

# THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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

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## Legislative Action Sought to Protect Sport Fishing

By Dennis Eade

The new 100th Michigan Legislature has convened and is ready to do the people's business. It is important to get off to quick start in securing support for sportsmen and especially sport anglers in order

to influence the passage of good legislation to protect and enhance the sport fishery. That is exactly why Dr. Bryan Burroughs, Executive Director of Michigan TU and I accepted the invitation of the House Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep.

Gary Howell (R) North Branch, to come before the committee and share our organizations' missions and directions.

On Tuesday, February 5th we were able to explain to the committee members the size and scope of our organizations and the



Dennis Eade, Executive Director of MSSFA and Dr. Bryan Burroughs, Executive Director of Michigan Trout Unlimited address members of the House Natural Resources Committee.



Photo: www.bridgemi.com

## What Does it Take to Make Ten Pounds of Salmon?

By Dan O'Keefe,  
Michigan Sea Grant;  
okeefed@msu.edu

MSUE News Category:  
Natural Resources, Fisheries & Wildlife, Invasive Species, Lakes, Streams & Watersheds, Sea Grant

The new edition of *The Life of the Lakes from Michigan Sea Grant* explores how much food Great Lakes gamefish really need. Before the arrival of several invasive species, it took over four and a half tons of plankton to produce ten pounds of chinook salmon in Lake Michigan.

In order to produce gamefish like trout and salmon, a lake must be able to produce the food source for these large predators. Nearly all life in the Great Lakes is dependent upon tiny, single-celled algae known as phytoplankton. These microscopic life forms produce their own food using the sun's en-

ergy, just as rooted plants like grasses and trees do in more familiar environments on dry land.

In ecology, plants and phytoplankton are called "primary producers" because they form the basis for the entire food chain. Animals that feed directly on these producers are called "primary consumers." In a grassland the role of primary consumer role would be filled by grazing mammals, while in the Great Lakes the primary consumers are microscopic zooplankton.

Looking across the landscape of an African savannah, we can easily see that grasses are far more numerous than grazing animals like zebras or gazelles, and top predators like leopards and lions are rarer still. In the Great Lakes, it is much more difficult to visualize exactly how much life is needed to sustain top predators like trout and salmon because the base of the

food pyramid is invisible to our eyes.

Just because plankton are small does not mean they aren't important, though.

Michigan Sea Grant's newly-revised fourth edition of *The Life of the Lakes* illustrates just how important plankton are with a figure that helps us visualize just how large the "base" of the food chain must be in order to support top predators like salmon.

### Trophic pyramids

In ecology, links of the food chain can also be thought of as levels in a pyramid. The base of the trophic (or food) pyramid always contains the primary producers like plants or phytoplankton. The next higher level of the pyramid is much smaller due to the loss of energy. In general,

"Salmon"

Continued on page 7

Great Lakes \$7.1 billion sport fishing impact on the economies of the bordering states. We outlined what our organizations do to promote sustainability of our natural resources, the economic impact anglers have on Michigan's economy and how conservation is improving the quality of life of Michigan's citizens. We shared with the committee that Michigan is second only to the state of Florida in attracting out-of-state anglers bolstering tourism by over 347,000 visitors annually. We answered questions that covered topics like dam removal, wood

debris placement in streams to improve fish habitat, invasive species, and commercial aquaculture.

I spoke to the need to enact a new commercial fishing statute in 2019 citing the antiquated provisions of a statute that was last amended in 1994 and propped up with MDNR director orders to keep it purposeful. We need to protect game fish species from being harvested commercially, to insure we are using gear and equipment that minimizes the killing of game fish, and sufficient penalties to dissuade violation of the regulations. To

this end, I am pleased to report that our sport fishing coalition of MSSFA, MUCC and TU has an upcoming meeting scheduled with Representative Jim Lilly (R) Park Twp. to discuss the statute and possible updated language which would protect sport fishing and update commercial fishing regulations.

The new statute will undoubtedly set the tone for the upcoming tribal negotiations for a new Consent Decree in 2020. Lake trout

"Legislature"

Continued on page 6



By Sally Zarafonetis,  
Contributing Writer

There are certain times in life that stand out as intensely meaningful. These moments come at odd times

## A Woman's Fish Tale

— when we are alone, when our senses and our emotions unexpectedly connect and transport us to something beyond the ordinary. Nature can inspire these moments, drawing out intense feelings and an overwhelming joy.

I went on a solo fishing trip in the Fall. It scared me to think that I was going fishing. "I won't like it," I said to myself.

To prepare for the trip, I brought comfort tools: warm sweater, insulated pants, water-proof jacket with hood, snacks and more snacks, a bottle of wine, gloves, hat, sun-

screen, warm socks, a blanket and my own pillow. I wanted nothing more than to insulate myself from the hazards of this adventure. "I'm sure it's going to be cold and damp," I thought. "I'll be uncomfortable and all alone."

Why was I doing this? I wanted to be brave and more rugged and I

"Fish Tale"

Continued on page 10



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## MSSFA PRESIDENT Tim Stegeman

It is the start of a new year and with that it is time again to pay close attention to fisheries management activity. However, I am going to leave those announcements to the MSSFA's Executive Director in his message to you.

We had our first state board meeting of the year and my first meeting at the helm and I must say that I am honored to be the President of the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association. With the board's diverse skill sets and backgrounds, I am glad to be working with such a great board and very optimistic that the organization will continue to grow and prosper. Much was accomplished at this meeting and I will highlight three major items:

Starting in January, I asked each chapter Director to submit a list of goals and priorities to consider. This list amounted to over 60 individual items that were then ranked by order of importance. The resulting top 10 priority items for the Association that the board voted on and approved are as follows:

### MSSFA 2019 Priorities

- MSSFA involvement with fisheries management
- Invasive Species
- New Memberships
- New commercial fishing statute/bill/law
- Salmon & Steelhead stocking
- Work with other groups to help fund CPMR/ Tribal Negotiation
- Membership retention
- Consent Decree Education and Tribal Negotiation funding
- New Revenue Sources
- Youth Memberships

This top 10 listing isn't to say the other items are no longer important, however, these ten items will be receiving the majority of our attention.

On a side note, someone who will remain anonymous suggested the MSSFA develop a hotline for addiction – fishing addiction. I did not see this suggestion as a serious submission and omitted it from the ranking exercise. However, if this is a serious item that the membership is concerned about, please let me know.

The board also reviewed its financial obligation of funding the MSSFA's portion of the Citizens to Protect Michigan Resources (CPMR) Tribal Negotiation efforts. From that review and discussion, the board voted on and approved a funding scenario that is fair and balanced for all chapters. To me and I believe everyone else who has been involved in this important

activity, a major milestone has been accomplished to help us move forward.

The last major item that was accomplished at the February meeting was that committee assignments were made. The listing for each director is by chapter below:

- Natural Resources- MetroWest, Thumb, Thunder Bay, South Haven, Grand Rapids
- Legal & Legislative – Holland, Battle Creek
- Membership Service & Education – Grand Haven, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, White River
- Finance & Audit – Southwest, Great Lakes Bay, Thumb

Believe me, there is a lot of detail that goes with all of these items. However, I will leave it to your chapter directors to give to you those additional details at your next chapter meeting. Should you be interested in helping your chapter director on the committee they are assigned, please contact them.

We also have the annual President's meeting coming up in April when even more information will become available. I strongly request that all chapter presidents attend or at a minimum at least have a chapter representative present.

On the fun side of being a Steelheader and state president, it is my intent to visit each chapter at least

once for a meeting or event during my term in office. The first event was to attend the Holland chapter's annual banquet. I want to thank Holland President Steve Weatherwax and his chapter members for the invitation. Steve and his crew have a very well run and attended event. I especially enjoyed their big fish awards ceremony as their participating members caught some monster fish in 2018. Also, their guest speaker Ben Turschak, MDNR Biologist, had an excellent presentation about the challenge of managing for predator/prey balance in a changing Lake Michigan food web. For March & April, I am planning on visiting Metro



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

West for their Sportsman's Banquet, Grand Rapids and South Haven for the Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop. In the meantime, there will be a visit or two in Lansing to work on your behalf.

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**Dennis Eade, Executive Director**  
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

The Ludington Fisheries Workshop was held on January 19th and covered the results of the 2018 season. The charter industry continues to show a resurgence in trips booked and total catch

and business is up 45% over the last three years. According to the numbers presented, lake trout were the most frequently harvested game species. Michigan charters harvested 72,950 lake trout

with 60,000 coming from Lake Michigan. Chinook salmon catch was 25,130 with 20,000 of those coming from Lake Michigan. Some 15,201 Coho salmon were caught last year and down from 2017 which was a phenomenal year. The 2018 numbers were more typical of what we have come to expect from the Coho fishery.

The brown trout fishery continues to be down with 494 brown trout harvested

in Lake Michigan out of a total 735 statewide. Just under 6,500 steelhead were harvested on charters. Salmonid species make up the bulk of the catch of Lake Michigan charters. On lakes Huron and Erie other species prove more important, especially walleye. More than 88,000 were caught on charters in 2018 in Michigan.

A presentation by Brian Roth, MSU associate professor covered the ongoing

predator diet study in lakes Michigan and Huron. It was apparent that the sampling has not been sufficient enough to draw meaningful conclusions as yet other than to establish that diet varies by species, by location, and by times of year. While chinook salmon eat almost solely alewife, other species, such as brown trout and lake trout have more varied diets. He encouraged anglers to submit frozen stomachs caught in the Great Lakes to the program (www.miseagrant.umich.edu/explore/fisheries/great-lakes-angler-science-fishing-for-answers/).

The Chairman of the Michigan House Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Committee, Gary Howell called me and asked if the Michigan Steelheaders would make a presentation to the committee, along with Michigan TU, about our organizations and what we do to protect and promote sport fishing in the state. I gladly accepted the invitation knowing that it provided an opportunity to establish credibility with the committee at the beginning of the new 100th Legislature and set the stage for testimony in support of a new commercial fishing statue bill expected to be introduced in the House very soon. It also gave us a chance to weigh in on commercial aquaculture, emphasizing the need to do it inland and not net pens on the Great Lakes.

Tournament Trail Magazine and its managing editor Scott MacDonald, requested I write a feature article about the Michigan Steelheaders for the new 2019 edition of the magazine. I submitted the article at the end of January and look forward to its publication and distribution later this month.

The Michigan Legislative Sportsmen Caucus breakfast meeting was held on February 14, 2019 in Lansing, MI. and as Vice Chairman of the Advisory Council, I was able to brief the members (both from the House and Senate) as to the purpose of the Advisory Council and how we stand ready to provide the members with insight and information when considering legislation that affects our natural resources or hunting and fishing heritage in Michigan. The Advisory Council elected Dr. Bryan Burroughs as its new Chairman to replace outgoing Chairman and now Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director, Daniel Eichinger. The council is also hosting a briefing and social gathering for newly elected members of the House and Senate on March 5th outlining what our or-



ganizations do to promote sustainability of our natural resources, the economic impact hunters and anglers have on Michigan's economy and how conservation is impacting the quality of life in the state.

I was able to attend the Metro West Steelheaders general membership meeting in Livonia this month and heard Fishery Chief, Jim Dexter give an excellent presentation on the accomplishments of the department and challenges facing the fishery as we begin a new season of angling. Awards were presented to the winners of the big fish contests for all the various species and I was excited to see a new category, kayak fishing, getting prominent interest from many MWS members.

The tourism industry coalition, TICOM, is hosting a legislative breakfast on February 27th to promote tourism and organizations like MSSFA, who promote sport fishing for out-of-state anglers coming to Michigan to enjoy the best fresh water fishing in the world. I will be attending the breakfast and later in the morning visiting with Representative Jim Lilly to discuss a new commercial fishing statue that protects game fish from commercial harvest.

The USDA Forest Service has announced a temporary closure order affecting Wild and Scenic Rivers, and specifically the Pine River, Manistee River and Au Sable River prohibiting the possession of an alcoholic beverage on or along the waters of these rivers except where private lands are involved and developed campgrounds and designated campsites. This order is being met with strong resistance from local fishermen who frequent these streams. The MDNR was caught by surprise by the order and questioned how it could come to pass without a public vetting process. Rumor has it that there has been a temporary pull back of the order but we need to watch how this unfolds. I did contact Senator Gary Peters about the order and he is looking into it.

The Board met on February 20th and it approved the budget for 2019 and agreed on priorities for this coming year. The Presidents' Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 20th at the Michigan Historical Library and Museum, 701 Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI beginning at 10:00 AM until about 3:00 PM. We are hoping to have Dr. Howard Tanner at the meeting with signed copies of his new book, "Something Spectacular". We are off to a great beginning in 2019!

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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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## THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS (GLSFN)

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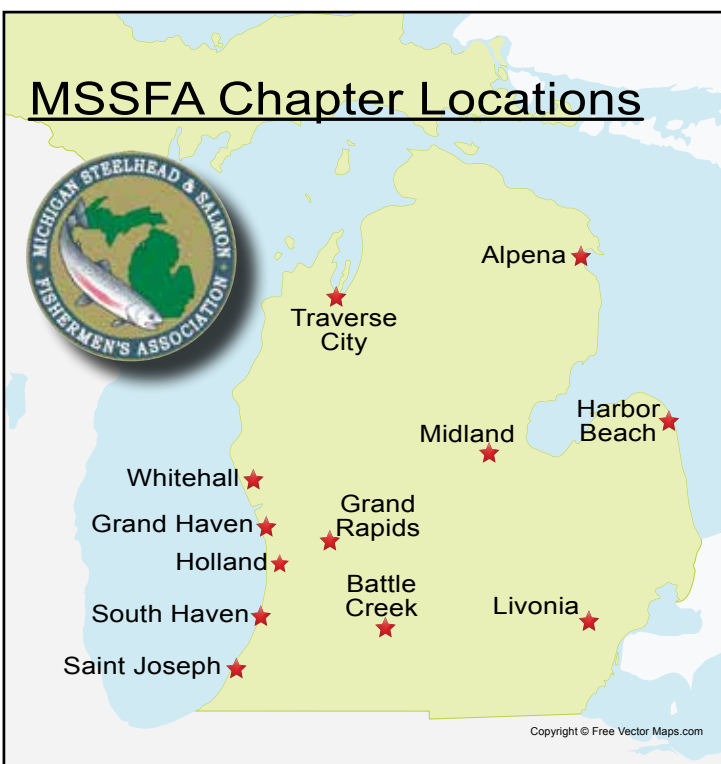
Better than forty years ago, The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association began to publish a magazine called the "Guide to Great Lakes Sport Fishing". Five years later the magazine became a monthly format called "The Great Lakes Steelheader". Today the newspaper is called "**The Great Lakes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

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

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

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

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## 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

**Saturday April 20, 2019** at Michigan Historical Museum  
701 Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, MI – 10:00 AM

**Wednesday, June 19, 2019** at MUCC Offices  
2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 P.M.

**Wednesday, August 21, 2019** at MUCC Offices  
2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 P.M.

**Wednesday, October 16, 2019** at MUCC Offices  
2101 Wood Street, Lansing, MI – 7:00 P.M.

**Wednesday, December 18, 2019** at MUCC Offices  
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3	All Auto Care	1234 Ball Ave. NE	Grand Rapids	MI	49505	Member Rates
4	Alpine Rent-All & Sales	1452 Alpine Ave NW	Grand Rapids	MI	49504	10% on Stihl & Toro Parts. <a href="http://www.alpinerent-all.com">www.alpinerent-all.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@alpinerent-all.com">info@alpinerent-all.com</a>
5	Ann's Custom Canvas	4414 Remembrance Rd	Walker	MI	49544	10% Discount, not valid on specials. Mention steelheaders before ordering
6	Art Van Furniture	Statewide				Friends and Family Sales only (need special coupon)
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8	Batteries Plus	2061 N-139 Suite B	Benton Harbor	MI	49022	10% & Member Discount 269-925-7374 <a href="http://www.batteriesplus.com">www.batteriesplus.com</a>
9	Batteries Plus	386 Bay Park Dr, Suite B	Holland	MI	49424	10% & Member Discount 616-396-9914 <a href="http://www.batteriesplus.com">www.batteriesplus.com</a>
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14	Big Lake Outfitters of Saugatuck	640 Water St	Saugatuck	MI	49453	10% on fishing tackle (retail store) with membership card 269-857-4762
15	Big Papa Sportfishing	50642 Oregon Ave.	Novi	MI	48374	10% except on equipment
16	Black Dog Outfitters	4444 14 Mile Rd	Rockford	MI	49341	10% Discount on fly tying materials, hooks & lines. <a href="http://www.blackdog-outfitters.com">www.blackdog-outfitters.com</a>
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“Legislature”

Continued from page 1

harvest is a contentious issue between tribal fishers and sport fishermen. Last year, the state recreational harvest in Grand Traverse Bay (known as the Lake Trout Management Unit MM-4) reached 93,000 pounds – exceeding the set total allowable catch of 77,200 pounds.

When either the state or the tribes exceed harvest limits by more than 15 percent, there is a penalty the following season. Under this scenario, recreational anglers on Grand Traverse Bay this year will be required to reduce their catch by nearly 32,000 pounds.

To accommodate that required reduction for the 2019 lake trout fishing season, the DNR is considering three options and is open to other options:

1. Allow the Grand Traverse Bay fishery to be open June 15-Sept. 2 with a 15-inch minimum size limit, and a two-fish daily possession limit. (Estimated reduction: 30,900 pounds)

2. Allow the Grand Traverse Bay fishery to be open July 1-Sept. 30 with a 15-inch minimum size limit, and a two-fish daily pos-

session limit. (Estimated reduction: 31,400 pounds)

3. Allow the Grand Traverse Bay fishery to be open May 25-Sept. 2 with a 15-inch minimum size limit, and a one-fish daily possession limit May 25-June 30 and a two-fish daily possession limit July 1-Sept. 2. (Estimated reduction: 27,400 pounds). The Lake Michigan Citizen’s Fishery Advisory Committee will participate in a conference call on March 7th to discuss lake trout regulations on Grand Travers Bay. The committee will review options suggested by the DNR and public from a March 6th public meeting. The information along with opinions expressed on the call will be presented to the NRC on March 14th.

All of these issues impact multiple stakeholders and require openness and a willingness to reach resolution. With invaluable natural resources comes an inviolable responsibility to protect and promote sensible resolution through legislation, regulation, or collaboration.



Above: Dennis responds to questions regarding Commercial Aquaculture.



Above: Chairman Gary Howell requests additional material covering inland aquaculture from Dr. Bryan Burroughs

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2	02/15/19	02/28/19
3	04/12/19	04/26/19
4	06/14/19	06/28/19
5	08/16/19	08/30/19
6	10/11/19	10/25/19

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**“Salmon”**

Continued from page 1

around 90% of energy is lost at each link in the food chain as waste heat and unavoidable inefficiency.

Charles Elton, one of the early pioneers of ecology, coined the term “pyramid of numbers” when he first described the concept of the trophic pyramid in 1927. Later researchers realized that a “pyramid of biomass” was often a better way to illustrate the large base of the pyramid. This is because a pyramid based on number of animals will be very sensitive to the size of individual animals. The pyramid of biomass reflects the weight (or mass) of all individuals at each level of the food chain. This provides a snapshot in time of the “standing stock” of all living things at each level.

**The 10:1 rule of thumb**

In Lake Michigan, fishery managers rely on calculations of prey fish and predator fish biomass to

produce a predator-prey ratio each year. The standing stock of prey fish (alewife) to predators (chinook salmon) is considered dangerously low if it falls below 10:1, which is very consistent with research done on a variety of other ecosystems.

This is based on the tip of the “pyramid of biomass”, which uses the weight of the standing stock of alewife and chinook salmon. For salmon and alewife, this works nicely. However, the lower levels of the pyramid of biomass actually begin to decrease in size.

For example, Lake Michigan chinook biomass averaged 4.6 pounds per acre in 1985-1990. Based on the 10:1 rule, we would expect more than 46 pounds of alewife per acre and over 460 pounds of zooplankton per acre. The actual biomass density of zooplankton averaged only 27 pounds per acre. This would be impossible to sustain were it not for the short generation time and high

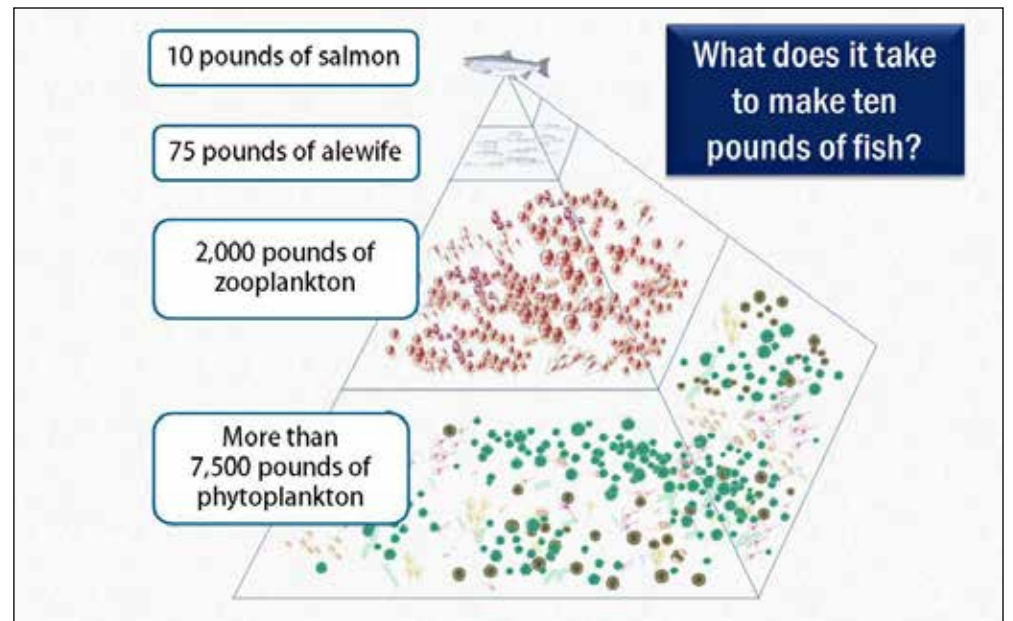
productivity of plankton.

Pyramids based on standing stock of biomass or numbers if individuals are useful tools for conceptualizing ecosystems, but none of these gives us a quick view of how much food really goes into producing a single gamefish. That is why a “pyramid of consumption” was used to visualize the resources that are required to produce ten pounds of salmon.

