

The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) is an inter-tribal, co-management agency committed to the implementation of off-reservation treaty rights on behalf of its eleven Ojibwe member bands.

Formed in 1984 and exercising authority specifically delegated by its member bands, GLIFWC's mission is to help ensure significant, off-reservation harvests while protecting the resources for generations to come.

GLIFWC's member bands are:

IN MICHIGAN—The Bay Mills Indian Community, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the Lac Vieux Desert band.

IN WISCONSIN—The Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Mole Lake/Sokaogon, Red Cliff, and St. Croix bands.

IN MINNESOTA—The Fond du Lac and Mille Lacs bands.

GLIFWC's policy is set by the Board of Commissioners composed of the tribal chairperson from each member band or a designee. Two standing committees, the Voigt Intertribal Task Force and the Great Lakes Fisheries Committee, make recommendations on resource management policies to the board.

GLIFWC has six divisions including Administration, Biological Services, Enforcement, Intergovernmental Affairs, Planning and Development, and Public Information.

Some of GLIFWC publications are:

- *Masinaigan*, a free quarterly newspaper
- *Understanding Ojibwe Treaty Rights*, a basic treaty rights guide
- *Seasons of the Chippewa*, a booklet on off-reservation resource management
- *With an Eagle's Eyes*, a video on GLIFWC
- Annual harvest reports



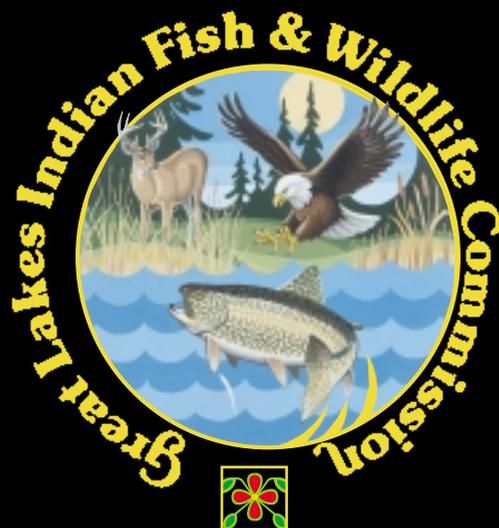
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Ojibwe Treaty Rights & Resource Management



Treaty Rights

The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission's (GLIFWC) member bands retain what are commonly referred to as treaty rights. Specifically, these are off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights in lands the Ojibwe ceded to the United States in the Treaties of 1836, 1837, 1842 and 1854.

These rights, which the Ojibwe have always had, were reserved by the bands and guaranteed by the United States to ensure that the tribes could meet subsistence, economic, cultural, spiritual and medicinal needs. The United States Supreme Court and other federal courts have affirmed these rights. The bands may exercise them in the ceded areas of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and are entitled to 50 percent of available resources to meet their needs.

The treaty rights can only be exercised in a way that conserves natural resources and protects public health and safety. The bands have enacted off-reservation natural resource management plans and conservation codes to meet these goals. GLIFWC assists the bands in coordinating their regulations and management activities with federal and state governments and among the bands themselves.

With the opportunities for off-reservation harvest comes the responsibility to effectively manage the treaty seasons and resources. GLIFWC and its member bands take the role of management seriously, providing both the biological and enforcement expertise necessary for the protection of the natural resources.

Resource Protection

GLIFWC's member bands rely on healthy resources for traditional foods and medicines and to retain a lifeway. GLIFWC is committed to protecting the resources from degradation, whether it is from invasive species, such as sea lamprey, purple loosestrife and zebra mussel, or from pollutants stemming from current or proposed development, such as mining.

GLIFWC's staff work on the local, state, federal and international level to promote a healthy ecosystem. For instance, participation in the Binational Program to Restore and Protect Lake Superior is one avenue of furthering GLIFWC's resolution to pursue zero discharge of contaminants into Lake Superior.

GLIFWC biologists test fish from lakes commonly speared by tribal members to determine mercury levels and publish color-coded maps indicating which lakes have higher levels of mercury contamination as a guide for tribal members.

Similarly, studies have been performed and a guide published on the preparation of Lake Superior fish to help consumers avoid contaminants in the fish.

GLIFWC staff provides input into proposed legislation and changes in resource management regulations potentially impacting off-reservation, treaty resources of interest to member bands.

GLIFWC recognizes that a meaningful exercise of the treaty rights can only continue if the generations to come inherit a healthy and bountiful environment.



The Inland Fishery

The most publicized treaty season has been the spring fishing season when the bands use traditional methods such as spearing and netting to harvest walleye, muskellunge, and other species.

The spring fishing season is closely monitored. Band members receive daily permits with a daily bag limit for walleye and muskellunge in each declared lake. All harvested fish must be brought to a designated boat landing where they are counted by species and biological data is collected. Both biological and conservation enforcement staff are present at each landing to monitor harvest and enforce tribal codes.

