

# Wisconsin DNR: Outdoor report summary for July 17, 2017

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Contact:

[Paul Holtan](#), DNR Office of Communications, Madison, [608-267-7517](tel:608-267-7517)

[Charlie Nettesheim](#), DNR Office of Communications, Madison, [608-267-0541](tel:608-267-0541)

## **Rains return to dampen outdoor recreation; torrential rains in southeast create state of emergency**

Recent rains across the regions have kept water levels above average and saturated swamps, forests and trails across the state. Torrential rains fell Wednesday in southeastern Wisconsin with as much as 8 inches reported in some areas. Many roads in Racine, Kenosha and Walworth counties were flooded and a State of Emergency has been declared in each county. The Fox River crested Thursday in Burlington at 16.1 feet, exceeding the previous high level set in 2008.

While there have been no reports of park, forest or trails closing, visitors should be aware of recent rain conditions in areas they visit and check-in with local offices to see if your favorite trail may be waterlogged.

With precipitation last weekend and this week, water levels around Lake Michigan have been fluctuating. In some instances they have been leveling off, while in other areas, such as the Door County Peninsula, they are rising to near record highs. The lower Wisconsin River continues to run high, but there are some sandbars available. Boaters should be aware though that recent rains may cause the river to rise again.

The weather combined with high water and the resulting murkiness on rivers again worked against anglers in the past week. However, there are still successful catches being landed. On Green Bay there were increasing reports of yellow perch trickling

in, a strong wave of freshwater drum and some improved walleye bite especially in the lower bay.

Along Lake Michigan, the salmon bite was more regular and rainbows are showing up alongside coho and chinook out of Sheboygan and Ozaukee counties. Angler out of Racine and Kenosha were reporting similar success for salmon, along with lake and brown trout. Catch size is ranging widely, particularly between salmon, with coho as small as three pounds and chinook all the way up to the low 20s. While above average, one individual also landed a 15 pound rainbow trout.

Fawns are hanging to mom almost constantly, bear cubs are growing and scrounging for berries, and turkey broods are marching around with poults in tow. While major migrations may have slowed, at Horicon Marsh, great egrets and blue herons, black terns and marsh wrens are all present and on display. Cedar waxwings, kingbirds, whip-poor-wills and nighthawks have been seen or heard in Vernon County. Be aware that the wet spell has given energy to the mosquito population, especially if you're looking to head near streams, rivers or the deep woods.

Milkweed, common Saint John's wort are coming up along roadsides, while bergamot, daisy fleabane, harebell, yarrow, wood lily, daisy fleabane, cinquefoil and butterfly weed are blooming. Blazing star, aster, and early goldenrod have all bolted and will be flowering soon. Also flowering is wild parsnip, whose oils can react with UV rays from the sun and cause blisters and burns on the skin.

An upside of all the rain has is that it also brought an explosion of life to the wild berries that tangle across our state, much to the delight of trail-side adventurers and animals alike. Roadside berries are transitioning from strawberries to blackberries and raspberries, and from the decreasing number of nuisance calls, it seems bear populations are appreciating them as well.