

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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No. 1

Water Quality Woes at Consumers Energy Dams Might Complicate Their Future

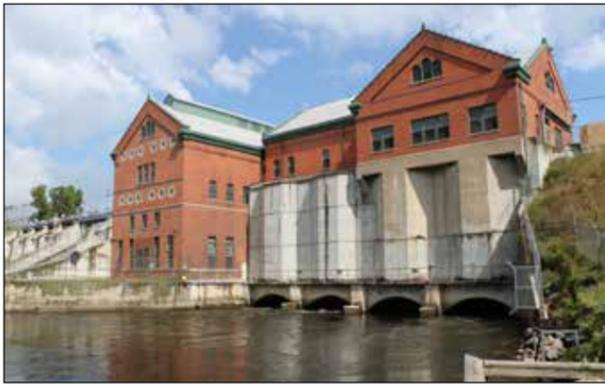
By Carol Thompson
Detroit News

Water quality problems caused by six of Consumers Energy Co.'s 13 hydroelectric dams threaten to complicate the utility's controversial plan to sell the dams to a Maryland private equity company.

The Croton Dam on the Muskegon River, the Tippy and Hodenpyl dams on the Manistee River, and the Mio, Alcona and Foote dams on the Au Sable River violate federal water quality standards because the water downstream of the dams is so warm it harms the environment, according to documents filed by the state, Consumers and a coalition of nonprofits with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy officials have warned that the department is unlikely to issue water quality certifications the next time the dams are up for relicensing, according to a letter EGLE Environmental Engineer Douglas Bridges submitted to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in October.

The 13 dams' current



Croton Dam: A majestic structure on the Muskegon River. Photo from pinterest.com

licenses expire between 2034 and 2041. Relicensing typically takes more than seven years, according to a 2021 Department of Energy report. Federal hydropower projects must either get a certification or a waiver of the certification to receive their federal license or permit.

"Until (water quality standards) are attained, there should be a continued process of evaluation of options and available technologies that may bring real reduction in stream temperatures downstream of these dams," Bridges wrote. "If further efforts fail to provide improvement, it is likely that subsequent federal ... (certifications) will be denied if relicensing

occurs."

Consumers announced in September that it planned to sell its 13 dams to Confluence Hydro, a subsidiary of the Maryland private equity firm Hull Street Energy. Confluence Hydro will operate the dams and keep the popular impoundments they create, while Consumers will buy the electricity back from Confluence Hydro for about twice the going rate of hydropower on the open market.

Consumers spokesman Brian Wheeler said the company has taken steps to improve water quality at its dams and acknowledges water quality problems

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Steelhead And Quagga Mussels

By Jim Bedford

Steelhead have been affected by invasive quagga mussels in Lakes Michigan and Huron for a number of years. The status of the mussels was surveyed this past summer and the report has not been released as I write this in late November. Zebra mussels a relative of the quaggas have died back a great degree in recent years and I hope the quaggas will follow suit. These mussels feed on the plankton that start the food chain in

each lake and have had severe effects on the alewives that are important in the diet of the salmon and steelhead that we anglers treasure. Whitefish have also been seriously impacted, probably to a more serious degree.

The big lake and tributary fisheries have been adversely affected to varied degrees which can be confusing. Last summer the salmon fishing in Lake Michigan seemed quite good. The dark cloud was that the chinook salmon were much smaller

than normal indicating a shortage of alewives and other forage species. Salmon over 20 pounds were quite scarce. It is pretty easy to deduce that very hungry salmon were easier to fool into striking lures. The tributary steelhead fishery has also had its ups and downs. A good example has been the Manistee River fishery. Last year the steelhead ran this river in good numbers in the fall while this past fall the fishing has been considerably slower based on the reports I have gotten. My home waters of the upper Grand and Prairie Creek produced a modest number of steelhead last year while this past fall's fishing has been really rough with a number of skunks. On a further note, the coining of the term "super skipper" for steelhead measuring in the low twenties is my opinion is not a good idea or accurate. The two photos I've seen in print in the pages of the GLS-FN and labeled "super skippers" were definitely females. Skipper steelhead have almost



Terri Bedford with a big Steelie

"Quagga"
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Save the Great Lakes Fish Act of 2025



Snake invaders: Quagga mussels caught in a bottom trawl in the Great Lakes. Photo: Andrea Miehl/USGS

Right before the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday, Rep Debbie Dingell (D) and Rep Tim Walberg (R) jointly presented HR 6053 (attached) – the Save Great Lakes Fish Act 2025. This bipartisan legislation proposes to amend the Great Lakes Fishery Act 1956 in a way that empowers the US Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to develop a comprehensive plan, including to establish a research program, to combat invasive mussels in consultation with partners in federal agencies, interstate compacts, and Tribal, State, and local governments. I am pleased to report that the

legislation is already attracting cosponsors (i.e. Rep Jack Bergman (R)) which bodes for its prospect of success. By sparking a structured and coordinated approach, and by proposing a US government funding appropriation of \$500,000,000 over ten years, this legislation is seeking to duplicate the kind of positive outcomes and monumental efforts undertaken to successfully combat invasive sea lamprey starting back in the 1950s. If successful, this legislation has the potential to be a once in a generation "moon shot" that could change everything we

know about invasive mussels, and the future of the Great Lakes ecosystem for critical keystone species such as Lake Whitefish.

Of course, this legislation is US focused, but if it becomes law, the GLFC will work with partners to expand efforts – hopefully into something as truly binational and comprehensive as we saw in response to invasive sea lamprey. We believe that a unified effort to control invasive mussels is the best, and perhaps only, path to success.

As you can imagine, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is gratified at the prospect that invasive mussels are getting some real traction as a serious threat to the Great Lakes that must final-

ly be addressed. GLFC is pleased to apply its full efforts to the mussel challenge, and to work within its extensive networks to tackle what is certainly one of the greatest challenges facing the Great Lakes today. All of us need to actively support HR 6053 and be willing to put all of our efforts behind the legislation. Write to your Members of Congress and urge them to support the passage of HR 6053.



Search groups for MSSFA

The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!

Protecting Our Great Lakes Ecosystem



As part of the International Canadian American Great Lakes Fishery Commission, VSI is dedicated to informing you about critical developments impacting the Great Lakes fisheries. We are sharing important news regarding the bipartisan HR 6053 – Save Great Lakes Fish Act 2025 – a pivotal step toward safeguarding our invaluable freshwater ecosystem. This initiative is of significant importance

to VanLandschoots & Sons Fisheries, underlining our commitment to the sustainability and health of the Great Lakes.

Bipartisan Effort to Combat Invasive Species

Representatives Debbie Dingell (D) and Tim Walberg (R) have introduced legislation to amend the Great Lakes Fishery Act of 1956. This amendment

would empower the US Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to implement a comprehensive plan to combat invasive mussels that threaten our waters.

The proposed legislation includes \$500,000,000 in federal funding over ten years to support research programs and implementation strategies. The initiative aims to replicate the successful efforts previ-

ously used against invasive sea lamprey, which have helped preserve the delicate balance of our Great Lakes ecosystem.

Why This Matters

Invasive mussels pose a serious threat to keystone species like Lake Whitefish, which are vital to both the ecological balance and the regional economy. These non-native species

disrupt food chains, alter water quality, and damage infrastructure.

Invasive mussels remove nutrients from the water, starving native fish species

Invasive species cost the Great Lakes region hundreds of millions annually in economic damages

Previous success against sea lamprey demonstrates that coordinated action can be effective.

This is very important to us, and we want to share any news that comes to us with all of our valued clients!

GLFC Celebrates Successful Passage of the Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) is celebrating the successful passage of the Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act (GLFRAA) by the House and Senate, extending critical financial support for the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Great Lakes Science Center through fiscal year 2030. This bipartisan legislation ensures continued federal funding and stability for science that underpins the long-term health of Great Lakes fish populations, ecosystems, and the region's \$5.1 billion fishing economy.

"The health and sustainability of the \$5.1 billion annual Great Lakes fishery relies on the availability of a solid scientific understanding of what is happening in the freshwater environment. The Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act has been and continues to be an essential tool for all those who work to keep the Great Lakes ecosystem strong. The Great Lakes community owes a huge debt of thanks to members of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force for their tireless work to advance and pass this critical legislation through both the House and Senate. The passage of GLFRAA has again put that scientific understanding on a more stable footing for years to come," said Ethan Baker, Chair of the Commission.

The Great Lakes Science Center conducts essential research on native and invasive fish species, habitat conditions, and biological assessments vital to sound fisheries management and conservation efforts across the Great Lakes Basin.

Other Activities carried out by the Great Lakes Science Center include:

Conducting surveys of both native and invasive fish populations in the Great Lakes. This data helps USGS, along with tribal, state, and local partners, develop effective strategies to protect and manage fisheries.

Development of reintroduction plans for culturally and ecologically sig-

nificant fish populations, which are essential for the long-term health of the Great Lakes.

Testing and development of technologies that assist in research.

The Commission greatly thanks the many House and Senate champions who pushed this bill across the finish line. This bill was led by Congressman Mike Quigley of Illinois and Congressman Bill Hui-

zenga of Michigan on the House side. The Senate version of the bill was led by Senator Gary Peters of Michigan and Senator Jon Husted of Ohio.

Representative Quigley stated, "Like all Chicagoans, I love Lake Michigan, and I want it to be healthy and vibrant when it's passed on to my kids and grandkids. This week's passage of the Great Lakes

Fishery Research Reauthorization Act will equip the U.S. Geological Survey with the tools and information needed to continue its important ecosystem restoration and maintenance projects for years to come. I was proud to formally establish this federal program 5 years ago, and I'm happy to see this important work move forward."

Senator Husted was instrumental in guiding this legislation through the Environmental and Public Works Committee in the Senate, while Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and Congressman Tim Walberg supported the legislation as it left the House Natural Resources Committee.



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Alan Douville, President

Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

Dear Members, Friends, and Supporters of the MSSFA,

It is both an honor and a privilege to introduce myself as the newly elected President of the Michigan

Steelheaders Sportfishing Association. As I step into this role, I want to express my deep appreciation for the trust placed in me by this remarkable community.

