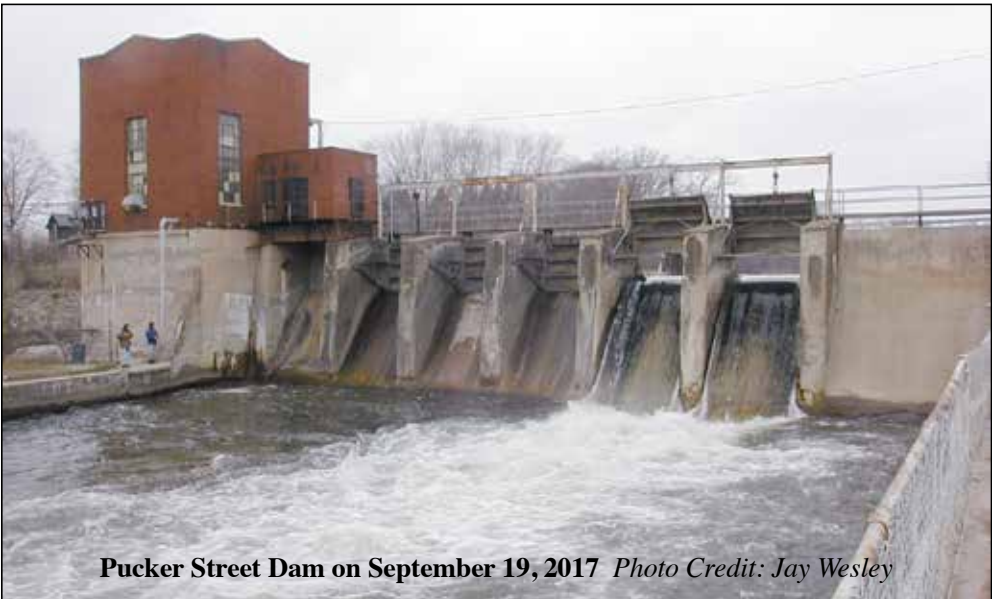




THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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

Volume 65 January/February 2021 No. 1



Pucker Street Dam on September 19, 2017 Photo Credit: Jay Wesley

Dam Out – Steelhead In

By Brian Gunderman
*Southern Lake Michigan Unit
Manager, Michigan Department of Natural Resources -
Fisheries Division*

Steelhead are about to have a lot more territory to explore thanks to an ongoing dam removal project on the Dowagiac River in Berrien County. One of the largest coldwater streams in the region, the Dowagiac flows into the mighty St. Joseph River near the city of Niles. The construction of fish ladders at the Ber-

rien Springs and Buchanan dams on the St. Joseph River have allowed steelhead and salmon to move into the lower Dowagiac since the early 1990s. The impassable Pucker Street Dam has confined these migratory species to the lower three miles of the Dowagiac . . .until now.

Site preparation and powerhouse removal at the Pucker Street Dam started in fall 2019, and the removal of the actual dam structure began in spring 2020.

When the removal is complete, steelhead and salmon will have access to an additional 159 river miles in the Dowagiac River and tributary streams. In addition, fragmented populations of native fish species (such as smallmouth bass and suckers) occurring upstream and downstream of the dam will be reconnected. The dam removal also will restore approximately 1.2 miles of high gradient

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A Step in the Right Direction Toward Control for Dreissenid Mussels

By Jill Wingfield,
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Beth Wanamaker,
Great Lakes Commission

For nearly forty years, invasive mussels have been wreaking havoc on the Great Lakes and their fisheries. While all aquatic invasive species are bad, one could easily argue that the ecological and economic damage caused by dreissenid (zebra and quagga) mussels make them one of the worst. In addition to costing industries in the region billions of dollars in cleanup costs and profoundly altering the food web by filtering out plankton at an alarming rate, dreissenid mussel colonies have also facilitated massive blooms of cladophora, a dark-green algae that has been linked to the deaths of more than 70,000 birds in the Great Lakes area.

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Sleeping Bear Dunes lakeshore , Before (above)
and After (below) Photo Credit: Harvey Bootsma



Paul Vogel with wild female steelhead

Why Wild Steelhead?

By Jim Bedford

It is widely believed by many that Great Lakes steelhead are mostly hatchery fish. A simple put, grow, and take fishery. This turns out to be a very erroneous assumption about our great steelhead fishery. More than half of the steelhead in Michigan are wild.

In general, life has gotten tougher for steelhead in recent years. The explosion of Quagga and zebra mussel numbers have altered the food chain by greatly reducing phyto- and zoo-plankton levels in the lakes. These small creatures are the basis of life in the Great Lakes. Steelhead and salmon smolts feed primarily on plankton and larval bait fish when they arrive in the big lakes

on their spring migration. Alewives diet is primarily plankton throughout their lives so their numbers are very depressed right now. With baitfish or prey fish numbers down there are a lot of hungry predators at the river mouths when the smolts arrive in May and early June. And, guess what, adult steelhead and salmon have no problem becoming cannibals when bait fish are scarce.

Naturally reproduced steelhead smolts are hugely better at dodging predators and finding food than the hatchery smolts. These fish have spent two or three years in their natal streams avoiding predators and finding enough to eat. Conversely, hatchery smolts are fed daily and usually protected from predators. This

easy life helps them grow to smolting size in just one year but has them woefully unprepared for survival in the wild.

This difference in survival was vividly demonstrated in Prairie Creek, a tributary to the Grand River in southern Michigan. A number of years ago, Michigan's hatchery steelhead all received a right pectoral fin clip. About 5,000 steelhead smolts are planted in this stream each year. Around the same time a study was done on the creek

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The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!

"Wild"

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and it was determined that between 3,000 and 5,000 wild smolts were produced annually by the stream. Once the time came that all of the hatchery fish should have been clipped it was determined that well over 90% of the returning steelhead were wild fish. In my personal catch it was over 95%.

It is significant that smolts from Prairie Creek have a long, tough trip to Lake Michigan. About 100 miles of the Grand River that contains very healthy populations of predators like smallmouth bass, walleyes, pike, and catfish, both channel and flathead, makes for a real gauntlet for these 7-8" rainbows. This fishery speaks volumes about the fitness of wild steelhead to become adult steelhead.

Starting in 2018 all hatchery steelhead were mass marked with an adipose fin clip by the states bordering Lake Michigan. This will continue until we will be able to tell with some certainty whether the steelhead we just landed was wild or of hatchery origin. The only reason we will not be able to tell with complete certainty is that Ontario will not be marking all the hatchery fish they stock in their Lake Huron

tributaries. Not only will this affect the Lake Huron tributaries but also, possibly some Lake Michigan streams because we know that fish can freely move through the Straits of Mackinac. The Lake Erie and Ontario states and Ontario are not currently marking their hatchery steelhead but are studying the possibility of doing so in the future.

Steelhead are a fine table fish, whether eaten fresh or smoked and there are relatively few situations where releasing them is mandatory in the Great Lakes. Like coho, Atlantic and chinook salmon, brown and lake trout, and splake, steelhead are stocked for a put, grow, and take fishery. However, releasing some of your catch will help to maintain and improve the fine sport fishery in our Great Lakes. In fact when fishing for wild trout and steelhead or any large predator fish, releasing most or all of your catch is the best idea in my opinion. With the likely continued decline of salmon in Lakes Michigan and Huron and increased pressure on other species like steelhead, catch and release will be even more important for a good fishery.

When you do decide to keep fish for the table being selective can make for a better meal and help sustain a good fishery. Al-



Author Jim Bedford with a deer season hatchery summer run steelhead

most always smaller fish will taste better than the trophies. Let the big fish spawn and keep the smaller but legal fish for the pan. When harvesting steelhead, remember that the males can fertilize the eggs of several females. Producing the milt also takes less out of the fish than making the eggs so the flesh of the males will be firmer. So keep a small male for the table or smoker and let the females go.

Successful releasing of

fish begins with the catching. Never fight a fish to exhaustion. Use sturdy enough tackle to subdue your quarry in a relatively short amount of time. Pressuring the fish from the side with your rod rather than lifting it to the surface will tire it faster and enable you quickly conquer large fish with relatively light tackle. When lifting fish with your rod, you are mostly fighting gravity and not tiring the fish.

Always keep the han-

dling of the fish to a minimum. For small fish that you can control by lifting from the water or grabbing your line, simply grab the hook, fly, or lure with your forceps and shake the fish free. If you need to handle the fish wet your hand first and turn it upside down to quiet it before removing the hook. A net will greatly speed the landing of large fish. Use it as a corral and leave the net bag in the water to minimize any abrasion damage or protective slime removal. Nets are now available with mesh material that is really easy on the fish. If you must "beach" a large fish never drag it up on dry land. Find a shallow area where you can force the fish on its side but still have several inches of cushioning water. If you can't get to the fish from a large boat, plan on having a large cooler half full of water to set the net bag and fish in when you plan to release it.

Along with a net, a pair of forceps (or needle nose pliers for large fish) should be a mandatory part of every angler's equipment. Trying to manually unhook a fish can be hard on the fish and, when fly fishing or using soft plastics, hard on your fly or lure. And, if the fish has sharp teeth like all members of the trout and salmon family, your fingers are likely to be scratched or punctured. Barbless hooks also help but even they can be stubborn at times and sometimes it is hard to pinch down those barbs after a big fish has prematurely dislodged a lure or weighted fly.

