



# THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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

Volume 63 September/October 2020 No. 5



Rep. Scott VanSingel, Rep. Bradley Slagh with biggest King Salmon of the Event, and Captain Chip Klein

## Showing Off Our Natural Resources Lawmakers share a day of on-the-lake education

By Dennis Eade

In the midst of this unprecedented time of restrictions and shutdowns, it was refreshing to be able to show off the splendor of Lake Michigan and the world-class sport fishery to the lawmakers who are stewards of our natural resources. That's just what occurred on the morning of July 13th in Grand

Haven at Chinook Pier. The Michigan Legislative Sportsman Caucus' fishing event, which was hosted by Rep. Jim Lilly, R-Park Township, and the MLSC Advisory Council made up of the key conservation and sportsmen groups across the state, brought fifteen lawmakers to town to experience sport fishing up close and learn about the threats posed by invasive species

on the resource.

Reps. Alexander, Bollin, Hauck, Iden, Kahle, Lightner, Lilly, Maddock, Meerman, Paquette, VanSingel, VanWoerkom, and Wendzel as well as Sen. Jon Bumstead took part in the event. Sen. Bumstead commented "It's really an educational day for most of them, a lot of them aren't outdoorsmen, so bringing them into this opens their eyes. It's

good for us and good for the charter captains to show them what they do to make a living." The event included a reception the evening before at Noto's Bil Mar Inn on the water, a morning of fishing, and a Catch and Cook luncheon at Old Boy's Brewhouse in Spring Lake to conclude the out-

"Lawmakers"  
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## Sheboygan, WI Proves to Be A Rewarding Destination

By Paul Zelenka

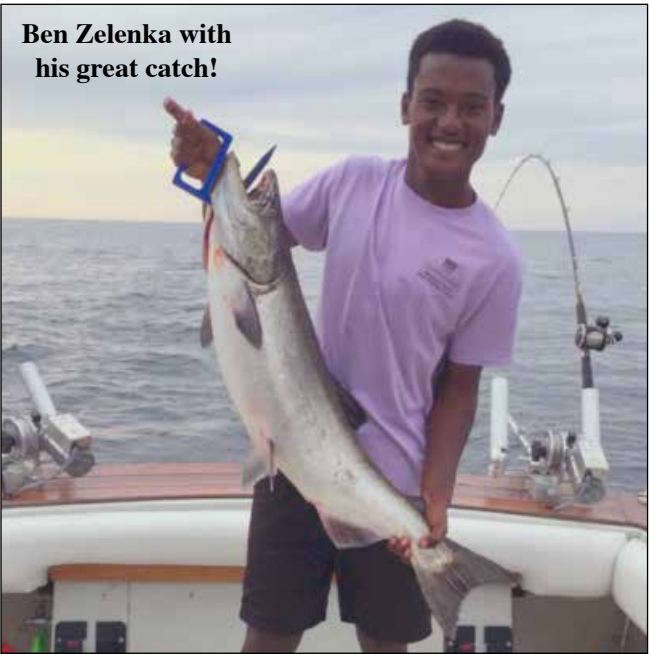
A few years ago, my high school son Ben and I came up with a goal to catch a salmon or trout in each of the Great Lakes. To date we have accomplished the goal on all but Lake Ontario. In the pursuit of the goal we found out we liked to fish new ports.

This year we decided to Fish the Sheboygan Cup in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. This tournament turned out to be the first event of

the 333 Tournament Trail season due to COVID 19 lock downs in Michigan. I usually fish several 333 events every year along with my crew. After watching several Salmon Showdown TV episodes on Carbon TV, we got even more excited about fishing the Wisconsin shoreline of Lake Michigan. June 10th arrived and Team Betty Lou (my adopted sons Ben

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Ben Zelenka with his great catch!



## Trip Of A Lifetime

By Dave Higgins Jr.

Growing up in Michigan, I have fished my entire life. I finally began big lake salmon fishing in 2010 after a good friend of mine took me out on his dad's boat. Thankfully, I've been friends of Dennis Eade's youngest son Brian since 2000. After a few trips out on Lake Michigan with the Eade family, I was officially hooked.

birthday (July 22), fishing was not on my mind... It's obviously a different world now and I've begun to forget how much fun it was out there...

Thankfully for me, I have fantastic friends. My good friend Nate Glennie called up Brian Eade and setup the trip of a lifetime. Brian's good friend (Bill Klaasen) let us borrow his 27' Sailfish called Bigger Bill\$. My Dad was added



Left to Right: Nate Glennie, Dave Higgins Jr. and Dave Higgins Sr.

My dad purchased a 1988 25' Sea Ray in 2010. We fished many, many times and had hundreds of fond memories. Unfortunately, none of them involved me landing a 20-pound King. I saw many 20+ pounders caught on my dad's boat, I just happened to be netting or driving at the time. I caught many, many fish and should not complain, but I couldn't get a 20 pounder?! My dad sold the boat at the end of the 2017 season, leaving me without many options moving forward... I went out again twice in 2018 and did not get a chance to go last year. 2020 was looking like a similar for me—I hadn't seen the big lake at all. As I approached my 40th

to the lineup and we left my hometown port of Holland on the morning of my 40th birthday. It was lumpy out, so we banged into the waves until we hit 220 feet of water (fow) and turned it around to troll with the waves. Fishing started off slow—we were one for three by 9 A.M. with a small Chinook in the box that hit on a J-Plug. Things got exciting when the port rigger rod started screaming after a quick release. When I

