



## Army Corps releases long awaited report on Great Lakes Great Lakes Interbasin Study offers eight options to protect system

The **Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS)** Report presents the results of a multi-year study regarding the range of options and technologies available to prevent aquatic nuisance species (ANS) movement between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through aquatic connections. Through a structured study process, USACE identified thirteen ANS of Concern established in one basin that posed a high or medium risk of adverse impacts by transfer and establishment in the opposite basin. USACE analyzed and evaluated available controls to address these ANS, and formulated alternatives specifically for the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) with the goal of preventing ANS transfer between the two basins.

The report contains eight alternatives, each with concept-level design and cost information, and evaluates the potential of these alternatives to control the transfer of a variety of ANS. The options concentrate on the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) and include a wide spectrum of alternatives ranging from the continuation of current activities to the complete separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The GLMRIS Report also includes an analysis of potential impacts to uses and users of the CAWS, and corresponding mitigation requirements for adverse impacts to functions such as flood-risk management, natural resources, water quality, and navigation.

The Eight options for aquatic nuisance species prevention listed in the recent GLMRIS report are defined in detail below. Two of these involve dams that would restore the natural divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins in Chicago. More specifics are available in a 28-page [summary](#) and the full GLMRIS [report](#).

### **Alternative Plan 1: No new federal action.**

If you think that current efforts that include electric barriers and removal netting are sufficient, this is the option for you. There are costs associated with current actions, but this is the baseline condition to which other alternatives are compared.

### **GLMRIS report**

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## **A Tough Balance: brown trout can interfere with brook trout conservation**

Cortland, NY – Brown trout introductions could hamper the conservation of declining native brook trout populations, according to a new U.S. Geological Survey [study](#).

Brook and brown trout are valuable sport fish that co-exist in many parts of the world due to stocking introductions. USGS researchers found that, in New York State, direct interactions between the two species, such as competition for food, have minor effects on diminishing brook trout populations compared to human-caused habitat disturbances. However, repeated, disproportionate stocking of brown trout in brook trout habitats could drastically decrease brook trout numbers.

"There is great potential for brown trout stocking to reduce native brook trout populations," said James

McKenna, USGS scientist and lead author of the study. "But brown trout aren't necessarily causing the current brook trout declines, and managers may be able to develop sustainable scenarios to support both fisheries."

The USGS study found that human-induced degradation (from dams and roads, among other causes) of the habitats of both species can affect the populations of either. However, because brook trout do better in forested watersheds, whereas brown trout can thrive in more agricultural environments, degraded watersheds and/or the elimination of forests may affect brook more than brown trout. Improper brown trout management could further threaten vulnerable brook trout populations.

### **A Tough Balance**

*Continued on page 8*

## MI successful stocking season creates more fishing opportunities

The Michigan DNR announced the totals from its fall fish stocking efforts. The DNR's Fisheries Division stocked eight different species totaling more than 1,050,000 fish that weighed more than 12.5 tons. Fish were stocked at 111 different locations throughout the state.

"It was another outstanding fall stocking season that will provide enhanced fishing opportunities throughout Michigan," said DNR Fish Production Manager Gary Whelan. "This is in addition to our successful spring stocking efforts that put more than 19 million fish into the state's waters."

The number and type of fish stocked varies by hatchery as each facility's ability to rear fish differs because of water supplies and temperature. In Michigan, there are six state and three cooperative hatcheries that work together to produce the species, strain and size of fish needed by fisheries managers. These fish must then be delivered at a specific time and location for stocking to ensure their success. Most fish in Michigan are stocked in the spring.

Fall fish stockings consisted of brook trout, lake trout, rainbow trout, steelhead, Atlantic salmon, lake sturgeon, walleye and muskellunge.

- The Marquette State Fish Hatchery stocked 34,093 fall fingerling and adult brook and lake trout that weighed 2,225 lbs. This hatchery stocked 47 locations using 18 trips.
- The Thompson State Fish Hatchery (near Manistique) stocked 157,909 fall fingerling brown trout and steelhead that weighed 1,947 lbs. This hatchery stocked five locations using four trips.
- The Oden State Fish Hatchery (near Petoskey) stocked 90,244 fall fingerling rainbow trout that weighed 1,967 lbs. This hatchery stocked two locations using two trips.
- The Platte River State Fish Hatchery (near Honor) stocked

221,808 fall fingerling coho salmon weighing 8,745 lbs. and 36,453 fall fingerling Atlantic salmon weighing 701 lbs. All coho salmon were stocked into the Paw Paw River using three trips and the Atlantic salmon into Torch Lake using one trip.

- The Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery (near Kalamazoo) stocked 435,950 fall fingerling steelhead weighing 6,598 lbs. and 56,143 fall fingerling Great Lakes and northern muskellunge weighing 2,358 lbs. The steelhead were stocked at six sites using four trips and muskellunge were stocked at 33 locations using 20 trips.
- The DNR's cooperative hatchery at Lake Superior State University produced 13,400 fall fingerling Atlantic salmon weighing 500 lbs. These fish were stocked with one trip in Torch Lake (Antrim County).
- Eastern Lake Superior, Northern Lake Michigan and Southern Lake Huron fisheries management units stocked 3,877 fall fingerling walleye weighing 229 lbs. These fish were stocked at eight sites using seven trips.
- The Southern Lake Michigan Management Unit in cooperation with the USFWS stocked 50 fall fingerling lake sturgeon weighing less than a pound into the Kalamazoo River.
- The Marquette Fisheries Research Station stocked 598 fall fingerling lake sturgeon weighing 22 lbs. into four sites in the Upper Peninsula. Four stocking trips were needed for this effort.
- The DNR's cooperative hatchery with Michigan State University on the Black River stocked 4,490 fall fingerling lake sturgeon weighing 66 lbs. These fish were stocked using three trips into four sites on Black, Burt and Mullet lakes.

DNR fish stocking database:  
[www.michigandnr.com/fishstock](http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock) ✧



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### Position Statement

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

## Inland Seas Angler GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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## Fisheries Division staffers talk Michigan ice fishing

Michigan anglers didn't have a lot of choice about how they practiced their sport in early 2014. With arctic weather leaving most of the state's lakes – as well as many of its rivers – frozen, it's been fish through the ice or stay home and think about fishing.

Fortunately, getting started ice fishing is relatively simple. Anglers need just three basic pieces of equipment – something to make a hole with, something to clear the slush from the hole, and something to fish with – and they're in business.

The first two are simple. Either an auger (a corkscrew-like cutting device) or a spud (an over-sized chisel) will get you through the ice. And a simple slush scoop – something that looks like a ladle with holes in the cup – will get that job done. That leaves a beginner short just one item: fishing tackle. Anglers can fish through the ice either with hooks and lines or spears. Ignoring the latter, the options are myriad, ranging from high-tech graphite rods and top-of-line spinning reels to simple fiberglass poles jammed into wooden-dowel handles with a simple plastic, spring-tension spool.

Anglers can fish through the ice anywhere they can fish during soft-water season except on designated trout streams – please consult the [2013 Michigan Fishing Guide](#) for exceptions – and can fish for virtually all species of fish except largemouth and smallmouth bass (the season on which closes Jan. 1). And in at least one case – spearing for sturgeon on Black Lake – there is fishing opportunity through the ice that is not available the rest of the season.

As with open-water season, opportunities are extensive and range from fishing for mere minnows (smelt) to muskies. DNR Fish Chief Jim Dexter prefers to fish for panfish, bluegills and perch. "Ice fishing to me is about reducing your catch to possession, and those are the species I like to eat," Dexter said. "There aren't too many guys out practicing catch-and-release fishing through the ice." DNR fisheries managers think most

Michigan anglers are like Dexter: panfish anglers.

