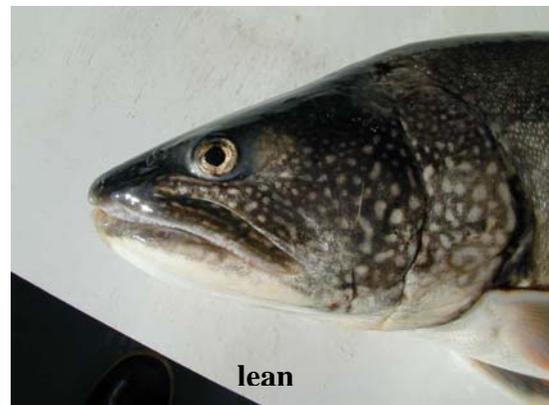


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Siscowet and lean lake trout in Lake Superior. The best characteristics to distinguish siscowets from lean lake trout are on the head. Siscowets have a shorter, bent snout with bulgy eyes that tend to be higher on the head than on lean lake trout.





State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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GREAT LAKES FISHERIES NEWS – June 2010.

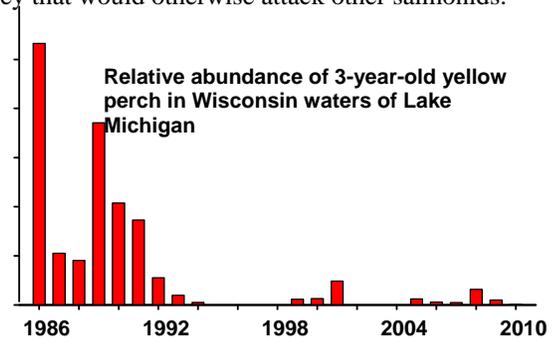
If you have questions or comments about issues related to Great Lakes fisheries, contact Bill Horns by phone (608-266-8782), FAX (608-266-2244), or e-mail (william.horns@wisconsin.gov). We also maintain Lake Michigan and Lake Superior web pages where you can find many reports:

Lake Michigan - <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/> Lake Superior – <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakesup/>

Siscowets rule in Lake Superior. Lean lake trout have been studied for decades in the Great Lakes but we are just beginning to understand the biology of the most abundant form of lake trout in Lake Superior, the siscowet. Siscowets currently have limited value in the sport and commercial fisheries, but appear to be very important predators in the Lake Superior ecosystem. Siscowets are also known as fat trout and have a higher fat content than lean lake trout. Their high fat content allows them to achieve neutral buoyancy with a small swim bladder, and thereby allows them to easily make vertical migrations of up to 500 feet and feed near the surface at night. They prefer to eat fish (chubs, deepwater sculpin, burbot, smelt) but they are not discriminating and bird feathers, terrestrial insects, balloons and other trash, and commercially discarded fish guts have been found in siscowet stomachs. As their abundance has increased since the early 1990s, more siscowets have ventured into shallow water to feed. They are commonly attacked by sea lamprey and may serve as a buffer by attracting lamprey that would otherwise attack other salmonids.

Is it time to increase yellow perch harvest limits for Lake Michigan?

Because our bag limit is only five, while Illinois has a bag limit of 15, we have been asked by some anglers to consider allowing a larger harvest in Wisconsin. Commercial fishing for yellow perch is closed throughout southern Lake Michigan and commercial fishers have asked us to consider allowing a commercial harvest. By our best estimates, the mortality rate attributable to fishing in Wisconsin is about half what it is in the other states. The chart shows catch rates of young yellow perch in DNR assessment nets using the same methods each year from 1986 through 2010. Although the population shows no sign of rebounding, it has stabilized at a low level and supports modest recreational harvests.



We will have a new boat on Lake Michigan. Our Lake Michigan assessment boat, the *Barney Devine*, will be retired after 75 years of service. It will be replaced by a 60 foot vessel to be named *Coregonus*, after the genus of fish that includes lake whitefish, lake herring, and bloater chubs. The new boat will be built by Burger Boat Company of Manitowoc and will be in use next summer. The *Coregonus* will be versatile and fast -- capable of deploying trawls, gill nets, and other assessment gear and able to travel at 20 knots.

Brown trout yearlings stocked off shore in Green Bay. On May 24, over 45,000 7.5-inch yearling brown trout were stocked in Green Bay waters at three offshore locations between Marinette and Sturgeon Bay. The trout were stocked in 50 to 90 feet of water from the USFWS vessel *M/V Spencer F. Baird*. Hydroacoustic equipment on board the vessel documented that the fish moved to the bottom. Since 2000, brown trout fishing has experienced a sharp decline in Green Bay. The harvest in 2008 reached an all-time low in Green Bay and was estimated at 1,384 fish with an estimated 0.6% return of stocked fish. Survival of stocked brown trout in Green Bay may be influenced by a changing predator community (e.g., walleyes, northern, cormorants) and by the location and timing of stocking. We hope that by stocking large fish offshore late in the season we will increase survival and see better returns to the creel.

GLRI funding for fish passage on Menomonee River. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is a finalist for funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative of a project that will open 17 miles of the Menomonee River and 20 miles of its tributaries (Honey Creek, Underwood Creek, Little Menomonee River, Little Menomonee Creek, Lily Creek, Butler Creek) to fish passage. The DNR is a cooperating partner in this project.

Walleye stocking resumes in Chequamegon Bay. In 2010 approximately 400,000 walleye were stocked along the Ashland shoreline. The walleye stocking program was initiated in 1979 to rehabilitate the population in Chequamegon Bay. Large numbers of walleye began to return to the Ashland shoreline to spawn each spring, creating a localized fishery that had not existed previously. Stocking was suspended in 2000 to evaluate natural reproduction, which subsequent fisheries surveys have shown to be negligible. Although natural reproduction in the Kakagon and Bad Rivers contribute to the overall fishery, catches rates in the western portion of Chequamegon appear to depend on stocking.