



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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

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The Future of Hydroelectric in Michigan A Responsible Path for the Future

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In Michigan, we love the water. We know how important our river hydro plants, and the reservoirs they create, are to the people living near them. People enjoy living, working and playing on the water and in the communities that have grown up near our 13 dams. But in the next 10 years, some of our hydro operating licenses issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), will expire. As we plan for a future of reliable, affordable

clean energy we will take part in a multi-year review of all our hydroelectric plants.

A detailed review of our 13 river hydro plants will help us choose the best path forward.

For each plant there are several potential results. It could lead to a renewal of our operating license for 30 more years. It could also lead to replacing or removal of the plant. Transferring ownership is another possibility. During each review we will be looking at the following:

Safety

We will inspect the safety of each plant. We will also review the condition of the plant. On top of that we will review what could happen to people living downstream if a dam fails.

Complying with Regulations

We will evaluate the cost and feasibility of operating each plant safely, while meeting state and federal regulations.

Community

We will explore how

each hydro plant and reservoir has affected the surrounding community. We will also explore how potential changes to the hydro plant could affect the community.

Cost of Operation

We will explore expected future spending for operating each plant. We will also add up the electricity we expect each plant to generate.

“Hydroelectric”
Continued on page 7

Autumn Migrants

By Jim Bedford

Michigan sportsmen seem to be constantly yearning for autumn. Obviously fall is “the hunting season” but it is also a very exciting time for Michigan river anglers. Chinook, coho, and pink salmon, brown, lake and brook trout, and Atlantic salmon all spawn in the fall and to varying degrees migrate up Great Lakes tributaries to procreate.

Steelhead are spring spawning fish but a portion of these great game fish run the rivers in the summer and fall. Thus the river angler has a real variety of salmon and trout to tempt with his or her offerings in

the fall. Often it is possible to catch four or five species of these fish in the same river at the same time.

While Atlantic salmon and summer steelhead may begin their runs in early summer their river numbers build to a peak in early fall. While Atlantic salmon were mostly limited to the St. Mary’s River in the past, the DNR is now stocking them in other Lake Huron tributaries.

Summer steelhead are primarily a Lake Michigan fish. The Skamania strain has been the most successful with Indiana supplying Michigan with eggs in exchange for eggs from our Little Manistee winter strain. These fish start run-

ning in June depending on the river temperatures but the most dependable time to find good numbers is in late summer and early fall. While summer steelhead are only stocked in the St. Joseph River by Indiana and the Manistee River by Michigan they frequently stray to other rivers.

Chinook salmon also begin their spawning migration in late summer with runs peaking in late September. In some northern rivers these fish will run upstream in midsummer but most of these fish won’t spawn until September or October.

“Autumn”
Continued on page 4

Sault Tribe Pilots Effort to Restore Whitefish to Great Lakes Region

By TV6 News Team

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. (WLUC) - Sault Tribe Natural Resource Department biologists are exploring whitefish rearing methods at tribal hatcheries and ponds, looking for ways to stock the fish in the future.

The tribe’s Fisheries Management Program started an experimental project to rear whitefish in 2018, funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



Whitefish fingerlings are netted and checked weekly for growth rates, and the pond is also checked weekly for water temperatures, oxygen levels, phytoplankton, and zooplankton. (Brenda Austin)

“Whitefish”
Continued on page 2



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CATCH PRESSURED FISH

By Bob Jensen

Boy has it been hot lately. I even heard one guy say that it's too hot to go fishing. While some say that "it's never too hot to go fishing" they also suggest going early or late in the day and take plenty of water and sunscreen. They say that even when it's hot the fish will bite, and they're right. There are almost always a few fish willing to be caught. However, from mid-summer until mid-autumn, we need to keep in mind that we're dealing with fish that might be a little more reluctant to be caught for a couple of reasons. Those reasons and how we deal with them follow.

Right now and for the next few weeks will be a time of plenty for predator fish. There's lots of food in the water. The baitfish that were born this spring are now at a size where the larger predator fish can use them as food. In many bodies of water, fish-food isn't hard to find.

Some anglers like to "Match the Hatch." "Match the Hatch" suggests that we use a bait that looks like something a gamefish would eat and lives in the same water as those gamefish. Pretend you're fishing for walleyes on a lake that has lots of perch, and many of those perch are 3 to 4 inches long:

Perfect walleye food. The walleyes see and eat those perch every day. Maybe it's like people. We see and eat hamburgers regularly, so when we're offered the choice between a hamburger and a slice of pizza, many times we go for the pizza. I don't know if that's the way it is in the fish world, but I do know that I've seen lots of times when a bait that looked nothing like a perch out-produced a bait that looked like a perch on a lake that had a strong perch population. If the fish aren't responding to a bait that looks like something that they often see, try something that doesn't look like something they regularly see.

Fishing pressure is another consideration. Jay Przekurat is a bass tournament pro from Wisconsin. He fishes all across the country in those tournaments and has got a first-hand look at fishing pressure. In the southern states, open water fishing goes on year 'round. Bass fishing is very popular in the south, and some of those lakes get fishing pressure every day of the year. Sometimes on weekends, Jay says anglers take turns at fishing the best locations. He says that when this happens, he tries to find spots that aren't as popular and throws baits that maybe the bass haven't seen as much. Flippin' a Texas-Rigged four inch

Rage Bug around shallow water cover or casting a 6XD crankbait in deeper water has helped him achieve much fishing success.

Other anglers do other things to catch fish that have been fished hard. I've had success by fishing lakes that aren't as popular with anglers. These lakes often have fewer fish so they don't get as much fishing pressure. Fewer fish in lightly fished lakes often will result in more bites than on lakes with more fish but also more fishing pressure.

Some anglers like to go after different species of fish than they usually do. White bass or channel catfish can often provide action when the walleyes and bass don't want to bite.

We know that summer is winding down, and we also know that autumn can provide some of the best fishing of the year. However, this time between the dead of summer and mid-autumn can provide some memorable fishing also. All we need to do is get on the water with an open mind and a willingness to try different things. If you do, you'll find yourself looking forward to this mid-summer to mid-fall fishing every year.



Jim Hunt switched species and techniques and turned a slow day of walleye fishing into a nice afternoon of catching Mississippi River white bass.



“Whitefish” Continued from page 1

“Whitefish have been one of the species to feel the biggest impacts from invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels. These mussels have reduced the available food for whitefish to be able to eat at very early life stages,” Sault Tribe Lead Biologist Brad Silet said.

As part of the effort to stock whitefish, Sault Tribe collected whitefish brood

stock from Lake Huron in late 2019, 2020, and 2021. These fish were spawned out at the Nunns Creek Fisheries Enhancement Facility near Hessel, Mich. The eggs were hatched on-site and the fish were raised there throughout the winter and into the summer.

“As a cold-adapted species with spawning dependent on temperature, it is uncertain what will happen to whitefish populations with continually rising water temperatures in the

Great Lakes,” Silet said.

The Fisheries team used multiple methods to raise the fish, looking at the feasibility of rearing whitefish to different sizes and life stages. In 2021, whitefish were then reared in an earthen pond with promising results — the 28,000 1-inch whitefish grew fast and showed natural food gathering abilities. Water temperatures, oxygen levels, phytoplankton, and zooplankton were checked each week. In October

2021, the pond was netted to retrieve the surviving fish, with 7,747 whitefish that averaged nearly 6.5 inches and weighed over an ounce each.

The fish came out of the pond 3.5 times longer than they went in and an impressive 30 times heavier — the largest whitefish reared in a hatchery setting ever in North America, according

to Silet.

Silet said the tribe's whitefish program has gotten the attention of the regional Bureau of Indian Affairs office, which acknowledged the advancements the tribe has had in the rearing of whitefish.

