January 4, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Ice fishing is on for most of the state however ice conditions are variable in some locations. Anglers will need to use caution especially in those areas that have received a lot of snow. Check the ice ahead of you and around you when heading out and remember deep snow and slush will hide dangerous pressure cracks and depressions. Steelhead fishing has come to a standstill as most rivers have shelf ice or floating ice.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Anglers are fishing the inland lakes in this area of the state.

Lake Erie: Perch anglers are taking fish in the Metro Park Marina and near the Banana Dike. Some good size fish have been caught on minnows and wax worms but anglers were still sorting out the small ones. Brest Bay is giving up walleye for those using Swedish pimples and jigging rapalas in 16 feet. Most anglers are walking out. Bluegills were caught in Lake Point Marina which is near the mouth of the Huron River.

Detroit River: Ice anglers have caught yellow perch along the south end of Grosse Ile in Airport Bay. Most were using minnows and wax worms.

Lake St. Clair: All the regular access sites have good ice. Yellow perch fishing was excellent on the north end of the lake.

Saginaw Bay: Had little fishing activity from White’s Beach south to Linwood. There has been a fair amount of activity off Linwood with some anglers going as deep as 24 feet and taking good catches of walleye however anglers need to use caution as there is an active pressure crack off Linwood and at least one machine has gone through the ice. Changes in wind direction can cause water level changes under the ice and this caused a pickup truck to break through the ice last weekend. There was a fair amount of ice fishing off the Bay City State Park. On the east side, there was light fishing pressure from Sebewaing to Bay Port with most fishing just outside the islands and in the Slot. Perch, pike and walleye were taken in Wildfowl Bay.
**Saginaw River:** Has ice anglers fishing the length of the river, from Wicke’s Park in Saginaw all the way down to the mouth. Ice thickness varies so anglers need to use extreme caution. Walleye were caught at most locations when using a fire-tiger jigging rapala tipped with a minnow head. Catfish have also been caught and a large lake sturgeon was caught recently. Anglers are reminded that any sturgeon caught anywhere in the Saginaw River or Saginaw Bay must be released immediately. Keep in mind that handling these fish for any length of time in these temperatures can cause the gill filaments to freeze and result in the death of a fish so get them back in the water as quickly as possible.

**SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** People have started ice fishing in this area of the state however the ice thickness varies considerably due to heavy snow. Many lakes have several inches of slush under several inches of snow which is slowing the freezing process. Ice thickness can go from four inches to once inch in just a few feet. Anglers should use extreme caution if they decide to head out, especially in the high snow areas near Lake Michigan or on lakes with natural springs. Ice conditions improve to the east including the area from Jackson to Lansing where there is less snow. Best advice is to use a spud and check the ice often. Anglers are catching bluegill and crappie using jigs and wax warmer or spikes. With ice coming down the rivers, steelhead fishing has been difficult.

**Kalamazoo:** Ice in the Kalamazoo area is marginal due to heavy snow, but people have been getting out. Most reported trips cut short due to the ice sinking or difficulty getting to regular spots.

**Muskegon Lake:** Has ice anglers targeting panfish.

**Muskegon River:** Steelhead fishing and angler activity has been extremely slow during this period of arctic weather.

**White Lake:** Has ice anglers. No reports on catch rates have come in.

**NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Mullett Lake:** Anglers were out ice fishing but caution needs to be used. Those using tip-ups were targeting pike.

**Otsego Lake:** Had anglers out fishing.

**Higgins Lake:** Is frozen but anglers will need to use caution. No one was fishing in deep water yet because it takes longer to freeze. Anglers were walking out from the south launch. The ice was still thin off the west launch so avoid that area.
**Houghton Lake:** Has good ice however anglers need to use caution near the inlets. Some areas have little snow while other areas are drifting. Walleye anglers are getting a few fish when using Swedish pimples and do-jiggers or rattle jigs. Hot colors were nickel blue, orange, pearl and dark green. Walleye anglers are also catching a lot of pike. Bluegills have been caught on teardrops tipped with a wax worm. If the bite slows, try wigglers.

**Lake Margrethe:** Has ice anglers.

**Tawas:** Those in the bay were targeting walleye, lake trout and burbot in 15 to 18 feet over the artificial reef. Those out toward the tip of Tawas Point were getting some walleye.

**Au Gres:** Most anglers were two to three miles out from the Pine River and off Palmer Road.

**Au Gres River:** Anglers were taking a few walleye. Some were fishing out on the bayou southwest of the river mouth but no reports had come in.

### NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

**Overall:** Many of the lakes northwest of Grayling had sloppy conditions. There wasn't a lot of ice to begin with and after getting hammered with a lot of snow, the ice is now insulated which slows the freezing process. There is a lot of slush under the snow. Be very careful especially around the Traverse City area.

**Lake Missaukee:** Ice fishing is going well with anglers targeting mostly panfish.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Anglers are fishing however ice thickness is not consistent because of all the snow. Areas with slush are also hidden by the snow cover. Both lakes have given up some nice pike and walleye on tip-ups. Good size bluegills and crappie were taken in the coves on Lake Mitchell.

**Big Manistee River:** Steelhead fishing is mostly shut down due to the arctic weather.

**Pere Marquette River:** Shelf ice has locked up many sections of the river. Anglers will have to wait for it to warm back up.

### UPPER PENINSULA

**Overall:** Inland lakes in this region have ice however caution still needs to be used because of deep snow and slush insulating most of the lakes.

**Courtney Lake:** In Ontonagon County had anglers fishing for brook trout.
**Lake Gogebic:** Anglers are fishing for walleye and perch.

**Keweenaw Bay:** Had no safe ice but there is a chance anglers could be out within the next two weeks.

**Alberta Pond:** In Baraga County had some brook trout anglers.

**Lake Antoine:** In Dickinson County had some ice shanties and angler activity.

**Munising:** The bay is ice covered and has anglers fishing close to shore near the city docks, the Sunset Motel and the Anna River access site. Ice thickness is unknown so please use caution especially off Sand Point. Ice anglers are targeting splake and Lake Whitefish when jigging small rapalas tipped with a single egg. Those using tip-ups are targeting splake with a minnow. Stay clear of thinking you can walk to Grand Island. Just because you see white ice does not mean it is safe!

**Indian Lake:** Was producing pike for those using tip-ups.

**Manistique Lake:** Was producing some nice walleye catches.

**Munuscong Lake:** Was producing some perch and walleye.

**St. Marys River:** Had quite a few ice shanties in Munuscong Bay. Most were moving around a lot because the bite was good one day but they would have no hits the next day in the same spot.
January 11, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Though ice fishing is on it is hard to say what impact the rain and above freezing temperatures this week will have on ice conditions. Anglers will need to use caution and watch for pressure cracks. Windy conditions could also impact ice conditions.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Lake Erie: Perch anglers were still taking some fish in the Metro Park Marina and near the Banana Dike. Try minnows and spikes. Brest Bay continues to give up a few walleye however more fish were caught in Ohio water especially off Camp Perry which is just north of the Portage River in Port Clinton Ohio. Anglers are still waiting for the big fish to come in.

Detroit River: Has a lot of ice coming down the river. Areas where anglers were ice fishing will most likely not be safe at this time. The Coast Guard has been out and breaking up the ice.

Lake St. Clair: Yellow perch fishing has been good throughout the lake including the areas off Selfridge, Fair Haven and Anchor Bay. Most fish were caught in six to 10 feet.

Saginaw Bay: Has a few anglers fishing two to three miles off Pinconning Road and Erickson Road but most of the activity is from Linwood south to the Saginaw River mouth. There are two major pressure cracks out there; the first about a mile off Linwood which is very active and the second one is about three miles out. Yellow perch were caught about a mile out in six feet but the walleye were two to three miles out. A blue and silver jigging rapala or spoons tipped with a minnow worked best. There was a fair amount of activity off the Bay City State Park. Those fishing off the loading docks near Spoils Island did well for walleye in 15 feet. A few were going out from Callahan Road. Not much activity off Vanderbilt Park. Some were fishing the Slot from Sunset Bay Marina and Thomas Road. Perch fishing was a bit slow from Sebewaing to Bay Port where most were averaging only four to five fish. Some good catches were reported out of Mud Creek. Those that did the best waited for the fish to come to them.
Walleye anglers were generally fishing between North Island and the tip of Sand Point where they got a few along with a couple lake trout. Anglers are cautioned to stay away from the tip of Sand Point as currents there make for sketchy ice conditions. At Caseville, perch fishing in the marinas was spotty. At Port Austin, a few pike spearing shanties were in the harbor.

**Saginaw River:** Anglers were fishing the entire length from Wickes Park to the mouth. Success has slowed from the usual first-ice, but anglers are picking up some walleye at most locations. In general, fishing was slower the further upstream you go. Most anglers were in 16 to 20 feet on the edge or the middle of the shipping channel and jigging rapalas tipped with minnows. Hot colors were blue and silver, black and gold, fire-tiger or red and silver. Some of the better fishing was near the Zilwaukee Bridge, the south end of Bay City near Cass Avenue, near the Veteran’s Bridge downtown and off Patterson Road. There was a lot of activity just downstream on the Independence Bridge near the U.S.S. Edson but catch rates were spotty.

**Tittabawassee River:** Had no safe ice for fishing and there is too much ice for navigation.

**SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Ice conditions still vary in this area of the state. The smaller shallow lakes had ice although thin spots were reported in some places. The large lakes like Gun Lake and Gull Lake have areas of thin ice and caution needs to be used. Those able to get out on the lakes have done well on panfish and pike.

**Kalamazoo:** Inland lakes in this area have ice but the thickness varies depending on how much snow. The ice can be six inches thick on some but only three inches thick on others and covered in slush. Word has it any lake west of US-131 would be iffy at best.

**Grand River at Grand Rapids:** With the warm up, steelhead anglers are getting some fish up near the dam.

**Grand River at Lansing:** Open water anglers have caught a few walleye downstream of the Moore’s Park Dam and near the Elm Street Bridge which is just upstream of the Red Cedar.

**Lake Lansing:** Ice anglers are getting bluegills and sunfish but are sorting through a lot of small ones. A couple nice channel cats were taken by those using tip-ups with minnows or cut bait.

**Muskrat Lake:** Was producing some eight to 10 inch bluegills and some nice pike.

**Sessions Lake:** In Ionia County is producing bluegills and perch.
**Muskegon Lake:** Ice anglers need to be aware of the tug boat going in and out between the GT Dock on the south end and the channel leading out to Lake Michigan. Stay far away from the open water in this area. Just south of the channel, yellow perch were caught off the Sand Docks. Try minnows, wigglers, wax worms or spikes. Fish were also caught just west of the GT Dock in 44 feet. Pike were taken on tip-ups with minnows off Hartshorn Marina. Pike and walleye were taken on tip-ups along the far east end.

**White Lake:** Yellow perch were caught just off the post office on the west end. Bluegills were caught off Wesley’s Marina on the northeast end. The “Narrows” at the east end are usually good for steelhead, walleye and pike.

**NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Black Lake:** Small yellow perch were caught on spikes and wigglers. Walleye averaging 20 inches were caught on blues in 11 to 15 feet. Those spearing for pike were seeing a lot of walleye in four to 11 feet. Anglers are reminded to be cautious near the rivers.

