



Great Lakes fisheries survey highlights

Annual assessments on Michigan Great Lakes fish populations completed for 2025



The Michigan DNR surveys the diverse and important Great Lakes fisheries every year between April and

November. Crews from research stations in Marquette, Charlevoix, Alpena and Harrison Township gather data on fish populations, fish health and the presence and effects of invasive species. This information directly informs fisheries management

decisions — such as stocking levels or regulated catch limits — and provides data on the success of past actions.

• Lake Superior and Northern Lake Michigan – Marquette Fisheries Research Station

The crew of the research vessel *Lake Char* began work on Lake Superior as soon as the ice melted and continued through early November. The [Marquette Fisheries Research Station](#) is responsible for work that focuses on monitoring fisheries resources, including culturally and economically important species. These include [lake trout](#), which were [recently declared recovered in Lake Superior](#), [lake whitefish](#) and burbot. Surveys are conducted annually or at periodic intervals to track key population trends to monitor overall health of fishery resources.

Lake Superior

Data from the spring adult lake trout surveys on Lake Superior showed a slight increase in populations east of the Keweenaw Peninsula and slight declines west. The summer juvenile lake trout survey indicated slight declines in western and central areas (Ontonagon to Marquette) and slight increases in eastern waters (Munising to Grand Marais).

In June 2025, the RV *Lake Char* team surveyed Big Reef to assess lake trout populations. Big Reef is a popular lake trout sportfishing site, offshore about 30 miles north of Munising. A similar expedition to Klondike Reef was conducted in 2024 — to learn more about the crew’s roles, the fish sampling process and why this research is important for managing Michigan’s fisheries, [watch the Klondike Reef expedition short documentary](#).

While out near Big Reef, the crew surveyed the deepest waters of Lake Superior (and all the Great Lakes) — about 1,320 feet — to assess siscowet lake trout populations. Siscowet lake trout is one of the lake trout morphotypes in Lake Superior that are most abundant in the deepest parts of the lake. They finished the survey season with lake trout spawning survey work between Marquette and Munising in late October and early November. During the 2025 field season, 198,000 feet (37.5 miles) of survey gill net was deployed for these surveys at 91 sampling stations across Lake Superior.

Northern Lake Michigan

Fisheries work in Upper Peninsula waters of Lake Michigan began shortly after ice-out with jaw tagging and acoustic transmitter tagging of walleye in Little Bay de Noc for movement studies of the species.

Fisheries assessment work in nearshore waters of lakes Michigan and Superior occurred during August and September. Crews sampled 20 locations (10 miles of trawling) in Lake Michigan’s Little Bay de Noc and Big Bay de Noc. Over 23,000 feet of survey gill net were deployed at 68 sampling stations spread across four locations in northern Lake Michigan (Big Bay de Noc, Little Bay de Noc, Naubinway and Manistique) and two locations in southern Lake Superior (Munising Bay and West Bay at Grand Marais). Catch data from these fall surveys allow researchers to assess changes in the fish community and populations of species such as walleye, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, northern pike, lake sturgeon and invasive Eurasian ruffe.

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Minnesota DNR adds new catch-and-release bass season

Anglers can now fish for bass before the traditional May fishing opener

The Minnesota DNRs' fishing regulations for 2026 include a new catch-and-release season that makes fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass open all year on inland waters. These changes for bass fishing and a variety of other new regulations are listed on pages 13-14 of the regulations book.

"We're improving bass fishing opportunities after hearing support from anglers for earlier bass fishing," said Eric Altena, Little Falls area fisheries supervisor. "Bass populations are thriving and have increased abundance and sizes, and compared with past decades, have broader geographic distribution in our state."

Since bass spawning peaks in late May, which is later in the year than some other species, there is no biological evidence that catch-and-release bass fishing poses a conservation issue for the fish.

Angler and Tribal support

In 2023, the DNR gauged public support for an extended bass season through a questionnaire. Of the 3,041 responses received, 91% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the proposal.

Bass fishing remains open

The harvest season dates for bass remain the same. Now, though, anglers are able to catch-and-release bass starting February 23. The rules that allow for the new catch-and-release bass season were adopted in January. While the DNR usually has new regulations go into effect March 1, the continuous bass season will begin as soon as the current season closes. Bass seasons will alternate between harvest seasons and catch-and-release seasons with no fishing closures. Anglers will need to follow separate regulations for border waters which are available in the fishing regulations on the

[Minnesota DNR website](https://mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing)
(mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing).

Other regulations changes

"In the regulations book available now, anglers should check for what's new before they head out fishing," said John Dunn, fisheries rules and regulations coordinator. "There are some updates for inland waters and border waters and also updates that apply to specific lakes and rivers."

The new or updated regulations for 2026 include:

- The season opener for stream trout harvest is now the second Saturday in April every year.
- The limit of one Atlantic salmon on Lake Superior has been removed. The limit is now five combined total for all salmon.
- The season closure date for brook trout and splake on Lake Superior and tributaries below posted boundaries is now September 30.
- A new rule allows up to three hooks within 18 inches on a single tackle configuration.
- Updated language clarifies only one bait is allowed per line and stinger hooks are only allowed on artificial baits.
- There is updated information on harvesting crayfish in infested waters and on labeling traps.
- There is no closed season for taking dead freshwater mussel shells.
- Inland portions of Mississippi River Pool 3 now conform with adjacent Wisconsin-Minnesota border waters regulations listed as "Mississippi River Pools 3-8 including Lake Pepin."

The regulations book additionally includes Minnesota Department of Health fish consumption guidance based on information about known contaminants in state waterbodies.

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Position Statement

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

Inland Seas Angler

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NY proposes fishing regulations changes to better protect walleye, pike

Proposed changes to NYS fishing regulations would shorten walleye season by two weeks in the spring to protect spawning walleye.

The New York State DEC recently announced the release of proposed changes to coolwater sportfish regulations. DEC said the changes will help protect spawning fish, increase the reproductive capacity of walleye in Lake Ontario's eastern basin, and eliminate unnecessary special regulations.

"The proposed regulation changes for walleye, pike, pickerel, and tiger musky reflect DEC's commitment to adaptively manage New York's fisheries resources and to simplify regulations wherever possible," said Commissioner Amanda Lefton. "We encourage the public to review the proposal and provide feedback."

