They were all given a SONS jacket in appreciation.

A special vote of thanks goes out to our officers and directors as well as their wives for the countless hours behind the scenes doing club business.



L to R Top Volunteers Jack Bock, Joe Springer and Larry Lipinski pose with SONS Pres. Jerry Skrypzak

LAKE ERIE WATER LEVELS IN DECLINE

*On August 16, 2023 Dana Massing,
writer for Erie Times-News, wrote the following:*

While Lake Erie's water level remains above average, it was expected to resume its seasonal decline in August and was projected to go down 5 inches between Aug. 11 and Sept. 11.

The downward trend is expected to continue through the end of the year and into 2024, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps of Engineers' weekly Great Lakes water level update for Aug. 11 indicated that Lake Erie, forecasted to be at 572.77 feet on Aug. 11, would likely go down 5 inches within a month. The other four Great Lakes also are expected to drop during that timeframe: 1 inch for Lake Superior, 2 inches for Lake Michigan-Huron and 8 inches for Lake Ontario. Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are considered one lake for Army Corps forecasting purposes because the lakes are connected at the Straits of Mackinac and rise and fall together.

A July 2023 Great Lakes water level summary from the Corps said Lake Erie water levels are forecast to be 7 to 10 inches above long-term average levels through January but 18 to 27 inches below record-high levels. The highs were set in 1986, 1987, 2019 and 2020.

The lake's water levels are expected to be 1 to 3 inches below 2022 levels from September to November and in January, according to the summary. In August and December, the forecast is for water levels to match 2022 levels.

Lake Erie had already started its seasonal water level decline from May to June, according to the Corps of Engineers summary. But that leveled off in July when the lake received above average water supplies, likely due to above average precipitation and runoff, according to the Corps of Engineers. The six-month forecast indicated the seasonal decline would continue in August.

For Lake Erie, the maximum water level recorded for July was 574.57 in 2019 and the minimum for July was 569.06 in 1934. For August, the maximum was 574.21 in 2019 and the minimum, 569 in 1934. The maximum for September was 573.72 in 2019 and the minimum for September was 568.83 in 1934, according to Corps of Engineers information.

Lake Erie reached its highest level, 574.61 feet, in June 2019, according to Army Corps of Engineers records. The monthly mean record highs for Lake Erie were set in October, November and December of 1986; January of 1987; June, July, August and September of 2019; and February, March, April and May of 2020.

Like Lake Erie, the other Great Lakes are expected to be above their long-term averages but below record highs for the next six months, according to the July Corps of Engineers summary. Lake Ontario is an exception.

Lake Superior is projected to be 2 to 6 inches above long-term average levels and 7 to 13 inches below record high levels.

Lake Michigan-Huron is expected to be 4 to 5 inches above average levels and 29 to 36 inches below record highs.



Jeremy Scott and his team pose with their winning catch

JEREMY SCOTT AND TEAM WIN CHARITY SALMON TOURNAMENT

Jeremy Scott is not only a skilled angler but a huge supporter of the SONS. He has been a guest presenter at many of our General Membership meetings. His presentations draw crowds of around 100 members whenever he speaks. He recently posted on Facebook an account of a tournament he participated in Michigan during July.

Jeremy Scott July 30 at 6:56 PM –

“Just got home from an awesome adventure North to the state of Michigan to fish with long time good friends Michael E Hinkel, Corry Lino & Jim Waldo in the Dreamweaver Charity Salmon Tournament. After arriving Wednesday night around midnight our alarms rang out at 2am Thursday morning and we were greeted by hungry fish biting well before daylight. Michigan is definitely allot different than Lake Ontario. Fishing was fantastic as the bites and fish were plentiful thanks to Captain Mike's scouting. I landed my first ever Whitefish, and together we landed a Coho Salmon, & many King Salmon. Friday had us back up at 230 am fishing until 11am, putting 7 more fish on ice. We picked up the captains pack of lures which are the only lures you can use during the tournament and we're excited to see many we believed would trigger Salmon bites. On tournament days wakeup was even earlier and to a big storm that had me wondering if we were even going to fish. We powered through the rain and hour and a half to the boat ramp to be met with whistling wind. We motored out into the abyss with a broken trolling motor which failed at the end of Fridays trip. We missed the first bite on a rigger, lost a Skippy on the other rigger, got spun in a circle with the first few rods out due to the waves and pitch black so we pulled them in to make sure they weren't tangled. We had heard a couple rods drag slip while setting others and figured it was wave surge making the drags slip. Nope, it was fish biting lures off! We lost our green plug and the fly off the back of the spin doctor though the team

continued on the back page

LAMPE MARINA FISH CLEANING STATION BACK ON TRACK

HARRISBURG, Pa. (July 24)

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) held its quarterly business meeting on July 24th

Boating -- The Board voted to give final approval to amendments to boat registration regulations. Under the changes, the PFBC will comply with requirements of Act 28 of 2022, which established a calendar-year boat registration cycle that is valid from January 1 through December 31. Currently, Pennsylvania boat registrations are valid from April 1 to March 31, which can be confusing to boaters and result in unintentional violations. The change to a calendar-year registration period will provide clarity to regulations, be easier to remember, and result in customer service improvements. Act 28 of 2022 requires the PFBC to publish amended regulations (58 Pa. Code § 93.1Opens In A New Window and 58 Pa. Code § 93.5Opens In A New Window) to implement the changes within 18 months. These amendments will go into effect upon publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. The PFBC will begin issuing calendar-year boat registrations in October 2023 which will be valid from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025.

