



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Oncorhynchus Mykiss
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Watch The Temperature Of Your Passion

By Roger Hinchcliff

It's no secret to many folks that my favorite fish is *Oncorhynchus Mykiss*, the mighty Steelhead, a member of the Salmonidae Family! A mature Great Lakes fish is typically 16 inches and up average weight of 9-10 pounds. This fish can reach a length of 36 inches and up, to twenty pounds. So, if you have had cabin fever this Winter, just hook one of these fish and you will soon forget the Winter Blues.

Early Steelhead Fishing marks the beginning of Spring. The Steelhead is known to be hard fighting and charging, not to mention beautiful. These are truly worthy of any angler's attention. It's no wonder it's such a popular sport fish among anglers in the Great Lakes.

These mythical creatures run our Great Lakes tributaries from October to early May, returning to spawn in the river they were born or stocked. These fish live to spawn several times unlike salmon that die once spawning has taken place. So, if you practice catch and release the fish can live to fight another day.

To catch a steelhead, you must first find them. These fish are a migratory fish on a mission and are always on the move. Knowing water

temperature can help an angler big time. When trying to predict where these fish are going to be in a large river system is easier than you think if you have some basic knowledge about water temperature. The water temp tells you what the fish is going to do and where they will hold. But the water temp also dictates the mood of the fish. Although this article will be printed in early January, I will start with the Fall timeline and take you through the Spring.

Early Fall

In early Fall water temps reach 45-50 degrees with cool Fall rains the fish will begin moving in. This is a fantastic time to fish for steelhead and could be late August or late September. At these water temps a steelheads metabolism is in full effect and they are aggressive and full of energy. At this temperature range they are still actively feeding and holding in faster runs and chutes. Once a steelhead enters a river conserving energy is the name of the game. You will always find them 8-10 inches off the bottom, always. The bottom current is always slower than the surface current. Average river depths in most rivers are 4-8 feet so if you fish close to the bottom you will always be in the zone regardless of

tactic or method used.

Fall

In the Fall, when water temps are 38-45 degrees, the fish are already in most river systems at these temps the months are usually October and November. Some Great Fall Steelhead Fishing takes place during this time due to more numbers of fish are in the system. However, at this temperature range they will already start looking for slower water instead of holding in faster water. Look for pools and runs with slower walking speed water. This is not to say they won't hold in faster water because they will, especially after a spike in flow and they get the urge to move up the river.

Winter

December-February the water temps are usually about 32-37 degrees. When water temps are this low the fish will be in a lethargic trance like state. They prefer slower runs and pools. At these water temps the fish do not move great distances to eat things. So, during this period it becomes a game of inches. After all they are there to spawn not eat. Mother Nature slows their metabolism down to conserve energy for the spawn.

"Temperature"
Continued on page 3

BEADS ENIGMAS

By Jim Bedford

Even though I remain a very confirmed lure tosser when it comes to river fishing for steelhead, brown trout, and salmon I have become very interested in the tremendous increase in the practice of bead fishing in Great Lakes tributaries. Several very successful anglers have related to me how this technique is even more effective than drifting actual eggs and spawn bags. Since I have always had an aversion to messing with eggs (in 53 years of hardcore fishing for steelhead, my life time catch of these special fish on spawn remains at two), the idea of successfully drifting beads for steelhead is quite appealing.

Some aspects of bead fishing have been quite a mystery to me. A main purpose of this article is to get anglers thinking about



Close-up of a male steelhead caught on a bead

the technique which should lead to ways to make it even more effective.

Pegging the bead on the line or leader above the hook seems to be the standard method. When I ask anglers why, the usual answer is that was the way they were taught by fellow fishermen. Often a reference is made to the fact that it is how it is done in Alaska

where bead fishing really got its start. The reason for pegging beads in Alaska is rarely described. Anglers there are fishing for very actively feeding rainbow trout and Dolly Varden char. These fish are trying to take in a year's worth of calories in the three month

"Bead Enigmas"
Continued on page 3



Sea Lamprey
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Sea Lamprey Abundances Are Below Target In Lakes Michigan And Ontario, And Are Decreasing In Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission today reported that populations of the invasive, parasitic sea lamprey remain at near-historic lows, below targets, in Lakes Michigan and Ontario, and above target, but holding steady, in Lakes Huron, Superior and Erie. Sea lamprey populations

in Lake Huron are close to target levels and have been holding steady for the past five years. Abundances in Lakes Superior and Erie remain above target but have also decreased significantly since the near-record highs observed in 2017. Sea lampreys are the worst of the alien species to invade the Great Lakes. Before con-

trol, sea lampreys destroyed many times the human fish catch. Today, sea lamprey control is the foundation of the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery.

The Commission and its partners are encouraged by the overall decrease in abundance of sea lampreys throughout the Great Lakes basin during 2019, but caution that environmental conditions, such as a prolonged spring and high precipitation events, contributed to the decrease.

Sea lampreys are native to the Atlantic Ocean but have been an unwelcome nemesis in the Great Lakes since they invaded through man-made shipping canals in the early 20th century. By 1939, sea lampreys were ravishing the system and laying waste to millions of fish. They do little good for

"Sea Lamprey"
Continued on page 8

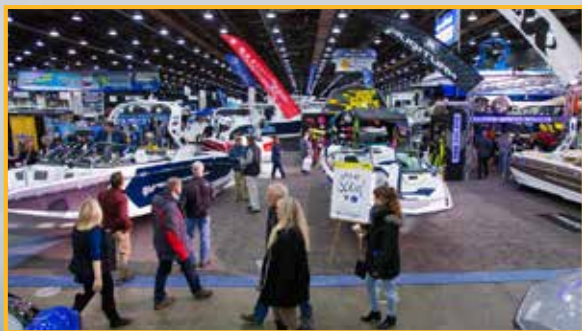


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“Temperature” Continued from page 1

Spring

Fast forward to late Winter or early Spring when the stream temps are starting to rise above 40-58 degrees. This is a transitional time for the upcoming pre-spawn steelhead, and they start holding in areas close to spawning gravel. This can be an epic time to fish. Once water temps start to reach 42 degrees many fish will start to spawn. Once the spawning has been completed these fish flip the switch and go into drop back mode. As they start dropping back toward the big Lake, they become ferocious feeders.

More Tips

Break the river into four sections no matter what the season. The Headwaters/ Upper Portion/ Mid-Section and Lower Section. Based on water temps and river levels the fish are always heading to the upper sections. Uphill is where all the spawning usually takes place.

If a fish comes up the river early in the Fall and stays throughout the Winter and stays until Spring remember this important tip. A cold snap regardless of the time of year that drop's the water temps by 4-5 degrees will always slow down a good steelhead bite until they adjust.

In early Fall or Winter if the river drops too low or water temps get too high Steelhead will drop back and back go out to the Big Lake. So down low in the system can sometimes produce even after the run is in full swing. Once the river and flow temps are prime again the fish will return and go back up the river. Believe it or not they will do this several times and happens more frequently than most realize.

During Winter months look for where the river widens. Where the river gets wider means slower winter holding water. Structure can absorb heat look for retaining walls, concrete walls and dark bottoms that attract the sun. These spots can payoff big time if temp is warmer by one degree. Also don't be afraid to fire up the boat and drive right through the run and wake up those cold lethargic stale fish. Sometimes that can be all the pool needs to get the bite going.

Look for walking speed water that has bubble lines or foam. (foam is home) The current seams are where the faster water meets the slower water. Its great place to always find the ever-moving steelhead.

It doesn't matter what the rivers temperature is, it's always the rivers temperature. By knowing and understanding the water temperatures you help yourself catch more fish!

“Bead Enigmas” Continued from page 1

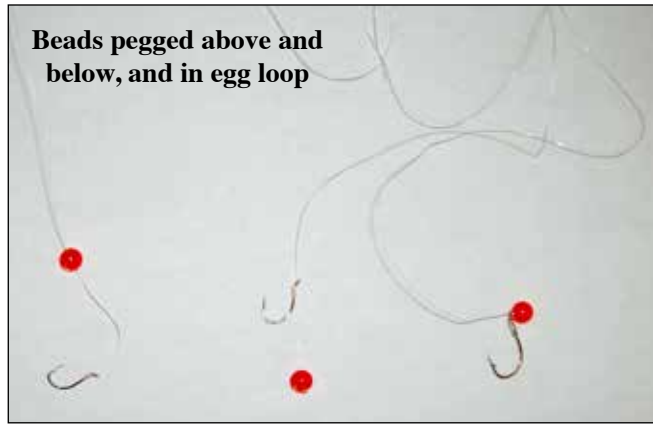
or so period in the summer when the various species of Pacific salmon are spawning.

The rainbows and Dolies quickly swallow the salmon eggs and if the bead was at the hook, it and the hook would be swallowed. Since most anglers release these fish even in streams where it is not mandatory there needed to be a way to catch these great game fish without hooking them too deeply. This had long been a problem with egg flies such as Glo-bugs since the fly is tied on the hook. Pegging the bead away from the hook so the trout would swallow the bead and not the hook was the answer. While at times this does result in the trout being hooked outside the mouth it has been very successful in preventing the rainbows and Dolies from taking the hook too deep. Alaska does limit the maximum pegging distance to two inches to decrease the chances of the hook finding the fish's eyes.

But, why peg the bead when fishing for steelhead? Most of the time these fish are not actively feeding and usually don't swallow the bead. When they discover it is hard and not soft like an egg, they are quick to expel it. Most bead fishing steelheaders peg the bead about one and a half inches above the hook. While this does separate the bead away from the hook and make it look more natural as a salmon egg drifting with the current, it would seem to make hooking the steelhead more difficult. In addition, there is also the risk that bumping into line on each side of the bead will cause the fish to reject it.

A possible solution would be to peg the bead much closer to the hook so that hook would always be taken into the mouth when the steelhead grabbed the bead. Or, you could place the bead in the egg loop of a snelled hook. It would be important in both cases that the hook size be matched with the bead. A large bead and a small hook would probably result in many missed fish. Conversely, a large hook and a small bead might be rejected altogether. My other suggestion would be to peg the bead below the hook. This is easily accomplished by leaving an inch or so of tag end when snelling the hook to the end of your leader. This way the fish sees the bead first and then will inhale both the bead and the hook when the bead is an inch or less below the hook.

There are two other big advantages in pegging the bead below the hook. The first is that it makes changing beads much easier and quicker. As we will talk about next, finding the right size and color of the bead can be critical to your success. No longer will you have to re-rig each time you change beads or



carry a bunch of pre-tied leaders with what you think will be the right size and color of beads for the river and the day. The other big plus is you can stop worrying about damaging your line or leader with the peg. While pegging has progressed past the toothpick stage with commercially available pegs designed to be very easy on your leader, you can use any kind of peg you want with impunity when positioning your bead below the hook.

When pegging the bead below the hook it is important to peg the bead from the bottom up to decrease the chance of the bead slipping off the tag end. This can easily happen when pegging the bead from the top down. Going back to the toothpick will also help secure the bead. Melting a little bead of fluorocarbon or nylon monofilament at the end of the tag end will add a little insurance.

Choosing the right bead color and size can make a big difference in your success. In Alaska, anglers and guides report that tiny changes in color can have a big effect on how effectively they are for rainbows and dolies on a particular day. This is hard to understand since salmon eggs change in color with time after they are laid and fertilized eggs act differently than those that didn't get fertilized. At any one time there are



Brett Hartford admires a bead caught steelhead

eggs in the streams of many differ shades. Obviously there will be times when the trout focus in on a narrow range relative to color and it is important that the angler match it.

Steelhead in our Michigan Great Lakes tributaries are probably less interested in beads that are exactly like the prevailing eggs drifting in the current along the bottom but it is for sure

that different colors and sizes can work better than others on a given day. The fact that steelhead are often attracted to beads that are larger than any of the natural eggs makes me think that they are not mistaking them for salmon eggs. Plus, think of those times when fluorescent charrreuse is the killer color. This seemed to be especially the case this past fall

as the fluorescent yellow beads were often the hot color. While not allowed in some states, Michigan anglers can fish two beads at one time. This technique seems to be especially prevalent on the Manistee River and doubles your chances of quickly finding the right bead color and size.

“Bead Enigmas”
Continued on page 11

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MSSFA PRESIDENT Tim Stegeman

The Holiday Season is over (I hope it was an enjoyable time for all of you) and we are off to start a new year. Before we talk about 2020, I just want to mention a few items that were significant for me in my first year as the President of the MSSFA.

My primary two goals of 2019 were to work with the MSSFA Board of Directors and our Executive Director Dennis Eade to identify priorities and rank them in order of importance as well as to set-up the committees that are required as per the MSSFA by-laws. This was accomplished in the first quarter and the committees have been

working towards achieving those goals for the Board. One priority in particular that I was most pleased to have resolved early on was Tribal Negotiation funding. After many hours of work and a lot of debate, the board successfully identified a funding scenario that was fair and balanced. This funding scenario was then unanimously approved and forwarded to the chapters. Since that time, the fund has been building successfully and we are on target to meet the funding goal.

Another goal was to visit each chapter during my two year term. To date I have visited Thunder Bay, Grand Rapids, Grand

Haven, Holland, South Haven, Southwest, Battle Creek and Detroit Metro West. Thank you again to those chapters for their hospitality. This leaves Traverse City Area, White River, Great Lakes Bay and Thumb Area chapters for 2020 and I am looking forward to these visits.

With that, let's talk about 2020. As stated earlier, the MSSFA Board resolved the Tribal Negotiation funding debate that has been ongoing for quite a few years. Good thing too, because August of this year is the Consent Decree expiration. 2020 is the year for negotiations and what happens this year could

very well be the final outcome and code of conduct for the rest of our lifetime. I'm anticipating a significant ramp up in communications regarding this, stay tuned.

While some of the Board priorities identified in 2019 (refer to the March/April GLSFN) will take several years to accomplish, there are a few that are nearing conclusion. One in particular are the Commercial Fishing Bills. Please continue to support this endeavor until we see it through to fruition. Another priority set is to identify new revenue sources to sustain MSSFA. As you know, revenue for



Tim Stegeman, President
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

the State MSSFA is pretty much membership driven by dues which is an "all eggs in one basket" scenario. The Board has been discussing several alternative revenue sources to diversify our revenue stream which may or may not all come into play. However, one in particular is definitely showing some promise. Therefore, I am pleased to announce officially that I have entered into negotia-

tions with the owners of the "Tournament Trail 333". We still have a ways to go, but I am confident that the "333" will be a terrific addition to the MSSFA.

The last item I want to hit on for this article is the water level predictions for 2020. As I think all of you are aware, water levels are high and are most likely going to remain at current levels or even go higher. This is going to continue to affect marinas and boat launch ramps. If your chapter is involved with open water tournaments, I recommend maintaining awareness as you may need "Plan B's" in order to have a successful event. I'm expecting we are going to see a lot of marina docks underwater with boats not leaving the dock. My guess is that this will be the year of the "trailer able" boats if the launches are serviceable. The lakes and rivers are also full of debris which adds another risk. This will be a challenging year to be on the water so please take necessary precautions and discuss lake and river safety items at your chapter meetings. Stream and river folks, buckle up. If you don't have a wading belt, now is the time!



Editor's Note

Our apologies for a mistaken reference in last month's issue of GLSFN.

We reported the author Mark Sak of the front page article, "2.5 Million Reasons For No Increased Commercial Netting In Michigan" as President of Michigan's Outdoor Writers Association.

The correction is that Mark Sak is the *past* president of Michigan Outdoor Writers Association (2014-2016).

At Great Lakes Sport Fishing News we do our very best to have accurate and current information. Please feel free to contact us if you notice any future errors in this publication.

If you missed the article mentioned above, or would like to read any past issues, please visit www.mssfa.org and click on the 'magazine' tab.

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Dennis Eade, Executive Director
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The Commercial Fishing Statue bills were favorably passed out of the House Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Committee on October 8, 2019 by a vote of 7-2. HB 4567 – HB 4569 were referred to the Ways & Means Committee in the House. The committee will have the bill sponsors and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Howell sit down with the committee and review the wording of the bills to ensure all is correct and the MDNR is proposing language that will provide commercial fishers in Saginaw Bay with a “buy-out” of their perch licenses to avoid an unfair forfeiture to the current fishers. The Legislative Services Bureau is currently scrutinizing the language in the bills to make sure there is no ambiguity. The bills are expected to be introduced and voted on by the House in late January 2020. If the bills pass the House, Speaker Chatfield (R-Levering) will assign them to a Senate committee to be considered. It is expected the bills will be sent to the Natural Resources Com-

mittee in the Senate. This is where we need to continue our outreach to the members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Chairman Ed McBroom (Iron Mountain), a dairy farmer from the Upper Peninsula, is on record as not supporting the bills. However, the other members of the committee including Senators Jon Bumstead (R-Newago), Rick Outman, (R-Six Lakes), Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), and Vice Chair, Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo) are potential “yes” votes and we need to contact them and encourage them to support the bills when and if they are assigned to the committee. We need to call Jon, Rick, Wayne and Sean and voice our support. Better yet, meet with them at one of their home district coffees or scheduled office hour sessions. We are depending on members from TCAS, Battle Creek and White River to get us over the finish line.

In preparation for the House Ways & Means Committee vote, we prepared local unit of government resolutions which

were passed and sent to legislators in the house. South Haven, Park Township (Holland), Ferrysburg, St. Joseph, and Bay City sent resolutions which will be referenced by the bill sponsor (Rep. Lilly) in his remarks before the Ways & Means Committee prior to the final vote.

Under pressure from charter captains, business groups and some anglers, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources announced Thursday, December 5th, it would increase Lake Michigan salmon and trout stocking levels over the next three years. The plan, which covers 2020-23, includes a 48% hike in Chinook salmon, the favored species for many charter captains but also the primary consumer of alewife, a key component of the lake's historically-low forage base.

It also boosts steelhead (rainbow trout) by 31%, Coho salmon by 25% and brown trout by 20%. Plants of lake trout, which are raised by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, would be unchanged in 2020, but then slashed 85% in 2021 and 2022. Also as part of its plan, the WDNR will reactivate a Lake Michigan brook trout stocking program next year. No proposed numbers or timeline were offered for stocking brookies, which were planted for decades in the lake but largely discontinued in the early 2000s.

The WDNR held four meetings this year to collect public input on its stocking program and help guide potential changes. “In meetings and in comments we received about this plan, there was strong interest in increases in stocking not just for chinook salmon but for Coho salmon, steelhead and brown trout,” said Brad Eggold, Great Lakes District Fisheries Supervisor. “This plan accomplished that goal and contained increases for every type of fishermen.”

The Lake Michigan Technical Committee to the Great Lakes Fish Commission was outraged at the rogue action being considered by WDNR. Jay Wesley, Basin Coordinator for Southern Lake Michigan, said this breach of the agreement will result in overstocking 185,000 Chinook equivalents and if the other species stocking plans hold up, 300,000 more fish could enter the system. Chairman of the Committee of Advisors of the Great Lakes Fish Commission, Denny Grinold, has sent a letter to Preston Cole, chairman of the Wisconsin Natural Resources

Board (NRB) expressing disapproval of this repudiation of the agreed upon stocking strategy for Lake Michigan endorsed by the Great Lakes Fish Commission. This decision is putting the ecosystem at risk and could result in devastating results. MDNR Director, Daniel Eichinger, has also written to Cole imploring him to reconsider this move which panders to the social interests of local anglers and the charter boat community. It is counter to the collective efforts of the surrounding states to manage the Lake Michigan fishery based on science and not short sighted economic interest.

On a positive note, five years of collective effort on the part of MSSFA, SW Michigan Steelheaders, Sodus Township, SW Michigan Planning Commission and the MDNR has resulted in the approval of a grant from the Natural Resources Trust Fund to purchase the property at Pipestone Creek along the St. Joseph River. Happy Landing is a piece of property at the

confluence of Pipestone Creek and the St. Joseph River which can be developed into a welcoming destination for Steelhead fishermen to launch their boats and relax after a morning of chasing steelhead. “It was because of local support that this project was approved”, said Jay Wesley, the DNR's Lake Michigan Basin coordinator. SW Michigan Steelheaders pledged \$5,000 and Sodus Township pledged \$10,000 toward the cost of the project and the township offered to manage the property for MDNR. Legislative approval is still needed and the funds will not be available until May 2020 but this is truly a win-win for anglers that visit the St. Joseph River watershed.

On December 10th, I was in Lansing for the House Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Committee hearing on the bipartisan package to bring back the optional youth fishing license. This voluntary program provides youth 17 years of age and younger with the opportu-

nity to purchase a fishing license for \$2.00. (We granddads and dads will probably be the purchasers.) The funds generated will be matched by federal monies to bring in additional funding to the Department of Natural Resources. The bills passed out of committee and will be sent to the Ways & Means Committee in January for approval and an eventual vote on the House Floor. I met with the bill's sponsor, Rep. Julie Brixie and expressed MSSFA's support for the bills. Rep. Brixie asked for our continued support as they move through the Ways & Means Committee. A lot is happening as we enter the New Year and hopefully we Steelheaders will benefit from the progress we are seeing in the legislature, the hatcheries and on the streams throughout Michigan. Happy New Year!



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THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE QUALITY OF FISHING REFLECTS THE QUALITY OF LIVING!

MSSFA was incorporated in 1971 by a handful of individuals who knew that Michigan's newly formed trout and salmon fishery was something worth working to protect. They were a small group who wanted to not only protect their fishery, but learn how to catch their elusive prey and tell fishing stories.

MSSFA chapters have membership meetings with guest speakers to learn about all the aspects of sport fishing. *MSSFA* chapters also sponsor fishing clinics, seminars, sport-fishing shows, derbies and tournaments. And are active sponsors for fishing outings for kids, seniors, veterans and our handicapped.

For those who love to fish but have no means, *MSSFA* chapters sponsor a “Crews” program that allows a sign up as a crew member for a day of fishing.

With a common goal, and a close working partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, *MSSFA* helps to enhance the resource and sport fishing in our rivers, streams, inland lakes, and of course the mighty Great Lakes. *MSSFA* is a front-runner at all levels of the legislature and in courtrooms, and has spent countless hours working behind the scenes and attending hearings.

So why join the *Steelheaders*... Got kids, love fishing.. *JOIN NOW!* ...and become a member of he largest organized groups of fishermen in the Midwest. There are chapters throughout the entire state. You too can help protect and preserve this world-class sport fishery for you, your children and generations to come.

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS (GLSFN)

The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News is owned and operated by The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association.

Better than forty years ago, The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association began to publish a magazine called the “Guide to Great Lakes Sport Fishing”. Five years later the magazine became a monthly format called “The Great Lakes Steelheader”. Today the newspaper is called “*The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News*”.

This paper has no paid writers and has a grass roots style. Its writers are the every day fishermen who share their techniques and fishing adventures; and the paper has become well known for it’s **January Special Edition** or “*Show Edition*” that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

Information in the paper covers the entire Great Lakes Basin region from Minnesota to New York including all five of the Great Lakes and their tributary streams.

Chapter members receive the paper as part of their membership. And because of the diversity of fishing in the Great Lakes, the information covers everything from river fishing, big lake fishing to inland lake fishing. The paper also offers a direct route for all new products and techniques on the market offered by our advertisers.

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<input type="checkbox"/> Battle Creek \$45.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Haven \$40.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Rapids \$45.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Great Lakes Bay Region \$40.00 (Midland)	<input type="checkbox"/> Holland \$40.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Metro West \$40.00 (Livonia) <input type="checkbox"/> South Haven \$40.00 <input type="checkbox"/> SW MI. \$45.00 (St. Joseph) <input type="checkbox"/> Thumb \$40.00 (Harbor Beach)	<input type="checkbox"/> Thunder Bay \$40.00 (Alpena) <input type="checkbox"/> Traverse City \$40.00 <input type="checkbox"/> White River \$40.00 (Whitehall) <input type="checkbox"/> At Large Membership \$35.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Junior Membership \$5.00
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South Haven Steelheaders
Donate to the Coalition To
Protect Michigan's Resources

Left: MSSFA Executive Director Dennis Eade accepts a \$1900 donation to the Coalition to Protect Michigan's Resources from Chapter President Rich Chapman. The donation will go toward the attorney's fees and expenses incurred during the Tribal Negotiations. Every chapter in the MSSFA will donate their share of the cost of the negotiations.

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Deb Shephard	Membership Coordinator	mssfamembership@charter.net

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS
Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 PM
Saturday, April 11, 2020 at the Michigan Historical Library and Museum, 701 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI
Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 PM
Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 PM
Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 PM
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 PM

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2	02/14/20	03/03/20
3	04/14/20	04/29/20
4	06/15/20	06/29/20
5	08/14/20	08/28/20
6	10/09/20	10/27/20

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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MICHIGAN STEELHEAD AND SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as *The Michigan Steelheaders*, or simply *Steelheaders*. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices. www.MSSFA.org

“Sea Lamprey”
Continued from page 1

the Great Lakes ecosystem as they prey on important species and have no natural predators. Sea lampreys feed on the blood and body fluids of fish by attaching to them with a tooth-filled, suction cup mouth and file a hole through the fish’s scales and skin with a razor-sharp tongue. The average sea lamprey will kill up to 40 pounds (18 kg) of fish during its parasitic stage. Sea lampreys prefer trout, salmon, whitefish, and sturgeon, but they also attack smaller fish like walleye and perch.

Sea lampreys successfully reproduce in more than 500 Great Lakes tributaries and thus, the battle to keep their populations in check must remain steadfast. Thanks to more than six decades of successful sea lamprey control, the Great Lakes fishery is worth \$7 billion annually to the people of Canada and the United States today. Before control, sea lampreys killed an estimated 103 million pounds (47 million kilograms) of fish per year. Today, because of ongoing control, sea lampreys kill less than 10 million pounds (4.5 million kilograms) of fish per year. Sea lampreys are a coiled menace; they are extremely hardy and relentless, and history has shown that if control efforts are ceased, or even relaxed for a short period of time,

their populations will rebound and the fishery will suffer.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was established by the Governments of Canada and the United States in 1955 as a response to the catastrophic damage wrought by the sea lamprey invasion. The 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries charges the Commission with sea lamprey control and research, fisheries research and fisheries management coordination. Sea lamprey control and research is conducted in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Geological Survey. Sea lamprey control consists of several techniques including lampricides, barriers, and traps. The Commission also is evaluating the use of chemosensory cues as a means to influence migratory and spawning behaviors. For more information, visit www.glfc.org/sea-lamprey.php.

“Keeping sea lamprey populations in check is absolutely critical if we want a fishery in the Great Lakes,” said Jim McKane, chair of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. “Each year, we must wage the battle anew. We cannot rest on our laurels or rely on our past success. Sea lampreys are here to stay. Fortunately, we can control their populations such that the damage they inflict on



Above: Lake Huron fisherman Darcy Bain shows a lake trout pulled through the ice, scarred and bleeding from a sea lamprey attack.

Photo: www.muskokaregion.com



Sea Lamprey suction cup mouth
Photo: researchgate.net

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allows for the establishment of a fishery that supports the millions of people that live, work, and recreate in the Great Lakes.

“The Great Lakes sea lamprey control program is the most successful aquatic vertebrate pest control program administered at an ecosystem scale in the world,” said Doug Stang, the Commission’s vice-chair. “Its effectiveness is built upon partnerships with both federal governments, the U.S. states the province of Ontario, tribes, and the Commission. The fishery makes these lakes great, and without sea lamprey control, there would be no fishery.”

The latest sea lamprey status, by lake, is as follows:

LAKE ONTARIO

Treatment effort on Lake Ontario has remained steadily consistent for the past three decades. As a result, lamprey numbers have remained steadily at or near target and at historic lows.

LAKE MICHIGAN

Lake Michigan has received a considerable amount of targeted treatment effort since 2012, including biennial treatment of the major lamprey-producing Manistique River;

this effort is evident in the continuation of historically low abundances of sea lampreys. Lake Michigan likely benefits from treatments in the northern portion of Lake Huron, such as the St. Marys River.

LAKE HURON

For nearly a decade, heightened and targeted treatment strategies, including two large-scale treatments of the St. Marys River, have been employed in Lake Huron. While sea lamprey abundances are slightly above target, they are still near historic low and are holding steady. Two tributaries to northern Lake Huron, the Mississagi and Garden Rivers, have been a focus of the control program. The Mississagi was treated in 2019 in partnership with the Mississauga First Nation and the Garden River will be treated in 2020, as part of an ongoing alliance with the Garden River First Nation. We expect the benefits of these treatments to be seen in the 2021 population numbers.

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior received a targeted treatment effort in both 2016 and 2019. The effects of the 2016 targeted treatment were not evident in the 2019 sea lamprey

abundances and the impact of the 2019 targeted treatment will likely not be seen until 2021. While sea lamprey populations are above target, they are holding steady. Contrary to the high populations, lake trout wounding rates are near target and decreasing, though there are pockets of higher wounding rates throughout the lake. Environmental factors, including a prolonged spring and high precipitation events, have long been hypothesized as being influential on sea lamprey catchability and natural mortality; this hypothesis was corroborated this year in that trap catches were low. In 2017 and 2018, the population estimate from the Brule River was greater than 40% of the total catch, but this trend did not hold in 2019.

LAKE ERIE

Challenging trapping conditions and poor catch rates in 2019 likely influenced the abundance estimate, which is above target but holding steady. Near record walleye year classes may be increasing, thereby creating predatory pressure on recently metamorphosed juvenile sea lamprey, especially from the Huron-Erie corridor.



Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Michigan DNR Letter Pledges \$8M to Asian Carp Barrier at Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Illinois

Recent eDNA findings in waters near Lake Michigan underscore need for action

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Dan Eichinger today confirmed the commitment of \$8 million in state funds for the preconstruction, engineering and design phase of a multifaceted barrier system to prevent invasive Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes.

In a Nov. 4, 2019 letter to Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Eichinger explained that the funds were appropriated as non-federal match for design of a system of structural and non-structural control measures at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in the Chicago Area Waterway System near Joliet, Illinois. Brandon Road is a critical pinch point for keeping bighead, silver and black carp – the Asian carp species of greatest concern – out of the Great Lakes.

Taking action at Brandon Road took on added urgency with the Nov. 1 announcement that 76 of 414 water samples from

waters connected to Lake Michigan – and well beyond Brandon Road Lock and Dam – tested positive for environmental DNA (eDNA) for invasive carp. Forty-nine of the water samples from the South Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River, also known as Bubbly Creek, were positive for silver carp eDNA, while 27 were positive for bighead carp eDNA.

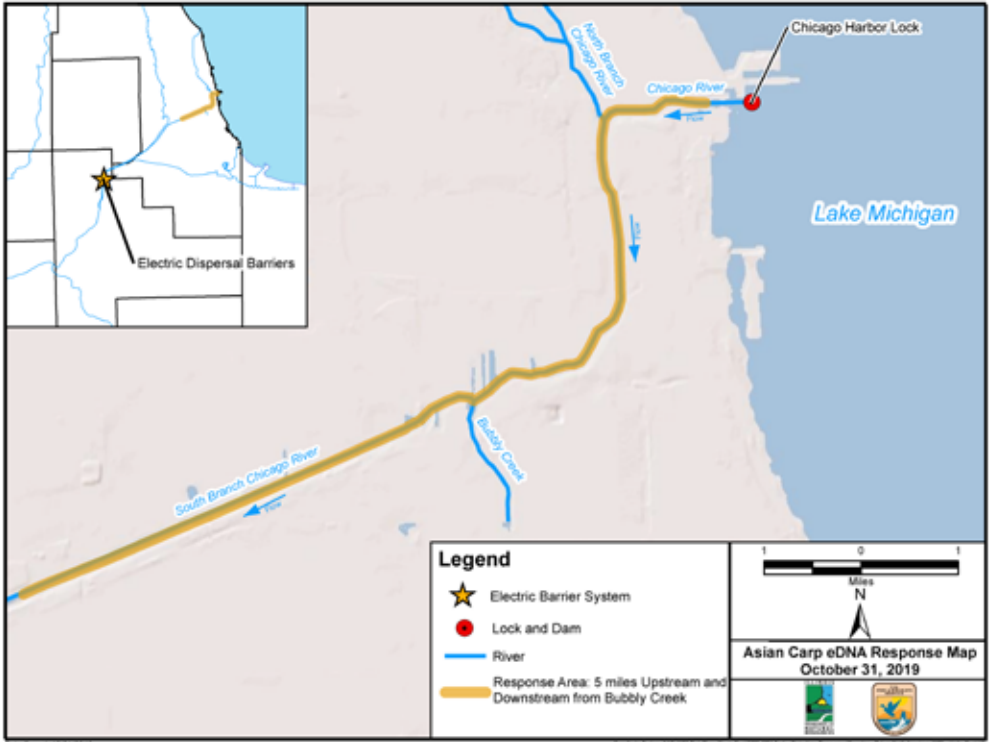
Although no live invasive carp were found in the recent sampling, the results showed far more invasive carp eDNA than had previously been discovered in these waters, prompting the Illinois Department of Natural Resources along with partner agencies to undertake additional surveillance for the presence of invasive carp.

“Our economy and way of life in Michigan depends on the preservation of our water, but right now, the threat of invasive species like Asian Carp is putting the future of our Great

Lakes, our economy, and Michiganders’ well-being at risk,” said Governor Whitmer. “The threat of Asian Carp is not new. It has grown to the point where we cannot afford to delay action. That’s why my administration has prioritized Great Lakes protection, and I’m hopeful that we can continue to work with our partners across the region to keep them safe from invasive species.”

The Brandon Road project, currently awaiting congressional approval, would install additional technologies -- including an electric barrier, underwater sound, an air bubble curtain and a flushing lock -- in a newly engineered channel designed to prevent invasive carp movement while allowing shipping into and out of the Great Lakes.

Supporting Illinois’ role as non-federal sponsor of the Brandon Road project, Eichinger’s letter expresses Michigan’s willingness to seek collaboration from other Great Lakes states and



Map depicting the location of Bubbly Creek and the response area for a Nov. 4-15 intensive sampling effort undertaken by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and partners. Image courtesy of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.



A US Fish and Wildlife Service fisheries biologist weighs a bighead carp. Photo courtesy of Ryan Hagerty, USFWS.

aid communications with these partners throughout the project.

“Stopping invasive carp from getting into the Great Lakes is one of the most important things we can do to protect Michigan’s signature natural resource,” said Eichinger. “The recent eDNA findings present one more piece of evidence that we need to move the Brandon Road project from concept to reality as soon as possible.”

Protecting the Great Lakes is a top priority for Michigan. With more than 3,000 miles of Great Lakes coastline, 11,000 inland lakes and 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, Michigan faces the greatest risk and has the most at stake if invasive carp infest the Great Lakes Basin.

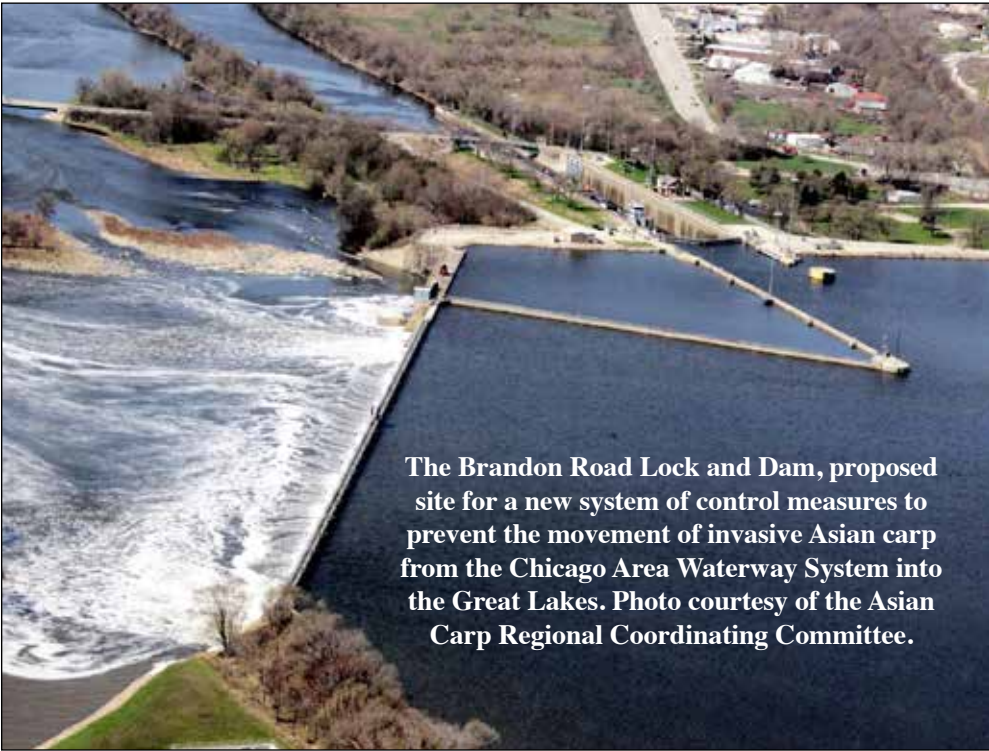
Invasive bighead, silver and black carp can significantly alter the Great Lakes



A comparison of silver (top) and bighead (bottom) carps. Recent sampling at Bubbly Creek, a tributary of the Chicago River near Lake Michigan, identified eDNA from both silver and bighead carp. Photo courtesy of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.

ecosystem, affecting the \$7 billion fishery, \$16 billion boating industry as well as other tourism-based indus-

tries, property owners, recreationists and others dependent on the Great Lakes and its tributaries.



The Brandon Road Lock and Dam, proposed site for a new system of control measures to prevent the movement of invasive Asian carp from the Chicago Area Waterway System into the Great Lakes. Photo courtesy of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.

Grilled Salmon and Steelhead

Recipe submitted from Bob Strek, Grand Rapids MI

Filet fish, skin, and bone: cut fish into strips no greater than 2” wide.

Place fish strips into a quart size zip lock bag.
Fish strips should not be doubled up in bag.

In a measuring cup add 1/3 a cup each:

- brown sugar
- virgin olive oil
- soy sauce
- warm water

Mix ingredients making certain that the brown sugar is diluted before pouring into zip lock bag with fish.

Pour ingredients into zip lock bag, seal bag, mix ingredients and fish strips.
Lay bag flat on a solid plate and in the refrigerator over night.
Turn bag over every few hours.

Warm grill to 400 degrees, place strips on grill turning over when first side is done. Serve grilled fish warm with tossed salad, fries or sweet potatoes.



Bob Strek with a Grand River Steelhead

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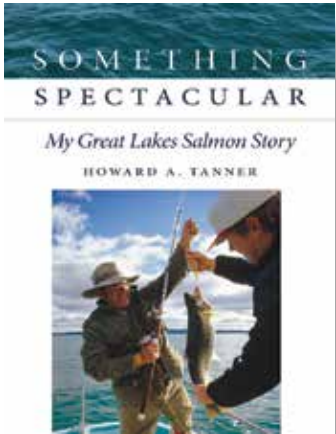
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WINTER FISHING IN RIVERS

By Bob Jensen

Rivers, both large and small, crisscross North America. Many of those rivers are full of fish in a

wide variety of species, and many of those species of fish like to get caught in the winter. Here are some ideas for catching those fish now and for the next few

months. Most rivers are home to several species of fish, but there generally is a dominant predator specie. In many rivers that dominant

specie is the walleye: In lots of other rivers small-mouth or largemouth bass are more prominent. Usually though, a certain area of a river will have a dominant specie. In one stretch walleyes will be most abundant, as we move into another stretch of river, bass will be more prominent. If we want to be as successful as possible, we need to employ the technique that will be most effective for the specie of fish that is most abundant.

One presentation that will take pretty much any type of river fish pretty much anywhere in the river is a jig. We can tip the jig with either a minnow or a piece of plastic. In the toughest conditions it’s tough to beat a jig/minnow combination, but almost all of the time a jig/plastic presentation will do the job very well. On recent fishing trips, the Strike King Rage Swimmer body has been a winner. The 3.25” size will be about right most of the time. This plastic body has a subtle action, and in cold water, subtle is often better. In clear water go with more natural color combinations, in stained water bright is often better. However, an orange or chartreuse jig-head is frequently a good place to start. Experiment with color combinations, jig one color, body another color, and let the fish show you what they want. This rig will take almost every specie of gamefish found in a river.

It’s very important to use a jig that’s heavy enough to stay within a few inches of the bottom. River fish usually hug the bottom, so we want our bait close to the bottom. Try this: Hold your rod so

“Bead Enigmas” Continued from page 3

Simply tie a second leader to the bend of the hook of the first. Most Great Lakes tributary anglers present beads suspended under a float. Usually they position the float so that the beads drift a foot or two off the bottom of the river. This allows the beads to drift in the prime strike zone of the steelies. These fish orient to the bottom where rocks, submerged logs, and uneven bottom structure provide refuge from the current. But, they look forward and up so beads drifted a bit above them are right in their strike zone. This is the same region of the water column where I try to sweep my spinners and minnow plugs. More than imitating salmon eggs, I think beads are bright objects that steelhead don’t like in their space so they grab them. There will be times when salmon eggs are fairly common in the river drifting with the current. It should be noted that salmon eggs are denser than water. This is by design so that fertilized salmon eggs will sink in to the crevices in the gravel where they can develop and avoid being eaten. At these times a more natural presentation will be to bottom bounce your beads. You can still employ a float to keep the line off the bottom and act as a strike indicator. Just make sure your float is positioned farther from the bead on your line than the water depth. While glass beads and some plastic beads will sink some plas-

tic beads will not, especially if the peg also floats. In these cases you will need some help from a sinker(s) to keep the bead close to the substrate.

Speaking of sinkers, I continue to be confused by the elaborate shot placement formulas employed by float anglers. A few years ago I retrieved float rig from a snag that had 21 split shot attached to the line below a Drennan 11 gram float. The expensive, sensitive float told me that this rig was lost by an avid, experienced float angler but I sure didn’t understand why there were so many, mostly small shot. I am sure part of it is dealing with varying current speeds at various depths as well as stealth. It would be great if a serious float angler would explain the whys of shot patterns in these pages.

Finally, getting back to stealth, I find it hard to understand using floats that have black or very dark bottoms. This would seem to be especially problematic when fishing very clear and relatively shallow water. You would think that fish looking up for the bead would be turned off by the dark float against the bright background from the sky. White or clear bottomed floats would seem to always be the way to go when bead fishing for river steelies.

As stated at the beginning I hope the above gets bead anglers thinking about their fishing method and ways to make it more effective.

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the jig is just off the bottom. Allow the current to wiggle the tail while the jig stays in place, not moving forward or backward. Tap the bottom every few seconds, then move the jig up a few inches so the tail can work and the fish can see it. This will often convince a fish to bite even when they aren’t aggressive. You need to be sure to use a jig heavy enough so the current won’t quickly sweep it downstream.

It’s also very important to have a sensitive rod/line set-up. A rod in the six and a half to seven foot length in medium to medium heavy action will do a good job. Lew’s has several rods in this configuration that are very sensitive, but also have the backbone to provide an effective hookset. Spool up with 15 pound test XTCB-8 line for the ultimate in sensitivity and hooksetting. Some anglers like to use a two foot length

of Tactical fluorocarbon in eight pound test as a leader, but in rivers the fluorocarbon usually isn’t necessary. Winter fish will often be concentrated in rivers. Some very successful anglers spend a majority of their time just below a dam, others look for deeper holes a mile or two downstream from the dam.

There are lots of ways to catch river fish, but if you put a jig close to them, you’re probably going to get bit. Next time you get the chance, find a river that has open water, take your jig box and a few plastic baits or minnows, and find out for yourself that you can catch fish in open water even in the winter.

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This river smallmouth ate John Peterson’s jig as it wiggled slowly in its face on a cold late season day.

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A Happy Ending for Happy Landing

By Dennis Eade

Five years in the making and finally a successful grant application from the Natural Resources Trust Fund has led to the purchase of property at the confluence of Pipestone Creek and the St. Joseph River in Sodus Twp., Berrien Springs, MI. What started as an idea from a member of the SW Michigan Steelheaders, then an aspiration of MSSFA along with Jay Wesley, Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator, MDNR Fisheries Division, has resulted in the purchase of Happy Landing, an ideal piece of land and ideal destination for chasing Steelhead on the St. Joseph River and Pipestone Creek.

According to Jay Wesley, this was a collective effort among stakeholders like MSSFA, Sodus Township (pledging \$10,000), Southwest Michigan Steelheaders (pledging \$5,000), Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC), and Cornerstone Alliance. Dave Chandler, Sodus Township Supervisor was able to gather 44 signatures from local stakeholders who support the project. When the purchase is complete, Sodus Twp. will manage the property for the MDNR. Marcy Hamilton from SWMPC helped with the water trail discussions, Matt Lincoln from Parks and Recreation Division along with Jay Wesley and Jessica Mistak from Fisheries helped Brian Gunnderman, Southern Lake Michigan Unit Manager for MDNR prepare the grant application.

“Once we get past all the hurdles of competing offers, appraisals, etc. and are able to purchase the property, then we can look seriously at long-term goals for site improvements”, said Gunnderman.

Jim Bedford, outdoor writer and MSSFA Life Member, has written that, “Pipestone Creek, which joins the St. Joe about three river miles up from I-94 is a large enough stream to draw steelhead well upstream and into it. Pipestone is a designated trout stream with resident browns present. Summer steelhead will remain in the lower reaches of this creek until the weather cools in September. Fishing off the mouth of this stream can be very productive.”

So, not only is this a great location to embark from, it is also a great shoreline fishing destination in the summer for young anglers to perfect their presentation techniques above weary steelhead lingering at the mouth of the creek and resident browns holding further upstream. Accessible by car means that kayakers and fishers alike can utilize the site for picnic lunches and a relaxing retreat after a morning on the river.



Looking southwest along St. Joseph River frontage. This area will be used for shorefishing, wading, and carry-in watercraft access.

This project is an example of how working collaboratively with anglers, water trail advocates, stakeholders and units of government, we can have a lasting positive impact on sport fishing and water tourism in the state of Michigan. It is especially

gratifying for those of us who live to be on the water chasing our favorite quarry, the magnificent steelhead trout.





