



## Environmental Protection Agency predicting more invasive species

EPA has released a final report entitled, "Predicting Future Introductions of Nonindigenous Species to the Great Lakes." This report predicts the spread of aquatic nonindigenous species into the Great Lakes to help resource managers focus monitoring activities on particular species at the most vulnerable U.S. Great Lakes ports. The report also demonstrates the use of a habitat suitability model and ballast water discharge data to predict invasion potential.

The Great Lakes have suffered ecological damage and incurred substantial economic costs from a number of aquatic nonindigenous species (NIS) that have successfully invaded this region. Ballast water from commercial shipping is the primary means by which NIS have entered the Great Lakes. Preventing the transport of NIS to the region is

the best way to avoid their potential adverse impacts, but if this is not possible, the next best alternative is to monitor for their arrival and control their spread.

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invaded this region. Ballast water from commercial shipping is the primary means by which NIS have entered the Great Lakes. Preventing the transport of NIS to the region is the best way to avoid their potential adverse impacts, but if this is not possible, the next best alternative is to monitor for their arrival and control their spread.

To predict future invasions of NIS in the Great Lakes, the two most important determinants of successful invasions were evaluated: whether there is suitable habitat in the Great Lakes for nonnative species and whether there are a sufficient number of these organisms and their larvae arriving in the Great Lakes. First, a species distribution model was used to identify the areas of the Great Lakes

### More invasive species predicted

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## Lead sinker, jig ban proposed in Illinois

Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago) has introduced a bill (Senate Bill 1269) in the Illinois legislature that would end the sale or distribution of lead sinkers and lead jigs.

Steans tells us she introduced the bill because "constituents in my district are concerned with the impact of lead on waterfowl."

A summary of **SB 1269 Lead Sinker & Lead Jig Ban** says: "Prohibits any person from selling, supplying, distributing or offering to sell, supply, or distribute lead sinkers and lead jigs. Prohibits the use of lead sinkers and lead jigs to take fish in freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, brooks, and similar bodies of water over which the Department of Natural Resources ("the Department") has jurisdiction under the Rivers, Lakes, and Streams Act. Requires the Department, after consulting with the

institute an educational program that meets certain requirements. Requires the Department to (i) notify the public about the Act's prohibitions; (ii) enforce the Act; (iii) confiscate, under certain circumstances, lead jigs or lead sinkers that it finds in the course of enforcing the Act; and (iv) suspend, for not more than 6 months, the hunting and fishing privileges of a person who uses a lead sinker or lead jig to take fish in violation of the Act. Provides fines for violations. Effective one year after becoming law.

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=&SessionId=76&GA=96&DocTypeId=SB&DocNum=1269&GAID=10&LegID=42210&SpecSes=&Session=> for the full bill.

Steans added, "I would like to **IL lead sinker, jig ban proposed**

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## Opposition grows to Lake Michigan Lake Trout expansion

Wis Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishermen vote to oppose plan

At the December meeting of the Wisconsin Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishermen, member clubs voted to oppose the Lake Michigan Lake Trout Task Group restoration plan.

The primary reasons for the opposition to the plan are: (1) Forage stocks in Lake Michigan are at a record low, and substantially adding to a predator base at this time could cause the forage base to crash. (2) Lake Michigan states have already been reducing salmon stocking due to concerns of the forage base.

It would make little sense to add to the predator base at this time. (3) Restoration of a self-sustaining population of lake trout in Lake Michigan has been the goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the Lake Trout Task Group for the past forty years, and it has resulted in very little or no success.

The Lake Michigan Lake Trout Task Group is comprised of six DNR officials from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin; two USFWS biologists; a consultant and a scientist representing the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, US Geological Survey; and five biologists representing various tribes – 16 members in all.

The Federation emphatically recognizes the way Lake Michigan is today, it wasn't yesterday and it won't be tomorrow. The Lake salmon fishery is one of the best things that ever could have happened to Lake Michigan and its surrounding communities, and to put that fishery in jeopardy at this time would be only "penny conscious and dollar foolish." It is believed the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation also opposes the plan for similar reasons.

Economically, the salmon program has been a tremendous financial boon for Lake Michigan communities and businesses.

The Lake Michigan Lake Trout Task Group claims that a handful of naturally produced fry collected from two locations in 1981 and 1994 and even less wild age-1+ lake trout of three year classes caught between 1983-1989 qualifies as evidence of natural reproduction in Lake Michigan.

If that is so, didn't the U.S. Geological Survey - Great Lakes Science Center, US EPA, Great Lakes Fishery Commission and all our respective state fisheries managers offer comprehensive studies and surveys telling us just a few short years ago that the Lake Michigan forage base was in dramatic decline? Isn't that why we held a lake-wide meeting to discuss and ultimately agree on reducing Chinook salmon plants?

Aren't we now being told that the lake is under increasing stress from invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels, gobies, spiny water fleas and other invasive Diporeia?

Isn't that why the four states dramatically reduced their respective yellow perch creel limits just ten short years ago – just before these prized keepers crashed to the point of no return?

Isn't the lake's food chain with all these ballast introduced invasive species creating an irreversible stressful decline in that food chain?

The stocking strategy adopted allegedly by consensus of the Lake Michigan Committee states that 50% more lake trout are to be stocked into Lake Michigan including 6.3 million fry, 550,000 fingerlings and 3, 320,00 yearling lake trout.

Why would we want to consider such an increase in stocking of lake trout that would only add to the stress of this Great Lake? What kind of junk science have we reverted to where we would want to even consider such an ill-advised plan?



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### Position Statement

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

### Inland Seas Angler

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## IDNR reminds snowmobilers to be cautious

### IDNR snowmobile safety classes currently being offered

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois DNR is reminding snowmobile operators and riders to take extra caution this year as the snow begins to fall in Illinois. Every year throughout the state, people are seriously injured or lose their lives on snowmobiles. Many of these accidents could have been prevented had proper precautions been taken and common sense been used.

Last season in Illinois, 66 reported snowmobile accidents resulted in seven fatalities. In most instances, being alert, knowing the trail, and traveling at a reasonable rate of speed for trail conditions can prevent most accidents. In North America, more than 50% of snowmobile fatalities involve intoxicated operators.

While IDNR encourages everyone to take a snowmobile safety class before their first ride of the season, state law requires that persons at least 12 years of age and less than 16 years must have in possession a valid Snowmobile Safety Education Certificate of Competency issued by IDNR in order to operate a snowmobile alone. For snowmobile safety information or a list of upcoming snowmobile classes, see [www.dnr.state.il.us/safety/snowmobile.htm](http://www.dnr.state.il.us/safety/snowmobile.htm).

Current snowmobile safety education courses require students to attend an eight-hour class where certified instructors teach basic safety principles, maintenance, operation, winter survival, regulations and a proper attitude of respect for the student's fellow person and the environment.

