



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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

Volume 41

January / February 2017

No. 1



ICEWATER STEELHEAD

By Jim Bedford

Great Lakes steelhead are wonderful fish. They aggressively take a variety of lures and baits no matter how cold the water is. Ice becomes the principal obstacle to catching winter steelhead because if you can get to the fish and operate your tackle they will readily strike.

Winter steelheaders probably pay more attention to the weather forecasts and than any other group. They are always on the lookout for that warming trend that will shrink the shelf ice on their favorite steelhead river. Prolonged thaws can even trigger runs of fresh fish from the lakes, especially in small rivers and creeks.

While steelhead rarely actively feed during the winter most anglers drift spawn, waxworms, wigglers (large mayfly nymphs) and other edible morsels. This technique works but this is a season when hardware techniques may be more effective, especially if the fish are

scattered. Often a good strategy is to fish with lures until you find some steelhead and then drift bait in the prime holes and runs.

Weighted spinners with their flash and vibration seem to issue the wake up call to cold water steelhead. These lures get the attention of steelhead from a considerable distance in our normally very clear winter rivers and creeks. This can be very important when an ice shelf covers half the hole. Once these migratory rainbows get a spinner in their sight they will also chase it for a considerable distance.

Having said that, a real key to winter success is to retrieve the spinner just fast enough to keep the blade spinning and has close to the fish holding cover as possible. The best spinners for winter steelheading are those with broad, French type blades and a fairly heavy body such as the Mepps Aglia and Super Vibrax.

Typically our streams

Gov. Rick Snyder Applauds Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board Recommendations

NRTF Board recommends \$47.6 million to enhance public outdoor recreation.

Gov. Rick Snyder applauded the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board for its submission of grant recommendations for recreational development and land acquisition projects to the state Legislature.

“For 40 years, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has provided opportunities to Michiganders to experience our state’s world-class natural resources. These recommendations reflect that ongoing commitment to a better quality

“Applauds”
Cont’d on page 3

What will the Lake Michigan salmon stocking cut mean for Michigan anglers?

Mass marking of Chinook salmon sheds new light on the relative importance of Chinook salmon stocked in Michigan.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the modern Great Lakes salmon stocking program. When coho and Chinook salmon were first planted in the

Great Lakes the results were spectacular. A nuisance invader (the alewife) became the prey of choice for salmon and fueled the birth of a world-class sport fishery.

Fifty years later we are struggling to adapt to the influence of new invaders, particularly quagga mussels

and round gobies. Fishery managers also must adapt to the rising importance of natural reproduction, which now accounts for the majority of Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan. On top of that, the experience of Lake Huron’s alewife/salmon col-

“anglers”
Cont’d on page 25



Jim Bedford with a large winter steelhead on a silver spinner.

are fairly clear in the winter but they may be stained and the days are often dark. With the sun low in the winter sky there will also be a

fair amount of shade. For these reasons, plus the fact that you are trying to excite these fish into striking makes real silver the first

choice for the blade finish. Silver reflects light much better than nickel or chrome and this is important where there is not much light avail-

able. Of course, in small clear streams on sunny days, downsizing your spinner

“ICEWATER”
Cont’d on page 2

Plug Pulling Boogie for Steelhead

Roger Hinchcliff

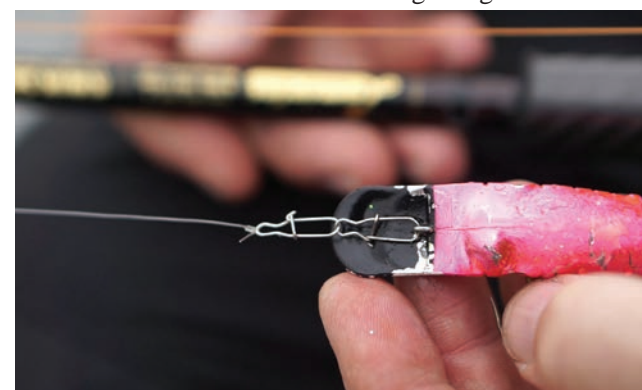
Ask any old timer that’s been Steelhead fishing for any given length of time and they will tell you stories about a method that has

been around for a while and it has many names. Names like back trolling, pulling plugs or hot shooting just name a few. I call it the Plug Pulling Boogie! It’s a tech-

nique where crank baits, i.e. (plugs) are set behind the boat with 4 rods. Either staggered, or the exact same distance creating a wall of plugs often referred to as the curtain or wall of death. Just for the record this slang term does not mean all fish die or are harvested.

Many plug pullers are like hunters hunting with

“Boogie”
Cont’d on page 18



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The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!

“ICEWATER”

Cont'd from page 1

and utilizing brass and copper finishes is likely the bet-

up from directly behind the spinner the flash is not very apparent but they can see the glowing tape.

and slowly swing across the current. This presentation gives the steelie a long look at the flashing blade and a

the path of the lure. Keep this in mind as you fish and move right along when fishing spinners.

“feel right”. In small streams you can also try to watch your spinner. It is pretty cool to see that white

fact that your hands are often either cold or encumbered by gloves or both and it is easy to see that good quality



Author with winter steelhead on a Snappy Minnow



Winter steelhead on an ice shelf



Bob Bryans ready to release winter steelhead

ter choice. Matching the stream conditions with your spinner so that it gets the steelhead's attention without spooking it is a key.

Regardless of the blade finish I always add fluorescent tape to the back of the blade. When steelhead come

The sweep cast is the most effective anytime when fishing for steelhead and is especially so in the winter. By casting across or quartering downstream, allowing the spinner to sink, and then slowly retrieving, the spinner will stay deep

chance to hit it without expending much energy.

Spinners are fine searching lures. You can cover a lot of water quickly with them because their flash and sonic attraction will generate strikes from fish that are a considerable distance from

Even though steelhead will frequently really blast a spinner there are many times when they will just sneak up behind it and inhale the lure. Thus it is important that you learn to feel the resistance of the blade spinning and then set the hook if it doesn't

flash as a steelie opens wide to inhale your spinner.

Obviously, just as in drift fishing, a sensitive rod is very important for detecting subtle hits. Add to this the

graphite rod can be very important to your success.

Spoons and plugs are also very effective winter steelhead lures. Spoons are fished in a similar manner as spinners and have the advantage of lower water resistance so they are easier to keep down near the bottom on sweep casts. This is especially true in fast water. As with spinners, metallic finishes combined with fluorescent colors are very effective.

Plugs can also be cast and swept across the current. They have the advantage of diving against the current and thus you can continue to fish them straight downstream. They can be backed under log jams and ice shelves, really invading the steelhead's territory. While compact high action plugs like Wiggle Warts, Mag Lips, and Kwikfish are the usual go to lures for steelhead I am having good success with suspending minnow plugs like the Kinchou Minnow, Pro Bomber Long A, and Snappy Minnow.

When you know steelhead present in the run or hole you are fishing it is pretty hard to beat drifting the “real thing”, even in the winter. Eggs can be fished singly, in skein clusters, or tied in sacks or bags. Wigglers, the nymph of the Hexagenia mayfly and, surprisingly, waxworms are also very good winter steelhead baits. I still haven't figured out why the larva of a terrestrial moth, which steelhead never see naturally in their lifetime, works so well but it does.

A three-way swivel is commonly used for drift fishing. The mainline from the reel is attached to one ring, the leader to another and the dropper for the sinker to the third. Veteran steelheaders prefer to simply use a two-way swivel and tie their leader to it with an improved clinch or Trilene knot. By leaving the tag end of the knot untrimmed you can crimp on split shot or hollow pencil lead. This saves the need for tying another knot when reregging, which can be really helpful when your fingers are cold and numb.

Proper sinker weight is critical to successfully drift-



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Lake trout down the road to recovery in Lake Huron

In 1972 the video game Pong was released and became the first commercially successful video arcade game. Also popular in that year was the first digital watch, release of the popular Easy Bake Oven, and a new station on television called the Home Box Office (aka HBO). Surprisingly, families of four could feed themselves (an average meal) for under \$4 in 1972.

But how does this relate to fish in Lake Huron? Well, according to agency stocking records, it was also the first year lake trout were reintroduced into Lake Huron beginning a substantial recovery program that would continue for decades.

During the 1940s and 1950s, lake trout populations in the Great Lakes declined severely as a result of overexploitation, impacts from invasive species (especially the sea lamprey), and spawning habitat degradation and contaminants. These stressors caused the declines, and in some cases extinctions, in many Great Lakes species. In Lake Huron, lake trout

were reduced to just a few small remnant stocks and the fishery entirely collapsed. Aggressive management actions included the chemical control of sea lampreys along with strict control or elimination of lake trout harvest in the fishery, both of which were necessary to provide the opportunity for rehabilitation. But most critical was the number of lake trout stocked since the recovery program began in 1972.

Lake trout restoration is coordinated through the Great Lakes Fishery Commission following a Joint Strategic Plan with key support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal, provincial, state and tribal natural resource agencies.

Fast forward 45 years later to the year 2017 and the magnitude of the next statement starts to take hold. The Lake Huron Committee (LHC), responsible for managing the fisheries on Lake Huron, have approved a strategy to reduce lake trout stocking based on three indicators

including relative abundance, survival of stocked fish, and recruitment or the proportion of wild fish in the population. The LHC is comprised of one representative from the State of Michigan, one from the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority, and one from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Recommendations from the committee represent the consensus of its members.

Based on fisheries biologist recommendations and various sources of data, the population of juvenile lake trout is now comprised mostly of wild origin fish and hatchery stocked fish are showing signs of decreased survival, suggesting they may no longer be needed for the recovery program. Is lake trout recovery on the road to success in Lake Huron? No, it is well down the road and maybe getting close to its destination: a self-sustaining population without the need for any stocking!

So what are the next steps? Beginning in 2018,

lake trout stocking will be reduced from 1.43 million fish to 540,000 fish representing an annual reduction

in stocking by 62%. Management agencies will continue to track the levels of lake trout natural reproduc-

tion in Lake Huron and if the trends continue, there could be further reductions in stocking after 2018.

"Applauds"

Cont'd from page 1

of life for Michigan citizens in every part of our state," Snyder said.

The board's recommendations total more than \$47.6 million for projects in 2017, including \$19.9 million in recreational development and \$27.7 million in land acquisition projects.

Of the \$27.7 million recommended to fund acquisition projects, \$19.9 million would be awarded to local units of government, while the remaining \$7.8 million would be awarded to the Department of Natural Resources. Of the \$19.9 million recommended to fund development grants, \$17.9 million would support 79 local government projects and \$2 million would support eight

DNR projects.

In 2016, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund celebrated 40 years of funding high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities for Michigan residents and visitors. Over the past four decades, the Trust Fund has granted more than \$1 billion to state and local units of government to develop and improve outdoor recreation opportunities in all 83 counties.

"The board's grant recommendations reflect the long-standing tradition of the Trust Fund's support of healthy lifestyles, public recreation and regional economies," said DNR Director Keith Creagh. "The Trust Fund is truly a unique treasure and we look forward to the continuing support it will provide

Michigan communities."

The board's recommendations will go to the state Legislature for review as part of the appropriations process. Upon approval, the Legislature will forward legislation to the governor for his signature.

2017 Tentative Print Schedule

Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/30/2016	1/6/2017
2	2/17/2017	2/24/2017
3	4/21/2017	4/28/2017
4	6/23/2017	6/30/2017
5	8/25/2017	9/1/2017
6	10/20/2017	10/27/2017

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News (GLSFN) is the official publication of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA). Subscription to the GLSFN is through membership in MSSFA. The GLSFN publishes six issues per year. Permission for reprint from this publication is normally permitted, unless otherwise stipulated by the article, and proper credit is given to the author and the publication. The GLSFN or MSSFA does not necessarily agree or support the contents of articles within this publication. The views expressed are those of the author(s) of the articles.

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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 in 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.

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MSSFA President Dr. Ken Merckel

I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season and received all the new baits and tackle you had on your wish list.

2017 has arrived and we

are still trying to settle the fish plant reductions for Lake Michigan with the State of Wisconsin. The sport fishermen in Wisconsin have taken this issue to

their State Legislature and Governor and by-passed their fisheries division, which places the lake wide Lake Michigan Technical Committee's agreed upon

reduction plan in jeopardy. The State of Wisconsin has until spring of 2017 to settle the difference in numbers to be planted or renege on the agreement.

If Wisconsin reneges, that leaves us with few options: *Have the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission step in and arbitrate a desperate resolution.*

Look at possible legal action against the state of Wisconsin for putting the Chinook fishery in Lake Michigan at serious risk by not complying with the agreed upon management plan for the lake.

Since Michigan plants 2.4 million Coho in Lake Michigan and Michigan licensed anglers catch 106,000 of them, it means the vast majority are caught on the Wisconsin side of the lake. Michigan could reduce the number of Coho planted in order to get Wisconsin's attention, still planting enough for southern Lake Michigan fishers and egg take at the Platte River. (Something needs to be done to bring Wisconsin into compliance with the Lake Michigan Committee's Plan.)

Roger Gordon, USFW and manager of the Jordan River (Federal) Hatchery,

has captured enough gametes from the herring around the Les Chenaux Island to begin the process of raising lake herring for outer Saginaw Bay. The eggs have been placed in an isolation facility at Genoa Hatchery, to make sure they are disease free and to begin a brood stock which will be returned to Jordan River to be grown out in their new herring facility.

