

Department of Natural Resources
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Diving for yellow perch eggs. DNR divers return to the R/V Gaylord Nelson after looking for evidence of spawning by yellow perch near Milwaukee. Yellow perch deposit their eggs in gelatinous skeins, each containing thousands of eggs. The divers swim along the bottom and count yellow perch egg skeins. In recent years the number of skeins has ranged from near zero to over 11 per 1000 square meters.



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

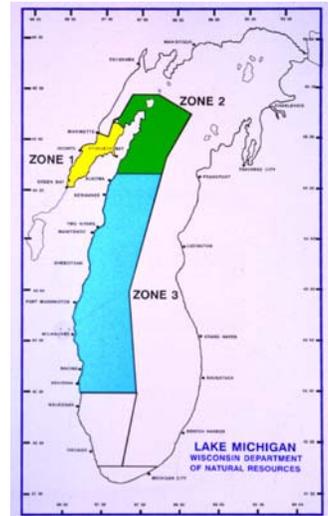
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GREAT LAKES FISHERIES NEWS – October 2009.

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:

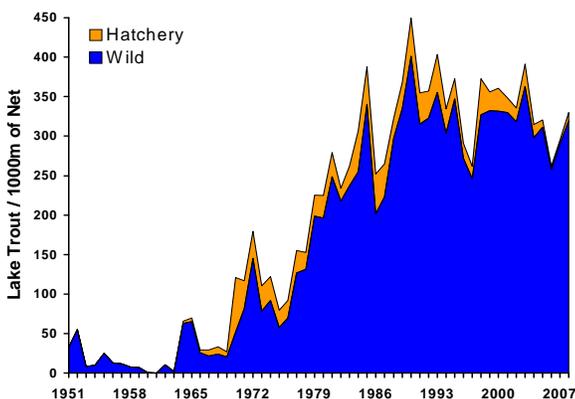
Lake Michigan - <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/> Lake Superior – <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakesup/>

Salmon and trout stocking in Lake Michigan. Statewide fish production plans are currently under review for the 2010-2011 stocking year. More detailed and final information will be available soon. We hope to hit the following numbers despite some adversity: brown trout fingerlings – 176,000; brown trout yearlings – 545,000; chinook salmon – 1,163,000; coho fingerlings – 180,000; coho yearlings – 310,000; steelhead yearlings – 270,000; other rainbow trout yearlings – 120,000. The adversity has to do with staffing, facilities, and disease containment. **Staffing.** The state hiring freeze and required furloughs have left us short-handed at some production facilities. **Facilities.** Although the new cold-water side of Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery is complete, other facilities are aging and in need of upgrades. We have contracted with an external consultant to review our state-wide production system, and hope to move forward with additional improvements when that is completed. **Disease.** The discovery of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) in Lake Michigan has forced us to adopt new practices. Most significantly, in order to minimize the risk of transporting the disease to inland waters, we will no longer move any Lake Michigan fish eggs out of the Lake Michigan basin. This has reduced the number of facilities available for Lake Michigan fish production and forced us to cut some production targets.



Department proposes increased lake whitefish commercial harvest limits for Lake Michigan and Green Bay. The proposed rule would increase the annual total allowable commercial harvest by 16.6%, from 2,470,000 to 2,880,000 pounds. The increase would be allocated among the three fishing zones in proportion to existing harvest limits -- 9.1% to Zone 1, 82.2% to Zone 2, and 8.7% to Zone 3. A public hearing on this proposal has been scheduled as follows:

time and date: 5 pm, Monday, October 26
location: Door County Public Library, 107 S. Fourth Ave, Sturgeon Bay, WI.



Lake Superior lake trout grow slowly and live a long time. This year we recovered a wild lake trout that had been tagged in October of 1978. It was 34.6 inches at the time of capture and had not been seen during surveys until it was harvested in 2009. The trout was 40 inches at the time of capture and had only grown 5.4 inches in 31 years. But even more amazing is a lake trout at that length would have been a minimum of 20 years old in 1978, making it at least 50 years old! **Harvests may be cut.** Lake trout have been sampled every year since 1951 on Gull Island Shoal, a historically important spawning area near the Apostle Islands. The data show a steady increase of naturally reproduced fish for over 20 years, followed by a leveling-off in recent years. Lake trout on Lake Superior are managed jointly by the DNR and the Red Cliff and Bad River Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa. This fall a new three year lake trout quota will be set and it is likely that some reduction in harvest will be recommended by state and tribal biologists.

We remain cautious and concerned about the Lake Michigan forage base, but salmon and trout growth appeared to improve in 2009. This is an issue that we will continue to watch. The 25% lakewide cut in chinook stocking that was implemented in 2006 may partially explain the improved growth in 2009 as that cohort reached age-3 and began to dominate lakewide forage consumption. We hope that we will soon reach agreement with the other states (MI, IN, IL) regarding a lake trout implementation plan in which lake trout stocking numbers are held at current levels, at least for the next few years.

