



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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Fishery Commission Lauds Oval Office Commitment *Trump-Whitmer-Hall Meeting Yields Renewed Optimism*

By Great Lakes Basin
Report

ANN ARBOR, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission today lauded Wednesday's Oval Office discussion among President Donald Trump, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and Michigan House Speaker Matt Hall about the need to prevent the migration of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. The Commission has been part of a determined, bi-partisan effort to keep these harmful, invasive species out of the Great Lakes, and Wednesday's conversation gives

renewed hope that key projects, like the one underway at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, will be completed as planned. "Asian carps would devastate the Great Lakes fishery if they were allowed to enter the system," said Commission Chairman Ethan Baker, who is also the Mayor of Troy, Michigan. "We must do everything we can to keep them out. The multi-billion-dollar fishery is at stake." "Asian carp" collectively refers to three species of fish—bighead, silver, and black carp—that are native to Asia and that

escaped accidentally into public waterways in the southern United States decades ago; they have been making their way towards the Great Lakes ever since, with a manmade canal system near the Chicago area being the riskiest pathway. The carps were originally raised for food and as a natural way to keep bodies of water free of algae and other aquatic vegetation. An electrical barrier exists near Romeoville, Illinois to impede the movement, and a major project, the retrofitting of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet, is designed to be an innova-

tive, impenetrable layer of defense. "We have every reason to be deeply worried about Asian carp," Baker continued. "The carps have decimated the fisheries in every waterway they have invaded already—primarily the Mississippi, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers. They eat massive quantities of food, and they reproduce prolifically. Bi-national, peer-reviewed risk assessments conducted by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and

"Oval Office"
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Sea Lamprey Control Program Receives OK To Rehire Federal Workers

By Great Lakes Basin
Report

The Great Lakes' sea lamprey control program has the OK to rehire three dozen federal employees it needs to combat the eel-like, invasive fish species. That's after staffing cuts and hiring freezes from the Trump administration last month threatened the work, which the Great Lakes Fishery Commission said would have led to more than \$200 million in lost fishing potential.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is a Canadian-American commission which coordinates lamprey control across the Great Lakes region. Each year, the commission contracts workers with the USFWS to set traps and apply lampicide in rivers, stopping lamprey before they enter the Great Lakes. But the Trump administration's firing of probationary workers and freeze on seasonal hiring jeopardized the program's operation, which typically runs from April to October.

Greg McClinchey, director of policy and legislative affairs for the GLFC, says the organization now has permission to hire back all those workers: 12 probationary and 25 seasonal. "It's good news. There is positive momentum," McClinchey said. "We're

five or six weeks behind schedule, but everybody's working hard to see if we can't get things as much back on track as is possible." Despite the OK, McClinchey said it's still unclear how many workers will actually choose to return. Some may have already taken other jobs and training new workers takes time, setting things back even more. It's not yet clear what impact those hurdles could have on lamprey numbers. "We're still in the process of assessing what, if any, impact [there] will be. Even if they all came back, 100%, the impact will be a delay in the start," he said. "The hope is still that we will commence as early as possible. The plan is to model the program as closely as we can after what we have done traditionally."



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Inland Sport Fishing Guide License Required for Guiding on Inland Michigan

By Great Lakes Basin
Report

With nearly 11,000 inland lakes and 76,000 miles of rivers and streams, Michigan has a wealth of inland fishing opportunities, and inland fishing guides help anglers enjoy those abundant resources. The Michigan DNR reminds anglers and guides that since March 1, 2024, inland fishing guides operating in the state are required to have an inland sport fishing guide license to take clients on guided trips on inland lakes, rivers or streams.

Great Lakes connecting waters refer to specific bodies of water in Michigan that connect the Great Lakes to each other: the St. Mary's River, the St. Clair River (beginning at the Fort Gratiot Light), Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River (beginning at the imaginary line extending due south of the Windmill Point Light, Wayne County, and ending at the imaginary east/west line drawn through the most southerly point of Celeron Island). Those interested should complete the following steps to apply for an inland

sport fishing guide license:

- Review the requirements and complete the questionnaire. The DNR will review responses to



verify license requirements are met. Applicants will be notified via email within five business days with further instructions.

- Upon receiving notification of DNR approval, buy the license online or on the Michigan DNR Hunt Fish mobile app.

The resident license fee is \$150, and the nonresident license fee is \$300. The inland sport fishing guide license is valid for three years after the date it is issued. Captains who possess a valid U.S. Coast Guard-issued captain's license will receive a license

fee waiver.

*Please note that obtaining a license is a two-step process: DNR authorization and license purchase. You



must complete the process after you receive approval by purchasing your license on the DNR e-license site or in the Michigan DNR Hunt Fish app. This is an electronic license only; you will not receive a physical license or stickers.

All licensed inland fishing guides will be listed on the inland sport fishing guide webpage. This list is updated monthly.

License requirements:

To be eligible for an inland sport fishing guide license, an applicant must:

- Possess a valid certi-

fication in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation issued by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association and be able to provide a copy of the certification to the DNR upon request.

- Possess a valid, lawfully obtained Michigan driver's license issued under the Michigan vehicle code, an official state personal identification card or a DNR-issued Sportcard.
- Have not been convicted of a felony or other violation listed within MCL 324.48714a(2)(c) in the last three years.
- Be eligible to purchase a license for the fish species targeted while acting as a sport fishing guide.
- Possess a valid state inland pilot's license issued by the DNR or a valid captain's license issued by the U.S. Coast Guard, if intending to operate a watercraft while acting as a sport fishing guide. Navigability of waters will determine which license needed.
- Possess, while acting as a sport fishing guide, a

"Inland"
Continued on page 2

The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!



Above: The DNR delivered 150,584 Chinook fingerlings to SW MI Steelheaders in St. Joe, MI net pens April 21st for care and feeding. We made some capital improvements to our pens this year and they are working great.

“Inland”
Continued from page 1

basic first aid kit that includes, but is not limited to, all the following: tourniquet, chest seals, compression gauze, CPR mask, trauma shears, sterile eye-wash, mylar emergency blanket, bandages, mole-skin and tweezers.

Mandatory reporting

All licensed inland sport fishing guides must file an electronic report of their monthly catch activity for all trips that occurred on all waters, except those included in previously required reporting (Great Lakes, Great Lakes connecting waters) and lakes or ponds with a surface area of less than 5 acres. Details about the reporting requirements are available on the inland sport fishing guide webpage. If you have questions regarding submitting monthly catch activity reports or how to obtain a guide license, contact Kendra Kozlauskos at 231-330-2845 or DNR-Fish-Charter@Michigan.gov.

The reporting requirements for inland sport fishing guides are in addition to the existing requirements for the Great Lakes charter boat program. Great Lakes and Great Lakes connecting waters reporting is also required. Reporting of Great Lakes/connecting waters is limited to boat trips. See the charter boat operator webpage for more information.

Stream trout fishing opened April 12

Minnesota’s popular stream trout season opened April 12, with quality fishing opportunities in every region of the state. Brook trout and splake fishing also opened April 12 on Lake Superior and its tributary streams. Trout anglers can find information on Minnesota’s trout streams on the Minnesota DNR’s website (mndnr.gov/fishing/trout). Anglers will find helpful learning guides and fishing tips tailored to each of Minnesota’s six trout fishing regions. Anglers can also access StreamFinder (mndnr.gov/fishing/trout/map.html), which provides anglers with a description, species list, regulations and access information for trout streams throughout Minnesota.

Minnesota has roughly 3,800 miles of designated trout streams. Anglers 18-64 years old fishing on designated trout waters must have a trout stamp validation in addition to an angling license, and a trout stamp validation is required for anglers 18-64 years old to possess trout or salmon they catch on any Minnesota water. Complete trout season details are available at the Minnesota DNR’s fishing page (mndnr.gov/fishing).

“Oval Office”
Continued from page 1

Oceans have demonstrated conclusively that no Great Lake would be spared and that it only takes a few males and a few females for a population to be established. We do not want the Great Lakes turned into carp ponds.”