Highlights of the proposed regulations include:

- Changing the closing date for walleye, northern pike, chain pickerel, and tiger muskie from March 15 to March 1 for both

statewide and special regulations;

- Changing the start date of fishing-prohibited regulations to protect spawning walleye on sections of select streams from March 16 to March 2;
- Eliminating unnecessary special harvest regulations for walleye in 33 waters;
- Changing the size limit and daily creel limit for walleye in Jefferson County waters of Lake Ontario to two fish per day with no more than one longer than 24 inches.

DEC said the proposed regulations address the concerns of fisheries managers and anglers about protecting spawning walleye and northern pike as a warming climate changes water temperatures and shifts spawning times earlier in the year.

Establishing an earlier fishing season closure will help ensure that spawning aggregations of these species are protected.

There are also several walleye waters currently managed under special harvest regulation (18-inch

minimum size limit, three-per-day possession limit) to help establish, restore, or improve walleye fisheries.

A subset of those waters does not meet that objective and the draft regulations propose to convert back to statewide regulations and a 15-inch minimum size, five-per-day possession limit.

In addition, the walleye fishery in Lake Ontario's eastern basin (Jefferson County) has declined, and DEC is proposing a more protective harvest regulation intended to increase spawning stock biomass and increase the capacity for natural reproduction.

The [full text and a summary of the proposed regulatory changes](#) are available on DEC's website. DEC is interested in anglers' viewpoints and encourages public feedback on these proposals. Comments will be accepted through [April 13, 2026](#), and should be emailed to regulations.fish@dec.ny.gov with the subject line "Coolwater Sportfish Regulations," or sent by standard mail to: Inland Fisheries Section, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-475 ✧

Prime Minister Carney appoints Dr. Steven Cooke to Fishery Commission

ANN ARBOR, MI – Prime Minister Mark Carney has appointed Dr. Steven Cooke of Ottawa, Ontario and Carleton University to serve as a Commissioner to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a bi-national, treaty-based organization created to improve and perpetuate the \$5.1 billion Great Lakes fishery. As a Commissioner, Dr. Cooke will work with his American and Canadian counterparts to set the Commission's agenda, decide on priorities, approve budgets, and take other measures necessary to protect the fishery.

Commissioner Cooke has an extensive history supporting the Commission's science mandate. He was a member of the Sea Lamprey Research Board from 2008 to 2023, serving as its chair for more than a decade. Currently, Dr. Cooke serves as the Chair of the Board

of Technical Experts, a role he has held since 2023, and as a member of the Commission's Science Transfer Committee. In addition, he fulfills the role of Canada Research Professor in the [Department of Biology](#) and the [Institute of Environmental and Interdisciplinary Science](#) at Carleton University, in the field of fish ecology and conservation physiology. Cooke is also the founding director of the Canadian Centre for Evidence-Informed Conservation.

"This prestigious appointment represents not only a great honor for Dr. Cooke and recognition of his contributions to fish ecology and conservation but exemplifies how Carleton researchers are shaping a more sustainable, prosperous future in Canada and abroad," says Rafik

Goubran, Vice-President (Research, Innovation and International) at Carleton University.

"The Commission and its partners have done so much to advance the restoration of native fish populations, including the maintenance of a long-term sea lamprey control program," said Dr. Cooke. "I am excited to see what we can accomplish together during my term as a Commissioner."

"For nearly two decades, Dr. Cooke has served an integral role in the Commission's achievements, particularly with respect to meeting our science mandate. I welcome him to this new role and am confident he will work to ensure we continue to fulfill our treaty obligations under the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries." Provost concluded. ✧

Ohio's rainbow trout releases begin in March

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio DNR will release more than 80,000 rainbow trout at 93 locations beginning Wednesday, March 11. The locations were chosen to give as many anglers as possible a chance to reel in these feisty fish in March, April, and May. Trout releases are designed for high angler success and harvest.

New trout release locations include Meadow Ridge Metro Park's Mirror Pond (Butler County), Restoration Park Pond (Clark County), East Palestine Park Pond (Columbiana County), Turtle Pond at Countryside Park (Montgomery County), Al Lease Park Pond (Portage County), and Boettler Park Pond (Summit County). Find a complete list of release dates and locations at ohiodnr.gov/troutstockings. Trout stocking events at certain locations may change due to weather; look for updated information online or by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE (1-800-945-3543).



Some trout stocking locations feature a special event on the day of the scheduled release, including youth-only fishing. Trout fishing opportunities for the public may be limited during special events. Fishing at state park youth ponds is only available for youth 15 years of age and younger for the first seven days after trout are released. After that week, these waters are open to anglers of all ages for trout fishing opportunities

through the end of April. On May 1, these ponds return to providing youth-only fishing for the rest of the year.

Where to fish

Rainbow trout are stocked throughout Ohio. A few of the most popular fishing locations are:

- **Central Ohio:** Antrim Lake, Ashley Upground Reservoir, Delaware State Park Pond, Franklin Park Pond, and Schiller Park Pond
- **Northwest Ohio:** Malabar Farm State Park Inn Pond, Maumee Bay State Park Nature Center Pond, Olander Lake, Pearson Metropark Ponds, and Sleepy Hollow Park Pond
- **Northeast Ohio:** Blue Heron Preserve Pond, Rowland Nature Preserve Lake, Tuscora Park Pond, Westlake Recreation Center Pond, and Wingfoot Wildlife Area
- **Southeast Ohio:** Buckeye Park Lake, Penrod Lake, St. Clairsville Reservoir, Turkey Creek Lake, and Yoctangee Park Lake
- **Southwest Ohio:** Adams Lake, Caesar Creek State Park's Youth Pond, Englewood North Park Pond, Rocky Fork State Park Beach Pond, and Rush Run Wildlife Area Pond

Rainbow trout are raised at Ohio's coldwater [state fish hatcheries](#) and measure between 10 and 13 inches when they are released by the Division of Wildlife. Rainbow trout are stocked primarily near metropolitan areas to provide close-to-home fishing opportunities for many anglers. Trout are sensitive to warm temperatures and typically do not survive through late spring so the best time to catch them is within two weeks of release.