In Wisconsin, bands have been exercising spring spearing seasons in ceded-territory lakes since 1985. A technical working group composed of state and tribal fishery biologists determines a Safe Harvest Level for each lake. The bands declare a quota, not exceeding the determined harvest level, for each lake they intend to spear or net, and their harvest is controlled to remain within that quota. The treaty harvest remains

small in comparison to the sport harvest each year.

In Minnesota, open water spearing and netting in Mille Lacs and other lakes are regulated under provisions of a court-approved five-year fisheries management plan. In Mille Lacs Lake, the tribal walleye quota, established in accordance with the fisheries management plan, is shared among eight GLIFWC member bands. Other lakes in the Minnesota 1837 ceded territory are regulated similarly to Wisconsin's treaty fishery.

State, tribal and federal assessment crews coordinate the collection of biological information from walleye in ceded-territory lakes. Surveys are done on important mixed-fishery lakes with healthy walleye populations during spring and fall. These data are shared and reviewed by state and tribal biologists at interagency technical committee meetings both in Wisconsin and Minnesota.



Lake Superior Treaty Fishery

Some of GLIFWC's member bands engage in treaty commercial fishing activities in Lake Superior. Like all fishing activity today, the Lake Superior treaty fishery is closely managed and regulated. Species of most interest to tribal commercial fishermen include lake trout, whitefish, and herring.

Lake Superior commercial fishing is regulated by species quotas, fishing management zones, and gear regulations. These controls are established under a ten-year agreement with the state of Wisconsin for the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior and under comprehensive tribal regulations in Michigan's 1842 ceded territory. GLIFWC biological and conservation enforcement personnel monitor the commercial harvest and enforce regulations.

GLIFWC and tribal biologists perform annual fish assessments, working cooperatively with state fishery managers in Michigan and Wisconsin. Other areas of cooperation between tribal and state or federal agencies include aquatic nuisance species and lake sturgeon assessments.



Wildlife Harvests

During treaty hunting and trapping seasons, band members harvest a variety of big game, small game, waterfowl and furbearers each year. While the treaty deer season attracts the most participation, the harvest is small compared to state deer harvest levels.

GLIFWC assists in maintaining on-reservation registration stations where permits are available, and harvested animals, such as deer and bear, are registered. Once a tribal quota is reached for a particular management unit, tribal harvest is ceased.

GLIFWC biological staff work cooperatively with state, federal, and tribal wildlife managers on a variety of wildlife management projects such as migratory waterfowl surveys, wolf management, trumpeter swan reintroduction, wetlands enhancement projects, and furbearer studies.



Wild Plant Harvest

Gathering wild plants for food, utilitarian, medicinal and ceremonial purposes remains important to the Ojibwe people today. Among the plants traditionally gathered are wild rice, birch bark, maple sap, berries, conifer boughs, sweet grass, wild leeks, and wintergreen.

The fall harvest of wild rice remains an especially important season for the Ojibwe people, as it is a food central to cultural activities and traditional diet. By locating and reseeding current and historical wild rice beds throughout the ceded territory, GLIFWC biologists strive to improve wild rice abundance.

Tribal members gathering wild plants follow tribal regulatory codes that are enforced by GLIFWC wardens.



GLIFWC biologists also monitor and document tribal, off-reservation wild plant harvests.

Tribal gathering on national forest lands within the ceded territories is regulated by a consistent set of practices established in a Memorandum of Understanding between ten GLIFWC member tribes and the Eastern Region USDA Forest Service.

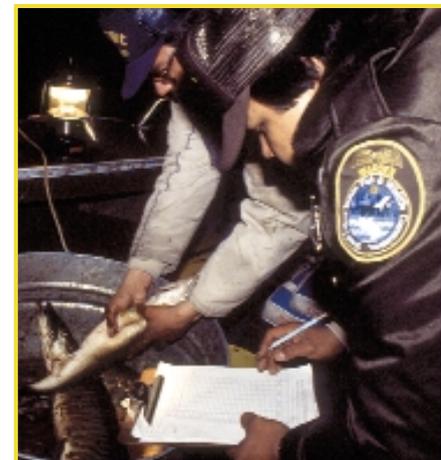
Off-Reservation Enforcement

GLIFWC's Conservation Enforcement Division has ten satellite enforcement offices located on member reservations. GLIFWC conservation officers stationed at satellite offices monitor off-reservation seasons in areas surrounding the reservations.

GLIFWC officers maintain regular patrols during off-reservation seasons and are present on all open landings during spring spearing and netting seasons. Violations of the bands' off-reservation codes are cited into tribal court for prosecution.

Enforcement personnel participate in annual training sessions designed to enhance proficiency in enforcement as well as rescue skills. They also work cooperatively with tribal, local, state and federal enforcement agencies.

In addition to patrol duties, GLIFWC conservation officers provide a variety of safety classes on reservations. These include instructing hunter safety, snowmobile safety, boating safety, and ATV safety classes. The classes draw participants from the tribes and the surrounding area communities.



TREATY HARVESTS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT