

MICHIGAN HUNTING & FISHING LICENSES BARGAINS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

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Michigan boasts some of the very best hunting and fishing anywhere in the United States. Anglers and hunters vote with their waders and boots. Only two states (Texas and Pennsylvania) have more hunters than Michigan. Only four other states (Minnesota, Florida, Texas, and California) have more anglers than Michigan.¹

So, do Michigan hunters and anglers pay a high price for top-notch recreation? Are their hunting and fishing licenses expensive? Absolutely not. The average angler in Michigan pays \$19.68 per year for a license. The average hunter pays \$35.28. Few, if any, states have better hunting and fishing than Michigan. But 39 states have cheaper hunting and 21 states have cheaper fishing (*see charts below*).

Michigan hasn't increased its hunting and fishing license fees since 1996. Because of inflation, you'd need a dollar and thirty-three cents today to buy what cost a dollar in 1996. If you're going to buy a new truck to go up north and go hunting or fishing, it'll cost you thousands of dollars more today than it did in 1996. And filling the gas tank in that truck will cost you xxxxxx what it did 11 years ago.

But fishing's a bigger bargain than ever. A bargain too good to be true. An unsustainable bargain.

For many months, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the state's leading outdoor recreation lobbying group, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, have pleaded with legislators to raise fishing license fees to support conservation officers who patrol our forests, lakes and streams to stop poachers and polluters, biologists who make sure those lands, waters, fish and game are healthy, habitat improvement projects, and many other routine costs of doing business if we're going to properly preserve and enhance the bountiful natural resources that cause so many people to hunt and fish in Michigan to begin with.

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing is, after all, a \$4 billion-a-year business in Michigan and will continue to be vibrant part of the Michigan economy – unless we ruin our woods and waters through disinvestment.

Under the hunting and fishing license increases proposed by the DNR (and supported by MUCC), anglers would pay \$40 per year for an all species license and \$30 per year for a firearm deer license. Licenses for out-of-state visitors would increase from \$42 to \$80 to fish and from \$138 to \$165 to shoot deer.

But legislators -- apparently trembling at the No-Tax Bogeyman and recall threats – this month told Michigan Natural Resources Commission Chairman Keith Charters that he can forget about it. License fee increases aren't going to happen.

"We got a lot of sympathy, but you can't put sympathy between two slices of bread," Charters told the MIRS news service last week. "Without a solution, draconian things will happen in November."

Maybe legislators figure those lakes, streams, and wildlife habitats – and the \$4 billion economy they produce -- will just take care of themselves.

STATE	2005 LICENSED HUNTERS	2005 HUNTING REVENUE	REVENUE PER LICENSE	REV/LIC RANK
CO	312,151	\$56,121,936.68	\$179.79	1
WY	139,064	\$23,411,676.00	\$168.35	2
MT	231,936	\$26,589,819.00	\$114.64	3
NV	60,385	\$6,043,700.00	\$100.09	4
ID	254,678	\$22,686,400.00	\$89.08	5
AK	99,954	\$8,578,916.00	\$85.83	6
NJ	82,566	\$6,636,457.00	\$80.38	7
NM	105,966	\$8,448,884.70	\$79.73	8
OR	279,140	\$21,292,414.00	\$76.28	9
KS	198,368	\$15,050,992.00	\$75.87	10
UT	148,849	\$11,142,967.00	\$74.86	11
SD	243,123	\$17,901,593.00	\$73.63	12
IA	280,398	\$19,677,199.00	\$70.18	13
ND	148,919	\$9,908,723.00	\$66.54	14
WA	197,135	\$12,663,409.95	\$64.24	15
AZ	196,706	\$12,132,147.00	\$61.68	16
NH	60,737	\$3,672,664.00	\$60.47	17
NE	170,785	\$10,010,804.00	\$58.62	18
IL	336,203	\$18,886,928.00	\$56.18	19
CA	299,303	\$16,571,836.00	\$55.37	20
WI	713,610	\$37,803,913.00	\$52.98	21
MN	571,547	\$29,191,889.00	\$51.08	22
RI	8,940	\$444,453.00	\$49.72	23
OH	431,815	\$20,864,113.00	\$48.32	24
MD	122,371	\$5,724,554.00	\$46.78	25
VT	81,265	\$3,617,165.00	\$44.51	26
GA	314,569	\$13,815,998.00	\$43.92	27
CT	52,207	\$2,202,720.00	\$42.19	28
MS	236,067	\$9,742,658.00	\$41.27	29
PA	1,006,293	\$40,490,306.00	\$40.24	30
SC	220,126	\$8,667,808.00	\$39.38	31
ME	199,102	\$7,482,779.00	\$37.58	32
IN	282,261	\$10,593,068.00	\$37.53	33
MO	479,959	\$17,994,472.20	\$37.49	34
HI	7,775	\$290,885.00	\$37.41	35
MA	59,016	\$2,193,378.00	\$37.17	36
WV	238,355	\$8,575,713.00	\$35.98	37
AL	259,241	\$9,200,297.00	\$35.49	38
KY	343,456	\$12,124,216.00	\$35.30	39
MI	789,244	\$27,841,230.00	\$35.28	40
TX	1,039,709	\$36,499,640.00	\$35.11	41
VA	317,239	\$10,878,718.00	\$34.29	42
DE	19,472	\$660,482.00	\$33.92	43
NY	573,970	\$19,416,047.00	\$33.83	44
LA	280,167	\$9,107,216.00	\$32.51	45
AR	375,737	\$11,946,536.00	\$31.79	46
FL	161,273	\$4,975,506.00	\$30.85	47
NC	427,608	\$9,832,703.00	\$22.99	48
OK	341,213	\$7,422,958.75	\$21.75	49
TN	775,511	\$16,681,793.00	\$21.51	50
TOTAL	14,575,484	\$723,712,681.28	\$49.65	AVE.