"Trip"  
Continued on page 3



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“Trip”  
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say screaming, this poor reel almost came apart. Whatever smacked the 11” White Paddle/ Oceana fly combo we had 120 down was Big! Thankfully, the reel was full of braid as Brian tends to use it for deep lake trout fishing. We were in 195 fow when the rigger let loose—the fish pulled line until the counter showed 575. Yikes! I gained a few hundred feet on him, but he peeled another hundred feet like it was nothing. After some struggle, my Dad asked

if he should slow the boat down. “Good idea!” ... yelled Brian. The last half of the fight went surprisingly well as it seemed the big fish began to give in. Brian took his time when the fish came to the back of the boat. We battled the twin 150 outboards to navigate the fish to the back of the boat. By then, everyone on board knew it was a very big fish... no one talked for the last 15 minutes of the fight. That all changed when Brian yelled out: “I Need Help! I can’t get this fish over the transom”. That is a good problem to have and I was glad

to lend a hand to help load this fish onto the back deck. At that moment, 3 middle aged fiends and an one old man lost their minds. We screamed and danced as we knew this was the fish of a lifetime. “Happy Birthday to me!” I yelled. What an awesome day on the lake! Twenty minutes later, the starboard rigger released, and I was handed another rod. Another monster decided to hit our moonshine lure! After another fight, we landed a 24-pound Chinook to add to our cooler. I went from never catching anything over 20 pounds, to catch-

ing a 33.22 pound and 24.5-pound King within an hour of each other. Nate added to the cooler with a good 10-pound eater and my Dad capped off the trip with a solid 18 pounder that hit a meat rig. A special thanks to the Holland Steelheader and boat owner Bill Klaasen for letting us take out his boat. “That’s not going to be an easy boat record to break” he said. Keep in mind that any day on Lake Michigan could end like mine so keep going out and enjoying the awesome fishery we have!



Paul Zelenka with his sons, Ben and Sam with their big fish.



Dave Higgins Jr. with his “trip of a lifetime” 33.21 lb King!!

“Sheboygan”  
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and Sam, my Brother Jim Zelenka, and Rob Richert) trailered my 24’ Rampage express around the south end of Lake Michigan and up to Sheboygan, WI. We checked into the hotel and splashed the boat. We got everything prepared for the next morning. We proceeded to the local tackle store to get Wisconsin licenses and a little advice on the salmon program on the “wrong” side of the lake. Russell at Anglers Avenue was great. He shared what was going on with the bite, despite being in competition with us in the upcoming tournament.

Weather was sketchy to say the least, so our first morning out it was just Rob and myself. We let the kids sleep in and we slipped out to get acquainted with the structure and contours we would be fishing in the tournament. This turned out to be well worth getting bounced around for two hours. We boated a half dozen fish. More importantly located commercial nets in front of the Sheboygan harbor. New ports offer challenges so ask questions and take your time.

Our 2nd day on the

“Sheboygan”  
Continued on page 10



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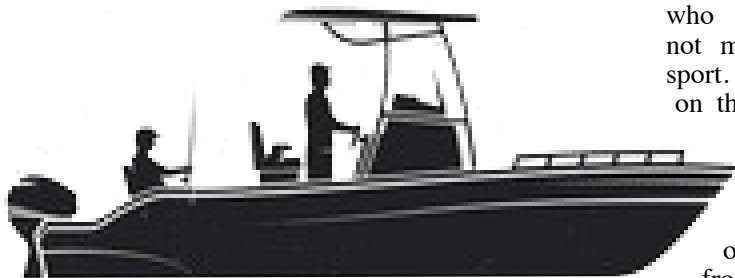
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# MSSFA PRESIDENT

## Tim Stegeman



Before I begin my story for this issue, the first thing I want you to know is that I am a horticulturist with a background in landscape design and entomology. Basically, this means my vocation revolves around plants and insects on land. Secondly, I just received the week #4 report for the MSSFA Share the Resource fundraising campaign for the tribal legal fund which was very disappointing for the week.

In my limited Covid-19 restricted travels the last couple of months, I had an unexpected opportunity to strike up a conversation with a big lake fisherman who had a very nice boat with all the latest and greatest gear. Why wouldn't he? After all, first impressions are very likely to help book that unscheduled afternoon charter. In his eyes, I was the moth and he was the light bulb. Thus began the dance. After several minutes, I learned that fishing was great. Big Kings, Coho, Steelhead and Lakers were being caught and for an industry standard fee I could participate in a Great Lakes fishing experience of a lifetime.

Unfortunately, I had to decline as I had a late afternoon meeting that day and that I had just stopped to grab a bite to eat, admire the boats and see the effects of the high water on the port. However, before part-

ing ways with the captain who was very knowledgeable about his vocation and obviously did a great job of putting his clients on fish based on the pictures displayed, I decided to ask a couple of additional questions. This Q & A conversation eventually led to me asking about something "I had recently read" – 2020 being the expiration of the consent decree with the tribes. I asked if he thought that would have any bearing on the future of the fishery. His reply was basically that there were some "groups" involved which represented sport anglers and that the 2000 decree would most likely be renewed "as is" in the end because it has worked out so well in the past. I then asked who those groups he referred to are and if he was directly involved or a member of any of them? He named a couple off then concluded with the statement that he was "too busy to be directly involved."

After ending the conversation and thanking him for his time, I walked away with a whisper of a

thought in my mind that grew in volume as the day progressed. Do I make a living from charter fishing? No. Do I make a living from the manufacture and sale of fishing gear? No. Will a partial or complete reversal of the consent decree affect my pocketbook? Absolutely not. The whisper I was hearing was saying to me: Why then should I be involved in tribal negotiations if a charter captain and even other related industry people, who derive their livelihoods from sport fishing all have the same thought, that "some group" will see the tribal negotiation through (I'll also add in the Commercial fishing bills) and achieve a favorable outcome without their direct involvement (volunteer time, letters/calls of support and/or ESPECIALLY donations to cover the legal costs of being at the table negotiating a favorable outcome?

An overwhelming majority of our members and supporters are recreational anglers who fish the big lakes, rivers and streams,

who only spend money, not make money on the sport. They spend money on the gear and terminal tackle and have to make time to be on the water. Where's the overwhelming support from the charter boat folks who are not part of MCBA, the fishing tackle manufacturers and distributors, the boat manufacturers, the convention and visitor bureaus, the commercial districts that cater to the fishing tourism clientele, all who benefit from a successful resolution and new consent decree and the passage of a new commercial fishing statute?

Myself, and many of you, just want to be assured that with all we spend, that there is a reasonable chance there are enough sport fish in the lake to have a better than average chance of catching, not just fishing, no matter the level of experience. I can only assume those who make a living from sport fishing want the same? The Tribal Negotiations with MSSFA's Share the Resource campaign as well as the Commercial fishing bills need everyone's attention and support. Not tomorrow, today!