Sales of fishing licenses along with the federal Sport Fish Restoration program support the operation of Division of Wildlife fish hatcheries. The Sport Fish Restoration program is a partnership between federal and state

governments, the fishing industry, anglers, and boaters. When anglers purchase rods, reels, fishing tackle, fish finders, and motorboat fuel, they pay an excise tax. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers and disburses funds from these taxes to state fish and wildlife agencies. These funds are used to acquire habitat, produce and stock fish, conduct research and assessment surveys, provide aquatic education, and secure fishing access. ✧

Plano expands its StowAway Utility Box line with new models

Columbia, SC – Plano, the industry leader in tackle storage solutions, is expanding its StowAway product line with new deep models engineered to give anglers best-in-class protection, organization, and ease of use. Designed with purpose-driven layouts to accommodate a wide range of baits and terminal tackle, these new StowAway utility boxes ensure gear stays organized, visible, and ready for action, no matter the conditions.

Each new box incorporates Plano's proven technology, including the Rustrictor-infused base to prevent rust and corrosion, a Dri-Loc seal on waterproof models, a durable translucent lid for quick content identification, and a single-latch design for one-handed operation. The utility boxes are also stackable for convenient transport and storage.

Plano is expanding its trusted StowAway lineup with a new range of deep storage solutions built for anglers who need more room and more protection for their gear. The new StowAway 3700 Deep and 3600 Deep models offer increased capacity for larger baits and bulkier tackle, with options that include open layouts for quick access and waterproof designs to keep gear dry in any conditions. ✧

Floating fish pen project aims at steelhead

A dedicated group of local conservationists is making positive waves in Dunkirk Harbor, all with the goal of bringing more steelhead back to local waters for years to come.

The Northern Chautauqua Conservation Club, located along the shores of Lake Erie in Dunkirk Harbor, has organized an ambitious project to assemble and install a floating fish pen that will help



steelhead fingerlings “scent imprint” to the harbor each spring, making them believe they were born here and must return each spring. Under the leadership of Chairman Paul Soper, the club and the project team have worked closely with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation fisheries team to bring the project to life.

With strict guidance and direction from DEC fisheries biologists, plans and materials were specified months ago to ensure the pen meets all the necessary requirements. The project team procured steel piping, flotation materials, netting, and other essential components. Construction of the pen, measuring 20 ft. long, 6 ft. wide, and 5 ft. deep, is now nearly complete.

Soper said, “Plans are for the floating pen to be installed near A-Dock at the Dunkirk Marina this spring, following coordination and support from marina representative Peter Smith.”

For several weeks, steelhead fingerlings provided through NYSDEC will be placed inside the pen and fed three to five times per day. During this critical period, the young fish will scent-imprint on Dunkirk Harbor.

This imprinting process increases the likelihood that the steelhead will return to these same waters as adults, creating expanded fishing (and learning) opportunities for the entire community.

Funding has come entirely through voluntary donations from generous individuals, local businesses

and community organizations that recognize the long-term value of strengthening Dunkirk’s fishery resources. Once operational, the pen will be installed and removed each spring as part of an ongoing commitment to enhance the local steelhead fishery.

“This is about investing in the future of our harbor,” Soper said. “If these fish return as adults, the entire community benefits — from anglers and families to local businesses that rely on outdoor recreation.”

While construction is nearly complete, the project still requires continued financial support to cover remaining expenses and future seasonal operations. Community members who would like to contribute are encouraged to send donations to: Northern Chautauqua Conservation Club – Trout Pen Trout Project, PO Box 178, Dunkirk, NY, 14048. Those with questions or who would like additional information about the project may contact Soper at the club.

With strong partnerships, dedicated volunteers, true generations can enjoy the thrill of steelhead fishing right here at home, from the city pier. ✧

This year could be historic for the annual walleye run

The annual walleye run on the Maumee River is expected to be historic this year, thanks to Lake Erie’s extensive ice coverage during the winter months. This year could be exceptional for walleye spawning, according to Brian Miller, founder of the Maumee River Walleye Run Group on Facebook. Miller is also a local author and has fished the walleye run for over 35 years.

The calm, icy Maumee River may be quiet now, but come spring it will be flooded with anglers trying to catch a bite. “It just makes for some amazing fishing,” Miller said. Every year thousands flock to the banks of the Maumee for the walleye run. “It’s the one place where you can fish while fish are in their spawning state for the

walleye, one of a couple in Lake Erie because it’s so big,” Miller said.

Miller says he’s expecting this season to be a great one thanks to the ice coverage on Lake Erie. “We haven’t had good ice like this in a really long time,” Miller said. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Lake Erie has only reached 100% ice coverage three times since the agency began tracking it in the 1970s. While this year didn’t reach 100%, it came close with 96% ice coverage.

“Anytime there is good ice, it’s better for the walleye to spawn in the spring,” Miller said. And with the cold temperatures experienced this winter, Miller expects a condensed but

exceptional season. “Normally what you’ll have happen is there’ll be a condensed season and it’ll actually be really really good fishing for a condensed period of time,” Miller said. Great fishing means not only good eats but a fun time on the river and memories that will last.

“I have so many people that I’ve met down at the river that you know they’re people I’ve known for multiple decades, not just a couple years but multiple decades and we become super close friends. That’s the best part about it,” Miller said. Miller said this area has good spawns the last few years, meaning it will bring great fishing seasons for years to come. ✧

What over a century of ice data can tell us about the Great Lakes' future

Michigan researchers have gone back in time to get a picture of how ice cover on the Great Lakes has evolved since the late 19th century.

Using historical temperature records from weather stations around the region, researchers improved their understanding of where ice might have formed and for how long it lasted — spanning the last 120 years.

Their findings were [published](#) in the journal *Scientific Data* last month. Researchers said this new data record would deepen understanding of how climate change has impacted the region over time and clarify what life under ice looks like for declining iconic species such as lake whitefish. The new data could also help improve ice cover forecasting in winter, making it safer for recreation and for people who go out on the ice.

“Lake ice is really part of the system, part of our life. It matters [for] our culture, regional weather, safety, everything,” said Ayumi Fujisaki-Manome, one of the study’s co-authors and associate director for the Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research at the University of

Michigan.

There’s a “pretty good satellite record” of Great Lakes ice cover from the last 45 years, she said. But research into the region’s historical climate requires a longer timescale, and there isn’t good data specific to ice.

According to researchers, there’s a general [gap in scientific knowledge about winter on the Great Lakes](#)—data buoys get pulled out because of harsh conditions. There are good historic weather observations, though. And air temperature is a good proxy for ice cover on the lakes because ice typically forms when there have been several cold days in a row.