The whitefish rearing program has also gained international attention for this success and with numerous

partners, including the Nature Conservancy, hopes to continue and expand their work with the project.

Over the next three years, the Nature Conservancy awarded a \$1 million grant from the DTE Foundation for environmental efforts across Michigan.

“Whitefish”
Continued on page 5



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Pattern Your Crappie Success

Tim Huffman finds that discovering and following fish patterns can be your key to success in catching crappies.

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Finding and catching fish on a consistent basis is not an easy task. Weather patterns change, water conditions vary and fish make seasonal movements. Skilled fishermen look to patterns, more than specific spots, to catch numbers of fish.

Hot weather is a good time to catch fish but getting out early is important for a good bite and to stay safe from the heat. Mid- to late summer often has consistent weather, so when a pattern is found that works, it should hold for several days or weeks.

Kyle Schoenherr, Illinois fishing guide and National Classic Champion with both Crappie USA and Crappie Masters, says, "There are so many factors that go into being consistent. Fishing is still fishing, with skill and experience playing a big part. Despite what many people think, you don't have to have LiveScope to catch fish. That's a misconception. Conventional fishing tactics still work."

Schoenherr says that whether fishing an unfamiliar lake or home waters after a long layoff, it's important to have good information for a starting point. For example, online reports or information from the bait shop can put you in the right area of the lake and the right depth. Both area and depth are important starting points when searching for fish.

"Last spring, I was fishing Rend Lake and didn't use my electronics for a month. I was fishing visible cover, mainly bushes.

So, the water a fisherman is fishing might require extensive electronics watching, or it might be a visible cover pattern where a graph isn't needed. The first step is to get into the area where you'll start fishing and take a good look. Secondly, start working different spots,

Lake has good water clarity, and a jig can be seen down several feet under the surface. Fish there will often be 12 to 20 feet deep with 15 being a good starting point in the summer. Rend Lake is totally different. It's dingy with visibility in inches instead of feet, so fish are

learned, a fisherman can go to similar spots and expect to catch fish. For example, fish are found on a 6-foot flat with fish at 4 feet. Contour mapping shows two similar flats. If structure and cover are similar to the productive spot, chances are very good you'll catch fish

to find balls of baitfish and concentrate in the areas where bait is plentiful. This tactic works good until late fall.

Weed line edges can be good. Combine wood cover with the weed line edge for a guaranteed spot. Fishermen often enjoy casting slip

cover and locate baitfish. Two baits, curlytail jigs and crankbaits, are king for catching crappies while pulling. Jigs often catch more fish because they catch both large and small fish. Jigs are easier to work with and are less expensive. Speeds are typically 0.8 to 1.2 mph.

Crankbaits catch fewer fish but more big slabs. Speeds are 1.4 to 2.0 mph. Cranks are expensive, and care must be taken when there are treble hooks and flopping fish. However, crankbaits catch fish. Common cranks include Pico Int and square-bills, Bandit 300 and 200 series, Arkie, Jenko and Flicker Shads. Pulling is good from now through late fall. Expect to catch crappies and other species. Marking brush piles is a bonus when covering a lot of water. Good beds can be marked and returned to on future trips.

Water may have a thermocline so it's important to keep baits above the 'cline. The water oxygen and pH will be better above the depth of the thermocline.

Heat can still be a problem in late summer. Get to the water early, catch fish and head home before it gets too hot.

If you enjoy panfishing, you'll find plenty of suggestions for locations and techniques in every issue of MidWest Outdoors, available by subscribing on our website.

Tim Huffman specializes in crappie fishing, is editor for two crappie magazines, as well as writing for several others. In 2018, he published his sixth book, Limiting Out for Crappie, available at Amazon. His first article appeared in MidWest Outdoors in 1988.



covers and depths until you find the fish. When you catch a fish, pay close attention so the presentation can be duplicated.

"Water clarity is one of the biggest factors I use because clarity, along with water temperature, determines fish depth. Kinkaid

often 4 to 6 feet, sometimes less."

Schoenherr says understanding seasonal fish movements, water clarity and having good starting information often determines whether a fisherman is a hero or zero.

"After a pattern is

at both spots. Consistent catching includes learning and following patterns."

Tips:

Summer and late summer can be good times to catch crappies. Almost any technique will work. Use mapping and side imaging

floats with minnows or casting jigs to catch weed-edge crappie.

Minnows and jigs are both good in warm water. Match the bait to the technique. Minnows are good for slow presentations while jigs work with slow or fast techniques.

Try a Road Runner. This bait is often a hit-or-miss depending upon if crappies want the flash of the blade or not. Whatever technique you use, trying a Road Runner may add many extra bites for fun/action and a better day of fishing.

Pulling, also called long lining or trolling, is a tactic to cover a lot of water, find



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“Autumn”
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These salmon have been extremely successful at reproducing themselves and you would be hard pressed to find a sizable stream that doesn't host a run of these fish. The majority make their only spawning run at ages between two and four years. In recent years the average size and numbers of the returning kings have been decreasing but in the past two years some especially large chinook have been caught. Fishing is often better in the rivers when fish are not crowded in the holes.

In early September it

is best to look for kings in the deep holes of the lower reaches of the tributary rivers. As the month progresses more and more fish will move to the spawning gravel. By early October spawning activity will peak and the runs and holes near the gravel and the spawning beds themselves will be the place to concentrate your efforts for our largest autumn migrant.

Pink salmon also reach their peak river numbers in September. None of these fish are stocked but because of their short river residence they have been very successful at reproducing themselves. The largest runs occur in Lake Superior



Author with a beautiful brown trout.

Below: Steelhead in full fall color.



and northern Lake Huron tributaries in odd years.

While many coho enter the rivers in September the main run usually arrives in October. Migrations of this fish continue into November and December. The coho tends to remain in good shape in the river for a longer time than its Pacific cousins. Bright silver cohos have arrived in Lansing after negotiating over a hundred miles of river and finding their way up five fish ladders.

These salmon spend their first year and a half in the river so they have been much less successful than the kings and pinks at natural reproduction. Like

maining in the river after spawning, often staying until the spring runoff begins.

Little is known about the success or failure of the lake run brown's attempts at natural reproduction. The best runs seem to occur where there are large plants in river harbors.

Runs of brookies or coasters are quite sporadic. The best runs occur in Lake Superior and northern Lake Michigan and Huron tributaries. Often these fish spawn in small trout stream tributaries which are closed to fishing by the time the brookies get there.


The vast majority of lake trout spawn on rocky reefs in the Great Lakes.


species taken are bonuses. Runs and holes in the lower parts of the rivers are the best places to intercept autumn steelies.


River run trout rarely actively feed and the Pacific salmon are actually physiologically incapable of ingesting food. The notion that steelhead and lake run browns follow the salmon to "gorge on their eggs" is not true but these fish, along with the other trout species, remain opportunistic. They will pick up food items that drift very close to them but usually they do not swallow the food.



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Another trophy fall catch

the pink salmon they only spend a year and a half loading up on forage fish but since they get ahead start from a much larger smolting size the cohos average several pounds larger. As you would expect the best coho action will be in rivers that receive large plants.

Cohos are often aggressive on their spawning migration and are eager strikers of a wide variety of lures. They are frequently found in deep slow holes near good spawning gravel.

While many brown trout attempt to spawn in the lakes themselves they do add to the river angler's bag. They begin to run in mid-September and most spawn in late October or early November. They have a curious trait of re-

Many large tributaries do host runs of these fish and the lakers seem to spawn before returning to the lake. Michigan's St. Joseph, Grand and Manistee Rivers are the best bets for anadromous lake trout but in recent years their numbers have been very low.

Good numbers of our Great Lakes steelhead join their summer run cousins in October and November. Ample fall rains will increase the proportion of these spring spawners which add themselves to the autumn anadromous bounty.

