

MSSFA Executive Director's Report – Jan. 2010

Lake Michigan Report

For 2010 the expected catch rate for Lake Michigan will be about the same as it was in 2009. The catch rate was good on all species of fish with slightly larger salmon caught by some anglers. Perch catch rate should be higher for 2010 than it was in 2009.

The department feels that the river systems on Lake Michigan produce about thirty percent of the total amount of salmon and steelhead in the lake depending on the year. This year it was at about 53% for salmon.

The stocking rate for Lake Michigan will be the same as 2009 for Chinook. Coho stocking will be at about 1.6 million for 2010, up from 2008 and there will be no other decreases in the stocking anticipated at this time.

There will be an increase of approx. 69,000 brown trout for northern Lake Michigan with increased plants in Ludington and Frankfort of the new Sturgeon River strain mixed with the Wild Rose strain. The Dept. also wants to do a paired brown trout study.

More YOY alewives seem to be making it to adult stage in 2009, good sign. Also a lot of Jack Coho returned to weirs this year and that is traditionally a good sign as well.

Salmon limits will remain the same for 2010 at 5 salmon.

There is a major increase in the cost of food for the hatchery fish. The increase will be about \$1.60 per fish in the hatchery.

Lake Huron Report

I talked with Kelly Smith about the future of Lake Huron. As you know, there are problems that we are working on with the department to try to make improvements to fishing on Lake Huron. Ken Merckel is working on a program that will increase Lake Herring (Cisco) to help create an added forage base. Ken will have more information on this program at the board meeting. There is also a study to stock more Atlantic salmon in Lake Huron in the next few years.

I also discussed a program that would increase steelhead plants in Lake Huron by 100,000. If we would increase our net pen program to new ports on Lake Huron, our organization could help the new ports with feeding the fish and building the net pens. Some of the existing salmon pens may be able to be reused for this propose.

Kelly Smith asked me to have Ken bring this proposal up at the next Lake Huron Task Force meeting which he did. This could possibly start in 2011.

Department Issues

The re-organization of the DNR and DEQ is a something else I have been involved with at this time. I have been working with Jim Vander Maas and Dr. Howard Tanner on this issue through the Conservation Coalition and other avenues as well. They will have a report on the progress of this issue at the MSSFA State BOD meeting. Jim and Howard have spent many hours on this issue and hopefully it can resolved satisfactorily.

Indian commercial fishing and net problems was much better this past season thanks to Jim Vander Maas who has helped the department supervise the problem and did a couple of ride alongs. Jim will make a report on this at the MSSFA State BOD board meeting. Seemed to be a lot less complaints and better marking of the nets in most areas. Several Tribal fishers fined for violations.

New Programs for the Great Lakes for the 2010 Season.

There is no money available for any new programs. May see a reduction in some programs as a result of the 3 million dollar cut to the Fisheries Dept.budget for 2010.Has been some rumor of a small license fee increase proposed by the Legislature, nothing has been introduced as of yet. Other issues that I am currently working on are the Wind Energy issue, Asian Carp, Ballast Water laws and fund raising ideas for MSSFA. If you see anything that would help the fishery that MSSFA could work on with the DNR, please let us know about it.

Andy Pelt – Executive Director - MSSFA