To peer into the past, researchers looked at temperature records from weather stations all around the Great Lakes, limiting their study to stations with the most consistent data since 1897. They calculated ice cover using this information, and the end result was a dataset that can be compared to present-day conditions. Researchers said it can inform future research on how animals behave during the winter, for example.

“A lot of the biological conditions under ice are really poorly understood,” said Katelyn King, a fisheries research biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the study’s lead author. King is using the dataset to study the historic decline of whitefish in the Great Lakes, a regional species that’s important culturally and economically.

King said this dataset is a helpful baseline as the region continues to shift under climate change. [Research shows](#) that average temperatures in the region have increased in the last two decades, frost seasons are shortening, and heavy snow and rainstorms are becoming more frequent. Still, year-to-year variability is the new normal. Ice cover on the Great Lakes was relatively close to average last winter, but followed [historic lows](#) the season prior.

“These really extreme years where we have really cold weather or really warm weather is just a sign that long-term climate is changing,” King said. “It really affects all of us in our day-to-day.” ✧

Muskegon Lake removed from list of Most Degraded Great Lakes Sites

Through a multi-year partnership with the Great Lakes Commission, NOAA has helped restore what was once one of the Great Lakes region’s most degraded areas.

In September 2025, Muskegon Lake was officially removed from the EPA’s [Areas of Concern list](#). It was originally designated one of the most environmentally degraded sites in the Great Lakes 40 years ago. [NOAA Fisheries’ Office of Habitat Conservation](#), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and other partners worked for decades to restore the area.

“Early in the restoration effort, there was significant skepticism that Muskegon Lake could be cleaned up, and NOAA’s involvement helped demonstrate that recovery was achievable through sustained, science-based collaboration,” said Kathy Evans, habitat focus area lead for the

Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership. “NOAA provided critical technical expertise, on-the-ground support, and nearly half of the funding needed to restore fish and wildlife habitat and meet the criteria for delisting.”

Since 2008, NOAA Fisheries has partnered with the [Great Lakes Commission](#) to carry out restoration projects that:

- Restored and reconnected 134 acres of wetland and offshore habitat
- Restored more than 7,000 feet of shoreline
- Removed 347,350 tons of debris
- Removed 190,000 tons of contaminated soil
- Enhanced habitat for species such as walleye, Chinook salmon, largemouth and smallmouth bass,

and threatened lake sturgeon

- Improved public recreational access

An economic study found that restoration generated an additional \$28 million annually in recreational value and an estimated 500,000 additional visits per year.

“As Muskegon Lake was cleaned up and restored, we saw tourism return and measurable economic benefits tied directly to habitat restoration and improved water quality,” said NOAA Great Lakes Restoration Program Manager Julie Simmons. “What truly sets Muskegon apart is the level of commitment from local partners and community members, who didn’t just plan projects but stayed engaged—managing volunteers, restoring habitat, and sustaining the work that made delisting possible.” ✧

Save the Date: Milwaukee Youth Spring Fishing Clinics April 18

The Wisconsin DNR, in partnership with local fishing clubs, invites families to save the date for the annual Milwaukee Youth Spring Fishing Clinics, occurring at multiple Milwaukee County parks on Saturday, April 18, 2026. These free, family-oriented clinics are designed to introduce beginners to fishing while helping established anglers sharpen their skills ahead of the open water season.

DNR staff and local fishing clubs will provide free beginner fishing lessons, discuss how to stay safe around the water and offer fun activities, games and prizes for kids ages 15 and under. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Clinics begin every hour at 9 a.m., with the last clinic starting at 2 p.m. All locations are accessible to youths of any ability.

- Brown Deer Park, 7835 N. Green Bay Rd., Milwaukee – Okauchee Fishing Club
- Dineen Park, 6901 W. Vienna Ave., Milwaukee – Inner City Sportsmen Club
- Greenfield Park, 2028 S. 124th St., West Allis – Milwaukee Great Lakes Sports Fishermen
- McCarty Park, 8214 W. Cleveland Ave., West Allis – Southside Sportsmen's Club
- Mitchell Park, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee – Bayview Rod & Gun Club
- Sheridan Park, 4800 S. Lake Dr., Cudahy – South Milwaukee 1400 Fishing & Hunting Club
- Scout Lake, 6201 W. Loomis Rd., Greendale – Walleyes Unlimited

Clinics will occur rain or shine, so participants are encouraged to dress for the weather. Fishing equipment is available, but participants are encouraged to bring their own if they have it. Adults are also encouraged to inquire about joining a club to expand their knowledge and help with future clinics



DNR keeps three-walleye limit for 2026 season on Mille Lacs Lake

Anglers on Mille Lacs Lake will have the opportunity to harvest three walleyes starting on the fishing opener on Saturday, May 9. Harvested walleyes must be 17 inches or greater, with only one over 20 inches.

State-licensed anglers share the harvest on Mille Lacs with Ojibwe Tribes that retain fishing rights by treaty. To conserve the fishery, an annual harvest level is set through discussion and agreement between the state and the Tribal Nations, with each party setting regulations to stay within their share of the harvest. This year's harvest level reflects a slight decline in the adult walleye population that was observed in last fall's assessment netting. Harvest is set at 105,300 pounds for state-licensed anglers and 79,700 pounds for Tribal fishing. The state's share of the harvest in 2025 was 113,600 pounds.

Mille Lacs Lake continues to experience changes in water clarity and the effects of invasive species such as zebra mussels and spiny water fleas. State and Tribal biologists study the lake's complex food web, managing harvests for the long-term sustainability of the lake.

The DNR reminds anglers to protect Mille Lacs Lake and all Minnesota waters from aquatic invasive species by cleaning and draining watercraft and equipment and disposing of unwanted bait in the trash. A decontamination station is available 24/7 at the Shaw-Bosh-Kung Bay public access on the west side of Mille Lacs Lake, about 8 miles south of Garrison.

Complete Mille Lacs Lake fishing regulations and regularly updated surveys that show state-licensed angler catches of walleye, northern pike and yellow perch are available on the [Minnesota DNR website](https://mndnr.gov/millelacslake) (mndnr.gov/millelacslake). ◇

Walleye, steelhead fishing classes

If you're interested in trying something new outdoors or brushing up on a pastime you already enjoy, check out the Michigan DNR Outdoor Skills Academy's upcoming classes. They offer expert instruction, gear and hands-on learning for a range of outdoor activities.