Since fall steelhead are still many months from spawning they are in prime shape and usually battle spectacularly. Many anglers focus on catching these fish and the other

taste right so even though they may not be swallowed the lake run trout will hold on to them long enough for you to get the hook set. Very fresh run salmon will also pick up bait but to increase your chances for all of the fall anadromous fish I suggest you use brightly colored lures. Salmon will hit flashy lures right up till their last days. Fluorescent drift baits, silver and gold spoons and spinners, and minnow and high action plugs will attract the attention of all the migrating salmonids.

Autumn is a truly special time for the Great Lakes tributary angler. The rivers are full of exciting battlers and you never know which one will hammer your lure next.



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

The CPMR Amici group voted to seek direct intervention into the Consent Decree negotiations after being ignored and excluded from caucusing with the state team or providing input into negotiations. It was the only recourse remaining to be able to be an effective voice for recreational fishermen across the state. The state team is more interested in getting a deal with the tribes than it is in preserving the safe guards put in place in the former consent decree negotiations. The state is willing to give up on some hard-fought protections to the sport fishery put in place in 1985 and 2000 consent decree. After our attorneys discussed with the Mediator the possibility of resolving our motion to intervene by negotiation, he did not think that possible. Thus, our attorneys are preparing for the hearing on August 25th. Based upon a comment or two by the Me-

MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dennis Eade



diator, we believe that we will need to be prepared to present proofs in the form of testimony, affidavits and/or an "offer of proof" as to the facts that make us believe that the State is not representing our interests and that the proposals on the table present a real risk of damage to the fishery. We are not at all sure that the Judge will want proofs and then hear from us at the hearing, but we need to be prepared. Such proofs will also be necessary if we are denied intervention and decide to appeal to the Sixth Circuit and request immediate consideration of our appeal and a stay of any proceedings to approve a settlement.

MSSFA was welcomed into the Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition Oversight Committee, and just as importantly, the MHRC welcomed the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association as a full-fledged member organization of the Coalition. The coalition is made up of five statewide, nonprofit conservation groups with an interest in the protection and enhancement of aquatic resources: MUCC, Michigan Council of TU, Great Lakes Council of Fly Fishers International, Anglers of the Au Sable and MSSFA. Its purpose is to work with members of the hydropower industry and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) through the licensing process to ensure that conservation, environmental and

recreational concerns are adequately addressed by FERC.

What we hope to achieve by joining MHRC is to have a seat at the table with FERC and the hydropower industry when discussing water quality standards and whether they are being complied with and what actions are being considered in the event they are not being met to be in compliance before the dams can be relicensed for continued operation. Ultimately what we are aiming our efforts toward is identifying obsolete dams that no longer can be operated effectively given their condition and the cost of bringing them into compliance. This is an outgrowth of our mission statement for obsolete dam removals by the board earlier this spring.

I have had some preliminary discussions with the MDNR (Jim Dexter, Ron Olsen, Heather Hettinger) and Senator Gary Peters' office about acquiring a public access site on Platte Bay in Benzie County. The MDNR attempted to acquire land now part of the Sleeping Bear National Shoreline National Park from the Department of the Interior about five years ago but the Regional Director of the National Park Service in Omaha, NE. had no interest in pursuing the proposal. Since that time the Platte River mouth has continued to fill in with sediment (sand) to the point that it extends up the coastline on Lake Michigan and

boat access from the mouth of the river into Lake Michigan is nearly impossible. The public deserves access and from a boater's safety standpoint, Platte Bay can be a severe risk for boaters in the event of a rapidly developing storm system. The nearest safe harbors are in Empire, MI or Frankfort, MI more than sixteen miles away. However, more importantly to sport fishermen is the ability to access Platte Bay to fish for Coho salmon in the late summer and early fall when the fish stage in the Bay before running the river to spawn. This is a premier fishing destination with no access that could become a prime destination for salmon fishers.

MSSFA's tent continues to grow larger as more and more river fishermen are joining our ranks. Preserving our cold-water fisheries are of paramount importance and obsolete dam removal will have the desired effect of reducing stream temperatures to protect cold water species like salmon and trout. Encourage your friends and family members to join MSSFA if not already members so we can continue the battle to preserve our sport far into the future. Tight lines!





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"Whitefish"

Continued from page 2

It is partnering with tribal governments and state agencies to pilot an experimental effort to restore whitefish in rivers flowing into Lakes Michigan and Huron. The tribes include the Sault Tribe and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.

Sault Tribe's Natural Resources Department is also looking into local rivers and streams for any remaining populations of spawning whitefish. These populations disappeared from rivers around the same time as the heavy logging a century ago. Using traditional ecological knowledge, the department is looking at rivers that were known to traditionally hold whitefish. If populations are not found, an option may be to stock these rivers with either fish or fertilized eggs. Streams, where whitefish might be stocked, include the Carp, Pine, and Bear rivers.

The Fisheries Man-

agement Program is the biological program within the Sault Tribe Natural Resource Department charged with implementing fisheries management aspects of the 2000 and 2007 Consent Decrees. Fisheries has four focus areas that all play an important role in protecting and enhancing tribal members' ability to access treaty fishing rights: interagency fisheries management, harvest management and assessment, adaptive ecosystem management, and public outreach.

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Sault Tribe Natural Resource Department



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THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE QUALITY OF FISHING REFLECTS THE QUALITY OF LIVING!

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

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

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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)

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

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

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

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

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

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Metro-West (Livonia) www.metroweststeelheaders.org • **South Haven** www.southhavensteelheaders.com
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“Hydroelectric”
Continued from page 1

Environment
We will explore the impact of each plant on the environment. We will look at sediments, fish and other animals, invasive species, and other ways the plant affects the environment.

Recreation
We will review the impact of each hydro plant on local recreation.

We are very aware that the decisions we make about our hydro operations could have an impact on local communities and recreation. That’s why we are holding public meetings about each facility, run by a neutral third party.

At each meeting you can give us your feedback, and learn about:

- FERC licensing
- How we are evaluating hydro facilities
- Details about river hydro operations
- Early information about dam conditions, safety and operating costs
- How to stay engaged in the review process

We will use what we hear as we plan the future of our hydro plants. If you live near one of our dams or reservoirs, you’re invited to one of the meetings below.



Scan QR code for meeting dates and locations.

For questions, please contact hydro@cmsenergy.com



MSSFA
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
MEETINGS
2022

Via Teams –
6:00pm

Wednesday
October 19

Wednesday
December 21

2022 Tentative Print Schedule		
Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/09/21	01/03/22
2	02/11/22	03/02/22
3	04/15/22	05/04/22
4	06/15/22	07/06/22
5	08/15/22	09/01/22
6	10/07/22	10/31/22

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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MICHIGAN STEELHEAD AND SALMON
FISHERMEN’S ASSOCIATION

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

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Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Showcasing the DNR: Move Over Dow Jones; We're Investing in Michigan Fisheries

(Note: This article first appeared in the summer 2022 issue of Michigan Trout magazine.)

By Sarah Lapshan, Senior Communications Advisor, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Ed Eisch knows fish. After 30-plus years working in the state's fish production program – doing just about every job from technician to hatchery biologist, and now overseeing the entire effort – Eisch understands even the smallest details of what it takes to keep the state's six fish hatcheries humming.

Those Michigan Department of Natural Resources sites, in Alanson, Beulah, Harietta, Manistique, Marquette and Mattawan, produce the fish eggs and fry that ultimately stock state lakes, streams and ponds, complementing natural fish production in these waters. That includes an average of 6 million to 7 million trout and salmon coming from the DNR's cold-water facilities each year.

Eisch is confident that recent state investment in the fish hatcheries will not only keep the lights on, but also positively influence fisheries.

