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 Hybrid Meeting Minutes
In-Person and Online Sea Grant assisted Zoom Hybrid Meeting
Monday August 8, 2022
Approved
10:30 am-3:00 pm

Attendees: In Person: Frank Krist, Meaghan Gass, Randy Claramunt, Brian Darland, Jim Johnson, Judy Ogden, Ed Blissick, Randy Terrian, Jim DeClerck, Dave Fielder, Jason Gostiaux, April Simmons, Dan Sampson, Ed Eisch, Nick Torsky, Dana Serafin, Jeff Jolley, Mike Tower, Blaise Pewinski, Paul Stowe, Julian Zielinski Jr, Paul Nienaltowski, John Moore, and Tod Williams; **Online:** Dave Cozad, Tom Andris, Mike Veine, Laura Ogar, Tom Heritier, Bryan Burroughs, Todd Williams, Damon Brown, Tom Frontjes, Seth Herbst, Jeremiah Blaauw, Fred Sterns, Kendra Kozlauskos, Tim Cwalinski, Gerald Ellis, Christian Lesage, Tess Nelkie, Lawrence Atkin, Tom Baird, Dan Cross, Todd Grischke, Tim O'Brien, Greg Potts, Robert Reider, Ed Retherford, Nathan Skibbe, and Gary Whelan

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

Frank welcomed Kendra Kozlauskos, DNR, who will be taking over Donna Wesander's role of Charter Boat reporting and the Coded Wire Tag (CWT) program from retired John Clevenger. Randy Claramunt brought up changes in the processing of CWTs from DNR to having the USFWS process a majority of the fish heads going forward.

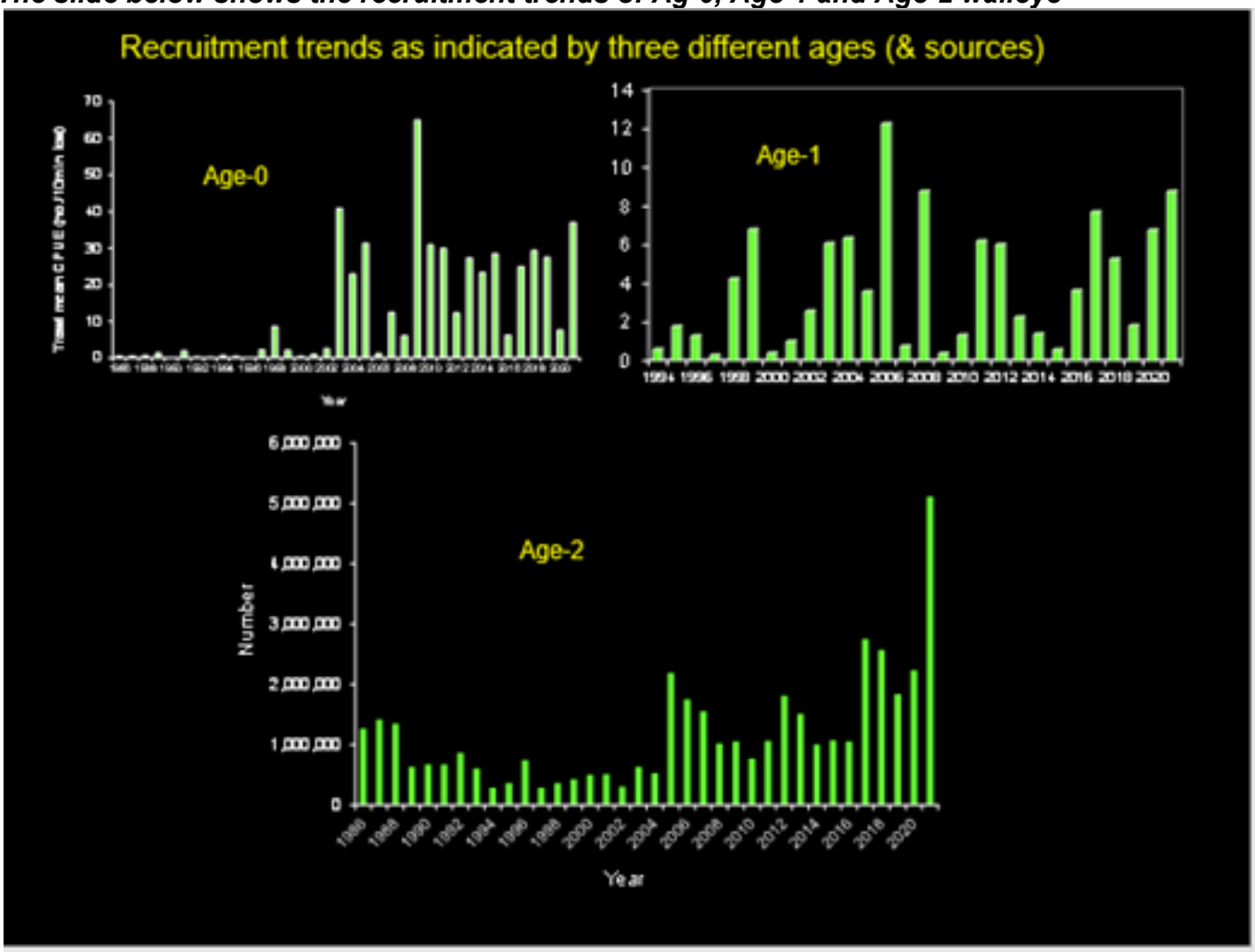
Update on the Saginaw Bay fishery surveys and model findings along with an overview of the walleye recruitment/spawning site study. In addition, there will be a discussion of a dissolved oxygen monitoring research project of the waters in the bottom of the Bay. (Dr. Dave Fielder, DNR Research Biologist)

This is the most complete report on the Saginaw Bay fishery based on the surveys and modeling output generated from the last year of fieldwork and data analysis. The review combines the fish community survey (combo of gillnetting and trawling), fishery independent survey, Walleye jaw tagging, creel survey (recreational fishing effort and harvest rates), commercial fishing reporting data (harvest rates, etc.), and computer model outputs.

