

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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



Volume 87

September/October 2024

No. 5



Bright red coho

Autumn Visitors

By Jim Bedford

As summer approaches its end, I pay attention to the fishing reports from Lakes Michigan and Huron. At one time I worried a bit about how many salmon and steelhead would be left to run the rivers in the fall. After many years of watching this cycle, I've come to the conclusion that good fishing in the lakes usually means good returns of anadromous fish in the fall. And this past summer seems to have been a good one for big lake fishing.

Reduced numbers of plankton feeding alewives have cut into the number of salmon and steelhead in the upper Lakes. There are signs that the numbers of quagga mussels that have peaked and that their numbers are trending down. That is good news!

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

Steelhead are spring spawning fish but a portion of these great game fish run the rivers in the summer and fall. Thus, the river angler has a real variety of salmon and trout to tempt with his or her offerings in the fall. Often it is possible to catch four or five species of these fish in the same river at the same time.

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

Summer steelhead are primarily a Lake Michigan fish. The Skamania strain has been the most successful with Indiana

supplying Michigan with eggs in exchange for eggs from our Little Manistee winter strain. These fish start running in June depending on the river temperatures but the most dependable time to find good numbers is in late summer and early fall. While summer steelhead are only stocked in the St. Joseph River by Indiana and the Manistee River by Michigan they frequently stray to other rivers.

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

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

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

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House Bill 5108 Would Privatize Great Lakes Waters and Fishery Resources ...and Therefore Violate the Public Trust

By Jim Johnson

HB 5108 is a proposed amendment to PA 451 (Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994) that would increase the use of Great Lakes bottomlands for commercial fishing nets, require the DNR to give "quotas" of most Great Lakes species to the commercial fishery, and authorize the use of gill nets, a lethal, non-selective gear that has been banned for most State-licensed commercial fishing since the 1970s. Estimation of quotas is very expensive and requires a long-term data series to arm fish population models with the data required for quota estimation – the cost of doing so for each species and management unit is prohibitive. These proposed uses of Great Lakes resources are not in the public interest, would require large subsidies to fund the necessary quota estimation and other administrative and enforcement elements of the bill, would direct unsustainably high fishing effort on certain species, and are inconsistent with Public Trust Doctrine.

In lakes Michigan and Huron, lake trout were driven to extinction

by overfishing and sea lampreys. They are only now showing signs of recovery. The collapse of lake trout led to explosions of the invasive rainbow smelt and alewives. The alewife

problem became so severe that a die off of 20 billion alewives in 1967 rendered Michigan's beaches too noxious for public use. Healthy populations of predators such as lake trout, salmon, and walleyes are required to keep the lakes in balance with their prey base and act as a primary line of defense against future invasions of non-native prey. Stocking to sustain lake trout in these two lakes

costs upwards of \$3 million annually. The lake trout are stocked for the purpose of restoring spawning stocks of this native predator so that eventually lake trout will be self-sustaining, and the lakes can

be weaned from the hatchery system, saving the taxpayer millions of dollars annually. Equally important, lake trout restoration would bring back a native predator that would help guard against overpopulation of invasive species, including future invaders.

Whitefish in most of lakes Michigan and Huron (Green Bay and Saginaw Bay whitefish are less affected) are in a state of crisis. Thanks to zebra and quagga mussels, they

are barely reproducing anymore, which means that as fish are harvested or die naturally, they are not being replaced by new generations. It's now kind of like mining: when the fish are gone, they seem incapable of recovering. Harvest in these waters is now approaching record-low levels and there is no sign of recovery (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

The Treaty Waters of 1836 are already adjudicated by the recently signed 2023 Decree governing fishing in waters of eastern Lake Superior, most of Lake Michigan and northern Lake Huron. This Consent Decree allocates harvest between the State and Tribal fishers and would take precedence over any State-level legislation. HB 5108 fails to acknowledge the 2023 Decree or how the Decree would affect this proposed legislation.

In administering Great Lakes resources, the State must weigh any private use it might authorize with respect to the public interest. HB 5108 would violate the Public Trust for a number of reasons:

- The proposed expansion of fishing power

"House Bill"
Continued on page 6



The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!

SW Michigan's Trolling with the Troops

A Day of Fishing, Camaraderie, and Support for Veterans



Boats exiting the channel

By Ryan McCartney

Now in its 6th year, "Trolling with the Troops" has become a cherished tradition in our community, providing veterans and service members with a unique opportunity to unwind, share stories, and enjoy the tranquility of nature. This much-anticipated gathering, organized by the Southwest Michigan Steelheaders, aims to foster a sense of camaraderie and support among participants, helping to build lasting connections

both on and off the water. "This event is about more than just fishing," said Ryan McCartney, "It's about creating an event where our troops can relax, connect with others who understand their experiences, and feel the appreciation of a grateful community."

Community Support

The success of "Trolling with the Troops" is a testament to the community's dedication to supporting its military members. More than 25

local businesses generously donated an assortment of prizes for the event, including Yeti Coolers and a Washer and Dryer. More than 100 prizes were raffled off the evening before the fishing event, as the Stevensville American Legion Post 568 and its volunteers host a dinner for the veterans and the boat captains. This dinner event not only allows the veterans to meet their respective boat captains, it allows them to share stories with other veterans and listen to guest speakers



Colonel Jay Powers with event organizers.

who share common stories. This year's feature speaker was Jay Powers, a 26-year veteran who retired in 2022 as a Green Beret colonel leading in the Joint Special Operations community. Jay shared several stories from his years of service, including his deployment to the Middle East ten times, nine of which were combat rotations leading formations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

A Day on the Water

Boats filled with eager anglers set out early in the morning of June 22nd. Each of the veterans were paired with local volunteers, who offered their time and boats to ensure that every participant had a memorable experience.

"It's heartwarming to see everyone come together for this cause," said McCartney, "We want our veterans to know that we appreciate their service, and this is one small way we can give back."

As the day drew to a close, all of the participating boats staged at the mouth of the St. Joe river, preparing for a boat parade, led by the boat captain who caught the largest fish the prior year. Fellow veterans and members of the community lined the riverbanks waving American flags and cheering on our veterans as they return from fishing. As each boat exited a large rainbow of water being shot over the river by our local fire department, they quickly weighed the boat's largest fish, as the winning veteran will receive a plaque and additional prizes. This year's winning catch was a 23.50# King Salmon, caught aboard the boat Salmon Row, captained by Mark Turner.