**Van Etten Lake:** Ice anglers caught panfish on minnows, wax worms and wigglers.

**Higgins Lake:** Ice anglers are out and have taken some smelt on the north end and off the west launch in 60 feet on a hali jig tipped with a wax worm or spike. Some lake herring were also caught off the west launch however anglers need to use caution as there is a large pressure crack. Lake trout were taken in 100 feet plus on the north end. Pike were hitting on the both the north end and the south end including one fish that was 44 inches. A few rainbow trout were caught in one to one-and-a-half feet near the conference center. Most were taken on wigglers. For perch, try the north end. Anglers can be found off the church camp in 40 to 60 feet or around the Sunken Island in 20 to 40 feet.

**Houghton Lake:** A few walleye have been caught next to the weed beds in eight to 12 feet. Most are using Swedish Pimples and do-jiggers. Pike are hitting good for those using tip-ups in the weed beds. Bluegill fishing has been good as well.

**Tawas:** Most of the activity was on and around the artificial reef which is up in the “armpit” of Tawas Point and north of Jerry’s Marina in 15 to 17 feet. Anglers were taking a mix of walleye, lake trout and burbot. Some were fishing further out in the Bay in 18 to 20 feet and taking walleye. Yellow perch fishing was slow and most of the fish caught were small ones. A couple were spearing pike both in and outside the harbor.

**Au Gres:** Had a lot of ice shanties south and west of the river mouth. Anglers were getting a mix of walleye, pike and some yellow perch. Down near the Pine River and Palmer Road, perch were caught in three to five feet but catch rates were spotty.
Walleye anglers going out to the Catfish Hole have done well in 16 to 17 feet especially in the evening. There was no safe ice north of the river.

**Au Gres River:** Had a lot of activity with anglers getting some walleye and a few keeper yellow perch.

### NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

**Antrim County:** Ice anglers were out but some of the inland lakes had layers of ice, slush, and ice again so use caution.

**Little Glen Lake:** In Leelanau County was producing a few perch. No word on Big Glen yet.

**Long Lake:** In Grand Traverse County was producing a few nice perch. Try minnows, wigglers, wax worms or spikes.

**Frankfort:** A lot of ice shanties were set up along the north shoreline in Betsie Bay but no report on catches yet.

**Crystal Lake:** In Benzie County had anglers fishing the east end and starting to take some lake trout on tip-ups.

**Lake Missaukee:** Is producing panfish and pike.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Ice fishing is in full swing with some nice pike, walleye and panfish taken from both lakes. The pike are hitting on tip-ups with sucker minnows. Panfish are hitting on minnows and wax worms. For walleye, try tip-ups with large shiners or jigging with rapalas.

### UPPER PENINSULA

**Overall:** Snow on the ice is causing some slush which makes it harder to see areas that may not be safe and also makes travel on the ice a bit more difficult. Those heading out will need to be careful.

**Lake Gogebic:** Continues to provide opportunities for walleye, northern pike, and yellow perch.

**Keweenaw Bay:** Ice has formed on Keweenaw Bay, Huron Bay, and Portage Lake. Keweenaw Bay is providing angling for lake trout, whitefish, brown trout, and splake. Newcomers to Keweenaw Bay will find fish off the mouth of the Falls River as well as off the Sand Point Lighthouse.
**Little Bay De Noc:** Has ice and travel north of the “Narrows” was good. Two large pressure cracks have opened just out from the Terrace Bay Inn causing problems for some anglers so please use caution in this area. There are various pressure cracks around the Sand Point area so use caution. Walleye anglers reported fair catches with a lot of undersize fish throughout the Bay. Best areas were in the channel in Gladstone in 28 to 35 feet and off the Center Reef in 24 to 35 feet when jigging rapalas with minnows at dusk. Perch catches were low but the fish caught were over 10 inches with many up near 14 inches. Several areas were producing fish including Kipling in 14 to 25 feet, in the channel just south of the “Narrows” in 28 to 35 feet and south by the shipping docks in Escanaba in 25 to 30 feet when using minnows. Good pike action in the Kipling flats and near the shipping docks in Escanaba when jigging rapalas or using tip-ups with sucker minnows. Some are targeting whitefish off Sand Point which is the best area to fish for them.

**Manistique Lakes:** Continues to produce a few perch, walleye and pike.

**Brevoort Lake:** Was producing some walleye and yellow perch.

**St. Marys River:** Still had quite a few ice shanties in Munuscong Bay where the walleye and yellow perch bite was decent.

**Hessel:** Ice anglers are catching pike and yellow perch around the Les Cheneaux Islands. The perch were hitting on spikes, wigglers and wax worms. Many were less than seven inches but some up to 10 inches were caught in 10 to 15 feet. A few pike were taken in 22 feet. Anglers are reminded to use caution and watch for moving ice especially where currents are found.
Ice fishing continues around the state and some of the inland lakes are in better shape after some of the snow cover melted. Rivers across the state should be fishable by the weekend with warmer temperatures in the forecast. Watch for changing ice conditions with the warm up and the rain.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Lake Erie: Perch anglers were still taking some fish in the Metro Park Marina and near the Banana Dike. Try minnows and spikes. Those fishing the Lake Erie Metro Park Marina caught bluegills. The fish were six to seven inches.

Lake St. Clair: Perch fishing continues to be excellent across the lake. A good number of fish were taken near Cotton Road and the St. Clair Metro Park. Most were using a gold spoon with a red bead tipped with a minnow. Those targeting panfish had some luck nearshore and in the canals. Some have taken walleye in eight to 12 feet. Those spearing pike were taking smaller fish.

Saginaw Bay: Had a lot of anglers from Erickson Road south to Linwood, with Linwood being the most popular access point. Walleyes were taken in 17 to 20 feet in the vicinity of the second pressure crack. Anglers need to use extreme caution near both pressure cracks as they are still active and changing all the time. Both people and machines have fallen through the ice near them. Walleye were caught in 14 feet off Parish Road. Perch anglers were getting some fish in five feet off Anderson Road and six feet off Linwood. Good catches including a couple limits came from the shipping channel near Spoils Island. A few were fishing in 10 feet off the trailer park near the river mouth. East of the Saginaw River mouth, success was slow at Finn Road and at Vanderbilt Park. Perch anglers in the lower Quanicassee River caught a few small ones. Slow perch fishing from Sebewaing to Bay Port. A few pike were speared or caught on hook and line and several perch anglers reported seeing pike down the holes. Perch fishing was a little better off Mud Creek in Wildfowl Bay. A few pike and walleye were taken incidental to perch in Wildfowl Bay. At Caseville, the thaw last week made the river and marina pretty murky and fishing slowed to a standstill. No fishing at Port Austin as the few shanties inside the harbor were pulled to shore.
Saginaw River: Be careful of the ice in or near the channel. The thaw last week caused the current to pick up and it thinned out the ice. You might be standing on eight inches of ice in one spot off the current and two steps away there might only be two inches! The thaw caused the water to muddy up and fishing slowed. From Wickes Park in Saginaw north all the way to the Independence Bridge, catches were limited to a walleye here and there with a lot of sub-legal fish caught and released. A couple eater-size fish were taken between the Independence Bridge and the mouth. Those fishing out of the main current seemed to be doing a little better, and evenings were best. A few walleye and some perch were caught inside the Yacht Club basin. Again, these areas out of the main current seem to be where the fish have been holding.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Ice conditions on most of the lakes in this area did get better. The bluegill bite has been fair with most fish coming from 10 to 20 feet near the drop-offs.

Gull Lake: Smelt fishing has been poor.

Grand River at Grand Rapids: Both Millhouse and Bruce’s Bayou seem to be the reliable bluegill spots. The steelhead action should pick up by the weekend.

Morrison Lake: Was producing a few perch for those using a jig tipped with a spec minnow. Anglers were moving around and working quite hard to entice the fish to bite.

Muskrat Lake: Continues to produce pike, bluegills and the odd crappie.

Muskegon Lake: Anglers should avoid the northeast corner of the lake as a truck went through the ice between Second Street and the Conservation Club. Also beware of the tub boat that goes in and out between the GT Dock on the south end and the channel leading to Lake Michigan. Perch have been caught in 42 feet on the southwest and west end off Cottage Grove and the Harbor Town parking lot. The bite turns on and off but some good size fish have been caught. Pike and a few walleye were taken off Fisherman’s Landing on the east end. Pike were taken off Heritage Landing and Hartshorn Marina.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Burt Lake: Was producing a decent number of walleye and perch.

Black Lake: Fishing pressure picked up. Anglers are catching walleye before sunrise and at dusk with blues in 11 to 18 feet. Anglers were also catching a few pike but most were sub-legal. Perch were caught on shiners in six feet. There were no musky reports
from spear anglers. There are some major pressure cracks near Zolner Road and off Corbat Road so use caution in these areas.

**Grand Lake:** Was producing some walleye.

**Higgins Lake:** Perch anglers were near the drop-off in 60 feet. Lots of anglers were out deep and targeting lake trout in 80 to 120 feet. Most are using greys or smelt. Those targeting smelt were in 50 to 60 feet off the North State Park, the west launch and off Big Creek with a Hali jig tipped with wax worm or spike. The occasional rainbow trout has been taken in shallow waters off the Conference Center when using a wiggler. A few pike are still being taken on tip-ups or by those spearing.

**Houghton Lake:** Anglers can walk out from the DNR launch on the north end but taking any kind of vehicle out is not possible as the cement ramp has buckled. Anglers should not drive across the pressure crack off the west launch. Bluegills have been caught on wigglers and wax worms in five to eight feet. For walleye, try jigging spoons tipped with a minnow head. Crappie were hitting on a small jigging spoons tipped with a live minnow. Those spearing or using tip-ups are taking pike.

**Tawas:** Those spearing pike did well on the north end of the bay off Jerry's Marina. Lake trout and walleye were caught around the artificial reef. A few anglers were walleye fishing out closer to the tip of Tawas Point in 20 to 22 feet.

**Au Gres:** Most of the fishing effort was concentrated in the back bay west of the river mouth where anglers were taking pike, a few walleye and some perch. Walleye anglers heading out from Hale Road, the Pine River access site, and Palmer Road were getting fish in 11 to 15 feet. Walleye anglers were also hitting the Catfish Hole off White’s Beach. Perch anglers north of the Pine River caught eight to 10 inch fish in four to eight feet.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Anglers were taking motorized vehicles out however caution should be used especially around any pressure cracks. The rivers should be fishable with warmers temperatures by the weekend.

**Walloon Lake:** In Charlevoix County was producing a few perch.

**Portage Lake:** Perch fishing was decent. Some nice fish were caught but anglers were sorting through the small ones. Lake herring were caught over deep water.

**Manistee Lake:** Had ice shanties off Penny Park.

**Lake Missaukee:** Has been good for panfish but no word on walleye.
**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Had less snow on the ice so travel conditions were much better. A good number of crappie were taken off Kenwood Park on Lake Cadillac. Mitchell is also producing some nice crappie. The coves on Mitchell were good for bluegills and sunfish. Pike were active on both lakes and were hitting tip-ups with sucker minnows.

**Pere Marquette Lake:** Anglers caught pike on tip-ups with sucker minnows. Some perch were also caught.

**Pentwater Lake:** Anglers were getting bluegill, crappie and a few perch.

**Haymarsh Lakes:** In Mecosta County were producing some nice bluegills. No limit catches but the fish caught were up to 10 inches.

