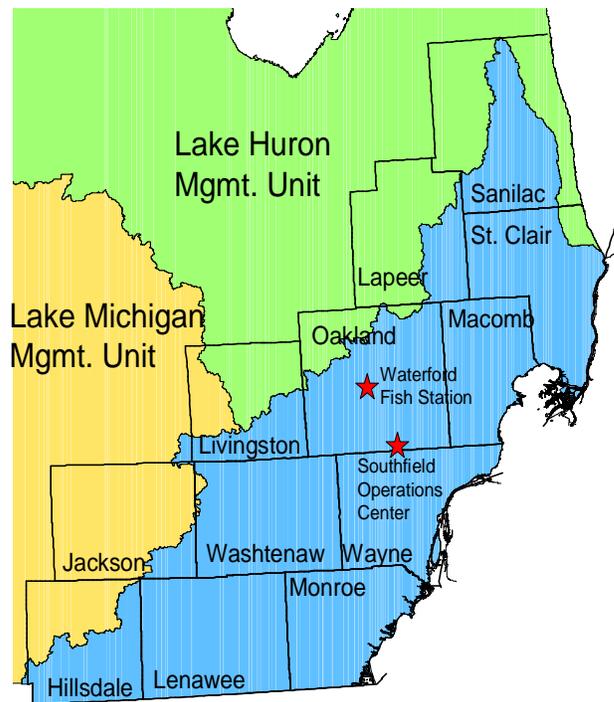




**SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN
DNR FISHERIES NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to the annual newsletter covering major field activities of the Lake Erie Management Unit (LEMU), shown at right. This unit covers all waters that lie within the watersheds which drain into the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, and Lake Erie. Fisheries Management personnel in this unit includes a Basin Coordinator in Lansing; two biologists and a unit supervisor located at the Southfield Operations Service Center; and two technicians and a technician supervisor located at the Waterford Fish Station.

This newsletter highlights some of our field activities conducted by our field staff during 2010.



Map of southeast Michigan, highlighting LEMU (in blue).

General Activities

Fish rearing

Since finding the fish disease Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in Michigan, fish production has not occurred in LEMU since 2006. LEMU usually raises walleye and northern pike for stocking into area inland lakes, but production has been on hold due to concerns regarding VHS. Fisheries Division has been very cautious to prevent the spread of VHS to our

hatchery system or to other waters in the state through stocking.

Fisheries Division has supported research to better determine the disease transmission path (i.e. can an infected adult pass the virus on through their eggs) and to develop a rapid test (24 hours versus 30 days). It is hoped that

we can resume fish production in LEMU soon, as we learn the answers to the transmission/disinfection questions and develop new tools like the rapid test.

Limited walleye production occurred in other management units throughout the state in 2010 and some of those fish were stocked in LEMU waters (Table 1)

Stocking

Trout stocking (Table 1) has been uninterrupted by VHS because unlike coolwater species where eggs are taken from wild fish, the hatcheries have captive broodstock of trout which are tested regularly for disease. Steelhead and salmon egg-takes continued from wild sources because salmonid eggs can be disinfected before being brought to the hatchery. It has not yet been verified that this same disinfection process will work for coolwater species like northern pike and walleye. Research is ongoing to determine if coolwater production can be safely expanded in 2011.

Fish ageing

From January through March, the fisheries technicians processed the biological data collected from the previous field season. This included determining the age of fish from scale and spine samples collected from fish captured in the LEMU and steelhead and chinook salmon from the Great Lakes creel survey program and weirs. The age of a fish can be determined by magnifying either its scales or a cross section of a fin spine. Both have rings which can be counted similar to how a tree is aged. In 2010, a total of 2,160 scales and spines were processed and aged by the Waterford crew. Field activities began as soon as the ice melted on area lakes.

VHS surveillance monitoring

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is a viral fish disease. This disease has

resulted in large fish kills in both hatcheries and in wild fish populations. VHS was first found in Michigan from a sample of muskellunge from Lake St. Clair in 2003. Although this disease has resulted in fish kills, there are no concerns with respect to human health with this pathogen, it can not infect humans, even if they eat fish containing the pathogen. Since 2007, Fisheries Division has routinely sampled fish from around the state to determine the distribution of this virus. More information can be found on the Fisheries Division web page at http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364_52259_10950_46202---.00.html



Blood sample collected from a northern pike to screen for VHS (non-lethal sampling).

