

FISHERIES DIVISION

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit



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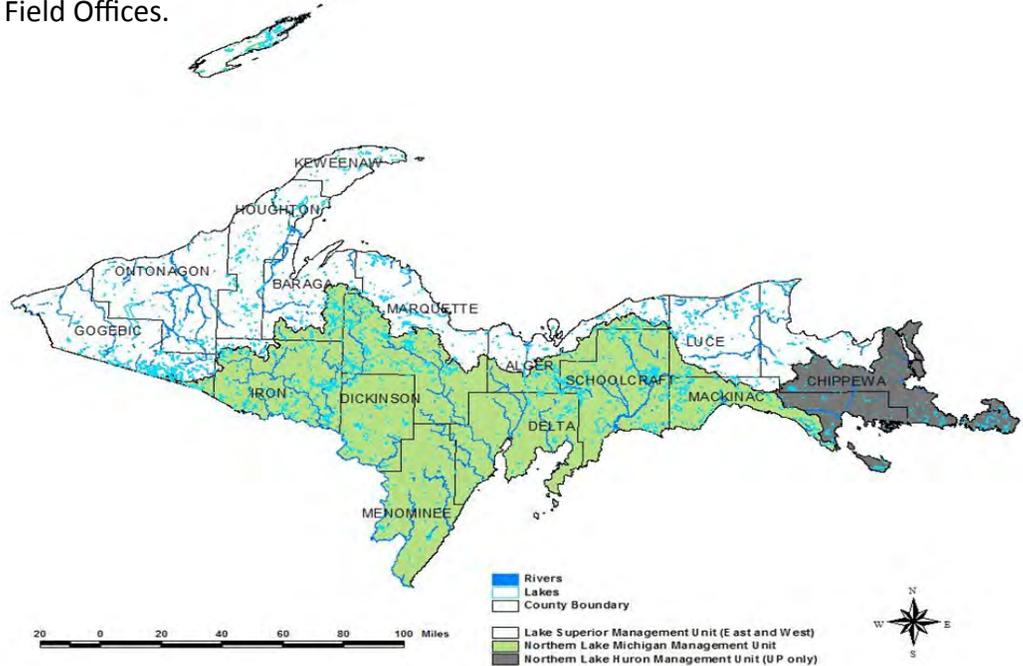
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What is the NLMMU?

The Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit (NLMMU) - shown shaded in green- encompasses all of the waters that drain into the northern portion of Lake Michigan. Our work area includes all or portions of the following counties: Gogebic, Iron, Baraga, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, Delta, Alger, Schoolcraft, Luce, and Mackinac. The NLMMU covers a diverse array of inland waters and nearshore Lake Michigan ports out of the Escanaba and Crystal Falls Field Offices.



Fisheries Division Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement:

To protect and enhance Michigan's aquatic life and habitats for the benefit of current and future generations.

Vision Statement:

To provide world-class freshwater fishing opportunities, supported by healthy aquatic environments, which enhance the quality of life in Michigan.

Dam Removal & Partnership

In July and August 2015, **Thompson Creek dam** and **Williams Creek dam** were removed and a section of lower Williams Creek reconstructed at the original site of the Thompson State Fish Hatchery (originally built in 1922 and approximately 0.75 miles south of the current hatchery location). The goals of the restoration project were to remove old infrastructure no longer need for hatchery operations and improve both aquatic and terrestrial habitat in Thompson and Williams creeks.

Partners during the project included staff from DNR Fisheries Division (Habitat Management Unit, Thompson State Fish Hatchery, NLMMU), DNR Parks & Recreation Division and volunteers from the Schoolcraft County Sportfishing Association.

Removal of the dams restored natural flows, reduced thermal effects of the impoundments, and restored natural floodplain and wetland functions. It is anticipated that several fish species will benefit from the removal including: brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout (steelhead), Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, mottled sculpin, longnose dace, common shiner, brook and ninespine stickleback, central mudminnow, Johnny darter, and white sucker. These fish species will be able to access improved habitat that may be used for refuge, feeding, or spawning.



Dam Removal Project Continued



Partners during the project included staff from DNR Fisheries Division (Habitat Management Unit, Thompson State Fish Hatchery, NLMMU), DNR Parks & Recreation Division and the Schoolcraft County Sportfishing Association.