The fall age-0 Walleye trawl provides data on abundance and is reported as catch per unit effort (CPUE). The alewife collapse around 2003 made it possible for much greater survival of age 0 Walleye also known as young of year (YOY). As a result, stocking was discontinued in 2006, with all current production coming from natural sources. The 2021 CPUE was the third highest in the data set going back to 1986 (only 2003 and 2009 were higher), see slide below.

The gillnet collections are one of the best ways to measure year class recruitment and the yearling (2020 year-class) collections were the second highest since 1994 indicating good survival from age-0. The Statistical Catch at Age model estimates age-2 abundance and the model estimates a very large 2019 year-class of over 5 million fish, driving the total Saginaw Bay stock of Walleye (age 2 and older) up to somewhere between 7 and 11 million.

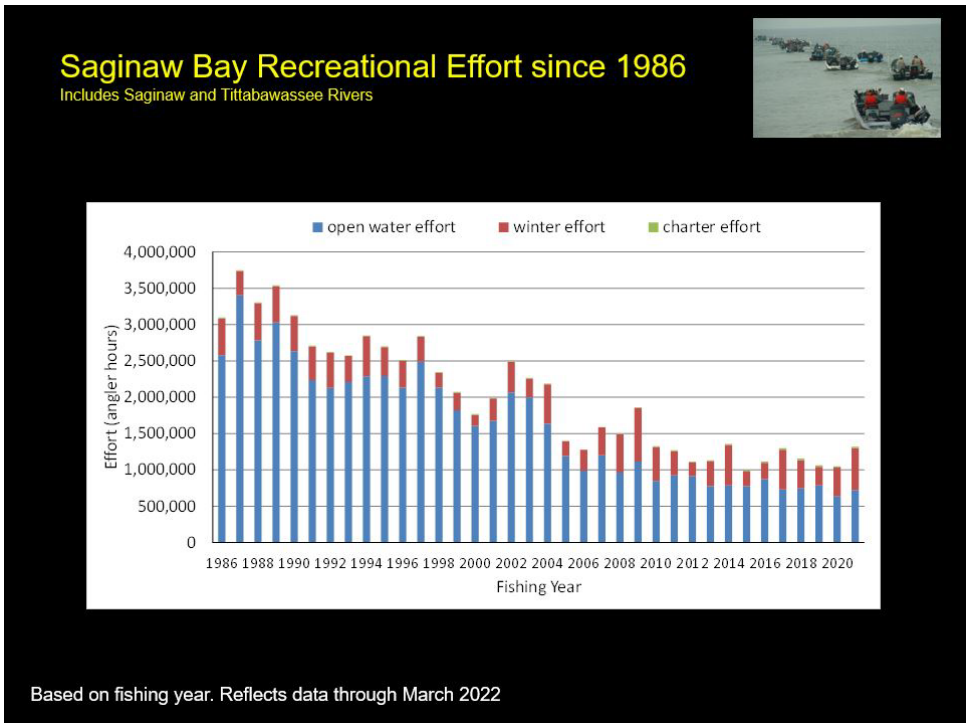
The slide below shows the recruitment trends of Ag-0, Age-1 and Age-2 walleye

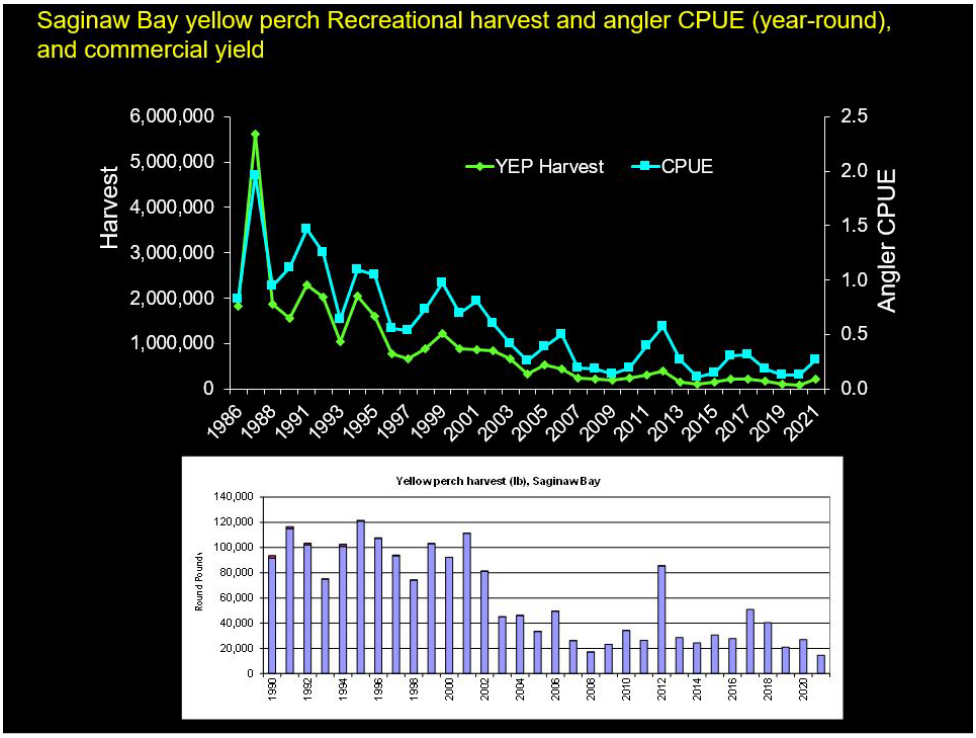


Greater abundance and higher densities typically reduces growth rates, which would be seen in creel data if the population became limited in prey availability. Instead, Walleye growth rates, as measure by mean length at age-3, have been steadily climbing since 2009 and are at, or near, the target level. If these trends in good recruitment continue, then growth rates are expected to decline with the increased density, due to the abundant 2019 year-class feeding on the available prey.