MSSFA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Douville

The MSSFA has a long and proud history of conservation, advocacy, and leadership in Michigan's sportfishing world — and I am excited to help carry that legacy forward.

I'm especially looking forward to working closely with our Executive Leadership Team, our dedicated Board, and the outstanding Chapter leaders across the state. Their experience, passion, and commitment are the backbone of our organization, and together I believe we can accomplish truly meaningful work in the year ahead.

As we look toward

2026, we have tremendous opportunities before us. This will be a year focused on strengthening our chapters, growing our membership, and ensuring that MSSFA continues to be the trusted voice for Michigan's anglers. We have important initiatives underway to support sustainable fisheries, protect our waterways, and advocate for legislation that benefits our members and the future of Great Lakes sportfishing. From habitat improvement to hatchery support to policy engagement in Lansing, our work has never been more important — or more

relevant — than it is right now.

But none of this can happen without you. Your involvement, whether through volunteering, participating in chapter events, supporting our advocacy, or simply sharing your love of fishing with the next generation, drives our mission forward. I encourage you to stay engaged, stay informed, and stay connected with your local chapter — your participation truly makes a difference.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your President. I am honored to be part of this incredible



community, and I look forward to working alongside each of you in the months ahead. Together, we can ensure that 2026 is a year of progress, unity, and success for the Michigan Steelheaders.

Wishing you tight lines and safe waters!



“Consumers” Continued from page 1

will be a discussion point in future dam relicensing processes. He said the company shared the information with Confluence Hydro when it negotiated the sale. Selling its fleet of dams is the best deal for Consumers' customers, utility officials have said, because they are off the hook for the costs of maintaining the dams or retiring and removing them. They argue that the higher rate Consumers will pay for the power will give Confluence an incentive to maintain the dams. Consumers Energy gets about 1.1% of its power supply from its hydroelectric dams.

The sale is before the Michigan Public Service Commission for approval. Environmental groups, the state Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel's Office, lake associations, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and business groups have intervened in the Public Service Commission case, angling to have a say in the proceedings. Some of the groups said they want to scrutinize Consumers' cost estimates for retiring and dismantling the dams. While Consumers contends dismantling the dams would be prohibitively expensive, environmental groups argue that dam retirement may cost less than what Consumers estimates, while solving downstream water quality problems and protecting communities from the possibility of a future private owner abandoning the dams.

“There are things that we need to look at more closely with how what they've presented matches with reality for what we have actually seen for larger hydroproject dam removals in the United States,” said Jessica Mistak, the DNR's

habitat management unit supervisor.

In statements sent through a public relations firm, Confluence Hydro CEO Ed Quinn did not answer whether Confluence Hydro planned to develop a mechanism that would finance the eventual removal of the hydroelectric dams it intends to buy from Consumers. “We are hearing loud and clear through our community outreach that the public wants the dams to be preserved and protected,” Quinn said. “Our plan is to maintain, upgrade and relicense the dams so they continue to operate safely and generate clean, reliable energy for the long term.”

Warming Waters Complicate Dams' Futures

Dams slow the water, which warms it by giving it more of a chance to absorb heat from sunlight. That can affect which fish survive downstream, since some fish species can only tolerate certain temperatures. Trout, for example, need cold water.

“They either have to go somewhere else, if possible, or they simply don't survive,” the DNR's Mistak said.

The DNR sometimes stocks fish in streams where warm temperatures would otherwise mean there aren't many fish for anglers to catch. The department spent more than \$1.2 million in 2022 on stocking fish downstream of the six Consumers Energy dams with water quality problems, according to a letter DNR Senior Resource Analyst Patrick Ertel submitted to FERC in 2023.

While some fish downstream of the problem Consumers dams are able to escape into the cool waters of lakes Michigan or Huron, “all 954,847 fish the Michigan DNR spent \$1.34M to stock near these dams, depend on coldwater to survive,” Ertel wrote. “Each of the 6 dams in question

regularly fails to meet the licensed water quality standards for coldwater during summer months.”

Consumers tried to fix the warm water problem. It installed an upwelling or venting system on each dam to send cooler water downstream. Those systems didn't work. The monthly average temperatures of the water downstream of the problem dams were still more than 2 degrees warmer than upstream, a violation of federal water quality rules. After they were built, Consumers submitted temperature data to FERC that indicated “the upwelling systems simply do not provide the temperature relief that the model-

ing may have indicated,” FERC wrote in a November 2023 filing. FERC encouraged Consumers to explore further fixes to the temperature problem, but because the dams have likely had the warm water issue since they were built and because Consumers took steps to address the problem, FERC determined Consumers was not violating water quality standards in 2023.

EGLE disputed that finding. In his October letter, Bridges accused FERC of leaning on a “flawed interpretation” of Michigan's water quality laws. “Improving water quality is a consistent theme and is paramount,” he wrote. “There is no ‘done’ in the

process until (water quality standards) are attained. As long as it is still technically/economically infeasible to meet (water quality standards) in these areas, attempts at improving water quality continues to be the goal.”

EGLE previously granted approvals for the dams to get the federal licenses they need to produce power because Consumers promised to take steps to fix those water quality problems, Bridges said. The department is unlikely to issue permits next time the dams are up for relicensing if the same water temperature problems remain, he said. “They haven't really committed to continuing that

effort and work,” Bridges said. “Denial of that project is kind of the purpose of the Clean Water Act. We should really be denying a project if they're not going to try to return it to meeting the water quality standard.”

If the dams lose their hydropower licenses, FERC will stop regulating them, and their oversight will fall to the state. That is what happened after FERC denied a license to the Boyce Hydro-owned Edenville Dam in central Michigan, which failed in 2020 and sent a rush of floodwater into Sanford and other downstream communities.

Confluence Hydro's Quinn said in an emailed statement that the company is “currently having conversations regarding ways we can partner with local communities to protect and improve water quality” when it purchases the dams. The company will also work with state and federal agencies that oversee the environment and dam safety, he said.

“We know that many communities rely on the Great Lakes and the water resources created by dams and hydroelectric facilities,” Quinn said. The stakes of the dam sale are high, said Bob Stuber, executive director of Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition, a coalition of conservation nonprofits.

The coalition is opposed to the sale, he said, because unlike Consumers, Confluence Hydro is not regulated by the state Public Service Commission.

Dam Removal Cost Estimates Questioned

The sale agreement between Consumers and private equity firm Confluence Hydro has also reignited a long-simmering issue for the DNR and environmental groups, which have spent more than 30 years



This is the type of fish stocking the Michigan Department of Natural Resources does across the state of Michigan. Here, 25,000 coho salmon are dumped into the Anna River near Munising in a recent year. (Mining Journal file photo)

“Consumers” Continued on page 5



Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

HB 5093, the long-anticipated legislation to address the funding concerns of the Fisheries Division did not receive a hearing in the Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee in the House before the House recessed. Rep. David Martin, who chairs the committee, told us to reserve January 14th and/or 21st on our calendars for a hearing on the bill in 2026. It to be held at the House Office Building, room 519 at noon on one of those dates. The benefits of the bill, outlining the license increases and the expansion of the youth license to generate additional Dingell Johnson Federal Excise Tax benefits to the Fisheries Division if passed, are being shared with other groups like the Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan at its December

5th membership meeting in Lansing. TICOM members were impressed with how the youth license proposal could actually bring in federal revenue sharing money seven times more than the licenses actually cost. Attendees were excited to learn that last year the MDNR sold 222,000 non-resident fishing licenses to visiting anglers to the state. The senate bills SB 276 & 277 which would increase license fees did not move either, though those bills do not have the same benefits to anglers as the House bill.

At the federal level, HR 6053 – Save Great Lakes Fish Act 2025 – a pivotal step toward safeguarding our invaluable freshwater ecosystem and a bi-partisan bill introduced by Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and

MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dennis Eade



Congressman Tim Walberg would authorize \$500,000,000 to combat invasive mussels in the Great Lakes. The bill would give the Great Lakes Fish Commission the needed funding to aggressively pursue solutions to the incredible threat mussels pose to the Great Lakes fisheries. Consumers Energy proposes to sell 13 hydropower dams to limited liability subsidiaries of Hull Street Energy and then buy back the power for the express purpose of avoiding liability for future maintenance, repair and decommissioning of these dams, and to harvest certain tax benefits not otherwise available to it. Hull Street will profit by selling power to Consumers. In the meantime, the health of the rivers and their fisheries, and the use of those lands, will be further degraded. MSSFA has signed onto a letter being sent to the Judge overseeing the sale request along with other members of the Michigan Hydro Relicensing

Coalition (MHRC). We oppose the sale and Consumers Energy's attempt to remove themselves from the liability for dam failure and/or decommissioning costs that will result in millions of dollars of exposure to the public and state of Michigan.

I had the opportunity to speak at the Holland Steelheaders membership meeting on December 4th with an update on all things happening. The Holland Coast Guard station has been decommissioned and Park Township is taking over the property. Township supervisor, Steve Spoelhoff, has indicated the township is making the dock available to the new DNR Research Vessel Steelhead for spring and fall surveys this coming year. An interesting side note is that during the fall survey, large mouth bass were identified cruising at a depth of eighty feet. Could gobies be attracting additional predators who aren't normally roaming the big lake? Only

time will tell.

MSSFA membership is up this year thanks to our chapters continuing efforts to offer exceptional experiences for all anglers whether it be by boating, kayaking, river wading or shore fishing. If you are reading this as someone who picked up a Show Edition and considering a place to learn and enjoy your fishing experience, take this opportunity to join one of our eleven chapters state-wide. Find us on Facebook or at the MSSFA website mssfa.org for more details. We have an exciting year planned!

Fishing for salmon and steelhead this year was universally heralded by lake advisors as superlative. There is concern about the average size of the fish and for alewife abundance, but those three-year-olds we were catching will be four-year-olds this year and expected to be bigger than ever. Let's look forward to a great year on the water in 2026!



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August 27-30

“Consumers”
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pushing Consumers to plan and save money for the eventual decommissioning and removal of its dams.

In 2012, Consumers filed a proposed plan and schedule for updating a previous dam retirement study with FERC. The utility said it would tally up the removal costs either 60 days after FERC accepted its plan or when Consumers received access to cost estimates of the Brown Bridge dam removal project on the Boardman River near Traverse City.