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**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Little Bay De Noc:** Had very little snow cover on it. *Ice conditions changed some and those heading south of Aronson Island reported much thinner ice. This area is considered dangerous and extreme caution must be used at all times.* Pressure cracks have been moving a lot over the last week so please use caution near them. Overall catches were down some but still fair to good. Walleye anglers reported fair catches near the Second Reef in 27 to 35 feet, in the channel south of the “Narrows” in 28 to 34 feet and just south of the Escanaba River in 25 to 32 feet. All were using rapalas tipped with a minnow. Several large fish were caught between Aronson Island and Portage Point when jigging rapalas tipped with a minnow in 27 to 32 feet. Lots of walleye anglers in the upper bay reported a good number of undersize fish which is a good sign for the future. Perch anglers had fair to good catches with wigglers in the Kipling Flats in 27 feet. Fewer fish were caught but the size was 10 to 13 inches. Fair catches were reported in the Gladstone Channel in 28 to 34 feet, out near Brach’s Cabins in 17 to 21 feet and out near the shipping docks in Escanaba in 30 feet. Good number of smaller perch and some bluegills were caught in the Escanaba Yacht Harbor in eight to 12 feet. Pike were active throughout the bay. Best catches of large fish were reported near the ship docks in Escanaba when using a tip-up with a sucker minnows and around 25 feet. Whitefish anglers reported fair to good catches out in the channel at Gladstone with minnows or spawn in 30 to 35 feet and off Sand Point in 80 to 90 feet.

**Manistique Lakes:** Walleye were hitting pretty good.

**Brevoort Lake:** Anglers caught walleye and pike.

**St. Marys River:** Those fishing the upper river above the locks reported good Menominee and whitefish action. Mosquito Bay is the popular location.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Cedarville was producing yellow perch and pike. Perch catches were good but anglers were doing some sorting. Off Hessel, perch were
caught around the Les Cheneaux Islands when using minnows, wigglers and spikes. Most were undersize but keepers averaged 10 inches. Be sure to use caution in areas where there is a current.
February 1, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Rain and warmer temperatures deteriorated some of the ice along the Great Lakes. Those out fishing on any large body of water such as Saginaw Bay will need to pay close attention to wind direction.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Detroit River: Had some shelf ice coming down.

Lake St. Clair: Still had ice however the rain and warm temperatures allowed some areas with current and run-off to open up. Fishing reports have not been quite as consistent as previous weeks. Some were having trouble locating the schools of big perch. Catch rates for panfish in the canals and nearshore areas did increase some.

Saginaw Bay: Ice conditions around the Bay are not good as they are changing all the time. Reports are coming in of snowmobiles and ATV’s going through the ice at the pressure cracks. Perch and walleye fishing were pretty good along the west side from White’s Beach south to the Bay City State Park. Perch fishing was pretty good from White’s Beach in six feet all the way to Linwood. Most of the perch were coming from four to six feet off Pinconning, Newman Road, Erickson Road, Coggins Road, and Linwood Road when using minnows or jack-hooks baited with a red plastic bead. Some limits were also reported. Walleye anglers were going to the Black Hole and out around the Spark Plug and getting fish on jigging spoons or a blue and silver jigging rapala tipped with a minnow. Off Bay City State Park, walleye anglers were fishing in the old shipping channel and over the dumping grounds in 20 feet. There was up to six inches of water on top of the ice in places near the second pressure crack off Linwood. No one is fishing out near Spoils Island due to poor ice conditions. Most of the activity was at Sunset Bay Marina with walleye anglers going out to mid-bay and also the Slot but watch out for the pressure crack! It would be good to avoid the area off Finn Road and Callahan Road as the Hot Pond discharge seriously weakened the ice in that area. Fishing up the east side from Sebewaing to Caseville was terrible as perch fishing was just plain poor. Mud Creek was also slow but a few were doing a little bit better there. Slow fishing at Caseville because of muddy water in the river and marinas.
Saginaw River: Ice conditions were BAD on the entire river and no one was out fishing. A few were in the marinas near the mouth but nobody was really doing any good. Colder weather this weekend may improve ice conditions.

Tittabawassee River: Had open water from Dow Dam downstream to about Mapleton. One boat went out of Gordonville Road and there were several shore anglers from Mapleton to north of the Gordonville Road ramp, but nobody was catching anything.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: After the rain and warmer temperatures, inland lakes in this area had little snow cover and were slippery. Anglers will want to bring cleats for easier travel. Those out fishing have caught a fair to good number of bluegills, crappie and perch.

St. Joseph River: Was producing some steelhead during the rain and warm weather.

Kalamazoo River: Anglers caught a couple steelhead up near the Allegan Dam.

Grand River at Grand Rapids: Anglers caught steelhead and a few walleye below the 6th Street Dam. Steelhead were also found in the Rogue when the shelf ice was gone.

Grand River at Lansing: Anglers caught a few walleye near the North Lansing Dam. Most were using a twister tail grub. The current was high and fast which makes fishing a bit more difficult.

Reeds Lake: Was producing a fair to good number of pike.

Muskegon Lake: Anglers will need to use caution along the shoreline where foot traffic only is advised. Anglers also need to pay close attention to the tug boat traffic off the GT launch and stay back away from that area. Perch have been caught in 42 to 55 feet off the Cottage Grove ramp and behind the old paper mill. Bluegills were caught on the northwest end off the State Park and perch were caught out deeper. Lots of pike have been caught off Heritage Landing and on the east end near Fisherman’s Landing. Walleye reports were few and those caught were taken by perch anglers.

Muskegon River: Water levels were a bit high and the water was muddy after the rain. Those targeting steelhead caught a few fish.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Burt Lake: Walleye fishing was decent for those using tip-ups or jigging in 15 to 20 feet.
**Black Lake:** Fishing pressure picked up with many anglers getting ready for sturgeon season which begins Saturday February 3rd. Walleye anglers have caught 18 to 21 inch fish in six to 15 feet when using blues. Early morning or dusk was best. Anglers were catching perch averaging six inches in 10 to 18 feet. A few 28 to 32 inch pike were caught but many were undersize. Anglers need to use caution near the river mouths and the large pressure crack on the southeast side of the lake.

**Higgins Lake:** The lake is slippery with only a dusting of snow on top so anglers might want to bring ice cleats for easier travel. Caution should still be used near the creek mouths. The bite slowed some but anglers were still taking a few whitefish. Perch were caught but anglers were doing a lot of sorting to get a few keepers. Smelt were caught along the drop-off in 30 to 60 feet in the evening however the bite was not consistent. Those spearing or using tip-ups with large minnows have taken some pike.

**Houghton Lake:** The DNR launch ramp on the east side of the lake is temporarily inaccessible as the cement planks have buckled. Anglers can still walk out from the access site but will not be able to take vehicles out at this site. Anglers should be aware of a pressure crack in the East Bay and at the entrance to the North Bay. The lake had about an inch of snow on top but anglers may still want to bring cleats for easier travel. Anglers are getting lots of pike. The bass became active and the bluegill bite was decent in the morning. For walleye, the better bite was between 4 pm and sundown. Anglers are using jigging spoons and rapalas tipped with blues. Orange and glow were the hot colors. Some were also using shiners or sucker minnows on tip-ups.

**Tawas:** Walleye fishing was kind of slow over the last week. One group fishing over the artificial reef off Jerry’s Marina caught a few walleye and some lake trout while another group out near the tip of Tawas Point did not do quite as well. Several pike were speared in Tawas Bay but the perch fishing was slow.

**Au Gres:** A few anglers fishing north of the breakwall were seeing walleye but none were caught. Those fishing south of the breakwall caught some perch and walleye. The area near the Pine River mouth had muddy water and poor fishing after the thaw but the bite did pick up so walleye were perch were found in 8 feet. Anglers need to beware of the pressure crack out there and avoid it as most were not crossing it.

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**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Ice fishing is still going strong in this part of the state. Lots of anglers have been out targeting pike, walleye, and panfish.

**Manistee Lake:** In Kalkaska County was producing some crappie for those using a jig tipped with a minnow. Those spearing pike can be found in the southeast corner.

**Fife Lake:** In Grand Traverse County was producing a fair number of pike just east of the boat launch. A few smaller perch were caught in 15 to 30 feet.
**Portage Lake:** Perch fishing continues but anglers were still sorting through a lot of small ones. Those fishing in deeper water were still taking some lake herring when using a Hali jig.

**Lake Missaukee:** Anglers have caught bluegills and crappie. A couple walleye were taken by those jigging near the drop-offs.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** The ice was slippery with not much snow on top. Be sure to bring some cleats. Those using tip-ups have caught some decent pike. The crappie fishing was very good with limit catches reported. A good number of bluegills and sunfish have been caught on both lakes.

**Manistee River:** Steelhead were caught during the warm spell but as we head back into a deep freeze, fishing might not be all that great by the weekend. Most were using spawn, jig and wax worm, beads and flies.

**Pere Marquette River:** Anglers were steelhead fishing after the rain and warmer temperatures. The shelf ice upriver cleared out so anglers were able to throw small eggs and nymphs.

**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Keweenaw Bay:** Strong winds broke up the ice which left many areas unsafe. Anglers were found at the head of the Bay and out in front of the Falls River in L’Anse. A couple anglers went through the ice on the Baraga side when walking out to the whitefish hole. With snow in the forecast, always check the ice with a spud as you walk out. Fishing for splake and brown trout was fair in 20 to 50 feet when jigging shiners or using tip-ups. Spawn was also productive.

**Little Bay De Noc:** Ice conditions worsened a bit with the warmer temperatures. Drifting snow made for difficult travel in some areas. Pressure cracks also presented problems so please use caution in those areas. Those fishing off Portage Point caught some walleye but the area was considered dangerous and extreme caution must be used. Out from the Terrace Bay Inn and south to the Escanaba River was also good for walleye when using tip-ups or rapalas in 30 to 35 feet. Perch anglers reported fewer catches with the best area in the Kipling Flats with wigglers in 28 to 35 feet or near Brach’s Cabins in 18 to 27 feet. Whitefish anglers reported fair catches off Sand Point with spawn or minnows in 80 feet. Northern pike have been active throughout and most catches were reported by walleye or perch anglers. If you like to spear pike good areas to try would be near Butler Island, the Day's River mouth, off the coal piles in Kipling and the Escanaba Yacht Harbor.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Near Hessel, the ice is black and clear but there has been a lot of movement along the west side of Hessel Bay. Be cautious of pressure cracks,
moving ice and areas with currents. Perch fishing picked up around the Les Cheneaux Islands. Many are still catching lots of small ones but a few seven to 11 inches have also been caught when using wax worms, spikes, wigglers and minnows. Anglers have spotted some pike and splake but no harvest reports yet.
February 8, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Ice anglers need to be careful especially with all the snow that has fallen and more to come by the weekend. Deep snow will cover pre-existing holes, pressure cracks and other areas that can be dangerous.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Fishing on the inland lakes was slow. Most panfish were taken on wax worms and spikes. Many were out pike fishing.

Lake Erie: Anglers were taking some perch in the Metro Park Marina.

Huron River: Was producing a couple steelhead.

Detroit River: Anglers were getting some perch in Airport Bay. Those fishing the marinas were getting bluegills and perch.

St. Clair River: Had some shelf ice coming down from Port Huron.

Saginaw Bay: Those that want to go out are doing so at their own risk! Anglers are warned to stay away from the pressure cracks and do not try to cross them. There is a bad pressure crack about 1 to 1 ½ miles offshore that runs from White’s Beach all the way down to Newberg Road south of Pinconning. The crack was about 20 feet wide. There is another crack that crossed the bay just north of the Black Hole and anglers should avoid that area. Extreme caution needs to be used. You might not see a pressure crack until you are on top of it and by then it is too late. On the east side, there was bad ice from Rose Island Road north to Geiger Road due to currents in the area. Anglers have fallen through in this area. Bad ice was reported in Wildfowl Bay off Beadle Bay Marina. The ice blew out at the Caseville Pier. Fishing was spotty just about everywhere and perch fishing near shore normally starts to wind down this time of year.
Saginaw River: Ice conditions were extremely variable. One angler went through the ice down near Crow Island. Ice thickness was as thin as 1 or 2 inches in some spots. Fishing was spotty at best.