The larger question is moving deep water herring from the Lake Superior down to Lake Huron. There are issues with taxonomy and our inability to get complete genetics on species, such as the Grand Traverse Bay herring and remnant populations which have not moved in over 50 years and the disease issue (VHS) which can be treated with Iodophor.

It also seems strange the Lake Michigan biologists have so much input on what happens in Lake Huron. We will have more discussion on this issue at a later time.

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**Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead &
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MSSFA enjoyed a gratifying year in 2016. We began the year with the passage of the "Microbead-Free Waters Act" in the U.S. Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support. Beginning in 2018, we should see a substantial decrease in microplastic pollution in our lakes and streams as a result. This positive action was followed by passage of the governor's budget package that authorized \$12.2 million to upgrade hatcheries and increase the rearing of

steelhead trout by 250,000 beginning in 2019.

On April 2, 2016, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the planting of Pacific salmon in the Great Lakes and Dr. Howard Tanner, the Godfather of the Great Lakes Sport Fishery, was present to receive richly deserved acknowledgement for having the courage and foresight to actually do it. The 2016 MSSFA award that bears Dr. Tanner's name was awarded to Congressman Fred Upton for his sponsorship and passage

MSSFA Executive Director Dennis Eade



of the "Microbead-Free Waters Act" but also for Fred's unwavering support for the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes.

We passed a dues increase enabling MSSFA to continue its efforts to protect, promote and enhance sport fishing in the Great Lakes and connecting waterways. We raised enough private donations to remake our state website; presenting a compelling message and platform for why its important to become a "Steelheader", become a steward of our natural resources and become a wise manager of our fisheries. Visit us at mssfa.org. Our new officers assume their duties in January and we look forward to rolling out the youth membership program, website enhance-

ments, social media strategy and marketing outreach initiatives.

We successfully stalled the pro net-pen aquaculture bills in the house and senate and did not see them reemerge during the lame duck session. (The fight is probably not over and we could see legislators bring them back up in 2017.) The DNR's Cold Water Resources Committee is drafting a Inland Trout Management Plan which should get vetted this year and we fought hard to preserve out Chinook salmon fishery in Lake Michigan, in spite of push back from anglers who don't want to see any stocking cuts.

Sponsorship of the Michigan Legislative Sportsmen Caucus breakfast meeting in November was a big success and we plan to have

a MLSC Advisory Council sponsored fishing outing for legislators on Lake Michigan in July this coming summer. I'm reminded of the quote from the columnist, Jim Hightower, "If you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu." It's important to be engaged in the legislative process.

My current attention has been focused on curtailing any movement on HB 5862 which would allow gold prospecting on our inland trout streams disturbing the stream bottoms, fish habitat and fish recruitment. We are involved in advocating for dredging the Platte River mouth, insuring continued access to the river for returning Coho salmon, and also for building a boat access ramp at the end of Tietsma Road on Platte

Bay, so fishers can get on and off the Bay especially when foul weather threatens the safety of boaters. The MDNR is partnering with us as we continue to pressure the National Park Service to move forward with plans to address both issues.

With the coming of the New Year we welcome our newest chapter; the Thunder Bay Area Steelheaders have reactivated in the Alpena, Michigan area. We extend a big welcome to Dan Bouchard, president, Brad Valley, vp, Nick Stoiski, secretary and Rick Konecke, treasurer. I am sure they would welcome any of you who would like to become associate members, so visit their facebook page or contact Dan directly. Happy New Year everyone!

President signs Outdoor Recreation Act Bill counts outdoor recreation economy as part of U.S. GDP

On December 8, 2016, President Obama signed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016 into law. Better known as the REC Act, it will instruct the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce to assess and analyze the outdoor recreation economy of the United States and the effects attributable to it on the overall U.S. economy, including recreational fishing and boating and hunting. Simply put, increased visibility means more and better fishing.

The House passed it earlier this month.

"The outdoor recreation industry—including fishing and boating—contributes approximately \$646 billion per year to U.S. Gross Domestic Product, or about four percent, of the economy. Our industry is about opportunities and improving the quality of life for Americans, and it is absolutely about jobs, business and the economy," said Scott Gudes, Government Affairs Vice President for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). "This bill will help put our industry sector on the same footing with respect to the agencies that measure and report on the U.S. economy, such as the Commerce Department and its Bureau of Economic Analysis. We look forward to the President's signature on this bill and thank the House and Senate leaders for their vision and foresight."

The Outdoor REC Act

will guarantee that sport-fishing industry jobs and recreational fishing's economic impact are accounted for as part of the gross domestic product (GDP). It will also ensure that the outdoor industry's economic statistics be measured in the same way as other sectors, such as the automobile, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries.

A temporary pilot program was enacted by the Secretary of the Interior in April, and the passage of the REC Act was needed to make sure that the outdoor economy—and its estimated 6 million jobs and \$646 billion in economic activity—receives official government recognition for years to come.

ASA is an active part of a team representing a wide range of outdoor industries that will work with the Bureau of Economic Analysis to shape how outdoor recreation is defined and ensure our reach and impact are recognized. ASA is also actively working with an outdoor industry group—the Outdoor Industry Roundtable—on briefing the incoming administration about the significant impact outdoor recreation has on the economy.





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Lake Superior goes wild for salmon

Due to the success of self-sustaining wild Chinook salmon in Lake Superior, stocking is no longer needed to maintain the fishery. This is a very positive development for anglers, salmon populations in the lake and the DNR.

Michigan first successfully stocked Chinook salmon in Lake Superior back in 1967 and has stocked more than 16 million fish to date. Through the years, about half of these stocked fish have been marked with tags, chemicals or fin clips.

Hatchery-produced Chinooks were unmarked during the first 20 years of stocking. Then, from the early 1990s through 2010, Michigan used various markings, including coded wire tags and oxytetracycline to help validate aging techniques, document mixing and movements of stocked fish, differentiate Chinooks stocked by other agencies around the lake, and evaluate contributions of stocked fish to the fisheries. More recently, Chinooks stocked from 2012 through 2016 received adipose fin clips via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mass marking program, and evaluation of this marking is what has enabled the composition of Chinooks in the lake to be determined.

Findings indicated more than 99% of angler-caught Chinooks in Michigan waters originate from natu-

ral reproduction. This was determined by DNR clerks who examined fish through annual creel surveys, documenting ratios of unclipped (wild) versus clipped (stocked) Chinook in Lake Superior over the last four years.

Beyond Michigan waters, the predominance of wild Chinook salmon in Lake Superior fisheries has also been demonstrated by other agencies including Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario. Based on their own analyses, Minnesota and Wisconsin ceased their Lake Superior Chinook stocking programs after 2006 and 2007, respectively. In Ontario waters, there is a single, private, non-governmental group that continues to stock relatively low numbers of Chinook as part of an egg-take operation. During 2010-2015 this group stocked on average 95,000 fish per year near Thunder Bay, Ontario.

"By surviving and reproducing, wild salmon have demonstrated a fitness for the Lake Superior environment, and that fitness will be passed on to future generations, ensuring viable fisheries for years to come," said the DNR's Lake Superior Basin Coordinator, Phil Schneeberger.

He noted an average of 3,000 Chinook salmon have been caught by recreational anglers in Michigan waters of Lake Superior annually over the last 10 years and

the consistency of these harvests during the period when creel clerks collected data provide good evidence that anglers will continue to catch Chinook salmon, despite the conclusion of stocking efforts.

"From a DNR hatchery perspective," said Schneeberger, "money and effort from Lake Superior Chinook salmon rearing can now be re-directed to other important programs."

Information related to self-sustaining Chinook populations in Lake Superior was presented during 2016 to various stakeholders, including the Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee, the South Shore Fishing Association, the Central Upper Peninsula Sport Fishing Association, the Upper Peninsula Sportsman Alliance, and the Upper Peninsula Sportfisherman's Association. In general the information was supported among the diverse memberships. Based on their own personal experiences, individual anglers corroborated the lack of fin-clipped hatchery Chinooks in their catches.

"The sportfishing community wants to see license dollars spent to promote the greatest good for the lake," said Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Chair, Mylan Koski. "Given the lack of hatchery fish showing up in angler

"wild"

Cont'd on page 22

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Top Five Steelhead Jig Float Fishing Tips

By Roger Hinchcliff

Jig size: Standard steelhead jig sizes in the Great Lakes 1/32 oz to 1/64 oz. While these smaller steelhead jigs offer that small profile, you need in 32-degree water they are often too light to anchor the float to its actual float line. Adding enough split shot to the float is crucial, so there is minimal pressure needed by the fish to pull it under. These are cold blooded creatures and this time of year they move much slower.

trust me it's worth the risk. If you are managing the mainline properly, and the float is vertical and still no bites, adjust bobber a few inches at a time. Most Steelhead are only 8-10 inches off the bottom. I generally set my Jigs a foot off bottom; seems to be just about right. This rule of thumb puts the jig in the strike zone and prevents me from getting snagged. However, sometimes you must bump them on the nose. Depth is very important and a game of inches.

The color choice while fishing can make all the difference in the world.

For example: The color Chartreuse doesn't work all the time in winter conditions. Sometimes it can be way too bright in cold, low clear water during the winter in my opinion. This color is a better option in low light at dawn and dusk. But I never say never in the Steelhead game. Sometimes the color you think will not work, will! That's the allure of these amazing game fish.

slow; try a plain lead head jig with no paint or color on it. Tipped commonly with a wax worm, butter worms or wiggler. Another deadly tactic is a small 1/32 oz. tube jig in hook size number 10.

Another winter bait option is the Berkley products such as Gulp Maggots, Hellgrammites or Honey Worms.

Many will even fish a bag on a jig. Do not tie your spawn sacks like you do in the Fall or Spring. Instead try small 2-4 egg bags.

Conclusion: Nothing will make you a better fisherman than time spent on the water. I hope these tips have been beneficial to you and help you catch more prize fight-

ing steelhead this winter. Remember always practice CPR... Catch, Photo and Release. Think about that then next time you release a fish. True happiness just left your hands. So get out this winter and enjoy our rivers and streams, life is good here.



Keep your mainline off the water to achieve a drag free drift: If the float is tilted downstream or dragging and your too deep. If the float is tilted upstream, then you might need add more weight closer to the jig. Your float should be pointing straight up, MUST be vertical. The goal is to make sure your offering is drifting at the same speed as the current. The float will tell you everything that's going on under the surface if you just pay attention to what's its doing.

Where to find Winter Steelhead: The slower the water the better depending on water temps. Look for darker bottoms or even structure such as a boulder or wood that can deflect the current and can give the lazy wintering fish a break. When you see, the river flowing over a submerged boulder or tree, it causes a swirling boil, giving away a prime fish holding location. The fish's goal is to conserve and not expend energy.

This time of year, we have a situation where holding and resting lye's are the same. Think slow moving pools when searching for winter steelhead holding water. Flat slicks or soft boils and the deepest water you can find. Where ever the river slows, and has depth they will hold there. Deep pools that have direct sunlight at the warmest part of the day tend to produce the best as well. Look for a riffle and where the water starts to slow down. The guts and tail outs of the pool will also hold fish. Lastly many anglers avoid shelf ice during the winter months like the plague. Please remember these fish are trout and I have caught many tucked up under shelf ice. Now one touch of shelf ice on your leader and game over. But

Floating MONO ONLY: Mono is near neutral buoyant and does absorb a small amount of water over time. But floating braided mainline is your enemy in the Great Lakes during Winter Steelheading season. Braid absorbs too much water and freezes quickly. Mono is the Best Choice for float fishing in extreme cold weather. Floating Mono can easily be mended and manipulated to ensure the line is behind the float and not in front. If this happens it will pull the offering too fast downstream. Current speed is important those fish know how fast a meal should be coming down the river. Floating Mono is a dream to mend, with little disturbance to the float.

Color: Steelhead are the most color conscious fish on planet earth, in my opinion.

But during the day instead, opt for more natural subtle tones and colors. Such as white, olive and black. One highly over looked color by anglers during low clear water periods is the color red. That tip alone was worth the reading this article I promise. Next Hot Pinks, Purples and Orange are staples of the steelhead world under an overcast sky. Color choices can change throughout the course of a day. So just because one color was working in the morning doesn't mean mid-day that's going to work. If bite slows just changing the color of your offering can make all the difference in the world. Lastly on color sometimes even none is better. Remember over fished fish can get conditioned to seeing the same jigs and baits coming by day after day. If fishing is

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Costa Sunglasses Partners with Backbone Media

Costa del Mar, the leader in polarized sunglasses, today announces Backbone Media as its communications agency of record. The Colorado-based agency will partner with Costa for public relations for its core fishing initiatives and media planning

and buying for angling and optical trade in North America.

“Backbone Media’s experience with top-tier brands in the fishing category, coupled with its passion for the outdoors, will provide us with a fresh approach to connect with

today’s anglers and even broaden our appeal with new ones,” said Bud Hanson, group leader, fishing communities at Costa.

Costa was born on Florida’s waters in 1983 by a group of fishermen who realized the caliber of their sunglasses did not match

the demands of their expeditions. More than three decades later, Costa’s mission remains the same: to create the clearest sunglasses on the planet for life’s great adventures. With a passion for the water that inspired its inception, Costa also focuses on numerous conservation efforts that strive to protect our waterways.

“Costa is a natural fit for Backbone, and we appreciate the brand’s genuine and authentic connection to fishing, the outdoors and conservation efforts,” said Greg Williams, media director and partner at Backbone Media. “We look



forward to helping Costa expand geographically, building awareness beyond their fishing markets, and spending some time on the water together.”

