



GREAT LAKES FISHERIES NEWS – March 2011.

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). 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/fish/lakesup/>

Hearings scheduled for trap net rule. In June of last year the fishing gear of a recreational fishing boat became entangled in a commercial trap net marker buoy line near Sheboygan. The boat capsized and one of the fishermen subsequently died of a heart attack. The Department then received citizen petitions calling for changes to the rules governing the placement of commercial trap nets in Lake Michigan. Because state law requires appropriate consideration of rule proposals brought by petition, the Department and the Natural Resources Board authorized public hearings on a rule change. The proposed rule would prohibit trap nets within five nautical miles north or south of Two Rivers, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan from June 1 through August 31, would supplement net-marking requirements, and would extend those requirements to trap nets used in Lake Superior. Public hearings will be held at the following times and locations:

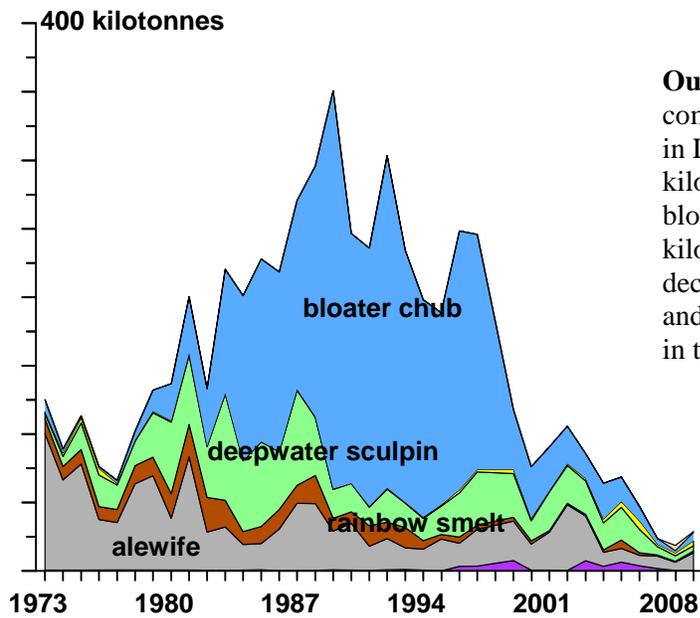
- 5 pm, March 14, 2011. University Theater, UW-Sheboygan, 1 University Dr., Sheboygan.
- 5 pm, March 16, 2011. Bayfield Lakeside Pavilion, 2 East Front Street, Bayfield.

Not a bad year for salmon and trout fishing. Creel survey results for 2009 and 2010 are compared below. Note the sharp increase in the estimated chinook salmon harvest in Lake Michigan. Harvests from Lake Superior tributaries are not included in these numbers.

	brook trout		brown trout		rainbow trout		chinook		coho		lake trout	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Lake Michigan	27	0	15,792	13,029	46,529	49,121	214,621	315,294	42,690	42,445	14,946	17,483
Lake Superior	16	0	833	765	37	121	484	1,161	1,972	9,117	20,309	19,278

Marking fish. DNRs around Lake Michigan are working with the USFWS to mark ALL chinook salmon stocked in Lake Michigan with coded wire tags (CWTs), bits of wire inserted into the nose of fingerling chinooks before they are released into the lake. This project is part of a Great Lakes Mass Marking Initiative (<http://www.glfrc.org/massmarking/>). The goal is to obtain better estimates of the number of naturally-reproduced chinooks in the lake and to learn more about their movements. Go to http://www.nmt.us/products/afs/video/autofish/afs_video.htm for a video of the Northwest Marine Technologies automated marking system that will be used to insert CWTs into the more than 3,000,000 chinooks that are stocked in the lake annually. The pictures below show one CWT on someone’s fingertip and another one magnified to display the coded information.





Our changing lake. In 1989 the estimated combined lakewide biomass of four forage species in Lake Michigan hit a peak of around 350 kilotonnes, or 770,000,000 pounds. Most of that was bloater chubs. Today the total is less than 50 kilotonnes. In the 1970's the prime suspect in the decline of native species was alewives. Today, zebra and quagga mussels are usually blamed for changes in the ecosystem. (source: USGS)