DNR Fisheries Biologist Dana Castle provided that cost estimate to FERC and Consumers last month. Removing the 91-year-old Brown Bridge dam in 2012 cost \$4.4 million, she wrote.

When asked whether Consumers would commit to updating its retirement study in response to Castle’s letter, spokesman Wheeler said the utility “hired an experienced outside firm to provide a fresh estimate of decommissioning costs and (we) stand by our financial estimates.”

Having an accurate estimate of what it will cost to decommission the dams will allow the public to understand how Consumers’ proposal to sell the dams compares, Stuber said. He predicted the cost would be “a big issue” in the ongoing Public Service Commission case.

In presentations made to communities near the dams in 2023, Consumers estimated it would cost \$781 million more to relicense its 13 dams than to decommission them. At that time, the utility company estimated that decommissioning the dams would cost \$631 million, while relicensing would cost over \$1.4 billion. Calkins Bridge Dam was the only one that would cost more to decommission than relicense, according to the presentations.

In its request for the Public Service Commission to approve the sale, the company estimated the cost was upward of \$1.7 billion. Selling the dams to Confluence Hydro and committing to a 30-year power purchase contract would cost \$1.25 billion, Wheeler said, and relicensing them would cost more than \$1.8 billion.

“All of a sudden these costs seem to have almost doubled,” Stuber said. “So that will be a point of examination.”

Consumers hired an experienced outside firm to provide a fresh estimate of its decommissioning costs for the MPSC filing, Wheeler said. “That updated information accounts for the change in projected costs,” he said.

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The DNR would like to see FERC or the state commission require the dams’ future owner to account for the eventual costs of decommissioning and removing them, the DNR’s Mistak said. The department wants to ensure the liabilities posed by the aging dams are the responsibility of “the people who are gaining income from the operation of these hydro projects,” she said.

“As with all infrastructure, there’s a life span,” Mistak said. “We are seeing across Michigan, across the United States, these aging dams becoming a concern, a liability for public safety, for natural resources, and there needs to be a plan in place to either replace these dams, repair these dams or remove these dams.”

Consumers Energy has not set aside money for decommissioning the dams, Wheeler said. The dams’ value depreciates at a rate approved by the Public Service Commission, he said. Those rates allow for the utility to collect for future decommissioning costs, but they have not been high enough to cover projected decommissioning costs. They are included in the sale request that the MPSC is considering.



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Thrilling Competition and Major Cash Prizes Await at the Ludington Offshore Classic July 13-19

Renowned as one of the Great Lakes' premier salmon fishing ports, Ludington is a standout destination on the Lake Michigan tournament circuit. Its welcoming community, lively atmosphere, and world-class fishing continue to draw anglers every summer. The 2026 Ludington Offshore Classic is scheduled for July 13-19 and promises a full week of excitement. The event features competitive divisions for professionals, amateurs, women, and youth, all competing for substantial cash prizes. With strong support from local businesses, the tournament showcases public weigh-ins at Ludington's picturesque Waterfront Park, attracting enthusiastic crowds and fostering a memorable community celebration. Make plans now to be part of this unforgettable event!

Big Boys Tournament:

July 14-15

Each summer, the Big Boys pro tournament kicks off tournament week and last year paid an amazing \$23,100 grand prize to the crew of Chasin Biggins.

After a two-day competition among 33 boats on Lake Michigan, Chasin Biggins had landed a total of 24 fish brought in (12 catch limit each day) with a total weight of 312.15 pounds.

While he had fished the tournament before, this was the first time Captain Nate Wellman had ever brought his own boat to Ludington. In preparation for the event, his Whitehall, MI, crew ran all of its charters in the area they planned to fish for kings and trout during the tournament. As the tournament drew near, Wellman found Big Point to be congested with other boats and decided he would try something different.

"Tournament morning, I was contemplating going to Pentwater to get an earlier start on those early morning kings, so we set off," Wellman explained. "As we went down the lake, I said to my crew, 'We are going to Whitehall water to live or die in our home water.' 'We got there, and fishing was decent. I think we got 9 kings in around 3 hours, so we pulled lines and went to our lake trout spots. Fishing was only ok there. By the time we headed in, we had our 17 fish tournament limit (catch limit was 20). Heading in, I knew we did ok, but I honestly didn't think we had enough for the Day 1 lead - but to our surprise, we did."



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"On Day 2, I told my guys it's going to be a better day. The warm water was pushing in, and setting the fish up even better - plus, we had a little more wind, which always makes them bite better," Wellman continued.

"We ran past our salmon area to set up on a troll. I thought it would be better for the wind and currents. (During) our first pass, we got 5, turned around and got 6 more, so the bite was on. 'We pulled lines, went to our trout spots, and the big ones were biting. We got our 20 fish before 11 a.m. and headed to Ludington. We had a real big box of fish that day, and honestly, we knew on the way in that we had won the event, so it was jamming to music and celebrating all the way in!"

"We won that event on spoons for kings.

They wanted big spoons. Fished fast Mag Dreamweaver spoons, Mag Yeck spoons were our tickets. For the trout, it was spin-n-gloves fished on the bottom.

"I can't stress enough how amazing my team is. These guys work and fish their guts out, willing to do everything that needs to be done day in and day out. We are all great friends, and it's always super fun on our boat every day. This win most definitely wouldn't be possible without them."

Ludington Offshore Classic Pro: July 18-19

In 2025, 123 boats competed in the Ludington Offshore Classic two-day pro/am tournament on Lake Michigan. Team Sorry was the pro division winner, taking the grand prize of \$20,000. This crew brought in

298.9 pounds of fish during the two-day tournament to clinch the title. This was a stroke of good luck after blowing a motor during the Big Boys competition and having to borrow a boat for the pro/am.

Captain Kevin Pomorski said the crew fished north of Big Sable Lighthouse on Days 1 & 2. They had pre-fished that spot and were able to bring in all of their kings during the tournament. For trout, they headed north to Manistee. "Our teammates as a whole have all fished the Offshore for many years. I personally started fishing it with Captain George Freeman of FreeStyle Charters around 18 years ago and fished it every year with him. I started running Sorry Kids three years ago, and over those few years, we put together a great team that works hard and well to-

gether, communicates well, and has a ton of fun!

"I would love to thank a lot of people who made this year's success possible. To our crew - without their hard work pre-fishing, working on the boat, ripping everything off Sorry Kids and installing everything on the loaner boat in the matter of a few hours, and the few who volunteered to sit out knowing we didn't have room for everyone - thank you.

"Thank you to Greg Magee for being overly generous and a true friend offering us a boat to use after blowing a motor in ours. Also, we can't forget the guys who get us the gear to catch the fish! Thank You to Dreamweaver Lures, Yeck Lures, and Captain Chucks."

Join us this summer for an unforgettable fishing experience. To register for the upcoming offshore

tournament, visit ludingtontournament.com. Registration opens April 1, 2026.

2026 Schedule of Events:

- July 13:** Big Boys captains meeting
- July 14-15:** Big Boys Tournament
- July 16:** Ludington Legends Memorial Tournament
- July 17:** Ladies and Youth tournaments
- July 18-19:** Pro/Am Ludington Offshore Classic





THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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MSSFA was incorporated in 1971 by a handful of individuals who knew that Michigan's newly formed trout and salmon fishery was something worth working to protect. They were a small group who wanted to not only protect their fishery, but learn how to catch their elusive prey and tell fishing stories.

MSSFA chapters have membership meetings with guest speakers to learn about all the aspects of sport fishing. MSSFA chapters also sponsor fishing clinics, seminars, sport-fishing shows, derbies and tournaments. And are active sponsors for fishing outings for kids, seniors, veterans and our handicapped.

For those who love to fish but have no means, MSSFA chapters sponsor a "Crews" program that allows a sign up as a crew member for a day of fishing.

With a common goal, and a close working partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MSSFA helps to enhance the resource and sport fishing in our rivers, streams, inland lakes, and of course the mighty Great Lakes. MSSFA is a front-runner at all levels of the legislature and in courtrooms, and has spent countless hours working behind the scenes and attending hearings.

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Better than fifty years ago, The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association began to publish a magazine called the "Guide to Great Lakes Sport Fishing". Five years later the magazine became a monthly format called "The Great Lakes Steelheader". Today the newspaper is called "**The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News**".

This paper has no paid writers and has a grass roots style. Its writers are the every day fishermen who share their techniques and fishing adventures; and the paper has become well known for its **January Special Edition** or "**Show Edition**" that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

Information in the paper covers the entire Great Lakes Basin region from Minnesota to New York including all five of the Great Lakes and their tributary streams.

Chapter members receive the paper as part of their membership. And because of the diversity of fishing in the Great Lakes, the information covers everything from river fishing, big lake fishing to inland lake fishing. The paper also offers a direct route for all new products and techniques on the market offered by our advertisers.