There is a lot on the line (pun intended) and the MSSFA needs financial support to fight your fishing resource battle. We are on the precipice of change yet



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

again and with the winds that are blowing, I think I may come to regret not skipping the meeting and paying the captain his industry standard fee and taking him up on his Great Lakes fishing experience of a lifetime for Big Kings, Coho, Steelhead and Lakers. I suspect that captain too will come to regret not being actively engaged now rather than a few years from now when that Great Lakes fishing experience he proudly touted could very well be drastically different.

Until I see a charter boat captain or fishing related industry person start volunteering for trade associations related to my vocation, I'm thinking it would be a good idea for the ones who haven't already, to fully get behind and support in every way possible the MSSFA's and us "average Joe's" efforts to protect the Great Lakes sport fishery as we know it. Put either your time and/or your money where your mouth is. Of course, if the tribal and commercial fishing bills aren't really all that important because it takes your

time and/or money to make a difference, why would I too not consider following in all the non-supporter's footsteps as an example? This horticulturist might just have to find himself "too busy" too if the level of support for the issues at hand continues to remain subpar. Can anyone say "bluegill"?

P.S. I can only assume after this article is published the charter captain I referred to above could put two and two together. So, my apology to him for not identifying myself as the MSSFA President who was quite familiar already with everything we talked about. Still, for him, I want to combine the words of two U.S. Presidential hopefuls, "C'mon man, believe me, your support and involvement is needed bigly, my time up?"



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To help save the recreational fishing experience you are accustomed to today, we need you to seriously consider donating to our grassroots "Share the Resource" fundraiser that will be used to protect Michigan's sport fishery. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 by October 16th, 2020 for the MSSFA legal fund. <http://www.michigansteelheaders.org/>

You can't save the recreational fishery alone,  
but the MSSFA can save it with your help!





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

On July 13th, the Michigan Legislative Sportsman Caucus Advisory Council, which I am the Vice Chair, hosted fifteen members of the House of Representatives and Senate for a Fishing Event hosted by Representative Jim Lilly, 89th District, at Chinook Pier in Grand Haven, MI. Rep. Bradley Slagh caught the biggest fish, a 20 pound Chinook salmon on board Hit Man Charters. Representatives Alexander, Bollin, Hall, Hauck, Iden, Kahle, Lightner, Lilly, Maddock, Meerman, Paquette, Sheppard, VanSingel, VanWoerkom, and Wendzel as well as Sen. Jon Bumstead took part in the event. I arranged for the charter boats, the rolls and coffee (thanks to Brendan Ringlever and Michigan Legislative Consultants) and the Catch and Cook luncheon at Old Boy's Brewhouse in Spring Lake at noon. The Michigan Softdrink Association (and Derek Bajema) sponsored the luncheon. The reception for legislators the night before was sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and McAlvey Merchant & Associates. The event was a huge success with Rep. Lilly asking me to please consider having the event again next year in his district in Grand Haven. Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter was able to explain

the impact invasive species are having on the Great Lakes ecosystem and Advisory Council Chairman, Bryan Burroughs spoke about the importance of the Commercial Fishing Bills, thanking members for passing them in the House and asking for further support as they move through the Senate.

The bills are expected to be considered for moving to a vote on the floor of the Senate in September but it is looking more and more like the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee will not allow them to move forward without substantive changes that are not acceptable to sport fishermen. The Chairman is Senator Ed McBroom (Iron Mountain), a dairy farmer from the Upper Peninsula, who's on record as sponsoring opposing bills offered by commercial fishing industry proponents, is the stumbling block at this time. However, the other members of the committee include Senators Jon Bumstead (R-Newago), Rick Outman, (R-Six Lakes), Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), and Vice Chair, Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo) who are potential "yes" votes and you need to contact them and encourage them to support the bills when and if the committee gets to vote on

sending them to the floor of the Senate.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Friday signed legislation creating more opportunities for quality outdoor recreation by authorizing \$28.7 million in Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants. Senate Bill 145, sponsored by Sen. Jon Bumstead, approves funding for 78 recreation development projects and land purchases recommended by the board. It is now Public Act 145 of 2020. The Happy Landing property in Sodus Twp., home turf for our SW Michigan Steelheaders, was one of the projects approved and currently the MDNR real estate folks believe a clear title to the property can be obtained and DNR is moving forward with purchase.

On the federal level, The Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law as bipartisan legislation that will guarantee funding towards public lands maintenance and renovation projects in Michigan and across the country. The Act will both permanently and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million dollars annually. The LWCF has helped promote outdoor recreation and has established and expanded parks and wild areas across the country. Over the past five decades, LWCF has provided \$342.4 million in funding to hundreds of projects to protect, preserve, and expand public lands across Michigan. This is critical to both conservation efforts and the state's economy. The recreational

areas, trails and waterways supported by the Land and Water Conservation Fund are critical to providing recreational fishing opportunities in Michigan and across the country. In addition, better maintaining our national parks, forests and refuges will greatly improve outdoor recreation experiences at these areas.

Under the authority of the Great Lakes Fish Commission, MSU facilitators for The FishPass Project in Traverse City, MI have begun holding Zoom meetings with stakeholders which will utilize the Strategic Decision Making (DSM) process to gain consensus on the connectivity issues between the Boardman River and Lake Michigan and ultimately provide a prescription for what fish species will be allowed to pass up stream from the dam. I am participating in this stakeholder group as is Ted Ewald from TCAS, MSSFA's chapter in Traverse City and Ryan McCarty from the SW Michigan Steelheaders. I am a believer in DSM because

it was successfully used to gain consensus among bordering state stakeholders on Lake Michigan when considering fish stocking reductions in 2013. After weighing all the risks, the final agreement prevented a potential lake wide crash like what was experienced on Lake Huron in 2004.

