



## **Congressional leaders step up to protect traditional fishing tackle** *Industry supports the prohibiting of federal regulation of lead fishing tackle*

**Alexandria, VA** – A provision to prohibit federal funds from being used to regulate lead fishing tackle and ammunition under the Toxic Substance Control Act was included in the omnibus federal spending bill recently released. The American Sportfishing Association (ASA), which strongly supports this action, has been working for the past several years on passage of similar legislation that will provide a permanent exemption for traditional fishing tackle.

“We applaud Congressional leadership, and House and Senate appropriators, for protecting the nation’s 60 million anglers from unjustified restrictions on fishing equipment that anglers have safely

used for decades,” said ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman. “On multiple occasions, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been petitioned by anti-fishing organizations to federally ban fishing tackle containing lead based on its impact on wildlife, a position that is not based on sound science.”

Nussman further said, “While the EPA has consistently rejected these petitions, we have advocated all along for a permanent fix to prevent an unnecessary ban from being approved. This temporary legislative fix supports and reinforces the EPA’s previous decisions and will aid us in our efforts toward a permanent solution, hopefully through inclusion

in a Sportsmen’s Package bill in the 114th Congress. Continuing efforts to set aside the EPA’s rulings through petitions and lawsuits demonstrate a clear need for a permanent, legislative solution.”

The spending bill’s text exempting lead fishing tackle and ammunition from regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act can be [found here](#). More information on ASA’s continuing efforts against bans on lead fishing tackle can be found on [ASA’s issue webpage](#). The omnibus spending bill, which is a short-term measure to keep the federal government operating for the near future, is expected to be signed into law in the coming days. ✧



## ***Merry Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous New Year***



## **High School Fishing picks Alabama and Pickwick for Finals**

**PONCA CITY, Okla.** – The Bass Federation (TBF) and affiliated Student Angler Federation (SAF) announce that the prestigious High School Fishing World Finals will make a venue change in 2015 to Florence, Ala., on the legendary Pickwick Reservoir, following a successful five-year inaugural run for the event at Arkansas’ Lake Dardanelle.

The 2015 championship, July 6 - 11, is expected to draw more than 100

teams from 25 states.

High School Fishing’s World Finals present one of the most unique and fair formats found in competitive fishing today. It is designed to give every team an equal chance to advance to Saturday’s final round of 21 teams. Competition begins with anglers competing over the first two days against others from their own states. The top two teams from each state then advance on to the semi-final round on day three.

Those who did not qualify for the semi-finals are placed in a consolation round with yet another chance to still make it to the final day. Regardless of where a team finishes, everybody enjoys their time during championship week. Online registration for the 2015 championship opens January 15 at [www.highschoolfishing.org](http://www.highschoolfishing.org). Additional details about the event and future updates can also be found on the same web site. ✧

## Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop

Registration is now open for the annual Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop! The Workshop provides the chance to learn about the reasons behind Lake Michigan's changing fisheries, and also an opportunity to share your thoughts with researchers, fishery managers, and other anglers.

This year, presenters will include representatives from Michigan DNR, USFWS, USGS, NOAA, MSU, and the Little Traverse Band of Odawa Indians. Featured topics will include the mass marking of Chinook salmon and lake trout, recent success in rearing and stocking native cisco and a radical change in the diet of alewife.

**Date: January 10, 2015, 8:30-3:30 PM.** Baymont Inn & Suites, 4079 West U.S. Highway 10, Ludington, MI 49431

### Registration:

Full-day event including hot buffet lunch; cost is \$25.00. Pre-registration required by January 2, 2015.

Online pre-registration with credit card is preferred. Use this link to register online:

<http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder=LudingtonFisheryWksp> ✧

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## IL Conservation Police arrest commercial fisherman for sale of live Asian carp

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Illinois Conservation Police have arrested a commercial fisherman for the unlawful possession and sale of 1,800 pounds of live Asian bighead and silver carp. Randall E. Watters of Hamburg, IL was arrested October 7, 2014. He was charged in Calhoun County for the Unlawful Sale of Live Injurious Species (Class 3 Felony) and Unlawful Possession of Live Injurious Species (Class 'A' Misdemeanor). Ronald D. Watters of Hamburg, IL was ticketed for possession of live bighead carp.

“Commercial fishermen play a key role in our efforts to control Asian carp, and we make every provision to allow them to deliver fresh product to processing plants,” said Illinois DNR Director Marc Miller. “However, our Conservation Police Officers take the job of preventing the spread of invasive species seriously, and anyone who attempts to transport or sell live Asian carp will be cited.”

Rules governing “injurious” species, such as Asian bighead and silver carp, are designed to curtail the spread of these species. The complete rule can be found here: <http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jca/admincode/017/01700805sections.html>. By state law, fish are considered to be live if they are held in a container with water, are held in a solution of salt, electrolyte, or other substance, or combination to promote health or longevity. The fish cannot be maintained by the addition of oxygen or compressed or supplied air to keep them alive in captivity.

A Class 3 Felony is punishable by up to 2-5 years imprisonment plus one-year mandatory supervised release, and up to \$25,000 in fines or restitution. A Class A Misdemeanor is punishable by up to one year in prison, fines of up to \$2,500, or restitution ✧



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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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## DNR, feds investigate Oregon company shipping illegal bait into Michigan

A bait supplier in Oregon has pled guilty and paid a \$2,000 settlement for shipping uncertified Pacific herring bait into Michigan. The uncertified bait poses a disease risk to Michigan waters as it is a known carrier of viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSV).