March classes include:

- [Walleye Fishing Clinic in Detroit](#)
Tuesday, March 10, 6 to 8 p.m. (virtual)
Saturday, March 14, 3 to 7 p.m. (in person/fishing) at the Outdoor Adventure Center

The walleye run in Lake Erie and the Detroit River is known worldwide. Participants will learn about equipment selection, pole set-up, techniques for shore fishing, and rules and regulations.

- [Walleye Fishing Clinic in Cadillac](#)
Sunday, March 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Mitchell State Park

This comprehensive seminar walks you through exactly how professional anglers approach a full day on the water – from launch to landing fish. Whether you fish from a boat or from shore, this class will help you develop a clear game plan for every season.

- [Steelhead Fishing Clinic in Cadillac](#)
Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Mitchell State Park
Sunday, March 29, 8 to 10 a.m. or 10 a.m. to noon sessions on the Manistee River

Whether you're brand new to steelheading or looking to fine-tune your skills, this two-day experience will show you proven tactics, gear setups and river strategies that will increase your success this season.

An additional steelhead fishing class is scheduled in April. The rest of the year brings opportunities to learn about wild mushrooms, elk and waterfowl hunting, and more. See a full schedule of classes — with more being added throughout the year — at Michigan.gov/OutdoorSkills. ◇

Why wear fishing gloves?

Although glove usage among anglers has skyrocketed over the last few years, many still ask the question: why wear fishing gloves in the first place? After all, we probably grew up fishing with fathers and grandfathers, and they never wore gloves—why start now?

Better technology has enabled the anglers of today to take advantage of many products that were not available to previous generations, or that simply had not yet been invented yet. Today, we can now protect ourselves much better from not just the sun but the rigors of a day on the water.

How many times have you returned from a fishing trip with your hands covered in small nicks, cuts and scrapes? Maybe you've noticed more of those brown age spots on the backs of your hands as well, signs of permanent and irreversible sun damage. A good pair of fishing gloves can go a long way toward reducing both of those issues. Fish Monkey, the industry leader in performance fishing gloves, has a complete line of 26 models to cover virtually any angling scenario, from freshwater bass and trout to saltwater inshore and offshore and even specialty gloves for cold weather and ice fishing, leadering pelagic gamefish, slow-pitch jigging and popping, fly-fishing and even cleaning fish at the end of the day. Here are a few things to look for in a good fishing glove.

Comfort

The first is that it must be comfortable enough to wear all day. If not, they'll stay in the tackle box rather than on your hands. Fish Monkey understands this, which is why their products begin with a second skin fit that naturally contours to your hands. Their sun-protection products are designed using lightweight quick-drying synthetic fabrics which also offer an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating of 50-plus, the highest in the industry. There's a range of protection depending on the style, from the minimalist Stubby to the slightly longer fingers and cuffs of the Pro 365 Guide glove and Half-Finger

Guide glove. There is also additional padding and grip in the palms to help you keep a secure yet tactile feel on your gear all day long, while increasing the comfort level and reducing fatigue.

Protection

Aside from sun protection, gloves also protect your hands from all those little nicks and scrapes we mentioned previously. Fish Monkey designs have protective padding in the key areas of the fingers and palms, allowing you to handle or release fish with ease while also taking wraps with braided line without worry of it cutting into your fingers or hands. Bass anglers love these gloves because they virtually eliminate "bass thumb," the abrasions from lipping and releasing largemouths all day. There are also specific products for leadering fish which have significantly increased amounts of padding and protection—including Kevlar—while the fish-cleaning styles contain ANSI-rated cut-resistant fibers to protect from knife cuts, perfect for chumming or chunking as well as cleaning fish at the end of the day.

Additional Benefits

Live-bait fishermen are cautious to not use sunscreen on their hands, knowing these products can not only kill fragile baitfish but at the very least can leave a telltale scent behind, reducing a live bait's effectiveness on the hook. Fishing gloves provide excellent sun and hand protection without the need for those goopy, smelly sunscreens—and if you combine gloves with a long-sleeve performance fishing shirt, face guard and hat, you can just about leave the sunscreen at home. Gloves should also look good. Fish Monkey has multiple color patterns and styles in each brand to match the wearer's individual sense of style, from mild to wild. As the No. 1 choice of professionals around the world, these products are constructed with durability as a top consideration. And thanks to input from a promotional staff comprised of dozens of sport fishing's top professional anglers, captains and guides, Fish Monkey products remain

on the cutting edge—if there's a need for it on the water, the company responds with a corresponding product to not just meet but exceed those expectations.

While the reasons for wearing fishing gloves are many, the real keys are comfort, protection and performance—stay more comfortable and your time spent on the water will be that much more enjoyable. ✧

Get a glimpse of fisheries research work on Lake Superior

Join the crew of the R/V *Lake Char* on a one-week research expedition on Lake Superior, [courtesy of a short film](#) that follows the DNR fisheries research vessel to Klondike Reef. The crew collected data on lake trout, an important native species in this Great Lake. Trout numbers have recently met recovery goals after disruption due to invasive species, pollution and overharvest.

You'll learn about the crew's roles, the fish sampling process, and why this research is important for managing Michigan's fisheries. Fun fact: It was on this expedition that the [oldest lake trout in the Great Lakes](#) – 62 years old at the time of capture – was discovered!

"Some of the information we can apply to other offshore locations – places like Stannard Rock, Isle Royale and Big Reef – where we don't know a lot about the fish, but the fish in areas like Klondike Reef might be similar," said DNR fisheries technician Dan Traynor. "What we learned by studying the fish here may help us better understand and manage fish in those other offshore reef locations."

Questions about the expedition? Email Shawn Sitar, research biologist who was the DNR lead for this project, at SitarS@Michigan.gov. ✧

Fisheries survey highlights

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• Lake Michigan – Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station

Three surveys accounted for the majority of the Great Lakes survey work for the [Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station](#) staff and the survey vessel *Steelhead* in 2025: the spring gill net survey, lakewide acoustic forage fish survey and bottom trawl survey.

Since 1997, the DNR has participated in a spring gill net survey in collaboration with other agencies responsible for fisheries management in Lake Michigan. The objective is to assess recreationally, commercially and ecologically important fish populations, with a focus on lake trout, burbot, lake whitefish and [yellow perch](#) in Michigan waters. Due to the broad area covered and multispecies focus, this survey provides the most comprehensive information on the status of Lake Michigan adult fish populations.