The Share the Resource Campaign is in full swing on MSSFA's Facebook page and website. Meeting our tribal funding goal is critical to preserving sport fishing as we know it today. I forwarded two press releases to media representatives when the Sault Tribe filed its federal court action requesting relief from the consent decree extension. I have done two radio show guest spots on talk radio to get our messaging out to the public. I did a guest spot on the Steve Gruber Radio Program from WJIM in Lansing, MI and with Duran Martinez on his weekend Wild Michigan Outdoors Radio Program which is syndicated throughout the state. We did see an uptick in donations to the Share

the Resource Fund after those broadcasts. I also sat down with Cheyna Roth an Investigative Journalist on the ramifications of the Tribal Consent Decree negotiations.

In September we are planning to live stream a message on facebook and mssfa.org supporting the Share the Resource Campaign and we plan to develop two short video spots to gain new members and encourage donations to the Share the Resource Campaign. If your not a member of MSSFA please join. A couple of years from now you will look back and be glad you had a part in saving the sport fishery from commercial overharvest.

It may be the Covid-19 shut down period but there is more to do than ever to keep MSSFA on top of all the issues facing sport fishing during these unprecedented times. Stay safe out there on the water!



## MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Dennis Eade







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

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

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

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

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## THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS (GLSFN)

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

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

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

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

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2020 Tentative Print Schedule		
Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/12/19	01/03/20
2	02/14/20	03/03/20
3	04/14/20	04/29/20
4	06/15/20	06/29/20
5	08/14/20	08/28/20
6	10/09/20	10/27/20

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

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2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Saturday, October 17, 2020  
Presidents’ Meeting  
Michigan Historical Library  
& Museum  
701 Kalamazoo St.  
Lansing, MI – 10:00 AM

Wednesday, December 16, 2020  
at MUCC, 2101 Wood Street,  
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Photo Credit: Sarah Larden, DFO.



Photo Credit: Sarah Larden, DFO.



# Two Of Lake Huron’s Top Producing Sea Lamprey Streams Receive Lampricide Treatments After Years Of Negotiations

**By Jill Wingfield**  
*Communications & Policy  
Program Manager  
Great Lakes Fishery  
Commission*

Three tributaries to Lake Huron produce more than half of the lake-wide sea lamprey larval population: the St. Marys, the Mississauga, and Garden Rivers. For the past several years, lampricide treatments on the Mississauga and Garden Rivers, which are located on First Nation lands, were not conducted due to concerns from the First Nation communities. Discussions over several years that engaged the community, provided information, and built relationships led to an acceptable treatment plan for both of these high-producers. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission and its Sea Lamprey Control Program are pleased to report that the Mississauga River was treated in August 2019, and the Garden River was just treated in July 2020. Crews from Fisheries and Oceans Canada led the treatments with support from the Mississauga and Garden River First Nations.

Treatment of the Mississauga River occurred on August 7-9, 2019. Mississauga First Nation began the treatment with a water ceremony at the upper limit of the treatment, and observed the treatment throughout the duration. Garden River First Nation Lands and Resource department staff also attended to observe. The treatment was very effective in the flowing portion of the river and crews reported seeing abundant numbers of several year classes of larval sea lampreys, including those currently undergoing metamorphosis into the parasitic life stage, the stage in which they damage fish. However, the river has a unique [for the Great Lakes] bird's foot delta, and the lake level and flow pattern for the river resulted in in-

complete coverage of TFM in this area. Post-treatment sampling by DFO and Mississauga First Nation discovered sea lampreys were still present in sections of the delta and a follow-up treatment using Bayluscide, which will allow for more precise targeting of this small population, is tentatively scheduled for later in 2020. This may need to be delayed until 2021 given programmatic constraints due to COVID-19.

Following approval by Garden River First Nation's Chief and Council in fall 2019, 73.7km of the Garden River was treated July 22-25, 2020. The following week, two tributaries to the Garden River, Maud and Driving Creeks, were treated. Prior to these treatments, the Garden River had not been treated since 2014. Before beginning the application of lampricide, DFO assessment crews conducted an electrofishing demonstration for community members to show how many sea lamprey larvae were in the system. Crews

reported densities of larvae in the Garden River beyond any that have ever been seen in this river since the control program began, including at least 4 age classes with abundant large larvae, including many beginning metamorphosis. Initial reports indicate that the treatment was very successful. The Garden River First Nation Lands and Resource Office staff participated in the treatment and a number of community members were present during treatment. At the completion of the lampricide application, another electrofishing demonstration was held in the same area as the pre-treatment demonstration; no larval sea lampreys were detected. Full post-treatment assessment is ongoing but early indications are that the treatment was a great success.

These treatments highlight the need for consistent, open communication; the necessity of working to understand the beliefs and concerns of local com-



munities; and, the value of partnerships among Sea Lamprey Control Program staff and First Nation communities. In addition, relationships with U.S. tribes, specifically the Sault Tribe and the Bad River Tribe, were critical to facilitating the treatment negotiation. Tribal and First Nation communities share concerns about the use of lampricides in nibi [water], yet also have a vested inter-

est in maintaining healthy Great Lakes fisheries. Understanding how other Indigenous groups have reconciled their concerns about lampricide application with their community needs helped Mississauga and Garden River First Nations work towards the decision to permit these much-needed treatments.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission and its Sea Lamprey Control Program

shares the First Nation's interest in a healthy, vibrant fishery, which motivated us all to work together towards that objective. The Commission is committed to continuing efforts to foster these relationships by being open and direct with information, available for discussion with any group, and persistent in promoting the necessity of sea lamprey control in the Great Lakes.

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L-R: Representatives Meerman, Bollin, Maddock, Lilly, Alexander, and Lightner show off catch.

“Lawmakers”  
Continued from page 1

ing. Rep. Lilly spoke at the luncheon and emphasized “the need to get our fishing statue right in order to protect and ensure we continue to have a vibrant sport fishery”.  
The biggest fish caught was a 20 pound King salmon boated by Rep. Bradley Slagh, R-Zeeland, who

fished on Hit Man Charters with Rep. Scott VanSingel, R-Grant.  
“We accomplished our mission”, said Dennis Eade, Vice Chair of Council and Executive Director of MSSFA, “which was to open their eyes to the economic impact that sportfishing can have to a local economy. The lawmakers arrived the evening before the event and had dinner

at a nice restaurant, stayed the night at a local hotel, had coffee and rolls before venturing out on charter fishing vessels and returned for a luncheon at a local restaurant and brew house. The money spent on all those activities benefited numerous local small business owners.” Sportfishing as a whole represents a \$2.3-2.4 billion in direct expenditures in this state

and supports more than 35,000 jobs. Importantly, more than 90 percent of the sportfishing industry is made up of small businesses—including manufacturers of tackle and boats to retailers and charter boat captains.