"Replacing roofs, repaving parking lots ... some of that stuff isn't very exciting, but it's all part of protecting our investment in these facilities," he said. "Other improvements have a direct impact on the quality and health of fish. Our current feeders are ancient, well past their expected life. Replacing feeders in at least two facilities will give us much better feed conversion rates, more efficient use of our feed dollars. That means bigger, healthier, more robust fish."

All six hatcheries have infrastructure needs, and all are set for some level of improvements – but Wolf Lake, in Mattawan, probably will see the most changes. One of the biggest is the proposed construction of a new, \$6 million cool-water facility for rearing walleye and muskie.

"This is key because it's going to allow us to physically separate our cool-water rearing from cold-water rearing, and that's a big biosecurity improvement, especially where viral hemorrhagic septicemia is concerned," Eisch said. "It will also secure our steelhead rearing even more."

The DNR is looking at biosecurity boosts at several locations: things like recoating the insides of rear-

ing units and adding UV filtration to remove pathogens from the water.

"Recoating is important because the old coating starts to peel away and that creates divots in the units, which make great spots for waste material to collect and for bacteria to grow," Eisch said. "Recoated rearing units provide cleaner places for fish to thrive."

Some projects include maintenance and replacement of wells, possibly some dredging of ponds – more flow means healthier, fitter fish.

Other planned work is more structural. Visitors to the Platte River hatchery in Beulah might see areas where the rebar is exposed because the concrete is crumbling. These are needs that have to be addressed and fixed now, or else the buildings will face replacement down the road. That's a much more expensive proposition.

The DNR also will target electrical distribution systems for repairs and upgrades, especially at Wolf Lake and Platte. Those systems (each at least 40 years old) have aging components including switch gears, buried electrical lines that are replaced as they fail, transformers, motor control centers – big, important components that, in the end, add up to hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars.

"It's all critical to securing state fish production," Eisch said. "Making sure that our electrical distribution systems are performing at peak is something we are committed to investing in."

An eye toward efficiency

Investment is everything, but DNR staff always look for ways to leverage every last dollar. That's especially true around the fish hatcheries, where, Eisch said, he's been known to hold things together with "baling wire and duct tape," and hatchery system utility costs can edge north of a million dollars per year.

"Everything we do is done with energy efficiency in mind. Whatever we can do to bring those costs down, so much the better," he said. "If we're looking at replacing a pump, for example, the intent is to replace it with a high-efficiency pump that reduces the electrical draw."

A departmentwide initiative to identify more energy-efficiency opportunities has influenced other changes. Some hatcheries' heating boilers and other components are being replaced with high-efficiency units to reduce natural gas



Several Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division staffers, including Chief Jim Dexter (center-right, holding net) and Assistant Chief Todd Grischke (center-left, hands on hips), are shown conducting fish survey work near the Twin Bridges section of the Au Sable River.

Photo credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

and propane use.

As part of the FY 2022 budget, the department received \$2 million in capital outlay funds toward solar energy installations. Five of the six hatcheries will get them. Eisch said he is hopeful the DNR will see a sizable decrease in utility expenditures as a result of that investment.

In the DNR's overall push for greener opera-

tions, the Fisheries Division is right in the mix.

A series of upgrades completed last year at the Thompson hatchery in Manistique included a new backup generator, construction of a new cool-water fish production facility, and improvements to the existing facility that will benefit Chinook salmon and steelhead production for decades.

At Oden, in Alanson, the visitor center already has a solar installation. Though it is smaller – more of a residential-scale installation – it has significantly reduced expenditures there. An electric vehicle charging station is planned there, too, for visitor use as part of the state's larger campaign this year to place such stations at a dozen state parks (and Oden) along the proposed

Lake Michigan EV circuit.

Eisch said he knows these investments aren't going to change the number of fish the DNR produces, but they will address needs that have been unmet for a number of years.

"What these changes will do is secure our level of fish production, going

"DNR"

Continued on page 9



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Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter holds a brown trout from the Au Sable River as Randy Claramunt, the DNR's Lake Huron basin coordinator, looks on during survey work.
Photo credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources



State fish hatcheries are in need of upgrading their old electric motors to high-efficiency motors.
Photo credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

“DNR”
Continued from page 8

forward for decades. It's going to make us more efficient and our product better and healthier,” he said. “Just putting the fish in the water doesn't get it done. The fitness of the fish that we stock is critical to the program. We need to know those fish are available to anglers and they're catching good, high-quality fish.”

A New Approach To The Au Sable

Another department initiative seeing success on an iconic Michigan river has the capacity to better position other watersheds and fish populations. More than halfway through a two-year pilot project that applies structured decision-making to assess the resilience of the Au Sable River in the face of existing and emerging threats, results are promising.

Randy Claramunt is the DNR's Lake Huron basin coordinator. He and Tammy Newcomb, DNR senior executive assistant director, are department leads working with Michigan State University experts on structured decision-making

and a group of stakeholders representing the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Trout Unlimited, the North Branch Area Foundation and fishing groups, among others. The DNR has additional representation from its fisheries, forestry, wildlife and executive divisions. To understand where structured decision-making fits in, Claramunt said it all starts with a stream. “If you restore a fish population in a stream, especially in a cold-water stream, the next logical jump is to habitat protection for that stream,” he said. “If the fish don't have the cold water, woody debris and water quality, you're going to be continually restocking that stream. Making that stream self-sustaining is the goal, but to get there you need to attack the in-stream habitat and the watershed.” The challenge? None of that happens in a vacuum. A change on one branch of the river has implications downstream. In-stream habitat has to be holistic and consider the entire watershed. “A watershed like the Au Sable River is the most dynamic stream in the state,” Claramunt said. “From the headwaters in

the North Branch to the main stem through the ‘Holy Waters’ down past Mio Dam where it's open to Lake Huron – that river changes dramatically, and boy, does it have amazing trout fishing.” Unfortunately, it's also a river experiencing several threats: thermal changes, climate change, flooding events, continued sedimentation ... threats that aren't going away. “The question was, if we're going to do habitat restoration or enhancements to improve the resiliency of the Au Sable River – which is, for the most part, a self-sustaining, incredible fishery – how do we pursue that resiliency,” Claramunt said. The rise in challenges, paired with an already overstretched fisheries management staff and a passionate stakeholder base, presented an opportunity to try structured decision-making on the river. “The power behind SDM is that stakeholders – the people who love, use and value the resource – not only help with goals and objectives, but they work with the data and the models right alongside us,” Claramunt said. “It's not the DNR saying ‘You can't look at our models.’ It's us making sure we are clearly explaining the neural network models, the watershed models, and asking the stakeholders for their input on what models and data to use.” The group uses data, population estimates, quantitative measures, values and qualitative input from the stakeholders, and then assesses the risks of different decisions. They'll consider questions such as:

- Who are the decision makers?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What is the scale of our decision?
- Are there legal and



Visitors of all ages go to the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan to learn about the fish-rearing work that happens there. Here, students from a tour group peer into one of the holding pens.
Photo credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

regulatory contexts to consider?

- What variables or unknowns could affect decision-making?