Basic safety tips for safe snowmobiling:

- ▶ Know your equipment and make sure that equipment is in proper working order.
- ▶ Wear sensible, protective clothing designed for snowmobiling like a full-size helmet, goggles, or face shield to

## Dock lotteries scheduled for Middle Bass Is. State Park

### One for year-round residents, another for general public

Lotteries for docks at Middle Bass Island State Park have been scheduled and those interested can apply until February 25. Two lottery drawings will be conducted: one for year-round island residents and one for general public permits.

A complete listing of procedures and rules as well as applications are available at [www.ohiostateparks.org](http://www.ohiostateparks.org), click on Middle Bass Island. Applications for both lotteries are also available at the Catawba Island State Park office located at 4049 Moores Dock Rd. Applicants may apply by mail or at the Catawba Island State Park office. Applications will be taken until February 25. The drawings for both lotteries will be conducted at 6 p.m. March 5; you need not be present. ✧

prevent injuries from twigs, stones, ice chips, and flying debris.

- ▶ Avoid wearing long scarves. They may get caught in moving parts of the snowmobile.
- ▶ Know the terrain you are going to ride. If unfamiliar to you, ask someone who has traveled over it before. Be aware of trails or portions of trails that may be closed.
- ▶ Drowning is one cause of snowmobile fatalities. When not familiar with ice thickness or currents, avoid these areas.
- ▶ Know the weather forecast and especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
- ▶ Always use the buddy system. Never ride alone or unaccompanied.

A minimum of 4" of snow cover must be present for snowmobile use on state-managed property. Call ahead to site offices to get the latest snow conditions and trail closures at individual sites. Ignoring closures can result in a minimum \$75 fine and possible arrest. Site offices: [www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/PA\\_RKS/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/PA_RKS/index.htm). ✧

## No such thing as safe ice, only safer ice

Ask anyone who has had the misfortune of falling through thin ice, and most would agree: There is no such thing as safe ice, only safer ice.

Follow these simple safety rules to minimize your risks:

- ▶ You need 4" of new clear ice for foot travel; 5" by snowmobile or ATV
- ▶ Don't consume alcohol.
- ▶ Never fish alone.
- ▶ Wear a life jacket under your winter gear. It will keep you warm and buoyant should you fall through.
- ▶ Carry ice picks or ice awls. These will allow you to pull yourself out of the water and onto the ice.
- ▶ Should you go through, remain calm. Turn in the direction you came from. Extend your hands and arms, forcing the ice picks solidly into the ice ahead of you. Kick your feet and pull yourself out onto the ice. Do Not Stand Up! By rolling away from the hole, you spread out your weight until you are able to reach solid ice.
- ▶ Carry a signaling type of whistle. Using it may be the only way to let someone know that you are in trouble. A cell phone can be a valuable survival tool but only as long as it remains dry. Carrying a length of rope also can be useful.
- ▶ Stay away from areas on lakes that have inlets or outlets. Be mindful about flowing water if fishing on a channel between two lakes. Ice fishing on Indiana's reservoir impoundments can pose particular concerns; pay close attention to fluctuating water levels.
- ▶ Think ahead and have a plan. ✧

### IL lead sinker, jig ban proposed

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hear from you and your group about how we can address this issue together. I am asking that you share this request with your organization and I would like to schedule a time to meet with representatives of your group, either in my office in Chicago or Springfield."

The bill has been referred to the Assignments committee. ✧

## Tanner inducted into AFS Hall Of Excellence

The Executive Committee of the parent AFS Fisheries Management Section recently honored Dr. Howard A. Tanner as a 2008 inductee into their Hall of Excellence.

Tanner is known not only for his long and distinguished career in fisheries and natural resources management, but also as the "Father of the Great Lakes Salmon Program." His early contributions shaped the Great Lakes stocking program as one of the most significant bio-manipulation programs in the history of fisheries management.

After returning from WW II service, Dr. Tanner received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. (1952) degrees from Michigan State University. He taught and conducted research at Colorado State University for nine years and led the Colorado Department of Game, Fish and Parks Research program for three years before coming to Michigan as Chief of Fisheries Division. There he teamed with Dr. Wayne Tody. Commercial over fishing and invasion of sea lamprey and alewife had disrupted the Great Lakes fishery.

With the objective of converting some of the huge alewife biomass into economic value, they explored pelagic predator species. Their decision to introduce Coho (1966) and Chinook (1967) salmon combined with sea lamprey control, restocking of lake trout and steelhead, and conversion of commercial fisheries from gill nets to selective trap nets, led to the emergence of the Great Lakes as a leading recreational fishing center of North America generating more than \$9.6 billion annually.

After two years as Chief of the Fisheries Division (1964 -66), Tanner served eight years as Professor and Director of Natural Resources at Michigan State U (1966-75). During that time, he became the first Chair of the Michigan Environmental Review Board. Under Governor William Milliken's administration, he returned to the Michigan DNR as its Director (1975-83). Following retirement from MDNR, he served another 10 years as Professor at Michigan State University and continues at MSU as an adjunct faculty member lecturing often to a variety of classes.

In retirement, he also has served on the Lake Huron Fisheries Advisory Committee, and co-chaired the MUCC Sea Lamprey Control Funding Task Force. In 2003, he was selected by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to head up a Task Force to protect Michigan's deer population from Chronic Wasting Disease. He is an active member of the Michigan Resource Stewards group that advises state government on environmental issues.

In addition to the AFS Hall of Excellence, Tanner has also been enshrined in the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame (1981) and MUCC's Hall of Conservation (2006). Other honors include selection as National Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year (1968), Trout Unlimited's Trout Conservationist of the Year (1974), Michigan Conservationist of the Year (1968), and the Outstanding Alumni Award in the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (1978). Dr. Tanner is nearing completion of a book to be published in 2009 that relates many stories of his notable career. ✧

## Great Lakes boating pays big bucks

An Army Corps study finds Great Lakes recreational boating produces over \$9 billion annual economic impact, the 103 page U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2008 Economic Great Lakes Boating Report. The information should be useful to document the economic importance of boating on the Great Lakes.

The report measures the regional economic impacts of recreational boating in terms of boater spending and job creation in the Great Lakes basin. The 911,000 recreational boaters on the Great Lakes:

- spend \$2.36 billion per year on boating trips;
- spend \$1.44 billion per year on boats, boating equipment and supplies;

- create 60,000 jobs with \$1.77 billion in personal income; and
- increase the quality of life and appreciation of the environment for many Americans.

Data used to estimate boating days; craft spending and trip spending for different size boats were obtained independently from on-line assessments conducted by the Recreational Marine Research Center (RMRC) at Michigan State University. According to the RMRC, an average boat owner using the Great Lakes spends about \$3,600 per year on vessel ownership, including \$1,400 on craft-related expenses (e.g., equipment, repairs, insurance, slip fees) and \$2,200 on boating trips (e.g., gas, oil, food, lodging) involving an average of 23 boat days. The averages are

dominated by the high percentage of mostly smaller watercraft.