There will be times when your lure or bait is taken deeply and the unhooking becomes more difficult. While it is important to avoid the eyes and gills when handling fish there will be times when using the gill cover as a handle is the best way to unhook and release them. With a wet hand carefully slide your fingers along the inside of the gill plate and take a firm grip. The back of your wet fingers may graze some gill filaments but will do no harm. Remember these organs are designed to slough off sand and silt and other foreign objects suspended in the water that pass by and through the gills when the steelhead breathes. When you grasp the gill cover as a handle the mouth will open up and let you see where the fish is hooked. Carefully push down to make room for the barb and then back out the hook. If possible, keep most of the steelhead in the water during the unhooking process and if you are struggling a bit to remove the hook, give yourself and the steelhead a break by putting the fish back in the water (in the net).

Usually your fish will be ready to take off after being unhooked but if it needs some resuscitation always take time to do this. Gently cradling the fish facing into slow current is best. If you are fishing in

a lake slowly move the fish forward until it recovers. Moving the fish backwards is counterproductive as the fish can't breathe when moved backwards.

Releasing that steelhead of a lifetime can be tough to do, especially if you are fishing by yourself. The solution to being able to let trophy fish swim away is to shoot them first. A camera is always part of my gear, ready to capture a deer drinking at streamside, an eagle watching me fish, a sunrise or sunset on a lake, or a freshly caught beauty of a fish. Obviously, almost all of us are carrying mobile phone with us now and, of course, they also take good photos. When taking a picture of a fish always have everything ready before you lift the fish out of the water. Of course, if you are taking a picture of yourself with the timer this will be automatic.

Measuring the length and girth of the fish along with a clear side view photo will allow you to have a replica mount made of your trophy. While you can calculate an estimate of your fish's weight with these measurements it is fun to know the actual weight. This is easy to do using your net. Simply hook your scales on meshes on the opposite sides of the fish and weigh it as your big steelhead is cradled in your net. Then just subtract the weight of the net or suspend the net rim with your other hand so that it is not being weighed. In recent years the style of hand-held scales with a gripper on one end has become very popular. I think weighing fish this way is very hard on them, especially large specimens. Fish are normally horizontal in water that is approximately the same density that they are. They use their swim bladder to maintain neutral buoyancy. While I am not aware of any studies documenting the fact, I believe that suspending large fish vertically in the air could harm their internal organs. This would be especially likely when fish are on their spawning run and their sexual organs are near maturity. You can still use these grip scales to weigh fish supported by the net.

As life gets tougher for steelhead in the Great Lakes, I think we should strongly consider releasing all of the wild fish we catch. In the states of California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska and the province of British Columbia, the release of wild steelhead is almost always mandatory and virtually all hatchery steelhead are marked. On the few rivers where wild steelhead can still be retained, the daily limit is one and the season limit of wild fish in 3 or 4. Usually the daily limit on hatchery steelhead is two with a season limit of 20 or less. Obviously the limits on steelhead in the Great Lakes are

"Wild"

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“Wild”**Continued from page 2**

much more liberal, usually 3 or 5 per day and no season limit. This angler is worried that our great steelhead fishery can't continue with such liberal limits along with the tremendous pressure the environment and dwindling food supply is putting on these great fish. Releasing all the wild fish and keeping only the occasional male steelhead will go a long way toward preserving our steelhead fishery. As a final note, if you are fishing streams where hatchery steelhead

are not marked, remember that the dorsal fin is commonly worn down or has bent rays in hatchery steelhead. Other signs are worn pelvic or ventral fins.

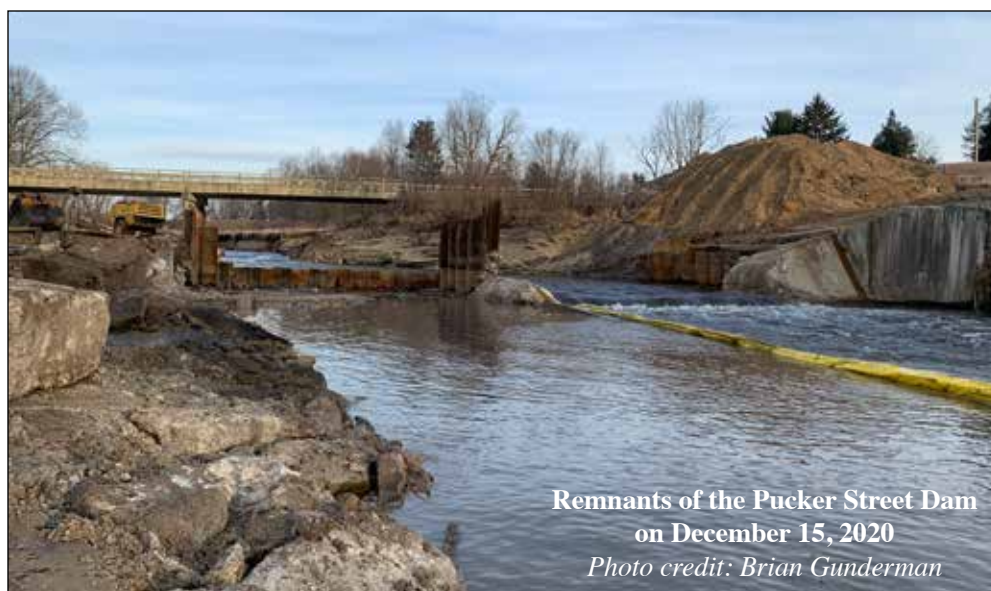
Releasing a large, wild steelhead is one of the most satisfying things you can do as an angler!

Note: As described in the previous edition of the GLSFN the DNR and Michigan Sea Grant have created an angler diary program for angler's to report their catches with fin clip information. See the sidebar for a reminder about this program. As I write this in mid-November I

have logged 40 steelhead into this program, most were caught in the Grand River, and seven were clipped. Four of the clipped fish appeared to be summer run steelhead based on their coloration and shape. They were likely strays from the St. Joseph River as the summer steelhead stocked the Manistee River also have their right ventral fin clipped.



Bob Bryans with big male steelhead from the upper Grand River



Remnants of the Pucker Street Dam
on December 15, 2020
Photo credit: Brian Gunderman

**“Dam Removal”
Continued from page 1**

stream habitat in the former reservoir, exposing more gravel substrate for fish spawning and invertebrate (i.e., fish food) production.

To truly appreciate the significance and challenges associated with this dam removal project, you need to know a little bit about the dam's history.

The steep rapids on the Dowagiac River near the existing Pucker Street bridge have been a magnet for people looking to harness the river's power for industrial purposes. In 1828, a wooden dam was constructed at this location to power a mill. The “modern” concrete dam was built a short distance downstream of the wooden dam in 1928 to generate electricity for the City of Niles. The reservoir behind the dam filled with sediment, was dredged, and then filled again until the dam became less profitable to operate. Electrical generation ceased in 1995. In 1999, the City decided to permanently drop the water elevation in the reservoir by five feet to reduce stress on the aging dam. The amount of sand that moved downstream as a result of the 1999 drawdown

exceeded expectations, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) installed a sediment trap on the upstream side of the dam to remove some of this sand. Subsequent monitoring conducted at seven sites downstream of the dam indicated that the river was able to evacuate most of the sand by July 2000.

Since 1999, the City, DNR, and other partners have had numerous conversations about the future of the Pucker Street Dam. In 2013, the City concluded that rehabilitating the dam to produce electricity was not likely to be economically viable and began the dam removal planning process. Removing a structure as large as the Pucker Street Dam is a major undertaking, so a diverse team was assembled to help coordinate the project and find funding sources. Funding for the dam removal has come from a variety of sources including the City of Niles, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, DNR, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The estimated price tag for the removal is around \$12 million.

One of the key issues that the dam removal team has had to address is management of the huge volume of sediment that has accumulated behind the dam over its long history. Several measures have been incorporated into the removal design to reduce and monitor downstream sediment transport. A sediment trap was excavated between the dam and the Pucker Street bridge before any drawdowns occurred. The lowering of the dam has been accomplished through multiple small drawdowns rather than one large drawdown event. The sediments behind the dam also are being excavated to create a new pilot channel for the stream through the former reservoir. This excavation work began at the upper end of the impoundment. As of mid-December 2020, the upper half of the pilot channel has been excavated. The crew will continue to excavate sediment throughout the winter. The pilot channel is anticipated to evolve into a more natural and diverse segment as the water power and large wood shape the river form.

Downstream sediment transport monitoring has

consisted of three tiers. The engineering firm overseeing the dam removal (Wightman & Associates, Inc.) works with City staff to measure turbidity upstream and downstream of the project area to detect sediment suspended in the water column. To detect sediment movement along the stream bed, the DNR and staff from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Department of Natural Resources routinely measure stream bed elevations at two transects downstream of the dam near Losensky Park. The City also periodically conducts drone flights over the project area to check for bank failures. Additional visual monitoring of sediment deposition in the lower Dowagiac River is being conducted by volunteers.

