



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Every Catch is a Story to Share

Senator Patty Ritchie

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Brian Hartman of Alexandria Bay will remember this season's walleye fishing for years to come, thanks to the record-sized fish he recently caught in the St. Lawrence River. The 32-inch fish was weighed three times to verify its official weight of 18 pounds, two ounces. Hartman beat the 2009 state record by more than 1.5 pounds.

His massive catch proves that when it comes to fishing, New York State—and especially Lake Ontario, the Thousand Islands and the St. Lawrence River Valley—is the place to be.

Not only do our region's waterways provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation, they help to boost our local economies too. In fact, New York's sport fishing industry generates roughly \$1.8 billion in economic activity annually, as well as helps to support nearly 17,000 jobs.

As State Senator—and someone who enjoys a day of fishing on the water with my family—I have worked in recent years to enhance angling opportunities in our region. My efforts include securing funds to support local fishing tournaments, as well as introducing legislation to promote fishing across our state—including a measure that would create a gift card for hunting and fishing licenses ([S.754](#)), as well as a bill ([S.1467](#)) to authorize special access to hunting and fishing grounds on state land for handicapped individuals.

As you and your family and friends prepare to hit the water this season—fishing poles in hand—I hope you will spend some time on some of our world-class waterways, open to all anglers dreaming of that record catch and that story to share. I invite you visit each of the following and more:

Lake Ontario: Not only is the fishing exceptional—boasting everything from pike to smallmouth bass—it's also a place to enjoy the coastal wildlife. You may even spot an eagle or snowy owl. Iroquois for “beautiful lake,” Lake Ontario lives up to its name.

St. Lawrence River: At 744 miles long, the St. Lawrence River straddles the U.S and Canada. It is there where you can find largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, bullhead, yellow perch and more. The river is also accessible from 14 different state parks, 12 public boat launches and numerous marinas.

Oswegatchie River: The serene settings continue on St. Lawrence County's Oswegatchie River—flowing from Gouverneur to Ogdensburg until it meets the St. Lawrence—where you can find smallmouth bass and walleye.

Black River: A little further south, Jefferson County's Black River is home to numerous fish, including brook trout.

Oswego River: The Oswego River—a pathway to the Erie Canal—has 21 different types of fish, including the popular Chinook salmon in the fall.

Salmon River: With its 17 miles of excellent sport fishing, the Salmon River draws people from across the country to our region. Located in Oswego County, the waterway offers some of the best sport fishing in our nation. It is there that two major fish records have been set—the Great Lakes record Chinook salmon (47 lbs. 13 oz.) and the world record Coho salmon (33 lbs. 4 oz.).

From the most well-known to the hundreds of smaller, yet still exceptional lakes, ponds and streams scattered across our area, it only takes one. One fish, one smile, one story. That is how our water will continue to bring in those anglers, those families and visitors looking for a memory for a lifetime, a tale to tell while they help our community thrive.