The spring gill net survey was conducted at eight ports this year: St. Joseph, South Haven, Saugatuck, Grand Haven, Arcadia, Leland, Elk Rapids and Charlevoix. Across all ports, more than 100,000 feet of experimental bottom gill net was deployed, and data was captured on more than 5,000 fish — including a 42.5-inch, 35-pound lake trout that researchers believe to have been stocked in 1995!

From late August to early September, the *SV Steelhead* and crew conducted the prey fish survey, a multiagency effort measuring the abundance of alewife, rainbow smelt, bloaters and other prey fish throughout Lake Michigan. This survey uses hydroacoustic (high-precision, recordable fish finder) gear. Results inform research and trout and salmon management in Lake Michigan, including the lakewide “predator-prey ratio” analysis to ensure prey fish can support the lake’s salmon and trout populations.

The hydroacoustic survey was comprised of 25 sections spanning nearshore and offshore regions around the basin. Areas surveyed this season by the *SV Steelhead* stretched around the Michigan shore from waters offshore of Beaver Island in the north to St. Joseph in the south.

Initial observations from this survey suggest that abundance of yearling and older (more than 1 year old) alewife is similar to that of recent years. However, numbers of young-of-year (less than 1 year old) were low at most ports except those in southern Lake Michigan. Unlike young-of-year alewife, other fish — including bloater, rainbow smelt, yellow perch and stickleback — seemed to have experienced above-average recruitment in 2025, with higher abundance than typically observed in the acoustic survey.

The *SV Steelhead* crew completed the annual bottom trawl survey in September and October at three ports (South Haven, Grand Haven and Pentwater). Ten trawl samples were collected at each port, covering a range of water depths from 25 feet to 120 feet. This survey provides information on the overall status of the nearshore fish community, including the presence, range expansion and effects of invasive species, and the status of yellow perch recruitment. This year had the highest catch of yellow perch since 2012 for this survey, which, with luck, could portend an improved yellow perch fishery over the next several years.

Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station staff also used small vessels for targeted surveys in 2025. Staff assisted Central Michigan University researchers with scuba surveys of native freshwater mussel populations in large rivers. Staff also used long-term deployment of egg sampling equipment to enumerate lake whitefish egg deposition on spawning shoals in Big Bay de Noc and in Good Harbor Bay. In addition to egg sampling, staff partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey to tag adult lake whitefish in

Bay de Noc with acoustic transmitters to determine spawning behavior and site selection.

Huron – Alpena Fisheries Research Station

The research vessel *Tanner* and its crew from the [Alpena Fisheries Research Station](#) completed a full suite of fisheries assessments across Lake Huron during 2025, traveling from DeTour in the north to the Thumb Coast in the south, with many stops — including Saginaw Bay — in between. Data collected throughout the entire 2025 survey season will be examined, shared with partners and used to update models and decision tools that help inform fisheries managers on the status of lake trout, [walleye](#), yellow perch and other important species across Lake Huron.



Fieldwork began in April with the annual lake trout gill net survey, which sampled more than a dozen stations across U.S. waters of the main basin of Lake Huron. Findings from the spring survey showed young, wild lake trout continuing to survive well and join the adult population, along with stable adult lake trout abundance, low annual mortality and strong natural reproduction in northern Lake Huron. While survival of stocked lake trout is lower than desired, these findings bode well for decades-long efforts to promote lake trout recovery after the negative effects of overfishing and invasive [sea lamprey](#) in the early to mid-1900s.

Early and midsummer saw the station’s vessels and crew assist partners with maintenance of acoustic receivers in Saginaw Bay, which are part of [Great the Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System](#). This

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equipment and other receivers in the GLATOS network “listen” for signals from a variety of fish species that have been implanted with acoustic transmitters. This information helps scientists determine individual fishes’ movement, habitat use and mortality. Recent acoustic transmitter tagging efforts in Lake Huron have focused on lake trout, lake whitefish, walleye, [lake sturgeon](#) and cisco.

The RV *Tanner* crew also completed the sixth annual outer Saginaw Bay hydroacoustics and midwater trawling survey to support a multiagency evaluation of cisco rehabilitation efforts. Cisco, commonly called lake herring by anglers, were once abundant in Lake Huron. The goal of rehabilitating this species is to bring it back both for angling opportunity and its role as an important piece of the food web.

In late August, the RV *Tanner* again departed for Saginaw Bay for the annual September Saginaw Bay fish community survey. This year had the second highest experimental gill net catch rate ever recorded for yearling walleye, with the total catch rate of walleye increasing but remaining in the range of values observed since the population recovered in the late 2000s. Catch rates of adult yellow perch remain low, and biologists continue to use data from this survey to inform fisheries management under the guidance of the recently published [Walleye and Yellow Perch Recreational Management Plan for Saginaw Bay](#).

Three juvenile lake sturgeon stocked as part of recent restoration efforts in the Saginaw River watershed were captured during the Saginaw Bay fish community survey. This is promising, demonstrating that small, hatchery-reared sturgeon can survive after they are released into the wild.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Saginaw Bay survey in early October, the Alpena crew took one of

its small vessels, the RV *Smolt*, north to the Les Cheneaux Islands for the fish community survey; yellow perch catch rates on this survey were comparable to previous years.

• St. Clair-Detroit River System – Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station

The 2025 field season for the [Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station](#) began in March, with staff using the research vessel *Mooneye* electrofishing boat to target [northern pike](#) on Lake St. Clair for tagging and collecting age structures. None of the northern pike previously implanted with acoustic telemetry tags (in 2023-2024) were caught, but several of these fish were detected with a portable tracking unit. The age structures were used to estimate age and assess long-term trends in growth rates. Results indicated stable northern pike growth rates, which contrasts with growth trends of other fish that feed primarily on the lower food web (e.g., yellow perch and lake sturgeon). Those other fishes have experienced reduced growth rates following increased water clarity in Lake St. Clair.



April and May also saw the RV *Mooneye* on Lake St. Clair, this time collecting [smallmouth bass](#) for acoustic tagging. The ongoing acoustic telemetry work is part of a larger effort to track movement of smallmouth bass throughout the St. Clair-Detroit River System and western Lake Erie and is being done with partners from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Smallmouth bass are a top predator in this Great Lakes

connecting waterway and are highly sought by recreational anglers in what [is widely considered a world-class fishery](#).