**So, what does it take to make ten pounds of salmon?**

It takes roughly one ton of zooplankton and over three and a half tons of phytoplankton to produce a single ten-pound salmon under ideal conditions.

Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan provided a convenient example for the pyramid of consumption because they feed almost exclusively on one species of prey fish (the alewife). Alewives feed primarily on zooplankton. This makes it relatively easy to figure out how much zooplankton



**Above: This pyramid of consumption for Lake Michigan shows how much food was required to produce a single ten-pound Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan before the invasion of spiny water fleas and exotic mussels.**

is needed to produce ten pounds of salmon based on the gross growth efficiencies (GGEs) for salmon, alewife, and zooplankton.

This provides a clean and simple picture of the pyramid, but the food web in Lake Michigan is quite a bit more complicated than

this simple picture. For example, alewives also feed on the opossum shrimp (*Mysis*), and *Mysis* often feed on zooplankton. To complicate matters even more, some of the zooplankton eaten by alewives nowadays are invasive spiny water fleas, which are

voracious and extremely inefficient plankton-eaters. Although spiny water fleas are themselves zooplankton, they feed on smaller zooplankton, and therefore represent a new level of the food pyramid between alewife and native zooplankton. Amazingly, one study showed that spiny water fleas are so inefficient that they consume 100 times more zooplankton for their weight than fish do in Lake Huron, and 17 times more zooplankton than our native *Mysis* shrimp!

Unfortunately, these complications in the food web make it very difficult to calculate and visualize exactly how the pyramid looks. Even so, the pyramid of consumption offers a simplistic basis for conceptualizing the food resources necessary to produce Great Lakes gamefish.

*Special thanks to Chuck Madenjian (USGS Great Lakes Science Center) and Steve Pothoven (NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory) for contributing to development of the pyramid figure and reviewing this article.*

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# Michigan Department of Natural Resources

## Eichinger Draws on Deep Outdoor Tradition in New Role as DNR Director

*Michigan DNR's 21st director youngest to hold the post*



**Above: Dan Eichinger, new director for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, shown in his office at Constitution Hall in Lansing.** Credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

**By John Pepin  
Michigan Department of  
Natural Resources**

As a boy, Dan Eichinger could be found with a spinning rod in hand, haunting the tree-lined banks of the Middle Branch River, trying to avoid the stream's suckers in favor of a tug on his line from a big brown trout.

Like lots of good Michigan folks, he loves the woods and water – they're in his blood.

Eichinger, 38, grew up hunting deer in that same part of Osceola County near Marion, a mid-Michigan village of about 850 people, situated along Highway 66 – about 10 miles north of where the Middle Branch flows into the Muskegon River.

Born in Cadillac, raised in Holland, Eichinger's paternal lineage is steeped in natural resources conservation advocacy and appreciation.

"My grandfather was Ryan Bontekoe. He was a charter member of the Pigeon River Advisory Council and served on that group until he passed away in 1994," Eichinger said. "So, he was involved from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s."

Bontekoe was the president of Michigan United Conservation Clubs in 1977. Not quite a decade later, that same post was held by Eichinger's father, John.

"Later in his career, my dad was the executive director of Safari Club International and he was president/CEO of the Ruffed Grouse Society until his retirement last June," Eichinger said.

Since those boyhood days in Osceola County, where he got hooked on fishing and hunting, Eichinger has followed the boot prints of his father and grandfather down a path to devoted service and support of numerous conservation and natural resources endeavors.

He was schooled at Michigan State and Central Michigan universities, earning a bachelor's degree in political theory and constitutional democracy and master's degrees in fisheries and wildlife and public administration.

Eichinger worked as membership director for MUCC, after a stint there as an intern during college. From 2004 to 2007, he was a conservation and natural resources policy advisor to Lt. Gov. John Cherry during the Jennifer Granholm administration.

After that, he was hired by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"From 2007 to 2009, I served as legislative liaison, working under then-Director Becky Humphries," he said.

His work then included aiding passage of legislation creating Michigan's Recreation Passport to help fund state parks. The Passport replaced vehicle windshield stickers for park entry.

"I then joined the Wildlife Division and worked with Russ Mason as assistant to the chief," Eichinger said.

He would help establish the DNR Wildlife Division's first Policy and Regulations Unit, later serving as its supervisor.

In 2012, Eichinger left

the DNR for an administrator's job at Central Michigan University, which would bring him closer to his home and family.

Two years later, he returned to MUCC to become executive director – continuing his family's tradition of holding top-level positions with the country's most effective state-based conservation organization.

After the November 2018 election, Eichinger said speculation began about who might serve in various positions in the new administration of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Eichinger was urged by several people to put his name forward, given his experience and situational awareness of state government. Weeks later, he said he was fortunate to find himself on a short list of finalists for the DNR director's position.

He remembers getting the call and the nod as a "great Christmas present."

"I was still in my PJs on a Sunday morning when I found out," Eichinger said. "It was a little before Christmas when I was talking to the governor."

His first day on the job was Jan. 2. Eichinger is the DNR's 21st director, standing on the shoulders of giants with names like Hoffmaster and MacMullan.

"It's a huge responsibility, only outweighed by the honor of doing the work," Eichinger said. "This isn't just work that I do, this is how I live my life."

Eichinger's home is in western Isabella County, where he lives with his wife and the couple's 8-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter. There, they hunt

ruffed grouse and American woodcock. They also enjoy camping and fishing for bluegill.

A waterfowl shooter, he is also a birder. He said he has studied ornithology and has always been interested in bird biology.

"I am not a life-lister, but usually travel with my Audubon guide so that we can identify the different birds we find on our adventures," he said.

Eichinger sent a message to DNR employees soon after his appointment.

"Over the coming weeks, I look forward to reconnecting with many of you, meeting those I don't know and learning about how we can advance new priorities, celebrate and maximize our current success, and continually strive toward personal and professional growth and development," he wrote. "As employees of the DNR, we are fortunate to wake up every day to work on things that matter to so many people."

Looking ahead, Eichinger said he has a few

top-drawer DNR priorities, including continuing to battle fish and wildlife diseases – with the scourge of chronic wasting disease at the spearpoint of those efforts.

Eichinger will insist Michigan remain a leader in preventing invasive big-head and silver carp from entering the Great Lakes, while coordinating state and federal action to curb greater grass carp proliferation in Lake Erie.

He also plans to continue fighting an entire suite of forest resource pests and diseases, which can negatively affect everything from commerce and ecology to recreation and employment.

Eichinger said the DNR's year-long park centennial celebration in 2019 reminds us of the century-old heritage of state park development across

**"Eichinger"  
Continued on page 11**

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**“Fish Tale”**

Continued from page 1

wanted to see how tough I was. I know men who go on solo fishing trips and it becomes an obsession with them. I wanted to discover their secret. What is it that draws them to the water and to a part of nature that can be harsh and unpleasant, especially when the weather doesn't cooperate?

Once I went on a hiking trip in the Smokey Mountains during college Spring Break. I traveled there with a friend – George – about my same height and stature who swore he was a big camper and hiker. “You’ll learn something and love this experience”, he said. I thought it would be wonderful, peaceful, beautiful and sunny.

I was naïve – it snowed the first night. The tent that we stayed in was freezing cold and the sleeping bags were thin and not a match for the weather that consumed us. We had to go

to bed at 7 pm because it turned pitch black after it got dark. I curled up and didn't want to emerge or even move again until it was light. Being out there alone with one other person, who was not prepared to fight off a bear or strange animal, terrified me. That was the only night that I endured. The next day I high-tailed it home on the first bus back from Tennessee to Michigan.

So here I was, many decades later, deciding that I wanted to go into nature again – this time on a weekend fishing trip. Let's just say that I was willing to give it a try, but I needed reinforcement and a little bit of help. I decided to start smaller this time. No overnights outdoors, just an eight-hour fishing trip during the day with a fishing guide on beautiful Betsie River in Northern Michigan.

That chilly September morning I awoke at 5 am in the dark. I had a curious level of excitement and

a bit of anxiety thinking about the day ahead. I felt excited, anticipating a new journey without a road-map. I didn't know what to expect. I only hoped that I would catch a fish – a really big fish – and I would bring it in by myself.

My guide met me at the entrance to Hanmer's Riverside Resort where I had stayed overnight. Barb Hanmer, proprietor, had arranged my trip with him to introduce me to sports fishing in Michigan. As I sized him up, he looked like an outdoorsman - burly build with beard, long hair and a ponytail, nice eyes and quiet demeanor. When he spoke, he was articulate, but he didn't really speak that much. I had an innate sense that here was a person I could be in a boat with for eight hours and he would know what he was doing. My instincts proved right.

We proceeded to a place on the Betsie River to

**“Fish Tale”**

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# Crispy Baked Walleye

Recipe submitted by Dan Foster, Battle Creek Steelheader (Left)

**Ingredients:** (makes 4 servings)

- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1/3 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup instant mashed potato flakes
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 4 (4oz.) fillets walleye

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Grease a baking sheet. Beat the eggs and water together in a bowl until smooth; set aside.



Combine the bread crumbs, potato flakes, an Parmesan cheese in a separate bowl with the seasoned salt until evenly mixed. Dip the walleye fillets into the beaten egg, then press into the bread crumb mixture. Place onto the prepared baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven until the fish is opaque in the center and flakes easily with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Enjoy!

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**"Eichinger"**  
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Michigan. The downside of that benchmark is a reminder that Michigan has a 100-year-old park system with a bulging backlog of unfunded park maintenance and improvement projects. "I'm concerned that at some point that's going to crush the park system," he said.

With a declining user base of hunting and fishing license buyers, Eichinger said the DNR needs to challenge itself to find solutions to meeting funding needs heading into the future.

In the long term, he said the department needs to continue its work to recruit, retain and reactivate declining numbers of hunters and anglers, reframing the conversation about those activities in rural communities, while remaining relevant.

"In the short-term, we've got to change those trend lines now," Eichinger said.

To do that, he wants to focus on enhanced efforts to make Michigan more of a destination state. Eichinger pointed to a recently released study commissioned by MUCC that showed the statewide economic impacts from hunting and fishing license purchases support 171,000 jobs and generate \$11.2 billion annually.

Eichinger suggested making those data available to a wider nationwide audience would increase interest in greater development of Michigan's recreation economy prospects.

During his first month on the job, Eichinger has been working to reacquaint himself with the DNR, listening to constituents and partner groups, while developing his priorities for the agency moving forward.

"The biggest impression so far is the quality of

people we have working here," he said.

Eichinger said DNR personnel see their jobs as "mission-based work" they believe in because, like him, they are invested in natural resources and recreation activities in their own daily lives.

Eichinger will be meeting DNR staffers face-to-face over the next few weeks through a series of all-employee staff meetings being held from Bellaire to Sault Ste. Marie.

Meanwhile, amid the hectic pace of his new job, Eichinger still plans to find time to return to nature himself, with his family and his hunting dog.

He said Beaver Island has become one of his favorite places on the planet. He also remains rooted in destinations he enjoyed in his younger days, including the Lake Michigan shore near Holland and the Pigeon River Country in the heart of the Lower Peninsula.

The forests, lakes, streams and elk there within the Pigeon's 104,000 acres remind him of his grandfather and make him feel very connected to his family.