Baker concluded: “The Brandon Road project, led by the US Army Corps of Engineers, represents the best in design and innovation, which is why the project has received broad, bipartisan support. Michigan and Illinois, together, have provided more than one hundred million dollars in non-federal, match-

ing funds for this project, for which the entire basin is grateful. I thank Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Speaker Matt Hall, along with Illinois Governor JB Pritzker in February, for raising this issue at the highest level. Additionally, I applaud Congress for appropriating funds, and President Donald Trump for confirming his and the federal government’s commitment to the project. The Great Lakes are the lifeblood of our region, and the Commission is very much encouraged by the president’s promise to act.”

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Control Crews to Begin Removal of Invasive Sea Lampreys Throughout the Great Lakes Basin To Protect the \$5.1 Billion Fishery

By Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Ann Arbor, MI—The Sea Lamprey Control Program released its 2025 treatment schedule earlier this month. Field crews will begin conducting treatment activities at the end of April, starting on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario tributaries. Highly trained control crews from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Fisheries and Oceans Canada will remove invasive, predatory sea lampreys from tributaries of the Great Lakes throughout the United States and Canada. Depending on various environmental factors, crews are scheduled to conduct treatments through October of 2025. Landowners and the general public may encounter control agents along rivers and streams during treatment periods.

Sea lampreys—native to the Atlantic Ocean and invasive to the Great Lakes—are a highly destructive species that can decimate populations of native and desirable fish species in the Great Lakes, significantly harming both the ecosystem and economy of the region. Adult sea lampreys use rivers and creeks to spawn once and die. The offspring—larval sea lampreys—live in river bottoms as harmless larvae



for several years before transforming into parasitic juveniles and migrating to the open lake to feed on the blood and bodily fluids of fish. Sea lampreys use their suction-cup mouth filled with sharp teeth and a rasping tongue to feed on a variety of Great Lakes fishes such as lake trout, walleye, salmon, yellow perch, whitefish, sturgeon, etc. Sea lampreys only feed for approximately 18 months of their life cycle, but each one is capable of killing up to 40 pounds (18kg) of fish during that time. Within a few decades of their inva-

sion, sea lampreys had colonized all areas of the Great Lakes basin and caused major economic losses. They also contributed to significant ecosystem disruption. The Sea Lamprey Control Program is a highly coordinated effort between the United States and Canada, after both countries signed the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, a treaty between the two nations, in 1955. TFM, the primary control tactic, was discovered in 1957 by scientists working at the U.S. Geological Survey's Hammond Bay Biological Sta-

tion in northern Michigan. In addition to lampricides, the program uses traps and barriers to evaluate and control sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes. "Staffing challenges at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have impacted our ability to launch the 2025 field season as planned," said Marc Gaden, the Commission's executive secretary. "Many concerned people in the region reached out to their representatives in Congress and expressed their strong support for sea lamprey control, and the response from the mem-

bers was overwhelmingly positive. We are extremely grateful for the support, and we are cautiously optimistic that, because of that, the field season can commence." "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff that comprise the U.S. side of the Sea Lamprey Control Program is a small but mighty force with approximately 85 full-time and 25 seasonal employees," said Ethan Baker, chair of the Commission. "Although we got a later-than-usual start preparing for the field season on the U.S. side of the border, I am confident those that have dedicated their career to protecting the \$5.1 billion Great Lakes fishery are doing everything they can to make up for the lost time and are eager to get out in the field and get the job done." While TFM is fully registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada, and is considered safe, the public is advised to minimize unnecessary exposure, as they would with any pesticide. Lampricides are selectively toxic to lampreys, though some fish, plants, and insects may be sensitive. If baitfish or other organisms are confined in stream water, it is advised to use an alternate water

source because lampricide may induce mortality of aquatic organisms that are crowded or handled. Agricultural irrigation must be suspended for 24 hours, during and following a treatment. Learn more about the application of lampricides here: https://www.glfc.org/pubs/factsheets/FACT%204A_HR.pdf. Gaden concluded: "Sea lampreys destroyed the Great Lakes fishery after they invaded through shipping canals in the early part of the twentieth century. Over the course of the nearly 70 years that field crews have been applying lampricides, we have seen time and time again that if control is reduced, sea lamprey populations will rebound, fish will die, and the economy of the region will suffer. Sea lamprey control in the Great Lakes is essential, proven effective, and a clear example of the efficiency possible through effective partnerships." *The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries.*

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Moran Iron Works Lays Keel for New R/V Steelhead II

Research Vessel for DNR

By Olivia Fellows
9and10news.com

ONAWAY — The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Moran Iron Works marked a milestone in the construction of the R/V Steelhead II, a next-generation research vessel designed to advance fisheries research and conservation efforts across Lake Michigan.

According to a March 20 news release, following the formal contract award, MIW has now completed the keel laying officially launching the vessel's assembly and marking the next phase in this innovative project.

The R/V Steelhead II will replace the aging S/V Steelhead, which has served the DNR's fisheries research programs for over five decades. Engineered with modern advancements, the new vessel will enhance stability, efficiency and safety, allowing researchers to spend more time on the water collecting critical data to guide sustainable fisheries management.

Among its state-of-the-art features, the R/V Steelhead II will incorporate a Sea Keeper gyroscope, which reduces vessel rocking by up to 80%, a bow thruster for precise maneuverability, and specialized safety lighting. The overall

vessel design was created by Boksa Marine Design.

Gregory Schultz of Schultz Marine Services, responsible for the vessel's electrical integration, described the scale of the undertaking.

"The electrical system is extensive, with approximately 10 miles of wiring supporting navigation, communication, and operational controls," Schultz said. The vessel will be stationed in Charlevoix and operate throughout Lake Michigan.

Patrick O'Neill, project lead for the DNR, emphasized the importance of this milestone. "This project has been in development for a long time, so seeing the steel come together is a major step forward. Our collaboration with Moran Iron Works has been outstanding, and their expertise ensures we're building a vessel that will serve our research needs for decades," O'Neill said. "With improved stability and enhanced safety, our team will be able to collect more accurate data to support fisheries conservation."

"This is a Michigan-built vessel for Michigan waters, and that's something we take great pride in," John Madigan of Superior Boats said. "The DNR needed a high-quality research platform, and MIW's commitment to



Pictured left to right: Jim LaLonde (MIW), Kris Snyder (DNR), Tom Moran (MIW), Patrick O'Neill (DNR), Drew Niemiec (DNR), John Madigan (Superior Boats), and Tyler James (MIW). (Courtesy/Sarah George)

excellence ensures they'll receive a vessel designed to meet their rigorous standards."

"This vessel is a first of its kind, and that's what makes it so rewarding," Moran said while reflecting on the technical challenges and sense of pride associated with the project. The complexity of integrating specialized research facilities, a laboratory, layout

for netting, a crane and advanced stability systems has pushed our team's craftsmanship to new levels. We take great satisfaction in knowing this vessel will stay in Michigan, directly benefiting our state's natural resources and communities."

Scheduled for launch in 2026, the R/V Steelhead II represents a long-term investment in Michigan's fisheries research and environmental stewardship. With an emphasis on sustainability, cutting-edge

technology, and local craftsmanship, the vessel will play a critical role in safeguarding the health of Lake Michigan's aquatic ecosystem for the next 50 years.



A closer look at the bow of the R/V Steelhead II. The vessel will replace the DNR's current research vessel which has been in operation for over five decades. (Courtesy/Sarah George)

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

The President's Meeting in Lansing on April 19th proved to be truly a great event. We honored Roger Hinchcliff as the Howard A. Tanner Award recipient for 2025 and his heartfelt reflections upon receiving the award impacted everyone in attendance.