Above: Rep. Ann Bollin and Rep. Bronna Kahle dockside.



Above: Chief Dexter explains how mussels are changing the ecology of the lakes

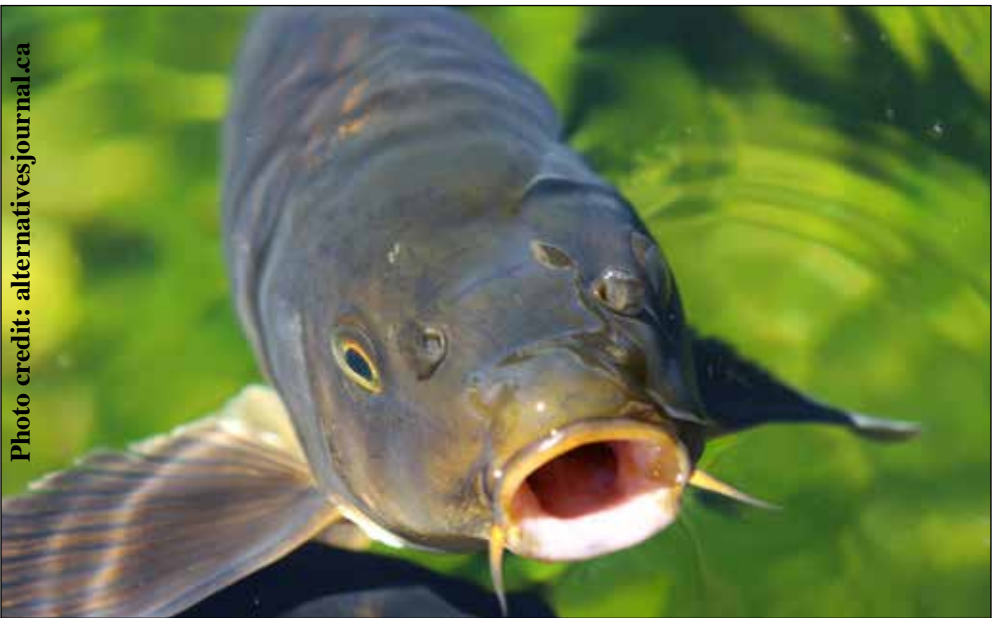



Photo credit: alternativesjournal.ca

## House Passes Bill, Bolstering Defenses Against Asian Carp, Toxic Algae

While Congress continues to grapple with the challenges posed by COVID-19, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a couple of major spending packages that include some of the Great Lakes Coalition priorities. The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives by a voice vote on Wednesday 29th! The bill is full of great stuff to aid in our fight against Asian Carp and toxic algal blooms.  
The House of Representatives passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 by a voice vote. The Great Lakes Coalition supports several core Great Lakes and clean water priorities in the bill that help stop Asian carp, halt toxic algal outbreaks, and create incentives for nature-based solutions to flooding and other environmental problems. The bill also calls for expanding an existing study to look at the

impact of record high lake levels on coastal flooding, storm damage, ecosystem restoration and recreation.  
The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works passed similar water infrastructure legislation in April, which not only included the Water Resources Development Act, but also supported critical investments in stormwater, drinking water, and wastewater infrastructure.  
The Water Resources Development Act (H.R. 7575) authorizes the construction of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam to prevent invasive Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes and wreaking environmental and economic harm.  
The bill also contains provisions to study and combat the rise of toxic algal blooms, which can poison drinking water and threaten the health of communities which rely on the Great Lakes for water.  
In addition, the 2020

Water Resources Development Act includes provisions for:  
• Nature-based solution for flood control projects in which wetlands, parks, forests, and rain gardens absorb rain and storm water before it overwhelms communities.  
• Studies of the effects that rising lake levels are having on Great Lakes communities.  
• Technical assistance to non-Federal interests and federal agencies to plan for increased flooding and extreme weather caused by climate change.  
• A pilot program to explore strategies for damage reduction during extreme weather events for economically disadvantaged communities.  
Congress must reconcile the two bills this fall before sending final legislation to the President.




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Paul Zelenka with his 30 lb. King and Big Fish of the tournament.



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Above: What a nice box of fish for the Betty Lou Team!

Below: Another big King added to the total in Sheboygan.



“Sheboygan”  
Continued from page 3

water, pre-fishing was outstanding. We followed the local charter fleet and set up south of town in 100’ of water. We put out our normal spread of spoons and spin doctors and flies. We had fish on the graph from 30’ to 80’ down. Rumors of large boxes of Kings, Coho, Steelhead and Lake trout where shortly proven to be the real deal. “Fish On!” was a steady call throughout the morning. We trolled south nearly 15 miles before calling it a day. Upon returning to the slip we found out other boats had similar results. We boated 17 fish of all species and sizes. Given that Michigan was in lock down, it was great to sit down and be

served breakfast at Harry’s Diner. Outstanding biscuits and gravy almost trumped the tournament planning experience.

Day 1 of the tournament saw us boat 12 fish. Our Big fish was a 19lb King, Given we had a 5 hour delay and fished 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, captain and crew were pleased to be in the top half of the Pro Division after day #1. Day #2 saw a little better weather and a 5:00 AM start. But we had electronics failure, fishing blind for the first 90 minutes as our graph refused to cooperate. The fish where not aware of a loose wire and we boated a 30 lb. king which ended up being the Big Fish of the tournament. Another 12 fish rounded out day 2 and we placed 7th in both 333 and the She-

boygan Cup Tournament.

Not only is the Sheboygan Cup a great event, the town is fisherman friendly. The locals did like to rib the only Michigan boat in the tournament, but it was all in good humor. When the fish go west in our home waters in May, don’t be afraid to try something new. Sheboygan is on my 2021 Calendar. Fishing a new port can test your skills, help you gain new ones and make new friends. Give it a try next season.