VHS surveillance monitoring continued in 2010. In 2009, VHS was found in Baseline Lake (Livingston and Washtenaw counties), which is part of the Huron River system. The virus was detected during surveillance monitoring, but did not result in any fish die-offs. Because of this finding, the 2010 samples were targeted towards the river and lakes both upstream and downstream of Baseline Lake. LEMU waters tested included Kent Lake and Whitmore Lake which are in the Huron River watershed upstream of Baseline Lake. As well as, Baseline Lake, Portage Lake, Barton Pond, and Belleville Lake, all on the Huron River

downstream of Baseline Lake, and the Huron River below Baseline Lake. Other waters sampled for VHS in LEMU included Stony Creek Impoundment, Independence Lake, Lake Hudson, and Loon Lake. Great Lakes sampling included fish from the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and Lake Erie.

All results were negative, including in Baseline Lake which tested positive in 2009.

Lake Hudson Muskies

Lake Hudson, in southern Lenawee County, is one of two musky broodstock lakes in Michigan. A broodstock lake is one where adult fish are caught and eggs taken and fertilized for the hatchery program. We spent 3 days in early April at Lake Hudson collecting northern musky. A total of 87 muskies were captured ranging from 28 to 52 inches. There were 22 new fish tagged bringing the total number of tagged fish in Lake Hudson to 783 since 1991. Population modeling based on the tagged fish produced a population estimate of 597 muskies in Lake Hudson in 2009; greater than 1 musky per acre.



A fall fingerling muskellunge being stocked into Lake Hudson.

Thornapple Lake, the other broodstock lake for muskies, was able to collect all the eggs needed for the hatchery. Therefore no eggs were taken from

Lake Hudson in 2010, but the fish were tested for VHS.

Great Lakes Muskies

In early April, fisheries personnel from Waterford, Platte River, and Bay City conducted a pilot study and attempted to capture spawning Great Lakes strain muskellunge in the Detroit River. This effort was to determine the feasibility of catching muskies from the Detroit River as a source for the development of a Great Lakes musky stocking program. This was a two week effort targeting the shoreline along Belle Isle and on the Scott Middle Grounds (a shoal area near Belle Isle). A total of 9 muskies were collected, including 2 females in spawning-ready condition.

Additional netting in the open-water area of Anchor Bay by the Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research crew was more productive, capturing 20 muskies.



Bob Kerry displaying a Detroit River muskellunge.

Enbridge Oil Spill

Enbridge Energy Partners LLP (Enbridge) reported a 30-inch pipeline ruptured on Monday, July 26, 2010, near Marshall. The release estimated that 819,000 gallons of oil entered Talmadge Creek and flowed into the

Kalamazoo River, a Lake Michigan tributary. Heavy rains caused the river to overtop existing dams and carried oil 30 miles downstream on the Kalamazoo River. Fisheries Division statewide responded to the incident, including field staff from Waterford and Southfield. The crew participated in an effort to rescue wildlife, including turtles and birds. More information is available at http://www.michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7-192-45414_40885_56784---,00.html

Woodland Lake Largemouth Bass

In late September, LEMU staff tagged bass in Woodland Lake as part of a study to evaluate the effects of the expanded catch-and-release fishing regulations on bass populations. Electrofishing was used to capture bass that were then measured, weighed, and released. In addition to the regulation evaluation, this study will also provide information on nest success rates, fish health, affects of fishing pressure, and a population estimate.

A total of 796 largemouth bass ranging from 2 to 18 inches were captured, with 21% exceeding the minimum legal size limit of 14 inches. We also caught 21 smallmouth bass ranging from 3 to 19 inches, with 33% exceeding the minimum legal size limit.