Menominee River Fish Passage Partnership

Once historically abundant **lake sturgeon** populations in the Great Lakes were reduced to remnant status due to various factors such as commercial fishing, pollution, and habitat loss. Habitat fragmentation is another important factor where man-made barriers (i.e. dams) on river have prevented adult fish in from reaching critical spawning and juvenile nursery habitats needed to complete their life cycle. Fish passage projects are important to lake sturgeon because when adults are ready to reproduce they return to the same rivers where they were born in an attempt to reach their historic spawning grounds (typically located up river). The inability to move past dams has resulted in blocking fish from reaching suitable habitat. On the Menominee River, lake sturgeons historically could migrate approximately 70 miles upstream to a natural barrier (now site of the Sturgeon Falls dam) before several hydroelectric dams were constructed.

One new program in 2015 was a fish passage project on the Menominee River that will assist lake sturgeons move past the Menominee and Park Mill dams. It aims to reconnect approximately 21 miles of the river up to the Grand Rapids dam which will provide access to 2,000 acres of lake sturgeon habitat. This project is funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and federal funding, and private matching funds from the hydroelectric dam owners.

The Menominee River Fish Passage Partnership includes the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Eagle Creek Renewable Energy, River Alliance of Wisconsin and Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition. Over 10 years of work culminated in April 2015 with the construction of facilities designed to provide passage for lake sturgeon around the two dams.

The Menominee Dam includes a fish lift and holding facility where adult lake sturgeons are captured, sorted, loaded on a trailer, transported around the two dams and then released back in the river to enable them to continue their journey upstream. Downstream passage facilities have been constructed at the Park Mill Dam and are being designed for the Menominee Dam for construction in the near future so lake sturgeons may safely return to Lake Michigan. Though it will be a long-term process, the sturgeon population in the Menominee River is expected to slowly increase as they utilize the important spawning and rearing habitat upriver that they now have access to.

In 2015, a total of 20 adult lake sturgeons were passed around the dams (out of a total of 46 captured) in May and October. Given that this was a new facility, the partners and operators experimented with different operational protocols (adjusting attraction water flow, operating the lift facility at different times of the day or night, etc.) to determine how to efficiently capture lake sturgeons. While the capture operations and techniques still need more refinement, hopefully further experimenting in 2016 will bring even better results and efficiencies. It was a tremendous learning experience for the NLMMU staff, and we look forward to continuing the operations of the facility with the other partners in the future to restore lake sturgeon in the Menominee River and Green Bay area.



Staffing Updates

The NLMMU would like to welcome Tyler Walls as a new fisheries technician in Crystal Falls in December 2015. Tyler is a graduate of Northern Michigan University with a B.S. in Biology and Ecology. He gained experience in the NLMMU over the 2014 and 2015 field seasons working as a Short Term Worker out of the Crystal Falls field office. Through this position he gained direct experience related to field operations and creel surveys within the central and western Upper Peninsula. Tyler has also worked for the MDNR Parks and Recreation Division in Pinckney adding to his State of Michigan experience and knowledge. We are eager to apply Tyler's knowledge and experience to manage fisheries on Upper Peninsula priority waters.



The NLMMU would like to welcome Jerek Gutierrez as a new fisheries technician in Crystal Falls in January 2016. Jerek received his B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University. He has worked in fisheries management and research positions with the U.S. Forest Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Jerek has spent the last four years working for the Michigan DNR as a Fisheries Assistant in Traverse City. Jerek brings a diverse mix of technical experience to the NLMMU and we are excited to put his skills to work managing Upper Peninsula waters.

2015 Walleye Rearing Summary

In 2015, the NLMMU managed 3 rearing ponds with staff to raise spring fingerling walleye. In addition through cooperative partnerships, walleye were raised and stocked in Upper Peninsula waters by volunteers: the Indian Lake Rearing Pond was managed by the Indian Lake Property Owners Association, Beer Lake Pond was managed by the Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club and Peterson Pond was managed by the Bays de Noc Great Lakes Sportfishermen, Inc (fall fingerlings). These great organizations contributed both workers and financial assistance, and we wish to thank these partners for all of the hard work and dedication to make walleye fishing better in the Upper Peninsula for anglers. Overall, the NLMMU and cooperators raised approximately 531,000 spring fingerling walleyes for stocking. Please see page 7 for a list of waters stocked with fingerling walleye.