Executive Director
Dennis Eade
616-298-8842
deneade@charter.net

Membership
Rebecca Goettl
231-349-3679
mssfamembership@charter.net

Battle Creek
Jeff Root, President
269-370-8515
jeffrootsteelheader@gmail.com

Dave Middleton, State Rep.
269-744-7270
dbm386steelhead@gmail.com

battlecreeksteelheaders.com

Grand Haven
Paul Zelenka, President and State Rep.
616-638-3273
pbzfarms@gmail.com

Website: www.ghsteelheaders.com
facebook.com/ghsteelheader

Grand Rapids
Don Remington, President
616-742-0238
donremington2@gmail.com

Rebecca Goettl, State Rep.
231-349-3679
Rgoettlcm@gmail.com

Search on facebook: Grand Rapids Steelheaders Official Page
Email: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com

New address:
P.O. Box 140198
Grand Rapids, MI 49514

Great Lakes Bay Region
Mark Trudell, President
989-839-4920
brandon_tacey@yahoo.com

John Letts, State Rep.
989-798-2493
maintenance@stjohn23.net

facebook.com/Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheaders

Website: http://steel-headers.com

Holland
Brad Stephenson, President
330-495-9555
brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

Alex Fergus, State Director
616-610-2410
afergus63@gmail.com

Website: www.hollandsteelheaders.org
facebook.com/Holland Steelheaders

Metro-West - Livonia
Bob Schulz, President
248-915-0043
bobschulz7@gmail.com

Mark Platt, State Rep.
248-881-4890
mcplatt4565@gmail.com

MetroWest Steelheaders
PO BOX 531927
Livonia MI 48153-1927

Website:
www.metroweststeelheaders.org
facebook.com/Metro West Steelheaders

South Haven
Rich Chapman, President
president@southhavensteelheaders.com

Rachel Ridley, State Director
ridleyrachel@gmail.com
269-206-2135

Website:
www.southhavensteelheaders.com
facebook.com/South Haven Steelheaders

Southwest Michigan
Ryan McCartney, President
574-274-6382
mccartneyryan@sbcglobal.net

Joe Montella, State Director
616-283-4296
joe-monte@comcast.net

Website: www.swmisteelheaders.com
facebook.com/Southwestern Steelheaders

Thunder Bay
Dan Bouchard, President
989-255-7350 Cell
dan-bouchard@hotmail.com

Ed Retherford, State Rep.
989-657-2681
retherfe@gmail.com

Thumb Chapter
Dan Nichols, President
810-488-6767
nicholsdant@gmail.com

Paul Nienaltowski, State Director
810-300-1561
pauliquo@yahoo.com

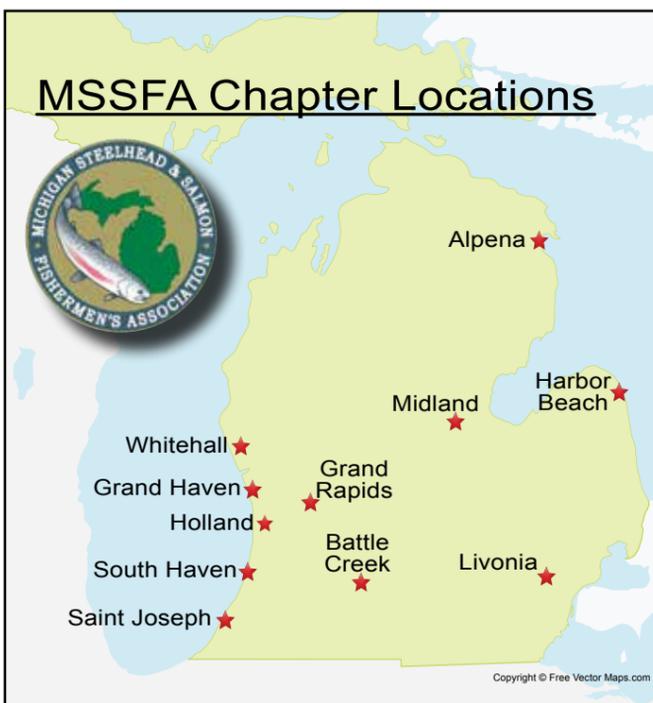
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White River
Clint Pollock, President
231-893-0210
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Eggs Today, Trout and Salmon Tomorrow:

Fall and winter egg collections wrapping up at DNR facilities

By Aaron Switzer, Joe Mickevich

In all, fisheries staff collected more than 16 million trout and salmon eggs this season.

Coho salmon eggs were collected at the Platte River State Fish Hatchery Weir from Oct. 16 to Oct. 28. The Department of Natural Resources stocks fish in Michigan waters every year, providing fishing opportunities and helping maintain healthy ecosystems. Where do the fish being stocked come from? It begins with collecting fish eggs, and the DNR has been working hard this fall gathering the necessary eggs to produce fish for stocking. Fall egg collections have been completed for wild Chinook and coho salmon and for captive broodstocks of brown, brook and lake trout. Egg collection for rainbow trout will soon begin.

Chinook salmon eggs were collected Sept. 29 through Oct. 8 at the Little Manistee River Weir. Eggs and milt (sperm) are gathered from fish during the annual salmon run. At the weir, salmon swim up a fish ladder and into holding ponds. From there, fish are brought into the facility, where eggs and milt are collected and the eggs are fertilized.

“We experienced another strong run of wild Chinook salmon this season,” said Aaron Switzer, DNR fish production manager. “The run at the Little Manistee was robust enough to provide for all of Michigan’s egg needs. We were also able to provide eggs to Indiana and Illinois state-owned fish hatcheries. Once hatched, reared and stocked, these Chinook salmon support and enhance the Lake Michigan salmon fishery.”

Coho salmon eggs were collected at the Platte River State Fish Hatchery Weir from Oct. 16 through Oct. 28.

“We collected nearly 6 million coho salmon eggs at the Platte River weir. This includes approximately 3 million eggs for Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin,” said Switzer. “All four states work together cooperatively each year to ensure Lake Michigan continues to receive Pacific salmon to supplement the fishery.”

In addition to egg collection from wild fish, captive broodstocks (fish kept at a hatchery to produce eggs and milt) provide many of the eggs that will become stocked fish: 880,000 Arctic grayling eggs; 333,500 brook trout eggs; 297,000 lake trout eggs; 2.6 million brown trout eggs and 1.5 million rainbow trout eggs. An additional 357,000 splake eggs (brook trout and lake trout hybrid) also will be

collected to support Michigan’s fisheries management objectives.

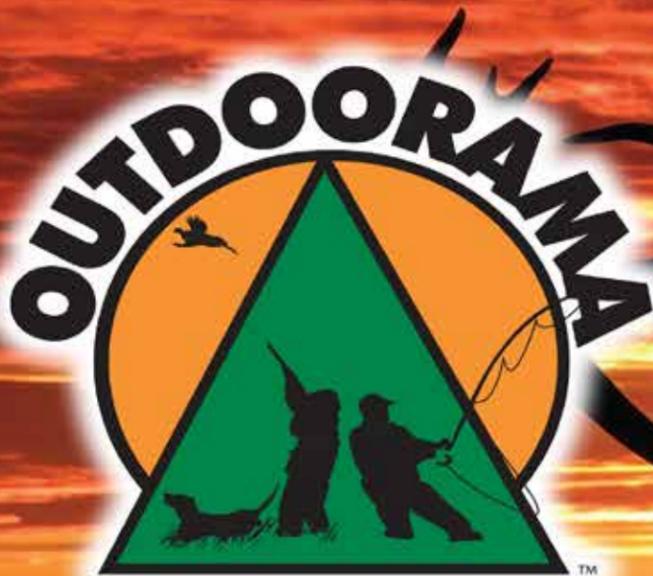
At Oden State Fish Hatchery, egg collections for brown trout occurred through mid-October. Rainbow trout egg collections at Oden will begin in December and continue until mid-January. These captive egg collections will occur every one to two weeks over the season. Captive broodstock egg collections for brook and lake trout at Marquette State Fish Hatchery have already been completed, and Arctic grayling egg collection is planned for early spring 2026.

To learn more about Michigan’s state fish hatcheries or to plan a trip, visit Michigan.gov/Hatcheries.



Coho salmon eggs were collected at the Platte River State Fish Hatchery Weir from Oct. 16 to Oct. 28

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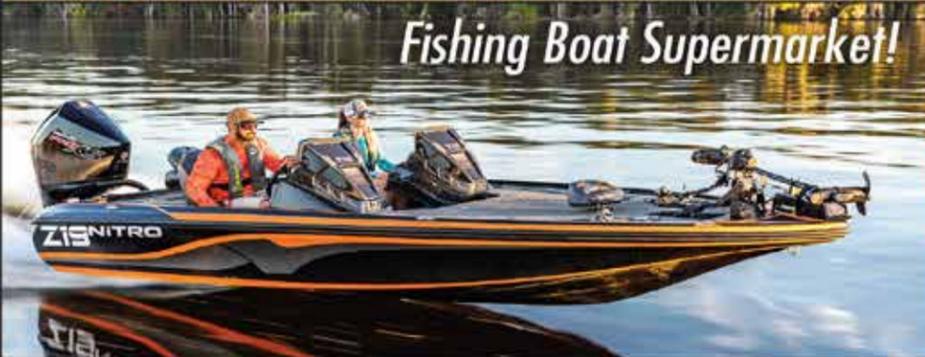
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2	02/13/26	03/02/26
3	04/10/26	05/04/26
4	06/19/26	07/06/26
5	08/14/26	08/28/26
6	10/16/26	11/02/26

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

MSSFA, *Publisher* Bonnie Eade, *Accountant*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 Stafford Printing, *Printing* Cell: 616-928-8970
 Greenville, MI bonnie.glsfn@charter.net

Dennis Eade, *Managing Editor* Laura Kleinheksel, *Layout*
 Tel: 616-298-8842 laura.glsfn@charter.net
 Cel: 616-836-0037
 deneade@charter.net

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MICHIGAN STEELHEAD AND SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Business Office Dennis Eade, *Executive Director*
 P.O. Box 8034 Rachel Ridley, *Secretary*
 Holland, MI 49422 Alex Fergus, *Treasurer*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 e-mail: deneade@charter.net

The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as *The Michigan Steelheaders*, or simply *Steelheaders*. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices. www.MSSFA.org

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Rachel Ridley	Secretary	ridleyrachel@gmail.com
Alex Fergus	Treasurer	afergus63@gmail.com
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Eric Braden	Natural Resources Committee Chairman	esbraden630@gmail.com
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My Favorite Bait

By Bob Jensen

When a person goes fishing, there are several decisions that need to be made. Where to go, when to go, who to go with, those thoughts all enter the picture. Then when we arrive at the body of water that we'll be fishing, there's more decisions. Should we chase bass, walleyes, panfish, or something else? What bait or lure should we start with? Some baits are better for particular species, but when it comes to just catching fish, it doesn't matter what kind of fish, you can bet than a good number of anglers will have a jig of some sort on the end of their line.

In my early days of fishing I used a lot of marabou and hair jigs that my dad made. I caught many, many fish of various species on them. As I got more into fishing, I experimented with other styles of baits and drifted away from jigs. At some point, I learned that drifting away from jigs was a bad idea. I didn't drift back to jigs, I ran back to them at full throttle.

