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.

Approved Minutes
Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting
August 6, 2019
Jay's Sporting Goods, Inc., Clare, MI
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Attendees: Simone de Souza, Ralph Zimmermann, Jerry Brown, Dave Fielder, Frank Krist, Randy Claramunt, Dennis Gulau, Tom Hamilton, Judy Ogden, Julie Shafto, Steve Shafto, Tom Frontjes, Lindsey Henski, Todd Grischke, Ken Merckel, Capt. Terry Walsh, Gary Decker, Tod Williams, Randy Terrian, Fred Sterns, Lee Martin, Ed Eisch, Nick Atkin, Bob Kettner, Leo Mrozinski, Jerry Serafin, Bonnie McMurry, Cameron McMurry, Dana Serafin, Patrick Hanchin, Craig Milkowski, Ralph Hamilton, Gary Whelan, David Shaw, Lakon Williams, Tim Cwalinski, Jan VanAmberg, Ji He, Paul Stowe, Donna Wesander, John Clevenger, Jon Jackoviak, Kathrin Schrouder, Jan Hamilton, Nicole Sherretz, Jim Francis, Eric Marrow, Jerry Lockhart, John Letts, Christian Lesage, Bryan Darland, Blaise Pewinski, Tom Heritier, Tom Keerl, Cody H, Gene Kirvan, Lance Campbell, Doreen Campbell, Jim DeClerck, Jim Johnson.

Welcome and Introductions:

Frank Krist called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Frank thanked Jay's Sporting Goods Inc. for setting up the space and accommodating us.

The Atlantic Salmon Program update (Randy Claramunt, Lake Huron Basin Coordinator; Paul Stowe, Natural Resources Manager Platte River State Fish Hatchery; Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries Biologist; Dave Fielder DNR Great Lakes Research Biologist; Jon Jackoviak, Manager of DNR Harietta State Fish Hatchery and Ed Eisch, Fish Production Program Manager):

The spreadsheet below was reviewed that showed the number of Atlantic salmon that has been stocked each year by the DNR and Lake Superior State University.

The DNR tries to release the Atlantic salmon in the St. Marys River when the University releases their fish. Since 2013, the DNR has marked each Atlantic salmon with a coded wire tag (CWT) along with an adipose fin clip. The

Number of spring yearling Atlantic salmon stocked by the DNR and LSSU into Lake Huron and the fin clips

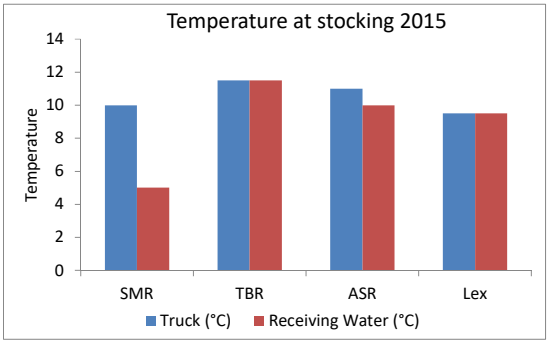
	St Marys River LSSU		St Marys River DNR		Au Sable River		Thunder Bay River		Lexington Harbor		Total	Total	Grand Total
Year	Number Stocked	Fin Clip	Number Stocked	Fin Clip	Number Stocked	Fin Clip	Number Stocked	Fin Clip	Number Stocked	Fin Clip	for LSSU	for DNR	for Lake Huron
2010	26,301	LV									26,301	12,689	38990**
2011	31,100	RP	21,742	None							31,100	21,742	52,842
2012	35,230	RV	35,120	None							35,230	35,120	70,350
2013*	35,000	LP	35,000	AD	30,000	AD	20,773	AD	15,092	AD	35,000	100,865	135,865
2014	40,908	LV	50,659	AD	35,860	AD	25,000	AD	19,584	AD	40,908	131,103	172,011
2015	39,907	RP	43,753	AD	36,984	AD	39,862	AD	39,873	AD	39,907	160,472	200,379
2016	36,790	RV	41,661	AD	47,218	AD	37,883	AD	33,091	AD	36,790	159,853	196,643
2017	28,983	LP	13,702	AD	28,246	AD	29,631	AD	39,237	AD	28,983	110,816	139,799
2018	34,937	LV	20,240	AD	33,254	AD	22,134	AD	37,781	AD	34,937	113,409	148,346
2019	20,000	RP	18,933	AD	20,112	AD	18,231	AD	22,966	AD	20,000	80,242	100,242

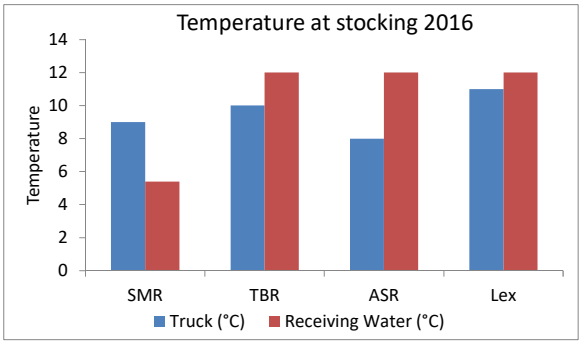
*Only AD clips after 2013 have coded wire tags in their snout which indicates stocking site and date. **The 2010 total includes 12,689 at Whitney Drain.**

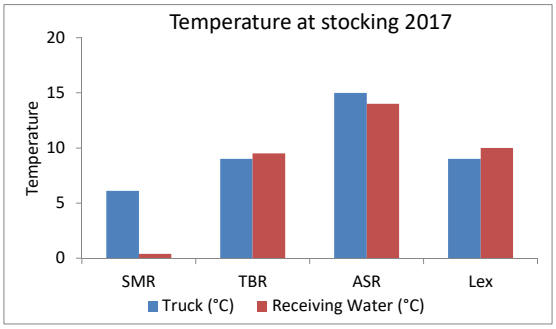
Updated: May 1, 2019

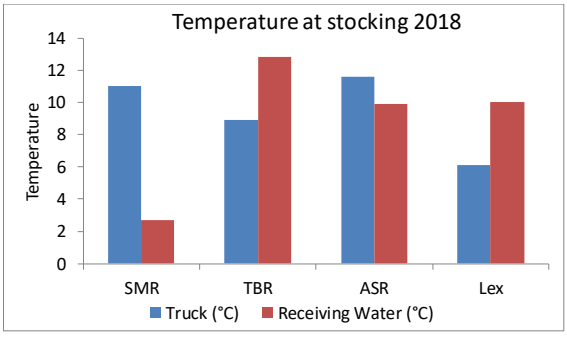
DNR stocking sites are in the St. Marys River, Au Sable River, Thunder Bay River and Lexington Harbor.

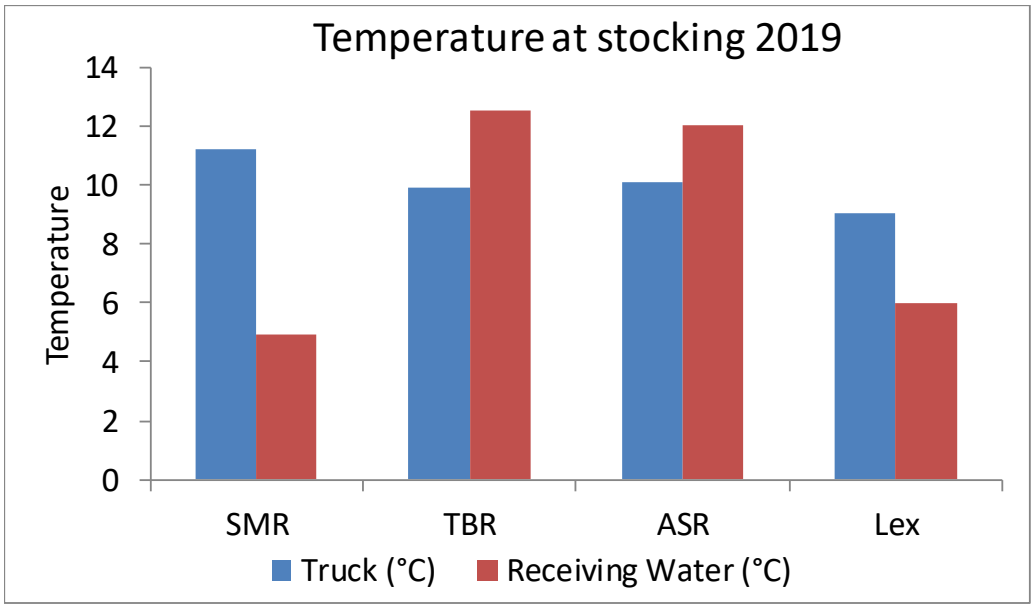
The Atlantic salmon are stocked when the receiving water is near 10 Celsius degrees (50 F degrees) since research has shown that at this temperature the smolted fish move more quickly into the open water. This reduces predation from fish and birds that often are present in large numbers at the stocking sites. The charts below show the temperature at the stocking sites since 2015.