The research vessel *Channel Cat* and its crew began large vessel work with a spring trawl survey in Lake St. Clair’s Anchor Bay. The trawl survey provides a snapshot of yellow perch abundance and growth — results continue to highlight the poor growth of Lake St. Clair perch due to changes in nutrients and invertebrate forage brought on by invasive [zebra](#) and [quagga mussels](#).

After spring trawling, the RV *Channel Cat* immediately moved to the north channel of the St. Clair River for the annual June setline survey for lake sturgeon. A total of 83 lake sturgeon were caught and tagged, including 32 fish that were captured in previous survey efforts. This survey continues to provide fisheries biologists with the data needed to manage the largest naturally reproducing sturgeon population in the Great Lakes.

July brought annual binational lakewide fish community survey, conducted in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Catch rates were higher in Canadian waters than in U.S. waters, with overall catch rates being about six times higher in Ontario. Abundant natural shoreline, higher turbidity and better gear efficiency due to shallower water are possible contributors to the higher catch rates in Canada. The U.S. shoreline is primarily hardened shoreline, such as sea walls, leading to poor fish habitat and greater shoreline water depth, which makes it easier for fish to elude the survey nets.

In August, assessment efforts shifted to trawling with the annual Lake Erie trawl survey and the annual Lake St. Clair lake sturgeon trawl survey. The Lake Erie survey, which is used to assess the abundance of forage fish and young-of-year walleye and yellow

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perch in Michigan waters of the west basin, documented increased reproduction for both species compared to 2024, including the second-highest catch rate of juvenile yellow perch in the time series. However, low survival of young perch to older ages continues to present a challenge for fishery managers and anglers alike.

The Lake St. Clair trawl survey resulted in the capture of six lake sturgeon (all first-time captures) that were tagged and released. Each sturgeon was implanted with an acoustic telemetry tag to track their movement and habitat use. These were the first lake sturgeon caught directly from Lake St. Clair to be tagged with acoustic tags!

Trawling work continued into September, when the RV *Channel Cat* joined the RV *Tanner* for the Saginaw Bay fish community survey. The catch rates of young-of-year walleye and yellow perch in the Saginaw Bay trawls were high, and forage abundance was above the average measured during the past 10 years.

The survey season for the RV *Channel Cat* concluded the first week of October with the Lake Erie walleye index survey, which measures the abundance of yearling and older walleye. Walleye catch rates were down from 2024, which was likely due to the record-high fall water temperatures, delaying annual migration of walleye back to the west basin.

Field staff ended the year working on the Lake St. Clair nearshore electrofishing assessment from the RV *Mooneye*. This survey sampled over 3,000 individual fish representing 27 species — indicating a diverse fish community comprised of both sport and nongame fishes. Final data analysis from all 2025 surveys is ongoing, and results will be shared with partners to promote sound, scientific fisheries management in the international waters of the region. ✧

Sportsman's Show returns March 19

The Toronto Sportsmen's Show (TSS) returns for a 78th year to the International Centre in Mississauga from March 19 to 22, featuring new and familiar attractions. The Master Promotions-produced trade show offers the latest in hunting, fishing, and outdoors-related products and attractions. Features include fishing ponds, taxidermy displays, and seminars on two stages. Dedicated areas for retriever trials and working dogs, as well as river and fly fishing, return for 2026. So will The Roost, an area dedicated entirely to waterfowl, featuring demonstrations led by top-tier experts and brands, a showcase of the latest products and technology, and networking with professionals. This year's speakers will include Ciprian Rafan, Ian Troup, Ivo Balinov, Morgan McLean, Daniel Norarianni, Bill Spicer, Larry Mellors, and Pam TE Grotenhuis, and more. ✧

Our fascinating language

It's All So Ovibus

Aocdrnig to rschearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mtaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoentn tihng is taht frist and lsat ltteer is at the rghit plcae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by istlef but the wrod as a wlohe.

Submitted by Johnathan Powell

Spell Czech

Eye halve a spelling chequer. It came with my pea sea. It plainly marques four my revue miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word and weight four it two say Whether eye am wrong oar write. It shows me strait a weighh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid, it nose bee fore two long And eye can put the error rite. Its rarely ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it, I am shore your pleased two no. Its letter perfect in it's weighh. My chequer tolled me sew.

Great Lakes water funding faces a critical year in Congress

WASHINGTON D.C. – With a major Great Lakes restoration program set to expire this year and infrastructure funding nearing its end, freshwater advocates traveled to the nation's capital last week to press Congress to maintain support for clean water programs across the region.



Top priority this year is the reauthorization of the federal [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI), a bipartisan program that since its genesis in 2010 has invested more than \$5 billion into the region and supported just shy of 9,000 restoration projects. Authorization for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is set to expire in September without Congressional action. Widely considered [one of the most successful freshwater conservation efforts](#) in the world, the GLRI is a financial lifeline for hundreds of organizations, including local fishers, farmers, nonprofits, and scientists. For every dollar invested on the GLRI, [more than \\$3 in economic benefit](#) is produced.

Authorization of the five-year program is set to expire on September 30. Advocates are asking for appropriations of \$500 million annually through 2031, [the amount proposed](#) by the reauthorization bill's bipartisan sponsors in 2025. If granted it would be the largest annual allotment since the program's inception. ✧

Open water or wood cover for crappie?

Learn how a veteran guide decides whether to seek crappie in the open or around wood cover and how he approaches each situation. The development of forward-facing sonar has shown that some crappie like to roam the wide-open spaces while others prefer staying close to home.

When Terry Blankenship competed in crappie tournament circuits, he noticed other competitors who ran spider rigs or long line trolled would catch crappie out in the middle of the lake. He figured the trollers were able to find crappie in the vast open areas because they had so many poles spread out to cover a wide swath.

“They would just go until they got bit and then they would focus on that area to see if there was a big school around there,” Blankenship said. “Electronics are good enough now that we can see those crappie out there.”

Blankenship and other crappie anglers always knew crappie were locked on wood cover, such as standing timber and sunken brush piles, but pinpointing crappie in open water was a hit-and-miss proposition until forward-facing sonar changed the game. The new sonar technology revealed that large schools of crappie roamed around, chasing shad or just suspending in open deep water.

Blankenship’s Humminbird XPLORE units are equipped with Mega 360 and Mega Live 2 features that help him find crappie in the wood cover or out in open water. Countless hours spent watching his electronics have taught Blankenship the tendencies that cause crappie to lock in on wood or roam wide-open spaces.