About Costa

As the leading manufacturer of the world’s clearest polarized performance sunglasses, Costa offers superior lens technology and unparalleled fit and durability. Still handcrafted today in Florida, Costa has created the highest quality, best performing sunglasses and prescription sunglasses (Rx) for outdoor enthusiasts since 1983.

Find out more on Costa’s website and join

the conversation on Facebook or on Twitter at @CostaSunglasses.

About Backbone Media

Backbone Media targets, engages and inspires the active lifestyle market through public relations, social media, content creation and media planning and buying. For over 19 years, Backbone has worked with leading outdoor gear, apparel, technology, food and beverage brands, as well as tourism destinations around the world. Backbone has offices in Carbondale and Denver, Colorado.

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As part of these weekends, all fishing license fees are waived for two days with residents and out-of-state visitors allowed to enjoy fishing on both inland and Great Lakes’ waters for all species of fish during their respective open seasons. All other regulations still apply.

To encourage involvement in Free Fishing Weekends, organized activities are often offered in communities across the state. These activities are coordinated by

2017 Michigan Winter Free Fishing Weekend

non-profit groups, schools, parks (local/state), businesses and others. Will you be joining them and planning a 2017 Winter Free Fishing Weekend event? If you would like to plan an event, check out:

www.michigan.gov/freefishing for information and resources to help! On the site you’ll find two toolkits; one focused on planning and the other on promoting your event.

Once your event is coordinated, please register it as

an official 2017 Winter Free Fishing Weekend activity online. Upon doing so you will be contacted about receiving a packet of materials from the DNR to use during your event. Please join this year’s efforts to help get more people out fishing. We welcome you to become a part of the tradition that is the annual Free Fishing Weekends — a time to get together and have some fishing fun!

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Is it the Dangle or Swing?

Swinging Flies for Steelhead is not for everyone.

By Roger Hinchcliff

If you're a numbers person, then this isn't for you. But for those of us who do swing flies for Steelhead know it can be very rewarding and frustrating at the same time. But when it's time to reap our reward when the lightning bolt crushes the fly and the reel starts to sing there's nothing like it. Now I do not profess to exclusively be a fly fishermen only because I'm not. And if you think I'm going to burn in hell for Float or Plugging for Steelhead, so be it. But I do enjoy swinging flies and live for the jolt! I just choose to enjoy the sport in many ways.

When swinging for the mighty Steelhead it's all about covering as much water as you can and getting the fly down to the right depth. If your missing key holding lye's or not in the zone, where the fish are holding. I'm sorry to inform you, it's going to be many fishless days for you. Once you learn how to cover water and fish the right depth, you will catch more fish.

Reading the Water

Before you start to cast, slow your roll. Stop and study the water and the run itself. First, think about how you're going to wade through the run. Always start close and work your way out. You will be surprised how many fish are closer than you think. Remember most steelhead are caught in 3 to 8 foot of water.

You must position yourself in the run so the fly is presented down and across to the fish. In the Great Lake's this is much easier to do because of the size of

many of our rivers compared to some larger rivers around the country. Most rivers here in the Great Lakes are easier to wade.

Once you position yourself you should have a clear understanding of where you think a likely holding area is. Start your casting and cast on a 45-degree angle downstream either left or right. Make sure the fish are getting a good look at the fly and your fishing it in fishy holding areas.

Immediately throw an upstream mend in your line. By doing this it will allow the fly to sink faster to the strike zone. Thus, causing you to cover more water with the fly in the actual fish holding zone, instead of dead or unproductive water. Pay attention to how much belly you have in your line. Keep throwing upstream mends in the line allowing the fly to slow and fish deep and hunt for you.

Note that the number of mends affects your depth. So, if you want to fish higher in the run, lower the number of mends to the line. If you hook a fish pay attention to where that fish was holding. You may come back repeatedly and hook fish there. After you master the swing and presentation you have one more thing to master. "The Dangle or the Hang"

The Hang or the Dangle

After the cast and the swing thru the run and the line straightens out time to reel in and repeat, right? NO! You must always assume the chrome assassin has followed the fly as they often do. It's not till the fly slows and what you do next that can make a huge differ-

ence on a successful day on the swing or a Big Goose Egg.

Once the fly has straightened out let it dangle there for a while. Now ask any serious Swing Junkie and they all will have a certain amount of time they wait. Most popular is the Happy Birthday Chant. But truthfully, I have no set time. I have seen fish sit there for what seems like forever and stare at the fly. Or worse yet nip at the fly and not commit. And do this several times before eating. Frustrating, to say the least, especially when you have been hunting all day and it comes down to that one bite. Patience is what will give you what you have been seeking. You must let the fish eat. Then wait some more before setting that hook. Set the hook too soon and the fish will not be there.

Drop Back

Now when I say drop back I'm not referring to a spawned-out fish dropping back to the Lake or Ocean. When the fly is on the Dangle or Hang Down and the line is tight, slowly pull the rod back past your hip and then let it drop back to the fish. Usually, this is when they crush it. I point that rod right at the fly.

Somedays the cadence of this method can vary. Somedays they want it faster or slower, short, or long pulls away from them. You're trying to tease them by pulling it away from them. Or by letting the fly fall back the fly acts as if it was dying, thus provoking that genetic response. Or sometimes it's a territory thing and they want the invader gone and out of

there space.

Optimum hook sets occur when you allow the fish to eat the fly and turn.

Simply lift the rod tip to the side and they will hook themselves. When they turn with the fly, it means a hook

"Dangle"
Cont'd on page 20
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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.

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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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June 13, 2017	7:00 PM Tuesday	MUCC	(2nd Tue)
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November 08, 2017	7:00 PM Wednesday	MUCC	(2nd Wed)

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Revised: 12-31-16 djs

The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association Provide leadership and input into the following DNR committees:

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- Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee
- Lake Michigan Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee
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25	Firestone - Metro 25	19268 Middlebelt	Livonia	MI	48152	\$20 off on \$200 or more on service www.metro25firestone.com
26	Fish with Jim Outfitters	http://www.fishwithjimoutfitters.com/	248-252-1277			Discount \$50.00 off the total trip price.
27	Glacier Corporation	1021 Fuller St.	Santa Ana	CA	92701	Aquarium Chillers for "salmon in classroom" \$625 + 60 (s&h) = \$685
28	Gold Coast Outfitters LLC	6755 Butternut Dr	Port Sheldon	MI	49460	10% Discount www.goldcoastoutfitters.com
29	Great Lakes Angler Magazine		www.glangler.com			Use promo code MCLUB10 1yr/\$13, 2yr/\$25, 3yr/\$36
30	Health First Chiropractic Clinic	2526 Woodmeadow Dr SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49546	First Visit Free
31	Homestead Resort on Betsie River	2399 Dam Rd	Benzonia	MI	49616	10% In Season, 25% Off Season (homestead@crystal-rentals.com)
32	Insta-Launch Campground	20 Park Ave	Manistee	MI	49660	Member Discount
33	Insurance Shop/Fremont Ins.	824 Water St.	East Jordan	MI	49727	10% Discount off insurance for MSSFA Group Members
34	Jim Waldron Pontiac, Buick, GMC	1146 S. State Rd	Davison	MI	48423	Contact Nick Russloll for Sales, 10% off all parts not to exceed \$100.00
35	J Smith Custom Tackle	1136 E Hughes Lake Road	Rose City	MI	48654	15% - 20% off depending on rod. Customrodsbyjsmith.com 989-685-2819
36	K & M Marine	14990 Telegraph Rd	Redford	MI	48239	10% off merchandise except sale items (www.kandmmarine.com)
37	Kamp Oil Inc	6467 Manistee St	Fredric	MI	49733	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
38	Kamp Oil Inc	3650 Eastern Ave SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49508	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
39	Beebe Oil Co (aka Kamp Oil)	4999 22 Mile Rd	Utica	MI	48317	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
40	Lapeer Boat Service	3556 Fort Knox Dr	Lapeer	MI	48446	10% off parts and labor (810-245-6038)
41	Liberty Tax Service	544 E. 8th St.	Holland	MI	49423	\$20.00 Discount on tax service
42	Life Family Chiropractic Centres	5795 Balsam Dr	Hudsonville	MI	49426	Complimentary 1st visit (excludes medicare) 50% off 1st massage
43	Linwood Beach Marina & Campground	135 S. Linwood Beach	Linwood	MI	48634	10% off service work
44	Logan's Run Muskegon River Cottage Rental	1648 Gardner St.	Newaygo	MI	49337	10% Discount www.logansrun.us 616-485-4501
45	Mark's Sport Shop	11530 Mason Dr	Grant	MI	49327	Member Discount
46	MC Sports	Major Locations				Member Rates with MC Sports Card
47	MUCC	2101 Wood Street	Lansing	MI	48912	\$18.00 Membership Dues
48	Racks Taxidermy	13662 Cleveland	Nunica	MI	49448	10% Discount 616-844-4495
49	Ramada Lighthouse Inn	1555 Phoenix Rd.	South Haven	MI	49090	20% Discount 269-639-9900
8	Red Sky Outfitters	5234 Plainfield Ave NE	Grand Rapids	MI	49525	10% www.redskyoutfitters.com 616-719-3074
50	Richfield RV	Statewide				10% Discount
51	River Raisin Marina & Campground	2502 E. Elm Avenue	Monroe	Mi	48161	Buy 1 get 1 free - call 313-575-4367 (www.riverraisinmarina.com)
52	RX Optical	Statewide				Plan 308
53	Slamco	Internet Sales	www.slammertipup.com			10% Discount
54	Sonus	3535 Parks St, Suite 108	Muskegon Heights	MI	49444	10% Discount. 231-737-4570 laura.szot@americanhearingsonus.com
55	Sun Coast Marine	1172 68th Street	South Haven	MI		Member discount
56	The Angling Outpost	2480 Duck Lane Rd	Whitehall	MI	49461	www.anglingoutpost.com 5% use coupon "steelheader" for online purchases
58	Tuffy Muffler	435 N. Beacon	Grand Rapids	MI	49417	10% off parts and labor
59	Tuffy Muffler	4384 Kalamazoo SE	Grand Rapids	MI	48512	10% off parts and labor
60	Tuffy Muffler	610 28th St SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49507	10% off parts and labor
61	Tuffy Muffler	4315 Clyde Park SW	Wyoming	MI	49509	10% off parts and labor
62	Van's Sport Center	1855 Alpine Ave.	Walker	MI	49544	10% Discount
63	Warrior Lures	5915 Lillian La	Traverse City	MI	49684	10% Discount on all product ordered (www.warriorlures.com)
64	West Michigan Propeller	847 Ionia Ave. NW	Grand Rapids	MI	49503	10% Discount
65	WG Grinders	5769 28th St. SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49512	10% Discount dine in/carry out (catering discounts available)



Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Investments to increase DNR's fish rearing capacity

its nearly 50 years of service, but they have all been relatively minor.

"We've been pursuing upgrades to this facility for years now, so we were really happy to hear the project is a go," said Central Lake Michigan Management Unit Manager Scott Heintzelman.

The proposed upgrades will modernize the facility significantly. Upgrades include replacing the badly aging generator that provides backup power during outages; old, inefficient pump motors; the ancient fish crowders with modern technology; as well as completely reworking the fish holding ponds. Given the salmon program is so much smaller now due to ecological changes in the Great Lakes, half of the ponds are likely to be taken out of service altogether. Outdoor lighting upgrades and installation of a more reliable alarm and monitoring system are also being considered as part of this project.

The improvements are not limited to just the weir. Most of the capital outlay funds will actually be spent at Thompson State Fish Hatchery, located just west of the U.P. town of Manistique. A portion of those funds will go toward increasing production of smolting sized steelhead. Upgrades in that area include adding another deep (2,000 feet) well, replacing the more than 40-year-old feeders, resurfacing the indoor and outdoor rearing tanks, and adding a UV filter to keep fish diseases in check. The deep well will provide additional water that picks up enough geothermal heat to make it the right temperature (around 52oF) to allow the fish to reach smolting size by spring. This will increase production by an additional 200,000 large steelhead smolts each year, an increase of 15-20% over existing state production.

"Anglers have been consistently asking for more

steelhead, so this is a big win for us and for them," said Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter. "These fish need to get to the correct size for stocking, and Thompson State Fish Hatchery is the only place we could do this."

The most visible changes at Thompson will be the addition of a coolwater production facility. Fishing for coolwater species (walleye, muskellunge and northern pike) has been steadily gaining in popularity for years now. That means the demand for hatchery produced coolwater fish has been going up as well. In fact, demand far outpaces the DNR's ability to supply fish, given the current system. The DNR fish production system has maxed out its coolwater production capacity and has essentially been using retrofitted cold-water hatcheries for coolwater production.

Walleye production is almost entirely limited to a number of ponds scattered

across the state that are operated by DNR fisheries technicians. Many of them have been operated with the help of various angling groups and have been very successful, while others are much less reliable.

Muskie production in the current system is limited to just four small lined ponds located at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery near Mattawan. Muskies reared in those ponds start out in a group of tanks that were fit into the basement of an on-site building. Rearing restrictions do not allow for a northern pike rearing program to be active at the same time muskies are being reared.

"The Wolf Lake crew has done an amazing job of stabilizing the muskie program in this system, but production from the four ponds is limited to 25-30,000 fall fingerlings annually," said Fish Production Program Manager Ed Eisch. "The new coolwater facility planned for

Thompson Hatchery will change that significantly."

The plans call for infrastructure enhancements and developments, which will allow the DNR to increase production by up to 15,000 muskies and up to 250,000 spring fingerling walleye.