A jig in some form is an outstanding bait choice for a wide variety of fish and for anglers of all skill levels. But there are a lot of different forms of jigs. Some jigs were designed for bass, some are better for walleyes or panfish.

Some anglers believe that jigs are best when a slower presentation is desired. And it's true, jigs are very effective when tipped with live bait and crawled across the bottom in search of a hungry fish. But they're also outstanding when tipped with an action-tail plastic and hopped quickly across the bottom or worked with a steady retrieve similar to how one would work a crankbait. You can cover water quickly and appeal to a wide variety of fish.

So, when it comes to using a jig to catch fish, here is how many very successful anglers go about it. For largemouth bass, you can't beat a weedless, rubber legged jig like a Hack Attack tipped with a plastic trailer. A Rage Craw in many situations will be an outstanding choice for a trailer. There are personal and regional favorites when it comes to color combinations, but a Hack Attack/Rage Craw will catch largemouth bass wherever they live.

Now for walleyes. If you want to use live bait, go with a jig with a short shanked hook. That's a walleye catchin' combination. However, more and more, walleye catchers are using plastic baits. If you're using plastic, go with a long-shanked hook and thread on a Rage

Swimmer.

When crappies are the goal, there are lots of choices. Start with a jig tipped with a Mr. Crappie Tube. Usually a jig/plastic will get a crappie to bite, but if not, tie on a Shoo Shiner Jig and tip it with a small minnow. If there is a crappie or other panfish in the area, it will eat this offering.

When we're just looking to get bit, a jig with a long shanked hook and a Rage Tail Grub is as good as it gets. This is the set-up that can be fished similar to a crankbait. Cast it out, let it sink a bit, then start reeling. Start with a straight retrieve and experiment with different retrieves until the fish show you what they want. When they reveal their preference, repeat that retrieve and you will quickly see why so many anglers, when they're just looking to get bit, will tie on a jig and plastic.



Status of Sea Lamprey Abundances in the Great Lakes

By Greg McClinchey
Great Lakes Fishery
Commission

Abundances return to pre-pandemic levels after resumption of regularly scheduled treatments.

ANN ARBOR, MI—The annual Status of Sea Lamprey Control report for 2025 was recently released by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission). The report highlights that 3-year average adult sea lamprey abundances increased in Lake Superior but decreased in Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario from 2024 to 2025.

According to the report, 2025 adult index estimates for each lake appear to have returned to levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic, when lampricide treatments were limited during 2020 and 2021. The number of adult sea lamprey captured during 2025 was 37,800 adults, which is just below the 3-year pre-COVID average of 38,167 (2017-2019). Although some indices remain affected by elevated populations resulting from limited treatments during COVID, the resumption of treatment efforts indicates an encouraging shift in abundances, as decreases observed in the 2024 adult indices for Lakes Huron, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario have been maintained into 2025.

The report highlights the necessity of continued sea lamprey control and research into innovative control measures. Sea lampreys—native to the Atlantic Ocean—are an invasive species that have posed a constant, significant threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem. Feeding on the blood and bodily fluids of fish, attaching to prey with a tooth-filled suction cup mouth, a sea lamprey can consume up to 40 pounds (18 kilograms) of Great Lakes fish. Control efforts are critical to protection, preservation, conservation, and management efforts around the basin, and the 2025 report further elucidates that lampricide treatments and the sea lamprey barrier network are highly effective in controlling sea lamprey populations.

“The Great Lakes mean a great deal to the millions of people living, working, and recreating in the basin,” said Ethan Baker, chair of the Commission. “This \$5.1 billion industry will crash if sea lamprey populations get out of control again. No one wants to have a repeat of the early days when it was hard to find a fish without a sea lamprey wound. So, we are going to continue working hard—in collaboration with federal, state, provincial, and Indigenous partners—to make sure sea lamprey control will continue without pause.”

Earl Provost, vice chair of the Commission, continued: “If we were unable to control sea lamprey populations, our native fish populations would suffer immensely. As we saw in 2022 and 2023, sea lamprey populations easily skyrocket when control efforts are relaxed. We are just now getting back to a semblance of what it was like before the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is still much work to do.”

The latest sea lamprey status, by lake, is as follows:

LAKE SUPERIOR: Though the adult sea lamprey abundance decreased for 2025, the 3-year average shows the abundance remains above target for Lake Superior. Stream-specific estimates showed the Bad and Tahquamenon rivers contributed the most to the lake-wide index estimate in 2025 (46% and 40%, respectively). Notably,

the adult sea lamprey catch in the Tahquamenon River was the second highest on record, with a catch of 2,156 adults. In addition, the Brule and Middle rivers had below-average spawning runs in 2025, likely due to lampricide applications on both streams in 2024.

LAKE MICHIGAN: The 3-year average of adult sea lamprey abundance decreased in 2025, but remains above target for Lake Michigan. However, the index of abundance has remained relatively stable around the target level for the past 10 years with the exception of 2022 (COVID-19). Stream-specific estimates showed that the Manistique and Big Manistee rivers contributed most to the lake-wide index estimate in 2025 (37% and 22%, respectively).

LAKE HURON: The 3-year average of adult sea lamprey abundance decreased in 2025, but re-

mains above the target for Lake Huron. Stream-specific estimates showed that the Echo and Cheboygan rivers contributed most to the lake-wide index estimate (28% and 26%, respectively).

LAKE ERIE: The 3-year average of adult sea lamprey abundance decreased in 2025 and is below the target for Lake Erie. Population estimates were generated using mark-recapture data for three of five index streams. The population estimates for Cattaraugus and Youngs creeks were modeled due to insufficient recaptures of marked sea lamprey. Stream-specific estimates showed the Cattaraugus and Big Creeks contributed most to the lake-wide index estimate (36% and 26%, respectively). Notably, surveys are having difficulties finding larval sea lamprey in Lake Erie tributaries, which corroborates the low

adult abundances observed in recent years.

LAKE ONTARIO: The 3-year average of adult sea lamprey abundance decreased in 2025, but remains above the target for Lake Ontario. However, it is worth noting that adult sea lamprey abundance from 2023 to 2025 significantly decreased from 56,000 to 11,584. Population estimates were generated using mark-recapture data for four of five index streams. The population estimate for Sterling Creek was modeled due to insufficient recaptures of marked sea lamprey. Stream-specific estimates showed the Humber and Black rivers contributed most to the lake-wide index estimate (37% and 31%, respectively).

As a response to the cataclysmic damage to the Great Lakes fishery caused by sea lamprey, the governments of Canada and the

United States established the Commission in 1955. Through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, the Commission is charged with sea lamprey control and research, fisheries research, and fisheries management coordination. Sea lamprey control and research are conducted in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Geological Survey. Sea lamprey control primarily consists of the use of lampricides and barriers, with trapping adult sea lamprey as a means to measure and track abundance. Additionally, the Commission is evaluating new and supplemental controls to further enhance sea lamprey control. For more information, visit www.glfsc.org/sea-lamprey.php.



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2026 Saugatuck Fishing Tournament

“The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing association invite you to join us for this exciting weekend for a get away that is rich in relaxing, fun and recreation. Come and walk the boardwalk in the downtown area and see all the happenings of the Fishing Tournament and visit many of the businesses that help sponsor this annual event.

The 2026 Saugatuck – “The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic will be held on Friday, August 7th – Sunday, August 9th. Boats will be allowed to stay and leave each day from any of the following Ports: Saugatuck, South Haven and Holland. Please call early and reserve your slip.

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association committee would like to thank all of the people for coming to Saugatuck

for the 2025 Tournament, The weather cooperated and fishing was good.

2026 Pro Division – 1st Place payout is \$10,000 based on participation.

2026 Am Division – 1st Place payout is \$4,000 based on participation.

The 2026 One Day “Spectators Pretournament Shootout”. Will now be two divisions in the Spectators Shootout – The Regular Division and “Women’s and Youth Division.” In the women’s and youth division 1st Place will pay \$1,000 Sponsored by Morgans Tackle.

RULES : Friday August 7th – Set lines at 6:00am, DNR Rules. Weigh in will be at Spectators Restaurant on BlueStar Highway just north

of Saugatuck, Bring your 5 biggest fish. Must be in line by 2:00pm. Entry fee \$100 per boat. 100% payback for the regular event and \$1000 to 1st place in Women’s and Youth Division. Check the box on the Entry form or contact a committee member by 6:00am Friday August 9th. (Women’s and Youth division teams may also participate in the regular division with paid entry into both events.) (Youth is 16 years old and under)

2026: Dual Port Tournament - South Haven and Saugatuck – Overall scores from both Tournaments will be combined and a winner will be Awarded the Dual Port Tournament Champion! Daily Prizes for both Tournaments will be awarded each day to participating teams. Both Pro boats and AM boats will

be eligible to enter this Dual event. Watch for more information on both South Haven and Saugatuck Websites for this event soon. (100 point scoring system will be used in both Port Tournaments)

The 9th Annual “DENNY ALLEN MEMORIAL” big fish contest will have a guaranteed first place payout of \$2,000 if that boat is entered in the Tournament in either the Pro or Am division. If just in the Big Fish Tournament, first place will be \$1,000. This Big Fish event is Sponsored by Barber Ford of Holland, Mi. All boats can enter this special event in which any and all boats can try for that ONE big fish over the two-day tournament, one fish may be weighed per day. \$50 entry and 15 places will be paid.

A boat may enter this contest without participating in the Pro or Amateur division if they so desire.

The 2026 Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic Tournament is planned for Saturday, August 8th and Sunday, August 9th, with the captains meeting Friday, August 7th in Saugatuck. Boats will be able to dock and leave and return to their docks in Saugatuck, Holland and South Haven. Available slips in Saugatuck fill up fast. Please contact the dockmasters at Seargents Marine or contact committee members for assistance in getting your slip for the 2026 Tournament.

The Saugatuck Tournament is put on by Sportsmen for Sportsmen and is a non-profit organized event. Monies raised for the tour-

namment from sponsors and entries are put toward the payout to tournament, Salmon in The Classroom and the Net Pen Project.

