



## Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

Established by the Department of Natural Resources  
to improve and maintain fishery resources  
of Lake Huron through better communication and partnership.

**Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Hybrid Meeting Minutes  
In-Person and Online Sea Grant assisted Zoom Hybrid Meeting  
Jay's Sporting Goods, Clare MI  
Tuesday, October 4, 2022  
10:30 am-3:00 pm  
Approved**

### **Attendees:**

Frank Krist, Randy Claramunt, Chuck Bronte, Gene Kirvan, Jim De Clerk, Paul Nienaltowski, Blaise Pewinski, Randy Terrian, John Moore, John Letts, April Simmons, Jason Gostiaux, Meaghan Gass, Brandon Schroeder, Tom Andris, Judy Ogden, Julie Shafto, Steve Shafto, Tom Keerl; Bryan Darland, Tom Baird, Steve Lenart, Kendra Kozlauskos, Kevin Postma, Christian Lesage, Tess Nelkie, Lawrence Atkin, Sarah Mansfield, Todd Wills, Dave Caroffino, Nick Torsky, Tim Cwalinski, David Cozad, Paul Stowe, Dave Clap, Ed Eisch, Tom Frontjes, Matt Kornis, Ken Pletcher, Ed Retherford, Craig Milkowski, Jeff Jolly, Neal Godby, Ed Blissick, Fred Sterns, Jeff Moss, Joe Lukasiewicz, Eric Morrow, Jay Wesley, Ed Roseman, Edward Beckley, Amber Fry, Stephen Greer, Steve Griffin, Todd Grischke, Laura Ogar, Jim Sroka.

### **Welcome and Introductions (Frank Krist, and Randy Claramunt, DNR Lake Huron Basin Coordinator)**

Frank began by thanking Meaghan Gass for setting up the room for the hybrid meeting. It was noted that the meeting will be recorded, with live transcription, to assist with the meeting minutes.

Frank also introduced Citizen's Fishery Advisory Committee co-chair Randy Claramunt and vice-chair Randy Terrian. He also thanked Jay's Sporting Goods for providing the facilities.

Online and in-person attendees introduced themselves.

### **Final decision where to stock additional Coho Salmon in Lake Huron (Randy Claramunt) and potential minor change to steelhead stocking (Jason Gostiaux, MDNR Fisheries Biologist)**

Frank noted that this item is a continuation of previous meetings' discussions about Coho Salmon, and the intent of the discussion today is to identify stocking locations. Randy provided additional background in that we are considering stocking an additional 100,000 yearling Coho Salmon on top of 100,000 yearlings that are stocked now, plus approximately 150,000 fall fingerlings when they are available. There are two decision points; 1) where to stock the additional 100,000 yearlings, and where to stock additional fall fingerlings.

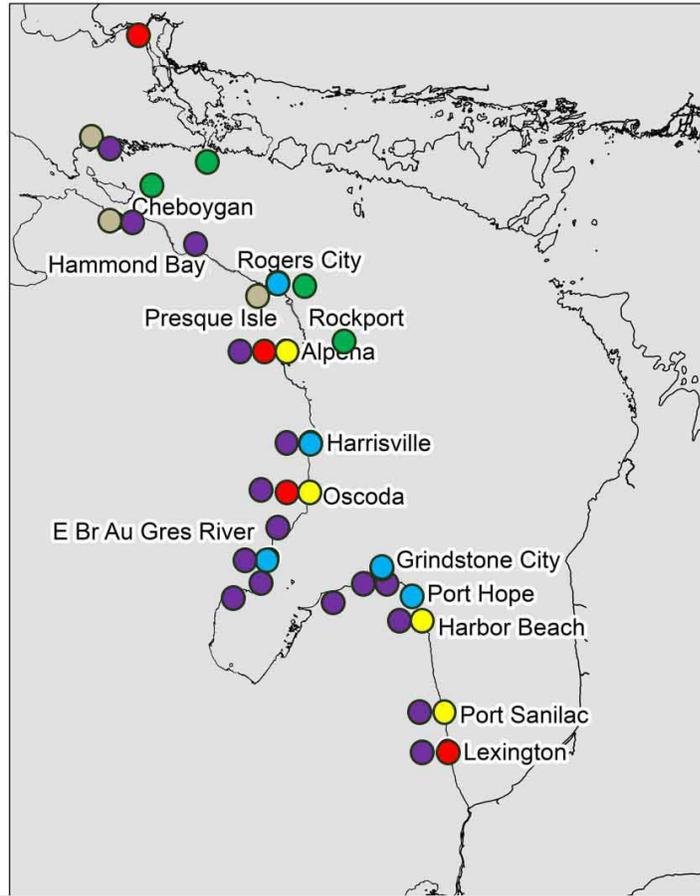
Currently, 100,000 Coho Salmon are stocked in a rotation with north and south sites. The original plan was to stock 50,000 fish at both Port Sanilac and Thunder Bay in year 1 and 50,000 fish at both Harbor Beach and Oscoda in year 2. Since we have the capacity to rear additional fish, we are