"While completion of this project won't get production capacity fully in line with demand, it's clearly a big step in the right direction," said Dexter.

DNR staff has already begun the process of selecting a design and engineering firm. Design work will take up to a year, with another 12 to 18 months for construction.

"With a little luck, we may be ready to start rearing fish in the new coolwater facility as soon as the spring or early summer of 2019," said Eisch. "The weir project will be bid out separately for construction so that project may be done a bit sooner, maybe even in time for the spring 2019 steelhead run."

Michigan fishing regulations 101

Michigan boasts some of the finest freshwater fishing in the world – with no shortage of opportunities for those who wish to pursue them. One of the reasons those opportunities are so readily available is because Michigan's aquatic resources are managed through regulations that allow current and future generations the chance to experience them.

Fishing laws are intended to conserve and improve

fish populations. There are several types of fishing regulations. Possession limits on the number of fish that can be harvested by an angler are meant to keep anglers from taking too many fish at one time or protecting limited stocks from overharvest. Size limits are meant to protect fish of spawning size before they are harvested. Fishing seasons protect fish during spawning. Some regulations

are enacted to ensure fish are caught ethically in a manner of fair chase.

"In Michigan, the regulatory fabric ranges from simple to complex. As examples, panfish regulations are fairly liberal due to their widespread distribution, size and numbers, while in contrast trout and salmon regulations have greater complexity because of their unique and limited habitats and populations,"

said Christian LeSage, fisheries biologist with the DNR's Aquatic Species and Regulatory Affairs (ASRA) Unit. "So, there's something for everyone here, plus you can fish 365 days a year on many waters for many different species."

Fishing regulations have been present in the state since the early 1800s with the first law implemented in 1820; a territorial law which made it illegal to obstruct passage of fish up or down streams.

Michigan's fishing-related laws became more dynamic through the mid-1800s and soon incorporated content related to seasons and method of take, followed by size restrictions. It was not until 1903 when laws related to possession limits were adopted.

Ironically, at the beginning of the 20th century, those who actually went fishing didn't even have to have a fishing license and the first license available in Michigan was only required of non-residents starting in 1913. Resident licenses became a requirement in 1933.

As any responsible angler knows, if you're age 17 or older you need a license to fish in Michigan. Revenue earned from the fees collected through the sale of fishing licenses go directly to the resource to manage them through habitat improvement, access development, population surveys, fish rearing and stocking and other activities. But purchasing a fishing license is just one of many regulations in place to protect and conserve the state's fisheries.

All of Michigan's fishing regulations are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis-even those that were developed decades ago-to

ensure they are as effective as they were originally intended to be and reflect the current state of the resource.

When regulations are no longer effective, one of several things happens: the pre-existing regulations are adjusted to be more effective or are eliminated, or brand new ones are developed.

Reviewing regulations can be prompted by a variety of mechanisms; they could come from an angler who shares a concern with their local management unit, they could be developed by the local biologist, because of data collected from a survey, or from a long-term research project that unveils critical new information.

"Most regulation changes or additions come from the field in respect to managing fisheries for their greatest potential," said LeSage. "Field staff are analyzing data and working with anglers so they often discover immediate needs as they arise."

Once a need is determined, local managers will put together a regulation proposal and shepherd it through an internal field review process that gathers feedback and support from those most closely-tied to the resource. Additional vetting occurs in late winter with interested anglers at local "coffee and conversations" meetings that staff hold each year. Each spring regulation proposals are due to ASRA for the next step in the process.

ASRA staff then package all of the submitted regulation proposals and take them to an internal committee for review. This committee consists of representatives from the DNR's Law Enforcement Division,

Tribal Coordination and others. This committee works with the Fisheries Division Chief to set up a schedule for changes to work towards have the proposals adopted during Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meetings that fall.

"For the NRC process each regulation proposal first goes for 'information-only,'" explained LeSage. "Then public review/comment is allowed for at least 30 days and at the following month the proposal goes back for action. However, if there is a lot of interest and comments then a decision may be extended for another month or two to allow additional public input before the NRC approves the changes."

Occasionally a fisheries emergency can occur which warrants immediate action to address the protection of Michigan's aquatic resources. The director of the DNR, not the NRC, has the authority to quickly enact a regulation based on unique situations – such as a spawning closure to protect the resource. Fishing is a privilege and obeying fishing regulations is the responsibility that goes with it.

All of Michigan's fishing regulations can be found online at:

www.michigan.gov/fishing-guide. Most are also printed in the biennial Michigan Fishing Guide but because of the dynamics required when managing the state's fisheries often changes are needed which are not reflected in this format. Be advised the online version of the Michigan Fishing Guide is the most up-to-date as several changes have been made this year since the printed version was finalized and distributed.

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Michigan Department of Natural Resources

More stocking adjustments coming for Lake Michigan

Over the past year there has been a lot of talk about the future of the Lake Michigan trout and salmon fishery. A roller coaster-like ride for fishing success just doesn't seem to stop.

Lake Michigan's carrying capacity continues to change with fewer nutrients available for prey fish. Quagga mussels have cleared the water and have removed much needed algae and zooplankton to support prey such as alewife, smelt and bloaters. Some predators like brown trout, lake trout, coho salmon and steelhead have shifted to round goby for prey. However, Chinook salmon continue to search Lake Michigan for the much less abundant alewife – the prey that has fed them and the Lake Michigan sport fishery for more than 50 years.

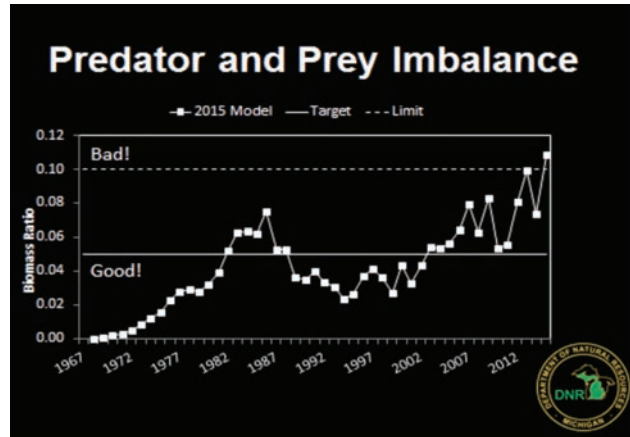
Prey surveys including alewife hit all-time lows in 2015 and prompted the Lake Michigan Committee (LMC) to recommend further stocking reductions for the fourth time since 1999. The LMC is comprised of top fishery managers from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority. After a two-year process that included working with the public and biologists in 2011 and 2012, the LMC developed a feedback policy to determine when to increase or

decrease Chinook salmon stocking to maintain a balanced fish community and world-class fishery.

Public criticism of the two-year process that led to the 2013 stocking adjustment told managers they needed to make quicker decisions – on an annual basis if necessary to maintain the fishery. The original policy that was developed looked at the size of age three females at harvest and egg-take weirs and later evolved into the Predator/Prey Model that evaluates the ratio of Chinook biomass to alewife biomass in the lake.

This model basically states that when there are an estimated 20 pounds of alewife to one pound of Chinook, the ratio is in good balance. When there are only 10 pounds or less of alewife to one pound of Chinook, there is an imbalance, similar to conditions Lake Huron saw prior to its alewife crash.

The LMC reviews this information and discusses the data annually with citizen advisors and sport fishing groups to determine when to increase or decrease stocking. In 2015, this review resulted in no stocking changes. In 2016, the ratio was above the "imbalance" level, so the LMC immediately proposed a 62% reduction in Chinook salmon stocking. This per-



centage reduction was based on predetermined stocking levels set in the feedback policy and supported by the public in 2012.

Soon after the news release went out, fisheries managers started to hear feedback from anglers and sport fishing groups. This feedback included: 1) anglers are seeing alewife in good numbers, 2) anglers want a reduction of other species, like lake trout, that are more plentiful and less desirable, 3) more negative press of a Chinook salmon reduction will be bad for charter boat and other local businesses, and 4) why wasn't the public informed about this early on and made part of the solution process. As a result of this feedback, the LMC adjusted their proposal to a 50% reduction in Chinook salmon and a 20% reduction in lake trout. Continued public pressure eventually led to a decision by the

LMC to reduce Chinook salmon by 24% and a mix of other species to reduce the total predation pressure equivalent to 900,000 Chinook salmon.

The DNR plans to stock 330,000 Chinook salmon (230,000 fewer) in 2017, 1.47 million coho salmon (96,000 fewer) in 2018, and the same amount of brown trout (560,000) and steelhead (540,000). The ports of Grand Haven, Holland and New Buffalo are stocked with federally-raised lake trout, which will be eliminated (80,000 yearlings) in 2018. Illinois and Indiana will also reduce Chinook salmon in 2017 and lake trout in 2018. Wisconsin chose to keep their existing Chinook salmon stocking number for 2017 and will reduce lake trout, brown trout, and some undermined number of other species by 2018.

Will this strategy work?

The LMC is optimistic the prey population will stabilize. The alewife anglers saw during the summer are most likely the 2015 and 2016 year classes, which showed up in the annual prey acoustic surveys conducted by the DNR and the United States Geological Survey. Hopefully, a mild winter will allow these alewives to survive and spawn.

Anglers need to understand however that there is more risk with this stocking strategy. It will now take until 2018 to fully implement stocking changes and reduce predation pressure due to brown trout, lake trout, steelhead and coho salmon being reared in hatcheries for 18 months versus only six months for Chinook. There is increased risk assuming the reduction of brown trout, lake trout and coho salmon will have the same impact on the prey as reducing only Chinook. These other species eat alewife when available but they are more apt to seek out other prey items when alewives are not available. Chinook primarily only eat alewives. The LMC tried to adjust for this by reducing two to three times the number of these other trout and salmon compared to Chinook.

Fisheries managers and researchers will continue to annually monitor the preda-



tor and prey populations in Lake Michigan and will continue to make changes as necessary. More research time will be invested in understanding what the carrying capacity is now with lower nutrients and continued invasive species challenges.

Managers will also devote more effort in understanding the population level, diet and consumption level of lake trout and will more closely monitor their rehabilitation throughout the lake. This information will help inform future stocking strategies.

Most importantly, fisheries managers will improve their communications with the public. There is a lot of complex information that needs to be shared to better understand how the Lake Michigan fishery is changing. The public will also be part of the process to help inform future stocking decisions. Although the process will continue to take more time, it is time well spent to have an informed public that understands and has choices about the management of their fishery.

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For more information: Chad Bard (269) 214-6934 or go to:
www.southhavensteelheaders.com

South Haven Steelheader's Gear Up for 31st Annual Pro/Am Tournament

The 2017 South Haven Steelheader's Pro/Am Tournament (SHSPAT) Event is geared up for it's 31st year! The event will be held May 19th through 21st, 2017, out of the beautiful port of South Haven, Michigan.

It all begins with the Friday 5 Challenge hosted by South Haven's Star of the Lake Masonic Lodge #158 Friday morning, May 19th and then moves into final registration, Friday 5 awards and a captain's meeting offering incredible opportunities to win merchandise in the evening at the South Haven Moose Lodge.

The next two days will be all about fishing for top cash awards, prizes and trophies in the Pro/Am and 333 tournament events.

But, that's not all! There will also be an All Species Big Fish Contest for both Divisions including an Overall Big Fish Award.

The tournament event culminates Sunday afternoon at the City's Southside Marina with the final tournament awards ceremony.

Free and open to the public, everyone is invited to attend the tournament's daily weigh-ins and Sunday award ceremony at the City's Southside Marina.

If you plan on coming by boat, the short distance from the pier to the centrally located city marina and fuel docks is very convenient. This arrangement has the added bonus of offering very short walks to the downtown dining and shopping district, public beaches and Michigan Maritime

Museum featuring the tallship, "Friends Goodwill" and the Coast Guard Motor Lifeboat #36460 that was in the Disney Film The Finest Hours. If you are trailering your boat, we have a large public launch ramp with plenty of parking also located within a short distance of the downtown and pier-heads.

Participation is easy and here is how to catch a piece of the action: Simply visit our website, download and fill-out the entry form and mail it to the South Haven Steelheaders with your entry fee before May 13th, 2017.

As the SHSPAT is a qualifying event for the 333 tournament series many visiting anglers are expected again this year. All out-of-town anglers are invited to take advantage of special SHSPAT dockage and hotel discounts by visiting our web site at www.southhavensteelheaders.com.

The South Haven Steelheader's Pro Am Tournament's primary purpose is to obtain fish for the Blueberry Festival Fishboil, the Chapter's primary fund raiser to provide money for the goal of educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing in the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. To accomplish this goal, the Chapter is actively involved in a number of activities such as Salmon in the Classroom, Scholarship Programs, Net Pen project and supporting the deployment of South Haven

nearshore data buoy station #45168. If you find the buoy useful, please consider making a donation to support its continued deployment.

While the South Haven Steelheaders earnestly solicits you to compete in our annual tournament the weekend after Mother's Day, we also invite you to explore our gem of a port at any time!

Besides our season long fishery including some of the finest Lake Trout fishing on Lake Michigan, South Haven is also host to some great events throughout the year. The primary events you should consider exploring are the Harbor Festival, Independence Day Fireworks, Blueberry Festival, Salute to Veterans Boat Parade and Ice Breaker Festival. In addition to its extensive network of bike and walking trails, South Haven has installed multiple canoe/kayak launch sites that make the river and lake very accessible for all types of watercraft.

