Fish You Can Catch

Chinook Salmon
Preferred Conditions: S3F-S5F
Near shore. 300 feet of water.
Local Tips: During the spring and fall, salmon in Grand Haven are great for chinook. In May, they come near shore to feed on alewives. In the fall, they move to their native streams.

Fish Facts: The chinook salmon offers the greatest challenge of any Michigan fish because of its trophy size and superb fighting qualities. Pier anglers use light line (6-20 lb. test) and live alewife as bait. In the fall, a variety of artificial baits are used.

Coho Salmon
Preferred Conditions: S4F
Ten miles from shore to upper 20-40 foot water column.
Local Tips: In April and early May, small boats find the warm water discharge near Port Sheldon to be a good fishing area. During the same time, pier anglers catch coho by casting small spoons or natural baits.

Fish Facts: Coho is the smaller cousin of chinook. Coho can be distinguished from chinook by fewer spots on a somewhat forked tail and a black mouth with whitish gills. The anal fin has 15-19 rays, while the chinook has 15-21 rays. Keep your alewife or smelt off the bottom with a large bobber is a successful technique for catching coho from the Grand Haven and Holland piers.

Steelhead Trout
Preferred Conditions: S4F-60Y Shallow depths of 8 feet or less.
Local Tips: Shore fishing is found along the county's sandy beaches at Grand Haven State Park, North Beach Park and Holland State Park.

Fish Facts: In the fall, steelhead trout are caught in shallow depths of 8 feet or less using spawn bags and artificial lures. From late June through September, steelhead can usually be found concentrated near temperature breaks 8-15 miles offshore.

Brown Trout
Preferred Conditions: Upper 50Y's. Near shore or on shallows if the water temperature permits.
Local Tips: The warm water discharge at Port Sheldon provides good early brown trout fishing. Pier anglers use dead smelt and live alewife as successful baits. Both the Holland area and Crockery Creek are stocked with brown trout annually.

Fish Facts: In the spring, brown trout frequent the shallows of Lake Michigan, particularly around piers, old wood abutments and power plant discharges. As summer approaches, they like points, ledges and gravel or rocky bottoms. At the start of April, small boat anglers have luck trolling behind sandbars in 6-12 ft. of water. Small artificial baits trolled at least 100 yards behind the boat are particularly successful.

Lake Trout
Preferred Conditions: 49F-51F. Near shore to 200 feet of water.
Local Tips: In August, the large lake trout come offshore in Holland and Grand Haven. During this time, it is not uncommon for anglers to catch 20+ pound lake trout.

Fish Facts: Since nearing extinction in the 1940’s, the lake trout population has been maintained by stocking. More intensive stocking takes place on offshore reefs near the center of Lake Michigan.

Yellow Perch
Preferred Conditions: Water temperatures and depths vary can be caught year-around.
Local Tips: From July to September, pier anglers in Holland and Grand Haven take excellent catches. The best waters for ice fishing are Big Bay in Lake Macatawa, Pigeon Lake, Spring Lake, Bruce’s Bayou and Lake Michigan.

Fish Facts: The best way to catch perch is to try likely locations and draw more every 10-15 minutes.

Walleye
Preferred Conditions: Water temperatures vary 6-30 feet, deep rock areas near shore and submerged sandbars.
Local Tips: Large populations are found in Lake Macatawa, the lower Grand River, Spring Lake and Crockery Lake.

Fish Facts: In the spring and fall walleye fishing is best in shallow water close to points or mouths of rivers. Deep waters are best fished in the summer with line strung 30-50 yards behind the boat, and bat at the bottom in 6-50 ft. of water.

Largemouth Bass
Preferred Conditions: Shallow waters early in the season, then up to 30 feet.
Local Tips: Ottawa County offers some of the Midwest's best bass fishing. The Grand River bayous have some of the best fishing in the area, but bass can be found in most waters including Lake Macatawa, Pigeon Lake, Crockery Lake and Spring Lake.

Fish Facts: Bass can be caught by employing a variety of tactics. In the spring, they can be caught on live bait, which can include shiners or alewives. In the fall, they can be caught on plastics or artificial baits.

Fishing Guide

For More Information Contact:

Grand Haven Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
One South Harbor Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417
1-800-368-6892 • 616-842-4199
www.visitchegrandhaven.com

Holland Convention & Visitors Bureau
70 E. 8th Street
Holland, MI 49423
1-800-760-1299 • 616-394-0000
www.holland.org

Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission
1220 Fillmore
Newark, MI 49671
1-888-751-4013 • 840-0000
www.co.ottawa.mi.us

Tournaments

Grand Haven Offshore Challenge
First weekend after Memorial Day
www.grandhavenoffshorechallenge.com

Big Red Classic - Holland
First weekend after July 4th
www.bigredclassic.com

Pioneer/EKs Tournament - Holland
Third Saturday in July

Gold Coast Tournament - Holland
Fourth Saturday in August

Grand Haven Salmon Festival & Big Keg Contest
Third weekend in September
www.visitholland.com

Year-Long Fishing Contest
Grand Haven Steelheaders
www.ghsteelheaders.com

Fish Facts: Largemouth bass may be caught by casting, using crank baits, and by still fishing with night crawlers, minnows, crayfish or frogs. For live bait, the best hook size is a long-shank No. 2. A medium action rod with 8-12 lb. test line works well. In areas of heavy log and tree cover, use a 1/2 oz test line.