With every dam removal, there is a tradeoff of a short-term disruption to the system in exchange for long-term ecological and recreational benefits. In the case of the Pucker Street Dam, the steelhead and salmon runs attract many anglers to Losensky Park every spring and fall. In September-November 2020, the City of Niles and their contractors were able to install fencing and keep a portion of the park open to anglers. As the project has progressed and more of the excavation is occurring in the proximity of the park, human safety and liability concerns made it necessary to close the park in December 2020. It is anticipated that this closure will extend through the spring steelhead run. If all goes as planned, the dam removal will be complete and the park will be reopened for the fall 2021 salmon and steelhead runs.

It is important to note that there are new options opening up for anglers wanting to chase steelhead on the Dowagiac River in 2021. For the first time, steelhead running up the river in the spring will be able to move upstream past the Pucker Street Dam. Anglers can access the river at Arthur Dodd Memorial County Park or the DNR boating access site off Peavine Street. The Dowagiac River is a Type 4 trout stream that is open to fishing year-round. (The possession season for steelhead

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MSSFA PRESIDENT Tim Stegeman

2020 was a difficult year to navigate for not only the entire nation but also for the MSSFA. What was once status quo for our chapters across the state of having monthly meetings with guest speakers, fishing tournaments, sports shows, banquets and other community service activities went out the window with the China virus restrictions being imposed upon all of us.

All this at a time when it is no secret that demographics have changed for non-profit organizations across the board and a vast majority of these groups have been experiencing an ongoing decline in membership and those willing to be leaders of these very organizations that provide important and useful services that really cannot be achieved any other way.

There is and has been a trend of people not joining organizations for a variety of reasons. When considering the reasons why, we hear things such as, "the demands on their family lives", "hectic pace of life" and "time limitations".

In the grand scheme of things, Covid, as well as having a politically divided country and the uncertainties that accompany it, have caused many Michiganders, and understandably so, to throw their hands up and step away from their civic organizations as well as other local associations.

We have a culture and world where time is such a valuable commodity, people tend to spend their extra time on family-oriented activities such as after school programs like sports, dance classes, music lessons and weekend activities with their families. They spend time on things that are in their direct sphere of influence while the rest of the world rotates around them. Throw in a Covid pandemic where much of these activities came to a screeching halt and family members within family groups are forced to isolate from one another, it is easy to understand why Michigan fishing license sales increased 9% in 2020 to 1.2 million licenses. Michigan has a population of around 10 million. This means that about 1 in 10 Michiganders are anglers at heart. That's a lot.

There are a variety of reasons why people fish. To list a few: Conservation/management minded, stress relief, social bonding, health benefits, recreation, self-fulfillment, boost the economy, fish for food and for the thrill.

While many of our chapters of the MSSFA are civic minded, like holding

community events to raise money for local charities, these noble efforts are secondary to the primary mission of the MSSFA which is to "Educate the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing in the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers".

The MSSFA exists to make sure there is a viable sports fishery for anglers. Yet, while the MSSFA is fighting for all the anglers in the state by advocating in Lansing for those issues that will protect our sport fishery like the Commercial Fishing Bills and Tribal Consent Decree, the MSSFA did not enjoy a 9% increase in membership in 2020. It is difficult to fathom why license purchases

increased in 2020, but MSSFA membership declined.

Are anglers apathetic to the macro issues facing the fishery? Our fishery is continually changing as a result of human interaction and we absolutely need eyes and ears on the ground, all the time, in order to insure we keep our invaluable sports fishery. Either we are not doing a good enough job of educating anglers about the importance of having a unified voice in Lansing, and seat at the table, for the macro fishery issues or we allow ourselves to be misled by the need for chapters to be able to conduct time-honored activities as being more important to those who are considering why to join MSSFA.

If the latter is the reason,

we seriously need to reconsider how we can continue to provide membership value at the local level in order to continue to be relevant as an organization on the macro fishery issues where "we believe the quality of fishing reflects the quality of living."

At a minimum, the two major historic fishery issues facing Michigan anglers right now, the potential exploitation of game fish and the right to share the resource equally, are at risk. All 1.2 million Michigan anglers need to rally around and add their voice to the roll of concern. If those 1.2 million anglers don't want to add their name to the MSSFA membership roll or donate to the MSSFA's Share the Resource



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

campaign where the MSSFA does the work for them, they need to figure out how they are going to be able to have a viable sports fishery going forward. Standing around and hoping somebody else comes to the rescue is prelude to disaster.

If Michigan anglers use Covid and time constraint excuses as a crutch for not being engaged this year, 2021 will be a lost cause for the sport fishery before it even starts. Like dominoes falling, all subsequent years

will see the resource shrink to point where buying a fishing license becomes a questionable proposition. It is time for those 1.2 million anglers to decide whether or not they too believe the quality of fishing reflects the quality of living or not. Please do what you can to help educate anglers about this pivotal point in time when historic Great Lakes fishery issue decisions are taking place right before our eyes.

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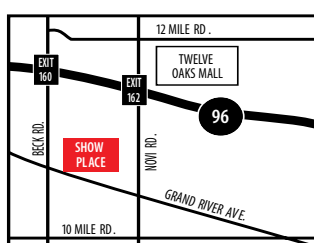
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Dennis Eade, Executive Director
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The pandemic has put a strain on many businesses. But some industries are booming, and that includes fishing and boating - especially here in Michigan. New data from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Marketing Division shows that during the pandemic more Michiganders have decided to take up fishing.

Across the country, there's been an increase of more than three million fishing licenses compared to last year. In our state,

people are fishing a lot more than they were last year, as Michigan resident fishing license sales are up over 10 percent. The most representative demographic, 15 to 45 year old males, is growing faster than any other. Women anglers are up 13% as they continue to learn how much fun sportfishing can be.

"People are getting in the outdoors, they're finding activities that they need and want to get back into, just so they're not cooped up in the house and feeling

claustrophobic", according to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's latest report.

While more Michiganders are fishing, non-resident license sales are down in our state. At the start of the pandemic, many states saw significant deficits due to all the travel restrictions in place. The tourism industry has been hard hit and we need to support those businesses until we can get vaccinated and be liberated from all these restrictions.

MSSFA has been busy working hard to get the Commercial Fishing Statue updated and the House Bills (HB's 4567-4569) passed out of the Senate Natural Resources Committee. We are working with a coalition of sportfishing associations to bring pressure on the

senate committee members to pass the bills as passed in the House and bring them to the floor of the Senate for a vote. Much to our chagrin, Chairman Mc Broom has taken up valuable time trying to placate the commercial fishing interests in his district by drafting first a report and then amendments to the bills. We were disappointed to receive a list of 93 amendments, three weeks after the adoption of the Chairman's workgroup report, and only days prior to a committee hearing. The proposed amendments are detailed and complex and took some time to prepare after many months of meetings with stakeholders. They require significant time, examination and deliberation to fully vet. Time which we

do not believe exists given the rapid approaching end of the legislative session.

From the onset of discussions, MSSFA and the other recreational angler associations have made very clear our opposition to statutorily allowing commercial harvest of game fish species. Unfortunately, this priority appears to have been dismissed in the formulation of the proposed amendments, with the inclusion of language to facilitate the commercial harvest of perch, walleye, and lake trout. As contemplated, these amendments would make Michigan the only Great Lakes state to allow commercial harvest of lake trout and walleye in the lower Great Lakes.

Since the beginning of this near decade-long pro-

cess, members of the recreational angling community have come to the table offering reasonable solutions to complex issues, often-times reaching outside our comfort zone in hopes of gaining consensus. However, throughout we have held firmly to a position of protecting game fish species such as lake trout, walleye and yellow perch from commercial nets and help form policies that ensure commercial fishers are responsible and conscientious corporate citizens. A number of these amendments may make it difficult to have reliable enforcement of these statutory provisions or promulgated rules, so without compliance the Great Lakes fishery is at risk. As proposed, these extensive amendments widen the divide rather than seek to honestly close it through reasonable compromise. There are several broad concepts within the Committee Chairman's report that as a group we could work towards compromise, including commercial fishing license fees, a tiered penalty system for violations, and more flexible net tending rules. Perhaps if more time was available to collaborate on the amendments, more workable strategies could have been identified. Unfortunately, as proposed these amendments, with few exceptions, are not supportable, and we will oppose them as presented.

To increase the gravity of getting this new updated Commercial Fishing Statue passed, DNR Director Eichinger introduced Fisheries Order 243.21 at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. That order was approved and signed.

For some period of time (decades), the DNR has allowed some commercial fishing/netting activity that exceeded what state statute allowed. Frankly, these things likely happen in all state departments - as times change and statutes become obsolete - there is also some gray area that departments use to continue to maintain their authority, but allow some flexibility. This is exactly the reason that the DNR has been wanting to update the commercial fishing statute...to provide a better fee structure, promote conservation, update licensing etc.

As it turns out, state statue only allows commercial netting to a depth of 80 feet. Fisheries orders for years have allowed commercial netting up to 150 of

"MSSFA"
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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.