The idea isn't to define a set of actions – Claramunt said that's a misconception about SDM, that you enter all the data, put in all the actions, and you get back a definitive “Do A, B or C” and you're done. “What structured decision-making does, at its best, is identify risks around different actions so you can choose an action and then monitor the results to see what the impact of that decision was. You're always reassessing. You might discover A, B and C aren't right, so you move to D. It's a truly adaptive approach in the sense that it's meant to have interaction.” Newcomb, who has used the SDM process to address cormorants, grass carp and salmon goals, agreed. “It's a great way to get people engaged, to ensure that all voices are heard and that no one entity sways the outcome,” she said. “This project is about a shared vision for a watershed highly

valued by many different types of people with different interests. By using contemporary, scientific approaches to understanding landscape processes and how they affect river habitat and fish populations, we can develop an action plan with outcomes that have everyone pulling in the same direction.” And when it comes to the Au Sable River, no one wants to make decisions that are high-risk. The goal, instead, is decisions with a far higher likelihood of reaching desired outcomes. “The Au Sable is an incredibly beautiful, unique and valuable river. But structured decision-making has never been applied to a river system like this,” Claramunt said. “In my opinion, the Au Sable is the most dynamic river system for cold-water trout. If we can successfully use SDM here, now all of a sudden, we can apply it to the Pine River, to the Cedar River, and to a number of brook trout streams across the U.P.” The Au Sable research, hatchery investments, energy upgrades and work done across all levels of the DNR

with support from valued partners are all in service to healthy, world-class fisheries and the people who love to fish our waters season after season. There is a passion there you won't find anywhere else. “Avid anglers live, eat and breathe this stuff,” said fish production manager Eisch. “A number of years ago, my wife was a nurse working with the Area Agency on Aging and did a lot of really great things to help people who are getting older but who want to stay in their homes,” he said. “I started comparing that to what I was doing and began feeling like maybe I'm not making much of an impact here. Then I realized some people wait all week just to hit the water. Michigan fishing is their happy place. It's salve for their soul. They need to be out there.” “It's pretty cool knowing the work we do at the DNR helps make the experience that much better for them.” For more on how the DNR takes care of state fisheries, visit Michigan.gov/Fishing.

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22-Pound Invasive Carp Found Seven Miles From Lake Michigan

By Garret Ellison | gellison@mlive.com

CHICAGO, IL — A live invasive carp was captured last week past barriers in the Chicago Area Waterway System designed to keep the fish from reaching the Great Lakes.

A 22-pound silver carp 38.3 inches long was captured in Lake Calumet on Thursday, Aug. 4, according to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

The lake is located about seven miles from Lake Michigan.

The fish, among a variety formerly known as Asian carp, is the third invasive carp since 2010 to be found swimming above electric barriers in the waterway system near Romeoville, Ill.

A silver carp was captured in the Little Calumet River below T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam in 2017 and a bighead carp was captured in Lake Calumet in 2010.

The latest fish was caught through gill-netting and electro-fishing by state and federal crews responding to a sighting by a local angler. The capture triggered a search for other fish but no additional captures were reported.

The multi-agency Invasive Regional Coordinating Committee stressed

that a single live fish does not indicate an established, breeding population exists beyond the Romeoville barriers.

The agencies have not yet released autopsy results to confirm whether the captured fish originated in the Illinois Waterway south of the electric barriers or not.

In contrast to past live carp captures, the latest discovery has not prompted widespread attention and public concern from nonprofits, state experts or Great Lakes lawmakers.

Widespread monitoring occurs throughout the region to look for environmental DNA, or eDNA, from invasive carp. Such routine sampling turned up a trace amount of unexplained silver carp eDNA in Lake Erie's Presque Isle Bay last month.

Should they become established in the Great Lakes, bighead and silver carp would have a major disruptive impact on fishing and recreational boating. Silver carp could injure people by leaping from the water when disturbed and both species would likely compete with native fish for food and habitat.

In Illinois, the detection follows the launch of a recent marketing effort to rebrand invasive carp as



A Feb. 23, 2018 photo of USGS biologists netting invasive silver and bighead carp at Creve Coeur Lake in Maryland Heights, Missouri.

“copi” in a bid to make the fish more palatable to consumers. The state currently pays commercial fishermen to cull the carp population in the Illinois Waterway.

Meanwhile, design and pre-construction engineering work is progressing on a \$850 million effort to fortify the Brandon Road Lock & Dam, a chokepoint dam on the Des Plaines River near Joliet positioned as a last line of defense to

keep the fish from Lake Michigan.

In July, the U.S. Senate increased the federal cost share of the Brandon Road project to 90 percent as part of the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA), which must go through conference to resolve differences with the House-passed version before it could be signed by the president.



Above: A July 19, 2016 photo by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service of silver carp caught by electrofishing in the Fox River in Illinois.



Asian carp control in Illinois:
A 2011 USGS photo of an invasive bighead carp taken from the Illinois River.

Opinion...

Steelhead Conspiracy

By Roger Hinchcliff, Steelhead Manifesto

Many anglers received a DNR Steelhead Survey on August 9th, and hopefully, many of you let your voice be heard. First, I think surveys are a great thing for the DNR and the management of our fisheries. However, I would like to point out a few things that bothered me about this survey.

Question: When thinking about your steelhead fishing experience in the past 12 months, rank the importance of the following for determining your satisfaction:

- Catch Rate
- Opportunity to catch Wild Fish
- Zing of the Drag
- River Aesthetics
- Catching a Fish with a Lure or Bait that I made or Prepared
- Opportunity to catch a Trophy Steelhead

What alarms me is the way these questions are posed. Trophy Steelhead and Wild Steelhead are mentioned? In my opinion, I can see where this is going. I've been sounding the alarm for two years now. Look no further than the West Coast Steelhead Fishery. Hatcheries have been shut down, and stocking has been cut due to folks who want pure wild steelhead and no opportunity to mix wild with stocked fish. Think about it, is that even possible anymore?

The West Coast, to be transparent, has many more problems with the fishery than hatchery fish mixing with the wild fish. Sea lions, gill nets, loss of habitat, and climate change (if you're a believer), to name a few.

Another question:

Rank the importance of the following fisheries management actions for maintaining or enhancing quality steelhead fishing opportunities: Rate preferred options 1-4. One being the most preferred:

- Regulating harvest, including spawning closures on rivers with natural reproduction
- Enhancing wild steelhead through increased connectivity to spawning habitat
- Enhancing populations through stocking events
- Adjusting stocking numbers of predatory fish to maintain suitable prey fish populations in the Great Lakes

Again, this questioning mentions Natural Reproduction and Wild Fish. Let me be clear I'm all for wild fish here in Michigan. But when you go down this path, angling opportunities will eventually suffer when it comes to stocked hatchery fish. Something will be cut or changed. They can coexist wild and hatchery and have been here in Michigan for a very long time.

The salmon ambassador program shed a lot of light on the subject of wild fish and was excellent research for sure. Now, this program has been turned to the steelhead side. We, as anglers, need to unite, get educated, and understand that our numbers together are strong. We need to pay attention to what's happening on the legislative side and the politics of our fishery.

The DNR has been studying return rates again of steelhead in our rivers. All this data is being collected for a reason. How do you feel about closing rivers in the Spring of spawning fish? Do you think it's okay for anglers to rake fish off gravel during the spawn? I sure don't; we can continuously improve how we do things to better the fishery, but how we get there is the question. What about Spring drop back fishing if a closure was in place? Legit anglers would lose opportunities to catch spring fish that have already spawned.

Will steelhead stocking levels be changed based on natural reproduction like the Salmon? Predator prey relationship? What the result will be of all this research is anybody's guess. I know wild steelhead can be a slippery slope, just look out West. I want what's best for the fishery and all anglers. To me some of those questions in the survey makes me wonder what's coming? So, this is your warning to pay attention.

Call it a steelhead conspiracy by me if you want; I don't want our hatchery stocking levels cut or angler opportunities lost for the wrong reasons.

Quote: "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." - Wayne Dyer



Mike Frisch with an early autumn walleye.

Fishing in the Fall

By Bob Jensen

The Labor Day weekend indicates to some people that summer is over and to other people that fall is starting. Some anglers look upon Labor Day weekend as the end of the fishing season, but to other anglers it signals the start of the best fishing season of the year. I like to fish during all the seasons, but the fall season is one that I truly look forward to for fishing. There are several reasons why that is. Following are some of those reasons.

The first reason that fall is my favorite: It's a very nice time to be outside. The colorful trees in early autumn make this season special, and the opportunity to see more wildlife adds to that. Waterfowl are migrating and fewer leaves on the trees later in the season make it easier to see deer and other wildlife. And there are fewer anglers on the water, so you're often not sharing the best spots.

