



Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

Established by the Department of Natural Resources to improve and maintain fishery resources of Lake Huron through better communication and partnership.

Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 7, 2018

Jay's Sporting Goods, Inc. in Clare

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Approved

Attendees: Tim Cwalinski, Gary Whelan, Dana Serafin, Lee Martin, Gary Boersen, Mike Feagan, David Shaw, Tom Hamilton, Jan Hamilton, Dave Borgeson, Judy Ogden, Julie Shafto, Thomas Heritier, Jim Baker, Randy Claramunt, Ken Merckel, Jim De Clerck, Randy Terrian, Doreen Campbell, Lance Campbell, Frank Krist, Aaron Switzer, Scott Lutz, Tod Williams, Craig Milkowski, Nick Torsky, Alan Seiferlein, Tom Frontjes, Ralph Zimmermann, Jerry Brown, Mark Lentz, Ron Beaulieu, Jim Sroka, Jon Jackoviak, Ed Eisch, Leslie Bloodworth, Clarence Fetnow, John Walters, Josh Peters, Emily Aisthorpe, Jim Price, Bob Miller, Donna Wesander, Eric Crissman, Eric Plant, Jim Johnson, Dave Fielder, Terry Walsh, Dennis Gulau, Gary Decker, Jerry Lockhart,

Welcome and Introductions (Frank Krist and Randy Claramunt, DNR Lake Huron Basin Coordinator).

All attendees introduced themselves, and sign-in sheets were distributed around the room. Natural Resource Commissioner (NRC) John Walters was introduced.

Continuing the discussion of the of the Atlantic Salmon Program and the next steps to increase fishing opportunities (Ed Eisch, DNR Fish Production Manager, Aaron Switzer, Manager Platte River, Oden and Harrietta State Fish Hatcheries, Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries Biologist, and Randy Claramunt).

Ed Eisch, head of Fisheries Division's Fish Production Section, noted that managers have implemented a 250,000 reduction in brown trout stocking due to relatively poor returns of stocked fish. This has made additional production space available. Aaron Switzer visited Maine's Atlantic salmon production facilities. The Maine facilities have low gas levels. At the Grand Lake Stream State Fish Hatchery, home to the West Grand Lake strain of Atlantic salmon in Maine, the water source originates from bottom draw in West Grand Lake, which is a reservoir. The water intake is 20 feet below the surface about 200 feet out in front of the dam. These water temperatures have seasonal fluctuations, but they are more stable than the surface water used at the Platte River Hatchery.

Aaron believes the Harrietta Hatchery is likely a better location to raise Atlantic salmon, since the well water source provides a constant 46⁰ F water temperatures. The water temperature at the Platte River Hatchery varies from 34 to 60⁰ F. The Thompson Hatchery is not considered an option. The ability to heat water would provide better growth but the facility has reached maximum capacity with steelhead production, so no additional rearing space is available.

The Atlantic Salmon production goal is to raise 180,000 yearlings annually. It is hoped that number should be available in 2020 from this fall's egg take. The plan is for 100,000 Atlantics to be housed at the Platte River Hatchery, and 80,000 at the Harrietta Hatchery. Ed stressed that there could be growing pains at Harrietta, as there is with any new initiative, but he feels the goal should be achieved reasonably quickly. The current bottleneck for the Atlantic salmon program expansion is the limited egg availability from Lake Superior State University brood stock. It would be difficult to collect more eggs without an additional egg take source. Several options are being considered including a mobile weir and establishing another permanent egg take location.

Ed was asked about disease issues. He says there are always concerns, but they deal with these as a regular course of business. A question was raised about water temperatures at Harrietta, and the impacts the colder temperature might have at the stocking site. Randy Terrian suggested that we need to be careful, and stock the fish at a date and temperature when the fish won't ball up and stay in the river too long and get preyed on. Randy Claramunt said we still want to match receiving water temperature of approximately 50° F to stocking time. Ed mentioned that that using the Harrietta Hatchery will allow the fish to be held longer if needed. We don't have the capability to heat water at Harrietta, and if we tried to heat water, the cost would be prohibitive. Jim Johnson complemented fish Production Section for the large change in fish raising protocols that allowed them to bring wild fish into Harrietta Hatchery. Ed says there has been bacterial kidney disease found and eliminated in the Harrietta Hatchery, so that was a contributing factor in bringing in wild Atlantic salmon eggs into the facility. Jim Johnson also noted that the stockings can be problematic with trying to time the plant to avoid predators and yet have decent water temperatures that will enable Atlantic salmon to feed and move quickly into Lake Huron. Fish production is going to learn much about Atlantic salmon smolting as related to temperatures with the addition of cold water rearing at the Harrietta Hatchery.

Aaron talked about Platte River Hatchery conditions and the goal to hold Atlantics at lower densities there. Currently about 27,000 are being held in each raceway. The current annual new target at the Platte River Hatchery is 100,000 yearling Atlantic salmon. There have not been as many disease issues after going to the lower densities, so initial thoughts are that the lower numbers are more appropriate to rear at the Platte River Hatchery. The goal is to have 7-inch fish at the time of stocking, but that will depend on air temperatures between now and next spring. A long intensely cold winter will reduce the water temperature and decrease the growth rate. Water supply degassing testing will be undertaken at the Platte River Hatchery and Aaron will have results of initial efforts next year.