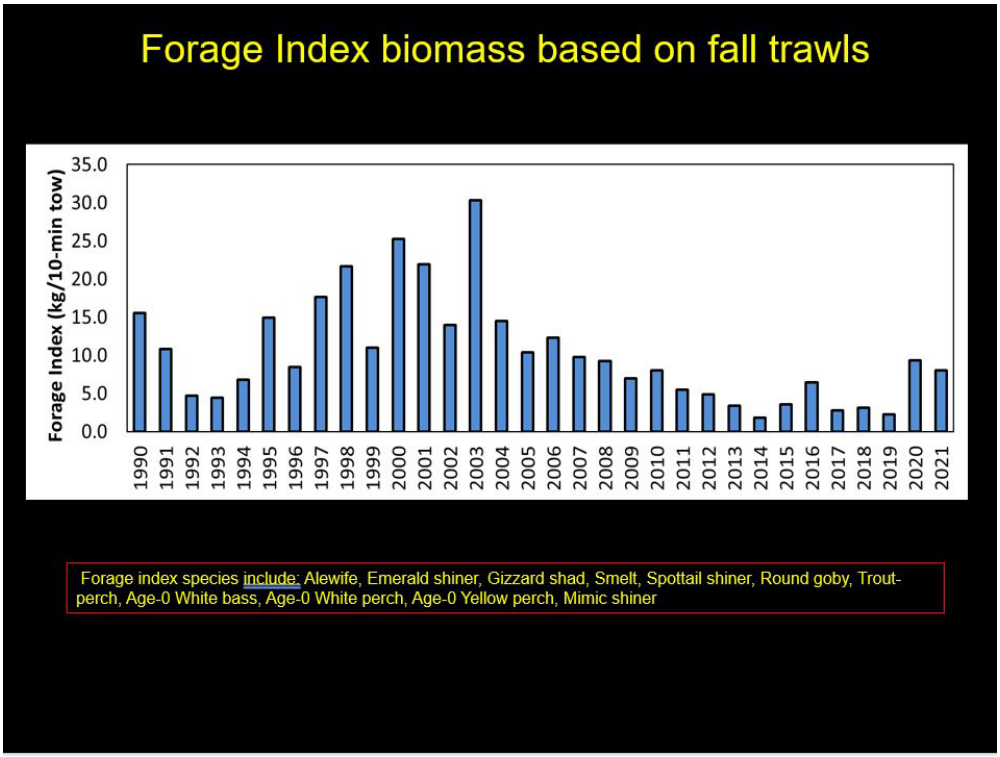
In 2021, there was a steep increase in the number of undersized Walleye being released by anglers supporting the observations that there may be a large undersize year-class coming into the fishery. The CPUE of age-1 Walleye in the trawling survey also confirmed the large upcoming 2019 year-class as did the gillnet survey data. This year class is big, just how big is still difficult to determine, and will have a major impact on the fishery for years to come.

Recreational fishing effort has been relatively stable since 2010, but overall current effort has declined substantially since 1987. Effort is driven by the Yellow Perch fishery, which currently is down considerably due high Walleye abundance resulting in fewer Yellow Perch surviving beyond their first year. The two slides directly below show the effort and harvest of yellow perch over the years. The Yellow Perch that do avoid predation are growing well, with growth rates exceeding the state average.

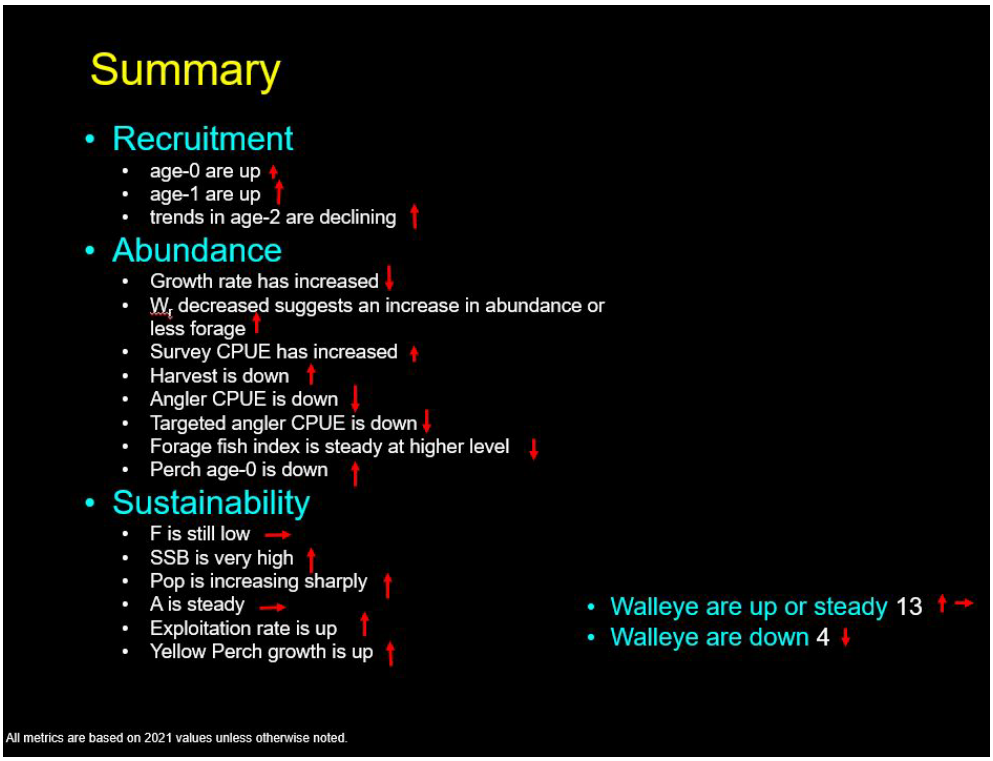




The forage base continues to remain at higher levels the past 2 year as shown by the slide below. The fall index trawls showed that 75% of the forage was white perch by weight and 15% was yellow perch.



Reviewing all the metrics for the walleye population, 13 are up or steady and only 4 are trending down as shown on the slide below.