proposing to stock each of these 4 ports with 50,000 yearling Coho Salmon every year for a total of 200,000 yearling fish, plus other fall fingerling sites including the East Branch Au Gres River, Port Hope, Harrisville, Grindstone City and Rogers City. The target for fall fingerlings is 75,000 fish per site, on an every-other-year rotation depending on production availability. Fall fingerling numbers depend on survival of the Coho Salmon throughout their time being raised in the hatchery. More Coho Salmon eggs are hatched than needed as yearlings and if survival is good in the raceways, then the number of fall fingerlings is larger. There is no annual production target for fall fingerlings.

The existing and proposed Coho Salmon stocking Sites are shown on the map below.

## Potential Ports for Salmon & Trout Stocking

- Coho Yearlings
- Coho Fingerlings
- Atlantic Salmon
- Chinook Salmon
- Steelhead
- Lake Trout



Randy C. noted that it is desirable to stock fingerling Coho Salmon at other sites since yearlings are already producing a successful fishery and stocking the original sites every year with yearlings should produce an even better fishery. It would be desirable to experiment at other sites with the fall fingerlings to determine if there are additional locations where a sustainable fishery may result. Increasing beyond 50,000 yearlings at each port could decrease survival from high density stocking because of a limited food source for the newly stocked fish. This design will also help determine if just stocking fall fingerlings at a site can produce a successful fishery. Some ports have little predation issues during the fall.

**Question:** Will there be mass marking for stocked Coho Salmon? Will equipment funds be used to invest in mass marking equipment?

**Answer:** There is no capacity for additional mass marking now. The DNR is considering the purchase of a mass marking trailer but it will take time to get it up to speed. The goal is to have all fish stocked into Lake Huron marked.

**Comment:** Chuck Bronte with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) added that the mass marking program isn't funded by state dollars. It is funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which paid for 4 mass marking trailers at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million each. The same funding source is used to support operation of the trailers. While the USFWS and its partners are moving towards increasing mass marking capacity in the Great Lakes basin, there are lots of moving parts and many hatcheries to service. The trailers are very complex and there are around 30 people in the world that know how to operate them. Most of those people are in the Pacific Northwest and there are only four here.

**Question:** Will the East Branch Au Gres River and Port Hope get fingerlings every year? Will this be a reduction in the number of fish that are currently stocked in the East Branch Au Gres River?

**Answer:** No, these sites are on a rotation. There would only be reduction if less than 75,000 fall fingerlings are available each year. The exact rotation will need to be determined. Internal discussions are continuing and additional approval will be needed for Rogers City since it is within the 1836 Treaty ceded area.

**Frank** asked the Committee if there were any objections to Randy's proposal. No objections were heard.

**Comment:** Judy Ogden added that the southern Lake Huron stocking program has been very successful. Coho Salmon have really taken off, which she thinks is due to the extra 50,000 yearlings that were available in 2021 and allowed both Harbor Beach and Port Sanilac to be stocked in the same year. The harbors were predator-free at the time of stocking, and she believes there is an improvement in the forage base. There was also lots of ice cover, leading to a slower spring warm-up so the fish were close to shore longer. Harbor Beach and Port Sanilac are close to population centers, and there are lots of boats going out from Port Huron and Lexington as well as anglers that are drawn in from the metro Detroit and Saginaw-Bay City areas. The fishery also attracts first time anglers, as the fish are exciting to catch.

**Question:** Are these fish accessible to anglers who fish from shore? What brings them back to harbors each year?

**Answer:** The DNR is receiving lots of photos of shore and pier anglers enjoying the fishery in the fall, which is more than anticipated. The fish have been repeatedly observed coming "home" to a stocking site even though they don't have a river to return to.

**Comment:** Ed Retherford added that there has always been some level of natural Coho Salmon reproduction in Lake Huron, and it would be beneficial to know where they're coming from before we disperse more fish. Hopefully, the Code Wire Tag marking program will be expanded soon.