If you are a member of the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fisherman's Association (MSSFA) you can also participate in other South Haven Steelheader tournaments throughout the year such as the February Ice Tournament, June Ladies Tournament, August Memorial Tournament and November River Tournament.

We look forward to seeing you "on the water" in South Haven!

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2017 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Event	Information	Membership Meetings Held at:
January	4	Pro Am Committee		Membership & Board Meetings South Haven Moose Lodge 1025 East Wells Street South Haven, MI 49090 contact: SHS President
	12	Board Meeting		
February	TBD	Ice Fishing Tournament		
	1	Pro Am Committee		
	16	Membership Meeting		
March	1	Pro Am Committee	River Bend Boat Club	
	23	Membership Meeting		
April	5	Pro Am Committee	Fisheries Workshop	
	20	Membership Meeting		
May	3	Pro Am Committee		
	18	Membership Meeting		
	19	Pro Am Tournament	19th - 21st	
June	7	Pro Am Committee		
	10	Ladies Tournament		
	15	Membership Meeting		
July	20	Membership Meeting		
August	12	Blueberry Festival Fish Boil		
	17	Membership Meeting		
	19	Salute to Veterans		
	26	Merle Morris Tournament		
September	21	Membership Meeting		
	21	Board Meeting		
October	19	Membership Meeting		
	19	Board Meeting		
November	1	Pro Am Committee 2018 Kick-off #1		
	16	Membership Meeting		
	16	Board Meeting		
	25	River Tournament		
December	6	Pro Am Committee 2018 #2		
	7	Local Tournament Committee Annual		
	9	Holiday Party		

SW Michigan Steelheaders "Winter Challenge" goes to Battle Creek



Nate Suhr of the Battle Creek Chapter with the winning big fish of 14.5lbs of the SW Michigan Steelheaders "Winter Challenge".



Joe Montella (right) from SW Michigan Steelheaders is presenting Nate Suhr his plaque for winning the "Winter Challenge".

By Ryan McCartney

The 27th Annual Southwest Michigan Steelheaders "Winter Challenge" River Tournament was held on the St. Joseph River on December 3rd, under almost perfect conditions. The winds light, the water clear as over 80 fisherman found their way to their favorite fishing holes. With lines in the water at 6:00 AM, most participants struggled to find the fish early but pressed on to find one or two, while others were fortunate enough to find their three steelheads for the official weigh-in. While tournament rules allow Brown Trout, Lake Trout and Walleye to be entered, none were registered.

The rules of this tournament are somewhat unique, as you enter as an individual but your registered weights could play a key role in the Chapter Challenge side of the 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 secured for a second year in a row by the Battle Creek Chapter, with a winning weight of 36.21lb versus 31.30 lb. The largest steelhead of the tournament was recorded at 14.52 lb and caught by Battle Creek Chapter Member Nate Suhr. The other two steelhead that made up the BC Chapter total weighed-in at 11.32 lb and 10.37 lb which were caught by Paul Lajoie and Mark Adams respectively.

Dave Middleton, Battle Creek chapter president said, "Again, for the second year in a row our chapter has taken the trophy home and out-fished these fine river anglers on their home water. We look forward to the

Spring Challenge and the defending our first place finish there as well."

As for the Southwest Michigan Chapter, Captain Todd Brill of Gold Coast Fishing Company recorded their largest steelhead weighing in at 12.09 lb, which secured his second place finish overall. He also received 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. The other two steelhead added to the SW Chapter total weighed-in at 9.61 lb and 9.60 lb, caught by Jeff Crouse and Winn Wolf respectively.

We would like to thank all of the participants, sponsors and members that helped with this event; we look forward hosting this wonderful tournament again next year.

2017 SW MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information	Membership Meetings Held at:
January	12	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 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	9	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
March	9	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
April	13	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
May	11-13	Summer Challenge Tournament	www.fishthesummerchallenge.com	
June	8	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
July	13	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
August	10	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
September	14	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
October	12	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
November	8	Membership Meeting	Board Mtg 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Mtg 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
December	2 8	Winter Challenge Tournament Christmas Party		

The Southwest Michigan Steelheaders Presents



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The Manistee County Sport Fishing Association Big Sponsor of Tournament Trail 333 for Manistee County Tournament

By Jan W. Burger

The Manistee County Sport Fishing Association, MCSFA for short, is a dedicated, membership-based sport fishing association in Manistee, Michigan. Our goal is to promote the great fishing here in Manistee County. This county has three wonderful harbors, three major rivers, and many lakes in and around the big lake of Lake Michigan. It is cold-water fishing at its best. Chinook salmon, Coho Salmon, Brown Trout, Lake Trout, and Steelhead abound in these waters. Warm water fish of many types are very common to these waters as well and provide countless fishing opportunities.

The fishing year of 2016 for MCSFA started off with our major fundraiser event, the Spring Banquet. The event was held at the Manistee VFW. The food was first-rate and the banquet turned out to be very enjoyable by those who attended.

If you have never been, or it has been a few years to this banquet, please make plans to attend this year's banquet

on May 6, 2017. It's open to the public. Bring the family. It's a wonderful night of fun, laughter, and prizes.

Several prizes are provided by our sponsors or are donated to help our ongoing efforts to promote the fish-

27th thru September 4th. Cash prizes are paid in four divisions of fish: Kings, Lake Trout, Brown Trout,

pete in the derby. Standings are posted at many of our sponsors and updated on our web site.



ery in Manistee County. The top prizes were guns, a gun safe, a kayak and fishing tackle, just to name a few.

MCSFA's summer salmon derby for 2017 runs May

and Steelhead. The tournament is divided into 3 periods during the summer (May/June, July, August/September). Being a member of the MCSFA allows you to com-

We sponsor an annual kids fish day: June 21st this year. This is to promote fishing for the youth. It's held at Man Made Lake. The children have a great time fishing. We want these kids to be part of our fishing future. I would like to thank the local Wildlife Turkey Federation for their donation and support in this cause and also all of the other sponsors and volunteers. Over 100 kids participate annually.

June 23rd, 24th, and 25th is our showcase Budweiser Pro/am and Ladies Classic fishing Tournament. Come join the tournament. Catch fish, weigh in your fish, and show the other fishermen your catch. Win prizes, money, and top honors. Be the team to beat!

We also sponsor a small boat tournament for boats 25 feet and smaller. This year's event will be on August 5 with a back up date of August 6th. Prize money is awarded based on the number of entries.

The 2016 season was a challenge to many who fished, however, spring Brown Trout fishing is getting better each year. Lake Michigan warmed up faster this year compared to past years. Warm water brings in bait and bait brings in Browns.

Kings and Steelhead fishing on the big water was slow with some good catches at times. Kings on average were heavier. Many were caught 25 lbs. and heavier; some over 30 lbs. Lake Trout fishing was very good. You could catch a Lake Trout it seems each time you went out.

There are fish out there you just have to go after them. New ways and techniques work and are fun to learn. Remember the more you fish the better chance you have to catch fish.

Join our association and put more fun into your fishing. Please check out our website www.mcsfa.org. Many of our members are on social networks and share their catch information. Good fishing.

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MCSFA Events
Salmon & Trout Derby:
May 27 - Sept. 4
Ladies Classic: June 23
Budweiser Pro/Am: June 24-25



Presented by:
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"Boogie"
Cont'd from page 1

dogs it's all about seeing the dog work. In this case, it all about the strike or the take down. I'd rather sit and watch a rod buckle all day than even reel in the fish. The take down is savage like and ferocious! When the steelhead has had enough and snaps, it's time to crush the invader and it's no joke.

What makes this technique so deadly, the reasons are many. First the theory is the fish are pushed around the hole and as the boat slowly moves down the run the fish keep getting pushed back to the back of the run. Once they get to the last 1/3 or so of the hole they strike the plug out of sheer anger because they do not want to leave the security of the water they have chosen to hold in. Remember these fish are used to cold, dark, deep water either in the Great Lakes or Ocean. Also, steelhead are very territorial creatures and a plastic wiggler presented slow and low in their face drives them crazy.

don't skimp on the rod it WILL catch you more fish. If your budget does not allow, check out the Lamiglas X-11 LX86 series. Great bang for the buck.

What these rods do for you is allow the plugs to set up and run, dig and work. When the strike occurs because of the soft, fast action tip the fish does not feel a stiff rod and let go of the invader. Once they crush the plug and turn its time for my two favorite words. FISH ON! So, the right rod allows you to get the maximum wiggle out of the plugs and then helps you when it's time for the strike.

Line Choices
Now this segment is just my opinion on line. Do what you feel is best. Over the years, I have discovered line choices are a personal and confidence thing. Out west most love to use high viz braid. And it works great out there. However, the choice in the great lakes is mono. Due to freezing temperatures. Now, some in the Great Lakes region will use braid with a long mono

the leader too heavy. I run a maximum 10-12 lb. test leader. Anything above that and you impede the action of the plug due to the line diameter and resistance. Great Lakes anglers fish very low, clear water in the winter. The fish hold in slow deep pools so they need all the wiggle and depth they can get.

Reel Choice
My favorite reels to use for plugging is a Shimano Tekota 300LC. I prefer a line counter reel so I always know how far back my plugs are from the boat. It's a nice feature but not necessary if your budget doesn't allow. You can simply count the passes of the reel to get an idea how far back you are. Or another great trick is to add a fluorescent colored string bobber stop. Measure out thirty or forty feet and cinch down, trim some of tag ends off and add a drop of fly head cement to lock into place. Depending on what river I'm fishing and the current flow, most of the time my plugs are the exact same distance from the boat. The line counter reels just make it easier to make adjustments and know where you are at all times.

Please remember to engage the drag on your reels and check them. My recommendation to set your drags light so the fish has room to run and turn. You can always adjust drag once rod is in your hands to land the fish. Remember if you follow my advice on leader size, the drag should be set at a 1/3 or 1/4 breaking strength of the leader. Use a scale to be precise if needed. The drag is important; it helps prevent break offs and to tire the fish quickly.

The Right Snap
Most plugs come with a factory snap or a split ring depending on the style and brand of plug. The plug was designed and tested to use the snap it comes with and the stock snap performs very well and should be used most of the time. What needs to be avoided is using a regular snap swivel. That's a big no-no. Plugs are made to wiggle not spin, but I see this on the river all the time.

Now here are some tips to get you more wiggle out of your plugs in slower water or current. First you can double up the factory snaps and instantly give the plug more wiggle which is great when fishing very slow water. Next you should consider using a VMC crank bait snap. This snap was designed for the Bass guys and is incredibly strong. It has a wider tear drop shape that allows the plug to wiggle more. I have scoured the internet to see if any steelhead fisherman has been talking or writing about using this. I could not find anything. So, there's a nugget for you. Trust me it works great in slower water and makes the plug dance.

Lastly make sure the snap is facing up. If not, while fighting the fish the upturned part of the duo

"Boogie"
Cont'd on next page



What's great is, it doesn't matter the mood of the fish so to speak you're forcing the fish to bite by invading their space. As we get into this deadly technique I will list some tips to get you started in the right direction or if you're a seasoned puller I hope to make you a better plug fisherman.

The Right Rod
You first should start with the right gear. The rod is so very important in this game. It's all about the wiggle of the plug. If the plugs are not dancing at the party equals no fish. The plugs must dive and wiggle to get in the fish's face. Thousands of dollars are spent on the engineering of these plugs and if your using too stiff of a fishing rod it inhibits the action of the plug.

Most serious plug pullers prefer a one-piece rod that's short in the steelhead world. Most are 7 1/2 - 8 1/2 feet in length and its crucial the rod be a fast action with a soft tip. I tried many rods over the years but my most favorite is the Lamiglas Certified Kwik Pro Series in the XCC 801 or 802. This rod has been around a long time and is a great investment. You spend lots of money, travel expenses, tackle, etc....

bumper. Most are fish are caught in 4-8 foot of water.

I love high viz mono like Suffix Siege in tangerine orange, in either 14lb or 17lb test. This line has a patented abrasion resistance and provides tough-as-nails durability, with near zero memory. First, the mono has stretch where braid does not and gives the fish more time to make that turn with the plug without resistance. Second, because its high viz you can see where each line is. If a plug gets fouled with debris and starts to slide over you can quickly grab the rod out of holder and clear it before it makes a mess. Also, other anglers on the boat can visually see where the lines are at when fighting a fish and steer the fish clear until the other rods are cleared to allow the fish to be landed. Lastly, mono is cheaper than braid and does not absorb as much water and will not freeze.

Fluorocarbon
Do yourself a favor and splice in a fluoro carbon leader. I generally use a leader that's 5-8 foot in length depending on flow and water clarity. It is imperative when fishing smaller plugs in the 3 - 3.5-inch range such as the Yakima Mag Lips not to make

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“Boogie”

Cont'd from previous page

lock snap can get hung up on the bill of the plug and come open. As you can see the snap is a very important piece of equipment.

How Far Back?

How far back, number one question I get while doing seminars. It's a great question but there is no one certain distance for every situation. It depends on the river, current speed, depth and clarity, to name a few. I have fished them anywhere from 15 ft. – 60 ft. back depending on the conditions. But a good rule of thumb is 40 feet from the boat. If your fishing slower water or water that's very clear you're going to need the plugs further away from the boat. This is needed to get the plugs down and keep the boat from not spooking fish.

A good plug puller will have the plugs put out well upstream of the run and get in position. The plugs must be the right distance from the boat and working properly when they drop into the run to be fished. During high water the fish will be setting high in the run. Low water they will be setting at the back of the run. If the fish are fresh or feeding they will be at the top. Lastly the leviathan toad that your seeking most times will be setting in the middle of the run in a prime rest lye. Only to be pushed back to the last third of its hideout before crushing the plug.