But probably the reason why fall is my favorite season for fishing is because the fish are hungry, which makes them easier to catch. Also, autumn is when the odds for catching truly trophy-sized fish are best. Fish instinctively

know that now is the time when they need to fatten up for winter, and fish that are fattening up are easier to catch.

If you're after a truly big fish, you need to be on big fish water. Some bodies of water have a reputation for big fish, others have a reputation for numbers of smaller fish. The deeper, clearer lakes will usually produce the biggest fish. Do some homework to determine which lakes have a history of producing big fish of the species that you're after.

Mike Frisch is a fishing guide and television show host, and in the fall if he isn't guiding or making fishing shows, he'll probably be on the water fishing for fun. Mike suggests very strongly that, in the fall, if you want to increase your chances for a really big fish, use larger baits. In the fall, big fish like big baits. They would rather eat one big meal than several small ones.

If you're after walleyes, Frisch suggests a jig tipped with one of the larger Rage Swimmers. This set up has been gaining in popularity among walleye anglers. Work it along weedlines or at night in areas of current.

If largemouth bass are your preference, try a rubber-legged jig and, again, add a bulky piece of plastic. Something like a Rage Bug in the four inch size is a favorite. Weedlines are where largemouth can be found in the fall. In fact, the deep weedline is home to lots of different species of fish in the autumn months.

For smallmouth bass, go with a dropshot rig worked with a KVD Drop Shot Shell or Dream Shot. Deeper areas with rocks and gravel are where you'll find the smallmouth, and when you find one, there are almost always others nearby.

When you get the chance to go fishing in the fall, take advantage of it. As the season progresses, the chance for a trophy fish gets better. The only way you're going to get that trophy is if you're on the water. If you're on a good spot on a good lake, make sure that your fishing partner is good with a landing net. Odds are good that you'll need it.



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How Forward-Facing Sonar is Changing Fishing

New “live sonar” technology is creating new ways for anglers to find and catch fish.

www.mercurymarine.com

On the Water Gear & Tech

If you check out a bass tournament right now, you’re almost certain to hear people talk about forward-facing sonar, also known as live sonar. It’s the latest technology driving innovation in fishing.

You’ll also recognize when an angler is using it when you see them staring down – sometimes for hours – at the depth finder on the front of the boat. And then you’ll hear comments like, “I watched the fish eat my bait! That was so cool!” The other line you’ll hear a lot is, “I see fish swimming all over the place, but I can’t make them bite.”

That’s because forward-facing sonar is truly “live” and shows fish interacting with lures in real time. The technology is such a powerful tool that it’s now one of the main factors serious anglers consider when preparing and practicing for a day on the water. In just about every major freshwater tournament – especially for bass and crappie – people ask, “Will this be a tournament where forward-facing sonar wins?”

To learn more about how it’s impacting competitive and recreational fishing, we reached out to some of the professional bass anglers on the Mercury Pro Team. Their experiences and insights will help you understand how forward-facing live sonar technology is impacting today’s advanced fishing tactics.

What is it?

The simplest way to grasp this new technology is to think of an ultrasound procedure performed at a doctor’s office. An ultrasound machine works by transmitting and receiving sound waves processed to generate a high-quality, live, in-motion view of a fetus or parts of the internal

anatomy.

Unlike traditional sonar, which actually displays the sonar history – what’s already passed under the transducer – forward-facing sonar shows what’s out in the water in real time in incredible detail. Bass anglers typically mount the transducer to their bow-mount trolling motor, where it transmits a beam out in front of the boat (in other fishing applications, like when trolling for walleyes, transducers are fixed on temporary mounts in the back of the boat). The anglers can turn the trolling motor to scan side to side and see fish, structure, cover and their lure without needing to move the boat directly above the fish. There are similar mounts that can be rotated by hand.

The technology has ushered in an entirely new type of “sight-fishing,” using electronic imagery to watch fish chase, bite or otherwise react to a lure in the water.

Shortening the Learning Curve

Mercury Pro Team member Brandon Lester, of Fayetteville, Tennessee, relies heavily on his Lowrance® ActiveTarget® forward-facing live sonar. He says the technology reveals incredible information about what is happening in the water.

“ActiveTarget shortens the learning curve each day because I can see what is going on under the water,” said Lester, who competes on the Bassmaster® Elite Series. “It helps me determine the depth of bait-fish, locate individual and groups of fish, see how the fish react to my lure, and see how deep my lure actually is. Those are just a few ways it helps me.”

“Say I’m fishing with a jerkbait and trying to get an individual fish to bite. If the fish doesn’t bite, I can pick up a different color bait and see if it bites that. Or, I can pick up a different

type of bait to try and trigger the fish to bite. Fish act differently each day, so this technology is a great tool to shorten the learning curve of catching them.”

Angler Evolution

While forward-facing sonar was initially considered a tool for catching fish close to the boat using vertical fishing techniques (partly because the picture was clearest closest to the boat), the picture quality has steadily improved as the technology has advanced. Fish are now caught using the sonar in all directions around the boat and up to 100 feet away.

Mercury Pro Team member Wesley Strader, of Spring City, Tennessee, is a well-known shallow-water angler who rarely fishes in water deeper than 10 feet. Even he has enthusiastically adopted the technology.

“As a shallow-water angler, being able to see small depth changes is important,” said the Major League Fishing® (MLF) pro. “I can see the depth out in front of me, 50 or 60 feet out. I can also find brush or stumps that I can’t see with my eyes by panning around with the ActiveTarget on the trolling motor.”

“Also, a lot of times, you can actually see a fish on a stump; you can see it swimming. That gives you a new sense of confidence that there’s actually a catchable fish there. We used to have to imagine what was going on under the water. We don’t have to imagine it now. We can see it, and we can see it in real time.”

Tournament Success

Alton Jones Jr., of Waco, Texas, won the 2022 MLF Bass Pro Tour Stage Two on Lake Fork in his home state, relying heavily on his Garmin® LiveScope™ forward-facing live sonar. He fished a shallow-running square-bill crankbait and caught fish in underwater stump fields.

While he didn’t see the



Photo credit: fishingtackleretailer.com

fish before he made his cast, Jones would often see – on his sonar screen – the bass shoot out from the root systems on the bottom and chase his crankbait. When the fish didn’t commit to biting, he made the necessary adjustments to elicit the winning bites.

“The Lake Fork event was one of the first times I’ve fished a crankbait while relying on my LiveScope,” Jones added. “I use it a lot with a jerkbait, which is king when it comes to LiveScope. I also use a neko rig (a soft plastic technique) with LiveScope.”

New uses such as this are all part of the evolution of the technology, and it’s paying big dividends to the anglers who have learned its benefits.

Will You Go All in?

Like many anglers, MLF pro Ott DeFoe, of Blaine, Tennessee, finds himself at a crossroads in this new era of forward-facing live sonar. The Mercury Pro Team member has seen top anglers such as Jacob Wheeler and Dustin Connell win tournaments by relying heavily on it. But he also feels like there’s more to fishing than looking at his screen.

“I haven’t gone all-in on the forward-facing sonar yet because I feel like to properly use it, I have to switch over to watching my Humminbird® MEGA Live screen nearly 100% of the time,” DeFoe explained. “There’s less reading the water, seeing what’s happening in my surroundings, and more staring at the screen. Don’t get me wrong, I’m big on using my electronics, having used my Humminbird 360 (a type of 360-degree sonar technology that is not live) for years now. I’ve got all the equipment on the front of my boat you can put on there. I’m just not quite to the point of dedicating myself to watching the screen all the time.”

“I hold out hope that tournaments can still be won without exclusively using live sonar. ‘Hope’ is the keyword there. I put Bass Pro Tour anglers in two categories: ‘hoppers’ and ‘scopers.’ Those of us not using it all the time hope we can beat the scopers and not have to use it all the time.”