In May, the Department of Natural Resources' Great Lakes Enforcement Unit began investigating a tip that a sports shop in Saugatuck, Michigan, had received a shipment of Pacific herring from Crowes Bait in Oregon. Earlier in 2014, Crowes Bait had contacted the DNR Fisheries Division to inquire about Michigan's requirements to ship Pacific herring into the state. When informed the bait would first have to be treated and certified as VHS-free by Michigan standards, Crowes Bait indicated to the DNR it would be too costly to sell the Pacific herring bait in Michigan.

Crowes Bait subsequently was sold to a new owner. The previous owner, Mike Culver, proceeded to open a new business called Oregon Bait, and then sold the Pacific herring bait under the Crowes Bait label.

That tip led to an investigation of the Saugatuck sports shop, where conservation officers from the Great Lakes Enforcement Unit and from

District 7 seized 273 packages of Pacific herring sold by Crowes Bait in containers that were labeled "worms." Seized invoices provided evidence of the company name being changed from Crowes Bait to Oregon Bait after the company had contacted the department to inquire about certification standards.

DNR Great Lakes Enforcement Unit conservation officers contacted agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and requested assistance to conduct interviews with officials from Oregon Bait in Oregon. Federal agents interviewed officials at the company who admitted to shipping the uncertified bait into Michigan in falsely labeled containers. Based on the investigation conducted by officers from the Michigan DNR's Great Lakes Enforcement Unit, NOAA and the USFWS, NOAA's Fisheries Office of law enforcement unit charged Oregon Bait and a \$2,000 settlement was assessed.

The DNR also was assisted by the Molecular Ecology Lab at Michigan State University, where verification was made through DNA analysis that the bait shipped into Michigan was Pacific herring.

The sports shop in Saugatuck was not charged as the supplier had provided false information to the sports shop indicating that it was Michigan-certified bait.

"This case is a great example of how our Great Lakes Enforcement Unit works every day to protect the Great Lakes from disease and aquatic invasive species threats," said DNR Law Enforcement Chief Gary Hagler. "Our officers responded quickly to this threat and helped lead a methodical investigation that resulted in a prosecution of a bait supplier trying to work around the rules—rules that were put in place to help protect our fisheries resource from further spread of VHS."

VHS is an extremely serious viral disease of fresh and saltwater fish. It recently has spread into the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. VHS virus has been found in Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan and the St. Lawrence River in New York. The virus also has infected several inland lakes in New York, Michigan and Wisconsin. The disease can cause large-scale fish kills and have severe economic consequences. For more information on the disease, go to [www.michigan.gov/vhs](http://www.michigan.gov/vhs). ✧

## Fishing remains a popular family activity both adults and kids can enjoy

Despite the modern draw of video games and organized sports, the attraction of the wild outdoors and all it has to offer remains as powerful as ever as evidenced by the number of anglers who shared the water with a son, daughter or other child in the past year. Whether spending the day in the comfort of a boat or clutching a rod along a shady bank, fishing remains a popular activity for all ages with up to 66% of active anglers reporting they took a child fishing in the past 12 months, according to a recent poll by [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com).

Angling is a great way to enjoy quality one-on-one time with a young person, but it's also an excellent group activity, too. When asked how many children each angler had taken

fishing in the past 12 months, 20% said they had taken a single child, while 21% took at least two. Nearly 10% reported taking three children fishing, 6% took four and an impressive 10% took five or more kids fishing in the past year. Thirty-four percent of those surveyed said they had not taken any children fishing.

"Taking a kid fishing is one of life's more rewarding efforts. Not only is it good for the child and family, it generates a future generation committed to conserving fish and the outdoors," says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com), [ShooterSurvey.com](http://ShooterSurvey.com).

[com](http://com) and [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com). "We encourage all anglers and the fishing community to get involved in youth fishing efforts and programs such as the RBFF's Take Me Fishing campaign and others."

Indeed, it looks like an activity that many angling families do enjoy together as 78% of those who reported taking a kid fishing said those children were in some way related to them. Forty-four percent were a son or daughter, 17% were a grandchild and 17% were a niece, nephew or other relative. Twenty-two percent said the child or children they took fishing were not related to them with 5% of those took them fishing as part of an organized Scouting, church or similar activity. ✧

## Feds to focus in on aquatic nuisance species in area

As a next step in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS), the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) has directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to proceed with a formal evaluation of potential aquatic nuisance species (ANS) control technologies. The focus of this analysis will be to reduce the risk of interbasin transfer of ANS to the maximum extent possible through the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) in the vicinity of Brandon Road Lock and Dam.

The GLMRIS-Brandon Road effort will assess the viability of establishing a single point to control the one-way, upstream transfer of aquatic nuisance species from the Mississippi River Basin into the Great Lakes Basin near the Brandon Road Lock and Dam located in Joliet, Illinois.

As strategic control of ANS is a shared responsibility among

federal, state, regional and public stakeholders, the GLMRIS Team will continue to collaborate with agency and nongovernmental partners to support an integrated management approach to control Mississippi River ANS transfer into the Great Lakes. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness of an ANS control program, nonstructural measures, including monitoring and biological, educational, and management controls, must be incorporated into any structural solution. This management strategy requires the close coordination of a variety of local, state and federal agencies to implement actions commensurate with their resources and authorities, toward achieving a comprehensive ANS solution.

