



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Region 3 - Great Lakes/Big Rivers

*Leadership in Conserving, Enhancing, and Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems*



# Iron River National Fish Hatchery

Iron River, Wisconsin



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Aerial View of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery; Iron River, Wisconsin

# Iron River National Fish Hatchery

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is located in beautiful northern Wisconsin a few miles from Lake Superior near the town of Iron River. It is one of 69 fish hatcheries operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Iron River NFH was established in 1979 to produce lake trout for interagency restoration programs in the upper Great Lakes and to serve as a lake trout brood stock facility.

## History of Lake Trout Rehabilitation in the Upper Great Lakes

Originally, lake trout, brook trout, whitefish, and several other species were very abundant and supported major commercial and sport fisheries in the Great Lakes. These resources collapsed in the late 1940s and early 1950s due to the invasion of the parasitic sea lamprey, over-fishing, and habitat destruction.

The United States and Canada negotiated and ratified the 1955 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries and this led to the establishment of international programs for the protection and restoration of Great Lakes fisheries. For lake trout, the restoration effort includes four major components; sea lamprey control, regulation of the harvest of lake trout, research on lake trout and other Great lakes fishes and the establishment of hatcheries like the Iron River facility to produce fish for stocking.



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A crew of 10 temporary workers (finclippers) mark about 1.4 million fish prior to stocking. For some fish, they use a machine to insert a tiny coded wire tag in the snout (shown above).

## Station Operations

The mission of the Iron River NFH is to support interagency fish community objectives for the Great Lakes that lead to a healthy ecosystem and benefit society economically and socially.



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Staff from Iron River National Fish Hatchery

Left to right: Steve Redman, Dale Bast, Nikolas Grueneis, Angela Baran, Laurie Gucinski, Denise Johnston, John Johnston; Absent - John Anttila

This fish hatchery produces approximately 1.4 million lake trout annually. In addition, about 100,000 brook trout are stocked in Lake Superior waters where stocks are depleted. About 7,500 lake trout adults (5 strains) and 1,300 brook trout adults (2 strains) are held in the brood stock facility to provide 4 million and 500,000 eggs respectively for conservation of these species.



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A brook trout's eggs are gently removed by spawning. Native brook trout are raised at the Iron River NFH to restore depleted populations in Lake Superior.

Visitors are welcome at the hatchery every day from 7:30 a.m. to dusk. For detailed information or to reserve a tour, please contact the hatchery at: **(715) 372-8510**