More Fun Catching ... Everything

As with bass fishing, forward-facing sonar has

made an enormous impact on crappie fishing. Crappie are notorious for suspending around docks and brush piles, and the forward look that the sonar provides is incredibly powerful for finding and catching them. The technology is quickly taking over ice fishing, too, because the sonar transducer can be turned to point straight down, providing the same live imagery as anglers enjoy in their boats, looking down instead of out ahead. It’s even factored into major wins in multiple walleye tournament trails, and has certainly impacted nearly all types of freshwater fishing and some salt-water applications.

Live sonar technology – forward-facing and otherwise – is changing the game for everyone by helping anglers catch more fish and learn more about where and how fish set up throughout the year. In the past, there were times when anglers wondered if there were even any fish near the boat. Now, there’s another powerful tool that can reveal the answer. Making them bite remains a challenge, but at least anglers can be assured they’re in the game and around fish.



Five Common Nautical Superstitions

Bananas, cats and whistling all have their place in sailors’ myths of old.

It seems that as long as sailors have sailed the Seven Seas, they have held superstitious beliefs about things that could bring bad luck to a ship. Today, many boaters still follow these superstitions – such as not renaming a boat – without even knowing where they came from. Here are the origins of five common boating superstitions.

It’s bad luck to rename a boat. This widespread notion dates back to ancient Greek mythology. Legend had it that Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, possessed

a scroll called the Ledger of the Deep into which the names of all the ships afloat were entered. If you changed the name of a boat in the ledger, sailors believed it would bring Poseidon’s wrath down upon the vessel.

Today, if you purchase a pre-owned boat and want to give it a new name, some believe there is a way to avoid the curse. First, you must rid the vessel of any trace of its old name – not only on the transom, but also in any maintenance manuals, logbooks, etc. This will purge the old name

from Ledger of the Deep. Then, gather your family and friends and hold a boat re-christening ceremony on board. Pay homage to Poseidon; say the vessel’s new name out loud and ask him to grant it safe passage. (For a more elaborate version of this ceremony, visit www.discoverboating.com/resources/ceremony-for-re-naming-your-boat.)

Never step onto a boat with your left foot. This sailors’ superstition stems from a medieval misperception that the left side was unlucky. In fact, during the Middle Ages, the Latin

word for “left” and “sinner,” gained a negative connotation, while “dexter,” the word for “right,” became the root of the positive term “dexterous.” Sailors always made sure they boarded a ship with their right foot first.

Whistling is forbidden on board. Sailors believed that whistling on deck would summon a fierce wind that could sink the boat. In addition, the sound of a person whistling might be confused with the pipe or whistle that a bosun used to give commands to lower-ranking sailors. There

was one exception to the rule, however. The ship’s cook was allowed – even encouraged – to whistle, because as long as he was whistling, he wasn’t eating his shipmates’ rations.

Bananas should be banned from boats. This superstition, dating back to the 1700s, is particularly prevalent among anglers, who believe you will never catch a fish from a boat that has a banana on board. There are numerous theories as to how bananas got such a bad rap. One is that

“Superstitions”
Continued on page 15

Jigging Softbaits for Fall Pike

By Dave Csanda,
www.midwestoutdoors.com

Fall is a great time to toss oversized lures for pike, and there are loads of options. In this article, we're going to focus on jigging moderate-sized softbaits, rather than humongous soft plastic baits typically associated with catching muskies.

In early fall, pike often penetrate healthy, green weed beds, relating to pockets, holes, clumps—what-

ever distinctive features occur. By mid- to late fall, however, with shallower weeds on flats typically dying, the action shifts to still-healthy deep weed lines—particularly where their outer edges meet deep water. Points, turns and irregularities along the deep weed edge in these areas attract and hold some real gators. Thus, you have opportunities to swim lures above weed tops, let them fall down into the weeds and rip them up and out,

or flutter them down deep weed edges.

Jigging softbaits in the broader 5- to 9-inch range, and more typically the 6- to 8-inch sizes, not only provide large baits suitable for triggering pike, but baits of reasonable size to also catch bass and walleyes. Thus, jigging is typically considered multi-species angling, whereas tossing gigantic muskie baits is more associated with catching muskies or very large pike.

One personal favorite I've used for years is the Bait Rigs ESOX Cobra Jig—either 3/4- or 1-ounce, even up to 1 1/2-ounce—dressed with a soft plastic bait. It is a triangular-shaped head with the hook eye at the nose, allowing you to slither the jig through most weed conditions. It is designed for swimming, planing and, when paused, fluttering on the descent. A heavy-duty 5/0 hook will hold any pike you encounter.

jigheads plain, or with wire leaders attached. They even offer some handy hints on how to make weed guards using rubber bands, and “over rigging” soft plastic with a kink or bend to accentuate the action.

Because the heads come with an-open hook design, I prefer to use them to briefly hang on deep weed growth, snap the jig free with a wrist snap of the rod, and then let it flutter down the deep outer edge. In sparser conditions, you can let the jig fall down between stalks, shake your rod tip and maybe come back clean most of the time. But if the weeds

with heavy 5/0 to 8/0 hooks, such as VMC's 3/4-ounce SBJ Swimbait Jig. A large paddle tail grub like a 6.8-inch Kei Tech Swing Impact Fat falls nicely into the multi-species category, with enough size to trigger strikes from large predators like pike and muskies. Because these heads have the hook eye atop the jig, rather than at the nose, they are much better suited to horizontal retrieves above the weeds or between sparse stalks, rather than penetrating down into weeds, where weed fragments will gather around the line tie at the hook.

Another favorite is the Storm Swim Shad, which comes in various sizes up to a whopping 9 inches, with the jighead molded into the body. I like the 6-inch version with a 7/8-ounce internal head when casting for pike.

Once again, the hook eye is atop the bait, so it will pick up weeds if allowed to penetrate too far down into the growth. But for horizontal retrieves above weed tops, fluttering down deep edges, and in summer, deep jigging at the 40-foot level for big pike near the thermocline, this lure is a real winner.

- Author Dave Csanda has enjoyed 40 years in the fishing communications industry at In-Fisherman, Angling Edge and now, as editor of MidWest Outdoors. He is an inductee of both the Minnesota and National Fresh Water Fishing Halls of Fame.



Photo: www.midwestoutdoors.com

Three glow-in-the-dark lures are shown against a dark background. The lures are white with orange, yellow, and pink accents. They are labeled "glow-in-the-dark lures" and "from Bay de Noc Lure Company".

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In the early days, Bait Rigs sold kits with 8-inch Reaper tails. Nowadays, they offer pre-rigged grub and shad tail versions, or you can add any soft plastic of your own preference. You can purchase ESOX

get too heavy, it's best to wrangle up a weed guard of some sort to prevent the frustration of constantly uprooting weed growth.

Also an option are mid-sized to large swimming grubs rigged on jig heads



CPMR Denied Intervention Status at Hearing

Judge Maloney disallows intervention but offers to make time for public comment on CPMR's objections to the final Consent Decree agreement at the status hearing in late September.

By Dennis Eade, GLSFN

The Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources (CPMR) sought to intervene into the Consent Decree negotiations with the five tribes and the state of Michigan after being excluded from caucusing with the state or providing input into the negotiations. Christopher Patterson, the attorney for CPMR argued the case during a public hearing before Judge Paul Maloney on August 25th in Kalamazoo. Patterson provided affidavits citing the reasons for the request to intervene but his arguments were met with strong objections from the other parties to the negotiations as not having sufficient merit. Judge Maloney

finally weighed in by stating, "I am not going to allow intervention, but I will make time for public comment at the final hearing". In essence the Judge is waiting to see the final agreement and if he feels the objectives of the consent decree process have been met and are acceptable to the court.