Tim Cwalinski talked about the current efforts to optimize the timing of Atlantic salmon stocking and the Atlantic salmon fishery reports he has received this year. Tim explained the difficulties in avoiding predators while also trying to match receiving water temperatures to those of the tank the fish are coming from. The volunteer Atlantic catch reporting has increased this year, especially from the St. Clair River, as well as Lake Erie. He also said returning Atlantics stayed in the rivers a long period last year after spawning which produces an extended fishery. John Clevenger has provided coded wire tag return information for 264 Atlantics: 13% of the fish were age 2, 83% were age 3, and 4% were age 4. Fish appeared to be growing well. He is seeing fish being caught from all stocking sites, with Au Sable fish providing lower lake returns overall, but the Au Sable did see a good return fishery in the river last year. Judy Ogden noted that creel returns in the Thumb may reflect the fact that the regular clerk is on medical leave. Randy Terrian says a lot of good things are happening at the southern end of the lake and into the St. Clair River all the way to the North Channel of the St. Clair River where the catch rate has been astounding. People are targeting Atlantics in the area with limit days not uncommon. The anglers are commenting on how much fun Atlantics are to catch. Tim noted that the creel clerk schedule will be extended this fall to capture information on the Thunder Bay River and Au Sable River return fisheries.

Randy Claramunt emphasized that we are trying to meet the original stocking goals. He also talked about the next challenges we will face regarding this program. For instance, we are reliant on Lake Superior State University for eggs, without a backup egg source. Randy has received comments from managers of Atlantic salmon programs from other areas of the country who noted the differences in how they operate compared to Michigan's program. Because of the success in Michigan, some of those managers are considering changes to increase their success.

Tim noted that there appears to be a decent amount of smelt available, which may explain some of the better growth of Atlantics. Julie Shafto thanked the DNR for providing another fish that has diversified the fishery. Tim noted that he got a fair amount of reports of anglers releasing fish that they had caught in the rivers (approximately 40% are released). Ken Merkel said we shouldn't be too surprised about the fish heading down the St. Clair River. Ken also wondered about net penning fish, and if that could help increase returns. Randy said

we need to be cautious with net pens; it has been successful in the St. Marys, but that is a unique cold-water situation.

Jim Johnson thought the reports from one charter operation that caught about 50 Atlantic salmon were amazing and confirmed suspicions that significant numbers of Atlantics would move down gradient. He also noted that getting the river fisheries going will truly maximize the benefits that Atlantics have historically provided. Randy talked about Simone Valle de Souza's (MSU professor) analysis of what different fish species can generate economically, which showed the top species (in terms of amount spent per targeted trip) was Atlantic salmon.

Frank echoed Tim's observation of Atlantics staying in the rivers for a long time. He also said they are eating about any prey item that is available, including gobies. Judy said they also provide fisheries in the harbors through the ice.

The Committee will review the compiled 2017 Saginaw Bay walleye harvest and survey data and provide a recommendation on the walleye regulations for 2019 in Saginaw Bay. (Jim Baker DNR Southern Lake Huron Unit Manager, Dave Fielder DNR Great Lakes Research Biologist and Randy Claramunt).

To publish information in the fishing guide, the DNR needs to make decisions by this time of year. If the Saginaw Bay walleye regulations are to be changed to anything more conservative for 2019, then the new rules must be submitted promptly so a recommendation on any potential changes is needed by the Advisors at this meeting.

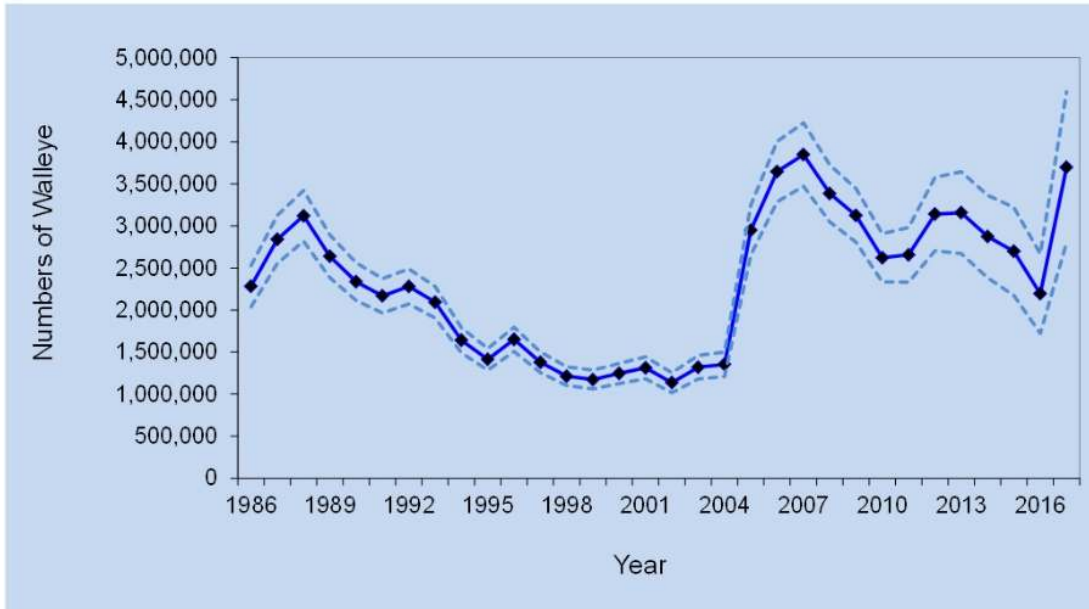
Dave Fielder presented information to assist in the discussion. He provided data that are included in the model that describes the Saginaw Bay walleye population. This information includes: the fish community survey, creel survey, telemetry survey, prey fish surveys, walleye tagging, and commercial reporting. He talked about the basics of the model that inputs recruitment and mortality, which will shape the population size and structure. The highlights are shown in the slides below.

