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CHEATING FISHERMEN SENTENCED

By David L. Dye, The Herald, Sharon, Pa.

May 11—CLEVELAND, Ohio — Two fishermen, including a Hermitage resident, were sentenced Thursday for their roles in a cheating scandal last year at the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament in Cleveland.

Chase Cominsky, 36, of Hermitage, and Jacob Runyan, 43, of Ashtabula, Ohio, were sentenced in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas to 10 days in jail; 1 1/2 years of supervised release; and suspension of their fishing licenses for three years.

They also were required to forfeit Cominsky's boat that was used during the tournament for cheating and for the unlawful ownership of wild animals. The boat is worth an estimated \$130,000, according to the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office.

The pair were also fined \$2,500, part of which may be paid to a reputable charity that works with children and fishing, the court ordered.

"I have no doubt that these two crooks cheated in multiple tournaments over the last several years. Unfortunately, we can only hold them accountable for what they did on Sept. 30, 2022," Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley said in a press release.

"Although these two deserve to have their fishing license suspended for life, the law only allows a maximum of three years. These two should be banned from every fishing tournament for life. They are thieves, and now they are convicted felons. This sends a message to the fishing community that cheaters will be held accountable in Cuyahoga County."

Runyan and Cominsky pleaded guilty March 2, to one count of cheating, a fifth-degree felony with forfeiture of the boat used in the tournament, and one count of unlawful ownership of wild animals, a fourth-degree misdemeanor.

The charges stem from an incident on Sept. 30, 2022, when Runyan and Cominsky were competing in the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament near North Marginal Road and Lakeshore Boulevard in Cleveland.

The tournament hosted fishermen from several surrounding states who were competing to see which team could catch five of the heaviest walleye fish in Lake Erie. Had Runyan and Cominsky won the tournament, they would have received a total prize of \$28,760.

BOATING BOOSTS ECONOMY BY \$230 BILLION

NMMA recently announced new data which found the annual economic impact of recreational boating increased 36%, from \$170B in 2018 to \$230B in 2023. The industry's contributions to the U.S. workforce grew as well, with an 18% increase in jobs supported, from 691,000 in 2018 to more than 812,000 in 2023. Conducted by John Dunham & Associates, the study, last fielded in 2018, measured the U.S. recreational boating industry's total economic activity as well number of jobs and businesses supported. "Recreational boating and fishing are a major economic engine in the U.S. and the latest economic analysis underscores the extraordinary growth and demand our industry has experienced coming out of the pandemic," said Frank Hugelmeyer, NMMA president. "The profound impact the past few years have had on our industry cannot be denied as we've seen Americans seek out boating and fishing in record numbers, driving significant economic output and supporting tens of thousands of small businesses and nearly a million jobs."

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Tuesday June 27th 10-12
East Waterworks pond PISP
Waterford YMCA volunteers
needed

Wednesday June 28th 11-1
Waterworks Pond Sr. Gus' Kids
Cafe Volunteers needed

Thursday June 29th 2-2:30
Waterworks Pond Kids from John
Horan apts. Volunteers needed

Friday July 14th 10:30-
12:30 Waterworks Pond North
East Summer Rec Program.
Volunteers needed

Tuesday July 18th 9:30-12
Waterworks Pond PISP Kids
fishing Volunteers needed

Wednesday July 19th 6-8PM
Bay View Park promotional table
and casting class volunteers
needed

Saturday July 29th 8-12
Waterworks Pond Discover PI
Family fishing Volunteers needed

Saturday July 29th and 30th
EPSFA Walleye Slam tournament
volunteers needed

Monday August 7th 5-?
SONS of Lake Erie Volunteer
Appreciation Picnic

Tuesday August 22nd 5-8 PM
Liberty Pier 8 Great Tuesdays
Family Fishing volunteers needed

Friday September 8th 9:30 –
12:30 East Waterworks Pond
PISP McDowell High School
Intermediate unit Volunteers
needed



SONS 2023 MEMBERSHIP BUTTON

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GREAT LAKES WATER LEVELS ARE UP

from historical average according to a story by Teresa Homsy May 11, 2023 on Michigan's WKAR Snowmelt and recent rain has brought Great Lakes water levels up. This spring rise is normal – and water levels are projected to increase even more this month.