The survey data and analysis indicate that the Walleye population has not yet reached its recovery equilibrium. The next few years will be very interesting to see where the fishery goes from here with the current large increase in the population.

Comment Randy Claramunt: There was concern that the ***dam failures*** might have reduced the survival of the young walleye, but possibly instead additional nutrients were released, and survival actually increased.

Question: Do bait harvesters take so many minnows in shallow water that it reduces the amount of food and forces walleyes to eat more yellow perch?

Answer: Even though a lot of minnows are harvested in the bay but compared to the entire prey fish population, the impact of the minnow harvest is probably small.

Comment Natural Resources Commissioner David Cozad: He thanked all those involved with collecting the data for the extensive database used to monitor the fishery in Saginaw Bay. It is good news to learn that the walleye population continues to grow but there are still challenges ahead managing the dynamic food web to provide a more stable and balanced fishery.

Update on research in Saginaw Bay:
There is currently an ongoing hydroacoustic tagging and telemetry study to track movement of Walleye tagged in the open water to learn where they go to spawn in the spring. This study is similar to the previous study that determined where walleye tagged with transmitters in the Tittabawassee River migrated after spawning. In that study, it was learned that some walleyes left the bay to move to various locations in Lake Huron while others remained in the bay. The results showed that each fish appeared to migrate to the same locations each year.

This study will focus on where fish that are caught in the open water of the Saginaw Bay spawn the following spring. This year 78 fish have been surgically implanted with a transmitter. The target is to implant a total of 350 walleye. Transmitters should last up to four years so the implanted fish, also tagged with external red floy tags, should continue to provide data unless captured by anglers. Anglers are encouraged to turn in transmitters for a reward.

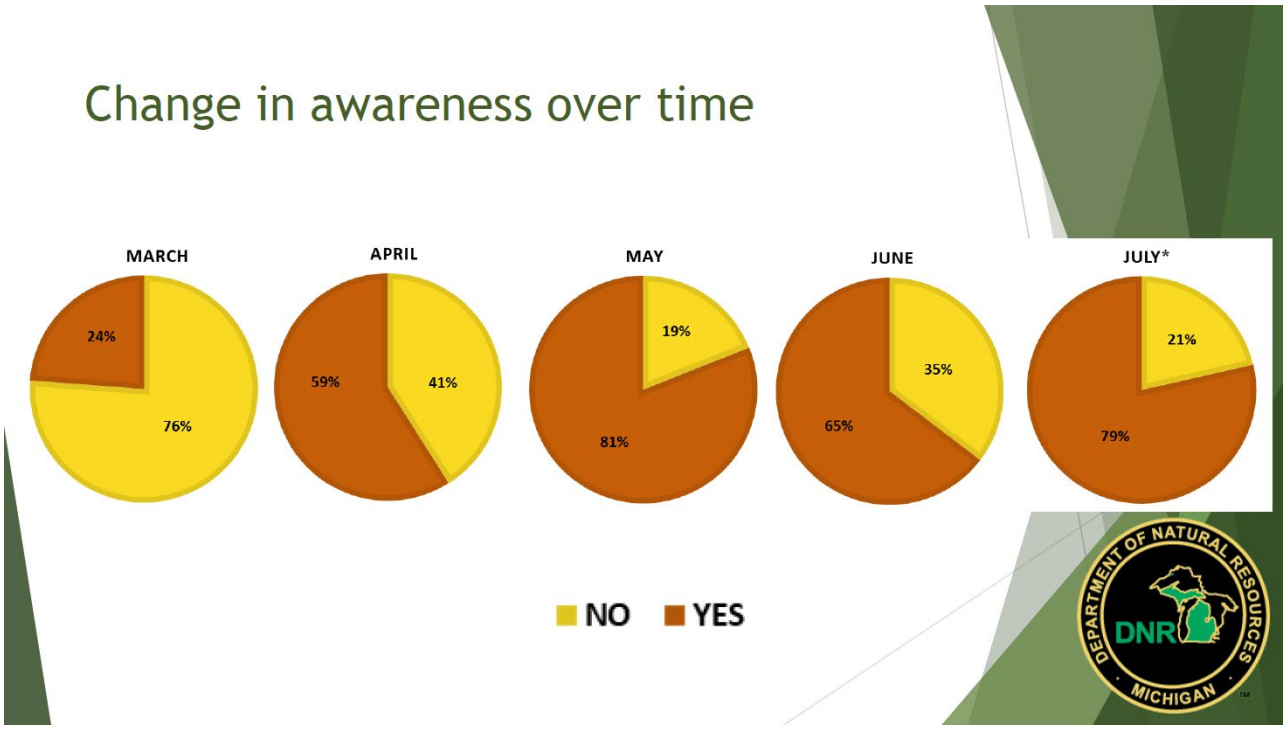
It is known that the Tittabawassee River has a major run of spawning walleye but several other rivers along the bay and possibly the offshore reefs are used for spawning by some of the walleye. This study will help quantify the importance of each spawning location. Effort is being made to tag the fish throughout the inner bay early in the spring to reduce bias in the sampling.

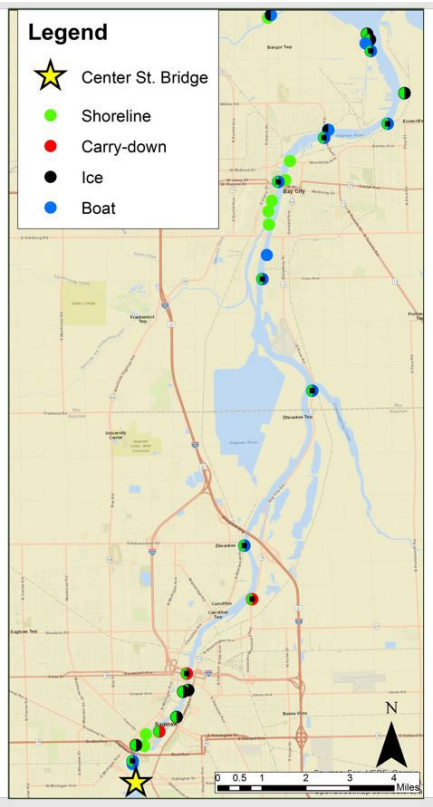
Finally, while the offshore Coreyon Reef complex restoration is complete, work continues to monitor how the fish are using this habitat. Historic nearshore reef areas are the next areas of focus for rehabilitation. Proposals have been submitted for reef installations near the Saginaw and Kawkawlin River mouths.