Owners of larger boats spend considerably more than these averages, up to as high as \$20,000 per year for boats 41 feet and more. Average spending per boat day on trips varies from \$76 for boats less than 16 feet in length to \$275 per day for boats larger than 40 feet. The largest trip expenses are for boat fuel (22%), restaurants and bars (17%) and groceries (14%). In 2003, registered watercraft users on the Great Lakes spent \$2.36 billion on boating trips and \$1.44 billion on craft expenses for a total of \$3.8 billion. The majority of annual craft expenses are for equipment (39%), maintenance and repair (29%) and insurance (14%). ✧

## Fly fisherman's Chippewa River catches world record

HAYWARD – An avid fly fisherman and fishing guide is the latest Wisconsin world record holder for the monster musky he landed on the Chippewa River with a fly rod.

The National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum notified Brad Bohlen of Hayward last week that the 51.25-inch musky he caught October 16, 2008, was indeed a world fly rod record for a released fish on a 36-pound tippet, according to Emmett Brown, the Hall's executive director.

Get a look at Bohlen's catch and read his story of how he landed this fantastic fish in [Record Musky on the Fly](#).

"I've never been a record chaser by nature, but I must admit that I am tickled to be in this position," Bohlen says. "I give all the credit to Tom Greenup for his wonderful guiding and oarsmanship that day, as well as good fishing buddy Derek Kuehl, who had invited me along on the trip after having a fellow angler cancel out."

Bohlen, who would say only that he caught his musky below the Winter



dam but above Lake Holcombe, says that the real story of that day was that not only did he catch a magnificent fish, but within moments, "Derek also hung into a record class beast of his own (fish measured 45") and we proceeded to execute an almost unheard of musky double on a fly!"

Bohlen, who guides and currently caretakes at the Winneboujou Club on the Brule River, joins a sizeable and

storied group of Wisconsin anglers who have hauled in record fish. Four world records were set in the Hayward area in the late 1940s, including the 69.11 lb. monster Louis Spray pulled from the Chippewa Flowage in 1949.

In more recent years, Wisconsin fly fishermen have also added to the record haul, including three new fly fishing catch and release musky records set in 2008 in addition to Bohlen's. Bill Flader set a new record for 14-pound tippet with the 40" musky he pulled from the Chippewa River in Sawyer County; Tom Peterson set two new records, for the 43-inch musky he pulled from North Twin Lake in Vilas County on 50 lb. tippet and the 41" musky he landed on Kentuck Lake in Forest/Vilas counties to set a record in the "unlimited tippet" category.

Wisconsin also owns a corner of a fifth fly fishing musky record set in 2008: Tom Peterson pulled a 46" musky from Smokey Lake, which is mostly in Michigan's Iron County but also touches Vilas County. ✧

## Chippewa system giving up world class fish

HAYWARD, WI – The Chippewa River and its namesake flowage are regaining their reputation for record-setting musky.

Two fish pulled from the storied system in 2008 set new fly fishing catch and release musky world records: the 51.25" musky Brad Bohlen caught and released on a 36 lb. tippet on Oct. 16, 2008, and the 40" musky Bill Flader caught on 14 lb. tippet from the river, according to Emmett Brown, executive director of the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum in Hayward.

Supervisor Dave Neuswanger reported a 2006 genetics study netted 52 fish more than 40" long, including hefty females over 50" long. "Those fish have only grown larger in the intervening years," Neuswanger says. "Musky fishing is improving steadily throughout the Upper Chippewa

Basin as our native strain is allowed to reach its inherent potential."

More than half a century ago, Louis Spray's capture of a 69.11 lb. musky from the Chippewa Flowage, followed by three other world record fish from the Hayward area, set off a fishing frenzy that led to the near collapse of the area fishery by the 1970s.

Since then, higher minimum length limits and a strong catch-and-release ethic, particularly among the most skilled musky anglers, have brought the big ones back. An article on these efforts can be found in the December 2002 Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. Neuswanger says that the DNR has no way of knowing the origin of Bohlen's fish. It could have grown up in the Chippewa Flowage before migrating through the Winter Dam and into the Chippewa

River downstream.

"Some muskies live their entire lives in the rivers, while others become large in forage-rich flowages before escaping into the rivers," he says. "River fishing is often overlooked by musky anglers, and so that's where many of the biggest fish live. It is quite a thrill (and even a little scary) to see a 50-inch muskellunge following your lure in clear water only a foot deep!" ✧

## Get your 2009 license

Fishing, hunting, and sportsmen combination licenses for 2009 Great Lakes States are now available from most DNR license and permit vendors online through direct links at the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council web site <http://www.great-lakes.org/licenses.html>. ✧

## Fisherman Dies, Dozens Rescued off Lake Erie Ice Floe

OAK HARBOR, Ohio, (AP) Feb. 8 – A miles-wide ice floe broke away from Lake Erie's shoreline on Saturday, February 7, trapping more than 130 fishermen, some for four hours. One person fell into the water and later died of an apparent heart attack.

Coast Guard spokesman, Chief Petty Officer Robert Lanier, said 134 people had been plucked from the ice by late afternoon. Some climbed into baskets lowered from rescue helicopters, while others boarded airboats that glided across the ice.

"We were in no danger," said Norb Pilaczynski of Swanton, Ohio, who was rescued from the lake along with several friends. "We knew there was enough ice out there."

However, officials apparently had good reason for being frustrated with the people they later rescued. Anglers apparently laid down plywood planks in order to get onto the lake. The ice under those planks then melted, sinking their wooden path. Warming temperatures and growing winds then widened the gap, stranding them on the ice floe.

"We get people out here who don't know how to read the ice," Ottawa County Sheriff Bob Bratton said. "What happened here today was just idiotic. I don't know how else to put it."

Leslie Love, 65, of New Albany, Ohio, died of an apparent heart attack after his snowmobile broke through the ice while he was searching for a safe place to cross back to shore, according to the Ottawa County sheriff's office. Love collapsed after he was helped back onto solid ice, the sheriff's office said. A relative performed CPR until a helicopter transported Love to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Mike Sanger of Milwaukee said the crack had been tighter earlier in the morning. "I was told the lake was frozen all the way across," said Sanger, 51. "I didn't think the lake could go anywhere."

Ice on western sections of Lake Erie was as much as two feet thick Saturday, National Weather Service meteorologist Bill Randel said. The ice cracked as temperatures rose into the 40s and winds of up to 35 mph pushed on the ice. When fishermen realized late Saturday morning (February 7) that the ice had broken away, they began to debate the best way off, Sanger said, adding that no one appeared to be too scared. Some chose to sit and wait for authorities, while others headed east in search of an ice bridge.

Sanger said he was rescued after about an hour by one of several private charter airboats that pulled up. Ohio Division of Wildlife spokeswoman Jamey Graham said the state warns fishermen every year that there's no such thing as "safe ice." And authorities along the lake are trained for these types of rescues.