**Randy C.** commented that there appears to be consensus for the proposal that the four existing yearling Coho Salmon stocking sites should receive 50,000 per year, instead of every other year on a rotation, and that fall fingerling sites will be added on rotational basis to evaluate returns and potential sustainable fisheries at new sites. He appreciates the Committee's work on the Lake Huron trout and salmon plan.

**ACTION ITEM:** Time was running short and there was a need to clearly state the stocking plan so it was agreed that Frank would email the Coho Salmon Stocking Proposal to all the Advisors for their vote. Below is the proposal that was circulated and voted on:

**Coho Salmon Stocking Proposal:**

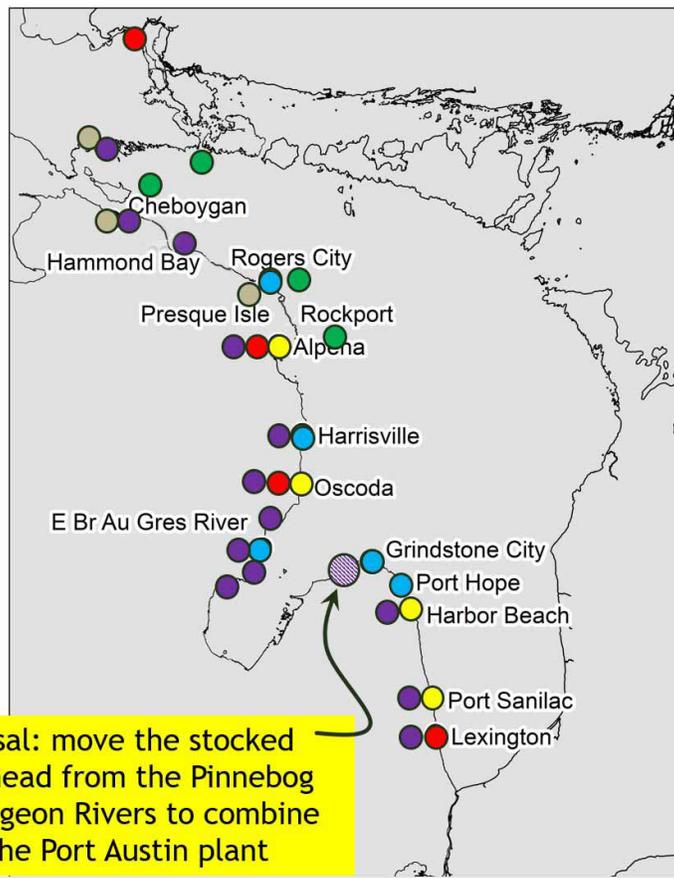
**Stock the existing yearling sites every year at the Au Sable River, Harbor Beach, Port Sanilac, and Thunder Bay River with 50,000 yearling Coho Salmon per site per year. Stock fall fingerling Coho at the existing sites of East Au Gres River and Port Hope, and add Harrisville, Grindstone, and Rogers City to the fall fingerling stocking site list. Stock fall fingerling sites up to 75,000 per site per year when they are available.**

**Note:** the vote was unanimous with 22 Advisors voting **yes**.

The discussion transitioned to Steelhead stocking. Randy C. described the 3 Steelhead stocking sites at the tip of thumb including the Pigeon River, Pinnebog River, and Port Austin and the DNR’s desire to consolidate those sites given the relatively small number of fish stocked at these locations each year (6,000-15,000 fish depending on site).

**Potential Ports for Salmon & Trout Stocking**

- Coho Yearlings
- Coho Fingerlings
- Atlantic Salmon
- Chinook Salmon
- Steelhead
- Lake Trout



Jason Gostiaux added that over the past year and a half the DNR has taken a closer look at its Lake Huron Steelhead stocking strategy to make it better. While we don’t have the data needed to determine how these three sites influence the main basin fishery, local anglers say that utilization of this resource is low in both the Pigeon and Pinnebog rivers. He would like to improve the open water fishery and allow for

greater access to the resource in summer, fall, and winter. Consolidating stocking from the three sites by stocking all these Steelhead at Port Austin could create a quality fishery both on the lake and for shore anglers.

Frank asked for a timeline on when the Department needed feedback from the Committee. Jason responded that delivery of the fish won’t occur until spring 2023.

**ACTION ITEM:** Since a decision is not needed until late winter, Frank will put the topic of consolidating the Pigeon River, Pinnebog River, and Port Austin Steelhead stocking sites on the winter 2023 meeting agenda so the advisors have more time to consider it.