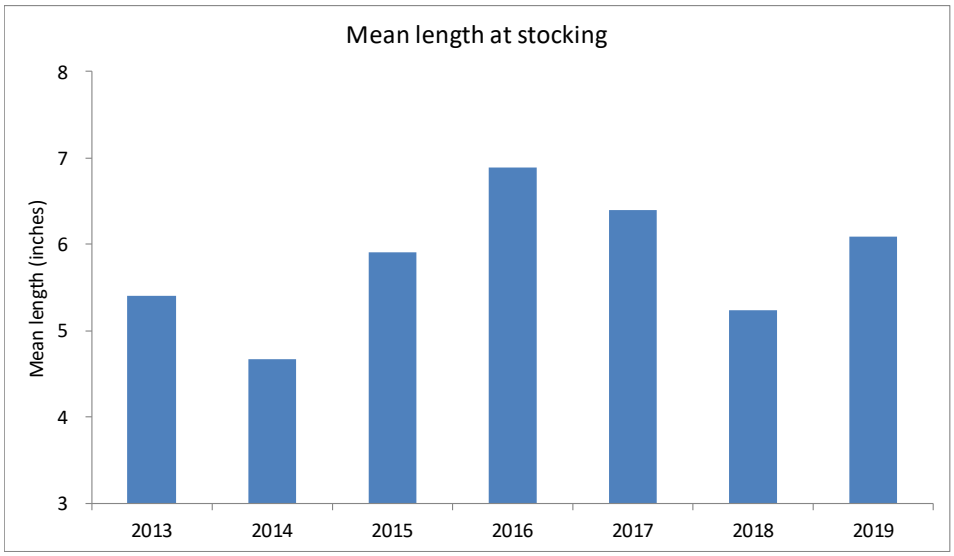




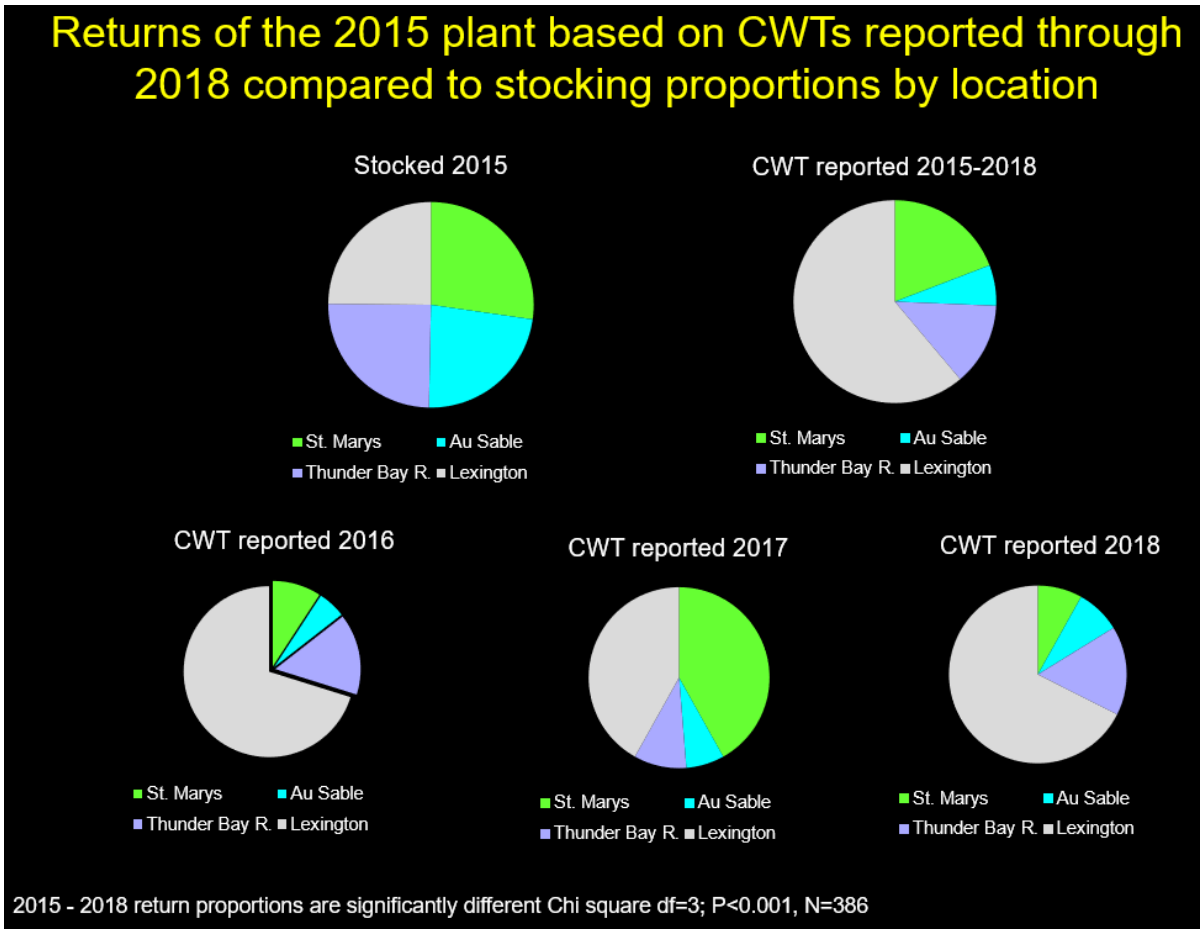


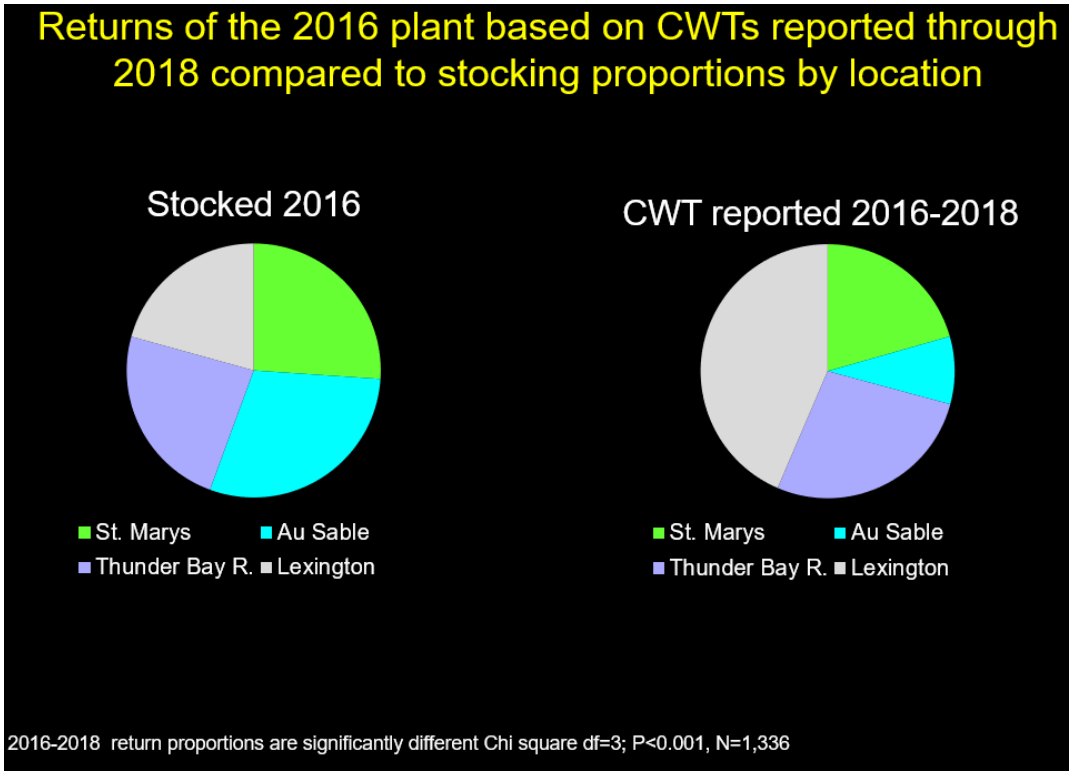


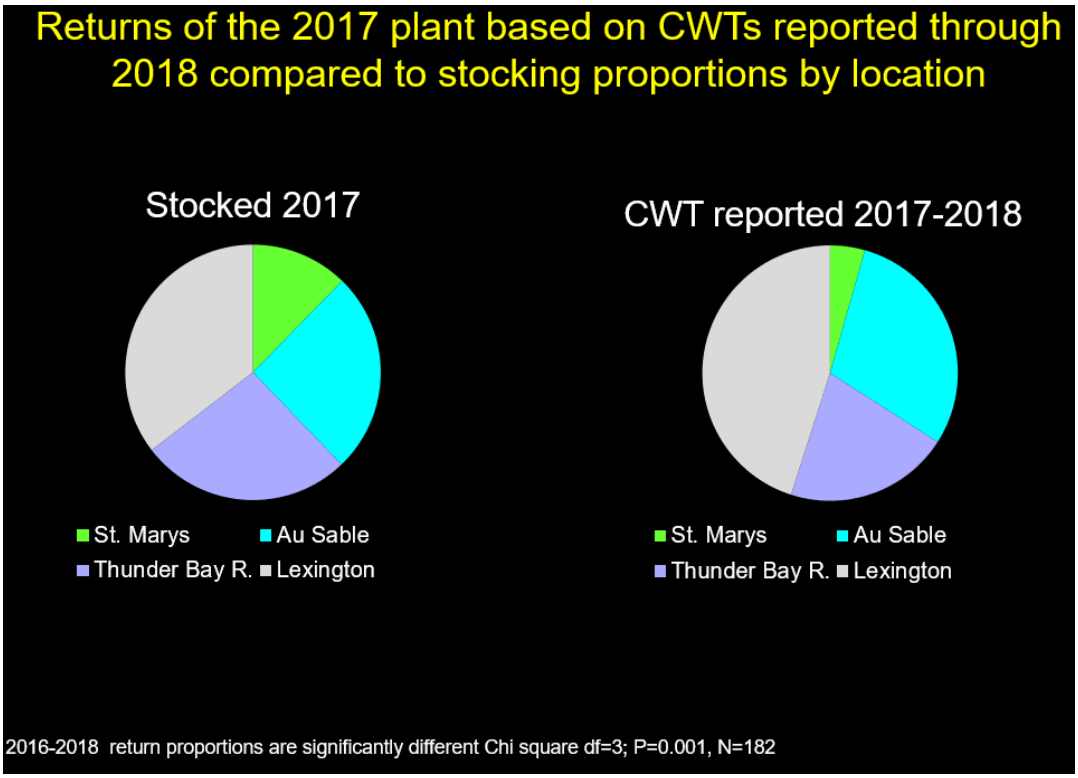
Another factor that has been shown to improve survival of the stocked fish is to raise them to a larger size. Lake Superior State University has had much success by raising the fish to 7 inches in length or larger. The Chart below shows the average size of the DNR stocked fish since 2013.



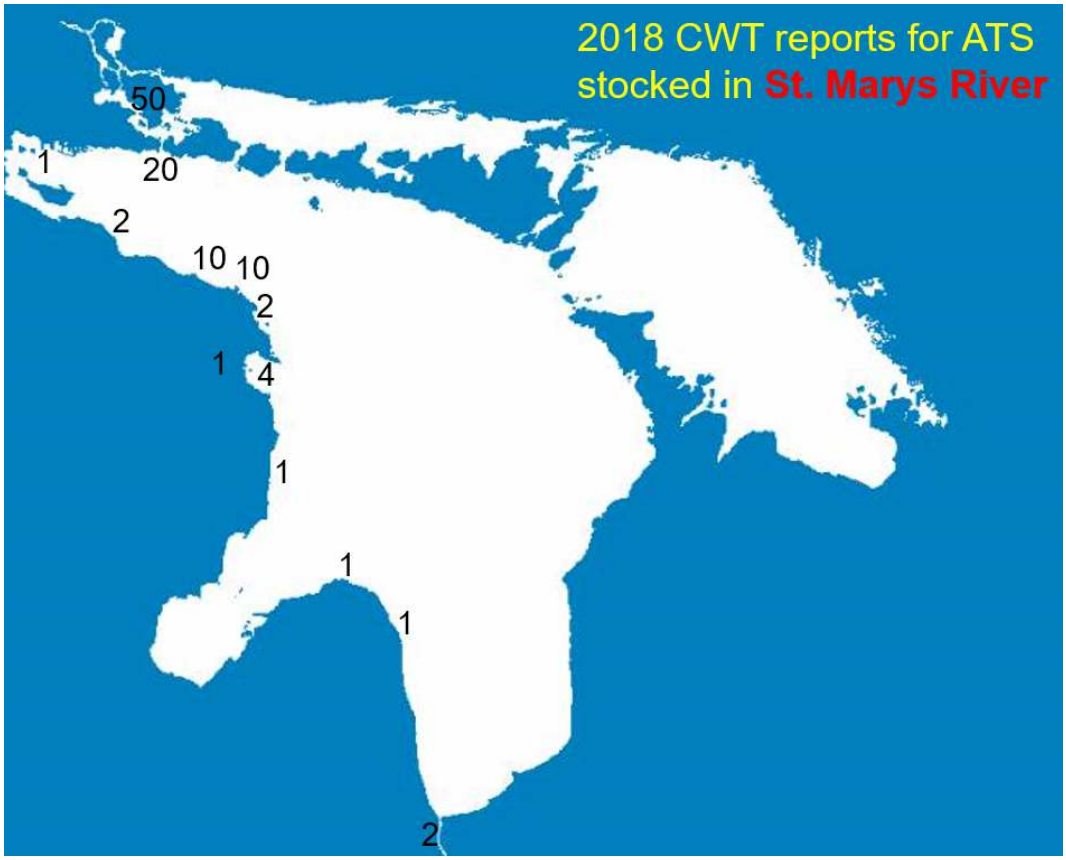
Documenting Atlantic salmon returns is limited to the creel program, coded wire tag information and volunteer reports. The following charts show the proportion of returned coded wire tags (CWTs) from DNR fish, stocked at the various ports from 2015 through 2017. The proportions changed over the years, but these data indicate that the Lexington site is preforming the best of all the DNR stocking sites.