USACE is concurrently announcing its intent to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), accept public comments, and host public scoping meetings to help shape

the effort at the Brandon Road site. Input is being solicited to refine the scope of the Brandon Road effort, such that the analysis focuses on significant issues, as well as eliminates issues that are not significant from further detailed evaluation. Significant issues for GLMRIS-Brandon Road could include impacts to native species, commercial navigation, water conveyance, water supply, and more.

Public scoping meetings were held in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to gain broad-based public and community input. The first of these meetings was in Lemont, IL on December 6, 2014 at Argonne National Laboratory. The second meeting was in Chicago on December 9, 2014 at The University of Chicago Gleacher Center. Comments will be accepted until January 16, 2015. You may submit a comment online at the GLMRIS website. ✧

## Sea Grant awards \$2.6 million for new aquaculture projects

### Evaluations of new technologies for raising yellow perch fingerlings

NOAA Sea Grant announced new grants totaling \$2.6 million for 15 projects to support the development of environmentally and economically sustainable ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes aquaculture. Through university, state and other partnerships, Sea Grant Programs will supplement the federal funding with an additional \$1.4 million in non-federal matching funds, bringing the total investment to about \$4 million for new national projects in 2014. These new research projects are in addition to multi-year extension and technology transfer projects selected in FY13.

The U.S. imports over 90% of the seafood we consume, about half of that is farm-raised fish or aquaculture. Current estimates of U.S. aquaculture

production, both freshwater and marine, are valued at \$1.3 billion annually. This supports only about 5% of our domestic seafood demand.

“Domestic aquaculture creates jobs and helps meet the nation’s demand for finfish and shellfish,” said Gene Kim, Ph.D., Program Director for Aquaculture for NOAA Sea Grant. “These grants support research that will produce tangible results to ensure a safe and sustainable supply of farmed seafood now and for future generations.”

Sea Grant has been involved in research to support sustainable aquaculture since its inception in 1966. This year’s National Strategic Investment competition focused on aquaculture research projects that will have immediate beneficial impacts

by: informing regulatory decisions; increasing production technology, or understanding the socio-economic issues that limit aquaculture development. Sea Grant supports NOAA aquaculture partners in NOAA Fisheries and NOAA Ocean Service with its academic and industry research partners. Sea Grant’s built-in network of extension agents and specialists along the coasts will provide this research directly to the local communities and small businesses that need it most. [For a full list of funded projects click here.](#)

The deadline for applications is 2:00 pm January 30, 2015. DEC anticipates announcing grant awards in March 2015. ✧

## Many hunters still enjoy small game and upland hunting

With more than 10 million hunters pursuing the white-tailed deer in the United States, according to the USFWS, this iconic creature reigns supreme as the most hunted species of game animal in North America. Walk by the newsstand in the fall and glance at the covers of outdoor magazines and it would seem deer and other big game are virtually all that is of interest.

But that perception would be wrong. In fact, according to a recent study by [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com), about half of sportsmen surveyed said they had hunted small or upland game in the past year. Species such as squirrels, rabbits, quail, pheasants and similar furred and feathered game still draw hunters into our nation's fields and forests by the millions every year.

"Small game and upland hunting often served as a hunter's first experiences pursuing game before deer, turkey and elk populations became so plentiful; and for many hunters, they still are. With abundant opportunities available to hunt various small game and birds, it would seem interest among many sportsmen is still there," says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com), [ShooterSurvey.com](http://ShooterSurvey.com) and [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com). "For those not pursuing small game, by promoting such hunting we may be able to help expand their hunting opportunities and fun, and thereby increase overall hunting activity."

And what is the type of firearm of choice for these small game hunters? [HunterSurvey.com](http://HunterSurvey.com) found the low-recoiling rimfire in either .22 caliber or .17 caliber remains a favorite among these sportsmen with 67 percent of those surveyed reporting they used them when hunting. Shotguns remain tops for bird hunting, to no surprise. ✧

## DEC advises backcountry visitors of winter conditions in the Adirondacks

*Winter recreational opportunities abound with proper preparation and precautions*

The recent snowstorm provided great conditions for winter outdoor recreation in the Adirondack backcountry. Backcountry visitors should be prepared with proper clothing and equipment for snow, ice and cold to ensure a safe and enjoyable winter experience.

Snow depths range from 6 - 20" or more. The deepest snows are in the eastern Adirondacks with the thinner depths in the western portion. Snow depths are deeper in the higher elevations like the High Peaks and other mountains over 3,000 feet.

Seasonal access roads are closed. Motor vehicles should not be driving on seasonal access roads that serve as snowmobile trails in the winter such as the Moose River Plains Road.

Most gates and designated snowmobile trails are or will be open by the weekend. Snowmobilers should check on local trail conditions before heading out. Skiers and snowshoers using designated snowmobile trails should keep to the side to allow safe passage of snowmobiles. Snowmobiles should slow down when passing skiers and snowshoers.

Visitors to the Eastern High Peaks are required to use snowshoes or cross-country skis for their safety and the safety of other backcountry users. It is strongly recommended that visitors to other parts of the Adirondacks do the same.

Snowshoes or skis ease travel on snow and prevent "post holing", which can ruin trails and cause sudden falls resulting in injuries. Ice crampons should be carried for use on icy mountaintops and other exposed areas. In addition, backcountry visitors should follow these safety guidelines:

- Dress properly with layers of wool and fleece (NOT COTTON!) clothing: a wool or fleece hat, gloves or mittens, wind/rain resistant outer wear, and winter boots.
- Carry a day pack with the following contents: Ice axe, plenty of

food and water, extra clothing, map and compass, first-aid kit, flashlight/headlamp, sun glasses, sun-block protection, ensolite pads, stove and extra fuel, and bivy sack or space blankets.

