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# Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit



ISSUE I

MAY 2013

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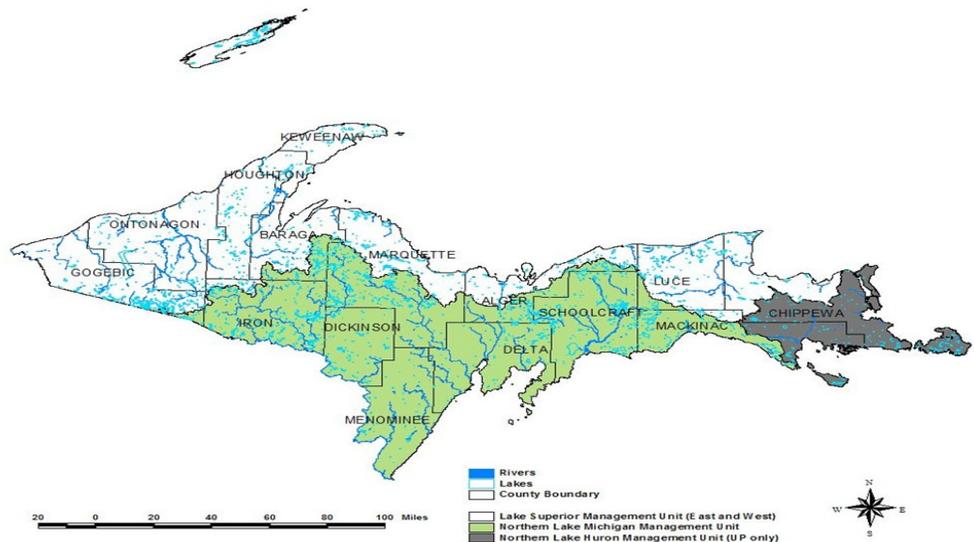
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## What is the NLMMU?

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.

Fisheries Division employees working in this unit include a Unit Supervisor, a Management Biologist, a Technician Supervisor, four Fisheries Technicians, and four Fisheries Assistants (Creel Clerks).



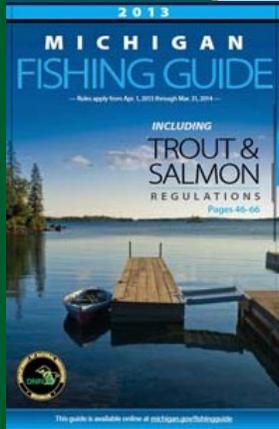
## Partner Spotlight

In 2012, the NLMMU partnered with DNR Forest Resources Division staff from Escanaba, Wildlife Unlimited of Delta County, and the Bays de Noc Great Lakes Sport Fishermen to reconstruct a winter access road (locally known as the South Yellow Gate Road) to make sure anglers could get to Little Bay de Noc north of Gladstone in Delta County. Over the past several years, the condition of this road worsened as it became rutted and was only useable by vehicles with four-wheel-drive. (continued on next page)

# Partnership Spotlight Continued

**Wildlife Unlimited of Delta County** and the **Bays de Noc Great Lakes Sport Fishermen, Inc.** each generously donated funds for the purchase of road building materials such as gravel while DNR Forest Resources staff provided heavy equipment and an operator. The road was rehabilitated in time for the 2012-2013 winter ice fishery. We thank our partners for helping make access to Little Bay de Noc safer and easier for all anglers.





**Watch the one  
minute video  
of NLMMU  
Creel Clerk  
Kathy Walters  
on YouTube!**

## Interested in Learning More about Fisheries Division?

If so, check out web page [www.michigan.gov/fishing](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing)

Where you can:

- Read our 2013-2017 Strategic Plan.
- Read our 2012 Annual Report.
- Learn more about proposed restructuring of fishing licenses.
- Buy a fishing license.
- Read or sign up to receive weekly fishing reports.
- Subscribe to email updates on a variety of topics.

## Creel Programs

Fishing effort, catch, and harvest information collected from creel clerks (Kathy Walters, Greg Sanville, Wayne Laitala, and Reuben Peterson) helps the NLMMU make informed fisheries management decisions, including regulation and stocking changes. In 2012, our creel clerks surveyed anglers throughout Big and Little Bays de Noc, the Cedar and Menominee Rivers, and several waters in the Western Lake Superior Management Unit. For more insight on what a creel clerk does, watch the one minute video of NLMMU Creel Clerk Kathy Walters, graciously shared with us by WLUC TV 6's Discovering: <http://youtu.be/oLGG6tVIVuw>.