"I would say most guys fish for bluegills," said Todd Grischke, the Lake Huron Basin coordinator. "After that, I would think it's perch and walleye." Bluegills are almost ubiquitous. Perch and walleye are a little less widespread.

With bluegills, the key is to "pound the bottom," said Christian LeSage, a recreational fishing specialist with the Fisheries Division. "You have to maintain contact with the bottom so you know where your bait is in the water column."

Olen Gannon, a fisheries technician out of the Plainwell office and a bluegill aficionado, said it's important not to get locked into the bottom, though. "Pay attention to the line as your bait's dropping," Gannon said. "If the fish are active they may hit it on the fall. And if they're real active they may be just a foot or two under the ice – that happens quite a bit when you're in deeper water." Assuming your bait makes it to the bottom, fish there and work your way up in the water column, Gannon said. "If the fish aren't there, move up one crank of the reel at a time," he added. "If that doesn't work, cut more holes and keep moving. Stay mobile."

Walleyes and perch are typically bottom feeders that are less likely to be found up in the water column. Jim Baker, Southern Lake Huron Fisheries Unit supervisor, likes to fish for walleyes on the Saginaw River. "I like to fish two rods," Baker said. "One with jigging lure like a spoon or jigging Rapala, typically baited with the head of a minnow, and a still rod with a walleye-sized minnow hooked through the lips. Fish near the bottom; the depth can be anywhere from 10 feet to out in the middle of the shipping channel. Sometimes they'll hit the spoon or Rapala and sometimes they'll hit the minnows."

Vince Balcer, a fisheries technician out of the Bay City office who often fishes for perch on Saginaw Bay, also likes to use two rods. "We use lightweight gear – light

action rods – and I like to use one with a live minnow hooked through the back to swim around and another with a small spoon with a single hook and a bead on it to jig with," Balcer said. "When you get on a school with that spoon, you don't have to mess around with re-baiting." Balcer said one of the keys to catching perch is finding them in the first place. "You've got to keep moving," he said. "If you don't find fish in the first half-hour, keep moving until you find them."

Chris Freiburger, a DNR habitat biologist and experienced perch angler, says anglers should be willing to experiment. "If you're catching small fish, go with a bigger bait – it might change what you're catching," he said. "Go to a bigger spoon or a Rapala and you might start catching bigger fish."

Not all fish are as bottom-oriented as perch and walleye. Fisheries biologist Gregg Smith, who works out of Plainwell, says fish such as black crappie and smelt are often found suspended in the water column. Smith said smelt, which are typically pursued after dark, start biting as soon as the sun sets. "Any small jig that you have baited with a spike will work," he said. "With a depth finder, you can see where the fish are and know where to fish. It's similar with crappie, too; just use a slightly larger jig, tipped with a wax worm or minnow head."

One of the toughest parts of ice fishing is enduring the elements. Good outerwear, boots, hats, etc., will help you stay out on the ice. Says fisheries biologist Scott Hanshew, "To make it enjoyable, go out when the weather's nice." But some guys pooh-pooh the idea that ice fishing is harsh. "When the fish are biting, you don't even notice it's cold," says Dexter.

Michigan is home to plenty of fishing opportunities in winter and year-round – including the upcoming Winter Free Fishing Weekend February 15-16. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/fishing](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing).

## Wisconsin Chinook stocking strategy set for 2014 and beyond

MADISON – The state’s strategy for stocking Chinook salmon in Wisconsin’s Lake Michigan waters in 2014 and beyond is set and seeks to maintain existing great fishing opportunities in spring and summer all along the coast while tweaking the state’s original proposal based on public input to improve fall fishing.

“You spoke and we listened,” says DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. “This stocking strategy reflects your input and will continue to help deliver the fantastic fishing opportunities you’ve enjoyed on Lake Michigan and its tributaries.” Stepp thanked the many people who attended meetings over the past two years to provide feedback on the stocking strategy, and those who submitted comments via emails and other communications.

Mike Staggs, Wisconsin’s fish chief, says the updated stocking strategy reflects newer research showing Chinook are highly migratory fish and that where the fish are stocked doesn’t affect the main fishery in the spring and summer.

“But stocking location does affect the fall fishery in Wisconsin, so we focused our strategy on striking a balance between providing opportunities along the coast in the fall and responding to public concerns to provide more fish where the angler pressure, harvest and economic impact are the greatest in fall,” he says.

Research shows that more than half of the Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan are wild and that Chinook swim all over Lake Michigan during the spring and summer. Read more in [“Lake Michigan’s salmon fishery thrives,”](#) in the December issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.

That information and other research to date suggests that stocking plays a much more important role in determining where fish are caught in Wisconsin in the fall, with the bulk of fish returning on their spawning runs to streams where they were stocked, says Brad Eggold, DNR fisheries

supervisor for southern Lake Michigan.

“We heard from stakeholders loud and clear that they wanted us to provide fall fishing opportunities in as many places as possible,” says Eggold. “This strategy provides that, but also stocks more Chinook where we see more fishing for Chinook.

“That’s one of the other concerns we heard at the October Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum meeting from anglers and the businesses and communities that depend on Chinook.”

Wisconsin and other states and tribes that share fisheries management on Lake Michigan agreed to adjust stocking levels of Chinook starting in 2013 to bring the number of predator fish like Chinook back into line with the number of prey fish. Significantly increased natural reproduction of Chinook in Michigan streams and record low levels of alewives, a key fish food, had led to declines in fish condition in recent years and university researchers projected the Chinook population would crash in coming years if no measures were taken.

That lake-wide stocking adjustment, public input, and the new understanding of fish migration since DNR’s longstanding stocking strategy was created spurred DNR to update the stocking strategy, Staggs says.

After the October 12 fisheries forum meeting, DNR kept most of the strategy the same but ratcheted back the number of Chinook that will be stocked in 2014 into Strawberry Creek, where DNR maintains the main egg collection facility for Chinook, and distributed them among other ports. The 2014 stocking plan and other materials are available on the Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum web page.

“This will still allow us to adequately meet our egg collection goals for Chinook. In addition to Strawberry Creek, we also can collect Chinook salmon eggs at our other two facilities (Besadny Anadromous

Fisheries Facility and Root River Steelhead Facility),” Eggold says.

Two other tweaks made to the proposal change the charter trips factor to include only fall charter trips, and to provide a direct allocation of 30,000 fish to northern Door County, Staggs says.

Ozaukee, Sheboygan and Kewaunee counties also will get a larger share of fish under the new stocking strategy because they have the highest angler effort, harvest rates and charter trips in the fall, Eggold says.

Dave Boyarski, fish supervisor based out of Sturgeon Bay, says that local fish managers in those counties with multiple ports will be working with angler organizations and others to help determine where fish go within a particular county if there is more than one port. Manitowoc, Kewaunee and Door County all have more than one port.

The numbers of fish planned for stocking in the counties are below; for more info: [DNR's Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum web page:](#)

- Kenosha County: 76,919
- Racine County: 75,338
- Milwaukee County: 83,046
- Ozaukee County: 89,049
- Sheboygan County: 86,164
- Manitowoc County: 83,515
- Kewaunee County: 95,142
- Southern Door/Strawberry Creek: 120,000
- Northern Door County: 30,000
- Oconto/Marinette counties: 69,082

Staggs says anglers won’t see a big change in their fishing opportunities during spring and summer because of the stocking adjustments. “We’re doing this to maintain the fantastic fishing on Wisconsin’s Lake Michigan waters,” he says. “The models show anglers shouldn’t see a big change in fishing opportunities because of the increase in natural reproduction in Michigan streams. ✧

## Illinois anglers asked to watch for Eurasian ruffe in Illinois waters

The Illinois DNR is asking for anglers to be on the lookout for and help with reporting any findings in Illinois waters of Eurasian ruffe, an aquatic nuisance species that has been in the Great Lakes since the mid-1980s.