Three other lakes were surveyed on the same nights by other crews, as part of a four lake study. This study is being conducted in partnership with Michigan State University. Students from MSU snorkeled these lakes in the spring to document nesting bass and monitor individual nest success. This was the last year of a 3-year study.

North Branch of the Clinton River Dam Removal Project

The North Branch of the Clinton River is a 43 mile long stream that empties into the Clinton River approximately 11 miles upstream from the Clinton River's

confluence with Lake St. Clair. The lower half of the North Branch is a coolwater stream, whereas the upper half is classified as a coldwater stream and contains some of the highest quality habitat. However, there were barriers to fish migrations which prevent fish from reaching the upper section of the North Branch. The Wolcott Road Dam is approximately 17 miles upstream from the confluence with the Clinton River and the Cascade Dam is approximately 21 miles upstream.



Photo of Cascade Dam on the North Branch of the Clinton River before the partial dam removal and river restoration.

Fisheries Division, in cooperation with the Clinton River Watershed Council, received grants from the USFWS Fish Passage Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sustain Our Great Lake Program to remove these two dams on the North Branch of the Clinton River. A river restoration approach was used to stabilize the stream and reduce bank erosion and sedimentation caused by the failure of Cascade Dam.



Photo of Cascade Dam after completion of the project.

These two dams were removed to restore connectivity in the river, providing access to some of the best available habitat in the river. Removal of the dams opened up an additional 93 miles of stream and tributary habitat to benefit native fish and mussel species in the North Branch, as well as migratory fish species from Lake St. Clair.



Todd Somers and Dennis Tar working the jack hammer on the Wolcott Road Dam.

The first Fisheries Division survey was conducted in 1983 and found most species of fish had slow growth, but there were still good numbers of large fish. There were very good catches of northern pike and rock bass in that survey. From 1991 to 1993, redear sunfish were stocked (16,000 to 22,400 annually) in attempts to develop a self-sustaining trophy panfish fishery. A 1994 survey to evaluate redear survival found a good catch of the 1991 year-class of stocked redear sunfish, although they were growing slightly below the state average. The 1994 survey again documented good populations of northern pike and crappies.

In May 2010, a fish survey was conducted using 3 trap nets, 2 fyke nets, 2 small-mesh fyke nets, and seining. A total of 870 fish were captured comprised of 15 species. Redear sunfish were the most abundant with 277 individuals captured. They averaged 8.4 inches in length in the trap nets, with a third being larger than 9 inches. Bluegills were the next most abundant with 200 fish caught and the trap net catch averaging 6.5 inches in length. This catch rate for bluegills is low compared to other area lakes. Large species of gamefish captured included 11 northern pike averaging 22.6 inches and 27% being legal-sized (24 inches or larger), and 24 largemouth bass averaging 10.4 inches and 13% exceeding the minimum size limit of 14 inches.

Inland Lakes

Independence Lake, Washtenaw County

Independence Lake is 192 acres in size and is found in north-central Washtenaw County. There are two inlets, one on the north and the other on the east end of the lake, with one outlet on the southwest corner. The lake has a large shelf area around the perimeter that is less than 5-feet deep, but also has a large area in the center with depths below 20-feet deep. The maximum depth is 34 feet and there are two areas where the bottom rises from 20 to 5 feet over a very short distance. There is a large county park with a swimming beach and fishing pier located along the eastern and northern shore. The lake can be publicly accessed via a gravel launch in the county park on the southeastern shore.

Loon Lake, Oakland County

Loon Lake is a 243-acre lake in central Oakland County, just west of the City of Pontiac. It is part of the Clinton River system and is connected to Lake Oakland to the north and Big Silver Lake to the east. A public access site is located on the west side of the lake.

Fish management has been quite interesting over the years. Initially, northern pike were stocked in the 1950's and the first fisheries surveys at that time documented very good growth of bluegill, black crappie, and yellow perch. In the early 1970's, Loon Lake was managed as a two story trout lake. Initial stockings of brown and rainbow trout had poor survival and the stockings were discontinued. Throughout the 1980's and early 1990's, walleye were stocked and surveys were conducted to evaluate their success. After documenting poor survival of walleye, the stocking program was discontinued after 1992. From 1995 to 1997 northern pike were stocked to supplement the population.