Bottom line, the plugs must be diving and fishing before you get into the run to insure it was covered properly. I see too many folks on the river that stop on top of where the fish are holding. In my opinion I believe the biggest fish every year come on plugs.

Speed of the Plug

I can sum this tip up very easily. Slow and low, that's it. Move through the run slowly. If you go through the run too fast the plug is looked at as a passer-by fish. Think about what I'm saying those fish are sitting there facing upstream in the current and see fish pass by all day every day. If the bait is put in their space and agitate them your more apt to get a bite.

Remember each plug has a minimum and maximum running depth. Most steelhead are caught in 4-8-foot range of water. If your fishing a run that's really deep you might need to rethink the plug choice. To ensure the bait will be in the strike zone. There is times and places where plugs presented above the fish's heads produce results but that's another article for another day.

Popular baits folks like to use are 2.5 – 3.5 inches in the world of steelhead. Hot Shots, Kwik Fish, Brads Wigglers and Wee Wigglers to name a few. My absolute favorites are the Yakima Mag Lips in those stated sizes. This tip is simple to remember slow and low and that should produce you some fish.

SCENT

Depending on who you're asking this subject gets a lot of opinions. But my experience is scent makes a huge difference someday. I have experimented with a lot of scents. My favorites are the gel, oil or Vaseline based scents. My favorites are Smelly Jelly, Dr. Juice, Pro Cure and Pautzkes. They all have their time and place and work very well.

Have you ever watched underwater trolling videos? Ever notice how many refusals of the lure? Add a little scent to seal the deal! Do not discount Garlic for steelhead. Many only use scent for salmon, steelhead love Garlic and there are days that's the scent of choice. I cannot tell you why and there are many theories. Whatever the reasons

do not discount the power of scent.

I hope you have learned a few tips and tricks on gear and plug placement. If you have never tried plug fish-

ing you're really missing out. There are days that it cannot be beat. Everyone is entitled to an opinion but no one is entitled to the facts. Ask any veteran in the

world of steelhead and I'm sure they will agree. Pulling plugs has a solid place in the steelhead world and is only growing in popularity every year. Give plugging a

try one savage take down; and the fish isn't the only thing that will be hooked.

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Tackle Haven.....	741 Riverview Drive.....	Benton Harbor, MI 49022.....	269-925-0341

"Dangle"

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book but a lot of anglers struggle with waiting. You must have patience with this type of fishing. Old habits are hard to break, many anglers are used to immediately setting the hook. However, the few that master this game of patience put more fish to hand.

Loop in the Line

Many anglers and guides love their clients to keep a small loop in the line. This trick is a matter of opinion and style. The hand holding

the rod has a small loop of line pinched between their finger and the rod. It just hangs there towards the water. The length of loop is personal preference. Some prefer 1 - 3 feet. The purpose of the loop during the swing helps you in hooking the fish. It ensures when the steelhead pulls the loop out of your fingers the fish feels no weight or fly reel drag.

By waiting for that slack line to be pulled out, it should be enough time for the fish to eat, and turn with the fly; a perfect hook set

will occur. Instead of a premature hookset, it acts as a buffer to ensure enough time is given to the fish before setting the hook. Always keep a light drag set as well. Remember not all takes are ferocious take downs. Sometimes they can be light biters. This is the norm in colder water temperature.

Fly Choices

This subject alone could be a whole article in itself so let's give a few nuggets of info to help you pick the best flies. Anything as simple as a nymph, egg sucking leach

can work great and save the day. The skies the limit in Spey fishing. Anything from a small fly, as big as 4 inches to even bigger are used. But when in doubt with no strikes switch to a smaller fly. The colder the water temps the smaller and deeper the fly must go.

Let the pool rest and try a different fly. Make sure color, size and profile are different before stepping down or moving on. Especially in a run or pool, that's been a proven spot to hold fish. By trying something

different, it can make all the difference in the world.

An essential point here is everyone has their own opinion or technique on the swing. Do what works for you; experiment while fishing and enjoy your time on the river. Nothing will improve your game better than actual time spent practicing and learning on the water. But if you get anything from this article, no matter how you like to fish the swing, pay attention to the dangle or hang, that's when the action starts. Your

flies must be slow and low at the end of the swing. Make that fly dance and be patient on the eat. Who says lightning doesn't strike twice?

Do that and your reel will sing and your rod will dance! Always practice CPR. Catch, Photo and Release!



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"ICEWATER"
Cont'd from page 1

ing bait for icewater steelhead. It needs to be heavy enough to tap the bottom occasionally but not so heavy that it drags and hangs up. You need to be ready to change the weight to match the current speed and depth of each run. It is best to err on the high side rather than hanging up a lot. Near the bottom rather than on the bottom is the key phrase. Steelhead look forward and up when resting on the gravel and their size results in their eyes already being six inches above the substrate.

Most drift anglers are now using floats to present their offerings. I believe this technique is especially effective in the winter. For one thing it decreases hang-ups and this is important when numb fingers slow the process of re-rigging.

Floe ice can make conventional drift fishing impossible but as long as you can cast your bobber rig into an opening in the ice you are in business. Then you just "go with the flow" until hopefully a steelhead makes your float take a dive. Cold temperatures at night can cause the stream water to cool below 32 degrees and result in anchor ice. Then as the air temperature rises during the day the water warms slightly and the anchor ice releases and

becomes slush on the surface. Steelhead can detect very subtle temperatures rises and often become turned on at this time. If it were not for floats you would not be able to fish for these active steelies.

Many anglers use small jigs under their floats, which decreases the need for additional weight. These can be plain fluorescent jigs or dressed with marabou. I favor the latter and they can be used without bait if there is a little surface chop to bounce the jig and bring life to the marabou. The addition of a small spawn sack, wiggler, or waxworm almost guarantees they will be attractive to steelhead.

The jig should be set about a foot off the bottom in most cases. There are times when steelhead hit them even better when they are suspended at mid depth. The floats make it easy to extend your drift through the entire run. Bouncing them along the edge of an ice shelf can be a killer technique.

When fishing for winter steelhead it is important to use a limp monofilament. My favorites are Trilene XL and Silver Thread AN40 but there are many other soft premium monofilament lines from which to choose. The highly abrasion resistant monofilament lines are usually very stiff and unwieldy at sub freezing tempera-

tures. Because you are using softer line it is important to check it often for nicks and change it more often.

Ice in the guides is never a problem when the water temperature is above freezing as you simple submerge the rod in the current and melt the ice when needed. However, if the stream is 32 degrees or less it is important to use a rod with guides that are easily warmed.

In general I try to avoid fishing when the stream is at 32 degrees or lower and the air is very cold unless, of course, the river is loaded with fish and they're on the bite. Even the hooks will become ice covered to the point that they have no point to hook a fish. I will admit to thawing the ice off my spinners with my mouth but this job isn't much fun when you're fishing eggs.

Staying warm is very important if you are going to enjoy your winter steelhead outing. Bootfoot neoprene waders were made to order for ice water steelheaders. They really insulate you from the cold. Regular waders will still do the job but buy them a size larger so you can wear extra socks and lots of layers underneath them. Layering is the key for your upper body as well. I generally start with polypropylene underwear, then a heavy shirt topped by a zippered sweatshirt with a hood. When walking a fair distance I open up the sweatshirt and take off the hood and my hat and then close back up as I cool down. When it is snowing or is windy a breathable, hooded wading raincoat is worn over everything to make you both waterproof and wind proof.

I hate wearing gloves when fishing and just warm them in my armpits as necessary. When it is really cold knit wool gloves with the thumb and forefingers open have worked well for me. This is really the limiting factor for how cold you can fish because you can insulate everything else. It is important to remember that the warmer you keep your core the easier it will be to keep your hands working.

Whenever you get cold the solution is to walk or wade to the next hole. Of course the ultimate way to warding off the chill is to hook a steelhead. I guarantee you will not be cold after battling one of our beautiful lake run rainbows!

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Study inventories movement of plastic and microplastic debris throughout lake system

By Susan Gawlowicz

Researchers estimate 10,000 metric tons of plastic enter Great Lakes every year

A new study by Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) that inventories and tracks high concentrations of plastic in the Great Lakes could help inform cleanup efforts and target pollution prevention.

Researchers found that nearly 10,000 metric tons-or 22 million pounds-of plastic debris enter the Great Lakes every year from the United States and Canada. Matthew Hoffman, assistant professor in RIT's School of Mathematical Sciences, is the lead author of "Inventory and transport of plastic debris in the Laurentian Great Lakes," which will run in an upcoming issue of Marine Pollution Bulletin.

"This study is the first picture of the true scale of plastic pollution in the Great Lakes," Hoffman said.

Hoffman used computer simulations to follow the volume of plastic debris moving across state and international boundaries-from Illinois to Michigan and from Canada to the United States.

Earlier studies estimate 40,000 to 110,000 metric tons of plastics enter the oceans along the U.S. coastline, Hoffman said.

In their study, Hoffman and co-author Eric Hittinger, assistant professor of public policy at RIT, report that half

of the plastic pollution entering the Great Lakes-5,000 metrics tons per year-goes into Lake Michigan, followed by Lake Erie with 2,500 metric tons and Lake Ontario with 1,400 metric tons. Lake Huron receives 600 metric tons of plastic and Lake Superior, 32 metric tons per year.

Estimates of surface microplastics entering the lakes each year show 4.41 metric tons in Lake Erie, 1.44 metric tons in Lake Huron and .0211 metric tons in Lake Superior.

Plastic pollution in Lake Michigan is approximately the equivalent of 100 Olympic-sized pools full of plastic bottles dumped into the lake every year, Hittinger said, whereas the yearly amount of plastic in Lake Ontario equates to 28 Olympic-sized pools full of plastic bottles.

Prior observational studies measured localized concentrations of plastic pollution in the open water, tributaries and along the shorelines. The new study applied mathematical modeling for

the first time to extend the scope of the problem over time and spatial scales.

The inventory gives full mass estimates on the entire connected lake system and maps plastic debris moving between lakes and across interstate and international borders. The results provide environmentally realistic concentrations of plastic in the Great Lakes.

Findings of the study show debris travels differently in the Great Lakes than in the ocean. Instead of the floating "garbage patches" found in the ocean, plastic in the Great Lakes are carried by persistent winds and lake currents to the shore—often washing up in another state or country, Hoffman said.

Plastic accounts for approximately 80 percent of the litter on the shorelines of the Great Lakes. The study quantifies dense plastic that quickly sinks and surface plastics like microbeads, fragments and pellets, plastic line and Styrofoam, which could be consumed by wildlife and potentially enter the food chain.

Major population centers are the primary sources of plastic pollution in the Great Lake system, with Chicago, Toronto, Cleveland and Detroit releasing more plastic particles than accumulate on their shorelines.

"Most of the particles from Chicago and Milwaukee end up accumulating on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan, while the particles from Detroit and Cleve-

land end up along the southern coast of the eastern basin of Lake Erie," Hoffman said. "Particles released from Toronto appear to accumulate on the southern coast of Lake Ontario, including around Rochester and Sodus Bay."

Estimates of plastic pollution throughout the Great Lakes were derived using population dynamics within 100 kilometers, or 62 miles,

of the shores and hydrodynamic modeling to simulate the distribution of plastic debris throughout the Great Lakes from 2009 to 2014. Data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Great Lakes Coastal Forecast System were used to simulate currents transporting plastic debris throughout the lake system.

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FINICKY PANFISH THROUGH THE ICE

By Bob Jensen

It's fun to catch fish through the ice, and it's also really fun to eat some of those fish. When some anglers get a desire for a fresh fish meal in the winter months, they go after panfish. Here's why and how.

Why go after panfish when you want a fish supper? In most areas of the Midwest, panfish are pretty abundant: You can usually catch enough for supper. However, it's important that we don't take too many. Panfish populations are fragile, and if we just take and take and take, it won't be long before it will be harder to catch enough panfish for the table. In fact, there are already some areas where the panfish, especially the big ones, have been beat up pretty good.

Now the how. Panfish can be very aggressive biters, or they can be very

finicky. If they're aggressive, they'll probably be pretty easy to catch. But when they get selective, you're going to have to do things a certain way if you want them to eat your bait, and that certain way is their way. It will rarely be the same way two times in a row. You're going to have to alter your presentation to match the way the fish want it. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Bluegills and sunfish and the like have a very small mouth. Usually a small bait will be best, and when they're finicky, a smaller bait will be even better. If they were eating a 1/32nd ounce bait and quit, go to a 1/64th ounce jig. You'll probably get a few more to bite.

If crappies are the quarry, you can use a bigger bait, as crappies have large mouths. However, if they

get choosy, don't hesitate to drop down in size.

A horizontal riding jig is often preferred for panfish. Something like Northland's Gill-Getter jig will be preferred. Be sure to tie these horizontal jigs onto your line so the line comes directly off the top of the jig. If you tie it to the front or back of the jig, it won't sit perfectly horizontal in the water. Sometimes a little tilt to your bait is good, but most of the time horizontal is best.

When the fish are exceptionally spooky, invisible line is a big help. I was recently introduced to P-Line FloroIce. This stuff is about as invisible as line gets. Usually three or four pound test will do a good job, but there are times when two pound line will put more fish on the ice.