- Carry plenty of food and water. Eat, drink and rest often. Being tired, hungry or dehydrated makes you more susceptible to hypothermia.
- Check weather before entering the woods—if the weather is poor, postpone your trip.
- Be aware of weather conditions at all times—if the weather worsens, head out of the woods.
- Know the terrain and your physical capabilities—it takes more time and energy to travel through snow.
- Never travel alone and always inform someone of your intended route and return time.

Ice has only recently formed on most waters especially on large waterbodies. Alternating periods of freezing and thawing have occurred over the past month weakening any ice that is present. Always check ice thickness before traveling across it. Avoid ice over running water, near inlets & outlet and near boathouses & docks—especially those with "bubblers" or other ice prevention devices. Ice that holds snow will not hold the weight of a snowmobile at this time and may not hold the weight of a person.

Skiers and snowshoers are reminded that the Avalanche Pass Slide in the Eastern High Peaks is closed to public recreation of any type during the winter. Call the DEC Forest Ranger Emergency Dispatch at 518-891-0235 to report lost or injured people or other emergencies.

The DEC Adirondack Trail Information web page, [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7865.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7865.html), provides current trail condition information and links to current weather, snow cover and other important information. ✧

## Violent crime down 37% over past 20 years

The FBI has released its annual Crime in the United States report, revealing the country in 2013 saw the violent crime rate fall another 5.1% from the previous year, so it is now at its lowest since 1978. Delving a little deeper, the murder and manslaughter rate fell 4.4% to the lowest level since 1968. The continuing decrease in violent crime—down 37.4% over the past 20 years—comes at a time when firearms ownership has increased across America, a fact that utterly contradicts the mantra of anti-gun groups that more guns equals more crime.

While the crime rate has been dropping steadily for more than the last 20 years, the number of firearms in the hands of law-abiding Americans has been rising dramatically. A new Gallup survey recently found 63% of Americans believe that having a gun in the house makes it a safer place, a doubling of that number since 2000. This result flies in the face of what anti-gun organizations have been trying to convince the public for many years now. ✧

## Chicagoland Fishing, Travel & Outdoor Expo, January 29-February 1, 2015

The Schaumburg Convention Center is easy to reach. Take I-90 to Route 53 North to East Algonquin Road (Route 62) West to North Thoreau Drive to the Convention Center. (The GPS address is 1551 North Thoreau Drive, Schaumburg, IL 60173.) Box office admission is \$12.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children ages 5 to 11. Children under age five are admitted free with a paying adult. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.sportshows.com](http://www.sportshows.com). Show hours are Thursday, noon to 8:00 p.m.; Friday, noon to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ✧

## Feds warn US military members to scrub social media accounts over ISIS attack concerns

Federal officials are urging current and former members of the military to review their online identifying information and do away with anything on social media — such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Flickr](#), [MySpace](#), [Google Plus](#), [Tagged](#), etc, that could draw attention amid threats that Islamic State terror sympathizers could target them in the homeland.

A joint bulletin issued December 1<sup>st</sup>, by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security suggests that ISIS sympathizers in the U.S. could be preparing attacks copying events that took place in Canada, where two uniformed Canadian soldiers were killed in separate attacks last month.

“The FBI and DHS recommend that current and former members of the military review their online social media accounts for any information that might serve to attract the attention of ISIL [ISIS] and its supporters,” according to a copy of the document obtained by ABC News.

The bulletin states that overseas FBI investigations have turned up examples of terror suspects “assessing like-minded individuals who are willing and capable of conducting attacks against current and former U.S.-based members of the United States military.”

Federal officials issued similar warnings for U.S. military personnel in October.

“Soldiers, Government Civilians and Family Members are reminded to be vigilant of their surroundings and report suspicious activities to their respective military or local law enforcement,” said a bulletin issued at the time. The Pentagon said the potential attacks could occur with “little-or-no advanced warning”, and that employees’ family members also could be targeted. ✧

## DNR reminds parents of ice danger to children

A mix of warm and cold weather across Minnesota and other areas of the Midwest has created inconsistent ice on lakes, rivers and ponds. DNR officials are warning parents to keep an eye on their children as they visit friends and family who live near bodies of water.

“Kids are adventurous and want to go out and play while mom and dad are cooking or visiting with friends. Right now, a thin coating of ice has formed on many lakes and ponds. An inch or two of ice is not safe,” said Capt. Todd Kanieski, DNR regional enforcement manager. He added children should not go out on the ice without adult supervision, even when conditions improve.

“Parents should also tell their children to stay away from any frozen water bodies around the home and that no ice is ever 100 percent safe,” Kanieski said. The DNR recommends anyone heading out on the ice should: carry a set of ice picks, check with a local bait shop or resort—ask about ice conditions—and measure the ice.

DNR clear ice thickness recommendations are:

- 4 inches for walking.
- 5 inches for a snowmobile or ATV.
- 8-12 inches for a car.
- 12-15 inches for a medium-sized truck.

Visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/thickness.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/thickness.html) for more info on ice thickness guidelines, ✧

## Hunt for Veterans with Disabilities

IDNR will host a pheasant hunt for veterans with disabilities at Ramsey Lake State Park on Tuesday, December 23. Veterans with disabilities interested in participating in the hunt should contact the Ramsey Lake site office for more information by calling 618-423-2215 or by email at [tim.pryor@Illinois.gov](mailto:tim.pryor@Illinois.gov). ✧

## Wired Arrow Outdoors' owners, pro-staff, charged with illegal harvest of 18 deer

### Illinois Conservation Police document 134 wildlife violations

SPRINGFIELD, IL – An Illinois Conservation Police investigation into the Wired Arrow Outdoors television show has resulted in the company's owners, pro-staff members and guests being charged with 134 wildlife violations, including the taking of 18 deer illegally in Illinois. After viewing videos of hunts, Conservation Police determined that hunting and filming were conducted on properties in the Chicago region without permission from landowners making hunting permits invalid. Hunting and filming allegedly took place on properties owned by several private companies, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and the Village of Lansing.

During the investigation, it was determined the pro-staff members had unlawfully harvested a total of 18 white-tailed deer, including 10 bucks and eight does, nearly all of which were aired on the Wired Arrow program. On September 16, 2014, a joint operation involving several state and federal agencies was conducted to interview all pro-staff members who had previously hunted in Illinois.

Cooperating agencies included the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Missouri Department of Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Seized during the joint operation were eight unlawfully-taken white-tailed deer heads, one set of antlers attached to a skullcap, and one unlawfully-taken turkey fan, beard, and spurs. Charges include violations documented from the 2012 and 2013 deer seasons.

"The Illinois Conservation Police will aggressively investigate whenever someone violates hunting laws, violates another's private property rights, or otherwise tries to exploit Illinois' natural resources at the expense of law-abiding hunters," said Rafael Gutierrez, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Chief of Law Enforcement.

"Hunting is a great privilege to be cherished and respected," said IDNR Director Marc Miller. "Those who violate laws intended to protect Illinois' wildlife resources and take game illegally will face the full consequences of the law."

The names of those charged and a list of violations follows:

**David T. Brugger** - Co-owner of Wired Arrow; Total Violations (42)

**Jessica E. Stoner** - Pro-Staff; Total Violations (10)

**Ryan T. Ederer** - Co-Owner of Wired Arrow; Total Violations (39)

**Nathan C. Fahndrich** - Pro-Staff; Total Violations (21)

**Joseph M. Cater** - Pro-Staff; Total Violations (6)

**Wade R. Childs** - Pro-Staff; Total Violations (6)

**Jeremy F. Howard** - Pro-Staff; Total Violations (4)

**Michael W. Porter** – Guest; Total Violations (3)

**Susan J. Porter** – Guest; Total Violations (3)

Assisting Agencies include the Michigan DNR, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Missouri Dept of Conservation, Ohio DNR, the USFWS, Union Pacific Railroad Police, Cook County Forest Preserve Police, and the Lansing Police Department ✧

## Certain vehicles no longer allowed on snowmobile trails

The Minnesota DNR reminds snowmobilers that only snowmobiles can operate on the state's grant-in-aid trail system. Due to a change this year in the way a snowmobile is legally defined, certain vehicles are no longer allowed on the trail. The new definition of a snowmobile no longer includes all-terrain vehicles (ATV) modified with aftermarket ski and track kits, said 1st Lt. Pat Znajda, DNR enforcement district supervisor in Baudette.

"The legal definition of a snowmobile is a self-propelled vehicle originally manufactured and designed for travel

on snow or ice steered by skis or runners," he said.

Snowmobiles do not include vehicles equipped with aftermarket ski and track configurations such as an ATV, an off-highway motorcycle, an off-road vehicle, a mini truck, a utility task vehicle, vans with tracks and skis and some bombardiers.

The grant-in-aid trail program is a cooperative effort between the DNR, local governments, local snowmobile organizations, and private landowners who provide the majority of Minnesota's 22,000 miles of snowmobile trails.

Funded through snowmobile registration and snowmobile state trail sticker fees and gas taxes, the grant-in-aid program helps local groups and clubs develop and maintain trails. A snowmobile state trail sticker or a registration/trail sticker combination decal is required when operating on grant-in-aid trails.

Minnesota's state and grant-in-aid snowmobile trails are open now through the end of March. For more info, see the snowmobile laws, rules and regs at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/regulations/snowmobile/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/regulations/snowmobile/index.html). ✧

## Upper Red Lake walleye regulations more restrictive this winter season

Walleye regulations will be more restrictive on Upper Red Lake following record walleye harvests the past winter and summer, according to the Minnesota DNR.

Effective December 1, anglers can only keep three walleye, and the possession limit is also three. Anglers must immediately release all walleye from 17- to 26-inches. Only one walleye in possession may be longer than 26 inches.

“More restrictive walleye regulations are not an indication of any biological problems with the walleye population on Upper Red Lake,” said Gary Barnard, Bemidji area fisheries supervisor. “The current walleye fishery is in excellent shape, but the great fishing has attracted considerably more angling pressure, which resulted in walleye harvest exceeding the safe harvest range for the first time since walleye angling reopened in 2006.”

The DNR and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa jointly developed a harvest plan for Red Lake’s walleye stocks in 2006 prior to reopening the fishery that governs walleye harvest on an annual basis. The plan allows for some excess harvest in an individual year, but requires a regulation adjustment to manage harvest back within a target range on a three-year average. ✧

## 2015 Winter Free Fishing Weekend

The 2015 Michigan Winter Free Fishing Weekend will be held Saturday, February 14, and Sunday, February 15. As part of these weekends, all fishing license fees are waived for two days with residents and out-of-state visitors allowed to enjoy fishing on both inland and Great Lakes’ waters for all species of fish during their respective open seasons. Please note all other regulations still apply during that time. ✧

## MN Parks and Trails Legacy Committee seeks applicants

*Applications due by Monday, Dec. 22*

Minnesota is seeking qualified applicants to serve on the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee. The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee plays a critical role in helping achieve the vision Minnesotans have for use of the Parks and Trails Legacy Funds. The plan can be found at [www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund/plan](http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund/plan).