“What I have seen is the black crappie do love open water,” Blankenship said. “I think they will get out and follow shad around, and the whites will too, especially as they get bigger. The smaller (white) crappie tend to

hang close to cover, and I think that is just for protection.”

The Missouri angler suggests the two crappie species tend to stage at different depths. He notices black crappie in brush suspend higher in cover whereas white crappie hold deeper in the wood. Weather and water conditions can dictate whether crappie cling to wood or roam in the open. Crappie in clear water hold tighter to cover on sunny days. “The crappie are a little bit finicky about sunlight,” Blankenship said.

A severe cold front or a lake drawdown can cause crappie to move out of shallow brush. “I like fishing a shallow brush pile if the crappie are in it, but if they have been pushed out, you just have to start stepping it down a little deeper,” Blankenship said. He looks for these migrating fish in deeper brush or suspending in open water over a creek channel or the first drop-off he locates.

Water temperature is a key factor in determining whether Blankenship targets crappie in brush or open water. “Now, with electronics, we know there are always fish out in roaming water but that is not as consistent in certain times of the year,” he said. Cold water in late fall and throughout the winter is the best time for Blankenship to pattern crappie in open water. Then he finds crappie suspending in open water in the middle of coves, along channel swings or on the main lake.

The Bobby Garland Lures pro staffer targets crappie in brush piles or standing timber more in warmer water. “Electronics will be the major player for me just to locate cover and the fish,” Blankenship said. “If I am coming up on a brush pile and not seeing many fish, I try to maybe check something out at the next depth level.” He keeps scouting with his electronics until he finds an area and depth level holding crappie in brush.

Blankenship suggests standing timber is good cover for crappie year-round. He favors the wood cover in the backs of coves or along flats in warm water and keys on standing timber along channel swings in cold water. When the water warms in the springtime and crappie migrate into the coves, Blankenship targets any wood cover he finds along spawning banks to catch crappie in the shallows.

On a recent winter trip to Lake Eucha in Oklahoma, Blankenship faced the challenge of trying to catch crappie at a lake he had never previously fished. He caught quality crappie from a tree sitting near a channel bend in a cove during his day and a half of fishing Eucha.

Feeling the pressure

Before FFS, open water crappie were only hassled by trollers and spider rigging anglers. The FFS pioneers easily caught crappie from the massive schools in open water for a couple of years, but the FFS craze has made it much tougher to catch open-water roamers. “Now you do actually have to worry about if the crappie have been pressured because there are two things that will mess with your head with suspended fish,” Blankenship said. “One is if those crappie have been pressured from fishing? Or two, are they just not biting?”

When brush piles receive heavy fishing pressure, Blankenship searches for the hardest-to-find wood cover to locate crappie that will still bite. He targets standing timber along drop-offs or any totally submerged timber to find less pressured crappie.

Blankenship believes open water crappie are more challenging than wood cover crappie. He suggests open water suspending crappie can be moody, and it becomes harder to stay on the school when it starts roaming. On his home waters of Lake of the Ozarks Blankenship notices black crappie become elusive as they follow

shad around in the open water. “There is a lot of surface acreage out there that the crappie can be in, so there is no way you will ever cover it all because the lake is so large,” he said. Those fish could be out in the middle of the channel following a school of shad around.”

When Blankenship fished Eucha, he knew he lacked time to invest in searching for open water crappie. So, he decided to spend most of his time keying on crappie in wood cover. “A lot of times if the crappie are in a brush pile it seems like they will react a little better to a lure than those big schools of open water crappie,” he said. “The crappie in brush are set up there for protection and when they see a meal coming by, they can’t hardly resist that once in a while. As long as you can fish brush right, crappie in brush are

easier to catch, but whenever that open water bite gets going good it is phenomenal.”

He casts a Bobby Garland Baby Shad on a 1/16-ounce jighead past the brush and makes sure he keeps the lure above the cover throughout his retrieve. “It is always better to keep your bait right above the fish,” Blankenship said. “Crappie don’t like to go chase a bait down and eat it. They might follow it down and might catch up with it going down, but they don’t go down to hit the bait as much.”

Blankenship likes to keep his lure moving and slightly above, where the crappie can see it. “Once they come up and start committing to your bait you are more apt to catch that fish than you are to set your bait down right in one’s face and go across it real close to

where it can get a real good look at the bait,” he said.

A Baby Shad or Baby Shad Swim’R set below a bobber is Blankenship’s favorite presentation for open water crappie, especially lethargic wintertime fish. “If you cruise the lure above them too fast, they won’t look at it, but if you slowly move it with the bobber or dead stick it, they will come up and eat it.”

Open water crappie tend to spook easily, so Blankenship positions his boat at the farthest distance where he can still cast and reach the school. Blankenship’s favorite colors for fishing Baby Shads and Baby Shad Swim’Rs are Blue Ice, Monkey Milk, Pink Lemonade and Bayou Booger. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[Trump ‘working with’ Whitmer to keep carp out of the Great Lakes](#)

In a recent social media post, President Trump said he is collaborating with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to fight against invasive carp in the Great Lakes, following a recent meeting with the governor.

[Restoring the long-lost arctic grayling](#)

Arctic grayling were once abundant in Michigan’s waters. But almost a century ago, habitat destruction, overfishing, and predation by introduced species decimated their populations. Today an effort is underway to

[NY State proposes fishing regulations changes to better protect walleye, pike](#)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation last week announced the release of proposed changes to coolwater sportfish regulations to help protect spawning fish, increase the reproductive capacity of

[Lake Erie has huge, lake-long crack clearly seen from above, and now close up](#)

An 80-mile-long ice crack runs along Lake Erie from Cleveland to the north shore of Lake Erie near Port Bruce in Canada. In addition to photos from satellites, there are now drone images from right on top of the crack

[Bass Pro Shops announces new location in Paducah, Kentucky](#)

Bass Pro Shops announced plans for a new 70,000-square-foot destination retail location in Paducah, Kentucky, adjacent to Kentucky Oaks Mall, expected to open late 2026 or early 2027. Founded by Johnny Morris, the store will feature localized design celebrating Kentucky’s sporting heritage and is expected to employ over 115 Outfitters

[Chinook salmon nearly vanished in Great Lakes. Here’s how they rebounded](#)

After a population crash around 2015, Chinook salmon numbers have rebounded, but recent data suggests another shift may be occurring.

End