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Dave Middleton accepts traveling trophy from Joe Montella, SW Michigan Steelheaders

Battle Creek Steelheaders Recapture Chapter Challenge Trophy

By Ryan McCartney

The Southwest Michigan Steelheaders held its “Winter Challenge” River Tournament on the St. Joseph River on December 7, 2019, celebrating 30 years of hosting this event. Although you register for this Tournament as an individual, your actual weights could play a key role in the Chapter Challenge side of this event. With more than half of our participants visiting from the Battle Creek Chapter of the Michigan Steelheaders, we weigh the three biggest Steelhead caught by members of each chapter and award the winning Chapter with a traveling trophy. This year, the Battle Creek Chapter took the trophy home with a winning weight of 35.33#, compared to the Southwest Chapter’s weight of 29.48#.

This year’s event attracted 67 fishermen, 28 boats which resulted in

55 fish hitting the tournament scales. All 55 fish were steelhead, although tournament rules allow Brown Trout, Lake Trout and Walleye to be entered. The largest steelhead of the tournament was recorded at 15.05# and caught by J R Dwan, who also weighed two additional steelhead. The three heaviest steelhead making up Battle Creek’s winning total were caught by David Reynolds, Nate Suhr and Dan Foster, with respective weights of 13.25#, 11.78# and 10.30#. The three winning steelhead that made up the SW Michigan Chapter total weighed-in at 10.19#, 10.05# and 9.24, which were caught by Bob Lausman, Todd Latosinski and Eric Decraene respectively. Also, we present the Walt Tober Memorial Award, which is named after a longtime, contributing member of the SW Club, to the current SW Member catching the largest steelhead of the day, which went to Bob Lausman with a single fish weight of 10.19#.

Preserving Our Sportfishing Heritage

AND HOW TREATY NEGOTIATIONS MAY AFFECT YOU!

By Steve Schultz,
CPMR Attorney

As many of you know, there are five Michigan Indian Tribes that have a right to fish in the northern Great Lakes under a treaty negotiated in 1836. The fish the tribes catch include many sportfish. The rules governing what the Tribes and we can catch are defined today by a Court Order that was put in place in 2000.

The Court Order, also called a Consent Decree, is based on the concept that the Great Lakes fishery is a shared resource. It sets forth the rules and limitations on fishing in the northern Great Lakes by the five Tribes and State licensed commercial and sport fishers.

BEWARE, however. The Court Order EXPIRES in 2020! This means that a

new agreement has to be negotiated with the five Tribes. If a new agreement is not reached, the future of our sport fishery is uncertain. Without a new agreement, no one knows how fishing in the northern Great Lakes will be managed. A new agreement will directly affect your fishing and it will likely affect everyone who uses the Great Lakes for recreation.

There are MANY issues we face. To bring you up to speed on the issues we are facing, set forth below are Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about these issues:

Q: Whose rights are affected by the current Court Order and the negotiations?

A: EVERYONE in the State who uses the Great Lakes is affected one way or another by the Court's

Order and the negotiations. The Court's Order directly affects where Tribal fishing operations may fish, where sportfishing is available, how the resource is shared, who may fish and when, what kinds of fish may be caught, what kind of fishing gear may be used by the Tribes, and how many fish may be caught by tribal fishers and sport fishers. The rules that have been in place since 2000 addressed all of this. A new agreement will affect these same issues.

Q. When does the current agreement expire?

A: The current agreement expires August 8, 2020.

Q. What happens if no new agreement is reached by that date?

A: There has been an agreement in place since

1985 so no one has had to face that possibility for 35 years. During that time, a lot has changed in the Great Lakes, however. Prior to 1985, there was a lot of uncertainty over who was fishing where, who was regulating the fishers, how many fish were being caught and where, and there was a lot of conflict between those who fished the northern Great Lakes. If no new agreement is reached, much of that uncertainty is likely to return unless we can come up with a short-term solution while they continue to negotiate or unless the Court intervenes.

Q. Are negotiations underway? Who is involved and how are they going?

A: Yes. Negotiations are underway. The parties, including an organization representing sport

fishers, the "Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources", started meeting in late September, much to the frustration of the Coalition. Negotiations should have begun at least a year before that. The issues we face are complex and there are seven separate governments involved, which also makes negotiations complex. Negotiations that led to the agreement reached in 2000 took years. To date, the parties have met for six days since mid-September. Negotiation sessions are set for every month between now and August, 2020.

As for how they are going, the going has been painfully slow. There are several fundamental issues that have not yet even been discussed.

Q. What are the issues that we face?

A: Unfortunately, the negotiations are subject to a "confidentiality agreement" that prevents anyone participating from talking about what is going on. The Coalition representatives

can't talk about the specific issues being discussed at the negotiating table. That said, a look at the current agreement that was signed in 2000 can show you the issues that we have to deal with. The issues addressed include:

1. How are the available fish, including lake trout, salmon, perch, walleye and others, are shared by tribal and State licensed sport fishers. Based on a shared resource principle, as was actually requested by the Tribes in 1983, the agreement results in a roughly 50-50 split of the fishery. It provides more of the available stocks to tribal fishers in specific areas of the lakes while reserving stocks in other parts of the Great Lakes for sport-fishing. It reserves to each Tribe a specific part of the Great Lakes for their tribal fishers, their "home waters." It defines certain areas of the lakes that are off limits to fishing at various times, such as in refuges set aside for rehabilitation of fish like lake trout, around stream or harbor mouths, or during spawning times.

2. The current agreement addresses whitefish, lake trout, walleye and salmon stocks. It sets forth a structure to assess the health of those stocks and to determine how many fish of a particular species are available to be caught. It creates a mechanism for State, Federal and Tribal biologists to work together to evaluate aspects of the fishery and make recommendations.

3. It includes a law enforcement and a dispute resolution process. It also creates an "Executive Council" to promote communication and to address issues that may arise between the parties.

The current agreement is 57 pages long with dozens of additional pages devoted to amendments, maps and other appendices.

Q. Who is representing those of us who fish the Great Lakes for sport?

A: Those of us who fish the Great Lakes have joined together to form a coalition of sport fishing groups dedicated to preserving sport fishing in the Great Lakes. There are a dozen members of the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources. The members include: Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Charter Boat Association, Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, Grand Traverse Area Sport Fishing Association, Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association, Blue Water Sportfishing Association, and the Burt Lake Preservation Association.

Q. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

A.: We sport fishers are the only ones who can preserve our fishery. While the DNR and others are also involved and are dedicated

"Preserving"

Continued on page 15

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Changes
In Fishing

By Bob Jensen

I've been in the business of fishing for about 40 years, and have been fishing even longer. The changes in fishing and fishing equipment over those years have been many, and a lot of those changes have effected, for the better, the way we fish and what we catch. Following are some of the changes that I've experienced.

I remember when graphite fishing rods were first introduced to anglers. The actions of the rods weren't very good, they were a little fragile and a lot expensive. And every angler had to have one. The graphite rods that we fish with today are way better. They're strong, we can find rods with actions that are perfect for a particular technique, and when the increase in quality and inflation are considered, the price of rods are actually less than they used to be.

Boats have changed a lot also. When I got my first boat that was to be used for business, it was aluminum and 16 feet long. It had a 50 horsepower tiler motor that put a lot of exhaust into the air. It also used a lot of gas. It had a flasher depthfinder in the back of the boat and an electric motor that I steered with my hand on the bow of the boat. When I was fishing from the bow, I moved the sonar from the back to the front. When we wanted to stay in a particular location, we put an anchor out. I couldn't imagine a better boat for fishing then, but my powers of prediction

"Changes"

Continued on page 22

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"Preserving"

Continued from page 14

to the natural resources of this state, WE fishermen and women are the only ones soley committed to our sport.

The Coalition needs your help.

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

1. Go to the Coalition's webpage, protectmiresources.com and donate to the cause. Every contribution helps!

2. Support the Coalition within your sportfishing group.

3. Go to the Coaltion Facebook page and like the Coalition: <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition-to-Protect-Michigan-Resources-263806077627923/>.

Grand Rapids Steelheaders Salmon in the Classroom Program

By Bob Strek

The 2019 – 2020 Grand Rapids Steelheaders Salmon in the Classroom program, (SIC), started November 12th, with the delivery of eyed Salmon Eggs from the Wolf Lake Hatchery in Matawan. The Grand Rapids Steelheaders along with the Grand Rapids Steelheaders Foundation supports and helps 8 schools in this program; Lake Michigan Academy, Wealthy Elementary, Murray Lake Elementary, Forest Hills Northern Trails, D A Blodgett, St Johns Lighthouse Academy, Northview High School, East Rockford Middle and St Anthony of Padua.

The SIC Program was started in 1997 with a few schools participating and each receiving 200 eyed Chinook salmon eggs each. In 2019 there are 300 schools across the state in the SIC Program with thousands of students viewing and participating in it. The 300 schools start out raising 150 Chinook eyed eggs per school each. The total eggs in the program are approximately 45,000 Chinook eyed eggs. The eggs will live, hatch and be released next April and early May. The survival rate varies for the 6 month period per school for many reasons. The harvesting of Chinook salmon eggs starts in the fall when the salmon re-

turn to their home streams. The salmon entering the Little Manistee River are captured in the DNR weir. The Little Manistee River weir is the main weir for the DNR. After being captured the salmon are sorted first by; wild verses planted fish, (planted salmon had their adipose fin clipped) and then by male and female. The wild salmon are checked for ripeness and when ready the sperm from one male is paired with the eggs of one female, (each mature female carries between 4 to 5 thousand eggs). Fish are also matched by different year classes to avoid inbreeding. Before the harvest of sperm and eggs the fish re-



ceive an iodine bath. After the eggs are fertilized they receive a Thymine bath. During the life of a Chinook their main diet of Alewife's lowers the vitamin Thymine level in the offspring. The eggs are now collected in 5 gallon buckets with circulating water and receive a second Thymine bath. The offspring



Above: Students look on as their teacher places eggs in their aquarium.

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with low Thymine levels will not survive. The Wolf Lake Hatchery has an estimated 1.5 million Chinook eggs right now. It is holding eggs that would have been stored in the Thompson Hatchery which is under construction. The green eggs are sent to hatcheries and placed in trays each containing 5 to 7 thousand eggs. It takes about 45 days for the eggs to shed their egg husk and they appear as a translucent sack fry or alevin with a sack on its belly trying to hide. By the time the yoke sack is consumed the sack fry or alevin acquires color and swims up and starts feeding. During the winter the fry's coloring becomes more complex and at this stage they are called parr. Before being released to return to Lake Michigan the parr lose some of their color and now they are called smolts. Once they are released the smolts imprint on the stream to return years later. I thank Tracy Page, Aquatic Education Coordinator, Michigan, and DNR for her help in making this article possible.



Manistee



Manistee - Danny Cheshure



Manistee



Kids Outing HN



Detroit River Walleye

Metro-West Celebrates Another Year of Salmon In The Classroom

By Robert Grech

The Metro-West Steelheaders (MWS) (Livonia), along with many other chapters, starts another year of promoting DNR’s Salmon In The Classroom project. MWS’s got involved in the project in 2011 and has grown over the years. The Classrooms have been supported by members Matt Lubaway, Adam Trenz, Roger Hinchcliff, Marshal Walker, Bill & Melissa Gagnon, Bob Olari, Mark

Davis and many others. MWS provides equipment, helps in set up, technical support, teardown and release of the fish. This year we welcome three new schools to our list, Delta Kelly Elementary in Oakland Township, headed up Jeff Gehm and Academy Of The Sacred Heart of Bloomfield Hills, directed by Stephanie Ho-way and Vandenberg Elementary of South Redford with Sarah McGuire. The other existing SIC proj-

ects are, Munger Elementary/Middle - Ellen Hoyer, Brownstown Middle School - Jeremy Giles and Novi High – Nick Ryan. Another educational piece we offer is “Traveling Sammy”, a 30# plus mounted King Salmon that was donated by chapter member Doug Rogers. This wall mount specimen was reconfigured to be mounted in a protective case to protect it from curious hands. It is really something to see the students’ eyes open up

with amazement to see that their tiny fingerlings could possibly grow up to be that big. For me, participating in the SIC projects has been very rewarding. Sharing the experience with students, to raise and release King Salmon into the Great Lakes water shed much like Dr Howard Tanner did when this great fish was first introduced here, like the title of Dr. Tanner’s book it is ”Something Spectacular”.