His journey in becoming the renowned angler and ambassador for steel-head fishing that he's become is truly an amazing story. We also heard from Ed Eisch, Asst. Fisheries Chief, and learned about the division's plans to seek additional funding through a new license increase proposal being considered in the house of representatives. He also updated us on new fishing regulations, stocking activities and infrastructure projects to compliment the field work being done. Paul Seelbach, retired fisheries research biologist and University of Michigan professor shared his prospective, as a member of the Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition. on Consumers Energy plans for selling or decommissioning the hydroelectric projects they have across the state.

This latter subject is going to be a ten-to-fifteen-year project since the dams are all beyond their life expectancies and face the need for major reconstruction to bring them into compliance with the

Federal Energy Commission's standards or need to be decommissioned and removed through a thoughtful well-planned program which supports the community prosperity groups who will be impacted by the river restoration efforts. The Michigan Public Service Commission ruled that Consumers cannot pass along the upgrade costs to bring the dams into compliance until Consumers decides what they are going to do with the dams and that has caused Consumers to stop its compliance upgrade activity for the moment. Consumers has until December 31, 2025 to make its decision.

The chapter representatives in attendance considered a by-laws proposal to make the association nimbler and more responsive. It allows for a smaller number of board members (7 instead of 11) to conduct the day-to-day business of the association while still requiring the larger chapter member representatives to elect the directors and vote on policy and organization direction priorities. The required 2/3rds votes were received and the proposal now goes to the individual chapters to meet and pass by a 2/3rds vote of their members in attendance.

On Thursday, May 1st Senate Bills 276 & 277 dropped in the Senate to address the shortfall for the

MDNR funding. The bills address both hunting and fishing license fees rather than the approach MSSFA supports which is a bill for funding the fish division divorced from the hunting license fees. The senate bill increases the cost of a resident fishing license to \$30 from \$26 and lowers the required age from 17 to 16. The non-resident license would go from \$75 to \$90. The 24-hour non-resident license would increase to \$25 while the resident 24-hour license goes from \$10 to \$15. The bill requires that \$5 from each resident

all-species fishing license and \$15 from a non-resident license to go into a cold-water subaccount presumably to be used to assist cold water species like salmon and trout. And there is a provision that for each license year, the state treasurer shall adjust the amounts set forth in the bill by an amount determined by the state treasurer, to reflect the cumulative percentage change in the Consumer Price Index. There are no guarantees that the Fisheries Chief will determine how license fee dollars will be allocated to

underwrite the costs of running the division. There is no provision for allowing the ability to troll more than three rods per angler on the big lakes. MSSFA will not take a position on the bills until the bills are fully vetted in committee and we see if the House members propose a bill which more closely aligns with anglers' direct concerns.

The NRC Steelhead Task Group will present its findings and recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission on June 12th in Bay City, MI. The final draft regarding

studying the potential causes of a drop in steelhead returning to the rivers last fall and winter has been completed. The report does not suggest overharvest is the factor affecting the decline in return of mature steelhead, which has been our contention all along. It does however, recommend more research into the factors and suggests applying for funding to further study what is impacting steelhead return to the rivers.

There is much going on in Lansing and around the state at this time of year so I will keep you all posted.





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Getting a quick measurement on a “super skipper” steelhead just shy of 25 inches long. These fish are larger than 15-19” skippers that have only spent a single summer feeding in Lake Michigan, but are not as large as the typical steelhead that spends three or more summers in the big lake.

Skipper and Super Skipper: What Do Small Steelhead Tell Us About Future Runs?

By Daniel O’Keefe,
Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan Sea Grant Extension

Last year’s steelhead run had many anglers concerned about steelhead populations, and the Michigan River Steelhead Program is documenting how young stocked and wild fish might translate to brighter days ahead.

Steelhead fishing is a favorite cold-weather pastime for many Michiganders. When autumn winds blow, some steelhead leave Lake Michigan and run upstream. Conventional wisdom states that they follow the salmon, which spawn during the fall months. Although steelhead certainly do gorge on salmon eggs, it is probably a combination of temperature, water level, and photoperiod cues (day length) that prompts steelhead to run upstream.

Whatever the reason, good numbers of fresh steelhead can show up in rivers in fall ... or not. Winter months can also provide fast fishing ... or not. Mid-winter thaws can encourage fall-run steelhead to move farther upstream and begin spawning in some years, but steelhead activity levels can remain very low for months at a time during severe winters. In short, timing is everything with steelhead fishing, and timing can be hard to predict.

Spring has historically been the most popular time for steelhead fishing because March and April tend to be peak months for a fresh run of spring spawners, but the most popular time to fish is not always the most productive time to fish.

When is the best time to fish for steelhead?

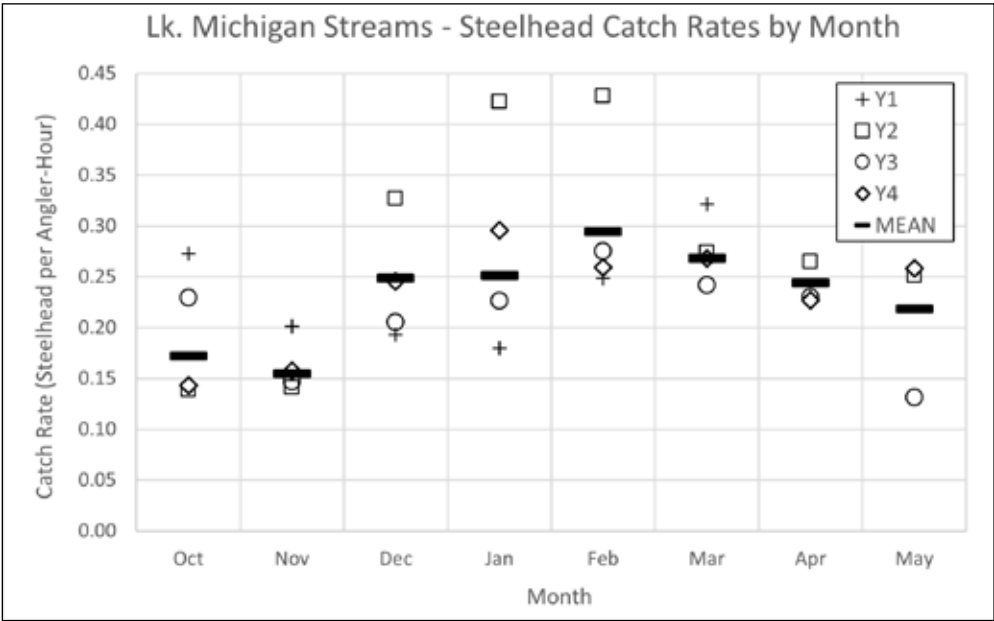


Figure 1. Monthly catch rate for steelhead caught by Great Lakes Angler Diary users during the first four years of the Michigan River Steelhead Program (Y1=Oct 2020-May 2021; Y2=Oct 2021-May 2022; Y3=Oct 2022-May 2023; Y4=Oct 2023-May 2024).

Since 2020, dedicated anglers have been using Great Lakes Angler Diary to record steelhead catches and other data on steelhead fishing trips as part of the Michigan River Steelhead Program. As a result, we now have four full fishing seasons of data, providing an unprecedented look at how fishing success fluctuates from month to month and year to year. Participants recorded at least 50 fish each year on seven key river systems in the Lake Michigan basin. Michigan Sea Grant hosted a Zoom meeting for registered participants on Dec. 16, which featured a detailed discussion of catch rates in these Lake Michigan tributaries.

It may come as a surprise, but February had the highest catch rates in two out of four years in Lake Michigan streams. February also had the highest average monthly catch rate over the past four years, due in large part to our recent string of mild winters.

Of course, things will probably look very different for February 2025 given that many river reaches were covered with ice this winter. Even so, the steelhead diary program has shown that savvy anglers can beat the crowds and find excellent fishing throughout the winter months when weather conditions are favorable.

Why are people concerned about steelhead populations?

The Michigan River Steelhead Program also surveys registered participants each year, and our 2024 survey found that angler satisfaction had dropped relative to the two previous years. To be clear, it didn’t drop by very much. Satisfaction was slightly below neutral in 2024 and similar to what it was in 2021. On average, people thought that fishing wasn’t as good as it had been — but it wasn’t terrible either.

Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, we were

able to take a very detailed look at different measures of fishing success to see if we could explain the changes in satisfaction. The first thing we looked at was overall catch rate, which is

the total number of steelhead caught divided by all of the hours fished. It turns out that our fourth year (Fall 2023 to Spring 2024) did have the lowest overall catch rate, but only by a tiny margin. Year 3 had an overall catch rate of 0.216 steelhead per hour and in Year 4 this dropped to 0.212. This is a difference of four steelhead caught per 1,000 hours of fishing effort, which is such a small difference that it would be impossible for an individual angler to notice.

Another approach was to look at monthly catch rates. October and November catch rates were below average for Year 4, but fishing improved in December and was fairly steady through winter and spring.

When we looked at size-specific catch rates, things got a bit more interesting. It turns out that Year 4 catch rates of large steelhead dropped dramatically. In Year 4, our volunteers caught one steelhead over 24 inches long for every eleven hours spent fishing. In previous years, volunteers only had to fish for six hours to catch a steelhead over 24 inches long. That is a difference big enough to worry about!

It is easy to understand why anglers would be concerned about such a big drop in catch rates of large fish, but the silver lining is that catch rates for smaller fish actually increased dramatically in Year 4. The story got even more interesting when we looked at

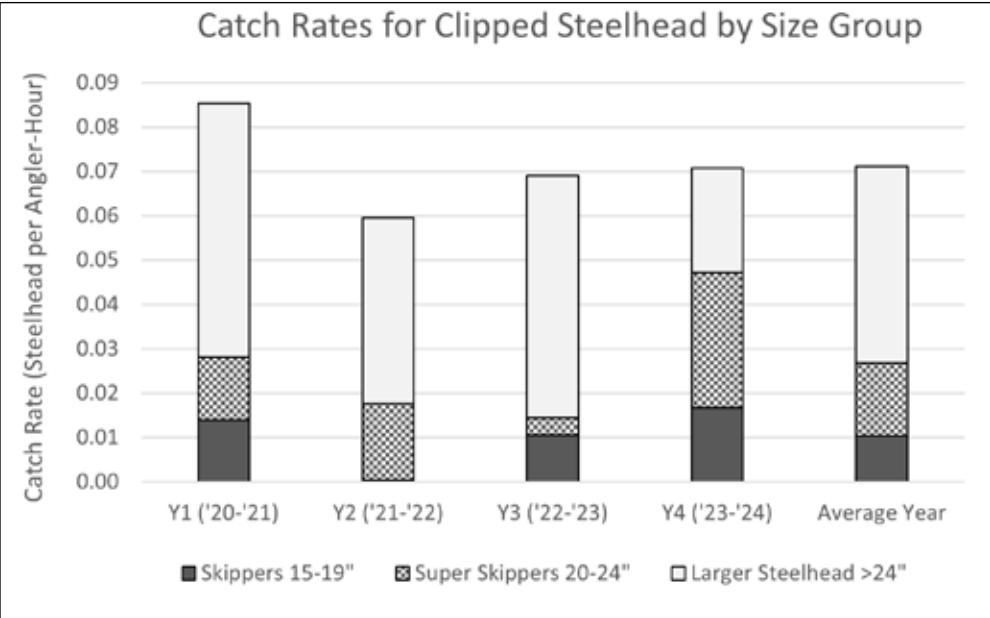


Figure 2. Great Lakes Angler Diary catch rates for fin-clipped steelhead in Lake Michigan tributary streams. Very few stocked skippers were caught in Year 2 because pandemic restrictions prevented egg take. This also led to poor catches of stocked super skippers in Year 3 and below average catches of larger stocked steelhead in Year 4.

able to take a very detailed look at different measures of fishing success to see if we could explain the changes in satisfaction. The first thing we looked at was overall catch rate, which is

The weak fall run was certainly a topic of conversation, but steelhead anglers know that fall runs have always been inconsistent from year to year.

stocked and wild fish in different size groups.

“Skippers”
Continued on page 7

“Skippers”
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Skippers and Super Skippers

One key aspect of data collection for Great Lakes Angler Diary is that we ask anglers to measure every steelhead and check for fin clips. Fish lengths can tell us a lot about populations. For steelhead, nearly all fish in the 15- to 19-inch range have spent one summer feeding in Lake Michigan. Anglers call these fish “skippers” because they are typically very aggressive and jump repeatedly when hooked.

Last season, anglers were noticing the increased number of fish in the 20- to 24-inch range, as well. Fishing reports on the Baldwin Bait & Tackle website started referring to these fish as “super skippers,” which makes a lot of sense. Fish in this size range are a bit bigger than the typical fish that spent only one summer in the big lake. Many of these super skippers have spent two summers feeding in the big lake, but there are also fast-growing one-summer fish and older slow-growing fish mixed in.

In the future, we will be able to tease apart these differences and assign ages to each fish. For now, we define 15-19” fish as skippers and 20-24” fish as super skippers.

Different trends for clipped and unclipped fish

Since 2018, all steelhead stocked in Michigan waters have been marked with an adipose fin clip. In 2020, pandemic restrictions prevented egg take and this resulted in a missing cohort of yearling fish in 2021. This missing cohort of stocked yearling fish had a clear impact on Great Lakes Angler Diary catch rates.

In Year 2 of our program (Fall 2021 to Spring 2022), the missing fish would have been skippers. Not surprisingly, catch rates of fin-clipped skippers were close to zero in Year 2 as a result; in Year 3, our catch rates for clipped super skippers were also very low due in large part to the missing cohort of stocked fish (Figure 2). This same missing 2021 cohort was also largely to blame for low catch rates of larger (over 24-inch) steelhead during Year 4, although the presence of some older fish from stocking years prior to 2021 helped to provide a few large fish for anglers in Year 4.

So, for clipped steelhead there was a clear and predictable influence of the missing 2021 cohort through time. Poor fishing for large stocked steelhead in Year 4 was largely due to the missing cohort. However, catch rates for large unclipped steelhead were also lower than expected during Year 4 and the reasons are not immediately obvious.

Although there is no evidence for any decline in steelhead natural reproduction over the past two decades (read analysis online), there is always the possibility of a bad year-class from time to time. Great Lakes Angler Diary might eventually provide some answers regarding year-class strength and the possible influence of factors like water level, prey availability, and mortality sources. However, the trends we have seen in unclipped skippers and super skippers suggest that catch rates of small wild fish may not be a great predictor of future fishing success for large steelhead.

We saw the lowest catch rates for unclipped skippers and super skippers during Year 3. This was despite a good run of skippers in

Year 2 that might have translated to more super skippers in Year 3. Even more surprising was that the weak run of unclipped skippers in Year 3 was followed by sky-high catch rates for unclipped super skippers in Year 4.

In fact, Year 4 saw the highest catch rates for unclipped skippers and super skippers at the same time we saw lower catch rates for unclipped larger steelhead (Figure 3). Perhaps environmental conditions that lead to good runs of small steelhead also lead to poor runs of larger steelhead, or perhaps there is more at work.