From time to time, his mind drifts back to those beautiful blueberry days down around Marion where he spent those early formative years exploring the Middle Branch River in pursuit of German browns.

"I trout fish now, mostly with a fly rod," he said. "But I still spin quite a bit, and that is how I first started fishing."

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# SOMETHING SPECTACULAR

By Jim Bedford

Dr. Howard Tanner's book on his life and the introduction of Pacific salmon into the Great Lakes has finally been published. When Howard was named chief of Michigan's Fisheries Division in 1964 the Great Lakes fisheries were in rough shape. There was essentially no significant recreational fishery. Over fishing by commercial operations and the invasive sea lamprey had taken their toll. A vast resource seemed to be just going to waste. Dr. Ralph MacMullan was the head of the DNR and his challenge relative to the Great Lakes to Dr. Tanner was to do something spectacular, hence the title of this book. By any measure no one will argue that Dr. Tanner, with lots of help, accomplished this tremendous feat. The subtitle of the book, "My Great Lakes Salmon Story" is also very apropos as most of the book is focused on the path to the introduction of coho and chinook salmon into the Great Lakes.

Howard grew up in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula during the depression and is obviously part of the "greatest generation". Fishing for brook trout in the Jordan River with his father was a favorite past time. He even worked as a fishing guide during his teen years. So his interest in a fisheries career had an early beginning.

World War II interrupted his education but not his desire to have a career in fisheries. When the war ended he enrolled at Michigan State and eventually received his bachelor's, master's and Ph.D degrees from there. His professional career started in Colorado where spent twelve years in various fisheries capacities. As he relates in the book, these jobs and the professional contacts he made were instrumental in his leading the introduction of salmon into the Great Lakes.

As you will read, there were lots of naysayers on the successful stocking of Pacific salmon in the Great Lakes. It had been tried many times before with no success except for one, the "accidental" stocking of pink salmon in Lake Superior—you'll have to read the book to get the details. These diminutive salmon continue to exist through natural reproduction more than 60 years later. The lack of a saltwater phase was often given as a reason that Pacific salmon wouldn't work in our inland seas. The success of land-locked sockeye salmon or kokanee also gave Dr. Tanner and his team reason to believe that an all freshwater life would work for these salmon.

The many hoops that had to be jumped through before salmon could be planted are described in

detail by Dr. Tanner in his book. Some of the twists and turns were somewhat serendipitous and make for some very interesting reading. One of Howard's pet peeves has been that writers have repeatedly written that salmon were planted to control the alewife population as these fish regularly fouled the beaches during their spring to early summer die off. All along Dr. Tanner considered this fatty baitfish as food, a resource, for the salmon he was planting—the goal was to utilize this forage base and, indeed, the salmon did.

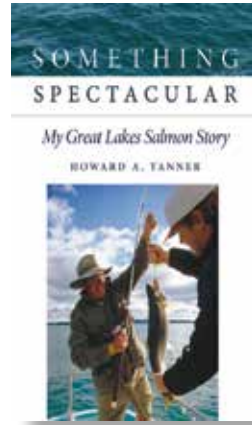
The success of the early years of salmon fishing is described by Howard but he did not leave out the tragedy of the late September storm in 1967. The economics of this introduction are well chronicled and so are the contaminant issues. Just a great read for anybody interested in Michigan and Great Lakes fishing.

On a personal note I also attended MSU and,

like Howard, received all three of my degrees there. My undergraduate advisor was Dr. Tanner's major professor, Dr. Robert Ball. The fisheries career in my future was altered by a turn toward fish contaminants and environmental toxicology but at least I was able to stay in Michigan and enjoy what I think is the world's great year round trout and salmon fishery. My first encounter with Howard was when he gave a seminar on the salmon program at MSU. We both are members of the Lake Michigan Citizen's Fishery Advisory Committee, which was established in the 1980s. Dr. Tanner would always be ready to offer his insight on a controversial subject and like the old investment company ad, when he spoke we listened.



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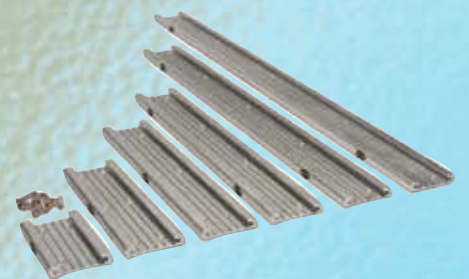
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**“Fish Tale”**

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launch his fishing boat. We floated on that cool clear morning with the mist rising above the water and a glint of sunshine sparkling through the trees. It was 6 am.

It felt good just to float. Coffee in hand, as my guide brought us to the first fishing hole of the day. While maneuvering the boat, he talked about when he began to fish and when and why he became a fishing guide. He then showed me how to hold the fishing rod, how to operate and release the spinning reel and cast the line out 20 – 30 feet or more. He did it a couple of times and made it look smooth and easy. After a few tries with the rod on my own, and a lot of laughs, I finally got the rhythm. Eventually, I began to loosen up, to swing the rod forward and back and then, just at the right moment, flicked it forward, pushing the line roller and released the line so that the lure sailed away to the spot it needed to be to catch something. (Sometimes this was a log...)

We waited a while. Nothing happened. We talked, and waited, and talked, and waited some more. I re-

peated the process with the rod many more times as the line drifted away from the fishing hole. We tried a few more fishing holes downstream and then about 2 hours later, after casting the rod 20 times or more, the rod suddenly jerked and my guide yelled “pull back”. I did. Amazingly, a fish was on the line!

It took off with such a mighty lurch that it almost pulled the rod right out of my hands. I regained control as the fish sped downstream. My guide instructed me to reel in a bit when the fish stopped pulling, but then the fish pulled back and the drag let out line again as it chased away. Back and forth in this continual pattern of reeling in and letting out we went. The fish and I were in a wild struggle for control and I used every muscle to hold the rod with both hands. Finally he grew tired and I was tired, too! I eventually reeled him in and we scooped it up and into the boat with the net.

I had caught the first fish of my life. It ended up being a lot harder than I expected, but also exhilarating to catch a 20-pound fish on my own with only a little bit of help. One of the most intense adrenaline



Betsie River near Crystal Mountain Resort

**Chinook Salmon swim upstream to spawn in the fall. Once they lay their eggs, their journey is complete. They die naturally soon after. A few of them are caught by fisherman or women who either release them or keep them for fresh eating, freezing or smoking.**

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rushes I’ve ever had, this fishing experience was similar to running a long race and finishing strong at the end – only this was better.

My guide and I caught about five more that were between 18 – 20 pounds.

He assisted me in bringing in many more once the hook was set and the fish were on the line. I really enjoyed the entire process of squaring off against these opponents. Twice I lost them off the line, but

I was able to get some of them into the boat so we could get a photo before releasing them back into the crystal clear water of the Betsie River.

Floating down the river on that sunny early fall day, after all of the excitement, was magical. We meandered down river catching new sights and pointing out new fishing holes, chatting or enjoying the silence, just being in the moment where nature’s beauty takes over. There is really nothing like it – just me, my guide and the boat...and the fish underwater scoffing at our mistakes and swimming away.

Later I took a few of the fish that we had caught back to Hanmer’s built-in fish cleaning station. I learned from Barb that if someone who stays with them is unsure about cleaning fish, that there are people, like her husband John, who will help with filleting. There are also places like Port City Smokehouse, in Frankfort, that will smoke your catch and ship it to you.

The exciting sport of fishing might be a primal instinct that both men and women share. According to the Michigan DNR, “The

reason fewer women participate in hunting, fishing, backpacking and canoeing is because they have not had an opportunity to learn the outdoor skills that are necessary to enjoy these activities.” I totally agree. I think we have this in us, but most of us were never taught or never mastered the skill of catching fish.

Even if the idea of baiting and catching fish seems distasteful, the reality is more a right of passage – where you participate in something so primitive and innate to our human survival. Plus, a lazy float down a Northern Michigan river is such a relaxing luxury.

My advice, though – leave the cell phone in your room or in the car. With the breeze in your face, the sun on your back and the gentle sway of the water underneath you’ll have enough stimulation to transport you to a place where time stands still. And if you listen hard enough, you’ll be able to really hear the water and the wind, and even the fish too. They’re all just patiently waiting to speak to you.



# Hunting Gators

By Jason Mitchell

Northern pike have a rap sheet with ice anglers. These top end carnivores have always held a special place in ice fishing lore simply for their attitude. Some of my earliest ice fishing memories involved staring down a hole in a shallow weedy lake. The weeds seemed vibrant like a neon green carpet. We would stare down the hole for hours watching pike and perch swim underneath. Each pike seemed larger than life as they fanned their fins and stared at our baits. Watching the strike was exhilarating. I can still remember how excited myself and my friends would get when a bigger pike rolled in. We could see

the snout of a pike sticking into our field of view like a spade shovel. We could glance down another hole a few feet away and see a tail. In a flash, the bait would be gone. The ensuing fight often left tangled lines and chaos inside the fish house. In hindsight, few of those pike were ever over five pounds but those early experiences were intoxicating none the less.

I love to target big pike. I will stare at tip ups all day for just one bite, one fish that surpasses that magical forty-inch mark. Big pike will test tackle and the runs are intense. The fish run and roll below the hole in a confrontation that can only be described as violent. The water moves up and down in the hole to the

point where your knees get wet. Big fish move water and simply pull back. I am always in awe when I get that first look at the broad, olive, back of a forty-inch-plus gator under the ice. When the head finally turns up the hole and you see the layers of teeth. The big fish often have that under bite jaw. The bottom row of teeth begins to resemble a row of roofing nails. Their eyes look reptilian. Big pike are special, and more ice anglers seem to be discovering how special these fish are and angling specifically for these big fish.

While catching pike through the ice can seem fairly rudimentary and basic, targeting trophy class pike often requires a different level of diligence.



The author Jason Mitchell with a trophy class pike from his home water on Devils Lake.

You also have to spend time on fisheries where big pike live. Classic big fish locations include big

natural lakes like; Zipple and Buffalo Bay on Lake of the Woods, Upper Red Lake and Devils Lake. The

Missouri River Reservoirs of Lake Oahe, Lake Sakakawea and Fort Peck. There are few under the radar locations like the backwaters of the Mississippi River. Of course, there are many opportunities north of the border in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in particular with a few drive to locations like Wekusko Falls near Snow Lake, Manitoba that are red hot for anglers willing to make the trek.

Each of these fisheries will fish somewhat differently but if there is a universal theme, you can’t go wrong at least starting out on large shallow flats that are adjacent to deep water. This could take the form of a large incoming tributary that opens up into a large shallow bay on a large Manitoba Lake or a prominent reef or point that is surrounded by deeper water on Devils Lake. Some

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“Gators”

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**“Gators”**

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structure might be more obscure on places like Upper Red Lake where there is no real deep water or obvious structure, so the locations might be subtle. On the Missouri River reservoirs, focus on the large incoming creeks and look for secondary points and shoreline flats that are near the old creek channels. Some anglers believe they have to find weeds but there honestly doesn't have to be any weeds present. Structure seems to trump everything. Some of these locations are sand or a soft bottom while other locations have some flooded trees or rock. Incoming water can universally pull fish up really shallow and sometimes tight to shore at late ice but what is interesting is that we often find some big fish at early ice and midwinter not that terribly far from the classic late ice locations.