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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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43	Sun Coast Marine	1172 68th Street	South Haven	MI		Member discount
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2021 Tentative Print Schedule

Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/11/20	01/04/21
2	02/12/21	03/03/21
3	04/13/21	05/03/21
4	06/14/21	07/02/21
5	08/13/21	09/01/21
6	10/08/21	10/29/21

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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

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Wednesday, February 17, 2021
via ZOOM – 7 PM

Saturday, April 10, 2021
Michigan Historical Library and Museum,
01 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI *(Pending State Authorization)*

Wednesday, June 16, 2021
MUCC, via ZOOM – 7 PM

Wednesday, August 18, 2021
MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7 PM

Wednesday, October 20, 2021
MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7 PM

Wednesday, December 15, 2021
MUCC, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7 PM

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Offshore Classic Welcomes Fishermen Back to Ludington

Tournament Runs July 12-18

Distinguished as one of the best sportfishing ports on the Great Lakes, Ludington will once again welcome anglers for the Ludington Offshore Classic/Big Boys Tournament, July 12-18.

This will mark the 19th year for the contest, which draws fishermen from all over the region to compete for large cash prizes and bragging rights.

The Ludington competition has earned a reputation for being one of the largest and respected on the tournament trail. In 2020, anglers brought in hundreds of pounds of salmon and trout from Lake Michigan during the week-long tournament. Adverse weather conditions and a global pandemic did not stop fishing action off the coast of this historical city. Only one day of fishing was cancelled, and organizers provided a safe, drive-through weigh-in system after fishing concluded each day.

The competition this summer will again feature events for pros, amateurs, ladies and youth -- and even have payouts for catching the "Big Fish" in each category.

Big Boys Tournament

Registrants in this pro-only contest will be judged on the total pounds of fish brought in over two days, July 13-14, with fishing from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Last year, the Ludington team, Hiatus Charters, was able to haul in 236.75 pounds of fish, earning it an impressive \$21,000 payout.

"We had a really good tournament. We had a solid plan, and when we had to make a move, they proved to be good decisions," said winning Hiatus captain, Adam Knudsen. "Both days we had very good-quality lake trout. Day one we needed one more silver fish, so we ran back to the pier heads. We set up on the north wall at 1:40 p.m. We hit a 10-pound steelhead at 1:45 p.m. to finish our 12-fish limit."

"Day two we had all 12 fish at 10:01 a.m. Weather really wasn't much of a factor."

Knudsen said the crew is always happy to hit the limit for weigh-in.

"Day one we knew we didn't have a monster box, but knew fishing was tough for most people. After the weigh-in, we were sitting very well going into Day

two. We were pretty sure a 12-fish limit with the same quality of lake trout would be hard to beat, so that was our goal."

"The Ludington tournament is our favorite to fish. We plan on fishing it every year."

Offshore Classic

The 2020 Offshore Classic Pro/Am was marked by some unsettled weather conditions and forced organizers to cut short the first day of fishing. Boats set out at 6 a.m. but were called in early due to increasing, high-wave action.

Then, Day two was cancelled altogether when storms rolled in across the lake. Tournament scores had been tabulated, and winners were announced based on just four hours of fishing on Day 1.

Fishing the Ludington tournament for the 16th year, Sportsmen II out of Pentwater took home the handsome \$10,000 prize.

"We fished for just four and a half hours," said Sportsmen II Captain Brent Daggett. "We had a pretty good idea that we would end up coming in early, so I guess having a home-court advantage helped. We

didn't go very far; we just tried to get as many fish as we could."

"We caught two big kings, and then we tried to catch as many lake trout as we could. A shortened time like that played into our hands."

"We will definitely be back for all four tournaments. We missed out on all of the tournaments in Michigan City, St. Joseph and Grand Haven (cancelled due to COVID) -- so just to have the tournament here was wonderful."

This year the Pro/Am contest will be held Saturday and Sunday, July 17-18.

Ruboy Thursday, Youth/Ladies Day

Between the two larger contests will be the Ruboy Shoot-out on Thursday, July 15, as well as the youth and ladies competitions on Friday, July 16.

The Ruboy event is a minimal-rule contest which draws a lot of boats and relaxing fun, sponsored by Dreamweaver Lures. Shinnin' Times walked away with \$3,000 in winnings in 2020.

Last year's tournament saw the return of the youth

and ladies events, after they had been called off due to turbulent weather two years in a row prior to that.

Sportsmen II was the winner of the ladies competition, taking home a \$1,000 prize, and Chase Anderson won \$500 for his 28.1-pound fish in the youth contest.

Great Place to Visit

With great marinas, award-winning beaches and a vibrant downtown, Ludington offers a special place to visit during tournament week. Fishermen and their families enjoy tournament headquarters at Waterfront Park and its proximity to Downtown Ludington and Lake Michigan.

"Ludington has long been a popular fishing and leisure vacation destina-

tion," said Brandy Miller, President/CEO of the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce. "Our community is the perfect combination of unspoiled natural resources and family-fun. We look forward to hosting fishermen in our community and showing them a good time and great competition."

2021 Fishing Tournament Schedule of Events

- July 12** - Big Boy Captains Meeting
- July 13-14** - Big Boys Tournament & Big Fish
- July 15** - Ruboy Thursday Shoot-Out & Big Fish
- July 16** - Youth Classic Tournament, Ladies Pro/Am & Big Fish
- July 17-18** - Ludington Offshore Classic Pro/Am Tournament & Big Fish



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In Memory of James L. Vander Mass

1941-2020

In remembering Jim VanderMaas, his mantra stands out...“Family and Fishing”. He made time for both earnestly and introduced his two children early on. Son, Jim Jr. remembers him being one of the first on the water with a bass boat in the 70’s and folks asking to take pictures of it. He started big lake fishing in ’79 when he bought a an old 21’ Larsen and moved up to a new 21’ StarCraft Islander in ’81, followed by a 29’ Chris Craft and then his ultimate fishing boat, a 31’ Tiara Open which he fished until he downsize to a 21’ Lund when he reached his 70’s.

Jim and his wife Ellen found their way down to the Florida Keys in the winter and stayed at Geiger Key not far from Key West where he fished for yellow fin, red fish, snapper and anything else the ocean would serve up for table fare from a center console he stored in the off season. Later they moved to Marco Island which offered even more amenities.

Jim’s involvement with the Steelheaders started in the late 80’s when he became a member of the Lake Michigan Fishery Advisors Committee representing MSSFA. He worked tirelessly on getting hatchery funding for the DNR for upgrades to Ogden State Hatchery as well as Platte River, Wolf

Lake and Thompson State Hatcheries. From 1994 to 1997 he worked with Kelly Smith, who became Fisheries Chief in May of 1997, to get approval for \$18 million dollars from the state’s general fund to make the improvements. He also was a strong advocate for sport fishermen’s right to keep five salmon and two trout as the daily bag limit but he always deferred to science based fishery management of the resource rather than what may be more acceptable to other stakeholders. It led to a more scientifically based predator/prey ratio based system rather than the red flag system which was the tool used in 80’s.

In 1997, Jim was elected president of the Michigan Steelheaders and also later served as the citizen advisor to the Tribal Law Enforcement Committee. This came after he represented MSSFA on the Ami-

ci Group negotiating team that successfully achieved the 2000 Consent Decree with the five tribes in Northern Michigan, and the State and Federal governments. Steve Schultz, who was the lawyer representing the sport fishermen said that Jim was “no shrinking violet when it came to calling out the DNR when they failed to represent the sport fishermen’s interests in the negotiations”. His efforts assured that we could protect salmon and trout and equally share the allowable catch lake trout resource with the tribes. Jim never missed a negotiations meeting and worked with the Thunder Bay Steelheaders in Alpena to meet separately with the Bay Mills and Sault Tribe representatives to iron out differences as the negotiations progressed. Kelly Smith once said, “My life was made much easier during my tenure as Chief

because of Jim Vander Maas.”

Jim went on to become Chairman of the Amici Group, the Coalition to Protect Michigan’s Resources in 2015, in anticipation of a new 2020 Consent Decree with the tribes going forward. He mentored the team who would participate in the negotiations for the coalition.

Dr. Howard Tanner, who is often referred to as the “father of Great Lakes salmon fishery” after successfully introducing Pacific salmon into the Great Lakes in 1966, remembers Jim as an avid fisherman and a strong voice for the sport fishery.

Help us honor Jim’s legacy. Memorial donations should be made to MSSFA, P.O. Box 8034, Holland, MI 49424. Or go to MSSFA.org and click on support MSSFA and use paypal or credit card to donate to the



general fund.

With Jim’s passing the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association has lost one of its longest serving advocates for the sport fishery and pil-

lar of the association. He will be sadly missed but always revered for his leadership and contributions to sportfishing on behalf of the Michigan Steelheaders.

“MSSFA”

Continued from page 5

depth. Also in fisheries orders have been the ability to offer commercial research/science permits (this is what the Rueleau operation in upper Lake Michigan uses for their trawl nets). The state statute does not allow the commercial take of suckers or chubs, though previous orders have. The statute also does not allow a rough fish fishery in Lake Erie.

So what does all of this mean? As of right now, there is no longer a commercial Whitefish fishery in Michigan in water deeper than 80 feet (pretty much all of the netting is done between 80-150 feet). There is no or very little rough fish netting in Lake Erie that is allowed, and no whitefish operations in Lake Erie are legal. The existing commercial trawling operation in upper Lake Michigan is no longer allowed.