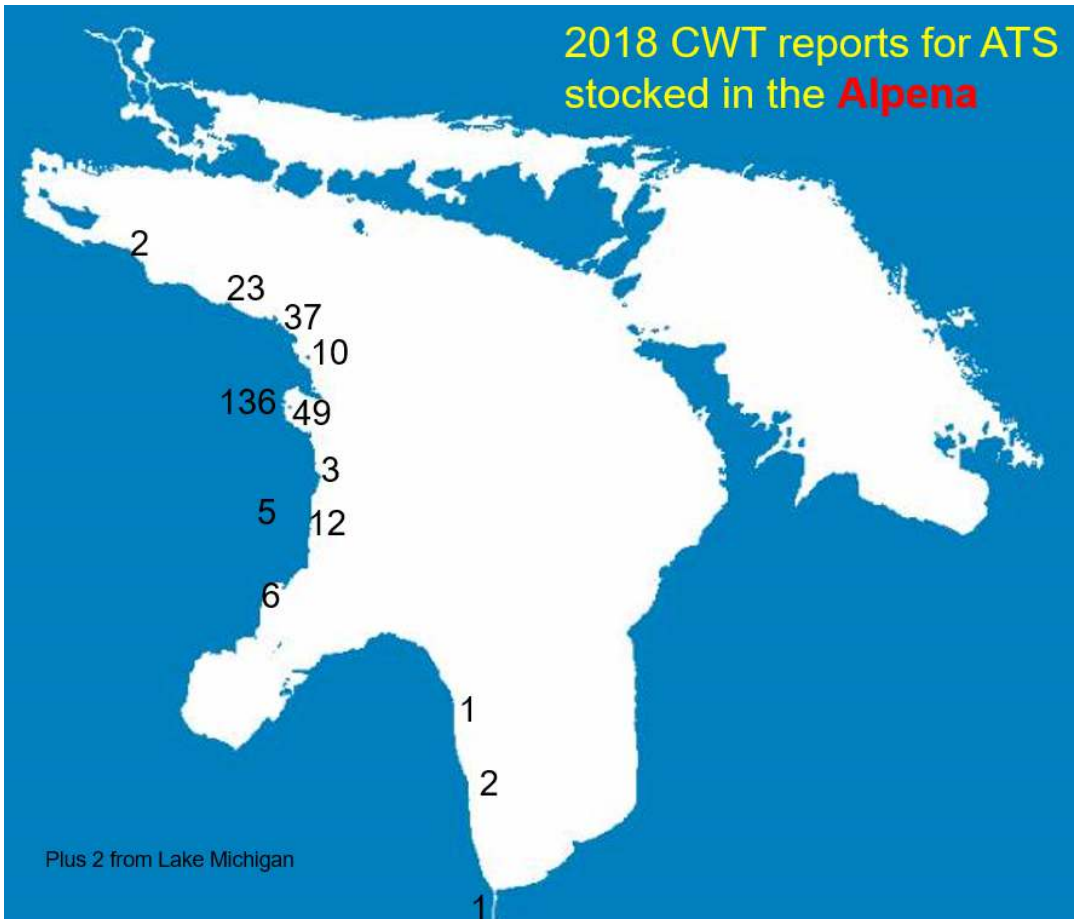


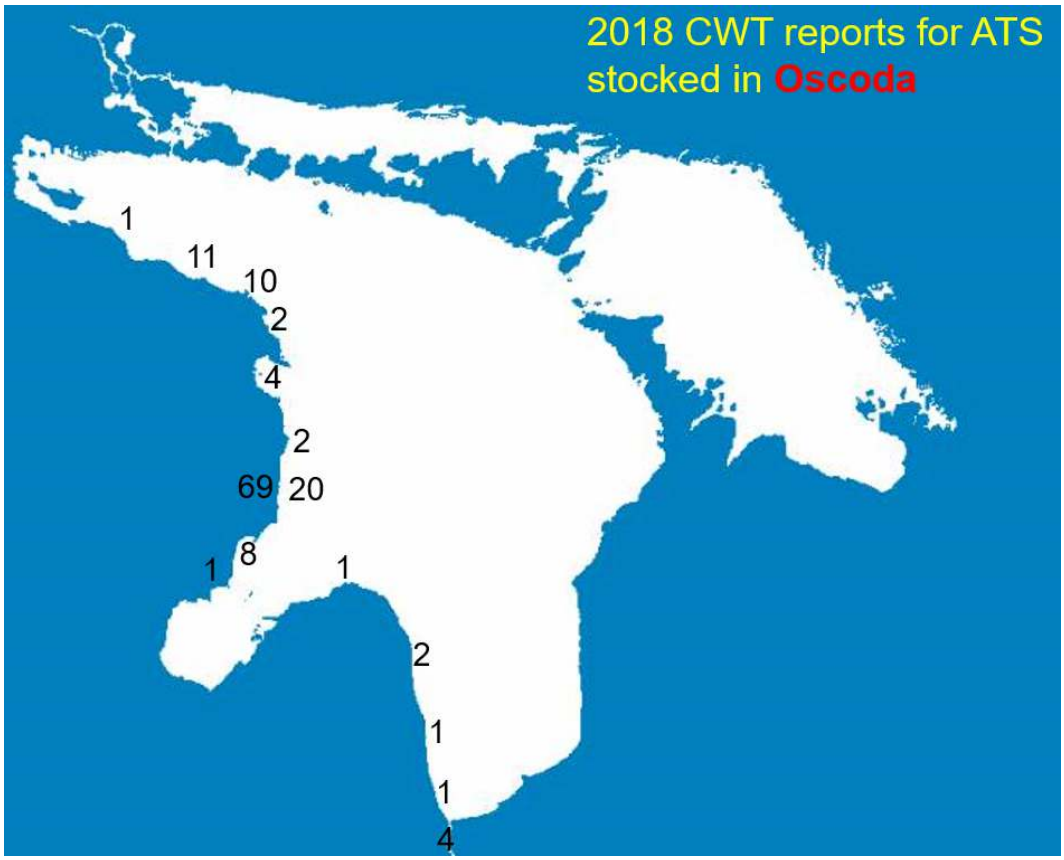




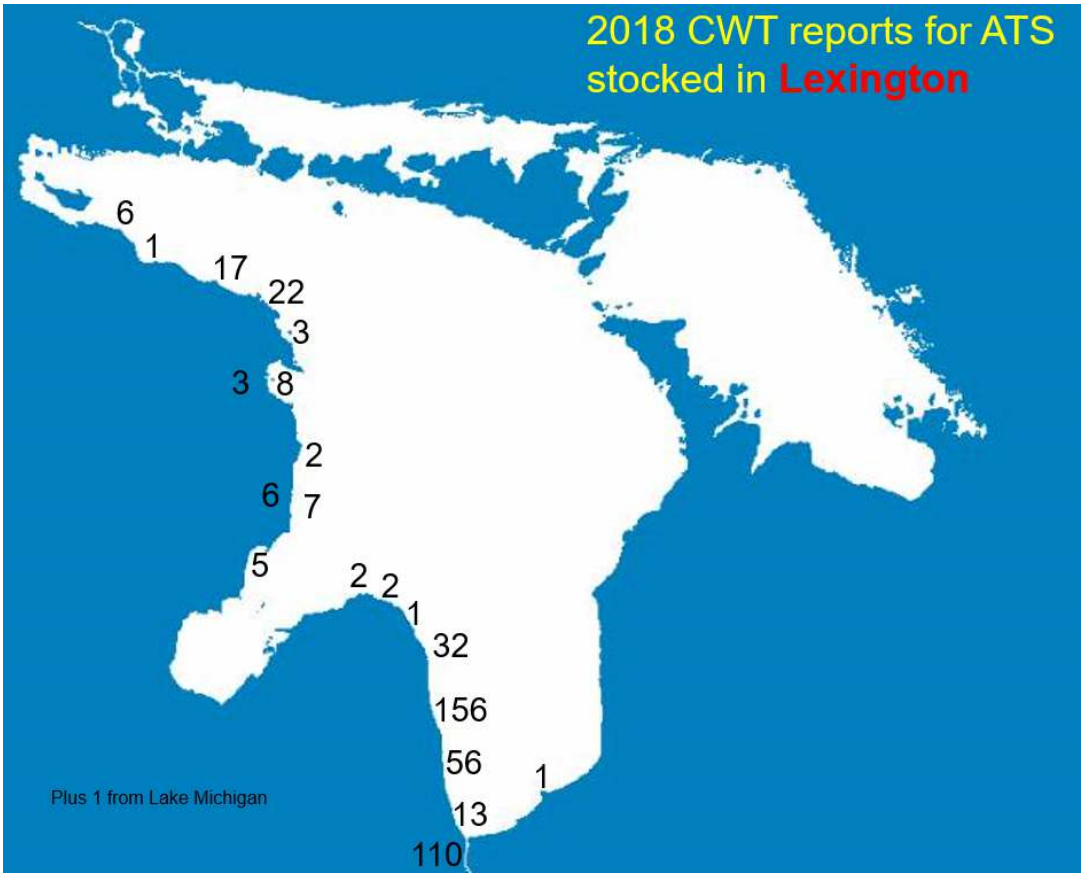
The returns of the coded wire tagged Atlantic salmon also show the locations where the fish stocked at the various locations are being harvested. Some stocking locations, like Lexington, are providing significant numbers of fish that are being caught throughout Lake Huron. The charts below show where the coded wire tagged returned fish from each of the DNR stocking sites were caught.