The committee is made up of 17 members. The committee has a mixture of park and trail professionals and citizens. Committee members should have expertise in two or more of the four strategic pillars of the plan:

- Connect people and the outdoors.
- Acquire land and create opportunities.
- Take care of what we have.
- Coordinate among partners.

Terms are two years with the option of serving two terms. Meetings are scheduled every two months and are located around the state and can be attended remotely. Complete the application form online: ([www.legacy.leg.mn/parks-and-trails-legacy-advisory-committee-member-application](http://www.legacy.leg.mn/parks-and-trails-legacy-advisory-committee-member-application)) or send applications to Darin Newman, DNR, Box 39, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155; email [darin.newman@state.mn.us](mailto:darin.newman@state.mn.us). ✧

## Resident Archery Deer & Fall Turkey permits

Illinois Archery Deer and Illinois Archery Fall Turkey seasons are open through January 18, 2015. Resident combination archery deer permits, resident antlerless-only archery deer permits, and resident archery fall turkey hunting permits are available over-the-counter from DNR Direct license and permit vendors. Find a vendor near you at this link: <http://dnr.illinois.gov/DNRDirectMonitor/VendorListing.aspx>. ✧

## Mille Lacs open to pike spearing; walleye regulation unchanged

Dark-house spearing of northern pike will be allowed at Mille Lacs Lake for the first time since the winter of 1982-83. Anglers and spearers can keep 10 northern pike, of which only one may be longer than 30 inches. Anglers also will be able to fish for northern pike for a longer period of time this winter. The close of the northern pike angling season will be extended from mid-February to the last Sunday in March.

“With the high number of northern pike under 30 inches, we’re providing more opportunity to harvest these surplus fish,” said Rick Bruesewitz, DNR Aitkin area fisheries supervisor. The lake’s walleye fishing regulations will not change this winter.

Anglers can continue to keep two walleye from 18- to 20-inches, except one out of the two can be longer than 28 inches.

Anglers may harvest smallmouth bass from the opener until the last Sunday in February. Anglers may keep six fish, only one of which may be longer than 18". For more info: [www.mndnr.gov/millelacslake](http://www.mndnr.gov/millelacslake). ✧

## Bill would protect rights of hunters and sportsmen

The National Shooting Sports Foundation supports the **Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act** for FY15 and strongly encourages a Yes vote. The NSSF supports this legislation because it protects the rights of hunters and sportsmen, not Washington bureaucrats, to choose the ammunition they want for hunting and target shooting, by preventing the EPA from banning traditional ammunition made with lead components (95% of all ammunition made and sold). Contact your member of Congress at **202-224-3121** and ask them to vote **YES** on the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (H.R. 83). ✧

## DEC accepting applications for Adirondack and Catskill smart growth grants

Adirondack Park and Catskill Park communities and organizations can now apply for \$800,000 in Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grants for smart growth projects, state Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens announced.

“The Adirondack and Catskill Parks are uniquely composed of public parklands and private property, home to thousands of residents and dozens of communities,” said Commissioner Martens. “These smart growth grants will help communities grow in a sustainable fashion that leverages the terrific assets of the Parks while bringing economic benefits to the regions.”

Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, these grants support implementation of key projects, actions and strategies identified in local plans developed by Adirondack Park and Catskill Park communities in pursuit of smart growth. DEC’s Smart Growth Implementation Grants Program is modeled after the national “smart growth” movement, which promotes growth that harmonizes economic development with protection of the natural and built environment.

The funding includes \$400,000 dedicated to each of the Parks. The grants will be focused on smart growth implementation projects within hamlets, villages and town centers. Projects can include capital improvements, environmentally sound economic development and organizational capacity-building to advance key projects.

The two separate Requests for Application (RFAs) are available through the NYS Grants Gateway at [www.grantsgateway.ny.gov](http://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov). DEC sent the RFA sent to more than 130 units of local governments in the Parks posted on its website. DEC will again partner with the Department of State and the Adirondack Park Agency in carrying out the program, building on the success of previous rounds of funding that focused on planning projects.

The Adirondack Park is America’s largest, and one of the oldest, state parks in the country. Under Governor Cuomo, New York State’s commitment to the Park has never been stronger; DEC is working with local officials and other stakeholders in the Park to improve the economy and community livability in the Park. Unlike most traditional parks, the landscape within the Adirondack Park is composed of about 50 percent private lands. It is the home of 130,000 permanent residents, more than 115 municipal governments and dozens of hamlets that help define the character and culture of the park.

The Adirondack Park grants seek to capitalize on the collaborative planning efforts of communities and organizations in the Park. Cooperation among Adirondack residents and regional organizations in the Common Ground Alliance and the Adirondack Partnership has created consensus around regional priorities. The first two rounds of Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth grant projects included extensive planning, visioning and strategizing. As a result, the Park has a unified economic development strategy and many communities now have plans and projects that are ready for implementation.