Eurasian ruffe (also known as ruffe or river ruffe), an eastern European species, has been found in western Lake Superior since 1986, and has been one of the most dominant fish in bottom trawls in channels within the Duluth-Superior Harbor. The USFWS Ashland Office monitored the expansion of ruffe populations and the species' range across Lake Superior.

"To date, fishery management agencies have not witnessed any significant impact on native fish species like yellow perch and walleye in the areas where ruffe populations have become established and are quite abundant in our bottom-trawl surveys," says Mark Brouder, Ashland Office Field Supervisor.

A recent basin-wide survey by the U. of Notre Dame, Central Michigan U., and The Nature Conservancy has found Eurasian ruffe DNA in water samples taken over the past year from Calumet Harbor

in northeast Illinois. This sampling is designed to use an analytical technique to detect species by filtering the water and detecting DNA that organisms leave behind. In fish, the DNA may be in slime, urine, or fecal material. The initial conclusion from the Calumet Harbor water samples did not detect ruffe, but follow up analyses suggest that ruffe *environmental* DNA (or eDNA) may be present in a small portion of the samples.

The Illinois DNR will continue to work with USFWS biologists who monitor the Great Lakes to continue sampling in the Calumet Harbor area to heighten sampling efforts for fish across the Great Lakes to look for Aquatic Nuisance Species. Illinois DNR monitors Calumet Harbor throughout the summer with electrofishing. The Illinois Natural History Survey monitors near-shore waters of Lake Michigan with micro-mesh gillnets, noted as a preferred gear for catching ruffe. To date, Illinois officials report NO Eurasian ruffe have been seen or reported from Illinois waters.

"The Illinois DNR urges anglers to report fish that may be ruffe, as

they may be taken while fishing for yellow perch or other fish in the Calumet Harbor area, or anywhere in waters surrounding Chicago," said Kevin Irons, Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Manager for the Illinois DNR. "A clear cell phone picture of the fish from several angles can help in identification, or you may simply put fish in a ziplock/plastic bag and freeze it. This species is listed as injurious, so these fish cannot be transported alive in Illinois. If found, please note specifically where the fish was caught and include time and date information."

To stop the movement of all aquatic nuisance species, sportsmen and women are reminded to 'Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers' and 'Be a Hero – Transport Zero' by following three simple steps: 1) Remove plants, animals and mud from equipment; 2) Drain all water from your boat and gear; and 3) Dry everything thoroughly with a towel.

For more info on ruffe: <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.aspx?speciesID=7>.

To report Eurasian ruffe locations or other Aquatic Nuisance Species, please call 217-785-8772. ✧

## Eurasian boars no longer "fair game" in New York

New York State announced the proposal of new regulations that would prohibit hunting or trapping of free-ranging Eurasian boars in New York. The proposal is designed to ensure maximum effectiveness of DEC's statewide eradication efforts. Public comments on the proposed regulations will be accepted until January 25, 2014.

Governor Cuomo signed legislation on October 21, 2013 which immediately prohibited the importation, breeding or introduction to the wild of any Eurasian boars. Furthermore, the law prohibits possession, sale, transport or marketing of live Eurasian boars as of September 1, 2015. The new law was an essential step in the state's efforts to prevent Eurasian boars from becoming established in the wild.

However, there are already small numbers of Eurasian boars on the landscape in New York. Since 2000, wild boars have been reported in many counties across the state, and breeding in the wild has been confirmed in at least six counties (Tioga, Cortland, Onondaga, Clinton, Sullivan and Delaware) in recent years.

The proposed regulations provide necessary exceptions for state and federal wildlife agencies, law enforcement agencies, and others who are authorized by DEC to take Eurasian boar to alleviate nuisance, property damage, or threats to public health or welfare.

DEC encouraged anyone who observes a Eurasian boar (dead or alive) in the wild in New York to report it as soon as possible to the

nearest DEC regional wildlife office or to [fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us) and include "Feral Swine" in the subject line.

Text of the proposed regulation was published in the New York State Register on December 11, 2013. The full text of the regulation change and instructions for submitting comments can be found on DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/34113.html>. Comments on the proposed regulations can be sent by email to [WildlifeRegs@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:WildlifeRegs@gw.dec.state.ny.us) or mailed to: Kelly Stang, NYS DEC, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754. Hard copies of the full text may be requested from the same address listed above. ✧

## Great Lakes Biology Surveys Aid Fisheries Management

Cornell and Buffalo State researchers have received a five-year, \$3.5 million grant from the USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to survey lower trophic levels—or organisms at the bottom of the food chain—that provide valuable insights into the health of higher species.

Specifically, Cornell researchers are using a 180' research vessel to collect phytoplankton, zooplankton and mysid shrimp levels in all of the Great Lakes, while Buffalo State researchers will head up collecting benthos (fauna from the bottom of the lakes) levels. Other researchers are also sampling for such pollutants as mercury, nutrients from farm runoff, viruses and bacteria.

Project leaders along with the New York DNR will work to assess lower trophic levels in Lake Ontario.

"Part of the reason we got this large grant was because of our history of collecting data," said Lars Rudstam, Cornell professor of natural resources and the grant's principal investigator. "Without the longer term dataset it is hard to determine changes in the Great Lakes." "We provide information to fishery managers that they use to decide how many fish they should stock and how much they should impose or relax fishing limitations," said James Watkins, a postdoctoral researcher in Rudstam's lab.

Data of lower trophic levels help researchers predict populations of larger fish, as plankton feed small fry, which in turn feed bigger fish. When levels of plankton drop, repercussions may be seen all the way up the food chain. For example, Pacific salmon were introduced into the Great Lakes in the 1980s, but they crashed in recent years in Lake

Huron but not in Lake Ontario, due partly to declining biomass at the base of the food web.

Cornell is also sampling a layer of water called the deep chlorophyll layer, which is located at or below a steep temperature gradient known as the thermocline located around a depth of 15 - 25 m. A long-term shift of algal primary producers from the surface layer to these depths may lead to vertical redistribution of zooplankton and higher trophic levels.

Two additional grants were funded by the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and U.S. EPA Region 2, to continue similar sampling in Lake Ontario. These grants, one for \$100,000 and another for \$50,000, are part of a collaboration that includes the Canadian Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, the Ontario MNR, USEPA, USGS, New York DNR and Cornell. ✧

## Chesapeake Bay cormorants continue steep ascent

On 23 May, 1978, while out conducting fieldwork, Charlie Blem (ecologist from Virginia U) discovered 6 pairs of double-crested cormorants nesting on the James River near Hopewell, VA. This was the first documented breeding of the species within the Chesapeake Bay region. The historic event was little noticed and there was no indication that in just over 3 decades the species would take root and become one of the dominant fish consumers within the estuary.

However, during the 2013 breeding season, a survey conducted by The Center for Conservation Biology documented more than 5,000 pairs breeding in 12 colonies throughout the Chesapeake Bay. This population would be expected to consume nearly 3000 metric tons of fish annually.

Growth in the Chesapeake Bay breeding population has been both rapid and dramatic. As recently as 1993, a survey conducted by the Center documented only 354 pairs.

During a visit in that year to Smith Island, Bryan Watts and Mitchell Byrd discovered 6 nests built on top of old brown pelican nests. In 2013, this colony is the largest in the Bay supporting nearly 2,500 pairs.