All commercial fishing regulations have now been reverted to only what the state statute explicitly says is legal.

So, as of the writing of this report, it is likely that the Commercial Fishing season in 2021 is in serious jeopardy unless a new commercial fishing statute is passed in the Senate.

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ICE FISHING - OPEN WATER SIMILARITIES

By Bob Jensen

There are certainly major differences between open water fishing and ice fishing, but once we get past the obvious differences, it's important to recognize the similarities. If we keep those similarities in mind, we will be more successful anglers on the ice or on open water. Here are some of the similarities that I've recognized through more than five decades of fishing.

Let's get the easy one out of the way first. If you want to catch fish, first you've got to find them. Open water or through the ice, that's a given.

Once we find them, we need to present a lure that the fish are willing to eat. Lure color can be a very important consideration at times. Open water or ice, I still start with the clear water/natural appearing bait, stained water/bright bait concept. However, through the ice, I have found that baits that glow can be super-productive at times. Those times are mostly during low light and in stained water. I had the opportunity to experiment with some of the first baits that were made with paint that glowed. We learned early on that baits that glow very often made a notice-

able difference in fish reaction. They liked it better. Mostly walleyes and crappies. I think that baits that glow are more productive under the ice than in open water, but I haven't fished open water with glow baits as much. That's because, as far as I know, there are more glow baits designed for ice-fishing than open water fishing. There are several glow patterns in the Genz Drop Series of jigs that panfish really seem to like.

Ice and snow on the ice, as well as the lower angle of the sun, reduces light penetration in the winter. However, in many situations there is still a significant increase in fish activity during the low light hours of dawn and dusk. The mid-day bite in the winter, day-in and day-out, might be better than the mid-day bite in the summer, but those low-light hours, ice fishing or open water, if you have to choose a time to go fishing, are the times to choose.

Fish can feel weather changes under the ice just like they can in open water. A person might think that that layer of ice would reduce the effects of weather, but those bright crisp days, summer or winter, can make for tough fishing.

Fishing pressure affects



Ice fishing and open water guide Kevan Paul with a big white bass that he took through the ice on a tiny jig.

fish under the ice just as it affects fish in open water. If an area gets pounded too hard, the fish get finicky or they move. Much of the time it's better to find an area that maybe doesn't have as many fish, but also has less fishing pressure. Consider moving to a dif-

ferent lake that isn't as good of a fishery, but also doesn't have the fishing pressure.

Fish will also become conditioned to lures and lure colors. If everyone is using the same style of lure and they're not having much action, try something else. Something bigger or

smaller, a different color, maybe move it faster or slower. Or try something completely different.

Boat traffic on open water can shut the fish down. So can vehicle traffic on the ice. I have a couple of ice fishing friends, they're very successful ice anglers,

that get a little cranky when someone in a pickup drives to within a few feet of the hole they're fishing, to see if "anything's bitin'". My friend usually responds, "They were but they probably won't be anymore". Noise will turn fish off.

Last thing: Line visibility. Ice fishing or open water, line visibility is an important consideration, but to many anglers, it's more of a consideration under the ice. In open water we're often casting or trolling. Under the ice, our bait isn't moving as much. The fish can get a closer look at it, and a too visible line will prevent fish from biting. Also, when ice fishing we often use lures much smaller than we do in open water, and small diameter line works better with tiny lures.

Open water fishing and ice fishing certain have their differences, but they also have some similarities. Be aware of those similarities and you'll catch more fish year 'round.

To see new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, fishing articles and fishing videos, go to fishingthemidwest.com





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2021 Manistee County Event Schedule



presented by:
Manistee County Sport Fishing Association

June 25-27, 2021



MCSFA
Budweiser
Pro-Am

www.MCSFA.org

July 23-25, 2021



www.tournamenttrail.net/manistee-splash

August 13-15, 2021

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August 20-22, 2021



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Be Sure to check out these other MCSFA events:

- Spring Banquet - Sat. May 1
- Small Boat Tournament - Sat. May 1
- Salmon Derby - May 29 thru Sept. 6
- Kids Fish - Wed. June 23

Find Out More: www.MCSFA.org

2021 Saugatuck Fishing Tournament Humminbird/Cannon Big Lake Classic

The 2021 Saugatuck Big Lake Classic will be held on Friday, August 6th – Sunday, August 8th. Boats will be allowed to leave from Saugatuck, South Haven and Holland.

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association committee would like to thank many people for making the 2020 Tournament happen. Thank you to the Saugatuck City Council, Allegan County Sheriff Department and to the Allegan County Health Department that helped support the efforts by all of those that helped with the Tournament during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Tournament was spread out along the Kalamazoo River so as to avoid crowds of people gathering at one site.

Tournament Participation for the 2020 tournament (Due to the Covid-19) was 55 boats, of which 14 were Pro's and 35 fished in the Am division we had 6 boats fish the Big Fish Tournament only. Salmon were throughout the lake and limit catches were caught both days of the tournament. Payouts to the fishing teams was at a return of 170% of entry fees paid. The Pro division paid out 6 places and the Amateur division paid 20 places. Big Fish paid 15 places.

The changes made by the 2020 - Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association committee did make a significant change for the Amateur Division in the 2020 tournament, 35 teams entered the tournament and 20 teams cashed. Catch 15 fish- Weigh biggest 5 fish. This will be the same for the 2021 Tournament.

Details for the One Day "Spectators Pretournament Shootout":

Friday August 6th – Set lines at 6:00am, DNR Rules.

Weigh in will be at Spectators Restaurant on Blue Star Highway just north of Saugatuck. Bring your 5 biggest fish. Must be in line by 3:00pm. Entry fee \$100 per boat. 100% pay-back for this event. Check the box on the Entry form or contact one of the Committee members by 6:00am Friday August 6th.

2021: Dual Port Tournament- South Haven and Saugatuck –

Overall scores from both Tournaments will be combined and a Champion will be Crowned the Dual Port Tournament Champion! Daily Prizes for both Tournaments will be awarded each day to participating teams. Both Pro boats and AM boats will be eligible to enter this Dual event. Watch for more information on both South Haven and Saugatuck Websites for this event soon.

Saugatuck

2021 Tournament:

"Pro Division – Observers are Required"

Both Pro and Am divisions "9 Trout Max"

SAME: FOR Saugatuck Am Division 2021 – catch 15/ weigh 5 fish

The 4th Annual "DENNY ALLEN MEMORIAL" big fish contest will have a guaranteed first place payout of \$1,000, Sponsored by Jet's Pizza of Holland, Mi. All boats can enter this special event in which any and all boats can try for that ONE big fish over the two-day tournament, one fish may be weighed per day. This will be a \$50 entry and 15 places will be paid. A boat may enter this contest without participating in the Pro or Amateur division if they so desire.

The 2021 Humminbird/Cannon Tournament is planned for Saturday, August 7th and Sunday, August 8th, with the Captains meeting Friday, August 6th in downtown Saugatuck. Boats will be able to dock and leave and return to their docks in Saugatuck, Holland and South Haven. Available Slips in Saugatuck fill up fast. Please contact the dockmasters at Tower Marine, Seargents Marine or contact committee members for assistance in getting your slip for the 2021 Tournament. (Please note that this is the current plan for 2021, however with water conditions, The Captains meeting and weigh in Station may have to be relocated. More information will be on the Tournament Trail and www.saugatucksportsfishing.com)

Downtown Saugatuck continues to offer a lot of opportunities to shop, eat at Sports Bars or Fine Dining restaurants, you can visit many famous restaurants or local watering holes within walking distance from most docking locations in Saugatuck. Come and join in the food, fun and fishing in Saugatuck August 6th – 8th and visit many of our local sponsors.

The Saugatuck tournament is put on by Sportsmen for Sportsmen and is a non-profit organized event. Monies raised for the tournament from sponsors as well as entries from the fisherman themselves are put toward the payout to tournament entrants. Other beneficiaries from the tournament are: Salmon in The Classroom, we are now supporting Classrooms in the Saugatuck/Douglas, Hamilton and Holland Schools and the Net Pen Projects.