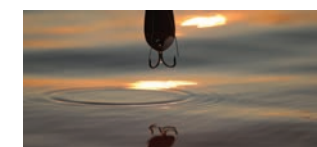
You would think that a live bait on your jig would



Duane Peterson had to slow his jigging action down to get this slab crappie to bite.

be best when the action is slow, but in the past few years it has become apparent that sometimes, maybe much of the time, a plastic is better. A tiny Impulse Blood Worm or Slug Bug has no motion by itself, and sometimes that lack of motion is what the panfish really go for. These baits have scent, lots of it, and when they are sitting motionless in front of a finicky fish, sometimes the fish just can't help but eat it. At times they'll look at the bait fifteen or twenty seconds before inhaling it.

Catching panfish through the ice is a great way to spend an afternoon. If you keep the above ideas in mind, you'll find out how much fun it can be.



"wild" Cont'd from page 6

catches, continuation of stocking would be wasteful and poor stewardship. Sportfishing groups look forward to working with the DNR to identify future stocking and/or management actions to benefit recreational opportunities in Lake Superior."

One of the intriguing

things about Chinook salmon in Lake Superior is they are thriving as a naturalized species in an environment where alewives are virtually absent. Cisco (lake herring), rainbow smelt and other chub species are what sustain Chinook in Lake Superior.

In other Great Lakes, particularly lakes Michigan and Huron, Chinook's

dependence on alewife as their primary forage is almost absolute. This situation has led to much discussion, press coverage and the necessity to make tough stocking decisions in efforts to balance predator-prey ratios in these two Great Lakes.

Compared to other salmonids caught by recreational anglers in Michi-

gan's portion of Lake Superior, Chinook salmon rank third. The top ranking species are lake trout and coho salmon, both of which are also self-sustaining; lake trout were last stocked in 1995 (except for some limited Consent Decree-related stocking in the Tahquamenon River between 1996 and 2000) and coho were last stocked in 2007.

Interestingly, retired Michigan DNR research scientist Jim Peck recommended cessation of trout and salmon stocking in Lake Superior in a report published nearly a quarter of a century ago. His conclusions were based on poor returns from stocked fish and prevalence of wild fish in catches as far back as the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The gradual but steady progression toward naturalized, self-sustaining fisheries in the Great Lakes is desirable biologically, socially and economically. Ecosystem balance is more easily attained via self-regulating, natural processes than from human manipulations.



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Sleeper Strategy for Shallow Hardwater Walleyes

By Dr. Jason Halfen

With the arrival of hard-water across the northland, the much-anticipated ice fishing season has finally begun. Intrepid anglers, with ice picks draped over their shoulders and light-

technology has your future-8-inch-hole-location displayed in its correct position, making it easy to find when you hit the ice.

This shallow weed pattern is all about timing. Of primary importance is time

a low-light pattern, so plan to hit the ice in midafternoon, drill ALL of your holes at least an hour before the sun hits the treetops, and then settle in for the evening rush.

I recommend that you

your efforts quickly, without additional drilling noise

robust, walleye-attracting green weeds rather than

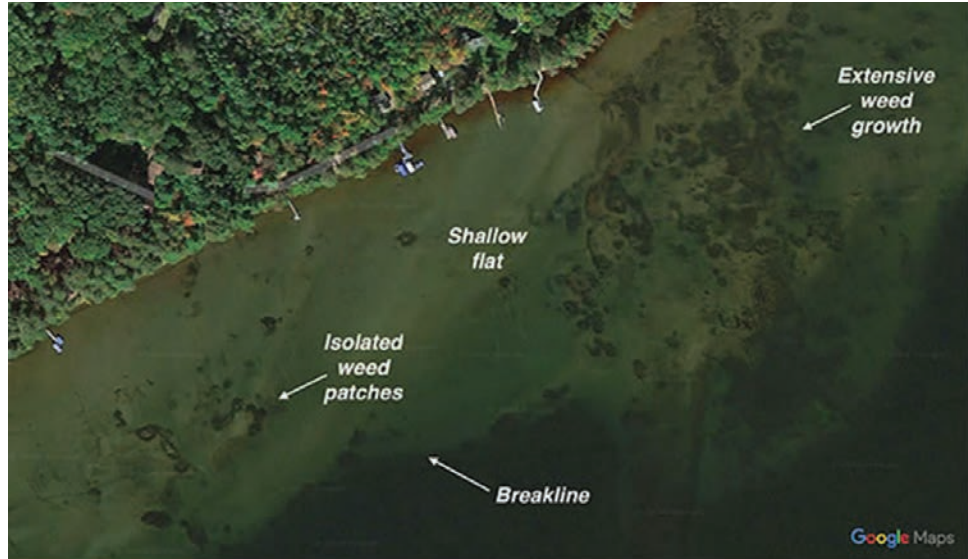
sented too far away from the weedbeds don't get noticed as frequently by edge-patrolling predators.

Each angler in your group should plan for one "active jigging" line, with the balance of their presentations being setlines, generally in the form of tip-ups.

Shallow, early-season walleyes are generally aggressive, so use a jigging presentation to match their mood. We like to call walleyes into our spread using LIVETARGET Golden Shiner Rattlebaits ripped through the bottom two feet of the water column. Have the rattlebait pound the bottom every few rips. This will create a suspended cloud of sediment, which serves as a persistent visual cue that a vulnerable bait is nearby. The internal weighting system of the LIVE-TARGET rattlebait ensures that the bait settles to the bottom belly-first rather than rolling onto its side, which dramatically reduces

"Sleeper"

Cont'd on next page



Visible satellite imagery, readily available on Google Maps or similar platforms, takes the guesswork out of searching for shallow water, early ice walleyes.

weight gear in tow, are now creeping across the shallows of their favorite lakes in search of the season's first frozen success stories.

Many early-season walleye hunters are immediately drawn to the weed-studded breaklines that rim deeper basins; textbook locations that will produce apex predators for much of the season. However, these anglers are also walking right over large numbers of relatively unpressured walleyes that continue to prowl shallow flats during the first few weeks of ice.

Want to learn how to find and catch those fish? Read on!



Robust, green weeds will hold far more walleyes than decaying, brown ones. Crystal-clear Aqua-Vu underwater video will help you to rapidly identify the most productive early ice weedbeds.

Preparing to pull walleyes through an eight-inch hole in the ice, with only a few feet of water beneath, begins not on the water, but at your computer. This is one of the times that I make extensive use of satellite imagery to visually inspect the shallow areas of clear lakes, looking specifically for flats or bays that have distinct patches of heavy weed growth. The larger these patches are, the more baitfish they will harbor, and the more walleyes they will attract.

Turning these satellite-located weedbeds into easy-to-find fishing spots is simple: on Google Maps, just drop a pin where you would like to drill a hole, and then save that location. Now, open up the Google Maps app on your phone or mobile device, and presto: the magic of 21st century



New new Aqua-Vu HD 700i captures underwater detail like no other camera before it.

when the bite fires up.

On our local Wisconsin waters, where three lines are allowed per angler, a group of three might be drilling out 30 holes, giving them comprehensive coverage of several weedbeds on one shallow flat.

We make extensive use of Aqua-Vu underwater camera systems to ensure that the weedbeds feature

fish-repelling brown ones.

Underwater video is also a powerful tool for fine-tuning hole position. Over the years, we've found that holes positioned 8-10 feet away from the weededge to be the most productive. When holes are too close to the greenery, active minnows beneath tip-ups will constantly become entangled. In contrast, baits pre-

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“Sleeper”
Cont'd from previous page
the number of times that a

with a spinning reel featuring a smooth drag, is an excellent combination for

For setlines, we rely on Frabill Classic Wood Tip-Ups, which feature hard-

include an 18” section of 10 lb Seaguar AbraxX Ice dressed with a Trapper Hook

enhances the the retention of hooked fish when compared to a traditional J-

baitfish that shelter among the weeds, and the walleyes that are munching on them,



St. Croix Mojo ICE

sticky-sharp treble hook catches the leader. A stout St. Croix Mojo ICE Rod, like the MIR32M, paired

presenting actively-jigged baits and for subduing shallow walleyes and pike.

wood bodies and robust metal components that stand the test of time and the elements. Since we will be fishing through dusk and into the first hour of darkness, each tip-up flag gets dressed with a Frabill Arctic Fire tip-up light, which makes bites easy to identify after dark, even from a distance.

It's important to respond immediately to a flying flag, as a nonchalant attitude will result in the fish retreating to the relative safety of the weeds. On the business end of the set line,



The Trapper Live Bait/Finesse/Dropshot Hook might be the most versatile hook on the market, tackling chores from ice fishing to freelining on the open seas.

#2 Livebait/Finesse/Dropshot Hook. The unique Trapper Hook. The unique Trapper Box, with its pair of right angle bends at the base of the hook, ensures that your shiner or sucker minnow remains in perfect position on the hook, rather than riding up and down the shank. More importantly, however, the Trapper Hook's unique geometry dramatically

shaped hook, as fish flesh and bone remain locked within the Trapper Box.

Dabbling among the shallow weeds is a distinctly early-season pattern. Once the ice cap grows to about 12 inches in depth, or a thick blanket of heavy snow covers the shallow flats, this pattern falls apart. Under these conditions, the

will make tracks for the weed-studded breakline and the relative stability of deep water.

If you want to experience the excitement of catching aggressive, shallow walleyes through the ice, the time is NOW. Get those batteries charged, pick out a few likely locations, and let's get to work before we get stuck sharing deep weedline fish with everyone else!



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Lake Sturgeon Management Plan for Michigan's Black Lake

A collective effort among agencies dedicated to the restoration of lake sturgeon populations in Michigan has produced a management plan for the species in Black Lake (Cheboygan County). Biologists from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Bay Mills Indian Community, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians worked together to write the plan that will guide management efforts to ensure the lake sturgeon population in Black Lake will thrive well into the future. The plan outlines objectives to achieve the goal of attaining a population of naturally produced lake sturgeon capable of producing a sustained fishery. "The level of collaboration between the biologists of the tribes and the DNR was incredible," said Dave Borgeson, DNR unit supervisor for the Black Lake watershed. "The commitment of all the writers of the plan to lake sturgeon rehabilitation was evident, and made this group a joy to work with." The Black Lake document is the first of a series of lake sturgeon management plans the DNR hopes to complete for priority waters across the state. The plan is based on goals and objectives identified in the DNR's Lake Sturgeon Rehabilitation Strategy. Prior to drafting the plan, tribal and state biologists sought input from their "Sturgeon"

Cont'd on next page

"Anglers"

Cont'd from page 1

lapse in 2004 serves as a constant reminder that stocking too many Chinook salmon on top of wild fish can lead to disaster for coastal communities.

With this in mind, state and tribal agencies of the Lake Michigan Committee decided to reduce the number of salmon and trout stocked in Lake Michigan. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources recently announced its plan to reduce Chinook salmon stocking by 230,000 (in addition to reducing lake trout by 270,000 and cutting coho salmon stocking by 96,000).

Public reaction to Chinook salmon cuts in Michigan has been mixed, with a narrow margin of support from groups like the Lake Michigan Citizen's Fishery Advisory Committee and Michigan Steelheaders (MSSFA) and opposition from Michigan Charter Boat Association and the newly-formed Great Lakes Salmon Initiative. What will the decision really mean for anglers?

Michigan stocking sites contribute little to Chinook catches.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory, only 7% of Chinook salmon

caught in Michigan waters during the open-water fishery (April – September, 2014 – 2015) were stocked in Michigan waters of Lake Michigan. Roughly 7 out of 10 Chinook salmon caught in Michigan waters of Lake Michigan were wild, and Wisconsin and Lake Huron plants contributed more than local stocking efforts.

For Michigan anglers, this means that Michigan DNR's 46% reduction in Chinook salmon stocking absolutely will not cause a 46% reduction in open water Chinook catches. After all, the vast majority of fish being caught by Michigan anglers are not Michigan-stocked fish.

Fewer stocked salmon does not necessarily mean fewer salmon in the lake

According to the Michigan and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, about 6.8 million untagged/un-fin-clipped Chinook salmon smolts recruited to the population

in Lake Michigan in 2012. While they believe that most of these unmarked fish were from wild, natural reproduction in Lake Michigan tributaries some did come from natural reproduction in Lake Huron tributaries and other sources. A small number of unmarked Chinook salmon smolts came from Salmon in the Classroom stockings (<10,000 unmarked fish) and from private hatchery stockings in Ontario waters of Lake Huron (214,352 unmarked fish). Even if all of these unmarked stocked fish migrated into Lake Michigan, the estimate of wild smolts recruiting to Lake Michigan in 2012 would be in the neighborhood of 6.6 million.

In 2013, wild reproduction fell dramatically to around 1.4 million smolts. Reasons are not entirely clear but, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may have been related to low water levels and warm water temperatures

during the fall spawning migration that produced those smolts. Other possible reasons include low survival due to an abnormally cold and prolonged winter, slow growth and high mortality of young salmon after hatching, and/or low numbers of alewife to feed on once young Chinook salmon entered Lake Michigan.

One way or another, natural reproduction was dismal in 2013 and remained below average in 2014 (2.9 million smolts). The poor fishing many Michigan anglers experienced in 2015 and 2016 was due, in part, to these weak wild year-classes.

The overwhelming influence of natural reproduction.

Back in the early days, fishery managers could control the number of Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan through stocking. If states stocked 2 million Chinooks, then that was it — nothing more to account for, no more mouths to feed.