"I'm already looking forward to next year," said Ralph Wilkes a Veteran who has attended the event every year since its conception. "This is more than just a fishing trip; it's a reminder that we're not alone, and that means a



Vets wave to citizens lining the channel upon return to port.



Colonel Jay Powers with Dave Middleton and Capt. Jim Marohn on "Reel Sharpie"



Vet shows off nice King salmon on the way to dock.

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lot." For more information about "Trolling with the Troops" and how you can get involved, please visit www.trollingwiththetroops.com or www.swmisteelheaders.com

NRC Will be Voting on Changing Steelhead Regulations Once Again

By Dennis Eade |
deneade@charter.net

As it turns out, the Natural Resources Commission will be voting on changing steelhead regulations once again, with a vote scheduled for September 12th. Fisheries Order 200.25 (michigan.gov)

As I read it, this would take effect April 1, 2025 and change the limit on 10" + steelhead from 3 (with one over 20") to 1 on most rivers except Muskegon and Rogue (which have Eagle Lake rainbows).

Based on the document,

there is a lack of biological justification and known social impacts of limiting harvest. Instead, the NRC is "modifying regulations to reduce confusion in certain problematic areas and (allegedly) helps anglers and law enforcement staff." Further, the changes are not perceived to be biological issues. So, there is no biological support for further restricting daily steelhead catch limits. The social implication is that it will "reduce the harvest ability for some harvest-motivated anglers".

It's becoming more and more apparent that we

could be embarking on a return to an era of "Flies Only" waters and "catch and release" with the NRC micro-managing the Fisheries Division of the MDNR. In my opinion, this predilection toward protecting wild steelhead has gone way too far given that wild steelhead now represent 40% of steelhead in Lake Michigan. This is a result of the lakes changing dramatically because of invasive mussels. The water clarity and lack of zooplankton have made it significantly more difficult for hatchery raised smolts to get to and survive in the

big lake. We continue to be at a safe medium mortality rate but hatchery steelhead are becoming less available to big lake anglers as well as river anglers.

What's at risk here is loss of opportunity and interest in steelhead fishing by those who make up the majority of licensed anglers who pay for the science-based management of the fishery. Instead of having the NRC tweaking or dialing up fishing regulations, why don't we just listen to the experts in the MDNR fisheries division and make changes when the science supports



Bob Bryans admires early fall steelie

"Autumn" Continued from page 1

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

While many coho enter the rivers in September the main run usually arrives

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

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

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

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

While many brown



Chinook close-up

trout attempt to spawn in the lakes themselves, they do add to the river angler's bag. They begin to run in mid-September and most spawn in late October or early November. They have a curious trait of remaining in the river after spawning often staying until the spring runoff begins.

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

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

The vast majority of lake trout spawn on rocky reefs in the Great Lakes. Many large tributaries do host runs of these fish and the lakera seem to spawn

before returning to the lake. Michigan's St. Joseph, Grand and Manistee Rivers are the best bets for anadromous lake trout but in recent years their numbers have been very low.

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

Since fall steelhead are still many months from spawning, they are in prime shape and usually battle spectacularly. Many anglers focus on catching these fish and the other species taken are bonuses. Runs and holes in the lower parts of the rivers are the best places to intercept autumn steelies.

River run trout rarely actively feed and the Pacific salmon are actually physiologically incapable

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

Spawn, wigglers, wax worms, crawlers, and other natural baits smell and taste right so even though they may not be swallowed the lake run trout will hold on to them long enough for you to get the hookset. Very fresh run salmon will also pick up bait but to increase your chances for all of the fall anadromous fish I suggest you use brightly colored lures. Salmon will hit flashy lures right up till their last days. Fluorescent drift baits, silver and gold spoons and spinners, and minnow and high action plugs will attract the attention of all the migrating salmonids. Drifting beads under a float has become the go to technique for many river anglers in recent years. The jury is out on how many fish strike the beads as eggs versus just grabbing them out of irritation of something in "their space".

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



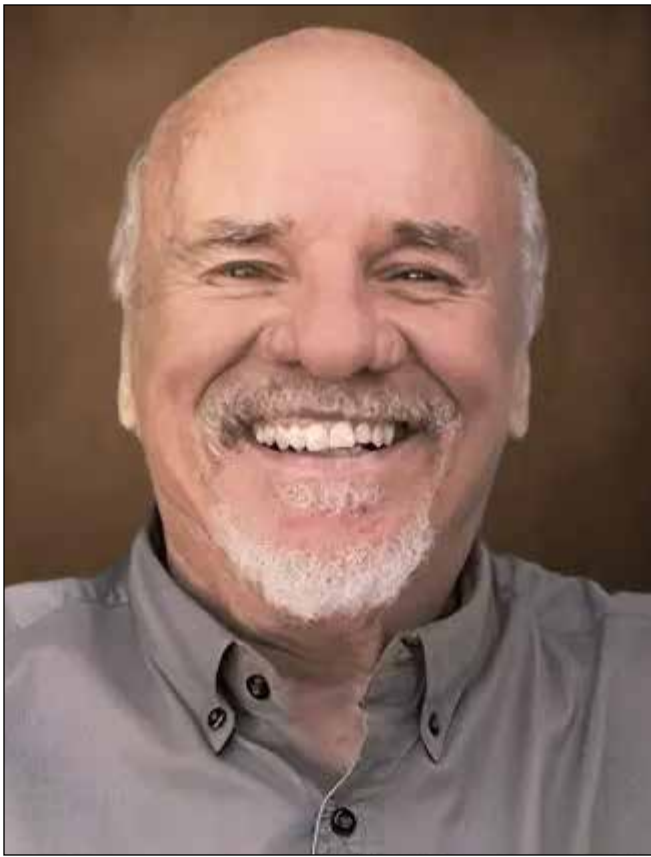
Author with lake run brown

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In Memoriam...Gary Decker

Gary Thomas Decker passed away on August 19th, 2024, after a courageous and hard-fought battle with pancreatic cancer. Born on August 24th, 1945, in Lackawanna, New York, Gary's smile and welcoming spirit were a testament to a life richly lived and filled with love.