## Walleye Egg Take

Walleye from Little Bay de Noc are used as a broodstock source for stocking waters in the NLMMU and most of the Upper Peninsula. The egg take normally occurs in mid-April as the water warms and the winter ice melts away. However, in 2012, walleye egg take on Little Bay de Noc occurred approximately 2 weeks earlier than normal due to the extremely warm weather experienced in March.

NLMMU personnel and volunteers handle the netting operations to capture ripe (ready to spawn) walleye, and then bring the fish to the Rapid River Public Access Site where staff from the Thompson State Fish Hatchery handle the spawning process. The fertilized walleye eggs are then taken back to the hatchery and are incubated for 20-30 days before hatching. Newly hatched walleye are called fry, and these fry are then distributed to rearing ponds across the Upper Peninsula. There they will eat zooplankton and grow to approximately 1.5 inches, or spring fingerling size, in five to six weeks time. Walleye spring fingerlings are then ready to be harvested and stocked in lakes across our unit.

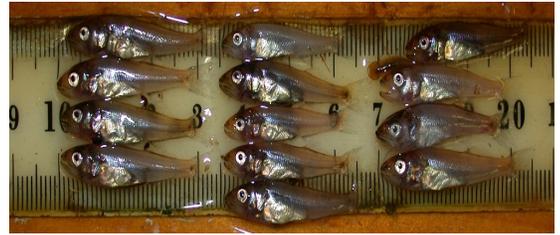
## Walleye Rearing Ponds 2012

In 2012 we ran five rearing ponds solely with unit staff. In addition to these ponds, the Indian Lake Rearing Ponds was managed by **Indian Lake Property Owner's Association** and Peterson Pond was managed by the **Bays de Noc Great Lakes Sport Fishermen Inc.** These great organizations helped with both excellent workers and financial assistance. **Wildlife Unlimited of Delta County** also helped financially with the purchase of yeast used to fertilize our ponds and promote zooplankton growth. We thank these partners for all their hard work.

With our limited staff and budget, we would not be able to raise walleyes in these ponds without cooperator assistance.

Some walleyes were also stocked from Amber 1 and Amber 2 ponds located in Western Lake Superior Management Unit with help from members of the **Ontonagon Valley Sportsmen Club.**

The total number of spring fingerling walleyes stocked into NLMMU in 2012 was 294,147 (see below for details). In addition, 3,455 fall fingerling walleyes were raised and stocked into various unit waters.



### NLMMU Spring Fingerling Stocking Summary- 2012

**Amber Ponds 1 & 2**

Fish Lake	4,775
Lake Antoine	10,492
Lake Ottawa	1,841
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>17,108</b>

**Gerometta's (Indian Lake Rearing Pond)**

Indian Lake	11,000
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>11,000</b>

**Grasshopper Pond**

Clear Lake	2,783
Indian Lake	11,350
Mehl Lake	2,366
Pete's Lake	2,490
Sand Lake	2,754
Triangle Lake	8,345
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>30,088</b>

**Landfill Pond**

Carney Lake	3,837
Hardwood Imp	13,700
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>17,537</b>

**Moss Lake Pond**

Big Bay de Noc	27,952
Camp 7 Lake	1,497
Corner Lake	3,911
Gooseneck Lake	5,276
Round Lake	19,288
Skeels Lake	3,143
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>61,067</b>

**Peterson Pond**

Big Bay de Noc	84,751
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>84,751</b>

**Square Lake**

Indian Lake	2,714
Millecoquins Lake	18,337
Pete's Lake	2,464
Nebel's Pond	2,590
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>26,105</b>

**Warren Pond**

Iron Lake	6,474
Lake Antoine	1,160
Lake Emily	13,348
Lake Ottawa	9,160
Hagerman Lake	9,135
Sawyer Lake	7,214
<b>Total Stocked</b>	<b>43,491</b>

## Where Do We Stock Fish?

The NLMMU works closely with our hatcheries to stock fish in the nearshore waters of Lake Michigan and inland lakes and streams. To find out where we stock fish, and the history of fish stocking back to 1979, click on <http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/> to use our online Fish Stocking Database.