Ottawa County sheriff Bob Bratton didn't mince words when asked about ice fishermen who apparently ignored signs that the ice was unstable on Lake Erie: "If there was a section in the code about common sense, we would have made about 150 arrests out there today."

"Out there" was in reference to an ice flow approximately eight miles long that broke off from land near Locust Point, Ohio.

Despite a massive rescue effort involving U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard, Ohio State U and Monroe County helicopters along with state hovercraft and airboats, one person died after slipping into the frigid waters.

Although not widely publicized, there are incidents each year involving ice fishermen who have misjudged conditions and found themselves in danger and needing rescue. Saturday's stranding of approximately 135 anglers, however, was unprecedented. It was infuriating to officials like Bratton as it seemed they ignored warnings from everyone from fellow anglers to the National

Weather Service that conditions were right to cause ice to break free, especially on the western part of the lake where Saturday's tragedy happened.

After the rescues, Ohio Division of Wildlife spokeswoman Jamey Graham repeated the state's annual warning to fishermen that "there's no such thing as safe ice."

Many of the 134 fishermen rescued returned to the miles-long floe Sunday using rented airboats to retrieve left-behind snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and other equipment.

◇

### Boaters sue for damage from gasoline blend Judge allows ethanol suit move forward

A Florida District Court judge recently denied a request to dismiss a lawsuit regarding the damage that gasoline blended with ethanol does to boat engines and fuel tanks. The suit was filed last August by The Kopelowitz Ostrow law firm on behalf of clients Erick Kelesceny, John Egizi and Todd Jessup, all Florida residents. Defendants in the case are Exxon, Chevron, Conoco Phillips, BP and Shell.

The suit alleges that the oil companies failed to warn boat owners that ethanol-blended gasoline may destroy fiberglass tanks and tends to absorb water and phase separate, which could cause damage to any boat, regardless of its fuel tank material.

The next step following last month's ruling is pursuing certification to become a class-action lawsuit. If successful, the oil companies will be forced to place a warning label on pumps at all Florida gas stations. The plaintiffs also seek compensation for Florida boat owners whose boats have been damaged by the fuel. ◇

## IL State Record Fish

The Illinois DNR is saluting 18-year-old Jon Zettler of Chatham for catching a new record yellow bass-white bass hybrid. The fish was caught Nov. 3, 2008 at Rend Lake.

IDNR District Fisheries Biologist Dan Stephenson reports genetics tests conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey confirmed the fish was a yellow bass/white bass hybrid. The fish weighed in at 2.06 lbs. and was 15" in length. The hybrid is the first of its size reported in Illinois and this fish has prompted the IDNR to add the category of the yellow bass/white bass hybrid to the list of state fishing records.

Zettler caught the fish on a Grizzly jig (tube) with a Sam Heaton Super Sensitive rod and Pflueger reel. When told his catch was a new state-record fish, Jon Zettler said, "I was blown away and sure glad I went with my dad and his friend (Nick Shafer) that morning. We don't spend as much time together as we used to and catching this fish sure made the day that more special."

Jon's father, Bob Zettler said, "Just to spend time with my son and see him enjoy the outdoors makes me happy, but when you throw in this particular fish he caught, words cannot do it justice of how proud and happy I am for him." ✧

## Michigan OKs five salmon limit

Michigan anglers beginning April 9th will be able to keep up to five salmon a day, in combination with other trout species. The rule change, approved by the Natural Resources Commission, will allow for up to 5 salmon per day (no more than 3 of the 5 can be browns, lakereels or steelhead). The Michigan Charter Boat Association and about 30% of the survey responses were not in favor of the increase. The Michigan Steelheaders supported the proposal.

Michigan fish chief, Kelly Smith said the DNR will track bag limits to help determine future bag rates. ✧

## USCG hearing on Dry Cargo Residues issue OK to submit comments online

On December 29, 2008, the U.S. Coast Guard published a Notice of Intent to prepare a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on our proposal to issue a final rule that may modify the Dry Cargo Residues on the Great Lakes interim rule and add new conditions for discharges. The EIS is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

As part of the scoping process under NEPA, the USCG held a public meeting in Chicago on January 28.

More info and instructions on how to comment can be found at Volume 73, page 79496 of the *Federal Register* published on December 29, 2008. The USCG will consider all comments received by March 30, 2009. For more info: [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg522/cg5224/dry\\_cargo.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg522/cg5224/dry_cargo.asp). ✧

## Pine Ridge fined for damaging wetlands Must pay \$16,340 for dredging a lakebed and filling in wetlands

MADISON – Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen announced that the Wis. Dept. of Justice settled a suit against Pine Ridge of Wautoma, LLC and Mathew P. Brown, LLC for violations of state environmental laws.

According to the complaint filed at the request of the DNR, Pine Ridge hired contractor Jody Henke to dredge a glacial pothole lake and place dredged spoils in wetlands on property owned by Brown, without obtaining proper permits. Pine Ridge stopped work on the project when approached by the DNR. It removed the fill from the wetland, and repaired the lakebed. Under the terms of the settlement, Pine Ridge has agreed to pay penalties totaling \$16,340 for the violations. It has also committed to finish restoring the disturbed area and to monitor that area in order to ensure that invasive or non-native species do not become established. Litigation against Henke is proceeding. ✧

## Early catch-and-release trout season opens Mar 7

MADISON – The March 7 opening day of the early catch and release trout season is the latest date it can be by law—benefiting Wisconsin anglers.

The early February warm-up erased what had been record snow accumulations in some parts of the state. "That means less snow so it will be easier to access the streams — at least until it snows again," says Larry Claggett, DNR coldwater ecologist.

"The cold, snowy winter we've had so far should leave trout streams in good shape. The groundwater recharge means they have a good amount of water and it's cold and clean and the trout are happy."

The season opens at 5 a.m. on March 7 and runs until midnight April 26, when there is a week "rest" before the regular season. The season is catch-and-release, and only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used while fishing for any species of fish on trout streams. Check the '09 Fishing Regulations for specifics.

Some of the best fishing — no bugs, weeds, or summer distractions — are found in the early season, according to Claggett.

Any damage from last year's flooding should be healed, Claggett says, but major changes may still be evident in some streams. Scouring should have cleaned out some holes and improved things for fishing deep holes in the early season.

Tips for fishing techniques during the early season and information on the fish populations in some popular early season waters are available on the early trout season page of the Wisconsin Fishing pages of the DNR Web site.

An estimated 230,000 anglers fish for trout, based on sales of inland license stamps, with a smaller proportion fishing the early season.

Trout anglers caught an estimated 1.6 million trout in 2006-07, according to results from a mail survey of anglers during that calendar year. ✧

## Input sought on state fish and wildlife rules

The Indiana Natural Resources Commission wants public input as part of an ongoing review of fish and wildlife rules for the DNR.

