

VOL. 5

Greater Niagara
**FISHING
EXPO** 
THE TEACHING FISHING SHOW

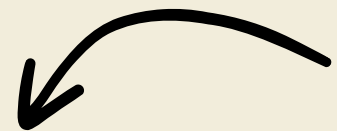
**PRESENTS:
KAYAK FISHING**



Paddle (and Pedal) your Way to Kayak Fishing Success

By Bill Hiltz, Jr.

Kayak fishing is currently riding a huge wave of popularity across the country. The Bass Anglers Sportsmen's Society (Bassmasters) has added a kayak fishing trail, big fishing derbies are adding kayak divisions (such as the Walleye Fall Brawl in Ohio), and in New York State, no less than six different kayak fishing circuits are available for friendly contests in the spring, summer, and fall.



If you have any interest in kayak fishing, be sure to mark Feb. 15-18, 2024, on your angling calendar – the “teaching fishing show” at the Niagara Falls Convention Center.

Getting started in kayak fishing might seem like an easy prospect, and for some it is, but the Fishing Expo will give you the knowledge you need to get started – from what kind of kayak to fish from and how to rig it to what fishing gear works best, accessories to use, and what electronics fit the bill including knowledge on the new forward-facing sonar technology.

At least 20 kayak fishing seminars are being planned for the 2024 show including those targeted for anglers just getting started and through to the experienced tournament kayak anglers.

From a personal note, I have witnessed an increased number of walleye fishermen on the water in places like Buffalo Harbor. Night fishing in the spring off Sturgeon Point and Hamburg (when the conditions allow for it) has seen a spike in activity. Before you try it, though, make sure you understand safety protocols at a time when the water is still extremely cold. This is the show that gives you those details.

Chuck Earls of Northeast Ohio will be one of the featured kayak speakers, bringing more than three decades of experience in places like Lake Erie, focused on walleye, bass, and steelhead. Not only will he make you a better fisherman, but he will also educate you on dealing with overall safety and how to handle extreme weather conditions that the Great Lakes are known for.

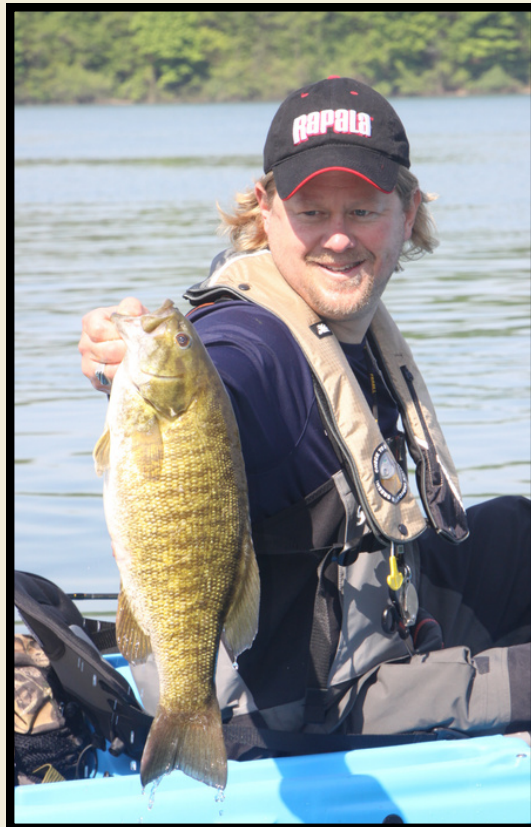


Earls is a licensed kayak fishing guide and a cold-water kayak safety expert. He uses a Native Watercraft kayak and explains the ins and outs of not only the hows, but the why's of how he handles certain situations. You can take things a step further by hiring him as a guide, using a kayak that he has already rigged, learning how his tactics will apply in other bodies of water.

Another excellent seminar speaker is Craig Koepke of Michigan City, Indiana who plies his kayak talents on Lake Michigan with a focus on open water salmon and trout fishing from these small vessels. Koepke, a retired charter captain, outdoor writer, and radio personality, grew up fishing for salmon and trout in Lake Michigan. His intimate knowledge will absolutely apply to Lake Ontario, especially in the spring when large numbers of salmon and trout congregate in and around the Niagara Bar at a time when the prevailing winds are mainly offshore making for calm lake conditions.



Koepke will be speaking on how to select a kayak that is best for you, how to rig your kayak, and how to fish your kayak for the species you want to target. His seminars are for all levels of fishing proficiency, from newbie to expert.



In addition, fall action in area harbors like Wilson and Olcott, as well as tributaries like Eighteen mile Creek, the Oak Orchard River, and the Genesee River will become excellent options for returning salmonids.