Water levels for the Great Lakes are still lower than their record high from a couple of years ago. But all the lakes are up from their long-term average, by between six and 13 inches, as of May 5.

Keith Kompoltowicz is the chief of the Detroit District Watershed Hydrology Section at the US Army Corps of Engineers. He said lake levels are determined by weather conditions, and their fluctuation is a natural phenomenon. "All of the lakes are above the long-term average – whether that's a good or a bad thing depends on the user," Kompoltowicz said. "Everybody's got their ideal water level."

Kompoltowicz said the Corps is keeping an eye on Lake Superior, which could reach a new record high this summer. Lake Superior, Michigan, and Huron are projected to rise by another three inches in the next month.

"As the level started to rise above that long-term average [a couple of years ago], we started to hear more instances of that coastal damage," Kompoltowicz said. "If levels were to turn around and start falling below average, we would likely start hearing issues with access to certain harbors."

Depending on the lake, levels typically peak sometime between June and August.

WESTERN BASIN HAD GOOD SPRING PERCH FISHING

The following appeared in the GLSFC newsletter.

Spring yellow perch fishing on Lake Erie is in full swing! Almost 80% of Lake Erie anglers were after yellow perch this April! Anglers were rewarded with an average harvest of 33 perch per boat and a catch rate of 2.6 perch per hour, which are both well above average (14.1 per boat; 1.5 per hour). Just over 7% of April yellow perch anglers achieved a 50-fish limit with an average length of 11.6 inches. Good perch fishing should continue through May.

Not here, unfortunately



SONS JUNIOR MEMBER

Charlee Lloyd is shown here in a composite photo of him fishing on the south pier recently. Photos submitted by his parents.

SEAWOLVES MASCOT TRIES HIS PAW AT CASTING

We include casting practice as part of our more than 30 fishing for kids programs each year. It gives the participants a hands on incite to the mechanics of the skill. On Saturday June 10th while the SONS were participating in a Children's Summer Safety Program sponsored by State REP. Ryan Bizzarro in an area at W12 & Peninsula Dr. when "Seawolf", the Erie Seawolves baseball team's mascot, visited our location and tried some casting.



LAKE ERIE SHORELINE ON WAY TO BECOMING MARINE SANCTUARY

according to an article by Associated Press May 18, 2023.

President Joe Biden's administration took the first step toward designating the Pennsylvania-owned section of Lake Erie as the state's first national marine sanctuary. A formal designation could take several years, and it wouldn't change existing regulations around the use of the lake. The announcement sets up a public comment period before the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration writes a draft plan for the sanctuary. The designation would apply to an approximately 740-square-mile area of water off Pennsylvania's 75 mile-long shoreline. It would attract federal funding to help find and preserve shipwrecks in the lake and boost education and outreach around the area's history.

That history includes being home to indigenous people who once lived there, its role as a hub on the Underground Railroad, and a maritime history as hosting the nation's largest fleet of steamboats before the Civil War. The area possibly includes scores of yet-to-be-discovered shipwrecks, according to NOAA.

There are 35 known shipwrecks in the area, from pre-Civil War steamboats to speedboats, tugs and barges lost before 1940, the agency said. There are two other national marine sanctuaries in the Great Lakes and a third in Lake Ontario nearing designation, all focused on shipwrecks. There are 15 total national marine sanctuaries, some of which focus on preserving endangered aquatic life, as well as two marine national monuments. Erie County first requested the designation in 2015.