Mixed cormorant and brown pelican colony on Smith Island in Chesapeake Bay

Cormorants of several species are now considered nuisances within numerous locations across the globe. In North America, populations were recovering from widespread shooting during the 1940s and 1950s only to be reduced to new lows by the 1960s due to the impacts of DDT. Since the banning of DDT, historic populations have experienced dramatic recoveries

leading to conflicts over the destruction of habitat required by other bird species, nutrient inputs into waterways, and fish consumption.

Impacts of overwintering populations on the aquaculture industry throughout the Southeast led the FWS to issue an aquaculture depredation order for 13 southern states in 1998. Conflicts with commercial and recreational fishing have led to the ongoing control of northern breeding populations.

The Chesapeake Bay has always been a significant wintering site for northern populations. For the decade prior to the discovery of breeding there was a documented increase of cormorants using the Bay during winter. The current size of the winter population is not known but believed to be substantial. Northern birds that have not reached breeding age also oversummer in the Bay in unknown numbers. The rise of the breeding population greatly increases the fish demand during the summer period. ✧

## Multiple sportsmen bills introduced into Congress

Three omnibus sportsmen's bills have introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. These bills include numerous legislative measures beneficial to anglers and hunters across the nation. In large part they pick up the measures contained in the Sportsmen's Act that failed to pass at the end of the 112th Congress. Sens. Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Thune (R-S.D.) introduced the first bill, S 1335, on July 18; Sen. Hagan (D-N.C.) introduced the Sportsmen's and Public Outdoor Recreation Traditions Act or SPORT Act on November 6; and on November 21, Rep. Bob Latta (R-Ohio) introduced the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act or SHARE Act, H.R. 3590.

Collectively the three bills contain 19 measures that will benefit our nation's sportsmen and women by providing increased access to our public lands and waters, habitat conservation, improving fish and wildlife management and protecting the use of traditional fishing tackle. ✧

## New Gander Mountain openings in Indiana, Missouri & Mt. Juliet, TN

[Gander Mountain](#) is once again expanding in Indiana; its fourth Indianapolis metro area location in Greenfield. It is set to open in the spring of 2014. The Fenton, MO, store is set to open in the spring of 2014. The Fenton store will be located in an existing 96,600-square-foot space on Gravois Bluffs Boulevard in the Gravois Bluffs Shopping Center, near the intersection of Highway 30 and Highway 141

The new Mt. Juliet store will be located in a new 52,000-sq. ft. space adjacent to Providence Marketplace, near the intersection of I-40 and Highway 171/Mt. Juliet Road, and will open in the spring of 2014. ✧

## An apple a day really does keep the doctor away

An apple a day for all adults aged 50 and over would prevent or delay around 8,500 vascular deaths such as heart attacks and strokes every year in the U.K. alone, a study indicates. The effect is similar to giving statins, or cholesterol-lowering drugs, to everyone over 50 years who isn't already taking them, says the study in the Christmas edition of *The British Medical Journal*.

The researchers conclude that the Victorian-era proverb "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" is able to match more wide-spread use of modern medicine, probably with fewer side effects. The authors stressed that no one currently taking statins should stop; although by all means eat more apples.

Using a mathematical model, the University of Oxford researchers analyzed the effect on the most common causes of vascular mortality of prescribing either a statin a day to those not already taking one or an apple a day to everyone aged over 50 years in the U.K. They calculated offering a daily statin to 17.6 million more adults would reduce the annual number of vascular deaths by 9,400, while offering a daily apple to 70% of the total U.K. population aged over 50 years (22 million people) would avert 8,500 vascular deaths.

"This study shows that small dietary changes as well as increased use of statins at a population level may significantly reduce vascular mortality in the U.K.," write the authors. ✧

## Recently returning Wis vets can hunt, fish free

MADISON – Wisconsin resident veterans who have recently returned from active duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom are eligible to receive a one-time free small game, archery, gun deer or annual fishing license, under recently enacted legislation. [Read Full Article](#) ✧

## Michigan winter fishing opportunities

Just because cold weather has arrived in Michigan doesn't mean you have to put your fishing activities on hold. The state's fishing opportunities are on proud display during the winter months with many anglers proclaiming this as the best time to go fishing.

The appeal stems from the fact that anglers can get just about anywhere on the lake during ice fishing season and that virtually every fish that's available in the summer can be caught through the ice. In fact, some are even caught more frequently in the winter.

Are you new to ice fishing? Don't be intimidated by the idea of heading out! Learn about the kind of equipment you need and the safety precautions to take. [The DNR has lots of this information online to educate you.](#)

Do you already go ice fishing? Consider taking on a new challenge by targeting a different species. Popular winter species include bluegill, crappie, smelt, walleyes and yellow perch (among others). Anglers use a variety of ice fishing techniques to target these species, including hook-and-line, tip-ups and spearing.

Learn about these fishes and techniques needed to catch them in the winter by checking out the "[Michigan Fish and How to Catch Them](#)" section of the DNR's website. ✧

## Bass Pro to build in Kanata (Ottawa), Ontario

Bass Pro Shops will locate its fifth Canadian store in Kanata, Ottawa, located at Highway 417 and Huntmar Drive, directly across from the popular Canadian Tire Centre hockey arena in Kanata. The new 150,000 sq. ft. store will be located at Highway 417 and Huntmar Dr., directly across from the Canadian Tire Centre hockey arena in Kanata. The new store will open midyear in 2015. ✧

## Two new potential World Record Muskie caught and released

Dania Beach, FL – Two potential world record muskie were recently caught and released in the St. Lawrence River by two separate anglers, only two days apart. Michael Forjohn, of Ambier, Pennsylvania, landed an enormous 130 cm muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*) on December 2nd, while trolling a Swim Wizz lure in the St. Lawrence River, near Clayton, New York. Once hooked up, Forjohn needed only six minutes to subdue his trophy, which he quickly measured, photographed and released alive. If approved, Forjohn's catch would best the existing All-Tackle Length record by two centimeters, although it may not be on the books for long.



Two days later, on December 4th, Mark Carlson of Rockford, Illinois, hooked into a massive 132 cm muskie (estimated at 55 lbs.) that put up a brutal 15 minute fight after it crushed the Legend Perch lure he was trolling on the St. Lawrence. Carlson, the current IGFA All-Tackle Length record holder for muskie, immediately realized his catch was of record quality and quickly measured, photographed, and released the fish alive.



The potential record catch was also equipped with a tag before it was released, as Carlson actively participates in a Quebec fisheries study. [www.igfa.org/](http://www.igfa.org/). ✧

## GLMRIS report

*Continued from page 1*

### Alternative Plan 2: Nonstructural control technologies.

This plan involves additional netting, chemical control, watercraft inspection, and education efforts in multiple states but does not involve additional structures to separate waterways. The estimated additional cost is \$68 million annually, and this option could be pursued in addition to other options.

### Alternative Plan 3: Control technologies without buffer zone.

This option involves \$9.1 billion in flood mitigation and two structures dubbed "GLMRIS Locks." The GLMRIS locks allow navigation to continue and do not achieve hydrologic separation. Instead, these locks would operate in conjunction with pumps and water treatment facilities to provide some measure of control specific to ANS that drift passively through the waterways. The price tag for these ANS control measures along with two additional electric barriers is \$4 billion and the estimated additional cost of this alternative is \$15.5 billion.

### Alternative Plan 4: Control technology with buffer zone

This option involves GLMRIS locks and electric barriers at three locations different from those proposed in Alternative 3. Flood mitigation costs (~\$2 billion) are less than Plan 3 and the estimated additional cost is \$7.8 billion.