Metro West Steelheaders - a chapter of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association

The chapter area covers the southeast part of lower Michigan. Members come from cities along the Detroit River on the east and south to the State Line; Algonac/Highland to the north and Fowlerville/Ann Arbor to the West. Other active members are spread far and wide – ie, Toledo, OH; Windsor, Canada; Williamston, MI; Pinckney, MI; Lambertville, MI; Manistee, MI, East Jordan, MI.

General Membership Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday each month at the Livonia Senior Center with average attendance of 65 each month. All meetings are open to the public and consist of a speaker, announcements of upcoming fishing events, fishing event results, and recent fishing reports. Speakers cover fishing techniques, equipment and demonstra-

tions; conservation issues; and DNR updates.

2020 Calendar of Events provides fifty-nine opportunities to get involved including eleven general meetings; three river clean ups; fifty-two fishing opportunities (river, Great Lakes, kayak, small boat, pier/beach and ice); five social events – kids (100) fishing outing at Kensington Metro Park, summer picnic, Sportsmen Banquet major fund raiser (300+), Comedy Club for a Cause and a Christmas party.

Angling opportunities are provided to target salmon (20 events), trout (24), walleye (7) and warm water species (7). There are members that are willing to help you learn how to catch fish from beach, rivers, small boats, kayaks and Great Lakes boats.

Learning and Conservation opportunities include sending kids to MUCC Kids camp (31 sent in 2019); support of Lake

Superior State University Atlantic Salmon Project and of the Clinton River Watershed Council; sponsor/support Salmon in the Classroom (SIC) projects in six area schools. The Chapter advocates for “Stop Harmful Algae Blooms” and “Stop Asian Carp” initiatives. Member representatives on the Cold-Water Stream Committee and the Lake Michigan and Lake Huron Advisory Committees. The Chapter is a very active member of Michigan United Conservation Clubs including sponsoring a cabin at the Youth Camp, with participation on fishing committees. The chapter was selected as the **2017 MUCC Affiliate of the Year**.

Membership of Metro West Steelheaders consist of two hundred and forty members. All chapter activities include member families and their friends. There are four types of membership in MWS/MS-SFA – Regular (\$40/yr.),

Young Adult (19 – 26 yrs. -\$20), Youth (to 18 yrs. - \$5) or Associate (other MSSFA Chapter Member - \$15). All members receive six Great Lakes Sport Fishing News each year and monthly MWS electronic newsletters (www.metroweststeelheaders.org/newsletters/).

You have an invitation to join MWS and become a part of an active family-oriented fishing organization! Attendance at MWS events average over 2000 anglers and friends each year for more than ten years. This great group can include you and your family. You can join on the Chapter website at <https://www.metroweststeelheaders.org/>; at one of three shows in Novi, Michigan (Ultimate Fishing Show Jan. 9 – 12, Outdoorama Feb. 27 – Mar. 1 and Novi Boat Show Mar. 12 – 15); at a General Membership meeting or contact Henry Nabors, Membership Director at hnnabors@gmail.com.



Clinton River Project



Benton Harbor

Dialing in the Dead Stick to Ice More Walleyes

By Joe Henry

It's called the "one-two punch" when ice fishing. Jigging one line, and dead sticking—or basically dangling a live minnow under a bobber—on the other. The idea is, the jigging line attracts walleyes, and if they are somewhat active, there is a good chance they will whack whatever is being jigged. In some cases, when walleyes turn to a more neutral mood, the dead stick can be the hottest stick in the fish house.

Traditional dead stick

The most common setup is a plain hook or ice jig with a minnow hooked just under the dorsal fin, under a bobber, set to dangle about a foot off of the bottom. This setup catches a lot of walleyes, but when the fish are not reacting very well to this presentation, mix it up.

Raise it up

After dozens of hours on my Vexilar, watching fish react to my presentations, there have been numerous times I would set my rod down to grab something, and often times my lure would be hanging three feet off of the bottom. I would watch a red line rise slowly off the bottom to eat my suspended offering. Walleyes are used to feeding up, or even sliding up in the water column, to catch minnows. Sometimes, it can be very effective, and almost triggering, to have your live minnow on your dead stick set higher up in the water column, versus six inches to a foot off bottom, which is a normal starting spot for many anglers.

Color

Color absolutely makes a difference, and preference can change from hour to hour, based on snow cover, cloud cover and the angle of the sun. When you are fishing with someone, try

different colors until you figure out what the walleyes want that day.

Details, such as the color of your hook, will make a difference. Paying attention to color will pay dividends.

In stained water, gold, glow and bright colors are good bets. In clear water, silvers and more natural colors are a good starting point.

Dead stick lures

In addition to plain hooks combined with a minnow, there are a lot of effective ice jigs for dead sticking on the market.

The Jig-O-Bit uses a Kahle hook attached to a lead head, and comes in a variety of colors. With a live minnow, it hangs nicely. The Demon is a well-known crappie bait, but in larger sizes, does well for walleyes and saugers. Something about that lure just works. The Danlure is a unique jig that has a swivel between the lead head and the hook, allowing the min-

now more freedom to swim, and at a different angle. On some days, this nuance has been the ticket.

There are definitely a lot of options. Some dead stick baits have propellers, small spinners, UV glow paint, glitter, rattles, single hook, treble hook, etc. Again, experiment until you find out the preference that day, or for that particular body of water.

Good electronics really help the process of deciding to change lures. If fish are coming through and not reacting positively to your offering, it is time to change things up. Without electronics, it would be hard to know if the fish are not reacting, or the fish simply are not there.

Change the flavor

Walleyes can be particular. The trick is to have at least a couple of different minnow species options, and try to have both (or more) options down in the same fish house if you are



fishing with a partner or two. The walleyes will tell you what they prefer that day, and eventually, everyone can hone in.

Size does matter

Size can relate to the ice jig you are using. At times, walleyes will prefer something larger as it is a bigger target, acts differently and makes more noise. A larger, heavier jig can also have a different action, as the minnow cannot roam as freely. In other cases, when you jig it, you can bang it on the bottom, which can cause the fish to become active.

Size also matters when considering bait. Some days, the fish prefer a larger minnow. On other days, especially when in a neutral mood, they prefer a very small minnow. There have been many times when a crappie minnow is my most

desired minnow amongst a bucket of larger minnows. The point is, experiment and figure out what the fish want that given day, or even hour.

Hook that minnow

The most common way to hook a minnow is just under the dorsal fin. Another nuance is to clip off half of the tail of the minnow, which changes the vibration of the swimming minnow. The minnow will also work harder to swim, often enticing that finicky walleye.

Some anglers will hook the minnow through the mouth, giving it a different look. Others will hook the minnow back by the tail, but on the bottom or underbelly of the minnow, rather than nipped through the back. This causes the minnow to sit upside down, and it will work hard to upright itself,

which can trigger a bite.

Dead sticks do not receive the attention the jigging line does. It's one of those lines that are often set and left alone. However, there are many days when a dead stick can be the most productive rod in the fish house. Paying attention to details, and trying a variety of presentations, will increase the number of walleyes and saugers pulled through the ice hole. It may not be as sexy as the jigging line, but on any given day, a dead stick can definitely be as productive.

Are you new to ice fishing? Learn what you need to know in the winter issues of MidWest Outdoors, available the first full week of each month at the newsstand or by subscribing on our website.

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Above: Julie Backowski, member of the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen’s Association (MSSFA) “Caught this big guy down by the Allegan Dam today (Dec.27). The biggest steelhead I have ever caught. This one is getting mounted!”



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Manistee County Sport Fishing Association is Sportfishing Year-Round!

By Alex Bialik

Freezing temperatures have been entering Manistee County, snow is flying, the wind is blowing, and surf/pier fishing is on our minds. This is the other side of Lake Michigan that most people don't see. No more sandcastles, swimming suits, or blazing heat. The sun may be out but so will the blustery winds of winter. It's time to break out the waders, big boots, warm jackets, mittens and stocking caps.

Lake Michigan has so many opportunities when it comes to surf/pier fishing, especially in Manistee County. Access areas for fishing the Lake Michigan Surf include harbors, city parks, beaches, river mouths and scenic shorelines. During the fall/winter salmon will have their spawning runs, thousands of fishermen will take advantage of the many access areas, steelhead will move in along the shorelines and into the rivers and chase these salmon as they drop their eggs. The shoreline is

the perfect place to chase these silver bullet steelhead as they look for food and warmer waters.

There are a few great set ups to target these steelhead effectively. All of these techniques involve spawn bags filled with floats. Fresh spawn is key, along with paying attention to details like color and water conditions. The first basic bottom fishing rig setup used for surf fishing uses a weight directly attached to your main fishing line. The weight should slide up and down the line freely. After threading the weight on the fishing line, a small bead is threaded onto the line. A Spro power swivel is then tied directly to your main fishing line. The bead will cushion the weight from slamming into your knot on the power swivel when casting. A fluorocarbon leader is tied to the other end of the power swivel. Leader length will vary with the bait used and the water conditions.

The second basic bottom fishing rig setup used for surf fishing uses a snap

swivel threaded directly on your main fishing line. The snap swivel is used where the weight was threaded in Bottom

Fishing Rig setup #1. A bead is used between the snap swivel and the Spro power swivel. The weight is attached directly to the snap swivel. The advantage of the addition of a snap swivel is that you can easily change the size of the weight without retying your knots. Another advantage is the weight is easily removed when your fishing trip is over and rod storage is simplified.

The third basic bottom fishing rig setup used for surf fishing uses a snap swivel threaded directly on your main fishing line with a loop of fishing line. The snap swivel is used where the weight was threaded in Bottom Fishing Rig setup #1. The weight is attached to a loop of fishing line with a smaller pound test rating than your main fishing line. The length of the

“Manistee”
Continued on page 22



Fishing the Manistee River. Photo credit: <https://nomad anglers.com>

12 Ways to Stay Safer on First Ice

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- 5 Never go without a flotation device.
- 6 Carry a pair of ice picks/rescue claws.
- 7 Always have a throw rope with you.
- 8 Leave before dark.
- 9 Make sure you have proper ventilation in your shanty.
- 10 Bring a portable charger for your phone. The cold kills batteries quicker than normal.
- 11 Stay hydrated. Bring water, just because its cold out doesn't mean you don't need water.
- 12 Layer up. As I was always told growing up, you can take clothes off. Dress properly for cold temps.

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Onkama Marine Inc.

Onkama Tournament

Ladies: August 14

Main Event/333: August 15-16

For info call:

Carrie Paxton @ 231-889-5000

carrie@onekamamarine.com

Scott MacDonald @ 231-690-1102

smac54@gmail.com



The SPLASH is back in July for 2020!

Ladies: July 24

Splash/Big Fish/333: July 25 - 26

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smac54@gmail.com

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JULY 24 - 26



AUGUST 28 - 30

Monster moves to August!

August 28 - 30

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“Manistee”
Continued from page 20

fishing line loop is generally 6 inches to 1 foot. The line is attached directly to the snap swivel. This basic bottom fishing setup is best when used in rocky areas where your weight might get caught on the bottom. The advantage of the addition of a snap swivel and fishing line loop is you can easily change the size of the weight without retying your knots.

Another advantage is the weight is easily removed when your fishing trip is over and rod storage is simplified. The addition of the fishing line loop also gives more action to your bait.