GLSFN caught up with retired DNR biologist and CPMR member, Jim Johnson, who posed questions for our attorneys now that the Judge has ruled. Jim asked whether our affidavits where now locked away or can anyone read them? Attorney Steve Schultz for the amici group said, "No. And in fact, they will be more valuable now and the basis for objection to any proposed decree." Jim asked whether the Judge read any of the affidavits? Schultz responded, "The Judge probably did not read them and that he probably had decided to deny our motion before he even heard the arguments, though it is

not unusual for the Court to have decided a motion based on the briefs."

Johnson further asked whether the Court is positioned to conduct any kind of public review? Schultz commented that, "Judge Ensln made the same comment back in 1984, that the courts are not a good way to decide complex scientific and political questions. That is why the Judge pushed the parties and litigating amici to negotiate allocation of the fishery resources. Judge Maloney has not taken the approach that Ensln took." Johnson finally asked, "How can the Coalition represent the majority views regarding allocation?" Schultz says, "We must submit science-based arguments as to the impact of a deal on the resource We can, and should, raise practical issues such as gear conflict, enforceability, etc. as well."

The final hours toward a new deal are waning and it is not looking like the sport fishery is winning.

2022 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Location
October	29	KALAMAZOO RIVER SALMON SLAM	ALLEGAN DAM
November	12	KALAMAZOO TROUT QUEST	ALLEGAN DAM
November	19	KALAMAZOO RIVER MEMORIAL	ALLEGAN DAM
November	26	ST.JOE RIVER FALL STEELHEAD	I-94 BOAT RAMP
December	3	ST.JOE RIVER CHAPTER CHALLENGE	BABES LOUNGE
December	10	CHRISTMAS PARTY	KALAMAZOO EAGLES
<p>Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94. FOR MORE INFORMATION: River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693 battlecreeksteelheaders.com</p>			

2022 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
September	10	Sportsman For Youth Day	
December	7	Annual dinner, recognitions, fundraiser	
<p>Other Events TBD</p> <p>For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarms@gmail.com www.ghsteelheaders.com</p>			

2022 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
September	12	Board Meeting	
September	26	Membership Meeting	Elks #48, 917 Bridge St. NW, Grand Rapids MI
October	3	Board Meeting	
October	31	Membership Meeting	Elks #48, 917 Bridge St. NW, Grand Rapids MI
November	5	Chapter Fall Fishing Event	
November	7	Board Meeting	
November	28	Membership Meeting	Elks #48, 917 Bridge St. NW, Grand Rapids MI
December	5	Board Meeting	
December	**	Christmas Party	
<p>STC* = Date subject to change. Please watch newsletter or facebook page. ** = Members and Family Only. (All other events open to the public). Speakers will be listed in the monthly newsletter, and on facebook.</p>			

2022 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Location / Time
<p>ALL EVENTS - TO BE DETERMINED</p> <p>Membership meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 989-496-3410</p> <p>Board meetings begin at 7:00pm Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending. On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72. Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follows weigh-in on Saturdays only. Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate. Children 16 and Under are free. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone.</p> <p>If interested in fishing with us please contact: Gary Decker at 989-859-7472 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com</p>			

2022 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	
September	12	Board Meeting	
October	3	Board Meeting	
November	5	River Tournament	
November	7	Board Meeting	
December	1	Membership Meeting	
December	3	River Tournament	
December	5	Board Meeting	
<p>Board meetings held at: TBD Locations General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow</p> <p>For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405, or email Steve Weatherwax at Waxer1221@Yahoo.com</p>			

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2022 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
September	6	General Membership Meeting	
September	10	Manistee River & Pier Tournaments	Adam Trenz River Chair/Eric Braden
September	17	Muskegon Kayak/SB Salmon	Eric Braden
September	19	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2023 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/Adam T/ River Chair/Nabors/ Zawacki
September	24	Manistee River Tournaments	Fabian Sepulveda
October	4	General Membership Meeting	
November	1	General Membership Meeting	
November	5	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Dave Zawacki/Eric Braden/Adam Trenz
November	19	PM River Tournament	Marc Traver/Adam Trenz
December	6	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
	10	Huron River Tournament	Hinchcliff/Brown
<p>** 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 - HHNNabors@gmail.com or call 248-225 4964.</p> <p>Contact: <i>President</i> Bob Schulz, bobschulz7@gmail.com, 248-915-0043 <i>Membership Director</i> Henry Nabors 248-225-4964</p>			

2022 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
September	15	Membership Meeting
October	20	Membership Meeting - and Board meeting to finalize next year’s events and set calendar
November	2	2023 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting
November	17	Membership Meeting - and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar
November	26	SHS River Tournament Invitational <i>(must be a member to participate)</i>
December		No membership meeting in lieu of Holiday Party
Dec	10	South Haven Steelheaders Holiday Party 2022
<p>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</p>		

2022 Southwest MI Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
<p>Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but we are still determining our schedule for 2022 due to the lingering effects of covid. Please check online for the latest information. www.swmisteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders</p>			
Decemberr	3	33rd Annual Winter Challenge Tournament	
<p>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</p>			

2022 TCAS Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
<p>All events are TBD</p>		
<p>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.</p>		

2022 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
September	15	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubly Foxhunters
October	20	7:30pm	Regular Meeting, Election of Board/Officers	- Ubly Foxhunters
Novmber				
December				
<p>Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.</p>				

2022 Thunderbay Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Time	Information
September	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
October	3	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
November	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
<p>Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.</p>			

2022 White River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event information	Location
<p>Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. – Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.</p>				
September	8	6:30	Member meeting	VFW
October	6	6:30	Member meeting	VFW
November	3	6:30	Member meeting	VFW
December	1	6:30	Mem	

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- Ingredients**
- 2 salmon fillets
 - 1 cup fresh or frozen (thawed) cranberries + 2 tbsp more (divided)
 - 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
 - 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - 2 tbsp orange juice
 - 1 tbsp maple syrup
 - 1 tbsp rosemary
 - salt & pepper to taste

How to Prepare

Preheat oven to 350 F.

In a blender or food processor, add 1 cup of cranberries, balsamic, orange juice, maple syrup and blend on high 1-2 minutes to create the glaze.

Using a small skillet, spread the glaze over the bottom of the pan in an even layer.

Next, add the salmon. Place one tablespoon of the oil on each salmon fillet then sprinkle with salt, pepper, and rosemary. Add the extra two tablespoons of cranberries around the salmon in the sauce.


Place in the oven to bake at 350 F 18 minutes.

Turn the oven off and turn the broiler on high. Broil 2-3 minutes until glaze is thick and fish is flaky.

Remove from the oven and devour!

Recipe and photo credits:
Megan at www.skinnyfitalicious.com





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“Superstitions”
Continued from page 12

ships transporting bananas had to sail fast in order to get to port before the fruit ripened; too fast for the sailors to troll effectively for fish while enroute. In addition, bananas release ethylene gas, which makes other fruit stored nearby ripen and ultimately rot more quickly. Sailors also were afraid of the deadly tropical spiders that sometimes hid in the banana crates in the cargo hold.

Cats bring boats good luck. Finally, a positive sailor's superstition! Ships of old commonly sailed with cats because the furry felines helped to control the rodent population on board. Ship's cats also prevented rats from gnawing on wooden decks and rope rigging, as well as eating the cargo. Sailors believed that if you took care of the ship's cat, good luck would follow. Conversely, if the cat fell overboard, that could summon a deadly storm. In addition, many sailors believed a ship's cat had magical power over the weather. This probably can be chalked up to an animal's natural sensitivity to changes in the atmosphere, which sometimes allows it to sense an approaching storm before the human crew.

While many boating superstitions got their start as a practical response to a perceived threat to life on board ship, today, we can enjoy them as colorful pieces of nautical lore. So, the next time you go boating, feel free to whistle a tune to your heart's content!





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