Now fishery managers have much less control over Chinook salmon numbers. Lake Michigan stocking (from all states) is being reduced from 1.80 million in 2016 to 1.35 million Chinook salmon smolts in 2017. Wild spawning salmon produce around 4.5 million smolts on average, but this wild production can range from 1.4 million smolts to over 6.6 million smolts. This is a lot of variation!

To put stocking into perspective, the total number of Chinook smolts (stocked + wild) produced in 2017 is expected to be around 5.85 million based on an average year of natural reproduction. However, if natural reproduction is poor this could be as low as 2.75 million. If natural reproduction is high, which is a distinct possibility, we could have upwards of 7.95 million smolts entering Lake Michigan in 2017. In short, the impact of the stocking cut amounts to very little in

comparison to this tremendous variation in wild fish.

For anglers, the bottom line is that there is good reason to expect the number of Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan to increase or remain steady despite the recent stocking reduction. If salmon numbers do dramatically increase, as they might due to natural reproduction, the result could be a permanent collapse of alewife and salmon.

If natural reproduction remains near recent lows, the worst-case scenario for anglers would be a slight reduction in the number of salmon over the short term. In reality, this worst-case scenario would also be the best-case scenario in terms of ensuring the long term viability of the salmon fishery because it would provide a better chance of alewife recovery.

For better or worse, the future will be determined in large part by wild fish.

"Sturgeon"

Cont'd from previous page

respective constituents to make sure the plan would contain all essential components important to the growing number of people who are interested in this iconic native species. Rehabilitation efforts in the Black Lake system have been ongoing since a survey in 1997 indicated a decline in the lake sturgeon population relative to the mid-1970s. These efforts have been successful in large part because of the assistance provided by the Black Lake Chapter of Sturgeon for Tomorrow and Tower-Kleber Limited Partnership who, in coordination with the DNR, built a streamside rearing facility to bolster the population until sufficient natural reproduction occurs. The facility also provides Michigan State University researchers a venue to conduct groundbreaking research that is helping managers better understand the factors currently limiting the population and identify strategies to address them. "Now that we have a mutual framework we can all draw from, the hard work of implementing the plan's ultimate goal begins," said Brett Fessell, the Restoration Section leader for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. "A goal that very likely none of the authors may witness—but that we now have confidence will materialize in form and function—is a naturally self-sustaining lake sturgeon fishery for many generations to come."

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The Great Salmon

**By Capt Richard Laaksonen
Finpower Charters**

There was a great salmon that lived in the lake. Anglers fished him for years, but no lure would he take.

He knew of the danger that came from above. It took all his friends and the ones he did love. Each year he got bigger and wiser they say. Captains fished him at night and all through the day.

There was not one bait that he had not seen before. All the plugs and the spoons and so many more. So he stayed safe and sound, and grew by the day.

The deeper the safer, so there he did stay. But there was a man who as a young lad had fished for this monster many times with his dad.

They had never hooked it, but each year they had tried.

His dad fished him for years, until the day that he died.

The boy's only wish was to see this great salmon one day.

So each night before bed, for this he did pray. Since his father had failed to accomplish his goal the boy took up this

quest, and swore on his soul.

That one day he would battle, this most massive of fish.

He would hook him then land him to fulfill his dad's wish.

Then one day in the store, this young man did find, the ultimate lure that he'd seen in his mind.

It stood out from others, it was unlike the rest. It was brighter and better, no doubt it was best.

It was new on the shelf, it was one of a kind.

It was something so special, it was a great find. As he paid for the bait he was brimming with pride it had a DW stamped right on its side.

With cold sweat on his brow and a fast beating heart, he jumped on his boat and he gave it a start.

He went to the spot where he had seen it before.

And wet this new lure that he bought at the store.

He was excited to fish with this most awesome new bait.

The one he was sure would seal the great salmon's fate.

Just as he'd thought, the fish couldn't refuse when he saw it, then bit it and then went for a cruise

He ran and he jumped and then headed for deep.

The lad saw a chance for his promise to keep.

The fight it was brutal, it went on for days.

The running, the reeling left both in a craze.

With the last of its might, and one great swish of its tail it soared

through the air, it was big as a whale.

When he finally saw the great fish he had sought, it was bigger and longer than he'd ever thought.

When at last the beast landed after such a long chase.

Both the man and the fish had a strange look on their face.

For the fish it had landed on top of the boat.

And there was no doubt it no longer could float.

The fish in exhaustion looked the man in the eye and was surprised when he

saw the man starting to cry.

Each knew it was over and the end was near.

But each was content and neither showed fear.

They had both done their best, so they both had won.

The torch had been passed from father to son.

They fought to exhaustion, they both took their last breath as the boat slowly sank to the deepest of depth.

Some say they still see them on some moonlit nights, both still thrashing and reeling not giving up on the fight.

So if it's your wish to catch a great fish of this kind then go grab a rod and see what you find.

For man against fish is the ultimate fight

If you've ever caught one this size you know that I'm right.

Some probably think that this is just a sad tale

About a man and his son, the fish big as a whale.

But if you look closer I think you might find the story I tell might just unlock your mind.

The challenges in life are just like the great fish if you keep on trying you just might get your wish.

The baits are the choices that we make in life, how we choose to react when confronted with strife.

For life is like fishing and if you're in it to win you must first choose a bait then put your line in.

If you try your best and give it your all you can hold your head high, and stand straight and tall.

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2017 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information	Contact Info
January	7	Squirrel Blast	Weigh in Irving Farms Battle Creek	Greg Peck 269-998-9407
January	21	Ice Fishing Tournament	Weigh in Portage Lake Klines Resort Vicksburg	Justin Kling 269-491-2980
February	18	Ice Fishing Tournament	Weigh in Gull Lake The Dock	Justin Kling 269-491-2980
February	25	St Joe River Trout Quest	Weigh in I-94 Boat Ramp	Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
March	4	St Joe River Chapter Challenge	Location Pending	Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
March	16	Kalamazoo River Spring Steelhead Allegan Dam		Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
April	22	Lake Michigan Coho Blast Benton Harbor		Contact Greg Peck 269-998-9407
May	13	Lake Michigan Weigh 3, Trip Swap Benton Harbor		Contact Greg Peck 269-998-9407
June	2-3	Connie McGowan Invitational Lake Erie Captain Must Be A Member		Contact Greg Peck 269-998-9407
July	15	Portage Lake Pan Fish/Family Picnic in Vicksburg		Contact Justin Kling 269-491-2980
August	19	Lake Michigan Memorial South Haven		Contact Greg Peck 269-998-9407
October	7	Kalamazoo River Salmon Allegan Dam		Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
October	21	Kalamazoo River Memorial Allegan Dam		Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
October	28	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest Allegan Dam		Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
November	25	St Joe River Fall Steelhead I-94 Boat Ramp		Contact Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324
December	2	St Joe River Chapter Challenge		Southwest Chapter Ryan McCartney (574)274-6382
December	9	Christmas Party		Kalamazoo Eagles

2017 Flint River Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information	Membership Meetings Held at:
January	18	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
February	15	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
March	15	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
April	19	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
	22	Salmon Tournament	6:00am St. Joseph	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	29	Salmon Tournament	6:00am Harbor Beach	contact Randy 231-342-0057
May	17	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
	20	Salmon Tournament	6:30am Holland	contact Randy 231-342-0057
June	3	Walleye Tournament	7:00am Linwood	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	17	Walleye Tournament	7:00am Sebewaing	contact Randy 231-342-0057
July	8	Walleye Big Bob Outing	7:00am Linwood	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	22	Walleye Tournament	7:00am Au Gres	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	29	Walleye Tournament	7:00am Port Austin	
August	5	Salmon Tournament	6:00am Ludington	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	19	Salmon Tournament	6:00am Frankfort	contact Randy 231-342-0057
	26	Salmon Tournament	6:30am Manistee	contact Randy 231-342-0057
September	20	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
October	18	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
November	8	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.
December	13	Membership Meeting	7:00pm at Walli's	Burton Mi.

2017 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Comments
Grand Haven Steelheaders: www.ghsteelheaders.com			
January	1	Member Year Long Fishing Contest	Jan 1 - Nov 30 contact: rtwilson42@yahoo.com
	1	Youth Fishing Contest	Jan 1 - Sep 4 contact: rtwilson42@yahoo.com
Awards given at the December dinner/meeting; fish out of the port of Grand Haven: Chinook, Coho, Steelhead, Lake Trout, Brown Trout			
April	TBD	Spring meeting, public speaker, program	date, location, program TBD in January
	TBD	Net Pen project, Chinook Salmon, date depend on coordination with DNR Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery	
July	29	Member Weeklong+ fishing contest	Jul 29 - Aug 9 contact: rtwilson42@yahoo.com
Fish out of the Port of Grand Haven; Chinook, Coho, Steelhead, Lake Trout, Brown Trout			
August	3	Sportsmen for Youth Fundraiser	https://sportsmenforyouth.com
	10	Grand Haven Steelheaders Member Picnic	contact: mjbelter@altelco.net
Rycenga Park, Spring Lake Twp.			
September	9	Sportsmen for Youth Day	Muskegon Cty Fairgrounds https://sportsmenforyouth.com
	16	Grand Haven Salmon Festival	Grand Haven Waterfront/City Mari www.ghsalmonfest.com
	16	GH Steelheaders-Salmon Festival Big Fish Contest	Grand Haven Waterfront Stadium www.ghsalmonfest.com
	16	Salmon Fest Kid Zone Activity area	Grand Haven Waterfront/City Marina location
December	TBD	Christmas dinner/annual meeting	

2017 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
January	9	Board Meeting
	21	Ice Fishing Tournament (Duck/Swan Lake)
February	6	Board Meeting
	23	Annual Banquet
	25	Ice Fishing Tournament (Duck/Swan Lake)
March	6	Board Meeting
April	3	Board Meeting
	20	General Membership Meeting
May	1	Board Meeting
	20	Holland Steelheaders Spring Challenge
	23	Tuesday Night League Kickoff
June	5	Board Meeting
	10	All Species Tournament
	24	Kids N Kings Tournament
July	10	Board Meeting
	27	General Membership Meeting/Captain's Meeting
	29	Holland Steelheaders Summer Challenge
August	4-6	Big Red Classic
	7	Board Meeting
	19	Holland Steelheaders Ladies Tournament
	26	Gold Coast Tournament
September	5	Tuesday Fish League Final Night
	11	Board Meeting
October	2	Board Meeting
November	6	Board Meeting
December	2	River Tournament
	4	Board Meeting
	7	General Membership Meeting

Membership Meetings Held at:
 Yacht Basin Yacht Club
 1862 Ottawa Beach Rd
 Holland, MI 49424
 Social Hour at 6pm
 Dinner at 7pm
 Call board members to find out locations of board meetings.
 For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org

2017 Huron Valley Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information	Membership Meetings Held at:
February	16	Membership meeting	7:30 PM	American Legion Post #200 11800 Michaels St Taylor, MI 48180
March	16	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM	
April	13	Detroit River Tournament w/MWS		John Popp tzjohn@comcast.net
	20	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM	
May	13	Taylor Fish-N-Fun Day	Tom Cunningham	
	20	Vision Impaired Outing	Dave Backhaus	
	27	Kelley's Island Tournament w/MWS		
June	3	Lake Erie Walleye w/MWS		
	8	Old Geezers Outing		
	15	Membership Meeting/Fish Fry	6:00 PM	
July	22-23	Ludington Tournament w/MWS		
August	17	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM	
October	19	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM	
	28	Huron Walleye Tournament w/MWS		

2017 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
January	9	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	30	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
February	4	Ice Fishing Outing STC	
	6	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	27	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
March	6	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	16-19	Ultimate Sports Show	Devos Place
	16-18	Ultimate Sports Show Fishing Contest	Devos Place
	27	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
	31	Year Long Fish Contest Ends	
April	1	Year Long Fish Contest Starts	
	1	Spring River Contest Grand & Muskegon Rivers and their Tributaries STC	
	3	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	27	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
May	1	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	22	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
June	3	Spring Big Lake Contest STC	
	5	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	9-11	Lake Erie 3 Day Walleye Contest	
	26	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
July	10	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	12	Chapter Family Picnic 6 PM at Johnson Park	
August	7	Board of Directors Meeting	
	19	Fall Big Lake Salmon	Trout 2/1 Contest STC
	28	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
September	11	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	25	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
October	1	Chapter Buck Contest Starts	
	2	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	30	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
November	4	Fall River Contest Grand & Muskegon Rivers and their Tributaries STC	
	6	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	11	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest STC	
	27	Membership Meeting	7:30 PM/Social Hour 6:30 PM
December	4	Board of Directors Meeting	7PM
	11	Chapter Family Christmas Party 6 PM - Diamond Hall	

2017 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information	Membership Meetings Held at:
March	16	Regular Meeting	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
April	20	Regular Meeting	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
		Fish Fry		
May	6	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	6:00 AM	Harbor Beach Marina
	18	Regular Meeting	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
	27	Fish Fry	7:00PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
June	3	ProKing Fishing Tournament	6:00	Harbor Beach Marina
	3	Grindstone Veterans fishing outing	for details	Grindstone
	10	Harbor Beach Veterans fishing outing	6:00:00 AM Contact Kevin Ramsey for details	Harbor Beach Marina
	15	Regular Meeting	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
July	20	Regular Meeting	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
August	5	Summer Showdown fishing tournament	6:00AM	Harbor Beach Marina
	13	Pig Roast	2:00PM	Stafford Park
	17	Ladies Night	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
September	21	Regular Meeting w/ tackle swap	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters
October	19	Regular Meeting-Election of Board/Officers	7:30 PM	Ubyly Foxhunters

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