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Huge lake trout added to the weight needed to finish 7th overall in the Pro Division.



# Bob Filbrandt Receives Special Tribute Award

Long time South Haven Steelheader member, Bob Filbrandt was honored with a Special Tribute from the State of Michigan at the Post 49 American Legion Hall in South Haven on Saturday, August 15, 2020. The recognition was awarded during the Salute to Veterans event which honors veterans, first responders, and nurses who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic. The event included a flyover by the Hooligans Flight Team. Bob served his country in the US Army from February 1968 to February 1970 including a tour in Vietnam. Bob's award was given by State Rep. Beth Griffin and signed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrest II, Congressman Fred Upton, State Senator Aric Nesbitt and State Rep. Beth Griffin.

The award was given in recognition for Bob's contributions to the South Haven community for

the past 50 years in various ways. He has served on the boards of the American Legion, South Haven Steelheaders, South Haven Moose Lodge, VFW and the River Bend Boat Club. Of special note is Bob's contribution to the South Haven Chapter's Fish Boil during the Annual Blueberry Festival. He packages and freezes over 1000# of fillets in May and transports the fish in special containers to the Fish Boil. The Fish Boil is the sole fundraiser for the South Haven Steelheaders who in turn have donated to various projects and organizations in the South Haven area. For the past nine years, he and his sons have participated in South Haven's Salute to Veterans by providing the opportunity for combat veterans from Operation Injured Soldier to fish from his boat.

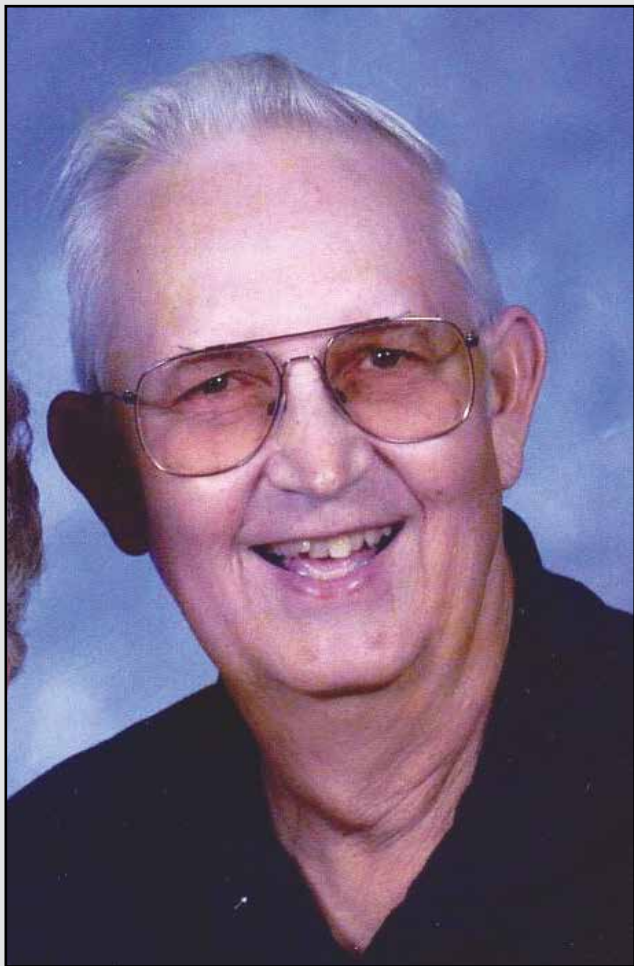
They also help provide and prepare the luncheon following the fishing trip. Last year over 200 meals were served.

Bob is also an entrepreneur. When he returned home from Vietnam, he worked at several meat departments in the area. He decided he could better provide for his family if he owned his own business, so he started going door to door butchering deer. He called it "Have board, Will travel." He then purchased a small shed and moved it behind his house, blocked it up and officially started Bob's Processing, Inc. Today it's a modern meat processing plant and his products have earned blue ribbons from Michigan, American and International Meat Associations. For locals and visitors to South Haven, it has become a destination.



Rep. Beth Griffin presents State of Michigan Special Tribute to Bob Filbrandt.

## In Memory of Joe Stezowski



Long-time South Haven Chapter member, Joe Stezowski, passed away on August 11, 2020. Joe had been involved in several of the chapter's activities and events. Most notably, he and his wife, Jennie organized, sold and served pieces of blueberry pie at the South Haven Chapter's Annual Fish Boil. They also organized the baking and transport of the pies to the Boil's location for several years. Joe was an active participant in our annual Net Pen project. He assisted by setting up the paperwork for the feeding schedules and was always there to help put the nets in the river and take them out for cleaning after the Chinook smolts were released. Joe kept busy with fishing and hunting in his retirement in 1992 after 37 years at Bohn Aluminum in South Haven. He was an active member of the Michigan Flywheelers Association and served his country in the United States Navy.

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## LOTS OF FISH ON LITTLE BAITS

By Bob Jensen

The summer of 2020 is starting to wind down. Lots of anglers, in many places more than usual, are on the water in search of a fish

that wants to eat the bait that's on the end of our line. Baitfish populations are at or near the highest levels of the year. A good number of those baitfish were spawned this spring and

are of a size that the larger predator fish can prey on. With baitfish levels high, it can be difficult at times to get those predators interested in our baits. Additionally, light pene-

tration is high at this time of year. On bright days when the wind doesn't blow very much, many gamefish do what they can to avoid light. Many of them burrow into weed cover and only venture out when they get hungry. Others go deep and stay deep until the sun isn't as intense. However, it's summer, the water is warm, and a fish's metabolism is high. They've got to eat sometime, and if we show them the right thing the right way, they'll eat it.

For the next several weeks, we're going to be targeting fish. Any fish. As autumn gets closer we start targeting big fish, but now, day in and day out, we just want to get bit. Crappies, walleyes, bass, pike, they're all fun and we just want to get a few to bite. When we're looking for big fish, we're probably going to be using big baits. Now, when we're not as concerned about the species or the size, smaller baits will be the way to go.

Much of our fishing will be on the deep weedline. In lakes with stained water the deep weedline might be in seven or eight feet of water. In clearer lakes, the weedline could be twelve to fifteen feet deep, and even deeper in super-clear lakes.