Rule change suggestions can be made through a Web-based interactive form by going to [www.IN.gov/nrc/](http://www.IN.gov/nrc/) and clicking on the "Submit a Suggestion" link. The suggestion form will be available until April 1. An advisory group will review the suggestions and conduct public hearings to determine the merit of suggestions received. The group will report its findings and recommendations in late 2009. Actual proposal of rule amendments is not expected to be presented to the NRC until early 2010.

The first stage of the project was to re-adopt all F/W Rules (312 IAC 9) without change to ensure the rules did not expire while the remainder of the project is in progress.

Stage 2 will provide clarity and consistency of interpretation and improve enforceability with minor amendments to the rules in three segments. The NRC granted preliminary adoption January 13 to the first segment of amendments on deer hunting and hunter education rules. Additional segments will address rules associated with wild animals (except deer), mammals and game birds (March 2009), and rules associated with reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, commercial licenses and permits (May 2009). Stage 2 should be completed and approved by October or November.

"Our intent is to take what we have and organize it, update it, and develop a more user-friendly product that encourages people to hunt and fish rather than discourage them because they don't understand the rules," Poynter said. "We want to unravel any language barriers by employing public input."

Stage 4 provides an option to work with the state legislature to enact necessary amendments to existing statutes. ✧

## New ILL DNR director Bill restores \$\$\$ to DNR

SPRINGFIELD, Ill (AP) – New Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn addressed the damage done to the state's natural resources under the Blagojevich administration. Quinn signed Senate Bill 1132 returning \$9.25 million to six dedicated sportsmen accounts. At the same event, Quinn named Marc Miller as the new DNR director.

Miller, 39, is a Springfield resident who has served as senior policy adviser to Quinn since 2004. He replaces former state representative Kurt Granberg, who was fired Wednesday. Gov. Rod Blagojevich appointed Granberg January 16. Quinn introduced Miller as someone with varied interests in the outdoors. "He's a fisherman. He's a hunter. He's a birdwatcher. He canoes. ... He's a stargazer," Quinn said, ticking off a long list of outdoor activities. "I saw first-hand in the last five years how dedicated Marc is."

Quinn said this was a day to focus on conservation, the state's land and water and the importance of connecting Illinois citizens with nature. Part of that mission, Quinn said, is reopening state parks closed late last year. Although no timetable was given, Quinn was adamant the seven parks would eventually reopen. "We're not going to let parks be shut down."

But the state's economic climate may make the rebuilding job tougher. With the state facing a deficit potentially reaching \$9 billion, extra money for conservation programs probably will be scarce.

Last autumn, then-Governor Blagojevich swept \$221 million from the state's budget, including \$9.25 million in restricted funds. Those restricted funds were also connected to \$16 million in federal dollars, which would have been lost had Governor Quinn not signed SB 1132. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service had given the state a February 1st deadline to return the swept funds. Under the Blagojevich administration, the DNR's budget had been cleaved from \$130 million to \$60 in just six years. ✧

## IN workshop on frogs/toads, Feb. 28 DNR needs volunteer help

Speculation about a nationwide decline in frogs and toads has prompted the Indiana DNR to offer three workshops on Indiana's 17 frog and toad species. The first will be held at the Salamonie Lake Nature Center Feb. 28, 2 to 4 p.m., to train volunteers to help gauge the state's populations of these amphibians.

Attendees will learn how to identify Indiana toads and frogs by their calls and how to conduct the surveys. Those who take a class may volunteer to assist the DNR with Indiana Amphibian Monitoring Program (INAMP). One does not have to volunteer for the program to be eligible to attend the training session, and you do not have to attend the training session to volunteer.

Workshop participants should tell the gate or building staff at the workshop location that they are attending the Amphibian Monitoring Workshop so they are not charged gate entrance fees. Workshop details follow.

Feb. 28, Salamonie Lake (Nature Center), 9214 West Lost Bridge West, Andrews, IN 46702, (260) 468-2125

Those who volunteer will listen for frogs and toads from late February through July, which is the amphibians' breeding season. Surveys are conducted at night, usually after rainy days, or on misty nights, when frogs and toads give their breeding calls. Information collected helps DNR biologists better understand the distribution and abundance of amphibians in Indiana.

Anyone is welcome to attend, but you must be 18 or older to participate in the monitoring program. Registration is not required. Internet access is required to participate in the program. Attendees should bring pen and paper.

Another opportunity to receive the same training at a different location is March 1, at Spring Mill State Park, 3333 Hwy 60 E Mitchell, IN 47446 - (812) 849-4129. ✧

## Boat owners may have federal tax benefits available

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Recreational boat owners who paid state sales taxes on a boat purchase, or those who secured a bank loan to finance a boat, may have some tax deductions available when filing their 2008 federal income tax return.

### The Sales Tax Deduction

For boat owners who paid substantial state sales taxes on a new or used boat purchase last year, the Tax Extenders Act of 2008 signed by President Bush on October 3 continues to offer a federal tax benefit with a deduction for state sales taxes. Boaters must choose either the state sales tax deduction or state income tax deduction on their federal tax return — you cannot take both.

In addition, to take the state sales tax deduction, the sales tax on a boat purchase must be applied at the same tax rate as the state's general sales tax. In order to claim the sales tax deduction, tax returns must be itemized. State sales taxes are entered on IRS form Schedule A, line 5b.

### The Boat Loan Deduction

For those owners with a secured boat loan, mortgage interest paid on the loan may be deductible from your federal income taxes. Taxpayers may use the "second home" mortgage interest deduction for one primary home and one second home and must itemize deductions on their returns. A boat is considered a second home for federal tax purposes if it has a galley, a head, and sleeping berth.

You may be unaware of this potential tax benefit because not all lending institutions send borrowers an IRS form 1098 which reports interest paid. Not receiving the form does not preclude taking the deduction. If a 1098 is not available, contact your lender for the amount of interest paid and enter it on line 11 on Schedule A along with the lender's tax ID number. If a form 1098 is sent, simply enter the amount on line 10 of Schedule A.

## More invasive species predicted

*Continued from page 1*

which could provide suitable habitat for NIS of concern. Second, commercial shipping and ballast water discharge data were used to evaluate if there are a sufficient number of these organisms entering the Great Lakes to become established.

The primary goal of this report is to help scientists and managers to better focus aquatic NIS monitoring activities and resources by identifying new invasive species, their potential to spread, and the U.S. Great Lakes ports most susceptible to invasion. Another goal is to demonstrate the use of a habitat suitability model and ballast water discharge data to predict invasion potential. Clients for this report include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office, Great Lakes port officials, the U.S. Coast Guard, environmental organizations, agencies in the U.S. and Canada concerned about invasive species, and invasion biologists.

This report was subjected to an independent external peer review and the reviewer's comments were used to revise the draft report. These comments focused on the need to include ballast water discharge data in the analysis, discuss new regulations that were developed to better invasions from ballast water, and update the literature review of the quagga mussel. All of these comments have been addressed.

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=190305> ✧

### Sorry, AMT

For those who fall under the Alternative Minimum Tax, most deductions are unavailable as taxes are calculated differently. Contact a tax preparer for more information.