Here are some extra pointers: Sand spikes or Surf Rod Holders are a requirement when fishing the surf. There is nothing that will destroy or ruin a fishing reel quicker than laying the fishing rod on a sandy beach. Another useful tip would be dress for the weather, there are a few things that can ruin your time in the outdoors and being cold is one of those

things. Make sure if you’re surf fishing wear the correct insulated waders. If you’re fishing from the piers wear heavy boots with good grip. Make sure you have insulated jackets and a good base layer. Safety is a must, if you see ice on or around piers please use caution, if you decide to go please put spikes or creepers on to make sure you are secure.

Lake Michigan surf and pier fishing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and a great way to spend time with the family. If you’re looking at getting into shore fishing and want to learn from an expert call a guide in Manistee county, they will love to get you out or simply give you the best input they have. This type of fishing will stay good till Lake Michigan shorelines begin to freeze up and become completely covered in ice.

The Manistee County Sportfishing Association (MCSFA) is your link to the county. Please visit our website at mcsfa.org, or like us on Facebook. Consider becoming a member and support our year round events.

“Changes”
Continued from page 15

were never very good. The boats we run today are so much better and so much easier to control. When we want to fish from a particular location, we push a button on the electric motor and it keeps us there. No more anchors to lift or get tangled in. The 150 horsepower motor of today uses less gas than the 50’s of yesteryear, and sitting behind a steering wheel is so much more comfortable on those long runs than the 50 horse motor that I started with. Of course there are lots of folks, I’m one of them, that still likes to fish from a 16 foot boat with a 50 horsepower motor. But today’s 16 with a 50 is so different, in a better way, than the 16’s with 50’s of 40 years ago.

Fishing line is superior today, and we have a lot more choices of it. We can spool on a line that is close to perfect for any technique, and it’s also much more reliable.

There’s a much wider selection of artificial baits now than 40 years ago. Sizes, colors, shapes: It’s possible to tie on a bait that seems to look livelier than the live version.

And, best of all, in many situations, the fishing is better now than it was 40 years ago, for size and numbers. Much of that is because of the improve-

Bruce DeShano Honored
by the Fresh Water Fishing
Hall of Fame



Bruce DeShano (Port Austin, MI) got the call from the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame and is among this year’s Class of Inductees. He joins an illustrious list of notable honorees which include among others Curt Gowdy, Virgil Ward, Roland Martin and the Linder Family.

Bruce owns and operates *Off Shore Tackle*, a trolling board, and trolling orientated company he started many years ago while trolling for salmon and trout on the Great Lakes. He built products that catered to the Great Lakes trolling community. He quickly realized that many of the same ideas would work well in the walleye fishing community and teamed with expert anglers to brainstorm, innovate and manufacture products for this fast growing industry. Bruce has always given back to the sport by sponsoring many anglers and has been a long time advertiser in Great Lakes Sport Fishing News. *Congratulations Bruce on a well-deserved honor!*

See Off Shore Tackle Ad on page 3

ments in the equipment that we use and the knowledge that has been shared down through the years, but it’s also due to better fisheries management. We’ve learned that all lakes can’t be managed the same way: One size does not fit all. It might be a bit confusing

and kind of a nuisance to have different regulations on different bodies of water, but in many cases, not all but many, those regulations give us the opportunity to catch truly big fish more often than we used to.

I admit that I’m slow to accept change, and my

computer, cell phone and sonar still do way more than I need them to do, but the changes that we’ve seen in the world of fishing in the past few decades certainly have for the most part increased our chances for success when we’re on the water.



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St. Joe River Fall Steelhead Outing

By Dennis Eade

Saturday, November 30th began in the low thirties with a mild breeze out of the SE and overcast skies. Actually, a perfect

day to chase steelies on the St. Joe River where the Battle Creek Steelheaders were hosting a fun tournament for members of the SW Michigan Steeheaders and the BC Steelheaders as

a warm up to their Chapter Challenge which took place on December 7th.

I fished with my two sons, Derek and Brian, on Win-n-Angel Too, captained by Winn Wolf from

St. Joe, MI. (269-208-9525, www.Win-n-Angel.com.) What a nice set up for winter steelhead fishing; a 26ft. pontoon boat with heated enclosed seating area, ample rear deck area for our

nine rod limit. We set up just as it was getting light over one of Winn's favorite runs. We no sooner set lines then a rod with a spawn bait started bouncing in the rod holder and luckily I was the closest to the rod and grabbed it making sure I didn't jerk the bait but rather set the hook after the fish had time to take it in. The fight was brisk but I could tell it was a smaller steelhead and it came to the boat fairly easily to be netted and "remove the skunk from the box". We were using both spawn to bounce along the bottom of the holes and Hot-N-Tot lures in orange and gold colors.

After giving the run ample time to allow holding fish to strike our baits, we moved to the next run and the then the next. Both Brian and Derek got chances to fight fish and Derek landed another nice steelhead midmorning. Fishing was slower than it had been in the days that preceded our trip but you could not have asked for a nicer day to en-

joy the sights and sounds of the river and the good company of fellow Steelheaders.

We joined the other fishers around 2:00 PM at the I-94 boat ramp, where the Battle Creek Chapter, and event coordinator, Joe Foy, provided sandwiches for the 38 entrants and 14 boats that participated in the event. This is just what makes being a Michigan Steelheader so rewarding, to be part of a group that looks forward to getting on the river with friends for a fun filled event and healthy competition. Speaking of competition, after weighing your three biggest fish, 1st place went to Paul La Joie with a total of 24.3 lbs. 2nd place was won by Tony Wolte with 23.3 lbs., 3rd place to Bob Lausman with 21.2 lbs. and 4th place went to Todd Brill with 9.14 lbs. The big fish of the day went to Elmer Rudlaff with 12.9 lb. steelhead.



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To contact us:
John Watson at 1137watson@gmail.com
 Or Call Tournament Director
 at 616-218-6686

For Dock Space contact:
Tower Marine at 269-857-2151
Sergeant Marina at 269-857-2873

- ★ \$5000 First Prize Pro Division - based on 15 entries
 - ★ \$2500 First Prize Am Division
 - ★ Am Division - Catch 15 fish, weigh 5
 - ★ 20 Places paid in the AM Division (35 Teams)
- Location of Captains Meeting, Weight In, and Awards:***
Coral Cables in downtown Saugatuck

August 7th - Free Pig Roast at Captains Meeting

- ★ August 8th - 9th Free Hamburgers and Hot Dogs
- ★ at Weigh-in and Awards Ceremony

All Provided by Coral Gables Restaurant



2020 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
January	18	Ice Fishing Tournament	Portage Lake
February	15	Ice Fishing Tournament	TBA
February	22	St. Joe River Trout Quest	I-94 Boat Ramp
March	7	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Sand Bar
March	21	Kalamazoo River Spring Steelhead	Allegan Dam
April	4	Lake Michigan Coho Blast	Benton Harbor
April	18	Trip Swap	We Go Over There
May	2	Trip Swap	They Come Here
May	23	Lake Michigan Spring Tournament	Benton Harbor
May	29-30	Connie McGowan Invitational (Captain Must Be A Member)	Lake Erie
July	18	Portage Lake Panfish/Family Picnic	Vicksburg
August	1	Lake Michigan Memorial	South Haven
August	15	Veterans Outing	South Haven
October	10	Perch Tournament	Lake Erie
October	24	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
October	31	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	14	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	28	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	5	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Babes Lounge
December	12	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles
<p> Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting NEW Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94. </p> <p> FOR MORE INFORMATION: River Tournaments – Ice Tournaments – Justin Kling 491-2980 Lake Tournaments – Greg Peck 998-9407 battlecreeksteelheaders.com </p>			

2020 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
January 1 - Nov. 30		Member Year Long Fishing Contest	
November	30	Member Year Long Contest Ends	
December	TBD	Annual Meeting, Recognitions, Dinner	
<p> Other Events TBD For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarms@gmail.com www.ghsteelheaders.com </p>			

2020 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
January	6	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
January	11	Ice Fishing Contest	STC
January	27	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
February	3	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
February	24	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
March	2	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
March	14-21	Spring River Week Long Contest	STC
March	19-22	Ultimate Sports Show	DeVos Place
March	19-21	Ultimate Sports Show Fishing Contest	DeVos Place
March	30	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
March	31	2019 Year Long Fish Contest Ends	
April	1	2020 Year Long Fish Contest Starts	
April	6	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
April	27	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
May	2	Spring Big Lake	STC
May	4	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
May	18	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
May	30	Steelheaders Free Kids Fishing Derby	
June	1	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
June	5-7	Lake Erie 3-Day Walleye Contest	
June	29	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
July	6	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
July	15	Chapter Family Picnic**	6 PM, Johnson Park Shelter House
August	1	Fall Big Lake	STC
August	3	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
August	31	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
September	14	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
September	28	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest Begins**	
October	12	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
October	24	Fall River Contest	STC
October	26	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
November	2	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
November	7	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	STC
November	23	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
November	30	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
December	7	Chapter Family Christmas Party	6 PM, Diamond Hall
<p> STC* = Date subject to change ** = Members and Family Only. (All other events open to the public) </p>			

2020 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event	Location
January	18	Daylight - 1:00 pm	Caseville Lake Trout Outing	
February	4	6:00/7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
February	22-23	Daylight - 1:00 pm 12:00 pm	Ice Fishing (Entry \$5.00) Weigh-in / Lunch @Linwood	
March	10	6:00/7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
March	21	Daylight - 1:00 pm	Big Man., Bear Creek	TBA
April	4	Daylight - 1:00 pm	Big Man, Bear Creek	
April	7	6:00/7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
May	2	7:00am – 1:00pm	Linwood Beach Walleye	
May	5	6:00/7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
May	16	5:30am-1:00pm	South Haven Salmon	
May	30	7:00am – 1:00pm	Linwood Beach Walleye	
June	9	6:00/7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
June	13	7:00am – 1:00pm	Sebewaing Walleye Kids Outing	
June	14	7:00am – 12:00pm	Outing Day 2	
June	27	7:00am – 1:00pm	Standish Walleye	
August			NO Board/Membership Meeting	
August	8	6:00am – 1:00pm	Ludington Salmon (Day 1)	
August	9	6:00am – 12:00pm	Ludington Salmon (Day 2)	
August	22	6:00am – 1:00pm	Manistee Salmon (Day 1)	
August	23	6:00am – 12:00pm	Manistee Salmon (Day 2)	
September	8	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
September	12	6:30am – 1:00pm	Frankfort Salmon	
November	7	Daylight – 1:00pm	Big Man. Little Man. Bear Cr.	
December	5	Daylight – 1:00pm	Big Man., Bear Creek	
December	8	6:00 / 7:15	Board meeting only	VFW Hall
December	12	Cocktails 5:00 Dinner 6:00	Christmas Awards Banquet K of C Hall, Auburn 4760 Garfield Rd. Auburn, Mi 48611	
<p> Membership meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 989-496-3410 </p> <p> All Board/Membership meetings begin with Board at 6:00 pm. Membership meetings follow at 7:15 pm. Board only meetings begin at 7:00pm. We ask that you please call the Port Chairman <u>no later than</u> Monday prior to the event as to whether you plan on attending or not attending. On the day of the event call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72 or cell phone for the Port Chairman. Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follow weigh-in on Saturdays only. Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate. Children 16 and younger are free. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone. </p> <p> If interested in fishing with us please email: kathy@steel-headers.com. Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com </p>				

2020 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
January	6	Board Meeting
January	8	Ice Fishing Tournament
February	3	Board Meeting
February	20	Holland Steelheaders Annual Banquet
February	22	Ice Fishing Tournament
March	2	Board Meeting
April	6	Board Meeting
April	23	General Membership Meeting
May	4	Board Meeting
May	12	Tuesday Night League Kickoff
May	16	Holland Steelheaders Spring Challenge
June	1	Board Meeting
June	6	Holland Steelheaders All Species Tournament
June	20	Kids N' Kings
July	6	Board Meeting
July	11	Veterans Fishing Outing
July	23	General Membership Meeting
July	25	Holland Steelheaders Summer Challenge
July 31 - August 2		Big Red Classic
August	3	Board Meeting
August	15	Holland Stelheaders Ladies Tournament
September	1	Tuesday Night League Final Night
September	14	Board Meeting
October	5	Board Meeting
November	2	Board Meeting
December	3	General Membership Meeting
December	5	Holland Steelheaders River Tournament
December	7	Board Meeting
<div>Board meetings held at: Turks of Holland, 977 Butternut Dr., Holland MI 49424 7:00 PM General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club, 1862 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland MI 49424. Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow</div> <div>For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405, or email Steve Weatherwax at Waxer1221@yahoo.com</div>		

Join a Chapter, Join the Fun!