If there is one tool that is tailor made for catching big pike, my vote would go towards a classic tip up. Tip ups have probably accounted for more big pike than any other winter angling method. Classic tip up designs that feature a lubricated spindle and a spool that rests below the waterline are by far the most popular. I still prefer the old school Dacron line as I find it has little memory and is very durable. Dacron will soak



The author Jason Mitchell uses a double treble hook harness.

up some water and freeze but that isn't an issue when the spool is in the water. I use the heaviest Dacron I can find and will often run a sixty-pound test main line. I find that the heavier line is much easier to handle when fighting a big fish and the heavier line rolls off the spool easier when a fish runs.

Oily dead baits like frozen smelt, herring, anchovies, ciscoes and tullibees often seem to work better than live bait from my experience. I find that dead bait often works much better if the bait is fresh. Bait that has been frozen and thawed or old bait that

has lost the shiny sheen on the scales doesn't seem to catch as many big fish. I also find that I catch more big fish if I can get the bait to hang perfectly horizontal in the water. I also find that I catch more fish if I don't use any weight on the line to sink the dead bait. Simply pop the air bladder and squeeze out the air so that the bait sinks and hangs horizontal. If you don't have to add any split shot or weight, it seems like the fish run with the bait better and don't drop the bait as much. Many pike anglers use a classic yoke quick strike rig like the Big Tooth Rig. These rigs are simple

and effective and available in both steel and heavy fluorocarbon. These rigs have a couple of small flicker blades and beads for added attraction and this extra hardware makes them legal in Minnesota where regulations prohibit using two hooks on one line unless the hook is in conjunction with a lure (thus the addition of beads and blades constitutes a lure). In really clear water and on water that sees heavier pressure, we have been catching more fish by tying our own fluorocarbon rigs that don't have any additional hardware.

One aspect of pike fishing that is often overlooked

is where to fish in the water column. There are days where there honestly seems like there is no difference in that pike find the bait no matter where it hangs but there are days where there is a definite pattern. Experiment with hanging the bait next to the bottom or even right on the bottom and also experiment with hanging the bait halfway in the water column and right under the ice. I would say that a general rule of thumb is two to three feet off the bottom but there are days when a little detail like fishing right below the ice can make a big difference in success. What is interesting about trying to target big pike with a spread of tip ups is watching the feeding windows develop. On the very best days, there are flags popping all day long, but the reality is that most days will have lulls and slow periods where most of the fish seem to come in flurries. You can have an hour of nothing and then have an hour where you can't keep every tip up in the water. You sometimes have to fish methodically especially when you are targeting a big fish on big fish locations where you might only get a few opportunities. I like to give good locations about two to three hours to see if there is any activity. A good rule of thumb is a flag per hour when targeting big fish.

Another lesson I have

learned over the years particularly when fishing in less than ten feet of water is simply to let the commotion settle down. Drilling holes and walking or driving around on the ice simply stirs the area up. Let the activity settle down and keep your noise down. There are times when you have to run up to get to a tip up when the fish is really burning off line but what is surprising is just how often the spindle on the tip up is slowly turning and then takes off as you walk up. The fish get spooked from your steps and start to run. I like setting the hook on fish as they are moving but the reality is that the further the fish goes, the better the chance the line gets caught on something underwater where there is enough resistance for the fish to drop the bait.

Most importantly when targeting big pike is simply taking care of the fish. Have your hook release tools like a long nose pliers and jaw spreader on you. Unhook the fish when the fish is in the hole so that it isn't flopping all over the ice. Stay in control of the fish when you lift it out of the water by firmly gripping the gill plate and hold the fish horizontally. Support the weight of the fish with both hands. Trophy class pike are just too special of a

**“Gators”**

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# Are Invasive Quagga Mussels Leading to Huge Redear Sunfish?

Arizona Dept. of Game & Fish

PHOENIX — Have the redear sunfish at Lake Havasu really gone quagga crazy?

Have these panfish that really can fill a pan, and are widely regarded as one of the better fish species to eat, found a surplus of invasive quagga mussels to munch?

A mystery remains: Redear sunfish at Havasu have been reaching world record sizes. But why, exactly?

Let's dive into this piscator puzzle.

Five years ago, "panfish" took on a new meaning.

We're at the time of year when Lake Havasu tacked its world-record pin on the fishing map. On Feb. 16, 2014, Hector Brito caught a 17-inch, 5.78-pound world-record redear sunfish on a dropshot-rigged night-crawler.

"I didn't expect the record to last this long," Brito said. "It's amazing."

This 45-mile fishing wonderland created by the Colorado River on the western-most strip of Arizona, adorned like a leather belt by the regal London Bridge, allows an angler to fish from the beach on the Arizona side and see the California mountains on the other. Some of those anglers said they witnessed a dramatic increase in the sizes of redear sunfish from 2009-2014 that — coincidence or not — occurred after invasive quagga mussels were first discovered in 2007 at Havasu.

In 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) did a study about the effects of redear and bluegill on quagga populations and found these sunfish do consume quaggas. Even more, the redear reduced quagga numbers by as much as 25 percent. The experiments

of the study were conducted in field enclosures of Lake Havasu, as well as in the BOR's Boulder City, Nev. Fish Lab.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department can't verify that redear sunfish, also known as "shellcrackers" because of their pharyngeal teeth (throat teeth) that allow them to crush crustaceans such as snails, are reaching unprecedented sizes due solely to quagga as an additional food source. Other biological factors include Havasu's food base of grass shrimp and redswamp crawdads.

Regardless, Havasu is home to some of the biggest shellcrackers on the globe.

Doug Adams, a former Lake Havasu City-based fisheries biologist for the Bureau of Land Management, said he also knows that redear sunfish eat quagga mussels. At the same time, he said that in 2005 — 2 years before quagga



Hector Brito is seen with the world record redear sunfish he caught in February 2014 in Lake Havasu. Some believe the large size of redear sunfish in Lake Havasu is due to their eating of invasive quagga mussels.

mussels were discovered in Lake Havasu — an electroshocking of 75 sites produced redear sunfish

that averaged more than 2 pounds.

"From one standpoint, there wasn't much fishing pressure until they started catching these bigger (re-dear)," Adams said. "Quagga could be a good contributor to their sizes. So it's kind of a mystery."

A mystery it might remain.

Still, some Arizona anglers have etched their conclusion: The increasingly larger sizes of redear is a quagga-based phenomenon.

For angler Mike Taylor of Phoenix, it's simple:

"They don't call them 'shellcracker' for nothing," he said. "No quagga, then lots of quagga. Regular redears, then big redears after quagga show up ... coincidence? Maybe, but I'd say increased food source equals bigger fish."

In an email to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, an anonymous angler said he has been fishing extensively for sunfish in Lake Pleasant and the Colorado River. He wrote:

"And I have observed that not only do redears feed on quagga mussels, but bluegill and green sunfish do as well. After holding them in a live well for a short period of time, they will regurgitate bits of broken quagga shells until there is a layer approximately a quarter-inch thick in the bottom of the live well."

And finally, some thoughts from Brito, the record holder:

"They eat a lot of quagga mussels. Everytime I fish for them, I search their stomachs and always find shells of quagga mussels."

A new world record remains possible.

"I'm sure there's a 7-pounder out there somewhere," said John Galbraith, owner of Bass Tackle Master in Lake Havasu.

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# Michigan Offers Plenty of Seawall Fishing Opportunities

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Don't have a boat or tired of heading out on a big lake? Why not try seawall fishing? These shoreline-hugging infrastructures can offer great angling opportunities and in plenty of parts of Michigan!

We tapped several of our fisheries management units to provide specific locations you might want to try - check them out!

## Southern Lake Michigan (Southwest Lower Peninsula)

Most of the seawall fishing opportunities in this area are located immediately upstream of Great Lakes piers.

In St. Joseph seawalls are located on the north (Tiscornia Park) and south sides (Silver Beach County Park) of the St. Joseph River. More information about both is available via the DNR's Trout Trails application!

At South Haven seawalls are located at the city parks on both the north and south sides of the river.

In Holland there is a seawall on the north side of river at Holland State Park. A trail from Holland State Park extends upstream along the shore of Lake Macatawa and has multiple fishing sites.

At Grand Haven there are seawalls on both sides of the river. Grand Haven State Park is on the south side and there is a city-owned parking lot on the north side.

The fishing opportunities at all of these sites change seasonally due to movements of fish from Lake Michigan. At all sites, there are seasonal fishing opportunities for steelhead, Chinook salmon, coho salmon, brown trout, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, channel catfish, walleye, freshwater drum, lake whitefish and round whitefish. The Lake Macatawa seawall in Holland is a better choice for anglers looking to catch bluegill or largemouth bass. Muskegon are stocked in Lake Macatawa and the lower Grand River, so there is a chance of catching a muskie at the Holland and Grand Haven sites.

## Central Lake Michigan (Northwest Lower Peninsula)

Muskegon, Whitehall, Pentwater, Ludington, Manistee, Onkama, Arcadia and Frankfort all have seawalls and piers anglers can fish off of.

Usually anglers can fish in Lake Michigan proper or in the channels leading to the drowned Rivermouth lakes.

## Northern Lake Huron (Northeast Lower Peninsula)

There are only a couple seawall fishing locations in this area; Sebawaing Marina and Caseville Pier.

There is work being done to improve the pier access area at Caseville with the removal of large rocks and the placement of a seawall at the base of the pier and parking area. At this location a variety of species can be caught in late fall, winter and into early spring; such as northern pike, smallmouth bass, walleye, yellow perch, channel catfish, lake trout, lake whitefish, burbot and the occasional brown trout and steelhead. During the summer anglers mostly catch northern pike, channel catfish, smallmouth bass and the occasional walleye.

Sebawaing Marina has seawall access for the entire area where anglers can fish (\$3 permit per vehicle required). At this location anglers can catch a variety of species; including northern pike, largemouth bass, channel catfish and a mix of panfish. Depending on the season, yellow perch and walleye can also be caught.

## Lake Erie (Southeast Lower Peninsula)

Along the St. Clair River seawalls are used as a means to armor the shoreline so it goes unchanged by wave energy, river currents and ice scouring. This allows for a stable fishing platform right at the water. Port Huron has about two miles right along the St. Clair River that can be accessed by the public. There is also a publicly-accessible seawall in the town of St. Clair. Anglers predominantly fish for walleye and smallmouth bass, but near Port Huron anglers also catch steelhead; Chinook, coho and Atlantic salmon; whitefish; northern pike and the occasional muskellunge.

The Detroit River has similar seawalls along its shoreline. Public parks have been developed in Detroit along portions of these shorelines with walkways and railings installed. Parking can be an issue, but a few with good opportunities include Riverside Park (just south of the Ambassador Bridge), Belanger Park (just south of the Rouge River mouth) and John Dingell Park (end of Southfield Road in Wyandotte). There are also a couple notable fishing piers extending into the Detroit River at Bishop Park (just upstream of Grosse Ile) and the soon-to-be-opened boardwalk and fishing pier at the International Wildlife Refuge in the downriver Trenton area.

Shore fishing on the upper Detroit River also occurs in Belle Isle Park. Popular fisheries include walleye, smallmouth bass, white bass (also called silver bass), various panfish, carp, freshwater drum and various suckers.