For more details on the mortgage deduction, go to <http://www.IRS.gov> and download Publication 936 or the Fact Sheets. For state tax deduction information download Publication 600 which also includes state-by-state tax tables. ✧

## WI DNR video shows ice anglers how to preserve bait

MADISON – Ice fishermen and women, particularly those who target pike, will want to watch a new video online to learn how to properly preserve dead bait to meet state rules to prevent the spread of VHS fish disease.

["Preserving Your Bait" \[VIDEO opens in a new window; Length 2:43\]](#)

"Preserving Your Bait" shows Ted Treska, a DNR fisheries biologist and VHS rules specialist, demonstrating two different bait preservation techniques.

VHS, or viral hemorrhagic septicemia, was detected in fish from the Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan systems in 2007, and in Lake Michigan in 2008, but DNR monitoring has not found it elsewhere. While state fisheries officials are encouraged by those results, they say that VHS remains a serious health threat for Wisconsin fish that can be spread at any time of the year and is most active when water temperatures are below 60 degrees.

VHS, or viral hemorrhagic septicemia, does not affect humans but it can infect dozens of species of game fish, panfish and bait fish, instead of a single species or related species, which is more typical of most fish diseases. VHS can spread rapidly, fish-to-fish and through the water, and it caused large fish kills in 2005 and 2006 in the lower Great Lakes. ✧

## Saltwater angler spending: \$31 billion

Washington, DC – Saltwater anglers spent more than \$31 billion in 2006, with spending in one state, Florida, accounting for more than half of the total. A report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) puts 2006 spending in Florida at \$16.7 billion followed by Texas (\$3.2 billion), California (\$3.0 billion), Louisiana (\$2.9 billion) and North Carolina (\$2.0 billion). ✧

## Lake Champlain Lamprey Control Successes

Essex Junction, VT— On Saturday, January 17, 2009, Lake Champlain International, Inc. (LCI) hosted representatives from the Lake Champlain Management Cooperative and elected officials to discuss recent successes in the control of sea lamprey in Lake Champlain and future program objectives. The Cooperative, a partnership formed over three decades ago by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of New York and Vermont, provides direction for coordinated fish and wildlife programs in the Lake Champlain basin.

**Sea Lamprey Control in Lake Champlain Background:** Sea lampreys are a nuisance predator in the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. They cause incredible economic and ecological damage in those ecosystems, inhibit restoration of native species, and undermine agency efforts to support sport and commercial fisheries. In both regions, sea lampreys are a big enemy to the sport angler. Agencies from the Lake Champlain region are working to improve the operations of the sea lamprey control program there and attain a secure stream of funding; the American Sportfishing Association has written in support of secure funding for the Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program.

In the Great Lakes region, a successful program to control sea lampreys has been in place since 1955. The program was created by a treaty between the U.S. and Canada called the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The convention established the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, which is responsible for implementing the control program. The Great Lakes Fisheries Act of 1956 is the U.S. enabling legislation for the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. Sea lampreys are controlled by a combination of pesticides, physical barriers, traps, and an innovative program to sterilize male sea lampreys.

There is a strong desire in the Lake Champlain region to model the Cooperative after the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, particularly in an effort to streamline permitting and other operations and to achieve a steady flow of funding. Sea lamprey control on the Great Lakes has been partially responsible for the recovery of native species, for ecosystem health, and for the spectacular emergence of a \$7 billion recreational fishery. In many areas of the Great Lakes, sea lamprey populations have been reduced by up to 90%. This allows fishery agencies to stock fish with confidence knowing that the fish will live long enough to reproduce or be caught by an angler.

However, sea lampreys will not be eradicated from the lakes, and ongoing control is needed to keep the populations in check. Even temporary breaks in the control effort allow for a resurgence of the species.

Sea lamprey control is a critical component to the Lake Champlain fishery restoration program. The Cooperative released an EIS in 1990, which laid the groundwork for the first round of sea lamprey control on Lake Champlain, from 1990 to 1997. Sea lamprey wounding rates fell from 77 to 27 wounds per 100 lake trout, proving the program was highly successful. Angler catch of lake trout increased by 74% and Atlantic salmon catch tripled. The resulting improvements in the fishery created a 3.5:1 economic benefit-cost ratio for the Lake Champlain region.

Sea lamprey control was stopped in 1997, however, to assess effectiveness in reducing parasitic sea lamprey abundance, fishery response and environmental and economic impacts as explained above. This information was incorporated into a Supplemental EIS, released in 2001, which enabled continued use of federal funds and resources for sea lamprey control. In ten years, sea lamprey wounds on lake trout rose to as high as 99 wounds per 100 fish

through FY 2007, a wounding rate not seen since the days before sea lamprey control occurred on Lake Champlain and a wounding rate certainly far too high for the achievement of any meaningful fishery management objectives. Lampricide treatments and sea lamprey trapping operations began again in earnest in FY 2002.

The result: wounding rates fell to 31 wounds per 100 lake trout for FY 2008, which is lowest wounding rate since 1998. While this wounding rate is still too high, it is a fraction of what it was before sea lamprey control and certainly critical to the achievement of fishery objectives for Lake Champlain. ✧

### USCG discontinues monitoring 121.5/243 emergency beacons

Start the year off right and make the switch to a digital emergency beacon. The Coast Guard and other search-and-rescue personnel now only receive distress alerts broadcast using 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Beacons. Search and rescue satellites no longer process older model analog EPIRBs that only transmit on 121.5 or 243 MHz.

The 406 EPIRB signal is 50 times more powerful than the 121.5 beacon's, allowing satellites to better detect its signal and provide a more accurate search area for rescue crews. EPIRB owners are required by law to provide emergency contact information and a vessel description by registering their beacons with NOAA. Register by logging in to [www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/](http://www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/). Registering your EPIRB is free and easy to use. ✧

#### Words to Ponder

"A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have."

*Thomas Jefferson*

## Three new marine monuments prohibit recreational boating/fishing access

### President leaves anglers and boaters a legacy of restricted access to public resources

Alexandria, VA – Using unilateral presidential powers provided under the Antiquities Act and bypassing long-standing environmental review and public comment processes, on January 6 President George W. Bush declared Rose Atoll, the Mariana Trench and the Pacific Remote Island Area (PRIA) as U.S. National Marine Monuments creating the largest marine protected area on the planet covering 195,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean.

The proclamation effectively prohibits recreational fishing out to 50 nautical miles within the monuments for an undetermined period of time until federal agencies can complete their compatibility assessments.

In 2006, the President first used the Antiquities Act to create the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Monument. The Antiquities Act historically has been used to set aside lands under a federal designation for historical or cultural significance, as are some of the areas within the National Park Service. The Hawaiian Islands monument encompasses 140,000 square miles where all recreational fishing, even catch-and-release, is banned.

