

# Get hooked on Ozaukee County fishing

**Submitted by the  
Ozaukee County  
Tourism Council**

Like most hobbyists, avid fishermen are passionate about angling. And while you could invest a small fortune in gear, the simple fact remains...basic fishing doesn't require more than a rod, a worm and, if you're 16 or older, a fishing license.

It seems more than ever recreational fishermen are lining our creeks, ponds and lakes in Ozaukee County. As life slowed down these past few months, more and more families dusted off their fishing gear and set off for the rivers or out onto Lake Michigan to haul in these denizens of the deep.

With more than a thousand miles of Great Lakes shoreline, 84,000 river miles flowing through 15,000 lakes and 160 species of fish, Wisconsin has long been a favorite landing spot for anyone seeking a few hours with a rod and reel. Ozaukee County's lakes and ponds, the Milwaukee River, Cedar Creek and Lake Michigan all offer great opportunities to catch a wide variety of fish including northern pike, smallmouth bass, yellow perch and bluegill.

Ozaukee County offers a number of lakes and ponds for a relaxing fishing experience. Some of the more kid-friendly spots include Quarry Lake and Puckett's Pond in Belgium's Harrington Beach State Park, Mequon's two Rotary Park ponds, Willow Brooke Park Pond in Cedarburg, and Schowalter Park Pond in Saukville. Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in Port Washington is also a popular spot for fly fishing.

Popular Milwaukee River

angling locations include Village Park and the Riverwalk in Thiensville. Anglers can fish along the shore or use the boat or kayak launches to explore more of the Milwaukee River. Smallmouth bass, northern pike, and bluegill are popular targets for anglers at this park. Fly fishermen often wade downstream of the dam when the steelhead trout are running in the spring, and when the salmon are passing through in the fall.

There are many parks along Cedar Creek that offer the public great fishing opportunities. Cedar Creek Park and Adlai Horn Park in Cedarburg are popular places to catch panfish and northern pike. The recently restored Adlai Horn Park now features small fishing decks that extend into the creek. This is a great place to fish with a worm under a bobber while enjoying the park. Covered Bridge Park in the Town of Cedarburg offers a unique experience where anglers can catch a variety of fish near the last remaining covered bridge in Wisconsin.

Boat launches are located at multiple locations along the Milwaukee River and Milwaukee Urban Water Trail and offer great access points for anglers who want to cover more river. Boat launches at Waubedonia County Park, Tendick Nature County Park and Grafton's Veteran's Park and Lime Kiln Park are popular with anglers or people looking for a leisurely paddle down the river. For information and additional launch sites, visit [www.milwaukeeiverkeeper.org](http://www.milwaukeeiverkeeper.org).

## Restoration work

The Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Depart-

ment's Fish Passage Program works hard to restore natural stream functions and to reconnect and enhance high quality habitats for native fish. A good example of this is the former Lime Kiln Dam on the Milwaukee River. In cooperation with the village of Grafton, the Lime Kiln Dam was removed in 2010, improving public access to the river. Today the site is a popular destination for anglers targeting smallmouth bass, including those who want to try fly-fishing. The limestone island is connected by a pedestrian bridge, and the deep water where the dam used to be is a great place to fish for big northern pike and smallmouth bass. Be sure to check out the educational signage to learn more about the dam removal project and the Ozaukee County Fish Passage Program.

At certain times of the year fish from Lake Michigan move inland during their spawning runs. Anglers have the opportunity to catch steelhead trout in the spring, and in the fall chinook and coho salmon can be found all the way up to the Bridge Street Dam in Grafton. Many anglers can't resist the lure of Ozaukee County's beaches and piers, such as Harrington Beach or the marina in Port Washington, as spots to surf fish or shore fish for salmon and trout. If you are targeting salmon or trout and are over the age of 15, you will need to purchase a salmon and trout stamp in addition to your fishing license from the Wisconsin DNR.

## Offshore fishing

If you're looking for an offshore fishing adventure, a fishing charter or private boat can take you out onto

Lake Michigan in search of trout, salmon and more. Port Washington alone offers several dozen charter boats, and experienced captains can help even the youngest fishermen feel confident when they feel that first tug on their line.

Bob Hammen, president of the Great Lakes Sport Fishermen of Ozaukee County, said Lake Michigan sports fishing in Ozaukee County got a kick-start in the late 1960s thanks to a growing population of alewives, a small invasive member of the herring family. To help control the alewives, the Michigan and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources introduced chinook salmon (also known as king salmon) and coho salmon (also known as silver salmon) to Lake Michigan. Today, organizations like the GLSFC help hatcheries raise two different species of salmon and three different species of trout for release into the Great Lakes, keeping the population of alewives under control, providing sport for fishermen and helping bring millions of dollars into our local communities.

Whether you're a sports fishing enthusiast or a family looking for a new adventure, make the most of your day on the lake by booking a charter in advance. Fishing charters will include professional quality rods, reels and tackle. Be sure to pack plenty of sunscreen and bug spray, and be prepared for changing weather (even sunny days can be cool and windy on the Lake).

Note that adults and children 16 and older need to purchase a fishing license from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources — they're easy to get and can even be done from your



Submitted photo

Sean Merley shows off a smallmouth bass he caught downstream from Bridge Street.

phone for immediate use. And while eating your catch can be part of a healthy, balanced diet, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers updated advice on the safe consumption of fish pulled from Ozaukee County's lakes, rivers and creeks.

Generally it is safe to consume Lake Michigan fish in moderation, but the DNR has specific recommendations on fish caught in rivers and streams. Visit [dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption) for more information about safe fish consumption.