Contact the 2026 Tournament Director John Watson with questions regarding the 2026: The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic at 616-218- 6686 or at 1137watson@gmail.com, or check out our website www.saugatucksportsfishing.com

2026 Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association Tournament Committee

2025 Pro Division

- 1) EZ Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland
- 2) Finscout – Joel DeVries – St Joe
- 3) Real Talk – Tyler Palazzolo - Holland
- 4) Best Chance – Hunter Engel - Saugatuck

2025 Am Division

- 1) Fishin Fever – Eric Bruins - Holland
- 2) Offline – Brad Stephenson - Holland
- 3) The Foundation – Jeff Frankhouser – St Joe
- 4) Utopia – Tom Peterson – South Haven

2025 S&S Dual Port

- 1) EZ Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland
- 2) Best Chance Too – Dave Engel – Saugatuck
- 3) Winn and Angel – Winn Wolf – St Joe

SAUGATUCK/ SOUTH HAVEN DUAL PORT CHALLENGE



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August 7th-9th 2026

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FRIDAY AUGUST 8TH SPECTATORS TOURNAMENT SHOOTOUT

Ladies and Kids Division 1st Place \$1000

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THE TOURNAMENT

DENNY ALLEN MEMORIAL

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For entry or pre-tournament shootout go to

www.saugatucksportsfishing.com

To contact us:

John Watson at 1137watson@gmail.com

Or Call Tournament Director at 616-218-6686

For Dock Space contact:

Sergeant Marina at 269-857-2873

Dave Engel at 616-218-4812

Tom Earley at 269-207-1095

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★ \$10,000 First Prize Pro Division - based on 20 entries

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★ Reserve your slip early

★ 2026 Friday Night Check In - Spectators Restaurant

5:00-7:00pm, Food Provided

★ Captains Meeting at 7:00pm

★ August 7th - 9th Free Hamburgers and Hot

Dogs at Weigh-in and Awards Ceremony

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METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS

Adam Trenz & Kenny Tran



Mike, Chase & Capt. Dave Zawacki



Invitation to Join Metro West Steelheaders (Livonia area)

By Henry Nabors and Friends

Metro West Steelheaders (MWS) is a 160 plus member "Family Fun" oriented fishing club. MWS's goals are to promote sport fishing, sharing fishing information with those wanting to learn and to educate young people through participation in fishing events throughout the Great Lakes region.

MWS is one of eleven Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) chapters across the state. MWS has something for most anglers with fishing events, socializing, environmental education, community outreach, and fund raising for special programs.

MWS holds over sixty events per year ranging from community outreach at the Ultimate Fishing Show and Outdoorama Show, fishing on Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan for walleye, salmon and trout. There is a river group that fish river systems in Michigan as well as "Steelhead alley" in Ohio. A kayak & small boat group that holds numerous events in multiple inland lakes and at Lakes Michigan and Huron ports. Lastly, there is a pier-beach group that fish several ports annually.

MWS holds their annual Swap Meet in April. There are three social events (Summer Picnic, Kids Fish & Christmas Party) and two fund raisers (Comedy for a Cause (50 to 75 attend) & Annual Sportsman's Banquet (200 - 300 attend)). MWS actively representing MSSFA on the MDNR Cold Water Steering committee and participates in Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) Policy Board

meetings and serves on the MUCC Fisheries Committee as well as serving on the MDNR Lake Michigan & Lake Erie Citizens Fishery Advisory Committees. MWS also participates with MUCC and other conservation groups in annual river clean ups on the Clinton and Manistee rivers.

MWS sponsors an annual "Kids Fish" at Kensington Metro Park with over 200 kids and related guardians annually. Each child receives a new pre-rigged fishing rod, bait and instruction by MWS volunteers throughout the morning - and a picnic lunch. MWS supports Salmon-In-the Classroom projects by providing equipment for the schools. MWS holds ten General Membership meetings per year. These meetings are open to the public with expert speakers related to fishing topics as well as MDNR officials and biologists. When able to meet in person each meet-

ing promotes social interaction and the exchange of information through time set aside for social interaction and networking. There are 50/50 and tackle raffles, event updates and fishing reports. Other fun activities include "Captain & Crewperson of the year" contests as well as River, Kayak, Small Boat, Beach and Pier "Anglers of the Year" contests. There are two Annual "Big Fish" fishing contests - biggest in each species and THE BIG FISH for the year.

MWS Fundraisers annually support sending area children to the MUCC Kids Camp, the Annual Kids Fish at Kensington Metro Park, equipment in classrooms for the MDNR "Salmon in the Classroom" program and donations to fisheries related special programs like the "Clinton River Watershed Council" and the Lake Superior State University Atlantic Salmon project.



Simon Nguyen

MWS is always looking for new members and welcomes anyone interested in fishing or learning more about sportfishing. Please feel free to come join us at the Ultimate Fishing Show or Outdoorama in Novi, Michigan or at one of the General Membership meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Meetings are held at the new Livonia Senior Center located at 32001 Five Mile Rd, Livonia, MI 48154. For more information visit the MWS Website at www.metroweststeelheaders.org or contact Henry Nabors - Membership at hfnabors@gmail.com (248.225.4964).

Chase, Mike & Capt. Dave Zawacki



Mike Traver, Kids Outing



2025 Kids Outing

Metro-West Steelheaders - continued



Above and below: Jeremy Kenward, Ludington PM Lake, 13# King



Above: Gus Nelson, Ludington PM Lake

Below: Gus Nelson, Ludington, 10# Trout



Below: Jeremy Kenward's 13# King



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2026 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Location
February	21	ST.JOE RIVER TROUT QUEST	I-94 RAMP
March	7	ST.JOE RIVER CHAPTER CHALLENGE TBA	TBA
March	21	KALAMAZOO RIVER SPRING STEELHEAD	ALLEGAN DAM
May	16	LK MICHIGAN SPRING TOURNAMENT	BENTON HARBOR/ SOUTH HAVEN
May	30	CONNIE MCGOWEN INVITATIONAL	LAKE ERIE/DBBC
July	11	PORTAGE LK PANFISH/FAMILY PICNIC	PORTAGE LK
August	15	VETERANS OUTING	SOUTH HAVEN
October	24	KALAMAZOO RIVER SALMON SLA	ALLEGAN DAM
November	7	KALAMAZOO RIVER TROUT QUEST	ALLEGAN DAM
November	14	KALAMAZOO RIVER MEMORIAL	ALLEGAN DAM
November	28	ST.JOE FALL STEELHEAD	I-94
December	5	CHAPTER CHALLENGE	TBA
December	12	CHRISTMAS PARTY	KALAMAZOO EAGLES

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting
 Meeting Location: (In process of finding a new location)
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Dan Foster at 269-370-3693
battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2026 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
April	23	Spring Meeting
May	28-31	GH Offshore Challenge
July 31 - August 13		Week Long +
August	13	Picnic
September	12	Sportsman for Youth
December	10	Christmas Party

Other Events TBD
 For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarm@gmail.com
www.ghsteelheaders.com

2026 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
January	5	Board Meeting
January	17	Murry Lake Ice Fishing* (pending safe ice)
January	26	Membership Meeting
February	2	Board Meeting
February	23	Membership Meeting
March	2	Board Meeting
March	12-15	Outdoor Sports Show DeVos Place/GR
March	TBD	Spring River Outing*
March	30	Membership Meeting, No speaker; recap Outdoor Show
April	6	Board Meeting
April	27	Membership Meeting - MEMBERSHIP DUES DUE
May	4	Board Meeting
May	TBD	Big Lake Outing*
May	18	Membership Meeting, Year Long Fishing Awards
June	4-6	Lake Erie Walleye Outing*
June	TBD	Wabasis Fish Outing*
June	29	Membership Meeting
July	13	Chapter Picnic @ 6pm, Johnson Park Shelter House**
August	1	GR/GH Chapter Challenge & Double D Tournament*
August	31	Membership Meeting
September	14	Board Meeting
September	28	Membership Meeting
October	5	Board Meeting
October	24	Fall Outing / Buck Contest**
October	26	Membership Meeting
November	2	Board Meeting
November	7	Fishing Partners*
November	30	Membership Meeting
December	7	Chapter Christmas Party**

* - Times/Events subject to change, watch facebook & email blasts
 ** - Members and Member's family only event.

NEW MEETING LOCATION:
 Jackson Street Hall, Polish National Aid Society
 921 Jackson Street NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
 616-774-9011

Events open to the public
Meeting Location - Elks #48, 917 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids
Time: 6:00pm-7pm Social Hour with food and beverage followed by Speaker
 Board Meetings will take place after the regular Member Meeting
 Email Grand Rapids Steelheaders: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com
 Dates with "*" are for members and family only

2026 Great Lakes Bay Region Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
January	6	Meeting
February	3	Meeting
February	7	Saginaw Bay Ice Fishing (2-Day)
March	3	Meeting
April	7	Meeting
April	11	Manistee
April	25	Season Opener (Anywhere)
May	2	Linwood
May	5	Meeting
May	16	Linwood
May	30	Sebewaing
June	9	Meeting
June	13	Sebewaing
June	27	Linwood
July	7	Meeting
July	11	Manistee
July	25	Ludington
August	8	Frankfort
August	22	Manistee (2-Day)
September	1	Meeting
September	12	Linwood
October	6	Meeting
November	3	Meeting
December	1	Meeting
December	12	Banquet at VFW 5pm*

Contact Port Chairman no later than Monday prior when attending outings
 Pull lines at 1:00pm on Saturdays, 12:00pm on Sundays (2-Day Outings). Port chairman will call the end of the outing on Channel 72 all Boats must check in.
 Board/Membership meetings at VFW Hall in Midland at 7:00 pm (No Meeting in August)
 On the day of the outing, port chairman will call the outing start on Marine Radio, Channel 72, All Boats must confirm they are fishing.
 Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follows weigh-in on Saturdays only.
New Rule: Weight in is at 2:00pm "Sharp" No Exceptions
 Outings: All Steelheaders members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate. Children 16 and under are free.
 Banquet: Drinks at 5:00pm Dinner at 6:00pm (Potluck Style)