2018 CWT reports for ATS
stocked in St. Marys River
50
1
20
2
10
10
2
1
4
1
1
1
2


2018 CWT reports for ATS
stocked in the Alpena
2
23
37
10
136
49
3
5
12
6
1
2
Plus 2 from Lake Michigan
1



The Atlantic salmon being raised at the Platte River Hatchery are doing well. Growth may be slightly above

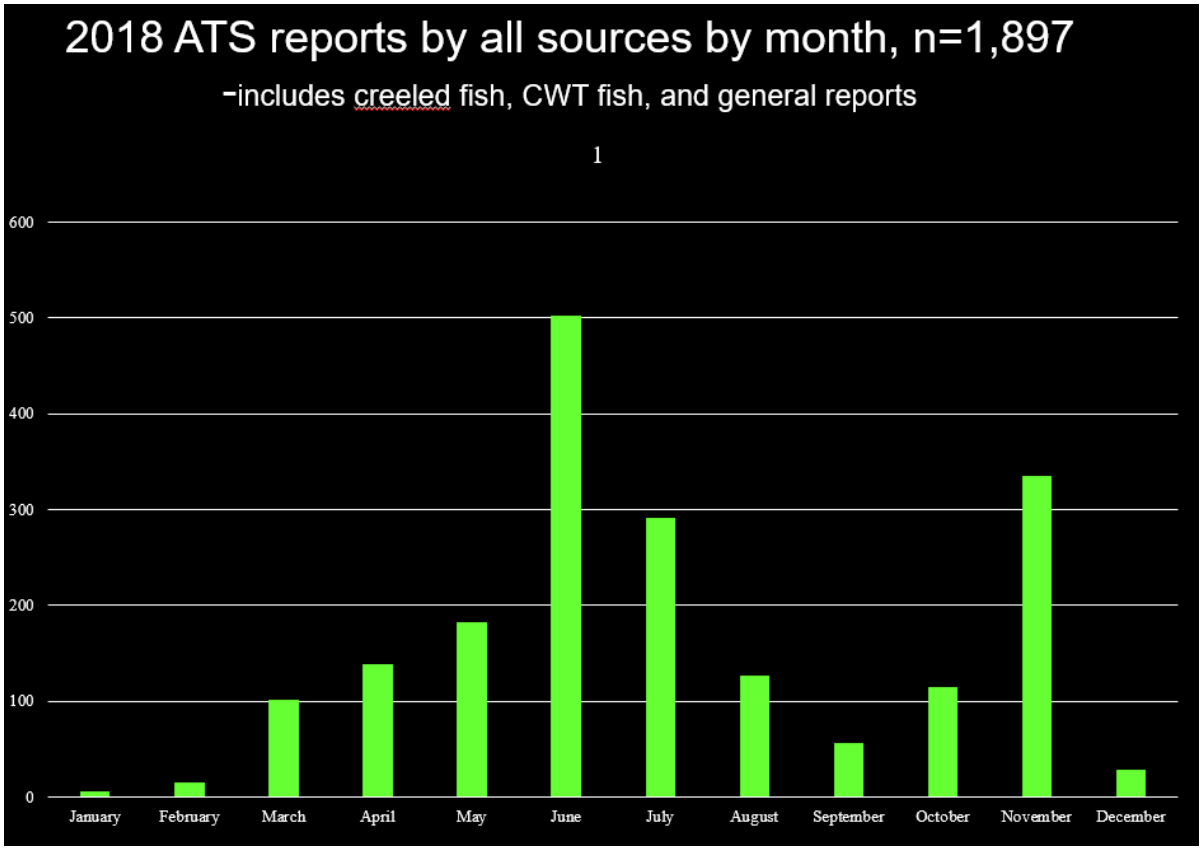


average. Reoccurring health issues continue even with reduced density. Much is being learned each year to maximize survival, but these fish are very unpredictable and a challenge to successfully raise to yearling size. This coming year (2020) the fish will be hand marked and tagged in March. One major item that adds to the uncertainty of environmental conditions is the Brundage Creek water source. This water is not treated for organisms and the flow rate and temperatures can vary greatly. The Advisors discussed treating this water and the cost of not only the new equipment, but also the need for ongoing funds to operate and maintain the system. In addition, other items complicate the water source problem, including heavy flows with increased sediment loads.

Currently, the target is to raise 100,000 Atlantic Salmon at the Platte River State Hatchery along with a new experiment to raise an additional 80,000 Atlantic salmon at the Harrietta Hatchery, which is going very well. These new fish are about 50 mm (2 inches) in length. One advantage at this second hatchery is the water source is from wells with a constant temperature the entire year. The first batch of these fish will be ready for stocking next spring.

There was a discussion about where the additional 80,000 Atlantic salmon would be stocked. Some participants expressed interest in stocking all the fish at the existing sites while others felt that stocking a portion of the 80,000 fish at one or two other new sites might provide more fishing opportunity overall and would experiment with different types of stocking environments. Currently, 3 of the 4 stocking sites are rivers that have heavy predation at times. Lexington on the other hand, is a harbor with fewer predators than the rivers and there is interest discussing further the opportunity of experimenting with 1 or 2 other harbor sites that have fewer predators. Once the Atlantic salmon are coded wire tagged, it cannot be changed where the fish will be stocked. The coded wire tags are programmed with the stocking location and if there were adjustments to the stocking prescriptions they must be completed before the fish are tagged in March. This discussion will continue at the October 22, 2019 meeting.

One trait that makes the Atlantic salmon so appealing as a sport fish is it is available to the angler more than other trout and salmon. The following chart shows that the Atlantic salmon are caught every month of the year.



The DNR and the Blue Water Sport Fishing Association are funding a MSU Graduate project to study Atlantic salmon and develop a Population Model. In addition, work will be done to better understand the potential fishing opportunities created by this species and learn more about the economic benefits generated by the fishery. Dr.

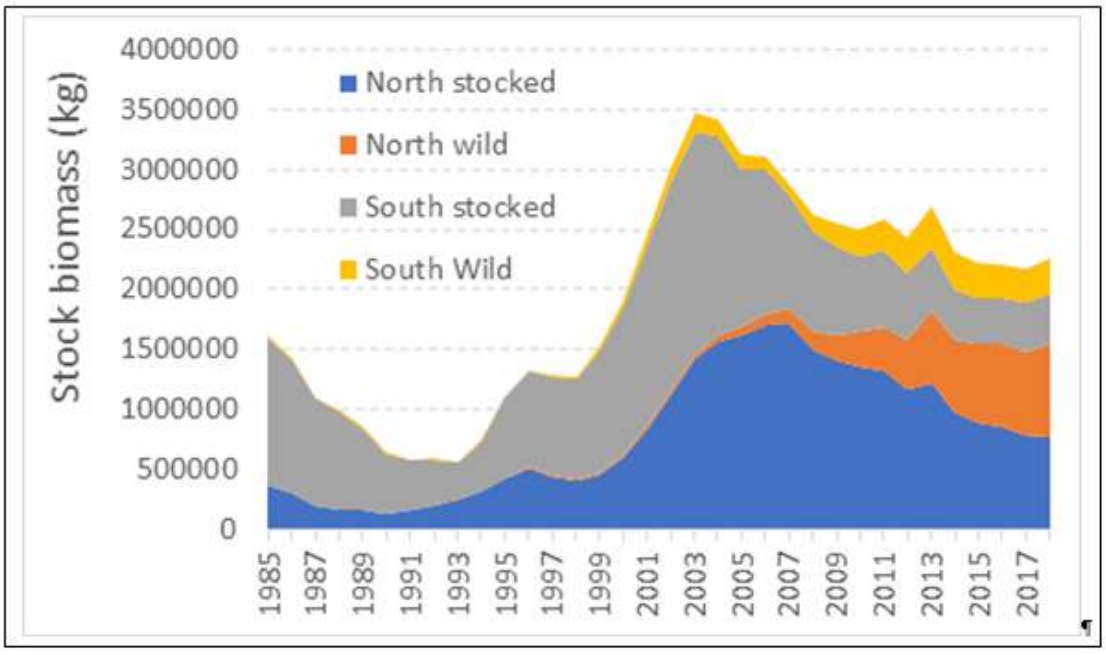
Simone de Souza from Michigan State University's Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, commented at the meeting that she will be participating in the study to learn more about the economic impacts of Atlantic salmon. She is an expert in Agricultural and Resource Economics and will be sharing the results with our Committee when the study is completed.

Review of the lake trout stocking policy in Southern Lake Huron (Randy Claramunt and Ji He, Great Lakes Research Biologist):

Randy Claramunt distributed an Issue Statement for discussion. The Lake Huron Committee (LHC), which is organized through the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and is composed of fishery managers from the DNR, Tribes and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, is responsible for cooperative management of the fisheries in Lake Huron. During 2016, the LHC approved eliminating stocking lake trout in Michigan waters south of Alpena beginning in 2018. This is a 62% reduction from 1.43 million stocked lake trout to 540,000. The decision to reduce lake trout stocking was based on few hatchery fish surviving, most juvenile lake trout being of wild origin and a significant amount of adult lake trout in the population.

Since the 2016 decision to reduce stocking and the implementation of the reduction in 2018, it now appears the lake trout biomass is actually decreasing. In southern Lake Huron, where stocking was cut 100%, the biomass has dropped substantially. Survey catch rates, trends in fishery catch rates, and overall concern from stakeholders support the sharp decline in lake trout abundance as shown in the chart below. How would the population changes of lake trout in U.S. waters of Lake Huron be best described?

Estimated biomass of lake trout in Michigan's waters of Lake Huron (MH-1 through 6) including the north (MH-1 and 2) and south (MH-3 through 6) by source of recruitment (stocked or wild).¶



The population changes can best be described by the following questions:

1. What contributed to the increase in lake trout biomass during the 1990s? The buildup of adult biomass (estimated total weight of all the adult lake trout) and production occurred prior to the alewife collapse and was driven by survival and recruitment of strong year classes of ***stocked*** lake trout from hatcheries. The impacts from other factors such as, environmental, food-web, and reduction in annual mortality sources such as sea lamprey and fishing were also important in the lake trout population buildup, but good survival of stocked fish was the primary factor.

2. The lake trout biomass expansion peaked around 2003 to 2007 but appears to have been decreasing since then (see chart above). What is limiting the expansion beyond 2007 levels? The recent decline in adult biomass is due to poor survival of hatchery yearlings after stocking. The lake trout expansion noted in item 1 was related to the high abundance of alewives, which provided both a food source and a predation buffer after the lake trout were stocked. When the alewife crashed in 2003, this food source and predation buffer was eliminated. The loss of alewives increased wild reproduction, but the production of wild lake trout could not increase enough to compensate for the loss in hatchery fish survival. This has caused the recent decline in lake trout biomass. The net effect was that the loss of stocked lake trout recruits was not made up by wild reproduction. Unfortunately, the large decline in juvenile lake being added to the population was not apparent in measurements of the adult biomass until 2014 at the earliest. This lake trout biomass decline was not immediately evident because mortality of the adult fish was reduced and there was a rapid buildup of older age groups.

3. What is limiting the lake trout stocks now and where are they headed? Food-web changes have had a major impact on lake trout growth, but a density effect on lake trout growth was not detected. This growth decline of individual fish was offset by a reduction in mortality at the population level resulting in more fish living to older ages. After the 2003 collapse of alewives, the adult lake trout biomass continued to increase until 2007, and adult production increased until 2010 which was evidence that, to a certain degree, the effect of a recruitment decline was offset by a reduction in adult mortality. However, with the cessation of stocking and the lower than expected levels of wild recruitment, managers could expect to see continued declines in lake trout abundance.

What is the primary recommendation to address the issue? Reinstitute stocking of lake trout in southern Lake Huron. What are the pros and cons of the action?