The American Sportfishing Association along with other members of the sportfishing community held a series of meetings with the White House over the past several months to highlight the conservation, economic

and social benefits of recreational fishing and boating and voice their concerns about using the Antiquities Act to establish marine protected areas in the Pacific Ocean.

“What most people will fail to realize is that this designation process took approximately 60 days to complete. There was no proposal or scientific information available for public review and comment,” said American Sportfishing Association President and CEO Mike Nussman. “We in the sportfishing community have significant issues with any process where the outcome prohibits people from accessing public resources, particularly when there is no open, transparent process to do so.” ✧

## Gov directs NYSDEC to explore sustainable funding to fund pheasant farm

### Hunters commit to partner with state to preserve savings and economic benefits from hunting

### Small game hunting brings millions of dollars to the upstate economy

Governor David A. Paterson announced that he has directed the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to halt the closure of the Reynolds Game Farm in Tompkins County as state officials and hunting groups explore options to fully support the costs of the program with increased license fees.

According to DEC statistics, approximately 60,000 sportsmen and women hunt pheasants in New York State each year. The USFWS 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation has estimated that small game hunters spent about \$600 per person per year on excursions and equipment-related expenses in 2006, contributing potentially millions of dollars to the State economy.

Since the closure of the farm was proposed, hunting groups have advanced several proposals to establish increased license fees or other hunting related fees to support program costs. In consideration of this effort, the Governor has

requested that DEC develop a fee structure that will generate new revenues to the Conservation Fund that would fully offset the operational and capital costs of the facility. If sufficient resources can be identified, operation of the Game Farm would continue in State Fiscal Year 2009-10. Governor Paterson asked DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis to explore a sustainable, hunting related funding stream to cover the expenses of the farm without the use of State dollars. Other long-term options to sustain the State’s pheasant stocking program could also be explored.

The farm, located outside of Ithaca, propagates pheasants for the hunting season. Operating costs are more than \$750,000 per year — \$400,000 of that in personnel. State law permits pheasant hunting through a \$16 small game license. The Reynolds Game Farm is largely paid for through the Conservation Fund, although the Fund’s annual deficits have required the use of State dollars to keep the farm operating.

Money from hunting and fishing licenses is dedicated to the Conservation Fund, which helps support a number of programs including fish hatcheries, sporting license databases, wildlife health monitoring studies and stream and lake surveys.

All pheasants distributed through the pheasant stocking program are released, either by DEC or other cooperators, on land open to the public for pheasant hunting.

On an annual basis, the pheasant stocking program typically produces:

- ▶ 25,000 adult pheasants that are raised on site and distributed by DEC
- ▶ 60,000 day-old chicks that are distributed/released yearly by over 200 4-H & sportsmen’s clubs and 5 State prisons
- ▶ 15,000 young pheasants distributed to individual landowners
- ▶ 1,600 adult pheasants for special hunts including people with disabilities and youths (ages 12 to 15)

✧

## DNR offers women's winter outdoor getaway Feb. 20-22

Michigan's Becoming an Outdoors Woman program has the cure for any woman (18 years and older) who is longing to get outdoors — the traditional BOW weekend, February 20-22, at the MacMullan Conference Center at Higgins Lake.

For details and registration forms, go to: [www.michigan.gov/bow](http://www.michigan.gov/bow).

Registrations are filling quickly, but there is still room for a few more adventurous women who are looking to learn new outdoor activities and enjoy the company of other women who would rather be outdoors having fun. For more info: Lynn Marla at [marlal@michigan.gov](mailto:marlal@michigan.gov), (517) 241-2225. ✧

## Rule clarifies hunting programs at U.S. Wildlife Refuges Public comment period closed Feb 12

The USFWS published in the *Federal Register* a proposed rule that modifies language regarding existing hunting programs at 76 national wildlife refuges. The proposed rule had a 30-day public comment period. The Service hopes to finalize the rule in time for the early spring 2008-2009 hunting seasons. The proposed rule does not expand or create hunting programs but clarifies minor administrative matters such as opening hours for hunter registration and approved weapons for big game hunting. ✧

### Thought(s) for the day:

A married man should forget his mistakes. There's no use in two people remembering the same thing!

## Luke Bryan to chair National Hunting and Fishing Day

SPRINGFIELD, Mo.— One of country music's new stars to watch in 2009, Luke Bryan has a hot debut album, a second album coming later this year, Top 10 hits in "All My Friends Say" and "Country Man," and a new role as honorary chairman of National Hunting and Fishing Day. The annual celebration is set for September 26, 2009.

Congress established National Hunting and Fishing Day to recognize hunters and anglers for their leadership in fish and wildlife conservation. Since launching in 1972, the day has been formally proclaimed by every U.S. President and countless governors and mayors.

A native of Leesburg, Ga., Bryan grew up farming, hunting and fishing with his family. He said, "I don't remember learning how to hunt and fish—just like I don't remember learning how to talk. It was just a natural thing in our family; it was part of our lifestyle. I had a dad who wanted to take me hunting and fishing, and we went two or three times a week."

==The growing list of sponsors for National Hunting and Fishing Day 2009 includes Wonders of Wildlife, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Bass Pro Shops, The Sportsman Channel, Realtree, GunBroker.com, Hunting Heritage Trust, Cabela's, Boone and Crockett Club, Smith & Wesson, Field & Stream/Outdoor Life, Woolrich and Yamaha.

For more information, visit [www.nhfd.org](http://www.nhfd.org). ✧

## Illinois legislator introduces Right-to-Carry bill

### Legislation supported by the Illinois Sheriffs' Assn

Pro-gun State Representative Brandon Phelps (D-118) has introduced House Bill 462, a Right-to-Carry bill. This legislation would establish a Right-to-Carry permit system in Illinois, with county sheriffs as the issuing authority.

Support for allowing concealed carry of firearms in Illinois — one of just two states that still outlaw it — is coming from what seems like an unlikely direction: the Illinois Sheriffs' Association. The group, for the first time in its history, is taking a qualified stand in favor of the controversial practice. Applicants undergo a background check to ensure they do not have a criminal or mental health record that would prohibit them from qualifying for the permit, and must meet certain training requirements. And while the sheriff will have a slight amount of discretion when approving or denying the permit, any denial that is not based on specified criteria spelled out in the issuing standards can be appealed.

Wisconsin is the state besides Illinois that forbids it. "I've got mixed emotions about it," said Robert Hertz, the Madison County sheriff. "Some time ago I was dead against these laws, but I've moderated my view." Hertz said he supported the association's position. A resolution of the organization, which represents the state's 102 sheriffs, says 90% support concealed carry if adequate training and safeguards are included.