Water temperatures rose rapidly in early April 2024,

“Skippers”
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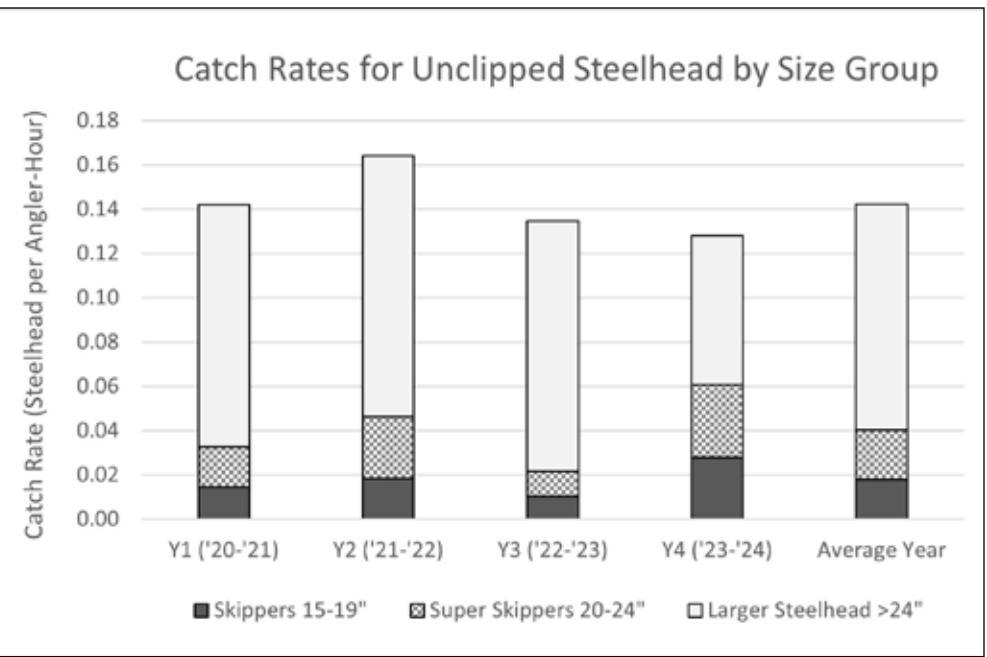


Figure 3. Great Lakes Angler Diary catch rates for unclipped steelhead in Lake Michigan tributary streams. Although Year 4 had the lowest catch rate for unclipped larger steelhead, it also had the highest catch rates for unclipped skippers and super skippers.



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Anyone can access the information generated by the buoys at any time through a text or on the internet. The valuable data created is all free of charge to the public, but each one of these buoys cost nearly \$15,000 per year to operate. There is no longer any government funding for these buoys; all funds to continue their operation come from individuals, organizations, and local businesses passionate about Lake Michigan.

On one hand, the cost to maintain these buoys is significant. But on the other hand we have hundreds of teams and thousands of anglers on the Trail. That means the math is on our side! By working together we can cover at least a big chunk of that cost if not the whole thing! So I'm challenging you to step up and help! Just before we went to print I made a \$50 donation to each Buoy and I hope you'll follow suit.

There is an individual fundraiser for each buoy. They are being run by the South Haven and the Holland Steelheaders - people we know, people who fish the Trail, people we can trust! Donating is simple! In fact you can do it right now! Just use your phone and scan one or both of the codes below.

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What to Expect With the Start of 2025’s Fishing Season

By Dylan Engels
Great Lakes Echo

A new fishing season started this month, and that means Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources has plans for stocking sport fish in the state’s waters. The DNR conducts a lot of research to make sure that the department isn’t overpopulating the Great Lakes with fish it releases. “Based on our research – which not only includes what percent of the population is wild versus fish coming back into the stream to spawn naturally – we also look at the forage that is out in the lake available for the fish to eat,” said Aaron Switzer.

Switzer is the fish production program manager at the DNR’s Platte River State Fish Hatchery and Weir in Beulah. “Based primarily on those two things, we can determine numbers to stock for natural reproduction,” Switzer said. The hatchery along the Platte River is where the DNR started its salmon program that produces Atlantic, chinook, and coho salmon.

The plan is to release 100,000 Atlantic salmon, 450,000 chinook salmon and 1,650,000 coho salmon into the Great Lakes this spring. “We started stocking salmon in the Great Lakes because of ecosystem balance, which is why we stock fish in general,” said Switzer. DNR’s management techniques reflect the fact that “the Great Lakes are so dynamic,” he said. DNR also has hatcheries in Oden, Marquette and Mattewan.

For anglers to keep salmon caught in streams and Lake Michigan, they must be at least 14 inches, and only five salmon can be kept in one day. “I don’t think there’s an odd concern about overfishing,” said Justin Tomei, the policy and government affairs manager for Michigan United Conservation Clubs. “The DNR does pretty well with the data that they have.” “We have a lot of protections in place based on the fishing regulation side, the equipment, methods of



Platte River Weir. Credit: Pure Michigan

taking the fish and getting rid of things like snagging fish.” Tomei said. Christian LeSage, a fisheries biologist for DNR, said that even if overfishing were to happen, the department doesn’t have authority to change the amount of recreational fishing licenses issued. “The state legislature sets the fees, and if there

was some type of emergency, we would have to draft a fisheries order to change the regulations to stop,” LeSage said. Although the DNR can’t change the number of licenses, it can adjust the specific season for each fish, yet that isn’t a common occurrence, he said. “There have been a few instances over the last 20

years where we’ve had low water in certain areas,” said LeSage. “If the water is low and someone can see a bunch of fish congregating, that creates a lot of activity for anglers, and it also brings some unlawful activities,” he said. This year, the DNR reduced the minimum size requirement for steelhead

trout in some streams. The department also imposed single pointed hook restrictions in the ports at Grand Haven, Muskegon and Whitehall beginning in November of this year. A prohibition on spearfishing also takes effect in November.

“Skippers” Continued from page 7

prompting steelhead that were in southern rivers to quickly spawn and migrate back to Lake Michigan. It is possible that many large, wild steelhead didn’t show up in catches because they were only in the river for or a short while. Steelhead don’t necessarily spawn every year either, so it is even possible that some large fish did not run at all. Our data show that small skippers are more likely to run in fall than large fish — which could explain why they were not as affected by the early warm-up in spring. This is pure speculation, though. We’ll need to collect additional years of data and complete age assignments to see if we can shed more light on wild steelhead year-class trends.

Is there hope for the future of steelhead fishing?
Absolutely! Fall fishing reports were very encouraging, and the spring run seems to be off to a good start. Despite the low catch rate for large steelhead last year, there were plenty of smaller steelhead in the system. This year will most likely be the last year that all Michigan steelhead receive an adipose fin clip. If you haven’t already registered at www.GLanglerdiary.org now would be a great time to sign on and get involved. In addition to submitting data online, participants are invited to complete an annual survey and participate in Zoom meetings fea-

turing the latest results and presentations from guest speakers. Our next Zoom meeting is on the evening of May 19, and will feature Michael Guthard from Michigan Department of Natural Resources discussing their coded wire tag (CWT) recovery program and what it can tell us about steelhead straying in Michigan rivers. The catch rates presented in this article are preliminary results from the Michigan River Steelhead Program. A more detailed discussion of catch rates, age assignments, and development of metrics to serve as indicators of year-class strength can be viewed on YouTube. Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan’s coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University and its MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 34 university-based programs. This article was prepared by Michigan Sea Grant under award NA24OAC0157-T1-01 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce through the Regents of the University of Michigan. The statement, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Commerce, or the Regents of the University of Michigan.

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

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

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

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Smelt is back on the Menu

Springtime means smelt! But how do we know it's safe to eat?

By Lauren Stigers,
Michigan Sea Grant,
Michigan State University
Extension

Changes in environmental practices, regulations, and control of pollution over the past 50 years have reduced concerns about eating fish. Americans do not eat enough fish according to the recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Fish are a good source of natural vitamins such as vitamin D (improves sleep) and omega-3s (heart healthy as it lowers the risk of strokes, heart attacks, and hypertension), and considered a brain booster (helping treat or prevent depression or ADHD and improve cognitive development). Often, concerns about contaminants keep people from choosing fish, but remember, just like all other foods in the food pyramid, eating fish improves health and provides essential minerals we need. Changes in environmental practices, regulations, and control of pollution over the past 50 years have improved not only our water supply but also our local fisheries supply, which reduces concerns about eating fish.

Change begins in the 1970s

Contaminant monitoring programs in the Great Lakes waters started in the 1970s. Under the Clean Water Act and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, regulating agencies across the Great Lakes began new environmental protective, monitoring, and reactive measures - all to decrease contaminants that were known or suspected to cause health impacts to people. Because our lives, and the lives of our food sources and environment, greatly depend on this water, many programs led to policy changes and more regulations. The U.S. now has many programs to protect not only water but also the potential environmental chemical hazards that can enter food supply chains - including fish.