**Discussion of the changes in the Coded Wire Tag (CWT) Program (Randy Claramunt and Kendra Kozlauskos, MDNR; Matt Kornis and Chuck Bronte, US Fish and Wildlife Service)**

Matt shared the attached comprehensive presentation on the Coded Wire Tag Program. The 84 slides provided an overview of the movement and survival of Chinook Salmon, Lake Trout, Steelhead and Atlantic Salmon in Lake Huron and their interaction with Lake Michigan.

**Frank** asked Matt if he would be able to come back to the winter 2023 meeting for additional discussion and questions since we are running short on time, and Matt responded that he is available. Randy C. followed and encouraged the Committee to think about questions that are important to managing the fishery, and whether or not Matt's CWT data could address them. He also noted that until mass marking is available, Atlantic Salmon won't be marked going forward due to concerns that hand-marking is causing mortality.

**Randy Terrian** expressed concern that there was not enough time to discuss the logistics of the Fish and Wildlife Service taking over processing all of the fish heads that are returned and compiling the data. After taking the time to collect and drop off heads, anglers expect to learn their specific results like they did when the DNR process the heads and sent letters to the collectors. It was then agreed that a committee would be established with Randy Terrian, Randy Claramunt, possibly other MDNR representatives along with Chuck Bronte, Matt Kornis and possibly other USFWS representatives to discuss this issue before our winter meeting.

**Question:** How can we better use mass marking for evaluation of Steelhead stocking in Lake Huron?

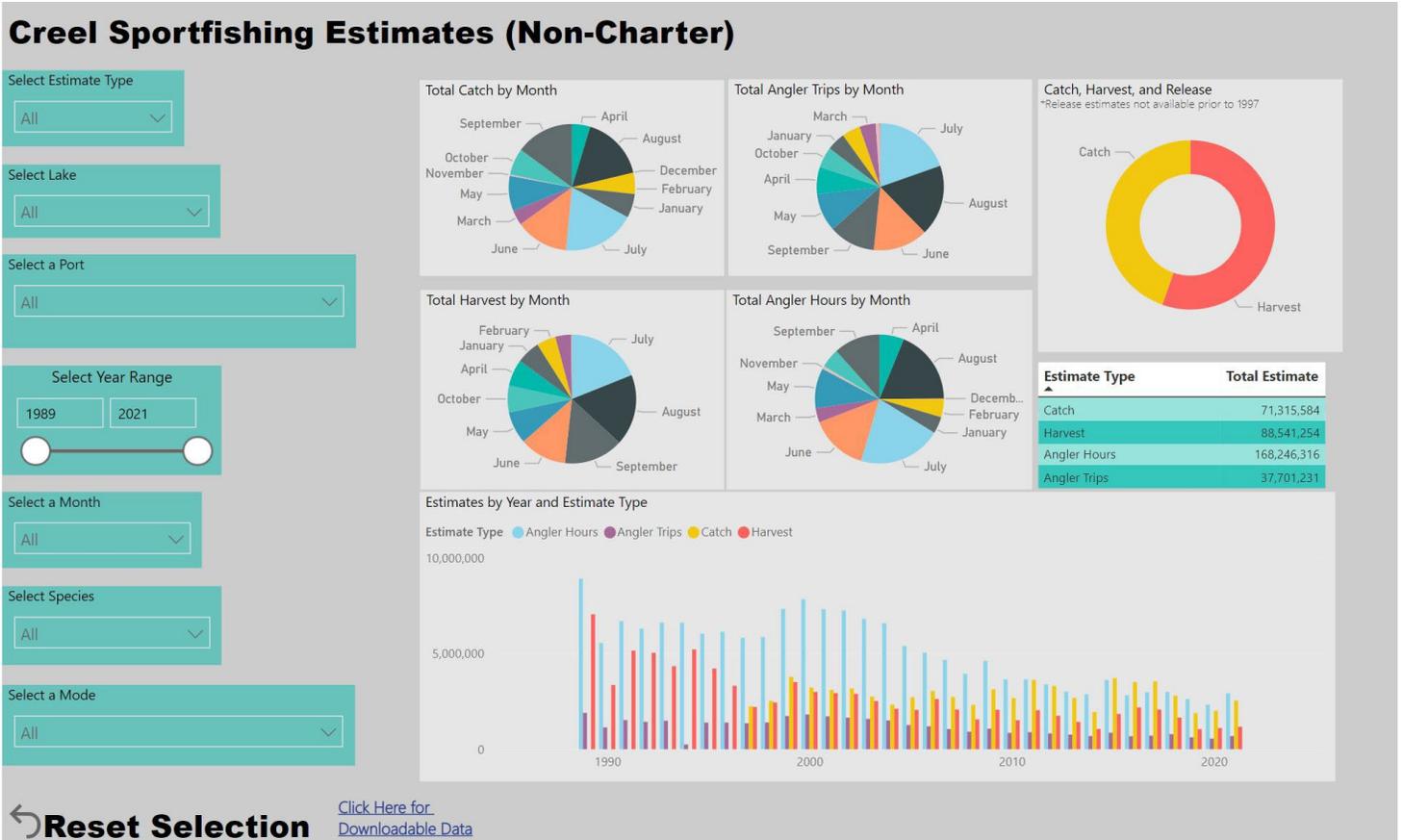
**Answer:** Marking the number of fish with the same tag information and the study designs are up to the DNR. The USFWS can assist with calculation of minimum tag lot sizes. Large lot sizes for tagging are recommended so that enough data can be collected to be statistical meaningful, as well as running a specific study for several years to better evaluate the results over a reasonable time period.