A charter member and founder of the Great Lakes Bay Region Chapter of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, he dedicated 40 years to the MSSFA, sharing his love for fishing with everyone he knew, including his children and his wife Vicki, as they enjoyed countless fishing trips together during their 30 years of marriage. Vicki

Decker, who predeceased him, served as president of MSSFA in the early 1980's. Both Gary and Vicki spent countless hours in service to the association.

Gary's early years in Lackawanna laid a foundation of resilience and determination. His academic journey included two years of college, and specialized training at the Army Chemical School, which honed his analytical skills and attention to detail. Gary brought these skills to his career at Dow Corning, where he retired after a distinguished tenure that saw him holding 32 patents—a testament to his intelligence and inventive spirit.

Gary's love for his

family was undeniable. His legacy lives on through his children, Chris Teugh (Douglas), Brett Wilcox, Jason Decker, and Jennifer Decker (Vince Miller), each of whom he instilled with his values of kindness and perseverance.

Those who had the pleasure of knowing Gary would describe him as loving, intelligent and the life of the party. His ability to light up a room with his presence was unmatched, and his laughter was infectious. He had an uncanny ability to make friends wherever he went, always offering to share a drink, and to leave a lasting impression on those he met. His kindness touched many lives, and Gary will always

be remembered as a great man.

It was Gary's wishes that those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association. Condolences to the family can be made at www.wswfh.com for not supporting any compromise on commercial harvest of game fish.



Caviar - From Salmon Roe

By Henry Nabors

Have you ever considered using the roe from your Great Lakes Salmon or Trout? Nancy and I talked about it years ago and looked into the subject. Nancy's Dad cooked fish roe when she was a little girl in Texas. Why shouldn't we try it - the eggs from a salmon are big and beautiful. Nancy found the recipe below and we have been using each year.

While cleaning fish at Ludington at the end of July, Nancy noticed the salmon eggs and asked if I was ready to make Caviar again. I said "Sure!"

Nancy made our Caviar on Monday and we enjoyed it on Wed. She made a second recipe after our Manistee weekend! This one was even better with a little less salt this time! I had mine on a waffle with cream cheese! It will last about two weeks and we can enjoy it several

different ways over the coming days! On crackers with a glass of wine is very nice!

Consider Salmon Caviar the next time you catch a salmon this fall!



Caviar

Caviar can be made from the eggs of a number of fish including salmon, mullet, herring, sturgeon, steelhead, striped bass, and shad.

Use fresh eggs that are less than 24 hours old. A heavy oily aroma is natural, but if any odor of spoilage is present, do not use the eggs for caviar.

Gently remove individual eggs from the skein and place them in a bowl. You will probably get about 1-1/2 cups of eggs from a 1/2-pound skein. As you pick out the eggs, remove and discard pieces of membrane, blood, and bits of intestine or black skin.

For each 1 or 2 cups of cleaned eggs, add 1/2-cup salt to 2 cups cold water in

a large bowl and stir until salt is dissolved.

Pour eggs into brine. Swirl eggs and let stand 30 minutes to firm and absorb salt. Remove any membrane pieces found.

Pour caviar into a strainer. Rinse in cold water, and drain. Pick out remaining membrane.


Store caviar in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator. Caviar can be kept several weeks, or as long as the flavor is pleasant.

Serve caviar chilled. Nest the serving bowl in a larger bowl of crushed ice, and serve with unsalted crackers or toast spread with sweet butter or sour cream.

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

With the Legislature in full campaign mode and recessed, HB 5553, sponsored by Rep. Amos O'Neal, (D) Saginaw, to update the commercial fishing statute to protect game fish species from commercial harvest has not been given a hearing in the Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee in the House. (Neither has HB 5108 - Jason Morgan (D) Ann Arbor) which would allow state-licensed commercial take of game fish, including lake trout, smallmouth bass, panfish, walleye, perch and

other game fish been given a hearing.) I personally don't believe the Morgan bill will get passed in lame duck and if it did, I believe the Governor would not sign it.

The NRC Steelhead Task Force to study the potential causes of a drop in steelhead returning to the rivers last fall and winter will begin drafting its findings and recommendations. I have participated in these meetings and fact-finding presentations and it's my opinion that the cause is a river capacity issue and not overharvest. Catch

rates and total catch are not indicative of a declining steelhead population.

What comes out of the Task Force's findings is sure to become the basis for how regulations will be adopted for steelhead bag limits on rivers throughout Michigan going forward. We will see if the committee will recommend keeping the recently imposed one steelhead over 20 inches, or decrease the bag limit further on northern rivers.

The Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Meeting was held on Monday August 26th and during the discussion on the proposed commercial fishing bill HB 5108, sponsored by Jason Morgan (D) Ann Arbor, I expressed my objections to the bill specifying the basic decision that sport fishing was recognized as the best allocation of the resource

in 1964 and still is today. I encouraged the commercial fishers to take game fish off the table. Then and only then can we negotiate an acceptable Commercial Fishing Statue update.

Chief Claramunt explained what the department is considering as a proposed license package increase, to be considered by the legislature, and hopefully adopted yet this year. Randy said there will be three phases to the package increase. The first phase will be a license increase. The resident license is proposed to be increased by between \$10 and \$20 dollars. The non-resident license is also proposed to be increased by between \$10 and \$20 dollars. The senior license is proposed to be discounted by 25% of the cost of a resident license.

The current discount on a senior license is 42%. The proposal will include a cost-of-living adjustment annually tied to the consumer price index. The second phase will consider additional revenue initiatives like special assessments for species stamps or the ability to use additional gear, etc. The final phase will be a proposed funding mechanism that will better meet the ongoing needs of the department moving further into the 21st century.

The July/Aug edition of Great Lakes Sport Fishing News was made available electronically only and hopefully members were able to access the edition on line at MSSFA.org by clicking on the Magazine Tab and selecting the issue date. We encourage all chapters to link the edition to its website and Facebook



page or better yet send the pdf version to members directly so they have multiple ways to access the publication.