- ***Pros:***
    - Stocking will help to stabilize a decrease in lake trout biomass that is caused by lower than expected wild recruitment.
    - Stocking would be an index or measure to determine if stocked fish can survive. The lack of stocking survival is a critical indicator for deciding whether to eliminate or reduce stocking; however, this index cannot be evaluated for the majority of Lake Huron in MH-3 through 6 because no lake trout are stocked in these central and southern management units.
    - Better distribution of stocked fish by stocking some lake trout in the south will support the lake trout stocks better throughout Lake Huron as most of the stocking is currently in a small area in the north.
    - Stocking in the south will help separate stocked fish from wild production as most of the wild fish are thought to recruit in northern Lake Huron, which is where the remaining 540,000 stocked lake trout are placed.
    - Southern Lake Huron is likely a population sink because it is relying on the recruitment from the northern portion of the lake. Stocking lake trout in the south will potentially provide added protection to wild lake trout if fishing pressure increases unexpectedly and/or the harvest regulations become less effective.

- ***Cons:***
    - Stocking will indicate at a policy level that our initial conclusions about reaching lake trout rehabilitation targets were premature.
    - Stocking will support fisheries that are potentially perceived as put-grow-take.
    - Stocking will be disruptive to state and federal hatcheries that have modified production capacities because of the 2016 decision to implement the 2018 stocking cuts.
    - Stocking will involve more costs in rearing and marking of the lake trout.
    - A management challenge is to improve the effectiveness of stocking if some level of stocking is resumed in southern Lake Huron. This may require additional evaluation and assessment resources.

Options for the Committee to consider:

1. Stock 220,000 at ___ site in southern Lake Huron.
2. Develop other options.
3. No, do not reinstate lake trout stocking.

The primary option to address the problem is to consider reestablishing stocking of lake trout in southern Lake

Huron. Also, other recommendations are welcomed. Frank asked if a decision was needed immediately. Randy Claramunt explained that it takes two years before a change happens, and another five years before the fish enter the fishery. With the current available information, a recommendation from the Committee would be appreciated.

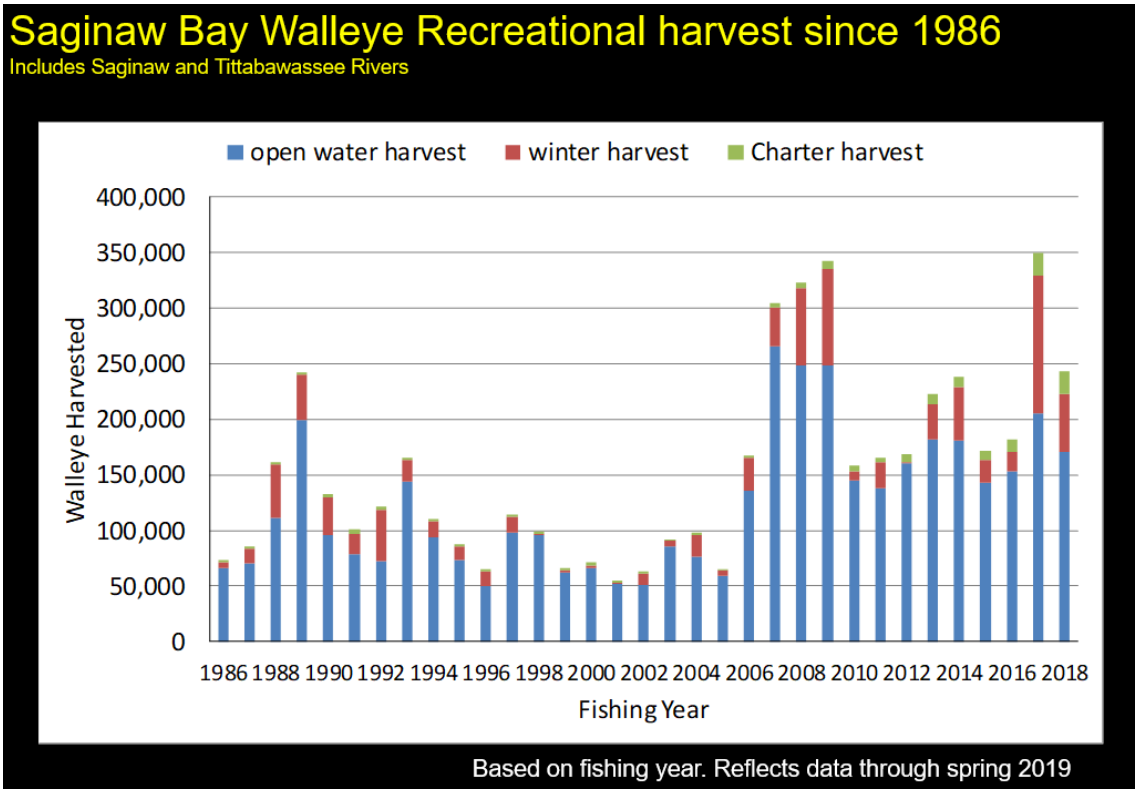
Vote: 14 yes to stock 220,000 lake trout at some site to be determined in southern Lake Huron and 1 vote to develop other options.

Discussion/Questions – Lake trout move much but usually stay within a 30-mile area. The prey biomass is commonly located around rocky substrate but most of this type of habitat in southern Lake Huron is found 20-30 miles offshore. The majority of anglers are not traveling that far out to fish and they may not be fishing where most of the lake trout are located. The offshore fishery may not be adequately represented in the current evaluations and there is concern that at least exploratory surveys should be conducted on the offshore reefs to determine if the existing surveys are adequate.

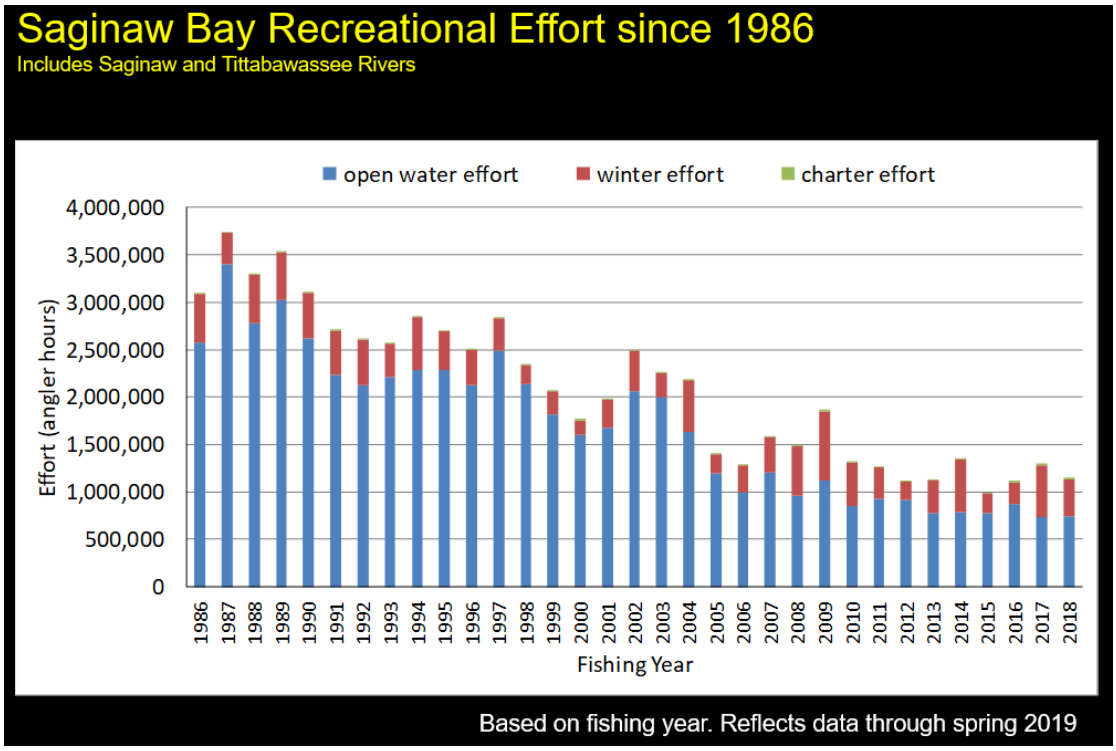
It was suggested that a small subcommittee review the data with Randy and Ji He and another update be provided at the next meeting. Frank and Jim Johnson volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Overview of the status of the walleye, yellow perch and forage fish in Saginaw Bay and a discussion of the need for potential changes to the walleye fishing regulation for 2020. There is much interest in opening at least a portion of Saginaw River to year around walleye fishing. (Dave Fielder and Randy Claramunt):

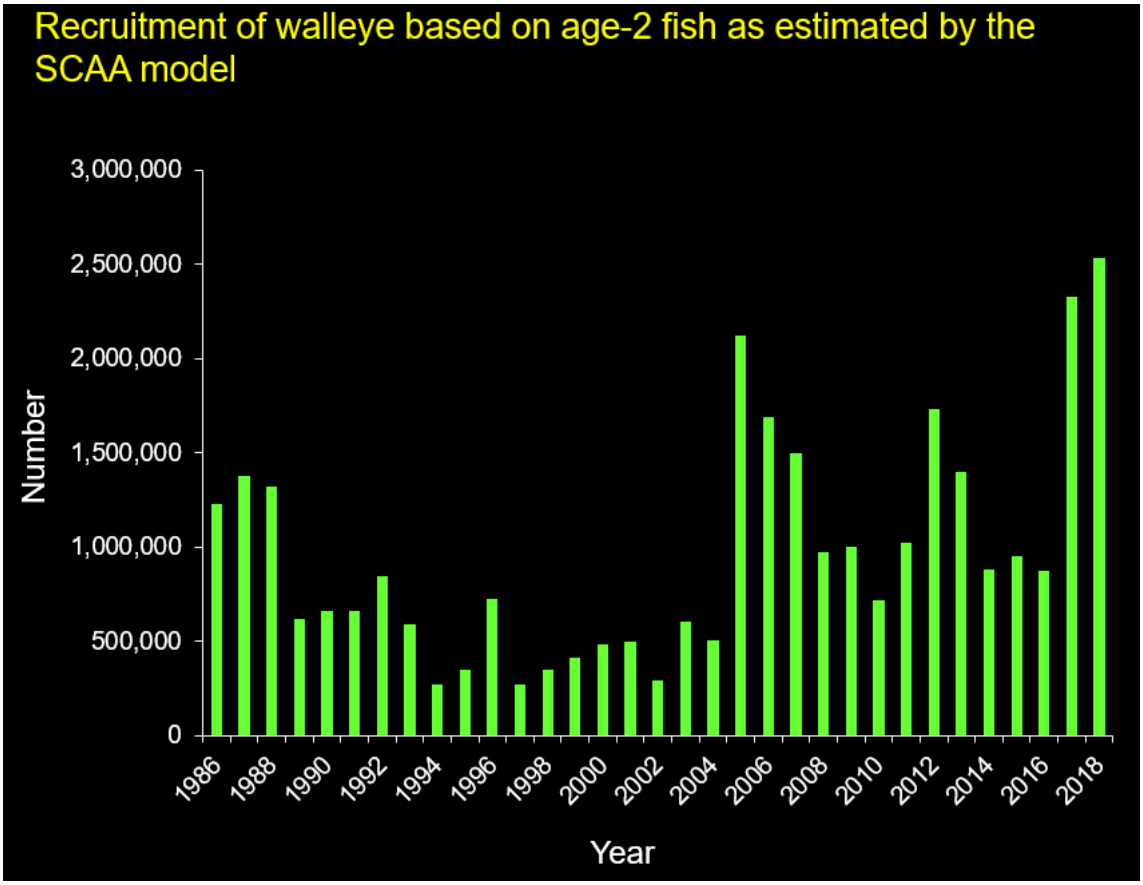
The Saginaw Bay walleye recreational harvest was liberalized beginning in 2015. It was anticipated that the harvest would go up significantly. Instead, harvest was unchanged or even declined some until 2017 when there was a substantial winter fishery resulting in a new overall record level of harvest. More recently, the harvest returned to levels commensurate with recent levels and the large increase in 2017 was not maintained in 2018 as shown in the chart below.