**An overview of the Creel Survey Program (Tracy Claramunt, MDNR Creel Survey Program Manager)**

The Statewide Angler Survey Program is mostly focused on the Great Lakes. Creel clerks who collect data for the program are stationed at most major ports along Michigan's Great Lakes shoreline, although there is some occasional inland coverage. The slide below shows all the Great Lakes Ports being creeled. The clerks work 40 hours per week and spend time conducting angler interviews and doing counts of boat trailers, with time most often split between two ports. Angler participation in an interview is voluntary. The clerks are not Conservation Officers and do not write tickets. They will ask when you started and ended your fishing trip, what species of fish you targeted, what you harvested and released, how many people were in your angling party, and other angler information such as number of fishing rods used. Clerks also take biological samples from fish, like weight and total length measurements, and notes of clips/tags and wounds/scars. Clerks also do counts of shore and pier anglers. In some large areas with lots of angler access, actual boat counts are done by airplane. The interview and count data collected by creel clerks are used to generate estimates of effort of the hours fished, catch, and harvest/release by port, region, or Great Lake.



shows an example of a creel request that is provided by the link. The creel results are typically available by early March of the following year.



## Great Lakes Creel Database

Results of inland creel projects over the years can be found with this link, <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/creel>

**Question:** If there are 2 anglers in a boat and they fish 2 hours how many hours count toward that trip? If there are 2 anglers in a boat does that count as 1 trip?

**Answer:** Each boat is considered 1 trip and the total number of hours for that trip is the number of hours the boat spent fishing times the number of anglers in the boat.

**Question:** How are trailer counts used?

**Answer:** Trailer counts are used to make estimates for boats (trailers) that were not interviewed.

**Question:** Can you collect volunteer data? What about using technology like phone apps? Could clerks be used to help educate the public about the importance of the program?

**Answer:** There are well-documented issues with volunteer data because anglers don't like to report trips with zero catch and tend to report higher catch trips. Zero-catch trips are important because they help with accuracy. Anglers also don't have fish identification skills like clerks and there is a lot of misidentifications of fish. While there are fish identification apps to help with this, they are usually created by businesses and the state can't promote one business over the other. We could create our

own fish identification app if there was interest in the angling community, but that isn't where we want to spend our money and time if there are private apps out there. Clerks are trained to help educate the public and are often the first line of education.

**Question:** How does information on the number of rods used?

**Answer:** This factors into the number of fish caught per trip and catch rate for that particular mode of fishing. This also allows us to determine when there is rod crowding on piers at certain ports.

**Question:** Can you explain the process for what happens when the DNR is short on creel staff, and some ports cannot be sampled during a particular year? How might it effect estimates? Why aren't rivers sampled later in the fall when some fisheries develop from fish migrating into streams from the Great Lakes?

**Answer:** Certain management efforts require that we have total catch for a region. Historically, we have explored relationships between sampled and unsampled ports. For example, if one port regularly harvests ½ as many fish of a species than another port than the relationship is used if one of the ports is not sampled that year. The proportions in the number of fish harvested of each species between ports can change from year to year causing errors in the estimate. This method was evaluated from a statistical standpoint, and we aren't comfortable with the amount of error around the estimates. Fisheries Division's Management Team agreed that this is an issue and is addressing it by adding more clerks to the program to avoid these types of errors. For 2023, another creel clerk will be added to MH-1 in northern Lake Huron from Rogers City to De Tour.