In May 2010, a fish survey was conducted on Loon Lake. A variety of gear was used including trap nets, fyke nets, gill nets, beach seines, minnow traps, and electrofishing to evaluate the type of species present, their relative abundance, and growth rates.

The 2010 survey captured a total of 1,117 fish comprised of 25 species. Bluegills were the most abundant with 598 individuals caught. Bluegills in the trap nets averaged 6.1 inches in length with 16% being 7 inches or longer. Rock bass were the next most abundant with 102 fish captured, averaging 7 inches long. Common carp were abundant; a total of 79 were caught, ranging from 14 to 30 inches. The total catch of carp weighed an estimated 560 pounds, which was 68% of the total biomass caught during the survey. The number of carp is not uncommon as they thrive in impoundments.

There was a good catch rate for largemouth bass. The largemouth bass averaged 12.9 inches, with 41% being legal-sized. Although not abundant, smallmouth bass were also caught in Loon Lake, including a 19 inch and 20

inch bass. The catch rate was fair for northern pike, with fish averaging 22.2 inches in length and 29% being legal-sized.



Jeff Braunscheidel showing off a nice largemouth bass.

Deep Lake, Lenawee County

Deep Lake is located in the River Raisin watershed. This 65-acre lake is located in northwest Lenawee County about 5 miles south of the town of Brooklyn. The surrounding landscape is a mixture of agricultural lands, small woodlots and wetland areas. Deep Lake has one inlet, a small swampy creek located on the south end of the lake, originating from Crooked and Mud Lakes. The outlet, located at the west end of the lake, drains to Grassy Lake and eventually through a series of lakes (Cleveland Lake, Briggs Creek, Vineyard Lake) into the River Raisin. Deep Lake is characterized by its very limited shallow water habitat (water less than 5 feet deep), steep drop-offs and a maximum depth of 50 feet. Residences, cottages and a small trailer park occupy about half of the total shoreline area. The remaining shoreline area is mainly wetland and is covered with shrubs and emergent vegetation. A gravel State-maintained public access site is located on the west end of the lake.

The first Fisheries Division survey was conducted in spring of 1927, finding a typical mix of bluegills, largemouth bass, and yellow perch. Bluegills and largemouth bass were stocked intermittently from the mid 1930's through the mid 1940's. A gill net survey was conducted in May of 1959 and a trap net survey in June of 1976. During those surveys, bluegill growth was above average and overall fishing success was reported to be fair. The next survey, conducted in 1986 showed that bluegills were growing about an inch faster than bluegills statewide.

Since 1987, approximately 2,500 yearling rainbow trout have been stocked annually in Deep Lake. These stockings have consistently produced a good rainbow trout fishery since their initial introduction. Rainbow trout remain very popular with area anglers and provides a unique opportunity to catch trout in an area of the state where fisheries of this type are limited. A one-time plant of 560 surplus yearling coho salmon was made in September of 1998. Results of this stocking were poor, but it is possible that some of these coho were misidentified by anglers as rainbow trout.

Deep Lake was surveyed in May 2010, producing a total catch of 1,587 fish represented by 28 species. A variety of minnow species were caught including blackchin shiners, bluntnose minnows, blacknose shiners, golden shiners, sand shiners, and spotfin shiners. The most plentiful gamefish species were rock bass. A total of 206 rock bass were caught, averaging 7.3 inches. Bluegills were next most abundant in the catch. Although catch rates were low, the size of the bluegills caught continued to be large. The bluegills averaged 7.4 inches in the trap net catch and over 1/3 of the catch were over 8 inches, including several 9 inch bluegills. The good catch of yellow perch indicates they are quite

abundant in Deep Lake. The most abundant large gamefish caught were largemouth bass. The bass catch rate was good and the fish averaged 11.4 inches in the trap nets, with 15% of the catch exceeding the minimum size limit. In addition, 6 smallmouth bass were caught, but none were legal-sized. There were three rainbow trout captured with lengths of 9, 10, and 18 inches. As evidence by the 18 inch trout caught during the survey, trout can live multiple years in Deep Lake providing the opportunity to catch large trout. The surprise of the survey was the lone walleye (23 inches), which was likely the result of an unauthorized stocking.