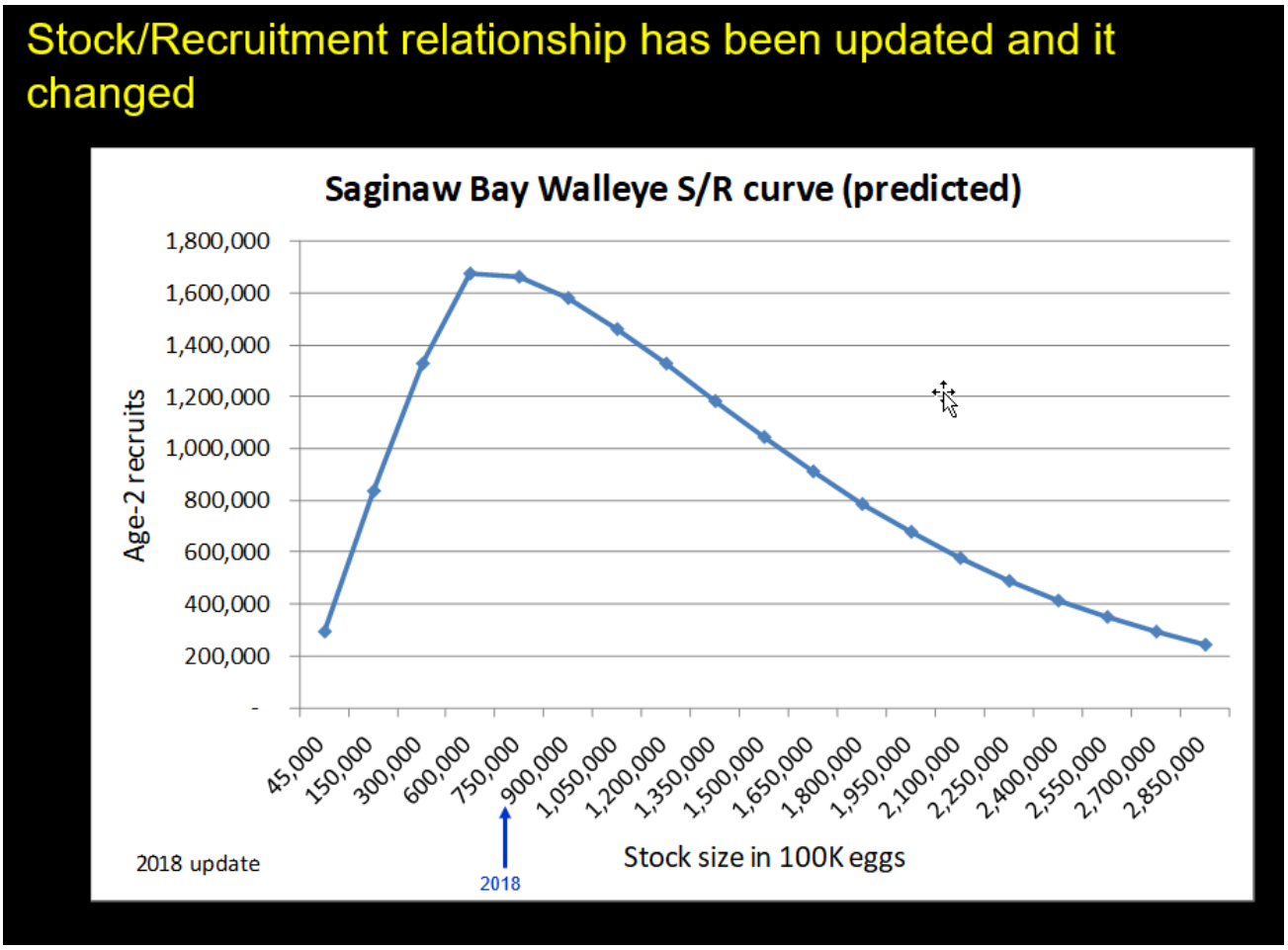
Fishing effort has continually declined since 1986 and leveled off since about 2010. Likely the ability of the liberalized harvest regulations to maintain a higher harvest is affected and in turn limited by this lower level of fishing effort. see chart below.



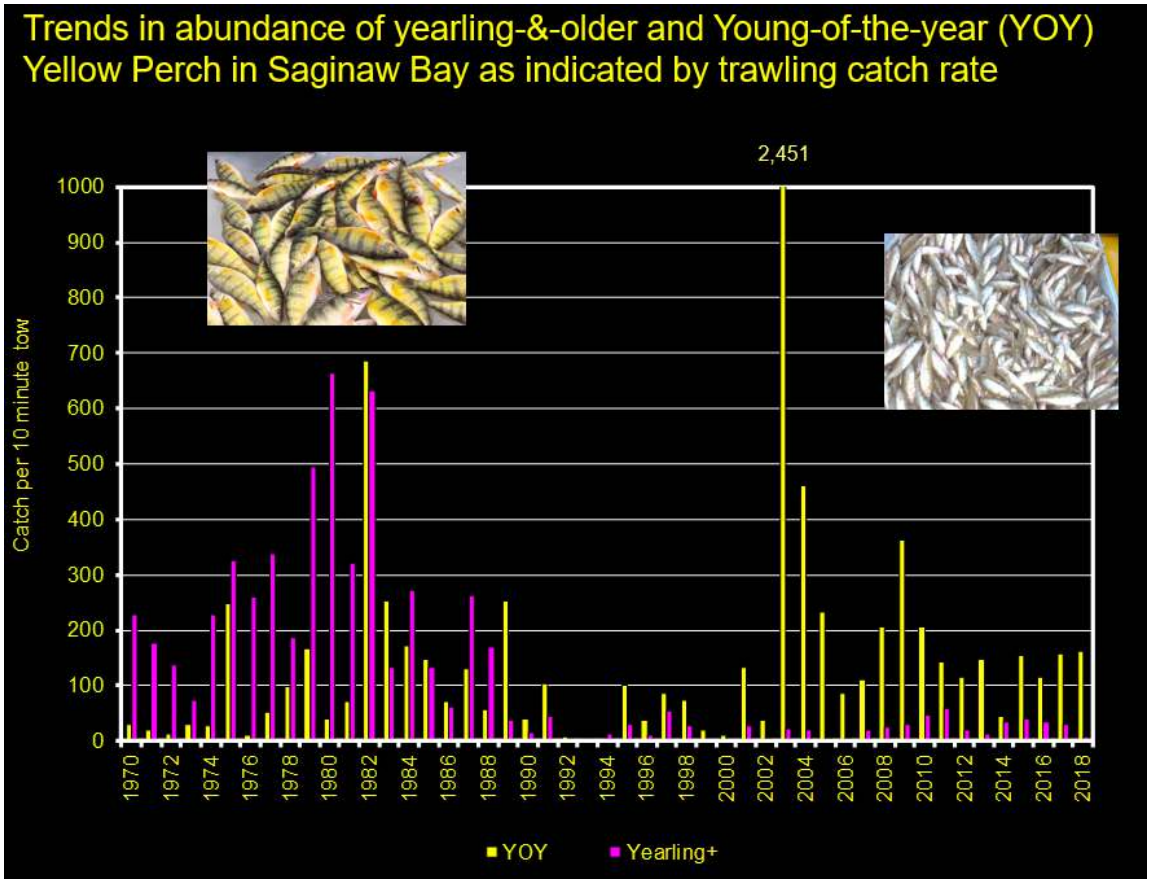
Recruitment of walleye is based on age 2 fish as estimated by the ***Statistical catch-at-age*** (SCAA) ***model***. The chart below shows the recruitment of age 2 walleye Since 1986. Two very high years of recruitment have occurred in 2017 and 2018 keeping the population very high.



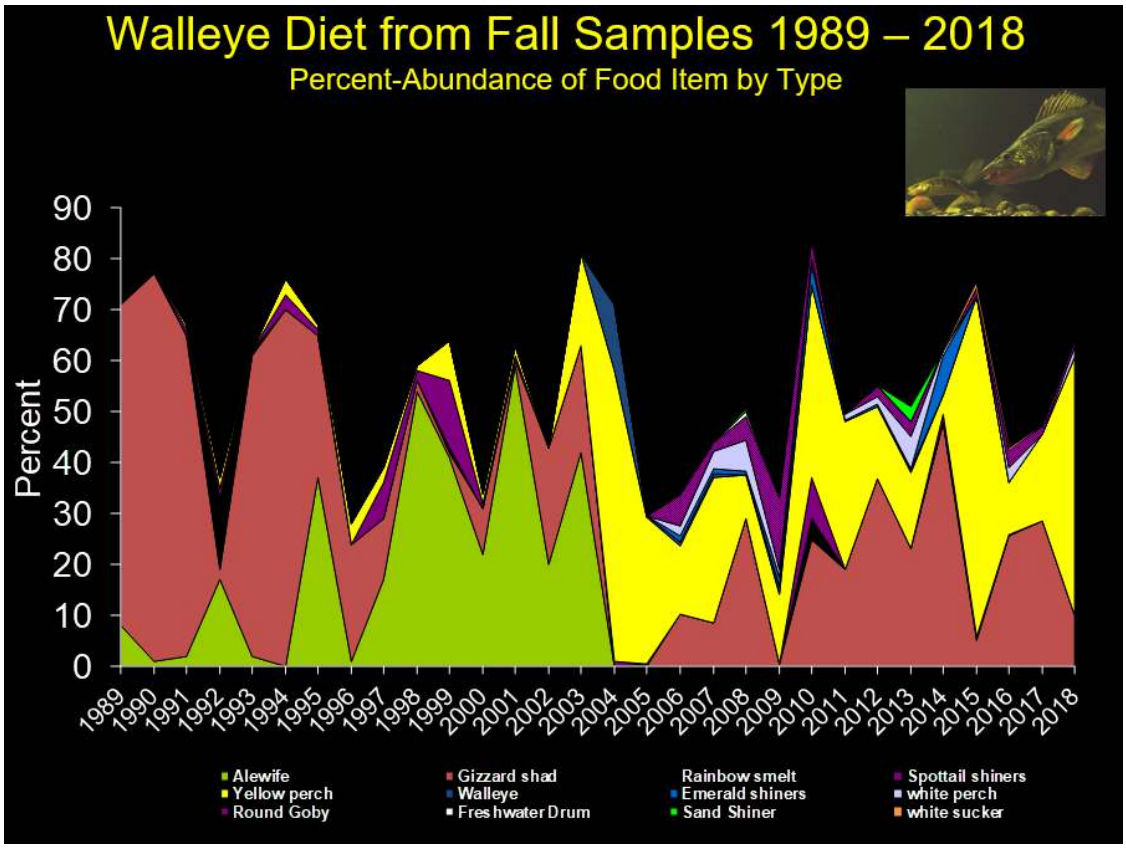
The Stock/Recruitment relationship tells us how recruitment results from any given size of breeding population. Many people think that the more spawners you have the more recruitment you get when in fact the relationships is more like a bell curve instead. The graph below is the most updated version of the Saginaw Bay walleye stock/recruitment relationship. What it tells us is that we have probably been successful with the liberalized walleye harvest regulations in reducing the mature breeding portion of the population but in doing so, we have moved to the left in the curve to elevate the amount of annual recruitment that results. This is the walleye population's way of resisting being downsized. The 2018 brood size is indicated in the graphic below and we can see that we are at the maximum (apex) of the curve. So, we are getting very large year classes like the last two we have seen that have exceeded 2 million fish each. What this now tells us is that if we want to reduce the walleye population anymore, we'll have to push the breeding population to the left of the curve's apex and that means to purposely overfish the population. A form of overharvest called 'recruitment-overfishing'. That is a danger zone in the population in terms of management where populations can react unpredictably and possibly crash. This in turn forces us to reconsider our ability to reduce the walleye population whether by liberalized harvest or any other means.