Bluegill
Preferred Conditions: In spring, fishing is best 1-4 feet deep along weedy edges. In summer, 10-20 feet deep and in winter, as soon as the ice forms.

Lake Perch
Preferred Conditions: All the Grand River bayous, particularly Lloyds, Stearns, Pottawatomie, Milhause and Bruce’s produce consistent bluegill fishing. The eastern end of Lake Macatawa also produces bluegill.

Smelt
Preferred Conditions: In April, hand nets used on the Grand River and Holland piers are successful in the spring.

Catfish
Preferred Conditions: Both the Grand River and Lake Macatawa offer excellent catfish angling. Flathead catfish up to 30 lbs have been caught, but 9-12 lbs is more common.

Menominee
During October and November, the Menominee come inshore and are accessible to pier anglers.

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Ottawa County Public Fishing Sites

1. **North Pier Access** - Outstanding Lake Michigan fishing for all big lake species including perch, salmon and steelhead.
2. **Grand Haven State Park (south pier access)** - Popular Lake Michigan fishing pier at the mouth of the Grand River Pier access through the State Park.
3. **Holland State Park** - Popular Lake Michigan fishing offers a wide range of Lake Michigan species. Pier access through the State Park.
4. **Lighthouse Connector Park** - Linear park along the Grand River extending from the south pier to Grand Haven’s boardwalk. Fish for river species.
5. **Mill Point Park** - For Grand River species off the bank or from a deck at the river’s edge.
6. **Jackson Street Dock** - Concrete landing provides shoreline access to Spring Lake. Fish for panfish, bass, and pike (take M-134 to Jackson St. in Spring Lake Village, north to lake).
7. **Lloyd’s Bayou Bike Path Landings** - Wooden boardwalks along the Leonard Road bike path provide good access to Lloyd’s Bayou. Fish for panfish, bass, and pike.
8. **William Ferry Park** - Shoreline fishing along the channel connecting Spring Lake to the Grand River.
9. **Indian Channel Launch** - Grand River shoreline fishing for a full range of river species.
10. **Pottawatomie Park** - Fishing access to Pottawatomie Bayou from shore or large floating dock. Catch fish, bass, and pike.
11. **Pigeon Bayou Bike Path** - A wooden walkway provides fishing for panfish, bass, and pike.
12. **Biggins Park Shoreline** - Fishing access to Millhouse bay with opportunities to catch perch, bass, and pike.
13. **Riverside Park** - Grand River shoreline fishing for bass, walleye, and catfish. Interior properties with handicap accessible dock popular for panfish (345 to 104th Ave., north to North Cedar Drive, east to the park).
14. **Deer Creek Park** - Bank fishing at the mouth of Deer Creek on the Grand River Popular for all river fish species (Leonard Road at Eastmanville, east to 60th Avenue, south to the park).
15. **Grand River Park** - Shoreline fishing on the Grand River for all types of river species, dock and bank fishing for panfish and bass on a 12-acre gravel pit lake (Fillmore Street to 28th Avenue, north to the park).
16. **Grose Park** - Fishing dock access to Crockery Lake. Popular for panfish and bass (7-7/2 north to Hoover, east to 24th Avenue, south to the park).
17. **Shebron Landing** - Access to lower Pigeon Creek near Pigeon Lake with bank fishing for panfish, pike, and bass (east of Lake Shore Drive).
19. **Van Bragt Park** - Floating dock on the Macatawa River. Fish for panfish, bass, and other species.
20. **Dunton Park** - Shoreline fishing on Lake Macatawa. Good for fishing for walleye, bass, and pike.
21. **Woodland Park** - Panfish and bass fishing in a small gravel pit lake (located on 12th Avenue between Cottonwood Drive and Millpond Street in Jenison).
22. **Georgetown Community Park** - Panfish and bass fishing in a small gravel pit lake (on 8th Avenue and Rosewood just south of M-21 in Jenison).
23. **Pigeon Lake (north pier access)** - Pier fishing on Lake Macatawa with opportunities to catch perch, bass, and pike.
24. **Bayou from shore or large floating dock. Catch fish, bass, and pike.
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34. **Kollen Park** - Extensive shoreline fishing on Lake Macatawa. Catch panfish, perch, and bass.
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