Lakeville Lake, Oakland County

Lakeville Lake is a 460-acre impoundment located in the northeastern corner of Oakland County. The lake was created when a water control structure was installed and the water level rose to join 13 small lakes into one. Surveys from the 1970's on have not captured good numbers of large panfish. It was determined that there were too many panfish and that they were stunted. An antimycin (fish toxicant) treatment was conducted in 1982 to thin the abundant small bluegill population. An unexpected benefit was the removal of approximately 4 tons of carp. Bluegill sizes in a 1984 survey averaged 6 inches, up from 5 inches prior to the treatment. The 1991 survey showed the average bluegill size dropped a little to 5.8 inches and although the average size increased in 1997 to 6.5, the growth rates remained poor. Northern pike were stocked in 1982 (4,000 spring fingerlings) and 2000 (1,231 spring fingerlings) and walleye were stocked in 1999 (15,009 fall fingerlings), 2001 (1,472 fall fingerlings), and 2002 (3,991 fall fingerlings).

In May 2010, a fish survey was conducted on Lakeville Lake. In addition to collecting data on the lakes

fish population, fish samples were collected and tested as part of the statewide surveillance monitoring for VHS. Fish were also collected and evaluated for contaminant levels. The current survey produced 1,111 fish captured with 15 species present.



Jeff with a nice walleye.

Panfish, such as bluegills, black crappie, pumpkinseeds and rock bass were the most abundant fish caught in the survey. Bluegills were the most abundant fish in the catch and had a good catch rate (34 per net night). However, the size of the bluegills caught was poor. The catch in the trap nets average 4.9 inches and less than 2% exceeded 7 inches. Redear sunfish had the next highest catch, but the size of the fish in the catch was also small. They averaged 6.6 inches with 20% exceeding 8 inches. Pumpkinseeds ranked third in the catch, averaging 6.2 inches. The most abundant large gamefish species captured were largemouth bass (36 fish). They averaged 10.1 inches in length with 14% exceeding the minimum size limit of 14 inches. Twenty northern pike were caught, averaging 24.5 inches with 60% exceeding the legal size of 24 inches. Six walleyes were caught during the survey averaging 22.3 inches and all of them were larger than the legal size of 15 inches.

Streams and Rivers

Paint Creek, Oakland County

Paint Creek is a top-quality coldwater stream in northeast Oakland County that originates at Lake Orion and flows in a southeastern direction until it enters the Clinton River in Rochester (a distance of 15 miles). Much of the stream is bordered by public land with maintained trails and has very good buffer zones of riparian vegetation. The cold water temperatures in the lower stretches are due to groundwater input. Cold temperatures in the upper portion of the stream are maintained due to a bottom draw structure at Lake Orion that was installed in 1991.

The stream was stocked with brown trout a couple of times before 1950, but has been stocked with brown trout almost annually from 1953 to present day. Paint Creek was treated with rotenone in 1968 and again in 1984 to remove competitors of trout, primarily creek chubs and white suckers. The effects of these removals were temporary. Other management activities included habitat restoration projects in 1984 and 2001 by the Clinton Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited.



A brown trout caught during the Paint Creek fish survey.

Natural reproduction of brown trout has been documented in much of the stream with most seeming to occur in the

central portion between Gunn and Tienken roads. Trout have been stocked only in the upper (Lake Orion to Adams Rd) and lower (Tienken Rd to Rochester Park) stretches of the stream since 1995 with 5-6,000 yearlings stocked annually at five sites. Beginning in 1997 and continuing through 2002, half of the trout stocked have been Wild Rose strain and half Gilchrist Creek strain. Population estimates were conducted from 1997 to 2000 to assess survival differences between the strains. The Gilchrist Creek strain produced better results and all trout stocked in Paint Creek are now Gilchrist Creek strain.