Dave described the original objectives of the 2015 liberalization of walleye regulations which are to fully utilize the abundant walleye population, reduce yellow perch mortality, and increase forage abundance. A record recreational walleye harvest occurred in 2017 fishing season. Fishing effort went up a bit this past year but was not historically high. Catch rate for walleye were also very high in 2017. Ice conditions were good, which helped produce a better winter fishery. Dave presented the walleye exploitation rate and growth rate information. He then showed information describing prey fish abundance which remains at low levels. Randy Claramunt mentioned that the forage base could be more abundant than shown by the surveys since gobies are difficult to sample in their rocky habitat. Also, gobies reproduce several times each season and a single survey may not show the goby production throughout the year. Jim Baker mentioned that the 2016 increase in forage was in large part attributed to the white perch young of the year. The yellow perch harvest and catch rate, as well as trawling catch rates for perch, were then described. So far perch mortality rate hasn't responded as hoped.

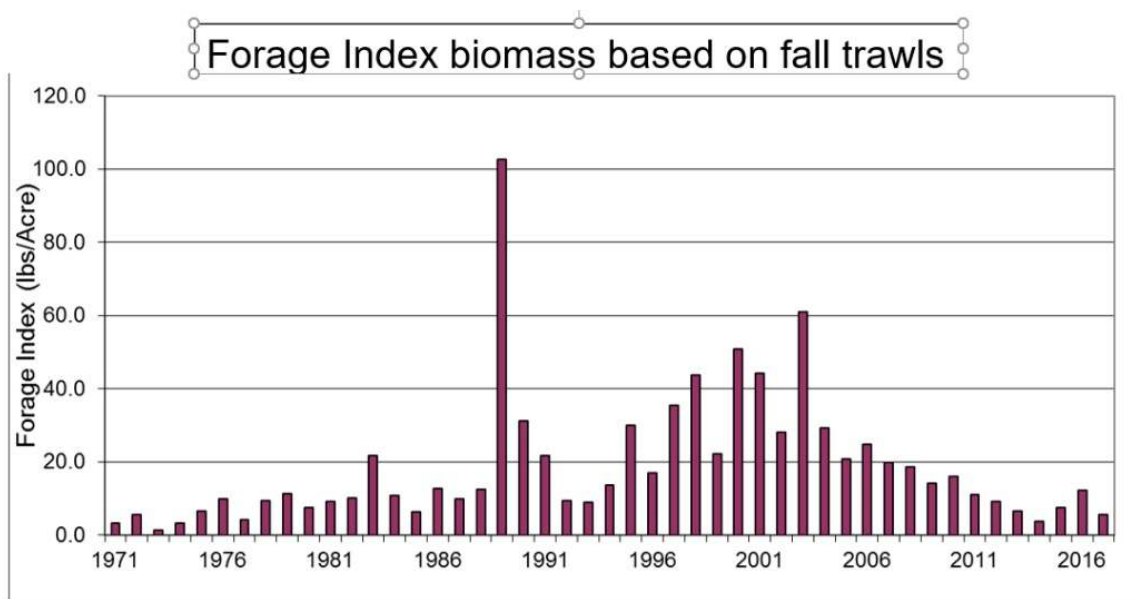
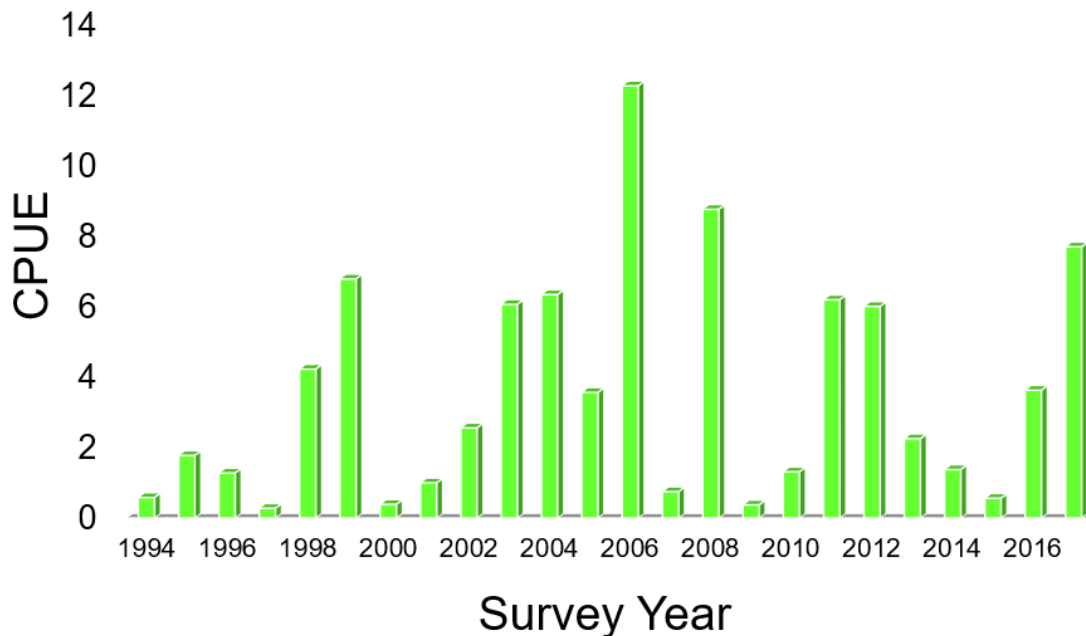
Saginaw Bay Walleye harvest since 1986
Saginaw Bay stock of walleyes, population size (age 2 and older) 1986 - 2017