Tittabawassee River: Was unfishable due to shore ice and floating ice.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Fishing continues on the inland lakes. Use caution when venturing out as deep snow will limit your ability to see pressure cracks and spearing holes. Anglers have caught pike, bluegills, perch, crappie and even some bass which must be released immediately.

Grand River at Grand Rapids: Anglers were still taking the occasional walleye or steelhead below the 6th Street Dam. The Rogue River has frozen over so anglers will have to wait until the next thaw.

Grand River at Lansing: Had no reports. Due to an ice jam, water levels were elevated near Portland. Anglers need to use caution in this area.

Lake Lansing: Channel catfish have been caught on tip-ups with minnows in the deep holes. Panfish have also been caught.

Reeds Lake: Continues to produce a good number of pike for those using tip-ups or spearing.

Mona Lake: Had good perch fishing near the Henry Street Bridge and next to the channel.

Muskegon Lake: Already has a good four to six inches of snow and more is coming by the weekend. The deeper snow makes travel a bit more difficult. Yellow perch have been caught along the drop-offs on the west end or between the black buoy and the Bear Lake channel. Perch were also caught in the northeast corner off Second Street in 30 to 40 feet. Walleye were caught in 20 to 25 feet. Pike anglers have done very well off Heritage Landing and out from Hartshorn Marina.

White Lake: Had good perch fishing on the north end in 30 to 50 feet.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Black Lake: Anglers need to be cautious near the river mouths, any pressure cracks and old spearing holes especially after the lake sturgeon season last Saturday. Fishing slowed. Walleye anglers jigging minnows in 15 to 20 feet had little luck. Those that were caught ranged 18 to 21 inches. A few pike up to 36 inches were caught in 15 feet.
**Higgins Lake:** Those spearing pike have done well including one fish that was 46 inches. Lake trout anglers are using trout minnows in 80 to 100 feet or deeper. Some nice perch were caught in 15 to 50 feet around the Main Island but anglers need to keep moving around to find them. Smelt were caught in 30 to 50 feet off the North State Park, Big Creek, the west launch and to the south of it. A few rainbow trout were taken on wigglers in a foot of water near the Conference Center.

**Houghton Lake:** Anglers still need to stay clear of a large pressure crack in the East Bay which runs from the canal on the west side of the East Bay and shoots northeast. Anglers can fish inside the East Bay but do not try to cross over into the main body of the lake as the pressure crack had opened up and could be hard to see especially with the snow cover. There is also a pressure crack at the entrance to the North Bay so use caution. The bite has been up and down depending on the weather. Pike are still being caught. More walleye were still caught after 4pm and were hitting on jigging spoons or rapalas tipped with blues. Orange and glow were still the hot colors. If the walleye and bluegills are not hitting on minnows, try wigglers.

**Tawas:** Some lake trout and walleye were caught around the artificial reef in northern Tawas Bay. Some perch were caught in 15 to 20 feet in the same area. This was the only area where we didn’t get reports of bad pressure cracks, but that doesn't mean there aren’t any out there. Caution needs to be used.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Lake Leelanau:** Walleye have been caught in both lakes. Perch fishing was better in the south lake where anglers were fishing in 20 to 30 feet. The north lake was producing some lake trout in 80 to 100 feet. Some smelt were taken along the north end.

**Green Lake:** Anglers were getting some perch in about 45 feet. Those targeting pike have done well with a fair number of fish taken off the State Park. Some smelt were caught in 40 to 50 feet.

**Long Lake:** In Grand Traverse County was producing some walleye and perch.

**Portage Lake:** Ice fishing continues with anglers taking perch and lake herring. The perch were found in 25 to 30 feet especially on the east end. Walleye and pike have also been caught.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Ice fishing continues. The bite slowed a bit but anglers were still getting a few walleyes along with bluegills, crappie and a few perch. Those spearing or using tip-ups continue to take pike.
UPPER PENINSULA

**Keweenaw Bay:** Ice in the Bay was building on a daily basis and anglers were venturing further out. Smelt fishing after dark was good. Lake trout fishing was fair off Sand Point and the Whirl-i-gig. The whitefish action was fair but the coho, splake and brown trout bite was slow.

**Little Bay De Noc:** Snow storms made travel on the Bay a little more difficult with many getting stuck. **Anglers need to be aware of a large pressure crack out from the Terrace Bay Inn which has been moving some as the weight of the snow increases.** Overall fishing slowed some. Walleye anglers reported fair catches in the Kipling flats and north to the Vagabond Resort when jigging rapalas with minnows in 27 to 35 feet, out from the Terrace Bay Inn in 35 feet and near the Escanaba River in 25 to 30 feet. A few anglers were fishing out by the Ford River but no reports have come in. Perch catches were slow. Anglers are catching some nice jumbo perch but fewer fish total. Best spots were the Kipling flats in 27 to 35 feet, Gladstone Beach area in 30 feet and good numbers of smaller fish in the Escanaba Yacht Harbor when using minnows or wigglers with halo’s. Whitefish anglers reported fair catches in Escanaba off Sand Point with spawn or minnows in 87 to 35 feet. Bigger fish were caught in 35 feet in the Gladstone area. A lot of pike continue to be caught throughout the Bay but most were undersize.

**Munising:** Ice was holding in the bay but the ice beyond Grand Island was not safe and Trout Bay was not safe as northwest winds shifted a majority of the ice. There is a large pressure crack near Rock 67 by Grand Island. Those on snowmobiles should not cross the lake as it is not safe. Several sleds went through the ice near Grand Island. Fishing has varied as some anglers report decent catches of whitefish up to 15 inches and others reported poor catch rates. The splake action was fair but the most fish were undersize. Most were using Swedish pimples and assorted jigs, mousies, spawn, cut bait or fathead minnows. Some have caught the occasional young rainbow trout or brown trout. Some smelt along with young coho were caught off Sand Point. Lake trout anglers fishing the west channel reported slow catch rates.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Those fishing around the Les Cheneaux Islands reported slower fishing. Anglers were seeing lots of smelt, perch and splake with little to no harvest. Some perch about eight inches were caught on minnows, wax worms wigglers, spikes or artificial soft baits in 10 to 15 feet. Splake were seen in 15 to 20 feet but no word on fish being caught. Anglers need to use extreme caution near any pressure cracks, moving ice and in areas where there is a current.
February 15, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Heavy snowfall has made things difficult in several parts of the state, but in other areas there has still been plenty of action.

Don’t forget it’s the 2018 Winter Free Fishing Weekend this Saturday and Sunday! More details are below in this week’s fishing tip.

This is the weekend to get out and try ice fishing as Michigan’s annual “Winter Free Fishing Weekend” will be held this Saturday February 17th and Sunday February 18th. No fishing license will be required however all regulations will still apply. Special events will be held statewide and will be subject to weather conditions. For a list of registered events, click here: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364_52261_50497-372353--,00.html

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: The inland lakes still had ice however there is a lot snow on top that will most likely turn slushy and make travel difficult.

Lake Erie: Those targeting panfish in the canals and marinas had success.

Huron River: The steelhead bite slowed but should pick back up with the warmer weather.

Lake St. Clair: Heavy snow has covered pressure cracks and has made traveling on the ice more difficult because of the slush. Many anglers had a hard time getting around on quads. Anglers have reported seeing a lot of inactive fish.

Saginaw Bay: For those heading out, ice conditions have not improved much and new snowfall has covered areas of thin ice and soft spots making them harder to see and judge. Anglers need to be extremely cautious. A good rule of thumb is; if nobody is fishing in a particular area, there may be a good reason for it and
maybe you shouldn’t go there either! Many walleye anglers were going miles offshore but some have taken limit catches 1 to ½ miles out from Pinconning south to Linwood in 10 feet. The biggest share of activity was off Linwood in 17 to 20 feet. Catch rates were hit-or-miss with some getting limits while others did not do as well. Perch anglers were getting fish in 6 ½ to 7 feet off the end of Linwood Road. Quite a few anglers fishing 7 to 8 miles off the Bay City State Park were getting walleye. Anglers did well around Spoils Island off the mouth if the Saginaw River. The fish were suspended at 18 feet in 30 feet over the shipping channel and were hitting on smaller jigs and lures. On the south end of the bay, walleye anglers were going 7 miles out from Finn Road to fish in 20 feet however anyone that goes out from Finn Road needs to watch out for thin ice created by the Hot Pond discharge. Perch fishing finally picked up off Vanderbilt Park near Quanicassee in 8 feet but so many people descended on that area that apparently the fish left. Fishing should be better during the week when there’s less pressure. Sunset Bay Marina had a lot of activity with walleye anglers fishing along the Bar which is about a mile west of the deepest part of the Slot. Ice conditions off Thomas Road are not good and anglers should avoid the area. Perch fishing was slow from Sebewaing to Bay Port. Not many anglers were out and the deep snow made the ice hard to judge. There was open water off the Sebewaing VFW and off Rose Island. In Wildfowl Bay, some did really well on perch but most caught very few. The key seemed to be spending enough time on the ice and either sitting tight and letting the fish come to you or moving around a lot and finding some active fish. At Caseville, ice anglers hugging the south side of the pier caught a few lake trout and walleye. They also reported seeing whitefish but were not catching many. Port Austin had little activity with only a couple ice shanties out.

Saginaw River: Fishing along the lower river was pretty good with lots of anglers around the U.S.S Edson and at the river mouth getting good numbers of walleye, but the snowstorms on Friday and Sunday stopped everything as anglers reported marking lots of fish but they would not bite. Good depths were 17 and 23 feet downstream of the Independence Bridge near the Edson, and in the channel in 28 feet at the mouth. Anglers are cautioned to be extra careful where they are walking; as an angler went through in a large fishing hole that was cut and abandoned without being marked near the Edson. There’s been so much activity at some locations, the ice looks like Swiss cheese. At the upstream end of the river, there wasn’t much activity off Wickes Park but the turning basin by Ojibway Island had a few anglers and many were scattered all the way from First Street to Bay City, but success was spotty and small fish dominated the catch. Watch for bad ice conditions around both sides of the Zilwaukee Bridge and around Crow Island.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: The inland lakes have ice and now slush because of all the snow. The bite was good in the evening just before dark for bluegill and crappie using wax worms and tear drops. The pike action was good for those using tip-ups or spearing.
St. Joseph River: Froze up during the cold spell but warmer temperatures this week should help to open it up. Anglers have caught steelhead during the warm ups.

Kalamazoo River: Froze up but should open back up as well. Look for steelhead and walleye up near the Allegan Dam.

Grand River at Grand Rapids: Look for increased steelhead action with the warmer weather. Steelhead and walleye anglers can usually be found below the 6th Street Dam. Look for steelhead in the Rogue River as well.

Lake Lansing: The bite was slow but some bluegills and crappie were caught on wax worms. The better fishing was just off the bottom in about 10 feet in the early morning.

Jackson County: Those fishing the inland lakes reported fair to good panfish action.

Muskrat Lake: In Clinton County was producing some bluegills in 10 to 12 feet.

Gratiot County: Had reports that the ice in this area of the state was not safe.

Crystal Lake: In Montcalm County was producing bluegills and crappie. Those spearing have taken some pike.