The Veterans' fishing outings have been well received again this summer and I attended the SW Michigan Chapter's "Trolling with the Troops" event July 26th and was really impressed with the turnout and quality of the programing. You all should take pride in the impact these events have on not only the vets but the communities which turn out to celebrate their service.

Fishing has been excellent this summer with lots of big kings being weigh-in. Whether its tournaments, leagues, or just fun outings, results indicate a strong fishery and lots of opportunity to enjoy our sportfishing heritage.

FIND'EM IN THE FALL

By Bob Jensen

When you go fishing, if you want to catch a fish, it's really important that you put your bait where a fish lives. That might sound extremely basic, but the most basic concept of fishing is to fish where the fish are. You might have the shiniest boat rigged with all the newest technology, lots of expensive rods and reels and tackleboxes full of lures, but if you don't put your lure near a fish, all that other stuff is going to do you no good. Here are some ideas for finding different species of fish in the fall months.

Let's start with crappies. Crappies are abundant and popular almost everywhere. In the spring we catch them near cover like rushes, docks, and timber in shallow water. In the fall, for the most part, if you fish those areas you won't be having crappies for supper. In most places, they're not in the shallows in large numbers in the fall.

In some lakes the crappies will be on the deep weedline and sometimes they'll be a cast away from the edge of the deep weedline. On a calm evening you can see them creating dimples as they suck bugs off the surface of the water. Cast a Mr. Crappie Grub on a sixteenth ounce jig to the area where the dimples are. Crappies and bluegills will eat it up.

Crappies will also be found near the bottom in the basin of some lakes. Cruise the basin with a close eye on your sonar. When you see a concentration of fish,

drop an eighth or sixteenth ounce jig tipped with a Mr. Crappie Lightning Shad. You'll catch perch along with the crappies.

Walleyes can be in a lot of places depending on the lake. Different lakes provide different hang-outs. In shallow lakes, you can find walleyes on windblown points close to shore.

In deep, clear lakes they'll be in twenty feet of water or more on structure like rock piles or points. They'll suspend away from structure near baitfish in some bodies of water, and they'll go on a night-bite in some lakes. Research the lake you'll be fishing to determine where you should focus your efforts.

Largemouth bass will also be in different areas, but as the weather gets colder, you'll find fewer of them in the sloppy shallows that many inhabited during the summer. However, on a warm day in the fall,

especially at mid-day, you can find them cruising reed beds near deeper water. Reed beds in six to eight feet of water that are close to cabbage beds in twelve to fifteen feet of water can be very good. The bass hold in the deeper water during cold conditions, then move shallower when there's a day or two of warmer weather. A spinnerbait used to be the go-to bait for largemouth in the reeds, and they'll still catch bass, but swimming jigs are taking as many and maybe more bass in today's world. Attach a Rage Craw in a contrasting color to the jig.

Be aware that some lakes have a lot more options than others for fall fish. In some lakes there will be just a couple types of structure that will hold fish, on other lakes you'll need to try different things to get bit. Keep that in mind and you'll find yourself getting lots of bites.



Mr. Crappie has lots of success with a jig/plastic combination in the fall.



“House Bill”

Continued from page 1

– that is, the intensity and efficiency of commercial fishing – directed at lake trout and whitefish is unsustainable. Commercial nets, especially gill nets and set hooks, are far more efficient than recreational fishing. Whitefish are in serious decline and lake trout are still struggling to recover in lakes Huron and Michigan. HB5108 retains archaic language that permits the use of gill nets and set hooks. These gear types would enable the commercial fishery to target the remaining whitefish and lake trout wherever they might be. While trap nets (the principal gear type currently authorized for the State-licensed fishery) are not well suited to fishing over rock bottom, gill nets and set hooks can be fished on any bottom types. Whitefish are gravitating to rock bottom because that’s where round gobies, a preferred prey of larger whitefish, thrive. Thus, use of gill nets and set hooks would give the commercial fishery the tools it needs to hunt down the remaining whitefish and undermine rehabilitation of lake trout in lakes Huron and Michigan. The public interest would best be served by the State imposing heightened protections for whitefish and protecting lake trout in these two lakes until their restoration has been accomplished. The highest and best use of both species is to build broodstock for conservation, maintenance of predator to prey balance, and recovery of the species. Any proposed amendments to PA 451 that do not remove its outdated authorization of gill nets and set hooks is unacceptable because these gear types threaten the recovery of these species.

• Allocating 25% of fish that had, up to now, been reserved for recreational fishing to the commercial sector violates the public interest. The recovery of walleye was paid for by fishing and hunting licenses and taxes on sportfishing gear (the Federal Dingell-Johnson Sportfish Restoration Fund). In addition, a large percentage of walleye stocked for various walleye recovery projects was reared in partnership with recreational fishing groups. Lake trout are stocked principally by Federal Hatcheries in mitigation for devastation caused by sea lampreys; their highest and best use is for furthering progress toward restoration and to restore predator/prey balance in the lakes, as biological guardians against invasive species. If surplus is available for harvest, that harvest opportunity should be managed conservatively and allocated to the recreational fishery. The recreational sector, not the commercial sector, has contributed to the restoration of these species.

• The recreational

fishery cannot compete with commercial fishing. The allocation of 25% of the resource to the commercial sector will erode recreational catch rates (the number of fish an angler can expect to catch during a fishing trip) to the point where most fishers will turn elsewhere or quit fishing.

• The public interest is best served when resources are managed for the benefit of the public, rather than for private interests. Commercial hunting was banned when recreational hunting proved sufficient to harvest available surpluses of game. Commercial fishing, even if it proves sustainable, reduces the number of fish available to recreational fishing and can depress recreational catch rates to where the resource

is no longer attractive recreational fishers. In addition, net encounters by angling boats can be dangerous and recreational fishers are reluctant to fish in the presence of large numbers of nets. The legislative allocation of 25% of available harvest of walleye, lake trout, and yellow perch, for example, gives a quarter of the resource to no more than 60 individuals whereas, until this bill, these fisheries have been enjoyed by over 1 million sport-fishing license buyers.

• The bill undermines science-based decision-making and resource management by authorizing the legislature to overturn or modify the DNR’s science-based decisions. The proposed legislation would give the

DNR authority to order emergency closures or reductions in harvest “based on a scientific determination that an emergency exists” but such an emergency measure could not be “in effect for more than 6 months unless extended by a concurrent resolution adopted by a record roll call vote by a majority of the members elected to and serving in each house of the legislature”.

The quota implementation procedures prescribed by HB 5108 invite political interventions in science-based quota administration by requiring the DNR:

• “Send notification of each licensed commercial fisher’s proposed whitefish quota to the chairs of the house and senate natural resources committees and the governor.”

• “Send notification to the senators and representatives who represent a district in which there are ports where licensed commercial fishers operate of the quota of each licensed commercial fisher that operates in that district.”

While HB 5108 would give the DNR authority to “specify the type and amount of gear that the licensee is allowed to use” it also dictates that trawls be authorized: “The director shall authorize the use of trawls by licensed commercial fishers for the purpose of taking fish in the waters of the Great Lakes”.

• The cost of managing quota-based commercial fisheries is too high and most of the cost would be from the Game and Fish Fund (supported by hunting

and fishing licenses). To set quotas, the numbers of fish of each age group and their annual survival rates must be estimated over a period of at least 10 years. Counting fish is not like counting trees. You cannot see the fish, but instead must estimate their numbers by conducting intense, on-the-water stock assessments, measuring and aging hundreds, sometimes thousands of fish over a period of years, analyzing survey and harvest data, and building and managing models of each fish population. This is expensive work, requiring vessels, crews, technicians, laboratories, and specially trained stock-assessment

“House Bill”
Continued on page 11

Only YOU Can Save The Buoys!

The Port Sheldon buoy and the South Haven buoy play a key role in boater safety and successful angler outings on Lake Michigan. The buoys provide real-time data on wave height and frequency, wind speed and direction, and water temperatures from the surface to 70 feet below. Originally deployed in 2014 through a grant from NOAA, these buoys have provided critical life-safety and fishery environment information, enabling us to be better at our sport and to be safer while fishing.

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.

Support The South Haven Buoy



Access The Buoy:
<https://limno.io/station/45168/>
 OR
 Text 45168 to: (866) 218-9973



Support The Port Sheldon Buoy



Access The Buoy:
<https://limno.io/station/45029/>
 OR
 Text 45029 to: (866) 218-9973



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THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE QUALITY OF FISHING REFLECTS THE QUALITY OF LIVING!

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

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

For those who love to fish but have no means, MSSFA chapters sponsor a "Crews" program that allows a sign up as a crew member for a day of fishing.

With a common goal, and a close working partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MSSFA helps to enhance the resource and sport fishing in our rivers, streams, inland lakes, and of course the mighty Great Lakes. MSSFA is a front-runner at all levels of the legislature and in courtrooms, and has spent countless hours working behind the scenes and attending hearings.

So why join the *Steelheaders*... Got kids, love fishing.. **JOIN NOW!** ...and become a member of the largest organized groups of fishermen in the Midwest. There are chapters throughout the entire state. You too can help protect and preserve this world-class sport fishery for you, your children and generations to come.

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS (GLSFN)

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

Better than 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 its **January Special Edition** or "*Show Edition*" that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

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

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

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For questions email: mssfamembership@charter.net

MSSFA ~ PO Box 423 ~ Paw Paw, MI 49079

The following Chapters accept online payments via Credit Card and/or PayPal. A PayPal account is not needed-use the option credit card. Note: some Chapters charge a small fee for processing.
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South Haven PayPal Link: <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/2GKMZWTWRTFZG>



Consumers Energy's license to generate hydropower at the Alcona Dam, on the Au Sable River, expires in 2034. The company is now considering selling Alcona and 12 other dams that generate small amounts of expensive power. (Bridge photo by Kelly House)

As Consumers Mulls Selling 13 Dams, Some in Michigan Fear Another Disaster

By: Kelly House
Bridge Michigan

As it considers the future of 13 hydropower dams that provide little electricity while operating at a \$152 million annual net loss, one of Michigan's largest utilities is considering selling them for as little as a dollar apiece.

Such a deal would be ideal for Consumers Energy, freeing the company and its 1.8 million ratepayers from a financial burden, while avoiding the contentious prospect of demolishing dams whose vast reservoirs have become popular recreational lakes.

But as the company privately vets prospective buyers, dam safety advocates and environmentalists who favor dam removal are raising alarm about the possible downsides.

Namely, a long history of companies offloading unprofitable dams onto new owners who can't afford their costly upkeep, eventually leaving Michigan taxpayers to pick up the bill — or pick up the pieces when a dam fails.

The most notorious examples are the Edenville and Sanford dams near Midland, which changed hands repeatedly as owners failed to make safety upgrades.

Finally, in 2020, the decrepit dams failed, flooding out mid-Michigan and causing \$200 million in property damage. Their owner, Boyce Hydro LLC, declared bankruptcy, and taxpayers have so far shelled out \$200 million to rebuild the dams, plus tens of millions more to clean up after the disaster.

"(Consumers) should know that this has turned out bad in the past," said

Bryan Burroughs, Michigan Trout Unlimited executive director. "And instead they're encouragingly talking about a scenario

that could set up a bunch more Midlands on us." Company officials note that they still haven't decided whether to keep,

sell, or demolish the dams. And they say safety is a priority as they vet prospective buyers.

"All three options

are still on the table," said Angela Thompkins, Consumers' chief diversity officer and vice president of community affairs, adding that "we want to make sure that we're doing the right thing for the company, for investors, the customers and the community."

Fans of the dams say they trust Consumers to find a good buyer. And for them, any trepidation about new owners is eclipsed by fear that Consumers could demolish the dams and turn the reservoirs back into free-flowing rivers.

"Everyone wants to see the status quo," said state Sen. Michele Hoytenga, R-Manton, whose district includes eight of the dams. "Obviously, we know that isn't working for Consumers."

Bad financial math

Consumers once owned more than 90 hydropower dams across Michigan, but has been exiting the business for decades as ballooning maintenance costs, new regulations and competition from cheaper energy sources make hydropower unprofitable.

Today, just 13 dams remain in the company's portfolio — and they're among the biggest and most well-known in Michigan. The impoundments in the Au Sable, Manistee, Muskegon, Grand and Kalamazoo rivers average more than a century old and generate just 1% of the company's electricity, at nine times the cost of any other power source.