2026 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
January	12	Board Meeting
February	9	Board Meeting
February	19	Banquet
March	9	Board Meeting
April	13	Board Meeting
April	16	Membership Meeting
May	1-3	Michigan City Tournament
May	7-9	St. Joseph Tournament
May	11	Board Meeting
May	15-17	South Haven Tournament
May	16	Spring Challenge
May	19	League Start
May	28-31	Grand Haven Tournament
June	8	Board Meeting
June	26-28	Manistee Tri-Port Tournament
June	27	Kids & Kings
July	11	Fishing With Veterans
July	13	Board Meeting
July	13-19	Ludington Tournament
July	23-26	Muskegon Tournament
July	25	Summer Challenge
July 30 - August 2		Holland BRC Tournament
August	7-9	Saugatuck BLC Tournament
August	10	Board Meeting
August	14-16	Manistee Monster Tournament
August	15	Ladies Tournament
August	25	League End
August	27-30	Frankfurt Tournament
September	8	League Dinner
September	14	Board Meeting
October	12	Board Meeting
November	9	Board Meeting
December	3	Membership Meeting
December	14	Board Meeting

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

mssfa.org
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For more information, contact your Chapter Membership Director or mssfamembership@charter.net



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- Little Manistee River
- Tippy Dam and the Backwaters
- hiking, biking, & snowmobile trails
- Crystal Mountain
- Caberfae Peaks
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MSSFA Board of Directors Meetings 2026

February 24th
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

August 19th
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

April 25th
MHLM - 10:00am
Lansing, MI

October 21st
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

June 19th
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

December 16th
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm



Illustration from pngtree.com

2026 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact
January	6	General Membership Meeting	
January	9-11	Ultimate Fishing Show - Novi	
January	16	Comedy Club Fundraising Event	
January	17	Lake St. Clair Ice Fishing Outing	
January	30	Manistee/NWNW Mi Rivers and Ice Fishing	
February	3	General Membership Meeting	
February	7	Steelhead Alley Ohio Rivers	
February	21	MWS Banquet	
February	28	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River/Pier	
April	7	General Membership - Swap Meet/Awards	
April	11	Ludington Brown Trout Tour. & Kayak/SB	
April	18	Walleye Tour. Det R/Erie	
April	18	Clinton River Clean Up	
April	21	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
April	25	Lexington/Sanilac Kayak/Small Boat	
April	25	Lexington Huron Lake Tournament	
May	3	Carp Fishing Event	
May	5	General Membership Meeting	
May	9	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	
May	16	Pt Mouille' Kayak/SB SM Bass/Walleye	
May	16	Howard Tanner Salmon Tour. Benton Harbor Sat	
May	17	Howard Tanner Salmon Tour. Benton Harbor Sun	
May	19	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
May	23	Bruin Lake Kayak/Small Boat	
May	23	Sterling SP Walleye Tournament	
May	30	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	
June	2	General Membership Meeting	
June	6	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	
June	13	Halloway Reservoir Kayak/SB	
June	16	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
June	20	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	
June	27	SW MI River Kayak Catfish/Pier Scrams	
July	7	Club Summer Picnic	
July	11	Manistee River Cleanup @ High Bridge	
July	11	Saginaw River Catfish Kayak/SB	
July	21	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
July	23	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Thu	
July	25	Ludington Member Memorial Tour - Sat	
July	26	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Sun	
August	1	Erieau Tournament - Sat. Erieau, Canada	
August	4	General Membership Meeting	
August	8	Salmon Tournament - Manistee - Sat	
August	9	Salmon Tournament - Manistee - Sun	
August	15	Salmon Tournament - Ludington	
August	16	Salmon Tournament - Ludington	
August	18	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
August	22	PM Lake Kayak/Small Boat	
September	1	General Membership Meeting	
September	5	Manistee Kayak/SB & Pier Tournaments	
September	15	Kensington Kayak/SB Monthly Tue Outings	
September	26	Manistee River Tournaments	
September	26	Revisit PM Lake Salmon Kayak/SB	
October	3	Harrisville Area kayak/SB/shore	
October	6	General Membership Meeting	
October	10	Lake Erie Perch Outing	
October	14	Captain/Crew/River Angler '26 Cal. Mtg	
October	17	Ludington Pier/Beach Event	
November	3	General Membership Meeting 2nd Tue.	
November	7	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tour. w DS	
November	14	Ohio Walleye Tournament	
December	1	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	5	PM & other NW Mi Rivers Tournament	
December	19	Huron River Tournament	

2026 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
FEB	14	Russ Pomeroy Memorial Ice Fishing Tourney - Date/Location based on ice conditions
FEB	14-15	Michigan Free Fishing Weekend
FEB	21	Tacklepalooza - Fishing Tackle Swap Meet - Hope Reformed Church Gym, South Haven
MAR	12-15	Ultimate Sport Show - DeVos Place, Grand Rapids
MAR	19	Fishing Seminar - Speaker TBD - South Haven American Legion Post 49*
APR	16	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - South Haven American Legion Post 49
MAY	2-3	Horizon Bank Quake Coho Classic - Michigan City, IN
MAY	8-9	St. Joe Tourney/SW Chapter
MAY	15	(New) South Haven Steelheaders' Harbor Light Brewery Ladies and Youth Tournament
MAY	15	The Lodge SH Steelheaders Pro Am Tournament Captains Registration - The Lodge
MAY	16-17	South Haven Pro Am Tournament - South Side City Marina
MAY	23	Merle Morris Tournament - River Bend Boat Club
JUN	6-7	Free Fishing Weekend
JUN	12-14	South Haven Harborfest
AUG	8	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival - August 6th- 9th)
AUG	15	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans
SEP	5	Labor Day Weekend
NOV	9	2027 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting
NOV	28	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament
2026 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates		
Note: All Board and membership meetings are generally held the third Thursday of each month except for special circumstances such as Pro Am Captain's Meeting set up in May, Fish Boil organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November.		
Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090 Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm. For more information email: rachapman1@comcast.net		
January - No membership meeting		
FEB 19th - 3rd Thursday		
MAR 19th - 3rd Thursday (week after GR Ultimate Sports Show, 3/13-3/16) - Fishing Seminar		
APRIL 16th - 3rd Thursday - Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - Dr. Dan O'Keefe presenting		
*MAY 14th - 2nd Thursday *prior to SHS Pro/Am - Membership meeting/Ladies and Youth Tournament. Registration at American Legion.		
JUNE 18th - 3rd Thursday		
JULY 16th - 3rd Thursday		
AUG 20th - 3rd Thursday		
SEP 17th - 3rd Thursday - Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year's events. ID event chairs.		
OCT 15th - 3rd Thursday - Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year's events and set calendar, nominations for Board of Directors.		
November/December - No membership meetings		

2026 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but please confirm online for the most updated information. www.swmisteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders			
JANUARY	8	Big Fish Awards / Club Elections	Elks Lodge, Benton Harbor MI
FEBRUARY	21	Winter Challenge River Tournament #2	The Sandbar, St. Joseph MI
MARCH	12	(Club Meeting) Spring Thaw - Happy Hour Discussion	The Buck & Brew, St. Joseph MI
MAY	8-9	The Shootouts Spectacular	West Basin Marina, St. Joseph MI
JUNE	4	(Club Meeting) Charter Captain's Roundtable	Elks Lodge, Benton Harbor MI
JUNE	19-20	Trolling with the Troops	Legion Post 568, Stevensville MI
SEPTEMBER	10	(Club Meeting) Fall Wrap-Up - Happy Hour Discussion	The Buck & Brew, St. Joseph MI
DECEMBER	5	Winter Challenge River Tournament #1	The Sandbar, St. Joseph MI
Meeting Location: Elks Lodge, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022			

2026 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
April	17	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion
May	3	6:00am	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina - NEED WORKERS!
June	14	6:00am	Veterans Fishing Outing	Harbor Beach Marina - Contact Kevin Ramsey for details
June	19	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion
August	21	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion
October	16	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion - Election of Board/Officers
Contact Paul Nienaltowski at 810-300-1561 for inquiries.				

2026 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
January	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
January	31	6:30am	Ice Fishing Derby on Lake Avalon
February	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
March	7	6:00pm	Annual Meeting/Dinner
April	6	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
May	16	5:30am	Alpena Tournament
June	13	5:30am	Presque Isle Tournament
June	27-28	5:30am	Presque Isle Tournament (5:30am both mornings)
July	6	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
August	22		Rogers City Tournament
September	14	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
October	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	14	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting

2026 White River Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information
Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.			
January	8	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
February	5	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
March	5	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
April	2	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
May	7	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
June	4	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague Boat Launch
July			No meeting
August	6	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague Boat Launch
September	3	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
October	1	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
November	5	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW
December	3	6:30 pm	Meeting - Montague VFW

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“Quagga”

Continued from page 1

always been small precocious males and equivalent to year old jacks in the salmon world. In the past the average size of steelhead that have spent two years in Lakes Michigan (a two-summer steelhead vs a two-salt steelhead if in the ocean for two years) and Huron is 24-26 inches. A 22 or 23-inch female would be better described as a runt two summer fish.

(Note: As a 60-year hard core fisher of steelhead with almost 12,000 brought to net and recorded, I have lots of experience with these special fish. Lots of anadromous chinook and

coho salmon were caught along the way from jacks to 30 pounders. In the 1970s I caught a jack chinook in the Grand River that was barely 8 inches long that squirted milt on me before release. I remember declaring in print that I had caught the world's smallest sexually mature chinook. Not too much of a reach since the average one summer chinook jack was running around 12-13 inches at the time with virtually unlimited forage. Covering more water may be the answer for success when steelhead runs are weak. Lures such as weighted spinners, spoons, and plugs can be seen by steelhead for a considerable

distance and allow the angler move right along and show his or her offerings to the steelhead. Once fish are found, the prepared angler can tempt the anadromous rainbows with more traditional drifted baits like spawn and wigglers. Beads under floats are also great lures when holding steelhead are located.

Let's hope that quagga mussel numbers are in serious decline or at least decreasing like zebra mussels did. As a very senior wading angler I know my days on the river are winding down and would love to see a rebound in steelhead numbers.



