



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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Fishing activities, exhibits plentiful in Conservation World the final weekend of the Illinois State Fair

SPRINGFIELD – Visitors to the Illinois State Fair are invited to explore a variety of new and popular long-standing fish- and fishing-related activities and exhibits in Conservation World during the final weekend of the 2024 Illinois State Fair, which closes Aug. 18.

“We have all the traditional favorites, including youth fishing and the giant aquarium filled with native fish, but we’ve also added some new things this year, including a sea lamprey, a catfish raceway, and fishing opportunities for anglers with disabilities,” said **Kevin Irons, assistant fisheries chief for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)**, which hosts Conservation World during the fair every year.

Conservation World, a 30-acre park in the northwest corner of the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. It features a variety of family-friendly outdoor activities, shows, demonstrations, learning opportunities, sensory hours, games, music, food, and shade. The Illinois State Fair tram stops at the main entrance to Conservation World.

Fish- and fishing-related activities and exhibits fairgoers will find in Conservation World this year are plentiful:

2,800-gallon aquarium

Visitors to the Fisheries Tent can marvel at the 28-foot-long, 2,800-gallon aquarium filled with native fish species, including alligator gar, muskie, catfish, and bass. Additional aquariums in the tent are filled with native fish, reptiles and more.

Fishing Has No Boundaries

IDNR staff and volunteers with Fishing Has No Boundaries are available to assist fairgoers who need assistance enjoying an angling experience from an accessible dock near the Fisheries Tent. Motorized reels are also available for use by those with mobility issues. Fairgoers who would like to use these services can sign up to participate in the Fisheries Tent.

Sea lamprey

Fairgoers can check out a sea lamprey, a 14- to 19-inch parasitic fish with a mouth full of sharp teeth that enable it to attach to a host fish to feed. Sea lampreys are an invasive species found in the Great Lakes and have caused considerable harm to Great Lakes sportfishing.

Copi®

Stop by the Flippin' Fish Shack in Conservation World to purchase [Copi](#) tacos and burgers. Copi – now a registered trademark – is the brand name for invasive carp, which are plentiful in Illinois waterways. Copi is a healthful, responsibly caught, locally sourced protein source.

Record-breaking catches

New in the Fisheries Tent this year are a series of banners highlighting record catches of sportfish in Illinois and North America. Take a close look to see that some Illinoisans hold North American records.

Youth fishing clinics

Young fairgoers are invited to stop by the pond just inside the Conservation World main entrance to participate in a family fishing clinic and catch a fish. Activities take place daily at 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. In addition, youth can fish from the dock of one of the large IDNR ponds and try their hand at catching a bluegill, bass, catfish, gar, bowfin, or other types of fish. The dock is behind the IDNR Fisheries Tent, and youth fishing happens at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Fly-fishing instruction

Stop by the Fisheries Tent to register for one of the free fly-fishing classes offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday at noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Space is limited.

Fly-tying demos

Learn how to tie your own flies in the Fisheries Tent throughout the day on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Pond management

IDNR biologists will be available in the Fisheries Tent daily to answer questions about pond and lake management, fish species, fishing tips and best practices, and more.

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