

Bass Newsletter

Bassing, Rigging, and Electronics ... Oh My!
By Bill Hilts, Jr.

The 2024 Greater Niagara Fishing Show



(Feb. 15-18, 2024) offers a smorgasbord of angling knowledge that can get you started or advance whatever knowledge you already possess. Three areas that will be highlighted include the area's outstanding bass fishery (how, where, and when); rigging your boat or personal watercraft; and marine electronics education. Western New York has some of the top smallmouth bass fisheries in the world. Don't take our word for it. Look to one of the top authorities on all things bass. Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS) releases a "100 Best Bass Lakes" list every year and once again in 2023, the waters of the Eastern Basin of Lake Erie near Buffalo (including the Niagara River) cracked the Top 10 Bass Lakes in the Country! This is huge news in the world of bass fishing, checking in at a solid ninth place. It did drop a slot from last year, but the recognition as one of the top ten smallmouth bass destinations in the country is something to be reckoned with. Chautauqua Lake and Cayuga Lake also showed up on the list for the top northeast bass fisheries for WNY.

Capt. Frank Campbell, Niagara County Fish Promotion Coordinator

"For the better part of 15 years, representatives of Bassmaster magazine have been visiting the Niagara Frontier as part of a Spring media outreach put forth by Destination Niagara USA," said Capt. Frank Campbell, Niagara County Fish Promotion Coordinator. "During that timeframe, the visits have resulted in phenomenal numbers and size of smallmouth bass on local waterways. In fact, James Hall, editor of Bassmaster Magazine, proclaimed that "this fishery not only deserves its ranking, but should be a priority on every bass angler's bucket list." One recent trip by Hall produced over 70 smallmouth bass and fish up to 6 pounds.



Brad Brodnicki



This is where the popular fishing show comes in. Expo organizers tap into some of the top local bass names in the area. For example, Brad Brodnicki of Buffalo, has made a name for himself not just in New York but around the U.S. Some of Brad's fishing accomplishments are multiple victories and top ten finishes in B.A.S.S. and FLW events. Just last year he placed 2nd in the FLW National Championship at Table Rock Lake in Tennessee.

"Fishing and fisherman are always changing, so it is important to stay up to date with the latest techniques and tackle," insists Brodnicki. "Bass tournament fisherman will have the opportunity to learn about how bass transition throughout Lake Erie and surrounding waters during the year and what lures and techniques would be best to use for those different times of the year. Electronics are a big factor in finding fish and locating areas that hold fish. Learning and understanding how to use that information to be more successful will also be discussed."

Other speakers include:

Capt. Joe Fonzi of Thumbs Up Charters is a wealth of knowledge for different kinds of fishing. For bass, he will be giving a talk on trophy bass fishing. This time around, he will be doing a transitional method tutorial. He will cover from pre and post spawn to summer and fall difference. Along the way, he will point to various locations around Lake Erie (but not all of them!), and what techniques work best for him.



Scott & Alex Gauld



Scott and Alex Gauld, a father and son fishing duo from Tonawanda, each have their own special expertise to share – especially in the Niagara River. Alex hopes to cover finesse tactics for smallmouth bass and Scott will be giving some pointers on how to find small spots that hold big fish. Alex has also been involved both high school and college fishing teams and can share insight into what is involved with school fishing teams and how it has helped him grow as a fisherman.

Barb Elliott of Pulaski will be giving seminars on proper bass handling, especially in the summer when fish are often caught in deeper water. Something called “barotrauma” occurs when these fish are pulled from deep water. Elliott’s expertise is with something called “fizzing,” a technique she promotes to release excess gas in the fish by using a small needle and inserting it into the swim bladder. Every bass fisherman should know how to do this to help conserve these important resources. There will be other bass experts delivering seminars on their in-depth bass fishing knowledge. These seminars will take place not only in a classroom setting, but also on the Hawg Trough where they will show you how they work their baits to entice a bass to bite.



