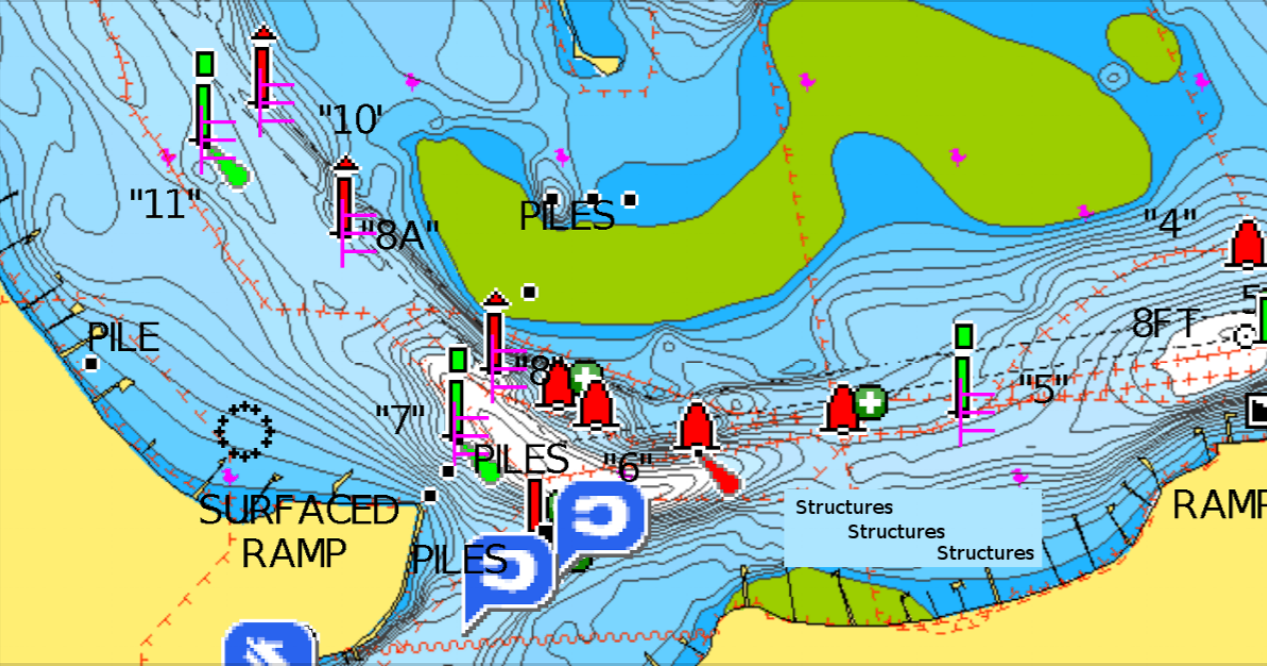


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OUTDOORS

Kayaks becoming popular for fishing: NE Ohio fishing report

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Kayak fishing has become very popular around the bays and harbors of Western Lake Erie, and on the main lake when the weather cooperates, reports Chuck Earl of Lake Erie Kayak FishingAdventures. Earl hosted kayak fishing seminars at the Progressive Catawba Island Boat and Yacht Show recently. D'Arcy Egan, Special to cleveland.com



By D'Arcy Egan | Special to cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Many anglers believe that Lake Erie's big waters demand a big fishing boat, but kayak anglers are proving they can safely catch walleye, smallmouth bass, catfish and panfish in comfort and safety.

For the 18th season, the South Bass Island Kayak Rendezvous will gather on the Lake Erie Islands on Friday and Saturday, June 10-11, and making the area especially friendly to kayaks are the Lake Erie Water Trails that provide access around the Lake Erie Islands and East and West Harbors on the mainland, and the Miller Ferry that can take paddler and kayak to the island.

For more information about the rendezvous, which is based at South Bass Island State Park, email Eric Slough: emanohotl@yahoo.com

Water Trail maps are provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and distributed by Lake Erie Shores & Islands Ohio at its tourism offices in Port Clinton and Sandusky.

The Cleveland Metroparks and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) have also created a Lake Erie Water Trail in Cuyahoga County. The 20-plus mile water trail along Lake Erie spans from Huntington Beach on the western edge of Cuyahoga County to Sims Park on the eastern edge of Cuyahoga County. It was the 16th water trail to receive the state designation.

Hard-core fishing kayaks, though, are far more expensive than a simple paddling kayak. Chuck Earls of Lake Erie Kayak Fishing Guided Adventures in the Cleveland area hosted kayak fishing seminars at the recent Progressive Catawba Island Boat and Yacht Show in Port Clinton.

"My fishing kayak costs about \$7,000, but it has a lot of amenities, including an electric motor to power the craft, fishing sonar and can even be adapted to handle disabled fishermen," he said.

On many calm water days on Lake Erie, a kayak is ideal for an inexpensive outing. With the schools of walleye hanging around the 16- to 20-foot depths in near-shore areas right now, kayak anglers can both troll lures and drift-and-cast for a limit of six walleye.