### Alternative Plan 5: Lakefront hydrologic separation

Four physical barriers located in canals near Lake Michigan are used to restore the natural divide in this plan. Water from Lake Michigan would be treated in ANS treatment plants before being released in CAWS canals to flush Chicago area runoff and [Combined Sewer Overflow](#) effluent downstream. This option includes \$14.4 billion in flood mitigation because runoff from heavy rains would no longer be drained into Lake Michigan. The cost of barriers and other ANS controls is \$446 million and the total additional cost estimate is \$18.4 billion.

### Alternative Plan 6: Mid-system hydrologic separation

Physical barriers placed near the midpoint of two canals achieve basin separation in this plan, which also incorporates ANS treatment plants and conveyance tunnels to use Lake Michigan for maintenance of water quality in the CAWS. The cost of barriers is \$223 million, while the cost of water quality mitigation is over \$12.8 billion. Total estimated additional cost is \$15.2 billion.

### Alternative Plan 7: Calumet-Sag Channel Open Control "hybrid"

This plan places a physical barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal but leaves the Cal-Sag open for navigation between basins via GLMRIS lock. Total estimated additional cost is \$15.1 billion.

### Alternative Plan 8: Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Open Control "hybrid"

This option is the reverse of Plan 7, leaving the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal open to navigation and without hydrologic separation. Total estimated additional cost is \$8.3 billion.

Now that design options and cost estimates are officially on the table, Great Lakes advocates, industry representatives and taxpayers can take the time to register an informed opinion. If you decide to [comment](#), be sure to reference the Alternative Plan you prefer; even if you do go on to voice concerns about certain design aspects, costs, or funding sources for implementation. ✧

## A Tough Balance

*Continued from page 1*

Fisheries managers in New York use stocking to maintain brook trout—a native species—and/or brown trout—a non-native species stocked in New York for over 100 years—in some streams. Brook trout have been declining within their native range in recent decades, and there has been concern that the stocking of brown trout has caused these declines.

The report is published in the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* and is available [online](#). For more info on USGS Great Lakes ecosystem research: [website](#). ✧

## Ohio's Archery in the Schools Tournament Registration opened Jan. 3

Sign-ups for the Ohio National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Tournament opened January 3, 2014.

ODNR will host the 2014 State NASP Tournament on February 28, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. in conjunction with the 2014 Arnold Sports Festival at Veterans Memorial, located at 300 West Broad St., Columbus, Ohio 43215. NASP is a school curriculum currently taught in 650 Ohio schools, making Ohio the third-largest program in the United States. Instruction takes place during two weeks of physical education classes and is designed to teach international target archery skills to students in grades 4-12.

Students with high-ranking scores may be eligible for scholarships through Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio. Individual archers and teams may also qualify for the NASP National Championship, which will be held May 9-10, 2014, at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky.

Last year, ODNR certified 370 new instructors from 57 schools in 49 different school districts as Basic Archery Instructors and awarded \$57,000 in grants to help with startup costs. New schools can apply for up to \$2,500 in grant money to start an archery program at their school. Ohio was the 10th state to participate in NASP.

For more info: contact Matt Neumeier, 614-265-6334 or [matt.neumeier@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:matt.neumeier@dnr.state.oh.us). ✧

## Ohio concealed carry licenses soar

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine has released the concealed handgun license stats for the third quarter of 2013, and with only nine months gone by in the year, new records have been set for the most initial licenses issued and most licenses renewed in a year. [Read the press release](#) here. ✧

## Judge throws out ban on Chicago gun sales

A Chicago law prohibiting the sale of guns within the third-most populous U.S. city has been struck down as unconstitutional by a federal judge. "Chicago's ordinance goes too far in outright banning legal buyers and legal dealers from engaging in lawful acquisitions and lawful sales of firearms," U.S. District Judge Edmond E. Chang wrote in a decision on Monday, January 6. The judge said he was delaying the effect of his ruling to allow the city time to seek a stay during an appeal or, if it elects to forgo an appeal, to consider and enact sales restrictions "short of a complete ban."

The ordinance, adopted in 2010 after the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision invalidated a ban on gun possession within the city, allowed only the transfer of firearms through inheritance, prohibiting even gifts among family members.

There were 415 murders and 1,864 shooting incidents last year, according to Chicago police, in the city of 2.7 million where President Barack Obama's political career began.

The right to keep and bear arms for self-defense under the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment must also include the right to acquire a firearm, Chang said. However, Chang granted the city the six months Mayor Rahm Emanuel said it needs to figure out where to allow gun shops in Chicago. ✧

## Cabela's to build in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada

Cabela's announced plans to build a 50,000 sq. ft. store in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. It is scheduled to open in 2015 and will employ 140 full-time and part-time employees. The store will be located in a new development near the intersection of the Mapleton Parkway and Trans-Canada Highway. It will be Cabela's first location in the greater Atlantic Canada area. ✧

## NY DEC adopts Sauger Management Plan

New York has adopted a conservation management plan for one of New York's most imperiled fish species, the sauger. Sauger are uniquely adapted to thrive in large turbid rivers and lakes and were once common in New York portions of Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, and Lake Champlain.

Only the Lake Champlain sauger population remains and even in this area the recent records of their occurrence are scarce. Sauger are also native to the Allegheny River, however pollution in the late 19th and much of the 20th centuries led to their extirpation. The population in the lower river is recovering; however access to much of the New York portion of the watershed is blocked by a dam.

"Sauger were once prominent members of New York's fish fauna, but are now at risk of being extirpated from the state," said DEC Commissioner Joe Martens. "Actions including stocking, habitat assessments, population monitoring, and public outreach will be implemented under this plan, which will start the process of restoring sauger to its native range in New York waters."

The final [Sauger Conservation Management Plan](#) is available on the DEC website. The goal of the plan is to establish and maintain sauger populations in all suitable waters of native watersheds by 2030. The three objectives of the plan include:

- Establishing a self-sustaining sauger population in the upper Allegheny River watershed
- Determining sauger population status and documenting and improving habitat suitability in Lake Champlain
- Determining the suitability of Lake Erie's eastern basin watershed for sauger restoration ✧

## Crossbow hunting bill signed by WI governor

On December 10, Governor Scott Walker (R) signed into law [Assembly Bill 194](#). This legislation provides hunters with the freedom to use a crossbow during big game archery season, beginning with the 2014 archery deer season. It allows more sportsmen to participate in the Badger State's rich hunting heritage. Thank you to Governor Walker for signing AB 194 into law and to the state Senators and Representatives who voted for this bill. Also, thank you to NRA members who contacted their state legislators in support of this important pro-hunting legislation. ✧

## Jobs for Vets

The Veteran Eagle is a newsletter for veterans, transitioning military, their family members and friends and supporters of VetJobs. Use their web site to help get a job. [www.vetjobs.com](http://www.vetjobs.com) ✧

## Michigan oks Wildlife Management Public Education Fund

[House Bill 4993](#) (now Public Act 246) was signed into law on December 21. It creates a Wildlife Management Public Education Fund to be managed by the Michigan Wildlife Council. This nine-member council will be responsible for establishing a comprehensive media-based public information program aimed at promoting Michigan's abundant wildlife resources and educating the general public on the role that sportsmen play in the conservation of these resources.

This legislation reinforces the long-standing traditions of sportsmen in Michigan. Hunting, fishing, and the taking of game are a valued and integral part of the cultural heritage of this state and should forever be preserved. With the enactment of HB 4993, Michiganders can rest assured that the natural resources of the state will be preserved for generations to come. ✧

## MI Becoming an Outdoors-Woman winter program, Feb. 28-March 2

Women seeking the opportunity to improve their outdoor skills are invited to register for the 13th annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) winter program in the U.P. The program will be held in Big Bay February 28 to March 2.

