

Erie PrOH Guide Certification Program Earns American Fisheries Society Award

12:00 pm, Tue November 19, 2024 – Erie PrOH, a voluntary certification course for Lake Erie charter captains led by Ohio Sea Grant and the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Division of Wildlife received recognition from the American Fisheries Society (AFS)

A voluntary certification course for fishing guides ("charter captains") and crew members on Lake Erie led by Ohio Sea Grant and the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Division of Wildlife received national recognition recently from the American Fisheries Society (AFS).

At the organization's annual meeting on Sept. 15, the **Erie PrOH** (<https://ohioseagrant.osu.edu/education/resources/proh>) Fishing Guide Certification Program was recognized with the 2024 Sport Fish Restoration Outstanding Project award in the category of Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) and/or Angler Education. According to the AFS, the award is intended to "recognize excellence in fisheries management, research and education."

Developed through a partnership between the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Ohio Sea Grant, **Erie PrOH is a voluntary certification course**

(<https://ohioseagrant.osu.edu/news/2023/h89vm/erieproh-supporting-sustainable-angling>) that empowers fishing guides and crew members to use conservation-oriented best practices. The course emphasizes the importance of fishing guides as environmental stewardship ambassadors and educates guides both on sustainable angling practices and how to share this knowledge with others.

The self-paced online course can be taken at any time. Successful completion certifies the recipient for five years and grants access to curated science communication resources by Lake Erie professionals. **A list of Erie PrOH-certified guides**



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(<https://ohioseagrant.osu.edu/education/resources/proh/certified>) can be found on the Ohio Sea Grant website.

"This program was created to promote Ohio's charter fishing industry, the fishery, and conservation-oriented best management practices," said Tory Gabriel, Ohio Sea Grant's extension program manager. "It helps elevate angling businesses by creating a reputation for responsible Lake Erie stewardship and allows fishing guides to act as ambassadors for sustainably fishing Lake Erie. Survey data shows that 90% of Erie PrOH certified guides plan on changing business practices based on what they learned, and 97% feel they improved their Lake Erie literacy."

AFS, an organization of over 8,000 scientists, fishery managers, and educators, is dedicated to the promotion and support of scientific research and sustainable fishery resource management. Each year, the organization awards programs that received Sport Fish Restoration grant funds in three Sport Fish Restoration categories: Sport Fishery Development and Management; Research and Surveys; and Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) and/or Angler Education. The nominees are evaluated by a committee of fisheries administrators based on criteria such as impacts on the public, advancement of sport fisheries management, and improved understanding of and support for fishery values.

"The award is a great honor and shows that our fisheries colleagues across the country recognize the positive impacts the Erie PrOH certification program can have on the Lake Erie fishery, and the fishing guide businesses and anglers that are a part of it, to support sustainable angling and environmental stewardship," Gabriel said.

Ohio Sea Grant is supported by **The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences** (<http://cfaes.osu.edu/>) (CFAES) **School of Environment and Natural Resources** (<http://senr.osu.edu/>) , **Ohio State University Extension** (<https://extension.osu.edu/>) , and **NOAA Sea Grant** (<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/>) , a network of 34 Sea Grant programs nation-wide dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of marine and Great Lakes resources. Stone Laboratory is Ohio State's island campus on Lake Erie and is the research, education, and outreach facility of Ohio Sea Grant and part of CFAES School of Environment and Natural Resources.

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