Jerry Skrypzak and Ed Kissell represented the SONS of Lake Erie as stake holders during the initial fact finding and application process. The aspects of the Marine Sanctuary and details of the designation were laid out and discussed during several meetings hosted by pas County Executive Director Kathy Dahlkemper. At these meetings there were no apparent negative probabilities that could affect fishing or the fishery of Lake Erie. We followed up with a letter of support that was part of the initial application package.

EAST AVENUE BOAT LAUNCH DREDGING COMPLETE

The East Ave. boat launch in Erie was closed for dredging during the last week of May with the work being completed on June 1.



We will be watching the process closely and advise our membership if there are any changes affecting our fishery.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will gather public input through virtual and in-person meetings on the dates listed below. Individuals who plan on providing oral comments during the virtual public meetings should register in advance for the meetings using the links below. In order to provide oral public comment during the virtual public meetings, participants must join the webinar online. Participants can sign up to speak by typing "public comment sign up" and their name in the webinar question box at any point before public comment begins. Oral public comments are limited to three minutes. An in-person public meeting will be held at the Blasco Memorial Library in Erie on Wednesday June 21st, 2023 from 6:30 -8 PM

There will be virtual public meetings on Date and Time: Tuesday, June 27, 2023, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET Registration: attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5727142095178900822 and

June 28, 2023, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET Registration: [Attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3840871623612958300](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3840871623612958300) and

You can also submit comments on line the Federal eRulemaking Portal, www.regulations.gov. The docket number is NOAA-NOS-2023-0039. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

Comments by mail to: Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, 4840 South State Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-9719

Please note the docket number (NOAA-NOS-2023-0039) at the top of your comment.

GIANT PERCH SCULPTURE GETS REFURBISHED



This is the photo of John Gerard in his art studio holding the repaired perch from our hatchery that was originally made by Jerry Thompson. Gerard is a local artist who volunteered to help us repair weather damage to the piece so it can again be displayed in our hatchery. The sculpture was mounted on the wall outside our hatchery where it was damaged.

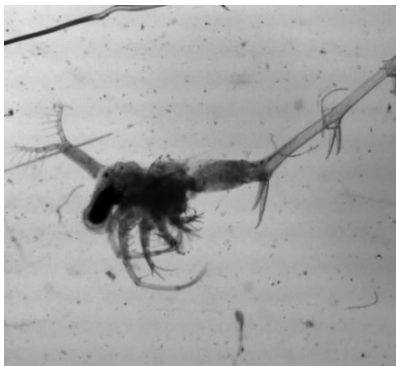
Meanwhile in



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SPINY WATER FLEAS – AQUATIC INVADER

*Excerpts from an article by Susan Knight Published
June 13, 2023 at 5:53 AM CDT on WXPR Public Radio*



Do you remember that 1979 horror movie, **Alien**? The alien from the title, the Xenomorph, was a creepy helmeted creature with a long tail, and nasty intentions. If you squint, it kind of looks like one of the threats to our local lakes - the spiny water flea. In fact, all kinds of arthropods, that

is small invertebrates with jointed legs, are quite monstrous if blown up to human size. Many have murderous mouthparts and bristly knuckles. They are aquatic arthropods called zooplankton. Zooplankton are small shrimp-like creatures, and most of them survive by eating phytoplankton, the microscopic photosynthetic algae at the bottom of the food chain in lakes. In turn, zooplankton are eaten by small fish and other animals. Spiny water fleas upset the usual order of aquatic ecosystems because, although they are zooplankton, they are large enough to prey on other zooplankton that usually feed on phytoplankton. So, spiny water fleas can unleash a bloom of algae that would normally be eaten by the smaller zooplankton. It appears that the long tail on a spiny water flea makes it difficult for small fish to eat them.

Bithotrephes longimanus, the scientific name of spiny water fleas, are native to brackish Northern European and Asian waterbodies where they inadvertently slipped into ocean-going ship holds along with ballast water and were then released into the Great Lakes when the ship's ballast tanks were emptied.