Comment: It was suggested that when designing the near shore reefs that possibly a multiuse structure could be built that would not only provide habitat for fish but also serve as a fishing pier. This is a good idea, and before any structures are built, the public will be involved providing input through workshops.

Updates on opening walleye fishing in the Lower Saginaw River year round in 2023, progress report on the Saginaw Bay Walleye and Yellow Perch Management Plan revision along with other information (Dr Jeff Jolley, DNR Southern Lake Huron Unit Manager, Jason Gostiaux, DNR Fishery Biologist, and April Simmons, DNR Fishery Biologist).

The Saginaw River will remain open next year through the previous spring spawning closures. Walleye populations are healthy and abundant, and this new opportunity will likely generate increased interest and attract anglers in the spring. The Southern Lake Huron Management Unit has been and will continue to work with municipalities, local sport groups, residents, and others to get the word out in preparation for the new changes. Creel clerks have also been asking anglers if they were aware of the spring walleye regulation changes, which around 79% of people said they were aware in July.





Southern Lake Huron has also been working on a fishing access inventory with data including the different types of potential fishing opportunities, see slide to the left. Categories include shoreline, carry-down, ice, and/or boat access sites. Efforts are being made to determine what might be done for developing more access or to improve the current sites.

The Saginaw Bay Fisheries Management Plan is scheduled to be drafted by the end of October. The plan will include specific goals or objectives for different species. For Walleye, the goal is to support a self-sustaining population that balances, high-quality and diverse angling and harvest opportunities, protection of reproducing fish, and appropriate utilization of the prey base. For Yellow Perch, the goal is to support a population that provides harvest opportunities for anglers in addition as a prey base for Walleye.

Question: Have you looked at Lake Erie and how they manage their Walleye?

Answer: It is a quota-based system established on the population estimates. Problem is that MDNR is not able to change regulations as quickly as might be needed. Also, quota systems work well when populations are increasing, but become problematic when decreases in the quotas are needed.

Question: Could we look at allowing the alewife populations to recover to a limited extent?

Answer: Some impacts from alewife are negative on such species as Walleye and Lake Trout while others, like salmon may benefit. However, turning the dial to control for a specific Alewife population may be almost impossible to get it right. The exotic mussels have a large impact and current lake productivity would make this extremely difficult. A single Alewife can produce over a quarter million eggs so not many Alewives are needed to produce a strong year class. Currently, the lack of nutrients and plankton leads to starvation of Alewife fry and mussels are really in the driver seat controlling the lake. What could have an impact on the Alewife population is the number of Chinook Salmon stocked. This has been discussed in the past and the concern was that stocking more Chinook Salmon would reduce the chances of increasing the abundance of Smelt.

Comment: Access can be limiting but there are some nice options and thanks for putting together the access sites map. It should be very useful to those trying to get out.

Comment: There is excellent fishing opportunities nearshore in the Saginaw River for anglers without boats and those with small boats. There is excellent fishing in these sites besides Yellow Perch and Walleye which include catfish, bass and even species like Bluegills.

Question: Due to the huge increase in the Walleye population compared to 2015 when the goal was to reduce the Walleye population to increase Yellow Perch abundance, we ought to be more worried about Yellow Perch than we ever have. What can we do?

Answer: What has been learned is that the Walleye population does not respond to regulation changes. We should not become discouraged but be glad the Walleye population is approaching

historic high levels. Historically, there were both high levels of Yellow Perch and Walleye existing at the same time so there is a chance that Yellow Perch abundance will begin to increase. There seems to be limitations, either in the bay or in the open water, that are not allowing for full restoration of both species.

Comment: With the seemingly large challenges of increasing Yellow Perch abundance at this time, we should not get discouraged so much that expectations of increasing the Yellow Perch abundance becomes so low that not much attention is directed at this goal in the future.

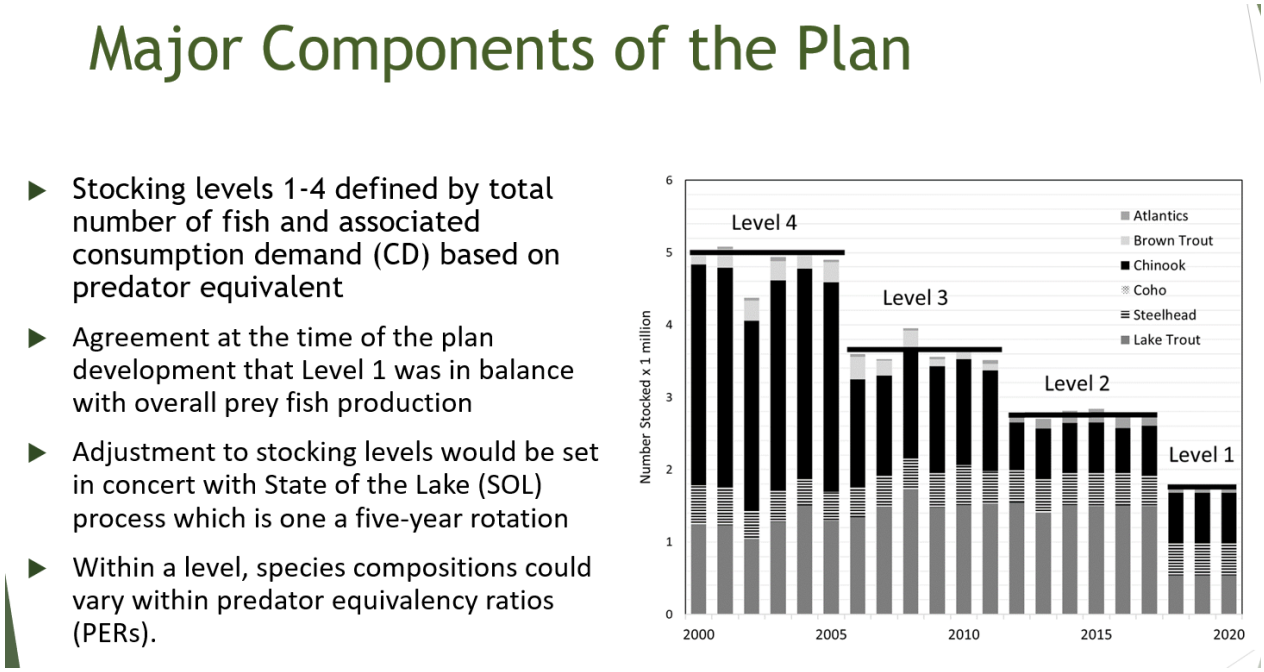
Response: The discussions have centered around what catch rates are needed to provide a quality Yellow Perch fishery that draws anglers to the Bay area. The fishery may not be as good historically, but it is important to strive for a quality fishery. This approach is being considered in the new Saginaw Bay Walleye and Yellow Perch Management Plan.