Sampling of Rivers occasionally occurs. Creel surveys are normally funded from April-October, however, when there is a lot of interest from the public and managers, money can be used to keep a clerk on later in the fall for river sampling.

**Question:** Could you explain why clerks are required to be in the parking lot when fishing conditions aren't favorable?

**Answer:** Because we are summarizing the month, and some of that month has unfavorable fishing conditions. If we only sampled on calm, sunny days our estimates wouldn't be accurate.

**Question:** Can clerks go into private marinas?

**Answer:** We try to be all-encompassing. The best scenario is that a clerk is going to both public and private marinas. However, while many private marinas allow access not all do. Everyone is different and access is often dependent upon a clerk's relationship with the marina owner. Let us know if there are marinas we are missing, and we will see what we can do for gaining access.

**Question:** Are Saturdays and Sundays on the weekend treated the same? Saturdays often have much more effort than Sundays since many visitors to ports leave after their morning fishing trip to return home.

**Answer:** That is a good question, and our program staff will examine our data to determine if changes should be made.

**Comment:** Paul Nienaltowski, a charter captain mentioned that that he used the new Deer Hunting App to report deer already harvested by his family that was very easy to use. The questions in that

App came up conveniently and there was no backtracking to enter data. The Charter Boat Reporting App, on the other hand, can be mastered but it is much more difficult to use. Often there is much backtracking making it more time consuming than necessary. It would be helpful if the Charter Boat Reporting App could be improved to work similarly to the Deer Hunting Harvest Reporting App.

**Answer:** Tracy agreed that the Charter Boat App could use improvements and it may be updated and if Paul wanted to be part of a volunteer group of testers to improve the Charter Boat App, please let her know. Paul was interested in being involved in the upgrade project.

### **Is there merit in investigating the reasons for the wild Lake Huron brown trout fishery in the Au Gres area? (Randy Claramunt and April Simmons MDNR Fishery Biologist)**

This topic was postponed due to a shortage of time and will be discussed at the winter meeting, however, April Simmons is having brown trout samples from the area genetically tested to determine the strain or strains present. See April's update comments toward the end of the minutes on page 12.

### **The Advisors brief fishing reports for the season**

**Tom Heritier:** Currently, fishing on the Saginaw River was light, both from boat and shore.

**Ed Blissick:** Friends in Cheboygan had good fishing for Chinook Salmon this fall. Better numbers than prior couple years.

**Tess Nelkie:** Was out last week off of Tawas and caught some Steelhead. Went out yesterday for Walleye and were the only ones on the water, took lots of effort to catch our fish.

**Fred Sterns:** Coho Salmon have been good outside of Middle Island just north of Alpena. Can catch Lake Trout whenever you want in this area.

**Meaghan Gass:** Great Sturgeon release event in Saginaw Bay. Lots of people came out and enjoyed the day.

**Brandon Schroeder:** Assisted with a kid's camp in conjunction with the Michigan Charter Boat Industry and had great fishing in August with the kids. They learned much about the lake ecology but also were able to catch the fish and then eat them. Caught many Lake Trout with a few Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon. This type of activity gets kids excited about learning about fish and catching them.

**Tom Keerl:** The walleye fishing in the Harrisville Harbor area has been declining for the last 10 years and this year was the worst. Some fish are being caught offshore and the stomachs are regularly full of smelt. A member of the community went out just before Labor Day and had a tremendous day catching 43 fish including several Chinook Salmon but that type of success has not been repeated since. Fishing has been good in the Harbor this fall with King salmon being taken regularly. Atlantic Salmon also show up occasionally and last winter a fishery for them developed through the ice in the Harbor.

**Tom Andris:** Made 9 trips to Saginaw Bay in June and this year finding a location with walleyes was key. You could troll for extended periods with no hits and then find the fish and catch a limit. The weather and water clarity did not seem to make a difference.

**Judy Ogden:** Good Coho Salmon and Walleye catches occurred regularly in the Port Sanilac/Lexington area. There was a very diverse catch in the charter fishery in late July. For example, one captain went out on the 22 of July just a few miles south of Port Sanilac and caught 1 king, 2 Atlantic Salmon, 4 pinks, 5 Steelhead, 6 Coho Salmon, 10 Walleye and 27 Lake Trout. Fishing in August and September continued to be good with the fish concentrated in 90 to 110 feet of water but above the thermocline in warm water where there was a lot of prey fish. Fishing for yellow perch was also very good from May into June.