Sponsored by the Michigan DNR, this program offers instruction in more than a dozen types of indoor and outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, dog sledding, ice fishing, fly tying, wilderness first aid, wood burning and more. Instructors provide basic and advanced instruction that is tailored to each participant's individual ability.

The program takes place at Bay Cliff Health Camp, a universally accessible facility, located in a picturesque wooded setting overlooking Lake Superior approximately 30 miles north of Marquette.

The \$180 registration fee includes all food and lodging, as well as most equipment and supplies, except as noted in the registration materials. Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with amenities including a sauna and hiking trails with access to Lake Superior.

Early registration is recommended as the program fills quickly. For class info and registration [www.michigan.gov/bow](http://www.michigan.gov/bow), and payments may now be made online as well. For more info contact Sharon Pitz: 906-228-6561 or [pitzs@michigan.gov](mailto:pitzs@michigan.gov). ✧

## More public access to WI private shooting ranges on way

MADISON – More high-quality shooting opportunities for the public are on the way thanks to a Wisconsin DNR cost-share grant program for public and private shooting ranges.- [Read Full Article](#) ✧

## Mukooda Lake closed to lake trout harvest

Mukooda Lake in Voyageurs National Park, MN will be closed to lake trout harvest effective January 15. The rule will be published in the state register prior to the start of the lake trout angling season opener.

While fishing on or in Mukooda Lake waters, angling for lake trout is limited to catch and release only. Any lake trout caught must be immediately returned to the water. It is unlawful for anyone to have in possession, regardless of where taken, any lake trout while on or fishing in these waters. The closure is a temporary measure which will be in effect for 18 months.

The lake contains a self-sustaining population of lake trout that have a unique genetic make-up. This unique strain has persisted for decades in spite of DNR stocking efforts and competition from cool-water species such as northern pike, walleye, and bass.

“The decision to close Mukooda Lake to trout harvest is based on creel survey estimates and observations of fishing pressure,” said Kevin Peterson, International Falls area fisheries supervisor. “The lake's habitat supports slow natural reproduction and efforts to boost the lake trout population through stocking have not been successful. Halting the lake trout harvest will protect the remaining stock and allow us to see how the fishery responds.” ✧

## A look back at natural resources issues, highlights of 2013

MADISON – From the first winter free fishing weekend to a massive wildfire in Douglas County, to the first year of expanded hunting in state parks, to the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative, to the launch of a new DNR free hunting and fishing mobile app and a new Public Lands Atlas, here is a look back at the natural resources issues and highlights of 2013. [Read Full Article](#) ✧

## For your health:

### Exercise is beneficial for forestalling dementia

Exercise may benefit older people with dementia by improving their cognitive functioning and ability to carry out everyday activities, according to a new systematic review published in [The Cochrane Library](#). However, the authors of the review did not see any clear effect of exercise on depression in older people with dementia and say that more evidence is needed to understand how exercise could reduce the burden on family caregivers and health systems.

Due to people living longer, rates of dementia are expected to rise sharply in the coming decades. Dementia affects the brain in different ways and is associated with effects on memory and personality. It is thought that exercise might be useful in treating dementia or slowing its progression, through improvements in the ability to carry out everyday tasks and positive effects on mental processes such as memory and attention, collectively described as cognitive functioning. Exercise may therefore indirectly benefit family caregivers and the healthcare system.

The study updates a Cochrane review carried out in 2008, when only four trials on the effects of exercise in older people with dementia were available. In the updated review, data from eight trials involving 329 people showed that exercise could improve cognitive functioning. Data from six studies involving 289 people showed exercise could improve the ability of older people with dementia to carry out daily activities, such as walking short distances or rising from a chair.

“In our previous review, we were unable to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of exercise in older people with dementia, due to a shortage of appropriate trials,” said researcher, Dorothy Forbes, an Associate Professor of Nursing who works at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta. “Following this new review, we are now able to conclude that there is promising evidence for exercise programs improving cognition and the ability to carry out daily activities. However, we do still need to be cautious about how we interpret these findings.”

The researchers remain cautious because there were substantial differences among the results of individual trials. In addition, they did not find enough evidence to determine whether exercise improved challenging behaviours or depression in older people with dementia. They were unable to come to any conclusions regarding quality of life, or benefits for family caregivers and health systems, because there was not enough evidence.

However, the researchers suggest that if more evidence becomes available, it may help to address the question of whether exercise can help people with dementia remain at home for longer. “Clearly, further research is needed to be able to develop best practice guidelines to enable healthcare providers to advise people with dementia living at home or in institutions,” said Forbes. “We also need to understand what level and intensity of exercise is beneficial for someone with dementia.” ✧

### Inflammation in prostate biopsies indicate reduced prostate cancer risk

Signs of inflammation in a man’s prostate biopsy may indicate he has a reduced risk of subsequently being diagnosed with prostate cancer in a future biopsy. That’s the conclusion of a new study published early online in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society. The study’s investigators say that because of its predictive value, inflammation should be routinely reported in prostate biopsies.

The association between inflammation and prostate cancer is controversial. Some studies suggest anti-inflammatory therapies reduce prostate cancer risk while others have found that prostate inflammation is linked with a lower risk of cancer.

To investigate the issue, Daniel Moreira, MD, of the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System in New Hyde Park, NY, and his colleagues analyzed information regarding 6,238 men aged 50 to 75

years who had prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels between 2.5 to 10ng/mL and who had a prior negative biopsy (indicating the absence of prostate cancer). Patients also underwent additional biopsies two and four years later.

Acute inflammation in biopsies taken at the start of the study was most common in men of younger ages who had lower PSA levels and smaller prostates, while chronic inflammation was associated with older age and larger glands. At the 2-year biopsy, prostate cancer prevalence occurred in 900 participants (14%). Both acute and chronic inflammation was associated with lower prostate cancer risk (a 25% reduced risk with acute inflammation and a 35% reduced risk with chronic inflammation). At the 4-year biopsy, only acute inflammation was associated with a lower prostate cancer risk.

“Given its predictive value, inflammation—and its type and severity—should be routinely reported in prostate biopsies,” said Dr. Moreira. “Also, it is possible that patients with inflammation at baseline biopsy may be followed differently than patients without inflammation at baseline biopsy given their risk of subsequent cancer detection is lower.”

The authors noted inflammation can arise as part of an immune response that occurs when the body recognizes malignant cells as foreign agents, thereby eliminating them before they can become an established tumor. This helps explain why inflammation was linked with lower risk of prostate cancer in their study. If this hypothesis is true, the findings suggest that monitoring and modulating inflammation and the immune response may help in the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer. ✧

## Gary, IN angler takes fishing fight to the feds

Residents of Gary and Griffith, Indiana fight for recreational areas where locals can fish from the shores of Lake Michigan

Silas Sconiers and Stacey Clayton just want to spend their retirement fishing. But for the men, who live in Gary and Griffith just a short distance from Lake Michigan, a fishing trip means driving to East Chicago or Portage.

"Why should I have to leave the city and spend my money when I'm on a fixed income?" Sconiers said. "I've been told I can go to Portage or Hobart, but I feel insulted by that."

Gary has the largest stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline in the region, but has no public fishing spot on the lakeshore.

Sconiers filed a civil rights complaint with the Department of the Interior against Gary early this year. He is alleging Gary lacks recreational services afforded to other cities with majority white populations; that funding is being denied based on race and that the Marquette Plan and the Lake Michigan Coastal Plan do not provide equal opportunities for fishing in minority areas that are provided in nonminority areas.

"I came from Chicago, an African-American community, and with all their problems, access isn't one of them but you come here to a similar city under African-American control and we have no access here at all to this wonderful resource," Clayton said. Sconiers said the funds being spent on the city's lakefront are not truly for the use of its residents.