SOURCE: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2005 National Hunting License Report(produced Jan. 2007- federalasst.fws.gov/).

STATE	2005 LICENSED ANGLERS	2005 FISHING REVENUE	REVENUE PER LICENSE	REV/LIC RANK
NH	140,595	\$4,877,499.00	\$34.69	1
NV	118,313	\$3,656,320.00	\$30.90	2
TX	1,565,384	\$48,124,802.00	\$30.74	3
AK	486,861	\$14,538,235.00	\$29.86	4
OR	634,722	\$18,233,668.00	\$28.73	5
NJ	161,219	\$4,475,765.00	\$27.76	6
CA	1,974,187	\$54,534,943.00	\$27.62	7
MA	171,745	\$4,458,967.00	\$25.96	8
WA	647,556	\$16,732,344.49	\$25.84	9
VT	119,154	\$3,068,219.00	\$25.75	10
MT	379,497	\$9,699,920.00	\$25.56	11
UT	386,127	\$9,373,302.00	\$24.28	12
ME	266,685	\$6,405,762.00	\$24.02	13
SD	199,287	\$4,682,861.00	\$23.50	14
ID	407,648	\$9,148,567.00	\$22.44	15
NE	186,363	\$4,124,590.00	\$22.13	16
NY	954,107	\$21,102,534.00	\$22.12	17
WI	1,389,183	\$29,146,323.00	\$20.98	18
RI	26,712	\$559,909.00	\$20.96	19
AZ	399,148	\$8,228,471.00	\$20.62	20
WY	247,399	\$5,083,641.00	\$20.55	21
MI	1,161,432	\$22,858,079.00	\$19.68	22
NM	200,996	\$3,871,725.30	\$19.26	23
NC	708,928	\$13,457,008.00	\$18.98	24
MD	311,315	\$5,855,911.00	\$18.81	25
KS	258,819	\$4,800,349.00	\$18.55	26
CO	678,032	\$12,512,423.03	\$18.45	27
CT	145,661	\$2,672,930.00	\$18.35	28
IA	422,110	\$7,738,695.00	\$18.33	29
PA	1,029,960	\$18,725,033.75	\$18.18	30
FL	1,377,692	\$24,404,547.00	\$17.71	31
MN	1,458,013	\$25,805,941.00	\$17.70	32
OH	874,366	\$14,829,052.00	\$16.96	33
WV	264,104	\$4,239,405.00	\$16.05	34
TN	996,873	\$15,891,181.00	\$15.94	35
MO	843,784	\$12,879,136.80	\$15.26	36
VA	619,802	\$9,390,612.00	\$15.15	37
OK	641,090	\$9,125,388.54	\$14.23	38
KY	592,708	\$8,297,553.00	\$14.00	39
LA	651,376	\$9,116,679.00	\$14.00	40
AL	465,206	\$6,209,950.00	\$13.35	41
IL	761,832	\$9,811,949.00	\$12.88	42
MS	380,933	\$4,854,395.00	\$12.74	43
GA	667,198	\$8,269,742.00	\$12.39	44
AR	692,212	\$8,454,025.00	\$12.21	45
IN	460,695	\$5,266,418.00	\$11.43	46
SC	488,378	\$5,425,861.00	\$11.11	47
DE	20,772	\$208,661.00	\$10.05	48
ND	157,656	\$1,579,715.00	\$10.02	49
HI	5,233	\$25,530.00	\$4.88	50
TOTAL	28,199,068	\$556,834,537.91	\$19.75	

SOURCE: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2005 National Fishing License Report(produced Jan. 2007- federalasst.fws.gov/).

¹“U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Related Recreation,” July 2007. Online at <http://federalasst.fws.gov/>