In light of that bad financial math, Consumers has spent the past two years mulling whether it wants to keep, sell, or decommission the structures. Spokesperson Tracy Wimmer said a

decision is expected in early 2025.

All three options are potentially controversial:

Keeping the dams would mean higher energy costs for the utility's customers, costing them a collective \$781 million more than dam removal.

Decommissioning the dams would please river advocates, who loathe how they superheat rivers and destroy fish habitat. But it would anger the owners of lakefront properties created by the dams, and transform communities that have built their economies around fishing and boating tourism.

And selling the structures raises questions about how a new owner could squeeze enough profit out of their meager hydropower to cover the massive maintenance costs.

Consumers announced its search for potential buyers last year. Fifteen North American companies have submitted viable proposals, according to notes from the company's meetings with local interest groups.

Consumers hopes one of them will purchase all 13 dams, then sell the hydropower back to Consumers on a 30-year contract. An instruction sheet for prospective buyers offers a selling price of as little as \$1 per dam.

"The goal is to identify a partner that has the expertise, financial capability, and desire to own, operate and care for the facilities over the long term," the document states.

Ignored calls for reforms

Hoytenga, the Manton lawmaker, said she trusts

Consumers Energy hydropower dams

Consumers Energy is debating the future of its 13 hydroelectric dams, including whether to keep the impoundments in place or remove them.



Credit: Map courtesy of Consumers Energy

"Consumers"
Continued on page 11

2024 Tentative Print Schedule		
Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/13/23	01/03/24
2	02/14/24	03/04/24
3	04/12/24	05/03/24
4	06/12/24	07/02/24
5	08/14/24	09/03/24
6	10/11/24	11/04/24

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News (GLSFN) is the official publication of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA). Subscription to th *GLSFN* is through membership in *MSSFA*. The *GLSFN* publishes six issues per year. Permission for reprint from this publication is normally permitted, unless otherwise stipulated by the article, and proper credit is given to the author and the publication. The *GLSFN* or *MSSFA* does not necessarily agree or support the contents of articles within this publication. The views expressed are those of the author(s) of the articles.

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



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MSSFA Board of Directors Meetings 2024
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm
 Wed. October 16
 Wed. December 11

Join a Chapter, Join the Fun!

For more information, contact your Chapter Membership Director or mssfamembership@charter.net

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 We'll *HOOK YOU UP* with the latest news!

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MSSFA: It PAYS to belong! Here's why:

1	AI & Bob's Sports	510 68th St	Grand Rapids	MI	49548	10% Discount with AI & Bob's Card or Steelheaders
2	All Auto Care	1234 Ball Ave. NE	Grand Rapids	MI	49505	Member Rates
3	Ann's Custom Canvas	4414 Remembrance Rd	Walker	MI	49544	10% Discount, not valid on specials. Mention steelheaders before ordering
4	Auto Owners Insurance	303 E. Monroe	Durand	MI	48429	Rowe Agent Group #486
5	Batteries Plus	2061 N-139 Suite B	Benton Harbor	MI	49022	10% & Member Discount 269-925-7374 www.batteriesplus.com
6	Batteries Plus	3082 44th Street	Grandville	MI	49418	10% & Member Discount
7	Batteries Plus	386 Bay Park Dr, Suite B	Holland	MI	49424	10% & Member Discount 616-396-9914 www.batteriesplus.com
8	Batteries Plus	5228 S. Westnedge Ave	Kalamazoo	MI	49002	10% & Member Discount 269-553-2355 www.batteriesplus.com
9	Batteries Plus	3031 28th Street SE	Kentwood	MI	49512	10% & Member Discount 616-575-0500 www.batteriesplus.com
10	Batteries Plus	5839 Hrvey Street, Suite 6	Norton Shores	MI	49444	10% & Member Discount 231-747-9168 www.batteriesplus.com
11	Big Papa Sportfishing	50642 Oregon Ave.	Novi	MI	48374	10% except on equipment
12	Black Dog Outfitters	4444 14 Mile Rd	Rockford	MI	49341	10% Discount on fly tying materials, hooks & lines. www.blackdog-outfitters.com
13	BoatU.S.					\$15 Annual Membership Dues - Use Membership # GA83723B
14	Bob's Outdoors	Statewide	www.bobsoutdoors.com			10% Discount (www.bobsoutdoors.com)
15	Brenner's Service	4765 W River Dr	Comstock Park	MI	46321	5% exclusions may apply. 616-784-9872 dawnbrenner@hotmail.com
16	Dayton, Rick R, DDS	169 Louis Campau Promenade Ste 2A	Grand Rapids	MI	49503	20% off all services (616)458-2545
17	Cascade Capital Funding	4251 Cascade Rd. SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49546	Free appraisal up to \$300.00
18	Dockside Marine, Inc	4320 State Rd	Glennie	MI	48737	15% Off Parts & Accessories (Excludes Electronics)
19	Dunham's Sports	Statewide				10% Discount # 50050/3
20	Firestone - Metro 25	19268 Middlebelt	Livonia	MI	48152	\$20 off on \$200 or more on service www.metro25firestone.com
21	Fish with Jim Outfitters	http://www.fishwithjimoutfitters.com/	248-252-1277			Discount \$50.00 off the total trip price.
22	Glacier Corporation	1021 Fuller St.	Santa Ana	CA	92701	Aquarium Chillers for "salmon in classroom" \$625 + 60 (s&h) = \$685
23	Great Lakes Angler Magazine		www.glangler.com			Discount 50% OFF 1 year subscription, members only! Use code MSSFA
24	Homestead Resort on Betsie River	2399 Dam Rd	Benzonia	MI	49616	10% In Season, 25% Off Season (homestead@crystal-rentals.com)
25	Insta-Launch Campground	20 Park Ave	Manistee	MI	49660	Member Discount
26	Insurance Shop/Fremont Ins.	824 Water St.	East Jordan	MI	49727	10% Discount off insurance for MSSFA Group Members
27	Jim Waldron Pontiac, Buick, GMC	1146 S. State Rd	Davison	MI	48423	Contact Nick Russloll for Sales, 10% off all parts not to exceed \$100.00
28	J Smith Custom Tackle	1136 E Hughes Lake Road	Rose City	MI	48654	15% - 20% off depending on rod. Customrodsbyjsmith.com 989-685-2819
29	K & M Marine	14990 Telegraph Rd	Redford	MI	48239	10% off merchandise except sale items (www.kandmmarine.com)
30	Kamp Oil Inc	6467 Manistee St	Fredric	MI	49733	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
31	Kamp Oil Inc	3650 Eastern Ave SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49508	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
32	Beebe Oil Co (aka Kamp Oil)	4999 22 Mile Rd	Utica	MI	48317	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
33	Lapeer Boat Service	3556 Fort Knox Dr	Lapeer	MI	48446	10% off parts and labor (810-245-6038)
34	Liberty Tax Service	544 E. 8th St.	Holland	MI	49423	\$20.00 Discount on tax service
35	Logan's Run Muskegon River Cottage Rental	1648 Gardner St.	Newaygo	MI	49337	10% Discount www.logansrun.us 616-485-4501
36	Mark's Sport Shop	11530 Mason Dr	Grant	MI	49327	Member Discount
37	MUCC	2101 Wood Street	Lansing	MI	48912	\$18.00 Membership Dues
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39	Richfield RV	Statewide				10% Discount
40	River Raisin Marina & Campground	2502 E. Elm Avenue	Monroe	MI	48161	Buy 1 get 1 free - call 313-575-4367 (www.riverraisinmarina.com)
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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!					

2024 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Location
October	26	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
November	9	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	16	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	30	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	7	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	On the River Tavern
December	14	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting
 Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94.
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693
 battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2024 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
September	7	Sportsman For Youth	
TBD		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 pbzfarm@gmail.com
 www.ghsteelheaders.com

2024 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
September	7	Sportsman For Youth	Muskegon
September	30	Members Meeting	
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest**	
October	*26	Fall River Contest STC	
October	28	Chapter Meeting	
November	3	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	
November	25	Chapter Meeting	
December	6	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
 ** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

New address:
 P.O. Box 140198
 Grand Rapids, MI 49514

2024 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
September	7	Manistee / Frankfort - Salmon T.B.D.
December	14	Banquet V.F.W. Midland

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

2024 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
September	9	Board Meeting
September	10	League Dinner
October	1	Board Meeting
November	5	Board Meeting
December	3	Board Meeting
December	5	Membership

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 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

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 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

2024 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
September	3	General Membership Meeting	
September	7	Manistee Kayak / SB & Pier Tournaments	Eric Braden
September	28	Manistee River Tournaments	Fabian Sepulveda
September	29	Muskegon Lake Salmon Campout Kayak / SB	Keith Childs
October	1	General Membership Meeting	
October	12	Lake Erie Perch Outing	Dave Zawacki
October	16	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2023 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/Trenz/Nabors/Zawacki
October	19	Ludington Pier / Beach Event	Eric Braden
November	2	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Zawacki/Braden/Trenz
November	12	General Membership Meeting - 2nd Tues.	Election Day Room at Senior Center #5
November	30	Ohio Walleye Tournament	Dave Zawacki
December	3	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	7	PM River Tournament	Marc Traver / Adam Trenz
December	14	Huron River Tournament	Roger Hinchcliff

** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
 7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road
 WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org
 If you have questions, contact MetroWest Steelheaders, PO BOX 531927, Livonia MI 48153-1927

Contact: President Bob Schulz, bobschulz7@gmail.com, 248-915-0043
 Membership Director Henry Nabors 248-225-4964

2024 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
November	23	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament
December		South Haven Steelheaders Holiday Party 2024

2024 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates

NO JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING
 FEB 15th - 3rd Thursday, Guest speaker - TBD
 MAR 21st - 3rd Thursday (week after GR Ultimate Sports Show, 3/7-10) - Best Chance Fishing Seminar
 APRIL 18th - 3rd Thursday - Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - Dr. Dan O'Keefe presenting
 MAY 16th - 3rd Thursday *prior to SHS Pro/Am - Membership meeting.
 JUNE 20th - 3rd Thursday
 JULY 18th - 3rd Thursday
 AUG 8th - 2nd Thursday - *Prior to the Annual Fish Boil
 SEP 19th - 3rd Thursday - Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year's events. ID event chairs.
 OCT 17th - 3rd Thursday - Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year's events and set calendar
 NOV 7th - 1st Thursday - Regular and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar
 December - No meeting in lieu of Holiday Party
 The 2025 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting is the 1st Wednesday of November (11/6/24)

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 organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November.

Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090
 Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm.
 For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com

2024 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			
October	10	Quarterly Meeting - Fall Run Salmon and Steelhead	
December	7	Winter Challenge River Fishing Tournament	

Membership Meetings Held at:
 St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022
Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 Contact: Ryan McCartney (574) 274-6382

2024 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
October	17	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Uby Foxhunters

Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.

2024 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
September	9	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
October	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting

Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.

2024 White River Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information
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.			
September	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
October	3	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
November	7	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
December	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW

Join a Chapter, Join the Fun!

**For more information,
 contact your Chapter Membership Director
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“House Bill”
Continued from page 6

scientists. The DNR Fisheries Division has, as a matter of policy for many years, avoided setting quotas in non-tribal waters and instead managed the number of licenses and number of nets such that a sustainable balance between fishing effort and the resource’s productivity was obtained. Stock assessments are conducted periodically to be sure this management system is working. Limiting gear to trap nets and focusing the commercial fishery on whitefish made the approach possible. This is a much more affordable process than setting annual quotas for each management unit and species. HB 5108, while increasing fees for

commercial fishing and requiring payment of royalties to the State, does not raise nearly enough revenue to pay for quota-based management; thus, the recreational angler through their license fees, will very likely pay for the estimation of commercial quotas.

The sponsors of this bill clearly misunderstand the process of quota estimation and consequently place an impossible time frame for the initiation of quota-based management: “By December 31, 2023 and each year thereafter, establish a total allowable harvest for lake trout, walleye, and perch within the waters of the Great Lakes...”. Quotas take years of stock assessment and modeling to become reality. Because harvest

quotas have not been established for Michigan-licensed fishers, a quota system would need to be phased in over a period of years, with provisional harvest regulations in place of quotas until the models are built and working reliably.