Reflects data through March 2018

1,767,620 new recruits

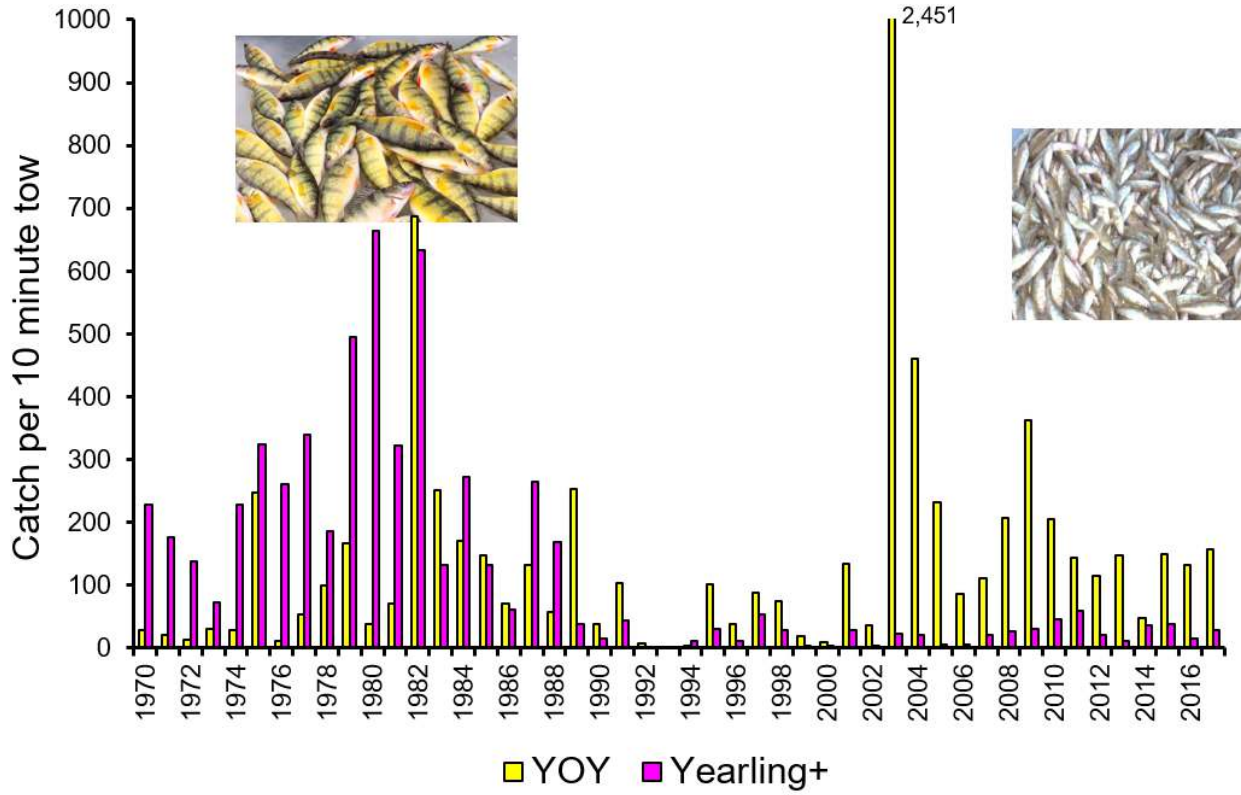


Yearling (Age 1) Walleye Catch per Unit of Effort (CPUE) from Saginaw Bay Gillnet Survey Collections

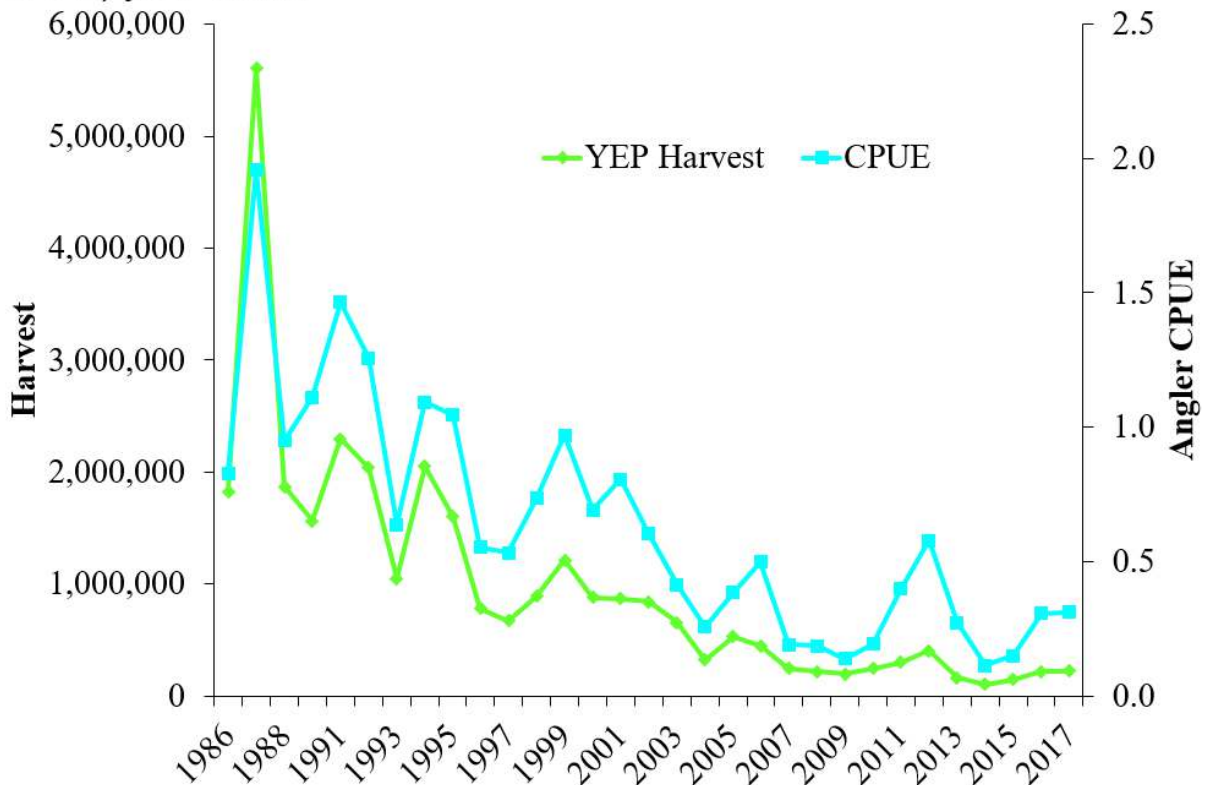


Forage index species include: Alewife, Emerald shiner, Gizzard shad, Smelt, Spottail shiner, Round goby, Trout-perch, Age 0 White bass, Age 0 White perch, Age 0 Yellow perch, Mimic shiner