Contact the 2021 Tournament Director John Watson with questions at 616-218-6686 or email to: 1137watson@gmail.com

"Saugatuck"

Continued on page 18

SAUGATUCK/ SOUTH HAVEN DUAL PORT CHALLENGE



HUMMINBIRD/CANNON

SAUGATUCK BIG LAKE CLASSIC

PRO DIVISION
Observers Required

Both PRO & AM DIVISIONS
9 Trout Max
Catch 15 fish, weigh 5

Pro/Am Fishing Tournament
August 6th - 8th 2021

This a non-profit tournament put on by sportsmen for sportsmen
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FRIDAY AUGUST 6TH - PRE-TOURNAMENT SHOOTOUT

THE TOURNAMENT

DENNY ALLEN MEMORIAL

Sponsored by **Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association**

- ★ Entry Fee: \$50
- ★ Guaranteed 15 Places
Raffle, 50/50, Fun

For early entry or pre-tournament shootout go to

www.saugatucksportsfishing.com

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

★ \$500 early fee paid by August 1st, \$550 after

★ \$2500 First Prize Am Division

★ \$250 early entry fee paid by August 1st, \$300 after

★ 20 Places paid in the AM Division (35 Teams)

Location of Captains Meeting, Weight In, and Awards:

Coral Cables in downtown Saugatuck

★ August 6th - Free Pig Roast at Captains Meeting

★ August 7th - 8th Free Hamburgers and Hot Dogs
at Weigh-in and Awards Ceremony

All Provided by **Coral Gables Restaurant**



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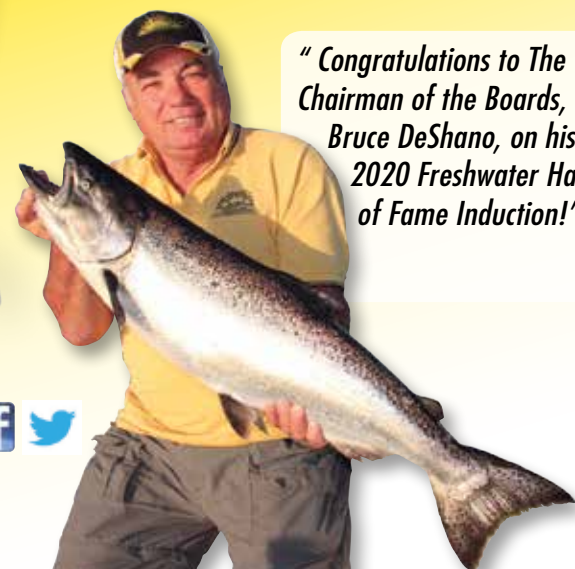
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OR40 EZ Crankbait Tuner



OR1 Downrigger Release

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Mastering Water Temps for Steelhead

By Roger Hinchcliff

When it comes to improving your game for steelhead you must learn, understand and master how water temperatures affect the steelheads behavior, mood and their movements. Not to mention the physiological effects on the fish. Many veteran steelhead anglers already know that water temperature and flow dictates where steelhead will rest and lie. In case you're new to the Steelhead Game these fish are cold blooded and water temps affect their metabolism rates and what they do. Not to mention whether they should continue their migration up river, or hold and even spawn. By not paying attention to this small detail you're for sure severely limiting your catch rates. Every Steelhead Angler should always know what the water temp is, for it will tell you where the fish are at and the type of water they will hold in!

When learning about water temps at first glance it can seem overwhelming when looking at all the available data on this subject. Especially in the Great Lakes when looking at deeper water temperature depths, etc. But in a river situation it's much easier to comprehend and break it down. After all, most steelhead are caught in 4-8 foot of water in a river situation. I will try to break this down by the seasons and months thus anyone can understand. Let's explore some basic fundamentals to help you become a better and more proficient angler.

Fall Time

Around the Months of September and October where water temps are in 45-50 degree range the fish are very active. These fresh fish are hungry and are willing to bite due to a more stable metabolism. They can be found in many types of water. Faster runs, tail outs, chutes and pocket water and pronounced seams. A variety of tactics will catch fish during this time of year. The fish have a much larger strike window and a larger threshold attraction factor. Pretty much any tactic will catch them.

Some of my go to tactics include throwing spinners and running plugs too cover lots of water this time of year. Depending on the water temps and current flow rates some fish will trickle in early so the size of the first push of fish can be spotty. You should pick lures that allow the angler to cover more water to find fish. Once a pod of fish has been located, a stealthier technique like float fishing which offers a wide array of lures that can be specifically targeted to a holding lie of resting fish. This strategy of covering lots of water and finding fish will bring more fish to the net.

The next temperature

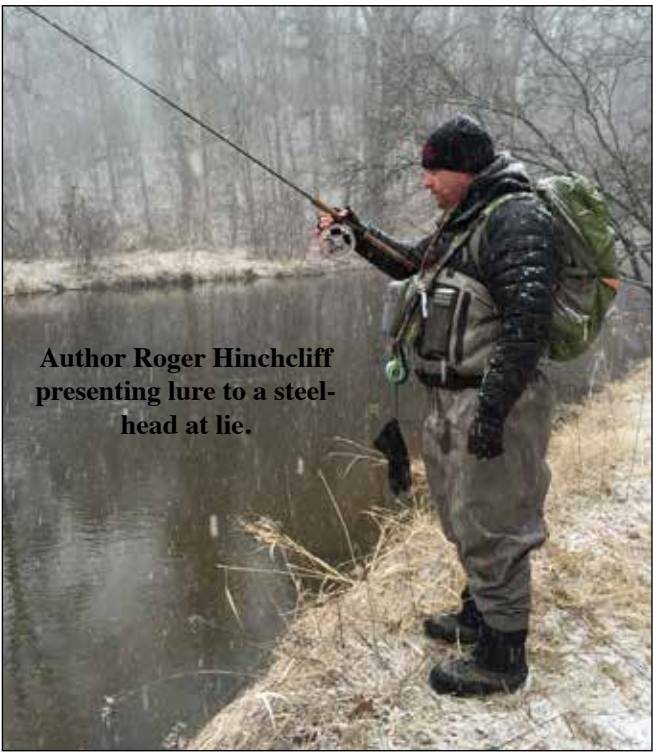
range of 38- 45 degrees F, usually occurs in the Month of November. This is a great month to target steelhead for several reason. One, by this time, we have had enough higher water events to bring you fish. So, all rivers by this time in the Great Lakes have good numbers of fish to target. At this time, you also have a good mix of fresher and more mature fish to target. Not to mention many folks are chasing whitetails at deer camp. This is an excellent time to be on the river to avoid the crowds.

At this temp range these fish can be found in the middle of pools, moderate runs and slower water. But do not discount faster water. I've seen fish through the

years that have surprised me holding in faster water and water temps were below 40 degrees F. Can't really explain why this is. My guess is to hide in broken water, intake more oxygen and they are refueling so to speak so they can continue their journey migrating up the river.

Winter Time

This period of months, December thru February, is where the average water temps can be 32-37 degrees F, the steelhead metabolism will be much slower and these fish will be very lethargic. No time of the year is float fishing more deadly. First you will find the fish in deep slow-moving pools, back eddies upper portions of a pool anywhere you can



Author Roger Hinchcliff presenting lure to a steelhead at lie.

find deeper slower currents. They will rest along edges and even right under the winter shelf ice. Steelhead tend to always move up stream when the river is on the rise or on the fall. There are usually only 2 things that will make these fish put on the brakes. Colder Water temperatures and low water conditions hence why Winter fishing can be Great. They put on the brakes and hold in these pools.

During this period the bite zone and strike window are very small at this time and so bumping them on the nose is the ticket. These same fish that were willing to travel several

“Water Temps”
Continued on page 15



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"Dam Removal" Continued from page 3

is all year. The Dowagiac

River also supports a brown trout fishery that is maintained by annual stocking coupled with natural repro-

duction in tributaries. The brown trout possession season in the Dowagiac River is the last Saturday in April

through September 30) Some tributary streams are classified as Type 1 trout waters and are only open

to fishing from the last Saturday in April through September 30. These Type 1 streams are expected to

be important spawning and nursery areas for steelhead, but they are too small to allow anglers a reasonable chance of landing adult steelhead.

One of the post dam-removal objectives for the DNR is to work with local partners to enhance public access and recreational opportunities on the Dowagiac River system. The City recently purchased 45 acres adjacent to Losensky Park. Whereas this land initially will serve as one of the deposition areas for sediment excavated from the Pucker Street Dam reservoir, the long-term vision is to develop this property for outdoor recreation and improve the existing boat ramp at Losensky Park. Discussions have already been initiated with other municipalities regarding river access opportunities in the upstream reaches where new steelhead and salmon fisheries will be established.

Anglers wanting to learn more about the project should check out the City's website at <http://www.nilesmi.org/puckerstdam/index.php>. The website has updates, photos, and videos, and also includes an option for people to sign up to receive project updates via text or email.



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“Water Temps”
Continued from page 13

feet to grab a bait a few months ago will now only travel a few inches. At this time of year, a one-degree temperature rise during the day can mean game on. Hence why fishing later in the morning or day can be a much better bet during this time. Also, on a side note temperatures swings can also shut the bite down especially a 5 degree drop or increase. These fish are so much more finicky during this period of time due to physiological changes and angling pressure. Unless you get a high-water event that brings you some fresh fish moving up river, a finesse presentation sometimes is key during these conditions.

This is where a micro jig in sizes 1/32 oz or 1/64 oz tipped with a wax worm is tough to beat. Generally speaking, winter steelhead fishing means low clear water. But don't discount the use of plugs during this time. I will run a swath of plugs through the run and literally force those fish to bite sometimes. Many folks are hesitant to use plugs or a spinner during the winter but they are really missing the boat. A #5 Silver Spinner Blade or a Chrome Plug will absolutely wake up those cold lethargic fish and get them to strike. There have been many days that without spinners or plug fishing during the Winter, the day would have been pretty slow.

