



## State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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### GREAT LAKES FISHERIES NEWS – FEBRUARY 2009.

If you have questions or comments about issues related to Great Lakes fisheries, contact Bill Horns by phone (608-266-8782), FAX (608-266-2244), or e-mail ([william.horns@wisconsin.gov](mailto:william.horns@wisconsin.gov)). We also maintain Lake Michigan and Lake Superior web pages where you can find many reports:

Lake Michigan - <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/>

Lake Superior - <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/superior/fish/fish.html>

**Commercial fishing – the minimum catch requirement.** Public hearing will be held on proposed commercial fishing rule revisions. The proposed rule revisions address relicensing requirements for Great Lakes commercial fishers, and other related issues. It also changes the commercial fishing license year from July-June to January-December. The focus of interest here is what is commonly referred to as the “minimum catch rule”, the requirement that a commercial fishing license holder must remain active in the fishery if he or she wishes to have his license renewed. The purpose of the rule is to identify inactive fishers. This has been a controversial rule for many years, and the proposed revisions attempt to accommodate concerns raised by commercial fishers while retaining meaningful relicensing requirements. For details go to <http://adminrules.wisconsin.gov> and search for CR09-016. Hearings will be at 5 pm on each of the following days:

March 18. Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center; 29270 Cty Hwy G; Ashland, WI

March 20. Cleveland Training Room, L242; Lakeshore Technical College; 1290 North Ave.; Cleveland WI

**Lake trout stocking.** As you may know we are in the middle of reviewing a draft lake trout rehabilitation strategy for Lake Michigan that calls for increasing lake wide stocking, with a focus on the northern and mid lake refuges. More lake trout would be stocked in Wisconsin waters than in the past, but most of those would be on the mid lake refuge. Details are spelled out in two documents that I can mail to you or that can be found on our web site, the Rehabilitation Guide:

[http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/Lake\\_trout\\_rehabilitation\\_guide\\_for\\_Lake\\_Michigan.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/Lake_trout_rehabilitation_guide_for_Lake_Michigan.pdf)

and the draft Implementation Strategy:

[http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/Lake\\_trout\\_implementation\\_strategy\\_for\\_Lake\\_Michigan.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/Lake_trout_implementation_strategy_for_Lake_Michigan.pdf).

All lake trout stocked in Lake Michigan are provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of increased costs and frozen budgets, the Service may not be able to meet the increased stocking goals of the Strategy in the near future.

**Making fish.** The Department’s fish production system has been working to adapt to declining funding and new fish health requirements imposed to minimize the risk of spreading Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) within Wisconsin. Some reductions have been necessary. If you have specific questions about this, let me know – I can mail or e-mail you a table summarizing stocking plans for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 production years.

**Ballast dumping.** Much has been written about the damage caused by invasive species brought to the Great Lakes in ballast water. Now the Wisconsin DNR is establishing a system under which ocean-going ships wishing to discharge ballast water in Wisconsin waters must obtain a general permit from the Department and, by 2012, meet specified standards dealing with the number and size of living organisms that are discharged. An informational hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m., Monday, March 23, at DNR Southeast Regional HQ, 2300 N. Martin Luther King Drive, Milwaukee. For more information try [http://dnr.wi.gov/news/mediakits/mk\\_ballast.asp](http://dnr.wi.gov/news/mediakits/mk_ballast.asp).

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**Retirement and renewal.** The R/V Barney Devine (at right), our fisheries assessment boat on Lake Michigan, is the oldest (71 years old) and one of the hardest-working fisheries assessment boats on the Great Lakes. The R/V Hack Noyes, our assessment boat on Lake Superior, is about the same age (62 years old). The Department is taking steps to replace the Barney and retrofit the Hack.