## Eastern Lake Superior (Eastern Upper Peninsula)

There are two great opportunities for seawall fishing in this area: Grand Marais and the Anna River fishing pier in Munising.

The breakwall pier in Grand Marais offers premium lake whitefish opportunities in the spring and

"Seawalls"

Continued on page 19



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## THE CHANGING WORLD OF FISHING

By Bob Jensen

On a recent or past episode of Fishing the Midwest television depending on where you live, we talked about some of the changes that have taken place in the world of fishing. I've been fishing for a little more than 5 decades and have seen many changes. Most of those changes have been for the good, some even great, for those of us who like to go fishing. Following are some of the changes that I've seen.

First the changes in equipment, and there have been lots. Perhaps the improvements and advancements in sonar are most noteworthy. When I got my first boat in the early 80's, a tiller boat with a 50 horsepower motor, it had a flasher by the tiller and a flasher on the bow. That was it, and that's how many boats were rigged. Some only had a flasher at the tiller. We could see the bottom depth, and by fine-tuning we could determine if the bottom was hard or soft. We could see weeds, and we could see fish for a few seconds.

Today, some anglers have a liquid crystal unit or 2 at the steering wheel and another 1 or 2 on the bow next to the electric motor. These units show what's currently under the boat and to either side of the boat, and because of the screen size, they show what we went over a ways back. They have mapping that shows where we are on the lake, and where we are on a particular piece of structure. They show water temp, latitude and longitude, and time of day. Truly amazing! The Raymarine units that I use enable an angler to zoom in on a particular area of the water column and they provide unbelievable target separation. They've changed the way we go fishing.

Improvements in boats and motors enable us to get to areas that in days gone-by were inaccessible. Back in the day we rarely ran long distances, especially if the weather forecast included much wind. Weather forecasts back then weren't as accurate as today, our motors weren't as reliable, and the boats weren't built for waves like they are now.

The Suzuki motors that I run are so much quieter, fuel-efficient, and more reliable than those motors of yesteryear. Today we can go farther with less fuel

and a lot more confidence.

The lakes are changing also, and in most instances for the better. Take Kabetogama Lake in northern Minnesota. I started going there in the early 2000's, and we had good fishing. We fished exclusively for walleyes, and we caught 'em. Mostly small ones, but every now and then we caught a big one. Then a slot limit was put in place, and within 2 or 3 years, we saw lots more big walleyes. We still catch plenty to eat, but the odds of catching a trophy are much better today. Kab is now a world class walleye

fishery.

Then a few years ago, crappies became abundant on Kab. We started fishing for them, and we caught lots of 'em, including some truly big ones.

And then a couple of years later, we learned about the smallmouth fishery on Kab. Absolutely outstanding: Another world-class fishery.

Sometimes we compare things back to the past, and sometimes our memory gets cloudy. I know mine does. But when it comes to fishing where I and my friends go fishing, right now are the good old

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days. And, I expect with even more advancements in equipment and fisheries management, the good old days are going to last a long

time. To see the episode of Fishing the Midwest referred to in this article, go to the Fishing the Midwest

YouTube channel. Also see fishing articles and videos go to [fishingthemidwest.com](http://fishingthemidwest.com)

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# A FISHERMANS STORY

By Will Volesky and Mark Steih,  
Great Lakes Bay Region  
Steelheaders

This story is about a man who has fished the Great Lakes for 50 consecutive years. He fished the “first runs” of Cohos, Steelhead and Kings on Lake Michigan in the late 1960’s and Lake Huron in the 1970’s. This Fisherman’s story is about Fred Saladine a current member of the Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheaders (GLBRS). Fred is now 83 years old. During the 2018 GLBRS Annual Christmas Banquet Fred shared that he has fished the Great Lakes for 50 consecutive years. I believe his story is worth sharing and the following excerpts are from an evening discussion at his dining room table.

I’ll start this story with sharing Fred’s involvement with the Michigan Steelheaders. Fred joined the Steelheaders in the early 1970’s two years after the local chapter started. He later served as the State Representative for the Saginaw Valley, Midland-Saginaw and Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheaders from the 1980’s through the Mid-2000’s. He continues to be active with the Steelheaders; attending monthly meetings when his health allows. Among numerous accomplishments, Fred is proud of playing an integral part in starting and expanding “Salmon in the Classroom” with four GLBRS sponsored schools in the Tri-City Bay Region. Ed-

ucating the next generation about the importance and value of the Great Lakes Fishery is a prominent goal of Fred’s.

This Fisherman’s Great Lakes fishing story starts in 1967 during the first fall run of Cohos in Manistee. Fred shared that fishing for Coho’s was new to everyone at the time. Fishermen, himself included, had no experience or equipment suitable for fishing Cohos. Fred used the same rod and reel he used for walleyes in Houghton Lake. Under the lens of our modern-day fishing equipment, Fred’s statement that his rod and reel combo with 10lb fishing line was not suitable for the task was an understatement. The Lake Michigan fishery in the late 1960’s and 1970’s had an abundance of food and the fish grew very big, very quickly. Fred shared that 30+ Cohos at that time was not uncommon.

During the late 1960’s fishing equipment for Cohos was in its infancy. Everyone was trying to develop a better mousetrap with commercial equipment lagging behind for a number of years. Fred reported that his first downrigger consisted of a clothesline attached to his downrigger weight. He would tie a light line from the downrigger weight to his fishing line that would break off when a fish struck the lure. Fisherman were making downrigger weights out of anything they could get their hands on, including window weights and beer cans filled with cement.



Fred Saladine and baby

Many of the boats in use were in the 12 to 18 foot range. A 20-foot boat was considered big at that time. In the late 1960s, Fred shared that the Manistee River was overcrowded with boats during the fall run. He noted that everyone wanted to try this new fishery and people from as far as Iowa and Missouri were getting their lines wet in Manistee.

Fred described the overcrowding of boats during the early years as a “nightmare” and “crazy.” It was

so crowded at times, “you could almost reach out and touch the other boats.” Fred shared that “no one knew what they were doing” and unfortunately a few hot-heads ruined a good time for everyone. It took a few years for people to calm down, be more considerate of others and follow some basic rules on the water. Fred always tried to avoid trolling behind another boat in case they hooked a fish to allow them room to fight the fish without being tangled in his equipment. The

local Sherriff did his part with maintaining the chaos, running his boat at high speed to stop someone and his wake would rock the little boats resulting in white knuckles gripping the hulls. Some people even ventured out in canoes to try their luck on Lake Michigan.

As the fishery expanded to Ludington, Frankfort and Platte Bay, so did Fred’s travels. Fred routinely fished each of the new fisheries. He noted that Platte Bay was as busy as Manistee during its first run of fish. A 60 foot “party boat” out of Tawas called the “Holiday” would make its annual run to Platte Bay to fish Cohos in the fall. Fred recalled Coho’s porpoising “just out of net range” all around his boat. He recalled looking in the water and occasionally observing Cohos swimming by his boat.

Despite the abundance of fish, catching them was a challenge. Fred recalled how difficult it was to land fish while surrounded by boats. Lines were frequently cut off by other anglers or cut when the Cohos would roll themselves in the fishing line. Fred shared that at times 60 percent of his daily limit were fish he caught and 40 percent were fish caught by others, which he referenced as “road kills.” Many fish suffered from the bends when reeled in from the depths and were found lying on the surface wrapped in line. A quick extension of the net would add to his daily limit and prevent any wasted fish. Fred shared, “I kept his fish

and he kept mine.”

During the early years there was little media coverage of the Lake Michigan fishery. Other than a few magazines and newspaper articles, word of mouth was the primary vehicle to learn about the fishery. Initially Manistee, Ludington, Frankfort and Platte Bay were considered primarily fall fisheries. Fred noted that St. Joe and other southern ports did a good job of keeping the secret about their spring fishery on the Great Lakes. The word eventually spread and anglers started to fish outside the traditional fall run.

When Salmon were planted in Tawas River and the Oscoda’s Au Sable River, so too did Fred travel to fish these new fisheries. Fred observed that the Lake Huron fall run occurred later than Lake Michigan’s. He shared a memorable day fishing in front of the mouth of the Tawas River in October when he hooked 14 fish and only landed 4 using his old walleye gear.

Fred made his own spoons while working at the GM plant. He made blueprints for the spoon die. He reported that the spoon design was eventually picked up by a current fishing company and sold today with little design changes. Fred’s original design mimicked the daredevil lure, but Fred wanted his spoons to “flip-flop,” rather than spin. He also used chrome plated drainpipes to make “surface spoons” for Steelhead. He kept the chrome and rounded shape from the pipe and it “bobbed all over the place.” Anything with good action caught fish!

Anglers were making lures and fishing equipment out of anything they could get their hands on – “Everyone was making their own stuff.” Fred noted that some early homemade downriggers were made from dryer pulleys and front tricycle wheels. One of Fred’s early downriggers took a swim to the bottom of the lake after a fish pounded his lure. His second homemade downrigger was made with a Ford station wagon window motor and he added a clutch and other thing-a-jigs beyond my ability to explain. He also developed his own downrigger release. Fred continued to use his homemade down rigger and releases to present day.

During the early years, anglers fished with two rods and lures trolled straight behind the boat. Having no rod holders at the time, Fred would tie his fishing rods to the boat to avoid hard-hitting fish from pulling them in the water.

Fred has fished nearly every port between Michigan City to Petoskey, but his favorite harbor is Ludington. He has fished a number of fishing tournaments and was one of the

“Fred”

Continued on page 23

## The Southwest Michigan Steelheaders



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**“Gators”**

Continued from page 14

fish not to take care of properly. The reality is that big pike only get big on certain fisheries and most of these fisheries are either remote, large enough to buffer angler mortality or have special catch and release regulations that protect the

top end fish. While small pike might be a nuisance to some anglers, I don't know of many anglers who don't delight in catching the big fish. Pike are also excellent eating as well and there are many how to tutorials on YouTube to learn how to fillet pike while removing the Y bones. In my opinion, a three to six-pound pike

is perfect fish for eating and you can remove a lot of smaller pike from most fisheries with no harm to the resource. Eat the smaller fish and take care of the big fish so that they survive to trip somebody else's tip up on another day.

There is no doubt a fraternity of ice anglers who are very serious about pike

and big pike in particular get a lot of anglers excited. There is a certain comradery that comes with a group of like-minded anglers and a spread of tip ups. For many, pike are the largest game in town. A perfect top of the pyramid predator that continues to inspire awe.

Just for Laughs...

**Pro-Tip:**  
When ice fishing,  
always bring an action figure.



A guy calls his boss and says  
"I can't come to work today."  
The boss asks why, and  
the guy says "It's my eyes."  
"What's wrong with your eyes?"  
asks the boss.  
"I just can't see myself coming to work,  
so I'm going fishing instead...."

Source: <http://www.jokes4us.com/sportsjokes/fishingjokes.html>



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**“Seawalls”**

Continued from page 16

early summer. Additionally, the views of the Lake Superior shoreline are outstanding!

The pier on the Anna River offers diverse fishing during the open water season, including for splake, lake whitefish, steelhead, coho salmon, burbot and yellow perch.

**Western Lake Superior (Western Upper Peninsula)**

Marquette's lower harbor breakwall is a great location for catching lake trout, brown trout and lake whitefish during the fall months. Caution should be used to not go out on this wall during stormy or high-wind weather.