They coat our downrigger cables and are regurgitated by yellow perch as they are pulled from the water, evidence that these invaders have become part of the regular perch diet possibly explain why perch aren't biting using normal baits.

NEW STATE RECORD FLATHEAD CATFISH RECORDED

HARRISBURG, Pa. (June 6) – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has certified a new state record Flathead Catfish.

On the morning of Sunday, May 14, 2023, angler Michael Wherley, 46, of Fayetteville, Franklin County was fishing from his 16-foot bass boat on the Susquehanna River section known as Lake Aldred, near Conestoga, Lancaster County. Wherley baited a live Rainbow Trout onto a large circle hook, weighted with a 1.5-ounce sinker, and cast his heavy-duty surf rod lined with 25-pound monofilament fishing line into an approximately 50-foot-deep channel.

The fish weighed 66 lbs., 6 oz., exceeding the previous state record by more than ten pounds. While the fish measured 50.25 inches long with a girth of 35 inches, Pennsylvania state record fish are judged only by weight, and must exceed the previous record by at least two ounces. Wherley and his partner Walter Clark also caught a 30 pounder and a 45 pounder before catching the record fish.

Anglers catching a new state record fish will receive a certificate from the PFBC and be listed on the PFBC website. A list of current Pennsylvania State Record Fish, official rules and application can be found at Fishandboat.com.



*Angler Michael Wherley stands alongside the record 66lb 6oz,
50.25 in record flathead catfish*

**Have a safe and
happy summer
and send us your
Fish Pictures!**



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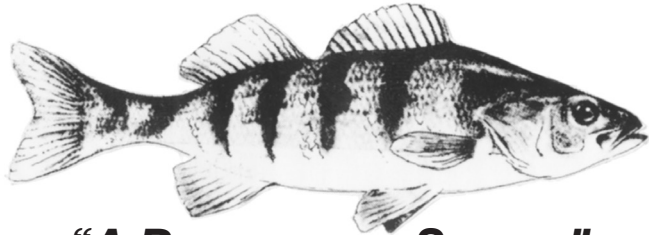
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JUNE 2023**



FISHING REPORT:

The posts found on the Presque Isle Bay Angler Facebook page indicate that walleye fishing has been good to great depending on who posts. A persistent NE wind the first week off June has kept water temps down.



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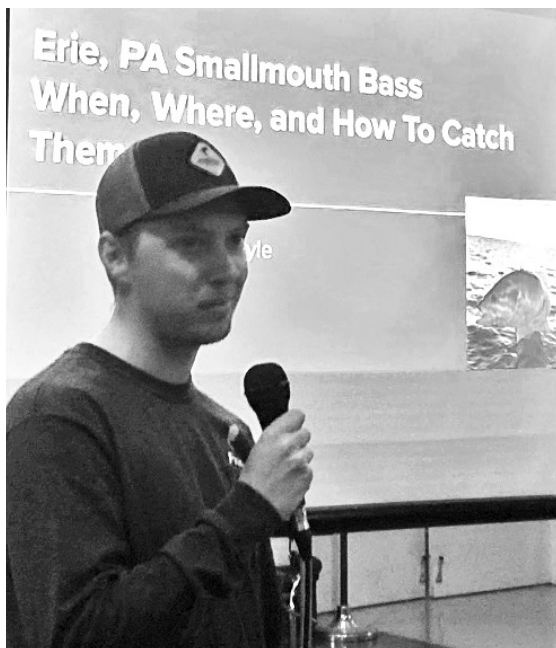
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BASS FISHING WAS THE SUBJECT AT OUR MAY MEETING

Fish USA pro staff member Nolan Pyle gave a great presentation at our May 22nd General Membership meeting. Nolan used a power point show to demonstrate some of his techniques, bait and tackle choices intended to catch bass consistently. His presentation attracted over 100 members to our meeting proving that we are not too old to learn.



Nolan Pyle spoke at our May meeting and on the right is Nolan showing a nice bass he caught.