## DNR Forest Resources and Fisheries Staff Work Together to Improve Walleye Rearing

Warren Pond, located near Sagola, is one of the NLMMU's primary walleye rearing ponds in the western Upper Peninsula. From 2007 to 2010, however, the pond was not used as a result of concerns related to spreading viral hemorrhagic septicemia (more commonly known as VHS). During this time vegetation, including willow and tag alder, grew up along the pond's bottom. Once walleye rearing was back on line and the pond was refilled in 2011, the woody vegetation caused problems with setting nets during harvest of walleye spring fingerlings. There were concerns that if the vegetation was allowed to continue to grow, then we might not be able to net the fish at all. Because Fisheries Division did not have the specialized equipment needed to cut down the vegetation or the money to contract the work, Forest Resources Division staff graciously offered to lend their staff and equipment to get the job done.

This is one of the many excellent examples of how the DNR is working collaboratively to improve our State's resources.



Forest Resources Division staff use a brush hog to help maintain Warren Pond, a walleye rearing pond located near Sagola.



**Left**—Jake McWethy holding a northern pike on Iron Lake.

**Right**—Jake again holding a largemouth bass on Lac Vieux Desert during last year's survey.



## Lake, River, and Stream Surveys

During 2012, NLMMU staff completed 28 surveys on 17 lakes and 3 rivers (some waters were surveyed more than once). Data collected from fisheries surveys are used to describe the status of the fish community and evaluate specific management programs (such as fish stocking or fishing regulations).

The waters surveyed in 2012 include:

<b>Water</b>	<b>County</b>
Big West Branch Escanaba River	Dickinson
Carney Lake	Dickinson
East Lake (Groveland Mine Ponds)	Dickinson
Gene's Pond	Dickinson
Sawyer Lake	Dickinson
Fire Lake	Iron
Forest Lake	Iron
Hagerman Lake	Iron
Indian Lake	Iron
Iron Lake	Iron
Lake Ottawa	Iron
Paint Lake	Iron
Runkle Lake	Iron
Stager Lake	Iron
Winslow Lake	Iron
Camp 11 Creek	Marquette
Log Lake	Marquette
South Kidney Lake	Marquette
Twin Lake	Marquette
Little Cedar River	Menominee

# EXAMPLES OF 2012 SURVEY REPORTS

## **East Lake (Groveland Mine Ponds), Dickinson County**

This lake was investigated to document the current status of the fish community as East Lake had not been formally surveyed prior to 2012. During the May survey, a total of 1,764 fish representing 8 species were captured. Bluegill (n=1,242) were the most frequently encountered species both numerically (70% of the surveyed catch) and by weight (59% of the surveyed weight). Bluegills ranged from 1-9 inches in length and approximately 70% of the observed fish were 6 inches and larger. Largemouth bass (n=107) represented the most abundant gamefish during the survey. Fish ranged from 2-16 inches and approximately 6% were 14 inches or larger. Other species captured during the survey included black crappie (n=14, 4-9 inches), muskellunge (n=1, 41.5 inches), pumpkinseed (n=304, 2-8 inches), rock bass (n=33, 2-8 inches), walleye (n=3, 23-28 inches) and yellow perch (n=25, 5-11 inches).

## **Lake Ottawa, Iron County**

This survey was conducted to gather information on the fish community to guide future management direction and contribute data to the Fisheries Division statewide Status and Trends database for lakes. Walleyes represented 5% of the survey catch by number and 8% of the catch by weight. Walleyes (n=30) averaged 15.1 inches, ranged from 3-24 inches, and approximately 53% of the walleyes caught were 15 inches or larger. Yellow perch represented 16% of the survey catch by number and 1% by weight. Yellow perch averaged 4.6 inches and ranged from 1-14 inches in length. Approximately 7% of the yellow perch captured were 7 inches or larger. Smallmouth bass (n=149) represented 24% of the survey catch by number and 38% by weight. Smallmouth bass averaged 12.4 inches and ranged from 1-19 inches. Other species captured during the survey included brook trout (n=7), common shiner (n=33), creek chub (n=4), fathead minnow (n=4), cisco (n=4), lake trout (n=2), lake whitefish (n=10), mottled sculpin (n=1), rock bass (n=170) and white sucker (n=111).