Late Winter & Early Spring

The water temps during this period can be anywhere from 40-58 degrees F, depending on what kind of Winter we have had. So, when I write this water temp strategy keep in mind nothing is in stone because everything can vary from year to year based on the weather patterns. As the longer photo light periods start to occur the steelhead will start staging near gravel or actually start spawning.

Look for fish in runs, pools and faster water in the Spring. This Spring fishery can be absolutely wonderful. Once spawning has started and completed for some, those fish will start dropping back through the system, back to the Great Lakes. Once

this occurs these fish put on the feed bag heavy and will bite almost anything. My favorite baits during this phase can be anything from Beads, Spawn Sacks, Crawlers, Butter Worms, Leeches and even Crawfish. The cut off temperature for me is when the water temps get in the High 60-degree F, then I stop fishing for them. Again, depending on Latitude and Longitude of where your home river is these fish can

be in some river systems up until June.

Conclusion
As you can see water temperature dictates a lot when it comes to fishing for Steelhead. In my opinion more so than any other factor, along with river clarity. Not to say barometric pressure, weather patterns, photo light periods and moon phase don't play a role because they sure do. But having a great understanding of how water temps

will affect your fishing and where to find them can pay huge dividends.

If you were to try and nail me down on what's my favorite water temps are to target Steelhead, I would have to say 42-58 degrees F. At these temps' the fish are happy and most active and you can expect to get them to bite. Let's be clear I love fishing for them anytime they are in the rivers.

In my opinion if you do not monitor or take water temp readings while you're out fishing you can still catch some fish. But you should look at water temps as a guidance system to help you be more successful. If you don't it will dramatically increase the probability of less fish caught as far as I'm concerned. Fishing for Steelhead is relaxing and a way of escaping Life's Troubles so enjoy it but why not improve your game.

“As no man is born an Artist, so no man is born an Angler” - Izaak Walton

Many Blessings and Tight Lines!

“Mussels”
Continued from page 1

We have seen firsthand how zebra and quagga mussels have harmed fish populations. As filter feeders, they essentially wipe out the very foundation of the food web, thereby ensuring fish at the top of the food chain have limited prey options. As massive colonies of mussels encrust the lakebed, they have eliminated important spawning areas. But, how are invasive mussels linked to bird deaths, you may wonder? As mussels filter the water, it becomes clearer, which allows sunlight to penetrate deeper and support the growth of algae. In areas of high mussel concentrations, decaying mussel shells serve as fertilizer to the growing blankets of cladophora. Eventually, the mats are pulled off the lake bed by wind and waves and we see it wash up on beaches and begin to decay. In addition to being unsightly and foul smelling, it harbors decaying mussels. It promotes the growth of bacteria that has been linked to multiple outbreaks of avian botu-

lism.
Lake Michigan has been particularly impacted by dreissenid mussels as well as cladophora. Researchers have found mats of algae several feet thick and hundreds of miles wide. Until recently, not much could be done other than sending divers down to the lake bed to manually scrap the mussels off. Scientists have been looking for a control solution since the 1990s. Great Lakes research and management agencies recognized the need to work together and thus formed the Invasive Mussel Collaborative (IMC). The founding partners, the Great Lakes Commission, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Geological Survey, began putting together a framework that would allow agencies to leverage each other's resources. Today, the IMC includes representatives of 29 U.S. and Canadian local, tribal, state, provincial and

“Mussel”
Continued on page 19

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Event Calendar Disclaimer:

Please visit your chapter website for the latest status on the activities listed. Many events are being postponed or canceled due to state restrictions. Call, text or email any additional questions or need for direction.

2021 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
2021 Events To Be Determined			
Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94. FOR MORE INFORMATION: River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693 battlecreeksteelheaders.com			

2021 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
April	15	Spring Banquet	
May	1	Event TBD	
June	3-6	Grand Haven Offshore Challenge	
July	31	GH / GR Silver Spoon Event	
August	12	Summer Picnic	
December	2	Christmas Party	
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			

2021 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
January	9	Ice Fishing Contest	STC
January	12	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
January	25	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
February	9	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
February	22	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
March	9	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
March	7-13	Spring River Week Long Contest	STC
March	18-21	Ultimat Sports Show	DeVos Place
March	18-20	Ultimate Soprts Show Fishing Contest	DeVos Place
March	29	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
March	31	2020 Year Long Fish Contest Ends	
April	1	2021 Year Long Fish Contet Starts	
April	13	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
April	26	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
May	1	Spring Big Lake	STC
May	11	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
May	24	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
June	5	Steelheaders Free Kids Fishing Derby	STC
June	8	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
June	11-13	Lake Erie 3 Day Walleye Contest	STC
June	28	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
July	12	Chapter Family Picnic	6:00pm at Johnson Park Shelter House **
July	13	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
August	7	Fall Big Lake	STC
August	10	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
August	30	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
September	14	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
September	27	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest Begins	**
October	12	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
October	24	Fall River Contest	STC
October	25	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
November	6	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	STC
November	9	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC
November	22	Membership Meeting	Social Hour 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm
December	6	Chapter Family Christmas Party	6:00pm - Diamond Hall **
December	14	Board of Directors Meeting	7:00pm STC

STC* = Date subject to change
** = Members and Family Only. (All other events open to the public)

2021 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event
All events are TBD			
Membership meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 989-496-3410			
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.			
If interested in fishing with us please contact: Gary Decker at 989-859-7472 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com			

2021 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
January	4	Board Meeting
January	23	Ice Fishing Tournament
February	1	Board Meeting
February	20	Ice Fishing Tournament
March	1	Board Meeting
March	13	Annual Banquet
April	5	Board Meeting
May	3	Board Meeting
May	11	Tuesday Night Fishing League Starts
May	20	Membership Meeting
May	22	Spring Challenge
June	7	Board Meeting
June	12	All Species Tournament
June	26	Kids and Kings Tournament
July	10	Fishing with Veterans
July	12	Board Meeting
July	22	Membership Meeting
July	24	Summer Challenge
July	30-31	Big Red Classic Fishing Tournament
August	1	Big Red Classic Fishing Tournamennt
August	2	Board Meeting
August	14	Ladies Tournament
September	7	Fishing League Final Night
September	13	Board Meeting
October	4	Board Meeting
November	1	Board Meeting
November	6	River Tournament
December	2	Membership Meeting
December	4	River Tournament
December	6	Board Meeting

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

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405, or email Steve Weatherwax at Waxer1221@Yahoo.com

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2021 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
January	5	General Membership Meeting	Zoom Video Conference
January	16	Lake St. Clair Ice Fishing Outing	Adam Trenz
February	2	General Membership Meeting	Zoom Video Conference
February	5-7	Manistee River/Ice Fishing	Phil Bustos
February	19	Comedy Club Fundraiser (Friday night)	Karen Westphal
February	25-28	OUTDOOR- RAMA Showplace Novi	Robert Grech/Chris Christoph
March	2	General Membership Meeting	Zoom Video Conference
March	11-14	Novi Boat Show	Bob Schulz
March	20	MWS Banquet	MWS Board
March	25-28	Ultimate Sports Fishing Show Showplace Novi	Marc Traver/Chris Christoph
March	27	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River/Pier w DS	Adam Trenz/Eric Braden
April	3	New Buffalo Coho Tournament	Dave Hutton/Dennis Cheshure
April	3	Muskegon River Tournament	Phil Bustos
April	6	General Membership Meeting (SWAP Meet)	
April	17	Clinton River Clean Up	Jay Labban
April	24	Detroit River/Lake Erie Walleye	TBD
May	1	Benton Harbor Coho Tournament	Dave Zawacki/Kirk Traver
May	2	Benton Harbor Coho Tournament	Marc & Kirk Traver
May	4	General Membership Meeting	
May	15	Bruin Lake Kayak/Small Boat	Chuck Davis
May	22	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sat	Chris Thompson/Kruszewski
May	23	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sun	Brad Allan/Mark Platt
May	29	Toledo Beach Walleye/Pt Moule' SM Bass/ Walleye	Bob Schulz & Braden/Childs
June	1	General Membership Meeting	
June	5	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	Brad Allan
June	5	Lake Erie Brest Bay Walleye Tournament	Len Wood
June	5	Sterling St Park SM Bass & Walleye	Eric Braden
June	12	Grand/South Haven Salmon Pier Event	Eric Braden
June	19	Muskie Tourney at lake Hudson Kayak/SB	Michelle Braden
June	26	Walleye Tournament (Saginaw Bay or L. Erie)	Fabian Sepulveda
June	26	Island/Kent Lakes Kayak	Jason Jones
July	6	Club Summer Picnic	Jim Robertson/Dave Zawacki
July	10	Flint River Kayak	Jason Jones
July	15	Erieau Tournament – Thur. Erieau, Canada	Clyde Schoen
July	17	Erieau Tournament – Sat. Erieau, Canada	Ron Bellemore/Henry Nabors
July	17	Huron River Kayak (Hudson Mills to Dehli)	Catherine Withrow
July	24	Manistee River Cleanup Day @ High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	29	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Thu	Gale Frazee/Tom Abdelnour
July	30	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Fri	Marc Traver/Dave Hutton
July	31	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sat	Dave Zawacki
August	1	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sun	Dennis Kelley
August	3	General Membership Meeting	
August	7	Independence Lake Kayak/Small Boat	Chuck Davis
August	7	Clinton River Cleanup Day	Jay Labban
August	14	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sat	Henry Nabors/Dave Hutton
August	15	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sun	Marc Traver/Kirk Traver
August	21	Lake Tournament – Frankfort	Robert Grech
August	22	Salmon Tournament – Frankfort	Bill Dodge
September	7	General Membership Meeting	
September	11	Frankfort River/Kayak/SB	Phil Bustos/Keith Childs
September	18	Muskegon Kayak Salmon	Eric Braden
September	18	Manistee River & Pier Tournaments	Jordan Pontoni/Eric Braden
September	20	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2021 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/P. Bustos/Nabors/Zawacki
October	2	Manistee Lake/River (Steelhead) Tournaments	Dodge/Hutton/Sepulveda
October	5	General Membership Meeting	
November	2	General Membership Meeting	
November	6	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Dave Zawacki/Eric Braden/Adam Trenz
November	20	PM River or Betsie River Tournament	Phil Bustos
December	7	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	11	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