Trends in abundance of yearling-&-older and Young-of-the-year (YOY) Yellow Perch in Saginaw Bay as indicated by trawling catch rate



Saginaw Bay yellow perch harvest and angler Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) year-round



Randy Claramunt then facilitated a discussion regarding Saginaw Bay walleye regulations. He explained the changes over time, when early in the time series the Saginaw Bay fishery focused on yellow perch (often nearshore, pier), and now it relies primarily on walleye. He noted that currently many boat access sites are full. He mentioned that the Advisors had been polled earlier by email asking for their preferences regarding the walleye regulation. The vast majority of the Advisors wanted to review the most current biological data before recommending any changes in the regulations.

Randy went through factors that should be considered when determining walleye regulations:

- Have the goals the following goals been achieved? (1) fully utilizing the recovered walleye stock, (2) reducing yellow perch mortality, especially between Age-0 and Age-1 and (3) increasing forage fish abundance? – **Not Yet**
- Are we moving in the right direction? - **Yes**
- Should we keep walleye regulations more liberal than statewide? - **Yes**
- How is social acceptance trending? – **It may be declining**
- Can we reduce the rate at which we move towards goals? – **Yes**
- Will a reduction of the walleye bag limit from 8 to 6 maintain most of the current fishing opportunity? - **Yes**

Randy asked, will the Advisors support a reduced bag limit? One member said that despite a record harvest walleye abundance has increased, so he thought we should keep limit at 8 or even go to 10 to help the yellow perch population. Randy Terrian thought we should keep the bag limit the same as well. Terry Walsh said it isn't just walleye impacting the prey fish community, there are a lot of contributors, including cormorants. Jim Baker

mentioned that walleye growth rates have been increasing. Jim DeClerck also believes that with the walleye population still building, we should consider increasing the bag limit. Dave Fielder was asked about the information comparing the inner and outer bay, he was also asked about the walleye population throughout Lake Huron. Dave said that about 37% of the walleye leave the bay, so some of the predation pressure on the bay lessons seasonally. Terry mentioned there is lower fishing effort now compared to years ago, and that walleye don't necessarily drive more people to fish. Randy Claramunt said that we don't want an either-or situation, walleye or yellow perch. He asked if we should be concerned about walleye harvest for the next couple years, when we don't know if recruitment will remain high, and social concerns are increasing. Frank talked about the goal for a balanced fishery, yellow perch and walleye. He asked Dave how much the harvest might increase if the daily bag limit remains at 8 walleye per day instead of moving to a 6-walleye daily bag limit. Dave estimated remaining at the current bag limit of 8 fish daily would result in about 10% more walleyes being harvested. Ken Merckel wondered who all the people are who are complaining about the current regulation. Ken also mentioned the impacts cisco might have on the situation by providing an alternative prey fish food source for walleye. Donna Wesander said some charter operations are utilizing 2 boats, one for walleye and one for salmon, so walleye are helping to produce additional effort in the bay.

Randy Claramunt mentioned the desire to have a uniform 25 yellow perch bag limit statewide, which might help reduce the disproportionately high harvest in the cuts seasonally. John Walters mentioned the need to keep angler recruitment in mind, and that we should be careful when correlating walleye and perch, the tradeoff isn't always direct. Jim Johnson warned about changing regulations based on one year of data. He feels with the large walleye abundance, many will die anyway in the commercial bycatch. When weighing risks for the walleye and yellow perch, Jim thinks the risk for walleye is likely not high, while the perch population is still at a low ebb so the risk for them is greater. He asked: "Why back off now?" Randy emphasized that we can't react as quickly as first discussed because more stringent regulations must be published in the Fishing Guide to be enforceable. If no change is made now, the next opportunity will be for the 2020 season. Jim DeClerck believes we haven't focused enough on yellow perch rehabilitation which could possibly increase fishing effort in the bay if the yellow perch numbers increase substantially. Another member thought we should keep the regulations the same as they currently are. Terry Walsh expressed concern about what might happen if the walleye population crashes. Dennis Gulau feels that if we lower the bag limit we will lose anglers who might end up going back to Erie. Doreen Campbell would like to keep the regulation as is.

Vote: Frank asked the question; will the Committee support a reduced daily bag limit of walleye from 8 fish to 6 fish?

Results: Of the voting members present, only one supported a reduced bag limit, while twelve voted to recommend maintaining the current daily bag limit of 8 walleyes per day.

Update on treating the lamprey larvae during 2018 in the Mississagi and Garden Rivers and the results of a recent Michigan State University study that shows a significant increase in the number of lamprey spawners if the rivers are not treated. (Randy Claramunt and Dave Borgeson DNR Northern Lake Huron Unit Manager).