Shallow-water walleye fishing popular: Fishermen are choosing to stay close to shore right now to catch walleye. Excellent numbers of the fish are hanging around the shallow waters, perfect for anglers who like to drift and cast small single-spinner rigs tipped with a half of a nightcrawler. Good catches have been reported around Huron by Bob Hanko at Cranberry Creek Marina. Craig Lewis at Erie Outfitters in Sheffield Lake says walleye limits are being quickly caught very early in the day off Avon Point in 16 to 20 feet.

The recent rains have pushed muddy water from the area rivers into Lake Erie, but the big lake has been clearing quickly in slightly deeper water. Good catches off Lorain and Cleveland have also been reported all the way out to 40 feet.

Lure choice for walleye expanding: Diving plugs have been in the spotlight for walleye anglers who are trolling on Lake Erie, with Bandits a mainstay lure. Lots of fishermen, though, are already making the switch to Jet Divers and Tru-Trip Diving Planers and 3- and 4-inch trolling spoons, as well as tandem-bladed spinner rigs and a whole nightcrawler.

Lures running 70 to 100 feet behind the boat off side planers boards, and running about 1.8 to 2 knots, have found lots of success. While suspended walleye are plentiful, the trophy fish seem to be hanging around the bottom of Lake Erie.

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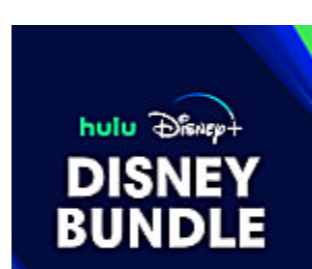
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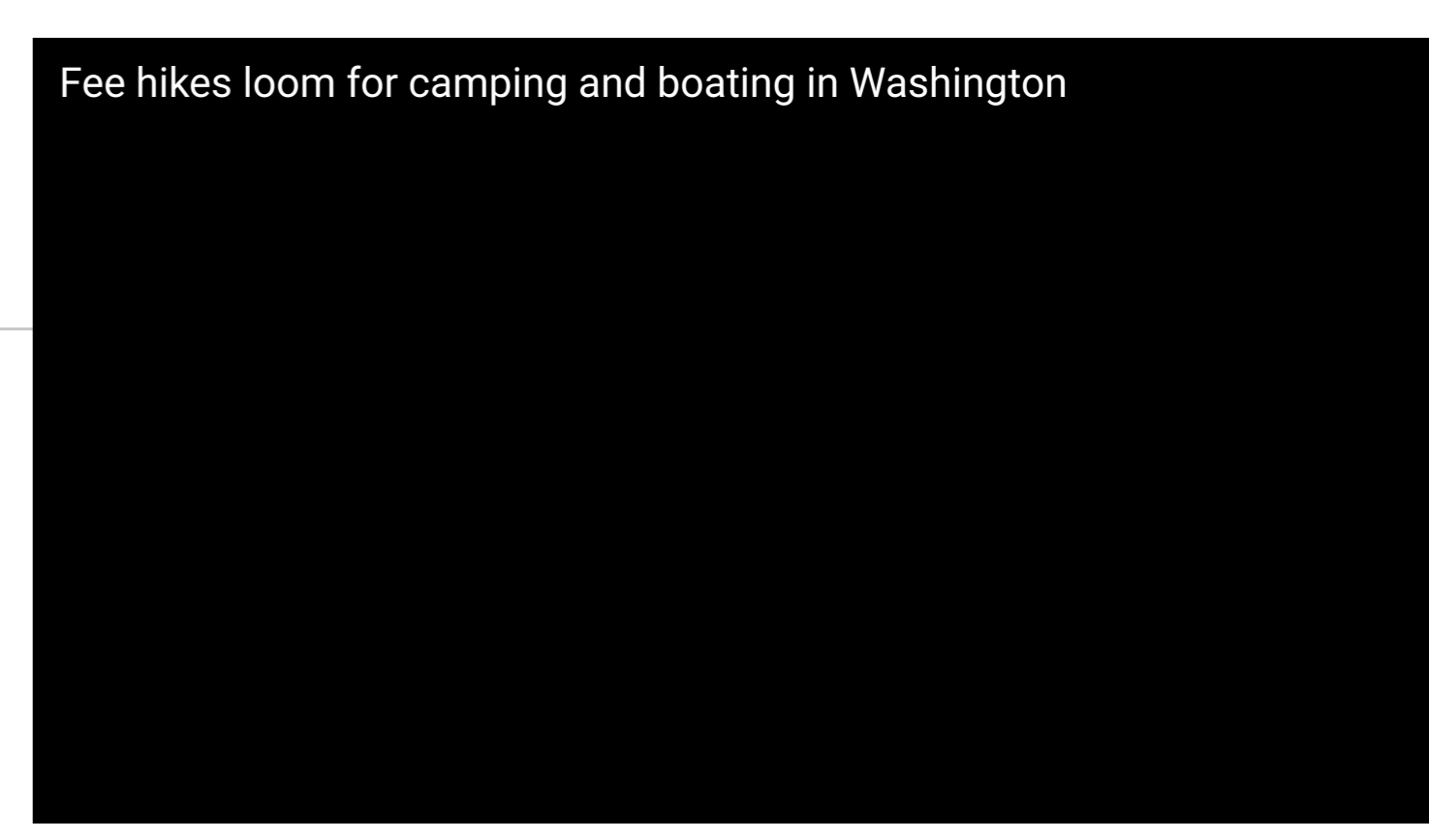
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