



Get Your FEET *Wet*:

FISHING IN MICHIGAN OFFERS A WEALTH OF AQUATIC OPPORTUNITIES!

BY BRANDON SCHROEDER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDON SCHROEDER & DAVE BRENNER (MICHIGAN SEA GRANT)

As winter melts away to reveal spring, Michigan's waters are freed from the ice to offer a diverse bounty of recreational fishing opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Anglers of all ages and from all corners of the state dig out and dust off their fly rods, spinning tackle, worm buckets and bobbers with fishing as their excuse to get out of the house and enjoy Michigan's great outdoors.

With the first break-up of ice, pike begin prowling the shorelines for food and entering rivers in seek of their marshy spawning grounds. The first warm spring rain brings reports of smelt and sucker runs. And, as spring continues on, perch and walleye also begin moving and congregating toward their spawning grounds.

Anglers don their waders and boats ply river mouths and near-shore waters of our Great Lakes in pursuit of wily steelhead and lake-run brown trout. For anglers with their hearts set on inland waters, the last weekend in April marks the trout season opener for inland lakes, rivers, and streams. By late spring, small and largemouth bass, bluegills and other panfish begin staging their beds in the near-shore waters of our inland lakes. With bass season opening for most Great Lakes and Michigan waters the Saturday before Memorial Day, late spring smallmouth and largemouth bass round out a spring of fishing anticipation!

The Great Lakes, inland lakes, rivers, and streams of Michigan represent a world-class fishery and a diversity of fishing opportunities unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Having been safely tucked away in our cozy homes all winter, Michiganders anticipate spring and the opportunity to take advantage of the enjoyment and entertainment these fisheries have to offer. Whether you are an avid

fly fisherman or baiting your first hook, celebrate the awakening of Michigan's richness in aquatic resources and fishing heritage.

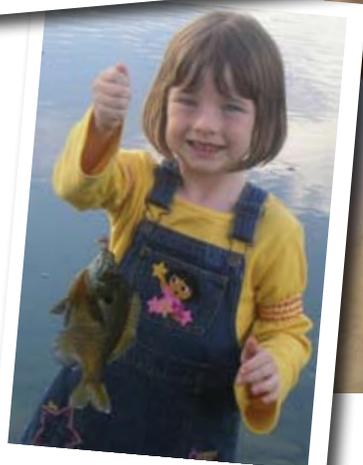
Michigan is most literally defined by nearly 3,921 miles of coastal Great Lakes shoreline--a longer coastline than any other state in the continental United States. With Michigan's wealth of inland waters, including an amazing 11,037 inland lakes and more than 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, you are close to water and a favorite fishing spot no matter where you visit or live.

Nearly 180 different species of fish swim in these Great Lakes and Michigan waters. Ecologically, these species represent a diverse and dynamic aquatic system of life, from baitfish to master angler predator fish. Recreationally, a significant number of these species represent valuable sportfishing opportunities, ranging from the many cold-water trout and salmon species to the cool water walleye, perch, pike, bass, and bluegills. Even warm water species, such as bowfin, gar, and carp can be a favorite for those looking to try something new or add a new species to their life list of fish caught.

In Michigan more than 1 million anglers purchase fishing licenses with the purpose of finding that perfect fishing spot, wetting a line, and pursuing their fish of choice. Economically, these sport fisheries contribute roughly \$4 billion to the Great Lakes regional economy annually. Fishing licenses purchased and Federal excise taxes on fishing equipment provide the primary funding for aquatic resource and fisheries management conducted by resource agencies. Fisheries travel and tourism also provide a vital economic contribution to many of Michigan's local businesses and communities.



Au Sable River



Hanna's "Big fish"!



Black Crappie



Brook Trout on



Josh & his Bluegill



Jenny Off-Shore Fishing

Get Your FEET^{Wet}:

Spring fishing in Michigan offers a little something for everyone. If you live in Michigan you are never more than a stone's throw from a great fishing hole and a wide selection of species to pursue. Whether it is for the great tasting meal highlighted by walleye or trout, the exhilarating fight of that steelhead or pike on the other end of your line, adding a new species to your life list of fish caught, enjoying solitude and scenery, or the good company of family and friends – there is no shortage of reasons to head outdoors and wet a line.

Informational and Educational Fishing Resources

Department of Natural Resources: If spring is your kick-off to a long summer of fishing, you will want to remember to purchase your annual fishing license from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which is responsible for managing these abundant fisheries. Information on fishing licenses can be found online. Here you can also find the DNR's guidebook with information on seasons and regulations, as well as regular fishing reports posted online from around the state. [www.michigan.gov/dnr--click "fishing"](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr--click-fishing).

Michigan Sea Grant College Program: The Michigan Sea Grant offers online information and resources related to Great Lakes fisheries. Michigan Sea Grant Extension, in partnership with fisheries agencies and stakeholder organizations, annually host spring workshops (open to the public) offering current research and information related to the regional status of Great Lakes fisheries. www.miseagrant.umich/fisheries

Project FISH: Introducing a new angler, young or old, to fishing is a rewarding opportunity to teach skills that last a lifetime. Project FISH (Friends Involved in Sportfishing Heritage) is a Michigan-wide collaborative offering fishing related educational programs, resources and low cost equipment for youth and families. Coordinated by Michigan State University's Department of Community Agriculture and Recreational Resource Studies (CARRS), Project FISH is a partnership with Michigan State University Extension's 4-H Youth Programs, resource management agencies and conservation organizations, local schools and community service organizations and other partners dedicated to educating young people about our natural resources through fishing. www.projectfish.org

Michigan Charter Boat Association: Are you looking for something new to try or do you want to entertain your guests with an excursion onto Michigan's waterways? The Michigan Charter Boat Association represents more than 600 professional captains licensed and certified to offer anything from guided river trips to a Great Lakes fishing excursion for first timers. These seasoned Captains are always ready to help you discover and learn new tactics and fishing gear, and many offer local fishing reports online and through local bait and tackle shops. www.micharterboats.com □

CASUAL FARE FOR A FISH FRY FRIDAY

BEER BATTER FRIED FISH

- 1 egg
- 1 cup warm lager beer (Sunset Amber Lager or Big Mac)
- 1 1/8 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup flour
- 2 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- Fish fillets

Mix all ingredients (except fish fillets). Wash and dry fish (pat with towel). Cut fillets to desired size. Heat 2 inches of cooking oil in a pan. Dip fish pieces in batter; fry briefly in hot oil turning as necessary. Adjust the batter ingredients as needed so it doesn't get too thick or too thin. Serve with sliced lemon and a cold beer!

Recipe by Michigan Brewing Company