Both rivers were not treated for sea lamprey in 2017 and will not likely to be treated in 2018 due to the Canadian First Nations' concerns with chemical treatments. The last lamprey treatments were in 2013 for the Mississagi River and in 2014 for the Garden River. Randy Claramunt mentioned that according to a study by Norine E. Dobiesz and James R. Bence at the Michigan State University Quantitative Fisheries Center, if the Garden River is not treated the spawning phase lamprey number will increase from 145,000 to 188,000 and if the Mississagi River is not treated the number will increase to 424,000. This increase could undo many years of hard fought funding and extensive progress in reducing sea lamprey to low levels.

Ken Merckel has talked to Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), and it doesn't look like much movement is being made on this front. Tom Gorenflo of the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority is talking to the First

Nations, trying to make progress and facilitate a resolution whereby the rivers get treated. Ken feels the Advisors should send a letter to the GLFC, indicating the damage that would be done without the treatments and the implications of obtaining continued funding for the program and the GLFC. There were no objections to Ken's suggestion. Frank called for a volunteer to write the letter. Jim Johnson volunteered. Ken said there are no treaties between the Canadian government and the First Nations, which may complicate the matter. Randy cited the increasing trend of people voicing objections to chemical treatments, and something will likely need to change in the lamprey control program in the future to address this trend.

The status of previous recreational overharvests of lake trout in MH-1 in Lake Huron from Rogers City to Drummond Island (Patrick Hanchin, DNR Tribal Coordination Unit, and Randy Claramunt).

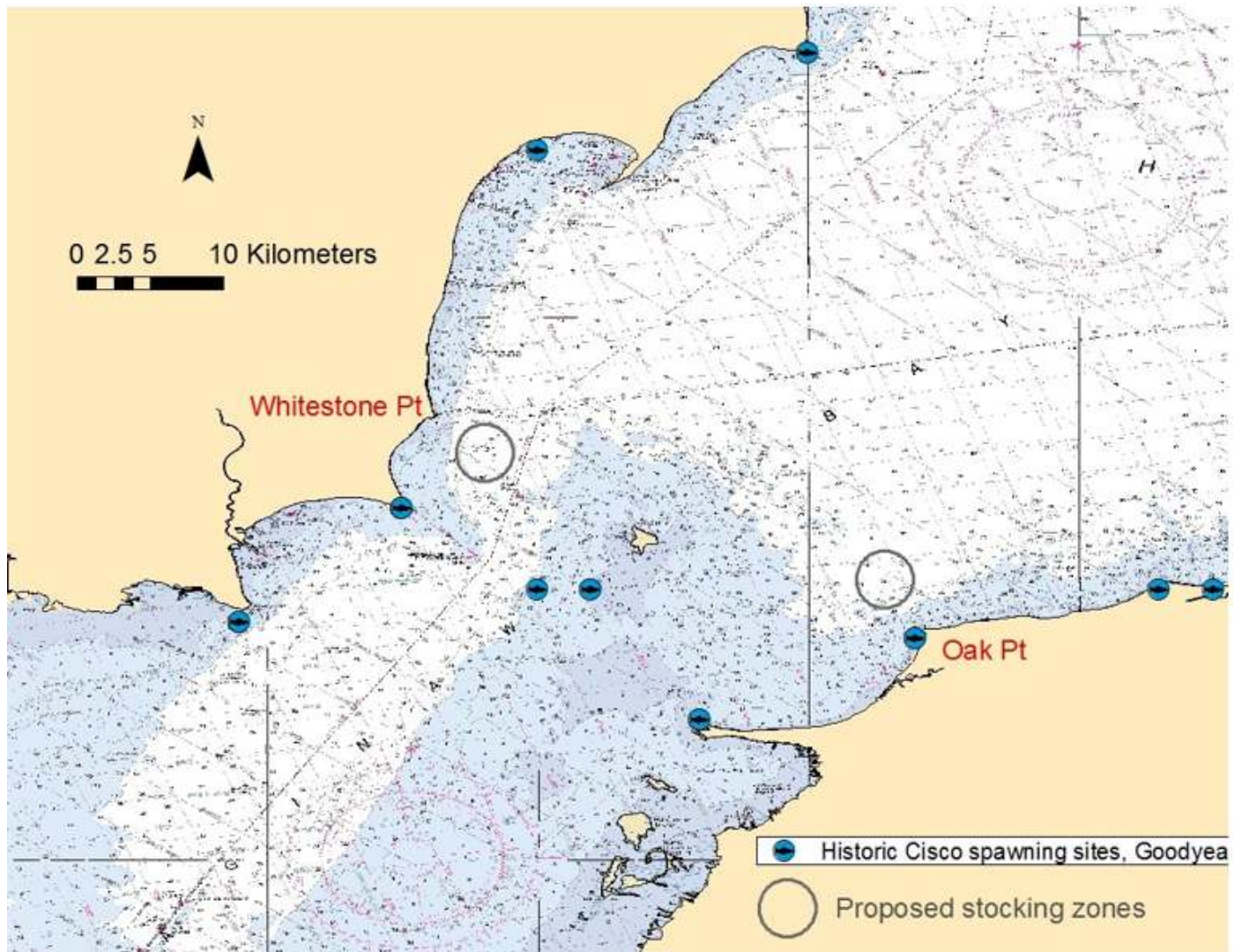
The MH-1 lake trout unit from Rogers City to Drummond Island remained at a 3-lake trout daily bag limit during 2018 despite overharvests during both 2016 and 2017. Randy recapped the history of harvest limits and overharvest levels and the subsequent penalties incurred by the state. The State proposed combining MH-1 and MH-2 (Rogers City to Alpena) units because biologically the lake trout move between the units and the Decree Technical Fisheries Committee is modelling both as one unit. The Tribes opposed the change. In June, the State of Michigan proposed splitting the penalty over both units proportionally, with no combination of units. The State is awaiting a response at the August Executive Council meeting. Lake Huron's lake trout population is not currently in jeopardy. The Tribes could dispute State inaction as a violation of the Decree. Jim Johnson reminded people that when the Decree was written, the State assumed Chinook salmon would be the main species for the recreational harvest, and the Tribes were mostly concerned with whitefish. Conditions have changed significantly since the year 2000. The current Decree expires in August 2020, so these points will be topics of negotiations for the upcoming new Decree. The Tribes have not been engaging in negotiations to date, and likely will wait for a new Michigan administration after the fall elections.

