

# Sea Grant Regional Fishery Workshop --- Ludington, MI

**Saturday, January 9, 2010 at Ramada Inn Convention Center**

Workshop was called to order at 9AM by Dan O'Keefe, SW Extension Educator.

## **1. Lamprey Hunters Update**

Great Lakes Fishery Commission sponsored study to monitor the affect of lamprey on the fishery from 2006 – 2009. Limited participation (17 participants)

- a) Largest targeted species was the Chinook Salmon
- b) Wounding rate highest in Lake Trout – 5 wounds per 100 fish sampled
- c) A decline since 2006 with 2009 the lowest incident year in the last 10 years
- d) In the Grand Haven area, 1/5 of all fish caught are showing lamprey wounds

Opportunity this coming year for tournament participation in the study – contact Dan O'Keefe @ Mich Sea Grant if interested. Lamprey Hunters program will continue into 2010 and needs more support from anglers.

[http://www.glfc.org/sealamp/lampreyhunter/Tutorial/tutorial\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.glfc.org/sealamp/lampreyhunter/Tutorial/tutorial_pdf.pdf)

## **2. Conservation Officer Report, Corporal Steve Huff Mich. DNR & Mark Cieski- LRB**

Commercial fishery enforcement has been aided by the net marking regulations. Trap net complaints are down. Two unattended gill nets in the Ludington area resulted in a \$10,000 fine and \$2,000 in restitution to the DNR. Compliance is way up as a result of the involvement of the Little River Band in compliance efforts. LRB is marking nets above regulations/requirements

Mandatory restitution rules have been adopted. Manistee area has two net operators and six trap nets, Ludington – 10 nets, Leland – 3 nets (2 have been removed). Pentwater has had all nets removed. No issues from fisher in the Ludington area. All Tribal nets pulled off from Whitehall, fisher is not permitted to fish this winter due to violations.

Call the RAP line if you spot an unmarked trap or gill net. Gill net locations are not on-line as yet but most Trap Net locations are. Corporal Huff covers most of Lake Mich. from the Straits south to below Grand Haven and has had good cooperation from tribal law enforcement officers.

## **3. Hydrographic Survey Project, Mark Brederland, Sea Grant Educator**

Grand Traverse Bay sonar mapping study of east and west bays of Grand Traverse identified deepest spot on the east bay at 616 ft. and located the tug boat that sunk on Nov. 4, 1980. The hydrographic survey confirms the results of the lead line surveys of the 1920's and 1930's that are still used on all the available Great Lakes charts and are reasonably accurate..

## **4. Poor Quality of the Spawning Habitat, Chuck Madenjian**

Cisco (Lake Herring) study suggests the major reason for the collapse of the species in the Great Lakes is attributable, in large part, to the degradation of the spawning areas, principally caused by low dissolved oxygen levels during the annual spawning period, between November and January. The collapse which occurred between 1920 and 1975 has in the past been attributed to over fishing, smelt affect during the spawning period and the impact of alewife population entering the food chain. Recent studies show alewife had little effect on Cisco population. Proposed stocking of Cisco in spawning areas like Green Bay, Wisconsin is being considered since dissolved oxygen measurements are back up to 16-18 parts per million during the spawning period (above the 11.2 ppm required) and a 50 to 75% survival rate has been documented for Cisco egg incubation. Water quality is good enough to begin restocking. Stocking was to begin this winter but the threat of VHS has officials reluctant to authorize until next year. Cisco could make up at least 15% dietary requirement of the Chinook salmon. The stocking program would use the Cisco from Grand Traverse Bay since this strain has shown a keener instinct for survival. Ciscos are native to all 5 great lakes, live about 20 years, and spawn in Nov/Dec. Very important part of food web.

Also told that Round Gobys go deep in the winter.

## **5. Chinook Salmon Outlook & Fisheries Mgt. Update - Randy Claramunt, DNR Fishery Biologist and Mark Tonello, Mich. DNR**

The Lake Michigan Management Committee requested input regarding natural reproduction success of Chinook salmon. The results show that natural reproduction continues to be encouraging (over 50% of fish caught are naturally reproducing) and stocking numbers will remain the same in 2010 as 2009. Chinook from 2001 to 2007 all marked with OTC, may not be marked after that due to budget issue. Estimate natural reproduction at 3.7 million in 2006, and 3.6 million in 2007. (53% wild fish and 47% hatchery fish).

Alewife biomass is up for one year olds which will make up the largest share of the Chinooks diet. More YOY alewives also making it to adults. With the only positive abundance of Cisco in Grand Traverse Bay, the other major diet share will be Mysis (Opossum Shrimp). Consensus of opinion is the 2010 Chinook catch rate will be similar to 2009's catch rate. Salmon weir returns show a decrease in numbers from historical averages but a slight increase from last year, but slightly larger fish at the weirs. Coho jacks returning this year to weir larger than past several years (NORMALLY AND GOOD SIGN)

Chinooks stocking for 2010 will remain the same as 2009. Platte River Hatchery will raise and release 1.6 million Coho, up from about 600,000 from last year. The department's goal is to also achieve a reliable brown trout fishery and as such, the Brown Trout strain is being changed from Seeforellen and Wild Rose to Sturgeon River. A paired study will be conducted (2010 – 2014) of Wild Rose and Sturgeon River browns in Ludington (increased from 18K plants up to 56K plants) and Frankfort (increased from 15K plants up to 31K plants). Also plants in Menominee and Cedar River of Brown Trout. In-land river and lake plants will occur as well (i.e. Manistee River).

Weir returns for Chinook - low numbers in 2009, larger numbers than past few years but below the historic average.

Little Manistee weir – 8300 for 2009, 5000 for 2008, average is 14,000 (had enough for egg take)

Boardman – 2000 for 2009, average is 13,000

Medusa – 4100 for 2009, average 6775

Swan on Lake Huron- 4000 for 2009 up slightly from 2008, average is 15,000

## **6. Asian Carp Update**

\$13 million dollars has been designated to put a barrier between the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Shipping Canal. Netting at the O'Brien Lock was negative but the lock has been open since October 1<sup>st</sup> so there is a good chance the Asian carp has entered Lake Michigan. The Supreme Court law suite will decide whether the lock is closed and will increase the voltage to 4 volts per inch on the permanent barrier. Water withdrawal allocation will be reviewed. (Illinois has filed an appeal to the injunction.)

Cost of closing the locks is projected to be \$30 million and the loss of 400 jobs. Cost of not closing the locks and putting a \$7.1 billion sport fishing industry at risk would result in \$355 million loss if there is only a 5% decrease in great lakes fishing and a loss of approx. 2400 jobs. Finally, the invasive species going both ways through the shipping canal poses serious ongoing threats to the system. Longspine daphnia, mottled fingernail clam, orange spotted sunfish and skip jack herring are all now in the Mississippi system. (Zebra mussels have already entered the Mississippi system through the Chicago Ship Canal from Lake Michigan). 2.1 billion gallons of water is flushed down the canal everyday from Lake Mich.

## **7. Cormorant Removal Update**

9000 birds were culled and 4000 nests oiled reducing the bird population to the established goal. For 2010, the take will be increased to 20,000 birds if approved and controlled nest counts will be monitored. Metrics will be developed to assess control methods going forward.

## **8. Forage Fish Diets & Conditions (Steve Pothoven)**

Quagga mussels continue to ramp up and Diporeia and Phytoplankton continue to decline dramatically. Mysis, Copepods (zooplankton) and Dreissena (quaagga) make up the remaining dietary choices.

There has been a 26% decline in alewife weight because of loss of Diporeia causing Chinook salmon to eat 20% more alewives "if they're there to eat" to maintain the same weight. The remaining forage fish are round gobies (lower in energy level as a food source), chubs and deep water Sculpin (at 300 ft). Mysis numbers are way down as well but have been stable for the last 3 years. White fish will be smaller going forward because of the lower food energy level of the remaining forage diet choices.

## **9. Michigan Charter Boat Reporting**

New report format – recording all fish boated, not just those kept. Professor Oh, MSU, presented a factor analysis matrix to assist charter boat captains in deciding how and what mix of factors impact customer selection and enhance trip bookings. The model attempts to weigh various factors that enhance the customer experience. Dan O'Keefe presented an

update on a project he is working on to provide a cost analysis methodology for charter boat operators. .

Workshop concluded at 4:00 PM. Submitted by Dennis Eade MSSFA VP