Question: What is the schedule for completing the Saginaw Bay Walleye and Yellow Perch Management Plan?

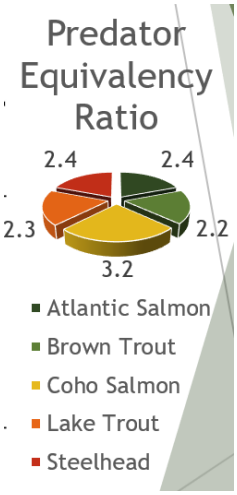
Response: The goal is to have a draft on paper during October and completing the Plan around the end of the year.

<u>Discussing sites to potentially stock more Coho Salmon in Lake Huron (Randy Claramunt).</u>

Randy Claramunt: Over the years Lake Huron's prey base has been able to support varying levels of predators. This rate has been compiled in four Consumptive Demand Levels with the highest level 4 occurring during the early 2000s when salmon were surviving well throughout the lake until now at level 1 when the prey base has declined much over the years. At the last meeting it was decided that there was enough forage available in Lake Huron to move from Level 1 to Level 2. See Chart below:



To determine how many fish of a specific species can be stocked, each species is compared to Chinook Salmon which consume the most food of all other predators in their lifetime. Studies showed that Coho Salmon, which only live about 2 years for example, eat much less than Chinook Salmon and as a result about 3.2 Coho Salmon can be stocked compared to each Chinook Salmon if those were stocked instead, see table on the right.



Since the data are showing that that more Coho can be stocked, it was decided at the last Advisory meeting that an additional 100,000 yearling and 150,000 fall fingerling Coho Salmon could be stocked in Lake Huron. This is actually somewhat less than the data are showing but it was agreed that a conservative approach is the best choice at this time. In addition, because Coho Salmon have very short lives compared to Lake Trout and even Chinook Salmon, if issues result, the program can be terminated very quickly. The production of yearling Coho Salmon is more reliable than fall fingerlings that depend on extra fish being produced because of good survival in the hatchery during a growing season.

Currently up to 100,000 Coho Salmon are being stocked at two locations per year, with half going in Northern Lake Huron and half in the Southern part of the lake. During a year for example, 50,000 Coho Salmon are stocked each at Thunder Bay and Port Sanilac and the alternate year 50,000 fish are stocked in the Au Sable River and Harbor Beach.

A comparison was done, and the growth rates of the Lake Huron stocked Coho Salmon have been comparable and at times even slightly better than Coho Salmon in Lake Michigan. This shows that these fish in Lake Huron are preforming well and have adapted to the food web.

The goal today is for the Advisors to determine where these additional Coho Salmon should be stocked. There are several possibilities,

1. Stocking the yearlings at new sites also in alternate years.
2. Stock the yearlings every year at the current sites.
3. Experiment with the fall fingerlings by trying new sites.
4. Other?

Comment: During the spring, Coho Salmon fishing was excellent from the St. Clair River up to Port Sanilac and even recently 2 and 4 Coho Salmon are often being taken per trip. This species has much potential.

Question: What about their movement over the course of the year?

Answer: In Lake Michigan Coho Salmon tend to move from the south to the north along the western side of the lake and return to their stocking sites in the fall. In Lake Huron, the Coho Salmon concentrate in the south in the spring and as the water warms it appears they tend to move north and easterly to find cooler water. When the water cools later in the year the Coho Salmon tend to return to the stocking sites where they can congregate offshore for extended periods before entering the streams to spawn.

Comment: Maybe increased stocking at current sites will improve post stocking survival by overwhelming the predators.

Answer: Sometimes if too many fish are stocked at a site there may not be enough food available which could actually reduce survival. There are many variables making it difficult to know for sure the ideal number to stock.

Comment: From experience at Port Sanilac and Harbor Beach, Coho Salmon have created a terrific fishery during the spring as they move up and down the lake and even occasionally the fishing is good during the summer months. Alternating stocking sites seems to work well in the Southern waters and has created a good fishery in the St. Clair River. This seems to work well in the south because Port Huron and Port Sanilac are not far apart. We have a large population of people that get engaged in the fishery and it brings in a lot of people from Detroit.

Question: Could we stock fish in tribal waters? Will these ever get clipped with Coded Wire Tags (CWT)?

Answers: We shouldn't take anything off the table at this point for stocking locations, numbers, etc. Efforts are being made to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to expand marking of stocked fish and we will be asking the managers of that program if they can attend our next meeting on October 4 to discuss the Coded Wire Tag Program. The MDNR is currently working toward getting a commitment from USFWS for marking Chinook Salmon, Atlantic Salmon, and Coho Salmon

Comment: April Simmons mentioned that in 2021 about 70,000 large fall fingerling Coho Salmon were stocked in the East Branch of the Au Gres River so it should be interesting to learn how the fishery develops next fall at this stocking site.