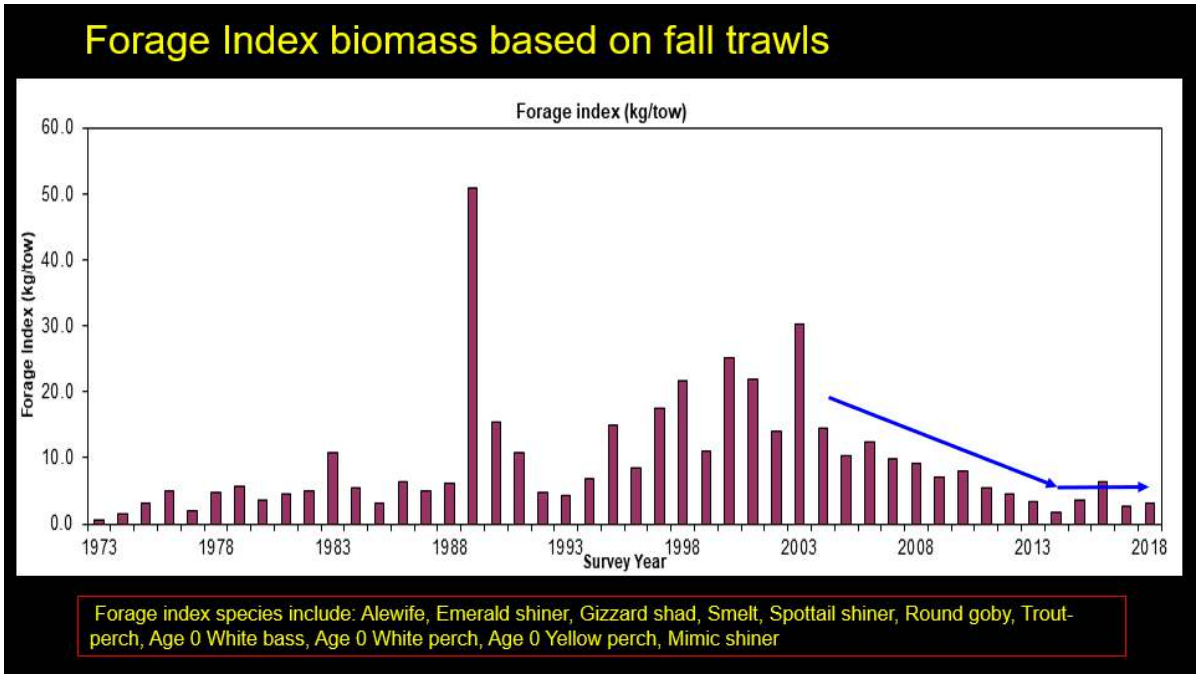
Yellow perch are reproducing very well; but are experiencing high mortality between ages 0 and 1. The chart below shows that there are high levels of yellow perch reproduction but few live to age 1 as indicated by the short pink bars in recent periods. A main reason for the poor survival of juvenile yellow perch is the high predation on yellow perch by walleyes and other predators.



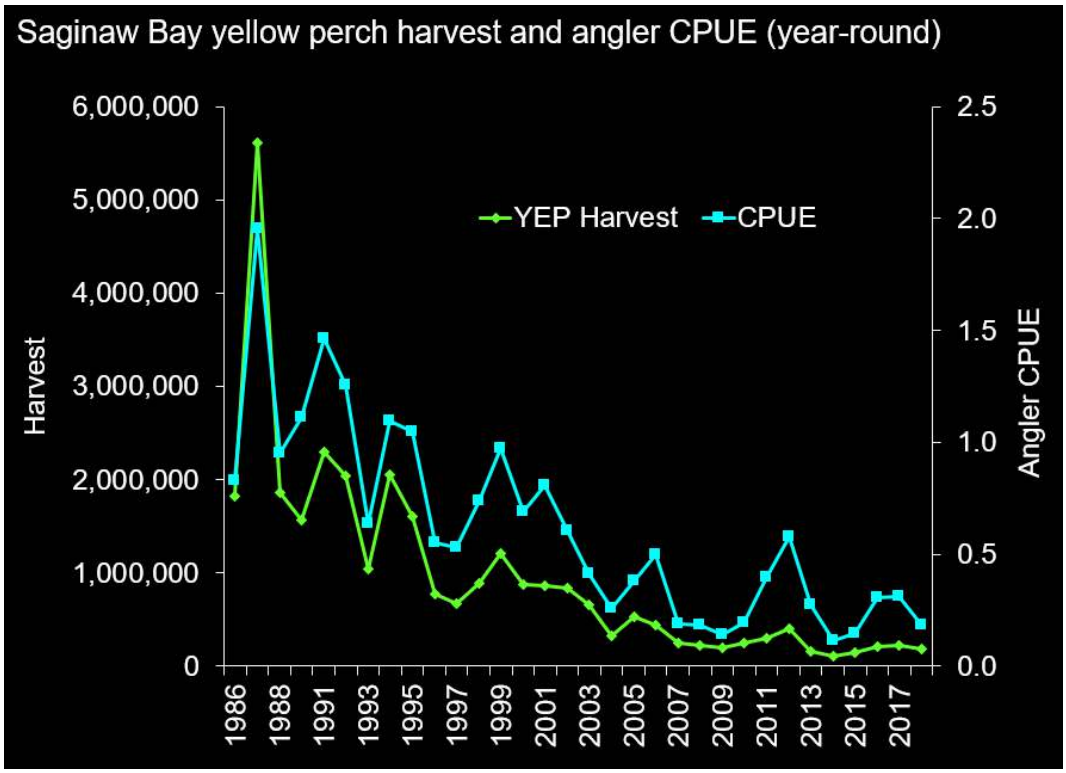
The yellow shaded area on the chart below shows that yellow perch have become a major food item of Walleye.



Overall the forage fish have stabilized at low levels compared with the past 20 years as shown in the chart below. The forage base has not substantially increased but does appear to be stable.



Because Yellow Perch are depressed in number due to the poor survival between age-0 and age-1, the few perch that do survive to older ages are growing at a very fast rate. This is to be expected because their growth is 'density-dependent' and at low density, there is little competition among perch for resources. As indicated in the chart below, Yellow Perch are in low abundance when compared to the other decades as recent as the 1980s and 1990s. This is evident in the recreational harvest and angler catch rate (CPUE) as indicated by the creel survey. The commercial fishery for yellow perch has shown similar declines.



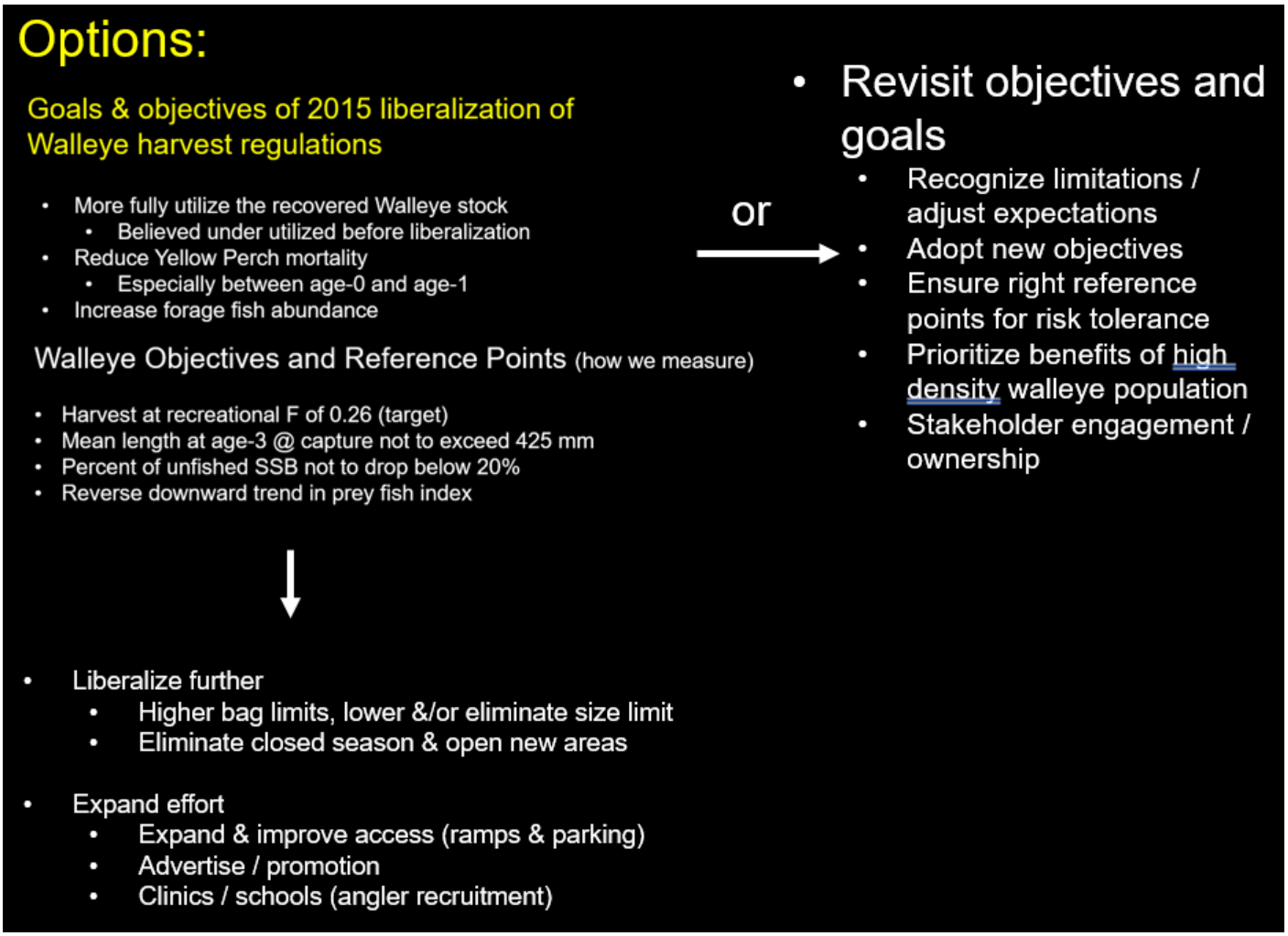
Summary of main points:

- It appears we probably have been successful in reducing the breeding portion of the walleye population through recreational harvest but in turn, that has resulted in increased recruitment because of the stock/recruitment function.
- To reduce the walleye breeding population any further would cross into 'recruitment-overfishing' zone and would be dangerous and unpredictable.
- So far, we are still within the limits of sustainability (no indication of over harvest so far)

What can be done to for 2020?