"Good people should have more of an opportunity to defend themselves," Hertz said. "I support this only with restrictions." If passed, HB 462 would represent a tremendous advancement for the right of self defense in Illinois. ✧

## Gun sales continue to increase

24% jump in December amid gun-owner concerns

NEWTOWN, Conn. – Despite a weak economy, gun sales are continuing to increase amid concerns that incoming lawmakers will institute a new gun ban on law-abiding Americans. Data derived from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) show a 24 percent increase in firearm purchaser background checks for the month of December 2008 (1,523,426 checks) over December 2007 (1,230,525 checks). This increase follows a 42 percent rise in NICS checks for the preceding month, the highest number of checks in NICS history. FBI background checks are required under federal law for all individuals purchasing firearms from federally licensed retailers. These checks serve as a strong indicator of actual sales.

A recent poll of hunters and target shooters by Southwick Associates, in which 80% of respondents said they expect it will become more difficult to purchase firearms under the incoming administration and congress, explains the increase in sales.

"Sales of firearms, in particular handguns and semi-automatic hunting and target rifles, are fast outpacing inventory," said NSSF President and CEO Stephen Sanetti. "It's clear many people are concerned about possible gun bans under the incoming Congress and are reacting accordingly."

According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the large increase in demand for firearms has led to a shortage of Form 4473s — the Firearms Transaction Record that must be filled out any time a person buys a firearm from a licensed retailer. As a temporary measure, ATF is allowing FFLs to photocopy the form 4473 in its entirety until they receive their orders from the ATF Distribution Center. NSSF has

## Michigan DNR hosts third annual State Virtual Archery Tournament

Michigan DNR is accepting registration forms for Michigan's third annual State Virtual Archery Tournament. The tournament, for students enrolled at schools participating in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), will take place February 16 through March 20, 2009. Final scores must be submitted to the DNR by March 23, 2009.

Teams will be separated by grade level division (4-6, 7-8 and 9-12) and must be comprised of 16 to 24 students with at least five team members of the opposite gender. Schools unable to field a team will be permitted to register students to compete individually.

Team and individual tournament champions will be awarded trophies, medals and other prizes thanks to the generous donations of several archery manufacturers and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

First place and qualifying teams per age division and the highest scoring male and female archer will be invited to participate in the NASP National Tournament, which will be held May 8-9 in Louisville, Ky.

For more info: Mary Emmons at (517) 241-9477; e-mail [emmonsm@michigan.gov](mailto:emmonsm@michigan.gov) or visit the DNR Web site at [www.michigan.gov/dnrarchery](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrarchery). ✧

reminded retailers of the newly launched Electronic Form 4473, which is free and downloadable from the ATF Web site.

Final year-end NICS data reveals a total of 12,709,023 background checks reported in 2008, up 14% from 2007. For more info on gun sale statistics, legislative issues and general firearm related questions, please visit the NSSF Web site at [www.nssf.org](http://www.nssf.org). ✧

## Hunters/shooters fear new administration will make firearms purchases difficult

By a large majority, hunters and shooters feel that the coming changes in Washington D.C. will make it more difficult for them to purchase firearms, according to a recent poll.

When asked to define their expectations regarding the new administration and Congress, a resounding 80% of respondents said they expect it will become more difficult to purchase firearms. Less than 1% said they expect purchasing firearms will become less difficult, while 16% said they expect their firearms purchasing ability will remain the same. Slightly fewer than 4% said they have no opinion.

"These results show that most hunters and target shooters expect changes resulting from the 2008 elections will make it more difficult for them to buy guns," commented survey author Rob Southwick of Southwick Associates. "Increases in firearm sales since the November election are also a strong indicator of such sentiment."

The online survey was conducted in December 2008. ✧

## MI to get 140 acres near Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area

The Michigan DNR will partner with Pheasants Forever to acquire 140 acres of land in Gratiot County that is adjacent to the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area. DNR Director Humphries authorized the transaction at a recent Natural Resources Commission meeting in Lansing.

The land, which is split in two parcels, a 120-acre parcel and a 20-acre one, is located in Hamilton Township in Gratiot County. The Saginaw-Gratiot State Game area is 15,892 acres in both Saginaw and Gratiot counties. For more information online, go to the [www.michigan.gov/dnrhunting](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrhunting). ✧

**Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[No-wake bill expected to protect shorelines, make lakes safer](#)

[Slip-up by the Minnesota DNR allowed fish virus into state](#)

[Release of big muskie draws praise](#)

[Great Lakes Recreational Boating](#)

[Carp roundup is a net gain for Minnesota's lakes](#)

[Study: More species invasions expected in Great Lakes](#)

[Discovery of natural reproduction may change bay musky stocking](#)

[Too much mussel: Mollusk explosion could do great harm to Lake Michigan sport-fishing industry](#)

[Invasive species Round Goby has population explosion in Great Lakes](#)

**Other Breaking News Items:**

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[No-wake bill expected to protect shorelines, make lakes safer](#)

MADISON — Legislation that would restrict motor boats to no-wake speeds within 100 feet of lake shorelines would make lakes safer and healthier, State Sen. Robert Jauch, D-Poplar, told the Senate Environment Committee on Wednesday. Under current law motor boats are limited to slow, no-wake operation within 100 feet of piers, or buoyed restricted areas...

[Slip-up by the Minnesota DNR allowed fish virus into state](#)

The Minnesota DNR allowed 2,000 trout to be imported from Wisconsin to stock a rural Cloquet man's private pond. But the source hatchery had a contagious fish virus not found in Minnesota. The DNR had made a potentially devastating error.

[Great Lakes Recreational Boating](#)

Army Corps study finds Great Lakes recreational boating produces over \$9 billion annual economic impact. The 103 page U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2008 Economic Great Lakes Boating Report. The information should be useful to document the economic importance of boating on the Great Lakes.

[Carp roundup is a net gain for Minnesota's lakes](#)

The weather helped scientists, out to rid lakes of the damaging fish, round up 90 percent of the carp in Chanhassen's Lake Susan.

[Study: More species invasions expected in Great Lakes](#)

Dozens more foreign species could spread across the Great Lakes in coming years and cause significant damage to the environment and economy, despite policies designed to keep them out, a federal report says. Among them are fish such as the tench (doctor fish), the monkey goby and the blueback herring.

[Discovery of natural reproduction may change bay musky stocking](#)

GREEN BAY – Indications the Great Lakes strain of spotted muskies have successfully spawned in Green Bay have been detected by the Department of Natural Resources, a discovery that could impact future musky stocking locations, said David Rowe, DNR fisheries biologist. Biologists and musky anglers have been looking for signs of natural reproduction ever since...

[Too much mussel: Mollusk explosion could do great harm to Lake Michigan sport-fishing industry](#)

Below the steel blue waters of Lake Michigan, a giant sucking sound is transforming the world's sixth largest lake in ways that scientists never thought possible. An estimated 330 trillion quagga mussels carpet vast areas of Lake Michigan's underbelly. The foreign mollusks literally are sucking...

[Invasive species Round Goby has population explosion in Great Lakes](#)

LUDINGTON – A bug-eyed fish that snuck into the Great Lakes in the ballast tanks of ocean freighters two decades ago is now laying siege to Lake Michigan, according to new research data. The round goby population enjoyed a population explosion in 2008. The invasive species accounted for...