What are the contaminants?

Environmental chemical contaminants such as heavy metals, pesticides, and industrial chemicals that can be found in both farm-raised and wild-caught fish can pose a potential food safety hazard. Sources of the contaminants are wide-ranging and can be introduced through human activities or naturally present in the environment. Compounds that accumulate in fish typically are persistent and do not easily break down in the environment, can be carried long distances by air or

water, and vary greatly in different types of fish species based on their eating habits, ecology, and nature of the fish such as its age. Chemical contaminants that may be present in the Great Lakes include: Chlordane, DDTs, Diquat, Dioxin's, Methylmercury, Mirex, Penoxsulam, PCBs, among others. The most common restrictions in Great Lakes fish typically include PCBs, mercury, and dioxins as they drive the majority of fish consumption advisories in both U.S. and Canada. Many people are now interested in testing for and learning about perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), lab-created chemicals that have been in commercial use since the 1940s.

Contaminant trends in Great Lakes Fish

Following the use of regulations and remediation efforts over several decades much of these contaminants have sharply declined and began to plateau by the mid-1990s. This decline shows a reduction in the addition of these chemicals entering the environment. Many agencies work to ensure adequate, routine testing of fish is done to determine guidelines per regulations, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), Chipewewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA), Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), and others. Overall, fish consumption contaminants in edible portions of fish have

declined over time in Lake Superior. In lakes Erie and Huron, the status has been unchanged since 2015 - meaning there is little to no introduction of new contaminants into the system. Of what does change, some new mercury has been traced to coming from the local watershed (or landscapes) rather than from industrial or atmospheric pollution.

Putting smelt back on the menu

In 2022, a "Do Not Eat Advisory" for Lake Superior surprisingly included smelt, a small, low-on-the-food-chain species. Usually, contaminants show up higher in the food chain. In 2022-23, testing agen-

"Smelt"
Continued on page 11



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“Smelt” Continued from page 10

cies including CORA, EPA, EGLE, and others concluded that the testing methods used in 2021 were not accurate as they did not differentiate between naturally occurring bile acids found in the smelt digestive system having the same molecular characteristics of what is known as “Branched PFOS.” This led to results of false positives in quantifying total PFOS in smelt. These agencies performed additional testing and results now show smelt having similar levels of PFOS as other Great Lakes fish - all of which are within safe levels as defined by the EPA and the federal Food and Drug Administration.

Advice about eating fish So, what can you do? Become curious and learn more about the benefits and risks, and then decide what choices work for you and

your family. We know fish offer many health benefits, so why not make it a goal to eat fish at least two times a week? Some other recommendations:

If you catch or harvest fish for consumption, follow the guidelines outlined in local guidelines such as Michigan’s Eat Safe Fish program: Eat Safe Fish - Michigan

If you buy fish from someone else (e.g., grocery store, farmer’s market, restaurant, etc)., the seller is responsible for meeting state and federal regulations that ensure the fish are safe for you to eat.

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40	River Raisin Marina & Campground	2502 E. Elm Avenue	Monroe	Mi	48161	Buy 1 get 1 free - call 313-575-4367 (www.riverraisinmarina.com)
41	RX Optical	Statewide				Plan 308
42	Salmon Trout Steelheader		www.salmontroutsteelheader.com			Discount 50% OFF 1 year subscription, members only! Use code MSSFA
43	Sun Coast Marine	1172 68th Street	South Haven	MI		Member discount
44	The Angling Outpost	2480 Duck Lane Rd	Whitehall	MI	49461	www.anglingoutpost.com 5% use coupon "steelheader" for online purchases
45	Traxstech Corp	14754 N Oakley	Chesaping	MI		989-845-5969 10%
46	Van's Sport Center	1855 Alpine Ave.	Walker	MI	49544	10% Discount
47	Warrior Lures	5915 Lillian La	Traverse City	MI	49684	10% Discount on all product ordered (www.warriorlures.com)
48	West Marine		Bay City	MI		10%
49	West Michigan Propeller	847 Ionia Ave. NW	Grand Rapids	MI	49503	10% Discount
50	* Your Business Here!					

Work Scheduled to Begin on Grand River Cofferd Dam Removals

By Dennis Eade

Work will begin to remove half of each of the four coffer dams on the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids in late June this year. The permit for the Lower Reach project has been granted and work crews will access from the same shoreline to remove half of each of the four dams this year and then the opposite shoreline next year to remove the remaining half of the dams. Large boulders and cobble will be used to stabilize the substrate and boats will be able to access the river half not under remediation so fishing is not totally affected during the project.

This is all part of the Restoration of the Rapids project that has long been touted as the catalyst project for revitalizing and reimagining the Grand River corridor in downtown Grand Rapids. This project is expected to have a positive impact on commerce and will add to the vibrancy and vitality to the region. Removing dangerous dams, and improving river access and use, will provide new business development opportunities and support existing businesses along and near the river. The project

is controversial since fishing on the Grand River has developed over the years in ways that highlight the area around the dams as prime areas where steelhead trout are targeted. The

goal is to improve the quality and quantity of fishing opportunities by providing increased habitat, structure, more gravel, boulder, cobble, diverse flows and a varied river bottom. Nu-

merous fish species would benefit including migratory fish that would hold better before moving upriver and local populations of walleye and bass would do well. Over the past 160

years, tons of boulders have been removed and the river bottom was flattened. Often the best structure leads to the best fishing. The river could provide a higher quality fishing experience,

like the St. Mary's River in Sault Ste. Marie that sees an annual economic benefit of at least \$7 million dollars generated from fishing. (Sault Ste. Marie Evening News; July 2, 2015).

Lamprey control is still topic of concern for the Upper Reach project which will be permitted later after the Lower Reach project is completed. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is leading the design and permitting effort for the upper reach project and has contracted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement process that kicked off in April of 2019. 14 design alternatives have been developed for the upper reach where sea lamprey control will be evaluated and will undergo additional evaluation of impacts and feasibility through the EIS process.

Some anglers look forward to discovering new areas to target steelhead now that the river will flow around boulders and cobble that will create new holding areas for fish. Regardless, change is difficult but the benefits of change could possibly outweigh the existing topography of the river. Only time will tell.



Grand Rapid's Sixth Street Dam, located along the Grand River. Image: Environmental Protection Agency

Great Lakes Fishery Commission Names Dr. Thomas Binder as New Director of GLATOS



Dr. Thomas Binder, the new GLATOS director, surgically inserting a tag into a cisco.

Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Ann Arbor, MI— Dr. Thomas Binder, currently a senior research associate at Michigan State University and a Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System (GLATOS) research scientist, has been appointed as the director of GLATOS. GLATOS is a multi-national network of Indigenous, federal, state, provincial, and university researchers using cutting-edge acoustic telemetry to track fish movement in support of Great Lakes fishery management. By collaborating across Canada and the United States, GLATOS connects scientists, shares data, and expands research capabilities, providing invaluable insights to support sustainable Great Lakes fisheries. Dr. Thomas Binder will join the Great Lakes Fishery Commission as GLATOS director to succeed Dr. Christopher Vandergoot, who tragically passed away in late 2024.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, in partnership with Michigan State University and the U.S. Geological Survey, and with support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, established GLATOS in 2010 with the goal of helping scientists, managers, and the public gain

a better understanding of fish movement, behavior, and population dynamics in the Great Lakes. GLATOS utilizes a network of acoustic receivers that are placed strategically throughout the Great Lakes basin to detect and record surgically implanted acoustic tags in individual fish. These tags emit a series of “pings” that the receivers hear, decode, and record, allowing researchers to track the fish’s movement throughout the basin. Movement of fish is just one piece of the puzzle—when collected and combined with other environmental or biological data, the information from GLATOS can provide a more robust account of a fish’s behaviors and activities (e.g., habitat occupancy) which helps scientists better understand the ecology of the animals, information which, prior to GLATOS, was unattainable. The GLATOS network of receivers works in partnership with the Ocean Tracking Network and the Champlain Acoustic Telemetry Observation System, which are global and local telemetry networks, respectively.