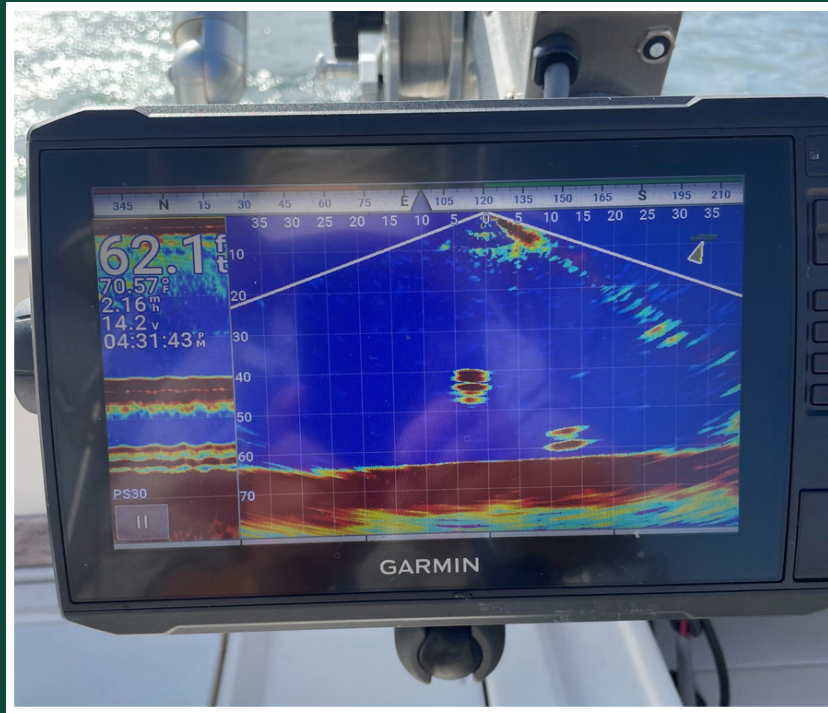
The Hawg Trough



The Hawg Trough is a 5,000-gallon aquarium that serves as the ultimate teaching platform during the show. You will be able to view, up close and personal, how fish react to certain kinds of baits under your boat or along the shoreline. It may change the way you fish.

One unique concept that the show is exploring is a virtual seminar.

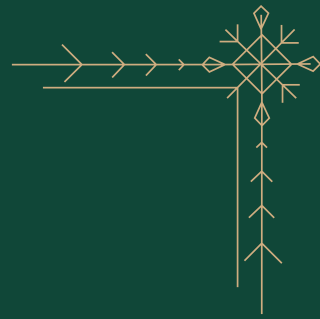
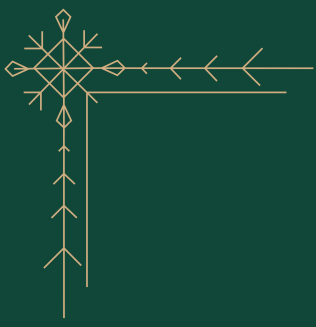
One of the top names in the world of fishing -- Steve Quinn of Minnesota -- will be giving a talk to attendees via Zoom in one of the seminar rooms. If you don't know the name "Quinn," you should. He was a long-time editor of In-Fisherman magazine and a host on the In-Fisherman television show. With a technical background in Fisheries Biology, he is the first fish biologist to serve as editor of a major magazine. Not only has he been inducted into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, he was also selected to be enshrined in the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame. He has been fishing in Western New York several times and on one trip caught a personal best 7.4-pound smallmouth that is still In-Fisherman's largest smallmouth on camera. You will want to sit in on the "fireside chat" with Quinn as he shares stories and answers your questions.



From an electronics standpoint, Mark McQuown of Garmin will be giving talks and working a booth to help answer people's questions. "Garmin fishing electronics help you maximize your time on the water," insists McQuown. "Starting with our ECHOMAP Ultra and UHD2 chartplotter lineup, which offers premium mapping, wireless networking, and sonar to help you find points of interest and fish, to our industry-leading Force Trolling Motor lineup to help you stay on the fish, to our LiveScope live scanning sonar to help you target and catch individual fish, Garmin has what is needed to take a fisherman from the boat ramp to netting a fish."

Another knowledgeable electronics wizard is Capt. Lance Valentine of Teachin' Fishin', one of the keynote speakers in the innovative Walleye School. No matter what your expertise level, Valentine will help you to get the most out of your fish finder. His expertise is Lowrance, but he can help you with other popular brands, too. Fish Hawk will also have a booth to help explain the importance of this electronic fishing tool for trolling speed and temperature at the location in the water column that you need to be fishing at. Darrell Huff of Smart Troll is another electronics tidbit of interest that will be expanded upon in the long list of seminar options. When it comes to rigging your boat, be it for Great Lakes trolling, smaller lake or river fishing, or personal watercrafts like kayaks, there will be educational seminars available to all levels of anglers. The New York Kayak Bass Federation will be sharing their rigging tips, as will dealers like Paths, Peaks and Paddles out of Tonawanda. The U.S. Coast Guard promoting boater safety will be on hand to help keep you safe on the water. Incidentally, 2024 is that last year that you can operate a boat or personal watercraft (based on your age) without a boating safety certificate from New York State Parks (or other approved sources).

See you at the Show!



Wrap Up

Free Parking!

If you plan on attending the Greater Niagara Fishing Expo, all the Niagara Falls lots will be FREE! Please know that street parking will still have a fee. So be aware!

Lodging

Stay and get cozy at one of our discounted rated hotels:

Comfort Inn
Hyatt Place
Sheraton
Wingate

Book your hotel now, hotel blocks are filling up at the discounted rate before they are all gone!

[Click this](#)

Tickets!

Please click below to order your tickets in advance! This is a perfect gift for the fishing connoisseur in your life!

Tickets only available for presale on the website.

Tickets available at door during event hours:

February:

Thurs 15: Noon-8 p.m.

Fri 16: Noon-8 p.m.

Sat 17: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sun 18: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

\$10.00 Stocking Stuffer!

Planning a trip to Niagara Falls!

Want to find things to do?

Use our day planner link here!

[Click this](#)