During summer 2010, a mark-recapture study was conducted to generate trout population estimates in Paint Creek. We used a stream electrofishing unit and surveyed four historic survey locations at Clarkston/Kern, Gunn, Silverbell and Tienken roads. Similar to previous surveys, higher catches of trout were found lower in the system, likely due to habitat differences. We captured a total of 566 brown trout averaging 8.2 inches. A total of 42% exceeded the minimum legal size of eight inches. The two largest fish were both 19-inches. There were also 115 young of the year brown trout captured, indicating good natural reproduction. In addition, we caught 71 rainbow trout. Most were young-of-the-year, but there were 5 that exceeded 10 inches. The origin of these fish is likely natural reproduction by steelhead from the Clinton River. This was the first year of a multiple-year study to evaluate brown trout in Paint Creek.

Gallagher Creek, Oakland County
 Gallagher Creek is a small, coldwater stream originating just south of the Bald Mountain Recreation Area in central portion of eastern Oakland County. It flows in a northeasterly direction and empties into Paint Creek at Orion Road

in the Village of Goodison. The creek flows through private land; there is no public access. This stream is home to one of the few remaining self-sustaining brook trout populations in southern Michigan. There were concerns that habitat quality had degraded due to sediment and nutrient inputs from erosion and runoff associated with development in the watershed. A survey in 1998 indicated that runoff from construction sites in the area was responsible for depositing sediment in the gravel riffles and natural pools formerly present in the stream.

Previous surveys of this stream in 1990 and 1998 produced brook trout densities of 300 trout per mile. In 1992, mottled sculpin were trapped and transferred from Johnson Creek in Wayne County to Paint Creek as a prey item for trout. The sculpin had managed to expand their populations into the lower stretches of Gallagher Creek by 1998.



A brook trout caught during the Gallagher Creek survey.

This survey was conducted to evaluate the status of brook trout in Gallagher Creek. We captured a total of 7 brook trout from 6 to 7 inches and 1 brown trout at 3 inches. The brook trout density found in this survey was about 50 per mile, down from 300 per mile in

1990 and 1998. This decline in abundance is likely due to siltation of the stream from the development along the creek.

Mottled sculpin have expanded their range even further upstream from 1998. We also captured blacknose dace during the survey. The presence of these two species indicates that the water quality is still good, but the heavy siltation is hampering the brook trout's ability to reproduce.

Chicken Creek, Washtenaw County

There is no record of Fish Division ever surveying Chicken Creek. Chicken Creek is a tributary to Paint Creek, Washtenaw County which is a tributary to Stony Creek which empties into Lake Erie. Paint Creek was stocked annually with brown trout from the mid-1970s through 1996. Although Paint Creek has not been stocked for a number of years, reports were received of trout being caught in this tributary to Paint Creek.

A fish survey was conducted to search for a remnant population of trout in Chicken Creek. A backpack electrofishing unit was used to collect all fish along a 300 foot section. A total of 60 fish were captured, comprised of 4 species. Mottled sculpin (55) were the most abundant, followed by green sunfish (2), and bluegill (1). In addition, 2 adult brown trout were caught (9 inches and 11 inches). Although brown trout have not been stocked in this watershed since 1996, a small population of brown trout remains.

Stony Creek, Monroe County

Stony Creek begins in southeast Washtenaw County and flows southeast until it empties into Lake Erie, just north of Woodland Beach. There is no record of Fisheries Division surveying these waters.

We surveyed 5 sites along this creek using either a stream electrofishing or backpack electrofishing unit. We captured 3,664 fish with 43 species present. This is a large number of species and was influenced by the presence of Great Lakes species such as white perch, spotted suckers, round gobies, and gizzard shad. Most of the fish captured during the survey were minnow and shiner species, along with gobies. Bluntnose minnows (940), round goby (837), and common shiners (346) were the most abundant species captured. Gamefish species included smallmouth (16) and largemouth bass (29), rock bass (90), bluegill (51), and northern pike (27).



Cleyo Harris beating the brush with a backpack electrofishing unit.

Paint Creek, Washtenaw County

Paint Creek is a tributary to Stony Creek. It originates in eastern Washtenaw County and flows south until it joins several other streams to become Stony Creek, as it enters Monroe County.