• HB 5108 is extremely divisive. Recreational and commercial fishers have harmoniously shared the same waters and worked collaboratively in fishery advisory committees and other avenues to advocate for the resource. With declining whitefish populations, this collaboration toward resource recovery is more important than ever. HB 5108 will likely end the level of trust and collaboration we have enjoyed since the 1970s.

“Consumers”
Continued from page 8

Consumers to seek out only responsible buyers.

“I am pretty confident in them, that they wouldn’t sell (the dams) to somebody who wouldn’t be able to maintain them,” Hoitenga said.

But Burroughs is skeptical.

If operating the dams isn’t financially feasible for Consumers, he wonders, how could another company make it work?

Monopoly utilities like Consumers have more financial incentive to maintain their infrastructure, because their captive ratepayers typically cover the cost, guaranteeing a profit.

That’s not true for private hydropower dam owners, which usually sell the electricity from their structures on the open market. Every dollar spent

on maintenance is a dollar less in profits.

As a result, their dams are often poorly maintained.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data shows that all of Michigan’s 40 utility-owned dams with available inspection data are in fair or better condition. In contrast, 32 of 396 private dams are in poor or unsatisfactory condition.

Any attempt to sell the Consumers dams would need to go through state and federal energy regulators, who have the power to reject a proposed sale or operating license transfer.

But neither Michigan nor the U.S. government require dam owners to prove they can afford to maintain the structures they buy.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which regulates hydropower dams, has spent three-and-a-half years pondering whether to enact such a policy. At the

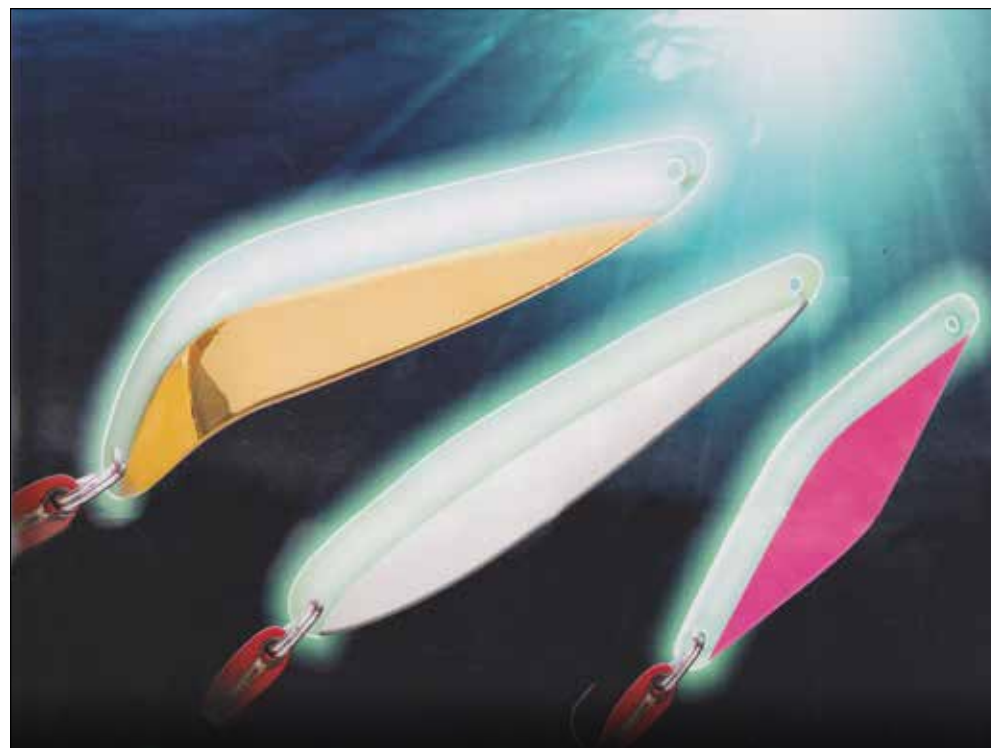
state level, lawmakers have declined to update the weak dam safety laws since the Midland disaster.

In a 2022 letter to FERC, Michigan’s top dam safety official, Luke Trumble, urged the agency to require financial assurances from dam owners, calling it a matter “of grave importance to the state of Michigan.”

Trumble went on to cite Michigan companies’ long history of offloading unprofitable dams onto new owners who can’t afford to maintain them. Examples abound across the state, from the Peninsular Paper Dam in Ypsilanti, to the Rugg Pond Dam near Kalkaska.

“Long after all revenues have been extracted from the resources, the taxpayers are left with the burden of removing the dams,” Trumble wrote.

Given the gaps in financial oversight, the prospect of selling the Consumers dams “is fraught



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with red flags,” said Bob Stuber, executive director of the Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition.

“There is no incentive for a new owner to ever put a penny into these once they buy them,” Stuber said.

FERC spokesperson Mary O’Driscoll said the

agency “cannot engage in any speculation” about how it would react to a proposal to sell the Consumers dams.

But O’Driscoll noted that when faced with license transfer requests, FERC officials consider whether the new operator “is capable of carrying out

its responsibilities under the license to be transferred.”

Matt Helms, a spokesperson for the Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates state utilities, declined to comment on how the agency would approach any review of Consumers’ preferred path forward.

No dam, no Mesick

In the tiny village of Mesick, 20 miles northwest of Cadillac on the Manistee River, Charlie Maidens has his own fears about the future.

He oversees the Northern Exposure campground, which leases land from Consumers along the Hodenpyl Dam Pond.

The nonprofit campground is an economic engine for the 400-person community: Its 260 sites are booked solid on summer weekends, and campers buy food, drinks, fishing tackle and gasoline at local businesses.

In Maidens’ ideal world, Consumers would stay in the hydropower business. But if that can’t happen, he said, he’d rather gamble on new owners than watch the Hodenpyl Dam disappear.

“Without the dam, there’s no Northern Exposure,” Maidens said. “If there’s no Northern Exposure, there’s no Mesick.”



The Midland dam failures of 2020 flooded out a large swath of mid-Michigan, causing widespread damage after a parade of owners over decades failed to adequately maintain and upgrade the dams. (Bridge file photo)



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