In addition to supporting a basin-wide detection database for data sharing, GLATOS supports individual research projects and facilitates collaboration and knowledge transfer among researchers around

the basin. GLATOS members contribute detection data and receiver locations from receivers they operate to the GLATOS database. In return, each project lead can access detection data from their tagged fish, as well as receiver locations and dates of operation from across the entire network of receivers. For more information about GLATOS, including an interactive map of receivers and a project list, visit glatos.glos.us.

“Having the ability to track the migration of fish in the Great Lakes is an incredible opportunity to gain insight into their behavior,” said Ethan Baker, chair of the Commission. “GLATOS has ballooned from a few receivers and locations to an entire network that is key to better understanding the behavior of fishes as it relates to the ecology and health of our fishery resources. We congratulate Dr. Binder on beginning his tenure as director of this vital program and look forward to working closely with him. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience and will undoubtedly lead GLATOS with zeal. We also graciously thank the late Dr. Vandergoot for his unwavering, enthusiastic leadership and for the paths he forged for the

“Director”
Continued on page 13

Holland

July 31 - Aug. 3 2025

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SLIDE ON A SLIP BOBBER

By Bob Jensen

There are lots of ways to catch fish. Some anglers like to try to learn a new technique every year. Others like to refine a technique that they're already familiar with. Doing so increases that angler's odds of fishing success. For instance, jigs will catch fish much of the time, but they're not always the best choice. Maybe a live bait rig would be better in some situations, or maybe crankbaits would be more productive when the fish are spread out. The angler that is proficient in several techniques will catch fish more frequently.

A technique that works well in some situations employs a slip-bobber. When the fish are finicky, a slip bobber will often coax them into biting.

When the fish are tightly schooled, slip bobbers will keep the bait right in front of the fish for an extended period of time.

When the fish are suspended at a certain level, a slip bobber enables an angler to suspend a bait at that level. At times slip bobbers will put fish in the boat etter than anything else.

Sometimes we think of bobber fishing as a technique that appeals mostly to beginning anglers. I remember, as a youngster, watching a red and white, fixed position bobber float across the surface of a pond, then mysteriously disappear, and then reeling in my line with a fish attached. Wonderful memories! But a slip bobber is different than the round red and white bobbers that clip onto your line. Slip bobbers have a hollow stem that goes through the bobber. You slide your line through that stem, which

allows the bobber to slide on your line.

The thing that makes the slip bobber work is the bobber stop. It is often a small knot that will slide through the guides on your rod. The bobber stop is placed on your line, then the bobber is slid onto the line. Now tie your hook on. If you set the bobber stop five feet above the hook, your bait will suspend five feet below the bobber. This allows you to present the bait at whatever level the fish are. Some trial and error will be necessary to determine the proper depth. Set the bobber stop so the bait will be suspended a little above where you think the fish are.

Most anglers work from an anchored position when slip bobbering. If there is some wind, anchor upwind of what you believe to be a fish holding area. Cast your rig upwind of the suspected fishy spot and let it drift through that area. Give the fish plenty of time to look at your rig, then reel it in and cast to another position that will enable your presentation to go through a slightly different section. Work an area thoroughly. In states that allow multiple lines, it works well to cast something like a crankbait while the bobber rig is doing its thing.

Some anglers like plain hooks tipped with live bait below the bobber, others go for a small jig. A 1/16th ounce Shoo Shiner Jig with a leech or minnow is a killer below a bobber. Lighter jigs enable the live bait to have more action. If you need more weight, crimp a couple of split-shot onto the line a foot or so above the jig.

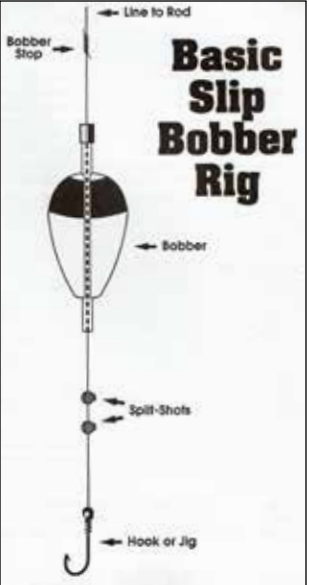
Using a slip bobber can help an angler catch more fish and bigger fish in some conditions. Consider adding slip bobbers to your fishing arsenal if you haven't already done so.

"Director"

Continued from page 12

GLATOS program," Baker concluded.

Dr. Binder earned an M.Sc. and Ph.D. from the University of Guelph, ON. He has a keen interest in understanding the behavior, biology, and physiology of fishes, especially lake trout and sea lampreys, to aid managers in making fisheries management decisions. Dr. Binder has 70 peer-reviewed scientific publications, which have been cited over 2,500 times, and was awarded, with his co-authors, the 2023 Chandler-Misener Award for the most notable paper in the Journal of Great Lakes Research. Dr. Binder has been a core member of the GLATOS team since inception and brings more than fifteen years of fish telemetry experience to the role of GLATOS Director.



How to rig a slip bobber.
Artwork from Pro-Mo's
Secrets to Live Bait
Fishing for Walleyes

2025 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Location
May	31	CONNIE MCGOWAN INVITATIONAL CAPTAIN MUST BE MEMBER	LAKE ERIE/ DBBC
July	12	PORTAGE LK PANFISH/FAMILY PICNIC	PORTAGE LAKE
August	16	VETERANS OUTING	SOUTH HAVEN
October	25	KALAMAZOO RIVER SALMON SLAM	ALLEGAN DAM
November	8	KALAMAZOO RIVER TROUT QUEST	ALLEGAN DAM
November	15	KALAMAZOO RIVER MEMORIAL	ALLEGAN DAM
November	29	ST.JOE RIVER TUNE-UP STEELHEAD	I-94 BOAT RAMP
December	6	ST.JOE WINTER CHALLENGE	BENTON HARBOR
December	13	CHRISTMAS PARTY	KALAMAZOO EAGLES
Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting Meeting Location: <i>(In process of finding a new location)</i> FOR MORE INFORMATION: Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Dan Foster at 269-370-3693 battlecreeksteelheaders.com			

2025 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
TBD	2025	Net Pens	
May 29 - June 1		GH Offshore Challenge	
August	1-13	Week-Long Plus Tournament	
August	14	Chapter Picnic	
September	6	Sportsman For Youth	
December	10	Chapter Christmas Party	
Other Events TBD For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarms@gmail.com www.ghsteelheaders.com			

2025 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
May	TBD	Big Lake Outing	
May	19	Chapter Meeting & Awards	
June	TBD	Summer Fishing Event	Wabasis Lake
June	6-9	Lake Erie Walleye Contest STC	
June	30	Chapter Meeting	
**July	14	Chapter Family Picnic	Johnson Park
August	2	Chapter Challenge/Double D Event	
August	25	Members Meeting	
September	6	Sportsman For Youth	Muskegon
September	29	Members Meeting	
October	1	Chapter Archery Buck Contest** pre-entry required	
October	TBD	Fall River Contest	
October	27	Chapter Meeting	
November	8	FishingPartnersManisteeContest	
November	15	Chapter Firearm Buck Contest** pre-entry required	
November	24	Chapter Meeting	
**December	TBD	Christmas Party, watch for details	
** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**			
Events open to the public Meeting Location - Elks #48, 917 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids Time: 6:00pm-7pm Social Hour with food and beverage followed by Speaker Board Meetings will take place after the regular Member Meeting Email Grand Rapids Steelheaders: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com Dates with “**” are for members and family only			
		New address: P.O. Box 140198 Grand Rapids, MI 49514	