"They spent \$28 million on the (Marquette Park) pavilion to make it look pretty because they can make money there, but no one who lives in this neighborhood can afford to have any events there," Sconiers said. "We are a Golden Corral community. When our people get married or pass, we can't afford to go there and they know it." Sconiers and Clayton could legally wade into the lake to fish, but neither have the physical ability to do so. Clayton, 59, is confined to a wheelchair due to injuries suffered in a shooting during a robbery. Sconiers, 62, has five herniated discs and is

legally disabled.

The Portage Lakefront Park and Pavilion has ADA accessible fishing, but that involves a 6-mile drive for the men. Even if the men were able, they said dangerous rip currents would dissuade them from wading into the water to fish. They can't afford a boat.

In September, Sconiers, local anglers and representatives from the Lake County Fish and Game Protective Association, Perch America, the Northwest Indiana Steelheaders and the Izaak Walton League of America met at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore with officials from the equal opportunity office of the U.S. Department of the Interior to discuss Sconiers' formal complaint.

Rose Pruitt, equal opportunities programs manager for the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., declined comment on the investigation. "It is not our practice to disclose the specifics of a complaint during the investigative stage," Pruitt said.

Gary's Law Dept. responded to the allegations in a letter to Pruitt in October, saying the city is willing to work with state and federal officials, but does not believe fishing access is currently economically feasible.

The letter explains Gary's lakefront is divided into the recreational section near Marquette Park and the industrial section near Buffington Harbor. The private property owners in Buffington Harbor, "have no affirmative duty or obligation to make their boat docks or property available to the public for deep sea fishing and the city has no control or authority to require these entities to provide access for recreational activities," Niquelle Allen, corporation council, wrote in the letter.

"The city makes every attempt to make recreational facilities and resources available to its citizens," Allen wrote. "However, deep sea

fishing is not a fundamental right that is guaranteed nor is there any city ordinance that requires primary access to the lakefront for deep sea fishing to the public." Sconiers said the response is "unacceptable."

"They told me one administration after the next, 'We'll get you next time.' Pruitt said the complaint is in the investigative stage. A letter of findings will be issued when the investigation is complete. "It's something I'm not going to give up on," Sconiers said. ✧

### Catch more crowded crappies

*Continued from page 13*

Two to three jig and spoon sequences are typically sufficient to milk a hole of its biters. Before leaving, however, Fournier taps the Toad for a final descent. "Let it fall just above the fish, give it a jiggle, pause it about 20 seconds and jig it again," he says. "If that doesn't work, move on."

To be fair, this is just the tip of Fournier's presentational iceberg. He also works swimming hardbaits like the Lindy Darter into the act, especially on deep lakes, as well as in shallow basins offering a decent drop-off. Dropper rigs, too, have their moments. One of his favorites is a Lindy Ice Jig or Toad dangled 6 to 8 inches beneath a spoon. In shallow water, a slow-falling soft plastic bait gets the nod. He especially likes a Lindy Watsit Grub, skin-hooked on a horizontal jig.

Time of day can also be an ally. "Crappies tend to school up and become more active at night," he says. "Sunrise and sunset are also peak activity periods for big crappies."

In the end, he believes the key to making your crappie dreams come true on pressured waters is fishing smarter and working harder than the crowd. Do that and you're well on your way to your best season ever. ✧

# Catch more crowded crappies

by Daniel Quade

Visions of icing slab crappies seldom include crowds of anglers. More often, sweet dreams of icy nirvana center on remote backcountry waters or hidden gems that somehow fly under the masses' radar. However, while untapped fisheries can be dynamite, you can also enjoy banner catches on waters besieged by the bucket brigade.

Panfish fanatic Paul Fournier knows the drill. Years of practicing his craft on hard-hit lakes sprinkled across central Minnesota's Minneapolis-St. Paul megatropolis have left him well versed on tackling pressure-cooker crappies. His finely tuned tactics include a blend of pre-trip recon and refined fishing strategies to ice slabs that elude other anglers.



"Start by doing your homework, so you know as much as possible about a lake before you get there," he said. Prior to an outing, Fournier scours lake maps for trends in depths and structural subtleties, often breaking lakes into one of two categories based on whether it has a deep or shallow basin.

In systems characterized by deep water, crappies often frequent the same locations in early winter as they did in late fall, such as the outside edge of deep weedlines that are adjacent to deep water. The depth of the edge varies by lake, but 10 to 15 feet is a common range on many waters. Often, crappies slide out deeper to gather over nearby soft-bottom basins as winter progresses.

Finding fish in shallow-basin lakes is often a matter of ferreting out the deepest water available. "Depth is relative, but for example, a 20-foot hole in a lake with lots of 12- to 16-

foot water can be a hot zone," he says. In total bathtubs, factors such as well-oxygenated inflows, bottom content changes and subtle differences in weed growth or woody cover can channel fish activity.

Such physical distinctions help guide Fournier's on-ice search efforts, but he also brushes up on the fishery's forage base. Finding out whether the crappies are feasting on insects or eating other fish, including minnows, young-of-the-year perch or even juvenile panfish, also steers him toward potential drop zones. For example, an abundance of food in shallow, still-green vegetation can hold slabs in surprisingly skinny water, offering savvy anglers a shot at unpressured panfish, even while offshore schools suffer wholesale slaughter in mob scenes barely a long cast away.

Once Fournier settles on a likely fishing area, he focuses on primary strike zones comprised of the best structure or cover the spot has to offer. "Examples include the tip of a point extending into deeper water, and an inside turn on a drop-off or weedline," he said.

Rather than punching a hole or two and hunkering down over such a sweet spot, he drills out a 20-hole grid pattern that starts shallow, covers the edge of the break or transition line, and stretches into deep water. Drilling completed, he quietly walks from hole to hole, using sonar to check for fish.

"Multi-crappie 'Christmas trees' are ideal," he grins. "They signal active fish competing for food, a scenario that encourages large crappies to feed."

He cautions, however, that even though the biggest fish may be the first to slide in for a look at your lure, they can be the toughest to trigger. Fournier favors a lengthy jigging rod, say, 36 inches or longer, to keep his silhouette out of the hole. He spools with 4-lb. monofilament mainline, ties on a small ant swivel to limit line twist, and then adds a 2- to 4-foot

leader of 2-lb. fluorocarbon. He notes that even though water clarity dictates leader length, it should always be long enough to prevent sunfish from swarming the swivel.

Presentational options abound, given the near-endless variety of jigs, jigging spoons and other hardbaits at his disposal. Still, Fournier often throws a reliable one-two punch. His first strike is typically a small horizontal-hanging jig like the Lindy Tungsten Toad.

"Since it fishes heavy for its size, it works equally well for targeting deep water off the edge of the break, and for punching through shallow weeds," he says. "Waxies and eurolarvae are common tippings, mostly skin-hooked wacky style, though super-wary slabs may demand the bait be threaded on lengthwise. Plastic baits can be deadly on slab crappies, too, provided you learn how to fish them. Fill up the tub or a sink and practice your moves at home."

His second rod brings slightly heavier metal to the table, in the form of a small Lindy Rattln' Flyer or Frostee Spoon, with waxies strung between the treble tines. Rigged this way, they're hard for fish to pick off the hooks, he says. When fishing either the Toad or a spoon, Fournier's



mindset and jig strokes are similar.

"Fish above the crappies, slowly coaxing them higher," he says. "Subtly work the rodtip back-and-forth so the lure moves from side to side." When a rising crappie stalls out, Fournier drops the jig back down to where he jigged it last. Often, this triggers a follower to dash down and strike.