**Julie Shafto:** Wind and gas prices affected early fishing effort. Often there was only 1 or 2 days a week that the weather cooperated and anglers could fish. In June at Rogers City, anglers began catching a mixed bag of Lake Trout, Chinook Salmon, Steelhead, Atlantics, Coho Salmon and a few pinks. There was hit or miss fishing but when the weather was good the fishery was diverse. Walleye fishing in Alpena was down this year but some were being caught offshore in deeper water. The lake trout out of Alpena were smaller this year with lots of young fish along with some Coho Salmon and Steelhead. The horrible weather at Rogers City impacted the Chinook Salmon fishery in August and September not only making it difficult to get out but the strong north winds brought in lots of warm water pushing the thermocline down very deep. Currently, when the weather cooperates, the Steelhead fishing and immature Chinook Salmon fishing has been very good at Rogers City.

**Blaise Pewinski:** East coast fishing (Lake Huron) was easier than west coast (Lake Michigan). Presque Isle was phenomenal. We had 14 boats visit the port and everyone caught fish. We had good catches out of Port Sanilac with several species of trout and salmon along with some walleye. The fishery is really starting to come back there.

**Paul Nienaltowski:** The Thumb area had a good diverse fishery this year. It started off with lots of Coho Salmon early and some Brown Trout. Fishing slowed down a bit in June but in July the walleye fishing was phenomenal. Lake Trout numbers were down but the catches of all species were still excellent with a very diverse salmon and trout fishery. Steelhead were late this year. Lake Trout appeared to be down (worst in 30 years) but diversity of bag was good, with excellent fishing in late July and August. The weather was a major problem blowing several times each week preventing the establishment of a stable thermocline and scattering the fish.

**Gene Kirvan:** Fishing for steelhead in the Au Sable River was good from February into the second week of April but then fishing slowed. The problem was the very low water flow. There were a lot of Smelt and Emerald Shiners in the river this spring and this heavy prey base attracted a good run of walleyes. Offshore fishing from late May through July was excellent for Lake Trout with an occasional King or Coho Salmon. During late July the walleye fishing was phenomenal with limits up to 25 fish per day being no problem. We were actually using crawlers offshore. Fall fishing at the river mouth was slow. The Chinook Salmon that were caught were clipped so hopefully the Coded Wire Tag program will determine where these Salmon are coming from.

**Comment:** Randy Claramunt indicated that he had fewer complaints about the fishery this year beginning with a lot of comments about a good diverse fishery along with Smelt runs. Even complaints about cormorants were down this year so it was a productive year fishing despite the challenges from the bad weather.

### **Brief Update on the 1836 Treaty Great Lakes Fishing Negotiations (Frank Krist)**

Frank provided an update on negotiations of the new 1836 Treaty Waters Consent Decree that will provide the rules to share the Great Lakes fishery with five Tribes, and the State's recreational and

commercial fisheries from Grand River in Lake Michigan into the Straits from Bays de Noc through Lake Huron to De Tour south to Alpena and the eastern half of Lake Superior. There are seven parties in the negotiations including five Tribes, the State, and the United States. Frank is a member of the Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association which along with MUCC, Michigan Charter Boat Association and the Michigan Steelheaders form the core group of the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources. The Coalition has been participating in the negotiations as an amicus which means it is not a full party to the discussions but has been providing input to all of the parties through the State. The negotiations have been ongoing for over three years, but the intensity of the meetings increased greatly since April. It became clear late in June that the differences in the approach to the negotiations between the Coalition and the State were huge and in mid-July the Coalition filed in Federal Court in Kalamazoo to become a full party in the negotiations so they could provide input directly to the parties. The Judge denied the request but ruled that after the seven parties complete their new tentative consent decree it will be made public, and the Coalition and others can provide comments that he will review before making final decision on the contents of the new decree. The 2000 Consent Decree was extended again until November 14, 2022. There is a chance a new decree may be completed before the end of the year.

**Question:** Is the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources still involved in the negotiations?

**Answer:** No, the Coalition is currently shut out of the discussions.

**Dave Caroffino** from the DNR Tribal Coordination Unit was asked if he wanted to provide an update on the negotiations and he provided the following:

We have been in an extended cycle of having discussions for a period and then having an extension. Currently, the Consent Decree extensions are getting shorter and the list of outstanding issues is becoming shorter. Looking to have a resolution by the end of the year.