Muskegon Lake: Perch anglers are getting fish near the black buoy and to the west of it in 30 to 45 feet. Fish were also caught out from the sand docks in 42 to 44 feet. While many were heading out further, those fishing about 50 yards offshore were taking a good number of fish. They are sorting out the small ones but those putting in the time have taken some limit catches of good size fish. Pike anglers were still taking a fair to good number of fish off Heritage Landing.

Muskegon River: Water levels were up some with the snow melt. Those seeking steelhead have caught some nice fish on flies and streamers.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Black Lake: Fishing slowed but some walleye were caught on minnows in 18 feet in the morning or at dusk. Many of the walleye were around 21 inches but some were undersize. Some 10 to 12 inch perch were caught on wigglers, spikes and minnows in 10 feet. A few 24 to 36 inch pike were speared or caught on tip-ups with large minnows. There were no reports of any musky caught.

Burt Lake: The better fishing for walleye and perch was in the morning or evening.

Mullett Lake: Fishing activity slowed but anglers were still getting some perch and a few walleye. A couple large pike were speared.
**Higgins Lake:** Ice fishing continues but anglers should still use caution near the inlets. The lake had 5 to 7 inches of snow on top. Pike spearing continues with some nice fish taken in 15 to 20 feet. The lake trout bite slowed. Perch anglers are getting some but were also doing a lot of sorting to get some keepers. Most of the action has been around the Main Island, Sunken Island and on the south end. Smelt anglers were still getting fish mainly at night in 40 to 60 feet.

**Houghton Lake:** Anglers are still advised to stay clear of the large pressure crack in the East Bay which runs from the canal on the west side of the East Bay and shoots northeast. Anglers can fish inside the East Bay but do not try to cross over into the main body of the lake. There is also a pressure crack at the entrance to the North Bay so use caution. Walleye anglers are seeing fish but the bite was slow. Orange and glow jigs tipped with a wax worm seemed to work best.

**Tawas:** Ice fishing was kind of spotty off Jerry’s Marina and out near Tawas Point. A few perch were caught near the reef. Walleye and pike fishing were slow but a decent number of pike were speared.

**Au Gres:** Walleye and pike were caught on the northeast side of the breakwall. Off Booth Road near the tip of Pointe Au Gres, some walleye and lake trout were taken in 8 to 9 feet. Down in Wigwam Bay, anglers going out off the end of Hale Road caught walleye and perch to the south or southwest towards the mouth of the Pine River in 8 to 10 feet. The perch were running 7 to 10 inches with a few up to 12 inches. Be sure to watch for the active pressure crack out there!

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Thumb Lake:** In Charlevoix County was producing some perch. Anglers were catching splake but many were small.

**Portage Lake:** Lake herring fishing remains strong over the deeper water. Perch fishing was hit-or-miss. Most anglers were concentrated along the shallow sandbar off North Point and to the west.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Ice anglers are getting a few walleye. Panfish including crappie and perch have been caught on both lakes including the coves on Mitchell.

**Manistee Lake:** In Manistee County had a lot of anglers fishing out from Penny Park. Rumor has it they caught some nice pike on tip-ups or when spearing. Perch and crappie were also caught.

**Big Manistee River:** Steelhead fishing should pick up with the warmer weather especially up around Tippy Dam. The river was frozen in the lower end.

**Pere Marquette River:** Should also have some good steelhead action.
UPPER PENINSULA

**Keweenaw Bay:** Smelt fishing was good at the head of the bay as well as out from the Baraga Marina after dark. The lake herring action was fair in 40 to 60 feet. Lake trout fishing was good out from the Whirl-I-Gig.

**Little Bay De Noc:** Catch rates slowed considerably and as a result angler participation was low. Walleye anglers reported very few catches even though they were marking fish. Anglers were as far south as the Ford River but no reports came in. Most of the walleye fishing was near the Escanaba River and south to Portage Point when jigging rapalas in 25 to 40 feet. Mixed catches of walleye and perch were reported off the Second and Third Reefs when using rapalas tipped with minnows or wigglers in 30 feet. Overall perch catches were down but some nice jumbo fish were caught. Many small perch were reported around Butler Island. Walleye were caught at the mouth of the Day’s River but most were undersize. A few large northern pike were caught in the same area when using tip-ups with sucker minnows in 18 feet.

**Munising:** The ice was holding within the Bay. **It is not recommended that anyone cross the channel especially from Sand Point due to unsafe ice and strong currents in the area.** Ice anglers did fair to good for coho and whitefish and fair to good smelt action was reported off Sand Point. Coho were averaging 14 to 16 inches and whitefish up to 18 inches. Coho anglers were using jigging spoons such as Swedish Pimples and the smelt anglers were using Hali jigs. The splake action was slow and the majority of fish caught were undersize. Those burbot fishing at night have done well with fish up to 28 inches caught on cut bait or smelt.

**Grand Marais:** The harbor had fishable ice and anglers did well for Menominee. There is ice just beyond the bay but it was not safe at this time.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Fishing was slow around the Les Cheneaux Islands once again. A few perch were taken on minnows, wigglers, wax worms and mousies in 15 feet. Many were around 9 inches with a few up to 12. Anglers are seeing smelt and splake but no fish were harvested.
February 22, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Very few updates have come in this week as few anglers were out. Rain and warm temperatures have many rivers at or above flood stage. Moving ice may also cause additional flooding. Anglers should avoid the rivers until water levels recede. Many inland lakes will no longer be safe.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Rivers are running high and the inland lake ice is deteriorating rapidly so few anglers have been out.

Lake St. Clair: Ice conditions were deteriorating quickly and warm runoff from rains this week will melt shoreline ice which will make accessing the ice difficult to impossible. The lake is experiencing heavy river flows, increased current, open spearing holes which will only increase in size, and fog. The safest decision is to stay off the ice.

Saginaw Bay: It is recommended that no one venture out onto the ice because of flooding, rising water levels and quickly deteriorating ice conditions. The rain, warmer temperatures and snow melt are creating dangerous conditions. Those looking to go ice fishing should head to the northern part of the Lower Peninsula or the Upper Peninsula.

Saginaw River: It is recommended that no one venture out onto the ice on this and other rivers in the area because of flooding and rising water levels. Conditions are not safe.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Inland lakes in the area have taken a hit after the rain and warm temperatures. Shoreline ice has deteriorated making it difficult to get out to any remaining ice which may not be safe. The rivers are running high and fast. Anglers might want to think about getting the spring and summer gear ready to go.
St. Joseph River: Had extremely high water levels and no one was fishing. It could be a week or so before the water recedes to fishable levels. Look for steelhead up near the dams once it does.

Kalamazoo River: Had high water levels.

Grand River at Grand Rapids: High water levels and a strong current will make fishing very difficult.

Grand River at Lansing: Anglers caught carp, catfish and a few pike before the rain but now the river is extremely high with a strong current and not fishable.

Muskegon Lake: Anglers are encouraged to stay off the ice. All the spillways at the dam are open sending fast dirty water down into the lake. Shoreline ice is deteriorating with 4 feet or more of open water to cross over. Even if anglers can get out in the morning, they may not be able to get back to shore.

Muskegon River: Had ice jams resulting in rapidly rising water near Rogers Dam and near Croton.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Anglers should still use caution especially after the rain and warm temperatures. The return of colder weather should help to shore the ice back up.

Black Lake: Still had ice but some major pressure cracks were starting to open up including one in front of Zolner Road. Fishing was slow but a few walleye were caught on minnows at dusk. Anglers were getting a few smaller walleye on minnows at dusk. Some perch ranging eight to 12 inches were caught along the weeds in 10 to 15 feet. Anglers were using spikes, wigglers and minnows with the best luck on minnows. Pike up to 29 inches were caught however most were 20 to 22 inches.

Burt Lake: Still had some shanties out on the ice. Most anglers are targeting walleye and perch.

Mullett Lake: Still had ice fishing and plenty of shanties out.

Higgins Lake: Ice anglers should stay away from the creek mouths due to deteriorating ice conditions from runoff. Anglers are still heading out. Those targeting perch were getting a good number but sorting through a lot of small ones. Lake trout were found just off the bottom in 80 to 110 feet. Good pike action continues. Rainbow trout were taken in shallow waters near Big Creek and the Conference Center. Smelt were hitting in the evening but catch rates were spotty. Be sure to bring ice cleats for easier travel.
**Houghton Lake:** Anglers are still fishing however **extreme caution needs to be used when traveling across the ice.** All the fishing and spearing holes have opened up and are much bigger now. Caution needs to be used near the rivers and creeks, near the pressure crack that runs across the East Bay and another one off Long Point near the entrance to the North Bay. Anglers caught crappie, bluegills, walleye, pike and perch on minnows. If the bite slows, try switching to wax worms. The better bite was early morning and again about 4 p.m. Be sure to bring ice cleats for easier travel across the ice.

**Rifle River:** Was under a flood warning. High water levels and a strong current are not ideal fishing conditions.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Ice fishing continues in this part of the state.

**Lake Charlevoix:** Still had ice. Cisco fishing was hit-or-miss but anglers managed to catch a few if they were patient. Most were taken in 100 feet.

**Portage Lake:** Continues to produce lake herring. The perch bite was still hit-or-miss. Many were still targeting the waters along the shallow sandbar off North Point and to the west of it.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** Ice anglers should avoid the areas where there is flowing water as these deteriorate first. Colder temperatures should help shore the ice back up.

**Big Manistee River:** Had reports of steelhead being caught.

**Pere Marquette River:** Also had reports of steelhead being caught after the rain and warmer temperatures.

**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Keweenaw Bay:** Fishing was slower. The smelt bite was fair after dark out from the Baraga marina. The whitefish action was slower than normal. Lake trout fishing was fair off of the Whirl-I-Gig. There were very few coho and brown trout caught but no kings or steelhead.

**Little Bay De Noc:** Ice remains throughout most of the Bay. **Saunders Point is dangerous and should be avoided because of the warm water discharge and open water in the area.** Overall fishing was slow but anglers are marking good numbers of fish throughout. Spotty walleye catches were reported throughout but the better catches were in the southern waters. Fair catches rates for those jigging rapalas in and around
30 feet just south of the Escanaba River and in 23 to 30 feet in the Stonington area. Bigger fish were caught along the break and 25 to 40 feet down off Portage Point. Many were using tip-ups in the upper Bay but those jigging did better. Perch anglers reported slow but steady catches. Some large perch were caught in the northern Bay. Fair catches were reported from the First Reef to the Third Reef with wigglers on the bottom. A lot of undersize walleye mixed with some keepers and several respectable catches of perch and pike were taken up near the Day’s River in 14 to 24 feet. Good to excellent pike spearing was reported in 8 to 10 feet just off Butler Island.

**Munising:** Catch rates for whitefish dropped slightly. Anglers are mainly fishing with a single egg or wax worm. The coho action was fair to good for those jigging spoons or a Swedish pimple. Catch rates were fair for smelt. Night anglers targeting burbot reported slow catch rates. Many were fishing Trout Bay and Sand Point.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Fishing pressure picked up around the Les Cheneaux Islands but the number of fish caught was down. Some days have been better than others. Perch ranging eight to 12 inches were caught on minnows, spikes and wigglers in eight to 12 feet. Bigger fish were seen but none were caught. Anglers reported seeing smelt and splake. Pike fishing picked up with most fish ranging 22 to 30 inches. Anglers still need to be cautious of areas with a strong current and or moving ice.
March 1, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Anglers are reminded that the 2018 fishing licenses go on sale starting March 1! Be sure to pick up a copy of the 2018 Michigan Fishing Guide or download it from [www.michigan.gov/dnrdigests](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrdigests). The best ice fishing locations at this time were in the Upper Peninsula. Anglers should use caution and check any ice carefully following the rain and warm temperatures. Those fishing the rivers will need to use caution and watch for floating debris.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

**Lake St. Clair:** The main lake ice is gone. Some marginal ice still remains in the canals and marinas. It is recommended that anglers stay off any remaining ice. The Harley Ensign Boating Access Site is wide open and a few boat anglers were starting to venture out.

