



# MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Russell Aikens, raikens@saulttribe.net

## Communications Department

531 Ashmun Street  
Sault Ste. Marie  
Michigan  
49783

## Phone

(906) 632-6398

## Fax

(906) 632-6556

## E-mail

jdale-burton@saulttribe.net

## Web Site

www.saulttribe.com

## Sault Tribe stocks 2019 summer walleye

SAULT STE. MARIE —Sault Tribe's Walleye Stocking Program stocked 910,000 summer fingerlings this July to area waterways from its three walleye rearing ponds in the eastern Upper Peninsula.

The program also stocked 1 million walleye fry this spring, .5 million each in the lower Tahquamenon River and Millecoquins Lake near Engadine, Fishery Enhancement Coordinator Rusty Aikens said. Even with a survival rate lower than fingerlings, the little half-inch fry are a valuable resource.

Aikens said walleye pond yields were down this year but it was a tough season with a long cold spring and two big rain events.

This year's walleye fingerlings went to their new homes on the St. Mary's River, Bay de Noc, Epoufette Bay, St. Martin's Bay and the Lower Cheboygan River at the beginning of July.

In the St. Mary's, 382,468 fingerlings were stocked at five sites:

Sault Area	20,068
Lake Nicolet	44,186
Lake George	85,662
Raber Bay	60,731
Potagannissing Bay	171,821

Elsewhere in northern Michigan walleye fingerlings went to:

Lower Cheboygan	77,090
Epoufette Bay	50,692
St. Martin Bay	264,204
Bay de Noc	135,378
Grand total	909,832

The MDNR and Sault Tribe work in cooperation on Bay de Noc walleye stocking to complement each other's resources, according to Aikens. The DNR collects walleye eggs and brings them to the tribe's walleye hatchery at 8-10 days old. Two strains are used — St. Mary's River walleye strain and Bay de Noc walleye strain. When it's time for stocking, the DNR transports them to Bay de Noc for release, said Aikens.

Aikens said the walleye are marked for tracking at three days old, so survival rates and other population data can be collected.

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Editors: Photos by Brenda Austin for *Win Awenen Nisitotung*

1) Sault Tribe Fisheries Aide Troy Lehre (left) and Fisheries Technician Dave Pine release summer walleye fingerlings into the St. Mary's River from a local marina and boat launch.

2) Walleye fingerlings close up.