NEW RESEARCH VESSEL WALLEYE LAUNCHED ON LAKE ERIE



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SANDUSKY, Ohio – The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife christened its new research vessel, the R/V Walleye, on Friday, Oct. 30 in Sandusky. The new vessel will improve the Division of Wildlife's ability to safely and effectively survey fisheries in Lake Erie's western basin.

The R/V Walleye, a 55-foot-long aluminum-hull boat, replaces the aging R/V Explorer at the Sandusky Fisheries Research Station. The new vessel is more stable and maneuverable in Lake Erie's challenging conditions. It also reduces noise and vibration for biologists working on the boat.


WALLEYE


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SANDUSKY, OHIO

The Division of Wildlife relies on research boats to complete trawl, gill net, and acoustic surveys, which contribute to the interagency management of sport fish in Lake Erie, known as The Walleye Capital of the World. These surveys allow Ohio to collaboratively set sustainable annual harvest levels for walleye and yellow perch.

The new vessel was constructed beginning in 2024 at Andersen Boat Works in Douglas, Mich. The Walleye is equipped with twin diesel engines, a hydraulic system for deploying and retrieving trawls and gillnets, a transmission that allows slow towing speeds for trawling with cruising capabilities at just under 20 miles per hour, advanced navigation and sonar equipment, and covered space for completing fisheries research work.

The Division of Wildlife's fisheries research on Lake Erie plays a critical role in maintaining the lake's excellent fishing. Walleye, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, and other popular sport fish species are monitored for population abundance, growth, age, diet, and health to better understand and manage this important recreational and economic resource.

Anglers who visit fishing destinations support the economies in those regions. Anglers generated $5.5 billion in economic spending in Ohio in 2022, according to a report released by the Wildlife Management Institute, Responsive Management, and Southwick Associates. The research found that 18% of Ohio's adults, about 1.7 million individuals, participate in fishing.

The *mission of the Division of Wildlife is to conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all. Visit wildohio.gov to find out more.*

ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at ohiodnr.gov.