**St. Clair River:** A few fish were caught off the wall at Port Huron.

**Saginaw Bay:** Ice fishing season is over as very strong winds blew the ice out of the bay or broke it up. Perch fishing in the cuts and canals may be available in a week or so, but spawning is still a few weeks away. Rivers in the area were either still in flood mode or starting to recede. Most were full of floating debris and were not fishable.

**Saginaw River:** Had wide spread flooding in the upper river including flooded boat launches. Providing we do not end up with more significant rainfall, it could take another week or more for the watershed to drain out and become fishable. Walleye season on the inland waters is open through March 15, so anglers will still have a shot at walleye fishing for 10 days or so before the season closes.

**Tittabawassee River:** Had wide spread flooding in the lower river and flooded boat launches. Like the Saginaw River, it could take another week or more for water levels
to come down and the river is fishable.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

**Overall:** Steelhead were on the move last week before the rapid rise in water levels. The ice is completely off some lakes while others had only partial cover. It looks like ice fishing is done as shorelines have opened up and warm temperatures this week will only weaken any remaining ice. Some have already started boat fishing. A few boats braving the float ice were going out onto Lake Michigan to target lake trout and brown trout.

**St. Joseph River:** Had some steelhead action.

**Kalamazoo River:** Also had some steelhead action.

**Grand River at Grand Rapids:** Steelhead and walleye were caught before the high water levels which have restricted fishing opportunities.

**Grand River at Lansing:** Water levels were receding. A couple anglers fishing over near Moore’s Park caught a few walleye on minnows or rubber baits and channel cats on liver. Fish were caught both above and below the dam.

**Muskegon Lake:** Has open water along the east and northeast end but no boat launches were open. The south half of the lake was still iced over but could break up quickly depending on the rain and wind. Needless to say, there was no fishing action to report.

**Muskegon River:** Water levels were coming down and steelhead were being caught. Try spawn, flies, beads or wax worms.

**Mona Lake:** Had a couple anglers targeting suckers in open water near the bridges.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

**Overall:** Strong winds and standing water on many area lakes have increased the risk for ice fishing. Caution needs to be used. Shoreline ice has deteriorated making it difficult to get on some lakes. Surface conditions will require ice cleats or grippers of some sort for easier travel.

**Cheboygan River:** Was producing some steelhead including some silver fish that were coming in.

**Burt Lake:** Still had ice however the shoreline ice had deteriorated. Be careful where the river feeds in near the State Park. Anglers will need to watch for pressure cracks, holes where ice shanties were sitting and spearing holes which are all bigger now.
Some have caught walleye and burbot. A few pike and small perch were caught on the south end but overall, fishing slowed.

**Mullett Lake:** Anglers should stay away from the large pressure crack and watch for old fishing and spearing holes as well.

**Black Lake:** Some were still getting a few perch and walleye.

**Ocqueoc River:** Was producing some steelhead including some fresh fish.

**Grand Lake:** Was producing some walleye and jumbo perch along the east shore.

**Higgins Lake:** Still had ice but some of the shoreline has broken up especially where there are natural springs. Use caution and watch for old spearing holes that are bigger after the rain and warm temperatures. Avoid the area around Treasure Island. Lake trout anglers were walking out. Perch anglers were targeting 30 to 60 feet and were sorting through a lot of small ones. Smelt anglers were getting up to 60 fish or more after dark depending on how long they stayed out. The smelt along with a few ciscos were caught in 30 to 40 feet. Rainbow trout were hitting on wigglers of Big Creek and near the Conference Center. Pike up to 45 inches were taken on tip-ups or by those spearing.

**Houghton Lake:** Still had ice but anglers will need to use caution near the pressure cracks and the Middle Grounds where the ice is very thin over the weed beds. Many of the permanent ice shanties have been pulled off the lake so watch for large holes where the shanties had been sitting. There was no snow on the lake so bring ice cleats. The bluegill and crappie fishing was good with limit catches reported. The fish were caught in six to seven feet close to shore or in 12 feet in the East Bay and along the north shore. Anglers are using minnows, wax worms and spikes.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Stream steelhead fishing should be picking up with the warmer weather. Many, if not all the inland lakes have seen a significant thaw. It would be risky to go out on the ice right now and warm temperatures through the weekend will only make conditions more dangerous. Anglers should use extreme caution on any remaining ice as the thickness will be variable.

**Traverse City:** Suttons Bay was wide open after the ice blew out.

**Betsie River:** Water levels have returned to near normal. Look for steelhead with the warmer temperatures.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** No anglers were out ice fishing as warm temperatures continue to make the ice dangerous.
**Manistee Lake:** The ice was pretty much done.

**Big Manistee River:** Steelhead fishing picked up with the rain and warmer temperatures. Try spawn, beads and wax worms. Water levels were near normal.

**Mason County:** Ice on the inland lakes was breaking up.

**Pere Marquette River:** With the lower water levels, anglers were catching some steelhead again.

**Pentwater River:** Was also producing some steelhead.

**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Keweenaw Bay:** Still had ice with snow cover on top however the snow could be gone by the end of the week so anglers might want to bring cleats for easier travel on the ice. Lake trout fishing was fair off the Whirl-I-Gig. The whitefish bite was slow. Splake fishing was hit-or-miss in eight to 40 feet. Smelt fishing was great after dark but only fair during the day.

**Lake Gogebic:** Was producing a few walleye and pike. A few more perch were caught on the north end.

**Little Bay De Noc:** The ice remains although travel can be hampered by rutted or crusty snow. A few anglers reported good walleye catches down near the Ford River in 20 to 30 feet when jigging rapalas. Other walleye reports remain slow with spotty catches reported throughout the Bay. Fair catches of decent size perch were taken in the Escanaba Yacht Harbor with minnows or wigglers. The better catches were taken around the Kipling flats in 30 feet when jigging minnows or wigglers. Some did well with small rapalas. The quality of fish was great with some huge jumbo perch taken but the number of fish caught was down. Fair perch catches at the head of the bay with minnows and wigglers in 12 to 20 feet. A couple walleye were also caught but most anglers reported good pike action with fish taken between Garth Point and the Day’s River when using tip-ups with sucker minnows in 14 to 22 feet. The whitefish anglers reported little action off Sand Point in Escanaba.

**Munising:** Had high fishing pressure especially on the weekends. Anglers are mainly targeting coho and smelt and reported fair to good catches. The whitefish action was slow with most fish under 12 inches.

**Manistique Lakes:** Anglers caught walleye and perch. Tip-ups with minnows were the most productive.

**Brevoort Lake:** Had a fair bite for walleye, pike, and perch.
RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Fishing slowed once again with the return of cold temperatures and snow. Walleye, pike and muskellunge season on the Upper Peninsula Great Lakes, inland waters, St. Marys River and all the Lower Peninsula inland waters will close at midnight on March 15. Walleye and pike season is open all year on the Lower Peninsula Greats Lakes, Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River and the Detroit River.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Lake Erie: Boat anglers have caught walleye when trolling crank baits in Brest Bay. Shore anglers caught perch in the cuts and canals.

Huron River: Anglers were still getting some steelhead up near the dam at Flat Rock when using fresh spawn or a jig tipped with a wax worm. Those fishing the deeper holes downstream were using crank baits.

Detroit River: Yellow perch have been caught in the cuts and canals. Walleye were not up in the river yet.

Lake St. Clair: Most of the canals and marinas still had some lingering ice. As for the boat launches, Harley Ensign was wide open with a few skid piers in. Selfridge was getting skim ice overnight but opens up midday but no piers were in yet. No boats could launch at the Clinton River Cutoff and Fairhaven was still iced in. Perch anglers were using minnows and spoons with a red bead six to eight inches off the bottom.

Clinton River: A decent number of yellow perch were caught from the mouth to the bike path at 16-Mile Road. Further upstream, anglers were catching suckers.

Saginaw Bay: It’s possible to get a boat out of Pinconning, but there was no fishing activity there. From Pinconning to the Saginaw River mouth, floating ice has prevented anglers from launching boats. At the mouth of the Saginaw River, boats could not go out any further than the range lights due to floating ice jams. It was not possible to get out to Spoils Island. Moving east, the Finn Road cut was iced over. Fishing in the lower
Quanicassee River was very slow. All of the cuts up the east side of the Bay from the Thomas Cut northeast to Bird Creek at Port Austin re-froze and had skim ice which made shore fishing next to impossible. One highlight on the east side was the very good lake trout fishing off the pier at Caseville when using either live minnows or casting with cleo’s and other spoons. Walleye fishing on Saginaw Bay remains open year round.

**Saginaw River:** The walleye hotspot was in the lower river from the mouth upstream through Bay City and as far as James Clements Airport with limit catches (eight fish per angler) common. Most were taken when vertical jigging from boats, either anchored or drifting, with heavy jig heads and stinger hooks baited with minnows. Moving upstream between Bay City and through Saginaw to the confluence, fishing slowed quite a bit which indicates the run is just now entering the lower river from Saginaw Bay. Anglers were getting walleye throughout this reach but they had to work harder for them. Anglers are reminded that the inland walleye season, which includes the Saginaw River will close at midnight on Thursday, March 15 and will re-open on Saturday, April 28.

**Tittabawassee River:** Both boat and shore anglers caught some walleye along the entire length of the river. Heavy jigs baited with minnows or plastic twister-tails fished right along the bottom were the ticket. The inland walleye season which includes the Tittabawassee River will close at midnight on Thursday, March 15 and will re-open on Saturday, April 28.

**Shiawassee River:** Was producing some walleye.

**Flint River:** Was also producing some walleye.

**SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Coho salmon and brown trout fishing was picking up in the waters south of St. Joseph. Most of the action came when trolling along the beach but some anglers were going out to 200 feet when the weather allowed.

**St. Joseph River:** Although river levels are still higher than normal, steelhead action was good as the fish ladders are open and steelhead could be seen. Boat anglers were doing best but shore anglers caught a few.

**Dowagiac River:** Anglers caught a couple steelhead up near the Pucker Street Dam.

**Kalamazoo River:** Water levels were still a bit high but anglers have caught steelhead and walleye up near the Allegan Dam.

**Grand River at Grand Rapids:** Although river levels are still higher than normal, steelhead action was good with a number of fish observed at 6th Street. Walleye were also being caught at a slower pace but they are definitely in the river. Steelhead are being caught in Prairie Creek in Ionia County.
Rogue River: Is also producing some steelhead.

Grand River at Lansing: All the fish ladders along the Grand are now open. A few anglers have caught walleye.

Muskegon: Pier anglers were getting the occasional steelhead.

Muskegon Lake: Anglers were getting a few walleye on blade baits near the river mouth but the season closes at midnight on March 15th. When they can get out, boat anglers caught yellow perch on the west half of the lake when using minnows and wigglers.

Muskegon River: Water levels continue to drop and the water clarity was still stained. Steelhead fishing was good but the cold and snow will slow the bite.