**2019 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event	Information
March	9	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Sand Bar
March	16	Kalamazoo River Spring Steelhead	Allegan Dam
April	6	Lake Michigan Coho Blast	Benton Harbor
April	27	Trip Swap	We Go over There
May	4	Trip Swap	They Come Here
May	18	Lake Michigan Spring Tournament	Benton Harbor
May 31 - June 1		Connie McGowan Invitational (Captain Must Be A Member)	Lake Erie
July	13	Portage Lake Panfish/Family Picnic	Vicksburg
August	3	Lake Michigan Memorial	South Haven
August	17	Veterans Outing	South Haven
September	28	Perch Tournament	Lake Erie
October	5	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
October	19	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
October	26	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	23	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	7	St. River Chapter Challenge	Babes Lounge
December	14	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting  
 Location: Moonraker West Battle Creek

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
 River Tournaments –  
 Ice Tournaments – Justin Kling 491-2980 Lake Tournaments – Greg Peck 998-9407  
[battlecreeksteelheaders.com](http://battlecreeksteelheaders.com)

**2019 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
January 1 - Nov. 30		Member Year Long Fishing Contest	
April	TBD	Placement of Net Pens	
April	TBD	Spring Program, Open to Fellow Fishermen	
September	7	Sportsmen for Youth Day	Muskegon County Fairgrounds
September	14	Grand Haven Salmon Festival	KidZone Activity Area
November	30	Member Year Long Contest Ends	
December	TBD	Annual Meeting, Recognitions, Dinner	

Other Events TBD  
 For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact Mary Jane Belter, [mjbelter@attelco.net](mailto:mjbelter@attelco.net) or GHS President Matt Whitney, [whitneycharters@charter.net](mailto:whitneycharters@charter.net) or 616-402-6303 [www.gsteelheaders.com](http://www.gsteelheaders.com)

**2019 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event	Information
March	4	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
March	9-16	Spring River Week Long Contest	STC*
March	14-17	Ultimate Sports Show	DEVOS PLACE
March	14-16	Ultimate Sports Show Fishing Contest	DEVOS PLACE
March	25	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
March	31	2018 Year Long Fish Contest Ends	
April	1	2019 Year Long Fish Contest Starts	
April	1	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
April	29	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
May	4	Spring Big Lake	STC*
May	6	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
May	20	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
June	3	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
June	7-9	Lake Erie 3 Day Walleye Contest	
June	24	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
July	1	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
July	17	Chapter Family Picnic 6:00 PM at Johnson Park Shelter House **	
August	3	Fall Big Lake	STC*
August	5	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
August	26	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
September	9	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
September	30	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
October	1	Chapter Buck Contest Begins **	
October	14	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
October	26	Fall River Contest	STC*
October	28	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
November	4	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
November	9	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	STC*
November	25	Membership Meeting	7:15 PM - Social Hour 6:15 PM
December	2	Board Of Directors Meeting	7 PM
December	10	Chapter Family Christmas Party	6:00 PM – Diamond Hall **

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

**2019 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Time	Event	
March	5	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
March	9	Daylight -1:00	Big Manistee, Bear Creek River Pere Marquette Fishing. Location TBA by outing Chairman	
March	23	Setup 8:30am Viewing 11:00 Auction 12:00	Annual Auction Fund Raiser	VFW Hall Midland
April	2	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
April	13	Daylight -1:00	Detroit River, Wyandot Boat Ramp	
April	27	Daylight -1:00	Tittibawassee River Walleye Picnic at Don Brown's house. \$5.00 entry	
May	4	5:30a – 1:00p	Manistee	
May	7	7:00 pm	Board Meeting Only	VFW Hall
May	18	5:30a – 1:00p	South Haven	
June	1	7:00a – 1:00p	Linwood Beach Walleye	
June	4	7:00 pm	Board Meeting Only	VFW Hall
June	15	7:00a – 1:00p	Sebawing Walleye (Kids Day Sat.)	
June	16	7:00a – noon	Outing, Day Two	
June	29	7:00a – 1:00p	Standish Walleye	
July	2	7:00 pm	Board Meeting Only	VFW Hall
July	13	5:30a – 1:00p	Manistee	
July	27	5:30a – 1:00p	Ludington	
August	7		No Board/Membership Meeting	
August	10	6:00a – 1:00p	Ludington (day 1)	
August	11	6:00a – noon	Ludington (day 2)	
	24	6:00a – 1:00p	Manistee (day 1)	
	25	6:00a – noon	Manistee (day 2)	
September	3	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
September	7	6:30a – 1:00p	Frankfort	
October	1	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
November	5	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
November	9	Daylight -1:00	Big and little Manistee River / Bear Creek	
December	3	7:00 pm	Board Meeting Only	VFW Hall
December	7	Daylight -1:00	Big Manistee River / Bear Creek	
December	14	Cocktails 5:00 Dinner 6:00	Christmas Awards Banquet K of C Hall, Auburn 4760 Garfield Rd. Auburn, MI 48611	

Membership meetings held at:  
 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642  
 989-496-3410

All Board/Membership meetings begin with Board at 6:00 pm.  
 Membership meetings follow at 7:15 pm. Raffle follow after every Membership meeting.  
 Board only meetings begin at 7:00pm.

We ask that you please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the event as to whether you plan on attending or not attending. On the day of the event call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72 or cell phone for the Port Chairman. Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follow weigh-in on Saturdays only.  
 Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate.  
 Children 16 and younger are free.

If interested in fishing with us please email: [kathy@steel-headers.com](mailto:kathy@steel-headers.com). Visit our web page [www.steel-headers.com](http://www.steel-headers.com)

**2019 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event
March	4	Board Meeting
April	1	Board Meeting
April	18	General Membership Meeting
May	6	Board Meeting
May	18	Holland Steelheaders Spring Challenge
May	21	Tuesday Night League Kickoff
June	3	Board Meeting
June	8	Holland Steelheaders All Species Tournament
June	22	Kids N Kings
July	8	Board Meeting
July	13	Veterans Fishing Outing
July	25	General Membership Meeting
July	27	Holland Steelheaders Summer Challenge
August	2-4	Big Red Classic
August	5	Board Meeting
August	17	Holland Steelheaders Ladies Tournament
September	3	Tuesday Night League Final Night
September	9	Board Meeting
October	7	Board Meeting
November	4	Board Meeting
December	2	Board Meeting
December	5	General Membership Meeting
December	7	Holland Steelheaders River Tournament

Board meetings held at: Turks of Holland, 977 Butternut Dr., Holland MI 49424 7:00 PM  
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club, 1862 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland MI 49424.  
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to [hollandsteelheaders.org](http://hollandsteelheaders.org), or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405, or email Steve Weatherwax at [Waxer1221@yahoo.com](mailto:Waxer1221@yahoo.com)

TAKE YOUR KIDS FISHING!

“Many of the most highly publicized events of my presidency are not nearly as memorable or significant in my life as fishing with my daddy.”  
 - former President Jimmy Carter





**2019 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
March	5	General Membership Meeting	
March	14-17	Novi Boat Show	Mac Traver/ Dave Zawacki
March	23	SPORTSMAN'S BANQUET – Burton Manor	MWS Board
March	30	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River/Pier with DS	Adam Trenz/ Eric Braden
April	2	General Membership Meeting	
April	6	New Buffalo Coho Tournament	
April	13	Detroit River/Lake Erie & St Clair Walleye Invitational	
April	20	Muskegon River Tournament	
April	27	Brown Trout Tournament Manistee	
May	7	General Membership Meeting	
May	11	Toledo Beach Memorial Walleye Tourn. & Vets	
May	18	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sat	
May	19	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sun	
May	25	Maumee River Kayak/Small boat	
June	1	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	
June	4	General Membership Meeting	
June	8	Grand/Southhaven Salmon Pier Event	
June	15	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament - Sat	
June	22	Walleye Tournament (Saginaw Bay or L. Erie)	
June	29	Maumee River Kayak – Small Mouth	
July	6	Clinton River Cleanup Day	
July	9	Club Summer Picnic	
July	11	Erieau Tournament – Thur Erieau, Canada	
July	13	Erieau Tournament – Sat. Erieau, Canada	
July	20	Manistee River Cleanup Day @ High Bridge	
July	25	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Thu	
July	26	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Select LUREs only	
July	27	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sat	
July	28	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sun	
August	3	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sat	
August	4	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sun	
August	6	General Membership Meeting	
August	10	Salmon Tournament – Frankfort	
August	24	Ludington Salmon Jigging	
September	3	General Membership Meeting	
September	7	Lake/Pier & River Tournament – Frankfort	
September	14	Muskegon Kayak for Salmon etc	
September	14	Manistee Pier Jamboree Starts at 7 pm	
September	21	Manistee River Tournament	
October	1	General Membership Meeting	
October	5	Manistee River Tournament	
October	12	Ohio Steelhead Alley (include Elk Creek P.A.)	
November	2	River Tourn./Pier & Shore Outing Manistee w/ DS	
November	5	General Membership Meeting	
December	3	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	7	Huron River Tournament	

**\*\* ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC\*\***

7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road  
 WEB Site: Go to [www.metroweststeelheaders.org](http://www.metroweststeelheaders.org)  
 If you have questions, contact Henry Nabors - [HHNabors@Ameritech.net](mailto:HHNabors@Ameritech.net) or call 248 225 4964.

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

**2019 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event	Location / Information
March	21	Best Chance Fishing Seminar	South Haven Moose Lodge
March	21	Board and Membership Meeting, (week after GR Ultimate Sports Show) Best Chance Fishing Seminar	
April	18	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop	South Haven Moose Lodge
April	18	Board and Membership Meeting Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop – Dr. Dan O'Keefe presenting	
May	16	Board and Membership Meeting Guest Speaker – Kevin Oles – Salmon in the Classroom Summit	
May	17	South Haven Tournament Captains Meeting	South Haven Moose Lodge
May	18-19	South Haven Tourney	
June	8	SHS Ladies Tournament	
June	8-9	Free Fishing Weekend	
June	20	Board and Membership Meeting	
July	18	Board and Membership Meeting	
August	10	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival August 8-11)	
August	15	Board and Membership Meeting	
August	17	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans	
August	24	SHS Merle Morris Tournament	
September	19	Board and Membership Meeting	
October	17	Board and Membership Meeting	
November	21	Board and Membership Meeting	
November	23	SHS River Tournament	
December	7	SHS Holiday Party 2019 (No Board or membership meeting this month)	

Note: All Board and membership meetings are held the third Thursday of each month.  
 Membership Meetings Held at 7 pm at: South Haven Moose Lodge, 1025 East Wells Street, South Haven, MI 49040  
 For more information email: [president@southhavensteelheaders.com](mailto:president@southhavensteelheaders.com)

**2019 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event
March	14	Membership Meeting
April	11	Membership Meeting
May	9-11	Summer Challenge Tournament: <a href="http://www.fishthesummerchallenge.com">www.fishthesummerchallenge.com</a>
June	13	Membership Meeting
July	11	Membership Meeting
August	TBD	Trolling with the Troops
August	8	Membership Meeting
September	12	Membership Meeting
October	10	Membership Meeting
November	14	Membership Meeting
December	7	Winter Challenge Tournament
December	12	Membership Meeting

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

**2019 TCAS Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Event
March	6	General Membership Meeting
March	15-17	Michigan Hunting Fishing Expo
April	3	General Membership Meeting
May	1	General Membership Meeting
May	4	Brown Trout Tournament Frankfort
May	18	Torch Lake Salmon Tournament
June	5	General Membership Meeting
June	15	Starvation Lake Tournament
June 29 - July 6		National Cherry Festival – NO MEMBERSHIP MEETING or Board Meeting
July	13	Lake Charlevoix Tournament
August	7	General Membership Meeting
August	10	Crystal Lake Tournament
August	24	Grand Traverse Bay Tournament (Elk Rapids)
September	4	General Membership Meeting
October	2	General Membership Meeting
October	5	Senior Center Fish Fry
November	6	General Membership Meeting
December	7	Christmas Party – Tentative date

Membership Meetings Held at: Traverse City Senior Center, 801 Front St., Traverse City, MI 49686

\* Ice Fishing Tournaments will be cancelled if ice is deemed unsafe.