## **Big West Branch of the Escanaba River, Dickinson County**

This survey was conducted to gather information on the fish community to guide future management direction and contribute data to the Fisheries Division statewide Status and Trends database for rivers and streams. A 1,100-foot sampling station was surveyed in August 2012 with a barge electrofishing unit. A total of 17 brook trout were captured and ranged from 3-13 inches with approximately 6% of the catch 7 inches and larger. Other species captured during the survey included blacknose dace (n=53), blacknose shiner (n=60), blackside darter (n=2), burbot (n=16), central mudminnow (n=3), common shiner (n=11), creek chub (n=5), green sunfish (n=1), honeysuckle chub (n=4), logperch (n=1), longnose dace (n=1), mottled sculpin (n=2), Northern redbelly dace (n=2), pearl dace (n=2), slimy sculpin (n=11), smallmouth bass (n=15), white sucker (n=76) and yellow perch (n=1).

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# Winter Technician Activities



Winterizing a boat motor

## Equipment Repair and Maintenance:

- Boats, Trailers, and Outboards
- Winterize water pumps and ATV's
- Net Repair (fyke nets, gillnets, hand nets and seines).

**Office Work:** Entering age, growth and stocking information into databases.

*Jody Johnston, below, repairs a fish stocking trailer and Jacob McWethy, left, repairs a fyke net.*



Aging fish spines and scales collected from past field season



Northern Pike Dorsal Fin

The above photo shows a technician cutting a northern pike dorsal fin, and (left) aging the fin under a microscope. Fish fin rays are aged by counting the annuli from a cross section of fin. Annuli appear as rings similar to a tree cross section when viewed under a microscope.



## Winter Technician Activities- Habitat Projects:

Fisheries Technicians assisted the U.S. Forest Service with constructing fish crib structures on Chief Edwards Lake in Iron County. Ten fish cribs were completed with the purpose of adding additional spawning structure for the lake's panfish population. The below photos show the group hauling logs and building fish cribs on Chief Edwards Lake—February 2013



### Fortune Pond Brush Bundles

Fisheries Division employees hauled harvested spruce, white pine, and balsam trees onto the ice of Fortune Pond, located just west of Crystal Falls, to assemble brush bundle structures. A brush bundle is a mat of intertwined trees that are anchored to the shoreline to provide habitat for spawning minnows.

Fortune Pond is a Type A trout lake stocked annually with brook trout and rainbow trout. A total of 3 structures were assembled along the pond's edge, covering an area 75 feet long by 20 feet wide.



**Left Photo—**  
Jody Johnston,  
Fisheries  
Technician,  
“anchoring” a  
brush bundle  
structure on  
Fortune Pond.

**Right Photo—**  
Completed  
brush bundle  
structures.



## Links to Recent Status of the Fishery Resource Reports (SFR):

Status of the Fishery Resource Reports document the results of surveys conducted on Michigan lakes and rivers that support fisheries of high interest to anglers. Each report describes the environment, history, survey results and management recommendations for the water body. The most recent NLMMU SFRs are listed below:

- Lake Antoine, Dickinson County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/LakeAntoine-SOFR\\_410405\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/LakeAntoine-SOFR_410405_7.pdf)
- Bass Lake (East), Marquette County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2009-67\\_312447\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2009-67_312447_7.pdf)
- Gemini Lakes, Schoolcraft County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-133\\_383476\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-133_383476_7.pdf)
- Lily Lake, Schoolcraft County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2010-93\\_330663\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2010-93_330663_7.pdf)
- Little Lake, Marquette County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-134\\_384015\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-134_384015_7.pdf)
- Mehl Lake, Marquette County: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-136\\_391358\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2012-136_391358_7.pdf)



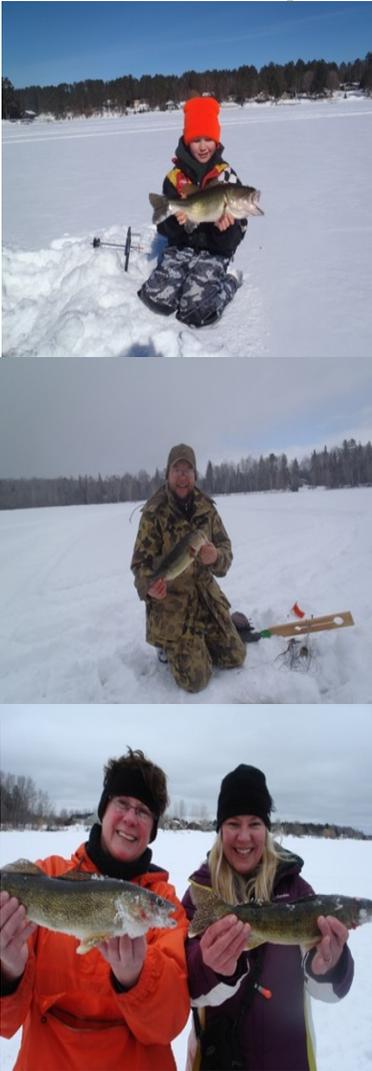
**Left Photo—**  
Escanaba River  
brook trout.