**For more information,
contact your Chapter Membership Director
or mssfamembership@charter.net**

2020 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event / Location	Chair
January	7	General Membership Meeting Speaker: Chris Ingalls talking about Manistee Spring Fishing	
January	9-12	Ultimate Sports Fishing Show Showplace Novi	Marc Traver/Chris Christoph
January	18	Lake St Clair Ice Fishing Outing	Adam Trenz
January	24	Comedy Club Fundraiser (Friday night)	Karen Westphal
February	4	General Membership Speaker: Chip Cartwright, Wolverine Tackle Owner	
February	7-9	The Farm - River Fishing Tournament	Phil Bustos
February 27 - March 1		OUTDOOR- RAMA Showplace Novi	Robert Grech/Chris Christoph
March	3	General Membership Meeting	
March	12 – 15	Novi Boat Show	Bob Schulz
March	14	SPORTSMAN'S BANQUET – Burton Manor	MWS Board
March	28	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River/Pier w DS	Adam Trenz/Eric Braden
April	4	New Buffalo Coho Tournament	Dave Hutton/Dennis Cheshure
April	4	Muskegon River Tournament	Phil Bustos
April	7	General Membership Meeting	
April	18	Clinton River Clean Up	Jay Labban
April	25	Detroit River/Lake Erie & St Clair Walleye Invitational	Bill Gagnon/Eric Braden
May	2	Benton Harbor Coho Tournament	Dave Zawacki/Kirk Traver
May	3	Benton Harbor Coho Tournament	Marc & Kirk Traver
May	5	General Membership Meeting	
May	16	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sat	Chris Thompson/Kruszewski
May	17	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sun	Roger Parlett
May	16	Bruin Lake Kayak/Small Boat	Chuck Davis
May	30	Toledo Beach Memorial Walleye/Muskegon Lk Kayak	Bob Schulz & Braden/Childs
June	2	General Membership Meeting	
June	6	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	Brad Allan
June	6	Lake Erie Brest Bay Walleye Tournament	Len Wood
June	13	Grand/South Haven Salmon Pier Event	Eric Braden
June	27	Walleye Tournament (Saginaw Bay or L. Erie)	Fabian Sepulveda
June	27	Big Rapids Kayak	Jason Jones
July	7	Club Summer Picnic	Jim Robertson/Dave Zawacki
July	11	Flint River Kayak	Jason Jones
July	16	Erieau Tournament – Thur. Erieau, Canada	Clyde Schoen
July	18	Erieau Tournament – Sat. Erieau, Canada	Ron Bellemore/Henry Nabors
July	18	McCollum Small Boat/Kayak	Catherine Withrow
July	25	Manistee River Cleanup Day @ High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	30	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Thursday	Gale Frazee/Tom Abdelnour
July	31	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Format tbd	Marc Traver/Dave Hutton
August	1	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Saturday	Dave Zawacki/Dennis Henderson
August	2	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sun	Dennis Kelley
August	4	General Membership Meeting	
August	8	Clinton River Cleanup Day/Betsie River Kayak	Jay Labban/Eric Braden
August	13	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Thu	Richard Spangler
August	15	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sat	Henry Nabors/Dave Hutton
August	16	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sun	Marc Traver
August	22	Lake/Pier/River/Kayak Tournament – Frankfort	Robert Grech / Eric Braden / P. Bustos
August	23	Salmon Tournament – Frankfort	Bill Dodge
September	1	General Membership Meeting	
	12	Frankfort River/Kayak/SB	Phil Bustos/Eric Braden
	19	Muskegon Kayak Salmon	Keith Childs/Eric Braden
	19	Manistee River & Kayak Pier Tournaments	Adam Trenz/Eric Braden
	21	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2021 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/P. Bustos/Nabors/Zawacki
October	3	Manistee Lake/River (Steelhead) Tournaments	Dodge/Hutton/Sepulveda
	6	General Membership Meeting	
	10	Ohio Steelhead Alley (River & Kayak) (incl Elk Creek P.A.)	Phil Bustos/Eric Braden
November	3	General Membership Meeting	
	7	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Dave Zawacki/Eric Braden/ Adam Trenz
	21	PM River or Betsie River Tournament	Jordan Pontoni
December	1	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
	12	Huron River Tournament	Hinchcliff/Brown

**** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC****
7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road
WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org
If you have questions, contact Henry Nabors - HHNabors@gmail.com or call 248 225 4964.

Contact: President Larry Tabaka 313-215-8979 / Membership Director Henry Nabors 248-225-4964

2020 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

2020 Calendar of South Haven Steelheaders Chapter Events

Feb 2020 SHS Ice Tourney – Date TBD based on ice conditions			
	22	Tacklepaloosa Fishing Tackle Swap Meet	South Haven Moose Lodge
March	26	Best Chance Fishing Seminar	South Haven Moose Lodge
April	16	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop	South Haven Moose Lodge
May	15	South Haven Tournament Captains Meeting	South Haven Moose Lodge
May	16-17	South Haven Pro Am Tournament	
June	13	SHS Ladies Tournament	
August	8	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival August 6-9th)	
August	15	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans	
August	22	SHS Merle Morris Tournament	
November	28	SHS River Tournament	
December	5 or 12	SHS Holiday Party 2020	<i>South Haven calendar continued, next column</i>

2020 South Haven ...continued

2020 South Haven Steelheaders Membership Meeting Dates

Note: All membership meetings are held the third Thursday of each month except for March (4th Thursday). Meetings are held at the South Haven Moose Lodge, 1025 East Wells Street, South Haven, MI 49090. Membership meetings start at 7:00pm. For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com

NO JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February	20	Best Chance Fishing Seminar	South Haven Moose Lodge
March	26	Best Chance Fishing Seminar	South Haven Moose Lodge
April	16	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop	Dr. Dan O'Keefe presenting
May	14	Prior to SHS Pro/Am - Captain's Meeting	
June	18	Captain's Meeting	
July	16	Captain's Meeting	
August	20	Captain's Meeting	
September	17	Captain's Meeting	
October	15	Captain's Meeting	
November	4	Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting	
November	19	Captain's Meeting	

NO DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING, due to Holiday Party

2020 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Date	Day	Event	Information	Location
January	9	Annual Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541 601 Riverview Drive Benton Harbor, MI 49022 Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784
February	13	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
March	12	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
April	9	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
May	7-9	Summer Challenge Tournament		www.fishthesummerchallenge.com
June	11	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
July	9	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
August	13	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
August	22	Trolling with the Troops		www.trollingwiththetroops.com
September	10	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
October	8	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
November	12	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
December	5	Winter Challenge Tournament		St. Joseph River

Membership Meetings Held at:
St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022
Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784

Chapter calendars continued on page 26

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2020 TCAS Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

TCAS meets the first Wednesday of each month except July (Cherry Festival) and December (Christmas Party)
Meetings begin at 7 pm at the Traverse City Senior Center, 801 Front St., next door to the Maritime Academy.

2020 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
January				
February				
March	19	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
April	16	6:00 PM	Michigan Sea Grant Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
May	2	6:00 PM	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Need Workers!
May	21	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
			Rossmann-USGS Prey Study for Lake Huron	
Tentative date	May 30	5:30 PM	Fish Fry	Ubyl Foxhunters
June	13	6:00 AM	Veterans fishing outing	Harbor Beach Marina, Contact Kevin Ramsey for details
June	18	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters, President from MSSFA coming to meet club
			Jill Wingfield-Great Lakes Fishery Commission	
July	16	7:30	Ladies Night Meeting - Painting with a twist	
August	20	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
			Dave Fielder-MDNR Saginaw Bay Walleye Models	
August	23	2:00 PM	Pork Roast	Harbor Beach VFW
September	17	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters, Nominations for board members and officers
October	15	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters, Election of Board/Officers
November			No Meeting	
December			No Meeting	

Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.

2020 Thunderbay Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
			TBD

Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.

2020 White River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information	Location
January	8	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
February	6	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
March	5	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
April	2	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
May	7	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
June	4	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
July			No Meeting	
August	6	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
September	3	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
October	1	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
November	5	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
December	3	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW

Note: Meeting dates and times are subject to change – Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.

2020 Membership Drive

There are thousands of fishermen, women and children who need to join in taking care of the Great Lakes and its fishery!

Let's get them to join!

This is a year-long contest. You need not be present to win! For new membership sign-up only!

Here's how it works!

- You (current member) are the sponsor.
- Have the new member fill out the application.
- On the bottom of the application, put your name in "Sponsored By" section.
- For each member signed up by you, you get a ticket.
- Your ticket(s) are put into a pot for a drawing.
- The drawings are held at the April Presidents' meeting.
- There are between 15 - 25 drawings.
- The more tickets in the pot, the more chances to win prizes.

For more information, contact your Chapter Membership Director or mssfamembership@charter.net

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Great Lakes Water Levels, St. Clair River Likely To Rise In 2020

Article from the Great Lakes Basin Report,
A Publication of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council
<http://www.great-lakes.org>

Prepare for higher water levels next year in the Great Lakes and the St. Clair River. That's the word from the St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Director Justin Westmiller addressed the Marysville City Council at its regular meeting on November 25. Assistant Director Mark White visited the St. Clair City Council on November 18. "We are 11 inches higher right now than we were at this time in 2018," Westmiller said. "We're at the lowest point of the year right now and from this point forward water levels will rise."

September saw a lot of rain, resulting in Lake Michigan/Huron – hydrologically one lake – rising to 35 inches above its long-term average and Lake St. Clair 33 inches above its long-term average. "Our office has had quite a few meetings with the USACE and National Weather Service and our big concern is what's coming our way," said White.

Lakes Superior, St. Clair,

Erie and Ontario set all-time records for high water this year; Lake Michigan/Huron missed a record high by an inch. Westmiller said that river levels are likely to be 7 to 12 inches higher next spring and summer than a year ago.

"It's not just St. Clair County," said White. "A lot

of coastal communities in Michigan are being impacted ... by the weather we've had, the amount of precipitation, the amount of snow pack, the amount of melting and runoff, everything that comes from Lake Superior on down has been huge. Predictions are that conditions in the coming year

are going to be probably worse."

In order for the water levels to fall, the Great Lakes Basin would need a warmer than normal winter, in which the lakes experienced little freezing, allowing for accelerated evaporation ... and less snowfall. But forecasters are calling

for a colder than normal winter.

Ice jams in the St. Clair River in the late winter and early spring are a growing concern. "The river can shoot up two-three feet in eight hours," Westmiller said. "Are we going to get first-floor flooding in Marysville like we're going

to get in Clay Township, Algonac, Marine City and East China?" No, he said. St. Clair and Marysville sit relatively high compared to downriver communities. "But we're likely to see seawalls over-topped," Westmiller said. Tributaries of the big river are likely to flood again.



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The Great Lakes Region Predator Challenge is January 24-26, 2020. There are still spots available for more teams, but sign up soon if you want to compete!

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