The Lake Michigan waterway between the Manitou Islands and Michigan’s west coastline, known as the Manitou Passage, was a busy shipping lane in the early 20th century. In 1908, it was determined that a new aid to navigation was needed a mile southeast of North Manitou Island to mark a shoal. Congress responded by approving funding for a lightship, which was easier to place and less expensive than constructing a lighthouse. Three different lightships served at the North Manitou Shoal from 1910 to 1935.

Beginning in 1932, federal funding was requested for the construction of a permanent light to replace the lightship. After delayed approvals and seasonal construction restrictions, the lighthouse was first lit on May 1, 1935. The North Manitou Shoal Light is a steel structure that sits on a foundation made of a wooden crib embedded in the lake floor that is filled with concrete and rock.

The lighthouse had a three-man crew serving on a three-week rotation with two weeks on and one week off. In 1980, the lighthouse became fully automated and the crew was permanently removed. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and ownership was transferred to the North Manitou Light Keepers, a nonprofit organization, in 2016. The lighthouse is located about eight miles west of Leland, Michigan and can be clearly seen from the ferry that services the Manitou Islands.
Michigan’s Historic Lighthouses

LAKE SUPERIOR
1. Au Sable Light Station
2. Big Bay Point Light Station
3. Copper Harbor North Pier Light Station
4. Copper Harbor Light Station
5. Copper Harbor Rear Range Light Station
6. Crisp Point Light Station
7. Eagle Harbor Light Station
8. Eagle Harbor Rear Range Light Station
9. Eagle River Light Station
10. Fourth Mile Point Light Station
11. Grand Island East Channel Light Station
12. Grand Island Harbor Rear Range Light Station
13. Grand Island North Light Station
14. Grand Marais Harbor Inner Range Light Station
15. Grand Marais Harbor Outer Range Light Station
16. Grand Island Light Station
17. Gull Rock Light Station
18. Huron Light Station
19. Keweenaw Waterway Lower Entrance Light Station
20. Keweenaw Waterway Upper Entrance Light Station
21. Manistique Light Station
22. Marquette Breakwater Outer Light
23. Marquette Harbor Light Station
24. Menominee Island Luce Royal Light Station
25. Mendota Light Station
26. Munising Front Range Light Station
27. Munising Rear Range Light Station
28. Ontonagon Harbor West Pierhead Light Station
29. Ontonagon Light Station
30. Passage Island Light Station
31. Point Iroquois Light Station
32. Portage River Light Station
33. Presque Isle Harbor Breakwater Light Station
34. Rock Harbor Light Station
35. Rock of Ages Light Station
36. Sand Hills Light Station
37. Sand Point Light Station (Bois Blanc vicinity)
38. Stannard Rock Light Station
39. Whitefish Point Light Station

LAKE MICHIGAN
40. Beaver Island Harbor Light Station (St. Joseph)
41. Beaver Island Light Station (Beaver Head)
42. Big Sable Point Light Station
43. Cedar River Light Station
44. Charlevoix South Pier Light Station
45. Frankfort North Breakwater Light Station
46. Grand Haven South Pierhead Entrance Light Station
47. Grand Haven South Pierhead Inner Light Station
48. Grand Traverse Light Station
49. Gray’s Reef Light Station
50. Holland Harbor (South Pierhead) Light Station
51. Harbor Range Rear Light Station
52. Little Sable Point Light Station
53. Little Traverse Light Station
54. Ludington North Pierhead Light Station
55. Manistee North Pierhead Light Station
56. Manistique East Breakwater Light Station
57. McGuire’s Point Light Station
58. Menominee North Pier Light Station
59. Minneapolis Shoal Light Station
60. Mission Point Light Station
61. Muskegon South Breakwater Light Station
62. Muskegon South Pier Light Station
63. North Manitou Shoal Light Station
64. Pere Marquette Point Light Station
65. Point Betsie Light Station
66. Poverty Island Light Station
67. Sand Point Light Station (Escanaba)
68. Saugatuck Light Station
69. Seal Cove Range Light Station
70. Skadulgwas Island Light Station
71. South Fox Island Light Station
72. South Haven South Pier Light Station
73. South Manitou Island Light Station
74. Sqaw Island Light Station
75. St. Helenia Island Light Station
76. St. Joseph North Pier Inner Light Station
77. St. Joseph North Pier Outer Light Station
78. St. Martin Island Light Station
79. Vultures Range Light Station
80. White River Light Station
81. White Shoal Light Station

LAKE Huron
82. Alpena Light Station
83. Bois Blanc Island Light Station
84. Charlevoix Island Light Station
85. Charlevoix Crib Light Station
86. Charlevoix River Front Range Light Station
87. Daatoz Real Range Light Station
88. Fort Gratiot Light Station
89. Forty Mile Point Light Station
90. Fourteen Foot Shoal Light Station
91. Gogebic Shoal Light Station
92. Harbor Beach (Sand Beach) Light Station
93. Lightship Huron
94. Mackinac Point Light Station
95. Marquette Light Station
96. Middle Island Light Station
97. Pine Island Light Station
98. Presque Isle Light Station
99. Point Aux Barques Light Station
100. Port Austin Rear Light Station
101. Port Sanilac Light Station
102. Presque Isle Front Range Light Station
103. Presque Isle Light Station (New)
104. Presque Isle Light Station (Old)
105. Presque Isle Range Light Station
106. Round Island Light Station (Shadows of Mackinac)
107. Round Island Passage Light Station
108. Saginaw Bay Range Rear Light Station
109. Spectacle Reef Light Station
110. Sturgeon Point Light Station
111. Tawas Point Light Station
112. Thunder Bay Island Light Station

LAKE ST. CLAIR
113. Lake St. Clair Light Station
114. St. Clair flats South Channel Front Range Light Station
115. St. Clair flats South Channel Rear Range Light Station
116. Windmill Point Light Station

RIVERS
117. Detroit River Light Station—Detroit River
118. Grosse Ile North Channel Front Range Light Station—Detroit River
119. Ptolema Island Rear Range Light Station—St. Clair River
120. Round Island Light Station—St. Mary’s River
121. William Livingstone Memorial Light Station—Detroit River

* Light Station is used throughout to refer to either a complex of buildings, or an individual light.

Information on the North Manitou Shoal Light Station is provided by the North Manitou Light Keepers and the Historic Structure Report compiled by Sandra & Campus Associates, PLC and Emery Tammelly Architecture with funding from a Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) grant from the State Historic Preservation Office of the Michigan Strategic Fund. North Manitou Shoal Light photographs were provided by David McWilliam, North Manitou Light Keepers. The historic North Manitou Shoal light photograph is from the National Archives. The historic photograph of visitors at the North Manitou Shoal light is from the Leelanau Historical Society Museum Archives. All other photographs are provided by Bryan Slepack, State Historic Preservation Office.

For more information about Michigan lights, please visit www.michiganlighthouse.com or call (800) 826-8883.