### **Updates by Agency Representatives**

**Nick Torsky, DNR Law Enforcement Division:** Lt. Mike Feagan who was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt and is now the Great Lakes Enforcement Unit supervisor, replacing Lt. Dave Shaw who was promoted to Division Chief. Hope to move forward in filling Lt Feagan's vacancy and the Upper Peninsula Great Lakes supervisor position left by Lt. Terry Short, who recently retired. Boat operator training was held in Straits area this fall and was very successful. In the past, the marine training was held in the southern waters, but it was very beneficial to train in the Straits with its hazards, traffic and numerous commercial fishing nets. There were heavy northwest winds during the training which provided a lot of good experience handling the boats. This diverse training enables the Officers to respond better to emergencies.

**Ed Eisch, DNR Fish Production Program Manager:** Staff are busy with fall egg takes at the weirs. The first day of the Chinook Salmon egg take is occurring today at the Little Manistee Weir. It appears that there are plenty of fish available to complete the egg take. A good number of Coho Salmon have already entered the Platt River and the egg take for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October appears to be on schedule. Captive egg takes are underway. Marquette Hatchery started egg take today with Lake Trout, and Oden Hatchery with Brown Trout. We are expecting soon disease testing results on the 2<sup>nd</sup> year class of Arctic Grayling. These fish have been doing very well with few losses. Muskie rearing is going well at Thompson and Wolf Lake hatcheries, and those fish have been moved to ponds. Working on capital outlay priorities with modernization of the hatcheries. Staff have been organized into design groups to prepare for the work that will be done.

**Tim Cwalinski, DNR Northern Lake Huron Management Unit (NLHMU) Supervisor:** He is working on backfilling the vacancy created by his promotion. Field staff have been doing a lot of inland Walleye assessment and stream work. Planning to continue assessing the Brown Trout stocking program in the Au Sable River below Mio, however, water levels are currently too low to run the jet boomshocker used for sampling.

**Jason Gostiaux, DNR SLHMU Fisheries Biologist:** Had a successful hatchery-reared Lake Sturgeon release in the Saginaw River watershed. Inland walleye stocking evaluations are starting tonight. Upcoming port electrofishing is scheduled for Lexington and Sanilac. This year both Atlantic Salmon and Coho Salmon will be sampled. April Simmons returned from the Czech Republic where she presented at the international Percis V conference representing Michigan. I attended the State of the Bay conference in Saginaw with Jeff and it was a good opportunity to exchange ideas with persons from many backgrounds. Technician staff are working on some ice fishing access site maintenance such as clearing vegetation and making it easier to use the sites. Recent sampling within Shiawassee watershed found two lakes with Cisco. We are investigating to determine if the cisco were native to these lakes or introduced.

**April Simmons, DNR SLHMU Fisheries Biologist:** To follow-up on studying the wild brown trout in the Au Gres area, April is having some lake-caught Brown Trout from the area genetically tested to determine if they are a unique wild strain or one of the stocked strains. This was an agenda item for this meeting, but it will be discussed in more detail at the winter meeting.

**Todd Wills, DNR Lake Huron-Lake Erie Area Research Manager:** Fall fieldwork is underway. Saginaw Bay fish community survey was recently completed, and the Les Cheneaux Islands fish community survey is in progress. Later this week Thunder Bay Lake Trout acoustic telemetry work is planned. Dave Fielder also visited the Czech Republic with April where he gave a keynote address at the international Percis V conference.

**Dave Caroffino, DNR Tribal Coordination Unit Manager:** We received a substantial increase in funding that will enable our staff to be doubled. I will become the head of the section and filling my vacant position will be newly hired Ben Rook, a research biologist who will be focusing on Lake Superior and Whitefish Modelling. He will also be working with the wholesale program and will be based in Charlevoix. We will be hiring a biologist and technician who will be based in Marquette to expand the coverage in the Upper Peninsula to help with the Treaty issues in the western part of the Upper Peninsula along with working with Emily Martin on inland issues. To complete having a crew in both the Upper Peninsula and Lower Peninsula another biologist and technician supervisor will be hired and work from Charlevoix assisting Biologist Emily Martin so she can expand her coverage to southwestern Michigan in the 1821 Treaty of Chicago area and on the east side of the State in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw area.

**Next meeting:** The winter meeting will be an online Zoom meeting to eliminate potential winter hazardous driving conditions. The date has not been chosen yet, but it probably will occur in February. Once the date is chosen Frank will send out a notification.