White River: Steelhead were caught but the cold spell slowed the bite.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Black Lake: Still had a few anglers but fishing pressure has slowed. Many of the access sites will no longer be accessible and anglers need to stay away from any open river mouths. Harvest numbers were low with only a few small perch taken on spikes and minnows. Those spearing reported undersize pike.

Sturgeon River: Some steelhead were starting to run.

Ocqueoc River: Had steelhead fishing.

Au Sable River: Was producing some steelhead.

Higgins Lake: The best access site continues to be off the North State Park but caution need to be used. Perch were hitting on minnows and wax worms in 20 to 40 feet but anglers are still doing a lot of sorting. Smelt were also in 20 to 40 feet and were hitting on wax worms or spikes. Rainbow trout can be found in shallow waters about a foot deep near Big Creek and the Conference Center. Most were caught on wigglers.

Houghton Lake: Has open water in the North Bay, the East Bay and at various other points around the lake. Few anglers have been out. A couple were targeting bluegills and crappie in shallow waters along the south shore weed beds. Those anglers are walking out and fishing in shallow waters only. Walleye anglers were fishing in open water near the rivers.

Tawas: Boats launching into Tawas Bay and trolling south of the bay off the “Crib” which is about a mile straight out from Alabaster were getting lake trout in 10 to 20 feet.
**Tawas River:** Fishing was generally slow with just a couple walleye, pike and steelhead picked up.

**Au Gres:** A few boats were trolling not too far offshore between Point Lookout and Point Au Gres but angler success varied.

**Au Gres River:** Shore fishing on the lower river was slow. Fishing pressure at the Singing Bridge was light as anglers were not having much luck.

**Pine River:** Anglers were trying to shore fish on the lower river near Standish but catch rates for perch were poor as the fish are not in the river yet.

**Rifle River:** Steelhead were caught in the lower river.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** The return of winter has slowed things down. River steelhead fishing is decent in the lower stretches. Water levels were low and clear levels which makes fishing a little more difficult. Ice on the inland lakes is unpredictable. Caution needs to be used.

**Bear River:** In Emmet County had reports of some steelhead starting to run.

**Traverse City:** In the northern part of the West Bay, both Suttons Bay and Omena Bay are open water and the perch anglers were out.

**Betsie River:** Steelhead are being caught.

**Lake Leelanau:** The north end of the North Lake was producing a few whitefish but no smelt. The south end of the South Lake produced a few walleye and lake herring.

**Lakes Cadillac and Mitchell:** While the cold nights were making ice, it is not recommended that anglers go out ice fishing.

**Manistee:** Coho salmon and brown trout fishing is picking up for those trolling along the beach. There is one dock in at the First Street launch. Pier anglers caught a couple steelhead and brown trout.

**Big Manistee River:** Steelhead fishing is decent in the lower river.

**Ludington:** A few hardy anglers trolling or pier fishing caught steelhead and brown trout. Those trolling were in 10 to 20 feet along the beach.

**Pere Marquette River:** Steelhead fishing picked up from the Twin Bridges at US-31 to Lake County but cold temperatures have once again slowed the bite.

**Pentwater River:** Has steelhead for those braving the cold weather.
UPPER PENINSULA

Michigamme River: A few anglers caught good size pike near the Way Dam.

Sawyer Lake: In Dickinson County had good pike fishing for those using tip-ups or rods with fathead minnows.

Menominee River: Anglers are starting to catch brown trout near the Hattie Street Dam.

Little Bay De Noc: The ice has held up for the most part although areas with moving water or surrounding rocky areas had begun to thaw. Anglers will need to use caution. Some walleye were caught at the head of the Bay when jigging rapalas or using tip-ups in 10 to 27 feet. Perch fishing was fair with most targeting the Kipling flats and north to Garth Point. The few fish taken were caught on wiggles or minnows in 16 to 30 feet. Whitefish moved north into the Bay and were caught between the Second and Third Reefs by several perch anglers.

Marquette: Limits or near limit catches of coho were taken on the bubblers. A mix of brown trout, splake, herring, and a couple kings were also taken but the ice moved back in and locked up access to the bubblers once again. Rivers in the Marquette area had very little fishing pressure.

Au Train: Anglers need to use extreme caution on the ice as the thickness is variable. Some coho lake herring and Menominee were caught at the mouth of the Au Train River. Anglers are catching them both through the ice and while drifting spawn bags in the river.

Munising: Overall catch rates were lower for coho and smelt. Some managed a few good catches while others reported none. Best time for coho was in the morning with assorted jigging rapalas or Swedish pimples. Few were targeting whitefish as the bite was poor. The occasional splake was caught when jigging for coho. Those spearing reported slightly better action for lake herring when schools of fish were moving through.

Grand Marais: Still had ice within the harbor but low fishing pressure. Anglers were fishing for Menominee in shallower water. A few coho and steelhead were caught in the upper part of the marina.

Cedarville and Hessel: Perch fishing picked up around the Les Cheneaux Islands for those using minnows, wiggles, spikes and mousies. Most of the fish caught were around eight inches but some did manage to find a few fish up to 14 inches. Smaller pike 22 to 25 inches were caught on minnows. Anglers saw some splake but only a few were caught. Anglers and recreational riders need to be extremely cautious near the island points and high current areas that have opened up or have poor ice.
March 22, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Fewer anglers were out because of the cold temperatures and strong winds. Shore anglers will likely encounter ice in the cuts and canals with temperatures dropping down below freezing at night. Warmer temperatures next week should help improve the bite. Anglers are reminded that walleye fishing on the Saginaw River closed on March 15 and will not re-open until Saturday, April 28.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

**Lake Erie:** Boat anglers continue to take walleye including some limit catches in 15 to 20 feet in Brest Bay. Most were using husky jerks.

**Detroit River:** Some anglers were getting two to four walleye on jigs and minnows in the Trenton Channel. Boat anglers will still need to watch for occasional ice coming down the river.

**Lake St. Clair:** Fishing activity has been very limited due to cold temperatures and northeast winds. Most of the canals and marinas still have some lingering ice. Good reports came in from shore and a few boat anglers catching panfish and perch in the canals. As for boat launches, Harley Ensign is open with four docks in. Selfridge is open but no docks were in and anglers were still not able to launch at the Clinton River Cutoff. Fairhaven was still iced in.

**St. Clair River:** Also had limited fishing activity because of the cold and windy conditions. The launch in the North Channel had no docks in yet. At Marine City, the large tree was removed and crews were working on removing the root system. No docks were in yet as they cannot be put in until the buoys are in due to navigation hazards when exiting the launch. The buoys cannot go in until the large ice slabs clear the river.
**Saginaw Bay:** Perch fishing is still not underway in the cuts and rivers around the bay as it is still early and the water in the bay is still cold with lots of floating ice. Perch were caught inside the basin at Eagle Bay Marina at the end of Sagatoo Road but anglers should bring a spud. Floating ice continues to hamper those trolling. Boat anglers were getting perch and walleye around Spoils Island and around the range light just lakeward of the river mouth. A few six to eight inch perch were caught in the channel at Finn Road but most of the rivers and cuts may be iced over in the early mornings. The Thomas Cut and Allen Cut had a lot of fishing pressure but most of the fish caught were small. Fishing in the Sebewaing River and marina was slow with just a few perch and the odd crappie caught. The perch at Mud Creek were small. At Caseville, perch fishing was slow in the marinas and those casting hardware or still-fishing with minnows caught a few lake trout or the odd brown trout, steelhead, whitefish or burbot. No reports yet on the sucker runs but they should start soon.

**Saginaw River:** Anglers are reminded that the river is considered inland water and walleye season along the entire river closed on March 15 and does not reopen until Saturday, April 28. Boat anglers fishing for perch in the lower river did well with eight to 10 inch fish taken on perch rigs and minnows. Shore anglers near the cement plant in Essexville caught a few. Be sure to check the Exceptions to General Regulations by County in the Fishing Guide for seasonal gear restrictions for the river and its tributaries.

**SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**St. Joseph River:** Water levels have dropped and the steelhead fishing should only get better as the weather improves and water temperatures begin to warm. Boat and shore anglers are getting some fish.

**Kalamazoo River:** Anglers caught steelhead and walleye up near the Allegan Dam. A fair number of suckers have also been caught.

**Grand Haven:** Pier anglers were getting the occasional steelhead. Boat anglers caught some perch south of the piers in 50 to 55 feet.

**Grand River at Grand Rapids:** Water levels are back to normal and anglers are still getting some steelhead. Some perch were caught in Felix Bayou near Spring Lake.

**Rogue River:** Water levels are low. Steelhead anglers caught fish one day and none the next.

**Grand River at Lansing:** Did not have much to report. The odd steelhead was caught but the fish are scattered and catch rates were not consistent. A couple fish were spotted at the North Lansing Dam.
**Muskegon**: Pier anglers caught some steelhead and brown trout but the action was not fast and furious by any means.

**Muskegon Lake**: Perch have been caught along the west side in 42 to 45 feet just south of the channel. Anglers were using minnows or wigglers. Not many but a few anglers managed to take limit catches.

**Muskegon River**: Steelhead numbers are slowly picking up but will remain on the slow side until it warms up. Some perch were caught above the Davis Bridge.

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**NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Cheboygan River**: Had a couple anglers fishing at the dam but the bite was poor and no fish were seen.

**Mullet Lake**: Still had some people on the ice but the pressure cracks are opening up. Extreme caution needs to be used.

**Black Lake**: Had no reports for the week. There is still ice but the thickness is unknown. Most access sites are usable but caution needs to be used. Anglers should also be cautious of open water around the lower Black River.

**Higgins Lake**: Between Point Detroit and Flag Point which is the area that becomes very narrow and divides the north and south basin; there are currents that chew the ice up quickly. Anglers should avoid the area. Watch the ice out from Big Creek because of the current. Lake trout anglers were still out. Smelt were caught on the north end or in front of Cottage Grove during the day. Some decent size perch were caught in 20 to 30 feet on the south end of the Sunken Island.

**Houghton Lake**: No one was out fishing. There is open water in many areas now with more opening up. Any remaining ice will most likely not be safe. It is time to get ready for open water fishing.

**Au Sable River**: Is running low and clear. Those using streamers in the lower river should find a small number of steelhead in the late morning or afternoons when it warms up.

**Tawas**: Pier anglers did catch some Atlantic salmon and lake trout with large minnows or when casting various lures. Boats trolling and vertical jigging down near Alabaster were getting both lake trout and walleye in 10 to 20 feet.

**Tawas River**: Shore anglers fishing downstream of US-23 did catch a couple steelhead and a few suckers.
**Au Gres:** Walleye were staging just off the river mouth and those trolling were doing well including some that were taking limit catches.

**Au Gres River:** Those fishing down at the Singing Bridge (Whitney Drain) caught some steelhead and one Atlantic salmon in the lower river and in the surf.

**Pine River:** Perch fishing in the lower river was slow and the fish were small.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Fishing conditions were not ideal. The rivers are low, clear and cold which is making it tough for anglers to target steelhead. While the inland lakes still had some ice, the thickness is variable and those planning to head out will need to use extreme caution.

**Lake Charlevoix:** The ice was holding. Perch anglers were doing okay along the South Arm in the morning hours.

**Boardman River:** Was producing some steelhead for those using spawn, a jig and wax worm or small spinners.

**Manistee:** When they can get out, boat anglers are finding some coho and brown trout when trolling in shallow waters along the beach. Pier anglers were picking up a couple steelhead and brown trout as well.

**Big Manistee River:** Anglers are trying and catching a few trout but fishing conditions have not been angler friendly. Those fishing the lower river reported decent fishing. Catch rates should improve in the next few weeks.