What a great way to set yourself apart from the mass of fishermen that arrive with the fish every year. Koepke will be hanging out with his brother at the show in the ITO Flies booth on the main floor.



Darrin Schwenkbeck with a big Lake Erie smallmouth bass caught from his kayak.

It's important to note that the New York Kayak Bass Fishing (NYKBF) group organized the first-ever Douglas Rods/Dakota Lithium New York Invitational on Oneida Lake last Oct. 7. There was a field of 64 kayak anglers from Western New York to the Adirondacks to Central New York to Long Island. Buffalo's own Bailey Eigbrett won the inaugural contest with his best five bass measuring 93.50 inches. Both Douglas Rods and NYKBF are exhibitors on the main floor, and both will be delivering seminars throughout the event. Make sure to stop by the NYKBF booth where they will have a fully rigged state-of-the-art kayak "fishing machine" and get all your kayak fishing questions answered by the experts.

Speaking of exhibitors, one kayak-focused vendor is Paths, Peaks, and Paddles out of Tonawanda.

They feature Hobie as their kayak manufacturer, offering the public an opportunity to try one out before any purchase is made from spring to fall. They will have plenty of vessels on hand to peruse at the four-day show in February.

With over 170 booths at the Expo, there is plenty of fishing gear available to help get you started or expand your arsenal of fishing equipment.

Find the lures, rods, and reels that can help to make you successful while fishing from a sit-in or on-top kayak.

Electronics dealers like Garmin are not only exhibitors, but they are also giving seminars on how to get the most out of your sonar equipment.



Fishing generates estimated \$58.55M in Visitor Spending in Niagara County

Article Credit: [Niagara County News](#)

With access to the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, Niagara County is home to some of the best fresh water fishing in the country. In fact, Bassmaster Magazine has ranked the area in the top 10 places for bass fishing two years in a row.

“Niagara County is known for the varieties and size of fish, in addition to high catch rates, making this a desirable destination for anglers from all over the country,” says Frank Campbell, Outdoor Promotions Director for Destination Niagara USA.

Recognizing the significant year-round effect on tourism, Destination Niagara USA commissioned a study by Young Strategies, Inc. to explore the visitor profile and economic impact of fishing in Niagara County in 2022. The most notable finding from the study was that fishing generated an estimated \$58.55 million in visitor spending in the County in 2022, which is 6% of total visitor spending during that timeframe.

The study was based on a survey including 1,165 qualified respondents with 57% of them indicating that fishing was their primary reason for visiting Niagara County, with sightseeing, water activities and camping representing the other most popular activities for anglers while in the destination.

”As a member of the Niagara County Fishing Development Board and representing a major sportfishing port, I am proud of the progress Frank Campbell, Economic Development, and Destination Niagara

USA have made in growing the fishing industry across Niagara County. Fishing and marine activities are a huge asset to the county, and we can see from the study that tourists enjoy many different activities while visiting the region. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to continue growing this vital asset to Niagara County,” says Niagara County Legislator Shawn Foti.

The last time a survey of this nature was completed was in 2010, with Niagara University collecting responses from 151 anglers. At the time, the results indicated \$30.2 million in visitor spending in the County from fishing. The updated survey shows that many anglers are repeat travelers to the destination, while the first-time visitation is the result of marketing and promotion, as well as word-of-mouth.

Other interesting results of the survey indicate that fishing parties reported staying an average of 3.6 nights in paid overnight accommodations in Niagara County, which is longer than the typical leisure traveler. Outside of New York State, the destination draws large numbers of anglers from California, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida with groups citing Niagara Falls, Wilson, Olcott, Youngstown and Lewiston as the primary destination for their trip.

“Our efforts to market Niagara Falls USA as a premier fishing destination have clearly paid off based on the growth we’ve seen since the last study was completed in 2010. We will now analyze the results of the 2022 data to determine where we can continue to grow the visitor spending related to fishing, ensuring the economic impact of the sport continues to grow across Niagara County,” says John Percy, President and CEO of Destination Niagara USA.



A perfect holiday gift idea for the
fishing lover in your life!



GENERAL
ADMISSION
TICKETS
HERE

B
U
Y

N
O
W

CLICK ON THE
PHOTO TO GO
TO THE
PAGE!



WALLEYE
SCHOOL
TICKETS
HERE



GENERAL
ADMISSION
TICKETS
HERE



SALMON
SCHOOL
TICKETS
HERE



BOOK YOUR
HOTEL HERE

OFF SEASON
HOTEL RATES!