Fisheries -- The Board voted to give final approval to amendments to regulations pertaining to the propagation, introduction, and transportation of live fish into Commonwealth waters. Under these changes, two chapters of the Pennsylvania Code (58 Pa. Code § 71Opens In A New Window and 58 Pa. Code § 73Opens In A New Window) will be combined into a single chapter (58 Pa. Code §71a) to address current conservation challenges, improve fisheries management and fish health, and simplify the code.

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, thousands of lakes, ponds, and stream sections are stocked by private individuals each year. To improve the PFBC's understanding of stockings occurring in Pennsylvania, protect aquatic resources, and address increased risks associated with aquatic invasive species and pathogens, there is a need to collect information on non-PFBC fish stockings occurring in the Commonwealth. As such, PFBC staff have undertaken an effort to improve management and oversight of fish and aquatic life transportation and stocking in Pennsylvania through the development of a Notice of Stocking.

In the United States, over 30 states have requirements for tracking how and when fish are stocked in state waters. Notably, all states in the Northeast, except Pennsylvania, require some form of documentation when individuals or entities stock fish in state waters.

In addition to a proposed Notice of Stocking, other regulatory sections within the new chapter would prohibit the release or disposal of live bait fish into waters of the Commonwealth, with narrow exceptions; create a fish health inspection protocol to provide additional protection to the Commonwealth's aquatic resources to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species and pathogens; and create watercraft inspection requirements to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by watercraft throughout the Commonwealth. At least 19 other states already have watercraft inspection requirements in place.

"From the start of this process, there was consensus that Pennsylvania must do more to protect fish and other aquatic resources from the threat of invasive species and pathogens," said Robert B.J. Small, District 6 Commissioner and PFBC President. "The Notice of Stocking will help us do that because we will know more about what is being stocked into our waters. We welcomed feedback, took it into account, and took the time to achieve a better version of this new chapter. Additionally, this chapter includes much needed regulations for baitfish, watercraft inspections, and fish health inspections. Putting the Resource First has been our guiding light," added Small.

The Notice of Stocking will go into effect on January 1, 2024, and full implementation of the fish health inspection protocol on January 1, 2026. All other provisions would be effective on January 1, 2024.

Grant Approval -- The Board voted to approve additional funding for an Erie Access Improvement Grant to the Erie-Western PA Port Authority for the construction of the Lampe Marina Fish Cleaning Station along Lake Erie, Erie County. While the PFBC originally awarded the grantee \$150,000 in April 2021 and \$100,000 in July 2022, it was determined that an additional \$150,000 was required to complete the project and planned improvements to the design. This is the only public fish cleaning facility in the vicinity, and it is part of a larger facility upgrade that provides public fishing and boating access. The additional funding will improve the project by providing features similar to other popular fish cleaning stations in the area. Board approval of grant funding is required under the Erie Access Improvement Program when funding exceeds \$100,000 per year. The full report from the meeting may be seen on line at: <https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/fish-and-boat-commission-details.aspx?newsid=532>



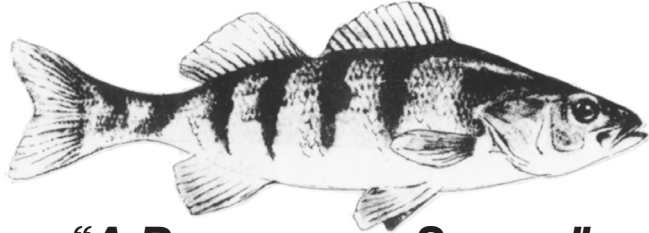
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"A REPLENISHING SPECIES"

NO MEETINGS UNTIL SEPTEMBER!!!



**HAVE FUN,
GO FISHING,
BE SAFE.**

Jeremy Scott, continued from inside

never gave up. We reset rods and the corner rigger fired three times in short order with good ones hitting the deck. One long slide and we had five fish in the box so we decided to pull rods in the 3 to 5 foot waves and run back up wind. We reset rods, hooked another good King which was a major upgrade. A 5 lb Laker rounded out our catch. We decided to pull lines and head in at 1045 am as the waves were getting even bigger. I'm blessed to say we finished in 1st place! We drove through a crazy ass storms to get there and pushed forward on pure will power, great commodity and an epic three days of fantastic food by Jim who did blackened fish, smoked fish hot Italian deer nachos and more! Sorry for such a long post, it's not every day you win a tournament with some of the best friends a guy could ever ask for!"

*Jeremy holds
up a Salmon he
caught during the
tournament*



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PFBC LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The PA Fish and Boat Commission met on July 24th and elected William Gibney of Honesdale, Wayne County, as President. Gibney, who served as Vice President and District 7 Commissioner, replaces Robert B.J. Small of Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County.

Daniel J. Pastore of Fairview, Erie County, was elected as Vice President. Pastore, who serves as District 1 Commissioner, representing Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties, replaces Gibney as Vice President. Both Gibney and Pastore will serve one-year terms through July 2024.



William Gibney and Daniel J. Pastore

PFBC Photo