Brainstorming session on how the presentations and minutes might be improved to make it easier to share the information with others (All).

It was suggested that the minutes should be put online. Frank said the minutes are on the DNR website. As for other documents, the State has limits on the amount of links they can be placed on the DNR website. Frank has also been receiving complaints about the new DNR website from the Northern Inland Lakes Citizens Fisheries Advisory Committee since only the current minutes are stored on the DNR website. Randy Terrian asked if presentations could be sent out as attachments. Many of the slides require an explanation so sending the slides along with the minutes may be misleading. Frank indicated that he is including many of the most descriptive slides in the minutes. Dennis asked if presenters could provide a summary page for each presentation. Frank said that it would be helpful if presentations could be made more printer friendly by using a white background. Jon Jackoviak said anyone can put the information on multiple cloud sites. Dennis said he would investigate that opportunity. Dennis Gulau encouraged folks to submit dennis@gulau.net photos and stories to him for the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Facebook page because photos are very popular <https://www.facebook.com/Lake-Huron-Citizens-Fishery-Advisory-Committee-218571618607049/>. Tim asked how many folks are routinely sharing information with others. Dennis said he forwards the minutes to all the walleye organizations he interacts with. Tim spoke to the difficulty of getting enough participation with providing angler data and attending meetings. Julie says a lot of younger folks can't make meeting because of work. Randy Claramunt said a lot of anglers aren't members of angling organizations, so making the necessary connections are becoming more complex and difficult, requiring utilization of multiple platforms. Jim DeClerck says the information should be more concise, without unnecessary background information. It should be packaged in a manner that is more on point. Dennis suggested putting summary bullet points in front, with more detail lower in the document.

Update on stocking cisco in Saginaw Bay during 2018 (Dave Fielder).

Dave Fielder provided an overview on the objectives for stocking cisco in Saginaw Bay including restoring a native species that historically fed on plankton, diversifying the prey base, and providing additional fishing opportunities. Currently, the federal hatchery has about a million cisco with a plan to mark them with Oxytetracycline which will stain the bones. The plan is also to use spring and fall fingerlings in the future, but this year only fall fingerlings will be stocked. Because of the cold spring, growth of the cisco was slowed so it was decided to leave all the fish in the hatchery until fall. The target was to stock 750,000 cisco, but there is the potential to stock up to 1 million this year. The Tribes have expressed concerns about stocking more cisco with the current state of the lake whitefish population in the north. The plan is to stock off Whitestone and Oak Points using the RV Baird, but contingencies for shore stocking may be needed. Current survey efforts and targeted surveys will be used to evaluate the program. The plan is to stock for at least 10 years to ensure an adequate evaluation. Dave was asked about the original plan to use different strains. Only Lake Huron fish will be used for now. It was mentioned that cisco had been stocked previously when a pilot effort was employed by the DNR to see if culture of cisco was practicable.



Progress Report of the Subcommittee of Advisors and, DNR biologists and managers to develop a draft Lake Huron Salmon and Trout Management Plan (Randy Claramunt and Frank Krist).

Randy outlined progress to date of the Trout and Salmon Plan Subcommittee. They have had three meetings; one face to face and a couple conference calls. The focus of the Subcommittee is to look at the entire trout and salmon community, and come up with a mission statement, goals, and objectives. The Mission of the Subcommittee is to provide a sustainable and diverse salmon and trout fishery that maximizes the lake's production potential to provide exceptional fisheries for communities across the lake. Criteria to serve as the basis for management actions was developed. The Subcommittee initially discussed Chinook salmon, steelhead, Atlantic salmon, and Coho salmon. The upcoming discussion will focus on lake trout. Discussions have also centered on how the plan will be implemented. Randy has discussed the Subcommittee with upper management of the Fisheries Division. The hope is to have a draft plan reviewed by the Full Advisory Committee this winter.

John Walters asked about the criteria used to come up with the numbers for each species. This is an involved question to answer because there are differences in food sources and habits of each species, the amount of various forage items consumed by each species, the amount of fishing opportunity produced by each species and the potential availability for each species for stocking. All these factors are being considered. Currently, Lake Huron appears to be in approximate balance with prey availability, but there will be suggestion on how to deal with potential changes in the future.

Cormorant management update (Randy Claramunt and Frank Krist).

Frank has been in contact with Congressman Jack Bergman's office. Our concern of protecting, free swimming fishes has not been addressed to date. Congressman Bergman held a hearing regarding his proposed Bill in Alpena. The Bill has been revised to allow the previous cormorant program to be implemented until the US Fish and Wildlife Service completes their required work and finalizes the required Environmental Assessment. There is a planned meeting on August 16 in Lansing with the DNR, Tribes and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to compile documentation of the need to manage cormorants to protect free swimming fish. The goal is to have the cormorants properly managed, so that the needs of the fisheries are balanced with adequate protection of the cormorants.

The public meeting in Alpena provided opportunity for the public to insist that the US Fish and Wildlife Service completes the needed work in a timely manner. Frank said that the US Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that compiling the needed data would be completed by November and the Environmental Assessment would be finalized toward the end of the year. John Walters asked if the DNR Fisheries Division or Wildlife Division is involved in the cormorant issue. Randy said both divisions are involved and will be represented at the upcoming meeting in Lansing. Gary Whelan said other states are watching closely what is happening in Michigan with cormorants a problem in Texas and pelicans an issue in Idaho.