Paint Creek was stocked with brown trout in the past. The creek has favorable temperatures for trout, but over time, development along the creek has resulted in siltation and habitat degradation. Low angler catches and few trout captured in surveys resulted in the end of the trout stocking in the late 1990's.

A backpack electrofishing survey was conducted at four sites along the stream to look for remnant brown trout. We captured a total of 281 fish with 20 species present, but no trout were caught. Creek chub (65), green sunfish (49), and mottled sculpin (27) were the most abundant species. Gamefish included 13 bluegills and 1 largemouth bass, all of which were small.

Saline River, Monroe County

The Saline River begins in south-central Washtenaw County and flows northeast into the town of Saline. It then turns southeast and flows into the Raisin River about 3 miles northeast of Dundee. This river is turbid but relatively cool. There are no records of previous fish surveys of the Saline River.

A fish survey was conducted on a 1,200 foot stretch in the lower part of the river to evaluate the fish community, using a stream electrofishing unit. The turbidity hampered our shocking efficiency due to poor visibility, but we managed to capture 284 fish represented by 21 species. The most abundant species were northern hog sucker (40), blackside darter (34), river chub (31), and common shiner (29). The majority of fish captured were minnow and darter species with a few large suckers. Gamefish species present were largemouth bass and northern pike, but none were legal-sized.

Swan Creek, Monroe County

Swan Creek begins in extreme southwest Wayne County and flows southeast until it dumps into Lake Erie, south of Estral Beach near the Fermi 2 nuclear power plant. The only Fish Division survey on Swan Creek was in 2005 during a large effort to survey the coastal marshes of Lake Erie. We surveyed the extreme lower reaches of the creek mostly downstream of Dixie Highway. We found large numbers of forage fish species and young gamefish.

The goal of the current effort was to survey the entire creek. We used stream and backpack electrofishing units to survey 1 site on the north branch and 4 sites on the main branch. On the north branch, we captured 252 fish with 14 species present. Blackside darters (111), green sunfish (45), and bluntnose minnows (41) were the most abundant species present. On the main branch, bluntnose minnows (578), round gobies (138) and central mudminnows (134) were the most abundant species. In 2005, we only captured 9 round gobies in the lower stretch of the river. Conversely, in the 2010 survey, we caught 138 round gobies and 72 tubenose gobies in the upper reaches. Gobies have continued to expand their range upstream. Gamefish species consisted of bluegill and largemouth bass, both of which were small in size. Northern pike were also present, with 3 legal pike captured.

Mill Creek, Washtenaw County

Mill Creek is a large tributary to the Huron River. It begins in western Washtenaw County and flows east where it empties into the Huron River in Dexter. The creek went through extensive channelization in the early 1900's. A major dam was removed in Dexter in 2009 and this survey was to document changes in fish populations following the dam removal. We stream electrofished the same 3 sites that were

surveyed in 2008, prior to the dam removal.

We captured 994 fish consisting of 24 species. The most abundant were white sucker (351), mottled sculpin (122) and creek chub (97). Some changes noted in this survey compared to the pre-dam removal survey included increased numbers of some darters, a higher abundance of native lampreys, and the presence of young-of-year northern pike. These results indicate increased migration of species from the Huron River, as well as use of the newly available habitats in the Mill Creek watershed by northern pike for spawning.

River Raisin, Monroe County

In September, fisheries personnel completed a survey of the River Raisin at a site located just downstream of Raisinville Road. This is a long-term survey site to evaluate smallmouth bass populations. Survey protocol calls for three consecutive years of surveys with three consecutive years idle and then the sequence repeats itself. This is the sixth survey over the past nine years.

This site was located between the two most downstream major dams. It is about four miles downstream of the Murciak Dam (located just upstream of Ida-Maybee Rd) and about two miles upstream of the Waterloo Dam. The river here has an average width of 237 feet with depths ranging from 6 inches to 3 feet (average depth 9.5 inches). There are several small islets scattered through the upper half of the site with the river channel braided through them. One larger island of about 200 feet in length is also located in the upper end of the site. Fish habitat is limited to some woody debris along the shoreline and the edge of the larger island. Additional habitat included the grassy edges of the islets and some larger rocks scattered throughout the reach.