2025 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	
May	3	Linwood	7:00 am
May	17	Linwood	7:00 am
May	31	Sebewaing	7:00 am
June	14	Sebewaing - Kids Day	7:00 am
June	28	Linwood	7:00 am
July	12	Manistee	5:30 am
July	26	Ludington	5:30 am
August	9	Frankfort(GaryDeckerMemorial)(2-Day)	5:30 am
August	23	Manistee (2-Day)	5:30 am
September	6	Linwood	
December	13	Banquet at VFW	5pm
Membership meetings are the first Tuesday every month (no meeting in August) Meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 Phone: 989-496-3410			
Board meetings begin at 7:00pm. Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending. On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72.			
Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follows weigh-in on Saturdays only. Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate. Children 16 and Under are free. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone.			
If interested in fishing with us please contact: Mark Trudell (989) 839-4920 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com			

2025 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
May	2-4	Michigan City Tournament
May	5	Board Meeting
May	8-10	St. Joseph Tournament
May	16-18	South Haven Tournament
May	17	Spring Challenge
May	20	Tuesday Night Leagues Begin
May 29-June 1		Grand Haven Tournament
June	2	Board Meeting
June	20-22	Manistee Tri-Port Tournament
June	28	Kids & Kings Tournament
July	7	Board Meeting
July	12	Fishing With Veterans
July	14-20	Ludington Tournament
July	24-27	Muskegon Tournament
July	26	Summer Challenge
July 31 - August 3		Holland Tournament
August	4	Board Meeting
August	8-10	Saugatuck Tournament
August	15-17	Manistee (Monster) Tournament
August	16	Ladies Tournament
August	21-24	Frankfort Tournament
August	26	Tuesday Night Leagues End
September	8	Board Meeting
September	9	Tuesday Night League Banquet
October	6	Board Meeting
November	3	Board Meeting
December	1	Board Meeting
December	4	Membership Meeting
Board meetings held at: TBD Locations General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow		
For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7000 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com		

2025 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Contact
May	6	General Membership Meeting	
May	10	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Bob Schulz
May	17	Pt Moulle’ Kayak/SB SM Bass/Walleye	Keith Childs
May	17	HowardTannerSalmonTournamentBentonHarborSat	Chris Thompson / Dennis Kelle
May	18	HowardTannerSalmonTournamentBentonHarborSun	Mark Platt / Dennis Kelley
May	24	Bruin Lake Kayak/Small Boat	Chuck Davis
May	25	Carp Fishing Event	Gale Frazee
June	3	General Membership Meeting	
June	7	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	J Somers/M Apostolopoulos
June	14	Sterling SP Walleye Tournament	Fabian Sepulveda
June	21	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Bob Schulz
June	22	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Fabian Sepulveda
July	8	Club Summer Picnic	Mark Platt/Dave Zawacki
July	8	Manistee River Cleanup Day @ High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	24	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Thu	Gale Frazee / Tom Abdelnour
July	26	Ludington Member Memorial Tournament – Sat	Dave & Kim Zawacki
July	27	Ludington Salmon Tournament – Sun	TBD
August	2	Erieau Tournament – Sat. Erieau, Canada	Henry Nabors / Ron Belemore
August	3	Erieau Tournament – Sun. Erieau, Canada	Ron Belemore / Henry Nabors
August	6	General Membership Meeting	
August	9	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sat	Mike Hartrick
August	10	Salmon Tournament – Manistee – Sun	Marc / Kirk Traver
August	16	Lake Tournament – Frankfort	Robert Grech / B Dodge
August	17	Salmon Tournament – Frankfort	Bill Dodge / R Grech
August	23	PM Lake Kayak/Small Boat	Eric Braden
September	2	General Membership Meeting	
September	6	Manistee Kayak/SB & Pier Tournaments	Eric Braden
September	27	Manistee River Tournaments	Fabian Sepulveda
September	28	Muskegon Lake Salmon Camp out Kayak/SB	Keith Childs
October	7	General Membership Meeting	
October	11	Lake Erie Perch Outing	Dave Zawacki
October	15	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2023 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/Trenz/Nabors/Henderso
October	18	Ludington Pier/Beach Event	Eric Braden
November	1	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Zawacki/Trenz
November	11	GeneralMembershipMeeting2ndTue. ElectionDayRoomatSeniorCenterNov	
November	29	Ohio Walleye Tournament	Dave Zawacki
December	2	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	6	PM & other NW Mi Rivers Tournament	Marc Traver/Adam Trenz
December	13	Huron River Tournament	Roger Hinchcliff

2025 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
May	3-4	Horizon Bank Quake Coho Classic - Michigan City, IN
May	9-10	St. Joe Tourney/SW Chapter
May	16	South Haven Pro Am Tournament Captains Registration
May	17-18	South Haven Pro Am Tournament – South Side City Marina
May	24	Merle Morris Tournament – River Bend Boat Club
June	7	South Haven Steelheaders’ Harbor Light Brewery Ladies Tournament
June	7-8	Free Fishing Weekend
June	13-15	South Haven Harborfest
August	9	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival - August 7th-10th)
August	16	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans
August	30	Labor Day Weekend
November	29	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament
2024 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates <i>Note: All Board and membership meetings are generally held the third Thursday of each month except for special circumstances such as Pro Am Captain’s Meeting set up in May, Fish Boil or organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November.</i> <i>Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090</i> Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm. For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com		
MAY 15th – 3rd Thursday *prior to SHS Pro/Am – Membership meeting. JUNE 19th - 3rd Thursday JULY 17th - 3rd Thursday AUG 7th – 1st Thursday – *Prior to the Annual Fish Boil SEP 18th-3rd Thursday – Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year’s events. I Devent chairs. OCT 16th-3rd Thursday – Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year’s events and set calendar NOV 6th – 1st Thursday – Regular and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar December 18th – 3rd Thursday – Regular Meeting, Election of Directors The 2025 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting is the 2nd Monday of November (11/10/25)		

2025 Southwest MI Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but please confirm online for the most updated information. www.swmisteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders			
May	8-10	Schu’s Summer Challenge Tournament (Tournament Trail Event)	
June	12	Club Meeting – Summer Run Steelhead & Offshore Fishing the Thermocline	
June	20-21	Trolling with the Troops Fishing Event	
September	11	Club Meeting – Fall Run Salmon and Steelhead	
December	6	Winter Challenge River Fishing Tournament	
Meeting Location: Elks Lodge, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Southwest Michigan Steelheaders swmisteelheaders.com			

2025 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
May	3	6:00 am	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Need Workers! Harbor Beach Marina
June	7	6:00 am	Veterans Fishing Outing	Contact Kevin Ramsey for details. Harbor Beach Marina
June	19	7:30 pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion
August	21	7:30 pm	Regular Meeting	Harbor Beach American Legion
October	16	7:30 pm	Regular Meeting Election of Board/Officers	Harbor Beach American Legion
Contact Paul Nienaltowski at 810-300-1561 for inquiries.				

2025 Thunderbay Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Time	Information
May	17	5:30 am	Alpena tournament
June	14	5:30 am	Presque Isle tournament
June	28	5:30 am	Presque Isle tournament
June	29	5:30 am	Presque Isle tournament
July	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
August	23		Rogers City Tournament
September	1	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
October	6	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	1	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting

2025 White River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Time	Event information
<i>Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. – Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.</i>			
May	1	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
June	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
July		6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
August	7	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
September	4	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
October	2	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
November	6	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
December	4	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW

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**Wednesday
June 18**
Via TEAMS -
6:00pm

**Wednesday
August 20**
Via TEAMS -
6:00pm

**Wednesday
October 15**
Via TEAMS -
6:00pm

**Wednesday
December 17**
Via TEAMS -
6:00pm



Illustration from pngtree.com

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\$53,845

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END CLEARANCE

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MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Ranger Z 620 Cup
\$84,995
\$102,523

MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Ranger 2000 MS Angler
\$77,055
\$84,905

MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Ranger Z 610
\$69,995
\$79,910

MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Ranger 1720 Pro
\$119,965
\$139,905

MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Nitro Z 19
\$47,715
\$51,715

MODEL YEAR
END CLEARANCE

SOLD

2024 Nitro Z 19
\$51,535
\$54,535

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