The deep weedline is kind of a highway for fish: They travel along it and school on points, pockets, or any irregularity in the weedline. We'll be mostly casting a jig/live-bait combination or a jig/plastic combination. Many anglers like the jig/live-bait deal, but more and more, jig/plastics are seeing additional water-time.

Minnows, leeches, and nightcrawlers come in pretty much one shape and one color and they require care. Plastics come in unlimited shapes and colors and keeping them in fish-catching condition is no problem. Plastics allow unlimited presentation options.

Jig weight is an important consideration. When a slow fall is desired, such as when you suspect the fish to be suspended along the deep weedline, which is what largemouth bass and crappies will do on over-cast days, a sixteenth ounce head with a bulky plastic will allow for a slower fall. Your bait will stay in the fish zone longer. Six pound line enables an angler to cast lightweight jigs better, but eight or ten pound line has a larger diameter and will make the bait sink slower.

If you're after walleyes or the sun is shining and

there's none or not much wind, the fish will probably be deeper. An eighth or three-sixteenth's ounce jig will be better. It will get down to the fish quicker.

The finickier the fish, the smaller the plastic. If they're really shut off the 2.5 inch Ned Ocho is good and will appeal to most species of fish. If they're aggressive, start with a 5 inch Ocho and increase the size until they quit biting. Use the largest size they'll take, but realize that if they're finicky, small will be better much of the time.

Summer is getting short, but the fish aren't. If you give them what they want, they'll eat it. When fishing is slow, a small bait will often speed it up.

To see new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, fishing articles and fishing videos, go to [fishingthemidwest.com](http://fishingthemidwest.com)



# GET READY FOR FALL FISHING

By Bob Jensen

Boy oh boy oh boy, summer of 2020 is already starting to exit. There are lots more butterflies on the bushes, birds are gathering, and football practice has started. And many anglers are spooling up with fresh line to prepare for fall fishing. I've often said that June and October are my favorite months for fishing. June 2020 is in the past, October 2020 is in the near future. Following are some things that I've experienced in autumns past that will help anglers catch more fish

in autumns future.

In the 80's I had the good fortune to work at a fishing school in Walker Minnesota called Camp Fish. Camp Fish hosted what they called "Camp Fish Celebrity Jamborees". These Jamborees were 2-3 days of hard-core fishing. Anglers visited Camp and were taken fishing by notable guides, fishing celebrities, and tournament anglers. The Jamborees were fund-raisers and were held in the fall for several reasons, with one of those reasons being the fishing for a variety of fish species was

best and most consistent then. On one memorable day my boat partners and I caught dozens of large-mouth bass using crankbaits along deep weedlines and on spinnerbaits in shallow rushes in the morning. In the afternoon we moved to a different lake and caught a bunch of walleyes on jigs in a narrow area between lakes. We would have been very challenged to have that much diversity with that much success at any other time of year.

In the fall, fish want to eat. They instinctively know that things are chang-

ing and they need to fatten up. They'll be wherever the food is. I recall a sunshiny October afternoon when we caught walleyes in 2 feet of water. They were on a wind-blown point that had attracted baitfish. Typically walleyes aren't that shallow when the sun is bright, but fall is different. The sun isn't as directly overhead in most of walleye country, and wind will diminish the negative effect of sunlight to some extent. And the presence of food in the fall will really encourage fish to participate in the catching part of fishing. Casting



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1/16th ounce jigs to hungry walleyes in 2 feet of water is fun.

I remember fishing for muskies with my friend Don Pursch on Leech Lake one autumn afternoon a good number of years ago. We had been fishing for several hours with minimal action. I was ready to call it a day, but Don said that a "major" was coming soon. The "major" was a major solunar period, and some anglers pay a lot of attention to these. Perhaps more anglers should pay attention to them. Don wanted to be on his best spot when the "major" arrived. We were, and so were the muskies. In just a couple of hours we saw and hooked more fish than we had in the previous several hours. Some very successful anglers believe that major solunar periods have the most impact on fish in the fall months.

Last thing. Smallmouth bass gather more than usual in the fall. Just

a couple of years ago Mike Frisch and I joined Tim Snyder on Kabetogama Lake in northern Minnesota. Tim told us that the smallmouth fishing can be very, very good in the fall. Some fisher-people exaggerate: Tim wasn't. We caught smallmouth after smallmouth on jigs and dropshot rigs tipped with KVD Dream Shot and Half Shell plastics. Absolutely the best smallmouth action that I've ever experienced, for quality and quantity. Spend time looking for the concentrations of fish in the fall and chances are they'll bite.

It appears that the fall of 2020 will be somewhat unusual, just like the spring and summer of 2020 have been. The good thing is, the fish don't know about that. They'll be where they usually are doing what they usually do in the next few weeks. If you're where they are and doing what they want, you can get in on some memorable fishing action.



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Event Calendar Disclaimer:

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

2020 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
October	10	Perch Tournament	Lake Erie
October	24	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
October	31	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	14	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	28	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	5	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Babes Lounge
December	12	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting  
NEW Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
River Tournaments –  
Ice Tournaments – Justin Kling 491-2980 Lake Tournaments – Greg Peck 998-9407  
battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2020 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
January 1 - Nov. 30		GH Steelheaders' Year Long Fishing Contest	
January 1 - Nov. 20		GH Steelheaders' Youth Fishing Contest	
September	12	Sportsmen for Youth Day, Muskegon County Fairgrounds	
September	19	Grand Haven Salmon Festival, KidZone Activity area	
December	TBD	Annual dinner, recognitions	

Other Events TBD  
For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarms@gmail.com  
www.ghsteelheaders.com

2020 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
September	14	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
September	28	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest Begins**	
October	12	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
October	24	Fall River Contest	STC
October	26	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
November	2	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
November	7	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	STC
November	23	Membership Meeting	7 PM (Social Hour 6 PM)
November	30	Board of Directors Meeting	7 PM
December	7	Chapter Family Christmas Party	6 PM, Diamond Hall

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

2020 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location
September	8	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
September	12	6:30am – 1:00pm	Frankfort Salmon	
October	6	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
November	3	6:00 / 7:15	Board/Membership Meeting	VFW Hall
November	7	Daylight – 1:00pm	Big Man. Little Man. Bear Cr.	
December	5	Daylight – 1:00pm	Big Man., Bear Creek	
December	1	6:00 / 7:15	Board meeting only	VFW Hall
December	12	Cocktails 5:00 Dinner 6:00	Christmas Awards Banquet K of C Hall, Auburn 4760 Garfield Rd. Auburn, Mi 48611	

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

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

We ask that you please call the Port Chairman 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. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone.