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




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Chapter Calendars are continued on page 18

2021 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events


Month	Date	Event
January		NO Membership Meeting this month
February	13	SHS Ice Tourney
February	20	Membership Meeting
March	25	Best Chance Fishing Seminar
March	25	Membership Meeting
April	15	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop
April	15	Membership Meeting
May	13	Membership Meeting
May	14	South Haven Tournament Captains Meeting
May	15-16	South Haven Pro Am Tournament
June	12	SHS Ladies Tournament
June	17	Membership Meeting
July	15	Membership Meeting
August	14	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival August 12th -15th)
August	19	Membership Meeting
August	21	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans
August	28	SHS Merle Morris Tournament
September	16	Membership Meeting
October	21	Membership Meeting
November	3	Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting
November	18	Membership Meeting
November	27	SHS River Tournament Invitational (must be a member to participate)
December	11	SHS Holiday Party 2021
December		no regular meeting due to Holiday Party

Membership Meetings Held at 7 pm at: South Haven Moose Lodge, 1025 East Wells Street, South Haven, MI 49040
For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com




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Blue Chip –
Eric Schippa - Saugatuck
Fin Scout –
Joel DeVries – St Joe
Best Chance Jr. –
Zach Engel - Saugatuck
E-Z Limits –
Josh Ezinga - Holland
Best Chance –
Hunter Engel- Saugatuck
Giv n the Bird –
Tom Earley- Saugatuck

Reel Property –
Bill Sikkell – Holland
Jimbobber –
Jim Van Brocklin - Holland
Outbound –
Greg Vanheulen - Holland
Hot Mess –
Jeff Cottrell - Saugatuck
Buck Shot –
Cameron Buck – South
Haven

Best Chance –
Hunter Engel - Saugatuck
Hook N Up Trouble –
Jim Page – South Haven
The Foundation –
Jeff Frankhouser – South
Haven
Kiss Off –
Joe Kiss – Saugatuck
Buck Shot –
Cameron Buck – South
Haven

Month	Date	Event	Information
January	14	Annual Meeting	Due to uncertainty of public meetings as a result of CV19 please check online for the latest information. www.swmsteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders
February	11	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
March	11	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
April	8	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
May	6-8	Summer Challenge Tournament	www.fishthesummerchallenge.com
June	10	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
June	18	Trolling with the Troops	www.trollingwiththetroops.com
July	8	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
August	12	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
September	9	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
October	14	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
November	11	Membership Meeting	Check online for latest information (see above)
December	4	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

Month	Date	Event
All events are TBD		
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.		

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
January			N/A	
February			N/A	
March	18	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
April	15	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
May	1	6:00am	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina - Need Workers!
May	20	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
June	12	6:00am	Veterans Fishing Outing	Harbor Beach Marina - Contact Kevin Ramsey
June	17	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
July	15	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
August	19	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
September	16	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
October	21	7:30pm	Regular Meeting - Election of Board/Officers	Ubly Foxhunters
November			TBD	
December			TBD	

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

Month	Date	Time	Information
January	4	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
February	1	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
March	6	4:00 pm	Annual Meeting / Dinner
April	5	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
May	3	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
May	15	6:00 am	Alpena tournament
June	12	6:00 am	Presque Isle Tournament
June	25, 26	6:00 am	Tournament location to be determined
July	5	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
August	9	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
August	28	6:00 am	Rogers City Tournament
September	13	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
October	4	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
November	1	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
December	6	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting

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

Month	Date	Time	Event information	Location
January	7	7:00pm	Meeting	Phone Tag
February	4	7:00pm	Meeting	Phone Tag
March	4	7:00pm	Meeting	Phone Tag
April	8	7:00pm	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.



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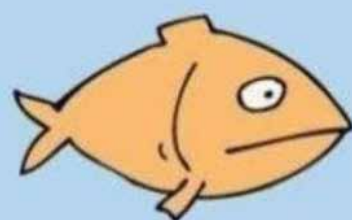
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“Mussel”
Continued from page 15

federal agencies; non-government organizations; and, industry and academic groups. It also supports a science team comprised of 12 research agencies and institutions.

Through the IMC, an experimental test site was developed in Good Harbor Bay, near Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Historically, Good Harbor Reef was a significant reproductive area for lake trout and lake whitefish. However, in recent years the reef has been completely overtaken by dreissenid mussels and cladophora. Fishery managers have reported a significant decline in abundance and yield of lake whitefish. Through a partnership with the National Park Service, the IMC selected Good Harbor Bay as the site for an experimental application of a new biocontrol technology.

This excerpt, taken from the Great Lakes Commission’s December 8, 2020 press release, Project successfully removes invasive quagga mussels near Sleeping Bear Dunes in Lake Michigan, provides a glimmer of hope in the four-decade quest to help our Great Lakes combat the waterfall of adverse impacts caused by invasive mussels.

“The Invasive Mussel Collaborative (IMC) announced a remarkable decrease in quagga mussel density in the weeks following experimental treatments at a test site in Lake Michigan near Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The IMC’s work to reduce the invasive species also led to a significant reduction in nuisance Cladophora algae at the site.

Using a molluscicide consisting of dead cells from *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria on a reef within Good Harbor Bay, project partners saw a 95% reduction in mussel density in the weeks following application. The project tested the application to an area important for fish spawning and identified changes in the underwater habitat. Lake Michigan is heavily infested with quagga mussels, which are fueling the growth of nuisance algae in the lake. They also serve as a food source for invasive round goby, which has displaced some native fish species and plays a role in avian botulism outbreaks.

The IMC also announced the release of a video [https://youtu.be/BK-9MeC0_GYY] highlighting its work at Good Harbor Bay. In the months ahead, the IMC will monitor the long-term effects of the project and work to identify future priorities and opportunities to conduct similar work.”

While the treatment was operationally intensive, it was successful at causing 95% mortality of the mussels in treated areas. This gives us great hope for the future work of the IMC! Within one

month of the application, the Cladophora and dreissenids that had colonized the substrate were largely gone. Scientists have also been monitoring different water quality metrics, such as dissolved oxygen, and have report minimal effects due to the treatment. Additional research has been examining the time it takes dreissenids to recolonize an area; due to round goby predation on mussels in Lake Michigan, it appears mussels have been slow to make a comeback.

The Invasive Mussel Collaborative has formed several work groups to focus on: future research needs, dreissenid control toxicity testing, and coastal site prioritization for potential future pilot control experiments.



SW Michigan Steelheaders Winter Challenge River Tournament

By Ryan Mc Cartney

The 31st Annual Southwest Michigan Steelheaders “Winter Challenge” River Tournament was once again held on the St. Joseph River on December 5th. The weather was fantastic, with sunny skies and mild temperatures, which helped attract the more than 50 fisherman. Fishing was found to be adequate on this beautiful day, with 30 plus fish being weighed.

Although you enter as an individual, your registered weights could play a key role in the Chapter Challenge side of this tournament. The three biggest Steelhead caught by a Battle Creek Chapter member(s) are put against the three largest weighed-in by a S.W. Michigan Chapter member(s). A traveling trophy is then presented to the Chapter with the most weight, which was awarded to the S.W. Michigan Chapter this year, with a

winning weight of 34.33# versus 25.27#. The largest steelhead of the tournament was recorded at 12.82# and caught by Troy Hahaj who has been chasing steelhead for many years with his son Ryan. The three winning steelhead that made up the SW Michigan Chapter total weighed-in at 12.82#, 10.93# and 10.58, which were caught by Troy Hahaj, Winn Wolf and Andy Racine respectively. The three, heaviest steelhead making up the Battle Creek total were caught by Don Oman, Dave Middleton and Joe Foy, with respective weights of 10.89#, 7.80# and 6.58#.

The coveted Walt Tober Memorial Award, which is named after a longtime, contributing member of the SW Club and presented to the SW Member catching the largest steelhead of the day, was awarded to Troy Hahaj.

We would like to thank Jim Kramer, owner of Shu’s

Grill and Bar, for providing a wonderful lunch at the weigh-in, Tackle Haven and The Fishing Hole for their sponsorship, the



Above: Troy Hahaj, Winn Wolf and Andy Racine.
Left: Troy Hahaj



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