- Liberalize the regulations further
- Expand effort
- Or revisit objectives and goals

The slide below shows the original goals established in 2015 and potential options to consider currently after there has been little success meeting those goals. It is a sort of decision flow chart. It is offered that in light of the newest information, that instead of pursuing more liberalization, that this would be a good time to revisit our management goals and objectives and ensure we are on the right track and have the right expectations. Likely its time to take a step back and reconsider our management in light of what has been learned over the last four years.



After the presentation and the suggestion to revisit management objectives and consider if we are still on the right track, the committee membership embarked on a discussion of how to liberalize the fishery further, specifically by

opening at least a section of the Saginaw River to walleye fishing the entire year and a discussion ensued around the benefits and possible negative impacts created by the new fishery.

Randy Terrian – Mentioned that the prey base in the bay may be impacted with the closing of the factories at the mouth of the river that discharge warm water. As that warm water goes away, gizzard shad may go away and the prey base will decline further.
Judy Ogden – Are we at a greater risk of disease due to the high density of walleye?

Jerry Brown– Will planting herring help this problem? They will definitely add to the forage base.

Jim DeClerck – If this is a sustainable fishery, we may never get enough recreational anglers to make a dent. So why not liberalize it? Liberalizing regulations (extensively) could benefit the whole picture.

Terry Walsh – Where the walleye population is, this is a prime opportunity to expand recreational fishing by opening the Saginaw River in the spring.

Dana Serafin – Why can't we offer walleye at a restaurant? Let the commercial fishers go to work.

Others from the commercial fishing and restaurant industry provided comments similar to Dana Serafin's comment above.

Dennis Gulau – There are many trophy angers that like to target larger fish and opening the river without controls to protect the larger fish could reduce the number of trophy size fish in the Bay.

Others mentioned that implementing a slot limit might help protect the larger fish.

Randy Terrian – Opening Saginaw River the entire year would be a start and provide additional fishing opportunity.

Fred Stearns – Let Randy Claramunt take our comments back and discuss with staff and bring a recommendation back to us.

Frank Krist – Dave Fielder has provided an excellent overview of the biology of the walleye and yellow perch fisheries and the DNR is looking for our recommendation so we should make a decision today.

Randy Claramunt – Suggests revisiting the objectives could be beneficial.

It was mentioned that the Bay City/Saginaw/Midland area is a major population center in Michigan and opening the Saginaw River the entire year to walleye fishing would provide additional fishing opportunity for many anglers. If there is concern about too many walleye being harvested during this new open period, then possibly a conservative approach could be used initially like reducing the daily bag limit.

Jim DeClerck made a motion that the committee agree to open the Saginaw River in the spring up to Center Street. ***Terry Walsh*** second the motion.

Vote: 11 yes and 3 no.

Randy Claramunt discussed that the process of moving forward would involve bringing the public into the discussion through the Sea Grant meetings in the spring and possibly some public hearings. This could delay the change for about 1 year.

Since lake trout throwback mortality is considered to be 41%, should targeting of lake trout after a limit is reached be made illegal? (Randy Claramunt):

This discussion came to Lake Michigan Fishery Citizen Advisory Committee first. Randy was asked to present this

to the Lake Huron Fishery Citizen Advisory Committee for their opinion. Grand Traverse Bay had a lake trout quota reduction to a 1 lake trout daily bag limit because the quota was exceeded. A factor in the overharvest was the large number of lake trout that were thrown back because of a 41% mortality of released lake trout had to be included in the harvest. Because throwing back lake trout caused the quota to be exceeded the DNR proposed making it illegal to release legal size lake trout.

Frank mentioned that he was present and participated at 2 Lake Michigan Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee meetings and a public hearing in Traverse City this year where votes were taken each time on this issue. The overwhelming result at each meeting was not supporting changing the law to make it illegal to catch and release lake trout. There was a strong opinion that catch and release is not enforceable and there is no way to tell if an angler is targeting lake trout or fishing for other species of trout and salmon. To help reduce this practice it was stressed that an education program should be emphasized instead of changing the law.

Ed Rutherford was not present but submitted comments against the change because there is no way to define targeting of lake trout. Lines are regularly set from the top to the bottom when fishing for trout and salmon and lake trout can be caught at all depths including on the surface since lake trout occasionally feed on the surface for bugs. Also, if an angler reaches the lake trout limit must they stop fishing for other species since if they catch another legal-size lake trout they would be in violation of the law? What happens if an angler does not want lake trout, must it be kept and then discarded onshore? There is a concern that tickets could be issued for legitimately targeting other species.

Enforcement was discussed and enforcement of this regulation would be very challenging.

Option for vote Should an exception be made to FO-248 making it illegal to Catch and Immediately Release lake trout after reaching the daily possession limit?

Vote 1 Abstain, 8 no and 3 yes.

Brief update on cormorant control (Randy Claramunt):

Little has changed. Looking to get communication from USFWS soon on their policy on how to manage cormorants. The policy will have impacts on Michigan and the other Great Lakes states, but we have not received nationwide guidance yet. The hope is to continue to work with the other states and USFWS and continue to develop a model that will be science based and would protect both free swimming fish and the cormorant populations.

Follow-up Note: On September 12, 2019 Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) introduced the Senate companion to the Cormorant Relief Act, legislation originally introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressmen Jack Bergman (MI-01) and Collin Peterson (MN-07). The legislation would temporarily reinstate depredation orders to allow for recreational fisheries and aquaculture facilities alike to effectively manage cormorant populations. It is important that individuals and organizations contact their US Senators and Representatives to encourage them to support the bills. This would provide protection of free-swimming fish while the USFWS and the states develop an updated process to deal with the issue.

Brief update on how the Lake Huron/Lake Michigan Diet Study is proceeding and locations in Lake Huron where there is a need to collect more stomach samples (Frank Krist):

No one from Michigan State University was available to attend the meeting but Frank mentioned that more stomachs are especially needed throughout Lake Huron from all species of salmon, steelhead, Atlantic salmon, brown trout and walleye (in units outside of Saginaw Bay). A decent number of lake trout and Saginaw Bay walleye samples have been collected but still continue to collect them since it is important to collect samples during as many months as possible.

Added agenda items.

Randy Claramunt provided an overview of the ***Recovering America's Wildlife Act.*** The act, if passed, could

provide Michigan with approximately 30 million dollars annually for the conservation of vulnerable fish and wildlife. The following link to The National Wildlife Federation provides many details about the Act and how to support it, https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act.

It was suggested that the Committee write a letter of support and send it to the Michigan United State Congressional Delegation. Jim Johnson volunteered to write the letter and Frank signed and sent the letters to all of Michigan's Congressional Delegation on August 19.

A vote was taken and all 12 Advisors voted to send a letter of support.

Manager, Law Enforcement and other updates:

Officers Nick Atkin, Craig Milkowski and Lt David Shaw – There have been three promotions to the Great Lakes Enforcement Unit. Another boat has been assigned Dickenson County. Six abandon nets were found in Lake Huron and so far, 5 were pulled. The unit is preparing for 2020 Great Lakes Consent Decree negotiations and the impacts of the potentially new commercial fishing statue if enacted into law.

Ed Roseman – USGS Great Lakes Science Center – The fall annual Lake Huron acoustic forage survey is scheduled for September and the bottom trawl work will begin in the middle October. There was a little increase in prey last year especially in the bloater population. Bottom trawl forage fish results are down in inner and outer Saginaw Bay. Lake Michigan acoustic survey starts next week, followed by the bottom trawl survey. An Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) is being developed and t this un-maned submarine takes high resolution photos and incorporates software that enables a computer to identify and count gobies and other fish. Jeff Schaeffer, who worked on Lake Huron for many years, is moving to Tennessee and is taking a new position as Director of the Water Center at Tennessee Tech University. Jeff will be in charge of facilitating research at the Center.

Pat Hanchin – Negotiations of the 2000 Great Lakes Fishing Consent Decree took two years to complete and the hope is to begin negotiations with the 5 Tribes and the United States soon. This topic will be on the agenda at the August 22, 2019 Executive Council Meeting with all the parties to the Consent Decree being present. The 2000 Decree took 2 years to complete and the existing Decree expires in one year.

Gary Whelan – Lake Michigan hydro acoustic that measures forage fish abundance with the assistance of the DNR will beginning soon. Todd Wills on Lake Erie survey right now.

Todd Wills – New Technician in Alpena. The Tanner and Smolt research vessels will be spending time on Saginaw Bay. The Tanner acoustic and trawls surveys will be looking for cisco.

Simone de Souza – Will be working with Randy and a Masters student to develop a biological assessment model and estimate economic value generated by the Atlantic Salmon Program.

Kathrin Schrouder – Jim Baker retired as Southern Lake Huron Unit Manager. Joe Leonardi, DNR Biologist retired as well. 900,000 walleye fry were raised and stocked this spring. The New Southern Lake Huron Unit Manger, Jeff Jolley starts Monday. Kathrin plans to retire effective Nov 1st.

Jon Jackoviak, manager of the Harrietta State Fish Hatchery – Sand blasting and re-coating the raceways are being done.

Donna Wesander – New on-line Charter Fishing reporting system went live this year. 55% of the commercial fishermen are using the new system. The new system is mobile; you can use your computer or your smart phone to record data.

Jan VanAmberg– Manager Thompson State Fish Hatchery, there is a $10 million project to enhance cold water production. It is not on schedule or budget. Mass marking will occur around October. We have acquired new staff, and maintenance is up to full staff at Thompson and Marquette.

Ed Eisch – DNR Fish Production Manager, The Artic grayling program has reached a milestone is moving forward. UV treatment was installed at Oden last week. The Artic graying are at Oden and will be moved to Marquette where they will be held as broodstock.

Paul Stowe – Platte River State Fish Hatchery. Coho salmon were stocked in Lake Huron this year for the first time since 1989. He is excited to see how well they survive. The stocking went smoothly and quality fish were released.

Christian LeSage – The regulations deadline for proposals to be placed in the Fishing Guide are due from the units by April 15.

Tim Cwalinski – Gaylord had one technician retire. This position will not be refilled. We saw inland lake bass mortality last year. Our unit's walleye ponds were not operated this year, which provided an opportunity to conduct needed maintenance. All of the walleye stocking commitments were filled by Southern Lake Huron Management Unit, however.

Adjourn

Next meeting
Tuesday October 22, 2019
All meetings will be held at Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare