

The top half of the cover features a photograph of a fish's head with its mouth open, showing its teeth. To the right of the fish is a wooden fishing rod with a yellow lure. The background is a dense field of green reeds or grasses. A semi-transparent green band covers the bottom half of the image, containing the title and subtitle.

# **Michigan Department of Natural Resources**

**Fisheries Division  
2011 Accomplishments Report**

Dear Michigan Citizens,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the good work and recent successes of the Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Division. You could look throughout the nation and the world, I believe, and not find a group of people more dedicated to the health and sustainability of its aquatic resources and fisheries.

Michigan may be known for the Great Lakes, but we're also home to an enviable network of rivers, streams and inland lakes and the many species of fish – from salmon and sunfish and muskie to minnow – that make our state a top angler destination, year in and year out. At the DNR, and in the Fisheries Division especially, it is our responsibility and privilege to work toward providing the healthiest habitat for these species and, ultimately, for the people of Michigan.

This report provides a snapshot of the past year in fisheries management in Michigan. We hope our stakeholders will enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at the vital on-the-ground and in-the-water work undertaken by this division and its remarkable staff and valued partners.

At the DNR, we are committed to providing excellent service to every customer and broadening support for and participation in Michigan's unmatched outdoor recreation opportunities. The important work of our Fisheries Division is critical to achieving these goals, as you will see in this report.

We live in an amazing state, with a quality of life that's difficult to find anywhere else – due in large part to our healthy, plentiful natural resources.

Thank you for your interest in Michigan's fisheries. I am proud of the work of our Fisheries Division – of the passion, intelligence and sound science these employees bring to the job, every day. I hope you will be, too.

Sincerely,



Rodney Stokes  
Director, Department of Natural Resources

Dear Michigan Citizens,

Thank you for your interest in learning about Michigan's Fisheries programs and the work our staff has accomplished in order to maintain and improve this state's great aquatic resources. Wherever you may live in Michigan, and wherever an aquatic issue arises, it is very likely someone in Fisheries Division has been involved.

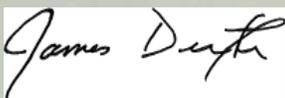
Fisheries employees work on an amazing array of issues in order to manage some of the best fishery resources in the country. Michigan was recognized in 2011 by Field and Stream magazine as the number one destination in the country for fly fishing because of our species diversity.

Our work, however, is not all species-specific, but rather we cover a whole continuum of issues that impact fisheries resources. For example we work with citizen volunteers and other partners to manage cormorants, a migratory waterfowl which feeds heavily on the fish we stock; we collaborate with Native American tribes to assess important stocks of inland and Great Lakes fisheries, which enhances our knowledge of fish populations to allow us to make more informed future management decisions; and we bring science and reasoning to state discussions for keeping Asian carp out of our Great Lakes waters. These few examples highlight some of the key issues we are working on in order to maintain Michigan's fisheries.

Across the entire state, people are saying good things about Michigan's fisheries. However, maintaining those fisheries - and the enthusiasm that anglers have about them - will be more difficult in the future. Revenue from fishing license sales provides the financial foundation for what we are able to accomplish. Fishing license sales have been slowly declining for more than 10 years, reducing this important funding.

As we move into 2012 we will continue to manage Michigan's aquatic resources not only for today, but tomorrow, next year, and for decades to come. We encourage your input on what we can do to continue to improve our resources for all Michigan citizens. Your voice is important to us, because it is our job to manage these resources on your behalf. You can contact us at [DNR-Fish-Accomplishments@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-Fish-Accomplishments@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,



Jim Dexter  
Acting Chief, DNR Fisheries Division

In Michigan you're never more than six miles away from a body of water. That means you're never more than six miles away from some of Michigan's 153 different species of fish; or 3,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline; or more than 11,000 inland lakes; or more than 36,000 miles of rivers and streams.

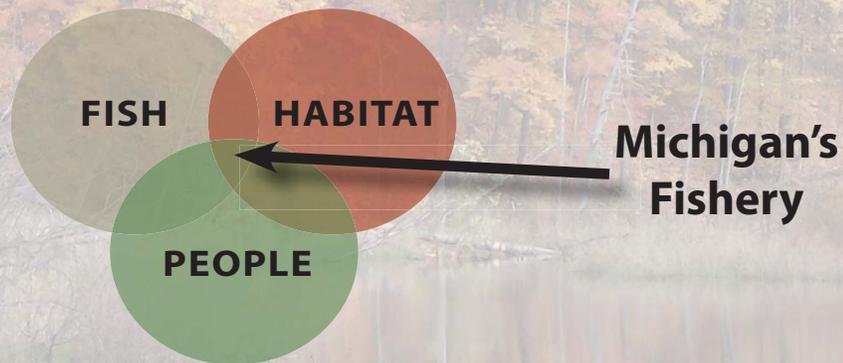
Those species, shorelines, lakes and streams take a significant amount of management so they can be conserved and protected for future generations. This management is conducted by the Michigan DNR's Fisheries Division and other critically important partner organizations who, together implement numerous activities and initiatives on an annual basis.

Michigan's fishery includes fish, habitat and people. This accomplishment report is organized along those lines. This report provides a summary of the 2011 accomplishments of the DNR's Fisheries Division and its management of the state's fishing resources.

Fisheries Division conducts aquatic surveys and assessments, performs permit reviews, and engages with the public and other agencies to provide critical information for management direction and decisions. Biologists and managers use this information to make fish stocking recommendations, prioritize and facilitate habitat improvement and protection projects, and evaluate and modify regulation changes, if necessary, on inland waters and the Great Lakes.

## Quick Fact:

Forty-three percent of the Great Lakes are within Michigan's borders; this makes up approximately 8.3 percent of the world's liquid freshwater.



# Michigan's Fish

## Understanding & Improving Michigan's Fish Communities

Similar to seeing a doctor for a physical or check-up, fish in our lakes, streams and hatcheries require ongoing assessments and research to evaluate and understand their health. Management actions are prescribed based upon this information to improve the fishery through stocking, habitat improvement, regulations and education.

In 2011, Fisheries Division:

- Completed 86 lake surveys and 91 stream surveys.
- Completed first-ever species management plans for northern pike, muskellunge and Asian carp.
- Investigated 79 fish kills caused by low dissolved oxygen, diseases and accidental spills.
- Collected fish samples throughout the state for ongoing fish disease monitoring and contaminant analysis for the Michigan Department of Community Health.
- Facilitated or conducted approximately 60 ongoing research projects: 43 were in the Great Lakes, 15 were inland, and two were statewide.
- Conducted long-term monitoring of key steelhead, salmon, lake trout, lake whitefish, perch, walleye and lake sturgeon populations.
- Conducted long-term monitoring of fish communities and angler use.
- Evaluated regulation and stocking actions.
- Conducted 132 inspections of all hatcheries and broodstock sources, analyzed 38 additional health diagnostic cases, and analyzed 139 lots for Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (22,698 fish from 36 species).
- Completed 51 Fish Quality Assessments by hatchery and field personnel, including 34 lots of fish at state hatcheries and 17 lots in cooperative rearing facilities.
- No significant fish losses from mechanical, human error or new disease events were documented in the entire fish production system.

Fish stocking is prescribed to re-establish lost, create new, enhance existing, and rehabilitate depressed fisheries in Michigan's inland lakes, Great Lakes and streams. To accomplish this task, Fisheries Division operates six fish hatcheries, with approximately 50 rearing ponds, 12 net pens, and 17 specialized fish planting trucks.

- Stocked 14,565,641 fish (654,138 pounds) of: eight species and one hybrid of trout, whitefish and salmon and five coolwater species such as walleye and muskellunge.
- Stocked 661 sites through 489 stocking trips driving more than 110,000 miles to stock fish.



# Michigan's Habitat

## Protecting & Rehabilitating Aquatic Habitat

Healthy fisheries require high-quality and diverse habitat. Through cooperation with other divisions, agencies, organizations and the public, the protection and rehabilitation of aquatic resources and habitats are among Fisheries Division's most important duties and responsibilities.

In 2011, Fisheries Division:

- Continued the development of three river basin assessments on the Grand, Manistee and Boardman rivers that will guide future management of these river systems.
- Completed or assisted with 56 fisheries habitat projects.
- Engaged in 10 projects that reconnected and improved 161 miles of streams and rivers.
- Carried out 17 dam removal projects resulting in 167 miles of rehabilitated stream habitat.
- Provided technical expertise and stream morphology (shape) assistance on more than 50 stream habitat rehabilitation projects.
- Engaged in various habitat assessments, including aerial surveys of land features, hydrology and bathymetry, and shoreline features to improve our understanding of Michigan's habitat.
- Led the development of a new fish barrier survey analysis and software development to determine which culverts act as fish movement barriers. The software will assist us in prioritizing the remediation of problem culverts.



# Michigan's Habitat (continued)

Many development projects have direct effects on Michigan's fisheries by impairing fish habitat. Such negative effects can be either (1) avoided or minimized during the permitting or licensing process; or (2) mitigated by the project proponent who either directly corrects project effects, or provides funds to Fisheries Division to offset resource damage.

In 2011, Fisheries Division:

- Reviewed and provided comments on nearly 2,900 Michigan Department of Environmental Quality/ Michigan Department of Transportation permit applications in an effort to protect aquatic habitat.
- Provided key input for the DNR on new Michigan Department of Environmental Quality rules for General Permits for development projects and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency power plant rules that will protect a broad range of fish habitat and prevent unnecessary fish losses from power plant operation.
- Reviewed 86 Natural River Program zoning applications and developed new Natural River Program rules to ensure future habitat protection along rivers.

Fisheries Division manages a Habitat Improvement Account that was established as a result of unavoidable damages from hydropower dam operations. These mitigation funds are used to implement major habitat improvement and research projects on the AuSable, Manistee, Menominee, Muskegon and Ontonagon Rivers.

- In 2011, mitigation funds helped remove six dams; facilitated three habitat improvement projects that installed large, woody structure; enabled two road-stream crossing projects that reduced excessive sediment inputs; financed three research projects that enhanced our knowledge on walleye, lake sturgeon and steelhead populations; and improved angler access at a key site.
- Led DNR implementation and compliance efforts on the Consumers Power Company Settlement Agreement on the AuSable, Manistee and Muskegon rivers; on the Wilderness Shores Settlement Agreement on the Menominee River system; and on the Bond Falls Settlement Agreement on the Ontonagon River. These efforts are protecting more than 500 miles of key fisheries habitat and ensuring continued availability of recreational opportunities on impoundments and tailwater areas of 23 dams.



# Michigan's People

## Partnering with People Interested in the Resource

Successful fisheries management must educate Michigan's public and anglers about the state's aquatic resources. Educational programs and information, coupled with appropriate regulations, can help provide diverse public fishing opportunities that maximize the value of Michigan's aquatic resources and fishing.

In 2011, Fisheries Division:

- Provided technical guidance to many internal and external agencies on important resource issues and concerns.
- Cooperatively managed fisheries of the four Great Lakes with multiple state, federal and Tribal agencies.
- Actively engaged with each Great Lakes Citizen's Advisory Committee and a broad range of other external committees to receive recommendations on important resource issues.
- Actively engaged with the public on stocking and regulation proposals through public meeting venues.
- Processed 1,300 entries into the Master Angler Program.
- Produced weekly fishing reports to assist anglers in assessing fishing opportunities.
- Produced and distributed educational materials on fish diseases, such as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS).
- Assisted with programs at the DNR's six hatchery interpretive centers that welcomed more than 42,000 visitors in 2011.
- Assisted with the Salmon in the Classroom program that now has 143 schools participating in raising and stocking Chinook salmon.
- Conducted creel census on 37 Great Lakes ports, five lakes, and five streams and implemented a statewide angler survey program.
- Assisted in the acquisition and development of fishing access sites.

### Quick Fact:

There were more than 1.1 million total resident and non-resident licensed anglers in Michigan in 2011.

This is a 4% decrease compared to 2010.



# Michigan's People (continued)

A key component of Michigan's fishery includes the oversight of state-licensed commercial fishing and the implementation of consent decrees that provide for the exercising of Tribal fishing rights. Management of state-licensed commercial fishing maintains stable commercial fisheries and accommodates Tribal fishing rights in treaty-ceded waters through negotiated harvest levels that minimize conflict with recreational fisheries. Implementation of Tribal consent decrees and other legal judgments ensure both Tribal fishing rights and Michigan's fisheries resources are protected.

In 2011, Fisheries Division:

- Reviewed and issued 49 state commercial fishing licenses covering all four Great Lakes.
- Renewed commercial fishing leases and issued 113 new leases for guides who operate on state lands, thereby ensuring these operations do not damage aquatic resources and coexist with other uses.
- Reviewed and issued 242 scientific collectors permits, allowing permit holders to survey and possess aquatic species for research or educational purposes.
- Implemented the 2000 Great Lakes and 2007 Tribal Consent Decrees and improved communications with Treaty of 1836 and 1842 Tribes.
- Worked with Tribal nations to manage state lake trout harvest in northern Lake Huron, facilitated the approval of five state stocking proposals, improved data reporting for all parties, and completed key large lake surveys.

Fisheries Division cannot operate without strategic direction, division-wide planning, outreach, and quality human and financial resources that ensure efficient operation and accountability of the division to our publics.

- Facilitated the division's human resource, information technology, education and outreach, purchasing, accounting and budgeting activities.
- Managed a \$27 million appropriation in fiscal year 2011.

## Quick Fact:

In 2010, Michigan supported a Great Lakes commercial fishery that landed 9.2 million pounds of fish (78% lake whitefish) that were valued at \$9.8 million. The total market value of this catch is estimated at \$40-50 million.

# By The Numbers

## Quick Facts about Michigan's Fishery

### Economic Value

The annual economic value for Michigan's recreational fishery in 2006 was estimated between **\$1.67 billion** and **\$3.69 billion**. Michigan was ranked 5th nationally in angler expenditures in 2006 and recreational fishing was responsible for 27,348 jobs.

### DNR Fisheries Division Employment

To manage Michigan's vast fisheries resources, the DNR Fisheries Division employs **165 full-time** and **40 seasonal** staff. Michigan's fisheries employees manage more acres of water per employee than any other state in the country.

### Fisheries Division Appropriation Budget

Fiscal Year 2011 (\$27,040,600)

### Funding Sources

*Game and Fish Protection Fund: \$15,292,900*

These funds are mainly derived from fishing and hunting license revenues and all monies are earmarked for fishing- and hunting-related operations.

*Game and Fish Resource Damage Settlement Fund: \$923,100*

*Federal - Dingell-Johnson: \$9,758,600*

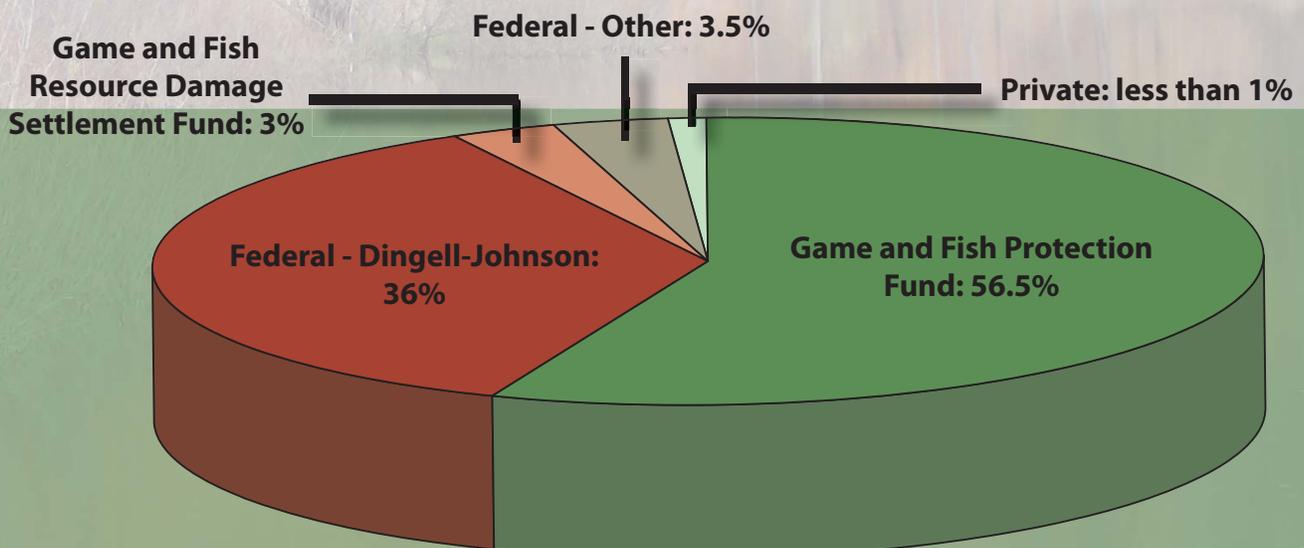
These funds come from a federal excise tax on fishing equipment and small boat gas tax funds.

*Federal - Other: \$966,700*

These funds are in the form of federal research grants.

*Private: \$99,300*

These funds are mostly direct-targeted donations.



The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

The mission of Fisheries Division is to protect and enhance fish environments, habitat, populations and other forms of aquatic life and to promote the optimum use of these resources for the benefit of the people of Michigan.

Learn more about Fisheries Division and fishing in Michigan by visiting [www.michigan.gov/fishing](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing).

Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/midnr](http://www.facebook.com/midnr).  
Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/MichiganDNR](http://www.twitter.com/MichiganDNR).

Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Fisheries Division  
530 W. Allegan Street  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 373-1280

To provide comments on this report, email them to [DNR-Fish-Accomplishments@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-Fish-Accomplishments@michigan.gov).