Comment: Harrisville has excellent infrastructure for access and stocking there might be a great opportunity.

Comment: In the past, there has been some issues about the shore, dock and pier anglers having good access within the Harrisville Harbor. This problem should be solved before any fish are stocked there.

Comment: There were lots of good reports coming from the Port Hope stocking. Since the existing alternate stocking ports are doing well the fishery should get an even greater boost if the yearlings are stock every year at those locations.

Question: What month are the fall fingerling Coho Salmon stocked? Is there a predation issue with returning trout and salmon feeding on the newly stocked fish.

Answer: If the fall fingerlings are stocked early in the fall predation could be a problem but waiting until after the spawning season will mostly eliminate that issue. Keeping the fall fingerlings in the hatchery longer is not a problem because they are raised in a different area than where the yearlings are kept. Some additional food may be needed but the fish will be somewhat larger if stocked later which should be beneficial.

Comment: Grindstone anglers would prefer to get Coho Salmon because others are getting a variety of stocking opportunities while they are being missed.

Answer: There has been a lot of feedback from the Grindstone area that there are good facilities there and several charter boats operate out of that port.

Comment: Agrees with individual above that Grindstone would be a good port to stock and charter captains do well there. This year the buoys were not installed there until later in the season so several charter boats that I associate with fished at Port Austin and were catching Coho Salmon regularly during the spring. This would also be a good port to stock. Another potential good site would be Cassville with its excellent facilities and a stream that cools very early in the fall.

Comment: An important point to consider is that it might be better to stock the Coho Salmon at ports outside Saginaw Bay to minimize heavy predation of walleye and other species on the newly stocked fish. It is apparent from the comments just made that fish stocked just outside of the bay migrate toward and into the bay as adults and provide excellent fisheries.

Question: What about historical site data? Are there any good producers historically that we could return to?

Answer: Survival has been good over a larger area than expected at this point, so we probably don't want to resort to historical sites when current ones are working well.

Question: Will the total number of Coho Salmon available to be stocked, if everything works out in the hatchery, be 200,000 yearlings and 150,000 fall fingerlings?

Answer: Yes, 200,000 yearlings and at least 150,000 yearlings depending on production in the hatchery.

Comment: Out of Presque Isle, Coho Salmon are being caught regularly ranging from three to six pounds and the Canadians are seeing the same size fish. The fish look very healthy are full of smelt and bugs.

Question: Would the fall fingerlings be way behind in growth compared to the stocked yearlings?

Answer: Not necessarily since the fall fingerlings could grow after stocking before the water becomes very cold and growth slows or stops. The fall fingerlings could possibly, at least some years, be about the same size as yearlings in the spring. Some of the very small fall fingerling Coho Salmon may be slow growing the first year and delay maturing until age 3 to produce a large trophy fish.

Comment: Fall fingerling production in the hatchery depends on the conditions during the year in the hatchery and there is no guarantee that there will be 150,000 or more produced every year. Some years there could be more and some years there could be much less. It is feasible, however, to keep the fingerlings in the hatchery later in the fall so raising them to about 4 to 4.5 inches in length is doable most years.

Question: Could the fall fingerlings be split and stocked at more than one site?

Answer: Yes, but there are transportations costs to consider. Stocking at 2 sites is certainly doable.

Comment: Stocking sites in the southern part of the lake are much closer together and adding others in the general area with fall fingerlings may saturate the area more than expected. In addition, the closer the sites are to Saginaw Bay the concern of predation on the newly stocked Coho Salmon from walleye is greater.

Question: What about stocking fall fingerlings at Rogers City since there are fewer predators and they could potentially provide a backup egg source?

Answer: That is something to consider, and it would also be interesting to compare Coho Salmon with the Chinook Salmon returns there. The Platte River egg take site has a good return of Coho Salmon each year but as history has shown the fisheries can change drastically very quickly. Another factor is the facilities are already in place at the Swan River in case an additional egg source is needed.

Moving Forward Randy Claramunt: This was an excellent discussion. These ideas discussed today will be shared with the Basin Team and options will be provided for the Advisors to consider at the October 4 meeting.

Update on the Cormorant Management Program. (Randy Claramunt).

Randy Claramunt spoke with Tony Aderman, USDA Wildlife Services, and they are at Beaver Island currently with their crew. It has been a very windy year which has slowed their work. Tern and cormorants were somewhat influenced by Avian bird flu and numbers are down slightly. Michigan will be within the allowable control numbers. Brevoort Lake is being used as a case study for cormorant control in inland waters. This is a project to determine the needed extent of cormorant control to maintain a sustainable fishery in inland waters. Because Wildlife Services has limited funds and the DNR did not receive cormorant funding for next year, there will be no lethal control at inland problem sites or at stocking locations. The control efforts will be focused on the Great Lakes colonies.

Question: Little Charity Island is overrun with cormorants. What can be done to open it up for control? The cormorants are decimating the Yellow Perch fishery.

Answer: It is tough as the Charity Islands are protected by a migratory bird refuge and the state has no authority to control the birds. A change under this new permit system is that the state has been in communication and coordination with the federal refuge staff. The Little Charity Island is saturated with cormorants, however, Big Charity Island has only a limited population and the refuge staff is committed to keeping the population at its current level. If the state challenged the federal staff, there would be a public hearing with the potential outcome of losing even the current controls. Working with the federal refuge managers provides the best opportunity to control the birds.

Comment: The best option to obtain better cormorant control including at stocking sites and inland waters is to contact state and federal legislators and educate them about the problem to obtain more funding for comprehensive control.

Comment: Thunder Bay has at least 8 breeding pairs of Eagles and I noticed lately that there are no cormorants on Scarecrow Island which was the largest rookery in the bay. I was reviewing the literature and found that eagles often attack cormorant colonies, which causes the cormorants to flee and scatter. The gulls will then move in and gorge themselves on the eggs and young birds.