**Right Photo—**  
Brian Mulzer  
and volunteers  
sampling fish  
on Deer Lake.



**Free Fishing Weekend, to be held  
Saturday, June 8 and Sunday, June 9.  
Check out the DNR's website to find  
local events.**

[www.michigan.gov/freefishing](http://www.michigan.gov/freefishing)



# Education Spotlight

- Hybrid sunfish were stocked into a pond located within the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park on two occasions last summer. These stocked fish provided a unique opportunity for visitors to fish within the Park and was complemented by programming aimed towards visitors who wanted to try their hand at fishing.
- A live fish and aquatic critter identification lesson took place at Bewabic State Park and Runkle Lake in Iron County in 2012. Both kids and adults were encouraged to come and see live fish from local waters and learn what they look like and what they eat, and given the opportunity to ask questions and handle the fish. We also had other aquatic critters including crayfish and several types of turtles for folks to enjoy and learn about.
- Classroom presentations were given in Watersmeet and at West Iron County High School to educate young folks on fisheries in our area. Topics included walleye rearing, the role of the DNR's Fisheries Division- including how lakes and streams are surveyed, and information on our local fisheries.
- Ice fishing workshops were held at Bass Lake near Watersmeet in Gogebic County and Runkle Lake near Crystal Falls in Iron County during the winter free fishing weekend. This was a joint effort with DNR Parks Division staff from the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. Minnows and other bait were supplied by Parks Division and DNR staff instructed anglers young and old on the art of ice fishing.
- Ice fishing instruction was provided in conjunction with the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program <http://www.michigan.gov/bow>.

## Hook, Line and Sinker

Learn to fish with the DNR

Have you ever wanted to learn to fish? Join the DNR for "Hook, Line and Sinker", a weekly fishing program conducted by our staff at over 30 state parks and hatcheries in Michigan.

We'll teach you casting and fishing basics, and we can provide a rod and reel to use if you don't have your own equipment. Hook, Line and Sinker programs begin in mid-June and continue throughout the summer.

For more information, contact the following Upper Peninsula locations for dates and times or visit the Hook, Line and Sinker website: [www.michigan.gov/hooklineandsinker](http://www.michigan.gov/hooklineandsinker)

- Cedar River State Harbor, Cedar River, 906-864-1040
- Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, Ontonagon, 906-885-5275
  - Wells State Park, Cedar River, 906-863-9747



**Department of Natural Resources  
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1420 West US 2  
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- ◆ **The NLMMU is a great place to fish and a fun way to get outside and enjoy this beautiful state and all it has to offer.**
- ◆ **Make a commitment to teach a child to fish this season.**
- ◆ **Get your family outdoors and catch some fish.**
- ◆ **Have a home-cooked fish fry.**
- ◆ **Take a drive to a lake or river that you have never been to before.**
- ◆ **Offer to buy a child a voluntary youth fishing license for \$2 (see the following paragraph for more information on how this benefits natural resources).**



Although it is not a requirement for youth under 17 years of age to have a fishing license to enjoy Michigan's fishing resources, by purchasing a Voluntary Youth Fishing License, the DNR receives additional funds from the federal government to support our fishing programs.

The youth fishing license costs only \$2.00, and the first time buyers will need to purchase a sportsman's card for an additional \$1.00, so for a \$3.00 investment the DNR will receive more than double that amount back to be able to invest it back into the resource.

Join us in encouraging our youth to get outdoors and go fishing. Help us keep the next generation of anglers involved, interested and "hooked" on fishing!

**Learn about eating safe,  
local, and healthful fish  
from our  
Great Lakes State.**

[www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish)



**Above**—Whitefish from Lake Ottawa survey.



**Below**—Northern pike from Iron Lake survey.