Manager and Law Enforcement updates.

Lt. Shaw, Law Enforcement Division, Great Lakes Unit, deferred to Lt. Feagan, Supervisor of Lower Peninsula Great Lakes Enforcement. Near Mackinaw Island an abandoned net was removed by Craig Milkowski and returned to the fisherman. About 2,000 pounds of invasive red swamp crayfish were confiscated in coordination with Canadian border authorities and the case is pending. They are conducting their normal activities, including checking of commercial nets. He noted the increased effort that is available with more officers on staff.

Gary Whelan, DNR Fisheries Research Section Supervisor: Gary said all research vessels are on the water and noted that the RV Lake Char hit a log and was put out of commission temporarily. Standard surveys are ongoing.

Gary then talked about fish diseases. He said VHS is still around and will remain an issue. It has caused a small die off in Lake St. Clair this year. The disease has also moved into New York finger lakes. He noted that herpes viruses are present and are expressed when fish are stressed. This virus (EED) is in Lake Huron. There also has been detections of a herpes virus that attacks lake sturgeon and can kill them in the hatcheries. A continuing issue is the movement of bait, which is one of the fastest methods to move diseases.

A question on the commercial bycatch progress was asked. The Senate hearing on the proposed commercial fishing statute was cancelled. There may be a hearing in September, but Fisheries Division is not involved in rescheduling the hearing.

Aaron Switzer, Fish Production Section, deferred to Ed Eisch, Fish Production Manager. Ed stated that in Fish Production it is business as usual, with a lot of time focused on mechanical issues such as well failures and electrical maintenance. The capital outlay projects, the upgrade to Little Manistee weir and Thompson Hatchery improvements, are progressing. The work at the Little Manistee Weir is ahead of the Thompson Hatchery project. The Thompson Hatchery cool water project is scheduled to start next spring, and shallow well drilling is likely to occur soon.

John Walters, Natural Resources Commission Commissioner outlined his background. He was historically active in Trout Unlimited, Anglers of the Au Sable, and the Pigeon River Country, but now concentrates solely on his NRC obligations. Chronic wasting disease is a very active topic. He relayed to the Advisors his credo: take care of the resource, and the resource will serve hunters and anglers. John and his wife are very active with outdoor recreation activities.

Lee Martin, Oscoda-Harrisville Creel Clerk, noted that lots of larger walleye are being caught at night off Harrisville. Off Oscoda a lot of walleye are suspended, with a fair amount of Coho salmon present along with the normal lake trout catches.

Donna Wesander, DNR Charter Boat Coordinator, said it was a great spring for the charter industry including salmon for Lake Michigan and walleye for Lake Erie. Cheboygan keeps getting more activity each year. The implementation of the online charter reporting system has been delayed, and they are now targeting 2019 for deployment.

Julie Shafto, Rogers City-Alpena DNR Creel Clerk said Alpena had a good Brown Trout Festival, with decent fishing off Alpena and Presque Isle. Fishing at Alpena has slowed down recently, with most occurring out of Rockport and Presque Isle because the deep water is much closer to shore. She said there has been fantastic fishing out of Rogers City. Chinook salmon, Atlantic salmon and lake trout are being caught along with some walleye and steelhead. The forage base has been consistently abundant this year with lots of goby and smelt available. It appears that there is a good year class of wild chinook.

Dave Fielder, Research Biologist, Alpena DNR Research Station, outlined plans for reef restoration in Saginaw Bay, with rock placement planned for 2019. Preassessments are occurring. He said an Oxytetracycline workshop occurred, with industry representatives checking out equipment used to detect the marks on the fish's bony structures. The Les Cheneaux Island area survey is upcoming, and next year will be the 50th anniversary. Dave is planning to talk about walleye management of Saginaw Bay at annual American Fisheries Society meeting in Atlantic City.

Jim Baker, DNR Southern Lake Huron Unit Supervisor said that they raised a record 1.7 million walleye fingerlings this year; stocking 25 inland lakes. Their pike marsh was a bust. Spring lake surveys which includes 13 lakes in 10 counties are completed and they are now conducting stream surveys. Hoister Lake was at full pool in time for Memorial Day, with some rainbows stocked to kick start the fishery. This lake provides a lot of recreational opportunity. Walleye fishing has recently tapered off in Saginaw Bay likely due to warmer weather, and walleye moving deeper. Perch fishing has picked up off the mouth of the Pine River, off Linwood, and in the

old shipping channel near the mouth of the Saginaw River. Lots of lake trout, and steelhead are showing up in the fishery.

Randy Claramunt DNR Lake Huron Basin Coordinator said that the Saginaw River system will receive its full complement of fingerling sturgeon this year. This is a cooperative project between DNR Fisheries Division and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dave Borgeson, DNR Northern Lake Huron Management Unit Supervisor mentioned the unit has completed all the spring and early summer lake surveys and they have begun their stream survey season. He noted that due to angler complaints about poor fishing in the North Branch of the Au Sable River, his crew conducted some short electrofishing surveys. They noticed unusually low trout abundances and will conduct three population estimates on the North Branch within a month or so. They also noticed similarly low abundances when surveying the West Branch of the Sturgeon River. Dave also mentioned that Neal Godby has led an effort that resulted in the removal of a dam on the headwaters of a brook trout stream. The impoundment was known as Trout Brook Pond, and the removal effort was a cooperative effort between Fisheries Division, Parks and Recreation Division, and the US Forest Service.

3:00 Adjourn.

Next meeting date:

Tuesday October 9, 2018 at Jays Sporting Goods in Clare