2015 NLMMU Walleye Pond Production

Pond Name	Number of Spring Fingerlings Harvested
Beer Lake Pond	59,762
Grasshopper Gulch Pond	155,400
Indian Lake Rearing Pond	24,000
Landfill Pond	162,310
Warren Pond	130,241



Walleye Fingerlings from Warren Pond

2015 Walleye Stocking

Water	County	Number Spring Fingerlings Stocked
Skeels Lake	Alger	3,310
Little Bay de Noc	Delta	56,380
Corner Lake	Delta	3,528
Gooseneck Lake	Delta	5,250
Lake Antoine	Dickinson	37,500
Sawyer Lake	Dickinson	10,000
Long Lake	Gogebic	10,966
Otter Lake	Houghton	9,170
Portage Lake	Houghton	100,000
Lake Emily	Iron	16,000
Ottawa Lake	Iron	13,775
North Manistique Lake	Luce	45,000
Brevoort Lake	Mackinac	51,262
Millecoquins Lake	Mackinac	57,912
Bass Lake (East)	Marquette	9,500
Little Lake	Marquette	13,620
Pike Lake	Marquette	2,610
Boot Lake	Schoolcraft	2,500
Clear Lake	Schoolcraft	3,000
Indian Lake	Schoolcraft	24,000
Petes Lake	Schoolcraft	4,850
Sand Lake	Schoolcraft	2,500
Triangle Lake	Schoolcraft	4,000

Fisheries Division East Lake Superior Management Unit and the Inter Tribal Fisheries Assessment Program (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) also provided spring fingerlings (14,960 and 35,000, respectively) to stock inland waters in addition to NLMMU stocking efforts. The Bays de Noc Great Lakes Sportfishermen, Inc. operated a fall fingerling walleye program and stocked 3,160 walleyes in Little Bay de Noc, (Delta County).

2015 Fisheries Surveys

During the spring, summer and fall of 2015, NLMMU staff completed 14 surveys on 12 lakes and 2 rivers. Data collected from fisheries surveys are used to describe the status of the fish community and its component populations or evaluate specific management programs such as fish stocking or fishing regulations.

Waters surveyed included:

Lake, River and Stream Surveys

Water	County
Island Lake	Dickinson
South Lake	Dickinson
Two Mile Creek	Dickinson
Sawyer Lake	Dickinson
South Lake	Dickinson
Caspian Pond	Iron
Lake Emily	Iron
Lake Ottawa	Iron
Paint River	Iron
Paint River Pond	Iron
Bass Lake (East)	Marquette
Goose Lake	Marquette
Little Lake	Marquette
Witch Lake	Marquette



Fish Stocking

To obtain information on where we stock fish, visit the DNR Fisheries website at <http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/>

Tagged Walleye in NLMMU

If you catch a fish with a jaw tag, please report the following information: species, length, weight (if known), tag location (where tag was attached), identification number (the larger of the two sets of numbers), tag return address (for example MICH DNR MM-1), capture date, and capture location by using the tag return form found at:

<http://www.michigandnr.com/taggedfish/tags>

Planning an Event for the 2016 Free Fishing Weekend

By registering your event you may now receive special materials from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division and your event/activity may be profiled in media efforts promoting the Free Fishing Weekend. Visit:

[2016 Winter Free Fishing Weekend Event Registration Form](#)

Family Friendly Fishing Waters

Are you looking for a great place to go fishing that is easy to access, has a high likelihood of catching fish, has various amenities, and is all around family-friendly? Then the Family Friendly Fishing Waters project can help! For more information on Family Friendly Fishing Waters, visit:

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364-299046--,00.html>

2016 Fishing Guide Regulations Changes

On April 1, 2016 new regulations changes will take effect. Pick up a 2016—2017 fishing guide at a DNR Customer Service Center, Field Office, your local retail sales outlet or download a PDF at:

<http://www.eregulations.com/michigan/fishing/>

2015 Creel Surveys

Angling effort, catch, and harvest information collected from Fisheries Assistants (i.e. creel clerks) assists the NLMMU make informed fisheries management decisions, including those related sportfishing regulations and stocking programs. In 2015, Fisheries Assistants conducted surveys throughout the management unit for both inland and Great Lakes waters.

Surveys focused on data collection from northern Green Bay (Lake Michigan), which included Big and Little Bays de Noc (Delta County) and South Manistique Lake (Mackinac County). In addition, the third year of a special creel survey was completed on Two Mile Creek (Dickinson County) and Bryan Creek (Marquette/Dickinson counties). This summer survey was conducted to provide supplemental data for the evaluation of brook trout bag limits on Upper Peninsula streams.

The information and data collected is an important tool used by biologists to aid in managing the vast array of fisheries resources in the NLMMU. If you are approached by a Fisheries Assistant conducting a creel survey, please take the time to answer a few short questions about your fishing experience and catch as the information you provide supports the management of fisheries in the NLMMU.



Great Lakes, Great Times, Great Outdoors

Department of Natural Resources

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