*Continued on page 12*

## USACE/USFWS information update: CSSC electric dispersal barrier research

As part of the U.S. Army Corps ongoing efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the electric barriers, they have coordinated with the USFWS, to conduct laboratory and field experiments. These experiments assess the potential impacts to fish behavior from barge tows crossing the barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC). The experiments consisted of the following:

- Development of a scale physical model to evaluate the possibility of fish being inadvertently transported across the electric barriers by navigation operations in the CSSC;
- Instrumented barge testing to determine the effects of loaded and unloaded barges crossing the barriers on electric field strength; and
- Observation of fish behavior during barge testing through the use of caged fish and tethered wild fish trials.

USFWS is also evaluating wild fish populations and their behavior within the electric barriers using a dual-frequency identification SONAR (DIDSON) unit, which is an underwater camera. DIDSON is used to evaluate fish populations throughout the entire barrier system, covering the entire gradient of barrier voltages and performing concentrated evaluations directly over the strongest part of the barrier.

The preliminary findings of this research and proposed future actions are summarized in a white paper that will be available on the Chicago District website ([www.lrc.usace.army.mil](http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil)). Additional review and analysis, as well as additional testing, will be required to fully understand the data and any potential impact on barrier operations and navigation in the CSSC.

There is no evidence that Asian carp are bypassing the barriers. Nor is there any indication Asian carp are in the vicinity of the barriers. The closest adult Asian carp found in the Illinois River are about 55 miles from Lake Michigan, and no small Asian carp have been observed closer than 131 miles from Lake Michigan.

The Barrier Research Workgroup, including representatives from the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), USFWS and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR), reviews individual results of barrier research as a collective unit to analyze data, develop a consensus on the meaning and recommend future actions.

Additional lab and field work was conducted, including using DIDSON and nets to capture the fish for identification and measurement to validate results. This data will require additional analysis, but USACE felt it

was important to make stakeholders aware of preliminary findings. Interim reports further describing the DIDSON results are available on the USFWS Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office website ([www.fws.gov/midwest/carterville](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/carterville)). Further research is needed to better understand these findings.

Findings like these are why we continue to monitor the area closely. It presents opportunities to strengthen the barriers we already have in place.

Future research will include a variety of simulations to further evaluate fish behavior, effects of the electrical field on groups of fish and how these may relate to operational protocols of the barriers and navigation in the CSSC. The research will be undertaken by ERDC over a two year period, with priority placed on completing the studies of surrogate fish, group challenges, and encroachment behaviors, as soon as possible.

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC) will continue ongoing initiatives in the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS), which have been effective in controlling Asian carp. As part of these efforts, the USFWS will conduct more fixed DIDSON sampling in 2014. These samples will be taken in the summer or fall months when fish are known to be concentrated in the barrier area. ✧

### **Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

#### **[Attorney general wants carp forums for state](#)**

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller wants the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to include Indiana among sites for public meetings on the GLMRIS report, which have been scheduled this month in four other Great Lakes states and St. Louis.

#### **[Tab to keep Asian carp out of Great Lakes could hit \\$18 billion, federal report says](#)**

The Army Corps of Engineers released its long-awaited report on options for keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, with some of the most potentially effective alternatives possibly taking decades to implement and costing up to \$18 billion.

#### **[Engineering marvel may be needed to stop Asian carp](#)**

Blocking Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes could require an engineering marvel that rivals the reversal of the Chicago River more than a century ago, according to a new federal study that promises to reignite a fierce debate about the region's waterways.

#### **[Indiana keeping an eye on the Deep River Watershed](#)**

Monitoring over the past year for the Deep River Portage Burns Watershed will provide data for a four-year watershed management initiative. The tributaries of Deep River, Deer Creek, Lake George, Turkey Creek and Burns Ditch form one of the largest watersheds in Northwest Indiana that flows into the Great Lakes.

**90% of shooting rampages could be stopped by quick-thinking civilians: expert**

“This tells us that citizens and bystanders have a very real and active role in stopping these events,” Terry Nichols, a former police officer and an assistance director at ALERRT, told [Yahoo News](#). “If we can properly prepare and educate civilians, maybe we can get to where 90 percent are stopped by civilians long before the police arrive.”

**Former Air Force Analyst: Drone Pilots Can't Tell The Difference Between A Shovel And A Weapon**

When you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. And when you're piloting a lethal drone, everyone looks like a dangerous militant. That is, according to a former employee of the U.S. drone program.

**Jesse Jackson Sr.: Duck Dynasty star is worse than Rosa Parks' bus driver**

Jesse Jackson Sr. has a message for Duck Dynasty star Phil Robertson: you're worse than Rosa Parks' bus driver. “At least the bus driver, who ordered Rosa Parks to surrender her seat to a white person, was following state law,” Jackson said. “His statements were uttered freely and openly without cover of the law, within a context of what he seemed to believe was ‘white privilege.’”

**New Taxes Set to Kick In Under Obamacare**

Millions of Americans are facing hidden tax surcharges on their insurance premiums under President Barack Obama's healthcare law as well as new health-related taxes on their income tax bills. The surprise two percent tax on customers for every health plan which increased a monthly premium, is expected to net about \$8 billion for the government in 2014 and increase to \$14.3 billion in 2018.

**Fish swim past electric barrier meant to block Asian carp**

The electric barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal that is considered the last line of defense to stop an Asian carp invasion of Lake Michigan has a problem: Fish can swim through

**Net pen bill signed into law by Gov. Walker**

In Madison, Wis., Governor Scott Walker signed a bill that could mean better returns on Chinooks and perhaps other salmon and trout species down the road.

**New permits for turbines will be good for 30 years**

In one of the nation's biggest clashes between energy production and wildlife interests, the Obama Administration has come down on industry's side by going forward with a federal rule that allows wind-turbine operators to go 30 years without proving at length that their giant machines aren't killing bald eagles and golden eagles.

**Michigan nullifies NDAA's indefinite detention**

This is a great step forward in protecting the basic due process rights of people in Michigan and gives activists there something to build upon. Michigan legislators suggest that the legislation should be expanded to include all people, not just U.S. citizens.

**Judge: DHS Complicit in Human Trafficking that Helps Fund Drug Cartels**

A U.S. federal judge has accused Obama's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of being complicit in helping Mexican drug cartels and felons inside America smuggle illegal aliens into the country. In a court order he signed on Dec. 13, U.S. District Judge

**Bribery, Smuggling: DHS Inspector Reports More Than 7,000 Criminal Complaints Against Employees In First Half Of 2013**

A recently released report from the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security reveals 7,868 complaints of criminal misconduct reported to the OIG in the first half of 2013.

**Study: Food supplies drop in Lakes Huron, Michigan**

Food supplies for fish and other organisms are declining in some areas of the Great Lakes, particularly Lakes Huron and Michigan, according to a newly released scientific report.

**Walker signs bill to fight sea lamprey in Lake Michigan**

To help combat the invasive, eel-like fish, Wis. Gov. Scott Walker signed legislation for Wis. to spend up to \$564,500 in the next two fiscal years on lamprey control efforts

**Ohio says 18 wildlife officers may have been deer hunting, not working**

An investigation by Ohio revealed 18 county officers may have been hunting for deer when they were supposed to be working afield for the Ohio DNR. The investigation began May 9, 2012 prompted by charges in 2012 against Wildlife Officer Allan Wright of

**Debtors' Prisons Make A Comeback In America»**

Cash-strapped municipalities throughout the Nation are wrongheadedly throwing residents into jail for failing to pay court-ordered fines, even when the taxpayer cost of jailing the debtors is higher than letting the fine slide.

End