**Ludington:** A few hardy anglers trolling or pier fishing caught steelhead and brown trout. Those trolling were in 10 to 20 feet along the beach.

**Pere Marquette River:** Water temperatures in the 30’s have slowed fishing. A warm up next week should help to get the bite going again. Anglers were using spawn, wax worms, and beads.

**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Keweenaw Bay:** Fishing has been slow. Those targeting lake trout had limited success. A few coho were caught in 10 to 15 feet. A couple nice brown trout were caught in 50 to 60 feet. Smelt fishing was very good both day and night on the Baraga side of the bay.

**Little Bay De Noc:** Ice remained in most areas but that will change fast in the coming weeks. A few were still taking vehicles out however it is not recommended especially
now that the shoreline ice will break-up fast. With walleye season closed, anglers are targeting perch or whitefish. The best perch catches were near Kipling between the Second and Third Reefs in 24 to 30 feet when jigging wigglers or minnows right on the bottom. For whitefish, the best area was off Sand Point when using minnows or spawn in and around 80 feet.

**Marquette:** Ice was still present at the Upper Harbor bubblers. Those fishing the open water did well for coho but were dragging boats across the ice to get to the open water. This is very dangerous and is not recommended. Fishing on the Carp and Chocolay Rivers was very slow as the water levels are low and clear and the steelhead have not shown up yet. Only a couple brown trout were caught.

**Au Train:** Fishing pressure was very light as few have been out. Those fishing the Au Train River caught a couple coho but no steelhead.

**Munising:** The bay still had ice. Coho salmon catches have increased the last few days with a few limits reported. Smelt are still schooling in large numbers with catches varying up to two gallons. Trout Bay had some shove ice but was still fishable. Splake and whitefish action was very slow. Night anglers targeting burbot did well with most fish averaging 22 to 24 inches.

**Cedarville and Hessel:** Those fishing around the Les Cheneaux Islands reported good pike and splake fishing with splake up to eight pounds taken on minnows in 18 feet and pike 24 to 36 inches taken in 10 to 15 feet. Perch fishing was a bit harder as most fish were only five inches. Anglers were using minnows, spikes, and wigglers. The area still had ice however always be cautious.
March 29, 2018

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

RECREATIONAL FISHING REPORT

Anglers are reminded that on Sunday, April 1 all anglers 17 years of age and older will be required to have a new 2018 Michigan fishing license. Be sure to look at a copy of the 2018 Michigan Fishing Guide for new regulations that go into effect on April 1 – you can download it from Michigan.gov/dnrdigests.

SOUTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

**Lake Erie:** Was producing limit catches of walleye in Brest Bay, off Luna Pier and near the Banana Dike.

**Detroit River:** A few walleye were caught in the Trenton Channel and near Wyandotte. Jigs and minnows were the ticket. Anglers were picking up some decent catches of perch in the canals in Gibraltar, the Ford Yacht Club, on Grosse Ile and other protected waters in the lower river.

**Lake St. Clair:** Wind and rain kept boat anglers off the lake early this week but a few decent reports of panfish and perch have come from shore anglers. Those fishing the canals were using minnows or a tear drop with a wax worm under a bobber for panfish. More suckers were starting to be caught further up the Clinton River.

**St. Clair River:** Before the ice came down, some anglers were able to find walleye as well as the occasional steelhead and salmon. The remaining ice from southern Lake Huron broke free on Monday and is now making its way down stream. This is making it difficult for anglers to access the river. Ice conditions can change dramatically throughout the day depending on wind direction.

**Saginaw Bay:** Perch were still not in the cuts and river mouths yet. Boat fishing for walleye has been difficult because of windy conditions. There has been very little fishing activity from Pinconning to the mouth of the Saginaw River. A couple walleye
were caught out near Spoils Island but nothing much over 15 inches. Moving east, a few nice perch were caught on a tiny tube jig in the open water at Finn Road. Not much to report on the Quanicassee River or at the Thomas Cut and Allen Cut except for a few small perch taken. Bluegills, crappie and small perch were caught in Sunset Bay Marina. The Sebewaing River and marina along with Mud Creek were slow as those trying for perch did not have much luck. The Caseville Marina was slow but pier anglers were taking a few lake trout on minnows or when casting hardware. Rain this week should help bring water levels and water temperatures up in the rivers and that should get the perch and sucker fishing going.

**Saginaw River:** Perch fishing in the lower river was pretty good with most boats in 30 feet along the shipping channel from the mouth upstream to the Bay Aggregate cut and also in front of Bay Harbor Marina. Crappie were caught in the tributaries.

**SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**New Buffalo:** Coho fishing was good for those trolling along the beach.

**Dowagiac River:** Anglers are catching steelhead at the Pucker Street Dam.

**St. Joseph:** Coho, brown trout and the occasional steelhead were caught by pier anglers and by those trolling along the beach.

**St. Joseph River:** Has a good number of steelhead and fish are moving onto the gravel for spawning. Spawn bags, skein and plugs have all worked especially up near the Berrien Springs Dam. Some limit catches were reported.

**Kalamazoo River:** Also has a good number of steelhead.

**South Haven:** Boat anglers were taking limit catches of coho. Pier anglers caught coho and steelhead.

**Grand Haven:** Boat anglers were still getting a few perch south of the piers. Steelhead were caught by pier anglers.

**Grand River at Grand Rapids:** Has a good number of steelhead with spawning fish moving to the gravel.

**Grand River at Lansing:** Reports were few but anglers have caught and released the occasional smallmouth bass though the window of opportunity was small. Those finding fish did so in the late afternoon in shallow waters only.

**Muskegon:** Pier anglers targeting steelhead are getting some fish.
Muskegon Lake: Perch fishing was good with boat anglers taking fish in front of the Sand Docks in 40 to 50 feet or in deeper water out from the Milwaukee Clipper.

Muskegon River: Boat and shore anglers are getting some steelhead but the action was still on the slow side with water temperatures in the mid 30's. A couple anglers tried fishing at the Reedsburg Dam but no fish were caught.

White River: Steelhead fishing picked up with fresh fish moving in.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

Overall: Steelhead fishing was slow on some of the local rivers. Anglers were still ice fishing on some lakes, but extreme caution needs to used, as ice conditions are questionable.

Cheboygan River: Those using spawn at the dam were taking steelhead.

Pigeon River: Anglers were starting to fish for steelhead but most caught brown trout that had to be released.

Black Lake: There is still ice on the lake however how much and what conditions are is unknown. There is open water near the mouth of the Black River.

Alpena: Thunder Bay has open water.

Thunder Bay River: Is open water and conditions are right for steelhead fishing. The marina is still frozen but the Fletcher Street ramp is open. Not a lot of runoff yet so the river is still pretty fishable. The dam will likely be opened with the first real warm weather we get and that could make fishing more difficult. Up until freeze up last fall, Atlantic salmon were being caught regularly in the old 'turning basin' in the river and it is likely they are still there. Try casting from the walkway along LaMarre Park in Alpena.

Higgins Lake: Still had some ice but getting on the lake has been a problem that continues to get worse with open water along the west shore, off Big Creek and near the natural springs on the north end. Fishing here is pretty much done for now.

Houghton Lake: Pretty much all the ice is gone now but no boats have been out. Anglers are now waiting for spring fishing to get started.

Tawas: On the pier at the state harbor, those fishing outside the pier caught some Atlantic salmon, lake trout and a couple brown trout or walleye when still-fishing with minnows or casting crank baits. The marina basin is full of minnows so perch fishing was hit-or-miss. Boats launching at the mouth of the Tawas River and fishing down near Alabaster were taking some nice lake trout when trolling or jigging. The sucker run in the Rifle River at Omer was stalled but the warm rain this week should help.
**Tawas River:** Those drifting crawlers and spawn sacks were getting some steelhead.

**Au Gres River:** Steelhead anglers fishing at the Singing Bridge did well when drifting spawn sacks in the lower river. Surf fishing was nearly impossible due to the strong east winds.

**NORTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA**

**Overall:** Steelhead fishing was slow on some of the local rivers as water levels were still low and cold. Anglers were still ice fishing on some lakes, but extreme caution needs to be used, as ice conditions are questionable.

**Lake Charlevoix:** Still had ice. Perch fishing was just okay in the South Arm during the morning hours.

**Betsie River:** Angling activity continues to increase with steelhead being caught. Some brown trout were also caught and released as the season is closed.

**Manistee:** Pier and boat anglers have caught coho and brown trout. Steelhead were caught by pier anglers.

**Big Manistee River:** Fishing picked up over the last week as a good number of fresh fish were moving in near Tippy Dan, anglers reported a decent bite that was best in the morning. Those on the north bank did well floating spawn while those on the south bank had luck with beads and flies.

**Ludington:** Pier and boat anglers have been picking up a few brown trout.

**Pere Marquette Lake:** Was producing a good number of yellow perch for boat anglers.

**Pere Marquette River:** Steelhead fishing is picking up with fresh fish moving in.

**Pentwater River:** Has steelhead.

**UPPER PENINSULA**

**Lake Gogebic:** Perch fishing started to pick up on the north end.

**Keweenaw Bay:** Fishing continues to be slow for lake trout, spake, and salmon. Smelt are still biting all day and night off Sand Point and out from the Baraga Marina. Spake and coho were seen off the Falls River but they did not want to bite.

**Menominee County:** Perch fishing was good on Hayward Lake. Lake Mary and Lake Ann have been slow; with little to no luck on bluegills. Shakey Lake was slow.
Little Bay De Noc: The cold nights have helped the ice some but the edges are getting rough in areas. The only anglers south of Gladstone were a few whitefish anglers off Sand Point that reported fair catches when jigging minnows or spawn along the drop-off. Angler participation has dropped and those out were primarily perch fishing off Kipling in 24 to 40 feet along the Second and Third Reefs with minnows or wigglers. Some were still getting the occasional jumbo perch. Those that still have ice shanties out are reminded that they need to be off the ice by midnight of March 31.

Marquette: Coho fishing was slow at the bubblers with most anglers only getting one or two fish per trip. Those dragging boats across the ice need to use extreme caution. Water levels were still extremely low in both the Carp and Chocolay Rivers. Very few fish other than a couple brown trout have been caught.

Au Train: Coho fishing through the ice was hit-or-miss at the Au Train River mouth. On the good days, anglers were getting limit catches but on the slow days they were lucky to get a couple fish. A few coho and whitefish were caught through the ice at the mouth of the Rock River.

Munising: Still had ice and it should hang around for a few more weeks. Anglers continue to report good catches of smelt especially in the afternoon when the schools of fish were more active. Night anglers for burbot have done very well throughout however the best areas were off Trout Bay and Sand Point. Coho fishing was slightly better with one or two fish caught in the morning. Weekend fishing pressure was very high with nearly 100 anglers and the increased noise factor with sleds coming and going may have slowed the bite. In general, there is a lot of food in the bay with an abundance of smelt. The splake and whitefish action was poor with only a few fish caught.

Two Hearted River: Access to the river would be by snowmobile only as there are no open roads in that area right now. Anglers interested in steelhead fishing would need to access by snowmobile as heavy snowpack still exists in the area.

Cedarville and Hessel: Perch fishing slowed around the Les Cheneaux Islands. Many of those caught were undersize but some did manage to catch the occasional eight to 14 inch fish with minnows, wigglers, spikes, and small lures. Some have caught splake up to eight pounds with minnows. The ice was holding but some bays now have open water. Anglers still need to use caution especially near the points and areas with a strong current.