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'96 GUIDE TO  
TURKEY HUNTING**

# Michigan SPORTSMAN™

A GAME & FISH MAGAZINE EDITION

**MICHIGAN'S  
BIG-WATER  
WALLEYES**

**SAGINAW, ERIE,  
ST. CLAIR & MORE!**

**TURKEY HUNTING  
IN MICHIGAN  
STATEWIDE FORECAST**

**MICHIGAN'S  
GREAT LAKES  
BROWN TROUT  
OUR BEST PORTS**

**MICHIGAN'S BEST  
OPENING-DAY  
TROUT STREAMS**

**BIG BASS IN  
MUDDY WATER**

**GREAT TIPS FOR  
SPRING WALLEYES**



MICHIGAN SPORTSMAN MAGAZINE

APRIL 1996



**PLUS:** TACTICS THAT WORK FOR SLAB CRAPPIES  
USE SMALL PLUGS FOR BIG TROUT!



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# Michigan's Big-Water Walleyes

Michigan has walleye fishing opportunities second to none. Michigan walleyes thrive in natural lakes, rivers, reservoirs and, yes, in the Great Lakes. The walleyes in our Great Lakes waters, nourished by such protein-rich forage as the gizzard shad, alewife and smelt, tend to grow fast.

By looking at the Michigan Master Angler tally sheet, we see that more

than 95 percent of all walleyes taken in Michigan that meet the 11-pound minimum requirement come from Great Lakes or tributary waters.

Big walleyes and a lot of them — that's what Michigan's Great Lakes waters have to offer. Here's a look at some of the best walleye waters in our Great Lakes State.

## LAKE ERIE

Anglers fishing the Michigan

waters of Lake Erie are coming off a banner 1995 season. The walleyes remained in Michigan waters longer, and the average size of the fish was larger than previous years.

The reason for this is speculation at best. Some say an inordinate amount of east winds throughout the spring and summer kept the fish in Michigan waters. District fisheries biologist Bob Haas believes it's just



TOM EVANS



# Our state's heaviest walleyes come from our Great Lakes. Here's a look at some of the best big water for you to target this year.

by Tom Irwin

because there's a lot of fish.

"We had an excellent spawning season in 1993 and 1994, and these fish are starting to show up in the anglers' catches," says Haas. "While most of these fish are small, 14 to 22 inches in length, there are still lots of big fish left from the huge year-class of 1986. These fish are real big, and while the larger females tend to migrate east out of Michigan waters, the males stick around, and many of them are 4 to 6 pounds."

The strip of Michigan water out of Monroe and Luna Pier is fairly small. Anglers are encouraged to purchase an Ohio fishing license in case they wander into Ohio waters.

Planer-board trolling with crankbaits or bottom bouncers trailing spinner-crawler combinations is the No. 1 technique for taking numbers of western-basin walleyes. Drifting with spinner-crawler combinations and counting down weight-forward spinners tipped with crawlers is also very productive at times.

According to Mike Zielinski, a Lake Erie charter captain, some of the more productive areas include the banana dyke off Pointe Mouillee, Stoney Point, from Luna Pier to Turtle Island, and from Luna Pier north to the Detroit River.

Good boat launches can be found at Bolles Harbor near the city of Monroe and in Luna Pier, just south of Monroe. For charter and lodging information, contact the Monroe area Chamber of Commerce at (313) 242-3366. Mike Zielinski can be contacted at (313) 692-6746.

## LAKE ST. CLAIR

While not an official Great Lake, Lake St. Clair is often dubbed "the Sixth Great Lake." This sprawling 256,000-acre lake connects Lake Huron and Lake Erie via the St. Clair and Detroit rivers. While walleye fishing improved in 1995, it's still not as good as it was before zebra mussels cleared the water.

"The clear water has changed the fishery," says Department of Natural Resources biologist Bob Haas. "I'm not sure if we have lost walleyes in terms of numbers or if they are just using the different types of cover. We certainly have a lot more weeds in St. Clair than we did before the zebra mussels cleared the water, and walleyes holding in weeds can be tough for anglers to catch."

The walleye fishing in Lake St. Clair is still pretty good, though. Captain Don Miller of Miller's Sportfishing Charters on Lake St. Clair spends most of his time chasing muskies, but he still finds time to fit in 15 to 20 walleye charters per year. "It's still pretty easy to take a limit of 'eyes on St. Clair," says Miller. "We

just have to work a little harder than we used to."

Miller long-line trolls Bomber 6A's and 8A's 90 to 100 feet behind the boat or planer boards. He concentrates his efforts in 15 to 20 feet of water in the summer months, moving shallower in the spring and fall.

Early in the year, Miller works the Anchor Bay area behind Selfridge Air Force Base Field. As the season progresses, he moves south between Beacon Cove Marina and the 400 Club. Late in the summer, Miller finds most of his walleyes in the deeper water southwest of the dumping grounds. Miller can be contacted at (313) 429-9551.