A 1,000-foot length of river was surveyed with a stream electrofishing unit. Due to the width of the stream, the crew surveyed up the left bank, walked back downstream and then surveyed up the right bank. Only smallmouth bass were captured this year. The water was high and very turbid from storms which hampered the electrofishing efficiency. We captured a total of 278 smallmouth bass with 6 meeting the legal size of 14 inches or larger. This section has historically been a good nursery area and 202 of the fish captured were young-of-the-year.

Staff Updates

Gary Towns, the supervisor for the Lake Erie Management Unit since 1995, retired at the end of 2010. Gary started his career with the state in 1978 with the Department of Agriculture, before transferring to the Fisheries Division in the Department of Natural Resources in 1982. He worked at a number of offices including Plainwell, Jackson, Haslett, Perry, Livonia, and most recently in Southfield.

Working mostly on inland lakes, Gary had an interest in maximizing opportunities for panfish anglers. This interest led Gary to be a champion for redear sunfish. This species grows faster and larger than native sunfish. A redear sunfish stocking program began in the late 1980s with the hopes of creating a fishery for trophy panfish. Many lakes in southern Michigan have been stocked with redear sunfish and most of these lakes now have naturally reproducing populations. Anglers have greatly enjoyed these larger panfish.

In addition to managing fisheries on inland waters, Gary's management area also included the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, and Lake Erie.

He was involved with management issues and habitat projects on all these waters.

His experience in southeast Michigan, especially with DNR and DEQ staff, has been a highlight of his career. As he put it, "It's been a great ride, and while the job has been both interesting and challenging, it has been the people I've worked with who made it such a special career."

We wish him well in retirement!

Written by: Dennis Tar
Edited by: Jim Francis

For more information about LEMU programs and activities, and for copies of fish surveys on area lakes, contact us at:

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Please send comments or suggestions regarding the newsletter to francisj@michigan.gov



Gary Towns with a Lake Hudson musky.

Summary of fish stocking in LEMU, 2010

Species	County	Water	Number	Avg. size (inch)
Rainbow trout	Hillsdale	Bear Lake	9,400	6.8
	Hillsdale	Bird Lake	9,400	6.9
	Lenawee	Allen Lake	3,800	6.9
	Lenawee	Deep Lake	2,800	6.8
	Livingston	Appleton Lake	2,800	6.8
	Livingston	Spring Mill Pond	369	16-19
	Oakland	Huron River	460	16.0
	Oakland	Huron River	510	19.0
	Oakland	Maceday Lake	12,760	6.8
Brown Trout	Hillsdale	St. Joe Maumee	2,780	7.0
	Livingston	Spring Mill Pond	409	14-17
	Oakland	Clinton River	4,800	5.0
	Oakland	Huron River	1,906	14-18
	Oakland	Paint Creek	5,160	5.0
	St. Clair	Black River	50,960	5.0
	St. Clair	St. Clair River	53,250	4.8
	Wayne	Johnson Creek	4,520	5.0
Splake	Oakland	Maceday Lake	13,300	7.2
Lake Trout	Oakland	Maceday Lake	300	25.0
Steelhead	Macomb	Clinton River	28,102	6.9
	St. Clair	Belle River	7,909	7.4
	St. Clair	Mill Creek	10,507	7.4
	Wayne	Huron River	66,536	7.8
Walleye	Livingston	Island Lake	7,000	1.9
	Livingston	Whitmore Lake	53,947	1.9
	Macomb	Stony Creek Imp.	28,041	1.1
	Oakland	Crescent Lake	4,315	1.9
	Oakland	White Lake	40,807	1.9
	Wayne	Belleville Lake	63,991	1.9
Channel catfish	Macomb	Stony Creek Imp.	3,508	8.0
	Washtenaw	Barton Pond	1,528	8.0
	Washtenaw	Geddes Pond	1,300	8.0
	Wayne	Belleville Lake	6,024	8.1
Muskellunge	Lenawee	Lake Hudson	1,500	10.0