**2019 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
March	21	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
April	18	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
May	4	6:00 AM	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina – Need Workers!!
May	16	7:30	Ladies Night Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
June	1	6:00 AM	ProKing Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina
June	8	6:00 AM	Veterans fishing outing	Contact Kevin Ramsey for details
June	20	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
July	18	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
August	12	2:00 PM	Pig Roast	Harbor beach VFW
August	15	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
September	19	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubyly Foxhunters
October	17	7:30	Regular Meeting, Election of Board/Officers	Ubyly Foxhunters

November  
December

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

**2019 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events**

Month	Date	Time	Information
March	4	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
April	1	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
May	6	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
May	18	6:00 am	Alpena tournament
June	3	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
June	8	6:00 am	Presque Isle Tournament
June	22	6:00 am	Tournament location to be determined
July	1	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
August	5	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
August	24	6:00 am	Rogers City Tournament
September	2	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
October	7	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
November	4	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting
December	2	7:00 pm	Monthly Meeting

Contact Dan Bouchard at [dan-bouchard@hotmail.com](mailto:dan-bouchard@hotmail.com) for inquiries.



# Easy Tactics For Mid-Winter Panfish

By Craig Ritchie

It's well known that the best ice fishing happens early and late in the season. Many species are still putting on the feed bag when the first ice seals the lakes shut, while longer days and the approach of spawning season for many species brings another burst of activity before the ice gives out altogether. But in between, things can slow a bit in what some anglers refer to as the *February Blahs*.

To me, that's the time to pull back a bit, simplify my approach, and enjoy fast and easy action with panfish. Not only does the panfish bite stay strong all winter, but a good feed of freshly-caught perch or bluegills makes even the foulest weather a lot more tolerable. They're also just the ticket for introducing children to the joys of ice fishing since they're easy to catch and a panfish session

doesn't have to be an all-day affair.

The fishing itself is pretty easy. Panfish like perch, bluegill, punkinseed and other types of sunfish seldom wander far from their summer haunts, but they will move into deeper water in mid-winter as oxygen levels in the shallows begin to thin out. Look for concentrations of fish to hold just above bottom off shallow, weedy bays and adjacent to shoreline points, saddles and islands in water from 12 to 25 feet deep. Finding fish generally isn't much of a problem, though finding numbers of larger, eating-sized fish is a bit more of a challenge. Larger fish tend to hold a little deeper than their smaller relatives, so once I start catching fish, I'll begin drilling additional holes in progressively deeper water in an effort to bump up the average size. Mornings usually produce the best action - panfish are

generally inactive at night, so by early morning they'll be looking for a square meal.

Small pinhead minnows fished on a light hook are just about unbeatable for catching winter panfish, but I prefer to jig using small spoons or even a simple jig-head with a bit of color on it. I find jiggling to be more enjoyable that watching or a bite with a static live bait set-up, and I find it tends to skew the catch toward larger fish. Panfish often show a preference toward bright colors, so bright pink, red, chartreuse or lime green jigheads often outperform black or natural ones. With spoons, I've always had the best success with bi-colored spoons in a silver/blue,

gold/red or gold/orange finish. Regardless of whether using spoons or jig heads, I like to tie them to the line by using a loop knot, which gives the bait more freedom of movement and, I feel, a more natural presentation.

It's generally not necessary, but tipping the hook with a bit of natural bait in the form of a wax-worm, mealworm, maggot or small pinhead minnow can also help skew your catch toward the larger fish in a school. Artificials like Berkley's Powerbait Ice Action Waxies also work well, since the idea is to bulk up the jig a bit, so it sinks more slowly on the drop.

Just about any light ice rod and reel setup will work perfectly fine for panfish,



though lighter outfits mean more fun. On pressured waters I'll spool up with straight four-pound fluorocarbon, since these small fish can react to fishing pressure like any other species.

The real reward of ice fishing for winter panfish comes at the end of the day, of course, when you fry up their small, succulent filets in breadding and hot oil.

Honestly - few meals ever taste as good as a solid feed of winter perch or bluegills after a wonderful day out on the ice.

Forget the February Blahs and spend a few days enjoying pure and simple fun with mid-winter panfish through the ice. They're easy to find, easy to catch, and if you enjoy a good fish dinner then you can't do any better.



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# THE DEVLE HAS A NEW HOME

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BY EPPINGER

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**“Fred”**

Continued from page 18

first “observers” at the Fred McDonald fishing tournaments. He learned a lot as an observer and took his duties seriously with paper and pencil in hand recording all the catches as they unfolded.

In 1998 Fred fished the steelhead tournaments by himself and was in second place going into the summers last tournament of the year. Fred’s brother-in-law joined Fred for the last outing of the year. It was one of those days when the fish were nearly jumping in the boat and Fred won the day’s tournament. As a result, Fred won the 1998 Steelheaders’ annual “skipper of the year award.”

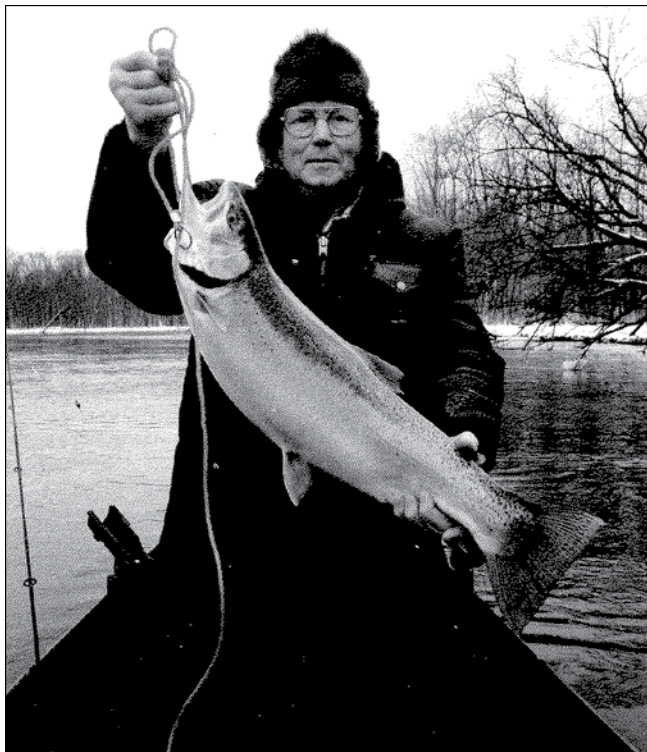
Fred shared that in the 1970’s the Steelheaders were highly recognized and considered an “elite group.” At that time, you needed to be recommended by a current member to join. In the mid-1980’s the Saginaw Valley Steelheaders had 500 members. Fred is appreciative of the Steelheaders voice with shaping legislative matters to protect Michigan’s fisheries.

Weather and safety are always of concern when fishing the Great Lakes. Most fishermen stayed close to shore during the early years as fog and wind could quickly put anglers at risk. Fred purchased the best compass one could buy before venturing out on the

great lakes. He commented that one should “always trust a compass.” During the early years, listening to the AM/FM radio was the primary means of monitoring the weather. Despite Fred’s best efforts to stay out of bad weather, he shared a story that made a lasting impression on him.

Fred recalled watching a storm front across the state of Wisconsin on television and believed he had enough time to fish a few hours in the morning at South Haven. He and four other boats ventured out 12 miles. Despite pulling lines after seeing the first flashes of lightning, the weather turned worse very quickly and Fred was caught in the storm. Sustained winds out of St. Joe were measured at 92 miles per hour. Fred’s Loran was not working in the storm and he navigated by his compass. He quartered the waves toward shore and luckily 100 yards from the pier head the storm lifted enough where he navigated into the harbor. The other four boats ended up near shore over 3 miles to the south of the pier heads.

Another memorable event (date unknown) was the Annual Saginaw Valley Steelheaders Winter outing. Fred shared that the first day of the event was 40 below zero. No one fished day one, but the 75 members made the most of their time together drinking coffee and other essential beverages. The second day



**Fred Saladine**

they were able to get one car started and they proceeded to jump the remaining vehicles apart from one vehicle. Day two was 0 degrees. Despite the cold, Fred and a handful of hardy fishermen hit the river. Fred recalls how beautiful the heavy snow was around the river that day.

Comparing the “old days” to “present day,” Fred shared that things are “so much better today and people don’t appreciate it.” Back in the early days, boat ramps were generally made of gravel with very few paved boat ramps. When he initially fished out of

Frankfort, they did not have a boat ramp. Channels to the lake in some ports were absent and boats needed to be walked out to deeper water. On windy days on Platte Bay, Fred shared that he needed to ride the waves

to avoid bottoming out on the gravel.

I am proud to share; I took Fred fishing on my boat on his “50th consecutive year of fishing” on Lake Michigan. In recent years, Fred has struggled with numerous health problems. Fred has difficulty seeing and walking in the dark and needs assistance getting in and out of the boat. However, once on the boat, he manages himself exceptionally well and his “sea legs” come to life. It was memorable watching Fred sitting on the cooler reeling in a sizable King. He skillfully worked the fish to the net despite having limited visibility sitting on the cooler. I recall him catching two fish that day.

Years ago, I thought I should have named my boat “Memory Maker” as so many grand memories are experienced while fishing. This outing, Fred’s 50th consecutive year fishing Lake Michigan, is one of my fondest memories. At the time, I did not know about the significance of

this outing, but it became more meaningful to me once I learned what a privilege it was to be on the water with him that day. I am praying that Fred’s health continues to improve and we can get out on the water a time or two this summer.

It has been said that time is the longest line between two points. During the 50 consecutive years Fred fished up and down the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, he has made his footprint in the sand, made friends and caught a few fish in the process. Throughout his life, he tried to be a good steward of Michigan’s fishery and educating the younger generation. On a grander note, while sitting at his dining room table, Fred pointed out a picture of a club member’s baby sitting on his lap after a day’s fishing in Ludington and stated, “That’s my kind of life!”



*Calendar of Events continued from page 21:*

2019 White River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event information	Location
March	7	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
April	4	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
May	2	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
June	6	6:30 pm	Meeting at Montague Boat Launch (weather permitting) – If raining, meeting at Montague VFW	
July			No meeting this month	
August	1	6:30 pm	Meeting at Montague Boat Launch (weather permitting) – If raining, meeting at Montague VFW	
September	5	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
October	3	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
November	7	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
December	5	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW

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





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