Updates from agency representatives

Nick Torsky, DNR Law Enforcement Division: Retirements have slowed slightly which has allowed a balance of new Officers coming in at a similar rate compared to retirements. A class was filled in 2021 and the officers are now in the field. Another class was hired in 2022 and they are now in week 3 or 4 of their training. It is anticipated that another class will be hired in 2023 as well. Currently,

there is a good balance of experienced officers and newer recruits, so the Division is experiencing a stable work force at this time.

Dave Cozad, Natural Resources (NRC) Commissioner: Appreciated the efforts of the Committee and wanted to make sure everyone knew that NRC fishery amendments coming up and can be viewed on the NRC agenda(s) at their website. https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/about/boards/nrc

Tim Cwalinski, DNR Northern Lake Huron Management Unit (NLHMU) Supervisor: Tim was just promoted from Senior Biologist to become the Unit Manager replacing David Borgeson who recently retired. Tim now has one Biologist short and has already started the process to hire a new person that could take a couple of months or longer. The stream survey season is about ready to begin for the next month and half. Brown Trout evaluations are ongoing this fall. NLHMU, the DNR Tribal Coordination Unit (TCU) and Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) conducted a sturgeon survey on Burt Lake this summer and encountered complications. The survey was terminated due to findings of some dead sturgeon. The team is evaluating and regrouping for next year. The Black River streamside sturgeon facility is ready to stock their sturgeon in a couple of weeks. Walleye stocking went very well in the north with production mostly from ponds located in the Southern Lake Huron Management Unit (SLHMU). The DNR is collaborating with other agencies to survey the St. Marys River fish community which happens about every 5 years. Both creel surveys and fish assessments in the river are conducted. Since Dave Borgeson was the best note taker ever, Frank asked Tim if he would step up and take over that role. Tim's online connection must have went bad since there was no response from Tim.

April Simmons, DNR SLHMU Fisheries Biologist: Sturgeon stocking will occur soon, and we are also working on a Walleye telemetry project in Saginaw Bay and its tributaries. Tagged 70 walleye for telemetry with five already returned by anglers. This survey will determine which rivers or reefs the walleye spawn in. Walleye fillets with off color have been diagnosed as sandy flesh disease, a normal but less common disease affecting muscular tissue in Walleye. The Au Gres boat launch is closed through sometime in October while they work on maintenance. The Tawas Boat Lunch is probably the best alternative site. The Unit's top priority currently is completing the Walleye and Yellow Perch Management Plan and working on inland projects.

Dave Fielder, DNR Research Biology Specialist: R/V Tanner is out looking for Cisco in Saginaw Bay then it goes to the St. Marys River for the collaborative fisheries survey of that system. This project involves several agencies. Afterwards we will head back to Saginaw Bay for the annual surveys and then head north again to the Les Cheneaux Islands for that annual netting survey.

Ed Eisch, DNR Fish Production Program Manager: A contract was recently awarded for solar arrays to be installed at five of the six facilities. For Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Outlay, there is a Cherry Creek water supply system upgrade at Marquette State Fish Hatchery that will be completed this year. The large hatchery infrastructure package will allow much needed major improvements. The FY2023 Capital Outlay package will go a long way to address the backlog of deferred maintenance at all facilities and also includes a new coolwater facility at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. Projects include energy efficiency, weatherization, and driveways/parking lots improvements. Arctic Grayling are doing well with the final year class in Oden State Fish Hatchery's Isolation Building along with the second year-class which is awaiting the second and third fish health clearances before they will be transferred up to Marquette State Fish Hatchery sometime in October. Hatcheries will also benefit

from the FY2023 Capital Outlay which will provide equipment funding to purchase items such as fish pumps, egg sorters and other needed modern equipment that will assist in improving fish production quality.

Dan Sampson, DNR Northern Area Hatchery Manager: Brown Trout spawning starts tomorrow because they have advanced spawning (light control) which allows for extra growth before stocking. Thompson State Fish Hatchery had their first year with a full-scale production at the new coolwater facility. They were able to produce about 65,000 Walleye with some issues of cannibalism in a couple ponds. Marquette State Fish Hatchery is in the process of hiring a new Fisheries Technician as Tony Beck was promoted to the Natural Resources (Hatchery) Manager creating a vacancy.

Paul Stowe, DNR Platte River State Fish Hatchery Natural Resource Manager: The number of Atlantic Salmon is down slightly this year because of fewer eggs sent from Lake Superior State University Aquatics Center. The fish are also slightly smaller this year but last year they were the largest ever produced.

Comments: Very happy with the large size and number of Atlantic Salmon produced last year. Appreciate all the efforts going in to produce a high quality fish to stock.

Mike Tower, DNR SLHMU Creel Clerk: Eastern Saginaw Bay Walleye fishing has been very good, but the weather has been tough. Recently warm weather and water have the fish scattered and fishing effort is down a bit.

Kendra Kozlauskos, DNR Research DNR Charter/CWT Programs: Trying to move to more electronic data recording. Internal discussions ongoing around how to return CWT data to anglers.

Randy Claramunt, with agreement from other participants, extended their gratitude to Michigan Sea Grant for their effort in making this hybrid meeting very successful. There has been key changes including adding an additional projector in the room so that the in-person participants could see the people participating virtually. Also, Jay's provided an upgraded audio system that greatly improved participants to hear comments made either in-person or virtually. Last, a camera was used to focus in on people speaking in the room in addition to 2 computer cameras that captured the speaker and another capturing the room.

Frank: closed the meeting with appreciation and thanks for the continued support of Jay's Sporting Goods. These hybrid in-person and Zoom meetings have been made possible especially with the leadership Meagan Gass, Sea Grant Extension Educator. Frank stressed that Paul Stowe deserves a lot of credit for undertaking the dreaded job of recording the minutes. Finally, Frank thanked all the presenters and everyone that attended the meeting.

Next meeting: is an in-person and online Zoom meeting to be held on October 4, 2022, at Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare Michigan from 10:30 am until 3 pm. The store opens at 10 am.