The Catskill Park was created in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to protect this mountainous and scenic region. The Catskill Park consists of 705,000 acres, almost half of which are “forever wild” lands of the Catskill Forest Preserve. In addition, the City of New York holds approximately 80,000 acres in the region. The area offers hundreds of miles of hiking trails and fishing on its fabled waterways. The Park serves as watershed, recreation area, and ecological and scenic reserve. As regional development pressures on Park communities increase, this program is designed to reinforce the assets of the villages and hamlets and help preserve the heritage of the Catskill Park. ✧

## Venison donations provide 11 million meals to the needy

For food banks nationwide, acquiring protein is a challenge because of the high cost of meat. Fortunately, hunters help make up the shortfall with generous donations of protein-rich venison that provide 11 million meals annually to the less fortunate.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that, thanks to hunters, an estimated 2.8 million pounds of game meat makes its way each year to food pantries, church kitchens and shelters and onto the plates of those in need.

With one deer able to feed up to 200 people, it’s easy to see how important donations of hunter-harvested venison are to charitable food providers. Last year in Missouri, for example, 4,500 hunters donated more than 227,000 pounds of venison through a state program.

The NSSF video called [Share Your Harvest](#) encourages hunters to contribute some portion of their harvest this hunting season. Many states have at least one organization that will accept donations of venison or other game meat and ensure it is properly processed and reaches individuals and families in need of a nutritious meal. The NSSF website [Hunters Feed](#) can assist hunters in finding a charitable food provider, and your state wildlife agency, local fish and game club or food pantry can help as well. Various donation guidelines may apply, so it’s best to check with the organization or processor before bringing in your game.

If you’re not a hunter and wish to be part of this caring effort, most organizations will accept donations to help pay for butchering and other services. The tradition of hunters donating deer and other game for charitable purposes is longstanding, and the impact of that generosity is told in NSSF’s infographic, [Hunters Feed Those in Need](#). ✧

## Federal warrant offers background on Dan's Fish case

A federal search warrant has shed light on why Wisconsin DNR agents descended on Dan's Fish Inc. in Sturgeon Bay November 5.

According to the federal search warrant application filed November 3 in U.S. District Court Eastern District of Wisconsin, Dan Schwarz, the owner of Dan's Fish Inc. and connected businesses, knowingly violated the Lacey Act, a federal wildlife statute. Schwarz allegedly "knowingly received, acquired, purchased, sold, transported or exported" walleye and lean lake trout over \$350 and knowingly "made or submitted a false record involving the sale or purchase of fish valued at over (\$350), which had been or were intended to be transported in interstate commerce."

Since the news broke, multiple agencies have been tightlipped about why DNR officials visited Dan's Fish. The USFWS and the DNR referred all questions to the U.S. Attorney's office for the Western District of Michigan. Kaye Hooker, public information officer for the U.S. Attorney's Western District, did not return calls asking for comment. Schwarz also did not return calls; when the DNR and other agencies came to the business last week, the company released a statement that it "will cooperate fully with the ongoing investigation to root out any regulatory violations" and that "no local restaurant or wholesale buyer is part of this regulatory issue."

According to the 31-page search warrant application, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement Special Agent Steve Stoiniski had been investigating "illegal trafficking of fish resources from the Great Lakes."

USFWS, as part of its investigation, established the "covert business" Upper Peninsula North Fish Co. on the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) Reservation around August 2012. According to the warrant, the investigation was prompted by "numerous sources" stating lake trout, lake sturgeon and walleye were being harvested

illegally in large numbers.

The storefront primarily bought wholesale fish but also sold resale. During the investigation agents posing as North Fish employees made more than 550 purchases of fish. Approximately "400 purchases involved fish that were illegal in some manner."

The storefront closed in November 2013, but agents continued to pose as employees and make fish purchases until September 2014. Agents kept audio recordings from many of their dealings with Schwarz and at least one of his associates. Agents allege he knowingly purchased illegally caught walleyes, lean lake trout and other fish.

The federal agents began selling to Dan's Fish in October 2012, according to the warrant. Between October 29, 2012, and May 21, 2014, agents sold to Schwarz's company on approximately 51 occasions. This amounted to 94,223 pounds of fish, of which 44,500 pounds were illegal. Illegal fish refers to fish "sold or transported in violation of either tribal or Michigan state law." Schwarz's company paid \$46,000 for the illegal fish.

According the application some of the fish sold was purchased from commercially licensed fisherman, which is illegal under KBIC tribal law.

On one occasion Special Agent Chris Aldrich met with Schwarz's employee Andy Stuth in St. Ignace, Mich., to pick up illegal walleye. In a recorded conversation between Aldrich and Stuth, the agent reportedly told Stuth "the fishermen he buys from are not allowed to sell walleye." Stuth allegedly responded, "It's a touchy subject. It's different if they are killing thousands and thousands ..." Aldrich later tells Stuth not to say where he got the walleye from.

Stuth allegedly told him, "We have to tell the DNR every month what we get and they never say anything." Stuth goes on to say he did

not think buyers would get in trouble but the fishermen who take the fish would.

Agents also sold Dan's Fish untagged trout. The illegal trout were also purchased from KBIC tribal fisherman. Between May 3, 2013, and July 11, 2013, agents sold to Dan's Fish on 16 occasions.

Of the 11,256 pounds of fish sold, approximately 3,600 pounds were "not tagged as required by the KBIC tribal code."

The complaint also alleges illegal walleye was purchased from an unlicensed wholesaler. Some of that fish made it to Dan's Fish. The person selling the fish was not authorized to sell fish wholesale in Michigan.

On April 29, 2013, agents brought the walleye it had purchased from the unlicensed wholesaler to Dan's Fish. Aldrich purchased 485 pounds of walleye from the wholesaler. During the April 29 delivery Schwarz told Aldrich that some of the walleye he purchased from Michigan earlier in the year had been investigated as part of a Michigan DNR sting.

