

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
July 18-10, 2006
DNR Service Center
Sturgeon Bay

Draft Notes –prepared by Bill Horns

Present: Paul Peeters, Randy Schumacher, Matt Coffaro, Brad Eggold, Mike Donofrio, Steve Hogler, Tom Hansen, Matt Mangan, Bill Horns.

1. Brief updates

Time was allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest.

- Review assignments from last LMFT meeting
 - Brad, Matt, and Sue still owe us a draft policy statement on net pens
- Ballast workshop (Bill Horns)
- Early collections of Skamania in the Root River (Brad Eggold)
- Streamside rearing of sturgeon (Brad Eggold)
- Funding prospects for sturgeon passage on the Menominee River (Mike Donofrio)
- Disposition of walleye from Green Bay tournament (Tom Hansen)
- Questions raised by Al Kaas regarding a high capacity well at the Kewaunee Salmon Pond
- Status of rule to eliminate the June 30, 2007, sunset on current bloater chub gill net depth limits
- Coast Guard water training areas
 - Bill was asked to send in a comment to be sure the Coast Guard is aware that fishing activity is greatest in June-August.
- 316b requirements and methods
- Status of initiative to replace the Barney
 - Bill will investigate where this stands.
- Coho stocking cuts in Michigan.

2. Green Bay yellow perch – drop net regulations

Background. Mark Maricque has requested that the Department consider re-opening the spring (May 20 – June 30) drop net fishery for yellow perch in Green Bay. Re-consideration of re-opening this fishery is a Tactic in the Lake Michigan Integrated Fishery Management Plan. The issue was discussed by the LMFT in March. Now, Matt Mangan has developed additional information.

Action. Discussion. Matt noted that not all Green Bay commercial fishers will agree on this. He suggests deferring action until the yellow perch population is larger or a resurgence of white perch occurs. It was suggested that a rule change might be considered when the commercial harvest limit reaches 200,000 pounds. If and when a rule is advanced, we should consider changing the minimum mesh size and setting a two-day lifting requirement. Consideration should be given to making those changes apply all year, not just during the spring season. Matt will write up a proposal for review by the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board.

3. Green Bay yellow perch – automating quotas

Background. At our last meeting we agreed to consider ways of automating the setting of yellow perch harvest limits. A discussion of the general problem of setting yellow perch quotas and of specific ways of automating them would be timely. With luck, John Netto will be able to attend and assist in the discussion. Two specific approaches that should be reviewed are the use of yield per recruit analyses and the use of creel survey results.

Action. Discussion. Bill Horns' proposal to have commercial quotas vary with open-water creel survey results of the preceding year was discussed. At a later meeting, John Netto and Matt Mangan will review alternative methods of automating quotas.

4. Cormorant control and research

Background. A cormorant control and research program is underway on Green Bay. It includes control activities by USDA Wildlife Services, continuing cormorant diet research by UW Wildlife Ecology, and a new UW study of effects of cormorants on other colonial nesting birds.

Action. Discussion. John Netto presented a preliminary analysis of the impact of cormorants on yellow perch based on Sarah Meadows' data and modeling. He plans to prepare a written 2-year report in the near future.

5. LMTC/LMC meeting

Background. The Lake Michigan Technical Committee will meet July 25-26, and the Lake Michigan Committee will meet in conjunction with the LMTC meeting. Brad Eggold is the LMTC chairman. The LMC meeting will be primarily devoted to discussing the lake trout restoration plan.

Action. Discussion.

6. Requested private bluegill stocking in Milwaukee River estuary

Background. A local group in Milwaukee would like to stock bluegills from a private hatchery or from Eagle Lake into the Milwaukee River estuary.

Action. Discussion. The issue will be revisited.

7. Stocking quotas

Background. In June the LMFT outlined a system of rules for adjusting stocking quotas in response to changes in the production system. As far as I know it worked pretty well, but it would be timely to discuss whether there are remaining problems or concerns.

Action. Discussion. There was agreement that Dave Giebtbrock will now be able to make quota adjustments without prior consultation. He should notify the LMFT after adjustments are made.

8. Review budgets

Background. There is some uncertainty about funding for projects in FY07. We have been asked to review our projects and identify areas where cuts could be absorbed, if necessary.

Action. Discussion. The LMFT was not able to identify any projects that would not use the allotted funds.

9. Feral brood stock data

Background. For some time I have been interested in developing a better system for bringing together all data (creel, weir, hatchery, etc) related to feral brood stock management to allow us to systematically review how things we control in the system can be changed to improve the fishery. Recently additional funding was provided to allow the hiring of an LTE to work on this, and that hiring process has been initiated. This would be a good time to get input and advice from the Team about the project.

Action. Discussion. The following concerns and questions were raised: 1) The LTE must be accomplished in Access and Oracle. 2) How will this be sustained after the LTE leaves? 3) Andy Fayram, Joanna Griffin, and Nancy Nate should be consulted. 4) Can the Science Services help?

10. Next meeting date and location – September 7, Plymouth.