



Ohio's Lake Erie Commercial Fishery

Commercial Fishing on the Great Lakes

- Commercial fishing on the Great Lakes is culturally, socially and economically important.
- The fishery supplies local as well as international markets.
- The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) has facilitated the management of Great Lakes fisheries between the US and Canada since the Lake Committees formed in the 1960s.



Lake Erie Fishery

- At its peak in the mid-20th Century, annual harvest exceeded 60 million pounds (M lbs.). Current harvest is at a sustainable 30 M lbs. (mostly from Ontario waters).
- Cold-water fishes such as Lake Whitefish and Lake Herring were historically important, but Yellow Perch and Walleye are currently the most important fisheries.
- Commercial fishing for Yellow Perch is permitted by Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Ontario, while the commercial Walleye fishery is limited to Ontario waters.
- Fisheries science, stakeholder input, and species-specific management plans are used to cooperatively manage harvest through the Lake Erie Committee (LEC) of the GLFC.
- Science-based management and routine independent audits help the commercial yellow perch and walleye fisheries maintain a certification of sustainability through the Marine Stewardship Council.

Ohio Fishery

- Ohio's commercial fishery consists of 18 trap net, 11 seine, and 4 trotline licenses and recently harvests an average of 4.1 M lbs. annually.
- The dockside value during 2014-2020 averaged \$4.5 M and is composed of Yellow Perch (74%), White Bass (9%), White Perch (7%), Channel Catfish (3%), Freshwater Drum (3%), and other lesser-value species.
- The trap net fishery catches 93% of the dockside value and is the only fishery allowed to harvest Yellow Perch.
- ODNR-DOW oversees the management and enforcement of this commercial fishery.
 - Trap net fishing is legal in all Ohio waters of Lake Erie except in Ohio's Commercial Closed Zones.
 - Since 2008, GPS-based vessel monitoring and electronic catch reporting have been required.

Yellow Perch Quotas

- The Yellow Perch quota is based on Ohio's portion of the LEC's Total Allowable Catch (TAC).
- Ohio's primary allocation of at least 65% of TAC is reserved for the recreational fishery.
- At most, 35% of Ohio's TAC is allocated to commercial fisheries.