According to the search warrant, Schwarz said when the MDNR asked him about the walleye he said "I just buy fish ... I don't know where they came from, I don't know how they got them, I don't care." During that same conversation Aldrich told Schwarz the walleye came from the Escanaba, Mich., area but told Schwarz if anyone asked he should say they were from Naubinway, Mich.

Schwarz allegedly said, "Ah, OK." Later in the conversation while discussing where Aldrich's fish came from, Schwarz allegedly told Aldrich "You know, as a fish buyer, really, the less you know about that the better."

Among the items authorities seized were documents for cold storage, invoices, handwritten notes documenting transactions, export documents, and mirrored images from computers and phone hard drives. ♦

# *Merry Christmas And Happy New Year*



As you spend time with family and friends this holiday season, take a few minutes to remember and be thankful for our service men and women around the world and to keep them safe from harm. And say a special prayer for strength for all the families of those serving and protecting our country.

## **Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

### **[Deep water port under development in Escanaba](#)**

Basic Marine has begun the development of the north shore of Escanaba, Mich., which will become the home of a new deep water port. To bring the company's plan to fruition, the property's shoreline needed to be dredged to allow ships access to the docks and pier being built.

### **[Enbridge settles Michigan class-action lawsuit](#)**

The Canadian company responsible for a 2010 oil spill in southwestern Michigan has agreed to pay about \$6.8 million to settle a class-action lawsuit.

### **[Natural Resources Board approves emergency rule to protect Lake Superior lake trout](#)**

The declining lake trout population in the Apostle Islands region of Lake Superior has prompted the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board to adopt an emergency rule reducing the 2014-15 harvests at its December meeting.

### **[U.S. House OKs \\$300 million a year for Great Lakes](#)**

The U.S. House passed a bill on December 9 authorizing \$300 million a year to be spent over the next five years on water quality efforts in the Great Lakes states

### **[Tackling the problem of Ghost nets](#)**

Once they break free, they drift unrestrained, buoyed, submerged and battered by the wild waters and shifting ice sheets of Lake Superior. Yet they continue to entrap fish, waterfowl and marine debris, even though no fishermen will come to claim and clear them.

### **[The man with the salmon plan](#)**

One biologist's radical dream for the Great Lakes came true when millions of salmon were brought in from the Pacific. The world's largest freshwater ecosystem has been a giant science experiment. Part One

### **[Salmon crowned king but its reign is wobbly](#)**

Turning the Great Lakes into a haven for Chinook created a multibillion-dollar recreational fishery. But the experiment has shown signs of going bust — leading to a boom in native species- Part Two

### **[A Great Lake revival](#)**

The demise of alewives and salmon in Lake Huron brought something nobody expected: An explosion of native species. Is Lake Michigan next? And could a more diverse ecosystem offer protection against Asian carp and other invaders? Part Three

### **[Lake Erie temperature at end of November was the coldest in decades](#)**

Lake Erie's water temperature at the end of November fell to 40 degrees.

### **[With lake trout populations in decline, low fishing quotas are in store](#)**

Lake trout numbers have been declining in Lake Superior in the last decade, meaning that limited takes are in store for the upcoming season.

### **[As 2014 winds down, no sign that levels won't keep rising in new year](#)**

With the exception of Lake Ontario, water levels of all the Great Lakes remained above average in October.

### **[Great Lakes ice breaking all the rules](#)**

Ice is forming on the Great Lakes faster this year than any other.

### **[Lead ammunition ban passed after feds withheld data, hunters group says](#)**

The NSSF is up in arms after obtaining emails that it says indicate that a federal official withheld critical data on lead blood levels in the California condor until after gun control advocates in the [California state legislature](#) used the iconic bird's plight to help

### **[Sonar maps Lake Huron trout habitat](#)**

Maritime archeologists are swapping shipwreck surveys for lake trout mapping in Lake Huron, and they're using sound waves to do it.

### **[Proposed rule for farms aims to improve Lake Erie](#)**

Ohio's lawmakers are taking their first step toward slowing the spread of algae in Lake Erie since a toxin contaminated the drinking water for more than 400,000 people.

### **[Experts voice concern over Fox River proposal](#)**

A plan to allow boats to bypass a lock on the Fox River is drawing concern from experts who say it will further the spread of invasive species.

### **[Feds probe Great Lakes commercial fishing](#)**

A two-year federal undercover operation into illegal fishing on Lake Superior has resulted in a series of recent raids, involving three northern Michigan fish markets and their fishing operations.

**Temporary project unveiled to prevent Asian carp from Great Lakes**

Another temporary project has been unveiled to keep the invasive Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, while a permanent solution is debated.

**Corps considers new front in Asian carp war**

The Corps announced plans to block the path of bighead and silver carp at Brandon Road Lock and Dam on the Des Plaines River near Joliet. The site is about 5 miles downstream from electric barriers on which the Army Corps now depends to prevent the aggressive carp from reaching Lake Michigan

**Feds call for no coastal turbines — unless county thinks otherwise**

The USFWS says it is confident that land area within three miles of the Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay shorelines needs to be protected from wind energy development. So confident, in fact, that the federal conservancy agency recommends Huron County include in its

**Plan to bypass Fox River lock prompts concerns over invasive species**

A public agency wants to build a transfer station to bypass a lock on the Fox River in northeastern Wisconsin, but critics fear the project could attract invasive species to inland waters.

End