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Fishing Can Be Confusing

By Bob Jensen

Fishing, like life, can be confusing. On the six o'clock news a person says people should have the Freedom of Speech. A few weeks or months later, the same person suggests that someone should lose their job or go to jail because of something they said. Same thing with fishing. On a fishing trip a long time ago, my fishing partner told me to use a bright lure. A few days later the same friend suggested a natural looking bait. WTH?{What the heck?}

When I was young my Dad introduced me to fishing. At that time I didn't think about the hows and whys of fishing. Dad bait-

ed the hook, flipped the bait in the water, and handed me the rod. "When the bobber goes under, start reeling" was his instruction. So, when the bobber went under, I started reeling and was often rewarded with a bluegill and sometimes a bass. My only thoughts were that fishing was fun.

As I got older, I started thinking about how to catch more fish. I read magazine articles and talked with older, more accomplished anglers whenever I could. Later on I attended fishing seminars where well-known anglers shared their secrets for catching fish. As I gained more knowledge about fishing, I had more questions. I found that the more I learned about fish-

ing, the more questions I had about fishing.

For instance, a friend and I went fishing one day in early spring. He told me that we should use small baits because small baits were best. We caught some walleyes. That fall, the same friend and I went fishing again. He told me that we should use big baits because big baits were best. I was confused, but went along with his suggestion. We caught some walleyes.

This small bait/big bait thing got me thinking. In the spring, we use small baits, in the fall we use big baits. When the water is cold, we move our baits slowly, but six weeks later when the water is warmer, we move them faster.

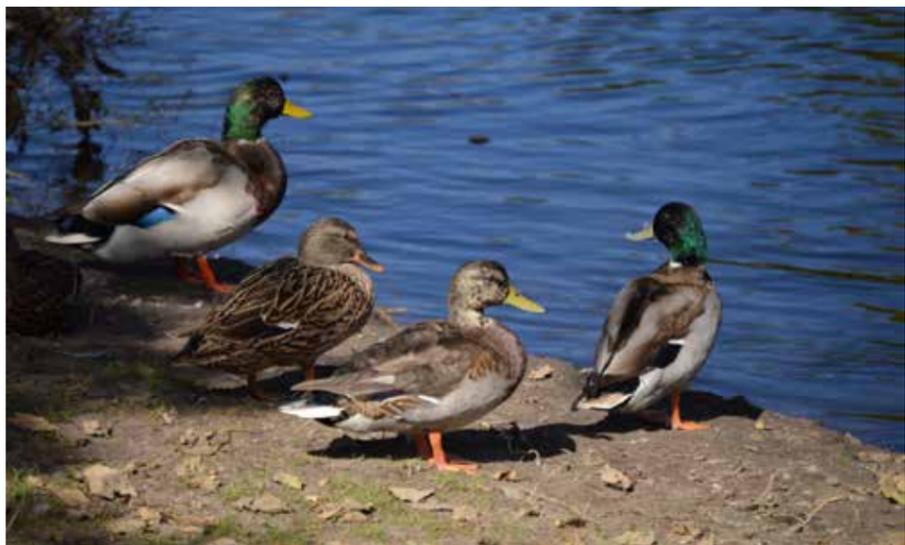
Then six weeks after that, as the water cools, we're back to slow moving baits. I learned that fish react to changes in their environment. When the water is cold, many species of fish prefer a slower moving bait. Also, in the cold waters of spring, they prefer a smaller meal, but when the water begins to cool off in the fall, they look for larger meals. That can be confusing until we learn that fish react differently at different times.

Now, back to that bait color question mentioned earlier. When my friend

suggested a bait color different than the one that he recommended a few days earlier, he explained that we were on a different lake and the water was more stained than the lake we fished previously. He shared that usually, bright baits were better in stained water, natural appearing baits were often better in clear water. Not always, but usually.

Here's something personal about fishing that's really confusing to me. Forward facing sonar{FFS} has become a big deal in fishing. You watch a screen and it shows you

where the fish are. You've got to keep your eyes glued to the screen. It's very effective and will usually add to your catch. I don't use it. I prefer watching loons, otters, deer, and the person I'm fishing with. Here's what I can't figure out: I'm not interested in FFS and watching a screen while I'm fishing in open water, but I would not want to go ice-fishing without my Vexilar, the ice-fishing version of FFS. My eyes don't leave that screen all day. Fishing, like life, can be confusing.



Some anglers prefer to watch ducks instead of electronic screens when they're fishing.

How to Go Ice Fishing in Michigan: *The Complete Guide for 2026*

By Lisa of fishingbooker.com

If you come to the “Great Lake State” and yell “Winter is coming!” you’ll probably hear a lot of cheering. That’s because Michigan’s rich waters don’t disappoint even during the winter months, with 11,000 lakes in Michigan waiting to be explored. Ice fishing in Michigan is a time-honored tradition, and anglers from all over the US come to this winter wonderland every year.

With a little know-how and an experienced local guide, you can find plenty of trophy catches and come back home with a bucket full of fish. Your adventure can be anything from simply drilling a hole in the ice and dropping a line to a full ice fishing extravaganza with shanties and snowmobiles. It takes just one trip to fall in love with ice fishing in Michigan, whatever you choose to do.

In this ice fishing guide, we’ve tried to cover everything there is to know about the Michigan ice fishing scene, from top catches to hottest spots. So let’s dive right into it!

Top Ice Fishing Catches

Ice fishing season in Michigan is pretty generous, offering anglers enough time to reel in some nice catches through the ice. What you’ll find at the end of your fishing line heavily depends on the lake you choose for your ice fishing adventure.

There are over 150 fish species in Michigan, and you can find most of them during the winter months. You can get your hands on anything from Panfish like Perch and Bluegill to big Northern Pike, Walleye, Trout, Whitefish, Burbot, and even the occasional Salmon.

Here’s a short overview

of some of the species you can catch while ice fishing in Michigan:

Yellow Perch

Every Michigan angler knows how rewarding ice fishing for Perch is. The thing is, these fish travel in big schools, so if you manage to find one it’s fish on. In order to find your tasty dinner, there are a few things you need to know about ice fishing for Yellow Perch.

They prefer to stay in shallower water with healthy vegetation early in winter. As the season progresses, they’ll move to deeper water. By the end of the ice fishing season, Perch will head towards their spawning grounds. Since they move in big schools, you’ll need to stay mobile



Successful ice fishing outing!



Yellow Perch



Lake Trout

Walleye.

While Lake Trout are making use of the frozen lakes, you, in turn, could pack your ice fishing equipment and head to your chosen lake for some Trout fishing. Keep in mind that Trout are highly mobile, so you’ll need to rely on bait-fish in order to find these predators. Spots with clear water and good visibility near steep structure are

arguably the best for Lake Trout ice fishing in Michigan.

Northern Pike

Ice fishing enthusiasts love Northern Pike for several reasons. First of all, these beautiful fish stay active even during the cold months, slowing down only a bit. Secondly, they are among the heaviest fish you can take through the ice.

And last but not least, Pike are great fighters.

Many ice fishing anglers use a rod and reel combo to catch these large fish. Artificial lures and frozen bait usually work well, but some prefer to work with live minnows. Northern Pike like to eat a lot, so pack bigger bait.

Top Ice Fishing Spots

With thousands of rivers and inland lakes to choose from, plus access to four out of the five Great Lakes, there’s no doubt Michigan is an ice fishing paradise. The biggest challenge here is to choose where to go first. Let’s see what ice fishing in Michigan has to offer!

Lower Peninsula

Walleye lovers hit the early and late ice of Saginaw Bay and Houghton Lake or head to the mighty Lake St. Clair to add Yellow Perch and Northern Pike to the list of potential catches.



Northern Pike

and move a bit throughout your lake.

Lake Trout

Lake Trout are real cold-water predators, and

catching one of those under the ice is fun for any angler. In fact, winter is the peak feeding season for Lake Trout. Some anglers say that this period is just like the summer months for

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St. Clair is relatively shallow, with many great areas to fish under the ice.

In southwest Michigan, one of the prime ice fishing spots is the Coldwater-Marble Chain of Lakes, located in Branch County. This destination is great for catching large Northern Pike, just like the first and last ice in shallow Fletcher Floodwaters in Alpena/Montmorency counties.

The third-largest lake in Michigan, Lake Charlevoix, is a great ice fishing spot with a lot of spots to hit for anglers looking to catch trophy Cisco, Walleye, Perch, Lake Trout, and Pike under the ice. Higgins Lake in Roscommon County also offers winter access at a variety of locations.

Upper Peninsula

Winter anglers come to Munising Bay for their dose of Coho Salmon, Cisco, and Lake Whitefish, along with Yellow Perch and Lake Trout. Murray Bay and Sand Point are pretty popular spots in the Bay, along with Trout Bay off Grand Island.

Another winter fishing spot in Upper Michigan is Big Manistique Lake – a 10,000-acre lake in Luce/Mackinac counties. Here, you can get your hands on Walleye, Yellow Perch, and Northern Pike – a combo that can hardly disappoint.

The slightly bigger Lake Gogebic in Gogebic County is known for its early ice with Walleye, Northern Pike, Yellow

Perch, and Black Crappie lurking underneath.

And That’s Not All

Of course, we’ve covered just a small portion of ice fishing spots in Michigan. If you hire a local guide who knows the right spots, ice fishing in Lake Michigan can be a wonderful experience for anglers of all ages. For extra safety, you can fish around the lake’s harbors and ports, where the ice is thicker.

Right next to this Great Lake is another premier ice fishing spot, Hamlin Lake. Ice fishing enthusiasts usually access it through Ludington State Park. The lake’s deeper than others, although the shallower upper part freezes over first.

Near Metro Detroit, you can enjoy ice fishing in Michigan’s Cass Lake without having to go far from the city. Jumbo Perch, Crappie, Pike, and Walleye are common catches in this lake. Lake Mitchell and Lake Cadillac are other good spots for winter fishing located right next to each other.

So, are you in the mood for a Great Lake ice fishing adventure or would you rather explore a smaller lake? There are so many options to choose from, and many more to find on your own!



Family bonding and life lessons on the ice.



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24	Homestead Resort on Betsie River	2399 Dam Rd	Benzonia	MI	49616	10% In Season, 25% Off Season (homestead@crystal-rentals.com)
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