If interested in fishing with us please email: kathy@steel-headers.com. Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com

2020 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
September	1	Tuesday Night League Final Night
September	14	Board Meeting
October	5	Board Meeting
November	2	Board Meeting
December	3	General Membership Meeting
December	5	Holland Steelheaders River Tournament
December	7	Board Meeting

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

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

2020 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event / Location	Chair
September	1	General Membership Meeting	
	12	Frankfort River/Kayak/SB	Phil Bustos/Eric Braden
	19	Muskegon Kayak Salmon	Keith Childs/Eric Braden
	19	Manistee River & Kayak Pier Tournaments	Adam Trenz/Eric Braden
	21	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2021 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/P. Bustos/Nabors/ Zawacki
October	3	Manistee Lake/River (Steelhead) Tournaments	Dodge/Hutton/Sepulveda
	6	General Membership Meeting	
	10	Ohio Steelhead Alley (River & Kayak) (incl Elk Creek P.A.)	Phil Bustos/Eric Braden
November	3	General Membership Meeting	
	7	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Dave Zawacki/Eric Braden/ Adam Trenz
	21	PM River or Betsie River Tournament	Jordan Pontoni
December	1	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
	12	Huron River Tournament	Hinchcliff/Brown

\*\* ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC\*\*  
7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road  
WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org  
If you have questions, contact Henry Nabors - HHNabors@gmail.com or call 248 225 4964.  
Contact: President Larry Tabaka 313-215-8979 / Membership Director Henry Nabors 248-225-4964



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2020 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

2020 Calendar of South Haven Steelheaders Chapter Events

November	28	SHS River Tournament
December	5 or 12	SHS Holiday Party 2020

2020 South Haven Steelheaders Membership Meeting Dates

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

September	17	Captain’s Meeting
October	15	Captain’s Meeting
November	4	Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting
November	19	Captain’s Meeting
NO DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING, due to Holiday Party		

2020 Southwest MI Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Date	Day	Event	Information	Location
September	10	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
October	8	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
November	12	Membership Meeting	Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM	
December	5	Winter Challenge Tournament		St. Joseph River
Membership Meetings Held at: St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784				

2020 TCAS Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

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

2020 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
September	17	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters, Nominations for board members and officers
October	15	7:30	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters, Election of Board/Officers
November			No Meeting	
December			No Meeting	
Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.				

2020 Thunderbay Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
September	7	7:00 PM	Monthly Meeting
October	5	7:00 PM	Monthly Meeting
November	2	7:00 PM	Monthly Meeting
December	7	7:00 PM	Monthly Meeting
Contact Dan Bouchard at <a href="mailto:dan-bouchard@hotmail.com">dan-bouchard@hotmail.com</a> for inquiries.			

2020 White River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information	Location
September	3	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
October	1	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
November	5	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
December	3	6:30 pm	Meeting	Montague VFW
Note: Meeting dates and times are subject to change – Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.				



# 2020 Membership Drive

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- For each member signed up by you, you get a ticket.
- Your ticket(s) are put into a pot for a drawing.
- The drawings are held at the April Presidents' meeting.
- There are between 15 - 25 drawings.
- The more tickets in the pot, the more chances to win prizes.

**For more information, contact your Chapter Membership Director or [mssfamembership@charter.net](mailto:mssfamembership@charter.net)**



Fishing Participation Continues To Rise

Alexandria, VA  
(July 15, 2020)

Today the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) announced the findings of the 2020 Special Report on Fishing, noting participation is still on the rise. The Outdoor Foundation and RBFF-produced report, now in its 10th year, provides insights into demographics, the “leaky bucket,” perceptions of fishing and more.

“Thanks to the strong improvements in recruitment and reactivation, fishing participation is up again this year,” said RBFF President & CEO Frank Peterson. “Better yet, the key audience segments we feel are tantamount to the future of fishing continue to see gains in overall participation and participation rate.”

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- Participation is up to the highest rate since 2007.
- 17% of the total U.S. population participated in fishing in 2019.
- That equates to a total of 50.1 million Americans

ages 6+.

- A net increase of more than 700,000 participants.
- 3.1 million Americans tried fishing for the very first time in 2019, making up 6% of all active participants
- Youth participation is up over the last years.
- Hispanic participation continues to rise – 4.4 million participated in 2019.
- Participation rate of 12%, the highest ever recorded in the Special Report.
- Hispanics go on an average of nearly three more trips per year than the general population.
- Female participation grew to 17.9 million.
- Third straight year of growth.
- The gender gap is continuing to close.
- “Leaky bucket” still an issue.
- Fishing lost 9.3 million participants in 2019 - a loss of 19% of the 2018 participant base – and nearly double the 5.6 million lost participants in 2017.

how important effective angler retention efforts are in safeguarding the future of fishing and boating. To that end, we are continually working on ways to keep participants better engaged, including developing programs and resources for our state agency and industry partners, as well as assisting them in developing their own R3 plans (Recruitment/ Retention/ Reengagement).”

In addition to demographic and participation-related data, the Special Report also looked at intangibles such as perceptions of fishing and trends that can help our industry predict and shape the future of participation. While survey respondents didn’t hold strong stereotypes of anglers, more men than women feel that fishing participants look similar to them. Prioritizing youth participation continues to be a theme in preserving the future of fishing; 91% of currently anglers first participated before the age of 12.

Hing Peterson continued, “Despite losing 9.3 million participants, fishing is still making gains. We are pleased with the increases among newcomers and key growth segments but are again reminded of

*Editors note:* License sales in Michigan are up 10% overall. There has been a 40% increase in new anglers in the 17-45 age group, and the number of female anglers continues to rise.

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